

## Oriental Time and Seasons

A Rokugan hour is actually 120 minutes.

The *hemin* do not care much about a formal track of the days, merely the seasons; when to plant and when to harvest. They work during most Imperial holidays.

**Days:** 24 hours/8 days a week

Hour	Common	Formal
6-8 AM	Hare	Sun
8-10 AM	Dragon	Moon
10 AM-Noon	Serpent	Hantei
Noon-2 PM	Horse	Akodo
2-4 PM	Goat	Doji
4-6 PM	Monkey	Shiba
6-8 PM	Rooster	Bayushi
8-10 PM	Dog	Shinjo
10 PM- Midnight	Boar	Hida
Midnight-2 AM	Rat	Togashi
2-4 AM	Ox	Fu Leng
4-6 AM	Tiger	Ryoshun



The day normally starts at the hour of the Hare.

**Seasons:** 12 months in a year, 32 days in a month

Season	Common	Formal	Festival
Spring	Hare	Sun	1st Oshogatsu (New Years)
	Dragon	Moon	
	Serpent	Hantei	
Summer	Horse	Akodo	6th Chrysanthemum Festival
	Goat	Doji	
	Monkey	Shiba	
Fall	Rooster	Bayushi	32nd Bon Festival
	Dog	Shino	
Winter	Boar	Hida	32nd Toshi no Ichi
	Rat	Togashi	
	Ox	Fu Leng	
	Tiger	Ryoshun	

### Spring

The time to plant and Bushi patrol, often a first posting for a samurai after gempukku. Ambitious daiymo send out small numbers of troops to get a head start on the wars of summer. Daidoji saboteurs could strike quickly to hurt a rival's production. Bandits may also take advantage of unprepared clans. Most of the time little happens. As the winter courts are dismissed the courtiers must do everything in their power to make sure that the alliances, agreements and other negotiations achieved over the winter are not wasted. Usually the most important treaties are brought to the attention of the Clan Champions. Such agreements are often altered several times by the Champions until all parties are satisfied, this can take the whole spring. Less important negotiations are usually handled by the families and provincial diamyo.

Oshogatsu, the New Year's Celebration marks the beginning of spring and the Rokugan New Year. All Rokugani celebrate their birthdays on the New Year. There

are festivities, parades, festivals and other activities as Rokugani visit family shrines and holy temples. The following day is spent thanking the Fortunes, ancestors and Heavens for their blessings, and for another fruitful year. The Emperor typically cloisters himself in his chambers after dusk on the first day to commune with Lady Sun on behalf of the Empire.

## **Summer**

Though not as physically taxing as the planting season, farmers relish this time no more than spring because the midday heat can be staggering causing some *heimn* to collapse in the field. The humidity is oppressive. In other areas the heat is so intense that a simple spark can ignite an uncontrollable brushfire.

It is impossible for a summer to go by without one diamyō insulting another, intentionally or not. Large scale war was outlawed hundreds of years ago, but smaller battles are common. The Lion are infamous for taking insult at any small offense. Often the Lion ambassador will state that the Lion farms will not be able to support the armies of the Emperor, and demand that another Clan, usually the Crane, allocate some of their land to the Lion. They are often ignored and war is the result. The Crab use the same excuse claiming that the constant war with Fu Leng is draining them. If the small scale wars become too large the Emperor will demand the fighting stop, once. If his word is not heeded then the Emperor himself will send out his armies to stop the fighting. He lets small scale wars go on frequently, but prevents large scale ones, to keep the Empire strong. Minor Clans are protected by the Empire and the major Clans may not declare war on them, unless insulted. Innocuous actions can serve as "acts of war" so most of the Minor Clans avoid visiting the court when possible.

Courtiers generally spend the summer delivering messages for the clans at war, to insight or to entreat alignments or look for a way to end the war. Less important courtiers travel the roads wooing the favors of other families or carrying out the terms of a treaty.

On the 6th day of the Horse, the Chrysanthemum Festival honors the day on which the Kami are believed to have fallen to the earth. It is the most popular festival, 4 days before, the day of the festival, and 3 days later there is no work done, even with the peasants. On the 4th day following the festival minions of the Shadowlands have historically created a bonfire and performed foul and bloody rituals for their dark master, with human sacrifice. The bonfire could be seen from the watchtowers of the Kaiu Wall, however for the past 7 years no bonfire has been lit.

## **Fall**

Yearly monsoons, also the season of tax collection. Generally, it is in the form of food, but some towns with well known artisans pay in koku. Autumn ends the wars as the warriors have to return home or starve and freeze. Armies that do not withdrawal could be snowed in, but an attacking army has to have something to show for their battles; hostages are appropriate or supplies of some sort. Courtiers are busy preparing for the Winter Court, only the honored and gifted are invited. Courtiers work with bushi to settle negotiations to end the fighting and to save face if the war went badly. A common tactic is to withdrawal humbly stating that the enemy has defended honorably, or to invoke the will of the Fortunes. Most are polite about it.

The last day of the month of the Dog, is the last day of fall and sees the Bon Festival. It is a very ritual holiday to honor the dead and commune with the wisdom of the ancestors. Every major city is bedecked with representations of the Elemental Dragons, the Great Kami, white-faced ghosts, and famous spirits of the past. During this time the spirits are closest to the land of the living. The festival ends with the lighting of small color paper lanterns, marked with the names of those who died in the past year. The lanterns are then released either to float down a river or to fly and drift away.

## Winter

Fierce snowstorms and sleet making outside labor almost impossible. Most of the time is spent indoors and it is custom to gather in a single peasants hut for warmth. Fuel is very valuable. Bushi spend the winter training or braving the Winter Courts, troop movement across the Empire is nearly impossible. Promotions are awarded shortly after the training starts to those who performed well in the summer. Bushi who attend the Winter Court are either political or serve as yojimbo (guards) to the courtiers and shugenja. Almost every winter sees one honor duel. Diplomats conduct dangerous plots, to pit enemies against each other, to curry favor, bring favor to their clans, or allies. "Nothing ventured is nothing gained." The Emperor chooses the location of each Winter Court and changes it year to year, it is a great honor to host the Winter Court. Generally the Champions of the Great Clans attend this court as do representatives of the large families.

The year-end festival, called the Toshi no Ichi starts on the 32nd. The kami are said to look down upon the world in this time. Peasants hang a rope of straw known as the shimenawa inside their houses so the evil spirits of the year can't enter, at the end of the festival the ropes are burned. Homes prepare a toshidana, an altar covered in rice cakes and sake to honor the spirits of the new year. At dusk the temples of the Brotherhood of Shinsei are emptied and their walls and floors are scrubbed. They then ring the bells of the temple 49 times and invite the peasants back into their temples.

