

STEAMPUNK MUSHA™

VICTORIENTAL ADVENTURES

CREATED BY RICK HERSHEY



AN ALTERNATIVE
FOR IRON GAUNTLETS™ GAME SETTING

STEAMPUNK MUSHA™

VICTORIENTAL ADVENTURES FOR IRON GAUNTLETS

- CREATED BY RICK HERSHEY -



**Iron
Gauntlets™**
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	4	5. ROSUTO-SHIMA	63
1. CHARACTER BASICS	7	History	64
New Magical Abilities	8	The Wilderness	66
New Gimmicks	8	Map of Rosuto-Shima	67
New Backgrounds	9	The Civilized Provinces	68
New Vocations	10	Shangti, the Imperial City	69
New Skills and Styles	13	Talu, the Floating City	71
Dishonor	14	Chinan, the City of the Arts	73
Kits	15	Huinan, the Summer Kingdom	75
2. CHARACTER RACES	21	Liaoyan, the Forest City	76
Humans	22	Chengti, City of Heaven	78
Gaijin	22	Kuang-Cho, the Underground City	80
Clockwork Ronin	23	Linan, Star of the South	82
Jinteki-Oni	24	Chieng-Mow and Yang-Mow, the Twin Cities	84
Juunishi-p'o	27	Kara Kora, Capital of the Keshou	86
Keshou	33	Tendou, Home of the Jinteki-Oni	87
Oher Races in Rosuto-Shima	34	6. BESTIARY	89
3. MAGIC AND RELIGION	35	New Creature Gimmicks	90
Scholarly Magic	36	Rosuto-Shima Creatures	91
Religion in Rosuto-Shima	37	Oni	96
Gui-Based Magic	38	Spirits and the Dead	100
Tenshu-Mahou-Based Magic	45	7. THE STORIES	105
Magic Reference	50	Story Locations and Ideas	106
4. ARMS AND ARMOR	51	Jisou-Seisen: The Children Crusade	107
Weapons	52	Source Material	116
Armor	56	CHARACTER SHEETS	119
Upgraded Items	57		
Other Items	59		
Constructs and Mounts	60		
New Weapons List	61		
New Armor List	62		

The Tale of Yu

ALL THESE THINGS TOOK PLACE IN A TIME BEFORE TIME WAS MEASURED, BEFORE THE GODS KNEW THEIR OWN NAMES. THE GREAT CELESTIAL DRAGONS, WHOSE NAMES MAN MAY NOT SPEAK, EXISTED IN A PLACE THAT HAD NO FORM, A PLACE SO SHAPELESS THAT NO THOUGHTS COULD CONTAIN IT, AND NOT EVEN THE DRAGONS CONSIDERED ITS EXISTENCE. IT IS SAID THEY WENT ON FOR UNCOUNTABLE MOMENTS IN THEIR WAY, KNOWING THE THINGS THAT THE DRAGONS KNOW, DOING THINGS THAT THE DRAGONS DO. PERHAPS EONS PASSED, BUT THE TRUTH OF THIS IS LOST TO MEN. WHAT IS KNOWN IS THIS: THE GREAT CELESTIAL DRAGONS DECIDED THAT THE FORMLESS PLACE SHOULD HAVE SOME FORM, THAT ITS LIFELESSNESS SHOULD BE FILLED WITH BREATH. SO THEY BREATHED IN THE SHAPELESS PLACE AND BREATHED OUT THE ONE CALLED YU.

THE CELESTIAL DRAGONS SPOKE THEIR THOUGHTS TO YU, AND YU ACQUIESCED TO THEIR REQUESTS, TAKING UPON HIMSELF THE TASK OF GIVING SHAPE TO THAT WHICH HAD NONE, BREATHING LIFE WHERE THERE HAD BEEN NO BREATH. BUT AS HE WATCHED THE UNIVERSE FORM, WATCHED THE STARS BEGIN TO SWIRL, WATCHED HIS PATTERNS GROW AND BEGIN TO FOLLOW HIS WILL WITHOUT BEING REMINDED, HE GREW SELFISH. WHY SHOULD HE SHARE THE UNIVERSE HE HAD CREATED? ALL THE CELESTIAL DRAGONS HAD GIVEN HIM WAS BREATH; HE HAD GIVEN THE UNIVERSE HIS THOUGHTS, GIVEN IT THE SHAPE HE WOULD NEVER HIMSELF HAVE. AND SO, HAVING NO FORM HIMSELF, HE SURROUNDED THE UNIVERSE AND HID IT FROM THE CELESTIAL DRAGONS. HE WATCHED IT GROW AND CHANGE, TAKING JOY FROM THE LIFE THAT STARTED INSIDE OF HIM, ALLOWING IT TO SHAPE HIM AS HE SHAPED IT.

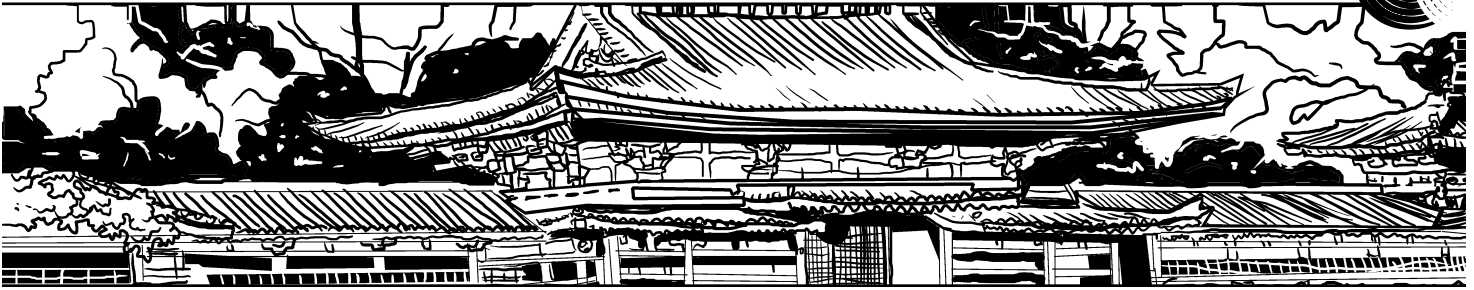
THE CELESTIAL DRAGONS REMEMBERED THE TASK THEY HAD GIVEN YU, AND THOUGH PERHAPS AGES PASSED BEFORE THEY THOUGHT OF HIM, THEY EVENTUALLY RETURNED TO ASK HIM WHERE HE HAD PLACED THE UNIVERSE. AS YU WATCHED THE CELESTIAL DRAGONS AND WATCHED THE UNIVERSE INSIDE OF HIM, HE REALIZED HE HAD DONE SOMETHING DISHONORABLE BY KEEPING IT A SECRET. HE CONFESSED HIS HORRIBLE ACT, AND THE CELESTIAL DRAGONS EXPLAINED THAT IN ORDER TO REGAIN HIS HONOR, HE WOULD HAVE TO CUT THE UNIVERSE OUT OF HIMSELF. YU QUICKLY SLICED HIMSELF IN HALF AND THE UNIVERSE BURST FROM HIM, AND THE CELESTIAL DRAGONS WERE AMAZED AT WHAT HE HAD CREATED.

BUT YU FELT HE HAD NOT DONE ENOUGH TO REGAIN HIS HONOR AND CONTINUED TO CUT HIMSELF INTO PIECES. AS HE CUT, HIS PIECES WERE GIVEN FORM. WHERE THE UNIVERSE HAD BEEN NOW BECAME HIS BOWELS, WHICH HE SPILLED ONTO A SMALL WORLD. HIS INNARDS POURED INTO AN OCEAN, AND HIS FLESH COVERED THEM TO CREATE AN ISLAND. HIS ARMS AND LEGS BECAME THE ISLAND'S MOUNTAINS, AND HIS HAIR BECAME TREES AND GRASS. AS HE WATCHED HIS FORM BECOME PART OF ONE OF HIS WORLDS, HE CRIED WITH JOY, AND THESE TEARS BECAME THE RIVERS WHICH LED TO THE SEA. BUT THE PAIN WAS GREAT, AND YU COULD NOT HOLD BACK A SCREAM OF PAIN, AND THIS SCREAM, TOO, TOOK FORM, AND FROM IT CAME THE SEVEN THUNDER GODS WHO STILL MIMIC HIS CRY. AND AFTER HE SCREAMED, HE RETCHED BLOOD, EXPELLING THE GREED AND DISHONOR THAT HAD MADE HIM HIDE THE UNIVERSE, AND THIS BECAME THE ONI. ON HIS BACK CAME FLEAS AND LICE, WHICH BECAME OUR ANCESTORS, AND FROM HIS LAST THOUGHTS, THE GODS WERE FORMED TO RULE OVER THE LAND. WITH YU'S LAST BREATH, THE FOUR GREAT WINDS BEGAN TO BLOW.

THE CELESTIAL DRAGONS WERE PLEASED WITH YU'S SACRIFICE, AND SO THEY SENT OTHER SPIRITS TO EXPERIENCE THE LAND, TO WHICH THEY GAVE THE NAME ROSUTO-SHIMA. THEY TOOK YU'S EYES AND SET THEM ABOVE THE WORLD, SO THAT YU MIGHT WATCH OVER WHAT HE HAD MADE. IN THIS WAY, THEY EXPLAINED, HE WOULD BE ABLE TO PREVENT HIS CHILDREN FROM COMMITTING THE DISHONOR THAT YU HAD COMMITTED. AND SO IT REMAINS; THE FIRST EYE, THE SUN, WATCHES OVER THE JOY AND HAPPINESS OF MANKIND, SEEING ONLY THE BRIGHT HOURS OF CELEBRATION. THE OTHER EYE, THE MOON, ONLY SEES THE DARKNESS OF MEN, AND IS WITNESS TO THE GREED AND SELFISHNESS THAT CAUSED YU SUCH GREAT DISHONOR. BUT THOUGH YU'S SECOND EYE ONLY SEES DARKNESS, IT SHINES, HOPING THAT ITS LIGHT WILL GUIDE MEN TOWARD LIVES OF HONOR AND AWAY FROM HIS PREVIOUS ACTIONS, THE CORRUPTION OF ROSUTO-SHIMA.

AND THAT IS HOW ALL THESE THINGS CAME TO BE.

-COLLECTED WRITINGS OF QUAN HONG



Imagine an island, cut off from the rest of the world by a series of treacherous coral reefs. Imagine that the island was plagued by a war that lasted hundreds of years, only to be divided into provinces ruled by warlords. Imagine that as technology improved and advanced in the world outside, the island has remained much the same as it has always been. Now imagine that foreigners have brought the outside world to that island, and things have changed forever...

This is Rosuto-Shima, an island torn between honoring the old traditions and embracing new technologies. The rulers of the eleven provinces have turned from open warfare to quiet competition, racing to develop improved technologies that can solidify and build the power of their provinces. It is a time of renaissance in Rosuto-Shima, but also a time of darkness. As more and more people turn to the new ways, the old ways are forgotten, and the old gods are not pleased.

Rosuto-Shima is a Steampunk setting with an Oriental flavor intended for use with *Iron Gauntlets: Heroic Fantasy Roleplaying*. Because Rosuto-Shima is an island that has been cut off from the world, the Steampunk Musha setting can be dropped into an existing Iron Gauntlets campaign, as well as fit into more modern or apocalyptic fantasy settings.

Unlike traditional fantasy settings, Steampunk Musha draws on East Asian mythology and history, and combines aspects of several cultural traditions with Victorian-era technology. The traditional Oriental setting is thrown into a roaring industrial age, where incredible new inventions contrast with ancient mysteries and restless spirits. High fantasy and science-fiction clash and combine in the middle of the conflict between old and new, father and son, clockwork and spiritual.

The Physical World

Dominated in the south by near-tropical marshes, the east by desert, and the north by cool, temperate forests, there are several climates scattered about the island of Rosuto-Shima. A large mountain range rises from the center of the island, and the cities are spread throughout the land. Between the cities, regardless of the climate, are small villages where the country folk of Rosuto-Shima still strive to make a living, while losing

most of their young, able-bodied workers to the lure of the cities. To the north, across the sea, is Jigoku, a volcanic island that bellows flames visible throughout the northern areas of Rosuto-Shima. The constellations and the zodiac that fill the night sky above Rosuto-Shima have significance to the old ways, but as the cities begin to create their own lights, it becomes harder and harder to see the stars.

Because of the coral reefs surrounding Rosuto-Shima, the waters are extremely dangerous to travel in large craft. The seas are nearly always rough, and rainstorms (or snowstorms in the north) give very little warning before unleashing their fury on the water below. In spite of the dangers, much of Rosuto-Shima's food comes from the sea, and fish who live the closest to the coral reefs are considered a delicacy because of the danger required to catch them.

The Inhabitants

Humans fill most areas of Rosuto-Shima and are more numerous than any other group. Humans who are not native to Rosuto-Shima are not considered humans, but *gaijin*, or outsiders. Gaijin make up a small part of the population, and some have been accepted as members of communities, especially in coastal areas of Rosuto-Shima.

Other racial groups on Rosuto-Shima include the *jinteki-oni*, humans whose blood has mixed with the blood of the oni—the demons of Rosuto-Shima; the *keshou*, goblin cousins who are short and stocky artisans gifted with the knowledge of clockwork; the *clockwork ronin*, who were created during an insurgence after the War of the States; and the *juunishi-p'o*, who exist somewhere between humans and animals, and embody the qualities of the animal symbols of the zodiac.

It is possible for other races of gaijin to travel to Rosuto-Shima: *elves* may travel to witness arts that have been unaffected by outside influence, *dwarves* may seek out new riches from a virgin market, and *goblins* may wish to free themselves from captivity by searching out their keshou cousins. These travelers, however, are even rarer than human foreigners, and would draw much attention from the local inhabitants.

Magic and Technology

Magic is ever present in Rosuto-Shima, though it is largely ignored by city dwellers. The magical arts are still familiar to, and accepted by, those who follow the old ways—from those who practice it to those commoners who merely view it as miraculous. People who have moved to the cities and see themselves as educated and civilized believe that magic is nothing more than old wives tales and superstitions designed to hold the gullible to the old ways. The new technology can be tested, it can be witnessed, and it can be improved. Technology is fact, physically represented; magic is intangible, and best left in the realms of myths and superstitions.

There are many types of magic present in Rosuto-Shima, from that of ghosts and demons to the magic of the Nikobo who hunt them. The Juunishi-p'ō have their own brand of innate (primal) magic, as well, while the artists of the kabuki theater practice another form entirely. While priests and monks more often practice philosophy than divine magic, that power is still present, ready to be used when the need is great.

The recent surge in technology is due in large part to the presence of magatama stones, which produce heat and seemingly burn without fire. Gaijin technology combined with the power of the magatama stones has brought steam-power to Rosuto-Shima, and creations such as steam-powered vehicles have become a staple in modern society. Charging powders are being used in a wide selection of weapons, including the Gatling Gun and both small and large handheld weapons. The surge in technological resources has also created jobs for the clockwork-minded, who now find themselves enmeshed with devices in constant need of improvement and repair.

The Rules

Playing in Rosuto-Shima requires both the *Iron Gauntlets* rulebook and *Steampunk Musha*. Important terms used in the campaign include characters, the director, and tasks. Each player takes on a character in the Rosuto-Shima setting, while the story is told by the director. Whenever a character attempts to do something out of the ordinary, this is considered a task—an action that requires a roll of one or more ten-sided dice in order to decide its resolution.

When creating a character for *Steampunk Musha*, players should have a concept in mind for the type of person they want to portray. Does the player want to portray a powerful, Clockwork Ronin warrior? A samurai still loyal to the cause of the Emperor? A beautiful kabuki actress with a knack for the

magic of shadows? A tough, but good hearted mechanist able to fix or fabricate anything—even the most broken objects? A con-artist, living on wit, charm, and other people's money?

Chapter 1 details new magical abilities, backgrounds, gimmicks, and skills, and also introduces kits, which function as a combination of both background and vocation. This section is important for understanding the special qualities that the various races of Rosuto-Shima possess. These elements take a character from average adventurer to a person with a profession, goal, and possibly even a family and history.

The races of Steampunk Musha are provided in Chapter 2. This section highlights the new species, in addition to providing notes on working those still eligible from the *Iron Gauntlets* rulebook into the setting.

The two new magical abilities are covered in Chapter 3, providing access to a total of six forms of magic in Rosuto-Shima. And finally, to equip characters with what they need to survive, Chapter 4 introduces new weapons, armor, and other gear.

The rest of this book describes the setting; threats, monsters, and animals; and provides a starting point with which to play.



CHAPTER
07

CHARACTER

BASICS

Steampunk Mushi makes use of the vast majority of the backgrounds and vocations listed in Iron Gauntlets, as well as new ones. A new concept called a Kit is provided, intended to incorporate elements of both backgrounds and vocations, representing a way of life. Kits are perfect for those who consider their jobs to be more than just work. Two new magical abilities can also be found. As usual, the director is welcome to add new backgrounds, vocations, or even kits to the list available for his players.

NEW MAGICAL ABILITIES

In addition to the four common forms of magic in the Iron Gauntlets rules, two new forms can be found in the Steampunk Musha setting. These are *gui* and *tenshu-mahou*.

Gui

This represents the character's devotion to the five elements—earth, water, fire, wind, and void. While only one must be chosen as an element to which he is attuned, the character may still channel the other elements, but his connection with them is not as strong. By channeling the elements, a character can imbue either a talisman or himself with special properties. Characters with this ability are typically considered *nikobo*.

Tenshu-Mahou

This represents the character's balance of *yin* and *yang* within his body and soul, and is drawn from the twelve earthly houses of the zodiac. Each house has dominion over different realms of power. Characters with this ability are considered *spirit masters*.

NEW RACES

Four new player races unique to Steampunk Musha are provided—clockwork ronin, jinteki-oni, juunishi-p'o, and keshou. In addition, *gaijin*, or human foreigners, are also present in this setting. More information on these races as well as notes on integrating existing Iron Gauntlets races with Steampunk Musha can be found in the next chapter.

NEW GIMMICKS

Blind Maneuvers

The character is naturally aware of his surroundings and may ignore all penalties due to poor lighting or visibility.

Inner Peace

The character has achieved a quiet place in his mind, permitting him to make more rational decisions than typical for his abilities. Because of this, he receives a bonus of +2D on all reasoning-based composure rolls.

Elemental Ignorance ✂

The character's connection with one *gui*-based element has been severed, and he cannot perform *katas* using that element. Only characters with the *gui* ability can possess this gimmick.

Epic Weapon

The character carries a specific weapon with him wherever he travels. No matter what happens, the weapon is never lost, merely misplaced. It always turns up by the end of the day.

Owed Debt ✂

The character owes someone a debt which has yet to be repaid. A man cannot refuse to repay a debt without losing face. If the character refuses to repay the debt when called upon to do so, he gains one (1) grade of dishonor.

Po Affinity

The character has an affinity with a specific type of animal, and can both locate all creatures of this kind and communicate with them within a radius of one-hundred feet. An awareness-based composure task is required.

Spring-Stepped

The character's legs are built for bearing loads, and he jumps farther than typical for his fitness ability. Because of this, he receives a bonus of +1D when making rolling dependent on jumping.



NEW BACKGROUNDS

Backgrounds form a character's history, providing a social status, style of upbringing, and family relationships. In addition to the new backgrounds listed below, all of those listed in the Iron Gauntlets rulebook may be used with Steampunk Mushi with the following exceptions:

- **LORD** is only available to gaijin or other foreign races—the character also possesses the **FOREIGNER** background. **IMPERIALIST** or **SHOGUNATE** are otherwise used in place of lord.
- **NOMAD** is only available to juunishi-p'o, and then only at the discretion of the director. There are no true nomadic cultures in Rosuto-Shima.
- **SLAVE** is not available to keshou.
- **TRIBESMAN** is only available to jinteki-oni, Juunishi-p'o, or foreign races. The island of Rosuto-Shima is a very civilized place, even in the countryside.

Countryfolk

The character was raised in the countryside, on a farm or in a village. He is familiar with the customs of the countryside and knows most of the people from his local area. In unfamiliar areas of countryside, he can often identify roles people play, such as identifying the leader among a group of villagers. It costs one point for every two allocated to the **SURVIVAL** and **GEOGRAPHY (REGION OF COUNTRYSIDE)** skills, and three points for every one allocated to the **STREETWISE** skill when creating the character, although increases through experience are not affected.

Crime Lord

The character has been involved in the business of crime all his life, and has developed a reputation as a mover and shaker in the world of organized crime. It costs one point for every two allocated to the **GAMBLING**, **STREETWISE**, and **COMMERCE** skills when creating the character, although raises through experience are not affected. The character also possesses the **WEALTH** gimmick.

Desertfolk

The character was raised in the vastness of the desert, where hot days, cold nights, and dry weather combined with a diet of snake and lizard are typical all year long. It costs one point for every two allocated to the **SURVIVAL** skill when creating the character, although raises through experience are not effected. The character also possesses the **RESISTANT (HEAT)** gimmick.

Foreigner

The character was raised somewhere other than Rosuto-Shima. Due to their outsider status, they gain a penalty of -1D on all influence-based tasks contested against traditional Rosuto-Shimans. This background may be combined with a secondary background to note the social status or culture from which the character came before entering Rosuto-Shima.

Imperialist

The character was raised to believe in the True Emperor of Rosuto-Shima and has great hope that one day the Imperial Family will regain control of the entire island. The character has a great disdain for modern technology and modern leaders, though he will use the former and manipulate the latter if it suits his cause. It costs one point for every two allocated to **AWARENESS-BASED** skills when creating the character, although raises through experience are not affected. The character also possesses the **WEALTH** gimmick.

Shogunate

The character belongs to the current ruling class of Rosuto-Shima and as a result, owns land, buildings, or other real estate located in a city or in the countryside. It costs one point for every two allocated to the **INFLUENCE** ability or **INFLUENCE-BASED** skills when creating the character, although raises through experience are not affected. The character also possesses the **WEALTH** gimmick.

NEW VOCATIONS

Vocations describe the occupation a character has been trained to perform. Some vocations are restricted to those from specific backgrounds, and cannot be taken by a character who does not meet the requirements. The training from a vocation provides the character with certain skills. All vocational skills may be selected by the character during the creation process on a point for point basis unless otherwise noted. All skills that are not vocational skills cost two points for every one allocated. A few new skills are utilized by the new vocations and are described later in this chapter. In addition to the new vocations listed below, all of those listed in the Iron Gauntlets rulebook may be used with Steampunk Musha with the following exceptions:

- **CONSTABLES** do not appear in Rosuto-Shima. Wandering warriors of this sort (protectors of the oppressed, etc.) are **RONIN** and swordsmen as opposed to bowmen.
- **HOLY KNIGHTS** do not exist per se. While it is common to encounter both a spiritually-oriented warrior (many **SAMURAI** are very pious) as well as a martially-trained priest (many **MONKS** excel at unarmed combat), armored swordsmen do not work for temples—temples do not employ them.
- **HUNTSMEN** may appear on Rosuto-Shima, but such work, unless done specifically for a company or a ruler, is considered poaching. Rosuto-Shima depends far more on agriculture and fishing than on hunting.

Alchemist

The character is trained in the use of charging powders, fireworks, explosives, and magatama stones. His skill is used by organizations wishing to enhance their knowledge of steamwork machines and their use of fire-power. He is still in the old habit, however, of hoping to convert lead to gold.

archery, firearms, legerdemain, observation, design, forging, alchemy, clockworking, medicines, commerce

Barbarian

The character is a vicious warrior from the desert of Sabaku Fuyou, and may be a criminal refugee. He excels at mounted combat, and his main source of wealth is from raids on merchant caravans that travel the desert wastes. Equipped with dual swords and wearing harsh leathers, the barbarians of Rosuto-Shima are growing to be a larger threat along the eastern coast. This vocation can only be chosen if the character has the *desertfolk* background.

athletics, brawling, melee, riding, stealth, observation, animal handling, survival, leadership

Clockwork Conductor

The character is a professional driver of steamwork vehicles. Although he may be found maneuvering such small vehicles as the steamwork horse and rickshaw, he most often drives larger clockwork machinery, including trains and boats. He is occasionally called upon to drive more traditional vehicles, such as the horse and carriage. Because this vocation is relatively new, the character has the reputation for being a daredevil and a thrill-seeker.

athletics, brawling, driving, riding, observation, animal handling, boating, clockworking, sailing, steamworking, commerce

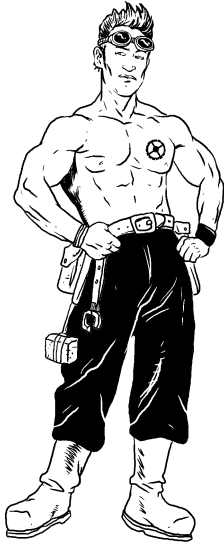




Clockwork Engineer

The character is a designer of clockwork and steamwork tools and vehicles. With a good sense for business, he sells his talent to the highest bidder and may work for leaders, nobility, or criminal organizations. The character may seek the company of protectors and warriors to ensure that he makes it safely from job to job, especially if a crime lord is displeased at his departure.

athletics, driving, observation, crafts, design, forging, masonry, boating, clockworking, sailing, steamworking, commerce



Geisha

The character is a beauty trained in the arts of persuasion and observation, as well as the more classical arts. Originally grown out of the highest class of courtesan, the geisha is an accomplished conversationalist, dancer, musician, poet, and calligrapher. Her knowledge of those in high positions at court occasionally comes in useful to collectors of knowledge, although no geisha would openly share information about her confidants.

athletics, legerdemain, observation, design, instrument, literacy, legends, performance, subterfuge



Monk

The character is a devoted servant of his temple or monastery, and is trained in the spiritual and martial arts. He seeks wisdom through meditation, as well as meditation in motion. To the character, the whole world is his temple, and he can meditate in any place or position. Monks who possess the *faithful* background take a vow of spiritual academics and divine endowments in order to extend the monastery's collective knowledge (those who officiate over other members are high priests rather than monks). Monks who come from other backgrounds are defenders of the faith, and points may be allocated to the essence ability when creating the character.

athletics, brawling, legerdemain, melee, stealth, observation, literacy, survival, leadership, all essence-based skills or sacrament, benediction, and consecration (divinity-based)

Ninja

The character is a warrior practiced in the art of stealth, as well as the use of explosives and new technology. Considered evil by some and a force for justice by others, he takes pleasure in using his skills to appear supernaturally powerful. He is generally loyal to a group or a single leader. Points may be allocated to the essence ability when creating the character.

all fitness-based skills (including firearms), observation, design, alchemy, medicines, survival, streetwise, subterfuge, all essence-based skills



Ronin

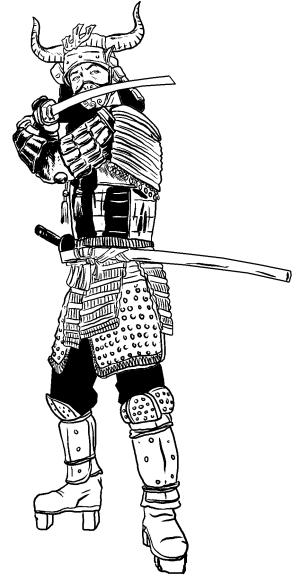
The character is a swordsman without a master. He may have lost his master to death or was disgraced and forced to leave. The path he takes might lead to protecting the poor and hopeless, or he might be a brigand, using his masterless status to cause trouble throughout the countryside. No law seems able to contain him. Points may be allocated to the essence ability when creating the character.

athletics, dueling, riding, observation, design, forging, literacy, animal handling, survival, subterfuge, all essence-based skills

Samurai

The character is a swordsman loyal to his lord. A member of a noble house, he was born to the life of the samurai and is required to devote his life in service of his lord, company, or corporation. Honorable to a fault, the character is devoted to upholding the law according to its interpretation by his master. Points may be allocated to the essence ability when creating the character.

athletics, dueling, riding, geography, observation, design, forging, literacy, animal handling, leadership, all essence-based skills



Scholar

The character is well versed in the history of Rosuto-Shima, as well as studies of architecture, warfare, and numerous other topics. Leaders seek out the character for his advice on ruling situations, for his knowledge on past successes and defeats, and for his knowledge of the new technology. Most scholars are also poets or writers and keep very careful notes on all that they learn. Points may be allocated to the crafting ability when creating the character if he also has the *imperialist** or *shogunate** background.

*firearms, all creativity-based skills, all reasoning-based skills, all crafting-based skills**



Spirit Master

The character is trained in the ways of tenshu-mahou and has balanced his animal nature with his human intelligence. Able to speak with animals and summon them to his cause, he draws on natural and supernatural forces to accomplish his goals. Points may be allocated to the tenshu-mahou ability when creating the character. This vocation can only be chosen if the character also has the *faithful* background.

archery, melee, observation, astromancy, design, literacy, alchemy, legends, medicines, commerce, leadership, all tenshu-mahou-based skills

Street fighter

The character is a martial artist, skilled in the use of his own body as a weapon. Though untrained and undisciplined, he practices combat with devotion, enjoying the thrill of hand-to-hand battle. Street fighters are often found in the company of gangsters and other outlaws.

athletics, brawling, gambling, animal handling, commerce, streetwise, subterfuge



Yakuza

The character is a criminal mastermind and runs organized criminal operations while keeping a low profile. Associated with gangsters and petty thieves, he tends to be more sophisticated than either, keeping up the appearance that he is a member of a higher social class.

brawling, firearms, stealth, gambling, observation, design, literacy, animal handling, commerce, leadership, streetwise, subterfuge



NEW SKILLS AND STYLES

Because the technology in Steampunk Mushi is more advanced than that expected for use with Iron Gauntlets, there are a few new skills necessary for using new weapons such as firearms, and for the creation of machines.

Fitness-Based Skills

Firearms

Loading, firing, and performing minor repairs of firearms, such as guns and cannons.

Driving

Controlling and operating clockwork mounts and vehicles, such as steamwork horses and rickshaws, and larger vehicles such as trains.

Reasoning-Based Skills

⊗ Clockworking

Designing, constructing, and repairing clockwork tools, vehicles, and other devices.

⊗ Steamworking

Designing, constructing, and repairing steam-powered devices, such as those that power vehicles.

Gui-Based Skills

⊗ Jin Kata

Practicing the Jin school of gui magic.

⊗ Fang Wei Kata

Practicing the Fang Wei school of gui magic.

⊗ Zhi Kata

Practicing the Zhi school of gui magic.

⊗ Yin Kata

Practicing the Yin school of gui magic.

⊗ Xing Yun Kata

Practicing the Xing Yun school of gui magic.

⊗ Da Ji Kata

Practicing the Da Ji school of gui magic.

⊗ Oni Kata

Practicing the Oni school of gui magic.

Tenshu-Mahou-Based Skills

⊗ House of the Rat

Appealing to nezumi-tenshu for intervention.

⊗ House of the Ox

Appealing to oushi-tenshu for intervention.

⊗ House of the Tiger

Appealing to tora-tenshu for intervention.

⊗ House of the Rabbit

Appealing to usagi-tenshu for intervention.

⊗ House of the Dragon

Appealing to doragon-tenshu for intervention.

⊗ House of the Snake

Appealing to hebu-tenshu for intervention.

⊗ House of the Horse

Appealing to uma-tenshu for intervention.

⊗ House of the Goat

Appealing to yagi-tenshu for intervention.

⊗ House of the Monkey

Appealing to Seiyuuki-tenshu for intervention.

⊗ House of the Rooster

Appealing to ondori-tenshu for intervention.

⊗ House of the Dog

Appealing to inu-tenshu for intervention.

⊗ House of the Boar

Appealing to buta-tenshu for intervention.

Fitness-Based Styles

Po Charging

athletics, brawling, composure

Charging an opponent and using one's natural weapons, such as horns or hooves, to inflict damage. The character may sacrifice accuracy (-1D) on the attack roll in order to increase damage by 1.

Bo

melee, athletics, composure

The use of a staff in combat to strike, unbalance, and pin an opponent, as well as parrying attacks and attempting acrobatic maneuvers.



Reasoning-Based Styles

Craftworks

clockworking, design, forging, literacy

Design and construction of craftwork sockets and bulbs upgrade components.

Motileworks

clockworking, design, forging

Design and construction of utility vehicles such as clockwork wagons.

Seaworks

steamworking, clockworking, design, boating or sailing

Design and construction of seafaring vehicles such as steamboats.

Tradeworks

steamworking, clockworking, forging, design

Design and construction of high-speed and powerful vehicles such as steamtrains.

Influence-Based Styles

Parlance Imagery

observation, leadership, commerce

Conveying one's perceptions of a situation with such detail and certainty in order to convince others of a desired intent or outlook. This covers negotiations, bartering, and even intimidation.

DISHONOR

Dishonor is an optional form of health, which may be used to add a little extra flavor to the social structure of the game. Rather than measuring something physical, it represents a loss of dignity, pride, and honor. These concepts are very important to the society of Rosuto-Shima, and if people are dishonored in some way, they cannot show their face in public without great disgrace—they lose face.

Dishonor (noted as *DIS*) is the measure of a character's loss of face. The amount of effort that the character can exert on an influence-based task may be reduced when he loses face (see the table below). Dishonor can only be reduced by restoring one's face by performing good deeds, displaying ingenuity, and being victorious in battle. The restoration of face is left to the discretion of the director.

	DISHONOR	PENALTY
1	Embarrassed	-
2	Abashed	-1D
3	Humiliated	-2D
4	Besmirched	-3D
5	Disgraced	-4D

Dishonor is only caused only by actions that are known publicly. While the character may have done something

dishonorable behind closed doors and it may haunt him for the rest of his life, it does not affect his standing in society, since no one has witnessed the act, nor can they tell others about it.

The character need not to even have committed a dishonorable act in order to gain dishonor. All it takes is a public accusation and the character loses face whether or not he is guilty of the act. If he can prove the allegations to be false or otherwise alter the public's perception by other actions deemed honorable, his face can be restored, however. Inaction would be considered a sign of guilt in situations such as this.

ACTIONS	DISHONOR
minor breach of etiquette	1 DIS
serious breach of etiquette	2 DIS
minor insult	2 DIS
serious insult	4 DIS
failure to succeed	1 DIS
failure to defeat enemy	3 DIS
failure to comply with orders	4 DIS
committing a minor crime	3 DIS
committing a serious crime	4 DIS
dozens of witnesses	+1 DIS
hundreds of witnesses	+2 DIS
influential witnesses	+3 DIS

KITS

Some people are born to their profession. Whether called to it by a higher power, left to it due to being orphaned, or raised to it as a member of a theater troupe, characters in Rosuto-Shima may belong to a kit, rather than being trained in a vocation. Their profession is the only life that they know—it is more than just a job, it is who they are.

Kabukika (Kabuki Fighter)

The world of theater is considered to be a magical place, where nothing is real but the story. On Rosuto-Shima, the kabuki theaters, called Kabuki-za, have combined real magic into their performances, enhancing the illusion of the tale further than props or backdrops would allow. Through dance and extravagant costumes, the Kabukika, or actors in the theater, practice the arts of the thespian, as well as the arts of the sorcerer.

Kabuki, like other theaters of Rosuto-Shima, began as a popular form of dance practiced on the piers and wharfs. What made kabuki different was the people it attracted—down-on-their-luck mystics, actors with a knack for the arcane, and even old warriors looking for work. Each brought different perspectives to the dance, incorporating their unique skills into the performance. The hybrid of martial skills, theater, and magic with the original dance changed the theater into a rare form of art that awed audiences throughout Rosuto-Shima. The popularity of the art led to its growth, and the kabuki theater became very competitive, dividing into troupes that would vie for the wealthiest and most prestigious audiences. The old, traditional stories eventually brought fewer and fewer crowds into auditoriums as more innovative troupes began to experiment with new tales of magic and adventure. Several kabuki troupes began to travel Rosuto-Shima in search of new stories to tell—and wound up being the heroes of their own stories.

The kabukika, or kabuki fighter, is a skilled warrior, talented actor, and master of phantasmal magic. Since the creation of the

kabuki troupes, most kabukika are born into the troupe and trained from a young age to become performers. Orphans are occasionally given to the theater in hopes of giving the child a better life among the kabukika rather than on the streets of the cities. Due to the competitive nature of their profession, the kabukika keep their trade secrets quiet—they use masks, face paint, and elaborate wigs to tell stories, or the truth of the world. Many kabukika clothe themselves in intricate costumes of silk, decorated with many embroidered patterns. Though each kabukika has a unique appearance, two factors play heavily into their costumes and decorative decisions—their troupe and the type of character that is their specialty.

Kabukika are encouraged to specialize in one of three types of acting forms. Training for these begins when the kabukika are at a very young age, growing the skills required to perform these positions as adults. Each form requires different skills, focusing more heavily on combat or magic or creating a balance of the two. While some focus on magic more than others, all kabukika are trained in the ways of crafting magic. Instead of using incantations and spell books, however, kabukika use dance and body motion (which may include both hand and foot gestures).

The effects practiced by kabukika are primarily used to confound enemies and captivate audiences. Because of this, their training is limited to the materia and sensus fabrics. They are often able to memorize more spells than wizards, however, who rely on their spell books for variety. The director may choose to allow kabukika to learn other forms of magic that are not normally taught within the kabuki-za at his discretion.

The traditional weapon of the kabukika is the naginata, a bladed polearm between six and eight feet in length.

Though some kabukika experiment with different types of weapons, most prefer the naginata and train to perfection. Some acting troupes consider weaponry and weapon forms to be part of the art of theater, and forbid the use of these weapons in actual combat.



The Four Acting Troupes

While there are many kabuki troupes throughout Rosuto-Shima, four have the greatest renown. Players may choose to belong to any of these troupes or may develop their own with the guidance of the director.

Hawatari Troupe (“Walking on a Sword”)

This troupe, is the oldest and most famous of all the kabuki-za groups. Members of this actor’s guild are very dedicated and highly loyal to the art form of kabukika. Many would go so far as to die in order to keep its secrets. Their crest is the image of a kabuki holding a naginata with crossed swords behind him. The Hawatari follow a strict code very similar to that of the samurai and live by a creed of five rules.

- 1 Think of what is right and true.
- 2 Know the principles of the crafts.
- 3 Learn to see everything accurately.
- 4 Become aware of what is not obvious.
- 5 Make no useless action.

Masuku House

This odd troupe of kabukika all wear masks instead of make-up. This skill and dedication has caused many of the Masuku school to decorate themselves with several masks, each unique and crafted with expert workmanship. It is forbidden for Masuku kabukika to ever show their true faces to those outside the guild—doing so is considered dishonorable, and the punishment for someone caught in this activity is death. Their crest is a white mask with only eyespots on a black background.

Kagemusha Troupe

This dark guild often refers to its kabukika as shadow warriors. They are known for performing stage shows of horror and evil, mastering the arts of fright, and causing fear in the hearts of audiences. The Kagemusha, unlike other guilds, has adopted the use of wearing dark colors such as blacks, blues, and grays and then highlighting them with streaks of brilliant shades of white, red, and yellow. Their crest is the red face of an oni on a black background.

Utsushie School

This troupe is known for its use of lanterns and shadow puppets to create stunning backgrounds and characters masked behind thin rice paper. The use of shadows has generated many masters of the stage dedicated to the art of stealth and hiding, and although many actors do perform directly on stage, those who work the balance of light and darkness are respected the most in this school. Their crest is the silhouette of a kabukika on a white background.

Few kabukika wear heavy armor, though many in more dangerous areas have found ways to include armor in their costuming. Some use thick, padded silks, while others use sturdy leather. In either situation, the kabukika places freedom of movement above protection—it is better to avoid getting hit than to withstand physical abuse. Even kabukika who wear costume armor while playing warriors on stage rarely wear real armor, knowing that their audience expects a more impressive look rather than something realistic and effective.

It is traditional for a kabukika to hide his true face behind make-up or masks; this is part of their creed. They believe in the concept of characterization over personal identity, and do everything possible to conceal their birth identity. The face paint or mask of the kabukika comes in many different forms, from all white and featureless to a grotesque distortion of human likeness, generally used to represent characters such as Oni. Kabukika also maintain a tradition of wearing brightly colored wigs or harshly dyeing their long hair, which adds both characterization inside of the story and a lasting image that impresses the audience.

Arogoto

Arogoto is the form of the rough, male warrior. On the stage, the arogoto plays either the leading man or a strong male role, such as a local troublemaker or antagonist to the hero. The majority of the time, the arogoto plays the role of a samurai, or noble warrior. Because of this, arogoto kabukika spend much time training in the art of the sword, learning both martial combat techniques and how to adapt those to choreography for the stage. Arogoto spend less time training in the ways of etiquette and magic in order to focus on their weapons. Thier illusions are focused on frightening their enemies or overwhelming the audience. Women are forbidden to play arogoto. Actors who perform as aragoto tend to wear very bright paints and outfits, with large and loud designs.

CHARACTER CREATION NOTES

It costs one point for every two allocated to the DUELING, MELEE, and PERFORMANCE skills when creating arogoto characters, although raises through experience are not affected. Points may be allocated to the crafting ability during character creation.

Vocational Skills:

athletics, dueling, legerdemain, melee, observation, design, literacy, legends, leadership, performance, subterfuge, fabrica materia, fabrica sensus, composure

Wagoto

Wagoto is the form of the gentle, romantic warrior. Wagoto are often leading men, but unlike aragoto, they are allowed to express emotions besides anger or violence on the stage. Loyal lovers or poetic heroes are the types of characters wagoto might play. Wagoto-trained kabukika focus less on martial skill and more on social etiquette and magic. The illusions the wagoto practice include projecting the emotions of their characters onto the audience, so that the audience feels what the characters feel. While most wagoto are men, some women choose to train in this style as bushiko, or female warriors. Actors who perform as wagoto wear large designs, but with subtler, softer colors than the aragoto.

CHARACTER CREATION NOTES

It costs one point for every two allocated to the LEGERDEMAIN, OBSERVATION, and PERFORMANCE skills when creating wagoto characters, although raises through experience are not affected. Points may be allocated to the crafting ability during character creation.

Vocational skills:

athletics, dueling, legerdemain, melee, observation, design, literacy, legends, commerce, leadership, performance, subterfuge, fabrica materia, fabrica sensus, composure

Onnagata

Onnagata is the form of the female character. Although some troupes have female actresses, many train male actors to play the female roles. Regardless of the actor's gender, the onnagata is the least trained in combat and most in social skills. They are also well trained in etiquette, rivaling the schooling of most royalty, and are the most powerful kabukika magicians. Onnagata may also play male characters on stage, generally in roles of administration or artists. Onnagata are often the business minds of the kabuki troupe. Onnagata outfits tend to be simple, but are generally very beautiful, and their faces are painted a smooth white with simple, but breathtaking features.



CHARACTER CREATION NOTES

It costs one point for every two allocated to the COMMERCE, SUBTERFUGE, and FABRICA SENSUS skills when creating onnagata characters, although raises through experience are not affected. Points may be allocated to the crafting ability during character creation.

Vocational skills:

athletics, legerdemain, observation, design, instrument, literacy, legends, survival, commerce, performance, subterfuge, streetwise, fabrica materia, fabrica sensus, composure

Shangti Cowboy

Some say that the life of a “copper” is in the blood. A Shangti cowboy might not know much about that, but there are very few of them who come to the job late in life. Most aspired to it since their youth. They may have come from the streets or left their life in the country, but each began early to start the life of a gunslinger, a bounty hunter, a hired tough—a Shangti cowboy.

The tradition of the Shangti cowboy began in the gritty slave city of Shangti, where the cowboys were considered a freelance militant police force. They patrolled the city, investigated homicides, found missing persons, tracked down known criminals, and worked as bodyguards or private detectives. The organization in Shangti lowered the crime rate significantly, and soon, other cities were clamoring for the services of such men trained in Shangti. With an open market for their services,

the core force in Shangti began to crumble, and soon all the cowboys were working on their own, looking out for their own profit. The rivalry was fierce, and soon public opinion turned to the belief that the vigilantes were actually causing more problems than the criminals.

When the respectable clientele vanished, the cowboys turned to other venues. Some continued to freelance for established police forces, while others continued to work as private investigators and bodyguards. A few moved off to join organized crime groups like the Yakuza, sacrificing their job choices for the promise of steady and high-pay work. The majority of the Shangti cowboys, however, find that life on the road suits them best, and they take jobs as they can find them, living with a freedom they value more than money.

Many Shangti cowboys grow up on the streets, spending childhoods in the slums and poor districts of major cities, honing skills in the struggle for survival. Occasionally, an older Shangti cowboy takes a young one under his wing, but due to the competitive nature of the market, this is rare. Some Shangti cowboys began their careers as city guards, soldiers, or police inspectors who never quite fit in with others in their profession.

Regardless of their beginnings, cowboys are known for their talents in getting the job done—because the completion of a job well done ensures that there is more work tomorrow.

While the Shangti cowboy has no faith in magic and would not use it himself, he is well aware of its uses, and this knowledge has allowed him to build up a resistance against it. The cowboy has no qualms about using magical weapons or items in his duties, however, as any tool that keeps him alive longer is a good tool to have on-hand. Cowboys often carry an assortment of protective talismans, enchanted firearms, or magical tools.

Well known as “dirty” fighters, Shangti cowboys commonly carry an assortment of hidden weapons or devices that give them the upper hand. If shooting a man in the back gets the job done, then so be it. Stealth and trickery are allies of the Shangti cowboy—live to see another day rather than die honorably before his chosen foe. His preference is for hand guns, rifles, and other firearms. These weapons allow him to kill quickly, efficiently, and at a distance. Many cowboys treat their guns as samurai treat their swords—guns are their most prized possessions, and the thing that allows them to avoid death. Many cowboys have their firearms custom-made, personalized with their names, trade symbols, or other designs. While the typical cowboy carries two firearms, some may carry between four and six at any given time. Shangti cowboys train with other weapons and carry a variety of arms for any given situation, often including swords, knives, and exotic weapons.

The Shangti cowboy chooses his armor depending on the type of job he is likely to take. Those involved in more subtle jobs tend to prefer armor that is less physically restrictive, such as light leathers and loose clothing. Others might prefer heavier armor if they are likely to be in several firefights before the job is over. Whichever style the cowboy

chooses, he is certain to have plenty of places to hide his concealed weapons, yet still be able to draw them quickly should they be needed.

Because Shangti cowboys tend to be hired for jobs that nearly always qualify as adventures, their very profession makes them an adventurer. Tasks such as tracking a kidnapped girl might take them to provinces not otherwise traveled. A cowboy might be willing to hire others with particular talents or join up with adventurers in order to get the job done. Cowboys who drift from job to job on the open road are called *ryokousha*, and are often disparaged by other cowboys as simple mercenaries and guns for hire.

CHARACTER CREATION NOTES

It costs one point for every two allocated to the STREETWISE and SUBTERFUGE skills, and one point for every three allocated to the FIREARMS skill when creating Shangti cowboy characters, although raises through experience are not affected. The character possesses the RESISTANT (CRAFTING, GUI, DIVINITY, AND TENSU-MAHOU MAGICS) gimmick.

Vocational skills:

all fitness-based skills, gambling, observation, legends, clockworking, medicines, survival, commerce, streetwise, subterfuge

Mechanist

Though few admit to the belief, there is a common superstition, even among the “enlightened” of Rosuto-Shima, that some people are born with an innate understanding of the inner workings of new technology. Some say it whispers to them, telling them how to make sure things are fixed.

Others say that the foreign spirits that serve as the gods to the machines have chosen these gifted people as their disciples. Still others mutter that perhaps the people are somewhat clockwork themselves, and that some mad inventor or wizard placed a machine in their minds, providing insight into technological advances. These people, when found and recognized, are called mechanists and are held in awe. This, of course, is only superstition.



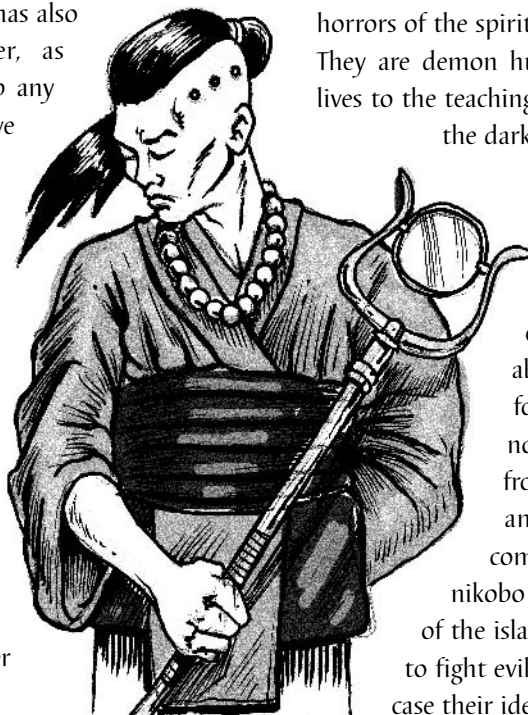


There is something slightly off about mechanists. They are people who prefer clockwork machines over humans, and can understand how things work. Their speech is littered with words that no one else seems to understand, but others of their kind seem to inherently understand meanings that no one else can grasp. They are behind the latest developments and technological advances. The mechanists incorporate clockwork machines into their wardrobes—adapting boots to carry tool kits and hats that light up so they can see in the dark.

While the keshou have had mechanists among them for years, in the form of tinkers, inventors, and builders, it has only been since the foreigners arrived on Rosuto-Shima that the other races have been caught up in the fascination with machines. In the few several years, the mechanist population has tripled as the need for people to fix machinery has also increased. The mechanists build and repair steamwork rickshaws, boats, and horses to speed transportation on and around the island. Some have combined forging with their understanding of machinery and have worked to develop more powerful firearms and even update older weapons for the new era. Others have designed clothing to contain hidden pockets or light-weight clockwork armor that can attack on its own. Still others have combined alchemy with clockwork devices, creating rockets that launch powerful fireworks.

Mechanists may believe in magic, but they certainly have no use for it. People who assume that their knack for understanding machines is a magical ability are quickly corrected. Their disdain for magic has also led to a potential weakness, however, as mechanists have never worked to develop any defense against it. Some mechanists have formed partnerships with wizards or priests able to enhance their designs with an extra, arcane advantage.

It is a rare situation that puts a mechanist into combat, and many lose composure in the face of danger. The devices a mechanist builds have their uses though—creations designed for a peaceful purpose may become a weapon in the hands of a desperate mechanist. Many mechanists are also proficient with firearms, since they have an intimate knowledge of the inner workings of the weaponry even if they never intend to shoot it for themselves.



Mechanists develop armor for its sheer utility rather than for its protective value. A mechanist would never buy armor that does not allow her to slide under a steamwork rickshaw to get at the gears. They prefer light leathers or metals with wiring, as well as armors that have pockets or storage areas.

CHARACTER CREATION NOTES

It costs one point for every three allocated to the FORGING and MECHANICS skills when creating mechanist characters, although raises through experience are not affected. Because of their uncanny knack for understanding machinery, luck points expended on any mechanical task are always doubled.

Vocational skills:

firearms, legerdemain, observation, crafts, design, forging, masonry, literacy, alchemy, clockworking, steamworking, medicines, commerce

Nikobo

Although the modernized people of the cities may try to ignore it, Rosuto-Shima is plagued by demons and evil spirits—in the mountains, temples, forests, and most commonly in the hearts of men. Every generation, people are called by the spirits who oppose these demons and evil spirits, and are given the knowledge and strength to fight them. These people leave their homes, follow the path of righteousness, and face down the horrors of the spirit realms. These people are called the nikobo. They are demon hunters, exorcists who have dedicated their lives to the teachings of enlightenment and the vanquishing of the dark forces plaguing the land.

The nikobo began as a secret order of monks and priests charged with the duties of fighting evil spirits and protecting the innocents. The dogma of the order was extremely strict, and the leaders required absolute obedience and blind faith from their followers. Though they fought against evil, not even the leaders of the nikobo were free from vice, and soon the order fell into disarray and corruption. The Emperor eventually commanded that the order be disbanded. The nikobo fled Imperial Law and scattered to the ends of the island. Those who remained faithful continued to fight evil, but never stayed in one place too long, in case their identities might be discovered.

Now that the Empire has fallen, the nikobo who remain on Rosuto-Shima and those who are called to the path of the demon slayer travel the lands seeking out evil and destroying it. Having seen the fall of their order, they make no attempt to reestablish a hierarchy, and many are sworn to a life of poverty so that they can reconcile the greedy acts of their predecessors. Whatever the case, the nikobo have a new dedication and will to prove themselves to both men and gods.

The beliefs of the nikobo remain very traditional. Their teachings and practices are not revealed to new pupils unless one is found to be dedicated to the eradication of evil. Despite this secrecy, some nikobo have sought out new members whom they found had talents in dealing with spirits. Others were subjects of demonic attacks or possessions in their youths, and overcame the spirits that sought to destroy them. These early encounters with the spirit world, as well as the daily battles the nikobo face, make many seem eccentric and aloof, almost to the point of madness. Few experienced nikobo take on apprentices, wary of bringing someone weak into the battle between good and evil, but those dedicated souls who seek only to fight evil find someone to guide them on their path. In some cases, nikobo take family members as apprentices, since the talent seems to be found in the blood.

Nikobo are full of tricks and skills that aid them in combat, but they are better known for their talent of casting spells designed to fight oni and other demonic spirits. This ability, called *gui*, is granted to the nikobo by what they believe is the true embodiment of good. They need no books or scrolls as spells come to them over time, and reveal the tools granted for their constant battle. *Gui* spells take the form of protection from or combat against evil spirits—unless a nikobo faces an evil spirit or mortal who is truly evil, the spells are of no use in conflict.

The traditional weapon of the nikobo is the Jin Void Staff, usually carved with protective symbols, and adorned with a mirrored disk on one end and a flat blade on the other. Other than their hands and feet, this is the nikobo's only true combat weapon. If his staff has been taken away, a nikobo may rely on simple pole-arms with which he can use similar techniques.

The nikobo wears the garments of a priest or monk. Common robes are long and of traditional colors such as white, sky blue, yellow, or orange, with embroidered designs of flowers, birds, and other peaceful images. Nikobo never wear armor, including any type of leather, due to traditional belief. It is common for nikobo to be seen wearing large hats or carrying parasols to protect them from the harsh sun or unexpected attacks. Nikobos who have taken vows of poverty often carry a bowl with them as well.

Nikobos travel Rosuto-Shima with a mission to destroy evil. They may join with adventurers who have similar goals, or may try to convince adventurers to join them in their life-long quest of defeating the evils plaguing Rosuto-Shima.

CHARACTER CREATION NOTES

It costs one point for every two allocated to the BRAWLING and MELEE skills when creating nikobo characters, although raises through experience are not affected. Points may be allocated to the *gui* ability during character creation.

Vocational skills:

athletics, brawling, legerdemain, melee, stealth, observation, literacy, legends, survival, leadership, all gui-based skills



CHAPTER
TOWER

CHARACTERS

Though dominated by humans native to the land of Rosuto-Shima, travelers who cross the island can see that there is a diversity of life present that a typical villager probably never notices. Other than humans, the standard player races of Iron Gauntlets are rare in Rosuto-Shima. There are four new player races unique to Steampunk Misha, however, and a fifth classification of human foreigners extends the adaptability of the setting by allowing characters that do not quite fit as they should.

This chapter introduces the four new races, as well as describing the culture of the humans indigenous to Rosuto-Shima. While the races may each seem best suited for a particular role inside of Rosuto-Shima society, bear in mind that adventurers are rare sorts in their communities, and may possess skills not typical to their traditional norms. As technology continues to change the face of Rosuto-Shima, the old stereotypes are beginning to fade away, and the residents of Rosuto-Shima may be surprised at the changes they encounter.

HUMANS

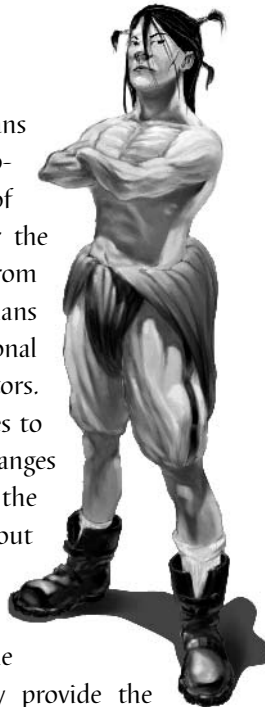
Although humans have shorter life-spans than other races indigenous to Rosuto-Shima, they are one of the oldest peoples of the island, younger only than the oni, or the demons who once roamed the land freely. From a culture steeped in tradition, many humans keep to the old ways, following very traditional patterns of life and honoring their ancestors. Others have turned to the new technologies to guide their lives, adapting quickly to the changes on Rosuto-Shima. Still others exist in the middle, following newer philosophies without betraying the old ways.

Humans are an adaptable species, and also a very varied group. Because they are the dominant peoples of Rosuto-Shima, they provide the standard against which all other races are viewed. Humans tend to be skilled in many areas, as opposed to specialists, though there are, of course, exceptions. In spite of the many modernizations on Rosuto-Shima, women are still viewed as less powerful than men, which is both a disadvantage and an advantage to a woman—when less is expected of a person, it is easier for them to surpass expectation.

While most humans view the other races, including any outsiders to Rosuto-Shima, with suspicion, city dwellers tend to be more accepting of people, even if they have horns or are the size of children. Surprisingly, the most forward-thinking group of humans tend to be those involved with criminal activity—those who break the law are most likely to accept anyone with the same lawless outlook into their circle.

CHARACTER CREATION NOTES

Like the standard humans in Iron Gauntlets, those of Rosuto-Shima do not have exotic qualities. They do, however, gain an extra point of luck before each episode, up to a total of six (6) in their luck ability.



GAIJIN

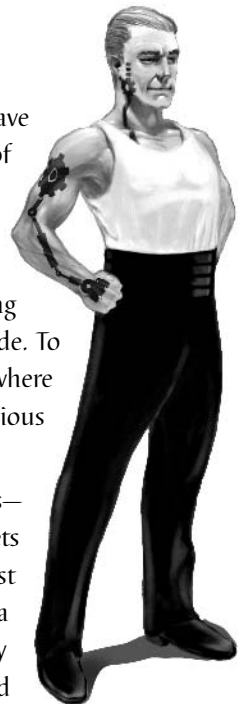
The world is a big place, and the gaijin have traveled far more of it than the natives of Rosuto-Shima. Full of ideas and familiar with a wide variety of technology, gaijin view Rosuto-Shima as a land of opportunity. To some, this means seeing the island as full of potential for new trade. To others, it means a place to start anew, where people are not be aware of their previous reputations.

Gaijin are humans from foreign lands—the typical humans from the Iron Gauntlets rulebook, only a little more advanced. Just as adaptable as their native Rosuto-Shima counterparts, the gaijin are not affected by the conflict between the traditional and the modern, as they are creatures of modernity and have long left their own traditional ways behind. Many gaijin are more open to women taking an active role in trade, but even these forward-thinkers see men as the dominant force in culture. There are far more male gaijin on Rosuto-Shima than there are females.

While viewed with suspicion by native Rosuto-Shimans, the gaijin tend to look down on those who have not embraced technology. They value the skills of the keshou and marvel at the creation of the clockwork ronin, but they have little time for the superstitions of villagers, fearsome looks of the linteki-oni, and the childlike activities of the juunishi-p'o.

CHARACTER CREATION NOTES

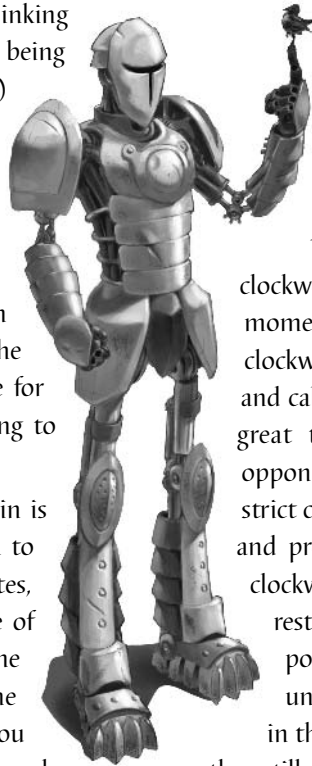
Unlike humans native to Rosuto-Shima, gaijin possess the FOREIGNER background. Because they are familiar with technology, they receive a bonus of +1D on all steamworking tasks.



CLOCKWORK RONIN

The clockwork ronin is a living, breathing, and thinking assembly of gears, springs, and metal. But without being inhabited by the spirit of a bushi (warrior) summoned by its creators, the body of the ronin is only a machine, incapable of acting on its own. The bushi spirit remembers its old skills, enabling the clockwork ronin to perform feats thought capable only in history and legend. The bushi spirit is unable to remember his ancestors, however. Its hometown and family are unknown. Deprived of an identity, the clockwork ronin strives to either develop a new life for itself or seek out the past of the bushi spirit, hoping to regain memories of its former life.

The technology required to build a clockwork ronin is anything but simple. When new technologies began to arrive on Rosuto-Shima just after the War of the States, both good and evil people found ways to make use of their discoveries. Four wizards, hoping to bring the divided Rosuto-Shima to its knees and replace the emperor themselves, enslaved a number of keshou craftsmen and began the sinister act of harvesting the souls of samurai who had fallen in the War of the States. As dozens of keshou worked on each body, the wizards bound their captive souls into the clockwork forms, careful that each would obey their commands with perfect resolve. They succeeded in creating more than ten-thousand troops in less than fifteen years. But due to the bravery of a keshou who escaped control of the wizards, rumors of this reached the leaders of Rosuto-Shima. An army of warriors, many of them samurai who had fought in the War of the States, rose up to defeat the unnatural threat. On a crisp, cold morning, the troops of the human army attacked the wizards, catching them completely off guard. The wizards sent the clockwork ronin into battle, but several warriors slipped around behind the mechanical samurai and slew the dark wizards. As the wizards died, the power left the clockwork ronin, and the battlefield was soon filled with the fallen gear-powered bodies of the valiant warriors. On the seventh day following the battle, however, the souls of the bushi reawakened inside their mechanical forms, free from the control of the wizards, but unable to remember their histories. Other memories remained with them, such as the use of speech and writing, skills like fishing and hunting, and the training they had received in running their metal bodies. But the small things of their former



lives remained gone, and they could not remember faces of children, parents, or even their former masters. The clockwork ronin separated, unable to look one another in the face, the blank metallic expressions reminding them of their own loss and the emptiness of their souls.

Though they have little to do with each other, the clockwork ronin all share a tendency to appreciate small moments in life. Outsiders have little empathy for the clockwork ronin, and view the mechanical warriors as cold and calculating. While it is true that the clockwork ronin are great tacticians in war and never underestimate their opponents, they are still men of great honor who live by a strict code of ethics and show themselves to be both graceful and precise in combat. While they were designed for war, clockwork ronin often seek out the arts in an effort to restore a bit of their own humanity. Many even write poetry and perform music when their warrior arts are unneeded. Seemingly difficult to wound, anyone looking in their eyes can see pain—while their eyes are mechanical, they still serve as a window to the soul.

A clockwork ronin stands about six feet tall and embodies the physique of a perfect man. This is a shell to cover the gears inside, however. They are constructed from metal and have none of the warmth and softness of human skin. Most clockwork ronin are steel-gray or bronze-gold in color, although body alterations have allowed clockwork ronin to pursue other metal shells. In an effort to become individuals, many have added specialty limbs, decorative armor, and weapon extensions to their bodies.

CHARACTER CREATION NOTES

Because clockwork ronin are composed of tough, metal, and inflexible bodies, they possess the MUSCLEBOUND and CLUMSY gimmicks, and have a natural armor rating of 4 against fatigue. In addition, they possess the RESISTANT (FABRIC MENTUS AND SENSUS) and RESISTANT (HEAT AND COLD) gimmicks. They are not affected by poison and cannot be healed by normal or magical means—fatigue or injury must be repaired with the FORGING or CLOCKWORKING skill.

Mortal and Clockwork Names

Humans

The human natives of Rosuto-Shima adopt two names at birth—first a family name and then a given name. *Hu Fushen* represents a family name of *Hu* and given/common name of *Fushen*. Traditional humans of Rosuto-Shima often judge a person's place in society and honor based on a family name and reputation. This pressure keeps traditional Rosuto-Shimans from acting outside of the traditional laws, in order to prevent any tarnish from coming to the family name.

Given Names: *Cheung, Po-Sin, Akira, Hiroshi, Kenji, Tadashi, Takashi, Toshio, Yuji (male); Jai, Ling, Euiko, Hiroko, Keiko, Mariko, Sakuro, Yoko (female)*

Family Names: *Heian, Fujiwara, Murasaki, Rokujo, Akashi, Taira, Uji, Yoshino, Okinamaro*

Gaijin

The human outsiders possess given and family names as well, although the positioning of these names is reversed. *John Drake* represents a given name of *John* and family name of *Drake*. Many of these gaijin also carry titles from their home land, such as *Sir* and *Count*. Rosuto-Shimans suspect that these titles are invented when the gaijin arrive on their island, but there is rarely any evidence to support this suspicion.

Given Names: *John, William, James, George, Charles, Robert, Joseph, Thomas, Henry (male); Mary, Helen, Margaret, Anna, Ruth, Elizabeth, Dorothy, Alice, Rose (female)*

Family Names: *Smith, Johnson, Williams, Jones, Brown, Davis, Miller, Wilson, Moore, Andersen*

Clockwork Ronin

Clockwork Ronin are created and summoned, but their builders generally allow them to choose single-word common names to represent their new form. This practice was popular among noble warriors of the past and is still practiced by modern samurai. Clockwork Ronin more readily identify with male gender roles, and very rarely choose female names.

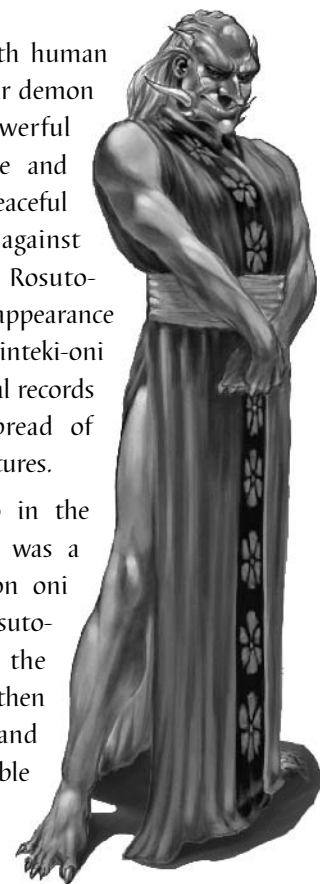
Given Names: *Shing, Xiaogang, Ken, Masao, Nobou, Shigeru, Sho, Takeo, Yusuke, Tsung, Mintaro, Mataru, Gungutan, Chu, Fuusai, Jomo*

JINTEKI-ONI

The jinteki-oni is born of both human and oni ancestry. In spite of their demon ancestry, these large and powerful beings seek to live in solitude and harmony. Their friendly and peaceful outlook does not protect against shunning by the humans of Rosuto-Shima due to their frightening appearance and heritage. The history of the jinteki-oni is, in fact, often left out of official records in an effort to avoid the spread of prejudice against the gentle creatures.

Over five-hundred years ago in the forests of Akki-Kouzetsu, there was a great battle between the demon oni and the human forces of Rosuto-Shima. The oni terrorized the surrounding villages to strengthen their claim on the forests, and through acts of treachery were able to slaughter the human forces. Among the oni generals was Bachiatar-Oni, a demon prince cursed with the torso of a man and a face so horrible that even his own infernal kind feared to gaze upon him. Bachiatar led his men on a raid of a small village during the war, under cover of night and a terrible thunderstorm. All of the village's men and children were murdered in their sleep, but twelve of the women were imprisoned and taken back to Bachiatar's camp. As the village was set alight and Bachiatar's men feasted on the bodies of the villagers they had slain and tortured those who still clung to life, Bachiatar retired to his camp and the company of the village women. Of the twelve women, only six survived, and by the next morning, the six were obviously with-child. Bachiatar ordered them executed in fear of judgment by his superiors. But before the task could be completed, the oni camp was showered with the bright lights of fireworks. A small band of monks entered the oni camp, continuing to use the power of the fireworks to fight off the demons.

Bachiatar and his troops fought fiercely, but were overcome by the monks and fled the camp, abandoning the pregnant women. The band of holy men took the women into their care, but not a single woman survived during childbirth. The twisted





infants were half-demon and half-man, and were raised by the monks, who pledged that these children would never follow the path of their father. In this way, the first jinteki-oni were taught the virtues of life and harmony, and were encouraged to value the world, even though they would never truly belong in it.

The jinteki-oni continue to embrace this philosophy, teaching their children the virtues of benevolence, love, compassion, responsibility, and dignity. They live a peaceful life of balance and patience, denying their accursed heritage and becoming masters of their own destiny. They are far from cowards, however, and are not afraid to fight for their beliefs if necessary. They readily rush to the aid of the weak and abused. Knowing they are not accepted by the other races of Rosuto-Shima, the jinteki-oni tend to keep to themselves, living amongst their own people or embracing a life of solitude. Some make their way to large cities, where they are, to some degree, accepted. Outsiders traveling in their territories find that jinteki-oni are very generous hosts, eager to learn of the outside world.

Their community is organized as a tribal republic; the leaders of the clans, almost always women (as they honor women as leaders more often than men, in acknowledgement of their human side), meet to discuss and decide what is best for their people. There are six jinteki-oni clans: *Three Horns*, a clan dominated by a three-horn growth; *Red Skins*, the members of which have skin pigmented in bright shades of red; *Black Skins*, the members of which have skin of a dark black pigment; *Big Bones*, a clan dominated by the oversized; *Man's Shadow*, a clan that appears mostly human; and *Dark Father*, a clan that appears mostly oni-like in appearance.

The clans live in small villages called zoku, which center around the central meeting hall of the republic. Each zoku houses no more than one-hundred individuals, about a quarter of which have not yet come of age. A single city was formed by the jinteki-oni when the Treaty of the States awarded them a province to govern. It was built in the image of the zokus of the surrounding mountains, but houses roughly half the population of the province—more than five-thousand residents.

CHARACTER CREATION NOTES

Due to their demonic strength and fearsome appearance, the jinteki-oni possess the MUSCLEBOUND and HIDEOUS APPEARANCE gimmicks. Jinteki-oni also possess both the MOUNTAINFOLK and TRIBESMAN backgrounds, as they rarely live outside of the mountains and their tribal society.

Appearance

Philosophers say that no two oni have the same appearance, and by looking at the jinteki-oni, one might believe that this is true. The jinteki-oni very rarely have more than a passing resemblance to even their closest relatives. When choosing to play a jinteki-oni, the following optional information is designed to flesh out the quirks of the character's appearance. Roll one die and consult the table below. Another table is provided after the features are described—roll two dice and add the two results together to randomly determine features.

ROLL	EXTRA FEATURES
1-5	none
4-8	one
9-10	two

Bloated Stomach

The front portion of the character's torso is considerably larger than the typical mortal. Because of this, he possesses the oversized gimmick.

Claws

The character's fingers end in claws rather than fingernails. These claws inflict +1INJ when used to attack an opponent, but also restrict the character's manual dexterity so that all tasks requiring precise hand movements, such as legerdemain or forging, receive a penalty of -1D.

Fangs

The character possesses large canine teeth in much the same way that apes do. These teeth provide a bonus of +1D on all tasks involving intimidation and can be used as natural weapons, inflicting 1INJ when biting an opponent.

Glowing Eyes

The character's eyes emit a red light that is barely apparent in daylight, but can illuminate a ten-foot radius in darkness.

Hunch-Backed

The back portion of the character's torso is considerably larger than the typical mortal. Because of this, he possesses the oversized gimmick.

Large Horns

One to three large horns protrude from the top of the character's head and can be used as weapons if necessary. Goring an opponent with these horns is tricky, and any such task receives a penalty of +2DIFF. A successful strike inflicts +1INJ.

Leathery Skin

The character's skin is extremely tough and leathery, and provides a natural armor rating of five (5) against fatigue.

Natural Camouflage

The character's skin is naturally colored to blend in with its indigenous environment. He receives a bonus of +2D on all stealth tasks performed in the mountains and +1D anywhere else, provided the character is not wearing clothing.

Prehensile Tail

The character possesses a tail that can be used to climb or grapple an opponent. In addition, the tail provides a bonus of +1D when attempted to maintain or regain balance.

Protruding Bones

The character's bones protrude all over his body in much the same way that horns protrude from the top of many animals' heads. These bones provides a natural armor rating of five (5) against both fatigue and injury.

Simian Arms

The character's arms are unusually long and similar to those of an ape. While this inflicts a penalty of -1D on all tasks requiring manual dexterity, it also improves climbing ability (+1D on climbing tasks) and balance (+1D on tasks to maintain or regain balance) for all tasks in which the character's arms are used.

Simian Feet

The character's feet are more capable of manipulation than those of the typical mortal. Tasks involving manual dexterity may be performed with the character's feet at half (rounding down) his fitness rating. In addition, the character receives a bonus of +1D on all climbing tasks in which his feet are used.

Small Horns

Two to five small horns protrude from the characters face. While the horns cannot be used offensively, anyone who punches or otherwise strikes the character in the face with his body receives 1INJ.

Spikes

Small, spiked bones protrude all over the character's body. These spikes provide a bonus of +1D on all brawling tasks when attempting to strike the opponent with them. In addition, they inflict +1INJ.

Tail

The character possesses a tail and can use it to whip an opponent as a brawling attack, inflicting +1FAT.

Third Eye

The character possesses a third eye on its forehead, providing a bonus of +1D on all awareness tasks involving vision.

Tough Hide

The character's skin is extremely hard and dense, and provides a natural armor rating of six (6) against injury.

ROLL	RANDOM FEATURES
2-3	bloated stomach
4	claws
5	fangs
6	glowing eyes
7-8	hunch-backed
9	large horns
10	leathery skin
11	natural camouflage
12	prehensile tail
13	protruding bones
14	simian arms
15	simian feet
16	small horns
17	spikes
18	tail
19	third eye
20	tough hide

Jinteki-Oni Names

The jinteki-oni adopt two names—a given and a clan name. The given name is presented first, and usually consists of a single, guttural syllable. The second is a blatantly descriptive clan name. *Kong Three Horns* or *Kong of the Three Horns* represents a given name of *Kong* and a clan name of *Three Horns*, which makes it clear that most members of his clan are marked by the growth of three horns.

Given Names: Chung, Hung, Kong, Yang, Gong, Tung, Jun, Kang, Fang, Chu, Kan (male); Chun, Lin, Mei, Mai, Ki, Kim, Fai, Ti, Lin (female)

JUUNISHI-P'O

Small of size and childlike in appearance, the juunishi-p'o are constantly underestimated by those they encounter. People who think the juunishi-p'o are an easy mark soon find themselves unpleasantly surprised—the juunishi-p'o are masters of tenshu-mahou, the ability to control the animal spirits they resemble.

The creation legend of the juunishi-p'o is more peaceful than the history of the jinteki-oni, even if both races originate from humanity. While the jinteki-oni were born of human women, the juunishi-p'o were self-created. It is said that an ancient religion of Rosuto-Shima worshipped the twelve animal lords that govern the zodiac. The followers of this religion sought to find within themselves a reflection of these animal lords by coming to terms with his their inner p'o—the animal instinct that all men still carry. Though their efforts might be viewed as primitive to more contemplative and philosophical religions, the worshippers met with success in a form they had not anticipated. The worshippers began to feel a change come over them, and as time progressed and their worship continued, they found that they had been blessed with the appearance of the animal lord they had chosen to worship. A new race, created in the image of the zodiac, was born, and the juunishi-p'o have continued their devoted following of the zodiac since that time.

The juunishi-p'o make their homes across Rosuto-Shima, residing wherever their spirits lead them. Villages of the juunishi-p'o are mainly located along the Tanzee River that flows from the mountains to the city of Huinin. The villagers house mostly the old and the young, and occasionally those looking for a spouse, however; most juunishi-p'o in their adult years spend their lives traveling, learning about the world, and spreading the belief of the animal lords. Superstitious village dwellers often view the juunishi-p'o not as people, but as avatars of the zodiac, and they willingly provide resources to juunishi-p'o travelers. City dwellers accept the juunishi-p'o, but see them as less than human, often displaying condescending attitudes and treating them as children.

While the juunishi-p'o are steeped in the tradition of their forefathers, they have no trouble embracing the new technologies reaching Rosuto-Shima. They are amiable, fearless, and always eager to see what the next new discovery brings into their world. While most of the residents of Rosuto-Shima feel the tension between the new and the old, the juunishi-p'o seem to view life as a cycle, and they have no problem moving swiftly from one idea to the next, confident that if they miss something it will eventually come around again.





The twelve houses of the juunishi-p'o are the Rat, Ox, Tiger, Rabbit, Dragon, Snake, Horse, Goat, Monkey, Rooster, Dog and Boar. The members of the twelve houses resemble a hybrid of the animal and human forms, typically growing between three and four feet in height.

CHARACTER CREATION NOTES

All Juunishi-p'o are naturals with tenshu-mahou-based magic; characters automatically start the game with 1 level in the TENSHU-MAHOU ability, but may not take tenshu-mahou-based skills without having the spirit master vocation. Because of their small size, all juunishi-p'o possess the UNDERSIZED gimmick.

House of the Rat

Juunishi-p'o of the Rat are cunning and sneaky, and are often stereotyped as taking advantage of others who are not as quick of wit. Because of this reputation, they are often shunned by others, even other houses among the juunishi-p'o, and they tend to make their homes in the shadows. Most Rats make their way to cities, living in the slums, surviving as scavengers and vagabonds. Once a Rat finds someone who inspires their loyalty, however, he fiercely protects them. Rats tend to use daggers and short blades, and prefer to sneak up on their enemies rather than tackle them head-on. Rats have trouble holding on to money, and generally piece together their equipment in whatever way they can, hobbling together a hybrid of new technology and old technology among their supplies. Rats have solid black eyes, whiskers, and fur growth, as well as extended ears, claws, sharp teeth, and tails.

CHARACTER CREATION NOTES

Because Rats are extremely observant, they start the game with 1 level in the AWARENESS ability, but their INFLUENCE ability may not go above three (3) due to their reputations. Rats also receive the AWARENESS: HEARING and SMELL flairs at +1 and may use their natural weapons in combat (claws: +1INJ; teeth: 2INJ; tail +1FAT). In addition, Rats receive a bonus of +2D when using their STEALTH skill to hide in dark areas and +1D in poorly lit areas. Rats possess the PO AFFINITY (RATS) gimmick.

House of the Ox

Juunishi-p'o of the Ox are known as protectors of the weak. They only fight when threatened or to aid those in danger, but when a fight begins, their typically passive nature seems to vanish and the uncontrolled temper of the Ox is unleashed. Easily at home among peasants, farmers, artists, and royalty, Oxen are reputed to be slow in thought and movement—this is true, as Oxen weigh the many possible options before making a decision. Oxen prefer using simple, blunt weapons, choosing those that can also be used as tools and avoiding weapons designed specifically for killing. Oxen rarely wear heavy armor, and generally dress in cloth or good leathers. Oxen have elongated ears, hunched backs, and solid frames, as well as horns, hooves, and tails.

CHARACTER CREATION NOTES

Because Oxen are amiable creatures, they start the game with 1 level in the INFLUENCE ability, but their REASONING ability may not go above three (3). They also receive a bonus of +1D when using the BRAWLING skill with their natural weapons (horns: +2FAT; hooves: +1FAT) and +2D when using the ATHLETICS skill to charge an opponent with the intent of goring with his horns. Oxen possess the PO AFFINITY (BOVINE) gimmick.

House of the Tiger

Juunishi-p'o of the Tiger are powerful and fierce, dedicating themselves to the art of combat. Their skill at arms has been recognized by the powerful of Rosuto-Shima, who are eager to bring Tigers into their service. Tigers are also dedicated to aiding those who have no strength of their own, and are welcomed by commoners as protectors. A Tiger rarely ponders questions—if he sees a problem, he tackles it head-on, unconcerned about what his actions may bring. A Tiger rarely relies on others, preferring to rely on his own strength and skill, and chooses friends very carefully. Once a Tiger considers someone a friend, he is extremely loyal, with a devotedness that can only be broken by the worst betrayal or by death. Tigers prefer weapons of grace and skill, usually blades and hand weapons that bring the Tiger in direct combat with their enemy. Tigers consider ranged weapons as a coward's tool, and prefer to rely on their own noble skill in combat than strategies deemed dishonorable. Tigers wear armor that is both efficient and stylish, realizing that appearance can influence battle. Tigers have elongated ears, whiskers, fur, retractable claws, fangs, and tails.



CHARACTER CREATION NOTES

Tigers start the game with 1 level in the **FITNESS** ability, receive a bonus of +1D when using their **INFLUENCE** ability to intimidate others with their fearsome roars, and receive a penalty of -1D on all **REASONING**-based tasks during combat due to their attitudes toward taking lives. Tigers also receive a bonus of +1D when using the **HUNTING** style to track prey. In addition, they may use their natural weapons in combat (claws: +2INJ; teeth: 1INJ). Tigers possess the **PO AFFINITY (FELINES)** gimmick.

House of the Rabbit

Juunishi-p'o of the Rabbit are friendly and outgoing, but tend to also be hyperactive and difficult to take in large doses. Honest to a fault, Rabbits tend to speak what is on their mind, regardless of the relevance or consequences. Strangely, this manic tendency seems to aid them in battle, as the Rabbit combines his quick wits with his incredible speed. In spite of the

seriousness of battle, Rabbits are nearly always light-hearted, even in the midst of battle (although they mourn fallen comrades with an intense solemnity). Rabbits tend to utilize light bladed weapons that make best use of quick thrusts and are happy to wield ranged weapons or new technology if it seems to have a strategic or tactical application. They tend to be attracted to light-fitting armor and clothing, although they wear heavier equipment if they need to defend themselves properly. Rabbits have elongated ears, whiskers, tails, large feet, buck teeth, and fur.

CHARACTER CREATION NOTES

Due to their large ears, Rabbits gain the **AWARENESS: HEARING** flair at +2, but their influence ability may not go above three (3) due to their bluntness. Because their legs are extremely powerful, Rabbits inflict +2FAT when kicking, and possess the **QUICK-STEPPED** and **SPRING-STEPPED** gimmicks, as well as the **PO AFFINITY (RABBITS, HARES, PIKAS)** gimmick.



House of the Dragon

Juunishi-p'ō of the Dragon are the wisest and noblest of the juunishi-p'ō. Dragons tend to find that high positions in government are made available to them, and they often act as advisors or diplomats. Known as loyal and discriminating people, Dragons are extremely well-trusted, and very rarely shake that trust. They are attracted to others who share their interests in intellectual matters and enjoy surrounding themselves with studied mystics and scholars. Masters of strategy, Dragons rarely run into a fight, preferring to direct it from afar, though they view force as an option only after all others have been exhausted. If forced to rely on weapons, Dragons arm themselves with ranged weapons and staves, making use of new technology whenever possible. Though they choose very sturdy and protective armor, generally of loose-fitting and comfortable build, it is almost always elaborately decorated. In fact, they tend to prefer weaponry and armor of the highest artistic quality alongside its usefulness in combat. Dragons have long whiskers, fangs, slit-eyes, claws, scales, and short horns.

CHARACTER CREATION NOTES

Dragons start the game with 1 level in the REASONING ability, but lose 1 point of luck before each gaming session. Dragons also start the game with an additional level in the tenshu-mahou ability if they pursue the Spirit Master vocation. In addition, they may use their natural weapons in combat (claws: +2INJ; teeth: 1INJ), although Dragons do not bite unless all other options had been exhausted. Tigers possess the PO AFFINITY (LIZARDS, DRAGONS) gimmick.

House of the Snake

Juunishi-p'ō of the Snake are cunning and sly, and this has led to a reputation for being incredibly untrustworthy. While many Snakes have served as spies for lofty noble houses, they often make their lives in slum districts and live and work among criminals. Rosuto-Shimans, even members of other juunishi-p'ō houses, generally consider Snakes to be vile and selfish, constantly indulging and manipulating to further their own whims. Possibly the reason for this distrust is that, when actually dealing with a Snake, he seems so charming that listeners are certain his reputation must be wrong, until they find he has walked off with their purses. Snakes tend to prefer ranged

weapons, such as shuriken, darts, or daggers, so they can stay clear of combat. When forced into hand-to-hand combat, however, they prefer grappling and the use of pressure points to disable their enemies with swift strikes. Some Snakes take up a two-blade fighting style, wielding a matched pair of wicked looking short swords or wakizashi. Snakes tend to wear light leathers or sturdy cloth for armor in order to avoid constriction to their movement. Snakes have slit eyes, forked tongues, scales, and fangs. Snakes have absolutely no hair on their bodies, and some even have a tail instead of legs.

CHARACTER CREATION NOTES

Snakes start the game with 1 level in the INFLUENCE ability, but due to their short-sighted indulgences, their CREATIVITY ability may not go above three (3). They also receive a bonus of +1D when using the WRESTLING style with their natural weapons (fangs: +1INJ), and +2D when using the STEALTH skill in noisy areas and +1D in relatively quiet, but not silent areas. Snakes possess the PO AFFINITY (SERPENTS) gimmick.

House of the Horse

Juunishi-p'ō of the Horse are exceedingly loyal and stalwart. They enjoy simple living and have a great love for the countryside, although Horses have occasionally been pressured into taking a position of authority in the city or a noble court. Simple pleasures such as gardening, good food, family, and festivals appeal to the spirit of the Horse. Though naturally shy of combat, Horses generally train with spears and poleaxes, using the weapons both for combat training and meditative purposes. Horses choose very basic forms of armor and focus more on the efficiency of their equipment rather than its appearance. Horses have extended ears, manes, tails, hooves, elongated faces, and sturdy builds.

CHARACTER CREATION NOTES

Because Horses are drawn to spiritual and artistic matters, they start the game with 1 level in the CREATIVITY ability, but due to their lack of interest in academics, no REASONING-based skill may go above three (3). Horses may use their natural weapons (hooves: +1FAT) while brawling. Horses possess the PO AFFINITY (HORSES) and MUSCLEBOUND gimmicks.



House of the Goat

Juunishi-p'ō of the Goat are both stubborn, vain, and sarcastic by nature. Those who manage to look past these quirks, however, find that behind the outer cynicism lies the heart of an idealist who just wants to make the world a better place. Goats tend to be extremely bright and have little patience for those who cannot keep up with their train of thought or whose ideals (such as nobility and honor) are likely to get them needlessly killed. Goats are combative by nature, both in their verbal sparring and martial skills. While certainly not intending to start fights, Goats often make tactless remarks that provoke their opponents into violence. Goats tend to use their legs as weapons, coupling their weaponry, such as axes, war hammers, and various side arms, with kicks from their extremely strong legs. Because Goats tend to be somewhat vain, they never let their armor get tarnished and keep their heavy equipment well-polished and greased so it keeps its pristine condition. Goats have elongated ears, tails, fur, horns, and hooves; male Goats also grow goatees.

CHARACTER CREATION NOTES

Because Goats are quick of wit, they start the game with 1 level in the REASONING ability, but due to their abrasive and tactless natures, their INFLUENCE ability may not go above three (3). They also receive a bonus of +1D when using the BRAWLING skill with their natural weapons (hooves: +1FAT; horns: +2FAT), and possess the PO CHARGING style if they have the requisite skills. Goats possess the PO AFFINITY (BOVINE) gimmick.

House of the Monkey

Juunishi-p'ō of the Monkey are considered the tricksters of Rosuto-Shima. They live for the chance to make a good joke or pull a prank on the unsuspecting. Good-natured and kind-hearted, Monkeys are readily accepted into nearly all social circles, though the wise know to keep an eye on them, as neither foe nor ally are safe from the Monkey's sense of humor. Monkeys rarely miss an opportunity to try to raise someone's spirits. Preferring to use strategies that humiliate the foe and bring a good laugh to his allies, a Monkey is no laughing matter in combat. They are proficient in a variety of weapons, the most common being the staff. Monkeys rarely wear armor heavier than leathers. Monkeys have enlarged ears, fur growth, elongated hands and arms, prehensile feet with opposable big toes, and prehensile tails.

CHARACTER CREATION NOTES

Monkeys start the game with 1 level in the AWARENESS ability, but due to their lack of attention, their REASONING ability may not go above four (4). They also receive a bonus of +1D when using the MELEE skill with a staff, and possess the BO style if they have the requisite skills. Monkeys can also use their natural weapons (tail: +1FAT) to strike or trip opponents. Monkeys possess the PO AFFINITY (SIMEANS) gimmick.

House of the Rooster

Juunishi-p'ō of the Rooster are extremely fickle and vain, making them undependable in even the simplest situations. This disposition leads them to the life of a vagabond, and they often travel on their own. One who knows how to play to the Rooster's vanity, however, might be able to manipulate her into using her skills for an adventuring party. In combat, Roosters are skilled and graceful, and they learn to become proficient with many weapons—their choice of weapon is determined by their moods. Roosters tend to prefer light armor that makes them look the most impressive, often deciding on features based entirely on fancy, such as bringing out the color of their eyes. Roosters grow plumes on their heads, and have feathers, claws on their feet, tails, and wings on their arms. Roosters retain the use of their fingers and hands, although they are buried under feathers. Though the name of the house refers to a male animal specifically, Rooster juunishi-p'ō can be male or female.

CHARACTER CREATION NOTES

Roosters start the game with 1 level in the REASONING ability, but due to their self-absorption, their AWARENESS ability may not go above three (3). They also receive a bonus of +2D when using the PERFORMANCE skill. Roosters can also use their natural weapons (claws: +1INJ) in combat and their wings may be used to glide short distances with a running start—consider gliding distance the same as running distance. Roosters possess the PO AFFINITY (BIRDS) gimmick.

House of the Dog

Juunishi-p'o of the Dog are extremely loyal and warlike. They make allies with those who share their thirst for combat and fit best in the company of warlords and generals. Though able to accept defeat, Dogs protect their allies if at all possible—there are stories of Dogs fighting to the death so that their allies have a chance to survive. More able at fighting and leading warriors than they are at creating strategies or seeing the overall tide of battle, Dogs seek instructions from those who can lead their armies and packs with wisdom and intelligence. Seeing all combat with the kill-or-be-killed morality of the battlefield, Dogs never pull their punches and use weapons specifically designed for killing. Dogs generally wear heavy armor, seeking equipment that provides the most protection. Dogs have elongated ears, fur, tails, fangs, blunt claws, and long snouts.

CHARACTER CREATION NOTES

Dogs start the game with 1 level in the FITNESS ability, but due to their primal behavior, their REASONING ability may not go above three (3). They also receive a bonus of +2D when using the OBSERVATION skill due to Dogs beings shrewd judges of character and environment, and possess the PARLANCE IMAGERY style if they have the requisite skills. They can also use their natural weapons (fangs: +2INJ; claws: +0INJ) in combat. Dogs possess the PO AFFINITY (WOLVES) gimmick.

House of the Boar

Juunishi-p'o of the Boar are often viewed as greedy, selfish, and short of temper, but this is only their outward appearance. Inside of their gruff demeanor, Boars are kind and wise and generally make life-long friends. Although they are great fighters, Boars are most notable for their skills at locating treasure and rare artifacts, which gains them acceptance among merchants and wealthy classes. Due to their squat form, Boars tend to select blunt weapons such as war hammers, maces, and clubs, although axes are not uncommon. Many Boars have become intrigued by firearms and are particularly enamored with cannons. Armor is generally custom made to fit the Boar's strange frame, and is therefore expensive—Boars without proper armor piece together several types of protection, adding technological advances whenever possible. Boars have elongated ears, broad and short frames, short tails, hooves, tusks, and snouts.

Juunishi-p'o Names

The juunishi-p'o are given one name at birth and a second when they come of age. The first name is always descriptive, commenting on one of the child's tendencies or other traits. The second name replaces the first, and references an event or additional trait that becomes evident as the child comes of age. Because the juunishi-p'o look like children their entire lives, it is difficult for outsiders to tell if their name is indicative of their childhood or adult life. Juunishi-p'o may also introduce themselves with an abbreviation of their name—*Brings Rain* might merely introduce herself as *Rain* to avoid having outsiders ask questions. Juunishi-p'o rarely refer to their clans, but outsiders often label them with an honorific based on their appearance—*Brings Rain* may be known as *Brings Rain of the Dragon*.

Names: Always Hungry, Sun Smiling, Cries like Thunder, Cherry Blossoms (childhood); Shadow Watching, Stands Stubbornly, Falls like Dove, Wakes the Heavens (adult)

Nicknames: Hungry, Sunny, Thunder, Cherry, Shadow, Stand, Dove, Heaven

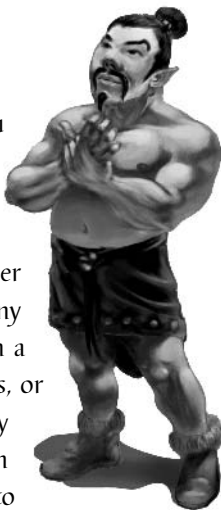
CHARACTER CREATION NOTES

Boars start the game with 1 level in the CREATIVITY ability, but due to their gruff demeanors, their INFLUENCE ability may not go above three (3). They also receive the AWARENESS: SMELL flair at +1, which is useful in tracking other characters. Because Boars are close to the ground, they are more likely to strike a critical area in combat—they receive no penalty for precision brawling attacks. They can also use their natural weapons (tusks: +1INJ) in combat. Boars possess the PO AFFINITY (SWINE) gimmick.



KESHOU

Though most closely related to goblins, keshou barely resemble their foreign relatives. They stand upright to a height of around four feet and are built extremely broadly across the chest and face. Their thick limbs and stocky build make them heavier than humans of the same height would appear. Many keshou men wear their black or silver hair back in a top-knot and most sport moustaches, short beards, or goatees. Keshou women tend to grow their hair very long, keeping it tied back in tight braids. Their skin ranges from, most commonly, a gold complexion, to a sun-burnt red color. They have sharp, piercing eyes, usually an emerald green or a blue-grey, which slant in an almond shape.



Historically, the keshou, like their goblin brethren, were used as slaves and brought to Rosuto-Shima nearly two-thousand years ago, sold to work in the households of the wealthy. Word spread quickly that the keshou were fast learners who excelled at working with their hands. Owning a keshou or even owning the works of a keshou became something of a status symbol, and they were treated well for slaves. They heeded their masters closely, learning the language and customs of the native Rosuto-Shimans. Due to their obedience and trustworthiness, the keshou were allowed freedoms that other slaves were not—they could gather with their own kind, run businesses for their owners without supervision, and do the work of raising children as nannies or tutors. Some thousand years into the keshou's history on Rosuto-Shima, the Emperor had a son, so he purchased a keshou to look after the boy and teach him the ways of humans. The keshou was called Boko-ban, and he taught the future Emperor the ways of honor and discipline. The pair grew to be not slave and master, but teacher and pupil, as well as extremely close friends. Their friendship was not to last, however. On a routine diplomatic journey, bandits attacked the Imperial caravan. They targeted the prince, but Boko-ban shielded his pupil with his own body, dying as arrow after arrow drilled into his flesh. The same evening, the Imperial prince's father, the Emperor, was assassinated. The young prince became Emperor Han Kodora, and with a heart full of mourning for the two men who had served as his fathers in his youth, he declared that no keshou would ever be kept as a slave again. He ruled for many years, and some said that the spirits of Boko-ban and the Emperor guided over his rule, helping him find the wisdom and justice needed to govern the nation.

Keshou Names

The crafters of Rosuto-Shima, known as Keshou, usually possess three names that are chosen at birth. In a typically simplistic and efficient fashion, the Keshou merely group these together as the first, middle, and family name respectively. *Genji-Oko Motoori* represents a first name of *Genji*, middle name of *Oko*, and family name of *Motoori*. The first and middle names are always hyphenated and usually come in the form of short one-syllable words. Middle names carry no gender connotation.

Given Names: *Bokaru, Kaigen, Amanu, Vaki, Vindu, Tenkazu, Giamun, Nikoto (male); Emiko, Hotaki, Fain, Aki, Kiri, Kyo, Akikono, Sei (female); Kuo, Ban, Oko, Gia, Jun, Mon, Dim, Min, Mao, Zin, Le, Po (middle)*

Family Names: *Daidoji, Hitoomi, Ikooma, Agashaki, Matsunomi, Motoori, Mooshi, Seppuntori*

Keshou are intelligent and very dedicated to tasks they begin. They enjoy works of art and relish any craftsmanship or device foreign to them, with a childlike wonder. Their humor is very easy-going, and the keshous' good-hearted nature makes them well-accepted company. This attitude quickly fades when they encounter danger, however—they fight furiously and regard all means of fighting as fair game, even tricks that more honorable folk would consider dirty. The keshou are very family-oriented, and greet their own kind with respect and affection, swapping stories and comparing secrets learned on the open road. Keshou embrace the philosophies of Makenki and Heishin, which loosely means "competition and advancement." The humans of Rosuto-Shima treat keshou as social equals—they are the only non-human race to receive such respect. The keshou are largely in control of the markets for silk, wine, and clockwork wonders throughout the island.

CHARACTER CREATION NOTES

Because keshou are both extremely tough and awkward, they possess the MUSCLEBOUND and CLUMSY gimmicks. Keshou also possess the DESERTFOLK background, and are inherently gifted when it comes to understanding technology, receiving a bonus of +1D when using the DRIVING or CLOCKWORKING skills. They are also naturals in the marketplace and receive of a bonus of +1D when using the COMMERCE skill.

OTHER RACES IN ROSUTO-SHIMA

The director may choose to allow the more traditional fantasy races to also roam Rosuto-Shima. Some of these races may have been brought to the island as slaves, visited the island on merchant vessels, or lost their way in storms at sea. Whatever the case, foreign races are small in number and usually only found in the larger cities of Rosuto-Shima. A few ideas of how to integrate the standard fantasy races are provided below.

Elves

The slender and beautiful race of elves are easily accepted by the upper class and entertainment industry, who value their elegant manner and lovely appearance. The superstitious commonfolk believe them to be spirits and either give them offerings or avoid them at all costs.

Dwarves

In ancient times, a race similar to dwarves did inhabit the land of Rosuto-Shima, but legends say they either became extinct or retreated deep into the mountains. Dwarves who come to the island are treated with much respect, as stories tell of their honor and alliance with humans against the oni hordes that devastated the lands.

Halfings

Child-sized and amiable, halfings might be mistaken at first glance for young humans or juunishi-p'o. Those who discover that they are neither might believe them to be spirits, sadly deformed humans, or juunishi-p'o who lost favor of their animal spirits. When recognized as halfings, they are given a wide berth.

Centaur

Considered a type of oni due to their half-human form, centaurs are feared throughout the countryside of Rosuto-Shima and cursed in the cities, as the forward-thinking residents see them as reminders of an outdated age. The jinteki-oni are most likely to welcome centaurs, seeing them as beings with a similar half-nature.

Goblins

Green-skinned and twisted, goblins barely resemble their stocky keshou cousins. Goblins found on Rosuto-Shima are almost universally slaves of wealthy families, who use them for physical labor in spite of their frail nature.

Gnomes

Wizened and bearded, gnomes are treated by Rosuto-Shimans as respected elders, despite their small statures. Rural communities believe that gnomes residing among the townspeople please their ancestors, and consider even young gnomes to have a special connection to their forefathers. Most gnomes reject these ideas, but some have been known to enjoy playing the role of storyteller and sage.

Orclins

Hideous in appearance and seemingly supernaturally strong, orclins are often mistaken for oni throughout Rosuto-Shima. The jinteki-oni, who know the pain of being mistaken for demons and monsters, find kinship with orclins and often welcome them into their communities. Other Rosuto-Shimans shun the race, typically making signs of protection or murmuring prayers to their ancestors upon encountering them.



CHAPTER
THREEMAGIC
OF
MUSHA

In addition to the magical forms described in Iron Gauntlets, two other religious forms of magic are known to the initiated in Rosuto-Shima. Although magic takes different forms and is granted to most of the mystics of Rosuto-Shima through faith rather than study, it draws on the same energies regardless of the user's orientation. Some scholars have considered magical energy to be a natural source that must be tapped through supernatural means.

SCHOLARLY MAGIC

The study of the arcane arts has a long tradition on Rosuto-Shima. Sorcerers, wizards, and kabukika have studied the ways of arcane spell casting, developing ways of calling on the powers of magic and using it to enhance their arts. Some have utilized their arts in an effort to gain power in Rosuto-Shima, gathering darkness and using magic toward evil ends. Others have used magic for alternative goals, such as bettering the lives of the less fortunate or providing protection for the old imperial family.

The coming of the new technology has caused many city-dwellers of Rosuto-Shima to look upon magic users, commonly called “mahoutsukai,” as phonies and charlatans. The events of the Clockwork Insurgency caused the commonfolk to develop a fear of arcane powers, and a suspicion against those who use abilities not naturally granted by the gods. More open-minded Rosuto-Shimans have looked at both the arcane arts and old traditions to work with new technology; the resulting upgrades to weapons and armor are highly valued on the island.

Like wizards and other practitioners of crafting magic in Iron Gauntlets, the mahoutsukai of Rosuto-Shima cast from the written word, although they can also memorize a small number of spells (see Iron Gauntlets, *Chapter 4*).

Kabukika

When the kabukika use the crafting ability, they access magical energy through motion and dance. Because kabukika have no access to specific effects in writing, they are able to memorize several more spells than the other mahoutsukai. A kabukika may memorize a number of specific effects equal to the sum of his reasoning and influence ratings.

While other mahoutsukai are held in contempt by many city-dwellers, the kabukika are universally praised for their efforts in transforming a dangerous power into a tangible form of entertainment. It is common for scholars and wizards to be jealous of the kabukika because of this distinction in social standing. For this reason, mahoutsukai tend to avoid keeping company with kabukika, or view any activity in the presence of kabukika as a competition. The kabukika may not notice this animosity, as they tend to have respect for those who wield all of the magical fabrics.

Dance (Uses Ritual Dance Skill)

Kabukika use ritual dances rather than incantations for releasing crafting-based effects. This dance requires a minimum of four (4) turns and is modified by +1D for each additional twenty (20) minutes devoted to it. This is also considered a united task when additional kabukika assist.



RELIGION IN ROSUTO-SHIMA

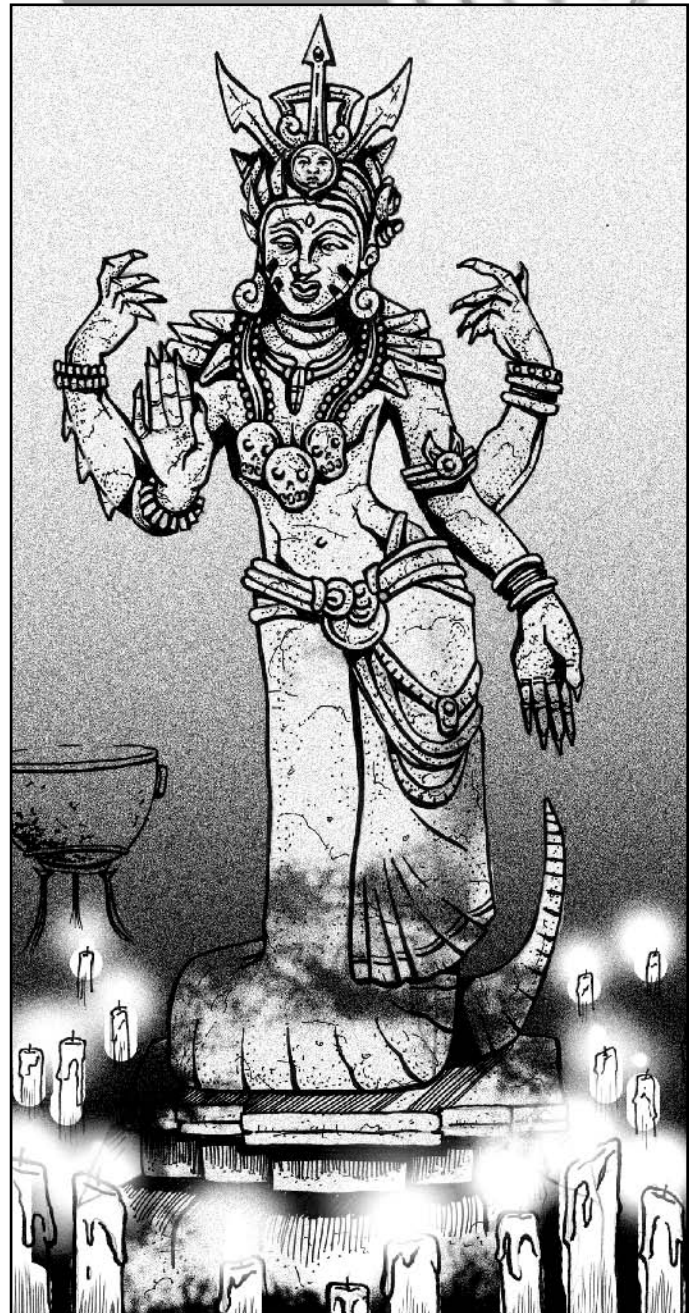
The Tale of Yu is the commonly accepted creation story of Rosuto-Shima. Worship of dragons is not uncommon, but it is far more common for Rosuto-Shimans to honor their ancestors, as well as local and family gods. During the Imperial Era, it was commonly accepted that the Emperor himself was divine. With the fall of the Empire, however, many people lost faith not only in the Imperial family, but in the gods and the spirit world.

While Rosuto-Shima is in an era where secular thoughts and ideas are taking precedent over the traditional ways, religion is still alive and well. This is evidenced from the city of Chengti alone, the holy center of all of Rosuto-Shima, and temples to all of the native gods can be found along its streets.

Traditional worship of gods is easily found throughout Rosuto-Shima, but the purpose of enlightenment has even more followers. It is said that many of the old gods honor this purpose so much that they, too, believe its tenants. Most of the monasteries throughout Rosuto-Shima are dedicated to the purpose of Enlightenment.

Throughout Rosuto-Shima there are many holy men and women devoted to following the calling of their gods, spirits of their ancestors, or searching for Enlightenment. All of those who preach to people, bringing the word of their religion to the commonfolk are considered High Priests. Those who are called to serve their gods for a less public cause are called Monks. Priests and Monks recognize each other with great respect, knowing that each vocation adds to the worship of their gods or their ideals. High Priests possess the divinity ability, while monks possess either the essence or divinity ability, depending on the nature of their studies. Members of other vocations, such as ninja, ronin, and samurai are often deeply in touch with the spiritual nature of their bodies, and though they may not be particularly religious, also possess the essence ability.

Some small groups of jinteki-oni have learned to practice the purpose of Enlightenment by paying homage to nature and animal spirits. These tribal jinteki-oni possess the totem ability. Some foreigners to Rosuto-Shima also have knowledge of totem spirits and practice magic in the same way. This magic is very rare on Rosuto-Shima, however, and even practitioners of crafting-based magic view this form of magic as slightly backwards.



GUI-BASED MAGIC

Gui-based magic is one of both devotion and form. Martial training is ingrained into the practice of gui magic, so that both magic and combat become as one.

The Elements

The five elements represent powerful forces in nature, and are the core belief behind gui-based magic. These forces are almost ethereal in nature, but when channeled by way of katas, or specialized methods of focusing the energy, the inert power of the elements is unleashed and molded for a single purpose.

Every practitioner shares a unique rapport with a single element. This element is said to be the radiance of his spiritual self, while all other elements are part of his spiritual shadow. Because of this, the attuned element is easier for the practitioner to channel, and the shadow elements are more resistant to channeling.

Earth

Earth is the embodiment of strength, substance, and grounding.

Water

Water is the nature of movement, expansion, and adaptability.

Fire

Fire is the power of consumption, radiance, and energy.

Wind

Wind is the epitome of sustenance, relief, and resistance.

Void

Void is the concept of emptiness, openness, and spirit.

Katas

Gui-based magic is taught by way of a series of body positions and movements known as a kata, which is passed on by various nikobo teachers. Katas were established by the early nikobo, and are used to influence the five elements (earth, water, air, fire, and void), each capable of producing a variety of effects. Katas are channeled by the practitioner, enabling him to focus the power of a single element with each performance. The effects of a kata are maintained for a period of one hour, after which time, the elemental forces relax and once again conform to reality.

A gui-based practitioner, typically a nikobo, can perform a number of katas per day equal to the sum of his fitness and creativity ratings. Many practitioners perform their katas early in the morning, not to specifically produce gui-based effects, but for training (experience may be gained in the normal fashion).

All kata require three full turns for completion. The base difficulty for performing a kata at this rate with an attuned element is challenging (4). The difficulty is increased by two grades (+2DIFF) if an unattuned element is channeled. Performing a kata at a slower rate can increase its potential—for each additional three turns spent performing the kata, the difficulty is decreased by one grade (-1DIFF), but it may not be reduced by more than three grades (-3DIFF). Rushing through a kata is also possible, but attempting to complete it in two turns increases the difficulty by one grade (+1DIFF), while cramming the entire kata into one turn increases the difficulty by three grades (+3DIFF).

KATA DIFFICULTIES

Standard Kata Task (3 turns; attuned element)	Challenging (4)
+3 turns	-1DIFF
+6 turns	-2DIFF
+9 turns	-3DIFF
-1 turn	+1DIFF
-2 turns	+3DIFF
Unattuned Element	+2DIFF

Jim Kata

Earth: The character receives a bonus of +1D on all fitness-based tasks in which muscle is a factor. Each point of overkill achieved increases this bonus by +1D. Each point of experience expended when attempting this skill can also increase the character's damage rating for brawling, dueling, or melee attacks by 1FAT.

Water: The character can increase the range of an arrow shot by a bow or an object thrown by ten percent (10% or the maximum range \times 1.10). Each point of overkill achieved increases the range by an additional ten percent (10%).

Fire: The closest flame to the character is intensified and casts more light, and also inflicts an additional 1INJ if it comes into contact with someone. Each point of overkill achieved increases this damage by a further 1INJ.



Wind: The character receives a bonus of +1D on all contested influence-based tasks. Each point of overkill achieved increases this bonus by +1D.

Void: The character inflicts an additional 1INJ to oni for brawling, dueling, or melee attacks. Each point of overkill achieved increases this damage by a further 1INJ. Spirits may be harmed by the character as if they were corporeal.

Fang Wei Kata

Earth: The character's armor rating is increased by one (1) against mortals. Each point of overkill achieved increases the armor rating by an additional one (1) point, up to a maximum of eight (8).

Water: The character receives a bonus of +1D on all fitness-based tasks made to block an attack. Each point of overkill achieved increases this bonus by +1D. Each point of experience expended when attempting this skill permits a single +1D bonus received from its effects to also be applied to parrying tasks.

Fire: The character gains the RESISTANT (FIRE) gimmick.

Wind: While touching the character, another mortal or oni receives a penalty of -1D on all fitness-based tasks in which agility and speed is a factor. Each point of overkill achieved increases this penalty by -1D.

Void: The character's armor rating is increased by one (1) when rolling for damage inflicted by an oni. Each point of overkill achieved increases the armor rating by an additional one (1) point, up to a maximum of eight (8).

Zhi Kata

Earth: The character receives a bonus of +2D on all stealth tasks. Each point of overkill achieved increases this bonus by +1D.

Water: The character receives a bonus of +1D on all fitness-based tasks in which dexterity is a factor. Each point of overkill achieved increases this bonus by +1D.

Fire: The character receives a bonus of +1D on all awareness-based tasks in which vision or hearing is a factor. Each point of overkill achieved increases this bonus by +1D.

Wind: The character gains the DARK SIGHT gimmick.

Void: The character receives a bonus of +1D on all reasoning-based tasks. Each point of overkill increases this bonus by +1D.

Yin Kata

Earth: The character's damage rating for brawling attacks is increased by 1INJ. Each point of overkill achieved increases the damage by an additional 1INJ.

Water: The character receives a bonus of +1D on all fitness-based tasks in which agility is a factor. Each point of overkill achieved increases this bonus by +1D.

Fire: The character receives an extra 1D when performing prostrated tasks.

Wind: The character's armor rating is increased by two (2) when rolling for damage sustained from falling. Each point of overkill achieved increases the armor rating by an additional one (1) point, up to a maximum of eight (8).

Void: The character can sense all spirits (see page 100) within ten (10) feet from him. Each point of overkill increases this range by another ten feet.

Xing Yun Kata

Earth: The character can ignore the effects of any kata used by others against him that channels water by making a successful resisted gui-based composure roll against their kata task.

Water: The character receives a bonus of +1D on all fitness-based tasks involving movement in water, such as swimming. Each point of overkill achieved increases this bonus by +1D.

Fire: All awareness-based tasks attempted to locate the character receive a bonus of +1D. Each point of overkill achieved increases this bonus by +1D.

Wind: The character's armor rating is increased by two (2) when rolling for damage sustained from asphyxiation in water (drowning). Each point of overkill achieved increases the armor rating by an additional one (1) point, up to a maximum of eight (8).

Void: All creativity-based tasks attempted within ten (10) feet of the character receive a bonus of +1D. Each point of overkill achieved increases this bonus by +1D. Each point of experience expended when attempting this skill increases the range by ten feet.

Da Ji Kata

Earth: The character receives a bonus of +1D on grappling attacks. Each point of overkill achieved increases this bonus by +1D. Each point of experience expended when attempting this skill can also increase the character's damage rating for grappling attacks by 1FAT.

Water: The character receives a bonus of +1D on all fitness-based tasks when climbing. Each point of overkill achieved increases this bonus by +1D.

Fire: The character receives a bonus of +2D on all influence-based tasks. Each point of overkill achieved increases this bonus by +1D.

Wind: The character restores an extra grade of fatigue by the end of the day. Each point of overkill achieved increases this restoration by an additional grade.

Void: All totem-based tasks attempted within ten (10) feet of the character receive a bonus of +1D. Each point of overkill achieved increases this bonus by +1D. Each point of experience expended for this skill increases this range by ten (10) feet.

Oni Kata

Earth: The character can bind a single spirit to an object or location. Once bound, the spirit cannot remove itself from the area. This can be resisted by an influence-based composure task made by the spirit, however.

Water: The character can cast a single bound spirit from a possessed mortal, object, or location. This can be resisted by an influence-based composure task made by the spirit.

Fire: The character, as well as others within ten (10) feet of him, can see the true form of both invisible oni and those that have transformed their appearance. Each point of experience expended when attempting this skill increases this range by ten (10) feet.

Wind: The character can prevent a single oni from approaching within ten (10) feet of him. Each point of overkill achieved increases this range by an additional ten (10) feet. This can be resisted by an influence-based composure task made by the oni.

Void: The character can summon a single spirit of nature (earth, water, fire, or wind) to appear before him in order to move, alter, or create an element.

For example: A fire spirit can move a flame from one field to another, or a wind spirit can increase the force of a storm.

Gui Talismans

Gui Talismans are small charm-like objects created from one of three materials—jade, wood, or bone. They are magically enchanted when inscribed with the the secret symbols of a particular element during the performance of a kata channeling that same element. The powers channeled into a talisman are permanent unless its elemental symbols become illegible or its physical form is destroyed. The effects stored within a talisman may be unleashed either upon wearing the talisman or holding it in one's hand.

Because of the vast amount of magical energy radiating from a talisman, any character wearing or holding one receives one grade of fatigue every four hours. This time is cumulative within a twenty-four-hour period. In other words, if a character wears a talisman for two hours, removes it from his person, and then holds it for another two hours later in the day, he still gains one grade of fatigue.

One talisman negates the affects of another worn or held by a character. An even number of talismans are balanced magically, so they do not provide a character with any special effects. An odd number of talismans worn or held by a character, however, are not magically balanced, so one talisman (the director's choice) is capable of unleashing an effect.

The physical creation of a talisman requires anywhere from one to five hours depending on the material used and the intricacy of traditional ornamental designs desired. These ornaments are just for show and do not affect the talisman's power. A wealthy house would not be adorned with a poorly decorated talisman.

DESIGN TIMES

Wood	1 hour
Bone	2 hours
Jade	3 hours
Simple ornaments	+1 hour
Complex ornaments	+4 hours

A complex design task is made to create the final talisman form, and a kata task channeling the relevant element must be made to imbue the talisman with power (see difficulties below).

TALISMAN KATA DIFFICULTIES

Standard Kata Task (10 minutes; attuned element)	Challenging (4)
+10 minutes	-1 DIFF
+20 minutes	-2 DIFF
+30 minutes	-3 DIFF
-5 minutes	+3 DIFF
Unattuned Element	+2 DIFF

Jim Talisman

Earth: A character wearing/wielding the talisman receives a bonus of +1D on all fitness-based tasks in which muscle is a factor. Each point of overkill achieved on the kata task to create this talisman increases this bonus by +1D. Each point of experience expended on the kata task to create this talisman



also increases the amount of damage inflicted by brawling, dueling, or melee attacks by 1FAT.

Water: A character wearing/wielding the talisman can increase the range of an arrow shot by a bow or an object thrown by ten percent (10% or the maximum range x 1.10). Each point of overkill achieved on the kata task to create this talisman increases the range by an additional ten percent (10%).

Fire: A torch held by a character wearing/wielding the talisman cannot cease burning even if no oxygen is present.

Wind: A character wearing/wielding the talisman receives a bonus of +1D on all contested influence-based tasks. Each point of overkill achieved on the kata task to create this talisman increases this bonus by +1D.

Void: A character wearing/wielding the talisman inflicts an additional 1INJ to an oni for brawling, dueling, or melee attacks. Each point of overkill achieved on the kata task to create this talisman increases this damage by a further 1INJ. Spirits may be harmed by the character as if they were corporeal.

Fang Wei Talisman

Earth: The armor rating of a character wearing/wielding the talisman is increased by one (1) against mortals. Each point of overkill achieved on the kata task to create this talisman increases the armor rating by an additional one (1) point, up to a maximum of eight (8).

Water: A character wearing/wielding the talisman receives a bonus of +1D on all fitness-based tasks made to block an attack. Each point of overkill achieved on the kata task to create this talisman increases this bonus by +1D.

Fire: A character wearing/wielding the talisman gains the RESISTANT (FIRE) gimmick.

Wind: A character wearing/wielding the talisman receives a penalty of -1D on all fitness-based tasks in which agility and speed is a factor. Each point of overkill achieved on the kata task to create this talisman increases this penalty by -1D.

Void: The armor rating of a character wearing/wielding the talisman is increased by one (1) when rolling for damage inflicted by an oni. Each point of overkill achieved on the kata task to create this talisman increases the armor rating by an additional one (1) point, up to a maximum of eight (8).

Zhi Talisman

Earth: A character wearing/wielding the talisman receives a bonus of +1D on all stealth tasks. Each point of overkill on the kata task to create this talisman increases this bonus by +1D.

Water: A character wearing/wielding the talisman receives a bonus of +1D on all fitness-based tasks in which dexterity is a factor. Each point of overkill achieved on the kata task to create this talisman increases this bonus by +1D.

Fire: A character wearing/wielding the talisman receives a bonus of +1D on all awareness-based tasks in which vision or hearing is a factor. Each point of overkill achieved on the kata task to create this talisman increases this bonus by +1D. Each point of experience expended on the kata task to create this talisman also provides a bonus of +1D to locate the talisman with an observation task.

Wind: A character wearing/wielding the talisman gains the DARK SIGHT gimmick.

Void: A character wearing/wielding the talisman receives a bonus of +1D on all reasoning-based tasks. Each point of overkill achieved on the kata task to create this talisman increases this bonus by +1D.

Yin Talisman

Earth: A character wearing/wielding the talisman inflicts an additional 1INJ from brawling attacks. Each point of overkill achieved on the kata task to create this talisman increases the damage by a further 1INJ.

Water: A character wearing/wielding the talisman receives a bonus of +1D on all fitness-based tasks in which agility is a factor. Each point of overkill achieved on the kata task to create this talisman increases this bonus by +1D.

Fire: A character wearing/wielding the talisman receives an extra 1D when performing prostrated tasks.

Wind: The armor rating of a character wearing/wielding the talisman is increased by two (2) when rolling for damage sustained from falling. Each point of overkill achieved on the kata task to create this talisman increases the armor rating by an additional one (1) point, up to a maximum of eight (8).

Void: A character wearing/wielding the talisman can sense all spirits (see page 100) within ten (10) feet from him. Each point of overkill on the kata task to create this talisman increases this range by ten (10) feet.

Xing Yun Talisman

Earth: A character wearing/wielding the talisman can ignore the effects of any kata used by others against it that channels water.

Water: A character wearing/wielding the talisman receives a bonus of +1D on all fitness-based tasks involving movement in

water, such as swimming. Each point of overkill achieved on the kata task to create this talisman increases this bonus by +1D.

Fire: All awareness-based tasks attempted to locate the talisman receive a bonus of +1D. Each point of overkill achieved on the kata task to create this talisman increases this bonus by +1D.

Wind: The armor rating of a character wearing/wielding the talisman is increased by two (2) when rolling for damage sustained from asphyxiation in water (drowning). Each point of overkill achieved on the kata task to create this talisman increases the armor rating by an additional one (1) point, up to a maximum of eight (8).

Void: All creativity-based tasks attempted within ten (10) feet of the talisman receive a bonus of +1D. Each point of overkill achieved on the kata task to create this talisman increases this bonus by +1D. Each point of experience expended on the kata task to create this talisman increases this range by ten (10) feet.

Da Ji Talisman

Earth: A character wearing/wielding the talisman receives a bonus of +1D on grappling attacks. Each point of overkill achieved on the kata task to create this talisman increases this bonus by +1D. Each point of experience expended on the kata task to create this talisman can also increase the amount of damage inflicted by grappling attacks by 1FAT.

Water: A character wearing/wielding the talisman receives a bonus of +1D on all fitness-based tasks when climbing. Each point of overkill achieved on the kata task to create this talisman increases this bonus by +1D.

Fire: A character wearing/wielding the talisman receives a bonus of +1D on all influence-based tasks. Each point of overkill achieved on the kata task to create this talisman increases this bonus by +1D.

Wind: A character wearing/wielding the talisman restores an extra grade of fatigue by the end of the day. Each point of overkill achieved on the kata task to create this talisman increases this restoration by another grade. Each point of experience expended on the kata task to create this talisman restores an extra grade of injury if the character has been wearing/wielding it for one full week.

Void: All totem-based tasks attempted within ten (10) feet of the talisman receive a bonus of +1D. Each point of overkill achieved on the kata task to create this talisman increases this bonus by +1D. Each point of experience expended on the kata task to create this talisman increases this range by ten (10) feet.

Oni Talisman

Earth: The talisman provides a bonus of +1D on any oni kata channeling earth attempted by its wearer/wielder. Each point of overkill achieved on the kata task to create this talisman increases this bonus by +1D.

Water: The talisman provides a bonus of +1D on any oni kata channeling water attempted by its wearer/wielder. Each point of overkill achieved on the kata task to create this talisman increases this bonus by +1D.

Fire: A character wearing/wielding the talisman can see the true form of both invisible oni and those that have transformed their appearance. Each point of experience expended on the kata task to create this talisman extends this capability to an additional character within ten (10) feet of the talisman.

Wind: An oni cannot approach within ten (10) feet of the talisman. Each point of overkill achieved on the kata task to create this talisman increases this range by ten (10) feet. This can be resisted by an influence-based composure task made by an oni.

Void: The talisman provides a bonus of +1D on any oni kata channeling void attempted by its wearer/wielder. Each point of overkill achieved on the kata task to create this talisman increases this bonus by +1D.

Gui Artefacts

Gui artefacts are normal items, such as swords, plate armor, doors, or even constructs, that have talismans built right into them. These constructs are enhanced in one way or another by the embedded talisman's power. Unlike talismans, however, artefacts do not inflict the wearer/wielder with fatigue, making them even more prized than talismans. Should an artefact be destroyed, dropped, or otherwise removed from use, it can no longer focus the effects of the embedded talisman, making it just another common piece of equipment—when the artefact's function ceases, it is no longer an artefact until wielded or worn again. There is no way to repair a destroyed artefact, however.

Whereas talismans are created in a two-step process, artefacts require three stages to their construction. The first two steps involved in the process are exactly the same as that for talismans—a design task for the talisman, followed by the desired kata task. The third and final step is to fashion the artefact so that the talisman becomes its central focus. For example, a talisman must be positioned in the center of the chest area on a suit of armor or just above the hilt on a sword. Producing the artefact requires a relevant creation task—forging,



crafts, or clockworking. In some cases, the masonry skill can also be used to make structures, such as walls and doors, into artefacts. Artefacts must be perfect in their design in order for the talisman to bond with them. Those undertaking the task must rely on their experience with katas since artefacts are a relatively recent discovery. For even the slightest imperfection is capable of blocking the effects of its talisman. In order to complete such a masterpiece, weeks or even months must be spent in the process. The amount of time dedicated to the project determines the difficulty of the creation task.

ARTEFACT CREATION DIFFICULTIES

1 week	Impossible (7)
2 weeks	Improbable (6)
1 month	Formidable (5)
3 months	Challenging (4)
6 months	Complex (3)
1 year	Routine (2)

In order for an artefact to unleash its embedded talisman's effects, it must be used in the intended capacity. For example, armor must be worn, swords must be swung, and torches must be lit. In most cases, artefacts bear the same effects as their embedded talismans. Only one talisman can be embedded in an artefact. The most commonly found artefacts are presented below. The director is free to invent his own artefacts based on the effects of the various talismans.

Jin Artefact

Earth: A weapon artefact inflicts +1INJ/+1FAT (per the weapon) for each point of experience expended for creating the talisman. Spirits may be harmed by the artefact as if they were corporeal.

Water: A firearm or bow artefact increases the range of projectiles by ten percent (10% or the maximum range $\times 1.10$). Each point of overkill achieved on the kata task to create the talisman increases the range by an additional ten percent (10%).

Fire: A torch artefact prevents its flame from ever being extinguished. A pouch artefact increases the damage of all charging powders held within by 1INJ for each point of experience expended on the kata task to create the talisman.

Wind: A pouch or strongbox artefact increases the effectiveness of all elixirs and salves held within by healing an additional grade of both injury and fatigue for each point of experience expended on the kata task to create the talisman.

Void: A weapon artefact inflicts +1INJ or +1FAT (as per the weapon) to oni for each point of experience expended on the kata task to create the talisman.

Fang Wei Artefact

Earth: The armor rating of an armor artefact is increased by one (1) against mortals. Each point of overkill achieved on the kata task to create the talisman increases the armor rating by an additional one (1) point, up to a maximum of eight (8).

Water: A shield artefact provides a bonus of +1D on all fitness-based tasks made to block an attack. Each point of overkill achieved on the kata task to create the talisman increases this bonus by +1D.

Fire: An armor, shield, or weapon artefact gives the wearer/wielder the RESISTANT (FIRE) gimmick.

Wind: An armor or shield artefact produces a penalty of -1D on all fitness-based tasks in which agility and speed is a factor. Each point of overkill achieved on the kata task to create the talisman increases this penalty by -1D.

Void: The armor rating of a an armor artefact is increased by one (1) when rolling for damage inflicted by an oni. Each point of overkill achieved on the kata task to create the talisman increases the armor rating by an additional one (1) point, up to a maximum of eight (8).

Zhi Artefact

Earth: A leather armor (or light clothing) artefact provides a bonus of +1D on all stealth tasks. Each point of overkill achieved on the kata task to create the talisman increases this bonus by +1D.

Water: A leather armor (or light clothing) artefact provides a bonus of +1D on all fitness-based tasks in which dexterity is a factor. Each point of overkill achieved on the kata task to create the talisman increases this bonus by +1D. The accuracy rating of a firearm or bow artefact is increased by one (1). Each point of overkill achieved on the kata task to create the talisman increases this bonus by an additional one (1) point.

Fire: A helm artefact provides a bonus of +1D on all awareness-based tasks in which vision or hearing is a factor. Each point of overkill achieved on the kata task to create the talisman increases this bonus by +1D. Each point of experience expended on the kata task to create the talisman also provides a bonus of +1D to locate the helm artefact with an observation task.

Wind: A helm artefact gives the wearer the DARK SIGHT gimmick.

Void: A helm artefact provides a bonus of +1D on all reasoning-based tasks. Each point of overkill achieved on the kata task to create the talisman increases this bonus by +1D.

Yin Artefact

Earth: A gauntlet artefact inflicts an additional 1_{INJ} from brawling attacks. Each point of overkill achieved on the kata task to create the talisman increases the damage by an additional 1_{INJ}.

Water: A leather armor (or light clothing) artefact receives a bonus of +1D on all fitness-based tasks in which agility is a factor. Each point of overkill achieved on the kata task to create the talisman increases this bonus by +1D.

Fire: An armor artefact provides an extra 1D when performing prostrated tasks.

Wind: The armor rating of a scale or plate armor artefact is increased by two (2) when rolling for damage sustained from falling. Each point of overkill achieved on the kata task to create the talisman increases the armor rating by an additional one (1) point, up to a maximum of eight (8).

Void: A helm artefact permits the wearer to sense all spirits (see page 100) within ten (10) feet from him. Each point of overkill achieved on the kata task to create the talisman increases this range by ten feet.

Xing Yun Artefact

Earth: Any worn artefact can ignore the effects of a kata that channels water.

Water: Any artefact floats in water and cannot sink.

Fire: Any artefact provides a bonus of +1D on all observations tasks made to locate it. Each point of overkill achieved on the kata task to create the talisman increases this bonus by +1D.

Wind: The armor rating of a leather armor artefact is increased by two (2) when rolling for damage sustained from asphyxiation in water (drowning). Each point of overkill achieved on the kata task to create the talisman increases the armor rating by an additional one (1) point, up to a maximum of eight (8).

Void: Any artefact provides a bonus of +1D on all creativity-based tasks attempted within ten (10) feet of it. Each point of overkill achieved on the kata task to create the talisman increases this bonus by +1D. Each point of experience expended on the kata task to create the talisman increases the range by ten feet.

Da Ji Artefact

Earth: A metal armor or gauntlet artefact provides a bonus of +1D on grappling attacks. Each point of overkill achieved on the kata task to create the talisman increases this bonus by +1D. Each point of experience expended on the kata task to create the

talisman can increase the amount of damage inflicted by grappling attacks by 1_{FAT}.

Water: A grappling hook or gauntlet artefact receives a bonus of +1D on all fitness-based tasks when climbing. Each point of overkill achieved on the kata task to create the talisman increases this bonus by +1D.

Fire: A jewelry, clothing, or armor artefact provides a bonus of +1D on all influence-based tasks. Each point of overkill achieved on the kata task to create the talisman increases this bonus by +1D.

Wind: Any bandage artefact reduces an extra grade of fatigue by the end of the day. Each point of overkill achieved on the kata task to create the talisman increases this restoration by another grade. Each point of experience expended on the kata task to create the talisman reduces an extra grade of injury if the character has been wearing it for one full week.

Void: Any artefact provides a bonus of +1D on all totem-based tasks attempted within ten (10) feet of it. Each point of overkill achieved on the kata task to create the talisman increases this bonus by +1D. Each point of experience expended on the kata task to create the talisman increases the range by ten feet.

Oni Artefact

Earth: Any artefact provides a bonus of +1D on an oni kata channeling earth attempted by its wearer/wielder. Each point of overkill achieved on the kata task to create the talisman increases this bonus by +1D.

Water: Any artefact provides a bonus of +1D on an oni kata channeling water attempted by its wearer/wielder. Each point of overkill achieved on the kata task to create the talisman increases this bonus by +1D.

Fire: A helm artefact permit the wearer to see the true form of both invisible oni and those that have transformed their appearance. Each point of experience expended on the kata task to create the talisman extends this capability to an additional character within ten (10) feet of the talisman.

Wind: An oni cannot approach within ten (10) feet of the artefact. Each point of overkill achieved on the kata task to create the talisman increases this range by ten feet. This can be resisted by an influence-based composure task made by an oni.

Void: Any artefact provides a bonus of +1D on an oni kata channeling void attempted by its wearer/wielder. Each point of overkill achieved on the kata task to create the talisman increases this bonus by +1D.



TENSHU-MAHOUBASED MAGIC

Tenshu-Mahou-based magic is founded on the internal balance of yin and yang, of human and animal, and draws this energy from the spirits associated with the twelve earthly houses of the zodiac. These same spirits were once worshipped by the juunisho-p'o in order to receive their current forms. A spirit master can harness the power of the houses by calling on the respective spirit, each closely mimicking and enhancing the natural abilities of the Juunishi-p'o. Spirit masters who are not juunishi-p'o may also use the magic to mimic the form of the juunishi-p'o, although the wisdom of trying such a thing is in question.

Appeals

Appealing to a spirit for power is instantaneous, and there is no need for ritual. Because of the master's connection to the spirits, the appeal is made merely by willing it to happen. This draws on his own energy; a spirit master may safely make a number of appeals equal to his tenshu-mahou rating within a twenty-four-hour period. While he may still make a number of appeals beyond this rating, each one inflicts one grade of fatigue due to the amount of concentration and effort required.

There are four types of appeals—favors, convocations, paragons, and summonings. The difficulty of a tenshu-mahou-based task is determined by the type of appeal. Bargaining is possible—for each additional five turns spent negotiating with the spirit, the character receives +1D on the task, up to a maximum of +3D. It is also possible for other spirit masters to combine their bargaining power in united tasks. If a task results in a calamity, the spirit is offended and inflicts an amount of fatigue or injury on the character as determined by the type of appeal (see table below).

APPEALS	DIFFICULTY	CALAMITY
Favor	Complex (3)	1FAT
Convocation	Challenging (4)	3FAT
Paragon	Formidable (5)	2INJ
Summoning	Improbable (6)	4INJ

Favor

The simplest type of appeal, a character can request a spirit to temporarily grant him limited power over the spirit's domain. If successful, the character can shape his world using the power

granted to him. The power of a favor remains with the character for a number of turns equal to the roll of one die—one can never be sure how long the spirits are willing to trust.

Convocation

An appeal can be made to a spirit to summon all nearby creatures of its domain to the character's location. The amount of time required, as well as the number and types of creatures are at the director's discretion, but the animals must be in the same relative area and must also be related to the spirit's zodiac house. Once summoned, the creatures are compelled to assist the character and cannot harm him, but they are in no way directly controlled by him. Spirit masters who also possess the animal handling skill (with a bonus of +1D) can attempt to get the animals to act according to his wishes. The power of a convocation remains with the character for a number of minutes equal to double the roll of one die—the temporary will of the spirits over animals slowly fades.

Paragon

An appeal can be made to a spirit manifest a paragon creature of its domain (see page 104), perfect in every way. The manifestation is instantaneous, but the animal must be related to the spirit's zodiac house. The spirit also invests the character with complete control over the paragon. The creature obeys all of the character's commands as if it were intelligent, but it is incapable of harming another of its kind, another spirit master currently imbued with the powers of the same spirit, or a juunishi-p'o of the same house. The paragon disappears after a number of minutes equal to the roll of one die—the manifestation of paragons requires a great deal of energy, so spirits eventually release this energy for other needs.

Summonings

An appeal can be made to a spirit for direct interaction. If the task is successful, the spirit has agreed to appear before the character and is willing to assist him, providing information or performing deeds. In exchange for this assistance, however, the character agrees to the same, providing the spirit with some form of cooperation. Such a contract is at the discretion of the director, but the greater the task by the spirit, the greater the debt owed by the character. The spirit remains in service of the character only until his task is completed.

The Houses

Because the spirits of each of the twelve houses have domain over certain areas, appeals result in different outcomes depending on the houses to which they are made. A number of sample effects are provided below for each of the houses and appeals.

House of the Rat

The House of the Rat holds dominion over shadows and darkness, as well as the ability to scrounge.

Sample Favors

- A radius of ten (10) feet from the character is covered in complete darkness through which only the character can see. This range is increased by an additional ten (10) feet for each point of overkill achieved.
- The character can alter the shape of a person or creature's shadow or the shadow of a man-sized object. The shadow's width or height can be altered so long as its overall area is not. A number of additional shadows may be affected for each point of overkill achieved.
- The character can turn a target person, creature, or object into shadow. While the target is fully corporeal, it lacks surface detail, making it difficult to spot or identify. All stealth tasks made by the target character in darkness receive a bonus of +2D, while tasks made in normal lighting receive a bonus of +1D.

Sample Convocation

- A swarm of rats converges on the character's location, causing distraction and possibly panic. If the task achieves three (3) or more points of overkill, the rats carry disease.

Sample Paragon

- A giant rat paragon manifests in front of the character, and may be used to search for food or find a way out of a cave.

Sample Summoning

- Nezumi-Tenshu appears before the character and agrees to find a missing ring. In return for this deed, an expensive piece of jewelry or interesting piece of new technology must be given to Nezumi-Tenshu.

House of the Ox

The House of the Ox holds dominion over the knowledge of plants, as well as raw force.

Sample Favors

- The character receives a bonus of +1D on all alchemy, medicine, or survival tasks involving plants. Each point of overkill achieved increases this bonus by +1D.
- The character inflicts +1FAT for brawling attacks. Every two points of overkill achieved increases this bonus by +1FAT.

Sample Convocation

- A water buffalo approaches the character's location, and may be used to haul equipment or as a mount.

Sample Paragon

- An ox paragon manifests in front of the character, and may be used to break down a door or block a road.

Sample Summoning

- Oushi-Tenshu appears before the character and agrees to move a large rock from the mouth of a cave. In return for this deed, a simple vegetarian meal in the company of the character must be provided for Oushi-Tenshu.

House of the Tiger

The House of the Tiger holds dominion over hunting and fear.

Sample Favors

- The character receives a bonus of +1D on all observation tasks made to track a person or creature in the wilds. Each point of overkill achieved increases this bonus by +1D.
- The character receives a bonus of +1D on all performance tasks made to incite fear in an opponent. Each point of overkill achieved increases this bonus by +1D. An opponent who is afraid receives a penalty of -1D on all composure tasks, with an extra -1D for each point of overkill achieved.

Sample Convocation

- A large feline seeks out the character and may intimidate or scare off an opponent.

Sample Paragon

- A fierce, black tiger paragon manifests in front of the character, and may be used to attack an opponent.

Sample Summoning

- Tora-Tenshu appears before the character and agrees to fight a battle. In return for this deed, the character must come to the aid of the next three people he meets who are too weak to fight their own battles. If the character refuses to fight one of these battles, Tora-Tenshu reappears to fight the character as punishment.



House of the Rabbit

The House of the Rabbit holds dominion over chaos, confusion, and the sense to retreat.

Sample Favors

- The character receives a bonus of +1D on all fitness-based tasks in which jumping is a factor. Each point of overkill achieved increases this bonus by +1D.
- The character receives a bonus of +1D on all awareness-based tasks in which hearing is a factor. Each point of overkill achieved increases this bonus by +1D.
- The character can target a person or creature, who receives a penalty of -1D on all awareness-based tasks. Each point of overkill achieved increases this penalty by -1D.

Sample Convocation

- A brace of rabbits jump to the character's feet and may be used for food.

Sample Paragon

- A large hare paragon manifests in front of the character, and may be used to lure a dog or cat away.

Sample Summoning

- Usagi-Tenshu appears before the character and agrees to run into a burning house to save a young child trapped inside. In return for this deed, the character must deliver a message for Usagi-Tenshu, likely to a region far from his current location.

House of the Dragon

The House of the Dragon holds dominion over the mists of the clouds and ancient secrets.

Sample Favors

- The heavens open and a light or moderate rain begins to fall in the area.
- The character's form becomes that of a mist, incapable of touch, or being touched or physically harmed. The character is still capable of speech, movement, hearing, and sight, however. Because of this change in physicality, the character is able to pass through walls and porous substances. Each point of overkill achieved increases the duration of this favor by one (1) turn.

Sample Convocation

- A drake lands before the character's and may be encouraged to use its fiery breath to set a building aflame.

Sample Paragon

- A dragon paragon manifests in front of the character, and may be used to clear a path or fly the character to safety.

Sample Summoning

- Doragon-Tenshu appears before the character and agrees to provide secret lore or inaccessible information on a particular subject. In return for this deed, the character must prove his worth by answering a riddle or providing military tactics.

For example: The rosy one keeps in her heart of pockets seven trees as seven beads, wooden tears, that if they fall will touch both heaven and earth and bring forth—the answer is an apple with its seeds.

Dragon Curse

- Unlike other tenshu-mahou appeals, Doragon-Tenshu may also grant a special curse. The character must stare at the intended victim for three consecutive turns without interruption. A trivial tenshu-mahou-based composure task is required each turn to determine if the stare is maintained (the director should modify the difficulty of the task based on the character's environment). The exact nature of the curse is chosen by Doragon-Tenshu —roll one die and consult the table below.

ROLL CURSE

1-2	Victim cannot speak for 24 hours
3-4	Victim is blind for 24 hours
5-6	Victim gains clumsy gimmick for 24 hours
7-8	Victim is unconscious for 24 hours
9-10	Spirit master can choose a curse from above

House of the Snake

The House of the Snake holds dominion over manipulation and deception.

Sample Favors

- The character receives a bonus of +1D on all subterfuge tasks. Each point of overkill achieved increases this bonus by +1D.
- The character can alter his appearance, so that his facial features, and body size and shape are different. If the character attempts to alter his appearance to that of a different race, the difficulty is modified by +2DIFF.

Sample Convocation

- A snake crawls beside the character and engulfs a plague-ridden rat.

Sample Paragon

- A giant constricting snake paragon manifests in front of the character, and may be used to grapple his opponents or carry him into a tree.

Sample Summoning

- Hebi-Tenshu appears before the character and agrees to use guile and charm to gain him access to a court function. In return for this deed, the character must procure a rare object or vital piece of information from a noble house—Hebi-Tenshu encourages thieving and spying.

House of the Horse

The House of the Horse holds dominion over domestic beasts.

Sample Favors

- The character receives a bonus of +1D on all animal handling and riding tasks. Each point of overkill achieved increases this bonus by +1D.
- The character can target a domesticated creature, which provides a penalty of -1D on all animal handling and riding tasks directed at it. Each point of overkill achieved increases the number of creatures that can be targeted.
- The character can alter the behavior of a domesticated creature, causing it to become violent, wary, lazy, or even frightened—this can affect animal handling and riding tasks at the discretion of the director. Each point of overkill achieved increases the number of creatures that can be targeted.

Sample Convocation

- A domesticated mule walks to the character's side, ready to haul equipment.

Sample Paragon

- A sleek and mighty horse paragon manifests in front of the character, and may be used as a mount.

Sample Summoning

- Uma-Tenshu appears before the character and agrees to carry him, as well as the character's companions, to a distant destination, requiring only one-quarter the normal time needed. In return for this deed, the character must design an original poem, devoted to the destination. It must then be performed in the presence of Uma-Tenshu and a small audience.

House of the Goat

The House of the Goat holds dominion over temper and the might of horns.

Sample Favors

- The character receives a bonus of +1D on all fitness-based tasks in which muscle is used to ram something (like breaking down a door). Each point of overkill achieved increases this bonus by +1D.
- The character inflicts +1INJ when thrusting a bladed dueling or melee weapon into an opponent. Each point of overkill achieved increases this bonus by +1INJ.
- The character can alter the behavior of another person, causing it to become either irate or calm. Each point of overkill achieved increases the number of people that can be targeted.

Sample Convocation

- A mother goat and her kids approach the character, providing both milk and food.

Sample Paragon

- A large-horned ram paragon manifests in front of the character, and may be used to charge opponents.

Sample Summoning

- Yagi-Tenshu appears before the character and agrees to break down a door with its horns. In return for this deed, the character must clean Yagi-Tenshu's armor or jewelry, or other possessions.

House of the Monkey

The House of the Monkey holds dominion over trickery and acrobatics.

Sample Favors

- The character receives a bonus of +1D on all athletics tasks. Each point of overkill achieved increases this bonus by +1D.
- The character receives a bonus of +1D on all subterfuge tasks. Each point of overkill achieved increases this bonus by +1D.
- The character receives a bonus of +1D on all legerdemain tasks. Each point of overkill achieved increases this bonus by +1D.

Sample Convocation

- A nimble monkey climbs the trees above the character, alerting him to invaders.



Sample Paragon

- A monkey paragon manifests in front of the character, and may be used to battle opponents in combat or sneak behind enemy lines to steal a map.

Sample Summoning

- Seiyuuki-Tenshu appears before the character and agrees to provide a diversion during an attack. In return for this deed, the character must play a prank on one of his companions at the earliest opportunity. If the prank is not amusing enough, Seiyuuki-Tenshu takes it upon himself to play a prank on the character.

House of the Rooster

The House of the Rooster holds dominion over cognizance and flight.

Sample Favors

- The character receives a bonus of +1D on all awareness tasks. Each point of overkill achieved increases this bonus by +1D.
- The character can levitate at a height no greater than ten (10) feet. The distance he can cover is the same as if he were jumping. The height at which he can levitate is increased by an additional ten (10) feet for each point of overkill achieved.
- A target object is touched by the powers of the rooster. When triggered by conditions set by the character, it causes a loud crowing sound to be heard only by the character. The conditions can be anything from the object being moved to an opponent walking past it.

Sample Convocation

- A flock of chickens follow the character, providing eggs or even food.

Sample Paragon

- A fantastically ornamented rooster paragon manifests in front of the character, and may be used to defend the area against rodents and other small animals, or attract hens.

Sample Summoning

- Ondori-Tenshu appears before the character and agrees to reveal the truth behind a myth, methods for slaying a particular creature, or other information gained in the telling of tales. In return for this deed, the character must prove his worth by telling a tale that the ondori-tenshu has not yet heard. Tales of his own past adventures can easily appease Ondori-Tenshu's desire for stories.

House of the Dog

The House of the Dog holds dominion over loyalty and leadership.

Sample Favors

- The character receives a bonus of +1D on all leadership tasks. Each point of overkill achieved increases this bonus by +1D. The targets perceive the character as completely loyal unless proven otherwise.
- All allies fighting in battle with the character receive a bonus of +1D on all reaction and composure tasks. Each point of overkill achieved increases this bonus by +1D.

Sample Convocation

- A wolf sneaks up behind the character, acting as protector or part of his pack.

Sample Paragon

- A long-fanged wolf paragon manifests in front of the character, and may be used as an ally in combat.

Sample Summoning

- Inu-Tenshu appears before the character and agrees to fight his battles. In return for this deed, the character must swear an oath of loyalty to a specific person. Should the character break this vow, Inu-Tenshu challenges him to a battle.

House of the Boar

The House of the Boar holds dominion over the hidden.

Sample Favors

- The character receives a bonus of +1D on all survival tasks involving digging and searching for food. Each point of overkill achieved increases this bonus by +1D.
- The character can determine the location of any target, no matter the distance.
- The character can determine the name and intentions of any target immediately before him.

Sample Convocation

- A boar approaches the character, and can be used for food or as a lure for other predators.

Sample Paragon

- A large boar paragon manifests in front of the character, and may be used for digging or locating buried objects.

Sample Summoning

- Buta-Tenshu appears before the character and agrees to hunt for lost objects. In return for this deed, the character must provide Buta-Tenshu with new firearms.

GUI KATAS/TALISMANS

Jin Kata
 Fang Wei Kata
 Zhi Kata
 Yin Kata
 Xing Yun Kata
 Da Ji Kata
 Oni Kata

GUI ELEMENTS

Earth
 Water
 Fire
 Wind
 Void

TENSHU-MAHOU APPEALS

Favors
 Convocations
 Paragons
 Summonings

TENSHU-MAHOU HOUSES

Rat (Nezumi-Tenshu)
 Ox (Oushi-Tenshu)
 Tiger (Tora-Tenshu)
 Rabbit (Usagi-Tenshu)
 Dragon (Doragon-Tenshu)
 Snake (Hebu-Tenshu)
 Horse (Uma-Tenshu)
 Goat (Yagi-Tenshu)
 Monkey (Seiyuuki-Tenshu)
 Rooster (Ondori-Tenshu)
 Dog (Inu-Tenshu)
 Boar (Buta-Tenshu)

KABUKIKA CRAFTING FABRICS

Fabrica Materia
 Abatement
 Alteration
 Salubrity
 Transformation
 Transmutation
 Fabrica Sensus

KABUKIKA CRAFTING METHODS

Dance (Ritual Dance)

DIVINITY ENDOWMENTS

Blessing
 Aegis
 Inspiration
 Intervention
 Touch
 Consecration
 Curse
 False promise
 Inspiration Lost
 Plague

Gospel
 Purity
 Rally
 True Sight
 Trust

Prophecy

DIVINITY METHODS

Benediction
 Efficacy
 Effigy
 Sacrament

ESSENCE PATHS

Inner Path
 Awakened Reflexes
 Awakened Sense
 Augmentation
 Hardened Metabolism
 Hardened Physique
 Quiet Focus

Outer Path
 Affinity
 Blinding Flash
 Mask
 Other Sight
 Roaring Echo
 Shroud

Explosive Path
 Disruptive Strike
 Extended Strike
 Peer
 Projected Strike
 Thrusting Strike

Shadow Path
 Graceful Passage
 Shaded Passage
 Silent Passage
 Weightless Passage

TOTEM ENTRANCEMENTS

Familiar
 Sacrifice
 Skin walk
 Claws
 Ears
 Eyes
 Fangs
 Fins
 Fur
 Gills
 Increased Musculature
 Nose
 Odorous Gland
 Quills
 Saliva
 Scales
 Skin Folds
 Tail
 Spirit Walk

CRAFTING FABRICS

Fabrica Ge
 Fabrica Materia
 Abatement
 Alteration
 Salubrity
 Transformation
 Transmutation

Fabrica Mentus
 Emotional Charge
 Focus
 Inner Wall
 Regression
 Union

Fabrica Motus
 Impetus
 Latency

Fabrica Sensus
 Fabrica Sphaera
 Cognizance
 Modulation
 Revocation

CRAFTING METHODS

Alchemy
 Circumscription
 Forging
 Inscription (Design)
 Recitation
 Inspection
 Proximity
 Action
 Tattoo
 Talismans

CHAPTER
FORARMS
&
ARMOR

The main form of currency in Rosuto-Shima is a gold coin called the kinka. It is roughly equivalent to the standard gold piece as used in Iron Gauntlets. The kinka is specially forged and has a square hole in its center. Merchants and those wishing to carry these coins typically secure them together with a string through the center hole, and keep them inside purses. Foreigners can easily convert gold pieces to kinka or simply buy and sell with the gold.

WEAPONS

Dueling Weapons

Butterfly Sword

Approximately the size of a human forearm, these short swords can be easily concealed in loose sleeves. Each blade is wide, flat along the top, and curved to a point. The blades are sharpened along the curved edge, and used almost exclusively in pairs (high dueling).

Jian

This short sword has a straight, double-edged blade. The guard of the sword is made up of two right-angled wings. The grip on the hilt has enough space for one hand plus three fingers of the other hand; normally jian are used one-handed. Jian are between eighteen and thirty-six inches in length.

Kama

Similar to a small sickle, the kama is made up of a steel head and wooden handle, and is usually approximately eighteen inches in length, with a six to nine-inch blade. Used in close combat, the kama utilizes speed and slashing attacks to sneak past an opponent's longer blade.

Kodachi

This long dagger is weak offensively, but is an excellent defensive weapon due to its speed. Many untrained fighters, including merchants and other non-combatants, carry kodachi in self defense. A kodachi is always shorter than twenty-four inches.

Tonfa

Though developed originally as the handle for a grinder for rice and soybeans, this farmer's tool makes an effective club-like weapon. The handle fits in the palm of the hand, and the club or rod is at a right angle to the handle. When laid across the forearm, it offers defense against bladed attacks. Tonfa are almost always used in pairs.

Wakizashi

This short sword is designed for use as in conjunction with a katana, although some fighters have been known to use a double-wakizashi style in close-quarter fighting to give them an advantage in smaller arenas. It is between twelve and twenty-four inches in length along the cutting edge.

Melee Weapons

Baqua

This two-handed saber has both a curved blade and a slightly curved hilt to accommodate both hands. Sharpened on both sides of its cutting edge, the blade alone is often thirty-six inches in length. The overall size of the weapon along with its two-handed function gives it enormous cutting and slashing power. Only warriors with both superior strength and agility are ever able to master the baqua.

Rosuto-Shima Staff

This six-foot long staff is generally made out of wood or bamboo. Some are decorated with burned designs or carvings. Wielded with both hands, the staff can be used in thrusts, strikes, and joint-locks, and is typically meant for self-defense.

Katana

This slightly curved sword, sharpened along the convex edge, is slightly longer than thirty-six inches in length. Often used with a second, off-hand blade (either a second katana, a wakizashi, or a kodachi), the katana is the preferred blade of the samurai and upper class warrior.

Kanabo

The kanabo is a long iron bar, usually seventy-two inches in length, and studded with rows of deadly spikes. Very few mortals use this weapon, but it is favored by oni soldiers.

Naginata

This long wooden shaft, generally seventy-two to ninety-six inches in length, is topped with a curved blade, adding an additional twelve to thirty-six inches to the total length of the weapon. The blade is slightly curved and is sharpened on the convex side. It has a sword-like guard between the blade and the shaft. Though typically used in melee combat, the naginata can also be used as a thrown spear.

Odachi

Sometimes referred to as a "nodachi," the odachi is a large, thick-bladed sword. Longer, thicker, and heavier than the katana, the odachi relies less on speed and more on the strength. Odachi are typically carried on the back (as they are too long to be sheathed at the waist) or carried by a page or follower who holds it for the warrior to draw.

Otsuchi

With a shaft of about seventy-two inches, the otsuchi is a large wooden hammer generally used for breaking down gates and doors. Usually only wielded by warriors with enormous strength, the otsuchi may also be used as a weapon against men, who break much more easily than doors.

Shikomizue

In areas where carrying a sword is illegal, some have found it useful to carry a walking stick or cane concealing a sword. The cane tends to be about forty-eight inches in height, though shorter wielders may choose a shorter cane. It contains a blade of about twenty-four inches in length hidden in its casing. These blades tend to be of fairly low quality, although some users have made the effort to perfect their use of both the cane and the hidden blade.

Tetsubo

This iron staff is seventy-two to ninety-six inches in length and extremely heavy. Tetsubo are only wielded by the strongest of warriors or among the oni, who have the strength necessary to handle its weight.

Double Jian

Like the standard jian, this is a straight, double-edged sword. This longer version extends thirty-six to forty-eight inches in length, and as such is used with both hands.

Yari

A straight-headed spear, the yari can be any size between forty-two inches and twenty feet long. The spear tip usually makes up three feet of the length, although it is smaller on shorter yari. The shaft is generally made of hardwood wrapped in bamboo strips.

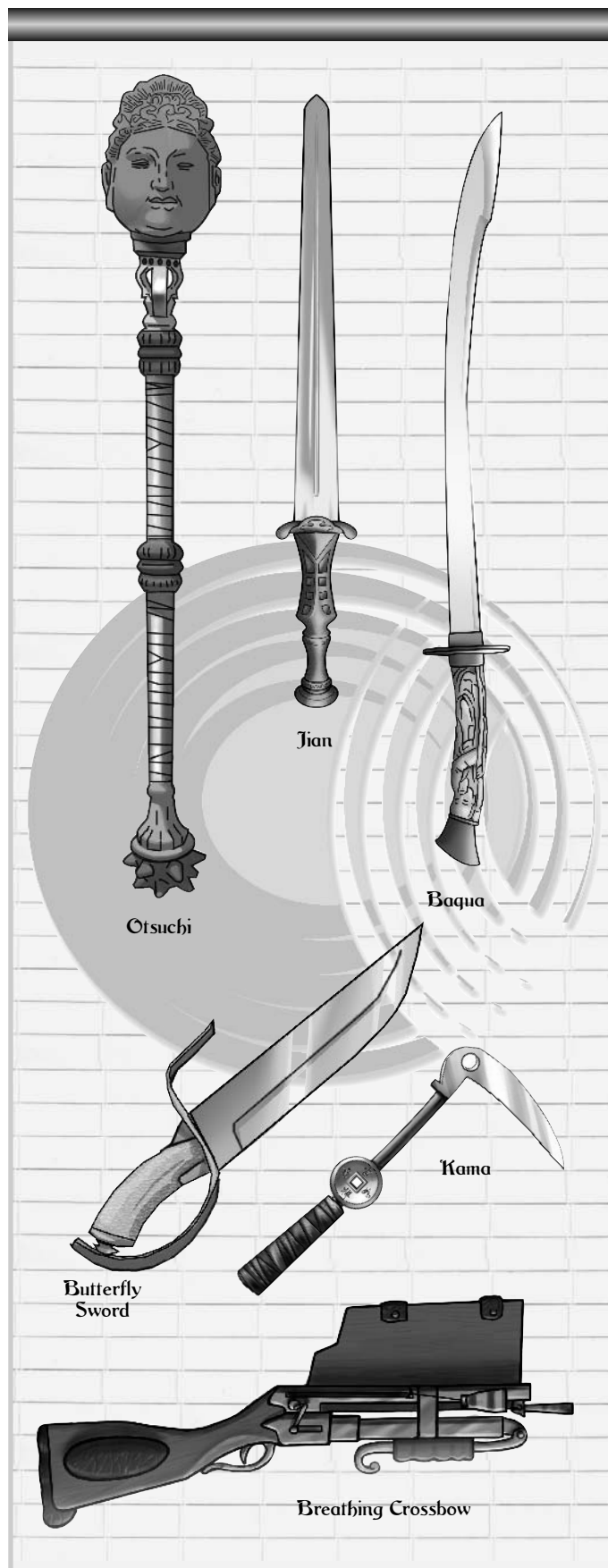
Archery Weapons

Daikyu

This long bow is constructed from bamboo, wood, and leather, and is usually seventy-two feet long. The shape of the daikyu is asymmetric—the upper and lower curves are different, and the grip on the bow is low, usually about one-third the bow's length from the lower tip. This allows the daikyu to be used from horseback in spite of its length.

Hankyu

This short bow is designed for ease of carriage, and is generally between thirty-six and forty-eight inches in length. It is similar to the longer daikyu.



Breathing Crossbow

By using a pump action, this crossbow uses air pressure rather than a traditional cord to release bolts. Several bolts are stored inside and one is launched once the trigger is pulled. As long as the crossbow is pre-pressurized, it can fire up to ten bolts consecutively without having to be reloaded.

Firearms

Ranged firearm attacks are similar to archery attacks, and are performed using the fitness ability, dexterity flair, and firearms skill. Many firearms can also be used as bludgeoning weapons (+2FAT) with a standard dueling attack.

Firearms need to be cleaned out and reloaded once its shot is expended—the amount of time required can vary by weapon. Upon initiating a reload, the character must make a routine firearms task. For every two (2) points of overkill achieved on this task, the character's reload time is reduce by one (1) turn. This time may not be reduced to less than one (1) turn, however.

Blundercannon

The blundercannon has a bell-shaped muzzle and is small enough to be carried and fired by hand. Usually, the blundercannon is leaned against a tree or lodged into the ground and fired. It is not a precise weapon, but often hits more than one target with the same shot. It can be loaded with the smallest cannonballs or with other random ammunition.

Bolt Gun

Designed by mechanists to quickly place bolts into the appropriate places in their machinery, the bolt gun has also become common as a weapon, firing bolts instead of bullets at an opponent. Less likely to pierce and more likely to bludgeon, the bolt gun is often used to weaken rather than kill opponents.

Derringer

This single-shot, muzzle-loaded pistol is incredibly small, and most of it is concealed by the hand holding it. The derringer has a very short barrel and uses ammunition of large caliber, making it a small package with a large punch.

Flame Thrower

Designed for use in the workshop, mechanists developed a way to keep a stream of flame flowing for their work in welding machinery. This tool has been modified for use as a weapon, propelling a flame between five and ten feet from its mouth.

Gatling Gun

This large, crank-handled gun is mounted on a tripod. It has a cluster of barrels that fire in sequence as they are rotated by the turning of the crank. It combines reliability, high firing rate, and ease of loading. While the rate of fire makes it difficult to fire accurately, a continuous stream of bullets is likely to eventually hit any foe. As long as a constant stream of ammunition is dropped into its feeder, the weapon can fire indefinitely.

Gatling Gun Arm

A favorite weapon with Clockwork Ronin who practice body modification, the Gatling Gun Arm replaces the arm of the wielder. In some cases, it is also fitted for amputees as a replacement arm. The length of an entire arm, the weapon launches bolts using steam pressure and often powered by magatama stones and water. The bolts are inexpensive and come in clips of twelve. The attachment itself includes a face-plate that protects the person from the steam-towers built into the gun's shoulder piece. While slightly inaccurate and known to jam, the gun arm increases the number of chances a gunslinger has to attack his opponent.

Single-Shooter

This medium sized gun is the most commonly carried firearm in Rosuto-Shima. It is muzzle-loaded and can only get off a single shot before needing to be reloaded, but it gives an extra advantage when facing someone who wields only traditional weapons.

Six-Shooter

Extremely rare, but highly desirable on Rosuto-Shima, this firearm can get off six shots before having to be reloaded. The pistol has a chamber that can be loaded with six bullets, and rotates and shoots the bullets through a single barrel. The disheartened and disillusioned gunfighters wealthy enough to carry a six-shooter are sometimes known to play Ronin Roulette when drunk—they spin the chamber with only one bullet loaded, and then fire at either themselves or someone also playing the game. They wager that five out of six is not bad odds for survival.

Rifle

A long gun with a rifled barrel, this firearm is the only gun commonly found in the countryside of Rosuto-Shima, due to its usefulness in hunting. The gun must be fired with both arms, one to keep it propped up against the shoulder and the other to pull the trigger. The rifle must be reloaded after every shot.

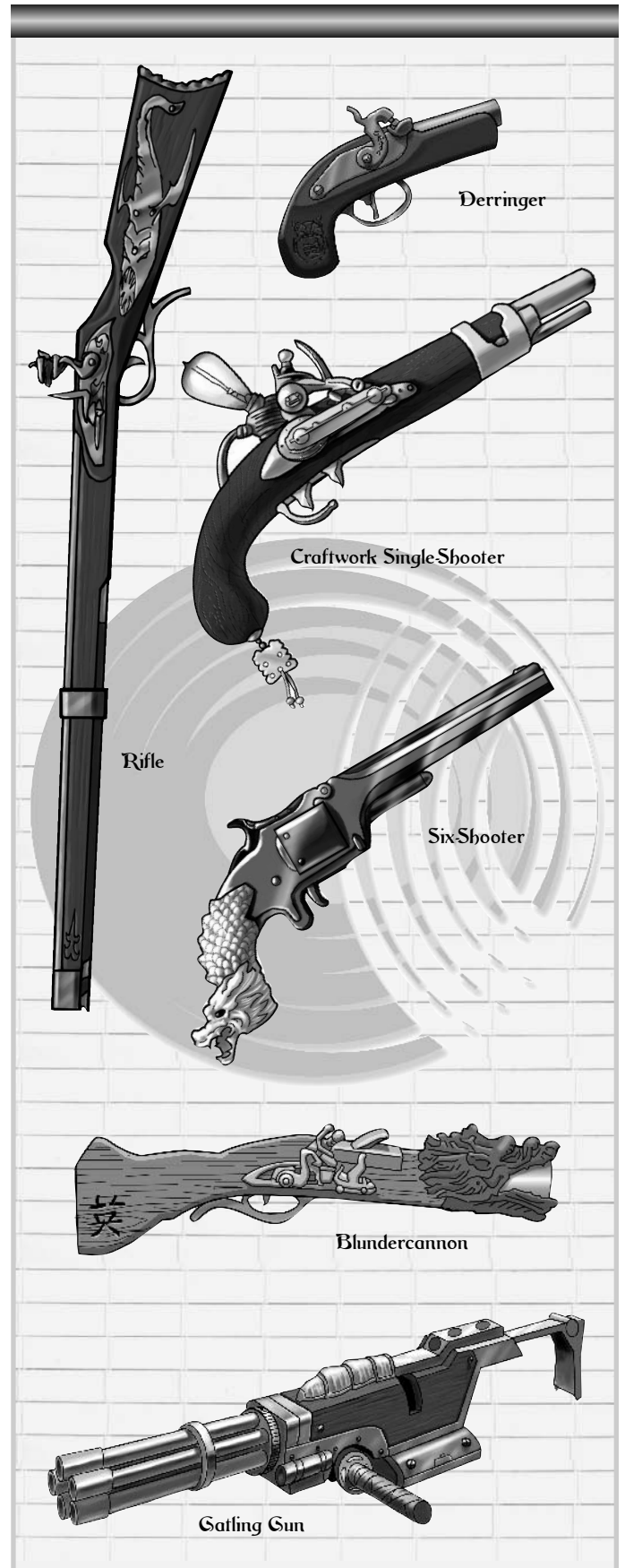
Long Barrel

Far more accurate than its shorter-barreled cousin, this rifle is designed for accuracy over long distances. The long barrel rifle is often used by assassins with a specific target in mind. Also called a sniper rifle, this rifle must be reloaded after every shot.

Other Weapons

Fukiya (Athletics-based; Ranged Weapon)

This blowgun is often disguised as a flute or cane, and is used with special darts. Generally used by those who prefer stealth to outright combat, fukiya darts are often dipped in poison to silence opponents, such as sentries before they can alert a household.



Derringer

Craftwork Single Shooter

Rifle

Six Shooter

Blundercannon

Gatling Gun

ARMOR

Most of the armors available in Iron Gauntlets have found their way to Rosuto-Shima; there is very little difference between boots from foreign sources and boots native to Rosuto-Shima. Though the styles are different, many of the armors have the same protective capability. Some unique armors found on Rosuto-Shima that are both stylistically and protectively different from those listed in Iron Gauntlets are described below.

Leathers

Haidate

This heavy leather apron is split to allow for movement and provides protection for the thighs and upper legs. Generally combined with greaves and armor for the upper body, the haidate is protective without being too heavy.

Kia

This armor is made of tough leather from the hide of a water-buffalo, or, rarely, a rhinoceros. It is heavier than other leather armors, but makes up for this inconvenience with additional protection. It typically covers the chest, upper arms, and upper legs.

Scale

Keiko

This scaled armor is made from small metal and leather plates that provide protection without sacrificing maneuverability. It is fairly heavy and is generally worn in heavy combat to provide protection against slashing weapons. It covers the chest area.

Suneat

These metal greaves are usually combined with armor that protects the torso and upper body. They allow for fast movement and provide protection without adding too much additional weight.

Ushikake-Shiki

This scaled armor allows for greater movement without sacrificing protection. It typically covers the chest and upper arms, although it has gaps in protection at the shoulders.

Plate

Do-Maru

This plate armor protects only the chest and torso of the wearer. It is often combined with other types of armor, such as a helm or greaves, to form a complete protective outfit.

Kabuto

This metal helm covers the head and neck of the wearer, causing slight blockage of peripheral vision and hearing (providing a -1D penalty on tasks related to hearing and vision). Some are designed to look especially fierce, giving the wearer an oni-like appearance on the field of battle.

O-Yoroi

This traditional full body plate armor combines many of the smaller parts of armor into a cohesive whole, and is typically designed specifically to fit the wearer's body. Worn by samurai and warriors who are members of noble families, the body armor of the Clockwork Ronin is designed in the same style as O-Yoroi.





UPGRADED ITEMS

While weapons and armor that have specially enhanced properties, such as artefacts, are available on the market, the most predominant way to improve combat gear is through the process of upgrading. There are two types of upgrades—steamwork and craftwork. The former is steam-powered and long-lasting, provided enough fuel is available. Craftwork devices are magical in nature, and therefore limited in usage, requiring replacement charges.

Craftwork Devices

Because of the vast amounts of energy required to create a magically enhanced item from scratch, very few, with the exception of the nikobo, imbue items with magical properties. In recent years, however, mechanists and clockwork engineers have begun working with mahoutsukai to fuse the new technology with magical properties.

By adding a clockwork socket to the hilt of a weapon or interior of armor, mechanists were able to develop a technology by which crafting-based inscriptions could be filtered into existing weapons and armor for temporary use. Mahoutsukai began to create special inscriptions that could be triggered and directed through small, glass vials in which they were sealed and plugged into the sockets. The triggering mechanism eventually became a small switch on the contraption, and when activated, the magical properties flow from the glass vial (called a bulb), through the socket, and into the weapon or armor. Most magical effects from these bulbs can last up to an hour, and each bulb can be triggered ten times before the inscription renders all of its magical energy. These craftwork devices are similar to bows and firearms in that they use a form of ammunition—rather than using arrows or bullets, however, they require replacement bulbs. And the variety of bulbs utilizing different crafting-based effects makes craftwork devices extremely flexible—a person with a craftwork katana, for example, could have a fire blade one week and an ice blade the next, using *fabrica materia: transmutation* bulbs.

Mechanists have begun experimenting with craftworks for firearms and cannons, but have thus far only been successful creating them for armor and dueling, melee, and simple ranged weapons.

Fire Bulb

Fabrica materia: transmutation bulbs ignite the devices (or their projectiles) to which they are attached. Arrows burst into flames when fired, swords ignite when swung, and armor radiates an aura of flame that burns anyone who makes contact with it (but not the wearer). Damage from this fire is +2INJ.

Ice Bulb

Fabrica materia: transmutation bulbs produce a shell of ice around the devices (or its projectiles) to which they are attached. Arrow tips become large balls of ice just before they hit the target, and armor gains a layer of ice. Damage from this ice when used as a weapon is +3FAT, and an extra level of armor against fatigue damage is provided when used for protection.

Kinetic Bulb

Fabrica motus: impetus bulbs increase the amount of momentum in the devices (or its projectiles) to which they are attached. Arrows can reach greater distances, swords are swung with incredible force, and armor can repel attacks. The damage from a weapon with this craftwork is increased by two (2) grades, projectile ranges from a weapon with this craftwork are doubled, and an extra two (2) levels of armor is provided when used for protection.

Emotional Bulb

Fabrica mentus: emotional charge bulbs cause unbearable mental strain when the devices (or its projectiles) to which they are attached strike a target. The target must make a challenging reasoning-based composure roll or break down into tears, panic, or even laughter, unable to act until the effects disappear (typically in one-hour's time).

Blinding (or Deafening) Bulb

Fabrica sensus bulbs cause illusionary blindness (or deafness) when the devices (or its projectiles) to which they are attached strike a target.

Oni Bulb

Fabrica materia: transformation bulbs cause the appearance of the target struck by the devices (or its projectiles) to which they are attached to transform into that of an oni (the type of oni depends on what was intended for the bulb).

Steamwork Devices

Steamwork Saw

By attaching a steam-powered device to the hilt of a medium or wide-bladed weapon and surrounding the blade itself with a chain, weapons such as the katana, butterfly sword, and odachi can be given new life. When activated, the chain spins at an incredible speed, creating a loud noise and circling the blade through the hilt of the sword. Frightening in combat, steamwork saws are often used to break down doors. This modification provides +2INJ and -1 to the attack modifier.

Steamwork Freezer

Weapons enhanced with freezer technology must have a thin cylinder hollowed out of the center of the portion that strikes an opponent, which holds a small glass tube that bends back on itself. Both ends of the tube connect to a compressor, which is powered by a small steam-engine, and controlled by an expansion valve that is attached to the hilt of the weapon. A liquid flows from the compressor, through the expansion valve, and down the central tube, chilling the weapon. Because of the hollowed center, steamwork freezers work best with blunt weapons such as the staff, otsuchi, or tonfa. This modification provides +2FAT when striking an opponent.

Steamwork Electrics

Both bladed and blunt weapons can be upgraded with electric power. The steam-powered energy supply, which is attached to the hilt, produces an electrical charge that is conducted through the weapon. This power supply and the entire hilt are covered with a thick sap from rubber trees before being bound with leather, in order to prevent the wielder from being shocked. Blunt weapons, such as the tonfa and staff, have a metal rod inserted into them to carry the charge. Bladed weapons, such as the katana and yari, are split at the tip of the blade, forming a prong that produces an arc of electricity. Bladed electric weapons have the potential to shock an opponent wearing metal armor or using a metal weapon at a distance, due to the flow of electricity through the blade (achieving more than three points of overkill causes this to occur—the director is free to decide how much damage is inflicted). This modification provides +2FAT when striking an opponent.

Steamwork Heater

Narrow and medium-bladed weapons may be enhanced by adding a steam-powered energy source to the hilt that heats the blade, and both burns and slashes in combat. Jian, kodachi, wakizashi, kama, and katana are commonly improved with this modification. A warrior using a heated weapon must be equipped with cooling gloves and a coolant sheath so that the sword does not burn through its traditional sheath or injure the hands of its wielder. Heated weapons glow red when activated. This modification provides +2INJ when striking an opponent, and can also be used to start fires and cauterize wounds.

Steamwork Polar

This upgrade is available for any weapon or armor made from metal. A small power-supply and a magnetic lodestone are inserted into the hilt of a metal weapon or into the back of an armor component. When the power supply is activated, it channels small electric waves into the lodestone, which reverses the magnetic polarity. This causes repulsion of any metal objects from the armor or weapon. Though these weapons do not cause any extra damage, they increase the protection of armor by one (1) point, and increase any attempts to disarm an opponent using the modified weapon by +1D.



OTHER ITEMS

Clocks

Powered by gears and inner workings, clocks are common possessions of city dwellers, who have them in a variety of sizes, from grandfather clocks to smaller wall clocks, to watches kept on chains in the pocket.

Fireworks

These alchemical devices are popular in celebrations of all sorts, and are said to frighten evil spirits. Fireworks are a favorite tool of nikobo. Unless launched properly over a lake, or using a rocket rifle or a fireworks cannon, fireworks have the possibility of setting fire to the area in which they are launched.

Gas Lamps

More popular than candles for effective lighting, gas and hurricane lamps are often found in the cities as an efficient lighting source in houses, stores, and even along the street.

Kimono of Many Pouches

This kimono looks like traditional clothing, but has pouches lining the sleeves and inside of the material, making it easy to hide small objects within the clothing.

Magatama Stones

These stones produce immense heat and seem to burn without fire. In appearance, they resemble pear-shaped coal, but they burn far longer. Because of this, magatama stones are highly sought as a fuel source especially for steam-powered gadgets, such as heated katanas and gatling gun arms. These stones are only found on the island of Jigoku, to the north of Rosuto-Shima, which is the historic home of the oni. Magatama stones are extremely expensive due to the difficulty in harvesting them.

Obsidian Bullets

These small-caliber rounds of ammunition explode causing a hail of smoke that covers the body and leaves the victim with an itching sensation. Many non-violent users of firearms choose this option for disabling their opponents rather than killing them.

Rocket Rifles

Not currently adapted as a weapon, rocket rifles are a portable way to launch fireworks high into the sky without having to worry about setting the nearby area on fire.

Telescope

Still expensive to own, telescopes have come into a vogue popularity in the upper classes, who see gazing at the stars as a noble hobby.

Jin Void Staff

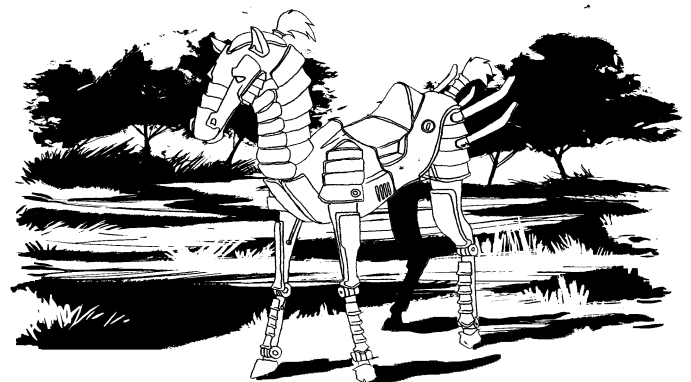
This is the traditional weapon artefact of the of nokobo. It has a blade on one end and a mirrored disk on the other. The Jin Void Staff is the same as a naginata, except that it can strike incorporeal creatures. Most nikobo create their own Void Staff, and may never make another in their lifetimes.

Men Shen

Men Shen are typically created by nikobo or priests favored by their gods. They consist of images of soldiers drawn on rice paper and hung from either side of the door of a home. Men shen are bound with a benevolent spirit, so that if an intruder attempts to enter the home without the permission the family or resident, the image comes to life in the form of a clay-like, life-sized guardian. Men Shen attack these intruders, but if the intruders flee, the spirit returns to its place on the paper. Only the most experienced of men can accomplish the feat of creating men shen—the oni earth kata is required knowledge, but the further secrets of the art are not easily shared.

Void Bullets

The most commonly created artefacts of the nikobo, spirit bullets are known to many outside of the secret order, as they are the best defense against evil spirits. Void bullets can harm oni and other spirits. The amount of damage they inflict can vary depending on the quality of the bullets, but 2INJ to 4INJ is most common. Void bullets can be made to work with any firearm. When fired at mortals, they are the same as regular bullets.



CONSTRUCTS AND MOUNTS

Steamwork Mounts

Steamwork mounts are small, often animal-like, transports. Operating a steamwork mount is no different from riding an animal except that the driving skill replaces the riding skill.

Steamwork Rickshaw

This vehicle has become common in large cities. Made from cheap scrap parts and powered by second-hand magatama stones, these self-propelled carts typically have three wheels. In organized crime circuits, rickshaw races are common, where bets are placed on both the winner and the horribly maimed losers. Other, less speedy versions of the vehicle patter through cities and down thin alleyways, helping merchants go about crating their wares from one end of a city to the other.

fitness	awareness	creativity	reasoning	influence
D	0	0	0	0

gimmicks: oversized, toughness (1)

Steamwork Warhorse

Originally created for the use of emperors and generals, steamwork warhorses, or simply steamhorses, were actually found to be inefficient and unreliable in battle. Because of this, they are typically only displayed in royal parades and the like. As the design has been improved over time, however, these expensive mounts have become extremely desirable for mounted warriors. Slower than living horses, the warhorse makes up in power what it lacks in speed. These large horses can withstand almost any weather and tackle numerous types of terrain, as long as they have enough magatama stones and water to power them.

fitness	awareness	creativity	reasoning	influence
C	B	0	0	0

gimmicks: oversized, toughness (2)
natural weapons: hooves (+1FAT)

Constructs

Constructs are typically large, movable devices created with clockwork or steamwork technologies, or a combination of the two. Constructs are assigned abilities, gimmicks, and natural weapons just like creatures. While they don't possess skills, their operation is managed by a conductor using the driving skill. But rather than using the conductor's fitness ability for operating the machine, all driving tasks utilize the construct's fitness ability since its own ability to move around is an important factor.

Germaine Beetle

Keshou mechanists developed these small constructs after being instructed in the design and engineering of mining equipment by a foreigner named Doctor Germaine. These large clockwork machines were built to aid miners in the desert and mountains, but the upkeep required for the machines was greater than their productivity warranted. Because of this, the keshou retired them. In recent years, however, the keshou have seen that their creations could be useful as mounts or battle engines. They are still developing new options, but occasionally, the smaller people of Rosuto-Shima can be seen riding large clockwork beetles across the countryside.

fitness	awareness	creativity	reasoning	influence
D	A	0	0	0

gimmicks: oversized, toughness (3)
natural weapons: mining drill (+3INJ)

Steamwork Boat

The steamwork boat, or simply steamboat, comes in a variety of sizes, so long as the frame is large enough to accommodate a steam engine. These boats travel much faster than traditional ones and do not require as much manpower. All steamboats must employ a clockwork engineer or mechanist to maintain it and a conductor to operate it.

fitness	awareness	creativity	reasoning	influence
D	0	0	0	0

gimmicks: oversized, toughness (4), clumsy
natural weapons: mining drill (+3INJ)

Steamwork Train

Commonly considered the "steam engine" in spite of the fact that steam engines are used in many machines and vehicles, the steamwork train is quickly gaining popularity as a fast way to travel from one city to another. Although the tracks are limited, many developers feel that they have discovered a gold mine, and are quickly trying to build more tracks and increase the range of travel across Rosuto-Shima.

fitness	awareness	creativity	reasoning	influence
C	0	0	0	0

gimmicks: oversized, toughness (5)



NEW WEAPONS

WEAPON TYPE	WEAPON	ATTACK	DAMAGE	SHOTS	LOAD	PB	SHORT	MEDIUM	LONG
DUELING	Butterfly Sword	-	+1 INJ	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Jian	+1	+1 INJ	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Kama	-	+1 INJ	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Kodachi	-	+1 INJ	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Tonfa	-	+1 FAT	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Wakizashi	+1	+2 INJ	-	-	-	-	-	-
MELEE	Baqua	-1	+2 INJ	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Rosuto-Shima Staff	-	+1 FAT	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Katana	+1	+1 INJ	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Kanobo	-1	+2 INJ	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Naginata	+1	+1 INJ ¹	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Odachi	-1	+2 INJ	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Otsuchi	-1	+3 FAT	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Shikomizue	-1	+1 INJ	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Tetsubo	-1	+3 FAT	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Double Jian	-	+2 INJ	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Yari	-1	+2 INJ	-	-	-	-	-	-
ATHLETICS	Fukiya	-1	- ²	1	1 turn	10ft	30ft	60ft	90ft
ARCHERY	Daikyu	-1*	+2 INJ	1	-	20ft	70ft	140ft	210ft
	Hankyu	-2*	+1 INJ	1	-	20ft	50ft	100ft	150ft
FIREARMS	Breathing Crossbow	-	+4 INJ	10	1 turn	30ft	70ft	150ft	200ft
	Blundercannon	-2	+4 INJ	1	12 turns	40ft	80ft	160ft	240ft
	Bolt Gun	-1	3 FAT	12	8 turns	20ft	40ft	70ft	100ft
	Derringer	-1	2 INJ	1	4 turns	10ft	30ft	60ft	90ft
	Flame Thrower	-	2 INJ	-	-	4ft	6ft	8ft	10ft
	Gatling Gun ³	-2	2 INJ	no limit	-	20ft	50ft	80ft	110ft
	Gatling Gun Arm ³	-2	2 INJ	12	2 turns	20ft	40ft	70ft	100ft
	Single-Shooter	-	2 INJ	1	4 turns	30ft	70ft	110ft	150ft
	Six-Shooter	-	2 INJ	6	8 turns	30ft	70ft	110ft	150ft
	Rifle	-1*	3 INJ	1	4 turns	50ft	100ft	150ft	200ft
	Long Barrel	+1	2 INJ	1	4 turns	50ft	100ft	150ft	200ft

^{*} penalty only applies if not firing directly at a target (i.e. firing over a battlefield)

¹ fatigue is inflicted rather than injury if only the shaft strikes an opponent

² weapon inflicts negligible damage unless coated with poison

³ every attack with a Gatling Gun or Gatling Gun Arm consists of four attack rolls—meaning that the attacker effectively has four tries to hit a target, and can hit his target multiple times



NEW ARMOR

ARMOR TYPE	ARMOR	RATING	PROT.	COVERAGE	NOTES
LEATHER	Haidate	3	FAT/INJ	Groin, upper legs	
	Kia	4	FAT	Chest, abdomen, back, shoulders, groin, upper legs	
SCALE	Keiko (Mail)	5	FAT/INJ	All except head and hands	-1D FITNESS
	Suneate	4	FAT/INJ	Lower legs, knees	
	Ushikake- Shiki	5	FAT	Chest, abdomen, back, shoulders	
PLATE	Do-Maru	7	FAT/INJ	Chest, abdomen, back	
	Kabuto (Helm)	4	FAT/INJ	Head and back of neck	-1D HEARING/ VISION
	O-Yoroi (Mail)	7	FAT/INJ	All except head and hands	-1D FITNESS

WEAPON	PRICE	AVAILABILITY
Butterfly Sword	15	common
Jian	7	common
Kama	5	common
Kodachi	6	common
Tonfa	5	common
Wakazashi	4	common
Baqua	20	rare
Rosuto-Shima Staff	4	common
Katana	15	common
Kanabo	15	rare
Naginata	15	common
Odachi	20	rare
Otsuchi	10	rare
Shikomizue	20	rare
Tetsubo	8	rare
Double Jian	14	common
Yari	3	common
Daikyu	20	common
Hankyu	15	common
Breathing Crossbow	75	common
Blundercannon	150	rare
Bolt Gun	75	common
Derringer	50	common
Flame Thrower	50	common
Gatling Gun	1000	rare
Gatling Gun Arm	1500	rare
Single-Shooter	50	common
Six-Shooter	75	common
Rifle	75	common
Long Barrel	100	common
Fukiya	4	rare

ARMOR	PRICE	AVAILABILITY
Haidate	20	common
Kia	40	common
Keiko	50	common
Suneat	25	common
Ushikake-Shiki	40	common
Do-Maru	60	common
Kabuto	40	common
O-Yoroi	75	rare

UPGRADE	PRICE	AVAILABILITY
Craftwork: Fire	100	rare
Craftwork: Ice	100	rare
Craftwork: Kinetic	150	rare
Craftwork: Emotion	150	rare
Craftwork: Blinding	100	rare
Craftwork: Deafening	100	rare
Craftwork: Oni	200	rare
Craftwork: Emotion	150	rare
Steamwork Saw	100	rare
Steamwork Freezer	100	rare
Steamwork Electrics	100	rare
Steamwork Heater	100	rare
Steamwork Polar	150	rare

OTHER ITEMS	PRICE	AVAILABILITY
Clock	10-100	common
Fireworks	150	rare
Gas Lamp	25	depends on area
Kimono of Many Pouches	75	rare
Magatama Stone	25	rare
Obsidian Bullet	10	rare
Rocket Rifle	150	rare
Telescope	1000	rare
Jin Void Staff	150	rare
Void Bullet	50	rare

MOUNTS/CONSTRUCTS	PRICE	AVAILABILITY
Steamwork Rickshaw	1000	common
passage	1-25	common
Steamwork Warhorse	2000	rare
Germaine Beetle	1500	rare
Steamwork Boat	100,000	rare
passage	10-100	common
Steamwork Train	150,000	rare
passage	10-100	common



CHAPTER FIVE

ROSUTO-SHIMA

The history of Rosuto-Shima can be traced back thousands of years according to the calendar of the juunishi. The books are filled with wars between the men of Rosuto-Shima and the oni, the coming of the keshou, and the births of the original jinteki-oni and juunishi-p'o. The most prominent and detailed of wars consists of the collapse of the Dou Dynasty, which ultimately led to the War of the States.

For most of Rosuto-Shima's long history, a single, uninterrupted Imperial line ruled the land. But the last Emperor of the Dou had no children, and though he had named a distant relative as his heir, many in his court were displeased with his choice. When the young Dou Zhou came to the Imperial City of Shangti, even before he entered the royal courts, he was assassinated, and his head was brought to the steps of the Imperial Palace. None saw who had committed the crime, nor who had made such an outrageous display, but each of the members of the royal court blamed the others. The governors of the other cities of Rosuto-Shima each claimed a link to the throne, though none had imperial blood. They raised armies to meet in battle.

The sister of the last Emperor Dou had married Lord Liu Zhong, and she persuaded him, for the safety of their children, to take possession of Shangti. Lord Liu took the city by force, returning order to the Imperial People and proclaiming himself Emperor. His rule lasted less than five years before he was murdered, and his entire clan was executed, save one young son who had been taken away by the scholar Song Wei, also known as the Phoenix Keeper. Shangti was taken by each of the warlords at least once during the War of the States. Song Wei and the young Liu Ce, who carried the Imperial Seal, took refuge in the city of Huinin with the mighty warlord Fei Guan. Lord Fei had always been loyal to the Dou Dynasty, and seeing that Liu Ce bore the Imperial Seal, Lord Fei proclaimed the young boy Emperor. With the help of Song Wei, Lord Fei took control of the southlands of Rosuto-Shima, granting the people of the south some reprieve from the fighting.

In the north, Dou Meng, Emperor Dou's nephew and the brother of the slain Dou Zhou, took control of Chinan and staged his efforts from there, but soon found himself facing not only the forces of Sun Cao from Liaoyan, but bandits from the Doragon-Iki Yama, the Dragon Breath mountains. Inspired by the chaos of war and led by a powerful wizard, many of the common people of Rosuto-Shima believed they no

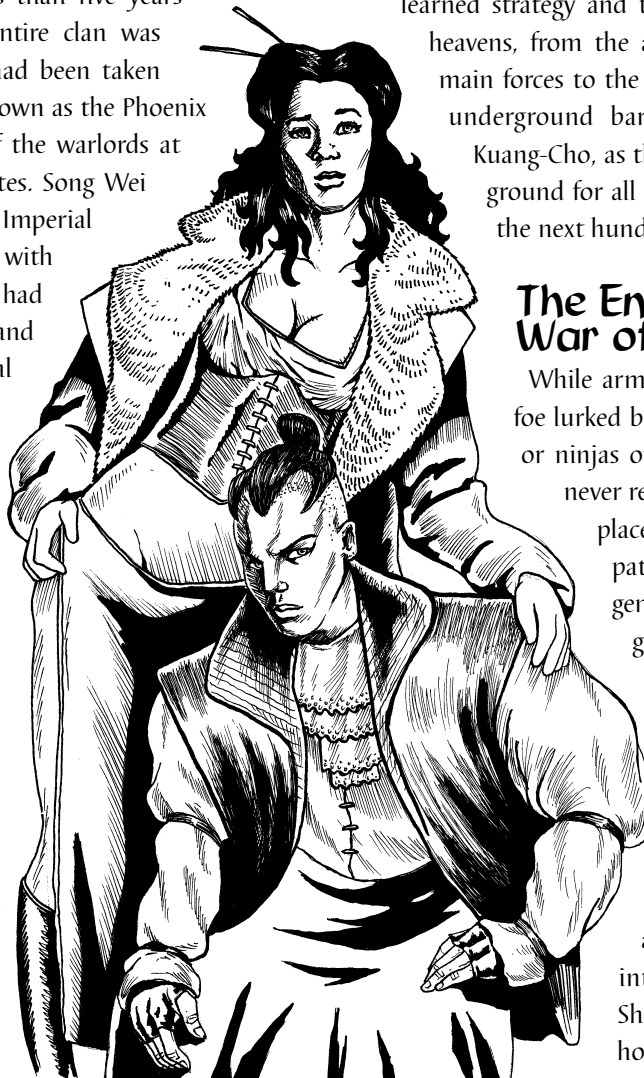
longer needed an Emperor and formed the Blue Coat uprising. The fighting was fierce in the north for many years, and the monks and priests of Chengti did all they could to protect that city from the chaos surrounding them.

Liu Ce married one of the daughters of Lord Fei, and they had six sons and one daughter. Song Wei advised Lord Fei to send the daughter to Linan to be raised by Governor Cho. Because of this, Lady Liu was raised in the south and was spared the slaughter her family suffered when ninjas infiltrated Huinin. Lord Fei, too, was slain, and the forces of Sun Cao were rapidly approaching the city. Song Wei ordered an evacuation of the city, and Huinin was abandoned. Song Wei retreated with a small force to Linan to offer his services to Governor Cho.

Eventually, Lady Liu grew up and married the son of Governor Cho. Their son, Cho Bei, inherited the Imperial Seal, which Song Wei had managed to transport with him in his flight from Huinin. Cho Bei was a great student of the military arts and learned strategy and tactics, as well as the reading of the heavens, from the aging Song Wei. Cho Bei moved his main forces to the small town of Kuang, where he built underground barracks and housing for his forces. Kuang-Cho, as the city became called, was the staging ground for all the battle plans of the Cho family for the next hundred years.

The End of the War of the States

While armies continued to battle, an unknown foe lurked behind the scenes. The Kokuei Shinobi, or ninjas of dark shadows, directed by a power never revealed, made their own attacks at key places, eliminating threats to redirect the patterns of the war. Though many of the generals used ninjas to further their goals, the secret manipulations of the Kokuei Shinobi determined the course of the war more than any heroics displayed on the battle field. Through the Kokuei Shinobi, and through geisha trained by the group to coax the living to the preferred course of action, Rosuto-Shima was divided into its current eleven provinces: Shangti, Chinan, Liaoyan, Chengti (the holy refuge), Huinin, Kuang-Cho, Linan,





the twin cities of Yang-Mow and Chieng-Mow, Kara Kora of the Keshou, Tendou of the Jinteki-Oni, and Talu (which was formed after the war was over).

The end of the war was marked by the Treaty of the States, brought about not by any great battle, but by the combination of an exhausted economy and the coming of the first foreigners to Rosuto-Shima. Because the threat the foreigners might bring was unknown, and because the costs of the continuous war was draining the supplies of all of the war lords, the leaders of the various armies agreed to a truce. The many samurai and warriors who now found themselves unemployed were facing the next threat—the creation of the clockwork ronin. After that great battle, peace was largely restored to Rosuto-Shima for the first time in centuries. Now, the play for power happened not on the battlefield, but through commerce, technology, and politics.

The Kokuei Shinobi tried many times during the war to eliminate all of the remaining Imperial Blood, but never truly succeeded. Even though the direct line of imperial blood is only currently known to a select few, the Imperial Seal is still kept by a descendent of Cho Bei, who became known in the history books as Emperor Cho. Like many other clans of ninjas, the Kokuei Shinobi no longer accept work from the rich and powerful, having made enough money during the war to be a power in their own right. Instead, they act as protectors and servants of the people. They work outside the law in shadows and darkness, eliminating corrupt officials and directing the course of events in an effort to bring those who suffered most from the continual years of war a lasting peace.



ROSUTO-SHIMA

Current Day

The new, divided system of government has arguably made it easier for Rosuto-Shima to industrialize—competition has moved from martial skill to economic growth and the development of new and better technologies. This race for technology has kept the provinces from returning to war as the end of armed conflict, as well as improved medical techniques, has caused major population growth in the fifty years since the end of the War of the States. Some scholars have already named this new age in Rosuto-Shima's history the Industrial Renaissance, an era full of knowledge and advancement.

Sadly, these technological advances have done little to improve the lives of the common people who live outside of the cities of Rosuto-Shima. The terrain of the island is difficult, with four major landscapes upon which it is impossible to farm. Because of these formations, only twenty-five percent of the land is arable, and despite the growth in technology, little thought has been given to improving or changing the condition of the land in order to be able to provide more food for the increased population.

The small villages around the island live, for the most part, exactly as they did before the War of the States—fighting off bandits, doing their best to provide a meager living for their inhabitants, and continuing to honor the old ways. For those who watch the spirits of Rosuto-Shima, it is a relief that the people of the country have not abandoned the old ways. When Yu created Rosuto-Shima, they say, he did not create a place for the spirits to go after they died. Without the proper rituals, provided by a priest, monk, or nikobo, the spirits cannot make the journey to the home of the Celestial Dragons and the First Emperor. Instead, they wander the countryside or sit on their graves, waiting for an opportunity to join their ancestors. Those spirits who feel they have waited for too long become angry and hostile, and some develop a hatred for the living so strong that their entire existence becomes devoted to taking as much life as possible. Though the nikobo do what they can to release these spirits to the afterlife, they cannot keep up with the number of souls that perish in the cities and have no one to perform the proper rituals. With overpopulation and crime infesting the major areas, murder is not an uncommon way to die, and murdered spirits are always the most vengeful.



THE WILDERNESS

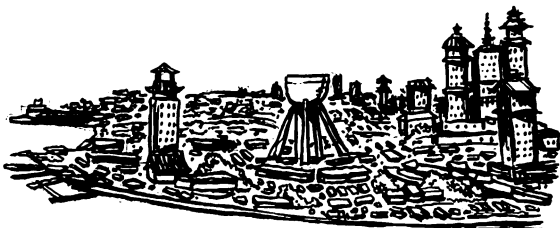
The four wild regions of Rosuto-Shima are Akki-Kouzetsu Mori, the Devil Tongue forest; Kokushoko Akuchi, the Black Color marshes; Doragon-Iki Yama, the Dragon Breath mountains; and Sabaku Fuyou, the Worthless Desert. While some cities have managed to develop and thrive in these areas, no farms are able to survive, causing cities within these regions to depend heavily on trade from other nations.

Akki-Kouzetsu Mori

The dominant landscape in the northern regions of Rosuto-Shima, the Devil Tongue forest, is dominated by huge trees standing over one-hundred feet tall. Once the territory of the oni, from which it earned its name, Akki-Kouzetsu Mori is extremely dense and is covered with snow for most of the year. The forest is governed by the province of Liaoyan and is heavily patrolled in case the oni or other evil creatures return to make war upon the local population.

Kokushoko Akuchi

The southern lands of Rosuto-Shima are covered with a swampy landscape flooded with black water. Legends say the Yuuhi Butsumon, also known as the Setting Sun Priesthood, who dominated the area before the War of the States made a deal with dark gods in order to gain favor with the Emperor. Unfortunately, the plan backfired, and when the Emperor discovered the priests' bargain, he outlawed their religion and ordered his soldiers to destroy them. When the priests stood up against the Emperor's men, they were slaughtered, and their blood ran black from their treacherous deal. Since that time, Kokushoko Akuchi's water has run black with the blood of the priests, and all of the plants that have grown there have been foul and twisted, unusable by the good people of Rosuto-Shima. In spite of this, small villages and towns have grown up in the outskirts of the marsh, hidden by the swamp's shoulder-high grasses and twisted trees. Kokushoko Akuchi is governed by the province of Linan.



Doragon-Iki Yama

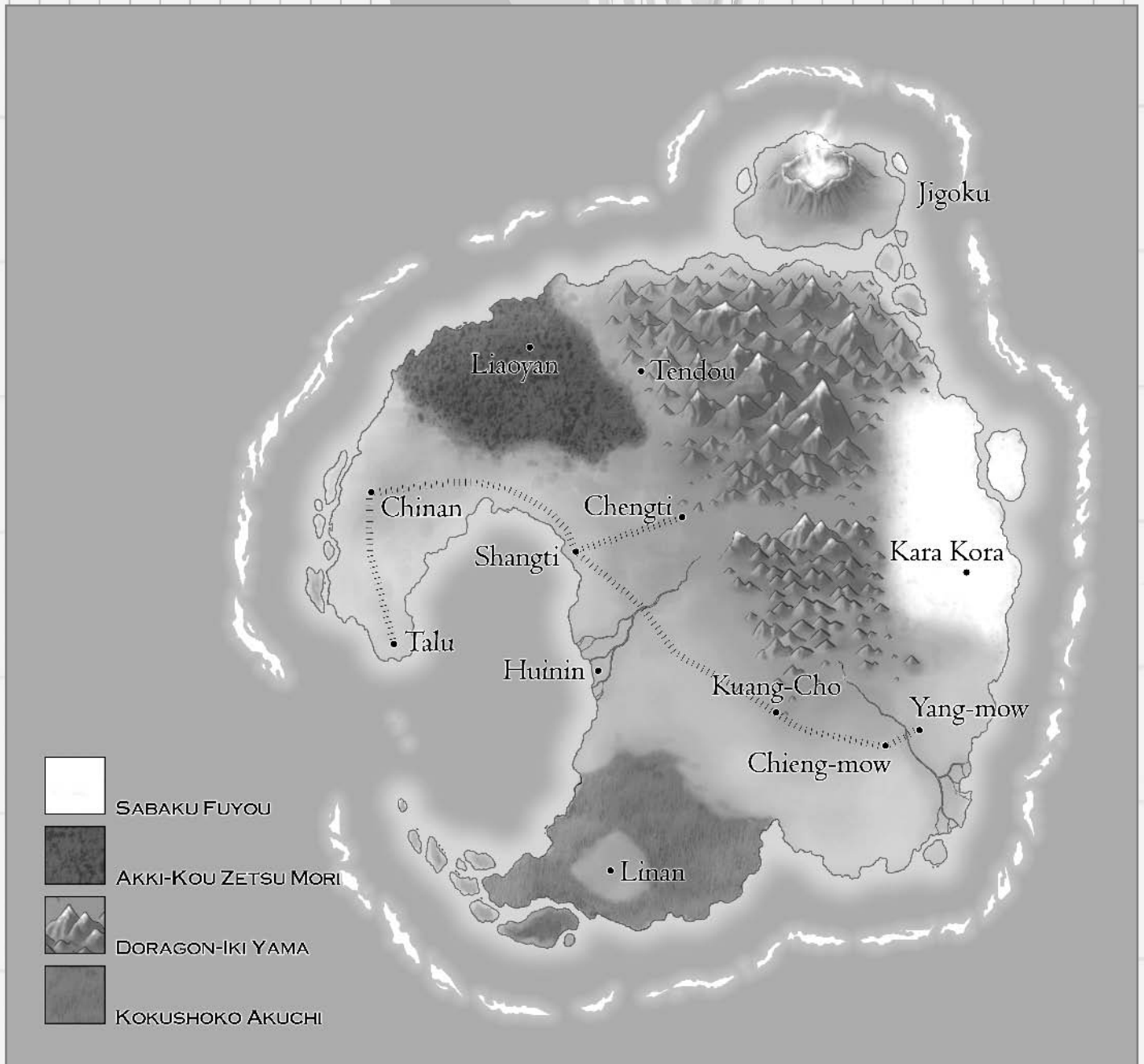
The Dragon Breath mountains are the most dangerous region in Rosuto-Shima—the paths are treacherous, and few who have not grown up in the region can navigate the mountains safely. Doragon-Iki Yama does have many villages in lush forests of the foothills, but higher up in the mountains only the jinteki-oni and various monastic orders make their homes. Few others are hardy enough to survive the frigid climate and deadly storms. The ranges average over twelve-thousand feet in height, with peaks reaching almost thirty-thousand feet. Much of the land within the range is uncharted. Along with the dangers of the climate and the treacherous paths, the mountains are haunted by many evil spirits, and those who make the journey into the mountains' heights find decrepit rope bridges, abandoned exploration camps, and a few survivors who have been driven mad by their experiences. Very few ever return from the mountain paths without scars—both mental and physical. Doragon-Iki Yama is governed by the jinteki-oni province of Tendou.

Sabaku Fuyou

The east coast of Rosuto-Shima is nothing more than a dry, sun-burnt land. Due to temperatures averaging over 110° fahrenheit, it is understandable why the Keshou city of Kara Koru is the only known inhabited part of the Sabaku Fuyou. Although the desert has claimed many lives, it is rumored that other people have made the land their home far in the north. Merchants and travelers have supported these tales with accounts of human refugees building small encampments around cool springs that bubble from the ground. Sabaku Fuyou is governed by the keshou province of Kara Koru.



ROSUTO-SHIMA



THE CIVILIZED PROVINCES

The eleven provinces, as determined by the Treaty of the States, all have varying degrees of power, technology, and importance in the Rosuto-Shiman landscape. Some are steeped in history; other communities developed or became recognized in the wake of the War of the States and have grown in the last fifty years. From holy cities to those ruled by war lords to leaders who still claim to have the blood of the dragons running through their veins, the provinces of Rosuto-Shima have little in common beyond trade and a shared history.

The world beyond the provinces is still largely unknown to the people of Rosuto-Shima, with the exception of the island of

Jigoku off the northwest coast. Jigoku is the only place where the magatama stones, which provide the power for most of the steamwork equipment in Rosuto-Shima, can be found and harvested. Unfortunately, it is also the homeland of the oni. While in the last fifty years, the oni have largely slumbered and allowed the people of Rosuto-Shima to harvest the magatama stones (causing foreigners and forward-thinkers to believe that the oni are merely an old superstition), the nikobo sense and the priests foretell that the oni will soon wake and, like the evil spirits of the island, make war on the people of Rosuto-Shima once again.





Shangti, the Imperial City

The first Emperor, Han Kiuro, chose Shangti to be the Imperial City, for it was once the most prosperous and splendid city of Rosuto-Shima. To this day, Shangti remains the largest and most prosperous city, but it is a shadow of its former glory. Few of its wonders survived the War of the States—the shrines of the ancestors of the Dou Dynasty were completely destroyed, the Imperial Palace was ruined beyond repair, and the Royal Courts were taken over by squatters. In spite of this change, the people of Shangti retain the belief that their city is the center, not only of Rosuto-Shima, but of the world.

After the Treaty of the States, the four most powerful citizens of Shangti divided the city into four Shuu, or quadrants—Shounin Square, the business district where most of the merchants trade; Motenashi District, the home of theaters and the entertainment industry; Juutakuchi District, the residential or housing district; and Gaisen Region, the area surrounding Shangti. The four rulers of the Shuu make all of the decisions for the welfare of the city, although the welfare of the city often involves making the rich richer and keeping the poor impoverished. Due to a huge influx of immigrants from foreign territories who believe that Shangti will become one of the world's wealthiest markets, the population of the city has expanded well beyond its means, and crime has become a dangerous addition to every day life.

The people of the city are extremely diverse, and the growing population of foreign merchants and slaves has caused the native Rosuto-Shimans to become accustomed to bizarre races and cultures. The poor slums have become home to many outsiders. This cultural diversity is the dominant factor in the atmosphere of Shangti, and most of the residents show a mix of cultures in their clothing and their selection of weapons and armor. Wizards openly practice magic in the streets, mechanists open the doors of their shops to create new devices and repair old ones, and kabukika advertise their performances along street corners. It is said that you can find anything in Shangti, and that has never been truer than right now.

Commerce

Gambling houses, brothels, and sakedokoros (taverns), make up the major enterprises in Shangti. The city has also prospered in many other ways, increasing its trade with other nations and acting as the main seaport of Rosuto-Shima for outsiders. Shangti has become well known for supplying exotic foods, weapons, and numerous types of slaves. It is supported by the outlying region of the province, governed by Daishou Taishou

Kong and his army, which provides the city with the agricultural goods needed to feed the huge population of the city. Many fishing villages also dot the coast near Shangti, and these fishing villages are able to provide fresh seafood for the city.

Shangti is also the hub for the steam-engine rail lines that cross Rosuto-Shima. The Rosuto-Shima Steam Rail Authority (RSSRA), founded by gaijin John Schuman and currently run by Executive Mao Ping, one of Shangti's wealthiest residents, manages all steam rail travel across the island. From Shangti, the train routes travel on the East Line to Chengti, on the Imperial Line to Kuang-Cho and the twin cities, and on the Coast Line to Chinan and Talu. Due to resistance from the province of Huinin, no line has been built to that city or to Linan, although rail authorities in the twin cities are considering running a line through Kokushoku Akuchi to the southern province and up into the Sabaku Fuyou to the keshou city of Kara Kora. The RSSRA does not currently wish to spend the funds to build this rail, which may lead to the development of a second Steam Rail Authority to compete with the RSSRA.

Law Enforcement

The police and military forces of the four district officials of Shangti are almost entirely made up of mercenary warriors. Kou Akiudo Jun keeps the merchant district under control with a mercenary force of police led by ex-Shangti Cowboy Nguyen Joe. Though Captain Nguyen is largely an honest man, he is known for his hot temper and is quick to use force even when negotiations might be more successful. His men, on the other hand, are always open to negotiation, which has led to an extremely corrupt force. Hiromu Sawa's Ronin-for-Hire, a business of body-guards tied into both local crime families and higher-level officers among the police, offer protection to visiting merchants for a high fee; part of this fee is used to pay off those who would normally be targeting the merchants, and part is used to pay off the police to keep them from investigating the merchants too closely. The Chou and Baisotei families are the two competing forces for domination of the underworld in Shangti, and both run smuggling, illegal gambling, and other criminal operations. Violence between the two families is common, but it rarely escalates to open battle, as both families prefer to use stealth in their operations, and warfare is bad for business.

Kou Kusemono Tadashi has a more traditional force in the Motenashi District; retired samurai and other noble warriors whose families were displaced during the War of the States. Though Kusemono did not come from noble stock himself, the warriors he has brought into his service treat him as though he

is a man with a long bloodline worth serving. Crime is less pervasive in the Motenashi District, but there are many houses of entertainment with technically illegal back rooms. So long as Kusemono receives regular payments from these organizations, however, he is happy to turn a blind eye to these activities and keep his forces occupied elsewhere. Many night clubs in this district hire their own security forces to keep the level of violence under control.

Kou Daitoku, once a priest, still resides on the grounds of a temple to the ancestors of the Dou dynasty. On these grounds, a host of priests and monks also reside, and they are the force for justice and peace in the Juutakuchi District. Due to the residential nature of the district, very little crime occurs openly in the district, although burglaries occasionally occur. These are usually committed at the request of the Chou or Baisotei families.

Daishou Taishou Kong, once a general, lives on an estate outside the city of Shangti. He has raised the army of Shangti on the grounds of his estate. The Daishou has pledged to never allow Shangti to be taken by force again, and his legions are incredibly strong, full of displaced warriors, mercenaries, magical practitioners, fighters known for their stealth, and even a few clockwork ronin. In all of Rosuto-Shima, there is no military force as diverse as his.

Notable Locations

Shounin Square is home to many merchants and stores. The most notable places of interest are Lady Yoko's Kanpouyaku and Sir Timothy Charles' Emporium. Lady Yoko, though a largely legitimate businesswoman in the herb market, is said to also sell all manner of herbs and poisons, not available to the average customer. In order to gain access to this back room, visitors must have the proper underworld connections.

Sir Timothy Charles' Emporium offers trade merchandise from around the world, both foreign and local, and tends to sell items of interest rather than new devices. Books, maps, and mundane devices such as telescopes, compasses, and small fireworks make their way onto his shelves.

The Motenashi District, along with being the home to many street performers, is the location of the Haimamire Gekijou ("Covered with Ashes Theater), where Shangti's elite kabuki artists perform. Kazamuki, one of the most famous Kabukika in

all of Rosuto-Shima, regularly performs at the Haimamire Gekijou. The Motenashi District has its own ghetto, which houses one of the most dangerous nightclubs—the Sensoumiboujin, or the War Widow as it is called by gaijin. Sensoumiboujin is a central gathering place for unemployed Shangti Cowboys, as well as a prime location to gather information about events transpiring in the city or the history of local officials—for a fee. Those who go to Sensoumiboujin without adequate protection are usually targeted for theft and rarely make it out the door with their purses intact.

Plots and Rumors

In the past few months, a third crime organization, run not by a family but by individuals pledged to the organization, has risen to power in Shangti. It is rumored that the leader, who goes only by the name Kitsune, is not a man but a spirit, and that he has great supernatural powers. Both the Chou and the Baisotei families are trying to learn the identity of Kitsune, but thus far have had no luck. It is also rumored that Kitsune makes his home in the Motenashi District, and regularly attends the Haimamire Gekijou. Whether these rumors are true, however, remains to be proved.

SHANGTI AT A GLANCE

Population:

1,700,000 in city; 10,000 in surrounding province

Demographics:

40% human; 30% gaijin; 30% other

Technology:

high (gas-powered lights, steamwork rickshaw, firearms)

Goods and Services:

exotic and foreign trade (slaves, technology, household conveniences, imported art); recreation (brothels, gambling, theater, entertainment)

Government:

ruled by four district officials: Kou Akiudo Jun, the merchant ruler of Shounin Square, also called Merchant's Square; Kou Kusemono Tadashi, the ruler of the Motenashi District, also called the Entertainment District; Kou Daitoku, the religious ruler of the Juutakuchi District, also called the Housing District; and Daishou Taishou Kong, the military ruler of the Gaisen, or Outer Region



Talu, the Floating City

Formed just before the end of the War of the States, the community of Talu was established by a wealthy businessman, who had the notion that the sailors of the various navies at war needed an outpost to relax and unwind before returning to the great sea. He opened a small brothel on the tip of the Serpent's Mouth Peninsula called Hana Tameni-ato Beppin, which translates as "Flower for a Pretty Girl." Because many enemies can dock at the same time, the businessman declared amnesty for all those in his town. The brothel soon grew in popularity among sailors and merchants both local and foreign, and its popularity continued to grow once the War of the States ended. Other businessmen, seeing the prospects for greater business, soon built near the Talu brothel. In the several years after the war ended, the town tripled in size and included many questionable establishments, such as brothels, gambling houses, and sakedokoro.

Eventually, the city of Talu fell under the power of foreign merchants and pirates. These barbarians held Talu hostage for almost twenty years until soldiers from Chinan defeated them and seized power. Officials from Chinan helped reestablish Talu as a great city by influencing it with political and economical ideas and developing a strong military defense. Talu was made its own province by the Treaty of the States, so once Talu was able to defend itself, the city was left in the control of a Talu native who owed allegiance to Chinan, firmly allying the nations.

The city itself barely touches dry land; all the homes and stores are constructed from anchored boats and barges, with the occasional building on stilts secured solidly to the ground beneath the waves. All of the buildings are connected by long bridges and adjoining planks, and the geography of the city is constantly changing as merchants dock or leave to sell their wares elsewhere. Many merchants take advantage of this system, selling and restocking goods that might be considered illegal, and then leaving the city as quickly as they came.

While Talu is still guided by families allied to Chinan, it is largely governed by its people, who elect a central figurehead called the Sensotsuchou. This appointed voice of the people deals with foreign ambassadors, governs the military and police forces, and appoints judges to interpret and form the laws of Talu. The population is extremely diverse, and it is known to be one of the most tolerant cities to foreigners and strangers in all of Rosuto-Shima, though even they maintain a healthy distrust of foreigners. Talu is one of the few cities where wandering

jinteki-oni, juunishi-p'o, keshou, and clockwork ronin actually settle as citizens equal to the native humans. The people of Talu consider these other races superior to the foreigners who have made their homes in the waters, and treat them with a great deal of respect.

Commerce

While Talu does not have the marketplace that Shangti boasts, many items that are rare in Shangti are available in Talu on the open market. Brewed spirits, various types of smoking materials, and firearms are the most dominant forces on the market, especially those that are illegal in other place of Rosuto-Shima. Foreign technologies and merchandise considered too dangerous by traditional markets are easily available for purchase in Talu.

Due to its limited land resources, Talu imports grains and other foods from Chinan, and rice from merchants sailing from Linan. The people of Talu have also cultivated a seafood market, creating many specialties, and constantly developing new ways to cook and eat seafood. Along with various restaurants and sakedokoros that serve local specialties, the entertainment industry in Talu thrives. River performers act out the same plays performed in higher class theaters along the wider bridges, and kabukika dance and perform traditional theater from altered barges. Gambling houses are extremely popular, and brothels are still the most profitable industry in Talu. Recently, brothels have begun expanding to service a wider variety of customers, opening their doors to non-human races and female clients.

The people of Talu are very business-minded, and though they are extremely friendly, they keep their personal lives secret, avoiding probing questions. Trade, sales, and rare items are common topics of conversation, and natives are quick to spread rumors about the various types of cargo that can be found and who has the most unique items for trade.

Law Enforcement

An elite police navy patrols the waters of Talu. They are called the Suigeki (Water Hammer), and their steamwork boats, called amenbo, give them the advantage of speed and mobility in the watery pathways of Talu. Originally designed by the military leaders of Chinan to serve as a navy, the Suigeki spend most of their time protecting the city and surrounding waters from pirate forces that attempt to besiege or raid the city. Since the difference between merchants and pirates that trade in Talu is often slight, the Suigeki often find themselves fighting off a ship that was earlier selling silks in the marketplace, while known pirate captains are often allowed to trade and restock in the city

so long as they stay on their best behavior. Because of this and the loss of pirate forces to the military of Chinan, Talu has been declared a pirate haven by Captain Akutagawa, the most powerful pirate in Shangti Bay. Akutagawa, who is well known for destroying warehouses in Shangti, Huinin, and the Twin Cities of merchants who do not pay him protection fees, has declared Talu a free haven, where anyone may dock and do trade. The few warehouses on the land north of the floating city are considered off limits, and those who break the code answer to Akutagawa if they are able to escape the wrath of the Suigeki.

A small force of Suigeki take an interest in internal affairs in Talu, and citizens report crimes to a centrally docked boat called Sui-Amen. Because the Suigeki are trained as a military force, they often contract with private investigators to look into crimes and find facts and information before turning criminals over to the Judges of the Sensotsuchou for their trials. The Suigeki stationed at Sui-Amen typically utilize smaller steamwork boats with faster engines so they can perform chases through the city if necessary.

Notable Locations

The Hana Tameni-ato Beppin is still the most popular of all of the brothels in Talu. Located on the land and extending out along a large dock, the Hana Tameni-ato Beppin is one of the few buildings of Talu that exists on the actual coast of Rosuto-Shima. Because of this, visitors traveling to Talu by land often encounter the Hana Tameni-ato Beppin before any other building in Talu, and weary wanderers often attempt to rent a room there just to spend the night, quietly surprised at the high prices and even more shocked when they find their room provides them with a night's worth of company. The Hana Tameni-ato Beppin is run by Su Ling, a granddaughter of the original founder. The Su family is a prominent and powerful family in Talu due since their ancestor was the founder. Many small shrines have been erected to the city founder, "Su Ojiisan" as he is called by all the locals, and many locals and visitors burn incense in his honor.

Several times a year, Talu is visited by the mysterious Madame Majo, who sells an assortment of potions, relics, and talismans

of rare origins. Strangely, no one ever sees Madame Majo arrive in Talu, and no one ever sees her leave. It never occurs to the people of Talu to question this—she is Madame Majo, and that is simply how she works. They advise travelers to never pass anything by at Madame Majo's, because you never know how long it will be for sale.

Plots and Rumors

On nights of a new moon, the people of Talu close their windows and stay inside. For this time of the month, the Nine Sisters walk the waterways, singing as they wander among the boats. It is said that nine women from one of the floating brothels were trapped inside after the boat had been lit on fire. It sank beneath the waves, killing the nine women. Because their spirits were not given the proper attention by local priests, they remain trapped and tied to Talu, wandering around and dragging any who approach to a watery grave. Storms at sea are sometimes attributed to the wrath of the Nine Sisters, but even locals are hesitant to give the spirits that much power. Travelers to Talu rarely believe these stories, suspecting that the citizens of Talu use the story to explain mysterious deaths and disappearances.

TALU AT A GLANCE

Population:

30,000 in the city and surrounding province; 17,000 visitors

Demographics:

50% human; 30% gaijin; 20% other

Technology:

medium (some gas-lighting, steamwork boats, firearms)

Goods and Services:

exotic trade (especially black market); recreational activities (brothels, gambling, entertainment)

Government:

ruled by Sensotsuchou Jonathan Yang, son of the former Sensotsuchou Yang Wei and his gaijin wife, Elisa



Chinan, the City of the Arts

In the vast history of the Empire, Chinan was one of the most powerful cities in all of Rosuto-Shima. The greatest samurai and the most valiant heroes have been known to come from this province. During the War of the States, Chinan held control of all the Serpents Mouth Peninsula. Its army supported a member of the Dou clan, who believed himself to be the rightful emperor, until the entire Chinan branch of the Dou family was assassinated. In spite of this, the leaders of Chinan became one of the controlling kingdoms in the War of the States. When the Treaty of the States was signed, Chinan turned its back on the ways of war to pursue a path of academics and the arts. Though it maintains a large army for defense in the event of another war, the focus of the city is on learning, crafts, and design.

Chinan has become a cultural blend of colleges, museums, and galleries. It is a city where the wealthy come to enjoy fine dining and the beautiful atmosphere of a city devoted to the arts. The streets are wide and lined with sculptures, monuments, and shrines. Every block is home to a tranquil garden of orchids or fruit. There is always something going on in the city, whether it be a festival, poetry reading, play, or contest of martial skill.

Lord Yoshuu and a council of twelve scholars from the most prestigious schools rule the city of Chinan. They gather weekly in an open forum to discuss the many aspects of law, philosophy, and business of the city. The public is welcome to attend these forums, although only those with adequate reputation for scholarship are invited to speak. And while Lord Yoshuu embraces the new form of government in Chinan, he is very much dedicated to the ways of the past, and has many samurai dedicated to his service. Every evening, Lord Yoshuu is known to sit in his garden and listen to the gagaku played by descendents of the musicians of the Imperial Court.

Commerce

Most of the people of Chinan are employed in the services of the arts. The universities are the largest employers, and bring in money through student tuition. Because of this, most of those who attend the universities come from wealthy families from all over Rosuto-Shima. Many of the students are from old, noble families, but some are children of up-and-coming merchants and mechanists who have capitalized on the new technologies and the markets they have opened. Because talent and merit are valued in Chinan, worthy youths who do not have funding but show incredible promise are accepted as students if they pledge to work for the universities for a specified period of years beyond the completion of their education. Those associated

with the universities who can afford housing on the outskirts of Chinan build beautiful estates in the hills there. Many students take housing within community mashon (apartments) designated by their school.

The other major industry in Chinan is tourism. Wealthy families from all over Rosuto-Shima come to visit the city and enjoy the arts and crafts produced by city residents. Although the theaters of Chinan are not as large as the Haimamire Gakijou of Shangti, there are many performing houses in the city. The street theater is also prevalent, providing visitors with constant amusements in music, comedy, and drama as they walk from one fine restaurant to the next. While a number of Chinan artists have established themselves as renowned performers or craftsmen, the road for most is one of poverty and struggle. Even the most talented painters, calligraphers, musicians, and dancers must compete to earn a place in Chinan's artistic society. The lucky find patrons at the universities, while the unlucky struggle to sell their wares to tourists, hoping to find a wealthy patron to lift them out of competition.

Many farming villages surround Chinan, and their wares are brought to market several days a week. Some of the Chinan rich have vassals guiding and protecting these villages. Those without such protection occasionally seek the warriors of Chinan, hoping that those of noble heart can protect them from raids by bandits—or worse, dark spirits of the countryside.

Law Enforcement

Lord Yoshuu's samurai are the peacekeepers of Chinan, as well as the leaders of the city's standing army. The army trains beyond the walls of Chinan, and most of the soldiers are housed in the southeast portion of the city. The samurai live at Lord Yoshuu's estate, although some of them also have estates in the countryside of Chinan. Some of these estates house small garrisons of soldiers from Chinan's army, providing a strong defensive position for the province.

The samurai residing in Chinan patrol the streets both day and night. Complaints of crime and suspects are taken to what is called the Tonsho at the center of town. The samurai are highly skilled in battle and their presence causes fear in the hearts of those who would do evil, but they are not trained in investigating crimes that have already been committed. For this, Lord Yoshuu often contracts with independent investigators, typically Shangti Cowboys, but these people are not well-trusted within the city, as many see them as having no honor.

Crime is kept largely quiet in Chinan. The majority of criminal activity involves picking the pockets of tourists. Several small

time Yakuza lead bands of thieves, as well as running underground gambling operations. At least two of the expensive restaurants in Chinan, Gyousei Sakedokoro (Morning Star) and Ishii Kashou (One Reed Song) have back rooms, where wealthy guests are encouraged to wager their money on dice, games, and contests of skill. Gyousei Sakedokoro is the finest establishment for gambling on martial tournaments in all of Chinan.

There is also a great deal of intrigue among the wealthy families of Chinan, as they vie for power and influence. Though the universities are seen as places free from corruption, even the most honorable of scholars can become a pawn in the games of control played by leading families. These families are said to be responsible for crimes such as murder, defamation of character, and attempted usurpation. No less than three assassins have attempted to kill Lord Yoshuu in the past seven years, although no investigators have been able to solve the crimes. The samurai of Lord Yoshuu mumble that this is probably because these investigative ruffians have been paid off by Lord Yoshuu's enemies.

Notable Locations

As the center for the arts in all of Rosuto-Shima, Chinan is filled with highly decorative architecture, respected artists and craftsmen, and noble warriors. It is a place for the wealthy and sophisticated as well as those seeking to learn the martial ways, magic, science, or any number of other disciplines. Chinan is finally at peace and the splendor of its renaissance is everywhere. This is particularly evident in its acceptance of so many keshou and juunishi-p'o into its community. The members of these races are treated as respected professors and worthy students at nearly all of the universities in the city.

The northern district of Chinan houses the largest battle arena in all of Rosuto-Shima. It is the home of the Zensen Tougijou, the premier tournament for skilled swordsmen, warriors, and courageous fighters. Competitions are held once every two months, with several matches a day for an entire week. Samurai Ninomiya Jiro is currently the leading swordsman and Kukrit Suchin, a female monk, holds the record for the most consecutive wins in the martial arts.

Located in the university district is the Gakufu Sangyoukikai (Academic Center of Industrial Machinery), where the brightest minds design and create the marvels of tomorrow. Visitors are

allowed to view many of these inventions in the campus museum, as well as meet with the young minds that created them. Lam Xuan and keshou mechanist Giaki-jun Daidoji are joint deans of the university, and the two are in constant competition to see who can come up with the most efficient machine. Their current goal is to create a mechanical messenger—the device must be able to protect a written scroll and travel to its destination without any aid after the initial instructions. This competition has been running for three years, and thus far neither has produced a functioning model. Oftentimes, their students take on this challenge for themselves, passing their innovations along to the professor they hope will win.

Plots and Rumors

When the last of the Dou clan was killed, it is said that the assassins took every trace of the Imperial Blood's presence save for a decorative ivory scepter, which was used in ceremonies to raise generals to their offices. The fate of this device is unknown, but many say that the Imperial Scepter still remains in the city, possibly in the basement of one of the universities. These loyalists believe that when the True Emperor returns to Rosuto-Shima, he will find the rod and regain control of the entire island with a song, and that the artists and performers will dance in the streets when they hear the sweetness of his voice.

CHINAN AT A GLANCE

Population:

150,000 in the city; 75,000 in the surrounding province

Demographics:

50% human; 25% keshou; 15% juunishi-p'o (particularly dragons, horses, and roosters); 10% other

Technology:

medium (some gas-lighting, simple machines, steamwork rickshaw)

Goods and Services:

arts and crafts (books, paintings, etc); recreational (parks, restaurants, arena, theater); academic (martial arts, science, clockwork, religious)

Government:

ruled by Lord Yoshuu and the Council of Twelve



Huinin, the Summer Kingdom

Before the fall of the Empire, not only was Huinin considered the second greatest city in all of Rosuto-Shima, it was also home to the Imperial Summer Palace. Like Shangti, the city of Huinin quickly grew to a point where even the fertile surrounding fields were unable to support it, although the most influential were still able to live in luxury. Wealthy families and poor citizens soon mingled in its streets as space became rarer. To ease this burden, the Emperor declared that Huinin would be the central military headquarters of Rosuto-Shima, and encouraged citizens of Huinin to seek employment in other cities or find a way to support the army. The army recruited and drafted poverty-stricken youths from all over Rosuto-Shima and turned their weakness into strength. Soon Huinin came to symbolize both the strength and order of the Empire. During the War of the States, however, the army broke into factions, supporting various warlords or a claimant to the Imperial Throne.

The son of the last Emperor's sister came to Huinin for protection, and for a time, the Imperial Family used Huinin as its base. But when Huinin was besieged, and the Imperial Family slain, Huinin became a ghost town nearly over night, and much of the population fled to Linan. The city was taken by the forces of General Bujin, in the name of Sun Cao of the north, but the general sought to carve out a name for himself and claimed the city as his own base. From here, Bujin waged war on the other leaders of Rosuto-Shima, and his descendants continue to control the city.

With the military background of the city, it is no surprise that it is ruled as though it is General Bujin's own personal army. General Bujin controls the city with an iron fist, putting into place strict laws and even stricter punishments for those who break them. While Huinin has fertile lands surrounding it and its placement on the river mouth make it an ideal trade city, it has never managed to recover the population or status of the Golden Age.

Commerce

The most crippling of all of General Bujin's laws, and possibly the one that will always keep the city from its former glory, is the complete ban on all items considered "machines." This list includes items as obvious as clockwork animals, steamwork transports, and firearms to the less apparent clocks, crossbows, and telescopes. Work such as farming and ranching is all done in the traditional way, and those in the countryside protected by Huinin are expected to hold to this law with as much devotion as those who live within the city walls.

Despite the dark feel of the city, Huinin is also home to the majority of silk farms in all of Rosuto-Shima. Weavers come to the city from all areas of Rosuto-Shima, seeking apprenticeships with the wise women who tend the silk worms. Along with the silk industry, Huinin provides much of Rosuto-Shima with grains and meats raised in its province. These exports make Huinin a city of commodities, although the merchants who trade there must be very careful not to enter the city with any devices or clockwork objects. Because the laws of Huinin will not allow the steam rail to pass through the province, most trade comes to the city by boat.

Law Enforcement

The city is dominated by the Kousotsu, an elite police force that answers directly to General Bujin. These soldiers serve as both protectors and oppressors of the citizenry. Many of the men who join this force are drawn to power, and take advantage of their positions. They pay particular attention to enforcing the law against machines—items of this nature are always confiscated by the Kousotsu before visitors enter the city, but those who are caught within Huinin could face penalties as extreme as execution. Clockwork ronin are attacked on sight and never allowed to enter the walls of the city.

General Bujin's strict laws have caused discontented citizens to rebel in every way possible. Although no organized crime group has lasted very long in Huinan, there is a single night club that has withstood pressure from the Kousotsu. Called Pakuri leinu (Biting Dog), this club is home to those who oppose Bujin's rule. Despite several searches by the Kousotsu, the basement of the Pakuri leinu has yet to be discovered—it houses nearly all of the technology in Huinin. Lit by gas lamps and filled with the experiments of mechanists, the basement of the Pakuri leinu is treated almost as a shrine to independence, and is visited by many citizens who seek to be free of the oppression of the Kousotsu. It has also become a sanctuary for criminals hiding from the Kousotsu.

Notable Locations

The Imperial Summer Palace, now only a shade of its former glory, is one of the few remnants of the Old Empire. Despite General Bujin's disdain for the old rule of Rosuto-Shima, he has ordered that the Imperial Summer Palace be kept clean and well tended. No one currently lives in the buildings, but many citizens of Huinan spend afternoons wandering through its lush gardens. The plant-life is tended by an old man named Phan Loc, and his work on the land is rumored to have roots in magic, although the old man says it is merely hard work.

Huinin is also home to the monastery Dou Gishin, governed by priest Em Rangsey, who is also called Sleeping Peace. Located at the site of one of the Imperial Shrines, the monks and priests of Dou-Gishin make offerings to the ancestors of the Imperial family. General Bujin disapproves of the monastery, but is currently unwilling to outlaw the group. His many intrigues to rid himself of the priests have not been successful.

Plots and Rumors

The scholar Ye Shang has recently come to Huinan to offer his services to General Bujin. All have heard of Ye Shang's reputation and cunning, and General Bujin was quick to welcome the scholar into his service. Many of the residents of Huinin fear that Ye Shang will advise General Bujin to snuff out any last bit of independence the citizens have. Others in the community, however, secretly hope that the scholar has come to undermine General Bujin's rule. One such believer of this theory is Em Rangsey of Dou Gishin monastery, and many have noted that the priest has been recruiting more monks to tend the Imperial Shrine.

Beyond the walls of Huinin, the villagers have recently been troubled by angry spirits. General Bujin believes that the villagers merely seek excuses for their small harvest, and has dispatched his Kousotsu to demand the proper tribute. None of these Kousotsu have returned, however, and there are whispers throughout the countryside that monsters lurk in darkness, waiting to strike.

HUININ AT A GLANCE

Population:

80,000 in the city; 30,000 in the surrounding province

Demographics:

90% human; 10% other

Technology:

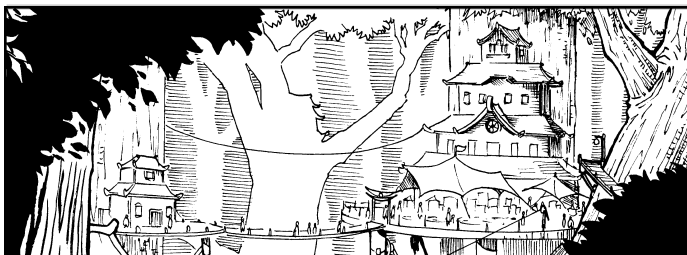
low (machines are illegal)

Goods and Services:

agricultural (grains, livestock); textiles (silk)

Government:

ruled by General Bujin



Liaoyan, the Forest City

Once a small outpost of warriors stationed by the Emperor to fend off oni attacks, Liaoyan has grown into a large forest city. After the Oni Wars ended, many warriors remained. During the War of the States, Sun Cao, who found the Imperial Sword and believed it to be a mandate of heaven that he should be the next Emperor, led the warriors of Liaoyan in a quest for greatness. Sun Cao became the King of the Northlands, and was respected by many. While he had no claim of blood to the Imperial Throne, many believed that he would become the next Emperor.

Sadly, the war continued, and Sun Cao passed his title to his heirs. None of them had quite the power of personality or strength in battle that Sun Cao had possessed, and after many years, the kingship was taken from the Sun family by generals in the army. The Sun family is still important in Liaoyan and treated with respect, but they are not treated as though heaven pays them any special attention.

After the War of the States, the Council of Seven Generals, who led the later war effort for Liaoyan, continued their rule of the city. The Council of Seven Generals elects its one members—should one fail greatly in battle, the other six may choose to replace him. After the Treaty of the States, war is no longer a proving ground for the Generals, and instead, they challenge each other to games of strategy and skill in the Liaoyan Arena.

The city itself is built high in the trees, with the buildings connected by sturdy bridges. The new technologies have made supporting the city much easier, and has also enabled the city to grow larger than in previous years. The bridges are now supported by iron clockworks that gauge the amount of pressure on them and apply more or less support as needed. Zip-lines have also been installed, so that messengers can quickly travel from one area of the city to another by soaring overhead. The Council of Seven Generals is working on development of flying machines, so that should the bridges be destroyed, the people of Liaoyan are not trapped in their tree homes.

Commerce

Liaoyan supports the largest lumber industry in Rosuto-Shima, harvesting the great trees of the Akki-Kou Zetsu Mori. The rare plants found in the dense forest have also been harvested and used in brewed spirits to great effect, making Liaoyan liquors popular throughout Rosuto-Shima. Unfortunately, the Akki-Kou Zetsu Mori does not provide fertile land for traditional crops. This logistical problem led the Liaoyan army to conquer lands in the south during the War of the States. Now that conquest is no longer politically acceptable,



Liaoyan depends heavily on trade from its neighbors to support the appetites of its people. The Council of Seven Generals has appealed to the RSSRA of Shangti to run a line into the forest, possibly from Chinan, but they have yet to make progress. Currently, the easiest way to transport lumber is to move it up a small river in the Akki-Kou Zetsu Mori to the coast, and then transport the goods by boat.

Law Enforcement

The standing army of Liaoyan makes up nearly half of the province's population. The army is filled with skilled warriors, but the Council of Seven Generals constantly seeks out the talents of those who are adept at fighting oni. Priests and monks are well respected and welcomed in the forest city. Liaoyan accepts all warriors of skill, and many clockwork ronin have found purpose here. Juunishi-p'o, most commonly of the ox, tiger, and Dog houses, often come to Liaoyan for training in the arts of war. Even the peaceful jinteki-oni have found Liaoyan to be a place to hone their skills and protect Rosuto-Shima from the threat of their oni cousins. The Council of Seven Generals has also made a concerted effort to upgrade the technological level of the army, recruiting men and women skilled with cannons, firearms, and other technologies.

For years, the Liaoyan Army was concerned only with fighting neighboring kingdoms. In recent days, however, more oni and spirits have made their presence felt in the Akki-Kou Zetsu Mori, and the Liaoyan Army once again stands between these dark creatures and the rest of Rosuto-Shima. So far, these creatures seem unorganized and independent, but it is a possible sign that another invasion of oni may soon flood the island, and the army of Liaoyan will be called into battle once again.

If this were not enough, pirates often raid the coast, intercepting the goods being shipped to the city. Bandits have also made the forest their home, and the Liaoyan army has its hands full trying to rid these brigands, the remains of the local Blue Coat insurrection from the War of the States.

Notable Locations

The Academy of the Five Rings, a school of martial training is the largest complex in all of Liaoyan. The academy is located in the trees and on the ground, but much of the training is done in a clearing called the Courtyard. Some students are taught the basics of magic—those who can command the arcane are instructed how to translate these skills to the arts of combat. In lieu of tuition, all students of the Academy are required, upon graduation, to serve in the Liaoyan Army for a number of years equal to those spent in study. The scholar Royama Masao, given

the name Wandering River, is the Master of the Academy, as well as an adviser to the Council of Seven Generals.

A notable figure in the Liaoyan community, though not often found unless she wants to be, is the mystic Lin ShuFang. Called Lady Lin by those who have only heard of her, Lin is a nikobo of great skill. She has perfected the oni kata and often creates artefacts for the priests and monks of Liaoyan, so that they can better protect the city in the trees. Rumors place Lin in a small cottage on the edge of the Akki-Kou Zetsu Mori and the Doragon-Iki Yama, but none have ever been able to locate her home. Some suspect that she is a spirit herself, a benevolent force who appears only when needed.

Plots and Rumors

In recent years, the gift of prophecy came to Huang Xi-Wang of the Blue Coat rebellion, much like it had to Huang Shang, the first prophet of the Blue Coats. While Huang Shang had prophesied the downfall of the Empire and believed he would be the force to rise from the Empire's ashes, Huang Xi-Wang has had visions of spirits angrily returning to the land of their birth, anxious to avenge their pain on the living of Rosuto-Shima. One of the priests among the Blue Coats deciphered the prophecy and declared Huang Xi-Wang to be the spiritual leader for the Liaoyan Army. Huang Xi-Wang wishes for nothing more than to offer his services to the Liaoyan Army, but the Blue Coats view the Liaoyan Army as an enemy that can only be taken over by force. The Blue Coats have begun collecting firearms, with most of it from the black market at Talu, and are preparing to mount an insurrection to take over the city.

LIAOYAN AT A GLANCE

Population:

45,000 in the city; 15,000 in the surrounding province

Demographics:

60% human; 20% clockwork ronin; 20% other

Technology:

medium (some gas-lighting, simple machines, firearms)

Goods and Services:

agricultural (lumber, brewed spirits); academic (martial arts, tactics and strategy); recreational (arena)

Government:

ruled by the Council of Seven Generals: Zhao Lok, General Who Quells the West; Meas Sovann, General Who Pacifies the East; Vuong Quang, General of the Left; Vu Hien, General of the Right; Eda Matsu, General of the Heights; Ken, General of Steel; and Sun Kong, the Tiger General

Chengti, City of Heaven

Hardly a day passes in Chengti when there is not a festival or parade. Of all the cities of Rosuto-Shima, Chengti boasts the most temples and shrines, and the greatest diversity of religion. From those who follow a philosophical path to enlightenment and reject the world and suffering, to those who espouse logical philosophies and seek to eliminate suffering, to those who embrace the world as it is, the people of Chengti are as diverse as their beliefs. Many pray to old gods of nature, some worship fox spirits, and others pay homage to family gods, while the more modern embrace spiritual philosophies without acknowledging the existence of actual spirits. While all religions are accepted and welcomed into the city walls, the pious are not often in accord, and weekly debates among the priests are held in the Garden of Heaven. These discussions are attended by the learned of Rosuto-Shima, and many scholars also attend to listen to the wise priests counter others' arguments.

Because the city has long been a holy refuge, it was practically untouched by the destruction that wracked cities like Shangti and Huinin during the War of the States. Several of the temples and shrines within the city date back earlier than any priest can remember. The streets are wide, and lined with memorials where visitors can leave offerings to those who have passed. The city is full of color, and flags, banners, and strings of bells hang from both holy and residential buildings. Because the city is built in the foothills of the Doragon-Iki Yama, none of the roads are straight, and many travel up and down large hills topped by temples and shrines. Music often floats down from the higher buildings as priests and monks offer prayers, and poets and singers offer their voices to their gods.

The city is governed by three sages. As a single ruling body, they are called the Tribunal. Although the three have opposing philosophies about the workings of the world, the people believe that whenever the three can come to an agreement, it must lead to the greater good. Nozaki Asa, known as Shining Palm, is trained in the unity of mind, body, and spirit. He places little importance on ceremony, because he considered such rituals as illusions. Ly Tu, known as Silent Dragon, is a philosopher who advocates living in harmony with society, believing that man must first master himself before he can rule over others. Chiba Sukey, known as Falling Flower, is a follower of the old gods of Rosuto-Shima, and believes that she has been chosen by the Celestial Dragons to appease the growing tempers of Rosuto-Shima's spirits. The Tribunal holds court in the Garden of Heaven.

Commerce

The market of Chengti is full of specialty restaurants and shops devoted to local arts and crafts. The location and inspirational atmosphere of the city attract a number of artists and poets. The works of the renowned Neak Tevy, a retired geisha turned painter and calligrapher, are often on display and available for sale. Neak Tevy also accepts commissions, dependent upon the subject and the client. Do Tuan, the famous poet, also makes his home in Chengti. Calligraphers have copied his work and placed it on decorative scrolls that visitors can purchase from any number of local shops.

Herbs and medicines are also available at many shops in the city, but most travelers who come to Chengti for a cure instead seek the religious healers that reside in the province's various temples and shrines. Students of the religious paths find willing teachers at the many schools associated with the temples. Spiritual guidance can also be found. Several priests of the old gods, and many of those who feel that spirit is present in the world, lead walking trips into the mountains, offering guidance to those who can keep their pace. Some schools also offer training of the body, and monks teach the spiritual aspects of martial combat, helping students unite mind, body, and spirit.

Though religious artifacts are not often for sale, religious items used for worship or for protection against oni are found aplenty at the Chengti market. Nikobo who wander the surrounding mountains often come to Chengti to trade, offering magical fireworks and ammunition to those who seek personal combat with the oni.

Law Enforcement

Chengti has never had a standing army, and its position as a holy refuge has been respected by the leaders of Rosuto-Shima throughout history. Every nation on Rosuto-Shima would rush to its defense. The city wall provides a strong defensive perimeter for Chengti, and the many monks trained in the martial ways who live inside the city's walls can defend the city at length if required. The city has ample storehouses for food and supplies, allowing it to weather a siege much longer than it takes for help to arrive.

The monks of the Unnamed Monastery are considered by all in Chengti to be the peace keepers of the city. Using the intuition and divination of priests, the monks are able to apprehend many criminals through spiritual means. When old-fashioned investigation becomes necessary, however, the monks of the Unnamed Monastery turn to professionals such as Shangti Cowboys.



Chengti has a fairly small amount of crime for a city of its size, but it does have its troublemakers. The Cult of the Fox is welcomed in Chengti, but the kitsune that come with the cult are largely unappreciated. Kitsune often make trouble for people not involved with priestly or religious occupations, and often do their best to tempt people into trouble through lust. Most people possessed by kitsune request food for the fox spirits, and regular sacrifices of kitsune at the shrines often keeps kitsune from tormenting those who make the offerings. This form of spiritual extortion is only grudgingly tolerated.

While the residents of Chengti are tormented by kitsune, the priests and monks themselves are often troubled by false visions and dreams brought to them by the shape-changing creatures of the mountains, known as *tengu*. They delight in playing tricks on the pious and do their best to catch travelers alone on the roads of the Chengti province, playing dangerous pranks.

Criminals in the city often perform their devious acts in the name of one of these two creatures. Many claim to be possessed by kitsune, attempting to avoid responsibility for their actions. These criminals are carted off to the Unnamed Monastery for penance. There is no organized crime in Chengti—gambling is already done at temples where risk is considered holy, and other temples find more creative uses for herbs and brewed spirits than most crime lords could imagine.

Notable Locations

The Garden of Heaven is situated in a low valley in the hilly city of Chengti. Full of ponds, rock gardens, butterfly gardens, bonsai trees, and orchids, the Garden of Heaven also has large seating areas where debates and open discussions are held. Courts are also assembled here to air the Tribunal’s judgments. Seats are made of either white marble or balsam wood. The Garden of Heaven is tended by an old bald priest named Samak Niran, or simply called “Gardener,” as well as a host of apprentices. Gardener is always interested in bringing new flowers and plants into the Garden of Heaven, and he and his apprentices work night and day to balance all of the elements of nature. Their purpose is to ensure that the garden accurately reflects the patterns of the heavens.

In the Garden of the Heavens is a large pond known as the Pool of Illumination. The scholar Quan Hong first realized his calling to record the history of Rosuto-Shima at this pond. It was also here that Okabe Ayama, after years of silence, regained her voice to become one of the greatest singers of her age. The pool is said to call those who need answers; many people dream of the Pool of Illumination for years, only to discover the truth

behind a question that has plagued them when they finally stand at the pool’s edge.

The Unnamed Monastery, governed by Master Chalerm Aran, is both the largest and one of the oldest buildings in Chengti. The history of the monastery is as unknown as its original name, but the monks who reside there are devoted to the perfection of the body through harmony with the spirit. They feel that these are two sides of the same coin, and both must be developed equally for true understanding of the art to be reached.

Chengti also boasts an opera house, Hat Cheo (Peasant Theater). Here, traveling *kabukika* are invited to perform; more often, however, Hat Cheo hosts concerts of local musicians. The building has acoustics so near perfection, some say that the building was once designed as a temple to lift the voices of its priests to the Heavens. This is untrue, however, as Hat Cheo was constructed after the War of the States. The Triune are perfectly willing to let the rumor continue, as it increases attendance.

Plots and Rumors

The apparition of a temple, clouded in mist and the sounds of bells, has been spotted in the hills outside of the city walls. But those who look at it long enough notice that the temple shifts—sometimes it seems to be an old, decrepit building on a hill, and other times it seems to be a huge, pristine thing, a testament to the power within its walls. No one has been able to determine why this apparition has been appearing, although the priests of Chengti have done their best to divine its meaning. Those who have traveled to the ghost temple’s location have returned unable to remember their travel, but they occasionally bear scars, bruises, or marks of a treacherous journey.

CHENGTI AT A GLANCE

Population:

90,000 in the city; 30,000 in the surrounding province

Demographics:

40% human; 25% gaijin; 15% juunishi-p'o; 15% jinteki-oni; 5% other

Technology:

medium (gas-lighting, simple machines, steamwork rickshaws)

Goods and Services:

arts and crafts (poetry, music, paintings, musical instruments); religious (items used for worship, protection against demons, spiritual guidance); recreational (restaurants, entertainment)

Government:

ruled by the Tribunal: Nozaki Asa (Shining Palm), Ly Tu (Silent Dragon), and Chiba Sukey (Falling Flower)

Kuang-Cho, the Underground City

During the war years, Emperor Cho created an underground barracks for his people, and moved his operations to the small village of Kuang. After the war, the barracks were converted into housing, restaurants, shops, and warehouses. Many remnants of the war are housed in the Museum of the War of the States, which is also underground. The original village of Kuang has expanded beyond its original boundaries, and while it remains a small city, the underground and aboveground populations have tripled in size since the end of the war.

The province of Kuang-Cho has a greater population than its central city. Many of the people of Kuang-Cho Province are ranchers and farmers who raise cattle, pigs, chicken, and sheep, as well as crops of soybeans on the wide stretch of fertile land surrounding the city of Kuang-Cho. Attempting to diversify, the people of Kuang-Cho have taken to the use of modern technology. The underground sections of the city are well illuminated with gas lighting, and steamwork rickshaws fill the streets both above and below ground. The train station is built with large clocks to show the time of arrivals, which gives residents the pleasure of complaining when a train is late. The underground city has many restaurants that emulate the feel of Shangti, though Kuang-Cho has far less of the criminal element in its restaurants, sakedokoros, and clubs.

Kuang-Cho has welcomed many engineers and mechanists to the city, although the level of technology is still not as high as many of these professionals would prefer. Some of the most creative mechanists, however, have made Kuang-Cho the capital of clockwork animals, designing pets for families, as well as beasts of burden for farmers.



The city is ruled by Xu On, the Minister of the Underground. The title comes from an honorary position invented by Emperor Cho to reward an administrator who had done particularly well at a task he had been given—the Minister of the Underground managed all the logistics for the underground barracks, where the military posts were held during the War of the States. Now, the title has been reclaimed by the last few leaders of Kuang-Cho, and was passed on to Xu On by his uncle Wu Shan, the previous Minister of the Underground. The position does not have to be hereditary, but the position has passed from one generation of the Wu family to the next since the Treaty of the States, and Xu On is the first Minister of the Underground to not carry the Wu name.

Commerce

This high level of agricultural production makes Kuang-Cho one of the greatest markets in Rosuto-Shima. It has the advantage over Huinin due to its position on the Imperial Line of the RSSRA, so animals and crops can be easily shipped from the city to locations throughout Rosuto-Shima. Few other areas of Rosuto-Shima are able to produce much wool or leather, so these textiles are important exports for Kuang-Cho. Many of the shops in the Kuang-Cho Underground Market, the legal market of Kuang-Cho, sell leather-work and armor, and several tailors have shops where they can make or alter clothing for common customers (wealthier customers often prefer wearing silks, which are only rarely available as imports in Kuang-Cho).

The ClockWorkshop, built into one of the old warehouses of Kuang-Cho, is the major center of clockwork animals and toys for the underground city. A gaijin mechanist named Nicholas Andersen and a local mechanist named Takahama Gin founded the ClockWorkshop ten years ago while both were beginning to experiment with clockwork technology.

Law Enforcement

Inspired by the small city's attempts to be more like Shangti, several Yakuza groups have moved into Kuang-Cho and are vying for dominance in the city's underworld. These small-time gangsters have opened illegal gambling operations and edgy clubs in the underground city, but they lack the ambition of the Shangti criminal element, keeping to petty thievery rather than extreme violence. Nut Pravat, a numbers runner hiding from his previous employers of the Chou family of Shangti, has made a very quiet living for himself by organizing and running bets on steamwork rickshaw races. These events are called the Cho races, and those who participate only know Nut Pravat as "The Emperor's Man."



Thus far, Kuang-Cho police have been unable to track down the organizer of these dangerous races. The main police department is located in the underground section of Kuang-Cho, next to the office of the Minister of the Underground. Gakusha Makoto is the chief of police in Kuang-Cho, and he boasts the first female police investigator in Rosuto-Shima—Tran Vui. Inspector Tran worked with the Shangti Cowboys in the capital city for a time, but after dealing with the chaos created by that group for too long, she decided to take the side of established law enforcement instead. Now she is one of the premiere police inspectors in Rosuto-Shima.

Kuang-Cho has only a very small army, which reports directly to the Minister of the Underground. Housed in a small section of the original barracks designed by Emperor Cho, the army is made up of about one-thousand soldiers. Many of these men, however, are from families that served under Emperor Cho before the Imperial line disappeared. These soldiers and their families are devoted Imperialists, who serve the Minister of the Underground because that position was appointed by the Emperor himself. The soldiers of these noble families are often some of the best trained and supplied warriors, though they have a disdain for the machinery of modern warfare.

Notable Locations

The most popular restaurant in Kuang-Cho is T'ien Ming (Mandate of Heaven). The restaurant serves local delicacies and features local performers and musicians, who take the stage every night to entertain visitors to the city. Mechanists in Kuang-Cho are working on ways to amplify the volume of the performers without interfering with their performances. The name of the restaurant, however, is controversial. Some believe that when Heaven declares the time is right, the Emperor and the Imperial Family will reclaim the throne of Rosuto-Shima. Others, however, believe that the name embraces the new age, stating that Heaven declared the time of the Empire was over, and the new rulers have been deemed worthy. To capitalize on this controversy, T'ien Ming hosts debates for scholars and laymen every few months, encouraging Imperialists and members of the Shogunate class alike to debate the fate of Rosuto-Shima. One night every week, amateur performers are encouraged to take the stage, singing anything from traditional ballads to modern and foreign numbers, accompanied by an in-house band. The hostess, Doi Ren, has gathered quite a following in Kuang-Cho, and many attend the amateur night to hear her sing.

Plots and Rumors

Rumor has it that Nicholas Andersen has asked his partner, Takahama Gin, to marry him any number of times. So far, the proper rancher's daughter has refused the gaijin. Interested parties feel that the ClockWorkshop is better off belonging to a single family, and have hired underhanded and skilled individuals to threaten Takahama's life, driving her into the arms of Andersen. Whether this ploy can work is unknown. The ClockWorkshop has been set upon by criminals and thieves any number of times, and the scare tactics are not only affecting Takahama Gin, but many of the employees at the ClockWorkshop. Even the keshou workers are beginning to fear the external element. Should business production be affected, it is likely that the unknown interested parties would call off their goons, but whether or not the mercenaries would actually follow their employers' orders is unknown.

KUANG-CHO AT A GLANCE

Population:

10,000 in the underground city; 20,000 in the city above ground; 25,000 in the surrounding province

Demographics:

60% human; 20% gaijin; 20% other

Technology:

medium (some gas-lighting, simple machines, steamwork rickshaws)

Goods and Services:

recreational (restaurants, entertainment); agricultural (livestock, poultry); textiles (wool, leather); technology (clockwork animals, steamwork rickshaws)

Government:

ruled by Minister of the Underground, Xu On



Linan, Star of the South

The city of Linan is surrounded by the Kokushoko Akuchi, and the land is difficult to farm. Despite this hardship, the farmers of the Linan province are able to produce enough rice to support the entire island of Rosuto-Shima. The people of Linan are predominantly peasants, although there is a small remnant of what was once the Imperial Court. Even these noble families have found themselves in a state of hardship in the last few years; after the Imperial Family disappeared during the War of the States, the Imperial Court had little chance to maintain its importance.

During the War of the States, Linan was ruled by Governor Cho, a loyal administrator, dedicated to upholding the Dou Dynasty. One of governor Cho's sons eventually married Lady Liu, the heir of the Empire. Emperor Cho was able to take back much of the Southlands from his enemies in the north, and while he moved the army to Kuang-Cho, the Imperial Court stayed behind in Linan. During this period, Linan prospered, and many great buildings were dedicated to the Emperor. Shrines were also erected for the ancestors of the Dou Dynasty, since the originals had been destroyed during one of the many attacks on Shangti. Because of this building phase and the money spent by the Imperial Court to complete the construction, Linan resembles Shangti during the Golden Age of the Empire, albeit on a much smaller scale. The Imperial Palace of Linan is a work of exquisite beauty, and is now the home of the Minister of the Left, Song Fai, and his family. Many other members of the Imperial Court have taken up residence there as well, due to the failure of the estates beyond the walls of the city.

Linan is the only city in Rosuto-Shima that closes its gate at dusk and does not allow anyone to enter the city after dark. This tradition started when the yuuhi butsumon lived in the marshes near the city. The strange creatures which were dealt with by the Setting Sun Priesthood caused the people of Linan to fear the priesthood; it was a messenger from Linan who aided the Emperor in discovering the treachery of the dark priests. When the Emperor's men arrived to destroy the yuuhi butsumon, the people of Linan were instructed to lock their gates at dusk and not let anyone enter until dawn. This tradition has continued through the years, and even Imperial Advisor Song Wei and his small army, fleeing from Huinin, were forced to wait outside the walls until dawn came.

Commerce

In spite of its connection to the Imperial Family, Linan remains a simple farming city. Very little is available on its market that would interest outsiders, with the exception of grain merchants transporting rice and sake. This is the major industry of the city, and even the nobles and remainders of the Imperial Court are able to converse easily about the harvest.

Visitors might enjoy the few sakedokoros the city has to offer, since the best sake in all of Rosuto-Shima is made in Linan. Aficionados of sake all make the journey to Linan at least once in their lives, so they can say they have been to the place where their favorite drinks are made, and can tell the difference between fresh Linan sake and all of the rest of the sake on the market.

There is a small entertainment industry of musicians and dancers in Linan, due to the presence of the remnants of the Imperial Court. The open air theater of Linan, called the Yeonhee, is attended by both the wealthy and the poor alike, and features traveling entertainers, musicians, dancers, and storytellers on a regular basis. Nearly all of these performances are paid by the Minister of the Left, so that all can attend and enjoy a few moments away from their normal lives. The most popular performances are by a local group called Pansori, or Storyteller. The three performers are the Oh siblings—the two sisters, Cho and Hei, play the drum and dance respectively as their brother, Hyun-Shik, tells the tale to the audience. Pansori performs at the Yeonhee once every several months, and turns out a large audience at every performance.

Law Enforcement

When Emperor Cho stationed his men at Kuang, he left a small force under the command of the son of Song Wei, Minister of the Left Song Yul, for the defense of Linan. Song Yul's force was named the Dragon Guard, and the soldiers dedicated themselves to protecting the Imperial Family. Years later, when Kuang-Cho was taken by an uprising out of the Twin Cities, the Emperor was killed, and the Imperial Family, fearing that the Imperial Blood would again be hunted, went into hiding. The Dragon Guard assisted their escape, and when the forces of the Twin Cities arrived at the gates of Linan, Minister Song was able to convince the army at the gates that there was no need to take the city, since the Imperial Family had already left. The Dragon Guard, not capable of taking on an army, breathed a sigh of relief when the army of the Twin Cities demanded only that one of their own men be put in charge of the city.



The position of Minister of the Left was restored to the Song family during the Treaty of the States. The Dragon Guard was reformed at the same time, and the government of Linan pledged its continuing allegiance to the Dou Dynasty. The Dragon Guard is made of both warriors and skilled tacticians and investigators, and serves as both a police force for the city of Linan and a protective guard for the province. With only one thousand members, the Dragon Guard is not a full army, but is unusually devoted to keeping the province safe.

Linan also has an underground group of vigilantes devoted to maintaining the peace and protecting the people. The Kokuei Shinobi have made their base in Linan. As a cover, they run a small sakedokoro called Kage. The people of Linan have no idea that the Kokuei Shinobi live in their midst, believing the old man known as Jiji-san merely as the grandfather of many restaurant workers. In fact, he is Ohira Akio, and in his youth, was one of the most accomplished ninjas that the Kokuei Shinobi had seen since the War of the States.

With so many people, both within and beyond the law, watching over the people of Linan, it seems strange that there would be much crime in the city. While a small group of Yakuza, led by Umari Zeshin of Shangti, runs a small gambling operation that draws in farmers and wealthy men alike, the Yakuza has little influence on the political climate of Linan. More dangerous are the monsters of the marshes, known to attack the villagers regularly, as well as the outlaws who live in the marsh. Led by Tian Guang, these outlaws seek to make the Kokushoko Akuchi their own. Tian Guang constantly seeks out new adventurers to add to his numbers. Eventually the group plans to take over Linan, but that is far in the future.

Notable Locations

Very little besides rice grows in the Kokushoko Akuchi, but a single garden graces Linan. Called the Garden of the Stars, it is a park devoted to the sky. The plants are all very short and well trimmed, and the pools and ponds are arranged so that from any point in the garden, the sky is clearly visible overhead. No plants are allowed to grow tall enough to interfere with a

visitor's view of the horizon; even the buildings in this area of the city are single-story, so that they do not impede the view of sunset or star-rise. Many wizards and scholars come to the Garden of the Stars to contemplate the heavens. Scholars often leave Linan with new advice for their masters.

Plots and Rumors

It is rumored that the Imperial Seal, in the possession of one of the descendants of Emperor Cho Bei, still resides in Linan. This rumor gives credence to the belief that the Imperial Family also resides in Linan, posing as a simple farming family, or as displaced members of the Imperial Court. Some members in the Imperial Court believe they know the identity of the Imperial Family, but this is doubtful. If anyone is able to pick out members of Imperial Blood, it is Minister Song and Ohira Akio of the Kokuei Shinobi.

The marshes beyond Linan still remain a dangerous place, infested with monsters and creatures of all sorts. There is a rumor that, unknown to the outlaws living in the marsh, a dark figure has also taken up residence there, seeking to raise the spirits of his fallen brethren. If he is able to do so, his dark army might very well be the undoing of Linan, and possibly all of Rosuto-Shima.

LINAN AT A GLANCE

Population:

20,000 in the city; 20,000 confirmed in the surrounding province

Demographics:

70% human; 30% other

Technology:

low (simple machines)

Goods and Services:

agricultural (rice, sake); recreational (entertainment, sakedokoros)

Government:

ruled by Minister of the Left, Song Fai

Chieng-Mow and Yang-Mow, the Twin Cities

Once the single kingdom of Mow in the old Empire, the Twin Cities were divided upon the death of the King of Mow who had bequeathed it to both of his twin sons. The two ruled very effectively together until their respective advisers convinced each that he was the rightful ruler. The princes Chieng and Yang declared war against each other, and the kingdom was split in half. During the War of the States, the Twin Cities united again in order to combat enemies from other parts of Rosuto-Shima, and when the Treaty of the States was written, the cities were once again considered a single province.

The cities maintain the tradition of the twin rule. The Princes of Mow are currently cousins Ji Fa and Ji Song. The pair had been rivals in youth, but instead of turning into destructive competition, the rivalry succeeded in strengthening both their friendship and resolve to do great things. The young Princes of Mow do still argue over some things, and currently compete for the hand of the lovely Liu Zi, a painter and member of the prominent Liu family, who once claimed relation to Imperial Lineage.

The two cities are separated by a river two-hundred feet wide. This river makes Chieng-Mow and Yang Mow excellent ports for trade, and each city has a trade district right along the river. Each city's wall stops at the river, as the waterway belongs to neither city. In the past, the walls extended along the riverbank as well, but because it hindered trade, both Princes have opted to keep the river open.

As one of the most populated provinces of Rosuto-Shima, Chieng-Mow and Yang-Mow have many restaurants, stores, and factories. They have not yet gained the same level of technology as Shangti, however, but strive to keep up in nearly all other ways, considering themselves to be the greatest, if only the third largest, province on the island. This feeling is evident from all members of the population—they are unimpressed with tales of Shangti or Chinan, preferring to believe that the Twin Cities are the center of the world and the most important place in Rosuto-Shima.

Commerce

Thanks to the river, the Twin Cities have one of the largest and most varied marketplaces in all of Rosuto-Shima. Foreign novelties and conveniences, and arts and crafts are readily available at many shops on the Chieng-Mow side of the river, while the Yang-Mow side of the river offers the opportunities for shoppers to purchase an assortment of weaponry, from

swords to firearms. Some of Rosuto-Shima's finest swordsmiths live in Yang-Mow. Smith & Funaki firearms, all created in Yang-Mow, are considered the finest quality on the island. Chieng-Mow sports locally made reed baskets as well, while Yang-Mow has many potters competing to sell their wares.

The restaurants on both sides of the river are of superior quality and tend to have excellent service. There are a variety of styles and price ranges; from full selections of brewed spirits and live entertainment to small counter service with one or two dishes. In spite of efforts to eliminate the practice, several restaurants also host illegal gambling. Beyond live performances at restaurants, several theaters and respectable dance halls can be found on both sides of the river. In Chieng-Mow, the focus tends to be more on dramatic and comedic theater, while Yang-Mow hosts musicians and dancers from all over Rosuto-Shima.

Both sides of the river also have a healthy illegal market. Smuggled goods, sales made by pirates, and illegal materials often find their way onto the Chieng-Mow and Yang-Mow market. These operations are handled very differently on either side of the river, and once someone has purchased something from one black market, they find themselves completely rejected from the other.

Law Enforcement

The Mow Army boasts about thirty-thousand soldiers and is one of the largest standing forces in all of Rosuto-Shima. Complemented by another ten-thousand sailors who make up the Mow Navy, the Mow Army is a very capable force, currently under the direction of General Horigoshi Keitaro. General Horigoshi comes from a samurai family, but focused on tactics and strategy rather than the pursuit of the sword. The general is still more than capable of defeating enemies in a fight, relying on firearms and new technologies over traditional weaponry. He believes the key to winning battles is mobility, and he has contracted clockwork mechanists and engineers to develop war-worthy machines that can transport soldiers from one location to another quickly.

While they share an army, the twin cities have separate law forces. In Chieng-Mow, Police Chief Dang Lam leads a force of several hundred officers and investigators. The police force of Yang-Mow, run by Ichihara Keiji, has fewer men, but many of these officers are skilled with both horses and steamwork rickshaws. These two small forces rarely interact, although there is a yearly steamwork boat race between the two groups, and every few years, a new sports competition is organized to prove that one police force is more skilled than the other.



The police forces are largely occupied with opposing gangs. Each side of the river has several gangs involved in smuggling, black market trading, and gambling, as well as occasionally running prostitution or slavery rings. The gangs compete with each other for dominance over their chosen city, but they completely ignore the gangs on the other side of the river. Those seen talking with gang members from the other side are ostracized, and visitors hoping to do trade with both black market groups are disappointed. Currently, the Tsume (Talons) are the most powerful group in Yang-Mow, while the Ishuikon (Grudge) rule the streets of Chieng-Mow.

Notable Locations

The twin palaces of the Princes of Mow are open to the public several days a week. Each palace has a collection of artwork from both Rosuto-Shima and foreign lands. The two princes are not simply collectors of artwork, but also businessmen. The pair do all they can to see that money makes its way into the land of Mow and stays there. Admission for tours of the palaces is minimal, but there are many trinkets to purchase once inside, and a high-priced sukiyaki grill is the only place to eat once inside the Chieng-Mow Palace. In the Yang-Mow palace, a sushi bar serves local delicacies at expensive rates. Each palace has different types of artwork—the Chieng-Mow holds more calligraphy and poetry, while the Yang-Mow palace has wall-length paintings and large decorated screens. Instruments, paintings, and poetry from foreign lands can be found in either, and the exhibits change constantly. Eto Midori, the daughter of a scholar from Chinan, manages both galleries very carefully, adding and moving art in order to entice visitors to come on a regular basis.

The Smith & Funaki Firearms Factory, located in Yang-Mow, offers classes on a regular basis, encouraging young sharpshooters to use only Smith & Funaki products. The factory is quite large, and has an entire wing devoted to a shooting range. Mr. Funaki and Mr. Smith rarely see visitors, but these two important businessmen are recognized throughout town. It is a surprise to some that Smith & Funaki firearms have made their way onto the streets, escalating the violence of the gang wars. When questioned, Mr. Smith and Mr. Funaki merely explain that they are businessmen who sell to paying customers. Other weapon shops worth visiting in Yang-Mow are Nut Pravat’s Wooden Weapons, which sells spears, staffs, tonfa, and other weapons made predominantly of wood, and Iida Swords, run by Iida Haru, who inherited his forging techniques from his father.

Chieng-Mow’s most popular store is The Boutique of Madam Camus, a foreign merchandise shop that carries all manner of oddities. Madam Camus is an elegant gaijin who is known to flirt mercilessly and brazenly with all her customers, making her quite a noticeable individual. Rumors say that she had a husband before she came to Rosuto-Shima, and that he died mysteriously before she left, but the madam only laughs at such thoughts, declaring that she loves the life of a free woman and never expects to marry.

Plots and Rumors

As the gang wars continue to escalate in violence, vigilantes have risen up to combat these criminals. Chu, a clockwork ronin, and his companion Hideki Kin, a Shangti cowboy, have taken it upon themselves to stop as many outbreaks as they can, sometimes countering with violence themselves. The pair roams both sides of the river, protecting innocent people while trying to avoid the police forces. No one knows quite where they reside, but many people say they have seen the two in action, saving the city from itself.

Along with the gang wars, the Twin Cities are suffering from an infestation of tokkebi, small creatures who steal, pillage, and break machines. Many people leave their steamwork rickshaws parked while they shop, only to find them scavenged for parts and no longer working when they return. Whether the tokkebi have an organized culture is unknown, but they continue to be a growing problem in the cities.

CHIENG-MOW @ YANG-MOW AT A GLANCE

Population:

125,000 in the cities; 25,000 in the surrounding province

Demographics:

50% human; 30% gaijin; 20% other

Technology:

medium (some gas-lighting, steamwork rickshaw, steamwork boats, firearms)

Goods and Services:

recreational (entertainment, restaurants, gambling); exotic trade (household conveniences, foreign art, illegal goods); arts and crafts (pottery, baskets, weapons); Technology (firearms)

Government:

ruled by Prince Ji Fa and Prince Ji Liang

Kara Kora, Capital of the Keshou

Travelers joke that if you find yourself lost in the middle of the Kokushoko Akuchi, just head toward the sound of explosions to find Kara Kora. While this is meant in jest, the keshou city of Kara Kora certainly does have a large number of explosions sounding on a regular basis. Because so many residents of Kara Kora are dedicated to creating new technologies, and because keshou refuse to give up on a machine just because it does not seem to work, there are often laboratory mistakes that result in loud noises, fires, and hospitalization.

The city of Kara Kora is a mechanist's paradise. Most of the buildings in the city are built of clay, seen by the keshou as efficient, or brightly colored tents, seen by them as replaceable. Most dangerous laboratory work is completed in tents, however, since tents easily catch on fire, quickly alerting medics that an inventor is in need of medical assistance.

Keshou highly respect the role of the craftsman. Because of this, many works of sculpture and clockwork creations line the streets. In the center of town is a large clock that chimes on the hour and can be heard for miles around Kara Kora. As much as the people of Kara Kora love inventing and experimenting, they are even more pleased when their discoveries make their way onto the market. Kara Kora has a very large market district, filled with shops, inns, and restaurants.

The Mayor of Kara Kora, Vomanu-zin Ikooma, has been the leader of of of the keshou city since his election six years ago. The government of Kara Kora is modeled after examples spoken of by foreigners, where everyone in the city of a certain age has the right to vote for a candidate to see to the needs of the city. A small council is also elected to support the mayor. While there is no law that states the mayor of Kara Kora must be a keshou, no non-keshou politicians have yet to run for office, although a gaijin does sit on the advisory council.

Commerce

There is very little in the realm of technology that cannot be found in Kara Kora. Although the clockwork mechanists of Kara Kora do not specialize in firearms, they do offer many upgrades not available in other cities. The keshou have a general distrust of priests and believe religion to be a waste of time, but they do have a great deal of respect for wizards, who manipulate reality with the same ease that mechanists manipulate parts to create a whole. The Dragon Scale Upgrade Workshop, run by juuniship'o wizard Lightning Burst of the Dragon and mechanist Bakotoku Hitoomi, produces nearly any type of clockwork or arcane upgrade on the market. If a customer is willing to pay enough,

they also accept special orders, and are delighted to craft new upgrades whenever given an exciting new idea.

The area surrounding Kara Kora is almost entirely desert, but the keshou have managed to irrigate some of the soil to the east of the city, making it possible to grow crops. However, the limited amount of food they are able to produce does not support the city, and grains, meats, and other agricultural goods are the most important import into Kara Kora. These imports support a number of restaurants spread out among the shops, and are designed to keep visitors in the market areas to spend more money. Most of the inns of Kara Kora are also in the market district of the city. Outsiders rarely see the residential areas of Kara Kora, and believe that most of the city is made of shops and restaurants.

Law Enforcement

Like their goblin distant cousins, keshou are interested in making money. Unlike goblins, however, keshou are happy to make money through trade and inventions, and embrace the capitalist notion that the person who makes the best toys earns the most money. Competition between merchants and inventors is fierce, and larger companies are known to promote corporate intrigue, stealing ideas from or destroying the properties of their competitors.

Knowing this to be poor for business overall, the mayors of Kara Kora formed a branch of police consisting of former private investigators and spies. Led by the former Shangti Cowboy John Hamaguchi, former ninjas of the Kara Kora Police Department and other Shangti Cowboys are thought to be an incorruptible force in the city. According to Police Chief Hamaguchi, his officers never accept bribes and always get their man. This, of course, is not always true. Occasionally, the skills of off-duty police officers are very useful to groups involved in corporate espionage, and the incorruptible officers are often perpetrating the very crimes their fellows are trying to solve.

Kara Kora has no standing army, but does have a number of constructs guarding the city. The nature of these constructs is unknown to outsiders, but they do create explosions and people trying to sneak into the city often find themselves escorted in through the front gates on stretchers and taken immediately to local healers.

Notable Locations

Tower Square, a small park near the clock tower in the center of the market district, is nothing special by Chinan standards. Very few plants are able to grow there, so instead of being decorated with flora, the park is decorated with clockwork



sculptures. For a single coin dropped into a slot, these machines leap into motion, play music, or tell interesting facts about the area. None of these machines move from their pedestals, but all are designed to entertain those who visit the park.

The Cang Hao Diner (Blue Sky Diner) is one of the most popular restaurants in Kara Kora. The Cang Hao Diner offers casual meals at reasonable prices, and employs actors as its wait-staff. These comedians, dancers, and musicians entertain as they serve meals, and are known to burst out into song across the diner, harmonizing with their peers. Owner Emiko-ban Daikooma hires very few keshou as wait-staff, preferring more experienced, outside talent. A number of keshou comedians have joined the staff in the last few years and have also introduced some clowning techniques to the performances. A crowd favorite is juunishi-p'o acrobat Tumbles Amok of the Monkey, who occasionally delivers food to tables from above, using wiring in the ceiling of the dining room to traverse from the chefs to the tables, then dropping by his tail to deliver the food to applauding patrons.

Plots and Rumors

Tales of the cool blue springs scattered throughout the desert have led both keshou and other explorers to take caravans into the desert, seeking out new locations that might allow for more prosperous agricultural growth and trade. Unfortunately, none of these caravans have returned to Kara Kora, and relatives of the explorers have gotten nervous. There is talk of hiring other explorers to go after the caravans that traveled into the desert, but so far, the mayor has not approved this idea, due to the possible costs involved. Several companies have lost good employees in these explorations, and it is possible that these groups will step up and offer to hire explorers themselves.

KARA KORA AT A GLANCE

Population:

30,000 in the city; 5,000 confirmed in the surrounding province

Demographics:

85% keshou; 15% other

Technology:

high (gas-powered lights, steamwork rickshaw, complex machines, firearms)

Goods and Services:

technology (machines and new inventions, new weapons, upgrades); recreational (restaurants)

Government:

ruled by elected mayor, Vomamu-zin Ikooma

Tendou, Home of the Jinteki-Oni

The mountain town of Tendou can hardly be called a city with only five-thousand residents and five-thousand others within the province. Many members of the groups signing the original Treaty of the States felt that giving an entire governmental seat to the jinteki-oni was unnecessary. The measure passed, however, and the jinteki-oni have a province to call their own, high in the mountains.

Tendou is more than fifty times larger than a traditional jinteki-oni zoku, but the city is built in the image of the traditional zokus. The leaders of the six clans do not reside in Tendou for more than one month out of the year, as they govern from their home zokus and only travel to the city when there is need for a decision that affects all the clans. Though the six clan leaders are the true leaders of the jinteki-oni, they have followed the example of the old Empire by appointing a minister to tend to the concerns of the city itself and administer to the needs of its residents. The central building in Tendou, a round meeting hall, has rooms for the six clan leaders to stay on their visits and is the home of the current minister, Lin Man's Shadow. Lin was selected for the position due to her good business sense and appearance, which is more pleasing than most to the human Rosuto-Shimans. The six clan leaders felt that for these reasons, Lin would be a good liaison to the human kingdoms, and could possibly help develop better trade with the outer kingdoms.

While the jinteki-oni strive to make their city more accessible and welcoming to people of the other provinces, travel to the city is difficult. Located on a series of cliffs, Tendou is largely connected by rope bridges, ladders, and other dangerously seeming paths. Most of the houses and shops are built into caves, due to the lack of proper woods. The only wooden buildings are those belonging to the Monastery of Jinteki, which honors the six original jinteki-oni.



Commerce

There is very little organized entertainment for visitors in Tendou. This is something that Lin Man's Shadow is working to change. Until recent times, the jinteki-oni had very little to offer in trade to the other kingdoms, as only the wealthy were interested in the artwork produced by their artisans, and then only as a novelty. In the last few years, however, a group of keshou moved into the mountains and described a plan by which jinteki-oni, could mine and become the suppliers of metal and ore to the rest of the island, saving keshou and human miners from facing the dangers of the Doragon-Iki Yama. Lin Man's Shadow tackled this idea directly, and miners were brought from several camps in the low areas of the mountains to instruct members of the jinteki-oni clans in the harvesting of materials from inside the earth.

Along with finding rich seams of ore and metal, jinteki-oni miners found many deposits of gemstones. These are harvested in small quantities and offered at the Tendou market. Gem merchants from all across Rosuto-Shima brave the mountains and the narrow passes leading to Tendou for the opportunity to trade with these gem miners. As trade has increased, the old stigmas associated with the jinteki-oni, and the dangers of the mountains, have fallen to the wayside.

Jinteki-oni are known to be highly spiritual, and many seeking spiritual guidance study at the Monastery of Jinteki. Although the monastery is devoted to the first jinteki-oni, they also embrace the old religions taught by the monks who first rescued them. The jinteki-oni are peaceful people, but their martial skills are fierce, and many young warriors seek to train in this spiritual form of combat. Master Kang, the leader of the monastery, is a hideous looking member of the Three Horn clan. He has more horns than is typical for members of his clan and also sports a third eye. Most visitors and new students to the monastery are terrified of Master Kang, but while he is a stern master, he is also kind and insightful, and his poetry has been recited as far from Tendou as the Twin Cities.

Law Enforcement

Due to the increase in trade, there has been an increase in crime. In order to combat crime, the six clan leaders appointed Kan Dark Father as the head of security for the city. Kan has gathered together a force of fifty jinteki-oni warriors as the Keepers of Tendou.

The jinteki-oni have a delicate relationship with local kijo, who, like themselves, are often mistaken for oni by wanderers in the mountains. The kijo often blame the citizens of Tendou if

any of their number are killed by travelers. Lin Man's Shadow has appointed Gong Big Bones to serve as an ambassador to the kijo to keep the situation from escalating.

Tendou is cursed with both tengu and kitsune, and any number of spirits roam the mountains, hoping to take the lives of travelers and manifest some of their own anguish. Despite Tendou's priestss best efforts, the problems persist.

Notable Locations

Chung Man's Shadow, called "Toad" by many outsiders, represents the Six Clan's Gem Mining Operation (SCGMO) of Tendou. Though others represent the metal and ore mining operations of the jinteki-oni, Toad is the best known of all of them. This is partly due to his extremely friendly manner and raucous sense of humor. His personality and the quality of his wares are largely responsible for the increase in Tendou's trade with the outside world. Toad executes his official business from the SCGMO cave office, but is often found at the Yama Sakedokoro, the only restaurant and sake bar in Tendou. Merchants believe that business conducted at the sakedokoro is more profitable for them, but Toad is a clever businessman. He is often able to make people believe they have negotiated a better deal than they truly have.

Plots and Rumors

A small cult of priests has recently built a retreat in the mountains near Tendou. These priests consider themselves to be purists, and believe that any creatures associated with the oni carry a taint and must be destroyed. The priests have not gathered the strength necessary to threaten the city of Tendou, but they have caused trouble for many of the villages in the jinteki-oni province. Young jinteki-oni have been kidnapped, and some villages have been set on fire, damaging crops, properties, and sometimes causing the death of village residents.

TENDOU AT A GLANCE

Population:

5,000 in the city; 5,000 in the surrounding province

Demographics:

95% jinteki-oni; 5% other

Technology:

low (simple machines)

Goods and Services:

religious (holy items, spiritual retreats and training); arts and crafts (paintings, poetry, dramatic prose); mining (metal, ore, gems)

Government:

tribal republic ruled by the leaders of the six clans

CHAPTER
SIX

BUSTILARY

Rosuto-Shima has long been plagued with dangerous creatures, and while many cityfolk consider them to be nothing more than myths and legends, countryfolk must deal with these creatures on a regular basis. Some are the result of careless use of technology, while others thrive in the new environments provided by city slums. Still others are forced to retreat into abandoned areas, because their territories shrink due to the rise of cities. Most are dangerous, but some are benevolent and even helpful.

Gaijin often come to Rosuto-Shima with stories of dangers in the world beyond. The traditional tales of these outsiders involve such amazing creatures as giants, mermaids, and unicorns. The people of Rosuto-Shima merely laugh at these tales. Such creatures must be the inventions of scribes merely to create awe in the audience. While few in Rosuto-Shima would believe in a horned horse, most would easily accept a Long Ma, or dragon horse. The people of Rosuto-Shima are always amused that gaijin do not know the proper names for the creatures in their own stories.

The Iron Gauntlets rulebook provides a number of animal and monster species for games set in a traditional fantasy setting. Some of these creatures appear in Rosuto-Shima, but most are considered nothing more than myth by the people of the island. Creatures from Iron Gauntlets that have made their homes on Rosuto-Shima are included in the following list.

Common Animal Species

All of the standard domesticated animals and livestock are common to Rosuto-Shima, and while not necessarily common, all of the typical animals of the wild are also indigenous to the island. Giant spiders are present, typically as followers of a kumo, a creature indigenous to Rosuto-Shima.

Droll Species

None of the droll species are indigenous to Rosuto-Shima, although Timmul goblins may visit the island occasionally to see their keshou distant cousins. The storytellers of Rosuto-Shima, hearing descriptions of orcs, assume that these are a type of foreign oni, and believe that the trolls and ogres described by gaijin are actually samebito and kijo respectively.

Behemoth Species

None of the huge creatures of the foreign lands live on Rosuto-Shima.

Serpent Species

Foreign dragons are believed to be nothing more than large lizards. Real dragons, say the Rosuto-Shimans, are far more powerful than the mere beasts described in gaijin legends. Nayome live near underground streams in the mountains and lava beasts are indigenous to Jigoku. Sand serpents occupy the Sabaku Fuyou, while snakes are common in Rosuto-Shima and represent lust in mythology.

Magical, Undead, and Other Creatures

Of these creatures, only a handful can be found on Rosuto-Shima. Sprites are rarely present, but they are thought to be related to the only barely more common yosei, which take on a bird-like appearance. Golems are occasionally built by wizards who have neglected to learn enough technology to employ clockwork servants for the same tasks.

New Creature Gimmicks

Along with the creature gimmicks described in the Iron Gauntlets rulebook, a handful of new gimmicks are provided below.

Possession

The creature is able to take over the mind and body of any character. Such an attempt requires a subterfuge task resisted by the target's reasoning-based composure task. An additional resisted task is required every six hours in order to maintain control.

Shapeshifting

The creature can change its physical form and appearance at will. The change takes a matter of seconds and is permanent unless the creature wills a another transformation. Each change requires a fitness-based composure task—a failure indicates that the creature gains one grade of fatigue.

Spirit Shade

The creature does not possess a physical form and cannot be harmed by physical attacks. It can make its presence known visually with an influence-based composure task, however. Because it does not have a physical form, all fitness-based tasks are attempted using the creature's influence ability instead, as a way of exerting its willpower to affect the physical world (such as brawling attacks). The creature may be witnessed by those with totem-based magic as if it were a human or animal spirit.





ROSUTO-SHIMA CREATURES

Ba-She

Raised as pets by nayome, the ba-she has a human-like face and a huge, snake-like body. The spines growing down its back are black and sharp to the touch. When not raised in captivity, ba-she are solitary creatures that enjoy a near-comatose sleep, waking only once every few years to feed. During those waking months, the creature causes havoc and death, moving quickly and eating the largest animals it can find. They usually feed on livestock, but the ba-she's unhinged jaw can also swallow an adult human whole.

While most people fear the ba-she's destructive power, the juunishi-p'o of the House of the Snake believe them to be a representation of the snake p'o spirit. During their time of slumber, juunishi-p'o leave offerings outside of ba-she lairs, believing that this satisfies both the creature's hunger and brings honor to the snake p'o.

Ba-she raised in captivity live wherever their nayome masters breed them. Wild ba-she live throughout the Doragon-Iki Yama; they tend to place their lairs nearby villages, so that when they wake after their long sleep, food is easy to find. Many have lairs in the mountains near Chengti. Though only barely intelligent, ba-she have learned the most common language of Rosuto-Shima, and often sing to intelligent prey before devouring them.

fitness awareness creativity reasoning influence
C B 0 A A

skills: brawling, stealth

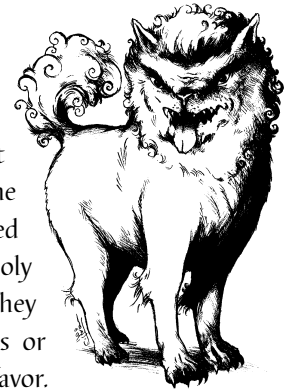
gimmicks: venomous

natural weapons: teeth (1INJ), constriction (+1FAT)



Fu Dogs

Once bred and trained by the Emperor's elite staff of animal handlers, fu dogs are a unique breed of semi-intelligent dog that mixes normal canine traits with the blood of dragons. Fu dogs were raised as guards for imperial treasures, holy places, and even royal children. They were often given as gifts to nobles or priests who had won the Emperor's favor. Several hundred were kept in the imperial kennel in Shangti. During the War of the States, the fu dogs disappeared from their domestic environments, and many suspected that the guardians were killed off by the war.



Many of these special dogs managed to survive, however, and have made their way in the wild. Without the constraints of the imperial breeders, the fu dogs have mated prolifically and have increased in number. Fu dogs now live all over Rosuto-Shima, preferring to make their dens in places near solitary temples. Their training to guard items of importance has become something of an ingrained trait—fu dogs hoard items in their dens, protecting these treasures and baubles as they would their own young.

Most fu dogs travel in packs of ten to fifteen, the majority of which are female. Each pack is headed by an alpha male and female, and generally contains at least three pups during the summer. Though no fu dogs are currently domesticated, it is possible that they could be brought back out of the wild to serve in partnership with humans once again. Fu dogs can easily communicate with humans, as they are able to speak the language of the Rosuto-Shimans, although their intelligence does not allow for very complicated conversations.

The images of fu dogs can be found at most of the Imperial sites still remaining in Rosuto-Shima, as well as a number of the temples in Chengti—great fu dog guardians were honored in death by being dipped in gold and placed as art. Some say that the spirits of these dogs continue to be guardians, even in death.

fitness awareness creativity reasoning influence
D D 0 A A

skills: athletics, brawling, survival, composure

gimmicks: toughness (1)

natural weapons: teeth (1INJ)

KenroJiJin

Creatures of earth and stone, the kenro-ji-jin are the sages of Rosuto-Shima. Appearing as nothing more than large boulders, they spend many years in a long slumber, but can be awakened by those who seek their wisdom. This is commonly performed by a ritual, but brave wanderers who learn the location and name of a kenro-ji-jin may be able to awaken the creature by traveling to its home and calling out its name. Once awake, the creature can provide information about history, ancient knowledge, or tales of the people and land of Rosuto-Shima. While kenro-ji-jin sleep for many years and experience little of the history of Rosuto-Shima for themselves, the land itself gives them the information over time, and they store it all in their wise heads.

The kenro-ji-jin are not aggressive by nature, but if they are awakened by those who seek to harm their homes or are provoked into a fight, the creatures turn into a destructive force. They prefer throwing rocks at their enemies from a long distance. Up close, they use their heavy stone fists to pummel their enemies into a fleshy pulp.

There are only a very few kenro-ji-jin known to live in Rosuto-Shima. Three of these live in the Doragon-Iki Yama and a fourth lives at the northern tip of the Sabaku Fuyou. There may be others living in Rosuto-Shima, and while the kenro-ji-jin probably know of them, no one else is aware of their existence.

fitness awareness creativity reasoning influence
 C A A G A

skills: brawling, geography, legends
gimmicks: oversized, toughness (3)
natural weapons: stone fist (+1FAT)



Kijo

These large horned creatures are often mistaken for oni—a mistake that has turned the once peaceful creatures into warriors. Kijo are ape-like humanoids with large tusks, ram's horns, and very little hair covering their bodies. They often wear animal skins as primitive clothing.

After centuries of being attacked and killed by wanderers in the forests and mountains, the kijo grew from solitary wanderers into nomadic tribes. Knowing that they needed greater skill to survive their well-trained enemies, kijo observed their neighbors in silence, teaching themselves warfare and the mystical arts. The spirits of the totem came to the kijo, and ever since, the tribes have been very devoted to animal spirit worship—many possess the totem ability.*

Kijo are extremely rare in the well-traveled parts of Rosuto-Shima, but they continue to make their homes in the Doragon-Iki Yama and the Akki-Kou Zetsu Mori, as far from the cities of men as they can reach. The kijo typically settle in an area for only a few months before moving, fearful that the humans of Rosuto-Shima will attack if they find the kijo villages. While kijo are not very intelligent, they have a complex and deep culture, and strive not to harm other living creatures unless their own lives depend on it.

fitness awareness creativity reasoning influence totem
 D C B B C C*
skills: brawling, composure, dueling, melee, totem skills
gimmicks: oversized, toughness (1)
natural weapons: horns (+2FAT)

Kumo

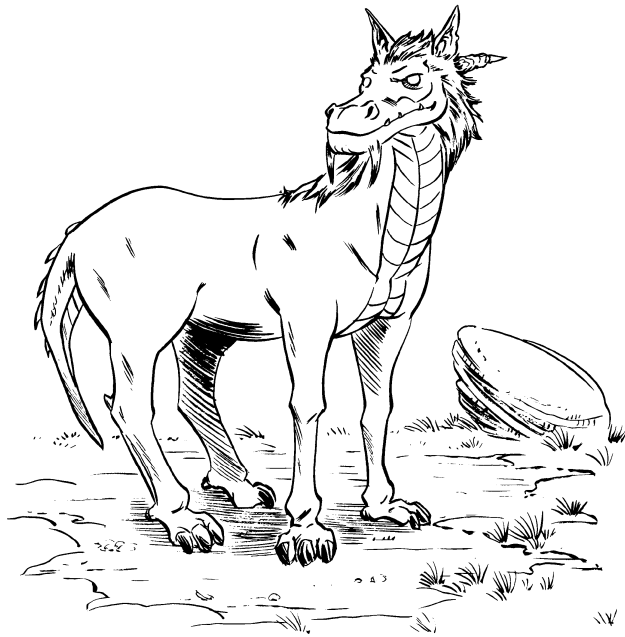
Kumo are humongous spiders, even larger than the giant spiders that serve them. Their webs are made of the strongest fibers, and no metal blade can pierce them—only magic and technological upgrades have been able to pierce through these webs. Giant spiders look to kumo as a queen and mother, serving them and bringing food—generally in the form of well-wrapped travelers. In hard years, when travelers are not plentiful, the giant spiders are known to sacrifice themselves so that the kumo can eat.

The venom of the kumo causes paralysis, and its hide is extremely tough. Luckily, kumo fear light and only hunt at night. There are two known kumo lairs in Rosuto-Shima—one in the Doragon-Iki Yama and the other in the Kokushoko Akuchi. The people of Linan know to stay well away from the coastal region of the swamp, fearing the giant kumo who lives there and all of her giant spider minions. A kumo is no more intelligent than



her spider minions, but she is a stealthy hunter. When hunting by herself, a kumo prefers to sneak up on her prey, leap on it from behind, and paralyze it.

fitness awareness **creativity** **reasoning** **influence**
 D C 0 0 0
skills: athletics, brawling, stealth
gimmicks: oversized, flight, toughness (7), venomous
natural weapons: mandibles (3INJ)



Raicho

Many travelers have mistaken the raicho for a common rook or crow until they get closer. The creature does indeed look like one of the smaller birds, but is typically four feet in length with an even longer wing-span. They are wild animals, have average intelligence compared to other birds, and are fiercely protective of their nests and their young. Most raicho nests are found in the foothills of the Doragon-Iki Yama, and there are nesting grounds just north of Tendou. Only very few warriors have ever survived travel through these nesting grounds.

Among the warriors who have braved the nesting grounds are members of the jinteki-oni, who often breed raicho as pets. The raicho, in turn, deliver small sheep and mountain goats back to the jinteki-oni villages, happy to hunt for their masters. They become just as protective about jinteki-oni children as they do their own young. For this reason, jinteki-oni often use raicho to protect their charges, such as property and children, as opposed to guard dogs.

fitness awareness **creativity** **reasoning** **influence**
 C C 0 0 0
skills: athletics, brawling, stealth
gimmicks: flight
natural weapons: talons (1INJ), beak (+1INJ)

Long Ma

Known as dragon horses, the long-ma are the relatives of the mighty celestial dragons and have the demeanor and appearance of horses. They are no more intelligent than animals, but are incredibly fast and hardy, and able to survive long months without food or water. Several herds of up to one-hundred live on Rosuto-Shima. While many have tried to catch and domesticate these creatures, none have yet to succeed.

The largest herd of long-ma tends to roam the southern parts of the island, just south of the city of Chieng-Mow. Stories tell how they have raced the steam-engine on its route from the Twin Cities to Kuang-Cho. Others say that the dragon horses have dashed straight across the Mow River without even seeming to recognize that they were running on water. Those who have seen the long-ma leap say the beasts can jump as high as ten feet in the air without being phased.

fitness awareness **creativity** **reasoning** **influence**
 D D 0 0 0
skills: athletics, brawling
gimmicks: oversized, sure-footed
natural weapons: hooves (+2FAT)



Samebito

Samebito are extremely large humanoids who have black skin, green eyes, and spiky beards. They typically make their nests under bridges. For this reason, wise travelers offer food at every bridge they cross, just in case a samebito lives beneath it. If a food offering is not left at the home of a samebito, they attack without mercy.

As cities have grown larger and the countryside has become more populated, samebito have adapted to the changes in their environment by taking up residence in abandoned buildings and wells. Abandoned villages are ideal habitats for samebito, although the creatures rarely live in groups larger than pairs and are typically solitary. Samebito most often make their homes in the center of Rosuto-Shima, in the fertile lands in the area between Chengti, Huinin, and Kuang-Cho.

In some villages, the presence of samebito is thought to bring good luck. The people of the village leave food offerings outside of town on a regular basis, and in exchange, samebito offer their protection against other creatures of the wild. Despite their bravery and fairly low intelligence, samebito are not so foolhardy as to attack large groups of warriors or soldiers. They tend to choose their prey by targeting small groups of travelers that look only lightly armed.

fitness	awareness	creativity	reasoning	influence
C	B	A	A	C

skills: brawling, melee, survival, stealth
gimmicks: musclebound, oversized, toughness (2)

Tanuki

Mischievous little creatures that look like a humanoid version of a badger crossed with a raccoon, tanuki are experts at getting into trouble. Only two to three feet tall, the tanuki live in tribal villages, predominantly in the Akki-Kou Zetsu Mori, although they also inhabit forests in the low ranges of the Doragon-Iki Yama. Their native language consists of barks and growls, but the more intelligent members of tanuki tribes have also learned the language of human Rosuto-Shimans.



Tanuki who live in the wilder, less inhabited areas are very peaceful creatures, although they like to taunt and scare travelers by pretending to be spirits of the wilderness. With the

expansion of Liaoyan and the growth of Tendou, the tanuki have lost much of their traditional habitat, and have found it easier to gain food and shiny objects by raiding villages and attacking travelers. For the most part, tanuki do not actually intend to harm, but are quick to rely on trickery and stealth to take what they desire.

When threatened, tanuki fight to the death with primitive weapons. They are especially fierce if their young are threatened. Tanuki largely prefer peaceful relationships with their neighbors and seek to cause a little bit of local mischief and chaos without causing harm.

fitness	awareness	creativity	reasoning	influence
B	C	A	A	C

skills: brawling, dueling, legerdemain, stealth
gimmicks: undersized

Tengu

Tengu enjoy nothing more than tormenting pious priests and monks. They can change their appearance and often take on the form of birds, monks, or long-nosed winged creatures. In bird-form, tengu physically attack holy men, and use their magic* to grant monks and priests false visions that seem to come from the gods.

While tengu prefer to live near small villages and monasteries in the mountains, many have recently begun making their homes in the mountains near Chengti. The wealth of holy men to torment in that city makes even a largely populated area have a great appeal for the Tengu.

Tengu rarely choose to fight. If necessary, they do so in their long-nosed, winged form. More often, tengu fly away in its bird-form, and later returns to lead the threat on a pointless quest, or convince them that a ridiculous dream has been granted to them by the gods.

fitness	awareness	creativity	reasoning	influence	crafting
C	C	C	C	D	C*

skills: fabrica sensus, performance, subterfuge
gimmicks: shapeshifting, flight
natural weapons: talons (in bird-form; 1IW)



Tokkebi

These small, humanoid creatures are extremely ugly and grow to only one or two feet in height. In early years on Rosuto-Shima, whenever a plow broke, a bridge failed, or another simple machine fell apart, villagers would automatically blame Tokkebi. These hideous creatures have always been fascinated by machines and tools, and the rise in technology has only further attracted their interest.

Tokkebi traditionally make their homes in the woodlands near small villages, but with the rise of technology in cities, more and more have made the slums their homes. While many modern city people are aware of Tokkebi, they do not think of them as monsters, but instead compare them to rats—a nuisance that every city must suffer.

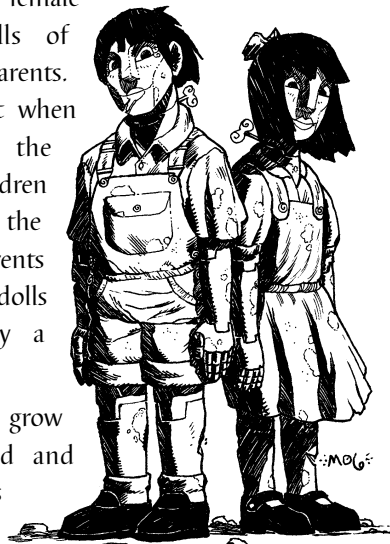
Tokkebi believe that if they cause enough mischief and break enough machines, they can eventually chase all of the big people away, making the cities a haven of chaos for their own tribes. Unfortunately, they do not seem to have thought this through to its logical conclusion—if they chase off the people, there will no longer be any machines for them to break. Until they understand this, tokkebi are likely to continue to create chaos. They spend much time in Yang-Mow near the firearms plants and love the cities of Shangti and Kara Kora, where technology is available everywhere.

fitness awareness **creativity** **reasoning** **influence**
 B C B B A
skills: legerdemain, clockworking, stealth
gimmicks: undersized, hideous appearance

Tokutaro-san and Otoku-san

The male tokutaro-san and the female otoku-san are clockwork dolls of children created for grieving parents. While the idea seemed brilliant when first developed and marketed, the production of the clockwork children came to a screeching halt when the designers realized that many parents were abandoning the clockwork dolls because they were too eerily a reminder of the dead children.

The clockwork children never grow old, and those who are loved and accepted by the grieving parents eventually outlive their masters.



Almost all tokutaro-san and otoku-san go mad or become spiteful towards living people, especially children. The clockwork dolls live in city slums, pretending to be runaways or homeless children, hoping only to be taken in by some family whose kindness they can exploit by causing chaos within the household.

While clockwork children have no natural weapons, they excel at adapting and learning. They have no skill in dueling or melee combat, because they were not programmed with the proper information. Instead, they prefer to use stealth and subterfuge to get their way, and often purchase herbal concoctions with stolen money that can eventually be used to poison their benefactors.

fitness awareness **creativity** **reasoning** **influence**
 C A A C C
skills: performance, stealth, subterfuge
gimmicks: undersized

Yama Uba

Appearing as hideous, old women in the forest, yama uba are only barely related to humanity. Similar to foreign monsters called hags, some yama uba have magical powers*. Some are able to divine the future, while others collect strange objects of great power. All yama uba live alone, usually in a forest cottage or mountain hut. Sometimes they live within sight of small villages in the farm country of Rosuto-Shima, but they never join communities or travel to cities.

Yama uba are just as likely to be devious as they are to be helpful. They typically seek to test not only a person's kindness, but also their sensibility. A generous fool is no more likely to find favor with a yama uba than a miserly villain. Instead, the hag seeks to reward those who balance their wisdom with their generosity, never giving too much and always with good purpose.

Those who seek out yama uba are encouraged to bring offerings for its sage advice. They prefer duck over all other meats and are likely to exchange information for the simple gesture of politeness.

fitness awareness **creativity** **reasoning** **influence** **totem**
 C C A C D C*
skills: many crafting-based skills
gimmicks: resistant (divinity magic, gui magic), toughness (2)

Yasha

In the deeps of Akki-Kou Zetsu Mori are vast, hollow trees, filled with colonies of bats. But not only bats live in the rotting forest—the yasha dwell there as well. With the wings and body of a bat combined with the torso and face of a woman, yasha are known to tempt travelers into dangerous areas so that they can attack all at once, draining their victims of blood.

Yasha generally live alone or in small colonies of no more than six. They tend to live in proximity to bat colonies, possibly to conceal their location. Yasha prey on any lone traveler, but they particularly like young men. As the population of Liaoyan has grown, yasha have gotten bolder in their choices of meals—any young soldier stationed on his own is likely to encounter the beasts, and while a single warrior is able to easily dispatch a single yasha, colonies of the creatures are a great danger to those who wander the Akki-Kou Zetsu Mori alone.

Despite their hideous appearance, these half-woman, half-bat creatures are often able to lure travelers into their clutches with nothing more than the performance of a song (this is the same as the Medusa paralyze attack, but by listening to the song rather than looking it the eyes*). They have beautiful voices and are said to be able to charm the heavens. All of their songs, however, are sad ballads that end in death, and wise travelers know to travel far from where such songs are sung.

fitness awareness creativity reasoning influence

B C A A C

skills: performance, subterfuge

gimmicks: flight, venomous, undersized

natural weapons: teeth (1N), paralyze*



ONI

Of all of the dangerous creatures of Rosuto-Shima, oni are the worst. Thought to be the demons that torment souls in the afterlife, oni also pose a real danger to the living. Once, scores of oni lived on Jigoku and in the Akki-Kouzetu Mori, but after the Oni Wars in the Golden Age of the Empire, they were largely chased from Rosuto-Shima. In the Steampunk Mushi setting, oni have been returning to the island. Some of them are even capable of masquerading as mortals, and their ability to pass as natives of the island causes many to fear these doppelgangers more than the most fierce and twisted oni of legend. All types of oni may possess the crafting ability, but most prefer to rely on their brute strength and fearsome appearance to intimidate their enemies.

Awabi

Twisted humanoids that live beneath the waves, awabi are “oni of the sea” that guard lucky black pearls. Most of them live in the coral reefs surrounding the island of Rosuto-Shima, but they keep plenty of distance from each other. They are vicious, devious creatures, and only socialize with others of their kind when mating, and the male awabi often becomes a meal for the female.





Awabi typically have dark blue or green skin, lending to their abilities to travel concealed below the waves. They are extremely protective of their territories, and attack any ships that travel near their lucky black pearls. Although the coral reefs are often blamed for the shipwrecks off the coast of Rosuto-Shima, awabi are just as guilty as the natural dangers. Awabi not only delight in sabotaging and sinking ships, but in torturing drowning sailors, tormenting them with the possibility of survival if they endure certain hardships. These sailors are almost always killed in the end.

Generally an awabi's lair contains huge collections of goods and items stolen from the ships they destroy. Awabi can breathe both air and water, and they enjoy calling out battle cries to weaken the resolve of their enemies.

fitness awareness **creativity** **reasoning** **influence**
 C C B C B

skills: variable, as with player characters

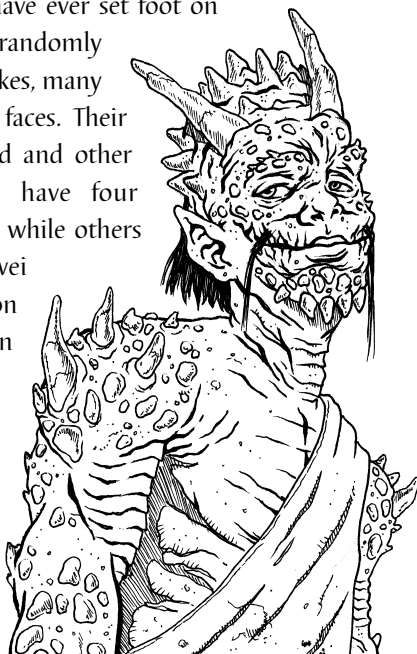
gimmicks: toughness (1)

Khwei

Though the oni and Celestial Dragons have long been enemies, at some point in their history, the two mixed. Whether the khwei are a type of oni created by the Celestial Dragons to counter the rest of their race or there was some tragic love story between the two races is unknown, even to the wisest and most learned scholars. What is known, however, is that the khwei combine the intelligence and sophistication of the Celestial Dragons with the twisted temperament and vile appetites of other oni.

Khwei have a mixture of both draconic and humanoid features, and only a very few have ever set foot on Rosuto-Shima. Their bodies are randomly covered in scales, horns, and spikes, many of which protrude from their faces. Their limbs are sometimes humanoid and other times reptilian—some khwei have four fingers and opposable thumbs, while others have sharp claws. Most khwei have patches of greasy hair on their heads, and some sport thin facial hair as well.

Although very secluded from other oni and typically solitary in nature even among other khwei, they have served as generals and strategists for



oni commanders. In times of war, the khwei are called upon to use their knowledge and innate cunning to turn the tide of battle. Khwei are also fierce fighters in their own right and dangerous foes. The last time khwei were seen on Rosuto-Shima was during the Oni Wars. At that time, a few were known to live in the Akki-Kou Zetsu Mori; in more recent years, they are thought to have gone back to their hellish homes. It is possible, however, that a few khwei still reside on the volcanic island of Jigoku.

Although most khwei are roughly the size of humans, one occasionally grows to an extremely large size. These creatures lose most of their reasoning and creativity ability, but gain huge boosts in their fitness ability and also possess the oversized gimmick.

fitness awareness **creativity** **reasoning** **influence**
 C C C D C

skills: variable, as with player characters

gimmicks: surefooted, toughness (3)

Konaki Jiji

Though it seems cruel, few residents of the countryside of Rosuto-Shima would stop at the sound of a baby in distress or a small child in tears. These people have learned not to trust such noises. While there is an occasional child in need of help, this is most often just a guise of the konaki jiji, one of the most deceptive oni. Disguised as babies or small children, konaki jiji wail at the top of their lungs until someone stops to help them. Once they have attracted a victim, the konaki jiji turns into a hideous creature with a child-like, porcelain face, and a large scaly body, four arms, and a small tail.

Kind-hearted villagers often approach a bawling child at a distance, and if the child's face or body is hideously scarred, they know that the child is a demon. City people, however, are often taken in by the deception. Because they reject the old superstitions, any kind-hearted urbanite is likely to stop to aid the small child and quickly regret it.

Konaki jiji have adapted quickly to the growth of the cities. They are not entirely social creatures, preferring to hunt alone, but some of them have gathered into small communities in the slums of Shangti and the Twin Cities, posing as runaways to lure unsuspecting victims into their midsts.

fitness awareness **creativity** **reasoning** **influence**
 B C B B C

skills: brawling, subterfuge

gimmicks: shapeshifting, toughness (1)

natural weapons: claws (+2FAT), tail (+1FAT)



Ma-Mo

The ma-mo have adapted well to the modern changes of Rosuto-Shima. These oni appear as black-skinned, beautiful women who entice men into relations. During their romantic encounters, the ma-mo infect the men with a horrible disease—the symptoms include large, painful boils and rotting flesh, accompanied by a sickly-sweet smell*. Those infected with this disease can find no cure through normal medical means. Instead, they must seek the aid of a priest or nikobo, who can consecrate them and remove the disease.

Many ma-mo have moved to the cities and reside predominantly in Shangti and Talu. They enjoy posing as prostitutes, and some brothels unwittingly employ them due to their beautiful and exotic looks. In spite of their ability to adjust to the growth of the cities in Rosuto-Shima, the population of ma-mo is still very low, and they only rarely make their presence known out of fear of the nikobo. The only way for an average citizen to identify a ma-mo is to look into the creature’s eyes—ma-mo have no whites or irises, only a pupil that fills their entire eye.

One of the geisha who regularly attends the business courts of Kou Akiudo Jun of Shangti is suspected by many priests of being a ma-mo. Any priest who dares to speak his mind about the geisha, however, find themselves ostracized by modern society as superstitious and backwards.

fitness awareness creativity reasoning influence
 B B B C D

skills: variable, as with player characters

gimmicks: toughness (1), disease*

Ko-Oni

Though their name literally means “little oni,” the ko-oni are not small of size, merely small of importance in the oni community. These huge brutes are less intelligent than nearly every other type of oni, and they tend to serve as soldiers and brawlers rather than leaders of their kind. They are often considered nothing more than slaves by higher forms of oni.

Ko-oni have four main skin tones—black, red, green, and blue. Different pigments of those tones are not uncommon, however. Ko-oni stand around eight to ten feet tall, but tend to hunch over and drag their long arms. They also have short legs and a pot belly, and their hunger is reputed to be insatiable. Most have a squished, ape-like face with two to four horns, and shaggy unkempt manes. They also have protruding tusks, often chipped or broken during some fit of violence, and dully pointed teeth.



Ko-oni have few desires beyond eating, sleeping, and wonton destruction. Most have a weakness for sake and prefer the taste of human flesh above any other food. While they can use any number of weapons, many prefer the kanobo, a six-foot-long iron bar studded with rows of spikes.

fitness awareness creativity reasoning influence
 C C A A A

skills: variable, as with player characters

gimmicks: oversized, toughness (2)

Moujuu

Though the moujuu have traits of common domesticated animals, most commonly the horse, ox, and goat, they are known as the wild beasts of the oni world. With their superior strength, wits, and ability to intimidate their peers, the moujuu are the dominant force over all the other oni. Over time, as the human world became more civilized, the moujuu mocked their forms of government, building corrupt laws and military-style governments designed to keep the themselves in power over all the other oni.

Although typically the same height as an average human, moujuu are also twice as wide. They have traits of beasts of burden juxtaposed on twisted and disfigured humanoid forms. Moujuu may also have traits of wild animals, but these features are uncommon, and generally mark them as being destined for greatness and leadership.

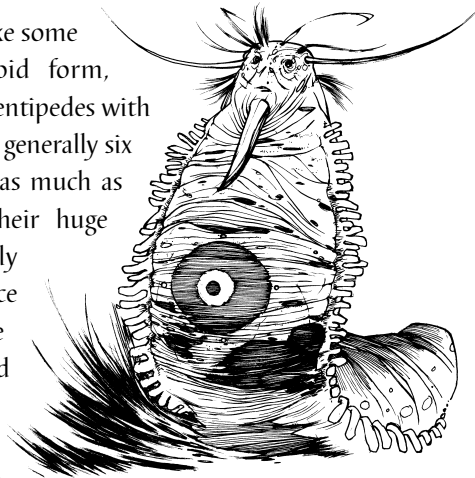


The last time moujuu were seen on Rosuto-Shima was during the Oni Wars. Like the khwei, they inhabited the battlefields of the Akki-Kou Zetsu Mori, taking control of villages and torturing the people who lived there between battles. No moujuu are currently known to reside on Rosuto-Shima, but some are suspected of remaining on Jigoku. Magatama stone miners have whispered about hideous goat-men and great, wide beasts that stalk the mining locations. Those who have seen such creatures often refuse to return to Jigoku.

fitness awareness **creativity** **reasoning** **influence**
 D C B C D
skills: variable, as with player characters
gimmicks: hideous appearance, oversized, toughness (3)

Okumade

Unlike most oni, who take some sort of twisted humanoid form, okumade appear as giant centipedes with thousands of legs. They are generally six feet in height and can be as much as twenty feet in length. Their huge mandibles are extremely sharp, and their brute force is impressive, but they have very little intelligence and are often only barely able to speak any form of language. Most okumade live underground, in swamps, or on mountain-sides. They prefer warm environments, so they avoid high peaks covered in snow and prefer volcanoes, as they are unhurt by lava. Though only a few okumade are known to live in Rosuto-Shima, they are found in the depths of the Kokushoko Akuchi and the northern portions of the Doragon-Iki Yama, as well as on the island of Jigoku.



Okumade suffer from random birth characteristics. Some have bloated bodies, and short and stubby legs like maggots. Others have twisted, humanoid faces with huge mandibles protruding from small humanoid mouths. These deformed okumade are particularly dangerous, as they are filled with rage because of their defects.

fitness awareness **creativity** **reasoning** **influence**
 D C A A A
skills: athletics, brawling
gimmicks: venomous, oversized, toughness (2),
 resistance (lava, fire)
natural weapons: mandibles (2IN)

Oni Nembutsu

When Rosuto-Shiman storytellers first told foreigners about the oni nembutsu, they were perplexed as to why villagers would have so much fear for a monster that literally translates as “demon playing.” Thinking the creatures sounded friendly, the gaijin missed important information—the oni nembutsu, appear to be fearsome humans, rather than oni. Because of this, they can blend in with villagers, murdering many members of a community before their true nature is discovered.



Most oni nembutsu look like very ugly, but otherwise normal, humans. Some may have a distinguishing feature, like extra eyes, that they hide under various costumes. Others have deformities hidden by normal clothing—a chest replaced with a gaping maw lined with hundreds of little teeth; the lower half of the body replaced by a giant hand, with fingers serving as legs; or hideous claws on both the fingers and toes, hidden by large shoes and sturdy gloves.

Because oni nembutsu can easily hide their identity, many suspect that they live among them, dressed as wanderers, pilgrims, or traveling priests, but no one knows for sure. Some even believe that the oni nembutsu is simply a superstition, designed to ostracize members of the community who do not fit in, and dismiss the monster as a folk rumor. If there are oni nembutsu on Rosuto-Shima, they do everything they can to encourage this belief, which makes their ability to blend in even stronger.

fitness awareness **creativity** **reasoning** **influence**
 C B B C D
skills: variable, as with player characters
gimmicks: hideous appearance, toughness (1)

Tsuchigumo

More fearsome than giant spiders or kumo, the tsuchigumo combine their oni heritage with the form of a humanoid spider. Their venom is deadly and only curable by a priest or nikobo, and they are generally ten feet tall, although this depends on their form. Like the okumade, they have huge, extremely sharp mandibles but very low intelligence. Most tsuchigumo prefer to live in forests or mountains, especially dark, moist places. Though only a few tsuchigumo are known to live on Rosuto-Shima, they are found in the depths of the Akki-Kou Zetsu Mori and in the dark valleys and caves of the Doragon-Iki Yama. They enjoy preying on lone travelers, dropping down from tall trees and landing with their full weight to trap their prey beneath them.

The features of tsuchigumo are random. Some are born with the body of a spider and the torso of a man. Others have roughly humanoid bodies, but the face and the huge arms and legs of a spider. Tsuchigumo often live in areas where kumo and giant spiders hunt—the tsuchigumo often find it a sport to hunt these other arachnid creatures. All tsuchigumo are accompanied by a swarm of spiders, often more than a thousand at a time, all of various sizes. Some giant spiders have also been known to join tsuchigumo swarms.

fitness **awareness** **creativity** **reasoning** **influence**

D C A A A

skills: athletics, brawling, stealth

gimmicks: venomous, oversized, toughness (2), surefooted

natural weapons: mandibles (2INJ)



SPIRITS @ THE DEAD

Since the coming of technology, restless spirits have become a larger and more dangerous problem. It is said that the dead must have certain rituals performed by priests in order to pass from this world to the next, often to be reborn into the world in a different form. As more and more people leave the old ways and religious life behind, more and more people die without having their souls properly sent back to the wheel of life. These spirits are trapped in Rosuto-Shima, and many of them have become very angry about their situation, taking out all their rage and ire on the living. Others are merely troublemakers who possess people and animals to tempt or taunt the people of Rosuto-Shima into dishonorable behavior. Still others are the creations of dark wizards who want power over the world of Rosuto-Shima and resort to old, destructive methods of raising the dead to do their bidding.

Iki Ryo

Iki ryo are spirits of the dead whose lives were ended by violence or corruption. Because of this, they are full of anger and envy. But iki ryo do not automatically attack living creatures, preferring instead to cause someone to end their life through their own vices. If pressed, iki ryo attack people who seem immune to the temptations laid before them.

Like many spirits, iki ryo are resistant to all physical attacks, unless a nikobo uses a kata in order to make them temporarily susceptible to the mystic's attacks. Take note, however, that even when defeated, a iki ryo is not destroyed, at some point recollecting itself. Only a priest or nikobo can release the spirit from its torment through the proper rituals.

Iki ryo are most commonly found in graveyards, but they prefer to be in locations where they can haunt and torment the greatest number of people. For this reason, they often appear to people in the slums or in houses of vice, making themselves known only as a quiet voice of temptation.

fitness **awareness** **creativity** **reasoning** **influence**

0 B A B C

skills: brawling, subterfuge

gimmicks: spirit shade, resistance (physical contact/attacks), vulnerability (divinity magic, gui magic)



Jikininki

Jikininki are the corpses of greedy people who could not get enough out of life, and have returned to the world in order to fill their insatiable hunger. Unfortunately, they lose the majority of their memories upon rising from the grave, and whatever they craved in life is replaced by a craving for flesh of the newly dead. When fresh corpses are scarce, jikininki attack and kill the living in order to feed on their corpses. If a jikininki cannot feed often enough, its own corpse rots and sometimes transforms into an iki ryo. When this happens, the creature regains the memories of its former life.

Jikininki are still rare on Rosuto-Shima. Fewer dead are now prepared for the afterlife with the proper ceremonies, so more and more jikininki return to life. Most jikininki are found outside of major cities and in graveyards near the cities, since most villages still prepare their dead properly. The worst locations for jikininki seem to be between Kuang-Cho and the Twin Cities, due to the large graveyards outside of those cities.

fitness awareness **creativity** **reasoning** **influence**
 B B 0 A 0
skills: brawling, dueling
gimmicks: toughness (2), vulnerability (gui magic)

Kitsune

Kitsune are the spirits of foxes that enjoy testing and playing tricks on humanity. Sometimes they appear as beautiful women and tempt men into betraying their spouses. Other times, they appear as humanoid foxes with two tails. They sometimes take the forms of merchants or scholars who beg for the generosity of the wealthy. Those who pass their tests, proving that they balance both generosity and wisdom, are often rewarded by the spirit in some way. Those who are miserly, find their lives plagued with small troubles, and those who are too generous are merely lose their contributions and are never repaid.

Kitsune are also known to possess people in order to get them into trouble. Oftentimes, they play on the desires and lusts of their hosts, but on other occasions they beg for food. Priests or nikobo who deal with kitsune often find that simply giving an offering of food to local fox spirits is enough to end the possession. In other, more severe cases, where the spirit is causing the host to commit crimes, a nikobo must be found who can release the spirit from the host.

Possession by a kitsune is called kitsune tsuki. While some possessed people show no physical effects other than desperate hunger and a change of demeanor, others gain physical aspects of a fox, and turn to lives of crime. Those who are unaware of

the kitsune lore often believe the possessed to be deranged juunishi-p'o, and base their opinions of the diminutive race on these criminals

Kitsune prefer to make their homes in the forest and mountains near villages where they can cause trouble, but they are likely to show up anywhere their animal namesake might live. A large population of kitsune live near Chengti, and others have made an effort to infiltrate the cities, including Shangti. Although cases of kitsune tsuki are rarely reported in the cities, they are more common than any of the more modern thinkers would like to believe.

fitness awareness **creativity** **reasoning** **influence**
 A C B B D
skills: legerdemain, subterfuge
gimmicks: undersized (in fox form), shapeshifting, resistance (physical contact/attacks), vulnerability (gui magic), possession

Kuang Shi

The kuang shi are mindless soldiers raised from the corpses of the dead by wizards with evil designs. They follow commands and perform simple tasks, but do nothing on their own except fight. Commands are inscribed by the wizard who raised them onto a piece of paper, and placed in the mouth of the corpse. Until the piece of paper is removed or destroyed, the kuang shi continues to perform the tasks set before it.

Kuang shi are able to defend themselves when threatened, and try to preserve their half-lives as long as possible. It is nearly impossible to destroy one—even in defeat, a kuang shi eventually puts itself back together to complete its task. Truly destroying a kuang shi is done by replacing the command in its mouth with one to end its existence. This paper must be consecrated by a priest or inscribed by a wizard or nikobo, but once placed in the unconscious corpse's mouth, the command is usually followed.

If the original paper is removed or destroyed, or if the kuang shi finishes the task and is not laid to rest by its creator, it attempts to return to the place where its body once lived. Kuang shi attack and feed on anyone who tries to stop them. These creatures can be found anywhere, but they are most commonly found in the countryside. Wizards typically raise these monsters from old battle fields, making the area south of the Akki-Kou Zetsu Mori an especially fertile region for raising dead warriors.

fitness awareness **creativity** **reasoning** **influence**
 B B 0 0 0
skills: brawling, dueling
gimmicks: toughness (2), vulnerability (gui magic)

Men Shen

Men Shen are images of soldiers drawn on rice paper, and hung on either side of the door of a home. These pieces of paper have a benevolent spirit bound to them, so that if an intruder attempts to enter the home without the permission of a family member or resident, the image comes to life in the form of a clay-like, life-sized guardian. Men Shen attack intruders, but if they flee, the spirit returns to its place on the paper. In their physical form, Men Shen can attack and be attacked like any physical being. If destroyed, Men Shen crumble into dust, and the spirit considers itself dishonored. In paper form, the Men Shen cannot be destroyed—the paper, guarded by the spirit, is indestructible.

fitness awareness creativity reasoning influence

D D B B A

skills: athletics, brawling, observation, composure

gimmicks: toughness (3)

Nio

Unlike their largely malevolent counterparts, nio are guardian spirits who mean no one harm, except those who try to breach the sanctity of the holy place or shrine that they guard. Most nio are tied to a location by priests who once worshipped there, and others are merely the souls of departed priests who cannot bear to see their shrines undefended.

Although nio are able to attack victims and are resistant to physical attacks, they most commonly draw on their divine abilities to curse trespassers of their holy places. They are especially cruel to those who attempt to steal from shrines or holy places, and if a shrine is defaced or destroyed while guarded by a nio, it may leave the location to haunt the person responsible for the destruction. A nio that has lost its shrine becomes bitter and angry, and is likely to take out its aggressions on those who associate with the person responsible for the destruction of the shrine, especially that person's family. Once the nio is satisfied that its revenge is complete, it dissipates on its own, leaving the world behind.

fitness awareness creativity reasoning influence divinity

0 B A A C C

skills: brawling, curse, leadership

gimmicks: spirit shade, vulnerability (gui magic),
resistance (physical contact/attacks)

Raiju

Like the kitsune, raiju are spirits that take the form of animals. They often appear as cats or weasels, and have an affinity for lightning. Raiju in cat form who are petted often discharge an electric shock to those paying them attention. Because of their affinity for lightning, raiju are agitated by storms and frenzy near thunder, causing lightning to strike the ground and potentially burning people near them. During these storms, raiju appear to be entirely made of lightning.

Raiju are known for possessing small animals and even mortals on occasion. People possessed by raiju are usually unaware of their plight until a storm occurs—only then do they realize they have put all of their companions in grave danger. During storms, raiju are likely to attack their traveling companions, inflicting harm not through physical force, but through electrical energy.

Far less common and substantially less intelligent than kitsune, raiju tend to make their homes in high places, and some are said to live along the river near the city of Huinin. It is rumored that raiju are entranced by the thunderous sounds of the steam-engine, traveling along the railroad tracks, hoping to solve the mystery of the huge thunder engine.

fitness awareness creativity reasoning influence

A C A A C

skills: stealth, subterfuge

gimmicks: possession, resistance (electricity)

Shiti Dama

The shiti dama is a wandering soul that looks like a floating fireball. These are often spirits that have not undergone proper burial rites by their families, and remain behind, angered by their families. Others are old spirits, once at peace, whose families no longer offer homage to them at shrines.

Very few shiti dama are able to retain memories of their old lives other than the identities of their relatives. They concentrate their anger against the people they most loved in life. As time passes, shiti dama begin to forget even their relatives and return to the places where they were buried. They continue to haunt their burial sites and attack anyone who comes near without leaving an offering. Of all of the cities and graveyards of Rosuto-Shima, only Chengti is free of these spirits.

fitness awareness creativity reasoning influence

C C A A A

skills: brawling, leadership

gimmicks: flight

natural weapons: body of fire (+1FAT), spirit shade,
energy discharge (+1FAT)



Tenshu

Tenshu are the spirit avatars of the juunishi, the twelve houses of the zodiac. They typically appear in the heavens, alongside the constellations that represent their positions in the course of the year. Spirit masters among the juunishi-p'o have developed a way to summon the tenshu when they are in need of aid. During these times, the avatars descend to Rosuto-Shima at the behest of the spirit masters. A single tenshu holds dominion over each house of the zodiac (see table below).

HOUSE	TENSHU
Rat	Nezumi-Tenshu
Ox	Oushi-Tenshu
Tiger	Tora-Tenshu
Rabbit	Usagi-Tenshu
Dragon	Doragon-Tenshu
Snake	Hebi-Tenshu
Horse	Uma-Tenshu
Goat	Yagi-Tenshu
Monkey	Seiyuuki-Tenshu
Rooster	Ondori-Tenshu
Dog	Inu-Tenshu
Boar	Buta-Tenshu

Despite their twelve separate dominions and appearances, the power of the tenshu are extremely similar. They are endowed with near-godly powers, and all possess the tenshu-mahou ability as if they are extremely strong spirit masters. Although these powers are mighty, the tenshu seldom use the full extent of their abilities, aiding spirit masters who summoned them only enough to keep them from harm. If a tenshu believes that a spirit master can solve a problem without their aid, it may refuse his call and remain in its home in the heavens.

** Tenshu suffer the same penalties on their abilities, and are given the same bonuses, as the members of their House among the juunishi-p'o.*

fitness awareness creativity reasoning influence tenshu-mahou
 D* D* D* D* D* E*
 skills: varies, as with player characters
 gimmicks: toughness (4)
 natural weapons: varies by House
 (see juunishi-p'o natural weapons)

Yosei

Spirits of the air, yosei look like birds at first glance. Those lucky enough to get a second glimpse of the creatures, however, see that no bird has the shape of a yosei. The creatures seem to shift as they are observed, sometimes taking the form of a tiny, winged woman, and other times looking like a solid, tiny bird. Their song is one of the sweetest sounds ever heard on Rosuto-Shima—listening to its performance often causes teary eyes in mortals.

While yosei are very rare in Rosuto-Shima, they can appear nearly anywhere on the island. While they almost never appear in cities, they may choose to reveal themselves among rice paddies, deep in the woods, or high in the mountains. Yosei particularly enjoy singing for priests and monks, who appreciate the sounds of their songs. They are extremely bright, and amiable audiences have been known to coax them into long philosophical conversations on pleasant afternoons.

Tales tell of yosei appearing to worthy individuals with the purpose of bringing beauty into their lives. Yosei often choose to travel alongside nikobo, knowing that they often travel in darkness, and try to balance their lives with light. Yosei always avoid combat, flying away instantly and changing into their bird forms if threatened.

fitness awareness creativity reasoning influence
 C F C D C
 skills: athletics, performance
 gimmicks: shapeshifting, undersized, flight, frail



CHAPTER
REVIEWSTHE
ROTS
SHIMA

Rosuto-Shima is a tough island, where the strong survive and the weak are either killed or in a constant state of struggle. Those searching for adventure are sure to find it—those looking for a peaceful life are also likely to find adventure. Ideas for such stories are described, and a complete tale for players to experience is also provided. Can the characters solve the mystery of the Jisou-Seisen, or are they destined to suffer the fate of the weak?

STORY LOCATIONS AND IDEAS

The City

The cities of Rosuto-Shima are full of intrigue, crime, and supernatural events. In spite of the willingness of people in the cities to put aside old traditions as mere superstition, even urbanfolk are possessed by kitsune or haunted by shiti dama. With the exception of Chengti, most people in the cities would prefer to hire freelance wanderers to handle their problems rather than acknowledge their supernatural experiences by going to see a priest. Because of this, adventurers are often forced to live between the old and new ways, existing at the center of the island's conflict.

Tokutaro-San in the City

The characters are hired to track down a child-like murderer, who is actually a tokutaro-san that has gone mad. And they are not the only ones looking for him, as members of a local crime organization know that the tokutaro-san saw the murder of his adopted parents, and while they know he has gone mad, the criminals are afraid that he may reveal the truth to others seeking him. The player characters face danger from both the crime syndicate and the clockwork child. Can they solve the mystery or will they be defeated by the criminals?

The Countryside

Rosuto-Shima is a large island, and there are countless unknown villages scattered among the provinces. These villages are often plagued by monsters, bandits, and other dangers of the countryside. Spirits are more active in these areas, and undead creatures raised by wizards plague villages more frequently than cities. The people of the countryside look for strength of arms or powerful magic to protect them. They do not and cannot expect the provincial governments to defend them, so they often seek hired help, although they can rarely offer them enough pay to make it worth their while.

The Besieged Village

A kitsune masquerading as a beautiful woman convinces the characters to aid a small town besieged by bandits. Once they get under way, the woman disappears and leaves them to face not only human bandits, but also a kijo that the bandits have brought into the conflict. The bandits must be defeated, but the characters may be able to end the violence against the village if they can convince the kijo and the villagers to live in peace.

The Surrounding Islands

Pirates plague Rosuto-Shima's coastline, and player characters could easily find themselves on a sea adventure, hunting down pirates for fun and profit. They could join up on pirate adventures, wreaking havoc on the coast line. Even here, oni of the sea and other supernatural dangers might follow them, and there are plenty of monsters to encounter.

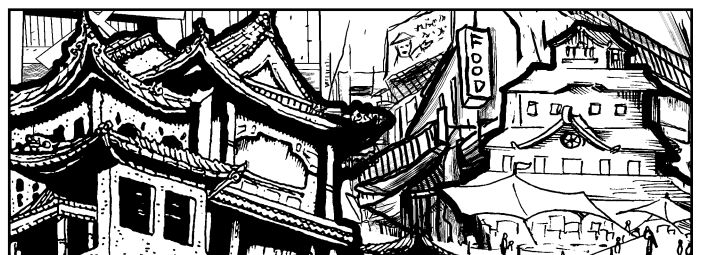
The most profitable of adventures for characters off the main island can sometimes be found on the small island of Jigoku, just off the coast. Nearly every province has an interest there, since it is the only place in Rosuto-Shima's territory where magatama stones can be harvested. It is also the ancestral home of the oni, and full of old dangers.

The Missing Stones

A shipment of magatama stones did not make it off of Jigoku. Someone is needed to bring the shipment to Shangti and discover what happened to the miners. When the player characters arrive on the island, they find that oni are not behind it as first suspected, but a wizard hoping to control the magatama shipments and make a fortune by using his undead creations to mine the stones. If the player characters can fight their way through the undead to the wizard, they discover the fate of the miners before them and must fight the wizard to recover the shipment.

From Distant Lands

Explorers sometimes reach Rosuto-Shima, and remain in search of fortune, adventure, and the unexplored lands. Shangti would be the most likely starting point for such a story. Out of place, and possibly in awe of the unknown technologies (depending on their place of origin), characters may feel more comfortable with priests or other holy men to serve as guides until they understand the new world, and this may take them to Chengti. In addition to guides, characters are also likely to require translators, something that may be extremely difficult to find on Rosuto-Shima.





JISOU-SEISEN: THE CHILDREN CRUSADE

This sample adventure is designed to introduce players to the world of Steampunk Mushi. It is assumed that the characters are part of a group of freelancing investigators, nikobo assistants, or newly-hired community watchdogs.

In the Imperial City of Shangti, a wealthy, old and childless couple purchased a pair of clockwork children. Shortly after the mechanical people were purchased, however, the woman found out that she was pregnant, and the couple abandoned the two in the streets. Since then, the clockwork dolls have been seeking a nurturing figure to raise them. But Shangti is a hard city, and there are few women on the streets of the city who are willing to take in a pair of mechanical misfits. Time and time again, the clockwork children were rejected by working women of the Entertainment District of Shangti, and the dolls memorized the face of each woman who rejected them.

Like most clockwork children, the pair were not entirely stable from the beginning. Belonging to a loving family would have fulfilled their duty, but the lack of acceptance and a care-giver quickly drove them insane. By the time they were taken in by a very old woman who ran a bath house, it was too late for them—their minds were bent on revenge. They lived in the bath house, but plotted to kill each of the prostitutes who had turned them away.

The murders began recently—five prostitutes have already been killed. Shao Li, the owner of the brothel Moonlight and a madam of some high regard in Shangti, is concerned about her girls. She has contracted with Tamiko Karu, a private investigator, to solve the mystery of the murders. The two clockwork children realize that Tamiko is getting close and are determined to eliminate both him and the rest of the women who have spurned them.

As the events unfold, the players' group sees Tamiko fall away from an explosion that kills the prostitute he was interviewing. The characters must continue Tamiko's job since he is too injured to continue. The clues take them to Shangti locations such as Moonlight, the brothel; The War Widow, Shangti's most dangerous bar; Lady Pud's Exchange, a black market run by a rat juunishi-p'o who takes in street urchins as her workers; and eventually the bath house where the two clockwork children have taken up residence. These locations, as well as possible

Local Rumors

Shangti is always full of rumors and gossip easily gained with the exchange of coin. It should also be noted that any rumors or gossip can, in fact, lead to other adventures in Rosuto-Shima. The director should feel free to alter or create new rumors as he sees fit.

- *About a week ago, a group of travelers stayed at a local tavern throwing around a lot of coin. They were well equipped and appeared to be able fighters. By morning, they had apparently vanished, and their bodies have yet to be found. Some say that they left in the middle of the night, but critics of this theory point out that they had already secured rickshaw transportation to a kabuki show, for which they had tickets. Others suggest that spirits captured them in the night, but this is, of course, dismissed as nonsense by any forward thinking person.*
- *There are two local gangs, each claiming territory over the same street corner. War might break out between them any moment as they both try to gain the attention and respect of the local Yakuza leaders.*
- *A gang of foreign youths now at home in Shangti has joined forces with a local gang, and are smuggling weapons in their parents' merchant vessels.*
- *A group of prisoners escaped before execution after being arrested for the kidnapping and ransoming of a noble on the outskirts of Shangti.*
- *They say the Haimamire Gekijō ("Covered with Ashes Theater") is haunted. An actor was dishonored by an audience and committed suicide. Some say he is waiting to take his revenge on Kazamuki, the star of Shangti, because the kabukika gets so much applause.*
- *The Rosuto-Shima Steam Rail Authority is going to be building a new line to Huinin, whether those backwards bumpkins like it or not. Mr. Mao, the head of the company, is sure that this contact can bring Huinin into the present with the rest of the island and increase trade.*
- *Nguyen Joe just made another bust last night over in the merchant district. He caught several folks who looked to be selling opium on the streets, but he did not even wait for them to explain themselves before he started shooting.*
- *Hiromu Sawa just brought in a bunch of jinteki-oni thugs for his Ronin-for-Hire business. It would not be a surprise if he begins to hire Kijo (large, horned creatures often mistaken for oni).*
- *Kou Daitoku, the ruler of the Juutakuchi District, is thinking about going back into the priesthood. If he does, he would either open the gates for someone to replace him or for Yakuza to take over his district.*

Local Rumors (continued)

- *Sir Timothy Charles of Sir Timothy Charles' Emporium is organizing a trade ship filled with Rosuto-Shimans who want to see the world. He still has a few positions open for sailors.*
- *A kitsune struck against the Chou family again. It was business as usual for the Chou representative, taking protection bribes, until a great light landed on him and he disappeared.*
- *Lady Yoko just received a selection of her special stock. The password this month is "kajiki."*
- *One of the Hat Cheo troupes from Chengti is performing peasant opera in the Motentashi District this weekend. It is something of a scandal, as several of the kabuki troupes were resistant to them coming into their territory. It should be a good show, if only to watch an angry audience.*
- *Daishou Taishou Kong, the leader of the Gaisen, the Outer Region of Shangti, had his army collect several rabble rousers who claimed to be members of the Imperial Family. The three of them looked like outcast wanderers, and one was even a gaijin.*
- *The Hawatari Troupe, one of the most prestigious kabuki troupes in the city, is now accepting applications.*
- *Amura Investigations used to be the place where people go if they need something found. No one seems to have lost anything lately, because the place is dead quiet.*

Some rumors may require coaxing with kinka (gold) or favors, which can be plot hooks for subsequent adventures. Some examples of favors are provided below:

- *Vindu-Ban Daidoji was an old, drunk keshou who repaired trinkets at a local pawn shop. Vindu-Ban had very few friends and was found dead in a gutter, stinking of booze. The characters are asked to carry his coffin in a small parade to a local temple for burial.*
- *The characters are asked to deliver a small package to the merchant vessel Virgin Princess. It is addressed to Captain Jack Dutch Todd. Although the goods may appear to be stolen, they are a set of jade chess pieces carved to resemble demons and skeletons of foreign belief.*
- *The characters are asked to escort the person to a warehouse several blocks away and in the middle of the night. The reasoning is left unspoken, but his fear of gangs or Yakuza threats is apparent.*
- *The characters are asked to clean out a storage cellar which is infested with a tribe of tokkebi. The tokkebi have claimed this storage shelter as part of their territory and attack all who enter.*

clues, are described below. Throughout the investigation, the characters are monitored by the clockwork children, and the director may choose to have the dolls scare them away with a blast from charging powders or gunfire at any point.

Day One

Read the Following:

Shangti. It's a tough city in a tough time. On these streets, you've either got to be one of the strong or one of the smart to survive. As you and your companions are out on the town one evening, you wander into one of the more dangerous areas of the city—maybe accidentally, maybe on purpose. The red paper lamps glow in the darkness like eyes watching in the night, and the cobbled streets are filled once again with water. The rain of the season has stopped momentarily, and above the tall buildings, you can actually see stars in the sky. That is, if you dare to look up. Fools stargazing in this part of town don't often leave again with all their belongings.

You're not expecting trouble, but you've got your eyes out for it. That's why you notice a fellow on the street corner, handing one of the ladies of business of this area a string of coins. This wouldn't be a strange transaction, except that the fellow tips his hat and walks away instead of them wandering off together. Still, it doesn't strike you as trouble until the explosion. It rocks the street, and both the gent and the lady go down in a blast of heat and light.

The characters may also be rocked by this explosion, but are far enough from the blast to avoid injury. Hopefully, they quickly approach the man. He is Tamiko Karu, a Shangti Cowboy and private investigator. He is not unconscious, but the impact of the explosion has crippled him. The woman is quite dead.

The explosion was actually caused by a charging powder bomb dropped from above by one of the clockwork children. They are incredibly good at hiding, and though they are watching from the top of the building, they are not willing to let themselves be spotted by the characters. If it seems safe, they stay where they are. Otherwise, they retreat through the building's service shafts into the relatively new underground water system beneath the city of Shangti.

Tamiko Karu is coherent enough to ask the characters to help him—not with his injuries, but his investigation. He promises them pay if they look into several murder cases. The one they witnessed is the sixth case of a prostitute being murdered in the past few weeks. He gives them the following information:



- All of the prostitutes worked for Shao Li, owner and madam of the Moonlight brothel.
- All of the prostitutes were Rosuto-Shiman women between the ages of twenty and twenty-five.
- None of the prostitutes were friends, and they all worked on different street corners.
- Three prostitutes were killed by bullets, two were killed by explosions, and one was killed by strangulation.
- An odd smell of seaweed was present at all of the murder scenes.

Tamiko imparts all this information in gasps of breath, and encourages the characters to leave the scene of the crime “before whatever passes for law enforcement this evening gets here.” He assures them that he is fine. If they refuse to leave him and want to get help, he tells them to go to the Moonlight and have Shao Li send for help. If they are not interested with taking the job, he insists that they go to the Moonlight and have Shao Li send help for which he is glad to pay a small fee. Shao Li tries to persuade the characters if Tamiko fails to do so, possibly offering a variety of services beyond coin.

The Moonlight

The Moonlight is a narrow four-story building found at the helm of an odd cul-de-sac down a busy alley. Several other establishments circle the alley, including, but not limited to, a small bar, tattoo parlor, laundry house, apartments, and outdoor hot food stand. All buildings are shadowed by larger establishments and warehouses, which face away from the alley. The Moonlight always has several people coming and going, as do the other locations in the alley.

Unlike most buildings in this area, the Moonlight was evidently once a beautiful building, and still possesses highly ornate exterior decoration, although weather has had its toll on the structure and it is in need of repair. Many scantily clad women and men can be seen carousing on the porch with customers or simply watching the crowds.

Read the Following:

The door to the Moonlight slides open, and any number of shoes in both foreign and traditional styles are slid into square slots in the wall. From the shoes alone, you can see that all manner of patrons visit here, from Shangti Cowboys to criminals, from nobles to common folk. Beautiful men and women gather to welcome you to Shao Li's establishment.

Characters are shown great amounts of attention depending on what they are wearing and their apparent rank in society. Even if they appear without riches, one or two patrons attempt to start a conversation.

The inside of the Moonlight is highly decorative, if not tacky. Dim lights, smoke filled rooms, and colorful curtains and beads decorate all the walls. The stench of foreign perfume lingers in the air, and the sound of soft music and singing pours down from the floors above.

The first floor of the Moonlight is mainly used as a parlor for entertaining guests until their rooms are ready, and secreted closets are used for storage. This floor also has two private rooms for large groups or private business meetings, as well as Shao Li's personal dwellings. The second floor consists of twelve small rooms used for entertaining clients, which open into a single long hallway with stairs on either ends. Both stairwells are very narrow and lead to all floors. The third floor contains the private rooms for those who live and work there. Finally, the fourth floor is used as a large dressing and storage area.

Shao Li can be found behind the counter. She is glad to help the characters, although if she knew anything useful, she would have already told Tamiko.

This is a good place to discover rumors about other occurrences in Shangti (theater, politics, etc), as well as the information below which can be useful to the investigation.

- All of the murdered women, including the most recent, were regulars at The War Widow. They went looking for additional clientele as freelancers outside of the brothel.
- All of the murdered women were seen in the presence of children. They all mentioned having been bothered by street urchins.

Characters familiar with the city might be aware of the street urchin business run by Lady Pud. She takes in street urchins to help her find rare and saleable items. She is also an information broker, as her employees (all well cared for), are glad to sell her customers what they have learned.

Characters for this section include Shao Li, the madam; Fu Lai, a female prostitute; and Yuki, a yaoi (in this context, a pretty man who services men).

Sensoumiboujin: The War Widow

Read the Following:

To a lot of the residents of Shangti, the Sensoumiboujin, called The War Widow by gaijin, is the soul of the city. This nightclub is at the center of nearly every sin, wrongful plot, organized crime, and premeditated assault that takes place in the slums and beyond. The War Widow is a decrepit two-story building, combining both foreign and local architecture as damages often occur. Only the toughest and worst of humanity make their way into The War Widow, and only the strongest make it out in one piece.

The outside of the Sensoumibouji is a dull, faded yellow, with large spots of chipping paint. A long porch surrounds the main entrance with several benches and tables placed about. The porch is stained with blood and urine, and the roof is shingled in a foreign style, although the four corners still hold decorative perched dragons. All the windows are shuttered closed, permitting little light to enter.

The ground floor is the main room of the War Widow. When a server is available, both beverages and food can be found here. Common people mingle, thieves and murderers make deals, prostitutes display their services, and mercenaries are also hired in this room. On most nights, the house band plays a mixture of foreign and local favorites behind a barred wall. A long counter stretches across one wall, with a kitchen entrance behind it. Many small tables scatter about the floor, with dark booths against the extra walls. Two private meeting rooms can be entered from here. These rooms are kept clean and styled in traditional Rosuto-Shiman fashion.

The basement is off limits to the general public and is used for storage and an opium den for the more privileged. The lower stairway is protected by an overly muscular jinteki-oni bodyguard. This room is kept very dark, with only a few lamps casting a red glow on the surrounding area. Large, feathered pillows are placed around the room on small tables as smoke-exhaling patrons are fed black rice from beautiful nude women. Many of these citizens spend weeks at a time resting on these pillows, quietly chasing the dragon.

The second floor of The War Widow is the dance club. Many of the young Yakuza gather here to make deals, indulge in pleasure, dance, and prove themselves in contests, such as shooting, cards, and fighting.

Unlike other areas of town where information can simply be purchased, the regulars of The War Widow choose not to make

Common Games

Cho-Han

This game uses two standard, six-sided dice, which are shaken in a bamboo cup or bowl by a dealer. The cup is then overturned onto the floor. Players announce their wagers on whether the sum total of numbers showing on the two dice will be *Cho* (even) or *Han* (odd). The dealer removes the cup, displaying the dice, and the winners collect their money.

Depending on the situation, the dealer sometimes acts as the house, collecting all losing bets. But more often, the players bet against each other, provided there is an equal number betting on odd and even, and the house collects a set percentage from winning bets.

Insect Battles

These fights take place on log stumps or a circles drawn in the dirt. At sakedokoros like The War Widow, insect battles occur in a square, walled box with a large red circle in its center. One can win when an insect pushes the other out of the ring, runs out of the ring in fear (which happens very rarely), or dies while fighting.

Characters can either bet on matches or purchase an insect from one of the many trainers around the ring. Bets begin in 5 kinka increments; most gambling houses place the maximum bet at 100 kinka.

Shoot-Outs

Unlike dueling in foreign lands, most Rosuto-Shiman gun duels place the opponents facing each other first. At the drop of a hand by the bartender, opponents draw and fire as quickly as possible.

it easy for newcomers. Any characters hoping to get information out of the regulars must engage in some game of skill or chance—Shangti cowboys and other gunslingers are challenged to shooting matches, for example (vases are kept aside for exactly this kind of contest; the faster draw and more direct shot wins). Other options include contests of strength (from arm wrestling to unarmed sparring), games of chance (cards and dice), and performances that draw the attention of the audience. A wielder of magic could easily win over the crowd, although they are unlikely to believe that it is actually magic being practiced, as most patrons are “forward thinking” individuals.



Once accepted by the regulars, characters learn many of the local rumors, particularly the ones dealing with the Yakuza or private investigators in town. News concerning Tamiko Karu's injuries has already spread, and people speculate about what is going to happen to his business if he is unable to recover. Beyond the local rumors, the characters learn the following information that pertains to their case:

- One of the girls talked about a pair of creepy kids who kept bothering her—they kept asking her to be their mother. They accused her of abandoning them, and got really upset when she told them to go away. Others heard similar stories from the other women.
- Several of the girls owed money to the Yakuza organizations in Shangti. Some of them never engaged in that kind of gambling, however, and were not in debt.

If the characters still need a push to Lady Pud's, someone might mention the connection between the street urchins and Lady Pud's Exchange.

The characters should always be aware that The War Widow is a dangerous place. If the characters go to the second floor, they are considered uninvited guests, and several young Yakuza decide to take issue with their presence and attempt to physically expel them. If they get too nosy on the first floor, someone else starts trouble. If the characters try to go downstairs, they are manhandled out of The War Widow. A brawl breaks out in any of these situations.

Non-player characters inside The War Widow include Pridi Kiet, a posh Shangti Cowboy; Kato, a tattooed first-floor bouncer with more muscle for his size than should be naturally possible; Umi, a waitress who was friends with several of the girls; and Ming, the overweight bartender who arranges the gambling. More information regarding these characters can be found at the end of this adventure.

Possible Attack

By the time the characters have reached their second stop, the clockwork children are aware of their movements. If the characters seem to be following the clues well, the clockwork children start taking action against them. They might be shot at from a rooftop or from a sewer. The clockwork children are very careful to make sure that they cannot possibly be seen. Alternately, the clockwork children may murder another prostitute, making the characters realize the urgency of the situation. The director can use the clockwork children however he prefers at this point, but the following text is a good start.

Read the Following:

The night is alive with sound and music coming from the various sakedakoros and dance clubs that line the streets. Those same streets, however, are only sparsely populated. It seems that everyone but you and your company has found a place to spend the night, drinking away their miseries or dancing in the joy of the moment. In addition, the evening air seems odd and dangerous, as though someone is watching you.

At this point, the clockwork children may take aim at the characters, targeting the strongest character with a shot from a gun. Whether they hit or miss is not relevant, as they merely want to scare off the characters and convince them to cease their investigation. The directors may choose to make the characters witness another murder—the original introductory description may be used as a starting point for the next death.

Lady Pud's Exchange

This is a glorified pawn shop. It is done up as an emporium and trinket store, decorated with screens and painted scrolls.

Read the Following:

The only door on this street with an active lantern is at the base of a seemingly condemned building. The door itself is decorated with ink painting; it depicts the symbol of the Rat constellation. A small bell catches on the door as you push it open and enter the shop. It appears to be one large room, filled with tables and book cases. Painted screens divide several areas in the back of the room, although it appears, by the orange tags on them, that even these are for sale. A few children disappear into the back of the room as you enter. As you glance upward, you notice gaps between the ceiling slats, making it easy for the legion of urchins that keep this place running to observe every move that you make.

A Rat juunishi-p'o, with a large jewel stuck on one cheek like a mole, approaches you. She is dressed in a fine pink kimono, and her face is powdered to appear pale, although it cannot disguise her rodent-like nose, nor can her hair hide her large ears. "I am Lady Pud, proprietor of this Exchange," she announces, bowing respectfully. "How may I help you?"

While the main shop is exactly as described above, the ramshackle building above it is sturdier than it looks. There are at least three additional stories above the shop and another below, where Lady Pud and her urchins make their residence.

Nearly all of the goods at Lady Pud's Exchange are stolen, although she would never admit that. Her good children would never stoop to something so dishonorable as thievery, so she says. Lady Pud knows all of the children who work for her, and denies that any of them would approach women of business. Lady Pud is aware of two strange children who have taken up residence at a bathhouse on the outskirts of the entertainment district, but is unwilling to part with that information without substantial coin or favors being offered. The more that the characters buy in her shop, the more likely she also is to answer.

If the characters decide to approach the children, they can only do so from outside. Lady Pud refuses to let the characters beyond the front room of the Exchange; she has paid her protection fees from one of the local Yakuza families, and if there is any trouble, gangsters come to her rescue, forcing the characters to flee. If the characters look outside the Exchange for additional information, however, enterprising young information brokers can be had through less coin or trinkets than can their boss. They can describe the two odd children in full detail, something Lady Pud cannot accomplish.

- The two children, a boy and a girl, do not seem to have a home, but when they were offered the chance to come stay with Lady Pud, they said that they were already under someone's care.
- The two children always move together, at identical speeds, walking in step with each other. They also finish each other's sentences. Everyone found this very eerie.
- Whenever the children appear, they smell strongly of seaweed and bath salts.
- If the characters ask the right questions, their informant may even acknowledge that it is a possibility for the children to be clockwork, because they make strange sounds when they run.

Non-player characters at Lady Pud's Exchange include Lady Pud; Lao, a young boy who carries a stuffed panda; and Shujen, a twelve-year-old girl who is good at business and the gathering of information. Shujen is actually likely to exchange information for rumors that the player characters may have heard about other occurrences in Shangti. More information regarding these characters can be found at the end of this adventure.

Dropping the Bomb

After the characters' second stop, the clockwork children are serious about stopping them. The children pull out their arsenal and throw another charging powder bomb at them.

Read the Following:

You feel as though you are close to solving this mystery, and every bit of information you receive makes you even more paranoid, as if you are constantly being watched. Most of the sakedakoros have now closed their doors, and what music remains is wafting off in the distance. It occurs to you that wise wanderers are already bedded down for the night, although there is nothing more to fear in the darkness than there is during the day... And then the world shatters into brightness, and the ground moves beneath your feet.

Certain that the characters are sufficiently deterred, the clockwork children are a little less cautious. Some characters may be able to track them back to the bathhouse. If the characters have not yet discovered the location of the bathhouse, the director can have the characters find something belonging to the children that they may have left behind. Some examples include complementary bars of soap, a small bit of towel with the name of the establishment on it, and a business card.

The Shangti Sento Bathhouse

Read the Following:

From the outside, the Shangti Sento Bathhouse looks less than intimidating in every way. Like other sentos in Rosuto-Shima, the building has two doors, one for men and one for women. In front of the bathhouse, there are two identical gardens, side by side.

This is the major combat of the adventure—the characters must defeat the clockwork children, who are completely insane. The clockwork children are lounging near the baby beds, but flee toward the boiler room as soon as they suspect that the characters are pursuing them. They are armed with various charging powder bombs (see the end of this adventure for more information), and each carries a derringer.

Their benefactor, whom the children call Obasan, tries to keep the characters from hurting the clockwork children through words, but is not about to stand between them. If characters explain what the children have done, Obasan realizes that she has been harboring murderers—she weeps but agrees that they must be destroyed, as they have become monsters.

The clockwork children are not interested in surrender. Their madness has made this a fight to the death, although they are still prepared to convince the characters that they are innocent



children. Once these innocents start shooting at the characters, however, it is pretty obvious that they are the killers. Pushing the clockwork children in the water at the bath house damages them (2IN) and makes it difficult for them to function. Alternately, as the clockwork children attempt their last stand from the boiler room, grappling and then throwing them into the fire under the boiler is sure to kill them.

Conclusion

Read the Following:

Morning breaks over Shangti, and the office of Tamiko Karu is exactly where he said it would be. It has been a long night, but the mystery is solved, and Shangti can rest more safely tonight because of your efforts.

Tamiko opens the door to his office as you approach. He sits in a chair with large wheels, and awkwardly rolls himself back to a low desk. "Come in, come in," he says. "What news do you have?"

The characters report back to Tamiko Karu and inform him that they have solved the mystery and ended the threat. He pays them 300 kinka for their efforts and suggests that he may have work for them again in the future. He is now in a wheelchair, due to the injuries he suffered from the explosion, and cannot perform all his usual footwork without aid. Tamiko can easily provide hooks for future adventures.

Non-Player Characters

The following characters appear throughout the course of the adventure, although some are only relevant for a single scene. The director is free to equip these characters with a pool of experience, so that any present in a scene can draw on this experience for the purposes of increasing the challenge to player characters (see Iron Gauntlets, page 76).

Tamiko Karu

Tamiko is a classic Shangti cowboy from the investigative school. He wears long coats and wide-brimmed hats over fighting wear. The world has been tough on him, and he has been tough right back, as is evidenced by multiple scars that peek out from beneath his high-collared shirt. As the owner of his own private agency, he is unaccustomed to taking orders or suggestions from others, and more accustomed to telling people how things are going to be. His dislike of local law enforcement comes from his own disillusionment with their practices;

despite his profession, he believes in the law, but feels no one is bothering to uphold it. While Tamiko is, like all Shangti Cowboys, efficient with firearms, his training is geared more towards the investigative side of his job. He tends to rely on his brains more than his guns.

fitness awareness **creativity** **reasoning** **influence**
4 3 2 4 2

race: human

skills: athletics 5, brawling 5, dueling 4, firearms 6, clockworking 3, observation 5, legends 3, survival 4, medicines 4, commerce 4, streetwise 6, subterfuge 5

gimmicks: resistant (crafting, gui, divinity, tenshu-mahou)

Shao Li

Shao Li has been in the pleasure trade for some time, but because of her youthful appearance, no one would ever know it. She dresses in full formal garb, appearing more like a geisha than a common madam. It is her rich appearance, some say, that keeps both the honorable and dishonorable in attendance to her establishment. Although motherly in her outlook to clients, she is fiercely protective of her staff. Shao Li's clients would never dare consider using physical violence in the Moonlight. Such behavior calls for an immediate removal from the premises and a severe beating, leaving them unsure of the perpetrator. Rumors suggest that Shao Li is a mahoutsukai, and her enchantments are what cause such damage. Others say that she has employed two clockwork ronin to bounce clients who get too rowdy. Shao Li was originally trained as a geisha, although she was also once an accomplished musician.

fitness awareness **creativity** **reasoning** **influence**
2 5 4 3 3

race: human

skills: athletics 4, observation 6, instrument 6, literacy 5, performance 5, subterfuge 4

gimmicks: sure-footed, striking appearance

Fu Lai

Trained for the last few months by Shao Li in the ways of the geisha, Fu Lai is an accomplished storyteller, but has disdain for the traditional costume of the profession. She prefers gauzy clothing that only barely conceals her form, reveling in the powers of her body to hold the attention of her clients.

fitness awareness **creativity** **reasoning** **influence**
3 2 2 2 1

race: human

skills: athletics 2, legerdemain 5, observation 4, literacy 4, legends 2, performance 5, subterfuge 4

gimmicks: striking appearance

Yuki

Extremely shy, the young Yuki hides his face behind a long pair of lashes that frame his brown eyes. He wears traditional robes and is extremely modest in comparison to most of the staff at the Moonlight. While he typically services men, in the few years working at the Moonlight, Yuki has also broken more than a few women's hearts as well.

fitness 2 **awareness** 2 **creativity** 4 **reasoning** 2 **influence** 4

race: human

skills: observation 3, design 6, instrument 5, literacy 4, legends 2, performance 6, subterfuge 5

gimmicks: striking appearance

Pridi Kiet

This Shangtai Cowboy is lighthearted and carefree, but extremely vain when it comes to his appearance. Pridi is always ready to sell his services to the highest bidder, regardless of the morality. He is often the champion of shooting contests at The War Widow and likes to revel in his skill when having defeated another. He wears garish colors and blends fashionable foreign clothing (oftentimes with laced sleeves and coat tails) with traditional elements, occasionally sporting a shirt decorated with characters. His guns are ivory hilted with gold-colored barrels and are carved to look like tigers.

fitness 5 **awareness** 2 **creativity** 2 **reasoning** 2 **influence** 3

race: human

skills: athletics 7, brawling 5, dueling 5, firearms 8, gambling 4, observation 4, survival 4, medicines 3, clockworking 2, legerdemain 5, streetwise 6

gimmicks: quick-witted

Kato

Kato is rarely phased by anyone's physical stature, only because his own is so striking. He is somewhat impressed with that of the jinteki-oni bodyguard who has recently begun working the basement of The War Widow, however. Standing nearly seven feet tall with shoulders almost as broad as a pair of bar stools, Kato is covered with tattoos of all colors, shapes, and sizes. He always wears iron gauntlets, giving him the edge in any brawls that might transpire.

fitness 5 **awareness** 3 **creativity** 1 **reasoning** 1 **influence** 3

race: human

skills: athletics 4, brawling 7, gambling 4, streetwise 5, subterfuge 5

gimmicks: oversized, musclebound

weapons/armor: iron gauntlets, kia

Jinteki-Oni Bodyguard

As a recent addition to The War Widow, no one knows much about this jinteki-oni's past, and he has not even provided his name. Some of the local patrons of the basement-level call him Ushi, which means ox, and he seems to take no offense. It is very likely that he does not understand that he is being mocked.

fitness 5 **awareness** 3 **creativity** 1 **reasoning** 2 **influence** 2

race: jinteki-oni

skills: brawling 6, dueling 4, firearms 4, leadership 4, streetwise 5

gimmicks: musclebound, hideous appearance

oni appearance: glowing eyes, horns

weapons/armor: haidate, suneate

Umi

Known by all as a girl with an eye for a deal, Umi is one of the oldest waitresses at The War Widow. Despite her age, she is also one of the most popular with the patrons, not because of her beauty (which she has maintained), but because of the business advice she offers freely on promise of a good tip. Umi knows everyone who frequents the bar—she remembers their habits, likes, and dislikes, and always passes on tips. She dresses more conservatively than other waitresses and dancers working at the bar, which means that her neckline does not plunge quite so far and her skirt is not quite so short.

fitness 1 **awareness** 4 **creativity** 2 **reasoning** 2 **influence** 4

race: human

skills: observation 6, literacy 4, commerce 7, performance 6, streetwise 7, subterfuge 5

Ming

Ming has been a fixture at The War Widow for as long as its regulars can remember. He is known for standing behind the bar, and watering down the sake and shorting people on drinks when they have already had too much. But in spite of these less than endearing qualities, Ming is known for his fairness in judgment and good advice. He also continually protests in a gruff tone that his humble advice is unworthy of the listeners, suggesting that he does not actually mean it. Ming wears a long robe with an apron over it, and his large belly is nearly as round as his bald head.

fitness 2 **awareness** 2 **creativity** 2 **reasoning** 4 **influence** 4

race: human

skills: brawling 4, observation 4, literacy 6, commerce 5, performance 4, streetwise 5, subterfuge 4



Yakuza Thugs

The second floor of The War Widow is full of Yakuza thugs and Street Fighters, both male and female.

fitness awareness **creativity** **reasoning** **influence**
 4 3 1 2 2

race: human

skills: brawling 5, firearms 6, streetwise 6, subterfuge 6

weapons/armor: ushikake-shiki

Lady Pud

Lady Pud keeps her nose close to the ground in an effort to sniff out news that can be of value to those who pay her with sparkly things. Like other Rat juunishi-p'o, she is clever and willing to take advantage of her clients, but only to a certain degree. Unlike others of her kind, Lady Pud actually wears fine clothing. She has a den in the underbelly of Shangti, where street urchins and other urban juunishi-p'o bring her news.

fitness awareness **creativity** **reasoning** **influence**
 2 4 2 2 3

race: Rat juunishi-p'o

flairs: awareness (hearing, smell): +1D

skills: firearms 5, stealth 4, gambling 5, observation 5, literacy 6, commerce 6, leadership 6, streetwise 7, subterfuge 6

gimmicks: po affinity (rats)

natural weapons: claws (+1INJ), teeth (2INJ), tail (+1FAT)

Lao

Lao is not yet an information broker, but he sees everything, and is sure to divulge it to his stuffed panda so that he does not forget. Lao is about five years old, wears a traditional set of robes, and has a mop of black hair on his head. Although Lao has yet to begin formal vocational training, his is extremely perceptive.

fitness awareness **creativity** **reasoning** **influence**
 1 3 3 2 1

race: human

skills: athletics 3, brawling 3, observation 5, design 4, literacy 2, streetwise 3

gimmicks: undersized

Shujen

Shujen is well on her way to rivaling Lady Pud as being the most informed on the streets of Shangti. She learned long ago that information is power, and she hopes that knowledge takes her all the way to the top. While she is unaware of it, Shujen has been selected by the ninja clans to receive training in their arts, because they see her natural potential to sink into shadow, watch what happens around her, and know how to put this information to use. She carries herself with the attitude that she is bound for great things, despite the fact that she has yet to discover what these are.

fitness awareness **creativity** **reasoning** **influence** **essence**
 3 4 1 3 4 2

race: human

skills: athletics 3, brawling 3, dueling 2, firearms 2, stealth 5, observation 4, alchemy 2, streetwise 4, subterfuge 4, shadow path 3

gimmicks: sure-footed

Obasan

Obasan is a humble woman who dresses in materials only slightly better than rags. Times have been very hard for her, and welcoming two children into her life seemed like a blessing from the spirits. They proved to bring a curse, however. Obasan has no family to care for her, and her age has begun to make running the bathhouse very difficult. Trained as a merchant vocation, she has never actually been a good one.

fitness awareness **creativity** **reasoning** **influence**
 1 2 2 4 2

race: human

skills: literacy 5, commerce 2, performance 4, streetwise 4

Clockwork Children

The clockwork children have long since forgotten their names. They are more monsters than people now.

fitness awareness **creativity** **reasoning** **influence**
 4 2 1 4 3

skills: performance 7, stealth 6, subterfuge 6

gimmicks: undersized

SOURCE MATERIAL

Whether the characters are out to become great heroes or are simply hoping to make some money, Steampunk Musha is an excellent place for them to start their exploits. The following sources are recommended for directors in order to enhance their Steampunk Musha stories. There are also monsters available in folklore that are not covered in this book; it is up to the director to take Rosuto-Shima and make it his own, adding elements from history, literature, or just his imagination.

Tales and Nonfiction

The Ways of the Samurai

Gaskin, Carol and Vince Hawkins; Byron Preiss, 1990

Stories and Studies of Strange Things

Hearn, Lafcadio, Kwadian; Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1904

A Dictionary of Asian Mythology

Leeming, David Adams; New York: Oxford University Press, 2001

Green Tea and other Ghost Stories

Le Fanu, Joseph Sheridan; Sauk City, WI: Arkham House, 1945

Japanese Tales

Tyler, Royall (editor); New York: Pantheon, 1987

Novels and Classic Literature

Shogun

Clavell, James; New York: Delacorte Press, 1975

Across the Nightingale Floor

Hearn, Lian; New York: Riverhead, 2002

The Ronin: A Novel Based on a Zen Myth

Jennings, William Dale; Rutland, VT: Tuttle, 1968

The Three Kingdoms, Volumes 1 and 2

Luo Guanzhong; translated by Robert Moss;

Berkley: University of California Press, 1999

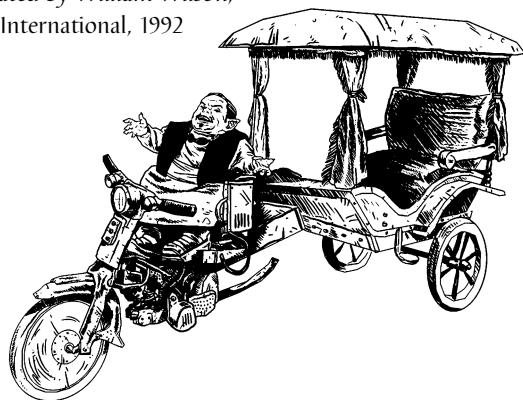
The Tale of Genji

Murasaki Shikibu; translated by Royall Tyler; New York: Penguin, 2001

Taiko

Yoshikawa Eiji; translated by William Wilson;

New York: Kodansha International, 1992



Comics and Manga

Chrono Crusade

Daisuke Moriyama; Tokyo: Kadokawa Shoten, 1999;

Houston: ADV, 2004

Sakura Taisen

Ikku Masa, Kosuke Fujishima, and Ohji Hiroi;

Tokyo: Kodansha, 2003; Los Angeles: Tokyopop, 2005

Kabuki

Mack, David; Orange, CA: Image, 2001

The Path

Mars, Ron, and Bart Sears; Oldsmar, FL: Crossgen, 2002

Rurouni Kenshin

Nobuhiro Watsuki; Tokyo: Shonen Jump, 1992;

San Francisco: VIZ, 2003

The Adventures of Samurai Cat

Rogers, Mark E.; New York: TOR, 1984

Blade of the Immortal

Samura Hiroaki; Milwauke, OR: Dark Horse, 2000

Robotika

Smylie, Mark S.; Fort Lee, NJ: Archaia Studio Press, 2005

Movies and Video Games

Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon

Sony Pictures, 2001

Jade Empire (for X-box)

Microsoft Game Studios and Bioware Corp., 2005

Shichinin no Samurai

Kurosawa Akira (director); Tokyo, 1954,

released in the United States as *Seven Samurai*; Criterion, 1954

Kamegusha

Kurosawa Akira (director); Tokyo, 1980

Ran

Kurosawa Akira (director); Tokyo, 1985

Onimusha Series (for Playstation 2)

Capcom, 2001-2004

Zatoichi: The Blind Swordsman

Takeshi Kitano, (writer and director), 2003

Throne of Darkness (for PC)

Sierra Studios, 2001

Ying Xiong

Hong Kong, 2002;

released in the United States as *Hero*; Miramax, 2004

EQUIPMENT

BACKGROUND / EXPLOITS / NOTES

ELEMENTAL AFFINITY / APPEARANCE / ZODIAC HOUSE

MEMORIZED SPELLS / MISCELLANEOUS NOTES

WEAPONS

WEAPON	ATTACK MODIFIER	DAMAGE
Butterfly Sword	-	+1INJ
Jian	+1	+1INJ
Kama	-	+1INJ
Kodachi	-	+1INJ
Tonfa	-	+1FAT
Wakizashi	+1	+2INJ
Baqua	-1	+2INJ
Rosuto-Shima Staff	-	+1FAT
Katana	+1	+1INJ
Kanobo	-1	+2INJ
Naginata	+1	+1INJ ¹
Odachi	-1	+2INJ
Otsuchi	-1	+3FAT
Shikomizue	-1	+1INJ
Tetsubo	-1	+3FAT
Double Jian	-	+2INJ
Yari	-1	+2INJ
Fukiya	-1	- ²
Daikyu	-1 ⁴	+2INJ
Hankyu	-2 ⁴	+1INJ
Breathing Crossbow	-	+4INJ
Blundercannon	-2	+4INJ
Bolt Gun	-1	3FAT
Derringer	-1	2INJ
Flame Thrower	-	2INJ
Gatling Gun ³	-2	2INJ
Gatling Gun Arm ³	-2	2INJ
Single-Shooter	-	2INJ
Six-Shooter	-	2INJ
Rifle	-1 ⁴	3INJ

¹ Fatigue is used if only the shaft strikes an opponent.

² Weapon inflicts negligible damage unless coated with poison.

³ Four attack rolls are made.

⁴ Penalty only applies if not firing directly at a target (i.e. firing over a battlefield)

ARMOR

COMPONENT	ARMOR RATING	PROTECTION
Haidate	3	FAT / INJ
Kia	4	FAT
Keiko (Mail)	5	FAT / INJ
Suneate	4	FAT / INJ
Ushikake- Shiki	5	FAT
Do-Maru	7	FAT / INJ
Kabuto (Helm)	4	FAT / INJ
O-Yoroi (Mail)	7	FAT / INJ

GUI DIFFICULTIES

KATA TASK	ARTEFACT TASK	DIFFICULTY
3 turns	10 minutes	Challenging (4)
+3 turns	+10 minutes	-1DIFF
+6 turns	+20 minutes	-2DIFF
+9 turns	+30 minutes	-3DIFF
-1 turn	-	+1DIFF
-2 turns	-5 minutes	+3DIFF
Unattuned Element		+2DIFF
ARTEFACT TASK		DIFFICULTY
1 week		Impossible (7)
2 weeks		Improbable (6)
1 month		Formidable (5)
3 months		Challenging (4)
6 months		Complex (3)
1 year		Routine (2)

TENSHU-MAHOV DIFFICULTIES

APPEAL	DIFFICULTY	CALAMITY
Favor	Complex (3)	1FAT
Convocation	Challenging (4)	3FAT
Paragon	Formidable (5)	2INJ
Summoning	Improbable (6)	4INJ

RANGES

WEAPON	PB	S	M	L	WEAPON	PB	S	M	L
Fukiya	10ft	30ft	60ft	90ft	Flame Thrower	4ft	6ft	8ft	10ft
Daikyu	20ft	70ft	140ft	210ft	Gatling Gun	20ft	50ft	80ft	110ft
Hankyu	20ft	50ft	100ft	150ft	Gatling Gun Arm	20ft	40ft	70ft	100ft
Breathing Crossbow	30ft	70ft	150ft	200ft	Single-Shooter	30ft	70ft	110ft	150ft
Blundercannon	40ft	80ft	160ft	240ft	Six-Shooter	30ft	70ft	110ft	150ft
Bolt Gun	20ft	40ft	70ft	100ft	Rifle	50ft	100ft	150ft	200ft
Derringer	10ft	30ft	60ft	90ft	Long Barrel	50ft	100ft	150ft	200ft

DISPOSABLETM HEROES

PAPER MINIS



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Playing a game which calls for a gang or army of the same mini (perhaps a group of orcs or unit of fighters)? Select one or more minis with the army option, and an entire page is filled with each selected mini—you don't have to print multiple pages just to get duplicates of the same mini. Or, you can fill a single page with all selected minis.

• Label and Number Minis

Are you assembling teams of minis and need to keep track of which ones belong to which teams? Select the label and/or number option to download the minis with a team name and/or number displayed on each.

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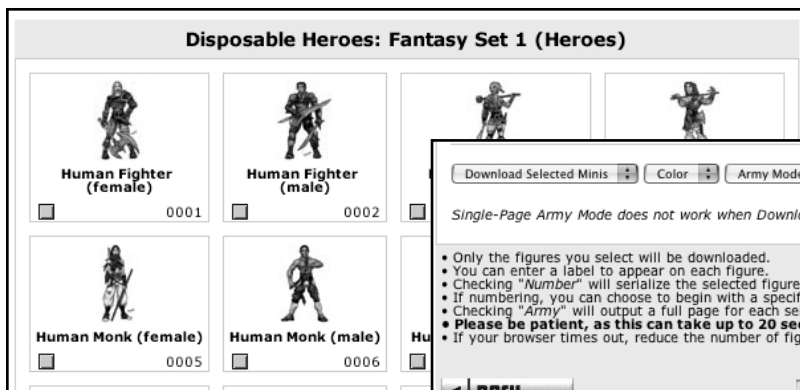
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ROSUTO-SHIMA

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