



DRAE RACE PACKAGE

deroTM
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1. History of the Race – Creation Myth

Most Drae scholars believe that their origins stem from the same split that created the Stone and Wild Elves. The story goes that in times long past the High Elven King had had four sons, and when he died no heir could be decided. The Drae maintain that their race stemmed from the first son. The third son, the progenitor of the Stone Elves, desired the throne to bring reason to the kingdom. The first son banished him for being a traitor despite his great love for his brother. He felt such great shame and sorrow at banishing his brother that he left the kingdom to be led by the youngest son (the second son having been the predecessor of the Wild Elves and having left for the wilds), and went underground to find his honour. Within Tyrra he found a Black Dragon, who taught him and his court true honor, then chose to stay within Tyrra rather than return to the honourless surface world.

The Drae eventually founded the city of Ryu-chen. The city is located under the Dark Lake, and has been flooded several times. While they have founded a second city, Manchukuo, the two largest Houses within Ryu-chen have ordered a new province be scouted to move the people of Ryu-chen too. To date no suitable location has been found, but the search continues. A small group of Drae formed the city of Xinshen in the mountains of Western Kyrinen. This is still very much a frontier town and the Drae there are working on expanding the town to a larger city.

Throughout their history many wars of honour and territory erupted, but after the Black Dragon left them the Drae grew fearful of other inhabitants of Ryu-chen and they found other things to fight. This chaotic time led to many losing their homes, and with few Celestial casters to provide wards this led to the Drae banding together to help each other. Drae to this day hold a strong belief in hospitality. While they will not take in every single beggar they find, they strongly believe anyone in need should be cared for based on their needs. While this tradition of hospitality is extended to non-Drae, it is not as pronounced as it once was in that regard.

2. Racial, Cultural and Social Structure

2.1 The Houses

Within the provinces of Ryu-chen and Manchukuo are 14 Houses, and each House is made up of a multitude of Families. Of these 14 Houses, 11 reside in Ryu-chen, the other 3 reside in Manchukuo. Each House is a unique variation of Drae culture unto itself and each Family within has its own traditions and customs.

There is a two tiered system of status among the houses. While the Drae had once been ruled by an Emperor, with the coming of the human King they have decided to forgo having an Emperor until they become a powerful race once again. The three most powerful Houses, now known as The Three, were the Emperor's noble land holders. While the balance of power has shifted among them over time, each has been the most powerful at one point by having the most usable land. Each of The Three has universities upon their land, and it is seen as politically expedient to send your children to the right university at the right time. Entry into these universities is thus fiercely competitive and grand tournaments and competitions are held each year in the martial divisions of said universities.

The eleven smaller Houses tend to specialize in merchant and artistic ways, each House usually being known for one specific specialty. Because of this, while they have less land than The Three, they tend to end up with more wealth than them. Out of respect and love for their own culture, the smaller houses pay tribute to The Three through gifts as they once paid tribute to the Emperor himself. It is considered good fortune for a Shogun to deliver a gift in person, or at one of the universities.

There is no encompassing government among the Drae Houses. Instead, each House has its own rules, and these rules are meaningless to other Houses. The only rule or code that binds them is codes of honour.

Almost all Houses have career courtiers called Rai or Rin, females and males respectively. These are a cross between a geisha and a courtier. They are not allowed to marry, and much like in real life they are not prostitutes. The House of the Rai oversees the Rai and Rin, and more information can be found in their House entry.

Each House is a miniature city with farms and roads, ruled over by a Shogun. Traveler's quarters, sometimes called foreign quarters, are located on the outskirts of each House and any non-Drae who chooses to stay within the House or visit the House does so here. The Shogun of each House maintains a Shogunate House within the foreign quarters to meet with foreign dignitaries.

Houses regularly compete for standing in Drae culture. The fortunes of one's House, either in lands or in wealth, usually define one's House. It is believed that during the time when the Black Dragon was a part of their lives, the Emperors of old ranked the Houses based on personal wealth. The more wealthy Houses were considered superior to the others. When the Black Dragon left the Drae people, they kept up this tradition, despite rumours that it was this system that had made the Dragon leave them in the first place. Wars of honour broke out over lands and trade. While the official ranking of Houses ended with the coming of the Human King, The Three are still ranked in this way and many of the other Houses still unofficially see themselves ranked in this way. This leads to more subtle methods of fighting for status.

3. The Three

NOTE: No PC may belong to any of The Three. These Houses are considered nobility by birth.

3.1 House Yakuru

Elven Name: Ce'Siance

Shogun-sun: Yakuru Kessen

House Symbol: A shield bearing the image of a dragon breathing fire or acid

Location: Ryu-chen

The largest and most powerful House in Ryu-chen, House Yakuru is commonly thought to “rule” Ryu-chen by outsiders. The families of this great House are known to wear bracelets proclaiming their family affiliations.

The Yakuru University boasts the largest and best martial training facility out of The Three. Each year the university holds the Tournament of Blades. The Tournament lasts for two weeks, the winners of each competition earning the right to learn at the University. While there are other ways to earn a place at the University, this is one of the only guaranteed ways.

3.2 House Otsutsu

Elven Name: Bel'du'Shanaisse

Shogun-sun: Otsutsu Iyoku

House Symbol: A dragon in flight forming a large “O” with its body

Location: Ryu-chen

This is the second largest House, and has been recently rocked by tragedy at the loss of their Shogun. Shogun Iyoku Otsutsu was recently elevated to the rank of Shogun only to later to lose his wife permanently. Lacking heirs, this has led to many would be suitors coming forth to try and catch his eye.

The Otsutsu House has a strong warrior heritage and used to have the best martial training facilities in their University. However in more recent times the prosperity of House Yakuru has allowed them to claim that honour as their own. Despite this, House Otsutsu still believes their warriors some of the best trained, and have ornate wrappings on the hilts and handles of their weapons to accentuate this fact.

3.3 House Yurimaru

Elven Name: Bel'du'Vortese

Shogun-sun: Yurimaru Akiko

House Symbol: a black dragon

Location: Manchukuo

House Yurimaru is lead by Shogun Akiko Yurimaru, a celestial adept. This is a rarity among the Shogun and Shogun-sun as most Shogun are warriors. She is married to an extremely handsome male named Ashiro.

House Yurimaru is known for its long quest to find the Black Dragon that once taught their race true honour. This has led to a small following in other Houses, and has even spawned divergent beliefs as to how the Drae came to be, though House Yurimaru believes strongly in the largely accepted version of their origin.

House Yurimaru's university boasts good martial training facilities, but also contains some of the best teachers in the arts of magic.

Every night the House partakes in a ritual known as the drinking of black dragon's blood. This is a tea ceremony in which they drink black tea (oolong) to remember their origins.

4. The Lesser Houses

4.1 House Kirin

Elven Name: Maison de Bashir

Shogun: Grande Madam Soliel Bashir Sous de Nuit (Shogun Kirin Tsuami)

House Symbol: A dragon spider

Location: Manchukuo

House Kirin is the second largest House in Manchukuo. They have a strong elven belief and their ruling family goes by the name Sous de Nuit, and tends to use Elven names instead of their traditional Drae names. House Kirin is one of the wealthiest Houses in Manchukuo, largely due to their strong merchant ties with the surface world. Known as a merchant House among the Drae, they bring goods from far off lands to sell in Ryu-chen and Manchukuo, and sell Drae goods abroad. Many Houses come to them to sell their goods, thus they are well respected among the Houses.

Because of their travels to the surface, the Drae of House Kirin are known to wear veils and carefully avoid exposure to bright light to avoid damaging their skin.

4.2 House Hiroaki

Shogun: Hiroaki Yamagata House Symbol: A pair of crossed katana

Location: Ryu-chen

Known as the monster killers, this House is located in a marsh-like area surrounding a dam on the outskirts of Ryu-chen. This House defends this dam with their lives against the monsters who would threaten it and Ryu-chen. Consequently they are well respected for their courage and for the role they play in defending Ryu-chen.

Further honouring his House is the fact that the Shogun's wife is of House Yurimaru. She was once a farmer, who gave up farming the noble lands to marry Yamagata.

Drae of this house typically wear silver ear rings and have a proud warrior heritage.

4.3 House Samura

Shogun: Samura Nikata (Nikatus Rex)

House Symbol: Uppercase lambda symbol (An upside down V)

Location: Ryu-chen

House Samura is primarily made of warriors and is run like a barracks, having no land aside from what they live and train on. All of Samura's warriors attend the Yakuru University for martial training, and then return to Samura to take up the way of the warrior.

They are the ultimate of elite warriors among the Drae, believing they are the first chosen of the Black Dragon that once ruled all of the Drae, and this training is further ingrained during their training. Warriors often try and marry into House Samura if that is what they want to be.

When inducted into the ranks of the House, you are given a Latin name and rank. Latin is the battle and House language of House Samura. Calling another House member by their Drae name would be akin to calling them a child and thus be considered a grave insult.

Warriors of this House are so tightly knit that none are left behind in battle, ever. They have no ninja, and normally do not join Human nobility. They rarely even venture to the surface.

Despite all this, the House has a very simple beauty to it. If one does not seek the path of war, one can find peace and tranquility here. Even the Rai of this House are plain by standards of other Houses. The warrior mindset of this House is tempered by ritual and meditation, granting them peace of mind despite their warrior heritage.

The Shogun of House Samura, Nikata Samura, is over 900 years old and occasionally teaches at the Yakuru University. She was once a formidable fighter in her youth and continues to have a fire within her spirit despite living through scandal and peace. Her House is unabashedly proud of being the longest lived Shogun.

Drae of House Samura tattoos their House crest on their chest, and if they are warriors, rank is scarred underneath the crest. Medals of valour are scarred onto the face. This leads many of Samura's warriors to wear helmets to protect their faces.

4.4 House Tomoko

Shogun: Tomoko Hokusai

House Symbol: A torii arch

Location: Ryu-chen

House Tomoko's lands consist of cold swamps located very near House Hiroaki. The anti-irrigation techniques used throughout Ryu-chen however do not seem to be able to rectify this problem.

The middle aged Shogun of this House has made it the biggest alchemy supplier in Ryu-chen. His main customer is House Hiroaki, who uses his House's alchemy to help defend Ryu-chen.

Recently House Tomoko has started bidding on plans for some of the more recent engineering innovations from the surface through House Itto-Ryu in an effort to expand their exports beyond alchemy. However they currently have to bid against House Anotsu as that House attempts to regain some of their lost prestige.

House Tomoko's Drae refuse to do business with anyone they have not eaten with.

4.5 House Saito

Shogun: Saito Hiro

House Symbol: A flaming omega symbol

Location: Ryu-chen

House Saito is a relatively small House, but it is well respected and is located near a fairly large iron mine. This House is known for its armour smithing, and for the devotion of its smiths. The Shogun of this House is a grizzled old Drae who believes strongly enough in the debt the Drae people owe to light and fire that he purposefully scarred his off hand by thrusting it into the fires of his forge long ago. His wife is a painter, and they have had 6 children together.

This house is not wealthy nor powerful, but their prowess at the crafting of armour and their iron mines make them well respected. They have close ties to House Samura and House Hiroaki as they sell both Houses armour.

The armour smiths of this house, in honour of their shogun, ritually scar their off hands. Members of this House generally wear great, if not master crafted, armour.

4.6 House Manji

Shogun: Manji Ashidaka

House Symbol: A red heart

Location: Ryu-chen

The Shogun of this house is a warrior in her mid-400s who trained at the University of Yakuru. After she graduated she taught martial training for 20 years, and met the love of her life in one of her students, 200 years her junior. His name was Otomo Samura, the youngest son of Nikita Samura. They courted for some time until he graduated and returned to his House to continue his training. At around the same time she was required to return home to fight for the title of Shogun. Upon receiving the title she sent 15 Rai and 15 Rin to House Samura to beg Shogun Nikita to allow Otomo to marry her. Nikita could hardly refuse the request after such a display, and Otomo came to House Manji fully ranked to help her solidify her position as Shogun.

House Manji is mostly farms, but has a strong warrior culture. They sell much of their crops to other Houses who rely more on their crafts. Their warriors are well respected, though they have kept to themselves in more recent centuries so their prestige is not what it could be.

The House is located closest to the House of the Rai, and as such any time the House of the Rai is threatened, it is House Manji who is called on to defend it. It has only happened 3 times in Drae history. The first and third times are forgotten and unspoken of respectively, but the second instance is well known, as it caused their old silver heart symbol to turn red.

Over 1000 years ago the Drae and neighbouring dwarves were at odds over tunneling rights. The Drae, haughty and proud, refused to negotiate, so the dwarves made a deal with the Dread Necromancer Jeristal. Jeristal told them simply that if the House of the Rai, the Drae who ran all of Drae society, were eliminated, the Drae would crumble under their axes. The dwarves jumped on this idea and invaded Ryu-chen, attacking the House of the Rai. The House of the Rai had no defenders, no warriors aside from their Shogun, and were killed repeatedly throughout the night through grotesque amounts of necromancy. The forces of House Manji tried to come to their aid, but found themselves unable to pierce the defenses the dwarves had set out around the House of the Rai.

The next night, as they heard more screams of the dying within the House of the Rai, the warriors of House Manji took up a great battle cry. The caverns of Ryu-chen shook with their ferocity as they whipped themselves into a great battle frenzy. The warriors of House Manji attacked the dwarves, slaughtering those in their path as they moved into the House of the Rai. The dwarves pleaded with the Dread Necromancer Jeristal to save them from their enemies, but he simply informed them that he had done his part. They had the intelligence and the means to fight back, and they did not need him. With that he used his magic to escape. The dwarves fought back against the Manji warriors but wavered at the sight of the great battle frenzy and were soon forced out of Ryu-chen. House Manji did not relent, and continued to slaughter the dwarves until fully half of House Manji had fallen. Jeristal was never found.

In memory of those nights, House Manji now wears red hearts upon their person, and all have an intense dislike of dwarves.

4.7 House Yoru

Shogun: Yoru Katsichima

House Symbol: A long dragon pennant, usually drawn fluttering in the wind

Location: Ryu-chen

This house is the ambassadors and diplomats of Drae society. This House has few lands, mostly just a thin tract, but boasts the largest foreign quarters of all the Houses. They are also storytellers, teachers and keepers of lore. The Library of Bontenmaru is located here and is a vast repository of knowledge. Most of the fortune tellers of Drae society belong to this House as well, typically using the art of reading carved stone or wood charms. However the most popular method among foreigners is the reading of tea leaves, an ancient practice among Drae many consider antiquated.

They often hold titles on the surface; in fact the Duke of Teleria, Yoru no Takahiro is a member of this House. On the rare occasion he returns home the Shogun and the Duke show each other the same amount of deference, despite the fact that the Duke owes no deference to the Shogun. This he does out of respect for the House and his culture.

The Rai of this House are legendary among the Drae, for they must be able to learn the customs of all of the peoples this House has dealing with and host the most prestigious of dignitaries. They are masters of conversation and negotiation, and must be so with incomplete knowledge of other races.

In recent times House Yoru and House Kirin have been at odds, House Kirin wishing to expand its mercantile efforts on the surface without going through House Yoru. This has caused some tension between the two Houses.

Because of their regular dealing with the surface dwellers of Tyrra, they see the sky more often than most Drae. As such they have more celestial casters within their House than most Houses, being one of the few Houses in Ryu-chen to have a Celestial Circle within the House proper.

Drae of this House tend to carry scroll cases, and usually pride themselves on their knowledge. Most Drae adventurers come from this House.

4.8 House Mutenichi

Shogun: Mutenichi Masamura

House Symbol: A katana superimposed over a waterfall

Location: Ryu-chen

The Shogun of this House has the distinction of being the youngest Shogun in Ryu-chen at age 87. She became Shogun at the age of 78 when her older sister was convinced to marry the Shogun of House Anotsu, leaving no other eligible person. Because she was not an adult by Drae standards, The Three convened to determine her fate and the fate of her House. They determined that for her to earn the title of Shogun she must go on a quest, performing a task for each of The Three. Shogun-sun Yurimaru tasked her with going into the earth to search for the dragon that created them. Shogun-sun Otsutsu tasked her with delivering a message to friends of the Shogun's in the Hand of the Earth. However the easiest task, or potentially most difficult depending on how one looks at it, was given by Shogun-sun Yakuru. She tasked her with finding that which made her truly happy.

Masamura returned one year later bearing the Warmth of Tyrra, a letter from the Hand of the Earth, and a panther sarr child. No one knows or has worked up the courage to ask if the child is her son, her only answer is that yes, he is her responsibility. She became engaged to a weapon smith of her own house, 300 years her senior and a widower. They married 2 years later when she became of age.

Shogun Masamura is an earthen adept and is fanatical about her House, having only one Rai and keeping her House staff to a minimum.

While this House has lands, those lands have been mostly left to the wilderness. Instead this House lives by the way of the sword, crafting weapons of exquisite quality. It is said the Emperor's personal sword was crafted by this House long ago.

Drae of this House also tend to have a strong affinity with nature, viewing their lands with a sense of peace despite the wild nature of them. Warriors of this House often meditate in the wilds with their weapons; letting the scenery bring them a sense of tranquility their violent lives sometimes prevent them from having. Warriors of this House who lose or misplace their weapons tend to consider it a grave dishonour and stop at nothing to retrieve them if stolen or lost, feeling like half a person until their weapon is returned to them.

The warriors of this House also started the fad of "Death Poems", writing a haiku and leaving it behind when ordered into a battle they knew for certain they would not return from alive, and leaving it behind for their loved ones. It was believed that transferring ones sorrow and courage into the pen helped them do the same with their sword. Warriors of other Houses sometimes practice this as well, some famous Death Poems are even now on display in the Library of Bontenmaru in House Itto-Ryu.

Drae of this House typically carry master crafted weapons with purple wrappings on the hilt. Purple is considered a youthful colour among the Drae, and on their hilts it is a way of honouring their young Shogun.

4.9 House Anotsu

Elven Name: Jean D'Estance

Shogun: Anotsu Jubai

House Symbol: A flower with a small dragon curled around the stem

Location: Manchukuo

House Anotsu was rocked over almost two decades ago when its previous Shogun, Eiku Anotsu, tried to topple the ruling House of Manchukuo, House Yurimaru. Their plans were foiled by House Kirin, and thus House Kirin earned much prestige and some of Anotsu's lands. They have not gotten over this dishonour, and talks of a blood feud between them and House Kirin still surface as both Houses posture against each other behind the scenes of polite society.

The Shogun of this House is married to Sakura Mutenichi, the elder daughter of that House. She was next in line to become Shogun of that House, but instead chose to marry Jubai to solidify his hold on House Anotsu, leaving her child sister to run House Mutenichi.

House Anotsu has recently been bidding against House Tomoko for rights to plans brought to Ryu-chen by House Itto-ryu for engineering items. House Anotsu wants these schematics badly, wishing to reestablish its identity among the Drae Houses. Before its fall from grace it was one of the biggest dealers in magical items, on top of having some of the best farm lands in Manchukuo. With its shame also came a loss of many of their loyal customers, and much of their better crop lands to House Kirin.

Drae of this House once wore their hair in long, elaborate braids. Upon their shaming as a House they all ritually cut off their braids and shaved their heads. In recent years none wear their hair past shoulder length. High ranking Manji sometimes tie a small braid into their bangs out of remembrance of their past glory, but these don't reach down past their shoulders.

4.10 House Daimyo

Shogun: Daimyo Ohira

House Symbol: A dragon on its hind legs holding a large goblette

Location: Ryu-chen

This House is an extremely large House that has to hire farmers and craftsmen to help farm its lands. They have an enormous training facility, but the vast majority of this House become artisans and craftsmen. They have good relations with the House of the Rai, a House that greatly appreciates this House's skills.

In order to become a master at artistic crafts, it is considered essential to marry into this House. This House boasts some of the best artistic craftsmen in all of Drae society. Ohiro's wife is such a skilled kimono maker she is back logged with orders that is longer than she is believed to live. This House is known for making kimonos, paintings, furniture, tapestries, and other such fine works, many families specializing in a specific craft.

Artisans and craftsmen of this House devote themselves to their craft in much the same way House Samura devotes themselves to the ways of war. Upon graduating from university, Drae of this House apprentice themselves to a master for no less than 50 years. Only at the end of this apprenticeship are they considered true craftsmen and allowed to work on their own.

Drae of this House typically paint a single white or silver line from their chin to the bottom of their lower lip. The Shogun paints two.

5. Life Cycle and Family

Drae are known to live as long as most other elves, some living as long as 1,000 years. At the age of 40, the Celebration of the Child is held. At this time gifts are given to the young Drae and they start on their journey towards adulthood. Some gifts are things like swords or tools the child might need in their chosen field, though gold is accepted as well. If the child looks like a worthy

candidate for joining the Ninja or the Rai, this is usually the time they are approached. The child and their family typically wear purple while celebrating, as it is considered a youthful colour.

A Drae reaches adulthood at the age of 80. Upon reaching 80 years of age a celebration is held in the House of the Rai, or at great expense the House of the Rai can be summoned to perform the celebration in the celebrant's House. Drae wine, made from rice and mushrooms and known for its potency, is served throughout the celebration. The celebration is usually known to last for weeks, or until the celebrant runs out of money. The various Houses and Families have their own traditions and rites of passage the celebrant must pass, though these are mostly light hearted.

5.1 Marriage

Marriage is a very serious and somber celebration among the Drae. Once one marries, they are joined for life and can not marry another unless their mate permanently dies. Before marriage the House of the Rai is contacted to negotiate among the two Houses involved over things such as who will take who's name, what the couple will wear (always white), and how the marriage will be performed as each House has their own traditions and ceremonies. The marriage is never conducted by anyone below the rank of Kyokujitsu Sho. Decorations for such events are typically done in red, red being the colour of love, passion and marriage.

Most Drae strongly discourage mating with another race, though due to their relation to Elves, mating with another race of Elf is considered tolerable, as is with Humans though it is even more discouraged due to their short life spans. Mating with any other race is unheard of.

Since it is impossible to create a mixed race child (any child is always one race or another), any child not born Drae is not usually treated all too well. They are either doomed to live in the foreign quarters for the rest of their lives, or be banished to the surface world and be considered Ronin. Very rarely, depending on the tolerance of the House's traditions, the child

may be allowed to live within the House proper and be raised as a Drae. It is so rare for Drae to marry a non Drae, it is generally common knowledge that little over a dozen non-Drae are allowed within the cities.

6. Racial Nobility and Ranks

Emperor/Empress: This title is not an active title anymore.

Shogun-sun: The leader of one of The Three.

Go-sun: Family of the Shogun-sun.

Shogun: The leader of one of the eleven other Houses.

Sho-sun: Family of the Shogun.

Nika: Clan Leader.

Kabach: High Knight General

Habach: Knight General

Kikka Sho: Knight Major

Kyokujitsu Sho: Knight

Zuiho Sho: Corporal Guardsmen

Kinshi Sho: Cadet Guardsmen

Manchukuo: Scout

7. Ninja

Despite the hide bound honour of each House, the seclusion of each House combined with varying traditions, customs and rules mean that when nefarious deeds would come to pass, no one would know about it until it was too late. However that is not true as each House has spies. None would ever admit it. They are an official lie as no Drae ever admits to the existence of the ninja. The need for spies is a necessary evil, but none admit it. On top of this, it is considered

dishonourable to order a smaller House into battle if it is in dire straights, for both Houses. It is also considered dishonourable to be unable to follow a Shogun's orders. Thus ninja are regularly hired to fight for them. They are also commonly hired when dealing with marriages by both Houses/families to be sure of the other's intentions.

Most Rogues in Drae society eventually join the Ninja Guild. Those who do not are those who hide their fighting style from those around them. The Ninja Guild is a brotherhood of spies and assassins always led by the strongest Rogues in Ryu-chen. That person's House does not matter. Because this position is held by the strongest and most cunning Rogues, plots and schemes abound around this person.

The rest of the guild holds no rank within the guild. None ever admit to being a ninja and have a separate life outside of the guild. If ever caught as a spy or assassin, they commit seppuku (ritual suicide). The Earth Guilds never ask questions of how one dies, they only accept donations.

Hiring a ninja is a complicated affair. The Shogun of the House wishing to hire a ninja tells their most trusted Rai that they need the services or a "thoughtful servant". That Rai communicates that need to the Shogun of the Rai. The Shogun of the Rai is the only one who knows the identity of the leader of the Ninja Guild, and thus they negotiate the contract. A ninja of the same House as those needing one is chosen, and all payment is done through the Rai. A portion of the money goes to the leader of the Ninja Guild. Ninja are chosen from the hiring House to make sure that they are totally loyal.

While ninja will act as spies and hired muscle, assassination is a very distasteful affair. Only Ronin are killed through assassination normally. Because of the fact that people can simply resurrect multiple times, it is exceedingly rare to ever have a Shogun order the death of a non-Ronin, since one death would not likely mean permanent death and multiple attempts on someone's life would be exceedingly costly and dishonourable.

7.1 Ninja Code

Ninja live by their own code, on top of the honour codes they hold dear. The laws of the Guild are complex, but they can be laid out simply:

Your responsibility is to your House.

Your responsibility is to the Guild.

Your responsibility is to the Rai.

Seek the places with no light, until your deed is done.

Let none witness your actions.

Go silently.

No wasted movement, thought or breath.

Have another, public life – it makes one accountable.

Suffer not the Ronin to live.

8. Ronin

A Ronin is a Drae outcast. Normally, it is almost impossible to have a dishonourable Drae due to their upbringing. The closest are the ninja but even they have a strict code and are bound by the tenants of honour.

Usually a Ronin is someone who has made unforgivable mistakes, or taken on dishonour in the name of their House or liege. Another way to become a Ronin is to Race Change. A Drae who Race changes into another race by accident need only make reparations to their House and are

treated as foreigners until they do. However a Drae who intentionally race changes into a non-Drae, or a non-Drae who race changes into a Drae is automatically a Ronin.

When one becomes a Ronin, they are banished from the underground, cursed to walk in the sunlight. Most Ronin choose to commit seppuku until permanent death, while others become outlaws. Some Houses hire ninja to hunt and kill any Ronin from their House to remove their shame.

9. Racial Conventions and Beliefs

Drae usually refer to themselves as Vornae, but when speaking about themselves to other races, they call themselves Drae. While most believe that both are acceptable ways of referring to their race, some of the more xenophobic Drae prefer that non-Drae not call them Vornae. Some people like to refer to the Drae as Dark Elves, and many are known to take offense at this based on the belief that calling them Dark Elves means they are a lesser form of Elf.

9.1 Names and Lineage

The naming conventions among the Drae are fairly simple in one way, but can be complex in another. The first word in the person's full name is always their title, followed by their family name, given name, house name. When the House name is the same as the family name, they are not repeated. A Shogun's immediate family would have the word "no" between their family name and given name.

Normally the name of a Drae is in Japanese, the racial language of the Drae, but some houses have also adopted other forms of naming. House Kirin for instance likes to have an Elven (French) name as well as their Drae name, and the Spartan House of Samura have a Roman name. These differences are noted in their entry in the list of Houses.

Because of these extra and different names, outsiders sometimes become confused as to what to call Drae they encounter (they do not know which of the names their given name is). Generally speaking it is considered impolite to refer to someone whom you are not familiar with a short form version of their name. It is always polite to use their full name, unless they introduce themselves with the shortened version of their name they prefer.

9.2 Death

Drae consider death a part of their lives. While they are not reckless and do what they can to survive much like any other race, they accept death as part of their existence. If their superior orders them to their deaths they see it as a matter of honour.

Drae burn their dead. Because of their strong ties to Tyrra and their hatred of Necromancy, they would never keep a body whole out of fear it might be used in an unseemly manner. Once the corpse is burnt their ashes are spread over their House's lands (or other places if they left a last request), and a plaque is erected in the family crypt. The ashes of Drae heroes and nobility are often known to be stored within the House for display as a show of honour to the dead. The urns housing these honoured dead are elaborately made and usually inlaid with precious metals and gems. It is considered a great honour among the general population to have an urn made by House Daimyo's artisans, though many Houses prefer to make the urn themselves out of respect for the dead.

Every night for a year, the family spreads white pigment under their eyes to signify their mourning. Those who die dishonourably are usually burnt with no record, and their ashes are spread over the surface away from their home to forever bake in the sun.

Drae consider black the colour of life, and white the colour of death. This is sort of odd when one considers that a couple being life mated typically wear white.

9.3 Seasonal Holidays and Festivals

The Drae do not have any seasonal festivals or celebrations as a race. Each House has their own celebrations and such based on House customs and traditions and are too numerous to list here.

9.4 Necromancy / Hedge Wizardry

It is considered unthinkable to use necromancy as a Drae, and is an easy way to become a Ronin. Because of the fact they live underground and their long lives, the Drae believe they have a closer affinity to Tyrra than any other race, including Dwarves. Thus any magic that would cause Tyrra harm, like necromancy, is seen as weakening their bond with Tyrra and an offense against the Drae as a race.

Hedge wizardry has no deeply ingrained racial stigma against it, but because of the laws set forth by the Towers it is illegal to use Hedge wizardry. As such it is simply not openly practiced or tolerated.

9.5 Ceremony

Most Drae ceremonies, aside from the coming of age celebration at the age of 80, are somber affairs. Most celebrations in Drae culture revolve around perfection of rituals.

Throughout their lives, Drae perform many rituals. In schools there are rituals for greeting a teacher and going about classes. There are rituals surrounding martial training to show respect for the art, such as proper seating and stances during training, and the order of exercises. Even

in their daily lives rituals exist everywhere. These rituals are varied based on House and family tradition, thus players playing a Drae are encouraged to come up with any they wish.

Good examples of small rituals are formal bows (usually with both feet together pointed forward, arms at the side, bowing at the waist), or the cleaning of the blade of a sword with a white cloth or paper after a kill to cleanse the blade and keep it pure.

10. Racial Laws and Values

While each House has its own rules and traditions, the tenants of honour bind them together. A Drae generally chooses 3 of the following codes of honour to uphold, more if they choose to. These can also be found in the race's entry in the official Nero Canada Rulebook:

1. Serenity - After every battle you must spend 10 minutes in quiet meditation in order to calm your mind and body. Activities such as treasure split and so on can wait. If you are on a module or adventure with multiple encounters you may consider the whole module or adventure 1 battle and meditate after. You must do your best to cleanse your body of any effects that have a duration, such as Slow and Disease, before beginning the meditation.
2. The Bushido Way - In order to be eligible for this code you must have at least 1/3 of your build tied up in weapon skills. You must accept unconditional surrender. You may not attack an unarmed opponent.
3. Duty - Once you agree to a contract you will follow through to the letter until the contractor betrays the contract or the conditions of the contract are met.

4. Purity - You shall never use alchemy or bombs against your foes and you shall never accept beneficial alchemy or traps.

5. Honesty - You shall never tell a lie nor steal an item of worth.

6. Pacifism - You find violence appalling and refuses to harm any living creature. Harm is defined by dealing the creature damage. Sleep, confining magics and curses are acceptable forms of passive defense/offense. You may wield weapons but these weapons must be used for defense and may not be used to deal damage to a living creature. You may not Killing Blow a living creature. You may participate in duels of honour normally, but may not fight to the death. Un-dead and Constructs are not considered living creatures, nor is anything that lacks a metabolism.

7. Etiquette - You shall not enter a domicile unless invited. You shall not attack someone inside their domicile unless they attack you first. You must show due respect and courtesy to all of a higher rank than yourself. A Drae who vows to follow the codes of etiquette bows before those who are their superiors when they greet them, and always uses a person's proper title, regardless of familiarity. They must also introduce themselves by their full name whenever possible. While Drae on the surface can accept the use of their given name and will answer to it, they introduce themselves always by full name. They may never lie about their name or attempt to conceal it.

8. Face - You value how others regard your public self a great deal. Should you be publicly embarrassed by an individual you must obtain a public apology on the spot or duel them. Should the embarrassment come from a non citizen race then you simply attack instead of following the dueling code.

9. Vengeance - Your honour demands that you repay any insult, attack or betrayal. You do not forgive. You may pick an appropriate time and place but the vengeance must be of equal or greater impact upon your victim as the original insult, attack or betrayal was upon yourself.

10. Shogun - Your honour demands that you swear to follow another which you regard greater than yourself. You tie your fate to theirs and should they die finally you will take one death to honour their passing. You must be in the same organization as your master and you must always be one rank or more below them. A Drae hopes to have a master that is also a Drae but an outsider may be chosen in rare circumstances. Unless it breaks other tenets of your honour code you must obey the master.

On top of the honour codes there are some standard conventions shared by all Drae. One of these is seppuku. It is seen as the last resort for the dishonoured. All dishonour is washed away by death. Thus one who is dishonoured and cannot restore their honour in a reasonable manner usually commits ritual suicide. Typically this is done by stabbing oneself in the stomach and having a trusted friend or relative cut off your head, but it can be done in just about any way. Some Houses and families have their own traditions surrounding seppuku, and are too numerous to list here.

Only when the person dissipates is their honour restored. It is the act of willingly weakening one's spirit, and even risking permanent death, that restores one's honour; and it must be done at the person's own hands.

Another main tenant shared by most Houses is based around duels. While normally in the Kingdom duels are used to settle disputes, Drae take it further and use duels to settle many issues of honour.

Swords play a large role in Drae culture. A Drae warrior considers his sword a part of themselves, and normally will not be parted from them. Typically a Drae swordsman will sleep with his weapons beside him. As such, in places where most weapons would not be allowed, swords are typically allowed to be worn out of respect for tradition. While many Drae feel the same affinity for other weapons, only swords are shown this kind of respect as a culture. Those of high station tend to wear paired katana/wakizashi swords.

11. Opinions of Others

11.1 Barbarians

While their warrior culture is respectable, their use of Necromancy in the past has many Drae distrustful of them.

11.2 Biata

Their strict adherence to rules and their extensive knowledge are both worthy traits.

11.3 Dwarves

Once they had dealings with them, and considered them strong and stalwart allies. However old hatreds fade slowly over long lives, and few can forget the attack on the House of the Rai.

11.4 Half-Orcs

Drae usually leave Half-Orcs alone. While they have some semblance of honour, they are too savage for their tastes.

11.5 High Elves:

Drae have a strong affinity with High Elves, seeing them as pale faced shadows of the Drae.

11.6 Hobblings

Good natured and lively, Hobblings make some of the more strict Drae uncomfortable. There are few official dealings with them.

11.7 Humans

The Drae have a strong respect for the human King, who rules them in place of their Emperor. Humans though vary greatly from person to person, so too does Drae opinion of them.

11.8 Mystic Wood Elves

For the most part the two races don't deal with each other much, being near complete opposites.

11.9 Ogrim

Savages with a sense of honour and a strong warrior culture. While most Drae leave them alone, some think they could be trained in the ways of true honour.

11.10 Sarr

Drae consider Sarr to be blood thirsty savages with little moral standards as a people. It is only because of their joining together in Prides that makes them better than Scavengers.

11.11 Scavengers

Drae consider Scavengers a motley race of misfits. While they show some of the same diversity as Humans in mentality, the fact they are "half-breeds" ranks them lower in the eyes of the Drae.

11.12 Stone Elves

While worthy of respect, their lack of emotion makes them heartless. If they continue to grow ever heartless, they will no longer be elves.

11.13 Gypsies

Drae generally consider Gypsies as liars and thieves, despite having little to no experience with the people beyond stories from travelers.

11.14 Wild Elves

They may be savages, but they are elves. This grants them a certain kinship with the Drae.

11.15 Earth Guild

Drae have a strong affinity with Tyrra and as such have a much closer affinity to the Earth Guild than the Celestial. However they consider magic in general inferior to martial training, thus the Earth Guilds tend to perform midwife-like duties, though they do act as advisors and the core for the appreciation of Tyrra.

Each and every House has a permanent Earth circle located within the House proper, and another located in their foreign quarter.

11.16 Celestial Guild

Since the Drae rarely see the stars, most celestial casters are usually considered “touched”, derided as fortune tellers and visionaries. Most Houses only keep a permanent Celestial Circle in their foreign quarters.

It is only because of both House Yurimaru and House Yoru is Celestial casting treated with any amount of respect in Drae society.

11.17 The Kingdom

The Drae have a great appreciation of the Kingdom, mainly because of the King. Not only is he a powerful leader, but his connection to Tyrra is unparalleled. The Drae once considered themselves the race closest to Tyrra, but the King makes them feel doubtful (though none ever admit it openly). Only when the Drae as a people become powerful once again will they even consider being ruled by an Emperor.

While living below the Kingdom, they are a part of it. The Shogun of the various houses are granted title within the Kingdom. The Shogun-son of The Three are considered equivalent to Barons, while the Shogun are considered Lords.

11.18 The Fae

In general the Drae have few dealings with the fae. They are considered flighty creatures with little sense of loyalty, and even less sense of honour. Were it not for the role they play in the grand scheme of things the Drae would ignore them entirely.

12. Portraying a Drae

Drae are supposed to have black skin and white, silver or blonde hair. As such you should attempt to cover your entire face, if not all exposed skin, in black make-up. A make-up sealant is best used to keep this make-up from running due to sweat. If you can not find a good hair spray, keeping your hair inside of a hat/helmet works, using a wig, or both. A wig is preferred. Make-up sticks work great for eyebrows and facial hair that is too fine to use hair sprays on.

It is best to wear Asian style clothing (unless from House Samura who use more Roman/Greek clothes) such as kimonos, tabi boots, hakama, karate uniforms or even ninja outfits. Black is the colour of life, white is the colour of death, red is for passion and marriage, and purple is

considered a youthful colour, so keep all this in mind when thinking of colour schemes. When possible, try and cover up any exposed skin not covered in make-up.

Avoid sunlight when you can, either staying in the shade, using large hats/umbrella, or just not going out during the day. Not only is this very much in character for a race that shuns the sunlight, it is also a good tip to stay cool on hot summer days. It's a win-win situation.

Drae are typically freaks about honour and station. Always try to use proper titles and honourifics for people and expect to do a lot of bowing, even if you do not prescribe to the Etiquette honor code listed earlier. Ignore people who have little or no honour unless they insult/challenge you. If dishonoured, seek relentlessly to restore your honour. When all else fails, death removes all dishonour.