

KUREI

GENE RECK

History & the Procedure

All peoples have an origin story and the *Kurei* are no different. Many say that they were made from the scrap clay from a giant project of great significance. It is possible, but impossible to know for sure. In any case, they do exist and live like all peoples. Naturally, they began to think and reason that resulted in the long search for a purpose and meaning for their being and existing. Out of all the searching, thinking and discussing a hierarchy evolved. The beautiful white porcelains were, of course, at the top; followed by the stonewares, earthenwares with the serviceable red terra cottas at the bottom. Those that could withstand the hottest fires were the best and natural leaders the porcelains said repeatedly.

Not all the peoples agreed with this system and the porcelains analysis of it – so a struggle began. It continued for a long time and the people tired of it. Being made of clay they broke rather easily. The fights lead to large losses to all the people. However, they learned that being cracked does not mean that you are broken and that all the people could be strong and honorable in many circumstances. Out of the conflicts the central idea of their society was born: that all clays might have differing properties but were, in fact, created equal and no one was above or below another. In describing them no pronouns are used as gender is a personal issue. They also recognized, through trial and error, that the jobs, roles and

positions they held were not who each of them actually were.

Of course, conflicts still occurred. So the *Kurei* devised a formal way to teach these values and ideals, and use them to conduct and settle disputes. They called the procedure *Sensou*. When described you will realize that it is similar in many ways to the game that humans call Chess. Humans learned the rules of chess from the *Kurei*, but failed to learn the lesson they were trying to teach through the procedure. *Sensou* has features that the human game lacks – as it was developed to emphasize the central idea of equality.

The contending groups form sixteen member teams. The team members are each assigned a number from one to sixteen. The starting field positions are arranged as in chess, but the team members are assigned to a field position by a random process. All team members must be prepared to play the role assigned to their position. In other words, in any given conflict a team member might be in any role. Specialization for the procedure is not possible. The role one has been assigned is designated by the robe they are wearing. The teams take turns moving on the playing field by consulting amongst themselves. Robes can be captured and removed from the field. Once they are removed they can no longer take part in the discussion of play. This leads to the development of a different style of play with different value placed on each robe.

Now about the positions and rules. The rules may be changed or features added by agreement between the contending teams, but they are generally as described below:

Sensou is played on a field divided into 64 equal areas (eight-by-eight) of alternating color. No matter what the actual colors of the field, the lighter-colored areas are called "light" or "white", and the darker-colored areas are called "dark" or "black." Sixteen "white" and sixteen "black" robes take the field at the beginning of the procedure. The field is arranged so that a white area is in each player's near-right corner.

Each original position has its own method of movement. A robe moves to a vacant area except when capturing an opponent's robe. The names here are an approximate translation of the original meanings of the positions.

- **The Philosopher** moves exactly one area horizontally, vertically or diagonally.
- **A Slider** moves any number of vacant areas in a horizontal or vertical direction.
- **An Advisor** moves any number of vacant areas in any diagonal direction always remaining on the same color.
- **The Minister** moves any number of vacant areas in a horizontal, vertical, or diagonal direction.
- **A Jumper** moves to the nearest area not on the same rank, file, or diagonal. (This can be thought of as moving two areas horizontally then one area vertically, or moving one area horizontally then two areas vertically - i.e. in an "L" pattern.) The jumper is not blocked by other robes. It jumps to the new location.

Walls have the most complex rules of movement: A Waller moves straight forward one area, if that area is vacant. If it has not yet moved, a Waller also has the option of moving two areas straight forward, provided both areas are vacant. Wallers cannot move backwards.

Walls are the only robes that capture differently from how they move. A Waller can capture an enemy robe on either of the two areas diagonally in front of the Waller, but cannot move to those areas if they are vacant.

Except for any move of the Jumper, robes cannot jump over other robes. A robe is captured (or taken) when an attacking enemy robe replaces it on its area the captured robe is thereby permanently removed from the field. The Philosopher can be threatened to be captured but cannot be captured. A team "wins" when it has arranged its robes so the Philosopher of the opposing side can make no allowed moves.

It is possible to arrive at arrangements of the players where it is not possible to achieve a "win" so that the issue under contention is not resolved.

At any point in the procedure except a "win" a team may realize they might lose, they may invoke Chaos but only once. When Chaos is invoked both teams must exchange the position of two of their players. It is often difficult to predict the outcome. And the other team can invoke chaos if the outcome is unfavorable.

The *Kurei* have successfully used this procedure to settle disputes involving their government, commerce, sports and other matters much too personal to discuss here!



FIELD



PHILOSOPHER



ADVISOR



MINISTER



JUMPER



SLIDER



WALLER