

Alignment and Honor

Oriental Adventures and Rokugan societies place a strong emphasis on proper behavior, rigid adherence to social custom, and a strict class system with no chance for advancement; another words a very lawful society. Barbarians, Nezumi, and chaotic characters can never be part of the Celestial Order. Closely linked to society is honor; a samurai without honor is nothing but a fighter with masterwork swords. Honor is a measure of a character and a reflection of an entire family's history and deeds. It reflects a person's worth in society, trustworthiness, decency, and loyalty. With honor comes power, influence and position.

Honor is a mechanic first developed in the *Unearthed Arcana*. In Rokugan most races start out with Honor = 0 (this differs from the *Unearthed Arcana*). Honor comes with, rank, position, and reputation (a daimyo gains +1 honor from that position, the Emerald Champion, and the Jade Champion both have +2 honor from their position, a Magistrates has +1 honor from their position). Honor is different from alignment, a lawful evil or lawful good person could be equally honorable; just in different ways. Honor involves following a code so most honorable characters are lawful, but that is only a generalization. Honor can give you certain advantages, a character who is known to be honorable has the following advantages:

A +1 Leadership score modifier.

A +2 circumstance bonus on Diplomacy checks.

A +2 bonus on Sense Motive checks when the target is behaving dishonorably.

A +1 circumstance bonus on Will saves when the consequence of failing the save would bring dishonor on the character.

There are 5 ranks of honor:

Honorless: (Rank 0) usually chaotic and or evil, those who can't be trusted.

Untrustworthy: (Rank 1) usually chaotic, neutral or evil characters, they can be relied upon to come to the aid of their clan, but to them the code of Bushido is an inconvenience.

Honorable Action: (Rank 2--average) usually neutral tending toward law, the character acts in accordance with the code of Bushido, even if their heart is not in it. subordinating one's own interests to those of the clan is difficult and living up to the code is a constant struggle.

Honorable Thought: (Rank 3) usually lawful neutral, they truly accept Bushido and don't question its demands. Bending the rules is a challenge of the exceptionally honorable samurai.

Honorable Soul: (Rank 4) usually lawful neutral or lawful good, the paragon of hone can't be swayed from the call of duty to clan and family, willing to give their own lives for the safety and security of others.

Strength of 1,000 Ancestors: (Rank 5) always lawful good, a completely selfless character thinking only of family and clan, who treats all he meets with honor and respect until they prove themselves to be without honor.

Honorable Actions:

Avenging the death of a family member.

Defeating an ancestral enemy.

Saving another person's life.

Leading a victorious force in battle.

Completing a great quest.

Dying a heroic death.

Completing a great deed (Unearthed Arcana)

Defeating an archenemy (Unearthed Arcana)

Fulfilling a family debt (Unearthed Arcana)

Heroic Death (Unearthed Arcana)

Removing a curse (Unearthed Arcana)

Dishonorable Actions

Being accused or convicted of a crime.

Being banished

Being taken prisoner.

Breaking an oath.

Committing Treason.

Convicted of committing a crime.

Losing a birthright, including an ancestral weapon.

Losing a contest or duel, especially to an inferior opponent.

Behaving rashly or improperly.

Refusing a contest of duel (samurai must get permission from their daymio to engage in a death duel).

Refusing to obey and order from their diamyō.

Entering into debt (of money or favors).

Fleeing a fight.

Being taken prisoner (except for shugenja)

Leading a losing force in battle.

Using a peasant or ninja weapon.

Disobeying one's lord.

Honor Rank is gained in amounts of 10 honor points; increasing a rank when the character accumulates 10 honor points.

Action Witnessed	Hr1	Hr2	Hr3	Hr4	Hr5
Honesty-giving a truthful report that could result in serious repercussions for oneself.	3	2	1	0	0
Courage-facing a clearly superior foe to preserve one's family honor.	3	3	2	2	1
Compassion-Aiding a wounded foe	4	3	3	3	3
Courtesy-Hosting samurai from a family with whom one is at war.	5	3	1	0	0
Sincerity-Fulfilling a promise despite great cost.	4	3	2	1	0
Duty/Loyalty-Following the diamyō's orders when one's personal feelings call for a different course of action.	3	3	3	3	3
Openly practicing a Low skill (Bluff, Craft (except weapons or armor), Poison, Disguise, Escape Artist, Forgery, Gather Information, Handle Animal, Hide, Move Silently, Open Lock, Perform (common entertainment), Pick Pocket and Profession (gambler, mortician, torturer))	0	-1	-2	-3	-4
Deliberate deception of another	0	-2	-3	-4	-5
Disobeying the command of your Lord.	-2	-3	-4	-5,-6	-7,-9
Instigating unwarranted violence	-1	-2	-3	-4	-4
Breach of etiquette	0	-1	-2	-4	-4

Surrender is dishonorable for a samurai, even the act of offering surrender to a clearly superior foe is dishonorable. Most samurai would rather die than surrender, although peace may be negotiated. Naga share a similar philosophy, but not the Nezumi. It is common for a losing army to purchase the safe retreat of their troops with a formal duel. The army's general (or his champion) challenges the opposing officer with the lives of his fellows as the stakes. If the challenger wins then his followers are allowed to leave the battlefield with honor. If the challenger loses the winner may do as he pleases with the lives of the challenger's followers.

Shugenja are the only exception to the surrender rule since the loss of them is too great. They are taken prisoner and treated with respect.

Hostages are taken legally with prior notification to their family. Hostages can also be used to cement an alliance, typically the 2nd sons of the allying daimyo. Occasionally these hostages are required to swear fealty to their captors, and learn the school techniques of their new clan. During violent periods it is the Emperor's right to invoke the Hitojichi (hostage) law, requiring each daimyo to spend a month of every year in Otosan Uchi. After the daimyo returns home his family remains in the city for another month as hostages of the Emperor.

Dueling: The standard means to settle a dispute between two samurai. It is not acceptable to challenge a samurai of a higher station, insults from them are to be borne with honor or resolved by one's lord. A formal duel requires witnesses and the permission of the daimyo. The challenged party determines the nature of the duel. In the case of bushi it is usually combat, shugenja a duel of magic, courtiers and artisans have contests of wit. A courtier or shugenja challenged by a samurai typically has a bushi stand in his place, usually a yojimbo (bodyguard) or close family member. The challenged party and his second share whatever fate is determined of the loser, meaning it is a duel to the death. If the challenged party's second loses the battle he must commit seppuku. Typically, bushi duels are resolved with iaijutsu and are taken to the first blood (*ketsuiki*). The first combatant to injure his foe wins. Shugenja duels (*tary-jai*) are usually not violent as each attempts to subjugate the other's will through the power of magic. Once a duel is complete the matter is considered finished no matter what the outcome.

A Blood Duel is declared when a samurai is killed in an illegal duel or due to gross incompetence of another. It is the right of the immediate family to declare the blood duel. A formal Blood Duel requires the consent of one's daimyo. It is a declaration of war between the two families, interfering in a Blood Duel threaten the honor of the offended and may be dealt with as the offended party wishes. The Emperor, his magistrates, Imperial Legionnaires and other members of the Imperial Family are exempt. Once the offending party has been killed the offended parties are expected to leave the lands peacefully.

Hiding the fact that you are casting a spell is dishonorable, but often done.

The Celestial Order: Everything is part of a great pattern and each living soul has a role to play, those who defy it risk being demoted to a lower station after reincarnation. Rokugan's social order is composed of 3 groups; *samurai* (those who make war), *clergy* (those who pray) and *bonge* (those who work). There is also a non-group; *hinin* (non-people; entertainers, those who handle the dead and other cast outs).