

THIRD SCROLL: TECHNIQUES

By Shiba Toma

Within are contained my notes for modifying L5R's school techniques. My rationale for the changes in my game are given *[within bracket and in italics]*. Schools have been listed by Clan, and then by Family. If I have completely rebuilt the school, the full text of the new version can be found in the Dojo.

Philosophy

I play a number of techniques differently in my own game. Many of these changes are an attempt to "balance" the schools as I see them. Others have been changed because the basic effect was not very interesting or did not prove to have a meaningful effect on play. Often I link school rank into the change so that more of a character's abilities grow with his insight.

General Note:

When a character changes schools with the "Multiple Schools" advantage, all references to School Rank in that character's techniques should be read as "number of techniques learned from that school".

Crab Clan:

Hida Berserker School

"The Hida Frenzy"

The berserk period lasts for a number of rounds equal to the berserker's School Rank x Earth Ring. The period of total exhaustion lasts for a half minute (6 rounds) per round spent berserk. The berserker is fully lucid during his rage, and there is no threat of him "going wild" and attacking allies... So long as at least one enemy is present. If there are no enemies available the berserker must make a Willpower + Meditation roll with a TN of 20 each round (until the berserk would run out on its own) to stop the frenzy. If the frenzy continues the berserker must attack one available target. The berserker must keep his best dice during such an "accidental" attack. A test of honor may be appropriate to not strike a comrade, but the character will NOT gain a point of honor if he succeeds.

If the berserker is rolling on the battle table, and chooses to berserk during a duel or heroic opportunity, he receives an additional die of damage on the following battle round.

[This links berserk time to school rank and clarifies the "down cycle" in a way that lets berserkers have some use on the battle table. If the battle is over, no extra die of damage, sort of "Win or Die". Looking at the card, it destroys followers and dishonors the personality. This is a potentially dangerous technique!]

Hida Bushi School

The Mountain Doesn't Move

This ability may be used a number of times per day equal to the character's school rank (assuming he has enough void points to activate it), but the TN is the amount of damage the Crab is trying to ignore. The damage is reduced to exactly 1 wound. Effects which only require a hit still apply (poison, "first blood"). Effects which are based on a number of wounds inflicted must refer to the new damage (one point). The player chooses whether or not to use this technique after damage is rolled.

[Changed text cleans up a lot of the problems this technique produces. Can be used more often now, but TN for serious injuries can be unreachably high. Trade-offs.]

Kaiu Engineer School

Total rebuild. See Dojo.

Yasuki Merchant School

Total rebuild. See Dojo.

Crane Clan:

Daidoji Yojimbo School (Bushi)

The Force of Honor

The yojimbo adds his Honor Rank to the number of wounds in each wound level box.

Kakita Fencing School (Bushi)

Strike from the Void

The character may spend void points up to his School Rank after the strike is rolled in an iajutsu duel instead of spending a single point before the roll.

[Was a shadow of the Shiba rank 1. Now it is uniquely Crane and allows better management of void for sequential duels.]

One Strike, Two Cuts

Just as the name implies the character only attacks once per round, but rolls damage twice. On the second roll the damage is not reduced by armor, if any (the Crane is so skilled he cuts the exact same place again). Raises apply to both rolls.

[Replaces "plain-vanilla" 2 attacks per round with unique technique that is well suited to Crane "one-on-one" philosophy. Weaker against groups, way stronger against single opponents. Trade-offs.]

Dragon Clan:

Mirumoto Bushi School

The Daisho Technique

The increase to the TN to hit the bushi is now (School rank + Kenjutsu + Defense). This bonus applies during any combat maneuver as long as the Dragon is armed with two swords.

[While this technique has always had value during Full Attack, overall it was just a highly limited fraction of an extra point of reflexes. New version starts about the same (+3 to +7) and grows with the character. Max of +15 seems entirely appropriate to a Mirumoto master.]

Loin Clan:

Akodo Bushi School

Strength of My Ancestors

The additional damage caused by this technique may not be reduced by any means. The base damage is still subject to armor, invulnerability, etc.

[This technique has always seemed a little weak to me. This modification is small, but gives a more spiritual feel to the warriors who's ancestors stand by their sides. Good against all manner of supernatural nasties.]

Akodo Tactician School (Bushi)

Total rebuild. See Dojo.

Ikoma Bard School

Total rebuild. See Dojo.

Matsu Bushi School

Total rebuild. See Dojo.

Unicorn Clan:

Moto Bushi School

Purity of Breath

This is one of the few techniques that will continue to improve even if the character changes schools. It is linked to insight rank, not school rank.

Otaku Battle-maiden School (Bushi)

Riding in Harmony

While mounted, the battle maiden keeps an extra die on all skill and damage rolls.

[While having the same limitation as the Way of the Unicorn (mounted only) this technique is much, much less effective, and highly vulnerable to wound penalties. This version broadens the benefit, making a starting Otaku much more a match for a starting Shinjo. The increased damage also links to their rank four technique nicely.]

Sensing the Breeze

Subtract damage equal to the maiden's Defense skill + School Rank from each blow.

[Why do the dreaded Shiotome of the Unicorn Clan keep coming off as inferior to the regular Shinjo troops? If two sword strokes are usually fatal (with 20 points to spare), why is blocking 3-5 points going to matter? The previous damage reduction just never made a difference in any battle I've run with a battle maiden. (plus, I'm always trying to make the defense skill more useful.)]