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DIGITAL HERO

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SECRETS OF THE SAMURAI

Sho laid there, for what seemed like forever. He thought he was ready to avenge the destruction of his village. It took a full year to track down the living fiend that did the deed, Shinshi. Now, his right leg laid a few feet from the rest of his body, and the villain was moving in for the kill.

"You are a fool to challenge me and my Akaiami style. Now, you will die!" Shinshi raised his bloody katana, only to lose grip of it as a wakizashi flew into his right hand.

Sho looked up, and spotted two faces he was glad to see. Kasumi, who tossed the wakizashi, also lost her village from this monster. The other was, in fact, a Tengu the humans called Tubasa. Tubasa flew towards Shinshi, only to have the monster recover his katana, and block the attack. "Take Sho," he squawked, "and leave. I shall defend."

"But you will die fighting him," replied Kasumi.

"It is my fate... please remember me. And never forget that there are some styles man was never meant to know." With that, Kasumi picked up Sho and left the area, while Tubasa prepared for his final swoop.



New Kenjutsu Martial Arts by Stanley R. Teriaca

Ainoken Kenjutsu

Tenko Tetsuyama created the Ainoken (or "Love Sword") school of Kenjutsu in the 1860s. This school emphasizes defense and light attacks. Another idea of the style is the almost exclusive use of the bokken and shinai (which does normal damage) as opposed to the katana and wakizashi. Advanced students also have taught themselves to use clubs like swords, but that is not traditionally taught in this school.

Optional Rules: Atemi Strike automatically targets the vitals, but does no extra damage because of location. Disarming By Hand Targeting actually strikes the hands, but causes no real damage (except for the possibility of dropping the victim's weapon). All the other strikes take a 2d6+1 location, unless the player decides to target low (2d6+7).

Special Abilities: Ainoken experts are experts at destroying objects. This coincides with the "breaking things" Dispel on page 123 of *The Ultimate Martial Artist*, except a focus is required.

Some Ainoken students and masters know certain spots of the body which control strength, endurance, and dexterity. They can hit these spots to cause temporary loss of these abilities. This coincides with the Drain power, as shown on page 123 of *The Ultimate Martial Artist* book, except a focus is required.

Finally, an Ainoken master can strike certain spots on the body that causes the body to stop all voluntary movement. It is bought as:



Paralysis Strike: Entangle 2d6, 2 DEF, Takes No Damage from Attack (+½), Cannot Be Escaped With Teleportation (+¼) (35 Active Points); No Range (-½), Cannot Form Barriers (-¼), Susceptible (re hitting the same points which caused the paralysis in the first place; can be figured out with a KS: Chinese Healing roll; -½), OAF (bokken; -1). Total cost: 15 points.

artwork by Britt Martin

AINOKEN KENJUTSU

Use Art with Blades Weapon Group; Blades Weapon Element is Free

Maneuver	Phase	Points	OCV	DCV	Damage/Effect
Advanced Ainoken Strike	½	4	+0	+3	Weapon Strike
Atemi Strike	½	5	-2	+1	2d6 NND (1) Strike
Basic Ainoken Strike	½	4	+2	+2	Weapon Strike
Chambara Ken ("Blade Clash")	½	5	+2	+0	Bind, +10 STR
Disarming By Hand Targeting	½	5	+2	-1	Disarm, +10 STR to Disarm Roll
Love's Wall	½	5	+2	+3	Block, Abort, Unbalancing
Moving Love's Wall	½	5	+1	+2	Block, Abort, FMove, Unbalancing

Skills

Acrobatics
Breakfall
KS: Kenjutsu
Paramedics *

Elements

Weapon +1 Use Art with Clubs

Making the Most of Special Effects

by Garry Morgan

As a GM, you see it happen time and again....

A player watches a movie or a cartoon or reads a comic book and says, "I'm going to make a character just like Doctor Omega!" Then he sits down, scribbles out his concept and comes up with his own version, the 350-point superhero Captain Alpha, and gets ready to take him into your game world to do everything that the good Doctor does.

But it never works out that way, does it?

Inevitably, the game character falls short of the abilities of the media character. This is especially true if the media character enjoys a large number of issues or several seasons of episodes. Why? Because while Captain Alpha has an energy blast like the Doctor and a force field like the Doctor, and can fly like the Doctor, he is seldom able to do the myriad of things that your average comic book hero does with these simple powers. The average energy blast is used to weld things together, to knock large objects around like billiard balls without harming them, and carve a hero's way out of every single kind of trap, restraint, and bond. But a game character cannot do this with a straight energy blast. All he can do is blast things.

But it does not have to be that way.

The HERO System has an answer to the problem of myriad effects for a single power – Power Frameworks. Obviously a Variable Power Pool will do the trick, but not everybody can afford to sink 90+ points into being able to do everything in the game at the drop of a hat. Elemental Controls are very useful, but should be used to purchase a number of different powers that spring from a common source, not a variety of uses for a single power. So a smart gamer turns to the last option, the Multipower.

A Multipower is defined as "a Power Framework in which several different powers draw from a common point reserve." Generally, these powers should spring from a common source or share a common special effect. Looking at the characters that have been released by Hero Games so far, we see some character types already have large versatile Multipowers, such as archers and armored masterminds. However, an average starting level character that has a Multipower is usually an energy blaster and has between three and six slots. On average, the Multipower is comprised of one or two attacks, and a couple of utility powers like Entangles or Telekinesis. However, there is no reason for this to be the case.

The purpose of this article is to illustrate how to make characters more versatile through

the use of cost-effective Multipowers. Also, this article will examine the benefits of a well-developed special effect basis.

To begin, let us define the terms to be used. A "special effect basis" is a well-defined origin of power for the character, with a stated purpose and accepted limits. This basis is the primary description of the physical manifestation of the character's power. Ice powers, magnetism, gadgetry, power armor, and even high strength are all excellent examples of a special effect basis. The special effect is used as a tool for the creation of Limitations, primarily, and as a basis for allowing Power Frameworks, like Elemental Controls. All Powers in *Champions* should have some kind of special effect. The trick is to choose a special effect that will lend itself well to a large number of Powers and ideally provide some kind of built-in Limitation. Deciding that you want to make a brick is not a special effect basis. No special effect is described or detailed; therefore, there is no basis for a benefit. However, defining a brick character as having a telekinetic force field that augments his strength to superhuman levels is. The special effect basis is not a literary tool, or a function of the story. Where the aforementioned character gets this force field – whether he is a mutant, or has a mystic gem, or whatever – does not matter. The basis is merely a concept or tool to be used by a player as an impetus for the creation of Powers, Advantages, and Limitations. What makes a special effects basis "good" is simply that the basis is well-defined, and allows a wide variety of power effects to spring from a common, limited power source.

Special effects are nothing new to the *Champions* game. However, too many players and GMs simply use them as a way to add a touch of color to a character, or as a way to exploit the occasional Vulnerability. In many campaigns, the special effect stops there. Many characters simply have a special effect written in, with cookie cutter powers that are common to the energy blaster archetype. Firemax, Doctor Storm, and Black Opal all have an EB 12d6, one fire-based, one lightning-based, and one darkness-based. But in very few cases are these differences really used to their fullest effect.

The first step to producing really useful special effects is a good working knowledge of the physics behind the effect. Unfortunately, this may mean a little research in some cases. For starters, try to describe how the actual physical effect is produced. Why does water freeze into ice? Why does magnetism affect metal but not other materials? How does the brain affect