

The Brother's Duel

Most ronin houses count themselves blessed when one of their sons is born with that rare essence that marks them as a prodigy of the sword, the kind of talent that can revolutionize a dojo and elevate a house's standing in the intricate political ballet of Rokugan. For the Kuno such talent was to become a curse, for it was afforded in abundance to two of their sons. The two sons of the Kuno line were bitterly divided over the course their school would take. Their father indoctrinated each in the rigid etiquette of the dojo and the elegant footwork that had made the otherwise unremarkable Kuno style popular amongst local ronin. Each of the brothers went on to expand and adapt the teachings of their father towards their own unique methods. Seishiro's experiences as a shugyosha evolved into a balanced style of attack, emphasizing both accuracy and power though the footwork and stances of their father's style. His sword was like water: flowing, surging, graceful and unconfined. The younger Toma's approach was single minded, concentrating on the purity of the killing thrust. He too adapted their father's methods of footwork and posture, but turned them into strictly killing techniques, forgoing defense in favor of overwhelming attack. His gleaming red sword was like a bonfire, destroying anything it touched. Both youths became expert swordsmen, venturing far and wide during their musha shugyo. Toma's journeys were a trail of slaughter, while Seishiro fought rarely and meditated often. Toma in fact returned home briefly and sought out their father, killing the elder Kuno in a vicious duel. It seemed inevitable that one day the two would fight for possession of their father's blades and for the future of the Kuno style. When at last they met, Seishiro's strength of character proved the telling factor. However, he allowed his brother to live, claiming that he had long since moved beyond rivalry with his sibling. After Toma recovered from the wounds of the hard-fought duel, he re-dedicated himself to the warrior's path and ventured out once more to hone his bloody abilities for a final, deadly rematch.

Clan samurai may take either of these styles as a Different School. Seishiro and Toma both amassed small groups of disciples, and True Ronin may be created with full access to one of these schools by surrendering 15 CPs and the ronin skill package during character creation.

Kuno Seishiro's "Moonlit Tides" Kenjutsu style

Benefit: +1 Perception

Beginning Honor: 2, plus 0 boxes

Skills: Athletics, Defense, Etiquette, Horsemanship, Kenjutsu, Meditation, and Sailing

Techniques

Rank 1: The Soul of Water

Seishiro's style is shaped and founded on the nature of water. It is a powerful yet contemplative approach to the sword. Seishiro's students keep an extra number of dice equal to their School Rank on all Meditation rolls and add their Water Ring to the total of all their Attack and Damage Rolls when wielding a katana.

Rank 2: Crescent Moon

The kenshi has learned the secrets of the "crescent moon slash". When attacking with a katana, the kenshi may make raises to stagger his target. Each staggering raise causes the opponent to subtract 2 from his next Initiative Roll. If this results in the target having a roll of 0 or lower, the opponent loses his action(s) for that turn.

Rank 3: Ebb & Flow

Seishiro's footwork allowed him to control the flow of combat, fading away from blows only to return a moment later, or rushing in to smite the unwary. At this rank the kenshi learns to withdraw or surge forward like the ocean wave. After initiative has been rolled (for all combatants) but before actions are declared, the kenshi has the option to add or subtract his Water Ring from his Initiative Roll. If he adds to his initiative, his TN to be hit is reduced by twice his Water Ring this turn. If he reduces his Initiative Roll, his TN to be hit this turn is increased by twice his Water Ring. In either case the kenshi **MUST** then declare

a Normal Attack this turn, and may not make raises or benefit from free raises on this attack. This technique may not be used while mounted.

Rank 4: Full Moon Rising

By calmly swinging his katana through a vertical circle (the "Full Moon Guard"), the kenshi learns to gather his energies while guarding himself from attack. For each turn the kenshi declares Full Defense without being hit before making an attack, he gains two free raises for his next attack. The maximum number of free raises that can be gained from this technique on a single attack is equal to the bushi's Meditation Skill, and raises not used on the first turn attacking after having declared Full Defense are lost.

Rank 5: The Second Wave

The kenshi's attacks flow from one to the next with elegant simplicity. If the kenshi hits with a Normal Attack with no raises, he may immediately repeat it, automatically striking the same opponent a second time. If he lands a Normal Attack with raises, he may spend a void point to immediately repeat it, automatically hitting and benefiting from the same raises again.

Outfit (Kenshi): As True Ronin, plus a Mount of average quality

Kuno Toma's "Empty Flames" Kenjutsu style

Benefit: +1 Intelligence

Beginning Honor: 1, plus 0 boxes

Skills: Athletics, Defense, Etiquette, Horsemanship, Intimidation, Kenjutsu, and Meditation

Techniques

Rank 1: The Spirit of Fire

Toma's style takes its inspiration from the power of fire. It is an aggressive, brutal style dedicated to killing the opponent with swift surety. A kenshi with Toma's grim passion keeps a number of extra dice equal to his School Rank on all Intimidation rolls and adds his Fire Ring x2 to the total of all Damage Rolls when wielding a katana.

Rank 2: Merciless Hand, Merciless Heart

Toma's style promises destruction to the weak. The kenshi's blows relentlessly batter away at his opponent's defenses. Those who cannot resist are crushed. Utterly. If he declares a Normal Attack on a character who has declared Full Defense that turn, he may roll to Attack twice, keeping the result he prefers. But, if he accepts this advantage the attack resolves at the end of the turn (possibly allowing another opponent to strike him before he has finished piercing his target's defenses).

Rank 3: Blazing Fang

Toma's footwork, like every other aspect of his style, focused on bringing harm to his opponent. The kenshi learns to direct all of his inner power into stunningly abrupt lunges. After initiative has been rolled (for all combatants) but before actions are declared, the kenshi has the option to add his Fire Ring to his Initiative Roll. If he does so, any and all of his Damage Rolls for the turn lose a number of dice equal to his Fire Ring and he may not make raises or benefit from his Rank 2 technique that turn. He may still benefit from any free raise to which he is entitled. This technique may not be used while mounted.

Rank 4: Conflagration

The power of Fire burns ever more brightly in the kenshi, giving him the power to destroy his foes. The kenshi may make two attacks per turn when wielding a katana.

Rank 5: Red Eyes

Like Toma, the kenshi's single-minded pursuit of slaughter has rendered him into a terrifying, almost inhuman monster on the battlefield. His visage carries a subtle aura of menace, disturbing the harmony of any who face him and creating openings for the kenshi's blade. Any turn that the kenshi declares a Full

Attack, he may forgo the +2k0 bonus to his Attack Rolls to gains a number of free raises equal to his Intimidation Skill to distribute between his attacks for that turn.

Outfit (Kenshi): As True Ronin, plus a Mount of average quality