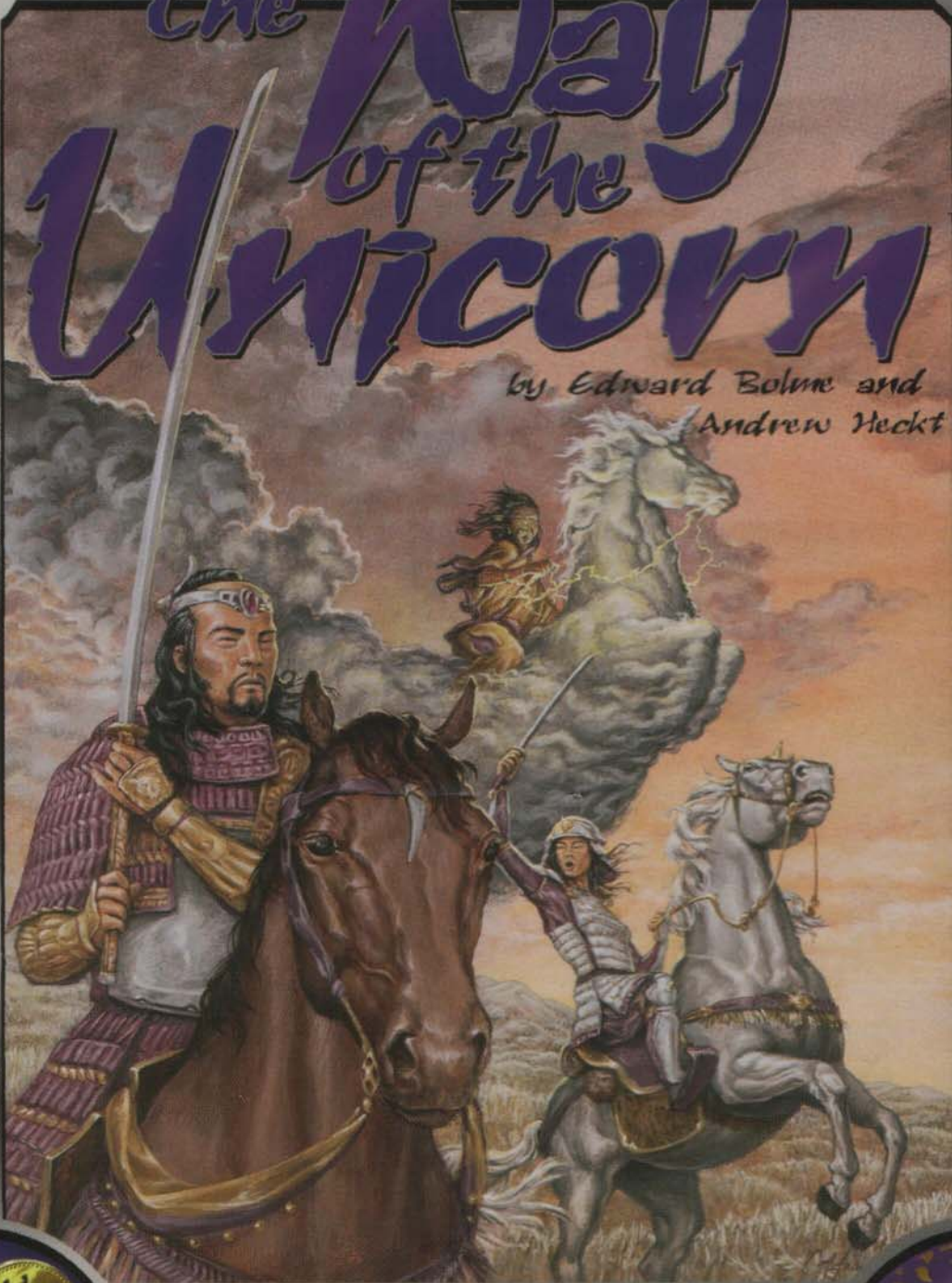


The Way of the Clans: Book Two

The Way of the Unicorn

by Edward Bolme and Andrew Heckt



Legend of the Five Rings





Legend of the Five Rings

The Way of the Unicorn



We left our home behind, but home never left our hearts.

– Shinjo

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David Williams once again helped out with rules, Techniques, game balance, etc.

Rob Vaux wrote the section on regions and provinces.

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Marcelo Figueroa wrote the strategy and tactics section.

Ree Soesbee wrote "The Lady's Heir" and (with Marcelo) Chapter 4.

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The Lady's Heir

The foal was large, larger than was usual for so early a spring birth, and when he was born his gentle mother passed into the void. The Unicorn stable master, Otaku Kojiro, looked down at the small bloody colt in sadness and regret. "Stillborn," he said to the young stableboy nearby. Kojiro climbed to his feet wearily. This birth had not been an easy one, and losing the first spring colt – much less to lose the two horses at once – was a bad omen for the clan. Iuchi Daiyu, shugenja and lorekeeper of the clan, scratched his chin thoughtfully and nodded. Leaving the colt's thin body beside the dead mare, the two men walked out of the barn to wash their bloodstained hands in the warm water of the trough outside.

As their voices faded, a tiny figure broke off from the darkness near the barn door. Slipping into the stall, the child hissed in shadowed whispers, "It can't be dead! Kouchi was my mother's mare and she promised that foal would be my battle steed!" The girl was no more than twelve years old and her pigtails waved behind her as she dropped to her knees beside the abandoned colt. She wiped the straw from the colt's soft gray coat, still wet from the birth-sack. "My mother promised..." the girl murmured, pulling the dead foal's head gently into her lap.

"You're not supposed to be here..." the stableboy started, but trailed off. Only a few years older than she, Masero looked down at the little girl and felt a rush of sudden pity. Everyone in the clan knew her mother had died in battle only a few months ago, her steed driven over a cliff by Lion forces in a violent border skirmish. He watched as the girl pulled the rest of the colt's thick embryonic sac from its tiny body. Thin arms encircled the foal and brushed gently at its wet,

furry hair. Sighing, the young stableboy decided to let her have a few moments with the dead foal. What harm could there be in indulging the poor orphaned child?

The foal was not breathing, and the girl ignored Masero as he peered nervously at the two men outside the barn. Carefully, as she had often seen her father do, the young girl bent down to the colt's unmoving head and used her kimono sleeves to clear its tiny nostrils. Her lips whispered prayers to the Lady Otaku, founder of her house, her voice shaking with tears.

Despite her efforts, there was no response. The foal lay unmoving, dead to all appearances, but the girl kept wiping its eyes and gently breathing air into the foal's mouth. Then, with a start, the foal breathed one deep shuddering breath and its large dark eyes opened to stare wonderingly up at the girl.

"Master!" the stableboy shouted, "Master! Quickly!" Kojiro and Daiyu rushed back to the stable, watching from the door of the stall as the little girl helped the struggling colt to its knees. "You can do it," she whispered to the foal. "You can stand!" Trembling, the foal tried again, only to fall upon the hard, straw-covered floor with a grunting whinny. "You don't have anything to fear," the girl murmured again, rubbing the colt's legs and hooves to free them of the red wetness of birth. "You can make it. I'm here – I'm with you. Neither of us will ever be alone again." The colt looked into her face, seeing the love and friendship there.

With a heave, the baby lifted itself from the floor on shuddering knees and looked at the assembled men with wide, fearless eyes.

Daiyu leaned forward, his expert hands feeling the colt's legs and back, recognizing the brave karma within the small animal. "He has a mark."

Pointing with slim fingers to a small pale streak on the foal's ankle, he continued, "It is the sign I was looking for, Kojiro. The symbol of Osano-Wo." Daiyu looked up at the stablemaster with troubled eyes, his finger tracing a thin white lightning strike that traveled the inside of the colt's gray foreleg.

"What is the omen, Shugenja?" the stablemaster whispered.

"War."

The colt nuzzled the thin girl's fingers eagerly, looking for milk and sustenance in the absence of its mare. Daiyu smiled then, a thin and weak

shred of hope. "War, Kojiro, but not death. Not this time." He patted the child on her head and stood. "But mark my words, stablemaster, by the time this child reaches her *gempukku*, there will be war on us all."



The colt grew strong and healthy on a diet of goat's milk, and the girl went to the paddock each day to care for the animal herself. Seasons came and went as they grew together into their maturity, and with the stirring of each new year came the steady tides of war. On the day of the girl's *gempukku*, the sun rose bright over the plains of combat, where many brave duels, contests of skill and strength as well as tests of honor were held to challenge the young samurai. The Unicorn banner tore through the air above the racing steeds, the hard-packed ground thundering with the impact of their hooves. The little girl chose her mother's name, Kamoko, to signify the position she had won as an adult, and it was loudly chanted by the other samurai of the Otaku family as she won honor after honor on the field.

It was a time for the families to celebrate their friendship and trust, and for the ancient stories to be told. Stories of another land, where the sand blew in the wind and the water was sweet. A warm country where the horses of the Unicorn had been born and fostered. As the sun descended over the horizon and the youths stood together with their families and their clan, Shinjo Yokatsu stepped forward to address the assembly. Otaku, Ide and Iuchi, as well as Shinjo, all waited for their daimyo's words, hoping for brave omens of the future and good counsel about the battles they would soon fight.

"Welcome, all assembled here..." he began, and his rich voice rang out across the plain, making the horses' ears rise in anticipation. "We are the people of the wind!" The ancient Shinjo rallying cry swept across the plain, and the people cheered wildly. Smiling, he held his hands up and continued, "The Unicorn must remember our history, as we have done each year since the time of our ancestors. We must rise to the winds during

this time of war, and we will be victorious!" The cheering continued as he looked up into the darkening twilight sky. "The words of our ancestors, those who left Rokugan for the far lands of the west, are still with us. Let their wisdom guide us in this troubled time. Let their names be spread again across the lands of the Emperor!"

"Shinjo!" shouted the people on the plains, and horses thundered war screams toward the dying sun. "Ide!" they called, ringing out against the empty sky.

Another name swelled from many voices, "Iuchi!" The banners of the proud families waved and fluttered and the cheers swelled, "Otaku!" The names raced like battle cries into the red light of the sun, the loud applause echoing with the blast of fireworks from the castle walls. The scarlet of the flames in the sky burned like the light of the dying sun, and the bright white of the explosions echoed the gleam of the last rays of sunlight on bright mantles and armor. Amid the clamor, Kamoko noticed Iuchi Daiyu staring at the first star of the evening with a troubled look upon his face.

"What's wrong, Daiyu-sama?" Kamoko was forced to yell in order to be heard. Around her, cheers of the populace and peals of hooves filled the plain, and another burst of fire was released into the darkening sky above them. Kamoko had grown from the thin child in the barn into a beautiful woman, with long dark hair beneath her brightly polished helm. She smiled at Daiyu, her mentor and tutor, and he looked back at her with a troubled countenance.

"An old prophecy, samurai," he murmured, and she could barely catch his words amid the torrent of fireworks that sparked trails across the sky. "One that foretold Otaku herself would come through the flames of the evening, and show us her chosen heir." He paused before continuing. "But the flames are fading, and she has not come."

"Heh!" Kamoko snorted, and leaped upon her proud gray steed. "Legends, shugenja. Only legends. Let the past remain in the past. Come," she clasped his shoulder in a friendly gesture, "join your brothers in celebrating, Daiyu-sama, for tomorrow we march to war upon our enemies!" She smiled down at him for a moment, resting one hand on the hilt of her newly won *wakizashi* before she sped off to join the others celebrating on the wide fields.





"*Hai*. A legend." Iuchi Daiyu gathered his robes about him with one last look at the pale light of the sun behind the horizon's edge. "But not of the past. For without the heir, we are doomed to lose this war." He watched Kamoko race across the field, outdistancing the others without effort, her face illuminated by the explosions in the sky.

On the plain, Shinjo Yokatsu smiled at the young samurai-ko and allowed his steed to run beside hers for a moment. The racers tore across the field despite the darkness, trusting their steeds as they would trust their brothers to choose the safe path home. When they reached the first barn, Yokatsu's red stallion was only a nose ahead, and the Champion smiled widely. "You have an excellent steed," he called to her as they slowed. "He will give the clan many brave children." Yokatsu seemed infinitely more at ease on horseback than he had standing before the assembled clan, and Kamoko saw the reluctance in his eyes as he dismounted. Indeed, it was a reluctance she knew well.

Kamoko leapt from the saddle easily. "*Hai, domo arigato, Yokatsu-sama.*" She bowed respectfully, holding the reins in a steady grip. "His first mare has just given birth to a son. Soon, his foals will swell the ranks of the clan." She smiled and her brown eyes were bright.

"The children of the clan are our future, Kamoko. We must guard them well." His eyes traveled over every inch of the stallion, judging with an expert's eye the fine muscles, dark intelligent eyes, and the unusual white zigzag which traveled down its gray foreleg. As if judging her value as well, Yokatsu turned his eyes to Kamoko, and looked at her for a long moment. She stood still and unafraid before his searching gaze until, at last, he turned away. His voice softened, and he said gently, "Your mother would have been very proud on this day, samurai." Her bright eyes darkened slightly, and she nodded.

"*Domo, sama. Domo.*" Suddenly, her steed pushed against her shoulder with his head, chafing at the delay. Both Yokatsu and Kamoko smiled at the horse's restlessness, and she brushed her hand against the stallion's mane lovingly.

"So, Kamoko, you have chosen your own name, but what of his?" The daimyo's broad smile was bright and pleasant, and Kamoko looked momentarily surprised. "A fine steed deserves the finest of names, no? After all, this is his

gempukku as well!" Shinjo Yokatsu chuckled as he spoke. The small, sturdy man paused and brushed his fingertips gently against the stallion's dark muzzle. "Hachiman. His name shall be Hachiman," he said. Bored and uncaring of the honor, Hachiman tugged impatiently at the reins, and danced sideways toward the barn.

Yokatsu smiled as he thought, *He is as rash and impetuous as his Mistress.*



Kamoko listened to the famous poets and beautiful music with only half an ear, waiting for the earliest appropriate time to vanish from the gathered throng. She wore a new kimono, patterned with hand painted clouds and fronds of fern, that made her eyes seem even more beautiful than usual. But Kamoko did not pay any attention to the subtle praises of the other young samurai, nor to their compliments on her victories of the day. Her mind was far away, waiting for the battles to begin. The young samurai-ko walked through the crowds, wearing her kimono with the same grace as her armor. Her dark hair was uncut and unadorned, free of the foolishness that many women of Rokugan entwined within their locks. Her movements held the gracefulness of the hunting cat, not the delicacy of the sparrow. Such things were for women who sought to catch a husband, not for battle-maidens.

The only thing Kamoko sought to catch was glory. And glory cares little for perfume and powder, silks and gentle words; glory cares only for victory.

When she left the ceremonies and walked through the illuminated paths in the palace gardens, her steps were short and thoughtful. Above her, the last volleys of fireworks tore through the silent heavens, their flames raining down over the fields and forests of the Otaku clan. Kamoko climbed the stone steps to the top of the walls and watched the display in the heavens above.

Sparks rained down upon the plains in brightly colored waves and made the waving grasses dance. To the west, a dry storm was



gathering, striking bright lightning streaks across the darkness and challenging the fireworks to an iaijutsu duel in the heavens.

Voices drifted across the gardens to Kamoko, of palace servants seeking for her to come and watch another poetry gathering. Sighing, Kamoko slipped down the stairs and watched the maids pass by in a futile search. As Kamoko waited for them to leave, she smiled to herself. There was only one whom she wanted to share her honors with. Her steps were lighter and her lips curved into a smile as she left the palace to go to the fields. Hachiman would be waiting.

The huge stallion stood near the paddock gate, and whickered when she approached. He was well tended, a bit of hay hanging from an idle lip.

Quickly she placed the saddle on his broad back and leapt astride. Only here did she feel at home – only here did the rushing call of her blood cease its clamor for battle. She turned Hachiman and raced into the wide fields where the *gempukku* had been held, closing her eyes and letting him find the path. The wind blew her hair back, free against the night sky, and the sharp cold drew tears to glisten at the corners of her dark brown eyes. Kamoko delighted in riding her steed alone, the saddle's creaks and the soft hoofbeats reverberating in her soul. She played games with Hachiman in an intricate dance of steps and rhythms, each testing the other's control.

Kamoko cared little about the rain that lightly spattered her kimono, laughing as the drops struck Hachiman's delicate nose. Neither of them noticed when the lanterns of the town died, and sleep settled over the palace of the Unicorn.

Far across the plain, a bolt of bright white flame raced down from the heavens and struck the ground without warning. The storm above thundered a warning, but no one at the palace awakened to its call. Given life by the lightning, a brilliant flame leapt up from the site of the blast. The dry grasses of the field sparked into a blaze, then a bonfire. Within minutes the fire was leaping toward the forest, and the precious barns where the horses were stabled.

Kamoko smelled the thick smoke before she saw the racing flames. In the dark, the choking haze clung to the ground in a black veil, and the flames were bright sparks like fireworks within the darkness. She slowed her steed and stood in the stirrups to see a thin line of bright, angry

flames dotting the horizon. "Shinsei," she cried, "not the stables!" Knowing there was no way the fire could be completely extinguished before it reached the barns, Kamoko spurred Hachiman. They raced toward the stables, and she yelled a warning cry. After a moment, a bleary-eyed Masero opened the door and looked curiously up at her.

"The barns are in danger! There is a fire on the western plain!" Kamoko pointed at the steadily growing flames. Otaku Masero took a single look at the flames and leapt into action, running for the great bell that sat near the paddocks. With desperate tugs, he swung the thick wooden bar against the bell, ringing a warning to the people of the palace. Kamoko saw the pricks of light across the field as the clan awakened to the danger. "Can we get the horses out before the fire gets here?" she asked breathlessly as Kojiro stepped to her side.

Other stableboys rushed from their sleeping areas within the barns, hurrying the horses away from the dangerous path of the fire. Many of them leapt on the backs of the animals, herding them to safety in a well-practiced swirl of motion. "They will be safe," Kojiro yelled above the noise of fear and pounding hooves. Running from the furor to stand at Kamoko's stirrup, he beckoned out at the steadily growing glow, "But the fire is headed for the north fields." The wind whipped the stablemaster's face, carrying with it the acrid scent of burning grasses and the sound of shouts from the fields.

"And if it reaches the north barn?"

"That would be disastrous. The pregnant mares are being kept there."

"Isn't there anyone watching them?" Kamoko demanded.

"No... no... none of the mares are close to birthing, and most of the grooms were given leave to attend the *gempukku* festival." The stablemaster's face fell. "The only way there is down the forest road. But that may already be on fire ..."

Kamoko's fine features hardened in resolve. "Then we must be faster than the flames." Hachiman reared violently as she turned him northward, and together they charged into the smoke.

The road was on fire, and the peasants of the near village were gathering at the river, beginning a feeble line of buckets and shoveling dirt to



combat the eager enemy. Hachiman dodged the heimin with great leaps of agility, his hooves seeking purchase in the newly plowed earth. With brave strides, he charged into the line of the flames, leaping across them with a tremendous effort. Kamoko yelled louder, and urged him onward through the danger, her skin reddening from the wave of intense heat. The roar of the fire was challenging her to a contest of wills – a contest which she was determined to win at any cost.

The hard packed earth was lined on every side by acres of thick pine trees, their frail branches already waving in the hot wind that swept along beside the racing stallion.

The road twisted and turned like a bucking steed, and Hachiman gulped in great breaths of smoke-filled air as he swerved through the trees toward the barn. Finally, Kamoko saw the dark wood of the building shining faintly in the firelight, the blaze already dancing through the nearby trees. As they approached, Kamoko dove from Hachiman's back at breakneck speed and dashed for the barn's thick doors. The doors were warm and she cursed the speeding wind that washed the fire through the forest like a river. Already she could see the fire clinging to the walls of the barn as the dry timbers and stored hay ignited in sudden bursts of light.

Kamoko threw open the doors to the huge barn, heedless of the flames that leapt and danced across its roof. The heat from within blasted her pale face like a furnace and burned the wind from her lungs in an acidic cloud of black smoke. Inside, she could hear the maniacal shrieks of the horses and the crack of splintering wood as they flung themselves against their stalls.

Hachiman danced and screamed outside the barn, unwilling to leave his mistress but unable to follow as she ran inside, hurling open door after door. With swift movements she draped the mares' heads with rags wetted from the trough, and led them through the doors of the burning building. Once outside, the stallion instinctively kept them together and used his hooves and terrible shrieks to prevent the mares from plunging madly into the blazing woodland which surrounded the barn. Kamoko worked feverishly, ignoring the heat that singed her fine hair and burned her hands raw.

Every minute seemed an hour as Kamoko fought alone to bring the horses safely out of the barn's inferno. The roar of the flames above her

threatened to choke her in viscous smoke or crush her beneath weakened timbers. The roof groaned from the weight of the fire, threatening at any moment to collapse and bury them alive in the broiling flames, but their threats did not stop her. She went into the barn again and again, struggling for control of the horses against their fear of the fire. At last, nearly thirty mares had followed her out of the barn, screaming as the smoke clogged their lungs and trying to flee in every direction. Hachiman danced and kicked, herding them, keeping them together until his mistress was done.

Trembling from exhaustion, Kamoko went in a final time. When she returned she was carrying Hachiman's newborn son, the colt's spindly legs kicking and dangling against her knees. The small foal's golden hair was burned by the heat of the flames and his eyes were wide and afraid. Kamoko lifted the tiny colt to Hachiman's back, hurdling up behind him as the infant uttered a piteous cry of fear. The colt kicked once more, then lay trembling across the mighty stallion's withers. With a fearless "Kiaii", Kamoko spurred Hachiman, turning him back toward the long forest road.

The path was covered in fire. It hung from the trees like wild streamers, in long licking tendrils of red flame. In minutes the entire wood would be engulfed in the blaze. The heat itself made the little trail seem to waver uncertainly, and the shrieks of the steeds were like the cries of children.

Kamoko hesitated only for a moment, then began lashing the horses with a branch torn from the nearest tree, tears streaming from her eyes at the pain she was causing to her clan's beautiful mounts. Hachiman helped, biting at their flanks and causing the mares to leap into a terrified run, more willing to brave the relatively clear road than the furious assault of stallion and rider. Hachiman sped after the herd of frightened horses and Kamoko clenched her teeth against a scream as the leather of the reins bit into her blistered palms. The tiny colt uttered no other sound, his body pressed against Kamoko's as she leaned over him, sheltering him from the wind-tossed embers.

Although blinded by heat and smoke, she clung to Hachiman's back and guided him by the strength of love alone.



The hooves of her steed clattered against stones in the road like the ringing laughter of a man gone mad, scattering the pebbles as Hachiman lunged through the burning forest. Desperately trying to keep ahead of the ravaging blaze, whipped by the wind's fury, Kamoko turned her tear-stained face to see the massive trees behind her felled by the fire. The other horses ran wildly through the woodland pass, terrified by the scorching heat of the inferno around them. Their eyes rolled and their high-pitched shrieks echoed in Kamoko's ears as she drove them onward. Far ahead she could see the opening between the trees that led to the clear fields where the peasants worked to quench the conflagration. In spite of her fear, Kamoko could feel her excitement rise, the battle nearly won. Soon! Soon! Her eagerness spurred Hachiman to greater heights, barely able to keep herself in the saddle as he pounded through the forest with titanic, leaping strides. She clutched the tiny foal, holding its face within her *haori* to keep the smoke and ash from the colt's nostrils and eyes. It shivered against her chest, and her tears were the only source of cool water within the crazed holocaust.

With a staggering burst of speed, the horses ran forward through the blinding smoke, instinctively seeking the opening between the trees. The mad race was breaking down the mares' endurance, the cloying smoke choking their wind and tearing at their eyes. As they fled through the flame-drowned wood, several branches erupted in flame and fell from the treetops around them, scorching the horses' hides with white-hot arcs of flame. Kamoko's heart wrenched as she heard their screaming sounds of agony, but not one of the mares faltered. Nevertheless, Kamoko knew the strain of the run was beginning to tell. A dark brown mare was gulping breaths in great heaving gasps, and one of the younger fillies had a reddening burn across its withers the size of a lady's fan. Ash and smoke choked her lungs and Kamoko held tightly to Hachiman's back.

Suddenly, she saw a tremendous limb fall from a tree above them, its fiery branches threatening to crush Hachiman beneath their weight. Unable to do anything, her arms wrapped around the trembling body of the young colt, Kamoko clenched her teeth. She bent over the foal to protect it, knowing that the collapsing tree meant death for them all – herself, the infant,

Hachiman and the mares they drove to freedom. Without their fear of Hachiman to drive them forward, they would separate and be lost in the inferno of the burning forest. Her victory was about to be stolen from her at the last moment, torn from her blistered grasp by destiny. Within the deafening roar of the fire, Kamoko was silent. She faced her death with a Unicorn's courage, although her heart echoed the screams of the wounded mares.

But the burning limb never landed.

At the last moment a silvery sword blurred out of nowhere, striking from the side of the path with awesome force. The huge tree limb was no more than paper to the blow, snapping in two like the smallest twig. With an undaunted shriek, Hachiman plunged onward, dodging the parted branch easily. Kamoko gasped in stunned surprise at the impossibility of her rescue, the burning branch still frozen in her mind's eye. She peered back through the haze and saw a strange figure at the side of the path, seated upon a tremendous white steed. The woman's pale eyes glowed like the clear blue sky and her massive horse stood unflinching in the inferno. As Kamoko sped onward, the lady lifted her gleaming sword in a warrior's salute, her ghostly stallion rearing as they vanished in the smoke behind the young samurai-ko.



The mares burst out of the burning forest with gleeful neighs, dashing through the open fields as their hooves sank into the freshly plowed dirt.

Hachiman did not stop, driving the mares forward past the lines of water-bearers who were fighting the raging fire. Standing at the far edge of the field near the palace wall, Otaku Kojiro raised his hand to his mouth in disbelief. "The mares..." he whispered, "She's saved them – by the Seven Fortunes, she's saved the mares!" Behind her, the cheers of the peasants drowned the angry hiss of the flames.

Slowing the great gray stallion, Kamoko swung herself down from Hachiman's back. In pain and relief, she leaned against the huge horse wearily as the heimin took the golden foal to its



grateful mother. The mares stood in an exhausted clump far from the fire, allowing themselves to be cared for by the stableboys who had come rushing at the sight of the horses. Although wounded and sorely burned, the mares had all lived through the deadly race against the flames.

"I saw her, Daiyu-sama..." Kamoko murmured, her hoarse voice surprisingly steady as the shugenja hurried forward to tend her wounds. Her long, soft hair was singed and blackened, her face covered in dark ash and her hands and arms red and blistered. The shugenja looked into the samurai-ko's dark eyes as she whispered. "I saw the Lady Otaku."

After a second's pause, Iuchi Daiyu nodded. "Your courage and your strength, Otaku Kamoko-sama, have saved the most precious children of the clan of the Unicorn." Daiyu watched the samurai and peasantry gather around the youngest battle-maiden as the envious fire began to die within the forest. "You are indeed worthy to be the heir of the Otaku line, and I believe, with you beside us, we will win this war. The prophecy has come to pass." He smiled, and raised his hands to command the silence of the gathered populace.

"Otaku Kamoko-sama," he said loudly, and his voice carried over the dying crackles of the fire's last flames. "I, and all your brethren, thank you for your courage. We thank you for ourselves, and we thank you in the name of those who have no voices to herald the strength of your heart." Kamoko smiled, her face beautiful despite her pain and exhaustion, and Hachiman lovingly rubbed his small mistress with his scalded nose. When the tumultuous cheering started again, the horses took no notice, and the young son of the mighty Hachiman nuzzled his weary mother and began to nurse.



Welcome to the second in our *Way of the Clans* series. *Way of the Unicorn* is a sourcebook designed to help Game Masters flesh out their own visions of Rokugan's most exotic Clan. The Unicorn have only recently re-appeared in the Emerald Empire, and they brought with them

eight hundred years worth of barbarian culture, technology, religion and magic. Many view them as little more than *gaijin*, and some even whisper they are pretenders to the legacy of Shinjo.

The truth to that question (and many more) does not lie in this book. *Way of the Unicorn* is not designed to be the "final authority" regarding the children of Shinjo. As usual, the Game Master has the final say over all matters of his game. If his vision of the Unicorn is different than ours, expect some differences on what you find here and what you'll find down the road.

The first chapter gives you some insight in the other Clans' views of the Unicorn.

The second chapter details the birth, departure, journey and return of the children of Shinjo who were once called "the Ki-Rin."

The third chapter covers all the rules you'll need to make a Unicorn character including new Schools, Skills, Advantages and Disadvantages as well as Fortune and Heritage Tables.

The third chapter has the Rings, Traits and Skills of some of the most notable Unicorns.

Lastly, we have included some additional material about the drastic changes to Rokugan that have occurred since the Unicorn's return, some new magic items, regions of the Unicorn provinces and a few other goodies.

We've deliberately stayed away from any kind of "family tree" for the Unicorn so the GM can fit his players anywhere into the Shinjo, Otaku or other Unicorn families. We have, however, included many famous Unicorn heroes which your players can take as Ancestors - for a certain amount of Character Points, that is.

For over eight hundred years, the Unicorn have journeyed outside of Rokugan, discovering new technologies, magics and philosophies. Their beliefs are strange, yet somehow familiar, perhaps echoing a time long ago, when Rokugan was still young and naive.

Are you ready to learn their secrets?

Well then, give me your hand and I'll pull you up. Don't worry about that hunk of dead cow flesh; it's only a saddle.

Hold on now. You're in for a ride you'll never forget.







Chapter One:

*Shinjo's
Children*



THE OTHER CLANS

The Unicorn have had 200 years to formulate their opinions of the stay-at-home clans. These are the majority opinions in the clan, but allowing for individual experiences and dissent is the Unicorn way.

Crab: "Allies and friends, perhaps the best we have in Rokugan. They adhere to their duty more closely than any of the others, and have been hated for it just as we are. And if they are a little rude at times, what of it? We've long since recognized the difference between harsh words and harsh deeds."

Crane: "This hand is both open in friendship and closed in suspicion. They have made overtures of allegiance, and for that we thank them. But their words are tinged with something else... mistrust perhaps? Or just distaste? The Crane have given us valuable advice on the nuances of Rokugan, and we recognize their rightful position as the Emperor's Left Hand. But if their distaste of us ever grows to something stronger... they shall answer for it."

Dragon: "We share a border with them, yet there is very little we actually know. They don't interfere with us, which is good. Yet they also ignore others' concerns, which is not so good. For all their cryptic riddles and imponderable enigmas, they have yet to offer anything of real value. Still, better a silent neighbor than an angry one."

Chapter One: Shinjo's Children

The following two letters are from Shosuro Kojuno, sensei of the Shosuro School, dated thirty years after the return of the Unicorn Clan.

FROM SHOSURO KOJUNO, SHOSURO SCHOOL SENSEI, TO THE FAMILY OF SHOSURO KENJO

With this letter, I send to you my deepest regrets. Your son has fallen prey to the newly returned children of Shinjo, the Ki-Rin who now choose to call themselves "the Unicorn." Kenjo did not die as a result of some poor reaction to a foreign food. Nor did he suffer a fatal accident beneath the hooves of their freakish beasts. No such subtle excuse was even offered. He was hung by the neck with a loose knot from an archway while his feet were drawn westward and the rest of him, unable to follow, rapidly expired.

Kenjo's objective was of the simplest kind, suitable to a journeyman of his age, under any other circumstance. No one expected that he would come to such a barbaric end.

Some months ago, our historians came across information in a set of old military treatises indicating less than wholly honorable behavior on the part of an Ide commander in a minor skirmish during their initial battles with the Lion. As that commander had a descendant in a position of some little authority in the current Ide court, the find seemed to present an auspicious opportunity.

Shosuro Kenjo was already scheduled to visit in the court for a period of some weeks. Along with reporting his own astute observations, he now had the leverage to arrange a protracted source of intelligence from within the court on a

long term basis. In short, he was to approach the commander's descendant, inform him of our knowledge, and use it to bargain for future favors from the man in question. A simple exchange.

I cannot be entirely certain of what transpired next. I can only estimate those things that went terribly wrong. That Kenjo approached the man is certain. That he revealed the knowledge he held, and further, that others also knew what he did goes without question. He was a good student and would never have been so foolish as to let the other party think that the information would die with the messenger. But somewhere afterward, events become vague.

The message that returned to us along with Kenjo's remains was written in the hand and with the seal of the Ide daimyo. It was brief, saying only that our agent had exceeded his hospitality, overestimating the importance of history, while underestimating the bonds of blood. Kenjo's belongings were all returned with immaculate care, including his private correspondences. These last were arranged in our traditional manner, sealed with a fine line of Kumo gum. They were not opened. As best I can reconstruct, the Ide whom Kenjo approached reported his plight directly to his lord. Sometime afterward, there was a public execution of our kinsman.

I can only conclude from this that the Unicorn have no care as a clan for the dishonor of their own ancestors. What's more, they do not feel the need to make us an excuse for the death of our man. Although I will mourn the loss of my pupil, as I know you will mourn your son, I know that of primary concern to us both is this revelation as to the nature of our potential rivals. If they will not be swayed by family honor, and flout even the most cursory courtesies of image, I am not certain what hold we can have on them. The matter requires further research to be sure. I am already preparing three more of my pupils to begin a more covert observation. I will keep you apprised of their progress.

Again, my regrets for your loss,

Shosuro Kojuno

FROM SHOSURO KOJUNO, SHOSURO SCHOOL SENSEI, TO BAYUSHI TANJARO, SCORPION CLAN DAIMYO

My Lord,

I do not think that I have ever known a greater threat to what we are. I received letters this morning from Shosuru Daie informing me that her cousin, Kenjo, was dead, and that his death came about as a direct result of his most recent post, representative to the Ide clan.

Details are few, my lord, but they are also vivid. You are familiar, I am certain, with our discussion to send Kenjo to the "Unicorn" to gather information on these impostors. Apparently, they found themselves offended by his manner, tied a rope about his neck and hung him on the gates of Ide castle. Then, they tied his feet to two of their misshapen beasts and tore him to pieces.

The manner of his body is significant, my lord. It tells us "We are not afraid of your retribution." This provides us with both leverage and a hindrance.

To begin with, it is obvious these barbarians do not know us. They do not know the delicacy of our methods. They also do not know themselves. Such an act could be easily and openly manipulated to our advantage in the court. Either they do not recognize this ... or they do not care. This last statement brings us to the hindrance.

My lord, if these gaijin do not recognize their position, they will be easy to direct and guide. But, if they do recognize it, and they do not care, they are more dangerous than even the Crab or the Phoenix. They are a mighty military power who have demonstrated the ability to thwart the Lion, and they do not recognize our own power. We cannot simply shame them as we do the Lion or tempt them as we do the Crane. Unlike the Crab, they have no obligations to keep them from our borders. Unlike the Phoenix, they

may very well have designs on our land. And, unlike the Dragon, they are only a few days ride from our provinces.

If these gaijin are truly unconvinced of our power, it is my advice to you, my lord, that we demonstrate it to them with merciless speed. If our weapons are truly ineffectual, we lose nothing, and gain understanding of a foreign enemy. However, if we find our wiles and wits effective, we may also find an ally who has a quality that is unique among our allies:

He will be willing.



EXCERPTS OF LETTERS FROM AKODO TOTURI TO MATSU KOJIKE

THE OTHER CLANS (CONTINUED)

Lion: "Why do they hate us so? What have we done to earn such scorn? They lash out at anything not like them, and consider us affronts to their so-called 'purity'. Hypocrites, every one of them. Their tactical prowess makes them formidable opponents, however, and for all their arrogance, they are still the strongest military force in Rokugan. Adversaries they may be, but they are adversaries worthy of respect. Underestimating them is the worst mistake we can make."

Phoenix: "Friendly yet patronizing, knowledgeable yet idealistic, the Phoenix are a study in paradox. They understand things that few others are capable of, but have never exercised that knowledge in any practical way. If they would only drop their paternal tone and listen to what we have to say, they could accomplish so much. Until then we will continue to work with them as best we can."

Scorpion: "Ah, the grinning masks! They move with such subtlety, they strike without pain. But their touch is as poisonous as any other. Their claims of honesty are as false as their smiles, and their sinister reputation is fully justified. Yet, amid almost universal hatred, they continue to thrive. There's a lesson in that, one we would do well to learn. If that means getting closer to them... what did the wise man say about your enemies?"

Dearest mother,
When Sensei Kage

suggested I spend my nineteenth summer here in the lands of the Unicorn, I never knew it would be so insightful, so invigorating ... and so perplexing. I have learned much observing their ways, but at the same time, there is so much more for me to learn.

I have not yet met with the daimyo, although I have seen him. He wears a strange coat made of animal skins. Although I have heard of such a habit, I imagined it only to be a Scorpion-born half-truth. But even as I write this, I can see them prancing with their steeds on the snowy plains, wrapped up in their furry mantles.

I have been kept clear of any maneuvers they have made with their armies, so I have found observing their strategies difficult. However, I am to be permitted to learn to ride one of their steeds tomorrow. Apparently, being a daimyo's son has its privileges...

...It is strong. Tall as well. Taller than me. Taller even than my father.

The samurai-ko who instructed me was a dour girl. It looked as if her face had never learned to smile. She showed me how to use the stirrups and the saddle with a grim voice that

sounded as if it had never learned to sing. I had to force myself not to retch from the thought of sitting on dead cow skin, but after a few moments on that magnificent steed, the thoughts fled from my mind.

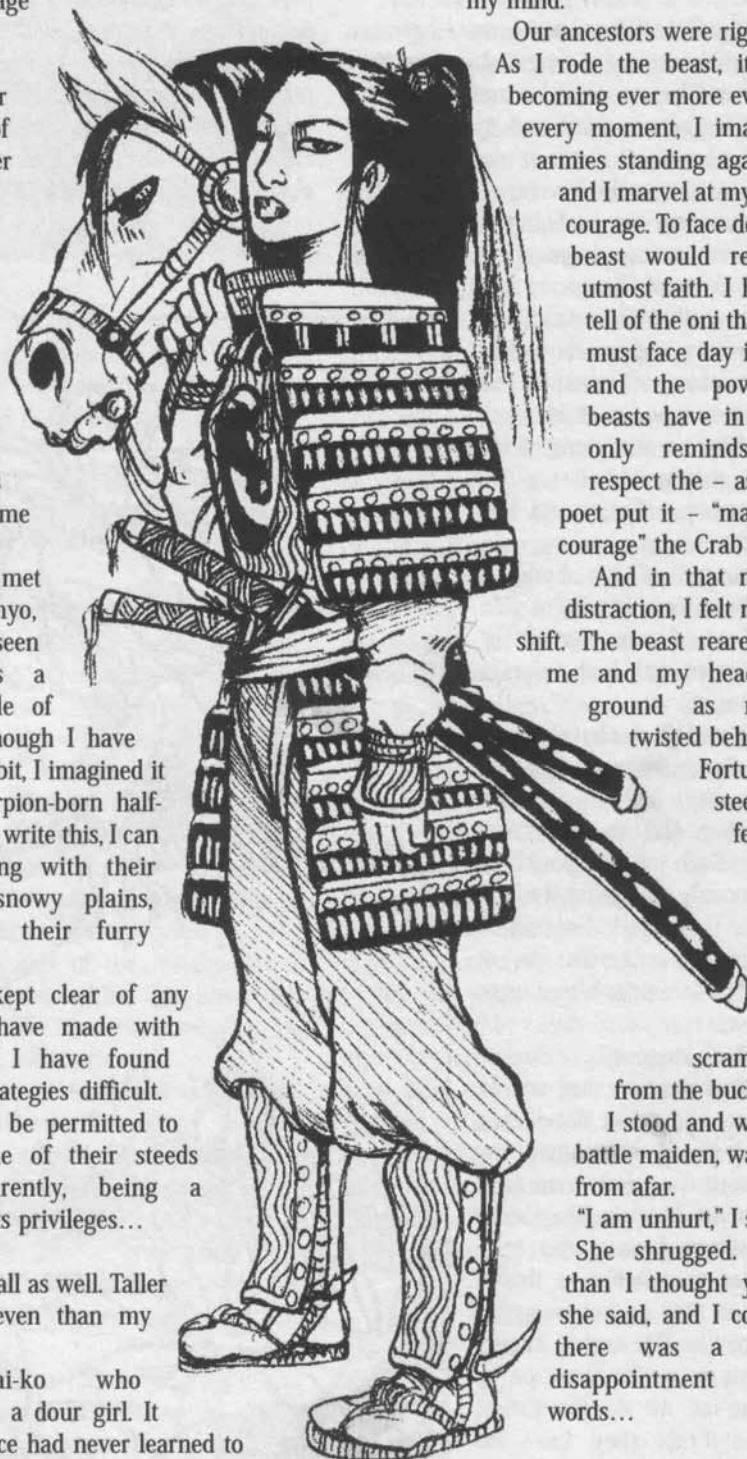
Our ancestors were right, mother. As I rode the beast, its strength becoming ever more evident with every moment, I imagined our armies standing against them, and I marvel at my ancestors' courage. To face down such a beast would require the utmost faith. I have heard tell of the oni that the Crab must face day in and out, and the power these beasts have in their legs only reminds me to respect the - as one Lion poet put it - "mad fever of courage" the Crab have.

And in that moment of distraction, I felt my balance shift. The beast reared beneath me and my head hit the ground as my body twisted behind me.

Fortunately, the steed's hooves fell a breath before my face as I

scrambled away from the bucking beast. I stood and watched the battle maiden, watching me from afar.

"I am unhurt," I said to her. She shrugged. "Stronger than I thought you were," she said, and I could swear there was a tinge of disappointment in her words...







Chapter Two



The History of the Unicorn



UNICORN TRAVEL POETRY

All during their journeys, the Unicorn developed a style of poetry far different from the minimalist haiku the Rokugani practice. Called "travel poetry", it is a unique style of proverb and poem, sometimes written in humor, but often intended to teach a lesson and serve as a reminder to those who have learned it. Throughout this book, you will find examples of travel poetry that you can quote when playing your Unicorn character.

The Unicorn view haiku as far too esoteric to be useful. Their style of poetry is utilitarian, humorous and educational. Haiku is often evocative and – sometimes – elitist. Some Unicorn have attempted haiku, but few have succeeded. (The haiku that begins this chapter is traditionally attributed to Doji.)

Chapter Two: History of the Unicorn

Shinjo, fleet and fair,

She was never where she stood;

Her soul the fifth wind.

A Ride Into Darkness

"Why have I come to him?" The question arose unbidden in her mind again, tormenting her as it had for the past week. She had no answer.

The acrid black smell from the sulfurous tar pits of the Shadowlands assailed her nostrils, making her retch. Thunder rose from the filthy smoke-filled valley before her. The land was aglow with a patchwork of blazing fires, her goal clearly delineated by that path where they did not burn. Alone she spurred her horse towards the black-scaled citadel that rose into the midnight sky, its bulk shrouded by the oily haze. Her horse shied, refusing at first to descend into the shadowy vale. She gripped the beast's fear and wrapped it tightly in her own, striving to conquer both as she had for almost three days.

She had not believed a land such as this could exist. It was such a change...



Nine newborn children played at Amaterasu's feet as she recovered the radiance she had lost during her labor. The children moved about her,

exploring their world and playing at various games. Shinjo rested apart from the others at a place she had discovered where she could look down upon the vast world below. Her father, Onnotangu, obstructed some of the earth from his position in the sky below her. However, Shinjo could still see cities below, vacant and empty, their serpentine occupants long ago resuming their deep slumber. Elsewhere upon the earth other creatures flourished, a wondrous variety whose antics amused her endlessly. The creatures lived in harmony with the land – a land as amazingly diverse as those creatures that dwell upon it.

Shinjo watched each creature, one by one, on its life journey, sharing in the experiences of each animal. As she watched, she felt a hand grasp hers, a gentle, kind, warm hand attached to a gentler, warmer smile. "So many mysteries to behold, little sister," mused the sweet voice, "so much potential to explore. Would you enjoy seeing others? Once I am grown I shall create more creatures whose lives shall astound you. I have great plans."

Shinjo laughed. She loved her brother Fu Leng.



Shinjo's horse rolled its eyes in terror, but held its path true and steady. She moved ever onward and downward into the blackened valley while eyes of crimson looked upon her perfect form. None of the demons had dared approach her, thwarted by her divine essence and the rumors of the speed of her sword. Instead, they kept to the shadows between the flames and hissed vile threats at her.

She ignored them, of course. She had not come to talk to them, not even to slay them. They were nothing to her, but their presence tormented her nonetheless, reminding her of the question that hung about her still. As she passed through the gaping maw of her brother's fortress, the question paced in Shinjo's mind, demanding... "Why have I come to him?" She hoped she would find an answer.



Anger filled Hantei's face before she could even finish her request. She had foreseen her brother's reaction before she had come to stand before the Emerald Throne. Yet, she had come to him first. Perhaps it was duty or loyalty. Perhaps she had hoped he would find merit in her mission and her reasons. Perhaps she had simply come to say good-bye. It did not matter; she had done what she had done. She had fulfilled her dharma in coming before the Emperor.

Shinjo pressed on, heedless of Hantei's mounting anger. There was a strained edge to her voice as she spoke, "Our people die all around us and we do not even know why Fu Leng attacks? I must do something!" Their missing brother had fallen apart from the rest of them when the children had come to earth. He had remained missing for long years until recently he had reappeared leading an army of gibbering fiends and corrupted beings from the Shadowlands. The dark army now rampaged across Rokugan destroying Hantei's fledgling empire, and no means had yet been found to stop them.

"He is jealous of what is mine," Hantei cried in frustration, pounding the arm of the Emerald Throne in emphasis. "He dragged me from our mother's side because he could not stand any of us possessing what he cannot. What more is there to understand, sister?"

"Everything, my Lord. Everything," Shinjo confessed.



The great hall filled the front section of the monstrous keep inside the gate, pillared and ascending fully a third the height of the citadel. A sickly light from an unknown source immersed the furnishings with a pale glow that accented the crimson stains upon the banquet table. Fu Leng's minions fell back before her, leaving their dinner, still screaming, chained upon the table. Repulsed, Shinjo struck an unspeakable creature's head from its shoulders before striding to the broad staircase at the far end of the hall. A man dressed

in oily black armor awaited her at the foot of the stairs. Bowing low, he informed Shinjo that his master awaited her above. Anxious to be away from the pall of death that tainted the hall, she quickly moved up to the keep's battlements.

At the top she looked around, but all was black. The smoke from the fires of Fu Leng's army filled the air and smothered the stars above. Finally she saw a shadow move, black even among the shadows, pacing along the parapet.

"I am sorry for the clamor below, sister," said Fu Leng, "but my servants can't seem to learn the manners that yours adopted so quickly." Shinjo noticed immediately that his voice had not changed from the time long ago when they had witnessed the mysteries of the lands below - it was still warm and compelling. But there had been changes. Even though Fu Leng's long robes covered his body completely, she could see that the robes hung upon him loosely and that his stance was awkward as he paced; bent, like a lame horse.

Shinjo watched and waited; there was nothing she could say. Fu Leng stopped pacing, and looked out over his army.

Thunder echoed across the skies and a light rain began falling. "Why do you suppose mother cries this time, little sister?" Fu Leng asked, not turning to face her. A pause. "She cried for us once ... remember?"



They ran in terror, all of them, as their father hunted them down. They knew there was no escape and still they ran. Bayushi and Akodo fell first. Bayushi in his conceit challenged Lord Moon, and he was snatched up for his troubles and swallowed. Clothed in fury, Akodo charged, only to be devoured himself. Shinjo ran like the wind while Fu Leng hid, watching in horror and revulsion as their mother offered sake to their father to help him digest their temperamental children. The sun goddess followed her manic husband and gave him more sake as Hida, Doji, and Shiba were likewise found and consumed.

Togashi stopped Shinjo in her flight and led her to Fu Leng's clever refuge. "Come out, brother," Togashi called calmly, "we must each

UNICORN TRAVEL POETRY (CONTINUED)

Travel poetry rarely rhymes, but always uses alliteration. It also usually involves five lines without consideration to meter or rhythm and a sixth line that sums up the poem. The first two lines of the poem will alliterate, the third line will alliterate within itself. The pattern continues for the fourth and fifth lines and the sixth. A certain style of travel poem - called the "death poem" - is unique in its style, for the last line does not alliterate. This is to represent the "jarring" nature of death; the last line never fits the expectations of the reader, catching him off guard.

The most distinguished Unicorn poet was Ide Ludan. His humorous poems of his traveling companions are almost always quoted at dinner tables, but his most famous poem, dedicated to Shinjo herself, is one of the first ever told to Unicorn children.

WEIGHT AND WISDOM

Better to have wisdom
Best to have weight
In the desolate desert
A poor strong man
A prosperous sickly man
Under the heat and fire,
how do they fare?



NOBLESSE OBLIGE

Noble blood is born from ancestry. Noble souls are born from action.

— Unicorn Proverb

Before their great contest, the Children of the Sun and Moon looked about them and saw the people of the earth gathered, watching them with blank curiosity. Mankind was as naked and naïve as newborn children, with no knowledge, no skills, no laws, no customs, no hope. The Children of Sun and Moon gathered them together and made to them this promise: "We will teach you the ways of the world and we will protect you from the evils of the world. Serve us with humility and obedience and we will keep this promise."

Shinjo believed humanity, formed from the tears of Lady Sun and the blood of Lord Moon, shared kinship with her and her siblings. In her eyes, The Promise sworn by the her and her siblings to humanity was a social contract to be inherited by her own children. She believed that a special burden lay upon her and her heirs to behave honorably and benevolently towards those they ruled. Shinjo also held that the rich should care for the poor, the well must tend to the injured, and the powerful should protect the weak.

play our part if we are not to perish. We cannot deny our place in the celestial order."

"Fool! You have doomed me!" roared Fu Leng and he sprang from hiding upon his brother, Togashi. And while Shinjo tried to stop their combat, their father found them.



"I remember," said Shinjo as the rain continued to fall. But, she thought, those tears had been pure, not black like this.

"Why have you come to me?" he said. Her mind seethed with questions of her own. *Where have you been? What happened to you?* But he had asked her the same question that had been tormenting her, and this time the question carried her brother's voice. It was a new perspective. A glimmer of an answer came to her mind, but only the obvious left her lips: "To find why you fight us."

Fu Leng turned to her. She could now see his eyes glowing green in the dark, and she knew her answer had not been enough. Not for him, nor for herself.

"Why have you come to *me*?" Her emotions flared. Images flashed - his ready smile and former beauty flew across her vision. Memories of the wonders of this earth they had beheld together and the company they had kept drew forth her response, another facet of the answer she sought: "Because you are my brother."

He lurched towards her, his very movements painful beneath the robes. He pointed one arm at her.

"Why have *you* come to me?" And she gasped. Why had she come? Why had not Hantei, Togashi, or Doji come to their brother? Why did they continue to fight when so many were dying? But all her siblings still lived. It was only humanity that suffered. There was no fear of death amongst her brothers and sisters, for no creature on earth was their match. If she did not fear death, what did she fear? Defeat? No...what could defeat bring, if it could not bring death? The echoes of the screams from the table in the keep far below reminded her of her answer. "To save the people."

And a hand grasped her face, a heinous, cruel, clawed hand with talons that grasped her in a cold iron vise. "So many mysteries are mine now,

little sister," pronounced the sweet voice in a soft tone, "powers I discovered in the depths of the earth." His voice began to grow cold with anger and hate. "You do not know what I have seen. I was trapped in the earth with the entrails of our father covering me... his blood seeping around me, into me... his hand still clutching mine... I learned so much as my beloved family left me to rot!" The sudden shift in her brother's temper took her by surprise. His talons dug deep into her flesh as he forced her face close to his.

She could smell the venom in his hissing voice as his glowing emerald eyes bored into her soul. "You all held your contest, but you never faced ME."



Shinjo rolled her body away from the swing, adjusting her balance and springing up, katana at the ready. Hida charged again, twirling his tetsubo as if it weighed no more than a chopstick. Shinjo knew now she would defeat her brother - if she remained quick. Confident in her impending victory, Shinjo threw her body prone, removing her body from the tetsubo's arc only to rise behind her brother, striking him with the flat of her katana across his hamstrings. Hida bellowed in rage. Their siblings laughed at the boldness of their sister's maneuver. Hida was not amused.

"You move like the animals you so dearly love, little one," Hida remarked as he leaned upon his club. His heavy armor had for the most part thwarted the attacks of his sister, but the day would be long and hot if each contest were prolonged. "Perhaps you should resign now and rule over them?"

Shinjo sighed. It seemed that none of her siblings understood her. But at least she could hear respect in the voice of her huge older brother. Until then, he had thought she was small and weak; now he realized her size was also an advantage. For her part, she was truly impressed with her brother's fortitude, and vowed to emulate his perseverance in her own life.

In answer to Hida's offer, Shinjo knelt, placing her katana upon the ground with its hilt toward Hida and countered with a smile, "Perhaps I shall, but only if you take your rightful place among them."

He laughed, low and menacing, appreciative of her humor and savoring his planned triumph. The ground rumbled as Hida slowly closed upon Shinjo, ever gauging the maximum distance of his swing. Shinjo remained motionless, her eyes closed, her hands upon her knees, her thought only upon her goal. The whistle of his tetsubo called her to action. She rolled forward, and the tetsubo impacted the earth where she had knelt but a second before. She pulled her wakizashi free of her obi. Never leaving its saya, Shinjo spun her wakizashi with her through Hida's wide stance, until she felt it collide with her intended target. A low, pained moan escaped Hida as he collapsed heavily upon his knees. Shinjo placed her wakizashi upon her brother's neck and roughly scratched his scalp. "Thus I score three times," she pronounced to her siblings.



Shinjo struck her brother's hand from her face and backed up, readying herself. Fu Leng turned his back to the battle and beckoned her forward. "Come, little Shinjo," he goaded. "You were impulsive enough to come visit me; now I give you the honor of being the first to fight me. Come, sister, see if you can push me off! I know you defeated our brother Hida, so let us begin the new contest!"

Shinjo straightened and looked at the rain that collected in her hand. It was pure now, having washed away the putrid smoke.

"You think I have learned nothing, brother. You are wrong."

The Mind of a Unicorn

In the Emerald Empire of Rokugan – as well as in many nations outside of its fair borders – the Unicorn Clan is known to be a fast, impetuous, even reckless clan. They are renowned for their speed, for swiftly charging into action of whatever sort, for being quick to anger, quicker still to forgive, and quickest of all to come up with crazy ideas or undertake dangerous quests. Such

opinions shortchange the Unicorn samurai's depth of character.

Unicorn samurai (and, in fact, most of their servants) base their lives upon the example given by their clan's founder, Shinjo.

Shinjo was an explorer. From her birth, she was infatuated with the myriad creatures of the earth, as well as the amazingly diverse terrain and strange new cultures. She moved among the treasures of the world, discovering untold wisdom, yet never settled down and tried to possess any of it. All Unicorns try to emulate both her ceaseless curiosity and her lack of materialism.

Shinjo was resilient. During her contest with Hida, she was impressed with her brother's fortitude. Although she was too quick for him to hit, and dealt him stinging blows, he never quit, never gave up, never let the slightest shadow of doubt cross his face. Shinjo swore that day to imitate this trait of Hida's; following her example, Unicorn samurai never give up.

Shinjo was honorable. The behavior of her brother Bayushi during their contest left her with a bad taste in her mouth, and she swore that she would never stoop to his level. This high standard of behavior has helped hold the Unicorn together during their long sojourn west... although it must also be noted that Bayushi's trickery opened Shinjo's eyes and helped the clan survive among the curious and often deceitful civilizations they encountered.

Shinjo was personable. Perhaps the friendliest of the nine children of the sun and moon, this tendency was reinforced by several hundred years of having to deal with foreigners. The Unicorn clan managed to get by more or less amicably with all they met, and now that they have returned to Rokugan, they still act with what others perceive as a naive and childlike friendliness. For their part, the Unicorn expected such a reaction from a fossilized civilization.

Shinjo was aggressive. This is perhaps the most misunderstood aspect of Unicorn life. Unicorns are not generally hot-headed, but it is easy to think so. One Unicorn proverb says, "he who hesitates is lost," and long years in strange lands taught them to take action. Faced with an insoluble problem, a Unicorn will do something, anything, instead of sitting and endlessly pondering. Further, when a Unicorn takes action, he takes it whole-heartedly, without reservation



NOBLESSE OBLIGE (CONTINUED)

Shinjo founded her clan upon this notion and it served her well beyond the borders of Rokugan. She and her samurai swore The Promise to the tribes and peoples who joined them and integrated the philosophy into their society. Every Unicorn samurai renews The Promise each year during the annual festival commemorating Shinjo's departure from Rokugan.



SHINJO'S THUNDER

Although Shinjo failed to save her brother, she returned in time to hear the words of Shinsei and his promise: "Give me seven samurai and I will defeat your brother." Shinjo had already gathered a great number of loyal followers, and as she looked upon them, she wondered who would be the one to go into the Shadowlands to face the brother she could not save.

As she looked over her most trusted and skilled followers, one woman had already thrown herself upon her horse with her katana in her saya and her lance in her hand. The woman looked back to Shinjo with the fading light of the sun in her eyes. No words needed to be spoken. Shinjo nodded and watched Otaku ride away to join Shinsei and his Thunders.

What is known of the woman Shinjo called "Otaku" is little more than what has just been told. We know she had a daughter, and that she named the daughter (Shiko) after her Lady, Shinjo. Much more is known of Shiko, for it was she who followed Shinjo on her Quest. The tales of the beautiful samurai-ko and her adventures are the basis of many Unicorn folk tales.

or delay. They firmly believe that the swiftness and sureness of a blow outweighs the accuracy of the strike: "Better the first blow than a well-aimed blow that never falls."



Shinjo was incensed.

Her brother Bayushi stood, a barely concealed smirk on his face touting to all his pride at having won the first two blows so handily. *He is a cheat*, Shinjo thought, but that failed to salve her injured pride. He had made her defeats look so easy. He knew her pride and her honor, and he was using those against her. It was humiliating.

"Let me make this last contest easier for you, sister," said Bayushi, flaunting to all that he expected to win this one as handily as he had won the others. He began drawing a large circle in the sand with the saya of his blade. "I draw here the boundaries of our third contest. If either one of us leaves this circle, we lose the contest. With your power and speed, you should have no problem," he added glancing up for just a moment.

Shinjo saw her opportunity. Bayushi was looking down, and he had always taken advantage of another's distraction. Although she had vowed never to stoop to his level, she decided she would play his game, just this once, with his rules, and see how he liked it. Bayushi was still looking down, walking slowly as he traced the circle. Shinjo tensed her body, ready to spring into action. The instant Bayushi finished inscribing the circle, Shinjo charged, intent on pushing him out before he could prepare.

Right before the impact, she saw him look up with calm and dancing eyes, and she knew in that sickening moment that he had wanted her to do just that. Instead of bracing himself against her charge, he bent like a reed in the wind. He flopped onto his back, his hands and feet guiding Shinjo's body over his as he let her inertia carry her over his body and out of the ring.

It seemed to her that she had a long time to ponder this new lesson, for Bayushi had inscribed the circle near the edge of a rather sizable cliff...



"You have learned, little sister," said Fu Leng, "but I have learned more."

She knew he was right. Three times Fu Leng's vile magic had struck her down on the battlements of his fortress. Each time Shinjo lay panting, her body screaming for her to submit and lie still. But as she recovered from each agonizing blast, she saw the world under Fu Leng's dominion. Humanity enslaved to work solely for his glory, serving his black arts and feeding his demonic minions. Helpless creatures horribly twisted and then tortured for entertainment. An empire where power and terror replaced honor and respect. All these things she saw; then her mother's tears washed away the horrid sight and the blood that splattered Shinjo's armor, and she would raise her body from the flagstones once more.

"Brother, I know why I came," Shinjo said, the words barely escaping her quivering lips. "It was for love."

Love of everything that suffered.
Even her lost brother.

A Prophecy

"I was wrong," said Hantei quietly.

His brother Togashi stood with him, watching the ragged gibbering army encroaching upon their lands. They moved like a great swarming black shadow across the green fields of Rokugan. In the days since Shinjo had left, Fu Leng's army had been moving even quicker, the victories more easily won and the price paid by Hantei's army ever steeper. "Do not regret," said Togashi, "for it is one of the Three Sins."

"I should not have sent her," said Hantei.

"You sent no one," said Togashi. "She would have gone anyway. It is her nature. She must find out."

"We will sorely miss her blade," said Hantei.

"We will not miss her blade," said Togashi, "we will gain it. She is fighting in her own way, even though we do not understand it. If she did not go, if she did not discover why she opposes Fu Leng, she would not be able to fight by our side."

"I sent her to her death," said Hantei, "and for nothing."

"She will return," said Togashi. "Never doubt that, my lord. Though we give her up for lost, she will always return. It is her nature."

The Weight of the Promise

After many long years, Fu Leng had at last been defeated by strange little Shinsei and his Seven Thunders. As they recovered from the trials and hardships of the war, Hantei called together his siblings to renew the building of his empire. To each he granted lands and duties to hold in his new empire. Akodo became the defender of his family; Doji the champion of his person; Hida the guardian of his borders; Bayushi the keeper of his secrets; Shiba the learner of his wisdom. Togashi asked to serve Hantei in his own fashion and retreated into solitude. But when Hantei called for his sister, Shinjo, there was no answer.

Hantei found his sister dressed for war. She was sitting in the ruined garden of Otsan Uchi, meditating upon a dead chrysanthemum. In the shadow of the setting sun, Shinjo explained to Hantei why she had not answered his summons. "Fu Leng may be defeated, but he is not destroyed, and his evils still wander the earth. How can we say that his terror is ended, while our people cannot walk without looking in fear upon the Shadowlands?"

Hantei answered, saying, "Never again will such an evil walk the land, dear sister. The time to heal from the wounds inflicted by our brother has come, and once we rebuild the Emerald Empire will be strong enough to protect everyone. We know what to expect now, and we can defend against it."

And Shinjo thought upon her brother's words, on the creatures that still stalked the night and the long, bitter years of a war almost lost. She thought upon those who had fought and died, and upon those innocents whom she could not save, and her thoughts ended with the words of the little man who had showed them The New Way. During his long talk with the Emperor, he had said, "Winds blow, fortunes rise and fall, but the simple folk will always be asked to shoulder the weight."

And Shinjo led her brother to the top of a high mountain, where they could survey the endless lands of the earth broken and scarred by the war. She faced Hantei towards the south and the Lands of Shadow and said to him, "We swore to protect the people from evil and we failed. We fought, but the people died. In the end, it was the people who



SHINJO'S THUNDER (CONTINUED)

We also know that Otaku never took a lover and married only when she and her horse were no longer able to serve her Lady. Curiously enough, she married Ide, Shinjo's loyal advisor. Their child (named Shiko, after the Lady) grew to be a beautiful and powerful samurai, but she was still only a little girl when she watched her mother leave with Shinsei into the Shadowlands. Her mother left her armor and her swords with Shiko, riding off with only a lance and her old steed, Shinrai.

Of all the dramatic and literary presentations of Otaku's departure, none capture the scene with more emotion and beauty than Kakita Kuojin's *Mother and Daughter*. Throughout the entire two hour play, Otaku remains silent. The only words she ever speaks are to her daughter, and they are whispered so silently, none can agree on what Otaku says to Shiko. The play itself does not list the dialogue; the author told it to the actor who died with the secret safely behind pursed lips.



LOYALTY AND FEALTY

*Service is not an
obligation, it is a choice.*

— Unicorn Proverb

When Lady Shinjo released her followers from their obligations she inadvertently began a custom that would prove invaluable to the Unicorn in their wanderings. Unlike the other clans, with whom heredity is everything, a vital element of Unicorn loyalty lies in choice.

On her journey, Shinjo recognized a fundamental truth that would remain with her followers, even after their return to Rokugan. A man who is born into a Clan is not necessarily one with that Clan. Early dealings with the Scorpion have reminded them of this lesson time and time again: Devotion does not come from blood, but from the heart.

saved themselves, for Shinsei and his Seven Thunders defeated Fu Leng, not the *Kami*."

And Shinjo turned her brother to face west, towards the setting sun. "You said we know now what peril to expect. But we did not know what to expect when Fu Leng attacked, even though he was our own brother. We were nearly beaten. Should another danger arise, perhaps from beyond those mountains, it would be a new threat, evil, mysterious and unknowable, of which we would know nothing. Who can say if our empire could stand against it? We must seek to discover such evil before it comes upon us, as did our brother's twisted hordes. And we must find other allies, for Shinsei and his Thunders are lost to us."

And as their mother raced from sight, Shinjo knew she would soon follow her.

Exodus

"Fellow offspring of my mother and father," Shinjo greeted the assembled Clan of the Ki-Rin, "these lands are yours until I return. I go to search out unknown dangers in a world of which I know little. Just as a bushi cannot protect his family unless he knows the danger, I cannot promise to protect you from the unknown evils I shall encounter. When I first came to earth, we swore a vow to each other. You promised to serve me, I promised to protect you and to teach you of the world. In the unknown lands beyond the mountains, I cannot guarantee I can uphold my promise. Therefore I release you from your

obligation to serve me. Serve each other instead, and protect the land which I commend to your care."

Shinjo swung herself upon her horse and turned northward. As she left, three families chose to follow her: Otaku, Iuchi, and Ide. Released from their obligation, each family followed by choice, each followed from devotion.

Shinjo spent seven months preparing for her journey. On the day she left Otsan Uchi, Hantei gave her two magical mirrors. The mirrors were



created by Shiba and his prodigy, Isawa. One of them was given to Shinjo; the other would be kept by Hantei. "If you gaze into the mirror when our mother is highest in the sky," Shiba explained, "you will be able to see and speak to the owner of the second mirror if he is doing the same."



LOYALTY AND FEALTY (CONTINUED)

Because of this, the Unicorn *gempukku* is a very important and ritualized process. To participate in the Unicorn *gempukku* ceremony, a child must proclaim their intention to become a Unicorn. Each family member who chooses to become an active member of the clan undergoes an examination to test their honor, loyalty, and faith in his or her ideals. If the candidate's

belief is found to be strong and to conform to the Unicorn's the candidate undergoes a grueling ceremony that inducts them into the clan.

DIET

Unlike their Rokugani cousins, Unicorn still eat red meat. They also use a lot of exotic spices, which is often of great gastronomic distress to those Rokugani invited to a Unicorn feast.

"This way we will never lose you, my sister," Hantei said.

Then she departed from the Imperial Palace, first heading south. Doji taught her to defend herself, and Akodo gave her tactical advice. Further south, Hida shared with her a simple tea ceremony. In a rare moment, Bayushi instructed her on trickery and evading its traps. Shinjo then headed north to pay one last visit to her lands.

It was there that she gave her famous speech to her people. She left her home, leading her faithful followers through the mountains of the Dragon to speak with Togashi. Finally, she paid her respects to Shiba, and received final instructions. On the day she left Rokugan, thousands were gathered to watch.

No one spoke a word as Shinjo and the Ki-Rin Clan left the Emerald Empire.

A Time of Hardship

The first years of the Great Quest were difficult for the Ki-Rin. They entered the Burning Sands a group of explorers on a challenging adventure, and emerged a battle-hardened group of canny desert warriors. In the Burning Sands they learned how strength is found through privation, peace through aggression, and how the survival of the clan hangs on each and every head.

THE UNBROKEN DESERT

"The worst enemy is the absence of hope."
— *The Tao of Shinsei*

The Path of Woe leads directly to the desolate dune sea known as the Burning Sands. Into this desert Shinjo led her followers, looking hopefully for a new land at the other end of the trackless wastes.

For over a month they traveled without respite from wind or heat. The scalding winds blew stinging sand at all hours, and rearranged the landscape making reliable navigation difficult. More accurately, it would have made navigation impossible, but for the presence of the Sun Goddess in the sky. Unfortunately, Amaterasu seemed ruthless in this land, and the blistering heat made even Shinjo question whether it was worth keeping her armor.

As can be expected, the group exhausted their provisions quickly. They began rationing water in

the second week. Much of their food quickly spoiled under the heat, and the group abandoned a good portion of the rest, considering gourmet delicacies worthless under their precarious situation.

In far shorter a time than any had thought possible, their supplies were all but gone. They did not have enough grain for human and animals both. Since there were fewer supplies to carry, they opted to slaughter the weakest horses. This way, the samurai would not eat the horses' grain, and with fewer horses, the grain would last longer. It was not without regret that this action was undertaken, but the persistence of an empty stomach can overpower even a samurai.

To escape, Shinjo continued west, hoping to find better land in the shadow of the mountains. Exhausted, they finally reached the steppes above the desert. Here she encountered a race of nomadic tribesmen; people who claimed to know nothing of their formation from Lady Sun's tears and Lord Moon's blood.

The First Meeting

The Ki-Rin were to meet many foreign races and tribes during their Quest. These first foreigners were a nomadic culture, fierce warriors endlessly fighting over the few resources the steppes provided. The Ki-Rin called them "Ujik-hai." The first meeting was less than auspicious. Shinjo and her group had been seen making their way out of the desert. Ujik-hai scouts surreptitiously watched the Rokugani for some time, and noticed that they were tired, hungry, and much the worse for their journey across the Burning Sands. Upon hearing this, the chieftain of this particular tribe decided to attack and take their horses and equipment by force. They met the Unicorn under a false pretense of peace, luring the samurai and their small retinue into camp, where they would be surrounded and attacked without warning.

Shinjo and her followers, being peaceful by nature and tired from their travels, fell for the trap, but when it was sprung, the attackers found it was they who were caught. While the Ujik-hai were fierce warriors, they had not the skill to match the divinely-born Shinjo and her heroic retinue. Shinjo alone fought as thirty men. Otaku Shiko, Iuchi, and Ide accounted for another fifty.



SHINJO'S LAW

There came a time upon their travel within the desert that desperation made for short tempers. Otaku Shiko and Iuchi drew weapons against each other over the need to kill horses to eat.

Shinjo intervened, proclaiming a new law. "We are of the same blood. Samurai only spill their own blood when they commit *seppuku*. Therefore let not one among us ever draw a weapon against another, lest we destroy ourselves." Because of Shinjo's Law, no Unicorn is allowed to kill another. Thus all duels between Unicorn are fought with *boken* or *shinai*. The first time this law was broken a young samurai-ko with a hot temper pulled her wakizashi, and the shugenja she faced, fearing his life, killed her with a spell. The shugenja promptly committed *seppuku* to atone for his defiance of Shinjo. The rest of the clan learned a lesson: to avoid an escalation of tempers, those from the Unicorn do not draw their katana unless they intend to kill with it.

The treacherous chieftain lost his head to Shinjo, who also clove it in half before it hit the ground. Upon seeing their leader's cleft skull, the tribe's morale quickly broke. The chieftain's son took up the tribe's banner and retreated, his people gathering their possessions as quickly as possible to get away from the reach of Rokugani steel.

During the night, many of the Ujik-hai deserted their comrades and came to beg Shinjo

many Ujik-hai rallied to her banner, and the Ki-Rin Clan grew to rival even the mightiest warlords of the steppes.

Among the Ujik-hai

While life was not easy on the steppes, it was certainly a big improvement over dying in the desert.

The adopted Ujik-hai taught Shinjo and her servants how to survive on the scant resources of the steppes, and Shinjo taught them how to defend themselves. Realizing that her exploration of the lands outside Rokugan would require the skills so ably demonstrated by the Ujik-hai, she adopted their nomadic lifestyle and it became the standard for Unicorn life.

Upon the windswept steppes, the Ki-Rin toiled beside the Ujik-hai to survive.



for her protection. They wished to follow a strong and capable leader, and they wished to learn the powerful techniques she had so ably demonstrated. Shinjo discussed the matter with them until dawn, and with the sunrise she and the Ujik-hai exchanged the vows of The Promise.

Through skirmishes over the next few years, the Ujik-hai came to recognize the prowess of Shinjo's group and the divinity within her. Soon

Throughout this time, Shinjo made certain that her clan did not lose sight of its purpose and become separated from their Rokugani heritage. Although her people learned the customs and culture of the Ujik-hai, Shinjo took care that they adapted the Ujik-hai ways into their own Rokugani culture. She also held frequent Rokugani ceremonies to keep the flame of their ancestry alive and strong. Over time, this, too became a habit; the Unicorn learned what they



CRIME AND PUNISHMENT

During their journey, the Unicorn had little to spare for criminals. Punishments were simple and harsh, and remain so to this day. Minor offenses required the criminal to provide compensation at twice the value. Major offenses had punishments from loss of title to banishment to execution (banishment is reserved for those whom the Unicorn think might redeem themselves; those deemed to be a continued threat are killed outright). Violent crimes are always punishable by death. Samurai are generally given the option of *seppuku*, though some vile crimes call for the criminal to be disowned by the clan and executed in a dishonorable fashion.

Once the criminal's debt has been paid, whether through compensation of the victim or by surviving a banishment, returning, and undergoing a new test of loyalty, the criminal's past is never brought up again. Quick to punish, quick to forgive, quick to forget: it is the Unicorn way.

could of native cultures, and adapted this new knowledge into bushido in a fashion uniquely theirs.

The incessant struggles helped spread the word of the power of the strange Ki-Rin Clan, and over time Shinjo's followers increased in number. To avoid overtaxing the land, the Ki-Rin often split themselves into small self-sufficient groups for short periods, and roamed the land hunting game and foraging for food.

It was also during this time the Ki-Rin made two of the most important discoveries of their wanderings. The Ujik-hai used a strange device they called a "saddle" that was strapped to the back of the horse. It made riding much more comfortable for both the rider and the horse. The second device was a foothold that fell from the saddle; the Ujik-hai called it a "stirrup." The Ki-Rin had spent all their lives riding bareback, relying on the strength of their legs and arms to hold them to the horse, but with these two devices, they could ride with ease and comfort.

Shinjo was fascinated by the device, but it was Otaku Shiko who saw their practical applications. She saw how the saddle would provide faster speeds and artificial handholds for the rider. The stirrup, on the other hand, provided the rider with the ability to stand in the saddle, allowing for what she called "free-handed riding." With a awe-struck grin, Shiko took the saddle and stirrup and began to experiment ...

KURICHITAI

Shinjo treasured the Ujik-hai as she did those who had followed her out of Rokugan, especially a wizened old woman named Martazera. Although Shinjo had lived more than a hundred years, Martazera held wisdom far surpassing her life of fifty-three years. Whenever Shinjo had no other duties, Martazera visited her and entertained her with tales of the exploits of her tribe and especially her dead sons. She told stories of battling desert raiders, hunting the dread wyrms of the northern reaches, and of raids against strange merchants who bestrode great beasts.

One evening Martazera did not come to visit Shinjo. The next morning Shinjo went searching for the old woman. When she arrived at Martazera's home she found the family beginning its day's toils, but Shinjo sensed their melancholy. She learned that the old woman had ridden out

alone, before dawn, on her *kurichitai* towards the northwest. Shinjo mounted her horse and followed, for she did not know what a *kurichitai* was.

In the darkness at dusk, Shinjo found the old woman, seated by a small fire, her pony unloaded and staked nearby. As Shinjo entered the firelight, Martazera raised her head. "You should not follow me," she said. "This is a journey I must take alone." Shinjo nodded, but sat beside her companion and awaited the old woman's wisdom. Martazera was silent for a long time. When she spoke next it was to be the last tale that Shinjo heard from her lips.

"When you first came to us your ways were not ours. You knew not the ways of the steppes, the paths of the doe or the wiles of the wyrms. You looked upon our desolate land and saw only death - for you yourselves were dying."

"And you showed us life," replied Shinjo.

"But not life as you knew it," countered Martazera. "Our plains were not your plains. Our ways were not your ways. The Ujik-hai live sparsely, far from the opulence you have told me of your homeland. And yet you chose to remain among us and not to return. You chose to adopt our ways and leave yours behind. You took our path and left your own."

"Such is the way of the river," Shinjo answered. "It flows continuously without any sense of hurry. It never chooses its own shape or path, but reflects that of its situation. Yet it stretches from its beginning as a trickle in the mountains to its end in the sea, and it is the same river, ever changing, yet always heading to sea."

Martazera nodded. "The *kurichitai* is my life's last journey towards the sea. This river has no life left to give our people, so I leave them." Martazera raised her head from the light of the fire and looked at the child of the sun. "You shall lead our family to other lands. Unlike my own sons, may your children live to walk this beach with you."

Shinjo and her clan lived amongst the Ujik-hai for a hundred years. Upon the desolate plains of the steppes the Ki-Rin Clan grew to number over a thousand.



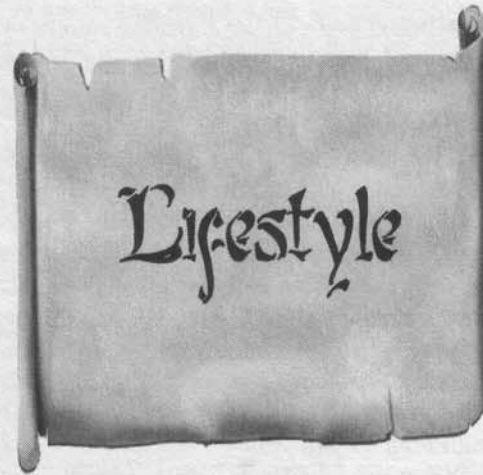
ADOPTION

Beginning with Shinjo's exploits in the Burning Sands and lasting all the way to their return to Rokugan (and even since then, although rarely), the Unicorn have met with strangers who earnestly wanted to join their clan.

Even if Shinjo had been disposed to thin her Clan's Rokugani blood with the blood of foreigners, it would simply be unwise to embrace every newcomer with open arms. A formalized method of adoption had to be developed.

The Unicorn would first question the supplicant to determine their values and their sincerity. If, after the questioning, the supplicant is found to be earnest and to have skills that fit well with the Clan, he or she is allowed to join on a probationary basis.

The foreigner is now treated as a working guest; they are a part of the troop, but not yet a part of the clan. During this stage, camp followers learn the Unicorn way. Once foreigners have proven themselves to be reliable and hard working, they can be formally inducted into the Unicorn Clan as a family member by going through the Blood Rite.



Three Tiers

The culture of Rokugan developed a social structure that divided everyone into a class based upon their occupation. The Unicorn system is similarly structured, but is military in nature and stems from their nomadic existence. The Unicorn continue to hold the Emperor as their preeminent authority. They have explored the lands beyond Rokugan at his order. Amongst the families of the Unicorn, Shinjo's descendants are held as the hereditary leaders of the clan. Each family is an independent organization. The daimyo details duties for each of his samurai, whom with the support of their followers provide essential needs for the family and the clan as a whole.

Beyond the family hierarchy, there's also a hierarchy amongst those Unicorn who travel together. When the Unicorn clan splits up into separate troops (which is most of the time), they do not split cleanly along family lines. Although one of these independent troops is largely comprised of members of a single family, about a quarter of any group are from the other families; this helps ensure that each troop is fully independent and has a well balanced group of skilled personnel. During these times, samurai of different families are answerable to the highest-ranking samurai of their family, who is in turn answerable directly to the leader of the troop. Of course, the leader often delegates his duties to lesser samurai of his family to keep his duties simpler.

Due to their nomadic nature, Unicorn samurai must organize and lead their *heimin* followers in providing for the clan. Unicorn samurai can be found leading hunting parties, supervising a trading caravan, overseeing craftsmen, or mastering a stable. Samurai are classed among themselves by Glory Rank, and their rank and occupation are part of their title. Thus a fourth ranked merchant might be: Ide Daikoku, Caravan Master of the Fourth Rank. Any samurai may command another of lesser rank in times of duress; such impromptu chains of command are never questioned.

Heimin provide the necessities of living. Contrary to other Rokugani, Unicorns hold merchants in the highest regard of all the *heimin* occupations, higher even than the farmer. Due to their nomadic nature, the merchants of the Unicorn became important providers of food and information. Hunters fall next in the ranking, for they provide food very directly. Artisans and farmers are held in equal regard as their wares used for trading. People selected to work with the fabulous horses of the Unicorn Clan are also honored.

On their journey, the livelihood of *hinin* and *eta* (entertainers, geisha, etc.) was provided for solely by each samurai or daimyo. Without the support of a member of the samurai caste, *hinin* were outcast. The same applied to criminals: if a samurai didn't provide food and a means of travel for a criminal, then the criminal was cast out from the clan.

DWELLINGS

Upon their return to Rokugan, some Unicorn have taken traditional samurai dwellings, especially those samurai tending to food production - a new duty for the nomadic clan. The ancestral castles, long ago modified under the guardianship of the Lion and Crane clans, are the seats of diplomatic power and home to the various clan schools. However, most Unicorn continue their nomadic existence, choosing to live the way of their ancestors. The current daimyo, Shinjo Yokatsu, often retreats from his castle, returning only for affairs of state.

WOMEN

In the harsh life on the steppes, the Unicorn learned to value women highly as the font of the future strength of the clan. With the notable

exception of the battle maidens, Unicorn tradition keeps women away from hand-to-hand combat. Nonetheless, all women of the samurai caste learn *kyusen no michi* (the Way of Bow and Arrow) and are often seen during battle in archery units. After battles, women descend to the battlefield with their children to dispatch wounded enemies and retrieve arrows. In this way, the bushi are free to pursue the enemy, while the children begin to learn the duties of war.

The Cycle of Life

The Unicorn's life differs slightly from that of their Rokugani cousins.

Youth: Samurai children are placed atop a horse each day beginning with their birth. At age four they are taught to ride and care for horses. At seven they begin training in *kyuba no michi* (the Way of Horse and Bow). Unicorn children are taught many other survival skills as well, and learn early in life that hard work by an individual brings great rewards for everyone. As a natural result of the clan's nomadic lifestyle, Unicorn children have more contact with their parents than do other Rokugani children. This may in part explain the intense loyalty most Unicorn have for their family and clan.

Gempukku: Unicorn participate in various examinations and contests, culminating in the *gorugen*, or Great Hunt. Encircling all the game in a given area, the horsemen close in with bows. Each is allotted a single arrow, and failure to bring home a kill is ridiculed. Battle maidens have their own, very rigorous *gempukku*.

Marriage: As was necessary among a thinly-spread population, marriages are always arranged. Daimyo arrange the marriages of samurai and samurai arrange those of their *heimin*. However, as might be expected from an

independent-minded and self-reliant set of people, Unicorn often get ideas of their own on whom they should marry. At these times, the Unicorn performs a quest for his lord in hopes of influencing the lord's decision. Most marriages are arranged not for political purposes or the personal gain of anyone involved, but to make the best use of the people involved, thus ensuring the continued strength of the clan's bloodlines.

Inkyo: Unicorn do not retire. There are several reasons for this. First of all, the Unicorn believe that enlightenment comes through experience, not meditation; thus to retire to a monastic life is



to deny enlightenment. Second, it is every Unicorn's duty to provide for the clan, and no Unicorn would so shirk his duty as to sit around all day just thinking. It is not at all uncommon to see sixty- or seventy-year-old Unicorns putting in a full day's work. There is a retirement of sorts: elderly Unicorn bushi are allowed to remove themselves from active fighting, relegating themselves instead to the important duty of



THE BLOOD RITE

Those not of Rokugani blood that wish to become a member of the Unicorn Clan undergo a ritual to become an adopted Child of Lady Sun and Lord Moon, known as a "blood brother." Once adopted, they are considered to be full-fledged Rokugani Unicorn.

The Unicorn Blood Rite is the inclusion of non-Rokugani into Shinjo's family. Because the humans found outside Rokugan do not claim the divine lineage deriving from Lady Sun and Lord Moon, their connection with the eternal elements is lost. It is this bond with the eternal that allows humanity to understand nature, hear the spirits, and gain enlightenment; therefore adopted foreigners must reclaim this heritage.

Ages past, the Blood Rite was performed at need. Once the Clan had grown to sufficient numbers, the ceremony became less frequent, and more ritualized. With the Unicorn's return to Rokugan the practice of the Blood Rite was rarely necessary, and today is only performed at the Clan's annual conclave.

THE BLOOD OATH IN ROKUGAN

In Rokugan, the use of blood in magical rituals is strictly forbidden. However, rituals of acceptance and fealty often use blood to show a symbolic tie to the Clan.



THE RITUAL

When the tribesmen of the steppes wished to follow Shinjo, she consulted with the wise shugenja, Iuchi. He foresaw that unless

measures were taken, the bloodline of the Ki-Rin Clan would lose its divine connection within three generations. Knowing her clan could not survive without the tribesmen's inclusion, Shinjo sought a solution. She took leave of her clan and ventured for four months. It is not known where she went or with whom she found her answer. Many suspect she returned to Rokugan and consulted with Shiba or Togashi on the wisdom of Shinsei. Some hold that her answer already lay within her, awaiting her discovery.

Finally, some believe she received the knowledge in exchange for aiding a shaman from a far northern tribe. What is known is that upon her return she consulted for a week with Iuchi before emerging from her shelter. She gathered the tribesmen around the mikoshi, the portable shrine Shinjo had brought from Rokugan, and withdrew a bloodstone necklace from her throat. It is told that Shinjo bled for forty hours as Iuchi conducted the Blood Rite, inducting all found worthy of joining with the clan. The bloodstone has been placed into a breast pin and worn by the daimyo of Shinjo's house ever since.

protecting the children in case any enemies break through. Should a Unicorn become so enfeebled that he feels incapable of performing his expected duties, honor demands that he not weaken the clan with dead weight. Instead, he packs his horse with minimal provisions and departs on a *kurichitai*, a journey of final discovery from which he does not return. Unicorn shugenja place great divinatory importance on the time and method of the horse's return from the *kurichitai*.



After the Ujik-hai

Raiders of the Desert

A wind swept the desert's night surface. A wind never felt before by the drifting sands. It bore a vengeance swifter than the swirling mote of a desert tempest. And in its wake thousands bled their life into the sand.

—The Histories of Ide Kanji

Having learned the secrets of the Ujik-hai, the Unicorn moved on, traveling further west toward the setting sun. The Ujik-hai warned them of the cities that lay ahead of them. They said they were ruled by a family of sorcerers who had sold their hearts to evil spirits to gain their dark powers. Shinjo took their warnings in stride and set off to investigate these possible enemies of the Empire.

It is not known how long they traveled before they reached the cities of the sorcerers, and as much is known of what happened when they arrived. However, the scouts who entered the cities fled quickly, chased by demonic fires and hungry spirits. Iuchi himself (now a very old man) was scarred by the fires, but escaped with knowledge that would change the Ki-Rin forever.

When they were far from the city, hidden by the desert's ever-moving sands, Iuchi showed Shinjo what he had brought back. It was a bundle of pages, bound together under a hard cover. He called it a "book." Written on the pages of the book was a long list of words and names, each one with a corresponding secret. Shinjo looked over the book all that night, marveling at the magic Iuchi had found. While she did not know as

much of magic as her brother Shiba, she was well versed. But this magic was new and different, and as she looked upon the knowledge, her eyes grew tired and heavy and her vision faded. She threw the book back at Iuchi and told him, "This is knowledge I cannot possess. It was not meant for such eyes as mine. Take it away and use it as you will."

Iuchi did so, and in time, his progeny studied it until they became its masters.

THE MAGIC OF THE WEST

What Iuchi discovered was a magic that was never meant for the Children of Sun and Moon. Only mortal men could grasp its knowledge, for it was knowledge that owes nothing to the Celestial Order. And by gaining this knowledge, the Ki-Rin Clan took one step away from the Order.

The magic of names was a foreign understanding of the world, and by accepting its knowledge, Iuchi and his followers lost a little of their connection to Rokugan. The power they gained and brought back to Rokugan lingers in their souls, and because of that, they have always suffered a slight separation from their heritage.

The Haunted Oasis

After their escape from the cities of the sorcerers, the Ki-Rin moved further west, following Lady Sun's nightly descent into the Underworld. It was a harsh journey, but far in the distance a stretch of mountains beckoned to them. Shinjo claimed that she heard a quiet song singing in her ears that called to her, told her to continue her travels, as if something was waiting for them at the foothills of those mountains.

After many weeks, they finally reached the foothills, and the desert seemed to fall away into lush green grasslands. Shinjo looked upon the oasis and saw a silvery shape shifting amongst the grasses and waters. Like a ghost, it moved without touching the ground, and Shinjo heard it calling her name as it danced through the oasis. She ordered her people to stay outside the oasis and wait for her return. Otaku Shiko moved to object, but then kept silent. And as Shinjo stepped into the shimmering oasis, they watched and waited from afar. Soon, the sun set behind the mountains and Shiko set herself to watch for Shinjo's return. Despite herself, she fell asleep

sometime during the night's darkest hours. When she and the rest of the Ki-Rin awoke the next morning, the oasis was gone ... and so was Shinjo.

The Unicorn

Shiko was furious. Iuchi demanded that they move on, but the daughter of Otaku would not move. "Do you think she will return?" he asked her.

"I do not know," Shiko answered. "But if she does, she has much to answer for."

It is said that seven days passed, and every day and every night was filled with a piercing wind that carried the voices of whispering demons, telling the Ki-Rin that their Lady was theirs, that she had been tricked and now served their every whim as their slave. Shiko's frustration grew every night as she tried to ignore the formless voices that she could not fight with her steel. Iuchi told her, "These are creatures you can only fight with your will, battle maiden."

The explanation brought her little comfort.

Finally, on the morning of the eighth day, the daughter of Otaku was awakened by Shinjo, the morning light shining about her like a halo. The battle maiden leapt to her feet and drew her sword. "What witchery is this?" she demanded. "Are you the Lady or are you another trick? For if you are a trick, I will ignore you and go back to bed. If you are the Lady, I will kill you for leaving us and breaking your promise!"

Shinjo bowed her head. "I am the Lady who promised to never leave you. But if you wish to kill me, you must wait, for my life is no longer my own."

As Shiko looked, she saw the Lady was correct. Her belly was full with child. The maiden nodded. Shinjo bowed low to the maiden. "When my child is born, you will decide what to do with me."

Many months passed as the Ki-Rin moved further into the mountains. Shinjo and Shiko prepared for the birth of the child. When the day finally came, Shinjo commanded all to leave the tent but Shiko and Iuchi. Very few have the courage to whisper the events of this tale, but what is known is this:

When Shinjo's child was born, she took her true form - that of the Ki-Rin - and bathed Shiko and Iuchi and her child in her unearthly fire. But

THE RITUAL (CONTINUED)

The Ritual requires the candidate to be purified in a ceremony, the secret of which is held by the Iuchi family. Once purified, the candidate performs the Blood Rite with a member of the ruling Shinjo family (usually the daimyo) presiding. The daimyo holds the Bloodstone in his fist, and blood mysteriously drips from his hand (it is unknown whether this is from the Bloodstone or from the daimyo). The candidates place their chop on a vow of fealty, burn the document, and brew it into tea. A shugenja takes one drop of blood from the daimyo and places it into each candidate's tea, and the candidate drinks it, thereby bringing his vow to the center of his being (the Rokugani believe *chi* to be centered in the belly). At the same time, the divine essence of a Child of Sun and Moon is transferred to the candidate. When the Blood Rite is completed, those new to the Unicorn Clan take new names in the Rokugani tradition.





Shinjo did not have a single child. When the fire had faded and all could clear their eyes, five children were found in Shinjo's arms. Shinjo passed one of the children to Shiko and said, "If you are to take my life, take care of my children. They will need a mother, and you shall be that mother if my life is now forfeit."

Shiko looked down and saw the child and its divine beauty. Tears welled in her eyes and she said, "I cannot take the life of she who brought such beauty in this world." Then, she looked to Shinjo and said, "The Promise has been broken, but it can be made anew. You can no longer swear that you will never leave us, but swear now that when you do, you shall always return."

Shinjo nodded and promised.

"I will always return."

The Children of Shinjo

The children that were born of Shinjo also carried the blood of the creature of ghostly fire. When asked about this figure, Shinjo would make only cryptic replies, and the only ones who had the courage to ask were Shiko and Iuchi.

The children of Shinjo and the Unicorn were beautiful and terrible. They were creatures not entirely human, but something much more. They were shape-shifting creatures who could take any form they desired, but the form they felt most comfortable with was that of their father.

At her Lady's request, Shiko looked after the children and taught them the secrets of war and the desert while Iuchi taught them the ways of magic and the religion of the Sun and Moon. The children grew over the passage of time, and grew quickly. However, at the end of their first year, a great sadness filled their eyes. When Iuchi asked them what was wrong, he learned a terrible secret. "Soon, my Lady," he told Shinjo, "your children will lose their ability to take different forms, and they will need to choose a single form for which they and their children will take for the rest of their lives."

Shinjo's sorrow was deep, and she nodded. She sat with her children throughout the night, and in the morning, she and her children emerged from her tent. Four of the children had decided to take the shape of their father and mother, as

shimmering white steeds with fiery halos. The fifth child – the strongest of the five – chose to take the form of a manchild.

Later that night, Shinjo looked upon her followers and saw how they had lost any resemblance to the men and women who followed her from Rokugan. She knew that one day, her children would be leaders of her followers, and ordered that at her death, they should no longer be known as the Ki-Rin, but that they should take another name.

"But you cannot die, my Lady," Shiko said. "For even in death, you will return to us, will you not?"

Shinjo nodded sadly and slowly, said nothing and returned to her tent.

BATTLE WITH THE ROCS

When the Ki-Rin reached the other side of the mountains, a terrible tragedy occurred. As the last of Shinjo's followers cleared the mountain path, they found themselves attacked by great featherless birds ridden by long-haired, pale-skinned men and women. The creatures were so large that they were able to lift a man and his steed in their talons and carry him off to their mountain holds.

Shinjo and her followers retaliated against the creatures. Iuchi called upon a terrible wind to smash the riders into the sides of the mountains, but his efforts met with disastrous results. The wind pulled at the soft snow at the mountain tops and it crashed down upon the riders and the Ki-Rin with equal force. Over half the Ki-Rin were lost under tons of snow – including one of Shinjo's children – and the pass they had used to cross the mountains was buried. Within a matter of minutes, the Ki-Rin were completely cut off from their passage back to the Burning Sands, the Ujik-hai and Rokugan.

Shinjo pondered the problem for three days. Finally, she decided the Ki-Rin would have to divide their numbers to find a passage back to the Burning Sands. But before they could split up, she would have to find a way for them to communicate back and forth, so they would not become completely separated.

She spoke long with Iuchi, and the shugenja told her that there was a way to divide her magic mirror into four pieces. "The act will break our communication with Rokugan, but it will allow

each of us to speak to each other as you have spoken to your brother," he said.

Shinjo agreed, and with her katana and Iuchi's help, she split the mirror. Then, she split the Clan into four groups, giving each of them a separate piece of the mirror while keeping one for herself. Then, with Iuchi at the head of one group, Shiko at the head of another, Ide at the head of the third, and herself at the head of the last group, they said their farewells and began their search for a way to return to Rokugan.

THE BROKEN MIRROR

While it is told that Shinjo broke the mirror of Amaterasu into four pieces, evidence does not exist for this. Each of the three remaining mirrors appears to be intact. The edge of each is outlined with the same frame of silver. Each differs only in the mon represented in the center of the top edge. The mons on the three remaining mirrors are of the Shinjo, and Iuchi, and Otaku family. The Ide family mirror disappeared with a portion of the family during their search for passage back to Rokugan.

Two Hundred Years

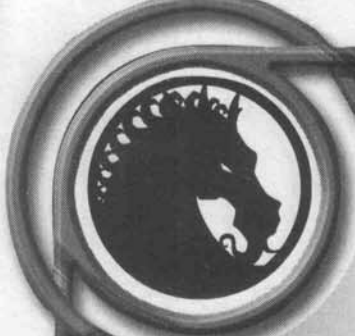
There are many tales that tell of the journeys of the four groups. The tales of flying carpets, spirits of fire trapped in bottles and fabulous cities floating in the clouds are all recorded as history, but are viewed as fantastical allegories of the trials and travels of the groups. Some of them had been trapped and enslaved by a brotherhood of sorcerers (apparently distant cousins of the sorcerers the Ki-Rin had encountered before). Otaku Rumarū, the descendant of Shiko, reported that the sorcerers had "hidden their hearts" in sorcerous jars and used magic that was "powerful and strange."

When asked how they escaped, Rumarū smiled and with a wicked gleam in her eye, she said, "They may not have hearts, but they are men, after all." The prize they brought back, however, was well worth the years of slavery. They now rode upon tall horses, taller even than Rumarū herself. They were not as sturdy as the horses they brought with them from Rokugan, but they were tall and as swift as the wind.



THE FAMILY MON OF THE UNICORN

When the Unicorn meet with outsiders, they tend to use the Unicorn mon. However, each family in the Unicorn clan has its own mon. A family's mon is most often prominently displayed during Unicorn Clan gatherings. Finally, each person or nuclear family within the clan may have their own mon. Usually this is simply the kanji character of their name, but other symbols have been used, and are too numerous to list here.



The Living Darkness

Nearly two hundred years after their separation, the mirrors of Shinjo began to glow with a furious fire. The leaders of each group picked up their mirrors and watched as the immortal beauty of Shinjo was ravaged by talons of darkness. She called for their aid, begging them to return to her with the speed of the wind.

Then, the communication ceased.

The three groups rode day and night to reach their beloved Lady, and as they grew closer, they began to notice a familiarity to the land that surrounded them. The trees grew thinner, and the grasses were brown and stiff. The pure blue waters turned fetid and foul and fires burned with less brilliance with every night they rode deeper into the dark lands. The children of Iuchi and

Otaku knew where they were. They had somehow stumbled across a distant outcropping of the Shadowlands.

A terrible realization struck Iuchi's great-granddaughter, Susan. If Fu Leng's power could reach this far from Rokugan... She shuddered and put the thought far back in her mind.

When the three groups finally reached the remainder of Shinjo's assemblage, they realized just what kind of power she was up against. It has been forbidden to record exactly what happened to Shinjo and her followers when they stood against the Living Darkness, but this much is known.

Shinjo and her followers assaulted the stronghold of the Darkness, but even their great skills and magic was not enough to challenge its might. Furthermore, they found that the Darkness had trapped them. In their effort to face the

Darkness, they had left their flank open, and found themselves surrounded by the servants of evil.

Shinjo took one look at the situation and commanded her followers to flee at once, to charge the surrounding armies and to never look back. Otaku Fujiko and Iuchi Susan agreed and they charged against the shadowy, formless armies. The Living Darkness pressed to their retreating flank, and suddenly Shinjo and three of her remaining children turned about and charged the Darkness.

"Go!" she called to Fujiko and Susan. "Go and never look back!"

Otaku tried to follow her Lady, but Susan would not allow it. "She will return to us. That was her promise. Now, we must flee!"



They broke through the flanking lines of the Darkness' army and fled across the Shadowlands, but all the while, Otaku watched the horizon as shafts of shining white light flashed against the tendrils of the Darkness, until finally, the Darkness devoured even the golden rays of twilight.

The Clan of the Unicorn

With Shinjo lost to them and their forces in complete disarray, Otaku Fujiko and Iuchi Suasan considered their options. Only a single child of Shinjo remained. His name was Yonaru, and he wept for the loss of his mother and his siblings. Otaku bent on her knee before him and swore she would protect him until his mother returned to claim her place at the head of the Clan. Iuchi Suanan did the same, as did Ide Sunosa.

Yonaru looked at the three and nodded. In their minds, they heard his words, and they agreed. He looked at the remainder of his mother's followers and saw that they were no longer what they once were. They were Rokugani no longer. They were something else. Perhaps even something stronger.

Yonaru declared that they would no longer carry the banner of the Ki-Rin, but their mon would be of a creature that carried both the blood of the Rokugani and the blood of all they had encountered. The fire-steed that was once their namesake was no more. From that day forward, they would carry the banner of the Unicorn.

THE INEVITABLE CONCLUSION

For another one hundred and fifty years, the Clan of the Unicorn moved westward, curtailing the dangerous dark lands of the south. They traveled far, encountering forests, deserts and finally, a great sea that stretched out further than even the Ide could see with their marvelous looking glasses.

The Unicorn now had to make a fateful decision. They could try to cross the endless sea, or they could turn back and try to find a passage back to Rokugan. As the grandson of the last child of Shinjo pondered his decision, the Iuchi mirror began to burn. Shinjo Sato ran out under the sun and scryed into the dark glass of the mirror.

There, in a dim reflection, he saw what could only be his great-grandmother, urging him to return to Rokugan, where she would return to them.

"Oba-san!" he cried out. "How do we return? We are lost! There is no ..."

"Through the dark lands, my child," the Lady whispered. "It is the only way. Great troubles are coming. Thunders ..."

And with that last cryptic word, the contact was broken.

With a grim determination, Sato told his followers of the message. He saw the fear in their eyes, but at the same time, he saw a light of hope. And at that moment, he knew they felt as he did.

That night, they prepared to once again enter the Shadowlands.

TO FACE THE DARKNESS

An entire generation of Unicorns would be born, live out their lives, and die before the Clan reached the edge of the Shadowlands, where they had once fought against the Living Darkness. Eighty years passed, and over those eighty years, children were taught of the power of the evil they would one day have to face. The horsefire children of Shinjo had long been mated with the great and swift warhorses of the Otaku in preparation for the inevitable meeting with the Darkness. The sons of the child who chose the form of a man took command of the Clan and the Otaku women swore fealty to their lineage.

When the Clan of the Unicorn finally reached the Shadowlands, it was Shinjo Nishijin who stood at the forefront of the Clan with Otaku Sekigako, Iuchi Shino and Ide Tadan at his side. He looked at his followers and made ready his mother's katana. Under the cover of night, they entered the Shadowlands.

For a nightmarish, unmeasurable time the Unicorn fought their way through the Shadowlands. Iuchi Shino noted that the jade they wore did not grow dark and soft as it did in the Shadowlands of Rokugan. Also, they did not feel the corruptive energies of Fu Leng upon them. This was indeed the Shadowlands, but a different master ruled here, not the brother of their Lady Shinjo.

The Unicorn did not linger on this thought. Unrelenting, they moved through the cursed land at full speed, halting only hours at a time for rest. They fought off the creatures of the Darkness for what seemed unending days, but then traveled for



UNICORN TRAVEL POETRY: FAST IS FOE'S GRASP

Showed himself quite brave
Even though a loathsome
race
Fast is foe's grasp
Assuredly he was dead
Open wound on his head
The chosen child was not
mine



SHINJO'S FAN

Long ago, when the clan of the Ki-Rin decided to leave the lands of the Emerald Empire and seek out the world over the mountains, there was much sadness at their departure. Lady Doji was opposed to her sister Shinjo leaving Rokugan, for the two were very close. However, she saw the wisdom of learning the knowledge of the wide world, and she knew that her sister would never be happy unless she was wandering new lands. So she went to Shinjo and spoke to her once more before her Clan set off on their travels. Bowing before her, Doji held in her hands a small sandalwood fan. With a delicate hand, she offered it to her sister, for luck on her journey. "Let this always travel with you, my sister, and you will always know that a part of your family is by your side." The two embraced, and their parting was filled with tears.

months at a time without any sign of attack. However, they soon learned the terrible cost of moving through the lands of the Living Shadow, for it drove mad those whose minds and wills were not ready for the task. Often, they were forced to kill their own kin when their eyes and tongues turned black and they turned on their brothers with the strength of a dozen men.

Finally, after what seemed twenty lifetimes of battle, an Iuchi shugenja noted that the jade about their necks was losing its luster. The attacks of the Living Shadow all but ceased, and a great cry of joy was heard from the Unicorns when they stumbled across a band of goblins dressed in unfitted samurai armor.

A day later, a single Hiruma scout saw a vast army of samurai carrying purple banners bearing a mon he had never seen before. He ran back to the Kaiu walls, and reported what he had seen. The Unicorn had anticipated returning home to Rokugan for almost eight hundred years.

They never expected the reception they were about to receive.

CLAN UNICORN

Just as they reached sight of the Kaiu walls, the army of the Unicorn was an exhausted, hungry, unwashed mess. Nearly a fifth of their army had had to be slain because of the Shadowlands Taint (they had run out of jade long, long before). They approached the Kaiu walls with a renewed breath of awe. Never before had they seen such a monumental and intimidating structure.

Standing on those walls were the massed armies of the Crab, ready to defend against the invading barbarian army. Before the Unicorn could say a word, they found themselves on the receiving end of a massive Crab assault. Magical and mundane fire was thrown down upon them. Arrows fired into their ranks, cutting down horses and riders alike. The Unicorn had no choice but to retreat.

They moved west, staying just outside of the range of the Crab's siege engines, until they reached the end of the Kaiu wall. There, a Crab army awaited them with fire and pitch and thousands of spears, katana and tetsubo.

The Unicorn knew exactly what to do.

They charged.

The Crab army watched as the Unicorn army – entirely on horseback – charged against them with a speed they had never seen before. The two

armies crashed together ... and the Unicorn did not stop. They rode on, leaving the Crab behind. The Crab daimyo commanded his armies to follow, and they did.

Right into the lands of the Scorpion.

The Scorpion daimyo's spies had told him there was a skirmish south of his lands, and assuming Shadowlands creatures had invaded, called upon the armies of the Lion and Phoenix to aid the Crab while his own armies stood in reserve; he would not dream of stealing glory from the Lion or assuming his own shugenja would be more capable than the Phoenix.

But the Unicorn army charged past them all with the speed and fury of the wind. Further north they traveled, until finally, a Phoenix shugenja caught up with them. He parleyed with the Unicorn under a banner of truce, heard their story and discovered their heritage. He conducted the Unicorn Clan Champion to Otsan Uchi, where proof was delivered. (See the sidebar *Shinjo's Fan* for details.)

The announcement of the return of the Unicorn, néé Ki-Rin, was met with mixed response. The Lion refused to believe that such uncouth, unwashed, dirty barbarians could possibly be scions of the noble Shinjo. The Scorpion likewise refused to acknowledge the claim and backed the Lion. The Crab saw that the Unicorn were not allies of the Shadowlands and returned to their duties at the wall. The Phoenix believed the tale and stood by the Unicorn, nonetheless. A week of bitter conflict erupted, and while the Unicorn were outnumbered, their unique tactics and superior steeds matched them evenly with the combined might of the Lion and Scorpion.

However, the lack of area knowledge was a considerable factor in the battles, and the Unicorn began losing ground swiftly. An ambassador – Ide Suari – left the battles for Otsan Uchi, and he pleaded with the Emperor to hear his tale. The Emperor listened, and at the end, Suari gave a precious gift to the Emperor: two breeding pairs of the mighty Otaku battlehorses.

That day, the Scorpion and Lion ambassadors were ordered to cease their attack on the Unicorn, and a year later, the Clan of the Unicorn were officially recognized as the legitimate heirs of Lady Shinjo, daughter of Sun and Moon and brother of Hantei.

200 Years of Adaptation

Even after two centuries, the Unicorn have a long way to go to be fully "accepted" into Rokugan culture. Part of this is due to the fact that many feel that it is unimportant to be accepted. Others feel it is up to the Rokugani to make the effort to bridge the gap between them. Another factor - perhaps even more important - is the amount of conflict the Unicorn have had to face since their return.

In two hundred years, the number of battles the Unicorn have seen is second only to the Lion (not counting the Crab's skirmishes with the Shadowlands, of course). They have proven to be valuable allies to nearly every Clan. Rokugan immediately recognized the advantage of the Unicorn cavalry and tactics, making their decision of allegiance a powerful factor in nearly every battle.

And even though they have been so valuable in so many battles, in the social circles of the Emperor's court, many of Rokugan's elite refuse to acknowledge them as a Clan ... at least while there are no Unicorn emissaries about.

The Unicorn Families Today

Over two hundred years later, the Unicorn families have learned to adopt the customs and mannerisms of Rokugan ... to an extent. Some Unicorns are reluctant to change: "I am told to follow the paths of my ancestors, yet when I do, I am called an *unclean eta!*" These Unicorns spit in the face of Rokugan tradition, preferring to adhere to Unicorn tradition. They wear animal furs during the winter (unclean meat as clothing?), speak with distinct accents (not even the common courtesy to speak properly) and keep Unicorn holidays rather than those prescribed by the Rokugan Fortunes (and dishonor their ancestors!).

Despite two hundred years of co-existence, there is still some friction between the Unicorn and the rest of Rokugan.

The Ide

"Violence is the language of defeat, swords the tongues of the lost."

- from the Ide family standard

The original Ide was an unassuming samurai; calm, collected, understanding, and accommodating. He proved to be the perfect liaison between the *gaijin* and the semi-divine Shinjo with her warlike bodyguard Otaku Shiko and suspicious shugenja Iuchi. Over the centuries, natural ability grew into tradition, and the Ide family became the spokespersons for the entire clan.

SHINJO'S FAN (CONTINUED)

Hundreds of years later, when the Unicorn returned to Rokugan, Shinjo Nishijin came to the court of the Emperor. When he announced that his clan had returned to the lands of their birth, there was much argument. "The clan of the Ki-Rin is dead!" some cried, and the Lion were especially quick to judge. "Their ways are not the ways of our people; how can they be the descendants of the Lady Shinjo?" Then the Champion of the Unicorn stepped forward, and approached the Emerald Champion, Doji Ryobu. When they were introduced, Nishijin reached within his *haori* and pulled forth a small jade box. "There is an ancient legend among us," he said, "that we were to return this to your family if we ever returned to our homeland. Take it now, as a gift in remembrance of the past." He handed the box to Ryobu, who opened it to reveal a very small and very ancient sandalwood fan. Ryobu lifted the fan from its enclosure and spread it gently to reveal the personal mon of the Lady Doji. "It is true," he said, placing his hand on Nishijin's shoulder. "He is the son of our sister Shinjo. The Clan of the Ki-Rin has returned to Rokugan at last."



2-S



THE IDE MON

The Ide family mon shows a gold-colored hand open in friendship and giving. The green octagon that forms the background represents the Emerald Empire and the eight children who founded it. There is a variant of the Ide mon also in use: those of the family who choose to pursue magic (or, more rarely, war) display the Ide mon with the fingers pointing up, as if it were poised to deliver a jujutsu strike.



In a manner similar to that of the Crane back home, but with their own peculiar slant, the Ide family has taken the strategy and determination of the samurai and applied it to the workings of the throne rooms and marketplaces. They are not warriors, but masters of what they call *wabukan*: the peaceful path.

The Ide administered many of the needs of the Unicorn Clan, amassing vast quantities of food or negotiating treaties with entire kingdoms. Just as the retainers of Unicorn bushi each have their part in furthering the samurai's duty, the Ide household retainers take care to see that smaller details of business are properly attended, while the family leaders look to the needs of the clan – and even the Empire – as a whole.

The exact nature of this division of labor depends on the samurai in question. For example, the servants of Ide Daikoku, the caravan master, take care of jobs beneath the samurai's dignity. They purchase proper amounts of supplies at advantageous prices, and sell food and equipment to the clan (or give it to the needy) as required. Their devotion leaves Daikoku free to negotiate for the acquisition of rare treasures. On the other hand, the servants of diplomat Ide Tadaji are bureaucrats. He forms policies in the Imperial Court, and when he is finished, his servants tend to the details of the negotiations, smoothing ruffled feathers, delineating special cases of new laws and treaties, etc.

Since the return of the Unicorn to the Emerald Empire, many of the Ide family have found their way into the Imperial Court, drawing up the laws which guide the magistrates of the Emperor. Their service has been invaluable; they have organized the confusing and draconian charters that were

the legacy of over two dozen Emperors and countless aides, removed the contradictions, and simplified the laws for the benefit of all (especially the common folk). They also see to it that Unicorn bushi are preferentially promoted to magisterial positions, and that their deeds are heard in the palace. Thus it is to the credit of the Ide family that the Unicorn are becoming known as "lawmen" in both an advisory and an executive fashion.

The Ide tend to be level-headed, fair and well-organized. They are master problem solvers and are often able to find the advantage in a situation that may appear hopeless to others. They are firm adherents to the belief that "necessity is the mother of invention", and are experts at utilizing all possible resources to their full advantage.

They are known for their keen diplomatic skills, an area of expertise that is rarely developed by other Unicorn families, but is often vital to their Clan in dealing with the other Clans of Rokugan. For this

reason, an Ide samurai is often more readily accepted and highly regarded by the other Clans than most Unicorns.

It is generally agreed among the Unicorn that when traveling in the Emerald Empire, an Ide or



two in your party will inevitably bring good fortune and a smoother journey.

The Luchi

"Power is what you think it is."

—motto of the Luchi shugenja school

Luchi was one of the three samurai who volunteered to accompany Shinjo on her epic quest into the unknown. His understanding of the mystical arts proved invaluable to the Unicorn clan in their long wanderings.

At the start of their epic journey, Luchi had only a passing knowledge of magic. He knew the rituals of the Seven Fortunes, and knew that it was possible to invoke their aid. He had also learned a few basic spells from Isawa before he left with Otaku and Shinjo. He practiced these regularly, so as to be of the greatest skill he could manage with his tricks.

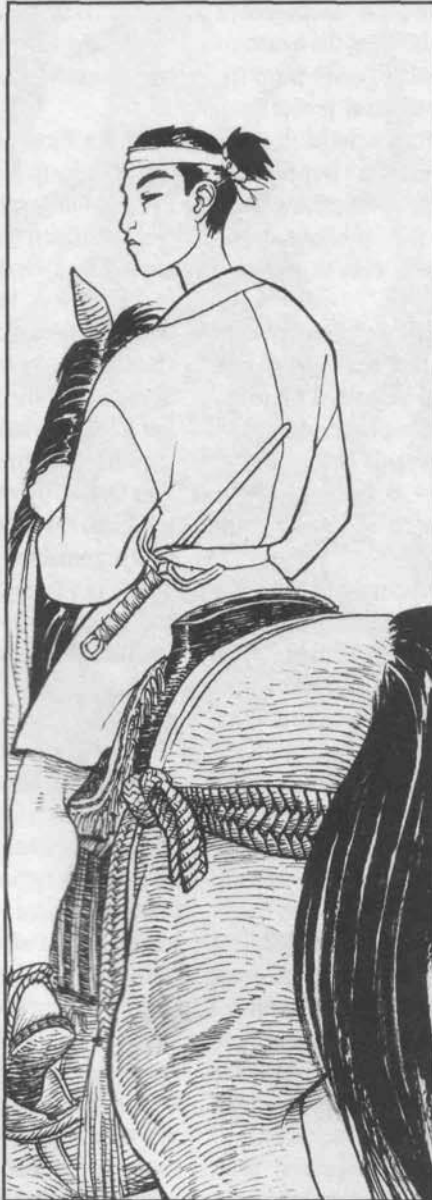
Once outside of Rokugan, though, Luchi was mystified to discover other shugenja working in foreign lands. They called themselves "sorcerers," "warlocks," "magicians," and "wizards." Some, he was able to tell, were charlatans and con artists, using their charisma and knowledge to deceive their people, but others, Luchi realized, were working actual miracles. This caused Luchi great confusion; how was it possible that a shugenja - by whatever name - could work magic without invoking the aid of the Seven Fortunes? He himself had difficulty working his spells in lands too distant from Rokugan, for the influence of the Seven Fortunes (so he learned) does not stretch everywhere.

Luchi studied with these workers of magic, trying to understand how they were able to exercise their powers. In exchange for their teaching, he traded knowledge he had gleaned from other mages (thereby setting an example for his good friend Ide on how to seal friendships

through trade). Between his studies, Luchi rode his horse with a copy of the *Tao of Shinsei* in his hands. Surely, he thought, the wise little man has an explanation for this...

It was, in fact, by watching these outlandish magicians through the eyes of Shinsei that Luchi at last understood. He saw that these strange people had an instinctive understanding of the Shinsei truism that all is one. While many Rokugani spent their lives in all humility trying to become one with the elements, these brazen people assumed it was the case from the very start. Luchi found this at once very arrogant and very powerful.

Once he understood the secret of their power, he was able to teach this ability to his own students. To be sure, Luchi was not as arrogant as were those of the exotic countries he had visited. Instead of adopting their methods straightaway, he rewrote the spells he had learned, replacing the traditional shugenja supplication to the Seven Fortunes with a request to the Elements themselves, a petition born of the unity of all things. While effectively the same as the traditional method, the Luchi consider it to be more direct.



THE LUCHI MON

The mon of the Luchi family clearly represents their devotion to the study of magic. An open scroll flows across a deep blue field, their family name emblazoned upon it. The spirals incorporated into the design represent the dynamic, fluid energy of magic, while the scroll symbolizes the Tao of Shinsei, on which the Luchi base all of their magical interpretations.





THE OTAKU MON

The Otaku mon is the simplest in Rokugan: a plain field of pale purple. It represents the original Otaku's silence, but can also be taken to represent her purity of purpose. Many opponents have learned, in some cases quite briefly, how terrifying this banner can be when carried by a formation of charging, silent *shiotome*, none of whom wish to dishonor their ancestor by uttering a battle cry.

This new style of casting spells helped the Unicorn greatly in their travels, and made it possible for the Iuchi family to acquire many new spells by trading with foreign spellweavers. Although many lack the delicacy of the other clans' magics, none can deny their efficacy in battle.

Along his journeys, Iuchi also discovered a new form of magic from the lands of the heartless sorcerers. Instead of summoning power from the elements, the sorcerers instead drew power from words inscribed onto talismans. Iuchi learned these inscriptions were of words (supposedly) spoken at the time of creation. By inscribing them (and combinations of them) onto precious stones and materials, the sorcerer was able to summon the power of the universe itself.

Iuchi stole this knowledge (he barely escaped with his life), and spent the rest of his life mastering it. His work would be passed on to his best student, Iuchi Tsubei, who perfected it. Now, the Unicorn art of talisman magic is the envy of every shugenja in Rokugan – at least those who do not tremble at the thought of invoking the power of the words of creation.

Upon their return to Rokugan, the Iuchi shugenja were alarmed by the proliferation of fortunes in their absence. They consider this deification of mortals at once arrogant and decadent, and the method of spell casting used by the Rokugani to be degenerate and muddled. It is not without a wry smile that they realize that they are now seen by the other clans as untrustworthy and arrogant in their own right, and full of barbarian tricks. The twists of fate are curious indeed.

Iuchi shugenja are more open-minded and willing to experiment than the shugenja of most other Clans. They have learned from experience that there is no "one true way" to do magic, but many different variations and methods which can be used, altered, combined and adapted to create magical effects.

They tend to be very ambitious and drive themselves relentlessly in everything they do. They constantly strive for improvement in all aspects of life, and believe that much can be gained by trying new things and learning from experience.

Tradition is not a rigid and absolute rule to be strictly adhered to, but rather a foundation, a base of knowledge and wisdom to be absorbed and

added to. The teachings of the Iuchi school are constantly changing and evolving, each new student contributing a vital new input and perspective.

The Otaku

"As they charged into our front lines, I saw their banners, empty as a clear twilight sky."

– from Akodo Toturi's war journal

Of the three original samurai who volunteered to accompany Shinjo on her travels, only Otaku never actually said she would do so; while Ide and Iuchi affirmed their dedication, Otaku remained quiet. Since Otaku's death, this action (or more properly, the lack thereof) has caused some scholarly debate between Unicorns. Some believe Otaku was demonstrating her total devotion to Shinjo; that she would diminish the intensity of her loyalty by having to affirm it. This is a favored argument of the Shinjo and Iuchi. Others hold that Otaku, by refusing to make a vow, indicated to Shinjo that she would follow her so long as her course remained true, but if Shinjo strayed, Otaku would not let her word tie her to a cause in which she could no longer believe. The Moto and Ide families largely adhere to this interpretation. The Otaku refuse to even discuss the issue, considering such intellectualized debate to be nothing but pointless sophistry.

Whatever the case, Otaku served Shinjo until her fateful ride into the Shadowlands. Her daughter, Otaku Shiko, proved to be an extraordinary heir.

The Otaku family values determination, devotion and straightforwardness above all other things. They believe that actions speak more loudly, and more clearly, than words. This, they know in their hearts (no matter what the others may speculate), is why the first Otaku did not speak her promise to Shinjo – she did not have to. To this day, members of the Otaku family are known for being people of few words. They choose their words carefully, and do not believe in idle chatter. It is interesting to note, however, that some of the most beautiful and highly-regarded poetry of the Unicorn Clan, and indeed, all of Rokugan, is written by tight-lipped Otaku.

Otaku samurai are fiercely loyal to their family, daimyo, friends and Clan. They tend to be decisive, strong-willed, independent and action-

oriented. Some would say they are stubborn, impetuous and impatient. The Otaku simply smile and remain silent.

ABOUT BATTLE MAIDENS

"Purity is my passion."

- Attributed to Otaku

Battle maidens have a nearly spiritual bond with their steeds. This is in part tradition, and in part an intense spiritual connection which has remained unbroken these many long centuries. All evidence indicates that this relationship requires that the maiden have some true Otaku blood, no matter how diluted it may be. The clan's Ritual of Adoption spell does not convey this relation to the recipient; while it makes the person a blood Unicorn, the ties are to Shinjo. Women from outside the clan have been allowed to join the battle maidens, but it is extremely rare. As such, their presence is considered bad

for the school's morale and focus, and their inclusion in the battle maiden school requires an incredible and unusual set of circumstances, beginning with a verifiable link to the line of Otaku herself.

Battle maidens are expected to have the spiritual purity of the original Otaku. Her spirit burned with a pure devotion; she was unquestionably loyal, eternally dedicated, and held herself above worldly desires. The safety of Shinjo was her only concern. She herself only married and had children so her lineage could continue to serve Shinjo.

Otaku swore that she would never teach a male of her lineage to ride, and that all her title, power, and wealth would go to her firstborn daughter. Since that day, the Otaku males have been cut out of the inheritance and bound to be footmen (unless they turn to another family or



clan). In compensation, the males of the Otaku family were granted the privilege of following their mother's example by caring for the most valued assets of the clan: the steeds. In that capacity, they have served well. They tend the horses conscientiously, groom them meticulously, and guard them religiously. A stable is not considered a stable if it does not have an Otaku in charge; it is merely a corral.

In contrast, the women of the family followed their mother's footsteps more directly, and the secret methods she taught them formed the basis for the family's battle maiden school. The battle maidens consider the propagation of their house to be important, and they recognize the need for one of their number to retire, marry, and have children (not necessarily in that order). This is not considered a shameful thing among the battle maidens, unless it happens "too early."





The Shinjo

"We are the people of the wind!"

*- traditional invocation by Unicorn Clan
Daimyo at assemblies of the clan*

"The Master of the Four Winds" Shinjo Yokatsu is the daimyo of the Unicorn Clan and the direct descendant of Shinjo herself. The Shinjo family is easily the largest of the Unicorn families, in large part because it is the family that receives almost all adoptees into the clan.

The Shinjo family pursues military careers almost exclusively, leaving the magic to the Iuchi. Some think there is a continuing family predilection towards action and away from contemplation that prevents Shinjos from being successful shugenja. Certainly the family displays more restlessness than the other Unicorn families; even Shinjo Yokatsu himself often abandons Shiro Shinjo for weeks at a time to go riding and hunting, to visit with the others of his clan in the field.

This wanderlust is actually of great benefit to the Unicorn, because unlike the other clans, their defenses are unpredictable. While a general can count on the Crab remaining in their impregnable fortresses, it is not possible to count on the Unicorn being anywhere in particular. They wander about their lands (and occasionally into neighboring lands) and despite the latest intelligence reports, an invading army might find itself suddenly attacked by a Unicorn contingent that just happened to stray in its direction.

The descendants of Shinjo possess a sense of freedom and independence unequaled in Rokugan. They do not like to be contained. Most Shinjo samurai would rather sleep under the stars, nestled against the warmth of their steed, than in a cramped tent or within the cold stone walls of a castle. They like to seek out new places and experiences, and their penchant for exploration makes them especially suited for scouting and hunting. They take great pleasure in the simple acts of living and being. They tend not to put much energy into unnecessary formalities, pomp and circumstance. They are open, honest, practical and trustworthy.

Many notice that the Shinjo seem to possess a unique "glow" of peace and well-being. Some attribute this to the traces of divine blood that still run through their veins. They do not deny this,

but they know that it takes effort and the right attitude to attain this state. They believe that by being true to oneself, exploring the possibilities and taking advantage of the opportunities life gives you, you can achieve all you need in life.

The Moto

"Moto can die, but cannot yield."

*- from the war banner of the Moto family
during the Blood War*

"Never."

*- from the war banner of the Moto family
present day*

The original Moto was a *gaijin* who distinguished himself in the service of Shinjo herself, some 700 years ago. From its founder's humble beginnings as an unknown servant, the Moto family grew through his being made samurai and marrying into the Clan, until it became "the right hand of Shinjo," the shock cavalry that was used to break enemy lines during difficult battles.

Throughout the history of the Unicorn, the Moto family was renowned for aggressive cavalry charges, incredible courage and ferocity, and a reckless lack of fear of death. One extreme example of this happened when the Unicorn first encountered armies equipped with massed pikes. While the other Unicorn milled about, frustrated at their inability to attack the enemy, the Moto volunteered to charge the enemy ranks. The Moto samurai stood hunched on the saddles of their horses as they charged. As their mounts impaled themselves on the pike shafts, the samurai leapt from the saddles and into the enemy troops, breaking their formation. The pikemen, having only the long shafts of their spears to defend themselves, were decimated.

Unicorn generals have often held the Moto cavalry back from the fighting until their power was needed to turn the tide of battle, or else to shatter the enemy completely. There were even a few times when the Moto family cavalry was used as a desperate rearguard, striking the lead elements of the enemy army while the rest of the Unicorn fled to safety. Even in these fights, the Moto always emerged victorious, though victory in these cases was largely determined by survival.

It seemed that the fortune of the Moto family would rise forever, perhaps even to outshine the

THE SHINJO MON

The ki-rin design of the Shinjo mon is regarded by the family as a portrait of the original Shinjo in her true form. The ki-rin faces west, representing Shinjo's journey into that mysterious land. The flaming mane is swept back as the creature runs free, a symbol of the family's spirit of freedom and exploration. The color scheme is black on bright orange, with fiery red around the edge.



Shinjo. There was even talk of a Moto becoming daimyo. But that was before the tragic events which brought the Moto down from their zenith.

The fall of the Moto family came about as a result of the family's attempt to assist the Crab's efforts to contain the Shadowlands. The Moto *daimyo*, Tsume, led his troops with confidence and bravado. His army was so confident of victory that their hearts were full of calm and joy as they moved deep into the Shadowlands. They sang martial songs and wagered on the number of goblin and oni heads each would take.

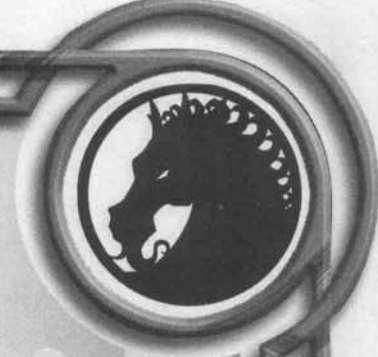
No one knew that this one move would at once destroy the Moto as a major force for years to come, and tarnish the family name for eternity.

What happened within the Shadowlands, none can say. Those few wide-eyed survivors who made it out alive returned to the Unicorn camp,

their hair as white as the winter snow and their hearts full of cold fear. None would – or perhaps none could – speak of the battle that had claimed their comrades, even though they awoke screaming with the memories night after night. Within five years, all of the survivors had died, pale and trembling, aged well beyond their years.

Since that dark day, Moto family members have been seen riding in the Shadowlands on the freakish steeds of Fu Leng, a hellish fire where their eyes should be. They are led by the inhuman laughter of their doomed *daimyo*. Thus has the name Moto become associated with horror and shame. In recognition of that, the Moto now wear white armor with purple used only as highlights.

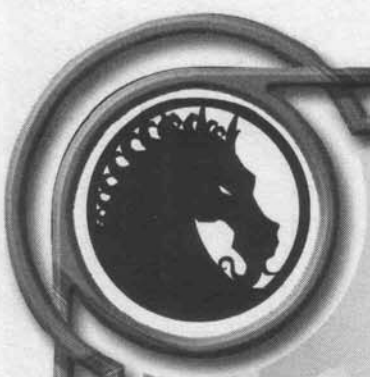
The loss of their family's honor through the vile sorceries of the Shadowlands has had a profound effect on the remainder of the Moto family. They changed their family *mon* to reflect the change of their attitude. Instead of the optimistic red chrysanthemum, their new banner bore a grim and threatening kabuki face; and they replaced the motto on their war banner. They are now even colder, more ruthless, more determined than ever before. They even go on raids into the Shadowlands, though they take a more conservative approach these days. To have their family name associated with the Shadowlands is a taint that can never be expunged, but nevertheless every Moto will try his utmost to do so. Thanks in part to the damage their former brethren have caused their family name, few Motos are seen in



THE MOTO MON

The mon of the Moto family bears the face of death – a stylized mask of intimidating determination that matches the ghostly white make-up worn by the Moto samurai into battle. This mon is stark and grim, as the Motos are themselves, and its appearance on the battlefield always seems to be followed by a disconcerting chill and a mournful keening of the wind.





Rokugan; they prefer to remain in self-imposed exile.

In spite of their grievous losses during the Blood War, the family has rebuilt. They have formed the White Guard, a military unit that embodies the implacable determination and unyielding mettle of the family. Famous among the *gaijin*, their mere presence on a battlefield has a terrible effect on enemy morale, and were they to march upon Rokugan's fields, many samurai would learn the meaning of the word 'fear.'

Their armor is white and battered, ghostly white plumes and manes adorn their helmets, and their faces are painted with stark white and black in frightening masks of death. They move with precision and relentless determination. It is said that a Moto warrior will keep advancing, keep fighting, even when mortally wounded. There are many tales of Moto samurai who lost a hand or an arm in battle and continued to slay many more enemies before finally succumbing to their fate.

The White Guard patrols on the far side of the mountains, the first line of Rokugan's defense. Few outside the Unicorn even know it exists.

Other Motos work alone, watching the movements of the *gaijin* armies and reporting all to their clan. Moto scouts are always ready to volunteer for the most dangerous tasks, and they either return successful or not at all.

Motos are usually reserved, introverted people. They prefer the company of their own family or complete isolation over interaction with others. They are acutely aware of their family's status; they are outsiders among outsiders. They channel the pain and humiliation of this situation into their fighting, and it makes them incredibly strong, both physically and mentally.

They are determined, grim and fierce. They think nothing of sacrificing themselves for a good cause, but they know that any effort, especially a final one, must be made to its full potential. A Moto never does anything halfway.



The Unicorn Philosophy

"No one loves the mother more than the child who has been taken from her."

– Shinjo

To understand Unicorn philosophy, one must first understand Rokugan's place in that philosophy. For eight hundred years, while the other Clans built a home and an empire, the Unicorn wandered. They traveled the length and breadth of the world, seeing and participating in a myriad of different cultures. In every place they came to, they were treated as strangers and outsiders. They had no place they could belong to, no one they could truly call kin. And if they stayed in any place for any length of time, they risked melting into the surrounding culture and losing their Rokugani roots forever. In the face of such pressures, the Unicorn developed a strong sense of cultural identity to preserve their cohesion and their mission to Hantei. Rokugani traditions grew in importance, even as they were modified to fit existing circumstances. Unicorn children learned to recite their heritage back to the first Shinjo, tying their present to Rokugan's past. And always, the Unicorn held in their hearts a feeling of home. The Emerald Empire may have been far away, but it was the land of their birth and the land that they would someday return to. It was where they belonged, and the sense of belonging somewhere – even somewhere they had never seen – that kept the Unicorn strong during their long years and travel and discovery.

Their return to Rokugan came as a bit of a shock, to say the least. Not only was the land much different than what their tales and legends had suggested, but it was full of hostile Clans who regarded them as intruders – just like every other culture they had met. But far from being disillusioning, these difficulties only heightened the Unicorn's sense of heritage and birthright. They had traveled through countless hardships at the behest of the first Emperor, and they would not be denied their rightful home by the spoiled heirs to his throne. This was their place in the world and no one would take it away from them.

This belief has continued unmodified in the two hundred years since their return. While they were able to secure their ancestral lands and have

been acknowledged as a member of the seven great Clans, they still are treated with disdain by their more grounded Rokugan brethren. And while they have gradually become adept at the Empire's political life, they continue to have trouble making long term allies in any one faction. Not that this bothers the Unicorn; they were looking out for themselves long before their return, and they can look out for themselves now. This time, they've got the concrete reality of a homeland to fight for.

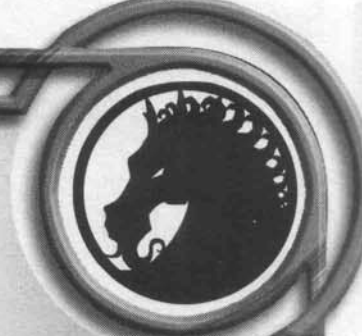
Traditions are held in high regard by the Unicorn, as are their duties to the Emperor and the Empire. While many of their ceremonies have become distorted over eight centuries, they continue to perform them with utmost solemnity. In so doing, they demonstrate their adherence to the spirit of Rokugan, and how that spirit carried them through the long years of wandering. So, too, are their duties to the Emperor executed. The lands under their care receive close attention, and peasants and tradesmen who bring a grievance to a Unicorn magistrate can be certain of being heard out. Imperial edicts are all observed, and Unicorn diplomacy is conducted with rigid adherence to the rules of protocol. By treating their duties as responsibilities to be upheld, not rights to be granted, they show themselves and other Rokugani that they are worthy to hold their place as a Great Clan. Wars have been started by those who suggested otherwise.

In short, the Unicorn believe they have found their place in the world, and they will both honor their duty to it and die fighting those who would take it from them.

"You tell me to follow the path of my ancestors and shame me for my ways. But my ways are the path my ancestors laid out for me. They ate meat, they wore skins and leather, they drank blood!

"Know this: I do follow the ways of my ancestors. I am certain in my cause. Question my ways again, and you question those who guide my hand. And I assure you, you will feel their strength behind my blade if you slight their honor again."

– Shinjo Yokatsu to Doji Satsume after his victory at the Test of the Emerald Champion



UNICORN TRAVEL POETRY: GIFTS

Great praise can be won
With small gifts
I have found friendship
With something
As simple as
A pastry twist and tea



Chapter Three



Character



Chapter Three: Character

In this chapter, we give you full details for creating Unicorn characters.

The diplomatic Ide and the oft-maligned Moto families have been added to the Unicorn roster. You can also now join the Moto bushi, Ide diplomat, and Otaku battle maiden schools.

Unicorn shugenja get secret Clan-only specialty spells as they advance in rank. See Appendix 2 for details. The Unicorn clan also has its own ancestor and fortune tables, as well as new skills, advantages, and disadvantages.

Skills

ANIMAL HUSBANDRY (HORSES) (VARIES)

This is the footman's equivalent of the Horsemanship skill. It can be used just like Horsemanship in all ways but one: it does not allow you to ride in battle. You can use it to evaluate horses for purchase, treat injured horses, break and train horses, etc., and while you can ride a horse just fine to go to the ocean and back, you're as lost as any peasant when it comes to mounted warfare.

HORSE ARCHERY (AGILITY)

A character with the Horse Archery skill can not only fire a bow from the back of a moving horse, but can do so without falling off and with a reasonable expectation of hitting the target. The bow used for this skill is the *dai-kyu*, a long, asymmetrical bow particularly suited to the task.

The strength of the *dai-kyu* comes from its size and greater draw, thus giving more force to the arrow; and a bowman on horseback is at least

three feet taller than one on the ground, affording a much broader field of fire, and range. See Appendix 1 for a discussion of the strategic use of a corps of horse archers.

The Horse Archery skill is based on the Unicorn art of *Yomanri* (and uses the same mechanics), and so is not generally available to non-Clan members. A character who knows *Yomanri* or Archery (*Kyujutsu*), but not Horse Archery, has his TN raised by at least 10 when firing from the back of a horse; characters who don't know how to handle a bow at all probably ought to hope for divine intervention. A similar penalty would apply if, for some reason, a character trained solely in Horse Archery were forced to fire from the ground.

Unicorn bushi can shoot at a gallop, and can fire at targets up to 90° to their right or at anything to their left side, even at targets straight behind them. Few other bushi are this skilled at horse archery, and the only shugenja so skilled are found in the Unicorn clan.

LANCE (UMA-YARI) (STRENGTH) (UNICORN BUSHI SCHOOLS ONLY)

Unicorn bushi (and occasionally shugenja) use this skill when trying to lance, e.g. with a *yari*. Obviously, lancing an enemy can only be done from on top of a moving horse. If the Unicorn samurai succeeds in hitting his target with a lancing attack, he does not add his own strength to the roll. Instead, if his mount is charging, he rolls the weapon's DR plus the number of rounds he's charged for damage. He must also make a Strength + Lance check against a TN equal to five times the number of rounds he charged. This extra roll is not considered an action. If the bushi fails this roll, he loses his grip on his pole-arm. If he fails it badly (Game Master's discretion), he can even be unhorsed.

YOMANRI (AGILITY) (UNICORN ONLY)

Most Rokugani practice what they call *kyujutsu*. This is a fast method of shooting the bow, and relies primarily on instinctive aim, feel, and experience. It's the equivalent of "hip-shooting" with a bow. In their travels to distant lands, the Unicorn learned a different method, involving careful aim. Instead of drawing and firing instinctively, the Bowman looks down the shaft of the arrow and aims it. They found this



method to be superior to the Rokugani method, for they could fire rapidly when they needed to, but they could also take their time and aim the arrow when scoring a hit was of critical importance. The Unicorn call this technique by its gaijin name, "yomanri," and all Unicorn samurai use it. As you might imagine, *gaijin* use this skill as well. The downside of this technique is the stillness it demands on the part of the archer: use of this skill is considered a Full Attack. No extra dice are rolled, but the TN to hit the archer is a 5.

The Yomanri skill is based on Agility rather than Reflexes. The Unicorn samurai can fire once a round like their counterparts, but they may also take time to aim their bow. For each round a Unicorn archer spends aiming (and doing nothing else), he gains a free Raise on his to hit roll. An archer can only aim for a number of rounds equal to his Yomanri skill.

Also, the amount a target is moving also restricts the amount an archer can aim. You can only spend half your skill in rounds aiming at moving targets.

GAIJIN NAME (1 POINT, UNICORN ONLY)

You have a name that sounds foreign. It might include the letters L or V, consonant combinations like ST, KS, or TH, or end in a consonant other than N. Your name is difficult for Rokugani to pronounce, and brands you as one who consorts with "blue-eyed devils." You roll one fewer die on all social interactions with those who are neither Unicorn nor *gaijin*.



New Advantages

GAIJIN GEAR (2 POINTS, UNICORN ONLY)

You start the game with a piece of *gaijin* equipment of your choice. See Appendix 2 for what is available. You may only purchase this once.

IRREPROACHABLE (VARIABLE)

You are devoted to your word. For each point you spent on this advantage, your add +5 TN to your ability to resist seduction and bribery attempts. You may not purchase Greed or Lechery.

New Disadvantages

ADOPTED BLOOD (VARIABLE)

Your parents were adopted (or perhaps you were). You must prove yourself to overcome the stigma of being a recent addition to the clan. For each point of Adopted Blood, you must gain an extra five points of Glory before you move up a Glory rank. Each time you go up a Glory rank, this penalty drops by five.

GREED (1-3 POINTS)

You've spent too much time watching the caravan masters, and not enough learning their ways. For each point of Greed, your enemies get a bonus of five points on all bribery skill rolls they



MOTO TERUMORI

Moto Terumori is the current Moto daimyo, an aging but stern leader. To his men, he is the epitome of dedication, having spent his entire life in the study and pursuit of the Dark Moto, and to his son, he is a hero.

Terumori was the firstborn son of the Moto daimyo, but he was not chosen as the house leader simply because of his birth. From the beginning, he has proven that he has the skill and dedication, and his loyalty to the clan has never been questioned. Although he is aging, he still rides firmly, his only son, Soro, at his side. Soro does not look forward to inheriting the responsibility of daimyo - not because he is not ready, or because he is afraid, but because he feels that his father is the greatest Moto that ever lived.

When Terumori passes the position to his son and enters retirement, it is certain he will be deeply missed.

make. You may not make an Honor roll to resist bribery attempts.

LECHERY (1-3 POINTS)

Love is more important to you than it should be to a samurai. For each point of Lechery, your enemies get a free Raise on all seduction skill rolls they make. You may not make an Honor roll to resist seduction attempts.

MOTO CURSE (0 POINTS)

This disadvantage is required for all Moto characters. Your family has been corrupted by the

Shadowlands. While your clansmen understand your situation, other Rokugani first heard your family name in connection with the evils of that dark land, and you find yourself the victim of great prejudice. Other clans refuse to give you Glory, recognition, or awards. They won't trust you and won't be hospitable unless pressured by other Unicorns (roll three fewer dice on all social skills with non-Unicorns). On the other hand, they are also somewhat fearful of you, so they give you no trouble... at least not to your face.

NEVER SAT ON A HORSE (1 POINT) (UNICORN ONLY)

You have never been on a horse, and don't know how to ride one. Even sitting on the back of a calm mare while traveling, you'll need someone to hold the reins and lead the horse for you. If you are mounted when fighting starts or something startles the horse, you are sure to fall off. You can buy this disadvantage away with one Experience Point.

OVERCONFIDENT (2 POINTS)

You never retreat, never choose to fight another day. You are possessed of the youthful illusion of immortality. When faced with superior forces, you must make a Perception + Battle skill check at 30 or you stay and fight. You may not also purchase Great Destiny.

Advanced Horsemanship Rules

Horsemanship is not needed to get on a calm horse or ride it at a walk. Riding is as common in samurai culture as driving is in ours. Of course, there are those who cannot ride, but the majority can. Horsemanship is not a test of whether you can let the horse walk you around; it's how well you can control the horse under difficult conditions. Riding at a gallop, leaping streams, fighting, even getting off a restless horse in the rain without stumbling in the mud, all call for Horsemanship.

With Horsemanship, all the basic maneuvers are readily done and do not require a skill roll unless circumstances make things tricky. That is, you can ride a full gallop without having to make a Horsemanship roll... except when there are



boulders rolling down the sides of Beiden Pass, and you want to leave the area before the boulders arrive. In cases like this, Horsemanship rolls are necessary.

MOUNTED COMBAT

A rider's Horsemanship skill is very important when fighting from horseback. The maximum skill dice a mounted warrior can use is equal to his Horsemanship skill. Thus a mounted character with a Horsemanship of 1 and a Kenjutsu of 3 would fight with an effective Kenjutsu rating of 1.

If a character has no Horsemanship skill but fights while mounted, treat it as if he had a skill of zero. For example, a ronin has an Agility of 3, a Kenjutsu of 2, and no Horsemanship skill. He jumps on someone's horse to make an escape as a guard runs up to stop him. The ronin takes a swing at the guard. Since he is mounted and unskilled at Horsemanship, his kenjutsu skill is effectively zero. When he swings, the player rolls three dice (for his Agility) and keeps all three.

CAVALRY AGAINST INFANTRY

Mounted troops enjoy an advantage over footmen. Their blows rain upon the heads of the footmen, while the footmen have a harder time striking the vitals of the cavalry. To simulate this easily, mounted samurai may roll an extra die of damage when using melee weapons against infantry. If you are using the hit location chart from the Game Master's Pack, the mounted samurai can roll twice for the hit location, and choose whichever one he prefers.

Infantry characters swinging at a mounted target must add 5 to their TN. They also roll one fewer die of damage when they strike. If you are using hit locations, roll the location twice, and have the target choose where he gets hit. Characters on foot can attack a mount without penalty.



Generations of experience in dealing with merchants and leaders from all different cultures have given the Ide family an insight that is beyond the understanding of even many Unicorns. **Benefit:** +1 Perception.

IDE EMISSARY SCHOOL

Although it is every bit as strict as any of the bushi or shugenja schools, the Ide household school discourages violence. Moto Terumori forbids anyone in his family from joining this school; not that any of them want to go. This is considered a shugenja school for purposes of your starting outfit.

Benefit: +1 Awareness

Skills: Horsemanship, Etiquette, Law, Kenjutsu, Sincerity, Commerce, Courtier

Beginning Honor: 2, plus 5 boxes

Outfit: Kimono, satchel, traveling pack, tanto, riding steed, 10 koku. Four items are fine quality.

TECHNIQUES

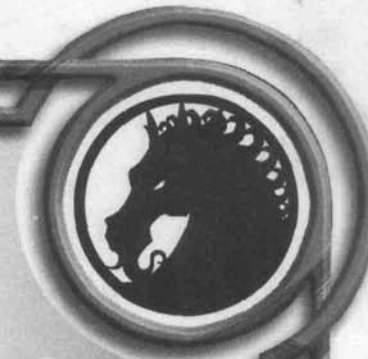
Rank 1: The Heart Speaks

The Ide student is shown how to let her soul shine in every action. Whenever the emissary makes a skill roll in a social situation, add her Honor to the result. Whenever the Game Master makes a random roll to determine someone's initial reaction to the emissary, the roll should be similarly adjusted.

Also, the emissary is taught to reflexively mimic and be responsive to local customs. She may make an Awareness + Etiquette roll against a TN of 20 to avoid making a *faux pas*, even if the character is not aware of the existence of a taboo. This extends to normal social situations; a

THE HAZARDS OF DIPLOMACY

It should be noted that the more barbaric tribes of the West were a proving ground of sorts for the Ide emissaries. Those clansmen who were not as good at diplomacy were sometimes killed or even eaten. Thus a simple form of natural selection has also influenced the development of the Ide family's skills. It was also quite motivational to future students of the school...





BARDING

The protection afforded by horse armor is similar to that of human armor: +5 TN to hit for light armor, and +10 for heavy. Like human armor, barding is supplied by the rider's daimyo, but since it requires a greater commitment of materials and time, it is consequently rarer.

successful roll will warn the emissary not to ask about the daimyo's son (who has just expired from the flu), even if she didn't know of his illness and without knowing why she shouldn't ask.

Rank 2: The Heart Listens

The student has learned that every detail is important, and takes great care to observe and remember everything. The character may make a simple Intelligence roll to remember anything that was said or done during a meeting. The TN of this check depends on the importance of the event and the significance of the action: recalling something the Emperor said on his birthday is only a TN of 5, while remembering what an opponent's aide said to another at an impromptu meeting is TN 30. Also, the emissary can gather important clues about the person she is negotiating with by looking around and assimilating details. Make a simple Perception + Investigation roll. The better the roll, the more clues to the person's personality are gained. Obviously, it is harder to gain clues when meeting someone in a dark alley than it is when meeting them in their house during the daylight.

Rank 3: When the Veils Move

The emissary is well attuned to the ebb and flow of negotiation, and can sense when the current shifts. If the situation turns violent or something else is about to happen that the emissary doesn't like, she may be able to react. The emissary rolls her Awareness against a TN equal to five times the sum of the Void + Sincerity of the opponent (*i.e.*, whoever initiates the undesired activity). If this roll succeeds, the emissary can take one action before anything else happens. Ide merchants use this skill to proactively attack thieves or cheats, while diplomats use it to move behind their bodyguards or grab someone valuable to their enemy to use as a shield.

Rank 4: Piercing the Veils

At this level, the emissary has learned to see past the surface to the truth within. This is done by paying acute attention to tangible clues (dilation of the eyes, unconscious habits, slight alterations in tone of voice) as well as by more esoteric spiritual methods which defy explanation. The Sincerity skill may no longer be used against the emissary, nor do those opposing her in negotiations receive any benefit from magical enhancements. Furthermore, whenever someone tells a lie to the emissary, she may make an opposed Investigation

versus Sincerity skill check to discern what the other person believes to be the truth of the matter. For each five points of success the emissary scores, she learns one true fact.

Rank 5: The Immovable Hand of Peace

By this point, the emissary has perfected the art of peace. She has incredible presence, and her calm and assured demeanor make her an island of serenity in even the worst of storms. She may use her personal presence as her defense. As long as she does not raise a hand in violence, anyone who wishes to do her harm must make an opposed roll pitting his Willpower against her Awareness to see if he can do so, after he declares his intent. The emissary rolls additional dice equal to her Void, but may only keep dice equal to her Awareness. If the attacker succeeds in his roll, he may attack the emissary without penalty. If he fails, he forfeits that action and all other actions taken against her this turn.



The driving urge to remove the stain upon the family name gives the Moto a resolute spirit. **Benefit: +1 Void.**

On the other hand, being associated with some of the more fearsome forces of the Shadowlands makes them suspect.

Disadvantage: Moto family members automatically receive the Moto Curse disadvantage (p. 52). There is no compensation for this; you do not receive any additional character points to spend.

MOTO BUSHI SCHOOL

The Moto bushi school is a dark one indeed, dedicated to defending the Empire at all costs (something their family has failed to do so long as

Motos ride in the Shadowlands), as well as preserving the purity of the soul. They do not know why so many their comrades succumbed to the Shadowlands, so they don't know how to prepare against it. Still, they try... and they have some unusual techniques they've developed in hopes that they can avoid following in the footsteps of their kin.

Benefit: +1 Willpower

Skills: Yomanri, Defense, Horsemanship, Hunting, Kenjutsu, Meditation, Shadowlands Lore.

Beginning Honor: 1, plus 5 boxes

Outfit: Kimono, katana, wakizashi, bow, 30 arrows of any type(s), heavy armor, traveling pack, riding steed, any 3 weapons, 10 koku. Two items are fine quality.

TECHNIQUES

Rank 1: Purity of the Breath

The bushi is first taught how to make every action perfect, from high-level activity like thought and kenjutsu down even to tasks like breathing and the very beating of the heart. The perfection of this technique will take a lifetime. With this purity of motion, the bushi adds his school rank to his TN to be hit as well as to every damage roll he makes.

Rank 2: Facing the Dark Within

Understanding the karmic ties between those of the Moto family and their corrupted kin, the bushi can detect the proximity of Shadowlands creatures with a successful Awareness check (see the sidebar for rules). This is an indistinct sense, and does not rely on sight or any other sense; it's simply a knowing. The better the success, the more is known about the size, number, distance, direction, power, and even intent of the Shadowlands creature(s).

Rank 3: Justice of Our Ancestors

Driven by the need for atonement, the bushi can focus on an aggressive attack to the exclusion of all else. He can make two attacks per round, but they may only be gained if the bushi is making a Full Attack.

Rank 4: Avenging Our Own

By this time, the bushi is the master of his fate and embraces the doom of his family. The bushi may spend two Void points on each action, and may declare whether or not he spends them after making his skill roll.

Rank 5: Bloodied but Unbowed

By this stage, the bushi is perfectly attuned to the doom of the Moto family. If he dies, he can will his spirit to ravage his body, tearing it and shredding it to prevent it from being animated.

FACING THE DARK WITHIN

The Game Master can estimate the TN of the task of detecting Shadowlands creatures by starting with a base TN of 5, adding one to the TN for every yard, and subtracting one from the TN for every Shadowlands creature out there. Really big creatures are easier to detect, and the presence of intervening rock or other material can make the task harder. Finally, prolonged exposure to someone makes it easier for the bushi to detect the Shadowlands taint. Subtract one from the TN for every minute the bushi spends in the presence of a tainted person or creature. The bushi still only makes the original skill roll, but you can use this to determine how long it takes for the bushi to figure out the target is tainted.





ORNAMENTAL HORNS

Many battle maidens include ornamental horns on their horse's head armor. A few other samurai do this as well, a practice that the battle maidens strongly dislike.

The bushi may also stay alive through indomitable force of will. On the Wounds chart, replace Down and Out with -4, and replace Dead with a -5 Wound Level, followed by -6 level, then -7, etc. The bushi cannot be killed, and can remain alive past the -4 state for a number of turns equal to his Void Ring. During this time, he can continue to move, fight, take damage, etc., but he must be healed to -4 or better by the end of his last turn or he dies. Some think this is an expression of the Motos' desire to live, but given the great damage taken by some Motos in their lengthy desperate battles, other Unicorn samurai know the Motos don't harbor such delusions.



*"Go for the horse; she can't fight without it."
— last words of many a bushi*

All Otaku females join this school. Females of other Unicorn families must take the Different School advantage to join (this costs only 3 points), while females from other clans are not allowed. This is because all females in this school must have a direct blood tie to the original Otaku (and given a thousand years for families to intermarry, most Unicorn females can demonstrate at least some distant relation to the founder). No males are permitted to join this school; many Otaku males end up at the Shinjo bushi school.

Students of this school are the *samurai-ko* of wonder and legend. They are swift, fearless, and have abilities which move beyond legendary and into the mystical, piquing the curiosity of bushi, shugenja, and monk alike.

Benefit: +1 Reflexes

Skills: Horsemanship 2, Defense, Kenjutsu, Battle, Lance, and any High or Bugei Skill

Honor: 3, plus 5 boxes

Outfit: Kimono, katana, wakizashi, lance, bow, 30 arrows of any type(s), heavy armor, traveling pack, Otaku steed, any 3 weapons, 10 koku. Three items are fine quality.

TECHNIQUES

Rank 1: Riding in Harmony

Her fiery ancestral blood yearning to be free, the battle maiden is one with Otaku when riding, preferably fast. Whenever the battle maiden uses one of her six school skills while mounted, she can roll and keep an extra die.

Rank 2: The Void of War

The battle maiden has learned to strike first and strike hard. After everyone rolls for initiative, the battle maiden can switch the values of her initiative roll and her TN to Be Hit for the rest of the combat round.

Rank 3: Sensing the Breeze

The battle maiden has learned to avoid damage by rolling with the impact. Subtract her school rank from the total damage done by each strike that lands successfully. This also applies to damage from the Battle Table.

Rank 4: The Wind Never Stops

The battle maiden has learned the secret of the continuous strike. This has two advantages. First, when making an attack from horseback, she can angle her weapon to make two attacks in a single round.

Second, if a battle maiden happens to kill an opponent with any attack (even if she is not mounted) she may attack another foe at the end of the round. Each attack the battle maiden makes in a given round can have a second attack associated with it, but if she kills her enemy with the secondary attack, she does not get a third.

Rank 5: Otaku's Blessing

The Otaku believe their ancestor looks upon them as they charge into a battle, bestowing her blessings on her most favored. During combat, mounted or unmounted, the Battle Maiden may re-roll dice that roll less than her appropriate Trait. This may only be done once per round.

Heritage Tables

After choosing which family a character came from, a player has the option to roll on the Heritage tables up to three times to see what sort of family line the character was born into. Every roll costs one Character Point.

Begin with Heritage Table 1 and follow the instructions. Be warned, not everything is fair among the noble Unicorn...

HERITAGE TABLE 1

| Roll | Result |
|------|---|
| 1-2 | Dishonorable Past. Roll on Heritage Table 2. |
| 3-5 | Undistinguished Past. No benefits or penalties. |
| 6-9 | Distinguished Past. Roll on Heritage Table 3. |
| 10 | Mixed Blessings. Roll on Heritage Table 4. |

HERITAGE TABLE 2 – DISHONORABLE PAST

Unfortunately, we are not all blessed with honorable ancestors. Moto characters subtract one from this die roll, Otaku characters add one.

| Roll | Result |
|------|---|
| 0-1 | Corrupted! One of your family now rides for the Shadowlands, as he has for the last five centuries. You begin the game at 0 Glory and lose 1 Honor rank. |
| 2 | Scapegoat! Another clan betrayed your family's trust and all but destroyed it. You begin with no steed, no money, no family, just your outfit (all of which is poor quality). Choose the clan responsible. |
| 3-5 | Fool! Your family fell for a subtle Rokugani ploy. Roll a die: if even, you have a Dark Secret; if odd, you owe an Obligation. Choose the clan responsible. |
| 6 | Weakling! One of your ancestors failed to live up to his duty to the clan. You start with no Glory, and must earn twenty Glory points to reach rank one. |
| 7-8 | Deserter! Your parents forswore their loyalty and left the clan with hard feelings. This happened shortly before your <i>gempukku</i> . You are a clan ronin. |
| 9 | Cursed! Your ancestors cheated a <i>gaijin</i> wizard, who cursed your family to the tenth generation. Lose two points of Honor, and you do not get your family Trait benefit. |
| 10 | Scoundrel! Even magistrates can be bribed; your father was. He was banished, and his name struck from Clan histories. Your mother committed <i>seppuku</i> . Your clan will give you no land or title, and will not trust you with money. |
| 11 | Charlatan! Your mother betrayed the battle maidens. Lose one Honor; you may not join the Otaku school. |

HERITAGE TABLE 3 – DISTINGUISHED PAST

| Roll | Result |
|------|---|
| 1 | Venerable Blood: The blood of your original ancestor flows strong in your veins. Gain 1 rank of Honor and one Void. This result may only occur once. Treat subsequent rolls as no effect. |
| 2 | Worthy pedigree: Due to marriage, the blood of a different family's ancestor flows in your veins. If you are a shugenja, gain a Unicorn Clan Secret Spell (see Appendix III). Otherwise, gain the rank 1 technique of any Unicorn school other than shugenja or battle maiden. |
| 3-5 | Battle Veteran: go to Table 3A, Great Battles. * |
| 6-7 | A Hero's End: go to Table 3B, Glorious Death. * |
| 8-9 | Meritorious Service: go to Table 3C, Notable Awards. |
| 10 | Famous Affair: Your family has romantic ties with another clan. Roll a die: if even, a politically expedient marriage was arranged, gain a Minor Ally from another clan and you can attend that family's school without buying the advantage; if odd, the affair was troublesome, and you gain a Minor Ally and Minor Enemy from that clan. |

(Tables 3A-3C are on the next page.)

* Ide characters must re-roll this result. Accept the result if they get it a second time.

HERITAGE TABLE 4 – MIXED BLESSING

| Roll | Result |
|------|--|
| 1-3 | As an Imperial Magistrate, your ancestor revealed another family's dishonor. Gain a Major Enemy, 1 rank of Honor, and 1 rank in Investigation. |
| 4 | Your family studied under <i>gaijin</i> alchemists: gain 1 rank in Poison. |
| 5 | Your ancestor married a barbarian. Gain +1 to any Trait that is rank 2, one rank in <i>Gaijin</i> Lore, and a <i>gaijin</i> appearance. This functions as a Social Disadvantage and Bad Reputation for non-Unicorn Rokugani. |
| 6-7 | Your ancestor slew another clan's hero in a duel. Gain a Major Enemy and an exquisite item (taken from his dead hands). |
| 8-9 | Your family has struggled financially. You have no koku, and all your items save one (and your steed) are average. Gain four bugei or low skills at rank 1 as you struggle to get by. |
| 10 | You have inherited a magical item. It is said it was taken from an oni by a distant relative. You aren't sure if it's magic, and if it is, if it's cursed or tainted. |

HERITAGE TABLE 3A – FAMOUS BATTLE

Your ancestor fought in a famous battle of the past, giving you a worthy standard to live up to. Moto characters subtract three from this roll, Shinjo characters add one.

| Roll | Result |
|------|--------|
|------|--------|

-2-0 The Blood War

Approximately 500 years ago, the Moto fought off the Living Darkness. Your ancestor was one of the few that survived. Gain 1 Glory rank and a free Void point to spend in every battle against Shadowlands creatures.

1-4 A small battle

Dispersed across the continent, the Unicorn fought a number of pitched battles during their many years abroad, though the renown of these pales in comparison to more recent events. The Unicorn have also played a part in many of the Crane's battles. Gain five Glory points.

5 The Return of the Unicorn: the Kaiu Walls

Your ancestor was particularly distinguished in the initial assault on the northern Kaiu walls during the Unicorn's return 200 years ago. The Crab Clan, although they lost interest in the Unicorn Clan when it turned out they were not the spearhead of a Shadowlands invasion, have long memories. Gain 1 Glory rank, 1 rank in Battle, and a Minor Enemy in the Crab Clan.

6-7 The Return of the Unicorn: Seven Day Battle Plain

After riding through the army of the Crab, the Unicorn faced the Scorpion and the Lion on this historic field where the Blood Speakers had been defeated a hundred years earlier. The terrain gave the mounted Unicorn enough of an advantage to cancel the superior numbers they faced, and they were able to withdraw to the north. Gain 1 Honor rank and 1 rank in Battle.

8-9 Battle of the Chrysanthemum Petals

173 years ago, the corrupted Moto led a vast army out of the Shadowlands and into the Unicorn's territory. Near the shores of the Chrysanthemum Petal Lake the Unicorn and various ashigaru turned them back. Gain 1 rank of Glory and 1 rank in Shadowlands Lore.

10-11 Battle of White Shore Plain

Before this battle, the Scorpion made a concerted effort to prove to the Empire that the so-called "Unicorn" were not Shinjo's children at all, but barbarian impostors. In the battle itself, however, they were defeated suspiciously easily by a small Unicorn force mostly made up of Battle Maidens and a handful of Lion samurai. Immediately thereafter, they publicly recognized the legitimacy of the Unicorn Clan. Gain 1 Glory rank, a Minor Ally in the Akodo (Lion) family, and a Minor Enemy in the Bayushi (Scorpion) family.

HERITAGE TABLE 3B – GLORIOUS DEATH

Your ancestor died an honorable death which has emboldened the family ever since. Moto characters subtract one from this roll.

- | | |
|------|--|
| 0-1 | Killed fighting the Shadowlands: Gain 1 rank in the weapon of your choice and no fear of Shadowlands creatures as you strive to avenge your ancestor. |
| 2-5 | Killed in a duel: Gain 1 rank in Iaijutsu and three Character Points for the example that was set for you. |
| 6-10 | Killed in battle: Roll once on Table 3A (gaining whatever benefit) and roll again here: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1 Saved the day: gain a Major Ally from any clan on your side.2 Spared someone's life: gain a Major Ally from an opposing clan and a Minor Enemy from a clan on your side.3 Protected an general: gain a Minor Ally from a clan on your side.4-5 Killed an important foe: gain 1 Glory and a Minor Enemy from an opposing clan.6 Saved a wounded samurai: go to Table 3D, Gifts.7-9 Fought well: gain 1-10 points of Glory and a Minor Enemy from an opposing clan.10 <i>Seppuku</i>: Your ancestor committed suicide to spare the family honor, leaving you with a token of remembrance. Go to Table 3D: Gifts. |

HERITAGE TABLE 3C – NOTABLE AWARDS

Your Ancestor served the Empire well. Gain one Honor and roll below. Moto subtract two from this roll, Ide add two.

- | | |
|-------|---|
| -1-2 | Famous General: Gain 1 rank in Battle. |
| 3-4 | Special mission for the Emperor: go to Table 3D: Gifts. |
| 5-7 | Imperial Magistrate: gain Minor Ally in the Imperial Court or any clan. |
| 8 | Winner of the Great Hunt: Gain 1 rank in Yomanri or Hunting. |
| 9-10 | No special bonuses. |
| 11-12 | Imperial Procurer: Gain 20 koku. |

HERITAGE TABLE 3D – GIFTS

All gifts are subject to Game Master interpretation.

- | | |
|-----|------------------------|
| 1-6 | Money. |
| 7-8 | Land. |
| 9 | Items of high quality. |
| 10 | Magic. |

Unicorn Fortune Tables

You cannot always control the hand of fate. Every Unicorn character has the option to roll on this table once to see what fate has dealt them. First, roll a die to determine whether the Fortunes have been good to you. If it's even, roll again on the Good Fortune table; if it's odd, roll on the Bad Fortune table.

GOOD FORTUNE TABLE

| Roll | Result |
|------|--|
| 1 | Shugenja: you have an extra spell. All others: You have an exquisite item. |
| 2 | You are a natural horseman; add 2 ranks to your Horsemanship skill. |
| 3 | You have an heirloom item, several hundred years old (tea set, painting, helmet). |
| 4 | You have a potion with five doses. Each cures one die of wounds. |
| 5 | You have an item of magical curiosity (a go set which can play against you, a wakizashi that draws itself on command, a kimono which never gets stained or wet). |
| 6 | Noble blood: gain three points of honor. |
| 7 | Prodigy: +10 insight. |
| 8 | Windfall: Roll one die and divide it by two, retaining fractions. You have this many extra koku. |
| 9 | You have a nice diamond. Roll two dice to determine its value in koku (re-rolling tens). |
| 0 | You have friends in another clan (less than a Minor Ally, more than nothing). |

BAD FORTUNE TABLE

| Roll | Result |
|------|--|
| 1 | You lack two items from your starting outfit (Game Master's choice). |
| 2 | Your horse died recently. You start the game on foot. |
| 3 | You grew up outside Rokugan, and are unfamiliar with its cultural subtleties. Your Sincerity and Etiquette skills are reduced one rank. You must pay one extra Experience Point to raise these skills. |
| 4 | You have an heirloom item, which is incomplete. You think you know who has the rest... (a shogi set minus one set of pieces, a katana without the saya). |
| 5 | You broke your family katana. Lose one rank of Honor and make do with a 2k2 katana until you find a better one. |
| 6 | Overconfident: lose 1 rank in your highest skill (choose randomly if there are more than one). |
| 7 | Disruptive Student: -10 insight. |
| 8 | Gambling losses: lose 1-10 koku. |
| 9 | Gambling debts: Lose all but 1 koku. The next 1-10 koku you get must be turned over to your creditor. |
| 0 | No bad fortune. Yet. No, don't worry about it. I'm sure your Game Master will forget all about this. |





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Chapter Four



*Who's Who in
the Unicorn Clan*



ANCESTORS

In the sidebars of this chapter can be found tales of great Unicorn Clan heroes.

Players can use Character Points to purchase these heroes as Ancestors (Ancestors cannot be purchased with Experience Points). While most Unicorn were adopted, interbreeding means that almost all characters have one or more of the original four Unicorns as an ancestor. Those who spend the points have a special karmic tie between themselves and the Ancestor.

INSIGHT

Perceptive readers will note that the statistics given for the characters described in this Who's Who do not necessarily add up to the insight total given for that character's School Rank. This is deliberate. For some games, it may be necessary for Hida Kisada, the Crab Clan Champion, to have a Horsemanship skill of 4. For others, such a skill would not only be highly inappropriate, but may ruin a well-thought out campaign or adventure. Therefore, we have only mentioned the most prominent skills for each character, leaving gaps in their insight totals where other skills and abilities can be determined by your GM as he feels is appropriate.

GMs should feel free to fill in whatever skills and abilities are needed for any Who's Who character (up to their insight maximum for their given School Rank), or simply allow them to develop in time, as the PCs interact with the character.

Chapter Four: Who's Who in the Unicorn Clan

The Shinjo

SHINJO YOKATSU

EARTH: 4

Stamina 5

WATER: 4

Strength 5

FIRE: 3

Agility 5

AIR: 3

Reflexes 5

VOID: 4

School/Rank: Shinjo Bushi 5

Skills: Etiquette 1, Singing 2, History (Burning Sands) 4, History (Rokugan) 2, History (Unicorn Clan) 3, Lore (Horses) 4, Shintao 2, Battle 4, Kenjutsu 5, Animal Husbandry (Horses) 3, Horse Archery 5, Horsemanship 5

Honor: 4.5

Glory: 8.1

Advantages: Clear Thinker, Quick Healer, Way of the Land (Unicorn), Social Position (Clan Daimyo)

Disadvantages: Can't Lie

Shinjo Yokatsu is the daimyo of the Shinjo house, and the current Champion of the clan of the Unicorn. Yokatsu is known to his clan as the "Master of the Four Winds", and he is a quiet man who seems more content on his horse than on a dais. Since the days of his birth, he was raised by his grandfather, the Daimyo of the clan at that time.

The elder Shinjo was a quiet man, very like his grandson, who spoke longingly of a time when the clan roamed the wild, endless seas of sand, and the wind was sweet in their faces. Yokatsu

grew up wondering of those lands, remembering them through his grandfather's eyes. His grandfather insisted that the boy spent time with all ranks of people, from the lowest *eta* to the greatest nobles of the land. Throughout his training, Yokatsu has learned the value of simple things – a straw mat, the stars in the sky, and the simple songs of the ancient land.

When Yokatsu attained his *gempukku*, he chose not to ascend to the position of daimyo immediately. He knew that he had to see the land for himself – the ancient place of his ancestors. All his life, he had sung the songs, listened to the tales and dreamed a dream of a long-forgotten place beyond the mountains of Rokugan. So, he saddled his horse the morning he was a man. He spoke once more to his grandfather, and rode to the west, following the trail of the sun in the sky.

For two years, Yokatsu traveled across the land, meeting strange people and fighting men who wore no armor, only strange rags. His days were spent on horseback, his nights beneath an empty sky. He sang the ancient songs of his people as he traveled, hearing again and again the words of the sun-filled plains. One day Yokatsu crossed the last ridge of the mountains. Beneath him he saw a world that had been scalded by the sun, made bare and pure by the tearing winds that hovered in great clouds above it, and far off in the breeze he could hear the ringing neigh of horses. Yokatsu rested his steed and gazed upon the land for many hours, watching the sun climb across the dark desert sky and listening to the lonely breeze as it blew the scent of dust and strange plants to his nostrils.

When the moon rose over the mountains behind him, the desert sand turned cold and stark, like the bones of the earth laid bare across the ground, and Yokatsu turned his steed toward the rising moon. He began to sing again as his stallion left the sand behind them, this time a song of the Rokugani peasants, the simple heirloom of his past.

When Yokatsu returned to Rokugan, he told the tale to his grandfather. The daimyo asked him why he did not complete the journey, why he turned back on the threshold of his homeland. Yokatsu was silent for a long while as he thought. "A homeland is not a place," he finally said. "It is a people."

Since his journey, Yokatsu has never longed to be anywhere except where he stood – or where



his steed was running. He became the daimyo of the Unicorn when his grandfather retired to the monastery, and although he has never been a political man, he has kept the borders of his people safe.

"We are the people of the wind!" is the battle cry of the Unicorn, and there is no man alive who so exemplifies that cry. Yokatsu only feels safe when his steed is beneath him, and even as a man, he joins the races of the youngsters. The title, "Master of the Four Winds" comes from his journey as a youth, for he is the only living member of his clan who has seen the ancient land of his people – the Land of the Burning Sands. His journey, as well as his position as master of the people of the wind, have chosen the title for him.

Yokatsu is not a particularly large man, and is fairly stocky. His bandy legs are slightly bowed from riding, and his gait is rolling. His smile, however is open and genuine – when he smiles. For the majority of the time, he is a stern-looking

man, more from discipline than from temperament. His eyes are restrained, and give the appearance of someone who measures every action of those around him. His laugh – when he laughs – is short bursts of glee, rocking the ceiling of any building that contains it. He has a laugh that was meant for the open plain. He keeps his clothing tidy and clean, and much of the court attire looks new and hardly worn – because it was. Preferring riding leathers when he has the choice, Yokatsu is uncomfortable in any court, keeping his thoughts to himself. When he makes a mistake, he mutters and curses freely under his breath, looking horribly embarrassed.

SHINJO YASAMURA

EARTH: 4

WATER: 3

Strength 4

FIRE: 2

Agility 4

AIR: 2

Reflexes 4

VOID: 3

School/Rank: Shinjo Bushi 2

Skills: Yomanri 3, Defense 3, Kenjutsu 4, Horsemanship 5, Horse Archery 3, Naginata 3, Hunting 4, Iaijutsu 3

Honor: 2.7

Glory: 7.4

Advantages: Benten's Blessing, Quick

Disadvantages: Softhearted, Vain

Shinjo Yasamura is an outgoing, energetic young man who has barely passed his *gempukku*. He is full of energy, always rushing about his duties with a pleasant smile and a whistle, and he is easygoing and full of fun. A bit vain, and sometimes overly interested in the clans' eligible young women, the eighteen year old Yasamura is fond of showing his horsemanship and prowess in iaijutsu.

Yasamura is the youngest son of Shinjo Yokatsu. He's not exactly a lady-killer, but he likes to think he is. You can often find him mooning over the daughter of some noble, passionately declaring his love to the nearest tree – but within a week, he's

ANCESTOR: SHINJO MALTERA

100? – 500?

10 POINTS

Shinjo Martera was the first-born son of Shinjo. A ruthless general and daring explorer, he was greatly feared in close combat. In the Burning Sands, he even gouged the eye out of one of his abductors before he was overpowered, even though he was then only a year and a half of age. More so than all of this, the son of Shinjo was known as a living example of everything a samurai should be. He exemplified *bushido* for the Unicorn, and none found fault with him his entire life. Every move was graceful, every action deliberate, every activity successful. Many assume it is from studying under Martera that Moto developed his school's technique of Purity of Breath.

Those with Shinjo Martera as an ancestor never fail to do their duty as they see it. While they may not live up to the higher expectations of others, they never fail the standards they set for themselves internally. In game terms, such a character never fails an honor roll, but he may never deliberately undertake any action that will result in a loss of honor, or he loses his connection to this ancestor.





**ANCESTOR: SHINJO
DIED CA. 400?
3 POINTS**

Of all the *kami*, Shinjo was perhaps the kindest and most compassionate. She was no warrior, always preferring to outmaneuver her opponents rather than destroy them. Her journey outside of Rokugan taught her much about the ways of mortal men, and perhaps that is why she held them so close to her heart. She also gained a fondness for the other creatures of Rokugan and the world beyond. Ever curious, she learned their languages and their ways and taught their wisdom to her followers. "We have much to learn from the world," she said, "not just from each other, but from the trees and the wind and the creatures and everything we teach ourselves to ignore."

Characters who choose Shinjo as an Ancestor get a free raise when trying to discern people's emotions or understand enigmas. That is, a character gets a free raise for trying to read someone's emotions, figure out what type of Shadowlands creature faces her, how this *gaijin* contraption works, or what the best way is to cook this curious plant.



found someone new. Most of the young women never even know. Yasamura is, in a way, the classic "Romeo" figure, eager to find some great destiny that he knows he was created to fulfill, even if it's a tragic one.

Yasamura has never been exceptional at warfare, although he can handle a sword as well as most bushi. His problem is that he would rather hear about daring deeds than perform them. Nevertheless, he is a likable fellow, and does have a great deal of courage and dedication to his clan. His monkey-grin and teasing voice have settled a number of spats within the Shinjo house, and he is always ready with a quick answer to any problem.

Yasamura grew up under the watchful eye of his father, Yokatsu, and has been told that a great deal is expected of him. This burden lies heavily on his shoulders, beneath the laughing outward appearance. His greatest fear is that he will let his father down, that he will not live up to the expectations Yokatsu has for him. Although

Yasamura is not intended to rule the Shinjo house after his father steps down, the son of the Daimyo of the Unicorn Clan is not without responsibility.

Yasamura grew up with his kinswoman, Otaku Kamoko, and the two have remained close friends. If there is a problem, Kamoko rushes to solve it, but Yasamura can curb her temper with jokes and teasing words. Yasamura is a good-looking man, although not perfect, and his slight-crooked smile betrays his lively sense of humor. His pale eyes brighten in the presence of ladies, and he is always ready with a joke or a smile. In fact, it's hard not to like Yasamura.

Unlike his father, Yasamura has no interest in the Land of the Burning Sands. He is the epitome of the new generation of Unicorns, to whom Rokugan has always been home. He does not follow the ancient ways of the Unicorn which trace back to those lands, but he still respects them in deference to his father.

**MORITO
EARTH: 3**

WATER: 2

Strength 4

FIRE: 3

Agility 4

AIR: 3

VOID: 3

School/Rank: Shinjo Bushi 1 (Clan Ronin)

Skills: Lore (Horses) 3, Horsemanship 3, Kenjutsu 2, Horse Archery 3, Animal Husbandry (Horses) 2, Hunting 4, Yomanri 3, Defense 3

Honor: 2.3

Glory: 0

Advantages: Ambidextrous, Quick

Disadvantages: Black Sheep

The ronin Morito was born Otaku Morito, oldest son of Otaku Tetsuko, Imperial Magistrate. With his younger brother, Otaku Tokei, he grew up watching the Battle Maidens and their fabulous steeds. He asked his mother, then serving as the Otaku Daimyo, if he could undergo the same training as the young women, but she



explained to him the long history of the Otaku family, and that his place was on the ground.

Nevertheless, Morito learned to ride with the assistance of Otaku Kojiro, and was allowed to exercise and train the young horses, and ride the non-combat steeds. He was told that his place was to serve the Battle Maidens, and to keep their steeds ready for war. But he rebelled against his mother. His brother, Tokei, warned him against breaking tradition, but Morito was adamant. He was fostered under Shinjo Hanari in the hopes that he would be content with the other, lesser steeds, but this did nothing but fuel Morito's desire to have one of the battle-steeds. Finally, one night, he stole into the stable and attempted to take a great dark stallion which belonged to a Battle Maiden. Tokei, his brother, convinced that there was nothing which could be done to change his brother's mind, followed him to the barn and assisted Morito.

What happened then was either karma or pure bad luck. Morito had barely ridden out of the

barn before the beast attempted to throw him. Recognizing that the rider he bore was not his Mistress, the huge stallion began bucking and twisting wildly, desperate to throw Morito. But Morito was no cadet at riding – he had been trained by the Otaku Stable Master. He hung on for life, and finally, the horse fell to the ground, its legs buckling. Tokei ran to his brother's side and dragged him free, but the horse had broken its leg and screamed in pain. Otaku Kojiro and the other keepers of the stables came from the nearby buildings and stared in shock at the scene. When Otaku Tetsuko arrived and saw what her sons had done, her fury was unmatched.

"Can the horse be saved?" she asked Kojiro, as he worked feverishly over the animal's wound, but the stablemaster shook his head.

"He may live, but he will never again bear a rider." The stablemaster looked at Tetsuko. "His leg has been ruined."

Tetsuko's justice was swift. Morito was cast out of the Otaku family. His crime was clear, and

**ANCESTOR:
MOTO CHAI**
593-619
7 POINTS

One of the greatest horsemen ever to live, even by Unicorn standards, Moto Chai served as a scout and skirmisher in the most dangerous situations. Whenever the Unicorn needed the impossible done, they turned to him. He is said once to have ridden his horse at a gallop while hanging underneath it so that the tall grass would conceal him from the enemy, and to have used his *umayari* as a pole to vault over a hedge to escape *gaijin* guards. It seemed the more daring the man was, the more the fortunes smiled upon him.

Three times he was offered the command of a large unit. Three times he refused, stating that if he commanded other men instead of doing missions himself, he would not be able to use his skills to serve his lord to the best of his ability. On the third refusal, the general was so insulted he ordered Chai to commit *seppuku*. When the daimyo heard of this, he wept for the loss of a great man, ordered the general to commit *seppuku*, and had his name struck from Unicorn histories.

Those with Chai as an ancestor can keep all the dice they roll for Horsemanship, and get a free Void Point to spend on every Athletics roll they undertake.





ANCESTOR: MOTO SORO
60? - 150?
5 POINTS

Moto Soro was a simple peasant, but his fearless determination to succeed and his whole-hearted embrace of bushido caused him eventually to be elevated to samurai status with his own family name. Although several Unicorn objected to the promotion of this rough and unmannered Ujik-hai guard to a position of such prominence, none can now argue that Shinjo made anything but a brilliant choice.

Moto Soro and his progeny have been both fearless and fearsome, and have bought many great victories with their blood. Their unquestioning obedience and ruthless determination makes the fact that Moto now ride for the Shadowlands an even greater tragedy.

Those with a direct tie to Moto Soro can completely ignore their Wounds for a number of rounds each day equal to their Void. These rounds need not be sequential.

there was nothing that could change her mind. So, Morito and his brother (who out of loyalty took Morito's name, and shared his exile) left the land of the Unicorn, and have sworn never to return to the Otaku family house. They wander Rokugan as ronin, seeking service with a Lord who will have them.

Morito is a tall man, thickly built, with a broad face and thin, dark eyes. He talks with a perpetual sneer, as if daring someone to challenge him. When he is found, it is certain that his brother – who has learned how to be a shugenja by apprenticing himself to the great Naka Kuro – is somewhere nearby.

SHINJO HANARI

EARTH: 4

WATER: 3

Strength 4

FIRE: 3

Agility 4

AIR: 3

Reflexes 4

VOID: 3

School/Rank: Shinjo Bushi

4

Skills: History (Rokugan) 3, Horsemanship 4, Horse Archery 4, Kenjutsu 3, Iaijutsu 3, Weaponsmith (Bowyer/fletcher) 4, Hunting 4, Heraldry 3, Naginata 2, Yomanri 4

Honor: 2.4

Glory: 6.9

Advantages: Quick, Way of the Land (Unicorn), Social Position (Sensei)

Disadvantages: Sworn Enemy (Hida Tsuru)

Shinjo Hanari is the sensei of the Shinjo Yomanri school. He is a gruff, aging man with grey in his beard and hair. His eyebrows are thick and bushy, and from beneath them, he glowers at all who pass by. Those who have studied under him at the Yomanri school whisper about his strict discipline and harsh words, but no one can say that he isn't the

finest archer in the clan. Hanari doesn't listen to such idle flattery. He has spent years in dedicated study of the bow, learning its mysteries and language. There are some Lions who swear he speaks to his arrows as he sends them forth, persuading them to strike their targets at tremendous distances. In the field, Hanari leads the archery contingent of the Unicorn clan. Swift, accurate and deadly, they are responsible for lightning-fast attacks that can come from any direction. They prefer to execute outflanking maneuvers and quick strikes before speeding away from their enemy.

Hanari's favorite companion – besides his steed, of course – is a war dog named Koji who follows him everywhere he goes. Grizzled and bad tempered – somewhat the image of his Master – the dog sits by the side of the archer in the field while Hanari teaches his students, and lies on his feet when he sleeps. The two are nearly inseparable.

The Unicorn have rarely gone south past the Spine of the World Mountains, although they have





claim to the land surrounding Chrysanthemum Petal Lake and Shinomen forest. Recently a small contingent of Unicorn were passing through the southern reaches of their land, when they found a Crab village on their side of the border. The southernmost portion of the Naga plains were being cultivated by Crab farmers. Hanari, who led the scouting party, brought the matter to his Daimyo and this began a brief struggle over the land. The Crab said that they were in desperate need of the farmland to feed their troops in the far south, who were battling with the evil of the Dark Lord. The Crab point of view was simple – they protected the southern border from the Shadowlands, and as long as they were doing that, the other clans should expect to support them when times grew sparse. However, the Unicorn knew that if the Crab were allowed to stay, the land would never be returned to them – war or no war.

Finally, political discussion (which neither clan was particularly comfortable with) broke down, and war began. The Unicorn tried to dissuade the Crab from remaining on their southern lands through a series of lightning raids, designed to take out the defenders of the villages and leave the heimin for capture. But the Crab were prepared for battle, and they had cavalry of their own. Arrows flew from the villages, and thundering Crab war-ponies quickly trapped the small Unicorn force. There was no escape.

Not expecting such a vicious battle, Hanari was prepared to surrender himself in exchange for the release of his men, but the Crab general turned him down. Instead, each of Hanari's men were forced to dismount. Before their eyes, every one of their cherished steeds had their throats cut, and bled to death on the ground of the rocky pass. "Listen well, Unicorns, for this is your only warning," the Crab general spoke in sharp, scornful tones. "The next time you invade Crab lands, it will not be your horses who pay the price – but your children."

That general's name was Hida Tsuru. Although the war eventually ended, Shinjo Hanari has never forgotten the cruelty of that act. Nor has he forgotten the name of the Crab general, and he longs for the day when he can take his revenge on Tsuru.

Hanari travels to the yearly tournament held by the Wasp clan, but he has yet to beat the Dragon, Mirumoto Sukune. Indeed, this has

caused quite a friendly rivalry between the two, one which is sometimes seen by others as not so friendly. However, the two men have nothing but respect for each other, and often spend time after the tournaments discussing various improvements to their style with the famed Wasp clan Daimyo, Tsuruchi. Hanari claims that he is beaten because the Wasp tournament is ground-based archery, and if Sukune were ever to shoot against him on horseback, he would beat the Dragon readily.

Hanari is a gruff man, whose eyes are narrow and slitted. His voice is sharp and usually sounds angry, even when he isn't. He does not give compliments; simply the fact that he had nothing to criticize makes his students proud of their work. Underneath it all, Hanari is not a cruel man, nor is he deliberately mean to his students. He knows that their ability with the bow and their horsemanship could save their lives one day, and he intends to make certain that they have that chance to survive. His strictness is for their own good.

However, at any mention of his hated rival, Tsuru, or any indication of the Crab clan at all, Hanari's scowl becomes real, and he clenches his hand on the shaft of his bow. Soon, he says, Tsuru will pay for his actions on that long ago day.

The Otaku

OTAKU KAMOKO

EARTH: 3

Stamina 4

WATER: 3

FIRE: 2

Agility 4

AIR: 3

Reflexes 4

VOID: 4

School/Rank: Otaku Battle Maiden 4

Skills: Etiquette 1, History (Unicorn Clan) 4, Horsemanship 5, Hunting 4, Lore (Horse Family) 4, Poetry 3, Singing 5, Animal Husbandry (Horses) 3, Horse Archery 4, Battle 3, Defense 4, Kenjutsu 5, War Fan 3, Lance 3

Honor: 3.7

Glory: 8.4

Advantages: Great Destiny (One of the Seven Thunders), Ancestor (Otaku), Quick, Social Position (Family Daimyo/Leader of Battle Maidens)

ANCESTOR: OTAKU

5 POINTS

Otaku was Shinjo's most trusted lieutenant and devoted bodyguard. When it came time to select one Unicorn samurai to ride with Shinsei into the Shadowlands, Otaku was already on her steed, ready to leave.

Much folklore surrounds the mysterious Thunder. Many theatrical productions involving Otaku portray her as mute, speaking with a secret language that only she and Shinjo could understand. Other folk tales tell that her voice was one of the most beautiful that the hills of Rokugan ever heard, but that she would only sing for Shinjo. Otherwise, she was silent.

Characters who take Otaku as an Ancestor automatically gain the Voice Advantage. Also, their words are understandable by all mammalian nonhuman creatures. This does not mean that the creatures will comprehend the meaning, nor does it mean that the creatures will obey or respond... but at least the words will be understood.



OTAKU SHIKO 4 POINTS

When the original Otaku left to fight by Shinsei's side, she left behind a small daughter, Otaku Shiko. Raised by her wise father, Ide, Shiko grew into a fine, strong young woman. Her mother's fiery spirit burned in her veins, tempered by the calm eloquence of her diplomatic father's nature. She was skilled, bright, decisive and inventive.

After the defeat of Fu Leng, Shinjo gathered the Ki-Rin Clan together and announced her quest. Otaku Shiko was one of the first to step forward, offering Shinjo her loyalty, protection and friendship. Taking her mother's armor and swords, she followed Shinjo into the unknown.

She stayed by Shinjo's side until the day the Ki-Rin Clan split up in order to find a way back to Rokugan. Shiko proved to be an excellent leader, combining the strength and skills of the warrior and the tact of a diplomat to steer her followers through many perils and adventures.

While her mother is considered to be the first battle maiden, Shiko is the founder of the battle maiden tradition. During her travels with Shinjo, she realized the enormous potential of the saddle and stirrups of the Ujik-hai. She began to practice riding with the new device, to experiment with different techniques of riding and fighting.

Disadvantages: Bad Reputation (Reckless), Brash, Lost Love (Mother/Sensei)

Bred for war. Destined for greatness. Tormented by unfocused hatred. These seem to be the most common descriptions given by those who have associated themselves with the Daimyo of the Otaku family, and the leader of the famed Unicorn Battle Maidens. Some would think that she has lived the charmed life granted to those of her privileged birth, but...

She was born the first daughter of Otaku Kamoko, matriarch of the Otaku family and leader of the Battle Maidens, and Shinjo Kojiro, who upon their marriage took the name of Otaku as his own and became the famed Master of the Otaku Stables. Destined to replace her mother (whose name she took upon her *gempukku*) by right of familial ascension, Kamoko entered the school of the Battle Maidens much earlier than the rest of her generation, and contrary to the tradition of leaving the parental household to attend school, she was afforded the luxury of having her father as her riding sensei, and her mother as her sensei on all other matters, who

had since retired to become the sensei of the Battle Maiden school.

Shortly after she turned twelve, however, catastrophe would end the years of joy spent with her family. As war over a border dispute was becoming inevitable between the Lion and the Unicorn, Kamoko's mother was brought out of retirement to fulfill a critical courier mission. It was the last time Kamoko would ever see her. Word came back many days later that her mother was ambushed, and died honorably fighting the brigands that attacked her, but word quickly spread through certain social circles that her mother was attacked and murdered by a band of Lion bushi sent to intercept the parcel she was delivering. Fueled by a rumor, Kamoko's hatred of the Lion Clan began to grow.

At her *gempukku* ceremony, she arrived mounted upon the foal of her mother's steed with her face painted white, a symbol of mourning for the loss of her mother. In a private tea ceremony with her aunt, Imperial Magistrate and Mistress of the Battle Maidens Otaku Tetsuko, Kamoko vowed, "When I find those responsible for my mother's death, the only thing swifter than my steed will be my revenge!"

It was only a few months later that Kamoko tasted the fruit of battle. The "inevitable" war never took place, but border clashes had been common in the interim. With her appointment to her hereditary title as Daimyo of the Otaku family and Mistress of the Battle Maidens not far off, she and the rest of the newly commissioned Battle Maidens were led by Otaku Tetsuko to stop a Lion scouting party from crossing into Unicorn lands. That Lion "scouting party" was nearly an entire invasion force, and the Battle Maidens found themselves horribly outnumbered. Poised to strike, Tetsuko ordered the maidens to withdraw to more defensible ground, and await reinforcements, but Kamoko's hatred of the Lions overcame her. As Tetsuko turned to leave the field, an ear-piercing cry erupted from the ranks. A lone Battle Maiden charged forward



bearing the standard of her elite sisterhood. Kamoko's mount glowed with a shimmering aura that focused on the bridge of his nose giving the appearance of the fabled horned beast. Seeing that the blessing of Otaku was upon her, the symbol of the one chosen to be their leader, the Battle Maidens charged forward to join her.

Many a Lion bushi that were there refuse to admit that they felt fear at the sight of the Battle Maiden's charge, but their line crumbled, and the Lion formation routed. Attempting to rally his troops, the Lion commander, Matsu Agetoki, was quickly surrounded by Kamoko's Battle Maidens. With a sense of honor still about her, Kamoko offered to allow Agetoki to commit *seppuku*. His response struck her heart as surely as any physical weapon. "You are the daughter of Otaku Kamoko, are you not? A tragic ending to such a glorious life."

"I am, and I bear her name as well."

"Well, then, Little Kamoko, perhaps in exchange for my life, I will tell you who was responsible for taking your mother away from you."

"It is only because I seek justice for my mother's passing, Agetoki-san, that I do not slay you. Now," as she lowered the tip of her katana to his throat, "who murdered my mother?"

Whatever words came out of his mouth were lost in the battle cry of the counterattacking Lion forces. Withdrawal was no longer an option. Matsu Agetoki managed to slip away during her distraction, and Kamoko was forced to give way to the Lion forces as she fell back to safer ground. The murderers of her mother would again go unknown and unpunished.

Shortly thereafter, Otaku Kamoko was rightfully named Daimyo of the Otaku family, and Mistress of the Battle Maidens. On that day, while she bowed before the family she swore to

lead, and the clan she swore to serve, all could see the hatred in her eyes, hidden behind the face paint of purest white. Once again, in her heart, she swore that her mother's killers would pay for their crime.

OTAKU KOJIRO

EARTH: 3

WATER: 3

FIRE: 4

AIR: 3

VOID: 3

School/Rank: Shinjo Bushi 4

Skills: Calligraphy 1, Etiquette 2, History (Horse Families) 5, History (Unicorn Clan) 5, History (Otaku Family) 5, Lore (Horse Families) 5, Lore (Horsemanship) 5, Animal Husbandry (Horses) 5, Theology (Unicorn Kami) 3, Yomanri 4, Kenjutsu 4

Honor: 3.5

Glory: 7.5

Advantages: Social Position (Otaku Stable Master)

Disadvantages: Bad Fortune (Can't Ride/Motion Sickness), Lost Love (Wife), Phobia (Horseback Riding)



OTAKU SHIKO (CONTINUED)

She called her new style of fighting "free-hand riding." With the saddle and stirrups, she was able to ride much faster and further, and with more maneuverability. With her hands free, she was able to utilize many different kinds of weapons. She developed techniques for using almost any weapon from horseback, at thundering speeds.

She taught these new ways she was developing to her family, passing on the knowledge and encouraging others to experiment as well. She knew in her heart that this new form of mounted battle would be a great advantage to her clan – perhaps their key to survival. She encouraged the qualities of loyalty, swift action and fierce determination in her students.

Shiko's fighting techniques, refined and perfected by her descendants, are taught at the Otaku battle maiden school to this day. Her fierce warrior's code shapes the spirit and attitude of one of the finest and most feared fighting forces in all of Rokugan.

A Unicorn who takes Shiko as an Ancestor is as stalwart as her noble ancestor. She may spend a Void point to ignore Wound Ranks for a number of rounds equal to her School Rank.



ANCESTOR: IDE
BIRTH AND DEATH
UNKNOWN
4 POINTS

Ide was a peaceable man, and an extraordinary diplomat. His demeanor was so cordial that he was chosen to be the voice of Shinjo in all dealings with strangers. It is said that although he wore the daisho in camp, he never drew either his katana or his wakizashi. When he met with foreigners, he left his daisho in the hands of a loyal retainer who understood that if the weapons were drawn, the only blood they would spill would be the retainer's. It is due to the influence of Ide that the Unicorn were able to move through so many strange lands without warring all the time.

Those who choose Ide as an ancestor have a powerful ability: as long as they wear neither weapon nor armor, anyone attacking them must first make a Contested roll.

The attacker rolls their Willpower and the Unicorn rolls their Honor. If the attacker rolls higher, he may attack normally. If he fails (the Unicorn rolls higher), he cannot attack that character this round.

He loves horses. He loves to breed them, he loves to care for them, and most of all, he loves to watch them run. He doesn't love to ride them. In fact, he hates being in the saddle. In an extremely bizarre twist of fate, Otaku Kojiro is the only known clan member to suffer from an extreme case of motion sickness. From the time he could mount a horse, Kojiro was an adept rider, as if he had an affinity for riding that most of his young peers wouldn't develop until much later in life. One day, while still rather young, Kojiro took it upon himself to impress his sensei by breaking one of the stable's newest ponies. The task proved more than he was capable of accomplishing, and Kojiro was thrown, landing very hard on his head and shoulder. The physicians said that he should have been killed by the fall, and that only the blessing of Mother Shinjo saved him. His survival, however, cost him dearly.

Once he had recovered enough to get back in the saddle, he fell violently ill. No one could explain his affliction other than a result of the fall, and punishment for his arrogance in trying to break the pony without the proper training. He knows the truth. The swaying motion of being mounted turns his stomach. It takes only moments after the horse starts moving before all color in his face washes away, and he starts to perspire profusely. It takes only seconds more before his stomach muscles cramp violently to the point of incapacitation. Because of his status within the clan, he knows he must ride so as to be an example to the others, but because of his condition, he prefers to ride in a wagon.

Born into the Shinjo family, Kojiro is the only son of eight children. This made him the prime candidate to marry the woman who would become the Daimyo of the Otaku family, more for his family's ability to produce daughters than anything else. But it also produced an interesting situation. Although in Rokugan it is not necessary to love one's mate *per se*, Kojiro is certainly an exception. He adored his wife, and although they only had one child, a daughter (of course), he loved her dearly as well. Thus, it came as a heavy blow to learn of his wife's death, and the rumors of who was responsible. However, where his daughter chose to seek revenge, Kojiro retreated into himself, content to believe that only one woman could share his bed. He has since thrown himself into the tedious position of Otaku Stable Master, and excels in his mastery of breeding and

caring for the life line of his clan. Kojiro has never remarried nor even sought comfort in the arms of another woman. His happiness comes from the pride he feels when he sees his daughter, Otaku Kamoko, lead her Battle Maidens, and watching his horses run. He remains solemn in his life, calling, and utterly devoted to the memory of his wife.

The Ide

IDE TADAJI

EARTH: 2

Willpower 3

WATER: 3

FIRE: 4

AIR: 4

VOID: 4

School/Rank: Ide Emissary 4

Skills: Commerce 3, Courtier 4, Etiquette 4, History (Rokugan) 2, History (Unicorn Clan) 2, Knife 2, Law 4, Lore (Dragon Clan) 2, Lore (Political) 4, Lore (Shugenja) 2, Oratory/Rhetoric 3, Shintao 3, Theology 2

Honor: 2

Glory: 5

Advantages: Allies (Shosuro Taberu, Iuchi Daiyu), Clear Thinker, Social Position (Ambassador to the Imperial Court), Voice

Disadvantages: Bad Fortune (Born under a bad sign), Lame

Ide Tadaji is an anomaly among his clan. Born with a club foot, he has never enjoyed the thrill of riding that his brothers and sisters so espouse. Always quiet, shy and retiring among his own people, Tadaji never felt that he "belonged" with them. Among the outgoing battle maidens and swift bushi, Tadaji seems out of place. When he was a child, his parents hid the boy from the other noble families of the Ide, knowing that his deformity would cause them to reject or exile the boy. As a child, Tadaji stood on the plains of the Unicorn, watching the other boys of the village run and play under an expansive sky. He saw them race to catch the young foals and fillies that would one day become their battle steeds, and he stood on the sidelines as the boys played "bushi" with long sticks. He never joined them in their play - his crippled foot would have become obvious all too rapidly, and so his parents forbade it. But always he watched them, and longed to



win in their games. Hoping that Tadaji would become a shugenja, his parents spoke only to Iuchi Daiyu, the clan lore keeper, and pleaded with him to teach their son his trade.

But Tadaji never showed promise for spellcraft either, keeping his thoughts to himself and fumbling even the simplest of incantations. During his tenure as Daiyu's unofficial "apprentice", however, he learned much of the history of the Unicorn, and showed great interest in learning the about the people of Rokugan as well. The boy's earnest simplicity touched the heart of the shugenja, and even though he showed no aptitude for the calling of magic, Daiyu spent much time with him and spoke to him the ancient lore of their people. Daiyu was Tadaji's only friend in the world, and the shugenja's heart was touched by the quiet, serious little man in boy's clothing. Thus, when his *empukku* grew near, and his deformity could no longer be hidden, Daiyu spoke on Tadaji's behalf, saying that perhaps the young man could be

useful to the clan. The daimyo of the Ide chose to send Tadaji away to a monastery within the Dragon lands, to learn about the people of Rokugan and their ways.

Many years after he had been sent away, Ide Tadaji returned to the lands of the Unicorn for the funeral of the Ide daimyo who had passed sentence on him. Tadaji amazed his clan members – he was no longer the weak, quiet boy they all remembered. His voice had become stentorian, his demeanor confident and he was schooled in the many peculiarities of the Rokugani court. It was whispered that Tadaji had become more Rokugani than Unicorn, and some members of his own family stared at him with concerned eyes, wondering what mysteries the Dragon had taught him in their mountain fastness. Although they stood apart from Tadaji at first, when Daiyu greeted Tadaji with open arms, the clan could do no less. Although still mistrusted, Tadaji had come home.

He was immediately accepted into the Ide emissary school, where he excelled. Between his time at the school, and the lessons he learned from his mentor, Daiyu, Tadaji grew into a very reputable advisor and courtier within only a few years. Although he had joined the school significantly later than his peers, Tadaji continued to excel and impress the daimyos of his clan.

When the Emperor's court passed through the lands of the Unicorn, Tadaji's new skills were needed by his daimyo. Shinjo Yokatsu, then the new daimyo of the Unicorn clan, called Tadaji into his personal chambers and asked him to advise the Unicorn on how to receive the Imperial Court. Through Tadaji's adept maneuvering and quick thinking, the Emperor's

ANCESTOR: IUCHI
DIED CA. 200
3 POINTS

Iuchi was one of the most resourceful shugenja in early Rokugan. He learned quickly from *gaijin* magic, and adapted it to his own metaphysical understandings. In the Burning Sands he carefully studied the alchemists' views of the elements, and how they interacted. This knowledge he was able to adapt to his teachings, making him even more resourceful.

Once a day, characters with Iuchi as an ancestor may use their Void in the place of any other Ring when casting spells.





**ANCESTOR: LUCHI
ATESORO
354-418
6 POINTS**

luchi Atesoro was the first of the luchi family to pursue a life as a bushi instead of a shugenja. While there were bushi adopted into the family, Atesoro was the first male descendant to take that path. Atesoro never wore armor (the family having at that time no retainers skilled in armoring), and thus was forced to find other ways to defend himself. He adapted the mysterious luchi shugenja schooling to his martial training, and eventually became a master of seeming to be where he wasn't. Tales tell of him charging a large group of barbarian archers, weaving and dodging his way while the arrows fell about him like rain.

Unfortunately, his technique has been lost over the years, but those with a close karmic tie to him can occasionally display a shadow of his talent. Characters with Atesoro as an ancestor may dodge arrows and other projectiles. Characters who fire arrows (or other ranged attacks) at this character do so as if this character were at Full Defense, even if he is performing a Full Attack.

stay in Shinjo Palace went smoothly and the Unicorn gained much favor in the court of Hantei. Yokatsu was so impressed with Tadaji's newfound skills that he sent Tadaji away from the lands of the Unicorn again – but this time, the dismissal was not one of shame, but of honor. Ide Tadaji went to the Imperial Palace of the Hantei, on the plains of Otsan Uchi far from the lands of the Unicorn.

Since that time, Tadaji has served his clan through politics and peace, rather than impetuous warfare. But life in the Imperial Palace brings with it many of its own challenges, and life for Tadaji has become more complex and dangerous than the young crippled boy on the plains could ever have anticipated. The ancient plots of the Crane and the twisted grip of the Scorpion draw him on every side, and it is all he can do to keep his voice heard in the furor and precision of the Court. However, he has an unlikely friend in the Imperial Palace.

While waiting for an appointment with the Lion ambassador, Tadaji sat quietly on his tatami, fanning himself lightly from the hot ocean breezes.

As he rested, composing his thoughts and the words he would use, one of the rice paper doors slid gently open, and a young man dressed in a simple brown kimono entered the room. "So sorry," the man began, bowing slightly to Tadaji. "Are you waiting to see Akodo-san?" Tadaji assured the young man that he was, but that he would be only too happy for the company during the wait.

The two men sat for nearly an hour, discussing various occurrences in the court that day, and they soon found that they had much in common. When the Lion ambassador's servant stepped out and told them apologetically that Akodo-san would not be available that day, the two men left together, and spent some time in the gardens of the Palace. The young man's name was Shosuro Taberu, and he was a member of the Scorpion clan envoy to the Imperial palace. Eventually, the two began to spend much time together in the gardens of the Imperial Palace – sharing a common interest in the game of Go. On one of the stone boards in the garden, they sometimes leave a game in process, waiting nearly weeks between turns as the court calls them to their duties elsewhere, but ever returning to the intricate competition.

The Luchi

LUCHI KARASU

EARTH: 3

Willpower 4

WATER: 3

FIRE: 2

Intelligence 3

AIR: 2

VOID: 3

School/Rank: Luchi Shugenja 3

Skills: Defense 3, Herbalism 3, Horsemanship 2, Hunting 4, Lore (Shadowlands) 4, Calligraphy 4, Medicine 3, Meditation 3, Sai 3

Honor: 2.2

Glory: 6.5

Advantages: Ally (Kuni Yori)

Disadvantages: Permanent Wound, Dark Secret, Benten's Curse

Spells: Not This Day, Dance of the Unicorn, Ride Through the Night, Tomb of Jade, Jade Strike, Fires From Within, The Burning Sands, The Four Winds' Favor, Gate to Nowhere, Heart of the Inferno, The Ties That Bind

Luchi Karasu, the enigmatic and mysterious shugenja of the Unicorn, has traveled the dark southlands of the Empire, beyond the great Kai Wall. He followed what he believed to be the way of his clan since the days of Shinjo herself – to travel beyond the physical barriers of the world into the unknown. He has made it his life's mission to seek the truth, to travel farther and investigate deeper than anyone before him.

The mask he wears is from one such journey. After his *gempukku*, Karasu placed his spells and belongings in a bag, and began to travel the length and breadth of Rokugan, sending letters home at each stop. He included descriptions of the Dragon Mountains, the seas on which Crane trading ships sail, from the cold northern lands of the Phoenix, to the southern tip of the Shinomen Forest. When he reached the Crab lands, they spoke to him of the horrors of the Shadowlands, the dark creatures and foul magic there. But these things only intrigued the young shugenja, and he was determined to travel farther.

He did not return for many months, until one day a scouting party of Crab bushi came upon Karasu, half mad from hunger and badly wounded. His body was floating on a log in the river, and there was no way to tell how far south



Karasu is a strange man, changed forever by his experience. He speaks in a deep, rasping voice that sounds like fingernails across a slate. Behind his mask, his eyes still glow red, illuminating the darkness, and his twisted hands have a tight grip on his sai. He still communicates with Kuni Yori, but their letters are written in a strange code – or some language which is not commonly known to Rokugan. Sometimes, for no apparent reason, Karasu will stand on the southern wall of Iuchi palace, always looking to the south, twisting the handles of his sai as if preparing for some battle.

Three years ago, Karasu was married to a young Kuni, a cousin of Kuni Yori. She is a quiet girl for a Crab, and has made many friends in the Unicorn lands. But still, some say she is here to minister to some strange illness that Karasu gained while in the Shadowlands, a sickness which only the Kuni know how to treat. The two have no children, and Iuchi Hiruko, Karasu's wife, can often be found on the walls with her husband, speaking in low tones as they watch the distant south.

He had traveled before he was injured. His face had been tortured, the skin removed in strips like a woven basket, and his eyes had become strange glowing red orbs that lacked irises or pupils. The Crab brought him back to Hida Palace, where Kuni Yori tended to his wounds and tried to discover what had occurred to the young Unicorn. Whatever Karasu said in his delirium has been kept between the two, and never have either of them shared the information with others.

Some say that Karasu found the darkest heart of the Shadowlands – the foul pit from which the oni are said to spring. Others say that the goblins, minions of Fu Leng, captured him and spent their days peeling the flesh from his body. Whatever the reason, Karasu now bears hideous scars across his face, their woven texture crisscrossing his features like some sadistic wood-carving. He wears a mask made for him by Kuni Yori, to hide the worst of his disfigurement, although his voice is still husky and coarse.

IUCHI DAIYU

- EARTH:** 3
Willpower 4
- WATER:** 2
Intelligence 4
- FIRE:** 3
- AIR:** 3
Awareness 4
- VOID:** 4
- School/Rank:** Iuchi Shugenja 4
- Skills:** Astrology 3, Calligraphy 4, Kenjutsu 3, Lore (Prophecies) 4, Lore (Woodland Animal 4), Medicine 2, Meditation 3, Shintao 5, Theology 4

INNER GIFT (6 POINT ADVANTAGE FROM WAY OF THE CRANE)

The character with Inner Gift has been blessed with an uncontrollable talent, perhaps empathy, precognition, or the ability to sense when danger is near. It is up to the GM to let the character know when their gift activates, and what that means to the current situation. A character with the inner gift of precognition, for example, might have a series of dreams about a bloody knife, only to wake up one morning and find their dearest friend has been assassinated. A character with empathy might be able to tell when someone is lying to them, or a character with a gift of psychometry (reading emotions from objects) might gain a flash of insight when they pick up a samurai's katana. The gift must be clearly defined at the time a character purchases this Advantage. The Gifts a character can choose are: precognition, animal speech, psychometry, and empathy.



**ANCESTOR:
MOTO SANJO
BORN 872;
DEATH UNKNOWN
0 POINTS**

Not all karmic ties with one's ancestors are beneficial... this is one such example. Moto Sanjo was one of the many brave (and overconfident) samurai who followed Moto Tsume on his doomed raid into the Shadowlands. No one knows his fate – no one knows the fate of any of the Moto who failed to return – but another Moto samurai was clutching Sanjo's broken katana when he staggered back into the Unicorn camp.

Moto Sanjo had had a number of children before he vanished, and now his spirit haunts those of his line. Whatever happened to him in the Shadowlands, it has driven his spirit mad. Some say that if his katana can be reforged, it will heal his spirit and allow him to move into the next world, for the katana is the soul of a samurai. Others stoutly maintain that he has been completely corrupted, and will hunger for the flesh and blood of the living for as long as he has descendants.

Honor: 3.4

Glory: 7.9

Advantages: Way of the Land, Inner Gift (Speak with animals)

Spells: Benevolent Protection of Shinsei, Calling the Elements, Elemental Ward, Hands of Jurojin, Accounts of Shorihotsu, Benten's Touch, Cloak of Night, Command the Mind, Quiescence of Air, Wind-Borne Speed, Wind-Borne Slumbers, Yari of Air, Fist of Osano-Wo, Fury of Osano-Wo, Inflammation, Teleportation, Roaming the Wide Plains, When Two Become One, Yuki's Blessing, The World Is Not Heavy

Iuchi Daiyu is the oldest of the shugenja of the Unicorn clan, and the keeper of its prophecies and secret lore. His face is unlined and young despite his years, and his eyes have a constant faraway look to them. Daiyu was the only child of loving parents who cherished him, providing him every opportunity they could afford. He was taught to be a shugenja at the school of the Iuchi, and when a visiting Isawa offered him the opportunity to travel to the lands of the Phoenix to study with the elemental masters, he politely refused. "There is no knowledge that can be given to me," he said, "that I cannot one day attain for myself."

Daiyu is a self-made man, following his instinct and intuition to learn the knowledge of the world around him. He teaches his students to study the environment, learning from the way the animals interrelate and how they are affected by changes in their world. As a student, his experiments led him to the knowledge that all things in the world are related, and by changing one small facet, you change the world. This knowledge gave Daiyu the strength to learn his secrets alone, and to follow his heart rather than the dogma of the other clans. His magic is a unique blend of spell craft half-remembered in lore from the Land of the Burning Sands and modern Rokugani practice. With its powers, he shields himself from all harmful magics, as well as some physical dangers.

But Iuchi Daiyu has one more gift, one that he does not tell his students. Sometimes, when he is alone in the wilderness, studying the animals and learning of the ways of the natural world, he can almost – almost – understand their speech. For years, he has worked with this talent to refine it,



to hone his abilities to the point that he could learn, not simply from observing the animals, but from the animals themselves. As yet, he has been unable to transform the half-understood phrases into concrete speech, but he spends much of his time in the woodlands around the Unicorn palace... watching.

HORIUCHI SHOAN

EARTH: 2

WATER: 3

Perception 4

FIRE: 3

Intelligence 4

AIR: 3

VOID: 2

School/Rank: Iuchi Shugenja 1

Skills: Calligraphy 3, Etiquette 4, Herbalism 3, History (Land of the Winds) 4, History (Rokugan) 3, Horsemanship 2, Kenjutsu 1, Lore (Wizard magics) 3, Poetry 4, Shintao 2, Singing 3, Storytelling 4

Honor: 2.9



Glory: 7

Advantages: Clear Thinker, Social Position (Horiuchi Daimyo)

Disadvantages: Reputation: Shy, Small, Lost Love

Spells: Castle of Water, Speed of the Waterfall, Path to Inner Peace, Evil Ward, Amaterasu's Blessing, Benevolent Protection of Shinsei

Upon her graduation from the Unicorn shugenja school, Iuchi Shoan, a quiet, unassuming shugenja served as *Josei-kateikyoshi* (governess) to Shinjo Yokatsu's two children. She was a marvelous storyteller and singer and taught the children Rokugan's wisdom as well as the wisdom the Unicorn learned outside of Rokugan's borders.

When Yokatsu's children - Shono and Shonoko - were five and seven, Shoan was accompanying them on a trek to the Lion lands. The caravan was ambushed by bandits, and while

the Unicorn samurai threw their bodies against the spears of the bandits, Shoan fled with a child under each arm.

Her flight was not fast enough, however, and she found herself surrounded by bandits. A quick Castle of Water spell surrounded her and the children as the Unicorn samurai re-grouped and dispatched the bandits.

Days later, when Yokatsu learned of her courage, he added "Hori" to her family name, which means "moat."

She is a peaceful woman, and often spends time alone, reading the great works of Rokugani masters. Some might term her bookish and shy, but when she is with the children, Shoan is outgoing and her bright laughter fills the room. She is extremely intelligent, and often speaks of concepts and ideas which are difficult to understand; that is, when she can be persuaded to speak. She is small, and slender, standing only 4'11", with dark hair that reaches to her feet and bright, shy eyes. When she speaks, it is in a quiet, halting voice - unless she is with her wards. Then, she is quick and clever, able to show them the richness of poetry and literature in descriptive images and adept metaphor.

Shoan's parents spent much time trying to marry their daughter to the eligible young men of the Unicorn clan, and then to members of other clans, but Shoan has never married, and most young samurai find her a bit bland and bookish for their taste. It is whispered behind her back that she met a young Crane while she was serving as

Ide Tadaji's secretary in the Imperial court - another way her parents tried to get her out of the library and into society - and that he stole her heart, but did not love her in return. She will not speak of it, but sometimes when she reads love poetry, she has been known to dream out the window toward the far away sea.

She is the only Horiuchi in the Empire, and she may very well be the last.

**ANCESTOR:
MOTO SANJO
(CONTINUED)**

Whatever the case, those of his blood always hear his maniacal laugh whenever Shadowlands creatures are near. While this acts as an early warning system (it alerts the character even if he can't see the creatures), it is also demoralizing: the character must always drop his highest die on every die roll while fighting Shadowlands. The character can avoid this penalty for one day if he succeeds in passing an honor test at TN 10.





Chapter Five



Sample Unicorn Characters

Ide Diplomat

Some said that the blood of the original Ide had found a home in you when you were born, and that certainly seems to be the case. You catch eyes when you walk in the room, and when you speak, other conversation dies, surrendering to the sound of your voice. You are a natural negotiator, and learned the techniques of your family well.

When it came time to employ those techniques at the Emerald Palace, in the very heart of Otosan Uchi, you were surprised and dismayed by your first failure. You were appalled to discover that the rumors were true - the other clans really did consider Unicorns to be little more than unwashed undereducated barbarian buffoons. They thought you did not understand the ways of the court.

But, oh, you did understand. And you saw the way that Bayushi Kachiko, the wife of the Scorpion daimyo, twisted those rules. And, learning from her, you saw how you could gain the upper hand. You watched her carefully, learned her every move and nuance, learned how she could flirt and tease. And you decided to use this skill, masking it behind a façade of barbarian foolishness. While Kachiko teased, you would seduce, tricking the over-cultured Rokugani into thinking they had gotten the better of you, while it was actually you manipulating events.

Once you put your plan into action, oh, the success you've had! You've pillowed with diplomats from many clans, reading their carefully-guarded letters while they slept. You've shuffled out of their chambers, pretending to hold back tears of shame as you fingered the stolen seal secreted in your kimono. And, in the very heat of passion, many secrets slipped past their lips.

There has been one mistake. Once, you conceived a child by another clan's daimyo. You hid the truth, and gave the child into the care of a trusted servant, then publicly adopted him as your own. You love the child dearly, but you can never tell him the truth, for if word got out, it could mean war.





Legend of the Five Rings

Name:
Ide Diplomat

Clan:
Unicorn

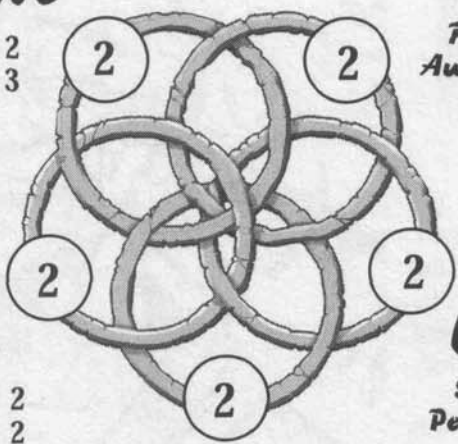
Profession:
Emissary

Fire

Agility: 2
Intelligence: 3

Air

Reflexes: 2
Awareness: 4



Earth

Stamina: 2
Willpower: 2

Water

Strength: 2
Perception: 3

Void

Void Points Spent:

Primary Weapon

None

Primary Armor

None

TN to be Hit

(Reflexes x 5 + Armor)

10

Skills

| | |
|---------------|---|
| Commerce | 1 |
| Courtier | 2 |
| Etiquette | 1 |
| Gaijin Lore | 1 |
| Horsemanship | 1 |
| Investigation | 1 |
| Kenjutsu | 1 |
| Law | 1 |
| Seduction | 2 |
| Shintao | 1 |
| Sincerity | 2 |

Insight: 114

Techniques

| |
|------------------|
| The Heart Speaks |
| |
| |
| |
| |
| |

School: Ide Emissary **Rank:** 1

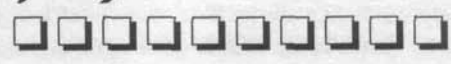
Wounds

| | |
|---|------|
| 4 | -0 |
| 4 | -1 |
| 4 | -2 |
| 4 | -3 |
| 4 | -4 |
| 4 | Down |
| 4 | Out |
| 4 | Dead |

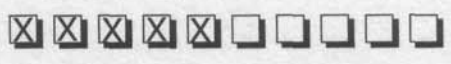
Advantages/ Disadvantages

| | |
|---------------|----|
| Blackmail | +2 |
| Clear Thinker | +2 |
| Read Lips | +2 |
| Voice | +2 |
| Dark Secret | -5 |
| Dependent | -4 |

Glory: 1



Honor: 3



Experience Points:

Inchi Holy Man

You are a holy man, though most of the dour spellweavers in Rokugan deny that fact. Unlike them, you are filled with the joy of life. You have spent your years seeking enlightenment by experiencing the world, and while your experiences may not yet have enlightened you, at least they have lightened your heart.

Everything goes your way. The world knows you, and will not harm you, for you understand it. Evil falls upon the unenlightened all around you, but you are left untouched. Your connection with the celestial order also displays itself in the magic which is your trade, for the spells of your morose Rokugani detractors arm you. You, of course, want to help these unhappy souls, free them from the chains that bind them to another incarnation in a dreary monastic life, until they at last understand the meaning of the Tao of Shinsei. You like to debate their religion with them, and the countless fortunes to whom they pray. You are quick to point out the fallacies of their system, as well as their misconceptions of the Tao.

Sometimes they mock your name, as well. You observe that only the truly enlightened can pronounce such a name, and that those who have difficulties ought to remember that not only can you pronounce it, you were born with it.

Needless to say, your quick tongue gets you into a lot of duels. It's only to be expected when dealing with self-important scholars who don't understand the true meaning of enlightenment. Usually any disputes which arise as a result of your debate tactics are resolved with a quick strike of your bo. Ah, well. Chaos is the stuff of challenges, and challenges breed conquest, and conquest brings enlightenment. Even the short-sighted shugenja of the other clans have a part to play in your life.





Legend of the Five Rings

Name:
Iuchi Holy Man

Clan:
Unicorn

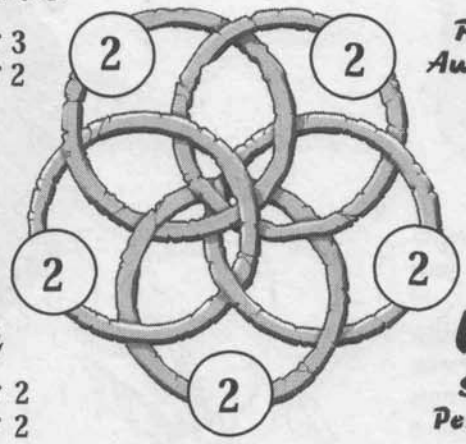
Profession:
Shugenja

Fire

Agility: 3
Intelligence: 2

Air

Reflexes: 2
Awareness: 3



Earth

Stamina: 2
Willpower: 2

Water

Strength: 2
Perception: 3

Void

Void Points Spent:

Primary Weapon

Bo Staff 2k2

Primary Armor

None

TN to be Hit

(Reflexes x 5 + Armor)

10

Skills

| | |
|--------------|---|
| Bojutsu | 2 |
| Calligraphy | 2 |
| Defense | 1 |
| Etiquette | 1 |
| Herbalism | 1 |
| Horsemanship | 2 |
| Hunting | 1 |
| Jujutsu | 1 |
| Meditation | 1 |
| Shintao | 1 |
| Theology | 1 |

Insight: 114

Spells

- Sense, Commune, Summon,
- Counterspell, Heart of Nature,
- The Penetrating Drop, Yuki's
- Blessing, Amaterasu's Anger, The
- Burning Sands, Force of Will

School: Iuchi Shugenja

Rank: 1

Wounds

| | |
|---|------|
| 4 | -0 |
| 4 | -1 |
| 4 | -2 |
| 4 | -3 |
| 4 | -4 |
| 4 | Down |
| 4 | Out |
| 4 | Dead |

Advantages/ Disadvantages

| | |
|------------------|----|
| Magic Resistance | +6 |
| Luck | +4 |
| Quick | +3 |
| Brash | -2 |
| Gaijin Name | -1 |

Glory: 0

□□□□□□□□□□

Honor: 2

☒☒☒☒☒☒□□□□□

Experience Points:

Moto Hunter

Just take a long drag on the hookah and you won't have to think about your story. You don't want to think about your story. You don't want to think at all.

Things started off bad. You knew your life would be rough when you realized what it meant to be a Moto. Start out with your name tainted for eternity because some of your ancestors had their souls eaten. Work your whole life against the evil power of Fu Leng just to try to clear your name. Tough work, but you had a vision then, you had a drive. Everyone said you had a spirit like steel. They were wrong, of course, but you didn't care. Now they say you have found the true meaning of the Tao of Shinsei, that you understand the essential truth of nonbeing. Maybe that's closer to the truth, because when the opium really hits, you forget who you are.

You used to have a joy of life, too, but that was before the Shadowlands stole away that part of your soul. You liked music and poetry, hunting with your falcons at dawn. You felt the power of the world, and it helped you go on.

No more. Not since you faced the creature that was once your great-great-whatever-great-grandfather. You recognized his face, withered though it was, from the paintings. You recognized the armor; the little embellishments that used to mark your lineage before the family started wearing white. You knew it was him. And you faced him. The others fled, but you were cut off. You faced him because you had to. And though you killed him, you often wonder who really won that battle. Which, of course, is why you take opium.

The others, they think you're brave, and now that you've proven your worth you are no longer distracted by temporal pleasures like women and song and drink and gambling. Fine. Let them think that. You just want another shot at that opium so you don't have to remember that black day and all those things it did that you've never told anyone. And when you can't get it out of your mind, you go back into the Shadowlands and kill some more of those... those *things* until your mind is again at rest.





Legend of the Five Rings

Name:
Moto Hunter

Clan:
Unicorn

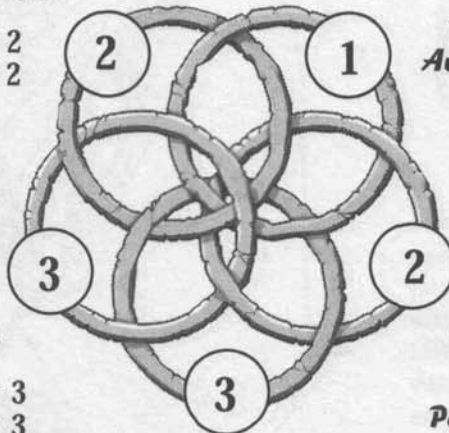
Profession:
Bushi

Fire

Agility: 2
Intelligence: 2

Air

Reflexes: 2
Awareness: 1



Earth

Stamina: 3
Willpower: 3

Water

Strength: 3
Perception: 2

Void

Void Points Spent:

Insight: 127

Techniques

| |
|----------------------|
| Purity of the Breath |
| |
| |
| |
| |
| |

Primary Weapon

Fine Katana 4k2

Primary Armor

Fine Heavy Armor

TN to be Hit

(Reflexes x 5 + Armor)

10

{23 with armor/technique}

Skills

| | |
|------------------|---|
| Battle | 1 |
| Defense | 1 |
| Horsemanship | 2 |
| Hunting | 2 |
| Jiu-jitsu | 1 |
| Kenjutsu | 3 |
| Meditation | 1 |
| Naginata-jutsu | 1 |
| Shadowlands Lore | 2 |
| Stealth | 1 |
| Yomanri | 2 |

Wounds

| | |
|---|------|
| 6 | -0 |
| 6 | -1 |
| 6 | -2 |
| 6 | -3 |
| 6 | -4 |
| 6 | Down |
| 6 | Out |
| 6 | Dead |

School: Moto Bushi

Rank: 1

Advantages/ Disadvantages

| | |
|------------------|----|
| Gaijin Gear | +2 |
| Irreproachable | +2 |
| Moto Curse | 0 |
| Chem. Dependency | -3 |
| Weakness | -5 |

Glory: 1



Honor: 2



Experience Points:

Shinjo Caravan Master

You were born the smaller of two fraternal twins. As you grew, you lived in your brother's shadow, both literally and figuratively. He was large, strong, fast; you were small and weak. You were regularly beaten by your older brother. Worse yet, his friends and whatever bullies might be around would join in. Even younger kids could get the better of you, for they seemed to have the grace and strength – and, most of all, the size – they needed to get the best of you.

You tried to learn. You studied kenjutsu, though it made you nervous, and the lessons regularly left you bruised. And one day, you tried to take a stand. You grabbed a tanto to defend yourself against your brother, but he seized your father's wakizashi, and with a clean, fast, powerful stroke, he took off all four fingers of your left hand. You got in trouble for staining the woodwork with your blood. Your brother received the wakizashi as a gift. The event has scarred your psyche to this day.

Your father favored your brother in all things, but your mother saw the power in your smile, and she helped you. She managed to find a place for you in the Ide school, a place without swords and fighting and strength to be feared. There, they recognize talent, and they apply the code of bushido to those whom the fates denied the fortitude to wield a daisho. There, your lack of a full hand was seen as a strength, for it made it even clearer that you would not – could not – wield a sword against someone with whom you were negotiating.

You studied under a caravan master, blithely ignoring the samurai prejudice against commerce. You traveled, and saw more of the world than these self-aggrandizing samurai bushi. And though you still fear steel, today finds you in a good mood. You tell jokes, smile often, and regale everyone with your haiku. No more do the sneers and comments of the haughty bushi depress you, for in the end, you know they will turn to you for the items they need.





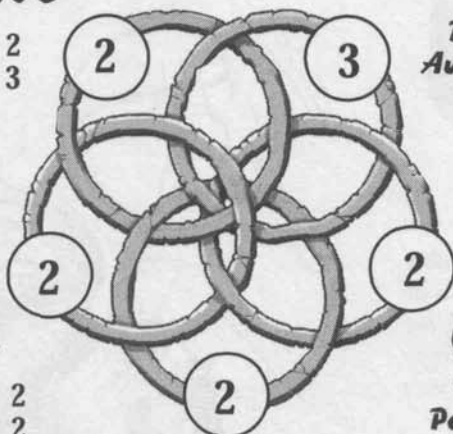
Legend of the Five Rings

Name: Shinjo Caravan Master
Clan: Unicorn

Profession: Emissary

Fire

Agility: 2
 Intelligence: 3



Earth

Stamina: 2
 Willpower: 2

Air

Reflexes: 3
 Awareness: 3

Water

Strength: 2
 Perception: 2

Void

Void Points Spent:

Techniques

| | |
|------------------|--|
| The Heart Speaks | |
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |

Primary Weapon

Fine Wakizashi 2k2

Primary Armor

None

TN to be Hit

(Reflexes x 5 + Armor)

15

Skills

| | | | |
|------------------------|---|--------------|---|
| Bard | 1 | Meditation | 1 |
| Commerce | 3 | Poetry | 1 |
| Craft (Tack & Harness) | 1 | Sincerity | 3 |
| Defense | 1 | Tea Ceremony | 2 |
| Etiquette | 3 | | |
| Gaijin Lore | 2 | | |
| Horsemanship | 2 | | |
| Investigation | 2 | | |
| Kenjutsu | 2 | | |
| Law | 2 | | |

Insight: 136

Wounds

| | |
|---|------|
| 4 | -0 |
| 4 | -1 |
| 4 | -2 |
| 4 | -3 |
| 4 | -4 |
| 4 | Down |
| 4 | Out |
| 4 | Dead |

School: Ide Emissary

Rank: 1

Advantages/ Disadvantages

| | |
|---------------------|----|
| Ally | +3 |
| Ally | +3 |
| Small | -3 |
| Phobia (Combat) | -2 |
| Missing Limb (hand) | -3 |

Glory: 1

□□□□□□□□□□

Honor: 2

☒☒☒☒☒□□□□□□

Experience Points:

Otaku Battle Maiden

You have a great destiny.

At least that's what the spirit of your venerable grandmother keeps telling you, so it must be true. It is a great honor to be the focus of the attention of your ancestor (even if her impetuous nature caused her to get pulled in half by a hungry ogre shortly after your mother was born), so you do your very best to live up to her expectations.

You only hope that your mettle will be up to the test, for your grandmother sets a very high standard. She expects you to be everything that she expected herself to be – which, of course, proved a little too much for her. Perhaps, you tell yourself, you inherited her dharma.

Your grandmother provides you with great help. She uses the force of her chi to keep you from falling when the going is treacherous, and her spirit bears a part of the pain you suffer when you are injured in combat. She stands beside you in combat, lending you her courage and strength so that you can face the most fearsome foes without hesitation. She encourages you in all things, makes great plans, and tells you of her admiration and pride in your accomplishments.

Unfortunately, she is also sometimes a bit of a distraction. At times her fury and excitement distract you during combat, as her spirit cheers your successes or criticizes your mistakes (often mistakes you make when you are distracted by her cheers). At times her pressing, wheedling voice (inaudible to others) interferes with your conversations, and there are more than a few out there who believe you have a very short attention span, or, worse yet, no respect for them.

And, at times, she demands that you stand and fight against insurmountable odds. It is hard to ignore her, especially when honor hangs in the balance, so often you stand and fight when even Lions and Crabs would look for an escape. It has almost been your death once already.

But you dare not question her judgment. She is, after all, a venerable ancestor, and due great respect. To deal with her as

you wish, you must first earn her respect. And that means following her direction, and succeeding where she failed.





Legend of the Five Rings

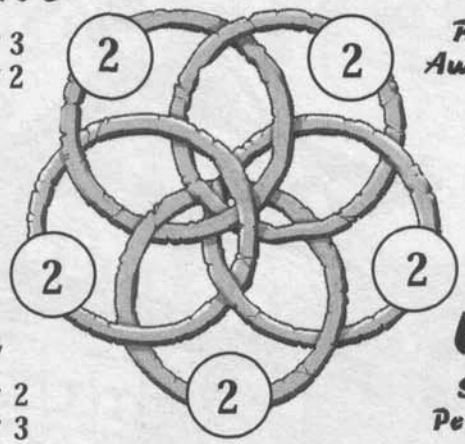
Name: Otaku Battle Maiden **Clan:** Unicorn **Profession:** Battle Maiden

Fire
Agility: 3
Intelligence: 2

Air
Reflexes: 4
Awareness: 2

Earth
Stamina: 2
Willpower: 3

Water
Strength: 2
Perception: 2



Void
Void Points Spent:

Primary Weapon
Fine Katana 4k2

Primary Armor
Light Armor

TN to be Hit
(Reflexes x 5 + Armor)
20
(25 with armor)

Skills

| | |
|--------------|---|
| Battle | 2 |
| Courtier | 1 |
| Defense | 2 |
| Etiquette | 1 |
| Horsemanship | 2 |
| Hunting | 2 |
| Kenjutsu | 1 |
| Lance | 2 |
| Meditation | 1 |
| Shintao | 1 |
| Sincerity | 1 |
| Yarijutsu | 1 |

Insight: 117

Techniques

| | |
|-------------------|--|
| Riding in Harmony | |
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |

School: Otaku Battle Maiden **Rank:** 1

Wounds

| | |
|---|-------|
| 4 | -0 |
| 4 | -1 -0 |
| 4 | -2 -1 |
| 4 | -3 -2 |
| 4 | -4 -3 |
| 4 | Down |
| 4 | Out |
| 4 | Dead |

Advantages/Disadvantages

| | |
|-----------------------|----|
| Perfect Balance | +2 |
| Strength of the Earth | +2 |
| Driven (gain glory) | -3 |
| Haunted | -2 |
| Overconfident | -3 |

Glory: 0
☒☒☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐

Honor: 3
☒☒☒☒☒☐☐☐☐☐☐

Experience Points:



Appendices





Appendix I: Strategy and Tactics

The Effects Of Cavalry On Warfare In Rokugan

THE SADDLE & STIRRUP

With the exception of the new horse breeds, quite possibly the greatest discovery of the Ki-Rin clan during their travels west was the saddle and the stirrup. Up to that point, the Ki-Rin were considered the masters of bareback horse riding, but bareback riding does have its limitations. Of course, until the Unicorn returned with the saddle and stirrup, bare back riding was the only way to ride. Bare back riding is by no means a simple task, and requires a tremendous amount of leg strength and balance on behalf of the rider. (Characters must have Horsemanship 3 to ride bareback.)

One of the first cultures to be encountered by the clan were nomadic horse people riding large mounts (the *gaijin* riding horse) from a seat fashioned of tanned and dried animal skins on the horse's back, and strapped around the horse's midsection. Furthermore, this new device had foot-holds attached to its bottom, thereby allowing the rider to stand in the saddle. The new saddle/stirrup combination not only afforded the rider greater balance and comfort, but it also allowed him to concentrate on riding the horse instead of concentrating on not falling off. Horses also seemed more comfortable bearing a rider in

a saddle, and thus performed better in travel and in combat.

In battle, the stirrup allowed the rider to actually stand up while riding, giving greater flexibility in the use of polearms, but also allowed the introduction of another innovation of the nomads, the Horse Archer. Riders who can stand in the stirrups are afforded the necessary amount of space and flexibility required to fire a bow. As a matter of fact, the Dai-kyu (or horse bow) did not exist in Rokugan until the Unicorn clan returned.

CAVALRY UPON THE RETURN OF THE UNICORN CLAN

Prior to the Unicorn's return, warfare in Rokugan was a straightforward infantry brawl. The opposing generals would line up their troops, march forward with their archers firing in the lead, and hope their side would kill more of the enemy than got killed. When one of the opposing lines retreated, the victor would pursue until it was no longer practicable to do so. This state of affairs endured until the Unicorns returned.

The introduction of cavalry into Rokugani warfare caused every fighting man in the Empire to step back and re-evaluate strategy. The spectacle of a horse and rider – an unheard-of innovation on Rokugani battlefields at the time – weighing ten times as much as a man, charging straight at a line of infantry at full speed, is a terrifying sight. Reactions of the generals of the other clans were mixed. Some clans sought to learn, mimic, and perhaps even improve on this new instrument of war, while others declared the use of the horse to be barbarian trickery, and refused to accept the efficiency of these new troops. They learned the hard way the price of adhering too closely to tradition.

Strategy and Tactics

Although the use of cavalry is a powerful new tool in Rokugani warfare, the Unicorn Clan does not seek to make war where it is not necessary. Frankly, the Unicorn Clan makes many concessions to gain the respect of the other clans in politics, culture, and warfare, and does not look to incur the wrath of the other clans through arrogance, over-confidence or by force.

Nevertheless, occasionally war does break out, and when it does, these are the formations used.

The Unicorn Clan has two basic strategies of fighting a battle, one offensive and one defensive, which can be easily adapted based upon the quality of the terrain (*i.e.* how favorable is it to the horses?), and the opponent. The most important thing that must be noted is that the Unicorns move their armies entirely on the hoof. There are almost always two horses for every soldier in the force, although not all of the soldiers fight from horseback. The Unicorn can move large bodies of troops faster and more efficiently than any other army in Rokugan, which usually allows them to choose the terrain on which the battle will be fought.

Unicorn armies have two basic troop types, with the cavalry arm of the army being subdivided into four categories.

MOUNTED INFANTRY

One of the fundamental aims of warfare is to drive the enemy off of his position. Although cavalry does have the advantage of mobility, the drawback is that horse troops are terrible at holding ground against a frontal attack. Consequently, the Unicorn also make use of infantry troops – but with a major modification. Since the majority of the armies of Rokugan move on foot, the Mounted Infantry of the Unicorn clan have the perfect combination of speed, mobility, and solidity. Unicorn Mounted Infantry can move into a captured position significantly faster than regular infantry and then dismount to stand their ground. The use of horses also makes their withdrawal, where necessary, even faster, and a pursuit by the enemy more difficult. The standard outfit of the Mounted Infantry is the same for all Unicorn bushi (heavy armor, daisho, etc.), and they are also armed with an assortment of polearms. For reasons of speed and mobility, their horses are unarmored.

LIGHT CAVALRY

The key to Unicorn battle tactics is the flanking and encircling movement. Because engagements in Rokugan can involve large bodies of soldiers, these movements can take quite a bit of time to execute, so speed is the most essential element. The primary use of the Light Cavalry unit is therefore to scout and attack the enemy flank and rear, and often times to attack


and harass the enemy's reinforcements or camp. The bushi of Light Cavalry units are armed with their daisho, a *yari*, and may sometimes employ the *dai-kyu* (horse bow) when harassing the enemy rear. They wear only light armor (breast/back plates, arm coverings, etc.), and some even choose to not wear a helmet. Like the Mounted Infantry, they ride unarmored horses.

MEDIUM CAVALRY/HORSE ARCHERS

The next step up in the cavalry chain is the Medium Cavalry/Horse Archer. Having learned from the nomads of the Near West to combine the killing power of the *dai-kyu* with the mobility of the riding horse, these troops are possibly the most lethal weapon in the Unicorn arsenal. This combination allows for these units to be deployed and re-deployed anywhere they are required on the field.

Most Rokugani archers employ the *yumi*, and standard practice would be to simply point the arrow at the target and fire. The Unicorn Horse Archers, in addition to using the powerful *dai-kyu*, gain an even greater range of fire than that of a standard archer by employing two other techniques of the nomads: arcing fire, and volley fire. By arcing the arrows' trajectory, range is increased at the price of accuracy. The loss of accuracy is offset when an entire corps of horse archers fires at a large concentration of troops. Arcing fire also allows the archers to fire over their own advancing infantry, and into the enemy ranks from the rear of the battlefield. Volley fire – the entire formation firing at one upon being given a signal – brings a large concentration of archer fire upon enemy units. It is, indeed, startling to see a massive hail of arrows impacting an enemy formation, causing them to lose their forward momentum.

The bushi of the Medium Cavalry/Horse Archers units carry the daisho, the *dai-kyu*, and a wide assortment of arrows. Some units may also be armed with the *yari* if they will charge the enemy. They employ all of the pieces of bushi armor except the arm covering and the *mempo*, which can restrict their field of vision and flexibility. Their horses are only partially armored to protect the steed's thighs, chest, and nose.



UNICORN TRAVEL POETRY: ENEMIES

You cannot escape death
By escaping enemies
The dearer a friend, the
deadlier an enemy he will
be
Life is fear and pain
Take no comfort in
promises
Peace lives at the end of a
blade



HEAVY CAVALRY

The highest level in the regular cavalry chain, the Heavy Cavalry are the main line unit of a Unicorn army. They deploy in the center of the line, and are always used to charge, and theoretically break, the enemy line. Where the opposing army has cavalry, the Heavys oppose them. Heavy Cavalry troops wear the full suit of bushi armor, and carry the *daisho* and *yari*. Their horses, however, are fully armored with flexible metal plated blankets resembling fish scales so as to protect the thighs, belly, chest, neck and nose, and to allow for maximum mobility and to protect them from any unnecessary damage while charging into combat.

SHIOTOME (BATTLE MAIDENS)

The most exclusive, and elite unit in the Unicorn army, the *shiotome* benefit from the *esprit de corps* of being the only all-female cavalry unit in the Empire. Their training begins like any other bushi student, but it is more intensive in its teachings in the way of battle, both individually and as a unit. Their ferocity in battle is akin to that of the Lion Clan, but their speed and mobility is strictly Unicorn. They are the shock troops of any Unicorn army, and there are those within the clan that believe that an army of Unicorns without the support of the Battle Maidens is doomed. The *shiotome* are also the only unit in the Unicorn Clan that ride the famed Otaku Steeds. Battle Maidens build an almost empathic rapport with their mounts. Indeed, the horses are even trained to defend their fallen rider. Furthermore, quite a few Battle Maidens would die to save their mount, as much as their mount would give its own life to save them.

There are those that say that the blessings of Otaku and Shinjo are on the Battle Maidens, and when they charge into combat, a mystical halo appears above the head of each horse, in the shape of a unicorn's horn. Although there is no

evidence that this effect benefits the *shiotome* in any way, this is more than made up for by their fantastic displays of discipline and skill. The Battle Maidens are equipped in the same fashion as the Heavy Cavalry, and their horses are outfitted equally as well.

NOTE: The following strategies are theoretical, assuming ideal conditions (weather, terrain, morale, etc.) and reactions of the opposing units.

The Offensive Strategy

If the general of a Unicorn army chooses to attack his opponent, he deploys his forces in a wedge formation with the Battle Maidens spearheading the assault, supported to their rear by the Heavy Cavalry, and to their rear the Mounted Infantry. Supporting the flanks of these units are the Medium Cavalry to the sides, and the Light Cavalry furthest out. The initial battle movement (Phase 1) begins with the Light Cavalry riding to the outside of the enemy's line seeking to move around to the rear. At the same time, the Medium Cavalry/Horse Archers move just inside the enemy flanks and begin their volleys. Finally, in the same formation as their initial deployment, the Battle Maidens and their supporting units begin their forward movement at a trot.

Phase 2 of the engagement begins with the Battle Maidens' initial impact with the opposing forces. If the enemy line is not immediately broken by the charge, this will create a salient, or bend, in the enemy line. On the immediate flanks, the Medium Cavalry/Horse Archers give up their bow fire and close to engage. From the rear, the Light Cavalry engage the enemy with the intent of pushing the defenders into their own lines, and creating a more restrictive space to defend from.

BM= Battle Maidens

DI= Dismounted Infantry

LC= Light Cavalry

HA= Horse Archers

MC= Medium Cavalry

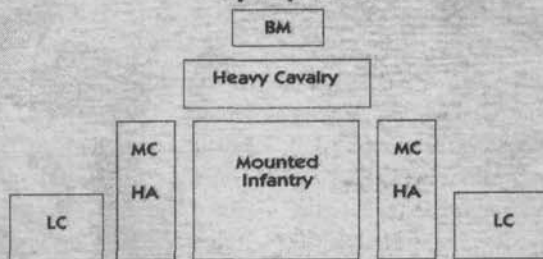
HC= Heavy Cavalry

MI= Mounted Infantry

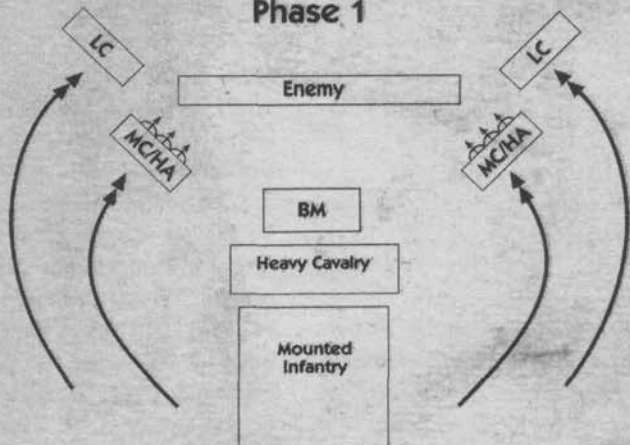


Offensive Strategy

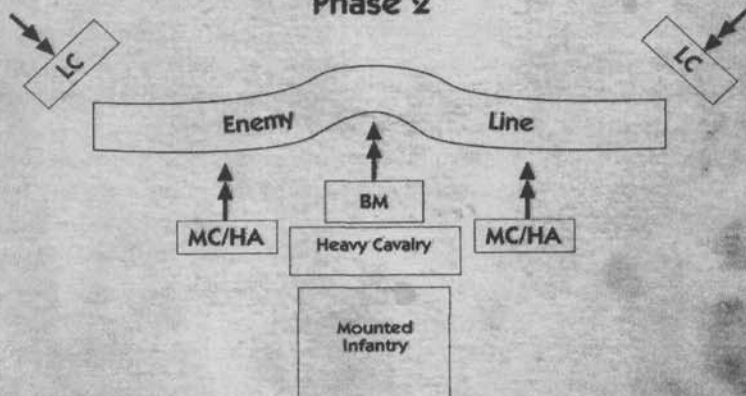
Deployment



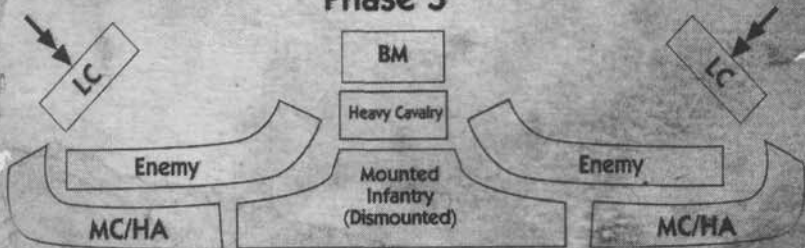
Phase 1



Phase 2



Phase 3





Phase 3 completes the severing of the enemy line in the middle by the Battle Maidens and the Heavy Cavalry, and the breach is held by the now dismounted Infantry. On the flanks, the Medium Cavalry/Horse Archers and Light Cavalry complete the encirclement of the enemy line. From here, the battle closes with the pursuit of escaping enemy forces, and the Infantry bracing for a possible counterattack. With the conclusion of the pursuit, enemy heads are counted, and any horses and bushi that can be saved are sent to the rear for medical attention. If for any reason the tides of battle turn against this assault, the cavalry immediately begin to cover the withdrawal of the infantry, and then make good their own escape: it is very difficult for infantry to pursue fleeing cavalry.

The Defensive Strategy

Should the occasion arise where a Unicorn general is forced to mount a defensive strategy, she would deploy her force in a very long line formation (terrain permitting), with the dismounted infantry as the center, the Medium Cavalry/Horse Archers to their immediate flanks, and the Light Cavalry again farthest out. Surprisingly, the *shiotome* and the Heavy Cavalry support the Infantry to the rear. As the enemy begins their advance (Phase 1), the Medium Cavalry/Horse Archers ride out to greet them by staying out of the enemy's bow range and raining arrows on them, while continuing to fade back toward their own lines. The Light Cavalry again launch their movement to the enemy flank and rear.

Should the enemy formation manage to hold together under the constant barrage of arrows and continue forward, Phase 2 of the battle

commences with the total withdrawal of the Medium Cavalry/Horse Archers behind the now-advancing body of Infantry, Battle Maidens, and Heavy Cavalry. There they begin to arc-fire their volleys of arrows over the heads of the advancing body to further break up the enemy. At this point, the Light Cavalry have taken up a position in the enemy flank, and rear, but do not attack until the next phase of the battle.

By this time, having been punished by constant arrow fire, and with the knowledge of Unicorn cavalry to the rear of his line, the enemy general would more than likely begin a withdrawal in order to save as much of his army as possible. Should he, however, choose to go forth, Phase 3 of the battle would ensue. The arrow barrage ceases, and the Medium Cavalry/Horse Archers split into their original units and move to strike the ends of the enemy line. The Light Cavalry then begin their charge to strike the enemy's rear. The biggest surprise comes when the Infantry cease their advance, and create gaps in their line to allow the Battle Maidens and Heavy Cavalry to pass through their ranks at full speed and charge the enemy line. The result of all this is yet another envelopment of the enemy force, except that this time the Infantry only shore up the gaps in their lines, and are not committed to the action.

Once again, with the bulk of the enemy destroyed or on the run, all that remains is to care for the wounded. Should the assault turn against the Unicorn force, the gaps in the Infantry line remain to allow for the withdrawal of the Battle Maidens, and the Heavy Cavalry, then the Infantry shore up the line to stand firm against the enemy. Once the Cavalry has had a chance to regroup, if necessity dictates, they will move to cover the withdrawal of the Infantry, giving them enough time to remount their horses, and begin the total withdrawal of the army.

BM= Battle Maidens

DI= Dismounted Infantry

LC= Light Cavalry

HA= Horse Archers

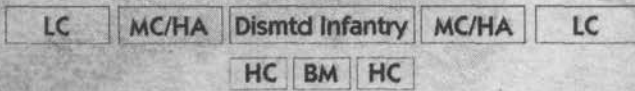
MC= Medium Cavalry

HC= Heavy Cavalry

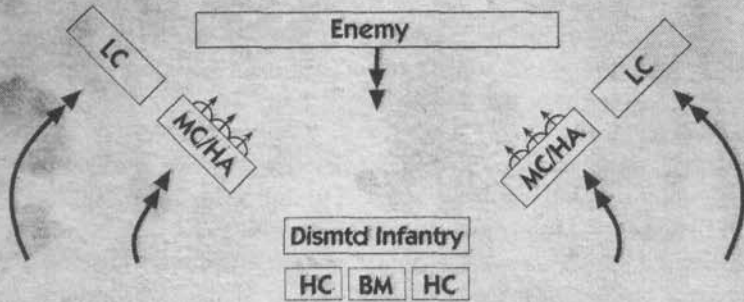
MI= Mounted Infantry



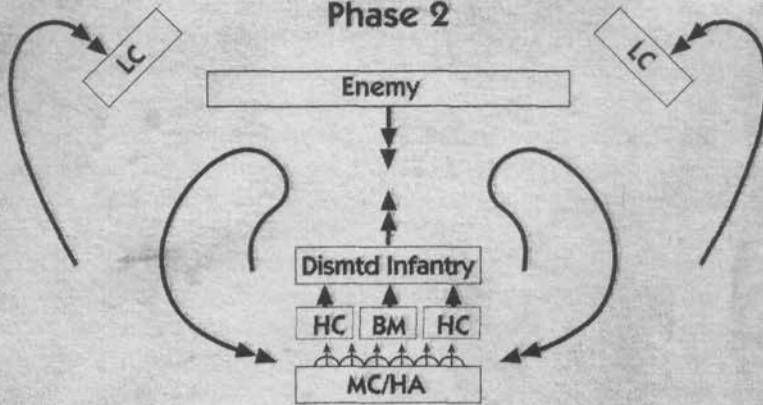
Defensive Strategy Deployment



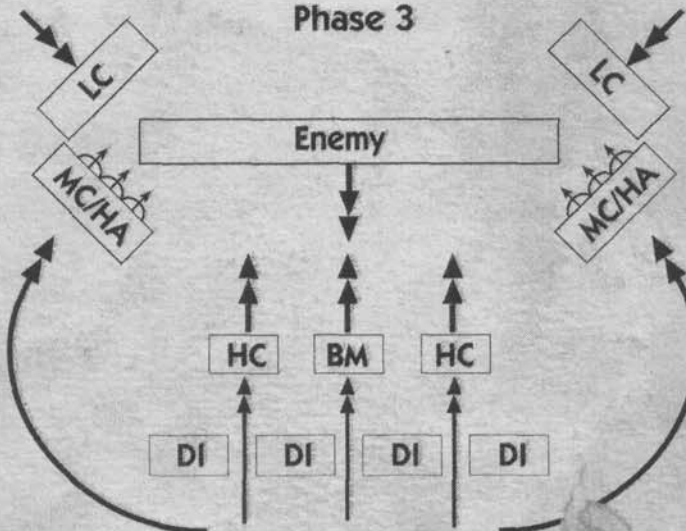
Phase 1



Phase 2



Phase 3





**UNICORN TRAVEL
POETRY: SCORPIONS**

Do not play games with
truth
You gain nothing but loss
Sly smiles tell no truths
A mask hides nothing
But morals
Repay cunning in kind

Commentary on the Unicorn Cavalry Strategy

A LETTER FROM BAYUSHI SUJIKO TO AKODO UJINDEN

Greetings to you, my cousin, on this grand day, the seventh day of the Dragon in the seventh year of our Emperor's reign, and may the wisdom of Shinsei guide his every step!

I have lamentable news for you, my cousin. For last evening, I was drinking with the noble daimyo of the former Ki-Rin Clan, Shinjo Okinuwa. Not only did the sake make his tongue slippery, my cousin, but it also made it waggle like a dog's tongue. After the sake was cold and the geisha retired from their evening's entertainments, we sat alone for a while, and he detailed to me the diagram I have enclosed in this letter, delivered to you by my brother.

As you know, I have no mind for military strategy as you do, my cousin. However, I do have a mind for secrets. Certainly such a diagram – laid out plainly and openly as it is – would be highly valuable to enemies of our beloved Emperor. If such an enemy were to gain this knowledge, he would put it to such a use as to make the Unicorn cavalry... impotent.

I hope your honor and discretion will guide you, my cousin. It is my duty, as a loyal servant of the Emperor, to give you this information, to assist you in your duties to protect the Emperor. After all, we have all seen the might of the Unicorn cavalry and what it can do. Did not your grandfather lead the Lion army at the Great Climb? I have heard tales of the battle, and how Lion forces were routed by the speed of the Unicorn cavalry. If such tales are to be believed, it would certainly serve the Emperor if this knowledge never fell into the wrong hands. And so I give it to you, my cousin, in the hopes that your wisdom can put it to use.

Your cousin,
Bayushi Sujiko

A LETTER FROM AKODO UJINDEN TO BAYUSHI SUJIKO

My cousin,

You were right to send the document to me, Sujiko. It was as dangerous as you surmised, possibly even more so. However, it is now in my hands, safe from the enemies of the Emperor.

Please find enclosed a document which details the weaknesses of the Unicorn's formations and strategies. I am sure that you, my Scorpion cousin, will not allow these plans to fall into the wrong hands.

As you can see, the Unicorn strategy is sound but only when the enemy chooses to charge against them. The weakness of the strategy lies in the advance of their archers onto the field. If an enemy army were to strike at the cavalry in the center of the battlefield by charging them with their own cavalry, the cavalry charge that follows up the archers would be immobilized. Then, while the Unicorn cavalry is tied up with the enemy's cavalry, the enemy's infantry advances to smash the outnumbered cavalry, thus immobilizing the deadly shiotome charge. Also, by placing pikemen in the center of the army, the shiotome charge would likewise be negated, thus crippling the strength of the Unicorn army.

The assumption of this strategy relies upon the enemy's lack of cavalry and archers. If the enemy were to employ similar tactics, his superior numbers would crush the Unicorn army.

As you can see, an enemy could easily defeat the Unicorn army... if it knew how to deploy its units properly. I have no mind for secrets, my cousin, but I know you do. I often lament that I have a mind that is gifted only in strategy. May your wisdom guide your hand in keeping this document secret lest the eyes of the enemies of the Emperor fall upon it.

Your cousin,
Akodo Ujinden



UNITS OF WEIGHT & MEASURE IN ROKUGAN

The Rokugani horse breeders follow the practice of measuring a horse's height (from the ground to the shoulder) in hand widths. A "hand" is usually about four inches, but it depends on whose hand is doing the measuring.

Weight is not quite as casual an affair. The standard unit of weight in Rokugan is the *ken-o*: the weight of Hantei's sword. A *ken-o* is approximately eight pounds. Similarly, there is a unit of length based on the imperial blade: a *ken-an* is approximately one yard.

Appendix II: Treasures of the Unicorn

Horses In Rokugan

DURING THE SOJOURN OF THE UNICORN CLAN

Like many of the animals that are native to Rokugan, the horse has existed since before the foundation of the Empire. Throughout the travels of the Unicorn Clan outside of the Empire, the horse was seen as nothing more than a beast of burden used by those privileged enough to own them; horses transported supplies and labored in the fields. In social terms, the horse was used as a ceremonial piece in parades, and such, usually ridden by Daimyos, members of the Imperial family, and the Emperors (keep in mind, though, that on the rare occasions the Emperor would make a public appearance, he would be carried by his samurai guards on a *palanquin*, not in a horse-drawn carriage). As for the military use of the horse, a general might be spotted sitting atop his mount to oversee the battle, but since there was no such thing as a saddle in Rokugan up to the return of the Unicorn, cavalry was all but unheard of in Rokugan... until the long lost Clan of the Ki-Rin returned as the Clan of the Unicorn.

THE UNICORN CLAN RETURNS

When the Unicorns returned, no one had any idea what they had found or were going to bring back with them. Indeed, it was uncertain that they ever would return; after all, they had been gone for 800 years. However, of all the treasures brought back from around the known world, the most impressive, and the most valuable, were the

new breeds of horses. Furthermore, the majority of the clan returned riding their horses on an entirely foreign apparatus called a saddle. These new breeds of horse were significantly taller than the Rokugan Pony – taller, in fact, than the majority of the people of Rokugan – and although some were used as beasts of burden, they were nurtured and cared for as if they were members of the clan. Not only was the introduction of these new breeds a phenomenal event in Rokugan history, but no one could have predicted the impact that these horses would have in changing the way war was waged in Rokugan. In the first battle that the Unicorn clan fought in Rokugan, the face of warfare changed forever.

The Three Breeds

With the return of the Unicorn clan, there are now three basic breeds of horses in Rokugan. The Otaku Stable Masters have taken great pains to keep the breeds pure by not mating horses of different stock. Indeed, they have kept very accurate records of the genealogy of the horse families. Certain horses are more valuable than others for having been sired by distinguished parents. One thing that must be noted is that the Unicorn clan does not "put down" an injured or ailing horse. All Unicorns revere the horse as a valued member of the clan that contributes to the clan's survival, and would make as great an effort to save a horse as they would for their own brother. For this reason, the Otaku Stable Masters have developed new forms of medicine to heal the ailments of their steeds.

THE ROKUGAN PONY

The smallest, and most common breed of horse in Rokugan, the pony is primarily used as a beast of burden, as is it best suited to pulling wagons and carts. Its short legs make it easy to mount, with or without stirrups, but it isn't an effective cavalry horse because of its short stride. The pony's fastest gait is a trot, further making it unsuitable for battle. However, it has tremendous endurance, does not consume as much food and water as the larger breeds, uses much less energy as it moves, and is ideally suited to pulling and carrying due to its short, stocky musculature. The Unicorn also use ponies to teach children the



basics of horsemanship, but soon the students graduate to the larger steeds.

Possibly the greatest benefit of the pony is its longevity. The Rokugan pony has an average life span of 30 years, with some of them living well into their 40s, and maintains its full faculties to within a few years of death. When a Pony is retired, the end of its natural life cannot be too far behind.

Height 10 Hands (3'4")
Weight 90 Ken-o (700lbs)
Life Span 30+ years

EARTH 2
Stamina 4
WATER 3
Strength 6
FIRE 1
Agility 2

AIR 2
Rolls when Attacking (Kick): 2k2
Rolls for Damage: 4k2
TN to be Hit: 10 (15 while at a gallop)
Wounds: 8: -1; 16: -2; 24: -3; 40: -4; 48: Down

THE GAJJIN RIDING HORSE

By far the tallest of the breeds, the riding horse is also the most common steed of the Unicorn Clan. In very simple terms, this breed is temperamentally suited to bearing a rider. Training a horse to accept a rider is no easy task. A samurai does not merely sit in the saddle and take the reins. A horse has to allow the rider to sit on its back, and the *gaijin* riding horse is the breed of horse that seems to be friendliest and most easily broken. All the clans' cavalry troops and their mounted infantry employ these steeds.

The endurance of the breed is second only to the Pony; they are capable of carrying a man and his equipment at least three times as far as a man on foot in a comparable length of time. The *Gaijin* Riding Horse has an average life span of 25 years. The training to accept a rider begins around age 2, and they are usually retired to stud around age 15.

Height 17 Hands (5'8")
Weight 160 Ken-o (1300lbs)
Life Span 25 years

EARTH 3
WATER 3
Strength 6
FIRE 1
Agility 2

AIR 2
Rolls when Attacking (Kick): 3k2
Rolls for Damage: 6k3
TN to be Hit: 10 (15 while at a gallop)
Wounds: 12: -1; 24: -2; 36: -3; 60: -4; 72: Down

THE OTAKU WARHORSES

In the eight hundred years of their exploration of the world, the farthest west the Ki-Rin clan went was an enormous desert they called the Land of the Burning Sands. It was here that they discovered the legend of the animal known as the Unicorn, and the horses that most resembled the famed animal: the warhorse. Only slightly shorter than its riding horse cousin, this breed is noticeably leaner and more muscular than the other breeds; Otaku warhorses have one fewer pair of ribs than other breeds. The reason for this skeletal adaptation is still a mystery. The warhorse is also fleet of foot, and centuries of travel on sand have given it a preternatural sense of balance. Domesticated first by the nomadic tribes of the desert, and then again by the Unicorn, the modern warhorse passes this ability of equilibrium on to its rider. Another unique feature of the warhorse is its unusually large lung capacity, a result of millennia of adaptation to the dry air of the Burning Sands region. In battle, this





gives the warhorse the ability to make fantastic sprints across immense battlefields, and where necessary, the endurance to gallop much farther than other breeds. The cost of these adaptations, however, is this breed's faster metabolism; warhorses require more grain and water than the other breeds.

The warhorse is by far the rarest breed in Rokugan, and they are exclusively bred by the Otaku family. The breeding grounds of these horses are the most heavily protected stables in all of the Unicorn lands, and they are bred solely for use by the Emperor, the Unicorn clan and family Daimyos, and the famed *shiotome* (battle maidens). Warhorses have an average life span of 25-30 years. Their training to accept a rider begins at age one, and they are required to retire for breeding at age 15.

The Otaku Battle Maidens spend years training with their horses, and form a special bond with them. If a Battle Maiden's horse is lost, it will take two years for another to be trained for her. In the meantime, she is confined to training, simple missions, and assignments which do not require her to be in combat.

| Height | Weight | Life Span |
|-----------------|---------------------|-------------|
| 16 Hands (5'4") | 125 Ken-o (1000lbs) | 25-30 years |

EARTH 3
WATER 3

Strength 6

FIRE 2

AIR 2

Rolls when Attacking (Kick): 3k3

Rolls for Damage: 6k3

TN to be Hit: 10 (15 while at a gallop)

Wounds: 24: -1; 48: -2; 84: Down

A rider on an Otaku Warhorse gets a single free re-rolled die for any action involving the Horsemanship skill.

Gaijin Gear

The Unicorn have dealt with many different cultures. Many of them have methods of warfare that are very different from those found in the Emerald Empire. Unicorn samurai can experiment with these items and the "treacherous barbarian tactics" required for their use.

ASHI-KYU (FOOT BOWS)

The ashi-kyu is as long as a dai-kyu, but it is symmetrical and much more powerful. It is designed to be fired at stationary troop formations or large targets. To fire it, you lie on your back, brace the bow with both feet, and pull back on the bowstring with your arms. While this awkward position makes it difficult to change your aim (if you can't do it just by angling your legs, you must wriggle on the ground) and makes you immobile, it makes for a very powerful pull. The range of the ashi-kyu is also far better than a dai-kyu or yumi; an archer can typically fire the ashi-kyu twice as far as a standard bow. It takes a full round to set up an ashi-kyu.

The Unicorn most often employ the ashi-kyu in sieges or against slow-moving or disorganized armies such as goblin mobs. They also occasionally use them in hit-and-run raids, sending a few dozen horse archers with ashi-kyu to sneak up on enemy buildings, launch two or three flaming arrows apiece, and then ride off before the guards can catch them.

Damage: as arrow, but roll extra dice equal to the archer's Strength minus one.

Range: The archer's Strength plus two, times one hundred yards.

LONGSWORDS

Barbarian longswords are very different from Rokugani katanas. Where the katana weighs maybe eight pounds and relies on its razor edge, the barbarian longsword weighs as much as forty pounds, and depends much on its impact. Some Unicorn carried longswords back into Rokugan, but they proved too cumbersome to be adapted to the Rokugani method of fighting.

Still, because of their great weight, longswords are effective against large, slow-moving creatures. Bushi must have a Strength and Stamina of 3 to use one, and it subtracts five from all their initiative rolls. On the plus side, it ignores armor. A longsword's DR is 1k4.

NAGAYARI (PIKES)

The Unicorn learned the effectiveness of these weapons against cavalry the hard way. Ever adaptable, they made their own versions, and taught their people how to use them. It is no coincidence that the camps of the Unicorn are filled with pennants mounted on very long shafts

with bladed tips, readily available in case of a sneak attack.

Nagayari can be used like any other pole-arm, although they are too long and unwieldy to gain the pole-arm initiative bonus in normal combat situations. They are best suited to defense against cavalry charges. Whether deployed properly or simply used like a long spear, those who wield nagayari automatically gain the initiative against charging cavalry (exception: see the sidebar "Umayari and Nagayari").

The proper way to use a nagayari against charging cavalry is to stick the butt end firmly in the ground, lean the nagayari toward the enemy, and stand on the back end of the shaft. This effectively braces the nagayari against an immovable object (the earth), and standing on the end helps keep the shaft from popping out of the ground when the blade is hit by a ton of horse meat. When used in this manner against charging cavalry, the bushi using the nagayari adds the horse's Strength to the damage roll, not his own. This is because the bushi is merely holding the nagayari in place; the horse determines the actual force of the impact. This makes the nagayari deadly against charging cavalry.

The same effect can be had by pounding thick wooden poles in the ground and sharpening their tips. These fortifications are known in Rokugan as "dragon's teeth." They are most often used as a means of slowing down the enemy infantry or diverting the enemy cavalry. Deployed effectively, dragon's teeth can channel an attacking force into a deadly crossfire or killing ground.

Sometimes, however, dragon's teeth are camouflaged and used as vicious cavalry traps. This is most effective in light woods, where there are enough stray pieces of wood that a few dragon's teeth might go unnoticed; or in farmlands or grasslands, where the tall grasses effectively hide the pointed stakes from a charging horseman. They can also be deployed right behind a line of infantry awaiting a cavalry charge. Right before the cavalry strikes the infantry line, the footmen retreat ten or twenty feet to a position safe behind the dragon's teeth. Done properly, the cavalry will have not enough warning and too much momentum to avoid impaling their horses on the spikes.

| Weapon | Damage |
|----------------|--------|
| Nagayari | 3k2 |
| Dragon's Teeth | 2k2 |

OIL LAMPS

In Rokugan, oil lamps are made of paper and wood. The most common kind of lamp illuminates the entire area in a soft glow, sort of like a 40-watt bulb. Other lamps are made almost entirely of wood, with a single door on one side. This door directs the light in one direction, much like a low-grade flashlight. The problem with these lamps is that they are fragile and flammable. Treat them roughly, and a fire is likely to ensue.

This is not at all the case with the barbarian oil lamps owned by the Unicorn clan. Made of metal and glass, the Unicorn's oil lamps are sturdy and windproof, and are much brighter than the paper lamps of Rokugan. They also have a larger oil capacity, and can burn all night long without difficulty.

Furthermore, *gaijin* alchemists have sold the Unicorn clan interesting lenses made of glass, which focus the light from a lamp. With these, the Unicorn have created shuttered lamps which are much better flashlights than the makeshift directional lamps of the other clans. The light is brighter, more tightly focused, and longer ranged. Unicorn magistrates often carry these around to help them locate wrongdoers in the dark; the common folk call these lamps "the eyes of the Horse."

| Type | Range |
|------------------|---------|
| Standard lamp | 15 feet |
| Directional lamp | 30 feet |

SHIELDS

When they returned to Rokugan, the Unicorn brought back shields among their multitudinous other treasures. Attempts to use them in melee combat proved catastrophic; while they provided virtually impenetrable protection, the shields were too heavy and too slow to be able to block light, flexible weapons like the katana. Unicorn samurai rapidly gave up having one arm weighted down with a shield and returned to the traditional Rokugani fighting style.

Shields, however, are still employed to provide cover against missile fire. They do excellently for blocking arrows and the like. Even area effect weapons like an oni's fiery breath have their effects impeded by the presence of a good shield.



UMAYARI AND NAGAYARI

When pikes and heavy lances are both being employed, both sides lose their initiative bonuses. Initiative is determined normally.

BLOWN GLASS

This is an art that the Unicorn learned during their journeys over the Burning Sands. Before they returned with this knowledge, there was no glass in Rokugan, only pottery; even today it is not often seen outside Unicorn lands. (The Kuni family, however, have found glass to be remarkably resistant to noxious oni secretions, and therefore a handy laboratory tool.) If for some reason a samurai wished to learn how to make glass, and one of the Unicorn artisans were willing to share the secret, the knowledge would be a Craft skill.



DAIRYA

There is conjecture among the Unicorn that the eyepatch worn by the ronin Dairy is, in fact, a sling.

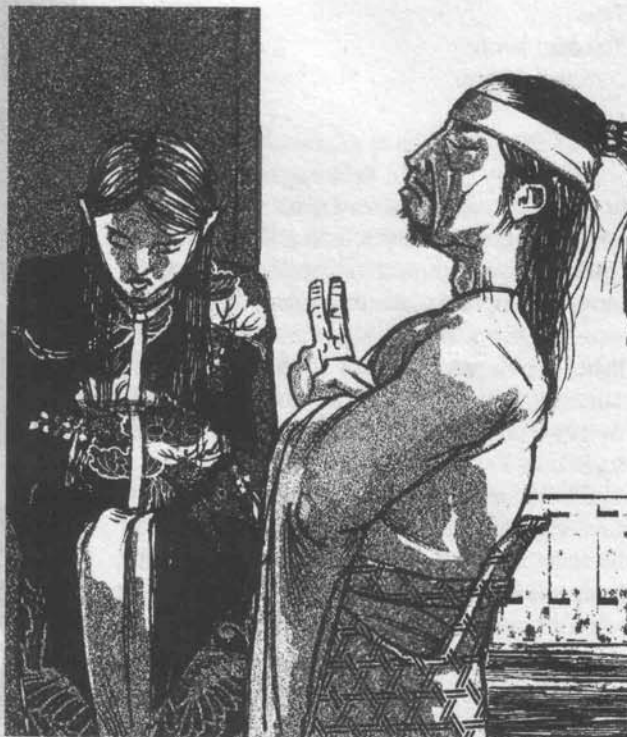
| Size | TN vs. Missiles | Area Weapon Dice Lost |
|--------|--------------------|--------------------------|
| Small | +5 | -10% |
| Medium | +10 | -25% |
| Large | +20 | -50% |
| Tower | +30 | -90% |

SLINGS

The sling is another "barbarian trick" the Unicorn brought back. It is a secret they hold very tightly, for they recognize that other Rokugani do not consider rocks to be deadly weapons, nor a sling itself to be anything other than a foolish-looking barbarian accessory. To perpetuate this belief, many Unicorns wrap their sling around their wrist or neck, wear it as a fake eye patch, or otherwise use it to adorn their outfit. Thus Unicorns have been able to carry a sling (and a "lucky stone" or two) into places where they would otherwise be unarmed.

The use of the sling is entirely separate from archery. While the Unicorn think nothing of it, other clans consider it a low skill. In fact, many would consider using a sling to be a vicious ninja trick!

| Item | DR | Range |
|-------------|-----|-----------|
| Sling | 2k2 | 75 yards |
| Staff Sling | 3k2 | 100 yards |



SPYGLASS

Spyglasses, another invention using glass lenses crafted in the Caliphate, are small telescopes. This is handy in times of war, when the use of a spyglass can locate hidden troops, survey the battlefield, or even spy on the gestures and expressions of an enemy general. There are several sizes of spyglass, with varying ranges. Small and easily-made ones can cause an object as far away as 50 yards to appear as if it's right next to the viewer; extremely well-made and pure lenses can push this range out as far as 250 yards, but such quality items are difficult to find outside of a daimyo's personal collection.

UMAYARI (HEAVY LANCES)

Another curious barbarian import, umayari are designed exclusively for use while mounted. All Unicorn characters who have both Horsemanship and Lancing skills automatically learn to use these. Umayari are held under the armpit and aimed at troops while charging. When the rider (hopefully) skewers his target, he simply lets the point of the umayari drop and slip behind him, and he drags the body of the victim on the ground until it drops off. At this point, the rider can reposition his umayari and charge again.

The great length of umayari make them ideally suited for the charging attack; the rider always wins initiative on the first round of a charge. The rider also wins the initiative on the first round of any subsequent charge, providing he has spent at least one round out of the fighting and wheeling his steed about for another run.

It is also possible, again due to the umayari's length, that a skilled lancer can impale two or three soldiers in a single run – even a single round. If the lancer is charging a group of infantry who are all neatly lined up and standing still, then few raises should be required. On the other hand, if the lancer charges a melee, where order is gone and everyone is running about, the chance to strike two targets is remote, if not impossible. In short, the difficulty is up to the Game Master.

Unfortunately, umayari are too long and heavy to be used on foot, so lancers are well advised to have a katana handy in case they get unhorsed.

DR mounted: 3k4

DR on foot: 1k2, -2 dice to hit, and -8 initiative.

High-Grade Equipment

Most equipment carried by samurai in Rokugan is of "average" quality, which is to say darned good by modern standards. However, certain items are out there which are of such excellent workmanship that even by the discriminating standards of the Imperial Court, they are considered of fine or even legendary quality. And, of course, in the hands of bandits and the inhuman scavengers of the Shadowlands, even the best equipment suffers the ravages of the elements and daily abuse, and degenerates to poor quality.

Average quality items are exactly that: the standard against which all others are measured. Their statistics are all exactly as given in the rules, and they provide no bonuses or penalties under normal circumstances. All the other quality ratings are based on this.

Poor items are those which are shoddily made, poorly maintained, or decrepit due to age and neglect. A bandit's homemade naginata, a katana that has been put away without cleaning, and a kimono that has mildewed all fall under this category. These items force a penalty of some sort upon the user. Poor weapons roll and/or keep fewer dice than normal, while accessories can increase the TN required for successful use of the skill (a dribbly tea cup is disruptive to a tea ceremony).

Fine items are not particularly uncommon in Rokugan, especially among the elite of the samurai. While they are more or less readily available, they are usually not bequeathed to young samurai.

Excellent items are uncommon, though not completely out of the reach of the average samurai. The richest families often flaunt their wealth by wearing excellent items to everyday events, but even the poorer clans can afford to provide their leaders with such gear.

Superior items are of enduring quality, most often seen in the hands of generals, family daimyos, elder advisors, and favored first-born offspring. Iaijutsu master Kakita Toshimoko's katana is one example of such an item; it sings with a pure tone like a bell as he draws it from his saya, and it reflects light like a mirror.

Legendary items are few and far between, and almost never seen out of the hands of the topmost leaders in Rokugan. These are items that

everyone has heard spoken of in reverent tones (and, thanks to their purity, many of these items have become *nemuranai*). Perhaps the most famous of the legendary items is the Ancestral Robe of the Hantei. It was not woven on a loom, but stitched together by hand by the bride of the first Hantei. Made of the finest spider silk, every square inch of the kimono is painstakingly embroidered, and when the viewer steps back, the fine details blur together to create an entirely different picture. The kimono never gets dirty, never wrinkles, and although it is a thousand years old, it is still bright and colorful.

Items of greater quality give game bonuses depending on their rating. This bonus can vary between items of the same rating: one fine katana might be perfectly balanced, providing a better chance to hit; while another might have a sturdy, razor-sharp edge which deals more damage. In game terms, items get bonus points to spend on their attributes based upon their quality rating.

| QUALITY | BENEFIT |
|-----------------|----------------------|
| Poor | 1 point loss or more |
| Average | none |
| Fine | 1 point |
| Excellent | 2-3 points |
| Superior | 4-6 points |
| Legendary | 7 points or more |

| POINT COST | BENEFIT |
|-----------------|---|
| 1 | Roll an extra die of damage |
| 2 | Keep an extra die of damage |
| 1 | Roll an extra skill die (this can also be used for weapons) |
| 2 | Keep an extra skill die (this can also be used for weapons, or to negate the heavy armor penalty) |
| varies | Extravagant ornamentation |
| varies | Special abilities (unbreakable, waterproof, etc., but nothing truly magical) |
| 1 | +2 TN to Hit (armor only, although it could be used with kimonos by GM approval, especially for Scorpion characters) |
| half cost | Advantage or Disadvantage (mounts only, by GM approval) |



UNICORN TRAVEL POETRY: PERSPECTIVE

I put my hat and robe
On a hanging rod
I contemplated their
countenance
The rod gained poise
Gold and purple
I was naked, but I had lost
nothing



UNICORN TRAVEL POETRY: SEARCHING FOR SOLACE

Mighty fighters were they
Magnificent warriors all
Battle steals brave men
Life blood wells out in
waves
Lifeless corpses empty
Souls searching for solace

Spells

All the spells in this section were developed by the Unicorn Clan. Most of them are Unicorn Clan Secret Spells; characters from other clans may not learn these spells. Spells not designated as a Secret Spell *can* be learned by other Clans, but only from a Unicorn shugenja who knows the spell... and they're often reluctant to share.

CLAN SPELLS PER SCHOOL RANK

Beginning Unicorn shugenja characters can choose one Unicorn clan secret spell as one of their starting spells. Whenever a shugenja is admitted to the next School Rank (starting with Rank 2), he may choose another clan secret spell as one of the three spells he learns. Sometimes the shugenja can choose which secret spell he learns, while at others the clan chooses it for him.

ABOUT UNICORN SECRECY

Shortly after the Unicorn's return, a Scorpion clan shugenja duped the Iuchi sensei into revealing the secrets of the *Heart of Nature* spell. To prevent the Scorpion clan from having gained an advantage, the sensei presented the spell to the Emperor and all the shugenja of the Empire. At the ceremony, a Scorpion presented the sensei with a sealed scroll, which read "Your minds have been so dulled by barbarians that you will surrender your secrets to all." The sensei committed *seppuku* for having weakened his school as a part of a Scorpion plot. Ever since that time, the Unicorn clan has been very protective of their clan and family secrets. Some wonder if that, after all, was the Scorpion's true intent.

Earth Spells

NOT THIS DAY!

Setting his haiku aside, he stood and tied a white cloth around his head. The goblins continued to batter at the gate; not long now. His hands gripped his katana tightly. He looked at me. His eyes were as flat and bright as the Void. "I am ready," he said.

Secret Spell

Base TN: 5

Casting Time: 3 Actions

Duration: Rounds equal to the target's Void

Mastery: 6

Concentration: None

Raises: Casting Time, Duration

Effect: Single Use. This spell is keyed to a specific individual, and the scroll for the spell must be written in that person's blood, which must have been given willingly in a special ceremony. When cast, the target becomes one with his doom and gives his life for the sake of the family name. He rolls and keeps additional dice equal to his Void on every skill and damage die roll he makes for the duration of the spell. He also adds his Void trait to his initiative die roll. At the end of the spell's duration, the target dies.

Some Rokugani object to this spell, claiming that since the scroll is written in blood and requires blood to function, it is black magic. To this, the Moto counter that the traditional Rokugani fealty ceremony involves signing a pledge with a brush dipped in your own blood. Signing your fate to a magical scroll is no different. Further, the scroll does not need the blood to power it; it simply needs it to key itself to the individual.

Water Spells

DANCE OF THE UNICORN

Secret Spell

Base TN: 5

Casting Time: 3 Actions

Duration: 2 Rounds

Mastery: 3

Concentration: Focused

Raises: Area of Effect, Casting Time, Concentration, Duration

Effect: This spell summons a purifying swirling mist which washes the air clean of smoke, dust, and poisons. It also gets everyone inside it wet, so shugenja are encouraged to transcribe this spell in oil-based ink. The mist is thick enough to get all the airborne particles in its area of effect, but not so thick as to affect vision. Its radius of effect is three feet (plus three per raise) centered on the navel of the shugenja. If the shugenja moves, the mist moves with him.



THE HORSE'S NOSE

Secret Spell

Base TN: 5

Casting Time: 2 Actions

Duration: 2 Rounds

Mastery: 3

Concentration: Casual

Raises: Bonuses, Casting Time, Duration

Effect: This gives the shugenja a sense of smell equal to that of a horse, which is to say good, but not as good as a dog's. The shugenja can make Perception rolls to track people by scent, smell predators or bandits hiding in ambush, or identify someone in disguise (usually humans have a near-impossible time concealing their scent). Each raise, up to a limit of the shugenja's Water trait, allows the shugenja to roll (not keep) another die for these Perception checks.

THE PENETRATING DROP

Base TN: 5

Casting Time: 10 Actions

Duration: Instantaneous

Mastery: 4

Concentration: None

Raises: Casting Time, Effect, Target Material

Effect: Just as water can permeate the cracks in rocks to split them asunder or leak into wood to warp it out of shape, so can this spell allow a target to let his Water seep into a target material and break it or otherwise ruin it. If you will, this is capillary action for the soul; the target does not actually get wet, but it acts as if it had been. The amount of raises which are required to break or ruin the target depend on what it is made of.

- **One Raise:** Paper, cloth, other water-absorbent material. This can peel paper off glue, make water-based dyes run, etc.

- **Two Raises:** Dry untreated wood, porous rock, low-grade steel. This can cause the wood to warp badly, break rock into two or occasionally more pieces, and cause a bandit's low-grade weapons to rust into uselessness.

- **Three Raises:** Treated wood, mid-grade steel, stone. This can pop a door, give a sword a dishonorable coating of rust, and crack stonework.

- **Four Raises:** Waterproofed wood, high-grade steel, marble and other solid minerals. This will tarnish and dull a blade, stress and weaken wood, and loosen masonry joints.

Additional raises can be taken to have a more dramatic effect; each raise affects the material as if it were the next class lower. The properties of this spell occasionally allow the caster to bypass the strength of the material he wants broken. For example, it would be hard to break an ear off a giant jade statue. However, if the ear had a hole for an earring drilled in it, the shugenja could insert a peg of dry wood snugly into the hole, then cast the spell and pour his Water into the wood. This is easily done, and the wood expands. Because the wood expands, it puts pressure on the jade and breaks it much more easily than if the shugenja tried to pour his Water into the jade itself. Similarly, it is often easier and more effective for a shugenja to affect the mortar holding stonework together instead of trying to affect the stone itself.

RIDE THROUGH THE NIGHT

Base TN: 10

Casting Time: 4 Actions

Duration: Caster's Water in hours

Mastery: 6

Concentration: Casual

DANCE OF THE UNICORN

The first unicorn taught the original Otaku a curious mix of poetry and dance. She did not understand the knowledge that was being given to her, but she kept it nonetheless, and passed it to her children as The Great Mystery of the Unicorn. Several hundred years later, an Otaku joined the Iuchi shugenja school, and understanding dawned: the unicorn's teaching was a spell.





THE BURNING SANDS

This spell was learned by the grandson of the original Iuchi while visiting with the unusual wizards in the Caliphate of the Burning Sands.

Raises: Additional Target, Casting Time, Duration (1 hour per raise)

Effect: This allows a target horse to run at a gallop for the duration of the spell or until dawn, whichever comes second. While under the influence of this spell, the horse does not need food, water, or rest, although the rider is apt to be sore by the time the spell is finished.

SPEED OF THE WATERFALL

Secret Spell

Base TN: 5

Casting Time: 3 Actions

Duration: Caster's Water in minutes

Mastery: 4

Concentration: None

Raises: Additional Target, Casting Time, Duration

Effect: This more or less doubles the speed of the target as long as it runs downhill. Aside from allowing Unicorn cavalry on the high ground engage the enemy at surprising speed, this adds to the force of the impact when the cavalry uses lances. With lances, roll extra to-hit and damage dice equal to the Water of the shugenja casting the spell. This spell only works as long as the target moves downhill, although moving uphill does not cause the spell to cease.

WHEN TWO BECOME ONE

Base TN: 15 minus the target's Horsemanship

Casting Time: 2 Actions

Duration: 4 Rounds plus the rider's Willpower

Mastery: 3

Concentration: None

Raises: Casting Time, Duration

Effect: This merges the spirits of a horse and its rider. The rider controls the body of the horse as if it were his own; his own body merely hunkers low on the horse's back and holds on tight. All rolls made by the pair use the higher trait and skill of either party (i.e., the rider could use the horse's Agility trait and his own Dodge skill). The rider can attack with the horse's hoofs using his own hand-to-hand skill.

WONDERFUL ORIGAMI FUROSHIKI

Secret Spell

Base TN: 10

Casting Time: 1 hour

Duration: 1 day or until opened

Mastery: 6

Concentration: None

Raises: Duration, Volume of Effect

Effect: Using a special silk furoshiki sack (costing up to 1 koku), the shugenja can fold a cubic yard of objects into a bundle merely half cubic foot in size. The weight of the pack is similarly reduced so that it is easily carried over one shoulder. When poked, prodded, or shaken, the furoshiki seems merely to be holding a few bulky items, but when it is unfolded, the contents resume their normal size and weight. This unfolding itself requires 5 Actions to do properly, and the results are rather abrupt if done carelessly. There is a story of an Ide caravan master who was beaten and robbed. When the bandits opened the sack, three chests jumped out of the cloth, and the heaviest chest crushed the bandit leader beneath it. The other bandits fled, fearing more magic.

THE WORLD IS NOT HEAVY

Base TN: 5

Casting Time: 3 Actions

Duration: Caster's Water plus Rank in minutes

Mastery: 4

Concentration: None

Raises: Casting Time, Duration

Effect: This spell helps the target to fully recognize that the material world is but an illusion, and does not weigh upon the eternal spirit, so that the target is not at all encumbered by whatever he is carrying. He must be capable of lifting his baggage without the aid of the spell, but as long as the spell is in effect, it is as if the baggage had no mass. Not even full armor gives the target a die roll penalty.

YUKI'S BLESSING

Secret Spell

Base TN: 5

Casting Time: 5 Actions

Duration: See below

Mastery: 5

Concentration: None

Raises: Area of Effect, Casting Time, Duration

Effect: **Ritual.** This freezes water into a thick, flat bridge of ice, which is more or less easily crossed on horseback (Horsemanship rolls are necessary if crossing it at any speed other than a walk). The spell creates a bridge ten feet long and five feet wide, which is plenty enough to cross streams. A like amount can be added for each



raise, making it possible for a group of shugenja to create a bridge large enough to cross a river, or for an army to cross moats several samurai abreast.

The spell takes effect instantaneously, but that is not of interest to the samurai crossing the ice bridge. They want to know how long the bridge lasts. In spring or autumn, the bridge can be crossed by mounted samurai for 15 minutes, samurai leading their horses for 20 minutes, and samurai on foot for thirty minutes or more. This duration depends on the season (which influences the water temperature) and the speed of the water. Fast rapids erode the bridge three times as fast, while bridges over placid lakes can last ten times as long.

Duration: 5 Minutes

Mastery: 4

Concentration: Focused

Raises: Casting Time, Duration, Range

Effect: When this spell is cast, it causes the spirits of the winds to carry sounds to the shugenja's ears. Wind speed and direction plays a factor: in still air, sounds are brought from every up to two miles away, while in a light breeze (10 mph) such sounds are carried downwind up to five miles, crosswind up to one mile, and upwind up to 100 yards. The wind spirits sort the sounds for the shugenja per his requests, giving him only those noises that are of interest to him. Soft or indistinct sounds may require the shugenja to make a Perception check to hear them; the spirits can only convey the sounds, they cannot amplify

Fire Spells

THE BURNING SANDS

Secret Spell

Base TN: 15

Casting Time: 4 Actions

Duration: Minutes equal to the Shugenja's

Fire

Mastery: 5

Concentration: Focused

Raises: Casting Time, Damage Rolled, Damage Kept, Duration, Height, Length

Effect: Ritual. This summons a wall of flame from the ground, twenty feet in length and five feet high. The wall does not completely block vision near the top, although it obscures it greatly and aiming through the fire is difficult at best. The wall may be in any shape the shugenja desires, but may not move once it is cast. The damage rating of the fire is 3k2. Raises can either increase the damage dice rolled or kept, although the shugenja may only keep additional dice equal to the number of shugenja in the ritual. Each raise may also increase the length by twenty feet or the height by ten, and add one minute to its duration.



Air Spells

THE FOUR WINDS' FAVOR

Secret Spell

Base TN: 5

Casting Time: 5 Actions



GATE TO NOWHERE

Some Ide shugenja wonder what impact this flow of air and other objects might have on either this world, which loses matter, or the other side, which gains matter from another place. Others wonder if something unusual but undetectable might be seeping its way back through this gate into Rokugan.

them. Shinjo shugenja often use this spell to eavesdrop on enemy generals, or to scan the terrain upwind for the sounds made by troops waiting in ambush.

GATE TO NOWHERE

Secret Spell

Base TN: 15

Casting Time: 4 Actions

Duration: 6 Rounds

Mastery: 9

Concentration: Total

Raises: Area of Effect, Casting Time, Duration, Range

Effect: Ritual. This summons a great gate to nothing, which looks like a black disk ten feet in diameter (plus five feet per raise). It appears wherever the shugenja wishes within ten feet of him (plus twenty feet per raise). The gate will not form in anything but air. If a shugenja forms a large gate in a small hallway, the gate will fill the hall but go no further. The gate is completely opaque, although sometimes unusual images that defy description can be seen in the blackness. Such images are not necessarily visible to shugenja watching the gate from the flip side. The gate is not solid, but neither is it just an opening. Air in the vicinity of the gate flows into it, arrows fired at the gate pass through and vanish from sight, but it resists allowing large objects like humans to pass (Game Master's discretion).

ROAMING THE WIDE PLAINS

Base TN: 5

Casting Time: 10 Minutes

Duration: Caster's Air + Horsemanship in hours

Mastery: 5

Concentration: Full

Raises: Additional Targets, Duration (1 hour per raise)

Effect: Ritual. This gives the target(s) the speed and persistence of the winds. They – horse and rider both – can move at a trot without food or water for the duration of the spell. If the horse and rider move as fast as a gallop or as slow as a walk, the spell quits affecting them. Targets of the spell can themselves cast spells, engage in combat, or whatever, and as long as their horse keeps trotting, the spell will continue its effects.

TELEPORTATION

Secret Spell

Base TN: 20

Casting Time: 4 Actions

Duration: Instantaneous

Mastery: 8

Concentration: None

Raises: Additional Targets, Casting Time, Size of Objects Teleported

Effect: This spell moves objects from one location to another. One of those locations must be within ten feet of the shugenja, and the other must be within line of sight, however distant. The object being teleported can be as large as a burly Crab samurai (larger with raises). If there are objects at both ends of the teleportation spell, their locations can be switched; the larger number of objects determines how many raises are required to make the switch, and the smaller number are transferred for free.

Nemuranai

The Unicorn are in possession of several very powerful magical items, many of which they acquired during their long sojourn among the barbarians. The most interesting items are described here.

HAYAI: THE UNICORN CLAN ANCESTRAL KATANA

This is the original katana carried by Shinjo herself. It drew its first blood in the war against Fu Leng at the dawn of the Emerald Empire, and heroes have since carried it across the length and breadth of the continent and through countless battles.

Hayai looks like a normal, slightly short, katana. The handle was once pearl and carved ivory, but has been blackened by the grip of countless hands through the centuries. There is a small white tassel at the butt end of the handle which is replaced anew by each person who carries the blade; you can therefore determine approximately how long someone has carried Hayai by checking how darkened the tassel has become through exposure to dust, sweat, and blood.

Hayai's saya is a very simple one, made of plain polished wood bound with leather at the top, center, and bottom. The saya is carefully split



down the blade side, so that the edge of the weapon can never rest on wood, even when the saya is worn reversed.

The blade itself is a marvel of craftsmanship. It is thin, mirror-bright, and razor-edged. It is so light that it feels almost weightless. Some believe that it actually is weightless, and that all the weight the bushi feels when wielding Hayai comes from the sword's handle.

Hayai is currently held in Shiro Shinjo, although Shinjo Yokatsu himself does not wield it at this time. He does not feel he is worthy to wield such a weapon, and waits to see which of his samurai will display the courage and dedication that marks a hero. He himself might bear the weapon if the time where he feels it is necessary to take a strong stand against the slow decay he sees in Rokugani culture. It is also possible that he shall give the weapon to a Unicorn who becomes the Emerald Champion or the Champion's chief magistrate.

HAYAI'S POWERS

Hayai grants a number of benefits to those who carry it. Its amazing lightness allows it to be wielded with great speed and accuracy, and the spirit of the sword itself drives its wielders to greater feats than they had thought possible.

The bearer is faster in combat: add his school rank to the result of his initiative die roll.

The weapon is much easier to control: the bearer can reroll attack dice that roll less than the sum of his kenjutsu skill and school rank.

Hayai aims itself for weak points in the opponent's armor: the target's TN to Be Hit is reduced by the wielder's school rank (twice the school rank if the target wears heavy armor). Thus, a rank 5 bushi attacking with Hayai ignores all normal armor bonuses.

DAITAN: THE UNICORN CLAN ANCESTRAL WAKIZASHI

When Hantei defeated his brothers and sisters to determine who should rule the Emerald Empire, part of the covenant they made that day was that each of them would sacrifice their wakizashi to Hantei, and he would have them reforged into his own katana (the fabled Ancestral Sword of Hantei). Iuchi, beloved compatriot of Shinjo, could not let his mistress be without a complete daisho, so he offered her his own, which he had forged with his mystical powers.

Daitan is an unusual blade. The handle is not at all ornate. No gold or silver or colorful threads adorn it, merely a finely woven mesh of nondescript silver-gray spider silk that seems almost slippery (in the past, some bushi have opted not to carry the blade into battle for fear of losing their grip on it and thus dishonoring it). When drawn and held still, the wakizashi's blade seems milky or cloudy. It almost seems to move of its own volition, but a hand held on the blade belies the eyes' impression. When swung in combat, Daitan seems more of a smear of steely mist, slicing all but unseen through the air. It is almost as if Daitan can be in more than one place at once. Certainly it is impossible for any mortal to follow the movements of the blade.

Like Hayai, Daitan sits on an 800-year-old stand of mahogany in Shiro Shinjo. It is not likely that it will be given to the same person who is allowed to bear Hayai. Unicorn heroes are not allowed to carry both weapons except in times of great war.

DAITAN'S POWERS

Daitan has but one power, though it is effective enough. Used in combat by a Unicorn (which can be done by anyone with a Kenjutsu skill of 2 or better), Daitan allows the wielder to negate one special technique of an opponent. The technique negated must be of a rank less than or equal to the wielder's own school rank. Thus, a rank 3 bushi could negate an opponent's rank 1, 2, or 3 special technique. Treat the technique as if the opponent never learned it.

It is up to you as the game master to describe exactly how it is that Daitan accomplishes this. There are so many techniques already, and more are coming in future clan books, that there's no way we could detail them all.

YUKI: THE UNICORN CLAN ANCESTRAL ARMOR

Yuki is traditionally worn by the clan daimyo. It is said to carry the echoes of the spirit of Shinjo, whose devotion to bushido was respected even amongst her siblings. Certainly those who wear the armor and those who follow the bearer are the better for it.

The armor is very old-fashioned, with large flat arm guards on each side, and a full-length hauberk split down the center for ease in riding. The armor is lacquered with a purple hue so deep

UNICORN TRAVEL POETRY: GENEROUS AND JUST

Better to be generous than wealthy

Better to be just than well-to-do

One is assured, the other is anxious

One earns esteem and respect

One earns obligation and debt

And fears favors he must repay



UNICORN TRAVEL POETRY: AGE

Before my eyes could see
Blind did I become
War, not age has taken
My battle cry
My fighting arm
Wisdom is my wealth

that it is almost black, and is bound together with strong cords of bleached leather dyed lavender. The edged of the armor plates are gilded, and painted in places with gold touches reminiscent of the open plains.

The helmet is covered with fine white fur, said to be a clipping of the mane of the first unicorn befriended by Otaku. Most consider this to be the case, because the fur is always clean, always white, and floats in the breeze as though it were spider silk. The helm is surmounted by a horn of pure gold, and a terrible mask adorns the front, the image of a unicorn's battle snarl.

Shinjo Yokatsu, the Unicorn daimyo, does not wear the armor. Partly this is due to the same reason he does not wield Hayai: he believes he is not worthy. The other reason is that the armor is a very (for him) uncomfortable reminder of his station as clan leader, one he would rather not have. Not only is he uncomfortable with the stationary lifestyle and the great responsibilities in what to him is a senseless land, but also the armor itself is displeasing to a man who has grown up wearing robes at most. Thus Yuki spends his time these days on a mahogany display rack, hanging above Hayai and Daitan, and there it is likely to stay for the time being.

YUKI'S POWERS

Yuki is heavy armor, though so well built that it has many special traits. It adds +15 to the wearer's TN to Be Hit, and also forces anyone who strikes the wearer to drop their highest damage die.

Imbued with Shinjo's audacity, the wearer can ignore a number of Wound levels equal to his School Rank. Thus, a rank 3 bushi would be at no wound penalty for some time, then drop straight to -4. The armor also has Shinjo's energy: neither the wearer nor his horse suffers fatigue.

The armor also has an effect on those around. For a radius on ten feet per rank of the wearer, mounted clansmen (including the wearer) gain an extra point of initiative and an extra die of damage (rolled, not kept); thus the wearer of the armor has often been the center man in a heavy cavalry charge against the enemy. This edge can be just enough to turn the tide of battle. Clan scholars are unclear whether the *nemuranai's* power led to this practice, or whether instead the tendency for the clan daimyo to make such brash

charges caused the armor to be imbued with that power.

THE MOST HONORABLE IRIS HAORI AND HAKAMA OF THE IDE FAMILY

No one is certain where these garments originated. Some stories hold that they were made by or for the original Ide, while others claim that these were the garments worn by Ide's son who was so successful in keeping the caliphs of the Burning Sands fighting each other instead of the Unicorn. A few maintain that a skilled and possibly magical seamstress in a distant *gaijin* land made the garments for one of Ide's distant descendants. Whatever the case, this antique apparel is reserved for only the most important of occasions.

The outfit is of a deep purple, which is commonly known as "royal purple" among the *gaijin*, and is adorned with a variety of hand-embroidered irises, unicorns, and other insignia. The garment hangs elegantly, if loosely. However, the loose folds give it the illusion that it was made specifically for whoever is wearing it at the time. Only the largest or smallest of samurai cannot wear this and look good in it. The deceptive folds of the garment increase the wearer's TN to be hit by 5.

More important, the garment is imbued with peace and wonder. If anyone tries to attack the wearer, the attacker must make a contested roll against the wearer. The attacker rolls his honor, and the wearer rolls his Ide School Rank. If the attacker loses, he cannot attack the wearer. If he wins, it counts as a failed honor roll; the attacker loses a rank of honor, but may attack.

THE ARROWS OF THE FOUR WINDS

The most commonly seen of the family heirloom items are these arrows. Made of an unknown wood, they are light yet very strong. They are painted purple, and fletched with a feather of white, gold, and gray. Their history does not apparently stretch as far back as the dawn of the Emerald Empire, but they were known to have been in use seven hundred years ago.

There are four arrows, one named for each wind and emblazoned with a likeness of the dragon said to send that wind into the world. The clan daimyo hands these arrows out to noble



servants as rewards for good deeds, or as a helping hand when sending someone to face a dangerous challenge.

If properly petitioned before being fired (requires a Awareness + Theology roll at a 15), the arrows return to the hands of the clan daimyo within the week. This is why the daimyo is relatively free in dispensing the honor of shooting these arrows: he knows they shall return to his hands. (Plus, if the arrow does not return, the archer's entire family is dishonored, and must seek to find the lost arrow or forfeit their lives.)

Each of the four arrows has a distinct power.

North: Piercing like the cold winds from the north, this arrow lets the archer roll extra damage dice equal to his School Rank, and keep additional dice equal to his Yomanri skill.

South: This arrow lets the archer roll additional dice to hit equal to his School Rank, keeping extra dice equal to his honor.

West: Fired into the air, this arrow flies in the direction the archer wishes to go. It can be used to find the necromancer's lair / ogre's booty / path home out of the Shadowlands. It may be used in this manner once per school rank before it vanishes to return to the daimyo.

East: This arrow has been missing ever since a band of Moto bushi ventured with it into the Shadowlands. It was said to have been named "The Arrow of Heart's Desire," though none now living can say why, or where it has come to rest.

THE BRASS GONG OF OTAKU MASERO

Although Ide Borume originally acquired it from a gaijin merchant, this ancient item is named for Otaku Masero, a stable boy whose loyalty and fervent devotion to his work and his clan had earned him great respect by the clan daimyo. It is Masero who was given the honor of holding the gong when it was first rung, and of keeping it in his house. Since then it has passed through many hands, though always in the hands of an unsung hero of the clan.

The gong is used during important ceremonies and grand story-telling festivals, as well as during memorials to the fallen of the clan. In times of great war, the gong is rung for the troops on the morning of what the generals consider will be the final day of a major battle. The gong itself is about three feet in diameter, and is suspended by a stout silken cord. As befits the nomadic Unicorn,

it has never been mounted on a stand; a person must hold it aloft. Traditionally, they hold the gong with their thumbs together, suspending it so that its center is at the holder's navel (the better to focus the sound at the center of the bearer's *chi*).

When the gong is rung, all who hear it are immediately overcome with a feeling of peace. If the listener is meditating, the meditation roll automatically succeeds, and the listener recovers all Void points within the time it takes the gong to completely cease ringing (typically ten minutes or so). The bearer of the gong not only recovers all Void points, but also goes up one rank in Meditation (maximum skill level equal to the bearer's school rank).





UNICORN TRAVEL POETRY: SILENCE AND SERENITY

A loud voice startles the
wind
Pious prudence is best
No one listens to boisterous
boasts
They who pass silently
Pass for wise
Silence is where serenity is
found



Adventure Hooks

THE KONKURU

Spring is a time of renewal and great celebration for the Unicorn clan. To commemorate the return of green to the frozen steppes and the birth of the season's new foals, they hold a great tournament, the Konkuru, where skills are tested and prowess displayed. There are, of course, many horsemanship contests. There are competitions for riding, jumping, horseback archery, lancing targets and displays of rider/horse cooperation. The races are another favorite spectacle. These contests are a chance for the breeders to proudly display the quality and value of their horses. There are races in classes of breed and weight, as well as special races run in full armor and over uneven ground. Much can be discovered about the physical attributes and temperament of the animals from these grueling runs.

Besides those events involving horses, there are trials of kenjutsu, yomanri, athletics, bojutsu, wrestling and more. There are also events that showcase the skills of the Unicorn shugenja. All of these events are observed by enthusiastic crowds who cheer their family's entrants as frantic wagering takes place at the betting booths.

Beyond the traditional formal contests, there are many spontaneous displays and private challenges. The young hopefuls of the battle maiden school, not yet initiated into the elite ranks, are well known to put on the most entertaining shows of the Konkuru. These are usually not so much competitions as a chance for

the girls to show off their beloved horses and impressive, if frivolous, trick riding.

Among the young cavalry bushi, rousing games of *kizuchi* are popular. This polo-like game is played with a scoop-shaped basket at the end of a long handle, that is used to move a rice-filled ball of sturdy cloth across the field to marked targets. Although some older samurai frown down upon this "sport" as a frivolous activity, the players insist that it reinforces skills needed on the battlefield.

In the evenings of the Konkuru, the people gather for great feasts of the fresh spring bounty. This is a time for families to establish and maintain relations and many marriages and alliances are made at these gatherings.

The atmosphere at Konkuru usually maintains an air of good-natured celebration, but there is always opportunity for conflict at large gatherings. Enemies are made and feuds born at Konkuru as well as alliances. Competition at the tournaments can become heated and jealousy among entrants can sometimes spawn sabotage or cheating. Some competitors have cracked under the pressure of a sensei who pushed too hard and asked too much. The promising careers of young samurai have been cut short by a debilitating accident at Konkuru. There have even been a few ugly incidents involving vengeful men who were forsaken by the Fortunes at the betting booth.

Recently, visitors from other clans have been traveling to the Unicorn lands to attend Konkuru. The Unicorn have encouraged this, hoping that this sharing of culture will help bring greater understanding and acceptance from the other clans. However, any time there is a mixing of clans, there is the possibility that rivalries will surface and conflict break out.

SHIOTOME

The sisterhood of battle maidens is one of the closest-knit "families" in all of Rokugan, but it is also a community of stiff competition and rivalry. Although the training of the *shiotome* emphasizes strength of spirit and conviction of purpose, there are always those who struggle with these challenges and succumb to jealousy. This is especially true of the young hopefuls who have not yet passed their *gempukku* ceremony.

One promising neophyte, Kizoko, is the daughter of a wealthy daimyo. Raised in luxury

and treated like a princess, she expected success to come easily at the *shiotome* school, as it had at home. She was wrong. Here they expected her to actually prove herself, and for that she was ill prepared. To make matters worse, another girl of the same age was admitted at the same time.

This student, Kurisuko, came from the poor family of a peasant farmer. Her father had gained great honor in the eyes of Otaku Kamoko when he offered shelter to a wounded scout returning from Scorpion lands with important information.

The scout stumbled to their farmhouse on foot, his horse having been slain some miles previously, and he was being pursued by a pair of Scorpion samurai determined to make sure the message never got to the Unicorn. Kurisuko (then only six years old) did her best to help as her father and two older brothers fought to protect the injured scout, who was very near death. She distracted the samurai with shouts and jibes and managed to keep her family armed with nearby tools when weapons were lost. The two Scorpions were finally killed, though both of Kurisuko's brothers died in the clash. Kurisuko and her mother bound the scout's wounds and the family escorted him to the Otaku castle, where the message was relayed.

The information proved to be very valuable indeed and saved many lives. Kamoko offered the family a larger parcel of land to farm, but the father politely refused, instead asking if his daughter would be considered for the *shiotome* school. Having heard the tale of the little girl's bravery in the fight with the Scorpions, and seeing the fire of battle-spirit in her dark eyes, she accepted.

To Kizoko, this was an outrage, and the slap stung even more when the peasant girl invariably bested her without the slightest effort.

The girl had the true spirit of a battle maiden and excelled in her studies. But life at the school was not easy for Kurisuko. She had to endure many jibes and whispered insults because of her humble beginnings. This made her put up protective emotional wall around herself. While possessed of a natural gift for the teachings of the

school, she was less than congenial to her sisters. She was quiet and gruff, choosing her words carefully and smiling rarely. Because of this, she made few friends and many enemies.

A few months before both girls were scheduled to compete in their *gempukku* ceremony, Kurisuko's horse was found alive, but badly wounded, in the stables. A door was left open, and a trail of blood led away from the scene. Deep slashes were cut across the neck and



belly of the horse such as would be made by the claws of some huge predator, or perhaps a many-bladed knife.

As soon as news of the horrible incident was let out, the peasantry erupted into hysteria. Sightings of great and terrible beasts were reported, each more horrible than the last. Bounty





ADVENTURE HOOK: SOMETHING EVIL THIS WAY RIDES

The prized mystical horses of the battle maiden hopefuls are being wounded and even slain. What creature could be attacking the animals, or worse, what person could be committing the atrocious crimes?

Fingers point to a mysterious unknown predator, the jealous daughter of a daimyo, the upstart peasant girl who got into the school on a favor, even a saboteur looking to thin the ranks and cause panic among the battle maiden forces.

hunters combed the steppes for any trace of such a beast but ultimately turned up nothing.

Speculation also turned to human suspects. Some whispered that it was an act of vicious jealousy against the peasant girl, but most think such an act against the sacred horses is beyond even the most vengeful of battle maidens. Some spoke of a saboteur from another clan, most likely Scorpion, looking to sow panic and disruption among the ranks of *shiotome*. Perhaps they even targeted Kurisuko's horse in retaliation against her family's defeat of their samurai.

A few even suspect Kurisuko of committing the heinous crime herself; after all, the theory runs, she is not worthy to be a battle maiden and this way she could retire without the embarrassing failure of the *gempukku* test. Another possibility was that the family of one of the battle maiden hopefuls was involved, attempting to ensure their daughter's success through less than honorable means.

THE UNICORN DIAMOND MINES

The mountains that border the spartan plains of the Unicorn lands harbor rich deposits of diamond. The Unicorns' main interest in the gem is its unequaled cutting ability, which is utilized in glass working and other crafts. The other clans (especially the Crane) have taken an interest in the gem's beauty and rarity and they have become highly prized for ornamentation. Some shugenja even claim that the jewels can help when scrying and divining.

Three mines have been established, and villages have sprung up around them to house the miners and craftsmen who work them. Caravans of supplies for the miners and convoys transporting the precious stones crisscross the plains that stretch from the base of the mountains to the Imperial Road.

Unicorn samurai are often enlisted to guard the caravans, and bandit raids are usually uncommon due to the inhospitability of the Snow Plains and the effectiveness of the escorts.

Lately, however, large bands of well-equipped brigands have been attacking and looting caravans, retreating into the mountains with the stealth and swiftness of cats. The only bandit captured thus far refused to reveal any information. Rumor has it that these groups are only elements of a much larger force gathering in a secret mountain hideaway.

Some speculate that a wily bandit leader is unifying outlaw gangs and preparing to plunder the mines themselves. There has even been talk that a shugenja leads them, seeking to amass a horde of diamonds for some devious magical working. They say this shugenja has armed the robbers with magic, allowing them to retreat with their spoils like shadows from the light.

While the Shadowlands lie far to the south of the Unicorn's territory, some of the creatures have managed somehow to establish themselves in parts of the Unicorn lands. One theory is that there is a subterranean network of caverns that extends under the Spine of the World mountains, the Shinomen forest and into the Shadowlands. It is possible that the creatures may have wandered into these caverns and emerged in the mountains near the Snow Plains and adapted to the new environment.

Travelers in the rugged mountain passes tell of goblin-like creatures with thick, fatty flesh who can re-attach a limb after it has been severed. Mujina also haunt the hills and plains, delighting in tormenting the diamond miners and spooking the horses of Unicorn troops. There have also been harrowing tales of the vengeful spirits of travelers frozen in snowstorms that haunt the broad plateaus.

The Lands of the Unicorn

The Unicorn lands are a reflection of the Clan's development over the past two hundred years. Originally composed of wandering nomads, the Unicorn have slowly settled down, establishing towns and fortresses. At the same time, wanderlust continues to grip their hearts, and they have never truly abandoned their ancestors' ways. As a result, their territory is a strange mix of the transient and the unchanging, of permanent settlements existing side by side with eternally mobile caravan trains. Such a combination takes many visitors by surprise, enhancing the Unicorn's "barbaric" reputation among other Clans.

The landscape on this western edge of Rokugan is well-suited to the dual nature of the people who live on it. It consists of vast expanses of rolling plains, grasslands and low hills. Yet it is



located between a trio of great lakes, and cut off from the rest of the Empire by a pair of swift rivers. While creating several ideal points for a city or fortress to be constructed, it also provides an immense natural defense for the unbroken plains that comprise the vast majority of Unicorn holdings. The permanent dwellings form anchors that the wandering population can use for respite, trade, and defense.

Of the entire Unicorn population, perhaps forty percent are nomads, never remaining in one set location for very long. These wanderers make their living by herding, and move their great flocks of sheep and herds of horses from place to place as the seasons dictate. The Unicorn plains are rich with wild grass and oats, perfect for nomadic herding. And it goes without saying that the Unicorn's horses are among the strongest and most valued in Rokugan. In the proper hands, a breeding stallion can fetch enough gold to feed an entire community for a year.

Most herders shun outsiders and do not interact with their cousins in the rest of Rokugan. Their strange dialect and uncouth ways mark them as outsiders everywhere they go. The harsh comfort of the windswept plains they know is enough to keep them from venturing beyond their caravan trails. Each band is led by a family magistrate, responsible for leading the group and enforcing the Emperor's law among them. Such magistrates must report to the Unicorn daimyos at least once each year, and answer for any wrong-doings their mobile community may have committed.

The remainder of the Clan – those who dwell in one place permanently – tend to cluster either at one of the great family castles or along the Firefly River on the eastern edge of Unicorn lands. Fishing villages and farmlands pepper both sides of the Firefly, depending upon yearly flooding to harvest their crops. The Unicorn is the least agrarian of the Clans, and most of their crop maintains their own food supply, rather than serving as trade goods.

Perhaps more importantly, the river is the only easy means of access to and from the Unicorn lands. Merchants and tradesmen of all types looking to do business make their way up the Firefly by boat or caravan. Outsiders are welcome to travel wherever they wish in Unicorn lands, although most of them choose to remain near the river. The fertile area along the Firefly is the most

“Rokugani” of Unicorn lands – its roads and townships look much like they do in the rest of the Emerald Empire. For this reason, traders and other outsiders are most at home here, and conduct their business without pressing further into Unicorn territory.

THE GREAT LAKES

The three great lakes in this area are held in high esteem by the Unicorn. Not only do they provide a constant source of water and the basis for nomadic moving patterns, but each one contains a special meaning which all Unicorns hold close to their hearts. In the far north lie Nagashi Naga Toshi, a Naga city sunken beneath the water. Though few beyond a handful of Shinjo scholars know its exact nature, it seems odd that such ruins would remain unchanged for thousands of years while other land-based buildings vanished long ago. The Unicorn point to it as a sign of how fleeting life is, and how so little of what we build truly lasts.

On the other end of the territory is Chrysanthemum Petal Lake, renowned throughout the Empire for its beauty and serenity. For most of the year, the lake is white with petals from the chrysanthemums that cover the shore – a liquid carpet of flowers that draws pilgrims from every corner of Rokugan. The Unicorn see it as evidence of nature's harmony, and an example of how disparate elements can exist peacefully alongside each other.

Finally, there is White Shore Lake, at the eastern edge of Unicorn lands. The resting place of Firefly River, the Lake has become a hub of fishing and trading. The fine white sand surrounding the water is said to have medicinal effects, and Unicorn peasantry are aware of how its waters give them sustenance. They view the lake as a testament to nature's generous and bountiful ways.

THE PALACES

The fortresses of the great Unicorn families are testaments to the Clan's efficiency as well as their fundamental differences from the rest of the Emerald Empire. They are more ornate than other fortresses, with flying buttresses and steep-sloped roofs unseen elsewhere. They are built along strange configurations, emphasizing sturdy, low walls instead of narrow high ones. Their gates turn away from the nearby roads, forcing visitors

UNICORN TRAVEL POETRY: TEMPERED BY TIME

Fulfill the will of your
people
Forget not the dawn of time
Many nights memories
frighten
Terrible enemies appear
Tempered by time
Leaders true, fear not death



UNICORN TRAVEL POETRY: SORROW

Wild winds of winter
Warm breezes of spring
No where to go, no one to see
Captured last year or more
Cornered by time
A samurai's sense of sorrow

to trek around the outer walls if they wish to visit. And the interior decorations, of course, are simply beyond the pale – animal skins, incense burners, even golden statues unseen anywhere else in Rokugan. Those who stay with the Unicorn nobility for any amount of time find their concepts of “proper” behavior taxed to the limit.

As each family has a duty within the overall Clan, each castle is built with a specific purpose in mind. In the south, as the flat plains give way to the Seikitsu mountains, the two “peaceful” families have placed their strongholds. Iuchi Castle is located along a howling valley in the midst of the mountains, the only way into Unicorn lands from the south. Harsh and unyielding, swept by the winds and other elements, the place is a potent link to the spirits of the Earth and Sky. Iuchi shugenja can practice their magic here, as well as easily defending the narrow vale from invading armies. Landslides and hurricane winds have been known to rain down on hostile forces looking to find a way through.

In contrast to the Iuchi, the Ide school is calm and serene – much like the Chrysanthemum Lake on whose shores it lies. At the foot of the mountains and surrounded by the snow-white petals of the lake, the Ide family teaches culture and beauty as well as diplomacy to its students. The greatest examples of Unicorn art have come from Ide castle, mixing traditional Rokugani styles with barbarian techniques from beyond the mountains. The castle (“school” is really the right word, for it is lightly defended) reflects the aesthetics of their greatest painters and sculptors, blending seamlessly with the snow-capped peaks and white-capped lake surrounding it. It also plays host to the great Chrysanthemum Festival every year, welcoming pilgrims from every Clan searching for enlightenment.

Toshi No Aida ni Kawa, located between the Firefly and Sleeping Rivers, serves as the principal defense against invading forces. Broad and imposing, it can be reached only by fording the Sleeping River, an arduous task leaving even the largest armies open to retaliation. The Unicorn house their diplomatic and ambassadorial corps here, as well as representatives from the Emperor and the other six Clans. All political dealings, business arrangements and offers of allegiance start and end within these walls.

In the center of the Unicorn plains lies Shiro Otaku Shoju – the headquarters of the Otaku family. Surrounded by flat plain on all sides, and easily spotted from hundreds of leagues away, outsiders are never allowed close to it. In addition to housing the famous battle maiden school, the fortress is the home of the Otaku stables, breeding grounds for the greatest horses the Emerald Empire has ever seen. So large are the stables, in fact, that they need their own walls and defensive guard to protect them. The horses here all belong to the Otaku battle maidens, and are bred and trained in the plains around the castle. When not traveling the Empire looking for war, most battle maidens can be found here, serving as a garrison and police force for the rest of the Clan. The castle’s location in the midst of flatland make the battle maidens ideal defenders – they can cut down an invading force in the blink of an eye.

Finally, in the northern end of Unicorn lands is Shiro Shinjo, capitol of the Clan. It can be reached only by a long and exhausting journey, and few not of the Unicorn have the inclination or the fortitude to travel that far. Here, clan daimyos conduct internal business: debating policy, proposing alliances, and ensuring that Unicorn interests are being served both here and abroad. The Clan Champion always resides here, along with his inner corps of advisors and bodyguards. While sparsely defended for a capital fortress, its walls are quite thick, and the guards posted here are fanatical in their devotion. Combined with the imposing landscape, it makes a target few would consider inviting. Which, of course, is just how the Unicorn like it.

Meishodo – Name Magic

Iuchi’s greatest discovery during his covert studies in the land of the heartless sorcerers was what he called “meishodo”, or “name magic.”

The sorcerers of the east were not calling upon the fortunes or kami to create magical effects, but were using what they called the “names of creation.” According to their beliefs, the words that were spoken at the dawn of creation held power, and invoking or inscribing those names could tap into that power.



Iuchi became fascinated with this new knowledge and furiously attempted to master it. Unfortunately, he would not see the fruition of his work. His untimely death (at the hands of a desert shadow) would cease his studies. However, his apprentice – Iuchi Nobane – continued his work and incorporated it into the Rokugani belief system.

The system of magic Nobane created involves inscribing the words that were spoken at the time of creation on talismans. Speaking the name while concentrating on the talisman causes a flux of energy from the wellspring of energy that is creation itself. Iuchi Nobane found this style of magic to be far more useful than the taxing meditations prescribed by Isawa. The power was ready at the caster's fingertips whenever he needed it.

However Nobane's style of magic did have a price. Try as he might, he could not vary the intensity of the effects he was invoking. The magic was "static", inflexible. For the rest of his life he would try to find a solution, but it eluded him. Even his students were unable to solve the problem.

When the Unicorn returned to Rokugan, they introduced this new form of magic to the courts, and the Phoenix branded it heresy. However, the Crane had long been magical artificers and found themselves intrigued by the new magic. The Emperor was forced to make a decision. He announced that only the Unicorn would practice *meishodo* and those they felt were worthy to handle its power. The Phoenix objected, but the Emperor would not relent. "Obviously the Unicorn have not been tainted by this magic. What do we have to fear?"

For two hundred years the Unicorn have adapted *meishodo* to the Rokugani belief system; however, they have found a small problem. Their own understanding of Rokugani magic has faded and they have found themselves somehow "cut off" from the tide of magical energies. The Iuchi have not revealed this to the rest of Rokugan; indeed they have not even revealed it to the rest of their Clan. The metaphysical implications could give the Unicorn's enemies great leverage indeed.

USING MEISHODO

Incorporating *meishodo* into your campaign is easy. First off, only characters from the Iuchi shugenja school are allowed to use it (unless a non-Unicorn character is willing to purchase the Different School advantage). All the spells listed

in the main book (and in Appendix 3) can be used with the *meishodo* rules.

If a shugenja who uses *meishodo* wishes to cast a spell, rather than reading a scroll, he concentrates on the talisman inscribed with a secret word. The power flows from the energies around him just like a normal spell and it is cast with all the usual rules. There are only two differences.

1) Casting Time = 1 Action

Meishodo spells have a casting time of a single action. That's it.

2) No Raises

Shugenja using *meishodo* cannot use Raises to change the effect, duration or any other part of the spell. Also, there are no *meishodo* rituals.

Mastery rules are also the same for *meishodo*. If the shugenja has gained mastery over the spell, he no longer needs the talisman to cast it. However, unlike traditional Rokugani magic, he does not gain a Free Raise if he casts a spell he has mastered with the talisman.

Finally, shugenja who use *meishodo* are invoking power from a metaphysical system that is not native to Rokugan. For whatever reason, whenever *meishodo* shugenja try to use traditional Rokugani magic (with scrolls and such), all target numbers are increased by 5. Also, *meishodo* shugenja may not use the spells Sense, Commune and Summon.



UNICORN TRAVEL POETRY: NO DEATH IS HANDSOME

Be not too clever if you wish to be happy

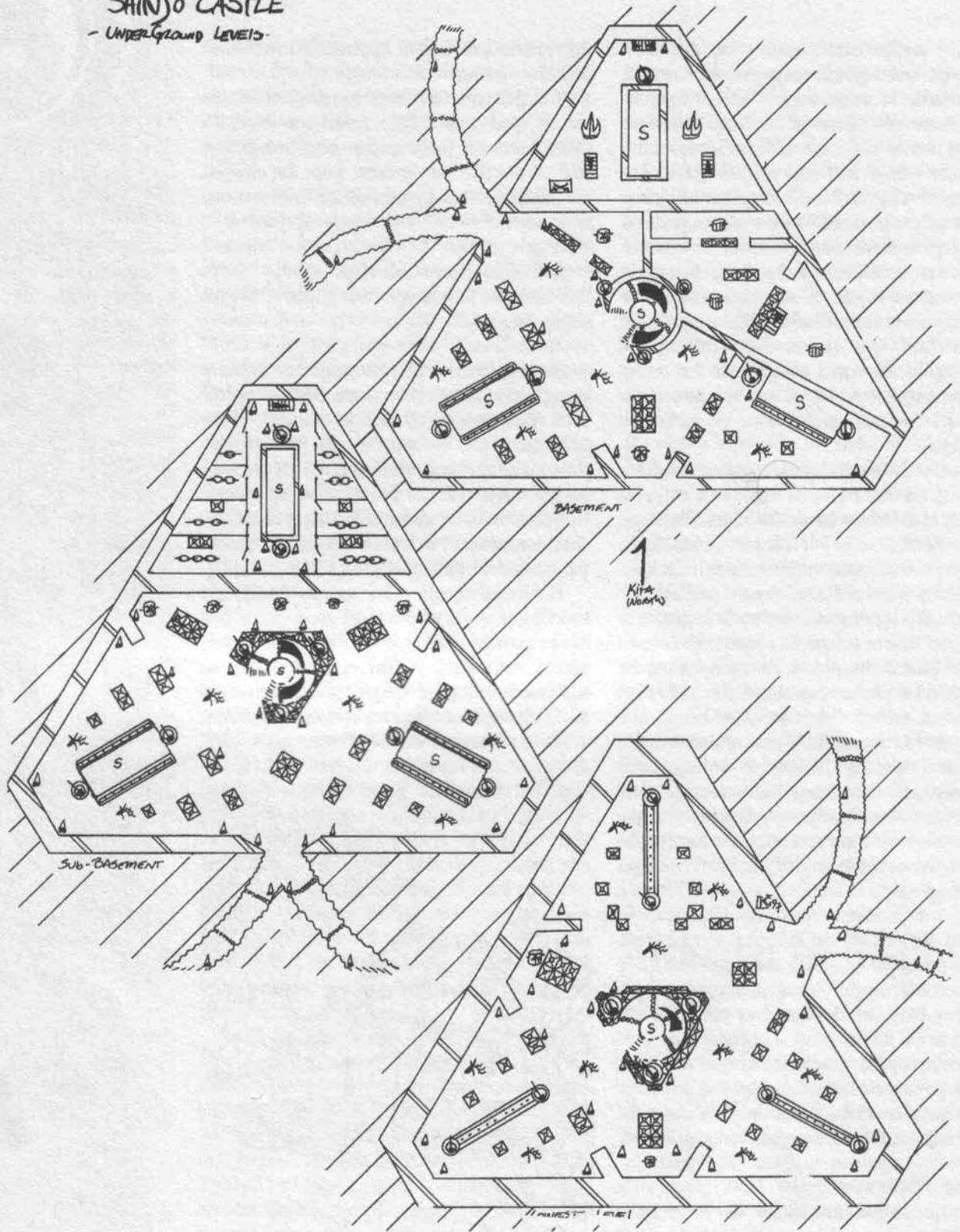
Half rely on fate and happenstance

Half a man's destiny should be hidden

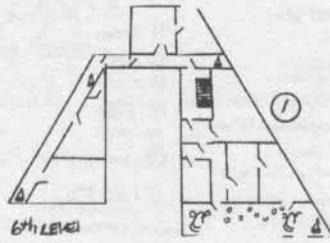
The best life looks dark at the end

Be content in your doom
No death is handsome

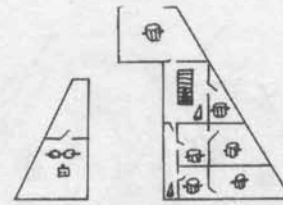
SHINJO CASTLE
- UNDERGROUND LEVELS -



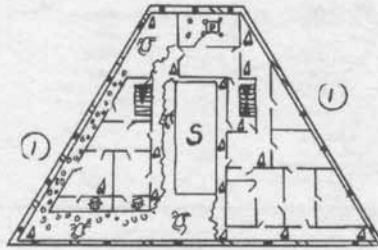
SHINJO



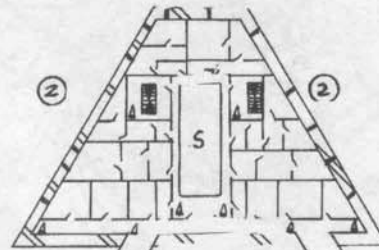
6th LEVEL



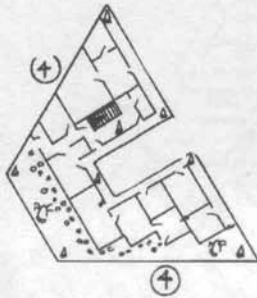
7th LEVEL



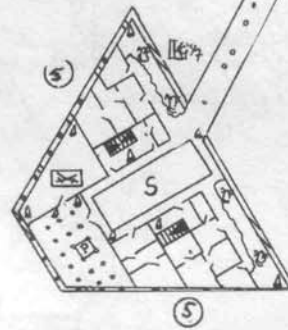
5th LEVEL



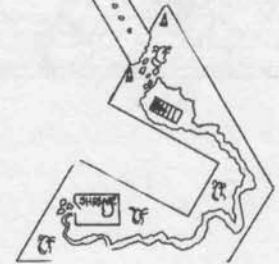
4th LEVEL



3rd LEVEL



2nd LEVEL



1st LEVEL



SHINJO CASTLE - UPPER LEVELS

MAP KEY

Scale: 1 cm = 10 m

① Dairyo & Family
 ② Clan Members & Family
 ③ Courtyards
 ④ Visiting Dignitaries
 ⑤ Guards Quarters
 ⑥ Daimyo Quarters

Spiral Ramp for Mounted Cavalry

S: very bright paper of red lacquer
 S: stone camp
 S: staircase
 S: stone staircase

Stables
 Well
 Storage
 Wash
 Garden
 Arches
 Gate Room which leads into stone wall
 Prisons
 Archery
 Armory
 Private
 Wash
 Pillar supports

Stone wall
 Courtyards
 Large dome stone
 Window (in stone)
 Staircase with murder hole
 Wood/stone wall with door
 Underground tunnel
 Incline marker
 Stone steps
 Chalk
 Pillars
 Pillar stones



Appendix IV: L5R CCG Unicorn Decks

"Pony Express" By Steve Swarner

DYNASTY DECK: 30 CARDS

- Inheritance OE . . . R
- Imperial Gift OE . . . R
- Iris Festival OE . . . R
- The Return of Fu Leng AoD . . . R
- Naming the True Evil C&J . . . R

- Small Farm x3 OE . . . C
- Merchant Caravan x3 FK . . . C
- Stables x3 OE . . . C
- Jade Works x3 OE . . . C

- Clan Heartland C&J . . . R

- Ikoma Kaoku SL . . . U
- Otaku Baiken x2 AoD . . . C
- Otaku Kamoko x3 OE . . . C
- Otaku Kamoko (Experienced) SL . . . U
- Otaku Kojiro SL . . . R
- Shinjo Rojin x3 C&J . . . C
- Shinjo Yasoma AoD . . . U

FATE DECK: 30 CARDS

- Breach of Etiquette x3 OE . . . U
- A Gift of Honor x3 SL . . . R
- The Egg of Pan Ku OE . . . R
- Charge x3 OE . . . C
- Deadly Ground x3 OE . . . C
- Traversable Terrain x2 OE . . . C
- Rallying Cry x3 OE . . . C

- Scout x3 OE . . . C
- Shinjo House Guard SL . . . U
- Heavy Mounted Infantry ToV . . . U
- Heavy Cavalry OE . . . U
- Shiryo no Otaku C&J . . . R
- Shiryo no Shinjo AoD . . . R

- Ancestral Sword of Unicorn Clan . IE . . . R
- Ancestral Armor of Unicorn Clan . EE . . . R
- Ancestral Standard of Unicorn . . . OE . . . R
- Armor of Earth FK . . . R

The strength of the Unicorn is the speed of its steeds. "Pony Express" is a basic fast attack deck that capitalizes on a first turn Breach of Etiquette or Gift of Honor, or both.

Otaku Baiken, who can bow to give your samurai 1F cavalry Follower tokens, builds the army on the turns that he is not needed for attack. Otaku Kojiro, who bows to straighten one of your cavalry Personalities, straightens your big hitter – usually Otaku Kamoko – after she has attacked so she can defend. Shinjo Rojin, who only costs five gold, is a vehicle for the various Followers in the deck. Ikoma Kaoku, the Lion Clan historian, writes it all down and gives your victorious Personalities a 1F/1C bonus.

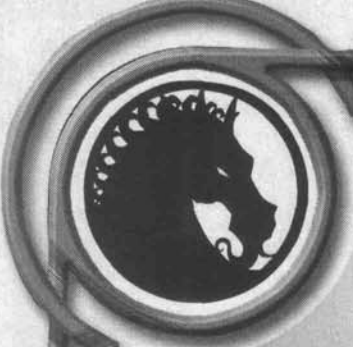
If you're going to play a multiplayer game, add another Otaku Baiken and two more Ikoma Kaoku; multiplayer lasts longer, and you'll have more time for their abilities to help you out.

"Stranglehold" By Steve Swarner

DYNASTY DECK: 50 CARDS

- Emperor's Peace OE . . . U
- Doom of the Crane SL . . . U
- Imperial Gift OE . . . R
- Inheritance OE . . . R
- Mine Riots C&J . . . U
- New Taxes C&J . . . U
- Peasant Revolt OE . . . U
- The Return of Fu Leng AoD . . . R
- Tsunami C&J . . . U

- Black Market x2 FK . . . C
- Corrupt Stables x3 ToV . . . C
- Jade Works x3 OE . . . C
- Merchant Caravan x3 FK . . . C
- Ninja Stronghold x3 OE . . . R



**UNICORN TRAVEL
POETRY:
EVERYTHING DIES**

Idé Ludan's last poem 'Everything Dies' was written on his deathbed to his son. It is interesting to note that it has only five lines, denoting Ludan's belief that memory can indeed cheat death of its final victory.

Everything dies
Everything dies
Every mendicant, every monarch
Every man every woman, everything
But never noble memory

| | | | | |
|-----------------------|-------|-----|------|---|
| Small Farm x3 | ..... | OE | .... | C |
| Stables x3 | ..... | OE | .... | C |
| The Doji Plains x3 | ..... | FK | .... | U |
| Horiuchi Shoan x3 | ..... | OE | .... | C |
| Hoseki x2 | ..... | AoD | .... | U |
| Kolat Servant x3 | ..... | OE | .... | U |
| Ninja Shapeshifter x3 | ..... | OE | .... | U |
| Oni no Ogon x3 | ..... | SL | .... | U |
| Yogo Asami x3 | ..... | FK | .... | C |

FATE DECK: 32 CARDS

| | | | | |
|------------------------------|-------|-----|------|---|
| Breach of Etiquette x3 | ..... | OE | .... | U |
| Bountiful Harvest x3 | ..... | OE | .... | R |
| Explosives x3 | ..... | OE | .... | U |
| Gift of Honor x3 | ..... | SL | .... | R |
| Kolat Infiltrator x3 | ..... | OE | .... | U |
| Kolat Master x3 | ..... | OE | .... | R |
| Night of a Thousand Fires x3 | ..... | C&J | .... | U |
| Ninja Kidnapper x3 | ..... | FK | .... | U |
| Oath of Fealty x2 | ..... | OE | .... | C |
| The Fist of Osano-Wo x3 | ..... | OE | .... | R |
| Mists of Illusion x2 | ..... | OE | .... | U |
| Night Medallion | ..... | OE | .... | R |

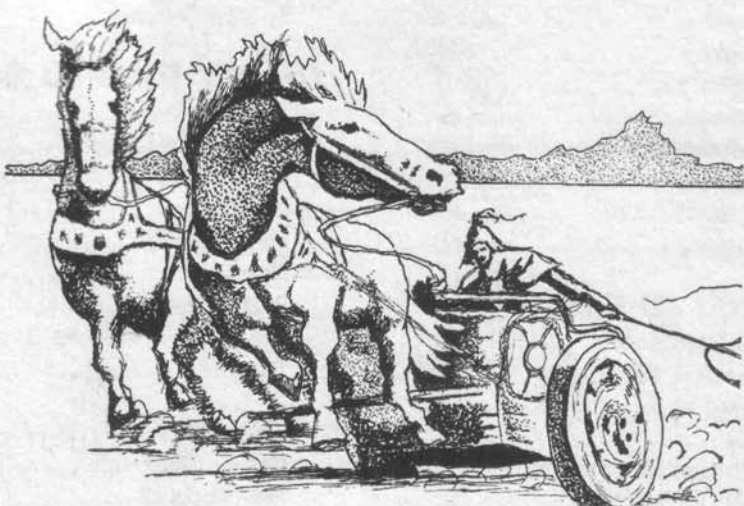
This Unicorn deck destroys the enemy's supply trains to starve it into submission. Its focus is to

prevent the opponent from playing her cards. If the deck needs honor to bring its cards into play, then slow it down with a Breach of Etiquette or with a Gift of Honor. This latter also helps with the real purpose of the deck: to prevent their gold production. Use the Fist of Osano Wo, Explosives, and Night of a Thousand Fires to destroy their holdings, while using Oni no Ogon with an Oath of Fealty and Mists of Illusion on him to make the opponent bow all of his holdings (preventing him from buying any cards). The Kolat Servant is the clincher: he holds the stronghold down while Oni no Ogon keeps the remaining holdings useless.

The Ninja Kidnapper, Yogo Asami, and Ninja Shapeshifter (copying Asami or Ogon as needed) distract any personalities that may have come out before you could tie up all the opposing resources. Stealing a useful Personality with Kolat Master not only wounds their deck but also gives you a body whom you can conveniently sacrifice to protect a Province.

In the end it's all about slowing their deck to a halt, locking down their whole fief. Then you can muster enough force to destroy their Provinces with Oni no Ogon, the Shapeshifters, and any Kolat Mastered cards.

This deck is only for duel games and not multiplayer; this deck would be hard-pressed to shut down two or more opposing decks.



C. H. BARNETT

The Merchant's Guide to Rokugan

Spring '99



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Legend of the Five Rings

Name:

Clan:

Profession:

Fire

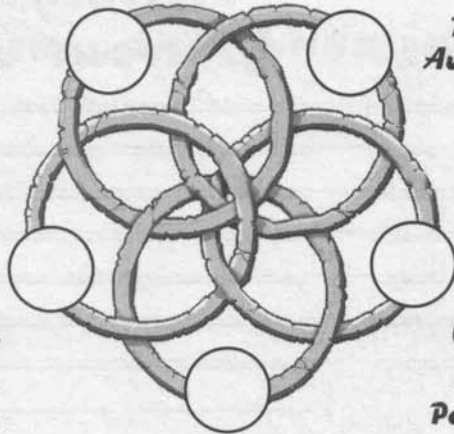
Agility:
Intelligence:

Air

Reflexes:
Awareness:

Primary Weapon

Primary Armor



TN to be Hit
(Reflexes x 5 + Armor)

Earth

Stamina:
Willpower:

Water

Strength:
Perception:

Skills

Void

Void Points Spent:

Spells

Insight:

Wounds

| | | |
|-------|--------------------------|------|
| _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> | -0 |
| _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> | -1 |
| _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> | -2 |
| _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> | -3 |
| _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> | -4 |
| _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> | Down |
| _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> | Out |
| _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> | Dead |

School: Rank:

Advantages/
Disadvantages

Glory:

Honor:

Experience Points:

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