

# Chapter of Fire: Characters (Creation and Advancement)

## Creating a Character

The first step to playing L5R is to create a Character. This is a process which should always be done in consultation with the GM (who may have specific ideas of sort of characters will fit into the campaign) and if possible with the other Players as well. Some GMs run “open” campaigns in which any sort of Character can work, but just as often the storyline will require some restrictions in order to work properly – thus, Character creation should always be a collaborative process between Players and GM.

Although the game-mechanics of creating a Character are important, in many ways the Character’s personality, history, and goals are far more important. Samurai are three-dimensional people with complex motivations and dreams. We strongly recommend that Players start by deciding who their Character is, and only after that proceed to building the Character’s mechanical aspects.

## The Game of Twenty Questions

Ever since the publication of its first edition in 1997, L5R has used the Game of Twenty Questions to help Players create the background and personalities of their Characters. The Game encourages each Player to ask the key questions about their Characters. What kind of character do you want to play? What is his history like? What are his goals? What is the most important thing in the world to him? These are the things each Player should consider before ever going through the mechanic sections of the book.

### **1. What Clan does your Character belong to?**

A samurai’s clan is often his most defining characteristic, since each clan has an ancient and unique assortment of beliefs and ideals. Of course, a Character may break the stereotypes of his clan instead of following them, but either way his clan identity is a very important to his personality.

### **2. What family does your Character belong to?**

Each clan contains one or more families, and each family has its own defining characteristics. The stereotypes of the Great Clans are broad, but the families have more specific roles and identities that add greater depth to a Character’s persona.

### **3. Is your Character primarily a bushi, a shugenja, or a courtier?**

Duty is central to every samurai’s life, and a Character’s assignment and training as a bushi, shugenja, or courtier plays a major role in what sort of duties his lord and clan will expect him to perform. A bushi is more likely to be given martial duties, while a courtier is more likely to be assigned diplomatic tasks. Also, the Character’s choice of school defines what some of his in-game capabilities will be – if you want your Character to be able to cast spells, you need to play a shugenja.

### **4. How would others describe your Character’s appearance?**

A Character is far more likely to “come to life” if you have a solid mental image of what he or she looks like and can share that image with the other Players. What is the Character’s most striking feature? Does he show some of his emotions, or is he stoic and unreadable? Is he handsome or ugly, tall or short?

### **5. What is your Character’s primary motivation?**

In theory, samurai care only about serving their lord. In practice, they usually have their own personal goals as well. Such goals may be simple ideals (“uphold my ancestors’ honor”) or complex and challenging (“find the mysterious assassin who killed my brother”), and may be honorable or dishonorable.

## **6. Who is the person your Character trusts most in the world?**

This not only helps define the Character but also helps to build a structure of friends and relatives around him. It is perfectly acceptable to choose a fellow Player Character as the answer to this question, although you should make sure that Player is willing to cooperate with such a background. It is also acceptable to answer “no one” – in which case your Character will probably be facing a difficult life as a loner.

## **7. What is your Character’s greatest strength and weakness?**

This question is not referring to game mechanics, but rather to aspects of the Character’s personality. For example, a strength might be something like the Character’s courage, his creativity, or his loyalty to his friends. Conversely, a weakness would be something like naïvete, selfishness, or a bad temper. It can also be interesting to create a contrast between what the Character *thinks* are his strengths and weaknesses, and what they *really* are.

## **8. What does your Character think of Bushido?**

All samurai are supposed to respect and venerate the Code of Bushido, but some clans and families pay more attention to some tenets over others, and there are always a few samurai who refuse to believe in Bushido at all. Does your Character agree with his clan’s views, or does he have his own interpretation of Bushido?

## **9. What is your Character’s opinion of his clan?**

Not every samurai is truly a loyal and devoted servant of the clan. Does your Character embrace his clan’s ideals and goals, or does he find himself in conflict with them? Does he agree with current policies or regard them as mistakes? Perhaps a militaristic samurai is born into the Crane or the Phoenix Clans, or a pacifistic samurai is born into the Lion or Crab Clans. Perhaps a Scorpion disagrees with his clan’s sinister behavior. Perhaps a Lion believes his clan’s enmity with the Crane is an error. The possibilities are endless.

## **10. Is your Character married?**

Marriage in Rokugan is primarily a matter of duty, both to ensure the continuation of family lines and to cement alliances and treaties. Your Character may very well have been ordered into such a marriage already. If not, he or she may still be betrothed for a future marriage. If your Character is married, is the spouse a complete stranger or someone you knew beforehand? Are you happy with the marriage? Is your spouse? Worst of all, are you in love with someone else?

## **11. Does your Character have any prejudices?**

Most of the Great Clans have negative prejudices toward some or all of the other clans, usually due to rivalries and feuds going back centuries. Does your Character share these prejudices, or reject them (and if so, why)? Does he have his own personal dislikes of other families, clans, or beliefs?

## **12. To whom does your Character owe the most loyalty?**

Although samurai are supposed to owe their ultimate loyalty to the Emperor, in practice most of them directly serve someone lower down on the Status scale – typically a local lord of some sort. Above that person are provincial lords, the family daimyo, the Clan Champion, and finally the Son of Heaven. Which of these persons does your Character respect and revere the most? The answer may well create a future conflict in loyalties.

### **13. What are your Character's favorite and least favorite things?**

The answers to this question could be anything from food and drink to specific activities, material possessions, or particular persons. Why does the Character like or dislike these things? Is it an arbitrary preference or something tied to his own history?

### **14. Does your Character have any recurring mannerisms?**

Almost all samurai follow the Empire's universal rules of behavior and etiquette. As a result, even the most trivial mannerisms tend to be easily noticed – things like chewing one's lip when nervous, or clasping his hands to hide his trembling fingers. Perhaps he always says the same thing when meeting a stranger. All these things add subtle depth to the Character... and so does a deliberate absence of mannerisms.

### **15. When does your Character show emotions?**

Although samurai are supposed to maintain On (face) and not show their emotions, few of them are truly able to control their feelings at all times. Even the most stoic and rigidly self-controlled samurai occasionally lets out a true moment of feeling. What emotions does your Character show, and why? What events or feelings can make him lose his self-control? And conversely, what emotions can he always control, no matter what ?

### **16. How would your Character handle a subordinate's improper behavior?**

A samurai's actions reflect on the honor of his superiors, and when this happens the superior must take action to end the shameful behavior. How would your Character respond in such a situation? Are you the sort who would demand seppuku even for minor infractions, or would you show mercy and try to correct your underling's misbehavior?

### **17. How would your Character's parents describe him?**

Parental devotion is an expected virtue in a land where the family, not the individual, is the repository of honor and reputation. However, despite this ideal there are plenty of samurai who have a fractious relationship with their parents, or who offer outward veneration while concealing a lack of respect. Does your Character have a proper relationship with his parents or are they estranged? Was the Character's childhood a happy one, or was he a torment to his parents? Are they still alive?

### **18. What is your Character's highest ambition?**

Desire is one of the Three Sins... but honorable ambition is considered perfectly acceptable in a samurai so long as it does not lead to improper behavior. Samurai aspire to gain glory in battle or in the courts, to rise to positions of authority and prestige, and to win the praise of their lords. Others pursue more personal goals, such as avenging a relative or solving an ancient mystery. What is your Character's ultimate goal, is it a socially acceptable goal or a dishonorable one, and how far is he willing to go to get it?

### **19. How religious is your Character?**

All samurai are expected to go through the outward motions of religious piety (especially shugenja, who serve as the priests of the samurai caste), but some are more truly reverent than others. Is your Character the sort who goes to the shrines every day, or does he only do the minimum required observance? Does he prize ancestral worship over the Fortunes, or does he consider the teachings of Shinsei to be the most important aspect of his faith?

### **20. How should your Character die?**

All proper samurai fully expect to die in the service of their lords, and it is said that every samurai lives three feet from death – the length of a katana blade. However, some deaths have more meaning than

others, and there are plenty of samurai whose outward façade of courage hides fear of mortality. How would you like your Character to end his life? Will he fulfill his destiny and join his ancestors in Yomi, or will his soul be forced to undertake another cycle on the Celestial Wheel of reincarnation?

## Building a Character

Once you've decided what sort of person your Character will be, it is time to start "building" the Character in the game. Initially, a new Character will have a fairly basic set of abilities that reflect the youthful training of a young samurai. These are then modified by your choice of family and School (if any) and by the expenditure of Experience Points.

All Characters start with a Rank of 2 in all but one of their Traits and in their Void Ring. The Player chooses one Trait (and thus, the associated Ring) which begins at Rank 1. This is the Character's **Weak Trait**, and it can never rise higher than Rank 4. All other Traits, and the Void Ring, can potentially rise to Rank 5. (Certain Advantages can change these restrictions.)

GMs may choose to limit how high a Trait or Ring can be raised during Character creation, restricting the initial maximum Rank to 3 or at most 4 in order to represent the Character's lack of experience.

All Characters start with a Glory Rank of 1.0 and an Infamy Rank of 0.0. (This can be changed with certain Advantages or Disadvantages.) Clan characters start with a Status Rank of 1.0, while ronin characters start with a Status Rank of 0.0 – this can likewise be changed with certain Advantages.

## Experience Points

The main tool for building and improving L5R Characters is Experience Points. A normal Character starts with 45 Experience Points. (Ronin Characters use a different number of points – see the Ronin rules in the *Chapter of Water* for details.) These starting Experience Points represent the benefits of basic life experience and childhood training. A Character can gain some additional Experience Points by taking Disadvantages.

The GM will award more Experience Points during play, representing the benefits of learning from one's actions, gaining confidence, and becoming more in harmony with one's inner Elements. Typically these will be awarded after each gaming session, although some GMs will choose to award them less often.

When you are building and improving your Character, you may spend your Experience Points for any of the following purposes:

- **Raise a Trait:** Raising a Trait by 1 Rank costs a number of Experience Points equal to **5x** the new Rank. Thus, raising a Trait from Rank 2 to Rank 3 will cost 15 Experience Points. The four Elemental Rings (Earth, Air, Fire, and Water) cannot be increased directly – if a player wants to increase these Rings, he does so by increasing their subsidiary Traits. A Ring's Rank is always equal to the lower of its two Traits.
- **Raise the Void Ring:** Since Void does not have any subsidiary Traits, the Ring has to be increased directly. Raising the Void Ring by one Rank costs a number of Experience Points equal to **6x** the new Rank. Thus, raising Void from Rank 2 to Rank 3 costs 18 Experience Points.
- **Purchasing and Raising Skills:** Buying a Rank in a Skill costs a number of Experience Points equal to the new Rank. Thus, buying a new Skill at Rank 1 costs 1 Experience Point; raising a Skill from Rank 1 to Rank 2 costs 2 Experience Points, and then raising that Skill from Rank 2 to Rank 3 costs 3 more Experience Points.
- **Learning Kata:** A Character may learn Kata if he has sufficient Ranks in the appropriate Weapon Skill. The cost of learning a Kata is equal to **4x** its Mastery Rank. Thus, learning a

Mastery Rank3 Kata will cost 12 Experience Points. Some Schools award a discount for buying specific Kata, allowing them to be purchased for 3x Rank instead of 4x Rank.

- **Purchasing Advantages:** Each Advantage has a specific cost in Experience Points. These costs may be changed if a Character belongs to a Clan or other group which is known to exhibit that Advantage more often (or less often). In general, Advantages can only be purchased when first creating a Character, but the GM may choose to award additional Advantages to the Character later (to reflect the outcome of adventures) or permit the Character to purchase them.

## **Improving Characters: Spending Experience Points after Character Creation**

A Character is not a static, unchanging person. Over time, a samurai's experiences will change him in many ways, both positive and negative. The most basic way to represent this is through gaining more Experience Points.

During the course of an L5R campaign, the GM will award the Characters additional Experience Points based on their accomplishments. For the most part, these may be spent in the same ways as Experience Points are spent at Character creation. However, there is one constraint: Advantages cannot be purchased after Character creation unless the GM specifically grants permission to do so. Likewise, although a Character may gain additional Disadvantages due to events in his life, he does not gain additional Experience Points for those Disadvantages unless the GM chooses to award them.

In a "traditional" L5R campaign, the GM will award Experience Points at the rate of 4 to 6 points per session, depending on how much the Characters accomplished and how well the Players role-played their Characters. However, this number is by no means set in stone. GMs who wish to have a more "grounded" campaign built around low-power Characters – the style favored by the original 1<sup>st</sup> Edition of L5R – should award no more than 3 Experience Points per session. Conversely, GMs who wish to have a faster-advancing or more "epic" campaign can award higher amounts, as much as 8 to 10 points per session. It is recommended that GMs not go above 10 points per session unless they are comfortable with the Characters advancing their capabilities extremely rapidly.

It is the discretion of the GM whether to award different totals of Experience Points to individual Characters or simply award the same amount to all Characters who played in the session. However, making individual awards can easily lead to accusations of bias or favoritism; GMs must keep this in mind when making this decision.

## **Measuring Growth: Insight Rank**

Insight Rank is an abstract way of representing a Character's overall capabilities and his growth over time. It represents how a Character gradually accumulates more knowledge and capability, thus becoming worthy of being taught the deeper secrets of his School. It also provides a useful "shorthand" for comparing the relative power and capability of different Characters.

Insight is determined from the following elements:

- **Rings:** Combine the total of all of the Character's Ring Ranks and multiply them by 10. Thus, if a Character has Air of 2, Earth of 3, Water of 2, Fire of 4, and Void of 2, the combined total is 13, yielding 130 Insight.
- **Skills:** Combine the total all of the Character's Skill Ranks.

The result of this is how much Insight the Character has.

The Character's **Insight Rank** is then determined by comparing his total Insight to the following chart:

Insight 0-100	Rank 0 (still in training)
Insight 101-149	Rank 1
Insight 150-174	Rank 2
Insight 175-199	Rank 3
Insight 200-224	Rank 4
Insight 225-249	Rank 5
Insight 250 and higher	Rank 6 [Elite]

All Player Characters will normally start at Insight Rank 1.

It is theoretically possible for a Player to make choices that cause his Character to start below 100 Insight, by refusing to raise any Rings, letting his Weak Trait lower one Ring to 1, and taking only a minimal handful of Skills; however, the GM should not allow this unless everyone is willing to play in a campaign in which the Characters are still undergoing training and have not yet passed their *gempukku* (coming-of-age ceremony).

No human Character can rise higher than Insight Rank 6, no matter how much he increases his Rings and Skills. There are limits to what mortals can attain, after all.

## Effects of Insight Rank

The primary benefit of increasing Insight Rank is that a Character who is enrolled in a School can learn new School Techniques (or in the case of a shugenja, learn new spells).

However, even if a Character is not in a School, or has run out of new Techniques to learn, raising Insight Rank still has value. Insight Rank is one of the components of a Character's Initiative Rank, and Insight is also used for a few key rolls in the game (as described in the *Chapter of Earth*) such as the roll to Stand Up and Fight during a Skirmish.

## Skills

Skills represent a Character's training, education, and life experience. They are ranked between 1 and 5, with Rank 1 being a novice who has only the most basic training, and Rank 5 being a master of that art who has few rivals in the Empire. Samurai Characters usually begin with a basic selection of Skills based on their School, mostly at Rank 1, and then add more Skills and increase their Skill Ranks by spending Experience Points.

Skills are divided into four broad types: High, Martial (or *Bugei*), Merchant, and Low. These represent how Rokugani society views these skills. In general, the Rokugani believe only **High** and **Martial** Skills are the proper domain of samurai. **Merchant** Skills are viewed as socially low-class, properly the domain of commoners, and a samurai who practices them openly will often suffer a Glory loss; exceptionally idealistic samurai might even lose Honor due to weakening their own self-image (GM and Players' discretion). **Low** Skills are those which are considered outright dishonorable for a samurai to practice (or even to think about, for truly idealistic samurai) – using a Low Skill will usually result in a loss of Honor, and if others witness the event it will also result in a loss of Glory and possibly an increase in Infamy, depending on how heinous the GM judges the specific act to be.

These Skill types are intended to assist players and GMs in understanding how Rokugani samurai view the use of Skills. They are not hard-and-fast rules for every single circumstance. There are situations where using Low Skills is not considered dishonorable, and situations where High Skills can cause losses of Honor or Glory. We've tried to list the more obvious examples of these instances under the specific Skills, but there will always be special circumstances that GMs and Players will need to judge for themselves.

## High Skills

High Skills are the Skills most associated with the samurai caste and the civilized, educated lives they lead. These Skills deal with things like politics, court life, and art, and represent the most refined and elegant aspects of Rokugani culture. Although High Skills seldom come into use during an action scene, they are vital to situations that feature courtly intrigue, mysteries, and diplomacy.

### Artisan (Category Skill) –

Any Skill which involves creating an enduring work of art falls into this Category. Obviously, physical art such as paintings, sculptures, and pottery are all Skills under Artisan, but so are Skills for more abstract forms of art such as composing poetry or writing plays. Artisan Skills do not include the actual performance of artistic works for an audience – that is Perform instead. Widely-used Artisan Skills include the following:

- **Ikebana** [usually **Awareness**] – The art of flower-arranging.
- **Origami** [usually **Intelligence**] – The art of paper-folding.
- **Painting** [usually **Awareness**] – Rokugani painting is done on either silk or paper, and can use a single color of ink or several colors.
- **Playwright** [usually **Intelligence**] – Rokugani plays are of two types. *Noh* plays are usually tragic and often use minimal dialogue or sometimes no dialogue at all. *Kabuki* plays are louder, more colorful, and quite flamboyant, and often tell comedic or heroic stories in addition to tragic and dramatic ones.
- **Poetry** [usually **Awareness** or **Intelligence**] – The favored form of poetry in Rokugan is *haiku*, which comprises three lines with a set number of syllables (traditionally 5-7-5) and draws heavily on images and contrasts. Other forms of poetry also exist, such as *tanka* (five lines, 5-7-5-7-7) and *sedoka* love-poems (two verses, call and response, of either 5-7-5 or 5-7-7 syllables).
- **Pottery** [usually **Agility**] – Commoner potters make thousands of cups, bowls, pots, and plates every year, often of considerable beauty, but samurai potters focus on artistry first and practical usage as an afterthought. The tea-set of a master potter is more likely to be displayed on a shelf in a Lord's residence than to actually be used to serve tea.
- **Sculpture** [usually **Strength**] – the smallest of the major Artisan fields, sculpture is used primarily to decorate castles and temples with statues of famous individuals from history, religion, or legend.

### Category Skills

In order to keep the list of Skills from bloating into a giant book of its own, we have created a number of “Category Skills.” These are not actually Skills themselves, but rather a general name/type which can be applied to an infinite number of different Skills which fall into the same category. For example, the Category Skill of “Lore” is a catch-all term for any Skill which grants in-depth scholarly knowledge of a topic, such as History, Heraldry, Bushido, or the Shadowlands.

A Skill from a Category will be written with the Category name first, followed by the name of the specific Skill. For instance, a character who knows how to make sculpture will list his Skill as Artisan: Sculpture.

Different Skills within a Category may use different Traits depending on the nature of the specific Skill. For example, while all Lore Skills use the Intelligence Trait, the Games Category includes Skills that use Intelligence (**Shogi** and **Go**), Awareness (**Sadane**), and even Agility (**Kemari**).

The Category Skills in L5R are **Artisan**, **Craft**, **Games**, **Lore**, **Perform**, and **Weapon**.

### **Calligraphy [usually Intelligence] –**

All samurai are considered literate (unless they take the Illiterate Disadvantage) and can read and write at a basic level. This Skill represents both greater expertise in literacy and the artistry of writing with beauty and elegance. It also incorporates an understanding of the multiple layers of meaning in Rokugani *kanji* (written characters) and the ways in which different messages can be hidden within a word, sentence, or phrase. Consequently, this Skill also encompasses the arts of creating and breaking ciphered messages.

### **Courtier [usually Awareness] –**

Courtier is the Skill of negotiation, manipulation, and rhetorical maneuver. It is the “attack” Skill for most situations involving social conflict – see the Social Conflict rules in the *Chapter of Earth* for details.

### **Etiquette [usually Awareness or Intelligence] –**

Etiquette includes both a character’s knowledge of Rokugan’s social rules and his ability to use those rules to protect himself in court. This Skill can be used with Intelligence to know the social requirements of any specific situation, and can be used with Awareness as the “defense” Skill for social conflict. Again, more details on this can be found in the Social Conflict rules in the *Chapter of Earth*.

### **Games (Category Skill) –**

Any game which is socially acceptable for samurai falls under this Category. This includes board games (**Shogi** and **Go**), courtly games such as the **Game of Letters** and **Sadane**, and even a physical game called **Kemari**.

- **Shogi and Go [usually Intelligence]** – These are both strategy games popular in the samurai caste and sometimes played by commoners as well. *Go* is the native strategy game of Rokugan, played with white and black stones on a wooden board with criss-crossing lines. *Shogi*, a game which somewhat resembles chess, is brought to the Empire by the Unicorn Clan in the ninth century, but quickly becomes popular with other clans, especially the Lion.
- **Sadane [usually Awareness]** – This is a courtly game of impromptu criticism, and thus typically uses the Awareness Trait, although Intelligence might be used to come up with references and comparisons. The competitors seek to deliver the most scathing possible criticisms of a mutually chosen topic, such as a play or another samurai’s kimono. Note that directly criticizing another person is potentially grounds for a duel, so Sadane players must be careful in their choice of targets.
- **Falconry [typically Awareness or Willpower]** is the sport of competitive hunting with trained hunting birds. This is considered a highly honorable sport among samurai, particularly those from wealthy Clans, and samurai will often compete or make bets on the prowess of their birds.
- The **Game of Letters [usually Awareness]** – This is an elaborate courtly game that involves the semi-public exchanging of letters with hidden meanings. A good game can last for months.
- **Kemari [usually Agility]** – A “courtly” game, considered an acceptable physical entertainment even in the most traditional and formal castles, that involves keeping a ball in the air with one’s feet. Much of the challenge of the game involves maintaining one’s dignity while playing.

### **Investigation [usually Perception] –**

Samurai are trained to notice their surroundings and to spot the minutest changes in their opponents. This Skill is used for a variety of purposes, such as spotting ambushes, noticing clues, searching out hidden items, and picking up subtle details in another person’s behavior. The Skill can also potentially be used to get a “read” on whether another person is lying or telling the truth – this is typically resolved as a Contested Roll of Investigation (using either Perception or Awareness, depending on the Character’s approach) against the target’s Sincerity/Awareness.



### **Lore (Category Skill) [Intelligence] –**

Lore is probably the broadest of all Categories, encompassing any Skill that represents detailed knowledge of a specific topic. This knowledge is most commonly attained through scholarly study and education, but it may also be the result of practical experience. Examples of Lore Skills are almost infinite, and many scholars pursue extremely specialized and esoteric fields of knowledge.

It should be noted that knowledge of certain dubious topics, like the Shadowlands, is considered shameful and a character demonstrating such knowledge in polite company is committing a Minor Breach of Etiquette.

The major, widely-used Lore Skills comprise the following:

- **Bushido** – In-depth knowledge of the moral code of Rokugani samurai, along with its history and its philosophical and practical implications.
- **Clan** (choose one) – In-depth knowledge of a particular clan's unique traditions, social customs, superstitions, philosophies, and territorial holdings.
- **Heraldry** – Knowledge of Rokugan's clan, family, and individual symbology, as well as general knowledge about famous/notorious people in the current Empire.
- **History** – Knowledge of Rokugan's official history. A character with very high Ranks in this Skill may also have knowledge of those portions of the historical record which have been suppressed or altered by official historians.
- **Maho** – Knowledge about the dark magic used by the Bloodspeaker Cult and other maho-tsukai (sorcerers), as well as of the cults themselves. This Skill is mainly limited to the Crab Clan and to various organizations such as the Phoenix Inquisitors and the Scorpion Kuroiban; outside of those groups, this is treated as a **Low Skill**.
- **Shadowlands** – Knowledge of the dark realm of the Shadowlands, the terrible creatures which inhabit it, and the Taint which suffuses it. In general, only the Crab Clan makes a point of studying this disgusting topic. Other samurai treat Lore: Shadowlands as a **Low Skill**.
- **Shugenja** – Knowledge about Rokugan's priestly class and the magic which they practice.
- **Spirits** – Knowledge about spirit creatures such as ghosts, gaki, the various shapeshifting animal spirits, and so forth. This Skill specifically excludes any study of the Shadowlands or the Taint.
- **Theology** – Knowledge of Rokugan's three combined religious traditions and beliefs: Fortunism (worship of the Fortunes), Shintao (the ways of the Little Teacher, Shinsei), and Ancestral Worship (veneration of the spirits of one's forebears).
- **Underworld** – Knowledge of Rokugan's criminal classes and the shadowy world in which they operate. This is considered a shameful Skill for most samurai to have, although magistrates can justify it as part of their duties.
- **War** – This represents scholarly study of the history, nature, and practice of Rokugani warfare (as opposed to practical knowledge of how to fight battles, which is represented by the Battle Skill).

### **Medicine [usually Intelligence] –**

The Rokugani lack modern medicine, but they do have a good practical understanding of how to treat physical injuries (sewing up cuts, setting bones, and so forth), and they have developed some moderately effective treatments for common sicknesses and some kinds of poison.

- The Medicine Skill can be used to treat Wounds on a Character who is not Dying. This is a Skill Roll at a TN equal to 5+ (5x current number of Wounds), but with a maximum TN of 30 regardless of how many Wounds the Character has. A success heals 1 Wound. This may be attempted once each time a Character is injured, although a tough-minded GM may choose to also restrict the total number of times per session that a character can be treated.

- The Medicine Skill can also be used to try to save a Character who is Dying (due to taking a Wound while at Death's Door). The TN of the roll is 10 higher than the TN to treat Wounds. A successful roll saves the character from death but does not heal a Wound.
- The Medicine Skill can be used to treat a poisoned character – see the Poison rules in the *Chapter of Earth* for discussion of this.

### **Meditation [usually Void] –**

Many samurai, especially shugenja, are taught how to center and focus themselves, clearing their minds of distracting thoughts and emotions with periods of meditation. Meditation is also hugely important to the monks of the Brotherhood of Shinsei, who typically spend several hours a day practicing it.

Once per session, a character who manages to meditate uninterrupted for at least an hour may make a Meditation/Void Skill Roll at TN 25 to either regain one Void Point or rid himself of one Rank of Stress.

### **Perform (Category Skill) [varies] –**

Any artistic performance which a Character presents to an audience is a Skill which falls into this Category. Rokugani culture has a great many performance arts, most of which are considered honorable and noble – hence, this Category is listed under High Skills, although there are a few Perform Skills which are considered lowly and only used by commoners or geisha. The well-known Perform Skills are the following:

- **Acting [usually Awareness]** – Performing in *Noh* or *Kabuki* theatre is considered a noble practice for samurai with the proper training, and popular actors can win great Glory.
- **Dance [usually Agility]** – In Rokugan, dance is a performance art, usually done by a single person accompanied by one or two musical instruments. Most dances are designed to tell a simple story or evoke a single emotion. Dance is predominantly a female art, although there are some male dancers.
- **Musical Instrument [Agility or Strength]** – Rokugani musical instruments include the *taiko* (a drum, of widely varying size, some as large as a wagon), the *samisen* (a stringed instrument played in a manner similar to a banjo), the *biwa* (a stringed instrument played somewhat like a violin), the *koto* (a stringed instrument similar to a zither), and the flute. Each instrument has its own Skill. Most instrument Skills use the Agility Trait, but drums use the Strength Trait.
- **Puppet Theater [Agility or Awareness]** – Rokugani puppeteers are usually commoners, putting on shows for their fellow peasants, although slumming samurai have been known to attend puppet-plays. Puppetry uses either the Agility Trait or the Awareness Trait, depending on the nature of the performance. This is usually considered a **Merchant Skill**.
- **Singing [usually Awareness]** – Rokugani song, like dance, is preferentially a female art, although there are a few male singers in the more artistically-inclined clans. Most songs recount tragic love stories or evoke moments of beauty in nature.
- **Storytelling [Awareness or Intelligence]** – Telling stories is a popular entertainment among both samurai and commoners, although the types of stories vary widely between the classes.

### **Sincerity [usually Awareness] –**

The Rokugani believe a samurai must always commit whole-heartedly to anything he does or says. This is especially important when he speaks in public or in front of his superiors. A samurai who does not seem to sincerely believe what he is saying is insulting both his lord and his audience. Any time a character is trying to project truthfulness and commitment in what he says (whether or not he is actually telling the truth), he uses the Sincerity Skill. As noted in the Social Conflict rules (in the *Chapter of Earth*), Sincerity is the Skill used in any social conflict situation that involves convincing an audience or a higher authority.

**NOTE:** The perceptive reader may realize that Bushido's Virtues of Sincerity and Honesty are sometimes in conflict with each other – a conundrum which every samurai must confront at some point. Thus, a character who uses Sincerity to lie may or may not lose Honor, depending on how honorable he is and, just as important, *why* he is lying.

## **Martial (*Bugei*) Skills**

Samurai are warriors above all else, and the Skills associated with martial service are considered honorable and proper for any samurai to study. After all, it is the sword which is the mark of a samurai's station, and every samurai is expected to be ready to die for his lord.

### **Athletics [varies] –**

Any physical challenge, such as climbing, swimming, running, or jumping, will use the Athletics Skill. The Trait used will depend on the exact nature of the action involved – swimming will typically use Strength, for example, while jumping will use Agility.

### **Battle [usually Perception or Awareness] –**

The Battle Skill represents the ability to command soldiers in combat and to plan and direct military campaigns. The Skill is used when commanding units or armies in a Mass Battle and when rolling on the Mass Battle Table itself (see the *Chapter of Water* for details on Mass Battle).

In a Skirmish, a Character with the Battle Skill may opt to use his Action to provide guidance to his allies. This is a Battle/Perception roll at a TN of 20 to help one ally, with each Raise adding an additional ally. Each ally aided with Battle gains a +1k0 bonus to their next attack roll or Defense Skill Roll (chosen by the Character making the Battle roll).

### **Defense [usually Reflexes] –**

The Defense Skill is one of the most important for bushi, since it represents the ability to avoid enemy attacks. In Rokugani combat, this is done through a mixture of weapon deflection, dodging, footwork, and using one's armor. Direct edge-to-edge "block" parrying is rare, since Rokugani blades have difficulty withstanding the shock of such impacts.

### **Horsemanship [usually Awareness or Willpower] –**

The Skill of riding horses is considered an important one for samurai, although only the Unicorn mount the majority of their army on horseback. This Skill is used any time a Character needs to make sure his mount stays under control or does what he wants. It is especially important in skirmishes since a Character who rides into combat with little or no Horsemanship is unlikely to do well.

A character must have at least 1 Rank of Horsemanship to be able to use other Skills while on horseback, and must have at least 4 Ranks in Horsemanship in order to be able to use the Full Attack or Full Defense Tactics while on horseback.

### **Hunting [usually Perception] –**

Samurai employ knowledge of hunting both for entertainment (it is a popular sport among the samurai caste) and for military purposes such as scouting enemy forces and tracking down criminals. The Hunting Skill is used for any situation which involves outdoor/wilderness tracking and survival, including following the trail of enemies and navigating one's way through wilderness areas.

A basic usage of the Skill would be to know the direction of a major landmark, or to know which direction is north or south (TN 15 to 25, depending on circumstances). If a Character is tracking someone who is actively trying to obscure their path, this will be a Contested Roll of the tracker's Hunting/Perception against the target's Stealth/Intelligence.

### **Iaijutsu [Awareness/Reflexes/Void] –**

This is the Skill associated with the special form of sword-dueling which Rokugani samurai use to settle disputes and prove their superior skills. The Iaijutsu Skill's uses are explained in the rules on Iaijutsu Duels in the *Chapter of Earth*.

Higher Ranks in Iaijutsu qualify a Character to purchase the Path of Void Kata (see the Kata rules later in this chapter).

### **Jiujutsu [usually Agility] –**

Rokugan is not a society in which unarmed martial arts play a large role, since samurai are known above all for their mastery of weapons. However, centuries of practical experience have taught the samurai class the value of being able to fight without their weapons, and most modern samurai learn a basic form of unarmed combat known as *Jiujutsu* (literally, “hands and feet”) which focuses on simple strikes, locks, and throws.

A Character who fights unarmed is considered to be using a Light Weapon unless he has an Advantage or Kata which changes this.

Three Clans – the Crab, the Crane, and the Dragon – have unique martial art traditions that extend beyond the limited methods of basic jiujutsu. These are represented by Jiujutsu Kata which are specific to those Clans – see the Kata rules later in this chapter for details.

### **Weapon (Category Skill) –**

This Category encompasses all the Skills used when fighting with the various weapons available in Rokugan, most notably the sword, the favored weapon of the samurai. Weapon Skills are especially important because most of them qualify a Character to learn Kata for that weapon (see the Kata rules later in this chapter).

The majority of Weapon Skills use the Agility Trait, but some use other Traits, notably Kyujutsu, Polearms, and Heavy Weapons.

- **Chain Weapons [Agility]** – This Skill is used when fighting with a variety of specialized weapons that incorporate chains (or sometimes ropes) into their design. These are difficult weapons to use effectively (they cannot be used unskilled), but those who master them can be formidable opponents. These weapons include the kusarigama and manriki-kusari, among others.
- **Heavy Weapons [Strength]** – This Skill encompasses a variety of larger weapons that rely on weight and brute force to overcome enemy defenses. Unlike many Weapon Skills, this one uses Strength as its default Trait. Also, because Heavy Weapons rely on force rather than finesse, there are no Kata for them. Weapons covered by this Skill include the tetsubo, ono, masakari, dai tsuchi, and no-dachi.
- **Kenjutsu [Agility]** – The Skill of swordsmanship is the most iconic and essential Weapon Skill of the samurai caste, and has by far the most Kata associated with it. No proper bushi will forego training in the sword. The primary weapons encompassed by this Skill are the twin blades of the samurai daisho (the katana and the wakizashi), but those trained in the sword also know how to fight with the obscure and shameful *ninja-to*, as well as the lower-caste weapon known as the *parangu*.
- **Knives [Agility]** – Many samurai carry small blades, known variously as *aiguchi* or *tanto*, for both combat and practical use. This Skill also encompasses training in certain types of peasant weapons with short blades, most notably the *kama*. Kata with this Skill are rarely taught compared to others, but they do exist.
- **Kyujutsu [Perception]** – Archery is the other foundational samurai Weapon Skill (alongside Kenjutsu) and in the Empire's earliest history the samurai caste was often associated more with the bow than with the sword. Rokugani archers do not draw and aim in the manner of a Western medieval archer, but instead practice an almost instinctive “see and shoot” style, believing the

arrow knows the way to its target. Thus, while the majority of Weapon Skills use physical Traits such as Agility or Strength, Kyujutsu uses Perception. For obvious reasons, there are no Kata for Kyujutsu.

- **Polearms [Strength]** – The Polearms Skill represents training in heavier long-hafted weapons that rely on powerful slashing attacks. The most famous polearm-type weapon, the naginata, is widely used among samurai and is considered almost as iconic for the warrior caste as the sword or the bow. Some of these weapons also see use among certain monastic orders, especially the long-bladed bisento. There are fewer Kata for these weapons than for the sword, but not so few as for Knives, Chain Weapons, or Warfans, since there are still large numbers of samurai trained in their use. Weapons covered by this Skill include the naginata, nagemaki, bisento, and a variety of specialized polearms used by magistrates to non-lethally capture criminals.
- **Spears [Agility]** – This Skill represents training in lighter long-hafted weapons that rely mainly on thrusting attacks, most notably the yari (spear). Although not quite as widely used as the naginata, the yari is still a very popular samurai weapon and is also issued to *ashigaru* (peasant soldiers) during wartime. The Crane and Lion are especially known for using spears in their armies, as are the Unicorn cavalry. Weapons covered by this Skill include the yari, nage-yari, and lance.
- **Staves [Strength/Agility]** – This Skill represents training in various wooden staves and clubs. It is primarily favored by monks and commoners, since these sorts of weapons are overlooked by the Imperial laws restricting weapons to samurai. A few groups among the samurai, notably in the Mantis Clan, have chosen to study these weapons, but most samurai look down on them as fit only for peasants, especially since they are of limited value against armored opponents. Weapons covered by this Skill include the *bo* staff, *jo* staff, *tonfa*, three-part staff, and *nunchaku*. Kata for these weapons are diverse, with those for the longer bo staff emphasizing movement and defense, while those for shorter staves focus on offense and rapid strikes. When wielding the bo staff, this Skill uses the Strength Trait, but when wielding smaller staves it uses the Agility Trait.
- **Warfan [Agility]** – A warfan is a large metal-reinforced fan carried by bushi and typically used both to signal orders on the battlefield and to deflect enemy blows. Warfans often have sharpened edges, allowing them to deliver attacks, but their primary role is defensive. The Warfan Kata are defense-oriented. Although Warfans have different names based on their cosmetic appearance, mechanically they all function the same and are considered the same weapon.

## Merchant Skills

Merchant Skills represent practical Skills which are used mainly by commoners, and hence are considered embarrassing or perhaps even downright shameful for a samurai to learn and use. There are, of course, exceptions – certain samurai do enter the crass world of commerce in order to serve the needs of their clan, and some of the Craft Skills are actually considered quite noble. Taken as a whole, however, Merchant Skills are not really appropriate for samurai, and using them in public will usually generate at least a small Glory loss.

### **Animal Handling [usually Awareness or Intelligence]** –

The Skill of training and caring for domesticated animals is considered servants' work in most clans. The notable exception is the Unicorn Clan, where caring for horses is an honorable and important duty. Unicorn samurai treat Animal Handling as a High Skill.

### **Craft (Category Skill) [varies]** –

In contrast to Artisan, which deals in the creation of beautiful items with no practical value, the Craft Category encompasses any Skill for the creation and repair of practical day-to-day items.

Craft Skills are primarily the domain of commoners, but a few of them involve the creation of items considered noble by samurai, such as armor and weapons. Conversely, there are also a few Craft Skills which deal with truly dishonorable practices (such as poison and explosives).

Much as with Lore or Artisan, there are theoretically an infinite variety of Craft Skills, but the list below comprises those which are widely known and practiced in the Empire.

Craft Skills typically use physical Traits such as Agility or Strength, but some of the more sophisticated and intellectual crafts such as Brewing and Cooking use Intelligence.

- Armorsmithing
- Blacksmithing
- Bowyer/Fletcher
- Brewing
- Carpentry
- Cooking
- Embroidery
- Engineering
- Explosives (Low Skill)
- Farming
- Kagaku (Agasha only)
- Masonry
- Poison (Low Skill)
- Traps (Low Skill)
- Weaponsmithing
- Weaving

### **Commerce [usually Intelligence] –**

This Skill encompasses both mercantile operations and associated knowledge such as bookkeeping and arithmetic. Due to Rokugani social prejudices, this Skill is considered somewhat shameful even for commoners (merchants are regarded as the lowest “tier” of the commoner caste) and samurai who engage in Commerce often try to socially insulate themselves by working through commoner intermediaries.

Among samurai, only the Mantis Clan, the Yasuki family of the Crab Clan, and the Daidoji family of the Crane Clan engage in Commerce more-or-less openly, and this lowers their repute with the rest of the Empire.

### **Sailing [varies] –**

The Skill of sailing a boat or ship, including the practical work of keeping the ship on course and in repair, as well as more esoteric knowledge such as navigation and judging the weather. Although the majority of the people who learn this Skill are commoners, several of the clans maintain fleets, and the Mantis Clan relies on its navy for power and influence. Thus, many samurai learn this Skill and it is not considered an embarrassing Skill to display in public, despite its commoner associations.

This Skill uses physical Traits when it involves practical work, but uses Intelligence for running and navigating a ship.

## **Low Skills**

The Skills found under this category are considered almost universally dishonorable for samurai to practice. Some samurai from the more pragmatic clans such as the Crab, Mantis, and Scorpion do make frequent use of Low Skills, but even they pay a price in public self-image for doing so. In the more idealistic clans such as the Lion and Phoenix, using Low Skills is considered extraordinarily shameful and can quickly ruin a samurai’s repute.

### **Disguise [usually Awareness] –**

In Rokugan, the Skill of Acting is a high art that relies on overt, symbolic makeup and highly stylized motions and speech. Those who wish to engage in deceptive dress or mannerisms will not learn such things in the theatre. The arts of disguise are taught mainly in a few covert organizations which specialize in spying and other such dishonorable activities. (The samurai of the Scorpion Clan's Shosuro family are particular masters of Disguise.)

This Skill encompasses both physical disguises – costume, make-up, etc – and the ability to assume others' voices and mannerisms. If a Character is using a disguise and meets someone who could see through it, this is usually resolved as a Contested Roll of Disguise/Awareness against the opponent's Investigation/Perception.

### **Forgery [usually Intelligence] –**

Like Disguise, the art of Forgery (creating false documents) is only taught among those who follow dishonorable paths. Forgers may create false letters to implicate others, false travel papers to facilitate covert travel through the Empire, false records to evade taxes or tariffs, and so forth.

Any time a forgery is presented to someone who might see through it, this is resolved as a Contested Roll – typically, Forgery/Intelligence against the opponent's Calligraphy/Perception or Investigation/Perception.

### **Gambling [varies] –**

This Skill encompasses both knowledge of the various kinds of Rokugani gambling games and the ability to cheat at those games, as well as the ability to spot other players who are cheating. Rokugani gambling is most commonly done with dice, with the favored games being the complex **Fortunes & Winds** (which involves special dice specifically made for it) and the much simpler **Han-Cho** ("Even-Odd").

Cheating with this Skill uses either Awareness or Agility, depending on whether the cheating is done by lying or through sleight of hand. Spotting a cheater is usually a Contested Roll of Gambling/Perception against the cheater's Gambling Skill with the appropriate Trait.

### **Intimidation [usually Willpower] –**

Those who seek to impose their will on others, either through psychological dominance or physical threats, employ the Intimidation Skill. The Skill is sometimes used in court by those who favor a crude and direct approach (as described in the Social Conflict rules), but doing so generally results in loss of Glory and the acquisition of Infamy. The Mantis Clan is notorious for relying on Intimidation in the courts rather than the more subtle methods of the older clans.

### **Locksmith [usually Agility] –**

Rokugani locks are generally less sophisticated than those found in Western cultures (Rokugan does not have combination locks, for example). Making locks is a task performed with **Craft: Blacksmithing**, but the art of outwitting or defeating locks is a specialized talent found only among criminals, ninja, and other dishonorable types.

### **Stealth [usually Agility] –**

The ability to move silently and avoid notice is a useful one, albeit hardly appropriate for samurai. Stealth is used for hiding, sneaking around, picking pockets (and similar acts of sleight-of-hand), and any related activities.

Stealth is considered in most circumstances to be dishonorable. However, there are a few groups in the samurai caste who make use of Stealth in ways that are considered acceptable – primarily the clans' military scouts, who use it to spy out enemy troops. Using Stealth in this manner is considered marginally

honorable (since the Character is performing an important duty for his Clan), but in almost all other cases Stealth is dishonorable.

A character using Stealth will usually be making Contested Rolls against opponents' Investigation/Perception or Hunting/Perception to avoid being noticed.

### **Temptation [usually Awareness or Willpower] –**

The art of appealing to someone's base desires – whether through physical attraction or straight-up bribery – is of course highly dishonorable, especially since it is a deliberate attempt to lead someone else into dishonor. The Scorpion Clan is particularly adept at using the Temptation Skill, but dishonorable samurai from any Clan may stoop to such methods.

This Skill is almost always used as a Contested Roll, pitting it against the target's Etiquette/Willpower.

## **The Great Clan Families**

Any Character from one of the Great Clans will belong to one or another of the families from that Clan. This section lists the two “game effects” of belonging to a Great Clan family: the Trait boost to a Character for belonging to that family, and the size of the Character's stipend. (See the section on Wealth and Equipment at the end of this chapter for details on stipends.)

### **Crab Clan**

**The Hida Family:** +1 Strength, 3 koku

**The Hiruma Family:** +1 Agility, 2 koku (3 koku prior to the Maw's eighth-century attack)

**The Kaiu Family:** +1 Intelligence, 5 koku

**The Kuni Family:** +1 Intelligence, 2 koku

**The Toritaka Family** (family name awarded after the Hidden Emperor era): +1 Perception, 2 koku

**The Yasuki Family:** +1 Awareness, 10 koku

### **Crane Clan**

**The Asahina Family:** +1 Intelligence, 4 koku

**The Daidoji Family:** +1 Stamina, 8 koku

**The Doji Family:** +1 Awareness, 10 koku

**The Kakita Family:** +1 Agility, 8 koku

### **Dragon Clan**

**The Kitsuki Family** (ninth century and onward): +1 Perception, 2 koku

**The Mirumoto Family:** +1 any physical Trait, 2 koku

**The Agasha Family** (up through the Four Winds era): +1 any mental Trait, 2 koku

**The Tamori Family** (after the Four Winds era): +1 Willpower, 2 koku

**The Togashi Order:** +1 any Trait, no stipend

### **Lion Clan**

**The Akodo Family:** +1 Intelligence, 3 koku

**The Ikoma Family:** +1 Awareness, 3 koku

**The Kitsu Family:** +1 Willpower, 2 koku

**The Matsu Family:** +1 Strength, 2 koku

### **Mantis Clan**

**The Gusai Family** (family name from 429 to 510 of the Imperial calendar): +1 Willpower, 5 koku

**The Moshi Family** (independent Minor Clan up until the Hidden Emperor era): +1 Intelligence, 2 koku



**The Tsuruchi Family** (family name awarded after joining the Mantis in the Hidden Emperor era): +1 Perception, 3 koku. (Stipend is 2 koku when the Wasp Clan is an independent Minor Clan.)

**The Yoritomo Family** (family name awarded at the end of the Clan Wars era): +1 Stamina, 8 koku

## Phoenix Clan

**The Agasha Family** (after the Four Winds era): +1 any mental Trait, 3 koku

**The Asako Family:** +1 Awareness, 3 koku

**The Isawa Family:** +1 Willpower, 4 koku

**The Shiba Family:** +1 Intelligence, 4 koku

## Scorpion Clan

**The Bayushi Family:** +1 Reflexes, 5 koku

**The Shosuro Family:** +1 Awareness, 5 koku

**The Soshi Family:** +1 Intelligence, 4 koku

**The Yogo Family:** +1 Willpower, 4 koku

### The Yogo Curse

The Yogo family are descended from Asako Yogo, who was cursed by Fu Leng himself to betray the one he loved. As a result, he left the Phoenix Clan and became a Scorpion, founding a shugenja family dedicated to opposing Jigoku... and burdened with the same curse as their founder.

All Yogo-family Characters receive the Disadvantage of Bad Fortune: Cursed to Betray Your True Love for no Experience Points. If a Player wishes to run a Yogo Character who does not have this curse, he must spend 10 Experience Points at Character creation.

## Unicorn Clan

**The Horiuchi Family** (off-shoot of the Iuchi, exists only in the twelfth century): +1 Willpower, 2 koku

**The Ide Family:** +1 Perception, 10 koku

**The Iuchi Family:** +1 Intelligence, 5 koku

**The Moto Family:** +1 Agility, 5 koku

**The Shinjo Family:** +1 Reflexes, 8 koku

**The Otaku Family:** +1 Stamina, 5 koku

### The Moto “Curse”

In the ninth century, the Moto family launches a misguided attack on the Shadowlands and the vast majority of their members succumb to the Taint, becoming a powerful army of Lost serving Fu Leng. Moto Tsume, their daimyo, becomes one of the Shadowlands’ most powerful and terrifying leaders.

As a result of this incident, those Moto who survive within the Empire afterward are for over two centuries seen by the Rokugani as accursed and possibly Tainted, their reputation irredeemably stained by their family’s fall. This does not change until the events of the Hidden Emperor era in the twelfth century, when the “desert Moto” return to the Empire, defeat Tsume, and take leadership of the Unicorn Clan.

Any Moto Character between the ninth century and the Hidden Emperor era automatically has the Infamous Disadvantage, and does not receive any Experience Points for it.

## Samurai Schools

Most samurai in Rokugan are trained in Schools – elite organizations which preserve and refine the secret techniques developed by ancient heroes and visionaries. Many of Rokugan’s prominent Schools can trace their history back to the dawn of the Empire, created by the Kami themselves or by the first and greatest mortal followers of the Kami. However, more Schools have emerged in the twelve centuries since that time, and new Techniques are constantly being developed.

A typical School consists of a series of Techniques, each more advanced than the last. A Character trained in the School will initially learn the Rank One Technique, then learn an additional Technique each time he advances in Insight Rank (see Insight earlier in this chapter for details).

An old and fully-developed School will have five Techniques. A younger School, or one which has received less attention and development over the years, may have only four, three, or even just two Techniques.

Schools often have unique names, but in general they fall into three types: **Bushi**, **Shugenja**, and **Other**.

Since samurai are warriors above all else, the **Bushi** Schools are the most well-known and widely-attended Schools in the Empire, with tens of thousands of samurai in each generation learning their Techniques.

**Shugenja** Schools, which teach the mastery of Rokugan’s elemental magic, have very low enrollment – only those samurai born with the ability to speak with the elemental spirits can become Shugenja. A Shugenja School does not really have Techniques; instead, students of the School are able to learn and cast spells, acquiring more spells as they advance to higher Insight Ranks. Shugenja schools are found in the *Chapter of Water*.

**Other** Schools are those which do not fit into either of the above categories. They include the various “courtier Schools” which teach Techniques for diplomacy, emotional manipulation, commercial activity, and social interaction. (It would probably be more accurate to call these “Social Schools,” since not all of them deal specifically with courtly politics... but that just doesn’t have the same ring.) The Other Schools also include specialized groups like artisans and ninja, as well as one-of-a-kind Schools like the Dragon Clan’s Tattooed Men, the Kuni Witch-Hunters, or the Asako *Henshin*. Other Schools are usually mechanically similar to Bushi Schools in that they have several Techniques, sometimes as many as five for an ancient, important, or revered School such as the Doji Courtiers. Far fewer samurai train in these Schools than as bushi, although they are more widespread than shugenja. Also, unlike Bushi and Shugenja, members of these Schools are not universally respected in all the clans – the Crab, for example, tend to view courtiers in a rather negative light, and the Tattooed Men are regarded with confusion and distaste by everyone outside the Dragon Clan.

A Character only trains in one School. Permission to train in a School is an honor, and trying to change your School later would be an insult to your *sensei* (teacher), your family, and your Clan. However, while a School makes a samurai better at serving his Clan in a particular way, it does not limit him to serving the Clan only in that way. Many bushi and shugenja also serve as diplomats or courtiers, for example, despite not having the Techniques of a courtier School. After all, samurai are expected to excel in all fields and to be able to serve their Clan properly in any potential duty their lords might select for them.

## Crab Clan Schools

### **Hida Bushi School**

**Trait:** +1 Stamina

**Starting Honor:** 1.5

**School Skills:** Battle, Defense, Heavy Weapons, Intimidation, Jujutsu, Kenjutsu, Kyujutsu, Lore: Shadowlands, any one other Weapon Skill

**Outfit:** Heavy armor, helmet, katana, wakizashi, bow with arrows, one Heavy Weapon of choice, any two other weapons, small piece of jade, rugged clothing, traveling pack

### **Techniques:**

#### **Rank One: Way of the Crab.**

You may ignore all die-penalties to your Skill Rolls from wearing Heavy Armor. You may ignore Wound die-penalties from a number of Wounds equal to your Earth Rank.

#### **Rank Two: The Mountain Does Not Move.**

You gain a +1k1 bonus to your rolls to Stand Up and Fight, and may roll to Stand Up and Fight a number of times per skirmish equal to your Earth Rank + your Void Rank, instead of just your Void Rank.

Choose one Heavy Weapon; this is your Signature Weapon.

#### **Rank Three: Two Pincers, One Mind.**

When fighting Thugs with Kenjutsu or your Signature Weapon, you receive a Free Raise to the results of your attack rolls. When fighting Characters or Thugs with your Signature Weapon, you may ignore the effects of Armor a number of ranks of Carapace equal to your Earth Rank.

#### **Rank Four: Devastating Blow.**

When fighting Thugs or non-human Characters, you inflict one extra Wound (on Characters) or one extra hit (on Thugs) when attacking with your Signature Weapon.

#### **Rank Five: The Mountain Does Not Fall.**

You ignore the effects of Death's Door until your Wounds exceed your Earth x3. You do not die until your Wounds exceed Earth x4.

## **Hiruma Scout School**

[This school is developed after the destruction of the Hiruma ancestral lands by the Maw's army in the early eighth century. For games set in the Empire's earlier history, use the Hiruma Bushi School.]

**Trait:** +1 Reflexes

**Starting Honor:** 1.5

**School Skills:** Athletics, Defense, Hunting 2, Kenjutsu, Knives, Kyujutsu, Stealth, any one other Bugei Skill

**Outfit:** Light or ashigaru armor, katana, wakizashi, knife, bow and arrows, any one other weapon, rugged clothing, small piece of jade, traveling pack

### **Techniques:**

#### **Rank One: Dance the Razor's Edge.**

You are trained to sneak through the Shadowlands and avoid your foes with speed and stealth. When you are wearing only ashigaru armor or no armor, you gain a +1k0 bonus on your Defense, Stealth, and Hunting Skill rolls; within the Shadowlands, the bonus is +1k1 instead. You may ignore any penalties for going without food and water for one day (this can stack with the Inari's Blessing Advantage).

#### **Rank Two: Run Like the Wind.**

You can maintain a run for a number of hours equal to your Stamina+Insight. In a skirmish, you may take a free Move Action in addition to your normal Action each Turn (which of course can also be a Move Action).

#### **Rank Three: Harness the Wind.**

You gain a Free Raise when attacking Shadowlands creatures (regardless of how you attack and regardless of whether they are Thugs or Characters). You also gain a Free Raise when attacking non-Shadowlands Thugs with Kenjutsu, Knives, or Kyujutsu.

#### **Rank Four: Veil of the Spirits.**

[This Technique becomes available in the ninth century.]

If there is any available cover or concealment (bushes, rocks, smoke, fog, etc), you may hold still and effectively "vanish," gaining a +3k3 bonus to your Stealth rolls so long as you do not move. This cannot let you hide "in plain sight" but so long as there is something which can conceal you, the bonus applies. This can stack with your Rank One Stealth bonus.

### **Rank Five: Strike of the Stalker.**

[This Technique becomes available in the eleventh century.]

Your swift, precise attacks with Kenjutsu, Knives, or Kyujutsu inflict 1 additional Wound and ignore 1 Rank of Carapace. If you are striking an unaware/surprised target, you may ignore all of its Carapace (if any).

## **Hiruma Bushi School**

[This is the original Hiruma school, and its techniques were lost after the eighth century.]

**Trait:** +1 Willpower

**Starting Honor:** 2.5

**School Skills:** Athletics, Defense, Heavy Weapons, Hunting, Kenjutsu, Kyujutsu, Lore: Shadowlands, Stealth, any one other Bugei Skill

**Outfit:** Light armor, katana, wakizashi, bow and arrows, any two other weapons, rugged clothing, small piece of jade, traveling pack

### **Techniques:**

#### **Rank 1: Torch's Flame Flickers.**

The Hiruma learns to focus his strikes even while protecting himself. When using the Attack or Full Defense Tactic, you gain a +1k0 bonus to both your attack rolls and your Defense rolls. You are skilled at survival and can make all food, water, and jade rations last twice as long as normal for a number of people equal to your Hunting Skill Rank.

#### **Rank 2: Wolf's Little Lesson.**

Hiruma learn to dash in and out in a single motion. Any time you hit an opponent with a melee attack, you add +1k0 to your Defense Skill rolls until your next Turn; you may increase this bonus (in increments of +1k0) with Raises from the attack roll. This effect stacks with your Rank 1 Technique bonus.

#### **Rank 3: Hummingbird Wings.**

The Hiruma know how the hummingbird can move in any direction and apply this truism to battle. Once per Round you may add XkX to your Defense Skill roll, where X is your Agility Rank. This stacks with the Defense Skill bonuses from your Rank One and Rank Two Techniques.

#### **Rank 4: Shark Smells Blood.**

No animal waits to see the effect of its first attack before pressing its advantage. You gain a Free Raise when attacking Thugs. When fighting a Character who you have already hit at least once, you may choose to either add +1k1 to your melee attack rolls against that Character or to use your Rank 3 Technique an additional time per Round against that Character.

#### **Rank 5: Daylight Wastes No Movement.**

The Hiruma learns to use no more energy than is precisely needed to kill his opponent. You gain an additional Free Raise when fighting Thugs. If you reduce an enemy Character to Death's Door (or outright death) with a melee attack, you may immediately inflict 1 Wound on another enemy Character within Short Range.

## **Kuni Witch-Hunter School**

**Trait:** +1 Perception

**Starting Honor:** 2.5

**School Skills:** Defense, Investigation 2, Jiujutsu, Kenjutsu, Lore: Shadowlands, Lore: Maho, Meditation, any one Skill

**Outfit:** Katana, wakizashi, knife, one other weapon, writing kit, rugged clothing, jade pendant, traveling pack

### **Techniques:**

**Rank 1: To See the Darkness**

You have a +1k1 bonus to any rolls you make to resist gaining the Shadowlands Taint. You may attempt to detect the Taint in another person by holding your jade pendant (or another piece of jade) and staring intently at them. This is a Contested Roll of your Investigation / Perception against the target's Sincerity / Willpower; you gain a +1k0 bonus to this roll for every Rank of Taint the target possesses. If you succeed in the roll and the target is Tainted, you are able to sense the presence of the Taint and its approximate strength, and gain a +1k1 bonus to any attack rolls you make against that person.

#### **Rank 2: To Ride the Darkness**

Any time you are confronted by a Shadowlands creature, you may roll Lore: Shadowlands / Intelligence at TN 20 to recall either one specific strength (such as Invulnerability) or one specific weakness (such as jade) for that creature. This does not require an Action. You choose whether you recall a strength or a weakness, but the GM chooses the exact information. You may use Raises on this roll to learn additional pieces of information, one per Raise.

#### **Rank 3: To Strike the Darkness**

The Witch-hunter learns to call on the power of purity to guide and strengthen his blows. If your opponent is a Shadowlands creature or a person you know to be Tainted, you gain either a Free Raise (if the opponent is a Thug) or inflict one additional Wound with a successful attack (if the opponent is a Character).

#### **Rank 4: To Repel the Darkness**

The Witch-hunter's intense study and spiritual training now gives him access to esoteric powers and makes it almost impossible for the forces of darkness to affect him. You gain a +3k0 bonus to all rolls for your Rank One abilities (both detection and resistance to the Taint) and to the roll for your Rank Two ability. In addition, Maho spells no longer have any effect on you.

#### **Rank 5: To Shatter the Darkness**

The Witch-hunter is now the true nemesis of Jigoku's forces, able to strike down his enemies with unmatched power. The effects of your Rank 3 Technique are now doubled – two Free Raises against Shadowlands/Tainted Thugs, and 2 additional Wounds against Shadowlands/Tainted Characters.

## **Kaiu Engineer School**

**Trait:** +1 Intelligence

**Starting Honor:** 2.0

**School Skills:** Battle, Craft: Armorsmithing, Craft: Bowyer/Fletcher, Craft: Engineering, Craft: Masonry, Craft: Traps, Craft: Weaponsmithing, Defense, any one Weapon Skill, any one Artisan Skill

**Outfit:** Light or heavy armor, katana, wakizashi, one other weapon, small piece of jade, rugged clothing, writing kit, traveling pack

### **Technique: The Kaiu Method**

Unlike most Schools, the Kaiu Engineers do not teach specific Techniques to their students. Instead, they train their students deeply and obsessively in the Skills required to serve their Clan.

At each of the Five Ranks of the School, the Kaiu Engineer may select one of his ten starting Skills to specialize in. The Engineer adds +XkX to that Skill, where X is his School Rank. Thus, at Rank One the Kaiu adds +1k1 to a single Skill of his choice, while at Rank Five he adds +5k5 to five chosen Skills.

Once chosen, the specialized Skills cannot be changed.

## **Yasuki Merchant School**

**Trait:** +1 Intelligence

**Starting Honor:** 1.5

**School Skills:** Calligraphy, Commerce 2, Courtier, Etiquette, Intimidation, Sincerity, Temptation, any one other High or Merchant Skill

**Outfit:** Wakizashi, one other weapon, practical clothing, merchant's cart with assorted goods, writing kit, traveling pack

## Techniques:

### Rank One: The Way of the Carp.

You gain +1k0 to all your Commerce and Intimidation rolls, and do not lose Glory for using the Commerce Skill. You may use Commerce to identify someone's material needs; this is resolved as a Social Conflict roll, your Commerce/Awareness versus their Etiquette/Awareness – if you win the roll, you learn what material goods that person wants or needs.

### Rank Two: Do As We Say.

You may spend Infamy Points on Commerce rolls, and when you do so the bonus is +2k1 instead of +1k1.

### Rank Three: Treasures of the Carp.

You have a special knack for acquiring anything your customers might need, no matter how rare or obscure. You can roll Commerce/Intelligence to acquire rare/special items and services, at a TN based on the rarity of the acquisition. (See the sidebar for examples of what a Yasuki can acquire with this Technique.) If you do this successfully, you automatically gain a Favor with that customer's faction.

### Rank Four: What is Yours is Mine.

If you have a Favor with a faction, you may use Commerce in place of Courtier, Etiquette, or Intimidation when conducting Social Conflict against members of that faction.

## Yasuki Acquisitions

The Yasuki are the greatest merchants in Rokugan and are known to be masters of acquisition, able to find almost anything their customers might need, from illegal goods to a perfect geisha. The Yasuki Rank 3 Technique reflects this talent by allowing Characters to acquire unusual items; however, the Players and GM should always remember that the purpose of this Technique is to show how the Yasuki do business – it is not intended to let a Yasuki Character “outfit” his fellow PCs with special items, although it can certainly be employed to get the Characters items which they desperately need to solve a problem.

With that being said, the following list may serve as guidelines for what sorts of things a Yasuki can find with various TNs:

**TN 20:** Pony; common weapons of average quality; jewelry and clothing of average quality; good quality *sake*; mundane items such as cloth, lanterns, etc.

**TN 25:** Expensive jewelry; high-quality clothing; ordinary armor; unusual weapons; high-quality common weapons; unreliable ronin bodyguard; travel papers for one clan's territory; invitation to a geisha house of average quality.

**TN 30:** Rare top-quality sake; fine pony; superior armor; a small boat; a poor-quality Unicorn horse; a reliable ronin bodyguard; a modest house in a major city.

**TN 35:** Introduction to a top-tier geisha house; minor nemuranai; unrestricted travel papers; a loyal and capable ronin bodyguard; a ronin shugenja; merchandise of “doubtful provenance” (e.g. smuggled/stolen/illegal).

**TN 40+:** A girl with green eyes; a kobune; a good-quality Unicorn horse; a major nemuranai; the contract of a superb geisha; a fine house in the Imperial capital.

## Crane Clan Schools

### Kakita Bushi School

**Trait:** +1 Reflexes

**Starting Honor:** 3.5

**School Skills:** Defense, Etiquette, Horsemanship, Iaijutsu, Kenjutsu, Kyujutsu, Sincerity, any one Artisan Skill, any one Bugei Skill

**Outfit:** Light armor, katana, wakizashi, bow and arrows, one other weapon, fine-quality sturdy clothing, steed (Rokugani pony), fan, traveling pack

### **Techniques:**

#### **Rank One: The Way of the Crane.**

You may purchase Iaijutsu Kata for 3x Mastery instead of 4x Mastery. When conducting an Iaijutsu duel, you gain a +1k0 bonus to the Assessment roll. When using the Kenjutsu or Kyujutsu Skills or performing an Iaijutsu Strike, you gain one Free Raise which may only be used for the Called Shot maneuver.

#### **Rank Two: Speed of Lightning**

In a skirmish, when you are wielding a katana or a wakizashi, you may add your Iaijutsu Skill Rank to your Initiative Rank. In an iaijutsu duel, you learn one additional piece of information from a successful Assessment roll.

#### **Rank Three: First and Last Strike.**

The Kakita are taught to sense their opponents' fighting aura, using this to know when and where to strike. When you are fighting with Kenjutsu or engaging in an Iaijutsu duel, you may ignore any penalties for obscured vision, including Bad Eyesight or Blind, and your opponents do not gain any Defense bonuses from darkness, smoke, fog, or any other such visual impediments. When conducting an Iaijutsu duel, you gain a +1k1 bonus to the Focus roll.

#### **Rank Four: One Strike, Two Cuts.**

When fighting Thugs with Kenjutsu or Kyujutsu, you gain a Free Raise to the result of your attack rolls.

#### **Rank Five: Strike With No Thought**

Any time you strike a Thug or a Character with a katana or wakizashi, you may spend any number of Void Points and/or Honor Points. Each Void Point and Honor Point spent increases your damage by one Wound.

## **Kakita Artisan School**

**Trait:** +1 Intelligence

**Starting Honor:** 3.5

**School Skills:** Calligraphy, Courtier, Etiquette, Games: Sadane, Sincerity, any 5 Artisan or Performance skills chosen from the following list: Acting, Dance, Ikebana, Music, Origami, Painting, Poetry, Sculpture, or Storytelling.

**Outfit:** Elegant clothing, katana, wakizashi, steed (Rokugani pony), fan, any items and equipment required for artisan specialty (paints and brushes, makeup, costumes, etc, etc), traveling pack

### **Techniques:**

#### **Rank One: The Soul of the Artisan.**

The Kakita Artisan is taught from the earliest youth to focus on specific forms of art, seeking perfection within those forms, as well as to be a scathing critic of artistic rivals. When you make Skill rolls with Games: Sadane and with the 5 Artisan/Performance Skills you selected as School Skills, you receive a +2k0 bonus.

#### **Rank Two: The Soul's Dream.**

The Kakita Artisan can use his art to affect his audience's emotions. When presenting a public performance or display of your chosen art, you may make a Contested Social Roll of (skill) / Awareness against the Etiquette / Willpower of the audience members. Those who fail their rolls are profoundly swayed and their emotions shift in a direction you desire - becoming friendlier, more hostile, calmer, or whatever other emotional shift your art is designed to evoke. This lasts to the end of the session, subject to the GM's judgment.

#### **Rank Three: Free the Spirit.**

Upon reaching Insight Rank Three, the Kakita Artisan must choose one of his five selected Artisan Skills to be his Chosen Path of artistry. Which Techniques he learns for Ranks 3, 4, and 5 is determined by which Path he chose. Alternatively, the Artisan may also opt to take the path of the Jester, which does not correspond to any specific Skill.

***Acting Path, Rank Three:***

The Crane martial art of mizu-do was originally created by actors wishing to enhance their depiction of staged combat during a performance. As a result, it is common for Crane actors to study this martial art as part of their training. You may purchase Mizu-do Kata for 3x Rank instead of 4x Rank, and you gain a +2k0 bonus to your Jujutsu Skill rolls.

***Dance Path, Rank Three:***

Dancers, as performers, are masters of drawing all attention onto themselves, their performance so consuming the audience that they become oblivious to all else. You may use your dance in this way against a number of chosen audience members equal to your Insight Rank. Make a Contested Roll of Perform: Dance / Agility against their Etiquette / Willpower; if you succeed, they suffer a 3-die penalty against their rolls to notice anything else happening in the vicinity (such as an assassin approaching them by stealth).

***Ikebana Path, Rank Three:***

An Ikebana Artisan can use his flower displays to bring good fortune to those he favors. Creating such a display requires the proper materials, at least ten minutes of time, and a roll of Artisan (Ikebana)/Intelligence at TN 20. With a success, your display grants one chosen individual (other than you) a +1k1 bonus on any one specific task. The task must be performed immediately or, at most, within a very short time (GM's discretion). You may do this a number of times per session equal to his Insight Rank.

***Jester Path, Rank Three:***

The Jester is adept at manipulating the emotions of others. A number of times per session equal to your Insight Rank, you may converse with someone and leave them feeling either distracted and frustrated or relaxed and carefree, as you choose. The target Character either suffers a 1-die penalty to all Social Skill rolls or a +1k0 bonus to all Social Skill rolls for the remainder of the session. You may not target the same Character with this Technique more than once in the same session.

***Music Path, Rank Three:***

A Music Artisan can create a zone of such beauty and harmony that it is admired by the elemental spirits themselves, reducing their willingness to answer the prayers of shugenja. While you are playing, any attempts to cast spells within Short Range of you (or to cast spells into that zone from outside) is considered a Contested Roll against your Perform (Music) / Intelligence; if the caster's Spellcraft roll does not overcome your Perform roll, the spell fails.

***Origami Path, Rank Three:***

The Artisan can use Origami to create small, mobile paper animals which follow his mental commands. This requires an Artisan (Origami) / Intelligence roll at TN 20. These paper creatures are quite small (each being made from a single sheet of paper) but otherwise can do the same things as a living creature – e.g. a paper bird can fly, a paper spider can spin a paper web, a paper dog can bark (very faintly), etc. They revert to normal paper if they move beyond Long Range from you or after a number of minutes equal to your Insight Rank, whichever comes first. You may use Raises on the Origami roll to allow them to travel farther from you and to extend their “lifespan,” as adjudicated by the GM.

***Painting/Sculpture Paths, Rank Three:***

Artisans trained in Painting or Sculpture are taught to imbue their works with long-lasting or even permanent effects. At this Rank, you may create semi-permanent glyphs in your artwork, which remain where they were painted/carved until a number of people have seen them equal to your Insight Rank. The glyph will create an emotional state in any target who loses a Contested Roll of their Etiquette/Willpower against the Artisan (Sculpture or Painting)/Intelligence roll you made when creating the glyph. The exact emotion evoked is of your choice, and its effects will be a penalty or bonus to their Skill rolls, as adjudicated by the GM. Typically, a negative emotion like confusion or anger will create a 1-die or 2-die penalty, while a positive emotion such as serenity or joy will create a +1k0 or +2k0 bonus. The effect lasts until the end of the session in which it is invoked.

***Poetry Path, Rank Three:***



An Artisan trained in Poetry has the ability to create a minor visual illusion based on his recitation. A poem about a forest, for example, could create the image of trees surrounding the Artisan, while a poem about a lady's beauty can make her seem even more lovely. These effects are brief, lasting only a number of minutes equal to your Insight Rank, and once created they cannot be altered. Anyone who sees the illusion created will know it is false, but those who encounter it after it was evoked must make a Contested Roll of their Investigation/ Willpower against your Perform (Poetry)/Awareness to recognize it as an illusion – otherwise they will think it is real until they attempt to touch or otherwise interact with it.

***Storytelling Path, Rank Three:***

Artisans trained as Storytellers have great knowledge of legendary items and ancient history. If you study an item for a few minutes, you can try to recall its importance in history, its previous owners, and any legendary attributes it may have. This is an Insight/Intelligence roll, at a base TN of 20 for well-known items and going higher for more obscure or legendary ones, as the GM judges appropriate. Note that a failed roll might result in the Storyteller recalling inaccurate information.

**Rank Four: Undying Name.**

In addition to the specific Technique for the Artisan's Chosen Path, all Kakita Artisans at Rank Four gain the ability to use their art to strengthen or weaken others' reputations. You may roll Artisan or Perform with your Chosen Art Skill and the Awareness Trait, at a TN of 20 plus 5 x the target's current Glory Rank. With a success, you may either increase (if your art is complimentary) or decrease (if it is critical) their Glory by 5 pips, plus an additional 5 pips for every Raise you make on the roll. You may also use a Raise to inflict a gain of Infamy instead of changing their Glory.

***Acting Path, Rank Four:***

The Actor can capture the essence of fearsome theatrical characters – demons, nightmares, furious spirits from beyond the grave – in his performances, and can evoke their terrifying nature in his own visage. You may use this to create a Fear effect centered on yourself, affecting anyone within Short Range. The Rank of this Fear effect is equal to your Insight Rank; you may roll Perform: Acting/Awareness at TN 25 to increase the Fear Rank by 1, plus 1 for each Raise. (You may also Raise to exclude specific targets from the effect.) You may use this Technique a number of times per session equal to your Insight Rank.

***Dance Path, Rank Four:***

At this rank, the Artisan's ability to fascinate the audience has advanced considerably. You may now use your Rank Three Technique against any number of targets within Short Range, and if they fail the Contested Roll they are not merely fascinated but outright mesmerized; they will ignore and forget everything around them (other than you and your dance) so long as it does not directly affect them. Thus, while a castle's guards would notice if someone attacked them, they will not see or even remember someone walking past them to enter the castle. This mesmerizing effect lasts for as long as you can sustain your performance; the GM may require you to make additional Contested Rolls to continue it for more than a few minutes.

***Ikebana Path, Rank Four:***

An experienced Ikebana Artisan becomes far more adept at using the beauty of his arrangements to inspire confidence and remove doubt. When using your Rank Three Technique, you may apply the benefits of your flower display to a number of people equal to your Insight Rank, plus an additional person for each Raise on the Artisan (Ikebana) roll. Moreover, the bonus may be used at any time during the rest of the session, rather than immediately.

***Jester Path, Rank Four:***

An experienced Jester is adept at using barbed words and insulting performances to provoke others into conflict without appearing to be at fault. You may attempt to lure someone into direct combat – provoking an archer to leave safe cover, taunting an opposing shugenja to rushing into combat, or even provoking a diplomat into drawing his blade in court. The Skill used for this depends on how you are provoking the target – applicable Skills could include Sincerity, Artisan (Poetry), Perform (Dance), Perform (Acting), or even Temptation depending on how you role-play your taunts. Make a Contested Roll of this Skill with Awareness against the target's Etiquette/Willpower; if you win the roll, the target must rush to attack you,

regardless of the tactical or social consequences. You may use Raises on the Contested Roll to lure the target into attacking someone else instead of you (GM's adjudication how many Raises this will require).

***Music Path, Rank Four:***

At this rank, the Artisan can use music to attract animals from the area to perform simple tasks. This requires a Perform (Music)/Awareness roll at TN 25 and at least a half-hour of playing and singing to summon the creatures, who will understand you through the music. The GM should determine exactly what animals appear, but they will generally be small ones such as squirrels, birds, or at the largest dogs. They will obey your wishes and perform basic tasks as best they can, without supervision, for the rest of the day, but will not do anything self-destructive/suicidal.

***Origami Path, Rank Four:***

Experienced Origami Artisans gain the ability to make their inanimate paper creations real for a short time. You may create a real mundane object such as a box, a kimono, a wagon-wheel, or even a weapon from a single piece of paper. The item may be as large as a small rowboat. It will still retain a strange, obvious "paper-like" quality but will otherwise function exactly like a real item of the same type. You may do this a number of times per session equal to your Insight Rank, and once created the items will last until the end of the session (subject to GM adjudication).

***Painting/Sculpture Paths, Rank Four:***

The Artisan may now create paintings/sculpture that are mystically connected to the specific individual depicted in the art. This is an elaborate process requiring high-quality components and also special implements which are connected in some way to the chosen individual, such as brushes made from their hair, a stone chisel forged from one of their weapons, a stone from their garden, etc. Creating the artwork is a lengthy process, requiring at least 1k1 days, and requires a roll of Artisan (Sculpture or Painting)/Intelligence at TN 25. If the work is created successfully, the Artisan can use it to speak with the target over great distances (though not outside the bounds of the Empire). Raises may be used to let the Artisan actually see through the eyes of the target, or to extend the reach of communication beyond the Empire's bounds (into the Shadowlands, into other spiritual realms, etc).

***Poetry Path, Rank Four:***

An experienced Poetry Artisan can use poems to send short messages, composed as haiku or waka, which are received as whispers in another's ear. The receiver may then compose their own poem, in the same style, and whisper it back. Within eyesight and Short Range this ability does not require a Skill roll, but for any greater distance, or if you cannot see the target, you must roll Artisan (Poetry)/Intelligence. The base TN is 20 for communicating within Long Range, increasing to 25 for Extreme Range and 30 for any distance beyond visible sight; the maximum distance is about ten miles, although a truly legendary Skill Roll could overcome this. You may use this ability a number of times per session equal to your Insight Rank.

***Storyteller Path, Rank Four:***

Experienced Storytellers can evoke belief in their stories that they may actually come true. You recount a famous tale or myth and make a Contested Void Roll against your chosen target; if you win the roll, you recount the story with such power that the target sees connections between himself and the myth, causing the story to gradually come true in his own life. You may use this ability on a specific individual only once. The story will have no immediate impact on the target but over time may have beneficial or detrimental effects (or both), as determined by the GM and the nature of the story. For example, if you tell the story of a great Oni which eats the feet of the dead and carries the hearts of victims to the Shadowlands, your target may be plagued by a strange odor, hear noises in the night, and over the course of weeks or months actually come to actually be stalked and threatened by such a creature.

***Rank Five: A Gift Beyond Price***

At this Rank, in addition to the specific abilities of their Chosen Art, Artisans are now so skilled that a gift of their work can profoundly change another person's attitude. Once per session, you may make a gift of your chosen art to someone from another Clan or faction and make a Contested Roll of your (chosen art Skill) / Awareness against their Etiquette / Willpower. (The GM may apply bonuses or penalties to this roll based on the type and subject of the art and the attitudes and beliefs of the target - some people

are easier to sway than others.) With a success, you permanently alter their attitude toward your Clan in a favorable direction. With a failure, the target becomes aware of your attempt to manipulate his emotions, and his attitude toward your Clan permanently shifts in a hostile direction.

***Acting Path, Rank Five:***

At this rank, an Actor has so completely mastered his art that he can physically alter his entire body, taking the form of a different person or even an animal for a short time. This can be done once per session and requires a Skill Roll of Perform (Acting)/Willpower at TN 30. If successful, the change lasts for a number of hours equal to your Insight Rank. You cannot take the appearance of a specific individual but can otherwise assume any human form or mundane animal, and can change your size by up to half (the upper limit on size being a Rokugani pony). Your underlying Rings, Traits, and Skills do not change, nor do your clothing or other gear.

***Dance Path, Rank Five:***

Artisans at this Rank have so sharpened their reflexes, body control, core strength, and timing that they are able to perform numerous precise movements in a short period of time. You gain a +1kl bonus to all Athletics and Perform (Dance) Skill Rolls, and during a Skirmish you may perform two Actions each Round.

***Ikebana Path, Rank Five:***

True masters of Ikebana has the ability to warp luck around themselves, gathering fortune and changing the odds of probability. You may create a flower arrangement with a Skill Roll of Artisan (Ikebana)/Intelligence at TN 30 that will bestow either a blessing of luck or a curse of unluck on its recipient (which can be yourself). A blessed target may reroll one failed Skill Roll of his choice during the remainder of the session; a cursed target may be forced by you to reroll one successful Skill Roll of your choice during the remainder of the session.

***Jester Path, Rank Five:***

True masters of the Jester's path can drag others into their performances, publicly shaming and humiliating them. Anytime you are making a public performance (at court, during a festival, etc) you may choose one individual in the audience to be the target of your acidic wit, making a Contested Roll of your Skill/Awareness against their Etiquette/Intelligence. Much as with your Rank Two Technique, the Skill applied could include Sincerity, Artisan (Poetry), Perform (Dance), Perform (Acting), or even Temptation depending on how you role-play your taunts. If you win the Contested Roll, your target is dragged into the performance, gains a Rank of Stress, and loses a number of Glory and Honor pips equal to your Insight Rank; you may inflict the same effects again for each Raise you make on the roll. You may use this ability any number of times per session but can only target each specific individual once per session.

***Music Path, Rank Five:***

The true masters of Music can create performances of such beauty that their audience will listen for as long as they can play. This is a Contested Roll of your Perform (Music)/Awareness against the Etiquette/Willpower of everyone within Short Range (including other Player Characters). All audience members who lose the Contested Roll will do nothing but listen to your music for as long as you continue to play, oblivious to everything around them unless they are physically shaken or harmed (which breaks them free of the trance).

***Origami Path, Rank Five:***

A true master of Origami can create not just objects but animals, fully alive and formed from flesh and bone. This may be done a number of times per session equal to your Insight Rank, and requires an Artisan (Origami) / Intelligence roll at TN 30. The animal may be as large as a Unicorn war-horse, and is completely real – though also completely mundane, having no supernatural abilities or intellect even if you give it the form of some legendary being such as a ki-rin. The creature is under your control, and will obey you as best it can within the limits of its animal mind and instincts. It will revert to a folded piece of paper at the next sunrise or sundown, whichever comes first.

***Painting/Sculpture Path, Rank Five:***

A master of Painting or Sculpture gains the ability to actually travel through his artistic works to the places they depict. You may create an artwork depicting a specific location elsewhere in the Empire,

making a Skill Roll of Artisan (Sculpture or Painting)/Intelligence at TN 30. (Creating a work of this supreme quality is a laborious process and can easily take several weeks.) If the work is a success, you may physically step into it and emerge in the location it depicts; however, each time you do this, there is a 1-in-5 chance that the artwork is ruined. You may take whatever you are carrying but cannot bring other living creatures with you.

**Poetry Path, Rank Five:**

Masters of Poetry can inspire great deeds through their recitation of famous poems about past and present heroism. You may inspire a number of people equal to 2x your Insight Rank per session, making a Skill Roll of Artisan (Poetry)/Awareness at TN 30 for each target. With a success, they are filled with inspiration and in their next conflict this session – whether it be a skirmish, mass battle, duel, or social conflict – they receive a +1k1 bonus to all their Skill Rolls.

**Storyteller Path, Rank Five:**

A master Storyteller has the ability to briefly bring the characters of myth and legend – legendary heroes such as Kakita's son Doji Nio or the Fortune of Thunder Osano-Wo – into physical form. These beings are not literally summoned, but rather their forms and powers are briefly evoked into the physical world by the Storyteller's chi. This requires a Perform (Storytelling)/Intelligence roll at TN 30, and you must concentrate on maintaining the effect – if you take any Actions, the effect will end and the evoked being will vanish. Barring this, the legendary being will act as you wish, subject to the limits of its story – thus Osano-Wo would happily fight an enemy but cannot woo a woman or cast spells because those things are not part of the Fortune's legendary characteristics. Also, be aware that a Storyteller who evokes a truly legendary being may be pushed beyond his mortal limits – the only Artisan bold enough to attempt to bring forth the First Children of the Sun was driven mad and torn to pieces by the power he attempted to channel.

### **Artisan Techniques in Play**

When applying the Artisan Techniques to game-play, the GM should remember that even in the civilized world of Rokugani samurai, not all persons are equally susceptible to the impact of art. A particular individual may be less (or more) affected by artistic work, and the GM can adjust the impact of the Artisan Techniques to take this into account.

In a situation where an Artisan is trying to affect a large number of people, the GM does not necessarily have to make separate Opposed rolls for everyone there. PCs and important NPCs should always roll individually, but with crowds of ordinary NPCs the GM can save time by making a single roll for most or all of them.

Please keep in mind that the Artisan Techniques are optimized for use in courtly environments and against the samurai caste; they are likely to be less effective or reliable in dangerous uncivilized regions or against lower-caste persons such as peasants, *hinin*, or criminals, and will probably be completely ineffective against nonhuman creatures, Shadowlands monsters, and similar foes. Common sense should apply, and the GM is the final arbiter of whether an Artisan Technique can be used in any unusual situation.

## **Doji Courtier School**

**Trait:** +1 Awareness

**Starting Honor:** 3.5

**School Skills:** Calligraphy, Courtier 2, Etiquette, Horsemanship, Sincerity, any one Artisan or Perform Skill, any one Games Skill, any one other High Skill

**Outfit:** Wakizashi, knife, fan, elegant clothing, court robes, writing kit, traveling pack

**Techniques:**

**Rank One: The Soul of Honor.**

When you spend Honor Points on Social Conflict rolls, you gain +2k1 instead of +1k1. You are a master of Cadence, the secret language of subtle gesture and posture that the Crane Clan uses in court; you can communicate with other Doji Courtiers without speaking by making a Courtier/Awareness roll, TN 20 to convey basic information and higher TNs for more complex messages (GM's judgment). You can use a Raise to communicate with other (non-Courtier) Crane, although they cannot respond.

**Rank Two: Speaking in Silence.**

You can subtly figure out other samurai's wants and needs through conversation. This is a Social Conflict roll (your Courtier versus their Etiquette), but instead of the usual results, a success grants you knowledge of what (if anything) that samurai needs or is looking for.

**Rank Three: The Perfect Gift.**

You can supply a gift that fulfills another samurai's needs (whether you identified them through your Rank Two Technique or simply via role-play). This is a Courtier/Awareness roll at a TN chosen by the GM (starting at 20 for a basic need and increasing from there). See the sidebar for more details. If you successfully arrange a gift, you automatically gain a Favor with that Faction.

**Rank Four: Voice of Honor.**

Crane are adept at the art of Political Maneuvering, forcing their opponents into a position where they cannot oppose the Crane without dishonoring themselves. If you win any Social Conflict roll, your position is shown to be synonymous with Honor, and your opponents automatically lose additional Glory and Honor as though they committed a Minor Breach of Etiquette. Opponents who fail to concede to your position gain a Rank of Stress (this is in addition to any Stress they gain from your Raises) and suffer additional Honor and Glory loss as though they committed a Blasphemous Breach of Etiquette (instead of a Major Breach of Etiquette).

**Rank Five: Gift of the Lady.**

The Crane are the true masters of political alliances. Once per session you may call on a Favor for its +3k3 bonus without actually losing the Favor.

## Daidoji Iron Warrior School

**Trait:** +1 Agility

**Starting Honor:** 3.5

**School Skills:** Athletics, Battle, Defense 2, Horsemanship, Kenjutsu, Kyujutsu, Spears, any one other High or Bugei Skill

**Outfit:** Light or heavy armor, katana, wakizashi, yari, bow and arrows, any one other weapon, fine-quality sturdy clothing, steed (Rokugani pony), traveling pack

**Techniques:****Rank One: The Force of Honor.**

You may use Honor Points as well as Void Points to "Stand Up and Fight," and may also make the "Stand Up and Fight" Insight/Stamina roll a number of times per skirmish equal to your Honor Rank + Void Rank. You may purchase Spears Kata from the Path of Air for 3x Mastery Rank instead of 4x Mastery Rank.

**Rank Two: Shield of Faith.**

If you are wielding a spear with the Attack Tactic, you gain a +1k0 bonus to your Defense rolls. If you Assist another Character's Defense rolls, the bonus is +2k1 instead of +1k1.

**Rank Three: Strike Beneath the Veil.**

When fighting with Kenjutsu or Spears, you gain +1k0 to your Defense rolls (this stacks with the Rank Three bonus) and gain a Free Raise when attacking Thugs.

**Rank Four: Vigilance of Mind.**

If anyone has successfully struck you with a melee attack since your last Turn, any attacks you make against that opponent on this Turn with Kenjutsu or Spears will inflict 1 extra Wound.

### **Rank Five: To Tread on the Sword.**

If an ally within Short range is hit by an attack or a damaging spell, you may spend a Void or Honor Point to “dive in front” and take the effects of the hit. You take the same number of Wounds they would have suffered, although you can mitigate these Wounds normally.

### **The Doji and Gifts**

In Rokugani society, gifts are not mere physical items or money. The perceived value of a gift often derives mainly from its emotional, historical, or personal significance. A gold statue may not be a particularly impressive gift, but a gold statue from the temple where Isawa taught his first students is a gift which any samurai (and especially any shugenja) would prize quite highly.

The Doji are adept at offering gifts perfectly attuned to the wishes, needs, and interests of their friends and potential allies. They can also use their political network to supply non-material gifts and favors, such as travel papers, good marriages, or admission to a prestigious school. Regardless, the GM and Players should keep in mind that the Doji Rank Three Technique is not intended to let a Doji Character “outfit” himself or his fellow PCs with nice items or special game benefits.

The Doji Rank Three Technique can potentially supply almost any sort of gift or favor, in contrast to the Yasuki Rank Three (which is focused on getting material items and wealth). The exact TN required depends on how difficult the gift would be to acquire, of course. The following list provides some guidelines to the GM and Players on what sort of things a Doji can provide:

**TN 20:** A gift of a Rokugani pony; a fine item; protected travel to a major city or palace; forgiveness of minor monetary debts; invitation to attend a famous shrine or monastery; a tutor to teach esoteric knowledge (represented by a specific Lore Skill); information on a fairly well-known topic or field of study; a Favor from a clan/family.

**TN 25:** A night with a fine geisha; an item of superior quality; a champion for your next duel; an invitation to a famous court; a prominent posting for an upcoming battle; your lord choosing you over your rivals to perform a notable duty; a shugenja willing to cast a specific spell which you need; a chance to study under a skilled artisan or craftsman; travel papers to another clan’s territory; a Favor from a specific person.

**TN 30:** Restore your reputation after you were disgraced; a gift of a Unicorn riding horse; gain a personal audience with a minor daimyo; forgiveness of significant monetary debts; a Crane artisan creates a masterpiece in your honor; a specific item or assistance from another clan; appointment as a gunso; gain an Ally in the clan of your choice; chosen to perform a minor service for your Clan Champion.

**TN 35:** Marriage to a daimyo’s daughter (or son, if applicable); an item of truly exceptional quality; gain an obligation from someone of note; appointed guardian of a famous clan heirloom or nemuranai; gain a samurai from your clan as a personal retainer; an appointment as a clan magistrate or a chui; an appointment as a gokenin (minor landholder).

**TN 40+:** Restored from ronin; chosen to bear and wield a unique item or nemuranai; an appointment as an Emerald Magistrate, taisa, or higher-ranking office; a prominent member of your clan will perform a service for you; personal audience with your Clan Champion.

## **Daidoji Scout School**

**Trait:** +1 Reflexes

**Starting Honor:** 1.5

**School Skills:** Athletics, Craft (Traps), Hunting, Kenjutsu, Knives, Kyujutsu 2, Stealth, any one Bugei Skill

**Outfit:** Light or ashigaru armor, katana, wakizashi, knife, bow and arrows, trap-making gear, rugged clothing, traveling pack

**Techniques:**

**Rank One: Surveying the Land.**

The Daidoji scouts are masters of observation and pursuit, tracking their opponents, harassing them, and delaying them with traps and ambushes. You gain +1k0 with Stealth and Hunting Skill rolls. Any traps you create with Craft: Traps are exceptionally deadly, inflicting +1 extra Wound.

**Rank Two: Scouring the Shadows.**

Daidoji scouts strike from concealment, hitting their opponents with devastating attacks. When attacking a surprised/unaware opponent, you gain a bonus of +2k0 to your attack roll. Your traps now inflict +2 extra Wounds.

**Rank Three: Strike and Move.**

The Daidoji scouts strike with the swiftness of the wind itself. You gain a Free Raise to any attacks made against Thugs, and inflict 1 extra Wound when wielding a katana, wakizashi, knife, or bow.

**Rank Four: Cunning of Daidoji.**

Daidoji scouts hit their enemies' weak points and never give them a chance to hit back. Your opponents do not gain any benefit from armor on their Defense Skill rolls. When striking a surprised/unaware opponent, you inflict +1 additional Wound (this stacks with your Rank Three ability if applicable).

## Dragon Clan Schools

### Mirumoto Bushi School

**Trait:** +1 Agility

**Starting Honor:** 2.5

**School Skills:** Athletics, Defense, Iaijutsu, Kenjutsu, Kyujutsu, Lore: Shugenja, Meditation, any one other High Skill, any one other Bugei Skill

**Outfit:** Light armor, katana, wakizashi, knife, bow and arrows, traveling pack

**Techniques:****Rank One: The Way of the Dragon.**

Mirumoto bushi are the masters of the Niten two-sword technique created by their founder. You may fight while wielding a katana and a wakizashi together (one in each hand); when you fight in this way, you gain a +1k1 bonus to all Defense rolls. You may purchase Iaijutsu Kata for 3x Mastery instead of 4x Mastery. In an Iaijutsu duel, you gain +1k0 to your Strike roll.

**Rank Two: Strong and Swift.**

When fighting Thugs with both a katana and a wakizashi, you gain a Free Raise on your attack rolls. Once per Round when a friendly shugenja within Short Range attempts to cast a spell, you may award the shugenja a +1k0 bonus to his Spellcraft roll.

**Rank Three: Calm in the Midst of Thunder.**

When you are wielding both a katana and a wakizashi (one in each hand), your Defense bonus from Rank One increases to +2k2.

**Rank Four: Furious Retaliation.**

When you are wielding both a katana and a wakizashi (one in each hand), your melee attacks inflict 1 extra Wound.

**Rank Five: Heart of the Dragon.**

When you are fighting Thugs with both a katana or wakizashi (one in each hand), you gain a Free Raise on your attack rolls (this stacks with the Free Raise from your Rank Two Technique). Your Defense bonus from Rank One increases to +3k2.

### Kitsuki Investigator School

[The Kitsuki family and School are founded in Rokugan's 9<sup>th</sup> Century. The School's Rank Five Technique is not developed until the 11<sup>th</sup> Century.]

**Trait:** +1 Intelligence

**Starting Honor:** 2.5

**School Skills:** Calligraphy, Defense, Etiquette, Iaijutsu, Investigation 2, Kenjutsu, Lore: Law, any one other High Skill

**Outfit:** Sturdy clothing, katana, wakizashi, writing kit, puzzle box, traveling pack

## **Techniques:**

### **Rank One: Kitsuki's Method.**

You gain a +1k0 bonus to your Investigation Skill rolls. You may choose to use Perception instead of Reflexes as the Trait for your Defense Skill rolls.

### **Rank Two: Wisdom the Wind Brings.**

You gain a +1k0 to all rolls using the Awareness and Perception Traits. Your Investigation bonus from Rank One is now +1k1 if you are using the Skill to tell whether someone is lying.

### **Rank Three: Know the Rhythm of the Heart.**

You add your Perception to your Initiative Rank. Once per session, you may make a Contested Social Skill Roll of Investigation / Intelligence against an opponent's Etiquette / Intelligence to identify one of their allies or enemies.

### **Rank Four: Finding the Path.**

You have mastered the art of *Ichi Miru*, seeing through to the heart of another person. You may make a Contested Social Skill Roll of Investigation / Awareness against an opponent's Sincerity / Intelligence to get a simple but true picture of their personality and motives. This can be attempted once per person per session.

### **Rank Five: The Eyes Betray the Heart.**

[This Technique is developed in the 11<sup>th</sup> Century.]

Someone with lower Sincerity Skill Rank than your Investigation Skill Rank cannot successfully lie to you; against all other persons you gain +2k2 to the Contested Roll (replacing the +1k1 from Rank Two) to tell if they are lying. You are immune to the effects of the Scorpion Feint Technique (Bayushi Bushi Rank Three).

## **Togashi Tattooed Men**

The men and women of monastic order of the Togashi, known as the *Ise Zumi*, are marked with mystical tattoos that grant them strange and unpredictable powers. Usually these tattoos are bestowed on them by special artisans from within their own order, but some Ise Zumi manifest their tattoos spontaneously, as though the images are called forth by fate and destiny.

The Tattooed Men are the source of one of Rokugan's oldest unarmed combat methods, known as Kaze-do (the Way of Wind). The Kaze-do Kata for Jiu-jutsu can only be learned by Tattooed Men or by those who are personally taught by them.

Those of the tattooed order who show a greater penchant for violence and aggression are said to be touched by the power of the Moon, and often exhibit the Crescent Moon or Full Moon tattoos. They are sometimes referred to as *Kikage Zumi* to distinguish them from the more enlightened and peaceful *Ise Zumi*.

**Trait:** +1 Void

**Starting Honor:** 2.5

**School Skills:** Athletics, Defense, Jiu-jutsu, Lore: Theology, Meditation, Sincerity, Staves, any two Skills

**Outfit:** Monastic Clothing, Stave, any one peasant weapon, Travelling Pack

### **Technique: Way of the Ise Zumi**

The Tattooed Men do not learn Techniques; instead, they acquire tattoos. A Tattooed Man Character starts at Rank 1 with two tattoos, and gains one additional tattoo each time he goes up in Insight Rank – to a maximum of seven tattoos at Insight Rank 6.



## ***Ise Zumi* in Samurai Society**

Socially, the *Ise Zumi* occupy a peculiar place in Rokugani society – they are members of a Clan and thus technically ‘samurai’, yet they live and behave like monks. This allows them to sometimes get away with odd and unconventional behavior that would not be tolerated from a normal samurai; indeed, the Empire is full of stories about “enigmatic *Ise Zumi*” who say and do the most peculiar things.

In game terms, *Ise Zumi* have the same starting Status as other samurai (Rank 1.0) and can gain and lose Honor and Glory in the usual manner. They have roughly the same social rights and privileges as other samurai, and the Dragon Clan occasionally even assigns them to samurai-type duties such as magistrates or diplomats. However, the rest of the Empire views them as eccentric at best. They can indulge in a certain amount of odd and norm-breaking behavior by virtue of their reputation and the protection which the Dragon Clan extends over them, but extreme or highly offensive acts will still carry repercussions, potentially lethal ones.

## ***Ise Zumi* Tattoos:**

The magical tattoos of the *Ise Zumi* order are numerous in type and peculiar in nature. Typically, the first two tattoos are bestowed when the Tattooed Men are inducted into the order, whether this be at gempukku (for those who joined as children) or when they take their vows (if they joined as adults). The tattoos reflect the nature and destiny of the specific monk, and on rare occasions a monk will evoke a new tattoo never seen before (and likely never seen again). However, the vast majority of tattoos are widespread enough to be known and recognized within the order, and sometimes a monk will specifically ask for one of these tattoos in the belief that it will support his goals.

**Activating and Deactivating Tattoos:** Many *Ise Zumi* tattoos produce immediate effects, and are used via an Action (such as the Arrowroot or Dragon tattoos). An *Ise Zumi* may use these tattoos as often as desired, so long as he takes the required Action.

However, there are also some tattoos which must be “activated” to create ongoing effects, such as raising a Trait. An *Ise Zumi* can activate or deactivate such tattoos at will; during a skirmish, this occurs at the start of his Turn in the Round. An *Ise Zumi* may only have one such tattoo active at a time. Finally, there are some tattoos which are in effect constantly, such as the Crane Tattoo.

**Arrowroot** – Rokugani herbalists rely on arrowroot to treat injuries, and the Arrowroot Tattoo bestows a similar power on the *Ise Zumi*. You may take an Action to heal someone you are touching, curing them of a number of Wounds up to your Insight Rank. However, you immediately suffer half that many Wounds (rounded up). The Wounds you acquire in this way cannot be magically healed – only the natural healing process of time can restore them.

**Avalanche** – The roaring power of the avalanche embodies physical strength. Activating the tattoo’s power increases your Strength by a number of Ranks up to your Insight Rank. However, the power of the avalanche has no flexibility; so long as the tattoo is active, your Reflexes Trait is reduced by the same amount.

**Bamboo** – The bamboo tree is a symbol of resilience, able to flex and endure the fiercest of storms. Much like the Avalanche tattoo does for Strength, the Bamboo tattoo enhances Stamina; activating the tattoo increases your Stamina by a number of Ranks up to your Insight Rank. However, this toughness comes at the price of physical sluggishness – your Agility Rank is reduced by the same amount.

**Bat** – The bat is revered for carrying the spirits of the dead into the afterlife, and is known as being among the swiftest of all animals. Like the Avalanche and Bamboo tattoos, the Bat tattoo enhances a Trait – in this case, Reflexes. Activating the tattoo increases your Reflexes by a number of Ranks up to your Insight Rank. However, this increased speed makes you jittery and unable to focus, lowering your Perception by the same amount.

**Bellflower** – The power of the Bellflower Tattoo is built on the fundamental insight that at the most basic level, all Rings are the same Ring: the ineffable Void. Activating this tattoo allows you to

swap your Void Rank for your Rank in any one Trait, maintaining the change until the tattoo is deactivated or until the next sunrise, whichever comes first.

**Blaze** – This tattoo, traditionally placed on the forearms and hands, evokes the rage of pure fire. When it is active, your unarmed attacks inflict 1 additional Wound as the pure elemental Fire burns the targets; however, so long as the tattoo remains active, your hands are wreathed in flames and will set fire to any flammable objects they touch.

**Butterfly** – The butterfly has complex symbolism in Rokugani culture, and can be both a messenger conveying others' feelings and a harbinger of ill fortune. The Butterfly Tattoo evokes the insect's symbolism as a messenger, enhancing your ability to sense and convey true feelings. When the tattoo is activated, you may raise your Awareness by a number of Ranks up to your Insight Rank. However, the ephemeral spirit of the butterfly has no force, and your Strength Rank is reduced by the same amount.

**Centipede** – The many legs of the centipede are evocative of relentless movement, allowing this lowly insect to travel great distances. You can travel anywhere within the Empire in a single day. This does not affect movement in the context of a Skirmish, but if you set out to travel to some other part of Rokugan, no matter how distant it may be, you will arrive there within one day.

**Chameleon** – Just as the chameleon has the ability to change its color to blend into its surroundings, an *Ise Zumi* with the Chameleon Tattoo has the ability to change his appearance. By taking an Action, you can alter your face and other outward physical features. You cannot change gender or look specifically like someone else, but otherwise can take on any sort of general appearance – older, younger, thinner, taller, etc.

**Cherry Blossom (Sakura)** – The sakura blossom is a symbol of purity and innocence, often associated with the reign of Emperor Hantei Genji, the Shining Prince, who created the concept of the Cherry Blossom Festival. When you activate the Cherry Blossom Tattoo you enhance your own moral strength; while the tattoo is active, you gain +2k2 from spending Honor Points, instead of +1k1. However, while the tattoo is active you cannot spend Glory Points.

**Cloud** – The Cloud Tattoo allows the *Ise Zumi* to speak with the Elemental spirits in a manner similar to a shugenja. By taking an Action, you can replicate the effects of a *Commune* spell in an Element of your choice. (However, since there is no Spellcraft roll involved, you cannot Raise for more questions or greater clarity.) You cannot use this tattoo more times per session than your Insight Rank.

**Crab** – The lowly crab is a symbol of toughness and perseverance, armoring itself within a shell. It is no surprise that the Kami Hida chose this animal as the icon of his clan. The Crab Tattoo bestows a similar resilience on those who bear it. When this tattoo is activated, you gain a number of Ranks of Carapace up to your Insight Rank; however, you become all but immobile, unable to move more than a few feet in a Round. In game terms, this means you cannot take Move Actions and cannot attack anyone who is not in your immediate vicinity.

**Crane** – The Crane is a symbol of luck, good fortune, and elegance. Those rare *Ise Zumi* who are blessed with the Crane Tattoo receive a profound gift: they cease to age, becoming effectively immortal (though they can still be killed in normal ways).

**Crow** – The crow, companion to Shinsei in the dawn of the Empire, is the symbol of resistance to the corrupting power of Jigoku. An *Ise Zumi* who possesses the Crow Tattoo acquires a greatly enhanced resistance to the Shadowlands Taint. You gain a +2k2 bonus to any Earth roll made for the purpose of resisting the acquisition or growth of the Taint.

**Chrysanthemum** – The chrysanthemum flower symbolizes the Emperor of Rokugan and his connection to the divine Sun. The Tattoo of this flower likewise bestows the blessings of Amaterasu on the *Ise Zumi* who possesses it. While you remain in open sunlight, you may heal yourself by spending Void Points. Spending a Void Point for this purpose requires an Action and heals a number of Wounds up to your Insight Rank.

**Dragon** – Perhaps the most iconic tattoo in the *Ise Zumi* order, the Dragon Tattoo grants the ability to literally breathe fire. By taking an Action, you breathe out a stream of searing fire, striking one

foe within Short Range. The target suffers Wounds equal to your Fire Rank. You may use this tattoo a number of times per session equal to your Insight Rank.

**Dragonfly** – The buzzing dragonfly can evade all but the most determined of hunters. When this tattoo is active, you gain a +2k2 bonus to your Defense rolls. However, you become so jittery and unfocused that in order to remain still or to concentrate on anything enough to use any other Skill, you must spend a Void Point.

**Eagle** – The eagle is a hunting bird which soars above the mountains. Although this tattoo does not convey actual flight, it allows you to perform prodigious feats of leaping. By taking an Action, you may leap to anywhere within Short range. If you are landing on a challenging location (such as jagged rocks, a narrow edge, etc) the GM may require an Athletics/Agility roll to keep your balance.

**Falcon** – The falcon is known and revered as a fearless hunter, and those who are gifted with the Falcon Tattoo share this courage. You have a perpetual +2k2 bonus to any rolls made to resist Intimidation rolls and Fear effects.

**Lion** – The lion is a fierce beast, chosen as the icon of the Clan of Akodo; those *Ise Zumi* with the Lion Tattoo share the Lion Clan's talent for war. By activating this tattoo, you gain Ranks in all non-Iaijutsu Bugei Skills equal to your Insight Rank. (This cannot raise your Rank in those Skills above 5.) However, while the tattoo is active you suffer a die-penalty of the same amount to all your Social Skill rolls.

**Monkey** – The monkey is a notorious trickster, known for hiding, stealing, and mockery. When you activate the Monkey Tattoo, you gain Ranks in the Stealth Skill equal to your Insight Rank (this cannot raise your Skill above Rank 5). However, each time you activate this tattoo, you lose Honor as though committing a Minor Breach of Etiquette.

**Moon (Crescent)** – The moon holds a complex position in Rokugani mythology; Onnotangu is one of the two creator deities, the father of the ten Kami, but is also associated with darkness, madness, and sinful behavior. The *Ise Zumi* tattoos using the Moon have correspondingly strange and enigmatic powers. In this case, the Crescent Moon tattoo allows you to become a semi-incorporeal shadow, able to pass through narrow spaces and thin physical barriers (such as wooden and paper walls). While in this state you are considered to have Carapace 2 against mundane attacks (spells, jade, and other such spiritual attacks will affect you normally). Entering this state may only be done at night, and requires an Action and the expenditure of a Void Point; leaving it (solidifying) also requires an Action (but not a Void Point) and if not done voluntarily will automatically occur at sunrise.

**Moon (Full)** – Those *Ise Zumi* whose tattoo evokes the power of the full moon gain the ability to negate their enemies' power, albeit only during the hours of darkness. At night, all those taking action against you – whether it be through Social Skills, physical attacks, or any other adversarial act – suffer a die-penalty equal to your Insight Rank. However, during daylight you feel weak and tired, and suffer a die-penalty to all Skill rolls equal to half your Insight Rank (rounded up).

**Mountain** – The strength of mountains endures against every possible threat. An *Ise Zumi* with the Mountain Tattoo possesses physical toughness beyond that of ordinary mortals. You may take a number of additional Wounds equal to your Insight Rank before reaching Death's Door. These additional Wounds do not cause die-penalties.

**Ocean** – The boundless depths of the ocean contain infinite life and power. An *Ise Zumi* with the Ocean Tattoo has no need to eat, drink, or sleep. In game terms, you cannot suffer Fatigue from any source. Once per session, you may use an Action to restore all of your Void Points.

**Phoenix** – The immortal phoenix, which dies and is reborn in its own fire, is the symbol of Rokugani magic and of the Clan known to master that magic. An *Ise Zumi* with the Phoenix Tattoo gains insight into the ways of Rokugani magic. Any time you are targeted by an Elemental spell (not maho or gaijin/nonhuman magic) you may choose to either boost the caster's Spellcraft roll by a number of unkept dice equal to your Insight Rank, or inflict a die-penalty on the Spellcraft roll equal to your Insight Rank.

**Pine** – The pine tree is known for its ability to shrug off damage and continue to grow. You may ignore die penalties for a number of Wounds equal to your Insight Rank.

**Scorpion** – The scorpion is known to be both treacherous and dangerous, making it the perfect symbol of Bayushi’s clan. You may activate this tattoo in a Skirmish to force a single enemy to use his lowest physical Trait for any attacks against you. The effect lasts for the duration of the Skirmish. However, there is a price for embracing the power of the scorpion – you become intrinsically untrustworthy, suffering a continual 3-die penalty to any Sincerity and Temptation Skill rolls you make.

**Spider** – The spider is known for its poisonous bite, and in fact Rokugani assassins have sometimes used spider venom against their targets. An *Ise Zumi* with the Spider Tattoo can activate the tattoo to infuse his own hands with lethal venom. Your touch (and unarmed attacks) delivers a lethal poison with a strength equal to your Insight Rank. However, you have no control over who is affected by this poison – your touch is lethal to both friend and foe until you deactivate the tattoo.

**Sun, Noon** – The Sun, the manifestation of the divine Amaterasu, is revered throughout the Empire as the source of light, life, and growth. An *Ise Zumi* with a tattoo of the Noonday Sun can call on Amaterasu’s power to strengthen his actions while he stands under Her light. During the day, you may add +1k1 to a Skill Roll of your choice a number of times per session equal to your Insight Rank. However, at night you suffer a 1-die penalty to all Actions.

**Sun, Rising** – The Sun is also a symbol of purity, standing against the darkness of Jigoku and the Shadowlands. An *Ise Zumi* with the tattoo of the Rising Sun can unleash Amaterasu’s purity against the creatures of darkness. A number of times per session equal to your Insight Rank, you can release a blast of pure light from the tattoo that inflicts 2 Wounds on all Lost and Shadowlands creatures within Short Range. This power can only be used during the day; the tattoo is useless at night.

**Tiger** – Tigers are fearsome predators and, unlike other such beasts, willingly hunt human prey; even samurai find them dangerous opponents. An *Ise Zumi* with the Tiger tattoo can evoke the beast’s ferocity in combat. A number of times per session equal to your Insight Rank, you can call on the power of the Tiger to inflict 1 additional Wound with your unarmed attacks, but while this power is in effect you cannot speak (uttering only growls and roars) and cannot hold anything in your clawed hands. Once activated, the tattoo’s effects last until you take an Action to end them.

**Tortoise** – The long-lived tortoise is a symbol of longevity, memory, and wisdom in Rokugani folklore, and an *Ise Zumi* with this tattoo can call on the memories of all previous *Ise Zumi* who bore the same tattoo. You may use this tattoo to boost a Skill roll, momentarily gaining Ranks in that Skill equal to your Insight. (This allows you to bypass the penalties for roll unskilled.) However, if you do this more times in a session than your Insight Rank, you must roll Void at a TN of 20 + (5x number of times beyond Insight); failure means you become Haunted (as per the Disadvantage) by the *Ise Zumi* whose knowledge you used.

**Unicorn** – The mystical creature which Shinjo encountered in the Burning Sands is an icon of both swiftness and good fortune. An *Ise Zumi* with the Unicorn Tattoo can bend fate in his favor. A number of times per session equal to your Insight Rank, you may re-roll a failed Skill roll, taking the second result. However, each time you do this, you must roll Void at TN 20; failure means you have disrupted the balance of fate and a future Skill roll, chosen by the GM, will fail automatically and utterly.

**Vine** – Vines are nature’s more resilient plant, able to regrow from the merest fragment of root, and *Ise Zumi* with the Vine Tattoo share this superhuman resiliency. You heal 1 Wound per hour, and can even regrow lost organs and limbs so long as you remain alive (although this requires many days). However, you must eat and drink twice as much as a normal person, and if you go without food and drink the effects of Fatigue will be twice as bad (2-die penalties in place of 1-die penalties).

**Void** – The ineffable Void is a mystery which no Rokugani has ever truly understood, yet reveals all to those who embrace it. An *Ise Zumi* with the Void Tattoo can call on its power to perceive true reality. You can activate this tattoo once per day. When it is active, for a number of minutes equal to your Insight Rank you can automatically see through any magical or supernatural illusions, and gain a +2k2 bonus to all your Perception-based rolls. However, once the effect expires, you are at a 3-die penalty to all Perception rolls until the next sunrise.

**Wasp** – The wasp is known for agility, speed, aggression, and accuracy, and an *Ise Zumi* with the Wasp Tattoo shares these abilities. While this Tattoo is active, you may take two Actions every Round of

a Skirmish. However, the jittery intensity of this unnatural state means you cannot spend Void Points while the Tattoo is active.

**White Mask** – This Tattoo appears to be a porcelain mask, featureless except for a laughing mouth. An Ise Zumi with this tattoo can hide his own nature with its power. While the Tattoo is active, you are an emotional blank and no one can tell anything about your thoughts, intentions, motives, or truthfulness – any Skill roll, spell, or Technique intended to do so will automatically fail. However, so long as the Tattoo is in effect you are considered to have an Awareness of 1 for any Skill or Trait rolls using Awareness.

**Wolf** – Wolves are known as fearsome hunters, able to track prey to the ends of the earth, and Ise Zumi with the Wolf Tattoo share this gift. You have a preternatural sense of smell that awards you a +3k3 bonus to Hunting and Investigation Skill Rolls that can utilize scent (GM's judgment). However, any foul odor in your vicinity will sicken you, causing a 2-die penalty on all Skill rolls.

### **Creating Unique Tattoos**

As noted, *Ise Zumi* sometimes possess unique tattoos which are tied to their personal history, destiny, or duties. Players who wish their own Characters to possess one or more unique tattoos should discuss their ideas with their GM. Of course, when Players are creating their own tattoos there will always be a temptation to make them too powerful – the Players and the GM should work together to ensure the tattoos are acceptable to everyone and do not “break” the overall level of power in the game. In general, the more restricted and specific a tattoo's effect, the more powerful it can be.

## **Lion Clan Schools**

### **Akodo Bushi School**

**Trait:** +1 Agility

**Starting Honor:** 3.5

**School Skills:** Battle 2, Defense, Kenjutsu, Kyujutsu, Lore: History, War Fans, any two other Bugei Skills

**Outfit:** Light or heavy armor, katana, wakizashi, bow and arrows, war fan, any 2 other weapons, sturdy clothing, traveling pack

#### **Techniques:**

**Rank One: The Way of the Lion.**

When you are using the Attack Tactic, you gain a +1k0 bonus to Kenjutsu attack rolls and get a Free Raise for the Called Shot Maneuver. You may purchase Kata from the Path of Water for 3x Mastery instead of 4x Mastery.

**Rank Two: Strength of Purity.**

Any time you spend an Honor Point on a Skill roll with Kenjutsu or Kyujutsu, the bonus is +2k1 instead of +1k1.

**Rank Three: Strength of My Ancestors.**

When fighting Thugs with Kenjutsu or Kyujutsu, you gain a Free Raise on your attack rolls. When you are using the Attack Tactic, your Kenjutsu attacks inflict 1 additional Wound.

**Rank Four: Triumph Before Battle.**

You gain an additional Free Raise for the Called Shot Maneuver. During a skirmish when you are using the Attack Tactic, you may spend two Honor Points (instead of only one) to boost the same Bugei Skill Roll.

**Rank Five: Akodo's Final Lesson.**

Once per session, you may regain all your Honor Points.

## **Matsu Bushi School**

**Trait:** +1 Willpower

**Starting Honor:** 3.5

**School Skills:** Athletics, Battle, Jiujutsu, Kenjutsu, Kyujutsu, Lore: Bushido, Sincerity, Spears, any one other Bugei Skill

**Outfit:** Light or heavy armor, katana, wakizashi, bow and arrows, knife, any 2 other weapons, sturdy clothing, traveling pack

### **Techniques:**

#### **Rank One: Matsu's Courage.**

When you are using the Full Attack Tactic, you may ignore the die-penalties for wearing Heavy Armor, and if you are wielding a Light or Medium melee weapon the Full Attack penalty to your Defense Skill rolls is reduced by 1 die (this can stack with the Kenjutsu Path of Fire Kata).

#### **Rank Two: Matsu's Fury.**

When you are using the Full Attack Tactic, any Honor Points you spend on Weapon Skill rolls award +2k1 instead of +1k1.

#### **Rank Three: The Lion's Charge.**

When fighting Thugs with a Light or Medium melee weapon, you gain a Free Raise to the results of your attack rolls. When you are using the Full Attack Tactic, you inflict 1 additional Wound with Light and Medium melee weapons.

#### **Rank Four: The Lion's Roar.**

Once per skirmish you may take an Action and spend a Void Point to unleash a terrifying kiai shout. This creates a Fear effect against all enemies within Short range. The strength of the Fear is equal to your Honor Rank.

#### **Rank Five: The Lion's Victory.**

While you are using the Full Attack Tactic, you may ignore Wound penalties for a number of Wounds equal to your Honor Rank. (Death's Door still applies as normal.)

## **Ikoma Omoidasu (Bard) School**

**Trait:** +1 Intelligence

**Starting Honor:** 2.5

**School Skills:** Calligraphy, Defense, Etiquette, Lore: Heraldry, Lore: History, Perform: Storytelling 2, Sincerity, any one other High or Bugei Skill

**Outfit:** Light armor, fine sturdy clothing, court robes, katana, wakizashi, any 1 other weapon, fan, steed (Rokugani pony), traveling pack

### **Techniques:**

#### **Rank One: The Heart of the Lion.**

You get +2k1 instead of +1k1 when spending Glory Points to boost Skill Rolls for Perform: Storytelling and Lore: History. You may use Perform: Storytelling to Brag on others' behalf, and they gain +1 additional pip of Glory when you do so. You do not lose Glory or Honor for expressing emotion in public.

#### **Rank Two: The Herald of Glory.**

The Ikoma Bards are trained to have an eidetic memory in order to accurately recount the glorious deeds of their fellow Lion. You may roll Intelligence (base TN 20) to recall anything in your past with complete accuracy.

#### **Rank Three: The Voice of the Ancestors.**

In a Social Conflict you may cite the wisdom of the ancestors, substituting Lore: History for Etiquette or Sincerity. When doing this, any Glory Points you spend to boost Lore: History award +2k2 bonuses instead of +2k1.

**Rank Four: Every Lion is Your Brother.**

Experienced Bards serve as “battle criers,” urging the Lion armies to perform great deeds. As an Action in a skirmish, you may inspire your allies with a Perform: Storytelling/Awareness roll at TN 20. A successful roll awards a +1k1 bonus to an ally (within Short range) of your choice; you may use Raises to help additional allies. The bonuses may be applied to any one Bugei Skill roll; if not used by the start of your next Turn, they are lost.

**Lion Beastmaster School**

**Trait:** +1 Awareness

**Starting Honor:** 2.5

**School Skills:** Animal Handling 2, Athletics, Battle, Defense, Jiujutsu, Kenjutsu, Lore: Lions, any one Bugei Skill

**Outfit:** Light or ashigaru armor, sturdy clothing, katana, wakizashi, Lion warcat, traveling pack

**Techniques:****Rank One: One With the Pride.**

You have trained in the highly secretive dojo of the Matsu Beastmasters and have forged a bond with one of the legendary Lion warcats, creating a “pride” which you lead. Your warcats will accompany you wherever you go and follow basic/simple non-suicidal commands without question; you may direct them to attack with an Action, and may give more complicated commands, including suicidal ones, with Animal Handling/Awareness at a TN chosen by the GM. Any of your warcats which are not attacking will automatically defend you, Assisting your Defense rolls.

No lion, trained or feral, will attack you so long as you meet its gaze.

**Rank Two: The Lion’s Strike.**

An additional warcat joins your pride. You no longer need to take an Action to direct your warcats to attack. Your Jiujutsu attacks are considered Medium weapons, and your attacks with Jiujutsu and Kenjutsu get a Free Raise against Thugs.

**Rank Three: With the Soul of a Lion.**

An additional warcat joins your pride, and you may add another warcat each time you subsequently gain an Insight Rank. You and all members of your pride gain a bonus of +1k1 on all melee attack rolls when fighting alongside one another.

**Lion Warcats**

The trained elite warcats which form a Lion Beastmaster’s “pride” are treated as (Non-Player) Characters, not as Thugs. They have the following game mechanics:

**Lion Warcat [Character]**

**Air** 1 Reflexes 4

**Earth** 4

**Fire** 1 Agility 4

**Water** 3

**Skills:** Defense 2, Hunting 3

**Initiative:** 5

**Attack Roll:** Claws 6k4, Medium

**Defense Roll:** 6k4

**Special Abilities:**

- **Carapace** 1
- **Roar:** Once per skirmish, a Lion warcat may take an Action to let loose a fearsome roar that creates a Fear effect on all enemies in Short Range. The Fear’s Rank is equal to the Lion’s Air + the Beastmaster’s Insight Rank.

## **Mantis Clan Schools**

For most of the Empire's history, the Mantis are a Minor Clan. In fact, for the first few hundred years of Rokugan's history they are simply a powerful ronin band – they do not get recognized by the Emperor as a Minor Clan until the Fifth century, and the family name they gained at that time – Gusai – was expunged due to treason less than a hundred years later. During the Clan Wars era at the start of the twelfth century, the Mantis leader Yoritomo forms an alliance with several other Minor Clans and ultimately succeeds in gaining recognition for the Mantis as a Great Clan and for his own family name; within a decade, two other Minor Clans (the Centipede and the Wasp) join the Mantis Clan, becoming the Moshi and Tsuruchi families.

### **Mantis/Yoritomo Bushi School**

[This School traces its roots to Osano-Wo and the original founding the Mantis Clan. Prior to the recognition of the Mantis as a Great Clan early in the twelfth century, it is known simply as the “Mantis Bushi School.”]

**Trait:** +1 Strength

**Starting Honor:** 1.5

**Skills:** Athletics, Commerce, Chain Weapons, Defense, Knives, Sailing 2, Staves, any one other Merchant or Bugei Skill

**Outfit:** Light or ashigaru armor, rugged clothing, katana, wakizashi, any 2 knives, traveling pack

#### **Techniques:**

##### **Rank One: The Way of the Mantis.**

You ignore any Glory or Honor penalties for using Peasant weapons. You gain a +1k0 bonus to all Athletics rolls and suffer no penalties for fighting on an uneven or moving surface, or when fighting in difficult weather conditions (rain, wind, etc). You treat improvised weapons as Medium Weapons (instead of Light Weapons) and are always considered to have a Skill Rank in them equal to your Insight Rank. You may purchase Kata for Knives and Chain Weapons at 3x Mastery Level instead of 4x Mastery level.

##### **Rank Two: Voice of the Storm.**

Your wild, unfettered attacks disorient your opponent and opens holes in his defenses. When you use the Full Attack Tactic, your opponent suffers a 1-die penalty to his Defense rolls. Any time you successfully use the terrain to boost your attack or defense (as described in the *Chapter of Earth*) you gain a +1k1 bonus to your attack or Defense roll instead of the normal +1k0.

##### **Rank Three: Strike of the Mantis.**

You gain a Free Raise when fighting Thugs in melee, regardless of what weapon or Skill you are using. When fighting with the Knives Skill or the Chain Weapons Skill, you inflict 1 extra Wound.

##### **Rank Four: The Rolling Wave.**

[Late eleventh century and on]

Mantis champion Yoritomo developed this Technique, which uses rolling and hypnotic motions to confuse enemy attacks. Regardless of your Tactic, you gain a +1k1 bonus to your Defense Skill rolls; if you are fighting on an uneven or moving surface, the bonus is +2k1 instead.

##### **Rank Five: Hand of Osano-Wo.**

[Four Winds era and later]

During a skirmish (not a duel), you may spend Glory Points on Bugei Skill rolls.

### **Mantis/Yoritomo Courtier School**

This School is originally developed by Gusai before his death in the fifth century. Up through the Clan Wars era, this is known as the “Mantis Courtier School.”

**Trait:** +1 Willpower

**Starting Honor:** 1.5



**School Skills:** Commerce, Courtier, Etiquette, Intimidation 2, Sailing, Sincerity, Temptation, any one other High or Merchant Skill

**Outfit:** Fine sturdy clothing, court robes, katana, wakizashi, knife, fan, traveling pack

### **Techniques:**

#### **Rank One: Duty Before Honor.**

You may use Intimidation in place of Courtier for any Social Conflict roll. You do not lose Honor for using Intimidation in social situations. You gain +1k0 to any rolls to resist Intimidation and Fear effects.

#### **Rank Two: Storm Heart.**

The Mantis are taught to put their boorish reputation to use, strengthening the impact of their words. When you spend Glory or Infamy Points on Intimidation Skill rolls, your bonus is +2k1 instead of +1k1

#### **Rank Three: Command the Winds.**

[This Technique is developed in the post-Clan Wars era]:

Bullying makes it hard for people to tell if you're lying. You may spend a Void Point or an Infamy Point to use Intimidation in place of Sincerity on any Sincerity Skill roll (including any applicable Social Conflict rolls).

#### **Rank Four: Will of the Storm.**

[This Technique is developed during the reign of Toturi III]

Your intimidating behavior can shatter the will of your opponents. If you win a Social Conflict using Intimidation, your opponent cannot spend Void Points or Glory Points against you for the rest of the session.

## **Phoenix Clan Schools**

### **Shiba Bushi School**

**Trait:** +1 Agility

**Starting Honor:** 3.5

**School Skills:** Courtier, Defense, Iaijutsu, Kenjutsu, Lore: Shugenja, Meditation, Polearms, Sincerity, any one other High or Bugei Skill

**Outfit:** Light armor, sturdy clothing, katana, wakizashi, naginata, bow and arrows, steed (Rokugani pony), traveling pack

### **Techniques:**

#### **Rank One: Way of the Phoenix.**

Shiba bushi are trained primarily to defend the Clan's shugenja. If you Assist an ally's Defense rolls, the bonus you bestow is +2k1 instead of +1k1. When you spend a Void Point on your own Defense Skill Rolls, you gain +2k1 instead of the normal +1k1. You may purchase Kenjutsu Kata from the Path of Earth and Polearms Kata from the Path of Earth for 3x Mastery level instead of 4x Mastery level.

#### **Rank Two: Dancing With the Elements.**

You are unusually familiar with magic. Enemy spells which target you suffer a 1-die penalty to the Spellcraft roll, and friendly spells which target you gain a +1k0 bonus to the Spellcraft roll.

#### **Rank Three: One With the Void.**

The Shiba are taught to embrace the Void and to fight in a state of "no-thought." When fighting in a skirmish, you may spend two Void Points at a time (instead of only one) on Skill rolls with Kenjutsu and Polearms.

#### **Rank Four: Move With the World.**

You gain a Free Raise when attacking a Thug with Kenjutsu or Polearms. Once per skirmish you may spend a Void Point to be able to make an attack while using the Full Defense Tactic (with Kenjutsu or Polearms Skills only).

**Rank Five: Touch of the Void.**

Masters of the Shiba style can draw back the veil and allow the universe to act through them. Once per session, you may recover all your Void Points.

## **Asako Loremaster (Historian) School**

**Trait:** +1 Intelligence

**Starting Honor:** 3.5

**School Skills:** Calligraphy, Etiquette, Lore: Heraldry, Lore: History 2, Meditation, Sincerity, any one other Lore Skill, any one other High Skill

**Outfit:** Sturdy clothing, court robes, wakizashi, knife, writing kit, traveling pack.

### **Techniques:**

**Rank One: Temple of the Soul.**

You are a genteel and honorable scholar. You gain +2k1 instead of +1k1 when spending Honor Points on Lore Skill rolls and Etiquette Skill rolls.

**Rank Two: Invincible Mind.**

The enlightened and educated Asako can see through the games, tricks, and deceptions of the material world. You may use Intelligence in place of other Traits when making Social Conflict rolls.

**Rank Three: Voice of the Universe.**

Your mastery of past history allows you to understand the patterns of current events. You may study a court or other social environment for a day and then roll Lore: History / Intelligence at TN 30 to gain +1k1 on all Social Skill rolls within that court until you leave or the end of the session, whichever comes first. (This effect cannot be stacked.)

**Rank Four: Wisdom of the Ages.**

You can share the wisdom of history with others. Once per day, you may roll Lore: History/Intelligence at TN 20 to bestow a +1k1 bonus to an ally to use on any Social Skill roll within that same day. You may use Raises to affect additional allies with the same roll.

## **Asako Henshin School**

**Trait:** +1 Willpower

**Starting Honor:** 2.5

**School Skills:** Calligraphy, Defense, Jujutsu, Lore: Elements 2, Lore: History, Medicine, Meditation, any 1 High Skill

**Outfit:** Sturdy clothing, court robes, wakizashi, knife, bo staff, medicine kit, writing kit, traveling pack

### **Techniques:**

**Rank One: Mysteries and Riddles.**

Henshin are trained in the ways of the Elements, how they manifest and react to the world, and how they can be coaxed by the secret methods which the Asako call the Riddles. Activating a Riddle does not take an Action but does require a roll of Lore (Elements/(Ring) at TN 25. Once active, Riddles' effects last until you end them voluntarily or until the next sunrise or sunset, whichever comes first. At this Rank, you learn the most basic Riddle to shift the Elements within your own body, raising both Traits of one of your Rings by an amount up to your Insight Rank while lowering both Traits of another Ring by the same amount. (You cannot lower any of your Traits to Rank 0 with this ability.)

**Rank Two: The Riddle of Air.**

This Riddle lets you add Xk0 to your Social Skill Rolls, where X is your Insight Rank.

**Rank Three: The Riddle of Earth.**

This Riddle lets you ignore the die-penalties for a number of Wounds equal to your Insight Rank.

**Rank Four: The Riddle of Water.**

This Riddle lets you add +Xko to all Strength-based and Perception-based Skill rolls, where X is your Insight Rank.

**Rank Five: The Riddle of Fire.**

When this Riddle is active, you may add Xk0 to your Jiujuitsu and Defense Skill rolls, where X is your Insight Rank.

**Rank Six: The Final Mystery.**

The Final Mystery is that of Fate, and the rare individuals who master it and complete Asako's Path are known to the Asako as *Fushihai* (Masters). There is no actual training and preparation for this achievement, and merely attaining Insight Rank Six does not assure it – the existing *Fushihai* must judge whether you are ready to join their ranks, based on your understanding of the Mysteries and Riddles.

**The Henshin in Play**

The Asako Henshin are a covert order, hidden even from the rest of the Phoenix Clan, dedicated to maintaining, studying, and developing the secrets which Asako discovered at the dawn of the Empire. As such, it is quite unusual for them to travel the rest of the Empire and when they do so it is generally in the public guise of one of their family's scholars (in game terms, the Loremaster School). They are required to keep their abilities secret from the public and especially from the Phoenix Clan's Isawa family, who have long suspected them of harboring some great secret.

Given these realities, a Henshin as part of a group of adventuring samurai creates some obvious problems – starting with the fact that the Character cannot openly reveal his supernatural abilities. The GM and Players should carefully discuss whether or not a Henshin can “work” in the campaign, and be prepared for the consequences if the Character winds up revealing the Asako family's ancient secret.

The GM should also consider very carefully whether Player Characters should ever be allowed to attain the Final Mystery. The responsibility of knowing the final, greatest secrets of the Asako is a heavy one, and those who are *Fushihai* unavoidably live at a distance from the rest of Rokugan's humanity. Thus, if a Character does attain this ultimate goal, he or she should probably be “retired” and become a Non-Player Character, perhaps watching over the other Characters from a distance and occasionally offering them help or advice if it is truly needed.

**Scorpion Clan Schools****Bayushi Bushi School**

**Trait:** +1 Agility

**Starting Honor:** 1.5

**School Skills:** Athletics, Defense, Intimidation, Kenjutsu, Knives, Kyujutsu, Sincerity, Temptation, any one other High, Bugei, or Low Skill

**Outfit:** Light armor, sturdy clothing, court robes, katana, wakizashi, knife, bow and arrows, 1 other weapon, traveling pack

**Techniques:****Rank One: The Way of the Scorpion.**

You may add your Intelligence to your Initiative Rank. When attacking a foe in melee who has lower Initiative than you, you gain a +1k0 bonus (this stacks with the effects of the Kenjutsu Rank 5 Path of Air Kata). You may purchase the Kenjutsu Path of Air Kata for 3x Mastery Level instead of 4x Mastery Level.

**Rank Two: Strike at the Tail.**

While other Clans seldom would presume to try to disarm their opponents, the Scorpion actively train to do so, enjoying the humiliation of taking their enemy's weapon. You may perform a Disarm Maneuver for only 1 Raise, and if you make an additional Raise beyond that, you may opt to direct the opponent's lost weapon into your own hand or that of an ally within Short range. You may spend a Void Point after a successful Disarm to mock your opponent, inflicting a Rank of Stress on them.

**Rank Three: Pincers and Tail.**

The Scorpion are adept at deceptive movements, enhanced by their custom of fighting with their left hand instead of their right, which trick their enemies into making themselves vulnerable. Once per opponent per skirmish, before making a melee attack you may make a Contested roll of your Temptation / Agility against your opponent's Investigation / Reflexes. If you win the Contested roll, you trick them out of position and gain two Free Raises for your attack roll that Turn.

**Rank Four: Strike From Above, Strike From Below.**

You gain a Free Raise when attacking Thugs with Light and Medium melee weapons. When wielding a Light or Medium melee weapon in a Skirmish, you may use 2 Raises to render your opponent Blind until the end of his next Turn.

**Rank Five: The Pincers Hold, the Tail Strikes.**

The final lesson of the Scorpion bushi is to always strike ruthlessly and shamelessly at your opponent's weakest point. In a skirmish, when attacking Thugs or Characters with Light or Medium melee weapons, you may spend Infamy Points to inflict additional Wounds, at the rate of 1 Wound per Infamy Point.

**Scorpion Dirty Tactics and Infamy**

Several of the Bayushi Techniques involve tactics, methods, and actions which the rest of the Empire would consider questionable at best, and in many cases outright dishonorable. It is recommended that the GM impose 1-3 Infamy pips (depending on the specific circumstances) on a Scorpion bushi any time he uses the Rank Two, Rank Three, and Rank Four Techniques where others can see, and on a Scorpion courtier any time he uses his Rank One and Rank Four Techniques.

Of course, since both of these Schools actually use Infamy to enhance themselves, many Scorpion Players will welcome these Infamy boosts... but even the Scorpion Clan has limits to what sort of reputation it will allow its samurai.

**Bayushi Courtier School**

**Trait:** +1 Awareness

**Starting Honor:** 1.5

**School Skills:** Calligraphy, Courtier, Defense, Etiquette, Intimidation, Sincerity, Temptation 2, any one High or Low Skill

**Outfit:** Sturdy clothing, court robes, wakizashi, knife, fan, writing kit, traveling pack

**Techniques:****Rank One: Weakness is My Strength.**

The Bayushi Courtier School teaches its students to turn the weaknesses of others to their advantage. You may use Temptation in place of Courtier in Social Conflict, and you may spend Infamy Points on all Social rolls (not just Temptation and Intimidation). When spending Infamy Points on Temptation, you gain +2k1 instead of +1k1.

**Rank Two: Secrets are Birthmarks.**

The name of this Technique comes from the Scorpion adage: "Secrets are like birthmarks; the more you try to hide them, the easier they are to see." You may perform a Social Conflict with Temptation or Courtier to learn how many points of Social and Mental Disadvantages your opponent has; if you make a Raise on the roll, you may learn the exact nature of the highest point-value Disadvantage (Lost Love, Dark Secret, etc)

**Rank Three: No More Masks.**

Scorpion Courtiers are adept at disrupting others' harmony and self-control, goading enemies into dropping their masks and shaming themselves with their true faces. You may perform a Social Conflict for this purpose, using your Temptation or Courtier (with Awareness) against their Etiquette / Willpower; with a success, you inflict 2 Ranks of Stress on them, plus 1 additional Rank if you have Blackmail

against them. You may also use this Technique in a “normal” Social Conflict, combining the effects, by calling a Raise on the Social Conflict roll before making it.

**Rank Four: Scrutiny’s Sweet Sting.**

At this rank, the Bayushi Courtier has learned to use all the information he has collected to subtly wreck his enemies, undermining their every word and deed. If you know someone has a permanent (not temporary) Social or Mental Disadvantage, you can bring pressure against them with a Social Conflict roll (using your Courtier or Temptation against their Etiquette). If you win the Social Conflict, you gain Blackmail against them.

**Rank Five: Pull the String.**

The true master of the Bayushi Courtier School is able to make others dance like puppets. Once per session per Blackmail you possess, you can gain +3k3 from a Blackmail without having to “cash it in.”

## **Shosuro Assassin School**

**Trait:** +1 Agility

**Starting Honor:** 0.5

**School Skills:** Athletics, Craft: Poison, Defense, Disguise, Forgery, Knives, Meditation, Stealth, any one other Low Skill

**Outfit:** Black “ninja garb” clothing, sturdy normal clothing of several types, ninja-to, knives (up to four), shuriken, 1 chain weapon of your choice, disguise kit, poison kit, traveling pack

### **Techniques:**

**Rank One: The Gauntlet.**

All Shosuro assassins are initially expected to play the role of ostentatious “ninja decoys” to distract enemy targets. Only those who survive this are trained in the School’s more advanced techniques. You gain a +1k0 bonus to your attack rolls with “ninja” weapons. When in an area with visual obscurement (darkness, heavy shadow, fog, smoke, etc) you gain +1k1 to your Stealth rolls.

**Rank Two: The Shadow Has No Mercy**

Once you have cleared “the Gauntlet,” you begin the real work of your school: infiltration, espionage, and assassination. You gain a +1k1 bonus to your rolls with Craft: Poison, Disguise, and Forgery.

**Rank Three: The Shadow Has No Form**

You are now adept at using the gifts of Shadow to evade enemy attacks. You may perform Move Actions while using the Full Defense Tactic. If there is any kind of visual obscurement (darkness, fog, smoke, etc), you gain an additional +1k1 to your Defense rolls regardless of your Tactic.

**Rank Four: The Hidden Blade**

When attacking with Light weapons or Ninja weapons, you gain a Free Raise against Thugs and inflict 1 extra Wound against Characters.

**Rank Five: The Shadow Has No Soul**

You may call on the power of Shadow to pass through solid walls. You must spend a Void Point and make a Meditation / Willpower roll at TN 30 to do so, and this must be done for each wall you traverse. (Very thick walls, such as castle walls, may be impervious to this ability, or require Raises to successfully pass, at the GM’s discretion.)

## **Shosuro Butei (Actor) School**

**Trait:** +1 Awareness

**Starting Honor:** 0.5

**School Skills:** Defense, Disguise, Etiquette, Knives, Meditation, Perform: Acting, Sincerity, Stealth, Temptation

**Outfit:** Assorted sets of clothing, stage costumes and makeup, disguise kit, knife, assorted poisons, fan, traveling pack

### **Techniques:**

**Rank One: The First Face.**

The Shosuro Actor begins his career by learning the basics of deception and mimicry. You learn one persona. Any time you spend a Void Point on a Disguise or Sincerity Skill roll, you gain a bonus of +3k1 instead of the normal +1k1.

**Rank Two: The Subtle Sting.**

The Butei are assassins as well as infiltrators. You gain a bonus of +2k0 to your Stealth rolls and to your attack rolls when wielding a Light weapon.

**Rank 3: The Second Face.**

You learn a second persona.

**Rank 4: The Viper's Kiss.**

When fighting with Light weapons, you inflict +1 Wound and may ignore any limitations on how many Wounds you can inflict with a single attack.

**Rank 5: The Third Face.**

The Shosuro Actor is now a true master of deception, infiltration, and murder. You gain a third persona. If you attack an enemy who is unaware of you or who does not expect danger from you, they cannot make a Defense roll against you.

**Shosuro Butei and Personas**

The deep secrets of the Shosuro Butei School are focused on teaching the actor to create entire “personas,” alternate personalities, which he can inhabit so completely that he effectively becomes them. The butei’s voice, speech patterns, behavior, body-language, and even subtle aspects of their facial features will change to match the persona. This makes the Butei extremely difficult to unmask, but also forces them to operate within the limitations of what the persona could do – indeed, a Butei will find it difficult to utilize any abilities which are not part of the persona’s skill-set.

Once developed and mastered, these personas are used to infiltrate, spy, and assassinate. It should be noted, however, that Butei personas do not replicate specific people – that is a skill even beyond their esoteric training. Instead, they develop more “generic” personas that can be used multiple times on different missions, such as “Lion bushi” or “geisha.”

Once a Butei has learned a persona, he can enter its mindset with ten minutes of concentration and a Meditation/Void Skill roll at TN 20. Once inside the persona, however, he can only use the Skills associated with it. For a samurai persona, this will be the Skills matching the School Skills for a Rank One samurai of that Clan and School. For a non-samurai persona, it will be an equivalent set of Skills that match the persona’s putative background and profession – for example, a “geisha” persona might have Calligraphy, Etiquette, Perform: Music, Perform: Singing, Perform: Dance, Sincerity, and Temptation at Rank 1 or 2.

While inhabiting a persona, a Butei will find it very difficult to use his own Skills without “breaking character” and leaving the persona. Using a non-persona Skill while remaining within the persona requires a Skill roll of Meditation/Void at a TN equal to 10 +5x his Rank in the desired Skill. If the roll fails, he cannot use the Skill without leaving his persona.

Leaving a persona happens instantly – no Action is required – but once out, the Butei must again concentrate for ten minutes and roll Meditation/Void as above to return to it.

It is important to note that personas are not magic – rather, they are merely the result of extremely intense training and practice. As a result, they are not “perfect” – even the most experienced Butei can make mistakes and give away his true nature. The GM should always be aware of this, and refrain from letting a Butei (whether run by the GM or a Player) be arbitrarily impossible to unmask.

## **Shosuro Butei and Assassins in Play**

It should be obvious from the description of their Schools that the Shosuro Assassins and Shosuro Butei are not the sort of Characters who can easily be part of a typical L5R adventuring party.

The Assassins' training and duties typically keep them completely isolated from Rokugan's normal samurai society, which they enter only in disguise and for the purpose of theft or assassination. Rokugani consider "ninja" to be vile dishonorable criminals at best, supernatural monsters at worst.

Similarly, a Shosuro Butei will typically be engaging in infiltration or spying missions that do not mesh well with normal samurai activities. Thus, when Assassins and Butei appear in an L5R game it will most often be as adversaries to the Player Characters.

However, this does not mean it is entirely impossible for a Shosuro Assassin or Shosuro Butei to be part of a "normal" L5R campaign. Perhaps the Assassin has been assigned as a covert bodyguard to one of the Player Characters. Perhaps the Butei is conducting a long-term infiltration plan that requires him to operate within normal samurai society. The GM and Players should discuss such ideas and decide whether there is a realistic way for an Assassin or a Butei to be part of the campaign.

## **Unicorn Clan Schools**

The Unicorn Clan returns to Rokugan at the end of the eighth century. For games set prior to that era, Unicorn Clan Schools are not available unless the GM opts to change Rokugan's canonical timeline for his personal campaign.

### **Shinjo Bushi School**

**Trait:** +1 Agility

**Starting Honor:** 2.5

**School Skills:** Athletics, Battle, Defense, Horsemanship, Hunting, Kenjutsu, Kyujutsu, Spears, any one other Bugei Skill

**Outfit:** Light or heavy armor, sturdy clothing, katana, wakizashi, bow and arrows, any 3 other weapons, steed (Unicorn horse), traveling pack

#### **Techniques:**

##### **Rank One: The Way of the Ki-Rin.**

The Shinjo are masters of cavalry warfare. When fighting mounted, your bonus for attacking opponents on foot is +1k1 instead of the normal +1k0. You may use the Full Defense Tactic when mounted at Horsemanship Skill Rank 2 (instead of Rank 4). You gain a +1k0 bonus to your Defense Skill rolls, regardless of whether you are mounted or on foot. You do not need an Action to mount or dismount from a steed.

##### **Rank Two: Dance of the Blade.**

The Shinjo employ a unique defensive tactic they learned in the Burning Sands, known as the "Shinjo Parry." When fighting in a skirmish with a weapon that uses Kenjutsu, you gain an additional +1k0 bonus to Defense Skill rolls (this stacks with your Rank One bonus and with the Full Defense Tactic bonus). Moreover, if you are using the Full Defense Tactic with a weapon that uses Kenjutsu, your Defense Skill bonus from the Tactic is +2k2 instead of the normal +2k1.

##### **Rank Three: The Four Winds Strike.**

If you are mounted, you gain a Free Raise when attacking Thugs in melee or with Kyujutsu.

##### **Rank Four: Spirit of the Blade Unleashed.**

If you are on foot, you gain a Free Raise when attacking thugs with Kenjutsu. All your melee attacks with Medium weapons, and all your mounted Kyujutsu attacks, inflict 1 extra Wound.

##### **Rank Five: Dancing With the Fortunes.**

When you are mounted, you are considered to have the Luck Advantage (if you already have Luck, you may use it a second time per session). While you are mounted, Void Points you spend on Skill Rolls for

Horsemanship, for attacks using Kyujutsu, and for attacks using Medium melee weapons award +2k2 to your rolls.

## **Moto Bushi School (the “Desert Moto”)**

This is the original Moto School developed during the Unicorn Clan’s eight centuries of wandering, and is a fusion of influences from the Moto’s origins as nomadic desert raiders and the fighting styles of the samurai they joined – who were still known as the Ki-Rin Clan when that merger first occurred.

In the ninth century, after the Unicorn return to the Empire, the Moto family makes a catastrophic mistake, attacking the Shadowlands and losing the vast majority of its bushi. As a result, this School dies out within the Empire, but survives among those Moto still living beyond the Empire’s borders in the Burning Sands. It is revived when the remaining “desert Moto” finally return to the Empire in the twelfth century (during the Hidden Emperor era) and assume leadership of the Unicorn Clan.

**Trait:** +1 Strength

**Starting Honor:** 2.5

**School Skills:** Athletics, Defense, Horsemanship 2, Hunting, Intimidation, Kenjutsu, Kyujutsu, Spears or Polearms, any one other Bugei Skill

**Outfit:** Light or heavy armor, rugged clothing, katana or scimitar, wakizashi, knife, bow and arrows, spear or lance, steed (Unicorn horse), traveling pack

### **Techniques:**

#### **Rank One: Legacy of the Burning Sands.**

From their earliest days in the Burning Sands, the Moto were known both for surprise raids and for using a wild, brutal, and chaotic fighting style that intimidated foes. When fighting mounted, you may choose to use Strength instead of Agility with melee weapons, but cannot use any Kata when you do so. When using the Full Attack Tactic, as part of an Attack Action you create a Fear effect against your opponent with a Rank equal to your Intimidation Skill + Insight Rank.

#### **Rank Two: Desert’s Harsh Sting.**

In their time in the desert the nomadic Moto learned to pit their strength against their enemies’ weakness, taking advantage of injured foes. When making a melee attack, you add +Xk0 to your attack rolls, where X is the number of Wounds your opponent already has.

#### **Rank Three: Desert Wind’s Strike.**

You gain a Free Raise when attacking Thugs with melee weapons.

#### **Rank Four: Desert’s Blind Fury.**

The Moto fighting style is both ruthless and relentless, delivering devastating strikes to surprised or overwhelmed enemies. You inflict +1 Wound with melee weapons when using the Full Attack Tactic, when fighting from horseback, or when attacking a surprised opponent.

#### **Rank Five: The Charge of Madness.**

A Moto charge is a fearsome thing, an all-out assault without concern for survival that can crush the most stalwart defense. When you are mounted, or when you are using the Full Attack Tactic on foot, you may choose to inflict additional Wounds on your opponent whether or not your attack overcomes their Defense; however, for each such Wound you inflict, you suffer one yourself. The Wounds you take from this Technique cannot be negated with Void Points.

## **Moto Bushi School (the Vindicators)**

This School is developed by the small number of Moto who survive Moto Tsume’s disastrous attack on the Shadowlands, and is focused entirely on their obsessive crusade to hunt down and destroy all the Lost members of their family. It remains few in number and is regarded with distaste by all those outside the Unicorn Clan. After the return of the Desert Moto and the defeat of Moto Tsume at the end of the Hidden Emperor era, the Vindicators go into decline as many Moto samurai no longer see the need to carry on a doomed war against the Shadowlands. By the end of the twelfth century they are all but extinct.



**Trait:** +1 Willpower

**Starting Honor:** 1.5

**School Skills:** Athletics, Defense, Horsemanship, Hunting, Investigation, Kenjutsu, Kyujutsu, Lore (Shadowlands), any 1 Skill

**Outfit:** Light or heavy armor, rugged clothing, katana, wakizashi, bow and arrows, any 3 other weapons, steed (Unicorn horse), traveling pack

### **Techniques:**

#### **Rank One: Purity of the Breath**

In order to attain the purity of soul and purpose which their fallen ancestors lacked, the Moto are taught to make every action perfect, right down to their breathing and heartbeat, overcoming the limits of the flesh. You may add Xk0 (where X is your Insight Rank) to your Skill rolls with Investigation and Kenjutsu and to your rolls to Stand Up and Fight.

#### **Rank Two: Facing the Dark Within.**

The Moto learn to use their karmic ties to their fallen brethren to detect the presence of Lost and Shadowlands creatures. You may roll Investigation/Awareness at TN 20 to intuitively sense the presence and location of any such creatures within Long Range; Raises will give you more concrete information about their identity, number, distance, and even intentions, as adjudicated by the GM.

#### **Rank Three: Justice of Our Ancestors**

Driven by the need for atonement, the Moto Vindicators rely on aggressive attack to the exclusion of all else. You gain a Free Raise on your attack rolls against Thugs. When using the Full Attack Tactic, you inflict +1 Wound with melee attacks.

#### **Rank Four: Bloodied but Unbowed**

The final lesson of the Vindicator School is to embrace the doom of the Moto family. You may roll to Stand Up and Fight an unlimited number of times in a skirmish, and can continue making these rolls while at Death's Door or even when you should be outright dead (Wounds exceeding 3x Earth). However, if you are still beyond 3x Earth in Wounds when the skirmish ends, you die instantly and your Final Moment is your spirit tearing your body asunder to make it impossible for the Taint to ever re-animate it.

## **Otaku Battle Maiden School**

**Trait:** +1 Reflexes

**Starting Honor:** 3.5

**School Skills:** Athletics, Battle, Defense, Horsemanship 2, Kenjutsu, Polearms, Spears, any one other Bugei Skill

**Outfit:** Light or heavy armor, sturdy clothing, katana, wakizashi, bow and arrows, any 2 polearms, 1 other weapon, steed (Otaku warhorse), traveling pack

### **Techniques:**

#### **Rank One: Riding in Harmony.**

Her fiery ancestral blood yearning to be free, the Battle Maiden is one with Otaku when riding, preferably fast. Your Honor Points award a +2k1 bonus (instead of +1k1) when used on Horsemanship Skill rolls and on attack rolls with Kenjutsu, Spears, and Polearms. When you are mounted, Honor Points also award this bonus on Defense rolls. You do not need an Action to mount or dismount from a steed.

#### **Rank Two: The Void of War.**

At the start of a skirmish, you may lower your Initiative Rank by 3 (for the duration of the skirmish) to gain +1k0 to all your Defense rolls for that skirmish. If you are mounted, this bonus is +1k1 instead.

#### **Rank Three: Sensing the Breeze.**

When mounted and using the Full Attack Tactic, you may take a Move Action in addition to your normal action for the Turn (which can also be Move). When you are mounted, you gain a Free Raise on your Kenjutsu, Polearms, and Spears attacks against Thugs.

**Rank Four: Wind Never Stops.**

When you are on foot, you gain a Free Raise against Thugs when using Kenjutsu, Polearms, or Spears. Your attacks with Kenjutsu, Polearms, and Spears inflict 1 extra Wound.

**Rank Five: Otaku's Blessing.**

The Otaku believe their ancestor looks upon them as they charge into battle, bestowing her blessings on her most favored. When mounted, you may spend 2 Honor Points at a time (instead of 1) on any Bugei Skill roll, and your attacks with Spears inflict 1 extra Wound (this stacks with the bonus from your Rank Four Technique).

## **Ide Emissary School**

**Trait:** +1 Awareness

**Starting Honor:** 3.5

**School Skills:** Calligraphy, Courtier, Defense, Etiquette 2, Horsemanship, Lore: Heraldry, Sincerity, any one other High Skill

**Outfit:** Sturdy clothing, court robes, wakizashi, knife, steed (Unicorn horse), fan, writing kit, traveling pack

**Techniques:****Rank One: The Heart Speaks.**

The Ide student is shown how to let his soul shine in every action. When you are using the Sincerity Skill to tell the truth, you gain a +1k0 bonus, and any Glory Points you spend on the Skill Roll award +2k1 bonuses instead of +1k1.

**Rank Two: Piercing the Veils.**

After centuries of dealing with unpredictable and violent folk in the Burning Sands, the Ide have mastered the ability to understand social cues and steer away from needless trouble. You may make a Contested Roll of Etiquette / Awareness against another person. With a success, you know what errors and pitfalls to avoid in social interactions with that person (e.g. what sort of things would anger or offend them).

**Rank Three: The Heart Listens.**

You may perform a Social Conflict for the purpose of making friends. This is resolved as your Sincerity/Awareness against their Etiquette/Willpower; with a success, their attitude toward you improves for the remainder of the session (subject to GM's judgment). The effects of this automatically end if you take any kind of overt hostile action against them.

**Rank Four: Immovable Hand of Peace.**

The Ide school teaches its students to be such perfect emissaries that no honorable person can deny their mediation even if it goes against them. You can intervene in a Social Conflict between other factions, supporting one faction over the other. If you win the Social Conflict roll, you get to choose which of the other two factions is victorious in the Social Conflict. You gain a Favor with the victorious faction.

**Rank Five: Ide's Ideal.**

The Ide ideal is always to prevent violence, but they are also experienced in dealing with the consequences when things go wrong. Any time a negotiation is going sour and is about to become a Skirmish, you may roll Etiquette/Awareness at a TN chosen by the GM (typically 25 or 30) to "pick up" on the danger and take one Action in the Skirmish *before* the normal Initiative sequence begins.

## **Characters Without Schools**

Although there is a natural tendency to assume that all samurai are trained in Schools, in reality this is not the case. There are millions of samurai in Rokugan, but each clan has less than a hundred sensei qualified to teach the sacred Techniques of their Schools. Competition to train in the Schools is intense, and samurai parents often spend great effort and engage in elaborate political favor-trading to ensure their offspring are admitted. As a result, there are countless low-Status samurai who are never able to enroll in a School, instead learning more basic fighting methods (Skills and Kata) at local dojo. These samurai

seldom rise to prominence – they spend their lives garrisoning castles, guarding remote villages, watching clan borders, and otherwise performing mundane samurai duties.

For the most part, Characters without Schools are not very likely choices for Player Characters – they are, after all, mechanically inferior to their cohorts, and are also likely to face social prejudice from their better-educated peers. However, some Players may find these disadvantages interesting from a story viewpoint, and enjoy the challenge of playing a Character who is an underdog. A Character without a School is treated as a bushi of his clan, but is subject to the following special rules:

- The Character does not receive a School Trait Bonus. (He still gets his Family Trait Bonus.)
- The Character has no School Techniques, but still learns the same School Skills and has the same Outfit as he would have for enrolling in his clan’s primary bushi School (e.g. Hida Bushi School for Crab).
- The Character starts with Glory 0.5 and cannot take the Fame Advantage, reflecting his obscure background.
- The Character gains 9 XP. Note that this is not worth as much as the Trait boost he would have gained from a School; the Character will always be a little behind the fully-educated samurai who did get into Schools.

## **Advantages & Disadvantages**

Advantages and Disadvantages represent aspects of a Character which are not easily depicted by more generic game mechanics such as Traits and Skills. Perhaps the Character is unusually sickly or small. Perhaps he is exceptionally tough, or is lucky enough to be blessed by the Elemental spirits. All of these things are represented by Advantages and Disadvantages. Advantages are purchased using Experience Points, and taking Disadvantages grants additional Experience Points for use on other things.

A character can acquire more Advantages and Disadvantages during play. Both can be awarded by the GM based on specific events or circumstances during the game – for example, if a character loses his arm in combat, the GM will impose the Missing Limb Disadvantage to reflect this. The GM may also take away an Advantage because the Character has done something to lose it, or take away a Disadvantage because the Character has somehow overcome it.

The GM may sometimes grant Players permission to buy new Advantages with Experience Points based on their Characters’ pursuit of new knowledge, training, or social connections. The GM may also allow a Player to “buy off” a Disadvantage if the Character has actually been making an effort to remove or overcome it – in this case, the Player spends a number of Experience Points equal to twice the original value of the Disadvantage. Finally, some Schools have Techniques that enable a Character to acquire or inflict Social Advantages and Disadvantages.

For convenience, Advantages and Disadvantages are divided into several types, much like how Skills are divided up according to their roles in Rokugani society:

**Physical** – These Advantages and Disadvantages represent a specific attribute of the Character’s body. In general, they represent things the Character was born with or acquired in childhood/youth. They can only be acquired after Character creation when special circumstances warrant it, such as the earlier example of the Missing Limb Disadvantage. Getting rid of Physical Disadvantages is extremely difficult and in many cases impossible – that Missing Limb is not going to grow back!

**Mental** – These represent some part of a Character’s personality, psychology, or emotional make-up. They cannot be acquired or removed after Character creation unless the GM allows it.

**Social** – Social Advantages and Disadvantages involve the Character’s interaction with other people, and are the easiest to acquire (or lose) after Character creation.

**Material** – These represent possession of a physical asset of some sort – an ancestral heirloom, a loyal servant, or a fine steed. Material Disadvantages usually represent cursed or burdensome assets. These are riskier Advantages to take, because an item can always be destroyed or stolen. These Advantages and Disadvantages can be both acquired and lost during play in a variety of ways.

**Spiritual** – These Advantages and Disadvantages represent a connection to otherworldly or supernatural forces, such as the Elemental kami, ghosts, or the spirit realms. These may be acquired or lost during play, typically due to special circumstances such as making contact with a spirit.

### **Limitations on Advantages and Disadvantages**

A basic, “default” game of L5R assumes the Characters will initially take a maximum of three Advantages and three Disadvantages. This is intended to prevent the creation of unrealistic Characters with giant laundry-lists of strange abilities and odd personal quirks. However, the GM can choose to be less (or more) restrictive if it suits the style of the game or if the Player has proposed an interesting Character which would “break” the limits.

An alternative restriction used in many L5R campaigns is to place no limits on Advantages, but restrict Disadvantages to a maximum of 10 Experience Points.

GMs who wish to encourage a more focused approach to role-play may wish to constrain Characters to just one Advantage and one Disadvantage. Conversely, the GM may also choose to remove all constraints and simply let the Players build their Characters in whatever way they see fit. It all depends on what sort of game everyone wants to play.

It should be obvious, but it bears repeating: some Advantages and Disadvantages cannot be taken on the same Character. For example, a Character cannot be both Blessed and Cursed by the same Fortune, and cannot be both Large and Small. Rather than try to list every such conflict, we simply suggest the Players and GM apply common sense to such situations. Also, the GM always retains the right to veto any choice that is inappropriate or does not make sense.

## **Advantages**

### **Ally [Social] (2-8 points)**

This Advantage represents a personal or political alliance with another samurai. An Ally is more valuable than a Favor, since the Ally is willing to offer assistance many times rather than just once. An Ally can be called on once per session to provide you with a +3k1 bonus on a Social Skill roll; however, the GM must judge whether the Ally’s help is available for that specific roll. In general, the more influential and powerful the Ally, the more widely and easily his influence can be brought to bear.

The Experience Point value of this Advantage determines how socially prominent and powerful your Ally is. However, this Advantage cannot normally award an Ally among the very highest tiers of the Empire’s society (e.g. you cannot take the Emperor as an Ally).

**2 points:** An ordinary samurai with no lands or political appointments

**4 points:** A samurai with some moderate influence – a landholder, a magistrate or diplomat, etc.

**6 points:** A samurai with major influence – a provincial lord, a high-ranking military officer, etc.

**8 points:** One of the Empire’s major lords, e.g. a family daimyo, general, or major Imperial official.

### **Ancestor [Spiritual] (5/10 points, -1 point for Lion)**

You are watched over by the beneficent spirit of one of your ancestors. This may be a personal ancestor from your own family line (5 points) or a famous historical figure of your Clan (10 points) – you should discuss the exact nature of the ancestor with your GM. Once per session you may call on the guidance of your ancestor to assist you in your goals, provided those goals are ones the ancestor would find appropriate (GM’s discretion) – this awards a +2k2 bonus to any one Skill roll.

If your ancestor is a famous historical figure, his/her guidance should award additional mechanical bonuses or unusual game effects, usually in exchange for your living your life in a manner

which the ancestor finds pleasing. Such unique effects and constraints should be decided by the GM based on the specific identity of the Ancestor.

### **Blackmail [Social] (5 points)**

Your character has Blackmail (as described in the *Chapter of Earth*) against another samurai chosen by you (with the GM's approval).

### **Bland [Physical] (4 points)**

You are physically unremarkable, a generic and unmemorable person who tends to be overlooked. You gain a +1k0 bonus to Disguise Skill rolls and your Glory and Infamy are both considered to be one Rank lower for the purpose of determining whether others can identify you with a Lore: Heraldry roll.

### **Blessing of the Elements [Spiritual] (10 points)**

You are especially favored by the spirits of one of the five Elements. As a result, you may raise that Ring (and associated Traits) to a maximum of 6, rather than 5. You may only take this Advantage once, and may not take it for the Element of your Weak Trait.

### **Blood of Osano-Wo [Spiritual] (3 points, Crab and Mantis/Yoritomo only)**

You claim descent from Hida Osano-Wo, the second leader of the Crab Clan and the Fortune of Fire and Thunder. His legendary resilience lives on in you, granting you +1k0 to any roll using the Stamina Trait and complete immunity to the effects of bad weather (cold, heat, storms, etc).

### **Clear Mind [Mental] (4 points, -1 point for Kitsuki)**

You are by nature calm and perceptive, resistant to taunts and manipulation, difficult to confuse or deceive. You gain a +1k0 bonus to any roll made to resist emotional manipulation (e.g. with Social Skills and Courtier Techniques) and to any Investigation roll made to test another's honesty or true intentions.

### **Dangerous Beauty [Physical] (4 points, -1 point for Crane or Scorpion)**

You are not merely attractive but in fact are near-irresistible. You gain a bonus of +1k0 to all Temptation Skill Rolls made against characters who could realistically be attracted to you.

### **Daredevil [Mental] (5 points)**

You are known for foolish death-defying acts, and you seem to pull them off more than you should. You may spend both Glory Points and Infamy Points on Athletics rolls.

### **Different School [Social] (8 points)**

Due to an alliance, political agreement, marriage arrangement, or some similar event, you are trained in a School from another Clan. This is not without consequences, since you now have conflicting loyalties between your Clan and your School.

### **Elemental Balance [Physical] (15 points)**

You have an ideal balance of the four Elements (Air, Earth, Fire, and Water) within your body. As a result, you do not have a Weak Trait. All eight of your Traits start at Rank 2 and may be raised up to Rank 5 with Experience Points.

### **Fame [Social] (7 points)**

You have already made a name for yourself in the Empire, or perhaps your family is very well-known. You gain +1 Rank of Glory.

### **Friendly Kami [Spiritual] [Shugenja only] (3 points)**

A particular Elemental kami has befriended you personally. You gain a Free Raise when casting Sense, Summon, or Commune spells in that Element.

### **Gaijin Gear [Material] (4 points, 2 for Unicorn)**

You possess a single item of gaijin origin – something made by a culture or tribe from beyond the Empire's borders. This may be a small item such as a fork or a book, an article of clothing, spices or liquors, a suit of armor or a weapon, or even a bizarre object such as a compass or spectacles. It is considered socially acceptable to possess such items as art objects or amusing curiosities, but for anyone not a Unicorn to actually use them is shameful – typically a Minor Breach of Etiquette, more in the case of gaijin weapons.

### **Gaijin Language [Mental] (5 points, 8 points for nonhuman languages, -2 points for Unicorn, Mantis, or Tortoise)**

The Empire has only one language (with two dialects). However, your character has made some contacts with the world outside Rokugan and has learned one or more gaijin or nonhuman languages. Each time you purchase this Advantage, you learn one foreign language. Note that using a foreign or nonhuman language is considered somewhat shameful, and in most circumstances will be considered at least a Minor Breach of Etiquette.

Human languages available in the L5R setting include (but are not limited to) the Yobanjin tongues, Senpet, Mekham, Yodotai, Ivindi, Merenae, and Thrane. Nonhuman languages include Ashalan, Naga, Nezumi, Goblin, and Ogre.

### **Gentry [Material] (variable, +5 points for ronin, -3 points for Imperials)**

You have inherited or been granted rule over a holding on behalf of your clan/lord/patron. This grants you +1 Rank of Status and increases your Stipend (as described in Wealth and Equipment) by the amount shown below. Of course, it also means you are responsible for administering, defending, and otherwise caring for the holding. In effect, by taking this Advantage your Character is embracing a long-term plot device.

The number of points assigned to this Advantage determines the size of the holding you oversee. The bigger the holding, the more wealth it generates... and the more challenges it will create for you. Note that holdings larger than a town are only bestowed to high-Status persons and cannot be purchased with this Advantage.

<i> Holding </i>	<i> Point Cost </i>
Village (+3 koku)	5 points
Large Village (+5 koku)	10 points
Town (+10 koku)	15 points
Unique Additional Holding (Sake Works, Falconry, etc.) (+2 koku)	+3 points

### **Great Destiny [Spiritual] (10 points)**

You are born with a great destiny which is important to the Celestial Order – as a result, fate will conspire to try to keep you alive. Once per session you may negate a Wound that would kill you.

### **Great Potential [Mental] (8 points)**

You have the potential to become a true master in one specific field of endeavor. When you take this Advantage, choose one Skill; this Skill may be raised to a maximum Rank of 6, instead of 5. You may only purchase this Advantage once.

### **Hands of Stone [Physical] (5 points)**

You are a rare samurai who has trained intensively for unarmed combat. Alternatively, you may simply have a powerful natural aptitude for fighting with your hands and feet. Regardless of the reason, your Unarmed strikes are considered to be Medium weapons instead of Light weapons.

### **Heart of Courage [Mental] (5 points)**

You are an embodiment of the samurai virtue of Courage. You gain a +1k1 bonus to all rolls made to resist Intimidation Skill Rolls and Fear effects.

### **Heart of Vengeance [Social] (10 points)**

One Clan or faction has earned your eternal and undying hatred. Select one family, clan, or faction when purchasing this Advantage. You gain a +1k1 bonus to all Contested Rolls made against members of that faction.

### **Hero of the People [Social] (5 points)**

You are known as a defender of the common folk, and they treat you with affection or even adoration. You gain a +1k1 bonus to all Social Skill Rolls made with commoners and monks, so long as you uphold your reputation with them.

### **Higher Purpose [Mental] (6 points)**

You have dedicated yourself to some noble goal or great honorable purpose – something that will take years to attain. After any session in which the GM feels you made concrete progress toward your goal, you gain one additional Experience Point.

### **Inari's Blessing [Spiritual] (2 points)**

The lesser but much-revered Fortune of Rice has blessed you. You may go without food for an extra day without any ill effect.

### **Inheritance [Material] (5 points, 10 points for a Kaiu or Kakita Blade, variable for special items)**

Your family (or some other person of high rank) has entrusted you with a precious heirloom. You must not allow this item to be stolen, damaged, or destroyed; if such occurs, you are considered to suffer the effects of a Major Breach of Etiquette.

The exact nature of the item should be discussed between you and the GM. In general, any such item will be of exceptional quality, awarding a +1k0 bonus to any Skill rolls made with it. If the GM approves, you may double the points spent on this Advantage to inherit one of the legendary Kaiu or Kakita swords (see sidebar). The GM may also permit you to spend even more points to make the Inheritance into an actual *nemuranai* (magical item) of your choice; the exact nature and powers of such a unique item should be discussed and developed by the GM and Player together.

### **Inner Gift [Spiritual] (variable, but should be at least 5 points)**

You possess a mysterious and unique gift which cannot be truly understood even by the wisest shugenja. Perhaps the Elemental kami have blessed you, or perhaps the Celestial Heavens has bestowed a special duty on you. Perhaps you can speak with ghosts and ancestral spirits, perhaps you receive premonitions of danger, or perhaps you have a natural empathy with wild animals – the exact nature of your Inner Gift (and any mechanical benefits from it) should be discussed with the GM, and every Inner Gift should be unique. In general, the more mechanically powerful the Inner Gift can be in the game, the more points it should cost.

## **Kakita and Kaiu Blades**

The most famous swordsmiths in the Empire are the Kakita artisans and the Kaiu smiths, and the blades which these masters create are prized and coveted everywhere. A samurai fortunate enough to be gifted with one of these blades will draw attention (gaining 1 Rank of Glory) and great things will be expected of him. However, if the samurai is ever unfortunate enough to lose or break such a magnificent blade, the social and personal consequences will be even worse than for a normal Inheritance – the Character will lose Glory and Honor as though committing a Blasphemous Breach of Etiquette.

**Kakita Blades** all have unique names and only two or three such weapons are forged each year. Mechanically, a Kakita Blade is a katana which awards a +1k0 bonus to Kenjutsu rolls and a +1k1 bonus to the Strike roll in an Iaijutsu duel.

**Kaiu Blades** are made in somewhat greater numbers – as many as a dozen or more per year – due to the relentless demands of the Crab Clan's war against the Shadowlands. Mechanically, a Kaiu Blade is an unbreakable katana which awards a +1k0 bonus to Kenjutsu rolls and inflicts 1 additional Wound against any foe it strikes.

## **Irreproachable [Mental] (4 points)**

You have a soul of true virtue, making it very difficult for others to lead you into dishonorable or embarrassing behavior. You gain a +1k0 bonus to any Contested Rolls to resist Courtier or Temptation.

## **Kharmic Tie [Spiritual] (1-6 points)**

Your destiny is tied to that of another person – most likely due to kharmic reincarnation from a previous life. You and the GM should work together to select one person who is kharmically linked to you. (This may be another Player Character, with the permission of that Player, but in this case the other Character must also take a Kharmic Tie with you.) For each Experience Point you spend on this Advantage, once per session you may spend a Void Point belonging to the other Character... but they may do likewise.

## **Large [Physical] (4 points, -1 point for Crab)**

You are significantly larger than the average Rokugani – in height, girth, or both. You gain a +1k0 bonus to attack rolls with Heavy Weapons.

## **Leadership [Social] (5 points)**

You have a talent for inspiring others to greater feats. When using the Battle Skill to award bonuses to other Characters in a skirmish, you gain a +1k1 bonus to your rolls.

## **Lip-Reading [Mental] (4 points)**

You are able to puzzle out others' words from the movements of their lips. If you can see someone speaking, regardless of whether or not you can hear them, you can understand what they are saying by rolling Investigation / Perception at TN 25. The GM may increase (or decrease) the TN to account for outside factors like distance, visual obscurement, etc.

## **Luck [Spiritual] (6 points)**

Fortune favors the mortal man. Once per session you may choose to immediately re-roll any one Skill roll, keeping the better of the two results.

## **Magic Resistance [Spiritual] (5 points per Rank, maximum three Ranks)**

The Elemental kami shy away from you and avoid your touch; as a result, spells often fail to affect you. For each Rank you purchase in this Advantage, shugenja who target you with spells suffer a 1-die



penalty. (This applies to the entire spellcasting roll, even if the spell is also targeting other persons who are not Magic Resistant.)

### **Perceived Honor [Social] (2 points per Rank, maximum three Ranks)**

You are very good at maintaining the outward appearance of being honorable, regardless of your true nature. For each Rank you purchase in this Advantage, your Honor seems to be one Rank higher. Any attempt to determine your Honor Rank with Lore: Bushido (as described in the *Chapter of Earth*) will instead detect your false Honor Rank.

### **Prodigy of Spirit [Spiritual] (5 points, shugenja only)**

You are a young shugenja of great promise, and your School expects great things of you. You may learn spells of any Mastery Level without regard for the normal restrictions.

### **Quick [Physical] (7 points, -1 point for Hiruma)**

You are both quick-moving and swift to react to enemy action. You gain +3 to your Initiative Rank.

### **Quick Healer [Physical] (1 point)**

You possess a formidable constitution, allowing you to heal far more swiftly than others. You heal one additional Wound each week.

### **Resourceful [Varies] (5 Points, +1 point for Sage, -1 point for Sensation)**

You are innately good at a certain type of activity, such as war, art, or villainy. Any time you are doing something in that field but do not have the requisite Skill, you are instead considered to have Rank 1 in the Skill. The specific type of Skill depends on where you are Resourceful:

- **Crab Hands [Physical]** – Weapon Skills (and improvised weapons).
- **Crafty [Mental]** – Low Skills.
- **Sage [Mental]** – Lore Skills.
- **Sensation [Social]** – Perform Skills.

### **Sacrosanct [Social] (15 points)**

You or your immediate family have done some great service to the Emperor, and as a result you have been placed under direct Imperial protection. Any samurai who attacks you before you attack them first is considered to be committing both a crime and a Blasphemous Breach of Etiquette.

### **Servant [Material] (3 points per Rank, -1 point for Imperials)**

You have one or more personal servants, assigned by your family or recruited by you personally. Each Rank of this Advantage grants you one servant; you may have a maximum number of servants equal to twice your Status Rank. Servants are NPCs, controlled by the GM, but will generally do their best to assist you in whatever way they can.

### **Seven Fortunes' Blessing [Spiritual] (4 points/9 points)**

The seven Great Fortunes are known to show their favorable aspect to certain mortals, granting them modest benefits. A Character may only be blessed by one of the Seven Fortunes, and must choose which one when taking this Advantage.

The basic form of this Advantage (represented by the lower Experience Point value) is a +1k0 bonus to certain types of Skill Rolls, as determined by the specific Fortune. The higher Experience Point value represents a Character who has gained more focused and significant attention from the Fortune; the

benefits of this will be specific to the Character and the Fortune, and should be decided by the GM and Player together.

- **Benton, Fortune of Romantic Love:** bonus awarded to any Social Skill Rolls made for the purpose of persuading others.
- **Bishamon, Fortune of Strength:** bonus on any rolls using the Strength Trait (except Weapon Skill rolls).
- **Daikoku, Fortune of Wealth:** bonus to all Commerce Skill Rolls.
- **Ebisu, Fortune of Honest Work:** bonus to all Craft Skill rolls.
- **Fukurokujin, Fortune of Wisdom:** bonus to Meditation rolls.
- **Hotei, Fortune of Contentment:** bonus to Sincerity rolls when used for the purpose of telling the truth.
- **Jurojin, Fortune of Longevity:** bonus to any rolls made to resist the effects of disease or poison.

### **Silent [Physical] (6 points, -1 point for Scorpion)**

You are naturally skilled at being silent. You gain a +1k1 bonus to Stealth rolls.

### **Social Position [Social] (5 points per Rank)**

You have been granted an appointment to a higher position in the samurai order, either due to your own actions or as a reward to your family. Each Rank of this Advantage grants you +1 Rank of Status. Whenever possible, the Social Position should be tied to a specific office or appointment (as with Gentry earlier).

Purchasing this Advantage should be discussed with the GM, who may not wish to allow higher-Status Characters in the campaign at the start of play.

### **Soul of Duty [Mental] (6 points)**

You truly embody the Virtue of Duty and refuse to let any injury or weakness stand in the way of completing your tasks. When rolling Insight/Stamina to “Stand Up and Fight” (ignore your Wound penalties), you gain a +1k1 bonus to the roll.

### **Strength of the Earth [Physical] (7 points)**

You embody the resilience and indomitable nature of the Earth, and resist the pain of injury as though your flesh is made of stone. You may take 1 additional Wound before you reach Death’s Door. This additional Wound does not inflict a die-penalty.

### **Tactician [Mental] (3 points)**

You have an innate talent for warfare, and your mind and senses easily perceive opportunities on the field of battle. When rolling to determine your status on the Mass Battle Table (see the *Chapter of Water*), you gain a +1k0 bonus to your roll, meaning you roll 2k1 instead of 1k1.

### **Touch of the Spirit Realms [Spiritual] (5 points)**

You have a connection to the spirit world. This allows you to detect the presence of a portal to any of the spirit realms with a roll of Insight / Awareness at TN 20. In addition, there will be unique effects of the spiritual connection depending on which of the realms it involves; the nature of these effects must be decided by you and the GM together, and should always be both interesting and challenging.

### **True Friend [Social] (5 points)**

Allies come and go with the winds of politics, but a true friend is a rare thing in the world of samurai. Your true friend will do almost anything for you (perhaps even dishonorable things), and you will do the same for him/her.

### **Voice [Physical] (4 points)**

Your voice is pleasant, memorable, or compelling, making it easier for you to persuade others to support you. You gain a +1k0 bonus to all Sincerity Skill rolls and to all Perform: Oratory, Perform: Singing, Perform: Poetry, and Perform: Storytelling Skill Rolls.

### **Wary [Mental] (3 points)**

You are difficult to surprise. Any time someone is trying to sneak up on you, ambush you, or otherwise surprise you, you gain a +1k1 bonus to rolls made to detect them.

### **Way of the Land [Mental] (2 points per Rank)**

You know one region in the Empire with great familiarity, and cannot get lost while you are travelling within it. Each Rank of this Advantage allows you to select one region which you know. A region will typically be the lands of one of the major samurai families, a city, the lands of a single Minor Clan, or something similar.

### **Wealth [Material] (4 points per Rank, 3 points per Rank for Imperial, Crane, Yasuki, and Ide)**

Your family is rich. Each Rank of this Advantage increases your Stipend by +5 koku.

## **Disadvantages**

For Disadvantages, the point value is the number of Experience Points you gain from taking the Disadvantage.

### **Antisocial [Social] (4 points, 3 points for Crab)**

You are uncomfortable around other people and often come across as cold or rude. You suffer a 1-die penalty to all Social Skill Rolls (except Intimidation).

### **Ascetic [Mental] (6 points)**

You embrace a simple, minimalist approach to life that rejects material goods and physical pleasures. This may be due to a personal quirk or because of a commitment to the Shinseist religion and its rejection of material things. Your School Outfit is reduced to only the things absolutely necessary to your duties (weapons and armor for bushi, scrolls for shugenja, etc) and your Stipend is reduced to 1 koku. You may not take the Wealth Advantage, and if you take the Gentry Advantage you do not gain any increase to your Stipend from it. Any time you would be awarded Glory for your actions, the award is halved (rounded down).

### **Bad Eyesight/Missing Eye [Physical] (6 points)**

Your eyes are weak or partially blind, or you are missing an eye. This may be due to illness, violence, or simply due to an accident of birth. You suffer a 2-die penalty to all ranged attack rolls and to any Perception-based rolls that involve sight.

### **Bad Fortune [Spiritual] (5-10 points)**

Your character was born under an ill-omened star, cursed by fate, karma, or the Fortunes. You and the GM should discuss the specific nature and effects of your Bad Fortune, since each one is unique, and the Experience Point value of the Disadvantage will vary accordingly.

### **Bad Liar [Mental] (4 points)**

You are very bad at telling lies – everyone can see through your deceptions with only the most minimal effort. Any time you try to use the Sincerity Skill to say something that is not true, you suffer a 4-die penalty.

### **Blackmailed [Social] (3 points)**

Someone has Blackmail on you. You must take a Dark Secret to go with this Disadvantage, and the Blackmail is linked to your Dark Secret. The GM chooses an appropriate NPC to possess the Blackmail. (Alternatively, the Blackmail may be held by another Player Character, assuming all Players and the GM agree to this.)

### **Black Sheep [Social] (12 points)**

Your family considers you a shameful disappointment or embarrassment. Although you have not actually been made ronin, you are no longer welcome within your own household. Members of your family will only help you if you take them as Allies. If you are trained in your own family's School, you may not advance in School Rank unless you persuade a teacher to overlook your shameful status.

### **Blind [Physical] (12 points)**

You are completely blind. This may be due to an injury or illness, or you may have been born without sight. This is considered shameful in Rokugan and you suffer a 1-die penalty to all Social Skill rolls. You have the Blinded Condition at all times – a blind Character suffers a 4-die penalty to all Defense Skill Rolls and to any other Skill Rolls which are dependent on vision (GM's discretion). You will also have difficulty moving safely, especially if you are running – the GM may require Athletics rolls for you to avoid tripping and falling in such situations.

### **Brash [Mental] (6 points, 5 points for Matsu)**

You are short-tempered and hot-headed, always ready to answer slights or threats with violence. Any time you are insulted or threatened, you must roll Honor/Willpower at TN 25 or immediately answer with a challenge or outright violence.

### **Compulsion [Mental] (4 points/9 points)**

There is some activity which you are compelled to pursue. This may be something illicit and addictive, such as *sake* or gambling, or it may be as innocuous as visiting every major temple you pass. The basic Disadvantage requires an Honor / Willpower Trait Roll of TN 20 to overcome. The higher Experience Point cost raises the TN to 30.

### **Contrary [Mental] (5 points)**

You are a stubborn and willful person who must always have a firm opinion on every topic and share that opinion whenever possible. Any time there is a debate or conversation, no matter how controversial, you must roll Honor / Willpower (at a TN chosen by the GM) to avoid stepping into the discussion and expressing your view. Needless to say, this can lead to serious breaches of etiquette under the wrong circumstances.

### **Cursed by the Realm [Spiritual] (7 points)**

This is the flip side of the Touched by the Spirit Realms Advantage. In this case, you or your family line has somehow gained the pointed hostility of one of the spirit realms, resulting in malign influences on your life. As with other Advantages and Disadvantages of this sort, you should discuss the exact nature of the curse with the GM.

### **Dark Fate [Spiritual] (4 points)**

This is the dark side of Great Destiny. You are marked by destiny... but your influence on the world will be a baleful one. You are fated to bring great evil and destruction. However, until you do this, that same fate will preserve your life; once per session, you *must* negate a Wound that would kill you.

The exact nature of your Dark Fate should be discussed with the GM.

### **Dark Secret [Social] (10 points)**

You know something or have done something which would ruin you if it came to light. Alternatively, your whole family might have a dark secret which you have learned about (for example, they might have practiced *maho*, or a venerated ancestor might actually have been a traitor). Either way, if your secret is exposed you will be disgraced and ruined – made *ronin*, required to commit seppuku, or perhaps even executed.

This Disadvantage contains within it some interesting potential. Depending on the exact nature of your Dark Secret, you may have access to “beneficial” forbidden knowledge such as *maho* spells, the secrets of gaijin pepper (gunpowder), or something similar. You should discuss the specific nature of your Dark Secret your GM in order to decide what sort of story and Character effects it will create.

### **Dependant [Social] (3 points)**

Another member of the samurai caste depends on your care and protection. This might be an elderly relative, a sickly or naïve spouse, or a child. Caring for your dependent reduces your Stipend by half (rounded down) and makes you vulnerable to numerous other complications, from outside threats to blackmail to poverty. The exact nature of the dependent should be discussed with the GM.

### **Disturbing Countenance [Physical] (4 points)**

Something about your appearance bothers other people. This may be outright ugliness, but it may also be something subtler or more disturbing that repels those who see you. You suffer a 1-die penalty to all Social Skill Rolls (unless you are interacting with someone who cannot see you).

### **Driven [Mental] (8 points)**

You have a goal which you will do anything to achieve, or perhaps you are obsessed with something which you will do anything to learn more about. You will break Imperial law, forsake Honor, and sacrifice your friends and family to pursue your goal. Any time you have a chance to advance toward your goal but a moral, legal, or emotional compunction stops you, you must roll Honor / Willpower, at a TN determined by the GM (the better the opportunity, the higher the TN) or you will pursue the goal regardless of the cost.

### **Elemental Imbalance [Spiritual] (8 points) [shugenja only]**

Your strength in one of the Elements is so potent that the voices of the kami sometimes overwhelm you. When you cast spells in the chosen Element, your TN is increased by 10. If you fail the Spellcraft roll due to this penalty, the spell is still cast, but it goes wrong in some bizarre or disastrous way chosen by the GM.

### **Epilepsy [Physical] (7/12 points) [-2 points for Crane or Imperial Characters]**

Certain members of the Crane and Hantei/Otomo bloodlines are cursed with a strange condition that causes seizures. Other samurai may also have this curse due to intermarriage with those bloodlines.

Seizures are caused by intense stress (such as combat) or by bright flashing lights (such as fireworks displays). When such circumstances occur, you must roll Willpower at TN 15 (TN 25 if you took the higher point-value version of the Disadvantage) or be rendered helpless for several minutes by a seizure.

### **Failure of Courage [Mental] (7 points)**

You find it difficult to live up to the samurai ideal of fearlessness. You suffer a 2-die penalty to all rolls to resist Intimidation Skill rolls and Fear effects.

### **Failure of Compassion [Mental] (6 points)**

You care primarily about yourself and your own interests, and lack empathy for others' suffering.

Although you recognize the importance of preserving your own position by serving your lord, when you must place yourself at risk for someone without any personal benefit, you must spend an Honor Point in order to do so.

### **Failure of Honor [Mental] (10 points, 12 points for Lion)**

You are unable to truly embrace Bushido, and your internal measure of your own honor is weak. Your Honor Points only award +1k0 bonuses instead of +1k1.

### **Gaijin Name [Social] (6 points, 4 points for Unicorn)**

Your given name is clearly of foreign origin. This is most likely because you or one of your parents is a member of the Unicorn Clan, although there are other circumstances which could also explain it. As a result, most Rokugani regard you with a mild but pervasive contempt regardless of your actions. When making Social Skill Rolls against any samurai who is not from the Unicorn Clan, you may not spend Glory Points on the roll.

### **Greedy [Mental] (4 points)**

You desire material wealth, rejecting the normal samurai ethic of standing above money and commercial interests. Anyone trying to influence or manipulate you with promises of material goods or wealth gains a +1k1 bonus to the appropriate Social Skill Roll.

### **Gullible [Mental] (5 points)**

You are naïve and trust others too easily. As a result, anyone trying to deceive you gains a +1k1 bonus to the appropriate Social Skill Roll.

### **Haunted [Spiritual] (6 points)**

This is the flip side of the Ancestor Advantage – instead of a benign ancestral spirit watching over you, you are instead haunted by the ghost of a relative or ancestor who died unfulfilled. The spirit will constantly pressure you to take actions that will allow it to complete its life goal. You should discuss the exact nature of this goal with the GM, and an exceptionally difficult one might justify a higher Experience Point value for this Disadvantage.

Any time you refuse to do as the ghost commands, it will torment and harass you for the rest of the day, inflicting a 1-die penalty on all your Skill rolls.

### **Idealistic [Mental] (5 points)**

You attempt to perfectly follow the Code of Bushido in all its complexity, without any regard for the compromises which reality may demand. Consequently, when you fail to live up to Bushido's requirements, you feel the pain even more than others. Whenever you lose Honor, the loss is increased by one Pip.

### **Illiterate [Mental] (7 points, 5 points for ronin)**

Unlike most samurai, you do not know how to read or write. This may be because you are a *ronin* who never got the chance to learn, or it might be because you grew up in a remote village with few resources. Regardless, the inability to read is a serious handicap in Rokugan, both practically (you cannot read anything) and socially. If others are aware of your illiteracy, you suffer a 2-die penalty to any Courtier or Sincerity rolls you make against them.

Shugenja Characters cannot take this Disadvantage.

### **Infamous [Social] (5 points per Rank, 4 points for Scorpion)**

You or others in your family have already done something to gain a dire and ominous repute with the rest of the samurai caste. Perhaps you are known for being ruthless or cruel, or perhaps for being exceptionally crude and bestial. Perhaps you are even the victim of a potent rumor-mongering campaign by your enemies. You should discuss the source and nature of your Infamy with the GM. Regardless of the reason, you begin play with 1 Rank of Infamy for each Rank you purchase in this Disadvantage.

### **Lame [Physical] (7 points)**

One of your legs is injured, withered, or otherwise crippled. This might be due to a birth defect, an injury, or a disease – you should discuss this with the GM. You must take one additional Move Action to approach an enemy or change your Range. Also, any Agility-based rolls involving your legs suffer a 1-die penalty.

### **Lechery [Social] (4 points)**

You have a weakness for physical pleasures and pursue them with little regard for Honor. Anyone who is using the Temptation Skill to lure you with physical pleasures gains a +1k1 bonus.

### **Lost Love [Mental] (6 points)**

You were once deeply in love with someone, but that love is now gone – perhaps they died, or perhaps their feelings turned against you.

If you are reminded of your lost love, you suffer a 1-die penalty to all of your Skill Rolls until the end of the session, unless you spend a Void Point or an Honor Point to regain your emotional self-control. This melancholy cannot afflict you more than twice per session.

At the GM's option, this Disadvantage can also be used to represent the loss of a close non-romantic relationship, such as a true friend, beloved sibling, or parent.

### **Low Pain Threshold [Physical] (7 points)**

You are brought to your knees by injuries which other samurai can shrug off easily. You suffer an additional 1-die penalty any time you have at least 1 Wound.

### **Missing Limb [Physical] (8 points)**

You are missing an arm or a leg, either due to a severe injury or a birth defect. In addition to the general problems which might arise from a missing limb, which should be obvious to you and the GM, you also suffer a specific 3-die penalty on all rolls for physical actions which involve the missing limb.

### **Momoku [Spiritual] (13 points, 15 points for Phoenix)**

For some reason, your soul is not fully connected to the ineffable Void that suffuses all of reality. The moments of harmony and perfection which other samurai attain from time to time are wholly unknown to you. Although you still have a Void Ring, you cannot spend Void Points.

### **Obligation [Social] (3 points per Rank, maximum 3 Ranks)**

You or your family are indebted to another samurai and must at some point fulfill this by performing some significant act for them. You should discuss the nature of the Obligation and the identity of the NPC who holds it with the GM.

Failing to fulfill this obligation when the time comes will disgrace you. This disgrace be expressed as a loss of Honor and Glory equivalent to a Breach of Honor – a Minor Breach for a Rank 1 Obligation, a Major Breach for a Rank 2 Obligation, and a Blasphemous Breach for a Rank 3 Obligation.

### **Obtuse [Mental] (6 points, 4 points for Crab or ronin)**

You are a dull soul who simply cannot see the value of the finer things in samurai life. Poetry, art, music, and rhetoric all seem like meaningless noise to you. You cannot spend Void Points, Honor Points, or Glory Points on High Skills except for Investigation and Medicine.

### **Overconfident [Mental] (7 points)**

You tend to overestimate your own skills and have difficulty recognizing when you are outclassed. Any time you are badly outnumbered or facing a clearly superior enemy, you must make a Perception Roll at TN 20 to be able to recognize the true nature of the situation. Otherwise you will remain confident in your ability to prevail despite the odds.

### **Permanent Wound [Physical] (9 points)**

You have an injury that refuses to heal properly no matter how carefully it is tended. You always have 1 Wound which can never heal.

### **Phobia [Mental] (2 points per Rank, maximum 4 Ranks)**

Samurai are supposed to be without fear, but you suffer from an irrational terror of a particular situation or thing. Any time you must face the source of your fear, you suffer a Fear effect equal to 2x your Rank in the Phobia.

### **Poor [Social/Physical] (3 points, 2 points for Sparrow Clan and ronin)**

Your personal family suffers from unfortunate financial circumstances, perhaps due to your lord not caring for you properly, or perhaps due to some mistake of your own. You lose one item from your Outfit (choice subject to GM's approval) and your stipend (if any) is reduced to 1 koku regardless of your family. If you are a *ronin*, you start with no money at all.

### **Self-Doubt [Mental] (5 points)**

For some reason you lack faith in your own training and skill, so much so that you cannot always perform up to the level of your training. Select one of your School Skills. You cannot spend Honor Points when making rolls with this Skill.

### **Seven Fortunes' Curse [Spiritual] (6 Points/10 Points)**

The negative counterpoint to the Seven Fortunes' Blessing, this Disadvantage means one of the Great Fortunes has shown you its wrathful aspect. This may be due to your own sins or because of a curse on



your family line, but regardless, you will have to labor long and hard if you are to have any hope of appeasing the Fortune's anger.

Much as with the corresponding Advantage, the lower Experience Point value of this Disadvantage imposes a general penalty (a 2-die penalty) on certain Skill Rolls. The higher Experience Point value represents an additional specific effect of the Fortune's anger, the nature of which should be discussed with your GM. For example, a stronger Jurojin's Curse might result in your Earth Ring being considered as one Rank lower for the purpose of how many Wounds you can take.

- **Benten, Fortune of Romantic Love:** penalty to any Social Skill Roll made for the purpose of persuading others.
- **Bishamon, Fortune of Strength:** penalty to all rolls involving Strength – including attack rolls with appropriate Weapon Skills.
- **Daikoku, Fortune of Wealth:** penalty to all Commerce rolls.
- **Ebisu, Fortune of Honest Work:** penalty to all Social Skill Rolls (except Intimidation) made against commoners and *hinin*.
- **Fukurokujin, Fortune of Wisdom:** penalty to all Contested Rolls against enemies who are using Courtier or Sincerity.
- **Hotei, Fortune of Contentment:** penalty to all Etiquette rolls.
- **Jurojin, Fortune of Longevity:** penalty to all rolls to resist all poisons and diseases.

### **Shadowlands Taint [Spiritual] (5 points per Rank)**

You have the Shadowlands Taint, either due to your own experiences or as an unfortunate legacy of your family. If your Taint is a secret, you must also take a Dark Secret (harboring the Taint is a crime).

You start play with 5 pips (0.5 Ranks) of Shadowlands Taint for each Rank you take in this Disadvantage.

### **Slow [Physical] (6 points)**

You are physically slow or have poor reflexes, making it harder for you to react effectively to your enemies. Your Initiative Rank is reduced by 3.

### **Small [Physical] (4 points, 6 points for Crab)**

You are significantly smaller and/or shorter than the average Rokugani. As a result, you suffer a 2-die penalty to all Strength-based rolls and cannot use Heavy Weapons when fighting on foot.

### **Soft-Hearted [Mental] (9 points, 7 points for Phoenix, 6 points for Asahina and Miya)**

Although most samurai are trained to be lethal warriors, you find human life precious and have great difficulty in committing acts of violence. You must make a Willpower Roll (TN 20) in order to lethally attack another human being. (You can avoid this requirement by making non-lethal attacks, such as trying to knock out or drive off your foes.)

If you do personally kill another human being, the intense guilt causes you to gain 1 Rank of Stress each time.

### **Sworn Enemy [Social] (4 points/9 points)**

Someone is determined to defeat or destroy you. This is most likely a samurai, but a Sworn Enemy could in fact be anyone – an embittered peasant, a Shadowlands creature, and so forth. You should discuss the specific nature of your Sworn Enemy with the GM, who can exercise a veto over an inappropriate choice.

If you take the more expensive version of this Disadvantage, your Sworn Enemy is a karmic nemesis who is literally destined to destroy you – in this case, you may not spend Void Points on rolls made against that enemy.

### **True Love [Mental] (6 points)**

True love in Rokugan is rare and often dangerous, since it creates an immediate conflict between devotion to one's beloved and devotion to one's lord. Love often ends in tragedy, and it is rare for samurai to be able to marry the one they love.

Any time you must choose between your true love and your samurai duty, you must spend an Honor Point in order to choose duty. Otherwise, you must choose love.

### **Unlucky [Spiritual] (5 points)**

Fortune favors the mortal man... but not you. Once per session, the GM may force you to immediately re-roll a successful Skill roll, keeping the results of the second roll.

### **Wrath of the Kami [Spiritual] (5 points)**

The spirits of a particular Element are hostile to you – this may be the result of a shugenja's curse, an offense against the Heavens, or simply being born under ill fortune. Select one Element; spells of this Element which target you gain a +1k1 bonus to the Spellcraft Skill roll.

## **Kata**

Kata are standardized fighting movements and postures for various types of weapons. They serve as the main method of teaching combat with these weapons, and most Rokugani dojo require their students to practice kata over and over again until they become second nature. A true samurai can use kata in combat without even thinking about it, his body instantly reacting with the motions that have been ingrained into muscles and nerves.

In game terms, Kata represent fighting methods which samurai (and sometimes monks) can learn at many different dojo in the Empire. Most of them have no Clan constraint at all, and can be learned in literally any dojo that teaches the associated Skill; this sets Kata apart very sharply from School Techniques, which are jealously guarded secrets available only to the students of those Schools. Courtiers and shugenja and ronin can learn Kata just as readily as Clan bushi, so long as they have the requisite Skill Ranks. Ultimately, anyone can learn Kata, provided they can find a teacher and are willing to invest the time and energy required.

**NOTE:** A partial exception to this “anyone can learn a Kata” principle is the three types of Jujutsu Kata, which can only be learned in the dojo of those specific Clans and are generally only taught to students from those Clans. However, even in those cases, the Kata can be learned by any member of those Clans regardless of School, and Characters from outside those Clans can learn them as well if they can persuade a *sensei* to teach them.

## **Game Mechanics of Kata**

All Kata are associated with specific Skills, primarily Weapon Skills. Each specific Kata has a Mastery Level, either 3, 4, or 5. A Character can learn a Kata once his Rank in the associated Skill equals the Kata's Mastery Level. If the Character qualifies to learn, he must train intensively for a significant amount of time; in game terms, this is represented by spending Experience Points.

In some cases there are multiple “Ways” of Kata for the same Skill. For example, the Staves Skill has two Ways, the Way of Fire and the Way of Water. (Unsurprisingly, Kenjutsu has the largest number of these.)

The Experience Point cost of a Kata is normally equal to 4x the Kata's Mastery Level. (Thus, a Mastery 3 Kata costs 12 Experience Points.) Some Schools award a discount for learning Kata from a

particular Skill or a particular Way within that Skill – for example, the Mantis Bushi School awards a discount on the cost of Knives Kata.

Kata build on each other, so a Character cannot learn a higher-Mastery Kata unless he has learned the lower-Mastery ones first. This includes different Ways within the same Skill; for example, a Character who has learned the Mastery 3 and Mastery 4 Kata in Kenjutsu's Way of Fire can learn the Mastery 5 Kata of the Way of Fire, but cannot learn the Mastery 5 Kata from the Kenjutsu Way of Water until he has also learned the Mastery 3 and Mastery 4 Kata from the Kenjutsu Way of Water.

## Chain Weapon Kata

- **Rank 3 – Choking Air.** When wielding a chain weapon, you gain a Free Raise that can only be used for the Disarm and Knockdown Maneuvers.
- **Rank 4 – Waves Rush to Shore.** Constantly whirling the chain weapon around you creates an obstacle to enemy attacks. When wielding a chain weapon, you gain +1k1 to Defense rolls.
- **Rank 5 – The Tail's Reach.** You can Entangle an opponent with a chain weapon by making 1 Raise on the attack roll.

## Iaijutsu Kata (the Way of Void)

- **Rank 3 – The Strike of Flowing Water.** This Kata is designed to make the duelist's strike so smooth and perfect that opponents cannot react to it and indeed appear to throw themselves upon it. You gain +1k1 to your Strike rolls in an iaijutsu duel.
- **Rank 4 – The World is Empty.** This Kata's combination of stillness and ritual motions centers you at the start of a duel, clearing your mind. If you spend a Void Point on your Assessment or Focus rolls in an iaijutsu duel, any bonuses you gain for winning either of those rolls are increased by +1k1.
- **Rank 5 – Strike with No-Thought.** This Kata enables a duelist to completely subsume his mind into the essence of the moment, striking without thought or hesitation. In an iaijutsu duel you add +Xk0 to your Focus and Strike rolls, where X is your Void Rank.

## Jiujutsu Kata, the Way of Kaze-do

The "way of wind" martial art was originally created by Togashi Kaze, a tattooed man who was offended by the way samurai abused peasants and wanted to teach the common folk a way of defending themselves without weapons (which were illegal for them to carry). When the Emperor demanded that Kaze demonstrate his techniques, Kaze refused and was executed. However, the fighting style he had devised survived among both peasants and the Togashi order, where it is widely practiced. The Togashi will occasionally teach their Kaze-do Kata to samurai they find worthy, but this is quite rare.

- **Rank 3 – Air Dances Over Seas.** You are adept at dodging enemy attacks, gaining a +2k0 bonus to your Defense rolls when fighting without armor.
- **Rank 4 – Thunder Shakes the Mountain.** When using Jiujutsu, your unarmed attacks are considered Medium weapons and you reduce your opponents' armor bonus (if any) to their Defense rolls by 1 die.
- **Rank 5 – All Beneath Heaven Kneels.** When fighting with Jiujutsu, you may perform the Knockdown Maneuver for only 1 Raise, and after a successful Knockdown you may opt to either inflict +1 Wound on that foe or Stun them for one Round as well.

## Jiujutsu Kata, the Way of Kobo Ichi-kai

The Crab martial art known as Kobo Ichi-kai has a very different (and very controversial) history from the other martial arts. When the Crab Clan Champion heard stories of an unarmed fighting art spreading among the peasants, he ordered one of his most loyal samurai to become a peasant and seek out this new knowledge. After years of study, this man – Hida Shinmen – returned to the Crab Clan with a fighting

style that combined practicality and brutality in unprecedented ways. Only Crab samurai may learn the way of Kobo, which is so savage that other Clans generally view it as turning Jiu-jutsu into a Low Skill.

- **Rank 3 – Hida’s Lesson.** If you are fighting unarmed and score a Raise on a Defense roll against an enemy attack, you may turn the enemy’s weapon back on them, inflicting 1 Wound on them. (Also sometimes called “Drunken Bushi” in reference to Crab magistrates dismissing the results of a brawl as “drunk bushi, fell on his own sword.”)
- **Rank 4 – Break the Bones.** When fighting with Jiu-jutsu, you may use a Called Shot against an opponent’s arm or leg to break the limb’s bones. Mechanically, this creates the same effect as if the opponent has the Missing Limb Disadvantage.
- **Rank 5 – Wearing Down the Mountain.** Masters of Kobo are taught to defeat even seemingly-unbeatable foes by striking the same place repeatedly and rapidly, breaking through armor and other defenses. When using Jiu-jutsu, you reduce your opponent’s Armor bonus (if any) to Defense rolls by 2 dice and reduce any Carapace your foe might have by 2 Ranks. If your foe is Invulnerable (as described in the *Chapter of Water*), you may use 2 Raises to ignore the effects of Invulnerability.

### Jiu-jutsu Kata, the Way of Mizu-do

In contrast to Kaze-do and Kobo, which both began as unarmed combat arts, Mizu-do (the “Way of Water”) originated as staged theatrical combat among Crane actors, and later was adapted into a defensive unarmed fighting style practiced by Crane samurai, especially the Doji and Kakita. Normally, Mizu-do may only be learned by Crane samurai, although samurai of another Clan might be granted the right to learn it as a gift/favor.

- **Rank 3 – Bend Like a Reed.** You can use an opponent’s strength and momentum against them to evade their attacks. You gain +2k0 to your Defense rolls against opponents whose Jiu-jutsu Skill Rank is lower than yours.
- **Rank 4 – Dragon Claw.** When using Jiu-jutsu, you may call 2 Raises to force a (human) opponent into a painful joint-lock. With a success, your opponent cannot move away from you until you let go or he uses an Action to win a Contested Strength Roll. While he is immobilized he suffers a 3-die penalty to all Skill rolls.
- **Rank 5 – The Farther You Fall.** You may use a Jiu-jutsu attack with 1 Raise to grapple and throw an opponent away from you. With a success, the opponent is left Prone and is Dazed for 1 Round. However, regardless of whether your attack succeeds, you are left Prone at the end of your attack.

### Kenjutsu Kata, Way of Fire

Those who follow the way of Fire in their swordsmanship learn Kata that prime them for aggressive, unhesitating attack, seeking to overwhelm their foes in an instant of controlled fury.

- **Rank 3 – Strength of Purity.** When using the Full Attack Tactic with Kenjutsu, the penalty to your Defense Skill rolls is reduced by 1 die.
- **Rank 4 – Spinning Blades Style.** When using the Full Attack Tactic with Kenjutsu, you gain a Free Raise against Thugs.
- **Rank 5 – Fury Without End.** When using the Full Attack Tactic with Kenjutsu, your hits inflict 1 additional Wound.

### Kenjutsu Kata, Way of Water

Where Fire is the way of aggression and Earth is the way of patient defense, swordsmanship focused on Water is about outmaneuvering one’s foe with accuracy and precision. Those training in this Way often engage in special exercises such as extinguishing candles by cutting through their wicks, or slicing butterflies out of the air.

- **Rank 3 – Drifting Snowflake.** When using Kenjutsu, you gain a Free Raise that can only be used for the Called Shot maneuver.
- **Rank 4 – Light Upon Water.** When you are using Kenjutsu, any enemy Armor bonuses to Defense Skill Rolls against you are reduced by 1 die.
- **Rank 5 – Gentle Blade of Winter.** You gain +1k1 to Kenjutsu rolls when using the Attack Tactic.

### Kenjutsu Kata, Way of Air

Air Kata teach the swordsman to strike faster than an enemy can see, bringing down opponents before they have time to prepare or even to react.

- **Rank 3 – Leaves in the Stream.** When wielding a katana or wakizashi, if you are tied with someone else on Initiative Rank, you always go first.
- **Rank 4 – Cut Under the Mountain.** Add +3 to your Initiative Rank when you are fighting with a katana or wakizashi
- **Rank 5 – Sundering Grace.** When using Kenjutsu and attacking someone with a lower Initiative rank, you add +1k1 to your Skill roll.

### Kenjutsu Kata, Path of Earth

Swordsmanship relying on the Kata of Earth is designed to teach patience, awaiting and then avoiding the enemy's attacks.

- **Rank 3 – Lee of the Stone.** When using the Full Defense Tactic and wielding a weapon that uses the Kenjutsu Skill, you gain +2k0 to your Defense Skill Rolls.
- **Rank 4 – Spirit of Iron.** If you are using the Full Defense Tactic and wielding a weapon that uses Kenjutsu, you may protect an ally who is close by (within Short Range and subject to GM's constraint). This awards +3k1 to that ally's Defense rolls until your next Turn.
- **Rank 5 – Power of the Mountain.** You gain +1k1 to Defense Skill Rolls while wielding a weapon that uses Kenjutsu. This stacks with the Rank 3 Kata, when applicable.

### Knives Kata

The Kata using the Knives Skill are less widely taught than some, since historically only a few Clans have made an in-depth study of how to fight with these short blades. Finding a dojo that will teach Knife Kata can be challenging in the territory of the Crane or Phoenix, for example.

- **Rank 3 – Whirlwind Storm.** This Kata is focused on footwork, and trains the samurai to compensate for his weapon's limited reach by striking quicker than thought, closing the distance before his enemy can react. You gain +2 to your Initiative Rank when fighting with the Knives Skill. If you are tied in Initiative against an opponent wielding a Light or Medium Weapon, you always go first.
- **Rank 4 – Twin Strike.** This Kata trains the samurai to fight with two knives at the same time, something wholly neglected in normal Rokugani martial teaching. You may fight with weapons that use the Knives Skill in each hand without any penalty. Moreover, when you do so, you gain +1k1 to your Defense rolls.
- **Rank 5 – Boundless Fury.** Building on the skills developed by the previous Kata, this one teaches the samurai to strike with both weapons in tandem to take down his enemy. When you are fighting with a knife in each hand, you are considered to be wielding a Medium Weapon.

### Polearms Kata, Way of Fire

Polearms are both long and heavy weapons, creating challenges for using them effectively. Kata of the Way of Fire teach samurai to use that size and weight to overwhelm their enemies by coordinating the weapon's movements with aggressive footwork.

- **Rank 3 – Swoop of the Wing.** When using the Polearms Skill, you gain a Free Raise that can only be used for the Knockdown maneuver.
- **Rank 4 – Beak Pierces.** When you are wielding a polearm, your opponents' Defense benefits from armor are reduced by 1 die.
- **Rank 5 – Heaven's Wing.** If your Strength Rank is higher than your opponent's, you gain +1k1 to your attack rolls with the Polearm Skill.

### **Polearms Kata, Way of Earth**

In contrast to the Polearms Kata of Fire, those of Earth teach the samurai to remain stationary and put all his energy into moving his weapon, using it to both deflect incoming attacks and to strike enemies before they can reach him.

- **Rank 3 – Iron Within the Mountain.** You may ignore any effects or penalties for your opponents having a height advantage, regardless of whether this is from their being on higher ground, mounted, or any other reason.
- **Rank 4 – Tail of the Sun.** This kata teaches how to exploit a polearm's reach advantage. When wielding a polearm, you gain a +3 bonus to your Initiative Rank.
- **Rank 5 – Phantom Blade.** When wielding a polearm, you gain +1k0 to Defense rolls; if you are using the Full Defense Tactic, this bonus is +1k1 instead.

### **Spears Kata, Way of Air**

The Spear Kata that follow the Way of Air are said to have originated in the Crane Clan, though they have spread widely over the centuries. They are athletic and flashy, designed to exploit the spear's combination of reach and relative lightness (in contrast to the weight of Polearms). The Crane actually hold competitions with these Kata, rewarding those who are able to demonstrate them in the most impressive and beautiful manner.

- **Rank 3 – Thundering the Sky.** Whirling athletic motions let you use your spear to vault and flip yourself over and past obstacles and enemies. When using terrain or environment to boost your attack or using Athletics to get past obstacles (as discussed in the *Chapter of Earth*), you gain a +1k1 bonus to the relevant Athletics rolls.
- **Rank 4 – Dance of the Winds.** When wielding a spear, you gain a +3 bonus to your Initiative Rank.
- **Rank 5 – Wind in Darkened Skies.** This Kata's unpredictable pattern of attacking movements (sometimes known as "Splendid Crane Yarijutsu") confuses enemies and disrupts their defenses. When wielding a spear, you gain +1k1 to your attack rolls.

### **Spears Kata, Way of Water**

The Water Kata for Spears originated more practically than those of Air, having been developed originally in the warlike Clans of the Lion and Crab. They are defensive in nature, teaching the samurai to exploit his spear's superior reach to disrupt and break enemy attacks.

- **Rank 3 – Wind Borne Strike.** When tied on Initiative with a melee opponent, you always go first unless they are wielding a polearm, spear, or bo staff.
- **Rank 4 – Unchecked Fury.** Your rapid stabbing movements distract your enemy, weakening both his attacks and his defenses. When you are using the Attack Tactic or the Full Defense Tactic, you gain +1k0 to attack rolls (if any) and +1k0 to your Defense rolls.
- **Rank 5 – Receiving the Charge.** When using the Full Defense Tactic, you gain an additional +1k1 bonus to your Defense rolls against all mounted opponents and against all opponents on foot who do not have a polearm, spear, or bo staff.

## Staves Kata, Way of Fire

The various Kata for Staves were developed by the monks of the Brotherhood of Shinsei rather than by samurai. However, the Brotherhood is always willing to teach those who wish to learn, and as a result these Kata have gradually spread across the Empire and are studied by the modest numbers of samurai who wish to learn how to fight more effectively with staves – most notably the ultra-practical Mantis and Crab. It is worth noting that the Brotherhood has also taught these Kata to commoners, particularly during times of unrest and social strife within the Empire.

The Staves Kata of Fire are designed for use with the smaller Light types of Staves – the Jo, Tonfa, and Nunchaku – and teach aggressive fighting movements that compensate for the weapons' short reach and lack of weight.

- **Rank 3 – Stone Striking Water.** This Kata teaches precise jabbing strikes with Light staves that allow them to hit enemies in vulnerable spots. You may ignore the Armor bonus against staves (but not the Carapace bonus).
- **Rank 4 – Strength of the Waves.** Much like the Rank 4 Kata for the Knives Skill, this Kata teaches the movements required to be able to fight effectively with two weapons. You can fight with a Light staff in each hand. If you do so, you gain a +1k1 bonus to your Defense rolls.
- **Rank 5 – Shattered Stone.** Those who pursue the Way of Fire to its end learn how to make hard combined strikes with two Light staves at once, enhancing the effectiveness of the weapons. When fighting with a Light staff in each hand, you are considered to be using a Medium Weapon.

## Staves, Way of Water (Bo)

Like the Way of Fire Kata, the Staves Kata of the Way of Water originated with the Brotherhood of Shinsei before spreading elsewhere. They are the most widely-taught Kata within the Brotherhood, designed for use with the large Bo staff that many wandering monks use as a walking-stick. Their defensive nature makes them popular not only with monks but also with the more pacifistic groups within the Empire's samurai, such as shugenja.

- **Rank 3 – Waves Upon the Breakers.** When wielding a bo staff, you gain a +3 bonus to your Initiative Rank.
- **Rank 4 – Find the Center.** You are adept at spinning and whirling your staff to protect yourself from all types of attacks. When wielding a bo staff, you gain +1k1 to your Defense rolls.
- **Rank 5 – Power of the Tsunami.** When wielding a bo staff, you gain a Free Raise which may only be used to perform the Knockdown or Disarm Maneuvers.

## War Fans Kata

War fans are primarily used as signaling devices, but the Lion Clan long ago perfected the art of using them as a supplemental defensive weapon, and these Kata eventually spread to the rest of the Empire. The War Fans Kata teach a samurai how to use their fan in tandem with a sword for defense, an otherwise unconventional fighting style.

- **Rank 3 – Commander's Stance.** You may wield a war fan in one hand while wielding a Light or Medium weapon in your other hand. When doing this, you gain a +1k0 bonus to your Defense rolls. You may attack with either the weapon or the Warfan, but not both.
- **Rank 4 – Wing Breaker.** This Kata teaches a sequence of motions that allow a war-fan to trap an enemy weapon within its tines and then wrench it out of the foe's hand. When using a war fan against opponents using Light Weapons or swords, you gain a Free Raise which may only be used for the Disarm maneuver.
- **Rank 5 – Dance of the Void.** When wielding a war fan (alone, or with another weapon as in the Rank 3 Kata), you gain +1k1 to Defense rolls. This stacks with the bonus from Rank 3 (making the total bonus +2k1).

## Armor

Rokugani armor is usually made from woven silk and cloth with lacquered plates, the latter typically made from metal (although sometimes wood or ceramic is used). This type of armor is designed to protect by deflecting and blunting incoming blows rather than stopping them outright. Armor made entirely from metal does exist, but is extremely rare and valuable, generally limited to great lords and famous heroes.

Armor grants a Character a bonus to his Defense Skill rolls to reflect how wearing armor makes it easier to deflect enemy blows or minimize their damage.

- **Ashigaru Armor:** Typically worn by peasant soldiers, ashigaru armor is also sometimes worn by samurai serving as scouts. It consists of a light protective piece for the torso and upper legs, and a simple iron helmet. Ashigaru armor awards +1k0 to all Defense Skill Rolls against melee attacks, but no benefit against ranged attacks.
- **Light Armor:** The basic form of samurai armor, light armor is comprised of plates protecting the torso, upper arms, and upper legs, with a more elaborate helmet to protect the head. The lower arms and legs are left largely uncovered. Light Armor awards +2k0 to all Defense Skill Rolls against melee attacks, and +1k0 to Defense Skill Rolls against ranged attacks.
- **Heavy Armor:** Used mainly on the battlefield, heavy armor offers the strongest protection available to samurai. It protects the entire body, including the arms, legs, hands, feet, and even the face, which is guarded by a mask attached to a full helm called a kabuto. Heavy armor awards a +2k1 bonus to Defense Skill Rolls against melee attacks (which increases to +3k1 against unarmed attacks, improvised weapons, and Light weapons) and a +2k0 bonus against ranged attacks; it however, it is also somewhat physically awkward and inflicts a 1-die penalty on all other (non-Defense) Skill Rolls that use physical Traits.

## Weapons

Weapons are often the most important equipment carried by a samurai – especially the paired swords known as the *daisho*, comprising the katana (symbolizing the soul) and the wakizashi (symbolizing honor). Owning a daisho is considered the mark of a samurai, and carrying the swords shows you are ready to use them at any time. However, there are also many other weapons which samurai use, as well as weapons favored by monks and even peasants.

All weapons fall into one of three categories: Light, Medium, and Heavy. As noted in the Chapter of Earth, this category determines how many Wounds the weapon inflicts when it hits. It also determines whether the weapon can inflict more Wounds with Raises.

A price is listed for each weapon. This is included mainly for the benefit of players running *ronin* Characters, who must purchase their weapons on the open market. A clan samurai normally requests weapons from his lord rather than stooping to buying them himself, as discussed later under Wealth and Equipment.

## Bows

Although they do not have the same prestige as the daisho, bows are still considered a very iconic weapon for samurai. In fact, in the earliest history of the Empire, samurai were known more as archers than as swordsmen.

Bows are traditionally carried unstrung to avoid overstressing the stave and bowstring, and stringing a bow requires an Action.

The two major types of bows (the footman's Yumi and the cavalryman's Dai-Kyu) are the only two ranged weapons which can attack at Long Range. Any bow attack made at Long Range suffers a 3-die penalty.



## Dai-kyu (Horsebow)

The dai-kyu is a large bow designed to be fired from horseback. Its size and shape make it awkward to use on foot, but when used while mounted it is quite effective.

**Type:** Heavy when mounted, Medium on foot

**Special Rule:** Anyone who uses a dai-kyu on foot suffers a 2-die penalty to attack rolls.

**Price:** 15 koku

## Han-kyu (“Half-bow”)

The han-kyu is a small, light bow employed by those who need to move quickly and stealthily. Its small size allows it to be easily concealed within the sleeve of a kimono, so it tends to be associated with questionable and shameful people (such as ninja). However, more honorable samurai such as scouts and magistrates also sometimes make use of it.

**Type:** Light, Peasant, Ninja

**Price:** 2 koku

## Shameful Weapons

In Rokugan, some weapons are associated with people who are considered shameful by samurai society. Any weapon which is marked as having the “Peasant” property is considered to be a weapon of the lower caste, and most samurai treat the use of such weapons as similar to using a Low Skill. The highly pragmatic Crab and Mantis Clan are exceptions to this – in their view a weapon is a weapon, no matter what it may be – but they pay a price for this in their reputation with other Clans, who still view these weapons as Low.

A few weapons are specifically associated with the sinister myth of the so-called “ninja.” For any Rokugani to openly use such a weapon is considered a Major Breach of Etiquette, and even the possession of these weapons is considered a Minor Breach. Moreover, the open use of these weapons will lead to suspicions that the wielder is themselves a ninja.

## Yumi (Footman’s Bow)

The yumi is the “standard” bow carried by infantry in Rokugani armies, and is also used by any mounted samurai who wishes to avoid the bulk and awkwardness of the dai-kyu. It is intended for use on foot, but can be used just as easily on horseback.

**Type:** Medium

**Price:** 10 koku

## Arrows

There are several different types of arrows used in Rokugan, but most of them perform identically in terms of game mechanics. Although some arrows are supposedly designed to inflict greater injury or to pierce armor, within the context of the L5R game system the differences between these arrows are not large enough to justify special rules.

However, there are two special types of arrows which are worth mentioning:

**Humming Bulb:** These arrows have a rounded hollow tip that makes a loud whistling sound when they fly through the air. They are used for signaling or sounding alarms. A humming-bulb arrow is always considered a Light weapon, regardless of the bow which fires it.

**Rope Cutter:** Rope Cutter arrows are designed with a broad crescent shaped head. The intended use is to fire the arrow at a rope in order to sever it. A rope-cutter arrow will sever any normal rope or cord it strikes, provided the archer hits such a small target. Due to the rope-cutter’s weight, it cannot be fired at Long Range.

## Chain Weapons

Chain weapons are somewhat exotic and only a few samurai make use of them – in part because they are considered somewhat inappropriate (many rumors associate chain weapons with ninja), and in part because mastering them is difficult and time-consuming. The Mantis and the Scorpion are the only Clans known to use chain weapons with frequency.

There are many variations on chain weapons, but all of them are similar in that they involve whirling and throwing a chain (or occasionally a rope) in order to strike the foe. Most chain weapons mount a blade or blunt weight on the ends, allowing them to be spun and then hurled at opponents. A skilled wielder of chain weapons who has learned the appropriate Kata can use them to entangle foes.

### Kusari-gama

The kusarigama is the most common and iconic chain weapon, and is popular with samurai from the Mantis Clan. It has a kama (see Knives) attached by its handle to a length of chain, which may be anywhere from six feet to as much as fifteen feet or more in length. The other end of the chain usually has a metal weight. The kusarigama is considered a Peasant Weapon for anyone who is not from the Mantis or Scorpion Clan.

**Type:** Medium, Peasant

**Special Rule:** A kusari-gama can be used to make “ranged” attacks on opponents who are within Short range.

**Price:** 3 koku

### Kyoketsu-shogi

The kyoketsu-shogi is a metal grappling hook attached to length of weighted chain or, when used by ninja, a silken rope. It is popular among dishonorable folk, who use it to scale walls more often than to strike opponents. Socially, it is considered a Ninja weapon.

**Type:** Light, Ninja

**Special Rule:** A kyoketsu-shogi can be used to make “ranged” attacks on opponents who are within Short range.

**Price:** 5 bu

### Manriki-kusari

This is the most basic chain weapon, a simple length of chain (anywhere from six to fifteen feet) with weights at both ends. These are usually small cylindrical metal ingots, although the Crab are fond of using over-sized spherical or spiked weights for greater impact.

**Type:** Medium (Heavy for the Crab version)

**Special Rule:** A manriki-kusari can be used to make “ranged” attacks on opponents who are within Short range.

**Price:** 1 koku

## Heavy Weapons

The term “Heavy Weapons” encompasses a variety of different weapons. They are united by their combination of large size and great weight; these properties make them deadly but also crude, lacking the finesse of the samurai daisho. Most Rokugani samurai consider Heavy Weapons to be acceptable on the battlefield but inappropriate for personal combat between honorable opponents.

The Heavy Weapon Skill usually uses the Strength Trait instead of the Agility Trait, and Characters must generally have a Strength of 3 to be able to use a Heavy Weapon. Most Heavy Weapons require the use of both hands – they are simply too bulky and heavy for even a very strong samurai to use them with only one hand. The clumsy and brutish nature of Heavy Weapons also prevents any Kata from being developed for them.

## **Dai Tsuchi**

The dai tsuchi is a massive two-handed hammer, a sort of war-sledge, popular in the Crab Clan but generally dismissed by other clans. The Crab favor it because they can use it effectively to smash through the defenses of otherwise-resilient Shadowlands creatures.

**Type:** Heavy

**Price:** 8 koku

## **Masakari**

The masakari is a one-handed ax, a military version of the simple axes used by woodsmen and carpenters. It is significantly smaller than other Heavy Weapons, but is wielded in much the same manner (with simple brute-force attacks) and thus uses the same Skill. The use of this weapon by samurai is considered somewhat shameful by most clans; it is considered a Peasant Weapon for anyone outside of the Crab and Mantis Clans.

**Type:** Medium, Peasant

**Special Rules:** The masakari uses the Agility Trait rather than the Strength Trait. However, it still uses the Heavy Weapon Skill.

**Price:** 3 koku

## **No-dachi**

The no-dachi is one of the largest weapons used by samurai. It is a huge sword, similar in general shape to a katana but much larger – the blade is typically 5 to 7 feet long. Originally conceived as an anti-cavalry weapon, the no-dachi is also used by Crab soldiers to fight the Shadowlands and by heavy soldiers of all clans on the frontlines of battle. Due to its size and weight, the no-dachi is considered a Heavy Weapon and uses the Heavy Weapon Skill and the Strength Trait despite being a sword.

**Type:** Heavy

**Price:** 30 koku

## **Ono**

A large two-handed ax, designed specifically for war. It is among the most powerful of weapons, able to cleave through enemy armor and bodies with equal ease.

**Type:** Heavy

**Price:** 10 koku

## **Tetsubo**

The tetsubo is a large wooden or metal club with steel spikes embedded along its length. It is well known as the signature weapon of the Crab Clan, but samurai from other clans will sometimes use the tetsubo on the battlefield. It is quite effective at shattering armor and beating down monsters from the Shadowlands.

**Type:** Heavy

**Price:** 10 koku

## **Knives**

The Knives Skill encompasses a variety of small bladed weapons. Many samurai carry a simple tanto or aiguchi, as much for a tool as for a back-up weapon. Of course, knives are also easy to conceal, making them popular with dishonorable persons.

## **Aiguchi & Tanto**

These two weapons are both simple fighting knives, often carried by samurai for personal grooming, practical tasks, or as a last-ditch weapon. The aiguchi has a hilt guard, while the tanto does not, but the weapons are otherwise identical.

**Type:** Light

**Special Rule:** These knives can be thrown (using Athletics / Strength) at opponents within Short Range.

**Price:** 1 koku

## Jitte & Sai

These weapons are slightly larger than the tanto and aiguchi, and have a more specialized use. In the early centuries of the Empire, the jitte and sai were developed from farming implements; they were originally considered “peasant weapons” (and thus inappropriate for a samurai to use) but later gained acceptance as the chosen weapon of magistrates, who use them to disarm and stun criminals and drunken brawlers. The jitte in particular is seen as a physical symbol of a magistrate’s office.

Both of these weapons are steel cylinders, roughly a foot long, with blunt tips. They have smaller blunt prongs that stick out from the base of the main “blade”; the jitte has one prong while the sai has two symmetrical prongs. These prongs make it easier to snare an opponent’s weapon.

**Type:** Light

**Special Rules:** Sai and jitte can be thrown (using Athletics / Strength) at opponents within Short Range. When wielding either of these weapons, you may perform a Disarm Maneuver for 2 Raises instead of 3. Also, these weapons can Daze an unarmored opponent with 2 Raises.

**Price:** 3 bu

## Kama

The kama is descended from a peasant’s sickle, and indeed the real sickles used in farmers’ fields are very similar in design (but made of much cheaper materials). As a weapon, the kama is a short, curved steel blade mounted on the side of a short wooden handle. The Mantis Clan has used the kama as its preferred weapon since the earliest days of the Empire, and it occasionally shows up in the hands of Scorpion or *ronin* samurai as well. Those who train intensively with the kama often fight with two of them, one in each hand.

Although the kama originated as a Peasant weapon, after the Mantis became a Great Clan in the twelfth century their influence reduces the social prejudice against it (though it does not completely disappear). Up through the Hidden Emperor era, the kama is considered a Peasant Weapon except within the Mantis Clan. After the Hidden Emperor era, it is generally considered a normal weapon.

**Type:** Light, Peasant

**Special Rules:** The kama can be thrown (using Athletics / Strength) at opponents within Short Range.

**Price:** 1 koku

## Thrown Weapons

The bow is the traditional ranged weapon of the samurai, but there are plenty of other ways to make ranged attacks. Samurai may hurl spears (but not polearms) using Spears /Strength. Knives, wakizashi, and improvised missiles such as rocks may all be thrown using Athletics/Strength. These ranged attacks function only at Short Range, lacking the power to reach opponents at Long Range.

An improvised thrown weapon, such as a rock or a piece of furniture, is considered a Light weapon for the purpose of causing Wounds.

Chain weapons can also make “ranged attacks” at Short range, using their normal Chain Weapons / Agility attack roll. Unlike other ranged attacks, this does not actually involve throwing the weapon – the Character retains control of the chain weapon and can use it again on his next turn.

## “Ninja” Weapons

The legendary persons called “ninja” are little more than a myth to most Rokugani. The Scorpion Clan maintains a small order of stealthy assassins, infiltrators, and spies – sometimes called *shinobi* – who are one of the main sources of the ninja legend, and other clans have also occasionally created secret organizations with similar goals.

The bizarre entity known as the Lying Darkness creates minions who also behave like the “ninja” of legend.

All of these persons are known for using a variety of unusual and seemingly impractical weapons. Of course, no proper samurai would ever dirty his hands (or his soul) with such gear. All of these weapons are considered Ninja weapons for social purposes (e.g. using them is considered at least a Major Breach of Etiquette).

## Blowgun

The blowgun is ideal for those ninja who wish to disable or assassinate a foe silently. It can also double as a breathing-tube while hiding under water. The weapon fires small darts at Short Range. The darts are unlikely to be able to cause Wounds on their own... but they are nearly always poisoned. On the other hand, it is difficult to penetrate armor with a blowgun dart.

A Character wielding a blowgun uses a roll of Athletics / Perception to attack.

**Type:** N/A (cannot inflict Wounds with a normal attack)

**Special Rules:** A target who is wearing armor gains an extra +1k1 to his Defense Skill rolls against blowgun dart attacks. A blowgun dart can potentially inflict 1 Wound if the wielder makes sufficient Raises to strike a vulnerable part of the anatomy (such as an eye or the throat). A successful attack with a blowgun dart will deliver any poison that is on the dart, even if the dart itself does not inflict any Wounds.

**Price:** 5 zeni

## Ninja-to

A crude, disposable short sword used by ninja and other such stealthy spies and assassins. Since infiltrators are just as likely to use their swords to help climb walls or pry open locks as to fight, a relatively cheap blade is preferred. The ninja-to uses the Kenjutsu Skill, but any self-respecting samurai will treat the use of this weapon as a Low Skill at the minimum.

**Type:** Medium

**Special Rules:** If a ninja-to inflicts 3 or more Wounds with one hit, its blade breaks.

**Price:** 1 koku

## Shuriken

The iconic ninja weapon, a shuriken is a small metal disk with sharp or spiked edges, and is thrown at opponents by hand. It is extremely difficult to throw a shuriken well enough or accurately enough to make it an effective weapon; on the other hand, shuriken are very alarming to samurai due to their association with the most frightening ninja legends, so the weapon can be a very effective tool for distracting or demoralizing samurai foes. The GM can permit Characters who make shuriken attacks in suitable circumstances (for example, attacking from concealment during night-time) to cause Fear effects in samurai opponents.

**Type:** Light

**Special Rules:** A shuriken can only be used as a ranged weapon. It can be thrown (with Athletics / Agility) at any opponent within Short range. Due to the difficulty of throwing a shuriken accurately, all opponents gain a +1k0 bonus to their Defense Skill rolls against it.

**Price:** 1 bu

## Tsubute

The word “tsubute” refers to small disc-shaped stones which have been ground and polished in order to use them as thrown weapons. Ninja use tsubute purely as distractions – unlike shuriken, they cannot easily cause harm even if they are thrown accurately.

**Type:** N/A (cannot inflict Wounds with a normal attack)

**Special Rules:** A tsubute can only be used as a ranged weapon. It can be thrown (with Athletics / Strength) at any opponent within Short range. They do not normally cause Wounds, but someone hit by a tsubute will be distracted and suffers a 1-die penalty to their Skill rolls on their next Turn. (This does not stack for multiple hits.) A tsubute can potentially inflict 1 Wound if the wielder makes sufficient Raises to strike a vulnerable part of the anatomy (such as an eye or the throat).

**Price:** 1 zeni

## Polearms

Polearms and spears are broadly similar in that they both are long-hafted weapons with blades on the ends. However, a polearm has a much heavier design and usually delivers attacks with swinging blows, whereas a spear is lighter, longer, and is more likely to attack with thrusting strikes. Consequently, the Polearms Skill uses Strength, whereas the Spears Skill uses Agility.

Polearms are also more likely to be used by infantry soldiers, whereas spears are more popular with cavalry.

Most polearms require the use of two hands, although the nagamaki can be used with one. The Kata for polearms emphasize sweeping motions that take advantage of the weapon’s weight and reach.

## Bisento

The bisento is an especially clumsy polearm, a thick wooden shaft with a large and heavy chopping blade mounted at the end. It is somewhat top-heavy, effective on attack but less useful for defense. It is popular in certain sects of *sohei* (warrior monks) from the Brotherhood of Shinsei, but is quite rare among samurai.

**Type:** Heavy

**Special Rules:** The bisento can only perform the Way of Fire Polearms Kata.

**Price:** 6 koku

## Nagamaki

The nagamaki is basically a sword blade (usually of somewhat lesser quality than a katana’s blade) attached to a short wooden pole. It can be wielded in one or two hands, and is intended to combine the virtues of the sword with the leverage of a hafted weapon.

**Type:** Medium

**Special Rules:** The nagamaki can only perform the Way of Earth Polearms Kata.

**Price:** 7 koku

## Naginata

The naginata is the most widely used and well-respected of the polearms, and is often viewed as being almost as iconic for samurai as the daisho itself. It is especially popular in the Phoenix Clan and among the samurai-*ko* of all clans. The weapon is essentially a short sword-blade attached to the end of a spear shaft; it is lighter and easier to wield than the bisento, and longer than the nagamaki.

**Type:** Medium

**Price:** 10 koku

## Sasumata

The sasumata, also known as a “man-catcher,” is a weapon intended to capture criminals or detain drunken and disorderly samurai in a non-lethal manner. It is a wooden shaft, 4 to 6 feet long, with a barbed crescent blade at the end. The barbs are used to trap and pin the target. The weapon is commonly used by magistrates and their deputies, including *doshin* (peasant law-enforcers).

**Type:** Light

**Special Rules:** Sasumata cannot perform Polearm Kata. A human (or human-like) Character or Thug who is struck by a sasumata can be Entangled with 1 Raise. If an Entangled target manages to break free, he suffers 1 Wound when doing so.

**Price:** 3 koku

## Sodegarami

Similar to the sasumata, the sodegarami is meant to detain criminals and drunkards – but does so by snaring their garments instead of directly trapping them. It is a 4 to 5 foot wooden shaft with a t-shaped metal head covered in hooks and barbs. The barbs snag the target’s clothing, making escape difficult.

**Type:** Light

**Special Rules:** Sodegarami cannot perform Polearm Kata. Any Character or Thug wearing clothing who is struck by a sodegarami can be Entangled with 1 Raise. The Entangled target may break free (by ripping his clothing free of the hooks) with an Action on his Turn.

**Price:** 3 koku

## Spears

As noted earlier, Spears are similar to Polearms but tend to have longer hafts, smaller straight blades, and to rely on thrusting attacks. They are popular with cavalry and with frontline infantry. The Kata for spears tend to either emphasize the weapons’ greater speed and stabbing reach or to focus on their ability to stand off and deter enemy attacks. Spears may be used either one-handed or two-handed, depending on the weapon, but all Spear Kata require the use of both hands.

## Lance

The lance is a weapon adapted from gaijin cultures, and is found almost entirely within the ranks of the Unicorn Clan. It is an extremely long and heavy spear which can only be used effectively from horseback. The cavalry rider will brace the lance and spur his mount to a gallop, driving at the enemy with the sharpened tip of the long heavy wooden shaft.

In game terms, a lance can only be used while the wielder is mounted.

**Type:** Heavy (but see Special Rules below)

**Special Rules:** Lances cannot use Spear Kata. A lance can only be used to attack from horseback. If the horse is moving swiftly (a trot or a gallop), the lance does damage as though it is a Heavy Weapon (although it uses Spears / Agility to attack). If the horse is walking or immobile, the lance does damage as though it is a Light weapon, and the wielder suffers a 3-die penalty to attack rolls. Also, if a lance inflicts 3 or more Wounds, it shatters.

**Price:** 5 koku

## Nage-yari

The nage-yari is the Rokugani equivalent to a javelin. It is a short heavy spear, usually about 4 feet long, with a metal tip. It can be used in melee but is intended primarily to be thrown at nearby targets.

**Type:** Medium

**Special Rules:** The nage-yari may be thrown (with Spears / Strength) at any target within Short range. It can only use the Way of Water Spear Kata.

**Price:** 3 koku

## Yari

The yari is Rokugan's standard spear, the oldest and most reliable of melee weapons, and the standard weapon for *ashigaru* (peasant soldiers) as well as for many frontline samurai infantry and cavalry. Most yari are thin wooden shafts 6 to 9 feet in length, with a thin, straight metal blade (typically a foot to eighteen inches long) mounted on the tip. The yari is normally used two-handed while on foot, one-handed when mounted. Like the nage-yari, a yari can be thrown, although it is less accurate.

**Type:** Medium

**Special Rules:** The yari may be thrown (with Spears / Strength) at any target within Short range; however, such attacks suffer a 2-die penalty.

**Price:** 5 koku

## Staves

Staves are simple, basic, crude weapons, used primarily by peasants and monks. Monks in particular favor them, and it is they who most often study advanced fighting techniques (e.g. Kata) for staves. With a few exceptions, staves are sneered at by samurai, who barely consider them 'weapons' at all. With the partial exception of the tonfa (see below), all Staves are considered to be Peasant weapons.

Staves suffer from a general weakness of being less effective against armored targets. A foe who is wearing armor gains a bonus of +1k0 to Defense Skill rolls against Staves. Also, creatures with Carapace are considered to have 1 extra Rank of Carapace against Staves.

## Bo

The simple and universal bo staff is a smooth length of wood, usually about 1 inch thick and 5 to 6 feet long. Monks often use it as both a walking stick and a weapon; samurai occasionally do so as well, especially peaceful samurai such as shugenja. Using the bo properly requires two hands.

**Type:** Medium

**Special:** Bo staffs may only use Staves Kata from the Way of Water. They are wielded with the Strength Trait rather than the Agility Trait.

**Price:** 1 bu

## Jo

The jo staff is a shorter version of the bo, designed to be used one-handed. It is usually about 3 feet long, although it may be shorter. Training in certain Kata allows specialists fight with two jo staves, one in each hand, overwhelming an opponent with a barrage of quick strikes.

**Type:** Light

**Special:** Jo staffs may only use Staves Kata from the Way of Fire. They are wielded with the Agility Trait.

**Price:** 1 bu

## Nunchaku

Originally a peasant threshing tool, the nunchaku evolved into an odd but surprisingly effective weapon, favored by monks. A nunchaku is a pair of foot-long wooden handles connected by a 1-foot or 2-foot length of chain. The weapon is used by holding one handle and spinning the other around, allowing it to strike with great speed and force. Those with advanced training often use nunchaku in pairs (one in each hand). However, using the weapon effectively requires skill and practice.

**Type:** Light



**Special Rule:** A nunchaku cannot be used unskilled (e.g. you must have at least 1 Rank in Staves in order to use it). Nunchaku may only use Staves Kata from the Way of Fire. They are wielded with the Agility Trait.

**Price:** 3 bu

## Tonfa

The tonfa is another peasant tool evolved into a weapon – in this case, the handle of a millstone. Its ‘weaponized’ form is a smooth wooden shaft roughly eighteen inches long, with a handle on the side that allows it to be held along the forearm. Like the Jo staff and the Nunchaku, the Tonfa is often used in pairs by those who have studied the appropriate Kata.

The samurai of the Mantis Clan sometimes fight using tonfa, and they do not consider it a Peasant weapon.

**Type:** Light

**Special Rule:** Tonfa may only use Staves Kata from the Way of Fire. They are wielded with the Agility Trait.

**Price:** 2 bu

## Swords

The katana and the wakizashi are the prized and sacred weapons of the samurai. There are other blades which are technically swords, but none of them have the social prestige and symbolic power of the daisho set.

### Katana

The katana is the quintessential weapon of the samurai caste. It represents the soul of the samurai who carries it, and while typically only bushi carry a katana with them at all times, all samurai have one they own, even if it remains forever in their home. Courtiers and shugenja do not usually carry their katana with them because doing so implies they are trained in its use, which would in turn place an expectation upon them to defend themselves.

A katana is typically kept within a family and handed down from generation to generation; the eldest child in each generation receives his grandfather’s blade. However, it is possible for a samurai who serves his lord well to possess multiple katana, including not only his grandfather’s blade but a blade bestowed for valorous service, another from an appointment to the position of Imperial magistrate, etc.

**Type:** Medium

**Price:** 25 koku. However, because of the symbolic nature of the katana and the difficulty in producing the folded steel for the blade, it is rare to find one for sale even to ronin.

### Parangu

The parangu is technically a “sword” (in the sense that it uses the Kenjutsu Skill) but would hardly be called such by samurai. It is essentially a machete, a thin blade of low-quality metal, used mainly for manual labor (clearing brush in the forest, for example). Only the Mantis Clan uses the parangu as a weapon, and even Mantis sailors are more likely to use it for mundane tasks like cutting ropes. All non-Mantis samurai consider the parangu to be a Peasant weapon.

**Type:** Light, Peasant

**Special:** A parangu cannot be used with Kenjutsu Kata and cannot be used with the Iaijutsu Skill. If a parangu ever inflicts more than 1 Wound, it breaks.

**Price:** 4 bu

### Wakizashi

While the katana represents the soul of a samurai, the wakizashi represents his honor. All samurai, even the most pious shugenja or delicate artisan, possess a wakizashi that signifies their station. The blades are not always carried but they are never far away, even when traveling. It is the wakizashi, symbol of honor, which is used to perform the ritual of *seppuku*.

**Type:** Medium

**Price:** 15 koku

## War Fans

There are a variety of different designs for *tessen* (war fans) in the Empire. Some are metal copies of court fans with sharp points on their vanes, while others do not resemble court fans at all. War fans are most popular in the Lion and Crane lands.

**Type:** Light

**Price:** 2 koku

## Wealth and Equipment

In Rokugan, all samurai serve their lords, but in exchange their lords provide for their material needs. A lord is obligated to ensure that his samurai have a place to live, food, any equipment they need to perform their duties, and a stipend to cover miscellaneous expenses. Lords who fail to fulfill this obligation are shaming themselves and will quickly face a variety of consequences, including disloyalty from their samurai and censure from their superiors in the Clan – after all, by failing to properly care for their samurai they are weakening the Clan as a whole.

In game terms, this is represented by Characters having access to an Outfit (determined by their School) and a stipend (determined by their Family).

### My Grandfather's Sword

Samurai families in Rokugan greatly revere their swords and will pass them down through the generations; carrying and venerating such inherited swords is an important part of the Rokugani traditions of family honor and ancestor worship. This is magnified, of course, by the overall tradition that a samurai's katana represents his soul and his wakizashi represents his honor. Breaking or losing such weapons is a significant loss of face, and all the more shameful if the weapon is a revered inheritance – indeed, some samurai will ask to commit *seppuku* to atone for such a failure.

What does this mean in relation to the Outfit rules?

There is no requirement for a Character's sword to be a valued ancestral weapon. After all, most families have several children and they can't all inherit the same blade! Thus, the GM and Player should decide whether the Character has inherited an older sword or has been gifted a new one of their own once they reach adulthood.

Losing or breaking a katana or wakizashi should always entail a loss of Honor for the Character, and possibly a loss of Glory as well depending on the context of the loss (GM's discretion). As a general guideline, the loss should at a minimum be equivalent to a Minor Breach of Etiquette, and possibly more if the circumstances were especially humiliating. If the weapon is a family heirloom, the loss should be at least equal to a Major Breach of Etiquette. Physically, however, the lost weapon will still be replaced by the samurai's Lord in the same manner as any other part of his Outfit – after all, a samurai without a weapon cannot properly perform his duties.

## Outfits

All Schools in L5R include an Outfit. This is the equipment a samurai trained in that School should expect to receive from his Lord. However, GMs and Players need to be aware that Outfits represent the

“average” gear for a Character from that School, and there are many reasons why any particular Character might have less, more, inferior, or better equipment. Perhaps the Character has an unusual personal background or has received specialized training. Perhaps his Lord is unusually wealthy or is laboring under the effects of bad fortune (such as several years of poor harvests). The GM and Players are encouraged to discuss such things and to consider changes to the standard Outfits to better represent the Characters’ specific circumstances.

In general, so long as a samurai continues to serve his Lord properly, any equipment in his Outfit that is lost or damaged will be restored after the next period of “down time” in the game – this will most typically happen in between game sessions, but can also happen during a session if the GM judges it appropriate to the situation (for example, if the Characters are at a winter court where weeks go by within each session).

It is important to note that Lords expect their samurai to take proper care of the equipment they provide. A samurai who is careless or flippant with his gear, who loses it often, breaks it due to lack of care, or otherwise fails to show proper gratitude for his Lord’s generosity is likely to suffer serious consequences – loss of Honor and Glory, reduction in Status, or possibly even *seppuku* or expulsion from the Clan if his offenses are serious enough.

### ***Ronin* and Wealth**

Unlike Clan samurai, *ronin* have no Lord to provide for them. They cannot assume that their needs will be met – they must pay for housing and food and clothing themselves, with their own earnings. The gear they get in their starting Outfit is all they own, and if it is lost or damaged, they must likewise replace it themselves with their limited coinage, or via looting and theft. One reason why *ronin* are often eager to hire on as mercenaries is because this gives them opportunities to acquire money and gear from defeated foes.

Obviously, *ronin* do not have a stipend. The money they start with is all they have, and they can only get more by taking jobs – as bodyguards, enforcers, mercenary soldiers, or even stooping to the shameful desperation of manual labor – or via theft or looting.

It is up to the GM how strongly to enforce the problem of money for *ronin* Characters, but as a general principle *ronin* should never be able to ignore money in the way that Clan samurai do. It can be boring and frustrating to require the Player of a *ronin* to track the use of every single copper zeni, so it is recommended that the GM allow a certain amount of abstraction – for example, simply requiring the Character to pay a koku or two for living expenses every game session. If the Character doesn’t have enough money, the GM can impose die-penalties to reflect the impact of hunger, ill health, and demoralization.

## **The Stipend**

Samurai who serve a lord (that is, anyone but a ronin) are paid a stipend to cover their living expenses. Most of this money does not appear in the game, but instead is abstracted out by the fact that the samurai has a home and does not have to worry about his material needs – food, clothing, etc. The “cash” portion of the Character’s Stipend, determined by his Family, represents the extra disposable income he has after those needs are met. The Stipend is listed in the Families section earlier in this chapter, after the Family Trait bonus. It may be increased or decreased by taking certain Advantages and Disadvantages.

In the world of Rokugan, a samurai’s stipend is paid on either a monthly or an annual basis. However, as noted, most of this money never appears in the game. The game Stipend – the Character’s “spending money” – is awarded at the beginning of each gaming session.

In general, a samurai should not be able to “save up” money over time – such behavior cuts directly against the nature and traditions of the samurai caste. Therefore, any unused portion of a

Character's Stipend will disappear before the next Stipend is paid. The extra money is assumed to have been spent on mundane things during the Character's "down time" in between adventures.

If a Character belongs to a samurai faction that actually pursues mercantile activity, such as the Yasuki family or the Mantis Clan, the GM can make an exception and allow excess money to be saved for investment (or self-indulgence). The GM can also allow a samurai to save up money if there is a specific story reason for him to be doing so (such as trying to buy a geisha's contract).

## Coinage and Values

Rokugan uses three standard coins: the golden *koku*, the silver *bu*, and the copper *zeni*. All three are circular in shape but with square holes through the center, allowing them to be carried on a string or cord. The *koku* was originally the term for a bale of rice, and at the Empire's founding the number of *koku* issued each year was based on the number of rice-bales reported to the Imperial government for that year's harvest. However, over the centuries the continual issuance of new coins has diluted this one-for-one equivalence and by the twelfth century a bale of rice is worth far more than a single *koku*.

The exchange rate between the three coins is, roughly, 50 *zeni* to 5 *bu* to 1 *koku*. However, local conditions – such as the presence of a silver mine, flooding the local economy and driving down the value of silver – can alter this.

## Equipment

There is a wide variety of mundane items and equipment used by the Rokugani. The following list is intended as a guide for players and GMs, rather than a comprehensive account of everything available.

The items include the typical prices that merchants charge for them, but the GM should usually avoid forcing the players to track their coins and pinch their *zeni*. Most of these items are so "mundane" that even a low-Status samurai can get them without any difficulty, so the GM and Players should only really concern themselves with the more expensive ones – those whose price is measured in *bu* and, especially, in *koku*.

*Ronin* are another matter, of course, and must watch their coins carefully lest they wind up hungry and cold.

## Mundane Items

**Back Banner:** Worn by samurai to identify their unit in battle. 1 *koku*

**Backpack:** Rokugani backpacks are built upon wicker frames, making them fairly rigid. 3 *zeni*

**Ball, Kemari:** A leather ball used to play kemari, a popular game. 5 *zeni*

**Baskets:** The most common container, crafted from wicker. Sometimes worn as hats. 1 to 5 *zeni*

**Blacksmith's Hammer:** Necessary for an armorer or weaponsmith. 3 *bu*

**Blanket:** A coarse-woven blanket appropriate for travel, often used stacked for warmth. 1 *bu*

**Bolt of Cloth, Linen:** Basic, durable cloth used for peasant garments, blankets, etc. 3 *bu*

**Bolt of Cloth, Silk:** Used for samurai clothing, protective wrapping, etc. 2 *koku*

**Bottle of Bleach/Dye:** Used primarily for clothes-making and hair coloration. 1 *bu*

**Bottle of Sake:** Rice wine, a very popular beverage among bushi. 5 *zeni*

**Bottle of Shochu:** "Rice brandy." A distilled alcoholic beverage, very strong and harsh. 1 *bu*

**Bottle, Empty:** Pottery of various quality, used for storing liquids for travel. 1-5 *zeni*

**Books and Scrolls:** Sturdy records used for journals and recording new information. 1-10 *bu*

**Bowyer's Kit:** Used for maintenance of bow and arrows. 2 *bu*

**Brazier:** Vessel for holding burning charcoal (or dried dung) or for heating liquids. 1 *bu*

**Bucket:** A wooden vessel with a handle, primarily for toting water. 1 *zeni*

**Candle:** A simple hand-dipped candle, with wax extracted from plants. 1 *bu*

**Chest:** Wooden chest with a lock for storing precious items. 1-2 *bu* (wood), 8+ *bu* (metal)

**Chopsticks:** Eating utensils. 1 *zeni*, or carve your own from twigs

**Daisho Stand:** Easily disassembled and carried, this is a wooden stand for displaying one's daisho and tanto. 2 bu.

**Dice and Dice Cup:** Used primarily for gambling. 15 zeni

**Divination Kit:** Sets of coins or carved sticks used for divining. 1 bu

**Finger of Jade:** Sacred jade to ward off the Shadowlands. 1 koku in Crab lands, 5 koku elsewhere if it can be found at all

**Fishing Kit:** A hook, a long cord, a small net, and a cleaning knife. 20 zeni

**Flint and Steel:** Useful for creating sparks and lighting fires. 1 bu

**Folding Stool:** Wooden stool used by soldiers in the field. 2 bu

**Games, Traveling:** Small sets of go or shogi. 1 bu and up

**Grapple Hook:** An iron hook meant to be attached to a rope for climbing. 1 bu

**Kiseru:** A smoking pipe, of wood or more valuable substances. 5-50 zeni

**Lantern:** Used for decoration and illumination, usually contains a candle or a wick in oil. 5 zeni (paper, for candles), 2 bu (metal, for oil)

**Lantern Oil:** A flask with two hours of oil for a metal lantern. 5 zeni per flask

**Lucky Cricket:** A small cricket in a cage. 4 bu

**Mattock:** A simple tool for digging and farming. 5 zeni

**Medicine Kit:** Needle and thread, cloth bandages, herbal disinfectants, etc. Typically contains enough supplies for 10 uses. 3 bu and up

**Mirror:** Metal polished to a high sheen. 3 bu to 2 koku depending on components and decorations

**Mortar & Pestle:** Used to grind and mix ingredients. 15 zeni

**Musical Instruments:** Samisen, biwa, flute, drum, etc. 1 to 5 koku

**Palanquin:** Elaborate personal carriage, carried by servants. 10 koku

**Paper:** Used for writing letters and journals and for spell-scrolls. 1 bu per 5 sheets

**Personal Seal ("Chop"):** Used to sign formal documents and verify identities. 4 bu

**Pet:** Cat, songbird, monkey, or others. 1 koku

**Pillow Book:** Small, loosely bound book of scholarship, fiction, or poetry. 1 bu to 1 koku

**Pot, Iron:** Used for cooking while traveling. 1 bu

**Quiver:** Cloth satchel for arrows (holds up to 60). 25 zeni

**Rope:** Varying quality – can be made of hemp, hair, or silk. Price per foot ranges from 5 zeni to 1 bu depending on quality

**Sake Cup:** Guests often bring their own cup to events. 10 zeni

**Spices:** Used to add flavor to food while traveling, or for barter. May be domestic or foreign. 1 to 5 bu for small bottle

**Sweets:** Popular snacks include small cakes and candies made from rice. 1 bu for 4 servings

**Tatami Mat:** Woven mat used for sitting or sleeping on the ground or floor. 3 zeni

**Tattoo Needles:** Made of steel or bamboo. 1 bu per set

**Tea Set:** Special pottery set used to perform the sacred tea ceremony. 1 koku

**Tent:** Heavy cloth tent suitable for two people. 1 koku

**Traveling Rations:** Rice-ball wrapped in paper, with cooked fish or tofu inside. 5 zeni per meal

**Umbrella:** Made of wicker and paper, or silk for fancier versions. 2 bu to 1 koku

**Walking Stick:** A simple cane, not a weapon. 1 zeni

**Whetstone:** Used to sharpen weapons. 10 zeni

**Writing Box:** The *sumi-e* box, contains brushes, ink sticks and ink stone, a water bowl, and sand. 1 koku

## Clothing & Accessories

**Cap, Courtier's:** Peaked cap popular among courtiers and bureaucrats. 2 bu

**Fan:** Fan with bamboo staves and paper or silk, usually with customized patterns. 1 bu and up

**Hakama:** Knee-length trousers. 25 zeni for linen, 2 koku for silk

**Haori:** Jacket-like garment worn over a kimono to emphasize shoulders. 3 bu and up

**Kimono:** The basic robe worn by samurai and many commoners. Can be linen or silk. Comes with belt/sash (obi). 1 bu and up

**Makeup Kit:** Face powders and paints. 1 koku

**Mask:** May be made of paper, silk, wood, or even metal, and can be plain or intricately patterned. 1 bu and up

**Netsuke:** Decorative item on a cord, used to tie pouches to an obi (belt). Often elaborately decorated and/or made of precious substances. 1 bu and up

**Obi Pouch:** A small silk pouch that fastens to the obi. 25 zeni

**Sandals:** The simplest and most common form of footwear. 10 zeni

**Traveling Coat:** Thick coat of straw, worn over clothes while traveling. 25 zeni

**War Paint, Vial:** Popular among Crab, Unicorn, and Lion warriors. 2 bu

**Wig:** Used for disguise or to gain attention in court. 1 bu or more depending on quality

### **The Traveling Pack**

Most if not all Schools include in their starting Outfit a Traveling Pack. A Traveling Pack is essentially a traveling bag, often called a *furoshiki*, filled with various items that the individual might be interesting or useful.

What exactly is in a Traveling Pack? Well, that depends on the family, the School, and the individual. The GM can choose to let the contents of Traveling Packs remain vague and “plot determined,” or he can have the Players select any ten items from the lists above.

## **Steeds: Rokugani Ponies and Unicorn Horses**

Many samurai have a “Steed” in their Outfit, and Character may also be issued steeds for journeys, military duties, or as a reward for promotion to a higher station (such as becoming an Emerald Magistrate).

The native Rokugani horse – referred to as the “Rokugani pony” in the rules – is a small, stocky animal. Although certainly useful as a mount or a beast of burden (although the Rokugani more often use oxen in the latter role), its value on the battlefield is somewhat limited, and mounted troops are only a minor aspect of Rokugan’s warfare for much of its history.

All of this changes when the Unicorn Clan returns to the Empire, bringing with them horses which are larger, faster, stronger, and more intelligent than Rokugan’s ponies. The Unicorn armies’ combination of mobility and shock attack completely up-ends Rokugani warfare, and for a time it appears as though they are all but unbeatable. The other Clans eventually develop tactics and strategies to try to counteract the Unicorn – including making better use of their own less-capable mounts – but the Unicorn Clan’s near-monopoly on its superior mounts lets it remain one of the Empire’s premier military forces.

For a non-Unicorn samurai to acquire a Unicorn mount is quite rare, usually occurring due to the Unicorn Clan wishing to curry favor with another Clan or reward a samurai they see as an ally.

The Otaku warhorses are even larger, stronger, longer-lived, and more intelligent than normal Unicorn horses, and are considered near-sacred animals by the Unicorn Clan, forming life-bonds with the Battle Maidens who ride them. There is no recorded instance of an Otaku Warhorse being given to any other samurai... save for the Emperor himself, who was gifted a breeding pair of them but has never presumed to ride them.

### **Steeds in Combat**

In general, a Character must have at least 1 Rank of Horsemanship to be able to use Skills while mounted on a horse, and at least 4 Ranks of Horsemanship to be able to use the Full Attack and Full Defense Tactics while mounted.

A Rokugani pony will move as its rider commands, on the riding Character's Turn, but will not attack unless the Character makes a Horsemanship Skill roll at a TN of at least 25. If it is without a rider, it acts on its own Initiative Rank and will generally avoid combat and flee, fighting only in self-defense.

A Unicorn Horse will act in a similar manner – moving on its rider's Initiative so long as it has a mount – but the Horsemanship TN to get it to attack is only 15. If lacking a rider, it will not actively seek out combat but will fight enemies which approach it.

An Otaku warhorse is a rather different beast – an intelligent creature that forms a powerful emotional bond with its rider. Otaku warhorses always act on their own Initiative Rank, whether or not they have a rider, but will obey the commands of their riders. They voluntarily attack enemies and, if left to their own devices, will ferociously attack any nearby foes. If their rider is injured or killed, they will stay by them and defend them (or their body) to the death.

## **Rokugani Pony [Thug]**

**Air** 2

**Earth** 2 Stamina 3

**Fire** 1 Agility 3

**Water** 2 Strength 3

**Attack:** Hooves 4k3

**Defense TN:** 15

**Initiative Rank:** 3

**Special Abilities:**

- **Huge**
- **Tough** – A Rokugani pony is mechanically a Thug, but must be hit twice to kill it.

## **Unicorn Horse [Character]**

**Air** 2 Reflexes 3

**Earth** 3

**Fire** 1 Agility 4

**Water** 2 Strength 4

**Attack Roll:** Hooves 6k4, Medium

**Defense Roll:** 5k3

**Initiative Rank:** 6

**Special Abilities:**

- **Carapace** 1
- **Huge**

## **Otaku Warhorse [Character]**

**Air** 2 Reflexes 3

**Earth** 4

**Fire** 2 Agility 4

**Water** 2 Strength 5

**Attack Roll:** Hooves 7k4, Heavy

**Defense Roll:** 7k3

**Initiative Rank:** 8

**Special Abilities:**

- **Carapace** 2
- **Fear** 3 (when charging)
- **Huge**