

# WARHAMMER NIPPON



WARHAMMER  
ARMIES

# NIPPON



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# INTRODUCTION

Welcome to Warhammer Armies: Nippon. This is your definite guide to collecting, painting and playing with a Nippon army in the Warhammer tabletop wargame.

## The Warhammer Game

The Warhammer rulebook contains the rules you need to fight battles with your Citadel miniatures in the war-torn world of Warhammer. Every army has its own Army Book that works with these rules and allows you to turn your collection of miniatures into an organised force, ready for battle. This particular Army book details everything you need to know about Nippon, and allows you to field their armies in your games of Warhammer.

## Why Collect Nippon?

This book describes in detail the troops that march to battle when the armies of Nippon go to war. A fully arrayed Nipponese army is a striking battle force filled with colour and variety. Samurai form the main battle line, supported by the lowly Ashigaru and brave Warrior Monks. Sumo Warriors march with them, as do the unwavering Hatamoto and the mysterious Kabuki Dojis. Daemonic Oni summoned by the Shugenja accompany them, followed by the masterless Ronin. The armies of Nippon are led by the Daimyo and the Taisho, the clan leaders, all sworn to the sovereignty of the Shogun.

## How this Book Works

Every Army Book is split into sections that deal with different aspects of the army. Warhammer Armies: Nippon contains the following:

## The Land of the Rising Sun

This section introduces the people of Nippon and their part in the Warhammer world. It includes their society and history. You will also find information on the land of Nippon, the Land of the Rising Sun.

## Nippon Bestiary

Every character and troop type in the Nippon army is examined in this section. Firstly, you will find a description of the unit, outlining its place in the army. Secondly, you will find complete rules for the unit and details of any unique powers they possess or specialist equipment they carry into battle. Also included are the rules for Ying and Yan Magic, along with Nipponese special characters – Akodo Kaneka, Shogun of Nippon, the Emerald Champion and others.

## Army of Nippon

This section contains photographs of the miniatures available for your Nippon army.

## Nippon Army List

The army list takes all of the warriors and creatures presented in the Nippon Bestiary and arranges them so that you can choose a force for your games. The army list separates them into Lords, Heroes, Core, Special and Rare units. Each unit type has a points value to help you pit your force against an opponent's in a fair match. This section includes Treasures of the Seven Heavens, magic items that you can give to your characters.





# LAND OF THE RISING SUN

Nippon is a relatively young nation, barely counting about 1200 years since its founding. Nippon was originally part of Cathay, settled by colonists from Cathay more than 4500 years ago. Still, being separated from the mainland meant the islands of Nippon would develop a culture all of their own, while the Cathayan influences helped them develop technologically. For the next 3300 years, the colony on Nippon would expand to cover more territory of the islands, and the population quickly rose.

Nippon merely acted as a vassal to Cathay during this time, with a governor controlling the state, but ultimately bowing to the superiority of the Emperor of Cathay. It wasn't until the death of the last governor Hideyoshi in the year 1358 that this would change, as he passed without appointing a new heir to lead Nippon.

His nine children, Hida, Doji, Togashi, Akodo, Shiba, Bayushi, Shinjo, Fu Leng and Hantei, decided they would hold a tournament to see who among them should rule Nippon. There was a contest of speed, a contest of strength, a contest of wits and many others. Togashi declined to compete in the tournament, for he looked at his brothers and sisters and knew the outcome. Fu Leng on the other hand, was deemed too young to compete by his siblings. This caused him great anger, but he was shut down. He left his father's house in anger, travelling north. This would not be the last of Fu Leng, however. Saddened by the loss of their brother, Hideyoshi's children still decided that the contest must go on, as Nippon needed a leader as soon as possible. Yet they knew in their hearts that it would be for the best, as Fu Leng had often displayed signs of delusion of grandeur and a craving to rule above all else.

The final contest was a great melee. Lord Hida relied on his great strength to carry him through the battle, but he was swiftly overcome by the speed and accuracy of Shinjo's strikes. Lady Shinjo's quickness proved to be her undoing. Lord Bayushi used her impetuosity to catch her off guard, and with his tricks and distractions, he defeated her. Lord Shiba was too crafty



for such trickery, however. He observed Bayushi's tricks and his actions were unmoved by the distractions. Then Lord Shiba turned to meet Lady Doji. The slender and beautiful Doji stood back and waited for Shiba to strike, knowing that her brother would gain too much knowledge from watching her movements. Shiba's patience ran out; he attacked and was swiftly defeated by Doji's technique. Then Akodo stepped forward. He knew Lady Doji's tactic and used it against her. Finally, only Akodo and Hantei stood on the battlefield. They fought with the love of brothers, but as the battle's intensity increased, so did Akodo's temper. At a crucial moment, Akodo's great fury overcame him. Hantei sensed his brother's rage and used it against him. It was a thoughtless mistake that caused Akodo to lose his duel with Hantei, a mistake that should have cost him his life. Because Hantei spared Akodo, Akodo swore to his brother that he and his family would serve him. Togashi, watching the battle from a distance, whispered: "When the last Akodo falls, so falls the last Hantei".

## Hantei Dynasty

At the end of the tournament, it was decided Hantei's dynasty would rule the others. Hantei declared Nippon independent from Cathay and that they should build a mighty Empire, an Empire that would show their devotion to their sacred mother Amaterasu the Sun Goddess. As Hantei was Emperor, each of his brothers and sisters except Fu Leng went out into the known lands, gathered together the colonists and created the Seven Clans. Hida formed the Crab Clan, Doji formed the Crane, Togashi formed the Dragon Clan and Akodo formed the Lion. Shiba formed the Phoenix Clan while Bayushi formed the Scorpion. Lastly, Shinjo formed the Unicorn Clan. The founders of the Clans are referred to as the Kami, and are almost seen as something like gods among the Nipponese today.

For many years, the Empire flourished as Hantei and the Clans built roads, palaces and temples, but one day, an army of foul and putrid creatures attacked the palaces and temples of the people of Nippon. They



were the forces of Fu Leng, who had fallen far away from his brothers and sisters. Angered by his brothers and sisters, he had caught the attention of the gods of Chaos, who saw him as an excellent way to spread their power and laugh as the mortals would bring doom upon themselves. Fu Leng, blinded by his ambition to rule did not see past their lies, and quickly sold himself to Chaos. He was given great power and became a mastery of dark magic. Armed with the creatures he had summoned from the realm, he planned in destroy the land of the Rising Sun and claim the souls of mortal men for his own power and glory.

### The New Way

Hantei and the Clans gathered an army to combat the goblins, ogres and shape-shifting Oni of Fu Leng, but no magic or steel could defeat his evil sorcery. Every battle forced Hantei to fall back. Finally, as his ragged army prepared for one final assault on the plains of Uichiman, a small man with a shaved head dressed in robes came to visit the Emperor Hantei. The man introduced himself as “Shinsei”, which means “new way”. He promised the Emperor that he could defeat the armies of Fu Leng, but Hantei was unimpressed. He commanded that the little man be removed, but when the guards tried to touch Shinsei, he defeated them all without using a weapon. Then, he turned to the Emperor. “Let me take seven warriors with me to your brother. There, I will stop the armies that march on your lands”. Hantei was intrigued with the little man. He spent the entire night questioning Shinsei as his brother Shiba recorded every word. The record of this conversation, called The Tao of Shinsei, can still be found in the Emperor's library and in the libraries of all the Clans. At the end of the evening, Hantei was convinced. He

sent one warrior of each of the Clans along with Shinsei.

He called them samurai, which means “servant”. Many weeks passed, and the armies of Fu Leng gained strength and ground with every battle. But one day, their power mysteriously ebbed, and at a crucial moment, Hantei's armies charged. The ranks of darkness broke and fled.

Hantei knew then that Shinsei had somehow fulfilled his promise.

In anticipation of the hero's return, he prepared a great feast for their victory but only a single samurai returned. It was the Scorpion samurai, bearing twelve scrolls and an enchanted hand made of obsidian. “Hide these scrolls”, he said, “for they were the doom of Fu Leng”. Then, the Scorpion samurai died.

The Emperor forbade the breaking of the scrolls' seals and gave the duty of hiding and guarding them to the Scorpion Clan. He then commanded the Crab to build a great wall between the Empire and the dark lands of the Haikido of the north, now known as the Cursed Isle, to guard Nippon from its evil.

The Crane and Lion Clans swore to protect the Emperor. Doji was selected to be the Emperor's first champion while Akodo led the Emperor's armies on the field of battle. The Dragon and Phoenix chose the paths of contemplation; both Clans took the Tao of Shinsei and incorporated it into their own understanding of sorcery. Lastly, the Unicorn Clan left the Empire to find what lay beyond its borders.

### The First Yasuki War

The First Yasuki War took place in the Fourth Century, and was the first major conflict between two Great Clans. The war had many major consequences for Nipponese society, including an Imperial decree that formally forbade the declaration of war between two Great Clans, and the first defection of a Family from one Clan to another. The war also created an ongoing feud between the Crane and the Crab. This bad blood led to innumerable border skirmishes over the centuries, a second war over the Yasuki and an ongoing conflict that history may very well remember as the Third Yasuki War.

The seeds of this conflict were sown when the Crane Clan began censuring questionable practices by the Yasuki Family.



The Yasuki leadership protested, claiming that they had been given leave to pursue their duties in their own manner for centuries, and that the Crane had always benefited from the fruits of their labor. The Crane Champion would not relent, however, and this created a schism between the two. Many expected the Yasuki Daimyo to commit seppuku in protest against his superior, but that was not the Yasuki way.

Instead, the Daimyo solicited the Crab for assistance, and orchestrated a seizure of several key Yasuki provinces by the Crab. When the Crane responded angrily, the Yasuki defected to the Crab and declared their fealty to the Crab Champion.

Enraged, the Crane declared war upon the Crab, and the ensuing conflict lasted for over a decade.

### **The Rise and Fall of the Gozoku**

In the late Fourth Century, a conspiracy led by the Scorpion, Crane, and Phoenix Clans united to subvert the power of the Emperor, placing themselves in control of the Empire and reducing the Hantei to little more than figureheads, symbols to keep the Empire united under their rule. When the conspiracy first arose, Emperor

Hantei V resisted its efforts, but they were able to bring him to heel by kidnapping his eldest child and heir.

Thereafter the Gozoku Alliance exerted near total control, embarking on an ambitious program of tying the Empire together with roads and trade networks, and actively encouraging artistry and cultural refinement. During the reign of the Gozoku Alliance, politics became more important than ever before, as courtiers manoeuvred to gain the favour of one or another of the Alliance's three leaders. Corruption and vice flourished, creating an environment where courtiers could amass both great power and great wealth, and the path of honour became elusive for all. Although the

Empire as a whole prospered under the Gozoku, the growing corruption and crime of the era remains a blight on the history of Nippon. Nor was it an era free of conflict - the great Crab-Crane War, which began in 387, raged through the first decade of the Gozoku Alliance's reign, and the infamous Five Nights of Shame (when the Phoenix Clan exterminated the corrupted Snake Clan) also took place during this time. The Gozoku began to lose its grip on power in 428, when it discovered Emperor Hantei VI was using the Brotherhood of Shinsei as spies and agents. The Gozoku's subsequent harsh persecution of the Brotherhood exposed its brutal methods to the rest of the Empire, and many samurai soured on the Alliance's reign. In an attempt to ensure its continued grip on power, the Gozoku arranged for all of the Emperor's sons to be fostered out to the Alliance's three Clans (Crane, Scorpion, and Phoenix), while his daughters were sent to other Clans to be married off for political alliances. This decision, however, proved the Gozoku's undoing. The Emperor's daughter Yugo-zohime, fostered to the Lion, was raised in the traditions of bushido and the glories of the Hantei Dynasty. With the support of the Lion and Dragon Clans, Yugo-zohime challenged her Gozoku-controlled brother for the throne. Her duel was victorious, and within a year of her coronation in 435, the Gozoku was completely dismantled.

The end of the Gozoku period marked the rise in fortunes of the Otomo family, formerly composed of little more than non-inheriting members of the Hantei line.

Empress Yugo-zohime handed many of the Gozoku's powers and responsibilities over to the Otomo, establishing them as the major court power which they remain today.





### **The Reign of the Steel Chrysanthemum**

In the year 589, Hantei XVI ascended the throne after persuading his father to retire early. A brilliant and capable man, he also proved to be a brutal tyrant and a paranoid, sadistically cruel man. His rule quickly became a reign of terror as he brutally tortured and killed anyone he suspected of disloyalty. Military resistance and peasant uprisings were crushed by the Imperial legions, commanded by his personal general, the "Stone Crab", Hida Tsuneo.

The only political figures willing to resist the Hantei's increasingly crazed rule were his mother, the dowager Empress Otomo Kaoichihime, and his younger brother, Otomo Tanaka. Working together, Kaoichihime and Tanaka sought to undermine the Hantei's authority and curb his power. Unfortunately, despite his madness Hantei XVI was a cunning and brilliant political manipulator, and every attempt to constrain his power met with defeat, followed by hideous reprisals.

Eventually, Tanaka and the dowager Empress concluded their only choice was to try to remove the Emperor by force, but they quailed at the thought of triggering a civil war. Many samurai, lion especially, would surely remain loyal to the Emperor to the bitter end, and such a war might tear the Empire asunder. Unable to face such a prospect, the two instead worked to persuade the Imperial Guard that Hantei XVI had become a threat to the future of Nippon.

They were still pursuing this goal when the Hantei discovered his mother's disloyalty. Furious, he ordered Hida Tsuneo to murder her in open court. This final outrage was too much, and the Imperial Guard joined Otomo Tanaka in slaughtering both Hantei XVI and Hida Tsuneo. A swift and merciless purge disposed of the Steel Chrysanthemum's other loyalists, and the true nature of his death was carefully concealed from the Empire at large. Otomo Tanaka, having participated in the coup, felt himself unworthy to hold the throne, and the post of Emperor passed to the Steel Chrysanthemum's young son - who, fortunately, proved to be a far better ruler than his father.

### **Battle of the Cresting Wave**

The Battle of the Cresting Wave is a signal event in the Crab Clan's history and the history of the Empire as a whole. It also stands, even after 450 years, as a textbook illustration of all the principal aspects of the Crab art of war: their engineering skill, their indomitable willpower on the defensive, and their Taw fury on the attack.

The battle was the climax of The Maw's attempt to destroy the Empire by military force, and the history of that campaign is well known. After overrunning the Hiruma and Kuni lands with a vast army of Oni and other foul spawn of Haikido, the evil forces marched north toward the Seigo River to crush the Hida and lay open the rest of the Empire to destruction.

When Crab Champion Hida Banuken reorganized his forces at his last remaining stronghold, Kyuden Hida, he realized that he would have to make what could be the last stand of the Crab on the northern bank of the Seigo, or else allow a debilitating siege of his castle.

A pitched battle on open ground, however, was out of the question. Banuken could muster barely more than 20,000 soldiers, including Ronin and scattered detachments from other Clans.

While no precise estimate of the Haikido horde could be made, a quick visual inspection made it plain that the Crab would be swamped.

The Kaiu could build defensive works to keep them at bay, but with The Maw only two days' march from Kyuden Hida, they had no time. However, a young Shugenja named Kuni Osaku stepped forward, working powerful magic that kept the Haikido army from crossing the Seigo River for an astonishing 73 days, until the effort drained the last life from her body. Her sacrifice allowed the Kaiu engineers just enough time to erect stout defensive works that later became the basis for the Great Wall. These defences included a network of tunnels that extended beneath the riverbed and emptied out onto the far bank.

During this time, The Maw, unable to nullify Osaku's enchantments, could only wait on the southern bank.

When she finally expired, the waters of the Seigo subsided, exposing the riverbed and allowing Haikido horde to cross. Banuken and his small force stood



ready for them, with the Hida heavy infantry, intermixed with Ronin and Clan allies, manning the walls, while the fell and revenge-crazed Hiruma waited in reserve to avenge the loss of their homelands. The Maw's minions launched themselves in an unending wave against the Crab fortifications, but the newly erected works held, and the genius of the Kaiu and the will of the Hida kept them at bay.

But an Oni Lord is not easily deterred, and The Maw rallied his forces to launch them again and again against the Crab defenders, who fought back with siege engines and destructive spells as well as steel. Hida Banuken himself patrolled the battlements, rushing with his personal guard to wherever the Haikido beasts seemed most likely to gain a foothold.

Finally, near the end of the day, both the Hida along the walls and Haikido horde approached exhaustion. Thanks to the fortitude of the Hida, Banuken had not had to commit his reserves. Now, he sensed the time had finally come for his counterstroke. From the walls, he gave the signal to advance, and 10,000 Hiruma warriors, grim yet elated at the prospect of revenge, rushed through the tunnels. They emerged into the dry riverbed, squarely in the rear of The Maw's wearied army.

Pinned against the fortifications by a fresh body of troops intent to a man on their slaughter, Haikido's horde dissolved.

Most fell to Hiruma's wrath. The Maw himself was killed, overpowered by more Hiruma bushi that he could destroy, supported by Kuni Shugenja who were themselves determined to extract vengeance for their own lands and for Osaku, already revered as a heroine. By nightfall, the enemy had disappeared from in front of the walls, save for the shattered remains of those monsters destroyed in the battle. Hida Banuken's army had suffered heavy casualties, but they had destroyed an entire army, and an Oni Lord for good measure. The Maw's skull was taken to Kyuden Hida, where it hung as the Clan's most prominent battle trophy for nearly five centuries.

The Seigo River was renamed Seigo no Kamao, the River of the Last Stand, in honour of the battle.

Not for the first time, nor for the last. Crab will and the sacrifice of Crab blood saved the Empire from its worst enemy.



### **The Return of the Unicorn**

In the year 815, the unexpected return of the Clan of the Ki-Rin - now calling themselves the Unicorn Clan - threw the Empire into turmoil and triggered a brief but violent war between the Unicorn and an unlikely alliance of lion and Scorpion. The Unicorn forestalled further conflict by revealing a fan given to Shinjo by lady Doji, thereby proving their identity as the true heirs of the Ki-Rin. The Crane embraced the Unicorn and carried their cause into the courts, where the Emperor soon welcomed them home and restored their lands.

Much of the rest of the Empire was uneasy with the sudden arrival of these gaijin-influenced strangers, and the lion and Scorpion were particularly unhappy, albeit for different reasons. The Lion were outraged by the presence of these foreign barbarians and by the loss of lands which they held for centuries. The Scorpion were appalled at the strange political and personal attitudes of the Unicorn, which made them difficult targets for the Clan's traditional methods of manipulation and blackmail.

The decades following the return of the Unicorn saw major upheaval in the Empire's politics, as all of the Clans came to grips with the arrival of a strange and powerful new player in the Empire's affairs. Every Clan was forced to adapt to the new reality and to devise both political and military strategies for dealing with the Unicorn.

### **The Scorpion Coup**

The Scorpion Coup in 1123 was quite possibly the most important turning point in the history of Nippon. During this utterly chaotic time an Emperor was assassinated by his spymaster, a Great Clan and the family of a Kami were cast out of Nipponese society, and not one, but two men not born to the Hantei family claimed the Imperial Throne. The reverberations of this event were felt across the Empire for generations.

The Scorpion Clan Champion Bayushi Shoji discovered an ancient prophecy indicating that the last Hantei would bring about the return of Fu Leng. Eager to save the Empire and under the thrall of the Bloodsword Ambition, he plotted to kill the Emperor to prevent the fruition of the prophecy.[citation needed]



As Bayushi Shoji knew that he would find opposition from other clans he carefully planned his coup. First, he asked Bayushi Sozui to encourage the Lion-Crane War and secondly he asked his wife Bayushi Kachiko to remove the great general Akodo Toturi from his path.

On the evening of the 14th day of Month of the Rooster in the year 1123 Otosan Uchi was seized by the Scorpion Clan following Bayushi Shoji's assassination of Emperor Hantei XXXVIII. This unprecedented act was the first major battle to take place in or near the city since the Battle of White Stag over seven hundred years ago. The armies of the Phoenix under Shiba Tsukune arrived that night, with the Unicorn Clan forces led by Shinjo Yokatsu arriving the following morning. During this time, open fighting was raging in many of the city districts, with the Seppun Miharu conducting guerrilla warfare against the much larger Scorpion forces.

Despite the arrival of the enemy forces, most notably the Unicorn Clan, arrived faster than Shoji had anticipated, the Scorpion Clan maintained a strong hold on the capital, initially. The first Unicorn attack of Otaku Battle Maidens was turned aside by Soshi Bantaro, who used the magic inherent the wall of Otosan Uchi itself.

The night after the coup, the forces of the Lion and Crane, led by Matsu Tsuko and Doji Satsume respectively, arrived at the capital. After joining with the Unicorn and Phoenix, the Clans began to assault in earnest, the Lion penetrated the Outer Southern Wall shortly after the Crane started their attack on the western portion of the city.

On the 16th, two days after the coup, Bayushi Shoji rode out and fatally wounded Doji Satsume. The defeat (and subsequent death) of the Emerald Champion dealt a serious blow to the morale of the coalition armies. On the day of the 17th, two unrelated events occurred that doomed the Scorpion armies and the new Emperor, Shoji I. Akodo Toturi, who was trapped in the outer city after being poisoned by the geisha Hatsuko managed to escape and join the assembled Clan armies. At the same time, Hida Kisada and the Crab arrived and joined the coalition forces. With the might of the

Crab and the skill of Toturi, the clans held the outer city by nightfall.

On day five of the coup the Elemental Masters of the Phoenix arrived and managed to temporarily suppress the Enchanted Wall on the morning of the 19th, allowing the Great Clans to fight into the inner city, where the southern gate of the Forbidden Palace was then breached by the Masters.

Using the Crab to create a diversion by storming the front gates, Toturi, Doji Hoturi (the son of Satsume), and a small force entered the Imperial City by stealth, taking the Scorpion defenders by surprise. Toturi and Shoji faced each other in a final duel, with Shoji showing himself to be the superior swordsman. Instead of killing Toturi, Shoji, finally realizing that his actions had been in error, cleft the Emerald Throne in two with Ambition, breaking the bloodsword. Toturi took this opportunity to kill Shoji, effectively ending the Coup.[citation needed]  
edit The Return of the Heir

With the Heir to the Hantei Dynasty believed dead, Toturi quickly decided to declare himself Emperor to prevent the petty squabbles of the other clans from devolving into outright civil war. Unknown to him the son of the Emperor had not been killed, but instead was spirited away by the Elemental Master of Void, Isawa Kaede and the Captain of the Imperial Guard, Seppun Ishikawa to the Phoenix holdings. Upon the Heir's return Toturi immediately voided his claim to the throne, but this act did not appease the new Emperor. He ordered Toturi stripped of his name and denied seppuku, forced to wander Nippon as a ronin. The Akodo family was also disbanded as was the entirety of the Scorpion Clan. The only person to escape this fate was the revered sensei, Akodo Kage. The new Emperor took Kachiko, the late Shoji's wife as his new Empress while the rest of her erstwhile family fled, hid, or were put to the sword.



## The Clan War

Many historians consider the Clan War to be the greatest, costliest war ever waged on the soil of Nippon. Although the so called "thousand years of peace" had effectively been ended two years before with the Scorpion Clan Coup, this conflict is generally regarded as the first major war since the First Yasuki War centuries beforehand. The Clan War was manipulated by the dark god Fu Leng, but the Clans were all too eager to war with one another, and even without his influence, it seems likely that the era would have been marked by massive, costly conflict regardless.

The Clan War began with an ill-fated alliance between the Crab and Haikido. United for the first time, these two enemy forces marched into the Empire with the intent of seizing the throne, left vacant by the ebbing strength of the Hantei Dynasty. The Crab-Haikido army razed many Crane and Scorpion holdings before being defeated at Beiden Pass by a force of Dragon, Unicorn, and Lion troops led by the ronin Toturi, the former Lion Champion. Despite their defeat, the Crab's campaign sparks fighting among the Clans throughout the Empire, much of it fomented by forces allied with Haikido, ultimately leading to an unprecedented alliance of the Empire's Minor Clans and a climactic battle at the Imperial City, Orosan Uchi. In the aftermath of the war, Toturi became Emperor and founded a new Dynasty, and the Mantis were elevated to Great Clan status.

Although the Clan War is remembered most for the terrible military and supernatural conflicts which tore the Empire apart, it was also an era of bitter political struggle. In the aftermath of the Scorpion Clan Coup, a plague scourged the Empire and the young Emperor Hantei XXXIX himself sank into illness, leaving the Empire rudderless and without any apparent heir. When the Clans marched their armies, courtiers manoeuvred for power, allies, and influence all across the Empire, and the Scorpion Clan lurked in the shadows, waiting for the chance to punish its enemies. The major politicians of the era waged a continual struggle, as bitter and ruthless as that fought on the battlefields.

Crab courtiers sought to distract and deceive those who might stand against their lord Hida Kisada's ambitious strike for power, and to hide his shameful alliance to Haikido. Crane courtiers worked to bring



Imperial power to bear against the Lion armies invading their lands, while the upstart Mantis assembled an alliance of Minor Clans to win power and respect.

Bayushi Goshiu, one of the few Scorpions allowed to remain in the courts after the Clan was disbanded, worked with Empress Kachiko to set all against each other, plunging the Empire ever further into turmoil. Even the Miya family, traditionally heralds and peace-makers, were torn apart and nearly destroyed by the rule of the violent, militant Miya Satoshi.

When the Clan War finally ended at the Day of Thunder, the Empire lay nearly in ruins. While the shattered armies struggled to pull themselves together, it fell to the courtiers to re-assemble the Imperial courts and bureaucracy and start Nippon functioning again.

## The War Against the Darkness

The War against the Darkness was far less distinct than other conflicts listed here, if for no other reason than for the majority of the period detailed, the Clans were unaware of the exact nature and identity of their enemy. The conflict was sparked by the machinations of an unquantifiable, primordial entity called the Lying Darkness. This entity was a portion of the universe that existed before Lady Sun and Lord Moon gave names to all things, and as a result it could take the form of anything it wished. The entity led the Clans against one another in a convoluted attempt to unmake all of creation, and return the mortal realm and even the Celestial Heavens to the primordial darkness from which it sprang.

It is difficult to isolate when the Darkness' plans first began to take shape, but the conflict engendered by them erupted when its agents kidnapped Emperor Toturi I. The Clans rapidly began casting blame on one another, and the Scorpion became the Empire's scapegoat. They were banished, cast out across the Burning Sands, but this did little to stem the growing disquiet between the Clans.

Agents of the Darkness infiltrated the Clans and replaced key advisors of many leaders and military officials. Fomenting chaos everywhere, The Mantis and the Crane fought over control of the Scorpion Lands, and the Crane quickly devolved into a civil war



while the Mantis marched on the Phoenix Lands. The Dragon Champion went mad from the Darkness' influence, and inadvertently aided its minions in enacting its will. The Mota nomads from across the Burning Sands came to the Empire accompanied by the Scorpion Clan and the Kami Shinjo, galvanizing many in the Empire to action.

Afterwards, the forces of the Darkness converged on the ruined troll city of Voltturnum, where they planned to open the Castle of Decay and use the artefact to destroy the spirit realms beyond. The Great Clans allied and marched through Haikido to defeat both Haikido and the Darkness at the Battle of the Castle of Decay.

### **Battle of the Firefly River**

Though but one battle in the Lion Clan's storied history, the Battle of the Firefly River stands as a classic example of the value of Lion discipline, tenacity, and strategic and tactical skill - all the more so because they prevailed against one of the most formidable military forces modern Nippon has known: a Moto-led Unicorn army.

In 1136, Khan Mota Gaheris decided to strike at the Lion, seeking both to expand his territories and to test the strength of one of the Unicorn's natural rivals. As Toturi I had only recently reinstated the Akada Family, Gaheris assumed (not without reason) that the strength of the Lion was at low ebb and would only get stronger over time. If there was a time to strike, it was the present.

Accordingly, he assembled an army organized according to the Moto model, consisting largely of cavalry, with Utau infantry and Iuchi Shugenja from the Baraunghar Army for support, and marched southeast, toward the City of the Rich Frog. The Ikoma, seeing that an invasion of their lands was imminent, opened negotiations with the Unicorn, and served their Clan well. Feigning weakness, they persuaded Gaheris the Lion might cede lands to him without a fight if only he would wait for a formal reply to his demands. Convinced more strongly than ever of his advantage, the Khan bided his time.

The Lion, of course, used that time to mobilize. The Ikodo family Daimyo, Akodo Ginawa, marshalled an army of his own family's forces, newly trained and organized according to the traditional Akodo model, along with a small contingent of Matsu shock troops, and headed for the Firefly River. When the Ikoma

diplomats received word that Ginawa was on the move, they finally broke off the parlay.

Gaheris, still convinced the Lion would not challenge him, proceeded at a leisurely pace. He crossed the Firefly just upriver from the City of the Rich Frog in an offensive posture, throwing his infantry across as a screen, the cavalry following across the narrow ford. He sent his Iuchi Scouts and light cavalry out on his flanks to observe the enemy and cut off their avenues of approach. But the left flank detachment could not find a suitable ford closer to the main army than ten miles upstream, and the right flank detachment could not cross except at a single-file bridge leading into the City of the Rich Frog. The Akodo army's sudden descent caught the Khan by surprise.

The battle commenced at mid-morning, the Unicorn having begun their crossing shortly after dawn. Ginawa was outnumbered, but he knew he would never have a better chance. With his enemy divided and unable to use their fearsome advantage in mobility. He hastily deployed his army into two waves, with the Matsu Berserkers and the Deathseekers in the centre of the front and his most dependable Akodo samurai in the second wave.

The first wave smashed into the screen of Utau Infantry, arranged in a crescent to cover the cavalry's crossing, and pushed it back toward the bank. The five legions of the Utau Battle Maidens were the only Unicorn mounted units to have made it across the river, and if they had not been on hand to launch periodic counter charges, the Unicorn bridgehead would have collapsed. As it was, Gaheris' remaining cavalry remained on the far bank; they quickly formed up but were unable to cross the ford in sufficient numbers to have much effect on the battle. The Khan and his personal bodyguard, the White Guard legion, crossed and aided the Battle Maidens in shoring up his position, but no other force of note was able to do so. By midday, the initial attack had lost much of its impetus, and even the Berserkers and Deathseekers needed to regroup.

The Unicorn infantry had also taken heavy losses and were compelled to contract their bridgehead. At this point, Ginawa sent his second wave forward, surging through gaps in the ranks of the first wave.

By now, according to Moto doctrine, the Unicorn light cavalry should have made its presence felt on the flanks, pressuring the enemy and giving the Unicorn tactical momentum.



But they had crossed the Firefly too far from the main battle and did not reach the field until noon, even with the aid of Shugenja to hasten them along. Even so, they could potentially have turned the tide of battle, taking the Lion in the rear just as Ginawa had committed all of his reserves.

However, Ginawa broke off a detachment on his right flank, which smartly marched out to meet the Unicorn cavalry and held them off for the remainder of the battle.

Seeing that half of his army was close to breaking and the remainder was in little position to reinforce them, Gaheris began his withdrawal. The Battle Maidens pulled back first, then the screening infantry broke off squadron by squadron, retreating across the river covered by Shinjo Horse bowmen deployed on the far bank. The fresh Akodo warriors kept up the pressure, of course, and in the end only the sacrifice of a handful of Ulaku officers, challenging any and all comers to individual duels, prevented a wholesale collapse of the line before the withdrawal could be completed.

Ultimately, the Unicorn lost about a quarter of their force, while the Lion only lost half as many as their foe. Mota Gaheris, having tested the Lion's strength, retreated from the banks of the Firefly, thoroughly disabused of any notion of their weakness.

Akodo Ginawa and the Lion, on the other hand, had won a significant victory. In the finest Akodo tradition, Ginawa showed flawless tactical and strategic judgment. He took full advantage of the time the Ikoma bought him, and when he saw his enemy was in a position where they could not use either their full numbers or their unique tactical skills, he attacked without hesitation. He committed his reserves at exactly the right time, and responded to crises with calm and grace.

In doing so, he restored the lost pride and honour of the Akodo. With scarcely a half-day's work, he broadcast to the rest of the Empire that they had returned to their rightful place in the Lion Clan.

## The War of Spirits

The War of Spirits followed the War against the Darkness, and was in fact a direct result of that first conflict. In addition to a lengthy military conflict, the War of Spirits was also a major theological and



philosophical struggle. On one side was the rightful Emperor, Toturi I, endorsed by the Heavens as the sovereign of Nippon; on the other, the returned spirit of Hantei XVI, who sought to return the Hantei Dynasty to power. The two figureheads on either side sparked intense division among many samurai in each Great Clan; traditionalists supported the rightful claim of the Hantei, while more progressive individuals supported the Toturi Dynasty.

The Battle of the Castle of Decay, which marked the end of the War Against the Darkness, resulted in the return of thousands - perhaps even tens of thousands - of spirits from the various spirit realms, among them the spirit of the despot Hantei XVI. The former Emperor, known to history as the Steel Chrysanthemum, wasted little time marshalling his forces and taking stock of the Empire. Traditionalists flocked to his banner over the initial months, and led to a years-long conflict between them and Toturi's adherents. The Battle of Beiden Pass ended the conflict, but cost the Empire one of its key trade routes through the Spine of the World, as the surrounding mountainsides were collapsed to crush the Steel Chrysanthemum's army. After that, Hantei XVI was restricted to a small private estate in the capital city, and the War of Spirits ended.

## The Cathayan Incursion

The conflict referred to in historical accounts as the Cathayan Incursion is only the second major conflict the Empire has ever had with forces beyond its borders, and it lasted significantly longer than the Battle of White Stag several centuries earlier.

Among many other distinguishing features of this conflict was the rise to fame of Toturi Tsudao, the eldest legitimate child of Emperor Toturi I, and the woman who would eventually become Empress Toturi II. It was also the first major engagement to be waged extensively by the Imperial Legions rather than the Great Clan families.

The Cathayan Incursion began with the Emperor Xien deciding to launch a campaign to reclaim Nippon to its rightful owners, Cathay. Several thousand ships were sent across the sea, packed with soldiers. The Cathayans descended upon the Phoenix provinces like a swarm of locusts, burning and looting everything in their path. The Shiba, normally stationed in the southern lands, responded as quickly as possible, but



the damage was already done and the enemy entrenched.

The Emperor instantly dispatched the Imperial Legions under the command of his young daughter, and for weeks the forces of Nippon slowly pushed forward, defeating the Cathayans at every turn and regaining mile after mile of Phoenix territory.

The final battle took place near the tiny Road's End Village, and Toturi Tsudao defeated the Cathayan Warlord in personal combat.

### **The War of the Rich Frog**

The War of the Rich Frog was, in many ways, the first of a new type of war in the Empire. It pitted the two greatest military powers in Nippon against one another, and resulted in a protracted and for the most part, limited war of attrition and patience. In the treacherous post-Clan War climate among the Great Clans, any conflict that risked large-scale battles between two Clans meant that at least one, possibly both, participants would deplete their resources and leave themselves wide open to attack by other Clans. Even the Lion and Unicorn, the two primary participants in the War of the Rich Frog, could not risk such a thing, and as a result the conflict dragged on for nearly a full year before a decisive victory was achieved.

The War of the Rich Frog began over a small but prosperous city predictably called the City of the Rich Frog. Located in the narrow band of unaligned lands between Lion and Unicorn territories, the city had long been protected by the Unicorn, but was claimed as a protectorate by the Lion during the war of succession among Toturi I's heirs. Five years after Toturi III took the throne, the Unicorn attacked in an attempt to retake the city.

The Lion knew the attack was coming (although they did not know the exact timing), and they were eager to test their military might against the Unicorn. The two Clans fought heavily for weeks, then settled into a pattern in which the Unicorn seized Lion holdings around the city, but did not or could not roust the Lion from their occupation.

The Dragon Clan became involved at the Emperor's request, and attempted to curtail the fighting, but to no avail. Ultimately, the Lion and Unicorn fought a climactic battle at the small town of Sukoshi Zutsu. The two Clan Champions met on the field of battle, and the Unicorn Champion was victorious. The

Unicorn held Sukoshi Zutsu, but the Lion were awarded permanent possession of the City of the Rich Frog, effectively ending the war by Imperial decree as enforced by the Dragon Clan armies.

### **The War of Fire & Thunder**

The War of Fire & Thunder, like the War of the Rich Frog that preceded it, was among the first in a new type of war waged by the Great Clans. Like many conflicts before it, the war was created by dark forces craving the destruction of the Empire; in this case, the Phoenix Clan was manipulated by subversive forces within it into a war against the Mantis Clan. It was a relatively simple matter, as the Phoenix reacted with predictable arrogance, and the Mantis were all too eager to resume their on-again, off-again feud with the followers of Isawa.

The war began when Asako Kinuye, a former Bloodspeaker, used her influence to accuse the Mantis in using one of the Black Scrolls to destroy a Phoenix village. The Phoenix were eager to believe such a thing, as it assured them that such a corrupt deed was not committed by one of their own. The respective strengths of the two Clans ensured that the conflict was restricted to coastal skirmishes, as the Mantis overwhelmed any Phoenix venturing far from the coast, and the Phoenix destroyed any Mantis that moved too far inland.

The conflict came to an end when the Mantis Champion grew impatient and moved her fleet to the Phoenix coast, prompting a response both from the Shiba armies and the Elemental Council of Masters. The battle was interrupted by the appearance of the Dark Wave, a fleet of corrupted Mantis vessels, which only confirmed the suspicions of many that the conflict had been manipulated the entire time. The Dark Wave was largely destroyed, and the Mantis Champion was killed, as was the Phoenix Master of Earth. In the end, the Phoenix surrendered purely out of a desire to prevent more killing, and the Mantis were awarded a chain of islands off the Phoenix coast as a result of their "victory."



## The War of Silk & Steel

The War of Silk & Steel ended only recently, after much loss of life on the part of both the Dragon and the Crane Clans.

The war was the result of an unfortunate misunderstanding, and infractions against Imperial Law on the part of both Clans.

The Crane Champion was unfortunately unaware of certain illicit activities conducted by the Daidoji Family on the Clan's behalf, leading to treat the Dragon's grievances with curt dismissal.

For their part, the Dragon believed that the Crane were deliberately concealing dishonour among their ranks, and that unless they were forced to expose it, the Clan would be disgraced before the Empire and cause a systematic breakdown of the Empire's political system. The conflict began in 1168 when a Dragon scouting party crossed into Crane territory without proper travelling papers or the permission of the Crane. With the assistance of a zokujin, the Dragon inadvertently discovered a cache of weapons and gunpowder near the Lion border. They were attacked by a group of Daidoji Harriers, and the gunpowder was detonated by accident. The lone Dragon survivor made his way home to report before dying, and the lone Crane survivor was recovered by his fellow Crane.

The Dragon dispatched magistrates to Kosaten Shiro to search for additional gunpowder, but were betrayed by a Crane hoping to conceal the fact that a member of the Lost was imprisoned there. The disagreement turned into a battle between the castle guards and a small number of Dragon in attendance, a battle complicated by the prisoner escaping and damaging the castle's foundation. The conflict continued to escalate over the late fall and throughout the winter, and only came to an end in the spring when the two Clan Champions held parley.

The Crane Champion admitted that she had discovered the disgrace among her ranks, and vowed to end it. The Dragon Champion, satisfied with her word of honour, withdrew his forces from the front line, and the war effectively ended.



## The Four Winds and the Race for the Throne

In 1158, Emperor Toturi I died in a Haikido attack, ushering in a violent and chaotic era focusing on his four children, Tsudao, Sezar, Naseru, and Kaneka. The four potential heirs contest with each other for the throne of Nippon for nearly two years. Although the era of the Four Winds is remembered chiefly for its wars and heroic battles, it is also a time of bitter political struggle, much like the Clan War, as each Wind's backers sought to gain power and undermine their rivals. Naseru eventually emerged from the chaos as Emperor Toturi III, following the heroic sacrifice of his sister Tsudao. But his reign proved a brief and troubled one, plagued by wars, political crises, Bloodspeaker eruptions, and an Empire-wide obsession with Enlightenment. As if that was not trouble enough, the returned spirit Bayushi Atsuki sought to recreate the infamous Gozoku, and enjoyed some success in the years 1165-66. Numerous courtiers supported the notion that the Emperor should not rule alone, but rather be "helped" by the Gozoku even his brother Kaneka, the Shogun, saw some merit in the concept. Although the conspiracy was exposed and rooted out by the end of 1167, it seriously undermined the authority and stature of the Toturi Dynasty. In 1168-69 the dynasty came to a bitter end. Toturi III died without heir on a quest for enlightenment. His Wife, Empress Kurako, reigned for a few brief months afterward, but with no child to inherit her position, and neither of Naseru's brothers willing to step forward and claim the throne, political and military forces began to move against the dynasty. At the end of the Winter of Red Snow, Kurako, Kaneka, and Sezar all died during the Khan's attack on the capital. Without any heir available to claim the Steel Throne, the Empire faced an unprecedented political crisis, one in which the new force known as the Spider Clan could thrive.

*"There is a time and place for the use of weapons."*

*Miyamoto Musashi*

# TIMELINE

## First Century (1-100)

### 1 Coronation of Hantei I

Following a tournament between the Kami, Hantei is determined to be the most worthy ruler of Nippon.

### 12 The War against Fu Leng

Shortly after the coronation of Hantei, waves of darkness issue from the Devil's Crater, tainting the southern lands of Nippon. The armies of the Lost Brother, Fu Leng, swarm across Nippon and destroy all in their path. The servants of the Hantei fight valiantly for decades, but find that they are slowly losing the War.

### 42 The Tao of Shinsei written

A strange little man arrives in the court of the Hamel, promising that he can give the Kami victory over the armies of Fu Leng. First, however, he gains audience with the Kami themselves, and speaks to Hantei at length. Shiba copies down the little man's wisdom dutifully: this text later becomes the Tao of Shinsei, the foremost religious text in Nippon.

### 42 The Day of Thunder

When the war looks bleakest, Shinsei gathers one mortal from each of the Seven Great Clans. Hida Marasi, Doji Konishiko, Mirumato, Matsu, Isawa, Shosuro, and Otaku join Shinsei on a journey to Haikido to defeat the fallen god Fu Leng. All of the Thunders die there, save one.

### 42 Death of Shiba

After the defeat of Fu Leng, Shiba journeys into Haikido in search of Shinsei and the Thunders. Shiba is mortally wounded slaying the First Oni, but ensures that Shosuro returns to the Empire alive.

### 42 Shosuro's Return

The final Thunder, Shosuro, returns from Haikido with the Black Scrolls. Shosuro survives her journey only by making a pact with the Lying Darkness, and immediately thereafter casts off the persona of Shosuro to become Sushi, founder of the Scorpion Shugenja family.

### 45 Shinjo's Exodus

With the war against Fu Leng now effectively at an end, the Kami Shinji determines that she must leave the Empire and explore the world to better prepare the Empire for its dangers. Three families of the Ki-Rin Clan choose to follow her. Before leaving, Hantei granted Shinjo one

of a pair of magical mirrors created by Shiba and Isawa. The mirrors would allow Shinjo to communicate with Hantei even in distant lands.

### 45 Death of Hantei

Crippled by a lingering injury during the War against Fu Leng, Hantei spends the last months of life bedridden. The Son of Heaven eventually doses his eyes and dies content with what he and his brothers and sisters have done.

### 46 Crowning of Hantei Genji

Due to a period of mourning, the Emerald Throne stands empty for a short time while the Empire recovers from the war and the loss of the Son of Heaven. Hantei Genji, the first son of Hantei, is crowned Hantei five months after the death of his father. Genji, also called the Shining Prince, is responsible for the majority of the social traditions of the modern Empire. Genji's reign lasts over two hundred years, the blood of the Kami Hantei strong in his veins. Hantei Genji marries a Doji woman, cementing the tradition of the Hantei Emperor taking a Crane bride and the concept of primogeniture.

### 49 Death of Akodo

While surveying the construction of the Hall of Ancestors and the Ikoma Libraries, Akodo One-Eye is caught in an unexpected fight with beasts of Haikido. The monsters make their way through the Shinomen Forest, preparing to attack the fledgling borders of the Empire. Akodo stands against the horde with one hundred of his men, and meets his enemy in what was once the Seikitsu Pass through the spine of the Kanto Yosid Mountains. When the battle seems lost, Akodo calls out to the Sun Goddess to witness how brave men died. As the advancing Shadowlands beasts reach him, Akodo's mighty roar collapses the pass, bringing down a mountain upon him and the enemy.

### 53 Disappearance of Bayushi

The First Scorpion is said to have left behind his mask and sword for his son. With the note "I have lost her forever" before disappearing completely.

### 55 Reported Death of Togashi

When Doji travels to the land of the Dragon clan to visit with her brother, Togashi, she is turned away at the gate. This was the first news of the death of the Dragon Kami.

**56 Disappearance of Doji**

Lady Doji is wracked with depression after the death of Togashi. As she has never been close to her sole remaining sibling, Hida, Doji begins to feel very alone. With that, Lady Doji imparts her final wisdom to her son Nio and walks into the sea, never to be seen again.

**58 Hida steps down as Champion of the Crab**

Though Hida is a powerful Kami, he recognizes many traits in his son Osano Wo that he himself lacks, in particular leadership and charisma. Particularly impressed by his son's great triumphs against the trolls, the Kami Hida steps down from rulership of the Crab to bestow the mantle upon his son. Hida thereafter is often seen leading large groups of specially selected samurai on brutal strikes deep into Haikido. He otherwise leaves the clan in his son's hands.

**60 Mantis Clan Founded**

Osano Wo chooses to acknowledge his illegitimate son Kenzan as his heir rather than the legitimate Kaimetsu-Uo. Though relations between Kenzan and Kaimetsu-Uo are not hostile, Kaimetsu-Uo leaves Crab lands find his own destiny. He finds it across the seas of Nippon, on the islands he names the Isles of Spice and Silk. His followers call themselves the Mantis, though they are not currently acknowledged as a clan.

**62 Hida Osano Wo murdered**

The Champion of the Crab is murdered by an unknown assassin. His father, Hida, is missing on a long expedition in Haikido, and with the powers of darkness on the rise Osano Wo's son Kenzan is reluctant to abandon his post. Instead, he sends a message of distress to his half-brother, who eagerly leaps upon the chance to avenge their father. Hunting the traitor to Phoenix lands with a fleet of Mantis sailors beside him. Kaitnetsu-Uo arrives at the doors of Shiro Shiba itself. When the Phoenix refuse to open the gates, Kaimetstallo cries to his father for vengeance. Thunder roars and a stroke of pure lightning opens the gates of Shiro Shiba. The Phoenix quickly back down and agree to assist the samurai who so clearly acts on behalf of the elements themselves. The traitor is released into Kaimetsu-uo's custody and painfully executed. Shortly thereafter, Phoenix scholars request that the Hantei grant the status of Fortune upon the departed Hida Osano-Wo. Osano-Wo is hereafter the Fortune of Fire and Thunder.

**63 Disappearance of the Kami Hida**

In the year 63, the aged Kami of the Crab took up his tetsubo, announced he intended to seek out his lost son, and departed into Haikido. He was never seen again.

**90 Fox Clan founded**

The Fox are the descendants of the Ki-Rin, those who remained behind when Shinjo led her people out of Nippon. Those who would become the Fox are ousted from their ancestral lands by the Lion. They are granted new land in Mori Kitsune, a family name and Minor Clan of their awn. The Emperor forbids the Great Clans from declaring war upon them.

**100 Kuni Nakano notices Taint on corpses**

The first signs of Haikido Taint, and its effects, are studied by the Crab Clan as early as the first century after the Empire's founding. Their scholarly research has saved many lives, and the information they have been able to discover during the thousand years of peace have been truly remarkable.

**Second Century (101-200)**

**102 Death of Hantei Genji**

Like his father, Genii is said to have ascended into the Celestial Heavens upon his death. The latter part of Hantei Genii's rule secures Shinseism and the philosophy of Shintao in the Empire, although it does not become widely popular until later in the history of the Empire.

**110 Creation of the Badger clan: circa year 110**

The Badger Clan, one of the smallest of Nippon's Minor Clans, is founded to guard the northern passes of the Empire.

**145 Book of Sun Tao written: circa year 145**

The origins of the man known as Sun Tao are open to speculation, but it is generally believed that he wrote his treatise on warfare during this period. The writings of the ronin general are valued as greatly as the observations of Akodo himself. sometimes even more so. The missing original copies of his manuscript are among the most greatly prized treasures in Nippon.

**153 Emerald Magistrates and Emerald Legions founded**

Experienced military officer Doji Hatsu and skilled courtier Soshi Saibankan begin to draft methods by which quality soldiers could be conscripted and magistrates could enforce the law of the Empire. Hatsu and Saibankan soon devise the framework for the imperial Legions and the Emerald Magistrates respectively. The new system guarantees that the Emperor's conscripts and magistrates will work closely, with power that complements one another without being excessive. The system persists without radical change to this day.

## Third Century (201-300)

### 243 **Invention of koku**

Yasuki Tanaka invents the koku. The system of exchanging items of worth for goods or services existed long before Tanaka, but it is he who designs the koku as it is recognized today. The koku's design features the kanji of the Fortunes on one side and the Karni on the other.

### 283 **Death of Isawa Akuma**

This date is important to note, as it correlates directly with the first emergence of Oni Lord Akuma from Haikido. Oni, the demons of Haikido, gain great power when they steal a name from their summoner. Akuma, one of the most powerful of all Oni, reportedly stole his name in this year from an Isawa shugenja who paid the price for ambition and power.

## Fourth Century (301-400)

### 339 **Founding of the Snake Clan**

Imperial magistrate Isawa Chuda successfully saves the Emperor's life from the deadly threat of a maho cult. In reward for his years of service and valorous actions, the Emperor declares Chuda to be the daimyo of the Snake Clan after Chuda proclaims that he is the Emperor's serpent, "creeping into the hidden places and striking down your enemies."

### 347 **Founding of the Centipede Clan**

Centered around a modest Shugenja school, the family of the school's original sensei is given the lands and title of a Minor Clan. The sun-worshipping Centipede are given their status mostly due to their isolation from the Phoenix, as several Otomo point out to the Hantei that it would be much simpler to record their events and tax their peasants if they were treated as a separate entity.

**371** Crowning of Hantei Fujiwa: year 371  
Hantei V (also known as Hantei Fujiwa) was an exceptional Emperor for many reasons. He believed that the more recent Emperors were too concerned with increasing the quality of Life in the Empire for certain areas Instead of improving the Empire as a whole. Hantei Fujiwa was the first Emperor since Hantei himself to actually engage the forces of Haikido in combat. Hantei V himself slew oni with the powerful Sword of the Hantei, and led the Imperial Legions in combat side by side with the Crab.

When the Emperor returned to Ootosan Uchi, his wrath upon the Lion and Crane was great. He accused them of weakening the Crab through political attacks, requiring as a result his direct intervention on their behalf. Fujiwa's first wife died childless during the time he was in Crab lands, only furthering the Hantei's anger. Late

in Fujiwa's reign, his eldest son was kidnapped by a conspiracy of Crane, Phoenix, and Scorpion courtiers calling themselves the Gozoku.

### 387 **The Yasuki split and the Crane-Crab War**

The great Crab-Crane war was the first large-scale internal war in Nippon. Caused by the Crab seizing territory along the Crane's southern borders and the split of the Yasuki family from Crane to Crab, the war lasts for over a decade.

### 391-435 **Rulership of the Gozoku**

After the kidnapping of Hanlei Fujiwa's heir, the Hantei Emperor had little choice but to concede to the demands of the Gozoku Alliance. Fujiwa fell ill and died shortly after capitulating to the Gozoku, leaving his aged uncle, Otomo Tohojatsu, as regent until Hantei Kusada could rightfully claim the throne. Tohojatsu quickly fell in with the Gozoku, as he had always coveted possession of the Emerald Throne. Hantei Kusada was destined to serve as nothing more as a figurehead – by the time he was of age to take the throne. Otomo Tohojatsu's concessions to the Gozoku had rendered them completely in control. The Gozoku themselves were interested in establishing the independence of the clans, with the Hantei Emperor to serve as a "face" for their rule over the clan provinces. The Gozoku's rule was a prosperous time for Nippon. They encouraged a detailed system of roadways and new ways of conducting trade and travel so that the clans would be able to stand more apart from each other. Art and culture flourished. Unfortunately so did crime and corruption as it became clear that even the Great Clans cared nothing for the Emperor's law.

### 397 **Coronation of Hantei Kusada**

The son of Hantei Fujiwa's coronation was held completely under the power of the Gozoku Alliance.

## Fifth Century (401-500)

### 401 **End of the Crab-Crane War and Sparrow Clan founded**

The war resulted in an Imperial Edict banning large-scale open warfare among the Seven Clans of the Empire. Since that time, only small battles have been permitted, and only with the Emperor's consent. The entire massed armies of the Great Clans were not turned against one another from that day until the day of the Scorpion Clan Coup.

During an earlier failed negotiation for peace, Crane official Doji Onegano was ousted from the Crane Clan. The Emperor grants Onegano lands stripped from the Crab and Crane for his own use. The lands are harsh, unforgiving, and

largely worthless. Onegano retires to a monastery but his son, Suzume, stays behind to found the Sparrow Clan.

**402 Snake Clan corrupted**

Chuda Tamihei, great-grandson of Isawa Chuda, succumbs to the temptation of a spirit and voices a deadly prayer to dark forces, unleashing a dreaded Shuten Doji in the lands of the Snake Clan. The spirit begins extending its influence throughout the tiny Snake Clan, completely assuming control in a matter of a month.

**403 The Five Nights of Shame**

Alerted to the presence of the Shuten Doji, the Council of Elemental Masters devotes considerable resources to the Snake Clan's destruction. Huge numbers of Shiba bushi are lost in the battle before the Masters discover the proper means to combat the spirit. In the end, however, the Snake Clan is utterly destroyed. No trace remains of the Shuten Doji, or of the Phoenix magistrate sent to discover its ultimate fate.

**412 Hida Tadaka & Matsu Itagi in Haikido**

This is the famous event wherein an arrogant Lion Champion ventured into Haikido, only to be rescued by the Crab. Both Champions thereafter died from the wounds they sustained fighting Haikido together.

**428 Hantei Kusada's spies uncovered by the Gozoku**

Though the Gozoku made many contributions to Nipponese culture, few notable advances can be attributed to Hantei Kusada himself save one. During Kusada's reign, he sponsored religion heavily and is responsible for the creation of over twenty-four temples within the walls of Otosan Uchi alone. These places were considered sites Shinsei either walked or performed some holy act at. During the year 428, Kusada hit upon the notion of using the Brotherhood of Shinsei as spies and agents, as no one would suspect a monk of such behaviour. The Brotherhood had no choice but to obey. However, the "spies" were caught, and the Gozoku decided to make an example of the Brotherhood. This is seen as the Gozoku's first mistake, as it turned more attention to the darker side of their control of the Empire. Kusada had several sons and daughters, but his heir would be his first-born, a son that was also controlled by the Gozoku. The Gozoku ensured that all of Kusada's sons were fostered by the Scorpion, Phoenix, or Crane, enabling the Alliance to retain their hold on the Emerald Throne. Kusada's daughters were wed or fostered off to other clans for political alliances, helping the Gozoku gain

increased control over the politics of the Empire.

**432 Hantei Yugozohime fostered to the Lion**

Yugozohime, a daughter of Hantei Kusada's is fostered to the Lion. Rather than marrying her to a courtier and teaching her to be a quiet, respectful woman as the gozoku intend, the Matsu and Ikoma train her in the tenets of bushido and the wisdom of the Heavens – the Lion teach Hantei Yugozohime how to be an Empress. When she learns of the true glory of the Hantei Emperors, the young Empress plans to one day defeat the gozoku.

**435 Coronation of Hantei Yugozohime**

When Hantei Kusada dies of old age, his heir is brought from Phoenix lands to take the throne. However, Yugozohime challenges her brother to a duel for the throne, and defeats him. With the support of the Lion and Dragon behind a confident and powerful Hantei Emperor, the strength of the Gozoku is swiftly and suddenly shattered.

Many members of the Gozoku's three clans either quickly retired to monasteries or die in duels within the year. Shiba Gaijushiko assists Yugozohime in dismantling the Gozoku's power base in return for his own pardon. No formal charges were brought against any Gozoku members, though Yugozohime's magistrates do arrest them for various criminal dealings. Yugozohime hands many functions of the Imperial Court that the Gozoku used to their advantage over to the Otomo family, effectively preventing any such attempt to make a pawn of the Throne in such a manner again.

**438 Gusai family name awarded**

Centuries after the Mantis were informally established. Gusai, current leader of the Mantis, is invited to Otosan Uchi. During a contest of wits with the Emperor. Gusai shows Yugozohime the strength of steel over words by drawing a blade to the Hantei's throat. Gusai wins his argument with the Empress, as well as Minor Clan status and the Gusai family name. The Daughter of Heaven has the last word, however, and proves the strength of her words by ordering Gusai's execution.

**440 Cathayan ambassadors arrive at the Imperial Court**

At the behest of the Mantis, a small group of Cathayans are allowed admission to the Imperial Court while their fleet docks in Golden Sun Bay. The Emperor opens limited trade and exchange of ideas with the Cathayans. The Cathayans are allowed two years to prove their honour and their respect for the Empire.

- 442 Battle of White Stag**  
The Cathayans are commanded to leave Otosan Uchi, and retaliate with violence. In the ensuing battle, Hantei Yugozohime is tragically slain. The united clans band together to slaughter the Cathayans, driving the shattered remnants of their fleet to sea, where many of their number are consumed in a mysterious storm. Yugozohime's uncle Hantei Muhaki assumes the throne. Shortly thereafter the Emperor bestows Minor Clan status upon Agasha Kasuga and his followers, despite the fact that they have apparently helped Cathayans attackers flee to safety. The true reasons behind Muhaki's decision are known only to Kasuga and the Emperor himself. The Tortoise Clan is born.
- 447 Boar Clan founded**  
The descendants of a group of Crab explorers thought lost in the Twilight Mountains since the year 383 arrive in Otosan Uchi with three tons of jade and iron. Their leader, Heichi, presents these as a payment of back taxes to the Emperor. Heichi's followers refuse to return to their former clan. Amazed by Heichi's story and intrigued by his profound knowledge of bushido and law, the Emperor bestows Minor Clan status upon them.
- 472 The Emperor's Blessing written**  
The Emperor's Blessing, Miya Mai's most critically acclaimed work, tells the tale of the end of the War against Fu Leng and describes the founding of the Miya household. Mai considered the work "too tame" and only completed it so that the commission promised by her patron would provide enough money for her to survive. The play is widely regarded to be Mai's best, and spawns a host of imitations.
- 487 Coronation of Hantei X**  
Hantei X was the first Hantei to give up his personal name to simply be referred to as "The Hantei". However, his name has been lost for all time, and in many texts he is referred to as "He who sacrificed his name for the Empire."
- 499 Kuni Nakanu's journals discovered**  
Otomo farm, younger brother of the Imperial heir, finds his destiny taking a sudden turn when he happens upon the resting place of Kuni Nakanu's maho texts. With the help of a Dragon and Crane Shugenja, lama translates the texts and discovers the secrets of power. A small cult forms, with lama at the helm. As leader of this secret society, Otomo ama takes a new name – Iuchiban.
- 508 Bloodswords Forged**  
Asahina Yajinden later uses the Anvil of Despair to forge the dreaded Bloodswords, Ambition, Passion, Judgment, and Revenge, for his dark master Iuchiban. The swords are given to the Scorpion, Crane, Crab, and Lion clan Daimyo respectively.
- 509 Red Snow Battle**  
Akodo Meikuko violently reacts to a Togashi monk's casual statement in the court, mobilizing an army of 120,000 soldiers to attack Togashi Mountain. Only 2,000 survive the great winter battle. Meikuko takes her life with the sword given to her by Asahina Yajinden. Her name is thereafter synonymous with "mistake" among the Lion.
- 509 Death of Hida Tenburo**  
Crab Daimyo Hida Tenburo suddenly murders his children in their sleep. He thereafter commits suicide with the blade given to him by Asahina Yajinden.
- 510 Suicide of Doji Tanaka**  
Crane Daimyo Doji Tanaka confesses his love for an eleven year old geisha to his assembled court, and thereafter leaps from the cliffs of Kyuden Doji to his death on the foamy rocks below. He carries the blade given to him by Asahina Yajinden.
- 510 Battle of Stolen Graves**  
Scorpion Champion Bayushi Rikoji, who has not yet touched the blade given to him by Asahina Yajinden, suspects foul sorcery after the deaths of the Daimyo who wielded the other three blades. Rikoji dispatches Scorpion magistrate and Shugenja Soshi Takasho to find the creator of the blade. Together with Legionnaire Akodo Minobe they discover the secret cult of the blood sorcerer Iuchiban, who plans to animate the bodies of the Imperial crypts as an army to be used against the Emperor himself. Rousing the armies of the clans, Iuchiban is eventually captured, killed, and entombed within a great structure that was enchanted to contain his blackened soul. The architect, Kaiu Gineza, is also entombed therein by Scorpion assassins so the secrets of the tomb will remain safe. After Iuchiban's defeat, Asahina Yajinden's

## Sixth Century (501-600)

- 501 The Anvil of Despair is created**  
The sinister Agasha Ryuden, a guest of the

mind is erased. He becomes a gardener in the Emperor's gardens. The Emperor thereafter issues a formal edict that all corpses of the dead will henceforth be cremated rather than buried, to prevent the use of the bodies of honoured ancestors as vessels of evil magic.

**511 Mantis family name 'Gusai' removed**

The Gusai family name, attributed to the nobility of the Mantis Clan, was revoked after only three generations after it was given. Gusai Rioshida, Mantis Daimyo, attempted a coup and held the Emperor's son hostage in the Mantis isles. The prince was returned and the Gusai family destroyed. Because the Mantis Clan chose to betray their lord and execute his family because of their shame, the Mantis were allowed to retain their clan status.

**533 Battle of Kenson Gakka**

After a failed attack on Kyuden Ikoma, the Matsui retaliate and attack the Shiro no Meiyo. The Lion make an example of the Scorpion present, killing everyone within and renaming the city Kenson Gakka ("Humility's Lesson").

**569 Birth of Hantei XVI**

The birth of the Steel Chrysanthemum (as Hantei XVI would come to be called) occurs under portents so ominous that their like has not been seen since the time of Iuchiban. The Shosuro, Ikoma, and Asahina quietly ignore this fact.

**589-597 Reign of the Steel Chrysanthemum**

Hantei XVI takes the throne when his father retires early at his son's request. Hantei XV believes his honest, clever, and capable son will usher in a new age of prosperity. Hantei XVI, however, proves a different sort of ruler. Plagued with paranoia since birth, the Steel Chrysanthemum's world is slowly overrun by ghost assassins, traitors in every corner, and enemies in each crowd. Hantei XVI enacts orders to mercilessly crush any threat to his power, real or imagined. Thousands die subjected to his cruel reign. Hantei XVI is finally deposed when the Imperial Guard assault the Hantei after ordering his own mother's death at the bare hands of Crab Champion Hida Tsuneo, Hantei, Tsuneo, and those few loyal to the Steel Chrysanthemum are all destroyed.

Those who follow the Steel Chrysanthemum into death are to be henceforth cursed to follow him forever.

## **Seventh Century (601-700)**

**622 Seppun Hanako writes the Articles of Heaven**

Having endured the brutal reign of Hantei XVI during her youth, Hanako eagerly assists the

young and Inexperienced Hantei XVII with his rule of the Empire. Hoping to curb baser tendencies of Nipponese society, she pens the Articles of Heaven, a set of legal reforms that touches on every aspect of the Empire's legal system. Hantei XVII enacts the Articles of Heaven, resulting in a new foundation for law in Nippon. Among the tenets of the Articles are sections that regulate the use of torture, increase quality of life for the heimin class, and place strict requirements on the treatment of prisoners and hostages.

**634 The Kusatte Iru is defeated**

Fearing that none other could possibly defeat the dreaded creature, Kuril Harike sets out to end the threat of the Kusatte Iru, perhaps the largest and most powerful Oni ever spawned by the Shadow-lands. Armed with his magic and a dark and sinister artefact, Harike sets out accompanied only by his friend and yojimbo. Kuni Ryute. Although Ryute is slain and Harike's soul irrevocably corrupted, the foul beast is placed in a deep slumber from which it may never awaken, ending the threat it poses to the Empire. Harike preserves his friend by encasing him in crystal, which unbeknownst to him prevents Ryure's spirit from entering the afterlife. Perishing after the twin feats of preserving his friend and defeating the Oni, Harike's remains are eventually retrieved by monks who establish a temple in the shugenia's memory.

**671 Yasuki Fumoki lost at sea**

One of the most prolific pirates of his age, Yasuki Fumoki was responsible for raiding innumerable Crane trade vessels, sending their wealth to the coffers of the Crab Clan. In 671, his command ship is attacked by a gigantic sea serpent. Survivors report to the Crab Daimyo that Fumoki was last seen burying his blade in the beast's gullet.

**689 Otomo Madoko writes The Subtlety of Court**

A powerful force in court and a student of the Book of Sun Tao by the renowned Ronin general, courtier Otomo Madoko is dared by a Lion diplomat to compare Sun Tao's tactics to court politics. Recognizing parallels between a bushi on the battlefield and a courtier in the midst of court, Madoko pens The Subtlety of Court, an examination of the battlefield – the courts of Nippon.

## **Eighth Century (701-800)**

**704 The Dragonfly Clan is founded**

Despite her betrothal to a samurai from the Lion Clan. Phoenix Shugenja Isawa Maroko marries her true love. Mirumoto Asijin of the Dragon. Their parent clans, notorious for their tolerant and enigmatic ways, permit the couple

to settle in the plains south of the Dragon Clan. Maroko's jilted suitor, Akodo Yokutsu, leads an army of 5,000 Lions against the couple's holdings, only to be stopped by two armies, one Dragon and one Phoenix, preventing his attack. Furthermore, a huge force of Shugenja prevents his retreat until Yokutsu swears never again to harass Maroko and Asijin. Pleased with the outcome of the Battle of Kyuden Tonbo, the pro-Crane Emperor awards the couple a family name, Tonbo, and Minor Clan status.

**711 The Battle of the Great Climb**

Insulted by an Agasha ambassador in court, the vengeful Lion general Akodo Yokutsu leads an army of Lion against the Dragon Clan, careful to avoid the lands of Mirumoto Asijin and Isawa Maroko lest he violate the oath he swore seven years previous. Laying siege to the Dragon, Yokutsu demands a duel with Asijin to redeem his honour. The Dragon Daimyo Togashi Ayoko arranges the duel, in which Asijin is killed. This is part of an agreement between Ayoko and Asijin, one which extends the Dragon Clan's protection to the Dragonfly in exchange for Asijin's sacrifice. The arrogant Yokutsu declares himself the Daimyo of the Dragonfly and states his intention to wed Isawa Marcia), but is challenged and killed in a duel by Asijin and Maroko's son, Tonbo Kuvuden. With the threat of violence from the Lion temporarily appeased, the Dragonfly Clan become the Dragon's official emissaries.

**715 The Battle of the Tidal Landbridge**

While a sizable force of Haikido creatures attacks the Crab forces elsewhere, a lone and sparsely defended watchtower near Earthquake Fish Bay is attacked by a cunning Oni no Kinjiro and its minions. Severely outnumbered, the Crab seem doomed despite their commander's battle prowess, but when all seems lost, a hunting horn sounds across the bay. Daimyo Daidoji Masashigi and his guardsmen charge across the Tidal Landbridge and attack the foul creatures. The weary and battered Crab are quickly left behind as Masashigi forces the creatures onto the Landbridge. There, they fight the Oni no Kiniiro as the waves rise up around them, swallowing everything. The Crab wait, but no survivors emerge. Only a battered helmet, once worn by Masashigi, is found. The Crab build a shrine to the valiant hero, and henceforth have close relations with the so-called "iron cranes", the Daidoji family.

**716 Hiruma Castle falls to Haikido**

Caught off-guard by a massive Haikido army, the samurai of Hiruma Castle are quickly overrun and completely routed. The dark army is greater than any witnessed since the days of

the war with Fu Leng. The Hiruma are pushed back all the way to the Hida provinces, where the army is finally stopped by powerful magic from the Kuni family.

**715 The Battle of the Cresting Wave**

After the fall of Hiruma Castle, the Crab Clan rallies around the provinces of the Hide. The great army of the oni lord Maw is delayed by a powerful young Shugenja named Kuril Osaku, who creates a gigantic wave of water from the Saigo River to keep them at bay while the Crab scramble to create the Great Carpenter Wall. After 73 days, the wall is completed. Osaku collapses dead from the strain of magic and the armies of the Maw attack the Wall. Despite their numbers, Haikido creatures cannot overwhelm the entrenched Crab, bolstered as they are by hired Ronin and samurai of the other Great Clans. The Maw's forces are eventually beaten back into Haikido, where a hidden force of bloodthirsty Hiruma exacts a terrible vengeance for the loss of their homeland. The Maw is slain in the battle —his army is shattered, but the Hiruma provinces remain under the control of Haikido for centuries to come.

**750 The Battle of Sleeping River**

Even hundred years after his first defeat, the dreaded sorcerer Iuchiban again rises to threaten the Empire. Armed with the secret of moving his spirit from body to body, Iuchiban spends the two centuries following his defeat creating a massive cult throughout the Nippon. The Bloodspeakers, his loyal followers, amass a great army of corpses on the plain near Sleeping River. An ise zumi discovers Iuchiban's spirit and alerts the clans to his treachery. After driving Iuchiban's forces from Ryoko Owari, the united clans converge upon the plains of Sleeping River and destroy the sorcerer's undead army. The ise zumi who first discovered Iuchiban manages to capture and hold his spirit until a suitable tomb can be erected, allowing the Bloodspeaker to finally be imprisoned for good.

**751 Hare Clan founded**

For his brave efforts against the armies of Iuchiban, the Ronin Reichin is granted the family name Usagi, and Minor Clan status. The Hare Clan is born.

**755 The death of Hiruma Sokokai**

The last surviving student of the Hiruma bushi school. Hiruma Sokokai's death results in the loss of the advanced techniques of the Hiruma family. With no school or formalized dojo, the Hiruma begin training informally among themselves.

**761** Kitsu Taiko becomes the Master of Fire Born of peasant stock, Kitsu Taiko has an instinctive command of the kami. He is discovered by the Kitsu at a young age after a spirit leads them to him, and is quickly inducted into their ranks. Taiko is a dominant force among the Lion throughout his life, influencing many great battles and making numerous innovations in areas relating to fire magic. When he reaches the age of retirement, the Phoenix offer him the position of Elemental Master of Fire, which he accepts. He is the only non-Phoenix to ever hold such a position.

**774** **The Oracle of Fire falls to Fu Leng**  
A mere decade after having been selected as the new Oracle of Fire, a minor Isawa Shugenja reappears in the land of the Phoenix. Apparently insane, the Oracle goes on a rampage, destroying several small villages and an entire legion of Shiba samurai before disappearing in a massive explosion that completely incinerates an entire shrine. At the same time, the Crab serving upon the Great Carpenter Wall witness an enormous explosion of fire from deep within Haikido, The Phoenix theorize that the Oracle somehow be-came exposed to the Taint of the dark lord and was called to Haikido to serve him. It is a grim reminder that no one is immune to corruption.

**782** **The fall of Morikage Tashi**  
Forsaken by her loving and callous husband Shiba Kojiro, a young bride formerly of the Dragon Clan takes her life to escape the pain of the dishonour. Mad with grief, the bride's mother lays a powerful curse upon the husband's castle. Soon the vines and trees reach out and reclaim the castle, wrapping it in thick vegetation that renders it useless. All attempts to magically dispel the curse end in failure, and in the end the Phoenix abandon the castle rather than arouse the ire of the vengeful spirits there. The castle lies vacant for centuries, home only to the restless ghosts that wander the halls.

## Ninth Century (801-900)

**815** **The Unicorn Clan returns to Nippon**  
After eight centuries of wandering abroad, the clan once known as the Ki-Rin return at last to the Emerald Empire. Pursued by the hordes of Haikido, the Unicorn know they cannot afford to take time to peacefully explain their approach to the Crab. Instead, the Unicorn return with a vengeance. Their powerful cavalry smashes through the Crab fortifications and speeds into Nippon. Confronted by an army of the Scorpion Clan, the Unicorn display bizarre outlandish tactics in another crushing victory at the Battle of White Shore Plain. As the Great Clans debate over whether or not to attack the strangers again, the Unicorn

emissaries find allies among the Crane by returning a fan given to Sill\* by Lady DO centuries ago. The Emperor decrees that the Ki-Rin have come home and restores their lands to them.

**816** **A new Hiruma school established**  
After a full century with no formal school in which to train their Hiruma scouts, the Crab realize that the techniques of the Hiruma are seriously atrophied. Nothing remains of their once renowned techniques, and plans are launched to build a new school. The Hiruma, however, refuse to accept charity from their kin and will not attend a school occupied by another Crab family. The newly returned Unicorn provide a solution. As a gesture of goodwill to assuage their earlier violation of the Crab's defences, they offer to house and train Hiruma students among the Shinjo family. The Hiruma accept, and in return they assist the Unicorn in constructing their new homes in Nippon. Within a matter of months, the techniques of the Unicorn swiftly improve with access to adequate training facilities and the advice of experienced Shinjo scouts.

**820** **The Kitsuki family of the Dragon Clan is formed**  
Agasha Kitsuki, a brilliant yet lacklustre student of the Agasha Shugenja school, is accused of murder. Given twenty-four hours to prove his innocence, Kitsuki produces both proof and testimony exonerating him. In recognition of his incredible powers of perception, he is given leave by the Dragon Clan to form his own family, the Kitsuki.

**825** **The Moto ride to Haikido**  
Led by family daimyo Moto Tsume, a large force of Moto warriors from the Unicorn Clan ride to Haikido, hoping to aid the Crab in their struggle against the dark forces there. He does not return.

**827** **Battle of the Chrysanthemum Petals**  
Moto Tsume returns from Haikido at the head of a great Haikido army, brutally attacking the Crab and his former kin in the Unicorn. Though the Crab and Unicorn manage to fight off the invading horde, the surviving Moto are stained by the utter corruption of their daimyo. On that day, the White Guard are born, a group of Moro warriors who wear only white – the colour of death – and will not rest until the last Dark Moto has been slain for good.

**828** **The Battle of the Broken Daisho**  
Faced with a conflict between the Lion and the Crane that might plunge the Empire into war, Phoenix Champion Shiba Toriiko takes an army

of Phoenix and intercedes. The Phoenix warriors keep the armies of the other clans from reaching one another, but do not lift a finger in their own defence, dying by the dozen in the hands Lion archers. Perplexed, both Lion and Crane pull back. The Crane general, Kakita Gosano, is incensed and enters a duel with Toriiko despite her obviously superior duelling skills. Toriiko never flinches, and is cut down. Deeply shamed by his pride, Gosano sends his forces home and enters a monastery, vowing to work toward the peaceful world Toriiko desired.

**830 The Shimushigaki is defeated**

Twelve Shugenja valiantly sacrifice themselves to banish the Shimushigaki, a powerful gaki returned from the spirit realms following its defeat with Iuchiban's armies. A shrine is erected in the Shugenjas' honour, and the monks there believe that so long as the Fells of the Dead ring regularly, the Shimushigaki cannot return to the mortal world.

**834 Founding of the Falcon Clan**

The Emperor grants the lands of the Toritaka province to the son of an ashigaru spearman who had saved the life of the Imperial Advisor. Yotogi (the peasant boy) quickly discovers the nature of the assassin a peasant half-maddened by the possession of an evil spirit. The Falcon quickly finds their meaning when their studies into the nature of ghosts and other supernatural occurrences lead them to be in high demand. The Falcon, as a result of their nature, have been allies of the Crab since the beginning.

**960 The Night of Falling Stars**

After a three-week siege of Shiro no Yogin, the Akodo legions seem destined to capture not only the castle, but the Daidoji troops that occupy it. Preferring to risk death rather than surrender, every man, woman and child occupying Shiro no Yogin leaps from the castle walls to the raging river below. Their torches trace their path resembling a night of falling stars.

## **Eleventh Century (1001-1100)**

**1078 Hantei Jodan is born**

The infant Hantei Jodan is born to Hantei XXXVII, formerly Hantei Yatoshin. In his youth, Jodan proves to be an exceptional student of the court a wise, compassionate man. His rule is expected to be long and prosperous.

**1090 The Battle at Kyuden Kitsune**

Each attempting to expand their holdings, the Flare and the Fox Clans begin a series of border skirmishes that threaten to explode into full-blown war. An attempt at mediation by the Crane results in a temporary mace

unfortunately rendered null by the unforeseen assassination of many Fox dignitaries.

Although the Hare deny involvement, the Fox immediately attack, supported by the Crane. The Fox are victorious, but their daimyo blames the Crane and challenges their emissary, Kakita Toshimoko, to a duel. Toshimoko wins easily. The Emperor decrees that Crane "advisors" will assist both Minor Clans in important diplomatic decisions henceforth.

## **Twelfth Century (1101-1200)**

**1101 The Battle of Fate's Gorge**

Following a slight to the Matsu family's generals, Isawa and Matsu forces meet on the field of battle to prove once and for all whether the Imperial Shugenja are truly needed by the Emperor. In an attempt to interrupt the Lion's leadership, Master of Water, Isawa Kaiyoko, magically teleports eight Shiba bushi into the war tent of the Lion to kill general Matsu Uniri and his wife Yunaki. The Phoenix fail to account for the couple's daughter, however, and ten-year-old Matsu Tsuko saves her mother's life by crushing the throat of the final Phoenix assassin with a boken. With Matsu Yunaki leading the Lion troops, the Phoenix are defeated on the field of battle the following day.

**1103 Hantei XXXVIII takes the throne**

At the age of 26, the rightful heir to the throne, Hantei Jodan, is crowned the 38th Emperor of Nippon. A daring and spirited young man, Hantei XXXVIII finds his life force slowly crushed over the years by the relentless conflicts between the Great Clans.

**1107 Hantei Sotorii is born: year 1107**

After the death of his third wife, Hantei took up the company of a Crane concubine. As soon as the boy is born, the Emperor marries the Crane concubine, making her the Empress and Sotorii the heir to the throne. Unfortunately, his mother dies victim of a mysterious fever a short three years after his birth.

**1109 The Wasp Clan is founded**

Born of a Scorpion father and a Lion mother, the young man named Tsuruchi survives both clans' treachery, losing both his parents and the castle that is his birthright. With cunning and stealth, he reclaims his home and kills the Lion that usurped it, his uncle. Tsuruchi presents his dilemma to the Emerald Champion, a Crane who shares his distaste for the Lion and Scorpion, and is given leave to create his own clan. The Wasp Clan is born, sworn into the service of the Emerald Champion.

**1111 The Yotsu family name granted**

A mountain-dwelling Ronin, the warrior Yotsu

discovers that the caravan of Empress Hochiahime has been attacked by a large Bloodspeaker cult. The cultists kill the Empress' infant children, and all the Seppun guardsmen attached to the caravan. The Empress Hochiahime and the young heir Sotorii are taken captive, intended for a sacrifice in order to fulfil an ancient prophecy. Yotsu creeps into the camp with the blade of a fallen guardsman. Though he knows he cannot possibly defeat the Blood-speakers alone, he asks the Empress for permission to die in the Empress' name. The Empress forbids it, instead insisting the Ronin rescue the heir Sotorii, passing Yotsu a message for the Hantei to mourn her and her unborn child. With no other options, Yotsu exchanges his youngest son in Sotorii's place and leaves. Weeks later, the young heir is reunited with his true father, the Emperor Hantei XXXVIII. In recognition of Yotsu's sacrifice, he is given the name Yotsu Yatoshin, the name of the Emperor's father, and a small fiefdom in the Mountains of Regret as well as rule over a district in Otosan Licht. Later explorations by the Imperial Legions find the Bloodspeaker Cult gone, and it is presumed that Empress Hochiahime was sacrificed to their blasphemous rituals.

**1116 Sword of Yotsu otokodate formed**

Yotsu Yatoshin begins swearing Ronin outside his family to the Yoesu name and training them in the techniques he devised while living deep in the mountains.

**1117 Yoritomo becomes the Daimyo of the Mantis Clan**

Well known for his anger over the Mantis' station as a Minor Clan, many in the Mantis feel that Yoritomo will lead them to greatness, perhaps paving the way for them to play a more significant role in Nippon.

**1118 The Badger Clan daimyo is killed while visiting the Crane lands**

Although the Badger are a very minor influence in Nippon, the dishonour of the Daimyo's assassination while in their lands is a great embarrassment to the Crane. There are whispers in court that the assassination was a result of the increasing tension between the Lion and the Crane, but the killer is never caught.

**1120 Kitsuki Kaagi disappears**

Born a member of the Matsu family, Kaagi turned to the magistrates of the Kitsuki after his father died, poisoned. Many years later, Kaagi stumbles into several encounters with the mysterious supernatural force known as the Living Shadow. He compiles a journal detailing

his experiences and accumulated knowledge and dispatches his eta servant to carry it to the Daimyo of the Kitsuki. She is the last person to see Kaagi, for he disappears without a trace after her departure.

**1120 Lion Champion Akodo Arasou is killed**

In an attempt to retake Otosan Uchi, also known as Violence behind Courtliness City and the Castle of the Lion, a large force of Lion samurai attack the well-entrenched Daidoji troops. Despite the valour of Akodo Arasou and his intended bride, Matsu family Daimyo Matsu Tsuko, the Lion are unable to retake the city from the Crane Clan. Furthermore, the Champion of the Lion is killed in the fighting. His younger brother, Akodo Toturi, is recalled from the monastery where he was sent years ago to become the new Lion Champion. Despite his impressive tactical skills, Toturi is despised by Matsu Tsuko, who compares him to her lost betrothed.

**1121 The Three Man Alliance is formed**

Following a series of minor squabbles over borders in court, the Scorpion Clan dispatches tactician Bayushi Tomaru to deal with the neighbouring Sparrow Clan. Supremely confident that his forces can defeat whatever resistance the tiny Minor Clan can offer, Tomaru is caught completely off-guard when the Sparrow are aided in battle by the archers of the Wasp Clan and the Shugenja of the Fox Clan, both of which have holdings near the Sparrow, Tomaru has no choice but to retreat. He is publicly rebuked by Bayushi Shoju for his failure against such minor opponents. The Daimyo of the three Minor Clans meet following their unexpected victory and agree to form a permanent alliance against the aggression of the Scorpion Clan.

**1122 Opium War rages in Ryoko Owari Tashi**

Manipulated by outside forces, the three criminal opium cartels of the City of Lies turn against one another. For weeks, entire rows of warehouses are burned and many deaths occur under mysterious circumstances. The violence continues until the Emerald Magistrates of the city hunt down the responsible parties and bring the opium war to an abrupt halt.

**1123 The Darkfever plague strikes the Phoenix lands**

A solar eclipse releases Oni no Kuzushi from its prison in the spirit realm after two centuries of confinement. While bound to a forgotten estate deep within the Isawa woodlands, the Oni uses its foul powers to unleash a lethal plague spread with magic. In the lands of the Phoenix, this proves a deadly curse and many lives are lost before clever magistrates locate

and destroy the Oni.

**1123** Pirates plague the Crane-Mantis trade routes: year 1123 Many important shipments between these two clans are lost at sea to pirates, causing each to question the other's honesty and intentions. Although the losses are light at first, they continue to escalate for two years until magistrates of the Emperor determine that a treacherous Lion, Matsu Shindoku, is the culprit. Shindoku had been attempting to threaten affairs between the Crane and the Mantis. This revelation further damages the relationship between the Crane and Lion clans.

**1123 The Oracle of Fire prepares to depart the mortal realm**

After several centuries as Oracle, the man who is known as the Oracle of Fire prepares himself for ascension into the Celestial Heavens. His choice of a successor, however, is discovered by a shocked and outraged Scorpion Clan: the Oracle has chosen an eta girl to replace him. The Scorpion attempt to manipulate the Oracle into declaring one of their own the new Oracle of Fire, but the plan fails and the enraged Oracle destroys a law piece of the Scorpion Clan's countryside. He is eventually appeased by a group of Industrious samurai, however, and balance is restored.

**1123 The Hare Clan is destroyed**

After the Sash' Yukio attacks and is killed by Usagi Ozaki, a Scorpion army under the command of Bayushi Tomaru arrives at Shiro Usagi. The castle is destroyed and the Daimyo. Usagi Oda, is killed. Tomaru takes Oda's daughter Usagi Tomoe captive while Oda's son Ozaki disappears with the Hare ancestral blade. After the castle's destruction, the Emperor disbands the clan upon hearing sworn testimony from four sources of Hares practicing maho.

**1123 The Scorpion Clan Coup**

The Scorpion Champion Bayushi Shoji, discovers an ancient prophecy that indicates that the Emperor will become possessed by the dark Fu Leng. Eager to save the Empire and under the thrall of the Bloodsword Ambition, Shoji launches a devious plan to prevent the prophecy by ending the Hantei line. He secretly scatters his army throughout Otsan Uchi, the massive capital city. Using his friendship with the Emperor to ingratiate him. Shoji cuts Hantei XXVIII down in cold blood, sending his troops throughout the city to suddenly and brutally seize control. Believing both the Emperor and his heir dead. Shoji declares himself Emperor. Shoji desperately stalls the armies of the clans until the Crab arrive, as he hopes Hida Kisada will ally with the Scorpion.

The Crab do not, however, and the Scorpion army is crushed by the combined armies of the clans. Shoji himself is slain in a duel with Akodo Toturi, the Champion of the Lion. Believing the Hantei line to have been exterminated, Toturi declares himself the Emperor of Nippon to prevent the outbreak of a war among the clans.

**1123 Hantei Sotorii becomes Hantei XXXIX**

Having been rescued from the Coup by the Phoenix Clan, the heir to the throne returns to Otsan Uchi after a rushed gempukku ceremony. His first edict upon taking the throne is the dissolution of the Scorpion Clan following their treachery, and the disgrace of Bayushi Shoji by discarding his remains on a communal pyre. Akodo Toturi protests this treatment of an honourable foe, angering the new Emperor. As punishment for his insolence, the Hantei declares Toturi to be Ronin and removes the Akodo family name from the Lion Clan. The new Lion Champion Matsu Tsuko quickly decrees that anyone bearing the Akodo name must either swear fealty to the Matsu, Ikoma, or Iotsu, join the Deathseekers, live as Ronin, or die. The renowned sensei Akodo Kage is the exception to this edict. As an afterthought. Hantei XXXIX takes Bayushi Kachiko as his bride to put an end to the traitorous Bayushi line forever.

**1123** Yogo Junzo opens the first Black Scroll In anguish over the death of Bayushi Shoji and enraged at the audacity of the Emperor to so dishonour a gifted and visionary man by destroying his family and clan, Yogo Junzo violates his clan's ancient duty and opens the first of the twelve Black Scrolls. The scroll creates a deadly Wasting Disease that begins to spread across Nippon, bringing misery and death to all who contract it. The spell also transforms Junzo, corrupting him and crafting him into one of Fu Leng's undead servants. A short time later, Junzo opens a second Black Scroll to craft his base of operations, an Iron Citadel in the heart of Haikido.

**1124 The Lion-Crane conflict erupts into war**

The persistent conflicts between the Lion and Crane along their shared border explode after a pair of massive battles. The ancient rivalry between the clans is manipulated by Bayushi Sozui and the traitor Kitsu Goden, who instigate the Battle on the Plains of Gaiju Shindal and the Battle of the Forgotten Tide. Both battles are worsened by Goden unleashing the vengeful spirits of Toshigoku to possess the bodies of mortal warriors. Fortunately, a small band of samurai discover, expose, and defeat them before their foul plan corrupts all of Nippon. The Lion and the Crane stand down

from their battles for a few short months before eventually escalating once again.

**1125 The Hare Clan is reborn**

Following the heroic efforts of Usagi Ozaki and his companions to clear the Hare clan's soiled reputation, the Emperor reinstates the tiny clan's holdings and family name. Though their castle lies in ruins and many yet look upon the Hare with suspicion, they are a clan once more, and their pride is overwhelming. The Hare begin the long, painful process of rebuilding. Preparation for the Clan War begins: year 1126 With the mysterious Wasting Disease raging across Nippon and an ailing, heirless Emperor upon the throne, the Great Clans of the Empire begin preparation for the inevitable conflict. The Lion mass for war against their ancient enemies, the Crane. The Crab break their vows by forming a dark alliance with Haikido, Hida Kisada believes that he can use Haikido as a tool to seize control of the Empire for himself, then using his power to crush Haikido once and for all. Late in the winter, the Crab army begins its march north.

**1126 The Badger Clan falls**

When Emerald Magistrate Kale Osuki travels to the northern reaches of Nippon to deliver an Imperial edict, he discovers that the strongholds of the Badger Clan have been destroyed. A monstrous Oni, summoned by unknown parties, has destroyed virtually every living being within the northern mountains. The great beast is eventually destroyed, but at great cost: the Badger Clan is all but extinct. Due to the Emperor's failing health, the name and Minor Clan status of the Badger are never formally removed.

**1126 The Henshin are exposed**

Manipulated by the dire Kuni Yori, the families of the Phoenix Clan fight amongst themselves while the Empire deteriorates into war around them. Using the insane Asako Oyu as a pawn, Yori demonstrates the secrets of immortality held by the Asako family to the jealous Isawa, ensuring that the two families will spend the next few months completely occupied with their centuries-old rivalry and not the machinations of the Crab Clan.

**1127 The Battle of Beiden Pass**

As an enormous force of Crab and their Haikido allies move north through the Empire, they sack several cities in the Crane and Scorpion lands. Intent on seizing Beiden Pass and crippling the Empire's trade routes, the Crab are surprised to discover a massive army awaiting them. Led by the disgraced Ronin Toturi, the army is comprised of Dragon Clan troops, large numbers of Ronin and Unicorn

cavalry. The battle is brutal and continues on for weeks, but in the end Toturi's superior tactics win the day against Hida Sukune and Hida Yakamo. The Crab are driven south, Toturi pulls his forces away and departs north, leaving the Unicorn to control the Pass. This battle is widely regarded as the true beginning of the Clan War throughout Nippon.

**1127 The Phoenix open the Black Scrolls**

With the Master of Earth Isawa Tadaka returned from Haikido with a Black Scroll stolen from Yoga Junzo, the Elemental Masters decide to open all four of the foul artefacts in their possession in hopes of better understanding the threat posed by Haikido. Only Isawa Kaede, the Master of Void, refuses to participate, certain that this path will result only in disaster. With Kaede absent, the remaining Masters open the four Black Scrolls thereby gaining access to much information. Unfortunately, the corruption of the spells runs rampant through their bodies and spirits, corrupting each of them with Haikido Taint.

**1128 The Second Day of Thunder**

After two years of war throughout the Empire, the clans finally unite against their common foe: Fu Leng. Marshalling their combined forces outside Otsan Uchi, the Great Clans join forces with Yoritomo Alliance and the Brotherhood of Shinsei to engage the huge armies of Haikido creatures surrounding the city. It is a massive and epic battle, one larger than any since the dawn of the Empire. Many heroes are lost and many threats to Nippon are destroyed permanently. Within the city walls, the descendant of Shinsei leads the Seven Thunders to face Fu Leng, who has possessed the body of Hantei XXXIX. The Emperor duels with Dragon Champion Togashi Yokuni. Fu Long slays Yokuni and then turns to finish off the others who dare face him. Hida Yakamo, Doji Hoturi, Mirumoto Hitomi, Toturi, Isawa Tadaka, Bayushi Kachiko, and Oraku Kamoko confront Fu Leng. Somewhat weakened after his fight with Yokuni, Fu Leng manages to mortally wound Tadaka and Hoturi before he is blinded by a vengeful Bayushi Kachiko. Taking advantage of their foe's blindness, the dying Hoturi slices deep into the dark one's chest while Toturi claims Fu Leng's head with a single strike of his sword. The dark Daemon Prince is at last defeated.

**1129 Coronation of Toturi**

After a bitter winter attempting to rebuild the Empire, Toturi I is crowned Emperor of Nippon, Master of the Chrysanthemum, and Lord of the Seven Hills. The conversations between Toturi and Shinsei's descendent over the winter are transcribed and compiled by

Nava Osugi, and collected as the New Tao. Toturi's first edicts as Emperor are to rebuild what was lost during the Clan Wars, and to detail the duty of each of the clans to the Empire. To symbolize the Empire's new dedication and survival against the Dark Lord, a new throne of jade is crafted for Toturi I, and Nippon becomes known as "The Jade Empire".

**1129 Banishment of the Togashi**

Hitomi appears from the mountains at last. She renames Kyuden Togashi as Kyuden Hitomi, and commands those with the Togashi name to swear fealty to her name. The alternatives are banishment or death. Some Togashi swear fealty to Hitomi, taking her name, while most flee the lands of the Dragon or are executed for treason by their new Champion and her enforcers. Those who escape are given refuge by the Brotherhood of Shinsei, as many of them are already far from Dragon lands working side by side with the monks. Among the banished is Togashi Hoshi, son of Togashi. Hoshi uses his long-standing close relations with the Brotherhood to accommodate the exile of his family, and gathers the former Togashi together.

**1125 Falcon Clan absorbed by the Crab**

After an unknown mahotsukai ritual opens a rift to the spirit world. Many members of the Falcon Clan are possessed by shuten doji. Although the ritual is reversed, many Falcon and peasants are killed, leaving the clan's lands in disarray. Acting on authorization from an Imperialshikken, the Crab Clan formally absorb the minor clan with the blessing of the Falcon daimyo. In time, the Falcon become the Toritaka family of the Crab.

**1129 Creation of the Monkey Clan and founding of the Fuzake**

When Toturi offers the position of Captain of the Imperial Guard to his loyal follower Toku, Toku respectfully declines and confesses that he is not a true samurai. He is, in fact, a peasant wielding a katana taken from a dead bandit years ago. The bravery and honour Toku displayed during the Clan War leads Toturi not only to pardon Toku for his crimes and offer the position of Captain of the Imperial Guard a second time, but to bestow Minor Clan status upon the young samurai and his followers. Shortly thereafter, a remarkable Yasuki named Garou is also granted the Fuzake family name. This is mostly due to the sponsorship of the Doji, who found his tireless efforts to tend the wounded and bring humour to the Empire during the war inspiring. Fuzake Garou swears fealty to Toku and joins the fledgling clan.

**1130 Opening of the Phoenix Gates**

After suffering the highest loss of life during the Clan War, the Phoenix clan struggled throughout the first year of rebuilding due to lack of manpower. The Grand Master of the Elements, Naka Kuro, pledges his aid in helping the clan rebuild, swearing fealty to Lady Tsukune. With Kura's help, and Tsukune's offer of fealty to any Shugenja that proves themselves worthy, the Phoenix slowly begin to reclaim their rightful place in the Empire.

**1130 Death of Hida Kisada**

His health failing since being wounded by Fu Leng, Kisada finally loses his struggle against death near the end of the winter. Though some see him as a traitor against the Empire for attacking Otsan Uchi during the Clan Wars, others have come to understand Kisada's actions. In a funeral led by his son, Yakamo, Hida Kisada is given the funeral pyre of an honourable samurai. In thanks for his invaluable aid in planning the assault on Fu Leng's forces on the Day of Thunder, Kisada's name is granted minor Fortune status by Toturi I. Kisada is now and forever the Fortune of Persistence.

**1130 Crab assault Haikido**

Preparations complete, the Crab and Naga combined forces march off past the wall into Fu Leng's Realm. Initial combat shows nearly no casualties for the Crab and Naga, and the beasts of Haikido seem unprepared for such a large invasion party. With the assault underway, the Crab army forges its way to lost Hiruma Castle to reclaim the ancestral home the Hiruma lost centuries ago.

**1130 Disappearance of Toturi I**

The new peace of the Empire is shattered when the Emperor's chambers are found ruined, with blood left behind where Toturi had slept the night before. A thorough search of the entire city of Otsan Uchi rums up clues implicating the Scorpion. Bayushi Kachiko is brought to answer for her clan as countless courtiers and nobles assemble to bring testimony against the Scorpion. The Emerald Champion, Kakita Toshimoko, bring the counsel of the Kitsuki family into the investigation, acknowledging the controversial Kitsuki Method of evidence for the first time in history. Though the Kitsuki can bring no evidence to accuse the Scorpion to light, the Scorpion are completely unable to answer for the testimony brought against them. Many claim that the Scorpion have finally enacted their revenge upon Toturi for the death of their beloved Bayushi Shoju, while others imply that it was simply the first step in placing

Bayushi Kachiko herself on the Jade Throne, in the absence of Emperor Toturi, his lieutenant, Takuan, assumes the position of chancellor of Nippon. Bound by the tenets of Imperial Law, he commands Toshimoko to convict the Scorpion. The Emerald Champion shows mercy, and orders their exile to the Burning Sands instead of their deaths. To ensure that none of the Scorpion's famed Ninja will retaliate against the Empire. Toshimoko orders all children of the Scorpion clan under the age of 12 to become the foster children of Crane houses, The Scorpion children become insurance against their clan's obedience. Shortly after pronouncing his judgment, Kakita Toshimoko pens his final haiku standing upon a cliff near the sea. The Emerald Champion's armour and swords are found on that cliff the next dawn, along with a petition to the Fortunes to forgive him for his failure to his lord. In the absence of both the Emperor and the Emerald Champion, Shinjo Shirasu leads the Emerald Magistrates and attempts to hold the law of the land.

After faking his death, Toshimoko disguises himself as a Ronin. He wears a mask at all times, and calls himself simply the Grey Crane. He begins a search for the truth. At this time. Toturi's lieutenants Matsu Hiroru and Ginawa also set out in search of their lost master.

**1130 Siege of Hiruma Castle**

The forces of Haiido surround the Crab now deeply entrenched in the ruins of Hiruma Castle. The Oni, goblins, and trolls toy with the samurai, knowing that help from the Empire will be a very long time in coming.

**1131 Mantis, Scorpion and Crane relations**

Citing their charter from Emperor Toturi, the Mantis claim the right to tax and regent "unaligned lands", including the now-empty provinces of the Scorpion, known to very few in the Empire, the Scorpion have bargained with the Mantis Champion, Yoritomo, in order for him to protect the Scorpion lands until such time they can reclaim them from their exile. In order to seal the bargain, Bayushi Aramoro fosters his only son to the Daimyo of the Mantis. Bayushi Aramasu, Aramoro's son, arrives in Mantis lands holding Yoritomo's "payment" for the alliance – Scorpion maps of Nippon, and other secrets the Mantis Champion demanded to further his power in the Empire.

The Mantis are escorted through Crane lands by Crane Champion Doji Kuwanan and his armies. As Yoritomo reaches the Scorpion lands at the head of his army, he turns to thank the Crane for their assistance, but finds Kuwanan has laid his own plans for the Scorpion provinces. Hoping to use the Scorpion

children as the means to claim the lands for his own, Kuwanan ambushes Yoritomo's forces once their arrangement has been fulfilled. Yoritomo, caught completely unaware and unprepared for war, is forced to withdraw. Though he does not realize it at the time, many of Doji Kuwanan's actions result from poor advisement by impersonators dispatched by Lying Darkness to cause strife and chaos in the Empire. This battle thus marks the initiation of the "War Against the Shadow."

**1131 Test of the Jade Champion**

In an effort to hold together the crumbling peace of the Empire, the Seppun and Otomo call the first Test of the Jade Champion in centuries. The post of the Jade Champion had long since been defunct, as its position of regulating spellcraft and hunting maho throughout Nippon, were seen as an affront to the Phoenix clan's power. Each Great Clan sends Shugenja to claim the prize. The Championship ends with the defeat of Iuchi Karasu, called "The Doomseeker" by a Lion Shugenja, Kitsu Okura. Rumours of Okura's power being owed to a dark allegiance persist, though the Lion Shugenja is awarded the post.

**1131 Lion march to the Wall**

Without preamble or explanation, Ikoma Tsanurli, the Lion Champion, gathers a legion of her most loyal soldiers and sets off to the northwest of Lion lands, presumably directly into the heart of Crab territory. The move is unexpected by those Tsanuri leaves behind, including the newly initiated Jade Champion and the daimyo of the Matsu, Ketsui. The Unicorn, in an attempt to prevent what appears to be an attack on the weakened Crab, demand an explanation that the remaining Lion cannot give. Combined with the growing reports of maho and other foul activities in Lion lands. Shinjo Shirasu attempts to investigate deep into Lion lands only to be intercepted and forcibly escorted back to the Lion border.

**1131 Defection of the Agasha**

Outraged by the actions of their Champion, the Agasha argue amongst themselves until a clear majority chooses to leave before they are exterminated like the Togashi. Daimyo Agasha Tamori refuses to allow the Agasha to leave the Clan. However, Tamori's student Gennai offers to take any who wish to follow him to the Phoenix lands to kneel before the sword of Shiba Tsukune. Within the week, less than ten who bear the Agasha name stand with the Dragon clan. Agasha Gennai is rewarded by Naka Kuro with a position on the Elemental Council as Master of Air.

**1131 Shinjo Morito leaves Unicorn territory**  
With the objective of carving out a destiny of his own, the ambitious Unicorn Shinjo Morito gathers a group of like minded bushi and stakes a claim to lands once occupied by the Phoenix. As the Phoenix no longer occupy those lands. Morito holds, they no longer can protect them in the Emperor's name. Thus, by right of his superior ability to maintain and control them, they must be his. The Phoenix disagree, but the strong defences Morito has already constructed lead them to abandon the matter for now.

**1132 Rescue of Emperor Toturi**  
Toturi I is found shackled and beaten in the ruins of Mori Kage Castle by Unicorn scouts. The truth is revealed that Toturi I was held captive by the Lying Darkness to allow the Empire to fall into chaos. The Unicorn, led by Otaku Kamoko, bring the weak and sickened Emperor to Otosan Uchi, igniting a small flame of hope in a darkened Empire.

**1132 Imperial Edicts**  
Captain of the Imperial Guard Toku is commanded to take the Monkey clan and end the fighting in the Dragon mountains. Toturi then commands the Unicorn magistrates to force the Lion to answer for their crimes in his absence the rumours of maho had proven true, and the lade Champion himself had taken a hand in corrupting the heart of Lion lands. Lastly, Toturi breaks with tradition by naming the Emerald Champion without a tournament, Seppun Toshiken, a prodigy with the blade and illegitimate son of Kakita Toshimoko, is given the swords and armour of the Emerald Champion.  
Shortly after his return. Toturi begins a cleansing of the Imperial City, summarily executing anyone he deems to be a "Kolats" on even the loosest evidence. Among the slain are Isawa Osugi, author of the New Tao. The former chancellor. Takuan, is horrified by his lord's actions and commits seppuku in defiance.

**1132 Storms over Matsu Castle**  
By the command of Toturi I, the Unicorn engage the Lion near Shiro Matsu. The Lion's corruption becomes clear as on take the field beside Tainted bushi and Shugenja under the command of Kitsu Okura, Matsu Ketsul, and Kitsu Motso. The battle is fierce, and the oni that bears Okura's name slaughters one hundred Battle Maidens single-handedly. The Unicorn are finally defeated, but the Lion's power is severely compromised.

**1132 Mantis siege of Phoenix lands**  
To expand his power, Yoritomo seizes the

lands of the Phoenix, claiming they are too weak to maintain their provinces on their own. The Mantis hope to quickly take the Phoenix under the umbrella of their mercy, but Shiba Tsukune views Yoritomo's movement as an act of war and responds in kind. However, the Phoenix are nowhere near as combat-ready as the Mantis, and Yoritomo's forces slowly make their way into deeper Phoenix territory. It is later concluded that Yoritomo's brash actions against the Phoenix are also the result of advisement by shape-shifting minions of the Lying Darkness.

**1132 Gift of the Emperor**  
Toturi I holds a contest to win a boon from the Jade Throne. All clans are invited to attend, and the winner of a single combat tournament is awarded a favour from the Emperor. The clans gather one entry apiece, attempting to use the Emperor's gift to gain an advantage as the whole Empire is engulfed in war. In the end, the winner is revealed to be Bayushi Aramoro disguised as a Ronin who was able to enter and win with assistance from the Dragon clan. Aramoro requests that he and his clan are allowed to retake their lands, and the Scorpion are restored to their place in the Empire.

**1132 Crane Civil War**  
Driven by the voice of his ancestor, Daidoji Uji leads troops away from Doji Kuwanan's command and toward Shiro no Yugin to reclaim it in the name of the Crane. This slowly creates a division in the Crane which runs into outright war as the bushi of the clan are split between their loyalty to the two lords. The fighting continues, and the dishonour and shame caused by such actions eventually causes the Great Sea Spider to wake from its slumber near Golden Sun Bay Once again. Shape-shifters are later blamed for miscommunication between the two Crane leaders.

**1132 Victory at Hiruma castle**  
The Lion reach Crab lands in time to assist in launching a second assault towards Hiruma Castle, and the combined might of the two Clans make a quick and easy victory.

**1132 Loss of the True Tao**  
The Tao of Shinsei is stolen by the Kola in an attempt to protect it from the Shadow. Some within the Kolats plan to revise the Tao, but others heartily disagree. Half of the True Tao is given to Daidoji Reikai by a traitor among the Kolats, but the other half is intercepted by the Lying Darkness and presumed lost.

**1132 Loss of the Ikoma Histories**  
A sudden attack by the Lying Darkness leaves the great histories of the Ikoma family lying in

ruin. With the Empire's past lost, the Lion historians can do little but pick up the pieces.

- 1132** **Reunification of the Dragon Clan**  
Togashi Hoshi claims leadership of the Dragon. Hoshi restores the Togashi to their rightful place, and brings those who swore fealty to his name to the Dragon. Using the wisdom Hitomi learned through failure and triumph. Hoshi begins preparing the Dragon for the upcoming conflict with the Lying Darkness.
- 1133** **Mantis repelled from Phoenix lands**  
The Mantis, after holding the Phoenix provinces for half a year, are finally broken by the guerrilla attacks of small Phoenix bushi and the magic of their Elemental Guards. Yoritomo is offered the Jade Throne by Shinjo, but the Mantis Champion refuses, claiming he will never be the pawn of the Kami.
- 1133** **Death of Toturi I**  
In a lucid moment, Toturi breaks free of the control of the Lying Darkness. He realizes that if Darkness were to take the soul of an Empire, the soul of the Empire itself would be forfeit. In a hasty ceremony. Toturi marries Isawa Kaede, and commits seppuku – denying Lying Darkness his soul and leaving the leader of Nippon as the one person it cannot touch, the Oracle of the Void.
- 1133** **The Battle of Castle of Decay**  
Their enemy now in plain sight, the forces of the Empire marshal together under the guidance of Toturi's general, Saigorei. As Lying Darkness undoes all of creation by turning the land of the dead into nothing but a lost memory, the forces of Nippon assault the armies of the Lying Darkness and Haikido in the ruins of the troll city, Voltturnum. The battle is fierce, and the boundaries between the Spirit Realms crumble. Spirits from Yomi and Toshigoku emerge in great numbers, and more than one hero from Nippon's past crosses the Castle of Decay to battle the enemy. One such man is the Emperor himself, Toturi I – free of the Shadow's grip on his soul. Many die, and the Air Dragon allows itself to be consumed by corruption so that the Master of Fire, Isawa Hochiu, is able to reach and Goju Adorai, the master of the Darkness. With the aid of a Shosuro actor, Hochiu strikes the killing blow and destroys Adorai.  
With the loss of Adorai, the Lying Darkness is now weak enough that it can be named. Lady Moon gives the Darkness the name "Akodo," which not only destroys the darkness but releases a large number of lost Akodo Ronin previously consumed by the Darkness and now

amnesiac. The weakened Goju and Ninube minions of darkness flee to plan their vengeance.

- 1133** **Moto War**  
While the Clans fight against the Living Darkness at Castle of Decay, the Moto family of the Unicorn engage in their own war. Shinjo's return brings the nomadic Moto from Cathay, who ride beside their cousins of Nippon as they meet the Dark Moto of Haikido in combat. The Dark Moto are led by none other than Otaku Kamoko, who has sacrificed her own honour to lead the corrupted Unicorn to destruction. Using fierce tactics of Khan Moto Gaheris, the undead Moto arc crushed, unifying the line of the Moto once and for all.
- 1134** **Rebuilding the Empire**  
After suffering two extended periods of war within ten years, the Empire once again turns to rebuilding as Emperor Toturi reclaims his throne.
- 1137** **Fall of the Alliance**  
Since the death of Yoritomo during the Battle of the Castle of Decay, the Mantis Clan have slowly lost power and influence among the Great Clans. Even with the assimilation of the Wasp and Centipede Clans, the Mantis are not what they once were. With no conflict to unify Yoritomo's former alliance, the other Minor Clans gradually withdraw their support from the Mantis Clan. By this point in time. the Mantis once more stand alone.
- 1137** **Birth of Toturi Sezaru**  
Toturi's second child is born under the signs of great fortune. The boy's hair becomes white shortly after birth and his aptitude for magic study surpasses even his mother's at the same age.
- 1138** **The War of Spirits begins**  
After years of preparation and monitoring the political climate of Nippon, the returned spirit of the Steel Chrysanthemum, Hantei XVI, demands that the Jade Throne be ceded to him. Toturi refuses, stating that the Hantei dynasty is dead, and the blessing of the Heavens is upon himself and his line. With the power of most of the reborn spirits and the assistance of the spirit of Nitta Tsuneo, Hantei XVI declares war upon the Empire to claim the throne for himself. Thus begins a long, slow war of attrition between the armies of the living and the dead.
- 1139** **Birth of Toturi Naseru**  
The second son of Toturi is born shortly after the beginning of the War of Spirits. Naseru is

easily the most intellectual and serious of all the children.

**1145 Ox Clan founded**

After proving himself in valorous combat against lion spirit armies attacking Shiro Iuchi, Emperor Toturi validates Shinjo Morito's claim to the unoccupied lands he and his followers have occupied for the past fourteen years. Morito immediately grants several expensive Cathayan artefacts to the Phoenix as a gesture of friendship to cushion the shock of losing their land. Thus the Ox Clan is born.

**1150 Phoenix children kidnapped**

With the War of Spirits turning decidedly in Toturi's favour, Hantei XVI retreats to Phoenix territory. With the help and advisement of the Tainted Dragon Agasha Tamori, Hide Tsuneo kidnaps the children of the Phoenix clan and murders Isawa Taeruko's daughter, Yaruko, as an example. The Phoenix grudgingly agree to assist Hantei XVI.

**1150 Devastation of Beiden Pass**

The end of the War Against the Spirits came when the majority of the spirit army was led into Beiden Pass. With the assistance of the Phoenix, a cadre of Scorpion Shugenja collapses the pass upon the spirits, destroying the majority of Hantei's armies.

**1150 Treaty with the Spirits**

The bulk of their forces gone, Hantei XVI enters into negotiations for peace with Toturi I. Though the Empire could easily crush the remains of the spirit army, Toturi shows mercy upon them by allowing them to return to Yomi in peace by leaping off of what is now called the Leaping Place – a cliff near the sea of Osaka. As part of Hantei's treaty, Toturi's child Naseru takes the Hantei name and is fostered in Hantei XVI's home in Otsan Uchi. Also, the Tamori name is granted to the descendants of the Tainted Agasha Tamori, who disappears shortly thereafter.

**1155 The Imperial Bastard is revealed**

Toturi's liaison with the geisha, Hatsuko, before the Clan War resulted in the birth of a child that Toturi was not aware of until he is announced in Ryoko Owari. Kaneka's claim is supported by several sources, and the Akodo offer the boy fealty. This causes a disturbance among the courts, as Kaneka is now the Emperor's eldest child. Toturi himself never officially acknowledges Kaneka as his son.

**1158 Death of Toturi I**

On a visit to Scorpion lands, Emperor Toturi I is slain in combat with a force of Haikido creatures. The Oni responsible for the

Emperor's death is of a breed never seen before, and escapes before the Scorpion rout the beasts and recover the Emperor's body. As Toturi Kaede, the Empress, disappears shortly after taking the throne, leaving the Empire with no clear leader. Toturi's children, Toturi Tsudao, Toturi Sezar, Hantei Maseru, and Akodo Kaneka begin vying with one another for support among the Great Clans so that one of them might assume their father's throne.

**1158 City of the Lost discovered**

Shortly after the death of the Emperor, the Crab Clan commands its Hiruma scouts to scour Haikido for any sip of what force could possibly execute such an organized attack so deep within Nippon. After months, the answer is hardly comforting – the Crab find an organized city deep within Haikido, maintained and inhabited by the Lost, mortals completely corrupted by the Taint. Until this point, the Lost had rarely shown such organization and unity of purpose, but it soon becomes clear that a new force drives Haikido – the Dark Lord, Daigotsu. His followers view themselves as samurai, dedicated to the memory of the Ninth Kami, Fu Long. Well trained, intelligent, and possessed of a twisted sense of honour, the servants of Daigotsu are the greatest menace yet to threaten the Empire. Most shockingly, the Hiruma realize that the Lost have begun to construct a shadowy reflection of the Great Wall, the Wall of Bones, to keep the Crab scouts from venturing too deeply into their territory.

**1159 Fall of Otsan Uchi**

While the Empire is divided by the four feuding children of Toturi I, Daigotsu strikes at Nippon's heart – Otsan Uchi. It is here that he reveals his true plan and purpose. As the ancestral home of Emperors and the place where Fu Long perished, the Dark Lord is able to use the city as a nexus between Spirit Realms and frees the Daemon Prince from the realm of Chaos. Fu Long burns for revenge against his enemies but finds the mortal realm now forever barred to him. Instead he turns his anger against his celestial kin, and stages a massive attack on the Heavens while Daigotsu's army ransacks the Imperial City. Alerted by what has transpired, the armies of the Lion Clan, as well as those who follow Akodo Kaneka and Toturi Tsudao make a fateful choice – to burn Otsan Uchi, which now stands beyond reclamation, to the ground to prevent further blasphemies from taking root. Having accomplished his objectives, Daigotsu withdraws before an organized counterattack can be mustered.

**1159 The Dark Lord's Vision**

Following his success in Ootosan Uchi, Daigotsu comes to a realization. Though the Lost have become a formidable force, only his power and charisma have driven them to set their own obsessions aside and act as one. Should he perish, he knows the City of the Lost and the Empire of Haikido will perish with him. Turning to the Dark Oracle of the Void, he gains knowledge of his own death. Though he knows this fate cannot be avoided, he forges contingencies nonetheless, offering the mysterious Shadow Dragon one half of his immortal soul for safekeeping.

**1160 Heaven and Earth:**

Fu Leng continues his assault, pressing further into the Heavens, and Daigotsu's power only seems to grow with each passing day in the Realm of Mortals. With the balance of the universe so wildly tilted, the Oracle of the Void, Empress Kaede, is now free to return to Nippon and guide her children and set things right. The Empress instructs the Four Winds, Toturi's heirs, that the key to defeating Fu Leng lies in Daigotsu. The worship of Fu Leng's Lost followers is what makes him strong, but those followers truly believe in Daigotsu, not Fu Leng. If the Dark Lord can be defeated, Fu Leng's base of power will be shattered and he will be cast down from the heavens.

Their path clear, the Four Winds pool what they have learned about the enemy and realize their course is dear. Toturi's children lead an attack upon the heart of Haikido, aided by the living statues known as Tadaka's Children. With the small army of statues distracting the forces in the City of the Lost, the Four Winds confront Daigotsu and defeat him. Naseru's words weaken Fu Leng's own faith in his follower, which gives the Winds the chance to confront him without the Dark God's interference. Though Torun Tsudao sacrifices herself in the final battle, Daigotsu is slain.

**1160 Coronation of Toturi III, the Righteous Emperor**

Stricken by the loss of their sister, the remaining Winds return to Kyoto, the new Imperial City, and agree amongst themselves that Naseru is the most worthy to lead. Kaeda returns to the Celestial Heavens, and Maseru declares that he will be known as Toturi. The new Emperor decrees that his older sister, eldest heir of Toturi and paragon of true nobility, will forevermore be recognized as Empress Toturi II and successor to the Splendid Emperor. Toturi Sezaru swears fealty to the Phoenix Clan to honour his mother and takes the name Isawa Sezaru. Toturi III recognizes the Phoenix Clan as the Voice of

the Emperor and his brother Sezaru as the representative of that title. His half-brother Ranch is recognized as Shogun, but in an attempt to curtail Kaneka's ambition the Emperor forces him to abandon his current armies and swear fealty to the peaceful Phoenix Clan. Kaneka grudgingly agrees.

**1161 Return of Daigotsu**

Daigotsu's most loyal follower, Goju Kyoden, offers his life to the Shadow Dragon in return for restoring Daigotsu's life. Though the Dark Lord is restored, he is not as he was. Resentful at how Daigotsu masterminded Fu Leng's escape, the Fortune of Death keeps the remainder of the Dark Lord's soul imprisoned in Meido. As a strange side effect of this, Daigotsu finds that he has been purified of Haikido Taint, and can no longer draw upon Fu Leng's blessings. Whereas another man might seize upon this opportunity to be free of Haikido, Daigotsu's faith and loyalty in the Dark Gods is not diminished. He hides his new 'weakness' to all but his closest followers and resumes rulership of the City of the Lost.

**1165 Return of Iuchiban**

In an attempt to return Daigotsu to his full power, the Bloodspeaker Shahai bargains with the entombed spirit of Iuchiban. Shahai offers Iuchiban his freedom in order to fulfil her own goals, but is betrayed. Iuchiban comes to the City of the Lost, to assume control of Daigotsu's armies. Daigotsu barely escapes with his life, and the bloodspeakers quickly rise to claim everything the Dark Lord has built. To herald a new age of darkness, Iuchiban enacts a ritual that covers the Empire in a rain of blood, corrupting many souls consumed with desire, regret, or fear and shackling their will to his own. Bloodspeaker cults, previously hidden in order to remain alive, surge from every corner of Nippon to unite with their returned leader, and the Empire is consumed by a bloody conflict as samurai turn upon one another under the Bloodspeaker's dark magic. The Dragon Clan, who are relatively unaffected by the catastrophe, are chanced by the Emperor to hunt those responsible.

**1165-1166 War of the Rich Frog**

In an unexpected assault, the Unicorn Clan attack the Lion city of Kaeru Toshi. Until a few years previous, the city had been Unicorn territory, but the nomadic Unicorn had left its rule mostly in the hands of the Ronin Kaeru family. During the period of the Four Winds the Ikoma family of the lion moved into the city and named the Kaeru as their vassals, an act that drew much ire from Moto Chagatai, Khan of the Unicorn Clan.

Though courtiers decry the Unicorn invasion as an illegal act, a clever Unicorn courtier counters that the treaties which forbid war between the Great Clans were drafted during the centuries when the Ki-Rin were assumed forever lost in Cathay. The Scorpion Clan secretly ally themselves with the Unicorn in return for the Khan returning rulership of Ryoko Owari to their clan. The Unicorn might have conquered the city in short order, but the Rain of Blood throws their attack into chaos and instead dissolves the confrontation into a long, gruelling war.

The Emperor knows the war must be brought to an end, but realizes that faith in his rule has already been gravely shaken by the Rain of Blood. He cannot afford to show favour to either the Unicorn or Lion, lest they turn against him. Thus he calls upon the Dragon Clan once again, asking that they do whatever they can to under-mine both clans in the war, making the conflict too costly for either to pursue. In the village of Sukoshi Zutsu the war finally comes to a head, with the Unicorn Klan slaying Lion Clan Champion Matsu Nimuro in personal combat. The Khan seems strangely

disheartened by his victory and does not move on to conquer Kaeru Toshi, instead satisfying himself with the small Lion village.

#### 1166 **Rise of the Gozoku**

Coordinated by the returned spirit of Bayushi Atsuki, the Gozoku are reborn in Nippon's modern age. The Gozoku move in secret to undermine faith in Toturi III, citing the rise of the Bloodspeakers and the War of the Rich Frog as tragedies that could have been prevented under a stronger ruler. Kaneka reluctantly allies himself with the Gozoku, as he too doubts his brother truly has the strength to rule. Before Naseru realizes the power of this new enemy, he finds his influence in the Imperial City greatly reduced. Without any other choice, Torun watches his power and influence wane. All he can do is call upon those loyal to him in hopes they might find a way to defeat his opponents. Scorpion Champion Bayushi Sunetra steps down at the Emperor's command, freeing herself of the responsibilities of ruling her clan so she might scour the shadows for the true leaders of this Gozoku.



# 將軍



# CUSTOMS AND CULTURE

## The Celestial Order

It is believed that everything and everyone plays its proper role in a great Celestial Pattern. All souls have their place, as decreed by the Celestial Heavens. Those who defy the Celestial Order shame and befoul the purpose of their existence. Not only is such a soul without honour, but they risk being allocated to a lower station after reincarnation.

Nippon's social order is composed of three distinct groups: samurai ("those who make war"), clergy ("those who pray"), and bonge ("those who work"). There is also one non-group, referred to as hinin ("non-people").

## Samurai

Of Nippon's social classes, samurai assume the top rank. The symbol of a samurai's office is the daisho, the two swords, katana and wakizashi. Only a true samurai owns or carries such weapons. Any other individual found guilty of possessing them or even touching them will be executed. All members of the samurai class are entitled to trial if brought up on charges by another samurai. Charges against samurai brought up by members of lower classes are simply ignored, unless a samurai wishes to acknowledge them. This is not to say that a samurai who commits a crime against a peasant is always immune to punishment. If a samurai murders a farmer who serves another lord, he



has harmed that lord's income and ability to feed his troops. Thus he has, in effect, committed a crime against another samurai and will face Justice. On the other hand if a farmer steals an apple from a peasant, he is unlikely to face any punishment whatsoever, though his fellow samurai will disdain him for such shameful behaviour.

## The Emperor

The Emperor holds the highest position. He owns all of the land in the Empire, and permits those who owe him fealty to manage it. Those who manage the land must pay yearly taxes. The Emperor also controls Nipponese religion. Effectively, the Emperor channels the voice of the Celestial Heavens — thus his title "the Son of Heaven." Though custom, law, and tradition define Nippon, the Emperor is the final arbiter of these things. Any command the Emperor makes is immediately considered Imperial Law. Naturally many Emperors wield this power cautiously to prevent contradicting themselves or eroding the faith their followers place in them. Emerald Magistrates enforce the Emperor's Law, and the Imperial Legions are his personal armies. Those who defy the Emperor face the wrath of the Magistrates and the Legions, if not all of Nippon. Upon taking the throne, most Emperors set aside their former name and are referred to only by the name of their dynasty as well as take on a unique title, usually an adjective that describes their style. The current Imperial Dynasty is the Toturi Dynasty, The current Emperor is Toturi III, the Righteous Emperor. The Toturi have ruled the Empire only for the past few decades. Their predecessors, the Hantei Dynasty, ruled Nippon since its founding.

## The Kuge

The kuge represent the most elite of the samurai class, inherited nobility with powerful positions within the government. The Emperor is a member of the kuge, though he carries far more importance than any other member. Ranking just below the Emperor are his functionaries, including the Daimyo of the Imperial





Families, the Voice of the Emperor, the Emerald Champion, the Jade Champion, the Imperial Chancellor, and the Imperial Advisor. The Shogun is a special case, ranking just above the rest of the kuge but just below the Emperor. In many cases it could be argued that the Shogun has more power than the Emperor, since he commands the Emperor's armies and maintains a far more visible profile. In theory, however, even the Shogun ultimately offers his fealty to the Emperor and thus the Emperor reigns supreme.

Directly beneath these individuals rank the Clan Daimyo. Great Clan Daimyo slightly outrank Minor Clan Daimyo, but in practice the difference between them is extreme. Great Clan Daimyo have far greater resources, political capital, and more followers than their Minor Clan brethren. Their nearly "equal" social status figures as a gesture of respect, nothing more. Major family Daimyo rank just beneath clan Daimyo. Again, Great Clan families outweigh Minor Clan families in most political arenas despite their equal status.

The lowest ranking members of the kuge are the immediate families of the leaders of each family. While many samurai are allowed to carry the name of a noble house, only a handful — the kuge — are actually directly related to the founders of the house. The rest have servant status, comprising the buke. It should be noted that all Minor Clan samurai other than the Daimyo count as buke, not kuge.

## The Buke

The majority of samurai are members of the buke. Buke are samurai who have not been awarded land and titles, but serve another household. Samurai in service to a house are typically allowed to bear that house's name. While there are relatively few samurai with blood ties to the original Matsu, thousands of buke bear the Matsu name. The rest are lesser vassal families of the Matsu. Though vassal families may maintain their own family name, it is seen as impolite and disloyal to use that name in favour of their lord's when interacting with others outside their clan, or at best use both with their vassal name given inferior status. For example, Ikeda Setjuro, vassal of the Matsu family, will refer to himself as Matsu Seijuro, or Matsu Seijuro, of House Ikeda, when interacting with those outside his family or clan.

The highest ranking samurai of the buke serve as bureaucrats and military personnel. Including provincial governors, officers, hatamoto, city governors, kayo (advisors to a Daimyo), Emerald Magistrates and clan magistrates primarily experienced warriors and courtiers who have earned their positions. Lesser sons and daughters of noble houses are delegated to the rank of buke by default. As they have no inheritance, and serve no direct purpose, they must prove their worth to receive the same respect and station as their more fortunate siblings.

Rank and file samurai make up the remainder of the buke membership, many of these are *ii-samurai* ("half samurai"), members of vassal families who have not yet earned the right to carry their lord's family name. Expected to increase their holdings and earn the respect of their lord, many *ji-samurai* are extremely ambitious warriors.

## Ronin

*Ji-samurai* also include lowly Ronin, samurai who by fault, birth, or circumstance serve no noble lord known as samurai without masters, a phenomenon that generally invokes distrust or disgust among true samurai. While Ronin have no true place in society, they are samurai and must be treated as such. As a result, many Nipponese are uncertain exactly how to deal with Ronin. Many clan samurai find them offensive reminders of the price of failure. Peasants consider them dangerous, loose cannons who answer to no one and could wreak terrible violence without



warning. Ironically a Ronin is almost invariably forced into the life of a bandit or mercenary. As samurai, performing mundane labour would be beneath their station, a violation of the celestial order, Thus their honour compels them to make a living as befits their status as warriors. Some samurai will leap at any chance to accuse a Ronin of a crime so that he can be executed and forgotten. Others see them as useful tools, disposable mercenaries that can be drawn upon to do unsavoury work when it is too risky to waste a loyal servant.

### **Ashigaru**

The absolute lowest ranking members of the buke are ashigaru, or career soldiers. Technically peasants, they possess far keener training than the average peasant or carpenter. While hardly comparable to samurai by any stretch of the Imagination, ashigaru are skilled warriors in their own right. Many ashigaru families have served their samurai lords for generations, and bear themselves with fierce pride and loyalty comparable to samurai. Most houses have several families of hereditary ashigaru, serving as guardsmen, doshin (soldiers serving magistrates), and scouts during times of peace.

### **The Clergy**

This class is comprised mostly of the Brotherhood of Shinsei, an order of monks dedicated to the writings of the Little Teacher. Though Shugenja belong to this group, they are also technically samurai due to the

special relationship their ancestors shared with the Kami. As members of the samurai caste, Shugenja naturally maintain some distance between themselves and members of the peasant classes while in sharp contrast, both the samurai caste and peasants alike warmly welcome monks in to their homes. In a land where noble houses constantly vie with one another in violent conflict, the Brothers of Shinsei represent the single constant. Even in the darkest times of war, their simple wisdom is both valued and respected. Though clans such as the Scorpion and Lion might not have the greatest respect for the Tao, even they cannot deny that its students are worthy and enlightened souls.

Most monks take vows of chastity and poverty, though practices vary by sect. The only goal expected of a monk in the physical realm is the pursuit of enlightenment, and helping others on their own path is a necessary step. Thus monks fall naturally into the roles as advisors, teachers, and spiritual guardians. Monks occupy a special place in the Nipponese social system. Though samurai out rank them, they still recognize the monk's role as teacher and wisdom holder. Thus while a samurai may technically command a monk, most samurai do not do so out of respect for Shinsei and his teachings. Monks do not pay taxes — left to their own devices. In turn, monks do what they can to serve samurai by keeping peace among the peasant populace. They distribute Shinsei's teachings of enlightenment and gentle wisdom, doing their part to promote order in the Emperor's lands,





Though they do not practice the flamboyant Shugenja magic, a monk's path grants him an understanding of the spirits and elements beyond mortal men. This is embodied most obviously in the form of kiho monks practice. Restless spirits seem to be drawn to the enlightened souls of the Brotherhood, their balance and harmony shining as a beacon to spirits who find themselves out of place. Thus, inevitably most monks have experiences with the supernatural at some point in their lives, either in battling evil spirits or helping tormented souls find peace. As peasants regard monks with less terror than they do Shugenja, they will often report strange supernatural occurrences to local monks.

### The Bonge

This class comprises peasants, merchants, and craftsmen collectively referred to as heimin ("half-people"). The highest rank of commoner is the farmer, whose labour feeds the Empire. The farmer is followed by the artisan, and finally by the merchant, who creates nothing and is thus the least worthy. Though some samurai do engage in commerce, they sidestep the technicality of such dishonourable labour by presenting themselves as "merchant patrons." While the samurai conducts trade negotiations and convinces his customer of the worth of his products, peasant merchants actually conduct the lowly business of exchanging coin for goods.

A heimin may file charges against another heimin if he feels wronged, but a heimin wronged by a samurai has no legal re-course. A samurai wronged by a heimin need not bother with a trial. Samurai may technically execute heimin if they feel they have been wronged in any way, and the definition of "wronged" is left to the samurai's discretion.

Needless to say, heimin act politely in samurai company.

### Eta

This non-group is comprised of hinin ("non-people") those whose professions cause them to be considered "unclean" including any person whose work regularly involves contact with blood or flesh as well as criminals, entertainers, and assorted ne'er-do-wells. Eta are technically not human, so even heimin tend to be abusive toward them. Killing an eta is not a crime, because they do not participate in the Celestial Order. Eta are not allowed to speak to samurai unless the samurai commands it.

Eta avoid samurai, if possible.

Exempt from much of the above, geisha fall under the protection of a samurai patron, so any insult or violence toward her is in fact directed toward their master. Geisha serve as entertainers and companions, with an expectation therefore to engage samurai though they do not perform the duties of a consort, despite the unsavoury reputation many geisha houses have cultivated. Geisha shine in their conversational charm, in dance, and music, and are rewarded for the peace they bring a troubled samurai's soul with many gifts. Even a married samurai suffers no shame for associating with geisha, so long as he keeps his association discreet.

Eta torturers also frequently associate with samurai. as their efforts complement magistrates in their work.

### Government

The government of Nippon legislates on simultaneously simple and complex levels. On the surface, the Emperor bears the responsibility for the final authority on all the laws of the land. The Empire belongs to the Emperor, who rules with the consent of the Celestial Heavens. As the Heavens put their faith in the Emperor, his word reigns with absolute authority and carries the weight of Lord Sun and Lady Moon. While this absolute power seems easy to abuse, it has only been notably perverted a few times in the history of the Empire, most notably, the rulership of the Gozoku Conspiracy, who undermined the rule of Hantei V and VI entirely, the bloody reign of Hansel KV', the man Steel Chrysanthemum, the reign of Hantei XXIX, who was possessed by the Dark God, Fu Leng, and the short period of time in which Toturi I was influenced by the Lying Darkness. Outside of these isolated events, the Emperor has always taken great pains to ensure that his son would do the ruling



dynasty's name honour, and the Imperial Families have eternally acted as a balancing influence, steering the Emperor subtly away from his darker desires. A busy figure, the Emperor cannot handle all affairs of justice. While the Shogun enforces the Emperor's will in all military matters, the Emerald Champion acts as the Emperor's highest agent of justice and the Emperor's personal bodyguard, but more commonly is dispatched far from the Emperor's side to enforce Imperial Law throughout Nippon. Under the domain of Emerald Champion, thousands of Emerald Magistrates roam the Empire, helping the Emerald Champion fulfil his duties. Those appointed to the position of Emerald Magistrate are expected to act with the justice of the Imperial Son of Heaven in mind, and nothing else. Magistrates often must put aside matters of clan or family politics or loyalty when they assume this station. Clever Magistrates, however, find ways to use their position to gain favour and honour for their clan without compromising the honour of their office. The clans also have their own magistrates, selected by Daimyo across the provinces. These magistrates carry out the law of the Emperor as well, but generally only within the borders of their family. These clan magistrates are slightly lower in station than the Emerald Magistrates, but still command respect within their own territories. They are considered the hand of their lord, and act with the full authority of the Daimyo they represent in all matters (the Daimyo, in turn, trusts them not to abuse that authority lest it be revoked), unlike the Emerald Magistrates. However, they almost never have to work in a manner that may harm their family or clan.

An office similar to the Emerald Champion is the Jade Champion. The Jade Champion's duty is to police all illegal use of magic in the empire, particularly *maho* (blood magic). The Jade Champion's Jade Magistrates and Inquisitors are to him as the Emerald Magistrates are to the Emerald Champion.

Each bit of land is usually governed by a minor Daimyo that is given the duty of making sure the peasants pay their taxes, and the province keeps in line with the Emperor's law, and the law of the clan. These minor Daimyo, in turn, report to either a more important lord, or even the Daimyo of a family. The family Daimyo is responsible for all the lords under his command, and reports to the Champion of the clan.



The Champion of a clan answers only to three people — the Emperor, the Emerald Champion, and the Jade Champion.

### Crime and Punishment

Nippon tolerates no aberrant activity. Deviance from custom and tradition encounters stern disapproval and harsh punishment for criminal behaviour. Robbery, forgery, murder, rape, and kidnapping are all punishable by execution. To salvage his honour if not his life, a samurai can offer to commit *seppuku*, though particularly vile criminals are denied this opportunity. Imperial Law grants a magistrate the exclusive right to punish a criminal's spouse and children as well in the case of serious crimes, a common practice.

Lesser crimes, extortion, vandalism, minor derelictions of duty, trespassing, generally merit a fine and either house arrest (for a samurai) or a savage public beating (for peasants). Minor crimes come at the cost of manacles or house arrest.

Technically not human, *eta* cannot be tried as criminals and thus stand outside the normal Nipponese justice system. However even the most innocent *eta* can be killed by a samurai with little or no repercussions. *Eta* that would use their status as an excuse to begin a life of crime should be wary.

Testimony is the strongest arbitrator of justice in Nipponese law. Though the evidence suggesting, an individual's guilt may be insurmountable, it is nothing if a reliable witness testifies as a witness to their guilt. Likewise a reliable witness might single-handedly convict a person despite any lack of evidence. Naturally many enterprising criminals take advantage of this, using their influence to manipulate potential witnesses into ignoring their activities or shifting blame to their competitors. While this is not easy in a land of samurai, where personal integrity is a highly praised virtue even for the humblest peasant, it is far from unknown.

Of course, this is not to say that samurai do not completely ignore the importance of evidence. However, evidence is regarded as secondary to testimony. Essentially, this boils down to the Nipponese perception of honour. Evidence lies but samurai don't. Thus a samurai's sworn testimony supersedes evidence obtained by any other means. In recent years, Emerald Magistrates (mostly hailing from or trained by the Kitsuki family) have begun to



reverse this tradition, revealing that subtle evidence can paint a clearer picture of what has truly occurred in a crime scene. While this has not reversed Nippon's preference of testimony over evidence, the testimony of a Kitsuki-trained magistrate who observes a crime scene now bears as much weight in a criminal investigation as an eyewitness.

Whatever evidence or testimony might be at hand, no crime can be punished without a confession from the suspect. In a case where guilt is clear and the testimony is above dispute, an eta torturer is brought in to torture the suspect until he either confesses or perishes. High ranking samurai — obviously guilty might be spared this indignity, but placed under indefinite house arrest until they make a confession. Such a state causes such shame for the samurai and his family that the suspect will generally either confess or commit seppuku.

A samurai accused of a crime outside his homelands can only stand trial by an Emerald Magistrate or a magistrate from his own clan. For a clan magistrate to punish a foreign samurai (especially with execution) is tantamount to a declaration of war, an action only a fool would take lightly, if a foreign samurai is found guilty of a crime and an Emerald Magistrate is not available to arbitrate, it is within a clan magistrate's rights to declare the suspect exiled from the lands of the magistrate's clan and escort him to the border, or detain him until an Emerald Magistrate arrives to arbitrate the matter.

The Nipponese legal system places Ronin in an awkward position. While they are technically samurai,

most Ronin have no superiors or brethren to stand by them should they find themselves falsely accused of a crime. Many magistrates automatically assume all Ronin are guilty of some crime and seize upon the earnest opportunity to accuse, imprison, and execute any Ronin who linger too long in their territory. While this attitude leads many Ronin to extreme caution in their travels, it also ironically encourages many others to lead a life of crime. If they must suffer punishment for a life of crime regardless of what they do, why not also enjoy the benefits?

### Travel

At the dawn of the Empire, the first Hantei constructed and maintained an excellent system of roads designed to connect the Imperial City, Otosan Uchi, with the palaces of the Great Clans with the idea that the Emperor himself would be travelling upon them. Wherever possible, trees border the roads, creating a canopy to protect the Emperor from foul weather and shade him from the midday heat of the sun.

Way stations staffed by younger samurai, usually low ranking Emerald Magistrates are places at regular intervals along the roads. These samurai serve as scouts in the event of an invasion, and patrol the area against bandit incursions. They assist travellers and maintain order in the general area. Larger way stations have one or two Shugenja on hand to serve as healers and defence against supernatural threats.

Those who wish to travel over clan borders must carry official travel papers. These papers can only be drafted

by an Emerald Magistrate or an official representative of the lord of the lands in question. These papers are checked each time a traveller passes a way station or encounters a patrol. How much access a lord can offer depends upon their jurisdiction. The Governor of Musume Mura in Crane territory, for example, could grant a Scorpion an invitation to that city, and he could pass through Crane lands to arrive there so long as he travelled swiftly and remained upon the road. The Kakita Daimyo could grant access to all roads in the Kakita provinces. The Crane Champion can grant unlimited access to any of the roads in the lands of the Crane clan. The Emperor, of course, can grant access to any road, anywhere. Though Emerald Magistrates can grant a samurai travel papers usable anywhere in the Empire, such papers maintain a temporary status and require regular renewal.

Travelling off the Emperor's roads increases one's chances of at-tack. Close to Haikido border in Scorpion and Crab provinces, one can easily run afoul of any manner of beasts. Elsewhere in the Empire, one runs the chance of being waylaid by bandits on unfriendly terrain. Navigating the rocky mountains of the Dragon and Phoenix lands represents considerable challenges, as do the forests of the Unicorn and Scorpion lands. Further, those who remain on the roads are typically assumed to be there on honourable business, and are granted some lenience If their papers are not in order. A Scorpion on the road in Unicorn lands who claims to be on his way to Kyoto might be politely escorted on his way, while a Scorpion skulking through the Shinomen Forest without papers will be granted no such mercy.

## Respect

Despite the emphasis on truth in both Nippon's texts and laws, the Empire has customarily emphasized appearance over fact. Those who speak sincerely garner favour over those who speak poorly. A samurai's on (which loosely translates to "face" or "respectability") measures one's reputation — a mark a little different than honour or concerns of glory. Though Akodo Flideyoshi possesses all the markings of an honourable man and capable general, if anyone uncovers the truth: he stammers and stutters in court, his on suffers, and he loses respect accordingly. By contrast, a worthless, dishonourable lout could still command respect if capable of keeping proper



appearances with the right people. The battlefield of the court tends to be taken most seriously, as a man's reputation can kill another's before the chance to engage in a formal duel even appears. A samurai in high standing with his peers will carry weight far beyond his own status, as those of higher status embrace his word as their own. Others will not even bother to challenge them, for fear of appearing foolish. A samurai's reputation figures as his most valuable asset and any samurai worthy of his swords will not allow any harm to come to his reputation.

## Dishonour

To a samurai, honour is more precious than life itself. To fail in battle, to betray one's duty, or to suffer a loss of face can all lead to disgrace and dishonour. Each clan maintains its own interpretation of honour, and thus each clan's definition of honour and dishonour varies. A dishonoured samurai must act immediately to restore his honour, if the source of his dishonour was an insult or betrayal, he must challenge the party responsible. If the source of the dishonour was his own actions, then he must redeem his mistakes. Even redemption, however, may not suffice. A dishonoured samurai may ultimately commit seppuku to atone for his deeds or, even worse, face exile as a main.

## Bushido

The customs and protocols surrounding honour could take up volumes. Of all the questions in the Empire, the most debated questions circulate around topics such as "What is enlightenment?" and "What is honour?" - similar in that mere words can never satisfactorily unpack the concepts. Those enlightened simply manifest it, as do the truly honourable. The Seven Tenets of Bushido set down by Akodo come closest to defining the concepts of enlightenment and honour.

Honesty – In Nippon, truth measures the meaning of life so adhering to the truth defines the course of a samurai's existence. However, common sense accepts that those who lead an honourable life, carry within them a pure soul and thus have nothing to fear from the truth. Lies are a tool of the weak and shameful. Even the most dishonest courtier would heartily agree, as misdirection crafted from half-truths works much better than a lie.



**Courage** – Samurai and Shugenja place their lives on the line for their lord, and even the courtier in the protected heart of Orosan Lichi must take risks that could lead to the downfall of his house and family, Fear touches the hearts of all who must stand for what they hold dear, but the samurai must stand above his emotion. Courage Is not the absence of fear, or the willingness to throw one's life away in the face of impossible odds, but the ability to continue onward regardless.

**Compassion** – A wise person tempers power with mercy. A great leader won't overwork and tax his peasants towards selfish ends. So, too, are the wisest samurai those who understand that mercy Is a fundamental principle of the Celestial Order, and the law of the Emperor. A samurai who spares the life of an enemy proves himself the better man.

**Courtesy** – Though strength of arms is the domain of the samurai, respect must also take its place, as the Empire would quickly dissolve into chaos without a strong tradition of courtesy.

**Honour** – is the binding force that defines all samurai, the shining virtue that elevates them above the common man. Honour cannot be truly defined, for those without any concept of Honour will never understand.

**Sincerity** – For a samurai, word and action coincide to complete the true meaning of sincerity. A samurai need not make promises, for every word he speaks should breathe sincerity. A samurai's word is the cornerstone of his reputation, and cannot be violated.

**Duty** – All that exists has a purpose: to recognize and fulfil that purpose insures the virtue of duty. Even the Emperor must bow before the might of the Heavens, and a samurai can do no less than follow his example.

## **Gempukku**

The most significant ceremony of a samurai's life, gempukku, celebrates the passage from childhood to adulthood. This ceremony typically occurs at fourteen years of age, though depending on the circumstances it

can take place earlier or later in life. Though most samurai children begin training long before this ceremony, a samurai need not go through an apprenticeship: upon completion of the ceremony, his elders give him his swords and consider him henceforth an adult in all ways. Naturally inexperienced samurai are rarely given the same responsibilities of their older brethren, but they are otherwise granted the respect and station of a samurai immediately upon reaching adulthood. The nature of the gempukku ceremony varies greatly by clan and family. While the Doji prefer elaborate ceremony offering opportunity for courtly interaction, the Hida gempukku involves surviving an expedition into Haikido and returning with an enemy's head. In times of war, gempukku ceremonies are often disposed of altogether as young samurai-to-be are handed their daisho and sent immediately to the front lines.

## **Seppuku**

When a samurai experiences dishonour, there is often little re-course but seppuku – a ceremony of ritual suicide. This ritual involves long prayers of solitary purification, after which the samurai kneels and slices his abdomen three times with his wakizashi. A chosen assistant called a second is generally on hand with katana at the ready. If the samurai performed the three cuts admirably and without crying out, the second immediately takes his head and ends his pain: otherwise the samurai is left to bleed to death in shame. The ceremony of seppuku occurs rarely and is often misunderstood. Seppuku doesn't preserve a samurai's honour; In fact it is the ultimate admission of one's shame and dishonour, rather, performed in hopes of cleansing one's family and clan of the shame that your actions have brought upon them. A samurai must ask and be granted permission to commit seppuku from his lord, or can be commanded to do so by his lord. A samurai who commits seppuku without permission has effectively stated that he can stand to serve his lord no longer, and implicates them in his own shame. That said, more than one samurai forced to serve a cruel or dishonourable samurai has committed seppuku without permission as the ultimate denouncement of their lord's actions.

Customarily when asking permission to commit seppuku, a samurai offers his wakizashi to his lord first. The sword will then be returned and used to



perform the act. The samurai's lord may also opt to give the samurai a different weapon to perform the act. A samurai offered the ancestral wakizashi of the clan for this ceremony has been shown the ultimate gesture of forgiveness (though it will not save his life). A samurai given a wooden sword for his seppuku experiences the gravest insult, as his lord implies that he does not possess the courage to go through with the act.

## Etiquette

In Nippon, etiquette is all-important, for a samurai who does not treat others with respect is worthy of none. All samurai study etiquette beginning at an early age.

Failure to display proper etiquette in the presence of one's peers and superiors will result in dishonour and exile, if not seppuku. The following delineate basic elements of courtesy in Nippon that every person of samurai birth will adhere to if they know what is good for them.

It is customary when greeting another person to bow as a gesture of respect and trust, although many bow merely as a formality. This practice began during the dawn of the Empire, when samurai would bow or kneel before their lord with their hands held to their sides.

This was a way to demonstrate their loyalty by offering their unprotected neck and thus their lives to their liege. The practice has continued to this day.

Bowing is a show of respect between two individuals of equal social standing. The lower the bow, the greater the respect shown to the person to whom one is bowing. Bowing only very slightly to another is a sign of inferior status and is commonly interpreted as a thinly veiled insult.

Kneeling is done before a person of obviously superior rank. Samurai always kneel before their lord, just as they would to any Daimyo of a family or clan, regardless of their affiliation or relation to that clan.

Even if two clans are at war, it would be expected for a samurai of one clan to kneel or at least bow very deeply to a Daimyo of the other. Doing otherwise would be very risky indeed. It goes without saying that everyone in the Empire bows before the Emperor, just as the peasants of the heimin class bow before all samurai. Eta sometimes prostrate themselves on the ground completely, just to be safe.



How a samurai addresses others can be either a sign of great respect or enormous insult. Samurai of different clans would be expected to address one another by the name of their clan unless it was obvious from their clothing to which family they belonged. For example, calling another samurai "Dragon" when his kimono clearly bears the Kitsuki family mon would be an insult, implying that his family was beneath notice or unknown to the speaker. Unless two individuals are close, or permission has been given, they will typically refer to each other by their family names rather than their personal names. Two samurai of differing clans who refer to each other by their personal names in public are acquainted with one another, distantly related, or are publicly displaying an alliance with one another.

## Gift-giving

When meeting a host or a superior for the first time, customarily one offers a gift. Gifts are also given to demonstrate good favour to another or to reward loyal service. The more personal and sentimental the gift is, the more meaningful it is. A Daimyo that gives his loyal retainer a gift purchased from the market could be expressing his indifference, but the same lord awarding his retainer with a sword-guard worn by his own father or a poem written in his own hand would be showing extraordinary favour, even if the recipient had no use or desire for the gift.

The gift of a weapon or even armour can be taken as an insult, implying that the recipient either requires protection or that their lord is unable to meet their needs accordingly. A gift of a katana implies the insufficiency of the very symbol of the recipient's status, in contrast, the gift of a katana is the most favoured of gifts when rewarded by one's Daimyo. A katana offered as a gift by the Emperor ranks as the rarest and most treasured gift: samurai have boasted about such treasures for generations after they were received.

When accepting a gift, one customarily refuses the gift two times before acquiescing. This allows the person presenting the gift to demonstrate their sincerity by continuing to offer it. A person who offers a gift once and then stops clearly was not particularly interested in parting with the object in the first place. A recipient who denies the gift a third time, or who does not invent particularly clever reasons to deny the gift, has



delivered a thorough and resounding insult. In Crab or Unicorn lands this tradition is rarely observed, as these clans consider the tradition a waste of time.

#### Learning

There are two distinct methods to learn a trade in Nippon. The first and most common among samurai is the use of the dojo. When a samurai reaches a suitable age, normally somewhere around seven years old although some families choose to wait until the children are considerably older, they are sent to a school that will teach them the skills they will require to serve their family and clan. The vast majority attend bushi schools, where they gain the martial training they will require as soldiers, magistrates, and sentries. A small number go elsewhere, to various clan-specific schools for courtiers, yojimbo, or even merchant patrons. Finally, a blessed handful with the supreme ability to speak to the karni, undergo the rigorous training that will allow them to serve their clan as Shugenja. Whatever the training, these schools usually teach their students for at least six years, sometimes as many as nine before granting them their gempukku ceremony.

A samurai taught in a dojo continues his education through-out his lifetime, even though he may leave the school for extended periods of time. It is generally accepted that students who return to their sensei and demonstrated a certain level of skill and proficiency are ready to advance. Such students are taught more intricate and complicated techniques of the school's style, increasing both their individual prowess and their value as a servant of the clan. The sensei of a clan's schools stand as highly respected individuals who may have hundreds of different students serving the clan in various positions. Learning a technique is a sacred trust. For a samurai to share his techniques with others is both an insult to his sensei and a betrayal of his clan's trust. Any samurai who perpetrates such a betrayal can expect retribution from the other students of his school if caught.

The other primary system of instruction, less common among samurai but used almost exclusively by the heimin and hinin classes, is that of the master and apprentice. Samurai craftsmen and artisans use this system to pass on what they have learned, choosing suitable apprentices to study with them for years and master the techniques they have spent their lives developing. Among the lower classes, various types of

craftsmen including smiths, carpenters, and stonemasons employ similar methods to ensure that their talents do not die with them, but that their village will continue to have such skills at its disposal.

#### Gender Roles

Gender discrimination does not figure as a huge issue in Nippon for the most part though it is for the most part a traditional society. Males assume a slightly dominant role in the majority of families without undermining feminine strengths. Female bushi are commonplace, the courts boast powerful courtiers of both sexes, and the karni do not discriminate between Shugenja of either gender.

That said, some families and clans discriminate more than others. The Crab, for example, have been known to underestimate the strength of women; the Crab tend to view everyone else as weak. But once one's strength has been proven the Crab show the proper respect. The Litaku and Matsu families swing to the opposite extreme, viewing men as weak and inferior beings. The Mashi family of the Mantis Clan does not discriminate as openly, but only women (particularly women who display talent as Shugenja) seem to have any true hope for political advancement in their family.





## Love and Marriage

Among members of the samurai caste, marriage is almost invariably a tool of political convenience rather than the result of true love. Among influential families, marriages are often planned out as early as childhood. Those who do not make a match early in life either do not have the necessary political connections to find a beneficial match or are members of such influential families that their parents are holding out for the most equitable arrangement possible. A select few samurai are given permission by their parents to select their own spouse. This is common if the child already has several older siblings who have undertaken arranged marriages, or in the case of a particularly indulgent parent.

When a samurai takes a spouse, typically one of the members of the partnership swears fealty to the new clan and takes the spouse's name. In most cases, the female takes the male's name, but not always. In matriarchal families such as the Utaku, Matsu, and Moshi, the male is expected to marry into the female's household. The Doji family generally expect anyone who marries into their household to take the Doji name, whether they are male or female. In some cases the bride swears no new vows of fealty at all outside her wedding vows. This is usually limited to very powerful individuals, such as the Shogun's bride, Doji Yasuyo. Such arrangements are always ironed out well in advance of the marriage, and the topic of who will swear fealty to whom has been buried more than one marriage arrangement long before it became public.

It is a common arrangement for one member of a union to take charge of the household while the partner assumes responsibilities beyond. For example, the husband might continue to serve his clan as an officer in the armies while the wife takes charge of problems that arise in the home village and coordinates the family's finances. Which spouse assumes which responsibility varies wildly depending on the clan, family, and individuals involved. In some cases, both spouses might continue an active life as bushi or courtiers and leave underlings to maintain their household.

Though most marriages are arranged, this is not to say that love is not known or valued. Love is seen as a grand thing, especially if a samurai has the strength to set love aside when duty calls. Samurai romances that end in tragedy are the subject of many popular plays,

but they are generally viewed as a warning of what can befall a foolish samurai rather than an example to be embraced. Peasants marry for love offering a least one thing to ignite little envy for the well-stationed samurai.

Due to the loveless nature of many samurai marriages, infidelity is commonplace, a matter commonly accepted, if not dwelled upon. So long as a samurai keeps his affairs secret, the matter is politely ignored. Should his affairs spill into the public eye, however, he brings shame not only upon his own family but upon that of his spouse as well. Such romantic catastrophes rarely end well for any of the individuals involved.

## Adventurers

It goes without saying that Nippon thrives with adventure. However, with all samurai sworn in service to a lord, some might wonder how intrepid young samurai wander the land in search of said adventure. Fortunately, there are a number of ways that young and enthusiastic adventurers can use as a pathway to find intrigue and excitement across the Empire.

## Musha Shugyo

The tradition of musha shugyo, or "warrior pilgrimage," is nearly as old as the Empire itself stating that warrior will leave behind all his allegiances, to family, clan, or anything else, and wander the Empire as a ronin in thus perfecting the warrior's art.

While the clans all recognize the tradition of the musha shugyo, they will not allow just anyone to undertake one. The Daimyo of the individual in question must first receive testimony from the samurai's senses that clearly states the senses believes that the pilgrimage will greatly improve the samurai's skills, thereby allowing him to fulfil some crucial function for the clan. Even with this testimony, the Daimyo may refuse, as sometimes every sword is needed in service to the clan.

A samurai on a musha shugyo travels without any indication of his former clan or family. He is treated as a Ronin by all he meets. For all intents and purposes, he is a Ronin, and cannot betray his origins or the sanctity of the pilgrimage is broken. He may travel with others, or he may travel alone. On rare occasions, several samurai on a pilgrimage may travel together. Once they have completed their journey and feel they have little else they can [earn by wandering, they return to their senses and demonstrate their knowledge. Then they may be accepted back into their clan once more.





### **Emerald Magistrates**

The Emerald Magistrates enforce the Emperor's laws. Some are assigned specific regions throughout the Empire to police, which can range from entire provinces to specific large cities like Osaka, while others are given leave to wander the wilder sections of Nippon, bringing law to the lawless.

New Emerald Magistrates recruits often work in assigned groups. This allows them to pool their talents and also allows the new magistrates to forge close bonds with their fellow officers, hopefully creating a more cohesive, cooperative force.

### **Imperial Cartographers**

A less common but still very valid purpose for adventurers to wander the Empire is in service of the Imperial Cartographers. By Imperial Edict, the Imperial Maps are infallible and nothing in the Empire truly exists that is not recorded upon them. The cartographers recognize the reality of the situation and constantly struggle to keep the maps updated. Although a few young samurai from the Great Clans will actually find a place among the Imperial Cartographer, cartographers commonly require the assistance of several samurai in the rough lands they must explore. Cartographers have unlimited travel authorization, but are often the victim of bandits or other unsavoury groups, hence the need for travelling companions. They also face less predictable threats, such as the possibility of gaijin barbarians when mapping the northern and western borders of the Empire, or Haikido creatures when mapping the south-western regions

### **Yojimbo**

Young samurai are often assigned as bodyguards for a wide variety of individuals. Important courtiers or Shugenja often require protection. Even prominent merchants can require yojimbo to escort them across the Empire, such as the famous Shinji caravans of the Unicorn Clan. Samurai who choose to see Nippon in this way (or perhaps are assigned to do so) have little choice in their destination, but at least they are always provided accommodations.

### **Other Adventurers**

Nothing prevents a samurai from wandering the Empire along less traditional lines, perhaps as scouts for their Daimyo, or even as members of an army on

reconnaissance. They might be members of the Imperial Legions assigned to locate specific items or individuals for their commander. They could be Ronin seeking a cause to serve or merely looking for a way to afford their next meal or ambassadors, diplomats, magistrates, spies or even bounty hunters. Whatever their calling, one always finds it absolutely necessary to travel and adventure in the Empire.

### **Labour**

For the most part, labour is strictly the domain of the heimin class. Physical exertion in the form of manual labour lies well beneath the inherent nobility of the samurai, with notable exceptions. During times of war, samurai commonly take up repair on fortifications alongside their peasant workers, but only under duress. Among the Crab Clan, it is a common occurrence for samurai to aid in the constant maintenance the Great Wall requires, just as the peasants must constantly aid in the Wall's defence. In the lands of poor Minor Clans, such as the Sparrow or Badger, engaging in labour beside the heimin to assure the clan's survival is a virtual necessity,

Other than manual labour, peasants have few options. The crafting of steel into weapons, for example, is an art form, not a labour elevating the smithing of weapons and armour to the exclusive domain of samurai.

It is important to note that peasant labourers are not paid. Their labour, together with the moderate taxes upon the crops that they grow, repays their lord for allowing them to live upon and work his land, a feudal system with proven viability over the centuries. In some cases a peasant may demand money in return for services rendered to a samurai who does not serve his lord. Most of this money is then passed on to the peasant's lord, with only a small percentage retained to feed the peasant's family.

Agriculture is the lifeblood of Nippon, Nipponese farmers work tremendously hard and industriously – expected to provide up to 60% of their annual yield as taxes. This is necessary to provide the family and clan upon whose land the farmers work with enough sustenance for the samurai under their command. This means that the farmers must redouble their efforts during the year to ensure that they have sufficient crops to not only pay their taxes, but also to feed their own family.



Industry is largely unknown in Nippon. For the most part, material goods are hand crafted on an individual basis. Because of the perception of craftsmanship as either an art form or a labour beneath the samurai class, no one has yet stumbled across the notion of mass production, though the engineers of the Kaiu family have begun to consider the possibilities. Fortunately, craftsmen and merchants in the Empire still manage to fulfil the majority of such needs.

## War

Though both the Code of Bughido and the Tao of Shinsel stress the virtue of compassion, the simple fact that samurai are career warriors cannot be avoided. With so many powerful factions living in close proximity, vying for resources and political advantage, open warfare rages quite commonly in Nippon. The Champion of a Great Clan may declare war upon another Great Clan, but he must seek permission from the Emperor before full scale war begins or the conflict is viewed as illegal. For the most part, the Emperor does not approve of his vassals slaughtering one another, so he denies most of the requests. Against a weaker opponent, a clan may opt to resolve their attack so rapidly that the Emperor has no time to intervene. Alternately, a general might draw upon his courtiers to find any number of legal loopholes excusing the attack as legal, that present an enemy's previous actions as an attack (palming the clan's aggressive actions as nothing more than self defence) or present an argument that the attack is not technically

an attack at all. The Lion Clan, for example, are charged with protecting the Emperor's Interests, and have often seized upon a poorly defended village as a threat to the Empire's defence.

Minor Clans fail under the protection of the Emperor, protected by extremely stringent laws forbidding invasion into their territory. No Great Clan may declare war upon them for any reason, though most Great Clans are quite adept at interpreting rather innocuous actions as "acts of war." As a result, most Minor Clans tend to avoid the court when possible to avoid drawing the wrath of ambitious, land-hungry samurai.

## Leadership and the book by Sun Tao

There are two primary texts on warfare which competent generals study. Akodo's Leadership, a massive volume begun by the Kami Akodo and appended by every Lion Champion since and the Book of Sun Tao, a compendium of philosophy and strategy written by the near-mythical Ronin, Sun Tao. Each of the two books has a wealth of wisdom regarding terrain, tactics, and reading the intent of one's opponent. Leadership is certainly the larger of the two texts; the Book of Sun Tao is much more focused and concise. Which of these two volumes holds the greater wisdom continues to be a matter of some debate; most cunning generals draw liberally from both. The original copy of Akodo's Leadership is the possession of the Champion of the Lion, though lesser copies can be found distributed throughout Nippon. The original copy of the Book of Sun Tao was lost,



though the manuscripts the Ronin general copied for the Dragon, Scorpion, and Hantei remain intact, and numerous copies have been made from these.

## Siege Warfare

The Book of Sun Tao states that "a desperate general besieges an enemy's city." indeed, must Nipponese generals dread siege warfare, and prefer to meet their opponents on even ground when possible. Siege warfare is long, tedious, and tiresome for both sides involved. Indeed, some samurai consider the idea of hiding from the enemy behind walls of stone and wood to be somewhat dishonourable. Most samurai are somewhat more practical, and will take advantage of the defences their lord provided for them.

The exception to this rule is the Crab Clan. Their engineering expertise and generations of experience fighting defensively on the Kaki wall have made their clan the undisputed masters of siege warfare. It could be said, in fact, that their clan lives in a constant state of siege. Their catapults, fire breathers, and battering rams are leagues ahead of the siege technology of any other clan. The Lion, aware of the Crab's expertise, attempt to glean a bit of the knowledge of the Kaiu siege masters whenever possible.

## Surrender

Surrender is dishonourable for a samurai. Indeed, even the act of offering surrender to a clearly superior opponent is dishonourable, for it suggests that the opponent would attack a foe that was beneath him. Such an insult can be answered only with wholesale slaughter. An attacking force can request surrender without any implication of shame or dishonour, but most defenders, thoroughly conditioned to protect their land, rarely accept the offer. Nippon encourages diplomatic solutions to conflict, but most samurai would rather die than consider surrender as an option.

Commonly, a losing army purchases the safe retreat of their troops via a formal duel. The army's general (or his champion) challenges an opposing officer to a formal duel, with the lives of his followers as the stakes, if the challenger wins, then the followers are allowed to leave the field of battle with honour. If the challenger loses, the victor may do as he pleases with the lives of the challenger's followers.



## Hostages

In Nippon, the ethics of hostage-taking and kidnapping diverge. Kidnapping is the illegal theft of a living person, a crime punishable by execution. Hostages are taken legally with notification to the hostage's family, most often to insure good behaviour in a defeated enemy. However, hostages are just as frequently used to cement an alliance. Typically the second son of the allying Daimyos is captured, symbolising that each daimyo takes his wish for peace seriously while remaining practical enough to protect his primary heir. Occasionally these hostages are required to swear fealty to their captors, and learn the school techniques of their new clan. Should one clan betray the other, hostages will pay with their lives.

During violent periods, it is the Emperor's right to invoke the Hitojichi (Hostage) Laws, requiring each Daimyo to spend a month of every year in Otosan Della After the &limy° returns home, his family remains in the city for another month as hostages of the Emperor. The Emperor could thus greatly reduce the chances of an organized attack by holding the loved ones of important figures: at any given time the relatives of a Clan Champion or his supporting families would be held hostage, thus the Emperor could rely upon that clan to protect him.

Hostages are treated as honoured guests, not prisoners. To treat a hostage well shows true mastery of the virtue of courtesy. A samurai held hostage knows that his presence protects his clan's interests, and would not endanger his clan by attempting escape. Most of these hostages are actually quite welcome among their captors, and are invited to train at their captors' dojo, leading to the occasional incidence of a samurai adept in the techniques of a rival clan. No shame whatsoever emerges as the after effect of being held as a hostage, and in fact those who undertake such a duty gain much respect among their kinsmen for risking their lives in such a manner.

## Travel during Wartime

With the constant possibility of war erupting in the Empire, the Clans protect themselves by keeping strict accounts of any samurai visiting in their lands. Samurai on official business must obtain travel papers (as mentioned previously) indicating their destination and



business. These travel papers are checked at all way stations and province borders. In times of war, members of certain clans may be forbidden passage across province borders, or may be detained for verification of their mission.

Emerald Magistrates possess permanent travel papers allowing them to journey anywhere in Nippon they deem fit, even during wartime, regardless of their clan, imperial Legionnaires require no travel papers so long as they remain with their unit. These samurai represent the Emperor, not their clan, and their duties are not to be trifled with.

## Duelling

When one samurai disputes with another, the standard means of rectifying the problem is through a formal duel. It is not acceptable to challenge a samurai of higher station. Insults from superior samurai are expected to be borne with honour, or resolved by one's lord. A formal duel must have witnesses; with no witnesses, the duel technically has not taken place and the matter remains unresolved.

The challenged party determines the nature of the duel. In the case of two bushi, it is assumed that the duel will be trial by combat, in the case of two Shugenja, a duel of magic. Courtiers and artisans generally have contests of wits. A challenged bushi who decides to greet his challenger with a contest of flower-arranging is in his right to do so, but will likely be branded a coward and lose a great deal of face. A courtier or Shugenja challenged by a bushi may call upon a second, usually a yojimbo or other close relative skilled in combat. This challenge is waived if the courtier or Shugenja wears his katana in public as such a symbol implies the individual in question is prepared to wield his own sword. If a second is named and the duel is lost, the challenged party and his second share whatever fate is determined for the loser of the duel (meaning that if it is a duel to the death, the challenged party must commit seppuku should his second be defeated).

Bushi duels are resolved with iaijutsu, and are taken to the first blood. The first combatant to injure his opponent wins. Shugenja duels are also usually non-violent, as each Shugenja attempts to subjugate the other's will through the power of magic. Duels to the death are technically illegal, as a samurai's life is not his own to throw away. However, should the parties in

dispute obtain permission from their lords, a duel to the death becomes perfectly legal.

When a duel is complete, the matter is considered to be resolved. For better or worse, a duel arbitrates and defines the code of justice between two samurai.

## Blood Feuds

When a samurai is killed in an illegal duel, or due to the gross incompetence of another samurai, it is the right of his immediate family to declare a blood feud. A formal blood feud requires the written consent of one's Daimyo and functions essentially a declaration of war between the dead samurai's immediate family and the offending party. Those who interfere in a blood feud threaten the honour of the offended, and may be dealt with as the offending party deems fit. (The Emperor, his magistrates, Imperial Legionnaires, and other assorted personages of the Imperial Family are exempt.) Once the offending party has been killed, the feud has been resolved and the offended parties are expected to leave the lands of their enemies peacefully. The most famous blood feud in history is that between the Lion and Crane Clans, dating back to the naming of Kakita as the first Emerald Champion. This feud was secretly instigated by Scorpion manipulation, but nonetheless has grown such that it is a rare period indeed that the Lion and Crane are not at one another's throats. The Lion and Crane Clans are currently under an uneasy peace due to the actions of Crane Champion Doji Kurohito and Lion Champion Matsu Nimuro, but since Nimuro's recent death it is unknown what the future for these two clans holds.

## Magic and Law

Testimony is the ultimate standard of Nipponese law so those trusted to speak the truth in matters of criminal offense can sway judgments with a simple word. Because Shugenja are holy women, their testimony is given more weight than the average samurai based on the responsibilities and purity of soul a Shugenja supposedly possesses.

This is not to say, however, that magic solves all the mundane problems in Nippon. Magic can be used to hunt down a criminal and bring him to the proper authorities, but if magic is involved in a direct manner to ascertain testimony, the information is not valid. The precedent for this goes back to the time of Hantei Genii, the Shining Prince. When a minor Scorpion Shugenja was accused of murdering a powerful Lion general, the Kitsune summoned the murdered Lion's spirit from the afterlife. The spirit gave testimony against the Scorpion, who was put to death. It was revealed shortly after that the Lion samurai was in fact alive, as the Soshi had held him hostage the whole time. The Scorpion accused the Lion of practicing imperfect magic, while the Lion cried that the Scorpion had perverted the Kitsune magic. In either case, the Hantei was faced with the obvious conclusion — magic was not foolproof, and using it in such a manner was an affront to the Kami and the Order.

To this day, testimony gleaned by magical means is considered useless even in the lands of the Phoenix.

Spells that reads men's souls or tells lies from truths lead nowhere, though magis-trates often utilize such things as clues while hunting more concrete leads. Even the noble spirits of deceased ancestors cannot be heeded in such affairs, as only the Shugenja can bring their words to the land of the living appropriately.

## **Magic and Courts**

A Shugenja is a valuable tool for a Daimyo. Using magic, a Shugenja can spy on his lord's enemies, detect when the Daimyo is being Lied to, and muddle the minds of enemy generals attending the lord's court. Since the dawn of the Empire, Shugenja have counted on magic to gain power and position for their Daimyo making the idea is far from novel. and every competent courtier has already taken into account the possibility of supernatural interference in his political gambits. Daimyo who wish to regulate spell casting in their presence must act carefully. As magic is a form of devotion and prayer, banning magic would be the same as denying the religion of the Kami and Fortunes, which would be a monumental crime. The best approach so far is to simply restrict prayers and scripture recitation (such as spells) to those who the Daimyo trusts and knows. it Is well within a lord's right to forbid all religious practices in his household save those conducted by his chosen household Shugenja. To violate such an edict would betray the lord's courtesy and are grounds for banishment from the household or worse. The Emperor allows only a select few to practice magic in his presence. Usually these are limited to the Elemental Masters of the Phoenix, the Voice of the Emperor, and the Seppun Shugenja of the Hidden Cuard, sworn to protect the life of the Emperor. From time to time, the Daimyo of major Shugenja families are also allowed such honour.

Dainwo, in their own court, can simply interrupt a Shugenja openly using magic without losing face\_ Clever lords simply re-quest that their own priests loin in the recital, forcing the caster to wait until the Daimyo's shugenja come to interfere with the first. The Daimyo can also request that a different sutra or prayer be chanted, ruining the chance that the first Shugenja will ever succeed with his spells.

Spell casting in courts is thus often a hidden affair, one that many Shugenja indulge in but nearly none admit to performing. Hiding such an action is dishonourable, and to admit publicly to that sort of behaviour can have dire consequences. Many Shugenja, however, feel that the sacrifice of their honour pates in comparison to the service they are performing for their clan or family.

## **The Seven Fortunes**

The worship of the Great Fortunes represents the oldest facet of religion in Nippon, a practice that existed prior to the fall of the Kami to the world. This style of worship is said to have originated in the lost city of Gisei Toshi, built and maintained by the sorcerer Isawa and his tribe in what would one day become the holdings of the Phoenix Clan. The exact form of worship was actually known as the "way of the gods." and referred to the Thousand Fortunes, a name that



included the Lady Sun and Lord Moon, the Seven Fortunes, and the myriad of other fortunes that inhabited every rock, river and grove in the Empire. The Seven Fortunes arc the most powerful of the Thousand Fortunes other than the Lady Sun and Lord Moon, universally recognized and accepted as the most powerful entities in the Nipponese belief system still active in the affairs of the mortal world. However, their activity is somewhat relative. The Fortunes intervene in mortal affairs rarely and even then usually act with extreme subtlety.

Worshipping the Seven Fortunes is done out of reverence, not out of fear or a belief they will immediately bestow their power upon their worshippers. Though Shugenja name many of their spells after the Fortunes, even a Shugenja realizes a Fortune rarely takes an obvious hand in a mortal's existence.

Because of their importance in the Celestial Order, the Seven Fortunes are worshipped throughout Nippon. Cities of any significant size contain temples to the Seven Fortunes, most of which have monks that maintain and care for the shrine, necessary because of the constant stream of worshipers, both peasant and samurai, who pay their daily respects to the Fortunes. Those villages not fortunate enough to possess an order of monks to maintain the temple must do so themselves. Perhaps surprisingly, there is never a shortage of workers to care for the temple. as it Is considered a great show of respect and results In good luck for the individual in question.

Images of the Seven Fortunes are always drawn in two very different styles. When all is well, the Nipponese pay homage to images of the Fortunes in their benevolent aspect, usually depicted reclining upon a pillow or perhaps streaking across the sky In a golden chariot. If there is strife, suffering, or discord then the Fortunes are worshipped in their wrathful aspect. Wrathful Fortunes are typically depicted with black skin and blazing red eyes. They are also often shown wielding gigantic, deadly weapons. Even at these times they are not worshipped out of fear. Fortunes rarely strike out at their worshippers, more commonly it is believed that the Fortune takes its wrathful aspect out of anger for the ill fate that has befallen its worshippers.



### The Lesser Fortunes

While the Seven Fortunes are considered powerful celestial beings very much removed from the world, the Lesser Fortunes known as mikoKami fall close to a more common realm. Each object or thing in Nippon, be it a rock, Stream, sword, tree, or hill, has a spirit within it deserving of respect, A farmer who cuts down a tree for firewood gives a prayer of thanks to the spirit of the tree that will provide his family with warmth and protection from the winter cold.

The mikoKami play a considerable role in the daily lives of the citizens of Nippon. They are considered much more accessible than the Seven Fortunes, and it is not uncommon for the heimin to make offerings to them in hopes of receiving their favour.

In coastal villages, for example, fishermen leave offerings to Suitengu, the Fortune of the sea, in hopes of a plentiful haul of fish in return. Villages within the Unicorn Clan holdings, on the other hand, might instead pray to Koshin, the Fortune of roads. for a swift and safe journey, if the event in question is of considerable significance, such as the beginning of the fishing season on a coastal village, then an entire festival might be scheduled.

Ironically the more human nature of these Lesser Fortunes also makes them somewhat more terrifying than their more powerful brethren. Suitengu's anger is a thing to behold, and few would tempt the wrath of Osano-Wo. Like the Seven Fortunes, mikoKami have both benevolent and wrathful aspects, though a handful are exclusively portrayed in either one or the other, There is something of rank and file between the more powerful mikoKami that are truly considered Lesser Fortunes and the nature spirits that inhabit everyday objects. In essence, the Lesser Fortunes wield more power, Influential mikoKami that have gained influence over a particular domain. A mikoKami might hold domain over an entire rice field in a particular village. but Mari, the Fortune of rice, inhabits in all such fields throughout the Empire. While a farmer planting his individual field would pray to whatever mikoKami inhabits it, a festival for the harvest of all a village's fields would be directed to Inari since there are many fields Involved.

### Ancestors

Of all the spiritual and heavenly entities found in the Nipponese belief system, ancestor spirits are by far the least powerful and however, the most active. The Realm of Ancestors lies very close to the mortal world, and it is easy for them to influence the mortal realms so long as they have an anchor: their descendants.

Using their descendants as links to the physical world allows ancestor spirits to vicariously experience a hint of the sensations they once knew in life.

Ancestor worship is not an organized religion by any stretch of the imagination. While all Nipponese recognize and appreciate the importance and influence of their ancestors, buildings shrines to them and paying them homage as appropriate, there are no centralized temples, no doctrine, not even monks who subscribe to the practice. Instead it is a unique and individual practice, with each family honouring their ancestors in their own unique way. Some choose to honour their ancestors by carrying items sacred to them, such as a Lock of hair or the dagger that they carried with them at all times. Others attempt to emulate their ancestors, completing unfinished business of theirs in the mortal world.

All families in Nippon, regardless of their caste, maintain a shrine to their ancestors. This is true for the Emperor just as it is for the poorest farmer. Each branch of a large family, such as the Akodo, maintains a separate shrine to their own specific ancestors as well as to the Kami Akodo himself. The Tsume vassal family of the Crane might have a shrine devoted to Tsume Retsu, the family's founder, as well as many prominent heroes of the Do, from whom the Tsume are an offshoot.

In addition to worshipping their ancestors as a means of finding guidance in their own lives, the citizens of Nippon also do so in an attempt to facilitate their ancestors' journeys through the afterlife. The Nipponese believe that the souls of the dead must first be purified of their sins before moving on to either reincarnation, or eternal rest in Yon, the realm of the ancestors. By praying for them, Nipponese can alleviate their ancestors' suffering and hasten their trip through the underworld. These prayers are often directed at Emma-O, the judge of the underworld and Iino, the Fortune of mercy. The Unicorn also direct these prayers to the Shi-Tien Yen-Wang, the mysterious Lords of Death.



SEA OF NIPPON



# THE LAND OF NIPPON

Through reverence and force, nature dictates the pace of the Empire. Farmers must plant and harvest when the time is right, and those who wish to wage war have only the days that nature provides. The seasons do not change their pattern to suit a mortal's wishes, not even the Emperor (though the Voice of the Emperor might claim some small amount of influence).

The year is divided into twelve months, just as the days fall into twelve hours. Unlike Nipponese hours, their months match up much more with our own. A Nipponese month is 28 days, and is regarded by a more common name and a formal name. The year begins with the month of the Sun, commonly referred to as the month of the Hare, which matches up with April in the spring.

The proper names of the months were only made official recently, by decree of Hantei XXXV, so in many provinces the more common names are all peasants know. In other lands, peasants and samurai alike will have different common names for some months, the three most popular differences being Crane (instead of Rooster), Tortoise (instead of Dragon), and Sheep (instead of Goat).

## Spring

When winter thaws, Nippon blossoms into its new year. Farmers in the fields face their hardest season, for this is when the planting must begin. Each heimin must be sure to plant quickly and carefully during this time. The land must be seeded so it may be properly harvested in the fall, and enough must be grown. Too much planting, however, can lead to a Daimyo either accusing the village of attempting to use more land than they were granted, or the lord expecting them to further increase production the following year. Bushi begin the slow task of performing spring patrols. Often a young samurai's first post after passing gempukku, and it can either be a season of utter boredom or a difficult, dangerous time depending on whether or not the clan is currently at war. While mass movement of troops is practically impossible during the winter, smaller groups are historically sent by particularly ambitious Daimyo in order to get a "head start" on the inevitable skirmishes the summer season brings. A small group of Daldoji saboteurs could strike quickly at the production of a rival's farm in the spring and quickly retreat to their homeland before an unwary Daimyo knows what has happened. Bandits also take advantage of this time where many clans are not fully prepared to defend the entirety of their lands. That is why the custom of the spring patrol was begun long ago. Small units of fledgling bushi are led all over the borders of their provinces, attempting to prevent such strikes against their lord's lands. More often than not, however, these patrols return home safely with nothing of interest to report.



As the winter courts are dismissed, the courtiers must do everything in their power to make sure that alliances, agreements, and other negotiations achieved over the winter months are not wasted. Usually, the more important treaties are brought to the attention of the Clan Champions, to ensure that the agreements will be followed and honoured. Such arrangements are altered several times by the Champions until all parties involved are satisfied. Such matters can occupy the entire spring season. Less demanding negotiations are handled by family and provincial Daimyo, and are usually simply acknowledged and acted upon without much alteration.

Oshogatsu, the New Year's Celebration, marks the beginning of spring. The first day of the Month of the Hare brings this, the most important celebration of the Empire, to the people of Nippon. Since all Nipponese celebrate their 'birthday' on the New Year, the festivities are the most elaborate of the year, as families gather to celebrate another year given to them by the Heavens. There are fireworks, parades, festivals, and other activities as Nipponese visit family shrines and holy temples, praying for the blessings of the ancestors and Celestial Heavens upon their family. It is considered proper to spend the following day in the family home, thanking the Fortunes, ancestors, and Heavens for their blessings and another fruitful year. The Emperor traditionally cloisters himself in his chambers after dusk on the first day of the Hare, speaking to Lady Sun directly on behalf of the Empire. The Toturi Dynasty continues to follow this tradition. Though the Toturi Emperors bear no blood relation to the Sun and Moon, the current Sun and Moon were, along with Toturi members of the legendary band of heroes known as the Seven Thunders. Thus they continue to watch over the current dynasty.

## Summer

Nippon is a land of climactic extremes, and summer is perhaps the most obvious proof. Though not as physically taxing as the planting season, farmers relish this time no more than spring. The midday heat can be staggering, bringing heat exhaustion or parched fields. The humidity in Lion and Crane lands can be quite oppressive, while in Crab and Unicorn lands the dry

heat is such that a simple spark can start an uncontrollable brush-fire. For the most part, farmers use this season to rest when they can, for most of the work involves undoing the damage nature brings to the harvest.

For samurai, summer is warfare season. It is impossible for a summer to go by in Nippon without one Daimyo insulting another, intentionally or not. Though the Hantei outlawed large-scale land war long ago, many small skirmishes explode during this time, as the unforgiving heat only adds to the tempers of proud samurai and their masters. Most of these squabbles do not lead to the larger wars or blood feuds that checker Imperial History, and some even occur between allied clans. It is the eternal business of courtiers to bring these skirmishes to diplomatic resolution, smoothing ruffled feathers and repairing the damage done by arrogant bushi.

The Lion are infamous for taking insult at any small offense, or attempting to wrestle nearby farmlands from other clans. Often, a Lion ambassador will decree that Lion farms will not be able to support the armies of the Emperor, and demand another clan (usually the Crane) allocate some of their land to the Lion.

Alternately, they will present evidence and testimony that another village is poorly defended or maintained, and thus must be seized by the Right stand so that its full potential can be realized in the name of the Emperor. More often than not, other clans will refuse flatly and the Lion invade. The Crab are also known for aggressively seeking to expand their borders, citing their never-ending battle against Fu Leng as a constant drain on their resources, though recent alliances with their closest Great Clan neighbours, the Unicorn and Crane, have made this almost unheard of.

Other small skirmishes develop over border disputes brought up during the previous winter courts, or insults suffered during that time. All of these are generally allowed by the Emperor, for it is wise not to allow the clans to forger the art of war in times of relative peace. However, if the fighting escalates too much, the Emperor will dispatch the Emerald Champion to intervene for the good of the Empire. This demand comes only once from the Imperial City — if the Emperor's words are not heeded, the full might of the Imperial Legions will be unleashed to end the conflict, permanently.



Courtiers spend the summer generally acting as messengers for clans at war. Depending on a clan's position and attitude, a courtier could be desperately seeking alliances, offering peaceful resolution to conflicts, or smugly goading to the emissaries of his clan's rival. Less important courtiers travel the countryside, carrying the favours and treaties of their lord to foreign provinces. Though there is much to do, this is the most inactive time for the courtier when compared to the intensity of the winter courts. Many courtiers use this time to improve their position in their own family or clan, or sow favours to be called upon during the critical winter months.

On the sixth day of the Horse, the Chrysanthemum Festival takes place in honour of the day the Kami were believed to fall to the earth. It lasts one day, but the customs of the Chrysanthemum Festival make it perhaps the most popular celebration of the year. For seven days, four days before the festival and three after, all labour stops and not even the peasants take up their tools. Originally, this festival was a great celebration of both the founding Kami of the clans and the Hantei Dynasty's connection to Lady Sun. However, since both the Hantei Dynasty and Amaterasu have passed into history, the festival focuses more on the connection of mankind to the Celestial Heavens.

This festival also has a somewhat darker connotation. On the fourth day following the festival, the minions of Daigotsu create a bonfire and perform foul and bloody rituals in honour of their dark master. Unfortunate captives are thrown into the fire to burn as sacrifices to the power of the Ninth Kami. Throughout the Empire, peasants and samurai alike shutter their doors and windows to protect themselves from evil spirits.

## Fall

The end of the summer hosts the yearly monsoon season. The tremendous winds and rains provide what is needed for the rice paddies to finally reach proper harvest. However, other crops are destroyed if not tended properly by the peasants. Wheat can easily be drowned by the rain, or ripped from the soft ground by the wind. Fall is also the season of harvest and tax collections. Farmers must have their share of the crops ready for the Imperial Magistrates to collect, as well as any other taxes that they bear responsibility for. Generally, taxes are levied in the form of crops



harvested or other resources of food, but certain large villages known for their artisans or other services must pay an amount of tax in koku.

Autumn arrives with an ultimatum to the skirmishing clans – end your battles or starve and freeze. The clans all have fresh foodstuffs to bring to their armies now, but time rallies against those who wish to continue fighting. Large scale troop movement becomes nearly impossible in the heavy winter snow, and if troops do not withdraw in time, they may be trapped. It could then take months to return to their homes. In which time most of the army would have starved. It is said there is no diplomacy as expedient as fall diplomacy, as courtiers rush to end conflicts in time to save the lives of their soldiers while maintaining the honour of their clan. A failing clan on the attack will withdraw tactfully, stating that the enemy has defended itself honourably and that the glory of battle was reward enough. Alternately, the courtier may claim that his army's general was blessed by a visitation from a Fortune who beseeched an end to the conflict. Few clans can take truly argue with such claims without appearing disgraceful or impious.

Preparations for the winter courts take precedence at this time. Only the truly honoured and gifted receive invitations to the Emperor's Winter Court, and travel arrangements must be made swiftly for the various other winter courts. Though the Emperor's is the most important, most clans attempt to send some of their most capable courtiers to winter courts in the lands of other clans. The Scorpion and Crane present themselves at nearly every winter function, as they seek to intimidate or ingratiate themselves in the hearts of as many other samurai as possible.

On the final day of the month of the Dog, the last day of fall, the Bon Festival is held in honour of the dead, a time for communing with the wisdom of the ancestors. It is the most ritualistic of the festivals, as calling upon the guidance of the dead is a very serious matter. Kyoto and every other major city of the Empire are filled with representations of the Elemental Dragons, the Great Kami, white-faced ghosts, and famous spirits of the past. Great basins of seawater fill Kyuden Do to represent the final resting place of Lady Doji just as the inner rooms of Kyuden Bayushi are filled with basins of water from Sleeping Lake, where Bayushi's spirit is said to rest. During this time the spirits of the dead are closest to the lands of the living, and the ancestors look

down upon every action of their living heirs. The festival ends by lighting small, coloured paper lanterns, marked with the names of the spirits of those who died within the past year. The light of these lanterns allows the spirits of the dead to see the living world clearly one final time, a final blessing to carry them into eternity.

## Winter

Winter is perhaps the only respite that a farmer will ever know as Nipponese winters settle in like a bear, as terrible as the summers, with fierce snowstorms and sleet making outdoor labour nearly impossible. During this season the peasants make repairs on structures in the area, fix their tools, and set about crafting things for the village. Forced by circumstance to spend the majority of winter season indoors, a custom of many people gathering in one peasant's but for the night has evolved, This not only conserves resources as only one house need be warmed, but builds friendships between the people and gives everyone someone to talk to while waiting out the cold, dark months.

Bushi spend the summer engaged in one of two affairs – training or braving the winter courts. Though large scale troop movement across the Empire is nearly impossible during this time, most militant families ensure there are several large areas conducive to the training of armies. Training starts with promotions: those soldiers who performed exceptionally well during the summer campaigns are awarded titles of honour, land, or position. These samurai so honoured are expected to share their experience with bushi who are deemed less capable or fresh from gempukku. Winter courts serve the courtier as the summer campaigns serve the generals of the clan, and the very term 'winter court' fills those who avoid politics with cold dread. While the harsh weather keeps the most powerful members of the court in one place, diplomats conduct dangerous plots and intrigue, pit their enemies against one another, curry the favour of clans they wish





to ally with, and generally promote the position of their family and clan. Ambitious courtiers gamble much for the sake of their own personal glory, as this is the true battlefield of a courtier.

These courts are not the exclusive domain of courtiers, of course. Those who attend winter court are either well versed in the ways of politics, or serve as *yojimbo* to the courtiers and *Shugenja* who attend such matters. More often than not, every winter court leads to at least one duel of honour, and those who follow the way of the sword must be present to ensure such things are settled properly and correctly. Generals who can manoeuvre the battlefield of the court are extremely invaluable to the clan, as they can balance awareness of the clan's military needs with their lord's political aspirations.

The most famous of these winter gatherings is the Emperor's own 'Winter Court. The exact location of the Emperor's Winter Court each year represents a great, though quiet, contest between the political engineers of the clans, as it is an unparalleled honour to have the Emperor spend the winter in your lands. The best and brightest of Nippon's courtiers, intellectuals, artisans, and others are showcased here, and move in an intricate dance of politics around the Emperor and his closest advisors. Generally, the Champions of the Great Clans are present, as are direct representatives of the major families of Nippon. The manoeuvring done during the long winter months will certainly be felt during the coming year, if not longer.

The year-end festival, called the *Toshi no 'chi*, commences on the day before the New Year's Festival (the twenty-eighth of the day of the Tiger). Participants invoke rituals meant to prepare Nippon for the visit of the Sun, the Fortunes, and the Mimi, as it is said they look down upon the Empire with great interest on the first day of the New Year. Peasants hang a rope of straw known as the *shimenawa* inside their houses so that the evil Spirits of the old year cannot enter. These ropes are burned at the end of the festival. Homes prepare a *toshidana*, a special altar covered in rice

cakes and sake to honour the spirits of the New Year. At dusk, the temples of the Brotherhood of *Shinsel* are emptied, and their walls and floors scrubbed clean with fresh water. The monks then ring the bells of the temple forty-nine times, seven times seven in respect for the benevolent and wrathful aspects of the Seven Fortunes. They then invite the peasants and nobles back into the temples.

### **Lore of the Land**

Terrain varies widely within Nippon's borders along with a dizzying array of natural and supernatural creatures. Although those travelling through the Empire have a general idea of what can be expected in terms of weather and wildlife, there are always surprises to be had, and they are not always pleasant.

#### **Climate**

The weather in Nippon is as varied as in any other land. The lengthy coastline along the Empire's eastern border ensures that enough moisture moves inland to keep Nippon a largely temperate region. Drought is uncommon although the far western reaches of the Empire, such as the Unicorn and Crab holdings, occasionally see such misfortune, especially during the hot summer months. The northern territories of the Phoenix are snow covered year round, and the islands where the Mantis Clan dwell boast tropical climates year round.

Nippon is home to an incredible variety of plant life. Nearly every type of flower, shrub or tree symbolizes, something crucial to Nipponese culture, and all serve a special purpose in the Empire's society, even if merely a decorative one. The gardeners among the *Kakita* and *Shiba* are greatly skilled at combining different forms and types of plants to create majestic beauty in even the simplest of gardens. The *Shosuro* are also renowned for the beauty of their gardens, though they recommend visitors do not approach the plants too closely.

Nipponese architects use wood magnificently when designing the interior of palaces and estates, although wood is less frequently utilized in the construction of military structures. Bamboo paper, rice paper, and vellum are also highly prized as decorative and delicate interior design materials.

Nippon is a land where spirits are active in the lives of mortals everyday and even the gods can intercede if the affairs of man catch their interest, in such a setting. It can be easy to forget that a very wide variety of natural creatures call the Empire their home. Although most species found in Nippon have a wide distribution range, there are animals that can generally be found in one region more so than others.

Mountainous regions, such as those held by the Crab and Dragon clans, are often home to hardier and somewhat more aggressive species such as bears, cougars, mountain goats, badgers and the like. While not necessarily hostile, these creatures present peril to an unwary traveller.

Regions with open plains, such as those held by the Lion and Unicorn clans and to a lesser extent by the Crane and Scorpion, tend to have much milder wildlife. The plains of Nippon are urbanized and see a fair amount of travel, preventing great numbers of animals from settling there. Deer, wild horses, gophers, and a wide variety of small game frequent these areas as well as the occasional predator such as a cougar, lynx, or wolf. The lands of the lion Clan, quite appropriately, boast large prides of the animal whose name they bear. Dense forests such as those held by the Phoenix and Fox Clans see a much broader range of animal populations. Virtually anything can be found within such places, although bears, boar, stags, foxes, wolves, and small game are the most common. The jungles and islands of the Mantis Clan feature even more exotic creatures, such as panthers, monkeys, tigers, parrots, vampire bats, and apes. The ocean, also a Mantis domain, teems with aquatic wildlife, including dolphins, porpoise, sharks, sea turtles, and beautiful tropical fish which the Mantis catch and export as pets for wealthy nobles.



## Kyoto

Kyoto is currently the capital city of Nippon. For generations the city had been fought over by the Lion Clan and the Crane Clan. In 1160, Kyoto was declared the new capital after the fall of Otosan Uchi.

The city had been heavily contested by the Lion and Crane Clans for centuries. In 1120, the Lion Clan Champion, Akodo Arasou, and his betrothed, Matsu Tsuko, attempted to retake the castle, then under Crane control. Despite their valour, Arasou was killed and the Lion were routed by a smaller, well entrenched Daidoji garrison.

The continuing conflicts between the Lion and Crane ended with the unlikely alliance between the two Clan Champions Matsu Nimuro and Doji Kurohito. The wars between the two clans ended and after the destruction of Otosan Uchi, Kyoto was made the new imperial capital.

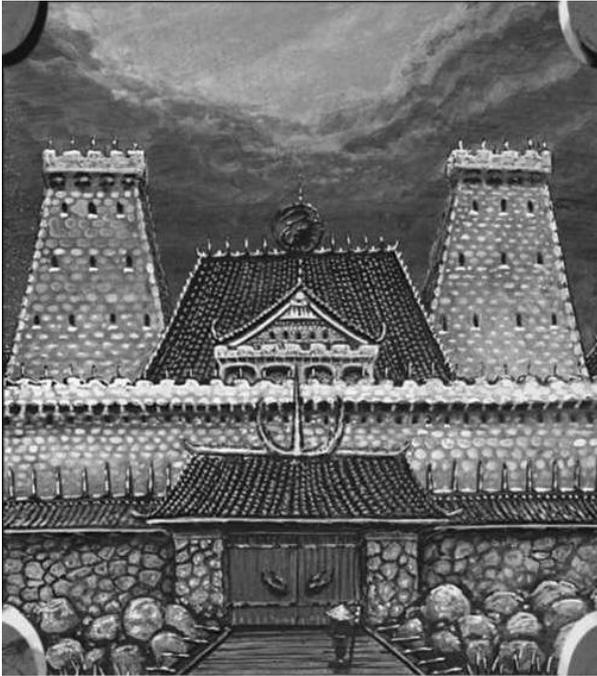
Now that it has become the capital, Kyoto is growing faster than any other city in Nippon despite some setbacks, most notably the Fires of Kyoto. In a few more years the capital will be the same size as Otosan Uchi was. The Imperial Families were the first to establish estates, but the Great and minor clans soon followed.

## Kyuden Hida

Although the Kaiu Wall is undoubtedly the centrepiece of the Crab Clan's defences, Kyuden Hida is both its primary command facility and the Clan's political centre. It is the long-time seat of the Hida Family, and also the headquarters of the Third Crab Army. In the event of a major invasion by Haikido, Kyuden Hida will become the Clan Champion's main headquarters, as operations involving the First, Second and Third Armies will be coordinated from here. Any Reserve Army units sent to the Wall or any of the fortifications under the command of the Third Army will also be expected to take their orders from Kyuden Hida instead of Shiro Kuni upon their arrival.

Kyuden Hida has come to symbolize the character of the Clan to which it belongs. The castle makes no pretence of being anything other than a military fortification. Like the Crab, it disdains all decoration; there are no gardens here, no works of art on display for the edification of visitors, no pretence of aesthetics to soothe the spirits of its permanent inhabitants. There is little to catch the eye here except for stone and mortar - unless one were to count the fanged skull of The Maw, the Oni Lord killed at the Battle of the Cresting Wave, which hung over the great gatehouse for some 500 years. It is no longer there, as it shattered when The Maw returned from Jigoku and reincarnated, but it stood as the greatest single battle trophy any Great Clan could boast, and represented both the power and indomitability of the Crab warriors.

Although it has never been tested by a Siege, Kyuden Hida was nonetheless sited and designed as if the life of the Clan would someday depend on its strength. It was built on a promontory overlooking Earthquake Fish Bay, the base of its high walls melding seamlessly



with the natural escarpment so that it seems an extension of the living rock. Kaiu architects built the walls to withstand any siege engine made by human hands. The gatehouse rises 60 feet high and is sited at the base of the escarpment and off to one side, forcing any invader who somehow got past it to traverse a long, narrow path with no cover right under the battlements to get to the castle itself. Kyuden Hida was built to look absolutely impregnable, and in that it certainly succeeds. Besides serving as the Crab Clan's fortified nerve centre, Kyuden Hida also hosts the main dojo of the Hida Bushi School, which is the Clan's largest institution for training its samurai. The dojo occupies an entire wing of the castle set aside for it. Kyuden Hida is garrisoned by the Second and Third Legions of the Third Army. Both of them are the home units of the Hida Elite Guard, and they provide security for the castle and the personages who live and visit there. The First Legion of the Third Army - its Berserker legion - also maintains barracks at the castle, although it is often sent to the Kaiu Wall to give the Berserkers the taste of combat for which they are so well suited.

### **Kyuden Doji**

Kyuden Doji is truly the crown jewel of the Crane Clan's court system. Everything about the palace speaks of beauty and elegance, and it is arguably the most beautiful place in all of Nippon. It stands atop a high cliff, overlooking the Heart of Yakamo, still known as the Sea of Amaterasu to many who live there. The palace is more like a city than a castle, with a multitude of shrines, tea and sake houses, theatres, marketplaces, and other attractions. Between the stunning vistas and the multitude of amenities available, Kyuden Doji is one of the most sought after locations in the Empire, which is exactly how the Crane like it.

The castle's history is a long one, and not without its tragedies. During the Clan War, the city and palace were burned to the ground by the forces of the False Hoturi. However, the Doji family turned this loss into an opportunity by rebuilding the palace with a more focused, unified design than its previous version, which had been somewhat sprawling and disorganized. As a result, the modern Kyuden Doji is not only one of the most beautiful castles in the Empire but also one of the most architecturally consistent. Since its completion it has been universally hailed as even more glorious than its predecessor.

It is often said that beauty attracts beauty. The court of Kyuden Doji is a prime example of this. Only the most fashionable, powerful, and elegant samurai in the Empire stride through its elaborate halls, just to walk among these individuals brings glory to a samurai's family.

To have them actually speak your name can either boost or destroy a reputation. Much of the strength of the Crane political machine comes from this carefully cultivated exclusivity. Many samurai are willing to owe a favour, or several favours, to the Crane in order to gain access to these halls of power, and this helps ensure that the Crane have no shortage of political resources to call upon in difficult times. Conversely, ranking samurai from other Clans who don't play by the rules set forth by the Crane can often find themselves excluded from Kyuden Doji, excluded from one of the most prestigious courts in all of Nippon, a severe blow to their reputation.

Because Kyuden Doji is seen as the Empire's most elite and desirable court assignment, making a good impression there is vital. Samurai who are not completely secure in their position in the Empire should tread lightly when in the true seat of Crane power. Even something as simple as fashion can be a powerful weapon in this court. Crane tailors are kept busy by visiting samurai wishing to gain attention and prestige by keeping abreast of fashion trends. This provides a subtle but potent means of control for the



court, as the Crane can manipulate their guests simply by having their daimyo start a new fashion trend. It also helps the local economy, as koku flow to the silk works and the talented seamstresses who maintain shops near the palace.

In keeping with the true customs of Nipponese politics, the Crane do most of their negotiations outside of the main court chambers, especially in the glorious gardens of Kyuden Doji. The so-called "Fantastic Gardens" are one of the greatest beauties of the palace, and offer a perfect location for quiet, unobtrusive conversations and secluded meetings. Originally, these were merely Lady Doji's private gardens, but since that time they have grown enormously, and today are the size of a small village. Story gardens, sand gardens, rock gardens, and every other sort of Nipponese garden are combined together in perfect harmony, supplemented by shrines, koi pools, and streams of pure water from the nearby Seikitsu Mountains. In recent decades the Crane have also enhanced the enjoyment of the Fantastic Gardens by adding a careful selection of sake houses, theatres, geisha houses, and other places of legitimate entertainment, all carefully designed and arranged to harmonize with the beauty of the surrounding gardens. It should come as no surprise that there are always small groups of samurai strolling through the Fantastic Gardens or pausing to enjoy its vistas.

The current master of Kyuden Doji is none other than the Crane Clan Champion, Doji Domotai. Because of her militant upbringing amongst the Matsu, many Crane have doubts about her political effectiveness, although they are of course careful to keep such thoughts to themselves. These doubts were further inflamed by the inflexibility she showed toward Hida Kuon at the start of the Crane-Crab war. However, she has begun to dispel such worries with her performance at her first Winter Court, when she appeared in the courts wearing a kimono in a style that was popular during the reign of Hantei X. Due to the complexity of the style, and the Crane foreknowledge of her plans, they were able to tie up most of the available tailors, placing all others attending the court at a distinct disadvantage.



## Shiro Mirumoto

Shiro Mirumoto was constructed over a thousand years ago by the family whose name it bears. It was ordered built by Mirumoto himself, but sadly he died alongside the other Thunders long before it was ever completed. His son, Hojatsu, was forced to move the building site not long thereafter because the original location was unsuitable for a fortification of its size. In a tragic turn of events, Hojatsu also perished before the castle was finished, dying in a duel with his father's rival, Kakita. Every Mirumoto daimyos since Hojatsu, however, has called the castle home.

As might be expected of the Dragon, Shiro Mirumoto is something of an oddity. It is not a lavish family estate, nor is it a massive fortress. In truth, it is everything that the Mirumoto require. Other than Iron Mountain Dojo, the dojo built upon the site of Mirumoto's first build location, it is the northernmost major holding of the Mirumoto family. It is the major site of their military might, and the host of virtually every major Dragon court held in the past thousand years.

Despite all that, it is not much to look at, as it seems rather stark and functional. In truth, most of its defence lies in its location, which is so inaccessible to outsiders that it would be virtually impossible to besiege. The Dragon are well aware of this, and have not squandered resources in creating fortifications that would be redundant.

Shiro Mirumoto is an ancestral estate, first and foremost. It is involved in virtually every aspect of the Mirumoto family's affairs, and serves as the largest dojo for their young students, the largest single barracks for the family's armed forces, the seat of the family's court, and the coordination point for all their military affairs. It is also prepared and stocked as though it were a fortress expecting a siege, although this manner of attack has never taken place in its history.

Traditionally the lord of Shiro Mirumoto is also the Mirumoto family daimyo, an individual who also holds the position of rikugunshokan of the Dragon army. In theory, that position is currently held by Mirumoto Mareshi, who was appointed Mirumoto daimyo by the Dragon Champion. Mareshi, however, eschews such responsibility, and negotiated a marriage to the much more capable (in his opinion, at least) Mirumoto Kei, to whom he ceded both the position as daimyo and command of the clan's army. Mareshi remains the lord of Shiro Mirumoto, however, and is in attendance with relative frequency. If both are out of the castle, however, control generally is ceded to either Mirumoto Hojatsu, a noted duellist and military officer, or Mirumoto Bokkai, one of the senior sensei at the castle's dojo.

Shiro Mirumoto is the archetypal mountain fortress, and is equipped with everything needed to withstand not only the harsh climate of the Dragon lands, but also any siege that might theoretically threaten the home of the Mirumoto family. As of yet, of course, no such threat has ever presented itself, but the Mirumoto never waver in their readiness. Shiro Mirumoto contains



massive stores of supplies, enough to house a large number of troops for a lengthy period of time. Ironically, however, the fortress does not have the barracks space to house more than a quarter of the clan's standing army, simply because the army is never stationed at the castle in its entirety, and the Mirumoto despise waste of resources. The castle is also known for containing one of the most prestigious dojo for swordsmen in all the Empire, and one of its only rivals, Iron Mountain Dojo, exists within sight of the castle. As noted above, Shiro Mirumoto has relatively meager barracks space compared to its size and importance, and as such has a comparatively low number of troops stationed there. This is generally not a concern given the castle's inaccessibility to enemies.

### **Kyuden Ikoma**

Kyuden Ikoma, or Sacred Watch Castle, has always been the key to the defence of the western Lion provinces. For much of the Clan's history there was little need for such defence, as the lands to the west were mostly unoccupied. Traditionally, it has been the Clan's eastern and southern borders that required defence, with occasional flare-ups requiring similar attention paid to the northern border as well. Despite its position as the key to the defence of the western Lion lands, historically Kyuden Ikoma has been the least defended of all Lion ancestral estates, at least until recently. The palace has always been well protected by geography, since it is shielded on one side by the Mountain of the Seven Thunders. It also has historically had the most visitors from outside the Clan of any estate within the Lion lands, and the Ikoma, as the voice and presence of the Lion in court, did not wish to seem overly hostile to their visitors. The palace has, in the past, hosted a far larger number of civilian Clan officials than any other Lion city, as well as a disproportionate number of monks,

who have been responsible for tending to the many historical shrines located in the city and throughout the Ikoma provinces.

Kyuden Ikoma has been attacked only twice during its long history. The first was during the War against the Darkness. During that time, the primordial entity called the Lying Darkness, an enemy that could not be understood and against whom a defence could hardly be mounted, targeted the extensive libraries in the palace. The libraries were utterly destroyed, a loss that devastated the Ikoma Family. The records were slowly and painstakingly rebuilt as the Family requested duplicates of records found all across the Empire. It was a difficult defeat for the Lion, but one that, in retrospect, could not have been anticipated because of the strange nature of the foe.

Then, in the winter of 1168, Kyuden Ikoma was the first major target of the Unicorn Clan's winter campaign through the Lion provinces. The Ikoma had only hours' notice before the Khan's attack, and they were insufficiently prepared to repel an incursion of such size, even though they had been reinforced by the personal forces of Lion Champion Matsu Yoshino. It was a crushing defeat for the Ikoma and the Lion as a whole, and one that nearly cost the life of Yoshino's chief advisor, the great hero Ikoma Otemi. Ultimately, the castle was sacrificed in order to allow the Lion to fall back and prepare for another battle at Bishamon Seido. Fortunately, the Unicorn had little interest in holding the palace or the city, and sacked it and left it behind them unoccupied. Despite the defeat, therefore, Kyuden Ikoma remained largely intact.

Since the spring thaws of 1169, when the Unicorn were forced from the Lion lands, Kyuden Ikoma has been repaired and rebuilt, and now it has been designated as one of the forward command centres for the Lion Clan's imminent counterattack on the Unicorn provinces. The Ikoma Army now considers Kyuden Ikoma their headquarters in more than name, and a reasonable portion of that army can be found here at any one time, along with their commanders and staff.



Kyuden Ikoma serves as the headquarters for the Ikoma Army as well as the diplomatic centre for the entire Lion Clan.

Kyuden Ikoma is the home of Ikoma Karin, the Daimyo of the Ikoma Family. Unlike many Family Daimyo, Karin remains at his Family's estate a greater portion of the year, choosing to eschew the political battlegrounds at various courts and instead focusing exclusively on the defence and protection of his home and the Lion provinces as a whole.

His visit to the Imperial Winter Court in 1168 was a rare and, from his viewpoint regrettable interruption to this tradition.

As the ancestral home of a Lion Family and the headquarters of one of the four Lion armies, Kyuden Ikoma has virtually everything one can imagine as being needed for a major army encampment. Dojo, stables, barracks, training grounds, supply posts, and dozens of other major facilities are all present in abundance.

As the home of the Ikoma Army, there are vast numbers of soldiers stationed within the borders of Kyuden Ikoma and the city surrounding it at all times.

### **Kyuden Gyotei**

Beyond the horizon from the southern Crane lands lies the most opulent palace in all of Nippon. While the art and style of Kyuden Doji is of course without compare, the sheer wealth displayed in the Mantis stronghold of Kyuden Gyotei is unparalleled within the Empire. Since the Mantis lands are fairly small in area, and trade brings them such large profits, the Clan of Storms has had little else to do with their wealth than display it.

Kyuden Gyotei originated as a single building on a small rocky island. As the Mantis coffers swelled,



century by century, the castle was expanded again and again, until it has become the sprawling complex it is today. Additionally, the Mantis' great wealth has bought the Clan works of fine art from all over the Empire and even beyond. Nipponese paintings on silk screens stand beside wooden carvings from the Ivory Kingdoms and woven rugs from the Senpet lands. The combination is garish and even offensive from a traditional Nipponese point of view, but even the most traditional Lion who visits Kyuden Gyotei cannot help but admit the great wealth the Mantis have expended to gather this collection.

Samurai from all over the Empire who are looking for rare or difficult-to-obtain items often come to Kyuden Gyotei to enlist the aid of the Mantis. Yoritomo's Clan relies on ocean-going trade, and has developed contacts in places where the land-bound Clans haven't even thought of looking. Naturally, such visits are often resolved not with mere payment (such would dishonour and insult a traditionalist Nipponese samurai) but through trade agreements and exchanges of favours. Besides, even for a mercantile Clan like the Mantis, a new trade contact that might possibly yield great returns for a long period of time is much more enticing than a simple bag of koku.

Even the wealthiest samurai attempting to deal with the Mantis will immediately be aware of the splendour that surrounds him, while a merchant from the Yasuki or the Daidoji Trading Council might be accustomed to using his wealth to give him a position of strength in trade negotiations; this is simply not possible with the Mantis Clan. The only way to entice the Mantis is to offer something their extensive trade network cannot find - typically, something political, since the Mantis are still labouring to build up their position in the mainland's courts. Thus, the court at Kyuden Gotei often sees negotiations that inteneave trade with more conventional political matters in a way which most mainland Nipponese would find disturbing. Even when a courtier has something the Mantis want, he had best be prepared to bargain tooth and nail to gain any significant measure of advantage. The Mantis are nothing if not excellent traders.

The current Mantis Clan Champion, Yoritomo Naizen, is the ruler of Kyuden Gotei's court, and he well understands the nature of his Clan's strength. However, he has a personal political viewpoint as well. Naizen began his life as a pirate and has managed to rise to become the leader of one of a Great Clan. Because of his humble origins, he believes strongly that anyone of sufficient talent can raise their stature in the Celestial Order. Naizen believes himself proof that one does not have to wait until a future rebirth to ascend the steps of the heavenly bureaucracy. Because of this, he has taken it upon himself to become the protector of the Nipponese heimen, and has re-oriented the Clan's political goals to match. This extends even to the treatment of servants in Kyuden Gotei - woe to those guests who treat servants in a harsh or dismissive fashion in the home of the Lord of Storms, for it can be assured that their dealings with the Mantis Clan will be significantly more difficult.

## Kyuden Isawa

Kyuden Isawa is the home of the Isawa family of the Phoenix Clan. It lies just to the east of the Mori Isawa, along the shore of the eastern sea. The castle seems hopelessly weak in its defences, but the great magics of its namesake protect it at all times. The castle houses the largest spell research library in Nippon.

The walls that house the Isawa family have been enchanted with runes, spells, and spirits to protect them from both magical and physical attacks. Though the castle seems completely inadequate from a military perspective, and would-be attackers would find themselves sinking into the sand of the coastline, being crushed under the sea's mighty waves, and struck by mighty lightning from the heavens.

The one time in recorded history that the protections upon the castle have failed completely was shortly after the murder of Hida Osano-Wo. Kaimetsu-Uo, Osano Wo's exiled son who would found the Mantis Clan, assaulted the castle in an effort to capture his father's killer, who, unknown to the Isawa, was hiding within. During that assault, the mighty lightning that usually protected the castle was instead unleashed upon it, throwing open the castle's gates. The Isawa immediately recognized the divine interference with their defences and released the killer to Kaimetsu-Uo. The most important feature of Kyuden Isawa is its library, which occupies nearly the entire castle. The Isawa library dwarfs all others throughout Nippon in sheer volume, its monumental amount of available information completely unrivalled within the empire. The library is kept by dedicated Isawa librarians and scribes.

Nearly every spell ever cast within Nippon has managed to find its way to the library at Kyuden Isawa. Each of these spells are painstakingly researched, catalogued, and controlled by the Isawa. Only certain individuals have access to the library, and those wishing to research there must obtain permission through the proper channels. As spell research is a



never-ending science, there is an entire branch of Isawa librarians dedicated to keeping the library neat, organized and up-to-date.

The magical protections placed upon the library are nearly as powerful as those placed on the castle's walls. Each Isawa family castle has a library of its own. These libraries are patterned after the main library at Kyuden Isawa, and are always smaller. These branches generally contain only copies of the knowledge contained within the great library at Kyuden Isawa. Located just south of Kyuden Isawa lies the Dai-Chikai Dojo, where the yojimbo needed to protect the Isawa are trained.

The Grove of the Five Masters is a garden where the Elemental Masters and others approved by them may visit and relax peacefully. A great deal of the Grove was destroyed in 1165 when Iuchiban loosed the Kusatte Iru on Kyuden Isawa to prevent the masters from going to the Siege of Gisei Toshi.[6] It is not yet known to what extent the Grove has been rebuilt.

## Kyuden Bayushi

Rising up from atop a plateau in central Scorpion lands is one of the most resplendent and sinister castles in all of Nippon. The palace of the Bayushi sits in state above the Scorpion lands as if it has been there since the beginning of the Empire. This, however, is one of the Clan of Secrets' main illusions. Kyuden Bayushi was burned to the ground by the Imperial Legions after the Clan was disbanded at the end of the Scorpion Clan Coup. Although the Scorpion Clan was restored after the Day of Thunder, just a few years later they were exiled to the Burning Sands, and this badly delayed the proper rebuilding of the castle. Once they returned, however, the Scorpion quickly completed the reconstruction of their ancestral seat, restoring it to exactly the way it was before the Coup. Kyuden Bayushi today looks just like the previous castle which stood for a thousand years.

This remarkable feat was carried out to remind the Empire that the Scorpion can never truly be defeated. No matter what outward appearances may show. Kyuden Bayushi is actually an extremely comfortable palace, and the greatest possible care is given to providing fine hospitality for its guests. Servants are

extremely attentive to any visiting samurai. Custom demands that they bathe newcomers on arrival to ensure they are clean and relaxed before the mental rigors of court begin.

Of course, the Bayushi always know who is coming to visit their home, and servants are chosen and tasked accordingly. Samurai often let their guard down around servants, even in a Scorpion palace where they should know better. Indeed, the principle that servants know almost everything is one of the first lessons taught to young Scorpion courtiers,

Kyuden Bayushi is not outwardly a heavily fortified castle, but it is nevertheless a difficult place to reach. A visitor's first encounter when approaching the palace is an unsettling one. As the road that leads up the plateau crests the top of the rise, a traveller is met with the sight of an immense hedge maze, the so-called Bayushi Labyrinth.

This maze is designed to be as disorienting as possible, and the walls shift regularly. It also contains many traps and obstacles - which can be activated in the event of attack. Only the castle's house guards can successfully navigate the maze with no difficulties, but the Bayushi often allow their guests to try to find their way through the maze as a way of impressing them with the mysteries of the Scorpion.

One of the many other physical oddities of Kyuden Bayushi is that the castle has almost no interior walls save for a few load-bearing necessities. This allows the hosts to change the layout of the castle and its halls easily, moving partitions and shoji screens around to reconstruct the interior with almost no effort. Visitors have been known to go to sleep only to awaken in what seems to be a totally different part of the castle from where they were before. Needless to say, this can cause problems when attempting to reach a meeting or appointment on time, so the Bayushi often employ this trick to place a petitioner in a position of weakness - by showing up to his meeting late, he has already insulted his hosts, forcing him to curry their favour. Another impressive feature of the home of the Bayushi is its huge gardens. Much of the area atop the plateau, indeed almost all of it not already occupied by the castle and the labyrinth, is home to a vast, sprawling series of extremely well-maintained gardens, while not as expansive or glorious as the legendary gardens of Kyuden Doji, the Bayushi gardens are still quite beautiful and impressive in their own right, and contain many shadowy recesses where private discussions can take place away from prying eyes. Of course, in Kyuden Bayushi it is seldom the public observer one has to worry about. The hidden ear is often the greatest danger. Spread throughout the gardens is a variety of magnificent ancestral shrines, of a quality which would make even a Kitsu proud. They are strategically placed in several of the most beautiful corners of the grounds, where guests are likely to see and visit them. However, careful inspection shows a certain pattern to these shrines. For the most part, they are dedicated to the most public and prominent Scorpions who have walked the earth. Bayushi Shoju, Bayushi Tangu, and other similar historical figures are memorialized here. Thus,



while these shrines fulfil their conventional role of venerating ancestors, they also serve as a quiet public reminder that a Scorpion's proper place is in the shadows.

### **Shiro Moto**

Shortly after Moto Gaheris became Unicorn Clan Champion, he commissioned the construction of a new castle for his Family.

Thanks to the Shinjo Family's vast wealth, which he had recently acquired, the construction of this castle was completed in a few months' time. Shiro Moto is obviously of gaijin design, and opinions as to its beauty vary greatly according to who offers them.

To most Unicorn samurai, this castle is wholly magnificent, an exquisite blend of gaijin style with traditional Nipponi architectural motifs. The complexity of Shiro Moto's architecture makes the place one of the most wondrous in the Empire, but many samurai, especially those of non-Unicorn descent, fail to see the intricate design as anything more than a grotesque reminder that the Unicorn are not wholly from Nippon.

For Moto Gaheris, the injection of foreign design elements was quite deliberate. The Unicorn are forever separated from the rest of the Empire by the influence of the many gaijin tribes they encountered during their great journey. Gaheris and many other Unicorn see this as a point of pride, despite what other Nipponi might think. Thus, while those outside the Clan think Shiro Moto the most hideous piece of architecture ever built, the samurai of the Unicorn Clan find it beautiful.

Regardless of what anyone might think of its aesthetics, Shiro Moto is one of the strongest fortresses in all of Unicorn lands. Although there are no troops officially appointed to garrison it, the Khan keeps at

least two or three Khol Army legions close to his capital at all times. The Khan's personal safety is not at issue; in the Unicorn samurai's mindset, the Khan is more than capable of defending himself, and to think otherwise would imply that he is not fit to lead the Clan. Thus, there is no house guard or other protective force in Shiro Mota. The Khan keeps troops nearby not for his own safety, but because Shiro Mota itself is too important to risk seeing it fall into enemy hands.

The White Guard maintains an austere barracks within Shiro Mota, and their troops are frequently posted to defend the castle's walls, as, well as using the vast fields around Shiro Mota to hone their skills. This is especially true in times of peace, when the Khan is frequently home receiving visitors at his court. The other Khol legions assigned near Shiro Mota, however, never enter the city. Instead, they make their presence as discrete as possible, camping in the fields several miles from the great Unicorn castle. Typically, the Twentieth, Twenty-Second, Thirty-Seventh, and Forty-Third Khol Legions are positioned in the vicinity of Shiro Moto. The commanders of these legions uphold the ancient Unicorn tradition of keeping a close watch upon their capital city without interfering in its politics. As one of the most elaborate fortresses in Unicorn Clan territory, Shiro Mota boasts imposing watchtowers and thick, seemingly impregnable stone walls. The gates of the surrounding city, however, are seldom closed, allowing anyone to venture inside.

Shiro Mota is home to the prestigious Dojo of the Khol Army. This great school can be found within the city proper, and the sensei of the Dojo of the Centre regularly select some of their finest students to defend the home of the Khan. Officially, these newly graduated students are assigned to the Army of the Centre, but they spend their time in the city, watching over it carefully.

The presence of these graduates, policing Shiro Mota, makes it one of the safest places in the Unicorn

provinces. It also prevents the Khan from having to dirty his hands dealing with common thieves and assassins, since such matters are dealt with by the Khol students assigned to the city. The current leader of these unofficial city guards is Moto Qjng.

### **Haikido, the Cursed Isle**

Beyond the Empire to the Southwest extends the vast, unknown region of Haikido. At the heart of this land lies the Devil's Crater, a gaping wound that opens into the heart of Jigoku, the Realm of Evil. The corrupting power of this place wells out of the pit and infests everything it touches. Anything that remains too close to the Pit for too long is inevitably suffused by the Taint. Those mortals who are corrupted by its power become willing servants of Fu Leng, known as the Lost. The Taint twists all living creatures, body and soul, turning them into monstrous new beings of its infernal design. The land possesses a will and mind of its own, driven by a dark desire to humiliate, terrify, and ultimately consume any who cross its borders. Countless varieties of strange creatures wander Haikido. Many are mindless predators or pursue their mysterious objectives alone. Traditionally the one truth that has offered the people of Nippon some measure of security was that the various forces of Haikido were an internally divisive and treacherous lot. They possessed no loyalty to one another beyond that earned by raw power or intimidation, and any large, organized force that rose from beyond the Wall would ultimately crumble due to infighting. In recent years, since the arrival of the Dark Lord Daigotsu, the people of Nippon have been forced to reconsider this truth. The youngest son of a Hantei Emperor, kidnapped by Bloodspeakers and cast into Jigoku itself, Daigotsu is a willing adherent of Fu Leng who possesses incredible mastery over dark magic. He also has an extraordinary charisma and a twisted sense of honor that many Lost samurai find appealing.

Following the Battle of the Castle of Decay, the Taint corrupted many samurai and left them wandering in search of purpose: Daigotsu offered them the purpose they sought. In the depths of Haikido he has built the City of the Lost, and countless corrupted men and women have rallied to his cause. Even the demonic Oni and the mindless bakemono bow to his will, and for once Haikido stands strong and united. Ironically, though Daigotsu despises Nippon, he cares little for the subjugation of the Empire. This is not to say that he is not extremely dangerous, but he feels that for Haikido to flourish, Nippon must survive — much like a predator cannot survive if all prey has been consumed. Since the Dark Lord's ascension, the City of the Lost has become a nightmarish reflection of the Nipponi Empire. The Lost view Daigotsu as their Emperor, and worship Fu Leng with all the devotion other samurai show their founding Kami. Daigotsu has even granted a handful of family names to those who serve him.





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# THE GREAT CLANS

The Empire of Nippon falls under the dominion of a single Emperor, but a number of powerful factions constantly vie with one another for influence. The eight Great Clans, four Imperial Families and nine Minor Clans are the most notable among these, though the various factions of Haikido are also a constantly dangerous factor.

Each Great Clan is comprised of a number of smaller families. These families are not families in the sense that all members are blood relatives, but in the sense that all of them have sworn fealty to a single lord within that family. Thus it is not uncommon for marriages to take place within the same family between spouses of different bloodlines. When referring to himself, a samurai always gives his family name first, then his given name. Thus Kisada, a member of the Hida family, is called Hida Kisada.

## The Crab Clan

Of all the Great Clans, the Crab Clan has the least enviable duty of all. Their clan guards the south-western borders of Nippon, where the Empire borders upon the sinister Haikido. The Crab are charged with protecting this border, holding back the dark forces of ligoku that would otherwise consume and corrupt all that they touch. It is an endless, thankless, violent task but the Crab have risen to the calling admirably. They are a tough, independent people tempered by the fires of a thousand year war.

Their soldiers keep vigil atop the Great Wall, an enormous barrier that covers the entire Haikido border, perhaps the most remarkable feat of engineering that Nippon has ever seen. Though the Great Wall has been broken, it is always repaired and built stronger than before. The basic Crab philosophy is one of strength and determination. To be steadfast like the mountain is the greatest virtue, to hold the line against impossible odds while one's comrades escape to carry the fight another day is the most heroic fate a Crab can hope to meet.

To the other clans, Crab bushi have a reputation for being uncouth and boorish, a reputation not entirely undeserved. A Crab has little time for etiquette and bureaucracy while the battle on the Wall continues. They are rude and blunt, always speaking their minds, ignoring most, if not all, rules of decorum. However they are not, for the most part, stupid. A Crab recognizes his limitations and will tend leave matters of politics in the hands of those equipped to deal with them. Among their own people, these duties fall to the Yasuki.

While the Crab Clan is not a poor clan, many of their resources are dedicated to maintaining the Wall and supplying troops for their endless battle. The Crab is forced to constantly seek alliances and favours from other clans in order to maintain their large armies, a fact that sits poorly with many Crab, as they feel that the Empire owes them a great debt for the task they



routinely perform. To be forced to beg in the courts simply so that they may continue to perform their assigned duties is intolerable for such an independent-minded clan.

One trait shared by almost all Crab is a complete and utter hatred of Haikido. The Clan was almost destroyed once by a well-intentioned alliance with certain factions of the Haikido Horde, and the succeeding Champions have sworn that there will never be a compromise with Haikido again. Even away from the Wall, Crab are recognized as the foremost enemies of Haikido. When something goes awry and the Taint seems to be involved, the first impulse of many a magistrate is to seek the advice of any Crab in the area. Members of the Crab Clan tend to be larger than average Nipponese, their skin darkened from constant exposure to the elements. Facial hair is commonplace, with long beards, moustaches, or even scruffy stubble being the norm. Their speech is gruff and simple, resembling the speech of common peasants more than the elegant High Nipponese of the courts. As Crab samurai spend a great deal of time fighting beside their peasant brethren, this is not entirely a surprise.

## The Crane Clan

The most graceful, beautiful, and charming creature to ever set foot on the face of Nippon was Doji, Hantei's sister and founder of the Crane Clan. Though the armies of her brothers may have tamed the land of the nascent Empire, it was Doji that brought art and civilization to the barbaric tribes the Kami found. Though Hantei's heart was eventually won by a mortal, it was clear that Doji was his favoured sibling of all, and the descendents of the First Crane always stood close to the Hantei Dynasty. Even to this day, with the rise of the Toturi Dynasty, the Crane Clan remains a powerful figure in the cultural and courtly aspects of the Empire. They are known as the Emperor's Left Hand, the hand of peace, and the powerful among the Crane are nearly inseparable from their Imperial allies. Drawing from the image of their founder, samurai of the Crane Clan engage in wars of clever words and



often win battles by their wit and honour alone. Few courts of any significance are without a Crane representative – indeed, generally the mere presence of a Crane ambassador assures a court's significance. The charm of Crane ambassadors combined with their artisans, storytellers, and other samurai ensures that they are well received in nearly any land, and the Clan as a whole can draw favours from almost any samurai in all of Nippon – even the Emperor with alarming frequency.

This is not to say the Crane survive on their words alone, just as Lady Doji brought the way of peace and the arts to Nippon, her mortal bride, Kakita, established the first formal academy of the blade. Much of what is considered acceptable in the way of single combat was dictated centuries ago by Kakita, just as Doji laid down many nuances of courteous behaviour. Combined with the cunning Daidoji warriors, bushi capable of outwitting and outmanoeuvring forces much larger than their own, those who think the noble Crane as little more than pampered nobles often realize the reality of their mistake far too late.

On the whole, Crane samurai have excellent grooming habits. They tend to be slight of build and athletic rather than muscular, and favour long, flowing hair that they tie back in combat. Crane artisans are the finest in Nippon, so it is rare to find a Crane who is not well dressed.

### The Dragon Clan

The most mysterious of all Great Clans, the Dragon have not experienced a great deal of interaction with the Empire at large throughout their history. Unknown to most, the Kami Togashi remained in direct control of their clan for over a thousand years, periodically changing bodies and names to avoid suspicion. Togashi could predict future events, but could never see his place among them, and thus he and his followers remained apart from the Empire to avoid affecting its development. It was not until Fu Leng returned that Togashi came forth, giving his life in combat against his fallen brother to demonstrate to the Seven Thunders that the dark god had been made mortal.

The Dragon have struggled to find their place in the world since Togashi's death. The Kami's successor, a samurai named Mirumoto Hitomi, came under the influence of the lying Darkness and led the clan into conflicts against the Naga and conflicts within the

tattooed orders, Hitomi's reign ended with her defeat of Onnotanug, the Lord Moon, and ascension to take his place. In the wake of her departure, Togashi's son Hoshi took his rightful place as the Dragon Champion until his mortal son, Togashi Satsu, came of age to assume control.

During the War of Spirits, the Dragon were coerced into supporting the Steel Chrysanthemum's rebellious forces because of Agasha Tamori, a traitorous Dragon Shugenja who gave the Hantei the information he needed to force many Dragon into submission. The Emperor recognized their position, however, and did not punish the clan for the actions of a few, and those few were given the opportunity for honourable seppuku.

Since Togashi Satsu has come of age, Togashi Hoshi and his wife ascended to the Celestial Heavens to join Togashi. His rule has been unpleasantly eventful. Tamora's legacy resulted in a volcanic explosion in Dragon lands, driving refugees into nearby Phoenix territory and sparking a war between the two clans. The lengthy conflict was extremely taxing on the Dragon because of Isawa's Last Wish, an artefact of nearly infinite power that the Phoenix brought to bear. Fortunately, the war came to an end before the damage was irreversible. More recently, the Dragon's military might was brought to bear again, this time at the Emperor's behest. For nearly a year, the Dragon armies harassed both the Lion and Unicorn forces at the War of the Rich Frog. While the Mirumoto did not claim victory, they did gain much respect for their military power.

Dragon samurai are a varied lot. There is no uniform philosophy among them, although generally speaking they place more emphasis on individuality than a typical samurai. This is not to say that they do not revere bushido or service to their lord: far from it. The Dragon are as loyal as any Lion or Scorpion in the Empire, and never hesitate to lay down their life if the situation calls for it. Simply because an individual is important does not mean that one is more important than another. Giving one's life for one's lord or one's family is considered the ultimate demonstration of loyalty.

If the Dragon can be said to have any truly common qualities, then appearance factors in. Dwelling in the mountains is a difficult life, and Dragon tend to be lean and muscular as a result. Their complexion is dark, and they rarely bleach or dye their hair as the Crane and Lion do.





### The Lion Clan

There has never been any question that the dominant military power in Nippon has throughout the Empire's history belonged to the Lion Clan, the Right Hand of the Emperor. Despite the hardships the clan has suffered throughout the past decades, with the Akodo family's dissolution and reformation, the use of maho by Kitsu leaders during the War against the Darkness, and other such difficulties, the Lion have never wavered or hesitated, contributing more troops to the Empire's defence than any other two clans combined. The Lion have experienced a tremendous change in leadership over the past two years. Akodo Ginawa, Noma Sume, and Matsu Ketsui, each the Daimyo of their respective families, have retired. Matsu Nimuro was killed by the Unicorn Champion at the Battle of Sukoshi Zutsu, and Kitsu Jun died under mysterious circumstances shortly following the battle. The change in leadership has not been difficult thus far, due mostly to the appointment of Ikoma Otemi as the Lion Champion, an appointment that pleased every family in the clan. The blossoming political conflicts between the Emperor and Shogun are beginning to stress relations within the clan, however, and the final outcome of this division remains to be seen. The Lion are consummate soldiers. Every major decision in their lives is made with bushido as the instrument to measure their outcome. Their current Champion, for example, turned away from his true love to marry an enemy because it was a strong political match for his family. The majority of Lion samurai have little or no talent at deception, and tend to be forthright almost to the point of rudeness. Yet the Lion are not the warmongering braggarts that other clans make them out to be. Even the long-standing enmity between the Lion and their rivals, the Crane and Scorpion, stems from the Lion's distaste for flowery language and deception. The Lion prefer an honest and dedicated approach to life that leaves no room for such things. The Lion are consummate soldiers, and appear as such. Every aspect of their appearance speaks to discipline and control. They tend to be of average height and slightly heavier built than many families due to their

years of military training. Some Lion dye their hair brilliant red colours or achieve that affect naturally via strong Kitsu ancestry.

### The Mantis Clan

If any Great Clan can be said to rival the Scorpion for an unsavoury reputation, it is the Mantis Clan. And like the Scorpion, this reputation is not altogether undeserved, as the Mantis have nearly a thousand years of piracy and general malice to back it up. The Mantis Clan was formed by Hida Kaimetsu-uo, the son of Hida Osano-Wo and grandson of Hida. When he was denied his birthright in favour of Osano-Wo's second son, Kaimetsu-uo left the Crab lands and sought his fortune among the distant Islands of Silk and Spice. There he met the storyteller Unmei, who shared with him tales of heroism witnessed firsthand before the Day of Thunder. Inspired, Kaimetsu-uo vowed to create a dynasty worthy of his uncle, the Thunder Hida Atarasi. Followers gradually came to his banner, and in time the Mantis were recognized as the first Minor Clan in Nippon (although the Fox insist they were the first to be recognized).

Kaimetsu-uo's legacy has been a checkered one. In time, his people have been both heroes, standing against the gal in at the Battle of White Stage, and villains, when their Daimyo Gusal Rioshida attempted to assassinate the Emperor. By and large, however, they have remained out of sight of Nippon, carving a profitable if solitary existence from the sea and the coastline, gradually accumulating great wealth through trade and the occasional acts of piracy.

During the Clan War, the Mantis Champion Yoritomo gathered many Minor Clans to his cause and forged what was known as Yoritomo's Alliance, a force that could rival that of any Great Clan. Together with his allies, Yoritomo fought against Haikido's forces that plagued the Empire and, on the second Day of Thunder, stood before the Great Clan Champions and demanded that he be given a place among them. Perhaps due only to the unique circumstances, Yoritomo's claim was recognized, and the Mantis Clan became the eighth Great Clan.

Life as a Great Clan has not been without hardship. The Mantis suffered flagging numbers after the War



against the Darkness and the War of Spirits, eventually absorbing the Centipede and Wasp Clans into their ranks. Just as the clan began to recover, Yoritomo's chosen heir, Yoritomo Aramasu, was assassinated, and the Championship fell to a veteran sailor and merchant named Yoritomo Kitao. Order might quickly have been restored had not Yoritomo's daughter, the previously unknown Yoritomo Kumiko, appeared as well. A brief but intense civil war followed, and Kumiko eventually gained the upper hand. The Son of Storms' daughter, the Daughter of Storms, was the new Mantis Champion.

The Mantis are an intensely practical and pragmatic people. Having survived centuries in isolation, they believe very strongly in individualism. They look upon the other Great Clans with a mixture of disdain and envy, which does little to improve relations with the mainland. Many younger Mantis frequently have innate insecurities that drive them to prove themselves to the world at large, driving them to either great heroism or to become insufferable bores.

Mantis samurai vary wildly in appearance according to family. The Yoritomo tend toward a gruff, burly demeanour, individuals who have a look hardened by years of experience on the high seas, due mostly to the conditions on their home islands. Tsuruchi are more lithe and athletic, quiet and introspective. The Moshi stay with a far more traditional style, with the air of serenity and calm that one might expect from a Shugenja family.

In the Empire's current political climate, the Mantis are in the midst of a slowly smouldering conflict with the Phoenix Clan. This dates back to the infamous Rain of Blood, when the evil sorcerer Iuchiban unleashed a ritual that corrupted thousands of samurai, driving them insane and pushing them to acts of violence. A sizeable Mantis force was in the Agasha lands at this time and held responsible for the virtual destruction of the City of Remembrance. The Phoenix have not yet forgiven the Mantis, and increased trade difficulties off the coast have only exacerbated the situation. Other than the Phoenix, the Mantis have few outright enemies, and participate in an economic alliance of sorts with the Crane and Unicorn.

The Mantis maintain a motley appearance, as the three families comprising the clan have radically different origins and backgrounds. It is rare that any rule of thumb can be used to identify a particular individual as a Mantis beyond their traditional colours or equipment.

### **The Phoenix Clan**

When the Kami fell to the mortal world, they went about organizing the scattered tribes they found into what would become the Clans of Nippon. All of Sun and Moon's children were attended by followers that swore fealty to them and the Kami declared themselves the masters of their Clans, save one. Shiba gathered those who would follow him, but was refused by the mystic called Isawa. Isawa refused to bend his knee to the Kami, even when Shinsei came to him to proclaim he was the Thunder of the Phoenix Clan, and the race



of men would be doomed without his help. Isawa said that without him, his people would suffer, and it was then that Shiba did the unthinkable – he knelt before the mortal Isawa and pledged an oath that the Kami's descendents would always protect [sawn's. Since that time, the Isawa have ruled the Phoenix Clan through their Council of Elemental Masters, and the Champion of the Clan (born of the Shiba line) has remained a figurehead to help maintain the Phoenix's place in Nippon. Among other Clans, such an arrangement would cause insurmountable disputes within the Clan. The Phoenix have little such difficulty. There are often struggles between the families of the Phoenix, but they fight amongst themselves like loyal siblings — never going far enough to harm another and always closing ranks in the face of outsiders.

As Shiba and Isawa were men of peace and study, the Clan of the Phoenix has evolved into a Clan of scholars, pacifists, and mystics. Those that seek knowledge on obscure and even dangerous topics often turn to the Phoenix for answers, and the Clan produces the finest Shugenja known to the Empire. Like the Crane, the Phoenix is dedicated to the ideal of peace, but is much more resolute in the face of violence. Men and women of the Phoenix gladly and freely give their lives if they feel their deaths will serve the cause of peace, and more than one conflict has been brought to a stunned halt as a Phoenix commander or battalion was cut down without even reaching for a weapon. Recently, the Righteous Emperor, Toturi III, rewarded the Phoenix's centuries-long adherence to such ideals by fostering his two siblings to the Clan and naming the Phoenix his voice in the Empire along with the Miya family. Though somewhat unaccustomed to taking a direct role in the politics and machinations of the Empire, the Phoenix Clan has risen to the challenge with the nobility of its founders.

The Phoenix are conservative in appearance, with elaborate but reasonable clothing and sharply pointed features. They frequently have a contemplative air, as if considering some mystery that others cannot fathom. This gives others the impression that Phoenix are arrogant, which is not always an unfounded assumption. Phoenix tend to have slight builds and are slightly shorter than average.

## The Scorpion Clan

Also referred to as the Emperor's Underhand, the Scorpion are a clan of secrecy and manipulation. Though the clan indulges in a number of various industries to support itself, the main source of the Scorpion Clan's power is information. They are master politicians, with eyes and ears in every court. It is said that if you possess a secret, there is a Scorpion somewhere who knows it. Though they have a reputation as blackmailers it is rare that they ever need to be so obvious. Threat and coercion are the tools of a desperate man: more valuable is to truly know one's opponent better than he knows himself so that he might be more easily manipulated.

This said, Scorpion samurai have earned quite a reputation as villains throughout the Empire's history. This is in no small part the Scorpion's intent, carefully cultivating an aura of fear and intimidation so that others will avoid opposing them. This reputation is everything to the Scorpion Clan, a careful mix of threat. Illusion and true power that keeps enemies confused and unbalanced. A Scorpion does not make a threat he is not prepared to act upon, and Scorpion vengeance is legendary in its swiftness, brutality, and inevitability.

Of course all of this manipulation and deception is not without purpose. The Scorpion are unswervingly loyal to the Emperor, and work tirelessly to seek out potential threats to the throne. Thus they maintain a balance by subtly pitting the clans against one another. This loyalty defines Scorpion honour.

All sins will be forgiven if loyalty to one's family, clan, and Emperor are maintained. Thus while it may be difficult to gain the true trust of a deceptive Scorpion, they are in the end the most loyal allies a samurai can hope to call upon. An honourable samurai who befriends a Scorpion might find many of his problems mysteriously melting away, enemies having accidents on the way to the battlefield or mysteriously reconsidering the matter altogether. The Scorpion, of course, will keep his hand in the matter concealed so that his honourable friend need not worry over the details of what he has done.

The Scorpion do not necessarily enjoy the dishonourable acts they must perform on a routine basis, but they recognize the need for them. It is not



uncommon for Scorpion samurai to become bitter and cynical as they watch the Empire prosper from their secret activities, yet continue to criticize them for their "dishonour."

Some might question how a clan that purports itself as the Clan of Secrets can possibly accomplish anything in secrecy. Again, it is a matter of reputation and manipulation. The Scorpion are quite adept at putting potential opponents at ease, at assuring them that they are in control until there is a pressing need to reveal otherwise. The Scorpion use their reputation as a shield as well as a blade. A typical Bayushi strategy is to shamefully admit that many among the clan are indeed dishonourable and untrustworthy – but that they are the exception. The courtier will beg that only a small modicum of trust be shown so that he might protect his new friends from his disreputable brethren. In other words, a Scorpion makes certain everyone knows how fiendish all Scorpion samurai are, but also that those around him believe he is the exception to the rule. Members of the Scorpion Clan tend to be pale and thin, with regal, delicate features. All Scorpion samurai wear masks, as the Kami Bayushi did, to honour their immortal founder. The style of the mask varies wildly by the wielder, and is always an extremely personal choice. Scorpion take their masks very seriously, and some would no sooner be seen without their mask than without their daisho.

## The Unicorn Clan

The Clan of the Unicorn was once known as the Clan of the Ki-Rin when it was founded by the Kami Shinji. Unlike the other Great Clans, the Clan does not have an extensive past in Nippon, but instead traces most of its traditions and history to the time that Shinjo's followers roamed the lands far beyond the Empire. When the first Thunders defeated Fu Leng, Shinjo found herself stricken by grief and worry. She had loved her brother, Fu Leng, and had even hoped to the last that there would be some way to redeem him. Further, the surprising corruption of the Ninth Kami hinted to Shinjo that there were possibly other dangers that could threaten Hantei's new Empire. Unable to live in an Empire built on the blood of her siblings and wary of what lie beyond the next horizon, Shinjo gathered what followers that would follow her into the unknown and began her journey to the north, to the Burning Sands and beyond. The trials of the Ki-Rin Clan shaped what they would eventually become, and their bizarre adventures and encounters made the Ki-Rin into something completely new. After spending generations outside the Empire and adopting the customs of those that flocked to the Ki-Rin's banner, the Clan realized they were neither Nipponese nor completely different. Shinjo's children took the symbol of the Unicorn as their totem and introduced themselves thus to the Empire when they returned after eight hundred years of self-imposed exile.

The confusion and distrust the Unicorn encountered over three hundred years ago upon their return has abated only a little subsequently. The Unicorn are constantly rebuked for their "barbarian" ways and



general refusal to give up their traditions to become more like the other Clans. The Unicorn are also a very nomadic people, causing them to eschew permanent structures and cities whenever possible. Naturally, this causes a serious problem for outsiders who wish to locate a specific Unicorn samurai, or those who wish to even find a mark of Unicorn civilization in their lands at all. Though the Clan has cities, they are far between and mostly for the purposes of farming or just for the convenience of visitors. Despite the Empire's general distrust of the Unicorn, none can deny the strength of their cavalry warriors or their skill in wilderness arts such as hunting and tracking. The Unicorn's return to Nippon brought disorder to even the most cunning Akodo generals, and the famed Hiruma scouts have long since formed a strong bond with the Unicorn in order to train among their hunters. In effect, the reason why the Unicorn tend to be scorned is the same reason they are respected and feared they are a strong, independent Clan full of unpredictable and exotic resources and tactics.

In recent generations, the influx of Moto family members who have dwelled for centuries beyond Nippon's borders has caused the Unicorn to embrace their gaijin traditions as never before. Though they do not disrespect the paths the other clans take, the Unicorn prefer to do things in their own unique manner. Though they will meet with foreign diplomats within their castles and cities and refer to Chagatai as their champion, they prefer open fields, dwelling in a warm yurt, and answer to Moto Chagatai by his true title – the Khan.

Unicorn stand out from samurai of other clans in any situation due to their gaijin ancestry. For most families, this is a matter of dress and demeanor as much as physical characteristics. Unicorn tend to be shorter and of stockier build than most, with broader features and long, bushy hair,

## The Minor Clans

Each of the Great Clans was founded to serve a specific Kami and perform a unique duty. Throughout history, the Emperor has also declared the formation of many other, smaller clans. There are the Minor Clans. The Minor Clans have samurai and provinces much like the Great Clans, with smaller and less populated holdings. Even the largest of the Minor Clans cannot compare with the wealth and prestige of a Great Clan samurai family. A Minor Clan does not officially exist until recognized and granted a clan name by the Emperor. This name and status can likewise be revoked by the Emperor at any time.

In the dangerous landscape of Imperial politics it can be difficult for these small clans to survive. Fortunately the Emperor has issued a number of edicts protecting Minor Clans from aggressive Great Clans. Most notable among these is that a Great Clan cannot declare war or initiate combat against a Minor Clan the Great Clan can fight only to defend itself. This edict secures the borders of Minor Clans from aggressive clans such as the Lion and Unicorn. It has also had the side effect of causing Minor Clan samurai to be almost invisible in the courts. One never knows what a Great Clan samurai might intentionally misinterpret as an insult or an act of war, thus wise Minor Clan samurai keep to themselves and avoid the activities of Great Clan samurai.

This is not to say that Minor Clan samurai behave like cowards. The more pragmatic among them simply realize that Great Clan politics is not an arena intended for them, A Minor Clan samurai must guarantee the safety of his own small territory and subjects before worrying about matters that concern an entire Empire. There are always exceptions, of course, and no Minor Clan samurai can forget the example of the Mantis Clan. Once an alliance of Minor Clans, the Mantis Clan earned the Empire's respect through courage, determination, and ambition and was rewarded Great Clan status. The Mantis stand as an example of what the other Minor Clans might hope to become, strong and independent instead of scurrying fearfully in the shadows of Great Clan samurai.





### **The Brotherhood of Shinsei**

To many, the little man known as Shinsei is a mystery that surpasses the Kami, the Celestial Heavens, and the great unknowns of the universe. He was a homeless old man that befriended the First Emperor, instructed Hantei how to save his Empire, and led seven mortal men and women to victory against the most powerful of the Kami. When Shosuro returned with the Black Scrolls that held the key to Fu Leng's imprisonment, Shinsei disappeared into the confusion, only adding to the mysteries surrounding him. Between his arrival in the Empire and subsequent vanishing, many others followed the Little Teacher to hear some scrap of the wisdom that seemed to tumble from his lips like water over a fall. These men and women shaved their heads and abandoned worldly fortune in recognition of Shinsei's ways, and studied the Tao after he was gone. Hantei Genji, the Second Emperor, took great steps to

incorporate the Little Teacher's wisdom along with the existing worship of the Fortunes, and to this end went about organizing Shinsei's followers into a recognized group. These disciples were called monks, and Genji named them collectively the Brotherhood of Shinsei. They were not equal to the Great Clans in status or even organization, but it mattered little to the selfless and pious monks. In homage to Shinsei, they devoted themselves to the study of his wisdom, the purification of self, and worked to establish the means for world of peace and harmony.

It is somewhat ironic, then, that such a group would so quickly become divided amongst itself. Such a diverse group of mortals did not always agree on the interpretation of Shinsei's words, and many claimed to have secret dialogues from the Little Teacher that had been previously unrecorded. Further, there were disagreements on just how the mercy and selflessness of the Brotherhood should be applied to the world around it. Some theorized that withdrawal and patience was key and that the hand of destiny would guide the mortal world, while others claimed that the Brotherhood's purpose was to be the force guiding the Empire. Though the philosophical differences were staggering in their number and strength, the monks never fell prey to violence against one another. Such wise scholars agreed upon one another on things with certainty, that killing would solve nothing, and thus the only solution was to create several sects among the Brotherhood to house its respective philosophies, practices, and studies. Like the samurai Empire had its Clans, the Brotherhood soon became a coalition of sects that were allied towards a common goal but took many different paths to get there. To this day, the Brotherhood carries the distinction of never allowing petty differences to result in bloodshed, and their dedication to the ways of peace and enlightenment has unfailingly served as a beacon in Nippon's darkest days.

Monks come from all walks of life, so there is no typical appearance for these men and women. Most monks shave their heads as part of their vows, but even this is not universal. Those monks who take up life as adventurers tend to be the wandering sort, and thus are lean and well muscled from years of rough travel.



# BESTIARY

**In this section you will find information and rules for all of the different warriors, heroes, creatures and war machines in the Nippon army. At the end of the section are some special characters – famous Nipponese that you can field in your army.**

The warriors of Nippon are among the finest in the world. They place honour above everything else, and gladly sacrifice their lives to keep it. They are an unstoppable force on the battlefield, greatly skilled in all things of war. They fear little, and horrors that would make any lesser man run in terror barely affect them. They are the reflection of the true warrior incarnate, and those who seek to defy them will perish at their blades.

On the following pages are the complete rules for the models in the Nippon army. Each entry includes the models profile and special rules. This is normally in combination with the army list on pages ??-?? to create a force that can be used in a one-off game in Warhammer. However, players can also design scenarios with specific forces involved, or run a series of games in a campaign, both of which may well use the information in this section without recourse to the Nippon army list.

## Special Rules

Many troop types have special rules to reflect their unique nature and abilities, and these are explained in the individual Bestiary entries that follow. To save space and repetition, where a model has a special rule that is explained in the Warhammer rulebook, only the name of the rule is given in this section. Refer to the special rules section of Warhammer for the full details of how the rule works. Similarly, the following rule applies to several units in this Bestiary, and as such is detailed here:

**Way of the Warrior:** The Warriors of Nippon have a strict code which they live by. Anyone breaking this code is forever shamed and cast out of society. As a result, the warriors of Nippon fight with unmatched determinism and valour.

Units with this rule may never choose 'Flee' as a charge reaction and must always accept challenges. In addition, they may re-roll all failed Psychology tests and ignores Panic caused by friendly units without this rule.

**Katana:** There is no weapon so revered as the katana. Three to four feet in length and slightly curved, the katana is a triumph of design, the midpoint between artistry and craftsmanship.

Specialty forged so that the black is hard and the Inside is soft, the katana combines a devastating cutting edge with enough flexibility so as to not shatter when cutting into armour or bone.

While the wakizashi may only be worn by those of the samurai caste, only warriors carry the katana. Families pass the swords down through generations; carrying a famous katana is an honour and pledge. A katana is not only a weapon of war; it is an expression of the soul of its bearer.

The Katana counts as a hand weapon. Katana are used by the samurai with great skill, allowing them to parry blows with ease. If fighting with only a single Katana, the wearer gains +1 to his armour save in Close Combat.



# COMMANDERS

Although the Emperor owns all land within the borders of the Empire, he has granted members of the samurai class the honour of protecting and overseeing his affairs, acting as his stewards over the vast majority of land in the Empire. Samurai that have oversight of a particular area are granted the title "Daimyo" and given permission to swear other samurai into their service. Rather than serving the Emperor directly, a Daimyo of this sort is usually appointed by and subordinate to the reigning Daimyo of the family or clan that controls the province within which his land falls.

The primary responsibilities of a Daimyo of this sort are protecting his assigned territory and ensuring that the proper taxes are collected for the Emperor. In order to fulfil these responsibilities he is allowed to take a portion of the rice and other goods produced in his province in order to equip and maintain samurai sworn to his service.

Each family recognized by the Emperor has a designated leader who is Daimyo of that family. Family Daimyo are the highest authority within their own family, although they are subordinate to the Daimyo of their clan.

Family Daimyo are also the honorary heads of their family's schools. The actual duties of running the schools are often delegated to someone more inclined to teaching, or in the case of families with multiple schools, someone who is more familiar with the lessons. Nevertheless, for any matter that would require the attention of the head of the school, the family Daimyo's approval would be required, whether or not he has an active hand in the school's day to day affairs.

The leader of a clan, whether a Great or Minor clan, is also given the title Daimyo, although they are more often referred to as the Champion of the clan. The clan Daimyo are generally also the Daimyo of their family within the clan. The clan Daimyo are the most



powerful in the Empire, second only to the Emperor and Shogun, in both political and military might.

Taisho is a military rank similar to a captain. A Taisho will have many Chui and their units serving beneath him, and reports directly to the Daimyo, who command the force in which the Taisho serves.

	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld
Daimyo	4	6	5	4	4	3	6	4	9
Taisho	4	5	5	4	4	2	5	3	8

## Special Rules

### Way of the Warrior

# SHUGENJA



Most armies keep at least one Shugenja on hand, both as a potent weapon against the enemy and to call upon the blessings of the Fortunes for the battles ahead. Once the battle is done, they give thanks to the Kami and purify the taint of blood and dead flesh that inevitably stains a victorious army.

Shugenja stand out as the one exception to the samurai's usual aversion to surrender. As servants of the Kami, they are always treated with respect and offered the option of being taken prisoner when possible. Most Shugenja realize how rare and precious their gift is, and how wrong it would be to deny the clan their gifts, and accept the offer even if the idea of being held hostage is otherwise intolerable.

Magic in Nippon, is not simply a Shugenja bending the elements to her will, magic underlies all activities: the bird taking flight, and the Sun rising each morning. Man too comes from the confluence this magic projected in the blood and tears of the first Moon and Sun mixing together to create something new. Magic spirits dwell everywhere, simply waiting to be called upon.

In a more common definition, however, magic is the art of Shugenja, and even the monk's kiho. While the average Nipponese understands that magic surrounds them every day, it is still a holy practice, and something to be looked upon with wonder. Shugenja, the most common practitioners of magic, bring with

their vocation the blessings of the Kami upon the Empire.

The samurai caste holds the keys to the magic realm, proof that the greatest blessings of the Sun and Moon are reserved for the nobility. Occasionally, peasants have a strong affinity for the Kami and in all but the rarest cases this is the same inner path that the monks follow. The peasant then goes on to study among the peaceful Brotherhood of Shinsel. Peasants who show true magical affinity are quickly granted samurai status and trained as Shugenja.

As a force, magic represents a tool and a blessing as a genuine gift from the Heavens. With the power of magic, a Shugenja can purify foul water, tell truth from fiction, hurl fire into their enemies, and convene with the wisdom of the Celestial Heavens. This immense power commands respect both for the Shugenja who wields it, and for the Kami who provide such strength.

Shugenja do more than simply cast spells. They are the priests of the Kami, their very power a testament to the wisdom and truth of their beliefs. Shugenja record and keep the names of the Fortunes, act as intermediaries between the world of mortals and spirits, and carry the wisdom set down by the Celestial Heavens. Though not the official keepers of the Tao of Shinsei, a duty held by the Brotherhood of Shinsei monks, almost all Shugenja are familiar with the text, and view it as a valuable guide to life.

Shugenja bless villages many times during a year, to help bring about a greater harvest, healthier livestock, and protect the village against threats both mortal and supernatural. They also commune with spirits of the dead, creating a link between the living and the reword ancestors of the family. Such a duty falls to them as both a great honour and a staggering burden, as many souls of the dead are troubled with unfinished business, and will seek a Shugenja's aid in fulfilling it in return for their wisdom.

Shugenja tend to be peaceful men. While most clans have their Shugenja trained for war and capable of casting impressive battle magic (The Crab, Dragon, and Lion have more such Shugenja than other clans), the path of the Fortunes and Kami impresses a Shugenja with a strong reverence for life in all its forms. Shugenja believe life is a gift, and should never be squandered for any reason.

	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld
High Shugenja	4	3	3	3	3	3	3	1	8
Shugenja	4	3	3	3	3	2	3	1	7

# SAMURAI WARRIORS



The Samurai assume the highest rank of the Nipponese social system, as decreed by the Celestial Order. The word "samurai" means "those who serve", and was first used by Emperor Hantei in reference to the Seven Thunders before the Day of Thunder. All who were born in this caste were considered samurai, regardless of their occupation. The Samurai warriors make up the bulk of Nippon's armies. Greatly skilled with both sword and bow, and wearing heavy armour, often with accompanying battle masks, these fearsome fighters are a match for any opponent.

The Samurai wield a variety of equipment in battle, and can adapt to any situation. They represent the height of human martial prowess, and fight according to a strict code of honour, displaying fanatical bravery and loyalty on the battlefield.

	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld
Samurai Warrior	4	4	4	3	3	1	4	1	8
Samurai Chui	4	4	4	3	3	1	4	2	8

## Special Rules

Way of the Warrior

# SAMURAI CAVALRY

Despite the fact that most Samurai go about their business mounted, generally merely as a sign of their station, only a very few have truly perfected the art of war from horseback.

The mounted Samurai are truly deadly warriors and the scourge of any commander foolish enough to incur the wrath of a Nipponese army. They eschew the heavy plate armour and cumbersome barding favoured by the knights of the Old World in favour of increased speed and flexibility. They attack in combination with infantry, using their excellent horsemanship to outmanoeuvre and strike the enemy from multiple directions at once.

The most famous Samurai Cavalry comes from the Unicorn Clan, whose horse expertise is unrivalled by any other in Nippon.

	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld
Samurai Cavalry	4	4	4	3	3	1	4	1	8
Samurai Chui	4	4	4	3	3	1	4	2	8
Warhorse	8	3	0	3	3	1	3	1	5

## Special Rules

Way of the Warrior, Fast Cavalry



# ASHIGARU



The Ashigaru are common foot-soldiers of the Nipponese armies and lowest ranked in the Buke caste, these men are peasants conscripted into service in times of war and sent to the battle front. Armed with little more than padding that serve as an excuse for armour and a yari, these men merely charge in large numbers and serves as an interesting backdrop for duelling samurai.

Ashigaru archers and spearmen, however, occasionally prove to be deadly when given sufficient direction and purpose by a competent leader. After all, arrows in sufficient numbers may maim or even kill the most highly trained, armed, and armoured bushi before it gets close enough to even wound anybody. Even then, however, most samurai look upon the ashigaru as mere tools: as Tsuruchi Nobumoto says, "What we do is art. What peasants do is merely adequate."

Most of the great houses have families of Ashigaru who have served for generations, and most of those in the family have a fierce pride and loyalty equalling that of most samurai. In times of peace these hereditary ashigaru serve mostly as guardsmen and scouts.

	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld
Ashigaru	4	3	3	3	3	1	3	1	6
Gunso	4	3	3	3	3	1	3	2	6

# PEASANT DOSHIN

The peasants of Nippon are mostly concerned with agriculture and other such trivialities, but are sometimes recruited as Doshin. Doshin is the lowest level of law enforcement in Nippon, being assistants to either a yoriki or a Magistrate's deputy. If there are not enough suitable samurai in the area, it is possible for a heimin to serve as a Doshin. Doshin have very little authority, except over those of the eta. They deal with minor crimes and are supported by budoka.

In times of war, the Doshin might be pressed into service of the Samurai army. They are not expected to do much other than die for their masters, fill out the ranks and acts as human shields for the more noble warriors.

	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld
Doshin	4	2	2	3	3	1	3	1	5
Nikutai	4	2	2	3	3	1	3	2	6



# WARRIOR MONKS



During the early days of Nippon, the prophet Shinsei changed the course of history in a single night, when he spent the long evening hours telling the first Emperor Hantei of his plan to defeat Fu Leng and his Haikido armies. Shinsei revealed many secrets to Hantei, secrets regarding the Celestial Order and the role of man in the universe. When the dawn came, the Emperor pledged Shinsei whatever he required to defeat Fu Leng. Fortunately for the Empire, the wisdom revealed in this conversation was not lost, but was dutifully recorded by Homers brother, the Kami Shiba.

The Tao of Shinsei grew out of Shiba's notes. He brought the scrolls back to his fledgling Phoenix Clan and surrendered them to the Tribe of Isawa. Isawa's followers studied the Tao carefully, and even the most arrogant among them could not deny its wisdom. Its secrets revolutionized the way Shugenja interacted with the karni, causing the Isawa to abandon the primitive blood magic they had always used. The Tao was too important to be kept secret, and Shiba saw to it that copies went to each Great Clan.

At the time the Tao of Shinsei was written, the people of Nippon already had a religion that predated the Karats fall from heaven.

They revered the powerful primordial beings known as Fortunes, including both the Seven Fortunes and less-powerful deities called mikoKami, such as the Fortune of Wind called Kaze-no-Kami. A schism developed between these two faiths, widening quietly until the two were officially merged by imperial edict several years later.

Individuals Messed with the ability to speak to the Kami directly are relatively rare, but there is no shortage of pious men and women who desire a

spiritual life. Devotees of the Fortunes and students of the Tao alike established monasteries where they could adopt an ascetic lifestyle while seeking enlightenment. These individuals are Nippon's monks, and their massive network of temples, shrines, and monasteries that spans the Empire Is governed by a body known as the Brotherhood of Shinsei. Some oversight is necessary given the sheer number of facilities controlled by the various monastic sects in Nippon, and while the Brotherhood has no formal leader, the most respected monks around Nippon are generally given authority by their fellow monks, whether they want it or not.

Monks occupy a tenuous position In Nippon's social order. As a rule, they are not forthcoming about their past, and it is considered almost blasphemous to inquire. A monk has left his old life behind. The fact that some were peasants and others samurai makes interacting with them difficult, as one never knows what station should be afforded a monk. Given the uncertainty and their position as religious figures, the honourable thing to do when interacting with a monk is to treat him with respect and admiration. This mindset is common to all but the most dishonourable samurai. While samurai feel some uncertainty when interacting with monks, the peasants simply revere them. Monks are teachers as much as anything else, and they treat all people equally. Also, many monasteries send their adherents into villages and towns to aid heimin and hinin with menial tasks.

Monks represent the entirety of Nippon's religion, which is a surprisingly diverse, eclectic, and elaborate institution with three distinct facets. While an Imperial decree technically links two of these facets together, and the third is so widely accepted that none dispute it, the truth is that the three do not fit together particularly well. Generally speaking, the average individual, including monks, selects an aspect he finds most desirable and uses that as the basis of his devotion.

	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld
Warrior Monk	4	4	3	3	3	1	4	1	8
Abbot	4	4	3	3	3	1	4	2	8

## Special Rules

### Immune to Psychology

**Martial Arts:** Warrior Monks are skilled combatants, studying the old martial arts of Nippon daily, which they have learned to bring use to on the battlefield, fighting with fist and feet as well as any weapon they might carry.

Warrior Monks gain one additional Attack in the first round of each combat.

# HATAMOTO

Those Samurai that distinguish themselves on the battlefield become part of a Clan's inner circle in the form of Hatamoto. These are the elite foot soldiers of the Clan, ferociously dedicated to their patrons, and experienced in war.

The Hatamoto are the chief aid and advisors to a Daimyo. The position commands great respect and influence, as the Daimyo has chosen the individuals for this task. When a Daimyo travels it is common for the Hatamoto to be left in charge of the Daimyo's estate. To be a Hatamoto means your lord regards your advice highly, and the title is so that all shall know you are one of his favoured subjects. Sometimes the title brings with it a certain amount of land, where the Hatamoto is expected to live and continue in the service to their lord.

Many of the Hatamoto spend their time perfecting their fighting skills and cultivating a full range of meditative and artistic disciplines, and many Hatamoto have brought honour to their clan as poets or painters.

One of the first recorded Hatamoto in history was Mirumoto, who became the Hatamoto of the Kami Togashi. Around this time was also the founding of the Shiba Yojimbo School, which was inspired by the Kami Shiba kneeling before Isawa and pledging to protect the Shugenja and his tribe.

The main duty of the Hatamoto is to protect important members or allies who were not expected to always defend themselves. People such as courtiers and Shugenja were most commonly not trained in the sword, and as such would require someone to protect them. In the case of duels of honour, a Hatamoto can often be someone's designated champion, although this is not necessarily always the case.

Above else, the Hatamoto acts as the Daimyo's bodyguard, both on the battlefield and in the castle.

The Hatamoto take their given task extremely serious, for to them there is no greater shame than failure.

Failure to protect the one they have sworn means their life is forfeit, and there is no other solution than to take one's own life, for a life in shame is completely unthinkable to them.



	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld
Hatamoto	4	4	4	4	3	1	4	1	8
Hatamoto Chui	4	4	4	4	3	1	4	1	8

## Special Rules

### Way of the Warrior

**Bodyguard:** The Hatamoto are entrusted to protect their target with their lives. Choose one character that is the unit. As long as that character is alive and with the unit, the Hatamoto are Stubborn and Immune to Psychology. If the character is killed however, the Hatamoto will commit seppuku if they break from combat, and are automatically removed as casualties.

# SUMO WARRIORS



Before Hantei I, many noblemen of Nippon lived in constant danger of assassination, whether from the hired killers of others or the ambitious members of their own family. In the complex web of family and group loyalty that is Nipponese society it was sometimes best to employ outsiders, individuals who have no clan or family ties to interfere with their personal loyalty.

The Sumo Warriors were such men, separated from their families in childhood and raised in special schools they are sold to any noble who can afford their services. Iron muscled frames sheathed in mountains of fat, the Sumo Warriors are the products of a strange bodybuilding regimen of force-feeding and tortuous strength and endurance routines.

In the performance of their bodyguard duties Sumotori was expected to interpose themselves between their master and potential threats, in effect providing them a living shield of unyielding flesh. This dedication to duty and complete lack of concern for their own safety made them a formidable foe on the battlefield.

After Hantei I took the throne and unified Nippon, the practice of Sumo bodyguards was redundant, as most Daimyos began to hire their most loyal Samurai to act as their bodyguards instead. Sumo Warriors instead became sportsmen in the very popular sport of Sumai.

Sumo wrestlers go through intense purification and meditation rituals before a sumo bout, and spectators come for the ceremony as much as the sport. An actual bout of sumo is over in seconds, as two massive wrestlers slam into one another with the intent of knocking the opponent off his feet or pushing him out of the ring. Matches are separated into four categories according to the skill and reputation of the wrestlers. In ascending order, these are juryo, maegashira, sanyaku, and yokuzuna. Winter Court only allows bouts of yokuzuna. Sumo tournaments take place between two teams of wrestlers who perform seventeen bouts before the Emperor and his entourage.

A beautifully crafted masterwork bow goes to the victor whereupon they receive an invitation from the Imperial court to perform bugaku, a complex ritual of ceremonial songs and dances; the champion dances while twirling the prize bow.

While the Sumo Warriors are sportsmen most of the time, they still train like any other Samurai. In times of war, these massive warriors go into battle carrying no-dachi, easily capable of cutting through a knight and horse with a single blow, making them excellent shock troops.

	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld
Sumo Warrior	4	4	3	4	4	1	4	2	8
Yokozuna	4	4	3	4	4	1	4	3	8

## Special Rules

### Way of the Warrior

**Crushing Grip:** Sumo Warriors boasts extreme Strength, easily capable of crushing mans skull with their hand. Sumo Warriors may choose to forego their normal attacks in favour of doing a Crushing Grip. If this attack hits, the enemy must pass a Toughness test or be automatically slain, with no armour save or Regeneration allowed. This only has an effect on models with a unit Strength of 2 or less.

# KABUKI DOLLS



Kabuki is one of the most common forms of theatre in Nippon, and focuses on lively and almost violent action, dancing and tension. Singers and orchestra often provide the backdrop for the actors and key information about the setting. The name Kabuki comes from the word kabuki-odori which means "stylish and shocking dances". The plays make use of elaborate costumes, makeup, sets and special effects to accompany the story, and the actors move in special stylized patterns known as kata. The set is changed by stagehands dressed entirely in black during the show, and the stage contains many trapdoors and rotating platforms to aid in this endeavour. There are two major types of Kabuki plays; the jidaimono, or "rough stuff style", and the sewamono, the "talk of the town".

Most performers of Kabuki theatre are professional dancers and actors; however a small and secretive cult

of masked assassins also trains its members in Kabuki, treating the intricate gestures and extreme posturing of the dance as the basis for a martial art form. These Kabuki Dolls, as they are called, receive lifelong training in diverse arts, from assassination, protection, and diplomacy, to proficiency with exotic and traditional weapons like the battle-fan and poisoned hair needles, as well as skill with a musical instrument, rhetorical excellence, and of course Kabuki dance. Some nobles flaunt their Kabuki Doll escorts when in public, as it is a great status symbol in society to own one, and accomplished Kabuki Dolls can command the price of a small mansion for a single evening's entertainment - or a single, spectacular kill. Though the battlefield is not their ideal environment, units of Kabuki Dolls make very effective combat troops. Their expertise in the martial arts, bravery and dedication to duty are second to none. They move in small formations on the battlefield, striking where the enemy is at its weakest. Brainwashed by their secret cult and filled with hatred, they throw themselves at their foes, tearing them to pieces with their blades, while laughing manically with blood dripping down their ghostly, white painted faces.

	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld
Kabuki Doll	5	4	3	3	3	1	5	2	8
Dai-jô	5	4	3	3	3	1	5	3	8

## Special Rules

### Skirmish, Hatred, Poisoned Attacks

**War Fan:** Fans are often used in Nippon by courtiers to hide their faces, and by generals to signal the troops. Eventually it was developed into a weapon as well. The War Fan was primarily developed to be defensive but it can also be used to strike blows with its sharp, metal edges.

A War Fan may be used in two ways: it can either be used as an additional hand weapon, or as a shield in close combat. You may switch between the two at the start of any Close Combat phase.

# ONI

Oni are the demonic monstrosities that make up the most powerful forces of Haikido. Many Oni gain physical form in the Realm of Mortals either as the spawn of an Oni Overlord or by being summoned from Jigoku by someone willing to share her name in exchange for power. In either case, an Oni's motivation and location is practically unlimited, though they are more frequently encountered in the Haikido. Usually, summoned Oni remain inside Nippon during their period of servitude and only for a little while after gaining their freedom from their would-be master. A newly-freed Oni generally expresses its joy through wanton destruction, and then eventually migrates to Haikido.

An Oni's personality is rooted in its bestial nature – it is a living expression of the will of Jigoku – but can be influenced by the personality of the Oni Overlord or Shugenja that brought it to the mortal world. An Overlord's spawn tends to have the exact nature of its master, while a summoned Oni becomes more and more like its summoner the longer the two co-exist. While the Oni more often than not acts as enemies to the warriors of Nippon, the Shugenja have unlocked the secrets of summoning them for their own agendas. Summoning an Oni seems very simple at first. The Shugenja will have to take the risks necessary to learn the maho knowledge needed and seek out the summoning scrolls.

The ritual requires the caster to have a proper name for the future Oni (See Naming an Oni. The Shugenja must first draw a circle of powdered bones on the ground. At the center of the circle, the summoner must then put a scroll with a name of a living human being on it. While the summoner spills blood all over the name scroll, the ritual described on the summoning scroll will proceed, destroying the scroll at the end of the ritual.

At this moment a gate to Jigoku will open to let loose one of the spirits inside. The Shugenja must then name the spirit, declare power over the oni and make his demand. There is no way to know which form will take an Oni before it is summoned.

The Oni will then obey, argue the demand or even rebel against the Shugenja. If its will is weaker than that of the summoner, the Oni is compelled by the summon to carry out the demand of the Shugenja. If its



will is stronger, the Oni can escape back to Jigoku. Oni are brought to battle as beasts of war obeying their summoner's will, which usually involve crushing her foes into a bloody pulp.

	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld
Oni	6	5	3	5	4	3	5	3	8
Overlord	6	5	3	5	4	3	5	4	8

## Special Rules

**Fear, Unbreakable, Magical Attacks, 5+ Ward save**

**Daemonic Instability:** Oni cannot be broken, but if they lose a combat they must take a Leadership test. If the test is failed, the unit loses one additional wound with no saves allowed for every point over their Leadership that the dice shows.

# NINJA



Ninja mostly come from the Scorpion Clan, although it has been rumoured that other clans have Ninja of their own. During the rule of Hantei X the Otomo family, jealous of the role of the Bayushi Ninja network (whose functions overlapped theirs) started a campaign of rumours. When these reached the ears of the Emperor, he ordered the Scorpion Clan Champion Bayushi Hajioki to dismantle the network. The order was given, and many Ninja, including Hajioki's own brother Bayushi Aramoro, committed seppuku. Since his time and for much time later, the Ninja were considered gone.

Even though Bayushi Hajioki was ordered to dismantle the network, he didn't obey that order. Instead, he planned together with the Daimyo of the Shosuro, Soshi, and Yogo families, and decided to charge Shosuro Nodage with the mission of creating a false conspiracy that would divert the attention from the real operations of the Scorpion.

Nodage did his best job. The Scorpion spread rumours of a group of Ninja that didn't obey Hantei X's order. That group called themselves "the Ninja". According to the legend, the ghost of Bayushi Aramoro appeared to them, urging the group to gain revenge for his death and the destruction of the Scorpion spy network. The men faked their own deaths out of respect for their dead master, and then used dark magics to transform their bodies and souls into shadow itself. These "Ninja" were said to be the power behind the wave of deaths that followed, of every person that was responsible for the death of Aramoro. Each murder was especially gruesome, and no trace of the assassin was left behind. As soon as the illusion was gaining momentum, low-ranking Scorpion spies began dressing in black clothes and provoking "Ninja sightings" all over Nippon.

While they would distract the credulous and superstitious people of the Emerald Empire, a more discreet assassin would stealthily complete the murder. With time, the myth continued gaining momentum even without the Scorpion's direct action, as many greedy and ambitious people found the stories of men

made of shadow that employ maho never seen before to be a perfect cover for their own ploys.

There was something more to the Ninja story than a simple myth though. Many trustworthy sources claimed that the Ninja indeed used the dark magics they were famous for, and many samurai dedicated their lives to uncovering the deeper truth about this conspiracy. Among them was Kitsuki Kaagi, a magistrate who dedicated himself to the study of what really were the Ninja. However, he disappeared without a trace before the Scorpion could learn what he was able to uncover. The only thing that was left behind was his journal. Only one Bayushi gained access to that journal, and he was maddened by whatever he saw. The man attacked the Shosuro Daimyo of the time, Shosuro Hametsu, screaming "He isn't human!" as he struck a dagger into the Daimyo's chest. Luckily, Hametsu lived, and the mad attacker was killed on spot.

Due to the nature of their duties, Ninja have to violate the tenets of Bushido at every turn. For this reason, Ninja groups usually adopt a slightly different code of honour. These vary from family to family, but almost always involve some form of the Three Oaths, originally devised by the Scorpion:

Secrecy – Ninja almost always operate under a cover identity or another. Often, even their own family does not know about their covert activities. This protects not only the Ninja himself, but also his associates.

Loyalty – A Ninja can only depend on his compatriots, and they only on him, making loyalty even more important than for normal samurai. He must also be prepared to deny allegiance to his lord when caught, and face the consequences alone.

Duty – A Ninja's duty is even more arduous than for others, as it often alienates him from his friends and family. In addition, he must be ready to solve difficult tasks on his own, often at the price of his own life, without the prospect of eternal glory and veneration a bushi enjoys.

Few Ninja decide to retire to a monastery, instead turning into advisors, low-risk yojimbo or other tasks where their experience is valuable, but their failing flesh not too much of a hindrance. Those that do sometimes become targets for their former brethren, who fear some of their secrets may be revealed to the outside world.

Though generally distrusted and loathed by the Samurai, some commanders see past the Ninjas' lack of honour and see their uses on the battlefield. Groups of Ninja scouts ahead of the army, assassinate valuable targets, and harass the enemy supply lines.

The Shadow Eye, on the other hand, is the highest ranking of Ninja in Nippon. They are employed to eliminate enemy commanders, small units and war machines, and are a match for anyone in combat.

	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld
Ninja	5	4	4	3	3	1	5	1	8
Blood Moon	5	4	4	3	3	1	5	2	8
Shadow Eye	5	6	6	4	4	2	7	3	9

## Special Rules

### Skirmish, Scout, Always Strike First, 4+ Ward save

**Dishonourable:** The Samurai have a great enmity towards the Ninja of Nippon, and would never lower themselves to fight side by side with them. Ninja may never join any units with the Way of the Warrior rule, and vice versa.

**Hidden:** A Shadow Eye is a special type of character. He may begin the game hidden in one of the following units: Ashigaru, Peasant Doshin, Kabuki Dolls or Ninja. Make a note of which unit the Shadow Eye is hiding in. A hidden Shadow Eye is not placed on the table during deployment, but is revealed later in the game. If his

concealing unit is wiped out or flees from the battlefield before he is revealed, the Shadow Eye is also lost and counts as a casualty. There is no other way the Shadow Eye can be harmed before he is revealed.

Hidden Shadow Eye may be revealed at the beginning of any of your turns, or at the start of any Close Combat phase. Declare that the unit contains a Shadow Eye and place the model in the front rank. Displace a rank-and-file model to make room for the Shadow Eye. If the unit is in close combat, the Shadow Eye displaces any rank-and-file model in the unit that is in contact with the enemy. If there are no rank-and-file models to displace in a suitable position, a command model or character must be moved to make room for the Shadow Eye.

**A Killer not a Leader:** Although Shadow Eyes are character models, units in the Dark Elf army may not use a Shadow Eye's Leadership and a Shadow Eye can never be chosen to be your army's General.

**Blowgun:** Blowguns firing poisoned darts are among the Ninja's favourite weapons, able to cripple to toughest foe.

A blowgun has a range of 12", strength 3, and fires 2x multiple shots. All shots made with a blowpipe are *poisoned*.

**Caltrops:** Caltrops are an antipersonnel weapon made up of two or more sharp nails or spines arranged in such a manner that one of them always points upward from a stable base.

The Caltrops may be used as a Stand and Shoot reaction. The enemy unit charging them deducts D6" from its charge move, as they must be careful not to trample on the caltrops scattered on the ground.

**Grappling Hooks:** Ninja use grappling hooks to scale walls and buildings otherwise impassable for them. Ninja equipped with grappling hooks ignores penalties for impassable terrain like walls, rocks and building, but not water and the like. Note that they may still not end their move within impassable terrain.

**Smoke Bombs:** The smoke bomb of the Ninja is a small eggshell filled with blinding powder, used to facilitate escape.

At the end of any Close Combat phase in which a unit of Ninja take part, they may choose to use their Smoke Bombs. On a 4+ the unit may disengage the combat and may not be pursued.

### Shosuro Shinobi School

*The Shrnobi are the most secretive school in the most secretive Clan in Nippon, and for good reason. The Shinobi are spies, and assassins. When diplomacy, strength of arms, and magic fall, it falls to the Shinobi to protect the Scorpion's Interests. Though some might call them Ninja, it is unwise to let them heat the term: the Shosuro family loathes the daemonic Goju assassins who proudly beat the name of "ninja".*

*Most Shosuro students are drafted from the other Scorpion schools when they begin to show great talent in stealth or the cold instincts that are so useful for an assassin. Most are instructed privately while they continue studies in other schools, adapting guises as samurai or courtiers as they continue their Shinobi training.*

*Optimally, a Shosuro Shinohi has a full life and duties aside from those he learns in school. When his Clan calls upon him, his skills are ready, but until these deadly samurai hide in plain sight.*

*A Shinobi is trained to move silently, kill efficiently, and blend effortlessly into the shadows. They are also knowledgeable in all aspects of Nippon's criminal underworld, for the duties often require them to seek aid or information there.*

*Above all else a Shinobi's most prized possession is his identity. A Shinobi conceals his true nature from any whom he does not trust completely. The Empire hates ninja and though the Shinobi do not consider themselves ninja, they do recognize that their tactics are so similar as to make little difference in the eyes of their enemies. Shinobi who are exposed must claim to be acting without the knowledge of the Scorpion Clan. They reveal nothing about their training or objectives.*

*If there is no possibility of escape, a captured Shinobi will take his own life rather than revealing the Scorpion's secrets under torture.*

# RONIN



No matter how prosperous or beleaguered the Empire becomes, there are always samurai who serve no master but themselves. To these samurai, known as Ronin, or "wave men", the notion of a life without duty is far worse than death. Some men are born to this lot, the child of a samurai who chooses not to recognize his offspring for whatever reason. Others are cast out for failure, denied even the honourable redemption of seppuku.

A samurai becomes masterless from the ruin or fall of his master, or after the loss of his master's favour or privilege. A samurai is forbidden to become employed by another master without his previous master's permission. When the samurai's previous master dies without an heir, or is stripped of his lands and title, the samurai is unemployable by other Daimyo. In addition, a samurai can become Ronin if he is not recognized as an heir by his samurai parent, is outcast

for a failure and denied seppuku, or is simply someone who has chosen to abandon his station.

To a samurai, for whom their duty to their master is their life, the loss of duty is often seen as a fate worse than death. Generally, a samurai will request to commit seppuku to absolve himself of whatever shame caused him to become Ronin, though this step could be forbidden by the samurai's Daimyo, if becoming Ronin were a punishment.

Traditionally, Ronin are generally regarded as disreputable and are frequently targets of humiliation and satire. In addition, Ronin often pose a serious threat, as the masterless life often degenerates into a life of thievery and malice. Ronin bands frequently threaten settlements and commerce. This is a problem that arises somewhat regularly and that the magistrates of Nippon put forth every effort to quell.

Ronin exist outside the Celestial Order. They are still samurai, but they are not subservient to any greater power. They wear the daisho, but they do not have the protection of even the eta who live under a Daimyo.

Ronin travel in small bands throughout Nippon, seeking to redeem themselves by fighting evil. Since there is no reason for a Samurai to exist without his honour, they want nothing more than to fall in the field of battle, thus relieving themselves of their shame by finding a worthy death. Most commanders are happy to allow them to join the armies of Nippon, as they fight for practically nothing in return, and hopefully results in a few less Ronin in the world.

	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld
Ronin	4	4	4	4	3	1	4	1	9

**Special Rules**  
**Skirmish, Unbreakable**

# KITSUNE

The Kitsune are fox spirits, perhaps the most famous denizens of Chikushudo, the Realm of Animals. Though they are often mischievous and overly bold, they are generally good-natured with an insatiable curiosity about the ways of mortals. They often visit Nippon, sometimes joining samurai in their travels to study their strange ways.

Kitsune understands lessons and are willing to put up with anything if it is explained to them in the context of learning a skill, and like teaching lessons as much as learning them.

Kitsune are particularly fond of the Fox Clan, with whom they share a common bloodline. In their human form a Kitsune seem somehow more beautiful than ordinary humans, with a slight flicker of amusement in their eyes. Their natural form is a fox of unusual colour with nine long tails.

Kitsune live in tightly-knit family units, with a dominant male and female directing the efforts of the rest of the pack. Even those that wander free from their homes still maintain a strong connection to their home pack, and will someday return.

Kitsune are peaceful creatures, but have been known to strike out violently at those who prove themselves to be without honour. They are especially defensive of their home forest. They use spell-like abilities to confuse and distract foes when possible, leaving them to perish in the woods.

	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld
Kitsune	9	5	0	5	4	4	6	3	9



## Special Rules

### Fear

**Spirit:** A Kitsune can only be harmed by magical attacks, and does not suffer any penalties for moving through any kind of terrain. In addition, all of the Kitsune's attacks are magical as well.

**Spell Caster:** During the Magic phase, pick one of the Lores available to the Kitsune and roll a D6; the result rolled is the spell that will be cast. All spells are cast as Bound Spells, with a Power Level of 4.

# THUNDER DRAGON



Thunder Dragons have long been a common sight in the armies of Nippon. Originating in the Kanto Yosid Mountains, these large, carnivorous lizards were domesticated by Nipponese for protection against Haikido and other foes that regularly assail the villages of Nippon. They are thought to be an offshoot of the Celestial Dragons that inhabit the mountains of Cathay. Unlike their lithe relatives, Thunder Dragons are stocky and well built, with layers of tough hide under their scales, designed to keep them warm in the sometimes bitter mountains. Smaller than their cousins,

Thunder Dragons seem to be less than ideal predators and they would be, if it weren't for their ability to generate a massive discharge of lightning through serrated plates in their throat. This charge can be controlled somewhat by the Dragon, though the process of doing so is little understood by the savants of the Old World or Cathay. The Dragon's natural inclination to unleash a deadly blast against anything that stands in front of it makes it equally dangerous and useful to the armies of Cathay.

	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld
Thunder Dragon	5	5	0	5	5	5	3	4	7

## Special Rules

### Terror, Large Target, 4+ Scaly Skin

**Spit Lightning:** Thunder Dragons can spit arcing forks of lightning up to 16" in each Shooting phase. Spit Lightning automatically hit its target if in range, and causes 2D6 Strength 4 hits.

# WARHORSE



A Warhorse is a steed that has been trained to carry its rider into the chaos of battle without fear and to lash out with its iron-shod hooves. Only the members of the Buke caste may ride them, usually as a sign of status. While most Samurai prefer to fight on foot, the ones that fight mounted are not to be underestimated. Less armoured than most knights, the Nipponese cavalry prefer speed and mobility over protection. The best warhorses in Nippon come, unsurprisingly, from the lands of the Unicorn, where they have great plains to wander about. These warhorses are much sought after by the mobility, but it costs a lot to get a member of the Unicorn clan to sell one of his prized mounts.

	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld
Warhorse	8	3	0	3	3	1	3	1	5

# KIRIN

According to the legends of Nippon, the Kirin were born of a union of Air and Earth when the world was young. The story is typical of Nippon, and hence manifestly fanciful, but does reflect accurately the potency of these creatures. Kirin are creatures of wholly unnatural composition, although appearing not unlike normal flesh and blood. They live amongst the devastating forces of lightning, storms and thunder. Kirin are aerial creatures who ride the roaring winds and storm clouds, bellowing like thunder and screaming great cracks of lightning through the electric-charged air.

Kirin have horse-like bodies with long, flowing manes spun with sparks and slivers of lightning. In the centre of the creature's forehead sprouts a long silver horn used to impale its foes. They are truly celestial beings of great intelligence and wisdom, and a symbol of swiftness and good fortune.

	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld
Kirin	9	4	0	4	4	3	5	2	8

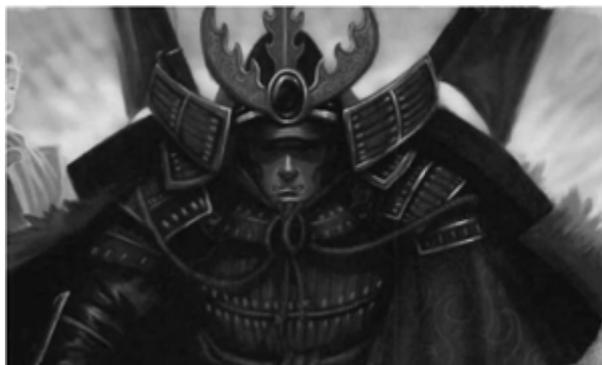


## Special Rules

### Fly

**Impale Attack:** The Kirin attacks with +1 Strength when it charges into combat.

# AKODO KANEKA, SHOGUN OF NIPPON



Akodo Kaneka is the illegitimate son of Emperor Toturi I and the geisha Hatsuko who was pregnant with Kaneka during the Scorpion Coup, and gave birth to him sometime after. It was at this time that the Dragon of Water intervened and removed the infant Kaneka and his mother from the mortal realm to prevent Kaneka interfering with the destiny of Toturi. Kaneka was then returned to the mortal realm six years later, still an infant.

Kaneka spent his early years growing up in a small hut in Shinomen Mori. His mother never revealed to him who his father was, and eventually he set out to travel the Empire as a ronin for many years. During his travels he met many other individuals whom he came to trust implicitly. Towards the end of his travels in, he visited the hut where he had been raised. There he encountered the Dragon of Water which revealed to him the truth about his existence and who his father was.

The year after Kaneka announced himself as the son of the Emperor Toturi I and a geisha. Kaneka's claim was supported by several sources, including the Akodo. This caused many disturbances in the Imperial Court, as that would make Kaneka the oldest child of Toturi. Toturi however never had the chance to officially recognize Kaneka as his son.

Shortly after the Lion announced Kaneka as the son of Toturi; The Scorpion, believing his claim false, attempted to assassinate him. The first attempt failed and the Lion heightened security, so Shosuro Yudoka and Shosuro Toson enlisted the aid of Shosuro Aroru. Aroru successfully planted a poisoned trap in Kaneka's armour, but the trap failed because the poison had been replaced by Aroru's wife Shosuro Teiriko. In 1159 Naseru joined the magistrate Kitsuki Remata to investigate the lineage of Akodo Kaneka. Remata revealed that Kaneka was more closely related to the Yasuki family line than Yasuki Hachi. With the support of the Scorpion Kaneka led an army to seize the Yasuki lands himself. The Crab were allowed to draw upon the resources of the land, while the Crane

Yasuki were ordered to leave. Both Hachi and Remata suspected foul play regarding the discovery of Kaneka's lineage.

He is a very ambitious man, driven to succeed and show Nippon that he is the son of Toturi in every way, and set about uniting the clans. After one year of conquest the Daimyo of the Scorpion Clan broke his wakizashi in order to show true allegiance to Kaneka. He was soon followed by the rest of the clans. Kaneka accepted their loyalty and took the title of Shogun, meaning "commander of force".

As Shogun, he controls the combined might of Nippon's armies. All the Clan Daimyo are subject to him, and he answer to no one other than the Emperor. Known as the greatest warrior of his time, he has all but put an end to the civil war between the Clans, and Nippon has grown stronger than ever during his reign, where he rules with both charisma and an iron fist.

	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld
Akodo Kaneka	4	7	5	4	4	3	6	5	10

## Equipment

Akodo Kaneka wields the Blade of the Silver Moon, wears the Helm of Iron Resolve, and heavy armour.

## Special Rules

### Way of the Warrior

**Shogun:** Akodo Kaneka must be the army's General. Any friendly unit may use his Leadership within 18" rather than the normal 12". In addition, any unit using his Leadership may re-roll failed Break Tests.

## Magic Items

### Blade of the Silver Moon (Magic Weapon)

*The Blade of the Silver Moon is the most potent weapon in Nippon, a blade of dull but deadly power. The moon can be seen constantly reflected in its blade, destroying everything in its wake.*

**Katana.** All attacks wound automatically, and each wound caused is multiplied into D3 wounds.

### Helm of Iron Resolve (Magic Armour)

*Created specifically for the protection of the Shogun, the Helm surrounds the wearer with a faint aura of light that can reflect any blow.*

The Helm of Iron Resolve adds +1 to Akodo Kaneka's armour save. In addition, he gains a 3+ Ward save against mundane Attacks, negated to a 5+ Ward save against magical Attacks.

# AGASHA CHIEH, SUPREME EMERALD MAGISTRATE

Agasha Chieh is the current Supreme Emerald Magistrate of the Imperial Court. She was an Emerald Magistrate from an early age as the result of her connection to her father, Agasha Hisojo. Only a short time before her appointment as Supreme Emerald Magistrate, however, did she emerge from the Izaku Library, where she took refuge from her father's reputation, and in to Nippon.

Agasha Hisojo was a great magistrate of the Dragon Clan long before the Agasha split. As such, Hisojo was looked well upon by the Kitsuki family, who took the Crane-turned-Dragon under their wing. This sentiment among the Kitsuki especially and the Dragon as a whole lasted beyond the defection of the Agasha and beyond the death of Hisojo.

Friends of her father's, in the Phoenix, Dragon, and the rest of the empire, watched young Chieh very closely. Practically from birth, great things were expected of the girl. At a very young age, and still rather unexperienced, Chieh was given the post of Emerald Magistrate and her choice of posts, and her father's friends looked on to see where the child of such a famous magistrate would choose to be posted.

Instead of reaching for fame or glory, Chieh sought refuge. She chose to be placed in the Izaku Library, a small, relatively uneventful place held by the Izaku family, a vassal of both the Agasha and Tamori families. Chieh took her appointment and retreated from the public eye.

Agasha Hamanari, the previous Supreme Emerald Magistrate, became stricken with illness in a torrent of apocalyptic visions shortly before the re-emergence of the Bloodspeaker Iuchiban. Chieh stood watch over Hamanari and attempted to nurse him back to health while recording his prophetic mutterings, as well as taking charge of administering the Agasha lands during his fugue. Tragically, she was unable to stop Hamanari's execution at the hands of one of Isawa Sezaru's magistrates. After the matter was cleared up and Hamanari's good name cleaned, the Council of Five decided that since Chieh had already been doing the job, they decided to officially name her the Supreme Emerald Magistrate.

Chieh is a passionate woman, but she hides her emotions behind feigned indifference. As an Emerald Magistrate, she has developed a very powerful desire for justice. She is the most powerful Shugenja in the entire land, whose spells can turn the tides of battle on a whim. Many Shugenja have challenged her to duels, but so far, none have been able to defeat her.



	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld
Agasha Chieh	4	3	3	3	3	3	3	1	8

## Equipment

Agasha Chieh carries a hand weapon, Agasha's Mirror and the Egg of the Void.

## Magic

Agasha Chieh is a Level 4 Wizard, who knows spells from any of the following Lores: Fire, Heavens, Light, Life and Shadow. She may freely combine spells from several Lores as she wish.

## Magic Items

### Agasha's Mirror (Enchanted Item)

*Agasha's Mirror was once a simple hand mirror used by the original Agasha in experiments she performed with light and reflection. But its exposure to her many investigations as well as to the magics of the many Agasha shugenja over the past 1,000 years has awakened the item to become a useful nemuranai.*

Agasha's Mirror gives the bearer Magic Resistance (2). If a spell is dispelled using the Mirror, Chieh may immediately throw the spell back at the enemy caster just like a Bound Spell, using the same casting value as the enemy wizard.

### Egg of the Void

*The Egg of the Void is a uniquely powerful vessel. Originally a gift from the Elemental Dragons to the Kami, it acts as a conduit between Ningen-do and Tengoku, and allows those who are near it to sense the greatness of the Elemental Dragons.*

The Egg of the Void allows Chieh to re-roll one Power Dice per casting attempt. Miscasts and Irresistible Force results may not be re-rolled.

# SHOSURO JIMEN, THE EMERALD CHAMPION

The Emerald Champion is the leader of the Emerald Magistrates and is responsible for the protection of the Emperor himself. Upon a vacancy in the post of Emerald Champion, the successor is decided by means of a tournament, to which samurai of all the clans are invited. While Kakita is traditionally considered to be the first Emerald Champion when he defeated Matsu, the post wasn't created until 153, with Doji Hatsuo the first official holder of the mantle.

When the post of Emerald Champion becomes vacant upon the retirement or death of the previous Champion, a grand tournament is held to select the new Champion. The tournament is generally the same format as many others throughout Nippon. First, the claimants to the position are given several written and verbal tests to ensure they have the legal knowledge necessary to be appointed the Chief Magistrate of the Empire. After that, a series of iaijutsu duels determine who is most fit to serve as the Emperor's Champion. The Emperor himself presides over the tournament. The new Emerald Champion is not severed from his clan and retains his original family name.

Jimen was a relatively unknown diplomat who had been left to oversee the Scorpion Clan's holdings in Kyoto, following Kaneka's stewardship of the throne. Jimen always considered politics as an end to themselves, and often seemed to act for his own amusement. He often relished the controversy and rumours surrounding him, especially after his elevation to Emerald Champion. On the other hand, Bayushi Paneki has said "He is most trusted representative, and he speaks with my full authority." Given Jimen's reputation, some have wondered about the truth behind that statement.

When the Phoenix Clan declared that the holder of the Amethyst Champion position was relinquishing it, Jimen was approached by Yoritomo Sachina. Sachina convinced Jimen that the Scorpion should not oppose the Mantis Clan candidate Yoritomo Yoyonagi.

Jimen became the Emerald Champion in 1169. He won the competition after reaching the final event of the duelling competition, where he forced the superior duellist Kakita Noritoshi to concede by threatening the honour of the Crane Clan and the life of Noritoshi's son.

After his concession, Noritoshi swore vengeance upon Jimen. In response to Noritoshi charging Jimen with dishonourable behaviour in court, Jimen sent Bayushi Sunetra to assassinate Noritoshi's wife, Kakita Mai. The attack was successful, although Noritoshi killed Sunetra in turn. Kitsuki Mayako, the Emerald Magistrate in charge of the investigation, began to suspect Jimen's involvement when she was ordered to cease her investigation and reassigned.



	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld
Shosuro Jimen	4	6	5	4	4	2	6	3	8

## Equipment

Shosuro Jimen wields Shinjitsu and wears the Emerald Armour.

## Special Rules

### Way of the Warrior

**Emerald Champion:** Shosuro Jimen must always issue challenges. Any wound caused by him in a challenge counts as two for the purposes of combat resolution.

## Magic Items

### Shinjitsu (Magic Weapon)

*Shinjitsu was the final gift of Tsi Xing Guo, the Fortune of Steel, to the Scorpion Clan in 1167. When it was first delivered to the Scorpion, Bayushi Paneki gave the blade to Shosuro Yudoka to guard. After Yudoka's death the blade passed to Shosuro Jimen.*

Katana. Shinjitsu gives Shosuro Jimen +1 to hit in Close Combat. In addition, enemies must re-roll all successful armour saves.

### Emerald Armour (Magic Armour)

*The Emerald Armour is the most recognizable symbol of the Emerald Champion's authority. Composed primarily of thick, supple leather and strong steel plates, the majority of the armour is a green shade that seems to constantly mutate as light flashes upon it.*

The Emerald Armour gives Shosuro Jimen a 4+ Armour save and the Regeneration special rule.

# THE RED RONIN



The real name of the Red Ronin is no longer known, for he cast it off as become honourless, no more the same man as he was before.

He was already a Taisho at the age of seventeen, and showed a huge amount of promise for his future. His promising future was destroyed when he was manipulated into killing his master.

His downfall began when his master sent him to deal with a band of ronin bandits that were plaguing the locals. Although the leader of the bandits was easy to dispatch to Jigoku, one of the bandits' followers battled with unnatural speed and power, and proved a challenge to destroy. When the bandit leader died, the strange follower turned to the Red Ronin and swore that he would get revenge, upon which he melted into black smoke. The Red Ronin reported the incident to his master and was commended for his actions.

Unknown to him, the strange follower was a shapeshifter, and posed as The Red Ronin's master to present him with a new sword, a sword that he stated was the true sword of the Red Ronin's father. This was the bloodsword Revenge. After taking up his new sword, the Red Ronin's master began to act out of character, insulting the sensei of the dojo and

disrespecting his ancestors. Soon after this he ordered the Red Ronin to attack a Dragon outpost.

Before the Red Ronin followed the orders, he realized that the bandit's follower must have been a changling and replaced his master. The Red Ronin challenged his master and in the struggle slew him with Revenge. His master did however not melt into shadow though, but lay bleeding at the Red Ronin's feet. The shapeshifter had been impersonating the Red Ronin's second in command, goading him into action against his master, and revealed his actions upon the Red Ronin's master's death before vanishing into smoke. The Red Ronin swore he would find the true killer of his master, and he would know that man by his eyes.

Since that day, the Red Ronin has been travelling the lands of Nippon as an honourless Ronin, searching for his master's killer to exact his revenge and restore his honour. He is a menace to all whom he faces on the battlefield, filled with hate and equipped with Revenge, he slays anyone that comes within range of his blade.

	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld
Red Ronin	4	6	5	5	4	2	6	3	10

## Equipment

The Red Ronin wields Revenge and wears heavy armour.

## Special Rules

### Unbreakable, Hatred

**Loner:** The Red Ronin has no master, and no honourable samurai would ever follow him into battle. He may never be the army's General, and he can only join units of Ronin.

## Magic Items

### Revenge (Magic Weapon)

*The bloodsword Revenge was forged by Asahina Yajinden in 508 on the Anvil of Despair. It was the first of four bloodswords forged by Yajinden. It grants the wielder great power, but threatens to destroy his mind from within with its sinister force.*

**Katana.** Revenge allows the Red Ronin to re-roll all failed rolls to wound. In addition, for every Attack that hits the Red Ronin in Close Combat, he may make an extra Attack back immediately.

# UTAKU YU-PAN, COMMANDER OF THE BATTLE MAIDENS

Utaku Yu-Pan was born into the Utaku family during the time when Kamoko's blessing was upon them. Her birth, as well as her three older sisters' births, was joyous events, but her life would not be one.

Yu-Pan was born on the very same day that the Steel Chrysanthemum began his war upon the Empire and her father was killed fighting the armies of spirits the same day that Yu-Pan was allowed to join the Utaku Battle Maiden School.

The same day as Yu-Pan had her gempukku her village came under attack by forces led by the spirit Bayushi Tozasu. Yu-Pan's mother, brother and three sisters were all killed.

Since that day Yu-Pan possessed an intense hatred for any spirit who had returned through Castle of Decay, swearing she would not let any dishonourable spirit live, no matter who they were.

In 1159 Yu-Pan received a letter delivered from Otomo Kakasu who wished to gather together certain individuals to meet them as soon as possible. Yu-Pan was not easily convinced, but travelled to the capital none the less. When all were gathered it was revealed that Otomo Kakasu was none other than the Emperor himself.

The Emperor revealed to the group that their mission was to investigate the murders of several returned spirits from Castle of Decay. Yu-Pan was not pleased, but did agree to help the Emperor.

The group travelled for two weeks to get to Ox lands. Once there, Kijuro, the leader of the group, revealed the existence of a spirit in Ox lands, Yasuki Kaneko, who would likely be the next target of the assassin. They quickly travelled to save Kaneko, arriving just in time to stop the assassin. They also discovered that the assailant was not a spirit but a man.

Kijuro and Yu-Pan and two others tracked the assassin into the wilderness, and only managed to keep on his trail because of Kijuro's knowledge of the land. Kijuro and Yu-Pan are become friends, but tragedy struck as the assassin attacked their camp while they are away. Yu-Pan, Kijuro and Kakau arrived at the campsite, founding one of their group members dead, and the other mortally wounded but alive. He recognized the assassin as Gusai, whom revealed certain details that only one of the group could have known, and Kijuro deduced that Kakau is the traitor. Kakau admits it, telling that the murders were a rouse to get close to the Emperor and assassinate him. Kakau then bowed his head in shame as Kijuro executed him.

Kijuro and Yu-Pan quickly travelled to save the Emperor, laying a trap for Gusai, but Gusai sprung the trap intentionally, mortally wounding Kijuro. Kijuro summoned his last strength to charge at Gusai, wounding him with a crystal spear to momentarily stun him. This allowed Yu-Pan the killing shot with a crystal-tipped arrow from her bow, killing the assassin.



As the only survivor, Yu-Pan was awarded the position of Battle Maiden Commander for her service of protecting the Emperor and discovering the assassin's plans.

Yu-Pan is the greatest archer in all of Nippon, easily outclassing her male counterparts. It is said that she can hit the wing of a fly from over 300 yards away. This has yet to be proved, but no one could ever doubt her skill with the bow nonetheless.

	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld
Utaku Yu-Pan	4	5	6	4	3	2	6	3	8
Silverhoof	10	5	0	4	4	1	5	2	8

## Equipment

Utaku Yu-Pan wields the Dai-kyu of Anekkusai, a spear, and wears heavy armour.

## Mount

Yu-Pan rides the unicorn Silverhoof.

## Special Rules

### Way of the Warrior, Fast Cavalry

**Expert Horse Archer:** Such is Yu-Pan's skill that she may target any model within line of sight at short range, suffering a -1 to hit for shooting at single characters. The target may not benefit from the "Look Out, Sire" rule.

## Magic Items

### Dai-kyu of Anekkusai (Magic Weapon)

*Light but extremely powerful, it greatly impressed all the Unicorn samurai who were fortunate enough to wield it. Today, this weapon is a favourite of the Shinjo Family, for in the hands of a mighty Unicorn horse archer it can be quite deadly.*

The Dai-kyu of Anekkusai has a range of 36", Strength 4 and armour piercing.



# CHOOSING AN ARMY

This army list enables you to turn your miniatures collection into an army ready for tabletop battle. As described in the Warhammer rulebook, the army list is divided into four sections: Characters (including Lords and Heroes), Core Units, Special Units and Rare Units.

## CHOOSING AN ARMY

Every miniature in the Warhammer range has a points cost that reflects how valuable it is on the battlefield. For example, an Ashigaru costs just 4 points, while a mighty High Shugenja costs 160 points!

Both players choose armies to the same agreed points total. You can spend less and will probably find it impossible to use up every last point. Most '2000 point' armies, for example, will be something like 1,998 or 1,999 points.

To form your miniatures into an army, look up the relevant army list entry for the first troop type. This tells you the points cost to add to each unit of models to your army and any options or upgrades the unit may have. Then select your next unit, calculate its point and so on until you reach the agreed points total. In addition to the points, there are a few other rules that govern which units you can include in your army, as detailed under Characters and Troops.

## ARMY LIST ENTRIES

Each unit is represented by an entry in the army list. The unit's name is given and any limitations that apply are explained.

**Profiles:** The characteristic profiles for the troops in each unit are given in the unit entry. Where several profiles are required, these are also given even if, as in many cases, they are optional.

**Unit Sizes:** Each entry specifies the minimum size for each unit. In some cases, units may also have a maximum size.

**Equipment:** Each entry lists the standard weapons and armour for that unit type. The value of these items is included in the points value.

**Options:** Each entry lists any available upgrades to the unit, together with their points cost.

**Special Rules:** Many troops have special rules which are described in this section.

## CHARACTERS

Characters are divided into two broad categories: Lords (the most powerful characters) and Heroes. The maximum number of characters an army can include is shown on the chart below.

Army Points Value	Total Characters	Max. Lords
Less than 2000	3	0
2000 or more	4	1
3000 or more	6	2
4000 or more	8	3
Each +1000	+2	+1

An army must always include at least one character to act as the **General**. Your

General will always be the character with the highest Leadership value in your army.

When one or more characters have the same (and highest) Leadership, choose one to be the General at the start of battle. Make sure that your opponent knows which model is your army when you deploy.

## TROOPS

Troops are divided into Core, Special and Rare units. The number of units of each type that are available to you depends upon the points value of your army. This is indicated on the chart below.

Army Points Value	Core Units	Special Units	Rare Units
Less than 2000	2+	0-3	0-1
2000 or more	3+	0-4	0-2
3000 or more	4+	0-5	0-3
4000 or more	5+	0-6	0-4
Each +1000	+1 min.	+0-1	+0-1

For example, if you are choosing a 2,000 points army you must take a minimum of three Core units and could choose to take up to four Special and up to two Rare. In addition, if an individual entry has a number limiting it, e.g., 0-1, then you may only have that many of that unit in your army. Otherwise you may have as many as the restrictions above and points allow.

# LORDS

## Akodo Kaneka, Shogun of Nippon

Points/model: 350

	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld
Akodo Kaneka	4	7	5	4	4	3	6	5	10

You may only include one Akodo Kaneka in your army.

### Equipment:

- Blade of the Silver Moon
- Helmet of Iron Resolve
- Heavy armour

### Special Rules:

- Way of the Warrior
- Shogun

### Options:

#### Mount (once choice only):

- Warhorse **15pts**
- Barded Warhorse **21pts**
- Kirin **60pts**
- Serpent Dragon **320pts**

## Agasha Chieh, Supreme Emerald Magistrate

Points/model: 300

	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld
Agasha Chieh	4	3	3	3	3	3	3	1	8

You may only include one Agasha Chieh in your army.

### Magic:

- Agasha Chieh is a Level 4 Wizard and knows spells from the following Lores: Fire, Heavens, Light, Life and Shadow.

### Equipment:

- Hand weapon
- Agasha's Mirror
- Egg of the Void

### Options:

#### Mount (once choice only):

- Warhorse **15pts**
- Barded Warhorse **21pts**
- Kirin **60pts**

# LORDS

## Daimyo

Points/model: 90

	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld
Daimyo	4	6	5	4	4	3	6	4	9

### Equipment:

- Katana
- Heavy armour

### Special Rules:

- Way of the Warrior

### Options:

#### Close Combat Weapon (once choice only):

Spear	3pts
Great weapon	6pts
Halberd	6pts
Additional hand weapon	6pts

### Ranged Weapon:

Longbow **10pts**

### Mount (once choice only):

Warhorse	15pts
Barded Warhorse	21pts
Kirin	60pts

### Magic Items:

Up to a total of **100pts**

## High Shugenja

Points/model: 160

	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld
High Shugenja	4	3	3	3	3	3	3	1	8

### Magic:

- A High Shugenja is a Level 4 Wizard and knows spells from the following Lore: Fire, Heavens, Light, Life and Shadow.

### Equipment:

- Hand weapon

### Options:

#### Magic:

Upgrade to level 4 Wizard **35pts**

#### Mount (once choice only):

Warhorse	15pts
Barded Warhorse	21pts
Kirin	60pts

#### Magic Items:

Up to a total of **100pts**

## Character Mounts

	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld
Kirin	9	4	0	4	4	3	5	2	8
Silverhoof	10	5	0	4	4	1	5	2	8
Warhorse	8	3	0	3	3	1	3	1	5

### Special Rules

Kirin: Fly, Impale Attack

# HEROES

## Shosuro Jimen, the Emerald Champion

Points/model: 145

	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld
Shosuro Jimen	4	6	5	4	4	2	6	3	8

You may only include one Shosuro Jimen in your army.

### Equipment:

- Shinjitsu
- Emerald Armour

### Special Rules:

- Way of the Warrior
- Emerald Champion

### Options:

### Mount:

Barded Warhorse

14pts

**Battle Standard Bearer:** Shosuro Jimen may carry the Battle Standard as detailed on page ???. If he does, you cannot have a Taisho carrying the Battle Standard.

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## The Red Ronin

Points/model: 175

	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld
Red Ronin	4	6	5	5	4	2	6	4	10

You may only include one Red Ronin in your army.

### Equipment:

- Revenge
- Heavy armour

### Special Rules:

- Unbreakable
- Hatred
- Loner

---

## Utaku Yu-Pan, Commander of the Battle Maidens

Points/model: 110

	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld
Utaku Yu-Pan	4	5	6	4	3	2	6	3	8

You may only include one Utaku Yu-Pan in your army.

### Equipment:

- Dai-kyo of Anekkusai
- Spear
- Heavy armour

### Mount:

- Silverhoof

### Special Rules:

- Way of the Warrior
- Fast Cavalry
- Expert Horse Archer

# HEROES

## Taisho

Points/model: 50

	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld
Taisho	4	5	5	4	4	2	5	3	8

### Equipment:

- Katana
- Heavy armour

### Special Rules:

- Way of the Warrior

### Options:

#### Close Combat Weapon (once choice only):

Spear	2pts
Great weapon	4pts
Halberd	4pts
Additional hand weapon	4pts

#### Ranged Weapon:

Longbow	10pts
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#### Mount (once choice only):

Warhorse	10pts
Barded Warhorse	14pts
Kirin	60pts

#### Magic Items:

Up to a total of	50pts
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#### Army Battle Standard

One Taisho in the army may carry the Battle Standard for +25 points. The Taisho carrying the Battle Standard can have a magic banner (no points limit) but if he carries a magic banner he cannot carry any other magic items.

## Shugenja

Points/model: 65

	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld
Shugenja	4	3	3	3	3	2	3	1	7

### Magic:

- A Shugenja is a Level 1 Wizard and knows spells from the following Lores: Fire, Heavens, Light, Life and Shadow.

### Equipment:

- Hand weapon

### Options:

#### Magic:

Upgrade to level 2 Wizard	35pts
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#### Mount (once choice only):

Warhorse	10pts
Barded Warhorse	14pts

#### Magic Items:

Up to a total of	50pts
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## Shadow Eye

Points/model: 100

	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld
Shadow Eye	4	6	6	4	4	2	7	3	9

### Equipment:

- Two hand weapons
- Throwing stars

### Special Rules:

- Dishonourable
- Scout
- Always Strike First
- 4+ Ward save
- Hidden
- A Killer not a Leader

### Options:

#### Ninja Equipment:

Blowgun	10pts
Caltrops	10pts
Grappling Hook	5pts
Smoke Bombs	20pts

#### Poisons:

Up to a total of	50pts
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# CORE

## Samurai Warriors

Points/model: 7

	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld
Samurai Warrior	4	4	4	3	3	1	4	1	8
Samurai Chui	4	4	4	3	3	1	4	2	8

<b>Unit Size:</b> 10+	<b>Equipment:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Katana</li> <li>• Heavy armour</li> </ul>	<b>Special Rules:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Way of the Warrior</li> </ul>
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### Options:

#### **Command:**

Upgrade one Samurai Warrior to a Samurai Chui **10pts**

Upgrade one Samurai Warrior to a Musician **5pts**

Upgrade one Samurai Warrior to a Standard Bearer **10pts**

A Standard Bearer may carry a magic standard worth up to **25pts**

#### **Weapons (one choice only):**

Additional hand weapon **1pt/model**

Halberd **1pt/model**

Longbow **4pts/model**

## Samurai Cavalry

Points/model: 15

	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld
Samurai Cavalry	4	4	4	3	3	1	4	1	8
Samurai Chui	4	4	4	3	3	1	4	2	8
Warhorse	8	3	0	3	3	1	3	1	5

<b>Unit Size:</b> 5+	<b>Equipment:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Katana</li> <li>• Heavy armour</li> </ul>	<b>Special Rules:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Way of the Warrior</li> <li>• Fast Cavalry</li> </ul>
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### Options:

#### **Command:**

Upgrade one Samurai Warrior to a Samurai Chui **12pts**

Upgrade one Samurai Warrior to a Musician **6pts**

Upgrade one Samurai Warrior to a Standard Bearer **12pts**

A Standard Bearer may carry a magic standard worth up to **25pts**

#### **Weapons:**

Spear **1pt/model**

Longbow **4pts/model**

# CORE

## Ashigaru

Points/model: 4

	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld
Ashigaru	4	3	3	3	3	1	3	1	6
Gunso	4	3	3	3	3	1	3	2	6

**Unit Size:**

20+

**Equipment:**

- Hand weapon
- Spear
- Light armour

**Options:**

**Command:**

- Upgrade one Ashigaru to a Gunso **6pts**  
Upgrade one Ashigaru to a Musician **3pts**  
Upgrade one Ashigaru to a Standard Bearer **6pts**

**Weapons:**

- Swap spear for bow **1pt/model**

## Peasant Doshin

Points/model: 2

	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld
Doshin	4	2	2	3	3	1	3	1	5
Nikutai	4	2	2	3	3	1	3	2	6

Peasant Doshin does not counts towards the minimum number of Core units you must include in your army.

**Unit Size:**

20+

**Equipment:**

- Hand weapon
- Flail

**Options:**

**Command:**

- Upgrade one Doshin to a Nikutai **6pts**

**Weapons:**

- Swap flail for sling **free**

## Warrior Monks

Points/model: 9

	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld
Warrior Monk	4	4	3	3	3	1	4	1	8
Abbot	4	4	3	3	3	1	4	2	8

**Unit Size:**

10+

**Equipment:**

- Hand weapon
- Halberd

**Special Rules:**

- Immune to Psychology
- Martial Arts

**Options:**

**Command:**

- Upgrade one Warrior Monk to an Abbot **10pts**  
Upgrade one Warrior Monk to a Musician **5pts**  
Upgrade one Warrior Monk to a Standard Bearer **10pts**

**Armour:**

- Heavy armour **2pts/model**

# SPECIAL

## Hatamoto

Points/model: 11

	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld
Hatamoto	4	4	4	4	3	1	4	1	8
Hatamoto Chui	4	4	4	4	3	1	4	2	8

<b>Unit Size:</b> 5+	<b>Equipment:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Katana</li> <li>• Halberd</li> <li>• Heavy armour</li> </ul>	<b>Special Rules:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Way of the Warrior</li> <li>• Bodyguard</li> </ul>
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**Options:**

**Command:**

Upgrade one Hatamoto to a Hatamoto Chui	<b>12pts</b>
Upgrade one Hatamoto to a Musician	<b>6pts</b>
Upgrade one Hatamoto to a Standard Bearer	<b>12pts</b>
A Standard Bearer may carry a magic standard worth up to	<b>50pts</b>

## Sumo Warriors

Points/model: 14

	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld
Sumo Warrior	4	4	3	4	4	1	4	2	8
Yokozuna	4	4	3	4	4	1	4	3	8

<b>Unit Size:</b> 5+	<b>Equipment:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hand weapon</li> <li>• Great weapon</li> <li>• Heavy armour</li> </ul>	<b>Special Rules:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Way of the Warrior</li> <li>• Crushing Grip</li> </ul>
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**Options:**

**Command:**

Upgrade one Sumo Warrior to a Yokozuna	<b>12pts</b>
Upgrade one Sumo Warrior to a Musician	<b>6pts</b>
Upgrade one Sumo Warrior to a Standard Bearer	<b>12pts</b>
A Standard Bearer may carry a magic standard worth up to	<b>25pts</b>

## Kabuki Dolls

Points/model: 14

	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld
Kabuki Doll	5	4	3	3	3	1	5	2	8
Dai-jô	5	4	3	3	3	1	5	3	8

<b>Unit Size:</b> 5+	<b>Equipment:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hand weapon</li> <li>• War Fan</li> <li>• Light armour</li> </ul>	<b>Special Rules:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Skirmish</li> <li>• Hatred</li> <li>• Poisoned Attacks</li> </ul>
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**Options:**

**Command:**

Upgrade one Kabuki Doll to a Dai-jô	<b>12pts</b>
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# SPECIAL

## Oni

Points/model: 55

	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld
Oni	6	5	3	5	4	3	5	3	8
Overlord	6	5	3	5	4	3	5	4	8

**Unit Size:**

3+

**Equipment:**

- Hand Weapon

**Special Rules:**

- Fear
- Unbreakable
- Magical Attacks
- 5+ Ward save
- Daemonic Instability

**Options:**

**Command:**

Upgrade one Oni to an Overlord

**20pts**

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## Ninja

Points/model: 12

	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld
Ninja	5	4	4	3	3	1	5	1	8
Blood Moon	5	4	4	3	3	1	5	2	8

**Unit Size:**

5-20

**Equipment:**

- Two hand weapons

**Special Rules:**

- Skirmish
- Scout

**Options:**

**Command:**

Upgrade one Ninja to a Blood Moon

**12pts**

**Ninja Equipment:**

Poisoned Attacks

**3pts/model**

Blowgun

**3pts/model**

Caltrops

**1pt/model**

Grappling Hook

**1pt/model**

Smoke Bombs

**2pts/model**

# RARE

## Ronin

Points/model: 13

	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld
Ronin	4	4	4	4	3	1	4	1	9

**Unit Size:**  
5-20

**Equipment:**

- Hand Weapon
- Katana
- Heavy armour

**Special Rules:**

- Skirmish
  - Unbreakable
- 

## Kitsune

Points/model: 175

	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld
Kitsune	9	5	0	5	4	4	6	3	9

**Unit Size:**  
1

**Equipment:**

- Claws and teeth

**Special Rules:**

- Fear
  - Spirit
  - Spellcaster
- 

## Thunder Dragon

Points/model: 175

	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld
Thunder Dragon	5	5	0	5	5	5	3	4	7

**Unit Size:**  
1

**Equipment:**

- Claws and teeth

**Special Rules:**

- Terror
- Large Target
- 4+ Scaly Skin
- Spit Lighting

# VESSELS OF THE KAMI

In this section, the Common magic items are listed first (see the Warhammer rulebook for a complete description). These are followed by a list of 'Nippon only' magic items. These items can only be used by models from this book. Magic items must be selected within the points limitations set by the army list section. Note that the rules for magic items presented in the Warhammer rulebook also apply to the 'Nippon only' magic items.

## COMMON MAGIC ITEMS

<b>Sword of Striking</b> Weapon; +1 To Hit.	<b>15 pts</b>	<b>Talisman of Protection</b> Talisman; 6+ Ward save.	<b>15 pts</b>
<b>Sword of Battle</b> Weapon; +1 Attack.	<b>15 pts</b>	<b>Dispel Scroll</b> Arcane; Automatically dispels an enemy spell (one use only).	<b>25 pts</b>
<b>Sword of Might</b> Weapon; +1 Strength.	<b>15 pts</b>	<b>Power Stone</b> Arcane; +2 dice to cast a spell (one use only).	<b>20 pts</b>
<b>Biting Blade</b> Weapon; -1 Armour save.	<b>5 pts</b>	<b>Staff of Sorcery</b> Arcane; +1 to Dispel.	<b>35 pts</b>
<b>Enchanted Shield</b> Armour; 5+ Armour save.	<b>15 pts</b>	<b>War Banner</b> Banner; +1 for combat resolution.	<b>25 pts</b>

## MAGIC WEAPONS

**Chukandomo** **50 pts**  
*Linked to the spirit world, Chukandomo rewards those with an honest heart, and brings death to the weak and cowardly ones.*  
Katana. For every point of basic Leadership that the character exceeds that of any enemy model in base contact, he gains one additional Attack, up to a maximum of 10.



**Kireru Hyoujin** **50 pts**  
*When drawn in the presence of Tainted creatures, persons, or objects, the blade will glow with a soft golden light that intensifies as the source of the Taint gets closer.*  
Katana. No armour saves may be taken against wounds caused by this weapon. In addition, the wielder gains +1 to his Strength when fighting against Undead and Daemons.

**Togashi's Daisho** **45 pts**  
*Because of the unusual organizational structure of the Dragon Clan, the Ancestral Weapons utilized by the Clan are those once used by Mirumoto, rather than those wielded by the Kami Togashi at the dawn of the Empire.*  
Additional hand weapon. The wielder gains +1 Attack and the Always Strike First rule.

**Yoritomo's Kama** **40 pts**  
*The kama once wielded by Yoritomo are simple in appearance, small sickles with handles bound in green silk, worn by the wind, sun, salt and sea that surround any Mantis every day of their lives.*  
Counts as two hand weapons. The wielder may re-roll all failed rolls to hit and gains Armour Piercing attacks.

**Ikoma Tessen** **30 pts**  
*A very old part of the Lion's heritage, the Ikoma Tessen was originally given to Ikama's son by Akodo as a wedding gift. Legend holds that Akodo tore the tessen from the stars themselves, although its modest appearance is hardly conducive to such a tale.*  
War Fan. All enemies attacking the wielder in close combat suffer a -1 to hit.

**Tetsubo Konbo** **30 pts**  
*Almost as famous a weapon as Chikara is Konbo, the first tetsubo wielded by Hida. Crafted by the First Crab himself, Konbo is very simple and practical weapon, as powerful as its creator.*  
For every hit the wearer inflicts on an enemy unit in Close Combat, the unit loses one Attack. The Nippon player chooses which models.



**Bitter** 30 pts

*Bitter is one of the Five Swords of Legend forged centuries ago by a swordsmith of almost preternatural skill. For whatever reason, the blade compels its owner to destroy honourless individuals regardless of the immediate circumstances.*

The wielder of Bitter automatically wounds any opponent with a basic Leadership of 6 or less.

**Honourable** 25 pts

*Honourable is a wakizashi, the companion blade to the katana Bitter. The blade is known to reflect the purity and honour of its bearer, and as such it can be a great asset to warriors of virtue, but a terrible curse to those with no regard for the code of Bushido.*

May be combined with Bitter. The character and any unit he is with may roll 3D6 for all Leadership tests and discard the highest. However, if the character flees for whatever reason, he loses one Wound with no saves allowed.

**Tsuruchi's Yumi** 25 pts

*Tsuruchi's Yumi is one of the most sacred artefacts of the Mantis, and it is kept today within Tsuruchi Nobumoto's quarters in Kyuden Ashinagabachi.*

Longbow. The wielder may fire as many shots as he has Attacks on his profile.

**Isawa's Naginata** 25 pts

*The naginata appears to be an unremarkable weapon, but when any member of the Elemental Council is threatened, its blade begins to glow as brightly as the sun.*

Taisho only. Halberd. The wielder gains the Bodyguard special rule (see page ??).

**Obsidian Hand** 25 pts

*This artefact resembles the right hand of a human, but it is made of sharp-edged obsidian. In order to use the Obsidian Hand, one must go through a painful ritual which grafts the artefact onto the stump of the right arm.*

Additional hand weapon. The wearer gains +1 Strength and the Crushing Grip special rule (see page ??).



**O-Ushi's Hammer** 25 pts

*The hammer that once belonged to the sister of the second Crab Thunder rests in Koten, the Crab Clan's hall of ancestors.*

The wielder always counts his Strength at least one higher than that of any enemy models in base contact.

**Kakita's First Blade** 25 pts

*While the sword that Kakita used to win the first Emerald Championship is an artefact closely associated with a powerful man, it is actually an ordinary blade. Only through exposure to the Crane Clan founder's greatness did the weapon become more than its materials, developing into a powerful nemuranai.*

The wielder may re-roll all failed rolls to hit and to wound in challenges.

**Daidoji Yari** 20 pts

*The Daidoji Yari appears to most as an unexceptional if serviceable weapon. However, despite its immense age it appears no worse for wear than any other battletested yari, and has never needed to be sharpened or mended.*

Spears. Only one enemy model in base contact may attack the wielder in Close Combat.



**Hunger** 20 pts

*Hunger is a no-dachi with a terrible reputation for bloodshed. Even the smith herself felt that the blade was somehow corrupted. She attempted to melt it down not long after its completion, only to discover she was unable to destroy what she had created.*

Great weapon. The wielder of Hunger has Hatred and is Frenzied. He must take a Leadership test at the start of each of his turns, or lose 1 Wound with no saves allowed. In addition, Hunger is completely immune to all spells of effects that would destroy or nullify it.

**Dragon's Claw Katana** 15 pts

*The original Dragon's Claw Katana was a blade crafted by the Void Dragon from one of its own claws, before it withdrew from the mortal realm to allow mankind to realize its own destiny.*

Katana. The wielder gains Weapon Skill 10, which cannot be modified in any way.

**Ryokan's Sword** 10 pts

*The blade belonged to a mysterious samurai who defended a remote village in the Dragon Lands against an onslaught of creatures from Haikido during the Clan War. Ryokan's Sword is aware and intelligent, and compels those who hold it to behave in an honourable manner.*

All Ashigaru and Peasant Doshin units may use the Leadership of the wielder of Ryokan's Sword just as if he was the army's General.

## MAGIC ARMOUR

### **Daidoji Armour** 50 pts

*Daidoji Armor is used for tasks where silence and stealth are considered paramount, and it has allowed Daidoji Harriers to poison entire enemy units, sneak past some of the most vigilant guards in the Empire, and engage in acts of sabotage even Shosuro shinobi would admire.*

Light armour. The character may scout, and cannot be charged or targeted with any kind of missile attack if further than 12" away from the enemy unit.

### **Yoritomo's Armour** 35 pts

*Worn by Yoritomo throughout his time as Mantis Clan Champion, Yoritomo's Armour is a set of heavy lacquered armour made as a gift by several of the Minor Clans to celebrate his ascension as Daimyo of the Mantis in 1117.*

Heavy armour. The wearer gains +2 to his Initiative and a 5+ Ward save.

### **Mempo of Matsu Hitomi** 30 pts

*This golden mask takes the form of a Lion's jaw, elaborately tooled and covered in small mirrors that catch the sun and shine it back into the enemy's eyes.*

The Mempo gives the wearer a 6+ armour save that may be combined with other armour as normal. In addition, the wearer gains +1 to his Toughness.



### **Isawa's Helm** 25 pts

*This helm has a long history among the Shiba and is considered one of the greatest honors that can be bestowed upon a yojimbo.*

Isawa's Helm gives the wearer a 6+ armour save that may be combined with other armour as normal. In addition, the wearer may re-roll failed armour saves.

### **Armour of Osano-Wo** 20 pts

*Yamigatai is not nearly as famous as the other two great Crab armours, but it contains the indomitable spirit of the second son of Hida, and it is blessed by his mother, the Thunder Dragon.*

Light armour. The wearer is completely immune to all effects from spells.

### **Fire Maple Mempo** 20 pts

*The Fire Maple Mempo is a simply-designed armoured mask painted to intimidate its wearer's opponents. The Fire Maple Mempo covers the lower face of its user and also protects his neck.*

The Fire Maple Mempo gives the wearer a 6+ armour save that may be combined with other armour as normal. In addition, the wearer causes fear.

### **Koutetsu Mukei** 15 pts

*Koutetsu Mukei is one of nine sets of elaborate heavy armour recently given as gifts to the Great Clan Champions by an as yet unknown benefactor.*

Heavy armour. The wearer ignores all penalties to hit and to wound he might normally suffer (due to magic items, spell effects etc.) with both missile weapon and in Close Combat.

## TALISMANS

### **Meishodo Amulet** 40 pts

*Ever since the Unicorn discovered the existence of meishodo in the gaijin lands, many Iuchi shugenja have devoted their lives to the study of this craft, experimenting with the art and developing new and innovative techniques.*

One use only. The wearer may increase one of his characteristics to 10 for that turn.

### **The Rainbow Cloak** 30 pts

*The surface of Shosuro's cloak is of a dark hue, but the colour seems to shift as light and shadow dance upon it, much like a length of fine Nipponese silk. It has been described as a slice of darkest, starless moonlight. The cloak's swirling patterns and movements are unnatural and can mesmerize even the most powerful Oni.*

Enemies shooting at the bearer or any unit he is with suffer a -1 to hit.

### **Hakama of the Ide Family** 25 pts

*The powerful magic of the vestment ensures that anyone wearing it appears calm and at peace with the*

*world. It creates for its wearer an imposing demeanour that can discourage his enemies from striking at him.*

Enemies attempting to strike the bearer in Close Combat must first pass a Leadership test. If failed, they may not attack this turn and will be hit automatically.

### **Token of Jade** 25 pts

*These items, known as Tokens of Jade or simply Jade Pendants, are simple-looking yet very impressive magical items. Each Token is a small round plate of jade with strange magical designs on one side and holy symbols on the other.*

The wearer gains a +4 Ward save against Magical Attacks and spells.

### **Henshin's Amulet** 20 pts

*These amulets are made of pure silver, and are a physical puzzle in and of themselves. Many Asako, even those who are not Henshin, wear the amulets as both a show of Family pride as well as for their magical effects.*

6+ Ward save. The wearer may re-roll one dice to Hit, to Wound or for failed amour saves each turn.

## ENCHANTED ITEMS

### **Drum of Water**

**40 pts**

*A Drum of Water is a small hand drum, extremely light and easy to use. The body is made from blue painted wood and decorated with spirals of purple and other colours.*

The bearer and any unit he is with (but not mounts) gains one additional attack when charging.

### **Obsidian Mirror**

**40 pts**

*For centuries, the Obsidian Mirror was possessed by the Scorpion Clan, and for much of that time it was known simply as Shosuro's Mirror, named for its creator. Anyone who possesses the Obsidian Mirror can view another location through it by spilling a drop of fresh blood upon it.*

The bearer and any unit he is with may make a free reform at the beginning of the Movement phase.

### **Curse of the Midnight Flies**

**35 pts**

*These small trinkets were originally created by the Ra'Shari, strange gypsy sorcerers who lived in the Burning Sands. Breaking a Curse of the Midnight Flies creates a small swarm of pestering, flying insects to attack the foes of the bearer.*

One use only. The character may use the Curse of the Midnight Flies in the shooting phase. It has a range of 24" and causes 3D6 Strength 3 hits.

### **Feet of the Kitsune**

**30 pts**

*The samurai of the Kitsune Family excel at traversing wooded and uncivilized areas without disturbing them. The Feet of the Kitsune are simple silken sandals, light and supple, allowing the wearer to move through places otherwise inaccessible to him.*

Model on foot only. The character and any unit he is with do not suffer any penalties for moving through any kind of terrain.

### **Serenity Lanterns**

**30 pts**

*Serenity Lanterns are found in almost every Phoenix palace and at every public function. The soft light that is shed by one of these minor nemuranai calms those around it, soothing anyone exposed to its radiance.*

The wielder and any unit in base contact with him is completely Immune to Psychology, and lose any other psychology rule they might have as long as they stay in base contact.

### **Dragon Pearl**

**20 pts**

*The Dragon Pearl is one of many dangerous artefacts collected by the Dragon Clan during the period after the Dragon-Phoenix War, when the Mirumoto scoured the Empire for potentially dangerous nemuranai.*

At the start of the Close Combat phase, the bearer may transform the Dragon Pearl into an exact replica of any magic item carried by an enemy character in base contact, retaining all of its abilities for as long as it stays in base contact.

### **Kaimetsu-Uo's Furoshiki**

**20 pts**

*Kaimetsu-Uo's Furoshiki is a plain and unassuming silken bag in appearance. When it is opened, and the owner speaks a command word unique to that particular bag, it produces a mighty wind that allow him or his allies to soar high above the ground.*

Bound Spell, Power Level 4. Casts the Steed of Shadows Spell.

### **Unicorn Saddle**

**20 pts**

*The artisans of the Unicorn Clan have developed several new and innovative ways to craft saddles and stirrups, based on secrets learned from the Ujik-hai, a gaijin race of nomadic horsemen with whom the Ki-Rin shared a close relationship.*

Mounted character only. The character and any unit he is with may roll 3D6 when pursuing and choose the two highest

### **Mantle of Fire**

**20 pts**

*Mantles of Fire can take many forms, such as a long cloak or a simple-seeming body wrap, but are most often made as rigid haori. Anyone who wears a Mantle of Fire finds that it draws out their inner Fire, causing their spells and attacks to become fiercer and more damaging.*

The wearer gains +1 to all his to Wound rolls.

### **Dragon Puzzle Box**

**15 pts**

*A Dragon Puzzle box is a small, mildly enchanted item intended to aid others in perceiving the world differently, thus spurring them down the road to Enlightenment.*

The character may take a Leadership test at the start of each of his turns. If passed, he increases his Leadership by 1 for the duration of the turn.

### **Jade Mirror**

**15 pts**

*The Jade Mirror will exaggerate the features of those who look into it in order to reveal their true nature through a sort of magical caricature. An honourable and virtuous samurai will appear stronger, taller, and fairer in visage. A cowardly individual will appear smaller, with cruel, conniving features.*

May only be carried by the General. Friendly units may use his Leadership within 18" instead of the normal 12". However, if he flees for any reason, the army may not use his Leadership at all for the remainder of the game.

### **Brass Gong of Otaku Masero**

**15 pts**

*About three feet in diameter, the Gong of Otaku Masero hangs from a stout silken cord, and as befits the nomadic Unicorn traditions the item has never been mounted upon a stand. When the Gong is rung, all the allies of the bearer who hear the sound immediately feel a wave of peace wash over them.*

All friendly units within 12" of the bearer may re-roll failed rally tests.

## ARCANE ITEMS

### **Bronze Lantern** 45 pts

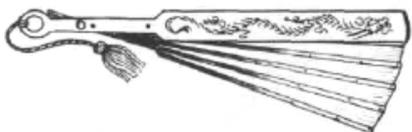
*Only shugenja can unlock the gaijin magic within a Bronze Lantern. To activate it, one simply rubs the item and speaks a command word. A mist begins to pour out of the device, and soon, this mist concentrates to form a creature of flesh and blood.*

Bound Spell, Power Level 5, Remains in Play. The Shugenja can summon a single Oni within 12" of her once per Magic phase. The Oni operates as a single unit at all times.

### **Tapestry of Air** 40 pts

*A Tapestry of Air typically depicts legendary scenes from Nippon's past, featuring Shinsei, Doji, and other famous historical figures. The item is imbued with the essence of Air, and bestows great advantages to the shugenja using it.*

If the Shugenja is using spells from the Lore of Heavens, she receives one free power dice to each of her casting attempts. She must use at least one of her normal Power Dice to cast spells.



### **Candle of the Void** 20 pts

*These magical candles are made of black wax. They are extremely thick and usually about one foot long when newly created. Imbued with faint but very practical elemental magic, it can greatly aid the Shugenja in casting.*

The Candle of the Void may be placed within 12" of the Shugenja at the start of the game, but may not be moved during the game. The Shugenja may use it to cast spells, using it for purposes of line and sight and range.

### **Incense of Concentration** 35 pts

*Incense of Concentration is one of the most powerful tsangusuri that can be created by the Asahina. It expands the mind and enhances the powers of a shugenja of any level of skill.*

The Shugenja gets +1 to cast.

### **Candle of Shadows** 30 pts

*The Candle of Shadows is a powerful nemuranai, originally created by Isawa artificers as a minor aid in divination and to allow the user greater use of their own magical abilities.*

The Shugenja may choose her spells instead of rolling for them.

## MAGIC STANDARDS

### **Imperial Standard** 75 pts

*The Imperial Standard is an ancient nemuranai. Many believe it holds a small portion of the essence of Hantei, and some are even convinced the Kami himself created it. The item remains one of the most cherished possessions of the Imperial Court, for not only is the Imperial Standard imbued with potent magic, but it is also a distinctive symbol the Emperors of Nippon.*

Any unit within 18" may re-roll failed break tests, rather than the normal 12". In addition, the unit carrying it is gains +D3 to their combat resolution.

### **Ancestral War Banner of the Hida** 50 pts

*Whenever the Crab Champion is on the Kaiu Wall, the banner is flown from the nearest watchtower. Even the most mindless beasts of the horde appear to recognize the standard. So the fighting is always the thickest wherever it is present.*

All combats with at least one friendly unit involved within 6" of the unit carrying the banner receive +1 to their combat resolution bonus.

### **Standard of the Phoenix** 50 pts

*A bright orange banner typically carried by the youngest Shiba in a formation at the centre of a Phoenix army, the Ancestral Standard of the Phoenix has been in continual use somewhere in the Emerald Empire since it was originally created.*

All Shugenja within 12" of this banner receives +1 Power Dice in the Magic Phase.

### **Standard of the Mantis** 40 pts

*A large sashimono that was first carried by the Mantis Champion Hotoka during the Battle of the Cresting Wave, the Battle Standard of the Mantis is decorated with three huge green Mantis mons.*

The unit may add +D6" to any charge they make.

### **Toturi's Battle Standard** 25 pts

*The battle standard of the Totori Family is an imposing flag made from layers of white silk, decorated with a golden dragon coiled inside a narrow ring of gold upon a night blue sky.*

All models in the unit may re-roll failed rolls to wound in the first round of combat.

### **Standard of the Iron Crane** 25 pts

*The Standard of the Iron Crane was a gift to the Daidoji family after Asahina joining the Crane Clan. The standard was made to embody the elegance of the Crane and be a symbol of their military might.*

The unit receives +1 to hit in the first round of combat.

### **Banner of the Roaring Tempest** 25 pts

*It is said the spirit of this samurai-ko still infuses the ancient banner of the Lion. It gets that name from the noise that emanates from it when it is carried in battle, the sound of a pride of roaring lions mixed with the rumble of a distant storm.*

The unit may count up to 5 ranks of rank bonus, instead of the normal 3.

# POISONS

The use of poison as a weapon is an extremely dishonourable practice generally associated with ninja. However, poisons can be quite an effective tool. All too often the results of poison resemble a natural death, so investigators cannot spot foul play. When properly applied, a poison can remove enemies without suspicion. It is not even necessary to kill one's enemies – a general can be made too sick to lead effectively, a duellist overcome by nausea, or a courtier consumed by a wracking cough that leaves him speechless during the final day of Winter Court.

Those of the Scorpion's Shosuro Family are the undisputed masters of poison lore, and in their gardens bloom a variety of beautiful and deadly herbs. Naturally their interest in the matter is purely academic, at least as far as the rest of Nippon is concerned.

## **Dripping Poison** **50 pts**

*A staple of an assassin's arsenal, dripping poison must be swallowed. It is usually administered by hanging a thread over a sleeping victim's mouth and dripping the poison down the thread from a hidden place in the ceiling. Dripping poison is especially deadly because it is administered at night, and usually allowed to go untreated for hours while the victim sleeps.*

One character, chosen by the Nippon player, must take a Toughness test at the start of each of his turn or lose a wound, with no saves allowed.

## **Fauntei Shi** **50 pts**

*The deadliest poison in the arsenal of the Scorpion, a trace of Fauntei Shi can kill even the most robust victim. The poison is a secret held dearly by the Scorpion, and few know the methods by which it is crafted. Fauntei Shi is employed only when the Scorpion need to be absolutely certain their target will die.*

A model wounded (after saves) by Fauntei Shi must pass a Toughness test on 2D6 or lose all remaining wounds.

## **Stolen breath** **30 pts**

*A somewhat obscure poison, Stolen Breath enjoys near anonymity outside circles that make use of the toxin. Stolen Breath is usually mixed in a victim's food or drink the night before a battle. The victim of the poison feels a slight tingle in his throat after an hour, and his voice becomes raspy. A full day after ingestion, or after a night's rest, the victim's throat is too dry to talk. The best the victim can muster is a low, painful whisper.*

At the start of the game, choose one character in the enemy army to be poisoned. The character suffers a -1 to his Leadership for the entire game.

## **Spider Venom** **25 pts**

*Not as deadly as snake's toxin, a spider's bite can nonetheless create significant problems if left untreated. Most spiders are so small that their bites are harmless, but some larger or deadlier varieties are able to kill children and even grown men.*

A model wounded (after saves) by spider venom loses 1 Toughness at the start of each of his turns for the rest of the game.

## **Night Milk** **25 pts**

*One of the first poisons developed by the Scorpion Clan, Night Milk foregoes devious and disabling effects for sheer brutality.*

Night Milk gives the character *poisoned attacks*. His attacks will automatically wound on a to hit roll of 4+, instead of the normal 6.

## **Snake Venom** **20 pts**

*Snake venom may be inflicted by a serpent's bite, gathered and administered internally, or synthesized by crafting a poison with similar effects. The venom attacks the victim's motor skills, lowering his agility and reflexes.*

A model that takes a wound (after saves) from snake venom will lose one Attack and strike last for the remainder of the game.

## **Fire Biter** **15 pts**

*Often painted onto edged weapons by unscrupulous ninja, Fire Biter wracks the victim's joints with painful spasms, causing physical damage as well as hampering the victim's ability to defend himself.*

A model wounded (after saves) by Firebiter may not attack and is automatically hit the next Close Combat Phase.

## **Hot Madness** **15 pts**

*A poison that attacks the victim's mental faculties, Hot Madness heats the victim's scalp and makes it nearly impossible for him to concentrate.*

A model wounded (after saves) by Hot Madness must re-roll all successful rolls to hit for the remainder of the game.

## **Wish You Dead** **15 pts**

*One of the poisons devised by the Shosuro family of the Scorpion Clan, Wish You Dead has spread to other hands over the centuries. The poison must be introduced into the bloodstream, and causes nausea in addition to loss of stamina.*

A model wounded (after saves) by Wish You Dead deducts 1 from his Strength and Toughness for the remainder of the game.

# REFERENCE

<b>LORDS</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>WS</b>	<b>BS</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>T</b>	<b>W</b>	<b>I</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>Ld</b>	<b>Base Size</b>	<b>Page</b>
Akodo Kaneka	4	7	5	4	4	3	6	5	10	20x20mm	
Agasha Chieh	4	3	3	3	3	3	3	1	8	20x20mm	
Daimyo	4	6	5	4	4	3	6	4	9	20x20mm	
High Shugenja	4	3	3	3	3	3	3	1	8	20x20mm	
<b>HEROES</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>WS</b>	<b>BS</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>T</b>	<b>W</b>	<b>I</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>Ld</b>	<b>Base Size</b>	<b>Page</b>
Shosuro Jimen	4	6	5	4	4	2	6	3	8	20x20mm	
Red Ronin	4	6	5	5	4	2	6	4	10	20x20mm	
Utaku Yu-Pan	4	5	6	4	3	2	6	3	8	25x50mm	
Taisho	4	5	5	4	4	2	5	3	8	20x20mm	
Shugenja	4	3	3	3	3	2	3	1	7	20x20mm	
Shadow Eye	4	6	6	4	4	2	7	3	9	20x20mm	
<b>CORE</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>WS</b>	<b>BS</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>T</b>	<b>W</b>	<b>I</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>Ld</b>	<b>Base Size</b>	<b>Page</b>
Samurai Warrior	4	4	4	3	3	1	4	1	8	20x20mm	
<i>Samurai Chui</i>	4	4	4	3	3	1	4	2	8	20x20mm	
Samurai Cavalry	4	4	4	3	3	1	4	1	8	25x50mm	
<i>Samurai Chui</i>	4	4	4	3	3	1	4	2	8	25x50mm	
Ashigaru	4	3	3	3	3	1	3	1	6	20x20mm	
<i>Gunso</i>	4	3	3	3	3	1	3	2	6	20x20mm	
Doshin	4	2	2	3	3	1	3	1	5	20x20mm	
<i>Nikutai</i>	4	2	2	3	3	1	3	2	6	20x20mm	
Warrior Monk	4	4	3	3	3	1	4	1	8	20x20mm	
<i>Abbot</i>	4	4	3	3	3	1	4	2	8	20x20mm	
<b>SPECIAL</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>WS</b>	<b>BS</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>T</b>	<b>W</b>	<b>I</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>Ld</b>	<b>Base Size</b>	<b>Page</b>
Hatamoto	4	4	4	4	3	1	4	1	8	20x20mm	
<i>Hatamoto Chui</i>	4	4	4	4	3	1	4	2	8	20x20mm	
Sumo Warrior	4	4	3	4	4	1	4	2	8	25x25mm	
<i>Yokozuna</i>	4	4	3	4	4	1	4	3	8	25x25mm	
Kabuki Doll	5	4	3	3	3	1	5	2	8	20x20mm	
<i>Dai-jô</i>	5	4	3	3	3	1	5	3	8	20x20mm	
Oni	6	5	3	5	4	3	5	3	8	40x40mm	
<i>Overlord</i>	6	5	3	5	4	3	5	4	8	40x40mm	
Ninja	5	4	4	3	3	1	5	1	8	20x20mm	
<i>Blood Moon</i>	5	4	4	3	3	1	5	2	8	20x20mm	
<b>RARE</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>WS</b>	<b>BS</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>T</b>	<b>W</b>	<b>I</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>Ld</b>	<b>Base Size</b>	<b>Page</b>
Ronin	4	4	4	4	3	1	4	1	9	20x20mm	
Kitsune	9	5	0	5	4	4	6	3	9	50x50mm	
Thunder Dragon	5	5	0	5	5	5	3	4	7	50x100mm	
<b>MOUNTS</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>WS</b>	<b>BS</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>T</b>	<b>W</b>	<b>I</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>Ld</b>	<b>Base Size</b>	<b>Page</b>
Kirin	9	4	0	4	4	3	5	2	8	40x40mm	
Silverhoof	10	5	0	4	4	1	5	2	8	25x50mm	
Warhorse	8	3	0	3	3	1	3	1	5	25x50mm	

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# WARHAMMER

# NIPPON

*"By the Way of the Warrior is meant death. The Way of the Warrior is death. This means choosing death whenever there is a choice between life and death. It means nothing more than this. It means to see things through, being resolved."*

*Akodo Kaneka, Shogun of Nippon*

The warriors of Nippon are among the finest in the world. They place honour above everything else, and gladly sacrifice their lives to keep it. They are an unstoppable force on the battlefield, greatly skilled in all things of war. They are the reflection of the true warrior incarnate, and those who seek to defy them will perish at their blades.

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