

死の地ノ宮

RuneQuest

Land of

NINJA

下迷さま宇火

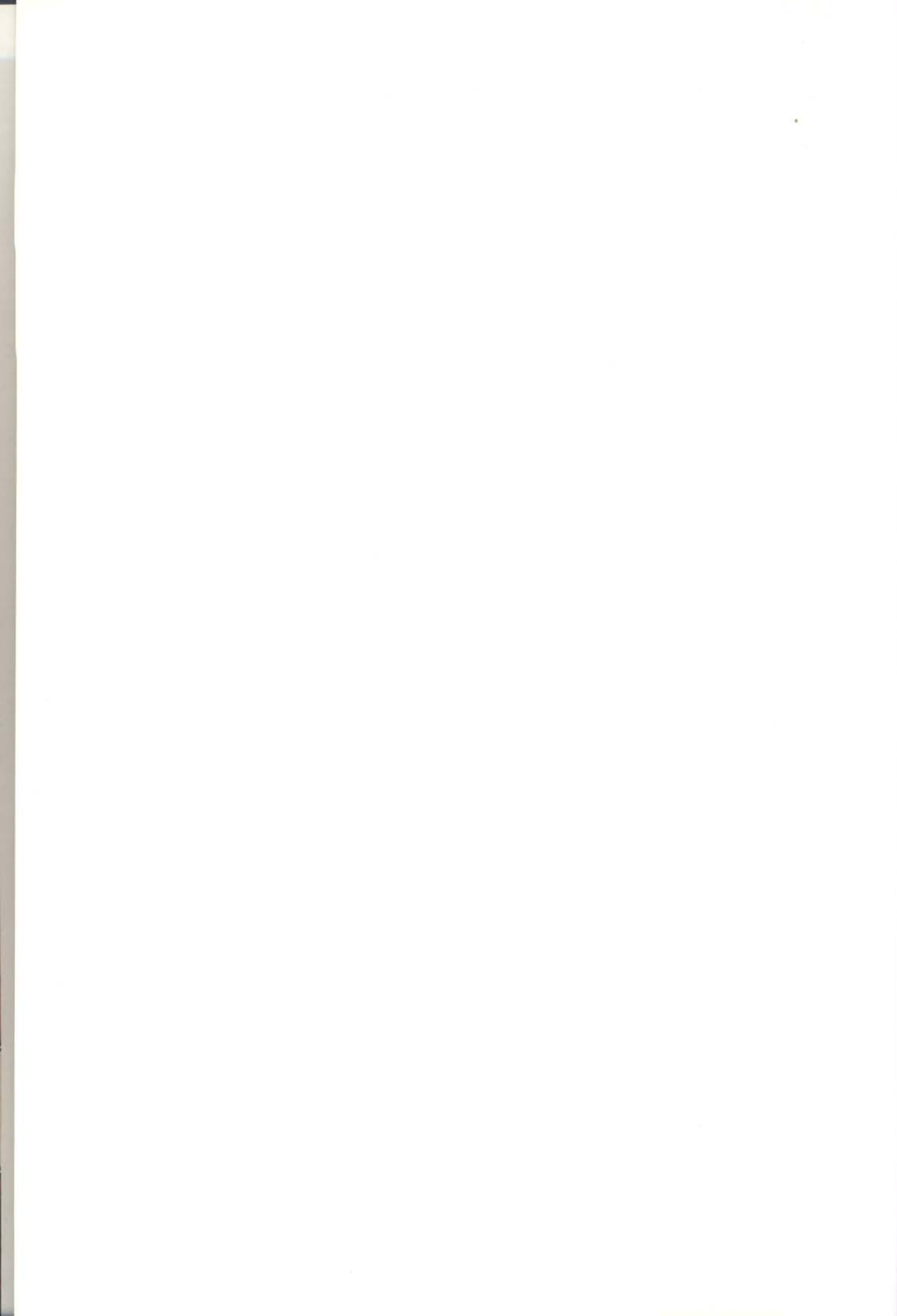
GAMES WORKSHOP



THIRD EDITION

A COMPANION VOLUME TO  
RuneQuest  
Fantasy Roleplaying Adventure







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**NINJA**

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A Companion Volume to RuneQuest Fantasy Roleplay Adventure

Adventure in the Land of Nihon

**THIRD EDITION**  
4th Volume

AUTHORS

Bob Charette, Sandy Petersen

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A Chaosium Game

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# PREFACE

The feudal Japanese mythos is one of the most exciting environments for a roleplaying game. The background is well-documented, and has been visualised by comics and films. The characters are larger than life - the word *samurai* covers everyone from the master swordsman, wielding death at impossible speed, to the incompetent cannon-fodder who mindlessly throws himself into a fray where dozens of his fellows have already been slain. And yet for all that destructive power, there is a simple limitation - HONOUR! To kill or be killed are but opposite sides of the same coin, but to behave dishonourably is to fail in the complete sense of the word.

Now there is *Land Of Ninja*, a chance for decadent Occidentals to adventure in the Land of the Rising Sun. This book expands and refines the rules presented in the three core rulebooks - *RuneQuest Fantasy Roleplay Adventure*, *Advanced RuneQuest* and *RuneQuest Monsters*. It brings *RuneQuest's* attention to detail directly to bear on the potential for adventure in the Far East.

*Land of Ninja* follows the format of the preceding three books in the Games Workshop edition. It provides the various mechanics for converting the *RuneQuest* game into one suitable for adventures in Nihon. Obviously, backgrounds are altered, but there are also changes to magic, to combat (particularly the rules for armour) and to skills.

Although every effort has been made to update this book in this new edition, players may still find references within this volume to different books in the Avalon Hill version of the game. Where references are made to the "Players' Book", "GameMaster's Book" or "Scenario Book", you should normally consult the relevant chapter of this book. References to the "RuneQuest rules" or to the "RuneQuest Players Book" or the "RuneQuest GameMaster's Book" should direct you to the relevant chapters of the *RuneQuest Fantasy Roleplay Adventure* rulebook and the *Advanced RuneQuest* rulebook. The simplest thing to do is to remember that this book builds on the original rules; if you can't find something in this book about a subject, the normal *RuneQuest* rules apply.

And now, outlander, take up your swords! The greatest adventures are just beginning....



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# Introduction

*RuneQuest* Earth is a world of magic, myth, and adventure. While it draws on history, science, and other disciplines for background, its motivations are those of story and legend rather than those of economics and culture. Magic banishes dry science in favor of rich story elements and plot.

There is no set, real-time analog to *RuneQuest* Earth. It is a place where various terrestrial cultures co-exist. In *Land of Ninja* (hereafter referred to simply as NINJA), we can find, for instance, adventures wherein Minamoto Yoshitsune (living historically circa 1170 A.D.) interacts with Tokugawa Ieyasu, shogun (living historically circa 1600 A.D.) and Momotaro, the Peach Boy, who lived only in the minds of men.

Anachronisms are the rule here. Omissions of intent and ignorance are common. Distortions of archaeology, history, and literature are inevitable.

The influence of magic on the world can never be forgotten. On slant15 *RuneQuest* Earth, the friends of the myriad deities wield real power. Thaumaturgists can bend the fabric of reality and create the sorcerers' city of Salamanca, the peaceful land of Prester John, or the visionary dreamland of Cockaigne. The geography may include the ancient realms or ruins of Atlantis, Lemuria, or Thule and the distant realms of Hyperborea, Myrkwood, or Yomi.

The presence of alien races should always be remembered. Things of dream and nightmare stalk the world, lurking just beyond the pathways of men. The wild places are filled with living monsters and intelligent threats. Ancient powers hold sway over ancient territories. Anything might happen.

This is a world for stories. Drama is a primary force. Its purpose is personal involvement with the exotic. Its intent is to give enjoyment.

Enter the magical realm of the imagination and forget that samurai warriors, missionary crusaders, and viking pirates did not co-exist. Get involved. Feel for your character. Be a hero.



## When Is This Campaign?

NINJA is a combination of fact and extrapolation. Cultural details and customs are primarily from the Warring States period of Nihonese history (approximately 1160 to 1615). However, your campaign may take place at any time, and you should feel free to insert anachronisms as you see fit.

Many interesting changes occurred over the course of Nihonese history. In some cases, these affect the rules or background of the game. Chaosium has provided the necessary information to round out your campaign, and permit you to play in whatever era you wish. Still, a wise gamemaster does extra research.

For the purposes of this game, the five main periods of Nihonese history are (the dates given are somewhat arbitrary):

Heroic Japan	-- to 645 A.D.
Imperial and Heian	-- 645-1160 A.D.
Early Warring States	-- 1160-1500 A.D.
Late Warring States	-- 1500-1615 A.D.
Tokugawa	-- 1615-1850 A.D.

**645 A.D.** marks the end of tribal family politics and the shift to imperialism on the Chinese model. It is also near the beginnings of Buddhism in Japan.

**1160 A.D.** marks the shift from Imperial to warrior control of the central government. The wars thereafter never really stop and Japan develops economically, socially, and technologically over the next three centuries. The division at 1500 A.D. is basically one of acknowledging great changes in Japan. The 16th century witnesses the introduction of firearms, mass infantry tactics, a powerful merchant class and their accompanying cities, and white foreigners.

**1615 A.D.** is the start of the later feudal system in all its glory, complete with sophisticated ethics.



## Who Are These People?

NINJA concerns itself with the dominant human culture of feudal Japan, and in particular with the ruling class of that culture, the samurai. Legendary and idealized ways of life are combined with actual historical realities. Various names of races and castes are in use in this supplement to describe portions of the population of the islands. Some overlap in meaning but clear understanding of distinctions between groups will aid your understanding of the culture presented.

**Ainu** — The remnant population of the aboriginal inhabitants of Japan. They are a caucasoid race larger than the Japanese. The men are hairy and sport thick beards. Women wear decorative tattoos around their mouths and on their hands. Ainu skin color is light while hair color is dark. Eye color ranges from light brown to a striking golden color. Their population has been pushed into the northern reaches of the main island of Honshu and onto the northern island of Hokkaido, both generally considered inhospitable by the Japanese. They have little to do with the everyday world of the samurai.

**Buke** — The dominant caste in Nihon. It is primarily composed of samurai but includes petty land-owners and the ronin (disfranchised samurai). Members of this caste are accorded the privilege of wearing the *dai-sho* ("long-short"), a pair of swords.

**Eta** — People who are technically outside the castes of Nihon. They are the lowest of the low and society assigns them all of the dirty, unpleasant, and ritually unpure tasks.

**Heimin** — The lower caste of Nihonese society. Westerners sometimes refer to these folk as peasants, but this caste includes what Europeans would describe as the "middle class" as well. In order of descending social standing, it includes farmers, artisans and craftspeople, and lowly merchants.

**Japan** — The common western term for an Asian archipelago comprising 142,706 square miles, located off the northeastern coast of the continent.

**Japanese** — The ethnic stock which you would recognize today as being Japanese. These people are short and tend to be stocky. Hair color is mostly black or dark auburn. Eyes have a noticeable epicanthic fold and are usually black or dark brown in color. They are the dominant ethnic type.

**Kuge** — The imperial nobles. They rank higher socially than the buke, yet have no real power. Most are bureaucrats within the withered imperial structure or jaded dilettantes.

**Nihon** — The official Japanese name for Japan. Translated, it means "Land of the Rising Sun."

**Nihonese** — An inhabitant of *RuneQuest* Japan.

**Samurai** — The military elite dominating the country as feudal overlords. Specifically, it describes those members of the buke deriving their income from service to a higher lord or by virtue of their own status as great land-owners. Their ethics pervade much of the society.



## Glossary of Terms

**AINU** — Caucasoid barbarian inhabitants of Hokkaido and northern Honshu.

**ASHIGARU** — A commoner trained in the military arts; a non-samurai warrior, always an infantryman.

**BAKUFU** — Military government of Japan under the direction of the Shogun.

**BAKEMONO** — Ghostly goblins or bogeymen; general term for weird creatures.

**BO** — Quarterstaff, full name roku-shaku-bo or six-foot-staff.

**BOSATSU** — A Buddha who has delayed entry to nirvana to help mankind; a Buddhist deity.

**BU** — A silver coin, value 1 koku.

**BUDDHA** — Enlightened one; deity of the Buddhist religion.

**BUKE** — A social caste consisting of the military aristocracy, the samurai. In this game it often refers to the jizamurai and ronin as well.

**BUKKYO-NO-OTERA** — Buddhist temple.

**BUSHI** — A noble warrior; any samurai.

**BUSHIDO** — The Way of the Warrior; the honor code of the samurai; similar in concept to western chivalric codes.

**BUTSUDAN** — "Buddha-box"; a Buddhist shrine in a family home.

**BUTSUDO** — Buddhism, a major Nihonese religion

**CHA-NO-YU** — The art and practice of the tea ceremony; a fine art.



**CHUNIN** — A middleman for a heimin organization; a contact man for a ninja family, overseer of genin; a contact man for a yakuza organization.

**DAIMYO** — A feudal overlord, literally "great name;" minimum income of 10,000 koku.

**DAI-SHO** — The two swords of a samurai, literally "long and short;" wearing of the dai-sho was restricted to buke and physicians.

**DOKA** — Ninja device for holding a live coal, used to warm hands and light fuses.

**ETA** — The untouchables; lowest social caste; those who deal with corpses, excrement, filth, animal slaughtering, etc.; also those outside normal society such as ninja, thieves, and entertainers.

**FUKUSHU** — A blood feud.

**FUNSHI** — Seppuku performed to shame an otherwise untouchable foe.

**GENIN** — A ninja agent.

**GIRI** — Literally "duty;" interlocking code of obligations which drives much of Japanese society.

**GO** — Strategy game popular with buke and kuge corresponds to social niche of chess in the west.

**GOKENIN** — Middle ranking samurai retainer; literally "house man."

**HATAMOTO** — Highest rank of samurai retainer; literally "banner man".

**HEIMIN** — A commoner; social caste of farmers, artisans, and merchants.

**HININ** — Lowest strata of the eta; dealers in deaths and corpses, such as undertakers and executioners.

**HIRAGANA** — Phonetic alphabet for Japanese; used for legal documents, Shinto texts, etc.

**HOJOJUTSU** — Techniques of rapid binding of foes; a manipulation skill.



**I CHING** — Taoist book of divination used in a sorcerous ritual.

**IAIJUTSU** — Fast-draw skill with the katana; a manipulation skill.

**JIGAI** — Ritual suicide; reserved for female members of the buke caste; performed by slitting the throat.

**JIIN** — A Buddhist temple.

**JINGA** — Shinto shrine.

**JITTE** — Metal truncheon with sword-catcher; used as symbol of authority by police officers.

**JIZAMURAI** — Farmer samurai; corresponds roughly to European "landed gentry."

**JO** — Short club or baton, used like a mace.

**JONIN** — Head of a ninja family.

**KACHI** — Lower ranking members of a samurai clan.

**KAGO** — A palanquin, or sedan chair, used by wealthy for travel.

**KAMA** — Farmer's sickle; used as weapon when necessary; edged weapon component of a kusari-gama.

**KAMI** — Literally "superior being;" applies to Shinto deities and animistic spirits; used to designate lord of a locality.

**KAMIDANA** — "god-shelf;" shinto shrine found in a private home.

**KANJI** — Chinese pictographic writing; used for Buddhist texts, sorcerous texts, imperial documents, etc.

**KANNUSHI** — Shinto priest serving as full-time keeper of a shrine.

**KANSHI** — Seppuku performed to reprove the samurai's lord.



**KARMA** — Good or bad "luck" in this life as reward or punishment due to actions in previous lives; fate.

**KATAKANA** — Phonetic alphabet for writing Japanese; used for common documents, street signs, public notices, etc.

**KATAKIUCHI** — Legal vendetta.

**KATANA** — Samurai sword; the "dai" of dai-sho.

**KAWA-NAGA** — A rope and grappling hook, used as a weapon by ninja.

**KENJUTSU** — The martial art of the sword; a weapon skill.

**KISERU** — A solid metal smoking pipe sometimes used as a weapon, and occasionally even fitted with handguards. It is usually used by yakuza and other lowlifes.

**KIRISUTEGOMEN** — The right of a samurai to immediately kill a member of a lower caste who is acting improperly; invoked for insults, real or imagined; literally, "killing and going away."

**KOBAN** — A gold coin, value 3 koku.

**KOBUN** — Member of a yakuza clan.

**KOKU** — Measure of rice sufficient to feed one man for one year, approximately 5 bushels; a measure of wealth; term can refer to actual rice or the equivalent value in goods or money.

**KOSHIGUMI** — A favored individual in a samurai clan who is not necessarily a member of that clan.

**KUGE** — Nobleman of the imperial aristocracy; kuge outrank samurai socially but few hold actual political or military power.

**KUJI-KURI** — Ninja sign language.

**KUSARI-GAMA** — A weapon consisting of a sickle (-gama) and a length of chain (kusari) or rope with a weighted end; a peasant's weapon.



**KYUNIN** — Higher ranking members of a samurai clan, usually consisting of the lord's family, the council of elders, and any koshigumi.

**KYUTETSU-SHOGE** — A ninja weapon consisting of a hooked knife and a weight or ring linked by a rope.

**MANDALA** — An mystic, symbol-encrusted object used by a Nihonese sorcerer instead of a familiar.

**MASAKARI** — A battle-axe.

**MATSURI** — A festival.

**MIKADO** — The divine emperor of Japan; literally, "heavenly gate or road."

**MON** — A copper coin (value 1 *RuneQuest* penny), 360 mon equals 1 koku; also a heraldic device.

**MYO-O** — Vanquishers of evil; Buddhist deities.

**NAGINATA** — Polearm with sword-like blade on the end.

**NAWANUKEJUTSU** — Techniques of escape from bindings; an agility skill.

**NEKODE** — A ninja weapon and climbing device.

**NENGO** — An era, a time period of variable length.

**NIHON** — The Japan of *RuneQuest's* Earth.

**NINJA** — Member of that counterculture; assassin; spy; saboteur.

**NINJATO** — Ninja sword; straight-bladed version of the katana.

**NINJO** — A term referring to the more tender of human feelings such as love and mercy; in Japanese tragedies ninjo often conflicts with giri resulting in the death of the hero.

**NIRVANA** — State of non-existence sought by Buddhists.

**NODACHI** — Large form of the katana; always used with two hands.

**NUNCHAKU** — Jointed end of a grain flail, used as a weapon.

**OBAN** — A gold coin, value 10 koku.

**ONI** — A demon.

## Pronunciations

A number of letters are pronounced differently in the Japanese language than in modern English. For those who care to pronounce them correctly, these approximations are provided. Remember that Japanese words have no emphasized syllables and all syllables are pronounced, even if "swallowed" by the rapidly speaking Japanese. Note that Japanese has no plurals. Thus one *ninja*, two *ninja*, etc.

**a** as in *father*.

**e** as in *they*.

**i** as a long *e* as in *meet*.

**u** has its long sound as in *rule*.

**o** as in *no*.

**ai** as long *i* as in *aisle*.

**au** as *ow* as in *cow*.

**ei** as *ay* as in *ray*.

**ch** as in *cheek*.

**ts** is blended together as in *cats*, thus *tsuki* sounds more like *sue-key*.

**n** as final letter is not pronounced clearly and the vowel before it is nasalized, as in the French word *bon*.

**r** is pronounced with the tip of the tongue giving a sound midway between an English *r* and *l*.



**OYABUN** — Head of a yakuza family; head of any heimin organization.

**RI** — Measure of distance equal to 2.4 miles.

**RISSHI** — An underpriest at a Buddhist temple.

**RONIN** — Member of buke caste not in service to a lord; ronin are technically outside Japanese society.

**SAIMINJUTSU** — Ninja hypnotic technique, in the game a sorcery spell.

**SAKE** — Alcoholic beverage made from fermented rice; usually served warm.

**SAMURAI** — Member of the buke caste owing service to a lord; literally "servant."

**SEPPUKU** — Ritual suicide; specifically for male members of the buke caste, self- evisceration.

**SHAKU** — Measure of distance roughly equal to 1 foot.

**SHINOBI-ZUE** — A stick or staff concealing a weapon, used by ninja.

**SHIKKEN** — The title used by the Hojo clan regents of the shogun.

**SHINTO** — Native animistic religion of Japan.

**SHOCHU** — A potent alcoholic drink made from distilled sake dregs.

**SHOGUN** — Military ruler of Japan; full title is *Sei-tai-shogun*; literally, "great barbarian-subduing generalissimo."

**SOHEI** — Martial monks maintained as troops by some Buddhist temples.

**SOJO** — An abbot of a Buddhist temple.

**SORYO** — An ordinary Buddhist priest.

**SUMOTORI** — Sumo wrestlers; usually rough, vulgar fellows, yet well regarded as athletic celebrities; retired wrestlers occasionally fall into work as yakuza enforcers.

**TANTO** — Knife or dagger.

**TEN** — Heavenly guardians; Buddhist deities.

**TESSEN** — A metal or metal-reinforced fan, used as a weapon by samurai.

**TETSUBO** — A large staff of metal or metal-reinforced wood.

**TETSUBISHI** — Small caltrops used by ninja to discourage pursuit.

**TOKI** — Japanese division of time, equals 2 western hours.

**TONFA** — Crank handle for a millstone, used as a weapon by the heimin.

**TORII** — Distinctive arch at entrance to Shinto shrines.

**WA** — Inner harmony; the sense of peace gained by being one with the world.

**WAKIZASHI** — Short sword; the "sho" of the dai-sho.

**WAKO** — Pirate, buccaneer, or viking-style raider.

**YADOMEJUTSU** — Martial art of cutting down or parrying arrows; a manipulation skill.

**YAKUZA** — The professional criminals of Nihon; literally "gambler" from early occupation; comparable to the Mafia in origin, style, and interests.

**YAMABUSHI** — A martial monk of a Buddhist sect, often more mystically inclined than the more common sohei martial monks.

**YARI** — Japanese name for a spear.

**YOGEN** — Study of mysterious powders, drugs, and compounds used by the ninja; a knowledge skill.

**YOMI** — The Shinto underworld.



# Creating An Adventurer

The samurai of medieval Japan present an image to western eyes that is simultaneously highly civilized and brutally barbaric. Their arts are advanced, with a wider esthetic appreciation than European contemporaries, while their laws stipulate the death penalty for slight crimes or even simple failure to carry out a command. The rules of their culture seem strange and harsh to outsiders.

The samurai ethic holds many concepts that we find familiar and even admirable. It honors filial duty, loyalty, and courage, as well as artistic and spiritual accomplishment. It is in the understanding and practice of these ideals that differences between our cultures emerge. Yet, the samurai are human, and each is different from the next. Some are ruthless, unyielding, and bloodthirsty. Others are humble, generous, and mild. Where some would never permit themselves the slightest departure from the samurai code as they saw it, others fail the code in a minor aspect in order to serve a greater aspect more fully.

Your samurai character's personality can be founded on any specific behavior pattern you wish. The results of your character's actions will depend upon the gamemaster and campaign style. Duplicity and backstabbing can serve great lords but failure or exposure of such methods could result in an order to commit seppuku. A campaign steeped in such treachery will see few characters live long. The pressures of the social system, and the righteous wrath of the gods, provide reins to control such behavior. If not, some true hero will surely be the downfall of such murderous antisocial characters.



The land of Nihon offers wonderful opportunities for roleplaying heroes out to prove their nobility and courage. The rigid social structure makes adventures involving characters of different social classes difficult, so beginners are encouraged to play adventurers of the same caste when they are to act as a group. If all are buke, a samurai's service to his lord provides an easy entry to adventure. Other classes can find a variety of adventures in Nihon: travel through a fascinating land on business or a pilgrimage to a famous shrine; achieve renown as the master of a craft, art, or martial skill; or seek fortune in the untamed regions of the north. NINJA roleplayers may find themselves in an unusual situation if they accurately portray that caste's common disdain for money — an exotic roleplaying situation for beginners.

Create a samurai or other Nihonese adventurer. Set out on the Tokaido road to the intricate and intriguing land of the rising sun. Enjoy yourself.

## Creation Notes

Your gamemaster may impose limitations on a character's origin. This is most commonly done to give a reason for the characters to be, and stay, together. Check with him. Some possible demands which he could make include: having all adventurers come from one family or clan; having all be samurai in service to the same lord (possibly a more experienced player character); or having all characters begin with the same occupational or social background.

Before play, you should think about your character's life objectives. Every character's motivations differ. Does he intend always to fight to the death, content with accumulating whatever glory he can that way? Does she want to acquire a stipend or nice plot of land and settle down? Will he be content to be a loyal samurai to a minor lord or will he seek to become a daimyo in his own right? Does she want to be a monster slayer, or an ascetic priest, or a famous artist? Does he want to travel throughout Nihon or beyond? Does he want to get married and raise a family?

This knowledge will help you to roleplay better. It might necessitate retiring your character from active play if he achieves his goals, but that is often the point of roleplaying anyway. Don't be afraid of starting a new character — the objective of roleplaying is not always to play a character to his death, but to play the most exciting moments of the character's life story. When it is time for your hero to live happily ever after, then it is time to move on to a new story, with a new hero.

Note that this system only allows characters to come from the main islands. It also limits players to Japanese characters. If gamemasters wish to have characters from the smaller islands or other lands settled by the Japanese, this must be done independently of this table.

Ainu characters should only be allowed by special arrangement. Their culture would be Primitive, although fishing and farming occupations would be available.

Following each provincial name is a reference to an Occupation Table. After determining the homeland of the character, go to the appropriate Occupation Table for that land unless the gamemaster has specified starting occupations for the characters.

**Characteristics:** Nihonese characters subtract 2 points from SIZ (due to their smaller stature). They add 1 to POW since Nihon, land of the eight thousand myriads of deities, is rife with magic. This gives them a potential POW of 23. All other statistics are figured normally.

**Names:** all people in Japan have given names. Males of the kuge and buke have names that are just names. The personal names of females of these castes are derived from common nouns or adjectives, often with the "-ko" ending. These worthies always have a family name as well. The family name is placed before the given name. Thus, Benkei of the Wachi clan is called Wachi Benkei.

Members of the heimin and eta have neither family nor clan name. The personal names of persons of the lower castes are often derived from nouns or adjectives that refer to their appearance, profession, personality, or preferences. In essence, nicknames may serve as their names. Such folk are sometimes further identified by a phrase identifying their place of origin. A commoner may well begin play with a given name and then acquire a nickname during the course of the game (thus, an unfortunate who lost the sight of one eye from a sword slash might be named Blind Ichi).

Some people change their names many times in their lifetime. Tokugawa Ieyasu was known as Matsudaira Motoyasu in 1560, and was born under still another name. Also, a name change takes place anytime a person enters a Buddhist order. Adventurers should be able to change their names as their fortunes rise (and fall).

Japanese rarely call each other by their given names, unless they are very close friends. Samurai and nobles are generally known by their titles (of which there are a profusion). No one ever calls their superiors by name. The emperor is never mentioned by name by anybody. No Japanese would ever say Emperor Hirohito. They say Tenno Heika. Lists of deceased emperors are posthumous names — the names used while alive. Buke, too, can be known by where they are from as well as their title. Hence, "the Rokuhara Priest."

## Men's Names (aristocratic)

Agatamori, Akimitsu, Akira, Arinori, Azumabito, Bakin, Benkei, Buntaro, Chikafusa, Chikayo, Chuemon, Emishi, Emon, Fuhito, Fujifusa, Fujitaka, Fusasaki, Gidayu, Gongoro, Hakatoko, Hamanari, Haruhisa, Hideharu, Hideo, Hidetanda, Hideyoshi, Hirotsugu, Hitomaru, Iemitsu, Ienobu, Ieyasu, Ieyoshi, Imoko, Iwao, Iwazumi, Junkei, Kageharu, Kagemasa, Kahei, Kamako, Kanemitsu, Katsumi, Katsuyori, Kazunori, Keisuke, Kintaro, Kiyomori, Kiyosuke, Komaro, Koremasa, Koreyasu, Kuronushi, Kyuso, Mabuchi, Maro, Masahide, Masamitsu, Michifusa, Mitsukane, Miyamoto, Mochiyo, Morinaga, Munetaka, Murashige, Nagafusa, Nagate, Nakahira, Naoshige, Narihiro, Oguromaro, Okimoto, Okura, Omaro, Otondo, Rokuemon, Sadakata, Sanehira, Sanetomo, Sanzo, Saru, Shigenobu, Shigeuji, Shoetsu, Sukemasa, Tadabumi, Tadashiro, Takatoshi, Tameyori, Taneo, Taneyoshi, Togama, Tomomasa, Toshifusa, Toyonari, Tsunayoshi, Tsunetane, Uchimaro, Ujihiro, Umakai, Watamaro, Yakamochi, Yasumori, Yorrie, Yoritomo, Yoshiie, Yoshisune, Yoshitane, Yoshizumi, Yukihira.

## Buddhist Men's Names

Chomei, Dosan, Gekkai, Gennai, Issai, Jikkyo, Jozen, Jussai, Kazan, Nambo, Razan, Rikyu, Ryokai, Shingen, Shozen, Tensui, Zuiken.

Buddhist priests always took names read in Sino-Japanese style rather than pure Japanese. Players should keep in mind that becoming a Buddhist priest does not necessarily inhibit violent activity. Buddhists do not always practice what they preached.

## Women's Names (aristocratic)

Akazome, Akiko, Ayame, Chika, Chizu, Cho, Fuji, Hamako, Hana, Hanazono, Hiromusi, Hisae, Hisayo, Imako, Inoe, Ishi, Izuko, Jun, Kagami, Kame-hime, Kameko, Kaneko, Kawa, Kawanomu, Keiko, Kenshi, Kiku, Kimiko, Kogin, Kogo, Komachi, Kozakura, Kumiko, Kusuriko, Machi, Mariko, Masago, Masako, Masuko, Matsukaze, Midori, Mineko, Miwa, Miyako, Miyoko, Mura, Nari, Ochobo, Oki, Onshi, Reiko, Renshi, Rin, Ruri, Sachi, Sadako, Sakura, Seki, Sen-hime, Senshi, Setsuko, Shikibu, Shina, Shizuyo, Shizue, Sugi, Suki, Taka, Takara, Tamako, Teika, Tokiwa, Tokuko, Tomoe, Towika, Tsukinoyo, Umeko, Umeno, Wakana, Yasuko, Yoshiko, Yukinoyo, Yukio.

It is possible to make up new names. Read through the lists and note how there are many compound names, especially those which use the prefixes Tada-, Yoshi-, Masa-, Hide; and the suffixes -taro, -ko, -masa, and -shiro. Although those in the list do not reflect it, most women's names would normally end in "-ko" or "-nomu" in normal usage. Combine them or others to make a distinctive name.

## Family Names

Abe, Adachi, Akamatsu, Akimoto, Akizuki, Aoki, Arima, Asano, Ashikaga, Ashina, Baba, Bessho, Chiba, Chikusa, Chosokabe, Daibutsu, Date, Egawa, Enomoto, Fujita, Fujiwara, Furata, Gamo, Goto, Hanawa, Hara, Hasekura, Hashiba, Hatakeyama, Hatano, Hayashi, Hiraga, Hisamatsu, Hojo, Honda, Hondo, Honjo, Hori, Hoshina, Hosokawa, Ichibashi, Iga, Ii, Iizasa, Iijichi, Ikeda, Imagawa, Imai, Ina, Inaba, Inagaki, Inoue, Ishida, Ishikawa, Itagaki, Itami, Ito, Iwaki, Iwakura, Iwasa, Izumi, Kabayama, Kada, Kagawa, Kaieda, Kajitori, Kamei, Kamitsukenu, Kamiya, Kanamori, Katagiri, Kato, Katsura, Kawada, Kawaguchi, Kawase, Kibe, Kido, Kimura, Kinoshita, Kira, Kitabatake, Kitagaki, Kiyowara, Ko, Kobori, Kojima, Kono, Koremune, Kosaka, Kuchiki, Kudo, Kumagaya, Kuroda, Kurokawa, Kurushima, Kuwayama, Kuze, Maeda, Maki, Makimura, Makita, Manabe, Marubashi, Marumo, Matsudaira, Matsui, Matsukura, Matsunaga, Matsushita, Matsuura, Minamoto, Miura, Miyake, Miyoshi, Mizuno, Mizutani, Mogami, Mori, Morioka, Munakata, Murakami, Murasaki, Nabeshima, Nagai, Nagao, Nagasaki, Nagoshi, Naito, Nakamura, Nakatomi, Nambu, Naoe, Narita, Nasu, Nawa, Nigao, Nikki, Nishina, Nitta, Niwa, Oba, Oda, Ogasawara, Ogawa, Ohashi, Oishi, Okabe, Okamoto, Okuda, Omura, Onakatomi, Ono, Onoki, Oseki, Oseko, Ota, Otani, Otawara, Otomo, Oyama, Rokkaku, Rokugo, Ryuzoji, Sagara, Saigo, Sakai, Sakakibana, Sakano, Sanada, Sano, Sasa, Sasaki, Satake, Satomi, Sengoku, Shiba, Shibata, Shimazu, Shinjo, Soejima, Suganuma, Suwa, Tachibana, Tada, Tagaya, Taira, Takahashi, Takayama, Takeda, Takenaka, Takiwaki, Tanaka, Tanuma, Terazawa, Toda, Togashi, Toki, Tokugawa, Tomita, Toyama, Toyotomi, Tsugaru, Tsukushi, Uemura, Ueno, Uesugi, Ukita, Urakami, Usami, Utsunomiya, Wada, Wakebe, Wakiya, Wakizaka, Yamada, Yamaga, Yamagata, Yamaguchi, Yamana, Yoshida, Yoshii.

Parts of family names can be combined in the same way as those of given names to create new names for your characters.



## Nicknames (or Heimin names)

Anjin (pilot), Bachuchi (gambler), Baka (idiot), Danyu (actor), Guzen (champion), Gyufu (fisherman), Hakoshi (boxmaker), Inago (grasshopper), Inu (dog), Isha (doctor), Kani (crab), Kanome (seagull), Kedamono (brute), Koji (orphan), Kurai (dark), Maruta (log), Momo (peach), Monosugoi (grim), Musuko (son), Musume (daughter), Nibui (blunt), Nojohito (farmer), Oishii (dainty), Ryoshi (hunter), Senin (mainer), Shisha (messenger), Shokunin (craftsman), Shonin (merchant), Taka (hawk), Tenjinashi (juggler), Tenshu (shopkeeper), Tsubaki (camellia), Tsuyu (dew), Uekiya (gardener), Unnayoi (lucky), Yakei (watchman), Yoi (good), Zoge (ivory).

A name can be created by taking a Japanese noun or adjective and adding -mono or -hito which mean "person".

**Species:** all Nihonese are human.

**Age:** as in *RuneQuest*.

**Gender:** Several notable examples of woman samurai warriors appear in the history/legends of Japan. Female sorceresses and witches abound, as do other strong women. Thus for game purposes, heroes may be of either sex despite the strongly patriarchal Japanese society.

**Culture:** Japan is Civilized.

**Religion:** Most Nihonese observe the rituals of both Shinto and Buddhism (for game purposes, they are "initiates" of both religions. See the chapter on religion for details.) Some elect to follow the tenets of one or the other faith exclusively.

**Homeland:** Roll D100 and consult the Home Region table to determine the home region of the character. Then roll another D100 and consult the corresponding Home Province table for the exact province or city from which the character originates. Most samurai think of themselves as natives of their province of birth rather than one of the Japanese islands or the empire of Dai-Nihon. A commoner does not even have that broad of a view; his "homeland" is the village or town of his birth.

## Home Provinces by Era

**Heroic Japan:** barbarian culture, rather than civilized. Convert all Common Land and Inland Regions to Rural Regions. Chikuzen is a Trade Center. All other Trade Centers are Rural Regions. The National Capitol rotates among all Kinai provinces (except Kii) and Omi of Okurikudo (location changes at death of Emperor). Tosando is an Ainu (non-Nihonese) region.

**Imperial and Heian:** civilized culture. Tokaido provinces of Awa, Kazusa, Musashi, and Shimosa are Rural Regions. Hizen is Common Land. Early National Capitol rotates as in Heroic Japan. The 8th century capitol is Yamata, later it is Yamashiro. When not National Capitol, Yamashiro is an Inland Region. Other regions as listed when not capitol.

**Early Warring States:** civilized culture. All provinces as listed. Sagami (Kamakura) is National Capitol during Minamoto and Hojo rule. Yamashiro remains National Capitol also — two capitols exist!

**Late Warring States:** civilized culture. All provinces as listed. National Capitol is Yamashiro only.

**Tokugawa:** civilized culture. All provinces as listed. National Capitol is both Musashi (Edo) and Yamashiro.

## Home Region Province Tables

<i>D100</i>	<i>region</i>	
01-12	Saikaido	
13-24	Nankaido	
25-34	Sanyodo	
35-48	Sanindo	
49-63	Kinai	
64-78	Tokaido	
79-89	Hokurikudo	
90-00	Tosando	

<b>SAIKAIDO</b>	<i>D100</i>	<i>province</i>	<i>occupation table</i>
	01-13	Bungo	Common Land
	14-26	Buzen	Common Land
	27-36	Chikugo	Common Land
	37-46	Chikuzen	Trade Center
	47-58	Higo	Common Land
	59-72	Hizen	Trade Center
	73-82	Hyuga	Common Land
	83-91	Osumi	Common Land
	92-00	Satsuma	Common Land

<b>NANKAIDO</b>	<i>D100</i>	<i>province</i>	<i>occupation table</i>
	01-20	Awa (A)	Common Land
	21-50	Iyo	Common Land
	51-70	Sanuki	Common Land
	71-00	Tosa	Common Land

<b>SANYODO</b>	<i>D100</i>	<i>province</i>	<i>occupation table</i>
	01-20	Aki	Trade Center
	21-35	Bingo	Common Land
	36-50	Bitchu	Common Land
	51-64	Bizen	Common Land
	65-78	Harima	Common Land
	79-88	Mimasaka	Inland Region
	89-00	Suo	Common Land

<b>SANINDO</b>	<i>D100</i>	<i>province</i>	<i>occupation table</i>
	01-14	Hoki	Common Land
	15-25	Inaba	Common Land
	26-40	Iwami	Common Land
	41-55	Izumo	Common Land
	56-72	Nagato	Trade Center
	73-83	Tajima	Common Land
	84-92	Tamba	Inland Region
	93-00	Tango	Common Land

<b>KINAI</b>	<i>D100</i>	<i>province</i>	<i>occupation table</i>
	01-20	Izumi	Trade Center
	21-30	Kawachi	Inland Region
	31-50	Kii	Common Land
	51-70	Settsu	Trade Center
	71-88	Yamashiro	National Capital
	89-00	Yamato	Inland Region

<b>TOKAIDO</b>	<i>D100</i>	<i>province</i>	<i>occupation table</i>
	01-02	Awa (B)	Common Land
	03-10	Hitachi	Rural Region
	11-15	Iga	Inland Region
	16-20	Ise	Common Land
	21-22	Izu	Common Land
	23-25	Kai	Inland Region
	26-28	Kazusa	Common Land
	29-32	Mikawa	Common Land
	33-46	Musashi	Trade Center
	47-60	Owari	Trade Center
	61-70	Sagami	Common Land
	71-73	Shima	Common Land
	74-83	Shimosa	Common Land
	84-92	Suruga	Common Land
	93-00	Totomi	Common Land

<b>HOKURIKUDO</b>	<i>D100</i>	<i>province</i>	<i>occupation table</i>
	01-10	Echigo	Rural Region
	11-19	Echizen	Common Land
	20-28	Etchu	Common Land
	29-35	Hida	Inland Region
	36-42	Kaga	Common Land
	43-50	Kozuke	Inland Region
	51-62	Mino	Inland Region
	63-69	Noto	Common Land
	70-79	Omi	Inland Region
	80-89	Shimotsuke	Rural Region
	90-97	Shinano	Inland Region
	98-00	Wakasa	Common Land

<b>TOSANDO</b>	<i>D100</i>	<i>province</i>	<i>occupation table</i>
	01-40	Dewa	Rural Region
	41-00	Mutsu	Rural Region



# Occupations

The Homeland Tables refer players to one of the Occupation Tables. These tables reflect the average percentages of the Nihonese population engaged in these pursuits, and hence the commoner-type occupations outweigh other types. The gamemaster is always permitted, and even encouraged, to ignore these tables to suit his campaign.

Previous experience in an occupation indicates birth into the caste which practices that occupation.

If the gamemaster wishes all the characters to be samurai, roll 1d100 and consult the Samurai Occupation Table. If the question of caste is to be left open, roll 1d100 and consult the table appropriate to the character's home province. A character is assumed to belong to the caste normally working in that occupation. Some occupations are marked with an asterisk (\*). These occupations have no assigned caste. The gamemaster may allow the player to choose his character's caste, or have him roll on the Priest/Sorcerer Birth Caste Table.

Once the character's starting occupation is found, go to the appropriate occupational background listing below. If the die roll indicates a ninja occupation, and the gamemaster is not allowing players to run ninja characters, the player may choose any other occupation instead.



## National Capitol Occupation Table

1d100	Occupation
01-06	Adept Sorcerer (see Priest/Sorcerer Birth Caste Table and Apprentice Sorcerer occupation listing)
07-11	Buddhist Priest (see Priest/Sorcerer Birth Caste Table)
12-25	Crafter (heimin — butcher and leather-worker = eta)
26-29	Entertainer (eta)
30-35	Farmers (heimin)
36-42	Kuge (kuge)
43-64	Merchant (heimin)
65-68	Physician (heimin)
69-80	Samurai Courtier (buke)
81-84	Samurai Soldier (buke)
85-91	Shinto Priest (see Priest/Sorcerer Birth Caste Table)
92-98	Thief (roll 1d6; 1-5 = heimin, 6 = eta)
99	Woodgatherer (heimin)
00	Ninja (eta)

## Samurai Occupation Table

1d100	Occupation
01-05	Adept Sorcerer (see the Apprentice Sorcerer occupation)
06-11	Buddhist Priest
12-27	Jizamurai
28-47	Samurai Courtier
48-92	Samurai Soldier
93-00	Shinto Priest

## Rural Region Occupation Table

1d100	Occupation
01	Buddhist Priest (see Priest/Sorcerer Birth Caste Table)
02-06	Ashigaru (roll 1d6; 1-5 = heimin, 6 = eta)
07-10	Crafter (heimin — butcher and leather-worker = eta)
11	Entertainer (eta)
12-42	Farmer (heimin)
43-70	Fisher (heimin)
71	Herder (heimin)
72-76	Jizamurai (buke)
77-81	Merchant (heimin)
82	Physician (heimin)
83-87	Sailor (heimin)
88	Samurai Courtier (buke)
89-93	Samurai Soldier (buke)
94-95	Shinto Priest (see Priest/Sorcerer Birth Caste Table)
96	Thief (roll 1d6; 1-5 = heimin, 6 = eta)
97-99	Woodgatherer (heimin)
00	Ninja (eta)

## Common Land Occupation Table

1d100	Occupation
01-02	Adept Sorcerer (see Priest/Sorcerer Birth Caste Table and Apprentice Sorcerer occupation listing)
03	Buddhist Priest (see Priest/Sorcerer Birth Caste Table)
04-07	Crafter (heimin — butcher and leather-worker = eta)
08-09	Entertainer (eta)
10-45	Farmer (heimin)
46-66	Fisher (heimin)
67-68	Herder (heimin)
69	Jizamurai (buke)
70-76	Merchant (heimin)
77-78	Physician (heimin)
79-83	Sailor (heimin)
84-86	Samurai Courtier (buke)
87-91	Samurai Soldier (buke)
92-93	Shinto Priest (see Priest/Sorcerer Birth Caste Table)
94-97	Thief (roll 1d6; 1-5 = heimin, 6 = eta)
98-00	Woodgatherer (heimin)





## Trade Center Occupation Table

1d100	Occupation
01-03	Adept Sorcerer (see Priest/Sorcerer Birth Caste Table and Apprentice Sorcerer occupation listing)
04-06	Buddhist Priest (see Priest/Sorcerer Birth Caste Table)
07-14	Crafter (heimin — butcher and leather-worker = eta)
15-17	Entertainer (eta)
18-41	Farmer (heimin)
42-65	Fisher (heimin)
66-67	Herder (heimin)
68-77	Merchant (heimin)
78	Physician (heimin)
79-82	Sailor (heimin)
83-86	Samurai Courtier (buke)
87-89	Samurai Soldier (buke)
90-92	Shinto Priest (see Priest/Sorcerer Birth Caste Table)
93-98	Thief (roll 1d6; 1-5 = heimin, 6 = eta)
99-00	Woodgatherer (heimin)

## Inland Region Occupation Table

1d100	Occupation
01	Adept Sorcerer (see Priest/Sorcerer Birth Caste Table and Apprentice Sorcerer occupation listing)
02-03	Buddhist Priest (see Priest/Sorcerer Birth Caste Table)
04-09	Crafter (heimin — butcher and leather-worker = eta)
10	Entertainer (eta)
11-76	Farmer (heimin)
77	Herder (heimin)
78-80	Jizamurai (buke)
81-85	Merchant (heimin)
86	Physician (heimin)
87	Samurai Courtier (buke)
88-92	Samurai Soldier (buke)
93-95	Shinto Priest (see Priest/Sorcerer Birth Caste Table)
96	Thief * (roll 1d6; 1-5 = heimin, 6 = eta)
97-99	Woodgatherer (heimin)
00	Ninja (eta)

\* thieves from Iga or Koga may elect to be ninja instead, in which case they are automatically eta caste.

## Beginning Magic

This section describes the magical skills gained by Nihonese adventurers. Before reading this section, refer to the proper occupation listing to find the type of magic available to your character.

**Spirit Magic:** all Nihonese are considered, at birth, to be lay members of both Shinto and Buddhism. Hence, all can obtain spirit magic from both their local Shinto and their local Buddhist priests. Spirit magic for all Nihonese is obtained at the rate of 1d3 per five years or fraction thereof the character has aged past 15.

**Sorcery:** sorcerers receive magic as per normal *RuneQuest* rules. Adventurers from non-sorcerer backgrounds have sorcery available to them only on a successful die roll on the Sorcery Per Character Class Table (as always, this is subject to the gamemaster's wishes). Even if sorcery is available, the adventurer need not choose to learn it. Adventurers that learn sorcery may not gain spirit magic in previous experience, but do gain the following skills: 1d3 sorcery spells, plus 1 for every 5 years or fraction thereof he is older than 20. He also receives Intensity x1 or Ceremony x1 or World Lore x1, Enchant x1 or Summon x1, and Spells x3 (allot the percentiles among known spells as desired).

## Priest/Sorcerer Birth Caste Table

Find the character's occupation in the left-hand column. Roll 1d100 and read across to find die-roll result.

Occupation	BIRTH CASTE			
	Kuge	Buke	Heimin	Eta
Sorcerer (any)	01-10	11-70	71-98	99-00
Buddhist Priest	01-05	06-30	31-90	91-00
Shinto Priest	01-15	16-70	71-00	—

## Sorcery Per Character Class

**Kuge:** 45%.

**Buke:** (Samurai Courtier) 15%; (other occupations) 5%.

**Heimin:** (Merchant, Physician, Thief) 10%; (other occupations) 2%.

**Eta:** 25%.



# The Occupation Listings

Previous experience is determined as in *RuneQuest*, using the following occupation listings. The specific magical skills gained by a character pursuing one of the occupations below are listed in the section titled "Beginning Magic."

## Adept Sorcerer

**SKILLS:** as *RuneQuest*, but change Sing or Play <instrument> to Read/Write Chinese x2. **MAGIC:** as *RuneQuest*. **EQUIPMENT:** fine silk robe, traveling clothes, writing brush and ink, scrolls and manuscripts, copy of the *I Ching* and 50 yarrow stalks, 80 mon in coin and miscellaneous goods worth 400 mon, walking staff, lacquer traveling trunk, tinderbox.

## Apprentice Sorcerer

**SKILLS:** as *RuneQuest*, but change Sing or Play <instrument> to Read/Write Chinese x2. **MAGIC:** as *RuneQuest* tinderbox, 1d10 mon in coin and miscellaneous goods worth 20 mon.

## Ashigaru

Ashigaru are non-samurai soldiers. They formed the bulk of the armies in the later feudal periods, though their fighting abilities and morale was less than samurai. Ashigaru serve a lord on a permanent or temporary basis. They fight as often for pay and loot as for loyalty. Ashigaru are comparatively scarce on the occupation tables because in reality Ashigaru are heimin and eta who have absconded to join the army. Many, if not most heimin and eta adventurers will fall into this category — born as peasants, but now vagabond warriors. **SKILLS:** Throw x1, First Aid x2, Speak Other Language x1, Evaluate x1, Human Lore x1, World Lore x2, Plant Lore x2, Hide x2, Conceal x1, Scan x2, Search x2, Listen x1, Track x2, Fist Attack x2, Dagger Attack and Parry x1, Kenjutsu Attack and Parry x1, 2H Spear Attack and Parry x2 or Longbow x2 and Dodge x2. **EQUIPMENT:** 2H spear or longbow as appropriate, wakizashi, 120 mon in goods and 10 mon in coin, heavy and light cotton clothing, knife, sacks, firemaker and tinder.

## Buddhist Priest

Buddhist priests are part of a temple staff or itinerant preachers of their faith. **ACCEPTANCE** and **MAGIC:** as described in *RuneQuest*. **SKILLS:** Throw x1, Fast Talk x2, Orate x5, Speak Japanese x3, Speak Chinese x1, Read/Write Chinese x3, Ceremony x3, Enchant x2, Summon x2, First Aid x2, Fist Attack x2, Quarterstaff Attack and Parry x2 or Martial Arts x2 and Fist Parry x2 or Dodge x2. **EQUIPMENT:** Saffron and black robes, writing equipment, begging bowl, knife, staff, pack, candles, incense, rosary, reputedly holy artifact, 10 mon in coin, miscellaneous goods worth 100 mon.

## Crafter

Crafters are revered for the superior products they make as well as for the artistic merit of their work. They are divided into two types: those who do their work at a fixed location (such as clothworkers, some foodworkers, most furnishings-makers, most ornament makers, potters, leatherworkers, and all smiths) and those who travel to perform their work. The latter category is sometimes divided further into those that maintain a fixed abode (such as gardeners, herbalists, thatchers, most weapon makers, and most woodworkers) and those who continuously wander in search of work (such as artists, brewers, and lacquer tappers). Sometimes a person of a normally sedentary craft will travel looking for opportunities to ply his trade, for while a village may have people capable of a particular craft, a craftsman knows that they often await the arrival of an expert for important jobs. Such wandering craftsmen are also sources of news, gossip, and rumor. Since they only modify the things of

the earth, crafters are held in less esteem than the farmers who actually produce new life from the earth. Crafters are still more highly regarded than the non-producing merchants. **SKILLS:** Throw x2, Fast Talk x2, Speak Japanese x1, Read/Write Japanese x1, Speak Other Language x1, Craft x5, Evaluate x4, Human Lore x2, World Lore x1, Conceal x1, Devise x4, Scan x1, Search x2, Fist Attack x2, Dagger Attack and Parry x1, Ceremony x2. **EQUIPMENT:** Set of hand tools appropriate to craft, 100 mon in goods and 20 mon in coin, light and heavy cotton clothing, knife, sack.



## Occupation Tables for Other Eras

**Heroic Japan:** the occupation tables are not useful for this period. There are no Buddhists, no Merchants, no Ninja, Ashigaru, nor Entertainers. And no Samurai. However, Kuge get Samurai Soldier skills instead of Kuge skills, because the Kuge were still warrior families in this period. If you wish to run your campaign in this period, you should use the Barbarian Occupation tables from *RuneQuest*, modified as described.

**Imperial and Helan:** Ninja and Ashigaru do not exist yet — replace with the Thief occupation. Entertainers and Merchants are rare — if Entertainer is received roll 1d6; 1-3 Entertainer, 4-6 Merchant. Replace the normal Merchant occupation with that of Steward; a kind of local bureaucrat who oversaw land activities for the nobles in the capital and shipped tax produce back and forth, eventually evolving into a merchant class of sorts. Stewards receive the same previous experience as Merchants. Samurai in the National Capital do not exist — replace with Kuge occupation.

**Warring States:** all classes exist. Non-buke can carry swords when appropriate (i.e., if they can afford it!).

**Tokugawa:** Jizamurai no longer exist. Roll 1d6; 1-3 Ronin, 4-6 Farmer. Ronin have the previous experience of a Samurai Soldier, but are masterless. Ashigaru no longer exist, as no heimin are allowed swords. Replace Ashigaru with Ronin, who became moderately common in this period.

*A man who keeps a considerable number of retainers...should first of all have the religious and habitual awareness to provide for his men well...Those under his command will naturally serve him with great loyalty, as will those of other clans, and he will have many reliable retainers.*

*(The Recorded Words of Asakura Soteki)*



## Urban Crafts Table

1d100	Occupation
01	Armorer
02-11	Artist (painter, sculptor, calligrapher, etc.)
12-16	Blacksmith
17	Brewer
18-38	Clothworker (spinner, sandlemaker, tailor, etc.)
39-53	Foodworker (butcher, an eta profession; cook, etc.)
54-63	Furnishings-maker (mat maker, thatcher, etc.)
64-67	Gardener
68-70	Herbalist
71-72	Leatherworker (an eta occupation.)
73-76	Ornament-makers (jeweler, lacquerer, lacquer tapper, netsuke carver, etc.)
77-87	Potter
88-92	Weaponworker (bowyer, haft maker, sword-sharpener, swordsmith, etc.)
93-00	Woodworker (carpenter, cooper, joiner, etc.)



## Entertainer

Entertainers in Nihon are considered to be eta. Although they are sought after for their skills, the upper classes wish to have them around no longer than their performance will take. **SKILLS:** are determined as in *RuneQuest*. **EQUIPMENT:** good instrument, make-up kit, light and heavy cotton clothing, gaudy clothing, knife, pack, firemaker and tinder, 50 mon in coin and 70 mon in goods, sleeping blanket, costume if appropriate.

## Farmer

Farmers tend the rice paddies which feed Nihon. Other crops (soybeans, radishes, tomatoes, cabbage, onions, and fruit) are grown as well, all with fairly advanced agricultural skill. **SKILLS and EQUIPMENT:** are determined as in *RuneQuest* except 2H Long Weapon Skill is replaced with either 1H Peasant Weapon (kama, tonfa, or jo) Attack x1 and Parry x1 or Dodge x1, or Martial Arts x1 and Fist Parry x1 or Dodge x1.

## Fisher

Fishers upon the bountiful waters around Nihon. **SKILLS and EQUIPMENT:** are determined as Barbarian Fishers in *RuneQuest*.

## Herder

Most herders of Nihon manage horses and train them for the upper classes. (A special permit must be obtained before a member of



the lower classes may ride a horse.) **SKILLS and EQUIPMENT:** are determined as in *RuneQuest* except that Throw is substituted for Missile Weapon.

## Jizamurai

Jizamurai are the poorer, independent landholders of the buke caste. Occasionally they will ally themselves with a samurai clan but such arrangements are generally of a "mutual defense pact" nature. Some younger sons, not in line to inherit the family land, can make their way by accepting a stipend from a local lord. Such jizamurai serve like a local militia in times of trouble. While holding to most of the samurai ideals, jizamurai are often closer to the land. They are rough-hewn and less cultured but every bit as proud as true samurai. Their closeness to the land and the problems of making a living from it often makes them more sympathetic to the heimin on their holdings. They may, out of a sense of justice as well as fear of losing their own holdings, come to the aid of local heimin oppressed by rapacious lords. Jizamurai are often considered uncouth and ill-mannered by other samurai as well as by the kuge. **SKILLS:** Throw x2, First Aid x2, Speak Japanese x1, Animal Lore x2 or Plant Lore x2 or World Lore x2, Conceal x1, Scan x2, Search x1, Listen x1, Track x1, Ride x1, Fist Attack x2, Dagger Attack and Parry x2, Longbow x3, Kenjutsu Attack and Parry x3. **EQUIPMENT:** Katana and wakizashi, long-

bow, 200 mon in goods and 100 mon in coin, light and heavy cotton clothing, knife, light lamellar armor (5 points) for torso, head, and arms.

## Kuge

Kuge are the imperial nobility of Nihon. They are renowned for their cultured ways and sophistication as well as their disdain for those who lack such graces. Many, while maintaining a facade of wealth, are actually poor. They survive by accepting gifts from those of lower stations wishing to win their good will or to gain honor by honoring such nobles, or by taking bribes to utilize their "superior" position within the court or their (usually ineffectual) office within the imperial bureaucracy. The typical member of the kuge is highly educated, adept in the refinements of his ancient land and knowledgeable in the devious arts of politics. It is rare that a member of this caste will excel in the warrior skills which made his distant ancestors great, through such throwbacks do crop up from time to time. **SKILLS:** Fast Talk x2, Orate x2, Poetry x2, Speak Japanese x4, Read/Write Japanese x4, Speak Chinese x2, Read/Write Chinese x4, World Lore x1, Conceal x1, Scan x1, Search x1, Ride x2, Dagger or Tessen (war-fan) Attack and Parry x2, Ceremony x2 Summon x1. **EQUIPMENT:** Fine silk court robes, fan, writing materials, 500 mon in goods and 200 mon in coin, light and heavy cotton clothing, knife, 1D3-1 body servants.

## Merchant

Merchants in Nihon receive little respect and are ranked as the lowest kind of heimin since they create nothing but merely serve as middlemen between producers and consumers. They frequently act as moneylenders to samurai. Often when a lord's debt is high enough, it can be erased by the debtors adopting or marrying a child of the merchant or, if the lord is powerful enough, ennobling the merchant's family as samurai (this usually takes effect with the merchant's children). **SKILLS:** as determined in *RuneQuest*. **EQUIPMENT:** pack horse with harness, porter's trunk, knife, firemaker and tinder, 1000 mon in goods, 400 mon in coin, light and heavy cotton clothing, fine clothes, writing materials, small lacquered box of exquisite craftsmanship.

## Ninja

To normal society, ninja are outcasts. Persons discovered to be ninja are shunned. Ninja caught performing acts of terror or espionage are subject to immediate and shameful execution. Ninja are spies, reconnaissance teams, terrorists, security specialists, and assassins for samurai overlords. In this game, ninja characters are not allowed unless the player(s) receive specific gamemaster approval. Even with approval, ninja characters should only be used as part of all-ninja adventures. If the gamemaster does allow ninja characters, refer to the Ninja chapter toward the end of this book for complete information about creating ninja characters.

If the gamemaster does not allow ninja characters, choose any other occupation instead.

## Physician

Physicians are highly honored in Nihon. Though technically of the heimin caste, for their service in healing samurai they are permitted to wear the dai-sho (katana and wakizashi) which is a symbol of samurai status. **SKILLS:** as determined in *RuneQuest* for a Healer, except that Kenjutsu Attack x1 or Martial Arts x1 may be substituted for 1H Weapon Attack. **EQUIPMENT:** Kit (with lotions, ointments, salves, herbs, soaps, tweezers, bandages, acupuncture needles), light and heavy cotton clothing, knife, sack, firemaker and tinder, katana and wakizashi or 1H weapon of choice, 30 mon in coin, and miscellaneous items worth 100 mon.

## Sailor

Sailors ply the waters of Nihon in junks, rarely venturing into deep water. Those who do often sail as wako, a term which applies to privateers, buccaneers, and outright pirates. **SKILLS:** as determined in *RuneQuest*. **EQUIPMENT:** a jar of sake, knife, 1H weapon of choice, sacks, ivory netsuke of sea creature (your choice), salt fish worth 50 mon, 10 mon in coin, tattoo.

## Samurai Courtier

Samurai courtiers are those samurai who spend most of their time in bureaucratic or courtly service to their lords or to the bakufu. Martial pursuits are not their forte but they still feel the culture's constraints to follow the code of bushido. **SKILLS:** Throw x1, First Aid x1, Speak Japanese x3, Read/Write Japanese x2, Read/Write Chinese x2, Poetry x1, Fast Talk x2, Orate x1, Evaluate x2, Animal Lore x1, World Lore x1, Conceal x1, Scan x1, Search x1, Listen x1, Ride x3, Fist Attack x1, Dagger or Tessen Attack x1, Longbow x2 or Fast Draw x2, Kenjutsu Attack and Parry x2, Ceremony x1. **EQUIPMENT:** Lamellar armor (6 points), katana and wakizashi, harness, 1000 mon in goods, 1000 mon in coin, noble clothing, light and heavy cotton clothing, knife, firemaker and tinder, sack.

## Samurai Soldier

Samurai soldiers are the rank-and-file retainers of the samurai lords. They are warriors, culturally constrained to honor the code of Bushido. When in service to a lord they receive a yearly stipend of at least 5 koku per year. **SKILLS:** Throw x2, First Aid x2, Speak Japanese x1, World Lore x2, Conceal x1, Listen x3, Scan x3, Search x1, Ride x3, Binding x1, Fist Attack x1, Dagger Attack and Parry x1 or Tessen Attack x1 and Fast Draw x1, Longbow x3, Kenjutsu Attack and Parry x4, 2H Spear Attack and Parry x2. **EQUIPMENT:** Lamellar armor (6 points), katana and wakizashi, longbow, riding horse with harness, 500 mon in goods, 100 mon in coin, noble clothing, light and heavy cotton clothing, knife, firemaker and tinder, sack.



## Shinto Priest

Most Shinto priests are only part-time clerics. They officiate at ceremonies when needed and at shrines on festival occasions. At other times they function as normal members of their communities. The status of "initiate" (in *RuneQuest* terms) to a kami represents this type of priesthood best. Certain priests were attached full-time to major religious sites. They train their offspring in the ways of their office. **ACCEPTANCE and MAGIC:** as determined in *RuneQuest*. **SKILLS:** Throw x1, Fast Talk x2, Orate x5, Speak Japanese x3, Read/Write Japanese x3, First Aid x1, Human Lore x3, Instrumental Music (koto, flute, or drums) x2, Sing x2, Ceremony x3, Enchant x2, Summon x2, -Fist Attack x2, and Weapon (appropriate to caste) Attack and Parry x1 or Martial Arts x1 and Dodge x1. **EQUIPMENT:** Ritual clothing, light and heavy cotton clothing, writing equipment, knife, candles, mirror, religious talismans, sacks, appropriate weapon, good quality musical instrument, 200 mon in goods, 100 mon in coin.

## Thief

Thieves are relatively uncommon in Nihon. Most are sneak thieves or burglars. Outright brigandage is more the province of ronin and renegade ashigaru, while spying and assassination are trades for ninja. Organized crime exists in the form of the yakuza families who control gambling, protection rackets, and often prostitution. Some yakuza organizations are actually formed for noble purposes — to oppose the depredations of corrupt or overbearing samurai and gain for the common man his proper rights and opportunities to fulfill his duties. **SKILLS:** as determined in *RuneQuest* except the Shortsword or Rapier option becomes Kenjutsu Attack x1 and Parry or Dodge x2 —or Martial Arts x2 and Fist Parry x2 or Dodge x2. **EQUIPMENT:** prybar, light and heavy cotton clothing, knife, wakizashi, mask, sacks, hooded candle lantern, 30 mon in pawnable items, Yakuza tattoos, 10% chance of missing the last joint of the little finger of the left hand.

## Woodgatherer

Woodgatherers and charcoal burners are common throughout Nihon to fill the need for firewood and building materials. Loads are normally carried on their backs but pack horses and man-pulled carts (only on roads) are used for large loads. Such men are often solitary and close to the ways of nature. **SKILLS:** Throw x2, First Aid x2, Climb x3, Jump x2, Animal Lore x2, World Lore x2, Plant Lore x4, Conceal x1, Devise x1, Scan x3, Search x2, 1H Axe Attack x1, Fist Attack x2, Dagger Attack and Parry x1. **EQUIPMENT:** Ax, 40 mon in goods and 10 mon in coin, light and heavy cotton clothing, knife, sack, firemaker and tinder, 20 meters of weak rope, pack frame for carrying wood, and a full load of firewood.

## New Skills

The following new skills are available to Nihonese characters, and have been included in the Previous Experience occupations. Several more skills could be added to a Nihonese campaign, such as calligraphy; flower arranging; garden design; military strategy; moon viewing; sacred, courtly, and popular dance forms; and others according to the style and type of campaign.

### Yadomejutsu (Arrow Cutting) (Manipulation 5%)

This skill allows the character to parry any projected missile weapon with a shaft, not just arrows. It is based on rigorous discipline, emphasizing the character's inner resources of timing, balance, speed, and perception. Any melee weapon or a fist may be used. The die roll to parry must be less than or equal to the character's scores in both the melee weapon Attack and Arrow Cutting. (Weapon Parry is not used because one is *cutting* the arrow!) A character must be aware of the missile attack and have his weapon readied to use this skill. The character is subject to the standard rules for actions per round and hence may normally only block one arrow a round, or two arrows if he uses two weapons and blocks arrows no less than 3 strike ranks apart from one another.

### Hojojutsu (Binding) (Manipulation 5%)

Enables a character to rapidly bind and securely immobilize a subdued opponent. A successful use of this skill gives the bonds a STR equal to the binder's STR + DEX. Unless the victim can overcome the bonds with his own STR or the Escape skill, he is immobilized. The ropes, of course, have only their normal physical resistance to breakage or cutting.

In combat, one limb per melee round may be bound, if the binder has a grapple hold on his victim. If someone else is grappling the victim, the binder may tie him up completely in a single melee round.

### Disguise (Knowledge 0%)

This skill allows the character to make use of make-up, costuming, and rudimentary mimicry to hide his true identity. A special success is required for the character to imitate a specific person. The character must be of the same SIZ as the one mimicked for this to work. Any character familiar with the original may penetrate the disguise with a successful Search roll. This roll may be attempted when he or she meets the disguised character.

Ninja have extended capabilities with the disguise skill. A special success allows mimicry of a person whose SIZ is different from the ninja's by 1 point. A critical success allows a 2-point differential.

Any disguise may be penetrated. Match the observer's INT against the disguised character's Disguise score. If successful, the observer has noticed something inappropriate or out of place. After the initial check, only specific inappropriate actions or words allow observers another check.

### Iaijutsu (Fast Draw) (Manipulation 5%)

This skill allows a character who has not yet drawn his sword to combine the draw with an attack or parry. The character's sword must be in his sash, edge up, to perform this feat.

Iaijutsu may only be performed with katana, ninjato, or wakizashi.

An iaijutsu draw is performed when a player states that his character will attempt it. A successful die roll means that the character may ignore any strike ranks lost to readying a weapon. Failure means the normal time is taken. A special success with this skill allows the character to treat his weapon as if it had a strike rank modifier of 1 for that turn. A critical success allows the character to strike on his DEX strike rank, ignoring SIZ and weapon strike rank modifiers for that round only. A fumble is treated as a fumble for that weapon.



### Kenjutsu (Swordsmanship) (Combat 15/10%)

Kenjutsu is a specialized weapon skill practiced only in Nihon. Kenjutsu covers the use of several weapons: katana, ninjato, nodachi, and wakizashi. These swords are normally wielded with both hands. The skill also covers the use of these swords in the character's right hand alone as well as their use from horseback. However, when a sword is used in the right hand alone, the user's Kenjutsu is lowered by 10%. The nodachi is an exception. Its use single-handed is not taught and, like all large two-handed swords, may not be used from horseback.

Kenjutsu does not allow the single-handed use of a sword in the left hand. This Ni-To-Kenjutsu must be studied separately. It is needed by those who would emulate Miyamoto Musashi and his two-sword technique. Teachers of such skill are very rare. All the normal *RuneQuest* rules for two-weapon use apply.

Kenjutsu is a combat skill, with normal attack and parry modifiers.

### Ni-To-Kenjutsu (Two-Sword) (Combat 5%)

As compared to the Kenjutsu skill described above, Ni-To-Kenjutsu concerns the use of two swords simultaneously in combat.

### Poetry (Knowledge 0%)

Poetry is the knowledge of verse forms and conventions. Characters may create or critique poems with this skill. Short poems such as Japanese haiku or waka may be created spontaneously.

### Tea Ceremony (Knowledge 0%)

Tea Ceremony, or Cha-no-yu, is the skill and knowledge required to present or participate in a proper ceremony with all the correct nuances of etiquette. Practitioners of great skill are highly regarded.

## Languages

For all Nihonese characters, "Own Language" is Japanese. It is spoken throughout the islands. However, language barriers exist — differences differ between regions, classes, and even by sex. Most heimin could not understand edicts from above even when read to them (they were usually too terrified to admit this, however).

When speaking to a person of a different social class (eta, buke, etc.), subtract 5% from each participant's Own Language skill. This rule does not apply to ninja, who learn all class dialects.

When speaking to a person from a different region of Nihon, subtract 5% from each participant's Own Language skill.

The above modifiers are cumulative: a samurai from one region trying to talk to a heimin from another suffers -10 from both his and the heimin's chance to communicate.

Kuge, Samurai Courtiers, and Buddhist and Shinto clergy from the kuge or buke castes ignore the above rules when communicating with one another.

Male and female speech vary from each other in each class. Men and women of the same class can understand each other, but attempting to use each other's speech is not done. People disguised as a member of the opposite sex add 10% to their chance of being detected due to the difficulty of using opposite speech. This rule also does not apply to ninja.

Characters that have lived in a different region for at least a year can gain the new region as a home area and can communicate normally there as well as in their birth area.

Other languages which Nihonese might know include: Chinese (the Mandarin dialect is most likely), Korean, Okinawan.

Read Own Language refers to a mastery of two syllabaries, that of *hiragana* and that of *katakana*. Each is made up of pictographs associated with phonetic sounds. Everyday paperwork and Shinto documents use these syllabaries.

A common script in Nihon is *kanji* which uses Chinese pictographic characters. All Chinese dialects use the same ideographs. Thus there is only one Read Chinese Language skill, although each of the major dialects can account for a separate Speak Language skill. Buddhist scriptures, important government documents, and sorcerous texts are usually in this script.

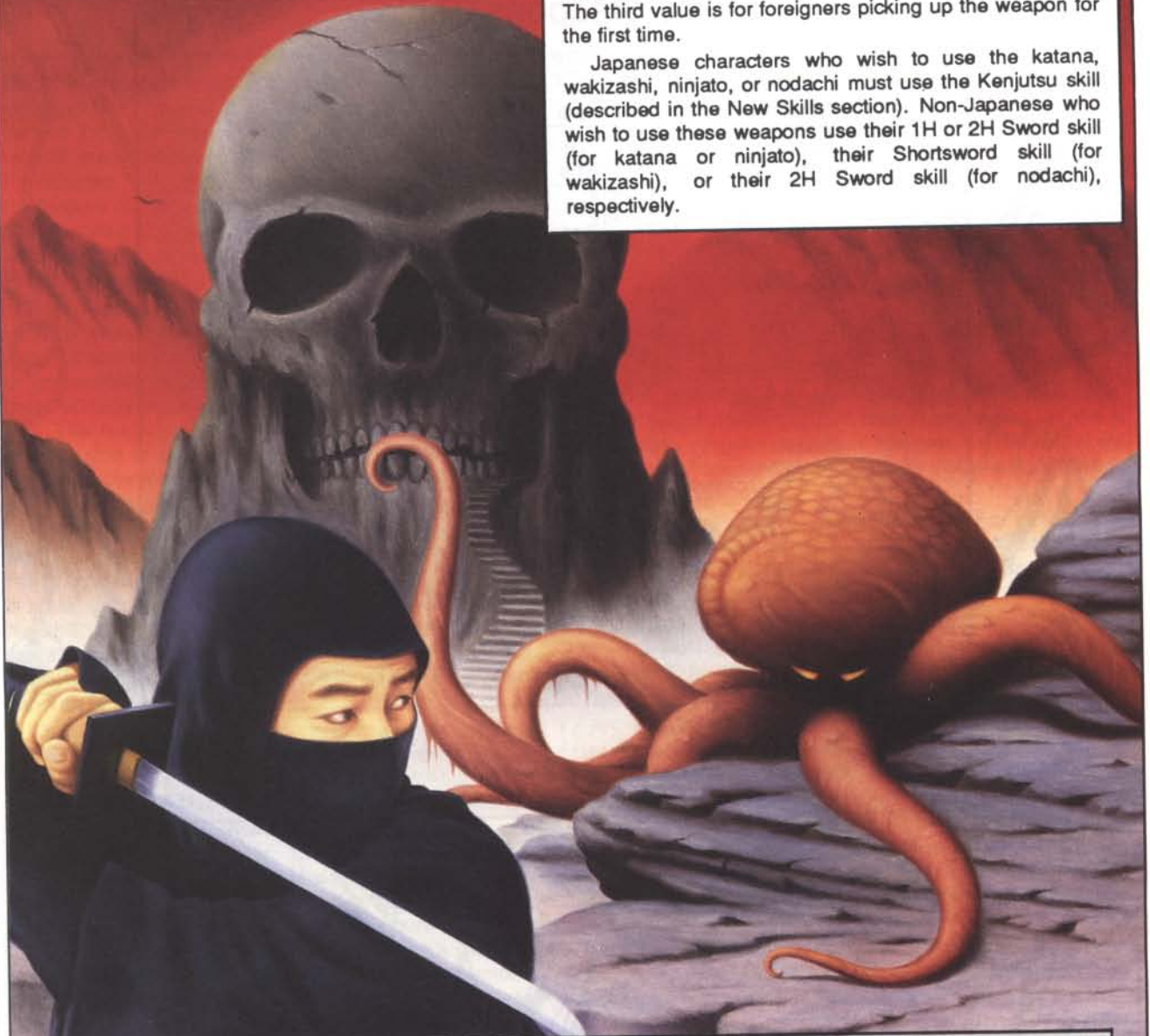
In Nihon, Read and Write (this latter is often termed "Calligraphy") are two separate skills. Regardless, a character's Read skill can never be less than half his Write skill, and the reverse is also true. Hence, if Hoichi had a Read 20 and Write 40, and raised his Write skill by 4 points, his Read, perforce, would increase by 2.



## Weapons

The following tables list Nihonese weapons. Each weapon has three listed base chances: the first is for buke and kuge characters, the second for heimin and eta. The third value is for foreigners picking up the weapon for the first time.

Japanese characters who wish to use the katana, wakizashi, ninjato, or nodachi must use the Kenjutsu skill (described in the New Skills section). Non-Japanese who wish to use these weapons use their 1H or 2H Sword skill (for katana or ninjato), their Shortsword skill (for wakizashi), or their 2H Sword skill (for nodachi), respectively.



Weapon Name	STR/ DEX	ENC	Damage	Armor	Range Effect/Max	Rate of Fire	Price
Longbow, Dai-kyu	11/9	.5 (.05)	1d8+1	6	90/275	1/SR	350
Selfbow, Han-kyu	9/9	.5 (.05)	1d6+1	5	90/120	1/SR	150
Dart, Uchi-ne	-/9	.5	1d6	4	20/30	1/SR	75
Shuriken	-/13	.1	1d3	-	20/30	1/SR	25
Javelin, Yari-nage	9/9	1.5	1d8	8	20/50	1/SR	100
Musket *	9/-	4.0	3d6	8	50/300	1/5MR	400

## Missile Weapons Table

Base Chances: all bows, 20/10/10; darts and javelins, 10/10/10; shuriken, 5/5/5; muskets, 15/25/25.

All missile weapons do impale damage on a special success.

\* guns appear in Japan after about 1540. Japanese guns are purchased or copied from Western models, so 16th century guns are copies of Portuguese and Spanish arquebuses, and 17th century guns are Dutch-style muskets. Japanese production of guns was common among progressive daimyo, but all gun production was strictly controlled by the daimyo. Private production never developed and private ownership of guns was almost unheard-of. Daimyo equipped their armies with guns in the late 16th century. Samurai did not use guns themselves (it being beneath their dignity), but led musketeer regiments made up of heimin. The Tokugawa peace ended large heimin armies and eliminated guns from the (now largely samurai) military. Guns remained in use in police forces. Pistols and other small arms were imported from the Portuguese and Dutch in small quantities. Some Tokugawa ronin and bandits carried pistols concealed in kimono folds, but they were subject to severe penalties if caught. Cannons were not cast in Japan until around 1850, though armies did borrow cannons from Portuguese and Dutch ships on occasions.

## Melee Weapons Table

Weapon Category	Weapon	Damage	STR/ DEX	ENC	BS%	Armor	SR	Price
Axe, 1H	Masakari	1d8+2	13/9	1.0	10/10/10	8	2	100
Axe, 2H	Masakari	1d8+2	9/9	1.0	5/5/5	8	2	100
	Ono	2d6+2	11/9	2.0	5/5/5	10	1	120
Chain	0.5m @@	1d6	7/9	0.5	5/10/5	2/8	2	10/40
	1.5m @@	1d6	7/11	1.0	5/10/5	2/8	1	20/80
	2.5m @@	1d6	7/13	1.5	5/10/5	2/8	0	30/120
Dagger	Tanto ##	1d4+2	-/-	0.5	15/20/15	6	3	33
	Jitte **	1d6	-/11	1.0	10/10/10	10	2	50
	Sai * **	1d6	-/11	1.0	10/10/10	10	2	60
Flail	1H Nunchaku	1d6	9/-	1.0	5/10/10	6	2	12/25
Mace	1H Jo Stick	1d6	7/9	0.5	15/25/15	5	2	10
	Kiseru	1d8	7/7	1.0	15/15/15	6	3	120
	Tessen	1d6	7/9	0.5	10/5/5	8	3	60
	Tonfa @	1d6	7/7	1.0	5/15/10	5	2	10
Maul	Bo Stick	1d8	9/9	1.5	5/15/10	8	1	20
	Sodegarami #	1d8	9/11	3.0	5/5/5	8	1	150
	Tetsubo	2d8	15/7	4.5	5/10/5	14	1	250
Sickle	Kama *	1d6	-/-	0.5	5/15/5	6	3	40
Spear, 2H	Naginata	2d6+2	7/11	2.0	10/5/5	10	1	150
	Nagamaki	1d8+2	-/11	1.5	10/5/5	8	2	120
	Yari ##	1d8+1	-/9	2.0	15/10/15	10	1	30
	Yari-nage ##	1d6+1	-/7	1.5	15/10/15	8	2	100
Kenjutsu	Katana *	1d10+1	11/11	1.5	15/10/5	14	2	350
	Ninjato *	1d8+1	11/11	1.3	15/10/5	10	2	(200)
	Nodachi	2d8	11/13	3.5	15/10/5	12	1	320
	Wakizashi *	1d6+1	7/9	1.0	15/10/5	12	2	150

\* can be used either as a cutting weapon or as a thrusting weapon which can impale. Mode must be declared before attack is rolled.

\*\* weapon possesses a swordbreaker\* function.

@ may be used either as a type of club, or to augment the user's Fist Attack and Parry. If so used, add +1 to the damage done in a punch, and use the Tonfa's armor points on a successful Fist Parry.

@@ this weapon (called a manrikigusari) is basically a rope or chain with a small weight at one or both ends. It is a flexible weapon and can be used either to entangle like a lasso or whip (causing no damage) or to strike with the weight for 1d6 damage. It cannot be used to parry. It may be made of rope or braided hair (armor 2) or actual metal chain (armor 8). Some chains have a second weapon attached to one end. This weapon requires its normal skill to use. The user must follow the rules for a two-handed weapon with regard to attacks and parries, but may use either his Chain skill or the skill for the attached weapon, depending on which is used. The most common weapons attached to chains are daggers, sickles (with a chain called kusari-gama), and sai or jitte.

# this weapon is for police use. It is a long pole with many barbs at one end for entangling the clothing of the target. A successful attack can be used either to entangle the target (only if clothed) or to do damage.

## all special hits with these weapons are impales.

PRICE NOTES: all prices are based on the weapons' availability in a Large City. If these weapons are purchased in a Rural, Wilderness, or Small City, the price will be different (usually higher). A price in parentheses (ninjato) indicates that this weapon is not commonly available and must be purchased surreptitiously. Where two prices are given, the first price is for a rope version of the weapon and the second is for a metal chain version (which also has correspondingly higher armor points).





## Combat Ki

Ki can be attained for all Nihonese weapon attacks and all non-missile-weapon parries, plus dodge. Ki cannot be used with foreign weapons. Ki parry results are the same for all weapons, as are ki attack results except for attacks with jo-sticks and nunchaku. Ki attack results for missile weapon use varies from the melee weapon results, but are the same in all instances except for shuriken. Ki attack, parry, and dodge results are not affected by combat modifiers.

### Attack Ki

The user spends one magic point at the start of the round for each weapon with which he wishes to attempt attack ki. A successful attack ki has the same effect as a critical hit, except that impaling-type weapons do not become stuck in the wound. A user with an attack of 100% or more can split his attack, which also splits his attack ki. Attack ki is not halved when an aimed blow is attempted.

**ATTACK (JO-STICKS and NUNCHAKU):** the user spends one magic point at the start of the round for each weapon with which he wishes to invoke ki. If, on the start of his attack, he rolls a successful attack ki, the user can attack again with his weapon one strike rank later. If his second attack is also a successful attack ki, he can attack yet again, and so forth. Once SR 10 is reached, no more attacks can be dealt.

**EXAMPLE:** Taro the heimin, who has a jo-stick attack of 100% and a jo-stick attack ki of 39%, is assaulted by a bandit. Taro spends a magic point to invoke his ki. Taro's strike rank with the jo-stick is 7. On SR 7, he rolls a 28, a ki success, so he does 1d6 damage and attacks again on SR 8. On SR 8 he rolls a 13, which is a special success, since Taro's jo-stick attack skill value equals 100. He does another 1d6 damage to his foe. Since his roll of 13 is below his ki, he can hit again on SR 9. He now rolls 44, which is higher than his ki, so he cannot get any more attacks that round. He still rolled under his attack skill, however, so he inflicts another 1d6 damage. The bandit is overwhelmed by the flurry of blows and rapidly succumbs.

**MISSILE ATTACK:** the user spends one magic point at the start of the round for each missile with which he wishes to invoke ki. If he plans to fire two arrows, he must invoke ki for both. If, on his attack, he rolls a successful attack ki, the missile hits in exactly the location he chooses. In game terms, the missile ignores any armor the target may possess, and the user may choose the hit location he wishes to strike.

**MISSILE ATTACK (SHURIKEN):** the user spends one magic point at the start of the round. He may then throw as many shuriken as he desires, all simultaneously. For each shuriken, he must attempt an attack ki roll. If the first roll is a ki success, he may attempt a second. If the second likewise succeeds, he may attempt a third, and so on. If a roll is not a ki success, however, he may attempt no further attack rolls, and all excess shuriken automatically miss.



### Parry Ki

The user spends one magic point at the start of the round for each weapon for which he wishes to invoke ki. If, on his parry, his die roll indicates a parry ki success, he can attempt a second parry roll that round, exceeding the normal *RuneQuest* two-action limit. If his second parry is also a successful ki roll, he can attempt a third parry, and so on, continuing until either one of his parry roll attempts fails or the melee round ends.

### Dodge Ki

The user spends one magic point at the start of the round if he wishes to invoke dodge ki. If, on his dodge, his die roll indicates a dodge ki success, he can attempt to dodge a second attacker, exceeding the normal *RuneQuest* two-action limit. If he ever fails a dodge ki roll, he can attempt no more dodges that round.

### Iaijutsu Ki (Fast Draw)

The user must spend a magic point at the beginning of the round. If the user's roll is below his iaijutsu ki, it is treated as a iaijutsu critical success (consult the iaijutsu skill description in the Character Generation chapter). If two blows occur on the same strike rank, the individual with the higher basic iaijutsu ki (ignoring temporary bonuses from Ceremony, and regardless of relative DEX) strikes first, possibly killing or maiming his opponent, and thus avoiding a return blow. Masters usually combine iaijutsu ki with kenjutsu ki.

### Yadomejutsu Ki (Arrow Cutting)

The user must spend one magic point at the beginning of the round. When he attempts his normal yadomejutsu roll(s), if his roll is a ki success, he can go on to attempt a second arrow cutting. If this is also a ki success, he can try a third, and so forth. Using ki, he may attempt to block missiles arriving only one strike rank apart from one another, or even on the same strike rank.



## Example of Combat Ki Use

Three ninja assassins ambush young Miyamoto Musashi on his way to a moon viewing. Musashi is unarmed, and his weapon is sheathed, but placed edge-up for an iaijutsu draw. The ninja wear their special padded chain mail and their blades are already out and ready.

Musashi's iaijutsu (Fast Draw) ki skill value is 19%. His kenjutsu (One-Hand Use) attack ki skill value is 66%, and his kenjutsu parry ki skill value is 49%. His iaijutsu is 120%, and his kenjutsu Attack/Parry 150%/100%. Musashi spends three magic points at the start of the round: one for iaijutsu ki, one for attack ki, and one for parry ki.

Musashi decides to swing at two of the ninja by splitting his attack in half (which also reduces his ki by half). His weapon is not drawn, therefore he will use his iaijutsu (Fast Draw) skill. His player's iaijutsu roll result is 08. Ordinarily, this is not a critical success using normal skill results, but because Musashi has invoked his iaijutsu ki, any roll of 19 or less provides a critical result. Therefore, Musashi hits on his DEX strike rank of 2.

On strike rank 2, he must still make an attack skill roll. His player rolls the dice and receives a result of 24 — for an attack ki success. The ninja parries, but Musashi's roll (lower than half his invoked ki) means that his katana does critical damage, or 22 points plus Musashi's 1d4 damage bonus. The assassin's ninjato blocks only 10 points and his chain mail is useless vs. the critical hit. The ninja falls, mortally wounded.

According to the normal *RuneQuest* rules, Musashi's second attack can come no sooner than three strike ranks after his first. Due to his ki use, Musashi makes his second attack on strike rank 5 — before any ninja has made even a first attack (note the advantage of ki skills!) His player rolls a 48. This counts as a normal success, because Musashi's split attack reduced his ki skill value to 33% and his attack to 75%. Between his chain mail and successful parry, the second ninja takes no damage.

With one of the three out of action, the two remaining ninja finally get to attack on strike rank 6. Musashi blocks one of them with a parry roll of 22; since this is less than his parry ki, he can attempt a second parry roll vs. the other ninja. His player rolls 05. This result is not only below his parry ki, but counts as a critical parry, because Musashi's normal parry skill is 100% (the parry ki does not increase Musashi's chance of a critical parry, but allows the benefit of multiple parries). He could attempt a third parry, if there were any further attacks that round. The battle continues.

On the second round, Musashi spends two magic points, one for ki attack, the other for ki parry. The two ninja hit on strike rank 6, but Musashi delays his swing until strike rank 10 — he is going for an Aimed Blow, which will cut his attack to 75% but not lessen his ki (which is not reduced by combat modifiers). The two ninja swing and Musashi parries one, rolling a 52, a success, but not under his ki, so he cannot attempt any more parries that round. The first ninja hits, is parried, and rolls 13 for damage which is easily absorbed by Musashi's katana armor points. However, the second ninja's attack roll is 89, a failure, and Musashi luckily escapes injury.



On strike rank 10 Musashi rolls 39 for his attack, well under his ki. The ninja parries desperately, but the ninjato only blocks 10 points of damage, in this case 24 points. Since this was an aimed blow, Musashi goes for the chest. Fourteen points to the chest nearly cuts the ninja in half and Musashi turns to his last opponent.

On the third round, Musashi expends only one magic point to invoke his Katana attack ki. The lone surviving ninja decides to go all-out, cutting with his ninjato and kicking three strike ranks later (two attacks but no parries as permitted in *RuneQuest*). Both Musashi and the ninja hit on strike rank 6, but Musashi's DEX is 18, while the ninja's is only 16, so Musashi's blow hits first. Musashi's player rolls a 92, a normal success but not a ki success. Only 3 points of damage get through the ninja's chain mail. Musashi's player rolls an 18 to parry the ninja's sword, but the follow-up Martial Arts kick on strike rank 9 gives Musashi 7 points of damage to his right leg, forcing him to fall. Musashi cannot do anything about this, because he did not attempt to invoke his ki for an extra parry. The ninja's desperation tactic has proven successful.

On the fourth round of the fight, things look bad for Musashi, who is flat on his back with a crippled right leg. He spends one magic point for a ki attack, and swings on his normal strike rank. The ninja has decided to attack twice again, using sword and kick as before. Again, Musashi gets to hit first, his player rolls a 51, which is under Musashi's attack ki value. The ninja's attack is halted as Musashi's sword chops off his left arm. The ninja fails the CON x1 roll that could have permitted him to continue fighting and falls down. He realizes that his mission has failed and so, with his last strength, stabs himself with his ninjato. He dies shortly, by his own hand. Musashi gets up, using his sheathed katana as a crutch, and slowly hobbles to a physician.

## Craft Ki

The user expends 1 POW before rolling his Craft ki. If the ki is successful, the item is not only a valuable work of art, but has minor magical properties. The exact magic depends upon the item and the maker, and is chosen by the gamemaster. A specific craftsman's works should all have similar or related magic. The magic does not necessarily have to be beneficial, so long as it is interesting. A tailored kimono might increase the APP of the wearer by a point. A sword might be bloodthirsty — it always does at least one point of damage on a successful attack if not parried or dodged, no matter how much armor the target wears, but each time it is drawn it must taste blood, or else it loses its sharpness.

A craftsman can expend more than one point of POW when making an object, if he desires, in which case the magic becomes correspondingly greater.

Not all crafts possess an associated ki ability. Only crafts which can reasonably be termed an "art" have ki. Leather workers (who handle dead animals, a loathsome business to Nihonese) have no ki ability. Nor do tasks such as farming, cooking, and so forth. If there is doubt as to whether a particular craft possesses ki, the gamemaster has the final decision.

### Crafts Possessing Ki :

Bonsai — miniature tray gardening  
 Chokokujutsu — sculpture, engraving, and carving  
 Gaho — painting  
 Kado — flower arranging  
 Kenchiku — architecture  
 Musical instrument making  
 Ningyojutsu — doll making  
 Origami — paper folding  
 Orimono — weaving  
 Ryori — cooking arts  
 Shodo (Write Japanese or Write Chinese) — calligraphy  
 Teienjutsu — garden design  
 Togei — pottery and lacquer-ware  
 Washi — paper making  
 Weapon making Yoroi — armor making

## Performance Ki Skills

All Performance ki skills function similarly. The user must spend 1d6 magic points at the time he writes the poem, sings the song, plays his instrument, or whatever. If the skill roll is less than or equal to the performer's ki value, the performance is of exceptional quality. It can also act as a special type of Divination for the user or, if appropriate, for the individual to whom the performance or work is dedicated. This special Divination should be given by the gamemaster in the form of a single word or short phrase which hints at the future, the present, or the past. Unlike normal Divination, the user does not ask any question.

### Performing Arts Possessing Ki:

Acting  
 Bunraku — puppet plays  
 Buyo — dance  
 Cha-no-yu — tea ceremony  
 Kado — flower arranging  
 Play <Instrument>, including koto (Nihonese zither), fue (flute), shakuhachi (Nihonese clarinet), shamisen (Nihonese banjo), biwa (Nihonese mandolin), taiko (drum), tsutumi (small drum).  
 Shi — poetry Uta — singing

## Agility Ki

**CLIMB:** the user must spend one magic point just before attempting his climb roll. A successful Climb ki permits the user to climb sheer (or even overhanging) walls, cling and move along ceilings, and similar feats impossible to the normal Climb skill. Most, if not all, Climb ki Masters are ninja.

**JUMP:** the user must expend a magic point just before he attempts a Jump roll. If his ki is successfully invoked, the jumper can leap up to four times his height horizontally and twice his height vertically, whether or not he has a running start. Jump ki can also be used when an adventurer is falling from a great height — a successful Jump ki not only permits him to select the hit location landed upon, but reduces the falling damage by 3d6. Hence, the user would have to fall over 9 meters before suffering any ill effects. Most, if not all, Jump ki Masters are ninja.

**RIDE:** Ride ki may be invoked for any one of three purposes. In each case, the user spends 1d3 magic points, then attempts a Riding ki roll. If his ki succeeds, he may chose:

- 1) for the next hour, neither the horse or the rider suffer any fatigue loss. This effect ends when the rider dismounts or when the hour is up, whichever occurs first.
- 2) for the next hour, the horse's speed is increased by 1, but there is no corresponding fatigue loss. If the rider wishes, he may expend 2d3 magic points and increase the horse's speed by 2 points, 3d3 magic points will increase the horse's speed by 3 points, and so forth.
- 3) for the next five minutes, 20 percentiles are added to all of the horse's skill values.

**SWIM:** the user must spend a magic point at the time he attempts a Swim roll. If his ki succeeds, then he can swim at a speed of 10 meters per round (1 per strike rank) until his next Swim roll. Alternately, he can use his ki to attempt to hold his breath underwater. If his Swim ki is successful, his CON is doubled for the purposes of attempting asphyxiation survival rolls until the next time he is forced to take a breath.

**THROW:** the user must spend a magic point at the time he attempts his Throw roll. If the ki succeeds, he can place the thrown object exactly where he wishes, or even ricochet it off other objects ending in exact placement. The normal maximum possible range of a throw is doubled for him.



## Knowledge Ki

**CRAFT:** this is discussed above.

**FIRST AID:** the user must spend a magic point at the time he attempts his First Aid roll. If the ki succeeds, it counts as a critical success, healing 1d3+3 points of damage.

**SHIPHANDLING:** the captain must spend 1d6 magic points at the time he attempts his Shiphandling roll. If the ki is successful, then for a number of hours equal to the captain's POW, his ship's Seaworthiness is increased by 5.



## Manipulation Ki

**CONCEAL:** the user must spend a point of POW at the time he attempts his Conceal roll. If the ki succeeds, then the concealed object becomes actually invisible and intangible until either it is spotted with a Search ki roll or the individual that concealed it desires to expose it. If desired, only a part of an object may be concealed. This skill is often used in conjunction with Craft ki.

**DEVISE:** the user must spend a point of POW at the time he attempts his Devise roll. If the ki succeeds, then the device he has assembled has a minor magic ability, chosen by the gamemaster and appropriate to the character and the device. the effect can be combined with an appropriate Craft ki to enhance the magic. Typical magic effects might include a lock that only opens if the lock's owner personally asks it to do so, a door that screams when forced open, or a spear throwing trap that only discharges when samurai of the

Taira clan unwittingly trigger it. A trap or lock created with Devise ki can only be circumvented or disassembled safely by the maker or a second Devise ki.

## Perception Ki

**LISTEN:** the user must expend a magic point at the time he attempts a Listen roll. If the ki succeeds he can hear things normally inaudible to any human. He can hear heartbeats, listen to the grass growing, etc.

**SCAN:** the user must expend a magic point at the time he attempts a Scan roll. If the ki succeeds, he can spot objects normally imperceptible to any human. He can notice houseflies buzzing over a hundred meters off, see sunspots on the solar disc, detect an all-black ninja in absolute darkness, etc.

**SEARCH:** the user must expend a magic point at the time he attempts a Search roll. If the ki succeeds, he can see things normally not obvious to any human. He can tell the caste and normal occupation of a disguised individual (if attempting to detect a disguised ninja using ki, the higher value ki succeeds), as well as tell whether an individual he meets possesses any ki. He can tell whether a door has been opened and closed since the last time he saw it, etc.

**TRACK:** the user must expend a magic point at the time he attempts a track roll. If the ki succeeds, he can track under conditions normally impossible to any human. He can track a person down a crowded stone street, or follow the trail of a snake in tall grass, etc.

## Stealth Ki

**DISGUISE:** the user must spend 1d6 magic points at the time he assumes the disguise. If the Disguise ki roll is successful, the disguise becomes real for a number of hours equal to the user's POW; if a male disguised himself as a woman, he actually becomes a woman for that length of time. If he has disguised himself as an older or younger individual, he actually becomes older or younger. His SIZ cannot be decreased to less than half normal, nor can it be more than doubled. Alterations in apparent characteristics due to use of Disguise ki have no effect on the user's actual characteristics or modifiers. Only humans and humanoid creatures can be imitated. All Disguise ki Masters are ninja.

**ESCAPE:** the user must spend 1d3 magic points at the time he attempts to Hide. Shadows must be present for the user to melt into. If the Hide ki is successful, he becomes invisible and intangible, and remains invisible until he decides to move, cast a spell, or prepare a weapon. He remains invisible even if a light is later shined into the area, dispelling part or all of the shadows. All Hide ki Masters are ninja.

**SNEAK:** the user must spend 1d3 magic points at the time he attempts to Sneak. For the next five minutes, he leaves no tracks. No record of passage over mud or sand is left. He can even walk on eggshells without breaking them. Nightingale floors are ineffective vs. the user unless the craftsman succeeded in his own ki skill when he made them.





## Mythology & Religion

Religion is a system of beliefs which relates the individual to the greater world in some way. Samurai relate to the greater world through belief in kami, and other deities and spirits of varying power and importance. Religion includes reverence for these deities (expressed through sacrifice) and it assumes some return for the worship from the deity, expressed in *RuneQuest* as magic spells.

Mythology is a body of knowledge which relates important explanations about the deities. To most modern readers mythological stories are interesting, if somewhat naive and often incomprehensible. Our knowledge of myths comes from ancient written sources based on older oral traditions. The original purpose of the tradition was to explain religion, but those facts were long lost to those writers who finally recorded the stories. Extrapolations from many sources can give us a general outline of the method of active belief. These general forms of worship can be traced back thousands of years.

The original mythologies were very different from those which were written down, because at one time the worshippers understood the true meaning of the tales. The transition of myth from meaningful revelations to half-forgotten stories is gradual and reflects a growing inability of the religion to satisfy the spiritual needs of the people. Such forces have been at work throughout Japan's history, as is amply demonstrated by the constant appearance of new religious philosophies. Yet at the same time, some elements of Japanese beliefs remained

constant or were influential in what changes were made. The very existence of the *Ryobu-shinto* religious doctrine exemplifies this. Later, some Japanese were able to adopt portions of Christian beliefs into their faiths without seeing any contradiction among in the beliefs of Buddhism, Christianity, and Shinto.

The world of *RuneQuest* samurai presumes that people still believe in the older faiths, and that this faith gives them access to magic. The exact nature of the spells available varies according to the deity and the method of worship used.

Most Nihonese are poly-religious: they follow the tenets of more than one religion. At the same time, they do not feel bound by all of the restrictions of any one set of beliefs. In *RuneQuest* terms, they are neither initiates nor priests in any cult, but lay members in many. With all the deities present in Nihon, a person could not live a balanced life devoted to one and ignoring the others.

This does not mean that the Nihonese do not interact with or worship the deities of Nihon. Buddhism and Shinto are important in a person's life and beliefs. Each faith caters to specific aspects of existence. A historical sect, the *Tendai* sect of Buddhism, formalized this approach to religion in the doctrine of Ryobu-shinto or the two-fold way of Buddhism and Shinto. This religious philosophy finds correspondences between the ancient animistic deities of Shinto and the deities of Buddhism, imported from India by way of China. In these correspondences, Shinto and Buddhism are found to be one religion.

The religious path in Nihon is one of balance: male and female, good and evil, active and passive. Indeed, the kami are said to have two "souls", one kindly and one inimical, reflecting the duality of the forces of nature. Two deities were needed to create the islands of Nihon, Izanagi (the male who invites) and Izanami (the female who invites). All things have a place in the natural order and harmony is obtained by maintaining the natural order in society and one's personal life.

Thus, to be born Japanese, (that is, in Nihon and of the Japanese race) is to be raised as a lay member of Shinto and a lay member of Buddhism as well. Foreigners may not partake of the benefits of Nihonese poly-religious orientation. They may still, however, join Nihonese cults which are friendly and compatible with their own native or adopted cults.

Most samurai retain this orientation throughout their lives. It leaves them free to partake of the spirit magic of either religion and free also of the strictures of behavior and perils of pollution or sin laid upon initiates and priests.

Still, in Nihon there are those who are dedicated to a single path. Persons electing such a path are strictly bound by the tenets of their chosen faith. Unlike their undedicated brethren, who may receive spirit magic benefits from institutions of any cult allied to Shinto or Buddhism, they are restricted to those of their own cult.

In Nihon, a person may have both a public religion and a private one. Many people profess either Shinto or Buddhism as the faith of their family or clan while professing contrary, complementary, or no beliefs in private. Many samurai, while privately poly-religious (as is only prudent), will profess a public adherence either to Shinto or Buddhism.



## Shinto

Shinto is a pantheistic religion. Worship, or at least reverence, is given to all things and phenomena in nature. Shintoists believe that all things, animate and inanimate, have their own kami.

Shinto has no written doctrine or laws. Its beliefs are passed down by word of mouth. Shinto emphasizes cleanliness of body, mind, and spirit, and promotes fertility. Practitioners revere the kami, transmit their ancestors' teachings concerning the essence of the kami, and promote human welfare. Shinto is a positive faith fostering harmony, well-being, and a constructive approach to the world.

Kami are worshiped at shrines (*jingu*). These range in size from a simple rock of unusual shape, venerated for its kami, to the large, multi-building compound of the Grand Shrine at Ise. Only the largest shrines have a full-time staff of clerics.

Shrines generally face to the east, never to the west or north. The entrance is marked by a distinctive archway called a *torii*. This consists of two upright posts and two horizontal crosspieces at the top. Additional torii may be present at a large shrine or an exceptional small shrine. These torii are often put up by lay worshipers at their own expense to try and win divine favor. Some confused locations even have these multiple torii in front of Buddhist temples!

Beyond the gate, a place is set aside for purification rituals, where a worshiper may be cleansed or, if technically pure, wash his hands and rinse his mouth before communicating with the kami. Groves of the sacred *sakaki* trees are common. The buildings, constructed of *hinoki* (Japanese cypress) wood, are of simple and austere design. Furnishings are almost non-existent and no images of the kami will be found in the inner shrine. The shrines of "cult" kami have distinctive styles of roof and torii construction.

Priests (in *RuneQuest* terms) of Shinto are rare. Most Shinto "priests" are only acolytes or lay priests. They are part-time officials who perform weddings and purification ceremonies. They never perform funerals or birth rites because such are impure, and hence Buddhist activities. They also keep up local shrines. They are awarded no special status due to their priestly profession.

All new buildings are purified by the local Shinto lay priest to make it safe for entry. In a sense, the priest is introducing the kami of the site to the new structure. Family homes receive the protection of the ancestral kami in this fashion. Such rites do not actually protect the house against misfortune, but it does install the ancestral kami in place, who then can be called upon for aid.

Shinto acolytes and priests must avoid becoming ritually impure. In such a state, they are considered inactive, but not sacrilegious. A Shintoist is rendered impure by the touch of blood, the presence of death, illness, the birth or death of a close family member, and the practice of sorcery. To regain purity, a Shintoist must remove the polluting presence (either physically, as for blood, or through time, as for a mourning period after a death) and perform a purification ritual. Ritual pollution is visible to any using Soul Sight.

## Buddhism

The Buddhist religion's ultimate goal is to attain enlightenment. An enlightened one (a Buddha) is spiritually free and has full understanding of the relationship between man and the cosmos. This divine state of release from physical woes (*nirvana*) is achievable through correct living and self-discipline.

There are many sects in Buddhism. A sect differs from a *RuneQuest* cult. Sects interpret the Buddhist teachings in particular manners although they all agree on certain fundamental precepts. Variation can be over minor doctrinal points or even political aims. For purposes of magical benefits available, these sects may be considered the same. Do not, of course, assume that the politics of all sects are the same. There is often open hostility between sects even though they provide services to all lay members of the religion. Most disagreements between Buddhist establishments are land disputes, though some are political. These differences have more than once resulted in bloodshed. Sometimes large Shinto establishments got into the fray as well. Very little doctrinal rivalry occurs in either Buddhism or Shinto. One Buddhist sect, the Nichiren or Hokke sect, did indeed launch religious disputes, but it was exceptional, and was shunned by more conventional Buddhist sects.

Buddhists have no god in the way a westerner understands the term. Yet many spirits, which function in the game as "deities," are connected with Buddhist beliefs. In many cases, these spirits are individuals who have achieved nirvana, yet still retain ties with the physical world out of a desire to aid others in achieving enlightenment.

An important sect has a major temple or monastery for their headquarters. These sites are staffed with many monks and priests. The more militant sects have religious warriors on call as well. The temples support themselves, usually tax free, from temple lands, farmed by tenant heimin. In many ways the temples function like samurai clans.



Buddhist temples (*jiin*), like Shinto shrines, vary tremendously in size. Small family "temples" (*butsudan*) are found in many homes, while the great temple complexes found on the sacred mountains of Nihon are often feudal demesnes in their own right. A Buddhist temple is ostentatious and showy compared to a Shinto shrine, from the tiled (as opposed to thatch or wood) roofs to the multi-story pagoda housing an inner sanctum crowded with images of the Buddhas and associated spirits. The temple grounds are always enclosed by a wall. The main gate is guarded by statues of fierce Ten, Myo-o, or shishi. Larger temples consist of more than one sanctum. These are usually in separate compounds defined by walls within the outer wall.

The head of the temple is an abbot (*sojo*). There are various ranks of underpriests (*risshi*) in charge of different aspects of the temple and its holdings. Beneath them are the ordinary priests (*soryo*) and initiates resident at the temple. There is usually an additional transient population composed of monks from other institutions or sects, wandering priests of no particular temple or sect, and pilgrims.

The martial monks, or *yamabushi*, associated with various sects are men who have taken the religious vows of initiates yet continue their martial ways. Another type of war-like monks, *sohei*, were generally little more than mercenaries hired by the temples to protect their interests. *Sohei* may simply be laymen with shaved heads, though some engage in Fudo worship. Sects that maintain these monks sidestep Buddhist doctrine and believe that fighting and killing can be justified to further the religion (in practical terms usually the particular sect or temple) and alleviate the lot of the downtrodden. The monks themselves may expect full forgiveness for violent

acts ordered by proper superiors or for acts which they can justify to those same superiors. *Sohei* are subject to all restrictions placed on Buddhists who have sinned if they commit such an act, whether it has been sanctioned by a superior or not, until they have purified themselves through a ritual of repentance.

Buddhists seek to eliminate hate, jealousy, and other violent emotions and replace them with tolerance, understanding, and love. This approach, and their belief in continued reincarnation of the soul until enlightenment is achieved, leads them to avoid all killing. Many are vegetarians to avoid the loss of animal life inherent in a more varied diet.

Buddhist beliefs lead the religion to be concerned with things spiritual rather than with the stuff of daily life. It offers rites for birth and death, areas of ritual impurity to Shinto. Its priests, through compassion and desire to ease suffering, are renowned for their aid to the sick, injured, and helpless.

Buddhist acolytes and priests are liable to sin against their beliefs. Sins include eating food from an animal source; participating in an act of violence; breaking a vow; drunkenness (or excess of any sort); killing of an animal; and accidental killing of a person. While in a state of sin they are considered inactive but not sacreligious. To purify himself, the sinner must perform a ritual of repentance.

Buddhists consider rape and murder sacreligious.

## The Deities

The deities of Nihon are many and varied. The *kami* are nature spirits, born of primitive animism. They bear within themselves both good and evil, just as nature can show kindly and hostile faces to man. The Buddhist deities are more refined. They personify emotions and attributes deemed estimable by man. Unlike the *kami*, they have an opposed race of spirits, the *oni* who embody the evil nature of the world.

### The Kami

Kami is translated as "superior one" as often as "deity" or "sacred." The *kami* are the sacred beings of Shinto. They are omnipresent in nature, though an individual *kami* is often associated with a particular object, site, or set of qualities. *Kami* are considered to have a parent-child relationship to people in general as well as an ancestor-descendant relationship to the Japanese.

Nihon hosts eight hundred myriads (8 million) *kami* and the ranks continue to grow. Some are celestial spirits who remain in the heavens, aloof from the world. Others are terrestrial spirits who dispense benefits or discipline to the people of the earth. *Kami* are neither omniscient nor omnipotent.

*Kami* are said to have two souls. One is benign (*nigi-mi-tama*), while the other (*ara-mi-tama*) is, if not evil, at least mischievous. Most *kami* are ruled predominantly by one or the other soul. Celestial *kami* are benign. Bad *kami* reside in Yomi, the Shinto underworld. *Kami* dwelling upon the earth tend to be more variable with regard to their ruling nature.

Amaterasu is the chief of the *kami*. She is the heavenly shining deity, the sun. Upset by the mischief of her brother Susano-O, she once hid in a cave, depriving the world of light. The other *kami* coaxed her to peek out and unknowingly observe her image in a mirror. Leaving the cave to discover the identity of such a beautiful *kami*, she restored light to the world. The other *kami* sealed the cave to ensure that the sun would always shine. The mirror has been passed on to become one of the three pieces of imperial regalia. Amaterasu sent her grandson Ninigi-No-Mikoto to secure and rule the Eight-Island Country, Nihon. From her through him are descended the emperors of Nihon.

Hachiman was originally a *kami* of fishermen and cultivators. As his worshippers developed into the armed and warlike samurai, he developed into the *kami* of war. It is said that one-third of the shrines in Nihon are dedicated to him.

Inari is the *kami* of rice, hence of wealth. He assures the prosperity of the land. This is a function he shares with Uke-Mochi-No-Kami. Their shrines are often shared as well. Inari's messenger is the fox and shrines dedicated to him often have stone foxes seated by the torii.

### The Buddhist Spirits

The deities of Buddhism can be divided into four types, each with specific functions within the beliefs of the religion: Buddhas, Bosatsu, Myo-o, and Ten.



A Buddha, or *nyorai*, is a separate, independent individual. Yet all Buddhas are united in nirvana as enlightened ones and, at the same time, each embodies a variant of the single concept of a Buddha. Thus the benefits provided to worshippers are similar. The most popular Buddhas worshipped in Nihon are Sakyamuni, Amida, Dainichi, and Yakusi.

Sakyamuni is the historical Buddha (Gautama). He is often considered the principal Buddha. Sakyamuni, while much revered, is little called upon since he has little interest in the mundane affairs of the earth.

Amida is the Lord of the Western Paradise (also called the Pure Land). He is the merciful lord of the dead and the most widely worshipped Buddha in Nihon.

Dainichi is the cosmic, solar Buddha. He is often identified with the kami Amaterasu. Some of his worshippers consider him all-powerful. He is popular among ascetics and scholars.

Yakusi is the Lord of the Eastern Paradise (also called the World of Pure Emerald). He is a patron of healers due to twelve vows he made to relieve the suffering and sickness of mankind.

Bosatsu are individuals who have found enlightenment but have delayed their entry into nirvana in order to help

others find the way. There are many Bosatsu. Two of the most popular are Kwannon and Jizo.

Kwannon, called the merciful, has vowed to save all human beings through her own mercy, compassion, and love. Kwannon is the only major spirit in the Buddhist pantheon commonly portrayed as a woman.

Jizo is the most frequently encountered Bosatsu in Nihon. He is associated with material benefits in the mundane world such as good harvests, long life, and prosperity as well as rebirth in paradise. These aspects make him especially popular with the heimin. Jizo is the patron of children and considered a special guardian of their souls.

Myo-o are the vanquishers of evil. They serve the greater Buddhist spirits by using their great strength to overthrow evil and by aiding humans in resisting temptation. The greatest of the Myo-o is Fudo. He is often worshipped in his own right.

Ten are the heavenly guardians and defenders of the Buddhist faith. Statues of fierce Ten often guard temple gates and the spirits can animate those statues in defense of the temple.



### Other Deities

Other deities appear infrequently in myth yet still are worshiped by cults. Such deities have powers that attract men to trade worship for favors and blessings. These include:

Tsukiyomi is the kami of the moon who rules the night. His messenger is the hare.

Suitengu is a sea kami, patron of sailors and fishermen.

O-kuni-nushi is the patron of healers, a descendant of Susano-O, and the greatest of the Earth Kami (Gods of the Land). He is worshiped at Izumo Shrine.

Uke-Mochi-No-Kami is an ancient agricultural kami. Many of her functions (and hence worshippers) have been taken over by Inari.

Still other deities are important in the mythology, but not in cult worship. Their cosmic functions are recognized, but not given mundane power through respectful worship.

Susano-O is the ruler of Yomi, the Shinto underworld. In addition, he is a warrior kami, a fire kami, and the *kami* of storms. It was he who slew the nine-headed serpent and discovered in its tail the great sword *Kusanagi*, "Grass Cutter." He presented it to his sister Amaterasu, and it has become one of the three pieces of imperial regalia of Nihon. In return she presented him with jewels from her hair, the third and final part of the regalia. Later, his rough nature and continued pranks and ill manners led to his exile from heaven.

Emma-Hoo is the Buddhist judge of the dead and ruler of the Buddhist hells. He decides whether a dead person's soul will be immediately reborn, spend a period

of torment in hell to burn off some karmic debt, or be banished to earth as a ghost until a specific karmic debt is paid.

Oni are never worshiped. They vary from pathetic tricksters to immensely powerful foes whom only a deity could conquer. Most humans can only hope to defeat an oni by relying on ingenuity and cleverness rather than armed might. Oni rule mysterious underground realms and mystic, fog-shrouded isles. Some also serve as tormentors of the dead in the Buddhist hells or as officers of Emma-Hoo's tribunal.

A vast array of minor yet powerful beings inhabit the world: bakemono, kappa, kitsune, tengu, and other fairy-like beings. Some are locally worshiped, some are feared and not worshiped, and some add harmless color to the wild hills beyond the rice paddies. None are important in the mythology, though all are active among humans.

### Religious Practices

The Nihonese seem to be at once both highly religious and basely materialistic. So many of the religious tenets and beliefs of both Shinto and Buddhism are bound into their daily life and secular culture that they pay little attention to the pomp and pageantry of a religion. They often seem casual or uninterested in religious observances. At the same time, deities abound in the land and must be accorded proper respect. The original pantheistic and non-hostile nature of the indigenous Shinto religion has allowed the Nihonese to embrace gods from other lands without contradiction or substitution. All persons have access to the deities and only the most dedicated seek to establish a stronger link.

Nihonese religious practices take several forms. Private worship of ancestral kami or Buddhist spirits is often performed in the home where it is led by the head of the family or an initiate or priestly member of the family. Normal observances are performed daily but spirit communication, in order to gain spirit magic, may only be attempted at special times of the year.

Most worship performed outside the home occurs on an individual basis rather than at a formal ceremony. Worshipers visit a shrine or temple and perform the appropriate rituals themselves, rarely aided by a priest.

Scattered throughout the calendar year are various festivals. These are dedicated to the many spirits and deities of Nihon. Lay, initiate, and priestly worshippers attend the festivities to revere the honored spirit and gain spirit magic. Cult-oriented initiates and priests may, through their participation and leadership in these rituals, communicate with their deities to gain divine magic.

A person may become an acolyte of Shinto by presenting himself or herself to the kami at a religious site and swearing to follow Shinto beliefs and rules strictly. He may become either an acolyte of general Shinto or of a particular kami. When not tending to the needs of the kami or meditating on the best ways to serve the kami, the acolyte follows his normal daily life, always mindful of the Shinto way. Full priests of Shinto (in the *RuneQuest* sense) are rare, and appointments are as much political as religious.

To enter a Buddhist sect, a person must spend time in a monastery, orienting himself or herself to the deities and the new restrictions upon daily life. Acolytes shave all hair from their heads and devote their lives to the enlightenment of self or others. Most Buddhist clergy are *RuneQuest* acolytes. Many are itinerant and some have no particular favored deity. Full priests are only present in the temple structure of the organized Buddhist sects. Buddhist religious usually leave their former lives behind, symbolizing this by taking new names.

All priests and acolytes may gain divine magic in standard *RuneQuest* fashion by worshiping at religious sites dedicated to their deities. Acolytes not devoted to a particular deity can normally only sacrifice for common divine spells, but can do so at any temple whose deity teaches the common spell being sought. Acolytes that are devoted to a specific deity can only sacrifice for their own deity's magic, and can only gain divine magic at sites dedicated to their deity.

## Pilgrimages

Pilgrimages are a standard part of Nihonese religious life. A person may undertake a pilgrimage at any time. A pilgrimage consists of resolving to travel to a particular religious site and going there.

A pilgrimage brings a character to the attention of a deity. The completion of one allows the character to check for an increase in POW. Travelling across town to a temple is not considered a pilgrimage — some hardship of travel must be involved, as decided by the gamemaster.

A pilgrimage may also consist of visiting more than one site. The sites should be connected in some obvious way, such as visiting the 33 temples of Kwannon, and must all have connections with the deity whose attention the character seeks.

Pilgrimages to multiple sites gives a lay member a chance to gain divine magic. It gives an acolyte or priest a chance to gain divine magic from a kami or Buddhist deity that he is not specially devoted to. Twice the number of sites visited is the percentage chance that such an opportunity will be allowed. Thus, a visit to the 33 temples of Kwannon gives, when completed, a 66% chance that the character can attempt to gain the sought spell, via normal POW sacrifice at an appropriate site. The divine magic must be available from the deity whose attention was sought. The spell gained is one-use only.

## Worship at Festivals

Many festivals honoring the deities of Nihon are held throughout the year. Some are held at religious sites throughout the land, while others take place at only a single religious site. Festivals offer characters the opportunity to worship deities and thereby gain magic appropriate to the deity. The magic sought must be appropriate to the festival and the religious site at which the worship is offered.

Some festivals offer special opportunities to learn special spells from guardian kami rather than specific deities. Such spells are imparted through spirit communication using the process outlined in *Getting Spirit Magic*. The messenger imparting the spell varies according to the spell type. The spell types listed in the Festival table correspond to the categories of spirits who can teach them.

Festivals are open to all lay members of a cult. Remember that, by right of birth, all Nihonese are lay members of all Shinto and Buddhist cults. They may participate freely in ceremonies of these cults unless they have joined a specific cult that forbids or prevents membership in the Shinto or Buddhist religions.

Lay members may attempt to gain spirit magic through spirit communication. Initiates and priests may use spirit communication to gain appropriate divine spells.



## Festivals (*matsuri*)

<i>Festival</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Deity Honored</i>	<i>Special Spells Available At This Time (Major/Important/Lesser)</i>
<i>Ganjitsu</i> (new year)	Jan 1-3	Kami of the Elements Buddhist deities	None
At this festival the Emperor conducts purification rites for the nation as a whole.			
Foundation Day	Feb 11	Imperial Ancestors Amaterasu	None
<i>Mina Matsuri</i> (girls' day)	Mar 3	None	Spirit Screen Heal, Countermagic Protection
<i>Higan</i> (spring) (spring equinox) (agricultural festival)	Mar 21	Kami of Place	None/Heal /Bless Crops
<i>Hanamatsuri</i> (flower festival) Buddha's Birthday	Apr 8	Inari Buddhas	None
<i>Tango-no-Sekku</i> (boys' day)	May 5	None	Fanaticism/Strength/ Endurance, Vigor
<i>Tanabata</i> (star festival)	Jul 7	None	Cloud Clear/Farsee/ Light, Shimmer
<i>O-bon</i> (festival of the dead)	Jul 11-13	Ancestors	None
<i>Tsukimi</i> (moon festival)	Aug full moon	Tsuki	Madness/Second Sight/Light
<i>Iwashimizu</i> (Hachiman's festival)	Sep 15	Hachiman	None
<i>Higan</i> (fall) (agricultural festival)	Sep 23	Kami of Place	None/Heal /Bless Crops
<i>Kanname-sai</i> (harvest)	Oct 15-17	Inari	None
<i>Kami-na-zuki</i> (month with no gods)	Oct 20-Nov 20	None	None
At this time all the gods congregate at Izumo Shrine. Worship may only be performed there.			
Great Purification	Dec 31	None	special**
local kami — date varies by location and kami	1 per year	Kami of Place	None

\*\* Characters may have pollution removed or sin erased by completing a successful spirit communication (see Getting Spirit Magic). The gamemaster should adjust the strength of the spirit fought to reflect the seriousness of a character's transgressions.

## Major and Minor Deities

Many deities are noted in myth and legend but their importance varies. Shinto deities rarely were worshiped in the organized manner presented in *RuneQuest*. Some did develop what can be characterized as cults. Buddhist deities did develop several distinctive cults during the period. Since the differences are significant for game purposes, the following categories are used:

**MAJOR DEITIES:** Amaterasu, Amida, Dainichi, Sakyamuni, Yakusi

**IMPORTANT DEITIES:** Hachiman, Inari, Jizo, Kwannon, Suitengu

**MINOR DEITIES:** Fudo, O-kuni-nushi \*, local kami, most Bosatsu

**LESSER DEITIES:** Susano-O, Tsukiyomi, Uke-Mochi-No-Kami, most Myo-O, Ten

\* *O-kuni-nushi is a special case. He acts as a kind of super "local kami," and has a cult far exceeding that of other Minor Deities.*

Major deities are those who receive full cult status, including temples, full-time priests, and public worship on a wide scale. They may also be worshipped privately, in spirit fashion, without priests.

Important deities are those who receive some, but not widespread, worship. They have only minor temples with part- or full-time priests which may be treated as normal *RuneQuest* temples. These deities may also be worshipped without a priest.

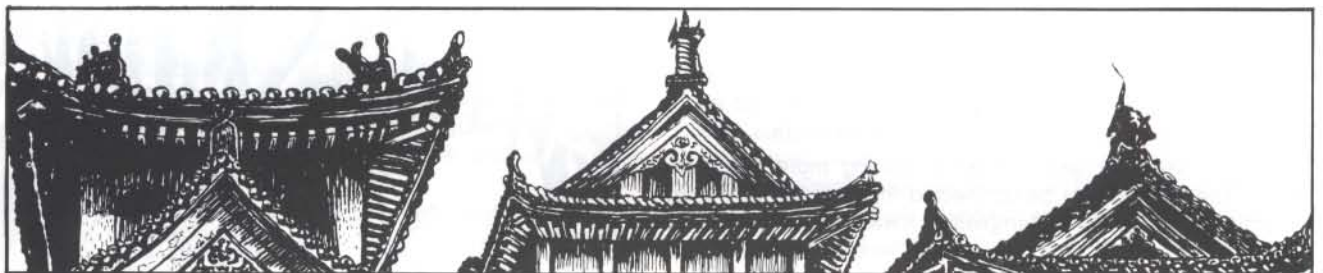
Minor deities are those who may only be worshiped by individuals using spirit communication or at special ceremonies at specific sites.

Lesser deities are those who have no organized cult, but may be important in the mythology. No benefits are gained by worshipping them.

## Temples

Nihonese religious temples come in the standard *RuneQuest* sizes. The gamemaster will have to determine the exact size and capacity of each temple within these limits. Although Shinto religious locations are always referred to as "shrines" regardless of size and the word "temple" is reserved for Buddhist religious sites in Japan, this supplement will use the terms set forth in *RuneQuest* to designate all religious locations in Nihon.

**Major Temples:** There are only few major temples in Nihon. The principal deity is served by a full-time priest who is the high priest of the temple. Other important cults present are served by minor temples with at least one full priest at these sites. Minor deities will have a shrine with at least an initiate of the cult.



## RuneQuest — Shinto Equivalencies

The standard cults given in *RuneQuest* are analogous to the following Nihonese deities. No hunting god analog is present. Note that some of the deities among the analogs do not receive cult worship.

Earth God	— O-kuni-nushi
Night Goddess	— Tsukiyomi
Ruling Deity	— Amaterasu
Sea God	— Suitengu
Storm God	— Susano-O
Sun God	— Amaterasu
Underworld God	— Susano-O
War God	— Hachiman
Trickster God	— Susano-O

## Principal Temple Locations (City, Province, Island)

### Ise, Ise, Honshu

MAJOR TEMPLE: Amaterasu

MINOR TEMPLES: Hachiman, Inari

SHRINES: Kami of the Elements, Imperial Ancestors

### Izumo, Izumo, Honshu

MINOR TEMPLE: O-kuni-nushi (this temple becomes a Major Temple during Kami-na-zuki, due to his reinforcement by every other local kami in Japan during that month).

### Hiei-zan, Yamashiro, Honshu

MAJOR TEMPLE: all Buddhas

MINOR TEMPLES: Fudo

SHRINES: Kwannon, Jizo

### Nara, Yamato, Honshu

MAJOR TEMPLE: Dainichi

MINOR TEMPLES: Other Buddhas

SHRINES: Fudo, Kwannon, Jizo

### Nara, Yamato, Honshu

MAJOR TEMPLE: all Buddhas

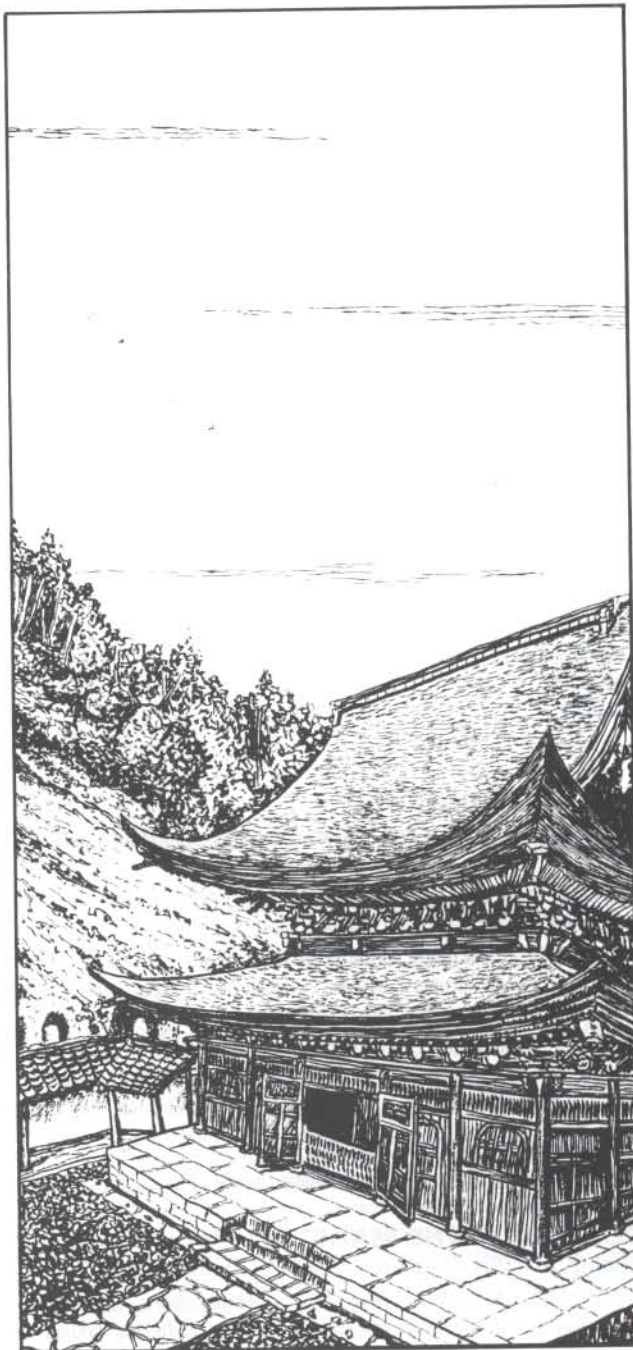
MINOR TEMPLES: Jizo

SHRINES: Kwannon, Fudo

## Who Do You Worship?

The following table shows what deities a character from a particular background is likeliest to join.

Occupation	Deity
Ashigaru	Hachiman
Crafter	local kami, Buddhist deity
Entertainer	Inari, Buddhist deity
Farmer	Inari, local kami, Buddhist deity
Fisher	Suitengu
Herder	local kami, Buddhist deity
Jizamurai	Amaterasu, Hachiman, Inari
Kuge	Amaterasu, any Buddha
Merchant	Inari, Buddhist deity
Physician	Yakushi
Sailor	Suitengu
Samurai Courtier	Amaterasu, Hachiman
Samurai Soldier	Hachiman
Thief	Inari
Woodgatherer	local Kami



**Minor Temples:** Several minor temples can be found in each of the towns shown on the map. Such temples may be dedicated to any of the major or important deities. The High Priest will be of that cult. Shrines to other deities may be present as well, with or without full-time priests, according to the gamemaster's will.

**Shrines:** Shrines, usually Shinto, may be found at many locations throughout Nihon. Each town will have a shrine to the local kami. Other shrines, with or without full-time priests, may be located at the gamemaster's whim.

**Sites:** Shinto sites are found virtually everywhere in Nihon. It is, after all, the land of the eight hundred myriads of deities. Such sites may be marked by something as simple as an offering bowl or a sacred rope. Some may have fallen into neglect while others are carefully tended. Most have no regularly scheduled rites of worship.

# Cult Descriptions

Divine magic is available from several deities. It functions as normal *RuneQuest* divine magic for both initiates and priests.

Some Nihonese deities provide more than a single spell at their shrines. This is another manifestation of the exceptional magic of Nihon.

**NOTE:** a **BOLDFACE** spell name indicates a new spell or skill. An *ITALIC* name indicates spells taught at shrines.

## AMATERASU (Shinto)

**SKILLS:** Dance, Evaluate, Longbow (Dai-kyu), Orate

**COMMON DIVINE MAGIC:** all

**SPECIAL DIVINE MAGIC:** Bless Crops, *Cloud Clear*, Illusory Sight, Mindblast, Restore Health <all>, *Summon Wind*, *Sunspear*, *Truesword*, *Worship Amaterasu*, *Worship* <any kami>

**SPIRIT MAGIC:** Countermagic, Demoralize, Detect Magic, Dispel Magic, *Farsee*, Ignite, Light, Lightwall, Protection, *Second Sight*, *Shimmer*, Spirit Screen, Visibility

## AMIDA (Buddhist)

**SKILLS:** Human Lore, Orate, Speak Japanese, World Lore

**COMMON DIVINE MAGIC:** all; *Heal Wound* and *Soul Sight* are taught at shrines

**SPECIAL DIVINE MAGIC:** Create Ghost, Exorcism, Heal Body, all Illusory spells, Reflection, Restore Health <all>, Shield, *Worship* <Buddhist deity>

**SPIRIT MAGIC:** Countermagic, Detect Enemy, Detect Magic, Dispel Magic, Heal, Light, Protection, *Second Sight*, Spirit Screen

## DAINICHI (Buddhist)

**SKILLS:** Human Lore, Orate, any Perception skill, World Lore

**COMMON DIVINE MAGIC:** all; *Dismiss Magic*, *Find Enemy*, and *Soul Sight* are taught at shrines

**SPECIAL DIVINE MAGIC:** *Absorption*, Exorcism, Heal Body, all Illusory spells, Reflection, Shield, *Worship Dainichi*

**SPIRIT MAGIC:** Countermagic, Demoralize, Detect Enemy, Detect Magic, Dispel Magic, *Farsee*, Light, Mindspeech, Protection, *Second Sight*, Spirit Screen

## FUDO (Buddhist)

**SKILLS:** Dodge, Kenjutsu Attack, any other weapon Attack or Parry, Martial Arts

**COMMON DIVINE MAGIC:** *Find Enemy*, Soul Sight

**SPECIAL DIVINE MAGIC:** Command Oni, Exorcism, Fear, Sureshot, *Worship* <Buddhist deity>

**SPIRIT MAGIC:** Demoralize, Detect Enemy, Dullblade, Fanaticism, *Second Sight*, Slow, Strength

**NOTE:** cultists do not sin if they participate in violent acts against evil (beware of deception!) or in defense of the Buddhist faith or its adherents

## HACHIMAN (Shinto)

**SKILLS:** Kenjutsu Attack, Kenjutsu Parry, Longbow (Dai-kyu), any other weapon Attack or Parry

**COMMON DIVINE MAGIC:** *Find Enemy*

**SPECIAL DIVINE MAGIC:** Berserk, Fear, Shield, Sureshot, *Truespear*, *Truesword*, *Worship Hachiman*

**SPIRIT MAGIC:** *Bladesharp*, Bludgeon, Coordination, Demoralize, Detect Enemy, Dullblade, Endurance, Fanaticism, Ironhand, Multimissile, Protection, Speedart, Strength, Vigor

**NOTES:** cultists are not polluted by blood shed in honorable combat

## INARI (Shinto)

**SKILLS:** any Craft, Devise, Evaluate, Fast Talk

**COMMON DIVINE MAGIC:** *Summon Fox*, *Summon Kitsune*

**SPECIAL DIVINE MAGIC:** *Bless Crops*, Command Fox, Restore Health <all>, *Truesword*, *Worship Inari*

**SPIRIT MAGIC:** Befuddle, *Bladesharp*, Control Fox, Detect Magic, Dullblade, Glamour, Protection, *Second Sight*, *Summon Fox*

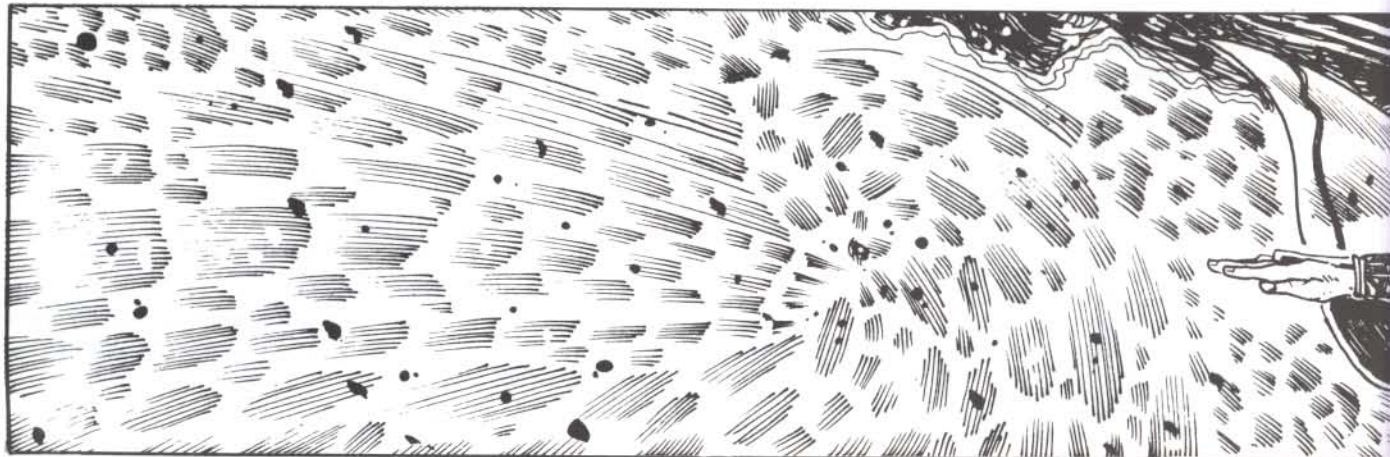
## JIZO (Buddhist)

**SKILLS:** Human Lore, Orate, Speak Japanese, Sleight

**COMMON DIVINE MAGIC:** *Find Enemy*, Heal Wound, Sanctify, *Soul Sight*, Spirit Block, Warding

**SPECIAL DIVINE MAGIC:** *Absorption*, Exorcism, Shield, *Worship* <Buddhist deity>

**SPIRIT MAGIC:** Detect Enemy, Detect Magic, Heal, Light, Protection, *Second Sight*





**KWANNON (Buddhist)**

**SKILLS:** First Aid, Human Lore, Orate, Speak Japanese

**COMMON DIVINE MAGIC:** *Heal Wound*, Sanctify, Soul Sight, Warding

**SPECIAL DIVINE MAGIC:** Absorption, Exorcism, Heal Body, Restore Health <all>, Shield, Worship <Buddhist deity>

**SPIRIT MAGIC:** Detect Enemy, Detect Magic, Endurance, Heal, Light, Protection, Second Sight, Vigor

**SAKYAMUNI (Buddhist)**

**SKILLS:** Human Lore, Orate, Speak Japanese, World Lore

**COMMON DIVINE MAGIC:** all; *Dismiss Magic*, and *Soul Sight* are available at shrines

**SPECIAL DIVINE MAGIC:** Absorption, **Embody Ten**, Exorcism, all Illusory spells, Reflection, Shield, Worship <Buddhist deity>

**SPIRIT MAGIC:** Countermagic, Detect Enemy, Detect Magic, Dispel Magic, Farsée, Glamour, Light, Protection, Second Sight, Shimmer, Spell Screen

**SUITENGU (Shinto)**

**SKILLS:** Boat, Craft Wood, Swim, World Lore

**COMMON DIVINE MAGIC:** none

**SPECIAL DIVINE MAGIC:** Breathe Water, Command <sea creature>, *Float*, **Summon Wind**, Worship Suitengu

**SPIRIT MAGIC:** Coordination, Detect Storm, Endurance, Extinguish, Glue, Repair, Strength

**YAKUSI (Buddhist)**

**SKILLS:** First Aid, Human Lore, Orate, Speak Japanese

**COMMON DIVINE MAGIC:** all; *Heal Wound* and *Soul Sight* are available at shrines

**SPECIAL DIVINE MAGIC:** Absorption, **Embody Ten**, Exorcism, Heal Body, all Illusory spells, Reflection, Regrow Limb, Restore Health <all>, Shield, Worship <Buddhist deity>

**SPIRIT MAGIC:** Befuddle, Demoralize, Detect Enemy, Detect Magic, Dispel Magic, Endurance, Farsée, Heal, Light, Protection, Second Sight, Shimmer, Spirit Screen, Strength, Vigor



# New Divine Spells

**Earth Grip****1 point**

*ranged, temporal, stackable, reusable*

Causes a 1m diameter circle of ground to soften, surround the feet of any being(s) standing thereon, and to harden again. The STR of the Earth Grip is equal to 1d10. The victim(s) must overcome the STR of the Earth Grip to pull his feet free. He can try once per round — untrapped friends can help to pull him free. In any case, he will probably leave any footwear behind. This spell will not soften rock, but works fine with normal soil, marshy ground or mud, and even sand.

Each additional point stacked either increases the area affected by 1m diameter or increases the STR of the Earth Grip by 1d10.

**Embody Ten****2 points**

*ranged, temporal, nonstackable, one-use*

Allows a Ten spirit to animate a guardian statue of a temple. See the description of Ten in the NINJA Gamemaster Book for its statistics.

**Exorcism****1 point**

*touch, instant, stackable, reusable*

Allows the caster to initiate spirit combat with spirit that is possessing a third party. Combat proceeds as described for shamans in *RuneQuest*, though the caster does not disincorporate. Each additional point of Exorcism past the first increases the caster's effective magic points for the spirit combat by 2d6. These extra points are the first to be lost in the combat and, if any remain after the spirit is exorcised, they are lost.

**Instruct <Skill>****Special**

*Spirit Interaction Only, Reusable*

The recipient's score in the skill specified is increased by 1d3 per point of spell. Ancestral kami with this spell can only instruct in skills which they had mastered in life (i.e., gotten to 90%+ skill).

**Repentance****1 point**

*ritual Ceremony, nonstackable, reusable*

Allows the caster to attempt to purge himself or another of sin and be restored to active status in the Buddhist religion. The spell summons a Myo-O who engages the character in spirit combat. Each round won by the character symbolizes his repentance for one occasion of sin. Defeat of the Myo-O absolves the character from all current sins. The Myo-O cannot be captured or bound. If the character is defeated by the Myo-O and has no sins remaining, he is free to go. However, if some sin remains, the Myo-O possesses the character and uses his body to perform acts to balance the sins of the character. This can be very hard on the sinner, since the Myo-O's vision is very much harsher than normal human philosophy. When the karmic scales have been balanced, the Myo-O departs.

**Purification****1 point**

*ritual Ceremony, stackable, reusable*

Allows the recipient to be rid of ritual pollution and restored to active status in the Shinto religion without waiting through the normal purification period. It may not be cast on oneself. Purification must be cast by a priest, and requires an hour to complete. If a character is especially polluted, more than one point of Purification, possibly many points, may be needed to cleanse him.

**Summon Wind****1 point**

*100m radius around caster, temporal, stackable, reusable*

Raises a wind with a STR of 1d3 for the spell's duration. The wind blows in whatever direction is desired by the sorcerer. If the direction chosen conflicts with a pre-existing wind, the two breezes clash, creating turbulence and little whirlwinds. Each additional point of spell used either adds another 1D3 to the STR or increases the radius of effect by 100m, at the whim of the caster.



## Spirit Magic

Most worship is private worship. This may be done either within the home, at a religious site by an individual unattended by a priest, or at a public religious service. Deities and spirits must be worshiped at specified times and places if benefits are to be received.

## Spirit Types

Nihon introduces these new types of spirits into the *RuneQuest* universe. Gamemasters who wish to run a "pure" Nihon campaign will limit themselves to these types.

These are the types of spirits described in the section "Getting Spirit Magic."

### Deities

A deity may be worshiped at any religious site dedicated to it during any festival. It may also be worshiped at any religious site of the deity's religion (Shinto or Buddhist) during a nationwide festival dedicated to that deity. The spirit spells available are those listed in the cult sketches. The deity dispatches a messenger spirit to communicate with the worshiper.

Deity Class	Spirit's POW	Spirit's INT
Major	3d6+10	2d6+6
Important	3d6+6	3d6
Lesser	4d6	2d6

### Ancestral Kami

The spirits of departed ancestors and other figures of the past. They are invoked for advice, consent, or simply to inform them of recent occurrences. Family ancestors may be contacted on the anniversary of their death, or during the public festival of the dead, and are contacted at the family *kamidana*. A deified public figure may only be contacted at the shrine which honors him.

POW 3d6  
INT 2d6+6

**Spirit Spells Known:** 2d6 points.

**Divine Spells Known:** 10% chance of 1d6 points, plus 50% chance the kami knows Instruct <skill>.

### Kami of Place

Lesser deities concerned with the area in which they reside. A kami of Place may only be contacted at a place sacred to it at a time special to it. The spells available to a kami of Place must be appropriate to his location and surroundings. Local inhabitants should have a working knowledge of the kami's capabilities.

POW 3d6+6  
INT 4d6

**Spirit Spells Known:** full INT.

**Divine Spells Known:** 6d6 points.

**Spirit Spells Possible:** Befuddle, Control <species>, Coordination, Countermagic, Demoralize, Detect Enemy, Detect Magic, Detect Storm, Detect <substance>, Dispel Magic, Endurance, Extinguish, Fanaticism, Glamour, Glue, Heal, Light, Lightwall, Mobility, Protection, Repair, Second Sight, Shimmer, Slow, Spirit Screen, Strength, Summon <species>, Vigor, Visibility.

**Divine Spells Possible:** all Common spells, Bless Crops, Cloud Call, Cloud Clear.

### Kami of Elements

Lesser deities which hold sway over the five elements that compose the universe. They may be contacted at specially-dedicated sites at any tiem, or at any Shinto site during the *Ganjitsu* festival.

POW 4d6  
INT 2d6

**Spirit Spells Known:** full INT.

**Divine Spells Known:** 10d6 points.

**KAMI OF AIR — Spirit Spells Possible:** Befuddle, Coordination, Ext Mobility, Slow, Speedart.

**Divine Spells Possible:** all Common spells, Cloud Clear, Summon Wind.

**KAMI OF WATER — Spirit Spells Possible:** Befuddle, Darkwall, Exti Shimmer.

**Divine Spells Possible:** all Common spells, Float, Breathe Water.

**KAMI OF FIRE** — Spirit Spells Possible: Coordination, Disruption, Firearrow, Fireblade, Ignite.

**Divine Spell Possible:** all Common spells, Sunspear.

**KAMI OF EARTH** — Spirit Spells Possible: Countermagic, Dispel Magic, Endurance, Heal, Slow, Strength.

**Divine Spell Possible:** all Common spells, Earth Grip.

**KAMI OF THE VOID** — Spirit Spells Possible: Countermagic, Demoralize, Farssee, Second Sight, Spirit Screen, Visibility.

**Divine Spells Possible:** all Common spells.

## Getting Spirit Magic

Each festival or anniversary sacrifice offers the opportunity to learn new spirit magic or, for acolytes, divine magic.

Spirit magic is learned by entering the ritual and communicating with the attendant spirit. This is done through a process similar to spirit combat, and it is necessary to beat the spirit every round to gain magic. One point of a spirit magic spell may be gained each round of combat, with these limitations:

- 1) No spirit can give knowledge of a spell it doesn't have. The limitations of a local spirit are usually known beforehand.
- 2) Only one spell may be attempted per festival.
- 3) Points of spell may be added only if they are greater than the current value of the spell known to the adventurer. **EXAMPLE:** Your character has Healing 4, and wants to increase it at festival. The earth kami comes to him and they engage in spirit combat-communication. Your character must overcome the spirit's magic points at least five times to gain a point of spell knowledge. The first four rounds do not count towards gaining new points of spell. If your character continues for more than five rounds, say seven rounds, then he will end up with Healing 7 if the spirit has that many points.

Remember, this is not spirit combat, but spirit communication. Neither participant actually loses magic points. Thus, the spirit has its full magic points in every round.

A person may attempt to learn only one spell per festival. However, all present at the festival may attempt to learn the spell of their choice, if it is available, at the same festival.

Divine magic is also gained at festivals and anniversary sacrifices. When the deity has been invoked, the acolyte or priest sacrifices the appropriate amount of POW and gains the spell. Expended divine spells may be regained by prayer at any time, not just at special occasions.

Characters are automatically eligible to confer with the ancestral kami of their family. Adopted members must make an appropriate sacrifice before being able to learn from the kami. A ritual introduces the new family member to the ancestors. During the ritual the new member sacrifices 1 point of POW and may thereafter participate in all family rituals.

Characters are also automatically eligible to communicate with the Kami of Place for the area in which they were born. New members of a community and wanderers must first sacrifice 1 point of POW to the kami before partaking in any festivals and attempting to gain spell knowledge.

No special sacrifices are necessary for any character to communicate with the Kami of the Elements.

Spirits cannot change their spells once the gamemaster has determined them. They cannot know more than their INT worth of spirit magic.

## New Spirit Spell

### Detect Storm

Ranged, Instant

The caster is made aware of the presence of a storm, its type (including whether it is natural or induced) and the approximate time of its arrival in the caster's vicinity. Range is 5 miles per point of spell.



# Sorcery

As in *RuneQuest* sorcery is handed down from the master to the student. The finest students become apprentices of their teachers and eventually adepts in their own right. Nihonese adepts may create a special inanimate "familiar" called a *mandala*, instead of the usual type of familiar.

The figure of the magus exists in Nihon but the ultimate goal of the great sorcerer is solving the riddle of immortality. Those who succeed are known as "immortals" and are believed to possess godlike powers. Immortals, with their new perspective on existence, usually withdraw from society, sequestering themselves upon remote islands or the peaks of distant mountains. They rarely become involved in the affairs of mortals.

The rules for students and apprentices follow those in *RuneQuest* with only one significant exception. Since the origins of Nihonese sorcery lie in Chinese sorcery, the texts of spells and rituals are almost always written in Chinese characters. Thus the requirement of Read Own Language at 25% becomes Read Chinese at 25%.

It is common that a master sorcerer (or the master of any discipline, for that matter) fears that an ambitious student will one day seek to gain reputation by overthrowing the master. An Oriental master therefore reserves some knowledge only to himself. Such knowledge is usually of the sort that will enable the master to handily defeat a challenge from a former student. This could be a secret spell which is specially tailored to affect a student whose ambitious nature is known to the master, or some magic item to be triggered by an attack by any former student.



## Standard Sorcery Spell Variations

The following *RuneQuest* sorcery spells are not normally found in Nihon: Create Basilisk, Create Vampire.

All other sorcery spells are available to Nihonese sorcerers. Some have variant versions as noted below. It is important to remember that the Taoist element of the Void is not a substance and hence may not be manipulated by any sorcerous spells which Sense, Form/Set or Animate (Substance).

### Create Familiar

This spell functions exactly like its standard *RuneQuest* form. The attitudes towards familiars should be noted carefully by budding adepts.

The use of an animal as a familiar is socially unacceptable in Nihon. Since many of the kami and Buddhas use animals as messengers, their use by mortals is thought to be presumptuous. Indeed, most of the population consider it the sign of an evil magician, one who flaunts his power before the gods. Traditional Nihonese animal familiars are foxes (INT 5), serpents (INT 3), dogs (INT 5), and, rarely, poisonous centipedes (INT 2).

Embodied spirits are encountered as familiars in Nihon. This practice is common only to reclusive sorcerers who have little to do with society. Believing the familiar is actually a kami, local folk and passersby often perceive the sorcerer as a holy hermit rather than a magician.

Most Nihonese sorcerers elect to create a mandala rather than a classic familiar in order to remain active in society and to travel more freely throughout the land.

## Dominate (Species)

Naturally, Nihonese sorcerers will have little access to spells for creatures not normally found in Nihon but the availability of other Dominate spells is standard. The following is a list of Dominate (Species) spells for Nihonese beings which are known to Nihonese sorcerers and their availability.

Dominate Bakemono	Common
Dominate Human	Exotic
Dominate Kappa	Common
Dominate Kirin	Exotic
Dominate Kitsune	Exotic
Dominate Minor Kami	Common
Dominate Major Kami	Not available
Dominate Mujina	Exotic
Dominate (Mythical Animal)	Exotic
Dominate Oni	Common
Dominate Ryu	Exotic
Dominate Tengu	Exotic
Dominate Tenuki	Exotic



## Immortality

The Nihonese version of the sorcerous spell of Immortality is rarer and more powerful than the standard *RuneQuest* form. A sorcerer may attempt to perform this spell only once. He or she will either succeed or die. The gamemaster should think carefully about allowing it into his campaign, keeping in mind that the enlightenment which comes with its completion should lead the character achieving it to virtually retire from play. If included, the spell should be forbidden to apprentices, and adepts should be prohibited from beginning the game with it as one of their starting spells.

Achieving immortality requires that the sorcerer select some thing or activity from which he must abstain or some act which must be repeated periodically. These conditions should not be trivial. If the abstention is broken or the act left unperformed, immortality is lost and the sorcerer will immediately succumb to his real age. Some of the common conditions are listed here.

- The sorcerer must abstain from all intimate contact with the opposite sex.
- The sorcerer must abstain from any form of animal food such as fish, meat, milk, butter, etc. The spell will preserve the sorcerer from the effects of such an unbalanced diet.
- The sorcerer must regularly sacrifice a being or beings using the Tap (Characteristic) spell. Magic points equal to his actual age must be acquired, although they need not all be taken from the same victim. The sorcerer does not get to keep the magic points as they immediately go to re-energizing the spell. The usual period is every 8 years beginning on the anniversary of the original spell casting. All sacrifices must be completed within a month. This is evil magic since it requires the killing of the victims.
- The sorcerer must have intimate contact with a number of virgins of the opposite sex while utilizing a Tap (Characteristic) spell. Except that the partner need not be killed, requirements and restrictions are as above. Intimate contact outside the ritual of renewal is usually forbidden.

The spell itself involves a contest with death. It must be cast at an intensity equal to the CON of the sorcerer. POW equal to his CON is sacrificed during the ritual. The basic time for the rite is a number of days equal to the sorcerer's CON. During this time the sorcerer is totally occupied. If the enchantment is abandoned or interrupted, the sorcerer will lose 1 point of POW for each day spent in the ritual and must start it again from the beginning.

Once the sorcerer has completed the ritual, roll 1D100. If the result is less than or equal to the sorcerer's skill in the Immortality spell, he has succeeded. Besides the benefits associated in *RuneQuest* for Immortality, he will gain a skill of 100 in the sorcery spell of his choice. This spell does not count against his Free INT.

If the sorcerer fails the die roll, he is dead. His shrivelled, power-blasted hulk of a body is beyond all aid.



## (Sense) Projection

A Nihonese sorcerer who projects all five senses in a multispell may cause a phantom image of himself to appear at the point to which he has projected his senses if he so desires. The image is invulnerable to harm and will not transmit damage or magic back to the projector. Likewise, he may cause no damage or cast magic from the image's position.

## Shapechange (Species) To (Species)

A common Nihonese version of this spell involves the transformation of living beings into trees or back again.

## New Sorcery Spells

### Create Mandala (INT or POW)

*Ritual (Enchanting)*



This is a Nihonese variant of the the Create Familiar spell and is actually two spells: Create Mandala INT and Create Mandala POW. An inanimate object is made into a familiar, but it is not transformed into a complete creature, unlike the normal *RuneQuest* rules. The outward form of a mandala is a mystical symbol embodying various Taoist concepts. The object may be of any material and the symbol executed in any medium. Wood or ivory carvings and painted scrolls are the most common forms.

A sorcerer may use an object created by a craftsman, but he must sacrifice an additional POW point to attune it to himself.

The mandala is created in an enchanting ritual, but the 1d100 roll must be successful for whatever Craft skill the sorcerer uses to create the mandala as well as for his Enchant skill. The sorcerer may transfer a desired number of points of INT or POW into the mandala. For each point of INT so transferred, the mandala gains 1d10 INT. For each point of POW transferred, the mandala gains 1 POW. Hence, if a sorcerer put 1 point of INT and 3 points of POW into his mandala, it would have an INT of 1d10 and a POW of 3. Each characteristic point taken from the sorcerer requires spending one hour in the enchantment ritual.

A mandala is automatically created with the condition that it is only usable by the creator.

The sorcerer may use the mandala's INT to store spells, its magic points to cast spells, and its POW to add to his own in resisting spells cast at him. In order to do this, he must be touching the mandala or have it clearly in his line of sight.

The mandala may not cast spells of its own volition (it has none) but may be ordered to cast a spell stored in it at a given time or under given circumstances. The mandala will do this even if the sorcerer is not present when the conditions are satisfied.

Only a minor telepathic link exists between the sorcerer and the mandala. He will know its relative direction from him as long as it is within 10 kilometers of him.

Spells affecting the emotions will not affect the mandala nor be transmitted through it to the sorcerer. Only spells actually directed at destroying the mandala can affect it and it can resist using its own magic points.

A sorcerer may have only one mandala at a time. If he wishes to create a new one, he must first destroy the old one. All resources stored in the old mandala are lost.

## Disguise

*Touch, Passive, Temporal*

This spell allows the caster to alter the outward appearance of the target into that of another member of the target's own species. The spell only affects living creatures who have SIZ. One level of Intensity will affect 3 SIZ points.

The target's new appearance may be of any age, sex, apparent SIZ, or APP. Only the appearance changes; characteristics and skills do not alter. A gouty old man will still hobble along even if he appears as a lithe young woman.

The sorcerer chooses the new appearance given to the target. If the form of an existing character is to be used, it may be flawed. The gamemaster should secretly roll a D100. If the roll exceeds the sorcerer's INT x5, then flaws exist that may be observed by characters who know the model. Roll against INT x5 for such characters whenever they spend any appreciable time in the presence of the disguised character.

The Mystic Vision of sorcerers, the Soul Sight of priests, or the Second Sight of a shaman can penetrate a Disguise spell at once.



## Hide Life

*Ritual (Enchanting)*

The sorcerer creates a receptacle in which he hides his life. Any object may be so enchanted. The sorcerer must sacrifice POW equal to his CON. When the enchantment is complete, the sorcerer's life is "hidden" in the item.

A sorcerer with a hidden life is immune to most physical damage. He will regenerate even mortal wounds at a rate of 1 point per wounded location per melee round. Only total and instant destruction of his body (as by intense flame or immersion in acid) can destroy him. However, if the receptacle containing his life is destroyed or even severely damaged, the sorcerer perishes.

The sorcerer may not increase his CON beyond the value placed in the receptacle. He may increase the CON in the receptacle with later enchantments.

If the sorcerer is separated from the receptacle, he loses CON at the rate of 1 point per day although he is still immune to physical harm. The distance he may travel from his receptacle must be determined when the item is enchanted. Each point of additional POW sacrificed allows a one kilometer radius of freedom for the sorcerer. This may also be increased in later enchantments.

## Oracle

*Ritual (Ceremony)*

This spell is a form of divination. The ritual requires 50 yarrow stalks and a copy of the *I Ching*, or "Book of Changes". Seeking the answer to a specific question, the sorcerer uses the stalks to construct a "hexagram" then consults the *I Ching* to determine its meaning.

The ritual requires five to ten minutes of undisturbed concentration. The gamemaster should secretly roll 1D100. The die roll must be within the sorcerer's Ceremony and Read/Write Chinese skills as well as POW x5 in order to get a correct response. In the case of failure the gamemaster should provide a misleading or actually false answer.

Questions may be on any subject but they must be short, precise, and constructed in a "yes or no" format. Only one question is allowed on a subject and additional questions may not be used to clarify vague or doubtful answers.

The gamemaster should limit his response to one or two words which summarize the overall nature of the answer. This will give the feeling of an actual *I Ching* response. It is intended that responses require interpretation. Such answers as "Great Peril," "Find Help," or the equivocal (but actual) response "No Blame" are desirable. The gamemaster may wish to read the actual *I Ching* to get an idea of the responses possible. The gamemaster should make all divination rolls, so the player does not know the extent of his success.

Confucian-style Sages who specialize in divination and the use of the *I Ching* can elicit more useful responses. Such advanced usage should generally be left up to the gamemaster's discretion, as such sages will rarely be player-characters.

## (Weather) Control

*ranged, active, temporal*

Allows the sorcerer to affect the specified aspect of the weather. The spell affects an area around the sorcerer with a radius equal to the Range. The various forms of <weather> Control can be Multispelled.

All changes are relative to the conditions existing before the spell is cast. After the spell has run its course, those conditions reassert themselves. The larger the radius of the spell, or the longer its duration, the longer it takes the natural weather to return. A change affecting a few hundred meters collapses almost at once, while a spell affecting many square kilometers may delay the return of normal weather by an hour or more. If the <weather> Control spell is maintained for a day or more, the natural weather conditions themselves may change. Hence, <weather> Control used to avert a storm would be effective if it were maintained past the time at which the storm would have dissipated anyway.

Wind Control allows the sorcerer to alter the Wind STR by 1d3 points per Intensity.

Cloud Control allows the sorcerer to alter the cloud cover by 1 percentile per Intensity. However, Cloud Control does not increase the chances of precipitation, unlike the divine spell of Cloud Call.

Rain Control can be used either to start or end rainfall. If it is used to start rainfall, it permits the sorcerer to check for a start to precipitation for each minute that the spell is in effect. He may check once per point of Intensity. The chance of increasing precipitation is, as usual, 1% per point of cloud cover. Once started, precipitation lasts until the end of the spell. The actual force of the rainfall depends on the cloud cover: if there are only light clouds, the rainfall is only a mild sprinkle; if heavy storm clouds loom, the rainfall may be a full-fledged typhoon. If Rain Control is used to halt rainfall, it permits the sorcerer to check for an end to precipitation for each minute that the spell is in effect. He may check once per point of Intensity. The chance of a halt is equal to 100% minus the current cloud cover. Once ended, rainfall cannot begin again until the spell has ended. The force of the rainfall depends upon the cloud cover. At temperatures over 1 degree centigrade, precipitation is rain. Otherwise it is snow.

Temperature Control allows the sorcerer to alter the temperature by 1d3 degrees centigrade per point of Intensity.

# Travel

Travel in Nihon is usually accomplished with the man's oldest mode of travel, the feet. Even samurai walk on most trips.

## Ships

As a nation of islands, Nihon finds ships important to commerce. Far and away the most common type of vessel is the junk. They come in many sizes but all are flat-bottomed (for river travel) with square ends. Battened sails of lateen rig power the vessels, but small ones may use oars as well. They ply the trade lanes along the coasts, carrying cargo and passengers. Many are specially constructed to carry specific cargoes such as sake or rice.

### Coastal or River Junk

Hull Type: merchant

Seaworthiness: 18/_____	Length: 14m
Hull Quality: 2D6=_____	Beam: 4m
Structure Points: 30/_____	Freeboard: 2m
Crew: 10 officers and sailors	Draft: 2m
Capacity: 10 tons (includes crew)	

### Undistinguished Fishing Boat

Hull Type: merchant

Seaworthiness: 16/_____	Length: 4m
Hull Quality: 1d3+2=_____	Beam: 1.2m
Structure Points: 16/_____	Freeboard: 1m
Crew: 2-3 men	Draft: .4m
Capacity: 1 ton (includes crew)	

### Cargo Junk

Hull Type: merchant

Seaworthiness: 26/_____	Length: 24m
Hull Quality: 2D6+6=_____	Beam: 6m
Structure Points: 75/_____	Freeboard: 4m
Crew: 25 officers and sailors	Draft: 3m
Capacity: 75 tons (includes crew)	

### Samurai Galley

Hull Type: warship

Seaworthiness: 12/_____	Length: 20m
Hull Quality: 1d6+8=_____	Beam: 3m
Structure Points: 50/_____	Freeboard: 1m
Crew: 50 rowers, 10 officers and sailors.	Draft: 1.5m
Capacity: 1 ton (includes crew)	

*These galleys are rarely used for anything other than rapid transport of personnel or messages along the coast. The rowers are all samurai and thus quite formidable in a fight. All officers are samurai as well, except for pilots who guide the ships through the waters. Sailors are heimin and treated with typical caste disdain.*









正徳二年

## Kago

*Kago* are palanquins used by the buke and rich merchants. The smallest are little more than closed baskets slung from poles and carried by pairs of bearers. Larger versions may have as many as eight bearers and carry two or three people.

The bearers carry the *kago* at a jog-trot and thus must rest often. The ride is so joltingly uncomfortable that the passenger is often as exhausted as the bearers at journey's end. When speed is of importance, a relief crew or two will accompany the *kago*. Bearers are *heimin* or *eta* and may be hired at any way station or town.

Some *yakuza* gangs control the *kago* business in certain areas. A favorite scam of these gangsters is to halt at a place far from anywhere and demand additional payment before proceeding.

## Kago Travel Rates

Rate	Distance Traveled	Notes
normal pace	60km/day	Assumes an average of 10 hours travel per day.
"double" pace	80km/day	Bearers exhausted. They may only carry <i>kago</i> at half rate on next day. Passenger is fully fatigued.

Availability of a relief team of bearers will increase travel rate by 50%.  
Payment is typically 5 pennies per bearer retained per kilometer traveled.

## Horses

The use of horses is restricted in Nihon. Only government officials and samurai may ride them freely. *Heimin* may occasionally be issued special permits allowing them to ride a horse on a specific journey.

The farmers of Nihon use oxen rather than horses for draught animals; hence horses are uncommon among the *heimin*. Merchants use them as pack animals or to pull carts.

Samurai primarily use horses as mounts for messengers and for war. High-ranking samurai use them for travel, but the pace remains a human's walking pace since that is the speed at which the large (unmounted) entourage of attendants travels.

In any case, horses are expensive to keep and maintain in a land where available cropland goes to feeding the human population first, and where little open space is available for the animals to range.



## Roads

The regions of Nihon are connected by great roads. These are patrolled by the local *daimyo*, under command of the *shogunate*, and are thus reasonably safe. Much of the trade through Nihon moves along these roads.

These roads have a five-and-a-half-meter-wide dirt surface over most of their length. When it rains, the once hard surface can become a miring mess. Local *daimyo* are under orders to keep the roads lined with pine or willow trees and maintain a system of distance markers. There is little wagon traffic and what there is is usually reserved to the imperial family and nobles. Thus, the great roads are mostly rut-free.

Many *daimyo* maintain "barriers," especially at the borders of their domains, where they may inspect traffic and levy tolls on goods passing through the province. Travelers are required to present identification papers and state their reasons for traveling. Since most *heimin* cannot leave their lands without a special pass from their own *daimyo*, these barriers serve as a check-point to maintain social order by identifying and capturing runaway *heimin*. Also, the landowner maintaining the barrier often collects a minimal fee from passers-by for so doing. The Tokugawa severely restricted the number of barriers because they interfered with central authority, but the Warring States period saw a proliferation of barriers that was almost comical. For instance, the road between the town of Uji-Yamada and the Ise Shrine, a distance of perhaps 7 km, had over 200 barriers. Again, the number of barriers and, inversely, their size, depends on the strength of the central *shogunate*.

Way-stations may be found at intervals of about a day's walk (7 *ri* or about 28 kilometers) along the great roads. These vary from a simple shelter, through small complexes of inns and foodstalls, to entire villages dedicated to serving travelers' needs. The size and complexity of the facilities are directly related to the amount of traffic along the road.

Some of the way-stations include post-stations maintained by the government. These are established every 30 *ri* (about 115 kilometers). At them the station master and his staff of twenty maintain horses and organize porters for official use. Stations on the great roads are obliged to keep 20 horses. Stations on lesser roads have fewer men and horses. Government officials are usually issued a writ allowing them one horse and 3 bearers for free. Additional men or animals can be hired at normal rates.

Conditions on the lesser roads of Nihon vary widely, as they are the responsibility of local authorities. They are usually less well-maintained and, since animal-drawn carts are not prohibited, often rutted as well. Some are not patrolled or regulated in any way; others are more strictly minded than the great roads. In almost all cases way-stations are fewer and farther between.

On all roads travelers of lesser rank are expected to give way to those of higher station. This practice sometimes leads to traffic jams, and occasionally combat, as status-conscious samurai refuse to give way to other samurai who they deem inferior in rank.





# Samurai

The family and clan of a samurai are very important to him. Their history is his history and their honor is his honor. A character with a small family will tend to be less arrogant than one with a large family. Good family connections can increase arrogance independently from family size. There is great potential for injustice here, but heroic characters struggle against all odds.

The size and connections of a family will determine what resources for training, goods, and wealth are available to a character who remains on good terms with his family. The larger the family, the more wealth and resources. Remember that the resources of a large family must be spread over a great number, so an individual may sometimes be disappointed in his desires. A large family also has greater expectations for returns to the family's wealth from an individual's efforts. An individual may also expect more calls on his time for service in the family's interests.

Smaller families have fewer resources, but an individual will be more likely to be able to take advantage of those that are available. Members of smaller families find they must rely more heavily upon each other and thus develop greater bonds of trust.

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*A master should not unreasonably make requests for the possessions of his retainers, such as their horses and falcons, or their swords, naginatas, paintings or Chinese goods. Generally speaking, for retainers to possess valuable articles is the same as if the master himself possessed them.*

*(The Recorded Words of Asakura Soteki)*

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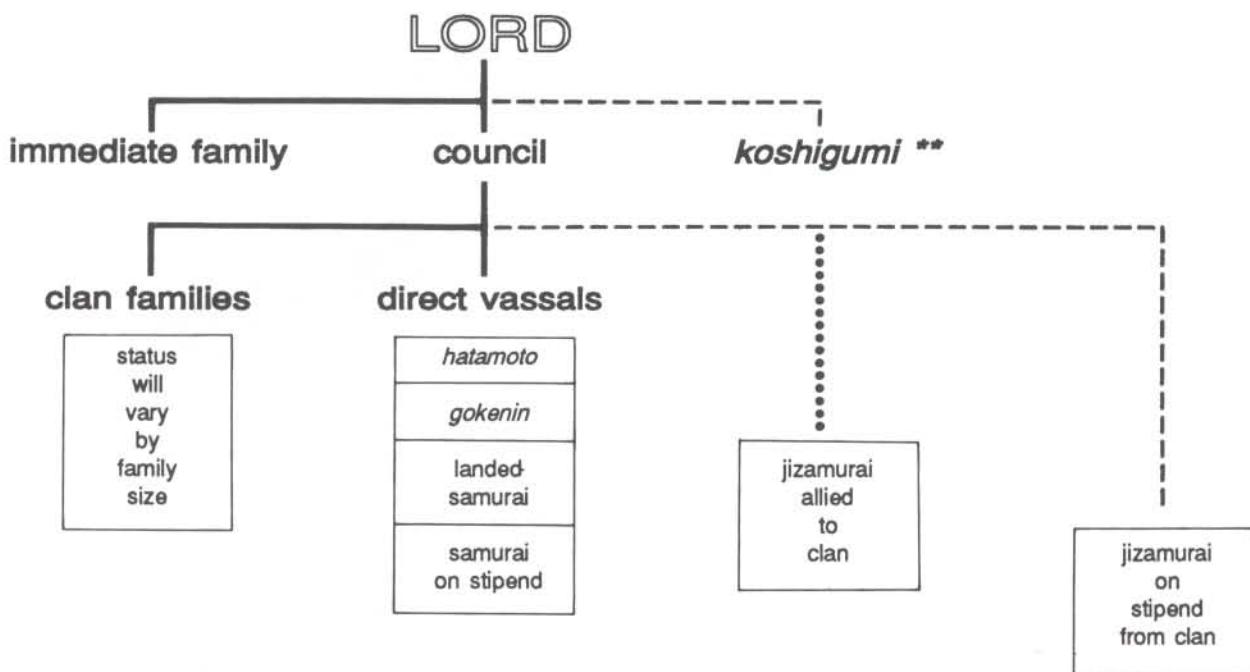
Samurai families exist in a web of bonds and duties. Families join together into clans to share and increase political and military influence. The families associated in a clan may expect considerations and support from each other. Oaths, intermarriage, adoption, land grants, stipends, and the exchange of younger members for training bind the families closer together. "Connected" families use all of the above methods to assure receipt of desired favors and to extend influence. A family can use its "connections" for its own gain. It must expect, however, to be called upon by those same "connections" to perform services and duties in return.

Vassals, whether individuals or whole families, can be bound into a family or clan structure. They are given most of the same rights, privileges, and responsibilities as those who are members of the group by birth. Vassals may expect considerations and support from their lords in return for their loyalty and service. In most cases a lord is responsible under the law for his vassal as if the vassal were a member of his family. In counterpoint, the vassal must follow the direction of his lord as a loyal son would follow his father's wishes.



## Clan Structure Diagram

Connecting lines show paths of authority. Solid lines are strong/very strong "connections" within the clan. Dashed lines are moderate "connections." Dotted lines are weak "connections." Blocks show relative status compared to samurai ranks.



\*\* *koshigumi* are favored individuals who stand high in the lord's esteem. Astrologers, magicians, priests, intimate advisors, spy masters, special bodyguards, and elite warriors are among those who may enjoy this status within a clan. Such individuals need not actually be members of the clan.

Samurai clans often join together in greater alliances. The structure of such an alliance resembles that of a clan, but with entire clans filling the niche that families fill within a simple clan. Such allied clans use the same methods to bind their member families. The Taira and Minamoto of the Gempei War were clans of this sort, as were many of the rival powers contending in the wars leading to the Tokugawa unification of Japan.

The lord of the clan is advised by a council of elders, generals, and senior clan members. Trusted clan members are given the title of *hatamoto*, a proud and noble rank for favored retainers who hold important positions or have significant fiefs. The rank of *gokenin* is given to senior and proven clan members. Below these are the rank and file samurai, the heart and sinews of the clan.



## Family Generation Procedure

Each player should roll D100 and consult the Family Size Table. Each player whose samurai character has a family "with connections" should then roll 1D100 twice and refer to the Connections Table. Use the first roll to determine the strength of the connection (the first column on the Connections Table), and the second roll to determine the source of the connection (the second column on the Connections Table). The gamemaster may specify a family's source of connection for campaign reasons rather than relying on a random die roll.

*It is not good to be feared by one's own retainers. It has been passed down from ages past that it is fundamental to value one's retainers' deep devotion. If such is not the case, when the time comes it will be difficult for them to be valuable to you by throwing away their lives.*

*(The Recorded Words of Asakura Soteki)*

The clan is as much a political organization as a family group. Clan laws are civil laws. The clan dispenses justice, maintains order, provides military strength, and collects taxes. Within its territory the clan rules with most of the prerogatives held by a king in medieval Europe. Only a strong shogun can force outside authority upon a powerful clan.



## Family Size Table

1d100	Result
01-11	Very Large Family
12-16	Very Large Family "with connections"
17-41	Large Family
42-46	Large Family "with connections"
47-80	Medium Family
81-82	Medium Family "with connections"
83-99	Small Family
100	Small Family "with connections"

## Connections Table

1d100	Strength of connection	Source of connection
01-35	weak (favors owed to family, or family and source are neighbors)	minor daimyo
36-65	moderate (vassal relationship)	major daimyo
66-90	strong (intermarriage between family and source)	imperial nobility
91-00	very strong (traditional allies)	family of shogun

source of the connection (the second column on the Connections Table). The gamemaster may specify a family's source of connection for campaign reasons rather than relying on a random die roll.

The precise size of your family will be determined by the gamemaster. It is not important to know the details of your family's or clan's size and connections at this point. These details can become important in connection with

the military or political events in the campaign-story. Since such things are so closely tied to the overall political, military, and adventuring structure of the campaign being run by the individual gamemaster, the exact numbers and possibilities are left to the individual gamemaster.

## Samurai Society

*In all things there is a comprehensive attitude that is important to have, but generally, there are few men of these times who have thought this through to a clear understanding.*

*First, a man whose profession is the use of arms should think and then act upon not only his own fame, but also that of his descendants. He should not scandalize his name forever by holding his one and only life too dear. On the other hand, in the light of this, to consider this life that is given to us only once as nothing more than dust and ashes, and lose it at a time when one should not, would be to gain a reputation that is not worth mentioning. One's main purpose in throwing away his life is to do so either for the sake of the Emperor or in some great undertaking of a military general. It is exactly that will be the great fame of one's descendants.*

*To be involved in some ephemeral quarrel will demonstrate the indiscretion of one's house and will not add to one's fame, regardless of being in the right or wrong.*

*(The Chikubasho of Shiba Yoshimasa)*

## Honor

To a samurai, his honor is everything. It encompasses his caste and station as well as his accomplishments and deeds. It is, in a very real sense, his reputation. In NINJA, each character has an Honor characteristic (called HON) which has several effects on social interactions.

### *HON for every character starts at 0.*

HON may have a score greater than zero, representing the positive esteem that other characters and society in general have for the character, or it may have a value less than zero, representing the general disdain for the character's ethics and deeds. Whether greater or less than zero, HON functions the same way in the game rules. Use only the numerical value, ignoring the "plus" or "minus" sign in front of it. Positive HON gains response due to good will and respect, while negative HON can achieve similar ends because of fear and intimidation.

HON may be increased by personal successes and decreased by personal failures. It may only be changed as a result of something a character does. It may not be trained or researched to increase its score.

Positive HON should be awarded when a character does something distinguished such as defeating a powerful opponent, completing a vendetta, overcoming multiple foes singlehandedly, mastering a skill (reaching a score of 91 or better), or gaining a new social rank (i.e., becoming gokenin or hatamoto).

Negative HON should be awarded for illegal actions, public displays of stupidity or rudeness, violation of the

code of bushido, failure to accomplish a vow, or excessive cruelty or violence.

The gamemaster should not award HON for good die rolling, simple puzzle solving, ordinary combat successes, or any other of the minor accomplishments which occur during the course of an adventure. HON should only be gained or lost for things which would significantly affect the way others view the character. No witnesses need be present during the act which gains or loses HON for a character.



For each circumstance, honorable or dishonorable, which could affect a character's HON, require the player to roll 1D20 for his character. If the die roll exceeds the character's current HON score (remember to ignore the + or -) or if the die roll is 20, the character's HON is altered. Add 1 if the experience was honorable and subtract 1 if it was dishonorable.

It is recommended that players keep a record of the circumstances of each alteration to the HON score. This will aid the gamemaster in determining the reactions of other characters, since those things which built a character's HON are what others will know of him.

### Using Honor in the Game

HON is used for social interactions between player and non-player characters. It is primarily used when one character attempts to recognize another character or when one tries to influence another's decision.



## Social Influence Table

For each step above the petitioner, subtract 1 from the HON modifier. For each step below, add 1 to the HON modifier. If the modifier is reduced to 0 or less, the character must find an intermediary whom he can influence in order to get the intermediary to use his own influence on someone who can grant the desire of the petitioner.



\* While not officially in the social structure, such persons can have influence. Particularly famed or powerful ronin and ninja may have a functional influence ranking greater than normal.



**Recognition:** When a new character is met, a recognition roll may be attempted to see if he is known for his deeds and accomplishments. This can give those meeting him or her some idea of what to expect. If the new character is of the same caste (i.e., kuge, buke, heimin, or eta), multiply his HON value by 5 and roll D100. Success indicates that his reputation has preceded him. The characters meeting him will know some or all of the things which made his reputation. When the character is of a different caste multiply HON by 3. If the character and those meeting him are of the same profession (i.e., all soldiers, all swordsmiths, all priests, etc.), add 1 to the multiplier. If the character is in disguise or travelling incognito, subtract 2 from the multiplier.



**Influence:** HON may be used to influence other characters in an attempt to gain favors or consideration for a character. The multiplier to the character's HON will vary according to the nature of what is desired and the difference in social rank between the petitioner and the person able to grant his wish. The modifier for the first is determined by the gamemaster, using the guidelines below. The modifier for the second may be found on the Influence Ranking Table. A successful roll will usually result in the favor being granted. Player characters subjected to influence may refuse, but to do so may result in negative HON if the gamemaster decides the request was just. Failure of an influence attempt means the character has committed one or more social gaffes — a dishonorable experience. He must check to see if his HON is reduced.

Examples of situations in which influence might be used include:

**Acceptance by master craftsmen:** A master craftsmen must be influenced to sell his superior products. He will not simply sell his best works to just anyone. Base modifier is x5.

**Acceptance by master teacher:** A famous and/or particularly skilled teacher must be successfully influenced by a prospective student before he will take on that person as a pupil. Base modifier is x4.

**Favor from superior:** Whenever a favor is sought from a superior, influence must be used. If the request is made within a samurai's clan, do not use the modifiers for social rank. The base modifier will vary according to the nature and magnitude of the favor sought. Here are some examples: permission to attempt a task in the superior's interest is x6, a second chance to resolve a situation is x3, request for a modest stipend increase is x4, relief from ordinary duty is x5, relief from a giri obligation is x2, leniency in a criminal case is x1, request for arms, armor, or equipment is x5; request of heirloom items is x3.

**Marriage Contract:** Families always seek the best matches so reputation and honor are important. Marriages are usually made within the same caste. Base modifier is x5; marriage across castes modifier is x2.

**Selection by master or employer:** A character wishing special duty or assignment to a particular mission from a master, or seeking a job from a potential employer, may influence that person to achieve the desired end. Base modifier is x5.

## Personal Virtues

The most important virtues for a samurai are adherence to the code of *bushido* and fulfillment of the obligations of *giri*. The code of bushido relies heavily on *giri*, while the performance of duties demanded by *giri* are often modified or reinforced by the dictates of bushido. Both are influenced by Confucian ethics and religious beliefs.

*Bushido* is the "way of the warrior." It developed as a personal and professional code of conduct among the samurai, and spread its influence into all walks of Japanese life. Its meaning was transmitted through teachings and lists of precepts presented by clan elders and outstanding warriors. Versions of the code were not written down as such until the sixteenth century. From these sources, as well as later explanations and earlier literary representations of the notable virtues of a samurai, a picture of the elements of bushido can be developed.

*Giri* refers to the web of obligations and duties owed by a person to those around him: parents, family, and friends as well as feudal superiors and inferiors.

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*If one were to say in a word what the condition of being a samurai is, its basis lies first in seriously devoting one's body and soul to his master. And if one is asked what to do beyond this, it would be to fit oneself inwardly with intelligence, humanity and courage. The combining of these three virtues may seem unobtainable to the ordinary person, but it is easy. Intelligence is nothing more than discussing things with others. Limitless wisdom comes from this. Humanity is something done for the sake of others, simply comparing oneself with them and putting them in the fore. Courage is gritting one's teeth; it is simply doing that and pushing ahead, paying no attention to the circumstances. Anything that seems above these three is not necessary to be known.*

*As for outward aspects there are personal appearance, one's way of speaking, and calligraphy. And as all of these are daily matters, they improve by constant practice. Basically, one should perceive their nature to be one of quiet strength. Of one has accomplished all these things, then he should have a knowledge of our area's history and customs. After that he may study the various arts as recreation. If you think it over, being a retainer is simple. And these days, if you observe people who are even a bit useful, you will see that they have accomplished these three outward aspects.*

*(Hagakure of Yamamoto Tsunetomo)*

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## The Elements of Bushido

Bushido is the ethical code of the samurai, and is composed of many elements: Loyalty, Honor, Courage, Refinement, and Excellence.

### Loyalty

Loyalty is the paramount virtue of the samurai. A samurai's loyalty is given first to a feudal superior, then to his clan, then to his family. Loyalty to the emperor is, of course, of great importance although this rarely had any practical effect on a samurai's actions. Conflicting loyalties are common and simple solutions are rare. In severe cases, a samurai's resolution to a conflict may be to commit seppuku.

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*When one is serving officially or in the master's court, he should not think of a hundred or a thousand people, but should consider only the importance of the master. Nor should he draw the line at his own life or anything else he considers valuable. Even if the master is being phlegmatic and one goes unrecognized, he should know that he will surely have the divine protection of the kami and Buddhas.*

*(The Message of Gokurakuji-dono)*

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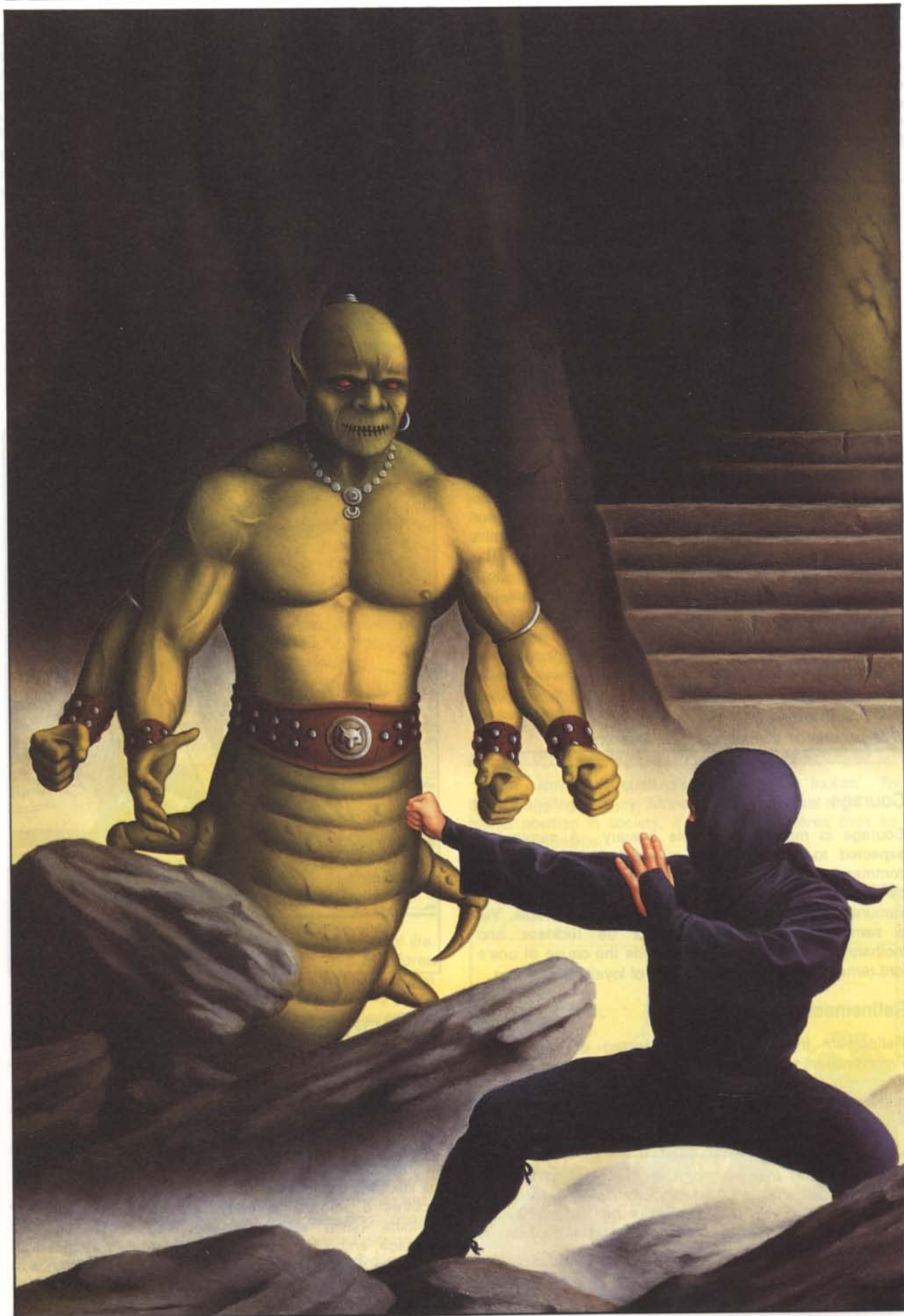


It is a samurai's duty to serve his superior, whether that superior is a military commander, a feudal overlord, a clan official, or the head of his family. A superior's orders are not to be questioned. They are to be followed immediately and to the fullest of the samurai's ability, even if this leads to unhappiness or death. A retainer's life belongs to his lord. It is to be preserved or spent as the lord wills.

This is the ideal. In practice, orders are disobeyed, ignored, and modified. A samurai's reasons for doing so can vary. A disloyal but ambitious samurai might seek to improve his own position; if he is successful, his breach of the code may be overlooked. A loyal samurai might disobey as well. He might do this knowing (or fearing) that his lord is mistaken in issuing a particular order, or seeing a better course of action. If he is right, and successful, and can maintain his lord's honor, he may be forgiven his breach. If he is wrong, seppuku may be the result.

Obviously this is the foundation of bushido, and yet almost all of Japan's major battles were decided by sudden defections and backstabbing. The major daimyos all knew this and made allowance for its happening, because it was so common. If a samurai family saw a chance to gain more land by switching sides, they often did so without hesitation. This was an endemic problem particularly in the 14th century. In fact some families split down the middle to ensure that enough of the family would end up on the winning side to survive.





## Honor

Honor, for a samurai, is a combination of integrity and reputation. Lying, oathbreaking, and cheating are dishonorable. Indeed, many consider lying an act of cowardice. A samurai's word is his bond, although sometimes the letter of a statement or agreement is followed rather than the apparent intent.

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*Because of some business, Morooka Hikeomon was called upon to swear before the gods concerning the truth of a certain matter. But he said, "A samurai's word is harder than metal. Since I have impressed this fact upon myself, what more can the kami and Buddhas do?" and the swearing was cancelled. This happened when he was twenty-six.*

*(Hagakure of Yamamoto Tsunetomo)*

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The Japanese concern with reputation and appearances is well known. Excellence in martial virtues or the arts, as well as acts in accordance with bushido or the demands of giri, bring honor while inferior performance, inattention to duty, and acts in opposition to bushido will lessen a man's honor. A samurai's honor must be maintained and a samurai will go to great lengths and perform strenuous deeds to restore lost honor. The thought of dying with tarnished honor is a nightmare to a samurai. The honor of a retainer and his lord are tied together and that which affects one affects the other. A loyal samurai holds his lord's honor higher than his own.

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*A man exists for a generation, but his name lasts to the end of time.*

*(Hagakure of Yamamoto Tsunetomo)*

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## Courage

Courage is more than simple bravery. A samurai is expected to face adversity at need, or at his lord's command, without qualm or hesitation. Physical pain is to be endured without emotion. Death holds no fear for a samurai. A death in battle is most certainly honorable. Yet a samurai's courage should not be reckless and foolhardy. To die unnecessarily while the cause of one's lord remains in doubt shows a lack of loyalty to that lord.

## Refinement

Refinement in all things is expected of a samurai. Proficiency in martial skills is called for by his profession as a warrior. It is equally expected that he develop an appreciation of and proficiency in the arts. His manners and etiquette should be flawless.

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*It is said that the warrior's is the twofold Way of pen and sword, and he should have a taste for both Ways. Even if a man has no natural ability he can be a warrior by sticking assiduously to both divisions of the Way.*

*(The Book of Five Rings)*

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## Excellence

The code of bushido calls strongly for excellence. A samurai is expected to always strive to be the best he can, at whatever he attempts. This drive towards excellence gives a samurai the determination necessary to strive bravely and achieve his goals.

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*Although the mean is the standard for all things, in military affairs a man must always strive to outstrip others.... In the stories of the elder warriors it is said that on the battlefield if one wills himself to outstrip warriors of accomplishment, and day and night hopes to strike down a powerful enemy, he will grow indefatigable and fierce of heart and will manifest courage. One should use this principle in everyday affairs too.*

*(Hagakure of Yamamoto Tsunetomo)*

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## The Obligations of Giri

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*Death is a feather, duty is a mountain.*

*(old Japanese proverb)*

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Giri refers to the obligations and responsibilities of a samurai to do what is expected of him in every aspect of his life. It is sometimes simply translated as "duty." Giri requires a samurai to obey and abide by traditional customs (such as those regarding familial duties, marriage, and gifts) and to perform any tasks assigned to him. The demands of justice, honor, and reputation are deeply bound up with giri. A samurai is dishonored for failing a giri obligation.

A samurai is expected to discharge the obligations of giri even though it may be unpleasant or result in unhappiness for him or others for whom he cares. Sometimes the demands of giri can conflict, either with other giri demands or with the samurai's personal wishes or feelings. Common conflicts pit duty against "human feelings" (ninjo) such as mercy or love. This can leave a samurai with no course but to act improperly according to one obligation in order to fulfill another. In extreme cases, the conflict can only be honorably resolved by seppuku.

Once a samurai named Kanzaki Shikibu found himself in a giri conflict. He was ordered to escort his lord's son to the Chimshima Islands. Shikibu's only son, Katsutaro, accompanied him on the journey. Along the way a fellow samurai entrusted to Shikibu's care one of his sons, Tanzaburo, who wished to travel to the islands. At a river crossing that samurai's son was accidentally drowned. Shikibu had to atone for his failure in the obligation to protect Tanzaburo. Shikibu could replace the samurai's loss by giving Katsutaro to him but that would take time and Shikibu's giri to his lord required that he continue on at once. Shikibu faced a dilemma:

*He thought for a while and then summoned his son. 'Tanzaburo's father entrusted his son's safety to me,' he said, 'but I let him die. If you remain alive, I will not be able to fulfill my duty to Lord Tango and preserve my honor as a samurai. And so you yourself must die at once.'*

*Katsutaro, with true samurai spirit, showed not the slightest hesitation. He turned back, dove into the seething waves, and was never seen again. For sometime, Shikibu stood by the river and contemplated the way of the world.*

*'Truly, nothing is so heartbreaking as fulfilling the claims of duty. ... I too would like to die here, but it would be a terrible thing if I disobeyed my lord's orders to accompany his son.'*

*(Tales of Samurai Honor 1:5)*



## Politeness

Politeness is expected of all Nihonese, in all walks of life. Many verbs have both a normal and a polite form. Honorifics are often appended to names to indicate that the speaker shows proper respect for the person to whom he is speaking. Good form and proper etiquette in performing any act are well regarded.

*There was to Lord Eirin's character many high points difficult to measure, but according to the elders the foremost of these was the way he governed the province by his civility. It goes without saying that he acted this way toward those in the samurai class, but he was also polite in writing letters to the farmers and townspeople, and even in addressing these letters he was gracious beyond normal practice. In this way, all were willing to sacrifice their lives for him and become his allies.*

*(The Recorded Words of Asakura Soteki)*

## Fatalism

Fatalism is common among Nihonese. Things considered lucky or unlucky breaks among Europeans are considered to be due to fate, or karma. They are the benefits of a good deed or the repayment of a bad one in a former life. Yet, it is a practical fatalism which expects a samurai always to try his best. After all, failure will be bad karma for a future incarnation.

## Attitudes Towards Money

Money is of little concern to a samurai. It is beneath his dignity to haggle with merchants. Thus samurai often pay exorbitant prices without question when unscrupulous merchants exploit this attitude. Monetary matters are the province of the female head of a household. The honor-conscious samurai woman has, on more than one occasion, secretly sold her own treasures to maintain her lord's appearances, lifestyle, and holdings. The samurai find wealth in beauty and other things, to whit:

*However, to oppress the people and covet the possessions of the samurai in one's desire to become quickly prosperous is absolutely laying the foundation of the destruction of the fief.*

*Precious metals and jewels are not necessarily treasures. Rather, one should consider his samurai and the common people as his wealth, and bring them up with gentleness and benevolence. Gold and silver are not necessarily to be recklessly accumulated; and when one receives wealth and distinction naturally through years of meritorious deeds, no disasters are likely to follow.*

*(Notes on Regulations by Kuroda Nagamasa)*

The heimin find such disdain of money foolish. To them, haggling is a joy. Money is their principal route to a higher position in society, if not for themselves then for their descendants.



## Membership in a Social Group

The group as an entity is a central concept to the Nihonese at all levels of society. A group can be a clan, a family, a trade, a neighborhood, an economic stratum, or some combination of these. Outsiders are objects of suspicion and distrust. Letters of introduction by members or friends of the group are common methods of bypassing barriers to acceptance.

The individual is subordinate to the group. His desires and wishes may be satisfied only after the welfare of the group is assured. What is good for the group is good for the individual.

The converse of this is that responsibility is often placed on the group for the acts of individual members. Such responsibility most often focuses on the elder or nominal head of the group. Sometimes entire families or villages suffer punishment for the actions of one of their members. The usual result of group responsibility is that Japanese groups elect to police their own members and to mete out punishment before the matter reaches outsiders. Such prompt action can restore whatever honor was lost due to the wrongdoer's actions.

The importance of the social group cannot be emphasized enough. It exists from the very top to the very bottom of society, and every group is stratified within itself. There are very few "equals" in Japanese society. Somebody is always above someone else.



*A man may not live under the same sky as the slayer of his father.*

*Confucius*



## The Family

A samurai holds his family in high esteem. It is his home, his history, and his future. It is said that any action by a son or daughter on behalf of the parents, no matter how self-sacrificing it may be, cannot repay the tiniest fraction of the debt owed. Filial duty is required under the laws of heaven. A child may not disobey the wishes of a parent even after the child has grown, unless he wishes dishonor and shame.

The samurai family is an extended family. Parents, their children, and their children's children as well as uncles and aunts, often share the same roof. A man's wife leaves her own family behind to join her husband's household, never to return to her parents' home except as a visitor or if sent home as a childless widow or in disgrace. Rich samurai often take concubines into their homes. Such women serve under the wife who herself serves under the senior female of the household (usually the husband's mother). The ultimate authority in the family resides with the patriarch of the family. He makes or approves all major family decisions. Under the law, he is responsible for the actions of any family member. His wife is undisputed ruler of household affairs.

Children are treated with great kindness and leniency. Tradition condemns any abusive treatment of the young. Until the age of seven, children are exempt from the strictures of society. At that age their formal schooling starts and the weight of Nihonese society begins to descend upon them. Young samurai males shave their forelocks at their coming of age ceremonies, which may occur any time between the ages of 13 and 21.

Inheritance is at the discretion of the lord. The first-born son is normally named as heir to prevent dispersing family holdings. This principle was strongly enforced during the Tokugawa period. Before that time, inheritance was haphazard at best. In the 14th century, it was common to divide holdings among all sons (and sometimes daughters). In other periods, land was given to the most competent son regardless of position. Hence, succession disputes occurred because there *were* no set rules.

Sometimes a likely heir is adopted into the family to assure a strong hand to maintain control over the family's holdings. Such adopted children, who may not even be children at all but grown adults, join the family as if they had been born to it. The greatest of the Uesugi family, Uesugi Kenshin, was actually a vassal named Nagao who saved his (younger) master from destruction on condition he be named heir. He then led the Uesugi family to greater heights than ever. Adoption into families, sometimes forced, is often used by self-made warlords to legitimize their holdings and improve their social status.

Strong bonds tie a samurai to his family. When a samurai takes service outside his family or clan, most of his loyalty is transferred to his new lord. Loyalty to a lord is intense, often greater than that given to the emperor or shogun. This is right and proper according to the code of bushido, but it can lead to conflicts. More than one samurai has found himself placed in a position where, to follow a lord's order, he must harm or allow to be harmed a member of his family. Sometimes, to save family honor, a lord must be disobeyed. This is a conflict of *giri* and, if it cannot be resolved with honor on both sides, the only solution may be *seppuku*.

Samurai families bond together into clans. A single family heads the clan and gives the clan its name. The main part of the clan is composed of cadet branches; families of relatives, both near and distant; and samurai vassals of all degrees. All members owe loyalty to the lord of the clan, the head of the principal family.

## Social Structure

In Nihon an individual always knows where he or she stands in relation to other individuals. Respect for superiors, acknowledgement of obligations to inferiors, and proper courtesy are expected of all. Yet within this seemingly rigid society is a tradition of reward for personal merit which can lead to advancement and improved social position. No leader can afford to let concerns of status blind him to the abilities of his social inferiors. Rewards go to the able as often as to the well-birthed. There is no formal path to advancement. The ambitious await the notice of superiors or build their own power base until such notice is inevitable.

Japanese society is structured to allow the greatest freedom to men. In Nihon, most women acquiesce to this cultural pattern. Still, there are those who overcome these restrictions. Such women carve their own niches in society. In Nihon, they are respected for their skill and courage.

The women of the Tokugawa period were the most oppressed, but even then a prominent woman could do well. In earlier ages, women had a great deal of freedom to move about and influence their surroundings. The real power behind Minamoto Yoritomo was his wife Hojo Masako. It is no accident that the Hojo family became Regents over a weak Shogun almost immediately after Yoritomo's death.



## The Castes

Nihonese society has a caste structure. Highest in prestige, although not in power, are the *kuge*, the imperial nobility. This group includes the immediate family and more distant relatives of the emperor; "retired" (officially abdicated but often still influential) emperors; and the ancient nobility of Nihon. The person of the emperor transcends any questions of caste for he is an embodiment of the divine *kami* and a descendant of Amaterasu.

The emperor lacks direct political power but his approval is necessary for a samurai to take the title of shogun. His influence and blessing must be courted in Kyoto, where he presides at the center of an intellectual circle that sets the pattern of artistic expression, fashion, and philosophy.

The emperor's influence is limited by the samurai practice of enthroning an imperial child in the place of an abdicated emperor. The shogun or some other very powerful samurai acts as regent until the child comes of age and is forced to abdicate in favor of yet another imperial child. The emperor spends his days in religious rituals and artistic pursuits, occasionally interacting with the real world to trade official approval of shogunate policies for some privilege or benefit.

Often, there are several retired emperors alive at one time. Though they lack the semi-divine status of the ruling emperor, their political influence is still strong in the court.



and can be a force to be reckoned with. Often these retired emperors, or members of their circle of nobles, get involved in plots to strengthen the imperial influence or or rebuild a political/military power-base for the throne.

In the Heian period, the "retired" emperors were the actual government at times. Often a young emperor abdicated on his own to avoid the ritual and get down to the real business of governing.

Below the princes and princesses of the imperial family are the ranks of greater and lesser nobles, ministers, and bureaucrats of the imperial court. Since status in the *kuge* is dependent on the antiquity of the family line, newcomers are very rare. These immensely educated and sophisticated nobles are often poor in terms of material wealth; much poorer than their social inferiors, the ruling *buke*. Many are reduced to peddling their influence at court in return for the resources to maintain their lifestyles. This is not universally true. The *kuge* were very wealthy in Heian Japan, and even in later periods many still had significant wealth. Their main problem was control of land. The *kuge* held vast stretches of land during the Heian period, guarded by stewards while the *kuge* relaxed in the capitol. Eventually, the stewards stopped remitting taxes to the capitol and noble power declined. But even in the worst days many *kuge* still had some land remitting income.

The real rulers of Nihon are the *buke*, the caste of the samurai. This caste includes the samurai and *jizamurai*. In some senses, the *ronin* may be included as well. A petitioner for the title (and rank) of shogun must be born into a samurai clan.

The government of the samurai, called the *bafuku*, is headed by a shogun. The shogun is, for all practical purposes, the supreme ruler of the country. When the shogun and his clan are strong, his word is law, enforced by the clan armies. When the shogun and his clan are weak, various samurai lords rule freely in their own



domains. The strongest prepare for the day when they may overthrow the shogun and petition the emperor to name the successful rebel (usually at this point encamped outside Kyoto with an army) as the new shogun.

Like all governments, the bakufu has a bureaucracy. Like many governments throughout history, as the central authority becomes weaker, the bureaucracy grows more complex and corrupt. The ministers of the bakufu are appointed by the shogun, usually for life or until they incur his displeasure. Some ministers serve as the shogun's personal representative overseeing important sections of the country. Others serve in an advisory council, each responsible for a government office dealing with a specific area of concern such as the economy, agricultural planning, road maintenance, or military strength. Serving the deputies and ministers are various underlings ranging from administrators of whole provinces down to local police forces and tax officials. Even under a strong shogun, the further from the seat of government, the more likely officials are to exercise their authority for their own ends and comforts. Most shoguns maintain a network of spies, magistrates, and informers who operate outside the regular bureaucracy as a check against excesses and a guard against rebellion.

In many ways, the shogun and his clan are first among equals. The great landholding lords, the *daimyo*, have their own clans, advisory councils, military forces, and even bureaucracies paralleling those of the bakufu. Within their lands, the *daimyo* are the law. Only the strongest of shoguns dare to overrule them. To qualify for the status of *daimyo*, a clan leader had to be a samurai, have income from his land of at least 10,000 koku per year, and receive official sanction by the shogun or the emperor. New *daimyo* were created periodically, and old ones vanished, as their clans lost their power or were shattered. At any given time, there were usually between 200-300 *daimyo* in all Nihon.

Samurai serve within their clans, owing fealty either directly to the clan lord (who may be a *daimyo* himself, or simply owe fealty to a *daimyo*) or to one of his subordinates. They are soldiers for the army and guards for palaces and castles, as well as middle managers and manpower for the hundred and one tasks involved in the day-to-day life of the clan. Income and status within the samurai caste vary widely.

Ranking below the "true" samurai are the *jizamurai*. They are landholders in their own right, much like European country squires and poor landed knights. *Jizamurai* are very possessive about their holdings, always fearing the rapacious desires of greater lords. At times they band together for mutual defense against attempts by nearby *daimyo* to seize the *jizamurai* holdings. On occasion such groupings become permanent and a new samurai clan is born. The *jizamurai* virtually disappeared during the Tokugawa period, when they were given the choice of being true samurai or becoming true peasants (losing their swords). Before that time, they were a force to be reckoned with.

In early times, the term *ronin* was used to refer to a peasant that had absconded from the land, usually to become an *ashigaru*. The more-used latter meaning refers to a samurai deprived of masters and/or land. Many *jizamurai* became *ronin* after 1600 A.D.

The *heimin* caste is the backbone of the Nihonese economy. It includes the farmers, artisans, and merchants. Within the caste the highest social rank is accorded to the poorest class, the farmers. They produce the rice upon which the nation lives. Next come the artisans, who produce tangible results from their labor. Lowest, and richest, are the merchants, who are seen as parasites who fatten on the work of others.

Oppressed *heimin* often form leagues called *ikki* to resist intolerable conditions. When peaceful overtures fail, such leagues may resort to armed rebellion. Such rebellions are almost always doomed, with great loss of life to its supporters and execution for its leaders. Yet even in such a defeat the *heimin* sometimes win their point, as the embarrassed samurai lord accedes to their original requests once order is restored.

Some farmers are quite wealthy. During the Late Warring States period they prospered and became nearly independent of the ruling classes (who were involved in death struggles among themselves). Some *ikki* proved so strong that they controlled whole districts and provinces for years at a time. The oppression of the Tokugawa period was a Bakufu reaction to this free spirit.

Among the *heimin* dwell the *yakuza*: criminals, gamblers, bullies, and the occasional "Robin Hood." These men organize themselves into "clans" on the samurai model. The head of a gang is known as the *oyabun*, a title with all the connotations of a Mafia "godfather." The members are bound by a code of group loyalty and obedience to the *oyabun*, serving him as samurai would serve their lord. A *yakuza* failing his *oyabun* does not commit *seppuku* as a failed samurai might. Instead, he cuts off a joint from one of his fingers as a symbolic suicide, and offers it to the *oyabun*. Acceptance preserves the *yakuza's* life. Rejection indicates that the *oyabun* feels the failure is deserving of death and a real suicide is expected.

Below the *heimin* are the *eta*, a caste of people whose livelihoods are considered unclean or unsuitable. Any occupations which deal with dead animals, such as butcher and tanner, as well as those which deal with the dead or the taking of life, such as undertaker, executioner, or gravedigger, fall into the unclean category. Entertainers, travelling actors, and even the highly regarded courtesans of the "willow world" ply trades which are unsuitable for proper folk. The lives of *eta* are full of misery, with little hope of improvement unless they run away to a new part of the country and conceal their origins. Players and gamemasters should think carefully before saddling a player with the burdens of an *eta* character.

Outside the formal structure of society are several significant groups of people. Buddhist clerics have no official status, yet are usually regarded somewhat more highly than the *heimin*. Physicians and famous scholars fall into a similar social niche. The samurai show their regard for such individuals by granting them permission to wear two swords and bear two names. Ronin (masterless samurai) are casteless as well. Any respect shown to them is based more on fear than on admiration. Many consider them even worse than the bandits and criminals who creep around the edges of Nihonese society.







Perhaps the most feared of the casteless folk are the *ninja*, dwellers in the dark night. This fear causes many folk to be cautious and circumspect around someone demonstrating ninja skills or suspected of being a ninja. If the person is not really a ninja, any blatant accuser will be greatly shamed and dishonored. If the person is a ninja, the accuser may not have much longer to live, even if the accused is killed. Ninja have relatives who will avenge them and mysterious ways of learning the secrets of their enemies.

Neither being a ninja nor employing a ninja is a crime. Yet a ninja, or person openly associated with one is suspect and shunned by most of society. A ninja caught in a criminal or treasonous act is subject to immediate and shameful execution. Anyone hiring a ninja for a criminal act is as guilty as the actual perpetrator, if a connection can be proven.



## Living Conditions

Nihonese houses are usually small, wooden-framed buildings with outer walls of plaster. They are built on short pilings that raise them from the ground to allow air circulation. Additional air spaces are present in the space between the ceiling and the roof. Many of the outer walls are movable, allowing the house to be opened to the elements. For inclement weather, windows and outer doors have sliding or hinged wooden covers called *amado*. In pleasant weather, doors and windows are opened during the day to air the house and discourage the mildew fostered by the humid climate. Heating is provided by movable charcoal burners called *hibachi*.

An entryway at the front of a house provides a covered area where shoes and outdoor gear are removed before entering the house proper. The outer half of this area is floored with packed earth. After removing his shoes a visitor steps up to the hardwood floor of the house. Just inside the house proper is a sword rack ready to receive the katana of guests.

The floors of the rooms are covered with rice-straw mats called *tatami*. These measure 3 feet by 6 feet and are two and a half inches thick. A room's size is measured in the number of mats needed to cover the floor (e.g., 4-mat, 6-mat, or 8-mat room) and are always of a geometry to allow the placement of full-sized mats. Rooms are separated by wooden walls or by sliding panels constructed of wooden lattices and paper panels. Heavy panels with opaque paper (*fusuma*) serve as room dividers while lighter panels fitted with translucent rice paper panels (*shoji*) function as doors and windows. Sometimes extra sliding tracks are provided to allow rearranging of the pattern of walls within a house. The floors of corridors between rooms are of polished hardwood.

The furnishings of a Nihonese house are sparse. A typical room has little more than a low table and some sitting cushions. Rooms serve double duty; at night any room may become a bedroom when mattresses (*futon*) and hardwood pillows are brought out from a chest of drawers or a closet. A room which is reserved for a particular occupant might have a dresser or cabinet for storage of personal items. Items of decoration or mementoes are often displayed on walls. The main room of a house invariably has a recessed alcove, slightly raised from floor level, called the *tokonoma*. It is designed for the display of artworks, flowers, or decorative scrolls. In a religious household, another alcove will house the family's shrines, the *kamidana* for Shinto and/or the *butsudoan* for Buddhism. A shelf, above head height, often runs around the walls of the room and is used for storage. A warrior's household will usually have a lacquered armor chest wherein is stored the owner's martial equipage. The suit of armor itself might be on display in a corner or folded within the box.

The kitchen is usually located at the rear of the house and has an entrance to access the family's garden plot. The floor of the kitchen is of polished hardwood where it connects with the house and packed earth near the door to the outside. A storeroom often opens off this part of the room.

A partially or completely separate building houses the bathtub, toilet, and washing facilities.

## Typical Manorhouse

The typical manorhouse residence of a samurai lord consists of several buildings and gardens surrounded by an eight-to-ten foot high wall. The size and elegance of these features varies according to the wealth and social standing of the owner. Wealthier lords' homes boast more rooms of the types described above as well as special rooms reserved for specific functions. All of the rooms are most certainly larger and grander in their materials, furnishings, and decoration.

The major building has rooms for receptions or audiences, guest rooms, and the rooms regularly used by the family. Often the women are sequestered in a separate part of the house. Servants' quarters are located near the center next to cooking and maintenance facilities. A veranda usually extends around the building.

Retainers are housed in communal long-houses around the edges of the compound. Such houses are often incorporated into the outer compound wall. Privileged or rich retainers might maintain their own separate residences.

Other buildings in the compound can include stables and appropriate workspace for the blacksmith, a teahouse, a bath house, a small shrine, storehouses, and possibly even a Noh stage.

The gate to a compound can give an indication of the owner's approximate rank and wealth. Government regulations set forth the styles and decoration types suitable for a samurai's rank. There may also be lesser gates, but these are rarely ostentatious. All gates are guarded by the lord's samurai, even after they are closed at dark.



## Typical Castle

Early castles in Japan are built simply as military strongholds to provide strategic defense points. Most are built on hills or in the mountains. Later castles are built to be residences as well as forts, many of them on small knolls or even flat ground. In all cases, Japanese engineers work to maximize the terrain advantages provided by the castle's site.

Outer defenses consist of moats (dry as well as wet) and high wooden or stone walls on the interior side. Walls and moats are arranged in "rings," with additional passages and open areas to give a maze-like effect. Gates in successive rings are always off-set to further confuse and delay attackers. Ramparts support wood and plaster walls to protect the defenders. These walls have holes to allow the defenders to use their bows. Sometimes the walls are double-sided and roofed to provide additional protection and to allow continuous harassment of attackers even after a wall's gate has been breached. The main keep is often supported by lesser keeps which are incorporated into the overall structure of the castle.

In the center of the castle stands the great keep, a multi-storied structure. It stands on a high, slope-walled stone foundation in which corridors and rooms are sometimes hollowed for storage, treasuries, armories, and escape passages. The upper levels are of wood and plaster construction. Like all plaster used in Nihonese castle construction, this outer surface is treated to be fire-resistant, resulting in a brilliant white finish. The first level of the upper keep is provided with chutes and trapdoors to allow defenders to rain down rocks and other debris to impede attackers. The upper levels are progressively less fortified since they are usually out of reach of enemy archers. They are used as living quarters.

In Nihon, magical defenses are incorporated into most castles. Due to the great size of Nihonese castles, lords can sometimes only provide such protection for parts of the castle. Most common are spells to foil the magical assaults of attackers; other spells might provide warnings of armed intruders.

A castle's true strength is the samurai who defend it.

## Clothing

A samurai normally wears a wide-sleeved, robe-like garment (*kimono*) and a divided skirt (*hakama*). A sash (*obi*) is worn around the waist, and into it are tucked the samurai's swords. The *hakama* may be worn loose or gathered together below the knee and tied closely around the lower leg. Split-toed socks (*tabi*) are worn along with straw sandals (*waraji*). Formal occasions call for the addition of a vest-like garment called *kamishimo* which bears the heraldic symbol (*mon*) of the samurai's allegiance.

A lady does not wear the *hakama* or *kamishimo*. Instead her *kimono* is of floor-length or longer. She often wears a second *kimono*, of complementary colors, to give a layered effect. Her sash is very wide and usually tied in an elaborate bow. Formal wear calls for more expensive versions of everyday styles and further layers. Women adventurers often wear male garb.

Everyday wear is likely to be made of cotton and sometimes linen but formal versions are of imported Chinese silk. Both materials are often printed in decorative patterns or repetitive designs. The *kimono* may be any color but warriors favor subdued hues. The *hakama* likewise varies in color but is usually darker than the *kimono*. Black and other very dark colors are favored. A samurai's *obi* is almost invariably white. Ladies usually sport pastel shades and bright colors. A lady's *obi* is often as colorful as the rest of her outfit. In Japan, white is the color of death as well as purity. It is worn for formal *seppuku*. Samurai expecting to die in battle often lace their armor with white cords.



*For clothing, anything between cotton and natural silk will do. A man who squanders money for clothing and brings his household finances into disorder is fit for punishment. Generally, one should furnish himself with armor that is appropriate to his social position, sustain his retainers, and use his money for martial affairs.*

*(The Precepts of Kato Kiyomasa)*



Bad weather gear consists of a straw raincoat, which makes a person resemble an ambulatory haystack, and high-soled wooden clogs instead of regular sandals. The clogs prevent wetting the feet in puddles but can require a delicate balancing act to keep one's feet. Oiled paper umbrellas are used as well.

Buttons are not used at all. Clothing is tied to secure it in place.

The Nihonese wear little jewelry. Elaborate combs and pins for a lady's hair are almost the only types to see regular wear. Rings are unknown and other jewelry

(earrings, necklaces, medallions, etc.) is rare. Adornment may be carried or worn in the form of fans, parasols, elaborate sword furniture, small lacquered or enameled boxes for sundries, and toggles (*netsuke*) which keep pouches from sliding through the sash.

Male samurai shave the upper, front portion of their heads which makes them look as if they are balding. The rest of the hair is left long but tied into a queue at the back of the head. This is worn sticking up in the "tea whisk" style or folded forward then back again over itself in the more popular style. Boys and young men leave a forelock, which is split and dressed towards either temple. The forelock is shaved at the boy's coming-of-age ceremony. Ladies wear their hair long in a single ponytail commonly gathered at the nape of the neck, but occasionally as low as the small of the back. For dress-up occasions, elaborate coiffures of multiple loops are socially required.



## Customs

The Nihonese adhere strongly to several customs which are alien to Westerners.

### Ronin

*Ronin*, or "wave men", are so named because they wander the land of Nihon aimlessly, back and forth like the waves of the sea. They are samurai who no longer have a master. A samurai can find himself in this situation due to discharge from service for real or imagined crimes, the reassignment of his territory to a rival, the destruction of his clan, or his lord's death. Becoming ronin is not irreversible; a ronin might find another lord and become samurai again. Rather than face the loss of honor in becoming ronin upon the death of a lord, some samurai elect seppuku.

Ronin are outside the normal social structure, yet they keep their attitudes of samurai superiority. In group-conscious Nihon, they are perennial outsiders. They are distrusted for this and feared as well. Their martial skills make them dangerous to any who cross them, especially since they are without the direction of a lord and outside the normal constraints on behavior.

Many ronin are desperate men, destitute of material wealth or spiritual solace. Some attempt to earn an honest living by teaching their martial skills or hiring themselves out as bodyguards. Others merely bully their way through life or turn to outright brigandage.

The most famous story about ronin is the *Chushingura*, the tale of the forty-seven ronin. The forty-seven were retainers of a lord who was maneuvered by a rival into committing seppuku. For a year, the retainers lived as ronin while awaiting their chance to attack the mansion of the rival lord. Their attack was successful and they presented the head of the rival to their lord's grave. The shogunate ordered them to commit seppuku. This they did, having fulfilled their duty to their lord. They have been honored since as true samurai.

## Katakiuchi

There are strict rules for conducting a *katakiuchi*, a legal vendetta, in Nihon. The vendetta may only be directed against the person who has killed or caused the death of a person close to the avenger. The right or wrong of the original death is immaterial once the *katakiuchi* permit is issued. The avenger must be of equal or lower social status than the person whom he wishes to revenge. Thus, a lord may not revenge a vassal, an older brother may not avenge a younger, and a father may not revenge a son. Once the *katakiuchi* is registered, the avenger may not return home without proof of his success. The avenger must ask for a leave of absence from his lord to register and complete his *katakiuchi*.

The permit for *katakiuchi* is issued by the lord of the province in which the target resides. If he refuses, no vendetta may take place in that province and the target is safe as long as he stays in that province. When permission for *katakiuchi* is granted, all pertinent data is entered into a document which the avenger must carry with him to present to officials once the vendetta is completed. The killing must be deliberate, not accidental, on the part of the avenger or the *katakiuchi* is uncompleted. The deliberate killing of the target by a third party renders the *katakiuchi* uncompletable. An unregistered or improperly registered *katakiuchi* killing leaves the avenger subject to a charge of murder, although sympathetic samurai officials often drop the charges.

Governmental regulations and clan custom provide motivation for *katakiuchi*. A son often may not be allowed to inherit while his father's slayer still lives. Similarly, a younger brother may have to avenge an older in order to receive his portion of a fief. In many clans, the person to be revenged is considered to have lost honor for having been so unprepared or unskilled as to be slain. This lost honor reflects on those eligible to avenge him. *Katakiuchi* would restore his honor.

Samurai who have successfully completed a *katakiuchi* are often rewarded by their lords with gifts or increased stipends. They may be offered better positions with other lords. Successful avengers have demonstrated samurai virtues and skills.

Other, more extensive, blood feuds (*fukushu*) exist in clan-oriented Nihon. A group may elect to register a vendetta against the slayer or slayers of a member of their group or for an insult. The target(s) must be notified of the *fukushu* and of the names of all those listed as targets. Otherwise the rules of *katakiuchi* apply. Officials often limit the number of avengers who may attempt *fukushu*, or apply other restrictions to minimize what could easily become a slaughter.

The rigid rules described above are from the Tokugawa period. Earlier periods were more relaxed, and frequently the perpetrator of a vendetta sought nobody's permission.



## Kirisutegomen

*Kirisutegomen* is the custom of "killing and going away." It refers to the samurai's right to kill a member of the heimin or eta castes who has acted other than as "expected." Surliness, discourtesy, and inappropriate behavior are not "expected" of the lower castes. Samurai may be held by officials, pending investigation of whether the victim was indeed deserving of the samurai's action.

In Nihon, anyone may defend himself from attack. A lower caste member successfully defending himself from a samurai will be questioned but is usually released since the samurai, having lost, certainly did not embody samurai virtues. Most lords will not grant katakiuchi rights against such a lower caste person.

Kirisutegomen, like formal katakiuchi, is a product of the Tokugawa period. Though samurai could (and often did) kill commoners for minor reasons in earlier times, *kirisutegomen* wasn't quite so common when commoners



had swords, too. In 1590, Hideyoshi conducted a sword hunt to deprive all heimin, priests, etc. of their weapons. This paved the way for the stricter class distinctions which rapidly followed.

## Sword Etiquette and Customs

The sword, particularly the katana, is believed to be the "soul" of a samurai. Fine blades are often handed down for generations within clans and families, with each successive wielder adding to the sword's glamor. Samurai often ask for well-known blades of defeated enemies after a battle, as their reward for service to their victorious lord. Since a samurai's honor is bound to his sword, if he loses it he is in a sorry state. Unless he recovers it, his honor is lost as well.

Normally only the buke wear the two swords (*dai-sho* or "long-short"). The *kuge* have the right but usually disdain such a vulgar display of martial attitude. Physicians also have the right, but often cannot afford them and so do without or wear wooden mock-ups. Heimin (other than ashigaru soldiers in service to a lord) are sometimes permitted to carry a single sword, usually a *wakizashi*, when traveling. Such a traveler is required to carry a document stating this permission, his starting point, his destination. Before the Tokugawa period, in areas where control was loose, heimin carried swords quite frequently. A good rule of thumb for heimin sword-bearing is the power of the central government and local daimyos (i.e., are they strong enough to suppress the peasants in their district?)

Even police are usually not sword-armed. In the Tokugawa period, only precinct heads of police were samurai. All others were heimin and not all of them were permitted swords. All carried *jittes*, which announced their office and doubled as a nice sword-breaker. Earlier police were similar. The Heian-era police were led by nobles, but the actual work was still done by heimin, because of the noble's distaste for such unruly work. To the nobleman, the position was just a sinecure.

Swords are worn stuck through the *obi* (waist sash). The scabbarded blade is normally worn with the edge towards the ground, signifying peaceful or at least non-hostile intent. Worn edge-up, the sword is in position for an *iaijutsu* draw and is inherently more hostile. Turning the blade from a normal position to edge-up is often considered an aggressive gesture.

The katana (and other weapons such as spears, bows, etc.) is removed upon entering a house. Often a servant, handling the sword with a cloth so that he will not soil it, receives the scabbarded blade and places it in a sword rack. A samurai will retain his short sword, carried in his right hand or placed at his right side where it cannot be brought into play quickly. When entering a building belonging to a lord other than his own, a samurai would expect to have all weapons removed, to be returned when he leaves.

Swords receive great respect. In showing off a famous blade, the owner presents it to the viewer with the edge towards himself. The viewer should draw it no more than an inch or two from the scabbard unless the owner urges him to draw it further. Only with additional urgings should it be removed completely from the scabbard and then only with the edge of the blade away from all present.

## Seppuku

*Seppuku*, also known as *harakiri*, is a form of ritual suicide used by the samurai. It can be meted out by a lord as punishment or chosen by an individual for a number of reasons. A samurai must request permission from his feudal superior in order to commit seppuku.

Samurai convicted of significant crimes are usually ordered to commit seppuku. This is a privilege of their caste, allowing them to commit suicide rather than face shameful execution. For particularly heinous crimes (such as arson or treason to the emperor), a samurai might be forbidden seppuku and executed as a commoner.

Seppuku is not the proper solution to every dilemma faced by a samurai, especially if it leaves some harm unavenged or is an attempt to avoid an unpleasant task. It is a coward's act to commit seppuku to avoid a duel or vendetta.

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*One should not torture himself over a single mistake. What is essential is one's presence of mind hereafter. In the Lun Yu it says, "When one makes a mistake, he should not be hesitant to correct it." It says further, "Making a mistake and not correcting it, this is a real mistake."*  
(Opinions in Ninety-Nine Articles by Takeda Nobushige)

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An insoluble conflict (such as being obligated to perform a deed which would bring intolerable shame, while not performing it would be dishonorable) and avoidance of a dishonorable task set by a feudal superior are reasonable grounds for seppuku. Seppuku is an accepted solution to preserve endangered honor. The most common case is to avoid capture or a dishonorable death at the hands of foes in battle. Battlefield seppuku was often carried out with little ceremony. Players are encouraged to develop samurai characters who refrain from seppuku in this case in the hope of escape and subsequent redemption of honor.

Seppuku is normally considered to restore lost personal honor when performed as atonement for the actions or inactions which brought about the dishonor.

*Kanshi* is a type of seppuku intended to reprove one's lord. A loyal samurai with the good of his clan at heart might chose this act to open his lord's eyes to wicked, foolish, or dishonorable acts. The perfect devotion to the lord's best interests shown by such a samurai is held in high esteem. A samurai need not receive his lord's permission to commit kanshi.

*Funshi* is a type of seppuku designed to display hatred of a foe whom a samurai is unable to harm. The samurai makes a public declaration of the wrongs committed by the foe, in the hope that the public shame will serve the samurai's need for revenge. Officials rarely deny requests for vendetta to survivors of a samurai who has committed funshi.



Another type of seppuku is *junshi*. When a great leader died, many loyal retainers would commit suicide rather than outlive their beloved leader. This practice was often involuntary during legendary history. The Tokugawa Shogunate outlawed *junshi* as a waste of human resources, and enforced this by executing the wife and children of *junshi*-offenders. This practice has popped up in modern Japanese history as well. When the Emperor Meiji died in 1912, General Nogi of Russo-Japanese War fame committed suicide along with his wife to follow the emperor.

The formal ceremony usually takes place in a quiet spot surrounded by the beauties of nature. All participants and observers wear formal clothes. The principal, dressed in white, kneels with his chosen second standing slightly behind him and to his left. After composing himself, the principal slits his stomach with a short sword or dagger. The full ceremony consists of three cuts, across from left to right, up, then diagonally into the heart. The second, to prevent any unseemly display of pain by the principal, strikes with his katana, cutting off the principal's head.

A female samurai performs a variation known as *jigai*. Before commencing the act, she ties her ankles together to maintain a modest posture in death. Instead of slitting her belly, she cuts her own throat with a dagger.

In extreme cases any form of suicide, when approached with a proper samurai attitude and full intent beforehand, could be considered seppuku.



## Dueling

Duels are common in Nihon. They may be fought to settle an argument, redress an insult (real or imagined), gain honor or renown, or prove the superiority of a favored martial approach. As long as witnesses are present to state that a duel was entered into freely by both parties, the duel is legal.

Duels may be fought on the spot or set for an arranged time and place. They are often arranged for a time and place where the combatants will be undisturbed. The European method of using seconds as go-betweens and stand-ins is not followed, although supporters of the duelists may be present for moral support or to insure a fair fight.

Duels may be fought with real weapons or wooden practice weapons. In either case, the fight may continue until first blood, until one party concedes the superiority of the other, or until death according to the wills of the combatants.

Some clans forbid dueling among their members to avoid useless bloodshed that could weaken the clan. Enmity and jealousy between retainers sometimes still ends in a duel, although most such rivalries result in political infighting instead.





## Boasting

Samurai are proud of their lineage and their deeds. At the start of a battle or combat, a samurai will often announce his name and clan as well as a short list of great deeds he or his ancestors have done. His opponent is likely to do the same. This encourages the first to add more great deeds to his announcement, preferably at the expense of the opponent's clan. Consider this challenge from a battle in the Hogen war.

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*'I once captured Ono Shichiro the chief of the brigands on Mount Suzuka in Ise province, and have thus received the emperor's commands to become vice-commander in chief of his army. My name is Kagetsuna, Watch my arrow and see whether or not it strikes you!'*

*(Hogen Monogatari)*

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Boasting serves as an identification of the samurai who will, he hopes, do something noteworthy in the combat. It bolsters his own courage and may unnerve the opponent who is about to fight such a fierce and accomplished scion of a renowned and feared warrior lineage.

## Recreation

Competitions of all sorts are popular among the samurai. These usually take the form of displays of prowess, in either the martial or the gentler arts. Contests in archery, poetry, and horsemanship are among the most popular.

Some popular sports began as religious rituals. *Sumo* developed from part of a fertility ritual into a betting sport replete with popular champions. Accuracy contests for mounted archers developed from an ancient Shinto form of divination through study of the horses' hoofprints.

Two-player strategy games such as *go* and *shogi* are popular. *Go* occupies a social niche similar to that of chess in medieval Europe. Some card games are played, as well as various dice games. Almost all forms of games involve betting on the outcome or make betting integral to their play. Gambling halls are common in the cities and even inns may have a regular gambling room. Gambling is often run by professionals under the control of the *yakuza*.

Dancing and singing are popular at festivals and holiday celebrations. Itinerant actors and puppeteers travel freely through Nihon staging shows. Large cities have theaters where plays are regularly performed.

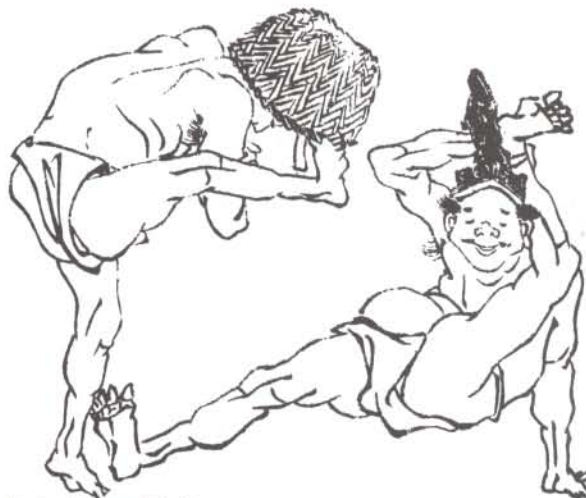
Cities have pleasure districts where all sorts of entertainments can be found. Most notable among them are the elegant *geisha* houses where a man may find a full evening's worth of dining, drinking, entertainment, and other sorts of amusement.

Moon viewing is a pastime learned by the samurai from the *kuge*. Participants spend an evening dining and drinking in a refined atmosphere. They then retire outside to observe the moon. Those of poetic bent are expected to compose extempore verse for the occasion.

Another placid pastime is the *cha-no-yu*, or tea ceremony. This is an elaborate and strictly defined ritual for the making and drinking of tea. Many samurai mansions have special, small buildings in their gardens reserved for such ceremonies.







## Drinking Rules

The alcoholic content of beverages is quantified by means of potency points per half-liter (pint) of liquid. These potency points accrue within a drinker's body as long as the drinker continues to drink. When the drinker rests his body works to eliminate the alcohol from his system.

### Effects of Alcohol

Accumulated potency points depress physical and mental functions and cause a loss of some inhibitions — effects sought by heavy drinkers.

**Percentile Roll Reductions:** each accumulated potency point reduces all percentile rolls made by the drinker's player by one percentile (including skill, magic, INT and CON rolls, but excluding Luck rolls).

**Drinkers' Comraderie:** when serious drinkers congregate, they frequently develop a sense of comraderie. Information can thus be easily gathered by an industrious adventurer who buys rounds of drinks, then plies his new friends with subtle questions.

Sometimes, however, getting a few locals seriously drunk can swing against the adventurer if the locals become rowdy or start fighting.

If a character drinks often, his player should decide how the alcohol affects the character: does it make him talkative, introverted, boisterous, sad, belligerent, or silly?

**Getting Sick and Passing Out:** excessive drinking can cause the drinker to get sick and/or to pass out. Each time the cumulative alcohol potency points exceeds a multiple of the drinker's current hit points, the drinker's player must attempt a CON x5% roll.

The first time that this roll is failed, that adventurer feels a wave of nausea pass through his body. He feels a bit dizzy, but there is no other effect. If this roll is fumbled, then the drinker passes out.

The second time that the drinker's player fails this roll, the adventurer gets sick. If the failed percentile result is greater than twice the reduced CON x5 roll, then the drinker passes out instead of getting sick. If this roll is fumbled, then the drinker both passes out and gets sick.

When the percentile reductions cause the adventurer's CON x5 health roll to fall to zero or less (due to the accumulation of alcohol potency points), then that adventurer passes out.

### Recovery From Alcohol Effects

Heavily-drinking adventurers must recover from several effects of alcohol: passing out, the alcohol potency, and hangover. Despite folktales to the contrary, the best route to hangover recovery is to eat good food and to get some sleep.

**Recovery From Passing Out:** a drinker who passed out will remain unconscious for 1d10+2 hours. During this time it will be nearly impossible to rouse him. After this number of hours has

## Beverage Potency Table

beverage	potency
watered rice beer	1
weak rice beer	2
strong rice beer	3
poor sake	3
average sake	6
best sake	9
fruit brandy	12
shochu	18

passed, the drinker will pass into a natural sleep that lasts another 1d10+2 hours.

**Recovery From Alcohol Potency:** after a drinker stops drinking and either passes out or goes to sleep, subtract the adventurer's current CON from the total alcohol potency points imbibed. The adventurer's body will then require one hour per remaining potency point to purge the alcohol from his system. During this time the adventurer will suffer from a hangover.

**Hangover:** a drinker experiences a hangover whenever he awakens after a night of heavy drinking and still suffers from an accumulation of alcohol potency points. Hangover is caused by residual alcohol toxins in the drinker's body. An adventurer with a hangover suffers from headache, general body ache, and nausea. His percentile rolls will still be lowered by the remaining alcohol potency points. Also, if he suffers any sudden movement or tries to perform and strenuous activity his player must roll percentile dice equal to or less than his adventurer's CON x5. Failure means that the adventurer gets sick.

### Drinking Contests

Drinking contests can be run in several ways. The most obvious is for each contestant to try to drink the others under the table.

When moderating a drinking bout between several adventurers and non-player characters, first take note of each participant's current hit points + CON. Then determine the alcohol potency of the beverage being drunk. Drinking bouts are most easily run if each participant drinks the same type of beverage for the entirety of the bout.

The gamemaster should then begin to tally the number of alcohol potency points consumed in the contest. Have each player attempt a CON x5 roll when the accumulated alcohol tally exceeds a multiple of his adventurer's hit points, remembering to deduct from his chances of success the alcohol potency points consumed.

A failed CON x5 roll means that the adventurer feels that first wave of nausea or gets sick. This does not disqualify him from the contest. If the failed percentile dice roll result is greater than twice the reduced CON x5 chance of success, then that adventurer passes out. An adventurer who passes out loses the contest, will not drink any more liquor, and begins to recover from the alcohol effects.

**Chug-A-Lugging:** this is the art of downing a drink without stopping — until the bottle is dry. This is one of the most common contests. Each participant must receive the results of a successful CON roll after each cup chugged. The last contestant to get sick wins.

**Other Games:** some contests can involve games of skill (archery, poetry, go, feats of horseback riding, etc.) conducted while all participants drink furiously.

**Nursing Drinks:** most drinks take only ten minutes or less to finish. An adventurer taking twenty minutes or longer to finish a drink is considered to be nursing his drink. Nursing a drink halves its potency. Miserly adventurers always nurse their drinks.

## Liquor

Rice beer, mildly alcoholic, is common throughout Nihon, especially among the lower classes.

*Sake*, a rice wine, is more popular with the buke and others who can afford it. It is properly drunk from small cups after it has been heated to body temperature.

*Shochu* is a strong beverage distilled from sake dregs. It is commonly available only in specialized drinking establishments and is only popular with serious drinkers.

Various fruits brandies are also available.

## Retirement

It is common for a member of the kuge or buke castes to retire from daily life in his later years, to shave his head and become a monk. The person takes the vows of a priest of his chosen religion, usually Buddhist. His behavior is subject to the strictures of Buddhism. Rather than actually taking on the religious activity of a normal priest, the retired person devotes time to meditation or the arts. In *RuneQuest* terms the person becomes only an initiate. Becoming a monk in this fashion is a statement that the person is preparing for his death rather than embarking on a new course of life. Such a course is an admirable one for a samurai who has lived a full, adventurous life.

Some samurai (particularly devious, politically oriented lords) profess to retire and become "monks," yet remain active in the world. Such characters may become initiates or priests of their religion and still lead an active political and military life. The realities of such a life will often leave such a character in sin or a state of pollution so that he will have no access to divine magic. In this he resembles the sohei of some Buddhist sects; but

unlike the sohei, he follows his own will and does not have the sanction of religious superiors for actions not in accord with standard religious doctrines. Such actions may in fact incur the displeasure of those same religious overlords, leaving the "monk" cut off from the gods — although his military and political powers may more than make up for the lack.

A character may, at some point in his life, desire to take a more religious path for reasons other than retirement. Such a freely chosen course may be taken as long as the character can meet the requirements to become an initiate or priest of the chosen religion. He receives the benefits of, and must observe the rules of, his religion.

Some samurai offer or are ordered to "shave their heads" as a punishment rather than commit seppuku. Such monks usually choose reclusive sects and strive to forget their former lives. A player character forced to this course has effectively left the campaign.

Characters forced to a religious course by an encounter with a deity may be considered to have received it either as a final punishment or merely a redirection of the character's life, depending on the circumstances and the character's actions to that point. In the former case the character leaves the game as if he had been ordered to shave his head. In the latter, the player must strive to have his character meet the requirements of priesthood and devote his efforts to the religion of the deity encountered. A player not wishing to have a priest for a character may opt to have the character join a reclusive sect and begin a new character.







## Clan Structure

As noted before, ninja "clans" are modeled on the samurai clan. Each clan is devoted to a particular philosophy such as non-interference with society in general, maintenance of balance through aiding the needy, or mercenary sale of skills to any who can pay the price. In many cases, a clan will have one or more special skills or devices which it favors. The gamemaster is urged to design specific clans for his player character ninja as well as for his non-player ninja.

To guide you, here is an outline developed from the historical *Togakure-ryu* of Iga province. The clan tends toward isolation but will undertake justifiable missions, combat and espionage contracts preferred. Skills emphasized include Disguise, Martial Arts, and Throwing. Favored weapons are ninjato, bo staff, shuriken, spears, *bisento* (a characteristic weapon; use *RuneQuest* naginata values), and kusari-gama. Characteristic devices include explosives, a four-pointed shuriken, tetsubishi, shinobi-zue, and nekote.

The clan master is called the jonin. He makes policy, approves contracts, and devises training regimens. His actual identity is usually concealed. Sometimes a jonin may even hide his identity from his clan, leaving and receiving identifiable messages or ciphers in a dead-drop to be acted on by his subordinates. Some historical jonin maintained two or more complete families in different locations as cover identities.

Beneath the jonin are the chunin, the middlemen. They are the clan elders, retired or incapacitated field agents, skill specialists, and teachers. Chunin oversee training of agents and administer the day-to-day activities of the clan. When someone wishes to hire a ninja, he must negotiate with a chunin. Of course, the chunin will rarely admit to being ninja. He will instead speak of knowing "someone who can help." Chunin rarely undertake missions themselves.

The field agent and common clan member is called a genin. Genin are the "soldiers" of the clan. Most player character ninja will be genin.

## Training and Skills

Ninja are trained from childhood by their families. In early life toughness, suppleness, and general athletic skills are emphasized. Later, fighting and specialized ninja skills are added to the training.

Besides the typical skills available to adventurers, ninja have certain special skills and variants on some common skills.

## Variations on Standard Skills

**Disguise:** Ninja have some special advantages when using this skill. See the description of the skill in the *Players Book*. Besides disguising themselves as specific persons, ninja are especially skilled in five more general disguises. When using such a disguise add 5 to the ninja's Disguise score. These disguises are called the "five ways of going." They are: a travelling entertainer (Sleight, Singing, or an Instrumental Music skill helps), who can travel freely across the land; a wandering Buddhist priest or yamabushi, welcome almost anywhere in Nihon; a simple peasant, often ignored by samurai; a merchant, free to travel and expected to inquire into current events; and a "blind" masseur, also free to travel and someone in front of whom customers talk freely (First Aid skill may be used to give a soothing massage).

**Hide:** Ninja are extraordinarily proficient at hiding. The gamemaster should allow them a chance to conceal themselves, at a reduced chance of success, where others would find no opportunity: an open field, an empty room, a leaf-bare tree, etc. If a ninja's presence is unsuspected, his chances of hiding are improved, possibly by as much as 100%. The exact modifications to the ninja's chance of success must be determined by the gamemaster, according to circumstances. Remember, though, that ninja may hide among the rafters in an empty room where a casual viewer would not think to look.

**Speak Japanese:** Ninja may use a sign language called Kuji-kuri to convey silent messages to confederates. The score in this skill is one-half of the character's score in Speak Japanese. A character may elect to specifically study Kuji-kuri to increase his score over one-half of his Speak Japanese score. Follow normal improvement rules.



## Special Ninja Skills

**Escape or Nawanukejutsu (05% — Agility):** allows a character to escape from bonds. Each round in which the character may work uninterrupted and he succeeds in an Escape roll allows the character to pit his STR+DEX vs. the STR of the binding. Failure leaves the character still bound. The process is easily visible to a guard who can interrupt it and negate the escape attempt. Due to childhood training, a ninja may use this skill to squeeze through openings which would normally be too small for a person of his SIZ. It takes a full melee round to pass through such an opening. A simple success allows passage through a space 1 SIZ point too small; a special success allows a 2 point difference; and a critical success allows a hole 3 SIZ points too small to be traversed. This ninja skill may sometimes be taught to outsiders, but the suppleness necessary for squeezing through holes can only be achieved in childhood training.

**Yogen (00% — Knowledge):** Yogen is the knowledge of the mysterious compounds, dusts, poisons, and potions used by ninja. A successful roll allows a character to identify a substance by its effects or physical characteristics. A character may also compound any of the common ninja substances or concoct an antidote to a known substance. Yogen is never taught to outsiders.

Yogen is a Knowledge Lore, and as such may never be increased by experience.



## Ninja Equipment

### Armor

Ninja armor consists of mail. Most common is a hood and shirt (protects arms, chest, and abdomen) which can be worn under a ninja's black garb. For major assaults and battles, mail pants can be added to the ensemble. Ninja may obtain silenced armor at twice the usual cost. The cloth and leather strips used to muffle the metal add 25% to the weight of the armor. Silenced armor does not subtract from the wearer's Sneak skill.

### Climbing Pole

This is a 3-meter pole with collapsible rungs. It can be fitted with a large hook on one end. It breaks down, each section sliding within another, to a 1-meter length for easier transport and concealment. The pole may be used as a ladder or a probe. A climbing pole weighs 3 ENC assembled and 1 ENC collapsed. The base cost of a climbing pole is 100 mon.

## Clothing

The garb of ninja operatives is a black or reddish-black variant on standard Japanese clothing. It is cut a little fuller in places so that it can be arranged to alter the ninja's human silhouette for better concealment. The tabi (socks) worn have soft soles for silent movement and a head wrapping is worn to conceal the face. Various pockets and straps are hidden about the clothing to allow for the concealment of weapons and devices. The dark color adds 5% to the chance of any character attempting to hide at night.

Variants on the garb come in other colors for concealment in special circumstances such as white for snow, dark green for heavily vegetated regions, and brown for areas of bare earth. Under the proper circumstances, the color aids in concealment. Sometimes the clothing is reversible, with the standard black on one side and normally colored clothing (for a quick disguise) or a second camouflage color on the other.

The base cost of a full set of ninja garb is 50 mon.

### Doka

A doka is a small container for safely carrying a live coal. The device is useful for lighting fuses with minimum fuss. On a cold night, it can be used to warm fingers before a delicate task.

The base cost is 15 mon.

### "Eggs"

"Eggs" are small containers used to deliver the various ninja powders to targets in combat. They shatter on impact, releasing the powder in a cloud to affect the target. A ninja uses Throwing skill to deliver the egg. Eggs weigh .2 ENC.

The base cost of an egg, ready for loading, is 10 mon.

## Explosive Weapons

Ninja utilize various weapons employing gunpowder and incendiary chemicals, well-kept secrets among the clans. These fall into four types: bombs, flashbombs, grenades, and incendiaries.

Some explode on contact and some use fuses. Fuses burn for a number of strike ranks determined by their length. Fuses must be lit by a source of fire such as flint and steel, a doka, or a candle. Fuses are unreliable and may go out. A ninja who lights one must make a POW roll to avoid this bad luck. Use POW x3 if the device is thrown, POW x4 if rolled to the target, and POW x5 if carefully placed.

A ninja must successfully use Throwing skill to toss a device and hit the target individual or area. Rolling a grenade requires DEX x5 to get it to the target.

**Bombs** are large and hard to conceal. They are used in defense of clan holdings and special sabotage missions. They use fuses and may not be thrown. A typical bomb is an area-effect weapon doing 6D6 points of damage to anyone within 6 meters of the center of the explosion. It weighs 3 ENC. The base cost of a bomb with 30 strike ranks of fuse is 500 mon.

**Flashbombs** are small and easy to conceal. They explode on impact, causing a bright flash that will blind anyone looking at it for 1D3 melee rounds unless that character can make a POW x5 roll. Creatures with eyes adapted to night vision are blinded for twice as long. Flashbombs weigh .3 ENC. The base cost of a flashbomb is 100 mon.

**Grenades** are small, concealable versions of bombs. They have an area-effect doing 2D6 points of damage within 2 meters of the explosion. Grenades weigh .5 ENC. The base cost of a typical grenade with a 10 strike rank fuse is 150 mon.

**Incendiaries** come as grenades or bombs. They give off a flash like a flashbomb when they explode but do not cause any damage as such. Instead they have a chance to ignite any flammable material within their area-effect. The exact chance depends on the material as noted below. The base cost of an incendiary grenade is 225 mon and that of an incendiary bomb is 750 mon.

Sample Material	% Chance of Ignition
oil	75
paper	80
cloth	50
wood	30

## Kawanaga

The kawanaga is a grappling hook with one to three prongs attached to a rope. Besides its obvious use, ninja learn to use it with Chain Weapon skill. A strike with the grappling hook end causes 1D4+1 points of damage. Other applications are as for a typical chain weapon. The base cost of a kawanaga and 10 meters of rope is 30 mon.

## Kyotetsu-shoge

The kyotetsu-shoge is a ninja "chain weapon." It consists of a dagger, with a curved projection on one edge, at one end of a 3-meter rope. The other end is attached to a metal ring about 6 inches in diameter. The ring acts as a standard chain-weapon weight and the dagger may be employed with Dagger skill. Beyond its use as a weapon, the curved projection on the dagger allows the kyotetsu-shoge to double as a makeshift grappling hook. The base cost of a kyotetsu-shoge is 40 mon.



## Nekode

Nekode are the ninja version of a fighting claw. The claws fit in the palm of the hand on a band of metal. This band allows the ninja to parry with the nekode (armor points 10). Nekode and a similar device to fit to the feet can be used as an aid in climbing. Add 5% to the Climbing skill of a ninja for each hand or foot so equipped. The base cost of a pair of nekode is 60 mon.

## Powders

Ninja concoct several powders of use to them. Some are efficacious externally while others must be taken internally by the victim. Some have immediate and temporary effects while others require time to work but may have more permanent effects. Powders are measured in "doses." Each dose is the amount necessary for the desired effect and/or to fill a delivery container.

Powders for internal use must be slipped into the target's food or forced down his throat. Powders for external use may be loaded into "eggs" or used in a metsubishi. A metsubishi is a small box-like device with a mouthpiece on one end and a hole on the other. The ninja places the powder into the box, places his lips to the mouthpiece, and blows into it to expel the powder out the hole. The range is equal to one half of the ninja's CON in meters. A metsubishi weighs .3 ENC. The base cost for a metsubishi is 25 mon.

**Blinding Powder (external, immediate):** Temporarily incapacitates the victim unless he makes a Dodge roll to avoid getting it in his eyes and nose. For 1D3 melee rounds the victim is blinded by watering eyes. The base cost of a dose of blinding powder is 30 mon.

**Blood Powder (external, immediate):** Designed to coat a victim and make him attractive to carnivorous animals. A ninja might then release such animals to attack the victim. The base cost of a dose of blood powder is 20 mon.

**Poison (internal, time variable):** Comes in a great variety of types. See the *RuneQuest* rules.

**Stink Powder (external, immediate):** Used like blood powder to coat a victim. The stench which clings to him is used as an aid in tracking or a ruse to get him to remove stinking armor or clothing. The base cost of a dose of stink powder is 15 mon.



## Shinobi-zue

The term shinobi-zue is applied to a range of devices which consist of a concealed weapon in a stick or staff. Such hidden weapons will pass any casual inspection short of handling them. Even then only their unusual weight is apparent.

Concealed sword and dagger blades are the simplest and their use is obvious. A hollowed staff may conceal a weighted chain to be shaken out in the same motion it takes to attack with it. Spring-loaded blades may be set to jump out to fighting position or to fire from the shinobi-zue like a shuriken. The latter requires a DEX x5 roll to hit the target. Range for such weapons is poor, about 5 meters.

Some shinobi-zue are set to release a dose of powder with a flick of the wrist. DEX x5 is required to hit the target and range is only 3 meters.

The base cost of a shinobi-zue depends on the item concealed. It is usually 300% of the cost of an ordinary version of the item.



### Sword Scabbard

The scabbard of a ninjato has many uses. The end cap may be removed to use it as a snorkel. The sageyo cord may be removed to use as a garotte. The cord may be used to pull the sword up after using the scabbarded blade as a "step-up" in climbing a wall. With the scabbard balanced on sword-tip and the cord held in the teeth, it may be used as a probe in a darkened room. This serves a dual function: any enemy touched will not know the ninja's true location, and the ninja's sword remains ready for action. A scabbard may be rigged to expel a dose of powder when an iaijutsu draw is performed (the target of the powder and the sword attack will be the same). The scabbard, with end cap removed, may be used as a blowgun to propel darts. Darts cause no damage unless a special success is achieved; then they do 1D3. They are most useful for introducing an internally-effective compound into a victim. Three darts weigh .1 ENC and have a base cost of 10 mon. The range of the blowgun is the user's CON in meters. A scabbard is included in the sword cost.

### Tetsubishi

Tetsubishi are small tetrahedral or multipointed devices designed to always present one or more points upward. Bare feet or the straw sandals of running samurai are easily penetrated by the points. In game terms, they cause 1 point of damage to each foot stepping on the tetsubishi, plus any poison with which they have been coated. They can cause distractions or cause a person to fall down. Anyone stepping on a tetsubishi must succeed in an immediate CON x5 roll or he falls to the ground, unable to walk until the tetsubishi is removed. A dozen tetsubishi may be scattered carefully over a square meter, giving a percentage chance equal to the ninja's INT x5 that anyone passing will step on one. If tossed rapidly into place, use the ninja's Throwing skill. If he fails his roll, none will be effective. If he succeeds, the actual die roll is the percentage chance that a pursuer will step on one. For each tetsubishi stepped on, reduce the chance of stepping on others in that area by 10%. The base cost of a dozen tetsubishi is 25 mon.

### Water Crossing Devices

Various water crossing devices are available to ninja.

**Air Bags** are used by ninja for hiding underwater or swimming below the surface for long distances. Once the ninja is out of breath under the *RuneQuest* rules, he may take another "breath" from the air bag and proceed as if he had just submerged. A makeshift air bag will hold only one "breath", while a specially treated skin will hold 1D3+1 "breaths". The base cost of a skin specially prepared for use as an airbag weighs 1 ENC is 50 mon.

**Floats** are also used but do not keep a ninja's devices dry. A ninja need not make the usual Swim roll to progress through the water and need not worry about drowning unless he loses his float. Movement is at the normal swimming rate. A ninja may construct a float from an animal skin or a collection of hollow gourds. A prepared float may be obtained for a base cost of 25 mon.

**Water Shoes** are large basket-like devices worn over the feet and lower legs. The ninja balances upright and propels himself with a paddle. He thus "walks on water." Water feet may only be used on calm water such as a castle moat or slow-moving river. This method allows the ninja to cross water without immersing any powders or explosive weapons he is carrying. The ninja moves at a rate of 1 meter per strike rank. If he is successfully attacked or conducts a dodge, attack, or parry himself, he must make a DEX x5 roll or capsize. He must make a second DEX x5 roll to free himself of the device or all movement will be hindered (at half values). Water feet weigh 3 ENC and have a base cost of 100 mon (including paddle).



## Ninja and Magic

Ninja tend to disregard magic and rely on their technological devices and finely honed skills. When they do resort to magic, spirit magic is most commonly used since ninja, living close to the land, find it easy to interact with the kami. Some ninja practice sorcery. Indeed, a few clans specialize in sorcery rather than using devices. Such clans favor spells which duplicate the effects of other clans' devices. Ninja sorcerers have developed several special spells:

### Hypnotism (*salminjutsu*)

*Ranged, Active until commanded-then passive, Temporal*

This spell is a weaker, but more common, form of Dominate. It is only usable on humans.

To use the Hypnotism spell, the sorcerer must have the use of his hands and be able to gaze into the target's eyes. The die roll for the casting must be within the sorcerer's Kuji-kuri score (see ninja variant skills) as well as any manipulation scores applicable and the skill with the spell. The intensity of the spell is pitted against the target's magic points.

The spell may be cast as part of a normal conversation, requiring an INT x5 roll for the target or an observer to notice before the spell's completion. Interrupting the sorcerer's rhythm disrupts the spell.

If the spell is successfully cast, the target enters a trance. He remains still unless ordered to move by the sorcerer. The target may be commanded to perform actions or answer questions. A popular use of the spell is to order the victim to ignore the presence of the sorcerer, except for commands. As far as the victim is concerned, the sorcerer is invisible. Any command to perform a violent or physical actions allows the victim to attempt to break out of the trance (POW x5 roll succeeds). A victim will not follow orders to harm himself or a loved one. All orders must be given verbally and the victim must, of course, understand the language spoken.

### Night Eyes

*Touch, Passive, Temporal*

This spell allows a character to see as well in the dark as in the day. Each point of Intensity lowers any percentile loss from darkness, including magical darkness, by 05%. Hence, 15 points of Intensity would completely remove any ill effect from complete darkness.

### Vanishing

*Self, Active, Instant*

This is a limited teleport spell. Each level of Intensity allows the transfer of the sorcerer, and up to his normal carrying load, 1 meter of distance. The destination must be within the sorcerer's sight and no Homing Circle is required. The disappearance is accompanied by a flash and a puff of smoke. The pyrotechnics divert onlookers long enough for the sorcerer to conceal himself at his destination using his Hide skill.

## Ninja Occupational Previous Experience

**Requirement:** The character must either be born into a ninja clan or must successfully influence a clan head in order to receive training.

Ninja are trained from the time they leave the cradle. Any character born to a ninja family gains training from the age of 10, instead of from 15. A 23-year-old ninja has 13 years of previous experience. This training destroys any chance the ninja ever had to lead a normal life, and makes him truly a creature of his clan.

**Basic Skills:** Climb x1, Jump x1, Swim x1, Throw x2, First Aid x1, Martial Arts x2, Conceal x1, Listen x2, Scan x2, Search x1, Track x1, Hide x2, Sneak x2, Escape x2, Clan Specialty Skill or Ninja Weapon Attack x2.

A ninja must choose a specialization as well. Each specialty brings additional skills to the character.

**Field Agent Skills:** Climb x2, Swim x1, Throw x1, World Lore x1, Hide x2, Dagger Attack x1, Kenjutsu Attack and Parry x2.

**Clandestine Agent Skills:** Human Lore x1, World Lore x1, Disguise x3, Search x1, Climb x1, Read Chinese x2, Write Chinese x2, Sleight x1, Kenjutsu Attack and Parry x1.

**Savant Skills:** Animal Lore or Plant Lore or Mineral Lore x1, Evaluate x1, Human Lore x2, Read Chinese x2, Write Chinese x2, World Lore x1, Sleight x1, Devise x2, Disguise x2.

**Sorcerer Skills:** Read Chinese x1, Write Chinese x1, World Lore x1, Sleight x1, Ceremony x1, Enchant or Summon x1, Intensity x2, Kenjutsu Attack and Parry x1, Spells x6 (allot the percentiles among known spells as desired).

**Magic:** ninja cannot become acolytes of Shinto or Buddhism, because their trade causes them to be continually befouled. However, they have access to spirit magic at the normal Nihonese rate of 1d3 per five years or fraction thereof the character has aged past 15. Ninja that are sorcery specialists can learn sorcery at the rate of 1d3 sorcery spells, plus 1 for every 5 years or fraction thereof he is older than 20.

**Equipment:** Ninjato and scabbard, ninja garb, clothing for disguise, 9 shuriken, doka, 100 mon in devices, 100 mon in goods, 50 mon in coin.







# Gamemastering

This supplement provides much material to aid the gamemaster as he strives to communicate the mood and mystery of Nihon to his players.

There is a large map included in the NINJA box. This is the Players Map. It indicates the best knowledge of Nihon available to a common person. Additional information will be gained through player experience, and the game will be enhanced if the best artist among the players charts their adventures right on this map.

Most adventure in Nihon will be confined to the Home Islands, for the Nihonese are a people centered on themselves and their land. Besides providing more information on things the player characters should know (which can be given to them as needed), this supplement provides the gamemaster with some information about other parts of the world which may intrude upon the serene harmony of Nihon as it floats in the middle of the sea.

## The Nihonese

The Nihonese are an inward-looking people. Their knowledge of the world outside the Home Islands is sketchy at best. The accuracy of this knowledge decreases as distance from the islands increases, dissolving at last into legendary and mythical realms beyond the sea.

Within the Home Islands civilization dwells. Everyone, even the creatures of the otherworld, speaks Japanese. Most of the lowlands are heavily populated, but even in provinces densely littered with villages there are secluded places, hidden valleys, and lonely mountains which hide mystery and strange beings.

Beyond the Home Islands dwell humans with strange customs and languages. Most are uncultured and barbaric in their actions, speech, attitudes, and personal habits. Strange monsters dwell in these lands as well. The sea itself hides many mysterious realms beneath its wave-capped surface. The Nihonese have little time for these foreign places but occasional adventurers return home with tales of high adventure and glorious deeds to spark the imaginations of youth.

Your campaign-story can involve all areas, from the known of the Home Islands and nearby lands to the unknown of mysterious and mythical places like Yomi and the Dragon Realm.

## The Nihonese Year

The following table provides a guideline to the seasons and weather of Nihon. Sample temperatures and rainfall amounts given approximate conditions prevailing across most of Honshu island. Temperatures are generally warmer in the south (Kyushu rarely seeing sub-freezing weather) and colder in the north (Ezo experiencing freezing temperatures well into spring and early in fall).

Except in winter the north is generally drier than the rest of Nihon, especially the very humid Pacific coast regions. Most snow is seen in the north and along the Japan Sea coast. Precipitation is generally longer and heavier in the rainy seasons. Note that Nihonese seasons are of unequal length.

### Cycle of Years

Nihonese measure the passing of years in two different ways. First, years are grouped into nengo, or eras. A new nengo begins when a new emperor is enthroned or at imperial decree to mark an event of great significance. Second, the years follow a cycle of twelve, with each year named after the animals of the zodiac. The 12-year cycle is part of a 60-year cycle. The 12-year cycles go through each of the five elements to complete a 60-year cycle.

### Cycle of Hours

Nihonese days are divided into twelve equal intervals called toki or "hours." Like years toki are named after the animals of the zodiac. Each toki was divided equally in two, thus creating the "greater" and "lesser" hours of a given animal.



### Animals of the Zodiac

animal	start of toki	animal	start of toki
Rat	11 pm	Horse	11 am
Ox	1 am	Goat	1 pm
Tiger	3 am	Monkey	3 pm
Hare	5 am	Rooster	5 pm
Dragon	7 am	Dog	7 pm
Serpent	9 am	Boar	9 pm

# Scanning the World

The world known to the player characters is mostly described in the *Players Book* and on the *Players Map*. Some additional material appears below which can be released to the players as required by the campaign-story. Other material is more for the gamemaster's information. A good guideline is this: if a place is on the *Players Map*, the information given below is commonly known.

## Biwa-ko

Lake Biwa is a large (674 square kilometers) freshwater lake which nearly divides the island of Honshu. It is said to have been formed by the small earthquake that birthed Fuji-zan in the fifth year of the emperor Kōrei (286 B.C.). It is renowned for its scenery and is sung by poets.

## China

China is a major source and inspiration for Japanese culture. At various periods trade between China and Japan was encouraged or outlawed. Even when trade was illegal, lords of Kyushu and the inland sea as well as pirates and buccaneers (wako) continued to conduct trading missions, outright piracy, and viking-style plunder raids to keep up the supply of goods such as rice, artworks, silk, and copper coins. When trade was legal, China eagerly sought Japanese craftwork, swords, sulfur, pearls, and gold.

## Dragon Realm

The Dragon Realm is a mysterious and magical land beneath the sea. It may be entered from almost anywhere along the shores of Nihon, with the proper guide. Time passes more slowly there and visitors often return to find all they once knew gone in the passage of time. Different parts of the Dragon Realm are ruled by the various sea gods, great kami who are almost always accompanied by a ryu (dragon) and can take the shape of one.

## Edo

Originally a small fishing village, Edo became important for its central location on the Kanto plain. It was chosen by Tokugawa Ieyasu to be the capital of his shogunate. It grew rapidly and remains a major city. It is now known as Tokyo. In Nihon, Edo is still a castle town of minor but growing importance. It qualifies as a small city.

## Ezo

Ezo (Hokkaido) is the northern-most of the main Japanese islands. It was not until the fifteenth century that Takeda Nobuhiro led a major colonization attempt, although Abe-No-Hisafu had established a garrison there in 662. Nobuhiro's descendant Matsumae Yoshihiro was recognized as the legitimate ruler in 1604. In Nihon, Hisafu's garrison is lost in legend and the island is a stronghold of hostile Ainu and a haven for rebellious samurai, self-styled ninja princelings, wild hermits, and mysterious magicians. The climate is similar to the northern parts of central Europe and is noted for very cold winters with deep snowfalls.

## Fuji-zan

Mount Fuji is the best known and, at 3776 meters, the highest mountain in Japan. It is a dormant volcano whose elegantly shaped cone has inspired innumerable artworks. The mountain may be seen from a great many miles away across the Kanto plain or from sea. Pilgrims come from all over Nihon to climb the mountain, an arduous task, and honor the great kami of the mountain. The climbing season runs only from July through August due to the cold temperatures and high winds prevailing on the upper slopes through the rest of the year. The annual festival of the kami is held on August 26.

## Gifu

Gifu is the capital of Mino province and a major castle town controlling the flow of traffic at a bottleneck on the major east-west roads between Kyoto and Kamakura. The lord of the town has considerable influence and his castle is one of the best fortified in Nihon. Gifu is a medium city.

## Goto

This group of islands lies northwest of Kyushu. They fall under the jurisdiction of Hizen province.

## Hakata

Hakata is a port city in Chikuzen province. It was the site of both Mongol invasions. Hakata qualifies as a small city.

## Hida Mountains

The Hida Mountains are one of the three groups in the chain of mountains known as the "Japanese Alps." It is reputed to be haunted by all manner of legendary and supernatural beings.

## Hiei-zan

Mount Hiei is located north and east of Kyoto, within easy travel, on the boundary of Yamashiro and Omi provinces. Its forested sides hide numerous Buddhist monasteries, schools, and temples. According to some counts there are 3,000 religious sites here, including the principal temples of many of the largest sects; most notably Enryaku-ji, principal temple of the Tendai sect. Many of the Hiei-zan temples, including Enryaku-ji, maintain

sohei (monk-soldiers). These warriors and monks periodically descend on Kyoto in large numbers carrying with them a mikoshi or portable shrine. On the way they accost passersby for donations and exhort them to greater faith. As often as not such activities have a political goal: the masters of the sohei recall them and end the turmoil they cause when the bureaucracy complies with priestly demands or rescinds decrees displeasing to the temple lords.

Often the monks left the mikoshi in front of some official's residence (or even the palace) and went back to Hiei-zan to wait. It was a kind of reverse blackmail: the monks sat back and dared the townspeople to defile their mikoshi and thus call down the wrath of the appropriate deities. Usually the government officials would back down under the strain and give in to the monk's demands. Large Shinto shrines, such as Hachiman, also occasionally pulled this trick in Kyoto.

## Home Islands

The Home Islands consist of Honshu, Kyushu, and Shikoku.



## Honshu

Honshu is the largest of the Japanese isles, comprising about 61% of the land surface of the chain. The bulk of the Japanese population resides here. It is the center of the country's politics as well as its intellectual, artistic, and martial life. The northern part is almost wilderness. Even those Japanese who dwell there are considered somewhat wild and slightly uncivilized. Ainu still live here and strange beings are said to abound.

## Iki

The island is an independent holding and often a haven for wako. It was devastated by the Mongols in 1274 and again in 1281.

## Inland Sea

The Inland Sea, or "sea within channels" (Seto Naikai), is composed of the waterways connecting Honshu, Kyushu, Shikoku, and the innumerable small islands between them. It has marvelous fishing grounds and is major thoroughfare for seaborne traffic and trade. The many small islands provide excellent bases and ambush sites for pirates and buccaneers who harass shipping. The straits of Naruto between Awaji and Shikoku are notorious for giant whirlpools caused by riptides (or perhaps dragons).



## Ise

Ise is a "holy city" of Shinto. The city itself primarily exists to house and feed the pilgrims who come to worship at the Grand Shrine. The Grand Shrine is the most ancient and venerated of all Shinto holy places. By tradition, the buildings are entirely rebuilt every 20 years. The shrine is primarily dedicated to Amaterasu and the imperial ancestors, but facilities and full-time priests for worshippers of all major and minor Shinto deities are present. The city qualifies as a medium city.

## Japan (Nihon)

Japan is composed of four main islands: Ezo (Hokkaido), Honshu, Shikoku, and Kyushu; and almost 4000 smaller islands. The chain stretches from Ezo in the sub-frigid zone to the southernmost reaches of Kyushu in the sub-tropical zone. About 71% of the land surface is mountainous. The terrain is characterized by numerous small lakes, volcanoes (active and dormant), ravines, steep gorges, narrow valleys, and hot springs. The mountain chains run along the lengths of the islands dividing them into two regions: the western sides facing the Japan Sea and the eastern sides facing the Pacific Ocean. Hot, humid summers are the rule, except in Ezo where it never gets very warm. Along the Japan Sea, residents suffer dry summers and cold, windy winters with heavy snows. Pacific Ocean currents and the Inland Sea provide a moderating effect on temperatures for the eastern sides and Shikoku.

## Kamakura

Kamakura was the second shogunal capital of Japan. From the small village selected by Minamoto Yoritomo it grew to a metropolis. It is said that at its height in the thirteenth century, the population exceeded a million people. It was burned and rebuilt several times, the last in 1526 when almost nothing was left but ruins. Important religious sites include the Great Buddha of Kamakura, dedicated in 1252, and the largest shrine devoted to Hachiman (*RuneQuest* minor temple). In Nihon, the shogunate appoints a deputy ruler to reside in Kamakura and administer the Kanto plain and the northern reaches. This is a very powerful post and holders have occasionally revolted against the shogun. Kamakura qualifies as a metropolis.

## Kanto Plain

The Kanto Plain is the principal "breadbasket" of Japan. It is the most extensive stretch of flat land in the islands and is well watered. The great farming resources provide great wealth for the master of the Kanto.

## Karafuto

Karafuto is a large island north of Hokkaido. In the period of Nihon, it is largely uninhabited.

## Korai

Korai (after 1392 it was called Chosen) is the Japanese name for Korea, a neighboring country and sometimes enemy. The legendary empress Jingo led an invasion which forced tribute from Korean kings, but all tribute was abandoned before the rise of the samurai. In historical times, Toyotomi Hideyoshi ordered two massive invasions (1592 and 98) of the country as a first step to invading and conquering China. Neither succeeded in subduing the Koreans and the second was aborted by Hideyoshi's death.

## Koya-zan

Koya-zan is a mountain in Kii province. Kobo Daishi, importer of the Shingon sect, retired there in 816 and founded the monastery of Kongobu-ji. This temple is the headquarters of the sect and a feudal power in the province. Many sohei are maintained, much to the distress of the local nobles.

## Kyoto

Kyoto, founded in 794 A.D. as Heian-kyo, was site of the imperial court from 794-1868. The Ashikaga shoguns ruled from the city in the years 1192-1333. The city was destroyed and rebuilt many times due to natural disasters and military activity. Kyoto, a victim of the tumultuous civil wars, declined as Edo grew in importance under the Tokugawa shogunate. In Nihon, both the emperor and the shogun reside in Kyoto. The heart of the city is a planned community with regular streets, beautiful parks, elaborate estates, and peaceful temples and shrines. The emperor lives in a great palace and many imperial nobles and powerful samurai maintain mansions here. The shogun rules his government from a small castle located within the city. Intrigue runs deep in the city within both the imperial court and the bakufu. It is said that at night, the only people met on the street are intriguers and ninja. Despite this mundane side, Kyoto is a center of artistic achievement and religious activity. Kyoto qualifies as a metropolis.

## Kyushu

Kyushu is the southwesternmost of the main islands and the closest to Korea and China. It is said that on Mount Takachido, Ninigi-No-Mikoto descended to earth. His grandson Jimmu-tenno set out from this island to conquer the rest of Japan. Kyushu is the second-most important of the Japanese islands. It was the staging point of both Jingo Kogo's invasion of Korea in 200, and of Hideyoshi's first attempt in 1592. Hakata Bay bore the brunt of both Mongol invasion attempts. It was on Kyushu that the first Europeans landed in 1542. The lords of Kyushu are powerful samurai often at odds with imperial or bakufu decrees which the locals deem to be ill-informed, unwise, or too restrictive. Some of the lords gather much of their wealth from sea-borne trade, often with a little piracy or overseas raiding on the side.

## Minobu

Minobu is a town in Kai province. It is notable as the location of the principal temple of the Hokke-shu, or Nichiren, sect. Its founder, Nichiren, was an outspoken critic of rival sects. Minobu qualifies as a town.

The Hokke sect is one of the few Buddhist sects in Nihon that violently opposes other sects on doctrinal disputes (as opposed to political ones). A Hokke adherent cannot worship at other Buddhist temples.

## Nagasaki

Nagasaki, at the outer edge of the Kyushu in the province of Hizen, is one of the major ports of the China trade. From the thirteenth to the sixteenth century, it was under the rule of the Nagasaki family from which it takes its name. In historical Japan it became the principal site of trade with the Europeans, which led to it being made an imperial city under direct government control in 1587. Its importance increased further when, in 1640, all foreign trade (by then almost exclusively Dutch and Chinese traders) was restricted to this port. The city declined somewhat when foreign trade was banned altogether in 1859. Nagasaki qualifies as a medium city.

## Nagoya

Nagoya is the capital of Owari province and a major port. It qualifies as a large city.

## Nara

Nara was the capital of Japan from 710 to 784. When the capital was moved to Kyoto, the city remained important as a religious center. Nara is the Buddhist equivalent of Ise as a site of pilgrimage. The great Daibutsu (Dainichi), the largest Buddhist statue in Nihon (16 meters), is housed in the largest wooden building in the world at Todai-ji, headquarters of the Kegon sect. The principal temples of the Hosso sect (Kofuku-ji) and the Shotoku sect (Horyu-ji) are also located here. Kofuku-ji maintains sohei troops to further its ends in civil matters as well as to support its religious rivalry against the Tendai sect. On a hill east of the city is Kasuga-jinga, an ancient Shinto shrine (*RuneQuest* minor temple) dedicated to imperial ancestors. Nara qualifies as a small city.

## Nihon

Nihon is the Japan of Alternate Earth.

## Oki

Oki is a four-island group north of Izumo province. It was the site of exile for emperor Go-Toba in 1221 and emperor Go-Daigo in 1332.

## Osaka

Osaka is the capital of Settsu province. It was the imperial residence from 313 to 342, 645 to 654, and 744 to 748. Osaka serves as the port for Kyoto. In 1583 Hideyoshi selected the city as his residence and built an immense castle. His son and heir was besieged in that castle in 1615 by Tokugawa Ieyasu. Osaka qualifies as a metropolis.

Osaka was known as Naniwa in the early days. In the 16th century it was the headquarters of the Ishiyama Honganji, a radical Buddhist sect similar in style to the Hokke (see above, under "Minobu"). It appealed to the lower classes and held large tracts of land in a kind of proletarian dictatorship. The sect was wiped out by Hideyoshi in 1581, who rebuilt Osaka Castle on the ruins of the Honganji.

## Otsu

Otsu is the capital of Omi province and was the imperial residence from 667 to 673. Northwest of the city is the principal temple of the Jimon branch of the Tendai sect. The temple, Onjo-ji or Mii-dera, maintains sohei troops and an intense rivalry with the Enryaku-ji temple on Hiei-zan. Otsu qualifies as small city.

## Ryukyu Islands

These are the islands between Kyushu and Takasago but do not include the northern group (Satsuma-shoto) which belongs to Setsuma and Satsuma provinces. The islands form three groups which are, north to south: Okinawa, Miyako, and Yaeyama. The islands enter Japanese history in 1187 with mention of the crowning of a new king, Shunten, said to have been the son of Minamoto Tametomo. An embassy from the king of the islands was sent to Kyoto in 1451 and the practice was continued to the beginning of the seventeenth century. The end of the embassies prompted an invasion in 1609 by the daimyo of Kagoshima (Shimazu Iehisa), who conquered them and annexed Okinawa. China had laid claim to the islands as well since the fifteenth century.

## Sado

Sado is a large island off the west coast of Honshu. It was a place of exile for former emperor Jintoku in 1221 and the priest Nichiren in 1271. Sado is also noted for its gold mines, worked by prison labor, which were discovered in 1601. The largest settlement qualifies as a town.

## Sakai

Sakai is the chief city of Izumi province. Throughout Japan's middle ages it was the principal port. Sakai qualifies as a large city.

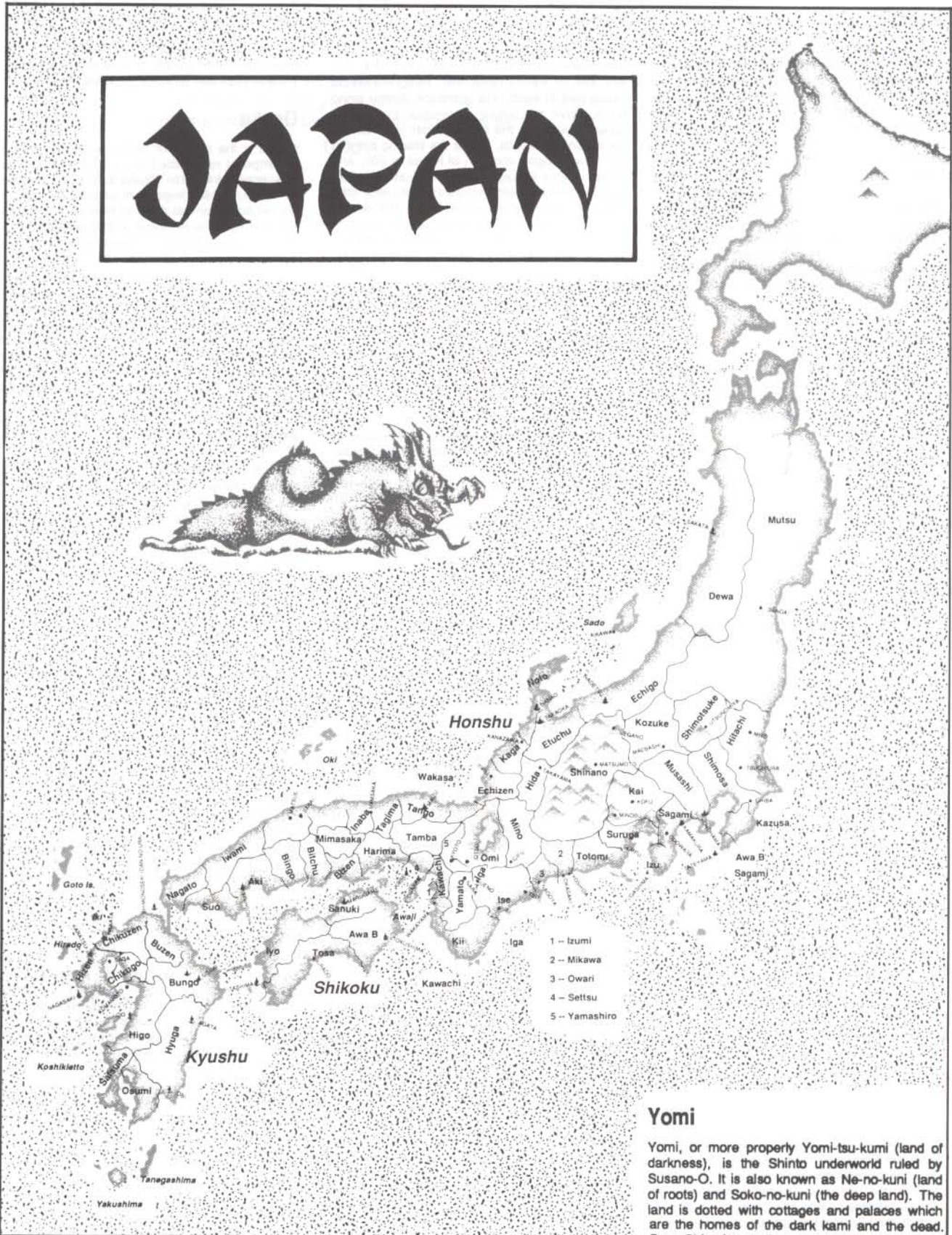
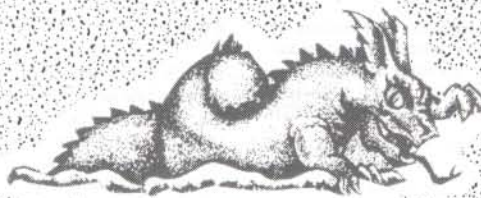
## Shikoku

Shikoku is the most densely populated of the major islands of Japan. Politics on the island follow those of Honshu. The island is the site of a major pilgrimage route, a circuit of 88 temples dedicated to Kobo Daishi (Kukai), founder of the Shingon sect in Japan.

## Takasago

Takasago is known as Taiwan by the Chinese and Formosa by the Portuguese.

# JAPAN



## Yomi

Yomi, or more properly Yomi-tsu-kumi (land of darkness), is the Shinto underworld ruled by Susano-O. It is also known as Ne-no-kuni (land of roots) and Soko-no-kuni (the deep land). The land is dotted with cottages and palaces which are the homes of the dark kami and the dead. Pure Shintoists believe the spirits of the dead reside here. Most Nihonese view it as a place of sojourn (assuming the Buddhist judge of the dead does not require a stay in the Buddhist hells) for a spirit until the next incarnation, usually 40 days. It is said that somewhere in Izumo province a sloping and winding road leads underground to Yomi. Near the shore of the province there is also reputed to be a bottomless abyss leading to Yomi.

## Tanegashima

Tanegashima Island belongs to Osumi province. It was here that Fernand Mendez Pinto, the first European to set foot in Japan landed. The lord of the island learned of firearms and began to manufacture copies. A gun became known as a tanegashima.

## Tsushima

Tsushima is a group of islands between Japan and Korea consisting of one large island and five smaller ones. The chief town Izu-no-hara qualifies as a small city. Tsushima was a center of wako (pirate-viking type) lords. The islands were devastated in the Mongol invasions of 1279 and 1281.

# Nihonese Civilisation

Nihon differs on several points from the general civilization rules given in *RuneQuest*. This section provides guidelines to those differences as well as expanding certain sections presented in the *RuneQuest* Gamemaster Book to include new material presented in this supplement.



## Economics

Nihonese economics work from a different base than those described in *RuneQuest*. For use in the game, however, only minimal changes need be made. These are noted in this section.

## Standards of Living

Each social class on Nihon maintains a certain standard of living. A standard of living is defined by the amount of money which a person is able to spend on him- or herself. A poor eta barely makes enough money to support himself. A daimyo is expected to maintain a certain lavish lifestyle, or risk losing his rank or honor.

These standards of living are generalized on the Standards of Living table. The first column of this table gives a range of average incomes, in mon (pennies) per year. If these values are compared to the values given in the *RuneQuest* Gamemasters Book, you will find that they differ at the higher levels. With its limited land area and teeming population, the average member of the nobility in Nihon rules more people than his European equivalent. Each supports roughly equal numbers of armed men, but whereas the western noble has some lower-quality troops (men-at-arms) the Nihonese lord has but samurai (higher quality but more expensive to maintain). The Nihonese social structure also places more obligations upon the noble's income. A poor daimyo with an income of 10,000 koku a year may maintain an army of 1500 samurai, which eats up much of his income (he also supports their wives and children), and he supports his hatamoto, other important retainers, and must give lavish gifts, etc. The amount he actually spends on himself places him at the same living standard as a *RuneQuest* count or earl.

The second column provides the *per diem* koku-value equivalents to the mon-value income. 1 koku is the quantity of rice needed to support 1 man for 1 year. Thus, the number in this column represents the number of men which that income can support.

The third column lists the various Nihonese social ranks which maintain each level of lifestyle.



## Coinage

Japan developed a money economy quite late. Before 1200 AD, almost all transaction was barter. All copper coins in use in Japan from circa 1200-1600 were of Chinese make.

In Nihon, a copper coin is called a *mon*. It is equivalent to a *RuneQuest* penny. Mon are about an inch in diameter and have a square hole in the center. They are often kept on a loop of string containing 100 or 1000 coins. The exchange rates for other metals are given below. Copper and silver coins are carried in a purse kept in a kimono sleeve or tucked into a sash. The larger, rectangular gold "coins" are carried in a folded paper wallet. Large transactions are usually made in silver or gold. The coinage is wrapped in heavy paper with the amount stamped on it along with the name of the mint or daimyo issuing it. Bullion is usually minted in long, narrow, 5-ounce bars.

### Coinage

- 360 mon (copper coin) = 1 koku
- 1 bu (silver coin) = 1 koku
- 1 koban (gold coin) = 3 koku
- 1 oban (gold coin) = 10 koku
- 1 oz. silver = 5 koku
- 1 oz. gold = 100 koku



## Standards of Living

Standard Incomes (mon)	Koku Values	Social Class Maintaining This Income
360	1	eta
1440	4	poor craftsman, farmer
1800	5	minimum stipend for a samurai
36,000	100	gokenin, poor kuge, rich crafter, jizamurai
360,000	1000	poor hatamoto, minor Buddhist temple, rich kuge or merchant
1,800,000	5000	official income of the Emperor
3,600,000	10,000	poor daimyo, major Buddhist temple
36,000,000	100,000	rich hatamoto
180,000,000	500,000	rich daimyo
360,000,000	1,000,000	shogun



## The Markets

The Weapons table indicates the costs (in mon) of various weapons in various markets. Following this table is a note about the availability of armor. Convert the armor costs given in *RuneQuest* to mon.

## Weapons

	wilds	rural	small city	large city
chain weapon	80	60	40	40
katana (m)	3750*	1250*	500	300
naginata (m)	1500*	600*	250	250
ninjato (m)	(900)*	(350)*	(150)	(150)
nunchaku	6	6	9	12
sai jitte (m)	200*	75*	50	50
shuriken	40	20	10	10
tessen (m)	375*	150*	60	60
tonfa	5	5	7	10
wakizashi (m)	90*	350*	150	125

\* 25% availability in the wilds; 50% in rural.  
 \*\* add cost of any attached weapon other than a simple weight.  
 (i) this item is not generally available - it must be purchased.

**Armor:** some types of armor are unavailable or in restricted use. Cuirbouilli, Bezainted, and Scale are unavailable. Plate is only found as a helm or cuirass. Mail is usually only found as sleeves (which may be worn separately), although head and body armors of mail are known. Ninja sometimes use mail suits which cover from head to toe but such armor is not generally available.

The equivalent names of armor pieces are:

- Greaves — Sune-ate
- Pants/Trews — Kobakama (Only leather available)
- Skirts — Haidate or plates from the Do
- Hauberk — Kusari-do
- Byrnie — Kusari-do
- Cuirass — Do
- Sleeves — Kote
- Coil/Hood — Kusari-kabuto
- Helm — Kabuto

## Anti-Ninja Methods

The threat of ninja activity has led the samurai to develop countermeasures to these dark agents of night. Some are passive, mechanical things while others rely on active human agents. Some of these methods work equally well as warnings of treachery or suspicious activity on the part of samurai or other folk.

### Nightingale Floors

Nightingale floors are cunningly designed patterns of warped wood intended to squeak when someone walks over them. Thus they reveal an intruder in the night by crying out his presence. In the game, a section of such flooring is given a rating for "creakiness." The rating is the INT x5 of the designer. Anyone simply walking across it with no attempt at stealth will cause the floor to creak. Anyone attempting to pass stealthily over it must successfully resist it with his Sneak skill. Failure results in the section of floor serving its purpose and making noise to alert sentries or wake sleepers. If a ninja suspects a nightingale floor, he may attempt to pad it with cloth (such as his obi or waist sash) and thus muffle any sound. Such padding reduces the rating of the floor by half.

### Bell Thread Attics

The crawlspaces of Nihonese homes, prime avenues of entrance for ninja, may be strung with a network of threads attached to bells. These bells will ring, alerting sentries or waking sleepers, if the threads are disturbed. Ninja attempting entrance must make both a Search and a Scan roll to note the presence of bell threads before blundering into them. Once they are discovered he must roll within his Escape skill or one-half his Dodge skill to avoid setting them off.



### Sentries

Sentries are the most common ninja warning device in Nihon. A ninja attempting to stealthily pass an alert guard must match his Sneak skill vs. the guard's Scan, just as described in *RuneQuest*. A lax guard may only use half his Scan to look for the ninja. Late hours and extended duty reduce vigilance. Reduce a guard's resistance value by 5% per hour of duty to represent loss of attention. Ninja may use general diversions (explosions or alarms in other parts of the building), minor distractions (a thrown pebble), or natural cover (rain or thunder) to hide his passage. Such diversions reduce an alert guard to an lax guard and an already lax guard may be passed with a simple Sneak skill success.

If the Ninja fails to sneak past a sentry, a successful Sneak roll allows his exact location to remain unsure. The guard is, however, aware of an intruder and may raise a general alarm. The sentry may now use his Search skill to locate the hiding ninja.

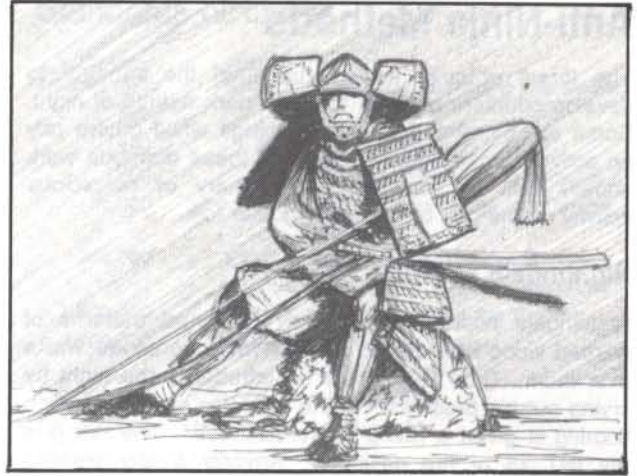


# Group Sizes

Nihon is densely populated. The distances between equivalent settlements are much less than those in basic *RuneQuest*. Settlement sizes are also larger. To determine which *RuneQuest* group classification is appropriate to a settlement, multiply the indicated population by 10.

Sorcerers are rare in Nihon, at least those practicing openly. Reduce the likelihood of finding one in a city. There are no colleges of sorcerers.

Every town and city in Nihon will have equivalent holy places for both Shinto and Buddhism. Many will have a large number of "sites" and "shrines," beyond those which would be expected from the settlement descriptions in *RuneQuest*.



# An Adventuring History

660 b.c. — Emperor Jimmu Tenno founds imperial family.

c. 200 A.D.— Empress Jingo leads an invasion of Korea, delaying the birth of her son by placing a stone in her girdle until the victory is won.

## Fifth Century

Revolt in Kyushu against military action to protect Japanese interests in Korea.

c. 405 — Introduction of writing from Korea.

## Sixth Century

552 — Introduction of Buddhism to Japan  
Elimination of Japanese power in Korea by the kingdom of Silla

## Seventh Century

604 — Chinese calendar is adopted.

607 — Prince Regent Shotoku sends first major embassy to China.

645-50 — Taika Reform: administrative reforms implemented.

## Eighth Century

702 — Taiho Code establishes a strong central government and a nationwide system of tax collection.

710 — Establishment of first fixed capital in Nara.

712-20 — Compilation of official records (*Kojiki*) and chronicles (*Nihonji*).

740 — Revolt of Fujiwara Hirotsugu against the monk Gembo, a power at the imperial court.

752 — The Great Buddha at Nara is dedicated.

764 — Defeat of Fujiwara Nakamaro; Empress Koken appoints abbot Dokyo as prime minister; first mention of block printing when the empress orders some sutras.

781 — Kammu, the fiftieth emperor, enthroned.

784 — Capital moved to Nagaoka by order of emperor Kammu

794 — Heian-kyo (Kyoto) founded as capital by order of Kammu, after divination discovers that Nagaoka had bad karma.

## Ninth Century

806 — Kudai founds Shigon sect of Buddhism; Saicho introduces Tendai sect from China.

808 — Plague and famine ravage Kyoto.

812 — Ainu of northern Honshu subjugated.

833-967 — Intrigues, struggles, and revolts involving the emperors, regents, and the dictators.

838 — Last embassy to Tang dynasty China.

858 — Establishment of Fujiwara regency.

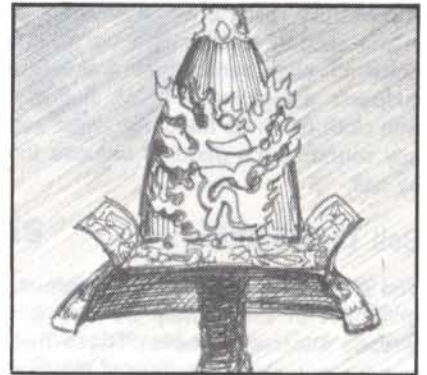
894 — Envoys to China abolished.

## Tenth Century

Wars in the north establish Minamoto and Taira as leading warrior clans.

939-40 — Revolt and execution of Taira Masakado; establishment of government by "cloistered" emperors.

960 — Half of Kyoto destroyed by major fire.



## Eleventh Century

c. 1002 — Sei Shonagon writes the *Pillow Book*, a revealing diary of Heian court life.

c. 1008 — Lady Murasaki writes *The Tale of Genji*, world's first novel.

1051-62 — Nine Year's War: Minamoto clan under Yoriyoshi eliminate the Abe clan in northern Honshu.

1058 — Fire consumes the imperial palace.

1083-87 — Three Year's War: Minamoto eliminate Kiyowara clan in northern Honshu.

1095 — Monks, sohei, and yamabushi first descend from Mount Hiei onto Kyoto.

## Twelfth Century

1156 — Taira Kiyomori (1118-81) takes control of civil government; Tomoe Gozen born.

1156-58 — Hogen War: Taira eliminate most of the Minamoto leaders.

1159-60 — Heiji War: Taira power expands; Taira Kiyomori (1118-81) becomes defacto ruler of Japan.

1170 — First recorded instance of formal seppuku.

c. 1174 — Minamoto Yoshitsune (1159-89) meets and defeats the yama-bushi Benkei (??-1189) on the Gojo bridge; the monk becomes a faithful follower.

1175 — Honen introduces the Jodo sect of Buddhism.

1177 — Fire guts central Kyoto.



**1180** — Frightened by an attempted coup, Kiyomori temporarily moves the seat of government to Fukuhara.

**1180-85** — Gempei War: Resurgent Minamoto clan destroy the Taira clan.

**1184** — Battle of Dan-no-ura: Yoshitsune (1159-89) masterminds the climactic defeat of the Taira forces.

**1184-89** — Jealous Yoritomo forces his brother Yoshitsune into exile; Yoshitsune commits seppuku rather than submit to Yoritomo's agents; legend claims he actually escaped to the mainland to become the conqueror known in the west as Genghis Khan (1157-1226).

**1192** — Minamoto Yoritomo (1147-99) appointed first shogun; headquarters his government at Kamakura.

## Thirteenth Century

**1202** — Eisai establishes first Zen Buddhist temple (Kennin-ji) in Kyoto.

**1205** — Hojo clan ascend to power as regents (shikken).

**1221** — Shokyu War: Retired emperors Go-Toba and Juntoku call for samurai to rebel against the Hojo regents; Hojo Yoshi-toki (1163-1224) defeats imperial partisans; ex-emperors exiled; many imperial estates confiscated; kuge's power broken.

**1224** — Yoshitoki assassinated by a servant of the imperial court.

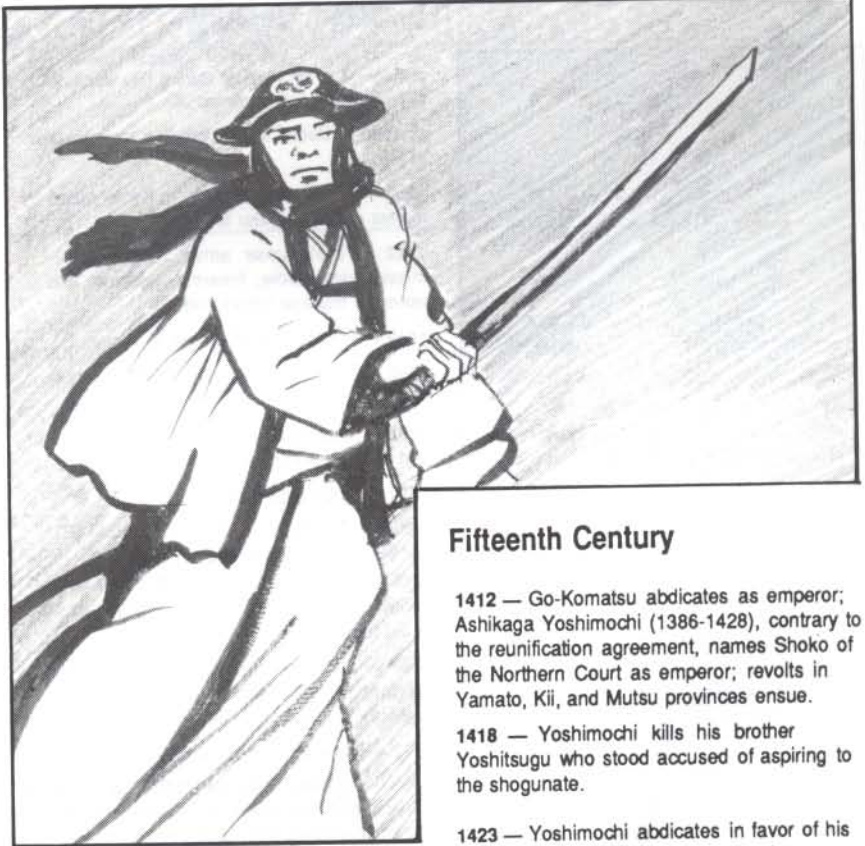
**1257** — Kamakura extensively damaged by earthquake.

**1268** — First of several Chinese envoys demands tribute from Japan.

**1274** — First Mongol invasion of Kyushu.

**1275** — Chinese envoys demanding tribute executed.

**1281** — Second Mongol invasion; Kublai Khan's forces devastated by the kamikaze (divine wind).



## Fifteenth Century

**1412** — Go-Komatsu abdicates as emperor; Ashikaga Yoshimochi (1386-1428), contrary to the reunification agreement, names Shoko of the Northern Court as emperor; revolts in Yamato, Kii, and Mutsu provinces ensue.

**1418** — Yoshimochi kills his brother Yoshitsugu who stood accused of aspiring to the shogunate.

**1423** — Yoshimochi abdicates in favor of his son Yoshikazu and becomes a monk.

**1426** — Yoshimochi resumes power upon the death of his son.

**1428** — As his first official act, shogun Ashikaga Yoshinori (1394-1441) names Go-Hanazono, a great grandson of Suko-Tenno of the Northern Court, as successor of Shoko-Tenno; the choice causes a revolt in Ise province.

**1441** — Akamatsu Mitsusuke, fearing court intriguers would convince the shogun to have him killed or dispossessed, has Yoshinori assassinated at a feast; Mitsusuke hunted down and cornered by loyalists, commits seppuku.

**1449** — Plague rages in Kyoto, killing a thousand people a day.

**1457** — Aino, led by Koshamai, rebel against Japanese encroachment in Ezo; aino crushed by Takeda Nobuhiro.

**1464** — Childless shogun Askikaga Yoshimasa (1435-90) names his brother Yoshimi (1439-91) as his heir; Yoshimi, at the time a priest, rejoins secular life.

**1465** — A son, Yoshihisa (1465-89), is born to the shogun Yoshimasa who plans to disinherit his brother.

**1467-77** — Onin War: central government collapses; Kyoto laid waste; imperial family impoverished; principal factions headed by Hosokawa Katsumoto (1430-73) supporting Yoshimi and Yamana Mochitoyo (1404-73) supporting Yoshihisa; fighting inconclusive.

**1474** — Yoshimasa abdicates as shogun in favor of Yoshihisa.

**1477** — Onin War ends in exhaustion of principal participants; fighting continues in the provinces.

## Fourteenth Century

Throughout century Noh drama flourishes under samurai patronage.

**1331-33** — Genko War: Emperor Go-Daigo begins rebellion against Hojo regency.

**1331** — Go-Daigo flees Kyoto seeking aid of Kusunoki Masashige (1294-1336); forces of Hojo Takatoki (1303-33) capture Go-Daigo.

**1332** — Go-Daigo exiled; returns the following year trying to raise new forces in Kyoto; Takatoki sends troops under Ashikaga Takauji (1305-58) who promptly declares for the emperor.

**1333** — Imperial forces under Nitta Yoshisada (1301-38) besiege and burn Kamakura; Takatoki commits seppuku.

**1335-36** — Takauji revolts against Go-Daigo and names himself shogun; Yoshisada and Masashige lead imperial forces in the see-saw battles.

**1336-92** — Rival imperial claimants: wars between the Northern Court in Kyoto (supported by the Ashikaga shoguns) and the Southern Court in Yoshino.

**1336** — Takauji deposes Go-Daigo and installs Komyo as emperor beginning the schism of imperial descent.

**1338** — Takauji headquarters bakufu in the Muromachi district of Kyoto.

**1342** — New era of trade with China begins.

**1346** — First woodblock-printed book.

**1365-72** — On Kyushu, clans under Imperial Prince Kanenaga battle Iwagawa clan and allies.

**1392** — Reunification of the imperial courts.

## Sixteenth Century

By mid-century the art of ikebana (flower arranging) is flourishing; during this century netsuke come into common use.

c. 1500 — Soami constructs first rock garden at Ryoan-ji.

1536 — All Nichiren temples in Kyoto razed by monks of the Enryaku temple.

1542 — Portuguese arrive; Christian missionaries follow; firearms, tobacco, and venereal disease introduced.

1549 — Francis Xavier arrives in Kyushu.

1568 — Nobunaga occupies Kyoto, razes major Buddhist temples.

1572 — Oda Nobunaga (1534-82) deposes last of the Ashikaga shoguns.

1582 — Nobunaga assassinated.

1582-90 — Toyotomi Hideyoshi (1536-98) eliminates opposition and becomes Kwampaku or military dictator (without connections to the Minamoto family line, he could not become shogun).

1587 — First edict proscribing the Christian religion; time of the famous "Sword Hunt," restricting weapons to the samurai.

1592 — Hideyoshi's first invasion of Korea.

1595 — Ishikawa Goemon (1558-1595), after a 21-year criminal career as "the Robin Hood of Japan" captured and, with his son Ichiro, executed by being boiled in oil.

1597-98 — Hideyoshi's second invasion of Korea; ends abruptly upon Hideyoshi's death.

## Seventeenth Century

Throughout the century Ukiyoe painting becomes more popular.

c. 1600 — Goldfish introduced from China.

1600 — Tokugawa Ieyasu (1542-1616) smashes opposition at the battle of Sekigahara; Will Adams (known as Anjin), pilot of the ship Erasmus, stranded on the shores of Bungo province.

1603 — Ieyasu establishes Tokugawa shogunate in Edo (Tokyo); O-Kuni, maid servant at Izumo Taisha shrine in Kyoto, organizes and "stars" in first kabuki performance.

1605 — Ieyasu abdicates as shogun in favor of his son Hidetada.

1614-15 — Siege of Osaka castle; Ieyasu eliminates Toyotomi heir and consolidates power.

1624 — Spaniards expelled from Japan.

1635 — "Alternate Attendance" of daimyo in Edo instituted.

1636 — Suppression of Christianity.

1639 — Portuguese expelled.

1640 — All other foreigners expelled.

1643 — Miyamoto Musashi (1584-1645), most famed swordsman of Japan, retires to a cave to write *Go Rin No Sho* (Book of Five Rings).

1651 — Shogun bans kabuki.

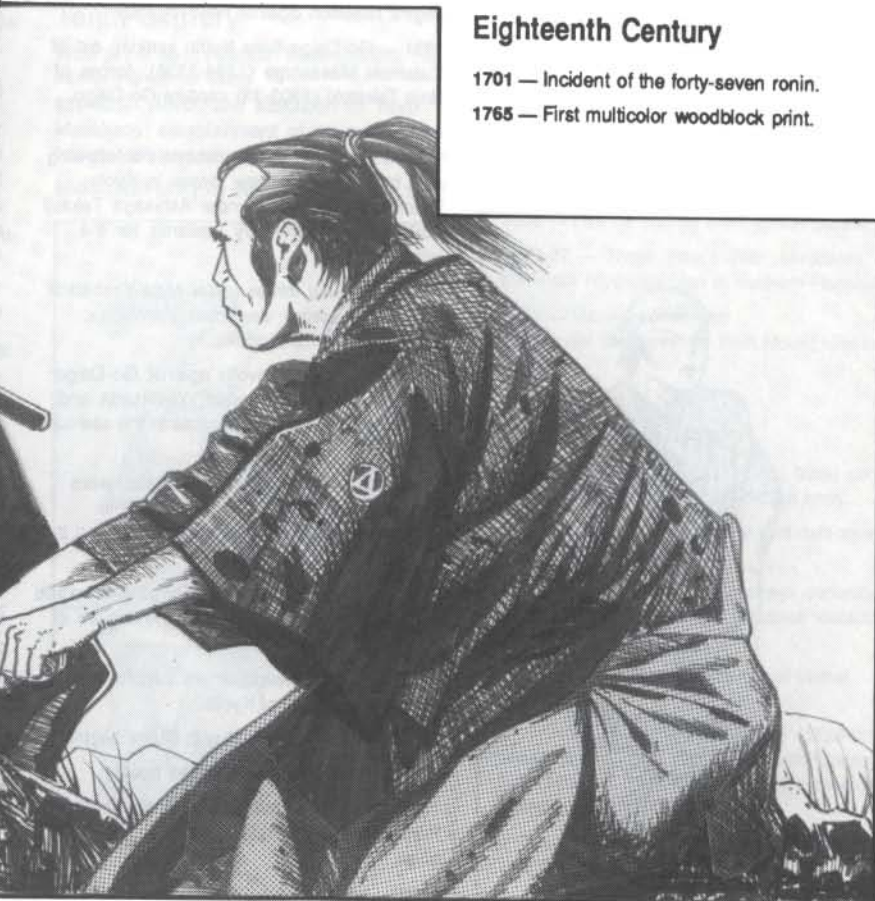
1653 — Shogun allows re-opening of kabuki theaters but requires all performers to be adult males.

c. 1675 — First haiku composed by Matsuo Bashu.

## Eighteenth Century

1701 — Incident of the forty-seven ronin.

1765 — First multicolor woodblock print.



# Creatures

Many of the creatures described in *RuneQuest* are not commonly found in Nihon. Remember, though, that samurai travelers will discover many creatures in other lands that never existed in Nihon. Thus, emissaries to a European court might very well come across a tribe of centaurs in Greece or a polar bear in Scandinavia. The gamemaster may place a creature in an abnormal environment to suit a special purpose in a scenario.

Like most primitive peoples, the samurai hold a superstitious awe of the misty hills and unknown waters that surround and divide the isles upon which are sited their fiefs and cities. Mountains host oni, tengu, and shikome. The great girdling ocean hides ryu, kojim, and other mysterious creatures. These things do not live in faraway places like the heavens of the great *kami*. They live here, in the world of men, past the rice paddies and beaches. Their homes are called haunted places, and the creatures are, in some way, magical and inhuman.

Many of the magical creatures that dwell in Nihon are not as clearly defined as in many fantasy games. Sometimes the same mysterious functions are performed by the same creature under different names in different provinces.

Any being apparently more powerful or knowledgeable than a man may be termed a *kami*, whether it is corporeal or not. Thus almost any being that interacts with humans might be termed a *kami*.

*Bakemono* is another term widely used to name the creatures of Nihon. Any creature evidencing supernatural characteristics or powers can be described by the term.

*Oni* as a term is used much like *bakemono*. Some translators use them interchangeably.

None of these interpretations of the creatures are wrong. The primitive people who experience spirit world beings do not categorize them neatly, much as this would please the scholars of later eras. The Mistaken Identity Table presents some of these creatures and several of their guises, cross-referencing the more important versions to their analogs. In these descriptions, the important factor is whether the creature is incomplete (but often worshipped) or complete (unworshipped).

## Supernatural Powers

Many of the mysterious creatures and beings of Nihon have variations on one or more of six general supernatural powers. The great *kami* and Buddhas control all of these powers. Less powerful beings, such as *shojo*, possess only limited abilities. The description of each power is accompanied by suggestions for its use gleaned from the folktales and legends of Japan.

Within the text of some of the creature descriptions, specific forms and combinations of these powers have

been assigned under the entry for Magic Powers. These specific powers are not defined in game terms and are provided as gamemaster suggestions. The gamemaster should use the suggestions as he sees fit, so long as the elements of the story mesh together in a plausible way. However, there are no absolute laws about how a magical creature must be described.

These powers are similar in use to spirit magic, with two notable differences. First, the creature's ability with its powers is always 100%. There is no need to try for a success roll. Second, use of the power never subtracts from the creature's magic points. If you wish to give a character a chance of not being affected by a curse or a blessing, match the magic points of the creature against those of the adventurer just as you would do with any normal magic. The creature does not have to sacrifice POW to any god to gain these powers, and will always be able to use them. Additional methods of avoiding a creature's magic may be provided in the creature description.

If the creature knows spirit magic, its use of that form of magic is governed by the same rules as anyone else's use of spirit magic (requiring a casting success roll and expenditure of magic points).

Many of the supernatural effects described below are appropriate for providing dramatic background, but do not let your dramatic effects destroy the adventurers by accident. It is one thing to lose a few fatigue points to the intense cold of a Yuka Onna, but quite another when the whole party drops from exhaustion and dies.

Remember, as gamemaster you do not have to know the exact game mechanics which your NPC creature uses to affect adventurers. What is important is that you describe an event in such a way as to convey the mood of the otherworld of Nihon.



**Environmental Effects:** Weather control is a very common supernatural effect. In dramatic moments clouds cover the sun; the temperature drops; winds rise; a fog envelops the traveler. There may be rolling clouds, flashes of lightning, bursts of fire, blasts of hail, and earth tremblings. There may be a moment of wrong colors, strange whistlings or ringing sounds, visible auras around magical beings or things, echoes of voices, or the sounds of distant laughter or tears. The air may carry the odor of smoke, the stench of corpses, or the pungent scent of incense. Glimpses of the Other Side seem dreamlike to the humans who see them, covered with a magical glamour.

## Creatures Found In Nihon

The following *RuneQuest* creatures can be found in Nihon. An asterisk (\*) or a Japanese name in parentheses indicates that the description is expanded in the discussions below.

Baboon (Saru), Brown Bear, Cattle, Chonchon (Rokurokubi), Crocodilian, Cult Spirit, Deer, Demon, Disease Spirit, Dog, Dragon (Ryu), Dryad\*, Elemental\*, Ghost\*, Giant, Hag (Uba), Hawk, Healing Spirit, Hellion, Horse, Human, Insect Swarm, Intellect Spirit, Lion (Shishi), Rock Lizard\*, Magic Spirit, Octopus (Tako), Orc (Shikome), Passion Spirit, Power Spirit, Python (Mi), Sea Serpent, Shark, Spell Spirit, Stoorworm (Oruchi), Tiger, Whale, Wolf, Wraith.

## Creatures Not Found in Nihon

The following *RuneQuest* creatures will not normally be found in Nihon.

Allosaurus, Giant Ant, Bandersnatch, Basilisk, Polar Bear, Giant Beetle, Behemoth, Brontosaur, Broo, Centaur, Chimpanzee, Duck, Dwarf, Elephant, Elf, Fachan, Ghoul, Gorgon, Gorilla, Grampus, Griffin, Halfling, Harpy, Headhanger, Jabberwock, Lamia, Manticore, Minotaur, Mummy, Naiad, Nymph, Ogre, Oread, Panther, Satyr, Skeleton, Cliff Toad, Cave Troll, Dark Troll, Undine, Unicorn, Vampire, Werewolf, Wyrm, Wyvern, Zombie.

## Mistaken Identity Table

Man constantly names and renames creatures and places. All of the creatures described in this chapter have been mistaken for something else at one time or another. Neighboring provinces often have different names for the same creature. The list below provides a summary of the more common names given to some of these creatures by man.

A creature listed in all **CAPITAL LETTERS** is described later in this chapter. The listing *see:* directs you to other entries which bear some relation to the creature. The *also called:* entry lists the beings which the creature is most often mistaken for.

<b>BAKEMONO</b>	<i>see:</i> mujina, rokurokubi. <i>also called:</i> oni, spirit.
<b>BAKU</b>	<i>also called:</i> kami.
<b>BUDDHA</b>	<i>see:</i> Bosatsu. <i>also called:</i> kami, Myo-O.
<b>BOSATSU</b>	<i>see:</i> Buddha. <i>also called:</i> kami, Myo-o, Ten.
<b>Dryad</b>	<i>also called:</i> kami.
<b>Elementals</b>	<i>also called:</i> bakemono, kami, oni.
<b>GAKI</b>	<i>see:</i> ghosts. <i>also called:</i> yokai, ghosts, shoryo.
<b>Ghosts</b>	<i>also called:</i> gaki, specters, wraiths.
<b>HENGEYOKAI</b>	<i>also called:</i> kitsune, tenuki, kami, oni, uba.
<b>KAMI</b>	<i>also called:</i> Buddha, Bosatsu, Myo-o, Ten, oni, uba, just about anything else.
<b>KAPPA</b>	<i>also called:</i> bakemono, nushi.
<b>KIRIN</b>	
<b>Kitsune</b>	<i>see:</i> hengeyokai. <i>also called:</i> kami, tenuki.
<b>KOJIN</b>	<i>also called:</i> bakemono, oni.

## LIVING SPIRITS

*see:* ghosts.

*also called:* yokai, gaki, specters, wraiths.

## MI

## MUKADE

## MUJINA

*see:* bakemono.

## MYO-O

*also called:* Buddha, kami, Ten.

## NUSHI

*also called:* uba, kami, bakemono, oni, swamp folk.

## ONI

*also called:* bakemono, ghosts, kami.

## OROCHI

*also called:* ryu, tatsu, kami, oni.

## ROKUROKUBI

*see:* bakemono.  
*also called:* hitobar.

## RYU

*also called:* tatsu, kami, wani.

## SARU

## SHIKOME

*also called:* oni, bakemono.

## SHISHI

*also called:* Ten.

## SHOJO

*also called:* kami, bakemono.

## Spirit

*see:* kami.

## TAKO

*also called:* bakemono, kami, oni.

## Tatsu

*also called:* ryu, oni, wani.

## TEN

*also called:* Buddha, Myo-o, kami.

## TENGU

*also called:* bakemono, kami, ghosts.

## Tenuki

*see:* hengeyokai.  
*also called:* kami, kitsune.

## UBA

*see:* hag.  
*also called:* yama-uba, nushi, kami, oni.

## Wani

*also called:* sea serpent, crocodile, ryu, tatsu, kami, oni.

## YUKI ONNA

*also called:* kami, yamauba, uba, snow woman.



**Supernatural Characteristics or Skills:** The supernatural creatures are often fantastically powerful in one or more skills or characteristics. Many of those who engage in physical contact, like Myo-O, are incredibly strong, even if they are small. Those which probe the minds and memories of humans have a very high INT characteristic and high Lore skills. If the creatures are fighters, they are probably experts at their weapons. Some creatures may possess immaterial forms, yet might have a freezing touch which Taps like sorcery. Many beings are simply immune to all edged and pointed weapons. Others have incredible armor which allows them to be bashed about, but barely pierced. Some have awesome CON, which makes them shrug off deep impales. Most of them can regenerate hit points or magic points lost through damage.

**Shapechanging:** This is an ability common to many gods, spirits, and powerful magicians. In general, the precise powers and abilities of a shapechanger will become those of whatever creature form he or she assumes. An uba who becomes a cat will have the agility and senses of a cat, albeit guided by her own intelligence. More powerful shapeshifters such as kami and Buddhas simply take on an appearance, retaining all their normal abilities and powers. Sorcerous shapechanging, such as the Disguise spell, changes appearance only and never results in a change of abilities; while other forms, such as Change (species) to

(species), do not allow retention of any abilities save SIZ. Shapechanging is tiring, however, and few beings may maintain a shape indefinitely. Many creatures return to their own shape to sleep. Animal shapechangers often fail at a complete transformation, leaving their natural tail or some other indication of their true nature which must be disguised by clothing. Some shapechangers may take the form of inanimate objects, retaining their senses and the ability to return to their own form at will.

**Ability to Disappear:** Sometimes a creature, especially one of the kami and Buddhist spirits, simply pops out of mundane existence. Others turn invisible at will.

**Curse:** Most troubles can be traced to supernatural effects. Mischievous kami or oni can sour milk, cause sickness, lame horses, mildew cloth, rot food, and miscarry calves. Angry spirits cause death, make unreasonable demands for sacrifice, and send malicious spells against upright heroes. Magicians can cast the evil eye with their last living sight.

**Bless:** Spirits can be favorable. They can improve the productivity of rice paddies, cause small windfalls of cash, or recover lost goods. Especially pleased spirits might improve a person's lot through influencing a lord to increase a stipend, bring fertility to a barren couple, or provide magical artifacts to aid an adventurer.

## Creature Descriptions

These descriptions, derived from Japanese mythology and folklore, do not include every spirit and creature available. It does present a sampling of creatures which may interact with adventurers during a campaign.

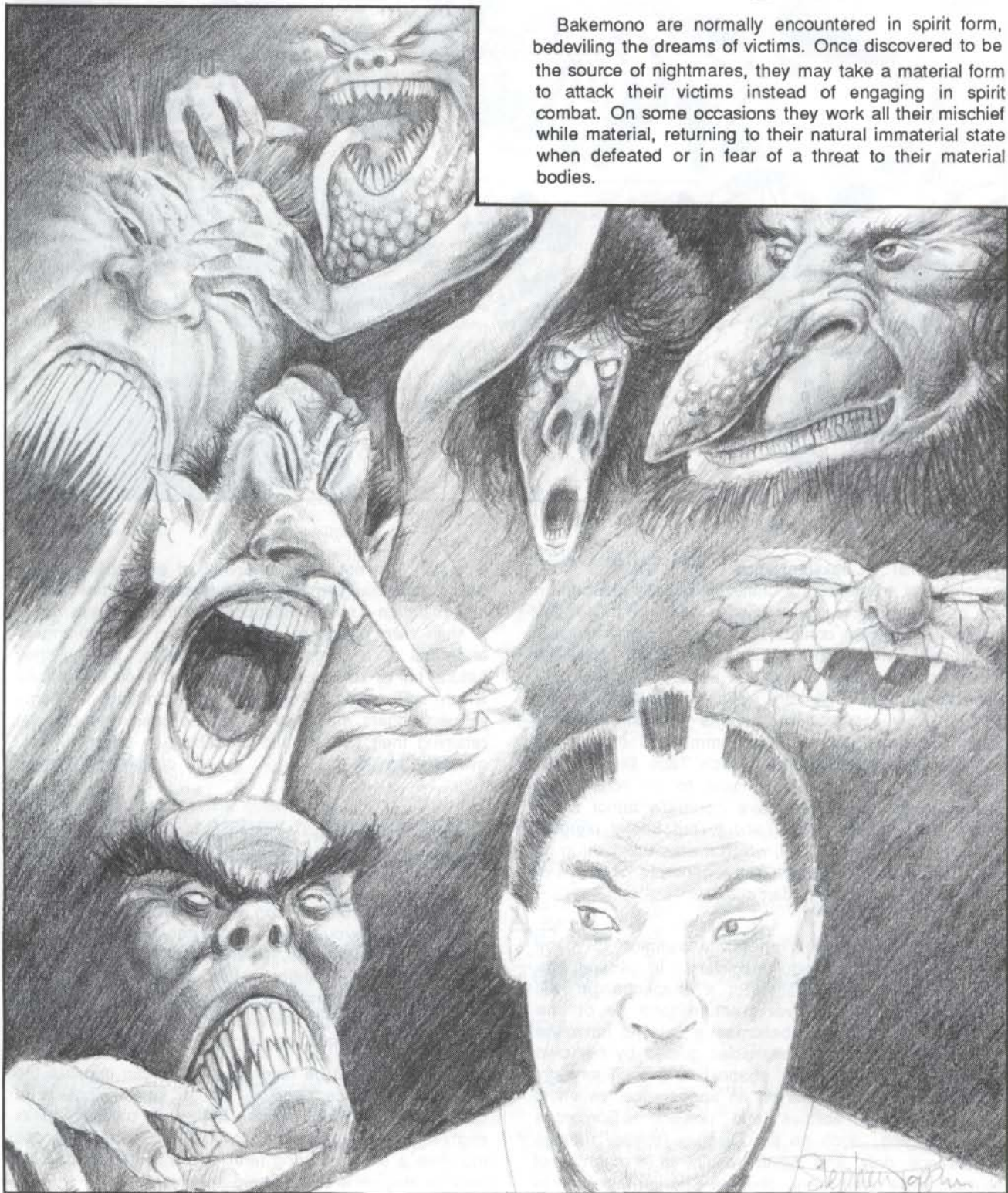
The entries below do not always present full characteristics for each type of creature. For example, the characteristics for hags can be found in the *RuneQuest* Creatures book.

### Bakemono

Bakemono are the "ghostly goblins" of Nihon. They come in many forms and sizes, each different from the next. Some have multiple limbs or eyes while others have reduced numbers of the same. Some have ridiculously enlarged anatomical features while others have similar features absurdly reduced. Some have horns, some have feathers, some have scales, and still others have fur.



Bakemono are normally encountered in spirit form, bedeviling the dreams of victims. Once discovered to be the source of nightmares, they may take a material form to attack their victims instead of engaging in spirit combat. On some occasions they work all their mischief while material, returning to their natural immaterial state when defeated or in fear of a threat to their material bodies.



## Small Bakemono

characteristics	average	attributes
STR 2d6+2	9	Move: 3
CON 2d6+3	10	Hit Points: 9 .....
SIZ 2d6	7	Fatigue Points: 19 .....
INT 3d6	10-11	Magic Points: 10 .....
POW 2d6+3	10	
DEX 4d6	14	DEX SR: 3
APP 2d4	5	

location	melee	missile	points
r leg	01-04	01-03	1-6/3 .....
l leg	05-08	04-06	1-6/3 .....
abdomen	09-11	07-10	1-6/3 .....
chest	12	11-15	1-6/4 .....
r arm	13-15	16-17	1-6/3 .....
l arm	16-18	18-19	1-6/3 .....
head	19-20	20	1-6/3 .....

weapon	sr	attack	damage	parry	points
talons	9	20+5%	1d3	0%	0



## Large Bakemono

characteristics	average	attributes
STR 3d6+6	16-17	Move: 3
CON 3d6+6	16-17	Hit Points: 18 .....
SIZ 2d6+12	19	Fatigue Points: 33 .....
INT 1d6+12	15-16	Magic Points: 20 .....
POW 4d6+6	20	
DEX 3d6	10-11	DEX SR: 3
APP 2d4	5	

location	melee	missile	points
r leg	01-04	01-03	1-6/6 .....
l leg	05-08	04-06	1-6/6 .....
abdomen	09-11	07-10	1-6/6 .....
chest	12	11-15	1-6/8 .....
r arm	13-15	16-17	1-6/5 .....
l arm	16-18	18-19	1-6/5 .....
head	19-20	20	1-6/6 .....

weapon	sr	attack	damage	parry	points
talons	6	35+11%	1d6+1d6	0%	0

**Dodge:** 60+7/-4.%.

**Armor:** may have scales, fur, or feathers which provide 1d6 points of protection on the material plane.

**Spirit Magic (100%):** Befuddle, Demoralize, Ignite, Protection, and Shimmer.

**Magic Items:** Bad Dreams, Create Fork in Path, Destroy Sense of Direction, Hide Road, Ill Luck, Illness, Insomnia, Mildew Cloth, Rot Food, Rot Wood, Snap Horse Girth, Snap Rope, Stench, Vermin.

**Notes:** if the material form of the bakemono is "killed," its form disappears with a pop as the being returns to the spirit plane. It retreats to lick its psychic wounds and cannot manifest itself again or interact with the material world for a year.

## Baku

The baku are strange creatures renowned for their ability to eat bad dreams. When seen on the spirit plane or with magical sight its appearance is strange: its body is lion-like while its head resembles an elephant's head.

Baku roam the spirit plane seeking disturbed persons. When they find one they will force the being into spirit combat. If the baku wins, it will feed on the bad dreams and depart. If the being wins, the baku will cease to exist.

## Baku

characteristics	average	attributes
INT 4/20	4/20	Magic Points: 4/20 .....
POW 4d6	17-18	

The two INT scores represent the baku's actual INT and its INT for purposes of spirit combat.

**Skills:** Detect Madness 60 + 7.

**Magic Ability:** Eat Dreams — baku may force spirit combat on anyone under a madness spell, insane, or suffering from bad dreams. If the beast wins, the person's mental health is restored. The baku, its hunger fed, wanders away. If the beast loses it is not subject to capture since defeat by a mentally disturbed person is fatal to it.



## Buddha

Buddhas, having reached enlightenment and *Nirvana*, have little to do with the material world or, for that matter, the spirit plane. They do send minor spirits to worshippers to teach them spirit magic and grant magic to their priests. If called upon by worshippers in dire need, they may send aid in the form of a Myo-O, Ten, or animal. They never appear in person.

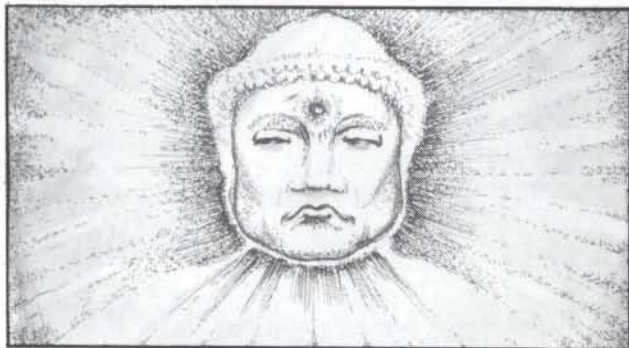
## Bosatsu

The Bosatsu are spirits who have achieved the requirements of Buddha-hood but have elected to retain a contact with the mundane plane to aid other beings in achieving enlightenment.

Bosatsu can interact with worshippers as do Buddhas but they may take a more personal role as well. A Bosatsu appearing on the mundane plane may take on any shape (human, animal, or other being) it desires. It may not be physically harmed. If engaged in spirit combat and defeated, it may not be bound or captured. Instead, it retreats beyond the spirit plane, out of reach of attacker. It can return when it has recovered.

The Bosatsu Kwannon is called the goddess of mercy and is concerned with the relief of physical suffering, especially that of women. The Bosatsu Jizo has children as his special concern. Tales tell of his reproof of those who harm or exploit children.

Intervention by a Bosatsu is a special gamemaster tool to be used only after much forethought. The players should not take these events lightly and the gamemaster should not use them indiscriminately. No adventurer would sensibly refuse the request of a Bosatsu so to have one appear (and be recognized as such) means you will have forced the players to your will. Think before acting with such highhandedness. Resist the urge to get carried away — few heroes of folklore met more than one Bosatsu and such meetings were always fraught with mystery, power, and enlightenment.



## Dryad

Folktales record dryads that fall in love with passersby or woodsmen and leave their groves to live with the loved one as a good and proper wife. Such an idyllic relation can continue, with the wife oh-so-slowly aging, until the tree is cut down or the husband discovers his wife's true nature.

**Dryad Characteristics:** Use the *RuneQuest* dryad.

**Cultural Notes:** unlike normal *RuneQuest* dryads, the being is the tree itself. The formed body may leave its grove of origin. The dryad does not control trees or other plant life. The most common source for Nihonese dryads is the willow tree.

## Bosatsu

characteristics	average	attributes
INT 4d6+9	23	Magic Points: 64 .....
POW 4d6+50	64	

**Notes:** Each manifestation of a Bosatsu should have its characteristics rolled separately.

## Bosatsu Special Abilities

The effects given below are true for all the Bosatsu.

**Magical Sight vs. Bosatsu:** an adventurer using Second Sight, Mystic Vision, or Soul Sight to view a Bosatsu will be struck by awe. He will be affected as if he had been targeted by the sorcery spell Stupefaction. The effect will last for a number of minutes equal to the Bosatsu's POW. Whether or not he is stupefied, the adventurer also fails to learn any information normally provided by this magic spell because the nature of the Bosatsu is so far beyond human comprehension. Any adventurer stupefied by awe of a Bosatsu must make a POW x5 roll or be smitten with an overwhelming desire to shave his or her head and become a Buddhist monk.

**Spells vs. Bosatsu:** any spell cast at a Bosatsu has a percentage chance equal to the Bosatsu's POW of failing.

**Combat vs Bosatsu:** any weapon (including any magical weapon capable of being produced in *RuneQuest*) used to attack a Bosatsu will simply pass through its "body."

**Supernatural Characteristics:** a Bosatsu may evidence physical characteristics (such as STR, CON, and DEX) at a value equal to its POW at will.

**Other Abilities:** Bosatsu may vanish instantly. A Bosatsu may reveal itself to a person (even only one among a group) as if that person had used magical sight on the Bosatsu. A Bosatsu may take any human or animal shape it desires although it almost never takes on a particular individual's shape. Bosatsu may converse with animals and inanimate objects. Bosatsu may perceive the true nature of any transformed being and see through any illusion. Bosatsu may present illusory scenes of things known to them for the edification of those with whom they converse. Often these are scenes of past lives used to explicate the karma of a being's current incarnation.

These rules are intended to inspire awe and fear in players who meet a Bosatsu. Bosatsu are not something with which to swordfight.





## Elementals

The Nihonese perceive the universe as composed of five elements as opposed to the four of classical European philosophies. These elements are air or wind, earth, fire, water, and the void.

The standard *RuneQuest* elementals corresponding to European elements exist. The fifth element, the void, has no specific form of elemental.

**Elemental Characteristics:** use the *RuneQuest* elementals.



## Gaki

One form of Nihonese ghost is the gaki. It appears as an insubstantial or transparent shape with a normal upper torso, a belly bloated as with malnutrition, and a lower torso trailing away to a misty, swirling column.

Gaki attempt to possess a victim and use the helpless body to fulfill their own longings. Once in possession of a body the spirit is no longer tied to its site. The spirit can be quite devious in its quest, often delaying its gratification in order to avoid detection or exposure as a gaki.

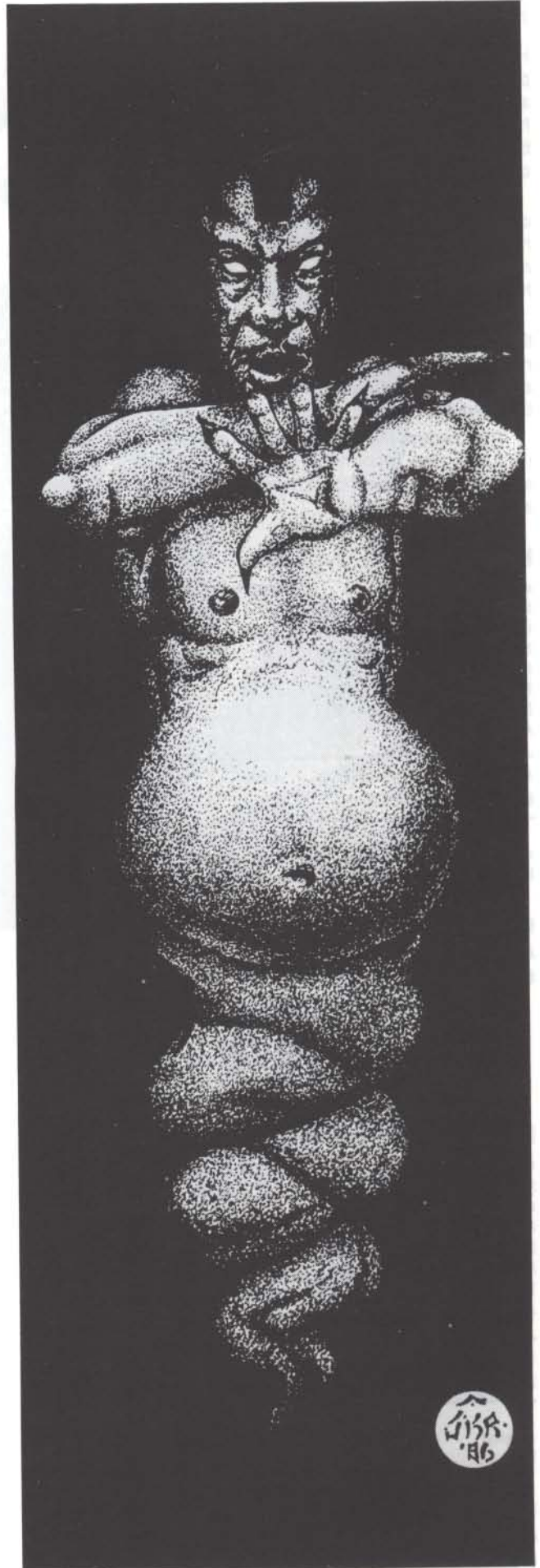
A gaki is insatiable and will pursue its objective to the destruction of its victim. Gaki can hunger for warmth (draining a victim of POW during the possession at a rate of 1 point per day); wealth (stealing anything valuable); sex (driving the victim to death by exhaustion or at the hands of outraged friends or lovers of those molested by the possessed victim); or light (drawing flames into the body of the victim with all appropriate damage).

**Gaki Characteristics:** use the *RuneQuest* Ghost.

## Ghost

Typical ghosts include vengeful spirits (goryo) seeking justice or revenge, lovesick spirits (rikomboyo) seeking the object of affection, and the typical restless spirit (yurai) seeking proper care for its corpse or the fulfillment of a duty. Nihonese ghosts usually have no legs when they appear. This lack may be concealed by long robes or may be visible as a wispy "tail" trailing from the apparition's waist.

**Ghost Characteristics:** use the *RuneQuest* ghost. See also: Gaki and Ikkiryu.



## Hengeyokai

Hengeyokai are the shapechanging animals so prevalent in Japanese folklore. The creatures can appear as ordinary-seeming animals who understand human speech. Sometimes the creature is distinctive in being an albino or in having multiple tails. Such signs often mark particularly old and powerful hengeyokai.

Tales tell of their rewarding kindness with kindnesses of their own, self-sacrifice to the benefit of the helpful human, wealth, or good fortune. Darker tales tell of the rewards of greed and cruelty being embarrassment, humiliation, ill luck, physical harm, and even death.

Hengeyokai may take human form at will, although they rarely perform this feat before human eyes. The man-form is as the creature desires but does not imitate a particular individual and is of the same as the sex of the animal.

The commonest hengeyokai are the cat, the fox (kitsune), the racoon-dog or badger (tenuki), and the serpent. Less common forms include birds, dogs, fish, and frogs.

### Hengeyokai — typical animal form.

characteristics	average attributes
STR as animal +1d6	+3-4 Move: as animal
CON as animal +1d6	+3-4 Hit Points: as animal +2
SIZ as animal	n/c Fatigue Pts: as animal +7
INT 2d6+6	13 Magic Points: 10-11 .....
POW 3d6	10-11
DEX as animal +1d6	+3-4 DEX SR: consult SR table
APP n/c	n/c

location	melee/missile	points
body	01-20	2/all .....

weapon	sr	attack	damage	parry	points
bite	9	25%	1d6-1d4	—%	—

**Dodge:** 55%.

**Armor:** 2 point hide or scales.

**Skills:** Track 35%.



### Hengeyokai — ancient animal form.

characteristics	average attributes
STR as animal +2d6	+7 Move: as animal +2
CON as animal +2d6	+7 Hit Points: as animal +6
SIZ as animal +1d6	+3-4 Fatigue Pts: as animal +14
INT 3d6+6	16-17 Magic Points: 14 .....
POW 4d6	14
DEX as animal +2d6	+7 DEX SR: consult SR table
APP n/c	n/c

location	melee/missile	points
body	01-20	2/all .....

weapon	sr	attack	damage	parry	points
bite	8	75%	1d8	—%	—

**Dodge:** 85%.

**Armor:** 2 point hide or scales.

**Skills:** Track 60%.

## Hengeyokai — human form.

characteristics	average	attributes
STR 2d6+12	19	Move: 4
CON 3d6+10	20-21	Hit Points: 15-16 .....
SIZ 2d6+3	10	Fatigue Points: 40 .....
INT as before	13/16-17	Magic Points: 15/17-18 .....
POW as before	14/17-18	
DEX 2d6+6	13	DEX SR: 3
APP 3d6	10-11	

location	melee	missile	points
r leg	01-04	01-03	1-8/5 .....
l leg	05-08	04-06	1-8/5 .....
abdomen	09-11	07-10	1-8/5 .....
chest	12	11-15	1-8/6 .....
r arm	13-15	16-17	1-8/4 .....
l arm	16-18	18-19	1-8/4 .....
head	19-20	20	1-8/5 .....

weapon	sr	attack	damage	parry	points
by type	5+	30+11/15%	by type	+1d4	30+8% by type

**Dodge:** 60%.

**Armor:** 1d6 points of magical protection in man-form, which may appear as clothing or armor at the creature's desire. If it appears as armor, add +2 to the protection provided.

**Skills:** see below.



### Notes For All Hengeyokai

**Magic Powers:** Shapechange. Hengeyokai have a percentage chance of success with their powers equal to the creature's POW x5. Failure with the Shapechange power means that the disguise is imperfect — the creature's tail is probably showing.

**CATS:** most often take the shape of old hags or beautiful courtesans. They are notorious for their evil nature, although not all wish ill on mankind. **Animal Characteristics:** STR 1d2; CON 1d6+2; SIZ 1; DEX 2d6+12. Roll either 1d6 or 1d6+12 for APP in human form, depending on the cat. **Skills:** Carnal Sex and Courtesan Sex each at INT x 5%. **Magic Available:** cats usually know sorcery and have 2d6 spells. **Magic Powers:** Drowsiness, Pass Unseen.

**FOX:** foxes often take the shape of samurai. Though capricious and occasionally mischievous, they usually follow the rules of bushido and proper conduct. A fox's idea of harmless mischief can mean serious trouble to a person, though the fox is usually repentant if it ever finds out. **Animal Characteristics:** STR 1d3; CON 2d6; SIZ 1d2; DEX 3d6+6. **Skills:** Kenjutsu at 25% plus INT x 5. **Magic**



**Available:** spirit magic (preferring Befuddle, Bladesharp, Glamour, and Shimmer) or sorcery with 2d6 spells. Foxes usually have at least 1d6-1 points of divine magic from the Inari cult. **Magic Powers:** Foxfire, Possession, Shapechange as Particular Person, Shapechange as Inanimate Object.

**RACCOON-DOG:** raccoon-dogs often take the shape of peasants or (impious) Buddhist priests. They usually are buffoons and enjoy playing tricks on all and sundry. Their humor is coarse and they feel little remorse if someone gets hurt in their jokes. They are very fond of sake. **Animal Characteristics:** STR 1d4; CON 2d6+1; SIZ 1d2; DEX 3d6. **Magic Available:** spirit magic, preferring Befuddle, Glamour, Shimmer, and Glue. **Magic Powers:** Drum on Belly (a musical will o' the wisp), Shapechange to Inanimate Object.

**SERPENT:** serpents usually take the shape of a person of the caste with which they interact. Their personalities vary as much as those of humans, ranging from violent bullies to noble heroes. **Animal Characteristics:** as per *RuneQuest* Python. **Skills:** several weapon skills at INT x 5%. **Magic Available:** spirit magic, preferring Bladesharp, Healing, and Protection. **Magic Powers:** Pass Through Crack, Move Without Sound.

## Ikiryu

Ikiryu, or living ghosts, are astral projections of disturbed persons. They may be generated by very strong emotional feelings such as extreme jealousy or hatred. They only appear when their source is asleep or in a trance. Disturbing the projector will cause the ikiryu to disappear, but it may return when its source sleeps or is entranced again.

The person generating an ikiryu is never aware of the phenomenon. If it is ever proven to that person's satisfaction, the ikiryu will not return.

Ikiryu usually, but not always, appear exactly like the projector. Sometimes they appear as the projector views him- or herself, a difference in appearance that may make the projection unrecognizable even to those intimate with the projector.

The ikiryu works to resolve the passions of its projector, most often in a violent or destructive fashion.

**Ikiryu Characteristics:** use the *RuneQuest* Ghost.

**Cultural Notes:** The ikiryu may not possess victims; its victory in spirit combat instead drives them insane. Ikiryu more commonly function to destroy their victims physically. An ikiryu may carry and use anything its projector can carry and use. The skills and senses of the ikiryu are those of its source.



## Kami

Among the kami are included the deities Amaterasu, Hachiman, Suitengu, Inari, and Susano-O. These are the "heavenly" kami who have little or nothing to do with the affairs of men save to send messengers who instruct worshippers in magic. They will not appear in person on the material plane.

The "earthly" kami dwell upon the earth and meddle in the affairs of men at their own whim. The more powerful the kami, the less likely it is to interact with men.

Ancestral kami never appear in person. They may only be communicated with via standard rituals and may not be bound in magical items. They never manifest in human form.

Kami of the Elements are manifestations and guardians of their element. They never manifest in human form. They may be bound in magical items.

A kami of place is the personification of a locale and the guardian of that location. They often (for kami) appear in human guise, especially when concerned about their charge. They may not be bound into magical items.

The use of intervention by kami is a special gamemaster tool to be used only after much forethought. The players should not take these events lightly and the gamemaster should not use them indiscriminately. No adventurer would sensibly refuse the request of a kami, so to have one appear (and be recognized as such) means you will have forced the players to your will. Think before acting with such highhandedness. Resist the urge to get carried away — few heroes of folklore met more than one kami (powerful ones at least) and such meetings were always fraught with mystery and power.

These rules are intended to inspire awe and fear in players who meet kami. The kami are not something with which to swordfight.

## Kami

kami type	INT	POW
Ancestral Kami	2d6+6	3d6
Kami of the Elements	2d6	4d6
Kami of Place	4d6	3d6+6
Earthly Kami		
Powerful Kami	3d6+6	2d6+60
Minor Kami	2d6+6	2d6+30
Petty Kami	1d6+6	2d6+6
Heavenly Kami		
Major Kami	4d6+12	4d6+100
Important Kami	4d6+9	4d6+50
Lesser Kami	4d6+6	4d6+10
Messenger Spirit Kami		
Major Messenger	2d6+6	3d6+10
Important Messenger	3d6	3d6+6
Lesser Messenger	2d6	4d6

**Kami Special Abilities:** the effects given below are true for all kami, except as noted after the description of the effect.

**Magical Sight vs. the Kami:** an adventurer using Second Sight, Mystic Vision, or Soul Sight to view a kami is struck by awe. He is affected as if he had been targeted by the sorcery spell Stupefaction. The effect lasts for a number of minutes equal to the kami's POW. Whether or not he is stupefied, the adventurer fails to learn any information normally provided by this magic spell, because the nature of the kami is so far beyond human comprehension.

**Spells vs. Kami:** Any spell cast at a kami has a percentage chance equal to the kami's POW of failing.

**Combat vs Kami:** Any weapon (including any magical weapon capable of being produced in *RuneQuest*) used against a kami has a percentage chance equal to the kami's POW of breaking. In return, the kami has a percentage chance equal to its POW to critically hit any desired hit location on one target per strike rank. It may do as much damage as it wishes up to its POW in points.

**Other Abilities:** kami may vanish instantly. A kami may reveal itself to a person (even only one among a group) as if that person had used magical sight on the kami. A kami may take any human or animal shape it desires, although it almost never takes on a particular individual's shape.

Kami may converse with animals and inanimate objects. Kami perceive the true nature of any transformed being. Kami may present illusory scenes of things known to them for the edification of those with whom they converse.

**Special Notes:** all kami except ancestral kami and kami of the elements may bless or curse mortals. For the kami's will to have effect beyond a number of days equal to its POW, the kami must roll less than its POW on 1D100. If it does so, only another kami (or a Buddhist spirit) may alter the kami's will. The blessing or curse of kami of place has no force beyond the area encompassed by the kami but is always in effect within that area unless the kami can be convinced or forced to change its mind.



Gamemasters should keep the benefits or detriments in keeping with the power of the kami. Weak kami would have only petty effects such as a spoiled meal, a ripped garment, a bag of coins, or a lucky break; but a powerful kami could permanently affect an adventurer's life with a chest of gold, a strong new son, a debilitating disease, or disastrous ill luck.

# Kappa

Kappa are small, water-dwelling beings about the height of a young boy but more massive. They dwell in fresh water, preying on fish and swimmers, human or animal. Most drownings are blamed on kappa, particularly if the corpse is found with its entrails sucked out.

Kappa are usually solitary. They often dwell near fords and sometimes offer safe passage to travelers who wrestle with them. Failure to defeat the kappa results in drowning but success can mean safe passage for an entire party. Some kappa may be bribed with cucumbers, a delicacy to their kind. Kappa are renowned for their trustworthiness once they have given their word.

A kappa's head has a saucer-shaped depression on top which is filled with the water of its native pool or river. The kappa's supernatural abilities, indeed its very existence, depends on this depression remaining full. Sometimes a clever human can trick a kappa by bowing to him. The kappa, a model of courtesy, often returns the bow and loses some of his precious water. Usually this is not possible, though.



If a kappa is grappled, thrown, or knocked down in combat, it must succeed in a DEX x 3 roll to avoid losing some of that water. A simple knockback in combat requires a DEX x 5 roll. If the kappa fails the roll, roll 1d100 to determine what percentage of the original fluid was lost. Roughly this percentage of his Strength (figured by the gamemaster) is also lost. A kappa with less than 50% of his water remaining usually retreats or attempts to surrender. A kappa that loses all of its water collapses to the ground, defeated. It dies in a matter of hours unless it can return to its native water.

The loss of water affects a kappa's magic powers, too. The kappa's chance of using a magic power is equal to the percent of water remaining in its skull depression. Return to its home water allows the kappa to refill its depression and restore these abilities. When in water, a kappa never expends fatigue points.



## Kappa

characteristics	average	attributes
STR 5d6	17-18	Move: 3/6 swimming
CON 2d6+12	19	Hit Points: 13 .....
SIZ 2d6	7	Fatigue Points: 13 .....
INT 3d6	10-11	Magic Points: 10-11 .....
POW 3d6	10-11	
DEX 4d6	14	DEX SR: 3
APP 2d6	7	

location	melee	missile	points
r leg	01-04	01-03	5/5 .....
l leg	05-08	04-06	5/5 .....
abdomen	09-11	07-10	5/5 .....
chest	12	11-15	5/6 .....
r arm	13-15	16-17	5/4 .....
l arm	16-18	18-19	5/4 .....
head	19-20	20	5/5 .....

weapon	sr	attack	damage	parry	points
fist	6	60+9%	1d6+1d4	45+11%	—
grapple	6	80+9%	1d6+1d4	—%	—

**Dodge:** 60+11%.

**Armor:** 5 point scales. A rare form *rosifugappa* or turtle kappa, has a 10 point shell on its chest and abdomen.

**Spirit Magic (50%):** has INT points of spirit magic usually including Healing, Extinguish, Ironhand, and Coordination.

**Skills:** Martial Arts 50+1 (note that since a kappa's Fist damage is 1d6, a Martial Arts fist blow does 2d6 + it's damage bonus); Watersense 45+7.

**Magic Powers:** Calm Water, Cause Flood, Create Current, Create Undertow, Create Whirlpool, Disappear in Water, Foul Water, Heal Broken Bone, Muddy Water, Purify Water, Reattach Limb.



## Kirin

The celestial steed of heaven and the Oriental equivalent of the unicorn. It is rarely seen upon the earthly plane. Heavenly kami may summon one at will when in need of a steed.

Even carrying riders, it can outrace the wind and run along the clouds to heaven. It is so fast that it need never fight and so pollute itself with bloodshed.

## Kitsune

Kitsune are also known as fox-spirits. See Hengeyokai.

## Kojin

Kojin are humanoids with the heads of fishes, most notably sharks. They dwell beneath the waters around Nihon and often serve in the palace of the Dragon-King.

Their underwater culture is patterned after the surface culture of Nihon. Humans, however, have rarely seen other than their samurai equivalent. These kojins often come to the surface to trade for goods (metal goods and artwork are especially sought-after) or to raid for those same goods.



## Kojin

characteristics	average	attributes
STR 4d6	14	Move: 3/6 swimming
CON 2d6+6	13	Hit Points: 14 .....
SIZ 3d6	10-11	Fatigue Points: 24 .....
INT 2d6+6	13	Magic Points: 10 .....
POW 3d6	10-11	
DEX 3d6	10-11	DEX SR: 3
APP 2d6	7	

location	melee	missile	points
r leg	01-04	01-03	3/5 .....
l leg	05-08	04-06	3/5 .....
abdomen	09-11	07-10	3/5 .....
chest	12	11-15	3/6 .....
r arm	13-15	16-17	3/4 .....
l arm	16-18	18-19	3/4 .....
head	19-20	20	3/5 .....

weapon	sr	attack	damage	parry	points
sword	2	35+6%	1d8+1	30+2%	10 .....
bite	3	15+6%	1d8	—%	—

**Dodge:** 0%.

**Armor:** 3-point scaly hides, but may wear other armor as well.

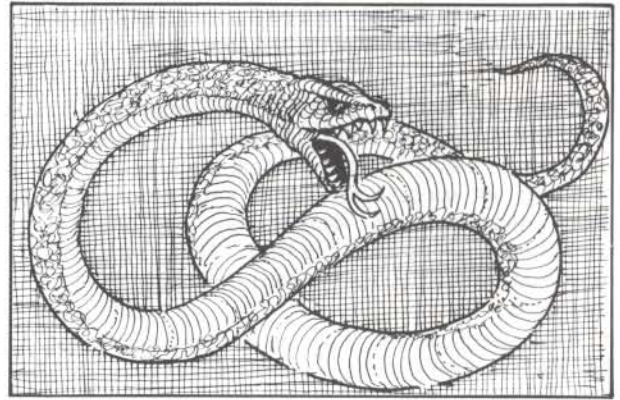
**Spirit Magic (50%):** INT points of spirit magic, preferring Fanaticism, Mobility, and Control (Shark).

**Skills:** Watersense 45+6%.

**Notes:** Kojin are natural water-breathers and immune to the pressures of the depths. Without magic they may only remain out of water for 3d6 minutes before they begin to suffocate.

## Mi

The great serpents of Nihon. Use the *RuneQuest* python.



## Mukade

Mukade are giant centipede-like creatures with great glowing eyes. Their great luminous eyes allow them to see in darkness, although they are highly-visible targets at night.

Despite their great size, mukade move stealthily and can hide themselves with surprising ability. They can coil up to resemble a pile of rocks, or make a burrow just under the surface of the ground, to wait for prey.

These beasts are as at home in the water as on land where they seek out dragons and orochi as prey. Humans are not preferred fare but anything that moves (and a few things that don't) is eligible as a meal as far as a mukade is concerned.

## Mukade

characteristics	average	attributes
STR 4d6+12	26	Move: 3
CON 2d6+12	19	Hit Points: 21 .....
SIZ 3d6+12	22-23	Fatigue Points: 45 .....
INT 2	2	Magic Points: 10 .....
POW 3d6	10-11	
DEX 3d6	10-11	DEX SR: 3
APP		

location	1d20	points
r side legs	01-04	6/2 (always 2 pts) .....
l side legs	05-08	6/2 (always 2 pts) .....
body	09-18	6/all .....
head	19-20	6/7 (.33) .....

**NOTE:** mukade have 20 legs on each side. Roll 1d20 to determine which leg is hit on a leg hit location. If the creature loses more than half its legs on one side, its speed is halved. If it loses all the legs on one side, it is immobilized.

weapon	sr	attack	damage	parry	points
bite	6	50+1%	1d10+2d6+poison—%	—	—
thrash	6	50%	2d6	—%	—

**Note:** the mukade bite injects a poison with a potency equal to half the creature's CON. The bite is capable of impaling.

The thrash attack can be used instead of a bite, and affects every target within a meter of the creature. Damage done is equal to the mukade's damage bonus. If the mukade is killed its corpse thrashes about for 1d6 rounds.

**Dodge:** 0%.

**Armor:** 6-point chitin.

**Skills:** Hide 65-13, Sneak 50-13.

## Mujina

A mujina appears at first to be a normal person. It has a natural appearance-altering spell to conceal its true visage, a featureless oval. A mujina may appear as either a male or female but may not appear as a specific person. The creature may drop its illusion of facial features at will, even during melee.



The mujina's true appearance (aided by subtle magical forces) is so horrifying to humans that it may drive them mad. Each melee round, everyone within sight of a mujina's visage must make a successful POW x5 roll or inadvertently face the creature. Treat an affected viewer as if he had been targeted by the divine spell Madness.

The mujina's appearance-attack may not be countered by defensive spells, such as Countermagic or Shield. Mujina are immune to their own appearance and to that of other mujina.

### Mujina

characteristics	average	attributes
STR	3d6	10-11 Move: 3
CON	3d6	10-11 Hit Points: 11 .....
SIZ	3d6	10-11 Fatigue Points: 21 .....
INT	2d6+6	13 Magic Points: 10 .....
POW	3d6	10-11
DEX	3d6	10-11 DEX SR: 3
APP	(3d6)	10-11

location	melee	missile	points
r leg	01-04	01-03	0/4 .....
l leg	05-08	04-06	0/4 .....
abdomen	09-11	07-10	0/4 .....
chest	12	11-15	0/5 .....
r arm	13-15	16-17	0/3 .....
l arm	16-18	18-19	0/3 .....
head	19-20	20	0/4 .....

weapon	sr	attack	damage	parry	points
appearance	1	auto.%	madness	—%	—
any weapon	5+	base+5	per type	base+1%	type

**Notes:** the mujina's appearance attack is automatic each round, once it reveals its true visage. Additionally, it may perform the normal number of combat actions.



**Dodge:** 0%.

**Armor:** wears clothing and can wear armor but normally disdains it.

**Spirit Magic (50%):** INT worth of spirit spells favoring Glamour and Demoralize.

**Skills:** Darksense 60+2.



## Myo-O

The Myo-O are vanquishers of evil serving the Buddhist pantheon. Buddhist temple statues depict them with fierce scowls and muscular bodies. They are armed with temple swords (ken) and ropes.

Myo-O are normally spirits, but can take physical form at need. They have no CON — Myo-O hit points are based on SIZ alone.

### Myo-O

characteristics	average	attributes
STR 10d6	35	Move: 4
SIZ 3d6+10	20-21	Hit Points: 20-21 .....
INT 2d6+6	13	Fatigue Points: n/a .....
POW 3d6+6	16-17	Magic Points: 16 .....
DEX 2d6+6	13	DEX SR: 3

location	melee	missile	points
r leg	01-04	01-03	8/6 .....
l leg	05-08	04-06	8/6 .....
abdomen	09-11	07-10	8/6 .....
chest	12	11-15	8/8 .....
r arm	13-15	16-17	8/5 .....
l arm	16-18	18-19	8/5 .....
head	19-20	20	8/6 .....

weapon	sr	attack	damage	parry	points
sword	5	70+16%	1d8+2d6	85+2%	10 .....
rope	3	85+16%	none	90+2%	25 .....
fist	6	75+16%	1d3+2d6	85+2%	—

**Notes:** the Myo-O's rope has a minimum range of 2 meters and a maximum range equal to the Myo-O's POW in meters. The Myo-O uses the rope to entangle evildoers. Since the Myo-O is supernaturally strong, an ordinary adventurer has no hope of escaping such an entanglement.

**Dodge:** 0%.

**Armor:** 8 point hide.

**Spirit Magic (80%):** INT worth of spirit spells.

**Divine Magic (100%):** 1d6 points worth of spells.

**Skills:** Martial Arts 75+3; Sense Evil 60+7 (this special perception skill allows the Myo-O to detect the presence of beings who violate Buddhist precepts).

**Magic Powers:** Reveal Disguised Evil, Supernatural Strength.



## Nushi

Nushi are swamp dwelling naiad-like beings. Though mortal, they are very long-lived.

**Nushi Characteristics:** use the *RuneQuest* naiad

**Cultural Notes:** A nushi does not have the power to transform into an undine. They have real, not water-formed, bodies. Use the stats for naiads except for the power to transform into an undine.

## Oni

Originally Buddhist in origin, these are the demons of Nihon. Their attitudes range from the impish to the hellish. Although they occasionally act as buffoons, they are more often cruel, malicious, avaricious, and lecherous. They delight in human females, finding them much more appealing than the extremely ugly females of their own race, and often kidnap young girls to serve their vile ends.

Magic anti-oni beans exist. When such a bean is thrown at an oni, it acts as a Disruption spell which the oni cannot resist.

Oni skins are warty and often of such startling colors as red, grey, or blue. They are hirsute, coarse, and unkempt in appearance. Most have one or two horns projecting up or back from their heads. Some have only one eye while others have three, although most have only two. Some of the oni serving in the Buddhist hell have the heads of horses or bulls. Their hands and feet are distinguished by having only three digits each.

### Oni

characteristics	average	attributes
STR 3d6+6	16-17	Move: 4
CON 2d6+12	19	Hit Points: 19 .....
SIZ 2d6+12	19	Fatigue Points: 36 .....
INT 2d6+6	13	Magic Points: 10 .....
POW 3d6	10-11	
DEX 3d6	10-11	DEX SR: 3
APP 1d6	3-4	

location	melee	missile	points
r leg	01-04	01-03	3/7 .....
l leg	05-08	04-06	3/7 .....
abdomen	09-11	07-10	3/7 .....
chest	12	11-15	3/9 .....
r arm	13-15	16-17	3/6 .....
l arm	16-18	18-19	3/6 .....
head	19-20	20	3/7 .....

weapon	sr	attack	damage	parry	points
sword	5	55+8%	1d8+1+1d6	45-4%	10 .....
other weapon	3+	45+8%	by type+1d6	635-4%	type .....



**Dodge:** 35-3%.

**Armor:** flinty hide worth 3 points. Scavenged, stolen, or scrounged armor may be worn for additional protection.

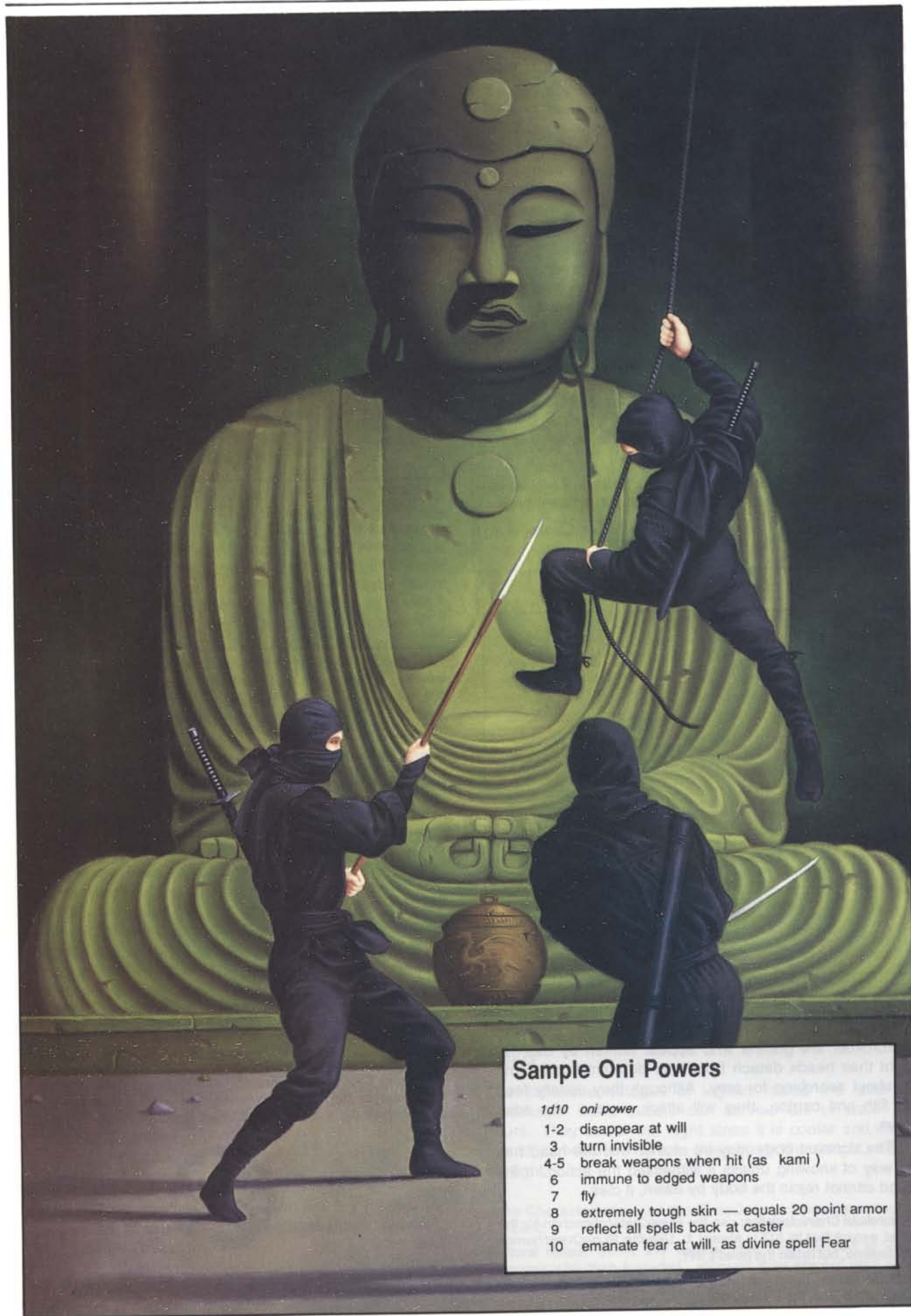
**Spirit Magic (50%):** INT worth in points of spirit magic.

**Skills:** Smell Humans 75+7 (this skill notes the presence of humans but not specific location).

**Magic Powers:** Bind Tongue, Cause Illness, Clumsiness, Darkness, Fever, Paralysis, Sleepiness, Snuff Flames. Some oni have special powers unique to themselves. The gamemaster may roll randomly on the Sample Oni Powers table or devise his own ability or combination of abilities.

**Notes:** Some great and powerful oni exist, calling themselves kings and dwelling in magical halls in mountainsides or at the





### Sample Oni Powers

- 1d10 *oni power*
- 1-2 disappear at will
  - 3 turn invisible
  - 4-5 break weapons when hit (as *kami*)
  - 6 immune to edged weapons
  - 7 fly
  - 8 extremely tough skin — equals 20 point armor
  - 9 reflect all spells back at caster
  - 10 emanate fear at will, as divine spell *Fear*

## Orochi

Orochi are giant serpents that dwell beneath the waters of the swamps, ponds, and lakes of Nihon. Often they are the guardians of those bodies of water and treated as kami. Most are malign and some demand human sacrifices as placatory gestures to keep them from destroying rice fields or villages. Orochi are solitary.

Orochi can take human form to beguile travelers or survey their environs. Many orochi are so bound to their homes that they may not leave them for long without suffering suffocation. Whether in human form or serpent shape, orochi prefer nocturnal excursions.

Legend tells of foolish or hateful humans who were changed into orochi. No one knows what triggers such transformations. Such an orochi may not take human form except on the anniversary of its transformation.

**Orochi Characteristics:** use the *RuneQuest* stoorworm for serpent form except INT is 2D6+6.

Use the *RuneQuest* human for man-form except INT and POW remains the same.

**Cultural Notes:** Orochi very rarely have the ability to generate poison gas. Orochi move at 6 in water.

**Magic Available:** Orochi may use spirit magic. Transformed humans will retain any magic known to them except divine magic.

**Magic Powers:** Call Thunderstorm, Create Waves, Disappear at Will in Water, Flood, Provide Fish, Shapechange



## Rokurokubi

Rokurokubi are goblins who appear human by day. At night their heads detach from their dormant bodies and fly about searching for prey. Although they usually feed on filth and carrion, they will attack anyone who sees them.

The dormant body may be moved and the head has no way of knowing unless it witnessed the action. If the head cannot rejoin the body by dawn, it dies.

**Rokurokubi Characteristics:** use the *RuneQuest* chonchon for the head, except that its SIZ is always 1. Use the *RuneQuest* human for daytime, but retain the head's INT.

**Cultural Notes:** roku:okubi heads must return to their body at dawn rather than the spirit plane.

## Ryu

Ryu are the great scaled beasts of Nihonese legend, known in the west as dragons. Unlike European dragons, ryu have no wings; they fly by running on the air. Ryu do not breathe flame either, although some have noxious breath which acts as poison gas.

Ryu dwell beneath the water, fresh or salt. Some are servants to the great Dragon-Kings in the sea. Others serve guardian kami or are considered such by humans. The occasional ryu is a self-serving, avaricious monster. Since their homes are the same as orochi, they are often confused with those serpents. Regardless of their nature, ryu have refined tastes and are highly appreciative of the artistic endeavors of humans.

## Ryu

characteristics	average	attributes
STR 20d6	70	Move: 3/7 flying or swimming
CON 10d6	35	Hit Points: 53 .....
SIZ 20d6	70	Fatigue Points: 105 .....
INT 2d6+10	17	Magic Points: 24 .....
POW 4d6+10	24	
DEX 3d6	10-11	DEX SR: 3

location	melee	missile	points
tail	01-02	01	24/14 .....
rh leg	03-04	02-03	24/18 .....
lh leg	05-06	04-05	24/18 .....
hind q	07-09	06-09	24/22 .....
fore q	10-13	10-14	24/22 .....
rf leg	14-15	15-16	24/18 .....
lf leg	16-17	17-18	24/18 .....
head	18-20	19-20	24/18 .....

weapon	sr	attack	damage	parry	points
bite	9	25+18%	3d6+8d6	—%	— .....
claw	6	35+18%	1d6+8d6	—%	— .....
tail	6	50+18%	4d6	—%	— .....

**Notes:** a ryu has two attacks each round: it may bite for one attack, and either use claw or tail for the other. The bite attack comes 3 strike ranks after any other attacks being performed. A ryu must be on the ground to fight an opponent there.

Tail damage equals half the ryu's damage modifier in d6s (round up). It is an area-effect sweep attack.

Use the *RuneQuest* stoorworm poison gas rules to represent the noxious breath of those ryu who have it.

**Dodge:** 0%.

**Armor:** 24 point scales.

**Magic Spells:** these dragons may use any magic but usually know spirit magic or sorcery.

**Skills:** Listen 50+24; Search 25+24.

**Magic Powers:** Call Storm, Calm Waves, Create Waves, Control Scaled Creatures (primarily fish and reptiles but the legendary definition includes whales and amphibians as well), Disperse Storm, Paralyzing Gaze, Shapechange.



## Saru

Saru are the Japanese macaque monkeys native to the islands. They are inquisitive, quick to learn, and quite inventive ... for monkeys. They have white fur and pink skins but are not albinos. Saru that dwell near the seashore may have learned to swim.

**Saru Characteristics:** use the *RuneQuest* baboon.

## The Seven Fortunate Gods

These "deities" —some of Shinto, some of Buddhist, and some of uncertain origin —are also known as the Seven Gods of Luck (Shichi Fukujin). They appear to signify a change in luck or fortune for someone. They may appear singly, thus giving some indication of the area in which the change of luck will come, or in groups. When the seven travel together, it is often in a magical ship full of wondrous treasures. Like other deities, they are not usually recognizable for what they are; their nature is instead inferred from the passage of events. These gods are: Hotei, god of luck, who often appears as a jolly, fat Buddhist priest; Jurojin, god of longevity, who often appears as a sprightly old man with a staff, is associated with cranes, tortoises, and stags (all animals believed to be long lived), provides for good health in old age and offers the accumulated wisdom of life; Fukurokujin, whose province includes longevity and wisdom and who usually appears as a sage or philosopher; Bishamon, god of warrior attributes, who appears always in armor; Daikoku, god of wealth, who appears as a fat man of good humor; Ebisu, god of luck and rewarder of hard work, who usually appears as a tradesman or fisherman; and Benten, goddess of the arts, who most often appears as a refined lady, usually with sea imagery in association; wani and ryu are hers to command.



## Shikome

Shikome are goblin-like beings dwelling in the wild parts of Nihon. Their name was once used for demons but this merely reflects human biases towards their habits and ferocity. Even before the Ainu came to Nihon the shikome dwelt on the islands. They lived in caves or in dwellings excavated from the ground, a practice adopted by the early human immigrants to the islands. Shikome envy and hate the humans who have mostly supplanted them in Nihon, taking the best land for their own.

**Shikome Characteristics:** use the *RuneQuest* orc.

**Cultural Notes:** use the *RuneQuest* scimitar stats to represent an inferior copy of the katana. Shields are not used. Shikome usually use spirit magic and a shamanistic system yet sorcerers are common among those few of their kind who devote their time to magic.

## Shishi

Shishi are the great lion-dogs which are the models for the guardian statues found at many Buddhist temples. Shishi usually appear in pairs.

**Shishi Characteristics:** use the *RuneQuest* lion.

## Shojo

Shojo are red-haired little folk with an ebullient nature and an inordinate fondness for sake and other potables. Their appearance at a drinking establishment or sake warehouse is cause for nervousness. Their wild behavior and prodigious capacity often result in property damage and sadly diminished stocks. Yet their patronage is often taken as a sign that the merchant has a superior product and his trade will increase thereby, bringing more than enough new business to recompense for his losses.

Shojo prefer to live in isolated, self-sufficient villages by the sea. Rumor says that they really live in the sea and villages visited by humans are simply sites for trading or drinking parties.

**Shojo Characteristics:** use the *RuneQuest* halfling.

**Cultural Notes:** Shojo are even less adventurous than halflings.

**Magic Powers:** Bless with Prosperity, Curse with Poor Business, Disappear at Will, Immunity to Effects of Alcohol, Spoil Sake.

## Tako

The Japanese octopus of legend raided the land for foodstuffs. Such beasts can survive out of water for hours. They prefer the night since it is cooler and more humid, conditions more to their liking than bright, warm sunlight.

**Tako Characteristics:** use the *RuneQuest* octopus. Its speed on land is 2.

**Cultural Notes:** Some wily beasts have even learned to wield weapons with their tentacles, although they are not very good with them (15-30%).



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## Ten

Ten are Buddhist spirits, guardians of the faith, its believers, and its temples. To this end they may be summoned, or in extraordinary circumstances may come of their own will, to inhabit the guardian statues of a temple. The typical statue depicts a fierce Myo-O but may instead depict a shishi. If the statue is destroyed the Ten will return to the spirit plane. Magic designed against possession will work against an embodied Ten as if it had a living host.

Embodied Ten taking the form of a shishi have the hit location and attacks of a lion. Otherwise, however, the statistics are identical. Some temples may have huge statues, with greater SIZ and STR. Such is at the discretion of the gamemaster.

## Ten

characteristics	average	attributes
STR	2d6+12	19
SIZ	2d6+12	19
INT	2d6+6	13
POW	2d6+6	13
DEX	2d6+2	9

location	melee	missile	points
r leg	01-04	01-03	7 wood/14 stone .....
l leg	05-08	04-06	7 wood/14 stone .....
abdomen	09-11	07-10	7 wood/14 stone .....
chest	12	11-15	9 wood/18 stone .....
r arm	13-15	16-17	6 wood/12 stone .....
l arm	16-18	18-19	6 wood/12 stone .....
head	19-20	20	7 wood/14 stone .....

**Note:** these are not hit points, but armor points, figured and used as per weapon armor points. Stone Ten have twice the hit points per location as wooden Ten.

weapon	sr	attack	damage	parry	points
sword	6	45+7%	1d8+1d6	25-5%	8 wood/16 stone
rope	4	30+7%	none	15-5%	8 wood/16 stone
fist	7	50+7%	1d4+1d6	—%	—

**Combat Note:** the rope is used to entangle after the fashion of a rope lasso.

**Dodge:** 0%.

**Armor:** none, but the entire statue is armor points. Wooden and stone statues are described above. Bronze statues have armor points equal to three times that of wood.

**Spirit Magic (85%):** INT worth in points of spirit magic.

**Divine Magic (100%):** 1d6 points worth of divine magic.

**Skills:** Martial Arts 35+3.

**Magic Powers:** Perceive Transformed Beings, See Through Illusions.

**Characteristics for Embodied Ten in Shishi Statue:** use the *RuneQuest* lion except POW, INT, armor, and magic as above.

## Tengu

Tengu are winged humanoids with bird-like heads and clawed feet. They dwell in trees in the mountain forests of Nippon, favoring pines and cryptomeria (also known as the "Japanese cedar"). Tengu are as often solitary as social. When they flock together, it is often around one of greater power and accomplishment who is known as a king.

Tengu have a fascination with bright things. Often they steal shiny objects (swords and gold as often as mirrors and baubles). It is said that they set houses afire simply to watch the flames and compose poetry about the beauty of the fire.

Tengu enjoy making mischief upon humans but are unappreciative when they are the butt of a joke or prank. They have been known to steal children and kidnap adults, detain them, and return them after they are no longer amused by their antics. Such returns may come years after the abduction. Despite the results of their actions, they are not really evil, merely mischievous or simply non-human in their outlook.

Tengu are renowned swordsmen and have taught the skill to some of the greatest swordsmen of Nihon. They are also masters of stealth and are reputed to be the original teachers of the ninja.

## Tengu

characteristics	average	attributes
STR	3d6+2	12-13 Move: 3/8 flying
CON	3d6+6	16-17 Hit Points: 15 .....
SIZ	2d6+3	10 Fatigue Points: 27 .....
INT	2d6+6	13 Magic Points: 16 .....
POW	3d6+6	16-17
DEX	3d6+6	16-17 DEX SR: 2
APP	2d6	7

location	melee	missile	points
r leg	01-03	01-02	1/5 .....
l leg	04-06	03-04	1/5 .....
abdomen	07-09	05-08	1/5 .....
chest	10	09-13	1/6 .....
r wing	11-12	14-15	1/4 .....
l wing	13-14	16-17	1/4 .....
r arm	15-16	18	1/4 .....
l arm	17-18	19	1/4 .....
head	19-20	20	1/5 .....

weapon	sr	attack	damage	parry	points
kenjutsu (katana)	6	75+12%	1d10_1	60+9%	14 .....
claws	4	25+12%	1d6	20+9%	—

**Combat Notes:** claw attacks may only be made when flying. A special success means the tengu has grasped something the target is holding or wearing. If the tengu overcomes the target's STR with its own, it may wrest the item from the target.

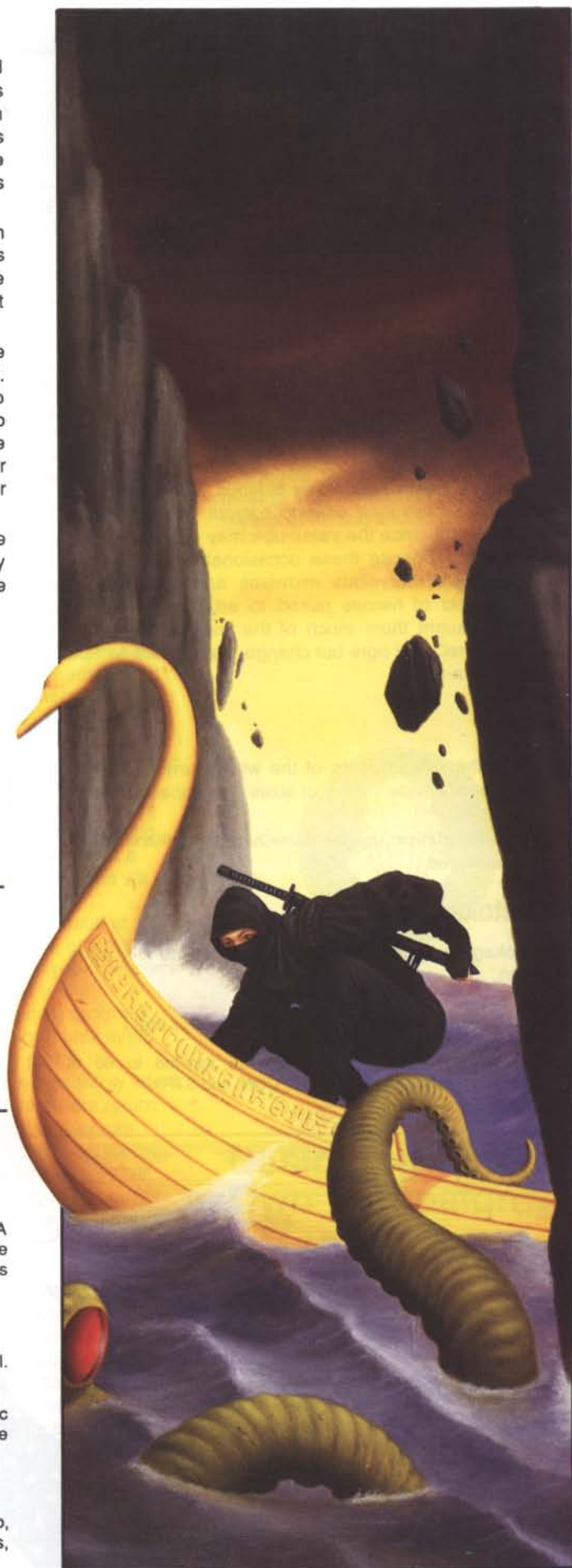
**Dodge:** 0%.

**Armor:** usually wear clothing but may wear armor as well. Feathers provide 1 point protection for wings and head.

**Magic Spells:** tengu often have 1d6 points of divine magic (usually Truesword, Shield, Reflection, and Berserk). Some tengu have learned sorcery and will have 2d3 spells.%).

**Skills:** Hide 90+0; Sneak 75+0; Conceal 75+0.

**Magic Powers:** Become Invisible, Befuddle, Bladesharp, Coordination, Disappear at Will, Fanaticism, Frighten Animals, Instruct in Swordsmanship (add 2d6%), Mobility.



## Tanuki

Tanuki are shapeshifters whose natural form is that of the racoon-dog or badger. See Hengeyokai.

## Uba

Uba are the hags of Nihon. Some are simply old women of a solitary nature usually because they are practitioners of sorcery or followers of shamanistic practices. Such women often learn a way to transform themselves into black cats while retaining their own INT and POW. Use normal *RuneQuest* human stats for these.

Other uba are the spirit creature hags of *RuneQuest*. Use the stats as given in the *Creature Book*.

Still others may be transformed cats. See hengeyokai.

Another type, known as yama-uba, live in the mountainous regions of Nihon. Some are of extreme beauty while others are grossly hideous. Local residents sometimes accept their offer to babysit children, often with later regret since the yama-uba may get hungry and eat the child. Despite these occasional lapses, yama-uba can make marvelous midwives and child raisers. Tales are told of heroes raised to adulthood by such hags who taught them much of the ways of the wilds. Use the *RuneQuest* ogre but change appearance to 1D6 for ugly yama-uba.

## Wani

Wani are the sea serpents of the waters around Nihon. They come in a wide variety of sizes and appearances.

**Wani Characteristics:** use the *RuneQuest* crocodilians or sea serpent as desired.

## Yamatokage

Yamatokage are giant lizards which live in the hilly parts of Nihon.

**Yamatokage Characteristics:** use *RuneQuest* rock lizard.

**Cultural Notes:** Some yamatokage are reputed to be of enormous size (add 3d6 or more SIZ, CON, and STR).

## Yuki Onna

Yuki onna are female spirits which dwell on mountain tops and serve as guardian spirits for their mountains. Known as "snow women," they are white of skin and beautiful of appearance when they take human form. If not propitiated, they can be severe and even lethal when reproving recalcitrant trespassers.

Yuki onna have been known to become enamored of human males who travel on their mountain. A yuki onna begins her dalliance with a nocturnal visit to the male, first assuring that any companions cannot interfere. She will come to the chosen traveler in a dream and engage him in spirit combat, a combat that he will perceive as a sexual encounter. If he wins, she will grant him a favor. If she wins, she may discard him, to be found frozen and ice-rimmed in the morning; she may grant him a favor; or she may elect to take human form and marry him. If the latter, she will be an ideal wife for a period of time. There is usually some condition on the length of time. It may be for a set period of years such as one, seven, or nine; it may be until the chosen male notices that his beautiful bride never ages; it may be until the birth of their first child; or it may be until the male speaks to someone of his encounter on the mountain.

## Yuki Onna Characteristics

characteristics	average	attributes
INT	4d6	14 Move: n/a
POW	3d6+6	16-17

**Notes:** in human form use the *RuneQuest* human stats, substituting the yuki onna's INT and POW. The yuki onna cannot be killed in this form; she merely returns to her spirit form and her home mountain.

**Magic Powers:** Amnesia, Cause Rockslide, Create Fog, Create and Control Thunderstorm, Fatigue, Form or Melt Ice, Freezing Cold, Sleepiness, Snap Rope, Snow, Wind.









Must they be ronin and heimin? Will your players run ninja (presumably all belonging to one ninja clan)?

You will find it useful to guide the campaign from the beginning. We suggest that you establish the initial group of adventurers as members of the same family or retainers of a single lord. The characters would naturally cooperate within society, and the players should do the same within the game.

As the initial adventurers are killed or retired, players must create new characters. Due to the unfolding of the campaign story, it may not be convenient to have these new characters come from the same background. You should always be ready to take a hand in directing the generation of a new adventurer before he enters play. It would be foolish for a player to get stuck with a samurai courtier from Mino province when the rest of the player-characters have a death-feud with the daimyo of Mino.

The gamemaster can ensure some degree of cooperating among samurai adventurers by decreeing that new characters are related to existing characters by blood or marriage. In well-organized campaigns where game-time flows quickly, the sons and daughters of older adventurers will eventually become old enough to be generated as adventurers themselves.



## Suggested Samurai Campaign

During the first game, have your players fill in their adventurer sheets. Let them choose their characters' names from the list given in the Players Book, unless they can think of one themselves. Also have them determine their character's sex, though almost all, if not all, warrior adventurers would be male. All should be human. Have each player roll  $2d6+15$  for his or her adventurer's age, but check for possible conflicts between randomly-determined adventurer ages and your campaign desires. Their culture is civilized, of course.

A good starting homeland is Mikawa province in the Tokaido region. The daimyo ruling Mikawa province is Uesigi Toshimichi. The clan to which the adventurers belong depends on your own plans.

If you wish them to belong to a large, well-to-do clan, use the Sadagawa Clan entry below.

If you wish them to be members of a small, honorable, fairly poor family struggling against the odds, use the Tsumiya Family entry.

**SADAGAWA CLAN:** this large clan is composed of several families controlling the small castle town of Yoshida on the Tokaido road. The clan is wealthy and influential in the province. It is led by Sadagawa Kikuchiyo, age 56. The most famous clan member is Sadagawa Naritoki, age 34, who is renowned as a military commander and successful duelist, having dispatched over 13 opponents legally and that number again in unsanctioned duels. The commander of the Yoshida castle garrison is Sadagawa Kiyoyasu, age 32, and eldest child of Kikuchiyo. He is notorious for his devious dealings in expanding clan influence and his heavy-handed use of troops when his scheming fails.

Have each player roll 1d20. Those receiving an odd result belong to the Sadagawa family proper. Those with odd die results higher than 16 are younger siblings of Kiyoyasu. Those with odd die results higher than 10 are younger siblings of Naritoki. Other results indicate that they are Kikuchiyo's nephews and nieces.

Players receiving an even die result are relatives of the Sadagawa; they have a different family name, but are still members of the Sadagawa clan and live in Yoshida. Players with even die results higher than 9 have adventurers who all belong to the same family, while those with results below 9 belong to separate families.

The players' families each consist of 2d20 members, not counting the adventurers. If two characters in the same family are the same age, then



they are either twins or one should adjust his age, at your discretion. You should now develop the rest of the Sadagawa clan as needed or as you see fit.

**TSUMIYA FAMILY:** this is a single jizamurai controlling a small village. The total number of family members is five plus the adventurers. Tsumiya Hisamasu is the bluff and hearty father of the family. Hisamasu is a man of simple pleasures, and stubbornly proud of his family's independence. He gladly works with his villagers to keep the land productive and scorns city-bred samurai who disdain working the land. Although the village is small and the land too hilly to support many rice paddies, its income has supported the family for generations. Hisamasu and his ancestors before him have shown little inclination to increase the family holdings. Any wealth gained by the family is soon lost preventing the recurrent incorporation attempts of nearby samurai clans. Hisamasu's wife is Marinomu, a retiring but educated woman tyrannized by Hisamasu's mother, Chikura, who resents the fact that the younger woman's family had the nerve to get slaughtered in the last great war leaving Marinomu without connections or, in Chikura's eyes, worth.

Ishikawa, age 24, is Hisamasu's eldest son. Ishikawa has shown more aptitude for the martial virtues than any family member in decades. It was his plan which thwarted the attempt, three years back, of the nearby Naotsugo family to take over the village by force. Still, Ishikawa shows no signs of ambition and seems content to follow his father's lifestyle.

Komiko, age 13, is Hisamasu's youngest child and his darling. She is somewhat spoiled by his attentions. Although she would never speak of it to her father, Komiko dreads his plans to marry her off here in the province. She dreams of being sent to the imperial court to serve as maid to some great lady, where she could attract the attention of a dashing samurai warrior and win him as a paramour.

Have each player roll 1d20. Those players receiving an odd result are Hisamasu's children. Those players receiving an even result are cousins of the Tsumiya, with a different family name, who reside in the village. If two players tie their rolls, they are siblings. If two characters in the same family are the same age, then they are either twins or one should adjust his age, at your discretion.

The occupation of the player-character's parents depends on their family. Sadagawa clan members and close relatives should roll 1d100 on the following table:

1d100	result
01-11	Apprentice Sorcerer
12-13	Buddhist Priest
14-41	Samurai Courtier
42-90	Samurai Soldier
91-00	Shinto Priest

Tsumiya family members must refer to the Jizamurai occupation for previous experience. Cousins of the Tsumiya should roll 1d100 on the Samurai Occupation Table (found in the Players Book) to determine their adventurer's parental occupation. Once occupation has been obtained, determine previous experience for each adventurer.

Determine each adventurer's religion once their occupations have been determined. Both Sadagawa and Tsumiya may elect to dedicate themselves to a cult. Traditionally, strongly religious Tsumiya family members have worshiped Inari, god of rice. The Sadagawa have no corresponding tradition.

The Sadagawa can choose any weapons appropriate to their adventurer's occupation from the Nihonese Weapons Table (found in the Players Book). Tsumiya can assign percentiles gained through previous experience only to the following weapons: Kenjutsu attack and parry, fist attack and parry, dagger attack and parry, and longbow attack.

Each adventurer begins with the standard equipment listed in the occupation descriptions. Members and relatives of the wealthy Sadagawa clan each receive an extra 2d100 pennies worth of fancy decoration, fine clothes, extra weapons, etc.

## Continuing The Campaign

Adventures can continue for generations of characters, if desired. The rise and fall of clan fortunes can be tracked for half a century or more. Adventurers might leave Nihon and wander the world. More disturbing to the wa of the land: foreigners, creatures of non-Nihonese origin, and foreign religions may be brought to Nihon to be used with great effect and surprise by you, the gamemaster. Or events transpiring in Nihon itself maybe used to alter the course of the campaign; the arrival of the Portuguese in Japan, the famous declaration ending the status of jizamurai, or the Sword Hunt of the late 16th century are all happenings which would greatly affect a clan.

Whenever your inspiration lags, refer to a source. Scan the bibliography in the Gamemasters Book. Most libraries should have at least some of the books listed. Some are best found in stores that sell textbooks. Go see a samurai flick or a chop-socky flick -- even the worst of these can usually provide at least one scenario idea with an oriental flavor.



## Notes on Enchanted Items

Many of the items typically enchanted in western fantasy are not present or only rarely used in the Japanese culture. Rings, for

instance, are common magic foci in European legends, but they are not worn at all in Nihon.

Personal jewelry is rare, and so is rarely met as a magical focus. Gemstones, especially pearls, however, are often cited as repositories of mystical power.

Fans, with the runes of enchantment in the form of ideographs or exquisite paintings on the paper or silk covering, are common magic items. Sorcerers often use fans for inscribing mandalas. Parasols are sometimes enchanted in like manner.

Staffs and walking sticks are often enchanted. Religious foci are often set in sacerdotal objects such as rosaries and reliquaries for Buddhists and mirrors for Shintoists.

Brushes or blocks of ink are often used in connection with spells of illusion and spells which manipulate or create matter. In such cases the user must usually paint a picture of the object or effect desired, but sometimes proper execution of the Chinese characters describing the result is required. Such items can also require the successful use of the appropriate Craft skill as well before the magic takes effect. Use of a Craft ki skill in conjunction with magic brushes or ink has a synergistic effect, best determined by each gamemaster according to case.

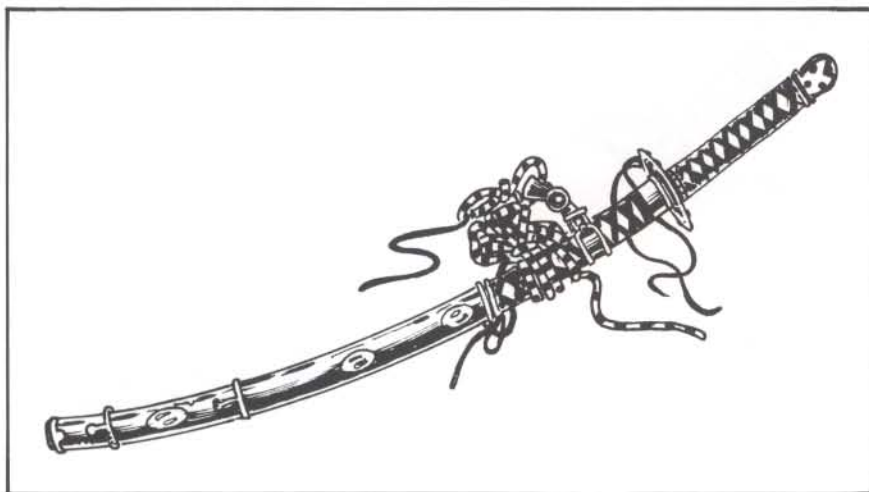
Drums are used in many kinds of magic, both secular and religious. Most commonly they are used for weather spells, especially storm magic, and for spells of summoning or command.

Combat spells usually use weapons or pieces of armor as their foci, much like their European counterparts.

The Nihonese prefer a harmonious and simple approach to magic items. A sword with forty-two Detect (Substance) matrices would be considered profane by most samurai -- a sword should be pure and dedicated simply to its purpose, with spells which increase its efficiency in combat.

## Special Enchanted Items

Do not be afraid to create magic items that are not created under the RuneQuest Enchanting rules. Craft ki effects and the presence of the myriad kami provide all the justification you should ever need for the existence of such items.



# Swords

Even on mundane Earth, there is something magical about Japanese swords. In Nihon, this is even more so. Few greater honors exist than owning a master blade forged by a true craftsman.

The greatest sword smiths of Japan are renowned throughout the length and breadth of the land. Many are priests of Inari. Their rituals are secret and lengthy, and far too time-consuming for any adventurer. Such craftsmen produce, at most, one or two blades a year. Perhaps once in a lifetime a true and devoted artisan produces a blade which stands above the master blades as they stand above ordinary weapons.

Usually, the blade's wielder must expend one or more magic points to activate the sword's power. In any case, the blade must be wielded in combat for the magic to work.

There is a great difference between one of these swords and an ordinary enchanted sword. The latter simply act as spell or magic point matrices (or whatever enchantments have been placed upon them). But a master blade has a soul, for a kami dwells within it. The kami expects to receive proper deference and worship, and may require certain deeds or sacrifices on the part of its user. If displeased by disrespectful or dishonorable behavior, it may not only refuse to use its magic, it may use it to the detriment of the wielder.

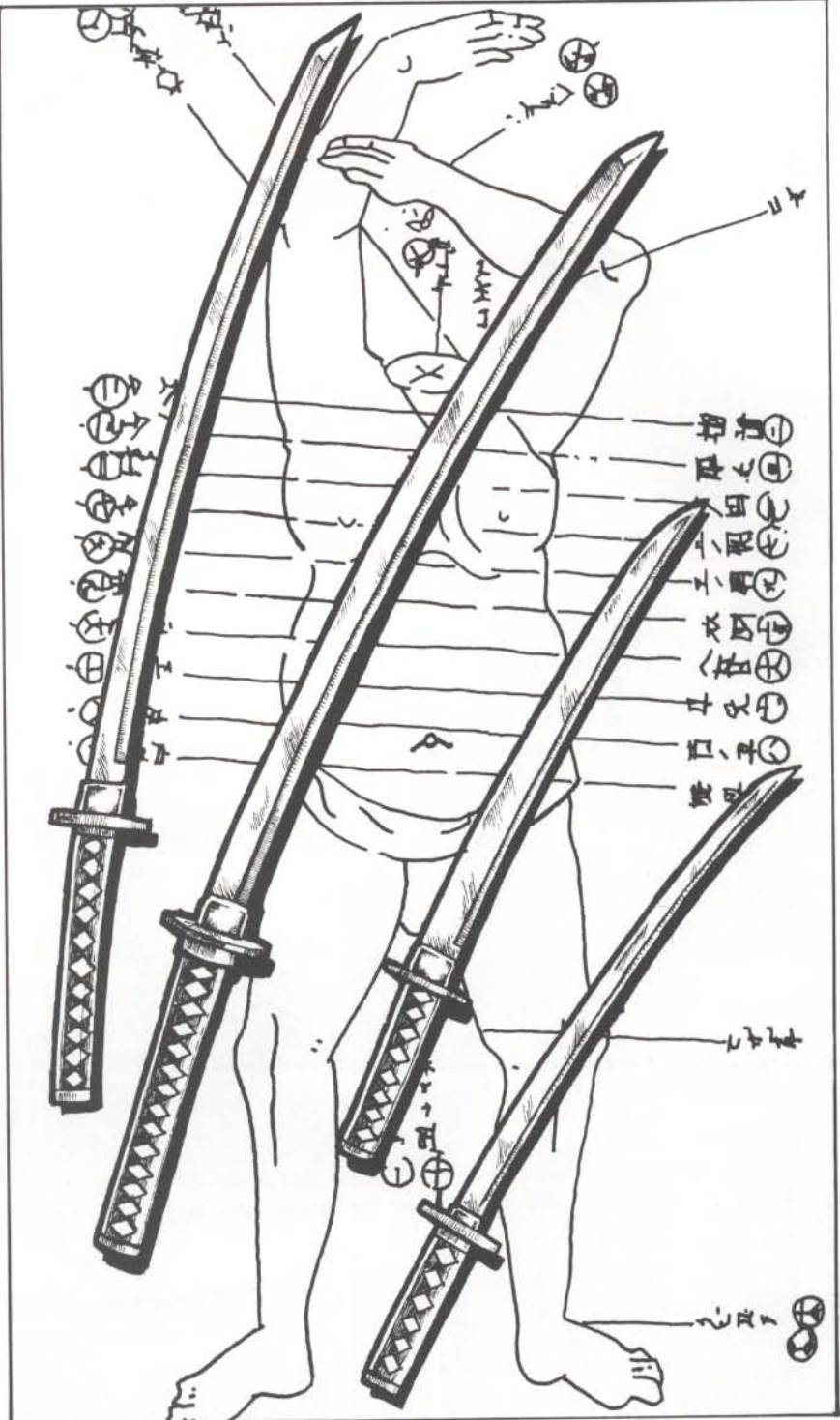
A master sword smith never sells a master blade. Only those with great reputations for courage and honor are likely to receive the gift of such a sword. Traditionally the recipient makes a gift in return. Most often this gift is in the form of money, a sum of a hundred thousand (or even a million) pennies being deemed barely sufficient. Sometimes when the recipient is a poor samurai, the gift is a display of valor and prowess worthy of the sword and a life dedicated to the code of bushido.

Rarely does a master sword smith turn his hand to a weapon other than the sword. When he does so, the weapon of choice is almost always a yari or naginata.



Some suggestions for master sword abilities follow:

1) Permanent Bladesharp effect. Roll 2d6 - 5 to determine the number of Bladesharp points. Treat results of 0 or less as "1".



2) Bonuses to the user's STR, DEX, and/or CON. Roll 1d10 and consult the Characteristic Bonus table in the upper-right corner of this page.

3) The user can make attacks and parries against unseen opponents or opponents to his side or rear at no penalty.

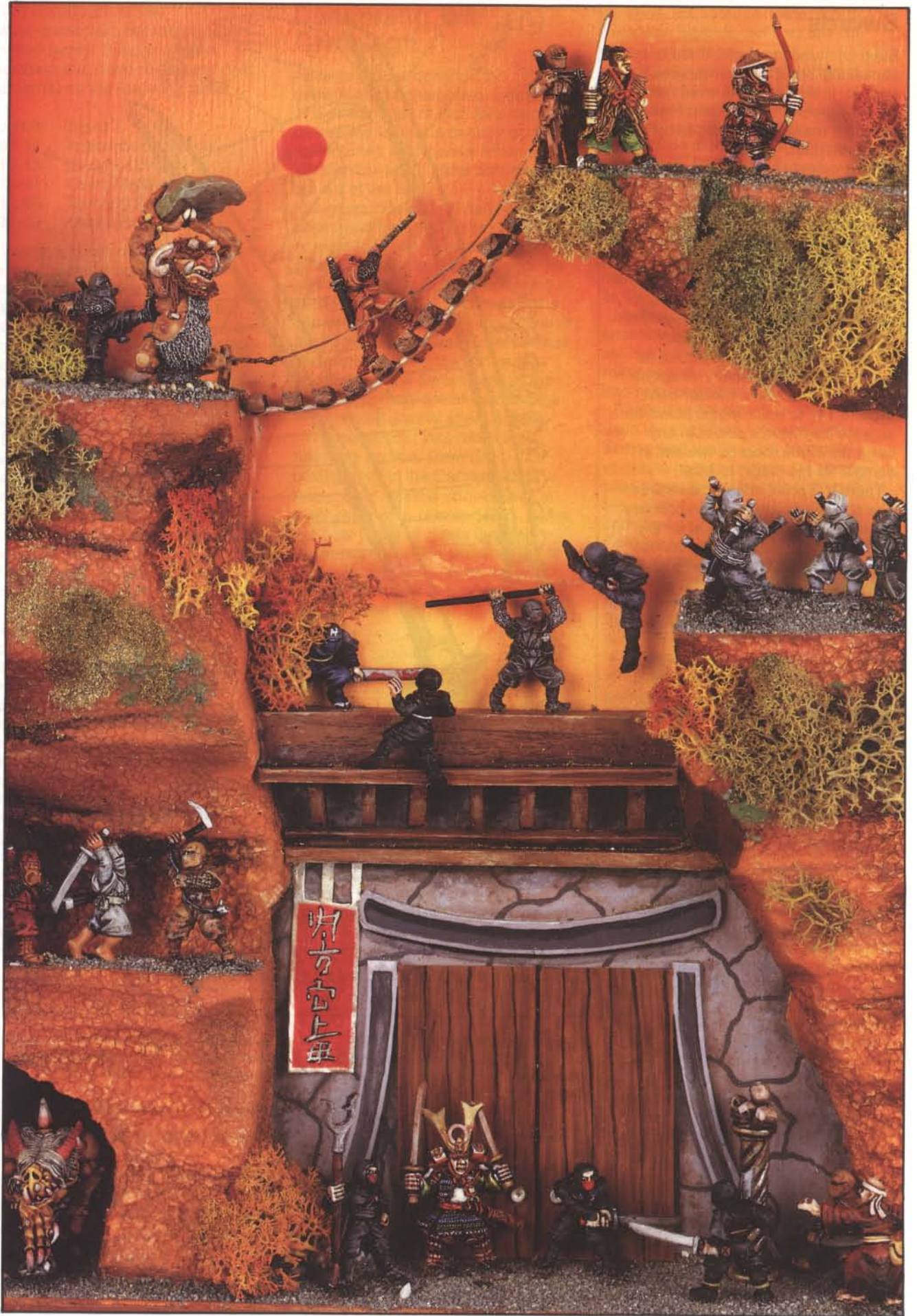
4) Dispels spells directed at the user and protective spells on opponents hit by the blade. Roll 2d6 - 5 to determine the sword's antimagic value. Treat results of 0 or less as "1". Spells encountered with equal or less points than the antimagic value are cancelled.

5) In combat, the user becomes Fanatical (roll of 1-5 on d6) or Berserk (roll of 6 on 1d6) as per the appropriate spell.

6) Permanent Truesword effect.

## Characteristic Bonus

1d10	result
1-2	+2d6 to STR
3-4	+2d6 to DEX
5-6	+2d6 to CON
7	+1d6 each to STR & DEX
8	+1d6 each to STR & CON
9	+1d6 each to DEX & CON
10	roll again and add results





## Duty Scenarios

Duty to the lord is required of all samurai. This duty is not always easy, and it is not always convenient, but it is always an honor.

The two following scenarios should be used to introduce the players to life in Nihon. They are introductory in nature and are suitable for both beginning players and gamemaster.

### Escort Duty

The call has come from Lord Uesigi Toshimichi, daimyo of Mikawa province and overlord of the adventurers. It is their turn for duty. They don their traveling clothes, geta (wooden sandals) to raise their feet from the mud, and kesa (straw hats) to ward off the sun. Armor and weapons beyond the dai-sho are left at home, since they have not been called to war. Leave-takings are made and the entourage sets out.

Travel to Okasaki city is easy in the mild spring weather. The Tokaido road is crowded with travelers bustling on their way, glad to be freed of winter's chill. In the rice paddies, lines of farmers can be seen planting the rice seedlings. The farmers' happy chants to Inari, counterpointed by Shinto priests' prayers and flute music, fill the air and lend a festive mood to the trip.

Okasaki would be a large city in Europe. Here it is small. People throng the streets; travelers gawk at the sights, merchants' shops are surrounded by eager customers, peddlers hawk their wares, and samurai stroll about casually or hurry along on duties. On a hill near the west edge of the city, clearly visible beyond row after row of houses, is the donjon keep of Lord Uesigi's castle. Its prominence makes the trip through the unfamiliar streets easy. Several times young women call out to the adventurers, telling them of the wonderful food and restful surroundings of the inn for which they work, just the thing for weary travelers. Each time the girl is saddened to learn of the adventurers' destination; it is sadness which disappears instantly when another prospect is spied approaching on the street.

The daimyo's letter serves as a pass for the adventurers to pass into the castle compound. A friendly samurai wearing garments marked with the Uesigi heraldic mon escorts them to the bachelor soldiers' barracks, where they can rest and clean up from the journey.

The next day, they are several other samurai are issued jingasa helmets (6 armor points), vest-like surcoats, and spears; all marked with the Uesigi mon. Tomita Masanari, a veteran samurai, informs the escorts, "We are to accompany my lord Uesigi Tametaka on his journey to Sempu city in Suruga province. Lord Uesigi will look unkindly on any country bumpkin who embarrasses his nephew Tametaka. Make no trouble in Suruga. Things are bad enough with the Shiki clan. Wakarimas-ka? Understand?"

Shortly thereafter the procession forms up. Lord Uesigi and Tametaka come out of the castle talking quietly. The nephew enters a kago palanquin. The four bearers lift it as a page starts off to clear the way. Six well-dressed samurai precede the kago. Masanari and the twelve guards, including the adventurers, fall in behind it.

The trip to Sempu is uneventful. During the five days of the journey the adventurers may talk with the other guards and Masanari. The well-dressed samurai are hatamoto, trusted retainers, and socially beyond conversation with mere guards, as, of course, is Tametaka himself. The best time for talk is at night when the party is staying at one of the roadside inns along the Tokaido. The other guards know as little as the adventurers and are just as curious.

Everyone knows that the Shiki are a great rival to the Uesigi. The clans have long disputed the ownership of Totomi province, and that concern over further warfare is common at the castle. Tametaka is on some sort of diplomatic mission. The orders to make no trouble would seem to indicate that Lord Uesigi is desirous of some sort of peaceful settlement of the issue. Whether this would be a permanent thing, or is only a ploy to

secure one front while Lord Uesigi prepares to act on another, is unknown.

The approach to Sempu is an inspiring sight; the great Fuji-zan rises in the distance beyond it. Thoughts of the majestic beauty of nature are soon lost in the realities of moving through the crowds towards the city gate. Letters presented to the gate guards by the hatamoto soon bring a hurrying hatamoto of the Shiki clan and his own escort. The part is taken to a manor just outside the city and comfortably installed. Servants place the guards' spears in a rack in the entrance. The katanas of the samurai are received by servants, hands covered with cloth so as not to defile noble blades with the touch of such a lowly one, and carefully placed in racks. The Shiki hatamoto bows, "Treat the mansion and servants as your own, Lord. I go to inform my lord. You shall not be disturbed here, as our samurai will keep the curious away." He leaves but his escort remains, taking positions at the manor's gates.

He is back within hours, announcing that the Lord Uesigi Tametaka will be received at the castle. Tametaka and the hatamoto recover their katanas and are escorted from the mansion and into the city. The Uesigi escort samurai are instructed to remain at the mansion and await the return of their superiors.

The waiting is easy. The mansion is well-furnished, food and sake are plentiful, and the servant girls are willing. In all, a wonderful treat for the samurai. Three days pass. Masanari has bouts of worry, but soon passes them off. "Nobles! They talk and talk and forget us poor samurai. Ah, I suppose it is to be expected. They probably have geisha in the castle. Karma, neh?" He laughs, mostly to himself, and takes another flask of sake to the rear veranda.

The morning of the fourth day is cool. The escorts, snug on their futon beds under quilted blankets, are still asleep or drowsing. They are awakened by one of the other samurai cursing, "Foolish wenches,

the braziers should be lit at dawn. Where are you, silly girls? ... Hey! ... Where are they?"

The servants are gone. A quick search reveals no one but the Uesigi escort samurai and the Uesigi kago-bearers within the manor compound. Outside the compound's walls, the Shiki samurai still stand guard.

This is a good time to build tension and apprehension on the part of the escort samurai. Encourage the players to think about the situation in which they find themselves. Remind them of their orders: to protect the nephew, to stay at the mansion until here turns, and to cause no embarrassments. Masanari tries to forestall any rash actions. He sees the contradictions which pose the problem. Without further knowledge, any action is too likely the wrong action. Yet inaction may be worse.

A further complication is soon added. The escorts' discussions are interrupted by a soft crash in the bushes near the manor wall. Investigation reveals the unconscious and bloodied body of one of the Uesigi hatamoto, who has apparently climbed over the wall, crippled by terrible wounds. Even as the escorts reach him, he dies. But in his outstretched hand is a strip of paper. The blurred characters on it, scrawled in his own blood, read: "Treachery ... Tametaka slain ... troops ... Shiki."

The Uesigi samurai face a dilemma. They have failed to protect the nephew. Do they attempt to avenge him? Anyone making such an attempt should be wished better karma in the next life because a dozen men storming a castle is suicide. Do they commit seppuku to atone for their failure? A course which expiates one breach of loyalty, but creates another to Lord Uesigi. Do they attempt to warn their lord of the treachery? The wisest, but still a dangerous course. And, naturally, even if they succeed, they may still have to commit seppuku to atone for the death of the nephew.

## Breakout

Unknown to the escorts, a large band of Shiki samurai are to leave their castle after dark, to minimize the chance they will be observed by Uesigi spies. The samurai will proceed to the manor under orders to kill all Uesigi present.

The situation for the escorts is desperate. There are 17 Uesigi in the compound: four non-combatant bearers cowering in fear, a dozen samurai including the player-characters, and Masanari. Peering over the walls, they can count at least 20 Shiki guards each armed with spear and dai-sho. The katanas and yaris of the Uesigi are locked into racks. Breaking the racks to free them may well attract attention. But all should realize that sooner or later the Shiki will have them killed (if none of the players figure this out, Masanari informs them).

The escorts may elect to break out. Such is certainly Masanari's intent. A break during the day will be noticed and arouse pursuit almost instantly. A breakout at night has a better chance of success. Leave the strategy of the breakout to the players.

The Shiki guards consist of 1 Excellent, 9 Good, and 10 Fair warriors. They wear no armor but jingasa helmets and are under orders to let no one leave the compound. Their leader knows of the treachery and maintains a close watch for escapees.

Masanari is an Excellent warrior, and the non-player-character escorts are only Fair warriors. The bearers, if forced to fight, will simply be cut down.

The breakout is left to your and the players' ingenuity to play out.

## Escape

Once the Uesigi have broken out and fled town, survivors may regroup in the nearby forest. Surviving Shiki spend their time regrouping and sending for reinforcements from the castle. The Uesigi must start on their way home. The Tokaido road, while certainly the fastest way, is unsafe, as galloping Shiki couriers demonstrate in short order. The Uesigi would soon be overtaken by Shiki horsemen. Masanari suggests cross-country travel at least until they reach secure territory.

The Uesigi push on through the night, trying to cover as much ground as possible. By day they lie up to rest. Search parties are combing the woods, but none find the fugitives. This is a good chance for you to throw a few scares into the player-characters with near-discoveries and other close calls.

Evening finds the Uesigi hungry and tormented by the smells of cooking coming from further down the hillside. Food is a necessity if they are to travel swiftly. The first circle of patrols have passed them, and this might be an opportunity to get enough food to complete the journey. In a small valley below them is a village. They have seen the resident samurai and his men ride off to join the search. Relief from the gnawing hunger is below for the taking. Should any escorts have moral compunctions, Masanari reminds them that the villagers are the enemy, after all. Besides, there is no need to kill any villagers.

The villagers offer no resistance to the Uesigi. As the Uesigi proceed about the task of acquiring food, the sudden ringing of a bell draws their attention. One of the villagers has run to the samurai's house and given the alarm. The alarm seems to have no results at first. But before the Uesigi can vanish back into the woods, sudden hoof beats announce the arrival of six Shiki samurai, two Good and four Fair. Some distance behind them, the Uesigi can hear the shouts of a party of footmen (20 ashigaru warriors). If the Uesigi can kill or incapacitate the horsemen before the footmen arrive, they can escape easily into the woods. The ashigaru will pursue any fugitives into the woods in a running battle until half their numbers have been slain. The surviving ashigaru will then break off the pursuit.

It is advisable for dramatic purposes to have the remaining non-player-character Uesigi killed in the village battle and pursuit. Each can kill his man before death, or some could be slain by arrow fire from the mounted samurai warriors. A dramatic reminder of purpose by a dying Masanari would not be out of place.

## Tengu Court

Once the remaining escorts (who now should be all player-characters) have escaped the village and lost their pursuit, they travel unimpeded for the rest of the night. The gamemaster may wish to continue the pressure of near-discovery during the next day as they lie up to rest and tend wounds.



The next night is a good one for travel. The moon, nearly full, occasionally covered by scudding clouds, illuminates their way. Progress is good and uneventful until a shadowed figure is seen standing under the trees at the far side of a clearing they are crossing. The figure calls out to them in a deep, croaking voice, "Stand, trespassers! Who disturbs Kashi-no-kunshu's peace with loud stumblings, rough talk, and ill manners?"



If the adventurers attempt to attack or flee, the figure snaps out large wings and flits up into the trees out of harm's way. A short crashing through the underbrush brings the adventurers back to the same clearing to receiving harsh, cawing laughter like the calls of crows. No matter how many times they leave the clearing, their path or paths return them to it.

If the adventurers wish to talk, the figure steps out from the shadows, showing itself to be a tengu. A successful Listen reveals soft rustling in the bushes all round the clearing. The first tengu greets any lies about the adventurers' origin with a raucous caw. He encourages the telling of their true tale with polite attention and leading questions. His goal is to get the adventurers to state their intentions and plans. This accomplished, he says, "But you are tired and haggard, noble samurai. Refresh yourself here and forget your burdens for a time." An outstretched hand indicates a feast spread out in the clearing, something none of the Uesigi had noticed before.

Beyond the feast table, on a flat rock, sits a large, portly gentleman with a long red nose. His florid face is framed with a shock of white hair which flutters in the slight breeze generated from the feather fan held in his left hand. "Bring cushions for these great lords! (turning to the Uesigi) Sit, my guests." If the Uesigi try to refuse, ten tengu move into the clearing from the surrounding trees. If the Uesigi try to fight their way clear, the tengu fight to disarm and capture them. If they acquiesce to the large man's request, either before or after the intimidation, he continues. "I am Kashi-no-kunshu, lord of the whistling winds and dark-leaved oaks; a renowned swords master and poet without peer; appreciator of the Chinese classics and fine music."

If none of the Uesigi pick up on the hint, after a short pause, one of the tengu says, "It is customary that guests give their name and accomplishments." The tengu's purpose is to tailor the contests to come in such a way as to emphasize something important to individual characters.

After much feasting and drinking, the gathered tengu (20 or 30 more have joined the party) begin to call for "The contests!" The contests are known as "sword, pen, and person" and are used by Kashi-no-kunshu's tengu to judge the men they host. They are tests of skill, prowess, and knowledge in all manner of martial, artistic, and physical endeavors. Each Uesigi will be matched with a tengu in a one-on-one test. Each Uesigi may participate once, unless there are not enough of them to complete a round.

A round consists of three tests: one martial, one artistic, and one of physical prowess. No tests are repeated. Thus, once a kenjutsu contest is held, other weapons must be used for the Martial test. (If a samurai lacks a weapon needed for a martial test, a tengu will lend him it.) Rounds continue until each Uesigi has participated at least once. The tengu react to the humans based on the scoring results:

**Winning a contest:** 2 points  
**Entering a contest without hesitation:** 1 point  
**Losing graciously:** 1 point  
**The Uesigi did not try to reject the tengu hospitality:** 3 points  
**The Uesigi did not attack or flee the first tengu met:** 2 points  
**The Uesigi never attacked the tengu:** 2 points

The tengu always take up a contest without hesitation, and are gracious about losing 90% of the time. Their skill level in whatever contest is chosen is 3d6 x 5%. Reroll for each contest.

**Sword:** martial contests are done with blunt weapons. They are won like real fights, but only 1d4 damage is done on a successful hit. A blow to a vital area wins the fight, and both contestants are healed.

**Pen:** a matching contest using some artistic skill such as poetry or calligraphy, or a knowledge skill such as classical literature. Each participant rolls on his skill until one makes a successful roll and the other does not. He has won the contest.

**Person:** match skills in a physical activity such as climbing or jumping, or match some physical attribute (such as strength for a wrestling contest).

If the Uesigi lose to the tengu, Kashi-no-kunshu appears gratified. The party continues for a few more hours, when he permits the Uesigi to leave. As they travel on their way, they notice that they feel quite rested and alert. If they wish to take some of the tengu food with them on their journey, Kashi-no-kunshu permits them to fill their pouches.

If the Uesigi outscore the tengu, Kashi-no-kunshu announces, "I am pleased. What would be a suitable gift for me to give to such brave and accomplished samurai?" Surrounding tengu shout answers, "Fine swords! No, armor! Gold! Horses! Sake! Geisha!" The shouting dies down and the tengu turn to look expectantly at their guests.

This is the final test. The Uesigi are expected to name their own reward. Their choice will be a measure of their worthiness. If they ask simply to be let go on their way or for the means to speed their journey, Kashi-no-kunshu is greatly pleased, knowing their duty is all-important. He will send a tengu messenger to the Uesigi castle to warn the lord of the Shiki treachery and advise him to reward his loyal samurai. If the Uesigi ask that a messenger be sent, Kashi is disappointed, but does so, saddened that the Uesigi ask others to perform their duties for them. The tengu messenger will warn Lord Uesigi, but will not advise him to reward his samurai. The party soon sours and dies. The adventurers drift off into troubled sleep only to awaken to an empty clearing in the morning.

If the samurai ask for material goods or personal pleasures, their requests are honored, but the evening proceeds as above and the goods are piles of bird dung in the morning. An appropriate reward for samurai who think of themselves before their lord.



## Return to Uesigi Castle

The rest of the trip is uneventful. The morning after the meeting with the tengu finds the Uesigi only short distance from Uesigi territory. Reaching a post-station on the Tokaido road, they can commandeer horses and ride to Uesigi castle.

If the samurai passed the tests of the tengu court, the daimyo already knows their story. His forces are mobilized in time to stop the surprise attack the Shiki are planning. If the gamemaster desires, some skirmishes with the adventurers leading small Uesigi forces against the vanguard of the Shiki can be played out. Such actions demonstrate to the Shiki leaders that they have lost the element of surprise and they call off their offensive. Lord Uesigi, Toshimichi-sama, pulls back as well, not wishing to fight a full-scale war at this time.

If the adventurers failed the tengu tests, their warning comes too late. The Shiki have started the offensive. The gamemaster should direct the course of the war to suit his desires for the campaign. If he wishes to cut the adventurers loose as ronin to wander the countryside having adventures, Shiki forces are successful, and break the power of the Uesigi. If not, Shiki samurai swarm over Totomi province and claim it for their clan. The Uesigi are weakened, but not destroyed. Battle ceases, but tensions remain high. Both sides try to further their positions through intrigue while preparing for all-out war.

In any case, the escort samurai need not commit seppuku for failing to protect Tametaka.

Toshimichi-sama is impressed by their loyalty to him and their efforts to warn him. Besides, he was not sure his nephew would survive the perfidious Shiki hospitality anyway, though he does not tell the escorts that. Instead, he praises their devotion to him as required of a samurai by the code of bushido.



## Outpost Duty

The call to duty is welcomed by all true samurai. Thus, the adventurers should be gladdened to receive a summons to Uesigi castle. The season is spring. The timing of the summons reminds them of an earlier summons and the events that followed. Perhaps their karma will be better.

The summons, under the daimyo's seal, is from Uesigi Saburo. Saburo is a young but distinguished general of the clan. He was present at the climactic battle of the last Shiki offensive. Indeed, he led his personal retainers in a valiant charge which decided the fight in favor of the Uesigi. Saburo is known to be high in Toshimichi's favor.

After the customary wait, the adventurers are ushered into Saburo's presence. From his side, a hatamoto speaks, "I am Tomira Ujiharu, honored to serve Lord Saburo. Lord Saburo wishes you to accept the honor of service at the border outpost of Kaiida. A force of ashigaru will accompany you to relieve the troops there. One of the soldiers, a certain ... (pause) ... Maigo is from the village and can serve to guide you. Lord Saburo also has letters for you to carry. These to Ito Tsuneo, commander of the outpost. This to Tobe Yoshi, the jizamurai who holds Kaiida village. (Name of character with highest Honor)-san, please convey these letters safely to their destinations."

The hatamoto then indicates the audience is over. Player-characters who wish to ask questions can easily see that Saburo-sama thinks such are unnecessary. Immediate compliance will do much more to gain his esteem. A samurai will escort them to the ashigaru barracks to get the twenty men who are to go.

The adventurers have never been to Kaiida, but have heard of it. A local byword, "As poor as the rice paddies of Kaiida" is used ironically

to indicate wealth. The village is in the northern part of Mikawa province, and is also renowned for the beauty of the foliage in fall. Lord Toshimichi is known to travel there when he is able, to view the color changes.

Maigo is a roisterous and outspoken fellow, for a peasant. He usually lets his tongue get away from him when speaking to samurai but tries very quickly to cover it up and



be polite. He is not so much impertinent as eager to please and somewhat forgetful of his caste, especially when talking to those whom he considers "fellow warriors." He tells the adventurers, "Hai, samurai-sama, I am from Kaiida. It is a fine village if you don't mind being bored. Plant the rice, tend the rice, harvest the rice, look at the trees, shiver your arse off and then do it all again. But then you won't have to do that ... at least not the part with the rice, heh, heh ... a....a... I mean, you should find your duty easy there, lord. The border is usually quiet. Weekly patrols. Check the travelers. Not much. Shouldn't be any trouble with the Shiki since we showed them how tough we are last year. Ah well, maybe we'll get a more exciting post next year. It could be worse, neh?"

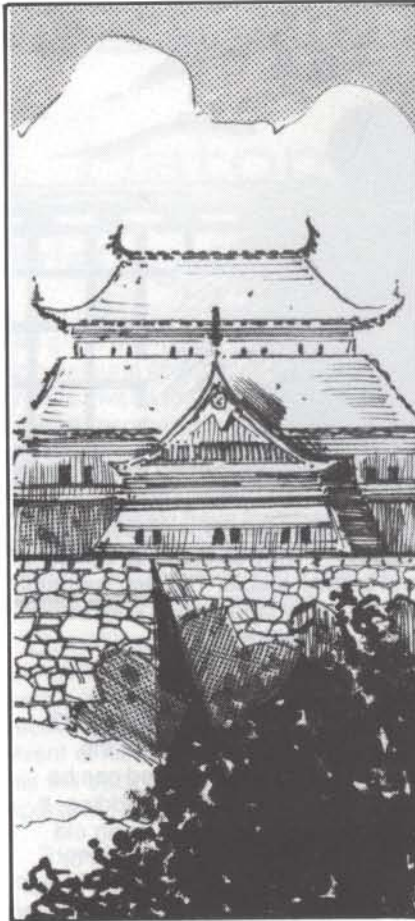
## Kaiida

The group leaves Okasaki city on a bright, clear day. The morning air steams from the mouths of the men and the nostrils of the pack horses Lord Saburo has supplied to carry the armor, extra weapons, personal goods of the adventurers, and the miscellaneous supplies, which the hatamoto neglected to mention, for delivery to the outpost.

Travel is uneventful as the group wends its way higher into the mountains. On the fifth day, the morning is foggy and chill. The exertions of travel soon warm the body and the trail leading out of the valley in which the adventurers spent the night takes them out of the fog.

Shortly after noon, the group clears the final rise, to gaze down into the valley wherein lies the village and outpost of Kaiida. The vantage point allows a clearer view of the layout of the valley. What looks to be the whole population of the village is out in the paddies planting rice seedlings. Vagrant breezes waft snatches of the music and song that accompanies the traditional rituals. Across the river the small fort flies banners with the Uesigi mon. But all is not perfect; even from here, one can see that the river is running high and fast.

As the group moves down the trail onto the valley floor, the gate of the jizamurai's compound opens and a figure rides out to meet them. Dismounting, he says, "Good day, samurai, and welcome to Kaiida. I am Tobe Yoshi. You are the relief for the fort?"



He awaits their names and confirmation of his guess as to their reason for being here. He then says, "Regrettably, the snows of winter were deep, and the mountain kami send much water with the thaw. The ford is closed. I shall be honored to host such noble samurai at my house until the waters recede. Your men shall be quartered among the villagers. Please come. You must be tired."

The jizamurai leads them to the compound. He calls for servants to attend the horses and arrange for quarters for the ashigaru. Once his guests are settled, they meet his wife, Kaiko. Dinner is served. It is a fine, if rustic, affair marred only by the clumsiness of the servants, which brings profuse apologies from the jizamurai.

The adventurers are advised to settle in to wait for the waters to go down. Attempts to contact the fort are doomed to failure. No other fords are available and the fort's garrison knows it. They will not attempt to contact the relief group, for they know it is only a matter of time before the waters go down. It seems that the adventurers are in for an unexpected bit of rest and relaxation before taking up their new duties.

## Semblances

All is not well in Kaiida. The jizamurai and his wife are not whom they seem. They are ninja agents employed by the Shiki clan. Their mission is to infiltrate Kaiida and undermine the garrison of the fort, preparing it for takeover by Shiki forces.

They have killed the real jizamurai family and taken their place. The servants are drugged to numb their minds and prevent them from revealing the deception. The villagers, who never had close contact with Tobe Yoshi anyway, have been easy to fool. A new garrison should have been even easier.

The river has forced the ninja to play their roles and host the samurai of the relief garrison. This close proximity will make the deception very difficult to pull off. The ninja are nervous. Given the slightest indication that the adventurers have noticed anything amiss, they set into motion plans to dispose of the relief force.

To rid themselves of these troublesome Uesigi, the ninja first develop a mythical monster. Using a mask, ninja devices and skills, they will begin to frighten off the ashigaru. Once the "reality" of the monster is established, the samurai can be killed and their deaths laid at the monster's feet. Of course, a few villagers must be killed as well to add to the mood and lend verisimilitude to the monster.

The plan will begin well. Two or three of the ashigaru will desert each night the monster appears. The ninja, however, face the pressure of time. The longer the adventurers stay at the house, the likelier they are to notice discrepancies and to discover that the ninja are impersonating the jizamurai. Also, the river will eventually go down, and the samurai from the fort will join the hunt for the "monster." A meeting with those samurai, some of whom knew Tobe Yoshi well, will be unavoidable. This was to have been avoided by pleading illness when the old garrison left.

Either ninja can play the "monster" though at first only the male will do so. If suspicion begins to fall on him being the monster, he can appear while the "monster" does its nefarious work elsewhere.



Playing the "monster" and guarding against discovery each night will tire the ninja out. Each morning they appear haggard and drawn. It becomes harder and harder for them to maintain their personae as jizamurai. What begins with not knowing the location of household items escalates to forgetting social graces. Also, their tempers will flare with the servants, who, in their drugged haze, continue to be clumsy, sloppy, and forgetful; a condition soon to be noticed as abnormal.

You, as the gamemaster, should carefully orchestrate the increasing pressure on the ninja and their mounting desperation. Mistakes might be made which can lead even the dumbest samurai to discover their nature. The lord should not open till they have dealt with the "monster."

Foiling another Shiki plot will stand the adventurers in good stead with their Uesigi masters, and rewards of increased stipends (+10-20%) or fine arms and/or armor are in order. Of course, such recognition will probably bring them to the attention of Shiki spies. The Shiki might decide that such effective agents of the Uesigi must be stopped, perhaps even made the targets of a ninja assassination attempt.

## The Jizamurai Compound

The grounds are surrounded by an eight foot wall. The courtyard is of hard-packed earth. The mansion has a veranda encircling it which may be closed up with wooden shutters. Other buildings in the compound include the servants' quarters, a

separate bathhouse, a pigeon roost (empty -- "They all died this winter."), and a small stable. The rear gardens are tastefully landscaped and feature a koi (goldfish) pond.

**Master's Quarters:** ordinary furnishings and appointments. The letter from Lord Saburo that the player-characters delivered can be found stuffed amidst the bedding. It gives greetings to Yoshi as an old companion and asks for a visit or a letter. "Yoshi" has said nothing about the contents nor any relationship with Lord Saburo. Behind a wooden panel, the ninja keep their stock of devices, their swords, and their black garb. The secret compartment is their own addition, but it would require a very sharp eye or a deliberate examination to spot the slightly flawed carpentry work which sets the panel off from its neighbors.

**Public Room:** this room is for the jizamurai's business. At one end is a platform with an armrest to accompany the sitting mat. Behind the platform, the wall sports a painting of cranes and carp.

**Storeroom:** household goods and supplies are stored here. The family strongbox is here as well. It contains 35 bars of silver (worth 450 pennies total) and 3 gold 1-koku coins. The ninja cannot open it, for they have not found the key. Among the boxes is a chest containing clothes, make-up supplies, and kabuki masks. One of the masks is used for the "monster's" face. If asked, the ninja claim that the chest was left when an actor was staying in the village. He was drowned crossing the river. The chest actually belongs to the ninja. It is part of the traveling disguise.

**Kitchen:** unlike the rest of the house, the floor is packed earth. A fire is always going here, though the cook may be elsewhere. Among the kitchen supplies is hidden a vial of the drug the ninja are using to dull the wits of the servants.

**Main Room:** all meals are served here. The takanoma area features a Chinese brush painting of cranes. A cabinet holds a small collection of netsuke carvings built around the theme of legendary creatures. This was the inspiration for the "monster" idea.

**Practice Room (dojo):** the room has a polished hardwood floor. It is bare of furnishings except for racks holding wooden weapons and a suit of armor in one corner. The suit is too large for "Yoshi," who claims it was his father's armor -- his is too poor for display. Note that it is the only suit of armor in the house. "Yoshi" practices here in the mornings, and "Kaiko" (using naginata) in the evening.

**Guest Rooms:** these are where the adventurers will be put up. They are well-appointed, but ordinary. One tatami mat in one of the rooms, if turned over, reveals a small brown stain, an overlooked spot of blood from the murdered Kaiko.

## The Monster

Wearing an oni mask, black ninja garb, and a patchwork of smelly skins, one of the ninja stalks the night, terrorizing the village. Phosphorescent paint for the mask's eyes and a flammable liquid sprayed through the mouthpiece of the mask add to the horrible aspect of the apparition. Smoke bombs and ninja skill make for sudden appearances and disappearances.

As the monster, the ninja are armed with nekode covered in filth to infect the wounds of any survivors.

The preferred method of attack is by surprise from behind when a kill is intended. A showy appearance is used when, in the ninja's estimation, the victim is likely to flee. A lone person fleeing the valley is likely to be devoured by wolf packs, ravenous from the cold winter, who roam the surrounding mountains. If such an unfortunate is found, his death is likely to be attributed to the monster despite any evidence of wolf prints.



# Hatomato's Illness

The player-characters are sent on a simple mission by their daimyo to pay his respects to a dying man. The hatamoto Masaki Otomaro, a long-time confidante of Lord Uesigi, is gravely ill, and little hope remains for his recovery. The player-characters are charged with bringing various tokens of the daimyo's esteem to his dying friend, and, after the sad event, carrying the hatamoto's will back to their lord for inspection.

The player-characters soon learn that the hatamoto's illness is not what it seems, and this discovery plunges them into a chaotic mystery involving an ancient wrong, a vengeful heart, and danger from beyond the grave.

This adventure requires a good deal of detective work by the adventurers, and you must fine-tune the manner in which clues are gathered. Some players love to solve mysteries, while others prefer to bull their way on through. You must adjust the scenario to fit your players' tastes.

## Who Should Play

Most adventurers involved in this mission would logically be samurai in service to Lord Uesigi. The mission might also include auxiliary members, such as a doctor, priest, or even a sorcerer. Non-samurai may also attend the band as servants, though a ronin or two might occupy intermediate positions as bodyguards. Ronin are treated as heimin by the buke met in this adventure, since the tale takes place in a highly organized stronghold of the landed class.

The leader of the mission should be a samurai courtier or a senior samurai warrior with some background in the courtly arts. This is a diplomatic mission, not a war party.



## Briefing

A clan official summons the samurai and gives them their orders. Non-samurai going on the mission are not invited to this meeting -- it is for clan members only.

"The noble hatamoto, Masaki Otomaro, is very ill, and he may soon die. The Masaki have long been among our noble lord's most loyal vassals, and the hatamoto's loss will be grievously felt by our clan.

"Lord Uesigi has ordered that a delegation be sent to the Masaki estate, to present his good wishes for recovery to the hatamoto. In the sad event of his death, you are to bring his will back to Lord Uesigi, for his approval.

"However, you are also required to observe conditions in the Masaki fief. Especially seek signs of potential disturbances that might follow Otomaro's death. While you reside in the Masaki manor and travel about the fief, watch secretly for any signs of treachery. Do nothing which might cause bad feeling between the Masaki family and our noble lord. Your inquiries must be deft and subtle, lest the Masaki feel that they are not trusted.

"Here are letters of introduction to present to the Masaki upon your arrival. Here is another letter, which empowers the mission leader to act with the full authority of the daimyo. You must not use this second letter unless it is absolutely necessary. Abuse of its authority would be most unfortunate.

"If there are no questions, you may make your preparations. You leave at first light."

If any of the samurai wish to ask questions, the official answers them as best he can. He can provide the following information:

What is the nature of the illness? "The hatamoto suffers from a painful and lingering fever, which sometimes causes fits during sleep. After such fits, the hatamoto is left very weak. Each fit leaves him weaker than the one before. Eventually, this will kill him."



Has no one tried to cure him? "Many wise doctors have announced themselves baffled by the disease. Holy priests have likewise failed to effect a cure. It was thought that the hatamoto might be suffering from some evil curse, and spells were placed around the manor to keep malign influences away, but this has not prevented further seizures."

What sort of political disturbances are we to watch for? "Rumors have reached us that certain retainers, possibly even members, of the Masaki family have been in contact with the Shiki (a rival clan). The Masaki holdings are on our border with the Shiki. Disloyalty in such a strategic location would be disastrous."



How long as the hatamoto been ill? "The illness first manifested as a minor weakness and slight fever a month ago."

Who heads the Masaki with the hatamoto ill? "Otomaro's son, Buntaro, is acting as head of the family during his father's illness. He is heir-presumptive to his father's land and titles."

Do the Masaki know of our coming? "A courier was sent with the news this morning."

The official can also name and describe important members of the Masaki family for the samurai (Otomaro, Buntaro, Akiko, and Nenjo). In addition, he can give them information about the geography of the fief).

This is the only concrete information the official can provide. On other subjects, he either pleads ignorance or gives the samurai his own uninformed opinion, at your option, as the gamemaster.



## Gamemaster's Information

This story begins 50 years ago, during the life of Masaki Nagamasa, father to Otomaro. Nagamasa was a violent and brooding man, a ferocious warrior, and a terrible enemy. Like his son, he commanded the armies of the daimyo. His tactics depended more on frontal assaults and bloody clashes than clever strategy.

Nagamasa, a widower at the age of 42, had lost all his sons in battle. Loathe to let control of the Masaki family pass from his line to that of his brother, he sought a wife through whom he might produce an heir. He married Amasa Chikuko, the 16-year-old daughter of a neighboring samurai family and, to his delight, their marriage produced issue within a year (Otomaro). With the family succession assured, Nagamasa's brother entered the Buddhist priesthood, taking the name Nenjo.

Five years after the marriage, it became evident to Nagamasa that his wife was unfaithful; he returned from a year's campaign to find her several months pregnant! In a fit of rage he slew her. The half-insane Nagamasa acted without thinking, as usual, for he now had no means of learning who his wife's lover had been. It was therefore necessary to conceal the deed, for under

Nihonese law, it is only lawful to kill an unfaithful wife if her lover is also killed. Nagamasa was now legally guilty of murder, punishable by death. Nagamasa hid Chikuko's body in the caves north of his manor house. In a final burst of fury and frustration, he pinned her corpse to the cave floor with his sword, a prized family heirloom.

Chikuko had been murdered and the rites of burial had been withheld. Thus, her spirit did not pass on, but lingered upon earth as a goryo, a vengeful ghost.

Meanwhile, Mikoshi Tadanobu, a youthful samurai in Masaki's household and Chikuko's secret lover, vowed revenge upon his vicious master and all his line.

Six years after Chikuko's death, at the age of 53, Nagamasa himself died. He died insane and screaming, haunted by visions of his murdered wife. This was hushed up by his newly-appointed steward: Mikoshi Tadanobu. Otomaro, only ten years old, was approved as heir by the daimyo, under the guardianship of his uncle, the monk Nenjo. Nenjo returned from his monastery to ward Otomaro until his nephew attained his majority.



Thirty-five years passed quietly. In that time:

Otomaro has risen to become one of Lord Uesigi's principle counsellors and finest generals. He married young and produced a son, Buntaro, whose mother died in childbirth. Hatamoto, disconsolate, remained a widow for many years.

Nenjo has become sojo (abbot) of his monastery.

Tadanobu has become bailiff of the Masaki estates, in full control of the family's lands and finances. For duty's sake, he married and produced six sons. He is now a widower.

Three years ago, Otomaro met and fell in love with Toshimaki Akiko, daughter of a jizamurai family from a far-distant province. Despite Buntaro's objections, Otomaro sought and received the permission of the daimyo to marry her. Otomaro's joy became complete several months ago, when Akiko became pregnant. Shortly after this happy event, his illness came upon him.

This disease is not of natural origin. It is caused by the vengeful spirit of his own mother, the murdered Chikuko. Chikuko has possessed Akiko, and is using her to provide a gateway into the manor, where she nightly drains Otomaro's vitality.

## Arrival at Masaki Manor

The journey from the clan capital is swift and uneventful. In a day or two, the mission arrives at the manor house of Masaki Otomaro.

A band of mounted samurai awaits the emissaries on the road. They politely ask to see their letters of identity. The soldiers escort the party to the manor house, with all the ceremony due an embassy from their daimyo. Outriders clear the road of passersby, conches are wined, etc.

The hatamoto's family and senior retainers wait in the courtyard to welcome the emissaries.

First, a burly young man dressed in elegant clothes welcomes them to his father's home. This is Masaki Buntaro, Otomaro's only son and the heir to his estates. He greets the emissaries in an abrupt, not quite openly rude, manner. He pointedly remarks that this very morning his father took a turn for the worse, and that the end appears to be very near. He states that the family's grief leaves it little energy to spare on other matters. He introduces the emissaries to Mikoshi Tadanobu, "The most capable retainer of the Masaki." Tadanobu is a slender sexagenarian, accompanied by two strapping samurai warriors, clearly his sons. If complimented on them, Tadanobu smiles and says he has six sons in all. A dignified Buddhist priest, dressed in the saffron robes of a simple monk, is introduced by Buntaro as his great-uncle, Nenjo.

After the introductions are finished and the emissaries' horses and servants led off, the samurai members of the party (along with any doctors, priests, or sorcerers) are conducted into the manor. After bathing and changing into formal dress, they are introduced to an exquisitely beautiful young woman: the hatamoto's wife, Akiko. Akiko greets them warmly, her modest manner combining with her really remarkable looks to make a deep impression on her visitors. She makes a point of speaking gratefully to any doctors and priests in the group who hope to cure Otomaro, urging them to do all they can for her dearly beloved husband-lord.

## Getting Settled

After all the greetings, and in the wake of the rapid journey to the manor, the emissaries are doubtless fatigued and hungry. Servants tend to these wants and help the emissaries get settled in the manor's guest rooms. The samurai, doctors, priests, and sorcerers are given an apartment in the manor. Non-samurai with the party are quartered with the household servants.

**A Note on Etiquette:** under no circumstances would the samurai, or any ronin bodyguards, wear any armor whatsoever in the manor house. As guests, they should carry only the wakizashi, without the katana. When traveling around the fief, they may wear both swords. Heavy weapons (spears, long bows) may not be carried at all, though ronin acting as bodyguards may carry an extra weapon when escorting their masters around the fief. As honored representatives of the daimyo, the emissaries may keep their armor and all their weapons in their rooms, rather than leaving them at the main gatehouse, as is customary. Generally, no armor is worn at the manor, only kimonos.



## At the Sickbed

The emissaries have yet to meet the man responsible for their presence, the dying Masaki Otomaro. If they ask to visit the sickroom, there is momentary opposition. Akiko is distressed, saying that the hatamoto is resting after a difficult day. Buntaro states the same objection, in stronger terms. However, before an argument gets fully started, the monk Nenjo gently reminds all present that a visit from messengers of Lord Uesigi can only hearten Otomaro. Without permitting time for further disagreement, Nenjo offers to conduct the visiting samurai to Otomaro's chambers.

Otomaro's outer rooms are of spartan simplicity. A magnificent suit of armor is displayed on a stand in one corner. Close inspection reveals that the armor, though well-kept, is covered with the marks of many battles. Opposite the armor is a sword-rack, bearing several weapons of great quality. However, the topmost place in the rack holds an empty scabbard. If this is commented on, Nenjo remarks that the family's most prized heirloom, a master weapon, has been lost for decades. It was lost after Nenjo entered the monastery, and he is unclear on details of the incident.

A young monk is in attendance at Otomaro's bedroom door. With a deep bow to Nenjo, he murmurs that the hatamoto is resting quietly after a day of torment. Signing to the visitors for quiet, Nenjo leads them into the sickroom.

Another monk is by Otomaro's bedside, sponging away the sick man's perspiration. Herbs, burned to purify the air, cannot conceal the foul stench of disease. An elderly man, features drawn and yellow with fever, lies upon the heavy futon (bed). The bedclothes are stained with sweat. Otomaro's flesh has shrunken to a mere covering for his bones. The corded muscles of a lifetime swordsman are slack and withered. A man with the hairstyle of a physician, wearing a kimono bearing the Masaki mon, stands by the bedside. This is Sakai Tamamura, family physician to the Masaki.



## Medical Report

Tamamura explains to any medical specialists among the visitors that life is almost extinguished. If the deadly seizures continue, death will come swiftly. Even if they cease, Otomaro is still likely to die within a few days.

The emissaries may have many questions about the hatamoto's condition and the procedures used to treat it. Sickroom security may also be on their minds. The following information is freely shared with the emissaries on request:

Tamamura and any of the monks, including Nenjo, can tell the emissaries little about the disease which they have not already heard. The deadly fits which advance the disease's progress always come at night, and without any warning. Following the fit, it often takes heroic doses of stimulants to keep Otomaro alive.

The progress of the disease seems impossible to reverse. Medical remedies, magic spells, even divine spells, have no lasting effect. If any emissary tries his own magic, he discovers that this, too, fails.

Professional magic defenses have been placed about the manor without helping the hatamoto in the least. It seems no ordinary magical or supernatural influence could breach these defenses.

Otomaro's chambers are guarded day and night, and the monks are constantly in attendance. The hatamoto is never left alone.

## Sickwatch

One of the more obvious things the emissaries may wish to do is set up a watch in the sickroom, seeking some insight into Otomaro's condition. Watching over the hatamoto by day reveals little. The dying man is unconscious most of the time, and during his brief periods of awareness, he is delirious, muttering in a barely audible voice of his mother, his wife, his unborn son, and his mother again.

Anyone present in the sickroom overnight may learn much -- if he has the power and wit to do so.

In the hour of the Rat (about 2 am), a remarkable series of events come to pass. Anyone present in Otomaro's chambers (the outer room or the bed chamber), feels a wave of dizziness and drowsiness sweep over them. Give the players only a few seconds to decide how their characters try to resist this sensation. Pain from a self-inflicted wound resists the drowsiness automatically (1 point of damage is sufficient). Proper mental focus also resists the drowsiness. This can be done by the successful use of an intellectual or verbal skill, such as Poetry or Singing. Successful meditation (i.e., Ceremony) also serves to focus the user's concentration against sleep. Proper use of mental focus permits the user to attempt a POW x 4 roll. If the POW roll succeeds, the user remains awake.



Any character that does not actively resist the drowsiness, or whose attempt to do so fails, automatically falls into a magical sleep. He cannot be awakened by any means. All the non-player-characters present fall asleep automatically, except for Nenjo, if he is there. The characters can see Nenjo's face working as he struggles against the effect. Any action by an alert character to awaken Nenjo succeeds, making his powers available in the ensuing events. If no one assists Nenjo, he, too, falls asleep.

If at least one person is conscious, he sees a flickering shadow, barely visible in the dim light, floating through the hatamoto's outer room, into his sickroom. The dark form moves towards the dying noble's bed. As it hovers by Otomaro's side, he begins to choke and moan before the horrified gaze of the emissary's eyes.

If opposed physically, the shadow proves to be incorporeal. It cannot be grabbed; blows pass through it unimpeded. Chikuko will not initiate spirit combat with the adventurers. If they try and block her from Otomaro, she simply passes through them, giving them a momentary chill.

A Spirit Block 2 cast upon Otomaro protects him from Chikuko's attack. If Spirit Screen 5 or greater is cast, Chikuko simply waits five minutes till the spell expires, then attacks again. If a second Spirit Screen is cast, she will depart. Spirit Resistance will not dissuade her. Any spell attacking POW or INT affects Chikuko to a limited degree. If such a spell overcomes her magic points, she vanishes, transported back into Akiko's body. No offensive spell has any other effect upon her.

Spells allowing the user to see onto the spirit plane (Second Sight, Soul Sight, or Mystic Vision with an intensity of 5+) reveal the apparent form of the dark spirit. Upon casting such a spell, the user sees the form of Akiko, Otomaro's wife, bending over the fever-wracked form of her husband. Her features are drawn into a snarl of feral hatred.

If the viewer has a Mystic Vision of intensity 10 or more, or succeeds in a Scan roll, he notices a shadow within the image of Akiko. If he then casts a second Soul Sight or Second Sight spell, or casts a Dismiss, Dispel, or Neutralize Magic spell capable of eliminating a 4-point spell, or intensifies his Mystic Vision to 15

or more, the vision of Akiko shimmers and changes for that viewer only. The ghost now appears as another beautiful young woman, one unknown to the viewer. Though she has shed Akiko's form, the ghost still appears to be several months pregnant. She is dressed in bloodstained clothes of fine cut, the costume of a samurai noblewoman. Her hair is long and tangled, sure sign of a ghost driven to insane fury by untimely death. Further spell casting or Scans do not alter this image, suggesting that it is the true one.

If Nenjo is present, he can cast Soul Sight and Illusory Sight at the same time, permitting all present to see the apparition.

If not stopped, the ghost spends two or three minutes draining more of Otomaro's life, and then leaves the bed chamber, vanishing from sight. If balked of her prey, or if her true appearance is revealed, she flees rapidly, vanishing from sight as she goes. Otomaro has another fit. A few more nights like this and it will be all over.

A few seconds after she has departed, any sleeping individuals in the hatamoto's chambers awaken, and are obviously unaware that they ever slept. All remember only sitting and watching. None remember anything of the dizziness or drowsy sensation. Anyone claiming that the various guards, doctors, and other attendants slept is ridiculed.

Any inquiries about Akiko's whereabouts are told that the lady retired early to her chambers. Her maids and the guards around her quarters testify that she has not left her rooms all night. Any emissaries trying to rush to Akiko's rooms while the spirit is still in the hatamoto's rooms must argue with the guards outside her door. If they force entry, they find Akiko sleeping peacefully. Such behavior on the emissaries' part will greatly anger Buntaro.

Any description of the ghost's true appearance draws a blank from the manor's residents. The description matches no one in the manor. The only person who recognizes their description of Chikuko is Tadanobu. He still denies any knowledge of the woman, but is alarmed at the discovery, and takes certain measures described below (under TADANOBU'S PLOTS). If Nenjo sees the ghost, he recognizes Chikuko at once.

## Exorcising Akiko

If the emissaries determine Akiko's involvement in the situation, they must figure out what to do about it. This is a terribly delicate situation.

Accusing Akiko herself of attacking Otomaro by magic is worse than useless. For one thing, it is untrue. Akiko is an innocent pawn of Chikuko. Such an accusation enrages Akiko, who is furious that anyone could accuse her of such a crime against her husband. If the emissaries confront Akiko, claiming that Chikuko has taken control of her, their plans are likely to backfire. Chikuko will either let Akiko stay in control, in which case Akiko naturally assumes that the emissaries are insane, or Chikuko might takeover and put on an act of outraged innocence. Chikuko prefers to stay in covert possession of Akiko, taking over her victim only if it appears that the emissaries have discovered her presence and identity. Even if Chikuko takes control of Akiko, she still pretends to be Akiko unless the emissaries take open action against her or enlist the aid of a powerful foe such as Nenjo. In such a case, the furious ghost loses her temper and attacks the emissaries and those aiding them with magic and, if she can, a naginata. She will behave like a madwoman.

Subtle handling of the affair is also possible to Chikuko. If she suspects that the emissaries are acting against her secretly, she takes control of Akiko and accuses one of the visiting samurai of rape! This will send Buntaro into an absolute frenzy of rage, with results described later (under THE ANGER OF BUNTARO).

See Chikuko's description for details on the nature of her possession of Akiko.



## Nenjo to the Rescue

Nenjo can assist the emissaries if they come to him with a concrete story of Akiko's possession, or if he has seen the ghost himself. Nenjo counsels patience in dealing with the situation, especially if it appears that Akiko herself is behind the attacks.

Once Nenjo knows Chikuko's true identity, he attempts to confront and reason with his deceased sister-in-law. This simply enrages Chikuko, who attacks Nenjo at once. The emissaries who should be present, should try to protect Nenjo and, if possible, subdue Akiko's body without harming her.

Nenjo undertakes to exorcise Chikuko from Akiko only if the emissaries are unable to do so, or if they try and fail. Nenjo's attempt to exorcise Chikuko is a failure. After this defeat, he loans his magic lamp to one of the emissaries to try to conquer Chikuko. If this also fails, Nenjo retires to his chambers to fast and meditate, gathering his efforts for one last supreme effort. This last supreme effort is a success, and drives Chikuko from her unwilling hostess. However, it breaks Nenjo's spirit, and, after the family crisis (i.e., the scenario) is over, he leaves immediately for his monastery to resign his post as sojo and take up the life of an ordinary monk. You may wish to impress the player-characters with pyrotechnics, shrieking spirits, and similar special effects during Nenjo's ultimate effort to oust Chikuko.

Chikuko, driven from Akiko's body, vanishes into smoke. However, the deadly spell she has cast on Otomaro remains in force. Though Otomaro now will suffer no more deadly seizures (the magic barrier around the manor keeps out Chikuko now -- it was useless earlier since she was already inside the manor), he is so pitifully weak already that his death is only a matter of time. The visiting samurai must still resolve the ancient mystery and restore the karmic balance if Otomaro is to be saved.



## Questions and Answers

The visiting samurai and their aides and retainers must do a fair amount of detective work around the fief. Several lines of investigation can be pursued to good end. You should force the players to roleplay these inquiries, providing information only when they ask the right question in the right place.

Clues may be obtained from any one of five sources:

**Retainers:** Masaki retainers in the manor house can be questioned by visiting samurai or physicians. They never deign to discuss matters with non-samurai.

**Servants:** the servants in the manor house can be questioned by anyone. However, they will tell samurai only what they think the samurai most wants to hear.

**Townfolk:** the people of Danshiro and the nearby village are best questioned by non-samurai, for most heimin become nervous when speaking with samurai and it may take some effort to get full answers from them.

**Archives:** the Masaki family owns extensive archives including family histories, contracts, and other records. These can be researched for clues by anyone able to read Japanese (a successful Read Japanese skill is needed for each item). The old archivist tries to aid in these inquiries, but he is so absent-minded that all he can do is wave his hands helplessly while scuttling around the dusty shelves seeking a particular record.



The clues are listed by subject. If the characters ask the right question in an environment where an answer exists, they get the answer listed below. If they ask any other question, their informant may make up an answer or truthfully claim ignorance.

If the emissaries are unsubtle in asking their questions, their investigation may come to the attention of Buntaro, who will then consider them to be "rude, nosy emissaries, with no respect for family troubles." Such openness may also alert Tadanobu that the emissaries are on the trail of his secret, depending on just how transparent the emissaries have been.



*Tell us about Lord Nagamasa, Otomaro's father.*

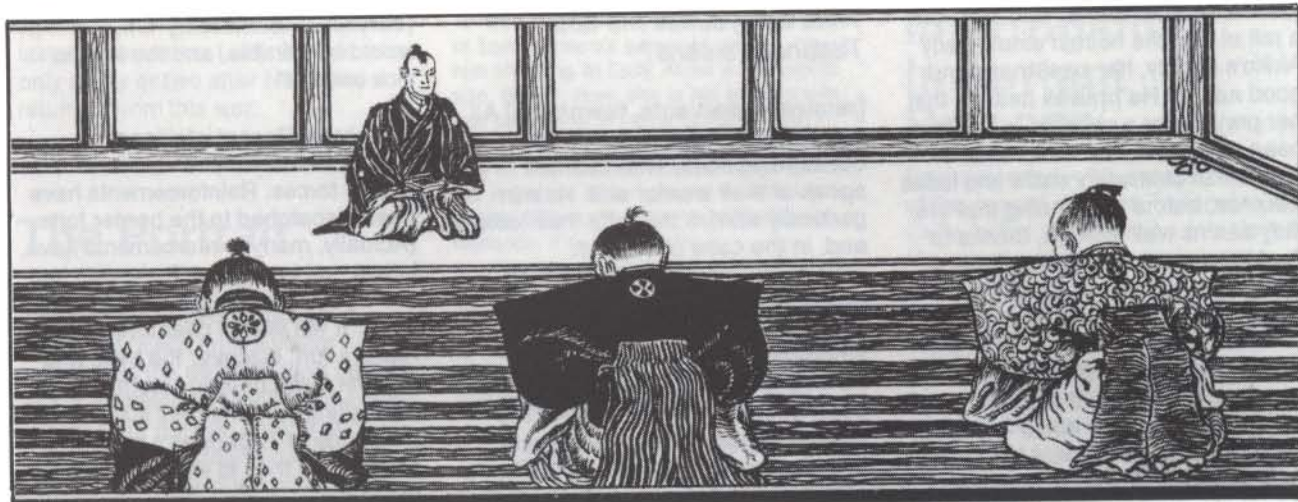
**[retainers, servants, townfolk]:** "Masaki Nagamasa was a hard man all right. He was given to bouts of fury when disappointed. When he commanded troops for the Uesigi, he always took his objective, but he was profligate in spending soldiers to do so. He was adamant about passing control of the family on to a son of his own -- he wouldn't consider adoption. That's why he remarried in his later years, after all his sons by his first marriage died. Some say he forced his only brother to become a monk so he couldn't inherit if Nagamasa failed to produce an heir." (If Nenjo is asked about this, he won't either confirm or deny it.)

*How did Lord Nagamasa die?*

**[retainers, servants]:** "Funny you should speak of it. He had a sudden onset of fever or plague and died very suddenly, just like ..." (the speaker breaks off suddenly, in superstitious dread of referring to Lord Otomaro's impending death). "Anyway, Lord Otomaro was just a child, so our daimyo asked his uncle Nenjo, to act as regent until the boy came of age. Nenjo took good care of things for, oh, seven or eight years."

**[townfolk]:** "Seems to me he died of (choose one; old wounds, assassination, illness, etc.)." The townfolk know only rumors as to the old lord's death, so many years past.





**[archives]:** a report from a physician is found, addressed to Regent Nenjo. It is dated at the time of Nagamasa's death, about 45 years ago. It details the progress of Nagamasa's illness, which is remarkably similar to Otomaro's, with this exception; instead of becoming comatose, Nagamasa was violent and delirious with agony. He screamed the name of his dead wife, Chikuko, over and over again till a final fit killed him. If this report is shown to Buntaro, he becomes very upset, convinced that this proves someone has hired assassins to kill his father. If the report is shown to Nenjo, he denies ever seeing it before. In reality, Tadanobu buried the report in the archives, preventing anyone from seeing it.

*Tell us about Lady Chikuko, Otomaro's mother.*

**[retainers, servants, townsfolk]:** "Masaki Chikuko was Lord Nagamasa's second wife; his first wife had died years before. All of Nagamasa's sons by his first wife had passed on. Lord Otomaro was born after they'd been married a year."

**[archives]:** research for records on Chikuko reveals that all records of Nagamasa's second marriage have been removed from the records. If the archivist is asked about this, he observes that this was the case when he took over the records, some thirty years back. He recalls that Lord Nagamasa ordered numerous records destroyed several years before his death. It is made to appear that Nagamasa removed the records, though Tadanobu actually did so.

*Who still remembers Lord Nagamasa and his wife?*

**[retainers, servants, townsfolk]:** "Oh, some of the older retainers, and Nenjo-sojo, of course. I would think that anyone else, even Lord Otomaro, would have been too young to remember the old Lord or his wife very well."

**[archives]:** the only record of any use is an order to the people of a farming village 10 km north of the manor, in the hills. It provides for a pension, maintained by the people of the village, to be provided to an old housemaid. Her age suggests that she was in service in Lord Nagamasa's time. The pension is rather a handsome one for an old servant who was not even of buke birth. (This note refers to Old Nurse, described below under AN OLD NURSE.)

*Tell us about Buntaro, Otomaro's son.*

**[retainers, servants]:** "Buntaro-sama is a fine warrior, but awfully hasty when he is angry." Those who have served with him in battle add, "He is a bold commander, leading the charges personally. He prefers frontal assault to strategy." While no one says so in so many words, it is obvious that most of the manor's residents agree that he is not the man his father was.

**[townsfolk]:** "Oh, Buntaro-sama is a fine young man, a perfect samurai. Of course, he is not as gentle a man as his father." Older heimin may remark that he reminds them much more of his grandfather, Nagamasa.

*Who is Buntaro's heir?*

**[retainers]** "Oh, very sad that. Buntaro's young wife died many years ago. Probably his uncle Nenjo would have to renounce his priesthood and take over the family in the event of Buntaro's death. Lord Buntaro does not seem to like women, and he has chosen not to remarry for that reason. He seems more at home in the company of other warriors." This latter is common among samurai.

**[servants]** "Oh, very sad that. Buntaro's young wife died many years ago and he has not remarried. Otomaro and Buntaro used to argue terribly -- the hatamoto insisted that Buntaro remarry and produce an heir. Buntaro was reluctant to do so. The old lord once yelled, 'If you won't do your duty to the clan, I'll have to marry again and do it for you!'"

**[townsfolk]** "Oh, very sad that. Buntaro-sama wed in his youth, at least ten years ago. His wife miscarried and died. He has never remarried. Maybe Lady Akiko would rule the clan in the event of Buntaro's taking sick."

*What can you tell me about Lady Akiko?*

**[retainers]** "Well, when Lord Otomaro first married her, the daughter of a poor jizamurai, I don't mind saying that some family retainers and even family members, were put out. But now every samurai of the Masaki would gladly die to save Lady Akiko from the slightest danger or pain." It is rather obvious that all the retainers worship her.

**[servants, townsfolk]** Roll 1d6. On a roll of 1-5, the heimin extols Lady Akiko's charity, her sweetness and good nature. He praises heaven that her prayers for a child have finally been answered. But on a roll of 6, the heimin cautiously sniffs and looks askance, before mentioning that the lady seems well enough, thanks to the kindness of Lord Otomaro in marrying a woman so far beneath him socially.

**[archives]** The archives produce the marriage contract and records. The dowry is surprisingly small -- a token only. The bride price paid by Otomaro was very large -- larger than that asked by Akiko's father. Looks like a love match, all right.

*What can you tell me about Nenjo-sojo?*

**[retainers]** The older retainers remember Nenjo very well, from his time as regent of the Masaki lands after Nagamasa died. "He performed his duties flawlessly. Since it was a time of peace, his ability to lead the family in war was never an issue."

**[servants, townsfolk]** "Oh, Nenjo-sojo is a mighty and holy priest. Buddha cannot help but smile on our lands while he is here."

**[archives]** The archives naturally have complete records of Nenjo's regency. These show a pattern of excellent and cunning management, coupled with rare diplomacy and political skill.

*What can you tell me about Mikoshi Tadanobu?*

**[retainers]** "Oh, Tadanobu is all right, if you like scholars. Now, his sons are all splendid fellows. Very devoted to him."

**[servants]** "A fair man, Tadanobu-sama, but very stern about the accounts."

**[townsfolk]** "A very fair man, Tadanobu-sama, but the taxes had best be correct every year or you are in great trouble with him."

**[archives]** All archive records prepared by Tadanobu are in letter-perfect condition. His term as bailiff began shortly after Otomaro became hatamoto (35 years ago). Before that, he was steward of the manor and its surrounding lands for a number of years.

*What can you tell me about Tadanobu's sons?*

**[retainers, servants, townsfolk]** All mention that Tadanobu has six outstanding sons. The retainers speak of their warrior skill. Heimin generally admire them for their looks and, in the case of some of them, their kindness. Pretty young maids and peasant girls may blush or giggle about one of the more amorous Mikoshi brothers. Be careful, though! A detailed description of such minor-seeming characters may hint to the players that they are in fact important. This is not good, for it lets the players guess at the plot due to a game mechanism, rather than from campaign events.

*Is there any hint of intrigue or spies among the Masaki?*

**[retainers]** roll 1d6:

1-3 -- the retainer laughs, and remarks that an enemy would have to be very foolish to try and subvert the brave and loyal Masaki.

4-5 -- the retainer laughs as above, but then looks thoughtful, shrugs, and says something to the effect that you hear many rumors when people get nervous. If questioned further, the retainer hints that nervous leaders make bad mistakes, but says nothing concrete.

6 -- the retainer over-reacts suspiciously. He may become too angry, with false rage that anybody could suspect Masaki samurai of treason. Or he may try to change the subject too quickly. Or he may simply seem nervous and upset. His response is suspicious because this retainer is involved in treasonable activities against the daimyo.

**[servants, townsfolk]** Questions along these lines simply get an astonished, "Well, do tell." response from the heimin.

If the player-characters decide to pursue this line, see below, under "TREASON IN SECRET."

*Are there any troubles with the Shiki?*

**[retainers]** "There are only rumors, and small patrol clashes. I must admit, though, that any such activity is disturbing with the family leadership under such tension." But all the retainers appear confident that any invasion can be countered. If you wish to speed matters up, you may allow this question to unmask one of the treacherous samurai, as described in the previous question.

**[servants, townsfolk]** "Oh, that would be horrible, and the lord so sick and all!"

**[archives]** Recent intelligence reports indicate a possible buildup of enemy forces. Reinforcements have been dispatched to the border forts. (Actually, many reinforcements have, in fact, not been sent. Tadanobu has managed to weaken the defense effort. It will take a rider three days to reach a fort, discover the trick, and another three days to return. If one of the visiting samurai tries such a thing, one of Tadanobu's sons follows and tries to kill him in the mountains.)

*Tell me a little of the history of Shiki and the Masaki.*

**[retainers]** "The problems go back several hundred years, ever since the Masaki became vassals of the Uesigi. The last major war was almost 45 years ago, when Lord Nagamasa was still alive. I remember that Lady Chikuko died just as that campaign ended."

**[servants, townsfolk]** "Oh, we have had troubles with them ever since anyone can remember. The last time we had a major war was almost 45 years ago, under Lord Nagamasa."

*What do you know about ghosts in the manor?*

**[retainers]** Masaki samurai think it is all nonsense. They may be afraid of ghosts (who isn't), but they pay no attention to peasant superstition.

**[servants, townsfolk]** "Oh, no! Scary ghosts?! It is bad enough with the haunted cave up in the mountains, without evil spirits attacking us all in our beds!" If the questioner pursues this line of questioning, the speaker admits that he has no idea where this cave is located, but everyone knows it is there.

*What about the family's missing heirloom sword?*

**[retainers]** The sword vanished during Lord Nagamasa's reign. No one recalls any details.

**[archives]** The sword vanished 45 years ago, shortly after Lady Chikuko's death. The last concrete reference to it is a record that Lord Nagamasa carried it when he rode out in the last major campaign

against the Shiki. This campaign lasted six months. Lady Chikuko died only a day or two after Nagamasa returned from this war.

## The Portrait

A special clue may be found in the archives, if the emissaries are persistent. Each time a visitor researches the archives long enough to ask a question, whether an answer is elicited or not, you should secretly roll on that character's Search skill. If the roll succeeds, then while he is reaching onto a high, dusty shelf for another scroll, a roll of cloth slips from behind the records and falls to the floor. Unrolling the cloth, which is heavy silk faded with age, he can see a portrait painted upon it, of a beautiful woman in courtly garments, admiring a nightingale perched upon a flowering shrub. If the person who discovers the scroll has seen the true appearance of Chikuko's ghost, he recognizes the portrait as of the same woman. Anyone succeeding at Evaluation, Craft: Painting, or some similar art appreciation skill identifies the style as a form of Chinese portraiture, popular among the nobility about half a century ago. Appropriate skills for this check are up to you, the gamemaster.

Any Masaki family member or retainer older than 45 years recognizes the subject of the portrait as Chikuko. Even Tadanobu will correctly identify the portrait, since to be caught doing otherwise would cause suspicion. Any reference to the portrait in the presence of Tadanobu or his sons alerts the vengeful bailiff that his plots are in danger, with the results described below, under TADANOBU'S PLOTS.

## Rumors

Rumors abound in the Masaki lands. However, no one will repeat a rumor to one of the daimyo's emissaries. If an emissary listens in on another's conversation (which requires an effort to do so and a successful Listen roll), he has a chance equal to his POW x5 to hear a rumor.

If the emissary is listening to a manor retainer or a servant's conversation, roll 1d4 for the rumor received. If he listens to a townsman's conversation, roll 1d6+2.

1. "Do you know, my cousin, who is one of Lord Buntaro's personal guards, heard him shouting at Lady Akiko a few nights ago. Really, now, she is his father's wife, and deserving of some courtesy, neh?" (Buntaro and Akiko have, in fact, been getting on each other's nerves lately, due to the immense strain caused by Otomaro's illness. This rumor has no particular significance, though it is true.)

2. "I hear that the emissaries from court (i.e., the player-characters) made Lord Buntaro so angry he threatened to make war on Lord Uesigi. Do you think it's true?" (This rumor is false.)

3. "Well, all I know is that the gatekeeper at Nenjo's monastery told the relic salesman that they were choosing anew abbot, because the old one wasn't returning! Something about a fief he inherited! What do you think of that?!" (This rumor is false.)

4. "I hear the daimyo's emissaries had a terrible fight with Lord Buntaro, and are going to convince the lord to take away his inheritance. Do you think it's true?" (This rumor is false. If it gives the emissaries any ideas, point out that the daimyo would not take away a lord's land on their say-so in any event.)

5. "My aunt is a cook at the manor house, and SHE says that the emissaries from the daimyo are a bunch of rowdies: drinking, chasing after the servant girls, and picking fights with the samurai. Isn't it terrible?" (This rumor is probably not true, but it depends on the characters' behavior.)

6. "That old woman gets worse every day. Just because the hatamoto ordered our village to provide her keep, I do think she'd be properly grateful and not complain so much. After all, why should an old servant get that kind of treatment?" (This refers to Old Nurse. If the emissaries decide to follow this clue up, see below under AN OLD NURSE.)

7. "Well, this samurai from the manor ran up a huge debt at the gaming tables, and the owner was going to complain to Buntaro-sama if it was not paid, so one night in comes the samurai with the whole payment, IN GOLD! What do you think of that?" (This samurai mentioned is in the pay of the Shiki, though the rumor-monger does not realize this. If the emissaries pursue this matter, they can get the samurai's name, and question him further, with results described above under the question "Is there any hint of intrigue or spies among the Masaki?")

8. "I had to go out by the haunted caves last night, and under a full moon, too. Eee, I thought I was going to go mad with fright. Never again, let me tell you." (This person can, if confronted, reveal the location of the haunted cave. You should make it sound like a local superstition, if possible. It is probably best if the emissaries don't tackle the cave until they know a bit more about the goings-on.)

## Interrogating Important Persons

Each interview with a major resident of the manor, such as Tadanobu, Lady Akiko, etc., must be roleplayed. You must answer the emissary's questions as best you can, using your own judgment as to how much that person knows, how honestly he is likely to answer questions, and his personality. Remember especially that overt or rude interrogating will anger Buntaro, with the results described under THE ANGER OF BUNTARO.

## An Old Nurse

If the emissaries follow up any of the several clues pointing to an ancient maidservant, pensioned off very generously in a farming village, they initiate an interesting chain of events. Old Nurse lives in the farming village shown on the map. She was established as a ward of the local peasants by order of Lord Nagamasa, shortly before his death (actually, this order came from Nagamasa's steward, Tadanobu). The villagers are required to provide food and take care of the old woman's other needs. While the peasants grumble about the old lady, they are secretly rather fond of her, and respect her as a wise person. She still advises the village midwife on difficult births and is a ready source of scolding mixed with excellent counsel for the young people.



Anyone in the village can direct the emissary's to Old Nurse's home, a small but scrupulously clean hut near the edge of the village. Entering the hut, the emissaries see a very old woman, possibly in her ninth decade, sharing tea with a tearful peasant woman. The old lady finishes a lengthy piece of advice to the woman before turning her attention to the emissaries. Old Nurse does not let the presence of samurai shorten her handling of the woman's case.

Old Nurse has a sharp tongue and fears nothing. She is an old lady who has seen almost everything, and not even samurai can make her nervous. She is not senile, but like many elderly folk finds that memories of a youthful past make more pleasant company than the aches of an aged present. She enjoys teasing handsome young men by flirting with them, well-aware that her looks are not what they were. She was very pretty in her younger days, and derives innocent pleasure from teasing fellows who would have been prostrate at her dainty feet 70 years ago.

Old Nurse answers the emissaries' questions with the following information: "Yes, I was nurse to Nagamasa in his childhood, and to Lord Otomaro, too. Between these tasks, I was lady's maid to Chikuko. Lady Chikuko was so pretty, and so sweet-natured. Nagamasa's foul temper made her sad. Perhaps that is why she took a lover. Even I do not know who it was -- Lady Chikuko was too clever for that." (At this point, Old Nurse begins to cry.) "I remember the night Lord Nagamasa returned, to find his wife with child by another. In a fit of rage, he killed my lovely Chikuko." (sobs)

The emissaries must now succeed in an Orate or Fast Talk, to get Old Nurse to speak on. An Honor x5 roll will also work, impressing Old Nurse with the emissary's forthrightness. If she speaks on, she says "That brute Nagamasa killed Chikuko before he thought to force her to name her lover. He feared discovery, so he carried off her body and hid it somewhere. He told everyone she had died of a sudden illness, and held fake funeral rites over an empty coffin." An INT x5 or a Human Lore roll permits any emissary to recall that it is murder to kill only one of a pair of adulterers in Nihon; only if both are slain are such killings legal.

Now, the emissaries must succeed in a second Orate, Fast Talk, or HONOR x 5 roll to get Old Nurse to continue. If she does, she says "Lady Chikuko once mentioned that her lover was a samurai. That puzzled me, because the Masaki were off to war, and only a handful of men remained at the manor, mostly old soldiers with crippling wounds; hardly suitable for a young woman's lover."

A third Orate, Fast Talk, or Honor x5 roll is now needed. If she continues, she says, "I remember Chikuko talking about the sensitive and scholarly conversations she used to have with the man. She once remarked that it was sad to live in a world where only soldiers and brute force was honored."

A fourth and last Orate, Fast Talk, or Honor x5 roll can now be attempted. If it succeeds, she finishes by saying, "I remember a funny name Lady Chikuko used to use when speaking of the man. She used to call him her 'sickly sweetheart.'"

Whenever the die rolls indicate that the emissaries get no more clues, Old Nurse begins to weep at these sad memories. She is very upset and obviously unable to continue. If the emissaries press her for more information, whether they are kindly or threatening, she collapses in a faint. There is no more to be learned here.

Unknown to anybody, Tadanobu has always realized that Old Nurse would reveal too much information some day, but he has not had the heart to kill her out of hand, because Chikuko loved Old Nurse in life. But he has posted a continuous watch by one or another of his sons over the old lady's house. Tadanobu's orders in the event that Old Nurse is interrogated by such dangerous persons as the daimyo's emissaries are grim and explicit. After the old woman is sleeping soundly and alone, a figure dressed in a plain kimono, his head completely covered by a wide straw hat, slips silently from a hiding place in the woods and enters Old Nurse's hut. With a swift, merciful cut, he kills her. The continued existence of Old Nurse is too dangerous to Tadanobu to permit once her true identity is known. The killer is one of Tadanobu's sons, chosen at random. He is unarmored, and is armed only with the dai-sho.

If the emissaries have been foresighted enough to post a guard on the hut, use opposing Listen and Sneak rolls to see if the killer is detected. If he is detected, he is heard just as he climbs through a window, and gets into the hut simultaneously with the emissaries' guard. The ensuing fight will waken the old woman, and the sight of a fight, or just the presence of an assassin in her room, proves too much for her valiant old heart, and she suffers a fatal attack. The Mikoshi will fight to the death to avoid capture. If the emissaries were not present for Old Nurse's death, they only learn of it if they return to the village to see her again.

## Tadanobu's Plots

Throughout the adventure, Mikoshi Tadanobu is plotting and planning to aid Chikuko in destroying the Masaki. He is the traitor who is worrying the daimyo. Tadanobu operates in secret, manipulating people and events from behind the scenes. He himself is a weak man, due to a childhood illness, and he prefers subtlety to force. When martial prowess is needed, it is provided by his sons.

Naturally, Tadanobu regards the arrival of emissaries from the court with some trepidation. However, his plans are so close to completion that he shall not, at first, go out of his way to make things difficult for the emissaries. Surely they cannot stop him. But as the emissaries draw closer and closer to solving the mystery, Tadanobu becomes more and more concerned. Depending on the emissaries' actions and, more importantly, what they claim to know, Tadanobu begins to plot their destruction.



## Tadanobu Worried

Tadanobu becomes worried if any of the following conditions are met:

- 1) the emissaries discover anything about Chikuko's nightly attacks on Otomaro (Chikuko will inform Tadanobu if this occurs).
- 2) the emissaries discover Chikuko's portrait.

3) the emissaries bluntly and too-openly investigate anything. Once he is worried, Tadanobu arranges to have one or another of his sons strike up a friendship with one of the visiting samurai. This son can thus keep a continuous watch upon the emissaries, though he won't do anything to give away his role as their keeper.

## Tadanobu Desperate

Tadanobu becomes desperate if any of the following conditions are met:

- 1) Chikuko is exorcised.
- 2) the emissaries question Old Nurse.
- 3) the emissaries are known to have discovered the secret meeting described below under TREASON IN SECRET.

Once Tadanobu becomes desperate, he plots to set Buntaro against the emissaries, claiming that they are reporting unfairly to the daimyo concerning Buntaro's fitness to run the estate. The results are described below, under THE ANGER OF BUNTARO.

## Tadanobu Frenzied

Tadanobu becomes frenzied if any of the following conditions are met:

- 1) the emissaries kill, capture, or identify one of his sons attempting to murder Old Nurse.
- 2) the emissaries kill, capture, or identify one of his sons at the secret meeting described below under TREASON IN SECRET.
- 3) the emissaries decide to search the haunted caves. Even if they plan to do so secretly, Tadanobu learns of it just after they leave (it is very difficult to keep any secrets from a manor's bailiff). He will send his sons to overtake the emissaries for the final struggle described below under DEATH DUEL WITH TADANOBU.

Once he is frenzied, Tadanobu throws caution to the winds. He sends his sons to murder the emissaries, initiating the chain of events described below under DEATH DUEL WITH TADANOBU.

## Running Tadanobu

You should not be afraid to make Tadanobu almost omniscient about affairs on the estate, especially concerning the emissaries' activities. He knows if they are spending hours each day in the archives, and if they sneak into anyone's chambers to spy or confer. He has agents throughout

the staff, as well as numerous legitimate ways to get such information. If a reaction by Tadanobu to an emissary's discovery will live up the adventure, do not hesitate to have it happen. Tadanobu is so clever that he can even guess about the emissaries' activities and usually be right. Of course, do not carry Tadanobu's near-omniscience to ridiculous extremes. Also, remember that Tadanobu's festering hatred of the Masaki clouds his judgment, making it possible for the emissaries to draw his attention to one activity, while performing another behind his back.

## The Anger of Buntaro

Buntaro is suspicious of the emissaries and their ostensible mission from the daimyo anyway. It would not take much for a foe to use him as a weapon against the emissaries. Buntaro is the acting family head, and will be obeyed by the Masaki samurai without hesitation. If the emissaries incur his open enmity, it could be hideously dangerous for them.

Buntaro will get angry enough to do something foolish all by himself, regardless of enemy machinations, if the emissaries in any way indicate that they think he is unfit to be hatamoto after his father. This is a very touchy point with him. Any careless gossip by emissaries that is unfavorable to Buntaro will reach him and trigger a furious response.



## A Curt Dismissal

If Buntaro is angered, he sends guards to summon the emissaries to see him. He is conducting family business from his own apartments rather than the official hall of the manor, lest it appear that he is impatient to succeed Otomaro (note: he isn't).

Buntaro brusquely announces that the emissaries have disturbed the wa ("harmony," or "peace of mind") of the Masaki and their retainers. He goes on to state that at such a sad and stressful time, such actions are disgustingly rude, and he insists that the emissaries pack up and leave in the morning. If the emissaries refuse, it had better be on proper grounds. Should they reveal their authority from the daimyo and, with all due courtesy, refuse to disobey Lord Uesigi, who is also Buntaro's lord, then Buntaro accepts their arguments, with ill grace. If the emissaries refuse to leave based on their own rank, or, worse, threaten Buntaro in any way, he becomes furious. He is entirely within his rights to have such rude fellows arrested, and calls upon his guards at once to do so.

If he does this, 2d6 guards arrive within 1d3 meleé rounds. If the emissaries do not fight them, they are arrested and spend the night in a stinking prison. Fortunately, Nenjo points out the error of arresting the daimyo's representatives to Buntaro. Come morning, the emissaries are freed and curtly told by Buntaro that, while he cannot forgive their rudeness, he must bow to their authority as derived from the daimyo. However, he is sending a report to Lord Uesigi which will not do their reputations any good at all.

If the emissaries actually fight with the guards (rather than surrendering quietly), they had better win. They will be killed on the spot otherwise. If they do defeat the guards, they can escape from the manor if they flee immediately. Any dithering around and the entire company of household samurai (over a hundred of them) come boiling out of the barracks. Defeated emissaries are executed at once. If the emissaries so escape, they finish the adventure as fugitives. Only a successful solution to the mystery can save them from utter disgrace and anew life as outlaw ronin.

## Buntaro Enraged

Buntaro is stirred to rage if Chikuko/Akiko accuses the emissaries of attempting to rape her, or if the emissaries do something very rash during their investigation. If the emissaries kill any suspected traitors without the ability to prove their suspicions, Buntaro becomes enraged. In such a case he assumes they are murdering his retainers in senseless duels, and he will not stand for it.

In this case, Buntaro immediately sends a force of swordsmen, outnumbering the emissaries by two to one, to kill them. If the emissaries defeat the guards, they are fugitives for the rest of the adventure. Only a successful solution to the mystery can save them from utter disgrace and a new life as outlaw ronin. Captured emissaries are dead emissaries: all Buntaro wishes to see of them are their heads.

## On the Run

Once the emissaries are fugitives, they cannot safely enter the manor, the town, or any villages. Samurai out hunting for them will show up within 1d6 x 10 minutes if their presence is reported. If the emissaries do not solve the mystery pretty quickly, Lord Uesigi will hear of their disgrace and they will be out of luck. The only person who willingly aids them in this case is Nenjo. Nenjo cannot calm Buntaro down, but he can secretly assist the emissaries in any plan they may have.

Tadanobu's sons will spend most of their time trying to find and slay the fugitive emissaries, acting on their father's orders. The final combat with the Mikoshi brothers may aim the emissaries in the right direction (see below, DEATH DUEL WITH TADANOBU).

## Treason in Secret

These events take place if the emissaries encounter suspiciously-behaving samurai, and follow them. They may do this by asking questions about spies and intrigue, or troubles with the Shiki, or by picking up on the rumor about the suddenly-wealthy samurai, as mentioned above under QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS. Or they may become suspicious of Tadanobu's

sons and follow one of them. Following a suspicious samurai during the day is quite easy. Unless the emissaries do something to inflame their subject's fears that he has betrayed himself, no skills or dice rolls are needed to keep him under light surveillance. If the emissaries clumsily betray their interest, then the samurai may attempt a Scan roll to see if he spots his shadows. Those following him may attempt a Hide roll to defeat detection.

If the retainer does not know he is being watched, he in fact will eventually lead the emissaries to a secret meeting of traitors, described below under A TREASONOUS GATHERING. If he does notice them, though, he betrays no sign of it. Instead, he gets word to several co-conspirators, and together they assault the emissaries that night, attempting murder. See below under MURDER BY NIGHT.



## A Treasonous Gathering

If the suspect does not know he is being watched, he goes about his normal tasks during the day and appears to turn in for the night about two hours after sundown. However, he remains in the barracks only half an hour before casually strolling out again. He moves quickly away from the manor grounds, walking towards the small woods by the main road, almost due south of the manor. He is joined by several other samurai.

Reaching the woods, he and his companions follow a winding path to a clearing. Here, dimly illumined by a glimmering lantern, is a figure dressed in black armor and a full-face helm which conceals his features completely. (This is one of Tadanobu's sons. Pick one at random. He is wearing lamellar armor worth 6 points of protection on all locations except the head, which has a full-plate helm worth 8 points.) The figure wears the dai-sho.

Briefly, each retainer reports to this mysterious warrior. One speaks of troop movements, another of plans to burn the manor at a pre-arranged signal, and so on. Each receives a sealed scroll, containing orders, and a small sack containing 6 bu (silver coins worth 360 pennies each).

If the emissaries attack this meeting, the samurai all fight to the death, except the black-armored warrior, who tries to cut his way out of the clearing and escape into the night. He has a horse concealed by the side of the road, about 30 meters off. If he reaches and mounts it, he gallops south, into the heavy forest south of the clearing, and makes a clean getaway.

If the emissaries kill the traitors without gaining clear evidence of their crimes, the wanton slaughter of his retainers infuriates Buntaro. The sealed scrolls and at least one live prisoner are necessary to prove any accusations.

If the emissaries wait until later, a search of the belongings of any of the samurai present locates the unsealed scroll (full of orders for the undermining of Masaki power) and the money. Any traitors exposed in this way are hauled off for torture and execution. They reveal that they are in the pay of the Shiki. The conspirators have no idea of the identity of the black-armored samurai who leads the conspiracy.

If the emissaries prevent the escape of the black-armored warrior, he fights to the death to prevent his capture. If he is captured or killed, and thus his identity is learned, Tadanobu becomes frenzied (see above under TADANOBU'S PLOTS).



## Murder by Night

If the suspect has noticed the emissaries trailing him, he determines to murder them. First, he gathers together several comrades by secret signals undetectable to the emissaries. Together, they sneak to the emissaries' apartments by night and try to slay them in their sleep. They are armed with the dai-sho and wear kimonos. The emissaries get a chance at a Listen roll to awake before the assassins strike. Set up the combat in the emissaries' rooms and resolve it normally.

If for some reason the emissaries are not in their apartment when the assassins arrive, the killers wait to ambush them when they return.

It is obvious to all that the samurai were trying to murder the emissaries, so killing them does not enrage Buntaro, though the incident certainly upsets him.



## A Final Word About Treason

The planned conquest of the Masaki fief will almost certainly collapse if Tadanobu is exposed, even if Otomaro dies. Just as certainly, it will probably take place successfully if Tadanobu remains undiscovered, sooner or later.

## Death Duel With Tadanobu

If and when Tadanobu becomes so alarmed that he decides to risk all on one move, he sends his sons (all that are left) to slay the emissaries. If it is likely that such a move will betray his plans, the Mikoshi are prepared to commit suicide if necessary, after they have removed the emissaries' threat to Chikuko, leaving the Masaki unprotected from her revenge.

Wherever the showdown takes place, the Mikoshi brothers will each carry their favorite weapons and wear only kimonos, unless the emissaries have somehow arranged things so that it would be plausible for the Mikoshi to wear armor around the manor. The Mikoshi will find the emissaries wherever they are and inform them that they must die. The brothers are exactly polite. If the emissaries have already slain one or more of them in previous activities, the brothers explain that this duel is not a matter of vengeance, but of filial duty. Their death is at Tadanobu's command. These preliminary courtesies end at once if the emissaries are rude or attempt a pre-emptive attack (doing either loses a point of HON for each emissary). The Mikoshi are fully prepared for battle, and cannot be surprised by such a move.

The fight occurs normally. Let us hope that the player-characters prevail.

## Tadanobu Takes His Leave

After the fight, there is still Tadanobu to deal with. If the emissaries are in or near the manor, they are likely to seek him out. They find this tragic man sitting in his study, waiting impassively. As soon as he sees the emissaries, he knows his sons are dead. With a swift motion, he takes something from his sleeve and swallows it. In seconds, the swift and deadly poison does its work (POT 20, does 10 points of damage even if a successful CON roll is made -- Tadanobu only has one dose of this stuff). He dies within twenty seconds, before any antidote or spell can be invoked to stop the welcome embrace of the venom. With his dying breath, Tadanobu grinds out one last threat. "You are brave ... and abler than I imagined. But you are too late. SHE still dwells in her grave and ... will prevail. The Masaki are finished ... finished. And then ... perhaps we will be together again." Mikoshi Tadanobu dies.



He clutches a scrap of paper. It is a crude but clear map leading to a location in the hills at the northern edge of the map. The location is marked with the name Chikuko. The map shows the haunted caves, where Chikuko's body is hidden.

If the fight with the Mikoshi brothers occurs outside of the manor, then Tadanobu is there too, watching the battle from concealment a short ways off. When his last son falls dead, the emissaries hear a great cry of anguish, and see the old man hobbling to the scene of carnage. Ignoring the emissaries, he drops to his knees beside one of the bodies, cradling it in his arms. Then, looking up at his enemies, Tadanobu

composes himself, and the action proceeds as described above.

Once the emissaries' battle with the brothers is done, events move very quickly indeed. If they are at the manor, a monk bursts into their room with the news that Otomaro is failing fast -- he will be dead in a few hours at most. If the emissaries are not at the manor, Nenjo comes barreling up, holding onto a horse for dear life (Nenjo is not much of a rider) to announce the same thing.

## The Haunted Caves

The emissaries are unlikely to learn of the caves till well into the adventure. Once they know the facts, however, after defeating Tadanobu, the only way they can save the Masaki family is to go to the caves and put Chikuko's soul to rest. Nenjo is willing to accompany the emissaries on this mission. If the emissaries learn of and travel to the cave before Tadanobu has been disposed of, he will send his sons to stop them as described above, under TADANOBU'S PLOTS.

The caves are quite visible from without. Just as the emissaries come within sight of them, a blinding flash of lightning splits the sky, heralding the start of a furious storm. Everyone present can sense the evil aura of the place. Light will be needed inside.

## The Entrance

Inside the entrance, the cave widens suddenly. Off to the right, the emissaries see a bluish glow. Spectral figures materialize, gesturing back towards the outside world and mouthing silent warnings. The figures are those of peasants. If the emissaries investigate the source of the apparitions, they find three moss-covered skeletons. On close examination, they see that the teeth of each corpse have been hacked out with sword cuts, and the jawbones shattered. (Nagamasa forced these men to help him carry Chikuko's corpse to the caves, then slew them, after ensuring that even in death they could not betray his secret.)

These ghosts are harmless, but the emissaries may be tempted to stop and put them to rest before continuing. If they do so, give each of them a point of HON. Of course, this means that they must waste time and magic on charity that can wait until morning.

## The Guard to Hell

The cave entrance narrows down to a 2-meter-wide tunnel. It goes for some distance into the hill. The emissaries can see light at the end of the passage, growing brighter as they near it. The tunnel empties into a large cavern. Entering this cavern, which is brightly lit with eldritch blue light, the emissaries observe two great doors of iron-bound wood at the far end of the cave.

Midway between the party and the doors stands a hideous figure. She looks like a very ugly old woman, with huge tusks and white hair, and she stands almost seven feet tall. She glares at the emissaries, and magic sparks flash from her iron fingernails. She is clearly a wicked hag.

She gestures magically. "Begone from this place, mortals!" she cackles. "These two be mine."

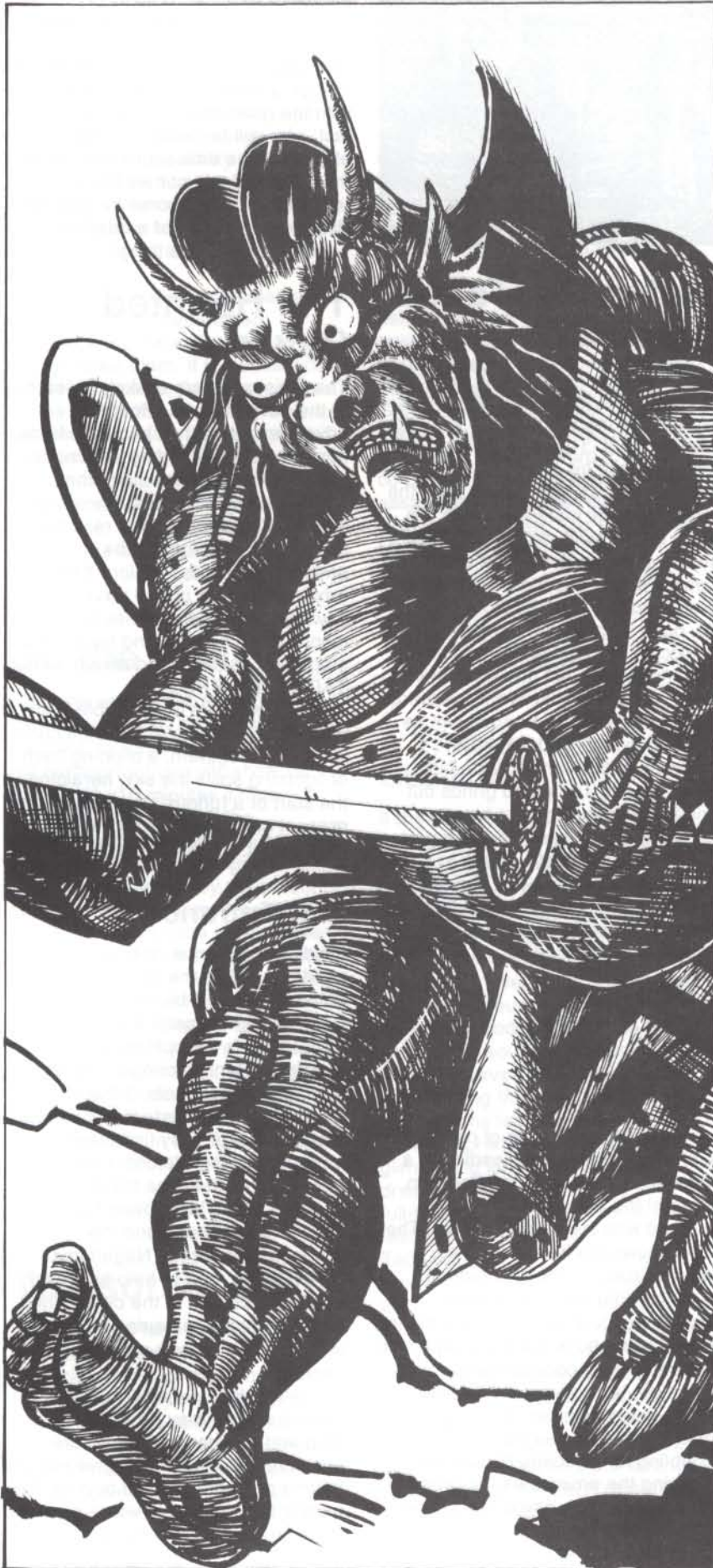
If the emissaries speak to the hag, no matter what is said, the hag answers, "Despite your words, you may not pass. Begone!" If the emissaries do not leave at once, the hag attacks. If the emissaries flee, the hag does not pursue, but assaults the emissaries on sight if they return to the cavern.

If the emissaries decline to battle the hag, they must realize that Chikuko, protected in her haunted cave, will continue her attacks until the Masaki are wiped out. Should they seek Nenjo for counsel, he advises them to drive off the hag, who is doubtless feeding off the anguish of the damned soul held within that cave. She is not, however, the cause of the hatamoto's illness, and was probably attracted to the cave comparatively recently. Nenjo is quite correct in his conjecture about the hag. His only error is that there is not one, but two damned souls held in the cave.

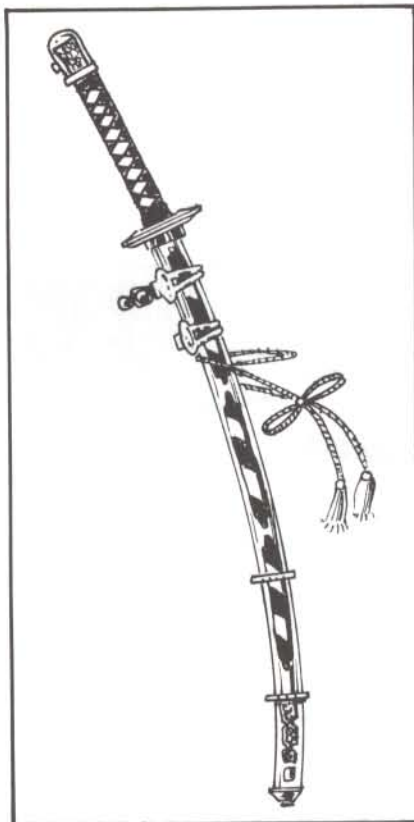


## The Final Confrontation

If the hag is conquered, she dissolves into fragments of black glass, and the ghastly blue light of the cavern vanishes. The next chamber ends in a pair of huge doors, sealed with the cartouche of Emma-hoo, ruler of Meifu, the Buddhist hell. Beneath the seal is a







If anyone can get past Nagamasa (he will try to prevent this), grabs the sword pinning Chikuko to the cave floor, and uses the sword on the demon, Nagamasa's healing ability immediately ends. His current wounds stop regenerating, and any future wounds dealt him are not healed. The sword is a master blade as well, doing 3 points more damage than an ordinary katana (for a total of 1d8+4, or 2d8+8 on an impale). It is also light and easy to wield (add 15% to the Kenjutsu skill of anyone wielding this blade). It has 16 armor points. Nenjo will not touch or take the sword.

If Nagamasa is despatched, Nenjo (or any Buddhist acolyte) can perform the proper rites for Chikuko's soul. As the ritual is intoned, the ghostly figure of Chikuko appears and hovers for a moment. A second spectral figure then appears -- a youthful samurai with a keen, sensitive face and slender limbs. The onlookers may recognize Mikoshi Tadanobu. The pair look searchingly at the emissaries and Nenjo. They neither praise nor blame -- just staring. Then they waver and vanish.

If Tadanobu is yet alive, his ghost cannot appear in the cave with Chikuko's. However, when the emissaries return to the manor, they discover that Tadanobu has taken poison to kill himself. (He did this when he felt Chikoku's spirit release from its Earthly bonding.)

If Chikuko's ghost is freed, when the emissaries return to the manor, they find that Otomaro has finally begun to respond to the healing treatments of his physicians. He is sitting up in bed, and able to converse.



## Endgame

If the emissaries put Chikuko to rest and save Otomaro, any little slips in their behavior are forgiven them. Crimes that are unforgivable are limited to killing Otomaro or Buntaro. If Akiko was killed while the emissaries were trying to deal with Chikuko, her death is viewed as sad, but necessary.

If the emissaries have solved the adventure at the cost of Otomaro's, Buntaro's, or Akiko's life, they simply leave the grieving Masaki clan and return to the daimyo to report to him. No special rewards accompany their tragic success, except for the master sword (see below).

If Otomaro, Buntaro, and Akiko are all still alive, then the emissaries return to the manor to find universal rejoicing. When he learns of their part in his healing (probably told him by Nenjo), Otomaro showers the emissaries with gifts:

- 1) horses for those on foot (with permits to ride them for heimin).
- 2) samurai receive fine armor: plate (8 points) on head and torso and splinted lamellar with soft leather (7 points) everywhere else. The armor is finely-crafted and decorated.
- 3) suits of court clothing for the celebration are pressed on all and sundry. They may be retained after the celebration is over.
- 4) each suitable emissary receives the weapon of his choice. While these are not master weapons, they are fine ones, made by excellent craftsmen.
- 5) non-samurai receive coins and presents worth 2500 pennies (divide this up among all the non-samurai present).

All this is fine, but one matter remains:



## What About That Sword?

The players are doubtless wishing furiously that they could keep the family's heirloom sword. When they return, Buntaro's eyes light upon the weapon, and he cries "The lost sword!" He seizes the hilt, only to scream in agony and amazement when it sears his hand! The Masaki mon, embossed on the hilt, is gone from the sword, and is branded on Buntaro's hand.

Whether Otomaro is alive or not, this is taken as a sign that the weapon has been disgraced by Nagamasa, and will no longer serve the Masaki clan. It is given to the emissaries for delivery to the daimyo. You the gamemaster, acting as Lord Uesigi, should award the sword to one of the emissaries, unless their actions during the adventure do not merit such an award. Note that if the sword's new owner ever disgraces it (as determined by the gamemaster), the sword will cease serving him, just as it did the Masaki. The new owner should hire a fine jeweler to emboss his own mon on the sword's hilt.

quotation from Buddhist scripture, on the subject of justice and the dependence of sinners upon the mercy of their fellow men. The doors open easily and silently at a touch.

Beyond, a cavern is lit in a hideous red glare. At the far end, opposite the doors, lies a mummified corpse, pinned to the cavern floor by a magnificent katana. The body is covered in the rags of colorful silk, all that remains of the exquisite clothes of Lady Masaki Chikuko.

Between the gate and the body stands a fearful monster. Its legs are twisted and deformed. It is armed with a great spear. Tufts of hair mar its muscular form. Its head is a loathsome mask, a vile caricature, but its features are reminiscent of Otomaro, Buntaro, even Nenjo. Nenjo recognizes the face at once, and his willpower cracks. He sobs, "Brother!" Intelligent emissaries will probably realize that this horrible being is Nagamasa's present incarnation.

Nagamasa immediately attacks the party. He fights to kill, and is willing to pursue the emissaries from the cavern, fighting until they are all slain. The emissaries can see the most terrible wounds rapidly heal themselves on the creature's flesh. If a limb or his head is chopped off, a new limb or head grows from the wound, slowly enlarging until it is complete. He seems invincible.



## Reference

This reference list is offered as a selection of good sources use in the writing of this supplement. It is not complete, but all sources listed are recommended, with the reservations contained in the comments.

### Ancient and Poetic Sources

These books are translations of ancient documents compiled early in the samurai age. The literary styles are sometimes difficult to follow but some good insights to the culture can be gleaned from them.

#### THE KOJIKI

*trans. Basil Hall Chamberlain,  
Charles E. Tuttle Co., 1981.*

This book is also called Records of Ancient Matters. The Victorian sensibilities of the translator results in occasional passages rendered in Latin. This and the archaic form make this edition a slow read. It is, however, a basic source of Japanese Shinto mythology.

#### THE NIHONJI

*trans. W. G. Aston,  
Charles E. Tuttle Co., 1972.*

This book is subtitled "Chronicles from the Earliest Times to A.D. 697." It covers much of the same material (with some significant differences) as the Kojiki but has a more Chinese flavor to it. Aston's translation should be more accessible to modern readers than Chamberlain's style.

#### KOJIKI

*trans. Donald Philippi,  
University of Tokyo Press, 1968*

This book corrects most of the Victorian absurdities of Chamberlain's version, so it is actually an easy read. Philippi makes a detailed discussion of the background of the Kojiki.

#### TALES OF ISE

*trans. Helen Craig McCullough,  
University of Tokyo Press, 1968*

This is a collection of 9th century poetry purportedly written by two famous Heian poets and accompanied by commentary in a (very) loose story form. Written about a century before Genji Monogatari, it is a precursor of that celebrated novel.

#### THE TALE OF GENJI

*Murasaki Shikibu,  
trans. Edward G. Seidensticker, 2 vol.,  
Charles E. Tuttle Co., 1978*

Japanese name is *Genji Monogatari*. This is a must for anyone wishing to be immersed in Heian society. It is the world's first true novel, and demonstrates the high level of literacy attained by court women.

#### THE TEN FOOT SQUARE HUT AND TALES OF THE HEIKE

*trans. A. L. Sadler,  
Charles E. Tuttle Co., 1972*

Contains the Hojoki and selections from Heike Monogatari. This book shows 12th century Japan from both the warrior's and the philosopher's point of view. Excellent stories of warrior prowess.



#### THE TAIHEIKI

*trans. Helen Craig McCullough,  
Charles E. Tuttle Co., 1979*

Similar in style to the Heike Monogatari, this book deals with the wars of the 14th century. Most statements of combat strengths are exaggerations, but that adds to the fun.

#### ESSAYS IN IDLENESS

*Kenko, trans. Donald Keene,  
Charles E. Tuttle Co., 1981*

Japanese title *Tsurezusagusa*. Observations by a none-too-holy Buddhist monk on the events surrounding him in the 14th century. One of the classics of Japanese literature read by all Japanese schoolchildren.

#### UGETSU MONOGATARI — TALES OF MOONLIGHT AND RAIN

*Ueda Akinari, trans. Leon Zolbrod,  
Charles E. Tuttle Co., 1977*

Nine tales of the supernatural by this 18th century novelist cover most aspects of the Japanese bakemono world. An absolute must read for Japanese horror fans.

### Fiction

Fiction dealing with feudal Japan or fantasy versions of that world are not very common. Some of the best and most helpful are listed below.

#### SHOGUN

*James Clavell,  
Athenum, 1975.*

Although only dealing with a short period of time and taking some historical liberties, this book gives excellent service. The reader will find his outlook shifting from the western to the eastern along with the hero Blackthorne as he discovers Japanese culture and ways of thought. Clavell provides a powerful and compelling tale.

#### THE SIGN OF THE CHRYSANTHEMUM

*Katherine Paterson, Avon, 1973.*

#### OF NIGHTINGALES THAT WEEP

*Katherine Paterson, Avon, 1974.*

#### THE MASTER PUPPETEER

*Katherine Paterson, Avon, 1975.*

Though written for children, these three books provide wonderful tales set in medieval Japan. They are full of local color and cultural details. The hero of the first is a son of a samurai searching for the father he never knew. The second features a samurai's daughter caught in intrigue between the warring Taira and Minamoto. The young hero of the third seeks the identity of a Robin Hood-style bandit with action in the streets of Osaka. All are highly recommended.

**TOMOE GOZEN***Jessica Amanda Salmonson, Ace, 1981.***THE GOLDEN NAGINATA***Jessica Amanda Salmonson, Ace, 1982.***THOUSAND SHRINE WARRIOR***Jessica Amanda Salmonson, Ace, 1984.*

These books are set in same setting of mythical Naipon. They follow the adventures of the famous woman samurai Tomoe Gozen. Salmonson blends details of the historical Tomoe's life with Japanese folklore, adds internal and external conflict, and creates a saga worth reading. These books will provide a number of adventure ideas.

**SENSEI***David Charney, Ace, 1983.***SENSEI II: SWORD MASTER***David Charney, Berkely, 1984.*

These two volumes tell of the variable fortunes of Tadamori-no-Yoshi who goes from a painted courtier to a master swordsman and duelist to an artist and philosopher. Though Charney's style does not match Clavell's, his books are filled with a wealth of details about life in feudal Japan.

**Films**

Films can provide a sense of detail, style, and ambience which books are hard pressed to capture. Indeed the popular picture of a samurai seems to be derived almost exclusively from films, particularly the works of Akira Kurosawa. Local "art film" moviehouses and college campuses are the most likely places to find such films.

**THE SEVEN SAMURAI***Dir. Akira Kurosawa, 1954.*

A tale of seven men who undertake the defense of a village against predatory bandits. Keen insights into several samurai hero types highlight this action oriented film.

**KAGEMUSHA***Dir. Akira Kurosawa, 1980.*

A tale of appearances and realities concerning a thief selected to act as a double for the warlord Takeda *Shingon*.

**THE THRONE OF BLOOD***Dir. Akira Kurosawa, 1957.*

The plot is adapted from Shakespeare's *Macbeth* but the style is pure Kurosawa. The twists taken in translating the western masterpiece into a Japanese tale are intriguing and informative.

**YOJIMBO***Dir. Akira Kurosawa, 1961.***SANJURO***Dir. Akira Kurosawa, 1962.*

Tales featuring the same enigmatic hero, a ronin played by Toshiro Mifune. The first places him in the midst of a gang war in a small village. In the second he aids some young samurai in their attempts to expose some corrupt officials. Both offer interesting comparisons of Japanese ethical stances.

**THE SAMURAI TRILOGY***Dir. Hiroshi Inagaki, 1954, 1955, 1955.*

A series of three films dealing with Miyamoto Musashi as an introspective hero in search of the true Way.

**MIYAMOTO MUSASHI***Dir. Yasuo Kohata, 1954.*

Another film about Musashi but one depicting him in an entirely different way — a scruffy, rough-mannered rogue.

**THE ZATO ICHI SERIES***Dir. various, begun 1962.*

The single most popular film series in Japanese history features the Ichi, a master swordsman who is also a blind masseur. These films maintain a fine balance between comedy, drama, and satire. They are filled with the colorful details that can bring a campaign-story to life.

**Other Works**

Some of these works are invaluable for a gamemaster trying to create a detailed background for a campaign.

**SECRETS OF THE SAMURAI***Oscar Ratti and Adele Westbrook, Charles E. Tuttle Co., 1973.*

If you are going to read only one book for background material, make it this one. Most aspects of Japanese society as well as armed and unarmed martial arts are covered. Scattered throughout the text are line drawings full of action and feeling. Part III of the book deals with the morality and inner factors of *bujutsu* (martial techniques) in a clear and understandable way.

**THE BOOK OF THE SAMURAI***Stephen Turnbull, Bison Books Limited, 1982.*

This is a coffee-table book detailing the warrior class of Japan. As such it has lots of informative and pretty pictures, and unlike many such books, the text is useful as well.

**THE SAMURAI***Stephen Turnbull, Macmillan Publishing, 1977.*

Subtitled "A Military History" this excellent book concentrates on material sure to be of interest to gamers with a taste for military and political details. The text is illustrated primarily with photographs of artifacts and reproductions of period artworks. The book provides a more in-depth look at some of the material in his *Book of the Samurai*. Turnbull writes clearly, a blessing when dealing with the convolutions of Japanese historical events.

**A HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL DICTIONARY OF JAPAN***E. Papinot, Charles E. Tuttle Co., 1972.*

This book is a veritable mine of details and information. Trying to read it like an ordinary book will soon tax even the most ardent Japanophile, but when used as a reference or sampled in small doses, it often supplies windfalls of information.

**JAPANESE MYTHOLOGY***Juliet Piggott, Peter Bedrick Books, 1969.*

A survey book which provides a good introduction to Japanese legends, folktales, heroes, and mythical creatures. An excellent starting place.

**RELIGIONS OF JAPAN***H. Byron Earhart, Harper & Row, 1984.*

Although serving as a good introduction to the religions practiced in Japan, this volume's prime benefit is in providing an understanding of the Japanese approach to religions in general.

**KWAIDAN***Laficadio Hearn, Charles E. Tuttle Co., 1971.*

Subtitled "Stories and Studies of Strange Things," Hearn's book features re-tellings of Japanese folktales dealing with otherworldly beings.

**TALES OF OLD JAPAN**

*A. B. Mitford,  
Charles E. Tuttle Co., 1966.*

This compendium of Japanese stories was originally published in 1871. Among the items of interest are the tale of the 47 ronin and an eye-witness account of a *seppuku*.

**EVERYDAY LIFE IN TRADITIONAL JAPAN**

*Charles J. Dunn,  
Charles E. Tuttle Co., 1969.*

The title of this book speaks for itself. The text and accompanying line drawings provide a wealth of information invaluable to a detailed campaign.

**IDEALS OF THE SAMURAI**

*trans. William Scott Wilson,  
Ohara, 1982.*

Wilson provides translation of various samurai "house codes" and other writings spanning the period. Varying styles and attitudes convey insights into the samurai mind.

**HAGAKURE**

*Yamamoto Tsunetomo, trans. William Scott Wilson,  
Avon, 1979.*

Wilson translates a selection of quotes from the sayings and beliefs of Yamamoto Tsunetomo a seventeenth century samurai. Although colored by the peaceful era, his comments provide a view of a radical exponent of *bushido*.

**BUDOSHOSHINSHU: THE WARRIOR'S PRIMER**

*Daidoji Yuzan, trans. William Scott Wilson,  
Ohara, 1984.*

Like the Hagakure, this is a translation of a seventeenth century work. The line of thought is closer to the mainstream than that work. The book is full of practical advice to young samurai. Very good for deepening one's characterizations. work widely read

**NINJA: THE INVISIBLE ASSASSINS**

*Andrew Adams,  
Ohara, 1973.*

This paperback is perhaps the best, one-stop source for information on the ninja. It does dwell mostly on history, techniques, and equipment and provides little in the way of material for developing characterization for ninja characters. Almost any of the ninja material by Stephen Hayes can provide a good basis for motivating a player character.

**JAPANESE HOMES  
AND THEIR SURROUNDINGS**

*Edward S. Morse,  
Dover, 1961.*

With the caution that some of the material dates from outside our period, this book is an invaluable reference for details of house construction and interior details and furnishings. It could be recommended for its numerous illustrations alone.

**CLASSICAL BUJUTSU**

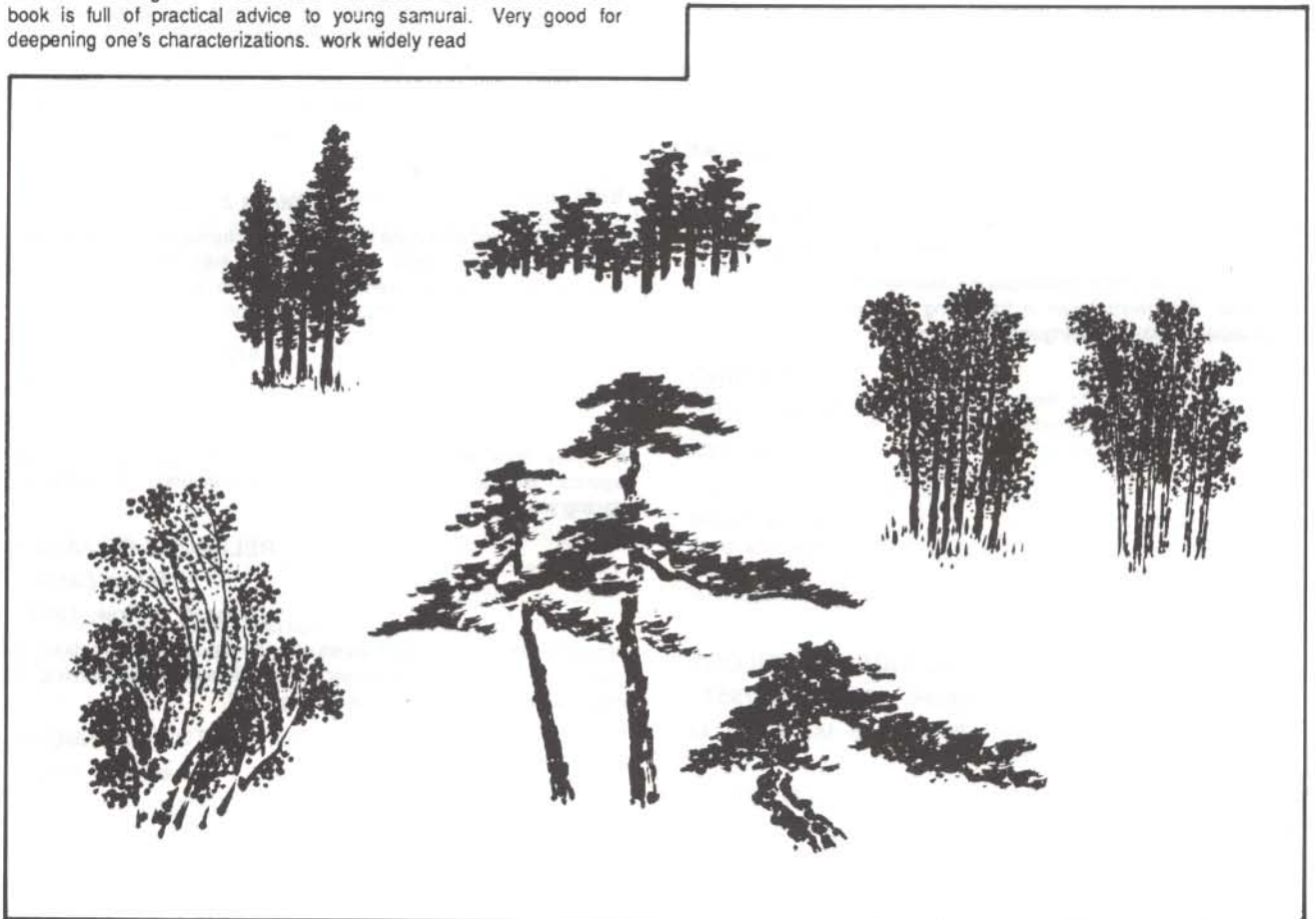
*Donn Drager,  
Weatherhill, 1973.*

An excellent, well illustrated guide to the martial traditions and techniques of Japan. Together with its companion volumes (*Classical Budo* and *Modern Bujutsu & Budo*) it forms "The Martial Arts and Ways of Japan," an superb study of the topic.

**A BOOK OF FIVE RINGS**

*Miyamoto Musashi, trans. Victor Harris,  
The Overlook Press, 1974.*

The classic work on Japanese swordsmanship and martial philosophy. A must-read for any serious gamemaster.



## PREGENERATED CHARACTERS

These are pre-generated character statistics for use with the LAND OF NINJA scenarios. Re-use these statistics as necessary.

## Sample Samurai Warriors

### Elite Samurai Warriors

These are accomplished samurai, who fear no foe in a fair fight.

STR	17	Move	3
CON	15	Hit Points	15
SIZ	15	Fatigue	32-6 = 26
INT	13	Magic Points	17
POW	17		
DEX	16		
APP	11		

Location	Melee	Missile	Points
r leg	01-04	01-03	0/5
l leg	05-08	04-06	0/5
abdomen	09-11	07-10	0/5
chest	12	11-15	0/6
r arm	13-15	16-17	0/4
l arm	16-18	18-19	0/4
head	19-20	20	0/5

weapon	SR	atk%	damage	parr%	pts
Katana	6	85%	1d10+1+1d4	80%	14
Yari	5	75%	1d8+1+1d4	60%	10
Longbow	2/7	65%	1d8+1	38%	6

**Spirit Magic (92%):** Bladesharp 4, Demoralize (2), Protection 4, Strength 2 (increases damage bonus to +1d6 and adds +3% to all attacks and parries).

**Skills:** First Aid 50%, Iaijutsu 60%, Listen 60%, Ride 70%, Scan 65%, Search 80%, Throw 50%.



### Good Samurai Warriors

STR	13	Move	3
CON	13	Hit Points	13
SIZ	13	Fatigue	26-6 = 20
INT	13	Magic Points	13
POW	13		
DEX	12		
APP	11		

Location	Melee	Missile	Points
r leg	01-04	01-03	0/5
l leg	05-08	04-06	0/5
abdomen	09-11	07-10	0/5
chest	12	11-15	0/6
r arm	13-15	16-17	0/4
l arm	16-18	18-19	0/4
head	19-20	20	0/5

weapon	SR	atk%	damage	parr%	pts
Katana	7	60%	1d10+1+1d4	55%	14
Yari	6	60%	1d8+1+1d4	45%	10
Longbow	3/9	50%	1d8+1	25%	6

**Spirit Magic (66%):** Bladesharp 3, Demoralize (2), Protection 2.

**Skills:** First Aid 45%, Iaijutsu 40%, Listen 50%, Ride 50%, Scan 50%, Search 50%, Throw 40%.

### Excellent Samurai Warriors

STR	15	Move	3
CON	14	Hit Points	15
SIZ	15	Fatigue	29-6 = 23
INT	13	Magic Points	15
POW	15		
DEX	14		
APP	11		

Location	Melee	Missile	Points
r leg	01-04	01-03	0/5
l leg	05-08	04-06	0/5
abdomen	09-11	07-10	0/5
chest	12	11-15	0/6
r arm	13-15	16-17	0/4
l arm	16-18	18-19	0/4
head	19-20	20	0/5

weapon	SR	atk%	damage	parr%	pts
Katana	7	65%	1d10+1+1d4	60%	14
Yari	6	50%	1d8+1+1d4	40%	10
Longbow	3/9	45%	1d8+1	18%	6

**Spirit Magic (79%):** Bladesharp 3, Demoralize (2), Protection 2, Strength 2 (increases damage bonus to +1d6 and adds 3% to all attacks and parries).

**Skills:** First Aid 50%, Iaijutsu 50%, Listen 40%, Ride 60%, Scan 60%, Search 60%, Throw 40%.

### Fair Samurai Warriors

These are less bellicose warriors and typical jizamurai.

STR	11	Move	3
CON	11	Hit Points	12
SIZ	12	Fatigue	22-6 = 16
INT	13	Magic Points	13
POW	13		
DEX	12		
APP	11		

Location	Melee	Missile	Points
r leg	01-04	01-03	0/4
l leg	05-08	04-06	0/4
abdomen	09-11	07-10	0/4
chest	12	11-15	0/5
r arm	13-15	16-17	0/3
l arm	16-18	18-19	0/3
head	19-20	20	0/4

weapon	SR	atk%	damage	parr%	pts
Katana	7	50%	1d10+1	45%	14
Yari	6	60%	1d8+1	40%	10
Longbow	3/9	40%	1d8+1	20%	6

**Spirit Magic (66%):** Bladesharp 1, Protection Skills: First Aid 35%, Iaijutsu 35%, Listen 35%, Ride 35%, Scan 55%, Search 45%, Throw 30%, some sort of Lore 35%.

## Poor Samurai Warriors

These are the samurai that make up the bulk of a lord's retainers. They are the guys who get chopped down in droves by the master swordsmen in Japanese sword-fight movies. They are more administrators and servants than warriors.

STR	11	Move	3
CON	9	Hit Points	11
SIZ	12	Fatigue	20-6 = 14
INT	13	Magic Points	12
POW	12		
DEX	11		
APP	11		

Location	Melee	Missile	Points
r leg	01-04	01-03	0/4
l leg	05-08	04-06	0/4
abdomen	09-11	07-10	0/4
chest	12	11-15	0/5
r arm	13-15	16-17	0/3
l arm	16-18	18-19	0/3
head	19-20	20	0/4

weapon	SR	atk%	damage	parr%	pts
Katana	7	40%	1d10+1	30%	14
Yari	6	45%	1d8+1	35%	10
Longbow	3/9	25%	1d8+1	20%	6

**Spirit Magic (60%):** Fanaticism, Protection 1.  
**Skills:** First Aid 45%, Listen 35%, Ride 25%, Scan 65%, Search 25%, Throw 30%, some sort of Lore 35%

## Tough Ninja

STR	15	Move	3
CON	18	Hit Points	16
SIZ	13	Fatigue	33-6 = 27
INT	15	Magic Points	14
POW	14		
DEX	19		
APP	10		

Location	Melee	Missile	Points
r leg	01-04	01-03	4/6
l leg	05-08	04-06	4/6
abdomen	09-11	07-10	4/6
chest	12	11-15	4/7
r arm	13-15	16-17	4/5
l arm	16-18	18-19	4/5
head	19-20	20	4/6

weapon	SR	atk%	damage	parr%	pts
Ninjato	5	85%	1d8+1+1d4	100%	10
Shuriken	1/5/9	90%	1d3+1d2	--	--
Fist	6	90%	1d3+1d4	90%	(6)

**Martial Arts** 90%.  
**Spirit Magic (77%):** Befuddle (2), Healing 3, Protection 3.  
**Skills:** Climb 95%, Conceal 95%, Devise 80%, Disguise 90%, Escape 75%, First Aid 55%, Hide 120%, Listen 95%, Scan 95%, Search 95%, Sneak 120%, Throw 90%, World Lore 55%, Yogen 55%.  
**Ki Skills:** Hide ki 30%, Kenjutsu Parry ki 30%, Shuriken Attack ki 30%, Sneak ki 30%.

**Notes:** wears black ninja garb and carries ninjato, nine shuriken, two blinding powder eggs, and two flashbombs. Own body has been enchanted to possess armor value of 2 in all hit locations.

## Ninja

This is the ninja usually called for in a scenario. He is a worthy challenge for the samurai he meets.

STR	13	Move	3
CON	16	Hit Points	14
SIZ	12	Fatigue	29-8 = 21
INT	14	Magic Points	14
POW	14		
DEX	16		
APP	10		

Location	Melee	Missile	Points
r leg	01-04	01-03	2/5
l leg	05-08	04-06	2/5
abdomen	09-11	07-10	2/5
chest	12	11-15	2/6
r arm	13-15	16-17	2/4
l arm	16-18	18-19	2/4
head	19-20	20	2/5

weapon	SR	atk%	damage	parr%	pts
Ninjato	6	75%	1d8+1+1d4	80%	10
Shuriken	2/7	80%	1d3+1d2	--	--
Fist	7	75%	1d3+1d4	60%	(6)

**Martial Arts** 60%.  
**Spirit Magic (73%):** Befuddle (2), Healing 3, Protection 3.  
**Skills:** Climb 80%, Conceal 75%, Devise 60%, Disguise 60%, Escape 50%, First Aid 45%, Hide 90%, Listen 85%, Scan 85%, Search 85%, Sneak 85%, Throw 80%, World Lore 45%, Yogen 35%.  
**Ki Skill:** Hide ki 20%

**Notes:** wears black ninja garb and carries ninjato, nine shuriken, two blinding powder eggs, and two flashbombs

## Masaki Akiko

Akiko is quite lovely. Her manner epitomizes the modest samurai wife. She is deeply in love with her husband, and she is always exquisitely dressed and made-up when in public. Her pregnancy is visible, but she is not yet impeded by it to any great degree.

Consciously, Akiko will do anything that seems likely to help Otomaro. Anything the emissaries tell Akiko is immediately also known to the ghost of Chikuko, which is covertly possessing her.

STR	8	Move	3
CON	13	Hit Points	10
SIZ	7	Fatigue	21
INT	11	Magic Points	14
POW	14		
DEX	11		
APP	17		

Location	Melee	Missile	Points
r leg	01-04	01-03	0/4
l leg	05-08	04-06	0/4
abdomen	09-11	07-10	0/4
chest	12	11-15	0/4
r arm	13-15	16-17	0/3
l arm	16-18	18-19	0/3
head	19-20	20	0/4

weapon	SR	atk%	damage	parr%	pts
Naginata	7	65	2d6+2	45	10
Tanto	8	32	1d4+2	22	6

**Spirit Spells (76%):** Befuddle (2), Glamour 3, Heal 2, Mobility 3.  
**Skills:** First Aid 55, Sing 82, Play Biwa 59.  
**Armor:** kimono.

## Masaki Buntaro

Buntaro is a burly man in his early 30s. His heavy features are usually drawn into a forbidding scowl. His manner is abrupt and often borders on open rudeness. Buntaro has a reputation for a hasty temper, and is a rash field commander.

Buntaro knows well that he is not as able as his father. In fact, though he does not know this, his personality mimics that of his grandfather, the notorious Nagamasa. Buntaro is suspicious of the emissaries and their ostensible mission to his family, for he fears that bad reports may cause the daimyo to be displeased with the Masaki, and possibly take away his inheritance. He deeply resents any apparent snooping around on the part of the emissaries.

Buntaro is a properly loyal son, and is almost frantic at the prospect of dealing with family problems in place of his brilliant father. If the situation is made worse by real or apparent danger from the emissaries, Buntaro might do something foolish.

STR	13	Move	3
CON	10	Hit Points	11
SIZ	12	Fatigue	23-3 = 20
INT	13	Magic Points	11
POW	11		
DEX	12		
APP	10		

Location	Melee	Missile	Points
r leg	01-04	01-03	0/4
l leg	05-08	04-06	0/4
abdomen	09-11	07-10	0/4
chest	12	11-15	0/5
r arm	13-15	16-17	0/3
l arm	16-18	18-19	0/3
head	19-20	20	0/4

weapon	SR	atk%	damage	parr%	pts
Katana	7	88	1d10+2+1d4	74	14
Wakizashi	7	88	1d6+1+1d4	74	12

**Spirit Spells (57%):** Bladesharp 3, Demoralize (2), Heal 3, Protection 3.

**Skills:** Orate 09, Ride 62

**Armor:** normally none. In time of battle wears plate helmet and torso (8 pts) and lamellar limbs (6 pts). This increases his ENC by 20 points.

**Magic:** carries a master katana, which does +1 damage.

## Masaki Otomaro

Otomaro plays little active role in this adventure. If the emissaries save him, those who survive the adventure can find him a useful friend. Only if the emissaries have injured or killed Akiko is Otomaro less than grateful for his salvation.

## Ashigaru

Ashigaru may be created by using the stats for Poor, Fair, or Good samurai. They have either longbow or yari, but not both. They do not have Ride, but instead have Hide and Track at the same percentile level. Ashigaru do not carry the dai-sho, but only one of the two swords.



## Nenjo-Sojo

Nenjo is a frail septuagenarian with an erect carriage and a clear, penetrating gaze. He moves lightly, though he leans upon a monk's staff when standing. His manner is quiet, always reasonable, and somewhat detached. Nenjo is Otomaro's uncle, but entered the Buddhist clergy in his youth, shortly after Otomaro was born. He is a widely respected abbot of a sect emphasizing Dainichi-nyorai. His sect specializes in matters of the spirit and karma.

Nenjo is deeply learned in magic and the universal laws of karma. Such knowledge may make him useful to the emissaries in their current challenge. He also possesses a good deal of common sense and gives excellent advice to those who request. He rarely interferes unasked.

While his magic can aid the emissaries in dealing with Chikuko and other spirits involved in the adventure, Nenjo is a rather frail old man and must be protected from physical dangers.

STR	8	Move	3
CON	9	Hit Points	9
SIZ	8	Fatigue	17-1 = 16
INT	16	Magic Points	22 + 9 relic = 26
POW	22		
DEX	11		
APP	10		

Location	Melee	Missile	Points
r leg	01-04	01-03	0/3
l leg	05-08	04-06	0/3
abdomen	09-11	07-10	0/3
chest	12	11-15	0/4
r arm	13-15	16-17	0/3
l arm	16-18	18-19	0/3
head	19-20	20	0/3

weapon	SR	atk%	damage	parr%	pts
staff	7	51	1d8	67	10

**Spirit Spells (128%):** Countermagic 4, Detect Magic, Dispel Magic 4, Heal 4, Light, Repair 2.

**Divine Magic: (118%):** Absorption 3, Dismiss Magic 5, Exorcism, Heal Body, Illusory Sight 3, Soul Sight, Spirit Block 2, Warding, Worship Dainichi.

**Skills:** Ceremony 96, Dodge 17, First Aid 61, Human Lore 61, Orate 83, Scan 97, World Lore 76.

**Languages:** Speak Japanese 103, Read Japanese 86, Write Japanese 69, Speak Chinese 58, Read Chinese 73, Write Chinese 69.

**Magic:** Nenjo has a magic lantern which, when lit and flourished in one hand, permits the wielder to force spirit combat upon any spirit in the area. It is only so usable once per day. He also has a relic sealed into a metal amulet which stores 9 magic points.



## Masaki Samurai

The Masaki samurai are known as good fighters, and Otomaro spared little expense in outfitting them. Normally, they wear only kimono for guard duty. Only when pursuing the emissaries as fugitives would they wear armor: 5 points on head and torso, 3 points on limbs, total ENC = 7 more than usual.

STR	12	Move	3		
CON	12	Hit Points	13		
SIZ	13	Fatigue	24-3 = 21		
INT	11	Magic Points	11		
POW	11	DEX SR	3		
DEX	12				
APP	10				
weapon	SR	atk	damage	parr%	pts
Katana	7	65	1d10+1+1d4	55	14
Wakizashi	7	65	1d6+1+1d4	55	12
Yari	6	55	1d8+1+1d4	50	10
Longbow	3/9	50	1d8+1	24	

**Spirit Spells (55%):** Bladesharp 2, Demoralize (2), Heal 1, Protection 1.

**Skills:** Ride 50.

**Notes:** all samurai carry the dai-sho. Normally, one in five also carries a yari (spear), and one in five carries a longbow.



## Mikoshi Tadanobu

Tadanobu is an ascetic-looking samurai of scholarly mien, in his early 60's. He was born a retainer of the Masaki. He himself is not much of a warrior, with a severe limp and general muscular weakness due to a childhood illness. He has risen above his handicaps to become a masterful administrator and superb business manager for the Masaki.

Publicly, Tadanobu seems to be a serious, conscientious retainer, supremely loyal to the Masaki. He is a scholarly man, with deep knowledge of the classics and a fine gift for poetry. In any interaction with the emissaries, he seems completely cooperative.

In reality, he is the mastermind plotting the downfall of the Masaki. He will never betray his own plots or work against Chikuko's goals, though he may pretend to do so in the eyes of the emissaries.

STR	6	Move	3		
CON	5	Hit Points	7		
SIZ	9	Fatigue	11-3 = 8		
INT	17	Magic Points	15		
POW	15	DEX SR	3		
DEX	12				
APP	13				

Location	Melee	Missile	Points
r leg	01-04	01-03	0/3
l leg	05-08	04-06	0/3
abdomen	09-11	07-10	0/3
chest	12	11-15	0/3
r arm	13-15	16-17	0/2
l arm	16-18	18-19	0/2
head	19-20	20	0/3

weapon	SR	atk%	damage	parr%	pts
Wakizashi	8	44	1d6+1	38	12

**Spirit Magic (86%11):** Coordination 3, Countermagic 5, Dispel Magic 2, Disrupt, Heal 1, Light, Protection 2, Shimmer 2.

**Skills:** Fast Talk 81, Human Lore 78, Orate 58, Poetry 99, Scan72, Search 104, Sneak 82.

## The Sons of Tadanobu

There are six Mikoshi brothers, sons of Tadanobu, ranging in age from 18 to 28. All are handsome men and dangerous warriors. The brothers resemble each other and Tadanobu closely enough that the family relationships are obvious to any casual onlooker. The brothers are all privy to their father's secret campaign against the Masaki and, for better or worse, have decided that filial piety outweighs feudal loyalty. They will do whatever their father demands of them. All are fanatically loyal to each other and to their father, despite his misguided thirst for vengeance. Perhaps they regret the circumstances that make them opponents of the emissaries, who also should be ideals of bushido. This regret will not make the brothers any less dangerous when the adventure erupts into open conflict.

Individual descriptions follow. In each case, parenthesized values are for when wearing armor, which the brothers could only do when pursuing the emissaries after the emissaries have become fugitives.



## Mikoshi Ichitaro

**Age: 28**

Ichitaro is a ruggedly handsome fellow, with a quietly studious nature. He has followed in his father's footsteps in scholarly accomplishments, and the Masaki assume that he will take Tadanobu's place one day.

STR	16	Move	3		
CON	13	Hit Points	11		
SIZ	9	Fatigue	29-5 (or -27) = 2		
INT	15	Magic Points	11		
POW	11	DEX SR	3		
DEX	12				
APP	13				

Location	Melee	Missile	Points
r leg	01-04	01-03	0 (7)/4
l leg	05-08	04-06	0 (7)/4
abdomen	09-11	07-10	0 (7)/4
chest	12	11-15	0 (7)/5
r arm	13-15	16-17	0 (7)/3
l arm	16-18	18-19	0 (7)/3
head	19-20	20	0 (7)/4

weapon	SR	atk%	damage	parr%	pts
Yari	7	70	1d8+1+1d4	60	10
Chain 1.5m	7	70	1d6+1d4	45	8
Katana	8	75	1d10+1+1d4	60	14
Wakizashi	8	75	1d6+1+1d4	60	12

Dodge 35 (13); Iaijutsu 60; Arrow Cutting 45.

**Note:** chain is attached to spear

**Spirit Spells (59% [37%]):** Befuddle (2), Bludgeon 2, Heal 2.

**Skills:** Fast Talk 40, Ride 65, World Lore 45.



## Mikoshi Nitaro

### Age: 26

Nitaro most closely resembles Tadanobu, without the handicaps of childhood illness. His looks are more "beautiful" than "handsome," but his success in dalliance shows that such an appearance is highly appreciated by many women. He is a fine musician, who has won praise from visiting kuge for his art.

STR	12	Move	3
CON	12	Hit Points	12
SIZ	11	Fatigue	24-4 (or -15) = 20 (9)
INT	13	Magic Points	12
POW	12	DEX SR	3
DEX	14		
APP	14		

Location	Melee	Missile	Points
r leg	01-04	01-03	0 (5)/4
l leg	05-08	04-06	0 (5)/4
abdomen	09-11	07-10	0 (5)/4
chest	12	11-15	0 (5)/5
r arm	13-15	16-17	0 (5)/3
l arm	16-18	18-19	0 (5)/3
head	19-20	20	0 (5)/4

weapon	SR	atk%	damage	parr%	pts
Katana	7	70	1d10+1	55	14
Wakizashi	7	70	1d10+1	55	12
Yari	6	65	1d8+1	65	10

Dodge 30 (19); Iaijutsu 55; Arrow Cutting 40.  
**Spirit Spells (63% [52%]):** Bladesharp 2, Disrupt, Heal 2.  
**Skills:** Devise 35, Play Go 55, Ride 60.



## Mikoshi Santaro

### Age: 25

Santaro is a stocky, easy-going man. He usually wears a lazy grin and is regarded as the friendliest of the Mikoshi.

STR	14	Move	3
CON	14	Hit Points	14
SIZ	13	Fatigue	28-4 (or -12) = 24 (16)
INT	10	Magic Points	13
POW	10	DEX SR	3
DEX	12		
APP	11		

Location	Melee	Missile	Points
r leg	01-04	01-03	0 (3)/5
l leg	05-08	04-06	0 (3)/5
abdomen	09-11	07-10	0 (5)/5
chest	12	11-15	0 (5)/6
r arm	13-15	16-17	0 (3)/4
l arm	16-18	18-19	0 (3)/4
head	19-20	20	0 (5)/5

weapon	SR	atk%	damage	parr%	pts
Katana	7	65	1d10+1+1d4	55	14
Wakizashi	7	65	1d6+1+1d4	55	12
Longbow	3/9	65	1d8+1	--	--

Dodge 25 (17); Iaijutsu 50; Arrow Cutting 35.  
**Spirit Spells (65 [57]):** Disrupt, Heal 2, Repair 1, Speedart.  
**Skills:** Play Flute 60, Ride 50, Sing 68.

## Mikoshi Yotaro

### Age: 20

Yotaro is one of twins (see Rotaro, below). While he and his brother are identical physically, they are quite different temperamentally. Yotaro is an energetic man, almost bustling from place to place and task to task. He has a touchy temper and has gained a reputation as a formidable duelist.

STR	14	Move	3
CON	12	Hit Points	11
SIZ	10	Fatigue	26-2 (or -8) = 24 (18)
INT	13	Magic Points	11
POW	11	DEX SR	3
DEX	11		
APP	13		

Location	Melee	Missile	Points
r leg	01-04	01-03	0 (3)/4
l leg	05-08	04-06	0 (3)/4
abdomen	09-11	07-10	0 (5)/4
chest	12	11-12	0 (5)/4
r arm	13-15	13-15	0 (5)/4
l arm	16-18	18-19	0 (3)/3
head	19-20	20	0 (5)/4

weapon	SR	atk%	damage	parr%	pts
Katana	7	45	1d10+1	45	14
Wakizashi	7	45	1d6+1	45	12
LH Wakizashi	10	40		1d6+1	5012

Dodge 20 (14); Iaijutsu 25; Arrow Cutting 25.  
**Spirit Spells (58% [52%]):** Bladesharp 2, Heal 2.  
**Skills:** Ceremony 25, Ride 40.



## Mikoshi Rotaro

### Age: 20

Rotaro is Yotaro's twin brother. Where his sibling is frantic, Rotaro is easygoing; where Yotaro is lively and full of energetic, Rotaro prefers to take things easy. Rotaro is always exquisitely dressed and is considered a connoisseur of the arts. He is familiar with all the latest fashions in art and etiquette from Kyoto.

STR	14	Move	3
CON	12	Hit Points	11
SIZ	10	Fatigue	26-3 (or -9) = 23 (19)
INT	14	Magic Points	9
POW	9	DEX SR	3
DEX	11		
APP	13		

Location	Melee	Missile	Points
r leg	01-04	01-03	0 (3)/4
l leg	05-08	04-06	0 (3)/4
abdomen	09-11	07-10	0 (5)/4
chest	12	11-15	0 (5)/5
r arm	13-15	16-17	0 (3)/3
l arm	16-18	18-19	0 (3)/3
head	19-20	20	0 (5)/4

weapon	SR	atk%	damage	parr%	pts
Katana	7	40	1d10+1	40	14
Wakizashi	7	40	1d6+1	40	12
LH Tessen	40	1d6+1	60		8

Dodge (13); Iaijutsu 30; Arrow Cutting 25.  
**Spirit Spells (46% [40%]):** Demoralize (2), Heal 2.  
**Skills:** Cha-no-yu 55, Evaluate 45, Human Lore 35, Ride 40.

## Mikoshi Rokutaro

### Age: 18

The youngest Rokutaro bodes to be the equal of his brothers in war arts. While still boyish and gangling, he moves with catlike grace and promises to bloom into a typical member of his sterling family.

STR	14	Move 3
CON	13	Hit Points 12
SIZ	11	Fatigue 25-2 (or -10) = 23 (15)
INT	13	Magic Points 10
POW	10	DEX SR 3
DEX	13	
APP	12	

Location	Melee	Missile	Points	
r leg	01-04	01-03	0	(3)/4
l leg	05-08	04-06	0	(3)/4
abdomen	09-11	07-10	0	(5)/4
chest	12	11-15	0	(5)/5
r arm	13-15	16-17	0	(3)/3
l arm	16-18	18-19	0	(3)/3
head	19-20	20	0	(5)/4

weapon	SR	atk%	damage	parr%	pts
Katana	7	40	1d10+1+1d4	35	14
Wakizash	7	40	1d6+1+1d4	35	12
Fist	8	65	1d3+1d4	50	6
Grapple	8	50	special	50	--

Dodge (32); 20; Cutting

Spirit (53% [45%]): Heal 2, Ironhand 2.

Skills: Martial Arts 60, Ride 30.

## Masaki Chikuko

Chikuko is a goryo, an "angry ghost." After Nagamasa murdered her, she remained earthbound. Her spirit has brooded for decades upon its wrongs and as her rage has grown, so has her power. She possesses unique powers through her relationship with the Masaki. Like most goryo, her only thought is of revenge for her wrongful death, and she cannot be reasoned with on any basis. Only strong magic can repel her from her current chosen victim, Otomaro.

At the scenario's start, Chikuko covertly possesses Akiko. When she wishes, she can change over to a dominant possession, and use Akiko's statistics and skills. However, she cannot use Akiko's spell knowledge. A naginata is available in Akiko's chambers, should Chikuko decide to go after someone with it.

INT	14	Move 20
POW	20	Magic Points 20

Spirit Magic (100%): Demoralize (2), Protection 5.

Magic: her spirit can assume Akiko's form at will, and leave Akiko to attack Otomaro. She can appear to Tadanobu in his dreams to instruct and encourage him. When she is possessing Akiko, her presence cannot be detected by magical vision, unless she takes active control of Akiko.



## The Hag

This hag came to the haunted caves about a decade ago, and has had a spiritual feast on the bad karma emanating from the cavern interior. She is not interested in permitting the emissaries to release either Chikuko or Nagamasa.

STR	16	Move 3/3 flying
CON	8	Hit Points 13
SIZ	18	Fatigue 24
INT	15	Magic Points 25
POW	25	DEX SR 3
DEX	14	
APP	6	

Location	Melee	Missile	Points
r leg	01-04	01-03	(8)/5
l leg	05-08	04-06	(8)/5
abdomen	09-11	07-10	(8)/5
chest	12	11-15	(8)/6
r arm	13-15	16-17	(8)/4
l arm	16-18	18-19	(8)/4
head	19-20	20	(8)/5

weapon	SR	atk%	damage
r claw	7	60	1d6+1d6
l claw	10	60	1d6+1d6

Dodge 90

Spirit Spells (145%): Befuddle (2), Heal 2, Protection 8, Shimmer 3.

Magic: she casts her Protection spell on herself just before intruders enter her cave. She can form a shade out of the darkness in the cave at a cost of 1 magic point per cubic meter of shade. Normally, she will create a 5-cubic-meter shade to fight intruders right at the start of any battle. She will sit back behind her shades, casting Befuddle spells and fighting as needed.

## Nagamasa, the Demon Ogre

In combat, he normally uses his spear until it is broken or he drops it. If he can, he is glad to sit back and throw large or small rocks at the intruders. The cave is littered with rocks. Nagamasa can find a small rock suitable for throwing easily, and he can find a large rock 20% of the time.

STR	15	Move 2
CON	22	Hit Points 21
SIZ	20	Fatigue 27
INT	11	Magic Points 24
POW	24	DEX SR 3
DEX	13	
APP	4	

Location	Melee	Missile	Points
r leg	01-04	01-03	5/5
l leg	05-08	04-06	5/5
abdomen	09-11	07-10	5/7
chest	12	11-15	5/9
r arm	13-15	16-17	5/6
l arm	16-18	18-19	5/6
head	19-20	20	5/7

weapon	SR	atk%	damage	parr%	pts
Spear	4	62	1d10+1+1d6	21	10
r claw	6	40	1d6+1d6		
l claw	9	40	1d6+1d6		
rock	3/9	35	1d4+1d3		
large rock	3	35	2d6+1d3 (5 meter max. range)		

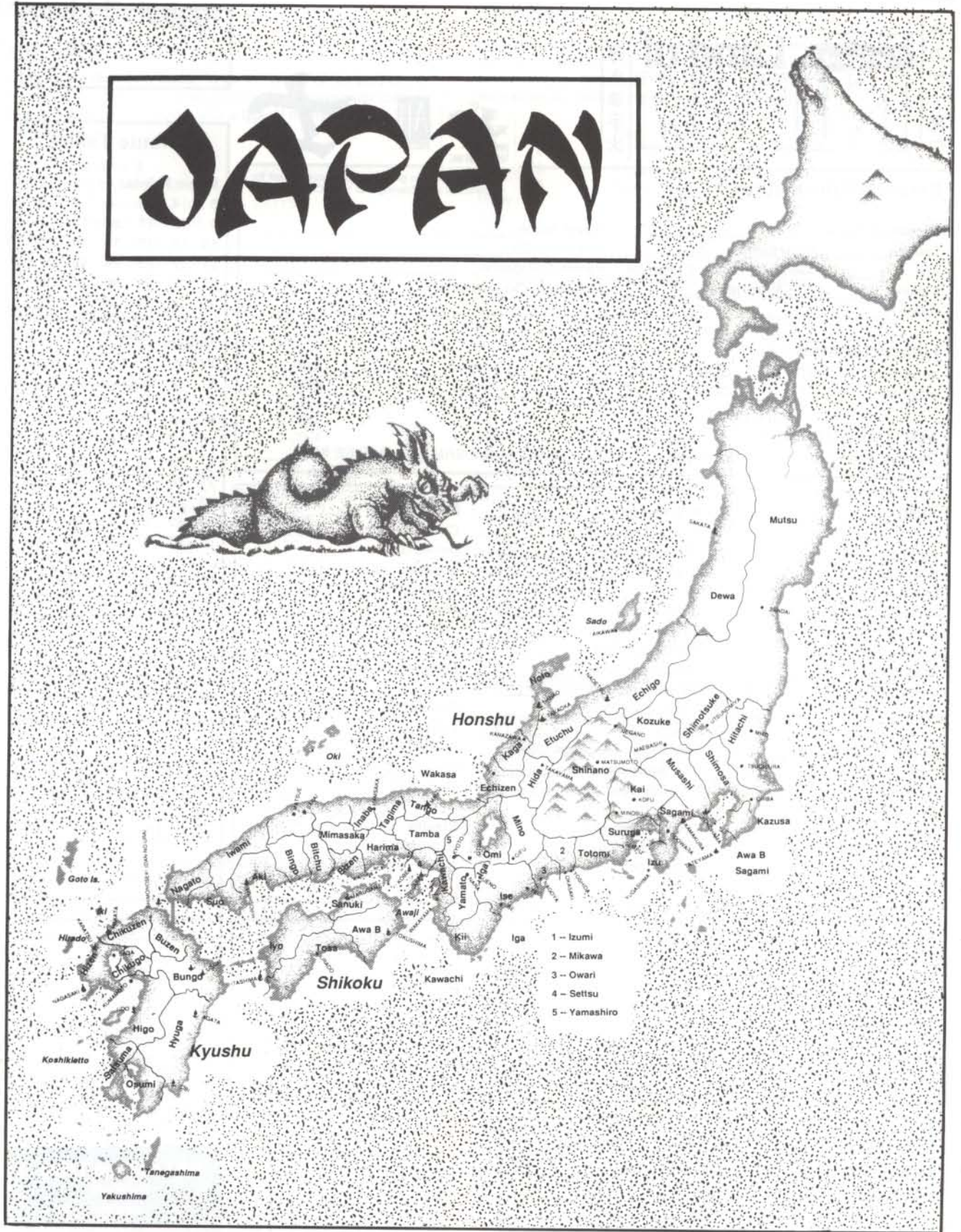
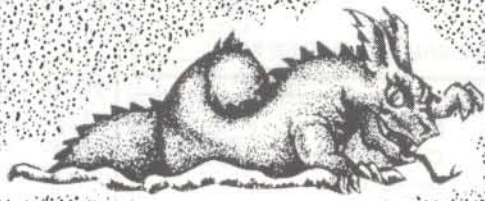
Spirit Magic (137%): Dispel Magic 5, Glue 3, Slow 3.

Armor: flinty hide only (worth 5 points).

Magic: all wounded locations heal at 1d6 points per round. Even if Nagamasa takes lethal damage, he will heal until life is restored. Also, none of his hit locations can be reduced past 0 hit points. Once he has been wounded (even 1 point) by his own sword (the one in Chikuko's mummy), this power ceases to operate.



# JAPAN









Possession of *RuneQuest Fantasy Roleplaying Adventure* is necessary to use the contents of this volume.

死の地ナ宮ワ

下迷さま宇火

# RuneQuest Land of NINJA



Journey to the land where the sun rises on fantastic adventure! Armed with your two swords, your loyalty to your master, and your honour, you must face the perils of feudal Japan. Once you have entered the *Land of Ninja*, glory or honourable death must be your goals.

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