

BUDO

BUDO

Hard Style Wushu

Writing and Design: Malcolm Sheppard, based on **Wushu Open** by Dan Bayn.

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Introduction

Budo is an adaptation of the **Wushu** rules by Dan Bayn and its variant, **Wushu Open Reloaded**. Where **Wushu** is "soft" on character specifics and specialized actions, **Budo** is a bit "harder." It defines things more strictly and has rules that are slightly more complex than baseline **Wushu**.

Budo uses vaguely Japanese terminology to distinguish itself from standard **Wushu** and to build atmosphere. Think less of the circular, continuous movements of kung fu and "bullet ballet" swordplay, and more of the sharp movements of karate, the swift, straight stroke of a katana and the slamming, grappling energy of judo. There's grace in these rules, but also a sense of decisive resolve. **Budo**'s a bit tougher than standard **Wushu** too. Characters don't leap back to their feet in an instant. An adventure can wear them out over time. On the other hand, Trait categories ensure that characters can hang in the fight longer if they're clever enough to use a variety of tactics.

You can run a **Budo** game in almost any setting, but our examples use a fantasy version of feudal Japan.



How to Run the Game

To run **Budo**, you need at least three people: Two players and the **Game Master** (GM). One player is a **Shihan**; the other is the **Iemoto**. The GM creates scenes for the players' characters to resolve. The Shihan is the "star" of a round; the Iemoto controls the order of events and vetoes **Details** that she doesn't think would fit the tone of the scene. The GM also picks the game type (**Jidaigeki**, **Chambara** or **Sentai**). The GM is always the same person, but the Shihan and Iemoto usually change from round to round.

You also need paper, pencils and erases, and 10 sided dice (d10). If you've played **Wushu** before, please note the different dice type. **Budo** characters are also a bit less competent than starting **Wushu** characters. They need a more time to resolve scenes and frequently take big risks to do it.

Budo scenes have aspects. Characters complete scenes by resolving their aspects, but there's a risk. Some aspects either drain **Ki** (life force – Chi in standard **Wushu**) or create **Setbacks**. Setbacks impair your ability to act. If you lose all of your Ki in a Trait category, you can't use its associated Kihon or Traits to resolve the scene.

Budo uses the **Principle of Narrative Truth**. Your character automatically does whatever you want him to do. You describe actions with **Details**; these give you dice to roll. Your successes knock down the aspect's Ki (though some aspects might take Setbacks instead). You can't instantly resolve a scene aspect (taking out enemies or

overcoming a challenge) until you knock down all of its Ki. At that point, you either resolve the aspect immediately or you can subsequently do so by declaring **Ikken Hisatsu!** – one strike, one kill.

Character Creation

It's easy to make a character but first, you have to figure out the kind of game you're going to play. **Budo** supports intense action with a dash of bloody-minded strategy and self-sacrifice. Create a character that's fun to play in this type of game. Naturally, you also need to know what kind of world you'll be playing in. That's the GM's responsibility, but she should always design his story based on what the players want to do.

TRAIT TYPES

Characters have three types of **Traits**:

- Ten** (Heaven, or mental)
- Chi** (Earth, or physical)
- Jin** (Human, or social)

There are many different kinds of Traits, but they all fall under these three categories. If you play **Wushu**, remember that in **Budo**, life force is **Ki**, not Chi – Chi represents physicality and the Earth element.

KIHON

Each Trait type has a **Kihon** (basic) rating that applies to all rolls using that Trait category. Set your Kihon ratings by splitting **6** points between Ten, Chi and Jin. You must devote a minimum of 1 point to each. If you don't have a Trait that applies to the situation, your Kihon determines your basic ability.

TRAITS

Next, pick your Traits. A Trait can be a profession (Loyal Samurai, Ninja, Imperial Noble, Foreign Barbarian), a personality trait (Furious Violence, Peacefully Righteous) a skill (Swordplay, Sorcery) – anything you can think of that would fit the game. Take this Trait and assign it to Ten, Chi or Jin. If your Trait would fit multiple categories you'll have to spend points on it again to apply it to the second category, or three times to apply it to all categories. If you're only a Ninja when it comes to Chi (Earth) tasks, then you don't have any special understanding of ninja poisons, astrology or crafts (Ten tasks) and can't use ninja disguises (Jin tasks) as well as a fully trained member of your clan.

Split **6** points between your Traits. Once again, you must assign a minimum of 1 point to each trait.

WAZA

Finally, choose your **Waza** (techniques). Every Trait point (don't count Kihon) gives you one Waza. Your Waza show what you can actually *do* with your Trait.

For example, if you picked three points of Ninja (Chi), you might know the following Waza:

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1. Shinobi-iri (sneaking around)
2. Taijutsu (dirty, quick unarmed combat)
3. Shinobi-kenjutsu (unconventional fighting using a ninja sword)

RYUHA

Now, choose a **Ryuha** (style – actually, this comes from the word for a school or guild. Drop the “ha” suffix when you apply it to an actual school). Your Ryuha is a general description of your character’s total attitude and abilities: your “character concept.” It’s the thing that ties your character together – and when a task relates to your Ryuha, you have special advantages.

A Ryuha gives you an automatic Detail to use when things get tight or when you need an extra boost during your action.

Sample Ryuha: *Samurai on a Quest for Vengeance, Aristocrat Practitioner of Secret Blood Magic, Taciturn Martial Arts Master Seeking Redemption.*

Note that if your Ryuha is an actual martial arts or craft ryuha, give it a name and describe its characteristics in terms of their relationship with your character.

KI

Finally, list your **Ki** (Chi to **Wushu** diehards). Divide 9 Ki between your three Trait categories. You must devote at least 2 points of Ki to each category. You can describe each type of Ki by its type (using the Japanese “no” adposition): **Ten no Ki**, **Chi no Ki** and **Jin no Ki**. (Note: the author makes no guarantees as to the grammar here!)

SAMPLE CHARACTER

*I want to create a ninja named Otomo Daisuke. He’s got to be smart and graceful, so my Kihon are **Ten** 2, **Chi** 3, **Jin** 1. For Traits, I take **Ninja** (Ten – Poisons Waza) 1, **Ninja** (Chi – Stealth, Unarmed and Sword Waza) 3 and **Musician** (Jin – Shamisen Waza). He’s not much of an undercover agent, but he has some rudimentary ability with a shamisen so that people will welcome him into an inn. His Ryuha is going to be an actual (fake) martial arts Ryuha: Otomo-Ryu Ninjutsu, which specializes in assassination under the cover of good will. Otomo’s **Ki** is Ten no Ki: 3, Chi no Ki 2 and Jin no Ki 4. He’s not good at social situations without his instrument, but has a certain enduring presence, represented by his high Jin no Ki.*

EQUIPMENT (OPTIONAL)

Assume that characters have all the weapons and gear they need to perform tasks. To simulate losing your sword or other issues, take a Setback.

Above and beyond that, you can use these optional rules. In them, equipment is anything that doesn’t reliably help you. You can lose equipment, leave it behind or just use it with less skill than usual.

If you use this option, starting characters have a base **Equipment Pool** of 5. This pool has a descriptor that tells everyone what it is (samurai battle gear, ninja

equipment, etc.). Split this pool up into specific pieces of gear with dice values of 1 to 3.

Example: *Daisuke has Ninja-Musician gear. This includes:*

- *Shamisen (1 die)*
- *Shinobi Katana (3 dice)*
- *Shuko climbing claws (1 dice)*

To use a piece of equipment, declare it along with your Details. Your equipment bonus can boost you past the scene's dice cap (see **Scene Resolution**). Add the equipment dice to your action for the scene, but subtract them from your pool.

For every additional scene in which you use that piece of gear, subtract an additional die. Once you're out of dice, the equipment's benefit ends. It's needs to be repaired, runs out of ammunition or you lose it. Your pool regains an equipment die in every scene where you don't invoke its benefits, until you have enough dice to use it again. To invoke a different piece of gear, pay the full price for the new item and another die each round.

You can switch equipment whenever the story allows it. By default, you can change individual items once per session, but you can only change the equipment pool type once per story arc.

If you capture a piece of equipment, add 1 die to your Equipment pool and list it. (This also increases your maximum pool.) Your item doesn't need to have the same dice value as it did when somebody else was using it, but if it was worth more than 1 die, you'll probably have to rearrange your list. If you lose a piece of gear, subtract its current dice value from your pool's maximum.

Don't interpret the value of your gear too literally. Your ancestral sword could



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help your reputation around other samurai. An ancient martial arts technique scroll could make you a better fighter.

ADVANCEMENT

Budo characters evolve and improve over time.

Evolution

Every session, you can change 1 existing Trait, Kihon or Ki point. You can move

a point of Ki (or Kihon) from Ten to Jin, or switch one Trait point from Ninja to Miko. You can even reinvest a point from an old Trait in a completely new one. You can also change Ryuha once per story arc. You can't leave yourself with 0 Ki or Kihon in any category.

Improvement

Add 1 Trait or Ki point once per story arc. Increase an existing Trait or develop a new one. You can substitute a new Trait for another point in your Equipment Pool. You can't increase their Kihon scores or raise any Trait higher than 5, but you *can* increase Ki scores as high as they like.



Scene Resolution

Style rules. That's **Budo**'s core idea. Players build dice pools with **Details**. These describe what's happening in the game, right down to the results. Each Detail is a bit of narrative flash that builds up the importance of the situation. Once you narrate a critical number of Details, roll the sum total as a pool of 10-sided dice. Every die that comes up equal or less than your Kihon + Trait is a success. If you don't have a Trait that really applies to the situation at hand, score your Kihon or less to succeed.

Successes do *not* determine whether or not you succeed at whatever you're trying to do. This is because of the **Principle of Narrative Truth (PoTN)**:

Everything happens exactly as the players describe it, when they describe it.

Success determines how close you get to resolving one aspect of the scene. Defeating an enemy is a scene aspect. So is picking a lock or making an inspiring speech.

If you're used to standard **Wushu**, there are some subtle differences between the standard PoTN and the one used in **Budo**. First of all, *Things happen exactly as the players describe it, provided they do not instantly resolve an aspect of the scene before being able to call Ikken Hisatsu!* (see below). Secondly, things happen *when they describe it, but this partly depends on the judgment of the round's lemoto* (see below).

ROUNDS, SCENES, SESSIONS AND STORY ARCS

Events happen in **rounds**. A round is just enough time for everyone in the story to do something significant — hit an enemy, shake off pursuers on horseback or hatch some palace intrigue.

Once you've resolved all of a scene's aspects, it ends.

A **session** is self-explanatory. It ends when you're done playing for the day, unless you want to run two or more sessions in a marathon of gaming!

A **story arc** ends when everyone has run through a set of sessions that follow a common storyline. There's no hard and fast guideline, though five to eight sessions is a good yardstick.

DETAILS AND DICE

Every Detail you add to your description earns you a die. These could be separate stunts, witty one-liners, cinematic flourishes — pretty much anything that enhances your gaming experience. (You always get at least 1 die, just for doing something.)

For example, someone who says "I dodge to the side" gets 1 die. Someone who says "I dodge to the side / and grab his sword blade with my chopsticks / before punching him in the face" gets 3 dice. Someone who says "I catch his sword blade with my chopsticks / when its chisel edge is less than an inch from my face, / then

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twist it around with one deft motion, / jam it into the bastard's gut, / and whisper 'Can't you see I'm trying to eat, here?'" gets 5 dice. Thus, anything that contributes to the atmosphere and energy of your game becomes a smart tactic.

You have one constant Detail: your Ryuha. Any time you do something consistent with your Ryuha, you gain a die. You don't need to narrate Ryuha use with too much gusto (though it's encouraged!). Just note that it's there.

Once you've built up the Details for your action, tell everyone which Trait you'll be using (Samurai use swords; Nobles say wickedly clever things and have a lot of money) and roll your accumulated dice. First, you might want to split them into **In** and **Yo** dice. If you don't, all of your dice are Yo dice. Every Yo die that comes up equal to or less than your Trait + its associated Kihon is a success. Successes knock off the aspect's Ki unless it (or he, or she) can convert these to Setbacks.

In dice are defensive. Roll them just like Yo dice, except that every success nullifies 1 Yo success that could harm you. Some aspects have In dice too. Their In successes strip your Yo successes.

INVOKING JU

It's always a good idea to use an opponent's strengths against him. In **Budo**, this is called invoking **Ju** (softness). Invoke Ju by using the aspect's (or enemy's) Trait in your Details. Each time you do this, increase your effective Trait level by one. You may only use one Trait per Detail, but if you know that the aspect has multiple Traits, you can effectively weave them together to stack the benefit in a single action. If this would bump your effective Kihon + Trait above 9, you get a bonus die equal to the difference between the rating you should have and 9. Invoking Ju sometimes takes time because you need to learn about your target's Traits.

Bushi can invoke Ju against you.

DICE CAPS, THE SHIHAN AND THE IEMOTO

There's a limit to how many Details you can work into a round,. In most scenes, you can invoke three Details a round. In major scenes, like climactic battles, you might invoke four, five or six (or maybe even more, for an earth shattering finale!). The only exceptions are that you can always add an additional die when you use your Ryuha, and you can narrate an additional Detail if you're the **Shihan** (master) of the round.

The GM chooses the Shihan for the first round. The Shihan chooses an **iemoto** (this comes from a word for an old-style martial arts or traditional crafts master). A Shihan is the "star" of the round and can narrate an extra Detail. The Shihan also goes first in the round unless he chooses to act later.

The Iemoto performs two tasks. First of all, she chooses the order that everyone except for the Shihan (including NPC Bushi and other aspects).

Secondly, the Iemoto can **veto** a Detail as inappropriate for the scene – even if that detail's coming from the GM. If you're Iemoto, you should only do this if it would break the game's tone or make things a bit less fun.

Once the round is over the lemoto becomes the Shihan and chooses a new lemoto. The new lemoto has to be someone who *wasn't* already lemoto during that game session, *unless* everybody's had a turn. If everyone has, then the position "cycles back" so that everyone eventually gets a turn again. As every lemoto becomes a Shihan, this means everybody gets a chance to be the "star" in turn.

If you like, you can slow things down a bit by changing Shihan and lemoto at the start of every scene instead of every round.

IN AND YO

In any conflict where you have to protect yourself, divide your dice into **In** (Yin) and **Yo** (Yang). Yo dice are "standard" dice. You use them to push a scene aspect toward resolution. In dice delay resolution or protect you from attack. Roll Yo dice to attack or otherwise affect an aspect (including an enemy). Every successful In die strips one Yo success from an action.

You might want to use some In dice even when there isn't any threat, because they are effective against surprise attacks like shuriken flying through the night, hidden pit traps and unsavoury secrets that come up in court.

TYPES OF SUCCESS

Each Yo success does one of two things:

- It strips one point of Ki from a scene aspect. Against a character, it strips a point of Ki from one of his Trait categories.
- It inflicts one **Setback**.

Players always choose whether to take successes directed against them in the form of Setbacks or Ki loss – but attackers choose what kind of Ki loss occurs (Ten, Chi or Jin).

Ki loss threatens your character's continued presence (and if you lose too much, you might even get killed!) for the session, but doesn't impair your ability. Setbacks strip away your ability to act decisively, to the point where you might only be able to call upon your Ryuha to act effectively. You absorb enemy successes as pure Ki damage, Setbacks, or any combination of the two.

LOSING KI – AND IKKEN HISATSU!

If you lose all the Ki in a Trait category, you're too exhausted or wounded to use that category until you find a way to restore your strength. Additionally, losing Ki can threaten your character's long term existence. This depends on the type of game you're playing, as follows:

- In a **Jidaigeki** (period – actually, this refers to the feudal era) game, death is common. If you lose all of your Chi (Earth) Ki, an enemy can declare **Ikken Hisatsu!** (one strike one kill) on the next round and kill your character. Worse yet, if the attacker scores additional successes equal to your Chi Kihon in the same attack that cost you your Ki, he can declare Ikken Hisatsu! on the same action he used to get rid of your Ki!



•In a **Chambara** (cinematic swordplay) game, you might be in danger if you lose all of your Ki in two Trait categories. The enemy can declare Ikken Hisatsu! on the next round.

•In a **Sentai** (fantastic hero team) game, you're only in danger if you lose *all* of your Ki from every category. After that, an opponent can declare Ikken Hisatsu! on the next round.

Ikken Hisatsu! kills an opponent or decisively resolves a scene aspect. It uses up your action for the round but doesn't require a dice roll. Some scene aspects don't need it; they resolve themselves as soon as they run out of Ki.

When it comes to your character, Ikken Hisatsu! *might* kill him – but it might not. You get to modify the narration of your character's untimely demise or disappearance. If you want, you can use this moment to leave open the possibility that your character might be

alive. In any event, your character is gone for the remainder of the session and it's time to play in **Ancestor**, **Oni** or **Kenin Mode**.

Fortunately, you regain a point of Ki each scene. You can assign this Ki to any Trait category you like, but you can't regain more Ki in a category than you started with.

SETBACKS

Each Setback drops your dice cap for the round by one. Narrate the same number of Details, but Details that would exceed the number of dice you can invoke become Setback Details. They don't help you. You're wounded, nervous or stunned – whatever hinders your character. Narrate your character suffering from injury or distress.

Fortunately, your Setbacks can never nullify your Ryuha – you always have one die on hand. Your Setbacks vanish in two situations:

- Whenever you regain a point of Ki, you lose a Setback.
- If you roll successes, you can allocate them to recover Setbacks on a 1 for 1 basis instead of resolving scene aspects.

DUTY IS AS HEAVY AS A MOUNTAIN, DEATH IS AS LIGHT AS A FEATHER

In addition to gaining Setbacks through conflict, you can *voluntarily* suffer a Setback to increase the Details (dice) cap of another character by one. Up to *two* characters can suffer Setbacks to benefit the same individual. In this case, narrate a Setback Detail that helps the other character. Maybe you threw yourself in front of a sword or played the buffoon as a distraction.

You can also impose a single Setback on yourself to automatically score a Yo success. Players normally do this if they've scored 0 successes and need to score one to push an aspect into Ikken Hisatsu! territory. In successes *cannot* nullify Yo successes that have been purchased in this fashion.

You can also spend Ki for the benefit of another character, but it's pricey; *two* points of your Ki grant another character *one* point of Ki. This represents a serious injury or loss of face. You decide which Ki you lose, while the recipient decides on the type of Ki he gains. You must narrate one Detail that justifies this loss. You can use this Detail for other purposes as well, but it can't be a Setback Detail.

These systems are called "Duty is as Heavy as a Mountain, Death is as Light as a Feather."

RESOLVING MULTIPLE ASPECTS AND AIKIJUTSU

You can resolve multiple aspects of a scene in the same round, but to keep one person from hogging all of the glory, there's a price: You lose a Detail die from the first thing you try to resolve, and an additional Detail die for every additional aspect. This applies to your pool as a whole – you split the reduced total between In and Yo.

But don't think you can just gang up on your enemies! Characters (including **Bushi** enemies) *gain* a die to oppose each additional opponent (beyond the first) unless they're **Ashigaru** (mooks). This is the **Aikijutsu** principle, where one character can fend off multiple enemies. So while it's possible to combine forces against a nasty enemy, your foe can use you against each other or, back against the wall, responds with uncommon ferocity. Aikijutsu bonuses stack with Details.

Aikijutsu doesn't work in Jidaigeki games, where (sadly) dishonourable tactics work just fine.

Scene Aspects

Scene aspects are the source of all conflicts in **Budo**. Anything important to the scene has an aspect – and anything that isn't, doesn't. The GM (or **Oni** — a player that helps with antagonists) invents scene aspects, “dressing” the scene and providing its challenges.

ASHIGARU

Ashigaru (footmen) are born to die in droves! In fact, They're little more than pawns whose only reason for being is to make the player characters look good.

Each group of Ashigaru has one or two low level Traits and a Ryuha, but have no Trait categories and only one Ki score – but that Ki score is prodigious because it belongs to a squad of spear carriers. Yo successes reduce this combined Ki score. Once that drops to 0 the lot of them are either all dead or running in abject terror. You don't need to waste time calling Ikken Hisatsu! Ashigaru can't suffer Setbacks. They're treated as a single aspect for the purpose of multiple actions and never benefit from Aikijutsu.

Ashigaru don't usually roll dice. Instead, they have a *Yo Rating*. Take the player characters' average Trait + Kihon score, divide it by 10 and multiply it by the base Details cap for the scene. Round off fractions to the nearest whole number.

Example: *The characters have average Trait + Kihon scores of 4. In a scene where the Details cap is 3, the Ashigaru have Yo Ratings of 1 ($0.4 \times 3 = 1.2$, rounded off).*

To determine the Ashigaru squad's Ki, multiply its Yo Rating (before rounding it off) by the number of rounds you want them to stick around *and* the number of characters in your group.

Example: *Continuing from the previous example, the GM wants the Ashigaru to last for five rounds against three characters. $1.2 \times 3 \times 5 = 18$, so the Ashigaru have 18 Ki.*

Ashigaru Traits mostly exist to allow characters to invoke Ju, but there are occasions when they'll be on the characters' side. In this case, they use their Traits to help characters, performing espionage, storming fortifications and so on. In these situations, Ashigaru roll dice normally.

Ashigaru rules also apply to ambient threats like fires, hails of arrows, mob ridicule and so forth.

BUSHI

Bushi are standard characters, but are controlled by the GM or Oni. They either oppose the players or add a complication that needs resolving. Not much more needs to be said, except to remember that they *do* benefit from Aikijutsu. At least one Bushi is always a Shihan. He acts after the players; Shihan but before anyone else. Other Bushi act whenever the Iemoto decides they do.

MINOR CHALLENGES

Minor Challenges are the inverse of Ashigaru. They don't threaten characters, but represent scene aspects that players probably want to resolve anyway, like fixing a cart or polishing a sword. Minor Challenges *might* have one or two Traits (to let players invoke Ju) and always have a Ryuha. Like Ashigaru, they have a single Ki score and no Trait categories.

Minor Challenges have an *In Rating*. Take the player characters' average Trait + Kihon score, divide it by 10 and multiply it by the base Details cap for the scene. Round off fractions to the nearest whole number.

Set a Minor Challenge's Ki by multiplying its In Rating (before rounding it off) by the average number of rounds you want the challenge to last and the number of characters in your group.

The In Rating counters Yo dice one a one for one basis, but characters' excess Yo dice *automatically succeed*, sapping the Minor Challenge's Ki. Once the aspect's out of Ki, it's been completely resolved.

GENERAL CHALLENGES

General Challenges are scene aspects that don't pose an active threat to characters but represent some obstacle that takes time and effort to overcome. These are the spring-loaded traps, complex locks and confusing forest trails of **Budo**. Assign a General Challenge to one Trait type (Ten, Chi or Jin) and a Ryuha that describes what the challenge is (Mountain Pass, Sword Forging). It has least one Trait and, like a Minor Challenge, a single Ki rating. Calculate Ki just as you would for a Minor Challenge. General Challenges don't invoke other Details. Their Traits represent important features (like Tall Bamboo for a forest) and have ratings equal to 1 less than the characters' average Kihon + Trait scores. The GM narrates the General Challenge's details. Many General Challenges only roll In dice, but some of them can harm characters and use Yo dice as well. Split dice as you would for a character.

Players *usually* resolve General Challenges with the type of Trait listed for the aspect, but this is a guide, not a hard and fast rule. For example, characters resolve a sturdy lock with Ten because it lockpicking is a learned skill – but someone might just use a Chi Trait and smash it with a hammer! If a player uses an unusual Trait type, he has a greater onus to demonstrate that his solution is clever and fun. Otherwise, it merits a veto.

You completely resolve a General Challenge as soon as you can declare Ikken Hisatsu! against it. You can invoke Ju on a General Challenge.

COMPLEX CHALLENGES

Complex Challenges are almost as detailed as characters. They have Ten, Chi and Jin categories, Traits for each, divided Ki scores – even Ryuha. Examples of Complex Challenges include enemy castles, esoteric rituals and warrior quests. To qualify as a Complex Challenge, an aspect's possible solutions must have combine mental (Ten), physical (Chi) and social (Jin) components — though some might not

require one of these. Unlike General Challenges, Scale and complexity determines a Complex Challenge's Ki scores. These can vary wildly between types. For example, a castle has a lot of Chi no Ki but next to no Jin no Ki. Smart characters can exploit these weaknesses if they narrate clever Details and invoke Ju.

Non-Character Players

Non-Character Players (or **NCPs**) either don't feel like playing a main character or can't play their usual character because of events in the story (death, kidnapping, etc.). An NCP chooses from one of three Modes.

ANCESTOR MODE

In **Ancestor Mode**, the NCP automatically and permanently becomes group Iemoto. She never becomes Shihan, but does set the order of actions and has veto power. The Iemoto also selects the Shihan each round, but isn't allowed to pick the same player again until everyone has a turn at the position (after which it cycles around as usual). Finally, in Ancestor Mode, the NCP adds one helpful Detail to another player's action per round. This represents the subtle influence of the ancestors (or fate) on the game.

ONI MODE

Oni (demon) **Mode** gives the NCP control of enemy Bushi and Complex Challenges. Once an NCP chooses this mode he collaborates with the GM when it comes to setting the scene. The player can drop one of his aspects (Bushi or Complex Challenge) into a scene after consulting with the GM about her plans. The Oni plays the Bushi or Complex Challenge to further the intended story arc but freely employs her own strategies to delay others players' victories. If you like, the GM either has veto over *all* Oni scenes or can veto *one* Oni scene per NCP, per session. It all depends on how much power you want the GM to exercise. An Oni's Bushi is always a Shihan.

KENIN MODE

If an NCP chooses **Kenin** (vassal) **Mode**, she plays a gang of allied Ashigaru. The players and GM contrive a scene that makes this possible. She normally gives one of her Ashigaru a name and personality – and this minor, plucky hero speaks for the entire squad. If he dies, a new member of the squad immediately replaces him. As allied Ashigaru, the Kenin makes dice rolls for Traits, but just uses a Yo Rating for combat. Kenin Ashigaru have these game statistics:

Ryuha: Player's choice.

Traits: Two traits equal to the group average.

Yo Rating: Calculate this normally, but use the *highest* rating in the group instead of the average.

Ki: Yo Rating x (number of players) x 5. Additionally, Kenin Ashigaru recover Ki equal to the number of player characters in the group every scene.

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BUDO

Name

Ryuka

TEI Kihon ○

CHI Kihon ○

JIN Kihon ○

KI ○

KI ○

KI ○

Traits and Waza