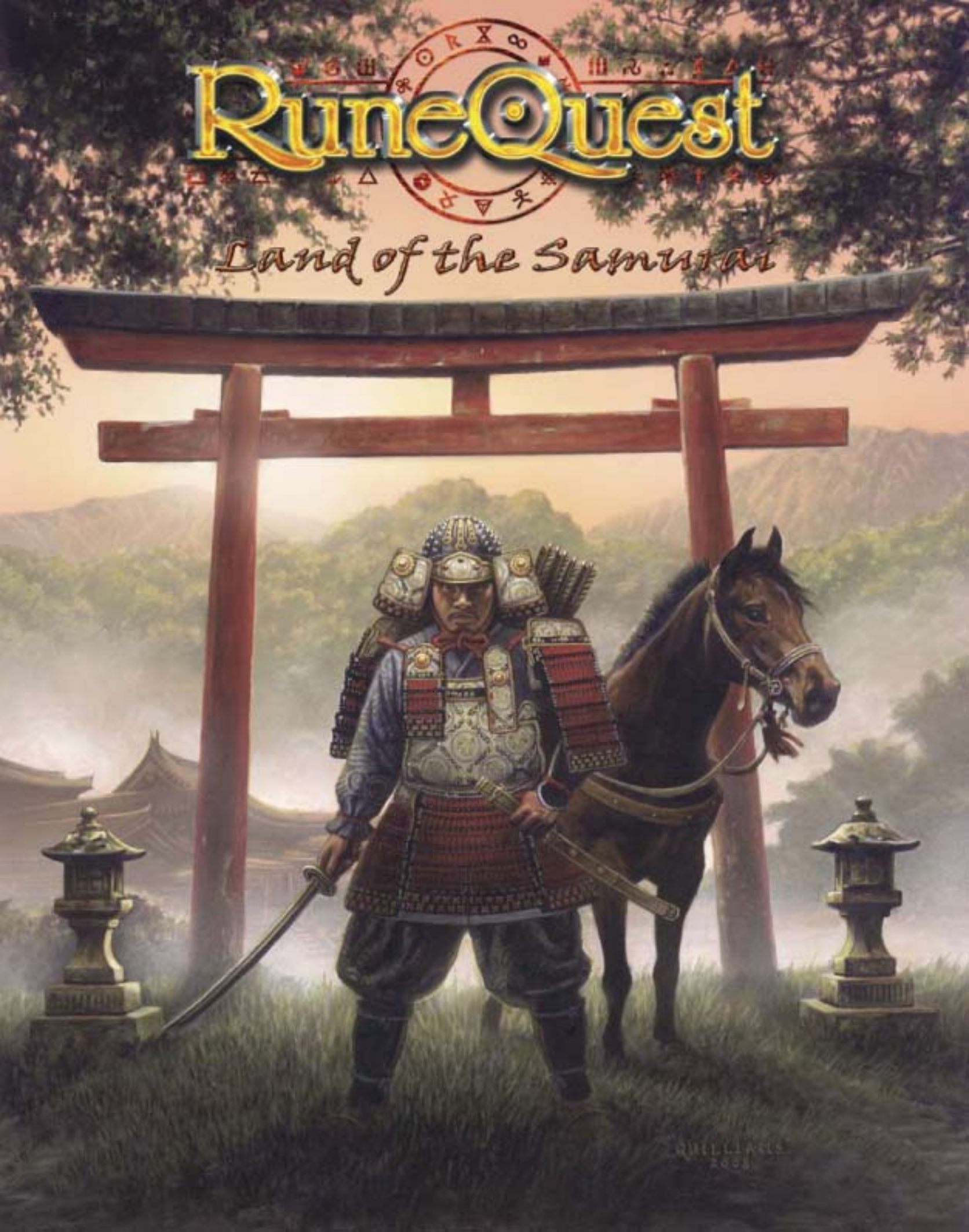


# RuneQuest

*Land of the Samurai*



QUILLIANS  
2001



# RuneQuest

## Land of the Samurai

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### Contents

Credits & Contents	1
Introduction	2
Japan and the Heian Era	4
Life in Japan	21
Land of the Samurai Characters	31
Weapons of the Samurai	53
Religion and Faith	60
Magic of Japan	71
Ways of the Warriors	82
Creatures of Japan	91
Ki For the Sensei	106
Beneath an Opal Moon (Scenario)	110
Glossary of Japanese Words and Terms	120
Index	123

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# INTRODUCTION

Ancient Japan has held a long fascination for the west. The formality of the society, steeped in notions of honour and debt almost unheard of in the west; the traditions of the samurai and their code of bushido; the enigmatic ninja and the duality of the Shinto and Buddhist religious philosophies – each contributes to a unique society that is ideal for adventure on many different levels.

## What Period is the Setting?

The most famous feudal period is that of Sengoku ('warring states'). The setting for *RuneQuest Land of the Samurai* is based on the earlier, Heian period (794 – 1192). It was in this era that the samurai began their ascent to power as a socio-military force and it encompasses a burgeoning period for the arts, religion and culture. Whilst the Emperor rules supreme, true power is held by the Fujiwara nobility, which exercised regency throughout the period.

The Heian (pronounced HEE-yun) period predates the Sengoku period archetypes. Ninja, that staple of popular Japanese and now western, culture, did not come into existence until much later. The warrior tradition of the bushi was in its formative years and the shogunates – the military dictatorship that controlled medieval Japan – came into being at the end of the Heian period. However, as this is intended as a *mythic* interpretation of the Heian era, guidance is given on including anachronisms such as the ninja.

There are several reasons for focusing on the Heian period. First, most, if not all, the most crucial elements of the feudal period were developed during this time. It is therefore an opportunity to explore the rise of the samurai, the establishment of the shogunate and the decline of imperial Japan. Second, power was consolidated into the hands of one or two clans, each with different agendas and this provides a perfect backdrop for a diverse range of character types without the dominance of the samurai that transpired in later eras. Thirdly, certain key precepts of Japanese Buddhism were developed in this

period, leading to a radical progression of belief and philosophy but also to schisms within the religious infrastructure. In the latter half of the Heian period the temples and monasteries took on a pseudo-militaristic approach, partly out of necessity, partly in response to the power base in the Imperial court and this offers a perfect backdrop for Japanese mystics and magicians. Fourthly, women occupied a unique place in Japanese society that was thoroughly diminished in the feudal era. Women were power-brokers, artists, thinkers and shapers of the cultural changes that marked the Heian period from its predecessors and successors. Finally, this is an era of Japan largely unexplored in roleplaying games, which have concentrated on the feudal period. This is fertile ground and *RuneQuest* wishes to tread it. We know you, the Games Masters and players, will thoroughly enjoy it.

## What Do I Need to Know?

This book assumes the reader is new to historical Japan, although those with knowledge of it through popular mediums and historical research should not find it wanting. Within these pages you will find everything needed to create an authentic sense of mythic Japan using the *RuneQuest* rules system.

## What Other Books Do I Need?

Aside from this book, you will need the *RuneQuest* main rules and the *RuneQuest Companion*. Other books that will prove useful but are not essential, are *RuneQuest Monsters* (volumes I and II), *RuneQuest Arms and Equipment*, *RuneQuest Legendary Heroes* and the *RuneQuest Spellbook*.

## What is in this Book? Japan and the Heian Era

This chapter gives a full overview of the setting for *RuneQuest: Land of the Samurai*, with information about the islands, its provinces, and people. This chapter also provides an extensive timeline for the Heian era, noting key personalities and events; historical and mythical.

## Life in Japan

The social, personal and political customs of Heian Japan are explored and explained, including the Japanese calendar and time notation.

## Character Creation

Full guidelines on creating a *RuneQuest* character for *Land of the Samurai* with new professions, skills, a clan/family table and the introduction of the On system, used for measuring personal and family honour.

## Equipment of the Samurai

An overview of traditional Japanese equipment, including new weapons.

## Religion and Faith

Detailing the Buddhist and Shinto faiths, with descriptions of the key beliefs and major deities.

## Magic of Japan

Full guidance on how the various magic systems of *RuneQuest* should be treated in *Land of the Samurai*, along with new spells and Kai abilities.

## Way of the Warriors

An overview of the martial classes of Japan: the samurai, the sōhei and as an optional inclusion, the ninja.

## Creatures of Japan

The monsters of Japanese myth and legend.

## Ki for the Sensei

Campaign advice for the Games Master and an introductory scenario *Beneath and Opal Moon* and a full Glossary of words and terms used throughout this book.



# JAPAN AND THE HEIAN ERA

This chapter fulfils two objectives: to describe Japan the place and to give an overview of the Heian period, which will be explored in greater detail in the chapters to come. Most people are familiar with some aspects of Japan; that it is a collection of islands; that it embodies strict social codes; that it has a long, highly evolved culture and that it has experienced great localised turbulence (wars and natural disasters) throughout its long history. However, there is much more to understand and learn and so in this chapter we present the facts about this fascinating country, from the perspective of the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> Centuries.

However, *RuneQuest* is also a fantasy game and whilst this book strives for historical accuracy, woven into the factual material is a certain degree of myth and legend. There are also some deliberate anachronisms. Ninja, for example, do not strictly appear until the later, feudal era but they are eluded to here and offered as a character option in the Chapter beginning page 31. Whilst this subverts the historical veracity, ninja and the like have become such staples of the west's perception of ancient Japan and are such an enticing concept for adventuring, that we feel a case can be made for deliberately skewing history to include them in this, a fantasy *RuneQuest* setting. Thus, the Japan described throughout this book should be viewed as a mythical, alternate Japan and the Heian era a mythical, alternate version of that period. The mythical and anachronistic elements are clearly presented and so, if an authentic historical recreation is preferred by players and Games Masters, they can be omitted easily enough.

## Shinto Creation Myth

*First came the primal chaos, which endured for aeons. Then, finally, the Plain of High Heaven arose from the chaos and with it was created the Ame-no-Minaka-Nushi-no-Mikoto, the August Centre of Heaven and then came Takami-Musubi-no-Mikoto, the August Producing Wondrous deity and shortly afterwards, a third, who was Kammi-Musubi-no-Mikoto, the Divine Producing Wondrous deity. Together these three were known as the Creating Deities and they dwelt in Heaven and watched other formations from the primal chaos.*

*From the void something heavy and opaque took shape; a complete contrast to the light and insubstantial Plain of High Heaven and this was the earth, which was like an oyster pearl, coalescing within the shell of the void. On this heavy, ungainly place, two further deities appeared. These were Umashi-Asbi-Kabibi-Hikoji-no-Mikoto (the Pleasant Reed-Shoot Prince-Elder Deity) and Ame-no-Tokotachi-no-Mikoto (The Heavenly Eternally-Standing Deity). They looked about the world and saw it was incomplete and adrift in the void but did nothing at that particular point. So it was that, after these five deities came into existence, so did many more; however, surrounded by the chaos, there was little for them to do except observe and so that is precisely what they did. Eventually though, Izanagi and Izanami, two of the deities of Heaven, were told to descend to the nebulous earth and make it substantial. This they did together, by pushing the point of the spear, Ama-no-Nuboko, into the murkiness surrounding the pearl. As Izanagi drew-up the spear, droplets fell from it and formed islands, with Onokoro being the first. This creation caused much delight between the two and they descended to the island and made it their home.*

*In its centre Izanagi and Izanami erected a pillar which was named Heavenly August Pillar. Around the pillar they built a great palace called the Hall of Eight Fathoms. Then, the two circled the pillar from opposite directions. When they met, Izanami greeted the handsome man approaching her and Izanagi greeted the beautiful maiden but told Izanami that it was improper for a woman to anticipate the greetings of a man. That settled, they embraced and from this first embrace came a creature that was boneless and leech-like. Disgusted, Izanami and Izanagi placed the creature in a basket of reeds and set it adrift on the water. Izanagi and Izanami embraced once more but the progeny was as disappointing as the first. Seeking an answer, the two ascended to Heaven and sought council. 'The reason,' they were told, 'is because the woman took precedence over the man when the first words were uttered.' Full of understanding, Izanagi and Izanami returned to Onokoro and repeated their steps around the Heavenly August Pillar but this time, Izanagi greeted Izanami first. When they embraced, the offspring was, this time, perfect and was the island Awaji. Next came Shikoku, followed by Oki and Kyushu; after that, Tsushima was made and finally, Honshū. The two deities named the islands Oyashi-ma-kuni, the Country of the Eight Great Islands and Izanagi and Izanami continued to embrace, creating thousands of smaller island children that floated around the eight great islands.*

# Provinces of Japan in the Heian Period





## The Japanese Islands

Japan consists of four main islands and countless smaller islands scattered around its coastline, stretching for some 3,000 kilometres end to end. The main islands are Hokkaido, land of the Caucasian, barbaric Ainu, Honshū, Kyūshū and Shikoku. There is mountainous terrain throughout, with little in the way of farmable land – perhaps a tenth of the total landmass of 378,000 square kilometres. Many of the islands' mountains are volcanic and whilst most are extinct, perhaps 30 or so are still active, including Mount Fuji. Japan also lies on a major fault-line in the earth, leading to earthquakes and tsunami, which are much more of a threat than volcanic eruption.

### Climate

The Japanese climate is humid, with oppressively hot summer months followed by torrential autumn rains, making it possible to experience 11 or 12 centimetres of rain in a single day; this means flash-floods and mudslides are yearly threats with entire villages sometimes being washed away in a torrent of blackened, unstoppable mud that pours down from the hills. Yet the seasons are clearly defined; in the glorious spring, cherry blossom creates a blanket of peach across the country and in the autumn the trees turn from green to burnished gold, amber and bronze; both are seasons of great beauty and considered to be special times for all of Japan. The summers and winters can be harsh and oppressive. In the summer, monsoon rains are frequent, especially in the south and in the winter deep snows are known throughout the mountain regions when temperatures plummet to below freezing, especially in the northern island of Hokkaidō. The central basin, around Lake Biwa and the capital, Heian, is less extreme, with warmer temperatures in both the winter and summer months.


### Hokkaido

Hokkaido is frequently referred to as Yezo, a catch-all description for any land north of Honshū. The central area of the island is mountainous and volcanic, surrounded by the coastal plains. Summers are cool and winters icy; in the winter months Hokkaido is buried under thick snow and its lakes and rivers turn into vistas of wintry beauty as the local kami sleep and allow the island to succumb to the cold.



Hokkaido is the land of the Ainu, a Caucasian people who claim to have arrived 100,000 years before the Japanese ('the children of the sun', as the Ainu know them) appeared in the southern islands. It is claimed by the Ainu that they occupied Honshū before the Japanese and were driven from these lands centuries ago, being pushed back into Hokkaido. Whilst considered to be barbarians, with a distinctly undeveloped (by Japanese standards) civilisation, they nevertheless engage in trade with the Dewa and Mutsu Provinces of Honshū. Their social traditions are simple; hunter-gatherers with no form of central government. Their language is also distinctly un-Japanese with a complex word structure very different from the language of the south. Tattooing is common, beginning at a young age with the tattoos being worn around the mouth, gradually stretching across the lower half of the face. As most men wear thick beards and long hair, with little attention to personal grooming, the tattoos become obscured with age.

The Ainu live in small, close-knit extended families, building thatched huts around a central hall. Like



the Japanese, they believe in the kami but hold Grandmother Earth in reverence above Amaterasu-no-kami, the Sun Goddess. There are no priests per se in Ainu settlements; all religious matters being attended to by the clan elders. When an Ainu dies, he believes his immortal spirit will travel to the Land of the Gods, there to hunt and live with the kami and perhaps, in time, become a kami himself.

The Ainu and the Japanese have clashed violently on several occasions. In the early Heian period the Ainu made settlements in northern Mutsu province, driving out the Japanese natives. In response to this Sakanouye Tamuramarō was sent by the Emperor Saga to reclaim the lands. Tamuramarō used force and tactics to drive the Ainu to the edge of Mutsu and then back to Hokkaido. He then established permanent garrisons at Izawa and Shiba to hold the Ainu at bay from northern Honshū. Sakanouye Tamuramarō was awarded the title Sei-i-Tai-Shōgun, which translates to Barbarian Subduing General – the first commander to hold the Shogun title.

## Honshu

Largest and most heavily populated, Honshū is the heart of Japan. The capital, Heian, is located here on Lake Biwa and it is central to all the social and cultural developments of the era. Honshū has the majestic Mount Fuji, the tallest mountain and an active volcano; the Shinano River (also known as Chikuma) is the longest in Japan, rising from Mount Kobushi, almost in the centre of the island and flowing to the north-west, where it meets with the Sai River. Extremely hilly and mountainous, the bulk of the populace is located in the Kanto plain in the eastern quarter of the island but communities of varying sizes are scattered throughout the island, occupying the hills and lower reaches of the mountains, which run for the length of Honshū. Despite the rigours of the terrain, Honshū supports agriculture, cultivating rice, vegetables in the Kanto plain and fruit orchards in the Yamanashi region.

Mount Fuji was created in a single day from a flat and fertile land. The farmer who lived in the area awoke to find the ground shaking and rocking and believing it was an earthquake, took to safety with his family. When the disturbance was over, Visu, the farmer, peered out to find a mountain had appeared in the lands where once he cultivated crops. He named it Fuji-yama, 'The Never Dying Mountain'. Mount Fuji has dominated Japanese

myth ever since, as indeed, have many other mountains. They are revered as the seat of many kami and are worshipped as kami in their own right. The tradition of *sangaku shinko*, meaning 'mountain beliefs' is especially strong in Honshū, as evinced by the many temples built in the higher reaches of the mountains, which have consolidated considerable spiritual and political power – so much so that the temples support their own, private armies and frequently engage in armed conflict over both political issues and points of spiritual doctrine.

Honshū is divided into 51 separate Provinces, each controlled by either a daimyo, local warlords or a temple. Beyond the provinces surrounding the capital at Heian, rule is fragmented and highly subject to local laws and dictates. In the sparsely populated northern Provinces, such as Dewa and Mutsu, monsters roam freely, terrorising the inhabitants.

## Kyushu

Whilst predominantly mountainous, some areas are more hospitable than others. Kyushu, the most southerly of the main islands, is bountiful, blessed with a balance of lowlands and mountains. Hospitable enough and flat enough for traditional agriculture, Kyushu supports many small farms and holdings raising livestock and growing vegetables. The hills are terraced and given over to paddy fields and throughout the island cedar provides excellent timber and much-needed stability to the soil. Kyushu is divided into nine Provinces: Bungo, Buzen, Chikugo, Chikuzen, Higo, Hizen, Hyuga, Osumi and Satsuma, each ruled by a powerful daimyo.

It was to Kyushu that *Hononinigi*, the Heavenly Prince, was sent by *Takami-musubi no Kami* and *Amaterasu no Omikami* (revered deities of Shinto). Hononinigi brought with him the three sacred regalia of Heaven – the Mirror, Yata, the Sword, Kusanagi and the Magatama Jewels – which declared divine authority over the island. Hononinigi was accompanied by the five clan chieftains: *Ame no Koyane*, who became the ancestor of the Nakatomi clan; *Futodama*, the ancestor of the Imibe clan; *Ame no Uzume*, ancestor of the Sarume clan; *Ame no Oshibi*, ancestor of the Otomo clan; and *Amatsukume*, ancestor of the Kume clan. These clans still rule in Kyushu and revere the Heavenly Prince, making much of their divine ancestry. In the Heian period Kyushu is thus the domain of the Five Clans and they do not cede readily to the Imperial Court of the capital. The three



components of the Imperial Regalia are now kept at the Shinto shrine at Ise, with high-ranking samurai from each of the five clans providing a constant guard.

## Shikoku

Meaning 'the four countries', Shikoku is separated from Honshū by the beautiful Inland Sea and divided into four Provinces: Awa, Iyu, Sanuk and Tosa. Divided into northern and southern regions by the east-west mountains, Shikoku is supportive of agriculture with rich soils allowing a wide variety of grains and fruits to be grown in addition to the staple of rice. Most people live in the northern provinces of Awa and Sanuki, whereas Iyo and Tosa are sparsely populated areas – mostly isolated farms with suspicious, superstitious peasants.

Shikoku is famed as the birthplace of the monk, Kūkai, born in Zentsuji in 774. Kūkai founded the Shingon sect of Buddhism, following his visit to China and study of tantric practices at the mountain temple at Mount Kōya is the Shingon Kempo or head temple. Shingon Buddhism is highly influential in the Heian period, especially within the Fujiwara clan. Shikoku is therefore an exceedingly important religious centre, not least for its Eighty-Eight Temple Pilgrimage wherein the devout visit, on foot, each of Shikoku's 88 temples in turn, 88 being the number of 'evil passions' in Buddhism; the pilgrimage thus represents striving for purity.

Given Kukai's (or Kobo-daishi, as the monk is known in Shikoku) pilgrimage to China and return with many concepts embraced by the Japanese, Chinese culture and customs have a far stronger influence in Shikoku than in other parts of Japan. Kukai is said to have brought tea and important medicines from China and as the Heian period progresses, Kukai's influence is felt throughout the islands as his teachings and findings are spread far and wide by the Fujiwara and those allied to them.

## Towns and Cities of Japan

Japan is not a populous country; its towns are comparable to large western villages and its cities, with a few exceptions such as Nara and Heiankyō, comparable to large towns. Settlements in the more remote provinces are relatively poor, with buildings of wood, bamboo and

thatch and are often in quite shabby states of repair, depending on the wealth and disposition of the daimyo for the area.



Most towns offer Buddhist and Shinto shrines, a tea house that offers basic accommodation and the various shop fronts of artisans and merchants, which are also their homes. The ruling classes tend to live outside the settlements in large estates befitting their status. Samurai on stipend live either within the daimyo's compound or may have a small lodging or residence in the closest settlement. Samurai who have been granted their own land will have built their own property, the size of which depends on how much they have to spend.

Japanese cities tend to be built with the buildings relatively close together and often built on a grid pattern although some of the older cities, such as Nara, are a little more haphazard. The properties of the Kuge and Buke, are segregated and often protected by wooden palisades. Richer nobles set their residences in fine gardens but poorer ones make do with small patches of land.

Roads in and between, settlements, are little better than impacted dirt tracks that, in the rains, become rivers of churned mud with deep ruts and potholes to catch unwary ankles and cartwheels. In the richer cities, like the capital, some streets are cobbled but this is, again, uncommon.

## Provinces, Cities and Towns

<i>Province</i>	<i>Island</i>	<i>Major Cities and Towns</i>
Aki	Honshū	Yoshida, Tsuda
Awa	Shikoku	Tamioka, Muya
Awa	Honshū	Takeyama
Awaji	Honshū	Sumoto
Bingo	Honshū	Shohara, Miyoshi
Bitchu	Honshū	Takahashi
Bizen	Honshū	Okayama
Bungo	Kyushu	Oita, Usuki, Saeki
Buzen	Kyushu	Kokura, Nakatsu
Chikugo	Kyushu	Wakaisu
Chikuzen	Kyushu	Fukuoka, Ori
Dewa	Honshū	Yamagata
Echigo	Honshū	Niigata
Echizen	Honshū	Fukui
Etchu	Honshū	Takaoka
Harima	Honshū	Himeji, Ono, Ako
Hida	Honshū	Takayama, Mori, Funatsu
Higo	Kyushu	Udo, Kumamoto
Hitachi	Honshū	Mito, Shimo-Date
Hizen	Kyushu	Nagasaki, Imari, Shimabara
Hoki	Honshū	Sakai, Hashizu
Hyuga	Kyushu	Miyazaki
Iga	Honshū	Ueno
Iki	Honshū	Katsumoto
Inaba	Honshū	Tottori
Ise	Honshū	Tsu, Yamada, Kanbe
Iwaki	Honshū	Shirakawa, Taira
Iwami	Honshū	Nagahama, Omori
Iwashiro	Honshū	Nihonmatsu, Sukawara
Iyo	Shikoku	Matsuyama
Izu	Honshū	Atami, Yugashima
Izumi	Honshū	Tarui, Sakai
Izumo	Honshū	Mori, Matsue, Hirose
Kaga	Honshū	Kanazawa
Kai	Honshū	Kofu

Kawachi	Honshū	Akasaka
Kazusa	Honshū	Ichinomoya, Sanuki
Kii	Honshū	Yuasa, Shingu, Koya
Kozuke	Honshū	Yubiso, Kiriu, Takasaki
Mikawa	Honshū	Koromo
Mimasaka	Honshū	Tsuyama
Mino	Honshū	Yawata, Ogaki, Gifu
Musashi	Honshū	Edo, Hachioji
Mutsu	Honshū	Hirosaki, Kamaishi, Iwagiri, Sendai
Nagato	Honshū	Hagi, Yoshida
Noto	Honshū	Wajima, Iida
Okai	Honshū	Saigo
Omi	Honshū	Kusatsu, Hikone
Osumi	Kyushu	Kajiki
Owari	Honshū	Tsushima, Nagoya
Sado	Island	Aikawa, Minato
Sagami	Honshū	Ogion, Hakone
Sanuki	Shikoku	Tadotsu, Kotohira
Satsuma	Kyushu	Kamiizumi, Akune, Izukuri
Settsu	Honshū	Osaka, Kobe
Shima	Honshū	Taba
Shimoso	Honshū	Sawara, Chiba
Shimotsuke	Honshū	Ashio, Tochigi, Sano
Shinano	Honshū	Matsumoto, Iida, Susaka
Suo	Honshū	Susaka
Suruga	Honshū	Yamanouchi
Suruga	Honshū	Omiya, Kojima
Tajima	Honshū	Hamasaka, Izushi
Tanba	Honshū	Fukuchiyama, Sonobe
Tango	Honshū	Miyazu
Tosa	Shikoku	Kochi
Totomi	Honshū	Hamamatsu, Sagara
Tsushima	Honshū	Takeshi, Izugahara
Wakasa	Honshū	Obama
Yamashiro	Honshū	Heiankyō, Miyako, Saga
Yamato	Honshū	Nara, Yagimoto, Takada, Toba



## The Heian Period

The Heian period spans 398 years of Japanese history, lasting from 794, when the Imperial capital was relocated from Nara to Heian (now Kyoto), until 1192 when the first Shogunate was established, signalling true martial rule and the beginning of the feudal era. The Heian period was one of *relative* peace, punctuated by several decisive martial clashes between temples, families, warlords and armies. It was in this period that the samurai began its inexorable rise as a social class and saw the Buddhist temples consolidate and exercise their power, both spiritual and military, to achieve their own ends. Most of the institutions and cultural traditions that are unique to Japan were founded in the Heian period and it was a period that saw the Japanese forge their own cultural identity after being dominated by China. The Heian period saw the development of the Japanese alphabet, the writing of the first novel and profound religious developments within the Japanese Buddhist faith, complete with schisms, political manoeuvring and outright bloodshed to achieve certain ends.

In 794 the Emperor, Kammu, decided to encourage people to study and improve, spiritually and educationally. He did this in two ways. First, he abolished the traditional, hereditary privileges that allowed the sons of high ranking officials to take influential government positions without first passing a classical examination. This ensured that the brightest and most educationally enlightened were the ones who moved into the corridors of power, rather than the posts simply being handed-down to whoever came along and had the right family connections. Second, Kammu introduced a scholarship system for the students of Chinese Classics and History so that they would not starve whilst they studied. This attracted people to education and ensured that those who were willing to invest in learning would then be better placed to find a good job within the state once their education was complete. These two reforms laid the foundations for the extraordinary development of the Japanese government in the early days of the Heian period. Education brought about a cultural and spiritual awareness that allowed the Buddhist faith to firmly secure its own position as an equal state religion with Shintoism. It also led towards many cultural shifts that took Japan away from the Chinese systems that had dominated the earlier, Nara period.

Up until Kammu's reign, Japan has retained many of the institutions put in place

by China, including its system of government and its alphabet. Kammu's reforms allowed people to study, question and change these old ways and a truly Japanese culture, with unique philosophies and outlooks, began to emerge.


The Heian period was also an enlightened one for women. Although women were still expected to be deferential to men, Heian women wielded a great deal of personal power in matters of court and government. They were free to pursue their own interests and many of the great literary works of the era, such as 'The Pillow Book', which details the extraordinary goings-on in courtly life, were penned by women. The subjugation women experienced in the later, feudal periods of Japanese history are largely absent in Heian Japan and indeed, it was female endeavour that drove many of the social and cultural advances of these four centuries.

Despite this cultural prosperity, the period was not without periods of strife. Famine and natural disasters continued to plague Japan and whilst the era is one of relative peace compared with the feudal era, the Heian period was beset by petty wars between clans, families, would-be warlords and even the Buddhist temples. Cultural change brings about conflicts of ideology, property and faith and the rise of the military classes; the *samurai* and *sōhei*, are directly attributable to the times. Indeed, the end of the Heian period is marked by the final series of battles known as the Gempei Wars when two clans, the Minamoto and the Taira, vied for complete control of Japan and fielded their warriors in several bloody engagements.

The Heian period is thus a time for heroes in all fields: spiritual, as the cases of Kukai and Saichō, founders of differing schools of Buddhism; cultural, as in the case of Kiyohara no Motosuke and his daughter, Sei Shōnagon; and militarily, with warriors such as Taira Masakomo and Minamoto Yoritome, whose martial prowess and strategic brilliance encouraged and embodied the samurai tradition.

### Three Families

The Heian period is dominated by three names; three great families. The Fujiwara, the Minamoto and the Taira clans consolidated and controlled state power for 400 years. The Fujiwara clan was the most influential but in the late Heian period (1075 onwards), its power reached



its peak and Fujiwara dominance over the Emperor and state began to diminish as the Insei or Cloistered Emperors shifted the balance of power.

The Fujiwara clan exercised power by cleverly marrying its female members into the imperial line and then acting as regents when the accession took place. Members of the Fujiwara clan were either appointed or created appointments for themselves, to all the key offices of the state, thereby threading Japan's political system with the Fujiwara silk. Its influence was almost total and whilst largely benign, provoked both envy and enmity. The Emperor became little more than a puppet for the Fujiwara clan but revered as a kami, few ever considered going against the wishes of the Emperor and his Court. Those that did, like Taira Masakado, were ruthlessly put down. Thus, the Fujiwara clan, through clever manoeuvring and dynastic engineering, became absolutely central to the Heian power structure, ensuring its members were placed in every key position and always ready to further Fujiwaran interests, whilst keeping in the check the upstart ambitions of the Minamoto and Taira.

The Minamoto clan grew out of those males in the Imperial Court who were ineligible for accession to the throne. The Emperor Saga was the first to bestow the title of Minamoto (known also as the *Genji*, a contraction of the Chinese character, *gen*, for Minamoto and *uji*, for family) and several others followed suit. Those given the Minamoto surname ceased to be members of the Imperial family and were allowed to forge their own destiny. The key Minamoto holdings are in the centre and north of Honshū but as the Minamoto line has grown, it has split into many separate family factions – all united by the *Genji* name – and so its influence spreads throughout Japan.

The Taira clan, dominating southern Honshū's, grew in a similar way to the Minamoto, with their honorific surname being granted by the Emperor when certain members of Court became subjects and thus ineligible to succeed to imperial power. The Taira are also known by the title *Heike*, another contraction of the Chinese *hei* and *ke*, meaning family. The Taira clan came to dominate the Imperial Court in much the same way that the Fujiwara did but had a much shorter exercise in such power. Throughout the Heian period the Minamoto and Taira clans maintained an intense rivalry which culminated in the Gempei War at the end of the Heian era and saw the Taira's demise. This final confrontation

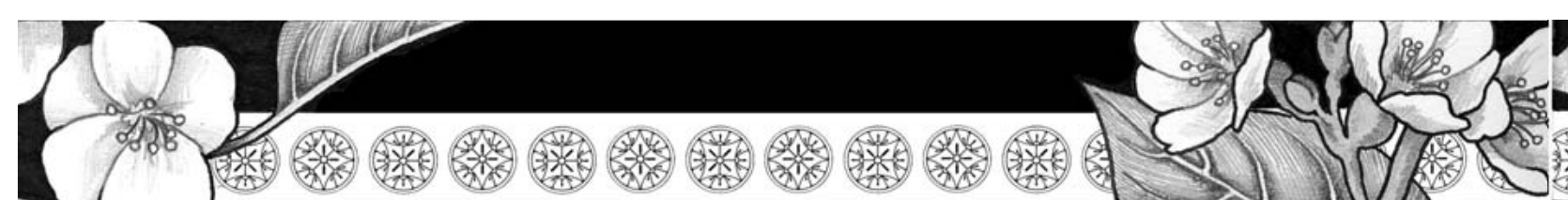
between these two immense clans signalled a change in the way Japan was ruled, passing from a civil state into the military dominance of the Shogunate, under Minamoto control.

## Rise of the Samurai

The accretions of power brought about by the economic and social changes of the Heian period led to many family and clan heads becoming wealthy *shoen* or landowners. To maintain their status and police their lands they found it necessary to form their own private armies. Previously the army had served the Imperial Court solely but the mid Heian period sees a shift in the power-base, especially when various political reforms were suggested to curb the growing wealth and status of the *shoen*. The private armies of the landed families became factions in their right and began to strengthen the codes of honour and prestige that had begun in their imperial days.

These were the samurai. The name is linked to a warrior but in reality the samurai are an entire social caste, dedicated to service and committed to the codes of honour ensuring that service. In the Heian period the status of samurai is a title of prestige and difficult to acquire although it is possible for humble spearmen to cross social ranks and become samurai, gaining all the privileges of the class. During the 10<sup>th</sup> Century the allegiance of the samurai shifted from direct support of the Emperor to the shoen of the outlying provinces. The samurai pledged loyalty to a family or clan head – a daimyo – and in return were paid well for their efforts. The samurai protected estates and holdings from rebels, robbers and bandits and when the occasion called for it, against other daimyo.

Many of the samurai families serving in this way were, initially, of relatively humble origins but through their dedication they attained further prestige and personal wealth allowing them, in turn, to become shoen. Some samurai claimed to have aristocratic lineage, usually from some minor imperial noble sent out into the provinces to make his own way in life. These particular clans, able to trace their lineage to the Emperor, found it easier to gather allies and followers, strengthening their positions. The two best examples are the Minamoto and Taira clans, which through being entitled by the Emperor, went on to accrue private armies that ensured their positions. The samurai class thus rose to a role of considerable social



and military importance during the Heian period and this importance and continuing accrual of wealth led to the samurai finally shifting the power-base of Japan to the first Shogunate and the start of the feudal era where everyone deferred to the samurai.

## Rise of the Warrior Monks

With the move of the capital from Nara to Heiankyō, the amount of power and influence the Nara temples had on the Emperor and Court was reduced. When the new temples were founded on Mount Hiei, the Nara temples were angered and resentful. The temple of Enryakuji on Mount Hiei was designed to operate outside of the Office of Monastic Affairs, which was subject to Nara dominance and it rapidly came to dominate the aristocracy through its development of Tendai Buddhism. Nara was thus supplanted as the spiritual centre of Japan and deeply envious of Enryakuji.

To protect their own interests, which were frequently disputed, the Mount Hiei and Nara temples began to employ armed security men, drawn from low-ranking samurai, ronin and those with martial prowess who had come to the monasteries for spiritual reasons. Over time and as the disputes between temples and sects within temples, became more serious, the role of these security forces expanded. The sōhei evolved from being straight forward temple guards into well-trained, well-armed private armies that helped enforce temple business, protect the high ranking priests when they descended from the mountain or left their temples and to undertake certain acts that Buddhist priests, reverential of life, could not conduct directly. The sōhei developed into formidable forces and towards the end of the Heian period, during the Gempei Wars, sōhei proved to valuable allies to the warring Minamoto and Taira clans.

The sōhei are religiously devout but as they are unordained as priests, they are able to conduct themselves in ways forbidden to the priesthood. Sōhei are feared and respected in equal measure and whilst they occupy a social strata quite separate to the samurai, their skills as warriors are every bit as legendary.

In addition to the sōhei there are also the *yamabushi* ('Mountain Warriors'). The yamabushi are quite distinct from the sōhei, although the two terms are sometimes interchanged.

The yamabushi, whilst certainly warrior monks, are not organized into armies in the same manner as the sōhei. Yamabushi are adherents to the Buddhist sect of Shugendo, which combines elements of Shinto and esoteric Buddhism and have their own rituals and secrets that are quite distinct from the main Buddhist factions. The key sects served by the yamabushi are the mountains of Omimesan (Kinbusen-ji), Kōyasan (Yamato province), Ushiroyama (Bitchū province), Daisen (Hōki province), Kumano (Kii province) and various mountains in Dewa province.



## A Chronology of the Heian Period

Spanning almost four centuries, the Heian period is filled with everything needed for intrigue and adventure. The machinations of the various clans offer untold opportunities for political scheming, double-crosses and armed confrontation. The rivalry between the various Buddhist temples offer similar opportunities but from a different perspective.

## When should I set my Land of the Samurai campaign?

The timeline in this chapter is extensive enough for Games Masters to set a RuneQuest Land of the Samurai campaign at any point in the Heian period. The default date from the point of view of this book is 1001; Ichijō is Emperor, the Fujiwara clan is at the height of its power and the Minamoto and Taira clans are developing and consolidating their own. The various Buddhist temples are divided and fractious, with established *sōhei* armies and the various *shoen* lords are becoming daimyo in their own right, attracting samurai and emulating the achievements of the Minamoto and Taira clans; allying with one or the other or attempting to create their own dynasties. In the hills and hidden valleys disenfranchised sorcerers are displeased at being outlawed and plotting their own schemes against the Imperial Court and the mighty Fujiwara clan. Seeing the rise of the Great Families and wanting to emulate them, *oni* and *bakemono* lords (see *Creatures of Japan*, beginning on page 91) are establishing their own territories in the more remote parts of Japan, terrorizing locals and imposing yet further burdens on a beleaguered Imperial Court. This is a time ripe for great feats and adventure but Games Masters can easily advance or regress the specific date if they so wish.

Also included in this chronology are some entirely fictional events to contrast with the historical ones. These concern mainly the incursions of various supernatural forces into the world either through the machinations of certain disenfranchised sorcerers or in response to the general turmoil Japan experiences during the middle and later Heian period. These mythic events are included to act as a spur and focus for a fantasy campaign and can be easily ignored if a purely historical campaign is preferred.

**794:** The Emperor Kammu moves the Imperial Court and capital city from Nara to Heiankyō. In the same year Kammu initiates his educational reforms to encourage people into education.

**805:** Private debts and outstanding taxes are cancelled in recognition of the fact that the cost of building the new capital and continuing military campaigns in the northern provinces (against the Ainu and others) is becoming unbearable for Japanese citizens.

**805:** The Tendai sect of Buddhism is founded by Saichō (also known as Dengyō Daishi) establishing the Tendai sect of Buddhism. The Imperial Court and government view the sect with great favour owing to its willingness to remain aloof from politics. The sect founds the first of its monasteries, *Enryakuji*, on Mount Hiei, north-east of the capital.

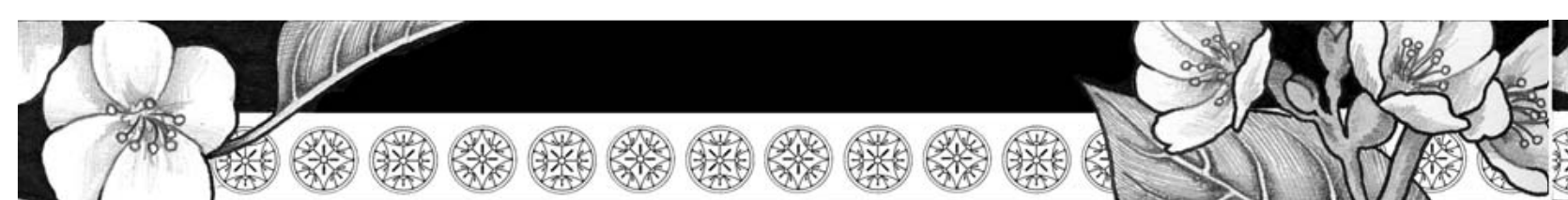
**806:** Heizei (Kammu's son) becomes Emperor. In the same year Kūkai (Kōbō Daishi) founds the Shingon sect of Buddhism but the main temple will be built 10 years later on Mount Koya in the Kii province of Honshū.

**807:** By government edict sorcerers, diviners and priests are forbidden to seduce, influence or intimidate the common masses. This edict forces those sorcerers and magicians who had been openly practicing magic to flee into exile; many developed direct grudges against the Emperor and the Court and began plotting their revenge. By contrast, the Court and government continues to call upon the services of certain sorcerers and priests from time to time to use their influence in precisely the ways banned by the edict.

**809:** Suffering from what is thought to be severe depression, Heizei abdicates the throne and retires to Nara. His younger brother, Prince Kamino, becomes the Emperor Saga. One year later Heizei, accompanied by his chief advisor, Fujiwara Nakanari and his consort Kusuko and her brother, conspires to retake the throne by forcing the return of the capital from Heiankyō to Nara. Many claim that Heizei had considerable sorcerous help in his schemes but the plot is thwarted after much bloodshed and Heizei is forced to become a monk. The other conspirators are forced to commit *seppuku*.

**816:** Kūkai is given permission to establish a monastery on Mt. Kōya in Kii province.

**822:** The temple of Enryakuji is given permission to establish independent ordinations of priests, which sunders the monopoly of ordination held by the temples of Nara and directly challenges the authority of the old capital. This is the beginning of schisms within



the Buddhist faith and which will lead to open conflict – political and military – between the various sects.

**823:** Emperor Saga abdicates and is replaced by his younger brother, who becomes the Emperor Junna.

**823:** The sect of Esoteric Buddhism begins in Japan when Kūkai is given the task of completing the construction of the Tōji temple in Heiankyō and to manage its affairs once complete.

**833:** Nimmyō becomes Emperor.

**850:** Death of Emperor Nimmyō. Montoku becomes Emperor.

**858:** With the death of Emperor Montoku, the nine-year old Seiwa becomes Emperor. Fujiwara Yoshifusa, Seiwa's maternal grandfather, becomes the first Fujiwara Regent, holding power until 872.

**868:** A schism in the Tendai sect splits the monks of Enryakuji into two separate sects: the Sammonha (known as the Temple Gate sect) and the Ennin, both named after rival abbots. A third faction arises in the Miidera temple located at the foot of Mount Hiei, known as the Enchin sect.

**877:** Seiwa abdicates the throne and is replaced by another nine-year old, Yōzei (who was often said to be criminally insane). Fujiwara Mototsune becomes Regent.

**884:** Yōzei is forced by Fujiwara Mototsune to abdicate. The true reasons for the abdication are hidden from the populace but people speak of Yōzei communing with dark forces and entertaining sorcerers. Kōkō becomes Emperor.

**887:** Kōkō dies and Uda becomes the Emperor. Because Uda's mother is not a Fujiwara by birth, Uda hopes to re-establish direct rule without Fujiwaran influence.

**897:** Uda abdicates in favour of his son, who becomes the Emperor Daigo.

**902:** An imperial edict is issued calling for the resumption of the system of allotting land according to the number of people in the household. The system had not been enforced due to its impossibility to administer effectively.

The edict is generally ignored as farmers lease or sell their land (with local official connivance, of course) and go to work on large estates in order to escape the tax burden associated with land ownership.

**930:** Suzaku, Daigo's eleventh son, becomes Emperor at 14 years old. Fujiwara Tadahira becomes Regent holding power until 949.

**939 - 940:** Taira Masakado stages a rebellion. Masakado begins with an attack on the government's outpost in Hitachi Province and the governor is made prisoner. In the winter of 939 Masakado conquers both Shimotsuke and Kozuke provinces and awards himself the title of *Shinno* (New Emperor). The government in Heiankyō responds by putting a bounty on Masakado's head and, 59 days later, his cousin, Sadamori, whose father Masakado had attacked and killed, kills Masakado at the Battle of Kojima. Masakado's head is duly taken back to Heiankyō.


**946:** Murakami becomes Emperor, supported by Fujiwara Tadahira. Murakami gives the impression of being a direct ruler but in reality the Fujiwara power-base has been consolidated and he is just as much a puppet as preceding emperors assisted by a regent. In reality The brothers Fujiwara no Sanetomo and Fujiwara no Morosuke are the *de facto* rulers of Japan.

**949:** The first major incident between the Buddhist sects occurs when monks from Nara's Todaiji temple gather at the residence of an official in Heiankyō to protest against a religious appointment that has displeased them. Monks from Enryakuji oppose them and a brawl ensues in which several monks are killed.

**967:** Reizei becomes titular Emperor. Fujiwara Saneyori becomes Regent.

**968:** Minamoto Mitsunaka, holder of the title *Chinjujushogun* and is commander of the armies in the north, denounces his kinsman Takaaki for conspiring to revolt against the Emperor, thus foiling the *Anna* Plot. In return, the Fujiwara help the Minamoto to grow in power and popularity. Several demonstrations by various temple factions, chiefly the Kofukuji monks of Nara, are targeted against the Fujiwara family.

**969-970:** Reizei abdicates the throne. Enyū becomes Emperor, with Fujiwara Koretada becoming Regent.



Several Kofukuji monks are killed by Todaiji monks when a dispute over temple lands degenerates into violence. Ryogen, the chief abbot of Enryakuji, decides to maintain a permanent garrison at the temple, thus heralding the establishment of the *sohei* (warrior-monks). This decision runs counter to previous edicts Ryogen had issued, aimed at curbing the excesses of the Enryakuji monks; specifically: confinement to Mount Hiei during their 12 year training period and being forbidden to cover their faces or carry weapons.

**972:** Fujiwara Kanemichi becomes Regent, remaining in power until 977

**977:** Fujiwara Yoritada becomes Regent.

**981:** Armed confrontation between the Ennin and Enchin sects occurs when Yokei of the Enchin is named as the Imperial Court's choice as the abbot of the Hosshoji temple. The Ennin are angered because traditionally the Hosshoji abbot has always been from their sect. When the Imperial Court refuses to reconsider its decision, some 200 monks from the Ennin faction conduct a violent demonstration in the capital at the residence of Fujiwara Yoritada. When they return to Mount Hiei they intimidate the Enchin sect so badly that the latter flees the mountain. A group of 300 Enchin remain at their temple at Senjuin and Ryogen orders an armed assault against them. Major bloodshed is averted only when Yokei agrees to stand-down as the Hossihoji abbot.

**984:** Kazan becomes the 65<sup>th</sup> Emperor. He is only 17 and rules for just two years but during this brief period he commissions the *Shūi Wakashū*, a collection of 1,351 poems *or waka*

**986:** Kazan is tricked into abdicating by Fujiwara no Kaneie and Ichijō becomes Emperor with Fujiwara Kaneie his Regent. Kazan becomes a monk.

**990:** Fujiwara Michitaka becomes Regent, lasting for five years when he is replaced by Fujiwara Michikane. Michikane lasts for only seven days, dying in office.

**996:** Fujiwara Michinaga becomes Regent.

**999:** The bakemono Lord Enezga seizes territories in the Iwami province and establishes his own court, drafting-in Ainu mercenaries and gaining the support of the sorcerer Sushigawa. Local kami are murdered

with the fabled Sword of Seven Cuts and the Buddhist temples defiled. The Minamoto and Taira clans, both of which have interests in Iwami province, form an uneasy alliance and mount a three-year campaign to oust Enezga. The war is fierce and many die on both sides but several heroes emerge.

**1000:** Awabi sea demons begin attacking ships in the Inland Sea, dragging sailors down to their depths of a watery hell. On the island of Sado, the Hisa-Me demons over-run the local settlements, led by the oni Magaru-Ie. Sado is declared a no-go area by the Regent.

**1001:** The sorcerer, Tanagarō, travels to Heiankyō in disguise, concerned with working magic against the Fujiwara clan and the Emperor. A three-year search is undertaken for the sorcerer and a series of mysterious deaths occur amongst the Fujiwara. Many ordinary people are accused of being Tanagarō associates and several show trials condemn them to death. Tanagarō is never found.

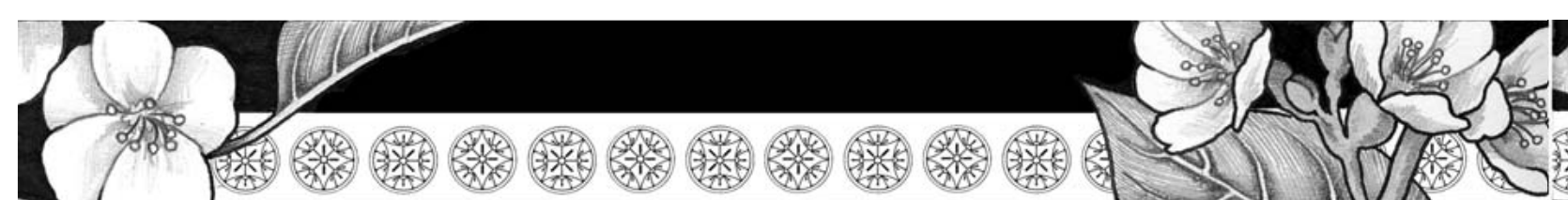
**1003:** The island of Oki becomes the realm of Hoji, a spirit of pure evil who dwells in a column of stone that was once located on the moors of Nau. A host of ghosts and other malign spirits support him. The twin sorcerers Awaji and Awina are credited with stealing the stone column from Nau and moving it to Oki in order to perform dark rites.

**1004:** The *Centipede*, long thought to have been killed by the hero Hidesato, is sighted again in the mountains north of Lake Biwa. A reward of 1,000 koku and clan status is offered to whoever kills it. The white sorcerer Basharo, a fallen Buddhist monk, claims that the Centipede can only be killed if Hidesato's sword is recovered from Hell.

**1006:** Roads all across Japan are beset by *nurikabe* – invisible walls that slow-down travel and disorient travellers. Sorcerers are blamed.

**1007:** The dai-kumo (giant spider) Jijiri terrifies the southern provinces of Honshū and is driven across the isthmus to Kyushu but it is not destroyed. It gives birth to 1,000 kumo which rampage across the island. Many families send samurai to liberate Kyushu and kill Jijiri. Later, territorial disputes break-out between the clans and families involved in the liberation.





**1011:** Sanjō becomes Emperor. By 1016 his sight has become so bad that he is persuaded to abdicate by Fujiwara Michinaga.

**1016:** Go-Ichijō becomes Emperor. (*Go* as a prefix means “the second.”).

**1017:** Fujiwara Yorimichi becomes Kampaku (chief adviser to the Emperor). Meanwhile, Minamoto Yorinobu founds the Kawachi Genji line in Kawachi province.

**1019:** A noblewoman, Murasaki Shikibu, completes the *Genji Monogatari* (“The Tales of Genji”). This is the world’s first novel and is written for the women of the Imperial Court. The *Genji Monogatari* concerns the life of one of the Emperor’s sons, known as Genji, concentrating on his romantic life. Genji is noted for his nobility towards women and never abandons a single one of his wives, although he engages on a long and sometimes unfulfilling, series of romantic adventures that includes the abduction of a 10 year old girl with whom he becomes infatuated. After Genji dies, the novel continues to follow the lives of Niou and Kaoru, Genji’s best friends.

**1028:** Taira Tadatsune leads a revolt in the provinces of Kazusa, Shimosa, and Awa as he attempts to extend the territory under his control. The Imperial Court seeks to stop him and nominates Minamoto no Yorinobu, Governor of Ise Province, to lead the attack. Yorinobu refuses and so the Court appoints Taira no Naokata and Nakahara Narimichi, who make little progress against Tadatsune and are soon recalled. The governor of Awa flees to Heiankyō in 1030 and in 1031 Minamoto no Yorinobu the governor of Kai province, pursues Tadatsune. Knowing he could not defeat Yorinobu, Tadatsune surrenders without a fight and is taken prisoner but dies on the way to the capital.

**1036:** Go-Ichijō dies. Go-Suzaku becomes Emperor.

**1045:** Go-Suzaku dies. Go-Reizei becomes the 70<sup>th</sup> Emperor.

**1050:** Minamoto Yoriyoshi is appointed as both governor and commander-in-chief of Mutsu Province in the north, specifically to subdue the Abe family who, under Abe Yoritoki, are levying taxes and confiscating land at will. This

marks the start of *The Early Nine Years War*. Yoritoki is killed by Yoriyoshi’s forces in 1057 but the Abe family fights on under Abe Sadato, inflicting a major defeat on Minamoto Yoriyoshi when his warriors are caught in a blizzard and forced to abandon their attack against Sadato’s stockade. Sadato launched a daring counter-attack and inflicted heavy casualties. Despite losing this engagement, Yoriyoshi’s 13 year old son, Yoshiie, earns the title *Hachimantaro* – the first born son of the war kami Hachiman; an accolade for both Yoshiie and his father (who was noted for deeply caring about the welfare of his men). The Abe family is finally subdued in 1062 after Abe Sadato is defeated and killed.

**1068:** Go-Reizei dies. Go-Sanjō becomes Emperor with Fujiwara Norimichi as Regent. Go-Sanjō’s rule is marked by attempts to regulate trade and strengthen the Imperial coffers, which have been severely depleted. His attempts are largely in vain and in 1072 he abdicates in favour of Shirakawa.

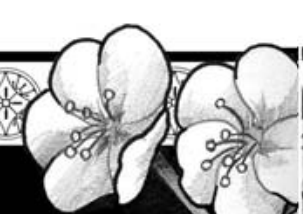
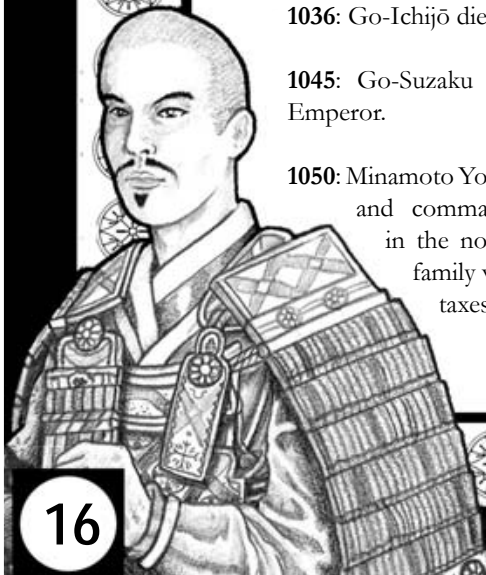
**1072:** Shirakawa becomes Emperor and Go-Sanjō becomes the *Cloistered Emperor* under the *Insei* system. This ancient system of rule permits an abdicating Emperor to continue exerting power. Despite the fact that Go-Sanjō soon becomes ill and dies, he has managed to weaken the Fujiwara Regency. Although the Fujiwara still hold important positions, this begins the period where the retired emperor – not a regent – controls the government.


**1075:** Fujiwara Morozane becomes Regent

**1083:** Minamoto Yoshiie, *Hachimantaro*, is appointed governor of Mutsu Province and with the help of Fujiwara Kiyohira, leads troops to put down an insurrection of the Kiyowara family in Kanazawa. This is known as *The Later Three Years War*. Yoshiie is an excellent samurai commander, having studied various Chinese military classics. At the end of each day’s campaigning, Yoshiie examines his men’s performance and assigns the bravest warrior of the day ‘The Bravery Seat’ whilst the worst is forced to occupy ‘The Cowardice Seat’.

**1086:** Shirakawa abdicates in favour of his son, Horikawa. Shirakawa becomes Cloistered Emperor.

**1091:** Minamoto Yoshiie’s military successes allow him to consolidate his own power base with extensive estates and *samurai* retainers. Fearing his growing power





and formidable reputation, the Imperial Court issues an edict forbidding farmers to commend their lands to him and declares that his *samurai* are forbidden to enter the capital city with him. Yoshiie, however, with a full retinue, returns to the capital after the Three Year War and resumes his posts as Commander of the Palace Guards and the Sovereign's Escort.

**1094:** Fujiwara Moromichi becomes Regent but dies in 1099 after being cursed by rebellious monks who are causing trouble in the city until he takes action to stop them. The rebellious monks are subdued, thanks, in large part, to the help of Yoshiie and his samurai. Dark rumours circulate in the Imperial Court that the curse that killed Moromichi was constructed with the help of the various sorcerers in hiding around Honshū. The supposedly immortal sorcerer, Tanagarō, is blamed as the ringleader.

**1105:** Fujiwara Tadazane becomes Regent.

**1107:** Emperor Horikawa dies. His son, Toba, becomes Emperor with Shirakawa remaining as *Insei* Emperor.

**1108:** Minamoto Yoshiie's eldest son, Yoshichika, is banished to Sanuki for an offence against the court. He escapes and returns to Izumo where he leads an uprising. This uprising is put down by Taira Masamori who is commended by the Emperor.

**1121:** Fujiwara Tadamichi becomes Regent.

**1123:** Toba abdicates in favour of his son, Sutoku. Shirakawa continues as *Insei* Emperor.

**1129:** Taira Tadamori, the son of Taira Masamori, subdues several rebellions and piracy on the inland sea. Like his father, he is given court rank in return and this signals the rise of military as a dominant force, something that will inevitably lead to the establishment of the Shogunate.

**1129:** *Insei* Shirakawa dies and Toba takes his place.

**1136:** A monster – an *Oni* summoned by Tanagarō or one of his disciples, such as the exiled Lady Nagara no Muji – rampages through the Imperial palace, slaying several Court officials and heading towards the suite of the Emperor's concubines, intent on rape and murder.

Minamoto Yorimasa, renowned archer and poet, stops the monster with a single arrow.

**1141:** Emperor Sutoku abdicates and Konoye becomes takes his place. Toba remains as *Insei*.

**1153:** With Taira Tadamori's death, Kiyomori becomes head of the Taira clan.

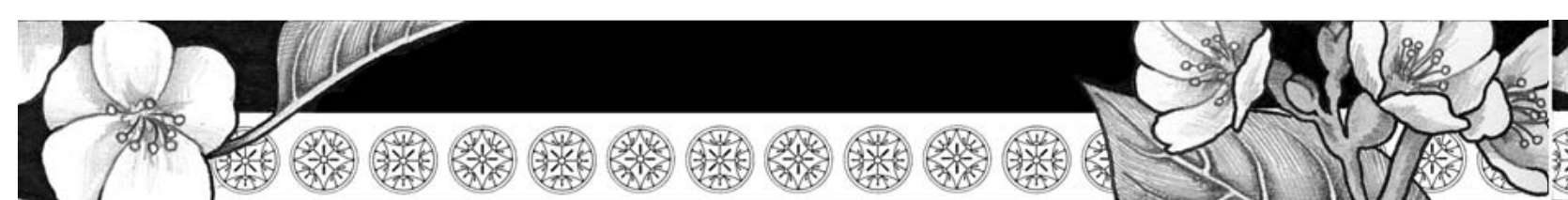
**1155:** Konoye dies, triggering a bitter succession dispute between the supporters of Go-Shirakawa on one side and Sutoku on the other. Go-Shirakawa prevails and becomes Emperor. Toba remains as *Insei*.

**1156:** Fujiwara Yorinaga collects a few hundred warriors, under the leadership of Minamoto Tameyoshi and with Sutoku, establishes defences in a palace in the capital. Fujiwara Tadamichi, Yorinaga's brother, with Emperor Go-Shirakawa's assistance, raises his own army from both the Minamoto and the Taira clans challenging Yorinaga. Yorinaga is killed in the battle that follows. Taira Kiyomori becomes an Imperial favourite and advisor, whilst Minamoto Tameyoshi is condemned to death. This period of insurrection is known as the *Hogen no Ran* and it marks the beginning of the final struggle for supremacy between the Minamoto and Taira clans.

**1158:** Go-Shirakawa abdicates (retiring to become *Insei*) and Nijō becomes Emperor. Fujiwara Motozane becomes his Regent.

**1160:** In an event that comes to be known as the *Heiji no Ran* or Heiji Insurrection, Minamoto Yoshitomo, Tameyoshi's son and Fujiwara Nobuyori, start another conspiracy to overthrow the government, timing it for when Kiyomori leaves the city for a holiday. Leading a force of some 500 well-armed samurai, they manage to kidnap both Nijō and Go-Shirakawa. Nobuyori appoints himself Chancellor. Kiyomori is forced to return to Heiankyō and raise an army of his own, helping to free the Emperor and ex-Emperor from the palace. Weeks of fighting across the capital ensue but eventually the uprising is crushed, with the help of *sōhei* from Mount Hiei. Yoshitomo is betrayed and killed by one of his retainers and the only Minamoto males remaining from the main family are his sons Yoritomo, Noriyori and Yoshitsune.

**1165:** Emperor Nijō dies and is succeeded by Rokujō, who is only a year old when he is enthroned. Go-Shirakawa remains as *Insei*.



**1166:** Fujiwara Motofusa becomes Regent

**1168:** Rokujō is deposed by Go-Shirakawa, following pressure from the Taira clan and Takakura, Rokujō's uncle becomes new Emperor – even though he is only three years older than his predecessor. Go-Shirakawa remains as *Insei*. Takakura's mother is Taira Kiyomori's sister-in-law and this leads to the rapid rise of the Taira clan's power, supplanting that of the Fujiwara clan.

**1175:** Hōnen Shōnin founds the Jōdo or Pure Land, sect of Buddhism, the first truly independent Japanese Buddhist sect. For much of his life Hōnen was a devout monk of the Tendai school but as Hōnen began to approach middle age he began to rethink the Tendai system. Hōnen read a Chinese text called the *Commentary on the Pure Land Meditation Sutra* and came to believe that chanting the name of *Amida* Buddha was all one needed to enter Amida Buddha's Pure Land, completely negating negative karma. He further believed that social, religious or intellectual standing had no bearing on entering the Pure Land. Hōnen thus relocated to the district of Ōtani in Heiankyō where he started to preach to crowds of ordinary men and women and establishing a considerable following. Many that were traditionally excluded from Buddhist practices, such as prostitutes, butchers, fortune-tellers and others, flock to hear him speak. Honen develops an excellent reputation and many priests and noblemen, including the regent, Kujō Kanazane, join the Jōdo sect. By 1204 Hōnen has around 200 disciples, ranging from laypeople through to samurai.

**1177:** Several minor Fujiwara nobles plot to assassinate Kiyomori. Kiyomori discovers the conspiracy and has most of the plotters killed. In the same year, a great fire sweeps through Heiankyō, destroying about a third of the city and killing thousands.

**1179:** Fujiwara Motomichi becomes Regent. In the same year and in response to Go-Shirakawa seizing Taira properties, Kiyomori marches into the capital with several thousand troops in retaliation. Go-Shirakawa is placed under house arrest and numerous high government officials are either banished or reduced in rank. This heralds the beginning of the *Gempei* Wars.

## The Gempei Wars: 1180 – 1185

The Gempei Wars consist of many battles fought across the provinces, with power constantly shifting between the Taira and the Minamoto, with Go-Shirakawa at the centre. Intrigues, double-crosses and fierce battles between two expert samurai commanders, Taira Kiyomori and Minamoto Yoritomo, characterise the five years of the Gempei and the final five years of the glorious Heian era.


**1180:** Having witnessed Kiyomori's treatment of Go-Shirakawa, Takakura abdicates and Antoku, Kiyomori's two-year old grandson, becomes Emperor. Go-Shirakawa remains as *Insei* and Kiyomori becomes the effective Head of State.

Minamoto Yorimasa, who was a respected member of the government, having refrained from taking sides with the Minamoto against Kiyomori and the Taira, plots to overthrow Antoku and Kiyomori and place Prince Mochihito, the son of Go-Shirakawa, on the throne. However the scheme is thwarted by Kiyomori and while trying to escape, Prince Mochihito is captured and killed while Yorimasa is wounded and chooses to commit seppuku.

In the summer Kiyomori forces the Emperor and *Insei* to move the Imperial residence to Fukuwara, Kiyomori's residence on the Inland Sea. The plan fails and the entire Court is forced to return to the capital that winter. Meanwhile, the Todaiji and Kōfukuji temples of Nara are attacked and burned on orders from Kiyomori, who fears the temples' military strength.

Minamoto Yoritomo, who had been exiled to Izu under the guard of Hōjō Tokimasa, appointed by Kiyomori, raises a small group of supporters and attacks and defeats a local Taira official. Yoritomo then leads a small body of troops out of Izu and over the Hakone Pass. Yoritomo and his samurai clash with Taira forces at the Battle of Ishibashiyama and the Taira army is victorious. Yoritomo and his men are scattered but find safety in the Hakone mountains.

Undeterred, Yoritomo travels to the eastern provinces and raises a large army before then advancing to the Suruga province. He is met by Taira forces but they are surprised by a rear attack from supposed allies and are forced to retreat. Yoritomo does not give pursuit and



instead remains in Suruga to strengthen his position. Towards the end of 1180 Yoritomo establishes the *Samurai-dokoro* in Kamakura, an office which regulates all the necessary affairs of the military, thereby centralising and developing a solid strategic platform for further military engagements.

**1181:** Yoritomo's uncle, Minamoto Yukiie, leads his troops into Mino province but is defeated by Taira forces. The next month, Kiyomori dies and affairs of state pass to his son, Munemori, who has no political skills or acumen at all. The Imperial Court soon descends into disarray. Meanwhile, Taira forces once again defeat troops led by Minamoto Yukiie at the Battle of Sunomata River. In the summer, the Government orders the pacification of the Hokurikudo provinces of the north where the Minamoto are gaining strength and preparing for rebellion. Taira samurai are despatched for the task of quelling the Minamoto but are defeated at Echizen by Minamoto Yoshinaka, Yoritomo's cousin.

**1182:** Famine sweeps through the western provinces weakening morale in the capital as hunger and plague affect thousands. Sorcerers, in league with the Minamoto, are blamed by many and countless kami are petitioned for help but none is offered. The famine is so severe that the Gempei war is brought to a halt for the year.

**1183:** Fujiwara Moroiye becomes Regent. That spring Yoritomo launches an attack on Minamoto Yoshinaka out of distrust for Yoshinaka's growing strength and success. The battle stops when the two great samurai leaders reach an agreement. Shortly after, Taira Koremori conquers Echizen province and seizes several of Yoshinaka's strongholds. This provokes Yoshinaka into a counter attack and he succeeds in recapturing Echizen. Koremori is defeated at the Battle of Tonamiyama in Etchū province, which is known as the Battle of Kurikara Pass.

In the summer Yoshinaka advances towards the capital from the north whilst Yukiie threatens from the east. Go-Shirakawa manages to escape Heiankyō, where he is still under house arrest since Kiyomori ordered it four years previously. He flees to Mt. Hiei whilst the Emperor and his consorts flee to a monastery in the suburbs. The Taira abandon Heiankyō and flee west with Emperor Antoku, his mother and a few attendants. Go-Shirakawa is escorted into the capital by Yoshinaka and gives him a mandate to destroy Munemori and the Taira army;

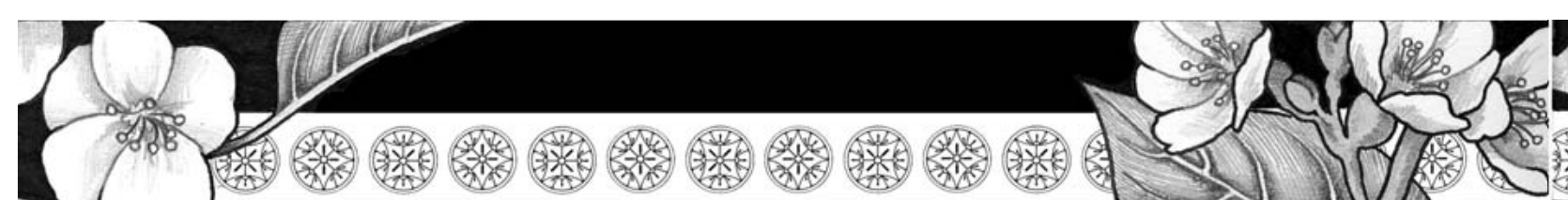
Yoshinaka prefers to attack Yoritomo, who he fears and hates but Go-Shirakawa convinces him to concentrate, instead, on the Taira.

By the early autumn the Taira forces have reached Kyūshū and established a temporary Court at Dazaifu but they are driven out by enraged local samurai and the temporary court is forced to move to Yashima, Shikoku, directly across from Kojima Bay in Bizen province.

Yoshinaka pursues the Taira and meets them on the border of Bitchū and Bizen provinces where he is defeated at the Battle of Mizushima. Following this defeat, Yoshinaka meets with the Taira and Fujiwara leaders and a plot to seize the capital is hatched. The plan is to capture Go-Shirakawa and set up a new government in the Northern provinces. Go-Shirakawa hears of the plan and sends word to Yukiie who, in turn, passes word on to Yoritomo.

In the winter, Yoshinaka makes good his plan and seizes the capital; his troops ravage the city mercilessly. Yukiie leaves the city with his men and heads to Harima province where he launches an attack on the Taira but he is defeated. Go-Shirakawa sends word to Yoritomo asking him to come to Heiankyō to subdue Yoshinaka; however, Yoritomo, believing it is better for him to consolidate his position in the eastern provinces, ignores the request. After repeated requests, though, Yoritomo calls on his brothers, Yoshitsune and Noriyori, to advance on the capital and destroy Yoshinaka. Yoshinaka attacks Hōjōji and takes Go-Shirakawa captive; he also sends troops to Ishikawa in Kawachi province to attack the troops of Yukiie who had set up a garrison there and was threatening the capital.

**1184:** With Yoshitsune and Noriyori converging on the capital, Yoshinaka is forced to flee the city with only a few men. Noriyori gives chase and catches up with Yoshinaka at Awazu in the province of Ōmi. Yoshnaka is killed in the battle. Next, in the early spring of 1184, Yoshitsune and Noriyori lead their troops out of the capital and towards Yashima to attack the Taira and regain the control of the Emperor. The Taira abandon Yashima, with the Emperor in tow, by sea. Taira troops land in Settsu and begin to build a defensive position while leaving the Emperor on a ship with guards near Wada Misaka. However, before the Taira defensive positions at Settsu are completed, Yoshitsune and Noriyori attack, overcoming the incomplete defences.



Yoshitsune and Noriyori divide their forces and encircle the remaining Taira at Ichinotani. In the ensuing battle the Taira forces are heavily defeated with the leaders either killed or captured and only a few thousand are able to retreat by ship to Yashima, taking the Emperor and the Imperial Regalia with them.

In the autumn Yoritomo orders Noriyori to leave Kamakura and attack the Taira. Yoritomo remains in Kamakura to concentrate on making strategic decisions and dealing with the diplomatic problems of the relations between the various warrior families and their leaders. Yoritomo's skills as a general are not in question and in this strategic role his skills as a diplomat and statesman come to the fore. However, Noriyori's forces have left Kamakura poorly equipped and his troops are brought to a standstill in the far western provinces due to a lack of food, supplies and ships.

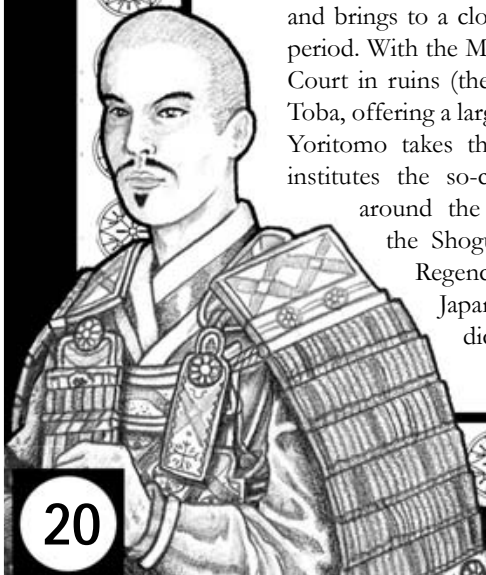
Yoshitsune is sent to the West to assist Noriyori. He crosses to Shikoku with only a few hundred men and attacks the palace in Yashima. The Taira, not knowing the size of the attacking force, flee by boat to Dannoura in the Straits of Shimonoseki with Antoku and the Imperial Regalia. The Taira are attacked by the Minamoto forces at the Battle of Dan-no-Ura and are defeated. The Emperor Antoku, who is only seven years old, flees with his grandmother, Taira no Tokiko, the widow of Kiyomori. Tokiko throws herself and the young Emperor into the sea and both are drowned; the Imperial Regalia (the Sword, the Mirror and the Jewels) go into the water with her; the mirror and jewels are recovered but the sword is lost. Go-Toba, four years old, becomes the new Emperor and Go-Shirakawa continues to act as the Insei, appointing Fujiwara Motomichi once more to the post of Regent. Yoshitsune pursues the remaining Taira forces and finally defeats them in a sea battle at Dannoura.

Thus ends the reign and supremacy of the Taira family and brings to a close the Gempei Wars and the Heian period. With the Minamoto victorious and the Imperial Court in ruins (the final Emperor of the period, Go-Toba, offering a largely ineffectual presence), Minamoto Yoritomo takes the position of Shogun (1192) and institutes the so-called 'Tent Government', moving around the country. By 1198, the power of the Shogunate is complete, supplanting the Regency and assuming complete power.

Japan passes into its feudal era of military dictatorship.

## Emperors in the Heian Period

Kammu	(781-806)
Heizei	(806-809)
Saga	(809-823)
Junna	(823-833)
Nimmyo	(833-850)
Montoku	(850-858)
Seiwa	(858-876)
Yozei	(877-884)
Koko	(884-887)
Uda	(887-897)
Daigo	(897-930)
Suzaku	(930-946)
Murakami	(946-967)
Reizei	(967-969)
Enyu	(969-984)
Kazan	(984-986)
Ichijō	(986-1011)
Sanjo	(1011-1016)
Go-Ichijō	(1016-1036)
Go-Suzaku	(1036-1045)
Go-Reizei	(1045-1068)
Go-Sanjō	(1067-1072)
Shirakawa	(1072-1086)
Horikawa	(1086-1107)
Toba	(1107-1123)
Sutoku	(1123-1141)
Konoye	(1141-1155)
Go-Shirakawa	(1156-1158)
Nijō	(1159-1165)
Rokujō	(1166-1168)
Takakura	(1169-1180)
Antoku	(1181-1184)
Go-Toba	(1184-1198)





# LIFE IN JAPAN

The cultures, customs and routines of classical Japan are very different to those of the west and this chapter describes and explores the concepts and attitudes that make Japan such a unique and fascinating place.

## Japanese Given Names.

The Character Creation chapter provides an extensive list of family names but characters will require a given first name, also. Japanese first names commonly consist of two kanji which denote positive characteristics such as intelligence, bravery, beauty, love or names for flowers or the order of birth (first son, second son and so forth). First names ending with *-ro*, *-shi*, *-ya* or *-o* are typically male first names, while names ending in *-ko*, *-mi*, *-e* and *-yo* are typically female first names.

There is almost no limit to the structures of first names. Some are exclusively female or male, while others can be either. Some names have many different meanings, depending on the kanji used to write them.

## Female given Names

Female names usually but not always, end in *-ko*, which means child. Common female names include Akiko (Autumn Child), Haruko (Spring Child), Jun'ko, Keiko, Kiyoko, Michiko, Natsuko (Summer Child), Sachiko, Yoshiko (Good Child) and Yukiko (Snow Child).

## Male given Names

Male first names sometimes indicate the order of birth, using the suffix *-ro*, the counter for sons. For example, Ichiro (first son), Jiro (second son), Saburo (third son), Shiro (fourth son), Goro (fifth son) and so on. Common male names include Hiroshi, Ken and its many variants (Kenji, Ken'ichi), Yoshi and so forth

There are lots of examples of first names found throughout this book but the key is imagination and using the appropriate naming conventions described here, to develop an authentic sounding first name. Remember that the given name always follows the family name. Family names are provided in greater detail in the following chapter.

## Social Outlook

The Japanese are concerned far more with honour and loyalty than with notions of social justice and equality. Great respect is placed upon those who observe and conform with the six virtues of Charity, Contemplation, Friendship, Loyalty, Sincerity and Wisdom. Graceful and dutiful conduct means more than absolute honesty and integrity is a matter of serving and serving well.

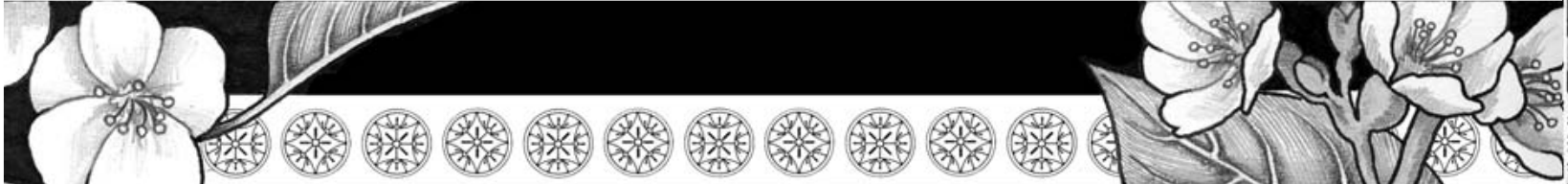
The Japanese find obligations and debt in everything they do. First and foremost is the debt owed to one's parents, for bringing them into life and nurturing them – hence the importance of the family. The only way in which to repay such debt is by becoming and being a good parent, conducting oneself in a way that continues to earn respect. The second is the obligation to one's Lord, be that a daimyo if you are a serving samurai, the Emperor if a member of the Imperial Court, a teacher (*sensei*), if one is learning or one's employer or community, if a member of the lower social orders. Debt and obligation is found in almost everything and the Japanese strive to repay their debts and fulfil their obligations as fully and as honourably as possible. Failure on either count is shameful.

## Clan and Family Dynamics

Where clans and family interactions are concerned, the relationship is based on strength and power, be that political, religious or military. Every family and clan seeks to consolidate its position and extend its reach and alliances are broken as easily as they are made if a better offer or prospect presents itself. In a highly stratified society, power and integrity (or at least a semblance of integrity), are the keys to success. Weakness is not tolerated and whilst the Heian period is certainly more relaxed than the feudal period in this regard, success and the power it brings are still central to the politics of the era.

## Marriage

Marriage in Heian Japan is rarely about love and frequently about securing position, status and power. Marriages are used to seal alliances and demonstrate respect. Romantic notions, whilst they play a huge part



in the songs, poems and stories of the time, are normally divorced from the institution of marriage. If a husband and wife love each other then it is a bonus; as long as the wife respects and obeys the husband – just as Izanami did with Izanagi – and bears him strong and healthy children, then the marriage is considered a good one.



All marriages are arranged by parents or by Lords. Permission to marry is dependent on the will of either and how beneficial, in the long run, the union will be. Once granted the ceremony is highly reverential and conducted at either a Shinto shrine or Buddhist temple with the bride shedding her white kimono to reveal a red one beneath, representing her rebirth into a new family.

All brides bear a dowry, which must be returned to her family if the marriage fails or the husband is found to be negligent in caring for the wife – such as failing to provide her with a standard of living suitable to her station.

Just as marriages are arranged by others, so can divorce be commanded. A daimyo can order a samurai to divorce his wife if circumstances dictate it is the most honourable or efficacious course to take. Likewise, the parents of the husband can arrange a divorce in their son's name if the wife is proving to be undutiful or unsuitable.

## From Youth to Retirement

Childhood is considered to last from birth until the age of 16, when the child attains adulthood. He is allowed to marry, to serve and to fight, although such things may happen earlier if circumstances dictate. Between 20 and 40 a man is considered to be in middle age and by 41, ready to retire if he has not attained an office that requires his continuation. It is common for Ryōmin men of 41 and older to retire to the priesthood or ascend to Inkyo, as it is known, retiring from active life, although it is not a requirement.

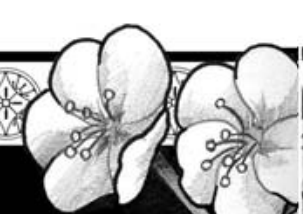
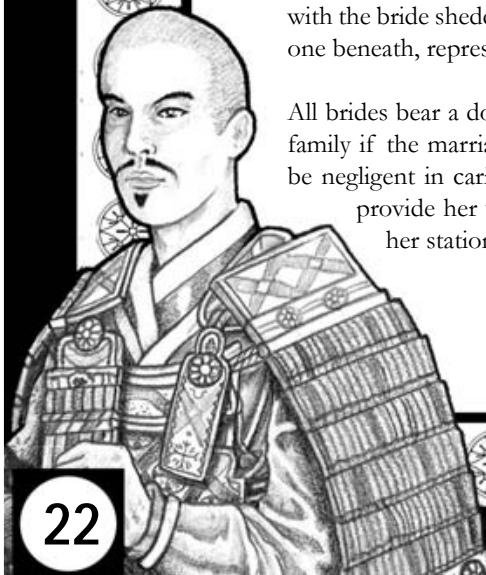
## Death


If one dies honourably, his soul and memory will be revered as a kami of the family; alternatively, if the deceased is of particularly high standing, a minor kami with a shrine erected in dedication. Shinto priests have no truck with death and so all death rites and burials are administered by Buddhist priests. Once the shackles of mortality have been discarded, Shinto reverence takes over, since the soul is now pure.

Dying with dishonour is to be denied the passage into the afterlife of Heaven and the shamed dead can expect no reverence. The spirit of the shamed deceased does not become a kami but a ghost or *kwaidan*, an 'unquiet spirit'. Kwaidan might haunt those who brought shame upon them or wander the earth seeking atonement – a last chance of regaining honour and gaining peaceful rest.

## Courtesy and Manners

Courtesy is everything to the Heian Japanese, and manners, the way in which, and when, things are done, are of huge importance. From simple things, such as the removal of shoes before entering a residence, through to bowing in the correct way, to the correct depth and for an appropriate time according to the rank of the person being bowed to, all are of the utmost import and consequence. The Japanese believe that courtesy and





manners are what set them above beasts and barbarians and are thus the marks of civilisation and culture. Since the Heian period was a time of high cultural development, it is here that courtesy and manners were developed into the institutions that have made Japan remarkable ever since.

## The Bow

The standard greeting in Japan is the bow, with the depth and duration of the bow reflecting the status of the person being greeted. For social equals this can be a brief bow from the shoulders but when greeting a superior, a long, dutiful bow is expected. Prostration is expected before one's Lord, such as a daimyo or when attending the Imperial Court. However members of the Senmin caste are usually expected to prostrate before high-ranking samurai and members of the buke or kuge classes.

In game terms it is not normally required for characters to make any Skill Test when making a greeting but if the situation is particularly delicate or grave the Games Master should call for a Courtesy test. If the roll is failed, then the character has not quite presented himself as formally as he should and this may be reflected in the superior's tone or mood but no other ill-effects should be forthcoming. If the Courtesy test is fumbled, then the character has shown disrespect by not bowing low enough or for long enough and he loses a point of On.

## Address

Modes of address and conversation are highly important and extremely complex. Between equals, colloquialisms are fine but in other situations the way someone speaks and the words used are of the utmost importance since they reinforce the social hierarchy and confirm both respect and deference. It is usual for those of inferior status only to speak when given permission to do so and the expectation is a clear, concise answer with no obfuscation. When a daimyo or high ranking magistrate gives an order or ruling, he does not want it questioned. If a character does so, it infers disrespect and immediately results in a rebuke and a loss of 1D2 On.

Even when allowed to speak freely, characters must use the correct grammatical forms, acknowledging their own position and that of their superior. This means that characters need to adopt a neutral or inferior tone and use of language, to avoid inferring their own superiority. Lapses and transgressions are likely to be overlooked in

a relaxed situation but in formal social situations such lapses will be taken poorly. Again, Courtesy tests may be called for with a 1D2 On loss if the roll is fumbled.

When using someone's name, the suffix *-san* is common. The suffix *-sama* is used where great courtesy is required and the superior position of the other party needs to be reinforced.

## Footwear

The Japanese revere cleanliness and footwear is always removed before entering a residence – even the humblest of hovels. This ensures the tatami mats and wooden floors of a building remain unsoiled and are not damaged. Servants look after deposited footwear and if one is required to walk outside without having the opportunity to don one's geta (the wooden platform clogs worn by most Ryōmin and higher ranking Senmin), then either socks or a spare pair of geta are generally provided.

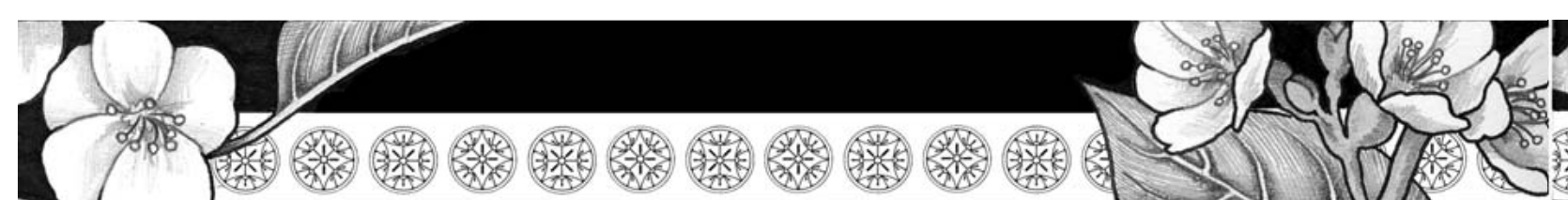
## Weapons

Tachi, katana and larger weapons must be surrendered to servants before entering just about every private residence. Failing to comply with this courtesy, even when stepping into the home of an enemy, immediately incurs a loss of 1D3 On. Weapons are stored in racks until the visitor is leaving, when they are returned. If a character wears a dai-sho, then the wakazashi can be retained but it is a common courtesy to remove the weapon from the sash and place it to one side.

Only members of the Ryōmin caste are permitted to wear the dai-sho. When the sword is not meant for use, it is worn through the sash of the kimono with the blade pointing towards the ground. This signals peace and makes it difficult to make an iajutsu draw with the weapon in this position. When a character means business, then the sword is worn with the blade facing upwards, permitting a swift draw; visibly switching the position of the blade, from ground-facing to up, a subtle move, is considered a sign of a challenge or hostility

Other signs of hostility include using the thumb to nudge the sword forward slightly in its scabbard, 'breaking' its seal, as it were. Making a deliberate reach across the body for the hilt is another, more overt signal of aggression. Characters signalling hostile intentions need to be confident enough to carry the matter through, especially if they are samurai. Backing down is to lose





face, resulting in a loss of 1D2 On (possibly more, depending on the situation).

Weapons such as polearms, like the naginata and yari, are always carried with the point towards the ground and about a metre in front of the body, when being carried on the road.

### The Dai Sho

One of the traditional marks and privileges of the samurai class is the wearing of the dai sho – the katana and wakazashi. In reality the dai sho was a much later development than the Heian period. In Heian Japan the sword of choice for most samurai was the tachi, worn on its own and swung at the hip from a cord rather than worn tucked through the obi or belt sash, as is the case with the dai sho. However, given the iconic nature of the dai sho it is perfectly permissible for Heian samurai (and only samurai) to adopt its use, despite the anachronism.

### Language and Literacy

Emperor Kammu, at the beginning of the Heian period, encouraged education and the development of literacy. Whilst this applied mostly to the Ryōmin, the Senmin also benefited and most people are capable of reading and writing. It is during the Heian period that Japan develops its own alphabet, the kana, which is not reliant on the Chinese alphabet used in earlier periods.

There are three alphabets, all consisting of ideograms, of differing complexity and for differing purposes:

**Katakana** is the most basic alphabet and the one most social classes understand and use for common written communication (such as signs, informal letters and so on). It is a highly simplified form of kanji.

**Hiragana** is a further development of kanji and used in formal documents and for when a particular kana is not known. Most Buke and Kuge use hiragana in their standard correspondence.

**Kanji** is the alphabet of the Imperial Court and taught to all those who must prepare official, legal and administrative documentation; it


is also the language of poetry and literature. As much an artwork as an alphabet, kanji is made up of many *kana*, which equate to syllables and convey not just sounds but also emotional inflections.

Characters who understand kanji will also be able to read katakana and hiragana as a matter of course. Those who understand only katakana and hiragana may attempt to read kanji at –40% to their Language (Hiragana) score. Those who understand only katakana understand hiragana at –40% to their Language (Katakana) score and kanji at –60%.

### Government

Japan has had a well-structured national and regional government system for many, many years. First based on Chinese models, with heavy elements of Confucianism, by the time of the Heian period many of these older institutions have been jettisoned in favour of agencies better reflecting the consolidation of supreme power in the divinity of the Emperor. In Heian Japan almost every





position in the influential government ministries are held by members, friends or allies of the Fujiwara clan, meaning that Japan is effectively a civil dictatorship.

## The Emperor and Regency

The head of the state and considered a being of divine descent from the kami, is the Emperor, who either holds power in name and is controlled by a regent or wields power directly, guided by regency advice and counsel. The Emperor can make laws, change laws and holds effective command across the entire fabric of Japanese life. This exertion of power is kept in check by only two things: the will of the Regent, who is always a member of the Fujiwara clan and the age of the Emperor. In reality, most law is made by the Great Department of State and ratified by the Emperor and Regent but the Emperor's word, in theory, is law and being divine, considered to be infallible.

## The Great Council of State

The Great Council is headed by the *Daijo Daijin* (prime minister) who is appointed by the Regent in the Emperor's name. The Daijo Daijin holds responsibility for preparing law for the Emperor's ratification and is in charge of appointing the members of the Council of State and the provincial governors who administrate at a local level on the Emperor's behalf. This is a key position, with its holder generally being viewed as the next Regent, once the post becomes available.

Also within the Great Council of State are the four ministers of the *Dainagon* who, supported by three lesser ministers, the *Shonagon*, who, together, provide guiding counsel to the Great Council, the Regent and the Emperor.

## The Department of State

Known as the *Daijo Kan*, the Department of State conducts the regular business of Japan and is divided into two branches: the *Sadaijin* or Minister of the Left and *Udaijin*, the Minister of the Right.

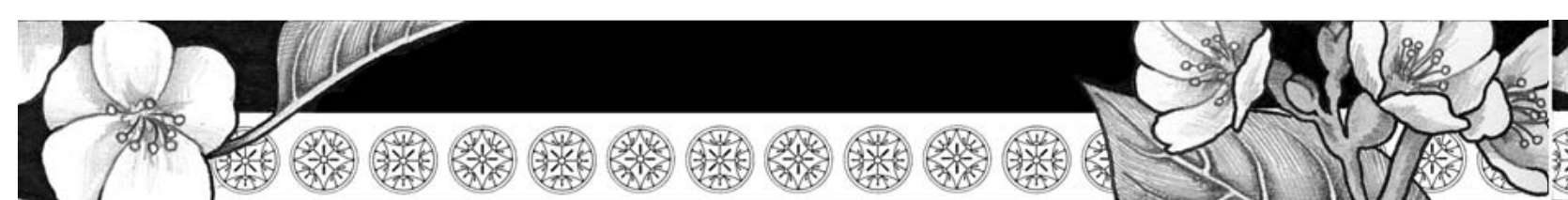
**The Minister of the Left** appoints and administrates several other ministries. The *Ministry of the Centre*, *Nakatsukasa-sho*, is the clearing house for all information coming from the ministries before it is conveyed to the Emperor. Thus, the Ministry of the Centre is the effective heart of Japanese government, party to all that happens and able to prepare information flowing in either direction, in a light that best serves whatever agendas

have to be served. The *Ministry of Ceremony*, *Shikibu-sho*, determines the constitution of the staff serving the Imperial Household and dictates the precedence enjoyed by courtiers at official ceremonies and engagements. For those seeking social advancement, friends in the Ministry of Ceremony are essential. The *Ministry of Civil Affairs*, the *Jibu-sho*, is in charge of ambassadorial appointments and affairs. It also holds power for legitimising clan status and names, making it a ministry of great interest to the power-hungry families of the provinces. Finally, the *Ministry of People's Affairs*, *Minbu-sho*, is responsible for all matters pertaining to the people, including the taking of the census and operating public works requirements (building roads, effecting repairs to public buildings and so forth). The ministry is in charge of gathering labour to meet public needs, effectively demanding labour as a tax and in return, can grant property rights or shoen, to those who provide whatever labour is needed. The Ministry of People's Affairs also controls the flow of money through the other departments, effectively acting as the exchequer.

**The Minister of the Right.** The Minister of the Right has direct responsibility for four ministries. The *Ministry of Military Affairs* or *Hyobu-sho*, co-ordinates all calls to the families and clans when the Imperial Court requires military service and the assembling of an army. The *Ministry of Justice*, the *Gyobu-sho* enforces the legal process, through the devising of punishments and fine tariffs, as outlined in Crime and Punishment, below. The *Ministry of the Treasury*, the *Okura-sho* is in charge of tax collection but cannot appoint tax collectors or set tax levies. The Treasury also has auditing rights over all government institutions and is allowed to set trade tariffs and prices. Finally, the *Ministry of the Imperial Household*, the *Kunai-sho*, looks after those who provide refreshments and catering to the Imperial Court and its officials. It administrates the Imperial rice fields, orchards and grain farms.

## The Provincial Governors

Appointed by the Daijo Daijin of the Great Council, the provincial governors represent the Emperor across Japan and are responsible for ensuring tax revenues are collected. They have no power over the families and clans in terms of how estates, towns and villages are run but are still powerful and influential figures nonetheless. Offending a provincial governor is to risk offending the Emperor (or more important, the Prime Minister and the Regent) and because there is a clear demarcation between the responsibilities of land owners and the



government, disputes are rare, although protests made when the levies change and the effects are felt directly on clan purses.

## Crime and Punishment

The Japanese legal system, administered by the Gyobusho of the Ministry of the Right, is based on personal confession; no punishment can be meted out or guilt assigned, without one. Therefore all efforts are taken to capture criminals alive, so that the hangan or magistrate, can question them to obtain a confession. This usually involves torture, including beatings, burnings, flayings, breakings, boilings, stretchings and all manner of gruesomeness designed to extract a confession and thereby establish guilt. Naturally such treatments are reserved for the lower orders and ronin; samurai and above are given the opportunity to commit seppuku, if the crime warrants it or make financial restitution to the injured party.

A prisoner who dies in custody before making a confession is deemed to be innocent. His family is paid the equivalent of half a year's income from the daimyo's coffers. If the prisoner proves he is innocent or is proved innocent in some other way, then he and his family receive a month's income. Family testament counts for nothing towards the proof of innocence and no hangan will hear family petitions no matter how heartfelt or truthful. The burden of innocence lies in the confession and that rests with the prisoner.

The punishment for capital crimes depends on status. Samurai and above are expected to commit seppuku. Lower orders are executed according to the nature of their crime. Arsonists (and arson is a dreadful crime in a society where dwellings are made from wood and paper) are burned alive. Others are crucified, with their body being stabbed by spears wielded by the very lowest of the social orders. Once done, the victim's head is severed and posted in a public place as a warning and the body is given to samurai to use for bow and sword practice.

In some circumstances the victim might be given to the samurai alive for such practice; condemned criminals are considered excellent for the testing of new blades and several might be stood in a line so that the samurai can test how many bodies he can sever in a single cut.

## Capital Crimes

- Adultery
- Arson
- Burglary
- Forgery
- Murder without Just Cause
- Patricide
- Practicing Sorcery
- Rape
- Robbery
- Treason against the Emperor. Treason is especially heinous. It means the death not only of the perpetrator but also his family, including servants, children, wife and parents, and the banishment of his grandparents. All family property is confiscated.

Lesser crimes are punishable through fines, public humiliation – such as being held in stocks, handcuffed for lengthy periods whilst made to carry-out day to day tasks or paraded through the streets naked – and confiscation of property, depending on the crime. Imprisonment is a short-term measure, although samurai and buke might be held under house arrest for a period, whilst charges against them are assessed. All punishments are meted by the hangan but may be carried out by samurai serving the daimyo or *kenin* servants. Samurai can be stripped of their status and reduced to heimin. Those suffering this fate are effectively disowned by the family or clan and if they do not commit seppuku and mitigate the crime, become ronin, losing all possessions and status.

## Killing – Kiri-sute-gomen

This is the right of a samurai to cut-down any common person with complete impunity. Much is made of this right but it was far more common in the feudal (specifically the Tokugawa) period, when military power was at its height. In Heian Japan, samurai do *not* enjoy this right. A member of the peasantry (the Heimin class) failing to honour a samurai can be berated and even punished, depending on the transgression and will certainly lose On but death is still considered murder and the aggrieved family can petition the daimyo for the samurai to be punished in some way.

Any samurai who kills in this way (i.e. not in self defence) will be held accountable for his actions. In such instances, the character must make an Opposed On roll against that of the daimyo or magistrate, with the On of the person he has slain used as a penalty against his own On. If the character fails to provide an adequate justification, he suffers a loss of On equal to one third of the On score of the person he has killed and is likely to face other punishments too, such as making a financial donation to a temple, the victim's family or the daimyo's coffers, depending on the circumstances.

## Seppuku

Another famous – or infamous – Japanese ritual is that of seppuku, ritual suicide by cutting open the belly. There are several reasons why someone would commit seppuku:

- To preserve personal honour – avoiding capture by an enemy, finding oneself in impossible circumstances and so forth.
- To atone for dishonour – where the shame incurred is so great, personal reputation cannot hope to be recovered.
- In the face of conflicting interests – where a person knows that what they have been commanded to do is wrong or will lead to great shame if carried out.
- To demonstrate absolute loyalty to a Lord – though this is exceedingly rare.
- Punishment – samurai can be ordered to commit seppuku if they are found guilty of a crime that demands an exemplary punishment.

In the Heian period the first of the above reasons was the primary reason for committing seppuku and usually on the battlefield. Seppuku for atoning for dishonour began during the 10<sup>th</sup> Century and did not become common amongst the buke until the Tokugawa period in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> Centuries.

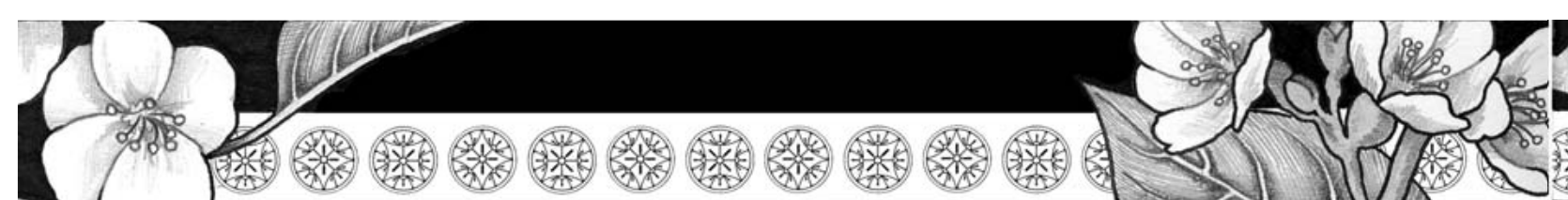
Only samurai and above are permitted to commit seppuku as a punishment. Lower classes are simply executed. The act is highly ritualised and involves a certain degree of preparation. First, the person committing seppuku spends a period in contemplation and meditation. This might also involve writing or dictating a letter outlining the reasons for the sacrifice. Next, the area is prepared; clean and private, with a small wooden table holding a tanto or other short-bladed knife, placed in front of where the person will kneel.

The person then kneels, with his kimono opened. An assistant, known as the *kaishakunin*, stands behind the victim with a katana drawn. The kaishakunin purifies the blade with water, which also helps lubricate it.

The victim then commits the act: three cuts to the belly with the knife. The knife is drawn from left to right across the belly for the first cut, then upwards from the centre of the first cut towards the breastbone. The third and final cut is made parallel to the first. When the third cut has been made, the kaishakunin sweeps down with his katana, beheading the victim in a single blow.

Characters committing seppuku or wanting to, should have very good reason for doing so and the moment should be treated with great reverence. For each cut, the character must make a Persistence test. If the roll succeeds, then the cut has been made successfully. If the test is a critical success, the character can ignore the Persistence penalty for the second cut. If the test is failed, then the character lacks the nerve to continue with the





cut. If a kaishakunin present, he strikes regardless and the character dies with shame upon his name.

For the second and third cuts, the character makes a Persistence test again but this time at a cumulative -20% penalty, with the results as above. On the third cut, the kaishakunin, if present, conducts the beheading.

Characters who fail seppuku and have not been beheaded because a kaishakunin is not present, immediately lose half their On and must live with the shame and inner anguish their failure brings about. Some will try again; others will leave service and become ronin, unable to reconcile their anguish and most likely seek-out death in some other way, welcoming it.

## Standards of Living

Naturally enough, standards of living vary considerably across Japan and are based on caste and social class. At the lower end of the social scale the peasants eke an existence in whatever ways they can, paying taxes on their meagre land plots and a regular tribute to the daimyo of their area. For samurai, a regular stipend is paid to them as their retainer and those who have served well may even be given their own property by their daimyo, which they are expected to maintain and police. Amongst the aristocracy, minor and major, standards of living are much higher with incomes sufficient to maintain their families and holdings.

The Japanese are, however, a naturally frugal people. Waste is very uncommon, mainly because in a country that has little arable land, every little counts. If a rice crop fails, all go hungry, not just the peasants and famines throughout the Heian period are not uncommon.

## Currency

Amongst the lower classes, the Senmin, barter is common. Coinage actually developed after the Heian period, borrowing its system from mainland China but in *RuneQuest: Land of the Samurai*, it has been brought forward. The currency is based on two concepts: the *mon*, represented by the copper piece and the *koku*, represented by the gold piece. The mon is the minimum amount needed for daily living. A mon buys a bowl of rice and a cup of tea or sake. A koku represents the amount of rice needed to support one person for one year or one gold piece.

Most daily transactions are therefore conducted using the copper mon. Larger transactions are conducted in silver coins, called *gin*. Gin are the preserve of the upper classes, rarely seen beyond the exchequers of the daimyo and wealthy courtiers.

## Coinage Values

180 mon (copper) = 1 gin (silver)

360 mon = 2 gin = 1 koku (gold)

Coins are minted by the Imperial Mint and carry the name, in kanji, of the current Emperor on one face and his mon (his heraldic device), on the other – hence the name given to copper coins. Coins have a square hole in the centre, allowing them to be strung on leather thongs, usually 100 at a time. A mon is about 3cm in diameter and a gin is about 5cm. Koku are 6cm and usually kept wrapped in cloth or waxed paper. For very large sums of gold, bullion is minted, stamped and transported in specially built, heavily guarded coffers.

## Diet

Rice and fish are the staples of the Japanese diet, supplemented by seasonable vegetables and fruits. Meat is rarely eaten, although game, when caught as part of a falconry hunt, is considered acceptable from time to time and may be served as part of a banquet or formal dinner. Beef is never eaten. Food is prepared simply, boiled, steamed or eaten raw. Frying is unknown in Heian Japan and is a technique that does not come into practice until quite late in Japan's history.

The uses to which rice is put are astounding. It is served boiled or steamed in grains, stirred until it is sticky and moulded into balls and pressed into solid, starchy cakes. It is ground into flour (although bread is unknown) and of course, fermented to make sake, which is served warm.

## Tea

Tea (*Cha*), a relatively recent import from China, is also drunk and during the Heian period complex rituals (*Cha no Yu* or Tea Ceremony) are developed around the brewing and serving of it. Cha no Yu is a social ritual invested with all the reverence of a religious service and is conducted in a Tea House built for the occasion. The

aim is to purify the mind, body and soul, emerging from the experience refreshed and clear-headed.

Conducting a Cha no Yu is done with the Lore (Tea Ceremony) skill. If the test is critically successful, all participants gain a point of On *and* a Magic Point, such has been the aesthetic perfection of the host's endeavours. There are no penalties for a failure, although a fumble means that the reverence of the ritual has not been observed correctly and the host loses a point of On.

## The Japanese Calendar and Time

The Japanese calendar is a complex combination based on a 60 year cycle, in which the years are named for elements and animals rather than being given a numerical notation. The first part of the notation, representing the elements, is known as the 10 trunks. Five trunks represent the elder brother of each element and the second five, the younger brother. The five elements are Earth, Fire, Metal, Water and Wood; thus, the first trunks are the Elder Brother of Earth, the Elder Brother of Fire and so forth and the second trunks are the same elements prefixed with 'Young Brother'.

### The Japanese Elements (Trunks)

Element	Japanese Name	Elder Trunk	Younger Trunk
Earth	Tsuchi	Tsuchi-no-e	Tsuchi-no-to
Fire	Hi	Hi-no-e	Hi-no-to
Metal	Ka	Ka-no-e	Ka-no-to
Water	Mizu	Mzu-no-e	Mzu-no-to
Wood	Ki	Ki-no-e	Ki-no-to

These 10 trunks combine with 12 twigs to form the year structure. The twigs are the 12 animals of the Chinese zodiac and are also used to denote hours of the day.

### The Japanese Zodiacal Signs (Twigs)

Zodiacal Sign	Japanese Name
Boar	I
Cockerel	Tori
Dog	Inu
Dragon	Tatsu
Goat	Hitsuji
Hare	U
Horse	Ma

Zodiacal Sign	Japanese Name
Monkey	Saru
Ox	Ushi
Rat	Ne
Serpent	Mi
Tiger	Tora

Thus, a year is expressed as Mzu-no-to-Tori (Year of the Cockerel, Young Brother of Water) and the next is Mzu-no-e-Tori (Year of the Cockerel, Elder Brother of Water).

### Hours of the Day

An hour is toki and the hourly cycle uses the signs of the zodiac once more but this time split into 'lesser' (Sho-X-no-Toki) and 'greater' (Sei-X-no-Toki) hours. With twelve signs and the two prefixes, one arrives at a 24 hour clock.

### Japanese Hours (Toki)

Hour	English Notation	Japanese Notation
Midnight	Greater Hour of the Rat	Sho-Ne-no-Toki
1am	Lesser Hour of the Ox	Sei-Ushi-no-Toki
2am	Greater Hour of the Ox	Sho-Ushi-no-Toki
3am	Lesser Hour of the Tiger	Sei-Tora-no-Toki
4am	Greater Hour of the Tiger	Sho-Tora-no-Toki
5am	Lesser Hour of the Hare	Sei-U-no-Toki
6am	Greater Hour of the Hare	Sho-U-no-Toki
7am	Lesser Hour of the Dragon	Sei-Tatsu-no-Toki
8am	Greater Hour of the Dragon	Sho-Tatsu-no-Toki
9am	Lesser Hour of the Serpent	Sei-Mi-no-Toki
10am	Greater Hour of the Serpent	Sho-Mi-no-Toki
11am	Lesser Hour of the Horse	Sei-Ma-no-Toki
12pm	Greater Hour of the Horse	Sho-Ma-no-Toki

Hour	English Notation	Japanese Notation
1pm	Lesser Hour of the Goat	Sei-Hitsuji-no-Toki
2pm	Greater Hour of the Goat	Sho-Hitsuji-no-Toki
3pm	Lesser Hour of the Monkey	Sei-Saru-no-Toki
4pm	Greater Hour of the Monkey	Sho-Saru-no-Toki
5pm	Lesser Hour of the Cockerel	Sei-Tori-no-Toki
6pm	Greater Hour of the Cockerel	Sho-Tori-no-Toki
7pm	Lesser Hour of the Dog	Sei-Inu-no-Toki
8pm	Greater Hour of the Dog	Sho-Inu-no-Toki
9pm	Lesser Hour of the Boar	Sei-I-no-Toki
10pm	Greater Hour of the Boar	Sho-I-no-Toki
11pm	Lesser Hour of the Rat	Sei-Ne-no-Toki

Traditionally, the Japanese do not have names for days but instead refer to the number of the day ('the first day of ...'. However the first and last days of each month are named: *Tsuitachi* and *Misoka* respectively. The last day of the year is known as *O-Misoka* (literally, Great Misoka).

## Japanese Time Divisions

One Year: *Toshi*

10 Days: *Shu*

2 Hours: *Toki*

7.5 Minutes: *Koku*

30 Seconds: *Fun*

0.5 seconds: *Byō* ('a moment')

## Weights and Measures

Whilst time is measured according to the 12 signs of the zodiac, weights, lengths and volume are measured roughly on a metric scale, as shown in the table below.

### Weights and Measures

Japanese Measure	Western Equivalent
1 monme	3.75 grams
1 kanme = 1000 monme	3.75 kilos
1 shaku	30.3cm
1 ken = 6 shaku	1.8metres
1 j = 10 shaku	3.03metres
1 ch = 60 ken	109metres
1 ri = 36 ch	3927.27metres
1 g	0.18litres
1 sh	1.8litres
1 koku	180litres



# LAND OF THE SAMURAI CHARACTERS

*RuneQuest: Land of the Samurai* uses a modified version of the standard *RuneQuest* character creation system, described in the *RuneQuest* rulebook and the *RuneQuest Companion*. This chapter describes the process of creating a Japanese character, including details on social background and professions and also includes new advanced skills.

## Character Creation Checklist

- Follow steps One to Three of the *RuneQuest* adventurer creation process.
- For step Four, refer to sections below relating to clans, families and professions.
- For step Five, all characters have a Movement rate of 4 metres per Combat Action.
- *Hero Points*: every *Land of the Samurai* adventurer begins with 3 Hero Points.
- *Age*: Any age between 15 and 30.
- Calculate the character's *On*, using the *Personal Starting On* column appropriate to the character's caste and class.
- For step Six, buy the adventurer's starting equipment according to the money determined by cultural background and profession. Refer to the Equipment chapter beginning on page 53 for more information on Japanese equipment available.
- Step 7, determine if the character has any *gifts* or *heirlooms* (see page 51).

## Clans, Families and Alliances

The family and the clan are important concepts in Japanese society. In Heian Japan many of the families were either members of or affiliated with, one of the major clans, such as the Fujiwara, Minamoto and Taira and may even be striving to establish their own clan either through achieving improved status or currying

### A Note on Gender Roles

Japanese society has always favoured male roles above female. Men occupied almost all the key roles in the Imperial Court and female samurai were unheard of. Women were home-makers, artists, poets and entertainers but could still quite easily exert power in their own way, albeit indirectly.

If you are planning a historically accurate *Land of the Samurai* game, then the social divisions between male and female should be observed, including female deference to men as a matter of etiquette. However if you wish to bend the setting to allow a greater degree of equal opportunity, this is up to you!

favour with the Imperial Court and being honoured by the Emperor himself.

The table below provides an extensive but by no means exhaustive, list of clans and families and notes which families are allied with which clans. Families listed as *Aspiring* means that the family is actively attempting to form its own clan by attracting alliances with other families and/or seeking greater glory and impressing the Imperial Court.

All the families listed are of the Ryōmin caste and either Kuge or Buke classes. For simplicity it can be assumed that the three major clans – Fujiwara, Minamoto and Taira – have family extensions into the Imperial Family (although it was by no means this clear cut), whereas the remaining clans are on the periphery of the Imperial Court. Clan rivalries are common and whilst clan warfare did not truly begin until the Gempei Wars, feuds and skirmishes, especially over political and territorial differences, occurred throughout the Heian period.



## Clans

Ō Ando  
 Ō Chino  
 Ō Fujiwara  
 Ō Genda  
 Ō Imebe  
 Ō Inihara  
 Ō Jukodo  
 Ō Kume

Ō Maeda  
 Ō Mimamoto  
 Ō Murata  
 Ō Nakatomi  
 Ō Nomura  
 Ō Sarume  
 Ō Otomo  
 Ō Tiara  
 Ō Tokugawa

## Families

Allied Families	Allied To	Unallied Families	Aspiring Families
Abe	Kume	Akagi	Adachi
Abukara	Chino	Akatsuka	Agawa
Ajibana	Ando	Akimoto	Aida
Akamatsu	Taira	Amaya	Aizawa
Akechi	Taira	Anami	Amagawa
Akita	Chno	Aoki	Asahara
Akutagawa	Kume	Aoyama	Asanuma
Amano	Jukodo	Arai	Asuhara
Anno	Taira	Arakawa	Atshushi
Anzai	Sarume	Aramaki	Chishu
Araki	Tokugawa	Arishima	Choshi
Arakida	Ando	Arita	Dainichi
Arato	Minamoto	Asari	Date
Arihyoshi	Taira	Ashia	Deushi
Asahi	Maeda	Baisotei	Endo
Asahina	Chino	Bando	Eto
Asai	Minamoto	Bunya	Ezakiya
Eguchi	Fujiwara	Ebisawa	Funabashi
Ekiguchi	Murata	Egami	Funakoshi
Enomoto	Nomura	Endoso	Furukawa
Etsuko	Jukodo	Fuchida	Gensai
Fujishima	Fujiwara	Fugunaga	Hama
Fukuda	Taira	Fujimaki	Hana
Fukunaka	Fujiwara	Fukao	Hata
Fukuoka	Kume	Genji	Hatakeda
Fukusaku	Imebe	Godo	Hatoyama
Fukushima	Imebe	Hachirobei	Hattori
Funaki	Murata	Hagiwara	Hayakawa
Fuse	Nakatomi	Hamaguchi	Hayuata
Futabatei	Nakatomi	Hara	Higuchi

## Characters

<b>Allied Families</b>	<b>Allied To</b>	<b>Unallied Families</b>	<b>Aspiring Families</b>
Fuwa	Minamoto	Haruguchi	Hira
Goto	Ijiri	Hasegawa	Hiraga
Gushiken	Taira	Hasekura	Hiratasuka
Hagino	Fujiwara	Hashimoto	Hirayama
Hanabusa	Fujiwara	Hatakeyama	Hirose
Hino	Genda	Hayami	Hiroyuki
Hiraoka	Fujiwara	Hayashi	Hisamatsu
Hirase	Maeda	Hayashida	Hishikawa
Hiro	Fujiwara	Hayata	Hokusai
Hohki	Otomo	Hideaki	Horiuchi
Hojo	Otomo	Higashikuni	Hotate
Honami	Ijiri	Higashiyama	Hyobanshi
Honjo	Kume	Higo	Ibi
Hoshino	Nakatomi	Hike	Ibu
Hotta	Murata	Hiraki	Ichimonji
Ichiro	Otomo	Hirano	Ichiyusai
Ihara	Taira	Hirasi	Idane
Ii	Minamoto	Hirata	Iemochi
Ikina	Maeda	Hirota	Iesada
Imada	Tokugawa	Hirota	Ikeda
Ishikawa	Taira	Hyata	Inokuma
Ishinomori	Minamoto	Ibuka	Inoue
Isozaki	Taira	Ichigawa	Inoue
Itagaki	Ando	Ichihara	Inukai
Itagaki	Murata	Ienari	Iseya
Ito	Minamoto	Iida	Ishida
Itoh	Taira	Iida	Ishiguro
Iwasa	Imebe	Iijima	Ishiguro
Iwasaki	Minamoto	Iitaka	Ishihara
Iwata	Taira	Imagawa	Ishimura
Izumi	Taira	Imoo	Itō
Jonouchi	Minamoto	Ina	Iwahara
Jumonji	Minamoto	Ino	Iwaki
Kagawa	Jukodo	Irie	Iwakura
Kamisaka	Jukodo	Isobe	Kakutama
Kamo	Otomo	Isoda	Kamachi
Kanegawa	Sarume	Ito	Kamio
Kaneko	Nakatomi	Itokawa	Kanada
Kasahara	Taira	Kanai	Kano
Kasai	Minamoto	Karamorita	Katsura
Kashiwagi	Jukodo	Kase	Kawakami
Katayama	Fujiwara	Kataoka	Kawasaki
Kato	Kume	Katsukawa	Kijimuta
Katsu	Taira	Katsumata	Kikuchi
Kawamata	Taira	Katsushika	Kikugawa
Kawazu	Nomura	Kido	Koiso

Allied Families	Allied To	Unallied Families	Aspiring Families
Kazuyoshi	Minamoto	Kijmuta	Kojima
Kenkyusha	Fujiwara	Kikui	Komon
Ki	Genda	Kimura	Kondo
Kikkawa	Taira	Kinugasa	Konoe
Kikutake	Minamoto	Kitamura	Koyama
Kimio	Ando	Kobayashi	Kuga
Kimiyama	Minamoto	Kobi	Kunda
Konoe	Genda	Kon	Makiguchi
Kubota	Imebe	Kono	Makuda
Kurmochi	Nomura	Kōno	Marusa
Kurohiko	Minamoto	Koruba	Maruya
Kurusu	Genda	Koshin	Maruyama
Kusunoki	Fujiwara	Koshino	Matokai
Kyubei	Genda	Kotoku	Matsuki
Marubeni	Imebe	Kozu	Matsura
Masanobu	Inihara	Kudara	Matsushita
Masaoka	Jukodo	Kudo	Minatoya
Mashita	Kume	Kuno	Minobe
Masudu	Maeda	Kunomasu	Mitsubishi
Masuno	Minamoto	Kuramochi	Mitsuwa
Matsukata	Minamoto	Kuramoto	Mitsuya
Matsumura	Genda	Kurkawa	Miyagi
Matsuo	Fujiwara	Kuroda	Miyazaki
Matsushina	Minamoto	Kuroki	Morimoto
Matsuzawa	Kume	Kusonoki	Morita
Mayuzumi	Chino	Makino	Motoori
Mihashi	Ando	Masoni	Motoyoshi
Minabuchi	Chino	Matano	Munkata
Miwa	Nomura	Matsuda	Murakami
Miyamoto	Sarume	Matsumoto	Mutō
Murayama	Sarume	Morioka	Nonomura
Mushanaokoji	Otomo	Moto	Nozaki
Mushashibo	Taira	Munakata	Nozara
Nagahama	Tokugawa	Murase	Oe
Nagai	Inihara	Murkami	Ogata
Nagano	Jukodo	Muruyama	Ohira
Natsume	Minamoto	Namiki	Okano
Nawabe	Kume	Nanami	Okasawa
Nemoto	Chino	Narita	Okazawaya
Noda	Ando	Ninomiya	Okimasa
Nogi	Chino	Nishihara	Okimoto
Nomura	Nomura	Nishimoto	Okui
Odaka	Sarume	Nishimura	Omura

<b>Allied Families</b>	<b>Allied To</b>	<b>Unallied Families</b>	<b>Aspiring Families</b>
Ogawa	Otomo	Nishio	Onohara
Ozaki	Genda	Okada	Saito
Ozawa	Fujiwara	Okanaya	Saji
Saionji	Maeda	Okawa	Sakai
Sakakibara	Fujiwara	Okazaki	Sakata
Sakoda	Taira	Okubo	Saotome
Sakurai	Tokugawa	Okuda	Saromi
Santo	Ando	Omori	Sasada
Sasakawa	Chino	Ono	Satoh
Sawamatsu	Fujiwara	Osagawa	Satoya
Segawa	Genda	Ota	Sen
Sekine	Imebe	Otani	Shibata
Senmatsu	Inihara	Otomo	Shidehara
Seo	Jukodo	Otsu	Shige
Seto	Kume	Ozu	Shigi
Shibaguchi	Maeda	Royama	Shimanouchi
Shibanuma	Minamoto	Ryusaki	Shimohira
Shiroyama	Tokugawa	Shigeki	Takahama
Siagyō	Ando	Shigemitsu	Takaoka
Soga	Chino	Shimamura	Takashi
Sonoda	Minamoto	Shimaoka	Takashita
Sugita	Fujiwara	Shimizu	Takekawa
Sugitani	Minamoto	Shimura	Taku
Takagi	Tokugawa	Shinozaki	Takudo
Takara	Ando	Shinozuka	Tamuro
Takarabe	Chino	Shirai	Tani
Takasu	Fujiwara	Shirane	Tashiro
Takewaki	Taira	Shirasu	Tatenaka
Takizawa	Taira	Shiratori	Tatsuno
Tamura	Ando	Shizuma	Tendō
Taniguchi	Maeda	Shoda	Teshigahara
Tokuda	Kume	Taka	Tsukada
Tomimoto	Chino	Takabe	Tsukioka
Tomori	Ando	Takada	Tsumemasa
Tono	Chino	Takahashi	Tsuruya
Torii	Nomura	Takakusaki	Uchida
Toyoda	Sarume	Takamura	Ueda
Tsubaki	Otomo	Takano	Uematsu
Tsubouchi	Taira	Takasugi	Uetake
Tsuchie	Tokugawa	Takecare	Usami
Tsukahara	Ando	Takeda	Utagawa
Tsukatani	Chino	Takemago	Watabe
Tsukehara	Taira	Takemitsu	Yagi
Tsunoda	Tokugawa	Takeshita	Yakuta
Tsutaya	Ando	Takeuchi	Yamabe
Tsutomu	Chino	Takishida	Yamagata

Allied Families	Allied To	Unallied Families	Aspiring Families
Ueda	Minamoto	Takishita	Yamamoto
Ukiyo	Minamoto	Tanaka	Yamana
Urogataya	Ando	Tanaka	Yamato
Utsumi	Chino	Tansho	Yanagimachi
Watari	Fujiwara	Tanuma	Yokokawa
Watanabe	Genda	Tatsuya	Yokoyama
Yabuki	Imebe	Terada	Yonemura
Yamaguchi	Taira	Terakado	Yosano
Yamanaka	Minamoto	Torisei	Yoshida
Yamanouchi	Maeda	Toru	Yoshikawa
Yamanoue	Maeda	Toyota	Yoshizaki
Yamaoka	Minamoto	Tsujimoto	
Yanagi	Murata	Tsurimi	
Yanagisawa	Nakatomi	Uda	
Yasuda	Nomura	Uehara	
Yasukawa	Sarume	Ueshima	
Yoemon	Fujiwara	Ui	
Yoshinobu	Taira	Umari	
Yuhara	Tokugawa	Umeki	

## Castes

Japan has always been a caste-based society; that is, people divided into social stations reflecting their background and upbringing. Essentially Heian Japan is divided into two sets of people, each with further internal divisions. The upper caste is the *Ryōmin*, or ‘Good Citizens’ and the lower caste the *Senmin* or ‘Low Citizens’. The caste one is born into dictates privileges one can expect, levels of respect (or lack of), jobs and positions one could (and should) hold and likely income. In the Heian period the caste system is far less structured than during the feudal period and mobility between castes is quite possible, for those with the will to rise above their birth station.

Every character in *Land of the Samurai* belongs to either the *Ryōmin* or the *Senmin* caste and then to one of the social classes within the caste. Caste and class function as the Cultural Background for standard *RuneQuest*, with characters gaining skills according to their caste and social class.

### Ryōmin Caste

The classes within the ‘Good Citizens’ are, in order of importance:

#### The Imperial Court

**Emperor** – Emperors can be of any age. If too young to exercise power, a Regent

is appointed by the Great Council of State, although it is now common practice for a Fujiwara Regent to be appointed regardless of age.

**Crown Princes** – Male heirs eligible to ascend to the Imperial Throne, Crown Princes, are named by the Emperor or his Regent; thus it is not an automatic right and depends very much on lineage and background.

**Retired Emperors** – known either as *Dajo-ko* or *Dajo-hoo*, if they have entered the priesthood. After 1072 the *Insei* or Cloistered Emperor, system comes back into use, whereby a retired Emperor continues to wield executive power from behind the scenes.

**The Imperial Family** – all those with a direct familial relationship to the Emperor.

**Nobles of Court** – The *Kuge*. This includes all senior advisers, headed by the Regent and for most of the Heian period is dominated by the Fujiwara clan. Regents are of two types: *Sesshō* advise child Emperors and the Empress, whilst *Kampaku* act as senior advisers to adult Emperors.

#### The Buke

The Buke are the nobles *outside* the Imperial Court, landowners and clan heads.



**Daimyo** – The leaders of clans and families with *shoen* (land and property).

**Samurai** – The word *samurai* means ‘to serve’ and strictly, it denotes anyone who offers service to a lord or noble, be it an adviser or warrior. During the Heian period samurai were, by and large, warriors who had proved themselves in battle and had dedicated themselves to the service of a particular lord. Thus, there are different levels of status within the samurai class, depending on service, experience, personal wealth and usefulness to the daimyo. Samurai without a lord, *ronin*, experience mixed fates. Whilst a lordless samurai is expected to incur a certain amount of shame, many were happy to wander, experiencing freedom outside the strictures of the clan.

### Senmin Caste

Low Citizens are those outside the aristocracy and comprise the rank and file of Japan.

**Imperial Servants** – *Ryōko*. Imperial Court bureaucrats and high-ranking household servants, including guards of the Imperial Household.

**Public Servants** – *Kanko*. Bureaucrats and servants of the government ministries, serving in official capacities in the capital and elsewhere.

**Family Servants** – *Kenin*. Lesser advisers, bureaucrats and servants to Buke families

**Heimin** – This is a catch-all term referring to the peasantry (*hyakusho*) who offered their lands to a Daimyo; artisans, craftsmen, merchants, farmers and so forth. Heimin warriors, typically drawn from the peasantry, are known as *Ashigaru*. Merchants and traders do not occupy especially high status in Japanese society. The pursuit of profit was not considered a particularly honourable way of living and whilst some merchants (*Akindo*) could become wealthy, they could never become Ryōmin. It was common for merchants to act as moneylenders and since the borrowing of anything in Japanese society incurs debt, the popularity of merchants is never very high.

### The Priesthood

In the Heian period the priesthood occupies its own social class. Most priests are Buddhists and attached to a



particular temple. Shinto has no formal structure of clergy and thus no formal priesthood, although many Ryōmin and Senmin acted in such a capacity. Priests are drawn from both castes and previous caste divisions are retained, to a degree, within the temple structure. However the

leaders of the temples, the abbots, are treated as Ryōmin, whatever their original station in life.

The Priesthood is discussed in greater depth in the Religion chapter, beginning on page 60.

## Status and Culture Background

Caste	Class	Caste and Class Skills		Professions	Personal Starting On
		Basic	Advanced		
Ry min	Imperial Family	Courtesy +10% Influence +10% Persistence +10%	Language (Japanese) +50% Lore (Regional)	Bushi (Warrior) Daishonin (Scribe) Gaikoukan (Diplomat) Gakusha (Scholar) Isha (Herbalists and Healers) Reijin (Bard) S and B zu (Buddhist Priest and Monk) Teishin (Courtier) <i>Youjutsusha (Sorcerer)</i>	70+POW+CHA
	Kuge	Courtesy +10% Influence +10% Persistence +10%	Language (Japanese) +50% Lore (Regional)	Bushi (Warrior) Daishonin (Scribe) Gaikoukan (Diplomat) Gakusha (Scholar) Isha (Herbalists and Healers) Kannushi (Shinto Priest) S and B zu (Buddhist Priest and Monk) S hei (Warrior Monk) Togi (Acrobat/ Entertainer) <i>Youjutsusha (Sorcerer)</i>	60+POW+CHA

Caste	Class	Caste and Class Skills		Professions	Personal Starting On
		Basic	Advanced		
	Buke	Courtesy +10% Influence +10% Persistence +10%	Language (Japanese) +50% Lore (Regional)	Bushi (Warrior) Daishonin (Scribe) Gaikoukan (Diplomat) Gakusha (Scholar) Hangan (Magistrate) Hyakoushou (Farmer) Isha (Herbalists and Healers) Kannushi (Shinto Priest) S and B zu (Buddhist Priest and Monk) S hei (Warrior Monk) <i>Youjutsusha (Sorcerer)</i>	50+POW+CHA
	Samurai	Courtesy +10% Influence +10% Persistence +10% 1H Sword +10% Riding +10%	Language (Japanese) +50% Lore (Regional)  Pick Two Calligraphy* Craft Dance Language Lore Play Instrument Shiphandling	Bushi (Warrior) Gaikoukan (Diplomat) Hangan (Magistrate) S hei (Warrior Monk)	40+POW+CHA
	Senmin	Ryoko Courtesy +10% Evaluate +10%, Influence +10%, Lore (World) +10%	Language (Japanese) +50%, Lore (Regional)  Pick Three Artistic Expression, Calligraphy* Craft, Dance, Language, Lore, Mechanisms, Play Instrument, Streetwise	Bushi (Warrior) Daishonin (Scribe) Gakusha (Scholar) Isha (Herbalists and Healers) Kannushi (Shinto Priest) Reijin (Bard) Shokunin (Craftsman) S and B zu (Buddhist Priest and Monk) S hei (Warrior Monk) Togi (Acrobat/Entertainer) <i>Youjutsusha (Sorcerer)</i>	20+POW+CHA



Caste	Class	Caste and Class Skills	Professions	Personal Starting On	
		<b>Basic</b>	Advanced		
	Kanko	Courtesy +5% Evaluate +5% Influence +10% Lore (World) +10%	Language (Native) +50% Lore (Regional) Streetwise	Bushi (Warrior) Daishonin (Scribe) Gakusha (Scholar) Isha (Herbalists and Healers) Kannushi (Shinto Priest) Reijin (Bard) Shokunin (Craftsman) S and B zu (Buddhist Priest and Monk) S hei (Warrior Monk) Togi (Acrobat/ Entertainer) <i>Youjutsusha (Sorcerer)</i>	10+POW+CHA
		Pick Two +10% Boating, Persistence, Resilience, Sleight, Stealth	Pick One Calligraphy* Craft Dance Language		
		Pick Two +10% 1H Sword, Dagger, Bow, Polearm, Spear	Lore Play Instrument Shiphandling		
	Kenin	Courtesy +5% Evaluate +5% Influence +10% Lore (World) +10%	Language (Native) +50% Lore (Regional) Streetwise	Bushi (Warrior) Daishonin (Scribe) Gakusha (Scholar) Hyakoushou (Farmer) Isha (Herbalists and Healers) Kannushi (Shinto Priest) Nusubito (Thief) Reijin (Bard) Ryoushi (Fisherman) Shokunin (Craftsman) S and B zu (Buddhist Priest and Monk) S hei (Warrior Monk) Suifu (Sailor) Togi (Acrobat/ Entertainer) <i>Youjutsusha (Sorcerer)</i>	5+POW+CHA
		Pick Two +10% Boating, Persistence, Resilience, Sleight, Stealth	Pick One Calligraphy* Craft Dance Language		
		Pick Two +10% 1H Sword, Dagger, Bow, Polearm, Spear	Lore Play Instrument Shiphandling		



Caste	Class	Caste and Class Skills		Professions	Personal Starting On
		Basic	Advanced		
	Heimin	Athletics +5% Courtesy +5% Lore (Animal) +5% Lore (Plant) +10% Resilience +5%  Pick Two +10% Boating, Dodge, Driving, First Aid, Persistence  Pick Two +10% 1H Axe, 1H Flail, 1H Hammer, 2H Axe, Dagger, Spear, Staff, Unarmed	Language (Japanese) +50% Lore (Regional)  Pick Two Craft Dance Lore Play Instrument Survival	Akindo (Merchant) Bushi (Warrior) Gakusha (Scholar) Hyakoushou (Farmer) Isha (Herbalists and Healers) Jojiki (Peddler) Kannushi (Shinto Priest) Nusubito (Thief) Reijin (Bard) Ryoushi (Fisherman) Shokunin (Craftsman) S hei (Warrior Monk) Suifu (Sailor) Togi (Acrobat/ Entertainer) Youjutsusha (Sorcerer)	POW+CHA

\*New Advanced skill.

## On

On is honour; the amount of respect one can expect from others, based upon one's social standing and personal reputation. The higher the On score, the more honourable and respected a person is. There is no theoretical upper limit for On, although it can never exceed the Emperor's and the Emperor (or his Regent) has an effective On value of 200.

A character's On derives from three sources: his caste class, his profession and his family. Consult the Social Clan and Family On table on page 43 for Personal Starting On and then add to it the On for the profession. Next, determine the On of the clan or family and divide it by 20; add this to the personal On score.

On can be gained and lost depending on one's actions. Failing to observe rules of etiquette, for example, incurs an On loss; providing a valuable service, favour or securing an important military victory wins On. A guide to On gains and losses is provided in the nearby table. On cannot be increased through Skill Tests, only through rewards for actions.

## Using On

On is used in social situations and in one of two ways.

First, On is used directly, as a form of skill, when seeking a favour or service. An Opposed test is made between the character and the person he is hoping to placate (or is being placated by). If the test is successful, the character's honour and reputation have convinced the opponent enough to grant the service or favour being requested. If the test is failed, then the service is denied and the matter ends there. If the test is a critical success, the character has put forward his case with such eloquence, courtesy and sincerity that he gains 1D3 On as a result. However, if the Opposed test is fumbled, the character has made a blunder of some form; an inadvertent insult or inappropriate remark perhaps and sustains a loss of 1D3 On, as well as being denied.

The second use for On is as a bonus to the following skills: Influence, Artistic Expression, Courtesy, Oratory and any other Advanced skill that involves social interaction. The character receives an automatic bonus to the skill of his On divided by 5. This reflects the way a character's personal standing and honour carries through into particular actions through the expression of personality, manner and demeanour.

When there is a difference between social classes – Ryokō and Samurai for instance, the higher ranked class gains a bonus of 5 On for each step above the inferior class, for the purposes of that interaction. For example, a samurai with an On of 75, being petitioned by the headman of a heimin village with an On of 60, the samurai would treat his On as 95, receiving a bonus of +20 for the difference between their stations.

## Gaining On

On is gained for particular deeds. The pursuit of On, either through excellence in a particular endeavour or success on the battlefield, is of major importance to all Japanese and On can be gained in all manner of ways. The table below outlines a selection of different scenarios where On can be attained and sample values for the gain. It is by no means an exhaustive list and Games Masters should award On for any successful endeavour that is likely to impress and enhance personal reputation.

## Sample On Gains

Action	On Gain
Complete a task or project that excels expectations	1D3+1
Complete a task or project to complete satisfaction	1D2
Create a work of art or excel in a performance	1D3
Defeat an enemy as part of a group engagement	1D4
Defeat an enemy in single combat	Enemy's On/20
Demonstrate outstanding loyalty	1D4+1 (depending on the act, this may be higher)
Kill an enemy in single combat	Enemy's On/10
Engage in an Arrow Duel	See page 84 of the Way of the Warriors chapter
Undertake or complete a conspicuous act of bravery	2D3

## Losing On

Losing On is dreaded prospect. Personal standing and reputation is hugely important to all Japanese, and losing personal honour injures not only the individual but the family and clan as well. Whilst most can withstand some shame, a major loss of On may be considered so heinous that the only honourable recourse is to take one's own life in the act of *seppuku* (see page 27). A character who loses On equal to, or more than, his CHA divided by 4 is

considered to have experienced a *Minor Disgrace*, and this is considered to be sustainable. A Lord or Daimyo might require the character to undertake a particular task, favour or atonement to compensate for the mistake.

Losing On equal to or more than CHA divided by two, is considered a *Major Disgrace*, and this is a very serious position for a character. A Major Disgrace *always* requires atonement of some kind, and this might take the form of the confiscation of property, loss of a title, or expulsion from the family, clan or service, depending on the transgression. Many who suffer a Major Disgrace join the priesthood in order to atone, whilst for a samurai, expelled from service, he becomes ronin and most likely unable to find service easily (many ronin become bandits or beggars in order to simply survive).

Losing On equal to CHA or greater is considered *Shame*, and Shame almost always involves *seppuku*. Committing *seppuku* restores respect posthumously and negates any shame brought upon the family or clan.

If On loss takes a character below the Class On for his class, there is the possibility that he is demoted to the next class down, and given an appointment reflecting the loss of social position. The character is allowed to petition his Lord in an Opposed On test, as described earlier, to try to avoid such a demotion.

## Sample On Losses

Action	On Loss
Commit an act of cowardice	2D3
Commit fraud or tell a deliberate lie	1D3
Conspire against one's Lord and be discovered/thwarted	2D6
Demonstrate overt disloyalty	1D4+1
Fail a task or project catastrophically	1D3+1
Fail to complete a task or project to complete satisfaction	1D2
Fail to show due deference to one's superior	1D3 per difference in class
Involve oneself in a criminal act	1D6 (depending on the act, this can be higher)

Action	On Loss
Murder a member of a lesser class without good reason	1D3
Murder a member of one's own class or above	2D3
Offer a deliberate insult or inappropriate rebuke	1D4
Suffer a defeat to an enemy as part of a group engagement	1D4
Suffer a defeat to an enemy in single combat	Enemy's On/20

## Families and On

Clans and families have an On score, just as characters do. The On values are as follows

### Using Hero Points to Mitigate On Loss

If the Games Master wishes, characters may spend Hero Points to negate the loss of On. It costs 1 Hero Point to negate up to a loss of 5 On (thus, a loss of 1-5 On costs 1 Hero Point, 6-10 costs 2 and so forth).

## Clan and Family On

Clan	On	Allied Family On	Unallied Family On	Aspiring Family On
Ando	70	60+2D10	50+2D10	60+1D10
Chino	80			
Fujiwara	100			
Genda	80			
Imebe	90			
Inihara	60			
Jukodo	65			
Kume	70			
Maeda	90			
Minamoto	95			
Murata	70			
Nakatomi	70			
Nomura	76			
Sarume	70			
Otomo	65			
Taira	95			
Tokugawa	85			

An allied family's On cannot exceed the On score of the clan it is allied to.

On between families and clans is used in exactly the same way as On for characters; to petition for favours and services and to act as a general guide to the family's honour, reputation and standing. On can be gained and lost by clans and families in exactly the same way and for the same reasons, as characters. When individuals are representing family or clan interests and seeking approval or assistance at a family or clan level, then the On of the clan or family is used in place of individual On. Clans always preserve their own interests above those of an allied family, although clearly there are certain obligations inherent in any alliance.

Conversely, even allied families want to protect and promote their own interests in addition to those of their allied clan and so orders from a clan that overtly clash with family interests may be resisted or even rejected, resulting in a loss of On, naturally but beneficial in the long run.

Unallied and aspiring families with relatively high On scores may very well be courted by others keen on forming beneficial alliances. Clearly this will be of interest to aspiration-prone families but may be of little consequence to an unallied family, which may be content in its independence.

Characters' actions have an impact on family On as well as their own. Every 10 points of personal On gained or lost translates to 1 point of gain or loss for the family.

## Money

A character's starting money is based on their caste, class and profession. For the Ryōmin, money is based on regular income from lands, estates, service and so forth. For Senmin, existence is more hand to mouth and money is based on whatever the character has been able to make through employment, trade or other services to the higher classes.

Caste	Class	Starting Money	Income per Year
Ry min	Imperial Family	4D10 x300 gin	1D10 x500 koku
	Kuge	4D10 x100 gin	1D10 x100 koku
	Buke	4D10 x50 gin	1D4 x100koku
	Samurai	4D10 x25 gin	1D4 x10 koku
Senmin	Ryok	4D10 x10 gin	1D4+1koku
	Kanko	4D10 x20 mon	2D2koku
	Kenin	4D10 x15 mon	2D2 koku
	Heimin	4D10 x10 mon	2D2 koku

Income per year comes from either regular stipends, paid to samurai or the amount of revenue a holding or estate produces. The Income per Year figure is the net of taxes paid to the government. Whilst the figure is expressed in koku, it is worth noting that the income is most likely generated in terms of rice, vegetables and other comestibles, rather than in hard currency. Samurai are often paid in rice or might be given land, depending on their status in the clan. If paid with land, they are expected to maintain it, police it and otherwise behave as a daimyo does. They are also expected to buy their own equipment, although gifts of equipment are sometimes given in lieu of a cash payment.

## Professions

The professions available to *RuneQuest: Land of the Samurai* characters differ from those in the standard *RuneQuest* rules, reflecting the Japanese culture.

For authenticity each profession is listed by its Japanese title, followed by its English title. Each profession also lists the skills

available to characters and its starting On, which should be rolled and added to the Personal Starting On obtained for caste and class.

## Akindo (Merchant)

Merchants do not occupy a particularly high status in Japanese society. More often than not considered to be unscrupulous and with little regard for personal honour (or the honour of others), merchants occupy the lower classes of society and even those who become very rich, are unlikely to move from being senmin to ryōmin. However the merchant class still has an important part to play. Trade and commerce is a matter of fact for any society and whilst the Akindo may not attract the respect they believe they deserve, they are an essential aspect of life.

On: 1D6

Basic Skills: Evaluate +20%, Influence +10%, Lore (World) +10%

Advanced Skills: Pick One—Language, Lore (Commerce), Lore (Logistics), Craft

## Bushi (Warrior)

Japanese warriors and soldiers are known as Bushi. Although the code of Bushido ('The Way of the Warrior') was not developed until the feudal era, its foundations lie in the general code of ethics found in the fighting men of the Heian period. Warriors of the Ryōmin caste are known as samurai, although that term actually describes a social caste as well as identifying any warrior who is retained by a Lord. Those Bushi that do not belong to the Ryōmin caste are generally known as *ashigaru* and these are the unsung footmen of the many wars and battles who supported the glory-hunting samurai and enabled many of their exploits. The term *ashigaru* is also used for militiamen working in the towns and cities of Japan.

## Samurai

To qualify for the title *samurai* a character must be of the samurai class or better. Whilst the traditional view of the samurai is that of the expert swordsman, in Heian Japan the samurai were actually experts with the bow, the horse and the sword. The most important qualities for a samurai of this period are expressed as *kyuba no michi* – the Way of the Horse and Bow or *kyusen no michi* – the Way of the Bow and Arrow. During the Heian period the bow was the every bit as important as the sword and the ability to ride and shoot a *daikyu*, the Japanese longbow, was the mark of a true samurai.

As the word samurai means 'To Serve', all samurai bushi pledge allegiance to a Lord. Usually this is their daimyo, the one who retains them but this can just as equally be a commander, the head of a clan or the Emperor himself. In so pledging themselves samurai are expected to fight with honour and glory and to hone his understanding of the strategy, tactics and spirituality of warfare as much as his practical bow and sword skills. The samurai who are truly revered in the Heian period, even by their enemies, are those who have a complete command of the arts of war, such as Taira Masakado and Minamoto Yoshiie. Both were commanders who genuinely respected and looked after their warriors and in return, helped to create the foundations of the Bushido code which developed over the following centuries.

On: 3D6. Any samurai picking *Yabusame* (see Skills, on page 49) as one of his skills gains +5 On.

Basic Skills: Courtesy +10%, Influence +5%, Riding (Bajutsu) +10%; Pick Two from: Athletics +10%, 1H Sword (Kenjutsu) +10%, 2H Sword (no-dachi) +10%, Polearm (Naginatajutsu)+10%, Bow (Kyujutsu) +10%, Yabusame +10%

Advanced Skills: Pick One from: Dance, Oratory, Play Instrument, Survival

## Ashigaru

If the samurai are the elite, then the ashigaru are the steady infantry and militiamen. Bushi of humble birth, some strive to become samurai (and some do) but all are prepared to fight for their clan, family and lands (sometimes with reluctance, perhaps), even though their names are never to be remembered in the history books.

All ashigaru are in service to a Lord – usually the daimyo for the region or a samurai who has been granted governorship of a town, city district or a particular region. When not serving in battle, ashigaru are expected to act as part-time militia and to help with mundane, family tasks for the remainder.

On: 2D6

Basic Skills: Dodge +5%, Lore (World) +5%, Resilience +5%, Unarmed +5%. Pick Three from: 1H Axe (Masakarijutsu) +10%, 2H Axe (Onojutsu) +10%, 1H Sword (Kenjutsu)+10%, 2H Sword (no-dachi) +10%, Athletics +10%, Bow (Kyujutsu) +10%, 2H Spear

(Sojutsu) +10%, Polearm (Naginatajutsu)+10%, Riding (Bajutsu)+10%,



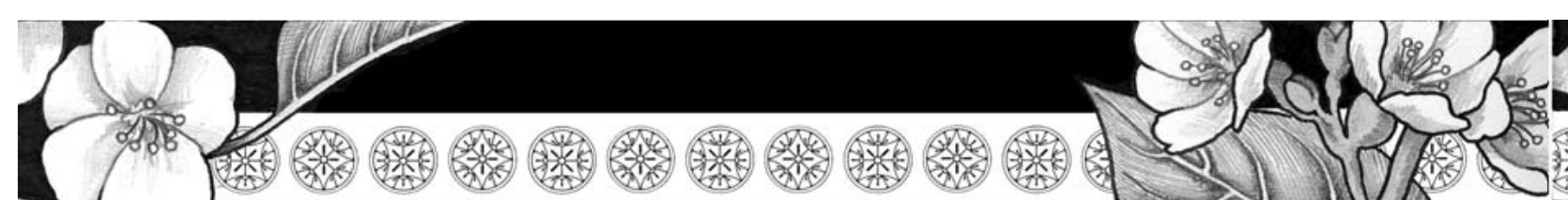
## Daishonin (Scribe)

Daishonin serve in all areas of Japanese society; as secretaries to ministers, magistrates, daimyo, court officials and so forth. Their task is to take notes, prepare official documents, attend to smaller administrative affairs and help run the institutions of a clan, family, ministry or area of Court. Often overlooked, daishonin are party to all kinds of knowledge and secrets, although their silence beyond their office is expected absolutely.

On: 2D6

Basic Skills: Courtesy +10%, Evaluate +5%, Lore (World) +5%

Advanced Skills: Language Pick Two from: Artistic Expression, Language (either a new language or an additional +10% to an existing language), Lore



## Gaikoukan (Diplomat)

All clans and noble houses employ diplomats. These might be honoured scribes and servants or retired samurai but the purpose is the same: to represent the interests of the clan or daimyo at Court or elsewhere. They thus carry with them the reputation of those they represent and are able to speak with authority on behalf of their Lord. In the fraught times of the Heian period, where the jockeying for political power is rife, *gaikoukan* are an important part of the socio-political process.

On: 3D6

Basic Skills: Courtesy +10%, Influence +10%, Lore (World) +5%, Perception +10%

Advanced Skills: Pick One from: Dance, Language, Lore, Play Instrument

## Gakusha (Scholar)

Most scholars, the *gakusha*, are members of temples, primarily Buddhist but also Shinto or are scholars within the ministries of the Imperial Court. Education, study and learning are heavily promoted in the Heian period, following edicts from Emperor Kammu and preserved by subsequent Emperors; thus, professional scholars, even those of the *Senmin*, are given a great deal of respect and their views sought.

On: 2D6

Basic Skills: Evaluate +5%, Lore (World) +5%, Persistence +10%

Advanced Skills. Pick two from: Lore (any), Lore (Buddhist Theology), Lore (Chinese Classics)

## Hangan (Magistrate)

Magistrates are placed by daimyo to regulate the affairs of villages and towns, hearing petitions, presiding over legal rulings and generally representing the presence of the daimyo to the masses. Magistrates are either retired or serving samurai, honoured servants or those seeking the higher status of the diplomat. As such, they command a great deal of local authority, although, especially in the outlying provinces, samurai authority prevails over that of the *Hangan*. Magistrates are also expected to interpret Imperial Law, applying that which is relevant and re-interpreting the rest to favour their daimyo.

On: 2D6

Basic Skills: Courtesy +10%, Influence +10%, Lore (World) +5%, Perception +5%

Advanced Skills: Pick One from: Lore, Oratory, Streetwise

## Hyakoushou (Farmer)

As Japan has little land for grazing and because most Japanese do not eat a great deal of meat, the *Hyakoushou* are primarily crop farmers, either cultivating in rice from the paddyfields or cereals, fruit and vegetables – although land is scarce, in Honshū at least, for such commodities. Just about every farm is subsistence in nature, with a tribute paid to the local daimyo and perhaps a little to sell in the towns and cities. The farmers of Japan are a simple, superstitious people, revering the local *kami* who they hope will protect them from the weather, mudslides, earthquakes, drought and famine (of which there are several during the Heian period) and the predations of bandits.

On: 1D6

Basic Skills: Athletics +5%, Driving +5%, Lore (Animal) +15%, Lore (Plant) +15%, Resilience +10%

## Isha (Herbalists and Healers)

*Isha* specialise in herbal remedies, usually having studied the extensive Chinese texts on these matters and made their own studies of native herbs and plants. As scholars in a particular field, they can command a deal of respect whatever their social rank, although, naturally, the *Ryōmin* have their own *Isha* and would never dream of sending for a *Senmin* herbalist.

On: 2D6

Basic Skills: First Aid +5%, Influence +10%, Lore (Plant) +5%, Perception +10%

Advanced Skills: Healing, Pick One from: Language, Lore (Chinese Herbalism), Lore (Local Herbalism)

## Jojiki (Peddler)

Itinerant peddlers and beggars are a common sight throughout Japan; out-of-luck *ashigaru*, fallen priests and just those of the *Senmin* who want to wander rather than toil in the paddyfields. Most beg their way, making (or stealing) a few trinkets and charms to sell here and there. However in their travels they see and hear much and if one wants news from somewhere, it is often considered a simple courtesy to buy a *Jojiki* a cup of sake and a few rice balls in return for gossip.

On: 1D6

Basic Skills: Evaluate +10%, Influence +10%, Lore (World) +10%, Resilience +5%

Advanced Skills: Pick one from: Language, Lore, Streetwise, Survival



## Kannushi (Shinto Priest)

Shinto supports no hierarchical clergy in the way Buddhism does. Instead, Shinto priests, the kannushi, are those who are somehow naturally in-tune with the kami and able to recognise their presence. Whilst there is no temple or church to belong to, it is common for a kannushi to attach himself to a particular shrine and act as its keeper and tender. They are thus concerned with the proper worship and reverence of the kami and in particular, with achieving personal spiritual purity. As a result, kannushi have, in addition to their other attributes and skills, a value called Purity, which is used in their dealings with kami.

Kannushi are very concerned with the state of nature in all its forms. Shinto is an animist religion, believing that nature itself is aware and watching. They are troubled by matters they consider unclean: the acts of birth and death, disease and healing and the presence of sorcery. These things attract *pollution*, which is anathema to the Kannushi and devalues his presence in the eyes of the kami.

On: 2D6

Basic Skills: Influence +15%, Persistence +10%. Pick One from: Lore (Animal) +5%, Lore (Plant) +5%, Lore (World) +5%

Advanced Skills: Artistic Expression, Lore (Shinto),

All kannushi begin with a Purity equal to 10+POW+CHA.

Kannushi can also channel magic or petition for it but they cannot learn or hold spells within their soul or psyche, for this is considered *pollution*. See the *Magic of Japan* chapter for more information on how Shinto magic works.

## Nusubito (Thief)

Professional thieves are a rarity in Japan. More common are bandits and desperate ronin who raid and waylay, rather than to rob and burgle. Theft is, of course, highly dishonourable, whatever its form but the act of stealing stealthily as a way of life is considered particularly so and the punishment for theft can be death. Thieves still exist, acting as confidence tricksters, forgers and burglars to make their way in life.

On: 1D6

Basic Skills: Acrobatics +5%, Evaluate +5%, Perception +10%, Sleight +10%, Stealth +10%

Advanced Skills: Pick One from: Disguise, Lore, Mechanisms, Streetwise

## Reijin (Bard)

Heian Japan has a very strong bardic tradition. The Japanese love stories, songs and poems of all kinds, especially those declaiming the heroism of a particular family or clan or a brave and glorious samurai. Bards are thus found amongst both the Ryōmin and Senmin, with Ryōmin Reijin finding particular favour in the Imperial Court and noble households. Ryōmin Reijin tend to be women, for they are the ones who are tasked with entertaining, whilst wandering Reijin, exclusive to the Senmin caste, tend to be male.

Several great works of Japanese literature are a direct result of the Ryōmin Reijin tradition: the *Heike Monogatari*, which recounts the struggles between the Taira and Minamoto clans; *The Pillow Book*, which recounts life in the Court of Empress Sadako; and the *Genji Monogatari*, which is the world's first novel. All written by women of the Heian Court.

All Reijin are skilled in telling stories, playing music and creating haiku.

On: 1D6

Basic Skills: Influence +10%, Perception +5%, Play Instrument +10%, Sing +15%

Advanced Skills: Pick One from: Artistic Expression, Dance, Language, Lore

## Ryoushi (Fisherman)

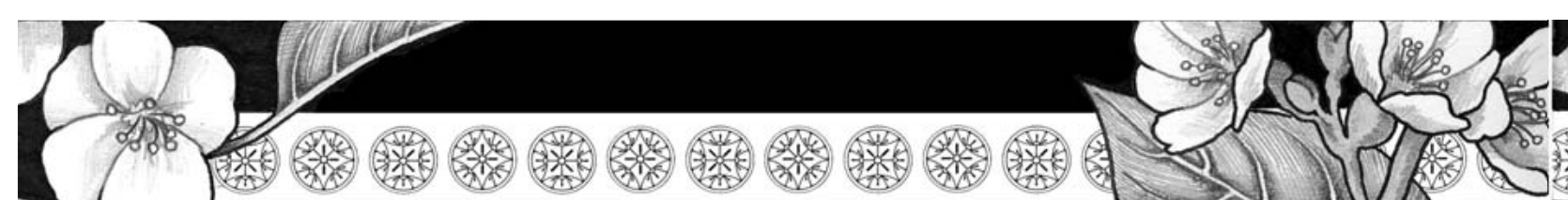
Fish is a dietary staple and many members of the Heimin class are fishermen, trawling the coasts of the outlying and inland seas for a catch to support their families and communities. Like farmers, Ryoushi are superstitious, with an innate knowledge of the coastal conditions around their locale and a healthy reverence for the kami of the tides, currents, cliffs and reefs. Special reverence is given to the fujin, the kami of winds and the kaijin, the kami of the currents and waves.

On: 1D6

Basic Skills: Athletics +5%, Boating +5%, Lore (Animal) +5%, Resilience +5%, Throwing +10%

Advanced Skills: Pick One from: Craft, Shiphandling





## Shokunin (Craftsman)

Whilst always part of the Senmin caste, Japanese craftsmen are held in high regard, especially weaponsmiths. The very best receive special favours from their Lord and the things they make attract value and reverence. As with most Japanese, Shokunin aim to achieve absolute excellence in their work, making them dedicated, diligent, patient and hungry to develop or learn new techniques. Being able to present an especially fine sword or bow to one's Lord is something all Shokunin strive towards, even though the material rewards might be low, the prestige, in terms of On, makes the effort worthwhile.

On: 2D6

Basic Skills: Evaluate +20%, Influence +5%, Persistence +5%

Advanced Skills: Craft. Pick One from: Craft (other), Engineering, Mechanisms

## Sō and Bōzu (Buddhist Monk and Priest)

Buddhists follow the way of the Buddha and in Heian Japan, are divided into two sects, the Shingon and Tendai schools, explored in more depth in the Religions chapter. Buddhist priests, Sō, can be either practicing as part of a temple, such as the main temples in Nara and Enryakuji or be at large in a community, as itinerant preachers or living and working in a city, town or village. Those who choose to remain cloistered as the monks or Bōzu, rarely, if ever, leave their monasteries. *Land of the Samurai* characters can choose to be either Sō or Bōzu and as well as making this choice, the character should also decide which sect of Buddhism is followed, consulting the Religions chapter for more detail on what their worship entails. A third school of Buddhism merges the faiths of Buddhism and Shinto together into *Ryōbu-Shinto* and this school believes that the Shinto kami are manifestations of the Buddha.

Priests come from all walks of life and their previous class and caste counts for relatively little within the halls of the monastery or temple. It is common for retired Emperors and members of the Imperial Court to become Bōzu (or Amu, the female equivalent).

On: 2D6

Basic Skills: Courtesy +5%, Influence +10%, Persistence +10%. Pick One from: Lore (Animal) +5%, Lore (Plant) +5%, Lore (World) +5%

Advanced Skills: Artistic Expression. Pick One from: Lore (Ryōbu Theology), Lore (Shingon Theology), Lore (Tendai Theology),

All Sō and Bōzu begin with a Purity equal to 10+POW+CHA.

Buddhist priests are able to call upon Divine magic, as described in the Religions and Magic of Japan chapters.

## Sōhei and Yamabushi (Warrior Monk)

Sōhei are warriors who have taken holy orders and serve in the standing armies maintained by the main Buddhist temples of Nara and Heizan. Sōhei are always attached to a monastery and never some small, provincial temple. As well as studying Buddhist theology, Sōhei are expected to develop and hone their martial skills. The favoured weapon of the Sōhei is the naginata, although many use other weapons and swords are commonplace. The role of the warrior monk is to defend the temple but also to go out and enforce the temple's wishes if necessary. Sometimes this means armed coercion and sometimes it means all-out war. On more than one occasion Sōhei were banished from the capital for the trouble they caused.

The honour and ethics of the samurai are lacking in most Sōhei, although if a Sōhei is a retired samurai, then they might still be present in the individual, they are replaced with devotion to the temple, the abbot, the sect and their own, personal interests.

On: 2D6

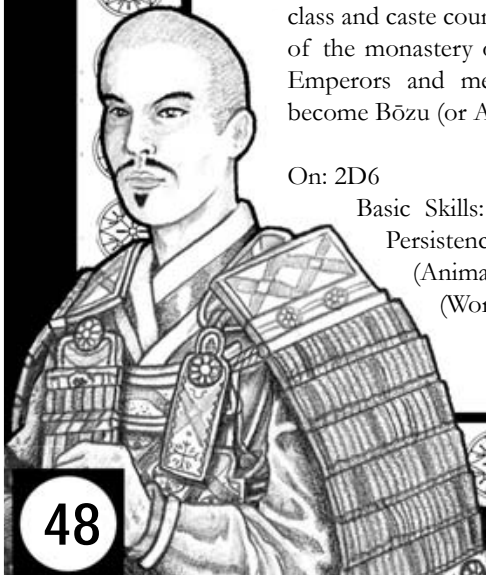
Basic Skills: Dodge +5%, Lore (World) +5%, Resilience +5%, Unarmed +5%. Pick Two from: 1H Sword (Kenjutsu)+10%, 2H Sword (no-dachi) +10%, Shield +10%, Athletics +10%, Bow (Kyujutsu) +10%, 2H Spear (Sojutsu) +10%, Polearm (Naginatajutsu)+10%, Riding (Bajutsu)+10%,


Advanced Skills: Pick one from Lore (Shingon Theology), Lore (Tendai Theology)

Sōhei are able to call upon Divine magic, as described in the Religions and Magic of Japan chapters.

## Suifu (Sailor)

Whilst Japan is not noted as a sea-faring nation, sea travel is an important part of life. Most vessels are coast-





huggers, not designed for long sea-voyages but the crews of these vessels are as competent as any.

On: 1D6

Basic Skills: Acrobatics +10%, Athletics +10%, Boating +10%, Lore (World) +5%, Resilience +5%

Advanced Skills: Shiphandling

## Teishin (Courtier)

Teishin (or the female equivalent, Jishin) are the courtiers of the Imperial Court: members of the Kuge, the aristocracy, that occupy positions of favour and State and represent the Imperial Family's prestige and grandiosity. In Heian Japan the court is a mixture of the most powerful clans of the time: the Fujiwara, which is dominant, the Minamoto and the Taira. Courtiers are thus related, in one way or another, to one of these clans and by extension, to the Imperial Family – although no Teishin is eligible to rule directly. Teishin occupy themselves with matters of culture and state, either in direct or indirect ways. They live a life of privilege and esteem, secluded from the harsh reality beyond the capital and largely insulated from the grime of life in the capital city. They attend when the Emperor or Regent requests it, offering advice or providing information or entertainment as needs demand. In return they can expect to exert a little influence on the rulers and are an inspiration to the lower orders.

On: 3D6

Basic Skills: Courtesy, +10%, Influence +10%, Perception +5%, Sleight +5%

Advanced Skills: Pick Two from: Artistic Expression, Dance, Lore (Art), Lore (Classics), Lore (Literature), Lore (Philosophy), Lore (Regional), Play Instrument

## Togi (Acrobat/Entertainer)

Togi are popular amongst the Senmin, mixing feats of acrobatics and street-theatre to tell stories and generally amuse. Always of a relatively low rank, there are occasions where a Togi might be invited to entertain a daimyo or appear at a Court function but for the most part, the streets are their stage.

On: 1D6

Basic Skills: Acrobatics +10%, Athletics +5%, Perception +5%, Play Instrument +10%, Sing +10%

Advanced Skills: Pick One from: Artistic Expression, Dance, Language, Lore

## Youjutsusha (Sorcerer)

Sorcerers are a curious breed; sometimes priests who have fallen from the path or scholars who have delved too deeply into arts that should not concern them. Sorcerers study the manipulation of reality through the application of magical formula, seeking to impose their own will on a natural order. Sorcerers are therefore anathema to Buddhism and Shinto alike, distrusted and disliked by the superstitious common folk and the Imperial Court which fears their power.

Sorcerers have been outlawed since the start of the Heian period, forbidden, upon pain of death, from entering the capital. Samurai hunt-down any who are suspected of being sorcerers and many who have demonstrated an interest in the sorcerous arts have been forced to flee to the northern provinces, taking shelter in remote areas or even retreating to Hokkaido and living amongst the barbarian Ainu, where their work is not denigrated.

Some sorcerers are genuinely benign and still seek to follow Buddhism but supplement their understanding through the manipulation of the material world. Others are corrupt, in league with the dark forces of the oni and bakemono, forsaking any semblance of respect for normal society. It is said that a league of dispossessed, embittered sorcerers exists, plotting the complete downfall of the Imperial system and using their powers to engineer war.

On: 0

Basic Skills: Evaluate +5%, Lore (World) +5%, Persistence +10%

Advanced Skills: Pick Three Sorcery Skills/Spells

## Skills

To lend authenticity, western skill names for *RuneQuest* skills have been supplemented with their Japanese equivalent. Thus, Riding is known as *Bajutsu* ('Way of the Horse'). A full glossary is given below.

Courtesy, an Advanced skill from the *RuneQuest Companion*, has now been made a Basic skill. Matters of etiquette are so central to Japanese life that everyone knows and understands how one is expected to behave in any social situation.

Japanese Skill Name	RuneQuest Equivalent
Bajutsu	Riding
Bojutsu	Staff
Jujutsu	Martial Arts
Kamajutsu	1H Flail
Kenjutsu	1H and 2H sword
Kusarijutsu	2H Flail
Kyujutsu	Bow
Masakarijutsu	1H Axe
Naginatajutsu	Polearm
Onojutsu	2H Axe
Sojutsu	Spear
Tantojutsu	Dagger
Sodegaramijutsu	Polearm

## New Advanced Skills

### Calligraphy (INT+DEX)

Known as Shogaku, calligraphy is the art of drawing the Japanese ideograms with a perfect and fluid hand. Experts in Shogaku produce not writing but works of fine art and this skill is used in preparing official documents, licences and so on. It is also used when composing haiku or other forms of poetry and the intention is that the quality of the calligraphy should represent the emotions and beauty being expressed in the words of the poem.

### Divination (INT)

Divination is popular in Japan, especially the I-Ching system imported from China. I-Ching aims to predict the future using a series of 64 ideograms made up of straight and broken lines (representing yin and yang), arranged into groups of six. Each ideogram is generated randomly, by tossing a coin or some other method that produces either a yin or a yang result. In this way, diviners believe, the path of Time can be cross-sectioned and examined, giving an insight into the future.

Characters using Divination should be given a hint or obscure clue (*'the sun will rise to a Black Dawn'*) as to what the future holds if they make a successful Divination test. I-Ching readings are typically abstract and open to much personal interpretation; they do not offer a concrete insight into what is to come. If the Divination test is a critical success, then the I-Ching reading is a little less obscure and more definite in its interpretation (*'the sun will rise to a Black Dawn when the goose flies north'*).

### Falconry (INT+DEX)

Hunting with birds of prey is a popular pastime amongst the kuge and buke. This skill, known as Tori-oi, covers both the ritualistic aspects of hunting and the ability to train and control a bird of prey. A well trained bird can be used to attack foes as well as bring-down game.

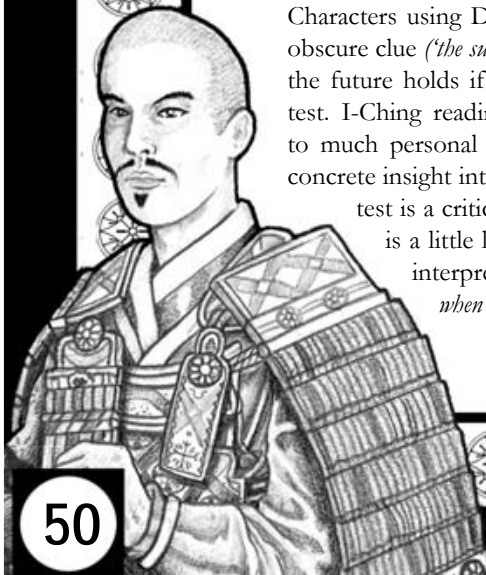
### Heraldry (INT)

Every family and clan has a mon, a heraldic device, indicating loyalty and allegiance as well as identifying the particular owner. Mon are worn as devices on clothing as well as being carried as battle standards. A typical mon is a particular design supplemented by the kanji for the family or clan or a motto adopted by the owner.

### Iajutsu (DEX)

This a martial skill, much practiced by samurai and is the ability to draw a scabbarded sword and make a single, sweeping cut in one, fluid motion. Iajutsu duels are common to demonstrate prowess.

A successful Iajutsu test allows a character to draw and strike with his sword in the same Combat Action. A critical roll also strikes an opponent as a Free Attack, with the appropriate damage. If the roll is a failure, then the weapon is drawn (but does not hit). If the test is a fumble, then the weapon is not readied and the first Combat Action is lost. Note: Iajutsu is most effective with the katana, which is worn with the blade edge facing upwards. The tachi, the principal sword of the era, is worn the opposite way and requires two hands to draw. Iajutsu is possible with a tachi but at a -10% penalty.



## Meditation (POW)

Meditation is common amongst priests and monks, allowing them to clear their minds completely of earthly concerns and concentrate solely on being at one with the universe. Each hour above the first spent in meditation gives a bonus of +5% to the Meditation skill. If the Meditation test is successful the character gains a bonus to *all* Skill Tests equal to his critical score in the modified Meditation skill. This bonus lasts for a period of hours equal to the amount of time spent meditating. If the Meditation test is a critical success, the bonus is doubled.

*Example: Issai, a Buddhist monk, decides to spend three hours in meditation before writing particularly important philosophical tract for his abbot. His Meditation skill is 50% and every hour above the first gives him a +5% bonus, so for three hours of meditation, his Skill Test is 60%. The test is successful and so for the next three hours after finishing his meditation he gains a bonus of +6% to all his skills. If his meditation had been a critical success, the bonus would have been +12%.*

## Yabusame (DEX)

Yabusame is a combination of two skills: Bajutsu and Kyujutsu. It is the samurai's ability to control a horse with his legs and knees whilst aiming and firing a dai kyu at the same time, even at full gallop. A character using Yabusame suffers no penalties to dai kyu attacks from horseback if he uses this skill and it is used for both shooting the bow and controlling the horse, effectively replacing the Bajutsu and Kyujutsu skills. If the character is on foot and using a bow, Kyujutsu should be used although Yabusame may be used but at a -20% penalty to the chance to hit. Similarly riding a horse with both hands on the reins requires Bajutsu although Yabusame can be used at a similar -20% penalty.

## Yadomejutsu (DEX)

'Arrow Cutting' is the ability to slice an arrow in flight with either a sword or more commonly, the naginata; however, for the purposes of *Land of the Samurai*, any weapon, including natural weapons, may be used. A character uses this skill to parry *any* missile attack launched at him; if successful, the missile is successfully cut or deflected, causing no damage.

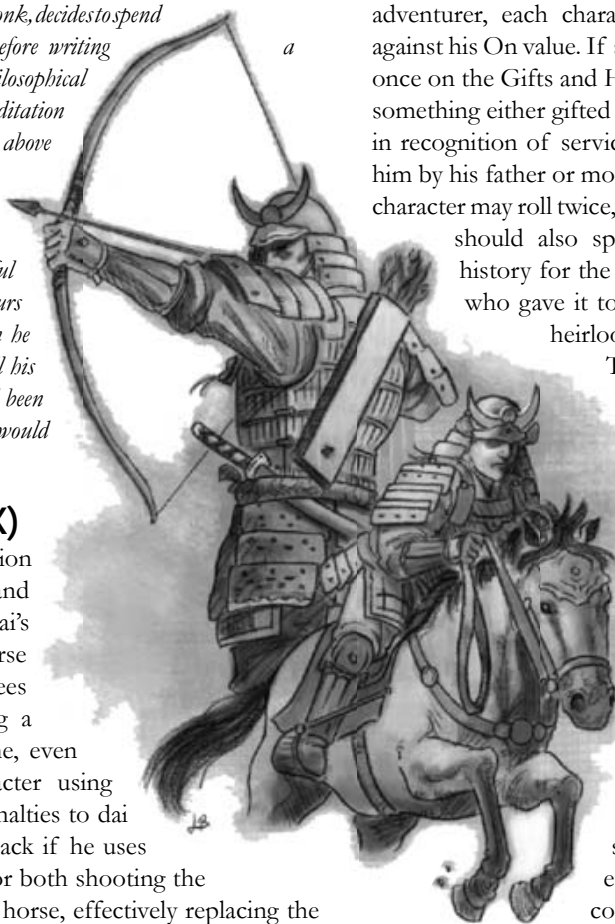
## Gifts and Heirlooms

As a final stage of creating a Land of the Samurai adventurer, each character should make a Skill Test against his On value. If successful, the character may roll once on the Gifts and Heirlooms table below, to receive something either gifted to him by his Lord (or a patron) in recognition of services rendered or passed-down to him by his father or mother. If the On test is critical the character may roll twice, taking both items. The character should also spend a few minutes creating a history for the items he has received, outlining who gave it to him, why and what the gift or heirloom represents to the character.

This is especially important for weapons that are 'Surpassing' or 'Heroic' in quality, as these are truly magnificent gifts indeed and will *always* have a story connected with them.

The Quality entry represents the quality of the weapon or armour as described in the *RuneQuest Companion*, page 65 onwards. The character should determine the special effects of the weapon in consultation with the Games Master.

If the character receives Armour, then it is appropriate to his station. That is, Ryōmin receive samurai armour and Senmin receive ashigaru armour.



## Gifts and Heirlooms Table

1D100	Item	Quality/Notes
01-03	Armour	Normal
04-05	Armour	Greater
06-07	Armour	Exquisite
08	Armour	Marvellous
09	Armour	Surpassing
10	Armour	Heroic
11-13	Daikyu	Normal
14-15	Daikyu	Greater
16-17	Daikyu	Exquisite
18	Daikyu	Marvellous
19	Daikyu	Surpassing
20	Daikyu	Heroic
21-22	Dai-Sho	Normal
23-24	Dai-Sho	Greater
25	Dai-Sho	Exquisite
26	Dai-Sho	Marvellous
27	Dai-Sho	Surpassing
28	Dai-Sho	Heroic
29-31	Hankyu	Normal
32-33	Hankyu	Greater
34-35	Hankyu	Exquisite
36	Hankyu	Marvellous
37	Hankyu	Surpassing
38	Hankyu	Heroic
39-41	Katana	Normal
42-43	Katana	Greater
44-45	Katana	Exquisite
46	Katana	Marvellous
47	Katana	Surpassing
48	Katana	Heroic
49-51	Naginata	Normal
52-53	Naginata	Greater
54-55	Naginata	Exquisite

1D100	Item	Quality/Notes
56	Naginata	Marvellous
57	Naginata	Surpassing
58	Naginata	Heroic
59-60	Tachi	Normal
61-62	Tachi	Greater
63-64	Tachi	Exquisite
65	Tachi	Marvellous
66	Tachi	Surpassing
67	Tachi	Heroic
68-70	Tanto	Normal
71-72	Tanto	Greater
73-74	Tanto	Exquisite
75	Tanto	Marvellous
76	Tanto	Surpassing
77	Tanto	Heroic
78-80	Wakazashi	Normal
81-82	Wakazashi	Greater
83-84	Wakazashi	Exquisite
85	Wakazashi	Marvellous
86	Wakazashi	Surpassing
87	Wakazashi	Heroic
88-90	Yari	Normal
91-92	Yari	Greater
93-94	Yari	Exquisite
95	Yari	Marvellous
96	Yari	Surpassing
97	Yari	Heroic
98-99	Horse	For Ry min, a warhorse; for Senmin a normal horse
00	Property	For Ry min, a house and land yielding 1D4 koku per year; for Senmin a small house and vegetable plot or small rice paddy



# EQUIPMENT OF THE SAMURAI

This chapter explores the equipment available to Land of the Samurai characters, describing uniquely Japanese items, weapons and armour. Prices and availability are given, along with the western and Japanese names for the things being described. Note that the prices are quoted for standard versions of goods. Better quality items cost more.

## Equipment Quality

Japanese craftsmen, even the most humble of heimin, strive towards perfection. The ability to make that superlative item, be it sword or sandal, which is admired and commented upon, confers status and respect. To this end, it is recommended that the Equipment Quality mechanics, found in *RuneQuest: Arms and Equipment*, be employed to measure the quality of goods and determine the benefits granted to those who use them.

## Armour

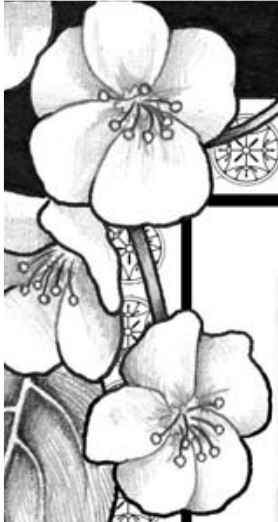
Samurai typically only wear armour when going into combat. For everyday affairs, they wear their robes of office and are only likely to don armour when called to arms by their Lord. Of course, adventuring and questing samurai might consider the wearing of armour perfectly appropriate, depending on the circumstances but as samurai like to project the image of being expert warriors with little fear of combat, pain or death, donning armour could be construed as either a weakness or a lack of skill, in the eyes of others and so the wearing of armour is never an automatic decision and always wholly dependent on the circumstances he is to face and who the opponents and witnesses might be.

## Samurai Armour - Yoroi

Japanese armour is of a lamellar design with small iron or leather scales tied together and lacquered, before being bound together by silk cords to form armour plates. As iron is extremely difficult to wear, not to mention expensive to make, iron scales tend to concentrate on the most vulnerable areas and are otherwise alternated with leather scales. The classic suit of samurai armour is called a yoroi and whilst relatively light, is somewhat inflexible and box-like in structure. The main reason for this is because most samurai prefer to fight from horseback and so their armour is designed to be light, offer maximum cover to the rider and offer optimum movement necessary for riding and shooting a bow. Dismounted, samurai suffer from restricted movement if wearing a full yoroi suit.

A suit of yoroi comes in four principal sections. The dō covers the chest and abdomen. The sode are a pair of large, square or rectangular shoulder plates that leave the arms free to use a bow or sword and are fastened at the rear of the armour by an ornamental bow called a agemaki. The helmet (kabuto) is a bowl made from eight to twelve plates of iron and leather and fastened together with large, conical rivets. The helmet's peak, usually brightly patterned, is called the mabisashi and a neck-guard, the shikoro, hangs from the back of the helmet, riveted in place. For additional protection, a face mask, called a happuri, is worn in conjunction with the helmet and this protects the brow and cheeks. Traditionally samurai of the Heian period do not wear armour on the right arm so that it is free to draw the bow. The left arm is a simple, baggy sleeve with scales sown into it, called a kote, allowing for some protection.

Whilst most of the time the legs go un-armoured, to make sure horse control is unimpeded, thigh guards (haidate) and shin guards (suneate) might be worn if the samurai is going into battle on foot and to protect the legs whilst on horseback.



personal colouring, clan or family mon and other unique touches, all of which contributes to the price. The armour, however, is personal and striking.

### Ashigaru Armour – Dō-Maru

Ashigaru footsoldiers have to be content with a much simpler set of armour known as dō-maru, which means ‘body wrapper’. Like the dō of the samurai’s yoroi, the dō-maru covers the chest and abdomen but is not as rigid or constricting. Instead it resembles an armoured coat, pinched at the waist by a belt or tightly tied sash. The helmet is of an open design and whilst not as elaborate as that of the samurai, still affords decent protection. Both shin guards and wrist guards are worn.

Armour	AP	ENC	Locations	Cost	Total Skill Penalty
Dō-Maru suit	–	5	See below	125 gin	–19%
Kabuto	5	1	Head	15 gin	–5%
Dō-Maru	3	2	Chest, Abdomen	40 gin	–6%
Wrist Guards	2	1	Arms	15 gin	–4%
Haidate	2	1	Legs	15 gin	–4%

### Yoroi Armour

Armour	AP	ENC	Locations	Cost	Total Skill Penalty
Full Suit of Yoroi	–	9	See below	300 gin*	–21%
Kabuto	5	1	Head	30 gin	–5%
Happuri	1	–	Head (face)	5 gin	–1%
D	5	2	Chest, Abdomen	80 gin	–10%
Kote	2	1	Left Arm	30 gin	–1%
Haidate	1	1	Legs (upper)	30 gin	–2%
Suneate	1	1	Legs (lower)	25 mon	–2%

*\*Buying a complete suit of yoroi is always more expensive than purchasing the components separately. The suit is made for the wearer and incorporates*

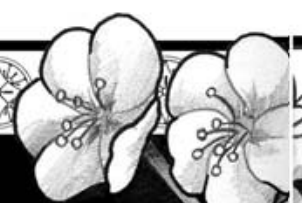
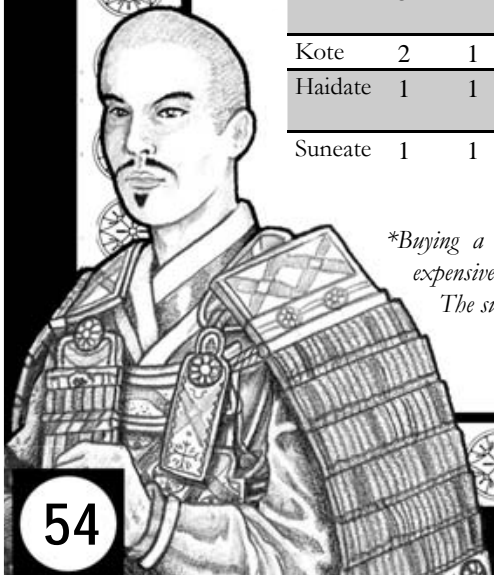
### Clothing Belt (Obi)

The traditional sash worn as part of everyday clothing by both men and women. Male obis are thinner and of a less complex design than the female version. The obi is used by men to carry the sword or dai-sho with the scabbard tucked firmly into place on the left side of the body.

### Boots and Clogs (Geta)

The Japanese do not wear boots or shoes as westerners know them and boots are exceedingly rare and only worn as part of armour by high ranking buke, if at all. For cold weather areas, such as Hokkaido, fur boots are worn and these are called kegetsu.

The standard form of footwear is the geta or wooden sandal. Secured to the foot by a straw thong, the geta is a wooden platform with a pair of wooden raisers attached laterally across the base. Geta look ungainly but the Japanese wear them as naturally as westerners wear



shoes or boots. A pair of socks or tabi, is worn with geta but only in colder months or when raining.

## Court Tabard (Kataginu)

The kataginu is a vest-like garment made of silk or cotton and with heavily starched shoulders. It is worn by samurai and other buke and forms part of the ceremonial garb rather than everyday wear.

## Hats (Eboshi, Kasa and Hachi-Maki)

Everyone wears a hat and like most things Japanese, the style of hat denotes function, rank and social standing. Paper and straw hats of the wide, conical variety (eboshi and kasa respectively), are worn by heimin at work in the paddy fields. Headbands (hachi-maki) are worn by artisans, samurai and sōhei alike. Priests wear more elaborate, lacquered eboshi for ceremonial occasions. Certain wandering priests wear a tall, conical hat rather like a basket that covers the entire face, the wearer peering out from between the weave but certain temple edicts made during the Heian period forbade such headgear.

## Jacket (Haori)

An everyday, lapel-less jacket worn over a kimono and worn by all castes and classes. More expensive varieties are decorated with mon. Length varies, ranging from short, waist-length haori, through to knee-length versions.

## Kimono

The familiar everyday robes worn by almost everybody in Japan. Made of cotton or silk and in a wide variety of lengths and styles, it is generally worn over trousers or undergarments and secured with an obi. Ryōmin kimonos are usually decorated with the mon of the family or clan and can be either plain or patterned, depending on the formality acquired (and funds available).

## Clothing

	Mon	Gin
Belt	20	
Boots	40	
Clogs	20	
Court Tabard		2
Hat	5 – 30	
Jacket	10 – 120	
Kimono	50 – 300	

## Everyday Items

The items in the table below are for everyday goods and consumables, listed in price by mon (copper) and gin (silver). The prices quote for basic quality items. Items of greater quality, beauty or made by an especially famed craftsman, will cost more.

### Everyday Items

Item	Mon	Gin
<b>Animals and Livestock</b>		
Cow or Ox		5
<i>Dog, domesticated</i>	50	
Dog, guard or hunting		8
<i>Horse, riding</i>		100
<i>Horse, war</i>		200
<i>Horse, work</i>		50
<i>Hunting falcon</i>		5
<i>Ornamental koi carp</i>	50	
Song bird		1
<i>Water buffalo</i>		8
<b>Ceremonial and Communication</b>		
Books	20	
Brushes	10	
Calligraphy kit	50	
Cosmetics		1
<i>I-Ching Scrolls</i>	70	
Incense	10	
Ink	5	
Medicines and bandages	30	
Paint kit	50	
Paper, poetry grade	6	
Paper, standard	3	
Tea	1	
Tea ceremony kit	50	
<b>Food and Drink</b>		
Eel	2	
Fruit brandy, barrel		2
<i>Fruit brandy, cup</i>	3	
Fruit brandy, flask	30	
Lobster	4	



Item	Mon	Gin
Noodles, bowl	1	
Octopus	4	
Rice, balls	1	
Rice, bowl	2	
Rice, cakes	2	
Rice, sack	20	
Sake, barrel		1
<i>Sake, cup</i>	1	
Sake, flask	20	
Shellfish	4	
Shrimp	2	
Soup, fish	1	
Soup, mizo	1	
Soup, vegetable	1	
Squid	3	
Vegetables (various, seasonal)	2	

#### Musical Instruments

Biwa (lute)		1
<i>Drums</i>	50	
Flute, bamboo	15	
Koto (banjo)		1

#### Tools and Craft

Abacus	5	
Armourer's kit		2
<i>Bowyer's kit</i>		2
<i>Bucket, wooden</i>	5	
Carpentry tools		1
<i>Fan, signalling/war</i>	90	
Fan, standard	30	
Gardening tools	10	
Purse	10	

#### Travel and Transport

Backpack	10	
Basket	6	
Boat, fishing		3
<i>Boat, junk</i>		200
<i>Boat, river</i>		20

Item	Mon	Gin
<i>Flint and steel</i>	15	
Lantern	20	
Palanquin		20
<i>Provision bag</i>	20	
Rice bag	3	
Shoulder bag	15	
Torch	2	
Travelling trunk	100	
Water bottle (bamboo)	3	

## Weapons

### Melee Weapons


**Bo:** The Japanese equivalent of a quarterstaff. A bo is typically made of hardwood, bound with bamboo, and lacquered. It is a favoured weapon of monks.

**Jo:** A shorter version of the bo, which can be wielded in one hand. Skilled users can use a jo in either hand to deliver a series of strikes and parries.

**Katana:** Most famous of the samurai swords but by no means ubiquitous, the katana is a viciously sharp weapon that can slice through flesh like a razor. With a longer hilt wrapped in cloth or leather, the katana can be equally wielded in one hand or two. Although vicious when striking flesh, armour holds a problem for the easily deflected edge of folded blades, meaning that any target struck gains a +2 bonus to its non-natural Armour Points against katana attacks.

**Naginata:** This is a thick-hafted polearm with a curved, axe-like blade at its very tip, often with a notched or wavy blade. It is traditionally decorated and polished, making it as beautiful as it is deadly. The naginata can be used like a chopping axe or a thrusting polearm, cleaving through targets easily enough either way.

**Ninja-to:** A shorter, straight-bladed version of the folded metal blade with a wider hilt guard, the ninja-to is often thought of as an assassin's weapon because it is quick and deadly. Just like its larger, curved cousins, the ninja-to has all the benefits and drawbacks of folded metal blades, meaning that any target struck gains a +2



bonus to its non-natural Armour Points against ninja-to attacks. Many ninja-to swords have hollowed hilts that can hold a small (less than 1 ENC) item and have their blades painted black with grease or charcoal to decrease any shine they may give off.

**No-Dachi:** The no-dachi is the largest of the folded metal swords being as long as two metres and is usually worn slung across the back. It has a curved blade like its smaller brother, the katana and is a heavy weapon to use. Requiring that the user assume a low stance and set his hands wide on the hilt, the no-dachi can be thrust forward at an approaching foe. This stabbing method is the no-dachi swordsman's answer to a lack of swinging room or to the fast approach of cavalry. Just like its smaller cousins, the no-dachi has all the benefits and drawbacks of folded metal blades, meaning that any target struck gains a +2 bonus to its non-natural Armour Points against no-dachi attacks.

**Sai:** Simple in design, the sai is a dagger-like weapon that does not actually carry an edge except at the last bit of the tip of its three prongs. Unlike a knife wielder, a sai fighter will only use the very tip of the central prong to drag shallow furrows in the flesh when slashing – though the weapon is far deadlier when driven deep enough into the wound to sink the other two prongs into the target as well. When performing a stabbing attack that is not Dodged or Parried (no Combat Reaction called against the attack) a sai fighter inflicts an additional +2 damage. Also, the three-pronged design of the sai allows it to turn bladed weapons away quite easily, adding +5% to Parry tests against swords, knives and axes.

**Tachi:** Slightly longer and heavier than the katana but crafted in the same way, the tachi is the favoured war sword of the samurai. It is worn slung from the waist, with the blade facing downwards and requires two hands to draw. It is traditionally used with two hands, although it can be used with one hand only. Although vicious when striking flesh, armour holds a problem for the easily deflected edge of folded blades, meaning that any target struck gains a +2 bonus to its non-natural Armour Points against katana attacks.

**Tanto:** The smallest of the folded metal blades, the tanto is slightly larger than a dagger and comes in curved or straight-bladed varieties. It has a sharply angled edge

to the front and is primarily a stabbing weapon, however it is just as sharp as its larger cousins. It is traditionally a weapon used to dispatch a fallen foe or comrade or even oneself. Just like its larger brethren, the tanto has all the benefits and drawbacks of folded metal blades, meaning that any target struck gains a +2 bonus to its non-natural Armour Points against tanto attacks.

**Tetsubo:** This weapon is attributed to large barbarians who once used sapling trees to make it, as it is amongst the largest of the bludgeoning implements carried by normal men. The tetsubo is a two metre long shaft of wood (or sometimes metal) that is thin and leather-wrapped at the haft. At the opposite end it is often as thick as a man's leg, giving the whole weapon the appearance of a gigantic club. The entire length of the weapon is then covered in strips of studded metal running lengthwise from the top to the leather wrappings, adding weight and impact to the already huge weapon. Due to its size, the tetsubo has a -10% penalty to Parry attempts made by and against it.

**Tonfa:** A simple baton with a crossbar, the wooden tonfa was originally used as a way to augment monastic fighting styles without endangering the monks' holiness by using conventional weaponry. A tonfa can be spun rapidly around its crossbar and can be used for attacking rapidly and without relent.

**Wakazashi:** The 'shortsword' of the folded metal blades, a wakazashi is the traditional secondary weapon of folded metal sword duellists. It is not quite as long as a man's arm and has a slight curve to the blade that matches that of a katana or no-dachi. Using a wakazashi is often viewed as a less honourable resort, meaning that the wielder must have lost or broken his primary weapon if he draws the wakazashi at all. Like other weapons of its kind, the wakazashi has all the benefits and drawbacks of folded metal blades, meaning that any target struck gains a +2 bonus to its non-natural Armour Points against wakazashi attacks.

**Yari:** The Japanese long spear. A straight, one metre long, two-edged blade, of the same high-quality construction as a sword blade, is fixed to a two-metre long shaft. The shaft is traditionally bound with bamboo strips and then lacquered for durability.

## Close Combat Weapons

Weapon	Skill	Damage Dice	STR/DEX	ENC	AP/HP	Reach	Cost
Bo	Bojutsu	1D8	7/7	2	3/8	+3	1 gin
Jo	Bojutsu	1D6	7/-	1	2/4	+1	50 mon
Katana	Kenjutsu (1H or 2H)	1D10+1 1D10+2	11/10 9/9	2	5/10	+3	250 gin
Masakari	Masakarijutsu	1D6+1 1D6+2	11/9 9/9	1	3/8	+3	25 gin
Ono	Masakarijutsu	2D6+1	13/9	2	3/10	+4	60 gin
Naginata	Naginatajutsu	2D8 1D10	11/7 10/9	3	4/12	+5	50 gin
Ninja-to	Kenjutsu (1H or 2H)	1D6+2 1D8+1	10/9 7/9	1	5/8	+2	Cannot be bought.
No-Dachi	Kenjutsu (2H)	2D8+1	12/10	3	5/12	+4	425 gin
Nunchaku	Kamajutsu	1D4+1	7/13	-	3/5	+1	100 mon
Sai	Tantojutsu	1D4+1	-/9	1	3/8	+1	6 gin
Tachi	Kenjutsu (1H or 2H)	1D10+1 1D10+2	11/10 9/9	2	5/11	+4	200 gin
Tanto	Tantojutsu	1D6	-/-	-	5/5	0	60 gin
Tetsubo	2H Hammer	2D8	12/-	4	4/12	+4	30 gin
Tonfa	1H Hammer	1D4+1	-/9	-	2/8	+1	10 gin
Yari	Sojutsu	1D10	5/5	2	3/10	+5	45 gin
Wakazashi	Kenjutsu (1H)	1D8	-/9	1	5/8	+1	125 gin

## Ranged Weapons

### Dai kyu

The Japanese longbow and foremost war-weapon of the Heian samurai. The dai kyu is two and a half metres long and can take two men to string it. It is made from laminations of deciduous wood and bamboo, reinforced with rattan twine and then lacquered. Designed to be used from the saddle, the bow is fired from a third of the way up its length, with the archer's arms held at a higher level of elevation than for western bows.

### Han kyu

A shorter bow than the dai kyu, it is, nevertheless, an excellent hunting weapon and weapon for Ryōmin ladies.

### Shinobi-kyu

The collapsible short bow of the ninja. It resembles a han kyu in all respects.

### Yari-Nage

The shortened, javelin-like version of the yari.

## Ranged Weapons

Weapon	Skill	Damage		Load	STR/DEX	Enc	AP/HP	Cost
		Dice	Range					
Dai kyu	Kyujutsu, Yabusame	2D8+1	180m	1	13/12	1	2/7	350 gin
Han kyu	Kyujutsu	1D8+1	70m	1	9/11	1	2/4	150 gin
Shinobi-kyu	Kyujutsu	1D8	65m	1	9/11	1	2/3	Cannot be bought
Yari-Nage	Sojutsu or Throwing	1D6	40m	1	5/9	1	1/8	30 gin

## Arrows

There are two, specialist arrow types used by the samurai, with differing implications for the effectiveness of the kyu attack and damage.

### Hummingbulb (Hiki-me)

Used as a signalling arrow, the bulb is perforated and emits a warbling, high-pitched whistle as it flies. The release of a humming bulb usually signals the start of a battle or arrow duel.

*Kyu effects: -2 to damage*

*Cost: 50 mon each*

### Bowel Raker (Watakushi)

A barbed arrow with the barbs curving out on either side of the arrow head and towards the point. These nasty arrows inflict terrible wounds but at a slight expense to range and aim due to their heavy, less stable nature.

*Kyu effects: +2 to damage, -10m to range, -10% to Kyujutsu/Yabusame test.*

*Cost: 70 mon each*

# RELIGION AND FAITH

The Japanese are a deeply religious people, able to relate to their surroundings through the two religions of Buddhism and Shinto. The former is by far the newer religion, having come to Japan in the mid 6<sup>th</sup> Century, whereas the latter, Shinto, has existed for far, far longer. The two faiths share many similar concepts, hence their ability to co-exist but are still very different in outlook and expression. This chapter explores the two religions and provides mechanics for integrating them into *RuneQuest: Land of the Samurai* games.

## Magic

In *Land of the Samurai* both religions are capable of working magic and this is discussed in more detail in the Magic of Japan chapter. However if a purely historical version of Japan is preferred, simply ignore all references to magic use. It need not form a part of your campaign.

## Purity

Of prime importance to both Buddhism and Shinto is the notion of Purity. In game terms Purity is rated on a scale from 1 to 100 and beyond and is treated very much like a skill, although in different ways for each religion. For Buddhists, it is a measure of how far one is on the path to enlightenment. For Shinto priests, it is a measure of how much pollution has been avoided. The mechanics for Purity are discussed in more detail for each religion but every priest character, whether Buddhist or Shinto, begins with a Purity value of  $10 + \text{POW} + \text{CHA}$ .

Purity can be increased in two ways. First, it can be increased as per any other skill, representing a character's general adherence to his faith outside the game session. Second, at the end of each game session, Games Masters should award priest characters with between 0 and 10 points of Purity, depending on how well or how far the character has remained true to the precepts of his faith during game play.

Purity, like On, can also be lost. The losses are slightly different for each faith but if a character makes a particular transgression for his faith, the Purity loss is immediate and

automatic. It cannot be mitigated against through the use of Hero Points, as can loss of On and atonement must come through subsequent action, hopefully resulting in a reasonable Purity award at the end of the session.

If Purity falls to zero or below, then the priest suffers an immediate crisis of conscience and must make a Persistence test. If the priest fails the first Persistence test, he is unable to contemplate any other activities save for atonement and immediately goes off in search of it, irrespective of his present circumstances or those of his colleagues.

If the test is successful the priest is able to emotionally handle his predicament for the time being but will seek to atone for his transgressions at the earliest opportunity, through meditation, prayer at the nearest shrine or temple and so forth. He must spend at least one day and a number of days equal to his negative Purity, in such atonement. At the end of this period, he makes a second Persistence test. If the test is successful, his Purity is restored to a value equal to  $\text{POW} + \text{CHA}$ . If the test is a critical success, Purity is restored to  $10 + \text{POW} + \text{CHA}$ . If the test fails, he must spend another day in atonement and may then try again. If the test is a fumble, he must spend a further number of days equal to the negative purity before being able to make the Persistence test once more.

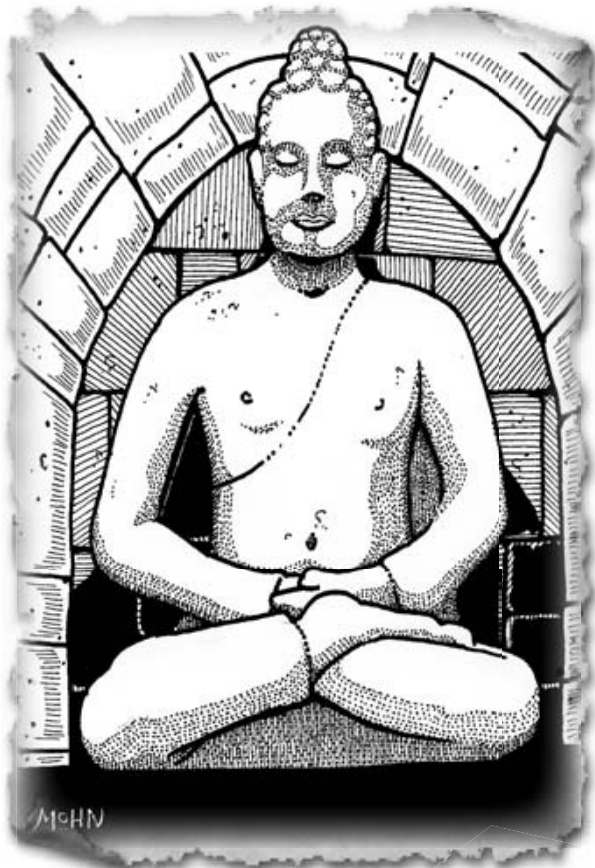
## Buddhism

Buddhism involves transcending ignorance to attain Enlightenment. Ignorance leads man to sorrow and suffering; men suffer because they do not know the true nature of things. To receive true knowledge, therefore, man must learn to recognise illusion and reject the ignorance of the world about him. Thus, if one attains Enlightenment he will also gain perfect happiness. Buddhism also is the teaching of the *bakku yoraku*, which means the removal of suffering and the giving of happiness. So, the teaching of Buddhism is the abstention from all bad and doing all good. The teaching of the Buddha is to show how to attain Enlightenment – perfect wisdom, supreme good and highest happiness in the perfect realisation of personality. To reach Enlightenment one must first lead a good and pure life, establishing good karma. Unless good karma is fully

attained, Enlightenment is impossible and one is trapped in a cycle of birth, death and rebirth. All Buddhists accept that they are part of this cycle and that attaining Enlightenment is a lengthy road to travel. Therefore, each Buddhist must lead as pure and as good a life as possible in order to hasten enlightenment and be finally reborn as a Buddha.

There are 10 cardinal precepts of Buddhism known as the *Jūzenkai* and all Buddhist sects observe them:

- Do not harm life*
- Do not steal*
- Do not commit adultery*
- Do not lie*
- Do not be abusive*
- Do not exaggerate*
- Do not equivocate*
- Do not be greedy*
- Do not hate*
- Do not lose sight of what is true*



Those who diligently and consistently observe and practice the *Jūzenkai* will, one day, reach enlightenment and become Buddhas, able to pass on their wisdom and teachings to others. There are many Buddhas already and more will be created. It is simply a question of leading a good and pure life and escaping the attraction of bad karma.

The teachings of Buddhism are contained in the sutras and all Buddhist priests have a duty to disseminate the sutras through preaching and through setting an example to others. Thus, wandering Buddhist priests, staff in hand, wearing simple clothing and unshackled by worldly possessions, are a common sight on Japan's roads and paths. Conversely Japan has many temples housing thousands of permanent priests and monks who remove themselves from general society in order to devote themselves to the study of the sutras and practicing of mantras (prayers) to help them reach a greater sense of spiritual understanding and purpose.

## The Buddhas

Buddhas are those who have attained enlightenment and passed on to nirvana, having exited the earthly cycle of birth, death and rebirth. There are many Buddhas, some borrowed from Shinto, called *Nyōrai* and they fall into the following rough categories.

### Bosatsu

Mortals who have attained enlightenment but remain in the mortal realm to teach others.

### Deities

The heavenly gods of Buddhism representing truth and enlightenment in various forms.

### Amida

The keeper of paradise, Amida is revered as one of the highest, if not *the* highest of the Buddhas. Following his teachings and examples and sometimes even simply chanting his name, is enough to enter paradise.

### Enma Ō

Enma Ō guards the entrance to hell and judges the souls of the dead, deciding the fate of the soul – either being reborn into the world, being confined to hell to atone for bad karma or returning as a spirit in order to repay a debt.

### Hachiman

Originally the son of the Empress Jingu, Hachiman is revered as both a Buddha and as a Shinto deity. He is a god of war but also revered by farmers and fishermen as he blesses them with good harvests and catches.

### Inari

Both a Buddhist and Shinto god, Inari is represented as both male and female and is often associated with the fox and the fox spirits or kitsune. Inari offers blessings to the rice crop and is seen as a mischievous, sometimes troublesome god, who, nevertheless, has good intentions at heart. Worship of Inari becomes popular during the Heian period, especially in the Imperial Court.

### Jizo

A patron of travelers and the souls of the dead, his statues are a common sight, especially by roadsides and in graveyards. Jizo is seen as the guardian of children, particularly children who died before their parents.

### Go-Chi

The Contemplative Buddhas: Taho, Yakushi, Dainichi, Askuku and Shaka.

### The Myō-ō

The vengeful or protector Buddhas who are permitted to work violence, when the occasion demands it, in order to preserve the harmony of the universe. These are wrathful beings with phenomenal powers over the elements: there are five Myō-ō: Daiitoku, Fudō, Gōzanze, Gundari and Kongō-Yasha and they protect the four directions from evil influences.

### Daiitoku

Represented as having six faces, six arms and six legs, haloed by fire and carrying a variety of weapons, Daiitoku is sometimes pictured as riding on a great bull. When sculptures of him are found in temples, he always faces to the west.

### Fudo

The best known of the Myō-ō, Fudo is depicted as a fierce, strong, dark-skinned warrior, encircled with flames, bearing the sword *kurikara*, which can defeat demons and ropes in the other hand, with which he captures and binds demons and the souls of those who cannot be redeemed. Fudo protects the centre.

### Gōzanze

Sometimes depicted as female, Gozanze protects the east and is often shown as having three faces and six arms, trampling demons and evil spirits underfoot.

### Gundari

Protecting the south against devils within and without, Gundari wears a fearsome expression and is depicted as having three eyes and eight arms. Snakes are frequently shown wrapping around his ankles.

### Kongō-Yasha

Protecting the north, Kongō-Yasha is depicted with three heads and six arms, a wrathful expression on his distorted face.

### San Senjin

The war gods of Buddhism, always depicted as fierce warriors wearing Chinese armour and carrying Chinese weapons.

### Bishamonten

A god of warriors, healing and wealth, Bishamonten is depicted as carrying a sword in one hand and a pagoda in the other, from which he dispenses wealth. Bishamonten is a favoured god amongst the *sōhei*.

### Daikokuten

As well as being a god of war (pictured holding an immense mallet), Daikokuten is also a god of farmers and one who dispenses wealth to them.

### Marishiten

Depicted as having several faces and several arms (numbers of faces and limbs vary), Marishiten is considered a personification of the divine light and is revered by warriors for her ability to become invisible or generate mirages, so that enemies can be evaded or made confused. She, again, is seen as a dispenser of prosperity and is revered by merchants.

### Shi Daitennō

The four heavenly kings guard the four directions: Jikoku guards the east, Kōmoku the west, Tamon the north and Zōchō the south. All four are depicted as warriors with a variety of forms and usually dressed in a Chinese style.

## Buddhist Sects

In the Heian period there are two principal Buddhist sects: Shingon and Tendai. Both sects revere the Buddhas but differ in how their teachings are to be studied and in how enlightenment is attained.

### Shingon Buddhism

Developed by Kūkai, Shingon Buddhism is an esoteric sect with involved, difficult to comprehend rituals and doctrines. Shingon devotees practice the study of mantras and mandalas in a bid to understand the truth of enlightenment and thereby attain true reason and wisdom. Amida is the venerated deity but the heart of the sect is Dainichi and his teachings regarding contemplation and reflection to achieve wisdom. All Shingon practice meditation and the drawing and study of complex mandalas that are considered to be expressions of truth and enlightenment. The Shingon Buddhists believe that enlightenment is not a distant ideal but something everyone is capable of achieving given the right depth of study and understanding.

### Tendai Buddhism

Founded by Saichō, Tendai Buddhism believes in Original Enlightenment (Hongaku shiso) – the idea that all beings are originally or inherently enlightened and that freedom from the earthly form is possible if the inner wisdom is awoken and the delusions that hide true nature are dispelled. The concept of Original Enlightenment is rooted in the central Buddhist belief that everything is interconnected and for this reason Tendai Buddhism has been able to easily reconcile itself with Shinto beliefs and practices.

The centre of the Tendai sect is the major temple Enryaku-ji, close to Heiankyō, on Mount Hiei.

## Buddhism and Purity

Buddhists aim to live and lead good lives, thereby creating for themselves good karma, which leads to enlightenment. Bad karma is anything that breaks the 10 precepts of Buddhism as outlined earlier. For the purposes of *Land of the Samurai*, Purity is a measure of how much good karma a devotee has accumulated.

Acts considered bad karma lower the Purity value, as outlined below:

## Bad Karma Penalties

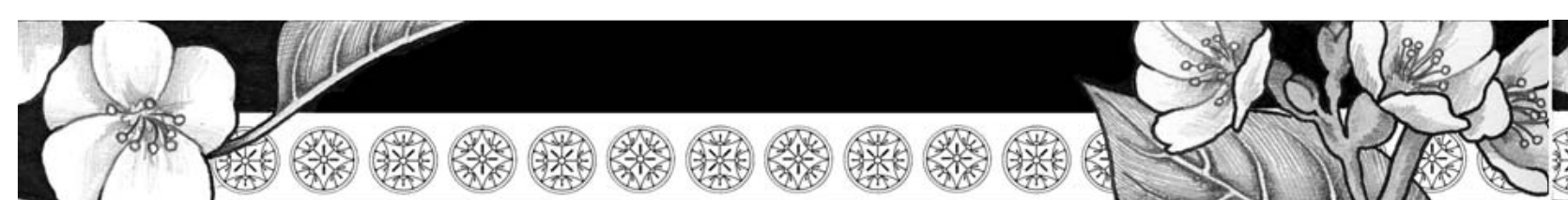
Bad Karma Action	Effect on Purity
Causing harm to life	-30
Lying	-20
Stealing	-20
Committing adultery	-20
Exaggerating	-15
Equivocating	-15
Being abusive or insulting	-20
Being greedy	-20
Accepting falsehood	-30

## Temples

As the various sects of Buddhism developed, so did schisms of political and ideological belief. The temples of Nara, the former capital, resented the growth of the new temples close to Heiankyō and this resentment ultimately degenerated into outright violence throughout the Heian period. The temples, to defend themselves, developed their own standing armies of sōhei warriors and took steps to fortify, particularly those of Nara which lacked the natural defences of a mountain. Also, such was the popularity of Buddhism, many temples attracted thousands of devotees from all casts and classes. The singular temples of Enryaku-ji and Kofukuji rapidly become large, self-supporting enclaves known as *jinaimachi* or 'temple towns'. The traditional jinaimachi model is based on a clear segregation between the sacred functions of the temple and those required for daily living. With such large bodies of people living and worshipping in the temple complex it is important to retain these distinctions, as much for spiritual reasons as for practical ones.

Major temples are entered by way of a ceremonial gate. The gate is both a spiritual and physical ingress and as such may or may not have defensive gates, depending on the temple's position, importance and how often it has been assaulted before (if at all). On either side of the gate are Nio statues, huge carved edifices of Buddhist protector gods designed to intimidate those considering trouble. It is traditional for one Nio to have its mouth open whilst the mouth of the other is closed. The Nio also provide a first line of magical defence, with alarm or defensive spells permanently cast upon them.





Beyond the gate is the courtyard, surrounded by sturdy temple timber buildings atop stone terraces. The interior of each building is based upon thick vertical support beams with large crossbeams for the upper storeys. The focus of the courtyard buildings is the hondo. The hondo has eaves protecting an external walkway that runs around the perimeter of the building and its doors are the traditional Japanese sliding paper doors or shoji. The hondo is given over to the main Buddhas revered by the temple and the images of these deities occupy the hondo's central area. Smaller Nio occupy the corners of the main area and these Nio are usually the Myō-Ō gods, protecting the four directions. Around the main area are spaces for priests to perform services and engage in private contemplation, sometimes with shoji to provide some privacy and to screen the central images of the Buddhas from the outside, if so needed.

Around the courtyard it is typical to find lanterns of all shapes and sizes, lit when it begins to get dark and pagodas, especially in the older temples of Nara. Pagodas are used to hold the remains of Buddhas as relics but in Japan are there more to symbolise the holiness of the temple and mark its stature. Another common feature of the courtyard is the bell tower, an open wooden structure housing a bronze bell that is struck with an external clapper, slung from a support beam and struck against the bell with a rope.

If the temple is also a monastery and most jinaimachi are, then around the courtyard are buildings for lectures, the learning of the sutras and small shrines for private meditation. It is also common to find a Shinto shrine to the local kami and offerings are made here by both Buddhists and Shinto worshippers, such is the accord between the two faiths.

Beyond the courtyard but still within the precincts of the jinaimachi are dwellings, workshops, gardens and vegetable plots. At its height, Enryaku-ji has some 2,000 separate buildings scattered across the summit of Mount Hiei, connected via a network of paths through the trees and into the many small valleys. Other temples and monasteries follow a similar structure, being completely self-sufficient communities. Sōhei have their own quarters away from the priests and traditional monks but worship in the main area. In their own quarters the sōhei maintain areas for training, weapon practice and worship.

In Shingon temples in particular, much importance is placed on secrecy and privacy. The esoteric nature of Shingon means that priests progress gradually through a series of secret rituals conveying the innermost knowledge of Buddhism. In some temples these rituals involve magical and mystical practices and some even involve the use of fire as a way of attaining purity of consciousness. The yamabushi followers of Shugendo perfected the practice of walking across red-hot coals to demonstrate their ability to transcend the material world. In these temples the areas used for sacred, secret ritual are separated from the common areas of worship and even protected by sōhei guards.

## Worship

Worship practices vary from sect to sect but usually involve group worship at particular times of the day, especially sunrise. Group worship typically includes the recital of the sutras, with the priests and monks seated in the hondo. This is followed by walking meditation, either around the courtyard or the hondo's perimeter walkway and then by private meditation in the hondo and other temple buildings. After that, the monks work, the sōhei practice and the priests turn to their esoteric studies, punctuated by further prayer, meditation and if it is part of their sect, secret study of the teachings that form part of the sect's rituals.

## Holy Days

Buddhists celebrate several matsuri or holy days/festival days in their calendar. As well as these specific matsuri, the Shinto matsuri are also frequently observed.

*Ganjitsu* (New Year). This three day festival cleanses the nation as a whole for the forthcoming year as the Emperor (or his Regent) leads the purification rites.

*Hanamatsuri* (March-April). This day celebrates the birthday of Buddha but all Buddhas are honoured. It is also the Flower Festival, in which people gather to view the cherry blossom and divine the state of the year's rice harvest.

*O-bon* (July). A festival of the dead, in which the ancestors of the family are honoured in the home and in the temples with the reading of sutras and the preparation of various offerings, such as small bowls of food and sake, a clean bed of straw.

*Kanname-sai* (October). The harvest festival, when Inari is honoured for blessing the rice crop.



## Using the Cult Rules for Buddhists

Buddhist temples are arranged into different ranks, with the newly ordained priests occupying the position of Initiate. Acolytes form the bulk of the priesthood, ranked according to their Purity and Lore (Specific Theology) skill rating. Above the Acolytes are the High Priests, again with their own ranks based on a similar measure to the Acolytes. At the head is the Abbot or Zasu, who leads the temple with the assistance of the higher ranking High Priests.

There is no real equivalent of a Runepriest or Runelord in *Land of the Samurai*. However, the cult requirements outlined on pages 81 and 82 of the *RuneQuest* rules serve acceptably for measuring progress in the Buddhist temple.

Any sōhei who fulfils the requirements for a Runelord may take the title Dai-sōhei and will be expected to fulfil similar duties in the service of his temple. Even the most honoured Dai-sōhei answer to the Zasu.

## Buddhist Sect Skills and Magic

Temples offer training in a wide range of skills in the same way as any other *RuneQuest* cult, especially in the jinaimachi. Skills offered depend on the sect, although Divine magic tends to be common across all sects because although the sects differ philosophically, the same deities are venerated.

## Magic

All Buddhist priests, monks and sōhei can pray for Divine spells at any Buddhist temple belonging to their sect. Limitations for rank in the sect are applied as described on page 80 of the *RuneQuest* rules. Buddhist sects also teach the Ki abilities (see page 71 of the Magic of Japan chapter) listed below.

Calling for Divine Intervention is possible but the circumstances must be extreme and if the Buddhist deities offer assistance it is likely to be as a subtle demonstration of their powers rather than as an overt manifestation of a Buddha or Myō-Ō.

## Shingon Priest and Monk Skills

Artistic Expression, Athletics, Divination, Lore (Shingon Theology), Martial Arts, Meditate, Perception, Persistence, Resilience. **Ki Abilities:** Destiny Map, Life Giver, Loremaster

## Shingon Sōhei Skills

Athletics, Courtesy, Lore (Shingon Theology), Martial Arts, Meditate, Polearm (Naginatajutsu). **Ki Abilities:** Avoidance, Battle Fury, Perfect Blow

## Tendai Priest and Monk Skills

Athletics, Lore (Inner Wisdom), Lore (Shinto Theology), Lore (Tendai Theology), Meditate, Oratory, Perception, Persistence, Resilience. **Ki Abilities:** Soothsay, Tireless, True Sight

## Tendai Sōhei Skills

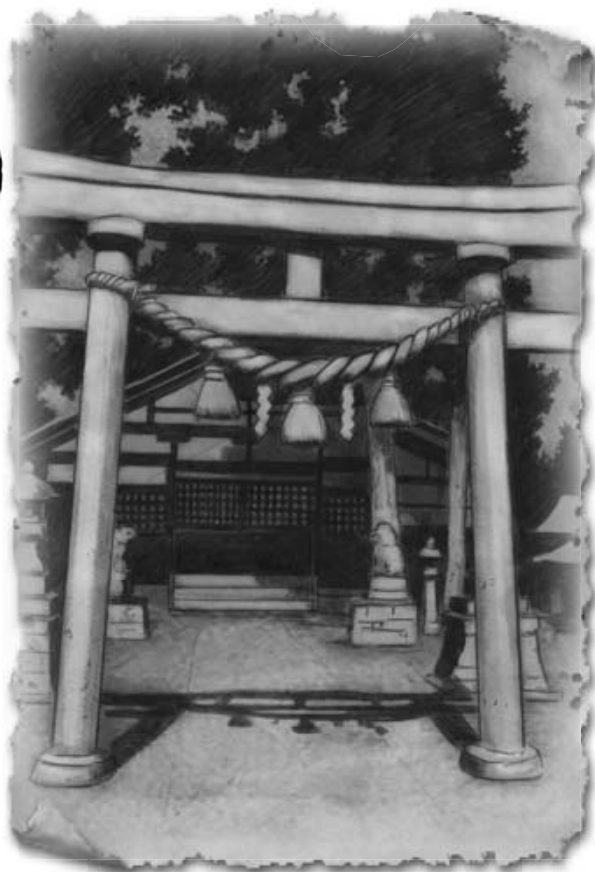
Athletics, Lore (Inner Wisdom), Lore (Shingon Theology), Martial Arts, Meditate, Polearm (Naginatajutsu). **Ki Abilities:** Perfect Blow, Storm of 1,000 Blows, Sundering Stroke.

## Shinto

Shinto is Japan's indigenous religion although Buddhism, in the Heian period, has displaced it as the state religion. Shinto believes that all things possess a spirit, awareness and presence in the world and these are called kami. Anything or anyone can be a kami, if they are pure and if they engender feelings of beauty and awe in those who behold them. Thus, the Emperor is revered as a kami and so are great heroes and even clan heads. The humblest rock or stream has its own kami and the great natural features, such as the mountains, the sun and the moon are major kami – deities with great power and influence.

Despite being in Buddhism's shadow, Shinto still permeates Japanese belief and even the Buddhist sects agree that the kami exist and should be honoured. Shinto has few great temples but thousands of shrines across the country, built to revere the local kami and the major kami of a particular region. The Heavenly deities, such as Amerterasu, Izanami and Izagami, are not worshipped directly but venerated at the Grand Shrine of Ise, the holiest of all Shinto places.

For most part, worship of the kami is conducted locally and relatively informally. Shinto priests are not seeking any particular enlightenment, as Buddhists are but they do seek to uphold certain values that are deemed important to life and Japanese civilisation. In essence these values equate to avoidance of sin, of which there are two types: Amatsu-Tsumi and Kunitzu-Tsumi.



Amatsu-Tsumi are those sins committed by Susano'o-no Mikoto, the brother of Amaterasu, involving the destruction of crops and things precious to life and were levelled against the festivals of thanksgiving. Thus, destruction of almost any kind is a sin in Shinto and a sin of the most powerful kind.

Kunitsu-Tsumi sins are those typically enshrined in Japanese criminal law and include injury, murder (especially infanticide), incest, poisoning, cursing and the learning of magic. Kunitsu-Tsumi also includes natural hazards, such as thunderstorms, tsunami and other hazards brought about by birds, reptiles and insects. Essentially anything that threatens the community is sinful and must be avoided. In the case of natural hazards, sin is avoided by observing the festivals, the matsuri and venerating the local kami who protect the community and nature equally. Failure to do these things costs purity.

## The Shinto Deities

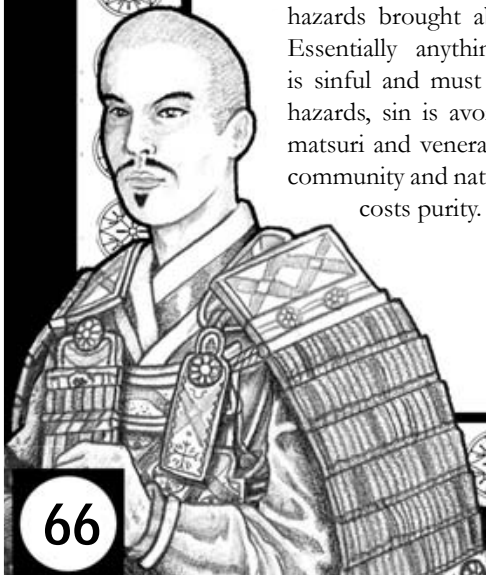
There are countless deities. However, the major kami, venerated at the Grand Shrine, are as follows:

### Amaterasu no kami

The sun goddess and most revered of all kami. She is the daughter of Izanagi who, with her brothers Susano'o and Tsukuyomi, lived a harmonious existence. When Susano'o committed the Amatsu-Tsumi sins, Amaterasu locked herself away in a deep cave, sealing it with a large rock. Light was taken from the world and all began to wither and die. Eight million kami came to the cave where she had locked herself and devised a way to lure her from hiding. First, the kami set up a mirror opposite the cave's entrance. Then, Ame-no-Uzume, the kami of merriment, performed a sensual dance on top of an upturned washtub, tapping the beat on the rim. The rest of the kami cheered and applauded the dance, making such a noise that Amaterasu's curiosity was too much and she peeked out from the cave to see what the commotion was about. One of the kami explained to Amaterasu that they were welcoming a new goddess; Amaterasu asked who she was and the kami pointed to the mirror. Amaterasu had never seen her own reflection and when she saw her own radiance reflected back at her, she declared that the new goddess was indeed beautiful and fascinating. Slowly, Amaterasu emerged from the cave to gaze upon this new arrival and when she had emerged the kami Tajikara-O closed the cave with the rock behind her. Once out in the world again, Amaterasu was persuaded to return to the celestial plain and return light to the world, which she did. She resolved to face her willful brother's actions in future and not to hide from them.

### Hachiman

The god of war, Hachiman is revered as the Emperor Ōjin of the 4<sup>th</sup> Century and known as the God of Eight Banners, which marked the Emperor Ōjin's birth. His symbol is the dove and as the Protector of Japan his worship is widespread with countless small shrines existing in addition to the larger shrine at Ise. A patron kami of samurai and peasants alike, he is also the patron kami of the Minamoto clan and all samurai in their employ hold reverence for him.



## Inari

Worshipped by Buddhists and Shinto, Inari is the sometimes mischievous kami of crops that takes either male or female form and is associated closely with the kitsune fox spirits. Foxes are considered Inari's creatures and with their slyness and cunning, are seen as embodiments of Inari's spirit.

## Izanagi

One of the creator deities, Izanagi created the world through stirring the primordial essence with his spear and letting the droplets form the first islands. After he lost Izanami to the underworld, Izanagi created the first cleansing rituals, washing first his left eye, which resulted in the birth of Amaterasu. Next he washed his right eye, creating Tsukuyomi, the god of the moon and finally, his nose, which created Susano'o, the storm god.

## Izanami

One of the creator deities, Izanami is the wife and sister of Izanagi and the mother of all kami. Izanami died giving birth to Kagutsuchi, the kami of fire and was sent to the underworld, where she chose to remain. When Izanagi went to bring her back, she refused and in a rage, Izanagi vowed to kill 1,000 of her subjects each day. Izanami countered this threat with a promise to create 1,500 to replace them.

## Suitengu

A child-kami of the sea, worshipped by fishermen and sailors.

## Susano'o

Susano'o is the storm god and banished from Heaven for committing the first sins against his sister, Amaterasu and causing her to hide, thus depriving the world of the sun. Susano'o descended from Heaven to the province of Izumo, where he met an elderly couple who had eight daughters. Seven had been eaten by the monster, Yamata no Orochi and the serpent was about to claim the eighth daughter. The parents promised Susano'o their daughter's hand in marriage if he agreed to slay Yamata no Orochi. So, taking eight bowls of sake, one for each head of the monster, Susano'o used guile to get the monster to drink the sake and then decapitated each head once it

had fallen asleep. From one of Orochi's tails, Susano'o pulled out a sword, which he named *Ame-no-Murakumo-no-Tsurugi* ("Heaven's Cloud-Gathering Sword"). This he presented to Amaterasu as a reconciliation gift and

it was later given to her descendant, Ninigi, along with the *Yata-no-Kagami*, the mirror and *magatama* the sacred jewels, as proof of his divine right to rule. These treasures became the Imperial Regalia, supposedly lost to the sea at the end of the Gempei wars.



## Tsukuyomi

Leaving Heaven to reside in the sky with his sister, Amaterasu, Tsukuyomi was responsible for killing Uke Mochi, the goddess of food. This angered Amaterasu because she had sent Tsukuyomi to represent her at a feast arranged by Uke Mochi and it was thus a great insult, not to mention a sin. Uke Mochi incurred Tsukuyomi's wrath in the way she prepared the food for the feast. First, she turned herself into the ocean and spat out a fish. Next, she made game animals come out of her mouth; finally, she turned herself into a rice paddy and created a bowl of rice by coughing it forth. Whilst the quality of the feast was good, Tsukuyomi was utterly disgusted by the way it had been made and killed the kami as a punishment.

When Amaterasu learned what happened she was so angry that she refused to ever look at Tsukuyomi again and moved to another part of the sky – hence the reason for the division between the daytime realm of the sun and the night time realm of the moon.

## Other Kami

Kami come in major and minor forms. All things possess a spirit and so all spirits can manifest as a kami. Major kami are considered important deities reflected in their power and sphere of influence. Minor kami represent the elements (air, earth, fire, water and wood), as well as particular locales and revered ancestors. Important major kami include Mount Hiei, Mount Fujiyama, Lake Biwa, the Emperor himself and any large, powerful or impressive natural feature that exudes an innate power over the landscape and lends shape to the communities dwelling in its shadow.

The powers of kami are discussed in further detail in the Magic of Japan chapter.

## Shinto Purity

Purity is of particular importance to Shinto priests; any spiritual impurity incurred through sin reduces the priest's ability to commune with and petition, the kami. Whilst most kami are benign, Shinto priests also know that they can be capricious beings and only those who can demonstrate an acceptable level of purity are likely to be able to persuade a kami to do something.

The table below summarises the penalties for incurring different forms of pollution, which itself arises from sin. All acts of destruction are considered pollutants, as are acts that physically stain the body, such as disease, contagion and blood. Curiously, whilst Shinto is a faith very much concerned with life and its value, it takes great pains to avoid the act of child birth, which brings life into the world. Midwives and physicians tending pregnant mothers are summoned from the Buddhist temple but once the child is born to the world, it is to the Shinto shrine where its is taken first to be blessed by the kami.

## Pollution Penalties

Pollution	Effect on Purity
Allowing harm to come to crops	-20
Attending or taking part in a funeral or burial	-20
Being present at any birth	-20
Causing a death	-30
Causing an injury	-20
Coming into contact with blood that is not one's own	-30
Coming into contact with death of any form	-30
Contract any disease or illness	-30
Defiling a shrine or allowing a shrine to be defiled	-30
Eating meat (including fish)	-20
Fumble a Purity test when petitioning a kami	-kami's POW
Telling a deliberate lie	-20
Offending or speaking ill of any kami	-30

## Using Purity

Whenever a Shinto priest seeks anything from a kami, be it a simple blessing, a favour or some form of magic, the priest makes a Purity test opposed by the kami's Persistence. Modifiers for the kind of favour or service being petitioned are applied to the priest's Purity value before the Skill Test is made. If the opposed test is successful; the kami will grant whatever help is being sought. If the test fails, the kami's refusal is assured. If the test is a critical success, then the priest has managed to atone and in doing so, may improve his Purity by an amount equal to the kami's own POW Characteristic. If the test is a fumble, then the attempts to appease the kami have failed disastrously and the priest suffers a reduction in Purity equal to the kami's POW.

## Purity Test Modifiers

Action	Modifier
Influence skill	+ critical value of the Influence skill
Sacrificing a Magic Point	+5 for every MP sacrificed
Bring an offering of food or sake	+5
Bring an offering of sake	+5
Request a Spirit Magic spell	-1 for each point of spell Magnitude
Request a Divine Magic spell	-2 for each point of spell Magnitude

## Magic Point Sacrifices

Kami love gifts. They especially like personal offerings that are heartfelt and sincere. A priest may increase his Purity skill test by sacrificing Magic Points during his petition to the kami. For every Magic Point sacrificed, the Purity roll gains a bonus of +5%. These Magic Points are expended whatever the outcome of the Purity test; kami like gifts but do not always gift back. The points sacrificed are regained at the usual recovery rate.

Each and every attempt to persuade a kami requires an opposed Purity test. For example, asking for a kami to bless a paddy field is one request and requires a successful test. Then asking it, a moment later, to also bless the harvest requires another test. Even if the first test fails, the kami might grant the second request; as already said, kami are mercurial beings at the best of times and might have their own reasons for granting one request whilst ignoring another. Sometimes a denied request might be granted tangentially through a successful petition for something else; it all depends on the Purity of the priest and how canny he is in negotiating and making a sacrifice at an opportune time.

## Shinto Shrines

Shrines or *jinja*, tend to be simple, wood and paper dwellings set into the natural environment and reached by a path. It is usual for a traditional torii gate to mark the entrance to the shrine but this is not always present. The essence is simplicity; Shinto shrines are never complex or ostentatious affairs.

If a shrine is tended by an incumbent priest, his quarters will not be far away and are as simple and straightforward as the shrine itself. A pale or well, with a wooden ladle, is available for visitors to rinse their mouths before

entering the shrine and as small area for leaving offerings is present either within or without the building.

It is very unusual to find any sort of statue or idol representing the resident kami. An object might be present, such as a polished stone or bough of a tree perhaps but more often than not the kami is represented by *heihaku* - paper or cloth strips attached to a stand, each carrying the kami's name written in kanji.

At the larger shrines, such as Ise and Izumo, the buildings are correspondingly larger and tended by resident priests who maintain the shrine and attend to prayer. Living quarters are provided for such staff and a public hall or *honden*, is present for public worship. The personifications of the kami are kept in a smaller, sanctified hall and are not open to public worshippers.

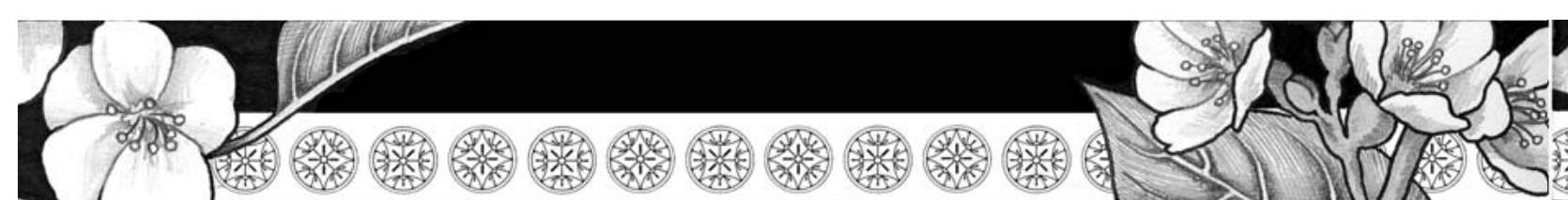
## Worship

The worship of the kami is concerned with simplicity and respect. Ceremonies are quiet, contemplative affairs where the worshipper embraces the kami's location and enters into a personal communion. There are no mantras or displays; simply a very quiet, very peaceful understanding of what the kami represents. Only during the large annual *matsuri* are celebrations more vocal and demonstrative. Everyday veneration of the kami is concerned with expressions of gratitude in the simplest and most respectful of ways.

There are three simple steps involved in worship. Firstly, the cleansing. Hands are washed and the mouth rinsed clean. This is a fundamental mark of respect for the kami and even if the other steps are not completed, the cleansing ritual is enough to demonstrate respect.

The second step is an offering of food or less frequently, money, which is used to help maintain the shrine. A bowl of rice, fish or soup is common and a cup of sake is always acceptable. An offering is not essential but is deemed respectful.

The third step is a prayer of gratitude, acknowledging the kami's place and the help it gives. Following the prayer, petitions can be made - for the future or for immediate needs. If the kami has been placated, it may answer, either spiritually and directly to the petitioner or through some kind of physical manifestation, either inside the shrine or within the immediate area of its concern. Kami can adopt any form they wish but human



forms are common, with the kami appearing as either a male or female, dressed simply and carrying, sometimes, a symbol of their influence.

## Holy Days

The Shinto matsuri are the only times when joyous celebration is allowed at a shrine, although even these occasions are respectful and courteous. The major festivals are:

*Ganjitsu* (New Year). This three day festival cleanses the nation as a whole for the forthcoming year as the Emperor (or his Regent) leads the purification rites. Celebrated as both a Shinto and a Buddhist festival. Everyone visits the local shrine and makes offerings and prayers of gratitude. Houses are thoroughly cleaned and elders and superiors are honoured with small tokens.

*Setsubun* (February). This matsuri marks the end of winter. It is also a time marking the passage of children into the state of youth and youth to manhood.

*Higan* (March). Local kami across Japan are venerated formally at the Higan matsuri. It also marks the spring equinox and the coming of blessed times.

*Tsukimi* (August – full moon). The honouring of Tsukuyomi.

*Iwashimizu* (September). This is the matsuri honouring Hachiman, both as an agricultural deity and as a god of warriors.

*Kanname-sai* (October). The harvest festival honouring Inari.

*Kami-na-zuki* (October). All kami leave their respective shrines and meet at the Izumo Grand Shrine to discuss matters personal to them and the state of their realms. Worship of the kami can only be conducted at Izumo because there are no gods anywhere else. The name of this festival means ‘Month with No Gods’.

## Using the Cult Rules for Shinto Priests

Shinto is far less formalised than Buddhism. There are no central tenets, no truly complex rituals and no vast temples with ranks of priests ordained into varying degrees of esoteric knowledge. Shinto is a simple faith with simple requirements and a simple structure. Priests tend to be lay-members although some, especially those with responsibility for a shrine, occupy initiate status.

Consequently there is no equivalent of a Runepriest or Runelord for Shinto. Priests might be compelled to act on a kami’s interests or business but since kami are rarely concerned with the mortal realm, such actions occur only when a kami is directly threatened. For the most part priests serve the spiritual needs of the community on a far more casual basis, officiating at marriages, naming ceremonies and matsuri.

## Shinto Skills and Magic

As there is nothing approaching a cult structure in Shinto, there is no support mechanism for the learning of new skills beyond the ways of the kami and how to venerate them properly. The priest for a shrine is able to teach those who worship there the Lore (Specific Kami) skill for the enshrined kami and Lore (Shinto Theology) but little else beyond the skills he himself has developed.

Because Shinto priests do not work magic themselves but petition kami to work it for them or through them, spells cannot be learned at any shrine.



# MAGIC OF JAPAN

*RuneQuest: Land of the Samurai* has several forms of magic available to characters, each based on the magic systems available in *RuneQuest* and the *RuneQuest Companion*. Priests and monks of the two religions are able to call upon Rune Magic, which is termed Spirit Magic in *Land of the Samurai*, as runes are not used and Divine magic. Sorcerers are able to work sorcery, although the practice, which bends the natural order and symmetry of the world, is deemed illegal in Japan and punishable by death.

The fourth kind of magic, explained below, is available to all characters and is not, strictly speaking, magic, although its effects may seem to be so to observers. This is Ki, the ability to call upon inner reserves of energy to achieve remarkable feats with a mundane skill. The character is able to focus on a particular skill and an associated effect and then channel his hidden reserves of power to bring the effect into action.

## Ki Abilities

Ki abilities emulate and channel Legendary Abilities. When a Ki ability is successfully invoked the character may bring into play a Legendary Ability without having to have achieved its requisite requirements in terms of Characteristics, Skills or Hero Points first. Legendary Abilities can still be achieved as normal when the requisites have been met and this represents the master of his art fully realising his Ki potential. However, before that, Legendary Abilities can be accessed in the following circumstances.

- A character must seek-out someone who displays the Ki ability he wants to learn and spend a number of days equal to the Hero Points for that Legendary Ability in dedicated study with the teacher. At the end of the study period he makes a Persistence test. If the roll is successful, he has learned to channel the Legendary Ability as a Ki ability and spends 1 Hero Point to consolidate it. If the Persistence roll fails, he may elect to spend a similar period in continued study and try again. No more than two attempts to learn a Ki ability are permissible.
- Learning Ki may or may not cost money; that is dependent on the teacher.
- Ki abilities are attached to a specific skill and may only be invoked for that skill. The character needs

to stipulate for which skill he is developing Ki as part of his training. A list of Ki abilities, drawn from a variety of *RuneQuest* sources and permissible in *Land of the Samurai*, are listed in the table below, along with the skills they are related to.

- Multiple Ki for a single skill are permissible, as long as all the above conditions are met.

## Using Ki Abilities

To use a Ki ability with a skill, the character must state that he is doing so and spend one Combat Action in preparation, clearing his mind and focusing on his inner Ki.

Next, the character attempts the Skill Test, for which he has learned Ki. Ki is invoked if:

- The Skill Test is equal to, or less than, his Persistence skill and/or
- The Skill Test is a critical success

If successfully invoked, the character spends 1 Magic Point and the Ki power comes into effect immediately, operating as per its Legendary Ability description.

## Permissible Ki Abilities

The table below lists the Ki skills permissible for *Land of the Samurai* characters, the skills for which it can be developed as Ki and the source where a full description can be found.

A few of the abilities have been renamed slightly to fit them with *Land of the Samurai*. The original name is given in parentheses.

## Ki Abilities

Ki Ability	Skills	Source
Avoidance	Dodge	Legendary Heroes
Battle Fury	Weapon Skills, Persistence	RuneQuest
Black Waltz	Weapon Skill, Dance	Legendary Heroes
Bloodhound	Tracking	Legendary Heroes
Born Leader	Command	Legendary Heroes



Ki Ability	Skills	Source
Born to the Saddle	Bajutsu, Yabusame	RuneQuest
Dead Eye	Kyujutsu, other ranged weapons	RuneQuest
Decapitating Swing	Kenjutsu, other weapon skills (note: this need not be a 2H Weapon)	RuneQuest
Destiny Map	Meditation, Divination	Legendary Heroes
Disease Immunity	Resilience	RuneQuest
Doppelganger	Disguise	Legendary Heroes
Duellist	Kenjutsu, 1H Weapon	RuneQuest
Empathic Wound	First Aid, Healing	RuneQuest
Forgemaster	Craft	Legendary Heroes
Gadgeteer	Mechanisms	Legendary Heroes
Golden Voice	Command, Influence, Sing	Legendary Heroes
Hachiman's (Titan's) Heft	Athletics	Legendary Heroes
Hail of Woe	Kyujutsu, Yabusame	Legendary Heroes
Heroic Aura	Influence, Oratory	RuneQuest
Juggernaut	Resilience	Legendary Heroes
Lifegiver	Healing	Legendary Heroes
Linguist	Language skills	RuneQuest
Lord of the Mount	Bajutsu	Legendary Heroes
Loremaster	Lore skills	RuneQuest
Maelstrom	1H Weapon skill, when using two weapons	Legendary Heroes
One With the Wild	Survival	Legendary Heroes
Perfect Blow	Weapon skills	Legendary Heroes

Ki Ability	Skills	Source
Pinpoint Aim	Kyujutsu, Yabusame, Throwing, Ranged Weapons	Legendary Heroes
Poison Immunity	Resilience	RuneQuest
Prestdigitation	Sleight	Legendary Heroes
Siren's Voice	Sing, Artistic Expression (Poetry)	Legendary Heroes
Skin of the Bear	Resilience	RuneQuest
Slaying Touch	Martial Arts	RuneQuest
Song of Amaterasu (Pan)	Play Instrument	Legendary Heroes
Soothsay	Divination	Legendary Heroes
Spider's Climb	Athletics	Legendary Heroes
Spirit of the Mer	Athletics	Legendary Heroes
Storm of 1,000 Blows	Martial Arts	Legendary Heroes
Sundering Stroke	2H Weapons	Legendary Heroes
Tireless	Resilience, Meditation	RuneQuest
True Sight	Perception	Legendary Heroes
Vanish	Stealth	Legendary Heroes
Voiced Power	Influence, Oratory	Legendary Heroes
Wall Leaping	Acrobatics	RuneQuest
Windwalker	Acrobatics	Legendary Heroes
Youthful Vigour	Resilience	Legendary Heroes

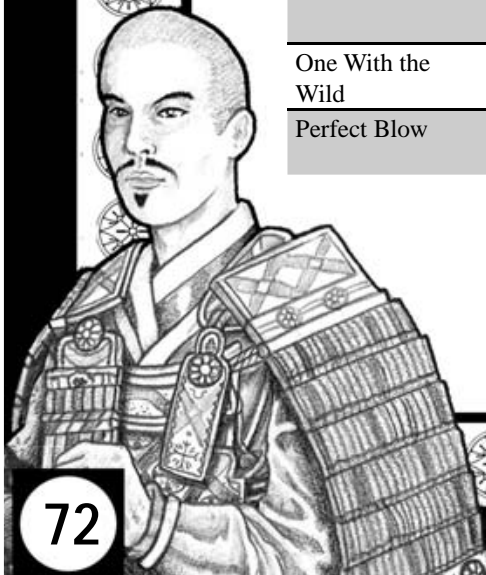
## New Kai/Legendary Abilities

### Arrows of Heaven

**Requirements:** Kyujutsu or Yabusame skill at 90% or higher

**Hero Points:** 10

Calling upon the name of Hachiman to bless his aim, the archer can release two arrows from the same bow,





at the same time. Both arrows must be directed at the same target and if the hit is successful, strike separate Hit Locations. If the attack fails, only one arrow hits and if the attack fumbles, neither arrow hits.

### Awareness of Hachiman

**Requirements:** Perception skill at 90% or higher  
**Hero Points:** 10

The character is innately aware of combat events around him. He suffers no penalties for surprise attacks and automatically senses the position of friends and allies, in relation to his own, during combat situations.

### Whirling Blade of Buddha

**Requirements:** Naginata (Polearm) skill at 90% or higher  
**Hero Points:** 10 (Sōhei), 12 (other characters)

A sōhei Ki ability (usable by any character), the warrior monk wields his naginata in a series of incredibly fast circles and arcs, cutting and stabbing at the same time.

Using this Ki ability imposes a -20% penalty on anyone attempting to Dodge or Parry the sōhei and allows the sōhei to make one free attack every Combat Round as a final action.

## Buddhist Magic

Heian period Buddhism is based on understanding esoteric practices; that is, it is shrouded in ritual and specific ritualistic practices designed to bring the practitioner closer to a state of enlightenment. Shingon Buddhists, in particular, study the relationship between the individual and the universe and have deciphered and understand the nature of magic.

All Buddhists can use Divine Magic by praying to the Buddhas. Different Buddhas offer different Divine spells and Buddhist priests gain and use these spells in precisely the same way as any other Divine magician, as described on pages 9 to 12 of the *RuneQuest Companion*.

There is an important difference for Buddhist priests when it comes to casting Divine magic: the Lore (Theology - either Shingon or Tendai, as appropriate) test result must be equal to or lower than, the priest's current Purity. If it is higher than the Purity value, then the spell fails, even if the Lore (Theology) test is otherwise successful.

### Available Divine Spells

Not all the Divine spells listed in the *RuneQuest Companion* are compatible with Buddhism - principally those that cause direct harm to a living creature. Those that can be used and the Buddhas offering them, are listed in the Buddhist Divine Spell table below. Several new spells, specific to Buddhism, are detailed on page 75.

## Sōhei and Divine Magic

Sōhei characters also have access to Divine Magic in the same way as Buddhist priests. As a martial profession that follows the tenets of Buddhism, rather than being ordained into a holy contract, they are also able to use certain spells denied to priests. These are noted in the Buddhist Divine Spell table below.

### Buddhist Divine Spells

Divine Spell	Buddhas Offering
Absorption	Amida, Enma , Inari, Myo-O,
Berserk (S hei only)	Hachiman, Myo-O, San Senjin
Breathe Water	Amida, Go-Chi
Consecrate	Amida, Go-Chi, Jizo
Dismiss Magic	Amida, Go-Chi, Inari
Exorcism	Jizo
Extension	Enma , Myo-O,
Fear (S hei only)	Hachiman, My - , San Senjin, Shi Daitenn
Find X	Amida, Go-Chi, Jizo, San Senjin
Heal Body	Amida, Go-Chi, Jizo
Heal Wound	Amida, Go-Chi, Jizo
Illusion (Motion)	Go-Chi, Inari, San Senjin (Marishiten)
Illusion (Odour)	Go-Chi, San Senjin (Marishiten)
Illusion (Sight)	Go-Chi, Inari, San Senjin (Marishiten)
Illusion (Sound)	Go-Chi, San Senjin (Marishiten)
Illusion (Substance)	Go-Chi, San Senjin (Marishiten)
Illusion (Taste)	Go-Chi, San Senjin (Marishiten)
Mindlink	Amida, Go-Chi, Inari, My -
Reflection	Amida, Go-Chi, Shi Daitenno
Shield	Hachiman, San Senjin
Soul Sight	Amida, Jizo
Spirit Block	Amida, Go-Chi, Jizo

### Divine Spell

Spiritual Journey  
Sureshot (S hei Only)  
True (Weapon) (S hei Only)

### Buddhas Offering

Amida, Go-Chi, Jizo  
Hachiman, My - , San Senjin, Shi Daitenno  
Hachiman, My - , San Senjin, Shi Daitenno

## Divine Spells from the RuneQuest Spell Book

The *RuneQuest Spellbook* describes many Divine spells that can be used by Buddhist devotees; however there are some spells that are clearly not within Buddhist teaching and would never be offered by a Buddha or Buddhist deity. The spells specifically forbidden are as follows:

### Forbidden Spell

Forbidden Spell	Forbidden Spell
Abandon	Inflammable Curse
Abscess	Iron Flesh
Acquittal	Justice is Served
Addle	Keel Haul
Alchemist's Touch	Killing Field
Anathema	Kowtow
Arc	Lust
Badland's Curse	Maelstrom
Barrage	Magnetic Curse
Blood Strike	Maim
Borrow	Maul
Boulder Rain	Mercy Killing
Breathe Fire	Moonstruck
Cemetery Horde	Munitions Unending
Condemnation	Myrmidon's Brutal Armour
Conflagration	Naval Escort
Contagion	Nightmares
Delirium	Nightshade Blessings
Demonic Boon	Oblivion
Dread	Palanquin of the Damned
Electrocute	Quagmire
Envenom	Reefstrike
Eruption	Ritual Offering
Eternity in Servitude	Salamander Summoning
Faithstrike	Sand Flesh

Forbidden Spell	Forbidden Spell
Fangs of the Carnivore	Sever Spirit
Feast of the Predator	Shade Summoning
Fire and Brimstone	Smite
Gnome Summoning	Sylph Summoning
Gout	Tapeworm's Hunger
Granite Flesh	Tenebrous Flesh
Grave Maul	Ulcerate
Hail Strike	Undine Summoning
Heartsword	Wildlife
Hell Fire	
Hoax	
Ice Flesh	
Ice Storm	

## New Buddhist Divine Spells

### Blessing of Nio

Duration 15, Magnitude 1, Trigger  
Buddhas: Enma-ō, Hachiman, San-Senjin

This spell enchants a guardian statue to a Buddhist temple, enabling it to animate and attack anyone who approaches the temple meaning it or its inhabitants, harm. Once cast the spell lies dormant until an intruder or enemy attempts to cross the temple boundary. At the end of the spell's duration the nio return to their inanimate state. The spell must be recast to rest the enchantment. Nio are tireless combatants, suffering no fatigue but are, due to their stone-state, slow. As these are animated statues they feel no pain and suffer no debilitating effects from major wounds, although a nio losing a leg will automatically topple over but can continue fighting from a prone position with appropriate modifiers. Animated nio have the following characteristics:

#### Characteristics

STR 4D6+12 (26)  
CON 3D6+9 (18)  
DEX 2D6 (7)  
SIZ 4D6+12 (26)  
INT 1D6+3 (6)  
POW 3D6 (11)  
CHA 2D6 (7)

### Animated Nio Hit Locations

D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
1-3	Right Leg	8/9
4-6	Left Leg	8/9
7-9	Abdomen	8/10
10-12	Chest	8/11
13-15	Right Arm	8/8
16-18	Left Arm	8/8
19-20	Head	8/9

### Weapons

Type	Weapon Skill	Damage / AP
Stone Tachi	40%	2D6+1D12 / 2

### Special Rules

*Combat Actions:* 2  
*Movement:* 4m  
*Strike Rank:* +6  
*Traits:* Formidable Natural Weapons, Night Sight

### Skills

Perception 35%, Resilience 50%, Stealth 20%, Survival 35%

### Typical Armour

Tough Hide (AP 8, no Skill Penalty)

### Blessing of the Myo-O

Duration 15, Magnitude 1, Trigger  
Buddhas: Myo-O

Similar in nature to Blessing of Nio, this spell enchants a Myo-O guardian statue within the precincts of a temple. Once cast the spell lies dormant until an intruder or enemy attempts to bypass a Myo-O from direction it guards. The spell must be cast separately on each Myo-O statue if all four directions and the centre are to be protected. When activated the Myo-O statue launches a psychic attack against the intruder. The intruder must match his Persistence against the Myo-O's Persistence of 90% in an Opposed test. If the test is lost, the intruder is forced to his knees and must pray to the Buddhas for forgiveness and enlightenment, remaining helpless for 15 minutes. Once the effect has completed the statue becomes inert and must be re-enchanted.



## Interpret Mandala

Concentration, Magnitude 1, Touch  
Buddhas: Amida, Go-Chi, Inari

The priest creates a mandala upon either paper or wood and contemplates its inner meaning whilst calling upon the Buddhas for temporary enlightenment. If successful, any problem, conundrum or mystery that has been troubling the priest becomes immediately clear as the priest sees through the illusion of earthly distraction.

## Prayer of Nirvana

Duration 1 Hour, Magnitude 1, Area

When cast an area in radius equal to the priest's POW in metres becomes open to the light of Nirvana – a spot of holy paradise for as long as the priest maintains concentration. No earthly element, natural disaster or physical attack can harm all those within the spell's area of effect and all effects of Fatigue are immediately alleviated. Anyone who has sustained a wound regains 1D3 Hit Points to each injured Hit Location.

## Prayer of Peace

Duration 15, Magnitude 1, Progressive, Ranged, Resist (Persistence)  
Buddhas: Amida, Bosatsu, Go-Chi, Shi Daitennō

The target of the spell immediately loses any will or compulsion to fight and instead assumes the lotus position and contemplates the folly of senseless violence for the duration of the spell.

## Prayer of Wisdom

Duration 15, Magnitude 1, Touch, Resist (Persistence)  
Buddhas: Amida, Go-Chi

The target of the spell receives temporary enlightenment, seeing before him the infinite wisdom of the Buddhas and being able to communicate it with eloquence and conviction. His Influence and Oratory skills are doubled and he automatically gains Lore (Buddhist Theology) at POW+INT for the spell's duration.

## Shinto Magic

Magic occupies a curious place in the Shinto religion. All Shinto priests consider the knowing of magic to be polluting but also recognise, without any difficulty, the

ability of the kami to work magic and miracles. Shinto priests believe that magic originates from the divine realms of Heaven and is channelled through kami for the good of the world. It is not for humans to know or use it directly but to petition the kami to work magic on their behalf. Thus, Shinto priests do not seek to learn spells or magical effects but they do ask the kami to work magic for them or through them, when the need is great.

## Kami and Powers

Kami fall into two categories, major and minor. Major kami represent the deities and demigods of the religion – the Heavenly deities and the kami of the major natural and spiritual features revered throughout Japan, such as Mount Fujiyama. Minor kami are the kami of the elements and the ancestral kami, revered by communities and households.

Kami are spirits and as such, largely conform to the rules for spirits found in the *RuneQuest Companion*. However, kami are not wandering spirit entities; they are irrevocably tied to their place of veneration or enshrinement and this has an effect on the influence they bring to bear. Strictly speaking a kami can only influence the area it is responsible for and in the case of minor kami this can be as little as a particular patch of ground. For major kami the sphere of influence is far more wide ranging. The kami of Mount Fujiyama, for example, influence everything upon the mountain – ground, trees, streams, rivers, stone, snow and wildlife. Major kami frequently have minor kami existing within their territory and where this overlap exists, the major kami will, for the most part, leave the minor kami to its own devices and will not intervene in its actions. However if something threatens the entire area influenced by the major kami, then it will act in the best interests of all within its sphere of power.

Kami do not possess corporeal creatures and neither can they be compelled to do so. Possession is simply not part of a kami's nature and whilst it might work magic through another person, this does not count as possession.

## Minor Kami

Minor kami know a number of Spirit Magic spells equal to their INT/3, rounded up, to a total Magnitude of POW/3, rounded up. Spells are always appropriate to their nature and/or sphere of influence, as noted in the

Spirit Magic table below. The kami's ability to cast a spell is its POW x5.

## Kami of Place and Elements

These are the kami most likely to be encountered in a rural shrine. They are the embodiments of a place and element or a particular item such as a particularly old and fine cherry blossom tree. They are able to manifest a representation of themselves, typically in a human form but more often than not communicate through subtle signs and manipulations of the physical environment around them. These kami can work magic, either directly or through Shinto priests but must be successfully petitioned first.

Elemental kami represent the five elements: Air, Earth, Fire, Water and Wood. They are present anywhere that these elements are found in purity and abundance. Their magic is restricted largely to their element but not exclusively so. Elemental kami tend to represent the characteristics of their element; thus, kami of the air or talkative but flighty, kami of the earth are serious and stoic, kami of fire can be aggressive and hot-headed (literally), kami of water tend to be reflective and evasive and kami of wood all-wise and knowledgeable.

### Kami of Place and Elements Characteristics

INT 3D6 (11)  
POW 3D6+6 (16)  
CHA 3D6 (11)

*Spirit Magic Available:* Dependent on place or element. Spirit Magic POWx3

### Skills

Influence INTx3, Lore (Local Area) INT x3 OR Lore (Element) INT x3, Lore (Ways of the Kami) INT x3, Persistence POW x3, Resilience 10+INT+POW, any two Lore skills relevant to the kami's location.

## Ancestral Kami

These are the kami of beloved ancestors, revered at household and community shrines. They watch over a family, a house or a whole community but are otherwise a largely symbolic presence.

The characteristics of Ancestral kami are based on the INT, POW and CHA values for the original ancestor.

Ancestral kami can work magic but only ever do so directly – never through a priest. Furthermore, they usually only employ magic when the family, household or community is under threat and as with other kami, only when successfully petitioned.

### Ancestral Kami Characteristics

INT 3D6 (11)  
POW 3D6 (11)  
CHA 3D6 (11)

*Spirit Magic Available:* Dependent on place. Spirit Magic POWx3

### Skills

Influence INTx3, Lore (Family) INT x3 OR Lore (Community) INT x3, Lore (Ways of the Kami) INT x3, Persistence POW x3, Resilience 10+INT+POW, any two Lore skills relevant to the kami's family or location.

## Major Kami

Controlling much greater areas than minor kami, major kami are akin to primal forces of nature but with the ability to express themselves clearly to those venerating them. Whilst a manifestation is a rare occurrence, it does happen from time to time, if the kami feels it appropriate. Otherwise, interaction is at a spiritual level or via subtle signals and abstractions.

Major kami know both Spirit and Divine Magic. A kami has a number of Spirit Magic spells equal to its POW/2, rounded up and Divine Spells equal to its POW/3, rounded up.

### Major Kami Characteristics

INT 6D6 (21)  
POW 6D6+6 (24)  
CHA 6D6 (21)

*Spirit and Divine Magic Available:* Dependent on place. Spirit Magic POWx5, Divine Magic POW x3

### Skills

Influence INTx3, Lore (Regional) INT x3 OR Lore (Specific Natural Feature) INT x3, Lore (Ways of the Kami) INT x3, Persistence POW x3, Resilience 10+INT+POW, any two Lore skills relevant to the kami's location or function.

## Kami and Magic

To call upon the magic of the kami, the Shinto priest has two options; petition the kami to work magic directly or to work magic through the priest. The former method is best employed when the kami is present in the area where the magic needs to be worked and is more potent as a result. The second method, where the priest seeks to channel a kami's magic, allows magic to be worked further afield but is weaker. In both cases, the priest needs to petition the kami to secure its help. This is done through an Opposed test matching the priest's current Purity against the kami's Persistence. A success means the kami acquiesces to the request and either works magic directly or establishes a spiritual link with the priest.

The chance of the magic working requires a test against the kami's requisite skill in the spell, as per any normal working of magic. If the magic is being worked through the priest, then the priest's Purity is used as the Skill Test value. Thus, a kami with Bless Crops 65% would roll directly against its Bless Crops percentage. However, if a priest with a Purity of 55% is channelling the spell from the kami (to bless a rice crop in a distant locale, say) then the test would be made against the Purity percentage instead. Where magic is being channelled the Purity value

cannot exceed the kami's score in the magic skill. So, if the priest in the above example had a Purity of 80%, the chance for the spell to work would be 65%, not 80%.

Minor kami can affect 1 jo (3 metres) in radius for each point of POW, with its shrine as the centre point. Thus a kami with a POW of 12 could affect an area of 12 jo (36 metres) from its shrine. Major kami can affect a similar area but measured in ken (109 metres). Where a priest is channelling a kami's magic, the distance is immaterial but the spell's magnitude cannot exceed the critical value of the priest's Purity score. Thus, a priest with Purity of 60% could not channel magic with a Magnitude of more than 6.

## Spirit Magic Spells Available to Kami

The Spirit Magic a kami knows depends on its type and its rank. Major kami have access to a much wider range of Spirit spells than minor kami. The spells available (taken from the Rune Magic chapter of the *RuneQuest* rules) are summarised below. An X indicates that the spell is available to a kami, if it is appropriate to its location and influence:

### Kami Spirit Magic

	Kami of Place	Kami of Elements	Ancestral Kami	Major Kami
Babel	X		X	X
Befuddle	X	X	X	X
Clear Path	X	X		X
Co-Ordination	X		X	X
Cover of Night		X	X	X
Darkwall	X	X		X
Demoralise	X		X	X
Detect X	X	X		X
Dispel Magic	X	X	X	X
Dullblade	X	X		X
Emotion	X		X	X
Endurance	X		X	X
Extinguish	X	X		X
Fate	X	X	X	X
Glamour	X		X	X
Golden Tongue	X		X	X

	Kami of Place	Kami of Elements	Ancestral Kami	Major Kami
Good Fortune	X		X	X
Heal	X	X	X	X
Ignite		X (Fire Only)		
Light	X	X	X	X
Mindspeech	X	X	X	X
Mobility	X	X		X
Protection	X	X	X	X
Repair	X	X (Only affects element of the kami)	X	X
Second Sight	X	X	X	X
Shimmer	X	X		X
Slow	X		X	X
Strength	X	X	X	X
Thunder's Voice	X			X
Undead Bane	X		X	X
Versatility	X		X	X
Vigour	X	X	X	X
Warmth	X	X	X	X
Waterbreath		X (Water only)		X

## Advanced Spirit Magic from the RuneQuest Spell Book

There are many more Spirit Magic spells kami can use if using the RuneQuest Spell Book as part of a Land of the Samurai campaign. The spells that are specifically *not* suitable for kami are listed below:

## Spirit Magic Spells from the RuneQuest Spell Book Forbidden to Kami

Spell	Spell	Spell
Absorb Flesh	Deadwood	Heatwave
Abysmal Pallor	Decimate	Jester's Mockery
Acid Stream	Detonate	Kiss of Death
Acidic Armour	Devil's Lash	Liquid Constrictor
Archer's Siege	Doom	Lion's Roar
Arctic Talons	Dragonbane	Maddening Sprites
Attacker's Defiance	Dragonclaw	Natural Abomination
Bands of X	Dragonscales	Oakstrike
Bane	Dragontail	Pincer
Banshee's Keen	Eldritch Blade	Pyreburst
Bedlam	Eldritch Bolt	Replicate Spell
Belch Flame	Electric Blade	Ruinous Blast
Biting Winds	Electric Eel	Salamander Form
Blast	Electric Storm	Shade Form
Break Blade	Embertouch	Shamanblade
Cadavar Eternal	Endless Arcana	Shock
Caterwaul	Endless Wound	Slash



Spell	Spell	Spell
Central Aim	Faeblade	Slavery
Cleave Stroke	Fatal Weakness	Soulstrike
Cloud of Flies	Firebolt	Sunstrike
Cloud of Shrapnel	Flash Freeze	Sylphform
Corpse Body	Frostblade	Tornado
Coup de Grace	Frugal Cursing	Touch of the Gorgon
Coward's Flight	Gauntlet of X	Undine Form
Crypt Call	Gnome Form	Verdant Surge
Daemonblade	Grand Mal	Vessel of Elemental Storage
Dalmation Curse	Groaning Tongue of the Damned	Wild Magic Surge
Darkblade	Hateblade	Word of Ending
Darkstrike	Heatblade	Zombify

## New Shinto Divine Spells

### Bless (X)

Duration Instant, Magnitude 1, Area

This is both a Divine Magic spell *and* a Spirit Magic spell. It allows the kami to place a protective blessing on a particular element or item appropriate to its type. The area of effect is as per the kami's affect radius as described earlier. Once cast, the Blessing lasts for a number of days equal to the Magnitude of the spell and provides the protected area with a Resilience score equal to the kami's POW x5%, which is used to resist both physical and supernatural attacks upon it. If the blessed area succeeds in a Resilience test, the attack fails immediately. If the Resilience test fails, then the area suffers half the appropriate attack damage or effects. If the result is a fumble, then the full attack effect is suffered.

### Prayer of Heaven

Duration 1 Hour, Magnitude 1, Area  
Kami: Amaterasu, Major Kami

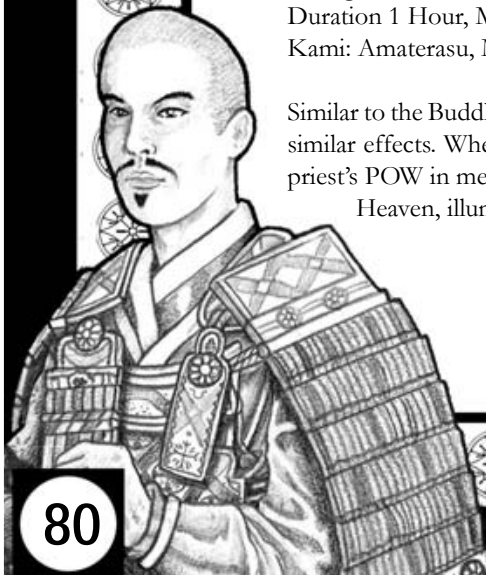
Similar to the Buddhist spell, Prayer of Nirvana and with similar effects. When cast an area in radius equal to the priest's POW in metres becomes open to the light of Heaven, illuminated by Amaterasu herself.



### Prayer of Peace

Duration 15, Magnitude 1, Progressive, Ranged, Resist (Persistence)  
Kami: Major Kami

Similar to the Buddhist spell. The target of the spell immediately loses any will or compulsion to fight and instead assumes the lotus position and contemplates the folly of senseless violence for the duration of the spell.





## Prayer of Wisdom

Duration 15, Magnitude 1, Touch, Resist (Persistence)  
Kami: Amaterasu, Major Kami

The target of the spell receives temporary enlightenment, seeing before him the infinite wisdom of the kami and being able to communicate it with eloquence and conviction. His Influence and Oratory skills are doubled and he automatically gains Lore (Shinto Theology) at POW+INT for the spell's duration.

## Sorcery

The Japanese are deeply resentful of sorcery, which is seen as perverting nature and going against the teachings of both Shinto and the Buddhas. Its practice, during the Heian period, is strictly outlawed but that has not prevented some from dabbling in the sorcerous arts.

Sorcerers are called *youjutsusha* and unless they wish to be caught and executed, work in exile and effectively become casteless and classless, irrespective of their social standing. The practice of sorcery is thus a lonely and dangerous occupation. The noble clans are always on the look-out for suspected sorcerers, usually to capture them and thus be highly praised by the Imperial Court and advance their status but just occasionally, because a sorcerer might prove useful. Where clans make use of sorcerers for their own ends, they take great care to cover their tracks, usually working through intermediaries to prevent a trail leading back to threaten the clan's honour. Sorcerers know their value in this regard and whilst many hate what the clans represent, they are prepared to do business albeit with a hidden agenda.

Sorcerers blame all the major institutions of state for their lack of status. The Imperial Court, they believe, is controlled by the Buddhist temples and has become blinkered and corrupt as a result. The Buddhists are simply jealous of any that threaten their station and the wars between the Mount Hiei and Nara temples reinforce this point of view. The clans, interested in power, are simply not to be trusted. Some sorcerers who claim to be able to see the future predict that the clans, if left unchecked, will eventually institute a reign of martial rule that will endanger Japan's progress as a civilised nation. There may be some truth in this. The daimyo and samurai grow more powerful each year and the Imperial Court is little more than a puppet for Fujiwara politicking.

So it is that some, if not most, sorcerers, seek to subvert the existing order. Some are more surreptitious and benign in their approach but others, such as the feared Tanagarō, are more forthright, using their knowledge and powers to form alliances with all manner of malevolence, especially the demonic oni and the malicious, envious, bakemono.

## Available Sorcery

All the sorcery spells described in the *RuneQuest Companion* and *RuneQuest Spell Book* are available to youjutsusha characters.

## Playing a Sorcerer

Youjutsusha characters are exiles and forced to live on the very fringes of society, well below their station in life. It is likely that they are in communication with others of their kind and may very well be protected by a ninja clan (see *The Way of the Warriors* chapter) if they have a permanent, well-hidden base. It is perfectly possible for a sorcerer to be faithful to Buddhism, although excommunicated officially from the faith, for there is a certain enlightenment to be realised through experimenting with the illusion of reality.

Nor does the youjutsusha character need to be bitter and resentful; not all sorcerers are. He may simply conform to the traditional Chinese notion of the hermetic wizard, intent on study and learning, rather than exercising magical power for personal gain. Whatever the sorcerer's outlook on life, Japanese society rarely looks favourably on them and so their activities will need to be carefully concealed and their magic, when visibly used, explained in terms that will not attract undue suspicion. This may prove much harder than it sounds; Buddhist priests will be on the watch for the signs of sorcery and will not hesitate to mobilise *sōhei* to apprehend any youjutsusha in their midst.

More difficulties emerge in trying to advance sorcerous expertise. There are very few scrolls and books of sorcerous lore in Japan. What few exist are guarded either by the Imperial Court, certain Buddhist temples (mostly of the Shingon sect) or the more powerful sorcerers. Sorcery is practiced in mainland China and occasionally a sorcerer is able to come by a Chinese tome either by travelling to China or through clandestine means across the Inland Sea. This restriction on knowledge may prove troublesome for youjutsusha characters, although by no means a complete hindrance.

# WAYS OF THE WARRIORS

This chapter concerns itself with the warrior classes of *RuneQuest: Land of the Samurai*: the samurai themselves, the *sōhei* and the *ninja*.

As mentioned earlier, *ninja* are an anachronism. They emerged as a recognised group sometime in the early 14<sup>th</sup> Century and almost certainly did not exist before then. However, as they form such an iconic part of Japanese warrior myth and because there are no doubt Games Masters and players who wish to include *ninja* in *any* samurai game, this chapter discusses them and offers an alternative, mythic rationale for their appearance during the Heian period.

## The Samurai

*I am not such a great man as men go, but I am an inhabitant of Iga province, a follower of the Lord of Aki and 28 years old. My name is Yamada Kosaburō Koreyuki. I am the grandson of Yamada no Shoji Yukisue, who was well known among the aristocracy for being the first to go into battle under the Lord of Bizzen at the attack on Yoshibito, Lord of Tsushima. My grandfather also captured innumerable mountain robbers and highwaymen. I too have been many times in battle and made a name for myself.*

— *The Hōgen Monogatari*

The word *samurai* is derived from the verb *saburu*, meaning ‘to serve’ and it came into use at some time during the 8<sup>th</sup> Century but not in a martial context, referring instead to domestic servants caring for the elderly and infirmed. Its current meaning developed during the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> Centuries when bushi went to the capital to serve guard duty for the Fujiwara regency, a function that then developed into the samurai serving the Imperial Court as its ad-hoc army, disbanding after a particular campaign was finished.

However, as the clans and families of the Heian period grew in power, so did their need for their own coteries of loyal warriors who would defend property, lives and reputations and put-down bandits and rebels. With increasing wealth the noble families were able to guarantee regular pay and parcels of land that outstripped the capabilities of the Imperial Exchequer and so bushi, especially the

samurai, were attracted to a change of employment. However the clans did not just want mercenaries and sell-swords. They wanted loyalty and armies that could be raised quickly and so chose carefully only those who displayed loyalty to a master and who deserved the title of *samurai*. In this way the samurai were no longer the exclusive preserve of the Imperial Court, although throughout the Heian period the samurai of the various clans were loaned into service on behalf of the Emperor. The clans could therefore build their own armed strength, the government benefited from troops when needed and the samurai gained prestige through the service of both their Lord and the Emperor.

The title of samurai denotes the elite fighting man, distinguishing him from the common foot soldier, the ashigaru. Claims to noble lineage play some role in acquiring the title but equally important is glory in combat. The more impressive the bushi’s skill with weapons, especially the bow and the horse and the more kills taken, the stronger the claim to the samurai title. Along with the prestige of battle, glory and expertise came a certain wealth and so came respect. The samurai were treated as more than simple retainers by the daimyo and clan heads and more as valued warriors symbolising the clan or family’s own status and strength.

Japanese warriors have always been concerned with personal honour and glory and as the samurai became a part of the clan structure, so too did notions of personal honour and loyalty. It became honourable for a samurai to be in active service and dishonourable to be outside it. It became honourable to wear the mon of a successful family or better still, a clan and be noted for the association. The samurai who distinguished himself on the battlefield could look forward to financial rewards and other honours, whilst the ashigaru remained the unknown and often un-thanked, infantry who frequently turned battles in favour of the head-strong, glory-hungry samurai.

Every samurai seeks glory and prestige. As a social class, excellence in the martial skills is drummed into every youth as he practices with bow and sword, the heroes of the clan being held-up as examples of what a samurai can achieve. Yet with that glory comes continued service, for without service the opportunities for glory are very

much reduced. So it is that the samurai emerged as, not simply a force of relatively wealthy soldiers with vague claims on nobility but a social class in their own right. Great pride is taken in personal loyalty, for it reinforces the position of the samurai social class and commands respect from every stage of the caste hierarchies. Unswerving dedication to a Lord and cause accords honour not just to the individual samurai but also to the samurai's family. Thus, the title of samurai extends beyond the individual and envelopes the family. For a son to carry the title samurai reflects well on his father and mother and goes some way towards repaying the debt all Japanese children owe to their parents.

However, the samurai are not always noble and honourable warriors in the tradition of the chivalric knights of the west. Samurai first and foremost, *serve a Lord* and Lords have needs and agendas that might require low cunning and a ruthless application of force to achieve a successful end. Samurai are therefore not supposed to question their Lord's motives and to do so is dishonourable. It should not matter that the daimyo's needs themselves might be dishonourable; loyalty comes before the detail of the deeds to be done. During the Heian period and especially in the Gempei Wars, the samurai readily stooped to trickery and sometimes, cruel means to secure victory. Whilst personal honour is of the utmost importance to the samurai, it should not be confused with nobility. The best remembered samurai heroes display nobility but usually in the context of service to their daimyo or immediate colleagues. In the face of their enemies, displays of nobility can be costly to life and limb. Displays of honour and ruthless capability prove to be far more efficient for cementing personal reputation and achieving military goals.

Certainly, the arrogance of the samurai could make them exceedingly hard to command. The idea of ranks of well-

## Lineage and Challenges

All samurai are proud of their achievements and those of their forebears. Before almost any combat – pitched battle or single duel – it is common for a samurai to list his lineage, stress the great deeds of his forebears and highlight the great deeds of himself. Most battles between samurai began in this fashion, with prolonged exchanges establishing the worth and notoriety of each opponent. For samurai characters it is recommended that a role call of such deeds (with deeds accomplished during play being added frequently) be developed. Before a combat, succeeding in an Influence test after reciting the character's lineage and achievements, especially if done in an arrogant and rousing fashion, should earn the character a few points of On.

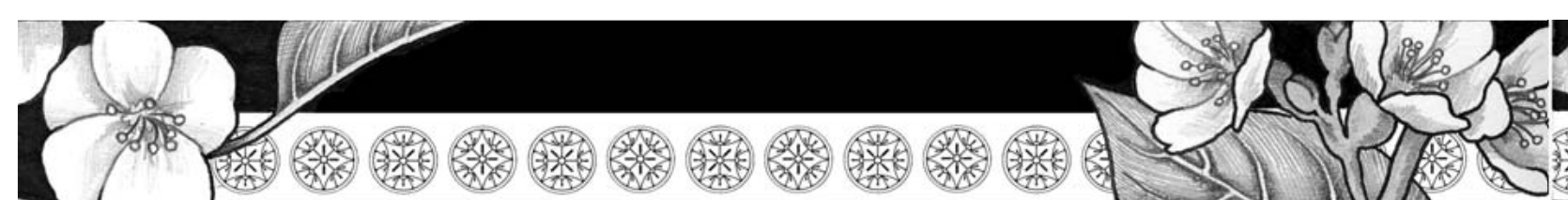
ordered samurai, moving and fighting in tightly formed and well co-ordinated units is something that did not truly come to pass until the feudal age. During the Heian period samurai, obsessed with achieving personal glory, could be difficult for a commander to control, surging forwards on the battlefield in search of a worthy opponent, rather than waiting for a direct order to attack a specific target. Personal honour frequently clouds the mind of the young and eager samurai, making them tempestuous, if brave, warriors, willing to cut a single-handed arrow-swathe through the opposition instead of working within a group to achieve victory with less risk.



## The Way of the Horse and the Bow

*The arrow pierced the breastplate of Itō Roku, who was first in the enemy's van, and passed through him, turned the sleeves of Itō Go's armour inside out and hung there. Itō Roku at once fell dead from his horse.'*

– *The Hogen Monogatari*



## Arrow Duels

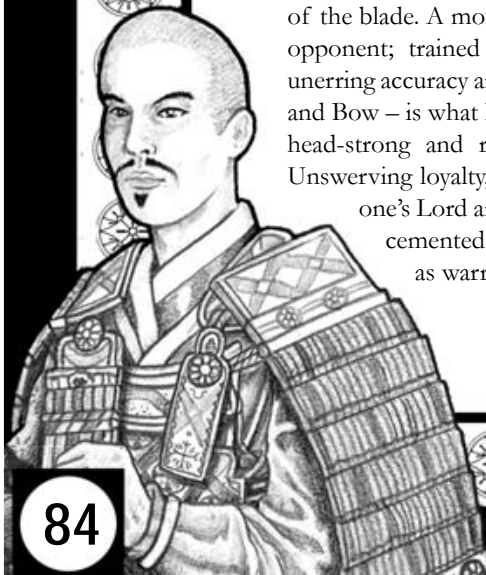
To prove combat superiority and confirm bravery and honour, samurai are known to fight *ya-awase* or arrow duels. *Ya-awase* are a common feature of pitched battles, both to provide samurai with a means of proving themselves in the face of their enemies but also to provide a diversion for other tactical deployments, a ploy used by Minamoto Yoshinaka against a Taira opponent at the Battle of Kurkara during the Gempei Wars, when he fought a prolonged *ya-awase* to buy time for his samurai to cover both sides of the Taira forces.

The process is simple and not unlike jousting. The two opponents agree terms (place, date, time) and arrive with their mount, bow and arrows. Spectators who can recount the duel are almost obligatory and are usually other samurai. The duellists separate themselves by about 100 metres, ready their bows and spur forth, riding towards each other at full gallop. Arrows are discharged by the duellists as they pass each other. The duellists then slow down, turn at the agreed distance and repeat the process until three arrows have been fired. After three arrows have been shot, the duel is considered at an end, irrespective of death and honour satisfied. The winner of the duel is the one who has killed, wounded or landed more arrows on his adversary but if both survive the duel, there is no shame or loss of face incurred.

Characters who decide to engage in *ya-awase* must make an opposed test of their Persistence against their opponent's Persistence as the two duellists spend a little time in a psychological exchange before the charge begins. The loser of the test suffers a penalty of  $-20\%$  to his Yabusame skill for the duration of the contest. If the winner of the test is a critical success, the winner gains a bonus of  $+20\%$ . If the loser fumbles the test, he must make a straight forward test against his On score to avoid declining the duel. Further modifiers to the Yabusame as below:

Any samurai taking part in a *ya-awase* gains On according to the following scale:

Taking part in the duel	+5
Killing the opponent	+12
Wounding the Opponent	+9
Hitting with three arrows	+7
Hitting with two arrows	+5
Hitting with one arrow	+3
Declining the duel	$-20\%$



In combat, the samurai of the Heian period are masters of the horse and bow, rather than being, explicit masters of the blade. A mounted samurai archer is a formidable opponent; trained to ride at speed and shoot with unerring accuracy and this ability – the Way of the Horse and Bow – is what helped compensate for the samurais' head-strong and reckless pursuit of personal glory. Unswerving loyalty, something to prove to oneself and one's Lord and brilliance with the *dai kyu*, is what cemented the samurais' formidable reputation as warriors par excellence.

In *RuneQuest: Land of the Samurai*, the Way of the Horse and the Bow is embodied in the Yabusame skill, which combines the talents of bowmanship and horsemanship into a single skill. Whilst it is not compulsory for any samurai character to be skilled in Yabusame, any samurai seeking personal glory and an enhanced reputation will consider it a key skill for his profession. There are many tales of the Heian period that venerate the samurai skill with the bow and in account, a samurai being beset by enemies notes with some relief that his opponents are armed with swords rather than bows.



## The Sword of the Samurai

*'Arikuni, having penetrated very deeply into the ranks of the foe, had his horse shot from under him and then while he was fighting on foot, his helmet was struck from his head... By this time his arrows were exhausted so he drew his sword and laid about him mightily, until, pierced by seven or eight shafts, he met his death still on his feet and glaring at his enemies.'*

– *The Hogen Monogatari*

Whilst for many, if not most samurai, the weapon of true excellence is the bow, the mystique of the sword is not entirely absent from the Heian period, although many of the traditions and myths attached to the 'soul of the samurai' are in their infancy.

The preferred sword was not the familiar katana – although the katana is certainly available – it is the tachi. Slightly longer than the katana and worn scabbarded at the side, slung from a belt or on the saddle, the tachi is every bit as fearsome a weapon and built with the same care and craftsmanship as its more famous cousin. The tachi is, however, worn with the blade edge facing towards the ground, meaning it requires two hands to draw and is harder to be drawn iajutsu-fashion.

It is impossible to say at exactly what point the bow was supplanted by the sword as the noted samurai weapon but there is no reason why certain samurai would prefer a blade to a quiver and drawstring. In close combat situations on foot a dai kyu is certainly unwieldy and the sword the natural weapon of choice and given the samurai's dedication to excellence in fighting, skill with the sword would not be ignored. So, whilst it will take a further 200 years or so for the sword to achieve its *mythical* status as the samurai weapon, there is no question that it is an important weapon in the arsenal of the bushi.

## The Sōhei

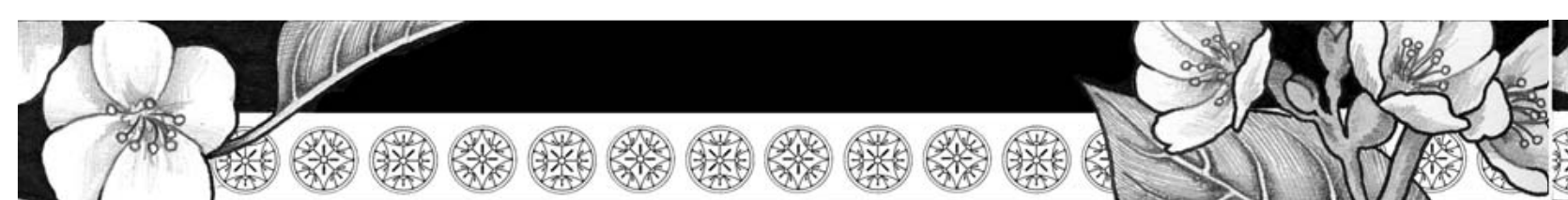
*'Gochin no Tajima, throwing away the sheath of his long Naginata, strode forth alone on to the bridge, whereupon he Heike straightaway shot at him fast and furious. Tajima, not at all perturbed, ducking to avoid the higher ones, and leaping over those that flew low, cut through those that flew straight with his whirring Naginata, so that even the enemy looked on in admiration.'*

– *An account of Tajima the Arrow-Cutter making a stand against the Taira samurai at the Battle of Uji*

The peaceful nature of Buddhism is somewhat compromised by the warrior-monks of the Nara and Hiei temples. The placid nature of the shaven-headed priest is replaced by the fierce scowl, bristled headed, robe and cowl, of the sōhei. Protecting and enforcing the political and financial interests of the great temples, as well their spiritual ones, the sōhei are the earthly representation of the fearsome, vengeful Buddhas of Buddhist lore. The sōhei might cleave to Buddhist ideals and worship alongside the normal monks but in terms of sheer conviction, the warrior-monks rival the samurai in terms of martial skill and determination to serve.

The sōhei have two exceedingly efficient weapons: their faith and their blades. All sōhei carry with them a rosary, with which they readily curse, in the name of the Buddhas, anyone daring to stand in their way or disobey them. Such curses are especially effective against those high-ranking Ryōmin who cleave deeply to Buddhist philosophies but also affect the superstitious peasants just as easily. Samurai, used to oaths, threats and proclamations of power are less easily shaken by sōhei curses but are still wary of the warrior-monks' skill with weapons. If some kind of spiritual reinforcement is necessary for the sōhei, they turn not towards magic but towards the production of the *omikoshi*, the portable Shinto shrine that represents the spiritual power and purity maintained by all temples and monasteries (and the enshrinement of the kami Sannō). The omikoshi is a sacred symbol and carrying it forth from the temple actively dares those who would oppose the will of the temple (or sōhei) to make good their protests and this insult to the sanctity embodied by the shrine. Few would ever dare risk such a challenge, especially when the 12 sōhei needed to carry the omikoshi chanted, in unison, all 600 of the Dai Hannya sutra as a curse. For good measure, the omikoshi might be left in a prominent spot as a continuing challenge and symbol of the temple's power, until the monks have got their own way.

The second weapon is the arsenal of the sōhei. Like the samurai the sōhei wear armour beneath their hooded robes of black, grey or saffron and carry katana or tachi, tanto, bows and their feared weapon of choice, the naginata. Wielded with two hands it makes a superb slicing and stabbing weapon and an adept sōhei can whirl the naginata in a series of eye-defying arcs, cutting and parrying whilst he does so.



Like the samurai, sōhei wear armour of a very similar design. The armour is usually then topped by the sōhei's loose robes which are typically white, black, dark grey or saffron in colour and accompanied by a deep cowl covering the head. If the robes are not worn, a headband is worn around the shaven head to denote the warrior's status as sōhei.

Sōhei also use shields on the battlefield. Whilst these were falling out of favour during the Heian period (samurai fighting mounted for the most part and unable to use a shield effectively), sōhei used shields when fighting with swords or short spears, forming a shield wall against their opponents.

The sōhei therefore present a formidable class of bushi. Religiously devote, unafraid to cause trouble in the name of their temple, dressed to intimidate and with a readiness to call upon holy curses to terrify their enemies, they present an interesting contrast to the samurai and a very different view of the Buddhist way.


## The Ninja

When the sorcerers of Japan were outlawed by Imperial Decree in 807, they quickly realised that they needed to do two things if they were to continue their practices, for good or ill, with as little molestation as possible: to go into hiding and then to protect themselves. Whilst the sorcerers had magical means of escaping detection and maintaining protection, these could not be entirely relied upon. To this end, various sorcerers actively began to recruit warriors who, for one reason or another, felt disenfranchised themselves. They recruited carefully, choosing those who held a clear grudge against the Emperor and the emerging clans such as the Fujiwara and Minamoto. Promising to teach these warriors, bandits and renegades new techniques of warfare, some of them blending sorcerous elements and mundane techniques that would pass as magical in nature, the first ninja clans were created in the wilds of Japan. Over the course of a century or more these disparate warrior groups formed communities and developed a loyalty to their sorcerous masters, creating an effective counter-culture to the emerging samurai class. By 1001 the ninja, as recognisable entities, are fully functional, serving both the sorcerers and developing agendas of their own. Long years of indoctrination against the ruling classes has created an underclass that is actively opposed to the Heian

power structures and one that is truly formidable in the arts of espionage, stealth and covert combat. The ninja serve practitioners of magic but have reached a level of confidence and expertise that they do not need to rely upon them to be effective. Whilst the Imperial Court denies their existence, the ninja are very much in evidence, working against the Imperial Court, the clans and the Buddhist temples whom, the sorcerers claim, were the motivators behind the 807 Imperial Decree.

Mirroring the great noble houses, the ninja have organised themselves into clans and have developed their own, internal codes of honour, debt and obligation centred on the sorcerer or sorcerers they protect (and whom are venerated like kami). Their outlook, however, is fundamentally different to the Ryōmin clans. Ninja do not seek to expand their territories or consolidate their power in geographical or political terms. Instead they seek to advance through the collection of information, which can then be used against *all* the existing power structures. They do not seek to destroy the Imperial Court but they do seek ways to have an Emperor enthroned that will repeal the edicts outlawing sorcery and who will be prepared to challenge the might of the Fujiwara, Minamoto and Taira clans and be prepared to stand-up to the Buddhist temples. To achieve this aim they therefore act as spies, insurgents and occasionally, assassins working subtly towards shifting the balance of power and creating a more (as they see it) harmonious society. They also maintain their protective role for the sorcerers, aiming to advance whatever schemes the sorcerers assemble and take revenge for the massive dishonour the sorcerers have had to endure for almost 200 years.

The ninja clans are organised into communities that are, to outsiders, typical heimin settlements located in out of the way regions. A casual visitor cannot distinguish between a ninja community and a legitimate heimin village and it is common for the ninja to pledge allegiance to one or another of the major clans to maintain their subterfuge. However ninja clans have no daimyo or samurai in their midst. Somewhere – perhaps living amongst them or hidden in a secret hermitage or cavern complex – there will be the sorcerer or sorcerers that the ninja are sworn to protect. Ninja are not bandits or indiscriminate killers any longer; most non-ninja passing through their settlements are perfectly safe, although they will be watched extremely carefully at every opportunity. The last thing the ninja want is a sudden disappearance to provoke samurai investigations but they will defend



their communities and can, if they so wish, make those with far too curious a nature vanish into thin air. If samurai or sōhei do come looking for sorcerers to oust, as they do from time to time, then the ninja use their considerable skills of stealth and ambush to counter the intrusion before it can become an all-out attack, dressing in the all-black or all-green garb that hides their identities and allows them almost perfect camouflage in the undergrowth surrounding their communities. Samurai deaths are then made to look like accidents or the attacks of wild animals or malicious bakemono in order to divert suspicion away from their villages.


Each ninja clan is organised into a general hierarchy as follows. At the head is the sorcerer or *sennin*. The sennin is a figurehead who has little to do with the clan's day to day business but maintains control over particular missions and largely works to his own agenda. The clan is directly controlled by a *jonin*, who acts as the clan chief, makes policy and decides strategy, usually in consultation with advisers. The jonin is usually the only member of

the clan to have any direct contact with the sennin but this varies from clan to clan.

Below the jonin are the *chunin*, the clan elders and advisers. Chunin are retired ninja operatives and are in charge of training and logistics. They plan the specific missions and activities of the clan to achieve the jonin's strategy and the sennin's over-arching objectives.

Finally there are the genin, the ninja foot soldiers and the bulk of the clan.

To all intents and purposes, the community looks and acts like any normal heimin village. Crops are tended, paddy fields worked and lumber cut. Clan members have wives and families but all are part of the great secret work of the ninja clan and women can be expected to undertake ninja tasks just as much as the men. Indeed, female genin are extremely useful in many ways that male genin are not and the ninja make full use of their capabilities.



One thing that might identify a ninja settlement, to those who are on the look-out for such things, is an absence of Buddhist regalia and trappings. It is common for heimin to cleave directly to Shinto but even the most humble heimin community retains some respect for the Buddhas. Not so the ninja; Buddhism is not embraced, although Shinto is and the eagle-eyed might notice such an anomaly when passing through a seemingly innocuous peasant village.

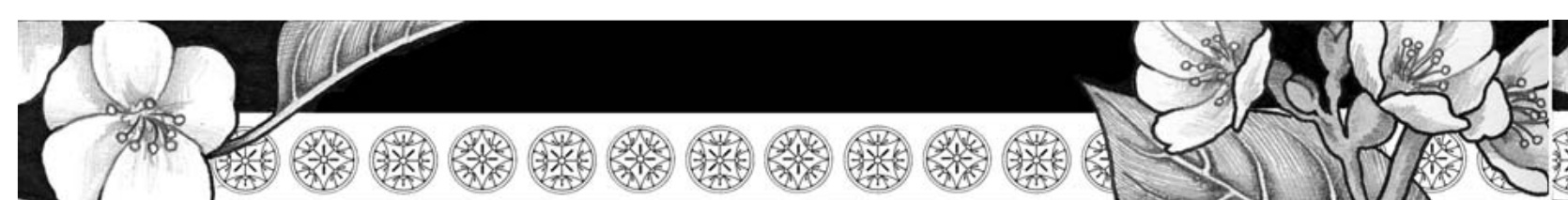
## Training and Skills

Ninja are schooled in their arts from childhood, with an emphasis on acrobatics, athleticism and stealth. Later, combat techniques are taught and after the young genin has participated in one or two field operations, some of the more mysterious and esoteric techniques are introduced. The skills in which ninja are adept are as follows:

### Disguise

The ninja have adopted the 'Five Ways of Going', which allow them to travel incognito beyond their communities. The Five Ways are as a travelling entertainer; a wandering Shinto priest, welcome in most places in Japan; the simple





peasant; the merchant – a profession that is expected to enquire into the business of other communities in search of trade; and the masseur (sometimes pretending to be blind), a profession that many who are relaxed will speak freely to. Ninja can be expected to own the garb and know the habits of each of these Five Ways of Going and to be able to play the role perfectly.

## Sign Language

The ninja sign language of kuji-kuri is designed for subtle, silent communication. Different clans have their own variations but the basic structure is the same for all ninja.

## Sleight

Ninja are masters of manipulating small items, palming them expertly without detection.

## Stealth

A skill taught from an early age, the expert ninja knows how to use natural cover, light and shadow to avoid detection and to move with almost total silence even in the stillest of conditions.

## Special Techniques

### Escape (DEX+INT)

The art of *nawanukejutsu* is taught to older genin. It is the ability to escape from bonds and to squeeze the body into gaps and through openings that would usually be too small for someone of the same SIZ. When using the Escape skill to break free of bonds or shackles, the Games Master should assign the bonds a STR score according to the type of material and how expertly it has been secured. A well-knotted rope binding, for example, might have a rating of 50 or 60; a wooden yolk might be 70 or 80. The ninja then matches his Escape against the STR of the bond in an opposed test in order to free himself.

In squeezing through small spaces, assign the aperture a SIZ rating, using the ninja's own SIZ as a guide. A ninja can squeeze effectively reduce his own SIZ by 1 for every 30% (up to a maximum of -5 SIZ) he has in the *nawanukejutsu* skill by compacting himself and if necessary, voluntarily dislocating joints. It takes a full round for the ninja to squeeze into or through the aperture and a successful test is required to complete the action in that round. If the ninja fumbles the test, he is stuck for 1D4 rounds.

## Lore (Yogen) INT

This is the knowledge of special compounds – dusts, pastes, potions and poisons that ninja put to a variety of uses. No doubt based on sorcerous alchemical knowledge, ninja Yogen can be used to identify the components of a compound, find components and given the right equipment and time, make any of the compounds listed in the Ninja Equipment section, below.

## The Role of the Ninja

The traditional view of the night-clad assassin, armed with a straight-bladed katana (the *ninja-to*) and all manner of small throwing weapons such as shuriken, is ingrained into the imagery of Japanese adventure stories. However, for the most part, ninja were – and are, in *Land of the Samurai* – spies, saboteurs and protectors first and foremost. Sorcerers, cut-off from the wider world, require constant information and rely on their ninja to bring it to them. The plans and schemes of the ruling clans need to be thwarted and so the ninjas' talents in sabotage and trickery come to the fore. Martial skills and ruthlessness are employed in protecting the sorcerer from harm, rather than for persecuting enemies (a sorcerer can summon creatures to do *that*). Occasionally, there will be times where an opponent needs to be silenced or a figurehead murdered, in order to maintain secrecy or make a particular point. For such missions as assassination, where the risks are extremely high and the chances of success low, ninja may well be employed. Ninja are not a cheap, expendable commodity; training takes years of dedication and few sorcerers would squander such a loyal and effective resources by constantly sending their ninja on suicidal assassination attempts.

## Ninja Equipment

The ninja employ all kinds of specialist items to achieve their goals.

## Compounds

Ninja compounds are plant and mineral based concoctions designed to aid the ninja in his various assignments.

### Smokescreen

This fine, silvery powder, when ignited with a flame or from a hot coal (see Firepot, below) gives out an acrid, dense smoke that the ninja can use to debilitate and distract enemies and make a rapid escape. A single dose covers a radius of six metres and those caught within it must make a Resilience test to avoid a fit of choking

## Ninja Characters

All ninja characters, despite being outwardly of the heimin class, treat their cultural background as ryōko (see page 39 of the Character Creation chapter). All ninja have Language (Kuji-kuri) at +50%

Professional skills are as follows: Basic Skills: Perception +10%, Stealth +10%, Pick Three from: Acrobatics +10%; Athletics +10%, Persistence +10%, Resilience +10%, Sleight +10%, Throwing +10%, 1H Sword (Kenjutsu) +10%, Bow (Kyujutsu) +10%, Dagger (Tantojutsu) +10%, Unarmed +10%

Advanced Skills: Pick One from: Disguise, Escape, Lore (Yogen), Mechanisms, Survival,

Ninja characters accrue On in the same way as any other character. However, if caught or exposed, their On is treated as effectively zero for the purposes of dealing with non-ninja.

Ninja do not traditionally use magic, preferring to rely on their own abilities. However, since so many serve a sorcerer, there is a chance that they will receive sorcerous aid for particularly daring, difficult to dangerous missions. Those ninja who excel, moving onto the chunin or jonin ranks may very well be taught a small amount of sorcery as both a reward and to aid them in their ongoing service to the youjutsusha they serve and protect.



coughs and a penalty of -40% to all Perception tests for 1D6 Combat Rounds. A single small pouch contains one dose.

### Sleeping Draught

A sweet-smelling brown powder that can be dissolved in liquid (warm sake works best) that induces a deep, snoring sleep in the imbiber. One dose affects one cup of liquid. A pouch contains up to five doses.

**Type:** Ingested

**Delay:** 1D3 minutes

**Potency:** 70

**Full Effect:** Victim falls asleep

**Duration:** 1D3 hours

### Venom of the Tatsu

A poison smeared onto the blade of a ninja-to, tanto or caltrops. It is thick and black, drying to a sticky sheen.

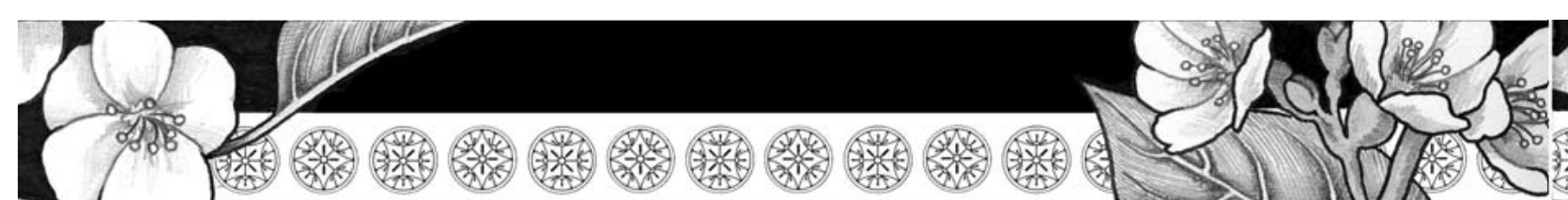
**Type:** Smeared

**Delay:** Immediate

**Potency:** 78

**Full Effect:** 1 Hit Point damage to the location struck, applies -6 penalty to victim's DEX

**Duration:** 3D10 minutes



### Beggar's Salve

This pale green paste, when rubbed into the skin, gives an unhealthy complexion but no further ill effects (although it has a vague, sulphurous odour). It lasts until washed out with clean, hot water. This forms part of the ninja's disguise repertoire. One dose covers the hands, arms, face and feet.

## General Equipment

### Climbing Pole

A collapsible bamboo pole with one clawed end. It can extend from approximately 40cm up to 700cm and is reinforced to accept up to SIZ 16 in weight. Using the pole to scale walls gives a +10% bonus to Athletics tests. As well as being used for climbing, it doubles as either a jo or bo staff when used offensively (AP2, HP8).

### Entry Equipment

Containing a small saw, a spade and various lock-picking tools, the entry equipment is essential for gaining swift, silent entry to premises. The lock picks provide a +10% bonus to Mechanism tests.

### Firepot

A hand-sized ceramic pot that holds a hot coal and insulated so that it can be carried within clothing. Used for keeping a ninja warm on long, cold surveillance and for lighting combustibles.

### Hooked Gloves (Nekode)

Thick hooks are set into a strap that fits around the user's palm and are used as an aid to climbing, giving a +10% bonus.

### Rope Ladders

Coming in an assortment of lengths, rope ladders fold into a very small, compact bundle easily concealed within clothing. Equipped with strong hooks at one end, a single rope ladder can support up to SIZ 40 in weight and gives a +15% bonus to Athletics tests.

## Weapons

### Ninja-to

The ninja straight-sword, fashioned in a similar way to a katana but with a straight blade that is mid-way in length between a katana and Wakazashi. See the Weapons section of the Equipment chapter.

The scabbard of the ninja-to has several practical uses. The closed end can be removed to make the scabbard into a breathing tube, a blowgun or a means of scattering powders; the sword can be drawn and secured with the scabbard's cord to form a probing pole.

### Shinobi-kyu

Of similar length to a han kyu or short bow, the shinobi-kyu is collapsible and concealable but at the expense of its overall strength and damage.



# CREATURES OF JAPAN

Japan is filled with legends of ghosts, unquiet spirits, evil demons, mischievous demi-humans and of course, kami and dragons. Some co-exist more or less peacefully with humans whilst others seek to dominate, subjugate and pervert and are the targets of samurai quests and battles. This chapter details the classic Japanese creatures of myth and offers suggestions for including them in *Land of the Samurai* games

Some of these creatures have already received a treatment in *RuneQuest Monsters II* but have been reprinted here and given some twists to integrate them more fully with the *Land of the Samurai* setting.

## Bakemono

The bakemono are the goblins of ancient Japan. Human-like in form but always considerably ugly, they are tormentors and persecutors, seeking to displace humans with their cruel ways and dishonourable practices. Their resentment is founded on jealousy and many bakemono seek to emulate the courtly ways of Heian culture but being primarily driven by hatred for true beauty, fail to realise their goals.

The bakemono prefer out of the way hiding places – deep valleys, isolated mountain peaks and lonely, dense forests. Their rough, greyish-green skin affords natural camouflage and they are adept at ambush. They covet money and possessions and especially fine examples of dai kyu to replace their own, inferior kyu cut from the branches of sickly trees and strung with animal gut.

The bakemono practice their own, twisted version of Buddhism, which takes the vengeful aspects of the Myō-Ō and other Buddhas and melds them with the vile oni who spring from Hell itself. They hate the kami, who represent everything they cannot be and are in the habit of desecrating shrines and imposing pollution on isolated Shinto priests, sniggering at their clever cruelty.

The bakemono are ruled by a stronger, taller species; the dai-bakemono. The dai-bakemono would ape the samurai and daimyo, affecting their dress and manners but being disdainful of notions of honour – though they may *act* honourably, there is little substance in it.

Both the Minamoto and Taira clans have mounted campaigns against bakemono incursions and treat these ugly, resentful creatures with absolute contempt and without mercy. Anyone who deals with bakemono or shows them mercy loses On immediately. Similarly, the sōhei of both Nara and Mount Hiei have launched their own campaigns to drive the bakemono from Japan and especially the mountainous areas where the Tendai sects wish to establish new monasteries. In retaliation the dai-bakemono have pledged a blood feud against all Tendai monks, priests and sōhei and show none of them any mercy when their paths cross.

The statistics below detail standard bakemono. Dai bakemono have an additional 1D6 STR and SIZ. Dai bakemono are often found wearing scraps of samurai armour and carrying tachis and katanas, whenever they can capture them.

### Characteristics

STR	2D6+3	(9)
CON	2D6+3	(9)
DEX	3D6	(11)
SIZ	2D6+3	(9)
INT	3D6	(11)
POW	3D6	(10)
CHA	1D6	(4)

### Bakemono Hit Locations

D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
1-3	Right Leg	-/4
4-6	Left Leg	-/4
7-9	Abdomen	-/5
10-12	Chest	-/6
13-15	Right Arm	-/3
16-18	Left Arm	-/3
19-20	Head	-/4

### Weapons

Type	Weapon Skill	Damage / AP
Yari	45%	1D8-1D2
Han kyu	50%	1D8-1D2

### Special Rules

*Combat Actions:* 2  
*Strike Rank:* +11  
*Movement:* 3m  
*Traits:* Camouflage, Night Sight  
*Skills:* Athletics 50%, Dodge 50%, Perception 35%, Resilience 35%, Stealth 85%

## Gaki

Also known as 'hungry ghosts' Gaki are semi-corporeal creatures that are the condemned and restless forms of those who succumbed to greed and gluttony in their previous life. Gaki are humanlike in appearance, with corpse-grey skin, dark, beady, hate-filled eyes, a constricted mouth and slender neck and an enormous, bloated belly that spills forward and almost down to the



knees. Gaki can press themselves through very narrow gaps, owing to their semi-corporeal nature but are still susceptible to physical attacks and damage.

Gaki eat anything and everything – hence their distended bellies – yet with their tiny mouths and throats, they have difficulty cramming in as much as they desire. A feeding gaki therefore shovels as much food into its mouth as it can, allowing its cheeks to swell and then swallows in tiny, gasping gulps, frequently gagging and choking as the food lodges in the gullet. Yet their inability to swallow effectively does not quell their appetite: nothing does. Given time, a single gaki can lay waste to an entire paddy field or grain store, its belly swelling to an ever greater size as it does so.

Cursed by Buddha, gaki are especially bitter and fond of decimating the stores and crops of Buddhist temples, and of drinking the purification water found outside Shinto shrines, which renders it unclean. If challenged, gaki usually try to escape but will fight if necessary, scratching and kicking with their wickedly long and clawed fingers, searching for things such as eyes that can be plucked and consumed.

### Characteristics

STR 2D6+3 (9)  
CON 3D6 (11)  
DEX 3D6 (11)  
SIZ 5D6 (18)  
INT 3D6 (11)  
POW 3D6 (10)  
CHA 1D6 (4)

### Gaki Hit Locations

D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
1-3	Right Leg	-/6
4-6	Left Leg	-/6
7-11	Abdomen	-/8
12	Chest	-/7
13-15	Right Arm	-/5
16-18	Left Arm	-/5
19-20	Head	-/6

### Weapons

<i>Type</i>	<i>Weapon Dkill</i>	<i>Damage / AP</i>
Scratch	55%	1D8+1D2

### Special Rules

*Combat Actions:* 2  
*Strike Rank:* +11  
*Movement:* 3m  
*Traits:* Night Sight  
*Skills:* Dodge 30%, Perception 35%, Persistence 115%, Resilience 90%

*Typical Armour:* Gaki sustain half damage from normal weapons. Any weapon blessed by a Buddhist priest inflicts full damage.

## Ghosts

Ghosts and malicious spirits abound in Japan. Souls denied Heaven, Paradise or Hell and forced to wander the Earth until they have found a way to lay whatever troubled them or caused their torment to rest. Ghosts therefore take many forms; from the disgraced samurai who committed seppuku but still feels deep shame for his deeds, through to truly malevolent ghosts seeking to punish any and all who cross their path.

Ghosts are non-corporeal and pass naturally through all physical objects. Destroying them means laying the disturbed soul to rest and whilst an exorcism ritual might send the ghost away, curing an unquiet spirit (or *knaidan*) is more a matter of finding the cause of the ghost's torment and doing whatever is required to satisfy the spirit's unarticulated needs.

### Characteristics

STR –  
CON –  
DEX –  
SIZ –  
INT 3D6 (10)  
POW 3D6 (10)  
CHA 3D6 (10)

HP 10  
MP 10

### Weapons

Type	Weapon Skill	Damage
Dependent on type of ghost		

### Special Rules

*Combat Actions:* 2  
*Strike Rank:* +20  
*Movement:* 10m  
*Traits:* Dark Sight, Dominant Possession, Night Sight, Recurring  
*Skills:* Dodge 40%, Lore (Spirit World), 30%, Persistence 50%, Stealth 50%

## Hengeyokai

The hengeyokai are shape-shifters, being able to change between animal and human forms with ease. Whether these are animals enchanted with the power or turn into humans or vice-versa, is unknown. Some believe hengeyokai are kami who have chosen a physical form and prefer to remain within it, whilst others believe that hengeyokai are cursed to adopt a state between animal and man but be accepted by neither.

It is possible that every animal found in Japan has a hengeyokai counterpart but a small number of definite hengeyokai are known to exist: henge-I (boar), henge-inu (dog), henge-neko (cat), henge-nezumi (rat), henge-saru (monkey), henge-U (hare). Note that the *kitsune*, which is a fox capable of taking human shape, is not classed as hengeyokai and is examined in more detail in this chapter.

In human shape hengeyokai retain the key characteristics of their animal form. For example, henge-neko are aloof, meticulously clean and may have cat-like eyes and long, perfectly manicured nails. Henge-I are large, gruff, hirsute and may have prominent lower teeth. In their animal form they retain the ability to reason and speak. Changing from one form to another costs the hengeyokai 1 Magic Point for each transformation, which takes 1D6 Combat Rounds to take effect, during which the hengeyokai is helpless as its form shifts to the new shape. Once changed, the hengeyokai has all the characteristics and abilities relevant to its form.

Hengeyokai tend to be solitary creatures, finding little acceptance amongst their animal cousins. In human circles they are distrusted and usually shunned, even though most hengeyokai do little to encourage such attitudes.

## Henge-I (Boar)

In human form, big, powerfully built individuals with a great deal of thick body hair and flattened, snout-like noses and sometimes, prominent lower teeth. Henge-I are taciturn as humans, preferring to be left alone and becoming aggressive if pestered. In boar form they are powerful creatures that prefer the forests and woodlands.

### Boar Form Characteristics

STR	3D6+6	(20)
CON	2D6+9	(15)
DEX	3D6	(10)
SIZ	2D6+3	(10)
INT	5	(5)
POW	3D6	(10)
CHA	5	(5)

### Henge-I Hit Locations

D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
1-2	Right Rear Leg	2/5
3-4	Left Rear Leg	2/5
5-7	Hindquarters	2/6
8-10	Forequarters	2/7
11-13	Right Front Leg	2/4
14-16	Left Front Leg	2/4
17-20	Head	2/5

### Weapons

Type	Weapon Skill	Damage
Tusk	45%	1D6+1D2

### Special Rules

Combat Actions:	2
Strike Rank:	+7
Movement:	4m
Skills:	Athletics 25%, Dodge 55%, Perception 50%, Resilience 40%, Stealth 55%, Survival 50%, Tracking 25%
Typical Armour:	Hide (AP 2, no Skill Penalty)

## Henge-inu (Dog)

In human form henge-inu are inquisitive, highly territorial and usually hungry. Many have wet noses and like to pant continuously. They are also excitable but deeply loyal, especially to those who offer them friendship (and food).

### Characteristics

STR	1D6+1	(4)
CON	3D6	(11)
DEX	2D6+6	(13)
SIZ	1D6	(3)
INT	5	(5)
POW	1D6+6	(9)
CHA	5	(5)

### Henge-inu Hit Locations (Dog Form)

D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
1-2	Right Hind Leg	-/3
3-4	Left Hind Leg	-/3
5-7	Hindquarters	-/4
8-10	Forequarters	-/5
11-13	Right Front Leg	-/2
14-16	Left Front Leg	-/2
17-20	Head	-/3

### Weapons

Type	Weapon Skill	Damage
Bite	40%	1D6-1D6

### Special Rules

Combat Actions:	3
Strike Rank:	+9
Movement:	6m
Traits:	Night Sight
Skills:	Athletics 60%, Dodge 30%, Perception 55%, Resilience 30%, Stealth 45%, Survival 30%, Tracking 75%

## Henge-neko (Cat)

Usually taking the form of a woman, henge-neko are aloof and keep themselves meticulously clean. They are also absolutely stubborn, unwilling to do anything that is not to their immediate comfort or advantage. However, when a henge-neko falls in love or takes a shine to someone, the attention is unrelenting and they require constant affection and praise to prevent them becoming sulky and petulant if it is not offered readily and frequently.

### Cat Form Characteristics

STR	1D3+1	(3)
CON	2D6	(7)
DEX	3D6+6	(14)
SIZ	1D3+1	(3)
INT	3D6	(11)
POW	3D6	(11)
CHA	3D6+3	(12)

### Henge-neku Hit Locations

D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
1-2	Right Hind Leg	-/2
3-4	Left Hind Leg	-/2
5-7	Hindquarters	-/3
8-10	Forequarters	-/4
11-13	Right Front Leg	-/2
14-16	Left Front Leg	-/2
17-20	Head	-/2

### Weapons

Type	Weapon Skill	Damage
Bite	40%	1D4+1-1D6
Claw	55%	1D6-1D6

### Special Rules

<i>Combat Actions:</i>	3
<i>Strike Rank:</i>	+13
<i>Movement:</i>	6m
<i>Traits:</i>	Night Sight
<i>Skills:</i>	Athletics 90%, Dodge 90%, Persistence 75%, Perception 65%, Resilience 30%, Stealth 95%, Survival 60%, Tracking 75%

### Henge-nezumi (Rat)

Henge-nezumi are the most despised of all hengeyokai and whilst their human form is unkempt, frequently dirty and of a distinct, rat-like appearance, they do little that can be construed as being hostile or disruptive.

### Rat Form Characteristics

STR	1D3	(2)
CON	2D6	(7)
DEX	3D6+6	(14)
SIZ	1D3	(2)
INT	3D6	(11)
POW	3D6	(11)
CHA	2D6	(7)

### Henge-nezumi Hit Locations

D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
1-2	Right Hind Leg	-/1
3-4	Left Hind Leg	-/1
5-7	Hindquarters	-/2
8-10	Forequarters	-/3
11-13	Right Front Leg	-/1
14-16	Left Front Leg	-/1
17-20	Head	-/1

### Weapons

Type	Weapon Skill	Damage
Bite	40%	1D4+1-1D8
Claw	55%	1D6-1D8

### Special Rules

<i>Combat Actions:</i>	3
<i>Strike Rank:</i>	+13
<i>Movement:</i>	6m
<i>Traits:</i>	Night Sight
<i>Skills:</i>	Acrobatics 80%, Athletics 90%, Dodge 90%, Persistence 75%, Perception 70%, Resilience 80%, Stealth 115%, Survival 80%, Tracking 35%

### Henge-saru (Monkey)

In animal form the henge-saru resemble the indigenous Japanese monkey, the macaque and in human form a small, lively-eyed, red-faced old man, stooped but not bowed and surprisingly agile. Henge-saru enjoy practical jokes, riddles and especially haiku contests, where the competitors attempt to compose the most spiritually enlightening, elegant and philosophically complex traditional Japanese poem. If they lose, which is rare, they can become very short-tempered.

Buddhists consider the henge-saru not a cursed species, as they do most hengeyokai but a blessed one, as the monkey figures large in Buddhist teachings and is considered a semi-sacred animal. Henge-saru have therefore been known to join Buddhist orders.





#### Monkey Form Characteristics

STR	2D6+1	(8)
CON	2D6+3	(9)
DEX	3D6+6	(14)
SIZ	1D6+3	(5)
INT	3D6+6	(14)
POW	3D6	(11)
CHA	3D6	(11)

#### Henge-saru Hit Locations

D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
1-3	Right Leg	-3
4-6	Left Leg	-3
7-9	Abdomen	-4
10-12	Chest	-5
13-15	Right Arm	-2
16-18	Left Arm	-2
19-20	Head	-3

#### Weapons

Type	Weapon Skill	Damage
Bite	50%	1D6-1D2
Fist	45%	1D6-1D2

#### Special Rules

Combat Actions:	3
Strike Rank:	+14
Movement:	4m
Skills:	Acrobatics 60%, Artistic Expression (Haiku) 80%, Athletics 70%, Dodge 40%, Lore (Buddhist Theology) 35%, Perception 60%, Stealth 30%, Survival 40%

#### Henge-U (Hare)

In human shape henge-U have prominent ears and wide eyes, coupled with a furtive expression. They do not especially like human company and prefer to keep themselves away from large settlements, although they are not antagonistic to humans as such and there are tales of henge-U saving human lives or showing great kindness.

#### Hare Form Characteristics

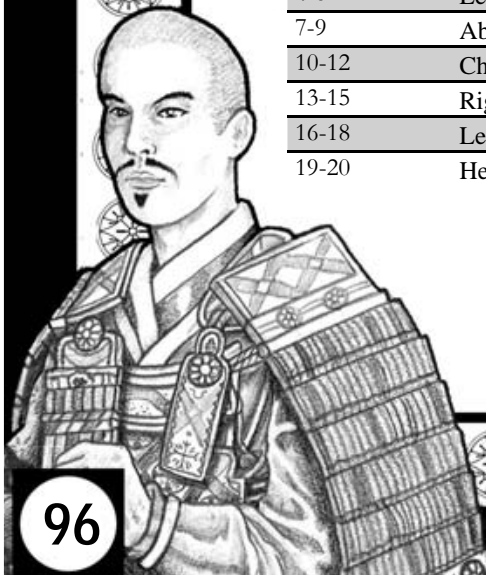
STR	1D3+2	(3)
CON	2D6	(7)
DEX	4D6+6	(17)
SIZ	1D3	(2)
INT	3D6	(11)
POW	3D6	(11)
CHA	2D6	(7)

#### Henge-U Hit Locations

D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
1-2	Right Hind Leg	-2
3-4	Left Hind Leg	-2
5-7	Hindquarters	-3
8-10	Forequarters	-4
11-13	Right Front Leg	-2
14-16	Left Front Leg	-2
17-20	Head	-2

#### Weapons

Type	Weapon Skill	Damage
Bite	30%	1D4-1D8



## Special Rules

*Combat Actions:* 3  
*Strike Rank:* +14  
*Movement:* 6m  
*Skills:* Athletics 115%, Dodge 115%, Persistence 45%, Perception 70%, Resilience 50%, Stealth 115%, Survival 80%

## Kappa (River Child)

Kappa are ancient water spirits with physical form and left upon the world to cause mischief and test the mortals' faith in mystery and nature. They are childish pranksters with generations' worth of tricks and lessons to unleash upon those who draw near to their river's banks. A kappa uses its power and environment to teach others how to respect the river and its inhabitants, sometimes with deadly results.

Every kappa looks identical to one another. Standing as tall as a lanky child or common human female, they have scaly skin and a turtle-like shell on their backs. They have webbed fingers that end in small but sharp claws that they use to defend themselves, while their toes are simply webbed and flipper-like. Kappas are the colour of muddy algae and moss, with their bright white eyes peering out of their dun colouration. Their most interesting feature however, is on top of their stocky, beaked head. They have a thick bony ridge that forms a bowl-like depression on the top of their skull, which is always filled with water.

This depression is their mystic link to the river and its powers and it has several magical properties. So long as the kappa has water in its head it has all of the energy and motivation it needs to play pranks or fight battles, depending on the need at the time. It not only fuels their body and their magics but it also exists as the only way to truly defeat a kappa.

It takes a great deal of effort but by getting the water out of a kappa is akin to stealing all of its power and life force. Eventually an empty kappa will dry up like a husk and die, ending what was likely to be a centuries-old existence. This risk is why a kappa is bound by honour and duty to help anyone who saves it from this painful end. Ancient legends speak of kappa writing poems that could melt any frozen heart or swimming a message an ocean away for their saviours; the perfect prize for the mercy it was shown.

The best way to cause a kappa to spill its precious life-water is to give it cause to bow low enough. Simply making a bow is not enough; kappa are wily beasts and used to such tricks. Instead, characters are allowed to engage the kappa in an Opposed contest using the character's On against the kappa's Courtesy skill. If the character succeeds, the kappa loses 1D10 points of water (see below) from its skull depression. If the test is a critical success, then all the water is lost in one go, as the kappa prostrates itself.

## Characteristics

STR 2D6+4 (11)  
CON 4D6 (15)  
DEX 3D6 (11)  
SIZ 2D6+2 (9)  
INT 3D6 (11)  
POW 4D6 (15)  
CHA 2D6+4 (11)

## Kappa Hit Locations

D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
1-3	Right Leg	1/5
4-6	Left Leg	1/5
7-10	Abdomen	1/6
11-14	Chest	1/7
15	Right Arm	1/4
16	Left Arm	1/4
17-20	Head	4/5

## Weapons

Type	Weapon Skill	Damage
Claw	50%	1D4+1-1D2

## Special Rules

*Combat Actions:* 2  
*Strike Rank:* +11  
*Movement:* 4m, 6m when swimming  
*Traits:* Excellent Swimmer, Immunity to Water, Night Sight, Regeneration (Special)  
*Skills:* Artistic Expression (calligraphy) 85%, Athletics 50% (80%), Courtesy 75%, Dodge 40%, First Aid 55%, Influence 45%, Lore (rivers) 95%, Perception 55%, Persistence 40%, Resilience 35%, Runecasting (Water) 70%, Stealth 65%

*Typical Armour:* Thick Hide (AP 1, no Skill Penalty);  
Ridged Head (AP 4, no Skill Penalty)

*Notes:* Kappas are utterly dependant on the energised water resting in the depression at the top of their head. No matter how they fall, fly, move or get knocked around this water will not spill unless a Precise Attack is made specifically to splash out the water. There is 10 Hit Points worth of water filling the depression, it has no AP and attacking it causes no direct damage to the kappa. When the water is driven to 0 however, the following effects occur:

- Ø The kappa is instantly paralysed except for its powers of speech.
- Ø The kappa loses 1 Hit Point from all Hit Locations every minute it is 'empty'.
- Ø The kappa cannot lie, withhold information or deceive in any way while 'empty'.

Anyone refilling the kappa's depression before it dies will instantly earn a single task from the kappa, which it will perform to the best of its abilities exactly as the asking person wishes.

At the end of any Combat Round where the kappa still has water in its depression, it regenerates a number of Hit Points equal to the amount of water left, divided in any way the kappa sees fit.

All kappa can breathe water and air normally, never suffering damage from suffocation from either.

The shell (abdomen and chest locations) of a kappa has the listed AP against any attacks originating from the front but counts as having an AP 6 against attacks from the side or rear.

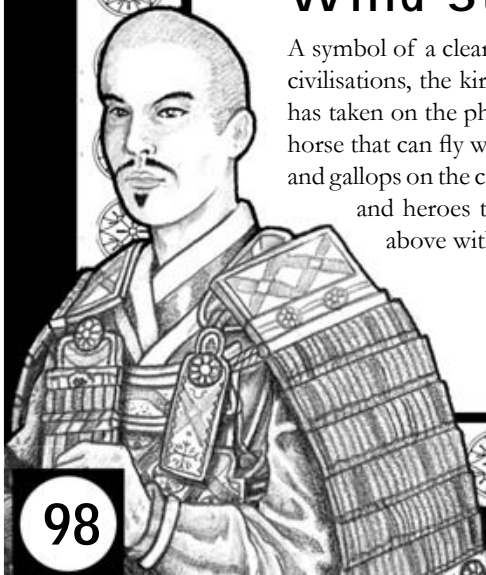
## Kirin (Dragon Horse, Wind Stallion)

A symbol of a clear sky and pleasant weather in oriental civilisations, the kirin is a good-natured wind spirit that has taken on the physical form of a somewhat draconic horse that can fly without wings. It floats on air currents and gallops on the clouds in search of villains to vanquish and heroes to lend aid to, swooping down from above without warning or invitation.



A kirin is a golden-hued horse that is covered in fine fur, its wispy silver mane and tail blowing like strands of silk in an unseen breeze at all times. It has deep and intelligent eyes the colour of a summer sky and a unique face that looks almost draconic in how it is shaped rather than being equine. At the top of its head, where its mane begins to grow, are two antler-like horns cast of pure and shining silver. These horns are the kirin's primary physical weaponry but there is something to them that makes them look more like jewellery than anything else.

Kirin (both singular and plural) are true believers in goodness and justice and spend most of their time hunting down enemies of those ideals. They have very keen vision that they use to look down upon the world as they float through the air; not so much as a hoof movement to push them along. When they find a battle worth their attentions they dive downward into the fray, unleashing powerful air magic at some enemies while going others with their dazzling rack of horns. They are capable of normal human speech and generally enjoy chastising their foes for the wrongs the kirin witnessed



but can also be amazing conversationalists to those they deem worthy to speak with.

### Characteristics

STR	4D6+6	(21)
CON	4D6+6	(21)
DEX	5D6	(18)
SIZ	4D6+4	(19)
INT	2D6+6	(13)
POW	4D6	(15)
CHA	4D6	(15)

### Kirin Hit Locations

D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
1-2	Right Hind Leg	4/8
3-4	Left Hind Leg	4/8
5-7	Hindquarters	4/9
8-10	Forequarters	4/9
11-13	Right Front Leg	4/8
14-16	Left Front Leg	4/8
17-20	Head	6/8

### Weapons

Type	Weapon Skill	Damage
Gore	65%	1D6+2+1D6 (AP 5)
Kick	70%	1D4+1D6

### Special Rules

<i>Combat Actions:</i>	3
<i>Strike Rank:</i>	+16
<i>Movement:</i>	6m, 10m when flying
<i>Traits:</i>	Disease Immunity, Diving Strike, Formidable Natural Weaponry, Night Sight, Poison Immunity, Trample
<i>Skills:</i>	Athletics 85%, Dodge 50%, Evaluate 55%, Influence 65%, Lore (World) 65%, Perception 105%, Persistence 70%, Resilience 60%, Runecasting 80%, Survival 45%, Tracking 55%
<i>Typical Armour:</i>	Tough Hide (AP 4, no Skill Penalty); Horned Head (AP 6, no Skill Penalty)

*Notes:* Kirin are directly tied to clouds and the sky and can always act as though it is holding two Air Runes for the purposes of casting spells, using its own Magic Points and Runecasting normally.

Kirin deal an extra 1D6 damage when their Gore is used with a Charge action.

When a kirin is slain there is a percentage chance equal to its POW that its horns will become an Air Rune.

## Kitsune

The kitsune are the fox spirits closely associated with the god Inari. Like hengeyokai, they can assume human or animal form at will but they are quite separate as species and sacred to those who follow Inari's teachings.

In human form kitsune take on the appearance of aristocrats, often samurai and behave as such. They are, however, very mischievous, taking delight in intrigues and rumour mongering to see what the effects might be. When caught out and confronted they are genuinely remorseful but it is short-lived and they are soon up to their old tricks.

Kitsune can have multiple tails and tails are not always masked when they assume human form. Each 3 points of POW a kitsune has above 13 indicates an extra tail. They adore magic of all kinds and are keen to learn whatever spells they can and this curiosity is often the cause of some of their trickery and deceit.

### Fox Form Characteristics

STR	1D3+3	(4)
CON	2D6	(7)
DEX	4D6+6	(17)
SIZ	1D3+3	(2)
INT	4D6	(14)
POW	4D6	(14)
CHA	3D6	(11)

### Kitsune Hit Locations

D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
1-2	Right Hind Leg	-/2
3-4	Left Hind Leg	-/2
5-7	Hindquarters	-/3
8-10	Forequarters	-/4
11-13	Right Front Leg	-/2
14-16	Left Front Leg	-/2
17-20	Head	-/2

### Weapons

Type	Weapon Skill	Damage
Bite	60%	1D4-1D8

### Special Rules

*Combat Actions:* 3  
*Strike Rank:* +14  
*Movement:* 6m  
*Skills:* Athletics 80%, Dodge 80, Persistence 45%, Perception 70%, Resilience 50%, Stealth 115%, Survival 80%

Kitsune typically have 1D4 Spirit Magic spells available at a chance to cast equal to POW+INT%.

## Mujina

Humanlike, Mujina are supernatural creatures delighting in sending men mad. By day they resemble comely and often beautiful, women who go out of their way to seduce the unwary, the gullible and the lustful. At night, the seduction complete, they drop their pretence, revealing their true form.

A mujina has no face. Instead is a dark, deep, mind-shattering abyss that is impossible for the mind to comprehend. Peering into the facial void saps the spirit and the will, allowing the mujina to grow stronger. The victim must make an Opposed Persistence test against the mujina's Persistence. If he fails, he loses 1D8 points of INT immediately. If the test is fumbled, the INT loss is 2D8. Being reduced to half original INT results in complete insanity and the victim is left a gibbering, useless wreck, although able to flee, screaming, into the night.

If the victim is successful in the Opposed test, he can retaliate but must continue to make an Opposed test for each Combat Round he continues to look at the mujina. If the success is critical, then the test must be made every other Combat Round and the INT loss, if incurred, is 1D6 rather than 1D8.

### Characteristics

STR 3D6 (11)  
CON 3D6 (11)  
DEX 3D6 (11)  
SIZ 3D6 (11)  
INT 3D6 (11)  
POW 3D6 (10)  
CHA 3D6 (11)

### Mujina Hit Locations

D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
1-3	Right Leg	-/4
4-6	Left Leg	-/4
7-9	Abdomen	-/5
10-12	Chest	-/6
13-15	Right Arm	-/3
16-18	Left Arm	-/3
19-20	Head	-/4

### Weapons

Type	Weapon Skill	Damage / AP
Tanto	45%	1D4+1

### Special Rules

*Combat Actions:* 2  
*Strike Rank:* +11  
*Movement:* 4m  
*Traits:* Cause madness (see above)  
*Skills:* Athletics 35%, Dodge 35%, Perception 35%, Persistence 95%, Resilience 35%, Seduction 85%

## Mukade

The mukade are the legendary monster centipedes of the kind killed by the hero Hidesato. Rumours abound of the return of these creatures in the hills north of Lake Biwa and elsewhere in the south of Honshu. It is likely that the centipedes' return is the result of sorcerous activity although no one can be certain that these monsters have simply not been hibernating in hidden caverns or at the bottom of swamps.

The centipede's body is divided into multiple segments, with each Hit Location covering one or two of these segments. The segments are numbered from one through 18, with segment one being immediately behind the head and segment 18 being the creature's posterior. If the centipede's head is reduced to zero Hit Points or lower, it begins to thrash frantically but the fight is over and the creature will soon die. If any of the other segments are brought to zero Hit Points but not destroyed, the centipede will lose 5m from its Movement rate. If enough locations are incapacitated to reduce the creature's Movement to zero, it will die.

However, if one of the centipede's segments is destroyed, all segments behind that one will be incapacitated and

immobile. Meanwhile, all segments ahead of the one destroyed will attempt to run away, carrying the creature's head with them.

There is a chance equal to the centipede's POW that, when killed, a pearl can be found within its skull. These pearls, by default, are the property of the Emperor and are exceedingly valuable items. A pearl contains 1D4-1, single-use Spirit Magic spells (or any Rune Spell from the *RuneQuest* rules or *Spell Book*) with a Magnitude of 1D4. Identifying what spells the pearl contains requires the attentions of a Buddhist priest with some skill in Divination or other method of insight. Using a spell requires the caster to be holding the pearl and to succeed in a test based on INT+POW.

### Characteristics

STR	8D6	(28)
CON	12D6	(42)
DEX	3D6	(11)
SIZ	12D6	(42)
INT	1	(1)
POW	2D6+3	(10)
CHA	1	(1)

### Giant Centipede Hit Locations

D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
1	Segment 18	4/5
2	Segment 17	4/5
3	Segment 16	4/5
4	Segment 15	4/5
5	Segment 14	4/5
6	Segment 13	4/5
7	Segment 12	4/5
8	Segment 11	4/5
9	Segment 10	4/5
10	Segment 9	4/5
11	Segment 8	4/5
12	Segment 7	4/5
13	Segment 6	4/5
14	Segment 5	4/5
15	Segment 4	4/5
16	Segment 3	4/5
17	Segment 2	4/5
18	Segment 1	4/5
19-20	Head	4/8

### Weapons

Type	Weapon Skill	Damage
Bite	65%	1D6+2D6+poison

### Special Rules

Combat Actions:	2
Strike Rank:	+6
Movement:	6m
Traits:	Poison (bite, see below for details on Centipede Venom)
Skills:	Athletics 60%, Perception 55%, Stealth 70%
Typical Armour:	Chitin Shell (AP 4, no Skill Penalty)

### Centipede Venom

Type:	Ingested or smeared
Delay:	1D3 Combat Rounds
Potency:	80
Full Effect:	1 Hit Point damage to location struck, applies -8 penalty to victim's CON
Duration:	3D10 minutes

### Oni (Demon)

Oni are the demons of ancient Japan and they come in many, many types. Oni come to the physical world at night to attack those whose souls would be better serving the Underworld rather than whatever it is they do in life. They are powerful creatures that know the best ways to cause a mortal pain and anguish, hopefully driving them to the final conflict that will send their soul to the Oni's dark masters in the Spirit World. In the Heian period malicious sorcerers summon forth oni to bargain with and encourage them to work havoc across the provinces, destroying the clans and grieving the Imperial Court. The oni Lords are fearsome creatures indeed, being utterly ruthless and without a single shred of compassion. They rage against the material world and the gods of Heaven and Paradise with equal fury.

Oni come in a vast array of different varieties but the main type that comes to wreak havoc upon the physical world are called red Oni for their crimson skin and hot rages. They are half again as tall as a common man and nearly a metre across from shoulder to shoulder. Tusk-like teeth and bestial horns grow from the creatures' face and a long savage claw tips each of their 10 meaty

fingers. Where the red Oni are the most prevalent, all the colours of the rainbow exist amidst the Oni legions. Although each Oni is normally different from the next because of their individual physical gifts, they all are fearsome creatures that despise goodness, crushing it whenever they can.

Each Oni might fight in its own way or choose a specific type of soul to target depending on its own individual strengths but they all seem to favour heavy eastern weapons that leave a ruin of their victims' flesh. Tetsubo and naginata are red Oni favourites, with some preferring to use their natural weapons over anything else instead. Whatever an Oni has chosen to use as its weapon, it can be assured that few enemies will be able to weather its attacks.

One interesting weakness that all Oni have in common is an ingrained belief that the common monkey is the spiritual protector of mortal souls. Whether or not this is truly the case is unknown to all but the gods but the Oni believe this fact to be true enough to stay away from monkeys while they walk the world. This legend is why many evil souls keep caged monkeys around them at all times – to hopefully keep the Oni away.

### Characteristics

STR	4D6	(15)
CON	4D6	(15)
DEX	2D6+6	(13)
SIZ	2D6+10	(17)
INT	3D6+2	(13)
POW	3D6+6	(17)
CHA	2D6	(7)

### Oni Hit Locations

D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
1-3	Right Leg	6/7
4-6	Left Leg	6/7
7-9	Abdomen	6/8
10-12	Chest	6/9
13-15	Right Arm	6/6
16-18	Left Arm	6/6
19-20	Head	6/7

### Weapons

Type	Weapon Skill	Damage
Bite	70%	1D6+2+1D4
Claw	80%	1D4+2+1D4
Naginata	65%	1D10+1D4 (AP 4)
Tetsubo	60%	2D8+1D4 (AP 4)

### Special Rules

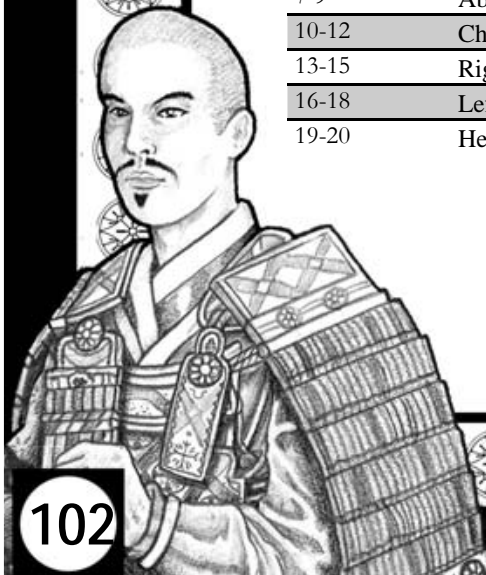
<i>Combat Actions:</i>	3
<i>Strike Rank:</i>	+13
<i>Movement:</i>	4m
<i>Traits:</i>	Chaotic Aura, Chaotic Features (1D3), Dark Sight, Night Sight, Poison Immunity, Regeneration 1 Hit Point/Combat Round, Vulnerable to Ivory
<i>Skills:</i>	Athletics 55%, Dodge 45%, Evaluate 55%, Influence 65%, Lore (Spirit World) 75%, Perception 65%, Persistence 75%, Resilience 65%, Stealth 40%, Tracking 65%
<i>Typical Armour:</i>	Tough Hide (AP 6, no Skill Penalty)

*Notes:* Oni cannot tolerate the presence of monkeys and will be forced to pass Persistence tests each round they are to stay within 10 metres of a common animal monkey. If they pass they may act normally. If they fail however, they must retreat to at least that distance before taking any other actions.

## Rokuro-kubi

Supernatural creatures, rokuro-kubi have the daytime semblance of humans but, at night, their heads, gullets, stomachs and intestines separate from the body, attach themselves together and the ghastly assemblage goes in search of live flesh, preferring human whenever it can get it. The head and guts must rejoin with the body by daybreak or the creatures wither and die as the first rays of the morning sun strike them. Their inert bodies are therefore always well-hidden and protected before the heads go hunting.

In human form the neck can extend rapidly up to a length of three metres allowing the monster to bite at range. They are also practitioners of sorcery and are known to serve and ally with human sorcerers in return for protection and hunting rights. A rokuro-kubi has a chance equal to its POW of knowing 1D4 sorcery spells at a base score of INT+POW. If it serves a human sorcerer, double this chance.



Rokuro-kubi are therefore cunning, malicious and merciless killers. Like the bakemono they abhor the kami and are fond of shrine desecration. In human form, the head must be severed for the rokuro-kubi to be completely killed. They can slowly regenerate Hit Points, taking a number of hours equal to the total damage sustained to fully recover but recover they can. In the floating head state, the monsters can be killed either by being kept from the body at sunrise or being sliced into ribbons; the body is required to recover from damage.

### Characteristics

STR	3D6	(11)
CON	3D6	(11)
DEX	4D6	(14)
SIZ	3D6	(11)
INT	3D6	(11)
POW	3D6	(10)
CHA	3D6	(11)

### Rokuro-kubi Hit Locations (human form)

D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
1-3	Right Leg	-/5
4-6	Left Leg	-/5
7-9	Abdomen	-/6
10-12	Chest	-/7
13-15	Right Arm	-/4
16-18	Left Arm	-/4
19-20	Head	-/5

### Weapons

Type	Weapon Skill	Damage / AP
Katana	50%	1D10+1
Neck	60%	1D6

### Special Rules

<i>Combat Actions:</i>	3
<i>Strike Rank:</i>	+13
<i>Movement:</i>	4m
<i>Traits:</i>	Extensible neck*, Regenerate
<i>Skills:</i>	Athletics 40%, Dodge 50%, Perception 75%, Resilience 55%, Stealth 65%

\*The neck can extend by one metre for every Combat Action and the head can be aimed like any other weapon, to deliver a bite attack

### Rokuro-kubi Hit Locations (head form)

D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
1-17	Entrails	-/5
18-20	Head	-/5

### Weapons

Type	Weapon Skill	Damage / AP
Bite	60%	1D6

### Special Rules

<i>Combat Actions:</i>	3
<i>Strike Rank:</i>	+13
<i>Movement:</i>	6m (flying)
<i>Skills:</i>	Athletics 20%, Dodge 80%, Perception 75%, Resilience 55%, Stealth 115%

## Shuten-doji

The vampires of Japanese legend, shuten-doji are humanlike in appearance save for their long, sharp front teeth and their clawed hands. They often disguise themselves as wandering priests or flute-players, better to ingratiate themselves with travellers or small communities.

Like all vampires, shuten-doji feed on blood. They are not affected by sunlight, exorcisms or holy symbols but they are susceptible to certain compulsions. All shuten-doji are forced to count any grains of rice spread across their path and when reaching any form of crossroads spend some time in consideration before randomly selecting their direction of travel. A shuten-doji is allowed a Persistence test to mask its compulsion successfully, although this can be opposed by a Perception test that, if successful, reveals the anxiety the vampire experiences.

Expert flautists, shuten-doji produce haunting flute music that lulls the senses. Match the skill of the vampire against the Persistence of all those it is trying to entrance in an Opposed contest. If successful, the shuten-doji entrances the listeners for 1D6 rounds (2D6, if the score is a critical success) and it then spends the time biting and draining blood. It can drain 1D3 points of blood per round, with the damage being removed from each Hit Location simultaneously. If the shuten-doji does not have the opportunity to use its flute, it waits until the victim is asleep before biting. If biting in combat, it has the opportunity to draw 1D2 points of blood in addition to any successful bite attack.





### Characteristics

STR	4D6	(14)
CON	3D6	(11)
DEX	4D6	(14)
SIZ	3D6	(11)
INT	3D6	(11)
POW	3D6	(10)
CHA	3D6	(11)

### Shuten-doji Hit Locations

D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
1-3	Right Leg	-/5
4-6	Left Leg	-/5
7-9	Abdomen	-/6
10-12	Chest	-/7
13-15	Right Arm	-/4
16-18	Left Arm	-/4
19-20	Head	-/5

### Weapons

Type	Weapon Skill	Damage / AP
Bo	60%	1D8+1D2
Bite	60%	1D6+1D2+1D2

### Special Rules

<i>Combat Actions:</i>	3
<i>Strike Rank:</i>	+13
<i>Movement:</i>	4m
<i>Traits:</i>	Formidable natural weapons
<i>Skills:</i>	Athletics 40%, Courtesy 50%, Dodge 50%, Perception 60%, Persistence 45%, Resilience 55%, Stealth 60%

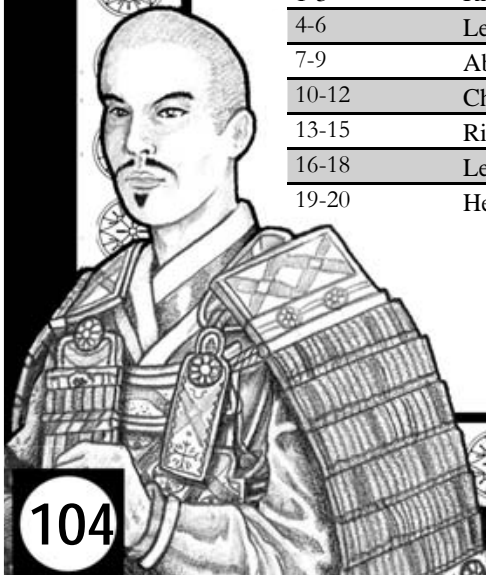
## Tatsu (Dragon)

Very different to their western counterparts, Japanese dragons are celestial creatures that run through the air without the need for wings, are highly magical and occupy a Heavenly status on a par with the kami. They have little cause to dabble in human affairs and rarely travel to the Earth. When they do, it is always on matters of great spiritual importance or to do battle against their sworn foes, the oni.

Tatsu are always serpentine shapes, with long, leonine heads, great clawed limbs and long, whip-like tails. They run through the air with the same ease as running along the ground or across water. They are very intelligent and magical, having access to any number of Spirit Magic or Divine Magic spells. They do not breathe fire but are often wreathed in it, with rippling flames following the undulating contours of their body. Some tatsu live beneath the oceans and even they can come forth wreathed in flame.

### Characteristics

STR	6D6	(21)
CON	7D6	(25)
DEX	4D6+4	(19)
SIZ	4D6+15	(30)
INT	7D6+6	(31)
POW	6D6+10	(31)
CHA	5D6	(18)



## Dragon Hit Locations

D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
1-2	Tail	11/11
3	Right Hind Leg	11/11
4	Left Hind Leg	11/11
5-8	Lower Body	11/13
9-12	Middle Body	11/13
13-16	Upper Body	11/13
17	Right Front Leg	11/11
18	Left Front Leg	11/11
19-20	Head	11/11

## Weapons

Type	Weapon Skill	Damage
Bite	115%	1D10+1D12 plus 1D8 fire
Claw	90%	1D8+1D12 (AP 7)
Tail	105%	1D6+1+1D12 (AP 9)

## Special Rules

<i>Combat Actions:</i>	4
<i>Strike Rank:</i>	+ 25
<i>Movement:</i>	6m, 8m when flying
<i>Traits:</i>	Breathe Flame (5D6, 2/hour), Formidable Natural Weapons, Night Sight
<i>Skills:</i>	Athletics 115%, Courtesy 90%, Dance 75%, Divine Magic 70%, Evaluate 105%, Influence 85%, Lore (all) 105%, Perception 72%, Persistence 105%, Resilience 115%, Sing 85%, Spirit Magic 70%, Survival 78%, Tracking 75%
<i>Typical Armour:</i>	Onyx Scales (AP 11, no Skill Penalty)

*Notes:* Any tatsu will have knowledge of 1D8 Spirit Magic spells and 1D6 Divine Magic spells, selected to reflect whatever purpose they happen to be pursuing. The whole catalogue of Spirit and Divine Magic is open to them.

## Tengu

Winged humanoids with ugly, bird-like heads and clawed feet, Tengu dwell in the mountainous forests. They tend to be solitary creatures and are extremely mischievous (although not outright evil). They like to torment and harass lonely travellers, sometimes waylaying them for hours, days or even months on end, simply for the amusement it affords. However, if shown courtesy and especially if gifted with bright, expensive things, they

will be courteous in return and can act as helpful guides. This is very dependent on mood, however. Tengu are not human and their natures are peculiar to humans. Despite their fondness for pranks they hate being the victim of such and can turn violent or vindictive if they believe they are being mocked.

They are skilled swordsmen and have been known to offer training to those who have amused them and shown courtesy, although there are tales that they are demanding masters who refuse to let their pupils leave, even when they have learned all they possibly can.

As tengu frequent mountainous areas that are usually the realm of a major kami, they may also know 1D4-1 Spirit Magic spells or 1D3-1 Divine Magic spells, cast at INT+POW%.

## Characteristics

STR	3D6+3	(12)
CON	3D6+6	(14)
DEX	3D6+6	(14)
SIZ	2D6+3	(9)
INT	3D6	(11)
POW	3D6+6	(14)
CHA	2D6	(7)

## Tengu Hit Locations

D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
1-3	Right Leg	1/5
4-6	Left Leg	1/5
7-9	Abdomen	1/6
10	Chest	1/7
11-12	Right Wing	1/5
13-14	Left Wing	1/5
15-16	Right Arm	-/4
17-18	Left Arm	-/4
19-20	Head	1/5

## Weapons

Type	Weapon Skill	Damage / AP
Katana	75%	1D10+1
Claw	45%	1D6+1

## Special Rules

<i>Combat Actions:</i>	3
<i>Strike Rank:</i>	+13
<i>Movement:</i>	3m (on ground), 4m (flying)
<i>Traits:</i>	Formidable natural weapons
<i>Skills:</i>	Athletics 40%, Dodge 50%, Perception 55%, Persistence 60%, Resilience 45%

# KI FOR THE SENSEI

This chapter provides is for the *RuneQuest: Land of the Samurai* Games Master. It looks at the key themes of a Japanese campaign and rounds out with an introductory adventure.

## Themes for Campaigns

*Land of the Samurai* lends itself to all kinds of adventure and some of the themes that are worth exploring in campaigns are sketched below. A good *Land of the Samurai* campaign will take elements from several of these themes and develop many of the others hinted at throughout this book. However the key to a successful Heian Japan campaign is to understand, even at a very high, detailed level, the major motivations of the period. This section aims to draw out these motivations and spark ideas for the Games Master who is wondering how to begin a series of adventures in ancient Japan.

### Clan Struggle

The three major clans of the Heian period – Fujiwara, Minamoto and Taira, struggled for ultimate control through most of the era in one form or another, with matters eventually coming a head with the Gemppei Wars, which saw the Minamoto clan emerge victorious, the Taira clan virtually destroyed and the Fujiwara clan diminished in power and ultimately replaced by the first Shogunate.

Clan struggle campaigns are based on the following kinds of element:

- ō Political, territorial and armed struggle between the major players. Raids on territory, insults and slurs in the Imperial Court, struggles for prestige, social intrigue as the clans try to marry into the Imperial Family.
- ō Low-ranking noble families attempting to ingratiate themselves with the major clans. Smaller clans forming from family alliances and deciding which of the major clans to support or remain as neutral observers.
- ō Larger clans vying for the support of small but honourable and prestigious families, in a bid to extend their territories

- ō Large clans fragmenting into regional subdivisions either voluntarily, through enmity or through a general demise in the clan's viability
- ō The consolidation of power and luring noted warriors away from the Imperial heartland and into private service – the development of the samurai class

Clan struggles offer the opportunity for dynastic development, inter and intra family intrigue and the development of personal reputations to further the social standing one's own family. Loyalty is at a premium, shame is to be avoided and allies are to be chosen carefully. The balance of power throughout the lower aristocracy changes with the seasons and the mood regarding the current Emperor and his Regent. Petty wars and battles are commonplace, both on the battlefield and in the corridors of the capital. Powerbrokers and malcontents stir-up trouble and intrigue almost for the fun of it and the reputations of entire families are placed on the line as favour shifts from one clan to another.

### Court Intrigue

Away from the clan and political struggles, life in the Imperial Court is about making a good impression, establishing the right connections, finding ways to thwart the wrong ones and being in the presence of the right people, at the right time, to secure personal prestige and advancement. Ladies of the Court find themselves part of the Imperial Family as concubines on the strength of their ability to craft a haiku, tell a story, play the biwa or declaim the finer points of Buddhism. Rivals to such positions gaze on with jealousy and plot subtle, intricate revenges that dredge-up family secrets, tenuous claims to lineage and all manner of social indiscretions that can tarnish or halt, courtly progress.

This type of campaign makes change from the whistle of arrows and the clash of tachi but involves weapons every bit as deadly and the shattering of reputations as easily as warring armies shatter bodies.



## Defeating a Mythical Enemy

Mythical enemies abound in Heian Japan. From the giant centipedes of the kind slain by the hero Hidesato, through to the invasive bakemono who are intent on establishing their own rule in the remote northern provinces.

Generally the appearances of mythic creatures are isolated incidents but they may also indicate the actions of disgruntled sorcerers intent on forging mayhem. As the activities of the malevolent sorcerers increase during the year 1000, more and more mythical creatures are appearing, requiring brave samurai to tackle them in the name of the Emperor, clan and personal glory.

## Family Advancement

The examples set by the Fujiwara, Minamoto and Taira clans have caused more and more families to seek personal status and influence. The surest way is to gain an alliance, through intermarriage, with an influential clan and by association, advance its own standing. However there are other means: aiding a clan in battle; securing

and delivering information about a clan's enemies; proving indispensable in terms of lands, local influence, advice or religious piety and so forth.

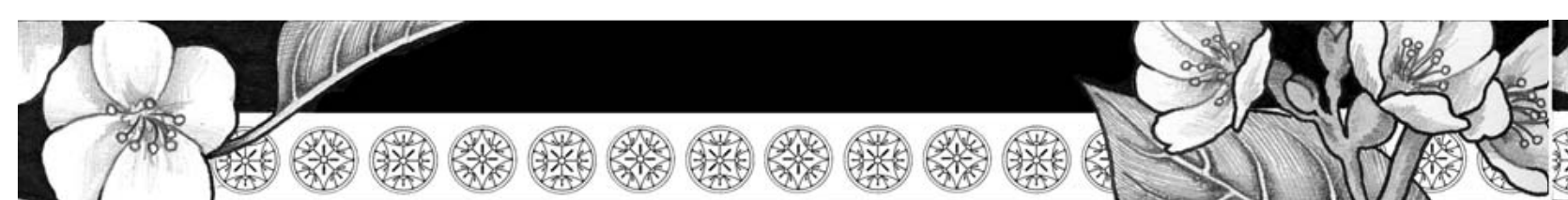
All this advancement is performed at several levels. The family heads formulate the strategy and conduct the negotiations but the delivery is carried out by loyal retainers such as the samurai. There is the opportunity to secure personal glory in this way and to personally advance within the family's status but there are risks, too. If the strategy is ill-conceived and those initiating it fail, blame can be laid at their door. Thus, the aspirations of a family can have profound implications for its servants and retainers, although the ultimate rewards will be to be benefit of everybody.

## Historical

The historical campaign seeks to engage the characters in the events marking the Heian period. The rise of the Mount Hiei monasteries; the machinations of the Fujiwara regency; the ascent of the Minamoto and Taira clans; the wars to push back the Ainu to Hokkaido and naturally, the battles of the Gempei Wars towards the end of the Heian period.

A historical campaign involves researching the period and those active in the key events. The timeline in the first chapter of *Land of the Samurai* helps identify many of these people and the events concerning them but the Games Master needs to conduct further research to gain a better understanding of the historical events and their repercussions. Good sources for information are the Tale of Genji and the Heike Monogatari and the Hogen Monogatari, all of which provide insights into the workings of the Heian period (especially the former) and the military deeds that shaped its final days (the latter two).

A historical game may be orthodox, shunning the mythical elements threaded throughout this book or include them to provide a different slant that might affect the eventual historical outcome. The choice depends on how much the participants want to pursue historical veracity. Whichever route is taken, a good historical campaign should include encounters with the great people of the time, such as Minamoto Yoshiie and find ways to work the characters into the crucial events – either as direct protagonists or as indirect agents who influence the main events from the unexplored sidelines. It is also an opportunity to engage the characters in



the fierce wars of the later Heian period, which were more than simply battles for territory but battles for the very soul of Japan. The Gempei Wars include political double-dealing, subterfuge, shifting alliances, organised rebellion, imprisonments and daring escapes and desperate flights for life. It is an exciting, adventure-packed area to explore.

## Magic and Sorcery

The Heian Emperors, reflecting the nervousness of the powerful Buddhist temples, were deeply fearful of magic and those who claimed to use it. Various edicts forbidding sorcery led to purges of its practitioners, despite the fact that the Buddhist esoteric traditions, especially Shugendo, dabbled in the study of magic with impunity.

Japan is a truly magical group of islands. Its gods, the kami, are real and ever-present. Magic can be found in the natural beauty of the lands and the mystic beliefs that every Japanese person is aware of from a young age. Even the Imperial Court rules through magical blessing, as embodied in the Imperial Regalia; when the Emperor and his family are considered to be living gods, the presence of magic throughout Japan is a natural consequence.

Yet magicians are rare, even in the stories and legends of the Heian period. Most people are happy to let the kami work magic on their behalf and even the Buddhist temples use magic judiciously and in pursuit of their goals, which are largely political. Japan is not a land filled with wizards, sorcerers or hedge magicians. Where such people exist, they are shadowy and remote. The samurai would never seek to learn magic to make his sword sharper or arrows more accurate and so, whilst Japan is magically rich, encounters with it are not everyday. For most, magic equals wonderment and proof that the gods look after the world. When humans work it without the gods' blessing, magic suddenly becomes threatening and malevolent. People fear it, for they cannot control it and its rarity increases its fearful potency.

## Ninja

As stressed already, ninja are an anachronism imported from Japan's future. A rationale for their existence is given in the Ways of the Warrior chapter and so, if they are included in a Heian campaign, they should be included as part of a mythic backdrop involving sorcery,

great quests and political intrigue rather than as part of a historical recreation.

Nevertheless, the wily, cunning, black-clad ninja agent, evading the watchful eyes of samurai or sōhei, to complete a mission of great daring and risk, is an alluring concept and the political situation of Heian Japan means that the ninja, had they existed, would have had many, many opportunities to spy, sabotage and on occasions, assassinate. Even if the rationale for sorcerers and sorcery is not being used, as long as everyone in the campaign welcomes the ninja as an acceptable anachronism, including the practitioners of ninjutsu can add a thrilling dimension to the game.


## Proof of Loyalty

The proof of loyalty campaign can concern individual loyalty to a daimyo, a family to a clan, a clan to the Emperor or even priests to a temple and its faith. The need for proof to be demonstrated is usually triggered by some form of shame or earlier transgression, with the proof being required as atonement or because those involved simply wish to regain the status they have lost.

Where loyalty has been questioned, the stakes are high. Others will seek to profit from the characters' loss, either seeking to consolidate the shame or move into the positions the characters or their superiors occupied. There is therefore a great deal of opportunity for clandestine manoeuvrings to prevent rivals taking advantage, especially where clan loyalties are concerned.

The form that proof of loyalty takes is important to consider. To the characters it can be quite possible that what they are told to do conflicts with their own moral stance; should they sacrifice personal integrity for honour? What are the effects if they refuse? How would others seek to profit from their refusal? If, on the other hand, there is no moral conflict, then it is likely that any task the characters must undertake to regain honour will be dangerous and likely to push the notion of honour to the limit. It could be a straight forward task such as retrieving a particular item or object or it could be something far more wide-ranging, such as taking a decisive part in a battle where the odds are clearly stacked against them.

On the other hand, the characters may simply wish to affirm their loyalty because some kind of loyalty has been shown to them and thus a debt has been incurred.



Here, there are opportunities for endeavours such as seeking out a particular gift, helping the person being honoured to achieve some form of goal or simply choosing to undertake a task that is slightly beyond their capabilities in order to prove worth.

## Pilgrimages and Quests

Quests take many forms and are often concerned with the spiritual journey more than with the object of the quest itself. Pilgrimages to holy places, such as Ise, Izumo, Mount Hiei, Mount Fujiyama or the Eighty Eight Temples are examples of staple quests common in Japanese faith. There are opportunities to meet like-minded pilgrims, form friendships and aid others along the way. One need not be religious to undertake a spiritual or religious quest of this kind. It might be atonement for disloyalty or simply a proof of loyalty. It is also an excellent way of gathering a disparate group of characters together, meeting together at a pilgrims' inn before setting out, each sharing the story of how they came to be there.

Where a quest has a specific goal, such as slaying a foe or retrieving some kind of treasure, Japanese myth has an especially rich heritage. Heroes taking up arms against monsters such as the centipede or re-enacting the deeds of Hachiman or Jizo, are common story themes and well-suited to a mythical campaign. The object of the quest may be something that will bring a family or clan huge prestige and as prestige and advancement are so crucial in Japan, quests figure large in its myths. The Shinto stories are especially rich in this regard. Izanagi's journey to Hell or yomi, in search of Izanami, only to be rejected when he finds her, is typical of the kind of questing myth popular in Japanese folklore. The Japanese of the Heian period are extremely fond of such undertakings, especially where the end results are not necessarily clear cut. Simply undertaking a quest can bring honourable rewards, even if it does not succeed.

## Temple Intrigue and Conflict

The Heian period saw the clash of the great Buddhist temples of Nara and Enriaku-ūji. These were not clashes over religious ideology but clashes for power.

The temples exert great influence over the Emperor and as the patronage of the Imperial Court slides towards the temples of Mount Hiei, the displaced temples of Nara, angered at their loss of influence, took direct action against both the government and their mountain-based rivals. This level of conflict provides great scope for a campaign, with priests, monks and sōhei actively descending on the capital to petition, punish and oppose the actions of rivals. When matters get out of hand in the cities and towns, action is directed against the temples with sōhei despatched to punish and coerce simply in order to establish political and religious dominance.

Even within the same temple, sects vied for position and took great offence if old traditions were not ordered. The appointment of the abbot of a temple, for example, is a political, rather than a religious act and within the control of the government. If the government favours one sect over another for some reason, it can (and did) provoke outrage leading to violent protests, curses and armed sōhei ready to reinforce a sect's position or defend it. The peaceful tenets of Buddhism are compromised by such attitudes and the priests and monks must, at all costs, be seen to operate within the doctrines of Buddhism whilst still taking decisive action to retain power – that is where the warrior monks come into play. Later, as the Gempei Wars begin, both the Taira and Minamoto clans actively seek the alliance of particular temples and use many different strategies, including promises of power, to secure the help of a temple's armies.

In a campaign using mythical elements the temples will actively mobilise against bakemono and oni seeking to subvert the divine nature of Japan. Such holy crusades receive the backing of the Emperor and would no doubt involve the major and minor clans, giving opportunities for glory. Clashes between spiritual and military leaders over strategy and tactics will be common, despite fighting against a common enemy and the differing approaches of sōhei and samurai; this first driven by religious zealotry; the second by a desire for personal glory and offer an intriguing opportunity for rivalry whilst engaged in a common cause.



# BENEATH AN OPAL MOON

Beneath and Opal Moon is an introductory scenario for *Land of the Samurai* characters. It takes place in an isolated village in a southern Honshu province and is designed for between three and five characters, which can be samurai, sōhei, a mixture of the two and include a priest. The scenario should provide a couple of strong sessions of play and produce ideas for future adventures.

## Summary

The village of Sukarō is in the province of Suō in southern Honshu. Sukarō and its surrounding croplands (largely paddy fields) were given to Sakoda no Moritano by his father, Sakoda no Masakano, as a wedding present. The Sakoda family is allied to the Taira clan as a result of this marriage but its position in the clan is tenuous and Sakoda no Masakano is desperate to curry favour with the Taira. Having heard nothing from his son in almost six months, Masakano is worried and has decided to send a small group of trouble-shooters to pay his son a visit, bringing with them a further, belated wedding gift but ostensibly to ensure that all is well and that Moritano is looking after the lands he has been gifted.

If the characters are Buddhist priests or sōhei, Masakano, a good Buddhist whose brother is the abbot of the nearby temple, has requested the temple's assistance.

Sukarō, the characters will find, is in disarray. Its rice harvest has failed and its people are starving. Somehow the shrine of the local kami has been polluted and the kami driven out. The characters need to discover the source of the pollution and find out why Moritano has failed to protect those he is bound, by honour, to look after.

## The True Story in Sukarō

Moritano and his new wife have been supplanted by a rokuro-kubi and his mujina consort. This evil pair had been lurking in the hills and old forests above Sukarō and when they saw the arrival of the young samurai and his bride, saw an opportunity to seize power for themselves. The rokuro-kubi and the mujina presented themselves to

Moritano as the victims of a distant vendetta between rival samurai clans and sought sanctuary from their enemies. Moritano, believing he was acting honourably, invited the couple to share his home, despite his new wife's protestations.

Within days the mujina had seduced Moritano and driven him insane. The rokuro-kubi keeps Moritano's wife as a slave. Both of them have assumed the identities of the unfortunate newly-weds and are now using the village as a feeding ground, with the rokuro-kubi taking the odd villager for a meal but not too many to attract the villagers' suspicions. To prevent the kami from revealing what is happening, blood has been placed in the cleansing bowl outside its shrine, ensuring pollution for the kami and its worshippers and neutralising the kami's power. The rokuro-kubi and the mujina intend to remain in Sukarō for as long as possible but are quite prepared to move out if their pretence is shattered.

## Reaching Sukarō

The characters are instructed by Sakoda no Masakano to visit Sukarō and convey his respects to his son. They are also to give two gifts; a war fan for the son and an exquisite haiku, written on high quality paper, for his wife. They are to remain for a few days and discover if Moritano is fulfilling his duties and remind him that the tax levy will be due shortly. They are also to observe the state of the marriage and bring back any news or observations regarding the way Moritano is running his affairs.

None of the characters have ever seen Moritano or his wife, themselves but they have heard how Moritano, in a battle against the neighbouring Yaranatō family, prevailed in an Arrow Duel against Yaranatō no Ichi, their leading samurai. Moritano's new wife, Taira no Kiyoko, is a reported beauty and excellent poet.

The journey to Sukarō takes a week. On the way, there is a 30% chance of the characters encountering one of the following situations on the road to the village.

*The Tax Collector.* This fussy official for the region has recently left Sukarō and protests that he was treated most shamefully by the young samurai in charge of the village. 'There is no rice harvest this year and nothing

in the village coffers. I was laughed at by the samurai's wife and called an ignorant old fool! I shall report this to the provincial governor and it will be referred to the ministry! There is little the characters can do to calm the irate tax collector but if they question him, which requires successful Influence or similar Skill Tests to cut through his blustering, they learn that the village is fearful and that the samurai in charge is clearly negligent.

*Bandits.* A group of three ronin, hungry and desperate, have set-up an ambush where the road to Sukarō narrows

and crosses a small river. They are armed with bows and have taken up positions in the trees on the far side of the bridge. They are after money, food, weapons – anything they can either use or sell. These are not especially brave or honourable men and a reasonable show of skill by the characters will drive them away but that does not prevent them from unleashing a hail of arrows as the characters cross the bridge over the river. Use the same statistics for all the warriors.

## Ronin Highwaymen

### Characteristics Special Rules

STR	15	Combat Actions:	3
CON	13	Damage Bonus:	+1D2
DEX	13	Magic Points:	9
SIZ	13	Strike Rank:	+14
INT	14	On:	20
POW	9		
CHA	9		

*Skills:* Athletics 25%, Dodge 23%, Influence 29%, Persistence 29%, Resilience 30%, Streetwise 48%

*Armour:* Scraps of padding and leather –8% skill penalty

### Weapons

Type	Weapon Skill	Damage
Dai kyu	50%	2D8+1D2 (four arrows each)
Tachi	47%	1D10+2+1D2

### Hit Locations

Hit Locations	AP/HP
Head (19-20)	-/4
L. Arm (16-18)	-/3
R. Arm (13-15)	-/3
Chest (10-12)	-/6
Abdomen (07-09)	-/5
L.Leg (04-06)	-/4
R.Leg (01-03)	-/4

If any of the ronin are captured, they plead for their lives. They beg to be given the chance to atone for their sins and simply want to rejoin useful service. It is up to the characters what they do with them.

*Wandering Shinto Priest:* A small, thin, hungry looking priest calling himself Saito asks the characters for a little food and water. If they agree, he prays to the kami of the road to keep them safe and tells them he is on a

## Saito, Itinerant Kannushi

### Characteristics Special Rules

STR	14	Combat Actions:	2
CON	9	Damage Bonus:	None
DEX	10	Magic Points:	14
SIZ	7	Strike Rank:	+12
INT	15	On:	54
POW	14	Purity:	75
CHA	11		

*Basic Skills:* Dodge 40%, Influence 79%, Perception 55%, Persistence 57%, Resilience 36%, Stealth 39%

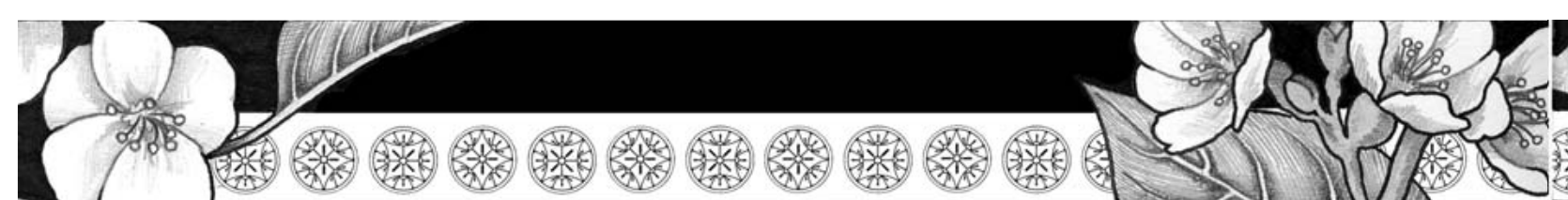
*Advanced Skills:* Language (Kanji) 95%, Language (Katakana) 55%, Lore (Shinto) 65%, Lore (Ways of the Kami) 79%, Survival 44%

Saito does not engage in any physical fights.

### Hit Locations

Hit Locations	AP/HP
Head (19-20)	-/4
L. Arm (16-18)	-/3
R. Arm (13-15)	-/3
Chest (10-12)	-/6
Abdomen (07-09)	-/5
L.Leg (04-06)	-/4
R.Leg (01-03)	-/4





pilgrimage to Ise to pay his respects to Amaterasu. He can be persuaded to join the characters for a while, if they succeed in a successful Influence test opposed by Saito's Persistence.

*The Madman.* As the characters get near to Sukarō, on the evening of their last day of travel, they pass through a forest at the top of the hill overlooking the valley where Sukarō is located. They hear a disturbance in the undergrowth and someone, half-naked, pale, thin and with wild hair, breaks from his nearby hiding place and rushes past the characters shrieking and raving, before disappearing deep amongst the trees. Attempts to track him come to nought. This is Moritano – or what is left of him, for his mind has been broken by the mujina. He now lurks in the forest, catching rabbits and eating them raw. The villagers are terrified of him and believe he is some evil spirit that is behind the recent disturbances.

## The Village

Sukarō nestles in the valley floor and consists of around 15 or 20 small, family homes, simply built but reasonably well maintained. On the south side of the village are the paddy fields, which the characters can see are impoverished with withered plants and murky waters. Closer inspection shows a badly failed rice crop, blighted by insects and a thick green slime that chokes the roots of the rice plants below the water line.

The villagers are typical of any small Japanese settlement; superstitious and wary of strangers. They are deferential to everyone but if their confidence is won, they are prepared to reveal their concerns at the lack of attention the new Lord, Moritano, is paying to the village. Since their rice crop failed, they have petitioned Lord Moritano for help and he has promised aid several times but none has arrived. His wife, they say, is aloof and abrupt and does not seem to know her place. Neither Moritano nor his wife is popular with the villagers and the headman says, privately, that they are relieved at the characters' arrival, so that word can be sent to Lord Masakano of their plight.

If asked when the troubles started, the villagers reveal it was soon after Lord Moritano arrived in the village.

At first he was friendly and helpful but this soon changed and then the rice crop was struck by blight. The kami, who is looked after by the headman, Nakachi, has gone silent and

Nakachi fears the village has been deserted by its god, which once made the rice crop bountiful.

They also tell of the tax collector, who came to inspect the crop and take the provincial dues. He left in a hurry, pausing only to claim he had been insulted very badly by Moritano's wife.

The villagers are also scared of the wild creature living in the forest. It attacked and killed two of their number a few weeks ago. They believe it is a goblin or a gaki, sent by the Buddhas because they have no rice to offer. In reality, they are referring to Moritano himself and although mad, Moritano is not responsible for the villagers' deaths. This is all the doing of the rokuro-kubi.

## The House

Moritano's house is small but comfortable and built in the traditional, single-storey fashion from local timber and stone. It is bounded by a wooden stockade, with a gate leading to the stables but otherwise the entrance to the house is open.

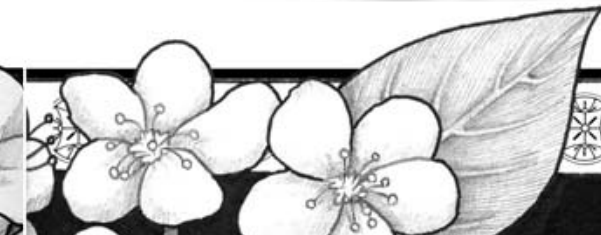
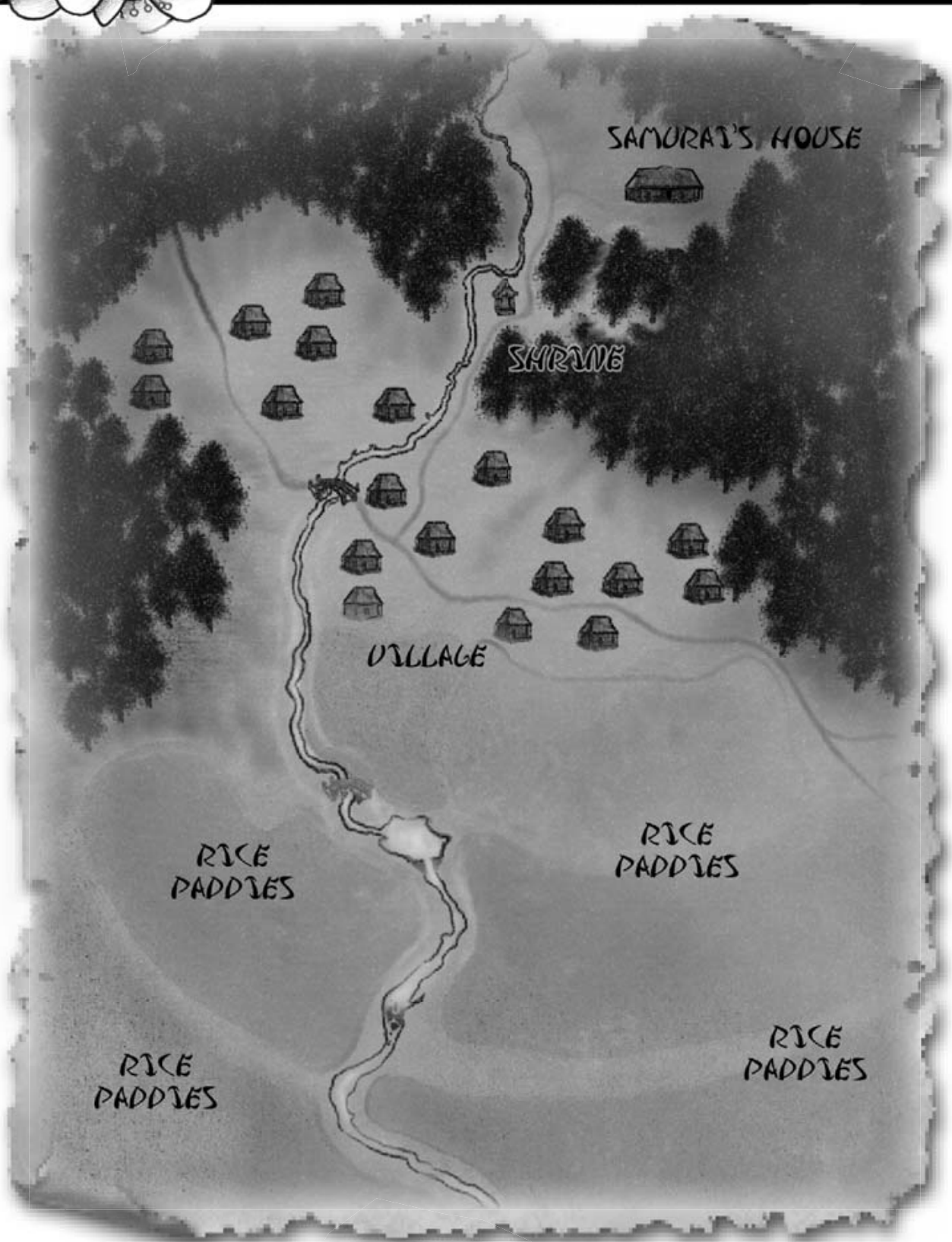
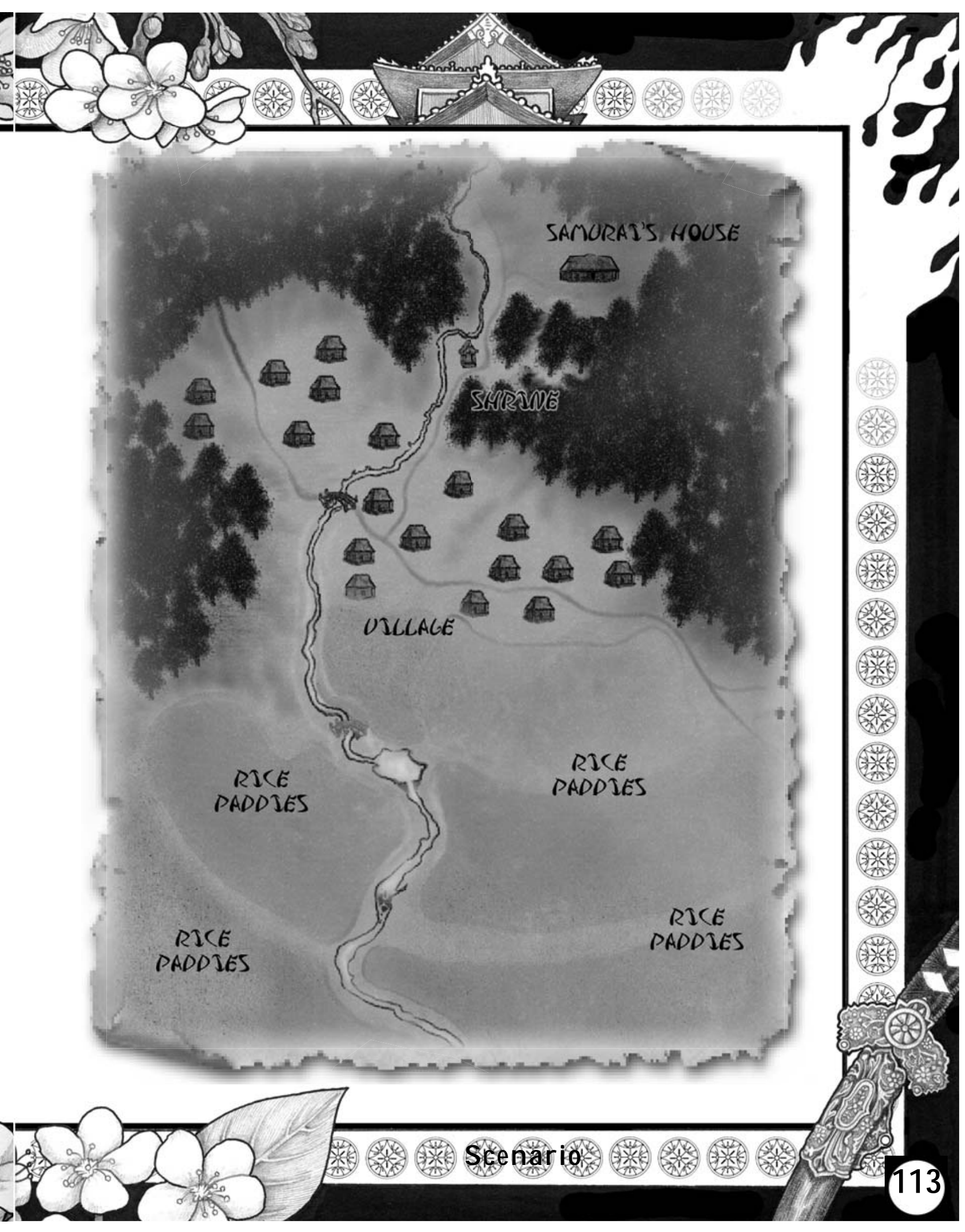
The gardens are unkempt, with weeds choking the vegetable patch and formal garden around the small shrine and tea house. One would expect a small staff of three or four servants to be in attendance but none are in evidence. In fact, they have been killed and eaten by the rokuro-kubi and the mujina, their remains buried in shallow graves in the vegetable garden, hidden behind a thick hydrangea bush.

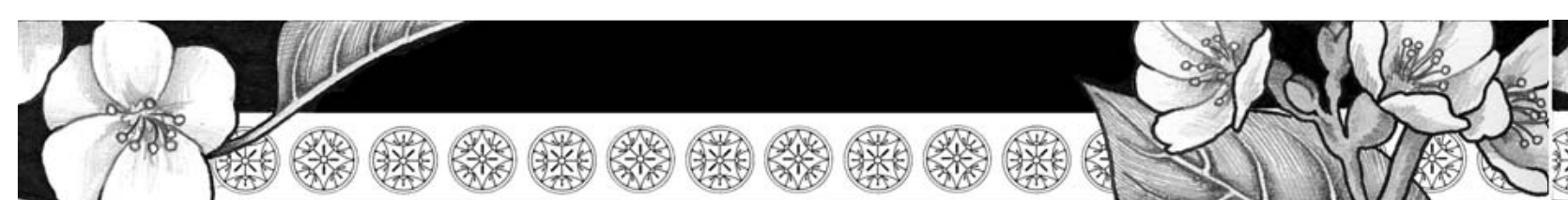
The household shrine is to the ancestor kami of the Sakoda family. It is completely defiled and polluted because the rokuro-kubi uses it when his head goes hunting. The kami dwelling here has been driven out and cannot return until the shrine is purified.

## On Arrival

The characters are met on arrival by the rokuro-kubi, who is posing as Moritano. He wears Moritano's kimono and quite strangely, Moritano's court tabard, bearing the Sakoda family mon. This kind of garment is worn only at ceremonial functions or for attending court but the rokuro-kubi likes it so much he wears it all the time.

The rokuro-kubi's name is Hinachi but he refers to himself as Moritano throughout. He appears slightly older than the characters may have been expecting





and he wears a styled moustache, which is not of any known fashion. His hair is neatly gathered in a formal bun and he behaves as impeccably as he can, intending to lull the characters into a false sense of security. He observes the traditional customs of weapons being left at the entrance and the characters may note that Hinachi carries no tanto of his own. Moritano's tachi is racked in the same place the character's weapons will be stored.

The characters are welcomed and offered refreshment in the Tea House, where, Hinachi says, his wife will attend shortly. If asked about the lack of servants he just shrugs and says that they were lazy and cost too much. They were dismissed some weeks ago. He has just the one servant now, who tends to his wife's needs but she is a half-wit who ought to be in a nunnery.

Although he tries to maintain a samurai dignity throughout his dealings with the characters, he behaves in a very informal, off-hand manner on several occasions. When given the messages Masakano has asked the characters to deliver he simply shrugs, offers some vague thanks and launches into detailed enquiries about the characters' own lives, exploits and achievements. How many men have they killed? What is happening in the capital? Has anyone taught the priests of Enryakuji a lesson yet? He is unconcerned with questions about himself or his wife and actively works to change the subject. If anyone asks him or mentions, his supremacy in the Arrow Duel for which Moritano is famed, Hinachi falters and has to quickly make up details, which he naturally gets wrong. If the characters start to display any signs of suspicion, Hinachi holds his temper, changes the subject but insists that the characters should stay at the house for a few days.

### Narai the Mujina

The real power in this relationship is Narai the Mujina. She controls Hinachi the rokuro-kubi and is far more intelligent than he. With her cunning they have evaded detection for years and she always keeps a careful eye on everything he says and does.

Narai is presented to the characters in the Tea House. She is dressed in Taira no Kiyoko's clothes but is not the beauty the characters might have been expecting. Narai is somewhat plain but very sensual and she coyly flirts with the character who has the highest CHA, directing her attentions to him in a way no good Japanese wife of noble birth would

ever contemplate. Her husband seems oblivious to her flirting. Narai also speaks out of turn and occasionally contradicts or snaps at her husband when he blunders or threatens to blunder. She performs a very inelegant tea ceremony, which the characters may or may not notice. Afterwards, it is time for the gifts from Masakano to be presented. Hinachi regards the war fan with barely disguised contempt but offers semi-gracious thanks. Narai glances at the haiku and frowns. She is unable to comprehend its meaning, its elegance or its beauty. She does not pay the poem any more attention and if asked to read it or perform a haiku of her own devising, refuses bluntly, claiming she has a headache.

### The Lady Taira no Kiyoko

When it is time to retire, Narai calls for her servant to attend to her. The name she calls is Koko and from the retainers house comes a thin, pale woman, clad in poor quality servant's clothes. Though her hair is unkempt and matted and though her face is grimy, there is no disguising her natural beauty. She avoids looking at any of the characters and is meek and deferential to Hinachi and appears to be completely fearful of Narai.

Kiyoko has been told by Narai that, if she serves faithfully and causes no trouble, Moritano's sanity will be restored but Kiyoko must serve for a year and a day before Narai is prepared to even contemplate returning her husband to normality. Naturally this is a lie but Kiyoko is so terrified she can do nothing but comply. Hinachi wants to eat her, of course but dare not harm her whilst Narai is enjoying having a slave to hand.

Yet Kiyoko's spirit has not been completely broken. If any character shows her any kind of kindness (or simply select a character at random), Kiyoko tries to get a message to him. Waiting until everyone is asleep, she creeps into the main house and pushes a sheet of paper under the door of the selected character. In a faltering hand and hurried kanji, she has composed the following two haiku as a coded message.

*Sick and feverish  
Glimpse of cherry blossoms  
Still shivering*

*Bold Heike  
Like the reeds, unbroken  
But bowing*

The first haiku refers to the plight of herself and her husband and is designed to alert the characters to the fact that she is the true Lady Kiyoko. The second refers to Heike, the name also given to the Taira clan. It refers to her inner strength and desire to prevail against these supernatural foes.

Getting to see Kiyoko without Narai being present is difficult but not impossible. If the characters can arrange such a meeting (and they will be watched by Narai or Hinachi), Kiyoko is able to tell the characters precisely what has happened in Sukarō and to herself and her husband and beg for their help.

## Taira no Kiyoko

### Characteristics Special Rules

STR	7	<i>Combat Actions:</i>	2
CON	9	<i>Damage Bonus:</i>	-1D2
DEX	12	<i>Magic Points:</i>	18
SIZ	13	<i>Strike Rank:</i>	+14
INT	15	<i>On:</i>	44
POW	18		
CHA	17		

*Basic Skills:* Courtesy 75%, Dodge 30%, Influence 70%, Lore (Animal) 40%, Lore (Plant) 45%, Perception 55%, Persistence 60%, Resilience 35%

*Advanced Skills:* Artistic Expression (Haiku) 95%, Calligraphy 68%, Language (Hiragana) 85%, Language (Kanji) 90%, Lore (Buddhist Theology) 31%

*Combat:* Tanto 43% 1D4+1-1D2

### Hit Locations

Head (19-20)	-/5
L. Arm (16-18)	-/4
R. Arm (13-15)	-/4
Chest (10-12)	-/7
Abdomen (07-09)	-/6
L.Leg (04-06)	-/5
R.Leg (01-03)	-/5

### AP/HP

## Narai's Seduction

At an appropriate opportunity (usually when everyone is sleeping), Narai goes to the bedroom of the character with the highest CHA to seduce him and drive him insane. She does not make the attempt in the character's bedroom but instead tempts him back to her own room. If her attempt is successful, she intends to repeat the process with each of the characters. After that, Hinachi can feed for as long as he wants.

If Narai's attempts to harm the seduced character fail, she adopts her fully human form and screams out, claiming that the character attempted rape. Depending on how the victimised character reacts and how he reacted to the seduction, his innocence may not be clear-cut. Hinachi, taking advantage of a fresh meal, suggests that, if the character is truly innocent, he will venture into the woods and spend the night naked and unarmed, hugging the twisted oak close to the Shinto shrine. If the character agrees, Hinachi waits until night time and then, in his disembodied head form, goes after the character to kill and eat him.



If the victimised character refuses Hinachi's suggestion, both he and Narai forcefully suggest that the character is guilty and should confess to his crimes. He tells the

characters they should return to wherever they came from and turn-in their comrade, so that the authorities can deal with him.

## Narai, Mujina (see page100, Creatures chapter)

### Characteristics Special Rules

STR	13	<i>Combat Actions:</i>	2
CON	17	<i>Damage Bonus:</i>	+1D2
DEX	12	<i>Magic Points:</i>	17
SIZ	16	<i>Strike Rank:</i>	+15
INT	14		
POW	17		
CHA	11		

### Hit Locations

Hit Locations	AP/HP
Head (19-20)	-/7
L. Arm (16-18)	-/6
R. Arm (13-15)	-/6
Chest (10-12)	-/9
Abdomen (07-09)	-/8
L.Leg (04-06)	-/7
R.Leg (01-03)	-/7

*Basic Skills:* Athletics 35%, Dodge 35%, Perception 35%, Persistence 95%, Resilience 35%, Seduction 85%

*Combat:* Tanto 45%, 1D4+1+1D2

*Magic:* Abyssal gaze. When Narai reveals her true form – an abyssal faced monster – the victim must make an Opposed Persistence test against the mujina's Persistence. If he fails, he loses 1D8 points of INT immediately. If the test is fumbled, the INT loss is 2D8. Being reduced to half original INT results in complete insanity

## Hinachi's Hunting

At night, Hinachi goes hunting. He walks down to the household shrine and leaves his body there whilst his head goes off in search of carrion and small animals.

Any character keeping vigil or watching Hinachi closely may spot his nocturnal wanderings. As the head flies through the air, guts trailing from it, it sheds a pale, ghostly opal pallor, like that of the waning moon. If anyone follows the head, Hinachi will be aware of it and seeks a good place for an ambush. He attacks to kill, not wanting any living witness to his true nature.

If Hinachi's true nature is discovered, Narai reveals her own and attacks the remaining characters aiming to cause madness and death.

## The Shrine

The shrine located midway between the village and the house, enshrines a kami of place called Noko-Go. One of the first things the rokuro-kubi and Narai did when they arrived in Sukarō was defile this shrine to neutralise the kami's power. This was an act of spite and stupidity, as well being evil, because without the kami's blessing the

rice crop has failed and the people are lean and hungry; not plump and juicy as Hinachi likes them.

The shrine was defiled by filling the sacred water holder at the entrance to the shrine with blood. The blood has seeped into the wood and now any water that touches it is impure. Thus, everyone who has tried to purify themselves before going to petition the kami has been impure, no matter how ardently they have followed the correct cleansing rite. Because its shrine has been defiled so badly and the people of Sukarō made impure, Noko-Go has retreated almost completely to the spirit realm, where it can see all that happens with utmost clarity but cannot communicate it.

If Noko-Go can be enticed back, it can re-bless the rice crop, which will remove the blight and help restore the plants for next season. The kami can also offer its magic to assist against the rokuro-kubi and mujina. It cannot cure Moritano – that will require the help of Buddhist powers – however it can offer blessings that will assist in the process.

To purify the shrine it needs to be washed, ceiling to floor, with fresh, pure water drawn from one of the nearby streams. Next, the pale standing outside the

## Hinachi, Rokuro-kubi (see page 102, Creatures chapter)

### Human Form

Characteristics	Special Rules	Hit Locations	AP/HP
STR 16	<i>Combat Actions:</i> 4	Head (19-20)	-/6
CON 17	<i>Damage Bonus:</i> +1D2	L. Arm (16-18)	-/5
DEX 19	<i>Magic Points:</i> 17	R. Arm (13-15)	-/5
SIZ 11	<i>Strike Rank:</i> +14	Chest (10-12)	1/8
INT 8		Abdomen (07-09)	1/7
POW 17		L.Leg (04-06)	-/6
CHA 7		R.Leg (01-03)	-/6

*Basic Skills:* Athletics 78%, Courtesy 35%, Dodge 55%, Influence 46%, Perception 66%, Persistence 57%, Resilience 81%

*Combat:* Tachi, 50%, 1D10+1+1D2; Neck, 60%, 1D6+1D2 (bite)

### Rokuro-kubi Form

Characteristics	Special Rules	Hit Locations	AP/HP
STR 16	<i>Combat Actions:</i> 4	Head (18-20)	-/6
CON 17	<i>Damage Bonus:</i> +1d2	Entrails (01-17)	-/7
DEX 19	<i>Magic Points:</i> 17		
SIZ 11	<i>Strike Rank:</i> +14		Regenerates 1HP per Hour
INT 8	<i>Movement:</i> 6m (flying)		
POW 17			
CHA 7			

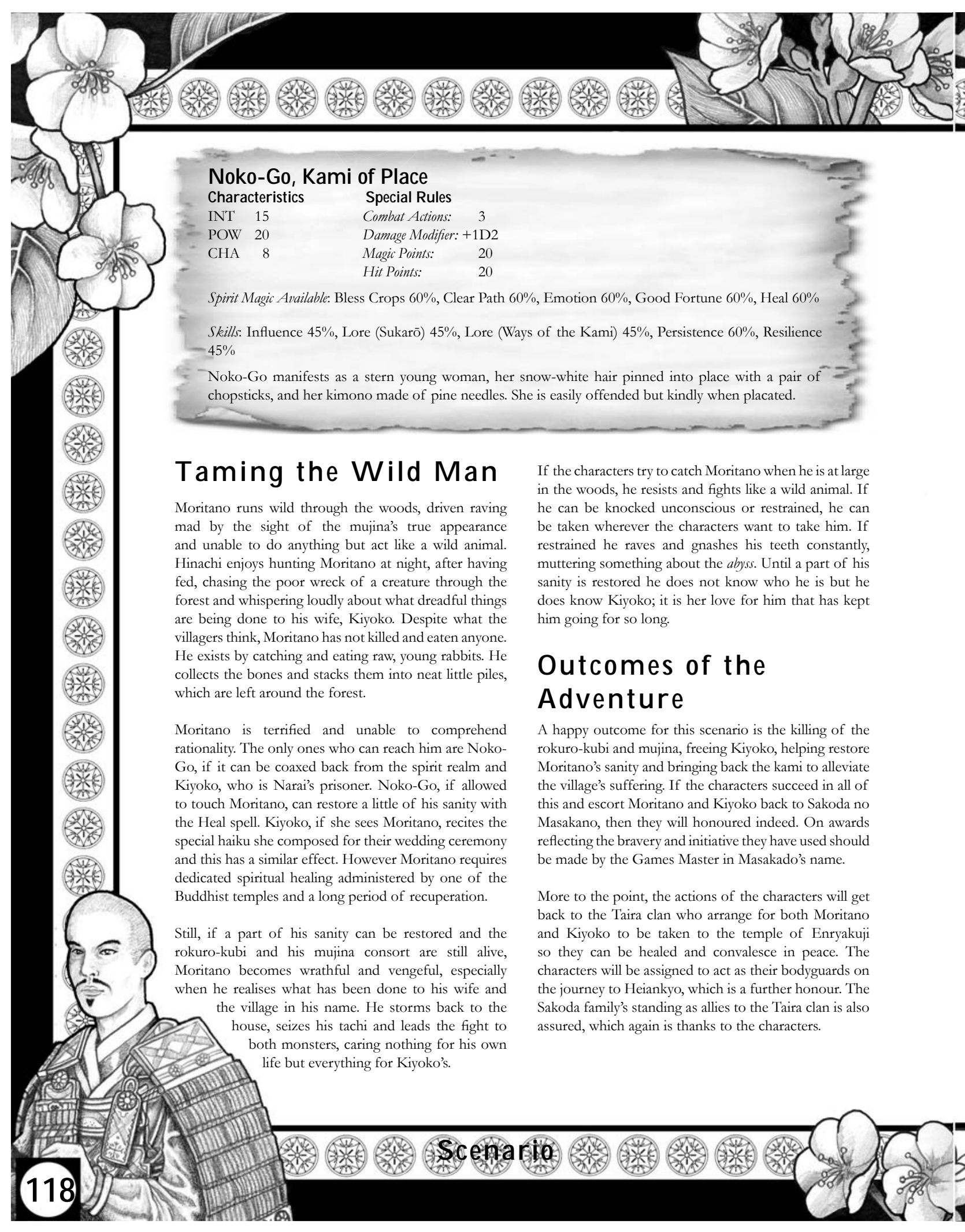
*Basic Skills:* Athletics 78%, Dodge 75%, Perception 66%, Persistence 57%, Resilience 81%

*Combat:* Neck, 60%, 1D6+1D2 (bite)

*Magic:* Hinachi can cast Animate (Plants) at 40%, up to Magnitude 4 and Damage Resistance up to Magnitude 4 and does so before setting out for a night's hunting.

entrance must be completely replaced so that there are no traces of blood. Of course, the characters will need to know that blood is present in the bucket's timbers and if they check the water, they find it has a slight pinkish tinge to it and has a raw, metallic taste. Lore (Shinto) tests indicate precisely what must be done to purify the shrine or if someone not skilled with Shinto Lore is present Lore (Buddhist Theology) or Lore (World) at a -20% penalty.

Once pure, Noko-Go must be encouraged to return from the spirit world. Only a Shinto priest such as Saito or the headman of the village, Nakachi, can really achieve this and it requires successful tests against Purity, Influence *and* Lore (Shinto) or Lore (Ways of the Kami) to convince Noko-Go to return. If successful though, whoever achieves it receives +20 to their Purity score.



## Noko-Go, Kami of Place

### Characteristics

INT 15  
POW 20  
CHA 8

### Special Rules

*Combat Actions:* 3  
*Damage Modifier:* +1D2  
*Magic Points:* 20  
*Hit Points:* 20

*Spirit Magic Available:* Bless Crops 60%, Clear Path 60%, Emotion 60%, Good Fortune 60%, Heal 60%

*Skills:* Influence 45%, Lore (Sukarō) 45%, Lore (Ways of the Kami) 45%, Persistence 60%, Resilience 45%

Noko-Go manifests as a stern young woman, her snow-white hair pinned into place with a pair of chopsticks, and her kimono made of pine needles. She is easily offended but kindly when placated.

## Taming the Wild Man

Moritano runs wild through the woods, driven raving mad by the sight of the mujina's true appearance and unable to do anything but act like a wild animal. Hinachi enjoys hunting Moritano at night, after having fed, chasing the poor wreck of a creature through the forest and whispering loudly about what dreadful things are being done to his wife, Kiyoko. Despite what the villagers think, Moritano has not killed and eaten anyone. He exists by catching and eating raw, young rabbits. He collects the bones and stacks them into neat little piles, which are left around the forest.

Moritano is terrified and unable to comprehend rationality. The only ones who can reach him are Noko-Go, if it can be coaxed back from the spirit realm and Kiyoko, who is Narai's prisoner. Noko-Go, if allowed to touch Moritano, can restore a little of his sanity with the Heal spell. Kiyoko, if she sees Moritano, recites the special haiku she composed for their wedding ceremony and this has a similar effect. However Moritano requires dedicated spiritual healing administered by one of the Buddhist temples and a long period of recuperation.

Still, if a part of his sanity can be restored and the rokuro-kubi and his mujina consort are still alive, Moritano becomes wrathful and vengeful, especially when he realises what has been done to his wife and the village in his name. He storms back to the house, seizes his tachi and leads the fight to both monsters, caring nothing for his own life but everything for Kiyoko's.

If the characters try to catch Moritano when he is at large in the woods, he resists and fights like a wild animal. If he can be knocked unconscious or restrained, he can be taken wherever the characters want to take him. If restrained he raves and gnashes his teeth constantly, muttering something about the *abyss*. Until a part of his sanity is restored he does not know who he is but he does know Kiyoko; it is her love for him that has kept him going for so long.

## Outcomes of the Adventure

A happy outcome for this scenario is the killing of the rokuro-kubi and mujina, freeing Kiyoko, helping restore Moritano's sanity and bringing back the kami to alleviate the village's suffering. If the characters succeed in all of this and escort Moritano and Kiyoko back to Sakoda no Masakano, then they will be honoured indeed. On awards reflecting the bravery and initiative they have used should be made by the Games Master in Masakado's name.

More to the point, the actions of the characters will get back to the Taira clan who arrange for both Moritano and Kiyoko to be taken to the temple of Enryakuji so they can be healed and convalesce in peace. The characters will be assigned to act as their bodyguards on the journey to Heiankyo, which is a further honour. The Sakoda family's standing as allies to the Taira clan is also assured, which again is thanks to the characters.

## Scenario

## Sakoda no Moritano

### Characteristics Special Rules

STR	16	<i>Combat Actions:</i>	3
CON	14	<i>Damage Bonus:</i>	+1D4
DEX	14	<i>Magic Points:</i>	13
SIZ	16	<i>Strike Rank:</i>	+9
INT	4 (14)	<i>On:</i>	55
POW	13		
CHA	9		

### Hit Locations

Head (19-20)	-/6
L. Arm (16-18)	-/5
R. Arm (13-15)	-/5
Chest (10-12)	-/8
Abdomen (07-09)	-/7
L.Leg (04-06)	-/6
R.Leg (01-03)	-/6

### AP/HP

*Basic Skills:* Bajutsu 60%, Courtesy 75%, Dodge 70%, Influence 53%, Lore (World) 62%, Perception 65%, Persistence 48%, Resilience 75%, Stealth 66%, Throwing 70%, Yabusame 58%

*Advanced Skills:* Command 45%, Meditation 36%, Survival 55%, Tracking 30%

*Combat:* Tachi 68%, 1D10+2+1D4; Dai kyu 72%, 2D8+1+1D4

Moritano is naked when living wild. At the house he has a dō breastplate giving 5 AP to his chest and abdomen but he is unlikely to don it.

If Kiyoko cannot be saved or freed and comes to harm, the characters will not be blamed directly but the Sakoda family's standing with the Taira clan will not be advanced further and it incurs some shame at letting a noble daughter of the Taira come to harm. If Moritano is saved but Kiyoko not, he is grief stricken and commits seppuku out of shame for not protecting her.

As for the evil pair who have afflicted Sukarō, if they are not killed, they vow a to have their vengeance on the characters and the Sakoda family...



# GLOSSARY OF JAPANESE WORDS AND TERMS

*Ainu*: A Caucasian race living on the island of Hokkaido. Considered to be barbarians by the Japanese.

*Akindo*: A merchant.

*Amaterasu*: A major goddess and kami of Shintoism. Amaterasu is revered above all other Shinto gods.

*Amatsu-Tsumi*: A form of Shinto sin.

*Ame-no-Uzume*: The kami of merriment.

*Amida*: A Buddhist deity.

*Ashigaru*: A warrior class drawn from the peasantry or Senmin caste.

*Askoku*: One of the contemplative Buddhas.

*Bajutsu*: The skill of riding and horsemanship.

*Bakku yoraku*: A Buddhist term referring to the alleviation of human suffering.

*Bishamonten*: A Buddhist war god.

*Birui*: A lake in the Kanto plain and the largest in Japan.

*Bojutsu*: The skill of using the staff (bo) in combat.

*Bosatsu*: Mortals who have achieved Buddhist enlightenment.

*Bōzu*: A Buddhist priest.

*Buke*: Minor aristocracy.

*Bushi*: The warrior profession.

*Cha no Yu*: Tea Ceremony.

*Cha*: Tea.

*Chunin*: Ninja clan adviser.

*Dai Sho*: Two swords worn together as a sign of samurai rank.

*Dai-*: a prefix meaning 'Great'.

*Daiitoku*: One of the protective Buddhas.

*Daijo Daijin*: Prime Minister.

*Daijo Kan*: The Department of State.

*Daikokuten*: Buddhist god of warriors and farmers.

*Daimyo*: The ruling head of a clan or family. Daimyo means 'Great Name'.

*Dainagon*: Ministers of State. Chief advisers.

*Dainichi*: One of the contemplative Buddhas.

*Daishonin*: A scribe.

*Dō*: A breastplate.

*Dō-maru*: Literally a 'body wrapper'. Part of ashigaru armour.

*Eboshi*: A conical hat made of paper.

*Enma-O*: Buddhist guardian of Hell.

*Fudō*: One of the protective Buddhas.

*Fuji*: Mount Fujiyama, highest of the Japanese mountains.

*Gaikoukan*: A diplomat.

*Gakusha*: A scholar.

*Ganjitsu*: New Year and a Buddhist/Shinto festival.

*Genin*: Ninja clan member.

*Geta*: Clog-like footwear.

*Gin*: A silver coin.

*Go-Chi*: Collective name for the contemplative Buddhas.

*Gōzanze*: One of the protective Buddhas.

*Gundari*: One of the protective Buddhas.

*Gyobu-sho*: Ministry of Justice.

*Hachi-maki*: A headband.

*Hachiman*: A Buddhist and Shinto war deity.

*Haidate*: Armoured thigh guards.

*Hanamatsuri*: Buddha's birthday, a festival day.

*Hangan*: A magistrate.

*Haori*: An everyday jacket.

*Happuri*: A facemask, attached to a kabuto.

*Heian*: The classical period of Japan, lasting between 794 and 1192. The default period for *RuneQuest: Land of the Samurai*.

*Heihaku*: A paper representation of a kami's presence. Found in Shinto shrines.

*Heimin*: The peasant class. Also called *hyakusho*.

*Hi*: Element of Fire.

*Higan*: The spring equinox. A Shinto festival.

*Hiki-me*: A signalling arrow.

*Hiragana*: One of the Japanese alphabets.

*Hitsuji*: A goat.

*Hokkaido*: Northernmost Island of the Japanese archipelago.

*Hondo*: Main hall of a Buddhist temple.

*Hongaku shiso*: The Tendai Buddhist belief in Original Enlightenment.

*Hononinigi*: A divine prince sent to Shikoku with the Imperial Regalia.

*Honshū*: Largest of Japan's islands.

*Hyakoushou*: A farmer.

*Hyobu-sho*: Ministry of Military Affairs.

*I*: A boar.

*Iajutsu*: Skill of drawing a sword and cutting in the same motion.

*Inari*: A Buddhist and Shinto deity.

*Insei*: 'Cloistered Emperor'. The Insei system allowed an Emperor to retire but still continue to wield power without occupying the office directly.

*Inu*: A dog.

*Isba*: A herbalist and healer.

*Iwashimizu*: A Shinto festival honouring Hachiman.

*Izanagi*: One of the Creator deities.

*Izanami*: One of the Creator deities.

*Jenmin*: A female bard or entertainer, typically a lady of the Imperial Court.

*Jibu-sho*: The Ministry of Civil Affairs.

*Jikoku*: Buddhist guardian of the east. One of the Shi Daitennō.

*Jinaimachi*: A Buddhist temple town.

*Jinja*: A Shinto shrine.

*Jizo*: A Buddhist deity – patron of travellers.

*Jojiki*: A peddler or travelling tinker.

*Jojutsu*: The skill of using the short staff (jo) in combat.

*Jonin*: Ninja clan elder.

*Jujutsu*: A Martial Art similar to judo.

*Juzenkai*: The 10 precepts of Buddhism.

*Ka*: Element of Metal.

*Kabuto*: A helmet.

*Kaishakunin*: Assistant present in the seppuku ritual.

*Kamajutsu*: Use of the flail in combat.

*Kami*: A nature spirit, revered by the Shinto religion. A kami can be anything that inspires awe and wonderment.

*Kami-na-zuki*: The Month of No Gods. A Shinto festival.

*Kanji*: The formal Japanese alphabet.

*Kanko*: Bureaucrats and servants of the government ministries.

*Kanname-sai*: A Shinto festival honouring Inari. Harvest Festival.

*Kannushi*: A Shinto priest.

*Karma*: Buddhist fortune and worth.

*Kasa*: A conical hat made of straw.

*Kataginu*: Court jacket or tabard.

*Katakana*: One of the Japanese alphabets.

*Katana*: Longsword.

*Kempo*: The headquarters or main temple, of a Buddhist sect.

*Kenin*: Lesser advisers, bureaucrats and servants to Buke families.

*Kenjutsu*: Swordsmanship.

*Ki*: Element of Wood. Also a reference to powers of

supreme concentration.

*Kimono*: Everyday Japanese robes, worn wrapped around the body.

*Kiri-sute-comen*: Killing and Walking Away; the right of the samurai to kill disrespectful people of lower social standing.

*Koku*: Amount of rice needed to sustain a person for one year. Also refers to one gold coin.

*Komoku*: Buddhist guardian of the west. One of the Shi Daitennō.

*Kongō-Yasba*: One of the protective Buddhas.

*Kote*: Armoured sleeve.

*Kuge*: Aristocracy.

*Kuji-kuri*: Ninja sign language.

*Kukai*: A Heian priest who developed the Shingon sect of Buddhism.

*Kunai-sho*: Ministry of the Imperial Household.

*Kunitsu-Tsumi*: A form of Shinto sin.

*Kusanagi*: One of the three heavenly treasures forming part of the Imperial Regalia. Kusanagi is a sword.

*Kusarijutsu*: Use of the two handed flail in combat.

*Kwaidan*: A ghost; an unquiet spirit.

*Kyujutsu*: Archery.

*Kyushu*: One of the four main Japanese islands.

*Ma*: A Horse.

*Mabisashi*: A helmet (kabuto) crest.

*Magatama*: One of the three heavenly treasures forming part of the Imperial Regalia. Magatama are the jewels.

*Marishiten*: Buddhist war goddess: the Divine Light.

*Masakarjutsu*: Use of the axe.

*Matsuri*: Name for any religious festival.

*Mi*: A serpent.

*Minbu-sho*: The Ministry of People Affairs.

*Mizu*: Element of Water.

*Mon*: Clan or family's heraldic device. Also used as a term for a copper coin.

*Myō-ō*: Collective name for the protective Buddhas.

*Mzu*: A year.

*Naginata*: Polearm.

*Naginatajutsu*: Use of the naginata or similar polearm.

*Nakatsukasa-sho*: Ministry of the Centre – legal clearing house.

*Nawanukejutsu*: The art of escaping from bonds.

*Ne*: A rat.

*Nekode*: Hooked gloves used for climbing.

*Nio*: Guardian statue of a Buddhist temple gate.

*Nusubito*: A thief.

*Obi*: A belt or sash.

*O-bon*: Buddhist festival of the dead.

*Okura-sho*: The Treasury.

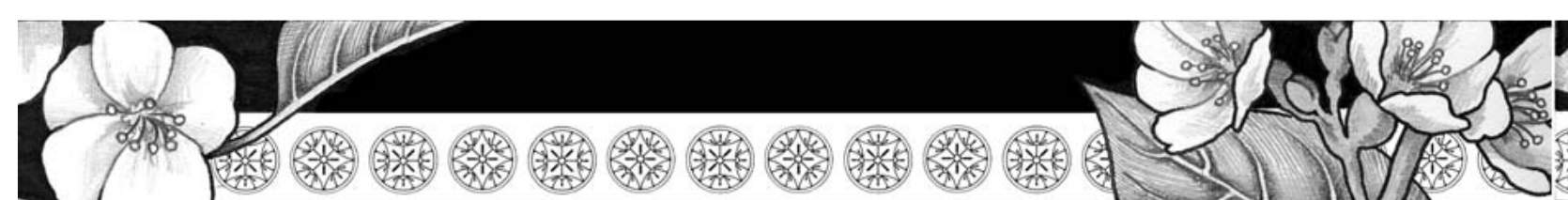
*On*: Personal honour.  
*Onojutsu*: Use of the two handed axe (ono).  
*Pagoda*: A tiered structure found in Buddhist temples.  
*Reijin*: A male bard or entertainer.  
*Ryobu-Shinto*: A mixture of the Buddhist and Shinto faiths.  
*Ryoko*: Imperial Court bureaucrats.  
*Ryomin*: Social caste – ‘Good Citizens’.  
*Ryoushi*: A fisherman.  
*Sadajin*: Minister of the Left.  
*-sama*: An honorific suffix to a given name, implying great courtesy.  
*Samurai*: The warrior caste of Japan. Samurai means ‘To Serve’.  
*San Senjin*: Buddhist war gods.  
*-san*: A honorific suffix to a given name.  
*Sangaku shinko*: ‘Mountain beliefs’ – the reverence for all Japanese mountains.  
*Saru*: A monkey.  
*Senmin*: Social caste – ‘Low Citizens’.  
*Sennin*: Head of a ninja clan.  
*Sensei*: A Teacher.  
*Seppuku*: Ritual suicide.  
*Setsubun*: A Shinto festival marking the end of winter.  
*Shaka*: One of the contemplative Buddhas.  
*Shi Daitennō*: The collective name for the Four Heavenly Kings of Buddhism.  
*Shikibu-sho*: Ministry of Ceremony.  
*Shikoku*: One of the four main Japanese islands.  
*Shikoro*: A neckguard, attached to a kabuto.  
*Shingon*: A particular sect of Buddhism.  
*Shoen*: Ownership of land and property.  
*Shogaku*: The art of calligraphy.  
*Shogun*: Military dictator but also a term used for a General.  
*Shokunin*: A craftsman or artisan.  
*Sō*: A monk, typically Buddhist.  
*Sodegaramijutsu*: Use of the Polearm; distinct from sojutsu.

*Sobei*: The warrior-monks of the Buddhist temples.  
*Sojutsu*: Use of the spear (yari).  
*Suifu*: A sailor – distinct from a fisherman (Ryoushi).  
*Suitengu*: A kami of the sea.  
*Suneate*: Armoured shin guards.  
*Susano'o*: Brother of Amaterasu, a Shinto deity.  
*Tachi*: Longsword.  
*Tabo*: One of the contemplative Buddhas.  
*Tajikara-O*: A Shinto deity.  
*Tamon*: Buddhist guardian of the north. One of the Shi Daitennō.  
*Tantojutsu*: Use of the dagger.  
*Tatsu*: A dragon.  
*Teishin*: A courtier, typically of noble birth.  
*Togi*: An acrobat or entertainer.  
*Toki*: One hour.  
*Tora*: A tiger.  
*Tori*: A cockerel.  
*Tori-oi*: Falconry.  
*Tsuchi*: Element of Earth.  
*Tsukimi*: A Shinto festival.  
*Tsukuyomi*: Brother of Amaterasu, a Shinto deity.  
*U*: A hare.  
*Udajin*: Minister of the Right.  
*Ushi*: An ox.  
*Wakazashi*: Shortsword.  
*Watakushi*: A barbed arrow – ‘bowlraker’.  
*Ya-avase*: An arrow duel.  
*Yabusame*: The art of archery from horseback.  
*Yakushi*: One of the contemplative Buddhas.  
*Yamabushi*: Adherents of the Shugendo sect of Buddhism; warrior monks.  
*Yata*: One of the three heavenly treasures forming part of the Imperial Regalia. Yata is a mirror.  
*Yoroi*: Samurai armour.  
*Youjutsusha*: A sorcerer.  
*Zasu*: Abbot of a Buddhist monastery or temple.  
*Zōchō*: Buddhist guardian of the south. One of the Shi Daitennō.



# INDEX

- Address 23  
Advanced Spirit Magic from the RuneQuest Spell Book 79  
Akindo (Merchant) 44  
Amaterasu no kami 66  
Amida 61  
Ancestral Kami 77  
Armour 53  
Arrows 59  
Arrows of Heaven 72  
Arrow Duels 84  
Ashigaru 45  
Ashigaru Armour - Dō-Maru 54  
Available Divine Spells 73  
Available Sorcery 81  
Awareness of Hachiman 73  
Bad Karma Penalties 63  
Bakemono 91  
Belt (Obi) 54  
Bishamonten 62  
Blessing of Nio 72  
Blessing of the Myo-O 75  
Bless (X) 80  
Boots and Clogs (Geta) 54  
Bosatsu 61  
Bow, The 23  
Bowel Raker (Watakushi) 59  
Buddhas, The 61  
Buddhism 60  
Buddhism and Purity 63  
Buddhist Divine Spells 74  
Buddhist Magic 73  
Buddhist Sects 63  
Buddhist Sect Skills and Magic 65  
Buke, The 36  
Bushi (Warrior) 44  
Calligraphy (INT+DEX) 50  
Capital Crimes 26  
Castes 36  
Character Creation Checklist 31  
Chronology of the Heian Period 12  
Clans 32  
Clans, Families and Alliances 31  
Clan and Family Dynamics 21  
Clan and Family On 43  
Clan Struggle 106  
Climate 6  
Climbing Pole 90  
Close Combat Weapons 58  
Clothing 54  
Coinage Values 28  
Compounds 88  
Courtesy and Manners 22  
Court Intrigue 106  
Court Tabard (Kataginu) 55  
Crime and Punishment 26  
Currency 28  
Daiitoku 62  
Daikokuten 62  
Daishonin (Scribe) 45  
Dai kyu 58  
Dai Sho 24  
Death 22  
Defeating a Mythical Enemy 107  
Deities 61  
Department of State 25  
Diet 28  
Disguise 87  
Divination (INT) 50  
Divine Spells from the RuneQuest Spell Book 74  
Emperors in the Heian Period 20  
Emperor and Regency 25  
Enma Ō 61  
Entry Equipment 90  
Equipment Quality 53  
Escape (DEX+INT) 88  
Everyday Items 55  
Falconry (INT+DEX) 50  
Families 32  
Families and On 43  
Family Advancement 107  
Female given Names 21  
Firepot 90  
Footwear 23  
From Youth to Retirement 22  
Fudo 62  
Gaikoukan (Diplomat) 46  
Gaining On 42  
Gaki 92  
Gakusha (Scholar) 46  
Gempei Wars: 1180 - 1185 18  
Gender Roles 31  
General Equipment 90  
Ghosts 93  
Gifts and Heirlooms 51  
Go-Chi 62  
Government 24  
Gōzanze 62  
Great Council of State 25  
Gundari 62  
Hachiman 62, 66  
Hangan (Magistrate) 46  
Han kyu 58  
Hats (Eboshi, Kasa and Hachi-Maki) 55  
Heian Period, The 10  
Henge-inu (Dog) 94  
Henge-I (Boar) 94  
Henge-neko (Cat) 94  
Henge-nezumi (Rat) 95  
Henge-saru (Monkey) 95  
Henge-U (Hare) 96  
Hengeyokai 93  
Heraldry (INT) 50  
Historical 107  
Hokkaido 6  
Holy Days 64, 70  
Honsh 7  
Hooked Gloves (Nekode) 90  
Hours of the Day 29  
Hummingbulb (Hiki-me) 59  
Hyakoushou (Farmer) 46  
Iajutsu (DEX) 50  
Imperial Court 36  
Inari 62, 67  
Interpret Mandala 76  
Isha (Herbalists and Healers) 46  
Izanagi 67  
Izanami 67  
Jacket (Haori) 55  
Japanese Calendar and Time 29  
Japanese Elements (Trunks) 29  
Japanese Given Names. 21  
Japanese Hours (Toki) 29  
Japanese Time Divisions 30  
Japanese Zodiacal Signs (Twigs) 29  
Jizo 62  
Jojiki (Peddler) 46  
Kami and Magic 78  
Kami and Powers 76  
Kami of Place and Elements 77  
Kami Spirit Magic 78  
Kannushi (Shinto Priest) 47  
Kappa (River Child) 97  
Killing - Kiri-sute-gomen 26  
Kimono 55  
Kirin (Dragon Horse, Wind Stallion) 98  
Kitsune 99  
Ki Abilities 71  
Kongō-Yasha 62  
Kyushu 7



Language and Literacy 24  
Lineage and Challenges 83  
Lore (Yogen) INT 88  
Losing On 42  
Magic 60, 65  
Magic and Sorcery 108  
Magic Point Sacrifices 69  
Major Kami 77  
Male given Names 21  
Marishiten 62  
Marriage 21  
Meditation (POW) 51  
Melee Weapons 56  
Minor Kami 76  
Money 44  
Mujina 100  
Mukade 100  
New Advanced Skills 50  
New Buddhist Divine Spells 75  
New Kai/Legendary Abilities 72  
New Shinto Divine Spells 80  
Ninja 86, 108  
Ninja-to 90  
Ninja Characters 89  
Ninja Equipment 88  
Nusubito (Thief) 47  
On 41  
Oni (Demon) 101  
Other Kami 68  
Permissible Ki Abilities 71  
Pilgrimages and Quests 109  
Playing a Sorcerer 81  
Polluton Penalties 68  
Prayer of Heaven 80  
Prayer of Nirvana 76  
Prayer of Peace 76, 80  
Prayer of Wisdom 76, 81  
Priesthood, The 37  
Professions 44  
Proof of Loyalty 108  
Provinces, Cities and Towns 9  
Provincial Governors 25  
Purity 60  
Purity Test Modifiers 69  
Ranged Weapons 58, 59  
Reijin (Bard) 47

Rise of the Samurai 11  
Rise of the Warrior Monks 12  
Rokuro-kubi 102  
Role of the Ninja, The 88  
Rope Ladders 90  
Ryōmin Caste 36  
Ryoushi (Fisherman) 47  
Sample On Gains 42  
Sample On Losses 42  
Samurai 44, 82  
Samurai Armour - Yoroi 53  
San Senjin 62  
Senmin Caste 37  
Seppuku 27  
Shikoku 8  
Shingon Buddhism 63  
Shingon Priest and Monk Skills 65  
Shingon Sōhei Skills 65  
Shinobi-kyu 58, 90  
Shinto 65  
Shinto Creation Myth 4  
Shinto Deities 66  
Shinto Magic 76  
Shinto Purity 68  
Shinto Shrines 69  
Shinto Skills and Magic 70  
Shi Daitennō 62  
Shokunin (Craftsman) 48  
Shuten-doji 103  
Sign Language 88  
Skills 49  
Sleeping Draught 89  
Sleight 88  
Smokescreen 88  
Social Outlook 21  
Sōhei 85  
Sōhei and Divine Magic 74  
Sōhei and Yamabushi (Warrior Monk) 48  
Sorcery 81  
Sō and Bōzu (Buddhist Monk and Priest) 48  
Special Techniques 88  
Spirit Magic Spells Available to Kami 78  
Spirit Magic Spells from the Rune-

Quest Spell Book Forbidden to Kami 79  
Standards of Living 28  
Status and Culture Background 38  
Stealth 88  
Suifu (Sailor) 48  
Suitengu 67  
Susano'o 67  
Sword of the Samurai 85  
Tatsu (Dragon) 104  
Tea 28  
Teishin (Courtier) 49  
Temples 63  
Temple Intrigue and Conflict 109  
Tendai Buddhism 63  
Tendai Priest and Monk Skills 65  
Tendai Sōhei Skills 65  
Tengu 105  
Themes for Campaigns 106  
The Japanese Islands 6  
The Myō-ō 62  
The Way of the Horse and the Bow 83  
Three Families 10  
Togi (Acrobat/Entertainer) 49  
Towns and Cities of Japan 8  
Training and Skills 87  
Tsukuyomi 67  
Using Hero Points to Mitigate On Loss 43  
Using Ki Abilities 71  
Using On 41  
Using Purity 68  
Using the Cult Rules for Shinto Priests 70  
Using the Cult Rules for Buddhists 65  
Venom of the Tatsu 89  
Weapons 23, 56, 90  
Weights and Measures 30  
Whirling Blade of Buddha 73  
Worship 64, 69  
Yabusame (DEX) 51  
Yadomejutsu (DEX) 51  
Yari-Nage 58  
Yujutsusha (Sorcerer) 49

# RuneQuest

## *Land of the Samurai*

Set in the Heian Period of Japanese history, when the Shinto faith was starting to give way to Buddhism, when the Samurai were making their climb to power, in a land of legends: Land of the Samurai is a stand alone RuneQuest game, designed for those of you who enjoy a huge pile of reality mixed in with your fantasy.

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