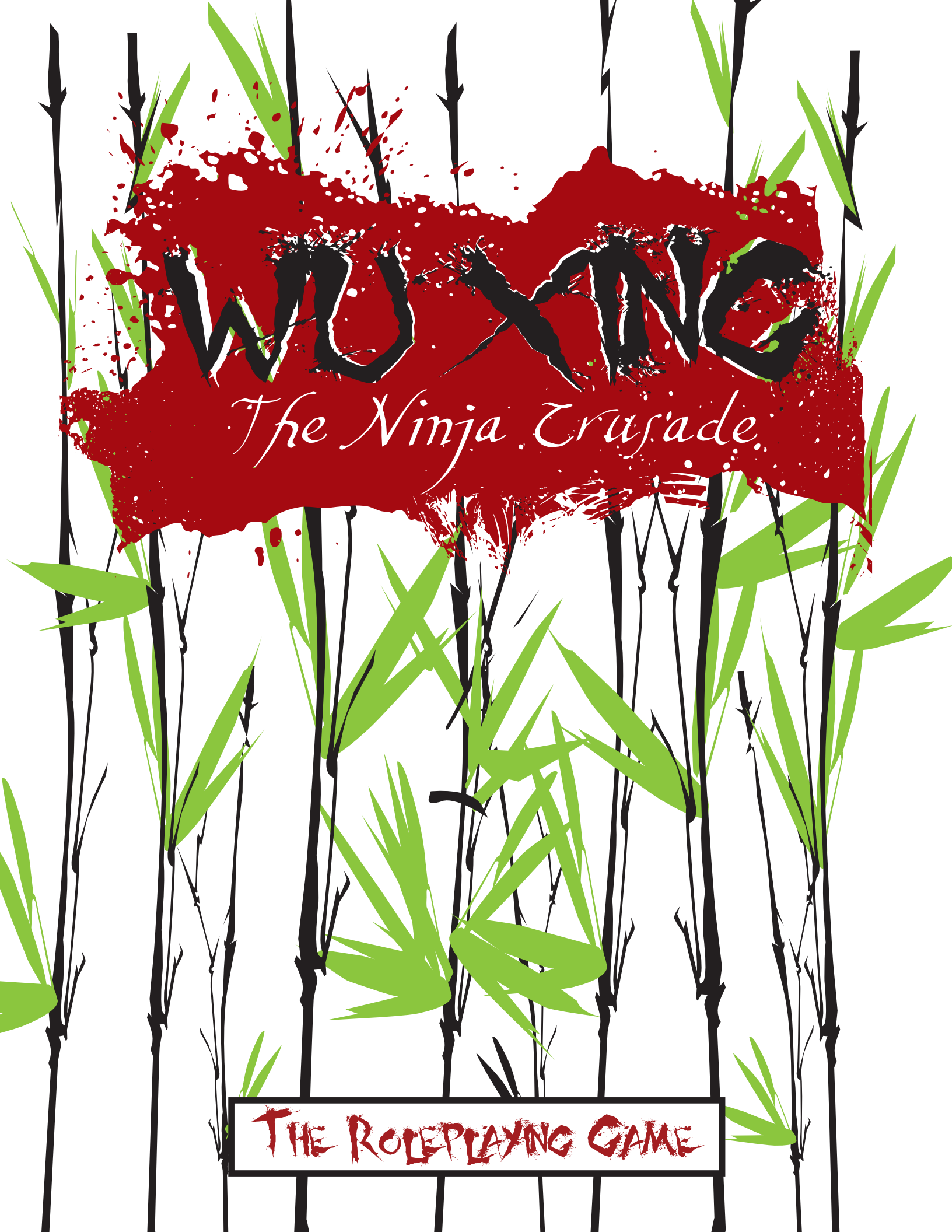


The background of the entire image is a stylized illustration of bamboo. It features several thin, black vertical stalks and clusters of bright green, pointed bamboo leaves. In the upper-middle section, there is a large, irregular red shape that resembles a blood splatter or a torn piece of fabric. The word "Wong" is written in a bold, black, stylized font across this red area.

Wong

The Ninja Crusade

THE ROLEPLAYING GAME



The Action RPG of Martial Arts, Mysticism and Rebellion



WU XING: THE NINJA CRUSADE... IN BRIEF.

Setting Summary

Four years ago, the latest war waged upon the ninja of the Empire began. This "Ninja Crusade" was ordered by the Emperor and his wayward son who took charge after the Empress's murder and princess's poisoning. Even though the ninja of the Empire have been allies to his family, helping to protect citizens and keep the peace, the Emperor suspects that ninja had something to do with these horrible events. The ninja, whose clans have carved the Empire into delicate and fluctuating territories, were caught unaware and many of their hidden, remote villages were destroyed by the Empire's soldiers. The ninja quickly decided that their survival was more important than their old rivalries and begrudgingly started the Lotus Coalition, a group of ninja that are leading the rebellion against the overzealous Emperor.

The ninja themselves have access to the building blocks of the universe: chi manipulation. With it they can create spectacular displays of magic to utilize against the Empire. They have commenced with several attacks and successfully defended their strongholds against the soldiers... and each other. Yes, sadly, the ninja have not put all of their old enmity aside and contests for territory and influence still occur between the clans, each trying to find their place in this time of war.

Characters can be pulled into the Ninja Crusade, and its intense conflict and political intrigue in a number of ways. They can be sent as emissaries to the Lotus Coalition to aid in full on assaults or they can exist in secret, as ninja, right next to the very soldiers that want them dead. Plenty of clans have peacefully existed in the same villages and towns as normal citizens, living reasonably simple lives and cultivating their own families, connections and responsibilities to their communities. However, some clans exist in a state of constant warfare and cannot rest until their enemies die bleeding or their own lives are ended.

Mood Summary

Wu Xing: The Ninja Crusade is a game of suspicion and rebellion. The setting is full of intrigue, betrayal, personal and physical conflict and amazing powers sought through years of mystical training. Ninja from rival clans are forced to work together in the efforts to rebel against the Empire, but this by no means makes them friends. Hatred burns hot and creates conflict

within the group quite often. The characters need to use warfare and political strategy if they hope to win this war. The Empire's army is formidable, wielding more numbers with stronger weapons which has put the ninja on the defensive. The ninja have no clue if they "can" win the war, but they must give it their all... or they (and the people they protect) are surely doomed.

Playable Characters

Players take the role of ninja from one of the many clans that reside in the Empire. Below are the 10 most influential clans in the realm.

- **Bamboo Herbalists:** Genius doctors and thrill-seekers, they are premiere medical ninja
- **Blazing Dancers:** Entertainers, well known for their acrobatic acts and fiery performances
- **Grasping Shadows:** Traditionalists, spies and assassins, they wield power over shadows and stealth
- **Hidden Strands of Fate:** Master manipulators, well adept at pulling strings (both literal and political)
- **Living Chronicle:** Historians, keeping knowledge alive in their minds and on their bodies
- **Pack of the Black Moon:** Ranchers and farmers, they are experts on animals, especially dogs
- **Recoiling Serpents:** Fallen lords, masters of poison and survival
- **Virtuous Body Gardeners:** Feisty warriors and artists, the newest clans that specializes in tattoos
- **Wardens of Equilibrium:** Merchants, who seek to balance the world and turning a profit while doing so
- **Will of Iron:** Sheriffs, they believe in invoking justice wherever they go
- **Ronin:** The clanless, composed of exiles, rouges and wanderers

Dynamic Gaming System

The DGS is a simple to learn system that uses only a single die... a 1d20 (or twenty-sided die). With one die, players can easily navigate through all the basic mechanics for everything in the world. This includes the innovative combat system that puts the player in the driver's seat, allowing them to make strategic choices about their character's personal battle style.

WHAT IS ROLEPLAYING?

Wu Xing: The Ninja Crusade is a tabletop role-playing game (RPG) of Martial Arts, Mysticism and Rebellion. This book contains all the instructions to create stories and characters in this unique setting. Some may have picked up this book due to the cool artwork, love of Asian culture or an interest in anime themes. Whatever the reason, we thank you for checking out our game. You are sure to enjoy yourself.

Tabletop RPGs are executed in a similar fashion as old-timey radio shows. The exception is that you can directly interact with the story, changing its course whenever you find it appropriate. These types of games are relayed verbally, requiring one person to be the Game Master (GM) and one or more others to be Players. Playing a tabletop RPG is not unlike playing a video game RPG, but with a lot more flexibility in a non-static world.

To play a game of **Wu Xing: The Ninja Crusade**, you'll need a good imagination, one twenty-sided die (1d20), the willingness to get into character and group of friends ready to have fun.

Game Master (GM)

One member of your gaming group takes the role of the GM, who crafts a story and takes the characters through the world. It is a big job, but is quite satisfying and rewarding in the end. The GM has the opportunity to develop plots, create mysteries, and plan puzzles and challenges for the players to take on. They also take on the roles of the people in the world for the player's characters to interact with. If any disputes arise, the GM is the final arbiter of what happens. **Wu Xing: The Ninja Crusade** is only one setting/system in this glorious pastime of RPGs. If you like this game, check out others and be sure to support the hobby.

Players

The players aren't expected to craft the world to their will like the GM, but they have a big job of their own... building their very own character. Using

the rules in Chapter 3, players piece together the powers and abilities of their character, but should also consider their character's disposition, personality and background. During play, they are also responsible for all the characters actions and statements. Playing a roleplaying game becomes so much fun as soon as you are playing a role.

Sessions

A game Session occurs when you and your friends sit around the table and join together in collective storytelling. The GM sets the scene and then the players decide how their characters respond to the events that occur. Below is a short example of how a typical scene should work:

GM: Arriving in a ninja-friendly village, your keenly trained eyes land on Izou Foot Soldiers roughing up the town leader. He's a kindly old man with a long beard and is being tugged by one of the soldiers.

Player 1: I'm thinking we need to stop them. I look around first to see if there's any sign that they have backup.

GM: Townspeople have started to collect around the ruckus, but no other soldiers. Appears they may be here on some sort of scout mission.

Player 2: I'm going to skulk around them and get a better vantage point of the action.

Player 2 rolls 1d20, adding their AGY Attribute and Stealth Skill to the roll versus a Moderate (20) Difficulty decided by GM. He rolls 23 (Success) and stays out of the soldiers' view.

Player 1: I'm going to make my way through the crowd, inching closer with every word they say to the old man.

GM: The soldiers are attempting to interrogate

the leaders, saying things like “*Who in this town is a ninja?*” and “*Tell us or we’ll torch this place.*” At this point, they’ve just been shaking the man, but now the soldier throws the first punch to his gut.

Player 1: I step out of the crowd. “*Unhand that man!*” I call out. I’m attempting to sound very threatening with my deep imposing voice.

Player 1 rolls 1d20, adding their CHM Attribute and Intimidation Skill versus the soldier’s 1d20 plus resistance to Fear/Awe (the GM rolls for the soldiers). Player 1 rolls higher and wins!

GM: They back up, definitely startled by anyone putting up a fight against them. They eye you down and look like they are ready to attack at any minute, throwing the old man to the side.

Player 2: That’s when I leap from behind them. “*Ah ah ah, it’d be unfair for you to fight my friend two to one. Why don’t we even the odds?*” Not trying to be intimidating, just bringing them into reality.

Player 1: Yeah, that should demoralize them.

GM: Yes, it does. They grab their weapons and start to back out, holding them in defensive ways and attempting to retreat. They obviously identify you as ninja, but have probably never actually fought one.

All the villagers in the crowd also grab their sticks and shovels and yell for the soldiers to leave. Screaming things like “*Tell the Emperor he can shove it!*” and “*Never come back, you cowards!*”

Player 2: We wait for them to leave, then turning to the villagers and attempting to calm them down.

Player 2 rolls 1d20, adding the CHM Attribute and Persuasion Skill versus a Simple (10) Difficulty and succeeds.

Player 2: “*We need to be ready for when they come back. This is just the beginning folks. If you can’t handle the war, I suggest you make your way to the nearest sister village and wait for word.*”

Player 1: “*Or you can stand with us and fight!*”

GM: The village roars with excitement, ready for the war at hand.

WU XING: THE NINJA CRUSADE

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Disclaimer: This book contains supernatural and magical themes, characters, and places. This is purely a fictional work and is for entertainment purposes only. Not recommended for those with closed minds or poor critical thinking skills.

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WUXING

The Ninja Crusade

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They hold strong to the traditions that their ancestors practiced and believe they uphold what it means to be a true ninja.

Hidden Strands of Fate

With the ability to bend others to one's will comes great responsibility. The Hidden Strands of Fate seem to embody the very idea of deception and back it up with original wushu unmatched by any other clan. Nobles have a way of finding their way to this clan, lured by the sheer influence it holds. However, the Thread-Bearers are in a constant struggle with each other for control of that power.

Living Chronicle

Esteemed historians with a rich history themselves. After the destruction of the Land of Crashing Waves' largest library, the Living Chronicle was established as an alternative to books or simple storytelling. They are known for having history recorded on their skin itself, their final goal being to be hung in the Grand Library for eternal preservation. While the Living Chronicle is a national institution, ninja hide within their ranks and hope to aid in the efforts to continue their mission of recording history.

Pack of the Black Moon

Out in the small villages, many untouched by the Izou Empire and their ever-present eyes, live the Pack of the Black Moon. They survive by way of their relationship with the animals they breed and care for, including specially-trained ninja canine. They utilize wushu that combine their skill with the natural aptitude of their dogs to take down any opponent in their way.

Recoiling Serpents

This clan is feared throughout the Empire and beyond. The Serpents embody the concept of a snake, with flexible and tough bodies and a mastery of poisons. The level of power they once held sparked the War of Withered Fangs, forcing soldiers and ninja to combine forces to take them down. Now they hold on to their fragile territory with ferocity, especially since they control a large region that separates the

Izou Empire from the southern nations.

Virtuous Body Gardeners

The newest of the ten clans in power, the Virtuous Body Gardeners are making a name for themselves in the Izou Empire. Other ninja have challenged their conviction, only to be swayed. Other ninja have tested their steel, only to lay dead in the grass. The Inks believe themselves artists before anything else, employing fantastic tattoos in mesmerizing displays of chi.

Wardens of Equilibrium

Made up primarily of merchants and other rich citizens, the Wardens of Equilibrium hope to balance the world itself and turn a profit while doing it. Violence must be balanced with mercy and hunger must be balanced by gluttony. The Wardens learn marvelous wushu that let them balance themselves, sense unbalance in others and force change in the world that few clans have the power to.

Will of Iron

The Will of Iron serves a purpose for the Izou Empire and for ninja-kind, despite their connection to the Land of Five Blades. Unlike so many others, this clan has a real sense of honor and proving one's ability through combat. They are master metalworkers and are unstoppable if wielding a weapon they forged themselves... usually employed to exact justice on the guilty.

BECOMING NINJA

In the old days, ninja were affiliated by blood ties, fathers and sons, mothers and daughters, cousins and uncles, brothers and sisters. It was these first families that created clans, giving their names, honor and lives for their members. Anyone not of their clan, not family, was considered a rival, enemy or ally, with very few in-betweens. Traditions strengthened with each new generation and many clans still hold to the idea that the best student is a

child that shares their own mystic blood. In some cases, this is true... as the special properties that manipulate chi in wondrous ways are often gifted through the blood, with the child requiring little training to actually use these magnificent abilities. Of course, there are also other children that show no gift for wushu or fighting. They are trained along with everyone else though, as clan leaders know that their dangerous training rituals will no doubt weed out the poor candidates.

As time passed and family ties crumbled and mended with each new generation, the idea of needing a “blood” link to the lineage faded away. It then became a matter of loyalty first and foremost, something that even family cannot be trusted to uphold in every occasion. No stranger is ever allowed in, but a prospective student that has been tested and completely vetted can be let into a ninja clan to one day become a full fledged member. Individual clans have different criteria for what they seek in a candidate, usually involving a mixture of martial training, so-

cial class or a unique skill that might be useful to the clan. These new ninja are either asked to leave their old life completely behind or asked to keep their previous role in society to one day be called upon to aid in the Ninja Crusade.

It should be noted that in these times of war and struggle, some clans look to train ninja much faster. This often involves looser acceptance criteria if they are truly desperate. It has never been uncommon for ninja to have their pick of the homeless or orphans (offering a family, a warm shelter and full bellies), but others have been approached for simply being able to hold a weapon in recent times. These “quick soldiers” are never given full access to the clan’s coffers and are more like the ninja’s own foot soldiers, with this war being the test to see if they’ll be accepted permanently into the clan.

MASTER/STUDENT RELATIONSHIPS

After being born into or chosen by a clan, the



initiate becomes subordinate to their teacher, who assumes the title of Master. The leader of a clan is also referred to as Master by everyone else in the clan. Even in a ninja's anger, sadness or frustration (and even after they leave their teacher's tutelage) they must hold to this name, never forgetting the Master/Student hierarchy. Some ninja come to hate their Master, especially if they have a particularly difficult time with their training, while others have an almost parent/child relationship.

These are the relationships that will carry them throughout the rest of their life as a ninja. The Master's reputation extends to their students whether or not they want it. So, the student of "Master Yoshi the Fool" will carry around that stigma and burden, unless they are successful in setting themselves completely apart from their teacher. In this instance though, the act brings a sense of shame and dishonor to the relationship, as the student is actively rejecting their Master. One's Master shapes them in every way and every relationship is different... to say the least.

SURVIVING NINJA

Once one becomes a ninja, it is a delicate dance of intrigue and battle that keeps them alive. Not only must they survive the normal conventions of Class, but also demanding clan politics and centuries-old rivalries and conflicts.

HIDDEN VILLAGES

Outside the normal towns and villages, on the outskirts of what would be considered "civilization", the ninja have assembled their own villages. Specialized training is needed to become a ninja and it is in these hidden villages that students receive such training, kept away from the prying eye of outsiders. If one was to search for these hidden villages, they'd find only complicated pathways and obstacles and their quest would almost certainly end in folly. Those in forest, swamps and jungles can be tucked away in the dense foliage. Some are carved directly out of a mountain or sit inside a volcano, out of sight. Others have been known to exist in valleys,



SLAY FOR PAY

The ninja continue to take on missions for pay from the common populace. Think of it? If one was to need help, anything from finding a lost item or pet to a bodyguard while traveling to a new town, who does one turn to? The Izou soldiers have other orders from more intimidating leaders, so they won't be taking on random tasks from the commoners. No, they turn to the ninja of the region, offering tribute (money, goods or services) in exchange for their assistance. Hidden Villages use this as a quick way to get funding for their wars.



deserts or other open spaces, simply obscured by clever wushu.

Most of these villages are completely autonomous, growing their own food, hunting their own meat and containing their own type of government (usually ruled by the Master of the clan). Some resemble "normal" towns so much that the Empire has no idea what lies beneath the surface. These types often have their own shops, commerce and even trade with other villages. The village's size depends on the clan in question and whether they live side by side with non-ninja as well.

Some ninja have lived in hidden villages their whole lives. They've no record of being born by the Empire and have no connection to society as the typical citizen would know it. Instead, they've grown up around the magical conjurings of friends and cousins, hoping to one day following their footsteps... which is their eventual destiny.

It was here that the first attacks against ninja occurred. Hidden villages that stood for millennia were somehow discovered by Izou soldiers and destroyed in a matter of seconds. Since the beginning of this Ninja Crusade, the hidden villages have become much more prepared for possible attacks. Their locations are kept as even deeper secrets than before. The Lotus Coalition (pg 18) has requested locations on several occasions, insisting that it's the only way to protect them. Smart clans, however, have ignored this edict and continued existing in secret, knowing that this alliance of ninja can only be so long lasting.

HONOR

To a normal person honor is everything. They must carry themselves with honor in their everyday life, showing the proper respect to their lords and demanding the same from their families, performing their daily duties as perfectly as possible and treating others with esteem. They might feel dishonored if heinously insulted, if someone hurt one of their loved ones or if they were sexually disgraced by another. By general standards, the response to dishonor is confrontation. This needn't always be physical violence, but can easily go from disagreement to argument to one of the parties on their back.

Discussing honor among ninja is a tricky thing. Their roots as nighttime assassins and surprise attackers go against the very idea, but views on the subject vary widely between clans. All ninja believe in the honor that comes from allegiance to one's clan and family. Some clans, like the Will of Iron, stay with the convention of honorable battle between two fighters to settle disputes. In the fray, one will lose and one will surely win, but fighting honorably means no attacks on an unarmed opponent or from the back, as well as accepting a formal submission. Other clans, like the Grasping Shadows, scoff at this idea, taking any opportunity to stab an opponent in the back or gut them by surprise. Multiple fighters ganging up on a single warrior would be considered dishonorable by most, but ninja often say "It is better to be alive than honorable". Mercy and compassion are seldom shown to enemies, especially in this time of war. Doing so may just cost a ninja their life... or the life of their clan.

Only in death are even ninja scared to dishonor another, with common belief of a person's spirit existing long after their body has decayed. Disturbing a grave or speaking ill of the dead only stirs ghosts from their sleep and creates dishonor for the defiler in heaven. A ninja's ability is honored, even in death, especially if they were able to continue standing even after being slain. These superstitions are taken very seriously.

Dishonor is only the symptom in many cases however. It all boils down to shame in the end. Dishonoring another brings shame to them as a person and shame to their family name. So, acts that one makes could bring dishonor and shame to their parents,

siblings, friends or children. Ninja often live by their own codes, but learn when to break the conventions of dishonor and when to conform to societal standards. A big enough slight against one's honor or their clan's honor may force them to fall upon their own blade.

If a ninja (or any other person) offends someone so badly or dishonors their family in an especially heinous way, ritual suicide (seppuku) is often the only route to amends. This is never a first choice scenario, but with horrible events comes stark consequences. There are some that would invite an honorable death if the alternative was to leave their family or clan in shame throughout the Empire. Others run away, becoming Ronin, often with their clans in pursuit.

CLAN POLITICS

Survival within a clan is sometimes just as dangerous as any battle against Izou Soldiers. Most clans have different roles, sects and a hierarchy that is firmly tied into their place in power. To tangle one's self in such a web can lead to great opportunities and horrendous deaths.

One's rank within a clan has many different effects on how they are perceived. Lower-ranked ninja are expected to follow instructions and fulfill missions they are provided. However, higher-ranked ninja give the orders, lead ninja squads on their missions and are the face of the clan when brokering deals with the outside. Each clan is different in its implementation, but clan politics affect each and every ninja. These political exchanges are not far removed from those within the Izou Courts. High-ranking leaders and titled-ninja rarely want to see their place in the clan taken away, especially by another.

Within a clan, the Master is the decision maker for all ninja under them. Some Masters are chosen from gifted bloodlines, while other clans give leadership to the most "powerful" of their numbers. All ninja lower in rank must obey orders from the Master at the risk death on the spot or dishonor to themselves and their families if they fail/disobey. The Master also has final say as to who can join their clan, can bestow rank to ninja and has control over who is admitted into their territory. For this reason,

the first lesson of clan politics is to always respect the Master and always obey their word.

Most Masters keep one or two advisors very close to aid in decisions that will affect the entire clan. These advisors are usually older ninja who can supply a wise word to the Master's ear. If they have more than one advisor, their numbers comes from those of differing backgrounds in order to provide balanced advice. Though, as politics can become corrupt, there are times when advisors are completely self-serving, perhaps giving advice that does little more than promote their own personal agendas. The second lesson of clan politics is to pay tribute to the advisors and get them on your side.

Every clan has their own sects that may command certain respect, so joining these groups is often a sign of a ninja's ascension in rank. More than that, some sects hold clan secrets that they only teach to those within the order, each with their own criteria for joining, of course. Sects usually contain some of the highest ranking ninja in the clan, so the third lesson of clan politics is that joining a Sect often gives one a voice. Sect membership means that the ninja has achieved enough experience for their opinions to matter to the higher-ups.

There are plenty of unscrupulous strategies for allying with ninja in power, from bribery to forced arranged marriages to blackmail. Ninja should never feel bashful or hesitant to use these tactics if it will give them more power to attain their goals... even at the expense of their clan-mates. The Hidden Strands of Fate obviously take all of these to heart, while the Pack of the Black Moon stays away from such dishonest activities.

RIVALRY

Clans are in constant conflict with each other. It is the way of life as a ninja to instantly distrust/dislike a ninja from another clan. Even beyond that, some clans have held on to rivalries and arguments for centuries. This hostile culture of attacks under the cover of night and stabbing assumed allies in the back is the reason that there are so few powerful clans in existence. Clans outside of the ten most influential are small and have often conceded to whatever rivalry created their current state... but not all take this route.

Some rivalries have risen from seemingly innocent actions, like two Masters arguing over the value of catching the rare yuudai fish. Simple and deep arguments alike have always been settled through direct conflict, whether verbal or physical. If verbal discourse is chosen, the two ninja choose an intermediary to hear both sides and give final judgment. The intermediary is never from their individual clans and a lot of careful consideration must be given to pick someone's whose favor does not automatically lean. Choosing just the right candidate can take months, which only allows the rivalry to fester that much more. No matter which way the issue ends, the clans are left with a bit more disdain for the other.

More intense situations, like the death of a ninja by another clan or a severely dishonorable action, often escalate to clan wars to violent ends. In these cases, civility and etiquette are thrown aside and the clans engage in every type of warfare they have at their disposal. Trickery, spying, murder and every other despicable act is warranted in this type of conflict, often called a Shadow War. The entire clan is not always involved with every Shadow War. If the conflict affects a certain Sect or even just an individual ninja directly, it is often better for a resolution to come to pass without the contribution of the entire clan. This is a choice made by the clan Master, as only they can call for a Shadow War.

All rivalries, whether somewhat peaceful or outright homicidal, end with increased tension between clans. As a ninja becomes experienced enough to take on their own students, these rivalries are passed down to continue sometimes indefinitely. These rivalries are the biggest reason that the Lotus Coalition has issues with infighting, despite the threat of annihilation for all ninja.



THE LOTUS COALITION

All of ninja history has revolved around rivalry and usurping power from one another. However, with the Ninja Crusade firmly in place, the clans found no other choice but to join forces to create a combined force the world has never seen.

FOUNDING & MISSION

After the initial attacks on the hidden villages, the ninja were scattered. Their important landmarks and vestiges were destroyed, and their families were murdered by Izou soldiers right before their eyes. Most importantly, some of the most influential ninja were also killed in the assaults, caught by the surprising waves of bullets that ripped them to shreds. Those first hit were the Recoiling Serpents and Grasping Shadows, two of the most powerful clans.

Wanted posters showed up on every corner and official Empire street-preachers called to the citizenry to oust any ninja they knew of and hand them over to the army. People were told of the insidious intentions of the ninja and how their very existence was a blight on the world. Many citizens were convinced that the ninja need to be destroyed. After all, why would their government lie to them about something like this?

Several ninja that lived among the populace (very common due to the Expansion Wars) were dragged from their homes and hanged or burned in town squares all over the empire. Family members that resisted were imprisoned without a trial and some still rot in their cells even years later.

In response to these horrible events, Sakamoto Tadao of the Wardens of Equilibrium sent missives to leaders of all the most influential clans. In his letters, Tadao spoke of the struggle against imperialism that began the ninja tradition and how it needed to continue. Bringing the clans together as one extended family, he proposed, was the only recourse against the towering Izou Army and their advanced weaponry.

It took a year of death, a year of bombs exploding, a year of incredible losses by ninja camps before the clans reluctantly caved to the Wardens' continuous pleas. The youngest and brightest of the clans joined first, followed slowly by those ninja who held

tight to their xenophobic tendencies. Their start was rocky, full of feuds over proper group management and even just the name of the new organization. It was eventually named the Lotus Coalition and every ninja, clan or Ronin, young or old, was invited to join and help defend against the injustice they had to endure. It has been going strong for 3 years now.

MIXING CLANS

In exchange for membership, ninja are given certain benefits. First, ninja have access to certain neutral safehouses, most purchased with the Wardens' unending coffers. These include small villages that are sympathetic to ninja, temples with monks that choose not to participate in war but have agreed to give shelter to anyone in need and even a few underground tunnels that can allow a ninja to seemingly disappear without a trace.

But the biggest advantage that was given was the mixing of clans. On one level, this created numerous altercations of long-forgotten rivalries that gave the impression that the fledgling Lotus Coalition was doomed to fail before they truly began. On another level, the idea of clans working in tandem becomes a great weapon. Instead of each clan battling the Empire with only the combat tactics and wushu they have cultivated, ninja from different backgrounds can combine their talents to create new and interesting strategies that will surely be key to winning this war.

To that effect, the Lotus Coalition has created their own hidden villages, bent on mixing ninja from different clans together in hopes of building a better tomorrow. This was first implemented in Blazing Dancer territory, taking into account their almost born ability to work with people of different backgrounds without issue. It was a success and quickly spread to a couple other areas around the Empire. In these hidden villages, young ninja are taught from a multitude of different clan techniques. With time, the next generation will be able to throw away the shackles of ignorance and hate that has existed within ninja culture and exchange it for harmony and a common goal.

CONFLICTS

Ninja are creatures of habit, technique and emo-

tions. They are not quick to give up judgments or opinions, especially if it involves a long-standing rivalry. Several conflicts have arisen within the Lotus Coalition that has strained the binding that holds the group together.

These events consist of too many instances of in-fighting. One conflict came from a Blazing Dancer that played a prank on a group of Grasping Shadows, incidentally inciting a bloodbath between the two groups. To this day, the two clans seldom work together on missions unless it is absolutely necessary. Another conflict was during the induction of the Hidden Strands of Fate to the Lotus Coalition, where several of the organization leaders were assassinated. It is suspected that the Thread-Bearers had something to do with the deaths, but investigation would only lead to the loss of a powerful ally.

However, the most influential and struggling conflict has come from what has been dubbed “the Wedding Fiasco”.

The Wedding Fiasco

During the initial founding of the Lotus Coalition, certain clans had very bad problems. The conflict between the Recoiling Serpents and the Pack of the Black Moon was particularly horrifying. The Hounds began a midnight campaign to steal territory away from the agitated Serpents who retaliated in kind with even more force. The two groups, even within the halls of the Lotus Coalition’s meetings, were at each others’ throats.

It was at the suggestion of Sakamoto Tadao of the Wardens of Equilibrium that the two clans put their rivalry aside for the greater good, brokering a peace that would be commemorated with the marriage between two of their most promising young ninja. The tension could be cut with a knife as the ceremony commenced, but both groups were pleased that a time of calm may finally fall between the clans.

However, right before the ceremony ended, the groom (from the Pack of the Black Moon) fell to the ground in a poison-induced coma. In the midst of confusion, several of the wedding attendees were slain in the ensuing battle. Instead of sealing the two clans in serenity, the proposed wedding only destroyed what little harmony they previously held for each other.

Today, the wars between the Recoiling Serpents and Pack of the Black Moon are even worse, with some of their more stubborn members refusing to be in the same room. Shadow Wars continue as ninja kills ninja, even as the empire hopes to do the same. In the mean time, the Lotus Coalition is doing what they can to investigate the matter and find out what happened. Were the Serpents actually behind this mysterious poisoning? They are masters of potions after all. Could an outside influence have caused this and to what end?

Only time will tell if one or both clans are decimated by the events of the wedding fiasco. The future of all ninja may depend on its outcome.

THE IZOU EMPIRE

The Izou Empire appears to be calm from the outside. Its cities have constant protection and its borders have several checkpoints to keep most “foreigners” out. It is the superpower of the world, with more military might, population and ambition than any other kingdom. This is, of course, due to the impressive leadership of the Emperor. Obviously, with a history 755 years old, the position has changed passed from one heir to the next.

From the inside, however, the Empire is a powder keg, just waiting to explode. It is a land of civil war and unrest, but it wasn’t always so.

THROUGH THE AGES

The “greatest of all kingdoms” was born from a period of horrible death and destruction. Hundreds of nations, big and small, fought over land and honor. One crushed another in an endless pursuit for power and the ninja were their weapons. That is, until the legendary Izou Zurui entered this tale.

Though Zurui was little more than a simple fisherman, he held considerable clout with many of his village’s warriors. He was able to best any of them in battle, trained by his father in the ways of the sword, but never aspired to join in the chaos of war that surrounded him. But when his family and livelihood were placed in jeopardy, he had no other

choice. He called many fighters under his banner, each one falling in line with his brilliant strategies.

His first siege was on the ruling government at the time. He wasted no time in launching a full scale attack on those that ruled in corruption and hatred. It wasn't long until he sat upon the throne of his own nation. He wasn't a king at heart, instead giving the title to his cousin, Izou Junshin, and taking the role of general instead. This was the beginning of the bilateral rulership that the Empire enjoys today.

Junshin and Zurui went down in history as a duo of peace and prosperity for their nation. General Zurui kept his armies well-trained and Emperor Junshin appeased the people and ruled with a just hand. However, it was Junshin's first son, Junshinichi, who sought to bring about war once more.

In 45 IE (In the time of the Izou Empire), Emperor Junshinishi declared his first war and took the land to the east. Through the generations, each ruling for an average of 40 years, the Izou Nation slowly

became the Izou Empire. Other nations fell to Izou might one after another until it took on its current form.

THE MAN. THE MYTH

The birth of Izou Mamoru in 691 IE was a momentous event. He was born on a battlefield to a mother who was a courageous soldier in her own right (why she was fighting in the war is a legendary story for another time). She died there, but her child was saved and brought to the reigning Emperor. The young heir was carried from his mother's corpse to his father during one of the worst wars imaginable between the Izou Empire and the Land of Five Blades.

Izou Mamoru was raised without a mother and only half-siblings that came after him. So much was expected of him during his childhood and he did not disappoint. By age 8 he had killed several men,



using a mixture of swordsmanship (with techniques passed down from his ancestors) and chi manipulation taught by rogue ninja (Ronin) from the Hidden Strands of Fate.

His father was poisoned by his court taster, leaving Mamoru to take the throne at the tender age of 10. This was not the first time a child Emperor held power, but it was the first time that the people of the Izou Empire simply fell in line. Emperor Mamoru crafted strategies to win the war and brought peace once more to his people.

Emperor Mamoru's rule stood as a pillar of control. He raised awareness of outside enemies, scaring the citizenry into submission. The Izou Army rose in number and intensity, stationed all over the Empire and plenty more in other kingdoms where they held influence (namely the Land of Seed and Blossom). He built a massive naval force that still stands today, rivaling that of the Land of Crashing Waves. The Emperor's goal of self-sufficient agriculture was also boldly realized.

Along the way, he met a beautiful geisha by the name of Hana. She was a mesmerizing vision that blinded Emperor Mamoru to all other women. After only one month of courtship, they were married in 718 IE. She was a delicate and fertile flower, giving birth to two males and one female: Yasuo in 720 IE, Megumi in 725 IE and Kano in 728 IE. Being the future of the Empire, the two boys were heavily trained in battle. Yasuo and Kano were inseparable, Yasuo even taking up chi manipulation and teaching his younger brother limited wushu.

However, while training out in the forests in 737 IE, the boys were caught in the crossfire of a ninja battle between rival clans. Yasuo, who had planned on being the next Emperor with Kano as his general, was slain that fateful day. This left Kano with an unchecked rage against all ninja.

LIGHTING THE FIRE

The Emperor's reaction to this tragedy was to crackdown on chi manipulation across the Empire. Unless one was a soldier or directly affiliated with the Izou Army, any ninja or chi manipulation activity was strictly prohibited. Most left the comforts of the Empire and sought their clan's hidden villages instead.



HIDDEN STRANDS HIDDEN SECRETS

No one beyond the Emperor and General know where the army receives its insight. The war, as far as anyone else is concerned, it is due to luck of divine intervention. Likewise, only the highest member of the Hidden Strands of Fate know of this alliance and the deals made to sustain their agreement.



Several battles between military and ninja forces began taking place on a regular basis, but peaceful ninja were allowed to simply flee. This created an atmosphere of unease Empirewide, but it changed to outright aggression years later in 751 IE.

A rebel group of ninja from an unknown or lost clan set upon Izou Hana and Izou Megumi as they traveled north to visit the Wu Ji Theater. When the smoke cleared, their escorts laid dead, the head of Izou Hana was fully removed and only Izou Megumi remained alive. After being rushed to the best medicine men the Empire had to offer, it was determined that Megumi was poisoned with a mysterious wasting disease. It would take months or even years to slowly tear her apart from the inside out.

Disgusted and horribly grieving, Emperor Mamoru called for the blood of all ninja. If there was no way to know which of the clans was responsible for his wife's death and his daughter's poisoning, he would gladly see them all destroyed. He also raised Izou Kano to the role of general of the military, confident that only his son knew the true pain and hatred needed to handle this war with the appropriate fervor.

Although, the emperor brought in many of his old allies among the Hidden Strands of Fate. With their help, General Kano was able to mount an effective offensive against the heart of the ninjas' hidden villages. They were also able to pick apart many of the chi lessons to train specialized soldiers, the Executioners and Golden Lions (pg 186).

In recent years, the ninja have combined their efforts to defend against the might of the Izou Army. The so-called Lotus Coalition should soon fall to the loathing the people have for the ninja after the death of members of their royal family.

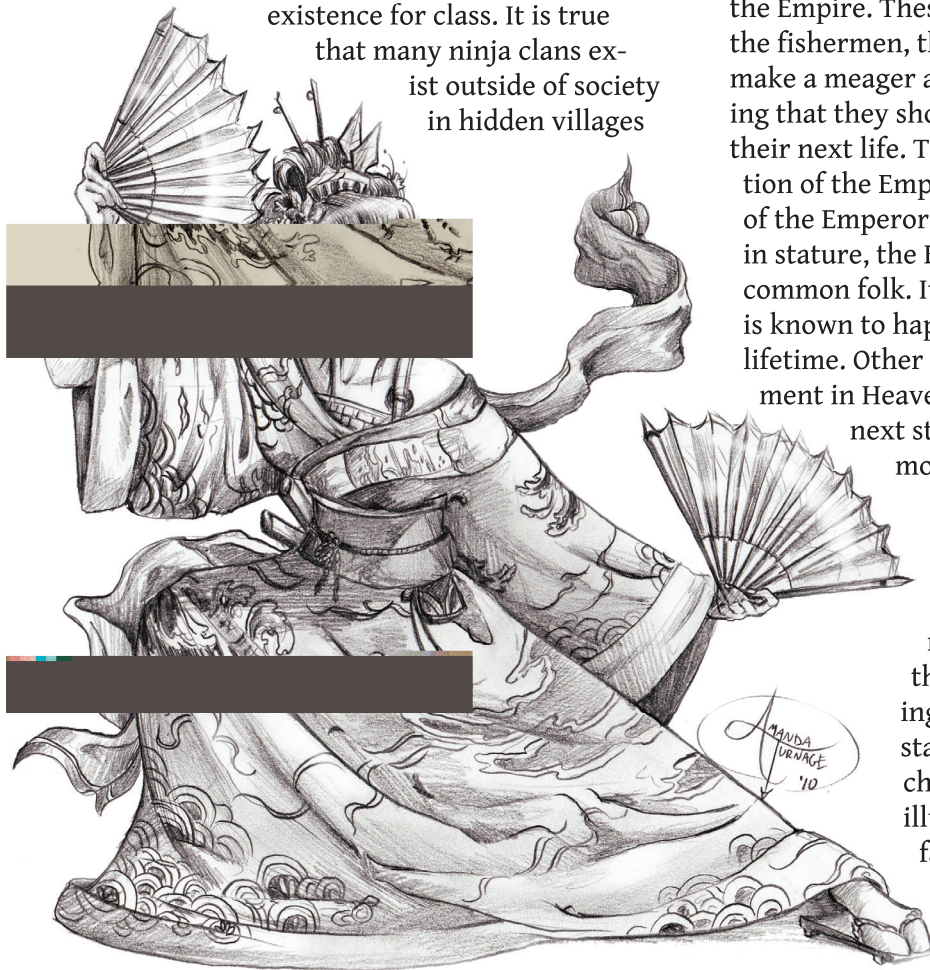
A LOOK AT THE EMPIRE

The Izou Empire is the most power kingdom in the world. They have crafted cunning alliances and waged risky wars to attain this position, sometimes to their citizens' loss. However, most of the the people have heart and believe in their Emperor to bring them through these dark times.

LIVING BY CLASS

One of the essential lessons to living in the Izou Empire is the existence of a fundamental class system. Everyone lives their life and, upon death, is reborn into a new class based on their actions. Those who lived horrible lives are believed to be reduced in class, while living a virtuous life of honor brings you higher. There are five major classes, but some fall in the middle of them as well.

One might think that a ninja has no place in their existence for class. It is true that many ninja clans exist outside of society in hidden villages



where they train their warriors and live completely separate lives. However, it was not always as such. There was a long period of peace in the Empire, where ninja lived side by side with normal folk. They were integrated into everyday life, and not all ninja turned and ran when they were cast out.

There are plenty of ninja who still live among the typical citizens, shopping at the same stores, waving hello as they walk by and working the same jobs. These ninja not only subscribe heavily to the idea of Class, but use it to their advantage to further infiltrate the Empire. Generally, the higher a ninja's status and class within society, the more they care about sustaining it and bringing the empire back to a peaceful place (as opposed to wanting to destroy its very foundation).

Commoner

The Commoner includes the everyday people of the Empire. These are the farmers, the shopkeepers, the fishermen, the barmaids and apprentices. They make a meager and humble living with pride, knowing that they should be elevated to a higher class in their next life. The Commoner class is the foundation of the Empire, and most sing the high praises of the Emperor and the Ninja Crusade. Though low in stature, the Empire would crumble without the common folk. It is also the only Class change that is known to happen frequently within the same lifetime. Other classes require ones death and judgment in Heaven. Becoming a Land-Owner is the next step above being the average Commoner.

It is from the Commoner class that ninja originated and, even today, most of their numbers are composed within this group. Commoner ninja usually stay in town with their family and friends, safeguarding them from danger and hoping to stay out of notice. They have their choice of occupation, but nothing too illustrious. For example, they can be farmers or teachers and even get a glimpse of what the other classes have to offer by owning a business or being a builder, able to provide

many different services to their clan who live on the outskirts. If they become a landowner, the ninja can even offer a place to meet and strategize.

Artisans

Artisans compose the next class of people. They are born into a life of art and beauty, from painters to jewelers to florists to chefs. The most famous Artisan role is that of the geisha, the secret class of females that tantalizes and allure with their music, makeup and even a single glance. It should be stated that geisha are not concubines or prostitutes, but are instead walking pieces of art. Artisans also include visionaries, intellectuals and scientifically minded individuals, as they put their minds to works 24/7 to make the Empire a better place.

Born craftsmen are a blessing to ninja. Some become tailors to clothe their fellow ninja and mend tears caused by battle, learn the gorgeous brush-stroke techniques, craft beautiful jewelry for the Empire's nobility, become renown stage actors or learn some of the world's best recipe to keep bellies full. Clans like the Blazing Dancer and Virtuous Body Gardeners get a lot of their membership from this Class, as these people are born into a life that is suited for beauty and performance.

Merchant

Those born to trade and guilds are known as the Merchant class. Their main purpose is to trade and barter resources that they usually have had no hand in producing. Some citizens look down upon Merchants, as they profit from other peoples' hard work, but this class is integral to the success of the Izou Empire. The Merchant class ranks higher than the Artisans in Empire Culture, though it comes in different variations. With enough money they can achieve a title such as "Merchant Prince" with hundreds of other merchants and runners below them, but a poorer Merchant may be little more than a lone shopkeeper.

Ninja of this Class are blessed with business savvy and riches even beyond Nobles (in some cases). It is hard to pass this type of luxury up without good reason. Many of the Merchants even run their organizations as guilds, extended families with mutual

goals that work together to even greater effect. Merchant ninja can bring a keen eye, money and plenty of contacts to their clan. Many Merchants are sought by the Wardens of Equilibrium or the Bamboo Herbalists.

Warrior

The next class is made up of families linked to the world through warfare. One can be born to the Warrior Class by having ancestry that has served the Empire directly in the past or by being plucked from another class by the Emperor himself and elevated. This class owns many estates, weapon manufacturing factories and anything else that deals with war. Their children are raised around the idea of "might makes right", making them combative, but they are also taught codes of honor to keep their aggressive natures in check. The Warrior Class rivals the Nobles for title and status, but report directly to the Empire General moreso than through the Emperor's court.

Being raised in a Warrior family brings with it intense training from a young age and lessons in loyalty, strategy and honor. While it is true that many of the warrior families serve the Empire, there are others that owe the clans for their continued prosperity. Warrior Ninja can offer clans access to soldier training and even the ability to seize control of a province without aggression (if the chance arises). Plenty of ninja from the Will of Iron and Grasping Shadows hail from this class and with good reason.

Nobles

Those of Noble birth make up the highest class within the Empire. Children of this class are brought up in the cut-throat arena of Imperial Court and the backstabbing, arranged marriages and cunning political maneuvers that make it up. They have silver tongues, but are almost universally hated and simultaneously envied by lesser class people. They have money and connections that can land them a coveted title, be it lord or lady of a city or a daimyo of an entire province.

Nobility is a game of politics not unlike that of the ninja clans. Those born to this Class become versed in creating and deflecting conflict, which is very

useful to a ninja. Also, ninja in high positions in the Empire's government can only help to sway others that may be more sympathetic to the ninja. Some even have the ear of the Emperor himself on occasion. The Hidden Strands of Fate have the tendency to collect members from influential Noble families, thus cementing their ever-increasing power in the Izou Empire.

Untouchables

Untouchables comprise the lowest class that one can be born into, almost to the point of not really being an actual class. It is, perhaps, a sub-class in the system, but still supplies an important service. They fulfill all the roles that other classes see as dirty or unworthy of attention from anyone besides the lowest people. This includes butchers that must touch filthy animal blood, blacksmiths that must work in the heat and soot and even gravediggers or corpse collectors that must handle the dead.

Some Untouchables view the other classes with contempt (as they are often mistreated) or with green eyes (as most wish they were born to different circumstances). Others view their condition as a chance to make amends for whatever horrible act they committed in their previous life. So they put their head down and accept that they are looked over by even Commoners, knowing that any violence or dishonor could land them even lower... in hell.

This class is at the bottom with no way to actually rise in status. One born an Untouchable stays an Untouchable their whole lives and few want to consort with these disgusting people. Indeed, it is within the clans that Untouchables find their solace, accepted by fellow outsiders to the societal constraints of the Izou Empire. They bring more members to the clans, which can be enough in this wartime.

FAITH AND RELIGION

The Izou Empire is far from a nation unified under a single faith. Most citizens follow the general belief of reincarnation and being born into their class, as such is taught to even the youngest child of the Empire. The idea of dharma is strong, one's life is the product of their actions in their past life.

Their position in society, their family and their entire livelihood was predetermined. Thus, few people attempt to cross classes or truly make their lives "better". Instead, they attempt to live a good and balanced life, hoping not to accumulate bad karma that will lead them to a worse existence in the next life.

Sustaining the hierarchy that governs is a primary way of showing reverence to Heaven and gathering good karma. There are many shrines where one can give what they can to the Empire. Doing good deeds is also important, but playing the part of one's class without question and without hesitation serves heaven much more.

Some gain so much bad karma that they can only end up in one of two places. The first is reincarnation, not as a human, but as an animal, usually an insect or a filthy beast. People are known to treat animals well, just in case they are past relatives. The second is to wind up in hell, each designed to torture a specific kind of wretched soul.

So, people tend to avoid bad karma in life, which can lead to some tricky situations. Dishonoring your family creates bad karma, but the Emperor says that withholding the identities of known ninja does this as well.

The Enlightened

Another religious group exists that runs parallel to the ideas of dharma and class. The Enlightened, however, attempt to break free of the bonds of class and ascend to heaven. Their history states that there was one being centuries ago, called only Ko, whose spirit ascended to heaven but returned to show others the way. The Tenets of Ko were written to help others follow in his footsteps. Today, several of Enlightened Monasteries exist, usually secluded in the mountains. While its monks are pacifistic, they study day and night in the various martial arts to tone their spirit and body and in case they need to defend their land.

The Reconciled

A fledgling religion known as the Reconciled has been found in small gathering throughout the Empire. They preach of a single being in Heaven that

governs all the world. This being has no name, but is thought to be greater than any ninja or the Emperor himself.

Most followers seem to come from harsh and violent lives where they've performed horrible acts. To join, however, they must seek forgiveness from Heaven through prayer and penance. This helps to rest their own personal demons and is said to keep them from descending in class in their next life. This idea, of course, is blasphemous in most circles, so members are rarely too open about their beliefs unless in good company.

THE TEN PROVINCES

The Empire is quite a vast domain with varying terrain depending on where one travels. Several dynasties of work has gone into building such a large power base and even taking other kingdoms' land during their wars. This section goes into the intricacies of the Izou Empire and its major locations.

Power within the Izou Empire is split into ten different provinces, each ruled by a separate daimyo (or governor). These provinces are constantly changing rulers as the ruling Emperor's favor changes from one noble family to another over time, but final ownership always falls to the imperial family. Provinces are listed in the order they became a part of the empire.

MIDDLE PROVINCE

This province is the foundation of the entire Izou Empire, directly in the center of the Empire itself, and sees more traffic than any other due to its politics, tourism and crime. The capital, Daiwa (or Harmony City), was conquered long ago and named after the idea that the Empire was to inspire, true harmony across the world. Of course, most believe that peace can only truly come through war. Daiwa brings in many different types of travelers though, noble-blooded politicians looking to gain favor with the Emperor, envoys from other kingdoms, protesters to the Ninja Crusade and plenty of citizens looking to join the Izou Army.

The Emperor's Palace was also built in Daiwa,

where the Emperor sits peacefully as he plans the destruction of ninja. Thirty-foot walls surround the grounds with roaming guards and lookouts, making it an almost impenetrable fortress. The Lotus Coalition has scouted for years and has yet to find a weak spot in its defenses.

For as evil the city may be in the ninjas' minds, it is also a place of great beauty and culture. From the gorgeous Children's Palace (a playground for noble child) to the Hall of Heroes Memorial (a tower remembering all the fallen soldiers to past wars) to the rapid roads of the shopping district, Daiwa rests on the plentiful Seimei River and has much to offer its citizens. Today, the feeling in Daiwa is one of relative peace. A brief period of rebellion to the Ninja Crusade came and went and there is still the occasional ninja being dragged down the street by an angry mob, but for the most part, the Empire has done a good job of convincing the populace that the Ninja Crusade only benefits them.

Nanchou, or South City, lies directly south of Daiwa on the border between the Middle and Cradle of Life Provinces. It, however, is less of a city and much more a city-sized penitentiary. The world's worst captured criminals are kept here due to its use of magic and mundane methods of rehabilitation. Today, there have been several revolutionaries, martyrs and even completely innocent people sent to Nanchou as a symbol to the Lotus Coalition. These people rarely survive and no one has ever escaped its walls.

To the east, Heigenchou (the City of Plains) was once one of the largest farming communities outside the Cradle of Life Province, the first to try out advanced agriculture techniques. This was the site of the very first testing for firearms and explosives, which left many of the citizens and much of the land... dead and unusable. A city in unrest, heavy guard has been placed here to ensure the workers continue producing the food needed to feed the thriving noble tradition.

In a province with so many colors, the Wardens of Equilibrium find it easy to practice their arts here. While they can be found in just about any major city, the clan holds the majority of power in and around Daiwa, making them the easy choice to lead the Lotus Coalition.



THE FLOATING CITY

Fouchou, the Floating City, began as a collection of merchant junk boats bound together in hopes of evading imperial oppression. They roped their boats and began selling their wares off the coast of Kiwan, hoping that their distance from the city would protect them from normal merchant laws. Over time, they picked up more and more boats, some stores and other becoming large homes, until the collection of boats became its own sprawling city of rope bridges and sails.

Today, they travel up and down the western coast of the Izou Empire, selling their wares as the largest known marketplace in the world. A shopper can theoretically get whatever they want or need there... for the right price. There is no prejudice against ninja in Fouchou (with no one clan having the majority of influence), so there are often mystical items or ingredients available as well. Sadly, the moral fiber of the Floating City is often lacking, leading to some boats that pander to slavery rings or others that are dedicated drug dens. Truly, one may find anything here.

During this stage of the Ninja Crusade, Fouchou can be found about half way through its migratory cycle, docked on the small peninsula just sought of where the Silk Belt Province becomes the Cradle of Life Province. Though, the GM is encouraged to place the Floating City where it best suits their story.



SILK BELT PROVINCE

The Silk Belt Province is where many noble families call home (or their seasonal home at least). It is mostly grasslands, but has plenty of forests that stretch across the Empire like a belt. The province is primarily known for its chief resource and export... silk (thus its name). Several small villages contribute different types and colors of silk to the trade, supplying the Izou Empire with enough income to fund their war efforts and keep the peace. Commoners here are treated somewhat better than in other provinces, expected to be at least from the richer end of the spectrum and have more etiquette.

The twin cities, Unmeishi (Sister to Fate) and Jikankei (Brother to Time), lie at the northern region

of the Silk Belt Province. Unmeishi is the Empire's second largest port city, mostly used for trading with the Land of Mountains and Valleys (well, half of it anyway). Jikankei, in contrast, is not a city of business... but of art. Many of the Izou Empire's great historical items are kept within the museums within this preserved city, which is itself also a huge point in history. It was the first city to fall when the Empire was rising in power. It also has the most expansive vineyards in the land.

Tennokiba, the city known as Heaven's Teeth, is the epicenter of political activity in the province. Several deals get made here, both in the courts and in the back alleys. The Hidden Strands of Fate hold most of their power in this province, using their wealth and influence to get themselves whatever they want and keep their membership at its peak. They are well ingrained into the political system, making it very hard to broker any deals without their involvement (even if indirectly).

BRIDGE TO THE WORLD PROVINCE

This province is highly sought by all political parties. It houses the largest number of imports and exports due to the majority of Izou Empire's important docks being centered in Kiwan (Turtle Bay). It serves as the hub for most of the communication to and from the Land of Crashing Waves. It is full of expansive plains, with a few pleasant ponds and cherry blossom fields to bring in tourists for its beautiful sights. The rapid Wakare River separates it from the Silk Belt Province.

However, for those with a different eye and a penchant for vice, there also exists Yuukou, or Oil's Light, named for its lights that never go out. Yuukou is a large city of non-stop intrigue and partying politicians and nobles. It is a good place to gain employment for those that live in smaller villages within the province, but the true power in Yuukou comes from money. Those who have it get whatever they desire, from companionship to jewels to political favors, and can afford to keep the oil burning.

The Bridge to the World Province is also the center of Living Chronicle influence. They originally hail from the Land of Crashing Waves, so carving out this province for their own allows them to keep constant contact with their homeland, especially when

needing to transport preserved bodies with important historical events upon them. Shajisei'n, or the Temple of Scribes, is their main headquarters where they initiate new members and keep their backup volumes. It is simultaneously their largest and their best-hidden temple, kept far from the sights of the Izou Army through the use of cunning wushu.

CRADLE OF LIFE PROVINCE

This highly populated province is where the Izou Empire gets most of its food. The Cradle of Life Province is primarily composed of dozens of farming villages, producing everything from wheat to oranges to rice to the bulk of the Empire's vegetables. Several ranches also exist within the Cradle of Life Province, breeding many of its horses and cattle. The farmers keep some of the food for themselves, but sell the greater part of their yield to the Empire for distribution throughout the kingdom. Souchou, the City of Grass set on Lake Higan, is where most of the magic happens, even being the place where brand new types of crops have been created.

This province was never purely for a rich place to grow food, but also a strategic point during the War of Withered Fangs. Higandou (Paradise Road) lies south of Souchou, established as a port to send soldiers across the Gulf of Gaisen to the Iron Province in order to flank their enemies. As the war ended, Paradise Road became a simpler town, helping to transport goods to the southern territories, but little else besides offering a way to avoid traveling through the swamps of the Triumph Province.

The Pack of the Black Moon keeps this province in check. They have their roots in simple farm towns, making the Cradle of Life Province just right for their tempers. Other clans are always attempting to take chomps out of their territory, but they are quick to defend what is theirs.

FLAME RIVER PROVINCE

Probably the easiest of the provinces to conquer so long ago, the Flame River Province was the site of the beginning of ninja culture. The angry mountains made settling cities in the bulk of this province quite troublesome, due to the frequent eruption of the Ensen Volcano atop the Takiyama Mountains. It was an important territory to command if the Izou

Empire wished to take their war east. When the dust settled, the region started to grow regardless of the Ensen Volcano (which calmed to only two or three small eruptions per year).

Today, the largest point of interest is the Wu Ji Theater, where the Blazing Dancers have made their home. They have put on the greatest shows of all time in this theater, but their doors have been recently closed, but they have begun mentoring other troupes to perform in their stead. The Flame River Province is easy to keep under control as the clan's movements within the Wu Ji Theater are a public matter.

Kokyuryu City (or Breathing Dragon) lies to the northwest of the region, said to be the last home of the ancient dragons thought to be extinct. It is a city of old temples and monasteries, giving an air of mysticism and magic throughout. By contrast, the city of Kakou (the Fire Port) is a bustling city of rebellion and export. It is the main source of the little trade the Izou Empire has with the Land of Exalted Flame, being unable to cross the Desert of Black Sand or the Arashi Sea without terrible losses. Kakou is also a place where refugees from the Exalted Flame and the Land of Mountains and Valleys come to hide out, a known place for intrigue.

BLACK VEIL PROVINCE

The Black Veil Province was named after the devastation caused by the Great Desert when the Izou Empire attempted their siege on the Land of Exalted Flame. Kokudou, the Black Road, was the city closest to destruction, burned down in the chaos. However, its people possess a firm spirit that has kept them unmoving. Kokudou is their home and its citizens have learned to weather through the abrasive sandstorms and sweltering heat with a smile.

The City of Kafukyuu, or Widow's Tear, is known for its hot summers and cold winters, but also for death itself. One of the past Emperor's was killed in this very city, but has slightly tainted the atmosphere. It is still a thriving vacation spot for noblemen, but usually only those with a taste for corruption as it is also has a superb red light district.

The province's third place of interest is a city that is currently dying. The Arashi Port, which once was a busy center of commerce and trade through

the Arashi Sea, has slowly turned into a ghost town. What is a port town that cannot sustain ships or boats due to the horrible weather conditions of its sea. The city is filled with empty, run down homes and receives little funding or food from the Izou Empire as it is no longer a strategic port. Those that still live at the Arashi Port do so because they lack the money or motivation to leave, as living there has been known to breed depression.

The Grasping Shadows find the bulk of their power in this region. They protect it from harm, but also rule it with an iron fist. Any aggressors are soon to find that even the citizens will fight against anyone that would take their land. The Black Veil Province isn't the happiest or shiniest place to live, but its people care about their land and will protect their lords to the end. The Shadows are regarded as terrorists by the outside, but as heroes to the people of the Black Veil Province.

BRIDGE TO BATTLE PROVINCE

To the southeast of the capital lies the Bridge to Battle Province. It was aptly named after the regions usefulness during the War of Withered Fangs. It was one of the major strategic points, right at the edge of the battle where soldiers were trained and housed for the war. It is the smallest territory, but still holds this important job. It is the first line of defense just in case there is ever an uprising from the Triumph Province. Few expect such a thing to happen, but the citizens have been swept up in the direction of the Recoiling Serpents in the past. If they attack again, who knows if this will occur once again.

The region carries an uneasy quiet, with the feeling that chaos will happen any moment. This is further influenced by the city Heiminmu, or Commoner's Dream, so named because the Emperor believed "It should be any commoner's dream to work for the direct enjoyment of his betters". This city is the hub for much of the Empire's mining expeditions and has led to the discovery of many useful plots of oil and metals. There is always a job to be had in Heiminmu, due to the frequent deaths due to black lung and other health-related disorders. There was a single uprising a year ago that was instantly disbanded by the Izou Army, who also happens to have major training facilities in this city.

The Virtuous Body Gardeners hold the most influence in the Bridge to Battle Province. It is manageable enough to retain with their small numbers and holds just the right amount of disquiet that they plan to use in their upcoming revolution. Few others seek control of their region, because the citizens are unruly, but the Inks prefer this to easily led sheep. Those with a strong will are ripe for joining the clan to further their plans of expansion.

IRON PROVINCE

After advances into the Triumph Province proved difficult, the Empire was determined to outflank their enemy. They used the city of Higandou in the Cradle of Life Province to launch a naval attack on the Land of Five Blades. The battle was long and daunting, but eventually fell to the Empire's favor. After founding Sensoumon (Gate to War) and securing the land, their armies were able to pursue a two-pronged attack from the Iron and Bridge to Battle Provinces simultaneously.

Kitetsuchou, the Shiny Metal City, became an important settlement for the Izou Empire. They were able to usurp a portion of the Aikuchi Mountains from the Land of Five Blades which was and currently is mined for a large amount of the metal used for the Empire. There is little in Kitetsuchou besides a few homes, the immense mining facilities and the fear that any Blade citizen may suddenly attack at any time.

Further south, Hotaru no Kouji (or Firefly's Path) was founded as one of the essential cities to attack the Land of Seed of Blossom. It is well known for its beautiful sights, blazing firefly symphonies in the sky and for being the location from which horrible burning attacks were initiated. It has become a city where representatives from the three great kingdoms converge to hopefully better the relations between them.

The Will of Iron holds the most power here, being part of their homeland. They were integral to settling a peace between the Izou and the Blades, often acting as liaisons between the two powers. Many of their tenets come from the teachings of the Land of Five Blades and are still alien to other clans in the Empire.



TRIUMPH PROVINCE

The War of Withered Fangs came to a head in this province, starting with attacks from the Bridge to Battle Province. The Slithering Gods defended their borders and territory from Koshinchou, or Sickly City, so named for the favored weapons of its people. Today, this city produces plenty of grain for the Empire behind walls of high grass that keep it nicely hidden.

Then the Izou Empire founded Dainiryoku at the heart of the Seifuku River, which became the second capital from which to run the rest of their war. Even today, it is where some of the greatest soldiers have been trained, including some specialty squads, like Golden Lions. Their forces moved from Dainiryoku north to Tokagewan (Lizard Bay). The small port town crumbled beneath the weight of the Izou War Machine, but only after the Slithering Gods summoned their most powerful ally, Khis (pg 197). The battle against the celestial snake decimated the Izou forces, but they still continued their attacks.

Yanuma, or Night's Bog, was the final city overtaken, being nearest to the gulf and where the region received most of its fish supply. When night fell, the entire town was reduced to ashes and the Slithering Gods could only watch. After their surrender, Yanuma has been rebuilt as a premiere port town with the Triumph Province, a name that is a constant reminder of the Empire's victory over the region.

The Slithering Gods became the Recoiling Serpents, but the clan still retains their power in the Triumph region. They make their home in the swampy center of the province, making any further attacks or even finding them quite difficult. Their clan is also the most adept at living in these conditions, so they have no real worry about other clans attempting to take their territory.

OAK LEAF PROVINCE

The final province added to the Izou Empire, the Oak Leaf Province could be said to be the easiest to conquer. The land it holds was given as tribute to the Emperor from the people of the Land of Seed and Blossom and was enough to appease the armies enough to end their war.

At the base of the Seifuku River, Kiheki stood as

the Wooden Wall against the Empire in its last days. It is said that the world's greatest medicine men live in this city, bringing in people from all over the world hoping to cure their family and loved ones of sickness. However, it was the city of Oriki (Broken Trees) that was the first to fall to the Izou Army. Today, the Emperor uses it to station soldiers to keep the Land of Seed and Blossom in check.

The Bamboo Herbalists keep the Oak Leaf Province as theirs, an extension of their former homeland. Many mystical checkpoints keep track of anyone that enters their territory that they keep under illusory protection. Other ninja often find themselves lost in the forests for days at a time if they show any type of aggression toward the Herbalists.

THE FIVE KINGDOMS

The nations outside the Izou Empire are referred to as the Five Kingdoms, but not always with affection. The Empire is the product of centuries of acclimatizing different cultures into a "melting pot" of diversity. The Five Kingdoms hold true to their own philosophies and cultures, accepting few others and are often xenophobic against outsiders. Some would say they have this right, since the Empire has tried to assimilate them at varying periods in the world's history. Each has gone to extraordinary lengths to keep themselves solitary, sovereign nations, a few giving up territory to keep the peace and others altering the very world they live in to stop the Empire's advances.

The Five Kingdoms exist apart from the Empire, no matter what the Empire's expansionist residents believe, though they are not so far removed from the Ninja Crusade as they would like. Each has its own internal conflicts to deal with, from native ninja to frequent religious and political clashes. Whether they like it or not, while the crumbling of the Izou Empire may sound pleasing to the ear, its collapse would spell chaos for the Five Kingdoms. The Land of Five Blades and Land of Seed and Blossom would surely reclaim their stolen territory and go to war over the remainder of the southern reaches of the Empire, while the Land of Crashing Waves and Land of Mountains and Valleys would

no doubt embark on naval wars from the Empire's coastal regions. The Land of Exalted Flame would have religious apprehensions about participating in the wars, but would be forced into action for fear of being outnumbered and overpowered by the other four nations.

Of course, this is just one theory... but it is the most popular. The world would go to ruin without the Empire and this is why they aid in the Ninja Crusade. Political arguments may continue throughout the war, but none will stop what is necessary. Even with this said, the Izou Empire's "allies" are one explosive incident away from breaking ties or declaring their own wars. Characters must be careful when dealing with ninja from other lands, as not to create international situations with the wrong decision.

Below is a brief description of each of the Five Kingdoms, their major contributions to the Ninja Crusade and other important landmarks.

LAND OF CRASHING WAVES

Across the Western Ocean lies the Land of Crashing Waves. The Izou Empire has attempted forward attacks many times on the island nations, but were faced with a superior navy every time. Not only that, but they must also contend with the numerous pirate vessels that most have come to fear. However, the two countries were able to come to an eventual agreement and alliance decades ago, and their bond has only grown stronger since the Ninja Crusade. The Land of Crashing Waves not only lends support in the way of soldiers and ships to defend the Empire's coasts, but also some of their most gifted generals and strategists. With their help, the Izou Empire hopes to make ninja extinct.

The Land of Crashing Waves is composed of a series of islands, each with its own culture, ruler and government. After century-long wars between them, a peace has settled and the Island Council has been instituted. Each nation elects representatives that attend the Council, which then takes votes in various propositions to improve the Land of Crashing Waves as a whole. This political atmosphere has created a tension in the land that is palpable, making most everyone have to learn the ins and outs of deception and manipulation. Council representatives have plenty of assistants and advisors,

each with their own agenda to make their nation strong. Even many of the pirates that circle the land in search of easy targets have become privateers for the nation that can pay the most. The Island Council takes place in Risutoa, the unofficial capital of the Land of Crashing Waves.

Their alliance with the Izou Empire places the Land of Crashing Waves firmly outside the reach of most organized aggressors. Their conflicts usually happen between the nations themselves. Previously, it had a series of minor wars, fought on the oceans for control of land and property. After the explosion that created Lake Kansou and the Island Council founding, these battles now take place in the form of lobbying, takeovers and manipulating audiences to one's favor. The Council paved the road for the Living Chronicle to come to fruition as a way to preserve all the information in the island nations, from business ownership to boarder alterations. Of course, they are not without outside influence, as pirates frequently pillage coastal villages for valuables and occasionally attack military/cargo ships sent to the Izou Empire.

Ninja in the Land of Crashing Waves have varied reputations, depending on who is asking. Some are politically minded, learning how to sway others' emotions. Others are remnants from the land's past battles, with devastatingly destructive power (like the one that created Kansou Lake or others that allow ninja to expand and control their bodies).

Grand Library

Even with all the accomplishments the Izou Empire has managed over its dynasty, the Land of Crashing Waves still has one thing it doesn't... the Grand Library. In Risutoa, not far from where the Island Council meets, stands this monumental tribute to knowledge. Within its walls lies the largest collection of written works and preserved bodies from rulings made by courts centuries ago to journals from the world's most prolific philosophers. Entry into this library must be sanctioned by the Island Council and is not easy to obtain. The waiting list runs miles long with people who wish to feast their eyes on this triumph of education.

LAND OF EXALTED FLAME

The Land of Exalted Flame to the east of the Izou Empire is a complete enigma to most. They are highly religious and passionately pacifist in nature, following sacred tenets that forbade harm to another. The Izou Empire sought expansion above all else and an opponent that wouldn't fight back made for easy pickings. Hundreds of thousands of the Exalted Flame's people were massacred in the face of the Empire's might, leaving them with only one chance to survive. Their most powerful monks, also ninja themselves, blackened hundreds of miles of land between the Land of Exalted Flame and Izou Empire, burning numerous war parties and even some of their own settlements in the process. This created the Great Desert (also called the Desert of Black Sand), a stretch of land too destroyed to live on and too impossibly hot to cross without certain death. When the Empire attempted to cross via ship, their ninja created an unstoppable hurricane without end, giving the sea its name... the Arashi Sea. This animosity toward the Izou Empire has continued into the Ninja Crusade, as the Land of Exalted Flame is only nation to refuse aid in a fool's war.

Its people have been all but completely removed from the rest of the world for centuries, believing isolation their only means of survival in a war-torn world. Every citizen is indoctrinated from birth into the teachings of the great Kasai, a peacemaker and philosopher that lived millennia ago. These lessons include reverence to one's elders and ancestors, as well as the way a person must follow to be the best they can be. However, its residents are also taught to be a member of their community moreso than an individual. They frequently forsake personal desires

to better their nation, community and family to an oppressive degree. Arranged marriages are the norm, not the exception. Dancing, creativity and free-will are replaced with the Way. The people follow a group of leaders that have attained a perfect state of being who make all the decisions in the best interests of their nation. They are housed in Seishin, the country's capital.

Their interaction with the other nations is limited at best. Communications are unreturned to the Izou Empire, the Land of Mountains and Valleys or the Land of Crashing Waves. The Land of Five Blades occasionally has visitors from Land of Exalted Flame in search of training or pilgrimage. However, this has halted since the beginning of the Ninja Crusade, as it has become much too dangerous to travel so far. In an effort to discover more of the world, their esteemed leaders have established a settlement in the Untamed Wilds. This has led to clashes with local barbarians and ninja from the Land of Seed of Blossom, but the settlement still holds strong.

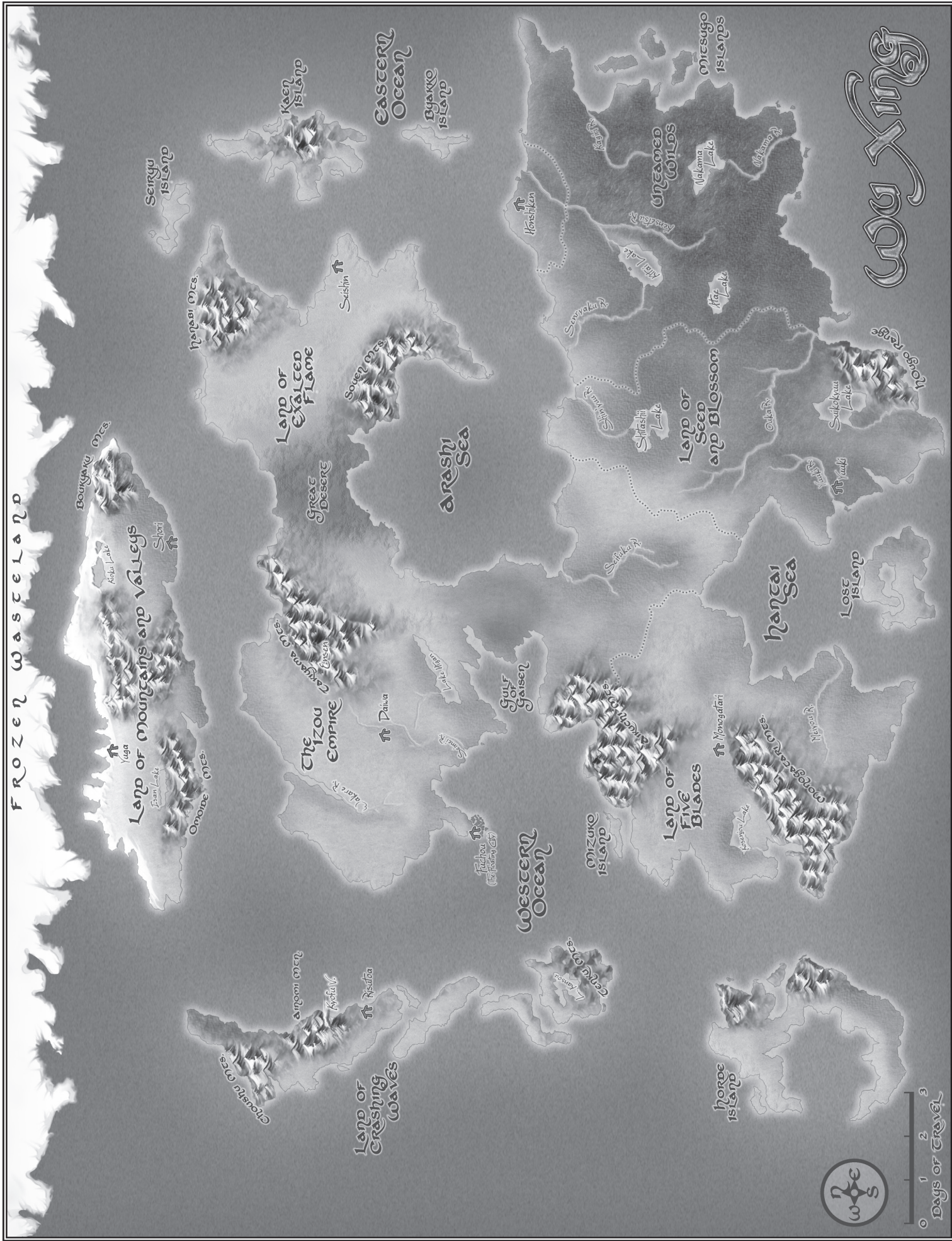
Once one finds out the true nature of the Land of Exalted Flame, it is not surprising that the Blazing Dancers fled their homeland for the Izou Empire. Those clans that still reside there, however, are capable of impressive displays of spirit manipulation and chi manipulation that few others have masters in the world.

Kaen Island

This island lies east of the Land of Exalted Flame and is a holy land for its people. Upon reaching adulthood, citizens travel to Kaen Island to shed their most valued possession into the great Kaen Volcano, thus cementing their connection to their nation and the Way. This may sound easy, but they must perform this pilgrimage without aid from others and with minimal food or water. Each is marked on their foreheads with ash from the Great Desert (where their journey begins). There are some so devout that they travel on their knees, bowing to the island every ten steps. This practice is just another reason why the Land of Exalted Flame is so strange to outsiders.

HORDE ISLAND

This crescent-shaped island in the southeastern region of the world is the known home for criminals from all around. Horde Island has become the place to visit if looking for illegal opportunities, such as pirating, slave trafficking or mercenary work. Anyone that visits with even the scent of a conscience usually ends up completely swindled or washed up on the shore.



LAND OF FIVE BLADES

Located to the Southwest of the Izou Empire, the Land of Five Blades is known for its strength, conviction and warrior culture. They were the first to be attacked by the Empire during its expansion and conquering, knowing that they stood little chance of winning in a fair fight. They instituted many secret assassins, scout parties and covert assault squads to take out key locations to incapacitate their enemies. In the end, their surprise attack worked and the Land of Five Blades was pushed back and made an eventual ally of the Izou Empire.

During the current Ninja Crusade, the Land of Five Blades supplies various sources of metal to the Empire to manufacture its guns and other machinery and additional warriors by the dozen. These secrets are not given lightly though, as their representatives have made considerable headway into the Izou Empire's political system in hopes of making real changes to benefit their country.

The Land of Five Blades is less a unified nation and more of a collection of likeminded nation-states. There are seven nation-states in total, with the largest of them in the center, housing the capital, Monotagari. To travel through the land is to look upon an almost alien world. The cities are made of spiraling metal and their skies are filled with smoke created by factories. Their geniuses were the first to discover steam power and have put it to very good use to improve their lives. The land's people follow strict codes of honor, considered foreign to other countries, and often take part in ritualistic, ceremonial and occasionally celebratory battles. This includes fighting for the right to take another's hand in marriage, to settle disagreements or to become an adult. These fights are rarely to the death, used instead to hone their love of battle and ability to take a hit. The people of the Land of Five Blades are known for accepting defeat gracefully, but also for retaliating forthright when the time is right.

Skirmishes along the boarder of the Iron Province or with the Land of Seed and Blossom have cropped up from time to time, but most of the violence that the Land of Five Blades enjoys comes from within. Not only are its residents in a constant sparring match against each other, five of the world's greatest swordsmen have hailed from this nation, giving

its well deserved name and pushing its reputation as a no-nonsense nation even further. Travelers visit with hopes of challenging the best swordsmen and besting them to gain the title for themselves. Though, few make it this far south and are guaranteed a certain, swift death if they actually do.

The most notable ninja clan from the Land of Five Blades is the Will of Iron, which holds territory in both lands. However, other clans from the Five Blades have mastered some of the most lethal and aggressive wushu known. Also, their nationwide code of honor appeals to Celestial Animals (pg 189), making it a haven for these beasts.

Sword Tower

This site has existed for centuries and stands tall at 300 ft. Sword Tower is one giant sword, implanted into the ground. Legend states that it is a remnant of the last great battle between rival ninja who wielded the awesome power of colossal Celestial Animals (pg 189). The people of the Land of Five Blades quickly carved out a structure within the sword, creating a true work of beauty. The metal removed was used to forge some of the most legendary weapons today, imbued with the magic of the celestials.

LAND OF MOUNTAINS AND VALLEYS

The Land of Mountains and Valleys lies directly north of the Izou Empire. It is so name because it possesses both of these geographical phenomena, but also as an illustration of the stark differences in its citizenry. It is a country where the rich and poor, the clean and dirty, the noble and commoner is easy to distinguish at a glance. The once-unified Land of Mountains and Valleys has been in a torrid civil war for the last 20 years and its ripples were actually one of the sparks that lit the powder keg of the 4th Ninja War. The Izou Empire sent several ambassadors north to aid in resolving issues, as well as several sentries to put the commoners in their place. This gained them an alliance with the western people who now supply large amount of saltpeter and other war supplies in the Ninja Crusade. The eastern people, however, have held true to their rights and continue with their guerrilla attacks against the west.

The conflict in their land began as the Kishin Family began to take over all the businesses and politics in the Land of Mountains and Valleys. They and their cohorts also began mining ancient, preserved ruins for profit to be spent on frivolous and gaudy tributes to themselves. That is until the residents of a small fishing village, Shori, began assembling large meetings that eventually went on to create an all-out rebellion against the ruling parties. At its height about 10 years ago, powerful masters of the Way of Earth raised an artificial mountain range to separate the two sides of the country, essentially creating two separate nations. Each side blames the other from this blight on their country, neither choosing to give it a proper name. This civil war continues even today, pitting brother against brother, and the people are starved for an end that is nowhere in sight... especially as the Izou Empire has their own stake in its continuing.

The continent is relatively safe from outside interference. It's proximity to the Frozen Wastelands removes the possibility of invasion for an abundance of resources or vacation homes. Its close relationship with the Izou Empire also means that aggressors would have to deal with a forceful ally to take down the Land of Mountains and Valleys. No, its conflicts are certainly internal, but the Empire has many fronts in the west and the Lotus Coalition in the east.

The ninja from the Land of Mountains and Valleys are as varied as its residents. The clans here held tight to their roots and never truly gathered territory in the Izou Empire, but that is not due to lack of power. Ninja from the west are known to influence a person's mind with a flick of their finger, while eastern ninja manifest illusions that can drive a person mad.

Frozen Wastelands

The northern part of the world, covered entirely in ice and snow is called the Frozen Wastelands. While many nations have journeyed there, the Land of Mountains and Valleys have become masters of the icy terrain. Both sides of the current war have territory in the Frozen Wastelands, often as hideouts to escape the war and rest before the next assault. Other nations may travel there in search of

new adventures, rare herbs that require the cold to grow or to involve themselves in the affairs of the Land of Mountains and Valleys.

LAND OF SEED AND BLOSSOM

A country of strangeness and danger, the Land of Seed and Blossom seems quite foreign to anyone that doesn't live there. After beating the Land of Five Blades into submission, the Izou Empire turned its attention to the southeast. They launched unstoppable attack with the help of the Five Blades, reducing towns and cities to rubble as they made their approach.

The Land of Seed and Blossom had previously enjoyed peace and the freedom to explore the Untamed Wilds to their east. But in the face of a war, they found that a battle on two fronts was just too much for them to bear. They sought a quick return to this peace and struck a swift deal with the Izou Empire to preserve their solace. Other nations regard them as cowards, but any other course would have destroyed their nation. During the Ninja Crusade, the Land of Seed and Blossom delivers vital medical aid and extra troops when they can be spared. For the most part, this agreement is made to keep the two nations separate, not for the Seed and Blossom to take hold in the empire.

The Land of Seed of Blossom is structured as a single tribe in a humungous jungle. People are garbed in little clothes, as the sweltering heat makes constricting apparel quite the hassle. There are several towns and villages that are self-ruled, but they all answer to the Elders – the eldest man and woman in the land. They are always housed in the capital, Yuuki, where they are cared for, given their every heart desire and are sought for their wisdom. Even if they did not ask for it, they are the defector rulers of the entire nation... some better than others. Their previous Elder male recently died in the initial attack of the Ninja Crusade, and his replacement is much more “war-minded” than his predecessor. Many believe that the Land of Seed and Blossom is ripe with intentions of dissent.

Although connected by land, the territory between the Land of Seed and Blossom and the Land of Five Blades is owned by the Izou Empire. Instead of beginning wars on their ally's land, the two na-

tions wage secret wars across the Hantai Sea. This struggle is usually over who will be first to explore the Lost Island that lies between them, a mysterious island protected by strange, magical barriers.

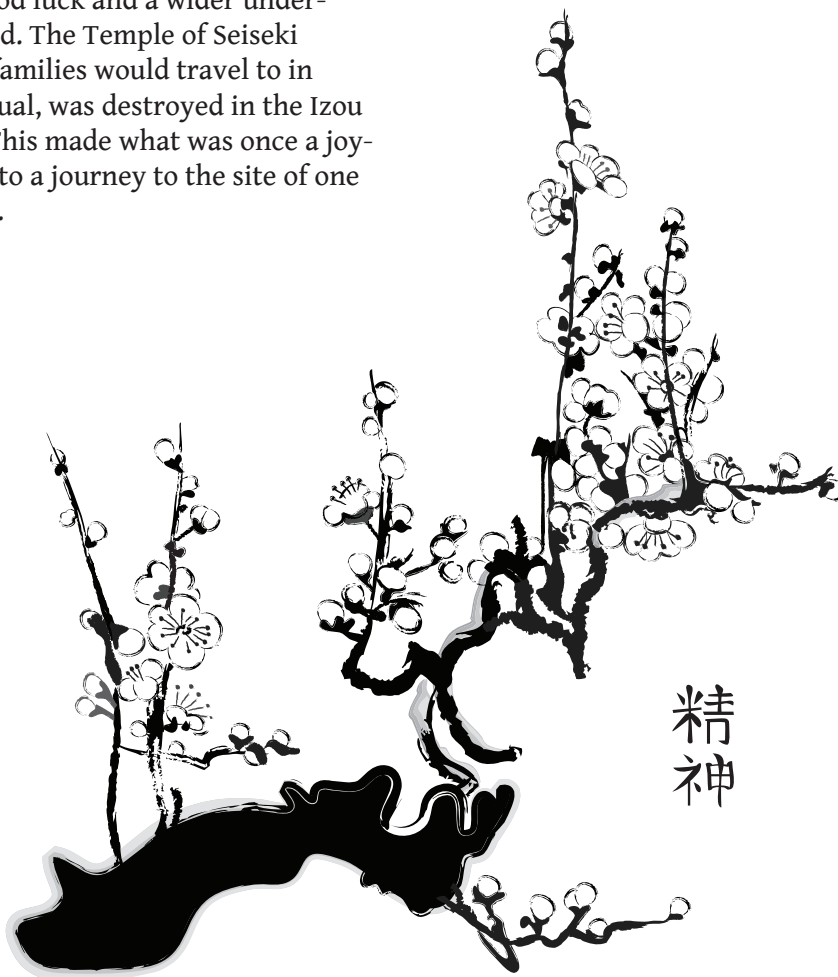
The Bamboo Herbalists once called the Land of Seed and Blossom their homeland, but they actually hold more territory in the Izou Empire nowadays. Just as the Brewers are masters of the healing arts, other clans are rumored to be paragons of manipulating their bodies. Mastery of disease and transmutation, their ninja are heralded as near-gods in the Land of Seed and Blossom – an idea that would be considered taboo anywhere else.

Ruins of Seiseki

The people of the Land of Seed and Blossom are known for their feelings of a beneficial community and spirituality. As part of their heritage, every child is given a birthstone, implanted into their forehead. It brings good luck and a wider understanding of their world. The Temple of Seiseki (Birthstones), where families would travel to in order to enact this ritual, was destroyed in the Izou Empire's expansion. This made what was once a joyous occasion for all into a journey to the site of one of their greatest losses.

UNTAMED WILDS

The Untamed Wilds is one of the few regions of the world that has not been acquired by a nation. The Land of Seed and Blossom has had the chance since the beginning of time to plant their flag, but has chosen not too. They believe that clearing out an area full of such rare flora and fauna to make room for people would destroy what makes it wonderful. Their tribes use travel into the Untamed Wilds as a sign of adulthood and are often enamored with simple exploration or seeking out new beasts to test one's skills. The Land of Seed and Blossom has begun a campaign to evict the Honshiken settlement from the Land of Exalted Flame, who has burned down a large piece of the Untamed Wilds for their people. Several night battles have been waged on their borders between the two lands, with neither gaining a real advantage at this point.



CHAPTER TWO: CLANS

The Izou Empire has many ninja that call its borders home, grouped into families called clans. Some have existed as long or longer than the Empire, each holding its own territory and forging its own history, culture and path into the future. Generation after generation, their traditions are passed from teacher to student in an attempt to keep their influence continuous through the region.

Not all clans survive in the end. Their countless wars have claimed several families in their bloody wake as the scales of power constantly shift. Some clans have committed heinous acts in the past, while others have tried to stay out of such conflict... even if unsuccessfully.

This chapter presents the 10 clans with the largest amount of power within the Izou Empire, as well as Ronin who have no clan affiliation. Some

hail from foreign lands, like the Blazing Dancers or the Will of Iron, while others have resided in the Empire for centuries like the Grasping Shadows or Recoiling Serpents. The following is explained for each clan:

- **History:** A look at the past of each clan and how they came to be
- **Lifestyle:** Info on the territory, training practices and life of the clan's members
- **Agendas:** The plots and goals of the clan during the Ninja Crusade
- **Character Creation:** All the options for making a character of that clan, including starting Fighting Styles and special Gifts/Drawbacks.

Players can choose from one of the 10 clans or start as a Ronin (a clanless ninja). Each has certain distinguishing advantages and drawbacks that make them unique in the world of ninja.



TYPICAL MEMBERS

It should be noted that the information given is for the “typical” member of that clan. No matter how typical the description, however, a player's character is an individual and can subscribe to all of its tenets or only a few. To subscribe to none would mean they are not an actual member, but not every clan member is a cookie-cutter replica of the next. The GM may, at times, request certain backgrounds and stereotypes be active for their story, but the player has the ultimate say in the behavior of their character. To assume that all stereotypes are true about every person affiliated with a particular group is unintelligent and is likely dangerous in the long run.

GMs should also feel free to restrict or disallow clans that do not fit their story. For instance, if the story takes place in a region with heavy Grasping Shadow influence, it may not be wise to let characters play as a member of the Virtuous Body Gardeners or Blazing Dancers if everything is expected to go smoothly.



BAMBOO HERBALISTS

Other Names: Ika Clan, Brewers, Healers

Stereotypes: Border-Crossers, Scientific, Great in Emergencies

"Yellow petals or pink petals?" the ninja asked.

Kino sighed with frustration, whipping back her long braid as she stood. "Pink, Emi, pink... and hurry up. We still must collect the eggs and this territory is not ours." The two Brewers gently plucked several flower petals, placing them into their side bags.

Then, suddenly, they heard a deadly rattle and saw a flurry of snakes emerge from a nearby cave. The rattlesnakes of the Triumph Province were known for their aggressiveness and their heavily-toxic venom. They backed away slowly, attempting to keep their distance.

"What now, Kino?"

Kino took account of her surroundings, noticing the rattlesnake eggs inside the cave. She smiled. "We get what we came for."

"Wha-," but before Emi could finish, Kino bolted toward the rattlesnakes. With a single leap, she bounded over them and landed at the mouth of the cave. She looked back, seeing Emi carefully controlling the snakes to attack each other... the violence was astounding. Back to the matter at hand, Kino snatched up three ripe eggs that were perfect for the potion she had planned.

As she exited, Kino noticed that for every snake before there was now two... then three... then four. Emi couldn't control them all and was on the ground unconscious. With a gasp, Kino jumped to Emi's side, then summoned up a wall of wood that shoved back the rattlesnake storm.

"You've unsettled the nest, one which you should not have disturbed in the first place." A ninja from atop the cave called out, a snake tattoo branding his right leg. "An angry reptile cannot be stopped." He followed his statement with a hand sign.

Outside the wooden wall, Kino heard the hiss and rattle of the snakes growing louder and louder. "We've got what we need. We can leave without any bloodshed."

"It's too late for that." And with that the wooden wall crashed down under the weight of a dozen snakes that each stretched ten feet long... and even more aggressive.

Kino quickly strapped Emi to her back and leapt into the tree above her. The rattlesnakes lunged at her, destroying the branches that she bounced from one by one. Their speed was also increased, allowing them to easily keep up with Kino, but there was no way she was going down without a fight.

And with that, she pulled her favorite potion from her bag. Kino was saving it to take out a Golden Lion, but this was a necessity. She tossed the bottle down below, disintegrating the snakes with a corrosive mist and left only bones.

She raced home as fast as her feet could take her. Emi would be fine, as the Brewers could cure silly snake venom, and taking on 12 giant snakes was going to be quite the story. All and all... a good day.



History

At varying times in history, the Brewers have been the most hated or most loved clan of them all. While other clans could chop down entire forests and send buildings crumbling to the ground with their wushu, the Bamboo Herbalists were the first clan to realize the healing capabilities that chi held. Mending wounds and curing even the most

mysterious of illnesses was possible with the unlimited power of wushu. Its founders quickly built the first academy for medical arts, initially only for ninja but eventually extending into what has become today's most-practiced holistic medicine. The Ika Clan has spent so much time studying the healing arts that it has become integrated into their very being, lengthening the lifespan and natural resistance to sickness and poison of its members. This proved to be an unprecedented advantage in the various Ninja Wars that they are called to, keeping themselves and their allies in good health on the battlefield. The clan was heralded as saviors on many occasions and, with suitable tribute and deals, has gone on to teach lessons to other clans.

In the same breath, the Brewers are universally hated, for their inability to adhere to territory borders. There are thousands of different herbs, animals and berries in the Empire that are needed for the clan's secret potions. In some cases, the Brewers have set up trade agreements to procure these items diplomatically, most notably with the Wardens of Equilibrium and Blazing Dancers. However, they are not above sneaking into other clans' territory in steal necessary ingredients. This has created great tension between the Brewers and those clans that are particular about visitors, like the Shadows that despise them and the Coils with whom they share a border.

Today, the Brewers find themselves as almost default members of the Lotus Coalition against the Empire. While they would much rather devote their time to research and keeping their own clan alive, they know that the threat is just too large. The recent Wedding Fiasco (pg 19) with the Lotus Coalition has put many of the clans at each other's throats, but the Brewers have attempted to be a calming influence.

Lifestyle

The Ika live in a constant state of discovery and research, much like people from the Land of Seed and Blossom, their homeland. They are forever seeking the newest medicine and are responsible for the majority of findings in mundane Empire herbalism (making a pretty penny from the sale of rare potions). Of course, they keep the best recipes for themselves. Initiates to the clan should show some knack for holistics or a natural affinity for science in general. But most important of all, they should have the love for uncovering secrets.

Their inborn longevity and wisdom lets them sustain their numbers without mass recruitment like other clans. Masters rarely take on more than three students in their lifetime and then usually only from family or close relation. After all, they are entrusting the student in the secrets to life itself. Students start at picking herbs and scouting ahead for animals to be hunted and then move to assisting with potion brewing and slaughter. Finally, they are taught to manipulate that kind of power with only their chi. These lessons often lead them into enemy territory to retrieve certain ingredients (flora or fauna), but they are also trained in martial arts to help ensure their survival though such situations. They graduate to full clan membership the moment they produced a working potion... which is no small feat. Prodigies that create brand new brews are especially favored within the clan.



Agendas

In the current war climate, their primary goal is supporting Lotus Coalition in the fight. The Ika are vital to keeping their warriors healthy enough to continue their resistance efforts against the Empire, as well as for finding an antidote for the

horrible poison that has befallen the leader of the Pack of the Black Moon. Becoming entrenched in the web of the Warden's obsession with controlling the conflict was not their first choice, but they are happy that the Wardens of Equilibrium have taken the helm and all the criticism for the horrible events. This allows the Brewers the opportunity to continue with their own work as normally as possible.

Character Creation

Free Specialty: Holistics

Fighting Styles: Dragon Style, Bear Style

Favored Wushu: Way of Caring Hands, Way of Wood, Way of Beasts

Clan Gift – Strong Like Bamboo: Ika ninja go through a special ritual that infuses their body with Yang energy to increase their lifespan. Some are given this gift at birth, while “adopted” ninja receive it when they prove themselves worthy. They age one year for every two after puberty (or graduation) not only due to this ritual, but also the mixture of medicines they regularly ingest. This extra health balances their body and mind, giving the following bonuses: +5 bonus against Poisons, Disease and Insanity, and the ability to last up to a number of days equal to their VIG without needing food or water, as well as up to three days without sleep without ill effect.

Clan Drawback – Thrill Seekers: The Brewers possess an overdeveloped sense of adventure. Many love staying indoors to research new potions, but most of their fun is had in the expeditions to gather their ingredients. They are constantly searching for rarer herbs and hunting increasingly dangerous beasts with each new recipe. There are even some that seek diseases on which to test their healing skills, traveling the land as wandering medicine men. This excitement taints their every decision and others' view of them.



CLAN IMPRESSIONS

In the words of Ichatsuko no Kino

Blazing Dancers: Man, they put on a superb show! Now if they could be as effective in this war, we'd be set. I hope they keep trying.

Grasping Shadows: I wish there was a potion to remove the stick from their butts, but alas.

Hidden Strands of Fate: Maybe they're hiding something and maybe not. Either way, they throw one hell of a party.

Living Chronicle: Write this down. “Inaction is Death.” Now read it back a few times and reflect.

Pack of the Black Moon: I tried to take a hair sample from one of their ninja dogs and the owner tried to bite me. I've heard of bonds with your pet, but...

Recoiling Serpents: They try to keep the good stuff from us. For being so big and bad, they sure are lax on their border patrol.

Virtuous Body Gardeners: I like these guys. They jump right into combat without a thought and make us look really good when we come in to save them.

Wardens of Equilibrium: Trying to control too many things. They'll never learn, so we'll just sit back and watch.

Will of Iron: We break a lot of rules. Just don't let them find out.

Ronin: Say hello and you may learn something new... or make a new enemy. One way or another, it'll be exciting.

Lotus Coalition: We joined to fight the Empire, not solve marriage issues. Still, it's probably our last chance at survival.

The Empire: Too many restrictions. Now you have to deal with us all and it's not going to be pretty.



BLAZING DANCERS

Other Names: Odoriko Clan, Dancers, Flame-Spitters

Stereotypes: Stylish, Performers, Clowns

Arisu wandered through the Autumn festival, being led by the hand of her father. The 10-year-old was amazed at the dazzling sights and wondrous displays of her very first event in Daiwa. She was looking forward to one performer in particular and she shivered with anticipation as they walked through the entryway to the biggest tent.

After getting their seats, Arisu and her father enjoyed the acrobats with adorned golden masks flipping and tumbling for the crowds amusements. The animals, dogs and elephants and eagles, put on a great show, showing the theater's training talents. The trapeze act climbed to the top of the tent, grabbing their swings and performing the best aerial feats the girl had ever seen.

And then, the final act. Lowered from the middle of the roof, suspended in mid air without ropes, Odoriko Minori appeared in his glory. His muscles shined in the light's and his costume shimmered as the crowd went wild. "And now... the Destroyer's Dance!" he called, raising the applause volume to the maximum, especially from Arisu.

The performers mimed their requests for volunteers and a number of hands rose within a second. Arisu and nine others were selected from the crowd of hundreds and she beamed as her father allowed her to go into the performance area. "There's one difference tonight from other nights... our volunteers tonight will disappear!"

Cheers filled the room as Odoriko Minori began spinning in the air. The faster he spun, the more blurred Arisu's vision of him, and then Minori burst into flames... the most magnificent part of the Destroyer's Dance. He slowly lowered to the ground, approaching each of the volunteers. The first woman was swallowed up instantly, followed by a gasp from the audience. Then a man and another woman and a small boy, each time receiving a huge ovation. Then Arisu was the last one to

vanish. She was scared and tightly closed her eye, until he finally reached her.

When she opened her eyes she was in a room and a trap door was closing above her. "It was just a trick," she laughed hysterically. Arisu and the others chuckled together, loving the fact that they were part of such a great show. The volunteers were all lead to the back of the tent where they greeted their families, all sworn not to reveal the secrets of the trick.

And then Arisu noticed... only nine people were released. "I want to say thank you again, father," she said, doubling back and peaking into the tent. She saw the old man being dragged away by the performers and then Minori seemed to materialize before her. "Here you go sweetheart, an autograph."

"Thank you Mr. Odoriko, but what are you doing with that man?" Arisu asked, while simultaneously taking the autograph.

"He's going to a surprise party... in his honor. Now you run along." Minori said, closing the back entrance to the tent.

Arisu couldn't tell if her senses detected partying or screams of pain. But she got an autograph out of it, so she returned to her father and enjoyed the rest of the festival.



History

The Blazing Dancers' story does not start in the Empire, but rather the Land of Exalted Flame that lies to the east. It's a land of obedience to a single purpose with no need for frivolity, but they became known for their performances and were invited to put on a private show for their king. During this show, the Dancers poorly chose to perform a certain religious/political satire that was taken as a completely blasphemous insult to their people. In response, the Odoriko clan was hunted down and

forced to flee the country or suffer a painful death in the jaws of the Okibi Island volcano. After being exiled, the Dancers escaped across the Great Desert via caravan, a feat never before accomplished. Their specialized wushu let them survive the trip with only minimal casualties.

Separated from their homeland, the Odoriko set out to make a new name in the Izou Empire, recreating their caravan of circus performers and actors once again. They put on elaborate shows for even the smallest village and built a quick following (and fortune) among the Empire's many nobles. Their most famous act, The Destroyer's Dance, became a clan staple empire-wide, which brought an immense influx of government art funding and talented young folk who wanted to join their ranks. They eventually settled north of the capital, opening the Wu Ji theater/school at the base of the Ensen Volcano to train both local performers and ninja initiates (in secret, obviously). They garner a large amount of hostility from the Grasping Shadows and other native clans, as the idea of foreigners setting up shop in the Empire is distasteful to most.

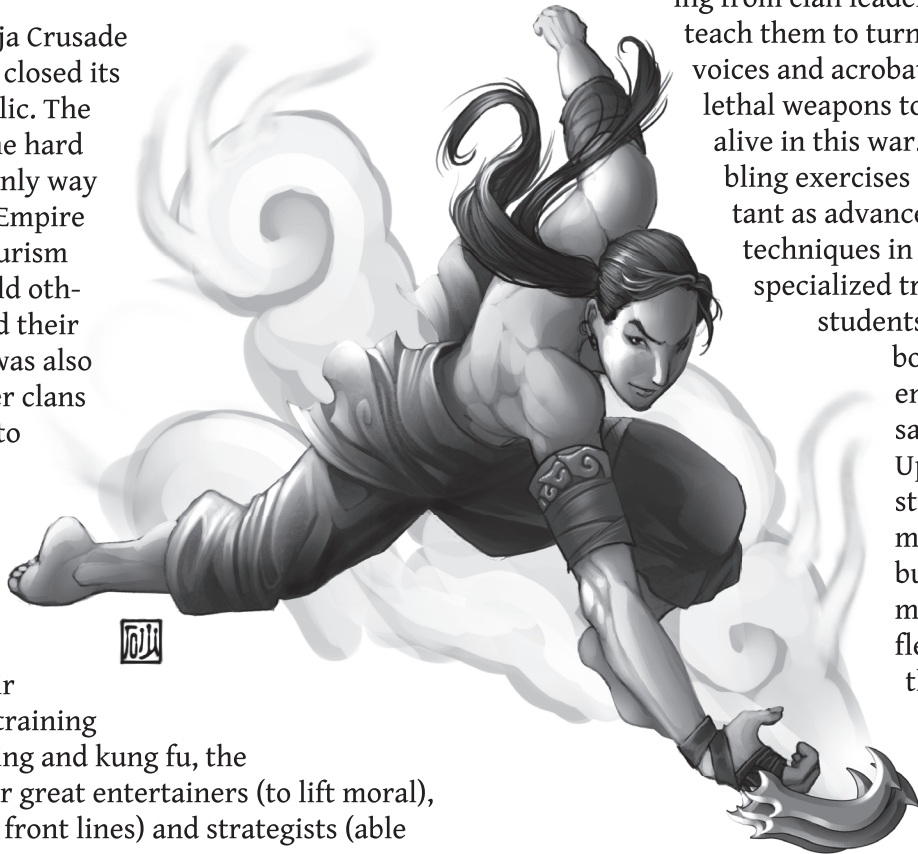
When the Ninja Crusade began, the Wu Ji closed its doors to the public. The Dancers made the hard decision as the only way of crippling the Empire by cutting off tourism money that would otherwise go to fund their petty war. This was also to show the other clans their allegiance to combating their common enemy and is why they so adamantly became part of the Lotus Coalition. Due to their highly-physical training in both performing and kung fu, the Odoriko make for great entertainers (to lift moral), warriors (on the front lines) and strategists (able

to easily choreograph complex war plans). They also completely back the Warden's efforts to unify the clans and support the Lotus Coalition at every juncture.

Lifestyle

Dancer territory was once a place where many flocked to see grand shows and, even after closing their doors to performances, a number of new students have continued to visit the Wu Ji. Students are seldom from poor families, but the school demands no stipend for their services. As long as they understand that only room and board can be gained from submitting to training, any student can begin their road to eventual stardom. New initiates of all levels are trained first on the mundane skills necessary of any Odoriko, such as raising their ability to dance several styles, strengthening their singing range and teaching the fundamentals of comedic and dramatic acting.

Only the most promising students are chosen from the fledgling ranks to receive ninja training from clan leaders. The Dancers teach them to turn their operatic voices and acrobatic bodies into lethal weapons to keep them alive in this war. Extreme tumbling exercises are as important as advanced storytelling techniques in their highly-specialized training, as the students are molded into both professional entertainers and savage warriors. Upon graduation, students used to move from stage builders and prop managers to full fledged actors in the grand shows put on by the Wu Ji. Now that the shows have stopped, they



funnel their new ninja into the Lotus Coalition to sustain their numbers.

Agendas

Many Odoriko have called for immediate evacuation from the Empire. These members protest that the Empire is not their business and that returning to their homeland would be less dangerous than being caught in the middle of the Ninja Crusade. This is, of course, not the Dancers' plan. They are staying to defend their reputation and territory from the tyrant attempting to destroy their traditions. They've thrown their clan's future and full support behind the Lotus Coalition and the War-den's lofty goals of a unified ninja front.

Character Creation

Free Specialty: Performance

Fighting Styles: Monkey Style, Wildcat Style

Favored Wushu: Way of the Immaculate Show, Way of Fire, Way of Movement

Clan Gift – Stage and Sound: As expert entertainers, they are taught how to put on a wonderful show. While telling a story, they can use this special Gift to create audible and visual effects (i.e. thunder crashing, spotlights, ghostly images, etc.). There is no check necessary, but these illusions are only seen by those who can clearly hear and understand their story - just another skill they used for their almost perfect performances.

Clan Drawback – Disrespected: Blazing Dancers are often stereotyped as jesters, comics and overall silly by others since they are considered entertainers more than seasoned warriors. They often have to work much harder to prove themselves to fellow ninja, and their constant smiles actually hinder their clan reputation in such trying times. With the Wu Ji closed, the Emperor has cast a shadow of ridicule on “the dancing clowns” throughout the Izou Empire. Many have left school without a penny to their names to escape the ridicule, some even using their “entertainment” abilities as prostitutes or concubines. This has helped their reputation even less.



CLAN IMPRESSIONS

In the words of Odoriko Minori

Bamboo Herbalists: Good guys to have a drink with. Their crazy adventures aren't for the faint of heart, so they're right up our alley.

Grasping Shadows: They hate us without reason. Seems that's just how they treat everyone though. Just smile and nod.

Hidden Strands of Fate: All style and no substance. Like other nobles, they laugh and applaud without really getting the meaning of it all.

Living Chronicle: We run in different circles, but I've seen them watching us lately. Kind of creepy.

Pack of the Black Moon: The dance of friendship comes so naturally to this clan. Sometimes, though, the dog is the better dancer.

Recoiling Serpents: I've heard stories, but they are even more menacing in person. Their dance is death incarnate.

Virtuous Body Gardeners: They dance to the beat of their own drum. I like that.

Wardens of Equilibrium: Not usually the kind we'd associate with. They can't decide which dance they want to do, but accept help willingly.

Will of Iron: A Smith laughed at one of my pirouettes, so I made sure my foot connected with his jaw. He couldn't hit me back since he said it was just. Ha!

Ronin: A kind word goes a long way, especially with these ninja. The favor will come back to you in the end.

Lotus Coalition: Our chance to make a difference, even if we have to endure some of the graceless.

The Empire: They gave so much and now they want it back. Sorry... no refunds.



Grasping Shadows

Other Names: Kumori Clan, Shades, Shadows

Stereotypes: Assassins, Traditionalists, Bigots

The stalk was clean. Kunio watched the man as he woke up beside his beautiful concubine. Her hair was in his face and it made him sneeze. It was quite touching. After greeting his children born by her, the man ate a breakfast of eggs and vegetables, dressed in his finest robes and left for court.

Oh yes, he was a nobleman, second cousin to the mayor of a small village that he one day hoped to rule. It was a stepping stone for his family to reach loftier goals. He wouldn't ever get there.

His session in court was tedious, talks of building new roads, fixing public structures and electing a new master-at-arms. His cohorts were pleasant enough, all of them seemingly scared of the influence he could one day hold.

The man traveled by carriage to see his wife afterward. The love between them had obviously faded long ago, but she bore him three legitimate children. For a moment Kunio pondered his missions. It was his sacred duty, as deemed by the Grasping Shadows, to leave this family widowed. Was it truly worth it?

No time to consider this though. The man was on the move once more. He traveled by carriage to a clearing in the forest and he blew a high-pitched whistle. From the trees came three men, bandits who worked for him. "Were you able to procure the merchandise?"

"Yeah, boss," one of the bandits answered. "No problem for minds like us." The man's smile suddenly turned to a look of terror as the bandits drew their clubs. "But a big problem for you. We've decided that we want ALL the money from now on."

The man clambered to find safe positioning, but was surrounded. "You need me. My connections, my money! What would you do without me?"

The bandits laughed. "We've got other sources. You're no longer needed." The man shrunk as the bandits launched forward to attack, but after a moment he realized that he felt no pain. He opened his eyes and saw two bandits on the ground, dead from kunai in their jugulars. The third was being dragged screaming into the forest, ending with the sound of cracking bones and swallowing one's own blood.

The man stood amazed, unsure of what had happened, when Kunio rose from a deep shadow clad in complete black with only his eyes showing. "You were not theirs to kill. That is my duty and I intend to fulfill this oath." Kunio unsheathed his sword and cut the politician in half with a single swipe. He vanished into nothing just as quickly, knowing that one more dead politician cuts another arm from the beast called Izou.



History

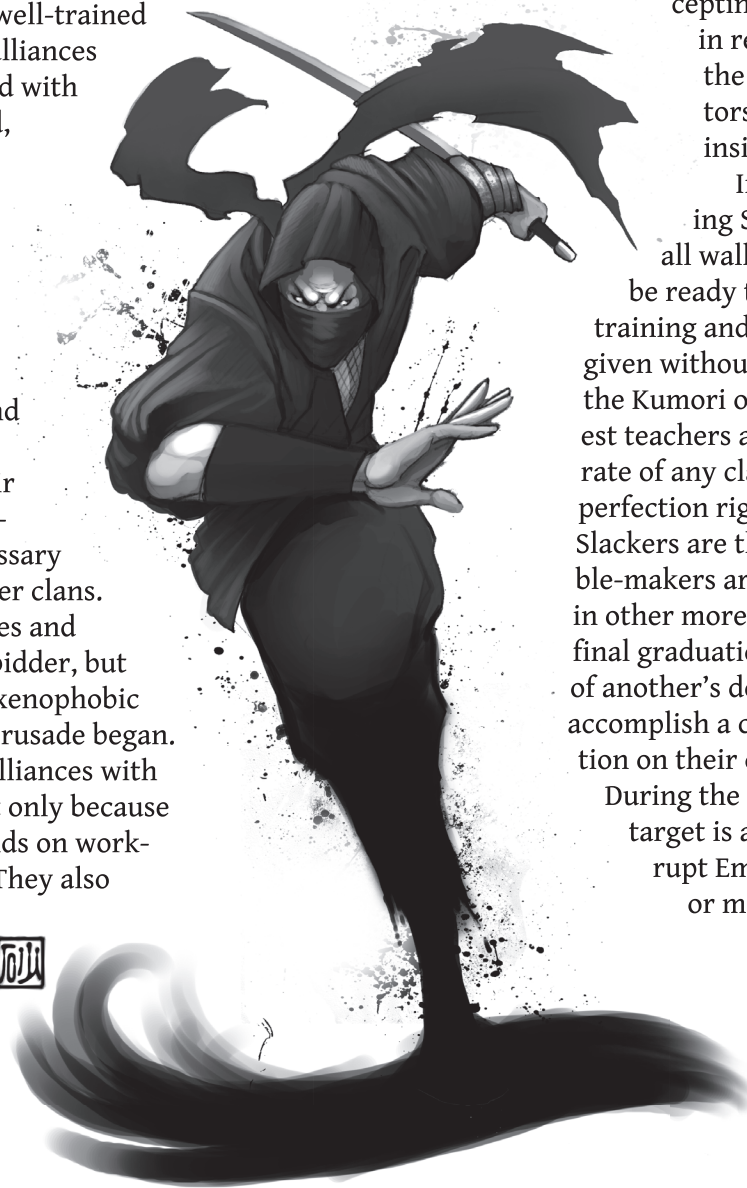
The Grasping Shadows were born from the very first ninja clans, standing out then (and now) due to their powers over darkness. They are one of the three clans to survive to this day with any significant amount of power and influence (the others being the Recoiling Serpents and Hidden Strands of Fate). For generations they bowed to the oppressive rule of the Hebi Clan, waiting for their moment to strike back and eliminate the overzealous fools... and that day came with the ascension of the Izou Empire to power and authority. For their cooperation, the Shadows were granted the title of Imperial Assassins, discretely killing any rebel up-

starts, opponents to the Emperor's rule and even a few leaders from rival kingdoms. With their power over stealth, they were very good at their job and continued to be the crown example of what it was to be a ninja. Their membership grew as well, to an almost unstoppable level.

After the death of the Emperor's son brought on by increasing imperial control over ninja, the Grasping Shadows suddenly switched their targets... to the Empire instead. They assassinated several influential daimyo and resigned as the "trained dogs" of the Emperor. A stand needed to be made against the Empire and they looked to their fellow clans for assistance.

Instead of finding other well-trained warriors ready to make alliances and fight, they were faced with plenty of non-disciplined, would-be ninja... hapless morons who could manipulate chi to a degree, but who lacked any type of focus or primary goals. They tried to show the other clans the "right" way, but found their lessons rejected.

They receded into their own lands for years, halting all but the most necessary communication with other clans. Many became mercenaries and assassins to the highest bidder, but were forced out of their xenophobic tendencies as the Ninja Crusade began. They have forged loose alliances with their obvious lessers, but only because their own survival depends on working together in the end. They also have a lesson to teach the Empire and the Emperor specifically... No one is immune to death.



Lifestyle

The Kumori are the masters of stealth, silent death and hiding in plain sight. They can blend into any environment and make a habit out of living among normal people just to leap out and kill their target at a moment's notice. They often trust only their clan-mates, always looking at others with slight-distrust. Citizens in Shadow Territory can live great lives if they are loyal to the clan, but disappear without a trace if they utter an unkind or traitorous word toward the Grasping Shadows. The Empire has tried to stop this activity, but the

people themselves are accepting of this treatment in recent times, seeing the Shadows as protectors against the Empire's insidious actions.

Initiates to the Grasping Shadows come from all walks of life, but must be ready to work hard in their training and follow any order given without question. In fact, the Kumori often have the strictest teachers and the highest failure rate of any clan, as they expect perfection right out of the gate. Slackers are thrown out and trouble-makers are often "dealt with" in other more heinous ways. Their final graduation comes at the price of another's death, as they must accomplish a complex assassination on their own to join the clan.

During the Ninja Crusade, their target is almost always a corrupt Empire official, taxman or military general.

Agendas

The Grasping Shadows are full members of the Lotus Coalition despite their

opinions of the other clans. They feign interest in the Warden's ideas of balance, but truly have their own agenda to put into action. Their goal is very straight forward: Not only to stop the Ninja Crusade, but to end the Izou Empire itself and bring it all crumbling down around them. It's time for a regime change in the world and it will come from the Shadows. This change also includes destroying those clans that they consider to be "less than", including the insufferable Blazing Dancers, Virtuous Body Gardeners, and (in some cases) the Wardens of Equilibrium. They have fragile alliances within the Hidden Strands of Fate and the Living Chronicle, mostly through mutual belief in continuing traditions, and will choose to work with these clans moreso than the others.

Character Creation

Free Specialty: Stealth

Fighting Styles: Eagle Style, Monkey Style

Favored Wushu: Way of Ebony Clutches, Way of the Unseen, Way of Water

Clan Gift – Heightened Training: Shadows go through intense training regimens, much more difficult than in other clans. They rely heavily on proper control of their body and mind, through skills and weapon training, rather than on flashy powers. Their students require a strong foundation in the tools that make a ninja... a ninja. Shadows gain a bonus to their Starting Skills during character creation, beginning with Discipline 3, Legerdemain 3, Stealth 3, Survival 3 and Primary Fighting Style 3, while other clans start with only Level 1 in each. They also receive one additional Weapon proficiency of choice.

Clan Drawback – Ninja Pride: They are masters of stealth, but are hard-pressed to hide their disdain for most of the other clans. This hatred is specifically passionate regarding the Dancers and Inks, but extends to most everyone that is not a member of the Grasping Shadows. Other clans know the Shadows hate them, making their presence often tolerated instead of invited.



CLAN IMPRESSIONES

In the words of Kumori Kunio

Bamboo Herbalists: One of too many foreign clans to claim permanent residence here. But they can heal, so we can't afford to lose them.

Blazing Dancers: Assassination can be a metaphorical dance, but not a literal one. We've no use for frivolity.

Hidden Strands of Fate: 1000 times better in form than other ninja, but 1000 times as misguided as well.

Living Chronicle: Keepers of the past are to be respected and protected before anyone else.

Pack of the Black Moon: Dismiss them. We command darkness itself and they... use dogs.

Recoiling Serpents: The most despicable ninja today. Their wushu should've been deemed forbidden long ago. You are wise to fear them... do not hesitate to strike one dead if need be.

Virtuous Body Gardeners: Overzealous with nothing to stand for. The fools are flashy, but will get us killed by focusing on their own agendas.

Wardens of Equilibrium: The universe has a way of balancing itself. You're not needed in the equation.

Will of Iron: These honorable warriors are our opposites, but are quite useful for drawing attention from us in battle.

Ronin: One false move and you're dead. Never forget that.

Lotus Coalition: Maybe we can teach the other clans a thing or two so they'll survive after all this is over.

The Empire: It's been a long time coming.



Hidden Strands of Fate

Other Names: Asaito Clan, Strands, Thread Bearers
Stereotypes: Manipulative, Secretive, Untrustworthy

At one end of the table sat Lady Miyaki Aya, a successful politician's daughter known for making important deals in the Emperor's court. Patterns of battling dragons and tigers covered her long silk robes. "And you wanted to meet because...?" she asked, sounding put out.

"I think that we have some business we can do together." At the other end, Ishikawa Ryota, a proud member of the Hidden Strands of Fate. His comfortable-fitting robes belied the level of influence he held within the political circles.

"Why was it so urgent that we meet tonight?" Aya asked with a raised eyebrow.

Ryota smiled. "It is the Winter Solstice and the annual ball is do to commence tonight."

"I'll well aware," she said, motioning to her delicate and expensive robes. "Get to the point. I have a handsome daimyo waiting for my company."

"Favors, my dear Aya. You owe me one and I am here to collect." He pulled out a vile and rolled it across the table to her. "It's a paralytic poison that stops the heart within minutes of ingestion. It is undetectable by taste or smell, even by someone with 'my' gifts."

Aya lifted the vile, rolling it on her thin fingers. "And what, exactly, are you asking for your favor?"

"Your handsome daimyo. Slip it to him tonight when the moon reaches its highest." Ryota said. "You're the only one who can get close to him past his guards and constant protection."

"This puts me at risk, Ryota-sama. No matter what I owe your clan, I refuse to compromise my position in court. I'm surprised you'd ask me to do so." Aya responded.

Ryota smirked. "You know me well enough to know that is not the case. You're position within court is just as important to me." He rolled another vile over to her. "Drink it and it will protect you from the poison. Apply the first to your lips and you can kill him with a single kiss that can never be traced by to you. It will look like a simple heart attack."

Aya immediately drank the potion. She then dipped her finger into the poison and rubbed it on her lips, rolling the vile back to Ryota. "If I do this... all of my debt is erased," she demanded.

"Of course not, Aya, but I will absolve you of half. Deal?" She stood up, turned and walked to the exit. "Dead. Tonight. Oh, and I fixed that pesky tear in your kimono while we spoke. You can thank me for that one later too." Ishikawa Ryota smiled at another successful meeting and another dead politician to help the

cause.



History

The history of the Hidden Strands of Fate, despite surviving longer than most other clans, is marred by several family upheavals and the cause of many clan wars. Over the last 600 years, the Asaito Clan leaders have been decided by one successful coup after another, after which they hold the immense power as leader until the next assassination. Members are careful to look over their shoulder at all times, never truly knowing when their station is threatened by someone who "wants it more". Many are born to the Warrior or Noble

classes, so this type of behavior comes naturally to them.

This distrust often extends to other clans too, as the Strands look on everyone with suspicion. They have a tendency to find themselves in the middle of others' lives, often orchestrating scenarios to test them or simply to see what happens next. This has been the catalyst for dozens of family rivalries that permeate the Izou Empire even today. If they could kill each other so easily and fool around with the lives of commoners without a thought, what would stop them from killing squad-mates from other clans?

The Lotus Coalition leaders were leery of allowing Strands into the fold, regardless of the influence they held, for this very reason. Feeling insulted and dishonored, the Asaito clan was responsible for the assassinations the first three leaders. The first, most notably, was hung in the center of Daiwa without eyes or skin. Everyone suspected the Strands, but had little proof. In the end, they were initiated into the Lotus Coalition after convincing the other clans that "strength in numbers" would protect the current leaders from future assassinations. They act and contribute just like any others, but the other clans are still wary of what their in-fighting may bring.

Lifestyle

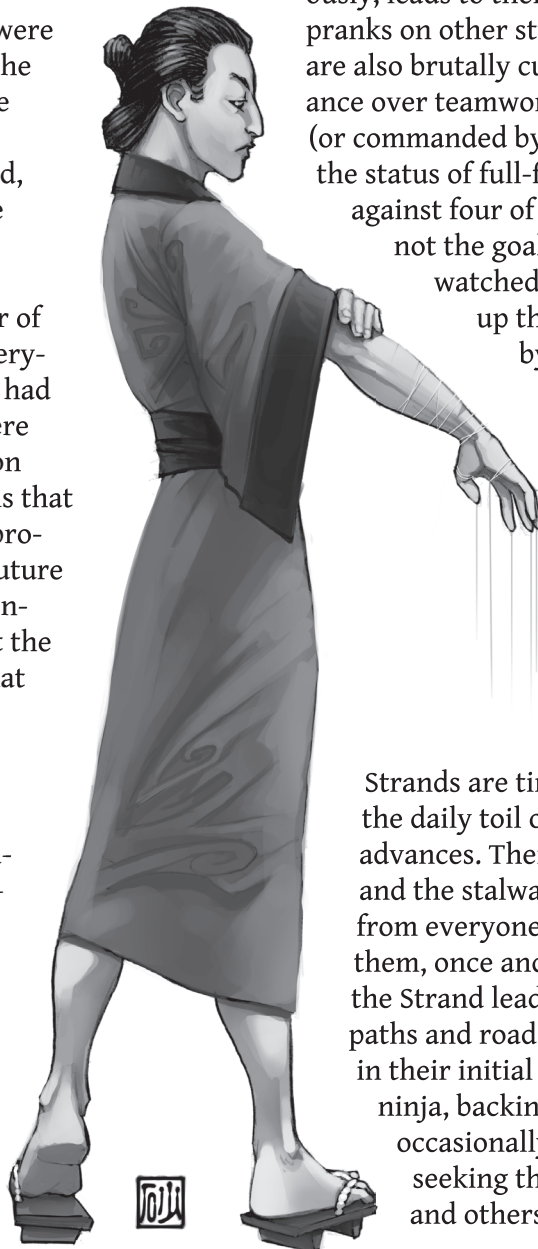
Despite their treacherous nature and constant power struggles, they are often at peace with others within the clan. No matter how often brother kills brother, they will steadfastly defend each other to the death against a common enemy. Their territory lies west of Daiwa (the capital), kept safe with hundreds of

threads that run through the trees and paths to alarm their loyal villages or set off booby traps. Asaito ninja are usually from the noble or warrior class, giving the clan insight into the Empire's political arena. Villages within their territory produce a lion's share of the Empire's silk, a symbol of power and status. Clan leaders have been known to imbue only the finest of silks in their chi, commanding the attention of their lessers.

They teach their children the art of deception from a young age, all while grooming them in the ways of string manipulation. This, quite obviously, leads to their young people pulling elaborate pranks on other students. Their training exercises are also brutally cut-throat, emphasizing self-reliance over teamwork unless it is absolutely needed (or commanded by their leaders). To graduate to the status of full-fledged ninja, they must contend against four of their equals. Simply winning is not the goal of this test, however. They are watched to ensure that they don't give up their struggle or show weakness by seeking aid from another student. The more ruthless their measures they take to win, the higher their chances of graduation. These tests often end in the death of at least one or two students in each graduating class.

Agendas

Unlike other clans, the Strands are tired of fighting for territory and the daily toil of defending against the Empire's advances. Their leaders despise all the clans and the stalwart tradition of living secretly from everyone else. They wish only to be rid of them, once and for all. To advance their goals, the Strand leadership covertly revealed hidden paths and roads to the Emperor's soldiers to aid in their initial takeover and massacre of the ninja, backing their rivals into a corner. They occasionally still help the Empire, some seeking the destruction of all other clans and others wanting to simply see how all



this ends up. Of course, the Strands plan on being on top... the last clan left with the expanses of territory for them to claim with the open permission of the Emperor. However, only the leaders and highest ranked members of the clan know of this secret alliance, and they'll do whatever it takes to keep it hidden from others.

Character Creation

Free Specialty: Deception

Fighting Styles: Crane Style, Horse Style

Favored Wushu: Way of Spun Threads, Way of the Unseen, Way of Metal

Clan Gift - Imbue Threads: The Thread Bearers can touch any type of thread (i.e. silk, hemp, clothe, etc.) and imbue it with 1 Chi point of any type to be able to manipulate it with a thought. Any imbued threads can be used as a weapon. They can flail around and strike their opponent alongside any attacks and assists when grappling with an opponent, adding the following bonuses: +2 Strike, +2 Throw, +2 Grapple and +2 damage (or +1 (L) if used to attack from afar - up to 10 ft. away). Wushu can be used for other wondrous effects. The Strands can also manipulate them to tie knots, wrap around objects or limbs or pull tight to create traps or activate other wushu just as easily. The thread must be imbued before being used in any clan wushu, leading many within the Hidden Strands to carry around their own thread on their back or forearms.

Clan Drawback - Betrayers: Their leadership is quite corrupt. During missions that they believe are for the progression of the Lotus Coalition, any character might receive an order that seems contrary to their original objectives. This could mean retrieving something in secret from a research site, relaying names and places back to their superiors, sabotaging others in their squad or even purposefully failing the mission altogether. These requests start off small and grow in intensity as the Strand rises in rank and grows closer to the clan leaders. Of course, disobeying orders means another Thread Bearer quickly takes the character's spot.



CLAN IMPRESSIONS

In the words of Ishikawa Ryota

Bamboo Herbalists: Useful to have around in a pinch, but an annoyance at any other time.

Blazing Dancers: Damn these puppets can dance... and they think they don't have strings attached.

Grasping Shadows: They know our ways and still consider us allies. We'll keep them around and take special joy the day we rip them apart.

Living Chronicle: As long as they keep us looking good to history, I'm pleased with their presence.

Pack of the Black Moon: So cute with their backwater drawl. Gain their loyalty quickly, before someone can poison them against you.

Recoiling Serpents: They may have physical power, but we've beat them before and can do it again. Though, their ruthlessness must be revered.

Virtuous Body Gardeners: They make me laugh with their desperate need to be relevant. It'll be even funnier when they realize they aren't.

Wardens of Equilibrium: Ha! Convince them that fate hangs in the balance and then prove the opposite.

Will of Iron: They are fueled by blind justice. If they step out of line, hand them their eyes so they can match their credo.

Ronin: Effortless to trick and no clan to protect them. Too easy.

Lotus Coalition: Not exactly our cup of tea, but we'll be damned if they have a party we're not invited to.

The Empire: We would've backed the Emperor on any decision except the Ninja Crusade. He chose wrong.



Living Chronicle

Other Names: Rekishi Clan, Codices (Codex), Historians

Stereotypes: Quiet, Knowledgeable, Distant

“And here we have the story of our founder.” Kaede said to her student. She raised her sleeve and pointed to the kanji along her arm, reading aloud “And it was on the day of the great tsunami that new rituals were created to keep the world’s knowledge. Books were not the way, but the body is pure and contains many secrets.”

As they walked through the temple hallway, her student asked, “Can’t you still lose a body?”

Kaede wasn’t shaken by this question, since it was quite common of newer members to the Living Chronicle. “There is not a moment in history recorded in only one place, but it is through devotion to the cause that you can be deemed worthy to hold these momentous events yourself.”

“And what exactly are we here to do?” the student asked.

The doors at the end of the hallway opened, revealing a man gagged and tied to a chair. “Watch and learn.”

Kaede said, approaching the man with no detection of emotion. “You and your soldiers have been found on our grounds for days. None of your messengers have made their way back to Daiwa and you are the last living of your squad. So, the question I have for you is... what is it that you hope to gain from stalking our temple?”

The soldier looks up with a grimace, blood running from his mouth from a prior beating he must have received. “Bando, One-Five-Seven.”

“If you do not talk, I’ll be forced to resort to,” Kaede paused to intensify the moment, “other measures.” Her student watched with bated breathe.

“Bando. One. Five. Seven.”

Kaede pressed her hand to the man’s forehead and

her wide eyes began to glow. The soldier convulsed as her chi flowed through her body and he screamed in pain as words began streaming onto Kaede’s body. “If you had cooperated, you would have been allowed to keep your thoughts. I pity you.” The man yelped as she let go, leaving him a shivering, crying shell in the chair. She pressed her hand to a scroll and the words poured from her skin onto the paper.

She handed the book to her student, “Read every inch of this and report back. The war is coming and the Emperor knows we are a part of it.”

History

Centuries ago a group of monks living in seclusion were asked by a powerful, but aging feudal lord to produce copies of his land’s history and to protect its memory for the generations that would come to follow. Their beautiful transcripts

received great praise from the lord and they were called to place members of their group permanently in court to record the goings on. This process repeated itself many times until their monks could be found in royal courts throughout most of the known world. They made reproductions of any writings they came across to be sent to their homeland, the Land of Crashing Waves, and kept safe in the first Grand Library. As was inevitable, their vast amount of research uncovered not only knowledge of the ninja and their manipulation of chi, but also its darkest secrets. They learned to harness the unrelenting ocean they had all become so accustomed to traveling across. Over time they delved deeper into the mountains that dominated



much of their homeland in order to more securely store their vast knowledge away from the constant wars of their people. Then accident struck when impossibly powerful wushu were unleashed, reshaping the land, destroying their accumulated lore and decimating their order numbers.

A radical decision had to be made by Rekishi edlers in order to prevent this from every occurring again. Members of a new order, called the Living Chronicle, would have history literally written upon their skins. Major events in history were immediately tattooed upon their most honored members who, upon their death, were embalmed and permanently preserved using rituals known only to their monastic ninja. These rituals shield the body from any harm brought on by outside elements and it is an honor to be hung in such a way.

Their involvement with the Lotus Coalition began with simply recording the dates and events at each encounter. However, this has grown into the Rekishi serving as primary strategists against the Empire.

Lifestyle

Most of the members of the Living Chronicle spend their days in private study and contemplation. Which members of this ancient monastery are actually ninja is often kept a strict secret, but only a small percentage of their now expansive order actually practices the art. After their training, consisting of learning to speak, read, write and catalog several languages, they are expected to spend at least one year in the world. This is usually done in service to a foreign

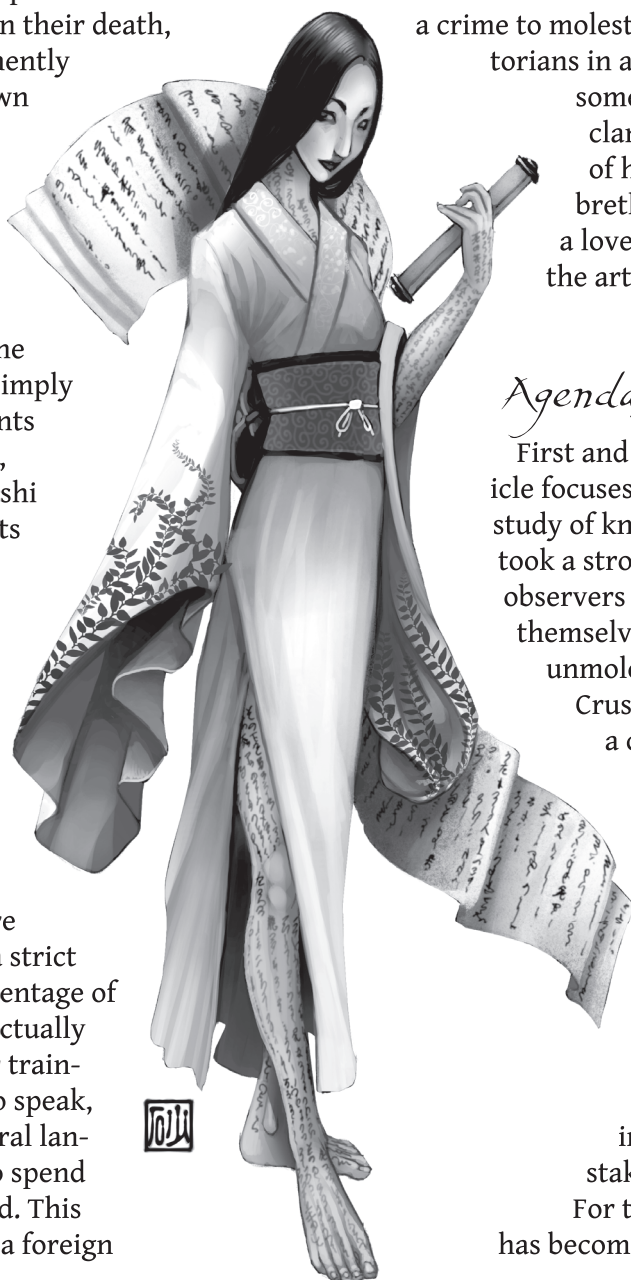
lord that can provide sage advice and give them access to tomes to maintain in their personal libraries. The Rekishi start off with copying or repairing any books/manuscripts they can find, but can rise in rank as their tenure increases. One of the most accomplished monks of the Living Chronicle served as the 4th Emperor's personal advisor for several decades.

The order holds many small enclaves in different nations and their presence there is normally welcome as few suspect their connection to the rest of the clans. In almost every nation, it is a crime to molest or injure one of the Historians in any way. This does not stop some from trying, of course. The clan has done an excellent job of hiding in the midst of their brethren who, while they share a love of history, do not practice the art of ninja.

Agendas

First and foremost, the Living Chronicle focuses on the conservation and study of knowledge. In the past, they took a strong neutral stance of being observers only, mostly because they themselves were all but completely unmolested. However, the Ninja Crusade has pushed them into a corner when attacks began on a few of their peaceful enclaves as well. While there is no actual proof of their ninja members, the Emperor has seemingly targeted their establishments, inciting book confiscation and even burning some of the Living Chronicle with important tattoos at the stake.

For their clan, the Ninja Crusade has become their personal rebellion



against the break-down of their culture. Their store of historical knowledge gives them an almost prophetic insight into the overall affairs of men and they hope to put this to good use in service to the other clans.

Character Creation

Free Specialty: Knowledge

Fighting Styles: Crane Style, Hawk Style

Favored Wushu: Way of Kept Lore, Way of Water, Way of Movement

Clan Gift – Long View: During their study in the monastery, Codices train their bodies to be prepared for their eventual embalming. Death is often viewed as an honor by their members, as they will then become a part of passing on history to future generations in fantastic museums. This acceptance gives them a +5 bonus to checks against Fear/Awe. The long hours they spend studying also gives them a wide base of knowledge that they can access at a whim. They receive 3 starting Languages (instead of 1) and, once per day, they can apply a +5 bonus to a Skill check of ANY kind as they delve into their profound learning.

Clan Drawback - Sheltered: Due to their tendency to take the long view of situations and events, most of their members spend the majority of their lives in constant study. This stalls much of their ability to interact with others on a personal level, making them come off as awkward and distant. Some people also distrust them because of their insatiable need to record everything as it happens. A secret written down can be read by anyone and anything you tell one of the Historians is sure to be notated.



CLAN IMPRESSIONS

In the words of Arai Kaede

Bamboo Herbalists: Watch them closely. They hold the key to life itself.

Blazing Dancers: Resourceful and entertaining. We have little use for them, but they are a fine addition to the world.

Grasping Shadows: Their history is marred by heinous acts and history always repeats itself.

Hidden Strands of Fate: Our records on this clan fill several bodies. They're at the center of every major catastrophic event in ninja history. It scares me to think what is to come.

Pack of the Black Moon: Born from blood and survival through companionship. Keep their loyalty, as it could save you one day.

Recoiling Serpents: The Coils are a huge historical influence. Their arrogance and vengeance is legendary. I fear they may outlive us all.

Virtuous Body Gardeners: There is a shift in the wind and it's coming from the Inks. They are the ones to follow.

Wardens of Equilibrium: Personal balance is a good thing, but it cannot exist forever in the world. History will show that these ninja at least tried.

Will of Iron: A warrior's path is fun to record, but don't get in their way.

Ronin: They come and go. We wait for them to do something phenomenal.

Lotus Coalition: The perfect chance to see if this will really work. If history is right... it's not likely.

The Empire: They have grown corrupt as evidenced by this war. It can only get worse without intervention.



Pack of the Black Moon

Other Names: Tsuki Clan, Hounds, Mutts

Stereotypes: Faithful, Animal-friendly, Uncivilized

The sky was a clear blue and the birds chirped a merry song. Eiji exited his cottage with his wood-ax on his shoulder, took a deep breath and smiled. After milking the goats and feeding the chickens Eiji retired to his back porch where he lounged in the sun under his hat.

Suddenly, he heard a noise that caused him to leap from his near-sleep. Yukiko barked loudly, coming running from the forest that hide Eiji's cottage. She was a medium-sized canine with a brown coat that loved the wander the forest and chase squirrels, well trained to alert for intruders. At Eiji's side, Yukiko growled in the direction of the threat and Eiji pulled his favorite hunting knife from its sheath.

"Come out, already! We already know you're there," he called out. Yukiko barked once more.

A whirlwind of leaves suddenly appeared, producing a masked man when it dissipated. "Then you know why I'm here, too?"

Eiji smirked, "Your boss thinks that I'm just a poor farmer. That I'll kowtow to all his demands and give up my land to the likes of you criminals."

"You may want to stop there. Every word you speak only digs your grave deeper," the man said.

Yukiko growled deep and barked with such force that it created a gust of wind. "You sure about that?" Eiji responded. "Ever wonder what happened to the guys sent before you? Well, it's where I got these fancy boots and hat. I sure do like those gloves too. I think I'll be taking those now too."

Eiji was no ordinary farmer, but a member of the Pack of the Black Moon, and he performed a hand-sign quicker than the other ninja could even view. Yukiko's hide turned to shimmering diamond and she rushed

the bandit, knocking him off his feet and stabbing him with spikes of crystal.

"Aww. You went down too quick," Eiji said while leaning down to take the man's gloves, but he then noticed a tattoo of a follower of the Reconcilers. They weren't known to work for criminals.

Then, Eiji noticed strings around his wrists retract from the body into the forest. Seems he had another visitor who was much shyer.

"And I would of figured a Shadow for this. Don't that just beat all."



History

The Tsuki clan began their journey shortly after the formation of the Izou Empire. Their strategy lied within an intrinsic ability to use their heart more than their mind, a primal understanding of the power that flows beneath the surface of the world. Living mostly in small, secluded villages in the early Empire, they used their discovered gift of understanding animals to improve their everyday lives, maintain the health of their herds and encourage faster crop growth through different agriculture techniques. They attempted to live alone peacefully, but jealousy began to surface in many nearby communities. The Tsuki clan's continued success seemed to rub several nobles the wrong way and drastic action was taken against the Pack. Empire officials visited the village with relocation papers, hoping to force them off of their land, but they didn't budge.

Then, beginning with a new moon, Tsuki Clan villages were set ablaze in a campaign that lasted

weeks. As they fled, ninja from the Grasping Shadows murdered Tsuki warriors and innocents alike.

It was then, lost in the woods and scattered, that the howling began. The dogs used to tend the herds and their masters suddenly created sympathetic bonds between the two. Using the sounds to find each other in the blinding dark and an unspoken connection to their hounds, the Pack of the Black Moon turned the battle on their assailants.

They were a true asset during the Ninja Wars to follow and finally found their place as peaceful farmers and breeders within the Empire. Of course, they promised to share part of their goods as taxes, but this left them able to isolate themselves from the other dangerous ninja... until the Empire decided to begin their Crusade, that is.

Lifestyle

Today, most of the Tsuki still live meagerly as farmers and ranchers in small villages just south of Daiwa. Their territory has plenty of grazing land for cattle and valleys of high grass to hide and play in. The family unit is paramount to the Pack of the Black Moon. Nothing is more important to the Tsuki than their immediate family, followed closely by the greater extended family acquired from the clan and then on to close friends that may not even know their identity as a ninja. They are loyal to a fault and are taught from a young age to respect the bonds that connect each person and animal. As long as the clan hierarchy is respected as well, peace presides over their land most of the time.

During their initial training, new students work as caregivers to their

teachers' canines, grooming, feeding and learning how to handle such a beast. When their time comes and a fresh litter born, the student is gifted with one of these specially-bred ninja dogs... their clan's greatest gift. Selection is done in order from the most promising student to the least of the new graduates, establishing in this (as in all things) the proper pack hierarchy. The union of dog and master is considered a fateful event, as the ninja gets just the canine they were destined to receive by heaven. Once together, ninja and dog train as a single unit.

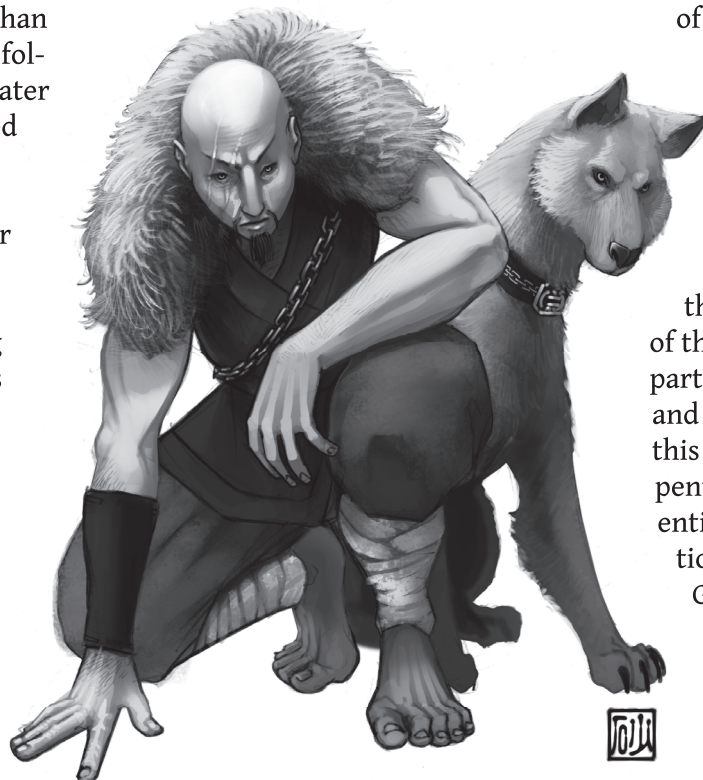
Agendas

For the most part, the Hounds want only to be left to their simple, calm existence. The crusade against all ninja has forced them into action, but they found it difficult to align themselves properly. Their existence bothers other clans that must work so hard for their gifts, while the Mutts establish their's so easily.

There was also bad blood between the Tsuki and other clans they had battled in the past. As a solution, a marriage was proposed by the Wardens of Equilibrium between the

Tsuki and the Hebi clans. This union has ended in an attempted assassination and one of the Pack leaders near now near death.

The clan has now split their efforts toward defense of their land, leading search parties for the Lotus Coalition and seeking the perpetrator of this poison (no doubt a Serpent plot). On top of this, the entire Pack holds a generations-old grudge against the Grasping Darkness Clan for their ancestor's attacks so long ago.



Character Creation

Free Specialty: Beast Handling

Fighting Styles: Crocodile Style, Dragon Style

Favored Wushu: Way of Twin Beasts, Way of Beasts, Way of Earth

Clan Gift - Entwined Souls: Every member of the Pack has a canine companion chosen from one of three special breeds. Each is exceptional for a dog of their breed and provides certain bonuses. In addition, the ninja and dog are linked spiritually - any wushu the ninja uses can (at will) automatically extend to their canine as well.

Unless otherwise stated, the ninja and canine are treated as a single character in combat, using the same bonuses and dealing the same damage no matter which of the two is performing the action. Health for the canine is equaled separately however (per pg 184).

- **Fang (guard dog, Chow type):** They receive +1 Action per Round and +2 bonus to Strike and Perception.

- **Zhu (herd dog, Shiba Inu type):** They receive +3 Health and +2 to Intimidation and Athletics.

- **Liè Quan (hound dog, Banjara type):** They receive 1 Action per Round, +2 bonus to Initiative and +2 bonus to Survival.

Clan Drawback - Bumpkins: Most people view the Pack as backward and insular people. “Uncouth” or “Wild” are words that are often used to describe the Mutts... and, while impolite, they are not wrong. The Tsuki clan lives a simple life and its members are often fascinated by advances like calligraphy or clocks. It makes them very uncomfortable when dealing with matters of etiquette.



CLAN IMPRESSIONS

In the words of Tsuki Eiji

Bamboo Herbalists: Their ability to heal makes them invaluable, but they are a wild breed.

Blazing Dancers: Met one that played a wonderful song that made us dance. They're pleasant to have around and should help our warriors stay in good spirits.

Grasping Shadows: We have a saying. “Never trust a Shadow.” Follow that rule and you'll never go wrong.

Hidden Strands of Fate: Disloyal. Might not sound strong enough a word for you, but that's as bad as it gets in my clan.

Living Chronicle: Good guys, educators and the sort. Haven't figured where they fit into this war.

Recoiling Serpents: Betrayers, the lot of them. They'll get their comeuppance for what they've done.

Virtuous Body Gardeners: They seem alright, but are more like little, scrappy dogs than ninja.

Wardens of Equilibrium: I guess balancing the entire world is a worthwhile cause. We prefer to seek peace.

Will of Iron: You have to “teach” right from wrong, not kill wrong.

Ronin: Offer a place to sleep and a bite to eat, and then see them on their way.

Lotus Coalition: Glad to help the cause and even gladder that I'm not the one in charge.

The Empire: Never back a dog into a corner. You WILL get bitten.



Recoiling Serpents

Other Names: Hebi Clan, Serpents, Coils

Stereotypes: Sneaky, Resilient, Malicious

Hebi Ine walked into the halls of the Lotus Coalition and all eyes were on her. She kept her stride short, simply to soak in the response to her very presence. The Dancers stopped their jovial banter. The Shadows brought their tone to a barely audible whisper. The Inks gripped the decorative hilts of their blooded blades.

She opened the double doors at the end of the hallway, revealing a room with a few Wardens of Equilibrium within. Their attention went to Ine, the only Serpent to be stationed at this cell and a legend within her clan. "Did you...?" one of the Wardens asked?

"Of course, I did," Ine responded bluntly, dropping a bag of gold on the table. "But that's the last time I do such a petty act."

The richest of the Wardens stepped forward. "There are no inconsequential missions, Hebi Ine. It takes then thousand pebbles to create a road."

Ine crossed her arms and scoffed, "You know what you can do with your pebbles."

"Now now. You are not privy to the strategies involved with this stage of war. All things will become clearer with time."

She smirked. "Hmmm. No, I don't think so. I think a new direction is in order. Starting now."

"What do you-," but before he finished his statement, Ine presser two fingers to his throat. He gasped and stepped back, each of the Wardens taking up arms in defense. "You-You didn't!"

"Yes I did," she smiled, reaching out to smack the face of another Warden. Ine ducked a spear attack, just to slap the ninja's hand away and then kicked another in the face with her bare foot. Within seconds, each of

them gripped their throats and fell to the ground.

She turned and opened the doors once more. The others saw her visage standing the doorway with three dead Wardens behind her. Ine made her plea. "If you truly want to win this war, we must look to the past and use its lessons." The Living Chronicle representatives took special notice. "Money will not save us. It

will take might and cunning to conquer our enemies. Will you follow me instead?"

Every ninja in the building grabbed their weapons and charged Ine instantly. Not the response she hoped for, but that's what Serpents are good for... disrupting the system and bringing out the killing spirit. Ine retreated with that much at least.



History

The southwestern jungles are filled to the brim with hundreds of reptile species, both poisonous and non. The Hebi clan rose from the depths of this forsaken and dangerous land, learning to adapt as a people. They became masters of survival and poisons, first worshipping snakes as gods, then creating deities long forgotten to history and eventually taking on the emulation the divine serpent as a concept more than a religion. However, their cultural development is not so simple.

Just as a snake's adaptive size is regulated only by their environmental limitations, so too did the unchecked Serpents grow in number and power. They ruled much of what the Empire calls their territory today, as they spread their influence throughout the land and conquered many other

clans along the way. The clan left unmatched for generations grew to such immense strength that, much like today, there was no choice but to combine efforts to destroy it. This led to the War of Withered Fangs as several clans fought the Serpents, ending with the Hebi cut down to size. The Serpents coiled and fell into a state of pseudo-peace with the other clans... as long as the territory they still controlled remained uncontested. Their demands were fulfilled, but a long-time feud with the Bamboo Herbalists has continued to this day, as they frequently enter Serpent country for rare and indigenous potion ingredients. The Hebi resent them greatly for their disregard to mandates of boundaries.

Due to the recent union between their clan and the Pack of the Black Moon, the Coils have been blamed for the attempted murder of the groom. The Lotus Coalition has called for a peaceful resolution to the situation, but the Serpents and Hounds have waged plenty of shadows wars under the midnight sky. Despite the repeated attacks from the Empire, their feud isn't likely to end in a quick manner.

They maintain their presence in Daiwa and give lip service to the Lotus Coalition, but their representation has severely diminished as much of their clan has returned to the jungles to defend their home and seek the truth.

Lifestyle

The Recoiling Serpents have the most members of any clan hands down, which has lead to abundant communities under their care that work well together and a feeling of

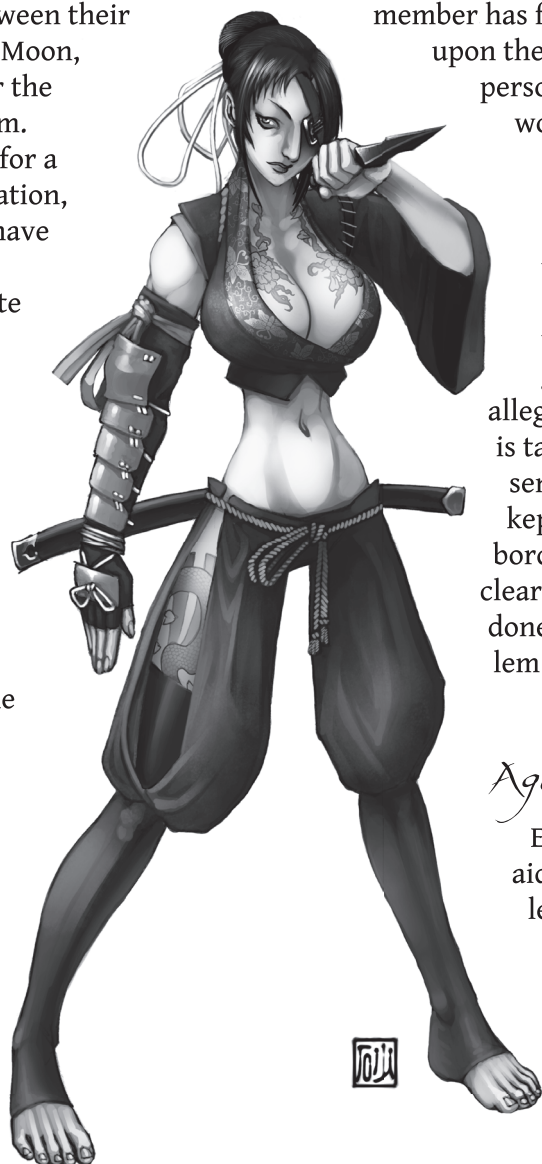
“family” throughout their region. Initiates are chosen and are taught of poisons from a very young age, learning what mosses and berries wield the deadliest poison and which reptiles inject the most venom with their bites. They are showed the depth of their swamps and discuss the lethal predators that stalk the land. Quickly, they see how the Coils keep so much land... it is filled with dangers that only they are ready to face. In truth, everyone in the region must learn these lessons in order to survive, but the Coils receive additional training as well.

New initiates, as early as 6 years old, are thrown into pits filled with hundreds of snakes of all different types. It is important to the clan that each member has felt the same pain they inflict upon their enemies. While the average

person thrown into such a situation would die in minutes, the Hebi is swiftly pulled out and a powerful adaptation wushu is performed on them. This ritual integrates the poison into their body, fusing their blood with the venom to make them immune. Upon graduation, an undying oath of allegiance to the Recoiling Serpents is taken. They become hated representatives to the Lotus Coalition, kept in the jungle to defend their borders or sent to find new leads to clear their clan's name. If they had done the deed, they'd have no problem admitting to it.

Agendas

Even though they are urged to aid in curing the poison that has left leader of the Pack of the Black Moon in a coma, the Coils have decided to focus their efforts on revenge. They have ignored the Brewers' pleas for even chaperoned permission into their lands for the correct



medicinal ingredients in their attempts. However, the Serpents have vowed to find the true culprit, which means curing the poison quickly may eliminate vital evidence they have of their innocence. They seek those truly responsible for this catastrophe and want to bring them to justice. Only then will they play nicely in anything other than official business.

Character Creation

Free Specialty: Survival

Fighting Styles: Snake Style, Hawk Style

Favored Wushu: Way of Great Serpents, Way of Survival, Way of Wood

Clan Gift – Snake-Like Body: Coils have developed strenuous training techniques that hone the human body for years to emulate the resilience and flowing movements of serpents. They are known to bend their joints in all directions easily in order to fit into areas that others wouldn't dare attempt. From their training, they become Immune to all poisons, receive +6 Health and a gain +5 bonus to any checks involving Flexibility.

Clan Drawback - Vengeful: The Coils are a prideful clan, which often leads to an overdeveloped sense of vengeance. If ever wronged, they despise the thought of allowing the guilty party to live. This ideology begins at an early age and is a reason why the clan has such strong bonds with each other. It is also why others have a problem trusting them, in fear that they may become the target of the Serpent's wrath if things don't go well. Someone that wrongs the Hebi must suffer a slow, painful death after all.



CLAN IMPRESSIONS

In the words of Hebi Ine

Bamboo Herbalists: Their skills contend with our own, but we are kings while they are mere servants. Find one on our land and slit their throat before they get a chance to run like cowards.

Blazing Dancers: Spin for me. Spin one more time. That's so... special. Keep doing that over there while the real ninja deal with the war.

Grasping Shadows: The Emperor's spurned lap dogs need to be put down. That's the first order of business after this crusade is over.

Hidden Strands of Fate: Always something with these guys. Never trust a word they say and if they even look at you the wrong way, kill them.

Living Chronicle: Every Historian I've met has been respectful. Which is to say... they looked at us with fear we deserve. Too bad they are watchers, not warriors.

Pack of the Black Moon: They've always been a pain, but have now accused us of betrayal and attacked our land in the night. They've bitten off more than they can chew.

Virtuous Body Gardeners: Silly clowns with painted bodies. They pretend to be fearless and willing to die to show their strength. Let them die then... by my blade or the Empire's.

Wardens of Equilibrium: They think they're in charge. They'll learn soon enough who the true bosses are.

Will of Iron: Their blades as sharper than their minds. They are of little consequence.

Ronin: Unique, but just as dead as the others.

Lotus Coalition: Give me another order... I dare you.

The Empire: They beat us once, but they'll need more than firearms this time.



VIRTUOUS BODY GARDENERS

Other Names: Sumi Clan, Gardeners, Inks

Stereotypes: Artistic, Innovators, Punks

Sumi Rika walked with a fellow Ink down the road laughing. "And then I said 'I can give it a blue tongue too if you'd like'."

"You didn't."

"I swear to the heavens." Rika shouted, the two girls almost stumbling from their hilarity. They were becoming a spectacle... and had been drinking quite a bit.

One of the Izou Soldiers that guarded the city approached the two ninja. "Do I need to escort you two home?"

Rika tried to hold in her laughter, but barely pulled it off. "No, sir. I think we can make it out our own." And they continued to walk. The guard reached out and touched her arm, which Rika quickly gripped, twisted and broke.

The soldier screamed in pain, which cut short the hilarity. "Rika, we can't do this. Let's get out of here," her friend cautioned.

"No! I'm taking the fight to them now! I'm not backing down!" she yelled, as more soldiers were approaching. "Go back and let the others know I'll be there shortly. I want to see how many I can take out first."

The other Ink rushed away, leaving Rika to be instantly surrounded by a dozen soldiers. "She's a ninja. We have orders to capture her!"

"Capture?" Rika smiled. "No no no no, that won't do at all." She pulled her hand blades from her legs and took her favored battle position. "It's to the death or nothing." She lunged forward quicker than a blink and stabbed into on soldier's chest, blood spilled on the ground. She parried two swords toward her and leap over a long sweeping staff, lifting her feet up to kick the swordsmen in their noses. She ducked a club attack while simultaneously cutting out the legs of one and

came up with a bladed uppercut to another.

The soldiers halted their assault, taking account that they had yet to land a hit on the ninja. "That's five, fellas. Can we keep going?" She performed a hand sign and her first attacker began attacking his comrades. The confusion allowed Rika the opportunity of slicing the throats of three other soldiers with a single swipe.

The controlled soldiers stabbed and killed two others and then fell on his own blade.

"And that's 11," Rika said walking up to the last remaining Izou foot soldier.

"You want to make it an even dozen or do you want to deliver a message for me?"

The soldier shook with fear, "Message, please, I have a family."

Rika smiled. "I have a family too. My message to your leaders is... we're coming for you."



History

By far one of the youngest clans in the land to hold any real influence, the Virtuous Body Gardeners have proven that they deserve to be a major player in the Empire. They created waves and burned a few bridges when they seceded from the Living Chronicle clan over 70 years ago. The Gardeners once served the Living Chronicle as tattoo artists, placing their historic marking on the monks' bodies. But they were composed of younger ninja who hated being treated lower than their purpose. Their tattooing skills became integral to their success and they began taking their wushu to the next level, eventually surpassing their mentors in the practice.

They were quick to make enemies of both the Will of Iron and Grasping Shadows as they broke away from stalwart tradition in favor of creating their own clan. The Gardeners oppose the Living Chronicle's patterned and practiced tattoos with vastly differing wushu styles that can bring about servant creatures, mighty weapons to dazzle the Lotus Coalition and real change in the world. They are respected by other clans because, while unconventional, their wushu have broken barriers formally seen as taboo and have proven quite a versatile tool for the wars ahead.

The Lotus Coalition reluctantly accepted the young clan into their ranks. The Blazing Dancers vouched for the up-and-comers and the Living Chronicle, who still regard the Gardeners as wayward children, stood up to any remaining resistance. Despite their small numbers, Inks have taken to the dangerous front lines of every major battle in the Ninja Crusade to show off both their superb combat prowess and born leadership expertise. The Sumi see themselves as a force of change with every battle becoming a way to make their clan stronger and help the evolution of the Izou Empire (which is obviously in the throws of its own metamorphosis). Change is on its way and the Gardeners intend to bring it to the entire realm.

Lifestyle

The Inks hold onto a small amount of land to the southeast of the capital, sharing borders with the Pack of the Black Moon, the Grasping Shadows, the Recoiling Serpents and the Wardens of Equilibrium. This is purposeful as they feel that

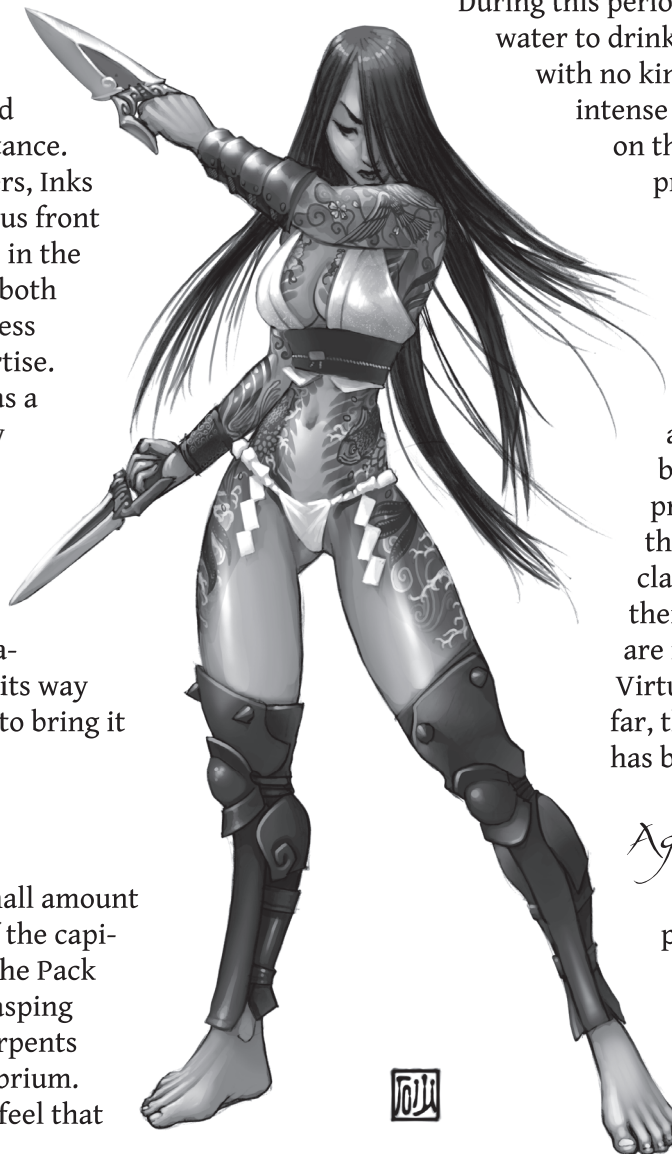
constant conflict will make them a more powerful clan. These strained borders have created obvious animosity between the clans, putting them in a multi-prong battle for land and opportunity. The Inks mark special characters and symbols on the trees, stones and other landmarks of their territory that can instantly warn intruders that they have stepped into Gardener land. They are also used as a way to contest terrain and let the current owners know that they intend to make it property of the Virtuous Body Gardeners.

After their initial training in weapons and martial arts, new Inks are secluded away and go through a three-day scarring ritual that prepares their body for the "Item Assimilation" Gift.

During this period, the initiate has only water to drink and simple bread to eat, with no kind of potion to dilute the intense pain the ritual inflicts on their mind and body. This process only hastens the development of the student's resistance to pain. Some even learn how to derive pleasure from such things. Self-mortification is common and any scars gained from battle are worn with clan pride. Upon graduation, they are branded with the clan markings at the base of their neck, showing that they are forever a member of the Virtuous Body Gardeners. So far, the only way out of the clan has been through death.

Agendas

The Inks have clear plans on becoming a more powerful and influential clan in the Izou Empire through expanding their initiations, increasing their membership and



carving a larger territory for themselves. Having already made enemies of the Shadows and Hounds, rivals of the Sheriffs, and allies of the Dancers, they've learned more about politicking going along. They don't really care how many toes they step on in this quest for their place and hope to use the current wedding fiasco as a way to incorporate a small portion of Hound territory into their own during the confusion. They'll soon turn their attention to the Grasping Shadows in a classic clash of new versus old.

Character Creation

Free Specialty: Arts

Fighting Styles: Tiger Style, Crocodile Style

Favored Wushu: Way of Inked Skin, Way of the Warrior, Way of Fire

Clan Gift – Item Assimilation: While not the first clan to use tattoos in their chi manipulation, the Sumi clan has learned to assimilate small items, such as knives, shuriken or even rations onto their body as tattoos. Without specific wushu, they are limited to Size 1, non-living items and the process takes about 2 minutes for either adding or removing. With wushu, it can take seconds instead.

Clan Drawback – Scarred and Painted: The appearance of an Ink is quite unlike what others normally see in the Empire. They are often covered from head to toe in heavily-artistic tattoos (both wushu and non-functional), even on their faces, which leaves many unsettled. In addition, their bodies have many ritualistic scars that they received in their days of training. These markings do not make them unattractive or hideous, but makes them stand out and puts others on guard. After all, what are to expect from someone that treats their body in such a way?



CLAN IMPRESSIONES

In the words of Sumi Rika

Bamboo Herbalists: Doctors are always needed. They are truly artists with their potions.

Blazing Dancers: Expression is a gift our clans share. We'll need to take care of each other to make it out of this alive.

Grasping Shadows: So you think you know what it is to be a "true" ninja? We'll find out one day on the battlefield.

Hidden Strands of Fate: Make a deal with these guys and you end up in their web.

Living Chronicle: Show our previous elders respect, but remember there was a reason for us to split from the Historians. We want to make history, not record it.

Pack of the Black Moon: Worthy combatants. I can't wait until we face them.

Recoiling Serpents: These guys scare me, but I'll never let them know that.

Wardens of Equilibrium: Balance is boring and so is greed. Change your shtick or get lost.

Will of Iron: The only clan with swordsmen as great as ours, but they tarnish it with proselytizing of "justice". Don't piss them off though. We're not quite ready to take them on.

Ronin: That was us not too long ago. Treat them well, because we could easily end up there again.

Lotus Coalition: This is our shot at gaining more influence in the world to come.

The Empire: What a great opponent to cut your teeth on, eh?



Wardens of Equilibrium

Other Names: Chuushin Clan, Scales, Chislers (cheats)

Stereotypes: Persuasive, Wealthy, Cheap

It was the tastiest apple he'd ever tasted. Sakamoto Tadao had his fill of oranges long ago and this was just the thing to bring a smile to his face. The crunch, the skin, so many things that enhanced the experience of eating an apple. As one of the wealthiest men in the Empire, he could have as many as he wanted and he loved that.

Sitting in meditation about the war was what he did with most of his days, except for one day a week when he took his business meetings. Today was one such day. Tadao filled out his import/export ledgers and weighed his gold for the morning and everything was equaling out as expected.

An attendant entered, "Mr. Sakamoto, are you ready?"

Tadao motioned for his visitor to be brought in and finished his last bite of apple. A tall, heavy man with a top-knot and a large bag of gold on his side walked in with a smirk. "Are you him?"

"Are you he? And yes, you're in the right place. What can I do for you?" Tadao responded, barely raising his eye from his work.

The man adjusted his weighted belt. "I'm told you're the one to talk to to do business around here." He tossed his bag of gold onto Tadao's table. "So, whaddaya say?"

Without raising his head, "No."

"Excuse me?"

Tadao stopped his writing, looked up at the man and said again, quite bluntly, "No."

The man became quite unsettled and upset. "You listen here. I was the Merchant Prince back in my town and I can bring a lot of good business here, so why don't you get down off your high horse and—"

"No, you listen!" Tadao stood up, raising his voice to a booming echo. "I am the law here and I say what goes." He rounded his table and met the man face to much taller face. "I know exactly who you are and what you sell. Your wares are not welcome here." He hung the bag of gold back on his the man's belt.

"Not a fan of opium? The man asked.

Tadao eyed the merchant up and down.

"I've looked into your soul and I know there's much more to it. There is darkness in your soul and there is already so much of that here. You presence disrupts the delicate balance I have tried to create."

"You're giving up a lot of money."

Tadao chuckled to himself and returned to his seat. "I already have a lot of money. And, unlike you, I have apples," he said as he took another apple from his basket and bit down hard.



History

Following the Coils' retreat following the War of Withered Fangs, a few of the wealthiest families in the young Izou Empire used their significant influence to form a volunteer force to help maintain peace after such a devastating event. The man set to this task was Chuushin Nobu, who also enlisted the help of his good friend Brother Yutaka, abbot of a remote and undisturbed Enlightened monastery near Daiwa. Nobu and Brother Yutaka recruited young men and women from noble and merchant families from every corner of the land

for hardened spiritual training by the monastery's ninja. The philosophy of maintaining balance not just in the Empire, but within one's own body was strictly enforced. To do this, volunteers were trained in pairs, two ninja whose soul and talents contradicted and complimented each other... teaching them true balance through harmony. After training, some students became merchants, traders and teamsters, ensuring their passage to almost anywhere and access to people of all walks of life to balance. Others stayed nobles and used their influence to open doors to their fellow Scales.

In the time since their inception, the Wardens of Equilibrium have become quite the force to be reckoned with. They have a hand in most of the buying and selling of goods in the Izou Empire, making most of the Chuushin masters quite wealthy men. They have had dealings with every clan in the Empire and see it as their duty to make sure that no one person or group ever grows to be as powerful as the Hebi Clan once was. The current state of affairs and the Ninja Crusade is completely unacceptable to them. The Emperor's war on the clans is a clear and direct attack on the careful balancing act the Wardens have been keeping for longer than the current Emperor has been alive. Honor and money go hand in hand as motivators in starting the Lotus Coalition, which they currently head.

Lifestyle

Members range from merchant princes to lowly oxen drivers to "Robin Hood" types... but they are all part of the same family (most even related in some way). Clan

profits are shared as evenly as possible, with every member able to request aid and usually receive it with no questions asked. They have domain in almost every province within the Empire, but have their major holdings around the capital itself. There is a comfortable economy in any city they exert their influence.

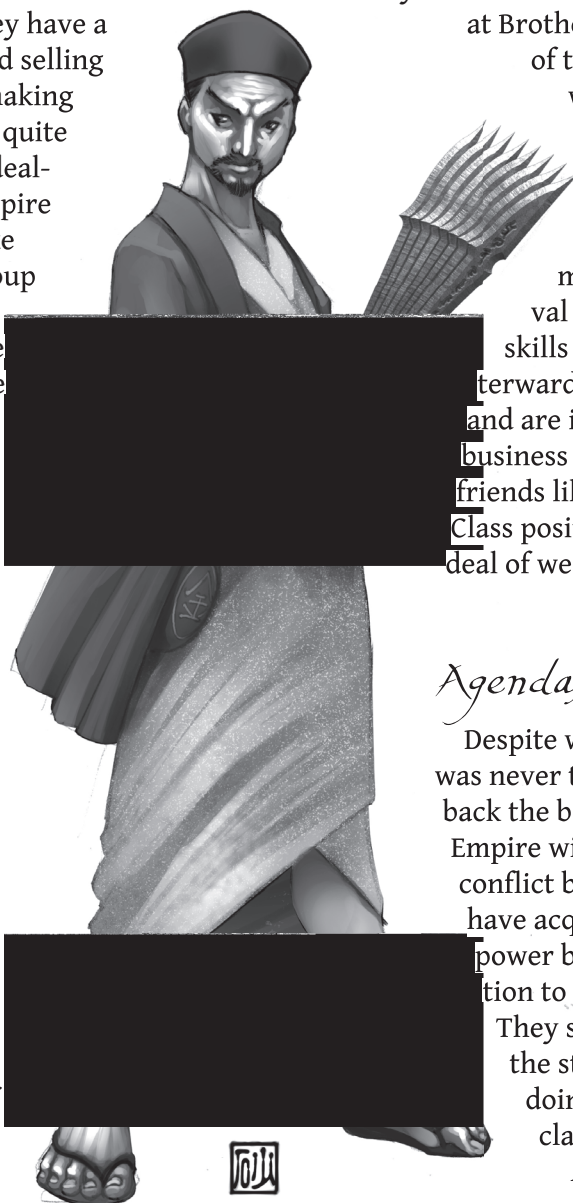
Initiates are trained and often work afterward in pairs (or multiples of two). The bond the two ninja students share is often tighter than blood, being joined by experience, loyalty and spirituality. The fact that partners may come from completely different walks of life creates a special kind of equality within the clan. Training usually occurs

at Brother Yutaka's monastery (out of tradition) with students living with the monks for at least a year while they train to sense the chi in others and the environment. When the clan meets once a year at the monastery, there's a huge festival as the students show off their skills to become full members. Afterward, they are considered an equal and are invited to discuss the state of business affairs across the world. With friends like this, even members in low class positions gain access to a great deal of wealth and resources.

Agendas

Despite what some may think, peace was never their goal. They seek to bring back the balance of power in the Izou Empire without destroying the healthy conflict between clans. The Chuushin have acquired considerable money and power by trading goods and information to different clans and families. They strengthen the weak, weaken the strong and make a profit while doing so, even if it means setting clan against clan.

Also, the wedding between the



Pack of the Black Moon and the Recoiling Serpents, the hopeful stepping stone to strengthening their resolve, has really only made things worse. Since the wedding was the Scales' proposal, it is a personal imbalance that they need to fix immediately.

Character Creation

Free Specialty: Persuasion

Fighting Styles: Bear Style, Eagle Style

Favored Wushu: Way of Balanced Scales, Way of Earth, Way of Survival

Clan Gift - Balancing Act: Every Warden is trained alongside a partner whose chi affinity opposes their own. If one is strong with Yang (Fire or Wood), then their partner is strong Yin (Water or Metal). Earth Souled characters choose Yin or Yang during character creation. The ninja learn to tune their chi to their comrade or opponent if they are of an opposing type.

- **Yang:** Gain a +2 bonus to Strike and Throw against targets with strong Yin. They receive a +2 bonus to resist Yin wushu and suffer no penalty when attempting a Cooperative Attack (pg 167) with a comrade of strong Yin.

- **Yin:** Gain a +2 bonus to Parry and Dodge against opponents with strong Yang. They receive a +2 bonus to resist Yang wushu and suffer no penalty when attempting a Cooperative Attack with a comrade of strong Yang.

Whether Yin or Yang, Scales also receive +1 Class during character creation, due to their economical influence.

Clan Drawback - Unpredictable History: Most clans have strong ties to other clans with alliances and rivalries that run deep. The Wardens, however, have equally helped and harmed all the clans at one time or another in their pursuit of perfect balance. Other clans will keep a wary eye on a Warden, never knowing when they might switch sides in order to keep a level playing field.



CLAN IMPRESSIONS

In the words of Sakamoto Tadao

Bamboo Herbalists: Often wilder than a jungle and yet steady enough to show true contemplation with potions. They are in balance for sure.

Blazing Dancers: Dancing clowns? Oh no, my friend. They are seasoned warriors through and through. Their talent is truly appreciated.

Grasping Shadows: We both understand the power of money, them as mercenaries and us as merchants. It's how we spend it that differs.

Hidden Strands of Fate: Where do we even start?

Living Chronicle: I tried to bribe one to only write good things about me and she refused. They seem balanced enough.

Pack of the Black Moon: Similar to our training methods, only with a dog. Glad they're on our side.

Recoiling Serpents: One never knows what to expect from the Coils, except to be surprised. If you don't provoke the snake, though, there's little to fear.

Virtuous Body Gardeners: Fantastic warriors with revolutionary wushu. They are our secret weapon against the Empire. Learn all you can, just in case they turn on us.

Will of Iron: We may look like the enemy to them, but a world that is only "good" isn't actually balanced. It's just monotonous.

Ronin: They still need to find themselves.

Lotus Coalition: Yes, we're the leaders, but only because the others don't have a clue.

The Empire: Completely out of balance. They must be stopped.



Will of Iron

Other Names: Hagane Clan, Sheriffs, Smiths
Stereotypes: Honorable, Courageous, Arrogant

Naomi strolled into the shop, a slight clang from her metal armor sounding against the walls. “Are you Kenshin?” she asked with a discerning stare at the man across the counter.

“Ye-yes,” the man responded with a gulp. Naomi’s Blade accent was more than enough to inspire the fear he felt. “Can I help you?”

She took another step forward, meeting him eye to eye. “You can. I am told that you have information on the death of Okada Tatsuya.”

Kenshin stuttered, “I-I don’t know what you’re t-talking about. I’m sorry.” He jumped when the shop door locks melted, sealing it instantly shut. Naomi pulled two large spikes from her side, eyeing the man in an intimidating manner but saying nothing. “Really. I d-don’t know any-“

Suddenly, Naomi flung the spikes into Kenshin’s hands, nailing him to the wall. He screamed as blood splattered, dripping on his face. In shock, he could do little more than mumble prayers to heaven under his breath.

“Let me tell you a story. A father of two and respected husband was returning home from working the fields when he was maliciously mugged and murdered.” She pulled out two more spikes and plunged them into the man’s feet.

“Okada Tatsuya has left a family behind all because of his precious red jade ring.” Naomi picked up a ring from the sales table. “This one particularly.”

Kenshin mumbled and cried, but finally let out “Yes! I bought the ring! But I didn’t kill anyone! I just bought it! You can take it! It’s yours, just leave me be!” The mixture of blood and snot trickled from his chin.

She placed the ring in her bag and then gripped the

man’s face to stare him in the eye. “Funny thing, in the eyes of justice... you are just as guilty as the criminals that held the blade. You purchased the stolen goods and you know the names of the culprits.”

“I’ll tell you! I’ll tell you! Just please don’t kill me!”

“Of course you’ll tell me,” Naomi chuckled. “And then your death will serve the heavens. So start talking.”

She spent that night torturing and killing Kenshin. It could have been quick, but that is not always the way of justice. Naomi then returned the ring to the widow and began a new campaign to track down her husband’s murderers. The job was not finished. Not by a mile.



History

The Hagane Clan way of life can be traced back to a man named Hagane Yoshio, a smith of great renown who was also an early user of wushu. He began his career on a pilgrimage to pray for the life of his brother who had been wrongly accused of a crime (a man that turned up dead after a heated battle about how to treat one’s wife). When he arrived at the temple, he found a block of purified steel with his family crest stamped on it, seemingly placed upon the prayer altar as an offering to the gods. Yoshio used the first metal-style wushu to carve at the holy metal and mold it with his bare hands. When he was finished, the finest sword ever made entered this world.

His brother was sentenced to death and Hagane Yoshio was dismayed over the court’s decision. With all the respect due the magistrate, he asked only that his brother’s death be merciful, offer-

ing to use the special blade fashioned by one of his own blood. When the sword fell upon the prisoner, he was miraculously unharmed, even after multiple attempts. The magistrate pardoned Hagane Yoshio's brother on the spot saying that Heaven (or perhaps an ancestor spirit) had chosen to spare his life. This new wushu would go on to become the cornerstone of the clan known as the Will of Iron.

Hailing from the Land of Five Blades, the Will of Iron had a large influence on their country's formation, as well as that of the Izou Empire. Their clan protects true, blind justice above all things. Most of the world's best swordsmen and smiths are members, using their blade to disperse with impartiality and fairness.

Their place in the Lotus Coalition puts them squarely in the Empire's sights. They bring to it the unique ability to judge events objectively and their mighty warriors to take down the Empire's soldiers. They humbly take the Warden's lead, but are quick to act outside of orders to preserve a just world.

Lifestyle

Most Hagane Clan enclaves can be found in the mountains or near mines and peat swamps, strong sources of the iron they use to forge artifacts. These enclaves seem like simple mining towns with exceptional craftsmen from the outside, but they are armed to the teeth with some of the finest weapons and armor in the Izou Empire. Since the Ninja Crusade began, these towns have told Empire lackeys of their sudden "shortage" of iron, hoping to slow the production of the guns the

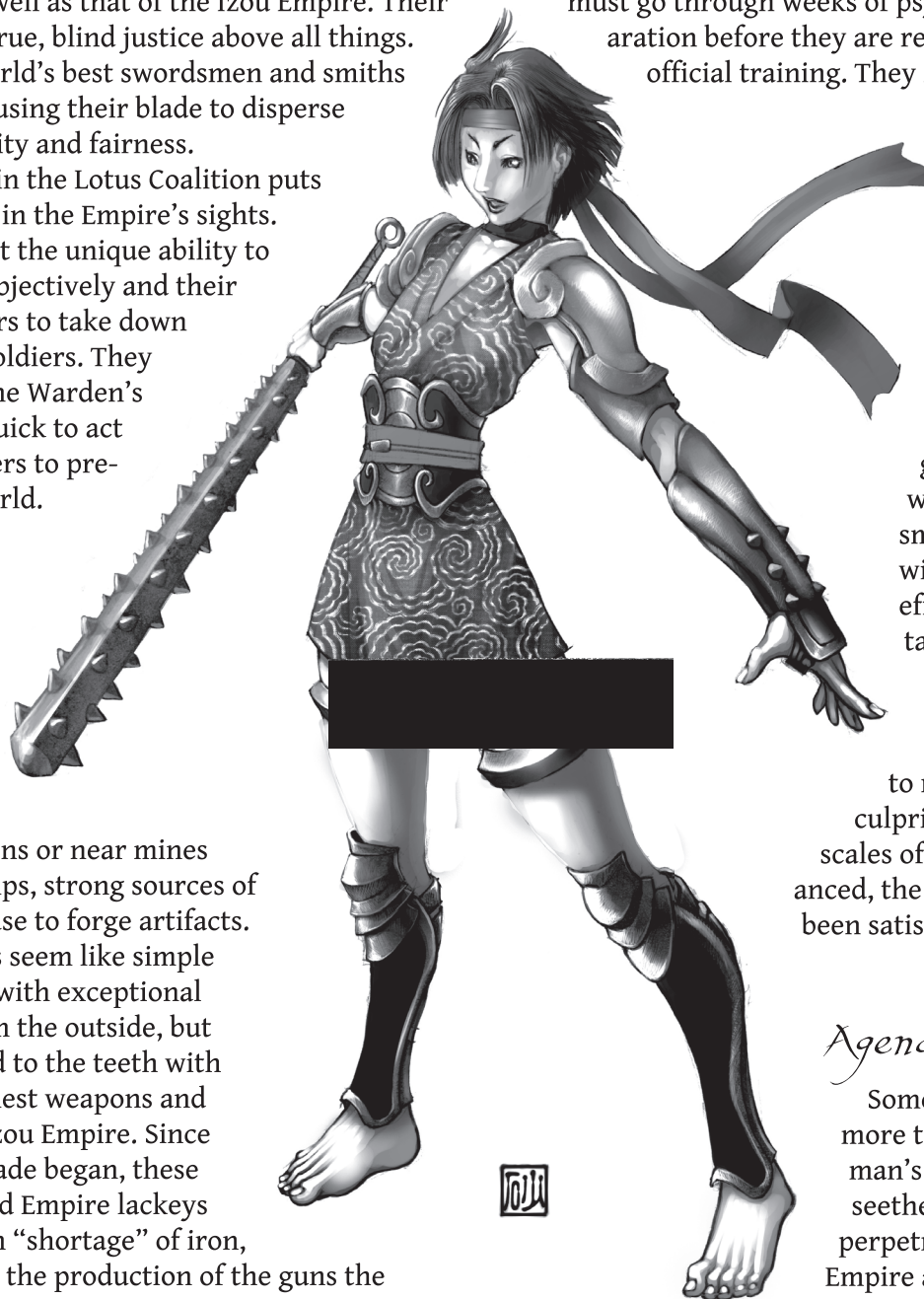
empire is using against the Lotus Coalition. However, they know this is a temporary obstacle at best since the Land of Five Blades currently backs the Izou Empire in their endeavors.

Becoming a member of the Will of Iron is no easy task. They consider themselves esteemed judges and have the ability to cut any guilty party in half with the permission of the heavens. Initiates can come from any background and Will of Iron even has many Untouchables in their ranks. Students must go through weeks of psychological preparation before they are ready to receive official training. They learn not only to

attune their spirits to the element of metal, making them better swordsmen, but also to the souls of those they encounter. Anyone that is guilty of a crime, whether large or small, is to be dealt with quickly and efficiently. Some take this to mean instant death, but others frequently attempt to rehabilitate culprits. As long as the scales of justice are balanced, the Will of Iron has been satisfied.

Agendas

Some want nothing more than a craftsman's life, but most seethe at the injustices perpetrated by the Izou Empire against those



they see as kinsmen. Most other clans get their arms from the Hagane Clan as they make the finest iron in the Empire. They were quick to jump to the Lotus Coalition as well, offering their blades and war expertise in support. At the same time, many clan leaders are suspicious of dealing too closely with the Will of Iron, fearing their judgmental nature and not so calm temperaments. Either way, the Will of Iron has little in the way of alternative motives for fighting the empire, which is refreshing to the Wardens of Equilibrium.

Character Creation

Free Specialty: Crafts

Fighting Styles: Tiger Style, Wildcat Style

Favored Wushu: Way of Heaven's Judgment, Way of Metal, Way of the Warrior

Clan Gift – Metallic Empathy: Sheriffs receive intense training to harmonize their soul with any metal items they wield. Objects made of metal simply work better for a member of the Hagane Clan, giving them an additional +2 bonus to all checks (including combat) when using the tool or weapon and they cannot be disarmed of a weapon they made themselves. Also, metal items are more readily available for the Hagane Clan, granting them a +1 Class bonus to acquire them (without the need of a Barter check).

Clan Drawback – Black and White: Most clans view the Will of Iron as a group of puritanical know-it-alls who see the world as only black and white, which is not entirely untrue. Thus, many generally avoid subjects that might be viewed as morally questionable for fear of the wrath of perceived justice. Smiths have a duty to investigate any possible injustice and are urged to “deal” with the guilty, even if it is a friend or comrade.



CLAN IMPRESSIONS

In the words of Chuushin Naomi

Bamboo Herbalists: As long as all you're doing is healing me, I'm fine with you still existing.

Blazing Dancers: Their practices are as questionable as their goals. The eye of justice is upon you all.

Grasping Shadows: Defenders of traditions long past, much like ourselves. They differ in tactics, but are commendable.

Hidden Strands of Fate: As corrupt as they come. One day, we will cut their strings.

Living Chronicle: Knowledge is only power when it has purpose. Stop standing on the side lines and do something!

Pack of the Black Moon: Insufferable mutts.

Recoiling Serpents: Rotten to the core... they need to be cleansed from this world and mine is just the blade for the job.

Virtuous Body Gardeners: Good swordsmen, bad aim. They may be redeemable in the end with some work.

Wardens of Equilibrium: Pick a side already! Staying in the middle only makes you an easy target.

Ronin: Don't trust a man without an allegiance. They believe in nothing.

Lotus Coalition: Just point my blade... I'll do the rest.

The Empire: They fight like cowards with their guns. We will do them the pleasure of stabbing them to their face.



RONIN

Other Names: Loners, Wanderers, Exiles

Stereotypes: Mysterious, Individualistic, Backstabbers

Kumiko wandered into the tiny village, the first she had encountered for days. She kept her hood up, hiding her porcelain face from plain view. A guard watched her heavy, metal footsteps with no way of knowing a ninja's strut from another's. She continued to the local street cook, frying skewered pork for just a couple jade pieces.

A quick smile and some coins and Kumiko had the first bite of food she'd had in three days. "Thank you, sir."

"You're welcome, young lady" the older gentleman replied.

When suddenly, a boy ran by and stole two skewers. He happily chomped on the pork as he ran, when two guards gave chase and blew a whistle to alert others. They eventually caught up, as the guards were bigger and faster, and they cornered the boy.

"This is that kid that stole Etsu's chicken." One of them said. The back of his shirt was gripped by a glove, while the other punched the kid.

Kumiko watched, taking another bite of her pork. Should she step in? This is village justice for a thief; does an outsider have the right to stop it? When the cook yelled "Hey, it's ok! Don't hurt him!" but the guards continued, her mind was made up.

Her movements were swift despite her armored right side and her large blade that appeared from nowhere was instantly at the guards' throats. "Back away from the boy and give up, you," looking at the boy, "Give me one of those skewers."

The guards took a step back and the boy handed the ninja the skewer with a shaking hand. As Kumiko had her second piece of pork, she looked around and saw a wanted poster with her face on it... noticing also that her hood had fallen. The boy's scared look turned to disgust. "Ronin!" he said as he spit at her.

She shoved the boy to the side as more guards showed up. "Catch her, catch her!" they said as they ran after her. Tapping into her chi, she easily outran the guards... but that was one more town that her name has spread to. It was only a matter of time.

History

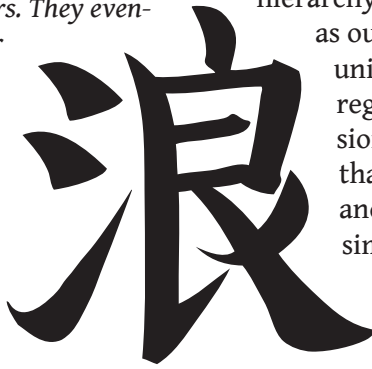
While some of the most legendary ninja have originated from dominating clans, several others have sprung from obscurity. Coming from any number of possible backgrounds, armed with signature wushu and zero clan ties, these unbound ninja are often feared in the Empire as rebels and troublemakers. They aren't predictable, are often nomadic and hold true to no law but their own code of honor (which some lack all together).

Ronin hold an interesting position within the hierarchy of ninja clans and society. They stand as outsiders, always looking in at the family

units created by clans, but are sometimes regarded as the future. Unique expressions of wushu often spur brand new clans that can prosper and flourish or crash and burn. Rivalries with clans that fill similar niches can end in the decimation of one, the other or both, thus fueling even more infighting among the clans. Most established clans find

it easier to be cordial with Ronin, as it may prove beneficial later on. Other less politically-motivated clans forget all pleasantries when dealing with common Wanderers, some even making sport out of destroying them before they've got their feet. Even the Virtuous Body Gardeners were regarded as Ronin less than a century ago. What other wondrous clans can bloom from anonymity?

The most despised of Ronin are those spurred from existing clans. This can occur if one is exiled from their homeland, excommunicated from their clan or found to be a traitor in any way. These Ronin keep a low profile as bringing undue attention is a mistake that could lead to death. They disregard their previous heritage and begin forging new paths for themselves, possibly for revenge against their old clan.



Lifestyle

Many Ronin are self-taught, practicing their martial arts from pictures in found books or mimicking ninja they have seen in battle. Others may have received basic ninja training from a ninja clan at some point in their life, but left their masters for one reason or another. They seldom learn wushu that are contingent on a clan concept, instead developing brand new ones that reflect their existence in solitude and survival. There are times when a Ronin may take on students, in essence creating their own small clan, but gathering together is usually only for survival. Although, many have aspirations for more.

Some Ronin travel from town to town to learn (or teach) new wushu, test their strength against residing fighters or even take on quests that the clans are too busy with politicking to undertake. Others stay in towns without strong clan presence, becoming local heroes and defenders of the people. In the face of the Izou Empire, Ronin are often the only glimmer of hope that some villages can count on.

Agendas

Ronin do not have a single goal or agenda. Nor do they hold a collective territory. Each of them exists as single, autonomous ninja that may or may not work together briefly. They are hated by some clans, mistrusted by some and ignored by others. Beginning Ronin focus on survival first, but power often leads to building new and



interesting wushu or the establishment of their own clans. Ronin often act as mercenaries in many fights against the Empire or wage their own personal wars for protecting the things they love. The Lotus Coalition has begun welcoming new Ronin, but usually only to use them as fodder.

Character Creation

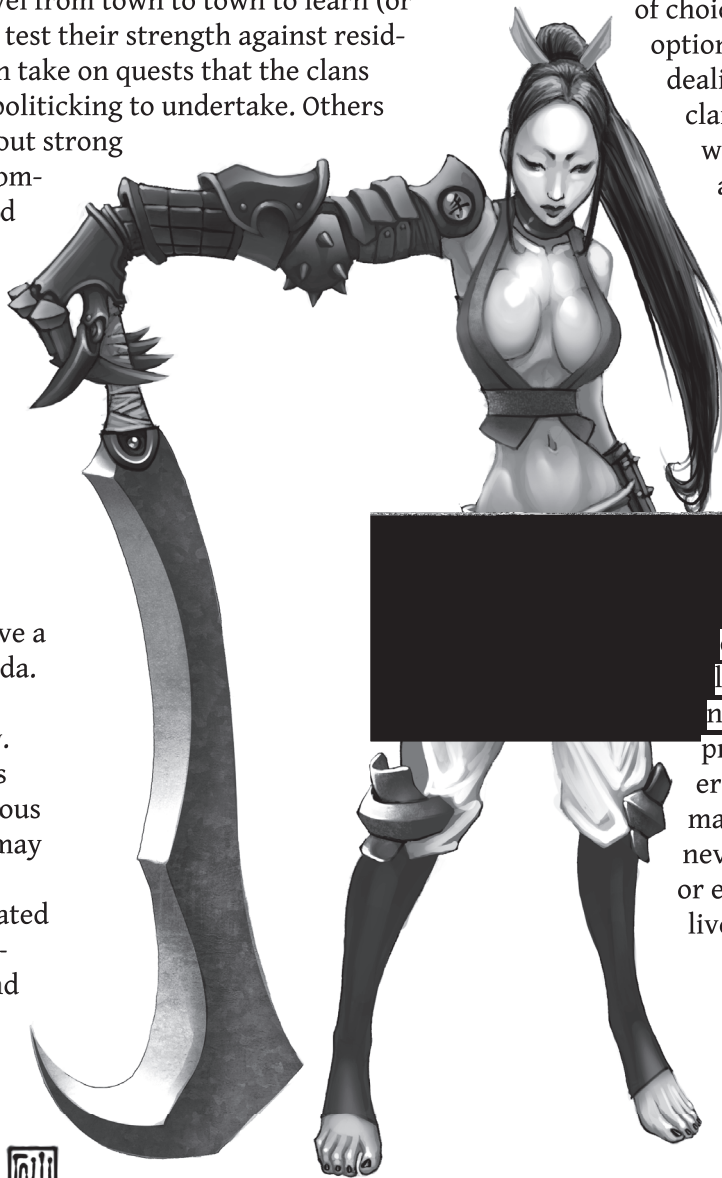
Free Specialty: None

Fighting Styles: One of choice

Favored Wushu: None

Ronin Gift – Choice: Ronin receive one Fighting Style of choice, as well as one additional Weapon of choice for free. They also have the option to abstain from political clan dealings and are not bound by any clan code. Ronin select 4 total wushu levels at character creation, instead of 5, but they can choose from ANY wushu path (even Clan-specific with the right background). None of these wushu are considered “favored”, so further wushu cost 2 BP per level. They also receive +2 Stamina points, a +2 bonus to Survival, and 12 BP (instead of 10 BP) to spend at character creation.

Ronin Drawback – Unaligned: While they have choice and independence, they lack the power base that clan ninja possess. Also, due to clan propaganda, Ronin are considered as traitorous and disloyal in many areas in the Empire. Ronin never know who their true friends or enemies are, leaving them to live a life of survival and paranoia.



CHAPTER THREE: CHARACTER BUILDING



BUILDING STEPS

Below are the basic steps for creating a new character for Ninja Crusade.

Step One: Concept, Passion, Element (record Starting Chi), and Clan (and Fighting Styles)

Step Two: Distribute Attribute Points (30)

Step Three: Record Starting Skills and Distribute Skill Points (30 + IQ)

Step Four: Select Wushu

Step Five: Spend Bonus Points (10)

Step Six: Calculate Sub-Attributes/Combat Bonuses



CONCEPT

When brainstorming for initial character ideas, it's often simpler to think of a basic concept that can be summarized in two or three words. This can be anything from "Wandering monk" to "Traveling Performer" to "Escaped Slave". It is easiest to first identify your character's role in the world (i.e. their occupation), then take stock of the type of person that would ultimately end up in that position. However, remember that the character is still a person with their own fears, personalities and goals, no matter their occupation.

Another way of conceptualizing your character is to take stock of their personality and psyche before choosing their role. Below are a few other things to consider when pondering who the character really is:

Gender/Sexuality: While men and women can assume many of the same roles of leaders, generals or homemakers, there are certain biases regarding each. Men are expected by society to be strong-willed, while women timid; a man courageous and a woman caring. Characters are outside of the norm, falling anywhere in between these stereotypes. A man could be quite effeminate and a woman could be the toughest warriors in a whole town. Romantic or sexual relationships between two people of the same gender is not the norm, but not illegal. Of course, with the strong gender roles and impressions placed on the youth, few publicly admit their alternative sexuality for fear of a social or political backlash.

Family Life: A character's upbringing and relationship with their family has considerable influence on the type of person they become. Are their parents still alive? If so, are they still married? How is their relationship with the character? Any siblings, rivalries, childhood friends? Evaluating all the connections the character has to the world and how they feel about them helps to mold the very idea of the concept. After all, a character whose father was

killed in the war and a brother that hates them will be starkly different than a character that grew up in a loving home with lots of family activities and celebrations.

Personal History: Then consider what the character has done with their adulthood. Did they immediately join up with their clan or did they have a life before that? Were they a playboy or perhaps a famous archery champion? Certain things about a person can draw a clan to them. For instance, a character that decided to pursue politics may get approached by the Hidden Strands of Fate, while another that tried their hand at being a merchant could be petitioned by the Wardens of Equilibrium.

Clan Life: How was the character's experience during and after their training? Becoming a ninja is nothing short of a miracle for some, while others have an easy-going approach that makes it simple for them. Did the character pick up a rivalry, close friend or enemy? Are they regarded by their leaders with distrust or complete pride? Do new members look to them for assistance or do they look away from the "dullard" of the clan?

Disposition: In the end, all their experiences will affect the character's disposition... how they view and act toward the world. Some ninja are not to friendly, while others could teach classes in perfect etiquette. One ninja could be gung-ho and ready for battle at all times and another completely pacifist. Some clans stress the importance of suitable outward appearances more than others, but the Lotus Coalition makes it inevitable that differing outlooks will conflict from time to time.

PASSIONS

Every character has their own motivations, loyalties and people or things that push them to action, represented by their Passion. Someone without a Passion becomes a drone and coasts through life without purpose or true happiness. Some characters strive for power, either over animals, over people or over themselves. Some seek balance or perfection in all things, strictly forbidding themselves certain pleasure in life. Others struggle only to protect what is theirs, whether it is their community or a personal item. Passions are the core foundation of a character

and stands as a reflection of their true nature.

Like the precepts of Yin and Yang, Passions are not wholly good. Elements of both good and evil, right and wrong or benefits and consequences exist within any character's Passion. The most important positive aspect is that Passions keep the character close to their humanity (although the concept of humanity differs between kingdoms). Without a motivation, goal, or purpose to their lives, the character loses their unique spirit and begins the road to conformity. Even ninja can become mindless zombies that do nothing but follow orders, but this type of existence is seldom rewarding.

Passions hold the key to a character's inner self, which clever enemies or rivals can use against them. It is not always easy to discern someone's Passion. Some wear such things so important to their identity on their sleeve. Others go to great lengths to hide their true soul, knowing that another can corrupt or spoil their Passion. An enemy that knows of the character's urge to protect their younger brother or other loved one (Protection) can easily place them in harm's way. A rival that knows a ninja admires or looks up to a certain leader (Approval) may make them the next target for assassination. A character that seeks only to find lost scrolls with an ancient ritual on them (Collection) could be lured to forgeries by a talented adversary.

PASSION MODIFIERS

As a character's Passion is the core of their being, they receive an additional benefit when their actions and motivations correspond to each other. This comes in the form of additional Experience Points (XP) awarded to the player whenever the character's Passion is implemented during the game in an interesting way. This could be simple act within their Passion's precepts or opposing an adversary centered on their Passion.

The GM may also give a +2 bonus to any check that directly aids the character in achieving some facet of their Passion in some way. This applies to extended and contested checks as well.

Likewise, a penalty may be given to a character that acts outside of their Passion, even if it is necessary. If a person's Protection is paramount, the ninja would suffer a -2 penalty to all checks if they suddenly chose to harm them. Also, a ninja with the

Community Passion that has to burn down an important building to lure empire soldiers is acting against their community. In this case, they would suffer a -2 penalty to all checks until they paid penance for their actions.

The GM is the final arbiter of what does and does not constitute as an action that receives a XP or Skill modifier.

Example: Kino (following the Collector Passion) sees the very herb that she came for, but is interrupted by a large bear on her way to pick it. Her goal is the herb, not the bear. The GM may give a +2 bonus to her Reactions to avoid the bear's attacks, but if she turns her attention to the bear, she may lose this bonus.

CHANGING PASSIONS

Everyone contains a combination of every Passion inside their soul, but their chosen Passion is the aspect that has taken the forefront in their lives. It has become their strongest motivator, but it is not impossible to change to a new goal when the story allows. A character's focus and goals must change after all or they become stale and unbalanced. Changes to a Passion usually accompany major life changes or the end of a particular life goal. It is important to work with the GM to decide if a change in Passion fits the situation and future events for the character's personal story.

Example: Xian is tasked with the protection of his village (Community) and finds out that his brother has been killed while he patrolled the streets. This could have a number of effects for him. He could fill with rage and become obsessed with finding the culprit and killing them (Vengeance). He could turn to his other family members and forsake his village to better defend his remaining family (Protection). He could just as easily have no change in Passion (Community) and simply decide to be even more vigilant in his patrolling.

Approval

A character with the Approval Passion seeks the approval of others, either of a group or single person. They may be loyal son who seeks approval from their parent or a warrior for the Emperor who wants nothing more than his kind word for their action. Another may be a ninja fresh out of training that seeks the approval of their new squad or even

an outcaste that hopes to be acknowledged by their community. These characters look beyond themselves and embody the spirit of a true servant. They pride themselves on their work, but even more on the reaction they receive from their chosen judges. They are not conformists or followers by any means, but base their worth on the respect they receive from others.

Bonus XP: Whenever they are noticed or commended by their idol or chosen judges.

Code of Honor

A character with the Code of Honor Passion follows a set of rules that they are bound to obey. Some may be monks that follow strict tenets against material possessions or giving into vices like alcohol and sex. Some are bound by their own personal or cultural code based on certain moral beliefs. Example codes include "Never attack an unarmed opponent", "Never tell an untruth" or "Never strike a woman". A character raised in a certain clan or with a warped sense of morals may create their own "opposite" honor code. In either case, these characters are connected to the world by the rules that allow them to live a worthy existence.

Bonus XP: Whenever they abide by their honor code with dire consequences.

Collector

A character with the Collector Passion revolves their life around a collection of items of a certain type almost to the point of obsession. Some are legendary, with the character vowing to bring together all the collection pieces to fulfill some destiny. Others collections are more low key, with a character that seeks rare knives or finding and breeding unusual animals. The object of their Passion becomes their overwhelming motivator and these characters become puzzle solvers finding the connection between their items. More dangerous warriors may collect parts of their opponents (i.e. an ear or finger), while more apathetic characters may simply collect people or servants.

Bonus XP: Whenever they gain another piece for their collection with some danger attached.

Community

A character with the Community Passion see themselves less as an individual and more as an extension of his village, town, city or even the Empire as a whole. These characters often become the defenders or problem solvers for their chosen community. Some hold offices in local law enforcement (i.e. soldiers or sheriffs). Others may become community organizers, arranging suitable living for homeless or town council members that help to steer their fellows in the right direction. They have a tendency to forget about others' individual rights as well, assuming that everyone is willing to sacrifice just as much as they are... which is seldom the case.

Bonus XP: Whenever they help their community in a noticeable way.

Escape

A character with the Escape Passion is motivated to get away from an adversary or locale, seeing escape as their only objective. Some characters seek an escape from an abusive home-life, while others are simply stuck in a life of routine and boredom, wanting nothing more than to escape their mundane existence. Others are criminals wanted by the law, living each day having to look over their shoulders with each move they make. These characters are constantly pursued by their Passion, whether it is law enforcement or the guilt of leaving their family behind. These characters have a strong sense of survival and adventure, linked to the world by their wanting to stay in it no matter the cost.

Bonus XP: Whenever they make another step away from a pursuer.

Faith

The character holds their religion and faith in the highest esteem for their existence, often instilled from an early age by family and community. Some have gone through horrible ordeals in their lives (i.e. death or addiction) and used faith to bring them through it safely. Some even become monks or street preachers, hoping to aid others in their own personal faith. These characters live by the tenets of their chosen religion and believe that faith can aid against any obstacle or danger, using it to protect fellow worshipers, strangers, trusted comrades and

their high ideals.

Bonus XP: Whenever the character uses faith to bring themselves or others through hard times.

Greed

A character with the Greed Passion wants to acquire vast quantities of something, usually just one particular thing. Some come from noble houses and seek nothing more than to pad their coffers with more jade. Some may seek to acquire favors or women to build their own harems, caring nothing about these people other than how many they have under their thumb. Another may simply want to know every wushu in existence. These characters have a craving that is never sated, no matter how hard they try or how much of their obsession they already possess. They often get a special joy from getting what they want at the expense of others as well.

Bonus XP: Whenever they acquire a large abundance of their chosen obsession.

Joy

A character with the Joy Passion surrounds their life with celebration, happiness and bliss. Some become performers in order to entertain and share that happiness with their countrymen. Others become politicians or even missionaries for the same reason, spreading joy throughout the land. They see themselves only through the smiles of others, many becoming caregivers or herbalists for the joy they can bring a saved patient. These characters are able to smile through adversity, knowing that better times are always ahead. Their optimism can bring them through many an obstacle unscathed.

Bonus XP: Whenever they can reflect on a bad situation and convince someone to see the good.

Love

A character with the Love Passion is urged to action by their obsession with romantic notions. Some people will do almost anything to gain the notice of the object of their affection or to keep the one they currently have. Some go on long quests to gain their subject's favor and perform any task required to stay that way. These characters are hopeless romantics that will also fight for the relationships of others as well, offering advice, comfort to the love lost or even

assistance to ensure that love blossoms. They feel a connection to others through this strongest of emotions.

Bonus XP: Whenever they act in a way that helps their own or another's love life.

Perfection

A character with the Perfection Passion seeks some type of personal goal that may seem unattainable to most. The concept of "Perfection" differs between different cultures, families and ninja clans. Some consider perfection to be a perfect balance of the body, mind and spirituality. Some believe in focusing on one aspect, striving toward perfect body conditioning or accumulating the perfect amount of knowledge. Some ninja attempt to create the perfect wushu to attain their goals. Darker notions of this Passion include those that delve into self-mutilation, horrible experiments or even the murder of others to make the Empire perfect.

Bonus XP: Whenever they take another step toward their personal perfection.

Power

A character with the Power Passion has only one thing on their minds... acquiring control of something in their lives, no matter the reason. These characters often go on to become leaders in most things, jumping to the forefront of a ninja squad or rising quickly in the ranks of the Empire's army. Others prefer to become advisors to great leaders, controlling things vicariously. They feel connected to the world by the amount of control they have over it and nothing else. Some do not actually earn their power, instead taking it from someone in an arrogant coup or war. A character with this Passion and a force behind them is a dangerous thing.

Bonus XP: Whenever they gain significant power over another, territory, or some part of their life.

Protection

A character with the Protection Passion is motivated by keeping something of value in their life safe. Some may have territory that they must protect by any means necessary. Some hold on to a particular family heirloom that is passed through their bloodline, such as a sacred weapon or their ances-

tor's journal. Others may actually protect another person, such as their spouse, sibling, parent, or a child. These characters are connected to the world by their connection to their most valued item and are motivated to keep it from harm even if it costs them their own lives.

Bonus XP: Whenever they protect their item from a real threat.

Rebellion

A character with the Rebellion Passion has the heart of a rebel, fighting against forces that may seem much more powerful than themselves. Some are ninja that fight against the unfair attacks from the Empire, while others are common folk that may rebel against corrupt officials in their city, town or village. Other character rebel against a system from within, finding ways to delay progress or striking a deadly blow to the establishment that they so desire to bring down. These characters only truly feel alive when they are rebelling against something or someone, holding strong to their convictions for their cause.

Bonus XP: Whenever they significantly rebel against an ideal or person and can get others to join their cause.

Rivalry

A character with the Rivalry Passion focuses their life on a constant competition they have with another person. Some characters are pit against their siblings, endlessly competing for their fathers' respect or their mothers' love. Some are rival soldiers that risk everything to gain the next rank on their way to top before their rival. Other characters may even pick ideal people from history or legends and attempt to outdo any deeds they accomplished in their time. These characters are motivated by a sense to always be better than someone else, which can cause envy or imbalance if not handled correctly.

Bonus XP: Whenever they get a leg up on their rival.

Truth

A character with the Truth Passion is on a constant quest to uncover the secrets of something in their world. Some are tasked by their clan to dis-

cover a traitor within their midst, while some may be searching for their real parents. These characters have many questions that remain unanswered in their lives and will stop at nothing to solve these great mysteries. They have highly developed ideas of justice, leading some to shed light on the truth for other on occasion, like proving a wrongly-accused man innocent. They are not necessarily concerned with consequences caused by knowing said truth, just that it is revealed.

Bonus XP: Whenever they find one more piece of the puzzle they seek.

Vengeance

A character with the Vengeance Passion has been wronged in their past and now devotes their life to achieving justice. Some strive to track down a single person or group for one reason or another (i.e. murder of a loved one). Others seek revenge against a group or an ideal with just as much fire (i.e. blaming the Empire for their problems, instead of an individual soldier). Methods are based on the character, ranging from brutally attacking any soldier in hopes that they are the one they were seeking to finding a way to simply get the person to admit their wrongdoing.

Bonus XP: Whenever they get one step closer to achieving their revenge.

Warrior

A character with the Warrior Passion lives primarily for the thrill of battle. They are urged to test their muscle and steel against another. Some are random attackers, hoping only to spill blood from anyone they face. Others become skilled strategist, testing their ability to conceptualize their win with a cunning plan. Others become wandering monks, traveling from village to village in hopes of finding their greatest challenge and those worthy of their efforts. These characters are fervent about battle, quickly becoming the one thing they do best, but this Passion has also led to centuries-long disputes that otherwise could have been solved with words.

Bonus XP: Whenever they win in a fight as the underdog.

ELEMENTAL SOULS

Each character is born with one of five Elemental Souls, determined by a combination of astrology and numerology. This affects the character's personality in certain ways, making one more prone to stubbornness or scheming, determines their starting Yin and Yang values, and gives them a special combat advantage tied to the concept of their element. It also brings with it drawbacks to having too much or too little chi that are specific to their element (pg 78). **Note:** Players should pick carefully, as there is no way to change the character's Element after character creation.

Earth

Earth-natured characters are sturdy, honest and trustworthy. They are the symbol of balance and are tied to the earth. They don't enjoy constant travel or needing to change their minds unnecessarily. These characters are also quite spiritual, leaning on faith in many instances.

Starting Chi: Yin 1, Yang 1, 1 of choice

Natural Combat: The character receives a +1 bonus to Strike checks for each successful attack they Dodge in that Round. This bonus is reduced to 0 at the beginning of the next Round.

Earth Imbalance – Scared of Life: The character becomes stubborn and very stingy. They begin second-guessing their choices, scared to act in any way. They must make a Moderate (20) Fear check every time they need to take a chance that might end with harm to themselves or their possessions.

Earth Depletion - Indulgence: The character loses the control over themselves that Earth provides. They become selfish and self-indulgent, tending to ignore other people's opinions. If they see something they want, they must make a Moderate (20) Insanity to resist just taking it outright, even if it also takes advantage of others.

Fire

Fire-natured characters are born energetic, artistic and passionate. Like fire, they burn bright and often take the spotlight at social engagements. They are born leaders and generals due to their natural charisma, etiquette and courteousness.

Starting Chi: Yang 3, Yin 0

Natural Combat: The character receives a +1 bonus to Parry for each successful attack they land in that Round. This bonus is reduced to 0 at the beginning of the next Round.

Fire Imbalance - Loquacious: The character becomes very talkative, overexcited and restless, regardless of whether they are threatening or sweet-talking someone. The bad part is that they often say whatever is on their mind, even if it's a secret. They can make a Moderate (20) Insanity check to stop their words from turning into a lecture and possibly leaking secrets.

Fire Depletion - Overheated: The character loses the decorum that Fire provides, becoming overly-aggressive without an actual target. They lose most of their confidence and are prone to constant paranoia from insecurity, making them twitch at almost any stimuli. When approached or accosted, they make a Moderate (20) Fear check or they attack and can only take Assault Rounds (pg 170).

Metal

Metal-natured characters are filled with bravery, discipline, and an overwhelmingly strong sense of justice. They are keen on routine and rules, but are not above improvisation when needed. Like metal, their beliefs are hard to destroy and are often so sharp that they hurt, but they are also able to reshape themselves to take on many different roles.

Starting Chi: Yin 2, Yang 1

Natural Combat: The character receives a +1 Damage bonus to their attacks for each successful attack their enemies land on them in that Round. This bonus is reduced to 0 at the beginning of the next Round.

Metal Imbalance - No Mercy: The character becomes cruel and destructive. They retain their bravery, but start to leave thought out of the process... acting on impulse instead. They must make a Moderate (20) Insanity check or lose all mercy.

Metal Depletion - Wallflower: They become quiet, shy and paranoid. The character often overthinks even the simplest situation, leaving them without the ability to make decisions on the fly. They must make a Moderate (20) Fear check or lose the ability to speak out and respond quickly (-4 penalty to Initiative).

Water

Water-natured characters are naturally intelligent, possess great memories and are cautious in their approach to life. Like water, their personalities can take on different forms, calm and peaceful one moment only to go into a rage that can overtake even the strongest substance. Most have intense urges to travel and adventure.

Starting Chi: Yin 3, Yang 0

Natural Combat: The character receives a +1 bonus to Strike for each successful Parry in that Round. This bonus is reduced to 0 at the beginning of the next Round.

Water Imbalance - Deviousness: The character becomes a schemer, creating outlandish and evil plots. They usually pick a target and spend hours planning their next moves, forsaking anything else that they may need to



do. They can make a Moderate (20) check or lose the ability to think past their next malevolent act.

Water Depletion - Escapists: The character loses their courage, becoming focused on survival only. They lack common sense and foresight, often acting very much in the moment without being quite sure what the next move should be. They must make a Moderate (20) Fear check to avoid a coward and hermit (-2 Actions per Round).

Wood

Wood-natured characters have a kind, sharing and gentle spirit to them, usually accompanying a healthy complexion. Their element often makes them resilient defenders of the weak. Like a tree, they grow to be strong and independent, but are also perfectionists, which can lead to competitiveness.

Starting Chi: Yin 1, Yang 2

Natural Combat: The character receives a +1 bonus to Strike for each successful attack they land on an opponent that Round. This bonus is reduced to 0 at the beginning of the next Round.

Wood Imbalance - Unbending: The character becomes completely inflexible and biased to the point of bigotry and prejudice. Their worse opinions of people and situations start to take over and they stubbornly ignore others' views. They must make a Moderate (20) Insanity check or lose the ability to compromise or accept new and different people.

Wood Depletion - Loss of Self: The character loses their boisterous personality, becoming weak-willed and easily swayed from their point of view. Hatred of those with strong opinions often creeps in as well. They must make a Moderate (20) Fear check or lose their own thoughts (-2 penalty to Empathy, Persuasion, and Deception)

CHI

Chi, also called ki, is the energy that resonates within all things, living and dead. This energy is split into two types, Yin and Yang, that represent the positive and negative natures of the universe. While opposite, one cannot exist without the other and are not representative of a good versus evil dichotomy. It is the difference between light and dark, strength and weakness or fire and water. Characters begin

with starting Yin and Yang Chi rating based on their chosen Elemental Soul. This determines their natural ability to work and store their chi energy without throwing their soul out of sorts.

Ninja are trained in chi manipulation from a very young age. Some think this requires them to sacrifice parts of their soul in order to mold the potent energy and, in some cases, they are correct. Everyone has chi that fills their body, but only ninja have received the training to unlock such wonders. Training revolves around molding the chi the ninja finds in their environment to refuel themselves after draining themselves of their natural chi or when they need extra in order to cause a dramatic effect. They draw chi from the rocks, the trees and even the air to forge powerful mystical effects (wushu) that give them control over the fundamental building blocks of the universe. Those with a higher Chi rating can accumulate more of that type safely.

PERMANENT AND TEMPORARY CHI

Characters begin play with Permanent Chi and Temporary Chi. Permanent Chi is their fixed maximums of each chi type they can hold within their body safely. Starting Temporary Chi is equal to their Permanent Chi values. This creates a direct link between their Element and how much chi they have to work with. Even as starting characters, a ninja can theoretically hold up to 10 points of each chi type (for a total of 20), but run the risk of damaging their bodies and souls. Extraneous chi has a way of influencing their mood in ways that could be detrimental to their health. Permanent chi is bubbled in on the character sheet and remains unchanging, unless the character raises their value with BP. However, Temporary chi is used to activate wushu, requiring 1 point per wushu level of the appropriate type.

Regaining: Chi returns naturally at a rate of 1 every 30 minutes as their body naturally absorbs it from their environment. The ninja can conversely spend 5 minutes in Meditation (requires a Moderate (20) INS + Discipline check) to regain 1 chi point instantly. A failed check means they can try again after the 5 minutes has passed.

Instant chi can be made by sacrificing Permanent Chi or Stamina points or making a Mold Chi Action (pg 168) during combat. A simple slash is used to indicate how many points of chi the character has

to utilize at any moment. Also, a character can hold either type of chi no matter their Permanent Chi values (i.e. even a Water Soul character with Yang 0, Yin 3 can hold Yang chi without issue). Below is a character with Permanent Yang Chi 3, holding 4 Temporary Chi points.



BALANCING CHI

A ninja is assumed to be “Balanced” when they have at least one point of Yin or Yang in their body, but not more than 2 total points over their Permanent Chi values. If they start to hold more Temporary Yang Chi than this, this is called an Elemental Imbalance. If they run out of a particular chi type, this is called an Elemental Depletion. Each forces a certain check to avoid severe personality changes, along with possible Skill or combat penalties associated with their Elemental Soul (see pg 75).

Chi Explosions: Holding more chi than your Permanent values can pay off in the end, but is quite dangerous. It has the possibility of damaging the ninja with chi explosions. If they roll a Critical Failure on any wushu activation check, all chi over their Permanent values explode inside of them, dealing 3 (L) per point. In the end, they lose all but what they can hold safely and the wushu still fails. This only comes into effect when the character is Imbalanced, meaning that are holding more than they can safely (Permanent Values +2).

SACRIFICING CHI VALUES

Everyone has an inner well of chi inside of them, but most don’t have access to such raw energy. Even ninja can only use a small portion of their overall power. However, it is this internal chi, shaped by their Elemental Soul, that gives them sway over Yin and Yang. In moments of great need, ninja can willingly tap into these stores of power and unleash bursts of chi for a number of varying effects. Any number of Yin or Yang chi can be sacrificed at one time, before or after a check and without the need to use any Actions.

Example: Instead of using a Mold Chi Action that would waste precious Speed in his current battle, Lee decides to reflexively Sacrifice 1 Permanent Yang chi for a burst of 5 instant Temporary Yang points. Since he already had 3

Yang stored, he now has 8 Temporary Yang. He can now commence with using his wushu without spending time to mold.

This can be absolutely dangerous for a ninja and is suggested for dire situations only. Why? While it may give a temporary boost of luck or a much-needed edge in battle, Sacrificing chi lowers the amount of chi they can contain safely, lowers their wushu activation checks (pg 121) by 1 for each sacrificed and returns very slowly. Sacrificed chi are regained at a rate of 1 per day.

Example: Throughout the fight, Lee also sacrifices one permanent Yin chi (meaning he has sacrificed 2 total chi points). He eventually wins, but after the battle he needs two days to recover all of his permanent chi points.

Instead of a slash through the chi box, Sacrificed chi is completely bubbled in until it is regained. This is to show that this part of the character’s Elemental Soul cannot currently contain any chi. Any chi that they currently have moves over to an empty box.



Yang

Yang is the energy of life, the sun and physical energy. It is used in techniques that allow growth, strengthening and courage. A character with more Yang than Yin is energetic and often happy, but too much more can cause quick tempers and impulsiveness.

Sacrificed Yang Chi can:

- Produce 5 Yang chi points
- Turn Non-Lethal damage Lethal for 1 Round
- Instantly regenerate 10 Health
- Give +3 Actions for the Round
- Automatic success on any Athletics, Acrobatics or Fortitude check
- Automatic success for a Yang Wushu Activation check
- Grants extra effects of a Yang wushu

Yin

Yin is the opposite of Yang, presenting death, the moon, stillness and mental energy. It is used for techniques that weaken or involve shadows and subterfuge. A character with more Yin and Yang may

seem unemotional and silent, but too much more can cause bouts of depression or unstoppable lethargy.

Sacrificed Yin Chi can:

- Produce 5 Yin chi points
- Disregard an opponent's AR for 1 Round
- Half damage (round down) from an attack
- Start at Count 1 (regardless of Initiative)
- Automatic success on any Discipline, Empathy or Perception check
- Automatic success for a Yin Wushu Activation check
- Grants extra effects of a Yin wushu

ATTRIBUTES

After the initial Concept has been complimented by their Passion, Elemental Soul and Clan, the player can now turn their attention to Attributes, their character's natural abilities. Attributes quantify how physically strong they are (Power), how quick and agile they are (Agility), how much of a beating their body can take (Vigor), how intelligent they are (Intellect), how observant and wise they are (Insight) and how socially graceful they are (Charm). These important factors build the foundation of a character, telling a story of how they lived their lives and survived. Some characters focus on their physical strength (Power) to bring them through hard times, while others have very high intelligence (Intellect) to figure out problems.

Attributes are rated from Level 1 to Level 10, with Level 4 or Level 5 being the average. The maximum level for any Attribute is 10, which represents the pinnacle of quality for that particular character aspect. To have Intellect (IQ) 10 is to be a veritable genius, while having Power (POW) 10 means they are as strong as a competitive weight-lifter. For those unfamiliar with the concept of assigning numerical values to physical and mental capabilities, try recalling rating systems used to rate another's looks or even a book review. If the person was a 10, they were an unattainable beauty, and if the book was reviewed as 10 out of 10, it was likely a best-seller.

At character creation, thirty (30) Attribute points are provided to distribute as the player chooses. Purchasing level 1-8 costs one Attribute point, while purchasing level 9-10 costs two Attribute points.

Every character must end with at least one level in each of the six Attributes.

POWER (POW)

POW is the Attributes that gauges the character's raw physical power, aiding in jumps, lifting weight, and the base damage of their strikes. It is important for characters that have undergone strength training to deal large amounts of damage or those that usually deal with their problems with violence.

Base Damage

Base Damage is a damage bonus the character receives to their attacks, which is then added to the damage dealt by their combat maneuver, weapon or wushu. Any damage dealt is subtracted from the target's Health.

Level 1: -3	Level 6: 1
Level 2: -2	Level 7: 2
Level 3: -1	Level 8: 3
Levels 4: 0	Level 9: 4
Levels 5: 0	Level 10: 5

Lifting/Carrying

For each POW level, the character may carry 25 lbs. and can lift double that weight. Carrying more than their maximum weight allowance incurs a -4 penalty to all checks until they lessen their load. If they attempt to carry their lifting weight amount, they suffer this same penalty, but cannot do anything other than carry their weight (no Actions or Reactions). Each Round they carry their lifting weight costs them 1 Stamina point (See pg 161). The character can attempt a Strength check to exceed their lifting maximum with a Moderate (20) POW + VIG check, plus +2 Difficulty per additional 25 lbs they wish to lift. Carrying this increased weight incurs a 2 Stamina point cost per Round.

AGILITY (AGY)

AGY is the Attribute that gauges a characters balance, hand-eye coordination, manual dexterity, quickness on their feet and grace of movement. It is

important for characters who have sustained acrobatic or flexibility training and used to create the intricate hand signs needed for many wushu.

Balance

Whenever a character's Balance is called into question, the GM may require an AGY + Acrobatics check. This can include avoiding a fall, recovering from a stumble or gaining their footing. A successful check means they catch themselves without much harm or ill-effect.

Combat Modifiers

(To Strike/Throw/Parry/Dodge)

This Attribute provides combat bonuses to the character's Strike, Throw, Parry and Dodge values. The faster and more agile the character, the easier it is to strike and avoid attacks back at them.

Level 1: -3	Level 6: +1
Level 2: -2	Level 7: +2
Level 3: -1	Level 8: +3
Levels 4: 0	Level 9: +4
Levels 5: 0	Level 10: +5

Extra Actions per Round

Faster movement equates to being able to act more often in combat. The character receives +1 Action per Round at levels 8, 9 and 10.

VIGOR (VIG)

VIG is the Attribute that measures a character's endurance, resistance to foreign elements that may harm their body and how much their body can take before they reach exhaustion or death. It is important for characters that have undergone body conditioning, which improves health and poison resistance, or for helping self-destructive types survive as they run head long into battle.

Stamina

Characters receive a number of Stamina Points equal to their VIG, plus any gained from Gifts or

Fighting styles. They are used to perform particularly difficult physical or mental acts, including powerful combat maneuvers or high-level wushu. More info on pg 161.

Holding Breath

Characters can safely hold their breath for up to twenty (20) seconds per VIG level. Each 20 seconds after their limit costs 1 Stamina point. For example, a character with VIG 6 can hold their breath for up to 2 minutes without needing to spend any Stamina.

VIG Resistance Checks

- **Disease/Poison/Drugs:** Whenever the character's body is attacked by a foreign agent (i.e. a disease or poison/drug) the GM may call for a VIG + Fortitude check to avoid Infection, contracting a disease or any negative effects that a poison/drug may have. A successful check means the character is immune to that instance of exposure, but additional checks are still needed if they are further exposed. The Difficulty of most poisons/drugs is based on its potency and how it's administered. See Disease on pg 176 and Posion/Drugs on pg 177.
- **Death:** Whenever the character's body is in danger of Death from taking too much Lethal damage, they have one last chance to survive. The character can attempt a VIG + Fortitude to stay alive for a bit longer. See Death on pg 175.
- **Unconsciousness:** Whenever the character would involuntarily lose consciousness (i.e. Knock-outs or the natural urge to Sleep) the GM may require a VIG + Fortitude check. The average person needs five to seven hours of sleep for optimal performance. If they get less than five hours sleep, they start the next day with -1 Stamina point and a -2 penalty to all rolls unless they succeed at a Moderate (20) check. This penalty applies until they make up their lost sleep. This same check can be made to stay awake later than 24 hours with +3 Difficulty per 12 hours.

INTELLECT (IQ)

IQ is the Attribute that measures the power and quickness of the character's mind, with high IQ characters being armed with quick wit. It is important for

characters that have gone through intense mental training or had teachers that spoke in nothing but riddles.

Bonus Skill points

Every character begins character building with starting skills (pg 82) and thirty (30) Skill points, plus a number of additional Skill points equal to their starting IQ. **Example:** A character with IQ 5 starts character creation with 35 Skill points.

Memorization

There are times when characters may need to memorize information for later recollection. They can make an IQ + Discipline check to determine the amount of information they can force into their minds. To recall information that was not previously memorized, the character can check to recollect, but suffers a -4 penalty. Difficulty varies based on the amount and intricacy of the information. Memorizing a name may be Simple (10), while recalling a particularly tricky Ode may be Tough (30).

INSIGHT (INS)

INS is the Attribute that gauges the character's willpower, intuition and awareness to the world around them. It is important for characters that have undergone training to resist mental degradation, illusions and intimidation. A high INS helps with achieving wisdom and enlightenment.

INS Resistance Checks

- **Fear/Awe:** Whenever the character is faced with something that invokes fear or makes them stare in awe, the GM may require an INS + Discipline check to resist the effects. This can include an Intimidation attempt or even versus a scary or impressive creature, location or circumstance. A successful check leaves the character's outlook unchanged, while a failed check gives the character a -5 penalty to their Initiative checks or may leave them staring.

- **Insanity:** Whenever a character faces a situation where their mind begins to degrade (i.e. trauma or malicious wushu) the GM may require an INS + Empathy check to resist the effects. Examples of these life-changing events include the loss/death of

important loved ones or the first time a ninja actually kills another in battle. See Insanity on pg 176.

- **Shrug Off Pain:** Whenever a character is in pain, they may choose to make a INS + Discipline check to temporarily shrug off Pain penalties for 1 Action. Some pain is brought on by loss of Health, stress-related situations, or from excruciating drug-related experiences. See Pain on pg 176.

CHARM (CHM)

CHM is the Attribute that measures the character's ability to coerce, charm or intimidate others. It is important for characters that have highly-developed social graces and is favored by performers and diplomats alike. Without CHM, the character finds it hard to project their presence to the world or influence others.

Bartering

Characters cannot barter for items with a Cost higher than half their CHM (rounded down). See pg 154.

Other Social Checks

A character's CHM is a reflection of their ability to convey their ideas. Some players are great at this in spite of low CHM levels or not very good even though their character has a high CHM. From a character aspect, there are too many times where they may "think" they are being suave and are really just making fools of themselves.

For this type of social situation, it is good to include a CHM check (with the appropriate Skill) to see if the character can truly portray what it is the player is trying to do. Difficulty should be based on how the target feels about the character. Someone who likes him may require a Simple (10) check, while trying to use CHM on someone that hates the character may require a Tough (30) check.

Summoning

A ninja that has learned to summon otherworldly creatures from beyond the wall uses a CHM + Discipline check to call forth the massive beasts. This reflects a stronger connection with their chosen creature.

SKILLS

Ninja go through years of training with their family or clan to learn the necessary Skills to accomplish their goals in life. Skills represent the character's learned abilities versus their Attributes that represent their natural capabilities. Every Izou ninja begins with a list of starting skills (listed below), as well as thirty (30) Skill points, plus a number of additional Skill points equal to their starting IQ, to spend as the player wishes (i.e. IQ 5 provides 35 Skill points).

STARTING NINJA SKILLS
Discipline 1
Legerdemain 1
Stealth 1
Survival 1
Primary Fighting Style 1

Each Skill (Standard or Fighting Style) is rated on a scale from 1 to 15. A character with Level 1 in a Skill has a hobbyist's interest in that skill, while level 15 represents complete mastery in their chosen field. There is no limit to the skill level a character can begin play with, but Skill point costs increase with higher levels. Skill Level 1-10 cost one Skill point and Level 11-15 cost two Skill points per level. The ninja's Primary Fighting Style uses this same cost scale.

Fighting Style Skills are purchased using the same Skill points received during character creation. Each ninja has access to certain Fighting Styles based on their chosen clan. They can access additional styles with the Outside Style Gift (pg 106). Each Fighting Style level provides combat bonuses and techniques that one can only gain through its special training.

USING SKILLS

Rules are used to enhance the story only. Skill checks represent a character's attempt to affect the world, but should never take the place of descriptive storytelling. Most common actions don't require an actual roll, which would only help to slow down gameplay and make roleplaying monotonous. For instance, a character doesn't need a skill check to make breakfast, but would use Crafts (Cooking) if

they wanted to impress the leader of their clan with a wonderful meal. No Empathy check is needed to know that the person sobbing into their hands is sad. No Strike checks are necessary to slap someone in the back of the head for a crude joke and Acrobatic dodging rarely factors into that sort of domestic squabble either.

Standard skills can be used in a variety of ways, but they are all used in the same manner. The player rolls 1d20, adding the values of the applicable Attribute and Skill needed to successfully complete the action as bonuses to their check (or roll), and attempt to reach a value equal to or greater than the Difficulty assigned by the GM. Attributes needed for Skill checks are not stagnant and change depending on the Skill's application. For instance, acting in a play would require a CHM + Performance check to gauge an audience's reaction, while an AGY + Performance check would measure their performance on a technical level.

SKILL DIFFICULTIES	
Simple (10):	Basic application of the skill.
Moderate (20):	Advanced applications of the skill.
Tough (30):	Complex applications that require more work than usual.
Legendary (40):	Almost impossible feats.

In most cases, the character is assumed to take the appropriate length of time to successfully complete their task with a single check. A Tough (30) Knowledge check to research a particularly hidden legend may take ten to twenty minutes of game time before the character knows if they have found what they were looking for. A quick charcoal sketch may only require a Simple (10) Arts check and five minutes, but creating a beautiful tapestry of calligraphy may need a Moderate (20) Arts check and take two days to complete. As a general rule, if the task is basic and can be finished in a few days, then it requires only one check. See Extended Checks for longer tasks.

UNTRAINED SKILL CHECKS

If a character attempts a task for which they do not have the appropriate Skill, this qualifies as an Attribute-only check. There is no penalty to the

check, but they have a much lower chance of success without experience and training. Natural talents (Attributes) can only get a character so far.

GMs may rule out certain skill attempts if the character does not have at least one level in the appropriate skill. For instance, a character would not even know where to start to train an animal without at least Beast Handling 1.

CONTESTED CHECKS

When one character is trying to stop another from using their Skill or is resisting the effects of said Skill, this is called a Contested check. The first character rolls their 1d20 + Attribute + Skill against the defender's 1d20 + Attribute + Skill. The character that rolls the highest after applying applicable bonuses is the winner of the contest. Ties always go to the defender.

Contested checks are best used when applied against other players' characters or important NPCs. For checks against lesser or random NPCs, GMs are encouraged to apply a Difficulty to the check for simplicity. Attempting to intimidate a random villager may be a Simple (10) Difficulty. If the target is a town guard or even a local hero, the Difficulty should be higher, but should still be kept as simple as possible. Breaking these tasks down to a single check helps to make game sessions flow faster and Skill implementation much easier.

EXTENDED CHECKS

When Skill checks need to account for an extended amount of time (usually longer than a few days), the check is split into a series of Extended Checks. The GM decides on the length of time taken with each check, as well as the total amount of successes needed. If attempting to build a small, one-man boat, the GM may rule that the character needs to make one Crafts check for every three days of in-game time and that a total of six (6) successes are needed to actually complete the task. A failed check would delay its completion for another three days.

ROLLING NATURAL 20

If the player rolls 1d20 and it lands on 20, this is considered a Natural 20 or a Critical Success for their Skill check. This may give additional or more

in-depth information on a Knowledge check, an especially stylish looking jump from an Athletics check or deliver a terrifyingly powerful blow to their opponent during combat.

Even if the character's total roll does not equal to the set Simple, Moderate or Tough target difficulty, a Natural 20 concludes that fate has stepped in and allowed the task to take place. This rule does not apply to tasks with a Legendary (40) Difficulty or to combat rolls, as fate can only do so much.

ROLLING NATURAL 1

If the player rolls 1d20 and it lands on 1, this is considered a Natural 1 and reaps a Critical Failure. Even if their total Attribute + Skill + modifier check is higher than the target Difficulty, they automatically fail their task. Critical Failures are also much worse than a normal failure and should be described in extraordinarily horrible detail. A jumper may horribly miss their mark and fall through trees to their eventual wounding. A skilled medicine man may botch a potion recipe, making it a horrible poison instead. Even the most observant person can become blind to clues right in front of their face.

TRYING AGAIN

If the character fails their initial Skill check, The GM may allow them to try again and again until they succeed. For simple actions, this may only cost them the time to attempt, but more complex retries suffer a cumulative -4 penalty for each time they try back to back attempts or are still using the same materials. If the circumstances change (i.e. they take a moment to compose themselves or obtain new materials to work with), they can start fresh and eliminate any penalties to their next check.

SKILL SPECIALTIES

When a Skill reaches level 5, 10 and 15, the character can select a Specialty, which provides a +2 bonus when using it for that specialized purpose. A handler with Beast Handling could have a Specialty in Breeding, while a performer with Acrobatics may choose a Specialty in Tumbling to help with their showmanship. Example Specialties are provided with each Skill description, but players and GMs are encouraged to create new Specialties to match particu-

lar concepts if those provided are not appropriate.

The character may choose to apply multiple bonuses to the same Specialty, providing up to an additional +6 bonus to a certain type of check. Specialties are the reason that some characters truly surpass others and are able to accomplish feats previously thought impossible.

Fighting Styles do not have Specialties. Instead, they provide certain Techniques at level 5, 10 and 15. These give the character new things they can do in combat, making them more versatile fighters. See pg 89 for more information.

Wushu Specialties: Every wushu has a basis in one of the 20 Standard Skills listed in this chapter. The player, if they so choose, can forgo the suggested list of example Specialties and use it to receive a +2 bonus to activating a particular wushu.

TEAMWORK

Certain tasks are simply too big for one character to pull off by themselves. If two or more characters have the same Skill, they can work together toward a single goal with a Teamwork check. All participating characters must be within three skill levels of each other, as those with far lower Skill levels are more of a liability to an experienced character and cannot provide a bonus.

First, choose which character will be attempting the task (project leader) and which characters are helping. The helpers first make a Moderate (20) check for the skill they are attempting with each success giving a +2 bonus to the project leader's skill check. A Natural 20 gives a +4 bonus instead. A Natural 1 gives a -2 penalty to the project leader. Four is the maximum number of helpers, as too many cooks in the kitchen can be a bad thing.

HARMONY CHECK

Through experimentation, characters find that certain Skills overlap or crossover, working in harmony with each other. Training in rhythmic movement (Performance) may aid in certain Acrobatic feats that require timing. Knowledge of a certain traveling Ronin's adventures may help with a Persuasion attempt to get the local clan representatives to jump to action. An acute level of Perception may help with the evaluation of a horse's ability to race or handle hurdles when using the Travel skill.

Harmony checks work the same as Teamwork checks. After deciding that a secondary Skill may assist in the use of a primary Skill, the character makes a Moderate (20) skill check for the secondary Skill. Success adds +2 to the primary Skill check. If they roll a Natural 20, they receive a +4 bonus instead. Rolling a Natural 1 gives a -2 penalty.

TOOLS

Certain tools or equipment can be used to enhance a job or make a task much easier. Climbing claws assist with Athletics (Climbing) checks, a choke leash may assist with certain Beast Handling (Training) checks and a character with the right materials and space may more easily unleash the artist within, gaining a bonus to Arts checks. Tools generally provide anywhere from a +1 to +5 bonus to appropriate Skill checks depending on how much the tool impacts the Skill and circumstances. GMs can also grant environmental Tool bonuses. Perhaps a singer gains a bonus to their Performance (Singing) check due to the acoustics in the theater. See pg 155 for example tools and equipment.

STANDARD SKILLS

Acrobatics

Characters with the Acrobatics skill have training in keeping their balance, tumbling and great timing for swinging and performance. They are often more flexible and quick to respond than others. Acrobatics is used in displays of aerial feats and is a vital asset in combat. AGY + Acrobatics is the most common application. In addition, this Skill provides +1 Initiative, +1 Dodge and +1 Parry at Level 3, 6, 9, 12 and 15.

Possible Specialties: Landings, Flips, Balance, Tumbling

Simple (10): Cartwheel or other basic tumbling/flips

Moderate (20): Walk a tightrope, advanced flips or gymnastics displays

Tough (30): Trapeze act, contortion to fit through prison bars

STANDARD SKILLS

Skill Level Cost: 1-10 x1, 11-15 x2
Specialties/Techniques at Level 5, 10, 15

Acrobatics	Intimidation
Arts	Knowledge
Athletics	Linguistics
Beast Handling	Legerdemain
Crafts	Perception
Deception	Performance
Discipline	Persuasion
Empathy	Stealth
Fortitude	Survival
Holistics	Travel

FIGHTING STYLES

Bear Style	Horse Style
Crane Style	Monkey Style
Crocodile Style	Snake Style
Dragon Style	Tiger Style
Eagle Style	Wildcat Style
Hawk Style	

Arts

Characters with the Arts skill have developed a way of expressing their emotions through indirect means, lending this ability to an artistic medium. Some become renowned poets or calligraphists for the Empire. An INS + Arts check is most common to ensure the proper emotions are conveyed by the art. AGY + Arts may be used to gauge tool implementation. Keep in mind that art is subjective, often relying on cultural context. Even a finely-crafted piece may sit in a barren gallery, unappreciated and misunderstood.

- Possible Specialties:** Calligraphy, Charcoals, Painting, Sculpting, Poems, Speeches, Song writing
- Simple (10):** Draw with reasonable proportions
- Moderate (20):** Compose an impressive speech
- Tough (30):** Create a piece of art that could impress the Emperor himself

Athletics

Characters with the Athletics skill have an appreciation for physical conditioning and vigorous activity. Most work out and enjoy sports. They are able to leap farther, climb higher, swim faster and throw with more precision. A POW + Athletics check is the most common application. In addition, this Skill provides +1 Strike, +1 Throw and +1 Grapple at Level 3, 6, 9, 12 and 15.

- Possible Specialties:** Climbing, Hurdles, Scuba
- Simple (10):** Climbing a fence, jump a hurdle
- Moderate (20):** Run an eight minute mile, reach the top of a mountain climbing wall
- Tough (30):** Spend a night leaping over rooftops

Beast Handling

Characters with the Beast Handling skill have experience with and the ability to empathize with animals. Some become breeders, train in general animal husbandry or learn to train wild animals. A CHM + Beast Handling check is the most common application to interact with animals (i.e. train, calm, aggravate, etc.), while an INS + Beast Handling check would be used to read an animal's mood or next move.

- Possible Specialties:** Training, Breeding, Empathy, Particular species (Dog, Cat, Horse, etc.)
- Simple (10):** Basic pet care, simple command training (sit, stay, heel, attack, etc.)
- Moderate (20):** Calming a wild animal, train complex commands with up two steps
- Tough (30):** Breeding qualities into animals, breaking a wild animal, train intricate commands with three or more steps

Crafts

Characters with the Crafts skills are knowledgeable in putting things together and taking them apart, from assembling the correct spices to please the tongue to crafting the perfect uniform for a special event. Unlike aesthetic use of the Arts skill, Crafts is for practicality. AGY + Crafts is the most common application. Inspecting the integrity of an item would require INS + Crafts and creating blueprints would require an IQ + Crafts check.

- Possible Specialties:** Armor, Cooking, Firearms, Ironworking, Tailoring, Sabotage, Appraising, Traps

Simple (10): Crafting a spear or knife, repair dents in armor

Moderate (20): Sew a ball gown, jury-rig a machine to work temporarily

Tough (30): Create a delicacy fit for a king, craft a suit of plate armor

Deception

Characters with the Deception skill have trained in the art of lying or otherwise making the unbelievable believable. They can hide their emotions, craft undetectable pretense and even create clever disguises. CHM + Deception is the most common application, which is usually resisted with an INS + Empathy check from the character's opponent. An IQ + Deception check is used with creating a disguise.

Possible Specialties: Exaggeration, Misdirection, Hiding emotions, Disguise

Simple (10): White lies or lying to someone without information to contest

Moderate (20): Convince someone who has proof to the contrary, basic disguise

Tough (30): Changing someone's basic beliefs, spot-on disguise

Discipline

Characters with the Discipline skill have experience with building their mental resistance, concentration and willpower. They are able to focus within the eye of chaos and can resist their basest urges like Fear and Pain. Some have built up this resistance in military training, while others have achieved this through meditation. INS + Discipline is the most common application.

Possible Specialties: Concentration, vs. Intimidation, Meditation, vs. Fear, vs. Pain

Simple (10): Ignore minor distractions or temptations

Moderate (20): Keeping calm when facing a much stronger opponents

Tough (30): Seeing through hallucinations or Illusions

Empathy

Characters with the Empathy skill have learned to sense the emotions and even the body language of others. Some go on to be great therapists, as Empathy allows them to fully understand their subject's psyche. Others may become great con artists, able to find just the right mark to seduce or trick. It also aids in resisting the effects of Insanity. INS + Empathy is the most common application.

Possible Specialties: Spotting lies, Body Language, Certain emotion (Anger, Depression, etc.)

Simple (10): Read basic emotions (happy, sad, angry)

Moderate (20): Read more complex emotions (anxious, bitterness, worry), Read body language

Tough (30): Seeing through elaborate lies by reading their tells

Fortitude

Characters with the Fortitude skill have worked on conditioning their bodies. Some training includes performing kata in harsh temperatures, learning to stave off the effect of poison or even drinking contests. VIG + Fortitude is the most common application, used to resist Poison/Drugs and even Death. This Skill gives +1 Roll at Level 3, 6, 9, 12 and 15 and +1 Health per level.

Possible Specialties: vs. Poison/Drugs, vs. Inebriation, Staying awake



Simple (10): Resist the effects of an inhaled drug

Moderate (20): Out-drink your alcoholic friend

Tough (30): Respond coherently to an emergency after a night of drinking

Holistics

Characters with the Holistics skill have received schooling in the healing arts, becoming medicine men and readers of portents. This includes knowing how to diagnose an ailment (usually by blowing a handful of chalk over their patient to see the patterns it creates), bandage and disinfect a wound, how to treat with herbs and potions that can cure almost any disease, create deadly poisons and the antidotes to reverse them, as well as learning anatomy for use in reflexology and acupuncture. IQ + Holistics is the most common applications, but AGY + Holistics checks can be used for the implementation of tools or for performing surgeries. Discipline checks may be needed to use this Skill during stressful situations without making horrible mistakes.

Possible Specialties: Potions, Poisons, Diagnosis, Surgery

Simple (10): Recall medicinal herbs and their side effects, Basic First-aid

Moderate (20): Full diagnosis, creation and applications of poisons/antidotes

Tough (30): Surgery, Recalling obscure herbs

Intimidation

Characters with the Intimidation skill know how to impose their will upon others in a threatening manner. This can be useful for interrogators and browbeating soldiers alike. CHM + Intimidation is the most common application. However, other Attributes can be used based on how the character is proving their dominance (POW for physical, IQ for mental, etc.).

Possible Specialties: Stare-Down, Interrogation, Subtle threats

Simple (10): Scare children or an obvious lesser, give the evil eye

Moderate (20): Scare an equal, interrogate a nervous person

Tough (30): Shaking the resolve of someone who believes they're better, interrogate someone with steel nerves

Knowledge

Characters with the Knowledge skill have devoted time to learning the intricacies of the world around them, from ninja culture to animal lore to geography. This skill provides general knowledge on just about any topic, but GMs should allow any Specialties that correspond to a character's concept. IQ + Knowledge is the most common application, used for both recollection or research checks.

Possible Specialties: Research, Mysticism, History, Religion, Agriculture

Simple (10): Basic library knowledge

Moderate (20): Professional knowledge (advanced scientific procedures, origins of less popular myths)

Tough (30): Scholarly knowledge (mating habits of a near extinct species or info on remote locations)

Linguistics

Characters with the Linguistics skill have focused on understanding different languages and communication as a whole. Each character begins with one main language (usually) and receives one additional language at levels 3, 6, 9, 12, and 15. IQ + Linguistics is the most common application, needed for non-native languages, but usable also to decipher old or coded languages. This skill covers reading and writing, unless otherwise stated.

Languages:

- **Empirical Tongue:** Spoken in the Empire

- **Island Tongue:** Spoken by the Land of Crushing Waves

- **Fire Tongue:** Spoken by the Land of Exalted Flame

- **Earth Tongue:** Spoken by the Land of Mountains and Valleys

- **Wood Tongue:** Spoken by the Land of Seed and Blossom

- **Metal Tongue:** Spoken by the Land of Five Blades

- **Old Tongue:** Spoken in old rituals and texts

- **Sign Language:** Use of hands to communicate, dialect taken based on above regions.

Possible Specialties: Certain Language, Cracking Codes, Reading lips

Simple (10): Translate basic phrases

Moderate (20): Read lips, decipher basic phrases in a different family

Tough (30): Crack or decipher language codes

Legerdemain

Characters with the Legerdemain Skill have become adept at precise hand motions, including sleight of hand tricks, picking pockets, picking locks or palming. AGY + Legerdemain is the most common application, but CHM + Legerdemain could be used if attempting to impress another with their tricks. Legerdemain is usually opposed by INS + Perception.

Possible Specialties: Misdirection, Hand Signs, Juggling

Simple (10): Stealing from a child, coin tricks

Moderate (20): Stealing from adults, picking a padlock

Tough (30): Stealing from ninja

Perception

Characters with the Perception Skill have learned to heighten their awareness to their surroundings and ability to observe others. INS + Perception is the most common application, used to look for details beyond the obvious or search an area. This skill is also used to resist actions like pick pocketing, hiding opponents or surprise attacks.

Possible Specialties: Specific sense (Sight, Hearing, etc.), Search, vs. Sleight of hand, vs. Stealth

Simple (10): Listen to a talking through a door

Moderate (20): Spot someone trying to hide

Tough (30): Search a cluttered room, listen in on a conversation across the room

Performance

Characters with the Performance Skill have learned how to put on a show to entertain others. Some are masterful singers, while others are able to strum a beautiful melody on the gu zheng. Some are acclaimed actors within the Empire's many theaters, while others are rhythmic dancers. CHM + Performance is the most common application, while AGY + Performance is often used to measure the performance on a technical level.

Possible Specialties: Singing, Dancing, Specific instrument, Acting

Simple (10): Satisfy an indifferent audience or one that already enjoys the performer

Moderate (20): Satisfy a split audience

Tough (30): Satisfy a rowdy audience or one that doesn't like the performer

Persuasion

Characters with Persuasion have found ways to get what they want without using physical force. Some have become great hagglers, strict negotiators, legendary leaders, courteous diplomat, trusted confidant or immaculate seducers. CHM + Persuasion is the most common application, which can be resisted with an INS + Empathy check.

Possible Specialties: Seduction, Oratory, Leadership

Simple (10): Get a small discount at the market, seduce a leech

Moderate (20): Haggle for 50% off, convince someone to divulge a secret

Tough (30): Seduce an uninterested target, fast-talk a trained diplomat

Stealth

Characters with the Stealth skill have been trained in silent movements. They are able to quickly find hiding places, conceal objects on their person, skulk through shadows and otherwise blend into their environment. AGY + Stealth is the most common application for moving silently, while active hiding uses IQ + Stealth. This skill is opposed by INS + Perception.

Possible Specialties: Shadowing, Concealment, Hiding in crowds, Hiding in shadows

Simple (10): Sneaking with distractions for cover

Moderate (20): Shadowing a paranoid person

Tough (30): Sneaking into a noble building past a dozen guards in broad daylight

Survival

Characters with the Survival skill have learned the lessons of different landscapes and terrain. This skill is important for foraging edible non-poisonous food, tracking others (or making the character harder to track), finding suitable shelter or navigating through difficult terrain. IQ + Survival is the most common application, except for tracking which uses INS + Survival.

Possible Specialties: Tracking, Navigation, Certain Terrain (i.e. arctic, desert, jungle, urban).

Simple (10): Camp building, Starting fire

Moderate (20): Dowsing, basic path navigation

Tough (30): Defining/categorizing plant-life, navigation through undefined terrain

Travel

Characters with the Travel skill are knowledgeable in the ways of travel, be it by carriage, horse or ship. This skill is important to merchants that travel in caravans, as well as soldiers that often fight on horseback. AGY + Travel is the most common application, while INS + Travel can be used to inspect a vessel and know if it is able to make a long trip.

Possible Specialties: Carriage, Horse, Skateboard, Ship, Spotting a Tail, Sharp Turn

Simple (10): Overcoming a simple travel obstacle

Moderate (20): Controlling speeding horses

Tough (30): Make a sharp turn to avoid a cliff

FIGHTING STYLES

Martial arts are taught to every character in Wu Xing. It is the cornerstone of their ninja training and what truly sets them apart from the common man. Each style was created to emulate a certain animal type, from bear to snake to tiger, and provides its own benefits and set backs.

Each fighting style provides combat bonuses that modify any checks made during battle, such as a character's Strike or Grapple abilities. Bonuses from each level simply stack on top of already existing bonuses. This is also true of bonuses acquired from selecting multiple fighting styles.

SELECTING STYLES

Each Clan has two specific Fighting Styles that they practice and teach to their students. During character creation, the player chooses one of these styles as their Primary style and the other becomes their Secondary style. Ronin begin with only one Fighting Style as their Primary style, but they get to choose their own. Characters can gain access to additional styles by purchasing the Outside Style Gift (pg 82) and there is no limit to how many styles they can train in other than the number of skill points they have to spend.

Fighting Style levels are purchased using the same starting Skill points with which they purchase Standard skills. Skill point costs vary depending on if the style is your Primary, Secondary or Outside Style. Ronin are not members of a clan, so all their Fighting Styles use Secondary costs.

Primary Style: 1-10 = 1 point, 11-15 = 2 points

Secondary Style: 1-8 = 1 point, 9-13 = 2 points, 14-15 = 3 points

Outside Style: 1-5 = 1 point, 6-10 = 2 points, 11-15 = 3 points

Note: GMs are cautioned to keep a watchful eye on how many levels the ninja begin the game with. Level 15 means that the character is a "Master" of that style. Unless the story deems it suitable, starting characters (young ninja joining a war with an unknown future) shouldn't be masters at their chosen fighting style, giving them room to grow and keeping opponents balanced. Starting level caps should be Level 8 for Primary Style and Level 5 for a Secondary or Outside Style. However, GMs should of course determine their own starting cap to suit the power level that is necessary for their story.

ACTIONS PER ROUND

Every character begins with 2 Actions per Round. They can gain additional Actions from Fighting Styles, Attributes and some Gifts.

STRONG/WEAK

Each Fighting Style is a unique balance of the various bonuses that a character needs in combat, from Health to Striking to Initiative. The style's largest benefit and biggest failing are listed with the respective fighting style for ease of selection for certain character concepts. Some players may find certain fighting styles "weaker" than others, but this is certainly not the case. The DGS is designed to easily mesh together fighting styles in an attempt to balance combat bonuses to fit personal strategies. A player with Crane style, which is weak in Damage, may opt to purchase access to Hawk style to give them an edge they previously didn't have.

WEAPON USE

Ninja are trained in the use of weapons as well as unarmed fighting. In fact, each Fighting Style has one weapon type listed in its description that the ninja is trained to use without penalty. Clan ninja

begin with training in the two weapons that correspond to their clan's Fighting Styles as long as they take at least 1 Level in each. Ronin receive training with the weapon that belongs to their chosen Fighting Style, plus one additional weapon of choice.

If attempting to use a weapon outside of their trained weapons, they suffer a -4 penalty to all checks that involve the weapon (i.e. Strike, Throw, and Parry). Additional weapon proficiencies can be accessed through the Weapon Training Gift. Characters can also become even more efficient with their weapon with the Weapon Expert Gift. These gifts are found on pg 107.

Every character automatically begins with proficiency in using shuriken without penalty, as it is the most common weapon used by ninja.

TECHNIQUES

As a ninja progresses through their training and become more adept at their chosen fighting styles, they are able to unlock special maneuvers to enhance their combat capabilities. A character can choose one free Technique at Level 5, a second at Level 10 and a third at Level 15 of the fighting style they follow. Some can even be taken multiple times. Additional techniques or technique ranks can be purchased separately with the Combat Techniques Gift (pg 104).

BEAR STYLE

Strong: Roll, **Weak:** Initiative

Weapons: Mace

Description: Bear fighters are heavily trained in upper-body techniques and generally taking a hit. Their style revolves around ignoring damage while delivering devastating blows to their opponent. However, students of the Bear are often slower to act as they put a lot of thought into each move.

BEAR TECHNIQUES

Fierce Strikes

(Speed +3)

Rank 1: By focusing their energy into a powerful attack, the fighter can change their unarmed damage type to Lethal for this attack.

Rank 2: The technique is Speed +1 (instead of +3).

BEAR STYLE BONUSES

Level 1	+1 Roll, +3 Health, +1 Grapple, +1 Parry, +1 Strike
Level 2	+1 Roll, +1 Damage, +1 Grapple, +1 Strike, +1 Throw
Level 3	+1 Roll, +3 Health, +1 Grapple, +1 Parry, +1 Dodge, +1 Initiative
Level 4	+1 Stamina, +1 Damage, +1 Roll, +1 Grapple, +1 Strike
Level 5	+1 Roll, +1 Damage, +1 Parry, +1 Throw, +1 Dodge
Level 6	+1 Roll, +3 Health, +1 Grapple, +1 Strike, +1 Throw
Level 7	+1 Action, +1 Roll, +1 Damage, +1 Parry, +1 Throw
Level 8	+1 Roll, +1 Grapple, +1 Parry, +1 Strike, +1 Dodge
Level 9	+1 Roll, +3 Health, +1 Parry, +1 Throw, +1 Initiative
Level 10	+1 Roll, +1 Damage, +1 Grapple, +1 Strike, +1 Dodge
Level 11	+1 Roll, +1 Grapple, +1 Parry, +1 Throw, +1 Dodge
Level 12	+1 Stamina, +1 Roll, +3 Health, +1 Strike, +1 Throw
Level 13	+1 Action, +1 Roll, +1 Damage, +1 Grapple, +1 Parry, +1 Initiative
Level 14	+1 Roll, +1 Damage, +1 Grapple, +1 Parry, +1 Strike, +1 Throw
Level 15	+1 Roll, +3 Health, +1 Damage, +1 Grapple, +1 Parry, +1 Strike

Demoralizing Roar

(Speed 6)

Rank 1: This is a specialized taunt that throws the ninja's opponent off through intimidation. The ninja rolls CHM + Intimidation with a +5 bonus. Opponent must make a contested Fear check or their next Action or Reaction is made a -5 penalty. This Technique can only be used once per Round.

Rank 2: Opponent also loses 1 Action if they fail.

Snatching Salmon

(Speed 5, -4 Strike)

Rank1: The ninja has learned to use great quickness and strength to disarm their opponent without requiring a Grapple beforehand.

Rank2: Strike penalty is removed.

Stomp

Rank 1: If the ninja has the High Ground, they gain +8 Strike (instead of +4) and deals +3 Damage when they land their hit from above.

Thick Skin

Rank 1: Intense training gives the ninja AR 2/0.

Rank 2: Raises to AR 3/1.

Rank 3: Raises to AR 4/2.

CRANE STYLE

Strong: Extra Actions, **Weak:** Damage

Weapons: Staff

Description: Crane fighter training focuses on developing balance, poise and the ability to deflect an opponent's blows. Their style uses a balance of blocking with the upper body and attacking with an array of kicks, while simultaneously avoiding any direct strikes. While truly dangerous, Cranes are more known for a thousand quick strikes, than single destructive attacks.

CRANE TECHNIQUES

Arrow Deflection

Rank 1: The ninja has learned to deflect, catch, and cut through flying arrows and other thrown weapons. They can use a Parry Reaction against arrows at a -8 penalty to start (instead of -12).

Rank 2: Penalty drops to -4

Rank 3: No penalty.

Deflecting Throw

(Speed 5, -4 Parry, +1 (NL))

Rank1: The fighter blocks an incoming strike and uses the attacker's momentum to throw them. If successful, the attacker must immediately make a Balance check of Difficulty (15) plus the difference

CRANE STYLE BONUSES

Level 1	+1 Parry, +1 Throw, +1 Initiative, +1 Strike, +1 Dodge
Level 2	+1 Action, +1 Parry, +1 Throw, +1 Grapple, +1 Roll
Level 3	+1 Parry, +1 Throw, +1 Initiative, +1 Strike, +1 Dodge
Level 4	+1 Stamina, +1 Action, +1 Parry, +1 Dodge, +1 Roll
Level 5	+2 Health, +1 Parry, +1 Throw, +1 Initiative, +1 Grapple
Level 6	+1 Action, +1 Throw, +1 Strike, +1 Dodge, +1 Roll
Level 7	+1 Parry, +1 Throw, +1 Initiative, +1 Strike
Level 8	+1 Parry, +1 Throw, +1 Initiative, +1 Strike, +1 Dodge
Level 9	+1 Action, +1 Parry, +1 Throw, +1 Grapple, +1 Roll
Level 10	+2 Health, +1 Throw, +1 Initiative, +1 Strike, +1 Dodge
Level 11	+1 Stamina, +1 Parry, +1 Throw, +1 Initiative, +1 Dodge
Level 12	+1 Action, +1 Parry, +1 Initiative, +1 Strike, +1 Grapple
Level 13	+2 Health, +1 Parry, +1 Throw, +1 Initiative, +1 Strike, +1 Roll
Level 14	+1 Stamina, +1 Parry, +1 Initiative, +1 Strike, +1 Dodge, +1 Grapple
Level 15	+2 Actions, +1 Parry, +1 Throw, +1 Initiative, +1 Strike, +1 Dodge, +1 Grapple

in their rolls. If the attacker fails, they are thrown to the ground a number of yards away equal to half the ninja's POW (rounded up). A Stand Action is needed to get back up.

Example: Lee attacks and rolls 16. Kino makes a Deflecting Throw check for 22. Lee must make a Balance check at a difficulty of 21 (22-16=6). If Kino has POW 4, Lee would be thrown 8 ft, and would also take 1 (NL) (Kino's Base damage 0 + 1).

Iron and Silk

Rank 1: The ninja has learned the art of parrying melee weapons unarmed without limit. They may

parry armed opponents barehanded, no matter what weapon they are currently using, at a -4 penalty (instead of -8).

Rank 2: They suffer no penalties.

Rank 3: Masters at this technique actually receive a +4 bonus to parry an armed opponent.

Leaping Dodge

(Speed 6, -4 Dodge)

Rank 1: The ninja dodges an incoming attack while also leaping a distance equal to their Movement away from their opponent. This puts space between them and usually forces a Move Action to enter close combat again.

Push Hands

(Speed 4, +0 (NL), -4 Strike)

Rank 1: This technique lets the ninja throw their opponent off balance with a strategic and powerful shove. Similar to a normal Push Action, but it throws the opponent to the ground a number of yards equal to the ninja's POW, also inflicting Base damage. Targets must make a Stand Action to get back up.

Rank 2: Raised to +2 (NL), -2 Strike

Rank 3: Raised to +4 (NL), -0 Strike

CROCODILE STYLE

Strong: Health, **Weak:** Extra Actions

Weapons: Ax

Description: Crocodile fighters focus on enhancing and conditioning their bodies for optimal performance. They choose their strikes wisely and prefer to defeat opponents through grappling. This style uses mostly upper body techniques, but also subtle kicks as well. They do not act often, but make it count when they do.

CROCODILE TECHNIQUES

Creeping Movement

Rank 1: The ninja learns the subtlety

of movement, which improves their ability to move silently. They gain a +3 bonus to all Stealth checks and opponents suffer a -3 penalty to resist a Surprise Attack from the ninja.

Rank 2: Raised to +6 Stealth and -6 to resist Surprise Attack

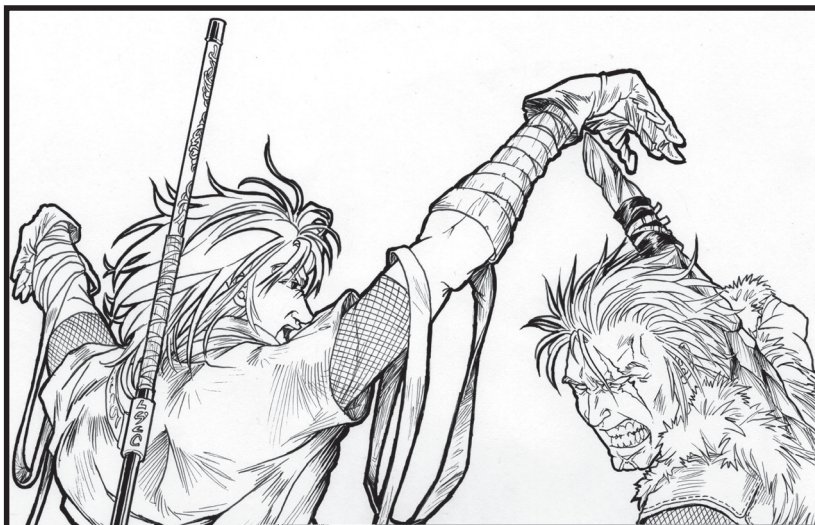
Rank 3: Raise to +9 Stealth and -9 to resist Surprise Attack.

Fierce Strikes

(Speed +3)

Rank 1: By focusing their energy into a powerful attack, the fighter can change their unarmed damage type to Lethal for this attack.

Rank 2: The technique is Speed +1 (instead of +3).



CROCODILE BONUSES

Level 1	+3 Health, +1 Grapple, +1 Dodge, +1 Roll, +1 Strike
Level 2	+2 Health, +1 Stamina, +1 Grapple, +1 Strike, +1 Parry
Level 3	+1 Damage, +1 Grapple, +1 Dodge, +1 Initiative, +1 Throw
Level 4	+2 Health, +1 Roll, +1 Dodge, +1 Strike, +1 Parry
Level 5	+1 Damage, +1 Stamina, +1 Dodge, +1 Roll, +1 Throw
Level 6	+2 Health, +2 Grapple, +1 Roll, +1 Strike, +1 Initiative
Level 7	+1 Damage, +1 Grapple, +1 Dodge, +1 Parry, +1 Throw
Level 8	+2 Health, +1 Stamina, +1 Roll, +1 Strike, +1 Parry
Level 9	+1 Damage, +1 Grapple, +1 Dodge, +1 Parry, +1 Initiative
Level 10	+2 Health, +2 Grapple, +1 Roll, +1 Strike, +1 Initiative
Level 11	+2 Health, +1 Stamina, +1 Dodge, +1 Roll, +1 Throw
Level 12	+1 Damage, +1 Dodge, +1 Strike, +1 Initiative
Level 13	+2 Health, +1 Damage, +1 Grapple, +1 Dodge, +1 Roll, +1 Throw
Level 14	+2 Health, +1 Stamina, +1 Grapple, +1 Strike, +1 Parry, +1 Initiative
Level 15	+3 Health, +1 Damage, +2 Grapple, +1 Dodge, +1 Roll, +1 Parry

Snapping Strike

(Speed 9, -4 Strike, +5 (L))

Rank 1: The ninja lunges at their opponent in a sudden burst and speed, attacking in a symphony of movement as their hands impact with their opponent like an alligator's mouth. Not only does this technique deal damage, but also initiates a Grapple between the two fighters. This Action can only be Dodged, not Parried.

Thick Skin

Rank 1: Intense training gives the ninja AR 2/0.

Rank 2: Raises to AR 3/1.

Rank 3: Raises to AR 4/2.

Twisting Pain

Grapple Maneuver (-4 Grapple, +2 Damage)

Rank 1: The ninja wraps their arms around the opponent and latch onto their opponent. They then rip back their hands, clawing into their opponent while simultaneously spinning them into the air. If their target fails their Grapple Reaction, they take damage and are flung into the air to fall to the ground. There is no check to resist falling, unless their opponent has the Lands of Feet technique (pg 101).

DRAGON STYLE

Strong: Parry, **Weak:** Dodge

Weapons: Sai

Description: Dragon fighters focus on mastering close combat while utilizing a balance of various punch and kick techniques. They are known for taking on multiple opponents at once, deflecting every attack at them and digging into their opponents with a ferocious spirit. Dragons are weaker in ranged combat, however.

DRAGON TECHNIQUES

Adaptive Blocker

Rank 1: The fighter is accustomed to using their environment to their advantage. They receive a +2 bonus to all Parry rolls starting on the 2nd Round, as it takes a Round to acclimate to their surroundings. Opponents also receive an additional -2 penalty to hit the fighter when they have Cover.

Rank 2: Raise to +4 Parry and -4 cover penalty

Rank 3: Raise to +6 Parry and -6 cover penalty

Dragon's Tail

(Speed 6)

Rank 1: The ninja can sustain themselves by their hands and swings their body around for simultaneous low attacks, sweeping everyone within close combat range. All opponents must make a contested

DRAGON BONUSES	
Level 1	+1 Parry, +1 Roll, +1 Strike, +1 Grapple, +1 Initiative
Level 2	+2 Health, +1 Parry, +1 Roll, +1 Initiative, +1 Throw, +1 Grapple
Level 3	+1 Stamina, +1 Parry, +1 Roll, +1 Strike, +1 Throw
Level 4	+1 Parry, +1 Strike, +1 Grapple, +1 Throw, +1 Dodge
Level 5	+2 Health, +1 Parry, +1 Roll, +1 Strike, +1 Initiative
Level 6	+1 Stamina, +1 Parry, +1 Roll, +1 Initiative, +1 Throw, +1 Grapple
Level 7	+2 Health, +1 Damage, +1 Parry, +1 Roll, +1 Strike
Level 8	+1 Parry, +1 Strike, +1 Grapple, +1 Initiative, +1 Dodge
Level 9	+2 Health, +1 Action, +1 Parry, +1 Roll, +1 Strike
Level 10	+1 Stamina, +1 Parry, +1 Roll, +1 Grapple, +1 Initiative
Level 11	+2 Health, +1 Parry, +1 Roll, +1 Strike, +1 Throw
Level 12	+1 Parry, +1 Strike, +1 Grapple, +1 Initiative, +1 Dodge
Level 13	+1 Stamina, +1 Parry, +1 Roll, +1 Strike, +1 Throw
Level 14	+2 Health, +1 Parry, +1 Roll, +1 Initiative, +1 Throw, +1 Grapple
Level 15	+1 Stamina, +1 Damage, +1 Parry, +1 Roll, +1 Strike, +1 Grapple

EAGLE BONUSES	
Level 1	+1 Dodge, +1 Throw, +1 Initiative, +1 Parry, +1 Strike
Level 2	+1 Dodge, +1 Throw, +1 Parry, +1 Roll, +1 Strike
Level 3	+2 Health, +1 Dodge, +1 Throw, +1 Initiative, +1 Grapple
Level 4	+1 Damage, +1 Dodge, +1 Initiative, +1 Parry, +1 Roll
Level 5	+1 Action, +1 Dodge, +1 Throw, +1 Initiative, +1 Parry
Level 6	+2 Health, +1 Dodge, +1 Throw, +1 Parry, +1 Roll
Level 7	+1 Damage, +1 Dodge, +1 Throw, +1 Initiative, +1 Roll, +1 Grapple
Level 8	+1 Action, +1 Dodge, +1 Initiative, +1 Parry, +1 Strike
Level 9	+1 Damage, +1 Dodge, +1 Throw, +1 Initiative, +1 Parry
Level 10	+2 Health, +1 Dodge, +1 Throw, +1 Parry, +1 Roll, +1 Grapple
Level 11	+1 Stamina, +1 Dodge, +1 Throw, +1 Initiative, +1 Roll, +1 Strike
Level 12	+1 Action, +1 Dodge, +1 Initiative, +1 Parry, +1 Strike
Level 13	+2 Health, +1 Dodge, +1 Throw, +1 Initiative, +1 Roll
Level 14	+2 Health, +1 Damage, +1 Dodge, +1 Throw, +1 Initiative, +1 Parry
Level 15	+1 Action, +1 Dodge, +2 Throw, +1 Initiative, +1 Parry, +1 Strike

Balance check against the attack roll. A failed Balance check means the target falls to the ground and must take a Stand Action to get back up.

Rank 2: +4 Strike bonus

Rank 3: +8 Strike bonus (instead of +4)

Flailing Body

Rank 1: The ninja has learned to avoid being grappled and how to release themselves from being held. They receive a +4 bonus to their Dodge check to resist initiating a Grapple and also a +2 bonus to all Grapple Reaction checks or for the Grapple Action:

Break Grapple.

Rank 2: +4 bonuses (instead of +2)

Rank 3: +8 bonuses (instead of +4)

Quick Recovery

Rank 1: If knocked down, this technique allows the fighter to recover quickly, reducing the Speed of a Stand Action to 2 (instead of 4).

Whirlwind Assault

Rank 1: The fighter is well-versed in multi-op-

ponent combat and suffers no penalty for striking separate targets in the same Round (instead of -2).

EAGLE STYLE

Strong: Dodge, **Weak:** Grapple

Weapons: Bow

Description: Eagle fighters exceed in the elegance of ranged combat. They take advantage of speed to launch quick attacks from a distance, but are certainly not weak in close combat where they primarily use kicks. Their style falters against grappling maneuvers, making many Eagles keep far from their opponents if at all possible.

EAGLE TECHNIQUES

Flying Strike

(Speed 12, -4 Strike, -1 Stamina, +6 Damage)

Rank 1: Requires Leaping Dodge. The ninja leaps into combat range, launches a flurry of strikes and then leaps out of range. This technique allows up to a full Movement, then attack and then another full Movement.

Focused Strikes

Rank 1: The fighter has honed their skills through intense training to strike specific parts of their opponent's body with ease. Penalties for Targeted strikes are reduced by 4.

Rank 2: Penalties reduced by 8 (instead of 4)

Rank 3: Penalties reduced by 12 (instead of 8)

Leaping Dodge

(Speed 6, -4 Dodge)

Rank 1: The ninja dodges an incoming attack while also leaping a distance equal to their Movement away from their opponent. This puts space between them and usually forces a Move Action to enter close combat again.

Pressure Points

Rank 1: Requires Focused Strikes. Through precise placement of their strikes to exposed pressure points, the fighter can inflict their Base damage with a Touch Action (pg 169).

Rank 2: +2 (NL) damage added

Rank 3: +4 (NL) damage added

Multi-Throw

Rank 1: The ninja has learned to throw two kunai or shuriken simultaneously with one hand or fire two arrows at a time, but suffer a -4 Throw penalty.

Rank 2: They can fire or throw four at once and can target two separate targets.

Rank 3: They can target up to four different targets without additional penalty.

HAWK STYLE

Strong: Initiative, **Weak:** Health

Weapons: Spear

Description: Hawk fighters focus on quick, hard strikes to take down their opponents. They are primarily mental combatants, strategists that can pick out weak points easily to make their mostly punching strikes matter. This style focuses less on physical conditioning than others, often leaving their bodies weaker.

HAWK TECHNIQUES

Focused Strikes

Rank 1: The fighter has honed their skills through intense training to strike specific parts of their opponent's body with ease. Penalties for Targeted strikes are reduced by 4.

Rank 2: Penalties reduced by 8 (instead of 4)

Rank 3: Penalties reduced by 12 (instead of 8)

Piercing Strikes

(Speed +2)

Rank 1: The ninja becomes a master at bypassing their opponent's armor while armed or unarmed. They can take a negative to Strike or Throw to give their attack the Armor Piercing quality on a two for one basis. **Example:** They can purposefully suffer a -4 penalty to gain AP 2.

Precise Strike

Rank 1: The ninja watches their opponent in action for one full Round to perceive their style and

HAWK BONUSES	
Level 1	+1 Initiative, +1 Parry, +1 Dodge, +1 Throw, +1 Roll
Level 2	+1 Initiative, +1 Parry, +1 Dodge, +1 Strike, +1 Roll
Level 3	+1 Damage, +1 Initiative, +1 Parry, +1 Throw, +1 Grapple
Level 4	+1 Action, +1 Initiative, +1 Dodge, +1 Throw, +1 Roll
Level 5	+1 Damage, +1 Initiative, +1 Parry, +1 Dodge, +1 Strike
Level 6	+1 Stamina, +1 Initiative, +1 Parry, +1 Dodge, +1 Strike
Level 7	+1 Damage, +1 Initiative, +1 Parry, +1 Throw, +1 Roll, +1 Grapple
Level 8	+1 Action, +1 Initiative, +1 Dodge, +1 Throw, +1 Roll
Level 9	+1 Damage, +1 Initiative, +1 Parry, +1 Throw, +1 Strike
Level 10	+1 Stamina, +1 Initiative, +1 Parry, +1 Dodge, +1 Throw, +1 Grapple
Level 11	+1 Damage, +1 Initiative, +1 Parry, +1 Dodge, +1 Strike, +1 Grapple
Level 12	+1 Action, +1 Damage, +1 Initiative, +1 Dodge, +1 Throw
Level 13	+1 Damage, +1 Initiative, +1 Parry, +1 Throw, +1 Strike, +1 Roll
Level 14	+1 Stamina, +1 Damage, +1 Initiative, +1 Parry, +1 Dodge, +1 Grapple
Level 15	+2 Damage, +1 Initiative, +1 Parry, +1 Dodge, +1 Throw, +1 Strike

HORSE BONUSES	
Level 1	+1 Stamina, +1 Roll, +1 Initiative, +1 Grapple, +1 Parry
Level 2	+2 Health, +1 Roll, +1 Initiative, +1 Dodge, +1 Strike
Level 3	+1 Roll, +1 Initiative, +1 Grapple, +1 Parry
Level 4	+1 Action, +2 Health, +1 Stamina, +1 Grapple, +1 Throw
Level 5	+1 Damage, +1 Roll, +1 Initiative, +1 Grapple, +1 Strike
Level 6	+2 Health, +1 Stamina, +1 Roll, +1 Dodge, +1 Parry
Level 7	+1 Roll, +1 Initiative, +1 Grapple, +1 Parry, +1 Throw
Level 8	+2 Health, +1 Stamina, +1 Initiative, +1 Grapple, +1 Dodge
Level 9	+1 Action, +1 Roll, +1 Initiative, +1 Grapple, +1 Strike
Level 10	+2 Health, +1 Stamina, +1 Damage, +1 Roll, +2 Dodge
Level 11	+1 Roll, +1 Initiative, +1 Grapple, +1 Parry, +1 Throw
Level 12	+2 Health, +1 Grapple, +1 Dodge, +1 Parry, +1 Strike
Level 13	+1 Action, +1 Stamina, +1 Roll, +1 Initiative, +1 Grapple
Level 14	+2 Health, +1 Damage, +1 Roll, +1 Initiative, +1 Dodge
Level 15	+2 Health, +1 Stamina, +2 Roll, +1 Initiative, +1 Dodge, +1 Strike

possible weaknesses. During that Round they suffer a -4 penalty to all Actions and Reactions. However, starting with the second round, they receive a +2 Damage bonus to all attacks as they strike at only the right spots to inflict the most damage.

Spear-Heel Strike

(Speed 7, -6 Strike, +3 Damage)

Rank 1: While wielding a spear, the ninja can engage two opponents in one strike by launching their spear in one direction and their heel in the

other. Normally this would give a -10 penalty to both checks, but with this technique the ninja rolls one Strike check at a -6 penalty.

Rank 2: Penalty reduced to -3 Strike and damage bonus raised to +5.

Whirlwind Assault

Rank 1: The fighter is well-versed in multi-opponent combat and suffers no penalty for striking separate targets in the same Round (instead of -2).

HORSE STYLE

Strong: Stamina, **Weak:** Throw

Weapons: Chain

Description: Horse fighters train to emulate the epic endurance of their namesake. They focus primarily on precise kick attacks or keeping their distance while their opponent slows down from fatigue. While they are strong workhorses, they are also weak against ranged fighters.

HORSE TECHNIQUES

Damaging Block

(Speed 4, -4 Parry, +1 (NL))

Rank 1: The ninja uses the attacker's momentum against them, simultaneously parrying their blow and redirecting their force back at them. Only takes effect if Parry is successful.

Rank 2: +3 (NL) (instead of +1)

Rank 3: +6 (NL) (instead of +3)

Endurance Running

Rank 1: This style requires the maximum movement and endurance from its ninja and they are trained rigorously to sustain miles of unassisted travel. This technique gives the ninja a bonus of +2 Stamina points and +4 Movement.

Rank 2: +4 Stamina points (instead of +2) and +8 Movement (instead of +4)

Rank 3: +6 Stamina (instead of +4) and +12 Movement (instead of +8)

Horse Kick

(Speed 7, +5 (NL))

Rank 1: The ninja balances their weight on their hands and launches both their feet at their opponent, planting their heels into their chest with extreme force. Not only is their opponent damaged, but they force a contested Balance check. If the victim fail, they are shoved backward a number of yards equal to half the ninja's POW.

Rank 2: Distance raised to their full POW.

Rank 3: Distance raised to double their POW.

Precise Strike

Rank 1: The ninja watches their opponent in action for one full Round to perceive their style and possible weaknesses. During that Round they suffer a -4 penalty to all Actions and Reactions. However, starting with the second round, they receive a +2 Damage bonus to all attacks as they strike at only the right spots to inflict the most damage.

Stomp

Rank 1: If the ninja has the High Ground, they gain +8 Strike (instead of +4) and deals +3 Damage when they land their hit from above.

MONKEY STYLE

Strong: Throw, **Weak:** Strike

Weapons: Kunai

Description: Monkey fighters are trained to master tumbling and ranged combat. They focus on quick, rolling attacks, striking with punches and kicks to throw their opponents off balance while keeping control of their range. They are versatile and adaptive combatants, but are weak in close combat.

MONKEY TECHNIQUES

Ground Fighter

Rank 1: The fighter can battle as easily on their knees or back than they can on their feet. Their opponent loses any High Ground bonus they would have received as well.

Multi-Throw

Rank 1: The ninja has learned to throw two kunai or shuriken simultaneously with one hand or fire two arrows at a time, but suffer a -4 Throw penalty.

Rank 2: They can fire or throw four at once and can target two separate targets.

Rank 3: They can target up to four different targets without additional penalty.

Quick Recovery

Rank 1: If knocked down, this technique allows the fighter to recover quickly, reducing the Speed of a Stand Action to 2 (instead of 4).

Rolling Attack

(Speed 4/6/8)

Rank 1: Teaches the ninja to tumble forward and end their roll with a low attack, allowing them to make a Movement Action and Light Strike at the same time.

Rank 2: Can use a Full Strike for Speed 6

Rank 3: Can use a Strong Strike for Speed 8

Rolling Retreat

(Speed 4/8, -2 Dodge)

Rank 1: The fighter tumbles backward, allowing them to make a ½ Movement Action and a Dodge at the same time.

Rank 2: Same as above, but can also make a Light Attack for Speed 8 as they retreat.

SNAKE STYLE

Strong: Grapple, **Weak:** Roll

Weapons: Knife

Description: Snake fighters are masters of close combat, both in keen strikes and subduing through grapple maneuvers. They primarily use hand attacks (known for their snake-like stances), but do not neglect their kicking ability. They focus on taking their opponents out quickly, but are not adept at shrugging off damage.

SNAKE TECHNIQUES

Coil and Strike

(Speed 10)

Rank 1: The ninja holds their Actions for 10 Counts without Movement and suffers a -5 penalty to all Reactions during this time. Afterward, they receive a +10 bonus to Strike and +3 Damage to the following attack. Cannot be used with Simultaneous Actions.

MONKEY BONUSES

Level 1	+1 Throw, +1 Dodge, +1 Grapple, +1 Roll, +1 Initiative
Level 2	+1 Throw, +1 Dodge, +1 Grapple, +1 Roll, +1 Initiative
Level 3	+1 Throw, +1 Dodge, +1 Grapple, +1 Initiative, +1 Parry
Level 4	+2 Health, +1 Throw, +1 Roll, +1 Initiative, +1 Parry
Level 5	+1 Stamina, +1 Throw, +1 Dodge, +1 Initiative, +1 Strike
Level 6	+1 Action, +1 Throw, +1 Dodge, +1 Roll, +1 Parry
Level 7	+1 Throw, +1 Dodge, +1 Grapple, +1 Initiative, +1 Strike
Level 8	+2 Health, +1 Throw, +1 Grapple, +2 Roll, +1 Parry
Level 9	+1 Damage, +1 Throw, +1 Dodge, +1 Grapple, +1 Initiative
Level 10	+1 Throw, +1 Dodge, +1 Roll, +1 Grapple, +1 Parry
Level 11	+1 Stamina, +1 Throw, +1 Dodge, +1 Roll, +1 Parry
Level 12	+1 Throw, +1 Grapple, +1 Roll, +1 Initiative, +1 Parry, +1 Strike
Level 13	+1 Throw, +1 Dodge, +1 Grapple, +1 Initiative, +1 Parry
Level 14	+2 Health, +1 Throw, +1 Dodge, +1 Grapple, +1 Roll, +1 Initiative
Level 15	+1 Action, +2 Health, +1 Throw, +2 Dodge, +2 Grapple, +1 Roll, +1 Parry

Creeping Movement

Rank 1: The ninja learns the subtlety of movement, which improves their ability to move silently. They gain a +3 bonus to all Stealth checks and opponents suffer a -3 penalty to resist a Surprise Attack from the ninja.

Rank 2: Raised to +6 Stealth and -6 to resist Surprise Attack

Rank 3: Raise to +9 Stealth and -9 to resist Surprise Attack.

SNAKE BONUSES	
Level 1	+1 Grapple, +1 Strike, +1 Throw, +1 Parry, +1 Initiative
Level 2	+1 Grapple, +1 Strike, +1 Throw, +1 Parry, +1 Dodge
Level 3	+1 Action, +1 Grapple, +1 Strike, +1 Throw, +1 Roll
Level 4	+1 Damage, +1 Stamina, +1 Grapple, +1 Dodge, +1 Roll
Level 5	+1 Damage, +1 Grapple, +1 Strike, +1 Parry, +1 Initiative
Level 6	+1 Action, +1 Grapple, +1 Strike, +1 Throw, +1 Dodge
Level 7	+1 Grapple, +1 Strike, +1 Parry, +1 Initiative
Level 8	+1 Damage, +1 Stamina, +1 Grapple, +1 Throw, +1 Parry
Level 9	+2 Health, +1 Action, +1 Grapple, +1 Strike, +1 Throw
Level 10	+1 Damage, +1 Grapple, +1 Strike, +1 Parry, +1 Dodge
Level 11	+1 Stamina, +1 Grapple, +1 Strike, +1 Throw, +1 Dodge
Level 12	+2 Health, +1 Action, +1 Grapple, +1 Parry, +1 Initiative
Level 13	+1 Damage, +1 Grapple, +1 Strike, +1 Throw, +1 Dodge
Level 14	+1 Stamina, +1 Grapple, +1 Strike, +1 Parry, +1 Dodge, +1 Roll
Level 15	+1 Damage, +1 Action, +1 Grapple, +2 Strike, +1 Throw, +1 Initiative

Focused Strikes

Rank 1: The fighter has honed their skills through intense training to strike specific parts of their opponent's body with ease. Penalties for Targeted strikes are reduced by 4.

Rank 2: Penalties reduced by 8 (instead of 4)

Rank 3: Penalties reduced by 12 (instead of 8)

Poison Resistance

Rank 1: The ninja develops a resistance to poisons and drugs, gaining a +4 bonus vs. Poison and a +2

bonus to Holistics (Poison).

Rank 2: Receive a +8 bonus vs. Poison and a +4 bonus to Holistics (Poison) instead.

Rank 3: The ninja is immune to poison/drugs and receives a +6 bonus to Holistics (Poison) (instead of +4).

Pressure Points

Rank 1: Requires Focused Strikes. Through precise placement of their strikes to exposed pressure points, the fighter can inflict their Base damage with a Touch Action (pg 169).

Rank 2: +2 (NL) damage added

Rank 3: +4 (NL) damage added

TIGER STYLE

Strong: Damage, **Weak:** Stamina

Weapons: Sword

Description: Tiger fighters are blatant powerhouses, conditioning their bodies and dealing as much damage as possible. They focus on punches, using intensely painful claw-style strikes that many opponents fear. While they are strong, they tire quickly as they put so much effort into each attack.

TIGER TECHNIQUES

Damaging Block

(Speed 5, -4 Parry, +1 (NL))

Rank 1: The ninja uses the attacker's momentum against them, simultaneously parrying their blow and redirecting their force back at them. Only takes effect if Parry is successful.

Rank 2: +3 (NL) (instead of +1)

Rank 3: +6 (NL) (instead of +3)

Fierce Strikes

(Speed +3)

Rank 1: By focusing their energy into a powerful attack, the fighter can change their unarmed damage type to Lethal for this attack.

Rank 2: The technique is Speed +1 (instead of +3).

TIGER BONUSES	
Level 1	+1 Strike, +1 Throw, +1 Roll, +1 Initiative, +1 Grapple
Level 2	+1 Strike, +1 Throw, +1 Initiative, +1 Grapple, +1 Dodge
Level 3	+2 Health, +1 Damage, +1 Strike, +1 Roll, +1 Grapple
Level 4	+1 Action, +1 Throw, +1 Roll, +1 Initiative, +1 Parry
Level 5	+1 Damage, +1 Strike, +1 Throw, +1 Roll, +1 Dodge
Level 6	+1 Strike, +1 Throw, +1 Initiative, +1 Grapple, +1 Parry
Level 7	+1 Action, +1 Damage, +1 Strike, +1 Roll, +1 Dodge
Level 8	+1 Strike, +1 Throw, +1 Roll, +1 Initiative, +1 Parry
Level 9	+1 Damage, +1 Strike, +1 Roll, +1 Grapple, +1 Dodge
Level 10	+2 Health, +1 Action, +1 Throw, +1 Initiative, +1 Parry
Level 11	+1 Damage, +1 Strike, +1 Throw, +1 Roll, +1 Grapple
Level 12	+2 Health, +1 Damage, +1 Throw, +1 Roll, +1 Initiative
Level 13	+1 Action, +1 Damage, +1 Strike, +1 Roll, +1 Dodge
Level 14	+1 Damage, +1 Strike, +1 Throw, +1 Initiative, +2 Grapple, +1 Parry
Level 15	+1 Action, +2 Damage, +1 Strike, +1 Throw, +1 Initiative, +1 Dodge

WILDCAT BONUSES	
Level 1	+1 Strike, +1 Initiative, +1 Dodge, +1 Roll, +1 Throw
Level 2	+1 Strike, +1 Initiative, +1 Grapple, +1 Parry, Dodge
Level 3	+1 Strike, +1 Initiative, +1 Dodge, +1 Roll, +1 Throw
Level 4	+1 Damage, +1 Action, +1 Strike, +1 Dodge, +1 Grapple
Level 5	+1 Stamina, +1 Strike, +1 Initiative, +1 Dodge, +1 Roll
Level 6	+1 Strike, +1 Initiative, +1 Dodge, +1 Grapple, +1 Throw
Level 7	+1 Damage, +1 Strike, +1 Initiative, +1 Dodge, +1 Roll
Level 8	+1 Stamina, +1 Action, +1 Strike, +1 Grapple, +1 Throw
Level 9	+2 Health, +1 Strike, +1 Initiative, +1 Dodge, +1 Roll
Level 10	+1 Strike, +1 Initiative, +1 Dodge, +1 Grapple, +1 Parry
Level 11	+1 Damage, +1 Strike, +1 Initiative, +1 Dodge, +1 Throw
Level 12	+1 Stamina, +1 Action, +1 Strike, +1 Roll, +1 Grapple
Level 13	+1 Damage, +1 Strike, +1 Initiative, +1 Dodge, +1 Throw
Level 14	+1 Stamina, +1 Strike, +1 Initiative, +1 Grapple, +1 Parry
Level 15	+1 Damage, +1 Action, +1 Strike, +2 Initiative, +1 Dodge, +2 Roll

Pain Resistance

Rank 1: The ninja has trained in many different forms of personal torture and self-mutilation, leading to a higher resistance to pain. In any Round where they have Pain penalties, they can make a reflexive Moderate (20) Pain check. If they succeed, they ignore Pain penalties for the entire Round.

Thick Skin

Rank 1: Intense training gives the ninja AR 2/0.

Rank 2: Raises to AR 3/1.

Rank 3: Raises to AR 4/2.

Tiger Claws

(Speed +3, -4 Strike)

Rank 1: The ninja attacks with their nails, ripping into the target's flesh with each strike. This effect halves the damage inflicted (rounded up), but each strike gives the target a -2 Pain penalty to all rolls for 1 Round.

Rank 2: Penalty is -4 penalty (instead of +2) -OR- the duration is raised to 2 Rounds.

WILDCAT STYLE

Strong: Strike, **Weak:** Parry

Weapons: Hand Claw

Description: Wildcat fighters focus on quick and close strikes, hoping to defeat their opponent before they get the chance to act. They utilize punches and kicks equally in swift succession, one right after the other. They are great at launching attacks, but their style leaves openings which detract from their ability to deflect incoming blows.

WILDCAT TECHNIQUES

Adaptive Dodger

Rank 1: The fighter is accustomed to using their environment to their advantage. They receive a +2 bonus to all Dodge rolls starting on the 2nd Round, as it takes a Round to acclimate to their surroundings. Opponents also receive an additional -2 penalty to hit the fighter when they have Cover.

Rank 2: Raise to +4 Dodge and -4 cover penalty

Rank 3: Raise to +6 Dodge and -6 cover penalty

Focused Strikes

Rank 1: The fighter has honed their skills through intense training to strike specific parts of their opponent's body with ease. Penalties for Targeted strikes are reduced by 4.

Rank 2: Penalties reduced by 8 (instead of 4)

Rank 3: Penalties reduced by 12 (instead of 8)

Lands on Feet

(Speed 2)

Rank 1: Anytime the ninja is tripped or fails a check to fall to the ground, they may immediately make a Moderate (20) Balance check to tumble back onto their feet. Does not work against the Trip Grapple Maneuver (pg 168). This technique counts as a Reaction, not requiring the use of an Action.

Pounce

Rank 1: The ninja has learned to take advantage to quick strikes and taking down their opponents before they get a chance to act. If the ninja with this technique acts first in any Round, they receive a +3 bonus to Strike and +1 Damage for their first Action.

Rank 2: +6 Strike and +2 damage to first Action.

Rank 3: +9 Strike and +3 damage to first Action.

Whirlwind Assault

Rank 1: The fighter is well-versed in multi-opponent combat and suffers no penalty for striking separate targets in the same Round (instead of -2).



GIFTS AND DRAWBACKS

No two ninjas are the same, even those from the same clan. Gifts and Drawbacks provide tools to reflect this by customizing characters beyond mere Attributes and Skills. Each Gift and Drawback is listed along with a numerical value. Gifts cost that value in Bonus Points (BP) and Drawbacks give back their value in BP. If listed in a range (i.e. 1-5), the character can purchase the Gift or Drawback multiple times and apply the listed effect each time. If listed as separate values (i.e. 2 or 4), the character can take the two-point or four-point version, but not both.

Gifts are boosted natural talents or social status, such as the character's Class, their existing social Connections or additional combat training. All characters start with 10 Bonus Points (BP) – except for Ronin who begin with 12 BP – to spend on Gifts on a 1-to-1 basis. BP can also be spent for Attribute points (2 BP for 1 Attribute point) or Skill points (1 BP for 1 Skill point). **Note:** It still costs multiple Attribute and Skill points to gain higher levels.

Drawbacks are penalties or complications that can further define a character's weak points. Taking Drawbacks and applying these negative qualities grants additional BP to spend on beneficial additions (as previously described). They can also sacrifice Attribute and Skill points in exchange for more BP (1 Attribute point = 2 BP and 1 Skill point = 1 BP). No more than a total of 10 BP can be gained from taking Drawbacks or sacrificing Attributes/Skills.

Certain Gifts or Drawbacks can be purchased at any point in the game (even after character creation), while others obviously cannot. For instance, the Giant Gift is generally only available during creation, as characters usually don't spontaneously grow larger than normal people (unless the GM orchestrates these events). The GM has final decision on which Gifts and Drawbacks they wish to allow in their game and those appropriate for a particular concept. **Note:** Directly contradicting Gifts and Drawbacks cannot be purchased together (i.e. Perfect Memory and Absent Minded).

 GIFTS		DRAWBACKS	
Adaptive Element (3)	Library (1-5)	Absent-minded (4)	Phobia (3)
Ally (1-5)	Light Sleeper (3)	Addiction (4)	Poor Hygiene (1-5)
Ambidexterity (3)	Lucky (3, 6, or 9)	Bad Reputation (1-5)	Poor Senses (2 or 4)
Animal Companion (3 or 2)	Masterwork Weapon (3 or 2)	Big Mouth (2)	Scrawny (1-5)
Attractiveness (1-5)	Natural Brawler (3)	Bleeder (3)	Shy (2)
Born Wrestler (4)	Natural Marksmen (3)	Blind (6)	Sickly (1-5)
Cat-like Balance (1-5)	Outside Style (2)	Chi Deficient (5 or 10)	Skill Deficient (3)
Chi Hoarder (2 or 5)	Pain Resistant (2, 4, or 6)	Combat Fear (1-5)	Skittish (1-5)
Class (1-5)	Perfect Memory (3)	Compulsion (3)	Slow Healer (4)
Combat Technique (3)	Punctual (1)	Curious (2)	Speech Impediment (2)
Connections (1-5)	Quick Draw (2)	Deep Sleeper (3)	Unattractiveness (1-5)
Directional Sense (1)	Quick Healer (6)	Disfigured (4)	Unlucky (3, 6 or 9)
Double-jointed (2)	Poison Resistant (1-5)	Easily Poisoned (1-5)	Untouchable Class (4)
Dual-Wielding (3)	Rank (1-5)	Emotional (4)	Wanted (2)
Enduring (2)	Sharpened Senses (2)	Enemy (1-5)	Ward (3)
Favored Wushu (3)	Sickness Resistance (1-5)	Graceless (1-5)	Weak-willed (1-5)
Fearless (1-5)	Sprinter (1-5)	Illiterate (1)	Weak Stomach (3)
Follower (1-5)	Strength Training (4)	Kid (4)	Wushu Dunce (3)
Giant (5)	Summoner (6)	Lecherous (2)	
Good Reputation (1-5)	Tough (1-5)	Lifesaver (3)	
Hard to Kill (1-5)	Weapon Expert (2)	Obese (4)	
Home Turf (4)	Weapon Training (1)	One arm (4)	
Improvisational Fighter (3)	Wushu Specialist (4)	One-eye (4)	
Increased Initiative (1-5)	Yang Master (3)	Pacifist (4)	
Iron Will (1-5)	Yin Master (3)	Paraplegic (6)	

GIFTS

Adaptive Element (3): A ninja with this Gift has learned to bend their Elemental Soul to exist together with the others. They receive only a -2 penalty to Wushu Activation checks for “Destroying” elemental types (instead of -4) and “Hindering” types give no modifier (instead of -2).

Ally (1-5): No one is alone in the world. This Gift represents a friend, family member or mentor that is there to aid the character. BP spent reflects how close the Ally is to the character and their influence. Unlike the Follower Gift, an Ally is not under the character’s employment and does not HAVE to help them. This Gift often reflects other ninja from the same clan or even just simple town folk.

- (1) Completely aloof martial arts instructor
- (2) Friend they can ask for a favor occasionally (as long as it doesn’t put them out)
- (3) Childhood friend that lets them stay in their home when they are down on their luck
- (4) Best friend that helps with anything they can (as long as there’s no extreme negative impact)
- (5) Brother (or blood brother) willing to sacrifice things in his own life for the character

Ambidexterity (3): The character can use both hands equally well to perform tasks. Some are born with this skill, while others work hard to master it. This Gift removes the -4 Off-hand penalty (See pg 173) and reduces the penalty hand-based Simultaneous actions by two. While Dual-Wielding (pg 165), they can use a weapon with a -8 for the first attack and -8 for the second attack, but also suffer a -2 penalty to any single attacks as well.

Animal Companion (3 or 2): The character has a loyal animal that is their friend and companion. Their pet is specially trained (choose up to three commands) and the two communicate well. Common choices are dogs, birds or horses (See Animals on pg 182). Members of the Pack of the Black Moon need only spend 2 BP for an additional dog.

Attractiveness (1-5): The character is attractive and can often open up life options that are available to few others. Each BP spent gives a +2 bonus to CHM

checks that are affected by looks (excluding Intimidation checks).

Born Wrestler (4): The character has a knack for close Grapple-style combat. **Bonuses:** +2 Strike to Initiate Grapple Actions, +2 Grapple, +1 Stamina point, and +4 Health.

Cat-like Balance (1-5): The character can easily walk a tightrope or traverse a terrain of bamboo reeds. Each BP spent gives a +2 bonus vs. Balance.

Chi Hoarder (2 or 5): The character has learned to adapt their body to holding larger stores of temporary chi safely. Ninja can normally hold +2 Temporary Chi over their Permanent Chi values. For 2 BP, they can hold +4 Temporary Chi for up to 30 min. For 5 BP, they can hold +6 for up to an hour. After the time elapses, the extraneous chi becomes volatile once more. See pg 78 for more info.

Class (1-5): The Class Gift determines the character’s lifestyle and how they are treated or seen by others in their everyday life. Characters are born into their class and usually stay that way until outward events change. For instance, a noble could disgrace themselves in the courts and be reduced down to a lower status. This Gift also affects the character’s wealth in terms of the Cost of weapons or equipment (pg 154). Those in higher station have an easier time getting their hands on the things they want.

(0) Commoner: Characters default to commoners in the world of Wu Xing. They work regular jobs in the fields, sales or other menial positions and often live in collective homes with friends or other members of their family. This also applies to monks, since they give up all but the most rudimentary material possessions.

(1) Land-Owner: Same level as Commoner, but they own some farm land, their own small home and may have access to a carriage or wagon for short-distance travel.

(2) Artisan Class: Born into the class of craftsmen and artists, including tailors, cooks, painters or jewelers. They usually own homes and a small bit of land and have access to horses or carriages. Character receives a free Arts Specialty in their medium of choice.

(3) Merchant Class: Born into the class of guildsmen and traders of a particular item from horses to sugar to rice. They are known for being the wealthiest residents without a ruling title, owning one or two homes, businesses and a few acres of land. They also have access to horses, carriages and ships. Character receives a free Persuasion Specialty for Hagglng or Negotiation.

(4) Warrior Class: Born into the prestigious warrior class, the character is trained from a young age to serve the Empire and his lineage. If they prove to be influential and trustworthy, they may be left in charge of towns or cities in the place of a noble. They usually have large homes or a small estate, with access to any type of travel. Characters receive a free Athletics or Acrobatics Specialty of their choice.

(5) Noble Class: Born into the noble class, the character is raised to be a ruler. They are easily the richest class in the Empire and can be appointed to control land for the Emperor. They have access to just about anything they desire, but must constantly compete for positions of authority with other nobles. Characters receive a free Deception or Empathy Specialty of their choice.

Combat Technique (3): While characters receive 1 free combat technique at level 5, 10 and 15 of their particular Fighting Style, some practice hard to surpass such limitations. Each purchase of this Gift gives one more Combat Technique or upgrades an existing Technique.

Connections (1-5): The character has influence and/or contacts within a particular community or other social structure. This Gift reflects both how wide their influence spreads and its extent. However, these ties become weaker the more they are used. They could have a friend who they can get a quick meal if needed (Fishermen 1), have a contact within the courts that can “lose” a wanted poster notice (Judicial 2) or be leader of the local monastery and have several monks to heed his call (Monks 5). Using these contacts is performed through roleplay. The GM may ask for a CHM + Persuasion + Connections check for particularly complex or strange requests.

Examples: Lotus Coalition, Criminals, Fishermen, Judicial, Monks, Nobles, Specific Clan, Soldiers

Directional Sense (1): The character has an innate sense of direction, regardless of the time of day, providing a +4 bonus to Survival or Travel checks involving Navigation.

Double-jointed (2): The character has trained their body to contort and stretch into impossible positions. This gives a +4 bonus to Acrobatics checks involving Flexibility.

Duel-Wielder (3): The character is adept at fighting with two weapons. When doing do, they reduce the penalty for Simultaneous Actions by 2 and double their Parry bonuses granted by the weapon. So, while duel-wielding Katana, the character could perform two attacks per Action at a -8 for the first attack and -12 for the second. When it came to defending, they’d enjoy a +4 bonus to Parry (instead of +2). They can also make a single attack with no penalty.

Enduring (1-5): Endurance training and exercise gives the character +1 Stamina point per BP spent.

Favored Wushu (3): The character can choose one additional General Wushu Way to become a Favored Wushu. This makes the BP cost to purchase new wushu only 1 BP per level (instead of 2 BP per level). **Note:** There should be some reason in their character concept as to why they excel at this type, when others of their clan do not.

Fearless (1-5): The character has experienced many horrible things in their life and is less prone to fear. Each BP spent gives a +2 bonus to Fear checks.

Follower (1-5): The character has someone under their command. They may be a younger ninja who looks up to them, a powerfully-built bodyguard or even a bound slave (if the character is especially ruthless). BP spent represents how helpful they are, giving five (5) Skill points per level to spend. Followers have all Attributes of 4, unless raised by the GM.

Followers take to (and may even enjoy) being ordered to action by the character, but there is little besides loyalty or jade keeping them in check. If mistreated, abused, or constantly belittled, they may betray the character at their worst moment possible.

(1) Child or someone with limited faculties

- (2) Normal person without extensive training
- (3) Capable servant with a few tricks in their sleeve
- (4) Valued and irreplaceable assistant
- (5) Truly remarkable and talented follower

Giant (5): The character is bigger and taller than others. **Bonuses:** +8 Health, +3 to Lifting, +1 Stamina, +2 bonus to Fortitude, and +1 Base Damage. Due to their size, they suffer a -2 penalty to AGY for manual dexterity (i.e. picking a lock, typing, etc.). Clothing/armor also requires +1 Class for special sizes that fit correctly.

Good Reputation (1-5): The character has a reputation for something good, whether truly deserved or not. This could be for a personality trait, such trustworthy, highly intelligent, tough as nails or incredibly kind. It may also be for an occupation, such as being a great tailor, intoxicating songstress or best tumbler in the land. BP spent represents how far this information has spread.

- (1) Within a certain social circle
- (2) Villagewide
- (3) Citywide
- (4) Empirewide
- (5) Worldwide

Hard to Kill (1-5): The character, for reason or another, is harder to send to their final death than others. Each BP spent provides a +2 bonus against Death checks and gives +1 Health.

Home Turf (4): The character is a master of their land and knows how to use their community to their advantage. Bonuses: +2 bonus to Stealth, Knowledge and Survival checks on their Home turf.

Improvisational Fighter (3): The character is proficient in fighting with whatever is handy, reducing the Improvised weapon penalty to -4 (instead of -8). If they use an improvised weapon that is similar to a weapon they are trained in they suffer no penalty. See pg 165.

Increased Initiative (1-5): The character is quicker to act and react to new events than the average person. Each BP spent gives a +2 bonus to their Initiative score.

Iron Will (1-5): The character's mind is particularly resistant to attacks to its integrity. Each BP spent gives a +2 bonus to checks against Insanity.

Library (1-5): The character owns a research library or has access to another's. Each BP spent gives a +2 bonus to Knowledge (Research) rolls, representing the level of information the library provides. Before making a check, GMs should determine if the library would assist in research into the topic (based on BP spent and concept).

- (1) Shelf in their room
- (2) Waist-high, full book shelf
- (3) Wall to wall library
- (4) Huge room of knowledge
- (5) Library building

Light Sleeper (3): The character only needs to sleep four hours each day to feel fully rested (instead of seven). Checks against Unconsciousness (from Knockout or Exhaustion) receive a +2 bonus and are only naturally needed if the character gets less than two hours of sleep (pg 80).

Lucky (3, 6 or 9): Once per session, the character may reroll a Natural 1. If the second check is a Natural 20, the effect is neither automatic nor a Critical Success, but succeeds if they made the target Difficulty. Rolling another Natural 1 means that luck has passed them over this time. For 6 BP, they can reroll a Natural 1 twice per session. For 9 BP they can reroll a Natural 1 four times per session.

Masterwork Weapon (3 or 2): Some weapons are forged with such beauty and purpose that they surpass a normal weapon. With this Gift, the character has possession of one weapon that receives a +2 bonus to all checks on top of its normal bonuses to use it, including resisting a Disarm Action. It also has +5 Durability due to its sturdy design. These weapons are usually passed down through family lines and are never received lightly. Starting characters cannot begin with more than two masterwork weapons. Only 2 BP if the character is from the Warrior Class.

Natural Brawler (3): The character was born with hard knuckles and the fill to fight. Bonuses: +2 Strike, +1 Parry and +1 Base damage.

Natural Marksmen (3): The character is practiced in throwing with great precision. This Gift doubles their throwing range for Hurl Weapon Actions and provides a +2 bonus to Throw and +1 Damage on ranged attacks.

Outside Style (2): This Gift gives access to a Fighting Style outside of their Clan for the skill point cost of Level 1-5 = 1 point, Level 6-10 = 2 points, Level 11-15 = 3 points. Ronin can pay normal Secondary skill costs for any Outside Styles.

Pain Resistant (2, 4 or 6): The character has a natural tolerance for pain. For 2 BP, they get a +2 bonus to Pain checks and all Pain penalties are reduced by two from having low Health. For 4 BP, they get a +4 bonus to Pain checks and Pain penalties are reduced by four. For 6 BP, they get a +6 bonus to Pain checks and Pain penalties are reduced by six.

Perfect Memory (3): The character has an uncanny memory and can remember just about anything they hear or read. They need not make Memorize checks, unless they are in truly stressful situations. Even so, they still receive a +5 bonus to their check.

Poison Resistant (1-5): The character has received some sort of poison training and receives a +2 bonus to resistance against Poison per BP. Cannot be taken by the Recoiling Serpents.

Punctual (1): The character has an innate sense of time and has a good deal of accuracy when guessing when the sun will set or rise. This provides a +2 bonus to checks where timing is essential (i.e. certain combat or athletic maneuvers).

Quick Draw (2): The character always keeps their weapon ready to be drawn. They can perform a Draw Weapon Action at half the normal Speed (rounded up).

Quick Healer (6): The character heals at double the normal rate. They regain Health at a rate of 10 (NL) per hour of rest and 6 (NL) per hour of light activity or 10 (L) per day of rest and 6 (L) per day or light activity.

Rank (1-5): The character has achieved a level of status within an official group, such as the town guard, the town council, a specific clan or even the Empire's military or noble elite. Each level gives a +2 bonus to Persuasion checks for commands or leadership when dealing with those within the organization. **Note:** With higher rank, comes more responsibility.



Sharpened Senses (2): The character has one sense that is particularly sharp (sight, hearing, touch or smell/taste). They get a +4 bonus to checks with this sense (taken separately for each).

Sickness Resistance (1-5): The character has conditioned their body to resist sickness. Each BP spent gives a +2 bonus to resist Disease (including Infection) and +1 Health.

Sprinter (1-5): The character is faster than others and has trained to increase their running speed. For each BP, they receive +2 Movement and +1 Health.

Strength Training (4): The character has undergone rigorous body conditioning, training almost to the point of excess. **Bonuses:** +5 Health, +5 to Lifting rolls, +1 Stamina and +1 Base Damage.

Summoner (6): The character has made a pact with one of the Celestial Animal breeds (pg 189), able to summon them to their aid. Conversely, the character may pay 1 Permanent Yin and 1 Permanent Yang instead of the 6 BP.

Tough (1-5): The character is extra tough and can take a lot of damage, gaining +3 Health per BP spent.

Weapon Expert (2): The character has increased training with their weapon beyond simple use. By purchasing this Gift, they are Speed -1. This Gift must be taken separately for each weapon type or multiple times on the same type, but cannot reduce Speed cost below 0 for that weapon.

Weapon Training (1): The ninja has been trained to use an additional weapon outside of those usually taught within their Fighting Style. The new weapon type no longer incurs the -4 penalty for using untrained (pg 165).

Wushu Specialist (4): The character has a special affinity for wushu from a certain way, such as the Way of Movement or Way of Beasts. They receive a +2 bonus to all wushu activation checks of that type, cumulative with any other bonuses. This Gift can be taken only once per Way.

Yang Master (3): The character gains one additional point of Permanent Yang. This also provides an extra point to sacrifice in a pinch. No character can have more than 10 in any chi value.

Yin Master (3): The character gains one additional point of Permanent Yin. This also provides an extra point to sacrifice in a pinch. No character can have more than 10 in any chi value.

DRAWBACKS

Absent-minded (4): The character forgets facts easily and often misses important details in information or their surroundings. They suffer a -3 penalty to all Memorize or Discipline (Concentration) checks, as well as a -2 penalty to Perception checks.

Addiction (4): The character is addicted to some type of drug, such as alcohol or opium. They are beyond the days when it was new and exciting and now need the drug for normal daily functioning. Most drugs cause debilitating and harmful effects to the body, also taking either -2 Stamina points or -3 Health (player's choice) during character creation. As long as they get a daily dosage, they can function normally. If they go a day without their drug, they become jittery and suffer a -3 penalty to all rolls. A few more days and that penalty doubles. If they go a week, they face withdrawal and will do anything to get the drug (even injuring their comrades). They can make a Tough (30) Insanity check at intervals decided by the GM.

Bad Reputation (1-5): The character has a reputation for something bad, whether deserved or not. This could be for a personality trait, such as traitorous snitch, highly dangerous, completely incompetent or liability. It may also apply to being horrible at an occupation, such as being a clumsy assassin. BP gained from the Bad Reputation Drawback represents how far this reputation has spread.

- (1) Within a certain social circle
- (2) Villagewide
- (3) Citywide
- (4) Empirewide
- (5) Worldwide

Graceless (1-5): The character is naturally clumsy and loses their balance easily. For each BP spent, they suffer a -2 penalty to Balance checks.

Illiterate (1): Either from a learning disability or isolation in their early life, the character can speak their starting language, but lack the ability to read.

Kid (3): The character is a child, likely no older than 12 years old. They are shorter than other characters and lose -1 Stamina point, lose -1 Base Damage, -3 Health and can lift only 15 lbs. per POW level. They are often told what to do and are expected to obey adults, unless they really prove themselves, giving them a -4 penalty to Intimidation on elders. However, if they use a Take Hit Reaction or are the target of a surprised ranged attack, their opponent must make at least a Difficulty (12) – instead of Difficulty (10).

Lecherous (2): The character is always on the prowl for sex, often in excess. They suffer a -2 penalty to CHM checks with someone that they find physically attractive (especially if they have the Attractive Gift), having a hard time paying attention when their mind lingers on sex. They also suffer a -4 penalty to resist Persuasion (Seduction).

Lifesaver (3): The character cannot stand to see another in pain, even if they caused it themselves. They also cannot resist helping someone in need, even if their better judgment would tell them otherwise. They can attempt a Tough (30) Insanity check, but few bother to resist doing the “right thing”.

Obese (4): The character is overweight to the point that it seriously impairs their normal lives. They suffer a -10 penalty to all Athletics and Acrobatics checks and lose 1 Stamina point per Round of combat just to participate. On the plus side, they receive a +10 bonus on checks where weight is an advantage, like tackling, pinning or ramming.

One arm (4): With only one arm, the character’s lifting weight is equal to their carrying weight (instead of double), but they may still attempt a Strength check (pg 79) to lift more. They also suffer a -4 penalty to Parry and Grapple checks.

One-eye (4): With only one eye, the character suffers a -4 penalty to Perception (Sight) checks. Due to loss of depth perception, they also suffer a -2 penalty to combat checks.

Pacifist (4): The character will not (for personal reason or due to a code of honor) start a fight with another. They can defend themselves, but also will not kill their opponent. This can be a serious drawback that can create reoccurring enemies or leave the character open to a cheap shot that may cost them their life.

Paraplegic (6): The character has lost the use of their legs and requires a wheelchair (Class: 1+) to get around. Their Movement is equal to their POW as they push with their arms.

Phobia (3): The character is deathly afraid of anything from snakes to heights to darkness. Whatever the choice, it should be something fairly commonplace. A fear of a tree frog indigenous to the Land of Seed and Blossom wouldn’t be appropriate for a character in the Izou Empire, for instance. When faced with their phobia, they must make a Moderate (20) Fear check or react in a hysterically scared fashion. They may fall to the crowd in a fetal position, lash out violently or simply run away. The Difficulty could even be raised to Tough (30) if the source is worse than normal (i.e. a giant snake).

Poor Hygiene (1-5): The character doesn’t take care of themselves or may have a glandular condition that causes poor hygiene. They often smell or secrete from their skin no matter how often they bathe. For each BP, they suffer a -1 penalty to CHM checks that involve looks, etiquette or general presence and any trackers receive a +2 bonus to their Survival checks to find them based on smell.

Poor Senses (2 or 4): For 2 BP, the character has one slightly dulled sense (sight, hearing, touch or smell/taste), suffering a -3 penalty to Perception checks with that sense. This penalty can be negated with corrective assistance, like glasses. For 5 BP, they suffer a -7 penalty that cannot be corrected. See the Blind Drawback for full sight loss.

Scrawny (1-5): The character is smaller and weaker than others. Each BP gained subtracts -3 Health from their total.

Shy (2): The character is shy around people or large crowds and suffers a -3 penalty to all Persuasion (Oratory) checks. This also applies to interactions with someone they may have feelings for or those in a higher station (Rank) than themselves.

Sickly (1-5): The character is thin and more susceptible to sickness than average. They suffer a -2 penalty to Fortitude checks against Disease or Infection and -1 Health per BP gained.

Skill Deficient (3): There is a skill that the character just cannot understand and it has caused issues in their life. They suffer a -4 penalty to all checks involving this skill and its level is capped at 4 levels (just enough to get rid of their penalty). This cannot be applied to Fighting Styles.

Skittish (1-5): The character has a certain level of paranoia at all times and is quite fearful. They suffer a -2 penalty against Fear per BP gained.

Slow Healer (4): The character's heals at a slower pace for some reason. This Drawback slows their healing to 2 (NL) per hour of rest and 1 (NL) per hour of light activity or 2 (L) per day of rest and 1 (L) per day or light activity.

Speech Impediment (2): The character doesn't speak correctly due to a slur, lisp, stutter or indecipherable accent. They suffer a -4 penalty to checks involving the spoken word, such as appealing to a group, learning to speak a new language or giving verbal commands to an animal.

Unattractiveness (1-5): The character is less attractive than others. They may have eyes too wide apart, patches of bald, a strangely-shaped nose or anything else imaginable. For each BP, they suffer a -2 penalty to CHM checks involving looks. This Drawback cannot be taken with Disfigured.

Unlucky (3, 6 or 9): Once per session, the GM can force the reroll of a Natural 20. If another Natural

20 is rolled, it is still a success, but is not considered a Critical Success. If they roll a Natural 1, the event should be disastrous, likely dealing damage to themselves or a friend. For 6 BP, reroll two Natural 20s per session. For 9 BP, reroll four Natural 20s per session.

Untouchable Class (4): The character hails from the Untouchable Class (pg 24). This includes peasants that work as butchers, blacksmiths, corpse disposers, waste cleaners and anything else considered unclean by society. They cannot ascend to a higher Class, which affects their ability to obtain items outside of their vocation. They also receive a -5 penalty to most social checks.

Wanted (2): The character's identity is known to the Empire. They find wanted posters around towns and run the risk of being turned in if they are fingered or identified.

Ward (3): The character has someone they must protect. This could be a child or weaker person that actually requires extra attention, like guarding the noble's daughter or defending a sickly sibling.

Weak-willed (1-5): The character is particularly susceptible to attacks on their mind. They suffer a -2 penalty to checks against Insanity.

Weak Stomach (3): The character becomes nauseous easily when faced with blood, body parts or other gross/scary things. They must make a Moderate (20) VIG + Fortitude check or they immediately vomit and have to leave the scene or continue to dry heave constantly. Even if their check succeeds, they suffer a -3 penalty to all checks while around the stimulus.

Wushu Dunce (3): The character just has no talent for one of their Favored Wushu paths. They suffer a -3 penalty to using any wushu of that type. This Drawback can be taken only once per Way.

CALCULATING SUB-ATTRIBUTES

HEALTH

A character's Health, their physical well-being, is represented by a numerical value. As their body is harmed from a punch, a knife or a sip of poison, their Health is reduced. A high Health means the character is tough and can take more before they die or are knocked out. Low Health reflects a fragile character. See Damage/Health on pg 174.

Starting Health: $((\text{POW} + \text{VIG}) \times 2) + 10$

STAMINA POINTS

Everyone has a point of exhaustion, when their body has gone as far as it can go. Stamina points are used to gauge this in the DGS. Not every action requires the use of Stamina points, but certainly stressful and exerting Actions do. This is recorded in the box next to the VIG Attribute on the character sheet. See Stamina points on pg 161.

Starting Stamina: Equal to VIG, plus any gained from Skills or Gifts

OTHER TRAITS

- **Vs. Balance:** AGY + Acrobatics + modifiers
- **Vs. Fear/Awe:** INS + Discipline + modifiers
- **Vs. Poison:** VIG + Fortitude + modifiers
- **Vs. Disease:** VIG + Fortitude + modifiers
- **Vs. Pain:** INS + Discipline + modifiers
- **Vs. Insanity:** INS + Empathy + modifiers
- **Vs. Death:** VIG + Fortitude + modifiers
- **Vs. Unconsciousness:** VIG + Fortitude + modifiers
- **Memorization:** IQ + Discipline + modifiers
- **Carry/Lift Weight:** 25 lbs per POW / x2
- **Strength Check:** POW + VIG + modifiers
- **Max Hold Breath:** 20 seconds per VIG

COMBAT BONUSES

Characters can receive combat bonuses from the following places (included here for ease):

- **Fighting Styles:** This is the largest contribu-

tion to combat bonuses. Add all the listed bonuses based on the level attained. Quick list at end of book.

- **Attributes:** A high POW provides bonuses to Damage. A high AGY gives bonuses to Strike, Throw, Parry and Dodge. A high VIG is crucial to Stamina points. See pg 161.

- **Skills:** Acrobatics (pg 84) gives bonuses to Initiative, Dodge and Parry. Athletics (pg 85) gives bonuses to Strike, Throw and Grapple. Fortitude (pg 86) gives bonuses to Health. All Skill bonuses are based on the level attained.

- **Gifts/Drawbacks:** Check pgs 102-110 to see the available bonuses and penalties through Gifts/Drawbacks.

- **Elements:** A character's Element (pg 75) gives them a special combat bonus that should be taken into account and recorded for quick reference.

INITIATIVE BONUS

A character's ability to react to sudden changes in their environment or to an incoming attack is represented by their Initiative bonus. A high bonus means the character has better awareness of combat positioning and reactionary reflexes. See Initiative on pg 162.

Starting Initiative: AGY + IQ + modifiers

MOVEMENT

A character's speed of Movement by foot is gauged by this numerical value. Below are the different way to travel and how it corresponds to their Movement:

- **Walking:** Characters can walk or briskly jog a number of feet equal to their POW + AGY with a Move Action (pg 169).

- **Running:** Characters can run at a top speed equal to their POW + AGY x 20 yards per minute, requiring 1 Stamina point if the pace is prolonged. GMs may also require AGY + Athletics check if the character heads into any obstacles (i.e. rough terrain). A failed check results in trips or falls, forcing a Balance check. Rolling a Natural 1 (Critical Failure) may lead to the character sustaining bodily harm (loss in Health) depending on the circumstances.

- **Jumping:** Characters can jump a number of feet equal to their POW + Athletics + 10 horizontally and can jump half this distance vertically, requir-

ing a successful POW + Athletics check. A failed check means the character missed their intended target and may need an AGY + Acrobatics roll to catch themselves. They can add 25% to their jumping distance if they have a running start of at least 10 ft. They can jump 50% of their maximum distance without a check or spending Stamina, but any farther requires the expenditure of 1 Stamina point per jump. A Critical Failure means the character falls and cannot catch themselves.

- **Climbing:** Characters can climb at half their Movement safely. Traveling any faster requires an AGY + Athletics check, with a failed check meaning they make no progress or may even slip down. A Critical Failure means the character falls to whatever fate is below them. If they choose to climb at their full Movement or are faced with an especially steep surface, they must also spend 1 Stamina point.

- **Swimming:** Characters with at least Athletics 1 can swim at half their normal Movement. No rolls are required in calm waters, but swimming for long periods or in strong currents may require a POW + Athletics (Swimming) check and costs 1 Stamina point to fight against the waves. A Critical Failure means the character flounders and may even drown.

- **Chasing:** If one character chases after another, they make contested 1d20 + Movement checks and compare the results. The gap between the two increases or decreases based upon the difference between the winner and loser's checks. The winner gains a number of feet in the race equal to that difference, making a high Movement integral to some missions.

Example: Yoshi has Movement 10 and is 5 ft. from Tsato who has (Movement 8) and decides to run away. Yoshi rolls 1d20 + 10 for a total of 19 against Tsato's 1d20 + 8 for a total of 24. Because Tsato rolled 5 higher than Chris, he caught up with him and can now enter into combat.

EXPERIENCE POINTS (XP)

Characters, especially ninja, aren't static beings. The homage of "learning something new everyday" is definitely a reality and applies to characters in Wu Xing: The Ninja Crusade as well. A martial arts student finally learning how to perform a correctly postured roundhouse is reflected by gaining a level

in an appropriate Fighting Style. Likewise, a brute learning the power of saying "Thank you" may raise their Charm (CHM) Attribute or gain a level in the Persuasion Skill. Personal growth comes by way of Experience Points (XP) earned in a variety the ways (examples listed below) and then spent to improve the character. **Note:** The GM is the SOLE decider on which player receives what amount of XP.

AFTER A GAMING SESSION

After a successful gaming session, the GM should distribute XP to reward players that have accomplished goals and played their characters well. The XP examples below do not apply to all sessions, making the average XP gained per session between 1 XP to 5 XP, depending on the length and quality of the session in question. The GM is also encouraged to create their own criteria for gaining XP that fits their group's play style.

- **1 point – Showing up to Play:** Every player that shows up to play should receive 1 XP just for joining in the game and contributing to its occurring in the first place.

- **1 point – Passions:** If the player used their character's Passion in an interesting way that affected the session, they should receive this point. See Passions on pg 71 for more information.

- **1 point – Spotlight:** If there was one character that took charge of a situation or was an effective leader during that session, they receive this point. It's a good idea for the group to vote on which player deserves this point.

- **1 point – Memorable Moment:** If a character does something that makes the group say something like "That's so awesome!", "Man, dude, what, no, really?" or make the GM speechless from how cool or clever it was, they receive this point. It shouldn't be given every session or it loses its flavor.

- **1 point – Morale of the Story:** If the character has learned something from the session, it is important to award XP for growing. Ask each player "So, what did you learn, if anything?" It could be something like "My character learned that inciting a riot is a bad idea in most cases" or "My character will never again test the patience of a Shadow".



CHARACTER BUILDING REFERENCE GUIDE

Step One: Concept, Passion, Element (record Starting Chi), and Clan (and Fighting Styles)

Step Two: Distribute Attribute Points (30)

Step Three: Record Starting Skills and Distribute Skill Points (30 + IQ)

Step Four: Select Wushu

Step Five: Spend Bonus Points (10)

Step Six: Calculate Sub-Attributes/Combat Bonuses

STEP ONE

1. Choose Concept

2. Choose one of the following Passions:

- **Approval:** You seek another's approval
- **Code of Honor:** You live by a strict code
- **Collector:** You're always looking for the next piece for your collection
- **Community:** You work to better your community
- **Escape:** You are always on the run
- **Faith:** You cling to faith in times of trouble
- **Greed:** You want to have a lot of something
- **Joy:** You want to bring happiness to the world
- **Love:** You fight for love, your's or another's
- **Perfection:** You strive for perfection in all things
- **Power:** You seek to accumulate power of some kind
- **Protection:** You want to protect something/someone
- **Rebellion:** You live to rebel against everything
- **Rivalry:** You are driven by competition
- **Truth:** You seek the truth behind mysteries
- **Vengeance:** You have a lust for vengeance
- **Warrior:** You live for the thrill of battle

3. Choose one of the following Elemental Souls and record Permanent Chi (pg 75):

- Earth (Yin 1, Yang 1, 1 of Choice)
- Fire (Yin 0, Yang 3)
- Metal (Yin 2, Yang 1)
- Water (Yin 3, Yang 0)
- Wood (Yin 1, Yang 2)

4. Choose one of the following Clans:

- Bamboo Herbalists (pg 38)
- Blazing Dancers (pg 41)
- Grasping Shadows (pg 44)
- Hidden Strands of Fate (pg 47)
- Living Chronicle (pg 50)
- Pack of the Black Moon (pg 53)
- Recoiling Serpents (pg 56)
- Virtuous Body Gardeners (pg 59)
- Wardens of Equilibrium (pg 62)
- Will of Iron (pg 65)
- Ronin (pg 68)

STEP TWO

1. Distribute thirty (30) points between your Attributes. Levels 1-8 costs 1 point per level and Level 9-10 cost 2 points per level. Every character must have at least 1 point in each Attribute and 10 is the maximum. Level 4 or 5 is average.

STEP THREE

1. Record Starting Skills (pg 82), then spend thirty skill points, plus a number of bonus Skill points equal to your IQ (30 + IQ). For Standard Skills and the character's Primary Fighting Style, Levels 1-10 cost 1 points per level and Level 11-15 costs 2 points per level. Secondary and Outside Fighting Styles advance differently (pg 89). 1 free Skill Specialty or Combat Technique is gained at Level 5, 10 and 15.

STANDARD SKILLS

Acrobatics	Intimidation
Arts	Knowledge
Athletics	Linguistics
Beast Handling	Legerdemain
Crafts	Perception
Deception	Performance
Discipline	Persuasion
Empathy	Stealth
Fortitude	Survival
Holistics	Travel

FIGHTING STYLES

Bear Style	Horse Style
Crane Style	Monkey Style
Crocodile Style	Snake Style
Dragon Style	Tiger Style
Eagle Style	Wildcat Style
Hawk Style	

STEP FOUR

1. Choose a total of 5 Wushu Levels from your Favored Wushu (see Clans, pg 37). Each starts with 2 General and 1 Clan-Specific path. Ronin can choose 4 total levels from any path (none are considered favored).

GENERAL

- Way of Beasts (pg 123)
- Way of Earth (pg 125)
- Way of Fire (pg 126)
- Way of Metal (pg 128)
- Way of Movement (pg 129)
- Way of Survival (pg 131)
- Way of the Unseen (pg 132)
- Way of Warrior (pg 134)
- Way of Water (pg 135)
- Way of Wood (pg 136)

CLAN SPECIFIC

- Way of Balanced Scales (pg 138)
- Way of Caring Hands (pg 139)
- Way of Ebony Clutches (pg 140)
- Way of Great Serpents (pg 142)
- Way of Heaven's Judgment (pg 144)
- Way of the Immaculate Show (pg 145)
- Way of Inked Skin (pg 146)
- Way of Kept Lore (pg 148)
- Way of Spun Threads (pg 149)
- Way of Twin Beasts (pg 151)

STEP FIVE

1. Spend your starting Bonus Points (BP). Clan ninja being with 10 BP, while Ronin start with 12 BP. These points can be used to purchase Gifts, raise Attributes and Skills or to acquire additional wushu. Additional BP can be gained by taking Drawbacks

or sacrificing Attribute or Skill points as well (to a maximum of 10 total points). See pg 102 for more.

STEP SIX

1. Calculate Sub-Attributes and Combat Bonuses: Use the instructions on pg 111 to calculate all relevant modifiers for the character. This includes Health, Initiative, and Stamina, as well as bonuses to Strike, Parry or Grapple.

EXPERIENCE POINTS (XP)

Use the following chart as quick reference for spending XP to improve characters.

1 Attribute Point	10 XP
1 Skill Point	5 XP
1 Bonus Point	5 XP
Permanent Chi	9 XP
Favored Wushu	5 XP per Level
Non-Favored Wushu	10 XP per Level

STARTING AS EXPERIENCED CHARACTERS

At character creation, characters are assumed to be "starting" characters - Rookies. However, the GM may choose to start the players off at a higher level. Use the chart below to help balance:

Experienced	+5 BP
Veteran	+10 BP
Hero	+20 BP



ADVANCED CHARACTER CREATION

Experienced players may create their character in a different order than that given. They may choose to select Gifts & Drawbacks first or perhaps go straight to the Wushu they want for their character. This method isn't for everyone, but as long as all points are spent correctly, it is as worthwhile as any other.



CHARACTER CREATION EXAMPLE

Step One: Concept, Passion, Element (record Starting Chi), and Clan (and Fighting Styles)

Step Two: Distribute Attribute Points (30)

Step Three: Record Starting Skills and Distribute Skill Points (30 + IQ)

Step Four: Select Wushu

Step Five: Spend Bonus Points (10)

Step Six: Calculate Sub-Attributes/Combat Bonuses

STEP ONE: CONCEPT, PASSION, ELEMENT AND CLAN

CONCEPT

After reading the majority of Wu Xing: The Ninja Crusade, Kristen takes some time to think about what kind of character she wants to create. She knows she wants a ninja dedicated to their clan over all other things. Going through the talking points discussed in the Concept section (pg 70), she comes up with the following:

Atsuko Anzai was raised by the Atsuko Twins of the Blazing Dancers, notorious warriors for the clan. She is as beautiful as she is dangerous, and has a score to settle with the Empire. Recently, during a street performance, her mentors were incarcerated and thrown into Nanchou, the prison city. She has joined forces with the Lotus Coalition and is looking for just the right comrades to help her break them out.

PASSION

Next, Kristen needs to pick Anzai's Passion. From the description above, there are two options: Collector or Vengeance.

Collector applies to the Anzai's quest to find members for her prestigious prison-breaking squad. Each warrior she finds would give her a bonus to XP and get her one step closer to her ultimate goal.

Vengeance applies to the true reason behind her aggression toward the Empire. She'll kill any soldier in her way and cut down any obstacle to get to her goal, relishing with each stroke of her hand blades.

Kristen chooses to go with Collector, deciding that Anzai has yet to give into the deep hatred

within her... yet. Vengeance could come into play later if circumstances push her mental limits.

ELEMENT

After checking her options, Kristen debates over whether Wood or Fire would good for Anzai. Picking Fire would make her character too aggressive, so she picks Wood, the element of bending with change. Anzai isn't just attacking head on, she's strategizing and attacking when just right. This makes her starting Chi: Yang 2, Yin 1.

CLAN

Kristen already decided that Anzai was adopted by the Blazing Dancers and was raised as such. It gives her a double reason to be so driven, as the Atsuko Twins were both her mentors and her family. This choice gets Anzai the traits listed on pg 43. She chooses Wildcat Style as her primary fighting style and Monkey as her Secondary (her clan styles). These styles make her proficient with both a Hand Claw and Kunai (throwing knives).

STEP TWO: DISTRIBUTE ATTRIBUTE POINTS

Kristen wants Anzai to be quicker rather than stronger, but with a great deal of willpower. She's been trained quite well to be a machine in battle, perhaps because her foster parents knew this day would come. To reflect this, she gives Anzai an above average Agility (AGY) and Insight (INS). She spends her thirty (30) Attribute points as follows:

POW 4	AGY 7	VIG 4
IQ 5	INS 6	CHM 4

STEP THREE: DISTRIBUTE SKILL POINTS

Because she gave Anzai IQ 5, she begins with 35 Skill points (30 + 5) on top of the Starting Skills (Discipline 1, Legerdemain 1, Stealth 1, Survival 1, Pri-

mary Fighting Style 1). While spending her points, she can link her skills to her specific training. Due to her Clan choice, she also receives a free Specialty to Performance. She ends up with the following skills:

Acrobatics 4	Performance 6 (Acting, Dancing)
Arts 2	Persuasion 2
Athletics 3	Stealth 4
Deception 3	Survival 2
Discipline 3	Wildcat Style 5
Legerdemain 5 (Misdirection)	Monkey Style 1

Her ninja training with the Blazing Dancers leads to her choice of Acrobatics, Arts, Athletics, Discipline, Legerdemain and Performance. These are common skills taught to students before and after they are inducted into their ranks.

The Atsuko Twins taught Anzai to use her words as well as her weapons to solve disputes. She learned the arts of Persuasion and Deception so she'd be able to get anything she wanted out of life.

She showed a real knack for hand to hand combat as a young girl, leading her clan to primarily teach her Wildcat Style martial arts. She also gains a Combat Technique at Level 5. She selects Lands on Feet from pg 101. They also taught her the basics of Monkey Style to balance her close and ranged combat abilities.

STEP FOUR: SELECT WUSHU

The Blazing Dancers have the Way of the Immaculate Show, Way of Fire and Way of Movement as their Favored Wushu, and Kristen receives 5 combined Wushu Levels to select to start. After looking at her options, she chooses the following Wushu: The Beautiful Dance (Level 2, Yang), Surface Running (Level 1, Yang) and Lightning Speed (Level 2, Yang – Fire).

These Wushu cement her as a real threat. The ability to move quickly on any surface and deflect almost any attack makes her formidable in battle.

STEP FIVE: SPEND BONUS POINTS

As a Blazing Dancer, Anzai automatically receives the Stage and Sound Gift and the Disrespected Drawback. Then Kristen has 10 Bonus Points to further personalize her character.

Unlike most players, Kristen decided to select her Drawbacks before her Gifts. She decides on the following:

Lecherous (2)
Bleeder (3)
Sickly (3)

She's given Anzai a slightly more fragile body with the Bleeder and Sickly Drawbacks, as well as a strong (almost dangerous) sexual drive with the Lecherous Drawback. These begin to paint the picture of how she grew up and give her 5 additional BP for a total of 18 BP to spend, which she uses on the following:

Ambidexterity (3)
Duel-Wielder (3)
Natural Brawler (3)
Weapon Expert (2)
Weapon Training (1)

Anzai has inherited twin swords from the Atsuko Twins, which she uses to fight in their honor. She took to them quickly because she is a Natural Brawler, but also needed separate Weapon Training to use the sword. After years of practice, use of the swords in both hands equally became second nature (Ambidexterity and Weapon Expert).

With 12 BP gone, she is left with 6 BP to spend. After careful consideration, Kristen spends 3 BP to purchase one more Wushu: Lighting Fists (Level 3, Yang) strengthening the idea that Anzai was never interested in learning fire Wushu.

Her final BP then went toward her Skills, being able to spend them on a one-to-one basis. She chooses to raise her Monkey Style to Level 3 and boosts her Stealth to Level 5. Now that Stealth is raised to Level 5, she gets a Specialty... she picks Shadowing.

STEP SIX: CALCULATE BONUSES

Kristen's character is almost complete. She's crafted a story for Anzai, selected her abilities and customized her with the use of Gifts and Drawbacks. To finish her character, Kristen must now go through the Attributes, Skills and Gifts/Drawbacks sections to calculate her bonuses. She receives the following bonuses from these sources:

SKILL BONUSES

- **Acrobatics 4:** +1 Initiative, +1 Dodge, +1 Parry
- **Athletics 3:** +1 Strike, +1 Throw, +1 Grapple

FIGHTING STYLES

- **Wildcat 5:** Strike +5, Throw +2, Parry +1, Dodge +5, Roll +3, Grapple +2, Initiative +4, Damage +1, +1 Stamina, +1 Action
- **Monkey 3:** Throw +3, Parry +1, Dodge +3, Roll +2, Grapple +3, Initiative +3

GIFT DRAWBACKS

- **Natural Brawler:** +2 Strike, +1 Parry, +1 Damage

WUSHU ACTIVATION CHECKS

- **Beautiful Dance:** Yang 2 + Performance 6 = +8
- **Surface Running:** Yang 2 + Athletics 3 = +5
- **Lightning Speed:** Yang 2 + Acrobatics 4 + 2 from Fire Element = +8
- **Lightning Fists:** Yang 2 + Athletics 3 = +5

SUB-ATTRIBUTES

- **Health ((POW+VIG) x2) + 10:** 23 (26 - 3 from Sickly)
- **Stamina (VIG+Modifiers):** 5 (4 + 1 from Wildcat)
- **Carry/Lift (POW 4):** 100 lbs. / 200 lbs.
- **AGY Combat Bonuses (AGY 7):** +2 to Strike, Throw, Parry, Dodge
- **Hold Breath (VIG 4):** 80 seconds
- **Strength Check (POW 4 + VIG 4):** +8
- **Memorization (IQ + Discipline):** +8
- **Barter (CHM + Persuasion):** +6
- **Initiative (AGY + IQ + Modifiers):** +20 (12 + 8 from fighting Styles)
- **Movement (POW + AGY):** 11
- **Base Damage (POW 4):** +2 (0 + 1 from Wildcat + 1 from Natural Brawler)
- **Actions:** 3 (2 + 1 from Wildcat)
- **Throw Range (AGY + IQ / x2 / x3):** 12 / 24 / 36
- **Vs. Balance (AGY + Acrobatics):** +11
- **Vs. Fear/Awe (INS + Discipline):** +9
- **Vs. Poison (VIG + Fortitude):** +4
- **Vs. Disease (VIG + Fortitude):** -2
- **Vs. Pain (INS + Discipline):** +9
- **Vs. Insanity (INS + Empathy):** +6
- **Vs. Death (VIG + Fortitude):** +4
- **Vs. Unconsciousness (VIG + Fortitude):** +4

WU XING: THE NINJA CRUSADE

Name: Atsuko Anzai Player: Kristen
 Clan: Blazing Dancers Passion: Collector
 Element: Wood Concept: Orphaned Prison-Breaker
 Gender/Age: F/19 Height/Weight: 5'5"/125 lbs Hair/Eyes: Black/Brown
 Personality: Outspoken in fun, always ready to offer an opinion or offer advice.

HEALTH
 23

12 -2
 154 -4
 128 -6

NL Damage
 L Damage

CHI

YANG
 YIN



ATTRIBUTES

Stamina 5
 POW (Power)... 4 IQ (Intellect)... 5
 AGY (Agility)... 7 INS (Insight)... 6
 VIG (Vigor)... 4 CHM (Charm)... 4

Other Traits

vs. Balance + 11 vs. Fear/Awe + 9 vs. Poison + 4 vs. Pain + 9

vs. Disease + -2 vs. Insanity + 6 vs. Death + 4 vs. Unconscious + 4

Memorize + 8 Carry / Lift 100/200 Strength Check + 11 Max Hold Breath 80 sec.



SKILLS

Lvl	+/-	Lvl	+/-
Acrobatics..... 4		Intimidation....	
Arts..... 2		Knowledge.....	
Athletics..... 3		Linguistics.....	
Beast Handling... ..		Legerdemain... 5	
Crafts.....		Perception.....	
Deception..... 3		Performance... 6	
Discipline..... 3		Persuasion..... 2	
Empathy.....		Stealth..... 5	
Fortitude.....		Survival..... 2	
Holistics.....		Travel.....	

Specialties: Acting, Dancing, Misdirection, Shadowing

FIGHTING STYLES

Lvl	
1st <u>Wildcat</u>	5
2nd <u>Monkey</u>	3
Other	

Techniques: Lands on Feet (Pg 101)

Weapon Training

Hand claw
Kunai
Sword

GIFTS

Stage and Sound
Ambidexterity (3)
Natural Brawler (3)
Weapon Training (1)
weapon Expert - Sword (2)
Lightning Fists (3)
Skill points (3)

DRAWBACKS

Disrespected
Lecherous (2)
Bleeder (3)
Sickly (3)



COMBAT BONUSES

+ 10 Strike + 8 Throw + 6 Parry + 11 Dodge

+ 5 Roll + 6 Grapple + 20 Initiative + 2 Damage

Actions 3 Movement 11 Armor Rating (AR) n/a

Weapon: Twin Swords Dmg +4 (L) Size 2
 Spd + 1 Strike +6/+6 Throw + 8 Parry + 10
 Range 12 / 24 / 36 Payload n/a RS n/a

Combat Actions and Reactions

Light Strike (Spd 2, +3 Strike, +1 Dmg), Full Strike (Spd 4, +3 Dmg), Strong Strike (Spd 6, -3 Strike, +6 Dmg), Finishing Strike (Spd 10, -6 Strike, -1 Stam, +10 Dmg), Throw Weapon (page 156), Hurl Weapon (Spd Sizex3, Range AGY+IQ/x2/x3), Aim (Spd 3), Coop Attack (Spd +2, -4 penalty, +25% Dmg), Disarm (Spd 4, -5 Strike), Draw Weapon (Spd 1+Size), Feint (Spd 3), Initiate Grapple (Spd 4), Grapple Action (Spd 5), Grapple Reaction (Spd 3), Hold Action (Spd 1), Mold Chi (Spd 8, -2 Actions), Move-Normal (Spd 4/2/1), Move-Sprint/Rush (Spd 6), Push (Spd 3), Stand (Spd 4), Sweep (Spd 3, Stam 1), Touch (Spd 1, +2 Strike), Use Skill (Spd 6+), Entangle (Spd 3, -4 Parry), Parry (Spd 3, -4 vs. Throw), Dodge (Spd 3, -4 vs. Strike), Roll (Spd 2), Take Hit (Spd 0), Take Hit Strategically (Spd 1, -4 Roll)

XP Total

XP Spent



Name	Lvl	Chi	Spd	Check	Effect
Beautiful Dance	2	Yang	3	+8	+6 to Reactions/-1 Speed for 2 Rounds
Surface Running	1	Yang	6	+5	Move along any surface
Lightning Speed	2	Yang	10	+8	+4 Init, +10 Move +1 Action / Battle
Lightning Fists	3	Yang	9	+5	3 Attacks at +4 Strike +4 Damage

Name	Lvl	Chi	Spd	Check	Effect

CHAPTER FOUR: WUSHU

Ninja training in the molding of chi is near-useless without Wushu, mystical effects and attacks that utilize the devastating power of yin and yang. Wushu are very personal to a ninja, usually reflecting their clan, values and personality. There are several wushu that are widely known and spread throughout the Empire, while others are kept within a specific clan for safekeeping. Some ninja develop their own signature wushu that only they may use, even going on to forge their own clans with such secrets.

Wushu are purchased during character creation either from clan-specific choices or from the lists of general wushu. During character creation, each player selects 5 total wushu levels in any combination from their Favored Wushu (i.e. One level 3 wushu and two Level 1 wushu or Two level 2 wushu and one Level 1 wushu or even Five Level 1 wushu). Ronin only begin with 4 total Wushu levels, but can select from any list (even clan wushu with GM approval and suitable backstory). Each wushu is purchased separately, but some may require prerequisite wushu to be known of a lower level. However, a character can learn wushu equal to or lower than their total Permanent Chi. This mean most starting ninja can purchase up to Level 3 wushu without before spending BP to raise their Permanent Yin and Yang values.

Future wushu are purchased quite simply with BP. Favored Wushu cost 1 BP per level, while those out-

side their favored wushu are purchased for 2 BP per level. All wushu cost 2 BP per level for Ronin.

YIN WUSHU VERSUS YANG WUSHU

Each wushu utilizes a certain type of chi, either Yin or Yang. Yang wushu are those that cause plants to grow, provides light, heals the sick or otherwise creates something from nothing. Yin wushu are those that can summon darkness, shatter a barrier, slow an opponent's movements or otherwise create nothing from something. Neither is more powerful than the other, just utilized to different ends. When creating a Signature wushu (pg 152), consult with your GM on whether the effect would be considered Yin or Yang.

CLAN FLAVORED WUSHU

A ninja's Clan Gift permeates through their very being and is the focus of their training. So much so that even wushu outside of their Clan Wushu may still utilize said gifts. For instance, a ninja using the Earth wushu "Open the Earth" may simply move the earth to create a hole. However, a member of the Pack of the Black Moon may strengthen their dogs to dig the hole for them. Likewise, a member of the Hidden Strands of Fate may animate their threads to dig the hole. Be creative when imagining how different clans may implement the same wushu.

WUSHU ACTIVATION

Ninja can use a wushu at any time by spending a number of chi points equal to the wushu Level of the appropriate type (Yin or Yang) to put them into action. Rituals are often involved, including specific hand signs or drawn symbols, so each wushu requires a check for activation. All are associated with a Skill for this reason. Difficulty for wushu activation checks vary based on level (see below) and use the character's Chi Value + Skill level for that check. For instance, the Clothing Change technique is associated with Yang and the Crafts Skill. So, the ninja would add their Permanent Yang Chi value and their Crafts level to make their activation check versus Difficulty (25). **Note:** A character need not have levels in the skill just in order to use the wushu, but it does help in succeeding in the activation check.

Level 1	Simple (10)
Level 2	Difficulty (15)
Level 3	Moderate (20)
Level 4	Difficulty (25)
Level 5	Tough (30)

Use of any wushu requires 1 Action for the Round, even if it is a Reaction. Level 4 and 5 wushu also require the sacrifice of 1 Stamina point. Other modifiers can come into play, such as any Bloodletting and Elemental or Clan Affinity:

Bloodletting

Some situations call for a ninja to make a blood sacrifice to increase their chances of activating a wushu. The more blood they release into their chi as a catalyst for energy, the more likely a positive outcome. They receive a +1 bonus to their wushu activation check for every 1 (L) they cause to themselves. This damage cannot be absorbed or negated by any other effects and cannot be healed until the wushu duration ends. Blood lost due to Bleeding (pg 175) or damage taken is not a substitute, as it is not released in a ritualized manner.

Clan Affinity

Many ninja have certain signature wushu to their clan. Any wushu that corresponds directly with a

ninja's Clan Gift automatically receives a +2 bonus to Activation checks. Any others that attempt to duplicate its effects suffer a -2 penalty. Using a non-clan

Overcoming: Just as the element affects activation, so too does it matter when two wushu are in a face off. If the wushu have no elements attached to them or only one does, then there is no difference. However, if both have elements and they correspond directly to the destruction cycle of the five elements, one will triumph over the other more easily. By this token, the effects of the defending wushu (AR, Health, Defensive bonuses, etc.) are halved when defending against the element that destroys it.

DESTRUCTION CYCLE

Earth destroys Water
Water destroys Fire
Fire destroys Metal
Metal destroys Wood
Wood destroys Earth

***For example:** Kino summons a Wall of Wood with 30 Durability to surround her while she plans her next move. However, her pursuer, Yu, is a master of Metal wushu. When he uses Sharpen on his blade and attacks the wall for 15 Durability, it topples to the ground. As Metal destroys Wood, the wall's Health was halved under the weight of the destruction cycle.*

Taking Time

Ninja can take additional time to cast their wushu to increase their chances of activation success. In game terms, they can sacrifice Actions for the Round for a bonus to their Wushu Activation check. For each Action spent (after the first to use it in the first place), they receive a +2 bonus to their check, but also adds +2 Speed. This method cannot be used on "Ritual" wushu.

RESISTING WUSHU EFFECTS

Most wushu effect the ninja using it or their environment. Others give them a special kind of attack that they can launch at their target, requiring a Reaction just like any other combat maneuver. However, some wushu affect a target's mind, body or even their soul directly.

A person untrained in the manipulation of chi is an easy target and has no way to resist wushu effects. Ninja, however, can instinctually resist the effects of a wushu by sacrificing 1 Action and 1 Stamina point, and then making a contested Permanent Chi (of the opposite type) against the ninja's Activation check. If



WUSHU FORMAT

- **Name (Level, Type – Element):** Gives the name of the wushu, its Level and whether it is Yin or Yang or has an Elemental Affinity.
- **Speed:** How long it takes to use the wushu. If just a number is represented, it is assumed to be Counts.
- **Check:** Skill used for the activation check
- **Prerequisite:** Lists the name of any Wushu that need to be previously purchased to learn it
- **Normal:** Description of the wushu effects
- **Sacrifice (X):** Exaggerated effects that occur when the ninja sacrifices X Permanent Chi

SPEED CHI MODIFIERS

- **Attack (No modifier):** This type of wushu is used in place of another Action, happening and then ending.
- **Concentration (-1 or +1 Chi cost):** This type of wushu requires the ninja to stay focused for it to continue working. They spend less chi to activate, but they can make no Actions other than concentrating on the wushu. They can take Reactions, but must make a Moderate (20) Discipline (concentration) check each time or the wushu fails. They can conversely add +1 Chi to the cost to make the effect last for 1 Round before needing to concentrate.
- **Reaction (+1 Chi cost):** This type of wushu can also be used as a Reaction. In most cases, it replaces the normal Reaction the ninja would use. However, in other cases, it simply adds Speed cost to another Reaction. If used as a Reaction, the ninja must spend +1 point of the appropriate chi type. Using a wushu as a Reaction still uses one of the ninja's Actions per Round.
- **Ritual (+2 Chi cost):** This type of wushu usually takes a longer ritual to activate than others. In addition, the ninja must spend +2 chi of the appropriate type for its use. Because they are taking extra time with the activation, the ninja receives a +2 bonus to their wushu activation check of this type.
- **Scaleable (No modifier):** This type of wushu allows the ninja to pay for the Chi cost multiple times to accumulate its effect while still using the same Speed.



GENERAL WUSHU		CLAN SPECIFIC WUSHU	
Way of Beasts (pg 123)	Way of Survival (pg 131)	Way of Balanced Scales (pg 138)	Way of the Immaculate Show (pg 145)
Way of Earth (pg 125)	Way of the Unseen (pg 132)	Way of Caring Hands (pg 139)	Way of Inked Skin (pg 146)
Way of Fire (pg 126)	Way of the Warrior (pg 134)	Way of Ebony Clutches (pg 140)	Way of Kept Lore (pg 148)
Way of Metal (pg 128)	Way of Water (pg 135)	Way of Great Serpents (pg 142)	Way of Spun Threads (pg 142)
Way of Movement (pg 129)	Way of Wood (pg 136)	Way of Heaven's Judgment (pg 144)	Way of Twin Beasts (pg 151)

the target wins, they are unaffected.

Example: Lee uses Roar of the Shore to deafen his opponent. He rolls his 1d20 + Yin + Perception, getting a 24 total which means a successful wushu activation. Kino can't afford the penalties, so she uses 1 Action, Sacrifices 1 Stamina point and rolls 1d20 + Yang in an attempt to resist. If she roll 24 or higher, she is unaffected. A 23 or lower means she is deafened.

DURATIONS

Duration is a relative term when referring to ninja and their wushu. Many work for a finite length of time while others are less stringent. See below for explanations of the terms used:

Finite: Counts, Rounds (20 Counts), Minutes (6 Rounds), Hours, Days, Weeks, Months, Years, etc.

Non-finite: Scene (whenever the ninja move from one situation or location to another), Battle (lasts until the end of the present fight)

SACRIFICING CHI

The act of sacrificing chi can have an array of effects (pg 78), but the most common usage is to boost the power of wushu in a ninja's arsenal. This act can double effects or even add all new effects due to the ninja giving up a piece of their souls to attain power. For the purposes of wushu chi cost, the sacrificed chi is in addition to the chi points needed for activation and must be spent at the moment of activation.

If the player or GM can come up with other cool boosted effects that are not listed with the wushu, they are encouraged to add them on the fly. It's all about what fits the current situation and story after all.

GENERAL WUSHU

WAY OF BEASTS

Eagle Eye (Level 1, Yang)

Speed: 6

Check: Beast Handling

Prerequisite: None

Normal: The ninja infuses his eye with Yang to increase the distance they can see, granting a +5 bonus to close-by Perception (Vision) checks and allowing them to perfectly inspect details up to 300 feet away.

Sacrifice (1): See perfectly up to ½ mile away.

Sonic Hearing (Level 1, Yin)

Speed: 6

Check: Beast Handling

Prerequisite: None

Normal: The ninja uses Yin chi to widen their range of hearing. They can hear sounds on almost any frequency, automatically succeeding at any Perception (Hearing) attempts within 300 feet away.

Sacrifice (1): Hear whispers up to ½ mile away.

Bloodhound (Level 1, Yang)

Speed: 6

Check: Beast Handling

Prerequisite: None

Normal: The ninja boosts their ability to recognize and detect scents. They receive +6 to Perception (Smells) checks and can catch a scent up to ½ mile away.

Sacrifice (1): Distance increased to 1 mile.

Night Eyes (Level 1, Yin)

Speed: 6 (Reaction)
Check: Beast Handling
Prerequisite: None

Normal: The ninja with this wushu can see in low light or nighttime conditions as if it were day. They also only suffer half the penalties in complete darkness.

Sacrifice (1): They can see without penalty in any type of darkness, even magical.

Calming Touch (Level 2, Yin)

Speed: 5
Check: Beast Handling
Prerequisite: None

Normal: The ninja can instantly calm an animal with a simple touch. No matter how rabid or hostile they are beforehand, the beast is reduced to a docile state. However, further provocation or attack the beast will negate the effects of this wushu.

Sacrifice (1): Affects all animals within a 20 ft.

Sacrifice (2): Beast stays calmed, even if attacked.

Favor (Level 2, Yin)

Speed: 10
Check: Beast Handling
Prerequisite: None

Normal: The ninja links their spirit with that of an animal, allowing the two to share communication. In addition, the ninja can then ask the animal to perform a simple request (scout ahead and report back what you see, deliver this message, etc.). The animal must be able to fulfill what is asked of them, but isn't forced to do it. If the ninja needs no tasks performed, they still receive a +5 Beast Handling bonus to all further interaction with the animal. Effects last for the Scene.

Sacrifice (3): Effect is permanent for the animal in question, lowering the wushu activation costs to Simple (10) for all future uses.

Animal Stance (Level 3, Yang)

Speed: 5
Check: Beast Handling
Prerequisite: None

Normal: By embracing their animal spirit and movements from a known fighting style, the ninja instantly gains a bonus to that style's "Strong" com-

bat value for the next Battle. For instance, taking on the essence of Bear would provide a +6 bonus to Roll checks.

- **Combat Check:** +6 bonus
- **Health:** +12 Temporary Health
- **Stamina:** Replenish 4 Stamina points
- **Damage:** +3 damage
- **Actions:** +3 Actions per Round

Sacrifice (1): Double bonus.

Sacrifice (1): Gain bonus from an unknown style.

Control Beast (Level 3, Yin)

Speed: 8
Check: Beast Handling
Prerequisite: Favor

Normal: The ninja employs Yin chi to gain control of an animal's mind. For the Scene or Battle, the ninja can direct every movement the animal makes, from attacking an opponent to guarding an entrance, etc. If this wushu is used on a specially trained animal (i.e. ninja dogs from the Pack of the Black Moon), the animal's owner receives a contested Moderate (20) INS + Yang check to retain control.

Sacrifice (1): Control lasts for 1 day.

Sacrifice (1): Raise contested check to Tough (30).

Animal Warrior (Level 4, Yang)

Speed: 12
Check: Beast Handling
Prerequisite: Calming Touch

Normal: The ninja enhances an animal's power, turning a meek animal becomes a ferocious beast with use of this wushu. The animal receives +10 Temporary Health, AR 2/2 from thickened skin/scales, +2 (L) and a +4 bonus to all combat checks (including Initiative). The animal, however, is filled with rage and attacks anyone except the ninja who used this wushu. It is often wise to use the Control Beast wushu first.

Sacrifice (1): Beast only attacks who the ninja's commands.

Beast Form (Level 5, Yang)

Speed: 1 Round
Check: Beast Handling
Prerequisite: Animal Stance

Normal: The ninja takes on the form of an animal of a chosen species (dogs, cats, etc.). They take on all the physical characteristics and benefit from any

natural abilities in that form (pg 182). Form last for the Scene.

Sacrifice (1): Duration extended to 1 day.

WAY OF EARTH

Muddied Steps (Level 1, Yang - Earth)

Speed: 5 (Reaction)

Check: Legerdemain

Prerequisite: None

Normal: The ninja instantly changes a patch of earth up to 20 ft. away and 20 ft. in diameter into slippery, muddy terrain. This forces a Moderate (20) Balance check to anyone standing in the effected area immediately and then every time they perform a Strong Strike, Finishing Strike, Hurl Weapon, Dodge or Move Action.

Sacrifice (1): Double the effected area and Difficulty (25).

Sacrifice (1): Extra slippery, Balance checks are needed for every Action taken.

Stone Like Clay (Level 1, Yin - Earth)

Speed: 1 Round

Check: Crafts

Prerequisite: None

Normal: The ninja with this wushu treats even the hardest stone as if it was clay for them to mold. The stone is not actually softened. Its still hardened rock for anyone else, but is pliable to the ninja. This also provides a +3 bonus to Arts checks to create sculptures. Effects last for a Scene.

Sacrifice (1): The stone's weight is halved when calculating how much the ninja can carry/lift.

Open the Earth (Level 2, Yin - Earth)

Speed: 1 min per 10 ft

Check: Crafts

Prerequisite: None

Normal: The ninja commands the earth to move itself in order to dig holes or cre-

ate openings in stone walls. These openings can be up to 10 ft. in diameter and can go up to 40 ft. deep. The digging is too slow to be used as an attack and often too loud to be done in secret.

Sacrifice (1): Opening dimensions are doubled.

Spitting Earth (Level 2, Yang - Earth)

Speed: 8 (Attack)

Check: Athletics

Prerequisite: Muddied Steps

Normal: The ninja softens the earth around themselves and fires torrents of mud at their opponent. The attack receives a +4 Throw bonus and inflicts +5 (NL) with AP 2.

Sacrifice (X): +6 Throw Bonus and can target X additional opponents at one time.



Pillars of Stone (Level 3, Yang - Earth)

Speed: 6 (Attack, Reaction, Scaleable)

Check: Crafts

Prerequisite: Open the Earth

Normal: The ninja commands tall pillars of stone to raise from the ground. Many use this technique as a way to simply elevate themselves or catch themselves from a fall, while others even use them to block entrance ways or to encircle an opponent. Can create up to four 5 ft. (or two 10 ft. or one 20 ft.) pillars.

In combat, this technique can be used as an attack or defense. As an attack, the ninja can attempt to use a pillar to catapult an opponent with a +2 Strike. If successful, their opponent is thrown up to Yang x 10 ft. away. As a defense, the ninja can elevate quickly to avoid being struck, giving themselves a +4 Dodge bonus.

Sacrifice (1): Height is a combined 40 ft.

Sacrifice (1): Double combat bonus and distance opponent is thrown.

Stone Skin (Level 3, Yin - Earth)

Speed: 10 (Reaction)

Check: Crafts

Prerequisite: None

Normal: The ninja is surrounded by a swirling cyclone of sand and rocks, assembling as rock armor that encases their body. Their eyes, mouth and other openings continue to be usable, but their body is now much tougher. They receive AR +3/+3 and 10 Temporary Health for the Battle.

Sacrifice (1): AR +5/+5 and 15 Temporary Health.

Quicksand (Level 4, Yin - Earth)

Speed: 10 (Attack)

Check: Legerdemain

Prerequisite: Muddled Steps

Normal: The ninja targets a 15 ft. diameter area of earth with a +4 Strike bonus and it becomes a sinking quicksand. If created underneath a target, they immediately receive chance to Dodge to avoid the effects. Otherwise, they and anyone that falls in afterward are dragged down at a rate of 1 ft. per Round and they cannot use any Move Actions. If the target can find no way to get out (i.e. rope, someone to assist, etc.), they eventually sink to the bottom and die of suffocation.

Sacrifice (1): Raised to +6 Strike and 30 ft. diameter.

Earth Form (Level 5, Yang - Earth)

Speed: 12

Check: Fortitude

Prerequisite: Stone Skin

Normal: The ninja becomes a being made entirely of stone and fights with the towering might of a mountain. They receive +20 Temporary Health, AR +4/+4, +3 Damage and the ability to Parry weapons without penalty for the duration of the Battle. However, all their Actions and Reactions are performed at +2 Speed due to their increased weight and slow movement.

Sacrifice (2): Bonuses doubled, no Speed penalty.

WAY OF FIRE

Bright Star (Level 1, Yang - Fire)

Speed: 5 (Reaction)

Check: Persuasion

Prerequisite: None

Normal: This wushu surrounds the ninja's body with bright light, not only illuminating the area up to 50 ft, but also making them harder to hit. Opponents suffer a -3 Throw penalty and -2 Strike penalty when targeting the ninja. This effect lasts for 1 minute.

Sacrifice (1): They burn even brighter, doubling the penalties to attackers and the range of the light.

Cauterize (Level 1, Yang - Fire)

Speed: 4

Check: Fortitude

Prerequisite: None

Normal: This ninja heats their body to the point that all wounds close in an instant, immediately stopping any effects of Bleeding (pg 175). Lasts for the Battle.

Sacrifice (1): Effects last for 1 day.

Sacrifice (1): Affects 1 other.

Spark (Level 1, Yang - Fire)

Speed: 3

Check: Discipline

Prerequisite: None

Normal: The most basic of fire control, this wushu can create sparks of fire anywhere within their line of sight. This can be used for a variety of purposes, like starting campfires or lighting candles. If used to distract others, their opponent must make an INS + Discipline check against the ninja's activation check. If they fail, they suffer a -3 penalty to their next Reaction.

Sacrifice (1): Raised to -5 penalty to target.

Extinguish (Level 2, Yin - Fire)

Speed: 4 (Reaction)

Check: Fortitude

Prerequisite: None

Normal: The ninja channels Yin chi into their hands and projects it out to extinguish any flame within a 50 ft. radius. If used against a particular incoming fire wushu attack, the ninja receives their Permanent Yin value as AR.

Sacrifice (X): Completely negates a Level X fire wushu attack.

Flame Arrows (Level 2, Yang - Fire)

Speed: 4 (Attack)

Check: Athletics

Prerequisite: Spark

Normal: The ninja learns to channel their yang chi to launch flaming arrows from their palms, inflicting +2 (L) from fire with a +4 Throw bonus.

Sacrifice (X): Throws +X arrows at the target (even at multiple targets) without penalty.

Fireproof (Level 2, Yin - Fire)

Speed: 5 (Reaction)

Check: Fortitude

Prerequisite: Extinguish

Normal: The ninja becomes resistant to damage from fire (be it natural or chi-created), taking only half (rounded down). Effects last for the Battle or Scene. This also protects the ninja's clothing and items.

Sacrifice (1): Immune to all fire damage.

Fire Breather (Level 3, Yang - Fire)

Speed: 8 (Concentration)

Check: Discipline

Prerequisite: Spark

Normal: The ninja inhales deeply and exhales a gi-

ant, fiery torrent with a +3 Throw bonus that engulfs everything it touches. The flame extends into a 20 ft. diameter area in front of the ninja, inflicting +6 (L) from fire to everyone within the range. This attack must be Dodged.

The ninja can also keep the torrent active by concentrating to make an often insurmountable obstacle for opponents. Easily flammable items and clothing catch fire almost instantly.

Sacrifice (1): Raised to +6 Throw and +10 (L).

Fire Mantle (Level 3, Yang - Fire)

Speed: 8 (Reaction)

Check: Fortitude

Prerequisite: Spark

Normal: The ninja's suddenly surrounded by swirling flame to enhance their stance in battle. They are graced with +1 Action per Round, a +2 bonus to Intimidation, +1 (L) from unarmed attacks and +8 Temporary Health. Effect last for 2 Rounds.

Sacrifice (1): Bonuses doubled, lasts the Battle.

Rise from the Ashes (Level 4, Yang - Fire)

Speed: 10 min (Ritual)

Check: Crafts

Prerequisite: None

Normal: The ninja with this wushu has a strong connection to fire, both the beauty it can create and the destruction it can cause. If they find the ashes of objects that have been destroyed by fire, the ninja can enact this wushu to restore them to their former glory. Weapons, ancient artifacts and even entire buildings can be affected, but it cannot restore once-living things (animals, etc.) back to life.

Sacrifice (1): Cuts Speed to 1 minute.

Fire Form (Level 5, Yang - Fire)

Speed: 12

Check: Fortitude

Prerequisite: Fire Mantle

Normal: The ninja becomes a being completely composed of fire with their eyes resembling suns. Their Movement is doubled, they gain +2 Actions per Round, +2 (L) and all their Actions/Reactions are made at -1 Speed (to a minimum of Speed 1).

Every time they hit their opponent, they roll 1d20 and their opponent catches fire on a Natural 18-20. However, the ninja must be careful where they use

this wushu, as indoor use could burn down the building they occupy and using it in forests could wreck the countryside with wildfires.

Sacrifice (1): Bonuses doubled and they can control their flame to make it safe to use anywhere.

WAY OF METAL

Mold (Level 1, Yin - Metal)

Speed: 1 Round

Check: Crafts

Prerequisite: None

Normal: The ninja with this wushu treats metal as if it were easily malleable clay. The metal itself isn't actually softened, but their hands carve through and sculpt with simplicity. This also provides a +3 bonus to Arts checks for sculptures. Effects last for a Scene.

Sacrifice (1): The metal's weight is halved when calculating how much the ninja can carry/lift.

Sharpen Blade (Level 1, Yang - Metal)

Speed: 5

Check: Crafts

Prerequisite: None

Normal: The ninja uses this wushu to instantly sharpen even the sharpest blade to deliver the deadliest blow to their opponents. While using the sharpened blade, the ninja receives a +3 bonus to Strike and +1 (L) for 3 Rounds. Anyone else that attempts to use the blade does not gain these bonuses.

Sacrifice (2): Bonuses Doubled for the Battle.

Melting Touch (Level 2, Yin - Metal)

Speed: 12

Check: Legerdemain

Prerequisite: Mold

Normal: The ninja with this wushu instantly smolders up to 10 sq. ft. of metal in front of them with a touch. Out of combat, this can be used to destroy artifacts, doors or statues easily. In combat, this allows the ninja to Parry or Strike with a -4 penalty to melt their opponent's metal weapon if successful.

Against armor, the ninja can make a Strike with a -4 penalty to reduce the AR of their opponent's metal armor permanently by -1/-1 per strike. When it reaches 0/0, the armor is destroyed. This ability does

not work on Masterwork or enchanted items. Lasts for one Touch.

Sacrifice (1): Happens instantly at Speed 5.

Sacrifice (2): Last for the Battle.

The Metal Within (Level 2, Yin - Metal)

Speed: 10

Check: Fortitude

Prerequisite: None

Normal: The ninja learns how to integrate metal objects into their body. They can keep knives in their forearms, spikes in their knuckles or even a lost treasure within their abdomen. The wushu must be used once to place the item within and again to remove, but can fit any item that is the relative size of their body.

Sacrifice (1): Item can be removed at any time without the need to use the wushu again.

Cage (Level 3, Yang - Metal)

Speed: 10

Check: Crafts

Prerequisite: None

Normal: The ninja summons a metal cage that springs from the ground to encircle the ground target. The target gets a chance to Dodge the attack (at a -2 penalty) and a failure means they are caught inside. The cage itself is Durability 20 (AR 3/3).

Sacrifice (1): Double to Durability 40 (AR 6/6).

Sacrifice (1): Cage rises up to capture an air target up to 40 ft. high.

Tough as Nails (Level 3, Yang - Metal)

Speed: 9 (Reaction)

Check: Fortitude

Prerequisite: Metal Within

Normal: The ninja hardens their skin to emulate metal, giving their eyes and hair a metallic sheen. They receive AR +2/+2, 8 Temporary Health and the ability to Parry weapons without penalty for the Battle.

Sacrifice (1): Raised to AR +4/+4 and 15 Temporary Health.

Hover Disk (Level 4, Yang - Metal)

Speed: 10

Check: Crafts

Prerequisite: Mold

Normal: The ninja creates a metallic disk from nearby material that they can hover above the ground up to 30 ft. high. Some use this to hover above the ground in order not to leave tracks, reach tall areas or just to cart equipment from place to place. It can be made up to 10 ft. in diameter, can travel up to double the ninja's Movement and supports up to 500 lbs. Effect lasts for the Scene.

Sacrifice (1): Can hover up to 60 ft. high and move at triple the ninja's Movement.

Magnetic Propulsion (Level 4, Varies - Metal)

Speed: 8 (Reaction)

Check: Fortitude

Prerequisite: None

Normal: The ninja learns how to use chi to alter their magnetic pull to metal items, moving them with a thought. The ninja picks either Positive or Negative propulsion when they learn the wushu (learning each one as separate wushu). Lasts for the Battle or Scene, but each further usage requires a Speed 5 Action.

- **Positive (Yang):** This type affects metallic attraction, allowing the ninja to draw items to them (i.e. pick up a weapon or Disarm at a distance) or to create such a strong magnetism between items they become nigh impossible to separate. Living targets, like those in suits of metallic armor, receive a Strength check to resist against the ninja's activation check, but are otherwise under the ninja's power.

- **Negative (Yin):** This type affects repulsion of objects, including pushing metal weapons faster (+1 damage) or throwing armored opponents backward. Also, attackers wielding metal weapons suffer a -5 penalty to hit the ninja as their body naturally deflects it.

Sacrifice (2 - Yang): -10 penalty to resist effects.

Sacrifice (2 - Yin): +2 damage, double thrown distance and -8 penalty to attack the ninja.

Metal Form (Level 5, Yin - Metal)

Speed: 13

Check: Fortitude

Prerequisite: Tough as Nails

Normal: The ninja becomes a being of pure metal, some appearing as shiny warriors of gold and others as sleek iron combatants. They receive +15 Temporary Health, AR 5/5, +2 (L) for unarmed attacks and gains the ability to Parry melee weapons without

penalty. All Actions/Reaction are performed at +2 Speed cost due to their immense weight and size. Lasts for the Battle.

Sacrifice (1): Bonuses doubled and no penalties.

WAY OF MOVEMENT

Surface Running (Level 1, Yang)

Speed: 6

Check: Athletics

Prerequisite: None

Normal: The ninja learns to regulate the chi at the bottoms of their feet to allow them to move on the side of buildings or even upside down. They must continue moving at a minimum of half their Movement for the effect to continue. Otherwise, it lasts for the Scene.

Sacrifice (1): Can be used even if at a stand still.

Tiger's Leap (Level 1, Yang)

Speed: 6

Check: Athletics

Prerequisite: None

Normal: The ninja jumps while using their chi to give themselves a boost in height, doubling the distance they would normally cover.

Sacrifice (1): Quadruples jumping distance.

Unmoving Stance (Level 1, Yin - Earth)

Speed: 5 (Reaction)

Check: Acrobatics

Prerequisite: None

Normal: The ninja links their chi with the ground to connect themselves to the ground and avoid falling. They automatically succeed in any resistance checks against being tripped, swept or thrown. Effect lasts for one attempt to throw them off their feet.

Sacrifice (1): Effect lasts for the Battle.

Lightfoot (Level 2, Yin)

Speed: 12

Check: Athletics

Prerequisite: None

Normal: The ninja makes themselves as light as a feather, able to stand weightless on items that would normally be impossible (like the edge of a sword or

jumping through thin tree branches) and adding 5 ft. to all of their jumps (vertically and horizontally). This also grants them a +3 bonus to all Stealth checks. Effects last for the Scene.

Sacrifice (1): +10 ft. to jumps and +5 to Stealth.

Lightning Speed (Level 2, Yang - Fire)

Speed: 10 (Reaction)

Check: Acrobatics

Prerequisite: None

Normal: The ninja increases the speed of their action, seemingly vanishing at times. They receive a +4 bonus to Initiative checks, +10 Movement and one

Free Move Action each Round so quick that they do not invoke a Retreating Attack. Effects last for the Battle.

Sacrifice (X): +X more Free Move Actions per Round.

Float (Level 3, Yang - Water)

Speed: 6 (Reaction)

Check: Legerdemain

Prerequisite: Lightfoot

Normal: The ninja learns specific hand signs to stop their movement in the air. Most prominently used to stop falling from heights, others use it during meditation or even to hover over targets in wait. They can float up to INS + 10 ft. off the surface.

Sacrifice (1): Double height of hover.

Sacrifice (X+1): Use to make X others hover.

Lighting Fist (Level 3, Yang)

Speed: 9 (Attack)

Check: Athletics

Prerequisite: Lightning Speed

Normal: The ninja launches a series of fast strikes at their opponent, moving in a blur of speed. They use only a single action to take three special attacks, each with a +4 bonus to Strike and +4 Damage. Each attack is responded to separately by the target. Cannot be used with weapons larger than Size 2.

Sacrifice (X): +X additional attacks.

Intangibility (Level 4, Yin)

Speed: 1 Round

Check: Fortitude

Prerequisite: None

Normal: The ninja with this wushu can move through inanimate objects as if they weren't there. The ninja holds their breath



while in this state and it ends when they breathe again (pg 80). They can pass through any substance and are immune to all physical damage, but can be normally affected by mental or illusionary wushu.

Sacrifice (2): Lasts for the Scene without the need to hold their breath.

Teleportation (Level 5, Yang)

Speed: 10 (Reaction)

Check: Discipline

Prerequisite: Lightning Speed

Normal: This very powerful wushu transports the ninja from one location to another in an instant. However, this effect is limited. When learned, the ninja chooses a special character that is necessary for the teleportation. Activating this wushu teleports them between places with this special mark within a one mile radius at will for the Scene. Teleport Actions are (Speed 4) and use up 1 Action even if used as a Reaction. If used right before an attack, the target must resist a Surprise Attack (pg 163).

Sacrifice (1): Teleport Action reduced to Speed 2.

Sacrifice (1): -5 penalty to resist Surprise Attack.

WAY OF SURVIVAL

Weather Tracking (Level 1, Yin - Water)

Speed: 6

Check: Survival

Prerequisite: None

Normal: The ninja that uses this wushu instantly gains knowledge of what changes will occur in the weather within the next day. This includes any naturally occurring disasters, like tornados or earthquakes. Those caused by wushu cannot be predicted.

Sacrifice (1): Foresee the weather one week forward.

Escape Technique (Level 1, Yin)

Speed: 10

Check: Legerdemain

Prerequisite: None

Normal: If the ninja is ever bound by rope and gag, chains and weights or in a cage, this wushu automatically releases them. The rope snaps, the chains budge and the cage becomes unlocked. The fuel for

this wushu is the ninja's feeling of being trapped, so it cannot be used outside of this type of scenario.

Sacrifice (1): Can be used in any circumstances, like breaking and entering or releasing another.

Foraging Technique (Level 1, Yang)

Speed: 1 min

Check: Survival

Prerequisite: None

Normal: This wushu makes it almost impossible for a ninja to go hungry out in the wilderness. Bugs will be more prominent and non-poisonous berries will present themselves more often for the next hour. The ninja receives a +5 bonus to any Survival (Foraging) checks, usually ensuring that they will find food.

Sacrifice (1): Skill bonus raised to +10.

Danger Sense (Level 2, Yang)

Speed: 4 (Reaction)

Check: Empathy

Prerequisite: None

Normal: The ninja with this wushu is able to sense impending danger for the Scene. When used, they receive emotional reactions that they can use to discern the level of impending doom may be upon them, but this is completely dependent upon the user. Someone with a phobia of Snakes will sense a huge danger, while it is really only very bad for them. If attacked while in use, the ninja receives +4 to Initiative checks.

Sacrifice (1): Wushu stays active for one full day.

Trackless Movement (Level 2, Yin - Earth)

Speed: 6 (Reaction)

Check: Stealth

Prerequisite: None

Normal: The ninja removes any sign of their passage through an area, such as footprints and slight noises they might make. For example, brushing a painting on the wall will not move it, make a sound or even disturb the dust upon it. They also receive a +3 bonus against tripping traps.

Sacrifice (1): Effects extend to up to five others.

Camouflage (Level 3, Yin - Wood)

Speed: 1 min

Check: Survival

Prerequisite: None

Normal: The ninja uses the wushu to overgrow the vegetation in the area and hide themselves or their camp site. Anyone searching the area receives a -6 penalty to their Perception check for the next hour.

Sacrifice (1): Instant usage (Speed 3).

Sacrifice (1): Penalty raised to -12 Perception.

Second Wind (Level 3, Yang)

Speed: 1 Round (Reaction)

Check: Discipline

Prerequisite: None

Normal: The ninja has learned to survive even the toughest battles and this wushu is a major contributor. The ninja is given a momentary boost of 10 Temporary Health, regains 2 Stamina points and is granted a +10 vs. Death. Effects last for the Battle.

Sacrifice (1): Happens at Speed 5, stops bleeding and heals the ninja to 5 total Health if they are below Health 0.

Summon Shelter (Level 4, Yang - Wood)

Speed: 1 min (Ritual)

Check: Survival

Prerequisite: None

Normal: The ninja uses their chi to summon a structure as shelter, forcing a wooden cabin to spring forth from the ground. It is not large, but can protect them from the elements or provide a strategic place to plan attacks or hold up to defend themselves. The structure stands for up to three days before sinking back into the ground. The structure itself has Durability 50 (AR 4/1).

Sacrifice (1): The floor plan becomes malleable for the ninja, allowing them to change walls, doorways and other aspects at a whim.

Realm of Warning (Level 4, Yin)

Speed: 1 min (Ritual)

Check: Empathy

Prerequisite: Danger Sense

Normal: The ninja creates an invisible field that extends 100 ft. in every direction and allows them to sense of anyone (or thing) that enters or exits the area, from soldiers to ninja to animals. They receive

a visual image of what is entering or exiting the area to discern exactly what the intruder is, their location and the direction they are headed. Lasts for the Scene.

Sacrifice (2): If the ninja has been granted ownership or lordship over an area, they can use this on the entire area regardless of its size. However, the larger it is, the harder it is to pinpoint potential dangers.

Resist the Elements (Level 5, Yin)

Speed: 1 Round (Reaction)

Check: Survival

Prerequisite: None

Normal: Like the mighty bamboo, the ninja with this wushu can withstand any force of nature and come out unharmed. They become immune to wild-fire, are unmoved by tornadoes and are otherwise unaffected by devastating natural events. This also eliminates any environmental penalties (pg 174). When facing an opponent with one of the Elemental Form wushu, the ninja can bypass any AR and ignores any combat bonuses their target received.

Sacrifice (X+1): Can extend protection to X others.

WAY OF THE UNSEEN

The Unheard (Level 1, Yin)

Speed: 5 (Reaction)

Check: Stealth

Prerequisite: None

Normal: The ninja cancels all sound in their surrounding 10 ft, including voices, footsteps, or even things dropping. Lasts for the Scene.

Sacrifice (1): Can use it directly on someone else. Some even use this just shut others up.

The Unnoticed (Level 1, Yin)

Speed: 4 (Reaction)

Check: Stealth

Prerequisite: None

Normal: The ninja with this wushu becomes lost to sight in the background as long as they stand completely still. They will be overlooked by even the most astute detective. If they move, the wushu ends.

Sacrifice (1): They can stay invisible and move at ¼ Movement.

The Unscented (Level 1, Yin)

Speed: 6 (Reaction)

Check: Stealth

Prerequisite: None

Normal: The ninja loses all traces of their scent, reducing the chances of being tracked by dogs or wushu that enhance sense of smell. This gives their tracker a -5 penalty to find them by scent. Last for 1 day.

Sacrifice (2): The ninja's scent is removed from everything in a half-mile radius, giving their tracker a -10 penalty.

Chameleon (Level 2, Yang)

Speed: 6

Check: Stealth

Prerequisite: The Unnoticed

Normal: The ninja blends in with their environment, making them mostly invisible to sight. They receive a +6 Stealth bonus and can move at their base Movement normally. If they attempt to Sprint or attack an opponent, the wushu ends.

Sacrifice (1): +10 Stealth bonus (instead of +6) and they can Sprint without ending the wushu. Still cannot attack others.

Unarmed Position (Level 2, Yin)

Speed: 5 (Reaction)

Check: Legerdemain

Prerequisite: The Unnoticed

Normal: The ninja extends their powers of the unseen to objects they carry. This wushu can completely conceal a Size 1 item, without the need for any roll. It also removes any scent on the item.

Sacrifice (1): Affects any number of Size 1 items.

Sacrifice (1): Affects Size 2 items.

Easily Forgotten Method (Level 3, Yin)

Speed: 6 (Reaction)

Check: Stealth

Prerequisite: The Unnoticed

Normal: The ninja with this wushu becomes a fading memory for someone they have encountered. After having a conversation (that did not lead to combat), the targets simply forget who they were talking to or what they talked about briefly after the ninja has left their presence. Has no effect on characters with INS 8+.

Sacrifice (2): Even affects someone the ninja has fought or argued with.

Reflection Defense (Level 3, Yang)

Speed: 6 (Reaction)

Check: Stealth

Prerequisite: None

Normal: The ninja creates an instant reflection of himself so close in proximity that it appears they are blurred. When being attacked, the attacker suffers a -10 Strike or Throw penalty, as they are not sure if they are attacking the real ninja or his subtle reflection.

Sacrifice (1): Multiple reflections make it harder to find the real ninja. Opponent suffers a -15 penalty and no added benefit if they roll Critical Success.

10,000 Masks (Level 4, Yin)

Speed: 10 (Reaction)

Check: Deception

Prerequisite: Easily Forgotten Method

Normal: The ninja with this wushu can change the look of their face so they no longer resemble themselves. They can make themselves look like an average person or, if used in response to meeting someone, they can change their face to resemble the person their target would most likely see. For instance, if walking through the Empire's palace, they may be mistaken for a guard or a scribe.

Sacrifice (1): They can resemble a particular person.

Elements Embrace (Level 4, Yin - Varies)

Speed: 10 (Reaction)

Check: Survival

Prerequisite: None

Normal: This technique allows the ninja to use the elements as a hiding place. They can meld into a tree of proportionate size, sink into the earth or even become invisible and partially intangible while submerged water. The ninja picks one of these elements upon learning the technique. They can move within the element at half their Movement, but cannot move through other elements or attack from their hiding place. Effects last a scene

Sacrifice (1): They can leap from their hiding place with a +6 bonus to their Surprise Attack.

Sacrifice (1): Extends their hiding up to 1 day.

Invisibility (Level 5, Yin)

Speed: 1 min

Check: Stealth

Prerequisite: Chameleon

Normal: The ninja with this ultimate wushu becomes completely undetectable by sight, sound or smell for the Scene. Their invisibility is still passive, so they cannot engage others in combat without breaking their wushu. However, they can gently nudge others without suspicion and their normal sounds (breathing, footsteps) are imperceptible.

Sacrifice (X): They can attack X number of times without breaking their invisibility.

Sacrifice (X+1): Extends invisibility to X others.

WAY OF THE WARRIOR

Precise Eye (Level 1, Yin)

Speed: +2 (Attack)

Check: Perception

Prerequisite: None

Normal: The ninja focuses their chi into their ranged attacks, granting them a +6 Throw bonus to their attack, +1 Damage and a Natural 18-20 is considered a Critical Success in exchange for adding +2 to the Speed. Even the smallest target can be struck by the arrow of a ninja with this wushu.

Sacrifice (1): A roll of a Natural 15-20 is considered a Critical Success.

Sturdy Fist (Level 1, Yang)

Speed: +2 (Attack)

Check: Athletics

Prerequisite: None

Normal: The ninja focuses their chi into their close combat attacks, granting them a +6 Strike bonus to their attack, +1 Damage and a Natural 18-20 is considered a Critical Success in exchange for adding +2 to the Speed. This wushu is key to many ninja's ability to strike even the most elusive opponent.

Sacrifice (1): A roll of a Natural 15-20 is considered a Critical Success.

Fighter's Focus (Level 2, Yin)

Speed: 5

Check: Discipline

Prerequisite: None

Normal: The ninja with this wushu focuses their chi on a single opponent, keeping them in tune with their movements and fighting tactics. This grants the ninja a +3 bonus to combat checks and +1 damage against the chosen target. Effects last for the Battle.

Sacrifice (1): Raised to +5 bonuses and +2 Damage.

Summon Weapon (Level 2, Yang)

Speed: 3

Check: Perception

Prerequisite: None

Normal: The ninja places a special character on their weapon that allows them to summon it instantly to their hand from anywhere within their line of sight.

Sacrifice (1): Range up to a mile.

Cannon Punch (Level 3, Yang)

Speed: 6 (Attack)

Check: Athletics

Prerequisite: None

Normal: This wushu is difficult to master, but increases combat ability in spades. It consists of the ninja learning to release a large burst of chi at the point of impact when attacking an opponent. This wushu not only adds a +3 damage bonus to the attack (+6 to non-living targets), but also pushes the target back 5 ft. per POW + Yang unless they succeed at a POW + Athletics check with difficulty equal to the ninja's attack check.

Sacrifice (1): +5 damage (+10 to non-living) and pushes for 10 ft. per POW + Yang.

Weapon Morph (Level 3, Yang – Wood or Metal)

Speed: 5

Check: Crafts

Prerequisite: Summon Weapon

Normal: A master warrior is able to make a weapon out of anything. This wushu can take any wooden or metal item (element chosen when learning the wushu) and turn it into a weapon of equal Size. This can morph weapons into ones more suitable, eliminating penalties for improvised weaponry.

Sacrifice (1): Shift a weapon to any size.

Strength Boost (Level 4, Yang)

Speed: 5

Check: Fortitude

Prerequisite: Cannon Punch

Normal: With this wushu, the ninja's chi courses through their body and increases their strength to unfathomable degrees. Their Carry/Lift amounts are doubled, they receive a +10 to all Strength checks, and they receive a +2 damage bonus. Last for the Battle or Scene.

Sacrifice (X): Each sacrifice raises the strength multiplier (x3, x4, x5, etc.) and adds another +2 damage.

Fighter's Trance (Level 5, Yin)

Speed: 10

Check: Discipline

Prerequisite: Fighter's Focus

Normal: The ninja subjects themselves to the flow of chi in the environment, completely removing thought from their actions. In this method, they move where the universe guides them, thus granting them a +6 bonus to all combat checks (including Initiative) and they become immune to any environmental penalties (pg 174).

Sacrifice (1): +10 bonus to all combat checks and also cannot be blinded.

WAY OF WATER

Liquid Breath (Level 1, Yang - Water)

Speed: 8

Check: Fortitude

Prerequisite: None

Normal: The ninja alters their body to be able to breathe water without penalty, allowing them to stay submerged for up to 10 minutes without the need to make a check or spend Stamina points.

Sacrifice (1): Duration is extended to the Scene.

Wind at the Back (Level 1, Yang - Water)

Speed: 1 min

Check: Travel

Prerequisite: None

Normal: Keeping the wind at your back is important for luck and travel over waterways. When travel-

ing by boat, use of this wushu reduces travel time by 25%.

Sacrifice (1): Winds reduces travel time by 50%.

Water Walking (Level 1, Yin - Water)

Speed: 6

Check: Athletics

Prerequisite: None

Normal: The ninja has learned to channel their chi beneath their feet to be in flow with water enough to stand on top without falling in. They can walk, run or sprint on top of the water without any ill effect. If the water gets choppy or currents increase, the GM may apply a -3 penalty to physical Actions that require Balance. Effect lasts for the Scene or Battle

Sacrifice (1): No penalty for unsteady waters.

Roar of the Shore (Level 2, Yin - Water)

Speed: 10

Check: Perception

Prerequisite: None

Normal: The ninja creates an illusory effect that fills the target's mind with the sound of the ocean crashing down, making it hard to hear or concentrate. The target is effectively deafened, and they suffer a -4 penalty to Discipline and Perception checks.

Sacrifice (1): Target also makes a Difficulty (25) Death check or suffers 4 (L) that cannot be negated and loses all their Actions for the Round.

The Jagged Edge (Level 2, Yang - Water)

Speed: 5

Check: Crafts

Prerequisite: None

Normal: The ninja instantly freezes nearby water into a spear or kunai of ice. The weapon is nearly identical to their mundane versions, but the ninja suffers a -2 penalty to Parry with it and it shatters after dealing or taking 15 damage.

Sacrifice (1): Shatterproof and +2 damage.

Pull of the Deep (Level 3, Yin - Water)

Speed: 8

Check: Perception

Prerequisite: None

Normal: This wushu thickens the humidity in the air to slow the opponent as if they were walking in ever-rising water. They suffer a -2 penalty to all

combat checks for the first Round, then a -3 penalty and +1 Speed to all Actions for the second and then a -4 penalty and +2 Speed to all Actions for the third Round.

Sacrifice (2): Penalties are doubled.

Like Water (Level 3, Yin - Water)

Speed: 8 (Reaction)

Check: Fortitude

Prerequisite: None

Normal: The ninja embodies the ever-changing movement of water, making them much harder to battle. Those that do actually land attacks on the ninja, create splashes of water as this wushu uses humidity in the air to reduce damage taken. They receive a +6 bonus to Parry and Dodge, +4 bonus to all other Reactions and AR 2/2. Effects last for the Battle.

Sacrifice (1): Raised to AR 4/4 and they gain +1 Action per Round for the Battle.

The Ink Blur (Level 4, Yin - Water)

Speed: 10

Check: Perception

Prerequisite: Roar of the Shore

Normal: The ninja can alter their target's perception to make their vision blur and waver. This creates a Partially Blind effect, giving the target a -7 penalty to all checks (including combat). Lasts for only one minute, as each Round that passes, the target's penalty is reduced by 1.

Sacrifice (1): Strikes the opponent completely blind (-15 penalty), taking longer to recover from.

The Hidden Mist (Level 4, Yang - Water)

Speed: 14 (Concentration)

Check: Discipline

Prerequisite: Wind at the Back

Normal: The ninja creates a thick mist that extends for 300 ft. in all directions that limits everyone's viewing range, except that the ninja can still see with exact clarity. Everyone else can see little more than a few feet in front of their face, rendering most ranged fighting obsolete (-10 penalty to all Throw checks).

Sacrifice (1): The ninja can use the mist to create illusions to distract, confuse or torture those within.

Water Form (Level 5, Yin - Water)

Speed: 15 (Reaction)

Check: Fortitude

Prerequisite: Like Water

Normal: Unlike other elemental forms, the ninja with this wushu doesn't gain any combat bonuses. Instead, they completely liquefy into a puddle, able to move as a puddle at half their Movement on land or triple their Movement in water. They are immune to physical damage, but are still vulnerable to mental attacks and illusions. Lasts for a Scene.

Sacrifice (1): Turns the ninja to water while retaining their normal shape.

WAY OF WOOD

Harvest (Level 1, Yang - Wood)

Speed: 5

Check: Survival

Prerequisite: None

Normal: The ninja infuses their Yang into a fruit-bearing plant to have it instantly produce enough of said fruit for one meal. Used by many to keep from starving in otherwise barren areas.

Sacrifice (1): The plant infused can be forced to produce any type of fruit, even if it is not the right type (i.e. apples from an orange tree) or is not fruit producing (i.e. apples from a cactus).

Instant Growth (Level 1, Yang - Wood)

Speed: 1 min. (Reaction)

Check: Crafts

Prerequisite: None

Normal: This wushu lets the ninja cause instant growth from any plant in a shape of their choosing. If they need to ascend, they could create ladder rungs. If they were falling, they could create longer branches for them to grab. Some ninja use this to create creative courtyard decoration or even furniture.

Sacrifice (1): Happens instantly (Speed 3) and they can even cause roots to rise up and strike their opponent with a +2 Strike bonus and +2 (NL).

Weapon Craft (Level 2, Yang - Wood)

Speed: 8

Check: Craft

Prerequisite: Instant Growth

Normal: The ninja reaches their hand into a tree and pulls out a weapon created just to their liking. This can be any completely wooden weapon, from a bo to a bokken. The weapon is identical to its mundane counterpart, but deals +1 Damage as well.

Sacrifice (1): The weapon is infused with yang and inflicts +3 Damage (instead of +1).

Tree Hopping (Level 2, Yang - Wood)

Speed: 8

Check: Athletics

Prerequisite: None

Normal: This wushu lets ninja use forests as quick ways to travel. By infusing yang chi into the soles of their feet, they can amplify their jumping distances if their platform is wood. Many ninja appear fly through the trees at three times their Movement due to this wushu. Effects last for a Scene.

Sacrifice (1): x5 Movement.

Wall of Wood (Level 3, Yang - Wood)

Speed: 10 (Reaction)

Check: Crafts

Prerequisite: Instant Growth

Normal: The ninja summons an instant wall made of thick wood with Durability 30 (AR 4/2). This wall can be grown to be up to 10 ft. tall and wide.

Sacrifice (1): Can be used to create a wooden cage around a target, who receives a Dodge check with a +2 bonus to resist.

Hiding Place (Level 3, Yang - Wood)

Speed: 1 hour (Ritual)

Check: Holistics

Prerequisite: None

Normal: The ninja steps into the center of a large tree, melding their body with it to draw on its healing properties. All Non-Lethal damage is instantly healed, while Lethal damage heals at a hourly rate (instead of daily). The ninja enters a trance state while inside, able to sense anything that comes in contact with the tree they currently inhabit. Some ninja use this after more arduous battles, while others use it for reconnaissance. They can stay inside the tree for up to a day.

Sacrifice (1): Effect is instant (Speed 12).

Sacrifice (X): Stay inside for an additional X days.

Immaculate Bridges (Level 4, Yang - Wood)

Speed: 3 Rounds

Check: Crafts

Prerequisite: Wall of Wood

Normal: The ninja creates a wooden bridge in order to cross areas otherwise unattainable. This can include quick routes over lakes or ways to overtake large chasms. The bridge can extend over an area up to 300 ft. and can support up to 1000 pounds.

Sacrifice (X): Each sacrificed chi multiplies the distance (2x, 3x, 4x, etc.).

Maze of Trees (Level 4, Yin - Wood)

Speed: 1 min. (Concentration)

Check: Deception

Prerequisite: None

Normal: The ninja connects with a surrounding forest or jungle area (up to a half mile radius), casting an illusion that makes it near impossible to travel through. Anyone that enters the effected area suffers a -12 penalty to all Survival checks to find their way or track others. They will suddenly lose their path and start seeing the same landmarks over and over again.

Sacrifice (2): Can forgo Concentration and lasts for 1 hr.

Wood Form (Level 5, Yang - Wood)

Speed: 10

Check: Fortitude

Prerequisite: Hiding Place

Normal: The ninja becomes a being of pure wood with thick bark for skin and vine-like tentacles. They receive +15 Temporary Health, +5 Grapple bonus due to the vines and +1 Damage. They also automatically succeed against any attempts to trip, throw, push or other attempts to destabilize them due to their ability to root their feet to the ground in an instant.

Sacrifice (1): Bonuses doubled and no penalties.

CLAN SPECIFIC WUSHU

WAY OF BALANCING SCALES

The Balanced Mind (Level 1, Yin)

Speed: 10

Check: Discipline

Prerequisite: None

Normal: The ninja balances their mind to remove impulsive urges from their being. They receive a +5 bonus to Discipline (Concentration) checks, as well as against Fear/Awe and Insanity. Lasts for the Scene.

Sacrifice (1): They are completely immune to Fear/Awe and Insanity effects and receive a +8 bonus to Concentration checks.

Chi Conversion (Level 1, Yin or Yang)

Speed: 1 Round

Check: Discipline

Prerequisite: None

Normal: The ninja learns to balance their chi to such a degree that they can use Yin for Yang or vice versa. After spending the chi to activate, they can use any type of chi to activate their wushu. This effect lasts for 1 minute.

Sacrifice (1): Occurs much faster, Speed 4

Sacrifice (1): They can sacrifice Permanent Yang for Yin and vice versa.

Many Tongues (Level 2, Yin)

Speed: 1 minute

Check: Linguistics

Prerequisite: None

Normal: The ninja listens to a few words of a language they do not know and they instantly acquire the ability to speak the foreign tongue. Last for the Scene.

Sacrifice (1): Also can read the new language.

X-Ray (Level 2, Yin)

Speed: 10

Check: Perception

Prerequisite: None

Normal: The ninja can extend their chi sensing for a 100 ft. radius, reaching beyond barriers. This allows

them to see and hear through walls, trees and other obstacles.

Sacrifice (1): Extends to 300 ft. radius and gives a +4 bonus to Perception checks.

Mind's Eye (Level 3, Yin)

Speed: 10

Check: Perception

Prerequisite: None

Normal: The ninja learns to open themselves to the chi flow around them to see without sight and listen without hearing. This negates any blindness or deafness penalties, gives the ninja 360-degree sight, makes Surprise Attacks useless against them and can see through Level 1 and Level 2 wushu from the Path of the Unseen.

Sacrifice (X): Can see through X+1 levels of Path of the Unseen (i.e. Sacrificing 3 Yin negates up to Level 4 wushu against the ninja)

See Chi (Level 3, Yang)

Speed: 1 Round

Check: Perception

Prerequisite: The Balanced Mind

Normal: The ninja surpasses sensing chi to being able to actually see it, both personal chi and that of the environment. They can see chi residue on a person or in an area that has recently (within 1 hour) had wushu used and can track with a +2 bonus to their Survival check.

Sacrifice (1): See chi trails up to 1 day after.

Sacrifice (1): Tell a person's Elemental Soul and how much chi they currently hold.

Destroy Chi (Level 4, Yin & Yang)

Speed: 10

Check: Discipline

Prerequisite: Chi Conversion, See Chi

Normal: The ninja synchronizes the chi in their body to react in an explosive manner when connecting with their opponent. Every time the ninja hits their target unarmed, they can spend 1 Yang chi to destroy 1 Yin from their opponent or vice versa. The activation cost is 2 Yin & 2 Yang and the effect lasts for the Battle.

Sacrifice (2): Can destroy up to 3 chi per Round without the need to spend their own.

Drain Chi (Level 4, Yin and Yang)

Speed: 10

Check: Discipline

Prerequisite: Chi Conversion, See Chi

Normal: The ninja alters their chi to make their body into a vessel for more (2 Yin and 2 Yang to activate). Every time the ninja hits their target and deal at least 2 damage unarmed, they can negate said damage and instead steal one of their opponent's temporary Yin or Yang points. Effects lasts for 2 Rounds.

Sacrifice (1): Steals up to 3 chi points with each hit.

Sacrifice (1): Duration raised to 1 min (6 Rounds).

Sacrifice (1): Can be done with a Touch Action (skin to skin).

Poison Chi (Level 5, Yin)

Speed: 12

Check: Discipline

Prerequisite: Drain Chi or Destroy Chi

Normal: The ninja fills their body with Yin chi and launches an attack to their opponent with a +6 bonus to Strike. If they hit and deal at least 3 damage, their target's chi is infected and they will lose 4 Health for every chi point they spend in the next minute.

Sacrifice (2): Target loses 1 chi point and 1 Permanent Chi of the same type for every point spent.

WAY OF CARING HANDS

Diagnostics (Level 1, Yin)

Speed: 1 Round

Check: Holistics

Prerequisite: None

Normal: The ninja with this wushu can look over their target and instantly know if they are sick or injured. They receive a +5 bonus to any Holistics checks that correspond to issues found.

Sacrifice (1): Sense mental aberrations (Insanities) in the target as well.

Quick Needle Technique (Level 1, Yang)

Speed: 5

Check: Fortitude

Prerequisite: None

Normal: The ninja pulls a few strands of their own hair, infusing them with Yang chi to create long, thin needles. In combat, they can be thrown (using shuriken stats) or they can be used for acupuncture techniques giving a +2 bonus to Holistics checks when utilized. This wushu can create up to 4 needles at a time.

Sacrifice (1): +4 bonus to Holistics checks and uses kunai stats (instead of shuriken).

Pure Touch (Level 1, Yin)

Speed: 1 min

Check: Holistics

Prerequisite: None

Normal: With the touch of the skin, the ninja with this wushu can completely nullify mundane poisons or venom in the target's body. Poisons created using wushu are dulled to half their effect, but cannot be fully nullified without the use of an Antidote (pg 177).

Sacrifice (1): Negates magical poisons and gives +2 bonus against Poisons for 1 day.

Healing Trance (Level 2, Yin)

Speed: 5 min (Ritual)

Check: Discipline

Prerequisite: None

Normal: The ninja goes into a deep, uncommunicative trance, using their medical powers to increase their healing rate. Resting in this state, their healing rate is doubled to 10 (NL) per hour and 10 (L) per day. They do not require food or water in this state. Effects last for at least 6 hours once begun and can be held for up to three days.

Sacrifice (1): Doubled to 20 (NL) per hour / 20 (L) per day (Sacrificed chi isn't regained during this wushu).

Heal Wound (Level 2, Yang)

Speed: 2 min

Check: Holistics

Prerequisite: Diagnostics

Normal: The ninja holds their hand just above a wound and focuses their Yang chi to heal any gash, scar, bruise or broken bone. Each use heals up to 10 (NL) or 5 (L) or 2 Stamina, but cannot bring the target above their maximum. The healing effects are halved (rounded up) if they use this wushu on themselves.

For the next day, the target also receives a +2 bonus to Fortitude checks (non-cumulative).

Sacrifice (2): Healing happens faster (1 Round).

Confusion Touch (Level 3, Yin)

Speed: 10 (Attack)

Check: Holistics

Prerequisite: Pure Touch

Normal: The ninja learns specific pressure points to strike in order to confuse the electrical impulses in their target's body. The victim may try to move their arm and instead leap up. They may try to turn their head, but only walk backward. This reduces all the target's combat bonuses by half (rounded down), raises the range for Critical Failure to 1-3 and swaps their bonuses in the following order: Strike and Dodge, Throw and Parry, Roll and Grapple. Lasts for 3 Rounds.

Sacrifice (1): They choose which bonuses are swapped, ignoring the above order.

Sacrifice (1): Double duration to 1 min.

Sacrifice (1): Critical Failure raised to 1-5.

Paralysis Needles (Level 3, Yin)

Speed: 10 (Attack)

Check: Holistics

Prerequisite: Quick Needle Technique

Normal: The ninja launches three precisely aimed acupuncture needles toward vital spots on the target's body, each with +4 bonus to Throw and dealing +1 (L). The target must react to each separately and, if all three strike, they are paralyzed instantly for 1 min. The needles are not effective if absorbed by AR.

Sacrifice (1): Raised to +6 Throw, +2 (L) and AP 4.

Regeneration Technique (Level 4, Yang)

Speed: 10

Check: Holistics

Prerequisite: Healing Trance

Normal: The ninja infuses their body with lively Yang chi that constantly replicates their body's cells... creating a regenerative effect. Once activated and at the beginning of each Round, the ninja heals 5 Health (of any type - Lethal, Non-Lethal), as well as a +5 bonus to Initiative and Fortitude checks. Effects last for 1 min.

Sacrifice (2): Bonuses doubled and lasts for Battle.

Lasting Life Technique (Level 5, Yang)

Speed: 10 min (Ritual)

Check: Holistics

Prerequisite: Diagnostics, Pure Touch, Heal Wound

Normal: The ninja with this ability can use their chi to instill life itself. It can bring a person or animal that has died within the last six hours back to life. The body must have all the major organs, as this power does nothing to regenerate limbs or lost parts. While often thankful, the targets are not without their drawbacks. They suffer the permanent lose of -2 Attribute levels (GM's choice), -3 Health, -1 Stamina and -1 permanent Yin or Yang Chi (players choice).

Sacrifice (X): Extend duration to X days (up to 3).

WAY OF EBONY CLUTCHES

Dark Eyes (Level 1, Yin)

Speed: 8

Check: Perception

Prerequisite: None

Normal: The ninja alters their perception, allowing them to see perfectly in any type of darkness (even magical). If blinded, they can instead sense the surrounding (300 ft. radius) shadows to reduce it to a partial blindness penalty.

Sacrifice (1): They sense exactly how many shadows there are and what type (person, tree, traps, building, etc.), allowing them to sense anyone hiding.

Shadow Cloak (Level 1, Yin)

Speed: 8 (Reaction)

Check: Stealth

Prerequisite: None

Normal: The ninja can grab a nearby shadow to drape themselves, garnering a +5 bonus to Stealth checks. It also obscures their appearance, making it impossible to identify them by sight.

Sacrifice (1): Raise to +10 Stealth bonus.

Puppetry (Level 1, Yang)

Speed: 5

Check: Legerdemain

Prerequisite: None

Normal: The ninja can manipulate any shadow to create fantastic shows, tell stories or create optical illusions. Detailed descriptions can cause an Awe or

Fear effect to onlookers up to a Moderate (20) Difficulty (GM's discretion).

Sacrifice (X): Adds a cumulative +4 Difficulty X number of times.

Shadow Fist Attack (Level 2, Yang)

Speed: 7 (Attack, Scaleable)

Check: Legerdemain

Prerequisite: Puppetry

Normal: The ninja creates a barrage of fists that launch in a flurry of movement with a +4 bonus to Throw and dealing +3 (L) each. The ninja and target contest 2 times, +2 times each time this wushu is scaled. Some ninja flavor their effect by shaping their fists into animals or weapons.

Sacrifice (1): Creates 3 fists and +3 fists when scaled.

Master of Night (Level 2, Yin)

Speed: 1 Round

Check: Survival

Prerequisite: None

Normal: The ninja creates a mini-eclipse that covers the surrounding half-mile radius in darkness, as if it were nighttime. This gives darkness penalties to anyone within the zone (except for the

ninja or those with the Night Eyes Wushu) for up to 1 hour and provides a +2 bonus to further Ebony Clutches Wushu for the duration.

Sacrifice (1): Extend to 5 mile radius.

Sacrifice (1): Extend duration to 1 day.

Blinding Darkness (Level 3, Yin)

Speed: 12 (Reaction)

Check: Perception

Prerequisite: Shadow Cloak

Normal: The ninja summons a cloud of magical darkness to fill the surrounding 100 ft. radius. Without certain wushu, anyone inside (including the user) is now completely blind, taking the full Blindness penalty of -15 to all checks.

Sacrifice (X): The ninja and X others are immune to the blindness effects.

Shadow Tentacles (Level 3, Yang)

Speed: 9 (Scaleable)

Check: Legerdemain

Prerequisite: Puppetry

Normal: The ninja fashions three whip-like tentacles from the surrounding darkness. They can be use as prehensile tentacles with a POW equal to half the ninja's POW (rounded down).

With one Control Action (Speed 6), they are able to attack with all the tentacles at a single target or at separate opponents. Each tentacle has a +2 Strike bonus and deals 2 (L) with AP 2. Each time this wushu is scaled, it provides +2 tentacles, but also adds +2 Speed.

Sacrifice (1): Raised to +5 Strike and 4 (L).

Unmoving Shadow (Level 4, Yin)

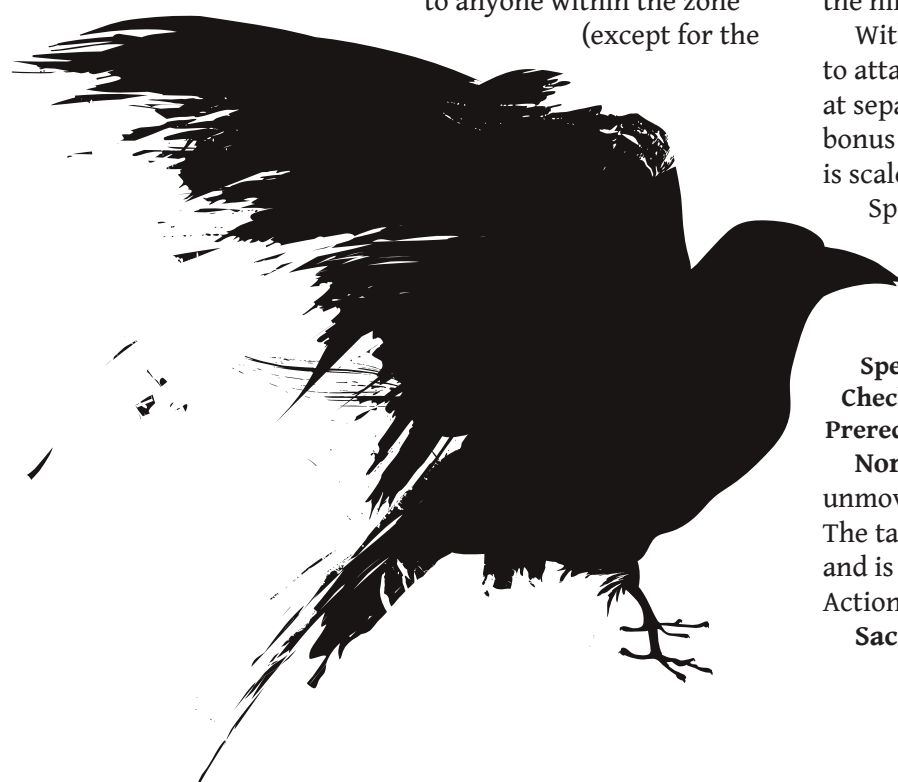
Speed: 8

Check: Legerdemain

Prerequisite: Puppetry

Normal: The ninja makes an opponent's shadow unmovable, thus rendering them semi-paralyzed. The target cannot move from their current position and is at a -4 penalty to all Actions/Reactions and -2 Actions for 1 Round.

Sacrifice (1): Duration raised to 1 minute.



Shadow Jump (Level 4, Yang)

Speed: 8 (Reaction)

Check: Travel

Prerequisite: None

Normal: The ninja is master of disappearing from one place and reappearing in another by leaping and traveling through shadows. Once activated, this wushu lets the ninja use a Move Action to travel up to Triple their Movement to appear from a shadow yards away. Effect lasts for the Battle or Scene.

Sacrifice (1): Raised to x5 movement.

Sacrifice (2): Ninja gets one Free Movement Action per Round to jump through shadows.

Grasping Shadows (Level 5, Yin)

Speed: 1 Round

Check: Legerdemain

Prerequisite: Shadow Tentacles

Normal: One of the Shade's greatest wushu is the Grasping Shadows, where they derived their name. The ninja manipulates the shadows to surround their target and drag them into the realm of shadows that the clan has become so accustomed. The victim makes contested Strength checks against the ninja's INS + Discipline and best of five wins the battle. If the target loses, they are sucked into the realm of shadow and kept there for 1 day. After the duration, they are spit out in a random place up to 1 mile away.

Sacrifice (1): +5 bonus to their contested checks.

Sacrifice (1): The ninja can decide where within the mile the target appears.

Sacrifice (X): Target kept in realm for +X days.

WAY OF GREAT SERPENTS

Long Tongue Technique (Level 1, Yang)

Speed: 4 (Reaction)

Check: Fortitude

Prerequisite: None

Normal: The ninja learns to extend their tongue up to 5 ft. long and it is prehensile, able to lift up to 5 lbs. per POW. In combat, the ninja may use their tongue as a weapon to lash at an opponent with a +2 Strike bonus and deal +1 (L). Lasts for the Battle or Scene.

Sacrifice (1): Extends up to 10 ft. and bonuses

raised to +4 Strike and +2 (L).

Sip of Venom (Level 1, Yin)

Speed: 6

Check: Holistics

Prerequisite: None

Normal: The ninja tastes a sample of potion and instantly knows its ingredients and uses (for those that do more than kill upon ingestion).

Sacrifice (1): They instantly sense if someone within sight has taken the poison, gaining a +3 bonus to track the victim.

Swallow (Level 1, Yin)

Speed: 4 (Reaction)

Check: Fortitude

Prerequisite: None

Normal: The ninja can disjoin their jaws and open their mouths wide enough to swallow anything inside of 1 ft. wide. They can safely keep said item inside of them until they choose to regurgitate it back up. If they keep the item inside for longer than 3 days, it disintegrates. Some Serpents are known to eat their meals in this manner, emulating the snake in their daily lives.

Sacrifice (1): Can allow an item up to 3 ft. wide and can keep it indefinitely.

Acid Spit (Level 2, Yang)

Speed: 6 (Attack)

Check: Holistics

Prerequisite: Sip of Venom

Normal: The ninja transforms their saliva into a dissolving poison. It can be spit at their opponent with a +3 Throw and 5 (L). Likewise, they can instead lick a blade to provide a +2 damage bonus for 2 Rounds.

Sacrifice (1): Raised to +5 Throw and 8 (L) or +4 damage bonus to blade.

Adaptation Technique (Level 2, Yin)

Speed: 1 Round

Check: Fortitude

Prerequisite: None

Normal: Just as a snake changes to suit their habitat, so too does the ninja learn to adapt to environmental hurdles. This wushu negates all terrain penalties for an area, including obstacles like loose

sand, sinking snow or forest denseness. Lasts for the Scene or Battle.

Sacrifice (1): Can extend to 1 other.

Shed Skin (Level 2, Yang)

Speed: 10

Check: Holistics

Prerequisite: None

Normal: The ninja makes the outer layer of skin disintegrate, removing any scars or bruising and instantly regaining 8 Health. In addition, this leaves them feeling refreshed and alert, providing a +2 non-cumulative bonus to Initiative for the Battle.



Sacrifice (1): Heals 12 Health and gains +4 non-cumulative bonus to Initiative for the Battle.

Venom Strike (Level 3, Yin)

Speed: 8

Check: Holistics

Prerequisite: Sip of Venom

Normal: The ninja's with this wushu sprouts snake fangs at the ends of their fingers, allowing them to poison their opponents with their unarmed strikes. They receive a +4 Strike bonus and AP 2 for 1 minute. Any attacks that deal damage to their opponent also inject a weakening poison. Each time, they must succeed at a Difficulty (25) Poison check or take +2 (L) and a cumulative -1 penalty to all checks (Max: -4).

Sacrifice (X): Lasts for the Battle and adds +5 Difficulty X number of times.

Up the Sleeves (Level 3, Yang)

Speed: 8

Check: Legerdemain

Prerequisite: None

Normal: The ninja summons forth dozens of snakes that extend from their sleeves, capable of initiating and performing Grapple maneuvers from up to 10 ft. away. The multiple snake bites go on to deliver additional damage and wrap around the target's limbs, giving the ninja a +3 Strike bonus to Initiate Grapple, +2 (L) and +6 bonus to Grapple for 2 Round.

Sacrifice (1): Bonuses doubled and lasts for a Battle.

Nagashi Form (Level 4, Yang)

Speed: 8

Check: Fortitude

Prerequisite: Shed Skin

Normal: The ninja's legs merge into one long, snake-like lower body that boosts their Movement by +10 and doubles their Movement over water, snow or sand. They can also perform a

Strangle Grapple maneuver (pg 168) without restricting themselves from defending against attacks by wrapping their snake form around their opponent, immobilizing and crushing them for 5 (L) per Round (instead of 3 (L)). This form lasts for up to 1 hr or for a Battle.

Sacrifice (2): +15 Movement and Triple over Water/Sand, as well as a +4 Strike bonus to Initiate Grapple.

Shed Form (Level 4, Yang)

Speed: 1 hr (Ritual)

Check: Fortitude

Prerequisite: Swallow, Shed Skin

Normal: A truly formidable wushu that makes the Serpents feared throughout the Empire. The ninja goes through a metamorphosis, creating a fully-formed version of themselves in the pit of their stomach that then climbs out of their mouth, thus shedding their form. Any previous damage is healed and any lost limbs are restored in their entirety.

Sacrifice (3): Happens instantly (Speed 12).

Poison Body Technique (Level 5, Yin)

Speed: 1 day (Ritual)

Check: Holistics

Prerequisite: Acid Spit, Venom Strike

Normal: A rare wushu, but one of great legend. The ninja enacts a ritual (shedding 9 (L) of blood) and corrupts their body with poison for 1 week. Their bodily fluids are transformed into a very deadly poison, making every kiss, sexual encounter, and even drop of their sweat truly deadly for their victims. After contact with the ninja, the victim must make a Moderate (20) Poison check each day for the next 4 days, with the Difficulty rising by +5 each day (up to Difficulty (40)). A successful check means they avoided the poison effects for that day. A failed check inflicts a cumulative 10 (L) and -2 to all checks. The Health can be regained and penalties will vanish only after the poison has run its course. Most victims die in the process.

Sacrifice (X+1): Victim must resist for X additional days.

WAY OF HEAVEN'S JUDGMENT

Sense the Guilty (Level 1, Yin)

Speed: 10

Check: Empathy

Prerequisite: None

Normal: The ninja takes a long hard look at their target, peering into their soul to see if they have anything to be guilty of. They get a simple impression of the type of crime the target is currently feeling guilty over. They do not get the exact action or when said crime occurred. The only drawback to this wushu is that the target must actually feel guilty over their actions. Sociopaths are non-effected.

Sacrifice (1): Get exact action.

Sacrifice (1): Get exact time action occurred (if within the past three days).

Hunt the Guilty (Level 1, Yin)

Speed: 10

Check: Empathy

Prerequisite: None

Normal: The ninja can use their Chi to infuse their words and actions with power while seeking criminals. Quite simply, they receive a +3 bonus for the Scene for any checks that will assist them in finding their culprit. This can include anything from a bonus to Perception to check an office or a bonus to Intimidation to scare tips from an informant. This wushu does not effect combat checks. The only catch is... the ninja must know that the person they follow is guilty.

Sacrifice (1): Raised to +5 Skill bonus.

Deception-Proof (Level 2, Yang)

Speed: 10

Check: Empathy

Prerequisite: None

Normal: The ninja is able to ignore someone's words and tell by their aura if they are lying. This does not garner the truth, only that the statements are false. Lasts for 5 minutes. Of course, it isn't a lie if the target "believes" their statements.

Sacrifice (1): Lasts for the Scene.

Sacrifice (2): Lasts for 1 day.

*Blind Justice (Level 2, Yin)***Speed:** 4 (Reaction)**Check:** Empathy**Prerequisite:** Sense the Guilty

Normal: The ninja holds true to the idea of blind justice, allowing them to shrug off the effects of blindness. Instead, the ninja lets truth guide their attacks. They ignore all penalties that may limit their sight, including blindness, darkness, thick smoke or heavy rain. Lasts for the Battle or Scene.

Sacrifice (1): Their sense of justice is incensed, giving a +3 bonus to combat checks for the duration.

*Eye for an Eye (Level 3, Yang)***Speed:** 6 (Reaction)**Check:** Empathy**Prerequisite:** None

Normal: The ninja has learned to reflect damage that has been done, giving their attacker their own brand of justice. They succumb to the attack, taking full damage, but then also reflect half damage (rounded down) back at their opponent.

Sacrifice (1): Reflect full damage.

*Instant Justice (Level 3, Yin)***Speed:** 6**Check:** Empathy**Prerequisite:** Hunt the Guilty

Normal: If the ninja sees someone commit a wrongdoing, they can even the odds instantly. If the target has stolen something, then something is stolen from them as well. If they have committed vandalism, so too will their property be vandalized. If they attack someone without cause, they will have a similar encounter later. The only limitation is that the ninja has no control over when the countering event will take place other than that it will occur within (12-INS) days.

Sacrifice (1): The event will happen within 1 day.

*Divulgence (Level 4, Yang)***Speed:** 6**Check:** Intimidation**Prerequisite:** Deception-Proof

Normal: The ninja touches the target and asks a question to which the target is urged to speak the truth in its entirety. If the target knows it's coming, they can spend 1 Stamina point per question to resist

answering or to give as little info as possible (such as a simple yes or no with no explanation). They always tire out though. Lasts for the Scene and is focused on one target.

Sacrifice (1): Affects up to 3 targets at once.

*Judgment Blade (Level 5, Yin - Metal)***Speed:** 1 Round**Check:** Empathy**Prerequisite:** Eye for an Eye, Instant Justice

Normal: A wushu designed after the legend of their founder, the Smith attaches the spirit of their weapon to a victim of a violent crime, like a man's wife being unjustly slain or a woman robbed of her purity. The blade responds to the cries of the innocent, giving the ninja one day to find the culprit that takes +15 (L) each time they are struck with the enchanted blade. However, the blade phases through anyone else unharmed for the duration.

Sacrifice (X): Extend duration for +X days.

*WAY OF THE IMMACULATE SHOW**The Perfect Show (Level 1, Yang)***Speed:** 10**Check:** Performance**Prerequisite:** None

Normal: The ninja enhances their allure during a show, gaining a +5 bonus to any non-wushu Performance checks for its entirety. Their voice sounds a little better, their make-up makes them take the part of their character more and their general showmanship is raised to please even the rowdiest audience.

Sacrifice (1): +10 bonus (instead of +5).

*The Beautiful Dance (Level 2, Yang)***Speed:** 3 (Reaction)**Check:** Performance**Prerequisite:** None

Normal: The ninja with this wushu adds their Performance level to any Reactions for 2 Rounds. These Reactions are also performed at a -1 Speed (to a minimum of 1).

Sacrifice (1): Duration extended to 1 minute.

Star of the Show (Level 2, Yang)

Speed: 6

Check: Performance

Prerequisite: None

Normal: The ninja brightens their aura to make anyone that is currently viewing them become completely enamored. This forces a check vs. Fear/Awe for anyone in their presence (Difficulty equal to activation check), where a failure means the targets suffer a -2 penalty to all checks against the ninja and -1 Action per Round. Lasts for the Battle.

Sacrifice (1): Target suffers -5 penalty vs. Fear.

Hypnotic Voice (Level 3, Yin)

Speed: 8 (Concentration)

Check: Performance

Prerequisite: The Perfect Show

Normal: The ninja begins to weave their yin chi into their voice in order to enthrall listeners. Their targets lulled into paying attention only to them while they are singing or telling their story. Out of combat, this incurs a -4 penalty to the target's Perception checks for anything except the ninja. In combat, this -4 penalty applies to Initiative and -2 penalty to Reactions, as they are not as quick to act due to lack of attention.

Sacrifice (1): Can affect up to 5 targets at once.

Trick Shots (Level 3, Yang)

Speed: 5

Check: Acrobatics

Prerequisite: None

Normal: The ninja uses their Yang chi to make their ranged weapons able to be ricocheted off objects in the environment for trick shots. This grants them a +3 bonus to all Throw checks and reduces penalties from Cover/Concealment by half (rounded down). Effects last for the Battle of Scene.

Sacrifice (1): Completely negates penalties from Cover/Concealment.

Shattering Song (Level 4, Yin)

Speed: 6 (Reaction, Concentration)

Check: Performance

Prerequisite: None

Normal: The ninja infuses their voice with chi in order to destroy items around them. Using this wushu inflicts 10 (L) to any non-living objects within

a 20 ft. radius. This can be used as Concentration to deal this same damage every 6 Counts. If the item is reduced to Durability 0, it shatters. Animals in the surrounding area are warded away and won't approach for at least 1 Round after the sound (unless commanded by an owner). People are slightly deafened, taking a -2 penalty to all Perception checks and Reactions.

Sacrifice (2): Doubles damage, penalties, and animals warded for 1 minute.

Understudy (Level 4, Yang)

Speed: 8

Check: Performance

Prerequisite: Star of the Show

Normal: The ninja can watch their opponent and learn their movements in order to fight against them and mirror their actions. They receive a +4 bonus to all combat actions against the target and can use any Combat Techniques used against them. Effects last for the Battle or Scene.

Sacrifice (2): The ninja can mirror wushu they witness too, but they costs +1 chi to activate.

The Destroyer's Dance (Level 5, Yang - Fire)

Speed: 10

Check: Performance

Prerequisite: Beautiful Dance

Normal: An ultimate technique for the Dancers, their bodies are illuminated in multi-colored Yang chi and fire and they begin moving so quickly that few see their actual attacks. They receive a +4 bonus to Strike, Parry and Dodge, +2 (L) to their unarmed attacks, -1 Speed for Action/Reaction and two total free Parry Reactions (without using Speed) that can be used anytime within 3 Rounds. They also receive 8 Temporary Health, as the fire protects them from harm.

Sacrifice (2): Double bonuses and lasts the Battle.

WAY OF NAKED SKIN

Ink Touch (Level 1, Yang)

Speed: 3 (Attack)

Check: Arts

Prerequisite: None

Normal: The ninja can touch their target (with a +4 to Strike) and place enough ink only their skin for a variety of effects. Mundanely, it can be used to gift others with a temporary creative piece of artwork (of almost any design) on their skin. Conversely, this chi-charged ink can be the catalyst for an array of other wushu of the Way of Inked Skin.

Sacrifice (1): Design is permanent.

Withdraw Weapon (Level 1, Yang)

Speed: 3

Check: Arts

Prerequisite: None

Normal: The ninja with this wushu can instantly draw weapons from a tattoo, regardless of size or type. The tattoo must be in a spot on their body that they can reach easily and takes the shape of the weapon intended to be withdrawn. When they are done, the weapon becomes a tattoo again.

Sacrifice (1): Weapon is Yang charged to inflict +2 Damage for 2 Rounds.

Artful Defense (Level 2, Yin)

Speed: 6 (Reaction)

Check: Arts

Prerequisite: None

Normal: This is the opposite of the Withdraw Weapon wushu. If attacked with a weapon, they may use this wushu to instantly absorb it into their body as a new Tattoo. They make a Roll check with a +4 bonus and, if successful, the weapon becomes a tattoo and deals no damage. If failed, they take damage normally. Lasts for 1 Round and does not affect enchanted weapons or unarmed attacks.

Sacrifice (2): Duration raised to 1 minute.

Tiger's Claws (Level 2, Yang)

Speed: 4

Check: Fortitude

Prerequisite: None

Normal: The ninja receives tattoos of claws on the backs of their hands that make their nails as sharp as a tiger's, but they cannot wield any weapons while this power is active. This wushu gives +1 (L) and +3 Strike to all their unarmed attacks for 1 minute.

Sacrifice (1): Bonuses doubles, Lasts for the Battle.

Needles of Agony (Level 3, Yin)

Speed: 8 (Scaleable)

Check: Legerdemain

Prerequisite: Ink Touch

Normal: Requires use of Ink Touch. The ninja moves implanted ink into precise points on their target's body and then transforms them into needles that causes intense pain. The victim suffers a -4 penalty to all checks due to Pain, which are cumulative with any Pain penalties they may already be suffering due to low Health. Victims can still make a Pain check to ignore the effects for an Action (pg 176).

Sacrifice (1): Doubles Pain penalty

Sacrifice (1): Cannot be canceled with a Pain check.

Pain Killer (Level 3, Yin)

Speed: 5

Check: Discipline

Prerequisite: None

Normal: The ninja is adorned with spiral tattoos at each of their seven chakra points to control their body's pain centers. This wushu not only cancels all Pain penalties, but also gives the ninja 10 Temporary Health. Effects last for 1 minute.

Sacrifice (1): +20 Temporary Health and effects last for the Battle.

Shuriken Explosion (Level 3, Yang)

Speed: 10

Check: Arts

Prerequisite: Artful Defense

Normal: The ninja is tattooed with kanji for shuriken at various points over their body. When activated, this wushu launches a flurry of shuriken with a +4 Throw bonus and AP 3 from the ninja's body at everyone and everything within 40 ft. Anyone hit with these shuriken takes +2 (L).

Sacrifice (1): Doubled to +8 Throw and +4 (L).

Complete Control (Level 4, Yang)

Speed: 10 (Concentration)

Check: Arts

Prerequisite: Ink Touch

Normal: Requires use of Ink Touch. The target sees the ninja's special ink spread over their limbs and body, giving them the ability to force movements against their will. The ninja can mentally command

anything, from dropping their weapon to attacking another opponent. Each requested Action takes Speed 5 and the target receives a Strength check to resist, each time against the ninja's original activation check.

Sacrifice (2): -5 penalty to resist the ninja's control.

Mark of Fear (Level 4, Yin)

Speed: 8

Check: Discipline

Prerequisite: Withdraw Weapon

Normal: The ninja receives facial tattoos that can be brought to life to warp their face into their target's worst fear, giving the ninja a +8 bonus to Intimidation checks for the Scene, +2 bonus to all attacks on their target and the target loses 1 Action. The wushu can only actively target one person's mind, but the effects extend to comrades as well if they share the same deep-rooted fear. If the target has the Phobia Drawback, they immediately respond to the ninja as if he represents their worst fear without a check needed, losing all their actions and attempting to flee.

Sacrifice (1): +14 Intimidation bonus (instead of +8), opponents lose 2 Actions and the ninja receives a +4 bonus on all attacks on their target.

Extra Arm Technique (Level 5, Yang)

Speed: 1 hr

Check: Fortitude

Prerequisite: Pain Killer

Normal: With very carefully placed tattoos at their sides, the ninja manifests two additional arms by shedding 3 (L) of blood. The ninja receives a +4 bonus to any Legerdemain checks and the time needed for Crafts checks is halved. In combat, this wushu also provides a +4 Parry bonus, a +2 bonus to all wushu activation checks, +2 Actions per Round and penalties to Simultaneous Actions is reduced by 4. Lasts for 1 day.

Sacrifice (2): Happens lightning quick (Speed 10).

WAY OF KEPT LORE

The Long View (Level 1, Yin)

Speed: 3

Check: Knowledge

Prerequisite: None

Normal: The ninja can use his intense knowledge of historical battles to gain an edge. Infusing movements with Yin, they raise their chances of acting first for maximum effectiveness. They add their Knowledge level to their next Initiative check.

Sacrifice (1): Add Knowledge level to two other Initiative checks (either their own or a comrade's).

Refusal of Bedlam (Level 2, Yin)

Speed: 5 (Reaction)

Check: Knowledge

Prerequisite: None

Normal: The ninja attunes their mind to all the knowledge they have stored, focusing on their training instead of anything around them. For 1 minute, they automatically succeed at any Discipline (Concentration) checks and receive a +5 bonus against any mind-altering wushu.

Sacrifice (1): Automatically succeeds at ANY Discipline check and +5 bonus raised to +10.

Instant Reading (Level 2, Yang)

Speed: 1 min

Check: Knowledge

Prerequisite: None

Normal: The ninja touches a book and instantly assumes all of its knowledge, as if they had taken the time to actually read the book entirely. This information fades after 1 day.

Sacrifice (1): Duration extended to 1 week.

Setting the Words Loose (Level 3, Yang)

Speed: 5 min

Check: Knowledge

Prerequisite: Instant Reading

Normal: By placing their target's or their own hand on an empty book, the ninja can force memories and thoughts to appear on its pages. While not optimal by the Order's tradition, this is an easy way to deliver information. They can transfer as much or as little information as as long as the book can hold

the amount.

Sacrifice (1): Info is transferred in 1 Round.

Preserve the Words (Level 3, Yin)

Speed: 10 min

Check: Knowledge

Prerequisite: Instant Reading

Normal: The ninja touches his hand to a piece of writing, be it literature or simple parchment, and absorbs the words into their skin. The writing is lifted from the pages and applied as tattoos on any part of the body they choose. They retain the data and even receive a +4 bonus to any applicable Skill check for the next hour, reducing to a +2 for the following hour, then to +1 and then it disappears.

Sacrifice (1): Receive the full +4 bonus for 1 day.

Worthy Borrower (Level 4, Yang)

Speed: 10

Check: Knowledge

Prerequisite: The Long View

Normal: The ninja's knowledge of chi is so advanced that they can lend other people (ninja or not) some of their chi to use. There is no limit to the number of chi or type that can be transferred, except that the ninja must be left with at least 1 Temporary Chi of each type in the end. This ability lasts for the Scene.

Sacrifice (1): They can transfer knowledge of their wushu to their target to use. They can end the effect and recall their wushu at any time.

Information Consumption (Level 5, Yin)

Speed: 1 hr

Check: Knowledge

Prerequisite: The Long View, Setting the Words Loose

Normal: Known as a mighty wushu indeed, Information Consumption is the tool of the Living Chronicle to force secrets so they can be documented. By placing the target in a ritualized circle, they can creep into their mind and steal information and memories. They pluck it from their target's mind and place it into their own.

Sacrifice (X): Can steal X additional pieces of info.

WAY OF SPUN THREADS

Invisible Threads (Level 1, Yin)

Speed: 5

Check: Stealth

Prerequisite: None

Normal: This wushu lets the ninja make their imbued threads completely lightweight and invisible. Many use this in conjunction with other wushu, to set traps or to appear to move things with their mind. Lasts up to 1 hour.

Sacrifice (X): Effect lasts for X days.

Strumming the Chords (Level 1, Yang)

Speed: 8

Check: Deception

Prerequisite: None

Normal: The ninja with this wushu can alter their vocal chord as if they were normal threads, allowing them to mimic voices or even create horrifying effects to their own for up one 1 hr. This ability can give them a +4 bonus to Intimidation or Deception dependant upon its use.

Sacrifice (1): Lasts for 1 day and rises to +6 bonus.

Spider's Scry (Level 2, Yin)

Speed: 10 (Concentration)

Check: Perception

Prerequisite: None

Normal: The ninja can touch a thread and be able to listen to any conversation being had within 20 ft. of its length. Strategically placed threads can allow for stealthy eavesdropping and the Hidden Strands are known to cover their territory for this exact purpose. If the area is particularly crowded or chaotic, a Moderate (20) IQ + Perception check may be needed to weed out individual conversations.

Sacrifice (1): Can weed out any individual conversation (without a check) within 40 ft. of the thread.

Thread Web (Level 2, Yang)

Speed: 6 (Reaction)

Check: Legerdemain

Prerequisite: None

Normal: The ninja creates a web of threads, spontaneously spun and attached to any surface. Some use this to catch themselves from falling (negating

damage), while others may use it to seal off an area. The web itself can have up to a 30 ft. diameter and has Durability 10 (AR 2/2).

Sacrifice (1): Widen up to 60 ft. diameter.

Sacrifice (1): Double Durability and AR.

Blast of Webbing (Level 3, Yin)

Speed: 7 (Attack)

Check: Legerdemain

Prerequisite: Thread Web

Normal: The ninja can launch a spiral of incapacitating threads toward their target with a +3 Throw bonus (Must be Dodged) and become sticky like spider webs. The target is slowed, losing 3 Actions for the first Round, 2 Actions for the second Round and 1 Action for the third. If the victim loses all of their remaining Actions, they cannot use Reactions for that Round either.

Sacrifice (1): Webs are extra constricting - target loses 4 Actions, then 3 Actions, 2 Actions and 1 Action.

Battle Strands (Level 3, Yang)

Speed: 6

Check: Legerdemain

Prerequisite: None

Normal: The ninja imbues their threads with enough chi to wield melee weapons (no larger than Size 2) and fight at a distance - using their Throw bonus instead of Strike if they choose. Due to their increased range and room for movement, they receive a +2 Parry and Dodge bonus, but their weapons inflict -1 damage. Lasts for the Battle. Members of the Hidden Strands are known to have threads already pre attached to their weapons, but attaching to new weapons requires a Draw Weapon Action.

Sacrifice (1): +4 Parry bonus and no damage penalty. Also, no Draw Weapon Action is required.

Clothing Change (Level 4, Yang)

Speed: 1 min (Reaction)

Check: Crafts

Prerequisite: None

Normal: This wushu is a main contributor to the Strands' ability as covert spies and assassins. With a touch, the ninja can change any imbued clothing to another look, color, or style. This wushu doesn't affect metal armor or any non-threaded clothes, but

can be made to look like armor. Effect lasts for up to 1 hr.

Sacrifice (1): If changed to armor, the clothes provides AR +2/+2 without any Hindrance.

Sacrifice (1): Change is instant (Speed 10).

Cloth Mask (Level 4, Yang)

Speed: 1 hr (Ritual)

Check: Deception

Prerequisite: Strumming the Chords

Normal: After wetting an imbued cloth (usually takes about a day to create) the ninja changes it into a mask of a different appearance (either generic or someone specific). Once applied to their face, the cloth feels and looks completely real. The character looks and acts just like the subject, with no further Deception check needed to prove it. Some Strands have even been known to create entire suits of imbued cloth in order to become the opposite gender. The ninja can place the mask on another if needed, but only the ninja who imbued the mask can remove it before the duration ends. The mask lasts up to 3 days.

Sacrifice (2): Effects last up to 1 week.

Spider's Charm (Level 5, Yin)

Speed: 10

Check: Fortitude

Prerequisite: Strumming the Chords

Normal: With the sacrifice of 4 (L), the ninja transforms their blood into threads, providing a +5 bonus to all Spun Thread Wushu. They can release it at will through any pour in their body, but most expel through their wrists for ease. These created threads are so intrinsically connected to the ninja, they are unbreakable and can be used as a whip with a +5 bonus to Strike, inflicting +3 (L) with AP 2. Effects last for 1 day.

Sacrifice (2): No blood sacrifice, automatic activation for all Spun Thread wushu and opponents need to spend 2 Stamina points to resist (pg 122).

WAY OF TWIN BEASTS

The Hunt Begins (Level 1, Yang)

Speed: 8

Check: Beast Handling

Prerequisite: None

Normal: The ninja enhances their senses and that of their dog to catch the scent of a particular object or person that they have encountered before anywhere within 1 mile. This wushu can even be used if they did not memorize the smell previously. They receive a +10 bonus to all Survival (Tracking) checks.

Sacrifice (1): Range increased to 5 miles.

In The High Grass (Level 1, Yin)

Speed: 10 (Reaction)

Check: Stealth

Prerequisite: None

Normal: The ninja and their canine blend in with their surroundings become

much less detectable. They receive a +4 bonus to Stealth checks, which is raised to a +6 bonus for the purposes of Surprised Attacks.

Sacrifice (1): +8 Stealth bonus (+10 Surprise Attack).

Prodigious Howl (Level 2, Yang)

Speed: 8

Check: Intimidation

Prerequisite: None

Normal: The ninja and their canine howl together to create a loud echo that deafens anyone within a 30 ft. radius, giving victims a -3 penalty to all checks for 1 min. While it only negatively affects nearby targets, the Hounds often use it to communicate with others over long distances (up to one mile). The howls are coded and only understandable by other Hounds.

Sacrifice (1): Communication range up to 5 miles.

Sacrifice (1): -6 penalty (instead of -3)

Canine Form (Level 2, Yang)

Speed: 1 min (Ritual)

Check: Beast Handling

Prerequisite: None

Normal: A fundamental wushu for the Hounds, the ninja gets in touch with the animal spirit within and takes a form identical to their ninja dog. Their mental stats (INS, IQ, and CHM) are kept, but physical stats become those of their chosen breed (pg 184).

Sacrifice (1): Happens instantly (Speed 4).

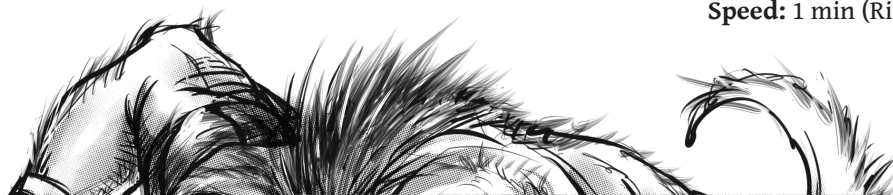
Linked Souls (Level 3, Yin)

Speed: 1 Round

Check: Beast Handling

Prerequisite: None

Normal: The ninja and canine are able to exchange senses and thoughts from up to 1 mile away. This can be good for sending the canine to scout ahead and gives each the ability to



know where the other is at all times. Effect lasts for the Scene.

Sacrifice (1): Range extended to 5 miles.

Meet In the Middle (Level 3, Yang)

Speed: 10 (Attack)

Check: Beast Handling

Prerequisite: None

Normal: The ninja and canine launch a triple strike attack at their opponent. The ninja first takes a swipe at the target from one direction, then the canine from the other, each with a +4 bonus to Strike and dealing +4 damage. Then they launch a final co-operative attack with a +2 to Strike and +8 damage (or +12 if both the first and second attacks dealt damage).

Sacrifice (1): Final attack raised to +6 Strike and +10 damage (+15 damage if first and second attacks also dealt damage)

Animal Within (Level 4, Yang)

Speed: 12

Check: Beast Handling

Prerequisite: Prodigious Howl, Canine Form

Normal: The ninja awakens their inner beast, taking on a bestial appearance with pointed ears, fangs and claws. They receive +10 Temporary Health, a +5 bonus to Strike and Parry, +2 (L) and +5 bonus to Survival checks.

Sacrifice (1): Raised to +15 Temporary Health, +8 Strike and Parry and +5 damage.

Human Form (Level 4, Yang)

Speed: 1 min (Ritual)

Check: Beast Handling

Prerequisite: Canine Form

Normal: This ninja makes their canine companion look like themselves, effectively creating a exact clone. They are still a normal dog, however, and do not gain the ability to speak. In this form, their canine receives their own Initiative check, the ability to utilize weapons (same as their owner) and acts independently in combat. They suffer a -3 penalty to all checks and cannot use wushu themselves.

Sacrifice (1): No penalty to the canine's checks.

Sacrifice (1): Happens instantly (Speed 4).

Twin-Beast Form (Level 5, Yang)

Speed: 1 Round

Check: Beast Handling

Prerequisite: Canine Form, Human Form

Normal: The ninja and canine meld their bodies together, becoming a giant double-headed dog standing up to 20 ft. tall with snarling fangs and a menacing appearance. They receive +20 Temporary Health, +4 bonus to all combat checks (including Initiative), +4 (L) and +8 bonus to Survival, Intimidation and Fortitude checks. They also replenish 3 Stamina points.

Sacrifice (1): Happens instantly (Speed 4)

Sacrifice (1): Raised to +8 bonus to combat checks, +6 (L) damage and a +12 skill bonus.

SIGNATURE WUSHU

The presented wushu lists are extensive, but far from exhaustive. Players will no doubt have certain abilities they wish to give their characters, based on individual storylines and concepts. GMs are encouraged to work with the players to get them just the wushu they want. Below are some tips to get great results.

Note: A GM doesn't have to let players create their own wushu just because they have the XP to do it. Learning and creating new techniques costs the character days (if not weeks) of arduous work. In other cases, a teacher may be necessary to facilitate a difficult lesson learned.

ALTERING

When a player approaches the GM with the idea of giving their ninja a unique wushu, the first thing to do is see if there is an existing wushu that can simulate the effect. Many of the presented wushu can seem very different with altered themes, but may just work as the player wants mechanically. Most cases allow for taking an existing wushu and simply modifying.

COMBINING

Combining aspects of different wushu together is another useful way to create signature wushu. Generally, only wushu with similar chi types can be combined (Yang + Yang or Yin + Yin). Combining effects

from a Yin and Yang wushu often creates disastrous results.

It is also important to note that Attack and Concentration wushu types cannot be combined with each other, as they are in direct opposition of how they are used. Wushu that provide bonuses are not added entirely to each other. The player should choose the base wushu and then add half (rounded down) of the secondary wushu's bonuses too.

The Level of this new wushu is the total of combining the Levels for the two or more wushu that are meshed. For instance, combining a Level 2 and a Level 3 wushu creates a Level 5 wushu (treated normally for the purposes of Chi cost and difficulty to use).

NEW WUSHU

Others, however, might call for creating an entirely new wushu. There are not hard fast rules to this, so this is not something that should be attempted by inexperienced GMs if it can be avoided. Below are important questions to ask when creating the new wushu:

1. Why did the ninja create this new wushu? No wushu is just arbitrarily created. Some ninja create Signature wushu in order to solve some puzzle in their lives or express something inside themselves.

2. What does the wushu do? In other words, what is the wushu's purpose? Does it dissolve walls, raise the temperature in the room or have some other awesome effect? Is it unique or just an improvement/alteration to an existing wushu? Be as clear as possible with what it should accomplish. This will help to determine whether it's a Yin or Yang effect, whether it corresponds to a specific Element and its relative level.

3. Any required Prerequisites? To create or learn a new wushu, the GM may call for certain other wushu to be known as a basis. For instance, if the ninja wants to suddenly learn how to manipulate wind, Wind at the Back (pg 135) may be needed.

4. Is the wushu clan-based or completely original? This is important due to possible bonuses if it is based on the ninja's Clan Gift. However, if it purposefully emulates another clan's wushu, they do suffer a -2 penalty to wushu activation instead.

5. Who else knows about this wushu? Some ninja create wushu and keep them secret, waiting for just the right time to use them. Others create them for

glory and recognition. When others know of someone with unique powers, they often become targets for their secrets.

DETERMINING LEVEL

Once a foundation for the wushu concept is gathered, the player and GM should work together on how it will affect the game and story. Below are general guidelines to help create your own wushu, using existing wushu to get an idea as to how much power it should have at each level. Though, there are exceptions to every rule.

Level 1 – Basic: These wushu should give a one time/limited bonus or perform some small feat. *Examples:* Up to a +6 bonus for 1 type of roll. Up to Molding metal.

Level 2 – Moderate: Wushu can affect others at this level, but are similarly weaker effects like Level 1. *Examples:* Bonuses that last up to 3 Rounds. Up to +5 Damage bonus. Effects like Heal Wound or Favor.

Level 3 – Expert: These wushu have lasting effects (usually for the Scene or Battle) and can have powerful ramifications. They usually take an action just to use, to then have later usage. These should be versatile, but not too powerful. *Examples:* Affect large areas or many opponents. Up to +8 damage. Shadow Tentacles or Pillars of Stone.

Level 4 – Impressive: Begin to push the limits of their concept, creating unique effects unseen by any other wushu. *Examples:* Combined bonuses up to +10. Up to +12 damage. Shed Form or Rise From the Ashes.

Level 5 – Ultimate: This is where concept takes it final, powerful form. *Examples:* Combined bonuses up to +14. Up to +15 damage. Twin-Beast Form or Teleportation.



CHAPTER FIVE: EQUIPMENT AND COMBAT

EQUIPMENT

Many people are defined by the things they possess and others simply have tools to make their jobs easier. Even the most pious monk that was forsaken material possessions knows that their monastery still requires certain goods to continue. This section provides information on using the Class system (See the Class Gift on pg 103), as well as some example equipment that a character may possess.

CLASS AND WEALTH

The Empire utilizes several different monetary systems, ranging from jade to gold to silver to trading and bartering. A noble (Class 5) would obviously have more money at their disposal than a simple land-owner (Class 1), which is reflected when looking for equipment. Instead of keeping track of each character's money by the coin or purchasing and keeping a long list of all their possessions individually, their Class score determines what they can "reasonably" purchase, own or carry. For instance, Class 1 could reasonably allow them to own items like a knife, bed roll or personal journal. Nothing

is subtracted from the character's Class score, as the system assumes they own it based on Class and concept.

Starting equipment is not always limited by Class. With the right concept and background, the GM can approve items outside of the character's Class to be possessed. However, anything they want after the game has already begun is limited by their Class.

BUYING NEW ITEMS

Equipment has a Cost associated with each item, ranging from 1 to 5 or N/A if any Class may purchase the item without restriction. The character need only have the appropriate Class level (equal to or higher) and have access to the item they would like to purchase in the game (i.e. can't buy a sword at the bakery). The character's Class assumes that they would have enough money to purchase the item. CHM + Persuasion checks may be allowed to negotiate a lower price and sometimes let the character obtain items previously outside of their Class range.

BARTERING

Trading goods and services is commonplace among the lower Class people of the Empire. Getting

a wheel for a carriage may be Cost: 1, but a commoner could easily trade a few bags of rice if the wheel salesperson can be convinced that the deal is a fair trade, requiring a CHM + Persuasion (Bartering) check. No matter their check, the character can never barter for items with a cost higher than half their CHM (rounded down).

ITEM LIST

The following items are mostly tools that affect checks or rare items unique to the world of Wu Xing. See Tools on pg 84 for more information. Keep in mind that ninja are not opposed to stealing items they need or recreating them. The costs associated with each item are commonly what can be obtained through legal channels.

Bicycle

Durability: 6 or 10 (AR 4/4), **Size:** 3, **Cost:** 1-2

Description: A simple riding machine on two wheels and operated with one's feet. Some are built from wood, while others are metal and much sturdier. Use of the bicycle provides Movement 7 per POW level, often requiring AGY + Travel checks to avoid obstacles or perform tricks.

Calligraphy Kit

Durability: N/A, **Size:** 2, **Cost:** 2-5

Description: A kit consisting of brushes of many sizes and high-quality parchment. This kit adds a +1 to +4 bonus to Arts (Calligraphy) checks, depending on price.

Camouflage Gear

Durability: N/A, **Size:** 2, **Cost:** 2

Description: Clothing specifically designed for stealth missions. They can be any color, but are usually shades of green for wooded areas, brown for deserts or dark red for night. This suit provides a +3 Stealth bonus in the correct environment.

Carriage

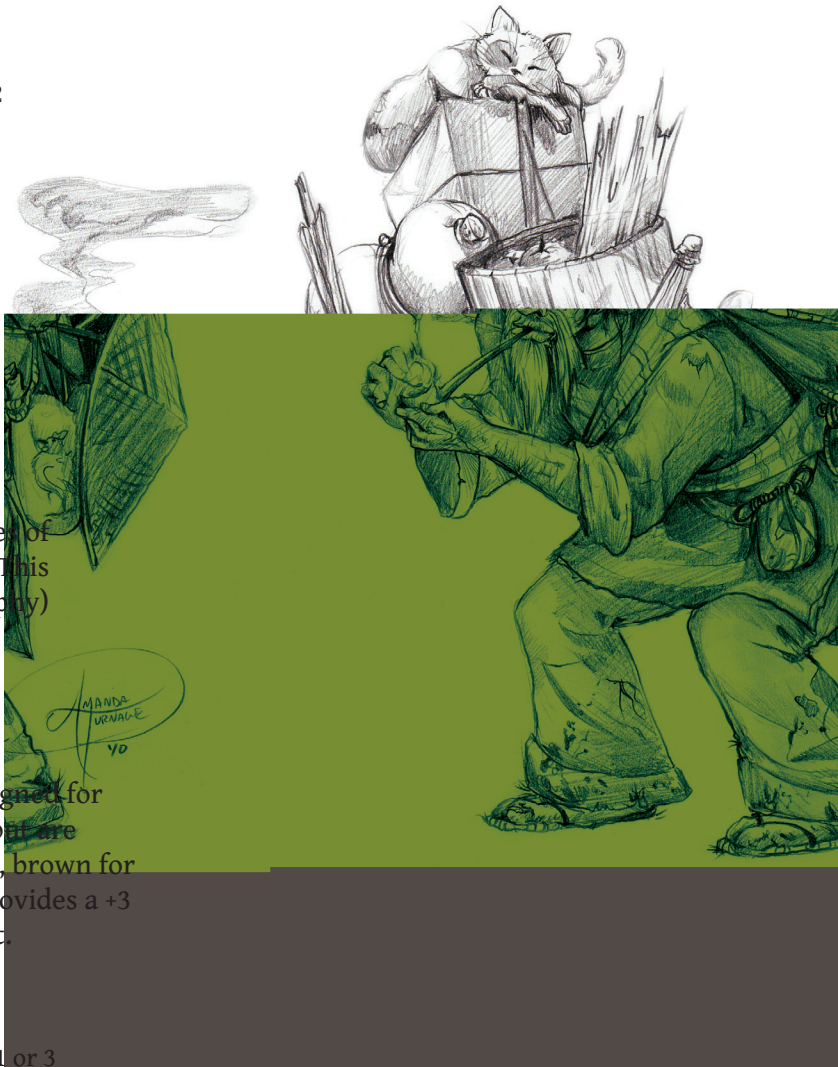
Durability: 16 or 22 (AR 6/4), **Size:** 10, **Cost:** 1 or 3

Description: Carriages are the standard vehicle of the Empire, besides a rickshaw, bicycle or simple walking. Most are drawn by one horse (Movement 25), while others are drawn by two horses (Movement 45). They are good for travel over long distances and can haul rations and other materials well.

Climbing Gear

Durability: 5 (AR 2/0), **Size:** 3, **Cost:** 2

Description: Climbing gear includes lengths of rope, fashioned hooks and often climbing grips to make even the steepest mountain easy to climb. This gear provides a +4 bonus to Athletics (Climb) checks.



*Fireworks***Durability:** N/A, **Size:** 2+, **Cost:** 2**Description:** Fireworks come in many different assortments, from small poppers to aerial displays. They are great for entertainment or distractions.*Herbalist Kit***Durability:** 4, **Size:** 3, **Cost:** 2-3**Description:** Most Holistics checks are made within a workshop where conditions are suited for stitching wounds or concocting potions. A well-prepared herbalist has one of these kits available in case of emergencies. Inside, they can find an assortment of the most common potions, from pain relief to curing infection. Having the right tools provides a +2 to +4 bonus to Holistics checks for medicine in the field.*Lantern***Durability:** 3, **Size:** 2, **Cost:** N/A or 1**Description:** Some lanterns contain a simple candle, while more expensive models are fueled by oil. The amount of light gauges applied Concealment modifiers for darkness for ranged combat at night. Lanterns can glow between 15 to 30 ft.*Lozan***Durability:** 1, **Size:** 1, **Cost:** 3**Description:** A compass that was originally created to align funeral arrangements with the proper feng shui. It was found by sailors to also aid in sea navigation. They are delicate, so they are hard to come by.*Make-up Kit***Durability:** 4, **Size:** 2, **Cost:** 1-3**Description:** This tool kit is great for performers or assassins and includes wigs, make-up and other items to create a great disguise or costume. Depending on the make-up quality, fully-stocked kits provide a +1 to +4 bonus to Deception (Disguise) checks.*Masterwork Weapon***Durability:** Varies, **Size:** Varies, **Cost:** 4+**Description:** Masterwork Weapons are those that are created by legendary smiths to be more durable

and usually easier to use. It gives a +2 bonus to combat checks that use the weapon, but are often only wielded by those of Warrior or Noble Class. To start with the Masterwork Weapon Gift, see pg 105.

*Mechanical Clock***Durability:** 4, **Size:** 2, **Cost:** 4-5**Description:** Usually built from wood with some pieces forged from iron and artistically modeled to be pleasing to the eye. It uses a series of gears that tick to keep accurate account of time. Seldom owned by anyone other than nobles or warriors. Commoners usually regulate their day by sunset and sunrise.*Musical Instrument***Durability:** Varies, **Size:** 1-4, **Cost:** 3-5**Description:** A musical instrument can be a very important tool for any character, allowing them to cheer up their squad or even earn a few coins by performing at the local tavern. Depending on its cost, the instrument can add a +2, +4 or +6 to their Performance checks.*Smoke Bombs***Durability:** N/A, **Size:** 1, **Cost:** Any**Description:** A small ball filled with smoke-creating herbs that, when thrown to the ground, create a thick cloud of smoke. Ninja often use them as a way to escape without leaving an Opening (pg 163) for counterattacks - requires a Draw Weapon Action to use. If thrown into an opponent's face, it can cause them Partial Blindness (pg 170).*Spy Glass***Durability:** 6 (1/0), **Size:** 2, **Cost:** 2+**Description:** A tool used by seaman and scouts, the spy glass allows one to see clearly at distances up to 10x farther than normal. It is 18 inches long when used, but can be collapsed down to 6 inches.*Toolkit***Durability:** 12 (5/5), **Size:** 3, **Cost:** 2-4**Description:** There are many toolkit types, from tailoring toolkits to carpenter toolkits. Having the proper toolkit for the job adds a +3, +4 or +5 bonus to Craft checks, depending on their quality (Cost).

WEAPON LIST

Bi-Su: Your standard knife, easily hidden and used by assassins. It can be one of the deadliest weapons in the right hands due to its size and quickness. **Required Weapon Training:** Knife.

Bo: Usually a 6-foot long staff carved from bamboo or iron wood. It's a length of wood that gives the fighter an advantage at both close and far ranges against their opponent. Any long, sturdy cylindrical object (i.e. broom handle) can be used as an improvised bo. **Required Weapon Training:** Staff.

Bokken: A wooden sword created for use with non-lethal sword techniques. **Required Weapon Training:** Sword.

Dao: A large sword with a long, wide blade. Wielded only by the strongest of warriors, these swords have blades and hilts twice as long as others. They must be wielded two-handed. **Required Weapon Training:** Sword.

Firearm: Empire Soldiers have fashioned a weapon they hope will bring down the ninja... firearms. The long barrel rifle of iron is filled with gunpowder and bullets that can project a blast at a far distance with devastating effect. Takes a long time to reload. **Required Weapon Training:** Firearm.

Ji: This is a long spear used primarily in the Empire's military. At the end of the spear, along with the blade, there are crescent-shaped side blades as well, similar to an ax. **Required Weapon Training:** Ax or Spear.

Kama: Once a simple gardening tool to cut stalks, the kama has become a common weapon in any ninja arsenal. Usually created with a wooden handle with a knife-like blade that extends 90 degrees from the top. **Required Weapon Training:** Ax or Knife.

Katana: The most common sword used throughout the Empire. The blade is roughly longer than two feet long, with differing designs based on region. Some are curved, while others are fashioned with hooks or extra ridges. **Required Weapon Training:** Sword.

Ko: Also known as a dagger-axe, it is created with a 2 ft. to 3 ft. wooden handle with a sharp, hooked blade at the end (like a larger kama). Usually wielded two-handed, but can be used one-handed with a -4 penalty to Strike and Parry checks. **Required Weapon Training:** Ax.



FIREARMS AND EXPLOSIVES

Guns and explosives are relatively new to the Izou Empire, created to give their soldiers an edge over the ninja and their magic. While a ninja could pick up a firearm and use it, ninja cannot begin with knowledge on how to use them. Tucked away in their hidden villages, they aren't taught the fundamental rules to wielding a firearm safely and could end up seriously hurting themselves in the process. For this reason, most ninja stay from them.

Likewise, the empire keeps close tabs on who has access to their gun, as well as their grenades that can deal 12 (L) to a wide area. The Izou Empire have overtaken several ninja villages with these weapons.



Kunai: Once a simple gardening shovel, the kunai is now akin a special knife made specifically for throwing. The edges are often (but not always) sharp, but its diamond-shaped point can easily pierce an opponent. **Required Weapon Training:** Kunai.

Manrikigusari: A specially-designed chain whip with weights at its ends for striking. When wielded, it is kept constantly swinging between attacks to maintain momentum and control. They are created in three, seven and nine link versions. **Required Weapon Training:** Chain.

Ninjato: A shorter, lighter sword than the katana. It's weighting allows it a more flexible to use and it can be more easily thrown as well. **Required Weapon Training:** Sword or Knife.

Nunchaku: Weapons made from two wooden (or metal) handles attached by a chain in the middle. Wielded with a fast-moving barrage of movement, they are difficult to control for a novice. **Required Weapon Training:** Chain.

Qiang: Similar looking to a staff, the qiang is a long, often wooden weapon with a bladed edge at the end. It gives its wielder a far reach and deadly force. This weapon is quite common in the Empire's military. **Required Weapon Training:** Spear.

Sai: A small weapon with a pointed, dagger-shaped baton in the center and two curved prongs projecting from its handle. This weapon is primarily used in defense, capable of blocking, disarming and

WEAPON CHART

MELEE WEAPONS	Spd	Dmg	Strike	Throw	Parry	Type	Size	Cost
Bi-Su	+1	+0 (L)	+2	+2	+0	Knife	1	N/A
Bo	+2	+3 (NL)	+2	+0	+2	Staff	3	1
Bokken	+1	+2 (NL)	+2	+0	+2	Sword	2	N/A
Dao	+3	+3 (L)	+3	-1	+2	Sword	3	3
Ji	+4	+4 (L)	+4	-1	+1	Ax/Spear	4	3
Kama	+2	+2 (L)	+1	+2	+1	Ax/Knife	2	1
Katana	+2	+2 (L)	+2	+0	+2	Sword	2	2
Ko	+3	+3 (L)	+2	+1	+1	Ax	3	2
Manrikigusari	+3	+3 (NL)	+1	+1	+2	Chain	2	N/A
Ninjato	+2	+1 (L)	+1	+2	+1	Sword/ Knife	2	1
Nunchaku	+2	+2 (NL)	+2	+0	+2	Chain	2	2
Qiang	+3	+2 (L)	+2	+1	+1	Spear	3	1
Sai	+1	+1 (NL)	+1	+0	+3	Sai	1	N/A
Sanjiegun	+3	+4 (NL)	+3	-1	+2	Chain/ Staff	3	3
Tessen	+1	+0 (L)	+1	+1	+2	Claw/ Knife	1	2
Tsin (Metal)	+2	+4 (NL)	+1	+2	+1	Mace	2	2
Tsin (Wood)	+2	+2 (NL)	+1	+1	+2	Mace	2	N/A
Urumi	+1	+2 (L)	+3	+0	+1	Chain	2	3
Zhua	+1	+1 (L)	+2	N/A	+2	Claw	1	2

RANGED WEAPONS	Spd	Dmg	Throw	Range	RS	Type	Size	Cost
Firearm	4	15 (L)	+0	30/60/90	15-IQ	Firearm	3	3
Kunai	2	+1 (L)	+4	20/40/80	N/A	Kunai	1	N/A
Shuriken	2	2 (L)	+4	10/20/40	N/A	Any	1	N/A
Sling	4	+2 (NL)	+3	15/30/50	6-AGY	Bow/Kunai	1	N/A
Yari	5	+3 (L)	+2	30/55/80	N/A	Spear	3	1
Yumi	3	Varies	Varies	25/50/100	11-AGY	Bow	2	1

ARROW TYPES	Throw	Damage	Cost	Special
Blunts	+3	+4 (NL)	1	Designed with a dull tip. Great for practice.
Broadheads	+3	+3 (L)	N/A	Standard arrows made of wood with metal tip.
Target Points	+2	+3 (L)	3	AP 3 - Arrows designed to pierce armor



WEAPON VALUES

Speed: Speed weapon adds to Actions/Reactions.
Damage: Extra damage the weapon deals.
Strike: Modifier to Strike when using weapon.
Throw: Modifier to Throw when using weapon.
Parry: Modifier to Parry when using weapon.
Range: Short/Medium/Long range values in yards. Medium -4 penalty to Throw. Long -8 penalty to Throw.

Reload speed (RS): Speed to reload for another shot

Type: Weapon Style needed to avoid -4 penalty

Size: 1 - Can be hidden in Hand, 2 - Can be hidden in coat, 3+ - Cannot be hidden. Wielders suffer a -2 penalty to all combat rolls unless their POW is equal to or higher than twice the weapon's Size

Cost: Minimum Class needed to acquire the weapon without Bartering



stabbing all without much effort. **Required Weapon Training:** Sai.

Sanjiegun: A weapon crafted from three staves connected by rings or chains. It is often clumsy and is more a weapon designed for personal defense.

Required Weapon Training: Chain or Staff.

Shuriken: Small, flat and sharpened discs, forged into any number of shapes (usually multi-pointed stars). Some are also fashioned from nails or long reeds of wood. They are light-weight and aerodynamic, but weak against armored or stronger opponents. Training in shuriken is standard for all ninja.

Required Weapon Training: Any.

Sling: By placing a stone in the cloth sling and spinning it, a trained fighter can launch it at their target with great accuracy. **Required Weapon Training:** Bow or Kunai.

Tessen: A metal fan with a very sharp edge. While they may appear simple, they are difficult to wield and deadly beautiful. **Required Weapon Training:** Knife or Claw.

Tsin (Metal): A metal baton forged with a heavy weight at its end. The metal Tsin requires slightly more effort for more bone-crunching damage. Sometimes fashioned with a spiked ball at the end for more damage. **Required Weapon Training:** Mace.

Tsin (Wood): A basic wooden club usable for offense or defense. Very common among bandits.

Required Weapon Training: Mace.

Urumi: Also known as the Coiled Sword, a long sword made of flexible steel. Sharp enough to cut into flesh, but bendable enough to be rolled into a tight coil. **Required Weapon Training:** Chain or Sword

Yari: A long pointed staff that is designed for accurate throwing. Used by commoners to hunt or to take out opponents at a great distance away. **Required Weapon Training:** Spear.

Yumi: A bow, usually longer than the wielder themselves, traditionally made of bamboo, wood and leather. The character's POW behind the pull, the arrow type they use and their AGY for reloading are important. **Required Weapon Training:** Bow.

Zhua: A hand claw, usually worn similar to a glove with three knife-like blades that protrude on top of the hand for enhanced offensive and optimal defensive capabilities. **Required Weapon Training:** Claw.

ARMOR LIST

Bamboo Armor: Crafted from lightweight bamboo reeds laced together to withstand attacks.

Chain Mail: Armor crafted by hundreds of iron ringlets to protect their body. Provides great protection from slashing weapons, but less from piercing weapons.

Leather Armor: Lightweight and sturdy, provides protection and relative freedom of movement.

Scale Mail: Created from plates of metal and leather that resemble scales on a dragon.

Stone Armor: Leather armor with stone medallions woven into it for additional protection.

Empire Armor: The best warriors of the Empire are provided with armor made from leather and iron, with ornate designs and oni helmets. The Empire also has a special quality to their armor that the ninja do not have... Bulletproof protection. When shot with a firearm, this armor absorbs the normal Lethal damage AR amount and converts the remaining to Non-Lethal damage. This non-Lethal damage is not further absorbed by the Non-lethal AR. They can usually take 3 shots before needing to be replaced.



the steed's Movement instead of their own, but moving any farther than 10 ft. uses +1 Action for the Round. A Rush Action while mounted adds +4 bonus to Strike and +4 Damage to their next attack. Using wushu on a steed raises the activation Difficulty by +4.

If the steed is crippled or brought down, the character may make a Moderate (20) Balance check to avoid being thrown to the ground, losing 1 Action for the Round and needing to make a Stand Action.

MULTIPLE OPPONENTS

In situations where a fighter may come up against multiple opponents, they must be smart about their Actions or they may find themselves in a world of hurt. At the beginning of each Round, a character can target one opponent and launch all their Actions at them normally (while still performing Reactions to any Actions done toward them). But if they choose to take an Action against more than one opponent, they receive a cumulative -2 penalty to Strike or Throw each time they change their target. This penalty is dropped at the end of each Round.

OFF-HAND ACTIONS

If a character is forced to make an Action with his or her off-hand, it is done so at a -4 penalty. This can happen for a variety of reasons (i.e. their main hand may have been injured, severed or even bound). This penalty is removed by taking the Ambidexterity Gift (pg 103).

PULLED STRIKES

Pulling strikes are used in situations where the character feels the need to hold back. This is often necessary when facing much weaker opponents without wanting to inflict full damage to them or if the character hopes to fool another into thinking they are weaker than they appear. They can make a reflexive Moderate (20) IQ + AGY check to voluntarily half any Non-Lethal damage dealt or change any Lethal damage into Non-Lethal (i.e. hitting with the flat of their blade). This can even be used with ranged attacks, either to make the opponent think they missed or to consciously strike points of the body that are less lethal (for instance, if they want to keep the target alive).

RANGE

Each firearm and thrown weapon has a particular range that it is most effective when using. The Weapons chart provides this information, broken down into Short, Medium and Long ranges. Characters suffer no penalty to Throw or Damage when attacking at Short range, a -2 penalty to Throw and -1 Damage when at Medium range, and a -4 penalty to Throw and -2 Damage when at Long range. Range for Hurling Weapons is $(IQ+AGY/x2/x3)$.

SACRIFICED ACTIONS

Characters may reflexively sacrifice one of their Actions for the Round in order to receive a +5 bonus to any Reaction check. Only one Action can be sacrificed per check. This ability cannot be used during an Assault Round (pg 170).

SIMULTANEOUS ACTIONS

Generally, fighters may perform one task for the cost 1 Action for that Round. The number of Actions they can take accounts for their speed of body and thought already, but there are times when one must multi-task. They may be trying to decipher a code in their head while attacking their opponent, trying to steer a carriage and parry shuriken or may just strike with a one-two combo. When attempting to perform two tasks for the price of one Action, each suffers a -10 penalty. Taking the Ambidexterity Gift (pg 103) reduces the penalty for dual strikes and other things associated with using one's hands equally, but not for Actions like Skill Use. The total Speed is equal to the higher of the two Actions plus 1 and costs 1 Stamina point.

TARGETED STRIKES

Sometimes characters want to Strike their opponents in particular parts of the body. Maybe they know their opponent has a bad knee, a wounded shoulder or a blind spot. They may also be an assassin that is being paid handsomely to shoot a poison-tipped arrow through their target's eye specifically. A precise strike is achievable, but is always hard. The attacker suffers a -3 Throw penalty to hit a certain part of the Torso, a -6 penalty to hit an arm or leg or similar appendage, a -9 penalty to hit the Head or hands/feet and a -12 penalty to hit an eye

or a certain pressure point.

The exact result of a Targeted strike is left up to the GM. A strike to the hand that is holding a weapon may cause a POW + Athletics check to keep their grasp. A Strike to a part of the body without Armor would ignore any AR. A Non-Lethal strike to the head may be treated as Lethal or may invoke an immediate Knockout effect.

TERRAIN

Battle can happen anywhere. Some ninja fight on rooftops and others through overgrown forests. Some terrain can give penalties to certain movements. Here are a few examples of how terrain can affect combat checks. **Note:** Penalties for rain are counted as “Concealment” and fighting on hills is counted as “High Ground”.

- **Populated:** While generally avoided, some battles take place with bystanders. The GM may give characters a penalty to Strike or Throw based on how many people they don’t want to hit. Of course, if they don’t care then no penalty is needed. If people are in close proximity, they may have a negative to Dodge as they find it hard to move around.

- **Ice:** An icy terrain makes the characters prone to slipping and sliding. The GM may ask for Balance checks for any action that requires Speed 6+, as these usually require a lot of movement. If the character slips, a Stand Action is then needed.

- **Dense Trees:** When fighting in an area with trees that have grown very close together, the GM may give a penalty to Throw checks. If attacking with a Strike, the weapon may get stuck in (forcing a Draw Weapon Action to take it out) or bounce off of trees (forcing a Strength check against Disarming).

- **Treetops:** When fighting in the treetops, ninja have to be careful of where they land. The GM should call for Balance and Jump checks every Round to make sure they are staying up.

- **Overgrowth/Mud/Wetness:** In an area with lots of roots sticking out of the ground or one that has been drenched with water (i.e. storm or a fresh street clean), the GM may call for Balance checks to keep from being tripped or slipping.

STAYING ALIVE

TYPES OF DAMAGE

Non-Lethal (NL): This type of damage comes from blunt attacks, such as unarmed strikes, clubs or other bludgeoning weapons. A character that is brought to Health 0 by Non-lethal damage falls unconscious automatically (no resistance check). If they continue to take damage from a Non-lethal source, additional Non-Lethal damage is converted to Lethal. This damage is recorded at the top of the damage box on the character sheet. Non-lethal damage is recovered at a rate of 5 per hour of rest or 3 per hour of light activity (no combat).

Lethal (L): This type of damage comes from attacks that wound more than just the surface, from bladed weapons to special wushu to firearms to poisons that can cause serious internal damage. Attacks to weak spots with a Non-lethal weapon can often be treated as Lethal (See Targeted Strikes). After losing half or more Health from Lethal damage, they begin to Bleed (pg 175). If they reach Health 0 from Lethal damage, the character must check against Death (pg 175). This damage is recorded on the bottom of the damage box on the character sheet. Lethal damage heals at a rate of 5 per day of rest or 3 per day of light activity (cleaning, etc. no combat).

Temporary Health: Some wushu effects grant the character additional Health for a short time. This Temporary Health is calculated separate from their total Health and can take the brunt of the hit for them and any AR still protects this Health. When this additional Health dissipates, further damage is applied normally to the character’s regular Health. The combination of Temporary Health and AR (pg 170) makes some opponents almost indestructible.

BATTLE SCARS

There are many ways that a character can gain a scar. Scarring is prevalent after an infection and some scar naturally from even the slightest wounds. Others have a natural healing quality and never scar, no matter how bad the damage to their body.

The option to keep a scar is considered more of a storytelling tool than a mechanic and can be implemented by the GM or the player to enhance their

concept or personal storyline. Some ninja, for instance, practice self mutilation and wear their scars as badges to show the rest of the world. Players may likewise want to keep a scar from a particularly momentous battle in the story or as a reminder of the kinds of action NOT to take after an accident.

BLEEDING

After losing half or more Health from Lethal damage, the character is considered to be seriously wounded enough to start bleeding. As the character continues to bleed, they take 2 (L) per Round (or more if the GM decides the wound is particularly terrible) until their wounds are bandaged (or cauterized) and the bleeding is stopped. This requires a Moderate (20) IQ + Holistics check for emergency health. Depending on how chaotic combat is, the difficulty of this roll may even be raised to Tough (30).

DEATH

After being brought to Health 0 from Lethal damage, the character begins to die. In an attempt to stay alive, they can spend 1 Stamina point to make a Moderate (20) Death check. If successful, they fall unconscious, incapacitated but not dead.

If they continue to take damage (such as Bleeding), they must make another check each time and add the amount of damage taken to the Difficulty. A failed check means the character dies. A Holistics check (using the same Difficulty standard) can be used to stabilize the victim, bandage their wounds and bring them to a point where they can start healing. However, without the proper herbs and spiritual healing, they will still eventually die. If the character reaches -10 Health, they are dead and receive no additional chances to live.

Example: Sato has taken Lethal damage, reducing him to 0 Health. He makes a Moderate (20) check with his VIG + Fortitude + bonus against Death and rolls 22 (success!). However, he was bleeding and takes 2 (L) at the start of the next Round. His check is now

Difficulty 22 (20 + 2 damage). He rolls 24 (success!). The next Round, he loses another 2 (L) and his check raises to Difficulty 24. Sato rolls 23 (failure) and takes his last breathe. If he had rolled 24+, he would have survived.

DEPRIVATION

It's a dire situation when a character is without food or water for extended periods. When this occurs, they slowly lose Health and Stamina points. They can go up to three days just fine, but they lose 1 Stamina and 5 Health for each additional day. If they start eating and drinking again, they regain Stamina at a rate of 1 per day and regain Health as normal. For suffocation (i.e. being held underwater), follow normal Holding Breath rules (pg 80).



DISEASE

A number of different sicknesses exist in the world of Wu Xing, from wasting diseases to the worst of fevers that only the brightest herbal minds can cure. Each has their own very potent (often deadly effects). Difficulties for Disease checks are based on the strength of the source versus the effects of the sickness (GM's decision). Sexually transmitted diseases may be Tough (30) to avoid catching the disease, while a kid with a cold would be Simple (10). Checks are made at first exposure, but additional checks may be needed if they have continuous contact with the source.

Curing a disease is not that different from creating an antidote for a poison. After discerning what type of disease the victim has, medicine men can combine complex amalgamations of different ingredients (from ground horn of a rhino to a distilled tiger eye). A IQ + Holistics check is needed to put it all together, with a Difficulty based on how difficult the potion recipe is and how rare the disease.

FALLING

Falling from heights causes 3 (NL) for every 10 ft. before they hit the ground. Damage is negligible from less than 10 ft. When they land, they can make a Roll check with Difficulty 10 + 3 for every 10 ft they fell. If the check is successful, they only take half damage (rounded down) instead.

FIRE

Fire deals Lethal damage in all cases. The devastation it can cause to homes, belongings and the human body is incredible to witness and difficult to survive. Damage for fire is based on how large the fire is versus how much of the character's skin is unprotected. If the character catches fire or receives fire damage from a continuous source, they will continue to take that same amount of damage every Round until the fire is extinguished.

Candle	1-2 (L)
Torch	4 (L)
Campfire	8 (L)
Bonfire	14 (L)

INFECTION

A character that takes Lethal damage during a fight must obtain the right salves and herbs to stave off infection. If they do not have access, they can make a check against Disease to resist. Difficulty is based on the amount of damage taken (see below). If the check fails, they cannot heal any Lethal damage (Non-lethal heals normally) and takes an additional 2 (L) per day until they can visit an herbalist. If this period extends to three days, they also lose 1 Stamina points per day that cannot be regained until the infection is gone.

If no herbalists are available, they have the option of amputating their limb or carving out the infected patch of muscle to get rid of the infection and stop its spreading. This forces a new check to resist this new wound becoming infected as well. Taking damage from an irregular weapon (i.e. a jagged knife or broken glass) raises the Difficulty by 3. Immediate attention and disinfection (within 2 hours) removes the need for this check.

Simple (10): 25% or less Lethal damage
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Moderate (20): 26% - 50% Lethal damage
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Tough (30): 51% or more Lethal damage

INSANITY

Some characters hear voices in their head, have intense and irrational phobias, suffer with acute depression or mood swings or even have multiple personalities in their body. Players are encouraged to be creative when approaching this type of character concept, but not to take it too far. Insanities change the entire face of the story if their insanity becomes larger than the squad itself. That type of character is not only unplayable, but not enjoyable to play along side. If the character wishes to push off the effects of their Insanity when it creeps up on them, they can make an Insanity check. Difficulty is based on the strength of outside influence and stress levels of the character.

PAIN PENALTIES

Pain is a very obvious reality of combat and has adverse effects to a character experiencing it. When they take more and more damage, their reaction time and combat abilities break down and weaken,

reflected by penalties to their checks. When a character's Health falls down to half (rounded down), all their checks suffer a -2 penalty, a -4 penalty to all checks at 1/4 Health (rounded down) and a -6 penalty to all checks at 1/8 Health (rounded down). These values are recorded to the right of Health on the character sheet for convenient reference. The character can attempt to push off the pain effects before an Action or Reaction by spending 1 Stamina point and making a reflexive Pain check to apply mind over matter. Difficulty is Simple (10) for 1/2 Health, Moderate (20) for 1/4 Health and Tough (30) for 1/8 Health. A failed check means the character still acts with a Pain penalty.

1/2 Health	-2 penalty to all Rolls
1/4 Health	-4 penalty to all Rolls
1/8 Health	-6 penalty to all Rolls

POISONS AND POTIONS

Recipes come along in Wu Xing with a variety of different ingredients and purposes. Some are recreational drugs like opium (a popular drug of the noble classes). Some are poisons created with staggeringly deadly effects. Others are potions that have the ability to heal or calm nerves.

Mechanically, they all work the same. Whether the effect is a detriment or a pleasure, the character taking it can choose to accept the effects or attempt to resist with a Poison check. Preparing a potion requires the right recipe, as any child who throws random ingredients together soon discovers. They can be created by anyone with Holistics 5+, but special concoctions may require Holistics 10+ at the GM's discretion. Powerful recipes are also quite difficult and often rare items to find, requiring extensive quests or teachers in order to learn.

There are a variety of effects that poisons and drugs can cause. Starting Difficulty is determined by the way the poison or potion is taken: Simple (10) for inhalation, Moderate (20) for ingesting and Tough (30) for taking intravenously, with additional Difficulty based on possible side-effects like those listed below. The GM is encouraged to come up with any others or adjust the Difficulty/effects based on the individual recipe being used.

- **Lethal Damage (+1-10):** Each point of Difficulty causes 2 (L) damage. Rotted food would be a +1, while an intricately crafted mystical poison would be +10. As a general rule, However, if the drug or poison has been cut with other substances, it may also cause internal damage to the victim.

- **Addiction (+4):** The victim acquires a craving for the drug, causing them to seek it out actively (even if it destroys their life physically or socially).

- **Awake (+2):** Instantly wakes a sleeper.

- **Blindness (+4):** They go blind over the course of the next minute. Sight returns within the hour.

- **Hallucination (+3 or +8):** The first diluted effect alters the victim's worldview, making it calmer or slightly blurry and giving a -3 penalty to most checks. The latter more powerful effect creates blinding bliss that the victim needs to make an Insanity check against just to go on with their everyday lives.

- **Sleep (+5):** The victim falls unconscious immediately.

- **Truth-telling (+10):** They suffer a -6 penalty to Deception when answering questions. If they fail their check, they accidentally blurt out the truth.

- **Paralysis (+4):** The character cannot move their body. They can spend 1 Stamina point to negate the effects for a Round.

- **Irritation (+3):** Their skin develops rashes and their eyes water. The constant annoyance gives a -2 penalty to all checks.

- **Weakening (+5):** The victim is drained of 2 Stamina points, +1 additional point lost for every 4 they miss their Poison check by.

Antidotes

Potions can always be counter-acted with an antidote. Antidotes eliminate the harmful substance from the victim's body and return the victim to a normal state very quickly, sometimes in as little as 1 Round. Other circumstances (such as chi-infused potions) may require up to a week for the antidote to take effect.

They can be created by anyone with Holistics 7+. It also requires an understanding of the drug they are eliminating, collecting the proper medicinal ingredients and a contested IQ + Holistics check to beat the check of the potion creator.

TRAPS

Ninja are secretive and stealthy by nature. This doesn't mean that they always have to do the job themselves. Instead, many clans have come to use traps, usually in defense of their territory. Most traps are set up in off-limit areas or on the invisible borders that separate one clan's land from another's, each set on stopping any fluctuation in their land. Others can be made to defend one's campsite or to thwart pursuers. They are invaluable to a ninja.

To create a trap the character makes an IQ + Crafts check. If the character is well-versed on traps, the Difficulty is based upon the materials they have available versus the time they have to place the trap. If they have ample materials and plenty of time to construct, then a Simple (10) check is all that's usually needed. A Moderate (20) check is required if they have one but not the other and a Tough (30) if they are strapped for time and have little in the way of materials to construct it (essentially jury-rigging a trap). This Difficulty should be raised if the character is a novice or unfamiliar with the particular trap they are preparing.

To hide the trap, the character must also make an IQ + Stealth check contested by the victims INS + Perception needed to avoid tripping the ambush. Most are set off by a tripped wire, but other (more advanced) traps can use pressure plates or even motion sensing. For example, many areas in Hidden Strand territory have intricate wire mazes requiring several AGY + Acrobatics checks to not trip their traps.

Chi Traps (+X Chi cost): Characters with Crafts 10+ can use their wushu as traps as well. One could recreate a Quicksand (pg 126) effect if a stone entryway is stepped on, while another could activate Spider's Scry (pg 149) as soon as someone touches a wire. Activating the wushu requires a +X Chi cost, allowing the wushu to lay dormant for X number of days until the trap is sprung or particular condition is met. After it is used, it must be set again, just like any trap. GMs should use discretion as allowing other than Attack wushu, as not every wushu is suitable for this use.

Example Traps

- **Attack Traps:** The victim springs a trap that launches some sort of attack. Ninja can set up any kind of weapon in this trap, from kunai and shuriken to spears that rise from the ground to stop horses to poison darts. If tripped, a number of weapons launch at the victim with a +5 bonus to Throw, plus another +2 bonus to Throw for each additional weapon launched at the same time. This type of trap is contested by a single Dodge check, unless the weapons are set to go off at intervals.

- **Capture Traps:** If tripped, the victim is captured, either in a falling cage and rising net. Others latch onto the victim's leg and suspend them from a tree. The victim receives a Dodge check to contest the Crafts check made to create the trap. This type of trap is easy, but gives the victims a chance to break through the trap (if they can).

- **Explosion Traps:** The Empire has become quite adept at using gunpowder to create huge explosions when their traps are tripped. If tripped, the victim can attempt a Tough (30) Dodge check or suffer 10-15 (L).

- **Immobilize Traps:** If tripped, the trap springs out handcuffs or possibly paralysis spray that keep the victim unmoving. Victims can make a Dodge check with a +5 bonus against the trap creator's Crafts check. Moderate (20) to Tough (30) Strength checks can be made after being caught in an attempt to free oneself.

- **Knockdown Traps:** Whether a giant log that swings out of the air or a leg rope attached to a rubber tree that flings their opponent into the air, a knockdown tree is dangerous. The victim is not only knocked down, but also thrown backward up to 30 ft. (GM's discretion). In circumstances like that of the giant log (especially if there are spikes attached), the victim may also sustain damage if they are not successful in avoiding the trap.

SAMPLE COMBAT

Below is a sample of how combat in Wu Xing: The Ninja Crusade works. It is fast-paced, fun and completely brutal all at all the same time. This example uses Kristen's Atsuko Anzai (pg 119) versus Sake, a character made by Christopher Lee Simmons during playtesting.

ROUND 1

GM: Your masters have come to a disagreement over the hand of a woman. As strange as it sounds, they've chosen female ninja from their clans to represent them in this duel to decide who gets her. As a duty to your clan, you stand before each other ready to fight for your honor. The masters give their nods for the duel to begin.

Kristen: I don't like this duel, but I'll do it for my clan!

Chris: Don't bet on winning!

They roll for Initiative. Kristen rolls 16 for a total of 36 (16 + 20 Initiative) and Chris rolls 3 for a total of 23 (3 + 20 Initiative). That means that Kristen starts on Count 1 while Chris starts on Count 5.

GM: Kristen has Initiative, so you're up first.

Kristen: Hoping to get the advantage, I'm going to use Lightning Speed right up front (Speed 10).

Kristen spends 2 Yang points and rolls a 7 on her wushu activation check for a total of 15 (7 + 8 to check) vs. a Difficulty 15, which succeeds. Chris doesn't need to take any action in respond.

GM: Anzai forms the necessary hand signs, boosting her speed.

Chris: Let's see if she can get out of the way of this then. I'll make a Full Attack (Speed 4, Damage +3), launching forward with a knuckle to her face.

Kristen: I'll Parry (Speed 3) that quickly.

To attack, Chris rolls a 4 for a total of 11 (4 + 7 Strike). In response, Kristen rolls a 14 for a total of 20 (14 + 6 Parry). This means that Kristen has successfully avoided damage.

Chris: Not done yet. A quick jab to her gut (Speed 2, +3 Strike, Damage +1).

Kristen: Ha! I'll use the Beautiful Dance (Speed 3) to boost my Reaction power.

Chris rolls a 7 for a total of 20 (7 + 10 + 3) on his attack. Kristen then spends 2 Yang Chi points, Sacrifices 1 Yang Chi to gain 5 additional points and makes a wushu activation check, rolling a 14 for a total of 22 (14 + 8) vs. Difficulty 15. She succeeds, so she now adds her Performance (+6) to all her Reactions that are also performed at a -1 Speed. She also Sacrifices a Yang Chi to extend the duration to 1 minute.

She makes a Parry (Speed 2) check rolling another 14 for a total of 26 (14 + 6 + 6), successfully parry this attack as well.

Chris: Dammit. I'm going to use my own wushu on her now, Ink Touch (Speed 3).

Kristen: Can't let that happen. I'm definitely Parrying (Speed 2) this as well.

Chris rolls 13 on a wushu activation check for a total of 22 (13 + 3 + 6 Strike) vs. Kristen's Parry rolls of 15 for a total of 27 (15 + 6 from Wushu + 6 Parry).

GM: The masters watch as Sake initiates attack after attack, not one of them landing. Sake's master grumbles, while Anzai's smirks in glee. Round 1 is over without a drop of blood shed. Anzai didn't use one of her Actions, but also Overstepped by 1, so she receives no modifier (+2 from Action, -2 from Overstep) to next Round's Initiative.

ROUND 2

At the start of Round 2, they reroll Initiative. Chris rolls another 3 for a total of 23 again. Kristen roll a 4 for a total of 28 (4 + 20 + 4 from wushu). Kristen begins on Count 1 while Chris starts on Count 3.

Kristen: Let's test the waters with a quick Sweep (Speed 3) to see if she can keep on her toes.

Chris: I'll Parry (Speed 3).

Kristen rolls 5 for a total of 15 (5 + 10 Strike) and Chris rolls an 8 for a total of 14 (8 + 6 Parry). This forces a Difficulty (15) Balance check, but Chris easily makes it by rolling a 12 for a total of 21 (12 + 9 vs. Balance).

GM: You strike Sake's leg and it trips her up, but it only seems that way due to her drunken style.

Chris: That all you got? Sake smiles in delight.

Kristen: Oh I have much more. Making a Full Attack (Speed 4, Damage +3).

Chris: I'm definitely Parrying (Speed 3).

Kristen rolls a 1, which is an automatic failure. The GM determines that Anzai overextended herself and loses 1 Stamina point. Chris has no need to roll for his Reaction, but still moves about the Combat Tracker.

Kristen: I'm done playing around. I pull my twin swords (Speed 5 – Size 2 + Size 2 + 1), which adds +1 to the Speed to Actions/Reactions. And that's my last Action.

Chris: Oh, you want to play like that? I'll Withdraw Weapon (Speed 3) too.

Chris spends 1 Yang Chi and makes a wushu activation check with a 4 for a total of 10 (4 + 6) vs. Difficulty 10. He succeeds.

GM: Sake reveals a tattoo on her left arm, reaching into it and suddenly drawing out a ninjato (Adds +2 Speed to Actions/Reactions) from it. You have the Initiative Chris. What's your move?

Chris: Going for the jugular with a Light Attack (Speed 4, +3 Strike, +1 (L)).

Kristen: I'll Parry that easily (Speed 3 – Note that the swords give a +1 Speed modifier, but her earlier wushu also gives a -1 Speed modifier to Reactions).

Chris rolls 18 for a total of 29 (15 + 8 + 3) while Kristen rolls a Natural 20 for a total of 36 (20 + 10 + 6 from wushu) to deflect the blade away. Kristen has the option to heal 2 Health of deal 2 damage to Sake due to her Natural 20. She's lost no Health yet, so she deals the first damage of the battle.

Chris: Just luck, so I'm doing the same attack.

Kristen: I've tasted first blood, so bring it on! I'm Parrying again.

Chris rolls a 13 for a total of 24 (13 + 8 + 11) and Kristen also rolls a 14 for a total of 29 (13 + 9 + 6). Kristen wins.

GM: No one has Actions left, so that's the end of the round. The Masters are getting restless in this stalemate.

Chris: No problem. The third round's the charm.

Kristen: Yes, I'll make short work of you this Round.

ROUND 3

Rerolling Initiative, Chris rolls 8 for a total of 28 (8 + 20) and Kristen rolls 2 for a total of 26 (2 + 20 + 4). Very close, Chris starts on Count 1 and Kristen starts on Count 2.

Chris: I'm slashing again with my sword to wipe that smugness off Anzai's face (Light Attack – Speed 4, Strike +3, Damage +1).

Kristen: I'll deflect (Parry 3).

Chris rolls 5 for a total of 16 (5 + 8 + 3), but Kristen rolls 8 for a total of 22 (8 + 10 + 6), blocking the attack as she expected.

Kristen: Seems my wushu is too strong for you, eh?

Chris: We'll see.

GM: Now you are both on Count 5, so this means simultaneous Actions. Since you have the same Initiative bonuses (+20), the character with the lowest AGY must announce their actions first. That's you Chris.

Chris: I'm going for an Ink Touch, cause she's toast if I get that off.

Kristen: I'll Parry with one sword and then perform a light Attack with the other (Speed 4). Twin sword training is the best.

Chris rolls a 4 for a total of 15 (4 + 8 + 3), but Kristen rolls a 6 for a total of 16 (6 + 10 + 6 from wushu – 6 for multiple actions). She parries Sake's hand with a sword, dealing half her damage as well (3 (L)).

Then Kristen rolls for a Light attack for her second Action, getting a 16 for a total of 25 (16 + 12 – 6 + 3). Chris needs to Parry this (Speed 3), but fails with a roll of 12 for a total of 23 (12 + 11). Anzai deals an additional 5 (L).

GM: The masters relish in the real sign of bloodshed, Anzai's master clapping in happiness.

Kristen: There's more where that came from. Doing another Split Attack, two Light Strikes (Speed 3).

Chris: Parrying is my only option here.

Kristen rolls two attacks, a total 11 and 25. Chris rolls a 13 and 17 to react, taking another 5 (L). And then attacks with the same arrangements again with a 23 and 21, while Chris reacts with a 17 and 10, taking another 10 (L).

GM: The masters stand and motion for their fighters to stop. The leader of the Virtuous Body Gardeners bows humbly to the leader of the Blazing Dancers. Healers are called to aid Sake in recovery and Anzai returns to her personal goals.

ROUND 1

Anzai

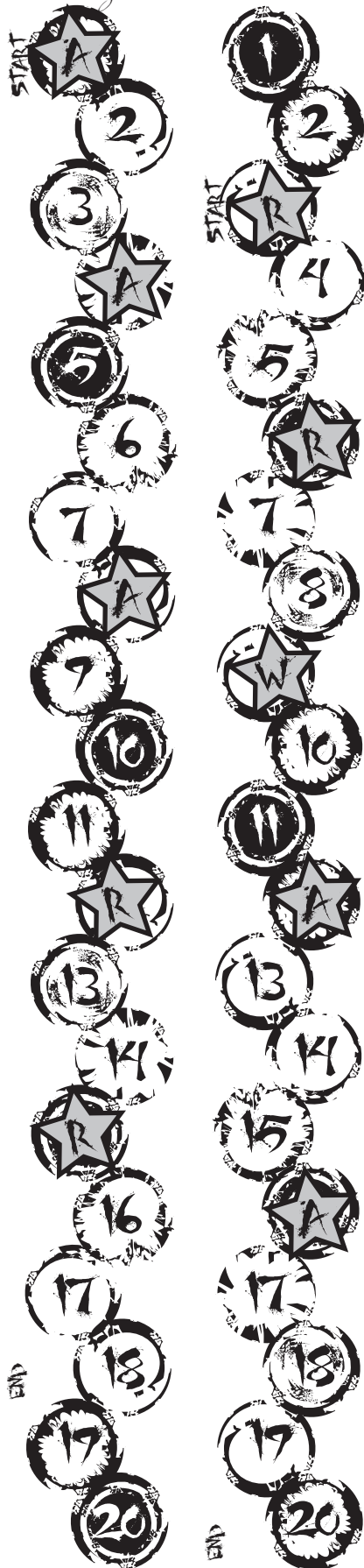
Sake



ROUND 2

Anzai

Sake



ROUND 3

Anzai

Sake



CHAPTER SIX: ANTAGONISTS

Characters do not exist in a vacuum. On their adventures, they travel the Izou Empire (and the world) meeting other interesting non-player characters (NPCs) and encountering dangerous foes. NPCs are controlled by the GM to create a lush, immersive world for their players. This chapter focuses on the threats, both normal and magical, that ninja battle against in their world of death and violence. Descriptions are left purposefully generic, allowing room for the GM to customize these NPCs to suit their story and match the characters.

Note: For simplicity, bonuses listed for NPCs should be applied with or without a weapon and include any

bonuses granted by Attributes already. The exception to this is Damage, as the GM can add weapon damage in battle. Skill Specialties are listed in parentheses, giving a +2 bonus for that function.

ANIMAL THREATS

Below are the major animal threats in the Izou Empire. Animals like housecats, mice, turtles or snakes have little Health to withstand blows from a human, let alone a skilled ninja. These small types aren't listed, but GMs should keep in mind that they often have their own awesome abilities. Cats have agility and the ability to jump and scratch. Snakes can deliver enough venom to incapacitate attackers and mice can get into just about any small opening. Other larger animals sometimes invoke a Fear check when a character first encounters it.

Note: Animals don't have access to every combat maneuver. Not all animals are adept at Parrying or Dodging, and the majority use close combat techniques. Combat bonuses listed are those the animal is capable of performing. If there is no bonus, special Actions may be listed in the Other Notes section.



ANTAGONIST FORMAT

Description: Short description of the antagonist, including appearance, motivations and tendencies.

Health: Their total Health points

Stamina: Number of Stamina points to spend

Yin & Yang: Chi points to use powers.

Skills: List of important skills known.

Traits: Bonuses to resistance checks

Combat: Bonuses to combat checks

Wushu: Any known wushu

Other Notes: GM notes, attacks and equipment



Bears (Fear 15)

Bears are some of the deadliest creatures to encounter in the wild. Few victims survive a bear's mauling, but they can be kind and gentle creatures if well fed and not antagonized. Some stand as tall as 12 ft. and are they incredibly fast, despite their bulky appearance. Their fur coloration depends on their land of origin: white in the Frozen Wastelands, brown in the Izou Empire, Black in the Land of Crashing Waves, light-brown with a green tinge in the Land of Seed and Blossom and grey in the Land of Five Blades.

Health: 26, **Stamina:** 3

Skills: Intimidation +10, Survival +10

Traits: +4 vs. Balance, +10 vs. Fear/Awe, +10 vs. Poison, +8 vs. Pain, +4 vs. Death, +5 vs. Unconsciousness

Combat: Parry +4, Dodge +5, Roll +10, Grapple +15, Initiative +9, Movement 12, Actions 2, Damage (See below)

Other Notes: Claw Crush (Speed 5, +6 Strike, 9 (L)): A downward swipe with the bear's massive claw. Hard Bite (Speed 6, -1 Stamina, +4 Strike, 12 (L)): A bite attack that mauls the victim. Hard Bite can also be used as a special Entangle Reaction or to Initiate Grapple.

Birds of Prey

Birds are a favorite companion for ninja. Not only are they useful for delivering messages over long distances or scouting, but larger birds are quite handy in battle. While few are large enough to really "fight", they are great for distracting, provoking or pecking at opponents after appropriate training. Flocks of birds are particularly dangerous.

Health: 5, **Stamina:** 1

Skills: Stealth +11, Survival +5

Traits: +2 vs. all Trait checks

Combat: Dodge +8, Initiative +10, Movement 30, Actions 1, Damage (See below)

Other Notes: Distraction (Speed 8, +6 Strike, 2 (L)): The bird pecks and claws at the opponent's face. The victim suffers a -2 penalty to combat checks for the next Round if successful.

Crocodile

The largest non-mystical reptiles on Earth, these 5 ft. long dangerous hunters live near rivers or in swamps and other wetlands. Unlike other animals, they are quick to attack if approached. They have large stomachs and are easy to agitate, but wait until their



SIZE

Size often becomes a factor in battle. The GM can invoke Size modifiers to help enhance the realism of the Scene. For instance, when a fighter is attacking a huge, easily-hit opponent. These rules are not always necessary when characters are very skilled ninja, but are appropriate for starting characters.

Modifiers to Strike/Throw

Size 1: -12 Teeny (Wasp)
Size 2: -8 Tiny (Rodent)
Size 3: -4 Small (Dog/Cat)
Size 4: -0 Human
Size 5: +4 Large (Horse)
Size 6: +8 Huge (Elephant)
Size 7: +12 Immense (House)



prey is so close that they couldn't possibly retreat.

Health: 22, **Stamina:** 3

Skills: Intimidation +10, Stealth +8

Traits: +4 vs. all Trait checks

Combat: Dodge +6, Roll +10, Initiative +12, Movement 16, Actions 2, Damage (See below)

Other Notes: Snap (Speed 5, +8 Strike, 10 (L)): A quick strikes with the crocodile's wide jaws. Spending 1 Stamina point doubles its Movement for 1 Round.

Dog/Wolves (Average)

This four-legged friend of man comes in several different breeds, sizes and personalities. Wolves are wild, often found in snowy or wilderness areas, while domesticated dogs are breed in towns and villages to aid humans in their duties or just as companions.

Health: 16, **Stamina:** 4

Skills: Athletics +5, Intimidation +7, Stealth +6, Survival +10 (Tracking)

Traits: +6 vs. Balance, +8 vs. Fear/Awe, +5 vs. Poison, +4 vs. Pain, +8 vs. Death, +3 vs. Insanity, +4 vs. Unconsciousness

Combat: Dodge +9, Roll +5, Initiative +14, Movement 18, Actions 3, Damage (See below)

Other Notes: Hard Bite (Speed 6, +6 Strike, 7 (L)): A lunging bite attack, not requiring a Grapple beforehand. Combatants make a contested Strength check to see if the animal stays attached (dog gets +9)

**VENOM**

While small and physically weak, snakes (and other poisonous animals) can deliver crippling and sometimes deadly venom when they attack. The GM should use Poison (pg 177) to reflect this, with a mixture of the Lethal Damage, Paralysis and Weakening effects.

*Dogs (Ninja Breeds)*

The greatest canine breeders exist within the Tsuki Clan. Breeding secrets are strictly held from outsiders (especially other clans), but flourishes among their members. While there are dozens of ninja breeds, the Pack of the Black Moon has three that are the most common: Fang, Zhu and Lie Quan.

Health: 20 (Zhu 25), **Stamina:** 4 (Fang 5)

Yin: 2, **Yang:** 2

Skills: Athletics +8, Intimidation +10, Stealth +8, Survival +12 (Tracking)

Traits: Immune to Fear/Awe checks. +10 vs. Balance, +8 vs. Poison, +9 vs. Pain, +12 vs. Death, +5 vs. Insanity, +8 vs. Unconsciousness

Combat: Parry +8, Dodge +12, Roll +8, Initiative +18, Movement 22, Actions 3 (Lie Quan 4), Damage (See below)

Other Notes: Hard Bite (See Above), Tackle (Speed 6, +5 Strike, 9 (NL) - Lie Quan): The large ninja canine rushes and tackles their opponent in one Action, inflicting damage and forcing a contested Balance check.

Horse

Horses are strong and resilient animals and the favored way to travel in the Empire. They have many uses, from stock/draft horses bred to work fields and haul cargo to saddle or racing horses bred for show and sport. While most are domesticated, wild horses can be found in rare glens, just waiting to be tamed by a master horse breaker.

Health: 22, **Stamina:** 5

Skills: Athletics (Jumps) +11, Stealth +5

Traits: +5 vs. Balance, +2 vs. Fear/Awe, +3 vs. Poison, +4 vs. Pain, +5 vs. Death, +6 vs. Unconsciousness

Combat: Dodge +4 (or the rider may use their own Dodge or Parry), Roll +6, Initiative +12, Movement 35, Actions 2, Damage (See below)

Other Notes: Back Kick (Speed 5, +7 Strike, 12 (NL)): The horse kicks their hind legs at an opponent behind them. Trample (Speed 6, -1 Stamina, +6 Strike, 8 (NL)):

It steps on top of the opponent in front of them - can be combined with a Sprint/Rush Action (pg 169).

Large Cats (Fear 13)

The world is full of deadly, imposing cats... from lions to cheetah. They are armed with large claws, sharp fangs and a cunning instinct that keeps them alive in the wild. They are usually found in grassy plains or jungles, but some zoos in the Empire have species for their citizenry to gaze upon. Their ability to hunt makes them a dangerous opponent in the wild... even for a ninja.

Health: 23, **Stamina:** 3

Skills: Intimidation +10 (Stare Down), Survival +8 (Tracking)

Traits: +10 vs. Balance, +8 vs. Fear/Awe, +3 vs. Poison, +5 vs. Pain, +7 vs. Death, +9 vs. Insanity, +4 vs. Unconsciousness

Combat: Parry +6, Dodge +8, Roll +8, Initiative +12, Movement 22, Actions 3, Damage (See below)

Other Notes: Claw Swipe (Speed 3, +5 Strike, 6 (L)): A quick claw strike. Leap Attack (Speed 6, +4 Strike, -1 Stamina, +10 (L)): They launch themselves at the victim, dealing damage and knocking them down (contested Strength check to stay standing).

Monkeys

These primates live in jungles and forests in almost every corner of the Empire. They possess great acrobatic ability making it easy to climb trees, swing on vines and retreat when threatened. Some monkeys are larger than others, giving them heightened wrestling ability as well. They are mostly peaceful creatures, so characters need only worry about monkey attacks if the animal is hungry, curious and then frightened or is protecting their young.

Health: 12, **Stamina:** 2

Skills: Acrobatics +10, Intimidation +6, Legerdemain +7, Stealth +6

Traits: +9 vs. Balance, +2 vs. Fear/Awe, +4 vs. Poison, +3 vs. Pain, +3 vs. Death, +2 vs. Unconsciousness

Combat: Strike +4, Throw +6, Parry +4, Dodge +9, Roll +10, Initiative +14, Movement 11, Actions 2, Damage +1

Other Notes: Monkeys are easy to scare and are more prone to retreat than staying to fight. If they attempt to run, they do not invoke an Opening (pg 173).

TOWNSHIP THREATS

This section details some of the more mundane threats that a character may face, including the average citizen, town guards that protect the people and criminal bandits that plague roads and pathways. Even a single ninja should be able to defeat a group of Township Threats, making these antagonists the weakest of those presented in this chapter. However, when attacking in numbers, Township Threats can still pose a challenge.

Everyday People

There are millions of people coming from all walks of life attempting to live a simple, peaceful existence. These are Everyday People: the shopkeepers, the bar maidens, your average street performer and everyone else. They are not combat trained and don't stand much of a fight against ninja or soldiers without numbers on their side. Motivations vary depending upon their individual Passion, so this group is not easily summed up with a single statement. However, if rallied to a banner, a large enough number can send an army away in tears.

Health: 8, **Stamina:** 1

Skills: One Skill at +10, All others +4

Traits: +2 to all Trait Checks

Combat: +2 to all Combat checks, Grapple +6, Initiative +5, Movement 7, Actions 2, Damage +0

Local Hero/Vigilante

Every town has one or two people that consider themselves heroes, even if they aren't. They are likely good fighters, sometimes trained briefly by a ninja or the army in the past. These NPCs feel the urge to take on the Empire by themselves or at least help the ninja, despite the scale of the forces they are facing. Without access to a real arsenal, they wield handcrafted weapons or found tools, like large shovels.

This type of person exists just about everywhere, usually encountered during stressful times in crowded areas. They're the ones calling others to attempt to take down a rouge ninja before the Town Guards arrive or to even attempt to defeat one alone (usually to no effect).

Health: 11, **Stamina:** 2

Skills: Athletics +4, Beast Handling +5, Survival +4

Traits: +3 to all Trait Checks



FODDER MOBS

There are times when the enemy wants to slow down or weaken the ninja by sending a mass of minions, guards, or otherwise "nameless fighters" to attack. In these cases, it is tedious and unnecessary to flesh out every attacker or even have the characters consume too much energy on them. Instead, the GM should treat them as "disposable" opponents, or Fodder, reducing the opponent to be equal to the "Everyday People" NPC description.



Combat: Strike +4, Throw +3, Parry +3, Dodge +3, Roll +6, Grapple +8, Initiative +8, Movement 9, Actions 3, Damage +1

Wushu: In special cases, the GM can deem that a Local Hero received previous training and has a single Level 1 General Wushu.

Other Notes: Enthusiasm gets them into trouble, as they often rush into battle without thinking (especially if they've been drinking).

Town Guards

The Empire's reach extends only so far, forcing many towns to defend themselves from bandits, wild animals and other threats. Without the aid of a heavily-trained militia, this results in Town Guards. They are trained better than others in town with a dedication to keep their community safe no matter what. They usually work on a system of patrols and watchtowers, but the life of a Town Guard is rarely glamorous. If a ninja is spotted, guards investigate cautiously, even if they believe they have a chance to defeat one. Towns that are friendly to ninja use Town Guards to protect against the Empire itself.

Health: 15 (AR 2/1), **Stamina:** 2

Skills: Beast Handling +6, Discipline +5, Intimidation +8 (Interrogation), Linguistics +5, Perception +8 (Investigation)

Traits: +4 bonus to all Trait Checks

Combat: Strike +5, Throw +6, Parry +5, Dodge +6, Roll +7, Grapple +11, Initiative +13, Movement 12, Actions 4, Damage +2

Other Notes: Town Guards are motivated, but cautious. Most hope to be promoted in their town and eventually recruited to the Izou Army. Standard Town Guards wield either spears, maces or bows. Other unique weapons, like hand claws or whips, fall outside of their expertise.

Bandits/Criminals

They go by many names like thieves, bandits or heretics, but they are usually just menacing people with criminal minds. Bandits often collect into bands of thieves, groups of con artists or swindling street-preachers all for the purpose of gaining money or acquiring power. They are troubled people, often from Commoner or Untouchable families, who could be redeemed if someone chose to help them. Without such an influence, they've instead turned to a life of crime. They excel as bodyguards and crowd control, ready to do damage at a moment's notice.

Health: 14 (AR 2/0), **Stamina:** 2

Skills: Athletics +5, Fortitude +6, Intimidation +8 (Physical Threats), Legerdemain +6

Traits: +5 bonus to all Trait Checks

Combat: Strike +7, Throw +3, Parry +5, Dodge +4, Roll +8, Grapple +10, Initiative +12, Movement 10, Actions 3, Damage +3

Other Notes: Bandits are primarily motivated by money and greed. They also have a tendency of double-crossing each other if a better deal comes along (exploitable by a clever character). Common gear includes knives and maces.

EMPIRE THREATS

The Izou Army is an ever-present threat to the ninja and come in a variety of shapes. They are sadistic, deadly and have the advantage of numbers in this horrible war. Below are stats for four different Empire soldier types with which to contend.

Foot Soldiers

Foot Soldiers can be found all over the Empire as guards, investigators and the everyday police force, usually of major cities. Even though Foot Soldiers are at the bottom of the hierarchy of the Izou Army, they are also the largest in number. Characters can expect to encounter Foot Soldiers in any city, especially those firmly within the grasp of the Empire. Villages on the outskirts of town may have the occasional Foot Soldier visitor, either investigating ninja or just passing through on their way to war.

Health: 14 (2/1), **Stamina:** 3

Skills: Athletics +7, Crafts +6, Deception +6, Discipline +6, Intimidation +9 (Interrogation), Perception +7 (Investigation), Stealth +9, Travel +8

Traits: +4 vs. Balance, +7 vs. Fear/Awe, +5 vs. Poison, +5 vs. Pain, +8 vs. Death, +5 vs. Insanity, +5 vs. Unconsciousness

Combat: Strike +6, Throw +6, Parry +5, Dodge +6, Roll +8, Grapple +10, Initiative +12, Movement 10, Actions 2, Damage +1

Other Notes: Foot Soldiers come in all shapes and sizes, from small and quick to large and bulky (GMs should adjust stats accordingly). They are difficult to confuse or shake off a ninja's tail because they answer to generals if they fail to accomplish their goals. Foot Soldiers would often rather die in battle than return to their leaders empty handed. They wield a combination of swords, spears, bows and small explosives. Occasionally, high-ranking Foot Soldiers carry a firearm.

Engineers

With borrowed advancements from the Land of Five Blades, the Izou Army has implemented gunpowder in their recent weaponry. Instead of using traditional swords and spears, Engineers use firearms and explosives primarily. It takes an intelligent soldier to become an Engineer. The number of people with this intellect is limited, making them very important to the war. They are seldom found on the front lines, as they have both the advantage of long distance attack and firearms, but also know how to repair weaponry and armor quickly on the battlefield.

Health: 20 (3/2 Bulletproof), **Stamina:** 3

Skills: Acrobatics +7, Athletics +6, Crafts +10 (Repair), Empathy +7, Discipline +7, Knowledge +10, Perception +8, Stealth +8, Survival +8

Traits: +7 vs. Balance, +5 vs. Fear/Awe, +5 vs. Poison, +4 vs. Pain, +8 vs. Death, +5 vs. Insanity, +6 vs. Unconsciousness

Combat: Strike +6, Throw +8, Parry +5, Dodge +8, Roll +9, Grapple +10, Initiative +14, Movement 10, Actions 2, Damage +2

Other Notes: Engineers carry firearms mainly, but also wield traditional bows, knives and explosives. Small explosives inflict 8 (L) with AP 5 to a 10 ft. area. Large explosives inflict 15 (L) with AP 5 to a 20 ft. area.

Executioners

Not all soldiers are built alike. Executioners are a step beyond normal soldiers with intensified physical training as well as a hardened spiritual core that allows them to nullify wushu effects. Becoming an

Executioner is not easy and takes years (or decades) to master the resistant arts, but it also takes a killer instinct that few possess. They are quite mad compared to the average soldier, taking sick pleasure in the pain of others. When not participating in the war, they kill for fun and sport, competing with each other to see who can take out the bigger and more dangerous opponents. There are a lot of deranged soldiers in the Izou army, but Executioners are used for “special” assignments like assassinations, leading small squadrons on espionage missions or as generals in the Ninja Crusade. Their insane outlook also leads to so many heinous acts (rape, murder, towns destroyed, etc.) that are done in the name of finding and killing ninja.

Health: 30 (AR 5/4 Bulletproof), **Stamina:** 5
Yin: 3, **Yang:** 3



Skills: Acrobatics +12, Arts +9, Athletics +12, Deception +10, Fortitude +13, Intimidation +14, Linguistics +9, Perception +10, Performance +8, Stealth +12, Survival +10

Traits: Immune to Fear/Awe checks. +11 vs. Balance, +8 vs. Poison, +12 vs. Pain, +8 vs. Death, +3 vs. Insanity, +7 vs. Unconsciousness

Combat: Strike +10, Throw +9, Parry +10, Dodge +11, Roll +14, Grapple +15, Initiative +18, Movement 14, Actions 4, Damage +4

Wushu: Knows “Precise Eye” and “Sturdy Fist” from the Way of the Warrior.

Other Notes: The Executioner’s greatest advantage is their ability to instantly nullify wushu effects used on them (either directly or indirectly) by spending a Chi point of the opposing type (1 Yin to nullify a Yang wushu or vice versa). Wushu used on the ninja themselves cannot be nullified. They also know any appropriate Combat Technique (GM discretion) and are adept at all weapon types.

Golden Lions

Ninja on the outskirts of the city or hidden within the populace are far from the only people to learn chi manipulation. The Emperor has initiated his very own personal ninja that work directly for the Empire, called Golden Lions. They come from soldiers that showed great mystical promise and were trusted by their leaders. Their loyalty to the Izou Empire is unwavering and they are trained to capture any ninja they encounter. If necessary, they will kill a ninja, but are known for detaining their victims in order to force wushu secrets from them instead.

With a limited number of Golden Lions, the Emperor uses them in only the most important battles or counter-espionage attempts. One never runs into a Golden Lion by chance. In battle, they wear suits of golden armor, specially charged with additional stores of chi to fuel their often-unique wushu.

Health: 45 (AR 5/4 Bulletproof), **Stamina:** 7

Yin: 4, **Yang:** 4

Skills: Acrobatics +12, Athletics +10, Beast Handling +11, Crafts +9, Discipline +10, Empathy +8, Holistics +10, Intimidation +13, Knowledge +10, Legerdemain +12, Perception +10, Persuasion +12, Stealth +9, Travel +10

Traits: Immune to Balance and Fear/Awe checks. +12 vs. Poison, +9 vs. Pain, +10 vs. Death, +8 vs. Insanity, +12 vs. Unconsciousness

Combat: Strike +12, Throw +12, Parry +10, Dodge

+10, Roll +12, Grapple +17, Initiative +16, Movement 16, Actions 4, Damage +5

Wushu: Golden Lion wushu usage is varied. Generally, they know all wushu of one General Way and then a few wushu from other paths. They are keen on stealing secrets from other ninja, so they may also know wushu from several different Clan-Specific Ways.

Other Notes: They don special armor, carved from mysterious metals, that store additional Chi for wushu. 5 additional Chi points are kept, usable as either Yin or Yang. They are masters of at least four weapons, but all Golden Lions are trained to use hand claws.

NINJA THREATS

With all the clan rivalries that fill the Empire with death and destruction, other ninja are a very real threat for characters. Below are stats for Novice, Experienced and Master ninja.

Novice Ninja

Novice ninja are those that have just completed their training. They are new to the role, to the war and to their power. This makes some unsure of their true potential and fills others with a sense of power that others can only dream. So, they generally fall into two distinct types: wallflowers or bullies. Scouting missions are their most common tasks, but Novice ninja are seldom sent out alone, traveling in groups of three to five for support.

Health: 20, **Stamina:** 4

Yin: 3, **Yang:** 3

Skills: Acrobatics +7, Arts +5, Athletics +7, Deception +6, Discipline +8, Intimidation +7, Knowledge +8, Legerdemain +7, Perception +6, Performance +6, Stealth +7, Survival +6

Traits: Immune to Balance checks. +6 vs. all other checks.

Combat: Strike +8, Throw +8, Parry +9, Dodge +7, Roll +9, Grapple +14, Initiative +15, Movement 15, Actions 3, Damage +2

Wushu: Novice Ninja typically know Level 1 or Level 2 Wushu from up to two different paths. If they prodigies, they may also know a single Level 3 wushu.

Other Notes: They have up to two Combat Techniques (GM's choice) and Weapon Training in three different weapons.

Experienced Ninja

After a ninja has defeated dozens of opponents and survived their fair share of battles, they are considered full members of their clan. Experienced ninja know what they are doing and have the power to fight alongside some of the greatest ninja.

Alongside this, they can also demand loyalty and obedience from lower-ranked ninja of their clan. They are primarily used as hidden village guards and investigators for the ninja, also acting as mediators for Shadow Wars on occasion. They are veteran warriors that can bring a distinct strategy to any squad.

Health: 35, **Stamina:** 6

Yin: 5, **Yang:** 5

Skills: Acrobatics +9, Arts +7, Athletics +9, Deception +8, Discipline +10, Intimidation +9, Knowledge +10, Legerdemain +9, Linguistics +8, Perception +8, Performance +8, Stealth +9, Survival +8

Traits: Immune to Balance and Pain checks. +8 vs. all other checks.

Combat: Strike +11, Throw +10, Parry +10, Dodge +10, Roll +11, Grapple +16, Initiative +18, Movement 16, Actions 4, Damage +3

Wushu: Experienced Ninja know up to Level 3 wushu, with one or two Level 4 wushu as well. They've fought in many battles and completed years of training, so they know wushu from up to 4 different paths.

Other Notes: They have up to five Combat Techniques (GM's choice) and Weapon Training in six different weapons.

Master Ninja

When a ninja attains a certainly level of power and prestige within their clan, they can be considered a master ninja. Some go on to be the official Master of their clan while others may head up distinctive sects or forge on to create unique wushu that lead to founding brand new clans. They are strong and have wushu that can allow them to take on a force of several ninja or Izou Soldiers as a solitary warrior.

Health: 50, **Stamina:** 8

Yin: 7, **Yang:** 7

Skills: Acrobatics +12, Arts +10, Athletics +12, Deception +11, Discipline +14, Intimidation +12, Knowledge +13, Legerdemain +12, Linguistics +11, Perception +11, Performance +12, Persuasion +11, Stealth +12, Survival +12

Traits: Immune to Balance, Fear/Awe or Pain

checks. +10 vs. all other checks.

Combat: Strike +14, Throw +15, Parry +13, Dodge +14, Roll +16, Grapple +20, Initiative +23, Movement 20, Actions 6, Damage +5

Wushu: Master Ninja have knowledge of just about any wushu the GM sees appropriate, even Level 5 wushu. However, they typically don't know wushu from more than six different paths.

Other Notes: They have up to seven Combat Techniques (GM's choice) and Weapon Training in all weapons.

SPIRITS

Legends, myths and folklore tell of the existence of spirits and ghosts, and they are widely believed to be real. However, most sightings and incidents end up as elaborate pranks or the signs of wushu usage in the area.

Several religions teach that there is an afterlife for those that live a good life and then die... called Heaven. It is a land of paradise, but is not a final destination. Those that live immoral or dishonorable lives go on to one of many hells (see Oni, pg 198). The souls of humanity pass from this world to Heaven and enjoy its splendor until it is time to be reincarnated (a belief that has led to the Izou's Class system). Of course, there is no customary time a soul must wait; every soul is quite different.

While in Heaven, the souls can watch over their living families and the Earth in general. Some even visit as spirits, but are intangible, invisible and unable to truly affect the world. Other spirits take part in the Celestial Courts with hopes of improving Earth before their inevitable return. Characters may sometimes feel the presence of a spirit, through a general vibe or one of many omens (i.e. cracked rice bowl, a blackbird on the window, etc.). Others may even see a spirit from the corner of their eye, but only for a split second.

Stories of spirits are considered just that by the common populace, but reverence paid to an ancestor (through tribute and prayer) makes their presence felt much stronger. Even though no one actually sees spirits, almost everyone believes that they exist and even ninja can be spooked by the thought of seeing one.

CELESTIAL ANIMALS

The most commonly encountered mystical creatures, if the term common can be used at all, are the Celestial Animals. They are born from the stuff of legends to serve heaven's will and are known to make deals with ninja.

ANIMAL REALMS

There was a time when humans were considered fit to rule the world. They worked alongside trusted canines, battled powerful foes with the aid of black bears and sought counsel from the wise reptiles. It was in the halls of the Celestial Courts that humans betrayed the animals when they began eating their loyal companions. This was certainly not the first animal a human had eaten, but it became a sadistic sport and bloody leisure to kill and devour the animals without real reason (an act that angered heaven).

The animals were blessed with awesome power, enough to destroy humanity outright and achieve their revenge. Some Celestial Animals even became more human-like to further contend with their attackers. Many a war was fought, but the majority of animals sought the high road and chose a peaceful retreat instead of wiping humanity from the Earth. Heaven replied with the kind gesture of creating special lands for each species to live without worrying about the human threat. Of course, Celestial Animals are curious creatures and intermittently cross the wall that separates them in order to learn more about the world.

The celestial realms are home to all types of mystical creatures and many believe that a human's soul passes through these lands, ever so briefly, before being judged and reincarnated. In addition to the occasional soul floating through, they also serve as the home to the Greater Celestial Animals. Some look the same as your average animal of their type, but they are very far from normal. They plot and live much as humans do on Earth, but always in service to Heaven. They occasionally lend their power to a ninja if they find them worthy, but prefer to exist in their own land.

Unlike what some say think, Celestial Animals are not immortal. They are born from love, grow up in generosity and forge eternal relationships. However, they are not without their own conflict. Rarely do the different families within a single species get along, leading to wars even among themselves. It seems there is never truly ever-lasting peace anywhere... such is

the balance of the universe.

Every realm is different depending on the type of animal that resides there and is separated from each other by the same magical walls that stop humans from traveling to Heaven. Rules about when an animal can leave or reenter the realm vary from species to species. For example, Celestial Bears often take after their mundane descendants, returning to their home-realm during the winter season for a long rest. Quite the opposite, some Celestial Turtles are known to live among humans for indefinite periods of time.

SUMMONERS

In their travels, Celestial Animals occasionally encounter and befriend particular ninja (based on any number of different qualities the animal finds appealing). Chosen ninja have learned the lost art of summoning these ancient, powerful creatures from the other world. Their bond is never taken lightly, as the process requires a piece of the ninja's soul and binding pacts with these Celestial Animals. Likewise, the animal must accept the ninja in order to give them the ability to call upon their assistance at a moment's notice. When summoned, the animal is plucked from their realm and brought directly to the ninja's location. They aren't bound to perform any tasks, but a ninja can get them to do just about anything with the right tribute and often plenty of Chi.

Few Summoners find their way to this position by chance. The tradition is usually passed down from teacher to student, starting with the student being introduced to the teacher's chosen animal companion that will one day continue the tradition. As time passes, the Celestial Animal can also bring along their own offspring with which to form new pacts.

The binding ritual itself is very simple. Once the ninja has been accepted by their chosen animal family as a member and friend, they sign the Scroll of Summoners (an ancient agreement to allow travel across the wall that separates the two worlds). As they sign, they can take the opportunity to read the names of those that have signed before them, seeing their parents, teachers and possibly legendary heroes.

The War of Withered Fangs was the last time that Celestial Animals were used in abundance. During the Expansion Wars, the beasts were utilized as weapons by the Izou ninja to conquer more land. Soon, after the Empire succeeded in dominating as much land as they required, they turned their attention to the



BECOMING A SUMMONER 6BP

Becoming a Summoner costs 6 BP or the character may Sacrifice 1 Permanent Yin and 1 Permanent Yang chi. This cost represents the ninja giving up a part of their soul to form a binding kinship with their chosen Celestial Animal type. They also receive a free Specialty in the skill associated with the animal.

Summon Activation: Ninja have free and constant access to their Lesser Animal, though their animal may at times refuse to be called or be away on other business. If at any time they need their animal and it is not there, they can spend 1 Chi point (of either type) to call it immediately.

When they want to summon a Greater Celestial Animal, they must shed 2 (L), spend the appropriate number of Chi (listed with the animal) and succeed at a Moderate (20) CHM + Discipline check. Greater Celestials require much more energy to summon and keep around. They can stay for 1 minute initially, but this can be extended to a Battle or Scene if the ninja sacrifices 1 Permanent Chi of either type. If the animal is resistant to actually staying and wants to leave, the ninja may have to expend up to 3 additional Stamina points to hold it. The ninja suffers a permanent cumulative -2 penalty to their Summon checks if their animal is reduced to Health 0 at any time... until it becomes almost impossible.

Note: As with wushu, the ninja receives a Elemental Affinity modifier to their summoning check based on its type (pg 121).



Summoners in their employ... forcing them to summon their animals to be caged weapons for the Emperor. Many clans severed long standing contracts with their animals so there was no way they could be forced to do so and those that fought back were heavily scarred or destroyed. This a huge contributing factor to the scarcity of Summoners today, but making friends with the Celestial Animals again may just be the only way to win the Ninja Crusade.

Without large-scale ninja wars enveloping the world, few summon their animals unless it is absolutely necessary. Some have dedicated celebratory events where they call upon their Celestial Animals to dance, reminisce and keep their friendship going. However, too many have let these relationships sour through non-communication, especially in the days when the Empire heavily regulated chi use.



SUMMON FORMATS

Element: The animal's associated element (contributes to Summoning check).

Skill: The animal's associated Skill (ninja receives a free Specialty in that Skill)

Lesser Animals: Description of common lesser celestial animal traits

Greater Animal Example: A fleshed out example for that type of Greater Celestial Animal.



LESSER AND GREATER ANIMALS

Lesser Celestial Animals appear no different from their mundane counterparts, but they possess an intelligence that often surpasses a human's. They are often the children of Greater Celestial Animals or those that just don't seek power. More engrained into the normal world, lesser animals sometimes take the role of an ordinary animal to observe people and live simply. Others reveal their true nature to normal people in the hope of forming friendships.

Greater Celestial Animals, however, are beings of majestic authority. Mythical creatures stand hundreds of feet tall, while others are normally-sized for their species with the power to affect the world in huge ways. For instance, Sword Tower (pg 34) of the Land of Five Blades was carved within a discarded sword from one of the mightiest of Celestial Animals. Some take entire villages or groups of ninja to defeat, making their power truly legendary.

Whether lesser or greater, all Celestial Animals have the following traits in common, in addition to those listed in their individual descriptions.

- **Human Speech:** They all have the ability to speak in any language they so choose, even Old Tongue that is mostly unknown in today's modern times.

- **Wushu:** Celestial Animals have access to and full use of the same wushu as ninja. In some cases, older and more experienced animals wield rare and commanding displays of Chi that are unheard of to ninja. Some are willing to teach these and normal wushu if persuaded with the right tributes.

- **Health:** When not in combat, they regenerate their lost Health almost instantaneously (10 Health per Minute). They also take all damage as Non-Lethal. The animal returns to their home realm automatically if reduced to Health 0. They, by all rights, cannot actually die as they are celestials.

- **Breeding:** While not widely practiced, Celestial

Animals can breed normally with mundane animals. The offspring resembles others of their mundane brethren, but are of a much higher pedigree... sometimes even having one of two special powers at their disposal (i.e. a housecat with the ability to leap to rooftops with one jump or even a snake that burns those that attempt to capture it). Some suspect this is how the Pack of the Black Moon (pg 27) received their first ninja canine breeds.

ANIMAL FAMILIES

When a ninja signs the Scroll of Summoners, they gain the ability to bring any Celestial Animal of their chosen type across magical walls. Agreements and connections are usually made with a particular animal, but it is not uncommon to receive help from another of the species if they are not available... and families are composed of a variety of different personalities. Two families of the same type could even be at odds with each other, with the potential of bringing two Summoners into conflict based on "family issues". Though it is more common for battles to arrive between opposing species. The examples given are far from exhaustive. The GM is encouraged to create their own Celestial Animals to fit their stories and characters.

BEARS

Element: Earth, **Skill:** Holistics

Lesser Animals: The average Lesser Bear is but a cub, but one that is still quick on their feet. While deadly, they are peaceful creatures and the Celestial Bears actually know many healing techniques to aid their Summoner through hard times. When the animal is fully grown, they possess a truly dangerous animal at their disposal. The down side is that traveling with a bear is completely conspicuous and may make it easy to spot the ninja.

Tetsuo the Aggressor

Cost to Summon: Yin 3, Yang 3

The great Tetsuo is a terrifying figure that stands 18 ft. tall with ripped muscles, a large broad sword and a patch over one eye. His last true conquests were at the height of the Expansion Wars where he was called on by the Wardens of Equilibrium to cut down a group of Recoiling Serpents that were growing in power. Dozens of Serpents were slayed by his mighty blade, but he

was eventually defeated by one of their leaders... who stories say took his eye. In exchange, Tetsuo the Aggressor also took the ninja's eye and the eye of every other Serpent he found as a trophy.

Today, he is a warrior aimlessly pursuing an enemy to fight. He detests the actions of the Empire and is looking for a ninja to team up with so he can test his mettle against the Emperor's army. He is not biased toward any particular clan, but chooses ninja who can prove their combat prowess. He is single-minded in deed and loves to fight with other Celestial Animals.

Passion: Warrior, **Yin:** 4, **Yang:** 10

Health: 60 (3/2), **Stamina:** 9

Skills: Acrobatics +9, Arts

+8, Athletics +12 (Jumps), Empathy +10 (Sense Lies), Fortitude +14, Holistics +6, Intimidation +15, Survival +10

Traits:

Immune to Fear/Awe, Insanity and Unconsciousness checks.
+8 vs. Balance, +10 vs. Pain, +10 vs. Poison, +12 vs. Insanity

Combat:

Strike +15, Throw +10, Parry +12, Dodge +10, Roll +15, Grapple +16, Initiative +25, Movement 15, Damage +6 (+9 (L) with Broadsword), Actions 5

Wushu:

Knows all wushu from the Way of Warrior and Way of Earth, as well as Surface Running and Lightfoot from the Way of Movement.

Other Notes: An accomplished warrior,



Tetsuo has the following Combat Techniques: Ground Fighter, Stomp, Demoralizing Roar, Snatching Salmon and Quick Recovery.

CANINES

Element: Wood, **Skill:** Survival

Lesser Animals: Just as there are many different mundane breeds, the Celestial Canines come in a variety of sizes and personalities. Some are large hound dogs that never speak, but are unstoppable in battle. Others are smaller, quicker dogs that are energetic to a fault and never stop talking. All of them, however, are accomplished trackers and can help their Summoner track down even the most elusive target. Dogs are common in the Empire so they can often pass detection easily... another great reason that ninja choose to ally with Celestial Canines.

Jin

Cost to Summon: Yin 2, Yang 3

Jin is different from many of the other Celestial Animals, choosing to exist on Earth instead of the Canine Realm. He discovered rejuvenation wushu that allow him to appear young even though he is closely approaching 100 years old. Despite his age, Jin is youthful in action, a master tracker and a very loyal animal to have at one's side. He also talks unimaginably fast. He travels all over the Empire, changing his species at times to acquire new and interesting owners. He is a "people-watcher" and quite enjoys seeing human behavior in action.

A prospective Summoner has to do very little to gain Jin as an ally, besides being someone that he would consider in the first place. Jin is attracted to fellow trackers and woodsmen or to orphaned children, the handicapped and others that find it harder to protect themselves.

Passion: Protection, **Health:** 32, **Stamina:** 5

Yin: 4, **Yang:** 5

Skills: Athletics +13 (Jumps), Beast Handling +9, Empathy +10, Holistics +9, Intimidation +7, Linguistics +7, Perception +10, Performance +11, Persuasion +10, Stealth +10, Survival +9

Traits: Immune to Balance and Fear/Awe checks.

+11 vs. Poison, +12 vs. Pain, +12 vs. Death, +9 vs. Insanity, +10 vs. Unconsciousness

Combat: Strike +12, Throw +10, Parry +10, Dodge +14, Roll +10, Initiative +20, Movement 25, Actions 4, Damage +3 (L)

Wushu: Knows wushu from the Way of Movement, Way of Survival and Way of Twin Beasts.

Other Notes: Knows all special attacks from dogs (pg 183). Also, there is rarely a scent that Jin cannot track down. If even the smallest trace of scent is left in the area, he can track it from miles away without a check.

FELINES

Element: Fire, **Skill:** Athletics

Lesser Animals: Celestial Felines are multi-skilled creatures, apt at crawling through small spaces or maneuvering themselves atop massive structures. They are sneaky at times, loving at others and know when to run from a fight. No two Celestial Felines are the same and they come in a variety of colors and sizes (though they generally look just like a common housecat). They can be integral to the survival of their Summoner and are less conspicuous to onlookers.

Queen Kazuhiko

Cost to Summon: Yin 2, Yang 4

In the Animal Realms, Kazuhiko sits atop a grand mountain, adored and pampered by her underlings. She is the named Queen of the Feline Realm, challenged only by her younger brother, Michio. He seeks revenge for the death of their father, who Kazuhiko murdered to attain her crown. Kazuhiko's servants are more than enough to hold off the fledgling rebel forces, but she suspects that the battle will spill over into Earth as well. So she currently seeks powerful ninja to join forces with to protect her title.

The fiery eye and her 12 ft. long frame is a clear sign to attackers that she is to be feared and her voice is deep and imposing. Her Summoners must be grand warriors with a spirit that evokes passion. As a tribute, She often asks for a difficult, always selfish favor (i.e. deliver 1000 fish for my lunch, get me a candle stick from the Emperor's castle, etc.) in order to watch how the ninja attempts to fulfill it. She leans heavily toward Summoners from the Virtuous Body Gardeners, but also from the Blazing Dancers, Will of Iron and Grasping Shadows. For obvious reasons, she doesn't make deals with the Pack of the Black Moon.

Passion: Rivalry, **Health:** 55 (AR 3/1), **Stamina:** 7
Yin: 5, **Yang:** 6

Skills: Arts +7, Athletics +12, Beast Handling +10, Deception +9, Holistics +6, Intimidation +8 (Veiled Threats), Knowledge +8, Linguistics, Persuasion +12

(Leadership), Stealth +9, Survival +12

Traits: Immune to Fear/Awe, Insanity and Balance checks. +8 vs. Pain, +10 vs. Poison, +9 vs. Unconsciousness

Combat: Strike +14, Throw +7, Parry +8, Dodge +13, Roll +12, Grapple +14, Initiative +21, Movement 20, Damage +7 (L), Actions 4

Wushu: Knows any wushu from the Way of Fire or Way of Movement, as well as Animal Warrior from the Way of Beasts, Danger Sense from the Way of Survival and Fighter's Focus from the Way of the Warrior.

Other Notes: Interestingly enough, Queen Kazuhiko will keep her Summoners alive, but goes to great lengths to avoid any actual work on her part.

HEDGEHOGS

Element: Earth, **Skill:** Perception

Lesser Animals: Celestial Hedgehogs are those creatures that find lost things. Not only do they unearth items that belong to someone else "by chance", but they are skilled at finding their Summoner's lost objects as well. They can be kept in the pocket of a thick jacket, but their protective quills make them hard to handle too often, especially in a bad mood. Many are temperamental, with extreme emotional highs and lows, but take care of their ninja as long as the same is returned.

Hibiki

Cost to Summon: Yin 1, Yang 3

A small burrower like her mundane counterparts, Hibiki is a white hedgehog with bright red eyes and a penchant for collecting rings. The Hedgehog Realm is where many lost human belongings appear, falling through cracks in the barriers between worlds. Hibiki and her family are some of those that return items to their rightful owners if they perform good deeds. For this reason, she spends a lot of time on Earth, watching hu-



mans to see if they deserve their misplaced items back.

Hibiki's personality is friendly and trustful, but her Summoner must have a special quality for doing the "right thing" in situations, even if it means losing. Hibiki usually approaches her Summoners (or goes through a lesser hedgehog) instead of the other way around for this reason. Ninja from the Wardens of Equilibrium or Will of Iron are approached more than any other clan.

Passion: Collector, **Health:** 15, **Stamina:** 4

Yin: 3, **Yang:** 5

Skills: Athletics +8, Art +8, Crafts +10, Empathy +12, Knowledge +12, Linguistics +10, Perception +14, Stealth +7, Survival +6, Travel +8

Traits: Immune to Sanity checks. +7 vs. Balance, +6 vs. Fear/Awe, +10 vs. Pain, +6 vs. Poison, +10 vs. Unconsciousness

Combat: Strike +9, Throw +3, Parry +0, Dodge +14, Roll +8, Cannot be Grappled, Initiative +16, Movement 8, Damage +1 (L), Actions 3

Wushu: Knows wushu from the Way of Earth, as well as Teleportation from the Way of Movement and Rise From the Ashes from the Way of Fire.

Other Notes: If a character has lost anything, Hibiki can attempt to find the item – usually by returning to her dimension to find it. Even if destroyed, she has special wushu to allow her to recreate, mend or bring it back from destruction. She must spend a number of Chi equal to the item's Size and can take up to 1 week to complete (GM's discretion).

MONKEYS

Element: Wood, **Skill:** Acrobatics

Lesser Animals: Celestial Monkeys are very close to actual humans, walking mostly on two-legs and possessing the power of critical thinking. However, they use their minds mostly to craft insidious pranks to play on others. They are primal mischief makers and quickly teach their Summoner to stay on their toes. In some circles, trained monkeys aren't uncommon, but it can raise an eyebrow if they appear to be "too" well trained.

Sita

Cost to Summon: Yin 2, Yang 4

Sita is the daughter of the greatest and most renowned Celestial Monkey of legend, Hanuman. His myths are spread around the world, leaving his children a lot to live up to. Sita has taken this challenge

with conviction. She travels the Earth in search of a hero to aid in their life-long quest. Of course, the Ninja Crusade is the perfect time for heroes to arise and she has taken on a few students in hopes that they may one day be the one to end the conflict once and for all.

Her disposition is cheery, but not to a gross degree. She loves to pull pranks on close friends, but is much too cautious to do the same to authority figures. Sita is still young and full of optimism, as she likes her Summoners to be. They must also have a talent for working through problems and a warrior's spirit. She is known for orchestrating a problem for the ninja to solve in order to gain her loyalty (i.e. a fake kidnapping).

Passion: Approval, **Health:** 45, **Stamina:** 6

Yin: 4, **Yang:** 8

Skills: Acrobatics +15 (Swinging), Arts +10, Beast Handling +10, Deception +8, Empathy +12, Holistics +9, Linguistics 10, Legerdemain +7, Perception +6, Performance +12, Travel +7

Traits: Immune to Balance Checks. +7 vs. Sanity, +10 vs. Fear/Awe, +6 vs. Pain, +7 vs. Poison, +8 vs. Unconsciousness

Combat: Strike +11, Throw +12, Parry +10, Dodge +10, Roll +14, Grapple +14, Initiative +27, Movement 14, Damage +4 (+7 (NL) with Staff), Actions 4

Wushu: Knows wushu from the Way of Movement and Way of Wood (using Tree-Hopping frequently).

Other Notes: She possesses the following Combat Techniques: Ground Fighter, Rolling Attack, Dragon's Tail, Spear-Heel Strike and Multi-Throw.

RAMS

Element: Metal, **Skill:** Fortitude

Lesser Animals: Celestial Rams are a fickle breed, often testy and easy to incite into a temper. They are strong allies in battle, able to knock opponents off their feet with their strong horns. They quickly teach their Summoner to withstand more bodily harm with this very technique. Most Celestial Rams are overlooked as pets in poorer communities, but it's uncommon to see them in the big cities, unless it is being led to the slaughterhouse.

Kuniyuki

Cost to Summon: Yin 3, Yang 2

Kuniyuki is a unique soul in the Ram Realms. He has been more fascinated with humanity's action than other curmudgeon goats and takes part in that world often. Though his normal form is nothing different

than the average ram, Kuniyuki can also take on the guise of a human. He observes humanity through blurred glasses, however, since he is a drunkard. He approaches everything with the smile of a cynic, constantly complaining when things don't go his way and suspicious when they do.

To gain Kuniyuki's loyalty, the ninja needs to remove themselves from the idea of the dreaded Class system, at least enough to acknowledge his existence since most overlook him as an Untouchable. Secondly, they must be able to hold their liquor. Kuniyuki has taken on many Summoners simply from a drinking challenge. He also hates cheeriness and it's better if the ninja doesn't say anything too contradictory. As a matter of fact, they really just have to catch him on the right day.

Passion: Code of Honor, **Health:** 35, **Stamina:** 10
Yin: 5, **Yang:** 5

Skills: Athletics +14, Discipline +10, Fortitude +16 (Alcohol), Intimidation +12, Knowledge +9, Perception +11, Survival +10

Traits: Immune to Pain and Poison checks. +4 vs. Balance, +8 vs. Insanity, +8 vs. Fear/Awe, +12 vs. Unconsciousness

Combat: Strike +13, Throw +6, Parry +8, Dodge +10, Roll +16, Grapple +12, Initiative +13, Movement 18, Damage +4, Actions 4

Wushu: Knows wushu from the Way of Survival and Way of Metal.

Other Notes: He can perform an enhanced ram attack, equal to a Horse Kick at Rank 3 (pg 97). Also, Kuniyuki has the ability to temporarily turn into a human for a Scene for 4 chi (any type). He cannot hold this ability in battle, but it can be helpful for observing the world.

RATS

Element: Metal, **Skill:** Deception

Lesser Animals: Celestial Rats are sneaky and clever to say the least. They love collecting rare items, be it a lost manuscript, legendary weapon or mystical scroll. Lying is second nature to them and they have no qualms about a lie to anyone that isn't their Summoner. They stay close to their ninja to inform them if others are being deceitful. They are also great for delivering messages or getting through small spaces.

Hachiro

Cost to Summon: Yin 3, Yang 1

Eighth born out of twenty-seven siblings, Hachiro was the first of his family to reach out to ninja and cross worlds. In the Animal Realms, his family is known for getting anything for anyone (including their Summoner)... for a price. His goals are simple: establish a power structure on Earth and slowly integrate himself and his family into the world. He has grown tired of the Celestial Courts and their drama.

Hachiro's personality is complex: loyal to a fault to his family, but anyone else is open to his cheating, swindling and lying approach to problem solving. He's always looking for a deal or a quicker way to do things. He never breaks his word, though it is rare that he goes to such lengths to make a deal happen. His Summoners must have a silver tongue, making him lean toward the Wardens of Equilibrium most often. Unique favors can be gained if the ninja finds a way to make Hachiro give them his word.

Passion:
Greed, **Health:**
15, **Stamina:** 4

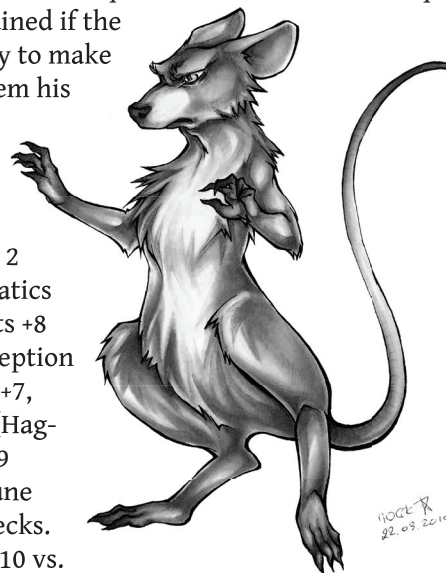
Yin: 4, **Yang:** 2
Skills: Acrobatics
+6, Arts +8, Crafts +8
(Appraisal), Deception
+12, Knowledge +7,
Persuasion +10 (Hag-
gling), Stealth +9

Traits: Immune
to Fear/Awe checks.
+8 vs. Balance, +10 vs.
Insanity, +5 vs. Pain, +6 vs. Poison, +6
vs. Unconsciousness

Combat: Strike +5, Throw +8, Parry +6, Dodge +8,
Roll +5, Grapple +11, Initiative +16, Movement 12, Dam-
age +1, Actions 3

Wushu: Knows wushu from the Way of the Unseen,
as well as Mold and Melting Touch from the Way of
Metal.

Other Notes: When summoned, Hachiro often appears with a little shop with an array of items. He never just "gives" something for nothing, not even for his Summoner, but is willing to trade. If he doesn't have what the ninja needs, he'll find a way to get it... even if it involves trickery or theft.



When searching for a requested item, he cannot be summoned. Instead, he'll send one of his 26 brothers and sisters to assist. Each has their own personality, opinion of Hachiro's plans and level of willingness to help.

ROOSTERS

Element: Fire, **Skill:** Intimidation

Lesser Animals: Just like the rooster that crows at the sunrise, Celestial Roosters are energetic and outspoken. Some have attitudes that rival rams, but most are simply blunt with their advice. Their gift is in planning strategies and teaching their Summoner exactly how to outthink their opponent, usually using intimidation tactics. There are a few roosters that nestle in their ninja's bags or just sit atop their Summoner's head. While all of the Celestial Roosters are male, there are several Celestial Hens that live in the same realm.

Akihiko-Chan

Cost to Summon: Yin 1, Yang 3

From the Rooster Realm comes a fiery, energetic Celestial Rooster named Akihiko-Chan. He's extremely hyper, mostly because he has recently earned the right to travel between worlds from the Celestial Courts. He's young (despite his 10 ft. height) and excited to explore the world, traveling from city to city in search of new experiences. And traveling is easy for him, being one of the fastest runners of all time.

He isn't particularly picky when it comes to Summoners, except that they need to have a pleasant and cheery attitude toward life. Traveling with a group of miserly, pessimists is not his idea of a fun time. To get his loyalty, Akihiko-Chan usually

challenges his would-be Summoner to a race. The object isn't to win, but it's to see if they still smile in the face of defeat. If the ninja actually does win, Akihiko-Chan is even more loyal

Passion: Joy, **Health:** 26, **Stamina:** 12

Yin: 2, **Yang:** 6

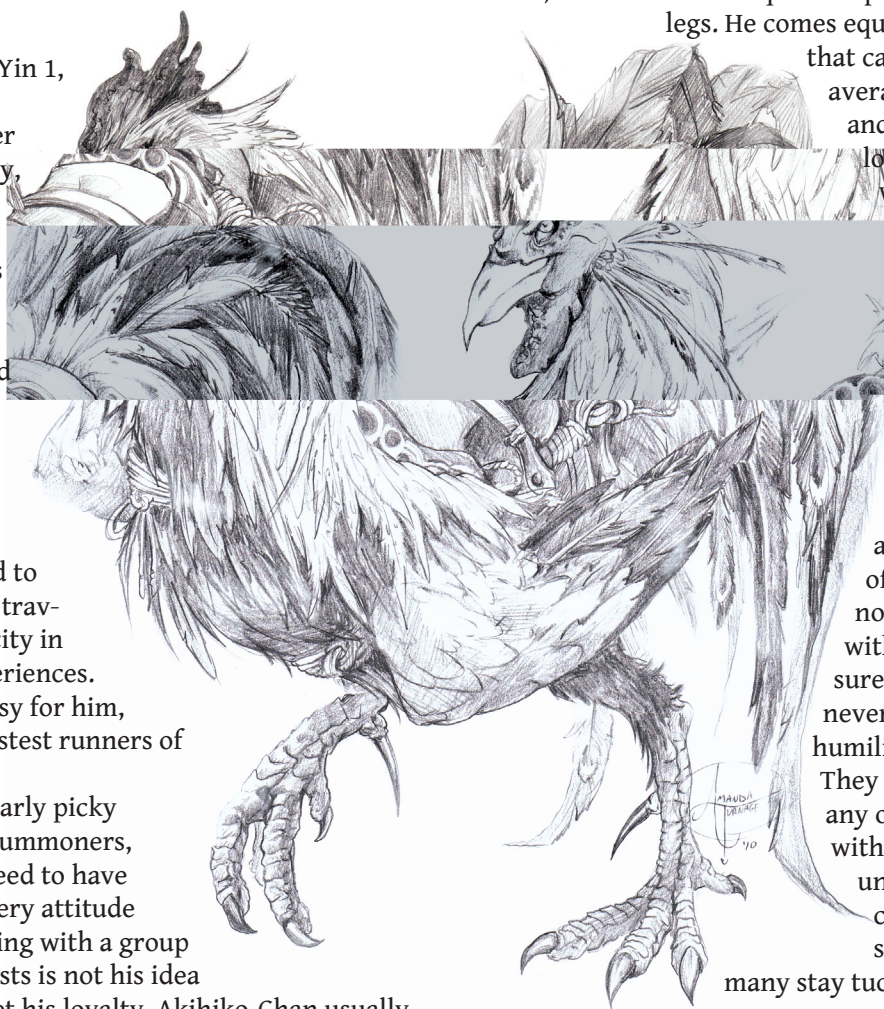
Skills: Arts +10, Empathy +8, Intimidation +9, Perception +12, Performance +10, Survival +6, Travel +8

Traits: Immune to Balance checks. +7 vs. Fear/Awe, +12 vs. Insanity, +10 vs. Pain, +8 vs. Poison, +7 vs. Unconsciousness

Combat: Strike +9, Throw +5, Parry +8, Dodge +12, Roll +10, Grapple +13, Initiative +30, Movement 40, Damage +3, Actions 4

Wushu: Knows wushu from the Way of Movement and Way of Fire, as well as Trackless Movement from the Way of Survival and Pure Touch from the Way of Caring Hands

Other Notes: If Akihiko-Chan is called in order to travel, he does so in the quickest possible way... his legs. He comes equipped with a saddle that can fit up to three average-sized people and he can get to a location in 1 day that would take anyone else 4 days.



SNAKES

Element: Water, **Skill:** Persuasion

Lesser Animals: Celestial

Snakes are masters of social interaction and wise in the ways of man. They look at non-social humans with disdain and make sure their Summoners never suffer any social humiliation if they can. They often appear like any other snake, but with unique colorings unlike their mundane counterparts. To stay with their ninja, many stay tucked in their Sum-

moner's bag, collar or sleeves. This gives them access to the ninja's ear to whisper secrets and the ability to bite their opponents while the ninja attacks.

Khis

Cost to Summon: Yin 5, Yang 2

Once worshipped as a god, the forty-foot long *Khis* was regarded as king of snakes by all Celestial Animals. He helped the Hebi clan during the Mercenary Wars, but found his power destroyed when it ended. *Khis* was a prize that the Izou Empire sought for years, forcing him to cut his earthly ties in order to save himself.

This severely weakened his stance in the Animal Realms. Without contracts to cross worlds, he lost many opportunities for tribute and power. His power was overtaken by several other Celestial Snakes, but he acquired a single goal of attaining as much power as possible. He has ingenuity and courage beyond his years and is just the snake to attempt this.

Khis is suave when vetting new Summoners, always giving them a test of social prowess like seducing a celibate woman or outsmarting a group of soldiers to harm themselves. He's mostly lured to those of the Recoiling Serpents in hopes that he and the clan can reassume power. Other ninja have to try much harder gain his aid. He is blunt and hates his time to be wasted with being summoned without good reason.

Passion: Power, **Yin:** 12, **Yang:** 7

Health: 70 (4/2), **Stamina:** 12

Skills: Athletics +14, Art +12, Deception +15, Discipline +10, Empathy +10, Fortitude +10, Intimidation +14, Knowledge +14, Persuasion +16, Stealth +10, Survival +14

Traits: Immune to Balance, Fear/Awe, Poison and Unconsciousness checks. +10 vs. Pain, +12 vs. Insanity

Combat: Strike +14, Throw +12, Parry +15, Dodge +13, Roll +12, Grapple +20, Initiative +22, Damage +8 (L), Actions 5

Wushu: Knows any wushu from the Way of Survival, Way of the Great Serpent or Way of Water, as well as any others the GM deems appropriate.

Other Notes: His saliva is considered one of the most corrosive liquids in the world and many potion-makers hope to one day obtain a sample. Anyone bitten will find their clothes and skin immediately dissolved, let alone if they are swallowed. Spit (Speed 5, 15 (L) AP 5): *Khis* blasts the victim with his spit, instantly eating away at clothes, weapons and eventually the victim's skin.

TURTLES

Element: Water, **Skill:** Knowledge

Lesser Animals: In the Animal Realms, Turtles are the keepers of knowledge. Their kind was ordained by Heaven to keep the world's memories, granted with extended lives in order to maintain this sacred duty. They can provide a wise word in the face of hostility and can recall historical events centuries in the past with surprising clarity. Lesser Turtles prefer to be called in times of peace, but it is not uncommon for them to be carried around by their ninja in a satchel.

Wakana

Cost to Summon: Yin 2, Yang 2

Like other Celestial Turtles, *Wakana* has a penchant for staying on Earth among humans. She has done so for longer than she can remember and is older than the Izou Empire itself. *Wakana* stands on all fours roughly 20 ft. tall and speaks in a slow, monotone manner, but her words carry weight. The oceans of Earth have been her home for centuries, where she has observed humanity's various historical highs and lows. She has removed herself from the Turtle Realms to learn what she can from human behavior.

Wakana has taken on a few Summoners in her time, but only those with an appreciation for learning. For this reason, she leans heavily toward members of the Living Chronicle, happy to share a bit of wisdom with them to help the accuracy of their records. She'll often ask riddles to potential Summoners and choose those with the right answers to call upon her.

Passion: Truth, **Health:** 22 (AR 5/5), **Stamina:** 3

Yin: 6, **Yang:** 6

Skills: Art +12, Empathy +13, Discipline +10, Fortitude +12, Knowledge +20, Persuasion +9, Survival +12

Traits: Immune to Poison checks. +5 vs. Balance, +12 vs. Fear/Awe, +14 vs. Unconsciousness, +15 vs. Pain, +15 vs. Insanity

Combat: Strike +7, Throw +4, Parry +11, Dodge +10, Roll +18, Grapple +13, Initiative +14, Movement 8, Damage +2, Actions 3

Wushu: Knows wushu from the Way of Water, Way of Beasts or the Way of Kept Lore.

Other Notes: *Wakana* has the ability to look backwards in time, but she can also see into the future. By spending 3 Chi, she can answer a question about the probably outcome of an event. Her predictions are never set in stone, however, allowing her Summoner the chance to change the future.

ONI

Oni are demons that are thought to plague the world in the night to steal children, cause natural disasters and kill humans for sport. These beings exist in myth as far as the average citizen is concerned, boogeymen and fairy tales to teach lessons to children or make sure they do their chores.

But they are quite real. Right below the ground's surface boils the barrier that separates the thousand hellish realms from Earth. Legends state that Oni used to reside on Earth before Heaven pushed them below and gave the world to humanity. There is a constant struggle to see who will rule when they return to the surface.

No two Oni look the same. Each is a human soul that committed horrible atrocities when they lived, either against another human, themselves or heaven itself. Punishment means being sent to a hell that reflects their sins (i.e. a hell for murderers, another for kidnapers, another for terribly dishonoring their family, etc.). Their bodies and spirits are distorted by their sins, turning them into ugly, monstrous beings. Some brave and legendary warriors have worn armor resembling Oni to instill fear in their opponents, which such a sight certainly does.

An Oni that makes an appearance on Earth is both strong enough to push through the barrier that keeps them in hell and clever enough to evade detection from the keepers of hell. The few documented sightings have caused the deaths of hundred of people, citizens and ninja alike. Either way, their emergence spells one step closer to even darker times.

Average Oni (Fear 28)

Oni are towering figures with terrifying and de-ranged features. Most notably, they often have bulbous noses, bugged-out eyes, ragged and chewed ears, sharpened teeth and a thousand other deformities that make each one unique. They are insane beings that once lived on Earth, but have been tortured for eternity in hell. When they return, they almost always visit the place they once called home when alive in hopes of seeing loved ones again. Sadly, their appearance only inspires fear and hatred, which throws them into a rage that inevitably destroys all they care for.

Health: 85 (AR 5/5), **Stamina:** 14

Yin: 10, **Yang:** 10

Skills: Discipline +15, Intimidation +20

Traits: Immune to Death, Fear/Awe, Insanity, Pain, Poison and Unconsciousness checks. +13 vs. Balance.

Combat: Strike +18, Throw +18, Parry +19, Dodge +20, Roll +25, Grapple +25, Initiative +23, Damage +12 (L), Actions 4

Wushu: No two Oni are truly alike. The GM can assign a path of wushu to each Oni, but they wield corrupted version of the effects. For instance, an Oni that uses "Open the Earth" may also be bottomless, trapping any that fall down it for eternity. Their power is unpredictable and chaotic, making them the most dangerous enemy a ninja will ever face.

Other Notes: Use of Oni in a story brings another layer to Wu Xing: The Ninja Crusade. It means the rules of the current war need to change to encompass a third, heinously powerful enemy. Some ninja would leap at the chance to fight an Oni, but most would also die in the process. It takes a large group to take down just one, let alone if there are more. This means a war on two fronts for either the Empire or the ninja, but they are essentially loners that are ready to attack anyone at a moment's notice. They should be used sparingly. Also, Oni and Celestial Animals are bitter enemies and will attack each other on sight.

CHAPTER SEVEN: STORYTELLING

THEMES

Many themes run deep within Wu Xing: The Ninja Crusade, but the core theme is one of Rebellion. It is a rebellion against a power much larger than oneself. Even with the immense power of chi manipulation and the mastery of several martial arts styles, the ninja are the underdogs. The massive Izou Army outnumbers them outright and its soldiers are armed with guns that can easily turn the tide of any war. They can also be rebelling against other more oppressive clans that collect and abuse all of the imperial influence.

Another major theme of this game is Secrecy. Ninja, by nature, are all about concealing the truth... from enemies and from each other. Only others of the clan or family ever truly know them as loyal, good people. If they live a double life within the Empire, they must keep a clever disguise not to be caught by the army.

Conversely, they are on a constant quest to unlock the secrets of other clans, hoping to one day take out their rivals or make peace. The ever-changing world of Relationships between clans, ninja, friends and family is a huge theme in Wu Xing. Tests

of these relationships should be used heavily with comrades, other player characters and even enemies.

MOOD

Wu Xing: The Ninja Crusade is an “Action RPG of Martial Arts, Mysticism and Rebellion”. Below are brief explanations of how it should feel to be in the game.

ACTION

Wu Xing is a fast-paced, action RPG that lets players fully customize their character to create just what they want to play. In the end, though, there is no story without action. As aggressive ninja as tend to be, it need not only be physical action. Action is a result of Conflict with the story. If the character is walking down the road, action and conflict can be created if they spot someone shadowing them, if they see someone they recognize or if their travel route is somehow obstructed. If they are attempted to break into a home, conflict can be created by a race against the clock or if soldiers are on their tail

the whole time.

Things should always be happening to the characters, and they need to be at the center of any major events. No matter how awesome an NPC appears to be, the game belongs to the players after all.

MARTIAL ARTS AND MYSTICISM

The world of ninja revolves around developing experience in the various martial arts. An array of different approaches can be taken in this account. The ability to tune one's body to their spirit is often overlooked for the simple execution of a devastating punch. Some fighters spend their whole lives to develop their skills in hopes of protecting their village or to deliver a blow to a rival. Others seek only to destroy, using their martial power to inflict fear and death upon the land.

Either way, martial art competitions are an integral part of *Wu Xing: The Ninja Crusade*. Two fighters meeting on the battlefield wouldn't be real ninja if the need to prove who the better fighter was didn't seethe through their veins. Not only is it a matter of honor, for one's martial arts instructor or school, but it is a matter of personal development. Each fight makes a ninja that much stronger, as taught by most clans.

Martial arts is as much about spirituality and mysticism as about physical growth. Ninja must learn the talent of meditation and an attempt to understand the world of magic. An air of mystery should always be implanted into the story. Even one's own clan can often be a journey into the unknown as the character uncovers underlying secrets.

ANIME INSPIRATIONS

Wu Xing: The Ninja Crusade takes many of its elements from actual Asian culture. The Izou Empire resembles a Chinese dynasty, the ninja themselves are obviously from Japanese myth and legends from Tibetan, Thai and Korean culture compose much of the Five Kingdoms.

However, the influence of Anime fills this game just as much as history. Below are a few anime titles that had the most effect on *Wu Xing's* outcome.

- **Avatar: The Last Airbender:** An awesome anime by Nickelodeon about one fated young boy who is out to save the world. We suggest watching the series to get a good sense of the large scale of the war against the ninja. The mood is dark at times and hilarious at others, hinting at the true back and forth of any good storytelling experience in *Wu Xing*.

- **Basilisk:** By the makers of *Ninja Scroll*, this anime is about the rivalry between two legendary ninja clans: The Kouga and the Iga. After their peace treaty is dissolved, it is a killing spree as the two clans destroy each other to decide the fate of the nation. We suggest *Basilisk* to get a sense of the intense hatred that two clans can hold for each other.

- **Naruto & Naruto: Shippuuden:** The story of a young boy, cursed with a demon inside his soul, on a quest to find his place in the world. Through the years, his journey brings him new friends, horribly powerful enemies and many trials that he must fight through. *Naruto* is much more modern than *Wu Xing*, but can be a great stepping stone to running your own games with its mixed-clan interactions and creative teaching methods. There are several extreme battles between powerful ninja who know wushu one could only dream of, as well as legendary and mundane summonings.

- **Ranma ½:** A Japanese boy and his father travel to China to train, where he falls into the "pond of drowned girl". When he's doused with cold water he turns female and then back into a male again with warm. It is extremely funny, never taking itself too seriously, but is also about the attempt to live a normal life while being a martial artist, developing relationships with friends and enemies and becoming more powerful through constant training. Be ready to laugh.

What you'll mostly learn from watching these series is that it's ok to laugh. The mood of *Wu Xing: The Ninja Crusade* is filled with death and battle, but humor is an important component. Whether it's friendly arguments over where to eat, making fun of each other over romantic interests or even throwing in a bit of slapstick (i.e. trips and falls, passing gas, etc.), injecting humor into your story gives a contrast to all the destruction that surrounds them.

CRAFTING STORIES

Putting all the elements of a story together can often be difficult, no matter how experienced the GM. A read through of *Wu Xing: The Ninja Crusade* should reveal several story hooks and plot ideas, but having so many directions to travel makes it hard to plan an exact route. Players should handle their character's concept, background and personalities, from how they were raised to life within their clan.

Now, though, the responsibility of crafting the perfect story for the characters to explore is up to the GM. Emphasizing the intrinsic themes and moods is important when in the planning stages, as well as figuring out the perfect balance that is necessary in your game. This can lead to a number of different approaches and stories, from wandering warriors to ninja's attempting to collect every wushu in existence to one of the following:

YOU'RE THE STUDENT. I'M THE TEACHER

Some of the best stories start at the very beginning. While a character's start can easily be explained in a brief summary or in a single Prelude session, some GMs chose to run their game with the characters during their initial training periods.

This type of story is great for starting GMs and beginning players. It gives a chance to start laser focused on the characters and their lives, as well as those important to their development. The war being waged outside their village walls is much less important than their training exercises and missions. Their teachers become role models and legends in their eyes. Their fellow students become rivals and allies, creating bonds that will last forever.

It is in this type of game where a player can get a real sense of their character's personalities through their reactions to training and the relationships that they cling to. The time they burned down their house while learning to throw a flame spear or a particularly challenging sparring session can become stories to tell for the rest of their lives.

Student era games can create a basis to build from, each enemy or trial becoming more and more challenging, instead of beginning in the middle of a devastating war with powerful foes. Basic missions

and tasks are the name of the game (some of which are paid for by nobles), keeping it low key but fun.

Note: The GM may wish to decrease the starting level (20 + IQ Skill points and 2 starting Wushu Levels to start) or require that the characters take the Kid Drawback (pg 109) for this type of story.

Story Hooks:

- **Track the Pet:** A ninja's first mission is often to track a mission pet for someone of class. Cats and dogs can be very elusive, but other more exotic animals may need to be caught.
- **Message/Package Delivery:** As carrier hawks can be easily detected and intercepted by the Empire, most clans send their students. Important letters or potentially damaging packages in the hands of even the youngest of ninja is more likely to meet its destination. Depending on how crucial the message is, the ninja may have difficult obstacles to overcome to fulfill their mission.
- **Competition:** Being a student is, at heart, a competition against one's peers or even oneself. In the spirit of competition, teachers will often pit their students against each other. Whether it is a test to see who can snatch bells from their belt or trials that assess ones survival ability, a teacher's job is to figure out which students are ready to move on to becoming full-fledged ninja. A final test, different for each clan, is also a fun way to experience what it takes.

CLAN VS. CLAN

After graduation into full ninja-hood, a character is always taught about their enemies and allies. The dynamics between ninja clans are in an ever-constant state of flux, changing with the wind in most cases. The Recoiling Serpents and Pack of the Black Moon has obvious hatred between them, just as the Grasping Shadows and Virtuous Body Gardeners. Some games may revolve around these delicate relationships that can be both exciting and dangerous.

A Clan vs. Clan story gives the opportunity to delve into the twisted world of the clans and their sentiments toward each other. Reading each clan description, it is easy to pick apart which clans like or dislike each other overall. However, even a clan

isn't always a single body, but instead are split into several sects and families within the clan. In this type of game, dealing with the war and the Ninja Crusade itself is secondary to understanding how it has affected the clan relationships. They can not only get a strong sense of their place within their clan, possibly attempting to attain a high-rank within, but may also lead excursions and attacks against other clans or help defend their allies.

These stories often take place exclusively within the walls of hidden villages. One village versus another in a constant rivalry or war that has not

stopped just because they share a common enemy now. As much as the Lotus Coalition would like to believe the opposite, most ninja have not abandoned their rivalries and hurt feelings toward each other.

Story Hooks

- **Espionage:** The most famous of missions for ninja to undertake is keeping track of their enemies. This includes shadowing important figures or even completely disguising themselves to fit into the crowd. That is, if they can make their way through

the heavy defenses that most hidden villages fashion to keep their enemies out. Overcoming the Pack of the Black Moon's tracking methods or traversing a illusory forest maze to enter a Bamboo Herbalist village can be fun.

- **Duels:** In order to settle some arguments, clans set up exhibitions where selected ninja battle to determine a winner. This can often be to the death and it is a great honor to represent one's entire clan in a duel. This leads to plenty of competition within the clan to show one's worth, as well as the duel itself.

- **Outright Aggression:** For particularly fresh insults, some clans are willing to drop everything and begin a clan war. This has led to the death of many promising bloodlines. These stories involve waiting for just the right time to assault and hopefully kill their enemy. Strategies like this work best when masked by other occurrences, like during a "peaceful" duel or after finding a weak spot in their defenses after a bit of espionage.

DOUBLE LIFE

There is something to be said for attempting to live a normal life. Some ninja have also tried to accomplish this feat, some successfully



and others not so much. Completely full lives can be lived within a hidden village, with strong loves and relationships. However, there are some that live a double life, a ninja hidden within the disguise of the average citizen. This kind of story can be a fun change of pace for those used to non-stop action.

Double Life stories let the players focus on their character's role within society itself. They have their choice of occupation (based on their Class) and can build relationships like marriages and children. The ninja has to be careful, however, as they are under the scrutinizing eye of the empire as they seek to out any ninja they can. This is a game of secrets to be kept and protection of the things most important, allowing the player to really explore the extents of their character's psyche.

The other side of the Double Life is the character's allegiance to their clan. Those ninja who are deep within the class system have the obligation of using their position to benefit the Lotus Coalition. Secret missions, such as gathering and delivering intelligence or leaving a gate open for a ninja to enter later become a daily occurrence. Those higher in Class can use their political pull to lower regulations on chi manipulation or attempt to sway the Emperor from the Ninja Crusade. Can the character hold on to their double existence without losing one or the other?

Story Hooks

- **The Witness:** A situation arises where the ninja has to perform some act using chi manipulation and is seen by a neighbor. Ninja can kill another without thinking, but this witness is well-known within the community and their death will be noticed and missed (i.e. perhaps a neighborhood organizer or a notorious shopkeeper). How will they handle the situation?

- **Gathering Intel:** The ninja's clan has tasked them with finding out the identities of potential assassination prospects. Just then, one of their best friends/family members becomes head of the guard... the perfect person to kill. Will the character turn on them to protect their position within the clan or vice versa?

- **Found Out:** The character has been discovered as a chi manipulator, an offense punishable by

death. They aren't able to simply turn tail and run without a care, since the Empire knows of their family, children and associates - they are all suspects. Will they be shunned by family or will they escape alongside the ninja, despite the danger?

THE FRONT LINE

The type of story likely to get the most game play takes place on the Front Line of the Ninja Crusade. It centers on the intense battle to save an entire people against destruction at the hands of the Izou Army. The Empire has the advantage of guns, but the ninja have wushu powered by their chi to fight against them.

GMs are encouraged to collect the characters into unique squads with a mix of ninja from different clans. This is the strategy behind the Lotus Coalition, using the power of the combined clans to destroy any preconceptions the Izou Army may have as they attack. The Front Line is an excuse to mix any type of ninja together, as long as they serve the Lotus Coalition, allowing the players to explore their character's perception of and relationship to other clans. Even with the rivalries that often flare up, the characters must learn to become a true team with the others of their squad... or they will surely end up dead on the battlefield.

These stories take place in different locations. Attack plans are usually crafted within hidden villages or Lotus Coalition HQs and then are executed all around the Empire. Some characters are called to liberate smaller towns from oppression, while others create chaos directly in the heart of the Empire, Daiwa. Some are sent to gather rare supplies for potions, often from the Floating City, and others are utilized as field medics (usually the Bamboo Herbalists). There are many roles to take within the war. The GM should figure out the characters' strength and decide the best use of their skills to further the ninja cause.

Story Hooks

- **Infiltrate:** The key to some attacks is knowing the enemy. In this hook, the ninja must infiltrate an Izou platoon, either as fellow soldiers or assistants, only to attack them from within. This is

ROMANCE

No matter which kind of story the GM decides to run, romantic feelings between characters are bound to spring up during the game. It could be a first love and/or broken heart between fledgling students, sexual tension between colleges, a desperate maiden in need of help or forbidden love between ninja from opposing clans. Each adds its own flavor to a game, enhancing and intensifying how one character feels about another.

It is important to check with your players to ensure that they are comfortable with injecting a romantic storyline into the game. Some may find that type of addition unnecessary while others would jump at the chance to explore every aspect of their character, even their love life. Either way, *Wu Xing: The Ninja Crusade* lends itself to romantic story seeds quite well.

a great option for an easy surprise attack, but too much time of infiltration further humanizes their targets. How easy is it to kill a man you shared a meal over a campfire with?

- **Seek and Destroy:** The Izou Army has been detected on the territory. Four, possibly five groups of soldiers all approaching from different directions. The ninja must spread out and take them all out. Hopefully, they don't have an Executioner or Golden Lion in their midst.

- **Liberation:** Important members of the Ninja Coalition have been brought to Nanchou (pg 25). Without the special wushu in their possession, the war will surely not be won. The characters are tasked with breaking them out of the impenetrable prison city.

STAGING YOUR STORY

After figuring out what kind of story to run, GMs need to decide where it takes place and who the important NPCs will be.

PEOPLE

Casting your story with many interesting characters is very important. Non-player Characters

(NPCs) need to be exciting and fascinating enough to impart a certain feeling and fill their roles, but it's critical that they not steal the spotlight from the characters.

Most NPCs should be handled as a GM comes across them. If the characters say they want to ask the guard a question, it isn't important to know the guard's entire life history. Instead, a simple name and personality (i.e. sweet, arrogant, etc.) can be applied on the fly. More crucial characters for the story should be fleshed out as much as (or close to) player characters.

In order to create the best NPCs possible, we've included some things to ponder:

- **Role:** Establish the NPC's role within the story. What purpose do they serve? Are they there just to give direction or are they honored mentors? The characters should be meeting and interacting with fleshed-out NPCs, not mannequins.

- **Appearance:** What do they look like? You can tell a lot about a person by how they present themselves, including scars and tattoos. The GM should pick out one or two key features to mention. A missing right eye or a sixth finger on their left hand are great examples.

- **Sentiments:** How do they feel about magic, ninja, the Empire, the city they live in, the world, celestial animals or even the various religions? Their views are colored by their past and their overall disposition.

- **Quirks:** Everyone has quirks. Whether it's that they hate to be kept waiting or they like to give everyone nicknames. What is the NPC's quirk?

- **Skills/Abilities:** Last but not least, what can the NPC do? Are they magically threatening with a dozen lethal wushu at their command or are they a quick draw at their sword. They could have a silver tongue to convince someone the sky is red or have command of a devastating Celestial Animal. The GM should try to keep the characters on their toes by giving unorthodox or entirely unique abilities to their NPCs. They'll never guess that the old lady they are buying from is a master pickpocket or that the child they passed has an empathic link to others. Surprise them!

PLACES

Which region the story takes place can determine a lot of about the people and events that the characters will encounter. After reading the section on the Ten Provinces (pg 25) you'll notice that the level of tension, unrest and poverty increases as you travel east and then south. So, a story set in the Bridge to the World Province should be quite different than if it were run in the Black Veil Province.

Next, the GM should decide on what important landscapes and buildings exist within the region/city. Using one of the existing Izou cities is easy enough, since their explanations include hints to the feel of the city and its inhabitants. However, if the GM chooses to create their own city, town or village (of which many exist outside of those described in this book), we suggest paying attention to the following questions.

- It is rural or urban?
- How is the town laid out?

- Does it have a high population level? Can it safely sustain these numbers?

- What is the mood of the town?

- Who runs the town and what ninja clan has influence there?

- Does the Empire have soldiers stationed or are there simply town guards?

- Any attractions or landmarks?

The same goes for describing a ninja's hidden village, where they have the most interaction with others of their kind. It's important to consider the following:

- How large is the hidden village?

- How many other ninja live there?

- How many civilians?

- Is it a single-clan village or one of the Lotus Coalition's mixed-clan villages?

- Does the village have any standing rivalries or is it mostly peaceful?

- Does the Empire know about its existence? If so, how does it keep itself hidden?

GM ADVICE

The Game Master (GM) is the core of any gaming group. They create stories through which the characters adventure and grow. The GM also directs actions and conversations when interacting with Non-Player Characters (NPCs). Here are a few suggestions for running a successful game.

1. Have Fun!

As the GM, it is your privilege (not your job) to craft a story that you and your players will all enjoy. Any game should be played with the intent of having fun above all else. The moment that creating the story and setting becomes a chore, or that your players stop having fun, is the moment that your game will falter. If this feeling strikes, take a break (perhaps go for a food run) and regain your bearings. Everyone will have more fun if the GM is focused and having fun as well. Bottom line: having fun is what it's all about.

Even a totally intricate story, full of twists, turns and mystery needs to take a backseat if the



players are not having fun. The players may be in the mood for a fight or for a moment of character interaction. The story could be focusing too much on plot and not enough on the ninja themselves. As the GM, it's helpful to be able to change course on the fly. This is a learned ability, so don't feel bad if you're not great at it to start. If you need a moment, just call for a 15-minute break while you decide how to proceed. Your players will understand.

2. *The Characters Are the Story*

No matter how tempting it is to create the coolest NPCs with badass abilities or mysterious origins, only the player's characters matter in the end. They are the story. The game must be shaped by the characters' decisions. If they traverse worlds, save innocents or conquer grand armies, the world and people around them should change to reflect these choices. After all, the characters are provided XP for personal change, so their world should change accordingly. No player wants a game where nothing they do actually "matters". It is perfectly fine to have events happening in the background, but they should only come into play as much as they affect the characters.

3. *Don't Control Everything*

Some GMs become aggressive dictators over games. Others take an adversarial role of GM vs. players. These are actively discouraged when playing *Wu Xing: The Ninja Crusade*. Yes, GM generally stands for "Game Master", a title worthy of someone who creates a world. But try thinking about it as the "Game Motivator" or "Game Mentor" instead. These terms are actually more correct. It's your job to direct the action, plots and stories, but players have the real control of the game's direction. The GM controls the world, but you do not control the characters. When reaching a point where players have choices, ALWAYS ask them what their characters do or say in response.

4. *Involve Passions, Involve Everyone*

All players deserve to take the spotlight during the story at one point or another. At times, one character may have more at stake in the current

plot point than another, but the other characters wouldn't be there if they didn't also have a reason. This is when a character's Passion can come into play. The Passion is their true nature and reflects their motivations. The best way to incorporate characters into a story is to use their Passion to link them. When you do this, every character cares about the outcome.

For instance, there are a multitude of reasons that a character may be motivated to search for a kidnapped person. One character with the Community Passion may see the victim as important to their neighborhood cause. One with the Power Passion may want to gain a favor from the victim by saving them. Another with the Love Passion may be in love with the victim or may have been asked by the victim's spouse to seek them out.

5. *Be Descriptive, Not Definitive*

One of the GM's roles is to filter descriptive information in the best way to create a mood for the scene. Describe the environment and NPCs the characters encounter, but be sure to leave out "exacts" and avoid being too "definitive". Compare these two descriptions of the same scene:

"You walk into a temple and see your Living Chronicle contact praying."

Or

"You enter the golden temple with dragons above the doorway, noticing a minor crack in its infrastructure. Most of the prayer mats are empty and the temple doesn't look like it's been tidied in weeks. The lights flicker from the candles lit along the walls and the smell of incense permeates the room. There's a man meditating silently in the middle of the room. He's got tattoos of words along his arms and sides, and appears to have stubble on his face as if he's been meditating for days."

Several elements are missing from the first example. It doesn't evoke emotion or imagery and the NPC is defined much too quickly. The second description uses cues like "tattoos of words" to make the characters assume it is a member of the Living Chronicle. The GM then has the option to introduce a Codex, a lost clan, another disguised as a Living Chronicle or someone with a botched tattoo job. Being descriptive keeps mystery alive and makes things more interesting.

BASIC GAME TERMS

1d20: One twenty-sided die.

Action: In combat, any task the character instigates. This can be anything from throwing a punch to picking a lock.

Armor Rating (AR): The amount of protection that armor and some magical effects provide. The first number represents Non-Lethal damage absorbed and the second number represents Lethal damage absorbed. See pg 170.

Attributes: Numerical values that represent the base abilities of a character, without training. See pg 79.

Bonus Points (BP): Points spent to purchase Gifts or extra Attribute and Skill points. See pg 102.

Character: Fictional roles created by players that exist in the setting and world created by the GM.

Check: A check is where the character rolls 1d20 and attempts to meet or beat the Difficulty. Players usually roll Attribute + Skill + 1d20.

Chi: Building blocks of the universe, used to fuel the ninja's wushu. See pg 77.

Clan: Group of ninja, usually associated with family or social ties. See pg 37.

Concept: A short description for a character, such as "wandering monk" or "sinister madame". See pg 70.

Count: In combat, it's used to track the speed of an Action or Reaction. Denotes 0.5 seconds of time. See pg 161.

Critical Failure: When the player rolls 1 on 1d20, this means an automatic failure and usually in a huge way. See pg 83.

Critical Success: When the player rolls 20 on 1d20, this means an automatic success for Standard skills. In combat, it has varying effects. See pg 83.

Damage: Points subtracted from Health, bringing the character closer to death or unconsciousness. See pg 174.

Depletion: When the ninja runs out of temporary chi points. They receive an adverse effect from their Elemental Soul. See pg 78.

Difficulty: The target number needed to achieve a task. Roll 1d20 + applicable Attribute, Skill, and modifiers. If total is higher than the Difficulty, the task is successful.

Drawback: Negative characteristics that can be applied to a character in exchange for Bonus Points. See pg 102.

Durability: Health for inanimate objects. See pg 160.

Duration: How long an effect (i.e. a wushu) lasts.

Elemental Soul: Each character is associated with particular element that colors their personality and gives bonuses to combat. Also affects their starting Permanent Chi. See pg 75.

Experience Points (XP): Represents growth of characters and can be spent to raise existing abilities or learn new ones. See pg 112.

Fodder: A weak NPC used to represent the easiest of enemies. See pg 185.

Game Master (GM): The GM is the member of the role-playing group that creates and controls the world that the characters interact within. GM Advice, pg 205.

Gift: Positive characters that can be applied to a character for the cost of Bonus Points. See Pg 102.

Harmony: When two skills can be used to accomplish a task together. See pg 84.

Health: The numerical value of the character's ability to take damage before dying. If Health drops to zero by Non-lethal damage, the character is knocked out. If Health drops to zero by Lethal damage, the character is close to Death. See pg 174.

Imbalance: When a ninja is holding more Temporary chi points than their Permanent Chi values + 2. They receive an adverse effect from their elemental Soul. See pg 78.

BASIC GAME TERMS (CONT.)

Initiative: In combat, used to gauge when a character acts first within a round. See pg 111.

Legendary: A target Difficulty 40. Players must roll equal to or higher than 40 with an Attribute + Skill + 1d20 check.

Lethal: Damage from swords, fire, bullets, and other sources that can kill you quickly. See pg 174.

Moderate: A target Difficulty 20. Players must roll equal to or higher than 20 with an Attribute + Skill + 1d20 check.

Movement: A Sub-Attribute that gauges the character's running speed. See pg 111.

Natural 1: Rolling a 1 on 1d20. See Critical Failure.

Natural: 20: Rolling a 20 on 1d20. See Critical Success.

Non-Lethal: Damage from punches, blunt weapons, falling, or other sources that can knock you out quickly or kill you slowly. See pg 174.

Non-player Character (NPC): An NPC is a character controlled by the GM (i.e. any character not controlled by a player).

Passion: A character's motivation to act. Chosen during character creation. See pg 71.

Permanent Chi: Based on the character's Elemental Soul, this is the most chi the ninja can hold safely. Can also be sacrificed for other effects. See pg 77.

Player: You are the player, the one who assumes the role of the character.

Range: The effective distance for firing a gun, throwing a weapon/object, or casting a spell.

Reaction: In combat, any task the character takes in response to an Action against them.

Round: In combat, 1 Round = 10 seconds (20 Counts). Initiative is rolled at the start of each Round. See pg 161.

Session: When your roleplaying group sits down to play.

Simple: A target Difficulty 10. Players must roll equal to or higher than 10 with an Attribute + Skill + 1d20 check.

Skills: Numerical values that represent a character's learned abilities. See pg 82.

Speed: The number of Counts an Action of Reaction requires. See pg 161.

Squad: The group of characters

Stamina: The numerical value of the character's mental and physical endurance before collapsing. If Stamina drops to zero, the character can do nothing but rest. See pg 161.

Story: A story that characters go through with a beginning, middle, and end. At the end of each story arch, players should be awarded bonus XP.

Teamwork: When two characters work together on one task. See pg 84.

Temporary Chi: Points of chi to be spent on fueling Wushu. Can hold their Permanent Chi value +2 before incurring negative effects. See pg 77.

Tie: Whenever two players (or a player and the GM) roll the same number total on a contested roll. Defenders always win ties.

Tough: A target Difficulty 30. Players must roll equal to or higher than 30 with an Attribute + Skill + 1d20 check.

Wushu: The awesome magical powers wielded by ninja. they come in many different flavors. See pg 120.

Yang: The power of light, the sun, positivity and activity. See pg 78.

Yin: The power of darkness, the moon, negativity and lethargy. See pg 78.

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FIGHTING STYLE BONUS TOTALS BY LEVEL

		Strike	Throw	Parry	Dodge	Roll	Grapple	Initiative	Damage	Stamina	Health	Actions
BEAR	Level 1	+1	+0	+1	+0	+1	+1	+0	+0	+0	+3	+0
	Level 2	+2	+1	+1	+0	+2	+2	+0	+1	+0	+3	+0
	Level 3	+2	+1	+2	+1	+3	+3	+1	+1	+0	+6	+0
	Level 4	+3	+1	+2	+1	+4	+4	+1	+2	+1	+6	+0
	Level 5	+3	+2	+3	+2	+5	+4	+1	+3	+1	+6	+0
	Level 6	+4	+3	+3	+2	+6	+5	+1	+3	+1	+9	+0
	Level 7	+4	+4	+4	+2	+7	+5	+1	+4	+1	+9	+1
	Level 8	+5	+4	+5	+3	+8	+6	+1	+4	+1	+9	+1
	Level 9	+5	+5	+6	+3	+9	+6	+2	+4	+1	+12	+1
	Level 10	+6	+5	+6	+4	+10	+7	+2	+5	+1	+12	+1
	Level 11	+6	+6	+7	+5	+11	+8	+2	+5	+1	+12	+1
	Level 12	+7	+7	+7	+5	+12	+8	+2	+5	+2	+15	+1
	Level 13	+7	+7	+8	+5	+13	+9	+3	+6	+2	+15	+2
	Level 14	+8	+8	+9	+5	+14	+10	+3	+7	+2	+15	+2
	Level 15	+9	+8	+10	+5	+15	+11	+3	+8	+2	+18	+2

		Strike	Throw	Parry	Dodge	Roll	Grapple	Initiative	Damage	Stamina	Health	Actions
CRATE	Level 1	+1	+1	+1	+1	+0	+0	+1	+0	+0	+0	+0
	Level 2	+1	+2	+2	+1	+1	+1	+1	+0	+0	+0	+1
	Level 3	+2	+3	+3	+2	+1	+1	+2	+0	+0	+0	+1
	Level 4	+2	+3	+4	+3	+2	+1	+2	+0	+1	+0	+2
	Level 5	+2	+4	+5	+3	+2	+2	+3	+0	+1	+2	+2
	Level 6	+3	+5	+5	+4	+3	+2	+3	+0	+1	+2	+3
	Level 7	+4	+6	+6	+4	+3	+2	+4	+0	+1	+2	+3
	Level 8	+5	+7	+7	+5	+3	+2	+5	+0	+1	+2	+3
	Level 9	+5	+8	+8	+5	+4	+3	+5	+0	+1	+2	+4
	Level 10	+6	+9	+8	+6	+4	+3	+6	+0	+1	+4	+4
	Level 11	+6	+10	+9	+7	+4	+3	+7	+0	+2	+4	+4
	Level 12	+7	+10	+10	+7	+4	+4	+8	+0	+2	+4	+5
	Level 13	+8	+11	+11	+7	+5	+4	+9	+0	+2	+6	+5
	Level 14	+9	+11	+12	+8	+5	+5	+10	+0	+3	+6	+5
	Level 15	+10	+12	+13	+9	+5	+6	+11	+0	+3	+6	+7

		Strike	Throw	Parry	Dodge	Roll	Grapple	Initiative	Damage	Stamina	Health	Actions
CROCODILE	Level 1	+1	+0	+0	+1	+1	+1	+0	+0	+0	+3	+0
	Level 2	+2	+0	+1	+1	+1	+2	+0	+0	+1	+5	+0
	Level 3	+2	+1	+1	+2	+1	+3	+1	+1	+1	+5	+0
	Level 4	+3	+1	+2	+3	+2	+3	+1	+1	+1	+7	+0
	Level 5	+3	+2	+2	+4	+3	+3	+1	+2	+2	+7	+0
	Level 6	+4	+2	+2	+4	+4	+5	+2	+2	+2	+9	+0
	Level 7	+4	+3	+3	+5	+4	+6	+2	+3	+2	+9	+0
	Level 8	+5	+3	+4	+5	+5	+6	+2	+3	+3	+11	+0
	Level 9	+5	+3	+5	+6	+5	+7	+3	+4	+3	+11	+0
	Level 10	+6	+3	+5	+6	+6	+9	+4	+4	+3	+13	+0
	Level 11	+6	+4	+5	+7	+7	+9	+4	+4	+4	+15	+0
	Level 12	+7	+4	+5	+8	+7	+9	+5	+5	+4	+15	+0
	Level 13	+7	+5	+5	+9	+8	+10	+5	+6	+4	+17	+0
	Level 14	+8	+5	+6	+9	+8	+11	+6	+6	+5	+19	+0
	Level 15	+8	+5	+7	+10	+9	+13	+6	+7	+5	+22	+0

		Strike	Throw	Parry	Dodge	Roll	Grapple	Initiative	Damage	Stamina	Health	Actions
DRAGON	Level 1	+1	+0	+1	+0	+1	+1	+1	+0	+0	+0	+0
	Level 2	+1	+1	+2	+0	+2	+2	+2	+0	+0	+2	+0
	Level 3	+2	+2	+3	+0	+3	+2	+2	+0	+1	+2	+0
	Level 4	+3	+3	+4	+1	+3	+3	+2	+0	+1	+2	+0
	Level 5	+4	+3	+5	+1	+4	+3	+3	+0	+1	+4	+0
	Level 6	+4	+4	+6	+1	+5	+4	+4	+0	+2	+4	+0
	Level 7	+5	+4	+7	+1	+6	+4	+4	+1	+2	+6	+0
	Level 8	+6	+4	+8	+2	+6	+5	+5	+1	+2	+6	+0
	Level 9	+7	+4	+9	+2	+7	+5	+5	+1	+2	+8	+1
	Level 10	+7	+4	+10	+2	+8	+6	+6	+1	+3	+8	+1
	Level 11	+8	+5	+11	+2	+9	+6	+6	+1	+3	+10	+1
	Level 12	+9	+5	+12	+3	+9	+7	+7	+1	+3	+10	+1
	Level 13	+10	+6	+13	+3	+10	+7	+7	+1	+4	+10	+1
	Level 14	+10	+7	+14	+3	+11	+8	+8	+1	+4	+12	+1
	Level 15	+11	+7	+15	+3	+12	+9	+8	+2	+5	+12	+1

		Strike	Throw	Parry	Dodge	Roll	Grapple	Initiative	Damage	Stamina	Health	Actions
WOLF	Level 1	+1	+1	+1	+1	+0	+0	+1	+0	+0	+0	+0
	Level 2	+2	+2	+2	+2	+1	+0	+1	+0	+0	+0	+0
	Level 3	+2	+3	+2	+3	+1	+1	+2	+0	+0	+2	+0
	Level 4	+2	+3	+3	+4	+2	+1	+3	+1	+0	+2	+0
	Level 5	+2	+4	+4	+5	+2	+1	+4	+1	+0	+2	+1
	Level 6	+2	+5	+5	+6	+3	+1	+4	+1	+0	+4	+1
	Level 7	+2	+6	+5	+7	+4	+2	+5	+2	+0	+4	+1
	Level 8	+3	+6	+6	+8	+4	+2	+6	+2	+0	+4	+2
	Level 9	+3	+7	+7	+9	+4	+2	+7	+3	+0	+4	+2
	Level 10	+3	+8	+8	+10	+5	+3	+7	+3	+0	+6	+2
	Level 11	+4	+9	+8	+11	+6	+3	+8	+3	+1	+6	+2
	Level 12	+5	+9	+9	+12	+6	+3	+9	+3	+1	+6	+3
	Level 13	+5	+10	+9	+13	+7	+3	+10	+3	+1	+8	+3
	Level 14	+5	+11	+10	+14	+7	+3	+11	+4	+1	+10	+3
	Level 15	+6	+13	+11	+15	+7	+3	+12	+4	+1	+10	+4

		Strike	Throw	Parry	Dodge	Roll	Grapple	Initiative	Damage	Stamina	Health	Actions
HAWK	Level 1	+0	+1	+1	+1	+1	+0	+1	+0	+0	+0	+0
	Level 2	+1	+1	+2	+2	+2	+0	+2	+0	+0	+0	+0
	Level 3	+1	+2	+3	+2	+2	+1	+3	+1	+0	+0	+0
	Level 4	+1	+3	+3	+3	+3	+1	+4	+1	+0	+0	+1
	Level 5	+2	+3	+4	+4	+3	+1	+5	+2	+0	+0	+1
	Level 6	+3	+3	+5	+5	+3	+1	+6	+2	+1	+0	+1
	Level 7	+3	+4	+6	+5	+4	+2	+7	+3	+1	+0	+1
	Level 8	+3	+5	+6	+6	+5	+2	+8	+3	+1	+0	+2
	Level 9	+4	+6	+7	+6	+5	+3	+9	+4	+1	+0	+2
	Level 10	+4	+7	+8	+7	+5	+3	+10	+4	+2	+0	+2
	Level 11	+5	+7	+9	+8	+5	+4	+11	+5	+2	+0	+2
	Level 12	+5	+8	+9	+9	+5	+4	+12	+6	+2	+0	+3
	Level 13	+6	+9	+10	+9	+6	+4	+13	+7	+2	+0	+3
	Level 14	+6	+9	+11	+10	+6	+5	+14	+8	+3	+0	+3
	Level 15	+7	+10	+12	+11	+6	+5	+15	+9	+3	+0	+3

		Strike	Throw	Parry	Dodge	Roll	Grapple	Initiative	Damage	Stamina	Health	Actions
HORSE	Level 1	+0	+0	+1	+0	+1	+1	+1	+0	+1	+0	+0
	Level 2	+1	+0	+1	+1	+2	+1	+2	+0	+1	+2	+0
	Level 3	+1	+0	+2	+1	+3	+2	+3	+0	+1	+2	+0
	Level 4	+1	+1	+2	+1	+3	+3	+3	+0	+2	+4	+1
	Level 5	+2	+1	+2	+1	+4	+4	+4	+1	+2	+4	+1
	Level 6	+2	+1	+3	+2	+5	+4	+4	+1	+3	+6	+1
	Level 7	+2	+2	+4	+2	+6	+5	+5	+1	+3	+6	+1
	Level 8	+2	+2	+4	+3	+6	+6	+6	+1	+4	+8	+1
	Level 9	+3	+2	+4	+3	+7	+7	+7	+1	+4	+8	+2
	Level 10	+3	+2	+4	+5	+8	+7	+7	+2	+5	+10	+2
	Level 11	+3	+3	+5	+5	+9	+8	+8	+2	+5	+10	+2
	Level 12	+4	+3	+6	+6	+9	+9	+8	+2	+5	+12	+2
	Level 13	+4	+3	+6	+6	+10	+10	+9	+2	+6	+12	+3
	Level 14	+4	+3	+6	+7	+11	+10	+10	+3	+6	+14	+3
	Level 15	+5	+3	+6	+8	+13	+10	+11	+3	+7	+16	+3

		Strike	Throw	Parry	Dodge	Roll	Grapple	Initiative	Damage	Stamina	Health	Actions
MONKEY	Level 1	+0	+1	+0	+1	+1	+1	+1	+0	+0	+0	+0
	Level 2	+0	+2	+0	+2	+2	+2	+2	+0	+0	+0	+0
	Level 3	+0	+3	+1	+3	+2	+3	+3	+0	+0	+0	+0
	Level 4	+0	+4	+2	+3	+3	+3	+4	+0	+0	+2	+0
	Level 5	+1	+5	+2	+4	+3	+3	+5	+0	+1	+2	+0
	Level 6	+1	+6	+3	+5	+4	+3	+5	+0	+1	+2	+1
	Level 7	+2	+7	+3	+6	+4	+4	+6	+0	+1	+2	+1
	Level 8	+2	+8	+4	+6	+6	+5	+6	+0	+1	+4	+1
	Level 9	+2	+9	+4	+7	+6	+6	+7	+1	+1	+4	+1
	Level 10	+2	+10	+5	+8	+7	+7	+7	+1	+1	+4	+1
	Level 11	+2	+11	+6	+9	+8	+7	+7	+1	+2	+4	+1
	Level 12	+3	+12	+7	+9	+9	+8	+8	+1	+2	+4	+1
	Level 13	+3	+13	+8	+10	+9	+9	+9	+1	+2	+4	+1
	Level 14	+3	+14	+8	+11	+10	+10	+10	+1	+2	+6	+1
	Level 15	+3	+15	+9	+13	+11	+12	+10	+1	+2	+8	+2

		Strike	Throw	Parry	Dodge	Roll	Grapple	Initiative	Damage	Stamina	Health	Actions
STAKE	Level 1	+1	+1	+1	+0	+0	+1	+1	+0	+0	+0	+0
	Level 2	+2	+2	+2	+1	+0	+2	+1	+0	+0	+0	+0
	Level 3	+3	+3	+2	+1	+1	+3	+1	+0	+0	+0	+1
	Level 4	+3	+3	+2	+2	+2	+4	+1	+1	+1	+0	+1
	Level 5	+4	+3	+3	+2	+2	+5	+2	+2	+1	+0	+1
	Level 6	+5	+4	+3	+3	+2	+6	+2	+2	+1	+0	+2
	Level 7	+6	+4	+4	+3	+2	+7	+3	+2	+1	+0	+2
	Level 8	+6	+5	+5	+3	+2	+8	+3	+3	+2	+0	+2
	Level 9	+7	+6	+5	+3	+2	+9	+3	+3	+2	+2	+3
	Level 10	+8	+6	+6	+4	+2	+10	+3	+4	+2	+2	+3
	Level 11	+9	+7	+6	+5	+2	+11	+3	+4	+3	+2	+3
	Level 12	+9	+7	+7	+5	+2	+12	+4	+4	+3	+4	+4
	Level 13	+10	+8	+7	+6	+2	+13	+4	+5	+3	+4	+4
	Level 14	+11	+8	+8	+7	+3	+14	+4	+5	+4	+4	+4
	Level 15	+13	+9	+8	+7	+3	+15	+5	+6	+4	+4	+5

		Strike	Throw	Parry	Dodge	Roll	Grapple	Initiative	Damage	Stamina	Health	Actions
TREE	Level 1	+1	+1	+0	+0	+1	+1	+1	+0	+0	+0	+0
	Level 2	+2	+2	+0	+1	+1	+2	+2	+0	+0	+0	+0
	Level 3	+3	+2	+0	+1	+2	+3	+2	+1	+0	+2	+0
	Level 4	+3	+3	+1	+1	+3	+3	+3	+1	+0	+2	+1
	Level 5	+4	+4	+1	+2	+4	+3	+3	+2	+0	+2	+1
	Level 6	+5	+5	+2	+2	+4	+4	+4	+2	+0	+2	+1
	Level 7	+6	+5	+2	+3	+5	+4	+4	+3	+0	+2	+2
	Level 8	+7	+6	+3	+3	+6	+4	+5	+3	+0	+2	+2
	Level 9	+8	+6	+3	+4	+7	+5	+5	+4	+0	+2	+2
	Level 10	+8	+7	+4	+4	+7	+5	+6	+4	+0	+4	+3
	Level 11	+9	+8	+4	+4	+8	+6	+6	+5	+0	+4	+3
	Level 12	+9	+9	+4	+4	+9	+6	+7	+6	+0	+6	+3
	Level 13	+10	+9	+4	+5	+10	+6	+7	+7	+0	+6	+4
	Level 14	+11	+10	+5	+5	+10	+8	+8	+8	+0	+6	+4
	Level 15	+12	+11	+5	+6	+10	+8	+9	+10	+0	+6	+5

		Strike	Throw	Parry	Dodge	Roll	Grapple	Initiative	Damage	Stamina	Health	Actions
WILDCAT	Level 1	+1	+1	+0	+1	+1	+0	+1	+0	+0	+0	+0
	Level 2	+2	+1	+1	+2	+1	+1	+2	+0	+0	+0	+0
	Level 3	+3	+2	+1	+3	+2	+1	+3	+0	+0	+0	+0
	Level 4	+4	+2	+1	+4	+2	+2	+3	+1	+0	+0	+1
	Level 5	+5	+2	+1	+5	+3	+2	+4	+1	+1	+0	+1
	Level 6	+6	+3	+1	+6	+3	+3	+5	+1	+1	+0	+1
	Level 7	+7	+3	+1	+7	+4	+3	+6	+2	+1	+0	+1
	Level 8	+8	+4	+1	+7	+4	+4	+6	+2	+2	+0	+2
	Level 9	+9	+4	+1	+8	+5	+4	+7	+2	+2	+2	+2
	Level 10	+10	+4	+2	+9	+5	+5	+8	+2	+2	+2	+2
	Level 11	+11	+5	+2	+10	+5	+5	+9	+3	+2	+2	+2
	Level 12	+12	+5	+2	+10	+6	+6	+9	+3	+3	+2	+3
	Level 13	+13	+6	+2	+11	+6	+6	+10	+4	+3	+2	+3
	Level 14	+14	+6	+3	+11	+6	+7	+11	+4	+4	+2	+3
	Level 15	+15	+6	+3	+12	+8	+7	+13	+5	+4	+2	+4

WU XING: THE NINJA CRUSADE

Name: _____ Player: _____

Clan: _____ Passion: _____

Element: _____ Concept: _____

Gender/Age: _____ Height/Weight: _____ Hair/Eyes: _____

Personality: _____

HEALTH



1/2 -2
1/4 -4
1/8 -6

NL Damage
L Damage

CHI

YANG ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
YIN ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

ATTRIBUTES

Stamina

POW (Power)... Lvl _____ IQ (Intellect)... Lvl _____
AGY (Agility)... Lvl _____ INS (Insight)... Lvl _____
VIG (Vigor)..... Lvl _____ CHM (Charm).. Lvl _____

Other Traits

vs. Balance + _____ vs. Fear/Awe + _____ vs. Poison + _____ vs. Pain + _____

vs. Disease + _____ vs. Insanity + _____ vs. Death + _____ vs. Unconscious + _____

Memorize + _____ Carry / Lift _____ / _____ Strength Check+ _____ Max Hold Breath _____ sec.

GIFTS

DRAWBACKS

SKILLS

Acrobatics..... Lvl _____ +/- _____ Intimidation.... Lvl _____ +/- _____
Arts..... Lvl _____ +/- _____ Knowledge..... Lvl _____ +/- _____
Athletics..... Lvl _____ +/- _____ Linguistics..... Lvl _____ +/- _____
Beast Handling... Lvl _____ +/- _____ Legerdemain... Lvl _____ +/- _____
Crafts..... Lvl _____ +/- _____ Perception..... Lvl _____ +/- _____
Deception..... Lvl _____ +/- _____ Performance... Lvl _____ +/- _____
Discipline..... Lvl _____ +/- _____ Persuasion..... Lvl _____ +/- _____
Empathy..... Lvl _____ +/- _____ Stealth..... Lvl _____ +/- _____
Fortitude..... Lvl _____ +/- _____ Survival..... Lvl _____ +/- _____
Holistics..... Lvl _____ +/- _____ Travel..... Lvl _____ +/- _____
Specialties: _____

FIGHTING STYLES

1st _____ Lvl _____
2nd _____ Lvl _____
Other _____ Lvl _____
Techniques: _____

Weapon Training

COMBAT BONUSES

+ _____ Strike + _____ Throw + _____ Parry + _____ Dodge
+ _____ Roll + _____ Grapple + _____ Initiative + _____ Damage
Actions _____ Movement _____ Armor Rating (AR) _____

Weapon: _____ Dmg _____ Size _____
Spd + _____ Strike + _____ Throw + _____ Parry + _____
Range _____ / _____ / _____ Payload _____ RS _____

Combat Actions and Reactions

Light Strike (Spd 2, +3 Strike, +1 Dmg), Full Strike (Spd 4, +3 Dmg),
Strong Strike (Spd 6, -3 Strike, +6 Dmg), Finishing Strike (Spd 10, -6 Strike, -1 Stam, +10 Dmg),
Throw Weapon (page 156), Hurl Weapon (Spd Sizex3, Range AGY+IQ/x2/x3), Aim (Spd 3),
Coop Attack (Spd +2, -4 penalty, +25% Dmg), Disarm (Spd 4, -5 Strike)
Draw Weapon (Spd 1+Size), Feint (Spd 3), Initiate Grapple (Spd 4), Grapple Action (Spd 5),
Grapple Reaction (Spd 3), Hold Action (Spd 1), Mold Chi (Spd 8, -2 Actions),
Move-Normal (Spd 4/2/1), Move-Sprint/Rush (Spd 6), Push (Spd 3), Stand (Spd 4)
Sweep (Spd 3, Stam 1), Touch (Spd 1, +2 Strike), Use Skill (Spd 6+), Entangle (Spd 3, -4 Parry)
Parry (Spd 3, -4 vs. Throw), Dodge (Spd 3, -4 vs. Strike), Roll (Spd 2)
Take Hit (Spd 0), Take Hit Strategically (Spd 1, -4 Roll)

XP Total

XP Spent

WUSHU

Name Lvl Chi Spd Check Effect

Name Lvl Chi Spd Check Effect

COMBAT TRACKING SHEET

Character 1



Character 2



Character 3



Character 4



Character 5



Character 6



Character 7



WU XING: THE NINJA CRUSADE

PAGE 1

Name: _____ Player: _____
 Clan: _____ Passion: _____
 Element: _____ Concept: _____
 Gender/Age: _____ Height/Weight: _____ Hair/Eyes: _____
 Personality: _____
 Strength: _____ Weakness: _____
 Romantic Interest: _____ Role in Squad: _____
 Goals: _____

HEALTH

1/2 -2
1/4 -4
1/8 -6

STAMINA

CHI

YANG YIN



ATTRIBUTES

Lvl		Lvl	
POW (Power)...	_____	IQ (Intellect)....	_____
AGY (Agility)...	_____	INS (Insight)....	_____
VIG (Vigor).....	_____	CHM (Charm)..	_____

Other Traits

vs. Balance + _____ vs. Fear/Awe + _____ vs. Poison + _____ vs. Pain + _____

vs. Disease + _____ vs. Insanity + _____ vs. Death + _____ vs. Unconscious + _____

Memorize + _____ Carry / Lift _____ / _____ Strength Check + _____ Max Hold Breath _____ sec.



SKILLS

Lvl		Lvl	
Acrobatics.....	_____	Intimidation.....	_____
Arts.....	_____	Knowledge.....	_____
Athletics.....	_____	Linguistics.....	_____
Beast Handling...	_____	Legerdemain...	_____
Crafts.....	_____	Perception.....	_____
Deception.....	_____	Performance...	_____
Discipline.....	_____	Persuasion.....	_____
Empathy.....	_____	Stealth.....	_____
Fortitude.....	_____	Survival.....	_____
Holistics.....	_____	Travel.....	_____
Specialties: _____			



Clan Gift: _____

Clan Drawback: _____

GIFTS

DRAWBACKS



Friends/Contacts

Enemies/Rivals

XP Total
XP Spent

Other Abilities/Notes

WU XING: THE NINJA CRUSADE

PAGE 2

COMBAT TRACKER



COMBAT BONUSES

+ _____ Strike + _____ Throw + _____ Parry + _____ Dodge
 + _____ Roll + _____ Grapple + _____ Initiative + _____ Damage
 Actions per Round _____ Movement _____ Jump H _____ / V _____
 Armor Rating (AR) _____ Throw Range _____ / _____ / _____

FIGHTING STYLES

Levels

Primary _____
 Secondary _____
 Other _____
 Other _____
 Other _____

Techniques

Weapon Training:

Weapon: _____ Dmg _____ Size _____ Spd + _____ Strike + _____ Throw + _____ Parry + _____ Range _____ / _____ / _____ Payload _____ RS _____
Weapon: _____ Dmg _____ Size _____ Spd + _____ Strike + _____ Throw + _____ Parry + _____ Range _____ / _____ / _____ Payload _____ RS _____
Weapon: _____ Dmg _____ Size _____ Spd + _____ Strike + _____ Throw + _____ Parry + _____ Range _____ / _____ / _____ Payload _____ RS _____
Weapon: _____ Dmg _____ Size _____ Spd + _____ Strike + _____ Throw + _____ Parry + _____ Range _____ / _____ / _____ Payload _____ RS _____

Other Equipment

ELEMENTAL SOUL NATURAL COMBAT

Earth: +1 bonus to Strike checks for each successful attack they Dodge in that Round. This bonus is reduced to 0 at the beginning of the next Round.

Fire: +1 bonus to Parry for each successful attack they land in that Round. This bonus is reduced to 0 at the beginning of the next Round.

Wood: +1 bonus to Strike for each successful attack they land on an opponent that Round. This bonus is reduced to 0 at the beginning of the next Round.

Metal: +1 Damage bonus to their attacks for each successful attack their enemies land on them in that Round. This bonus is reduced to 0 at the beginning of the next Round.

Water: +1 bonus to Strike for each successful Parry in that Round. This bonus is reduced to 0 at the beginning of the next Round.

ACTIONS

Light Strike (Spd 2, +3 Strike, +1 Dmg)
 Full Strike (Spd 4, +3 Dmg)
 Strong Strike (Spd 6, -3 Strike, +6 Dmg)
 Finishing Strike
 (Spd 10, -6 Strike, -1 Stam, +10 Dmg)
 Throw Weapon (page 156)
 Hurl Weapon
 (Spd Size x 3, Range AGY + IQ / x2 / x3)
 Aim (Spd 3)
 Coop Attack (Spd +2, -4 penalty, +25% Dmg)
 Disarm (Spd 4, -5 Strike)
 Draw Weapon (Spd 1 + Size)
 Feint (Spd 3)
 Initiate Grapple (Spd 4)
 Grapple Action (Spd 5)
 Grapple Reaction (Spd 3)
 Hold Action (Spd 1)
 Mold Chi (Spd 8, -2 Actions)
 Move-Normal (Spd 4/2/1)
 Move-Sprint/Rush (Spd 6)
 Push (Spd 3), Stand (Spd 4)
 Sweep (Spd 3, Stam 1)
 Touch (Spd 1, +2 Strike)
 Use Skill (Spd 6+)

REACTIONS

Entangle (Spd 3, -4 Parry)
 Parry (Spd 3, -4 vs. Throw)
 Dodge (Spd 3, -4 vs. Strike)
 Roll (Spd 2)
 Take Hit (Spd 0)
 Take Hit Strategically (Spd 1, -4 Roll)

WU XING: THE NINJA CRUSADE

PAGE 3

Name: _____
 Level: _____ Way: _____
 Speed: _____ Check: _____
 Effect: _____

 Sacrifice (): _____
 Sacrifice (): _____

Name: _____
 Level: _____ Way: _____
 Speed: _____ Check: _____
 Effect: _____

 Sacrifice (): _____
 Sacrifice (): _____

Name: _____
 Level: _____ Way: _____
 Speed: _____ Check: _____
 Effect: _____

 Sacrifice (): _____
 Sacrifice (): _____

Name: _____
 Level: _____ Way: _____
 Speed: _____ Check: _____
 Effect: _____

 Sacrifice (): _____
 Sacrifice (): _____

Name: _____
 Level: _____ Way: _____
 Speed: _____ Check: _____
 Effect: _____

 Sacrifice (): _____
 Sacrifice (): _____

Name: _____
 Level: _____ Way: _____
 Speed: _____ Check: _____
 Effect: _____

 Sacrifice (): _____
 Sacrifice (): _____

Name: _____
 Level: _____ Way: _____
 Speed: _____ Check: _____
 Effect: _____

 Sacrifice (): _____
 Sacrifice (): _____

Name: _____
 Level: _____ Way: _____
 Speed: _____ Check: _____
 Effect: _____

 Sacrifice (): _____
 Sacrifice (): _____

Name: _____
 Level: _____ Way: _____
 Speed: _____ Check: _____
 Effect: _____

 Sacrifice (): _____
 Sacrifice (): _____

Name: _____
 Level: _____ Way: _____
 Speed: _____ Check: _____
 Effect: _____

 Sacrifice (): _____
 Sacrifice (): _____

Name: _____
 Level: _____ Way: _____
 Speed: _____ Check: _____
 Effect: _____

 Sacrifice (): _____
 Sacrifice (): _____

Name: _____
 Level: _____ Way: _____
 Speed: _____ Check: _____
 Effect: _____

 Sacrifice (): _____
 Sacrifice (): _____

IMPORTANT WUSHU NOTES

FAVORED WUSHU

Clan: _____
 Other: _____
 Other: _____
 Other: _____

WUSHU ACTIVATION DIFFICULTIES

Level 1 = 10 Level 2 = 15
 Level 3 = 20 Level 4 = 25
 Level 5 = 30

ELEMENTAL MODIFIERS

		Wushu				
Ninja	Earth	+4	+2	-2	-4	+2
	Metal	+2	+4	+2	-2	-4
	Water	-4	+2	+4	+2	-2
	Wood	-2	-4	+2	+4	+2
	Fire	+2	-2	-4	+2	+4

OTHER MODIFIERS

Clan Wushu (+2 to Wushu Checks)
 Bloodletting (+1 to Wushu Checks for each
 1 (L) taken by ninja)
 Taking Time (+2 to Wushu Check for each
 Action sacrificed - also +2 Speed)

DESTRUCTION CYCLE

Earth destroys Water
 Water destroys Fire
 Fire destroys Metal
 Metal destroys Wood
 Wood destroys Earth

SPEED CHI MODIFIERS

- **Attack (No modifier):** This type of wushu is used in place of another Action, happening and then ending.
- **Concentration (-1 or +1 Chi cost):** This type of wushu requires the ninja to stay focused for it to continue working. They spend less chi to activate, but they can make no Actions other than concentrating on the wushu. They can take Reactions, but must make a Moderate (20) Discipline (concentration) check every time or the wushu fails. They can conversely add +1 Chi to the cost to make the effect last for 1 Round before needing to concentrate.
- **Reaction (+1 Chi cost):** This type of wushu can also be used as a Reaction during combat. In most cases, it replaces the normal Reaction the ninja would use. However, in other cases, it simply adds Speed cost to another Reaction. If used as a Reaction, the ninja must spend +1 point of the appropriate chi type. Using a wushu as a Reaction still uses up one of the ninja's Actions per Round.
- **Ritual (+2 Chi cost):** This type of wushu usually takes a longer ritual to activate than others. In addition, the ninja must spend +2 chi of the appropriate type for its use. Because they are taking extra time with the activation, the ninja receives a +2 bonus to their wushu activation check of this type.
- **Scaleable (No modifier):** This type of wushu allows the ninja to pay for the Chi cost multiple times to accumulate its effect while still using the same Speed.

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THE WAR HAS BEGUN



The Emperor has called for blood! All ninja of the Izou Empire face the crushing might of their own nation. Where once there was peace, now there is only destruction and death. The ninja are forced to fight back, wielding the ancient art of chi manipulation alongside their shuriken and katana. Empire soldiers pack their own secret weapons to combat ninja wushu... powerful firearms.



The ninja of the realm have assembled into their own army, the Lotus Coalition. Together, they hope to take down the Empire and stop the reign of destruction upon the people of the land. That is if they can overcome centuries old feuds and rivalries that could destroy them from within!



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- Rules for playing any one of the 10 most influential Ninja Clans, like the Recoiling Serpents or the Virtuous Body Gardeners
- Easy-to-learn, flexible character creation rules.
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