

The Yakuza

The mysterious Yakuza are the thieves' guild of Rokugan. They operate out towns and villages of almost any size, having connections and spies everywhere. The Yakuza are almost as mysterious as the legendary Ninja and several people accredit the Yakuza with being Ninja who merely operate in the light.

The Yakuza got its start some 400 years ago. Members of various merchant families suffered from a falling out with other clans and families and so sought revenge. A shadow war of economics and trade soon followed the fall out as the families attempted to destroy the opposing families. Both sides hired various ronin to fight for them in underhanded, unhonorable ways. Both sides fought bitter power struggles that still go on today. Originally just dealing with merchant ventures, it became involved with crime and other un-honorable acts. Prostitution, gambling, banditry, thieving, assassination, and political intrigue. Nothing was above the Yakuza's attention. Many of their services, such as places where a lonely samurai could engage in more than just a relaxing evening with a Geisha, were welcomed, as long as it was never seen publicly that anyone ever visited such as place.

The Yakuza are separated into various families, with each plying their trade in an attempt to outdo their cousins. There are two major factions within the organization. The hidari-Yakuza and the migi-Yakuza. Merely the Right and the Left Hands of the Yakuza. The Right Hand is comprised of those who were once part of the more prosperous families and the Left Hand of the those that suffered the falling out. Of course today the two organizations are more friends than enemies, each taking a distinct section of the various underground trades under their wing. The Right Hand claims the central and inland areas of Rokugan for their own, while the Left Hand claims the coastal towns and the islands.

The families of the Yakuza are overseen by a figure known as an Oyabun. The Oyabun functions very much like a Daimyo, delegating authority and meting out punishment on those that have dishonored or slighted the family.

A sign of distinction and rank within the Yakuza are the acquisition of tattoos across ones body. The greater ones station, the more tattoos there seem to be. An Oyabun could easily have

the entire story of his life and deeds etched across his body.

Some tattoos are awards. Some are considered magical in nature, offering protection from Oni and similar spirits.

A sign of failure within the Yakuza is the loss of finger joints. If a Yakuza agent fails in his task, then, if he is still alive, he is expected to cut off one or more joints of his fingers, starting with the pinky. The severity of the failure usually dictates the number of joints. Most of the time, one joint is all that is required. The finger cutting is usually reserved only for significant failures, as agents without fingers would become too numerous among their organization if small failures were counted. Also, if a number of people started showing up with fingers gone, it is possible a magistrate would not be able to look the other way for too long anymore.

Generally for smaller infractions, a monetary sum is fined, or maybe service in the fields is required. Possibly a lashing or maybe even the acquisition of one's children.

As a side note, it is thought that the Yakuza could easily be a front for a more mysterious organization known as the Kolat, though this remains to be seen.

The Factions and their Families

The Left Hand of the Yakuza

Claiming all coastal towns and islands as their territory, the members of the Left Hand are a shrewd lot, plying their trade at sea as well as on land. Many members of the Left Hand are Wako, pirates, who sail the waters raiding small coastal villages, fishing boats and trading vessels. Some members of the Left Hand are actually in cahoots with members of the Nation of Albion and operate out of Victoria Island. (See document of The Nation of Albion for more detail on Victoria Island). Some have even hired on a mercenaries for the Albions, travelling with them to their home in distant Albion.

The Left Hand's primary concern is with gaining money and treasure. The more gold, silver and precious stones the better. Sadly, attacking Mantis clan trading ships has become

rather costly in life, so the Left Hand has had to settle with small raiding excursions. Unfortunately this often leads to clashes with the Right Hand, as they invade territory claimed by them.

The principle 'family' group of the Left Hand is the Kadokawa. Made up of some of the most undesirable people you could imagine, the Kadokawa is a brutal group. They are assisted by several smaller families, usually a small group on an island or within several coastal villages.

Kadokawa

The Kadokawa make most of their money from thievery, assassination, banditry and piracy. They enjoy taking from others what is not theirs. Many tax collectors have fallen prey to the Kadokawa Yakuza, or at least that is what they say happened. The Kadokawa operate a small fleet of pirate ships in order to hassle fishing and merchant ships especially those of the Mantis clan when they can get away with it.

Benefit: +1 Stamina

Starting Glory: 0

Family Mon: The Kadokawa 'family' symbol is a fish with a straight sword skewering it. It is often tattooed on their left shoulder blade. Tattoos of deeds and accomplishments are always placed on the left arm and the left side of the chest and back. It is rumored that the Kadokawa have developed a mystical tattoo that allows them to breathe water.

Kadokawa Wako School

Benefit: +1 Strength

Starting Honor: 0

Skills

Kenjutsu, Law, Lore (Yakuza), Athletics, Knife, Wrestling, Gambling, Seamanship, Archery.

Techniques

There is only one technique available to the Kadokawa.

Rank 1: Fury of the Wako

The Wako launches a swift, overwhelming attack on his opponent. The opponent must always go last in combat while the Wako uses this technique, representing the opponents unease at the all out fury of the attacker.

Outfit

(All considered to be of low quality) Wakizashi (always hidden), tanto, robes, rope, fishing line (good garrote), hat.

Noted Family Members

Kadokawa Ryu – Current Oyabun of the Left Hand and one of the most fear of the Yakuza assassins. It is rumored that Ryu was trained by the Scorpion assassin masters themselves.

Kadokawa Miyu – A pirate captain of the waters that surround the bay of the capital. She is fierce and utterly ruthless.

Nemuranai

Kadokawa's Sword

The weapon is an ancient blade, first given to Seppun Kadokawa upon the completion of his Gempuku ceremony some 700 years ago. It is always carried by the head of the Kadokawa family and confers the advantage of Voice to its user as well as being +1K1 to damage and hit rolls.

Ancestors

Seppun Kadokawa – 6 points

Supposed founder of the Yakuza organization itself, Seppun Kadokawa was a dishearten member of the imperial family who found himself on the short end of the stick way too often. The last son of several older brother and sisters he was destined at best for the monastery. He rebelled and left the capital, becoming ronin. It is said he created the Yakuza so that he could rule over at least on type of empire.

Anyone with Kadokawa as their ancestors gains the advantage Imperial Blood as well as the disadvantage Black Sheep.

The Left Hand and Magic

The Left Hand has few shugenja working for it. Obviously any shugenja worth their name would not be caught dead working for such an organization. The Left Hand therefore must rely on infamous one shot wonders and disgraced students of the shugenja schools. One shot wonders are those rare people who have found that they can coax a single kami of one element to do one spell effect for them. These people are rare and often snatched up by shugenja of the clans, but every once and a while one slips through the cracks and the Left Hand gets one. The Left Hand is primarily concerned with those that can use Air spells, as they can aid a ship in its escape as well as impede a potential target.

Noted Events of the Left Hand

The Left Hand have been involved in many deeds and events in the Yakuza's long life. The Kadokawa were the original family and as such have seen the most.

The best known event of the Left Hand and the Kadokawa occurred when the first elements of the Kolat infiltrated the Empire. The Left Hand at first welcomed the allies but soon realized what they were really about. To date, the Kolat always thank the Kadokawa for their help in securing their place in the Empire, a fact the Left Hand would rather be forgotten.

The Right Hand of the Yakuza

By far the more powerful of the two groups, the Right Hand is a force often felt but not seen within the interior of Rokugan. Members of the Right Hand can be found in many places, running legitimate business as well as dealing with underhanded material.

The Right Hand is truly large organization, with two major families controlling its interests. Of course these interests often clash, but this is rare.

The Right Hand is concerned not only with acquisition of wealth, but the gaining of power in the way of favors. The more favors owed to a member of the Right Hand, the more his prestige within the family.

The Tatsunoko are the power family of the Right Hand, with the Mizuno ranked just behind them. The only reason that the Tatsunoko have managed to secure their position of power is that more peasants attend their events than nobles visit Mizuno places of business. That and though having a favor owed by a samurai is a good thing and having a favor owed by an entire village is a whole different matter.

The Tatsunoko can most often be seen plying their trade near large cities and towns.

The Mizuno on the other hand try to hide themselves from even the shadows in which they stay. The Mizuno has the distinction of having the only female Oyabun of all the Yakuza. The Mizuno also has a rather large amount of woman as part of its ranks.

Only found in cities where the nobles are many and have little to do except sample pleasures best not spoken of, the Mizuno businesses are truly dens of iniquity, where nobles can do things best not spoken of in public places.

Tatsunoko

Largest of Yakuza families, the Tatsunoko are most well known for their blood sport matches which they hold once a month. Peasants who seek to gain quick riches for themselves fight these matches. No person of noble birth would ever lower himself to fight in such a match, though there are stories of Ronin who've entered the blood matches in order to hone their skill.

The Tatsunoko are as a whole, a silver tongued group, consisting of people capable of convincing even the most stingily of farmers on gambling just a little.

Benefit: +1 Awareness

Beginning Glory: 0

Family Mon: The family symbol for the Tatsunoko is a iron staff over top of a white lily. All members of the Right Hand have their tattoos on the Right Side of their bodies. Family symbols are often on the shoulder blades.

Tatsunoko "loanshark" School

Benefit: +1 Strength

Beginning Honor: 0

Skills

Kenjutsu, Law, Lore (Yakuza), Athletics, Bo Stick, Knife, Hand-to-Hand, Gambling

Techniques

Rank 1: The Tongue of Silver

The loanshark is capable of making a person want to bet money, even if they have none to bet. This of course is a persuasive capability and thus is a contested roll of the users Willpower vs. the Opponents Willpower. If the loanshark is successful, the target will succumb to the betting bug.

Outfit

(All considered to be of average quality)
Wakizashi, tanto, money purse, robes/kimono,

Noted Family Members

Tatsunoko Morotonbu – Head of the Tatsunoko family, he arose to his position through strength and cunning. Probably one of the most gifted nofujutsu fighters in the Empire, Morotonbu is a large man whose speed belies his size and whose intelligence belies his often-vacant look.

Nemuranai

The Tatsunoko family have no items of note.

Ancestors

Tatsunoko – 4 points

Founder of the Right Hand, Tatsunoko was Kadokawa's yojimbo at the time of his self-exile. Tatsunoko followed his friend and lord into exile and later founded the Right Hand as a way for the interior to be handled and leave the exterior to Kadokawa.

Having Tatsunoko as an ancestor confers the Loyal advantage as well as the Clear Thinker advantage.

Mizuno

Smallest of three major families, the Mizuno are very capable peddlers of flesh. They have dozens of "pillow" houses and services across the country, at which someone can easily spend an evening, engaged in whatever sexual lust holds their fancy. Mizuno, though small, are the best protected of the three major families because their houses often cater to those of noble birth. Nobles often visit in order to 'vent' their pent-up lusts in private so that their home life stays peaceful.

Benefit: + 1 Willpower

Beginning Glory: 0

Family Mon: A simple rose, beauty with a hint of danger. All members of the Right Hand have their tattoos on the Right Side of their bodies. Family symbols are often on the shoulder blades.

Mizuno Procurer School

Benefit: +1 Awareness

Beginning Honor: 0

Skills

Seduction, Law, Lore (Yakuza), Athletics, Knife, Commerce, Hand-to-Hand, Gambling

Techniques

Rank 1: Whisperer of Dark Dreams

The Procurer often has to find out just what it is that the potential customer needs or wants, even though the customer may not want to voice his desire. The technique lets the Procurer use his or her seduction to draw forth from the customer what that desire is. This is a contested roll of the Procurer's Seduction + Perception vs. the targets Willpower + Etiquette. If the target does not possess Etiquette, oh well, buyers beware.

If successful the Procurer has managed to figure out the dark desires of his/her target and can now offer such services to him/her confident that the target wishes them, else they would not have approached the procurer.

Outfit

(All considered to be of average quality, with one item of good quality) Tanto, Kimono or robes, tools of the trade (use your imagination), money pouch

Noted Family Members

Mizuno Shiwa – Master of manipulation and husband of Mizuno Yuri, Oyabun of the family. Shiwa is said to be able to lie blatantly to a Scorpion and not be discovered. His stories and half-truths have gained his wife and family immense information and favours.

Mizuno Yuri—Only female Oyabun of the family, Yuri is an older, but still beautiful woman who knows how to use her beauty to her advantage. She often seduces those that she feels are important enough to deserve the best in pleasure.

Nemuranai

The Mizuno have no items of their own, though through favours acquired, they do have access to a number of interesting items.

Ancestors

Mizuno – 4 points

Mizuno was a skilled courtesan who was caught up in the Yakuza in its early inception. Mizuno seduced her way to power and then used her charms to secure her families success and position.

Mizuno confers the advantage of Benten's Blessing to those who have her as an ancestor.

The Right Hand and Magic

Unlike the Left Hand, the Right Hand has access to a number of shugenja who, through the Mizuno family, owe the Right Hand favours. These shugenja are usually used in one shot deals and actions, thus repaying their indebtedness.

A few Ronin shugenja also work with the Right Hand, but that number is very small indeed.

Noted Events of the Right Hand

The Right Hand has done many interesting things in their time in the Empire. They were on the ones responsible for at least three peasant

uprising in the last 400 years. Sadly the Kolat has incredible control over the actions of the Right Hand, hence its power over the founding Kadokawa family.