



SHINOBI RYŪ™

A Sourcebook for Sengoku: Chanbara Roleplaying in Feudal Japan™

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First printing.

Stock No. 1004E

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SHINOBI CLANS IN SENGOKU

Records show there have been 73 ninjutsu ryū throughout history.

Here we present ten ninjutsu ryū which exist in Sengoku Japan. Each entry includes background information about the ryū, its families, political and geographical sphere of influence, and its allies and enemies.

Also included for each ryū is a character template, for those who wish to create a shinobi character from that ryū. The template should be used in lieu of the caste and profession templates presented in the *SENGOKU* core rule book.

Lastly, under each ryū description we present several notable personalities associated with that ryū. Note that these personalities are presented in historical context, although their abilities and skills are designed for Chanbara-level games. GMs desiring more Historical level figures should reduce the stats and skills by 2 points each (minimum of 1). Characters marked with a (1) represent historical figures, those marked with a (2) represent shinobi from the clan's own mythology, and those marked with a (3) are invented NPCs with no historical or legendary connections at all.

Within each ryū description, the GM will find a genealogy for the clan (called a *kazu*) and as much accurate historical data as can be located on the group. Also, each description contains, where ap-

propriate or required, a section concerning the myths and legends associated with the clan as well as a fictionalized account of the ryū's development combining historical and mythical elements.

Finally, though as much care as possible has been taken in researching the history of each ryū, very little is known about shinobi ryū—with the possible exception of Iga, Kōga and Togakure ryū—prior to the beginning of the Tokugawa period. Wherever possible names, those dates which could be located at all (and which must all be considered approximate) and deeds have been taken from extant Japanese sources. Because most groups either possess no history or many conflicting ones, it has sometimes been necessary to make a selection based on content and accessibility of sources. This rather ironic state of affairs would, we think, not displease the great masters to whom we pay homage with this work, for those who spent their waking lives misleading and confusing their opponents have, in death, become a legend so distorted by tradition and myth that none, not even their own descendants, can now accurately separate the fact of them from the fiction.

Throughout this section, the baseline for all the shinobi ryū is considered to be 1603, which ties in with the main campaign hooks in this supplement.

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FŪDO RYŪ

BACKGROUND

THE HISTORICAL FŪDO

The Fūdo ryū takes its name from the Fūdo valley, close to the *Sanjo* (hinin/outcast place) village of Yamanaka on the Western shore of the island of Awaji. The ryū was originally founded on the mainland, in the province of Iga in 1193, from scattered remnants of the defeated Taira clan armies (broken during the final Genpei War of 1183–1185). It is said that the founder of the ryū, Taira Rikimaru, actually met with Kain Doshi in on the foothills of Mount Kame, but other ryū also claim this honor. It seems more likely that the group was put together by disaffected members of the recently established Iga ryū, whose base was situated in the province. Clearly, there was no love lost between the ryū. Between 1194 and 1202 the clans were engaged in something of a secret war, with the smaller Fūdo ryū coming off the worse and being driven across the inland sea onto the Island of Awaji. With the Fūdo ryū's relocation, the Iga interest in them ceased and relations since that time have become a good deal friendlier.

The first Jōnin of the Fūdo was Taira Rikimaru (possibly an alias) (ca. 1161–1203). When he died in the Iga War, his place was taken by his old friend Fujiwara Noboru (clan myth) (ca. 1162–1217) until Rikimaru's son, Taira Shinbe (1186–1245) was able to take on the mantle of Jōnin. In 1215 when Shinbe took up leadership of the ryū, the Taira and

Fujiwara members of the group put off their old names and took up new ones: Hajime (the first one) for Rikimaru's scions and Akame (the bright one) for Noboru's children. Hajime Jurobe (1220–1285), the jōnin who ordered the construction of the Fūdo's first underground base on Awaji, followed Shinbe as Jōnin.

Then came Hajime Taisō (clan myth) (1269–1353), a Mongolian warrior mysteriously rescued from the wrecked Chinese invasion fleet of 1281 on the orders of the weakening Jōnin. Taisō is also recorded as being the shinobi who perfected the art of *shurikenjutsu*, turning it from a simple way to throw knives and darts into a deadly method of crippling a foe in combat. With the death of Taisō, control of the clan passed away from the Hajime family for a while.

The next three jōnin, Akame Setsu (1311–1366), Akame Goryo (1343–1403) and Akame Tatsu (1369–1437) saw the ryū finally able to expand its influence outside the island of Awaji, as they made more friends in the Iga ryū and were no longer unable to seek lucrative contracts on the mainland. In 1435, the Hajime again took control of the position of Jōnin when Hajime Shinichi (1412–1488) replaced the ailing Tatsu. His rule, though long, was dogged by several disastrous missions that almost ruined the ryū. Had it not been for the timely aid of the Iga shinobi, who supplied the Fūdo with enough funds to keep running till their reputation had been repaired, the clan would have surely split up.

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Hajime Kichiro (1451–1513), the next Jōnin, allied the ryū with the Oda family of Omi, leading to the clan’s greatest period of success. From that time till the end of the Edo period, the Fūdo were sworn servants of the state, working alongside the Iga as sanctioned shinobi. Hajime Rashō (1487–1550) followed up his father’s success by fostering a friendship with the young lord Nobunaga (a very unusual man, who seemed to understand and respect the Fūdo’s way of life).

His son, Hajime Kise (1505–1583) served Lord Nobunaga until the Daimyō turned his armies on the Buddhist temple of Enryakuji. Thereafter, until the lord’s assassination, Kise was counted among the lord’s enemies.

Shortly after the death of Nobunaga, the aging Kise retired (possibly in shame for his failure to prevent lord Oda’s destruction of the Enryakuji); his son Hajime Kōmon (1560–1623) was the Fūdo ryū Jōnin who took the clan into service with the Tokugawa family in 1600.

CLAN LEGEND: THE PERFECTION OF SHURIKENJUTSU

After Hajime Taisō, the Mongolian warrior adopted by Hajime Jurobe, finished his shinobi training, he was sent out as part of a mission to weed out some *wako* (pirates) who were drawing the attention of the authorities close to their base. In one small engagement, his group’s Chūnin had decided that the best method of attack was a quick shower of shuriken, followed up by a charge to cut down the remaining foes. Each shinobi selected a pirate from the group lounging close by and readied several of the metal stars to throw (it usually required several hits to kill or maim even a weak man, unless the shuriken was poisoned), except Taisō who took only one out. The chūnin let the matter go, for he knew that Taisō was an excellent thrower and possibly wished to distinguish himself with a single hit kill, but even so he readied himself to take down Taisō’s man as well as his own.

On the command to throw, Taisō held back and waited as the panicking pirates ran and died under the coarse hands of his colleagues. The chūnin, thinking that Taisō had lost his nerve turned to pursue the last pirate when a single shuriken leaped out of the shadows, striking the man behind the knee and dropping him like a stone. Almost at the same instant, Taisō left cover in a blinding flash and drove his blade down through the wako’s throat.

The chūnin was suitably impressed and reported Taisō’s success to the Jōnin, who asked his adopted son about the source of his skill. The Mongolian told Jurobe that as a child he used to hurl stones at rabbits, being too thick set of finger to use a needle to make a sling. “By the end I had learned that I could cripple them easily by hitting their legs and neck. It is just the same in this case. Cut a man’s tendons with this little blade,” he said, holding up

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a shuriken, “and he’s not going anywhere very quickly.”

Jurobe had always been conscious that his ryū was small and often lost too many men on even a well-planned mission. Any way of offsetting the risks of physical combat was to be welcomed, no matter from where it came and so he accepted Taisō’s technique and set him to instructing the clan in the proper use of shuriken.

FAMILIES

The Fūdo are a small clan, containing no more than 13 families—Bumon, Endo, Fujiwara (Akame), Ito, Junbe, Kise, Morita, Nakaoka, Oda, Ota, Oyoda, Taira (Hajime), and Yosha.

CLAN LEGEND: TAIRA (HAJIME)

The founder of this family was a young Taira general at the time of the Genpei Wars. Whether his name truly was Rikimaru (the strength of the circle/whole)—a very common name among shinobi heroes, especially in Edo period fiction—is unknown. What is known is that instead of following his father into suicide at the sea battle of Harima, Rikimaru threw off his warrior’s code and fled to the mainland with his men swearing vengeance on the blood stained Minamoto. There he is said to have learned the ways of the shinobi at the feet of Kain Doshi himself, though this is unlikely considering the time of Rikimaru’s initiation into Ninpō.

Unusually for shinobi, who tend to look on common merit above blood, the members of this family always seemed to find themselves placed highly in Fūdo ryū affairs. Few, however, would suggest that this has anything to do with favoritism, as the shinobi from this line, including the adopted members, always seemed prove themselves worthy in their own right. It may be that the tutors of the

group worked them harder, longer, and more completely than other students, but some think that the blood of the great Taira lord still flows true in his descendants.

CLAN LEGEND: FUJIWARA (AKAME)

The Founder of this family, Fujiwara Noboru, was the second in command to Taira Rikimaru at the battle of Harima, and a prince of Imperial blood—though in truth, not an important one. He gave over command of his ship at Harima in 1185 to Rikimaru when he was stationed on it (recognizing the general as the superior officer) and remained as Rikimaru’s second-in-command even when they fled into hiding together. (Noboru rejected the pardon granted to all Imperial family members by the Minamoto after the war.)

That the Fūdo ryū can claim a family of Imperial blood—though much reduced over the years—has been a great source of pride to the clan and has also served them well, for many other shinobi ryū, being staunch royalists, respect the Akame’s blood and honor their ancestors—the “free” Emperors such as legendary Jimmu and the powerful Tenchi.

MEMBERS

Jōnin: Hajime Kōmon

Soke: Kise Junichi

Chūnin: 27

Genin: 96

Sympathetic non-shinobi: 10



FŪDO RYŪ SHINOBI TEMPLATE

INT 3 WILL 4 PRE 3 AES 4 PIE 4 KAO 3
STR 2 CON 2 BOD 3 TECH 3 REF 3 DEX 3
MOVE 3 END 20 SD 4 STUN 15 HITS 15 REC 4
RES 12 HON 30

Perks: Contact: Ebisu Shrine Priest (4), Membership Level 2 in ninja clan (6), Gimmick Ningyō (see below)

Complications: Code of Honor: Ninja code, risk death (Frequent, Extreme) (25), Oppressed: Hinin, outcast (Constant, Minor) (6), Poverty: Dirt broke, hinin (Constant, Minor) (5), Secret Identity: Living a normal life (Frequent, Extreme) (15).

Skills: Acrobatics 4, Folk Art: Kugutsu Mawashi 2, Language: Shinobi clan dialect 2, Meditation 2, Ninjutsu 4, Ninpō Taijutsu 4, Scouting 2, Stealth 4, Survival 3

Equipment: Ninja garb (shinobi shojoku). Gimmick puppet (Karakuri Ningyō). Folding Kama (2)—Fūdo ryū specialty weapon.

Notes: The gimmick puppet of the Fūdo clan shinobi is a marvel of *karakuri* (automata) and a real prize to the Fūdo, who sell them dearly to other shinobi ryū. The head is possessed of a small spring launcher from which a shuriken can be fired (and a Fūdo clan shinobi suffers no penalty to the roll when casting a shuriken from the puppet). The puppet's arms can also be detached, becoming a *manrikigusari* (chain) weapon if required. The torso conceals both a *kama*—which can be attached to the chain weapon to become a *kusarigama*—and a rolled up *shojoku*.

HISTORICAL NOTE: PUPPETS

Clay and wood puppets first appear in the physical records of both the Kofun (tumulus) period (c. 500 BC—c. 40 AD) and the Uji (Clans) period (c. 40 AD—645 AD). It is from these Kugutsu (dolls) that the first true puppets evolved in the Nara

(hometown) period (710–780 AD)—as ritual objects of possession and spiritual power in native Japanese religions. The first real step forward came with the influx of Korean nobles from Paekche (fleeing war with the kingdom of Shilla) who brought the *Koktogakshi* (Maiden Dance) puppet theater from their home. The Koktogakshi puppets combined very successfully with native Kugutsu tradition to create Awaji Island Kugutsu Mawashi—the oldest known semi secular puppet theater tradition in Japan—in the early Heian (peace) period (780–1185).

SPHERE OF INFLUENCE

AWAJI ISLAND

Lying between Shikoku and the mainland, Awaji is a small, rugged, but fertile island that was first colonized in the Kofun (tumulus) period. While it possesses good flat land for planting, deep forests and abundant fresh water, the ferocity of the tidal races surrounding it have always conspired to keep most people from settling on it—especially with Shikoku so close at hand. As a result, the few communities which live on the island (including the Fūdo ryū) have lived in relative isolation for many hundreds of years, disturbed only infrequently by tax officials, military expeditions, and pirate raids.

The economy of the island is mainly derived from the sea, the island's fishermen knowing enough about the treacherous currents surrounding the island to be able to fish the *Fugu* (blowfish), which make their homes around Awaji, without much interference. The island also exports a variety of pig—known as *Kobuta* (baby pig)—which is considered a delicacy in Osaka.

There are only three towns of any size on Awaji: Sumoto on the Eastern shore, with the only deep

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water anchorage anywhere on the island; Minato on the Western seaboard, the center for the Fugu fisheries and the usual port of contact with Central Southern Japan; and Sanjo to the south, which has been the home of the Ebisu Jingu since the Nara period.

These three towns serve as civic and legal centers for the 70 or so small hamlets which are dotted around the coast and plains of the island, providing such necessities as blacksmiths, mercantile stores, the occasional brothel, and, of course, Fūdo shinobi ryū front companies.

The ryū receives most of its financial support from the fishing and prostitution businesses—the former as it is very profitable and the latter because it allows the ryū to keep close tabs on the few samurai sent by whichever daimyō administers the land. The clan also runs several inns (both on the road and in the three main towns) as safe houses for agents and trusted sympathizers.

CLAN LEGEND: THE UNDERGROUND FORTRESS

While the Fūdo ryū maintain a large village “front,” much as many shinobi clans did, their real stronghold was removed from the village by a good few miles (as opposed to being the village itself as with the Fukushima ryū, or in tunnels under the buildings as with the Iga ryū), buried in the slopes of Mount Tengu, at the head of the Fūdo valley. It is said that Jōnin Hajime Jurobe first discovered the potential of the mountains, while training there, stumbling as he did onto a natural cave network



which not only connected all slopes of the mountain with a small number of natural vents, but contained many large chambers and enough room for many men to live comfortably. Always conscious of the need for a stronghold in which to store the ryū’s increasing arsenal of weapons and store of equipment, but also mindful of the fact that a base in or under the village might still be discovered, he ordered that the caves be secretly prepared to receive the clan and act as their base.

POLITICS

The Fūdo are staunch royalists (see *Families—Clan Legend: Fujiwara*, page XDX) and only served the Oda family because they recognized his strength and desire to see an Imperial descendant take the throne again. The rumors that lord Nobunaga wished to place a descendent of Fujiwara Noboru on the Imperial throne are totally unfounded.

ALLIANCES AND ENEMIES

The Fūdo have no direct enemies. As they count the Iga as an ally, though, they certainly are not on friendly terms with the enemies of that ryū.

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FŪDO SHINOBI OF NOTE

(1) HAJIME KŌMON

Jōnin of the Fūdo Shinobi Ryū

Age: 43 (in 1603)

Caste: Hinin

Religion: Ebisu (Buddhist)

INT 5 **WILL 6** **PRE 6** **AES 3** **PIE 4** **KAO 6**
STR 6 **CON 5** **BOD 5** **TECH 7** **REF 6** **DEX 6**
MOVE 5 **END 50** **SD 10** **STUN 25** **HITS 25** **REC 11**
RES 18 **HON 60**

Perks: Contact: Ebisu Shrine Abbot, Membership Level 7 in ninja clan, Contact: Tokugawa family lord. Member of an exempt profession, Puppeteer (may travel without papers).

Talents: Knack with Shinobi iri.

Complications: Code of Honor: Ninja code, risk death (Frequent, Extreme), Oppressed: Hinin outcast (Constant, Minor), Poverty: Dirt broke, hinin (Constant, Minor), Secret Identity: Puppeteer (Infrequent, Extreme). Renown: Puppeteer (Constant, Strong).

Skills: Acrobatics 5, Do-ton-jutsu 5, Folk Art: Kugutsu Mawashi 6, Genjutsu 5, Inpo 4, Joeionjutsu 5, Ka-ton-jutsu 3, Language: Shinobi clan dialect 4, Leadership 5, Meditation 4, Ninjutsu 6, Ninpō Taijutsu 6, Riding 3, Scouting 5, Senjutsu 4, Shinobi iri 6 *, Shurikenjutsu 6, Stealth 5, Suiton-jutsu 2, Survival 4, Tonpo 5.

* includes +1 for knack

Equipment: Ninja garb (*shinobi shojoku*). Above average Shinobigatana (+1 AV), average *kama* (2).

Background: The Jōnin of the Fūdo ryū after the fall of Oda Nobunaga, Kōmon is an outwardly taciturn but inwardly jolly man who takes great pride in his little group, though he rarely shows it on the surface. Living out his life as an itinerant puppeteer for the Ebisu Jingu, he leaves the day-

to-day running of the Fūdo to the clan Soke and spends most of his days at the shrine, only rarely taking missions away from Awaji (claiming that his duties as a puppetmaster take up too much of his time). It is universally accepted in the ryū that his sedentary lifestyle is mainly due to his teaching activities at the ryū's school—concealed in the Ebisu Jingu—for at heart Kōmon is very fond of the clan's children and believes that they should be given the best education they can receive—even if that means him having to give up the “active life” for their sake.

Personality: Kōmon likes to present a stern face to the world, especially when he is teaching, but in reality he is a very light hearted man, full of the contentment of his situation and unworried by the nature of his calling. He is not a callous person, but has simply found his way to a true sense of seishin and, as such, has been lifted to a degree from the cares of the world. He is honorable after the shinobi's way and not one to hold a grudge beyond professional concerns.

In his cover as the chief puppetmaster of Awaji Ebisu Jingu he is greatly respected and loved by the island's inhabitants for his childlike humor and his open honesty.

Quote: “*Puppets we are, and all to the same hand. So play your part and play it well, for you can do no more.*”

HISTORICAL NOTE

Little is actually known of Kōmon other than that he was a puppeteer with the Ebisu shrine on Awaji while leading the Fūdo ryū. However, he is said to have been the man who trained a young puppetmaster called Takeda Yōshi, the father of Takeda Izumo—the inventor of modern Ningyō Jōruri and Bunraku puppets.

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(2) AKAME JUNKO

Chūnin of the Fūdo Shinobi Ryū

Age: 21 (in 1603)

Caste: Hinin

Religion: Ebisu (Buddhist)

INT 4 **WILL 5** **PRE 5** **AES 3** **PIE 4** **KAO 5**

STR 4 **CON 4** **BOD 5** **TECH 6** **REF 6** **DEX 5**

MOVE 5 **END 40** **SD 8** **STUN 25** **HITS 25** **REC 8**

RES 15 **HON 50**

Perks: Contact: Ebisu Shrine Priest, Membership Level 5 in ninja clan, Contact: Iga ryū chūnin.

Talents: Knack with Shurikenjutsu, light sleeper

Complications: Code of Honor: Ninja code, risk death (Frequent, Extreme), Oppressed: Hinin outcast (Constant, Minor), Poverty: Dirt broke, hinin (Constant, Minor), Secret Identity: Living a normal life (Frequent, Extreme). Renown: Shrine Dancer (Infrequent, Mild).

Skills: Dance: Kagura Shrine Dance 4, Acrobatics 4, Language: Shinobi clan dialect 3, Meditation 4, Ninjutsu 4, Ninpō Taijutsu 4, Scouting 3, Stealth 4, Survival 4. Senjutsu 2, Shinobi iri 4, Shurikenjutsu 5 *, Tonpo 4, Moku-ton-jutsu 4, Inpo 3, Joeionjutsu 3, Onibi Jutsu 2.

* includes +1 for knack

Equipment: Ninja garb (shinobi shojoku), Shrine garb (Kaguramaijoku). Above average Kama (2) (+1 AV), Onibi (3 jars—never to be found in camp or at the shrine, but never without them on a mission).

Background: Junko is currently a student of the Fūdo ryū's resident explosives master as well as the Shurikenjutsu coach to the senior trainees in the clan. Her cover as a part time *Kagura* (Spirit entertainment) dancer at the Awaji Ebisu Jingu keeps her in constant contact with Jōnin Kōmon. Both he and the clan have come to accept her as his unofficial bodyguard—though in truth he seems to afford her more protection than vice versa. Her father, before he died, was the ryū's master chemist and Junko has picked up something of his trade,

though she only seems keen on perfecting a number of types of *Onibi* (devil's breath) firebombs (much to the distress of the ryū's Soke as she has a habit of mixing up her materials in her underground quarters). However, because of her remarkable skills and the sufferance of the Jōnin her work is allowed to go on with only the mildest of rebukes to repay the countless scorched floors.

She is also one of the few well traveled shinobi in her generation; the rest of her peers have been kept mainly on the islands under orders of their new Tokugawa masters. She has visited the Iga ryū on several occasions both to teach (shurikenjutsu) and learn (Onibijutsu). Her dedication to her ryū and her clear purpose have won her several admirers in the Iga clan.

Personality: Junko is not given over much to thinking about anything other than her work and rarely ventures out with the other young women of the ryū. The death of her father hit her very hard (having lost her mother years before) and she has channeled her affection for the half crazed chemist into her work on the Onibi he loved to tinker with.

While she certainly is driven and single minded, she will open up very readily to a person is honestly interested in her work, there being few like minded agents in the ryū.

Quote: “*You play with this fire and a burning is the least you can expect!*”

HISTORICAL NOTE

Junko appears in a handful of Fūdo ryū tales written especially for the children of the clan. In them she is described as a typically clumsy but good natured shinobi (much like Kirimaru, Shinbe, and Rantaro from the popular NHK series *Nintama Rantarou*) who is always getting herself into—and out of—trouble with a wide range of ludicrous pyrotechnic devices.

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(3) OYODA KUMA

Genin of the Fūdo Shinobi Ryū

Age: 33 (in 1603)

Caste: Hinin

Religion: Ebisu (Buddhist)

INT 4 **WILL 7** **PRE 4** **AES 3** **PIE 3** **KAO 4**
STR 8 **CON 8** **BOD 7** **TECH 6** **REF 4** **DEX 4**
MOVE 3 **END 80** **SD 16** **STUN 35** **HITS 35** **REC 16**
RES 21 **HON 40**

Perks: Contact: Ebisu Shrine Priest, Membership Level 3 in ninja clan, Contact: Gaijin Sailor (English)

Talents: Knack with Firearms

Complications: Oppressed: Hinin outcast (Constant, Minor), Poverty: Dirt broke, hinin (Constant, Minor), Code of Honor: Ninja code, risk death (Frequent, Extreme), Secret Identity: Living a normal life (Frequent, Extreme).

Skills: Acrobatics 3, Do-ton-jutsu 3, Firearms 5*, Language: English 1, Language: Shinobi clan dialect 2, Meditation 2, Moku-ton-jutsu 3, Ninjutsu 4, Ninpō Taijutsu 6, Scouting 2, Senjutsu 3, Shinobi iri 2, Shurikenjutsu 4, Stealth 3, Sui-ton-jutsu 1, Survival 4.

* includes +1 for Knack

Equipment: Ninja garb (*shinobi shojoku*). Average *kama* (2), English naval deck gun (treat as Ōdeppo).

Background: Kuma (no one knows or remembers his real name and he seems in no hurry to remind them) is something of an oddity in the ryū. He is an archetypal ox of a man, short on smarts (for a shinobi, though he is by no means stupid) but long on brawn. Those who see him (especially when clad in his shojoku) can hardly associate his huge frame with his profession. However, Kumachan (as the children of the ryū call him) is a very effective member of the clan and has given good service for many years, working primarily as support personnel on missions with a good chance of heavy fighting.

He has been fascinated by teppō ever since he was a boy and made many attempts to get hold of

one of the few which the ryū hold for special missions. Eventually, after rising to the position of Genin, he was in a position to “assign” himself one of these guns but found them all too small and ineffective for his liking. While working under cover for an English trader friend of Tokugawa Ieyasu’s called Adams, he was stationed in Yokohama. He came across a gun to his liking: one of the large deck guns (more like small cannon) which one of the English vessels carried on her stern. As his team were under orders to ensure that an accident befell the vessel shortly after leaving for England, Kuma decided that “liberating” one of the pieces would not cause too many problems, and he has been inseparable from the gun ever since. He still occasionally sees Adams on Awaji (the sailor seems to like the Ebisu puppet theater) and has been learning English from the remarkable pilot.

Personality: Kuma seems to be a simple soul at first glance, ever ready with a smile and a sweet or two for the ryū’s children, maybe because he remembers being taken in by the Fūdo as a terrified youngster and shown more kindness by these dread Shadow Warriors than the samurai who killed his parents showed him. However, this is not a complete picture of his character by a long sea mile. He is deeply serious and ever aware that his position in the ryū was not secured by blood, but by compassion and though his place in—and loyalty to—the clan is not in doubt, he ever feels the need to prove that he is worthy of their trust and affection. His only fault, the one thing that prevents him achieving true seishin, is that he does not trust himself as he should. While this has not been a serious problem so far, his chūnin is well aware that the situation needs real attention lest the great Kuma fall foul of his own doubts during a mission.

Quote: (spoken in broken English) “A man is not the sum of his parts, but the sum of his ambitions.”

忍者

FUKUSHIMA RYŪ

BACKGROUND

THE HISTORICAL FUKUSHIMA

The first Jōnin of the ryū was the young Ishimura Goyobe (1082–1146), also known as Yuki no Saji (The Snow's Plaything). Following his death, the title of Jōnin passed into the Akiba family for several generations with Akiba Senzo (ca. 1101–ca. 1177), Akiba Senza (1135–1202), Akiba Sensoko (1170–1252) and Akiba Rashō (1209–1294) taking the clan through the hard years of the Genpei Wars into an alliance with the Kamakura Shōgunate. Fuda Fūdoshi (alias: real name unknown) (1258–1312) followed. He in turn was succeeded by Tsume Fumie (alias: real name unknown) (1276–1333), who was responsible for the building of the clan's first permanent base in Kai province. The rules of the next two jōnin, Jigen Daisuke (alias: real name unknown; 1301–1344) and Ishimura Sadō (1306–1402) passed off without incident.

In the time of Kenta Burō (????–1450), who was responsible for extending the clan's influence as far North as Musashi, the ryū came into contact with the powerful Fuma ryū, tying up Fukushima clan in a war that lasted for about eighty years (1420–1500) and was ended only by the death of Oda Henjin (alias: real name unknown; 1417–1500; clan legend). Of the following Jōnin, Kawa

Kiichi (1460–1526), Tsume Oson (1479–1564) and Sugahara Kamui, very little is known, other than that Kamui stepped down in 1523 to live out his life in the Ebisu shrine.

During the rule of Ishimura Hanze (1536–1600) much of the strength of the ryū was called away to fight in the 1600 Sekigahara campaign for the loyalist forces of the dead *Kanpaku* (adviser to the Emperor), Hideyoshi. In this campaign, most who went were hunted down by Iga clan shinobi. Hanze himself was killed and in the confusion of the campaign's aftermath the Fuma—backed it is said by the Tokugawa family—overran many Fukushima holdings, including Fukushima itself.

The son of Hanze, Ishimura Kanbe (1569–1642) ruled over a much-reduced clan ever at odds with bandits and Fuma clan shinobi.

CLAN LEGEND: THE FOUNDING

The Fukushima shinobi ryū was formed in 1107, a casualty of the changing political climate of the Heian period Imperial Court.

In 1104 a young warrior, Ishimura Goyobe, came to Miyako, at the invitation of his Father-in-Law Fujiwara Genmon, the Second undersecretary to the Shikibu (the Court Office of Ritual). He took up a position of Door Warden to the dying Emperor Horikawa. No sooner had he been ceremonially installed as the warden than the emperor died. The Imperial Heir ordered that all the household



staff be burned along with the palace and the old Emperor to prevent the contagion from spreading to his reign.

Kumie, Goyobe's wife, went to her father and pleaded for her husband's life, denouncing her own father as a traitor in the heir's presence. In a fit of rage, her father struck off his own child's head and was himself cut down by the palace guards for shedding blood in the halls of the Emperor. The poor Goyobe, though deeply wronged, was not reinstated as Door Warden. Being innocent of any real crime, he was still polluted by the death of the old Emperor and was offered the choice of execution or exile to the farthest reaches of the realm, under pain of death never to return.

Swearing to uphold the honor of the new Emperor Toba, Goyobe took the latter option and was taken north beyond the central mountains to live out what life was left to him. In late November 1104, Goyobe's party was caught in the first snows of the Kai region's winter and his escort left him on the border to make his own way to his new home. Without aid, without food, and without skills (for he was a child of a wealthy family), Goyobe might have died in that place had it not been for a young woman dressed all in white who brought him to a place of safety. She gave him food while uttering no sound beyond such kind words of comfort as one would give a sick child. On the third morning he woke to find that his savior had left him and in her place were three white clad men, all masked and with knives drawn.

Questioning him long, they ascertained that he was who they thought him to be and immediately asked him, as a true son of Imperial blood, to be their leader. A little bewildered, Goyobe tried to tell them that he had been shamed and sent away. At that moment the woman who had saved him reappeared, revealing herself to be *kunoichi* of the Kara-san ryū and told the puzzled Goyobe that they knew all about his story.

Thereafter, Goyobe trained with these hardy warriors, following the teachings of his new friends and teaching them the ways of the court. Each year, their number grew as more and more people traveled to the desolate Kai region, fleeing either the harsh justice of the Fujiwara or the ever-increasing military conflicts to the south between the Minamoto and the Taira. In the year 1107, Goyobe declared that he would form a new ryū, taking all who wished to join him, to defend the Musashi region from all evil-doers for the honor of the Emperor. All of the Kara-san ryū rallied to his cause and so was the Fukushima shinobi ryū founded.

FUMA CLAN LEGEND: THE FUKUSHIMA/FUMA WAR

According to legend, the Fukushima ryū invaded the region of Musashi in about 1420, coming into contact and fighting with the Fuma ryū until about 1500. The Fukushima records that have survived do not mention this war at all. It is possible that the Fuma clan created this conflict to justify their actions around Fukushima in 1600.

The events of the war are unknown, so GMs may feel free to do as they wish with the conflict. However, Fuma stories tell of "many hundred" shinobi attacking their holdings on Musashi. As unlikely as this story is, it has been included here because it is a good adventure hook.

FAMILIES

Being a clan of foundlings to a great degree, many families have associated with the Fukushima ryū over the years. These groups were often represented by a single member, they often depart from the clan as seemingly swiftly as they arrive. Currently 23 family groups of varying size make up the operational center of the ryū.

忍者

FAMILY NAMES

Akiba, Bunto, Fuda, Fujiwara, Ganbe, Hato, Ibe, Iga, Ishikawa, Ishimura, Jigen, Kawa, Kenta, Koga, Minamoto, Moru, Nagata, Namu, Nobita, Oda, Sugahara, Seimon, and Tsume.

MEMBERS

Jōnin: Ishimura Kanbe

Soke: Fuda Hiroshi

Chūnin: 19

Genin: 79

Sympathetic non-shinobi: 23

FUKUSHIMA RYŪ SHINOBI TEMPLATE

INT 3 WILL 4 PRE 3 AES 4 PIE 4 KAO 3
STR 2 CON 2 BOD 3 TECH 3 REF 3 DEX 3
MOVE 3 END 20 SD 4 STUN 15 HITS 15 REC 4
RES 12 HON 30

Perks: Contact: Bandit Leader (4), Membership Level 2 in ninja clan (6).

Complications: Code of Honor: Ninja code, risk death (Frequent, Extreme) (25), Enemy: Fuma clan shinobi (Constant, Minor) (5), Oppressed: Hinin, outcast (Constant, Minor) (6), Poverty: Dirt broke, hinin (Constant, Minor) (5), Secret Identity: Living a normal life (Frequent, Extreme) (15).

Skills: Acrobatics 4, Language: Shinobi clan dialect 2, Meditation 2, Ninjutsu 4, Ninpō Taijutsu 4, Scouting 2, Stealth 4, Survival 3, Winter Survival 2.

Equipment: Ninja garb (*shinobi shojoku*).

SPHERE OF INFLUENCE

KAI

The main strength of the ryū is located around the lake of Inawa, roughly in the middle of the Kai region. The Fukushima shinobi take much of their wealth from that lake as they work under the cover of fisher folk. However, their influence stretches as far north as the Musashi/Kai border and as far South as Igaki City in Suruga province (near modern day Mito). Once away from the lake, around which the ryū has total control, the clan can only count a small number of safe houses (and none along the Musashi border), mostly located around Igaki itself, where the clan sell their legitimate wares (fish, nets, and farm tools).

POLITICS

The Fukushima clan is a staunchly royalist ryū, dedicated to the ideal of the Emperor should ruling the land directly, not through the Shōgunate. This Regency they hold to be the prime cause of the land's slow failing as they believe that the children of heaven—the Emperors—are the reason why the land of Japan was originally blessed. While the ryū have worked for Shogunate officers in the past, they have always done so with an eye to finding out as much information about their employers as possible so that they can better protect their Kai home.

ALLIANCES AND ENEMIES

Currently the Fukushima clan is in a state of war with the Fuma clan of Musashi, which has attempted to occupy parts of the northern reaches of the Fukushima ryū's territory. However, they have no other enemies to speak of and a few low-rank-

忍者

ing, but firm, friends in the Tokugawa family who supply the clan with work, in the hopes that a Fukushima victory will create a strong and battle-hardened shinobi ryū which will be willing to help further Tokugawa causes.

FUKUSHIMA SHINOBI OF NOTE

(1) ISHIMURA KANBE

Jōnin of the Fukushima Shinobi Ryū

Age: 34 (in 1603)

Caste: Hinin

Religion: Buddhist

INT 5 WILL 6 PRE 4 AES 4 PIE 5 KAO 3
STR 4 CON 4 BOD 5 TECH 5 REF 4 DEX 5
MOVE 5 END 40 SD 8 STUN 25 HITS 25 REC 8
RES 18 HON 30

Perks: Contact: Tokugawa noble, Membership Level 7 in ninja clan.

Talents: Knack for Sui-ton-jutsu and Sailing

Complications: Code of Honor: Ninja code, risk death (Frequent, Extreme), Enemy: Fuma clan Jōnin (Constant, Major), Oppressed: Hinin, out-cast (Constant, Minor), Poverty: Dirt broke, hinin (Constant, Minor), Secret Identity: Living a normal life (Frequent, Extreme).

Skills: Acrobatics 5, Firearms 4, Genjutsu 5, Inpo 4, Joeionjutsu 5, Ka-ton-jutsu 3, Language: Shinobi clan dialect 4, Leadership 5, Meditation 4, Navigation 4, Ninjutsu 6, Ninpō Taijutsu 6, Sailing 5*, Scouting 5, Senjutsu 4, Shinobi iri 4, Shurikenjutsu 5, Stealth 5, Sui-ton-jutsu 6*, Survival 4, Tonpo 5.

* includes +1 for knack

Equipment: Ninja garb (shinobi shojoku). Above average Teppō (+1 AV), above average Shinobigatana (+1 AV).

Background: Kanbe can still remember the day that the battered remnants of the Fukushima

Shinobi Ryū Gundam (battalion), which had fought at the battle of Sekigahara, returned to their homes to find Fuma clan shinobi pouring across the border with Musashi to the North. The bloodshed that followed lasted eight days. Although the Fuma were eventually pushed back, almost to the border itself, the loss of life was almost crippling to the Fukushima.

Kanbe had always been something of an idealist, taking as his model the great founder of the ryū, Goyobe sensei, and Kanbe had always lived firmly in the belief that all shinobi were brothers and not ones to war on each other without great need. Naïve he might seem (especially to overlook the infamous “Oukami Yo” (Night of the Wolf) in 1581 during which the Iga clan assassinated over 100 Koga shinobi), but he firmly believed that no sworn shinobi would go to war with another just to gain land. As this seemed to be the case with the Fuma attack, the sense of betrayal he felt after forcing the Fuma back to their own land was doubly heavy for him.

Unusually for a clan’s Jōnin, he is very open about his position in the Fukushima clan and has never taken to using a secret identity around his clansmen.

Personality: Kanbe is an angry man who feels that he has been unable to make a single correct decision for his clan since he took charge in 1600. He is depressed that he was unable to force back the Fuma Clan without costing his ryū many lives—especially hard after the battle of Sekigahara.

Desperate and almost at his wits end, Kanbe is a broken man, leading a proud and defiant clan into the jaws of death. If the Fukushima ryū are ever to regain their rightful place in the world something *must* be done about Kanbe soon.

Quote: “The man who is forsaken by the gods were better to have never lived.”

忍者

HISTORICAL NOTE

What little is known of the historical Kanbe points to him actually being quite a remarkable sailor as well as an adept shinobi. He has often been “written into” shinobi fiction over the years as either an assassin trained in water warfare or a boatman who mysteriously turns up to advise the hero of the piece.

(2) ODA TENCHI

Chūnin of the Fukushima Shinobi Ryū

Age: 29 (in 1603)

Caste: Hinin

Religion: Buddhist

INT 5	WILL 4	PRE 4	AES 5	PIE 4	KAO 5
STR 3	CON 3	BOD 5	TECH 4	REF 6	DEX 5
MOVE 5	END 30	SD 6	STUN 25	HITS 25	REC 6
RES 12	HON 50				

Perks: Contact: Fukushima Village Headman, Membership Level 5 in ninja clan.

Talents: Knack with Ninpō Taijutsu

Complications: Code of Honor: Ninja code, risk death (Frequent, Extreme), Enemy: Fuma clan shinobi (constant, minor), Oppressed: Hinin, out-cast (Constant, Minor), Poverty: Dirt broke, hinin (Constant, Minor), Secret Identity: Living a normal life (Frequent, Extreme).

Skills: Acrobatics 4, Firearms 3, Genjutsu 4, Inpo 4, Joeionjutsu 3, Ka-ton-jutsu 1, Language: Shinobi clan dialect 3, Leadership 2, Meditation 3, Navigation 3, Ninjutsu 5, Ninpō Taijutsu 6*, Sailing 4, Scouting 4, Senjutsu 3, Shinobi iri 4, Shurikenjutsu 4, Stealth 4, Sui-ton-jutsu 5, Survival 4, Tonpo 2.

* includes +1 for knack

Equipment: Ninja garb (shinobi shojoku), Average Kusarigama.

Background: Tenchi is the current head of the Fukushima ryū Ninpō Taijutsu school and the man who is being groomed to replace the increasingly erratic Jōnin, even though he has not realized it

yet. He is fanatically loyal to the clan, but also dedicated to Kanbe whom he still sees as the clan’s savior after the war with the Fuma, rather than as the decaying old man whose lack of seishin is dragging the whole clan into ruin. This is one reason why he has not been informed of the Soke’s decision to see him replace the Jōnin.

Tenchi was born to a peasant farmer, Meido, in the village of Saza on the shores of lake Inawa. The clan adopted Tenchi as a favor to his father, who had served the ryū most of his life as a sympathetic ear. The youth was not made aware of his origins for many years, however, because the clan does not risk divided loyalties creeping into a student’s mind. It was not until his 16th birthday that Tenchi was introduced to his parents. He quickly overcame his adolescent resentment of the situation and drew his parents to his heart, both as valuable assets to the ryū and as his own flesh and blood.

Personality: Not everyone in the clan suffers in the same way as Kanbe (with guilt and a lack of seishin) over the loss of the clan’s youth at Sekigahara and in the Fuma war. Tenchi himself is as bright and determined to recover his ryū’s station in the world as can be, directing his every moment to living his life in harmony with nature, not dwelling on the fall of the Fuma. However, like many in the clan, his vision concerning Kanbe is clouded and he has great difficulty seeing that the Jōnin has become a wreck of his former self, more of a burden than a leader. Tenchi knows that Kanbe is not well, but he firmly believes that the Jōnin will quickly recover and lead the clan back to Kai soon.

Quote: “*There is nothing to be feared on The Way, but the fear of failing. Your enemy cannot make you step from that path, neither will the World force you from it. Only you can choose to walk off the road and on to ruin.*”



HISTORICAL NOTE

Almost every Shinobi ryū has a legend concerning a foundling who rises to a position of import and saves the clan from doom (or itself); even today it is a popular conceit among writers of shinobi fiction. Oda Tenchi is the Fukushima ryū's foundling son. His full story is beyond the scope of this work, as it carries on well into the 17th century and ends in a climactic battle between the head of the Fuma ryū and himself—which, of course, he wins.

(3) ODA KATSURO

Genin of the Fukushima Shinobi Ryū

Age: 19 (in 1603)

Caste: Hinin

Religion: Buddhist

INT 3 WILL 4 PRE 4 AES 4 PIE 4 KAO 3
 STR 3 CON 2 BOD 3 TECH 4 REF 3 DEX 4
MOVE 3 END 20 SD 4 STUN 15 HITS 15 REC 5
 RES 12 HON 30

Perks: Contact: Sympathetic level 2 Fuma Shinobi, Membership Level 3 in ninja clan (6)

Talents: Knack with Acrobatics

Complications: Code of Honor: Ninja code, risk death (Frequent, Extreme), Enemy: Fuma clan shinobi (Constant, Minor), Oppressed: Hinin, out-cast (Constant, Minor), Poverty: Dirt broke, hinin (Constant, Minor), Secret Identity: Living a normal life (Frequent, Extreme).

Skills: Acrobatics 6*, Genjutsu 2, Inpo 2, Language: Shinobi clan dialect 3, Meditation 2, Navigation 1, Ninjutsu 3, Ninpō Taijutsu 4, Sailing 2, Scouting 3, Shinobi iri 3, Shurikenjutsu 4, Stealth 4, Sui-ton-jutsu 4, Survival 3.

* includes +1 for knack

Equipment: Ninja garb (shinobi shojoku).

Background: Only recently chosen as one of the clan's Genin, Katsuro is the son of a famed

Fukushima ryū master and great things were expected of the youth. At the age of 12 he had already undertaken his first solo mission (killing a Fuma shinobi in single combat) and by his 16th birthday he was the most promising student in his class and the only one to be taken to Sekigahara. Fortunately his life was spared in the carnage of the Shinobi Taisen with the Iga ryū, prior to the battle proper and made his way home with Kanbe after the Loyalist forces were scattered by the Tokugawa. Since that time, he has spent most of his time teaching Acrobatics and spatial awareness to the children of the ryū (especially important aboard ship). However, his constant requests for field service have not fallen on deaf ears, and he is called on fairly regularly to carry out field missions with his most promising pupils.

Personality: Katsuro is perhaps one of the few rank and file members of the clan to see clearly what is happening to the ryū and what should be done about it. However, he has not dared speak his mind to any but the Soke, whom he perceives as being of a like mind, and his fiancée.

He loves Kanbe dearly, as the Jōnin was his own tutor for many years, and he cannot abide to see the great man wracked by the doubt and self-destructive urges which daily haunt the Jōnin. It is almost as if Katsuro feels a measure of the pain which Kanbe heaps upon himself.

Katsuro is a brooding figure these days, obsessed with that which he thinks only he can see: the rot at the heart of the clan. He could be in as much danger of destroying himself in doubt as the Jōnin is.

Quote: *"Speed, strength, agility: These things are not so hard to achieve. Free the heart, and you will surely free the body."*

忍者

FUMA RYŪ

BACKGROUND

THE HISTORICAL FUMA RYŪ

Fuma Rikyū (1390–1464), the first grandmaster of the Fuma clan, took up the office in 1411, consolidating his position by marrying the daughter of a Musashi clan chief (clan legend). Following his abdication in 1460, Fuma Katsura (1428–1501), became Jōnin, stepping down himself in 1480 in favor of Fuma Echizen (ca. 1461–1524). Fuma Echizen was the first Jōnin to mention the 1420–1500 war with the Fukushima ryū and the plans that the Fuma had to exploit Fukushima land for their own purposes (see below). Although Echizen did much to further the clan’s schemes, it was not until Fuma Rantarō (1491–1577) took over when Echizen was crippled in on a mission that the clan had enough money to finance the bribes for their grand plot. At the battle of Sekigahara, in the time of Fuma Kotaro (ca. 1533–1606)—famous for his daring nocturnal raids against Takeda clan troops in the unrest of 1581 in support of Odawara Hojo’s army—the ryū had the opportunity to set their invasion force in motion while the Fukushima ryū were occupied in the south.

CLAN LEGEND: THE FOUNDING

The province of Musashi (modern Yamagata) was not within the bounds of the Japanese Empire

when the Fuma family was dispatched by the court to settle the region and assess what threat the local tribes posed to an expansion of the realm. The Fuma were “invited” by the Emperor (forced by the Shogun) to return their fief to the state, sell what assets they held directly and move the whole clan by sea to the outpost of Musashi Castle, which had not even been laid out by the time they arrived in 1394.

Little knowing what to do, the Fuma built a compound of sorts and began gathering in the resources (wood, fish, and gold) that the Emperor had requested of them. The first winter was especially harsh, with over 60 of the clan, mostly children, dying of cold or malnutrition because the promised autumn supply ship did not show up. Indeed, many more might have died without the aid of a small clan of Aboriginal mountain men, who taught the Japanese about life in the harsh north land.

By the spring thaw, though reduced and embittered, the Fuma were a hardier lot and more determined than ever to give good service to the Emperor. They dutifully prepared a survey of all the local native tribes, gathered as much material as they could, and waited for the spring merchantmen who were scheduled to carry away their goods and bring in further settlers.

The ships that were sighted on the morning of April 24, 1395, were a fleet of Shogunate war galleys, which so unsettled the Fuma that the sight of them prompted the daimyō of the clan—Fuma Horikawa—to send the women, children, and heir-





looms of the clan into hiding with the locals while the men waited to answer the call of their honor. Receiving the embassy with great estate, as was proper, Horikawa gave his report to the quite incredulous commander of the fleet, being forced to stop several times to clarify how they had managed to survive. Not sensing the danger, Horikawa talked of the alliance with the natives of the region—the help he had taken from them—and this closed the noose on his neck. The fleet had not been sent to collect any prizes for the crown, but to simply ensure that the winter weather had finished off what the lack of supplies would have started—the destruction of the Fuma clan.

Horikawa was denounced as a traitor, for consorting with enemies of the throne and hoarding

wealth (about 24 ounces of gold) to buy mercenary armies of barbarians to use against the Emperor. Perhaps to hide the fact that the real wealth of the family, its children, were safely in hiding, Horikawa and his bodyguard fell on the Shogun's Hatamoto and slew him on the spot, before turning on the rest of the embassy. The fight, however, was one-sided and the Shogunate men had soon bottled up the Fuma men in the half-built Tenjo (main keep) of the castle.

Setting the Tenjo well alight with oils, the Fuma men, with Horikawa at their head, led one final charge against the besiegers and were quickly cut down in a hail of arrows. Four miles away, the young Rikyū saw the burning of his home and the tears of his mother and, though he did not know what was occurring, cried too—the last time, so it is said, that he shed a tear in mortal life.

The local people, the Kokto, who had befriended the Fuma, took the women and children into their own clan and made a special place for them in their community: a place in which the memory of the fallen could be honored and the lives of the lost could be recalled so that the children of the clan could rise up one day and revenge the deeds done to them. The guardian of that place was an old shinobi of the Goton Juppu ryū called Goda Aeka who had been sent as an agent by her Jōnin to discover what the court wished of the north. Enraged by the casual manner in which the Fuma had been erased from history in the eyes of the court, the old woman confessed her position to the wife of Horikawa and offered her services in extracting revenge.

Under her tutelage, the children of the Fuma soon mastered all the skills which Aeka could teach them. When she was finished, the Kokto chieftain added his own people's knowledge of woodcraft, plant lore, and survival to their training.

忍者

CLAN LEGEND: THE WAR WITH THE FUKUSHIMA RYŪ

Fuma clan legends tell us that in the year 1420, a party of shinobi from Fukushima raided across the Musashi border and sacked a Fuma Ryū outpost. This was supposedly the start of eighty years of warfare between the clans. As this legend only appears in one (much later) Fuma source and nowhere else, it seems likely that the tale is apocryphal and possibly just an excuse to cover up the fact that in 1600 the Fuma clan invaded Fukushima ryū, in order to taking advantage of the losses that the Fukushima clan had suffered in the Sekigahara campaign of that year.

CLAN LEGEND: THE ASSASSINATION ATTEMPT ON EMPEROR GOYŌZEI

Though clearly a myth, it is said that the Fuma clan had always harbored a desire to be revenged upon the Empire for casting them down so completely when they were nothing less than loyal servants of the throne. The legend tells that as the years wore on and the desire for revenge became stronger that an Onmyoji (diviner) in 1430 known to the clan made a prediction, “When the blood of Goyobe’s heirs wash the shores of Inawa, then will the child of Fuma send her gold to blind the eyes of the faithless son of heaven.” The clan took Goyobe’s heirs to mean the Fukushima ryū—of whom they knew—and they well knew that the son of heaven could only mean the Emperor. Since that time, the clan—it is alleged—spared no effort in attempting to prepare the way for this revelation, building an army with which to crush the Fukushima ryū, placing agents as close as possible to the throne and attempting to do all this in uttermost secrecy.

HISTORICAL NOTE: THE KOKTO

There were many tribes of native Japanese living in the north of Honshu when the Fuma were sent there and the Kokto were one such people. Of the same culture as Ainu of Ezo, the Kokto are thought have descended from either Alano Sarmation (or Osset) nomads who settled in Korea and Japan in about 200 B.C. (according to Han Chinese chronicles) or—which is supported by recent genetic studies—from people of mixed European and Altaic bloodlines.

Like all the native tribes in Honshu though the Kokto had vanished from recorded history by the time that the Tokugawa government started pacifying the North in the early 1600s and the last aboriginal Japanese (the Ainu) were driven back to Ezo (Hokkaido).

FAMILIES

While many families, both Kokto and Japanese, have sent their children to study with this ryū there is only one acknowledged family—that of Fuma. However, the following family names are recorded as being part of the ryū due to their connection with the Fuma before the clan was wiped out in 1395.

FAMILY NAMES

Fujihara, Fuma, Fumio, Ibuki, Iga, Ito, Kangen, Kiichi, Koktoga, Miho, and Senda.

MEMBERS

Jōnin: Fuma Kotaro

Soke: Fuma Gakshi

Chūnin: 22

Genin: 112

Sympathetic non-shinobi: 13



FUMA RYŪ SHINOBI TEMPLATE

INT 3 WILL 4 PRE 3 AES 4 PIE 3 KAO 3
 STR 3 CON 3 BOD 3 TECH 3 REF 3 DEX 3
MOVE 3 END 30 SD 6 STUN 15 HITS 15 REC 6
 RES 12 HON 30

Perks: Contact: Kokto Clan Chief (4), Membership Level 2 in ninja clan (6)

Complications: Code of Honor: Ninja code, risk death (Frequent, Extreme) (25), Oppressed: Hinin (or barbarian: Kokto), outcast (Constant, Minor) (6), Poverty: Dirt broke, hinin (Constant, Minor) (5), Secret Identity: Living a normal life (Frequent, Extreme) (15).

Skills: Acrobatics 4, Disguise 2, Language: Kokto 2, Language: Shinobi clan dialect 2, Lore: Kokto history 2, Meditation 2, Ninjutsu 4, Ninpō Tajjutsu 4, Scouting 2, Stealth 4, Survival 3.

Equipment: Ninja garb (shinobi shojoku), Kokto garb.

SPHERE OF INFLUENCE

MUSASHI

In the time of the founding of the Fuma shinobi ryū, the land of Musashi was a frontier between native Japanese tribes and the Empire of the Sun's resource hungry lords. By the 1600s, with the population of the empire expanding ever faster, the pressure on the few remaining aboriginal peoples in the mainland is great and they are pushed into ever smaller and smaller pockets as greedy Daimyō ravage the ancient lands for money, lumber, ore, slaves for the mines, and information. This wild country—rife with bandits, full of outlaw native tribes, and reeking of the corruption of the cruelest men

of the time—is home to the Fuma clan. What better location could there be for an ambitious shinobi ryū?

While the clan does gain some income from raiding and robbery, most of its finances come from either bodyguarding important caravans (in disguise as rōnin) through their “bandit haunted” lands and from the few mines which they work themselves. The clan could technically be quite prosperous on the income they receive, but most of it flows directly into supporting the clan's plot to overthrow Goyōzei. Thus, the ryū actually remains quite poor and lacks influence outside its own area.

POLITICS

The Fuma have a hatred of both the Imperial family and the Shogunate (born both out of the Fuma clan's desire for vengeance on the throne and the Kokto's native hatred for the samurai as the defiler of their land) that knows no bounds. No other political consideration is important to them (though outwardly they profess royalist leanings) and the clan has no agenda, other than its secret desire for revenge, to guide its dealings with the world.

ALLIANCES AND ENEMIES

Currently the Fuma are allied with the Iga, who have been led to believe that the invasion of Kai was only in retaliation for the eighty years of war in Musashi. This is because the Iga ryū have recently declared for the Tokugawa family and would most likely not allow the Fuma to execute Emperor Goyōzei as they wish to do.

The alliance with the Iga has ensured that, apart from the Fukushima ryū, no other shinobi group (with the possible exception of the Koga) considers the Fuma their enemy. However, if their scheme to slay the Emperor goes ahead as planned in 1605, they will find themselves in the middle of a maelstrom from which they may not be able to escape.

忍者

FUMA SHINOBI OF NOTE

(1) FUMA KOTARO

Jōnin of the Fuma Shinobi Ryū

Age: 70 (in 1603)

Caste: Hinin

Religion: Kokto (Shamanic)

INT 4 **WILL 5** **PRE 4** **AES 6** **PIE 4** **KAO 4**
STR 3 **CON 3** **BOD 4** **TECH 5** **REF 4** **DEX 4**
MOVE 4 **END 30** **SD 6** **STUN 20** **HITS 20** **REC 6**
RES 15 **HON 40**

Perks: Contact: Chief of the Kokto People, Membership Level 7 in ninja clan

Talents: Knack in Do-ton-jutsu and Danger Sense (base of 10)

Complications: Code of Honor: Ninja code, risk death (Frequent, Extreme), Oppressed: Kokto, outcast (Constant, Minor), Poverty: Dirt broke, hinin (Constant, Minor), Secret Identity: Living a normal life (Frequent, Extreme).

Skills: Acrobatics 5, Culture: Ainu 3, Do-ton-jutsu 6*, Genjutsu 5, Language: Kokto 3, Language: Shinobi clan dialect 3, Leadership 3, Meditation 5, Moku-ton-jutsu 5, Ninjutsu 6, Ninpō Taijutsu 6, Scouting 4, Shinobi iri 4, Shurikenjutsu 4, Stealth 5, Sui-ton-jutsu 4, Survival 4.

* includes +1 for Knack

Equipment: Ninja garb (shinobi shojoku), Above average Kyouketsu shoge (+1 on AV).

Background: Fuma Kotaro is the archetypal shinobi and has enjoyed a long and colorful career. His youth was spent in the service of both his father, the previous Jōnin of the ryū, and the Odawara family in the Kansai. As a young man, Kotaro was sent to study with several friendly ryū throughout the Kansai region, ending up in Odawara service because of a friend in the Iga clan. Although he had been made Jōnin in his absence

with his father's death, he served with the Odawara until the year 1585, carrying out many missions of daring for his lord. When he left the Odawara family's service, he returned to Musashi to take command of the clan properly and put into final gear the plan to crush the Fukushima ryū and humiliate the Imperial household.

Few of the clan actually know him as their Jōnin, for he lives his life as a simple Fuma chūnin at the ryū school and exercises his power only through the Soke and a group of chosen aides.

Personality: Kotaro is a dark and brooding man, much as his father was before him, given over to long bouts of silence and contemplation of the foul deeds he is likely to have to carry out in the name of his forefathers. While he wants to take revenge on both the Fukushima and the court for the wrongs of the past, the road set for the clan by the old Onmyoji is a path that Kotaro treads with less and less fervor each day. However, he finds himself unable to step off the road ahead and, believing in the rightness of fate, he has decided to sacrifice his clan's future to satisfy the soul of a long dead ancestor. For Kotaro knows that it is unlikely the Fuma will survive such a blatant attack on the one thing that most shinobi ryū hold dear: the Imperial person.

Historical Note: Fuma Kotaro indeed was very well thought of in the various ryū around the Kansai in the late 16th Century. His exploits, both real and invented, were of such daring and character that it is said he was actually received in audience by the Kanpaku and commended on his skills (even though Kotaro had worked against, as well as for, Hideyoshi in his career). His skills were viewed as great even by the Iga, and he was known among the Iga shinobi as "Ue sama" (boss/overlord). His death in 1606 was a great blow to all shinobi who loved their art.

Quote: "No pity, no quarter, no thought. Just kill. "

忍者

(2) FUMA TAEKO (ALSO KNOWN AS HARA THE MAID)

Chūnin of the Fuma Shinobi Ryū

Age: 21 (in 1603)

Caste: Hinin

Religion: Kokto (Shamanic)

INT 3 WILL 3 PRE 4 AES 3 PIE 4 KAO 3
STR 2 CON 2 BOD 2 TECH 4 REF 3 DEX 4
MOVE 3 END 20 SD 4 STUN 10 HITS 10 REC 4
RES 9 HON 30

Perks: Extreme beauty, Contact: Lord Akoda Senbo, Membership Level 5 in ninja clan

Talents: Knack in Hensojutsu and Danger Sense (base of 10)

Complications: Code of Honor: Ninja code, risk death (Frequent, Extreme), Oppressed: Hinin, outcast (Constant, Minor), Secret Identity: Imperial Household maid (Constant, Extreme).

Skills: Acting 6, Culture: Kokto 3, Etiquette: Serving girl 4, Genjutsu 4, Hensojutsu 5*, Herbalism: poison 5, Inpo 5, Language: Kokto 3, Language: Shinobi clan dialect 3, Meditation 5, Ninjutsu 6, Ninpō Taijutsu 6, Ritual: Imperial Court 4, Seduction 5, Shinobi iri 4, Shurikenjutsu 4, Sui-ton-jutsu 3, Stealth 5.

* includes +1 for Knack

Equipment: No shinobi equipment.

Background: One of Kotaro's elite aides, Taeko (or Hara, as she prefers to be called) has been working at the Imperial Summer palace at Edo since construction on it began in 1601. Before that time she had been the serving girl—and sometime concubine—of the lord Akoda Senbo (the head of the Imperial Archives in Kyoto). She was presented to the Imperial Palace as a girl worthy of serving in court in 1600 and was approved to serve in the new summer residence in 1601 (having used her considerable charms on several young Hatamoto in Kyoto).

Kotaro placed Taeko into service in 1598, hoping that she would come to serve in court. This was all part of the ryū's great scheme of slaying the reigning Emperor to repay the destruction of the Fuma clan. Taeko is well suited to the task, being both beautiful and utterly free of any moral qualms concerning the work that has needed doing over the years. (Some of her promotions have been through terminal illness and accidents.) She now has three Fuma genin working around her—not actually in the palace yet, although she is working on their promotions—and is almost ready to carry out her long-awaited duty as soon as Goyōzei comes within her grasp.

Personality: Taeko is not as callous as one might think. Rather say that she is driven beyond all imagining and lives only for the moment she can gouge out Emperor Goyōzei's eyes and fill them with the powdered gold which the Fuma family were to send back to the court the year of the massacre at Musashi Castle. She is a consummate actress and a master of disguise, so much so that she has long forgotten who she really was before she became bound to lord Akoda.

All she knows now is that Goyōzei must die and, at some point it will be her duty and pleasure to fulfill "The Plot of the Fuma Clan."

Quote: "Do you require anything else tonight, my lord?"

HISTORICAL NOTE

The character of "Fuma no Taeko" turns up several times in popular Shinobi fiction in the course of the Edo period and the version of the character employed here appears in the lead role in a play called "Musashi Matsuri" (the Festival/Dance of Musashi), in which she is an agent of the "infamous" Fuma shinobi clan that wishes to see the Imperial family—who are all, rather unbelievably, staying in the hot springs of Kai in the play—slain.

忍者

The plot revolves around how the heartless assassin, Taeko, is slowly moved to sympathy by her intended victim's prison-like existence. She reaches the point where she is unable to carry out her mission and takes her own life, leaving the guards and the Emperor to ponder on the "weight of love" which could be the only reason why the popular and beautiful maid would kill herself.

Our Taeko has no such qualms however.

(3) FUMA GAKSHI

Soke of the Fuma Shinobi Ryū

Age: 34 (in 1603)

Caste: Hinin

Religion: Kokto (Shamanic)

INT 4	WILL 5	PRE 4	AES 4	PIE 4	KAO 4
STR 3	CON 3	BOD 4	TECH 6	REF 4	DEX 4
MOVE 4	END 30	SD 6	STUN 20	HITS 20	REC 6
RES 15	HON 40				

Perks: Contact: Lord Mito Hideo, Membership Level 6 in ninja clan

Talents: Knack in Leadership

Complications: Code of Honor: Ninja code, risk death (Frequent, Extreme), Oppressed: Ainu, outcast (Constant, Minor), Poverty: Dirt broke, hinin (Constant, Minor), Secret Identity: Ainu clan Chief (Constant, Extreme).

Skills: Acrobatics 5, Culture: Ainu 3, Do-ton-jutsu 3, Genjutsu 5, Language: Ainu 3, Language: Shinobi clan dialect 3, Leadership 6*, Meditation 5, Moku-ton-jutsu 3, Ninjutsu 6, Ninpō Taijutsu 6, Scouting 4, Shinobi iri 4, Shurikenjutsu 4, Stealth 5, Sui-ton-jutsu 4, Survival 4.

* includes +1 for Knack

Equipment: Ninja garb (shinobi shojoku), Above average Kusarigama (+1 AV).

Background: Gakshi was born to be the Soke of the Fuma ryū. As son of the chief of the Kokto people it was the only possible position he could fill in life, and he does it well.

No one in the Fuma ryū is as closely acquainted with the everyday running of the ryū and the relationship the shinobi have with their Kokto siblings. Nobody loves the ryū more than Gakshi.

And nobody wishes to see this dreadful plan of clan suicide fail more than he does.

He was first made aware of the awful truth behind the plot to humiliate Emperor Goyōzei when he was made Soke, being appointed as one of his Jōnin's aides. He hated it from the start. His view is that the ill-chosen words and ill-expressed visions of a mad Onmyoji have condensed into a nightmare vision that threatens not only to wipe out the Fuma, the Kokto, and the Fukushima shinobi but all native peoples left on the mainland as well. All barbarians exist on sufferance of the Tokugawa government, and Gakshi doubts that Ieyasu would long allow them to live once Ieyasu sees what Taeko has planned.

Gakshi is also aware that he must move cautiously to reveal the plot for what it is, if he is ever to stop it; he knows the Jōnin will brook no interference in this matter and would silence Gakshi rather than risk exposing the plot. Moreover, Gakshi dares not simply reveal the threat to the Matsumae as the repercussions for the Fuma and the Kokto would be the same as if the plot had carried through.

Personality: There is no joy in Gakshi's world. He sees his life and the life of his people counting down day by day to the point when all their dreams will cease to be on the point of a Fuma Kunoichi's blade.

He does not know how to stop the plot without destroying everything he loves and does not dare risk allowing it to be completed for the same reason. The Fuma clan is composed of dead men walking, and only Gakshi can see this.

Quote: "Be sure of what you buy with your promises, for others may be forced to pay the price"

忍者

GIKAN RYŪ

BACKGROUND

THE SEMI-HISTORICAL GIKAN RYŪ

Not every student can live under the same roof as his master.

So it was with the founder of the Gikan shinobi ryū in 1172, when a chūnin named Moriyoshi Kanai (????–ca. 1211), of the ancient Koga shinobi clan, broke away from that family to begin his own ryū in the forests of Kyushu. It is not known why he chose to break faith with his clan (The Koga simply say, “Kanai took magical secrets from the clan and fled.”), for he never spoke of it to any of his pupils. He preferred to speak of the future and his small group’s potential as masters of the more esoteric arts of the shinobi.

Kanai’s first student, Akechi Suman (?–1238), became Jōnin after Kanai. He began recruiting more effectively in Kyushu (being secretly attached to a Buddhist temple school which provided the funding required) especially from among disaffected shinobi. He was followed by Adachi Kumio (ca. 1200–ca. 1293), also known as Maho no Kumio (Kumio of the prayers) for his mastery of all things magical. Kumio was the first Gikan (in the legends of the clan) to bind a condemned soul from the land of the dead to his service.

Kumio was succeeded by his son, Adachi Kumo (1241–1324) (also a great Ninpō-mikkyō), but in

1324 Kumo attempted to bring the spirit of the long dead Minamoto Yoshitsune into the ryū and this ritual proved his undoing. No one was present when Kumo carried out the rite, but when the noise died away, his assistants dared to enter his room to find him dead, having strangled himself.

Kuro Hanzei (1286–1357), who followed Kumo as Jōnin, attempted to reforge the ryū’s links with the outside world and attempted to use his small clan’s esoteric skills to bring them prestige among the other known shinobi clans. He sent shinobi regularly to work with any ryū that asked for their special skills, and he went several times, as counselor, to their allies in the Kumogakure clan. His son did not succeed him as Jōnin as Hanzei had wished, for the boy did not feel capable of leading the ryū. Instead, the mantle passed to Oda Seizo (ca. 1324–ca. 1403), who, although not a Mikkyō himself, respected their power and trusted to their judgment.

Seizo was followed by his son, Oda Tsuke (1348–1437), a Mikkyō of consummate skill who is said to have created the art of Genjutsu and chosen his successor, Mitsu Sadame (1402–1501) through a contest of Mikkyō arts. Though some questioned the contest as a means of choosing the clan Jōnin, Sadame proved to be an excellent choice, marrying a deep appreciation of his mystical arts with a practical understanding of the less esoteric aspects of Shinobi work. To honor his master, he too chose his successor by contest, but—to satisfy his critics—made his a test of both

忍者

Mikkyō powers and regular shinobi training. The winner, Hangan Gikanbo (?–1549), demonstrated that he was able to employ both skills effectively in a mission situation. Makoto also proved to be a very capable Jōnin, and one who was aware that early leaders of the clan had, perhaps, strayed too far away from the physical demands of Ninpō. In an attempt to draw his shinobi closer to what many of them perceived as the power base of the clan, he spent most of his time as Jōnin working with the art of Genjutsu, eventually recreating it as a technique that bridged the world between Mikkyō and mundane shinobi, giving both some common ground to walk on. His successor—his grand nephew, Yoshimitsu Tenshu (alias: real name unknown; 1527–1614), took over after Makoto’s death at the request of the old man, for he recognized the immense power that lived within the boy and also foresaw a great time of trial at the turn of the 17th century, which he felt would require his grand nephew’s special skills.

HISTORICAL NOTE: GIKAN MIKKYŌ

The Gikan ryū is one of only a handful that preserve any legends concerning the practical use of magical powers by shinobi. It was viewed until the mid-19th century as being connected directly with the land of the dead; in the 16th century Sekkyō play “Gikan Mori” (Gikan Forest), the clan is called “Jigoku no Gikan” (Hell’s Gikan).

When the clan eventually came out of hiding and joined the Bujikan Taijutsu Federation—a loose collection of interconnected ninpō schools—the clan members quickly lost their mystic trappings. However, the legends of the ryū still persisted (especially on Kyushu), and many strange stories (as you will have seen from the Kazu) are even now associated with historical masters of the school.



CLAN LEGEND: THE ART OF GENJUTSU

Many shinobi study and practice the techniques of Genjutsu—the art of imposing illusions and waking dreams on others—but few realize how recently this technique was both invented and re-worked for their use.

In 1392, the Jōnin Oda Tsuke, whilst experimenting with heightened states of consciousness in meditation, was able—for a split second—to project his thoughts into the mind of his assistant. The act had been a simple error (merely a thought that he would like a drink), but the effect it had on the Jōnin was profound. He had been aware, like all Mikkyō, that his power came from an understanding and manipulation of the threads which bound all things in creation together, but neither he nor any one of his predecessors had ever considered that it might be possible to directly manipulate another’s thoughts by will alone using



these threads. However, having once seen that it might be possible Tsuke was unable to resist experimenting further, to determine exactly what could be done to the human mind by an empowered Mikkyō.

The human mind turned out to be a tough thing indeed, and Tsuke eventually found that while he could confuse the average person with illusory images and sounds, or pass on instructions to others as if he had spoken them, he was unable to control even the youngest or weakest members of his ryū directly with his own thoughts. He knew it was impossible to direct a subject of hypnosis to harm himself, and considered it also not possible for him to cause another man's mind to collapse.

Naming the art Genjutsu (the art of illusion) he still ordered it placed on the teaching schedule of the Mikkyō shinobi, recognizing that any tool could be put to good use, and left the matter at that. Only when Hangan Gikanbo—the great Gikan ryū champion of Kejutsu (combined arts—the method of mixing mikkyō and shinobi skills in combat)—came to power did anyone recognize the most un-

usual fact about the art of Genjutsu: that use of it did not rely on any skill with Mikkyō powers. The technique had always been taught to the Mikkyō because old Tsuke had made it so, and because of its obviously mystical nature no one had ever thought to try the other students with the study of it. Makoto believed that it should be possible for a well-centered shinobi (or anyone with the correct level of seishin) to master the skill and proved it by teaching a dozen of the clan's children to project simple illusions into the minds of their teachers.

From that point Genjutsu was made part of the philosophical aspects of Ninpō Taijutsu and was even passed outside the ryū—the clan having no real enemies to speak of and the goodwill of most other ryū (even the Koga by this time).

GAME NOTE

This is how we have chosen to see the clan for the sake of our Chanbara setting. Any GMs wishing to make the Gikan part of a historical game might be well served to bar Mikkyō for all shinobi and to allow Genjutsu only to the Gikan, an NPC clan.

FAMILIES

The clan, though fairly small, can boast 18 large families currently within its ranks.

FAMILY NAMES

Adachi, Akechi, Enzo, Hondo, Ise, Kamo, Kise, Koga, Kuro, Moriyoshi, Nagai, Oda, Sada, Sebu, Suigi, Sumon, Taika, and Yoshimitsu.

MEMBERS

Jōnin: Yoshimitsu Tenshu

Soke: Akechi Nekane

Chūnin: 19

Genin: 97

Sympathetic non-shinobi: 29

忍者

GIKAN RYŪ SHINOBI TEMPLATE

INT 3 WILL 4 PRE 3 AES 4 PIE 4 KAO 3
 STR 2 CON 2 BOD 3 TECH 3 REF 3 DEX 3
MOVE 3 END 20 SD 4 STUN 15 HITS 15 REC 4
 RES 12 HON 30

Perks: Contact: Tendai Buddhist temple abbot (4), Membership Level 2 in ninja clan (6)

Complications: Code of Honor: Ninja code, risk death (Frequent, Extreme) (25), Oppressed: Hinin, outcast (Constant, Minor) (6), Poverty: Dirt broke, hinin (Constant, Minor) (5), Secret Identity: Living a normal life (Frequent, Extreme) (15).

Skills: Acrobatics 3, Language: Shinobi clan dialect 2, Lore: (select either Shinobi, Oni, or Buddhism) 2, Meditation 2, Ninjutsu 4, Ninpō Taijutsu 3, Scouting 3, Stealth 4, Survival 2.

Equipment: Ninja garb (shinobi shojoku)

Notes: Gikan shinobi may take Mikkyō at character creation (if allowed by the campaign environment) in place of their lore skill. See Ninpō-Mikkyō chapter for details of prayers. If characters do this, they also replace their Abbot contact with Talent: Mystic and reduce their stealth to 3. GMs may wish to allow a Gikan ryū player to start with one free prayer or require them to purchase them as normal.

SPHERE OF INFLUENCE

KYUSHU

No other shinobi ryū operates anywhere on Kyushu without the Gikan's leave. Though they have recently accepted Iga clan requests to allow small bases in Tokugawa fiefs around the coast, they are the final arbiters of any shinobi actions which take place on their island (forcing even Hattori Hanzo to bow to their wishes).

SUWO

Through their relationship with the Kumogakure ryū, the Gikan have a reasonable amount of influence in this area of southern Honshu, if only because few Kumogakure shinobi would dare question the authority of a Gikan agent in the field.

CLAN LEGEND: GIKAN FOREST

For any shinobi ryū it would have made an excellent location for a base, but for a clan which was delving deeper into the mystic aspects of ninpō than any other there could have been no better choice of operations and since moving to Gikan Forest, the ryū have made themselves masters of the wood.

Today, nothing, not bird, beast or man walks under its shade without the Jōnin of the ryū knowing of it.

Moreover, it has been reported that the shinobi of the Gikan ryū regularly consort with (or command) any number of spiritual beings, such as bakemono, Yurei and even great Oni. No reliable witness has ever brought evidence forward to verify these claims.

The only thing that is certain is that the Gikan control their forest home totally and not even another shinobi has ever bested a Gikan Ryū member in its shade.

Outside the forest their influence is based entirely on their good relations with both the Tendai Buddhist sect (whose school teaches the young shinobi when required) and the shinobi ryū which have hired their "experts" to teach their own shinobi the more practical applications of ninpō-mikkyō.



HISTORICAL NOTE: GIKAN FOREST

The Forest of Gikan near Taragi on Kyushu has always had a reputation for evil and the supernatural. It was first tamed (in legend) by the Yayoi Shaman/princess Himiko, but was abandoned shortly thereafter as even that great mystic could not truly pacify the region. In later years, many stories of strange creatures, both wonderful and terrible, living in or coming out of the forest, were told, and local inhabitants have always made a point of not living within sight of its eaves.

POLITICS

The Gikan ryū are that most unusual of animals, an apolitical shinobi group. They are generally content to stay well hidden in their forest home, dispensing wisdom and knowledge to those who seek and keeping a close watch for misuse of spiritual powers. Over the years, the clan has devoted more and more of its time and money into fighting what it sees as a war against hell itself—hunting down malign spirits and demons, fighting the evil of shugenja who have turned from the path, and rooting out shinobi who seek to use the powers of ninpō-mikkyō for personal ends.

ALLIANCES AND ENEMIES

The Gikan have no enemies to speak of; even the Koga respect this esoteric ryū, although the Koga have clear justification for disliking the Gikan. The Gikan are engaged in a task that injures none and benefits all: the rooting out and purging of manifest evil in the mundane world. Almost every clan that exists today has, at some point, hosted a Gikan Mikkyō teacher, and the knowledge that these have passed on freely to their shinobi kin (even to the Koga) has won the Gikan many friends.

The clan has an especially strong link with the

Kumogakure clan of Tokuyama (southern Honshu), their closest neighbors and something of a bulwark against physical threats as Kumogakure tends to look on northern Kyushu as part of its own domain. The relationship has become very close over the last hundred years or so, and a union of clans might not be too far off. Most of the teachers at the Gikan Ninpō Taijutsu school are actually Komogakure ryū agents, and all of the Mikkyō in the Honshu-based clan are trained in Gikan Forest.

GIKAN SHINOBI OF NOTE

(1) YOSHIMITSU TENSHU

Jōnin of the Gikan Shinobi Ryū

Age: 66 (in 1603)

Caste: Hinin

Religion: Tendai Buddhist

INT 6	WILL 5	PRE 4	AES 6	PIE 4	KAO 5
STR 2	CON 3	BOD 3	TECH 6	REF 5	DEX 5
MOVE 4	END 30	SD 6	STUN 15	HITS 15	REC 5
RES 15	HON 50				

Perks: Contact: Jōnin of Komogakure Shinobi ryū, Contact: Buddhist Temple Abbot, Membership Level 7 in ninja clan

Talents: Knack in Mikkyō and Genjutsu. Mystic.

Complications: Code of Honor: Ninja code, risk death (Frequent, Extreme), Oppressed: Hinin, outcast (Constant, Minor), Poverty: Dirt broke, hinin (Constant, Minor), Secret Identity: Living a normal life (Constant, major).

Skills: Acrobatics 3, Culture: Oni 3, Do-ton-jutsu 3, Genjutsu 6*, Language: Oni 3, Language: Shinobi clan dialect 3, Leadership 6, Meditation 5, Mikkyō 7*, Moku-ton-jutsu 3, Ninjutsu 5, Ninpō Taijutsu 4, Shinobi iri 4, Shurikenjutsu 4, Stealth 4, Survival 4.



* includes +1 for Knack

Prayers: All Mikkyō prayers and six other prayers. However his favored ones are: Kannon's Golden Embrace, 1000 Eyes, Ride the Flowing River

Equipment: Ninja garb (shinobi shojoku), Above average Shinobigatana (+1 AV).

Background: Most shinobi never see the world as the Gikan know it. The Gikan understand and respect the fact that all of creation—including the Western Paradises, Nirvana, the Karmic Wheel, etc.—is part of a single unified Whole and those who are sensitive enough can actually touch a part of it to enhance their lives. Very few have been able to make the leap of faith required to accept, and therefore master, all the spheres that exist beyond the perception of the average human. The Gikan have, perhaps because of their long dwelling in the ancient and god-haunted Gikan Forest, elected to master these spheres (taking the laurels of the Koga, who until ca. 1200 were considered the most esoteric of shinobi ryū) and have made it their goal to understand the power granted for the benefit of all of their shinobi siblings. The Gikan are all masters of their art and mediators between the undreamed-of powers of creation and humanity. It should be no wonder that few shinobi can understand them.

And yet, the current Jōnin, Tenshu, is viewed by the Gikan in much the same way as most other shinobi view them. Tenshu has been at the center of the universe since before he can recall. Even before he was born, he spoke to his mother from within, asking her questions about the state of the world and the nature of the space between things. It would almost seem as if he were both intellectually and physically aware of all creation from the womb. He has often said since his birth that he has “not seen as far or as clearly as when my childish eyes could not see at all.”

Since the day he was born, being proclaimed as the next Jōnin of the ryū that day by his grandfa-

ther, Tenshu has lived his life as if he were truly in two places at once. Quite soon after becoming old enough to think clearly he discovered that there was nothing in the world which eluded him, no skill which he wished to learn that he did not already seem to have mastered, and no person with whom he would be close of which he did not already seem to know. It was as if his life had been laid out before him to be memorized and played out on cue.

Before the death of his grandfather, Tenshu spent much time in contemplation of the cosmos—in physical astronomy as well as meditative travel via his mikkyō gifts—for, as he said to one of his assistants “my mind is such a small thing in relation to the Whole that when in its presence I can throw off this destiny and be just a man for a while.” With his assumption of power it seemed to all as if he had finally taken up the position that had long been prepared for him and he gave up his wandering to focus his energies on the future.

Personality: Tenshu is at once the most contented man in the world and the most unhappy. That he can see his whole life laid out before him in perfect order is a great joy to him that even knowledge of his own death cannot tarnish. However, that he is forced to view a similar path for each and every person he meets is almost crushing to his soul, especially when he encounters a person whom he knows is destined to slip from the Karmic Wheel into total destruction. He knows enough to realize that he was not born to live a man's life, but to be a vessel for the future of his people—the Japanese, not just the Gikan. His purpose in life and his death are tied to the Imperial throne in a very violent and bloody way, which is why he is bending every effort towards Kai and the war in that region.

Quote: “Come in, please, I've been expecting you.”

忍者



The life of Yoshimitsu Tenshu is recorded in a reasonable amount of detail in several distinct sources available in Japanese. As each of these gives a wildly different version of the man, it is difficult to know what is true about him.

All sources agree that his skill with Mikkyō and “other sources of magic” had “no peer in his family, and therefore in Japan,” but nothing is recorded as to how he employed his skills, or what sort of magic he used. As with all the historical ryū which were associated with Mikkyō, the Gikan shinobi were most likely merely “working up” popular notions about the Shadow Warrior’s ability to command mysterious forces. However, that the Gikan lived in one of the most mysterious and haunted woods in the oldest inhabited part of Japan cannot but have added to their reputation as magicians and spirit masters.

(3) AKECHI NAKANE

Soke of the Gikan Shinobi Ryū

Age: 38 (in 1603)

Caste: Hinin

Religion: Tendai Buddhist

INT 4	WILL 4	PRE 3	AES 4	PIE 3	KAO 5
STR 4	CON 5	BOD 4	TECH 5	REF 5	DEX 4
MOVE 3	END 50	SD 10	STUN 20	HITS 20	REC 9
RES 12	HON 50				

Perks: Contact: Tendai Buddhist Chief Abbot, Membership Level 6 in ninja clan

Talents: Knack in Leadership and Genjutsu

Complications: Code of Honor: Ninja code, risk death (Frequent, Extreme), Oppressed: Hinin, outcast (Constant, Minor), Poverty: Dirt broke, hinin (Constant, Minor), Secret Identity: Tendai Priest (Constant, Extreme).

Skills: Acrobatics 4, Acting 5, Disguise 4, Do-ton-jutsu 3, Genjutsu 6*, History: Tendai sect 3, Language: Shinobi clan dialect 3, Leadership 6*, Meditation 5, Moku-ton-jutsu 3, Ninjutsu 6, Ninpō Taijutsu 4, Religion: Tendai Buddhism 3, Scouting 4, Shinobi iri 4, Shurikenjutsu 4, Stealth 5, Survival 4.

* includes +1 for Knack

Equipment: No ninja equipment.

Background: While Nakane has no skill with Mikkyō (it being a rare gift, even in this magically attuned ryū), the Gikan Soke is not an unimportant member of the community. As well as administering the ryū’s day-to-day affairs, including some of the jobs normally carried out by the Jōnin, Nakane lives out his life teaching Gikan ryū children (as well as the children of local nobility) at the Tendai Temple school at Kunimi Dake (to the north of Gikan Forest). No one has a greater understanding of the Gikan area or its history and the clan has come to view its Soke as something of a flip-side to Harume (who has no peers in the interpreting of the future).

Currently, the Soke is engaged in a serious attempt to find out what is happening in the Kai area

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of northwest Honshu as his Jōnin has been showing great interest in the area without telling anyone why. So far he has discovered from the Iga that the war between the Fuma and the Fukushima ryū, which started in the 15th century, has crossed onto the mainland and that Fuma forces have secretly driven the Fukushima shinobi to the sea, but he is not satisfied with that.

There is some connection between the Fuma, the Fukushima and a great upheaval in the near future and Nakane knows that the Gikan will be closely involved. He has sent such agents as he can to seek for answers, but the usually friendly Iga are unusually quiet on the matter of the Fuma/Fukushima war and those agents sent to the warring parties have not been heard from in over a year. It is clear that a great secret is being kept in the north of the country and he cannot help but be curious, especially as his master is being very close-mouthed about his own discoveries.

He has sent more agents, with sensitive Mikkyō among them this time, with orders not to contact the Fuma or the Fukushima, but simply observe the sides and bring back what information they can. All he can do now is watch and wait.

Personality: More than a little perturbed by the way in which his usually friendly, if distant, Jōnin has locked his Soke out of this Kai affair, Nakane has been given over to brooding about the future. He is certain that some great fate hangs in the balance, or it would not involve his master so, and is sure that he can be of some assistance. His own long-standing dislike of the fact that he failed at Mikkyō training as a child and feelings of worthlessness as a member of such a magically driven shinobi ryū are fueled because he has not been brought into the investigation officially.

His only goal at the moment is to win back (as he sees it) Harume's favor by identifying the source of the trouble in Kai.

Quote: *"It is seishin, not mikkyō, which is the source of our power. Without the former, the latter is just a dream thrown to the breeze."*

(2) ADACHI KAMMON

Chūnin of the Gikan Shinobi Ryū

Age: 29 (in 1603)

Caste: Hinin

Religion: Tendai Buddhist

INT 3	WILL 4	PRE 4	AES 3	PIE 4	KAO 3
STR 3	CON 3	BOD 4	TECH 4	REF 4	DEX 4
MOVE 4	END 30	SD 6	STUN 20	HITS 20	REC 6
RES 12	HON 30				

Perks: Contact: Yamabushi school, Contact: sympathetic Gotoku neko (stats as per *Sengoku* main rules), ML 6 Gikan shinobi ryū.

Talents: Knack in Ninpō Taijutsu and Absolute Direction

Complications: Code of Honor: Ninja code, risk death (Frequent, Extreme), Oppressed: Hinin, outcast (Constant, Minor), Poverty: Dirt broke, hinin (Constant, Minor), Secret Identity: Sekkyō performer (Constant, major).

Skills: Acrobatics 3, Culture: Oni 3, Do-ton-jutsu 3, Genjutsu 5, Ka-ton-jutsu 4, Language: Oni 2, Language: Shinobi clan dialect 3, Meditation 3, Mikkyō 4, Moku-ton-jutsu 3, Ninjutsu 5, Ninpō Taijutsu 6*, Scouting 4, Sekkyō (storytelling) 5, Shinobi iri 4, Shurikenjutsu 4, Stealth 5, Survival 4.

* includes +1 for Knack

Equipment: Ninja garb (shinobi shojoku), Above average shinobigatana (+1 AV).

Prayers: Breathe Life, Exorcism, The Cries of the Dead (mikkyō prayer), Heal Wounds

Background: Kammon has never been a very good Mikkyō when compared with his peers. While having a good understanding of the way in which his gift works and enough inner calm—enough seishin—to be able to carry off most prayers should his mind be on them, he cannot concentrate enough to execute most sorceries properly.

This is not because he is a failure (for if he were, no prayers at all would work for him), but simply because his mind is otherwise occupied by his chosen profession: hunting and killing errant monsters.

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Kammon is one of about thirty Gikan shinobi who currently work as traveling priests or musicians (or other occupations exempt from travel restrictions), as a cover for scouring Japan for those supernatural creatures which have forgotten their place and taken to causing trouble. Like his brethren, Kammon's work is unpaid as the Gikan (and a few sympathetic temples/shugendō schools) support the work of these Mikkyō demon hunters, and Kammon especially enjoys the freedom which his job gives him, for (though he is a fully trained shinobi) he much prefers confronting such beasts as renegade Oni in open combat to the sneaking about and politicking which accompanies the more usual shinobi mission.

Kammon is also unusual in that he has an ally in a ferocious Gotuneko, called Nya (Miaow) which became attached to him after he dragged it out of a pottery kiln (in which it had an idea to make a home) and beat some sense into it. As the cat had not killed anyone—just frightened the life out of the potter—Kammon was inclined just to let it go and was surprised to find the beast following him around. The cat demon wished to see the heart of Gikan Forest and offered his services for a period of years equal to the days he was allowed to stay in that magical realm were Kammon to take him home. How he had discovered the connection between Kammon and Gikan was never explained by the cat, but Kammon knew full well that beasts such as this could often see thoughts. He took the creature and for one month the cat enjoyed the magical properties of the wood before joining Kammon back on the road. Since that time he has proved an able and loyal assistant, never eating anyone out of turn and always watching Kammon's

back. The demon hunter has only questioned Nya's total loyalty once and was told, somewhat cryptically, "I've seen what Tenshu can do to the stars. It's not worth crossing a man like that."

Personality: Kammon is a self-confessed drunk who seems to spend more time in front of an altar washing away his drink-induced pollution than he does on missions. This is really part of his front and he takes it a little more seriously than perhaps he should.

He likes to fight, he likes to drink, and most of all, he likes pushing himself to the limit, both physically and mentally. Kammon is neither crazy nor a fool for going after the sort of beasts which would scare the bravest samurai. He knows that this is his calling and that he can do it better than most others out there.

Quote: *"You can play with me or the cat, and either way you will find that today is not your lucky day."*

HISTORICAL NOTE

Adachi Kammon is first mentioned in a story attributed to Chikamatsu Monzaemon, which is itself a reworking of an older folk tale from Kyushu. In the Monzaemon story, "Yama he" (Towards the Mountains), Kammon appears briefly as a "ghost specialist of the mysterious Gikan forest" with a strange fox-like woman in his company. However, apart from a few comic sequences (Kammon gets violently drunk and fights with the play's hero) and a transformation scene involving the fox-like woman—in reality a Kitsune Fox Spirit—he plays a very small part of the overall story.

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GYOKKYO RYŪ

BACKGROUND

THE HISTORICAL GYOKKYO RYŪ

The exact date of the foundation of this ryū's skills base is lost to history, but it is written that during the T'ang dynasty in the northern court of Xian, a princess by the name of Zhiqiao developed a system of fighting, called G'kko, under the tutelage of a Buddhist monk named Yo Gyokko, which better suited her build as a woman. Teaching this system to her maids and other female attendants she formed her own corps of palace guards, much to the dismay of the Empress, who disliked the notion of women "brawling in the streets like brutish men."

No more is written on Zhiqiao except that in 907 she, along with many of her family, fled to Japan to escape the fall of the T'ang and it is supposed that she, or one of her staff, began instructing the native Japanese in the art. By the latter part of the of the Heian period, most of these Chinese refugees had been either driven out of the court or returned to face life in their homeland. It is likely that one of these exiled Chinese (history names them as Yo Gyokko, but this may simply be a Kamakura period invention) was the teacher who passed the G'kko (or Gyokkyo in Japanese) techniques on to Tozawa Hakunsai (1077–1259), the first Jōnin of the Gyokkyo Shinobi ryū.

CLAN LEGEND: THE FOUNDING

Tozawa Hakunsai, born a woodsman under an unknown surname in the Nara district, began studying crude shinobi-like skills when he was apprenticed to a Yamabushi of Chinese extraction called Genzo (though this is popularly thought of as an alias for Yo Gyokko), who wished to pass on his secrets before he died. To this end, Genzo tested as many of the boys of the families of his acquaintance as was possible to determine their physical strengths and their appreciation of the natural world. When Genzo came to Hakunsai's home, the youth was so caught up with a cricket on his sleeve that, at first, he did not hear the old mystic sit beside him. When asked by Genzo, "Why do you admire it so?" Hakunsai answered without hesitation, "Because it is perfect, in its own way. It knows what its place in life is and has no trouble because of that. I wish I knew my place." Genzo stood, nodding slowly to himself and offered the young Hakunsai his hand, saying, "I may not be able to show you your way, but I can show you mine and hope that in it you may find a clue to where it is you wish to go."

Hakunsai studied with the old Genzo for a decade before the old man passed on, and then he traveled south to Iga. There, his skills sufficiently impressed the ryū that he was not only permitted to complete his education with that august and noble school of ninpō, but stood for a while as that

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body's Jōnin. (The shinobi of the Iga clan were dedicated to perfecting the ways of Ninpō and ever open to new ways of expanding the art as they knew it, even if that meant taking an outsider as Jōnin.)

THE HISTORICAL GYOKKYO RYŪ'S KAZU

Having spent many years in the company of the Iga, Hakunsai moved north to the Kanto area in 1156 to found his own small ryū, named after the art he had learned at the knees of Genzo: Gyokkyo. Though he lived only another four years, upon his death a successor was able to take up the title of Jōnin, Suzuki Rikkyu (1121–1193), suggesting that the aging shinobi took a group of followers from the Iga ryū to help found his dojo, a very great honor indeed when one remembers that codes of shinobi loyalty very rarely allow for this sort of thing. In the years that followed the death of Rikkyu, the clan, being one of the smallest in Japan, was maintained through the ages almost exclusively by the Suzuki family of Yokohama. No personal names have been recorded to honor those caretakers, who protected the traditions of Genzo

and Hakunsai, and they are traditionally revered in the ceremonies of the ryū as the Shokansha (the librarians).

In the year 1532, an Iga shinobi chūnin by the name of Sakagami Taro (1482–1555) located the Gyokkyo bōjutsu (the lost arts of Gyokkyo) and managed to persuade the Shokansha of the time to allow him access to the techniques. It took him over two years to assemble the scattered texts and assimilate the arts of Gyokkyo with his own Iga teachings. In the end, Taro was able to demonstrate enough of a proficiency with the Gyokkyo techniques that the Shokansha of the school not only asked him to join their number, but offered him the position of Jōnin. Taro and his successor, Sakagami Kotaro (1500–1562) led the school back into the annals of shinobi history.

Within thirty years, they expanded the ryū from one man to over seventy students and masters: a force which Kotaro was able to lead to war, on the part of the Otome family in 1562. Though the campaign cost Kotaro his life, it made the reputation of the Gyokkyo. The Jōnin who took over from Kotaro, Sogyoku Ritsushi (1529–1613), has spent much of the time either assisting the Kuroda family or consolidating the small clan's position in the Kanto area.

KOSHIJUTSU

A version of the atemi waza (nerve striking) techniques of other shinobi ryū, Koshijutsu (the art of attacking the soft), extends the concept of influencing a body by disturbing its centers of Ki, to breaking the softer parts of the body (muscles, organs, and so on).

While the Gyokkyo hold that Yo Gyokko himself created the technique, it is thought by many scholars that Koshijutsu was actually perfected by the princess Zhiqiao (or another woman) as the technique has always been most effective among the Kunoichi of the ryū.

The technique is always taught to Gyokkyo stu-

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dents as part of their dance training—being reliant in part on postures and motions found only in Chinese traditional court dancing—further re-enforcing the argument that the technique was developed for or by Chinese court ladies (as only women of the T'ang court danced at official ceremonies).

The technique's main focus is the delivery of crippling blows, using mainly the tips of the fingers, or such esoteric weapons as Sai, Jitte, or even silvered o-hashhi (this also might be a holdover from Chinese court life as in the T'ang court it was common for members of the royal family to eat with silver o-hashhi (chopsticks) as the metal would turn black on contact with a wide range of poison types). It was held as fact that a master of the Gyokkyo school could kill a person by simply slipping her fingers through the victim's ribcage to crush his or her heart.

Realistically however, it is likely that the art was developed simply to give the Kunoichi (who specialized in infiltration roles) an effective closeup fighting style that maximized damage as much as it minimized risk, by exploiting the slight frames and delicate fingers of their deadly female agents. Indeed, in practice, only females were taught how to exploit the technique with their hands. Male students were expected to practice the art through the medium of the above-mentioned weapons.

Koshijutsu Strikes

Maneuver	AV	DV	Notes
Shako ken (Claw strike)	-1	-1	STR-2d6 KD
Shishin ken ("Finger needle")	-1	-2	STR-2d6 KD

Koshijutsu is only available to Gyokkyo ryū shinobi, who receive it at level 2 at character creation for no cost. Use of Sai, Jitte, or specially prepared o-hashhi is allowed under Koshijutsu for male Gyokkyo shinobi, but only when used as part of this technique (proficiency in Koshijutsu does not grant weapon proficiencies in the weapons themselves).

FAMILIES

Though a small clan, the number of Iga and masterless shinobi that have affiliated with the ryū have expanded it to the point that it currently contains 16 families.

FAMILY NAMES

Akamatsu, Daisaburo, Hatsumi, Kato, Kojiro, Masaaki, Mitsu, Momochi, Sakagami, Shigeyoshi, Shinryuken, Sougyoko, Suzuki, Toda, Tozawa, and Yamon.

MEMBERS

Jōnin: Sougyoko Ritsushi

Soke: Mitsu Rie (Kunoichi)

Chūnin: 6

Genin: 32

Sympathetic non-shinobi: 20

GYOKKYO RYŪ SHINOBI TEMPLATE

INT 3 WILL 4 PRE 3 AES 4 PIE 4 KAO 3
STR 2 CON 2 BOD 3 TECH 3 REF 3 DEX 3
MOVE 3 END 20 SD 4 STUN 15 HITS 15 REC 4
RES 12 HON 30

Perks: Contact: Buddhist temple abbot (4), Membership Level 2 in ninja clan (6)

Complications: Code of Honor: Ninja code, risk death (Frequent, Extreme) (25), Oppressed: Hinin, outcast (Constant, Minor) (6), Poverty: Dirt broke, hinin (Constant, Minor) (5), Secret Identity: Living a normal life (Frequent, Extreme) (15).

Skills: Acrobatics 4, Dance: Chinese Court Dance 2, Koshijutsu 2, Language: Shinobi clan dialect 2, Meditation 2, Ninjutsu 4, Ninpō Taijutsu 4, Scouting 2, Stealth 4, Survival 3.

Equipment: Ninja garb (shinobi shojoku)



SPHERE OF INFLUENCE

KANTO PLAIN

The Kanto plain was one of the largest fertile areas in Japan. Although today it is covered almost entirely by the Tokyo metropolitan area, in the Sengoku period it often out-produced the Omi area (which was known as the Rice Bowl of Japan). For their services to Oda Nobunaga, the Tokugawa clan were awarded this province late in the 16th century, making life for the Gyokkyo ryū more difficult. Supporters of the broken Ishida clan—a vassal of Toyotomi Hideyoshi’s and an enemy of the Tokugawa—during the civil war period, even the ryū’s friendship with the Iga shinobi (currently working for the Tokugawa themselves) would not protect the small clan from Tokugawa wrath should they ever cause the Shōgun to look their way.

Consequently, the Gyokkyo have almost no power outside their own port of Yokohama (almost in the shadow of the recently refurbished Edo castle) and are content to keep to their own place. However, within Yokohama, they control a wide range of business activities, including a monopoly on training matsuri dancers, a silk works, several pleasure houses and one of the few good Geisha establishments outside the Kansai.

They are also the only truly urbane shinobi ryū in Japan at the moment. None of their members live or work in the rural setting (though all train there), and they have an understanding of the rapidly developing urban lifestyle which other ryū, particularly the Iga, wish to exploit. This may be why, though the Gyokkyo are old Loyalists at heart, the Iga have made no attempt to remove them from Yokohama and instead filter work to them from the Tokugawa authorities (as well as not exposing their other activities to the authorities).

POLITICS

Though the current Jōnin is a staunch Hideyoshi Loyalist, the clan has, through the Iga ryū, already carried out missions in the Kanto for the Tokugawa and shows no signs of resisting the new order of things. Indeed, “Far better,” says Ritsushi, “that a single bloom flowers among a bed of weeds than none at all,” contenting himself with the knowledge that even with the peace of the Tokugawa, there will be many more decades, maybe even centuries, of work for his pupils before peace comes to Japan.

ALLIANCES AND ENEMIES

Currently the clan has no formal alliances, but the smaller clan is so much beholden to the Iga ryū that it can barely make a move without that ryū’s authorization.

However, perhaps because the Gyokkyo are little more than vassals to the Iga, they have no real enemies either.

GYOKKYO SHINOBI OF NOTE

(1) SOGYOKU RITSUSHI

Jōnin of the Gyokkyo Shinobi Ryū

Age: 74 (in 1603)

Caste: Hinin

Religion: Tendai Buddhist

INT 4	WILL 5	PRE 4	AES 3	PIE 4	KAO 5
STR 2	CON 3	BOD 3	TECH 6	REF 4	DEX 4
MOVE 4	END 30	SD 6	STUN 15	HITS 15	REC 5
RES 15	HON 50				

Perks: Contact: Iga ryū Jōnin, Contact: Tokugawa clan Hatamoto, Contact: Tendai Buddhist Abbot, Membership Level 7 in ninja clan

Talents: Knack in Koshijutsu and Danger Sense (base of 10)

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Complications: Code of Honor: Ninja code, risk death (Frequent, Extreme), Oppressed: Hinin, outcast (Constant, Minor), Poverty: Dirt broke, hinin (Constant, Minor), Secret Identity: Scribe (Constant, major).

Skills: Acrobatics 3, Calligraphy 5, Inpo 4, Koshijutsu 7*, Language: Chinese 2, Language: Shinobi clan dialect 3, Meditation 4, Ninjutsu 5, Ninpō Taijutsu 6, Scouting 3, Shinobi iri 4, Stealth 5, Survival 2.

** includes +1 for Knack*

Equipment: Ninja garb (shinobi shojoku), Scribe's brushes and ink.

Background: Ritsushi is a patient man indeed. He knows that, just as the Emperor he loves is bound to the Shōgunate like a slave, so too is the Gyokkyo bound to the Iga Shinobi ryū. The Iga ryū have never treated the Gyokkyo badly, although the Iga could have easily absorbed the school many times over the course of the years. It still seems to Ritsushi that the larger ryū stifles his clan and keeps it in a state of suspension, unable to expand properly or work in ways which suit the Gyokkyo, perhaps as a token of Iga power and dominance in the shinobi world.

In truth, the old shinobi can recall a time when Gyokkyo agents were just as feared as any other clan and commanded the same high prices as did Koga or even Iga genin. In those days of his youth, Ritsushi himself often undertook daring missions, simply for the pleasure of it, and even earned the praise of the Kanpaku for his skill.

No more.

Now Ritsushi spends most of his time working in one of the ryū's own front businesses—as a contract scribe—both tutoring his replacement as Jōnin and journeying occasionally to the local magistrates to be assigned such work as the Iga let trickle through to him. Ritsushi is effectively biding his time, waiting for the wind to change and the Iga or the Tokugawa to fall from their lofty heights so



that the Gyokkyo can once again move freely and live as they have always lived: like a cricket.

Personality: Ritsushi is determined to have his clan rise out of the shadow of the Iga, but is not foolish enough to think that it will be achieved in his lifetime. Much like the cricket of the founder's story, he knows his place in life and is content—as all the Gyokkyo are—to wait out the years till a chance to make their lives their own again comes along.

Moreover, in spite of all his misgivings about the fast forming Iga/Tokugawa hegemony, which threatens to make a Gyokkyo breakaway even more unlikely, Ritsushi can teach, write salacious shinobi fiction (his greatest love outside the ryū and an ironic conceit which all his shinobi find amusing), and generally perfect his (and his clan's) ninpō skills. He has come to look upon himself as a latter day Shokansha who is preparing the art of the Gyokkyo shinobi ryū for yet another long hibernation.

Quote: “Only when you can hold the attention of a tiger's eye will you be ready to walk this path.”

忍者

HISTORICAL NOTE

Sogyoku Ritsushi is recorded in modern Gyokkyo ryū histories as the master of the art who preserved the complex and subtle techniques of his ryū for the future, collating many delicate scrolls with the history of the tradition and its techniques. His enthusiasm for recording the past seems to have stemmed both from the school having already lost a great deal of its traditions during the dedicated, but incomplete, stewardship of the Suzuki family and from Ritsushi taking great pride in his writing (a rare skill indeed at that time, even in Japan). His vision of his art going into hibernation was rather prophetic, for shortly after his death, combined pressure from Tokugawa legislation and a lack of more usual work forced most of the ryū members to give up the art and turn to other professions, until the techniques were revived in the 19th century.

(2) SHIGEYOSHI FUMI (ALSO KNOWN AS HANAKO)

Kunoichi Genin of the Gyokkyo Shinobi Ryū

Age: 19 (in 1603)

Caste: Hinin

Religion: Tendai Buddhist

INT 3	WILL 4	PRE 3	AES 3	PIE 4	KAO 3
STR 2	CON 3	BOD 3	TECH 5	REF 4	DEX 5
MOVE 4	END 30	SD 6	STUN 15	HITS 15	REC 5
RES 12	HON 30				

Perks: Contact: Tendai Buddhist Abbot, Contact: sympathetic Geisha manager, Membership Level 2 in ninja clan

Talents: Knack in Dance and Koshijutsu

Complications: Code of Honor: Ninja code, risk death (Frequent, Extreme), Oppressed: Hinin, outcast (Constant, Minor), Poverty: Dirt broke, hinin (Constant, Minor), Secret Identity: Maiko (Infrequent, major).

Skills: Acrobatics 3, Dance: Matsu Odori 5*,

Dance: Temae 5* (both Maiko/Geisha specialties), Fashion 3, Genjutsu 5, High Society 3, Inpo 3, Koshijutsu 6*, Language: Shinobi clan dialect 3, Meditation 3, Music 3, Ninjutsu 5, Ninpō Taijutsu 6, Persuasion 2, Scouting 4, Seduction 4, Shinobi iri 4, Shurikenjutsu 4, Singing 4, Stealth 5, Storytelling 5, Survival 4.

* includes +1 for Knack

Equipment: Ninja garb (shinobi shojoku), Various Maiko outfits, folding ōgi (fans), Biwa (instrument).

Background: Shigeyoshi Fumi is one of the brightest stars in the Gyokkyo firmament and one of the few to see much active service in these days of Tokugawa control. With the ryū from birth, she excelled at her Koshijutsu and dance training at a very young age and was chosen to work as a maid in the ryū's Jade Petal Tea House. While there she befriended many of the Maiko and Geisha (the vast majority of whom were not shinobi) and took it upon herself to train in their arts secretly, in case her chūnin should disapprove. For three long years she practiced her singing, dancing, and musical skills.

Her work was rewarded one morning when the Jōnin, Ritsushi, was so captivated by her naïve, but beautiful, Biwa pieces that he invited Fumi to join him for a drink, revealing to her that he was her clan's Jōnin. She was asked if she wished to join the tea house as a Maiko—for, ironically enough, the Gyokkyo who were renowned for their Kunoichi among other ryū had few girls capable of work as Geisha—and she was thus installed in the Jade Petal to become the idol of Yokohama society. The move proved very worthwhile, for within a year, Hanako (as she renamed herself) was being invited to work for the most prestigious clients in the city, and even the Tokugawa recognized that her talents could not be found in the Iga clan.

Currently she works most evenings at the house of lord Horobi Shinosuke, a vassal of the Tokugawa who is under suspicion of taking large bribes from

忍者

a source in the Musashi region. So far Hanako has found out nothing of import, but she has time and all the talent she needs to get the job done.

Personality: Like most Kunoichi with the Gyokkyo, Fumi takes great pride in her skills, both technical (such as the deadly power in her Koshijutsu) and social (no better dancer exists in her generation). She has been accused in the past of being a shade too haughty for her place, a situation which the favor of Jōnin Ritsushi has not helped much.

Fumi is a sweet girl, full of the joys of the young and confident that her life, be it short or long, will not be of the same dreary character of those of most of her female friends in Yokohama. She is shinobi, she is Kunoichi, and, whatever fate has in store for her, she knows she can meet it in full stride and face it well.

Quote: “Oh, my lord, you are such a wit. But tell me, what did you say to the Shōgun then?”

HISTORICAL NOTE

Popular fiction of the late Sengoku and early Edo periods often feature Kunoichi disguised as Geisha. The conceit comes partly from the fact that the average peasant was about as likely to ever meet a shinobi as meet a Geisha (they were both part of that that distant, far removed, life of which the average Japanese knew only stories) and partly from the fact that to represent a Geisha as a shinobi was—in the fiction of that period—to suggest that the agent had penetrated to the very top of the social ladder (for even the great shōgun Ieyasu himself was not unaccustomed to the company of these ladies of art).

While the Shigeyoshi Fumi/Hanako character *can* be found in the Gyokkyo ryū records for the early 17th century as one of their Maiko, the fact that a shinobi character named “Hana no Fumi” also appears in a play titled “Ran no Hana” (The Orchid) as a shinobi who impersonates a Geisha for several years in order to be able to access an



important target makes one wonder if art was imitating life or vice versa. Either way, both characters share very similar traits (excellent dancing, formidable combat skills, and a bright smile) and so this Fumi is something of a hybrid of both girls.

(3) MASAACKI TENSHIN

Chūnin of the Gyokkyo Shinobi Ryū

Age: 27 (in 1603)

Caste: Hinin

Religion: Tendai Buddhist

INT 3	WILL 4	PRE 4	AES 3	PIE 4	KAO 3
STR 3	CON 3	BOD 4	TECH 4	REF 5	DEX 5
MOVE 4	END 30	SD 6	STUN 20	HITS 20	REC 6
RES 12	HON 30				

Perks: Contact: Wealthy Tokugawa Samurai, Contact: Tendai Buddhist Priest, Membership Level 3 in ninja clan

Talents: Knack in Koshijutsu and Herbalism

忍者



Complications: Code of Honor: Ninja code, risk death (Frequent, Extreme), Oppressed: Hinin, outcast (Constant, Minor), Poverty: Dirt broke, hinin (Constant, Minor), Secret Identity: Doctor (Constant, major), Sense of Duty: to patients (Frequent, Major).

Skills: Acrobatics 3, Dokuenjutsu 4, Herbalism 4*, Ka-ton-jutsu 4, Language: Shinobi clan dialect 3, Massage 4, Meditation 3, Ninjutsu 5, Ninpō Taijutsu 6, Research 2, Scouting 4, Shinobi iri 4, Shurikenjutsu 4, Stealth 5, Survival 4.

* includes +1 for Knack

Equipment: Ninja garb (shinobi shojoku). Various medicinal tools.

Background: Masaaki Tenshin has always been better at making people frown than the re-

verse. Though a member of the Gyokkyo ryū from birth he was always in the shadow of his older Kunoichi sister and, perhaps chose his career so that he would not always be fighting with Emiko for their parent's attention.

The boy's attitude did not go against the needs of the ryū—as every shinobi clan needs its specialists—and so he was allowed (as long as he maintained a good, if not exceptional, record on his shinobi training) to study with the ryū's herbalist in order to become not only a doctor for one of the clan's fronts, but also a master of Dokuenjutsu, capable of supplying the clan with any number of herbal and chemical smoke weapons.

Most days, he works in a small practice near the docks, treating the sailors's wounds and listening to the gossip they have on their all-too-loose tongues. However, he is not above taking missions when required and has quite recently returned from one to the Fukushima shinobi ryū where he had been attempting (along with several other doctors) to diagnose the source of the Fukushima Jōnin's depression.

Personality: Never quite at ease unless he is working in his practice, Tenshin is a consummate shinobi who is happy with his contribution to his clan. His only trouble is that he, like many other of the clan, recognizes that he is living in the waning days of the Gyokkyo shinobi ryū and he firmly believes that the clan will either be swallowed up by the Iga ryū on the Jōnin's death or be lost forever to time.

Quote: “Yes, yes. I'm sure that hurts. Now don't be such a baby; hold very still while I pull it out!”

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HAKŪN RYŪ

BACKGROUND

THE HISTORICAL HAKŪN: FRAGMENTARY DATA

Records of this ryū say that it was founded by the Chinese ascetic, Garyu Doji (or Kain Doshi in the Iga version of the story, though this is unlikely), possibly as an offshoot of the Iga ryū which was forming at about the same time, and was eventually consolidated by the famous master Tozawa Hakunsai (1077–1259) (either while he was teaching at or had just left the Iga ryū), from whom it takes its name. The archives also state that the founder of the Togakure ryū, Togakure Daisuke, studied at the ryū as part of his training with Kain Doshi. Very little accurate information is known about it beyond that.

Apart from the above individuals, none of the names of its Soke or Jōnin have ever been recorded and it is the opinion of some scholars of ninjutsu that this is because the clan was not actually a ryū in itself but a specialist school of the central Iga shinobi group. It is contended that as the school was founded in Iga, a very small and isolated place, and that as three out of the four known figures associated with the founding story are also directly connected to the larger Iga ryū, the Hakūn were (at least in the beginning) little more than a specific fighting school for the Iga clan.

As the little information on the ryū that does

not refer to the founding masters only details the school's one known fighting technique it further reinforces the scholastic contention that no independent school of Hakūn Ninjutsu existed until the 19th century when it was re-founded and given a wholly new (and wholly artificial) identity.

However, as the school's technique Kensō Akuma (the Elemental Demons) is of particular interest, we have presented the clan here in as full a form as we can, based on the available evidence. While we have chosen to make the ryū a separate, though friendly, clan to the Iga, we feel that GMs would be fully justified in merging both Hakūn and Iga ryū in a historical campaign setting.

CLAN LEGEND: THE FOUNDING

After Tozawa Hakunsai left the Iga ryū, he sent his followers on ahead to make preparation for him in their new home and traveled for several days along the banks of Ichimonju River to get out of the circling mountains that surrounded Iga on three sides. Always aware of the world around him, he soon became aware of a pair of youths, in shinobi garb, moving through the trees ahead of him.

Hakunsai was curious, for he did not recognize the boys, even though they dressed and moved much as Iga shinobi, and he thought he was acquainted with all the trainees of the clan, so he waited till they came level with him and called them to stop.





Like rabbits they spun on him and Hakunsai was surprised that they had not seen him where he stood in the shadows, but his surprise deepened even more when they attacked him. Though powerful—one of the boys crushed a branch close to the master’s head with a clawing strike—their efforts were crude and not even worthy of a 3rd year Iga student. However, as he dodged the incoming strikes, his petitions for peace fell on deaf ears and Hakunsai was eventually forced to take sterner action. In an instant the boys were lying on the ground cradling their sides and Hakunsai sat down quite nonplused in front of them and asked, “Now then, where can I find your master?”

Very puzzled by the old man, the boys indicated a deep cave in the cliff behind him. Hakunsai trotted up the steep slope to its entrance, with the students trailing behind him. Entering, he came face to face with a middle aged man called Kanta who he recognized as one of the Iga chūnin, and it seemed as if the chūnin had recognized him by the shocked reaction on his face.

Looking around at the cave, especially at some old Chinese scrolls stacked neatly on a crude shelf by a dojo mat, Hakunsai felt he had the measure of

the situation. “You know very well that teaching techniques other than those prescribed is forbidden in the ryū, so what makes you think that I won’t simply walk back and bring you to task?” he asked the cowed Kanta in one of his more condescending tones of voice.

“Because you yourself want to start a school perhaps?” the chūnin tentatively offered, before dropping to his knees before the old man. “Master Tozawa, if only you had seen the scrolls. They’d be lost or changed in the hands of the Iga masters, I’m sure. They are Chinese teachings, from the hand of Garyu himself and free from any flaw.” He was so excited that he had taken hold of a scroll and was clutching it tightly.

“There now. Calm down and give me one of those.” Hakunsai put on a more understanding face and took one of the scrolls from the shelf, reading it through before speaking further to the chūnin. “Yes, I see what this is aiming at. A little crude maybe—but then again it is old even by the standard of my master’s art—but lively enough and certainly worthy of a place in the scheme of things,” he said, mimicking a posture from the text he had just read and crushing a spear haft with a flick of his wrist. “Oh, yes. This will do nicely,” he added clearly satisfied with the result. “Of course it may take a little longer to instruct you in this as the handwriting is abominably indistinct—a common fault in old Garyu’s material—but we will get there eventually.” Tozawa Hakunsai spent a month tutoring Kanta and his pair of pupils in the subtle arts of Kensō Akuma, and when he was finished they could learn no more from him.

On the day he left, he stood each one before the entrance to the cave, facing them back towards the Iga base and told them in solemn tones, “I have given you a great power here and I would not wish it used for ill against your peers. I would prefer you to share this with your fellows in Iga, but I agree with you that it would not remain unchanged in that place. Now, do as you will, stay or go at

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your own choosing, for the art of Kensō Akuma is yours to keep and you must decide how to preserve it best.”

When Hakunsai had left, Kanta and his pupils returned to the Iga ryū, revealed their deceit and awaited justice from the clan. For his duplicity, Kanta was banished to his cave, while for his lies, he was charged with protecting the secrets of Kensō Akuma, and for his students attacking an Iga Jōnin, his school was required to swear loyalty to the Iga. Thus were justice and compassion both served in one form and so all were pleased with the work.

Since that time, the Hakūn ryū has served as something of a proving ground for Iga shinobi as well as an excellent buffer between the Iga holdings and the Koga. A number of key Iga figures, including Togakure Daisuke and Hattori Hanzo have studied, if only briefly, with the school and they have in their turn helped the small ryū, preventing it from dying out. During the civil war period however, the clan was very quiet, not being allowed to fight beyond the confines of Iga by the Jōnin of the larger ryū, for fear of it being wiped out. Although never a large clan, it suffered less than most in the violence of the age.

Currently the Hakūn ryū agents (all twenty that make up the ryū) are working directly for Hattori Hanzo, exploiting their anonymity in shinobi circles to find out what is happening in Fuma ryū territory, for the Tokugawa spy master has heard disturbing reports about their war with the Fukushima ryū and wants answers.

KENSŌ AKUMA

This fighting style was originally developed by Garyu Doshi as a way of bringing a warrior closer to the elements that he needed to call upon in battle. While it was originally devised to accompany a number of weapon techniques, the version taught by the Hakūn ryū incorporates the following four deadly strikes into the Ninpō Taijutsu taught by the school.



First Demon: Kage Akuma (Shadow Demon)

This strike, made with a single sweeping leg or arm is designed to both unbalance the opponent and move the shinobi around the victim's body by using the leverage gained in the attack as a source of momentum to effect the switch of position. This leaves the opponent in a position from which a counter attack would be difficult.

Martial Dodge: -1 AV + 4 DV + 1d6 damage. A successful use places the shinobi directly behind his opponent.

Second Demon: Taika Akuma (Inferno Demo)

This is a powerful blow that does hideous amounts of damage if it connects, but leaves the shinobi somewhat vulnerable to counterattack. The strike is performed with a clawed hand and the damage results from the practitioner crushing his opponent's limbs or vitals in this vise-like grip.

Killing blow: +2 AV -5 DV + 4d6 Killing damage. The shinobi must time his or her strike perfectly and so must spend one action "aiming" the attack.

Third Demon: Gansekiu Akuma (Stone Demon)

This roots the shinobi to the earth and makes his or her arms as tough as rock for the duration of a block. If successful, all damage is rolled with one less die (minimum 0), as the shinobi draws on the strength of the earth to fend off an attack.

Martial Block: -5 AV + 2 DV. Damage reduced by one die (minimum 0).

Fourth Demon: Kyōfu Akuma (Wind Demon)

A series of swirling motions in an intricate and difficult-to-read pattern conspire to keep the shinobi employing this dodge maneuver out of harm's way when attacked in close combat.

Martial Dodge: -3 AV + 5 DV. Adds 5 to DEX for purposes of dodging melee attacks only.

FAMILIES

No family names are recorded for this ryū after the founding. GMs with Hakūn ryū PCs may substitute Iga ryū family names here to represent the fact that most members of the clan were drawn from the larger ryū.

The Hakūn can call upon only 20 active agents at any one time.

MEMBERS

Jōnin: None (effectively Hattori Hanzo)

Soke: Hattori Shinichi

Chūnin: 3

Genin: 17

Sympathetic non-shinobi: 0

HAKŪN RYŪ SHINOBI TEMPLATE

INT 3	WILL 4	PRE 3	AES 4	PIE 4	KAO 3
STR 2	CON 2	BOD 3	TECH 3	REF 3	DEX 3
MOVE 3	END 20	SD 4	STUN 15	HITS 15	REC 4
RES 12	HON 30				

Perks: Contact: Buddhist temple abbot (4), Membership Level 2 in ninja clan (6)

Complications: Code of Honor: Ninja code, risk death (Frequent, Extreme) (25), Oppressed: Hinin, outcast (Constant, Minor) (6), Poverty: Dirt broke, hinin (Constant, Minor) (5), Secret Identity: Living a normal life (Frequent, Extreme) (15).

Skills: Acrobatics 4, Dance: Popular Dance 2, Kensō Akuma 2, Language: Shinobi clan dialect 2, Meditation 2, Ninjutsu 4, Ninpō Taijutsu 4, Scouting 2, Stealth 4, Survival 3.

Equipment: Ninja garb (shinobi shojoku).

SPHERE OF INFLUENCE

As the Hakūn live in the Iga domain and consider themselves effectively vassals of the Iga shinobi ryū, they have no direct control outside their own dojo (the few sympathetic peasants in the region answer only to the Iga). Outside the province, knowledge of the Hakūn is so rare as to make the name no passage to favor with any but other Iga allies.

Their main dojo is situated in the north of Iga province in a small woodsman's hamlet in the caves on the slopes of Mount Henjō. From this position they can guard the main north-south trade road and be on the lookout for Koga patrolling across Iga borders.

POLITICS

The Hakūn have no politics, being content to let the Iga clan direct such matters.

忍者

ALLIANCES AND ENEMIES

The Hakūn consider all Iga clan allies their allies too (Fūdo, Gyokkyo, Togakure, etc.) and will render aid to a member of any of these ryū.

However, they dislike the Koga with a passion and—through a loophole in the Iga/Koga treaty and some “blindness” on the part of the Iga Jōnin—are under no obligation to be civil (meetings between Kōga and Hakūn shinobi *always* go badly).

HAKŪN SHINOBI OF NOTE

(3) HATTORI SHINICHI

Soke of the Hakūn Ryū

Age: 53 (in 1603)

Caste: Hinin

Religion: Buddhist

INT 3	WILL 4	PRE 3	AES 4	PIE 4	KAO 4
STR 2	CON 3	BOD 3	TECH 3	REF 4	DEX 4
MOVE 3	END 30	SD 6	STUN 15	HITS 15	REC 5
RES 12	HON 40				

Perks: Contact: Iga Ryū Jōnin (Elder Brother), Membership Level 6 in ninja clan (6)

Talents: Knack in Kensō Akuma.

Complications: Code of Honor: Ninja code, risk death (Frequent, Extreme), Oppressed: Hinin, outcast (Constant, Minor), Poverty: Dirt broke, hinin (Constant, Minor), Secret Identity: Living a normal Life (Constant, major).

Skills: Acrobatics 3, Calligraphy 5, Inpo 4, Kensō Akuma 7*, Language: Chinese 2, Language: Shinobi clan dialect 3, Meditation 4, Ninjutsu 5, Ninpō Taijutsu 6, Scouting 3, Shinobi iri 4, Stealth 5, Survival 2.

* includes +1 for Knack

Equipment: Shojoku (shinobi garb)

Background: Being the cousin of the Tokugawa shōgun’s chief shinobi would be something of a trying experience for any man, but when one is also the Soke (in the loosest possible sense of the word) of perhaps the smallest shinobi ryū in Japan, it would be too much for most to bear.

Not Shinichi, though.

He was put into the Hakūn school when he was 10 and did so well that he was made Soke of the ryū on graduating, which would have been unheard of in any other dojo. His pride at his promotion was short-lived when he realized that he would not be allowed to fight alongside his cousin in the war with the Koga, being “too precious a treasure to throw to the wolves of the Koga.” He has always resented being treated as if his school were, at best, a living memorial to Tozawa Hakunsai or, at worst, a joke to the shinobi of their parent clan.

With the war’s end he has been pushing his relative to give his clansmen more to do, and Hanzo, being well aware of the ability of Shinichi and his men, has approved a series of daring missions for them (much to the dismay of the Iga clan Soke).

Personality: Until recently a little bitter and disillusioned by the Iga’s treatment of his ryū, Shinichi currently enjoys a very content existence, working with his small clan on his cousin’s orders. For the first time in an age, it seems, the teachings of Tozawa Hakunsai are being put to good use as the ryū shinobi score victory after victory against foes unused to their unorthodox fighting techniques.

As Shinichi’s men push further into Fuma territory he is beginning to realize that there is more to this war with the Fukushima than meets the eye.

Quote: “*We all have our little demons inside of us. I just prefer to call mine by name.*”



KUMOGAKURE RYŪ

BACKGROUND

THE HISTORICAL KUMOGAKURE RYŪ

This clan does not maintain any accurate records for itself today, and so we have been forced to rely on secondary sources (other ryū, Japanese folk archives, and academic libraries) more than we have been required to do with other groups. While much of the material we have employed in this book cannot be called wholly authoritative, the following must be considered as little more than legend.

CLAN MYTH: THE FOUNDING

The Hidden Cloud School of the Kumogakure shinobi clan's foundation is unknown save in the following legend:

In the year 1205, when a wolves' winter was on the land, a band of rōnin (warriors exiled from Miyako) were trying to make their livelihood as bandits in the Tokuyama region, just across the water from the island of Kyushu. The group was beginning to starve for lack of both victims and the skill to make its own way in a hard land. One morning they chanced upon a young priest with what appeared to be a sack of gold coins. Challenging him to surrender the money, the group approached the priest (sure that at twenty to one the

odds would be with them, though they were tired and hungry) and tried to take the sack from him. Just as the leader reached out for the priest, the young man was suddenly a good fifty yards down the track and walking on as if nothing had happened. Again the brigands tried to bring the youth down and again he simply vanished to appear elsewhere on the road.

Undeterred, the rōnin struck again and again though all their efforts were for nothing, until one of the bandits collapsed (from cold, hunger, and fatigue). The youth then seemed to regard the wretched specimens and returned to them, and dumping his pack and taking out some potions, he began to minister to the fallen warrior. Though they were taken aback by the gesture, the rōnin did not forget that the sack they had sought—the gold—lay but a few feet away and was now wholly untended by the strange priest, so one of them carefully slipped over to it and cut its cords. He immediately fell away from it as the contents, a huge number of shining pointed disks, came flying out and formed into the shape of a great beast constructed from these sharp little disks.

The priest left his work of healing and commanded the beast down, scattering its form like sand in a gale, and gave the bandits a withering look before returning to his work (which now included the rōnin who had opened the sack). When he had finished with the injured, he turned and asked for the leader of the group. He told the man that he was certain that they could do better than

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stealing from peasants and could, if they were willing to serve him, learn secrets which would not only guarantee their survival, but gain them access to a world of which they had heard of only in myth. Nothing more is recorded save that the leader of those bandits, Toda Kenjirō (????–ca. 1250) accepted the mastery of the shinobi Mikkyō who had bested them all to become, in time, the first master of the Kumogakure Shinobi ryū—friends and brothers forever to the Gikan ryū who had made them.

The names of the masters of the Kumogakure ryū are not known for many years after the founding of the clan. As the only other ryū which records the history of the Kumogakure is the Gikan, it may be possible that the Kumogakure was, for a great while, little more than an outpost of the Gikan, which was given status of its own in the early 15th century—as well as the myth of its founding. Whatever the cause, records from that time become more specific (and therefore more credible), speaking of the work of Toda Sagenta Nobufusa (1408–1486), the first Jōnin of the clan whose name is known beyond Gikan archives and the shinobi who is said to have invented the Kumogakure version of Ninpō Taijutsu, Shōjō Taijutsu (Maiden's Taijutsu).

He was followed by Toda Gohei Nobunaga (1451–1537), who is recorded as being a remarkable Mikkyō, having trained in the Gikan ryū and who eventually became a monk, leaving the position of clan head to Toda Noriyoshi (1495–1560), his great nephew. When Noriyoshi left the post of Jōnin, the chair was offered to a Gikan shinobi (whose name before he took up the chair is unknown) known only as Toda Seiryū Norihasa (1531–1599) who is said to have participated in a series of attacks against Oda Nobunaga in retribution for sacking the Enryakuji on Mount Hiei in 1575, and whose son, Toda Seiryū Nobutsuna (1569–1643), rules the clan even now.

CLAN LEGEND: SHŌJŌ TAIJUTSU

There are those among the Kumogakure who speak of a Togakure ryū Kunoichi teaching this form of Ninpō Taijutsu to the Kumogakure in the early 16th century. However, no member of the Togakure clan has ever demonstrated such a fighting style and while it is possible that a lone or renegade shinobi might have ventured into the South to seek refuge, it seems unlikely that such a powerful figure could have gone unnoticed for so long in Shinobi history.

Whatever the story behind it, Shōjō Taijutsu represents the Kumogakure art of fighting, but (unlike more usual versions of Ninpō Taijutsu) this art was developed specifically for use by a shinobi wearing tight formal robes, which would otherwise limit movement. The key to the technique is recognizing that the body can still make a great number of movements even when bound up in heavy clothing, but that these movements will naturally be restricted. Should a shinobi keep this in mind and always move within the confines of his or her clothing then he or she will be able to act and fight as well as any other Shadow Warrior, even while wearing the most formal of clothing.

Clearly, the technique was originally designed for infiltration, but the Kumogakure have made it part of their method of fighting in a confined space. In their dense forest home, or a like place, a Kumogakure shinobi can move and fight as if he or she were in an open plain, while her foes struggle to engage properly, hindered by the terrain itself.

In game terms: only Kumogakure shinobi (male and female) may learn this skill. It allows a shinobi to fight effectively in any garment or in cramped conditions without penalty. The skill also allows acrobatics, climbing, and other maneuvers which would normally be forbidden to anyone so constrained by clothing, but at a –2 to REF and DEX.

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KUMOGAKURE RYŪ SHINOBI TEMPLATE

INT 3 WILL 4 PRE 3 AES 4 PIE 4 KAO 3
 STR 2 CON 2 BOD 3 TECH 3 REF 3 DEX 3
 MOVE 3 END 20 SD 4 STUN 15 HITS 15 REC 4
 RES 12 HON 30

Perks: Contact: Buddhist temple abbot (4), Membership Level 2 in ninja clan (6)

Complications: Code of Honor: Ninja code, risk death (Frequent, Extreme) (25), Oppressed: Hinin, outcast (Constant, Minor) (6), Poverty: Dirt broke, hinin (Constant, Minor) (5), Secret Identity: Living a normal life (Frequent, Extreme) (15).

Skills: Acrobatics 4, Dance: Popular Dance 2, Language: Shinobi clan dialect 2, Meditation 2, Ninjutsu 4, Scouting 2, Shōjō Taijutsu 4, Stealth 4, Survival 3.

Equipment: Ninja garb (shinobi shojoku).

FAMILIES

While the Toda family effectively controls the ryū, the following eight families also have a presence in the clan.

Adachi, Akechi, Hondo (which points to the influence which the Gikan ryū has with the Kumogakure), Kise, Kuro, Moriyoshi, Oda, and Taika.

MEMBERS

Jōnin: Toda Seiryū Nobutsuna

Soke: Taika Atsushi

Chūnin: 12

Genin: 49

Sympathetic non-shinobi: 9

SPHERE OF INFLUENCE

While the clan has some political clout because of its connections to the Gikan ryū, the ryū seems content to remain within the boundaries of its Tokuyama home.

POLITICS

Clan members are tacit royalists, but they have no inclination to go against the views of their Gikan ryū fellows.

ALLIANCES AND ENEMIES

The clan is allied very closely to the Gikan ryū and subordinates itself to that clan when required. It has no enemies as such, having never been involved in inter-ryū strife, but it counts the enemies of Gikan as unfriendly to itself.

忍者

KUMOGAKURE SHINOBI OF NOTE

(1) TODA SEIRYŪ NOBUTSUNA

Jōnin of the Gikan Shinobi Ryū

Age: 34 (in 1603)

Caste: Hinin

Religion: Tendai Buddhist

INT 6 WILL 5 PRE 4 AES 6 PIE 4 KAO 5
STR 2 CON 3 BOD 3 TECH 6 REF 5 DEX 5
MOVE 4 END 30 SD 6 STUN 15 HITS 15 REC 5
RES 15 HON 50

Perks: Contact: Jōnin of Gikan Shinobi ryū, Contact: Buddhist Temple Abbot, Membership Level 7 in ninja clan

Talents: Knack in Shōjō Taijutsu and Genjutsu.

Complications: Code of Honor: Ninja code, risk death (Frequent, Extreme), Oppressed: Hinin, outcast (Constant, Minor), Poverty: Dirt broke, hinin (Constant, Minor), Secret Identity: Woodsman (Constant, major).

Skills: Acrobatics 3, Culture: South Honshu, Do-ton-jutsu 3, Genjutsu 6 *, Language: Shinobi clan dialect 4, Leadership 6, Meditation 5, Moku-ton-jutsu 3, Ninjutsu 5, Shinobi iri 4, Shōjō Taijutsu 7*, Shurikenjutsu 4, Stealth 4, Survival 4.

** includes +1 for Knack*

Equipment: Ninja garb (shinobi shojoku), Magical Shinobigatana (+3 AV).

Magical Items: Shinobigatana: “Ryusenji.” Forged by a sorcerer of the Gikan school for his first son when it was revealed that the boy would not become as powerful a Mikkyō as his father, this blade is said to command shadow and light to such a degree that any shinobi wielding it is considered to be 1 skill level higher when performing Do-ton-jutsu, Genjutsu, Inpo, Moku-ton-jutsu, and Shinobi iri. The weapon must be drawn for the power to work—as it is the blade which bears the



power—but the owner must also be true to the shinobi code and remain always in a state of Seishin. Any shinobi who falls from that position (as determined by the GM) will suffer 1d6 killing damage each time they try to unsheathe the sword.

Note: In a historical campaign, treat the sword as a Master Quality item only.

Background: Born to a Gikan shinobi who had been made Jōnin of the Kumogakure, Nobutsuna proved, even as a child, that the breeding of his Gikan blood with the physical power of his Kumogakure training was a powerful combination. When his father recognized that even without

Mikkyō training, Nobutsuna was developing real signs of being aware of the latent magic in the world, he was sent to the Gikan school and there instructed in Genjutsu (which he is said to have mastered in less than six months).

On his return to the Kumogakure, he brought with him not only a Gikan wife (whose obvious skill with Shōjō Taijutsu soon won her acceptance to the ryū), but also a magical blade, given to him by his father-in-law to acknowledge that the Kumogakure clan has never betrayed or let down the Gikan, though suffering not inconsiderable losses on Gikan's behalf over the years.

Currently, he is working with the Gikan Jōnin on a matter of some delicacy in the lands of the Fuma ryū. He has no idea what is going on in those lands, or why his shinobi must travel far out of their way simply to hunt Koga ryū shinobi, but he has never questioned the strange Gikan Jōnin on any matter and will not start now.

Personality: Nobutsuna is a very happy man at heart, well content with his place in the world, and confident in his ability to maintain not only his own clan's position but the safety (at least physically) of the Gikan. In his heart he knows that if the larger Mikkyō-wielding clan ever needed the smaller Kumogakure, they certainly do not now. He still likes to think that his group serves,

perhaps, as a buffer between the Gikan and the rest of the Shinobi ryū, as the Kumogakure host most visitors to the Gikan themselves rather than admit them to Kyushu.

He does not understand the trouble in Fuma territory, nor does he wish to, but neither does it trouble him greatly. He has placed his faith totally in the Gikan and is certain that they will resolve the issue, or at least discover what is going on so that the Kumogakure and such other interested ryū can act effectively.

Quote: *“My thoughts are immaterial and, likely as not, already known to the only one who might prize them.”*

HISTORICAL NOTE

All that is known about the historical Nobutsuna is that he was married to an unnamed member of the Gikan ryū and was possessed of a sword of exceptional quality. Far more is known about his fictional persona—Toda Nobutsu—who featured in two late-18th century plays. He appeared as a shinobi Mikkyō, in the Jōruri play entitled “Ran no Ya” or “Arashi no Yoru” (both: A Stormy Night) and as an agent from Kyushu Daimyō in the insipid Kabuki play “Hagi no Ya” (The Clover Bush).

忍者

TOGAKURE RYŪ

BACKGROUND

CLAN LEGEND: THE FOUNDING

While the Togakure shinobi have, for most of their life, shared the same mountain home as the Iga and Hakūn ryū, the story actually begins in the Buddhist temple of Enryakuji—the headquarters of the Tendai sect—on Mount Hiei, just outside Miyako, with a monk by the name of So-ō in the early 10th century. While he worked at the Enryakuji, he both taught and learned from Chinese, Indian, and Korean Buddhists in order to perfect himself, for he believed that each sect only carried a small portion of the whole truth with them. He was determined to come to know as much of the whole as he could by learning from as many masters as possible. By the time of his death, it said that he had effectively created the philosophical foundation of Ninpō, but that not until the 12th century was his theory put into practice, when Kain Doshi (known as Kagakure Doshi to the Tendai sect), a mountain ascetic and priest, took the teachings of So-ō into the province of Iga to avoid the Genpei wars sweeping across Miyako at that time.

THE HISTORICAL TOGAKURE RYŪ

The founder of the Togakure ryū, Togakure Daisuke (ca. 1145–1240) was born in what is now Nagano prefecture, a warrior and vassal to the Nishina clan. During the early stages of the Genpei Wars, the Taira family moved against Daisuke's family and, after being defeated by the Regent's army, Daisuke and some of his guard fled south, skirting Miyako, to find refuge in the province of Iga.

Though living reasonably well in the mountains, Daisuke's men were not used to the ways of the land and would have surely starved (or been caught) as soon as winter fell on them, but before that could happen Daisuke encountered a figure who would change his life forever.

Much as the Fūdo ryū claim of their founder, while fleeing from an army patrol (a Taira one in this case), Daisuke and his men encountered the aging Kain Doshi sunning himself on a rock at the top of a steep cliff, highly amused at the struggles of the Nishina soldiers. Also much as in the Fūdo story, Kain Doshi stated to Daisuke that they both had a purpose being on that spot at the same time and that he would teach the young warrior his ways so Daisuke could survive the coming purges.

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HISTORICAL NOTE

It is interesting that two shinobi ryū, both founded in the defeat of an army within a few years of each other (Togakure in 1160 and Fūdo in 1185), on opposite sides of a huge political divide should conjure up almost the same story to explain their initiation to Ninpō. Some have viewed this a simply being the Fūdo ryū attempting to strike back at the Togakure ryū and legitimize themselves in the face of the Taira and Fujiwara bloodlines they represented. Recently it has been suggested that (especially as the clans were both founded in Iga province) both ryū were brought into being under the orders of the Iga ryū. This is supported by the fact that the two smaller ryū were taught by the same figure (who was also a leader of note to the Iga, if one can believe that the Kagakure Doshi who taught Nishina Daisuke and Taira Rikimaru is indeed this man), by the fact that the clans were either allied or at least friendly (despite being at war

with the Iga, in the case of the Fūdo) to the Iga ryū, and by the fact that in later years, there seemed to be no bar to prevent members of all three ryū from joining any of the others.

Daisuke studied with Kain Doshi for twenty years and when the master left, he took his followers further west into the forests of Nishi Iga to form their base. But he did not stay there very long, for it is written that in 1206 (according to Togakure archives) or 1207 (by Iga reckoning) he was appointed the Jōnin of the Iga ryū, staying there till either 1210 (Iga) or 1211 (Togakure). No evidence as to why he would leave his people for any length of time has ever come to light, but the fact that some have chosen to see a connection between the Kagakure Doshi who led the Iga till 1207 and the famed Kain Doshi, might indicate that Daisuke was chosen because of his connection to the great teacher and might have led the ryū till a suitable leader from the Iga was ready to take the title (mirroring the earlier situation in which Tozawa Hakunsai took the position of Jōnin for six months). However, after Daisuke returned to the Togakure he continued to run the ryū for another thirty years, eventually resigning in 1238 and placing the adopted Shima Kanesada (????–ca. 1295), a Minamoto family retainer who had been defeated in battle and taken in by the ryū as Jōnin. It was he who is said to have reformed the Togakure's school of arms to better reflect the state of the fighting arts as he knew them, but it was not until the time of his successor, Togakure Gojo (ca. 1270–ca. 1340), that the clan finally created their own Ninpō Taijutsu school, which taught a special form of the art incorporating fighting techniques using climbing aids—specifically Nekode.

After Gojo however, the names of the clan Soke and Jōnin are not accurately recorded until the end of the civil war period and the following cannot be thought of as anything other than a very rough guide: Togakure Kosanta, Koga Kosanta, Kaneko Tomoharu, Togakure Ryuho, Togakure Gakuun,

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Kido Koseki, Iga Tenryu, Ueno Rihei, Ueno Senri, Ueno Manjiro, Iizuka, Saburo, Ozaru Ippei, Kimata Hachiro, Kataoka Heizaemon, Mori Ugenata, Toda Gobei, Kobe Seiun, Momochi Kobei, and Tobari Tenzen.

With the signing of the Iga ryū to the service of the Tokugawa government in 1603, the Togakure Jōnin resurface in the shape of Tobari Tenzen (1599–1662), who is said to have become one of Hattori Hanzo's senior field agents, coming out of retirement in the 1650s to advise the Tokugawa on a number of security issues.

CLAN LEGEND: TETSUBISHI

Togakure Daisuke was, though a brave warrior, not what his family could have described as a traditional clansman. While the bushi of his period prided themselves on being the best heavy horse archers in Asia (not exactly true but still . . .), Daisuke was too nervous around horses to even contemplate sitting on one, much less fighting from the back of one. Therefore, the young warrior was relegated, along with the very old, untried, and peasant levy to the infantry blocks, which armies of the period used to bulk out the center of an army.

Ever eager to avoid getting anywhere near horses, the young Daisuke actually ran into a patch of brambles to avoid pursuit in the battle of Yōkaichi (1181), hoping that the plants would fend off his mounted assailants. However, the Taira soldiers urged their horses into the brush, and one was about to pin Daisuke to the ground when his horse's hoof apparently hit a long thorn, which caused the beast to buck the soldier off. The young Nishina soldier then had time to scramble out of the other side of the patch (his armor protecting him from the brambles) and into the river beyond.

As he wandered he thought frequently about his fortunate escape and how lucky it had been that the bush had been around to cripple the horse. (horse's feet are very tender just back from the

hoof) He wished he could always have a handy patch of brambles around to use in such a way. Wishing however, would do little for him, he well knew, so he turned to thinking about recreating the bramble thorns in a way he could use and eventually he turned to the pyramidal shape (forged from two twisted pieces of steel) which we know today as the caltrop (or Tetsubishi in Japanese).

HISTORICAL NOTE

It is unlikely that the Japanese actually invented the caltrop, as Chin dynasty sources from the Chinese city of Xian speak of them being a well recognized tool of war around 220 B.C., but it does fit well with the classic folk myth that surrounds the weapon in both Asia and Central Europe.

CLAN LEGEND: NEKODE

Every shinobi knows how hard it is to do anything while wearing nekode. These climbing claws, while being very useful in getting up soft surfaces (wooden, soil, and loose rock) have to be strapped on to the shinobi very firmly and make it impossible for the wearer to hold anything as the climbing claws project from the palm of the glove-like tool.

Togakure Gojo so disliked this problem that he decided to make the nekode (and the Ashiko—the foot claws) part of Togakure Ninpō Taijutsu techniques, teaching his pupils not only how to climb, but how to fight effectively with the small but dangerous claws.

In game terms, a Togakure shinobi armed with nekode suffers no minuses for using nekode when engaging in hand to hand combat and will do killing damage (KD) with any strike he or she performs.

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FAMILIES

While there were certainly more families involved with the ryū originally, only the following 16 names survive in records.

Togakure, Koga, Kane, Kido, Iga, Ueno, Iizuka, Sawada, Ozaru, Kimata, Kataoka, Mori, Toda, Kobe, Momochi, and Tobarī.

MEMBERS

Jōnin: Tobarī Tenzen

Soke: Ueno Akeo

Chūnin: 26

Genin: 57

Sympathetic non-shinobi: 18

TOGAKURE RYŪ SHINOBI TEMPLATE

INT 3	WILL 4	PRE 3	AES 4	PIE 4	KAO 3
STR 2	CON 2	BOD 3	TECH 3	REF 3	DEX 3
MOVE 3	END 20	SD 4	STUN 15	HITS 15	REC 4
RES 12	HON 30				

Perks: Contact: Tendai Buddhist temple abbot
OR Iga Ryū Shinobi Genin (4), Membership Level 2 in ninja clan (6)

Complications: Code of Honor: Ninja code, risk death (Frequent, Extreme) (25), Oppressed: Hinin, outcast (Constant, Minor) (6), Poverty: Dirt broke, hinin (Constant, Minor) (5), Secret Identity: Living a normal life (Frequent, Extreme) (15).

Skills: Acrobatics 4, Language: Shinobi clan dialect 2, Meditation 2, Ninjutsu 4, Ninpō Taijutsu 4, Scouting 2, Shōten no Jutsu 3, Stealth 3, Survival 3.

Equipment: Ninja garb (shinobi shojoku).

SPHERE OF INFLUENCE

While the Togakure make their home in Nishi Iga, their influence (both through their status as an ally of the Iga ryū and their reputation as masters of Shōten no Jutsu techniques) actually spreads much farther than the borders of their realm. A Togakure ryū shinobi will find friends in just about any clan he or she visits (as long as they are not directly opposed to the Iga ryū and its policies).

POLITICS

Politically royalist by leaning, the ryū however follows the lead of the Iga clan and respects the peace of the Tokugawa.

ALLIANCES AND ENEMIES

The Togakure ryū is allied with the Iga ryū. They share common roots and both developed in Iga province. Togakure shinobi can expect aid from any Iga shinobi or Iga ryū base, and vice versa. Moreover, the Togakure consider any ally of the Iga to be theirs also, whether or not any formal treaty has been negotiated between the groups.

Togakure ryū is an enemy of the Koga ryū, though not to the extent that their Iga cousins are. If push comes to shove, however, the Togakure ryū will back the Iga ryū in a conflict.

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TOGAKURE SHINOBI OF NOTE

(3) TOBARI TENZEN

Jōnin of the Togakure Shinobi Ryū

Age: 33 (in 1603)

Caste: Hinin

Religion: Tendai Buddhist

INT 4 **WILL 5** **PRE 4** **AES 4** **PIE 4** **KAO 5**
STR 3 **CON 4** **BOD 4** **TECH 5** **REF 4** **DEX 4**
MOVE 4 **END 40** **SD 8** **STUN 20** **HITS 20** **REC 7**
RES 15 **HON 50**

Perks: Contact: Hattori Hanzo, Membership Level 7 in ninja clan (6), Contact: Iga Ryū Jōnin.

Talents: Knack in Leadership and Shōten no Jutsu, Immunity to animal attack (see below)

Complications: Code of Honor: Ninja code, risk death (Frequent, Extreme) (25), Oppressed: Hinin, outcast (Constant, Minor), Secret Identity: Woodsman (Constant, Extreme).

Skills: Acrobatics 6, Acting 4, Bribery 4, Bureaucracy 4, Dance: Popular Dance 2, Do-ton-jutsu 5, Hensojutsu 4, Herbalism 4, Language: Shinobi clan dialect 4, Leadership 5*, Meditation 5, Moku-ton-jutsu 4, Ninjutsu 7, Ninpō Taijutsu 6, Scouting 5, Shinobi iri 5, Shōten no Jutsu 7*, Stealth 5, Survival 4.

** includes +1 for Knack*

Equipment: Ninja garb (shinobi shojoku).

Notes: Master of the forest, Tobari Tenzen is the lord of Iga province as far as its more animalistic residents are concerned. He is so in tune with the natural world that he cannot bring himself to harm any living thing willfully, and is a strict vegetarian. Moreover, his presence is such that under very few circumstances (not even great hunger, but in retaliation) will an animal attack him—recognizing him for what he is.

Background: As a youth Tenzen was quite a malcontent, unhappy with the restrictive life of a

shinobi and generally unwilling to conform. By his fifth birthday, his parents were convinced that he would have to be sent away to a foster family or even silenced permanently to keep him from betraying the secrets of the clan as he grew. However, the Jōnin of the clan decided to give the boy one last chance before deciding his fate and took Tenzen with him on a journey into the heart of the Iga forests.

When the pair returned, young Tenzen was scratched, bitten, cut, and shaking like a leaf in the wind, but he was walking quietly and looked calm, even happy to be with the Jōnin who held him by the hand. He spoke to no one, not even his parents, about that experience, but from the day of his return he became something of a model student in the ryū, always ready to learn, ever prepared to undertake any action for the good of the ryū, and always terrified of the forest.

As he grew to manhood he became a powerful man, a true master of climbing and fighting, just as his parents had wished for him, but he was till afraid of the woods. Finally, on Tenzen's 16th birthday, the aging Jōnin took him out once again and they remained away for over a week this time. On their return, the old Jōnin was limping, cut badly in several places, scratched, bitten, and leaning on the young Tenzen's shoulder. When they reached the Jōnin's house, the young man knelt and bowed to the earth before the old shinobi who nodded and said, "You never needed to fear them in the first place, but *you* are the true master there now and soon here as well if my heart tells me right."

That was seventeen years ago. Currently Tenzen is working on a treatise about his life in the forests of Iga at the request of Hattori Hanzo and is not involved in the political wars which occupy most other Iga allies.

Personality: Tenzen is the most quiet and thoughtful man anyone is likely to meet. He is driven only by his desire to understand the natural world perfectly, seeing it as his way to access a

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higher level of Seishin. He leaves the running of the clan more and more in the hands of his Soke.

He rarely becomes angered at anything, except the willful destruction of life (human, animal, or plant), which has been known to send him into a black mood from which only violent action can lift him.

Thankfully though, that is rare indeed and for the most part Tenzen is quite approachable (even open, for he makes no attempt to hide his position as Jōnin) and is willing to entertain any ally of the Togakure (Iga, Gyokkyo, etc.) as if they were his own clansmen.

Quote: “All the signs we need can be found in nature. Look to the ground, the sky, and the waters: There you will find the answers to all things.”

HISTORICAL NOTES

Though the name of Tobarī Tenzen is known, none of his deeds are recorded and so, his life history here is a complete fiction.

(3) TODA ETSUKO

Chūnin of the Togakure Shinobi Ryū

Age: 27 (in 1603)

Caste: Hinin

Religion: Tendai Buddhist

INT 4 **WILL 4** **PRE 4** **AES 4** **PIE 3** **KAO 3**

STR 3 **CON 4** **BOD 4** **TECH 3** **REF 4** **DEX 4**

MOVE 4 **END 40** **SD 8** **STUN 20** **HITS 20** **REC 7**

RES 12 **HON 30**

Perks: Contact: Iga ryū Soke, Membership Level 5 in ninja clan

Talents: Knack in Shōten no Jutsu

Complications: Code of Honor: Ninja code, risk death (Frequent, Extreme), Oppressed: Hinin, outcast (Constant, Minor), Secret Identity: Itinerant storyteller (Constant, Extreme)

Skills: Acrobatics 4, Dance: Popular Dance 2, Do-ton-jutsu 3, Language: Shinobi clan dialect 3, Meditation 3, Moku-ton-jutsu 4, Ninjutsu 5, Ninpō Taijutsu 4, Scouting 3, Sekkyō 6, Shinobi iri 3, Shōten no Jutsu 5*, Survival 3.

* includes +1 for knack

Equipment: Ninja garb (shinobi shojoku).

Background: Etsuko is the Togakure clan chūnin in charge of relations with the Iga ryū and spends most of her time at the Iga family stronghold or Edo (when time allows—for she likes the place). She is not a politician, nor does she understand all the ins and outs of inter-ryū relations. Neither does she care, which is why she was chosen for the job by both Tenzen and Hattori Hanzo.

She is also something of a storyteller and has become the Togakure ryū’s unofficial loremistress, though in truth she far prefers the more bawdy tales of the genin to the more esoteric histories which delight the leaders of the ryū.

Personality: Sometimes lost in a world of words, Etsuko can often be difficult to reach when she is relaxed and considering one of her stories. She is not, however, the sort to be easily distracted by the words or deeds of another, and (especially on mission) she can be a dangerous foe to under-

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estimate. She is not discontent with her life, and, indeed, relishes every day she is permitted to spend in or around Edo (actually, most often she dwells in Yokohama with the Gyokkyo clan).

Quote: “Now that reminds me of a story I know ...”

(3) IGA HANZE

Genin of the Togakure Shinobi Ryū

Age: 24 (in 1603)

Caste: Hinin

Religion: Tendai Buddhist

INT 4	WILL 4	PRE 4	AES 4	PIE 3	KAO 3
STR 3	CON 3	BOD 4	TECH 3	REF 4	DEX 4
MOVE 4	END 30	SD 6	STUN 20	HITS 20	REC 6
RES 12	HON 30				

Perks: Contact: Iga ryū genin, Membership Level 2 in ninja clan

Talents: Knack in Shōten no Jutsu

Complications: Code of Honor: Ninja code, risk death (Frequent, Extreme), Oppressed: Hinin, outcast (Constant, Minor), Secret Identity: Toymaker (Constant, Extreme).

Skills: Acrobatics 3, Dance: Popular Dance 2, Do-ton-jutsu 3, Language: Shinobi clan dialect 2, Meditation 3, Moku-ton-jutsu 3, Ninjutsu 4, Ninpō Taijutsu 3, Scouting 2, Shinobi iri 2, Shōten no Jutsu 4*, Survival 3, Woodworking 4.

* includes +1 for Knack

Equipment: Ninja garb (shinobi shojoku).

Background: Hanze is, like most genin in the Togakure ryū, obsessed with the natural world and the flow of the world around him. Also, much like his brethren, he is quite a bit more naïve than one might expect of a shinobi during a time of political turmoil, but that is a product of the way in which the Iga, recognizing that the Togakure school represented a legacy that should not be allowed to die



out in futile conflict, kept the Togakure away from real harm during the years before the truce with the Koga .

His current position is as aid to the Jōnin, and assisting him (and acting as his all-too-unnecessary bodyguard) on extended journeys in the wilds.

Personality: A very personable young man in many ways, Hanze is very defensive when it comes to his Jōnin and will allow no one to question Tenzen’s passive ways, treating any who deride his master as unfriendly, even if from an allied ryū.

He will however, look on any person he perceives as being genuinely interested in his lord or his clan with more open eyes and will be willing—with his Jōnin’s approval—to entertain and educate those guests in the best way possible.

Quote: “No, but wait, you haven’t tried these cakes yet. They’re made from mushrooms and...”

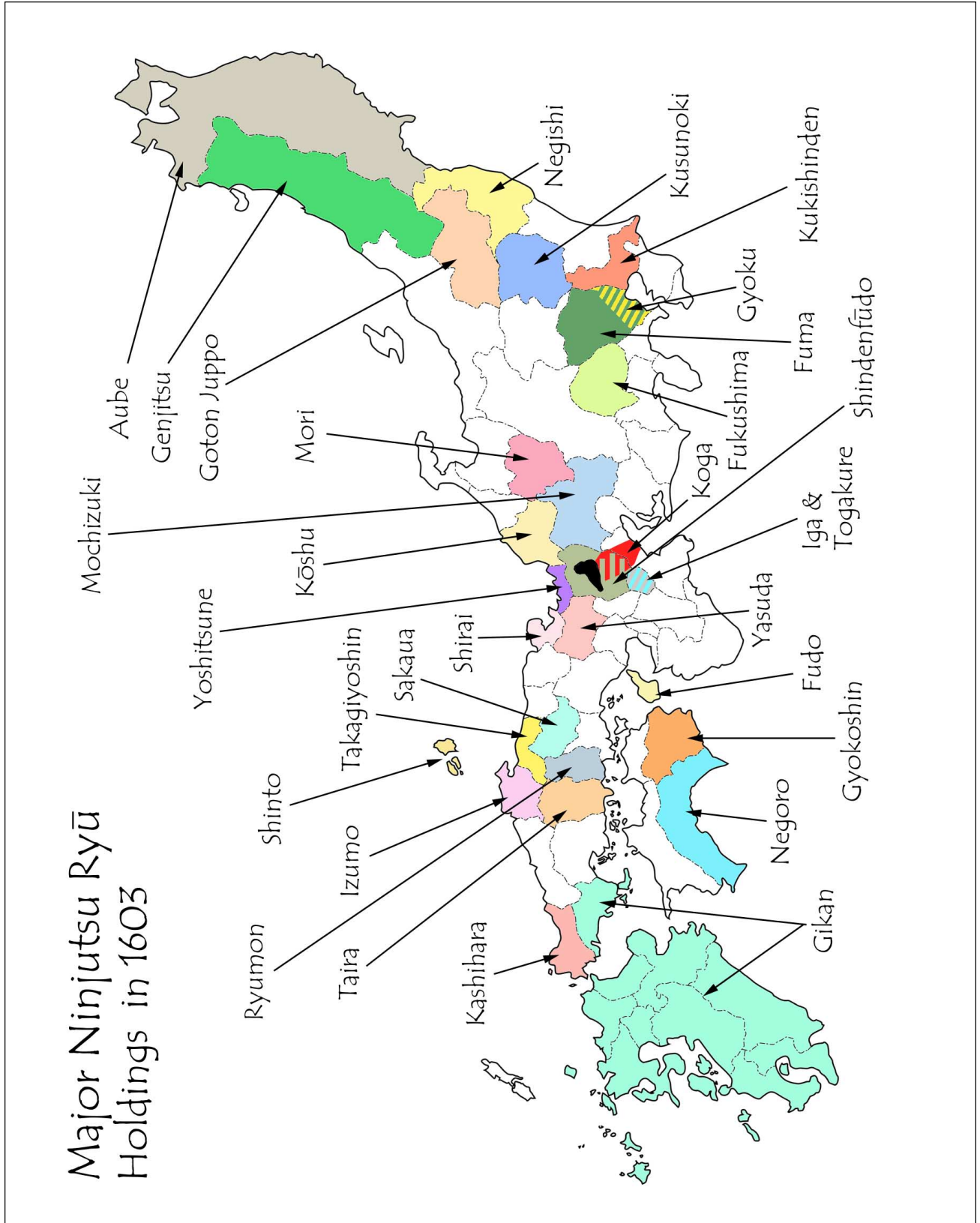
OTHER RYŪ OF NOTE

Other ninjutsu ryū that have been mentioned in historical texts include the following. GMs can use these names for other shinobi clans in their campaign, if they so choose.

Ryū	Members	Main Base Province	Political affiliation
Aube ryū	74	Mutsu	Pro-Tokugawa
Genjitu ryū	69	Dewa	Anti-Tokugawa
Goton Juppo ryū	45	Iwashiro	Anti-Tokugawa
Gyokoshin ryū	48	Awa	Pro-Tokugawa
Izumo ryū	34	Izumo	Pro-Tokugawa
Kashihara ryū	50	Nagato	Anti-Tokugawa
Kishu ryū	45	???	Pro-Tokugawa
Koto ryū	80	???	Anti-Tokugawa
Koushu ryū	78	Echizen	Pro-Tokugawa
Kukishinden ryū	57	Shimosa	Pro-Tokugawa
Kusunoki ryū	49	Shimotsuke	Anti-Tokugawa
Minamoto ryū	40	???	Neutral
Mochizuki ryū	43	Kunoichi/Mino	Neutral
Mori ryū	68	Hida	Pro-Tokugawa
Negishi ryū	64	Iwami	Neutral
Negoro ryū	100	Tosa	Pro-Tokugawa
Oshin ryū	80	???	Neutral
Ryumon ryū	79	Bitchū	Neutral
Saiga ryū	72	???	Anti-Tokugawa
Sakaua ryū	42	Mimasaka	Pro-Tokugawa
Shindenfūdo ryū	69	Omi	Neutral
Shinto ryū	74	Okii	Neutral
Shirai ryū	60	Tango	Neutral
Takagiyoshin ryū	71	Hoki	Pro-Tokugawa
Tenton Happo ryū	81	???	Neutral
Toda ryū	83	???	Anti-Tokugawa
Taira ryū	70	Bingo	Neutral
Yasuda ryū	68	Tanba	Pro-Tokugawa
Yoshitsune ryū	69	Wakasa	Neutral

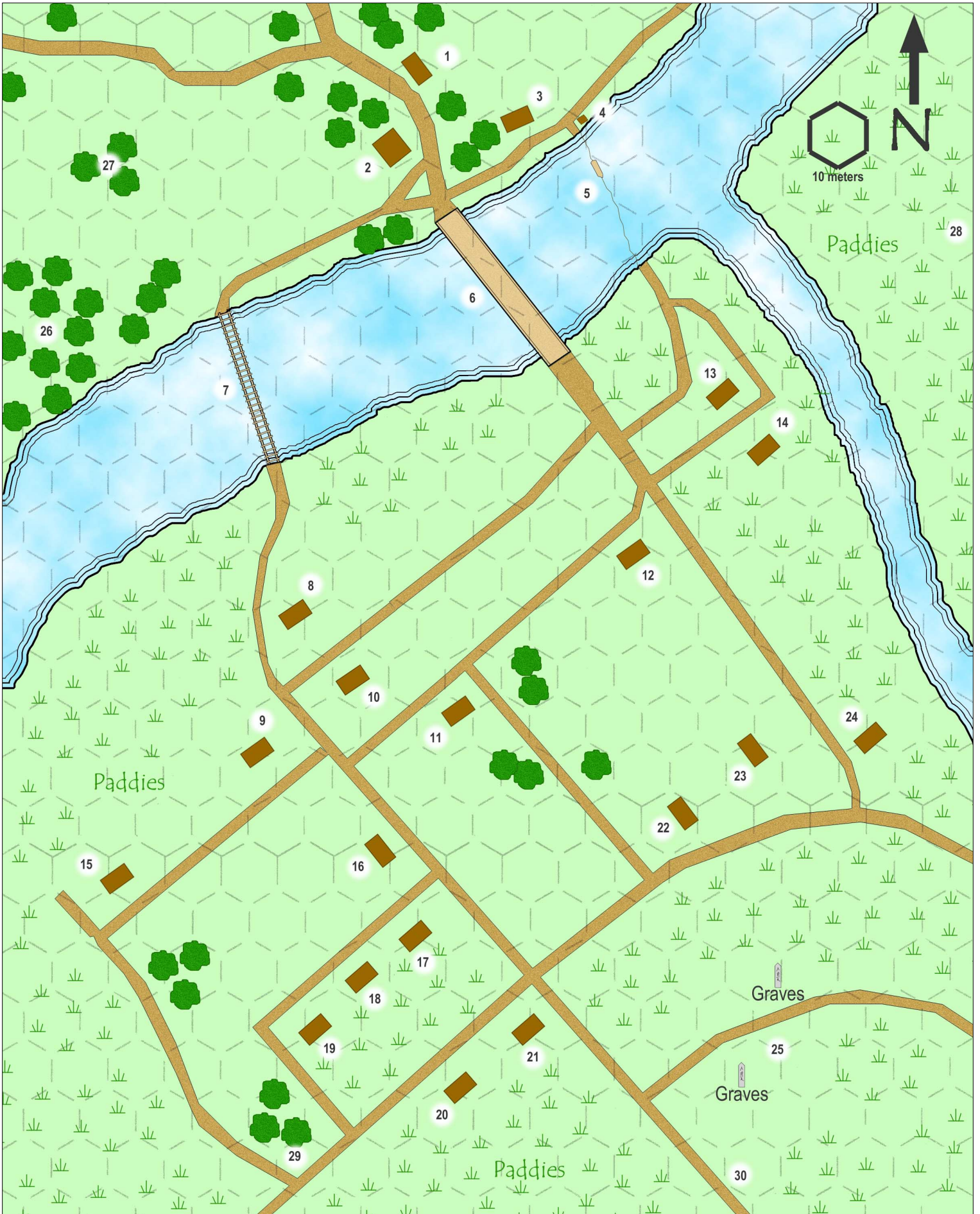
???, indicates that the location of the main base as of 1603 is unknown.





Major Ninjutsu Ryū Holdings in 1603

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SHINOBI VILLAGE

1. Village Headman's house: The village headman, his wife and daughter live here. The headman and his wife are in their 50s and the daughter, unmarried, is in her 30s.

The village headman is not an active shinobi but rather the soko of the families that live in the village. There are no contraband items hidden here.

2. Buddhist (Shingon) temple: This small, four-room building houses a statue of Amida, several mandala scrolls hanging on the walls and incense, though no items of significant value. The temple is maintained by a full-time priest named Tosabō.

Tosabō is actually a shinobi genin whose long-term cover is that of a priest. He has all of the requisite skills of a priest, as one would expect of an experienced shinobi in his position.

3. Ferryman's house: This small modest dwelling is the home of the village ferryman. He is also the village rumor-monger and adept at telling entertaining stories.

The ferryman is not an active shinobi but serves as the point of contact or go-between for the various genin and the local chūnin, as well as the local chūnin and the chūnin of other nearby cells. He is also the "answer man" concerning local rumors.

4. Temporary ferryman's shelter: A small lean-to more than a house, this small structure serves as crude shelter for the ferryman during rainstorms when he is not actively ferrying customers across the river.

5. Ferry boat and line: This small boat can hold up to 10 people, including the ferryman, or a combination of people and cargo totalling no more than 1,600 kg. The boat is secured by a cord to a larger rope that itself is secured to both banks of the river.

6. Bridge: This is the main bridge across the river. It is four meters wide (unusually wide for a village of this size) and made of wood. The bridge occasionally washes out when torrential rains cause the river to flood in the summertime).

Beneath the bridge are twelve shinobi-zue-style yari. They are secured to the bridge and appear as part of the bridge itself (DN 24 to spot if the underside of the bridge is searched). If the village is expecting an attack, explosives can also be placed beneath it, causing the entire bridge to be destroyed; anyone on the bridge when it blows suffers 6d6 damage from the explosion and flames.

7. Temporary ladder bridge: A narrow (1-meter) ladder bridge spanning the river. Crossing it requires any non-shinobi to make a Climbing roll at -3 (failure indicates the person has fallen into the river). The bridge is used in emergencies or when the main bridge is washed out by flooding. It is rebuilt annually.

If necessary, the ladder bridge can be broken down into four sections and quickly hidden in the nearby paddies.

8–17. Farmer's house: Home to a small family of farmers. On average, one man, one woman, and two children live here. Farming tools, bonge clothing and futons can be found inside, with hanging vegetables and baskets kept outside.

To the north of house 12, near the intersection, is the official village posting board, where notices from the temple, headman or local samurai are posted.

The families living in houses 9, 10, 12, 15, and 17 are all active genin (use stats for Average Genin for the clan). The head of households 9 and 12 are the bugei (combat art) sensei and armorer, respectively. Each of the five houses also contains a hidden cache with one shinobi-gatana (ninjatō), two shinobi-zoku, a tantō, nine shuriken (style appropriate to the clan), and 2 each of grenades, flash eggs and smoke bombs.

18. Tofu maker: This is the home of the village tofu maker and

his wife. Both are in their mid-50s and extremely friendly. The tofu maker is known by the villagers to have a minor talent as an herbalist.

They are not active shinobi, although the tofu maker is also adept at concocting high-protein field rations as well as ingested poisons.

19. Vacant house: This home was recently vacated when the family moved to the closest town so that the father could pursue a career in tatami-making. The house is now offered to guests (when there are any) and will likely be occupied by the next couple to marry—at least that's what the villagers say.

The family that left did so to work with an allied shinobi cell in the town. This is known only by the local Chūnin and the ferryman.

20–24. Farmer's houses: Home to a small family of farmers (as houses 8–17).

The "family" of three (husband, wife and daughter) in house 24 are all active shinobi, with the "father" being the local Chūnin. The house is used as a "safe house" for visiting genin or associates. Hidden in the house is a hidden cache with three shinobi-gatana (ninjatō), two shinobi-zoku, two kusarigama, two tantō, 27 shuriken (style appropriate to the clan), a kusarigama, and 6 each grenades, flash eggs and smoke bombs. Also hidden below the floorboards in a small chest containing the families' "professional" funds of 800 ryo and the Chūnin's juban-gote (chain tunic armor). The "mother" keeps a poisoned hairpin (treat as a kogai, coated with one dose of Dōsanka poison).

25. Graves: In the graveyard are a number of markers.

Among the stones around the graveyard are two that are hol- lowed (DN 21 to locate), each containing 25 ryō. These coins are to be used only in an emergency. Only the Chūnin (located in house 24) knows about the money hidden in these stones.

26. Herbs: Among the trees growing near the river are several patches of herbs, planted by the shinobi.

Appropriate herbs for medicinal use or creating poison can be found here with a successful Herbalist (DN 14) or Perception roll (DN 18).

27. Lookout post: Small six-meter-high planks, along with concealed ropes, allow a shinobi to move between the three trees. From this point, one can see the next village some five ryo away and anyone approaching within 2 ryo of the village. It requires a Perception roll (DN 24) to spot the lookout spot from the road.

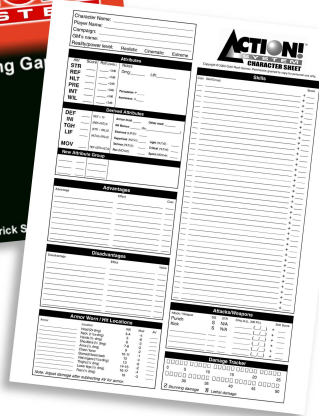
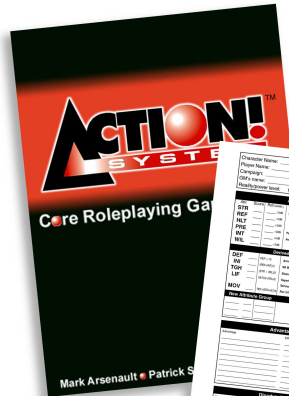
28. Hiding Place: In the paddy is a concealed (DN 24 to spot), underground space, roughly 2 meters to a side. The space contains four days' rations, a gourd of fresh water, and a firestarting kit. The space is large enough to conceal two shinobi comfortably, or up to four in an emergency.

29. Training area: In this area are several thin logs in a piled, with an ax laying nearby.

Ostensibly the work of a woodcutter, this is actually a training area for students of shurikenjutsu (blade-throwing) and kyujutsu (archery). The ax is kept nearby to prevent suspicion and provide a logical reason for the many cuts, slices and nicks in the wooden logs, which are actually used as targets by the practitioners and students.

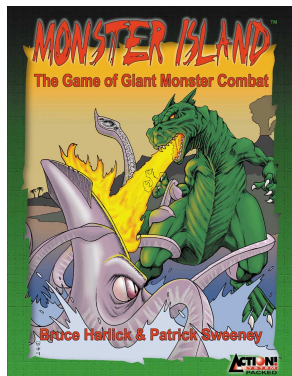
30. Hiding place/Ambush spot: This is a hiding place, nearly identical to location 28, except that it also contains a cord that can be used to release a trap door across the road, leading into a two-meter pit with bamboo spikes (inflicts two separate 2d6 attacks on anyone falling inside). The trap door can be spotted with a perception roll (24) only when within a few meters of the trap.

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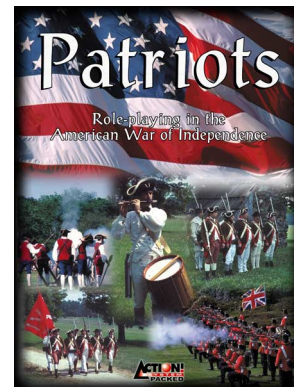
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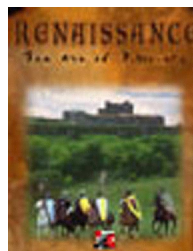
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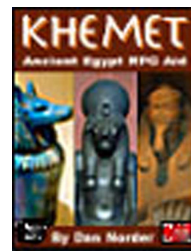
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