

STORY : ROKUGAN :

11 Before the birth of the universe, there was Nothing.

Eventually, the Nothing receded, and into existence came beings of vast, almost unknowable power. Amaterasu, the Lady Sun, and Onnotangu, the Lord Moon, were the greatest of these, and together, husband and wife gave names to all that was, creating the mortal realm of Ningen-do, as well as many other spirit realms and all that dwelled within them. Thus it was that the universe was born.

Lady Sun and Lord Moon had ten children, sons and daughters who were much beloved by their mother. Their father, however, recognized that the children had the potential to grow more powerful than he, and that their mother loved them more than him. These were unacceptable circumstances, and the anger and jealousy grew within Onnotangu until he could bear it no longer. One after another, he pursued his children, defeated them, and devoured them. After each one, his wife brought him sake with poison, and after nine children, Onnotangu fell into a slumber. When he awakened, he discovered his last son, Hantei, ready to face him, prepared by the Lady Amaterasu. Their battle was fierce, and Hantei cut his father open, allowing his siblings to spill forth and tumble from the Celestial Heavens, falling far to the mortal realm. Unwilling to leave his siblings to face this alone, Hantei accompanied them.

In the mortal realm, the children of the Sun and Moon, who became known as the Kami, found tribes of men and woman scattered across the portion of the land where they came to rest. Eight of them, for one disappeared during the fall and another never emerged from his father's gullet, held a tournament to determine who among them would be the leader, and Hantei was victorious. Declaring himself the first Emperor of Rokugan, Hantei bid his siblings to go out and gather followers, which they did. Each of the seven siblings who stood with Hantei went out and gathered mortals to their banner, creating the original Great Clans of Rokugan.

- 1 Hida, the great warrior, strongest mortal in the world, created the Crab Clan.
- 2 Doji, the gentle spirit and creator of Rokugan's society, formed the Crane Clan.
- 3 Togashi, the mysterious and contemplative, created the Dragon Clan.
- 4 Akodo, greatest commander of men to ever take the field, led the Lion Clan.
- 5 Shiba, the scholar and philosopher, created the Phoenix Clan.
- 6 Bayushi, the master of lies, created the Scorpion Clan.
- 7 Shinjo, the compassionate lover of nature, created the Ki-Rin Clan.

The Empire of Rokugan was created as a reflection of the perfect harmony and order found in the Celestial Heavens, the realm of Lady Sun and Lord Moon and the original home of the Kami. Each of the Kami granted their name to their immediate family members, specifically their spouse and children, as well as to those who swore fealty to

them. In this way, each created a large family to govern the clan they created. Other families soon came into being as powerful servants proved their worth to the Kami. These sworn vassals soon became the samurai caste, the nobles of the Empire, sworn to service to their families and clans. The vast majority of these samurai were warriors known as bushi, individuals sworn to live and die in the name of their lords. A smaller number, those skilled in the political and social arts, instead took to the courts of their lords to pursue the agendas that would place their clan in the Emperor's graces; in the courts, a whisper is as deadly as a blade. A still smaller portion, gifted from birth with the natural ability to speak to the elemental spirits that comprise all that exists in the mortal realm, become priests of the kami, as such spirits are called, and are known as shugenja. As members of the samurai caste, shugenja command the same rights and responsibilities as the others, but additionally have the power to command the elements themselves.

The samurai of Rokugan base their lives around the code of bushido, an ancient philosophy created by Akodo, the Kami who formed the Lion Clan. The virtues espoused by the code are embraced completely by the Great Clans, although each embraces a different virtue and chooses to focus their attention upon it. After more than a thousand years of devotion, however, the adherents of Fu Leng, the Kami lost to the others during their fall to the mortal realm, subverted the code and created a blasphemous mirror of it, emphasizing all the negative aspects that appealed to the arrogant, violent nature of their duties as warriors. This philosophy, known as Shourido, emphasized things, will, knowledge, and perfection, among others. Although the vast majority of those embracing this philosophy were found among the Spider Clan, the followers of Fu Leng, a small handful could be found among the ranks of the other Great Clans as well.

Rokugan is an Empire of warriors, although the nature of war that a samurai wages depends upon the duties assigned to them by their lords. Throughout the long history of the Emerald Empire, countless wars have been waged, both between the clans and against a host of supernatural enemies. Under the watchful eye of its Emperors, the Empire has flourished with the blessings of the Celestial Heavens. Wars have come and gone, and will come again.

**11 And when they do, the samurai of
Rokugan shall stand in the name of
the clan, their family, and their
Emperor, and they shall die for their
honor.**