

# Ronin Techniques

## Why ronin should have techniques:

Why should ronin have techniques? They don't have a clan or a school to teach them, they don't have the same benefits as a clan character and so perhaps don't have the same opportunity for advancement. Ah, but the flip side of this argument is that many ronin have taken this path as the warrior pilgrimage, the way to perfection with the sword and in the process, they are bound to learn a few things that the clans don't teach. In addition, there are scary men out there like Dairyya, and he certainly hasn't gone his whole life depending on the clans to teach him what he knows. And he is not the only scary ronin out there either (though he is arguably the scariest). It is my belief that this 'oversight' (meaning that it wasn't covered in the basic book) will be covered in a future published book, but in the meantime, this is my poor attempt at a set of ronin techniques.

## Learning a ronin technique:

While many ronin have special techniques (not clan techniques that is), few of them are able or willing to teach them to others, though there are a few. To teach a ronin technique to another person, the ronin must be at least two ranks above his student, unless he is rank five and then he can teach anyone he wants, just like the clan schools.

To learn a ronin technique, the student must first find a receptive master. Whether he cajoles, bribes or simply impresses the person who is going to teach him is up to the player and the G.M. whichever method he uses, the student must be of a rank where he does not already have a technique. In other words, if a clan ronin with his clan's rank 1 technique wishes to learn a ronin technique, then he must wait until he reaches rank 2 before he can seek out a master to teach him a new technique. If the teacher agrees to teach the student, then the student may learn any technique that the master has (wishes to teach him that is). Unlike clan techniques, there are no rank restrictions on ronin techniques. Any technique may be learned at any rank, though a ronin may never have more than 5 techniques, just like a clan bushi. This does mean that ronin PC's may mix and match techniques to get the best of it all. If you let them. However, ronin masters (rank 4 and 5) may be quite reluctant to teach overzealous power mongers with no concept of humility and honor their most powerful techniques (or any of their techniques for that matter). A rank 1 true ronin may not take a ronin technique when being created, he must find a ronin master who will teach him.

## The Techniques

### Life on the road is hard

A ronin with this technique spends his life very simply, never sleeping on a bed, eating only enough to keep the hunger away and rarely indulging in drinking. He spurns money and generally only keeps as much as he can carry.

The ronin with this technique may multiply his earth by 3 for all wound levels.

### One stands alone

The ronin is alone, without his ancestors wisdom or guidance, though he has learned to accept this and even use the rage and despair that it creates to his advantage. Without their guidance, he attacks only with his skill and spirit, but he kills with his heart.

For every opponent that faces a ronin with this technique, the ronin gains a free raise for damage.

### Like unto the wave

Water teaches flexibility, fluid motion and the application of force to weak areas. Water is also hard to hit, impossible to grasp and yet resilient and demanding as the waves on the beach and that is what this technique teaches. Do not stand firm against your opponent, rather flow with him and bend with his attacks. He with the spirit of the wave within him is difficult to grasp or strike.

The ronin with this technique adds +5 +rank to their TN to be hit.

### One against many

A form of Ni Ti Ichi Ryu that was brought down from the Mirimoto school by one disowned, this technique teaches that two swords are for two attacks, not for defense.

The ronin using this technique may roll two separate initiatives and make one attack with each, one with his katana and one with his wakizashi (no other weapons are allowed). Neither attack can be a full defense.

### To know success

If you do not believe in your heart that you can win, then you will certainly fail, is the motto of this technique. A bushi must believe that he can win, without a doubt, before his victory will be assured and this technique teaches a bushi to erase all fragments of doubt and proceed with a clear mind, intent only on success.

With a successful void roll verses TN20, a ronin with this technique may add one dice (to roll, not keep) to his current roll.

### **Torturous ground**

When a man can master himself, he can then master other men and 'push' them around, directing their actions while in combat as though commanding them even though he is fighting them. He will run his opponents into bad places, poor footings, trees, doors, lintels, obstacles and other dangerous places. The affect is to demoralize the opponent and to make his defeat both easier and swift.

The ronin with this technique may lower his opponents TN to be hit by 5 + the ronin's rank.

### **One stands against many**

The tenants of this technique are patience and reaction. The ronin learns that by watching his opponents he can wait for their strike and counter attack with great effect. This is especially useful when fighting large numbers of opponents. The ronin with this technique may make a counter attack for every attack made against him in a round after the first. These counter attacks do not count against the ronin's normal number of attacks but must take place directly after and only after an attack has been against him.

### **The final breath**

When a warriors soul is pure and his mind clear of purpose, nothing may hinder his actions. When wounded, the ronin does not hesitate nor flinch, ignoring his wound by sheer force of will, to complete his action. A ronin with this technique may ignore any wound penalty from a wound just received for the remainder of the round, but only for the round the wound was received in, in order to complete his action. This technique does not have any effect if the ronin has already used his actions for the round or in iaijutsu duels, but will count even if he is reduced to dead or below.

### **A question of honor**

Is a ronin's worth any less than a clan samurai? The clans would have you believe so, but that is only to protect their fragile honor. They denounce the ronin duelists they run across, refuse to test their skill against them and spurn their advances. There are some ronin out there, a few, who have learned that the only way to combat honor, is with honor and so strive to elevate themselves to a higher level. When such ronin request a duel from a samurai of school of kenjutsu, their opponents must make an honor roll verses the ronin's honor X 5 if they wish to refuse without honor loss. If they fail, they may still refuse, but loose an honor rank as a consequence.

### **The benefits of glory**

Sometimes it is simply enough to be well known. Sometimes it is enough to look scary and sometimes it is enough to be cocky in order to give one an advantage in a fight. No mater how it is obtained, a slight advantage can be all it takes to turn the tide of battle. A ronin who practices this technique learns how to make himself look and feel more dangerous, to make his reputation count for something other than simply being well known. Whenever he is faced with an opponent, that opponent must roll his awareness verses the ronin's glory rank X 5. If he fails, he looses one dice to all attacks and damage rolls.

### **Duty's call**

Now and again there is more to a ronin's life than just survival. Sometimes there are friends and sometimes there is a newfound duty. This technique enables the ronin to step into any duel that he feels like and take the place of one of the challengers. This is normally done when someone challenges one of the ronin's friends or charges and the ronin believes that they will loose. It has also been known to happen when certain ronin have seen duels that have been grossly unfair (a Phoenix shugenja was challenged by a Lion bushi looking for an easy ribbon to add to his saya was one of the more renowned cases). The person replaced looses no honor but gains no glory, while the ronin gains normal glory but no honor.

### **Stillness of motion**

By remaining perfectly still, barely even breathing, before the start of an iaijutsu duel, a ronin with this technique prevents his opponent from finding out his agility, void or iaijutsu. His opponent cannot "read" him and so can not guess his abilities. In addition, this technique allows the ronin to raise once more than he has void ring during an iaijutsu duel.

### **The unheard sound**

There are times when a person does not quite hear something, doesn't really know that something is coming or that someone is watching, but somehow feels it anyway. Perhaps it's the very absence of noise that does it, or maybe the way the wind moves or even a certian smell that cues a person in to danger. With proper training, a ronin can sharpen this instinct into a technique, making him hard to surprise. Very hard.

With a simple awareness roll verses a TN 20, a ronin with this technique can "sense" approaching danger. This is not an exact warning and will not tell the character what kind of danger, just that something potentially dangerous is arround. If he is sleeping, he might wake suddenly or if he is walking through a

bamboo forest, he might realize that something is following him. Things like that.

### **Break their stance**

A ronin that learns this technique learns to jar his opponent out of their comfortable stance, to throw their attack off balance, to disturb their center and throw them into disorder. If the ronin declares a full defense against his opponent and his opponent fails to hit him, then the ronin has thrown off his attack and disturbed his normal fighting stance. The ronin's opponent may not make any further attacks that combat round. If the ronin's opponent has no further attacks that round, there is no effect.

### **It's only a scratch**

If a ronin does not take care of himself, no one else is likely to. With the hard and unnatural life that a ronin leads and the application of this technique, a ronin heals twice as fast for all normal wounds suffered. The technique involves a little toughness on the ronin's part, a lot of bandage changing and some simple meditation techniques.

### **The Damokuri Thread**

The "Damocles's" thread technique allows the ronin to recover his dropped weapon without taking an action. Its usefulness for climbing and other tricks are dependant on the cleverness of the player.

### **The Typhoon Blade**

Once Damokuri's Thread has been mastered, the character may learn the Typhoon Blade technique. By drawing and throwing his sword and whipping it along the length of the strand the ronin may make an attack on an opponent up to 20' away, rolling Air + Iaijutsu to attack. After an opponent has been attacked this way once, the ronin's TN to hit then with this technique again is permanently raised by +15. Roll damage as normal.

## **Itto Ronin School**

**Benefit:** +1 Agility

**Beginning Honor:** 1, plus 5 boxes

### **Skills**

Athletics, Defense, Kenjutsu, Stealth, Tanto, Pick one Bugei Skill, and Pick one Craft or Low Skill

### **Techniques:**

#### **Rank 1: Grasp the Soul**

The bushi learns to control his blade's motion with subtlety instead of muscle. When rolling Damage with

a weapon, he may roll Weapon Skill + Damage Rating instead of Strength + DR. Upon learning this technique, the bushi chooses one Bugei Skill for which he is always considered one rank higher (to a maximum of 6).

#### **Rank 2: Divide The Heavens**

The bushi has learned to bat aside arrows, knives, and shuriken almost reflexively. When the bushi has a weapon in hand, the base TN to hit the bushi with missile weapons is 5 plus his Weapon Skill x 5. Armor and Full Defense may increase this further (Full Attack reduces the base TN to 5).

#### **Rank 3: Behind Night's Shadow**

The bushi's speed and deceptive stances allows him to punish the overzealous. Once per turn, when the bushi has declared Full Defense and an opponent has missed with a melee attack, the bushi may roll a Normal Attack against that opponent. If successful, the bushi inflicts a number of wounds equal to his weapon skill.

#### **Rank 4: Know Your Enemy**

The bushi has learned to counter the multiple-attack techniques of other schools. Opponents must spend a void point to declare more than one attack per turn on the bushi. The bushi may not use this technique in the same turn as any technique that gives multiple attacks per round.

#### **Rank 5: Stand Against the Waves**

By spending a void point, the bushi may make one Normal Attack on each opponent who declares a melee attack upon him this turn. Use of this technique must be announced during declare actions step of the turn.