

Shogun

PLAYERS' GUIDE

A 'Muse of Fire' Production

Nathan Richards

Richard Salmon

Richard Perry

Chad Brinkley

A.J. Smith



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1. INTRODUCTION

'Shogun' is a freeform or 'theatre-style' role-playing game. A freeform is an interactive role-playing game in which each of the players takes on the role of a character in an unfolding story. Each character has a separate personality, goals, motivations, secrets and abilities.

Each player has complete free will, subject only to the rules of the game as set out in this booklet, and the player's interpretation of what his or her character would do in such circumstances. Each player chooses how the character will interact with other characters and with the Game Masters (hereafter referred to as 'GMs'), who will take on the part of any non-player characters (hereafter referred to as 'NPCs') who are required.

Thus, in a freeform, from their perspective, each character is the protagonist of the story (be they hero or villain). It's like being a lead character in a film or a book, but in a story with no script – in a freeform, each player has complete autonomy.

All of the rules for the game are contained in this booklet. There is no need for you to memorise them – simply carry the booklet around with you and refer to it as required and/or ask a GM or another player for assistance in answering any questions you have regarding the interpretation of the rules.

2. THE AIM OF THE GAME

Freeform role-playing games, unlike many other types of games, have neither winners nor losers, at least in the conventional sense. No-one is going to assess your performance over the course of the weekend with a view to ascertaining how many of your objectives you have accomplished and/or how well you have acted out your character. The focus is on roleplaying to create enjoyable collaborative interactions (often referred to as 'scenes').

Overall, the aim for all of the players in the game should be threefold:

- **Be your character.** That is, act in a manner consistent with your character's personality and goals, and the game's setting. Bear in mind, though, that your character sheet provides a starting point and guidelines, but should not be seen as a constraint. You choose what to do and how you approach your goals – there is no 'correct' way to play any given character. Each player's interpretation is as valid as any other viewpoint. You should feel free to adapt your goals to meet the changing circumstances – character development is encouraged.
- **Have fun!** What constitutes fun differs from player to player. You know best what you would most enjoy doing over the course of the weekend. If your idea of fun is trying to collect the most loot or solving the cryptic riddles of the Zen monks, then go right ahead. Equally, if your idea of fun is roleplaying the mental disintegration of your character's mind because of a doomed love affair, your spouse running off with your arch-rival and your accidental slaying of your child in a fit of grief, then feel free to chew the scenery and 'ham it up' to your heart's content.
- **Help others to have fun.** Whilst all players are encouraged to follow their own fun, we ask you to consider the fun of the other players around you when doing so. Acting with a mind to what is dramatically appropriate (as if you were in a film) makes for more satisfying scenes for everyone. We ask that you keep this in mind when making choices.

Whatever you decide to do, we hope you and your fellow players will all have a weekend to remember!

3. CREATIVE INFLUENCES

'Shogun' is loosely set in the late 16th century in Japan. However, the game is not a 'pure' historical re-enactment:

- The society and culture that underpin the game are a fusion of concepts from Japan, China and other eastern cultures, which have been selected for their dramatic roleplaying potential and transplanted into the game setting.
- The game has been modified to permit the female characters more active roles in society, and greater political power and licence than would historically have been the case.
- The game incorporates elements from novels, cinema and roleplaying games, in order to include the more dynamic approach of the fantasy action genre.
- Liberties have been taken with the timing of certain events, principally the dates of the introduction into Japan of firearms, and the arrival of Spanish, Portuguese, English and Dutch missionaries and traders, in order to enhance the capacity for conflict between the principal factions vying for power.
- Limited elements of the supernatural and/or magic have been incorporated into the game, subject to ensuring that an appropriate game balance is maintained.

To the extent that any jarring inconsistencies appear to be present in the game, you are encouraged to suspend your disbelief so as to ensure that both you and the other players around you benefit from the maximum enjoyment of the game.

4. GAME MATERIALS

Prior to arriving at the game, you will have been issued with your character sheet. Your advance character sheet should contain the following:

- **A detailed background**, describing who and what your character knows and/or has done in the past.
- **A list of goals**, which are the objectives that, at the start of the game, your character wishes to accomplish.
- **A list of personality traits**, which you may wish to use as a guideline on how to play your character.
- **A summary of your views**, describing your opinion on the key political themes of the game.
- **A list of skills that your character knows**, each rated with a numerical score between 1 (the lowest) and 10 (the highest). If no skill is listed, then the character's ability level should normally be considered as zero.
- **A list of special abilities**, which (if used) will allow you to ignore the rules of the game in a specific manner. Each special ability may only be used the specified number of times and, once used up, cannot be used again.

You may also have been provided with, depending on whether the character you are playing has spent some time in Japan, a guide to Japanese culture and society in the era when the game is set.

You are provided this information in order to aid with costuming and preparing yourself for getting into character. **Please do not 'pre-game'** (e.g., talk with other players and work on plot or goals ahead of the game) – such activity can unbalance the game and reduce the amount of fun for you and others.

5. WHAT TO DO PRIOR TO THE GAME

Prior to the game, you should have read the game materials through thoroughly in order to familiarise yourself with your character's goals, motivations and secrets, and thereby help you to minimise the amount of time you have to spend in game thumbing through the documentation to check your facts. However, no-one expects you to memorise your character sheet, and you will always have access to it if you can't remember the details.

In some cases, the GMs may have notified you of the person (whether real or fictional) on whom your character is based. In this event, you may wish to read some background literature about your character, to help you better understand the character and/or draw inspiration on how to speak and act during the game. Likewise, you may wish to read up about the game setting, to gain a better understanding of the social mores and constraints of the game setting.

The decision to do so, in both cases, is entirely up to you, and such information is not required in any way in order to play the game. In cases where information from such primary sources conflicts with the game materials, the game materials take precedence, since we have taken liberties to make the game more enjoyable for the players and to fit with our vision.



6. COSTUMING

You will need to procure an appropriate costume to wear during the game. Costuming is very much a matter of personal choice. Some players will have several elaborate and historically authentic costumes to wear over the weekend, since they feel that wearing an appropriate costume (or costumes, in fact) helps them get into the mind-set of their characters, allowing them to participate more fully in a visually spectacular event. For them, costuming is a fundamental part of their enjoyment of a game.

Other players adopt a much more relaxed approach, believing that the game is essentially about suspending disbelief and relying on one's imagination and roleplaying. Thus, they see no reason why players cannot simply imagine that their counterparts are dressed in a costume appropriate for their character.

While your choice of costume is up to you, the GMs do request that you make a reasonable effort to wear an appropriate costume that at least attempts to blend in well. Please do not simply turn up in jeans and a t-shirt.

If you are part of a group or couple within the game, you may wish to coordinate costuming with those other players. This is one of the reasons character information is released prior to the game.

Suitable costume for almost any character can either be obtained cheaply and easily over eBay and/or in many charity shops, or can be improvised from existing wardrobe items.

One thing is for certain – you cannot possibly be overdressed for the game! Many players will bring multiple outfits of an extremely high standard to wear!

7. HOW TO PLAY

When you arrive at the game, you will receive a complete character packet, which will include your final character sheet, items, abilities, and a copy of this Players' Guide and other information sheets. Read the contents of the character packet carefully, in case there have been any last-minute changes or additions.

At the start of the game, the GMs will introduce themselves and hold an initial rules briefing. After that, the GMs will declare 'time in', and you are free to interact with any or all of the other players and/or GMs, subject to the social conventions of the game setting, which may be quite different from modern times.

You should then talk to the other characters and endeavour to fulfil your goals whilst remaining true to the essential spirit of your character. The best strategy is to talk to as many people as you can on the first evening, ensuring you connect with significant people from your background and goals. (Those people are noted in bold in your character sheet).

Of course, events may occur over the course of the weekend that dramatically alter your character's perception of the world around you and the other characters. In this event, you may decide to re-think your character's approach to life and alter your overall objectives, attitudes and/or social constraints. Do not worry if some of your initial goals fall away, or if you find yourself pursuing new completely different ones. Remember, one of the main aims is to have fun, so just go for it!

8. THE GAMERS' CHARTER

Participation in the game is subject to certain overriding considerations:

- Do not bring any form of replica weaponry of any sort to the game. If a weapon is required for the game, then the GMs will provide a safe and suitable prop.
- Do not touch anyone else without that person's express permission, regardless of whether your character is supposed to be romancing or in combat with them.
- Act in accordance with the spirit of the game. Players may lie to each other when "in character", but any player not crossing-off abilities when used or hiding item cards, on their person or in their hotel room, is cheating.
- Don't seek to bend or break the rules or mechanics. If in doubt, ask a GM.
- Do not do anything that might alarm or inconvenience a member of the public.
- Comply with all of the laws of the land and the rules of polite and civil behaviour.

The GMs reserve the right to exclude any player from the game without warning who, in the view of the GMs, does not comply with these rules and/or acts inappropriately and/or is a risk to themselves or others, whether as a result of excessive consumption of alcohol or otherwise. In this event, no refunds will be given.



9. DROPPING OUT OF GAME

When actively playing, all persons should wear a 'Shogun' name badge. If the name of your character is visible, then you are deemed to be 'in-game' and may be approached 'in character'.

Sometimes you will need to drop 'out of character' in order to check the rules of the game, to check with other players about co-ordinating a fight scene or deciding boundaries in romantic interactions, or perhaps just to make sure the player is roleplaying in not in actual distress. In this event, you can either make a 'time-out' sign with your hands or temporarily cover your badge with your hand, and say you are 'out of character', have your meta discussion and then go back 'in character' and continue as normal. If you need to drop out of character for a longer period for any reason (for example, to eat) then please remove your badge. By doing so, you are effectively saying that you do not wish to be involved in the game at that moment, and you should be deemed to be taking some 'down-time'.

If you really need to talk to another player who is 'out of character', then by all means ask the person if they are willing to re-enter the game for a moment. But if the person does not wish to do so, please respect that person's wishes. You can always catch up with them later.

The GMs do ask that players minimise the amount of 'down-time' they take, since the game is more enjoyable the more characters there are in play to interact with. But the GMs do understand that longer breaks can be needed. If you need to leave the hotel or drop out of the game for any reason, either permanently or for an extended period of time, then please remove your badge and notify the GMs accordingly, so that they can make alternative arrangements if your absence would significantly impair the enjoyment of the game of any of the other players.

10. GETTING HELP DURING THE GAME

If you run out of ideas or goals to pursue during the course of the game, there are several things you can do to re-invigorate your game:

- Find a friend or two and get them to involve you in their plots and intrigues. Whilst this may be artificial, most players will not mind and will be keen to help ensure that you have a good time.
- Put a paperclip on your name badge (available at the main GM table). The paperclip is a widely-recognised message to the other players that means that you are at a loose-end, and are keen for other players to involve you in the game in some way.
- Talk to a GM, and see if the GM can either give you a new piece of information that you can pursue with your existing character, or suggest methods to get 'unstuck'. The GMs want you to have a fun game, and will work with you to adjust your character so that it works for you. Do not be shy about asking for help. The GMs are there to help you. If all else fails, the GMs may be able to give you another character with new goals to pursue.

Likewise, if another player approaches you seeking your help in involving their character in the game, or you spot a player with a paperclip on their name badge, then please try hard to involve them in some way, so they have a more enjoyable experience. The GMs request that players keep an eye out, if they can, for less experienced or new players and help them if they appear to be lost or uncertain. A simple 'out of character' check in will do – sometimes player may appear bored or upset or isolated, but may just be roleplaying. Checking is the best way to know for certain.

11. INTERPRETING THE RULES

In the game, a decision may need to be made on how to interpret or apply the rules. The GMs will endeavour to be available to fulfil this function and assist you. However, there are far more players than GMs, and the GMs may well be busy. We therefore encourage you to use Mike Young's '**You are your own GM**' ('YaYoG') system. To minimise player downtime, you can act as your own judge of whether your character could or could not do something; or, alternatively, find someone whom you (and any other affected players) agree is uninvolved in your situation, and ask for a decision. We call that person the Objective Third Party ('OTP').

The OTP can act as a GM for your situation and you should accept the OTP's ruling as final. Occasionally, the GMs or OTPs will take actions that may seem arbitrary or unfair to you. However, they may know something that you and your character do not. There is probably a good reason for their decision. Do not try to appeal to one GM or OTP after another until you receive the answer that you want.

When deciding if you should be able to do something, or if you are an OTP contemplating a situation, you should consider the following factors:

- **Is it reasonable?** Could the character logically do such a thing, given the character's abilities and history? For example, if someone is playing a spy but doesn't explicitly have an ability to pick locks, can that person try to pick a lock? You may decide that they should have a chance to do so. However, if the same character wants to perform heart surgery, you should probably conclude that there is nothing in the character's background to support such an activity, so you would rule that the character cannot do it.
- **Is it fair?** A decision should be fair to the player, to anyone else involved and to the game as a whole. Would refusing the player's request damage that player's fun? Would agreeing to the player's request spoil the fun for another player? What would be best outcome for the game as a whole?
- **Are there any special circumstances?** For example, a player in a combat might say to you, "I'm attacking him from behind, I have a pistol and he's tied to a chair. Can I have a bonus?" Where there are extenuating circumstances, it is perfectly reasonable to give a bonus.
- **Is it dramatically appropriate?** For example, Mieko is playing a detective. Five minutes into the game, she knows who did the crime. Allowing Mieko to unmask the culprit so soon is not very dramatically appropriate and unfair to the culprit. Ask Mieko to get more proof. Likewise, letting the culprit flee the game upon hearing that you declined Mieko's request isn't fair either. Instead encourage both players to act out a dramatic denouement when best for the game.

Sometimes you will be asked to be an OTP but are unable and/or unwilling to do so because:

- You are too close to the situation and cannot act as an impartially or
- You simply cannot decide what is fair and reasonable or
- You don't feel you have the ability, experience or interest to act as a GM.

In such a situation, explain to the players involved that you cannot make the decision. You don't have to say why but, if you can, please find a different player to act as the OTP to facilitate a timely resolution.

12. TIME AND SPACE

As it is obviously impractical to provide physical space for each and every possible game location, and for the game to be conducted in 'real time', both time and space are 'elastic' during the course of the game.

Events that might take place over several years may be condensed into minutes. Likewise, spare game space may be commandeered for use as any location that players require that is not already provided. Players should suspend their disbelief and 'go with the flow' in order to facilitate the game experience.

13. LANGUAGE

All the characters in the game are able to speak, read and write Japanese sufficiently well to be able to converse with each other in the game.

Characters speaking in any language other than Japanese should hold one hand aloft whilst doing so. Players within earshot can notify the speaker what languages the character knows, and ask if they can understand what is being said. If so, the speaker should continue as if they do not realise they are being overheard. If the listener does not understand the language being spoken, they should disregard anything they overhear.

Any documents in the game that are written in any language other than Japanese will be contained in an envelope marked accordingly. If your character is able to speak, read and write the relevant language, then you may open the envelope and read the document inside, but you may not show it to anyone else (although you may, of course, describe the contents). If you are not able to read the relevant language, then you may not open the envelope or read the document inside.

14. GAME ITEMS

All in-game items are represented by an item card with a unique reference number. Items may also be (but are not necessarily) represented by a prop. If, at any time, the prop and the item card are separated, the player in possession of the item card should be deemed to be in possession of the game item. If you need or believe that you should be in possession of or able to purchase or require an item card, please ask a GM, who will provide you with the requisite card, if appropriate.

Some game items are physically heavy and/or bulky (e.g. a *Consignment of Muskets*). The item cards for such game items are marked accordingly. Heavy and/or bulky items cannot be carried around by a character on their person but must be stored at all times in a character's residence or premises, which will be represented by an envelope held by the GMs.

Heavy and/or bulky items being transferred from one character's residence and/or premises to another character's residence and/or premises may need to be transported through one of the internal or external gates of the city of Edo – players should consult the city map to determine whether this is actually the case. If so, such goods may be subject to search and, if illegal and detected, seizure by the Imperial Police. Characters wishing to avoid such risks may wish to seek out and hire a smuggler to transport their goods on their behalf or, alternatively, seek to bribe an official in the Bakufu for a permit, which should allow the transport of such goods under official seal without inspection.



15. THE IMPERIAL ARCHIVES

There may come a point in the game when you need to find something out in connection with a particular plotline (which you could not, perhaps, find out from talking to the other characters) or get help in solving a difficult puzzle or answering an obscure question. In such circumstances, you can potentially use either the machinery of government and/or the underworld (as appropriate) to undertake research or make enquiries on your behalf. Rather than wait for a GM to become available, you should collect a research request slip from the GM Desk, complete the form and place it in the appropriate box on the GM Desk. The GMs will, when time permits, contact you in due course with an appropriate answer to your query.

Assuming you can call in a favour, research conducted either in the Imperial Archives, through the Keeper of the Archives or another appropriately authorised official, or by someone with the requisite connections on the street, is more likely to be successful than other lines of enquiry and will be faster (i.e. the GMs will give priority to any such request).

However, it should be noted that there are no guarantees of success, whatever route you use to pursue your enquiry.



16. ROMANCE

'Shogun' uses the romance mechanism conceived by the Cruel Hoax game 'The King's Musketeers'.

Why have mechanics for romance? Why not leave it up to the players? Two reasons, really: The first is pacing. These mechanics will keep most characters from achieving their goals of having true love until Saturday night. Some might race to true love earlier, and some might have to wait until Sunday, but most players will only be able to find love on Saturday night at the earliest. The second is for the same reason that we don't just let characters who want to fight just slug it out. Different players have differently levels of ability in romance. By making it abstract, we give romantic rivals a level playing field.

(a) Courting

Characters who are eligible for romance will have a heart outline on their name badges. When you want to court another character, you should ask that person (in character) for a way to prove your admiration and affection. They *must* set you one of the tasks from the *Heart List* on their character sheet. If you fulfil that task, you may ask the object of your affections for another task. If you complete enough tasks, then you will win their heart, and they will fall in love with you and give you their heart. Winning the heart of another will enable you to use their 'Heart Ability'.

(b) Being Courted

Likewise, if you are asked (in character) to set a suitor a task to win your affection, then you cannot refuse (unless you do not have a heart outline on your name badge). Multiple suitors may ask you for tasks and be attempting to win your heart at any given moment. Likewise, a suitor may ask any number of people for tasks with a view to winning their heart.

(c) Task Assignment

If your suitor succeeds in fulfilling a task, then you may not set your suitor that task a second time. If your suitor fails the task, then you may set your suitor the same task again, but not twice in succession. So if Akira fails his task and asks for another one, you cannot give him that same task again immediately. However, you could give him that task again after the next one.

You may give a romantic task to more than one character at a time, and you may even set the same task to several suitors at the same time. Once a character has completed a task, others who are also trying to accomplish it can still succeed, as well. Keep track on your character sheet what tasks you have set each suitor, and which they have fulfilled.

(d) Task Resolution

It is entirely up to you to decide if a suitor has achieved a task. Sometimes success can be measured objectively, but sometimes the person has to impress you. It is also possible for someone to achieve one of your tasks without realising it. Say you have a task, "take me out to the theatre," and Akira decided to ask you there without asking for a task. You may, if you so wish, count that as a task that has been fulfilled. It's entirely up to you.

Success: If you succeed in the task, you can request another different task from the object of your affection immediately.

Failure: If you fail a task or give up, you have to wait one hour before asking for a new task. So if you admit defeat at 2:37pm – and you need to do that to the person's face (while roleplaying your woe) – then it won't be until 3:37pm that you can screw up your courage to try to prove your love again. This constraint does not apply on Sunday morning.

(e) Falling in Love

Once someone has successfully fulfilled as many romantic tasks as your *Heart Level*, you have fallen in love with that character. You will find a *Heart Ability* card in your character packet. Give that card to your new love. Your love may start using your *Heart Ability* immediately. You may not use your own *Heart Ability*, just other peoples' *Heart Ability*.

Note that when someone wins your heart, you are in love with them, but they are not yet in love in you. You need to both 'win' each other's hearts to find 'True Love'.

Once you have given away your heart, you may still be asked for tasks by someone other than the person who holds your heart. If someone completes a number of tasks in excess of the number required to win your heart, then your new suitor steals your heart from your current love interest. Reclaim your heart from your current love interest (playing out the break up) and give it to your new love.

(f) True Love

If you and another character both give your heart to each other, you have achieved True Love. You should both take a solid heart sticker from the GM's Desk and put it on your name badge. (Please fix the sticker on the *badge* and not the badge holder, since otherwise it takes hours to scrub them off later). Your hearts cannot be stolen (unless you agree), and you may refuse all romantic task requests if you so wish. It is possible that you may still have a third party's heart even after achieving True Love. That heart can still be stolen from you.

If the character you have given your heart to dies, you may choose to let that character keep it as a sign of your undying love or take it back, as you choose. You may keep the *Heart Ability* of any character who gives you their heart and then dies.

17. OPIUM

Opium was originally imported into Japan from China for medicinal purposes in the fifteenth century, but was increasingly used as a recreational drug in Japan at this time.

A character acquiring and consuming a dose of opium gains 1 level of Mental Prowess for the remainder of that game period, and may ignore the effects of 1 Wound when comparing results in a contest later in that game period. However, the character must immediately make a Mental Prowess test against a difficulty level of: $[2 + (\text{total number of doses of opium consumed by the character in game})]$. If the player's score is less than the difficulty level of the test, then their character has become addicted to opium.

The symptoms of opium addiction include:

- Drowsiness, slurred speech, confusion
- Headaches and nausea
- Mania, rapid speech or excessive energy
- Mood swings
- Slowed reflexes
- Apathy and depression
- Neglect of things the person once loved, such as hobbies or family

Roleplaying these symptoms is not intended to remove your character from the game or materially inhibit your interactions with other characters. You may therefore roleplay some or all of these symptoms in order to represent your addiction, as you choose.

Any character who becomes addicted loses 1 level of both Physical Prowess and Mental Prowess at the start of each successive game period until another dose of opium is consumed, or until two full game periods have elapsed.

The GMs do not approve of or in any way condone the use of illegal drugs in real life, and no illegal drugs should be brought to or consumed during the game.

18. HONOUR

Honour is important only to members of the Samurai social class and foreign diplomats. It is entirely irrelevant to all other characters. The relative level of honour of every member of the Samurai social class is recorded on a notice board located next to the GMs' Desk (the '**Honour Board**') in the form of a number of Honour Points.

(a) Gaining Honour

Characters who are members of the Samurai social class may gain honour for:

- Winning a contest or physical combat against another member of the Samurai social class – see Section 21(c) for details.
- Notable in-game achievements – for which the award of Honour Points is at the discretion of the GMs.

(b) Losing Honour

Characters who are members of the Samurai social class may lose honour by:

- Losing a contest or physical combat against another member of the Samurai social class (see Section 21(c) for details).
- Being convicted of a crime – the loss of honour for which will be determined by the GMs.
- Adopting an individual who is not a member of the samurai social class into the samurai social class.
- Being considered to have committed an act of dishonourable conduct.

(c) Changes to the Honour Board

Players should adjust the standing of their character (but only their character) themselves, as their Honour changes. We rely on your honesty in doing so.

19. DISHONOURABLE CONDUCT

Any member of the samurai social class wishing to accuse another of an act of dishonourable conduct should fill in the requisite form at the GMs' Desk, stating:

- The name of the character accused of dishonourable conduct.
- The nature of the dishonourable conduct allegedly committed.
- The name of the character making the allegation.

The player should pin the form to the adjacent notice board. If the accused character does not take steps promptly to address the allegation (either through a duel or by acknowledging and apologising for their conduct), then the GMs will consider the accused character to have 'lost face', and will adjust the accused's standing on the Honour Board accordingly. The GMs are the sole arbiters in determining the amount of Honour that is lost.

20. THE MARTIAL ARTS BOARD

Practitioners of martial arts in the game will start with a certain level of Reputation Points. Fighting other practitioners of martial arts in an attempt to prove the superiority of their techniques will likely result in a change to the number of Reputation Points that a character has, depending on whether the character wins or loses. The relative success/ fame of each martial artist will be recorded on a notice board located next to the GMs Desk (the '**Martial Arts Board**') in the form of Reputation Points. Players should adjust the standing of their character (but only their character) themselves, as their Reputation changes. We rely on your honesty in doing so. At the end of the game, the character with the highest number of Reputation Points will be the Champion of Japan.

21. CONFLICT RESOLUTION

On occasion, you may wish to:

- Determine whether your character has succeeded in a difficult task or
- Engage in a competition or fight of some kind that cannot be resolved through roleplay alone.

The system described below is intended to enable you to resolve such conflicts quickly with the minimum of disruption. Once the result of such a conflict has been determined, the event should be acted out so that those around you may applaud your accomplishments or deride your defeat.

(a) Accomplishing a Task

First, the difficulty level of the task should be determined by reference to a GM or an Objective Third Party:

- | | |
|----------------------------|---|
| 2 = Trivial | Anyone with even the slightest ability could so it. |
| 4 = Easy | Only the very rankest novice would have difficulty with this. |
| 6 = Moderate | An everyday task that requires competence to do consistently. |
| 8 = Difficult | Even the competent would find it tricky, a novice would have no hope. |
| 10 = Very Difficult | A truly heroic feat; a rare achievement for a mere mortal! |

You will have an envelope, containing 5 Contest Cards:

-2	-1	0	+1	+2
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Shuffle the Contest Cards (or better yet, have someone else shuffle them for you) and draw 1 card at random. Now add (or subtract, where applicable) the number shown on the card to the level of your character's ability in the skill relevant to the task.

If your score is:-

- **More than 1 point greater than the difficulty level of task**, you have won a Major Success.
- **Equal to or greater than the difficulty level of the task**, you have succeeded in the task.
- **Lower than the difficulty level of the task**, you have failed the task.
- **More than 1 point lower than the difficulty level of the task**, you have suffered a Major Failure.

Precisely what a Major Success or a Major Failure means will depend on the context, but in loose terms, a Major Success is one where you achieve complete and unequivocal success, impressing all around with your outlandish prowess. A Major Failure is one in which you fail miserably, possibly breaking something, rendering it impossible for you to repeat the attempt. If there was a chance of injuring yourself during the task, you have done so, and witnesses will be dining out on tales of your buffoonery for weeks to come!

(b) A Contest between Opponents

If you are trying to do something that is being resisted by someone else, the sequence of actions is as follows:

- Once a contest has been declared, any ability card that must be declared before the contest are played first.
- The contestants both shuffle their cards, draw 1 at random and apply the results to their ability scores.
- The contestants subtract 1 from their total score for each wound that they are currently suffering from.
- The contestants compare their respective total scores.
- Any ability cards that can be played straight after an action are played now.
- The outcome is determined and those involved roleplay the result.

The results of the contest will be as follows:

- **The Scores are Equal – A Tie.** No clear victor has emerged. If the contestants are not satisfied with a tie, they may repeat the contest, but all ability cards used have been spent.
- **The Scores are 1 Point Apart – A Minor Victory.** The victory is clear but neither overwhelming nor humiliating. If the losing character elects to continue the contest (if appropriate), it is at a -1 penalty for the next round.
- **The Scores Differ by More than 1 Point – A Major Victory.** The losing character was resoundingly beaten, and must drop out of the contest.

(c) Contests between Samurai

Contests between members of the Samurai social class are resolved in the same manner as any other contest. However, the following additional consequences apply:

- Any member of the Samurai social class who defeats an opponent of equal or superior skill, in either a contest or physical combat, gains 1 point of Honour.
- Any member of the Samurai social class defeated by an opponent of inferior skill, in either a contest or physical combat, loses 1 point of Honour. No honour is lost by the loser if the opponent was of equal or higher skill.
- Any member of the Samurai social class who, as a result of losing a duel, is deemed to have made a false accusation loses 1 point of Honour.
- Any member of the Samurai social class who, as a result of losing a duel, is deemed to have committed an act of dishonour loses 1-3 points of Honour, determined by a GM, depending on the nature and severity of the dishonourable act.

(d) Contests between Martial Artists

Physical conflicts between practitioners of the martial arts are resolved in the same manner as any other type of contest. However, the following additional consequences apply:

- Any martial artist who defeats, in physical combat, an opponent whose base skill is equal or superior to them gains 1 Reputation Point.
- Any martial artist defeated, in physical combat, by an opponent whose base skill is inferior to them loses 1 Reputation Point. No Reputation is lost by the loser if the opponent was of equal or higher skill.

22. PHYSICAL COMBAT

(a) Combat with Blades or Fists

Physical combat is conducted as a special contest between two (and only two) opponents with the following results:

- **Tie** – Neither character is wounded. The combatants may continue the fight or one combatant may escape if they so desire.
- **Minor Victory** – The winner may:
 - Inflict 1 Wound on the loser, but remain unharmed or
 - Inflict 2 Wounds on the loser, and take 1 Wound himself.

In a duel (other than to the death), the loser must concede defeat.

- **Major Victory** – The winner may:
 - Inflict 2 Wounds on the loser, but remain unharmed or
 - Inflict 3 Wounds on the loser, and take 1 Wound.

In a duel (other than to the death), the loser must concede defeat.

If the combatants both so choose, the combat may continue until one or other of the combatants has incurred wounds that exceed their ability to sustain.

(b) Combat with Firearms

Any combatant with a firearm automatically gets a 'free' attack before physical combat begins. Shooting someone with a firearm is a task with a difficulty level of 5 involving the Firearms skill. If successful, the attack causes 3 wounds. The combat must then continue (if both combatants are still alive) using blades or fists for at least 1 round. A firearm may never be reused during a combat.

23. INJURY AND DEATH

If your character sustains an injury then, unless treated by someone with a healing ability card, you will be affected as follows:

1 Wound: 'Grazed'. You have grazes, bruises and ruffled clothing. This is not serious and you will heal naturally shortly after the end of the combat.

2 Wounds: 'Injured'. You are slightly wounded. You may be limping or bandaged but are not seriously physically impaired. You will heal naturally by the end of the session.

3 Wounds: 'Sorely Wounded'. You are badly injured and need assistance. You may drag yourself to 1 game location, where you must stay unless carried by at least 1 other character to another location. You will remain in this state for 1 hour whereupon you will have recovered sufficiently to be classified as 'injured'.

4 Wounds: 'Mortally Wounded'. You are near death. You must remain in 1 game location. Unless healed within 30 minutes, you will bleed to death.

5 Wounds: 'Dead'. If it is Sunday morning then you are deceased. Otherwise, your character is only Mortally Wounded. After 30 minutes of being 'Mortally Wounded', if you are unable to die, your character recovers to a state of 'Sorely Wounded'.



24. A NOTE ON DEATH

It is possible, even likely, that your character will die. By dying, you will create a dramatic situation for the rest of the characters in the game, especially those whom your character has touched in some way. In addition, you will have the opportunity for a dramatic death scene. However, no character can die before Sunday morning in 'Shogun' because: (1) other players, who may need to interact with the character in order to develop or resolve important plot points, get the chance to do so before that character dies; and (2) Fairness. Some people have signed up for this game in the expectation of playing the game, in an appropriate costume, through to the end of the weekend and/or completing certain big scenes. This rule ensures that any potential victim is not automatically robbed of their big spotlight scenes..

If your character does die, please inform a GM before leaving the game. There may be loose ends that need to be tied up in order to keep everyone else's game running smoothly. Or just talk to the affected players, if it's clear who needs to be informed. If you're lucky, there may be a spare character available for you to play. If there are no spare characters available for you to play, you can continue to participate in the game by roleplaying your character's ghost, if you so wish, in exactly the same way as you played your character previously, but subject to the proviso that you cannot physically touch other characters or item cards. However, you can still be seen by and interact with others if they so choose, and this may allow you to resolve any 'loose ends' outstanding when your character died.

25. GAME LOCATIONS

There are six principal game locations. Not all are in use for their listed purpose at any given time. If a location is not scheduled for use in an event listed on the game schedule, then it is eligible for use by any characters who wish to use it. The game locations are as follows:

GROUND FLOOR:

The Streets of Edo (The Shelly Suite) – Edo is a huge sprawling network of homes, warehouses, tea houses, gambling parlours and other dens of iniquity that have sprung up haphazardly around the walls of the Forbidden City over many years. Whilst the authorities would like to take action against these sinkpots of vice, to do so would be to acknowledge their existence and, in some way, cast dishonour on the Emperor. The streets of the Forbidden City are open to all characters. The locations of the majority of the buildings in Edo will be marked out with tape on the floor, including the following:

- The Shaolin Temple
- The Christian Church
- The Mission
- The Gaijin Warehouse
- The Offices of the Imperial Kou
- The Moneylender
- The Pawnbroker
- The Paper Merchant
- The Incense Merchant
- The Tea Merchant
- The School of Martial Arts
- The Theatre of the Company of the Rising Sun

The Sake/Tea House (Wellbeck Suite) – Characters of all social classes who cannot afford or gain access to the Geisha House generally seek solace in the Sake/Tea House where they can rebalance their inner peace with a cup of 'cha' or perhaps something stronger, like rice wine ('sake'). The Sake/Tea House is only open at set times or at the discretion of the proprietor.

THE MIDDLE FLOOR:

Edo Castle (The Grove Suite) – Edo Castle is where the Shogun and the members of the Bakufu conduct the day-to-day business of the Imperial Court, settling disputes, receiving ambassadors and meeting with the Gaijin. The Imperial Court is open to members of the Samurai social class at all times, and to members of other social classes if accompanying a member of the Samurai social class.

The Imperial Apartments (Thoresby Suite) – The Imperial Apartments are the private living quarters of the Shogun, the temporal ruler of Japan, and his immediate family, and represent the centre of the Edo Castle. They are heavily guarded and, as such, are open only to the Shogun, his immediate family and personal retainers, and the most senior representatives of the Imperial bureaucracy.

The Prison (Thoresby Suite / Shelley Suite) – Characters who have been arrested and imprisoned are held in the dungeons of Edo Castle. The Prison will be located in the Thoresby Suite at the start of the game but thereafter will be located in the Shelley Suite. It will only be utilised on an 'as-required' basis.

THE TOP FLOOR:

The Geisha House (Rufford Suite) – The Geisha House, known as the House of Cherry Blossom, is where members of the Samurai social class and wealthy merchants go to relax from the pressures of everyday life. Entrance to the Geisha House is strictly at the discretion of the proprietor (the 'Mama-san'). The Geisha House is only open at set times, or at the discretion of the Mama-san.

26. THE CAST LIST

THE IMPERIAL FAMILY & ITS RETAINERS:

Toyotomi Murasaki, Wife of the Shogun
Toyotomi Hirohito, Son of the Shogun
Sakamoto Jin, Head of the Imperial Bodyguard
Fujiwara Mariko, the Imperial Astrologer
Fujiwara Yoshi, the Imperial Physician

THE BAKUFU:

Oda Ashigaru, the Imperial Chancellor
Miramoto Mori, the Minister of the Centre
Tokugawa Yabu, the Minister of the Left
Takeshi Motoko, the Minister of the Right
Fujiwara Mai, the Keeper of the Imperial Archives
Sano Ichiro, the Imperial Magistrate
Bayushi Kuro, the Prefect of Edo City Gaol
Ishida Kitsu, the Prefect of the Imperial Police
Kawasaki Tojo, Inspector in Imperial Police
Takeshi Moru, Inspector in Imperial Police
Matsu Kurosawa, the Fire Warden
Tokiko, Head of the Imperial Revenue Service

THE DAIMYO, THEIR FAMILIES & VASSALS:

Ishida Matsunari, Head of the Ishida Clan
Ishida Kiri, Vassal of the Ishida Clan
Tokugawa Ieyasu, Head of the Tokugawa
Tokugawa Omi, Wife of Tokugawa Ieyasu
Tokugawa Buntaro, Son of the Clan Leader
Miramoto Akira, Head of the Clan
Miramoto Fujiko, Wife of the Clan Leader
Miramoto Yuki, Vassal of the Miramoto Clan
Takeshi Hirima, Head of the Takeshi Clan
Takeshi Mizu, Daughter of Takeshi Hirima
Takeshi Wayu, Vassal of the Takeshi Clan
Akodo Katagiri, Scion of the Akodo Clan

THE RONIN:

Musasashi, a Ronin (formerly of the Azai Clan)

THE AMBASSADORS:

Niohe Hojo, the Ambassador for Manchuria
Zang Juzheng, the Ambassador for China
Hwang Yun-Gil, the Ambassador for Korea
Sho-Nei, the Ambassador for the Isles of Ryukyu
Zheng Zhilong, the Ambassador for Dadu



THE MONKS:

Tripitaka, Acting Abbot of the Shaolin Temple
Koji, Keeper of the Temple Relics
Hyuga Teiji, Steward and Almoner of the Temple
Sanzang, Treasurer of the Temple
Yang Miya, the Shrine Maiden of the Temple

THE GEISHA:

Kiki, Mama-san of the Geisha House
Chie-Chie, Geisha of the First Rank
Fu-Fu, Geisha of the Second Rank
Ai-Ai, Geisha of the Second Rank

THE SUMO WRESTLERS:

Kenko, the Sumo Wrestler
Teoshi, the Sumo Wrestler
Wakanami, the Sumo Wrestler
Daishi, the Sumo Wrestler

THE COMPANY OF THE RISING SUN:

Chen, Leader of the Troupe
Nobu, Manager, Costumier and Musician
Minoru, Musician
Otomo, Actor
Shoji, Female Impersonator

THE MERCHANTS:

Yoritomo, Administrator of the Imperial Kou
Kinyu, the Moneylender
Satomi, the Pawnbroker
Toda, Proprietor of the Sake House
Shinjo, Bartender in the Sake House
Ayako, the Paper Merchant
Noboru, the Incense Merchant
Hikari, the Tea Merchant

THE MARTIAL ARTS PRACTITIONERS:

Shimako, Sensei of the School Of Martial Arts
Supaiku, Mistress of the Martial Arts

THE GAIJIN:

Father-Superior Jose Da Cunha, Catholic Priest
Father Martin Alvito, Catholic Priest
Father Rodrigo Mendoza, Catholic Priest
Brother Diego, Catholic Priest-In-Training
Don Juan De Ferreira, Captain of the Black Ship
Vasco Rodrigues, Pilot of the Black Ship
Dorotéia Santos, the Trade Factor
John Blackthorne, Pilot of the Erasmus
'The Reverend' Pieter Van Nekk, Protestant
Sailor

27. GLOSSARY

Bakufu – the Japanese government and its functionaries

Bushido – the code of honour that all members of the samurai social class are supposed to follow

Chado – the 'Way of Tea', the Japanese cultural art of the tea ceremony

Chaji – a formal Japanese tea ceremony

Chan – an honorific denoting affection. E.g. 'dear'

Daimyo – the leader of a major samurai clan

Danna – the wealthy patron of a geisha who contributes to her upkeep in return for the exclusive right to her companionship

Gaijin – a foreigner from the West

Garlic-eater – a term of abuse implying Korean ancestry

Geisha – a skilled female hostess and entertainer

Genpuku – the coming-of-age ceremony of a person of the samurai social class

Hara-kiri (or '**Seppuku**' when written) – the act of committing ritual suicide

Honbasho – The annual grand tournament fought between the best fifteen sumo wrestlers in Japan

Iaijutsu – the skill of drawing a katana from its scabbard and striking in a single movement

Ikko-Ikki Resistance – a coalition of farmers, monks and peasants who fought against *Oda Nobunaga*

Jidaimo – classical play with a historical theme

Jitte – the baton of a police inspector

Kabuki – Japanese theatre

Kado – the Japanese cultural art of flower arranging

Kai – a secret society or criminal underworld gang

Kami – the spirits of nature

Kanshi – remonstrance death; the act by a samurai of committing ritual suicide in protest at the orders or decision of their Daimyo

Katana – the main (longer) sword carried by a member of the samurai social class

Kodo – the Way of Fragrance, the Japanese cultural art of appreciating incense

Kow-tow – to bow

Mah Jong – a gambling game from China, in which the players try to collect sets of different tiles, made from bone and backed with bamboo

Makuuchi – the top division in the sport of sumo wrestling

Mama-san – the proprietor of a geisha-house

Miai – the initial, supposedly accidental, meeting of the families of two people whose marriage to one another is being contemplated

Nakodo – a marriage broker

Nageirebana – the spontaneous natural style of Japanese flower arrangement

Oni – a demon

Onnagata – a male Kabuki actor specialising in the performance of female roles

Oshiguma – a silk towel on which actors press their face after a performance to preserve an image of their make-up

Rikka – the formal decorative style of Japanese flower arrangement

Ronin – a samurai whose clan has been dissolved

Sake – rice wine

Sama – very honoured sir or madam

Samurai – a member of an elite social class

San – honoured sir or madam

Sensei – a teacher

Sewamono – a play with a domestic storyline based on the everyday life of common characters

Shodo – the art of calligraphy

Shogun – the supreme (temporal) ruler of Japan

Shosago-to – a dance drama

Wakizashi – the second (short) sword carried by a member of the samurai social class

Wako – a pirate

Yakuza – a member of the criminal underworld

Yokuzuna – the grand champion of a top-level sumo tournament

28. INDICATIVE SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

<i>Start</i>	<i>Finish</i>	<i>Event</i>	<i>Location</i>
20.00	00.00	GAME SESSION 1: FRIDAY EVENING	
20.00	20.30	Game Briefing & Start	Shelley Suite
21.00	21.30	The Reading of the Imperial Will to the Imperial Court	Grove Suite
21.00	22.00	The Sake House / Tea House opens	Wellbeck Suite
22.00	22.30	The Sumo Tournament ('Honbasha') – Round 1	Shelley Suite
22.30	23.00	Opening of the Geisha House	Rufford Suite
23.00	00.00	The Imperial Court Debate on which is the greatest of the samurai virtues	Grove Suite
23.30	00.00	Moon Watching	The Gazebo
09.00	13.00	GAME SESSION 2: SATURDAY MORNING	
09.00	10.00	Auditions for and Rehearsals of the Company of the Rising Sun	Rufford Suite
10.00	10.30	The Presentation of the Ambassadors to the Imperial Court	Grove Suite
10.30	11.30	The First Meeting of the Council of Regents	Thoresby Suite
11.30	12.00	The Shinto/Buddhist Festival of Hanamatsuri	Shelley Suite
12.00	12.30	The Tournament of Nations – Poetry Contest	Wellbeck Suite
12.30	13.00	Putative time of the Robbery of the Imperial Gold Shipment	Rufford Suite
12.30	13.00	The Imperial Court Debate on whether the world is round or flat	Grove Suite
14.00	18.00	GAME SESSION 3: SATURDAY AFTERNOON	
14.00	14.30	The Sumo Tournament ('Honbasha') – Round 2	Shelley Suite
14.30	15.30	Imperial Court Hearing into Religious Practices	Grove Suite
15.30	16.00	The Christian Feast Day of St Michael the Archangel	Shelley Suite
16.00	17.00	Entrance Examinations for the Bakufu	Grove Suite
17.00	18.00	Putative time of the 'Mah Jong' Tournament	Wellbeck Suite
20.00	00.00	GAME SESSION 4: SATURDAY EVENING	
20.00	21.00	Meeting of the New Moon Society	Wellbeck Suite
20.00	21.00	The Geisha House opens	Rufford Suite
21.00	22.00	The Second Meeting of the Council of Regents	Thoresby Suite
22.00	22.30	The Theatre Performance by the Company of the Rising Sun	Shelley Suite
22.30	23.00	The Castle Games 'Go' Tournament	Wellbeck Suite
23.00	23.30	The Tournament of Nations – The Gift-Giving Contest	Grove Suite
23.00	00.00	Putative time of Rendezvous of the Robbers of the Imperial Gold Shipment	Thoresby Suite
09.00	13.00	GAME SESSION 5: SUNDAY MORNING	
09.30	10.00	The Sumo Tournament ('Honbasha') – Round 3	Shelley Suite
10.00	10.30	Meeting of the Investors in the Imperial Kou	Wellbeck Suite
10.30	11.00	Putative Timeslot for the Investment of the Shaolin Llama	Shelley Suite
11.00	11.30	Putative Timeslot for the Closure of the Mission	Shelley Suite
11.30	12.00	The Tournament of Nations – Martial Arts Tourney	Shelley Suite
12.00	12.30	The Coming of Age of the Heir and Affirmation of the Fealty of the Daimyo	Shelley Suite
12.30	13.00	Putative Timeslot for the Civil War / Invasion	Shelley Suite
13.00	15.00	Game End / Lunch / Game Debrief	Shelley Suite