

The House of Swords

By the title, I'm sure you can all figure out exactly what I'm talking about, and for those of you who don't, I'm talking about New Babylon. It's found in one of the untouchable books in the South America series (South America 2 to be exact) and probably one of the most munchkin series of books in the entire Rifts saga (though I'm sure others will argue). I have always felt that South America was one of the most powerful settings ever described by C.J. Carella. Now, I like Carella's style of writing, but he had a severe problem with making every book he wrote more powerful than the last. Granted I know many of you may complain and bitch and moan that South America has no need for altering, but I never said that you needed to use anything here.

Anyway, for those of you interested in the revisions to South America, enjoy. I hope this is to your liking. Now here are my plans, as they stand at this moment. I will definitely be providing more information on the Silver River Republics (SRRs). What exactly that information is, I'm not sure. But I'll probably do some work on the Shining Path and definitely on New Babylon. I also plan on giving information on how to make the Incas, and I mean the True Incas, more playable. For some reason, I don't, personally, like playing Godlings as a player character or allowing them as GM. That's what I have in store at the moment, in addition to several other ideas I've been cooking up for New West and a little more on Europe.

And now, the House of Swords...

The House of Swords has been a part of the Amaki culture since the beginning of written history. The Amaki used to hold personal honor above all else. The House of Swords was an open school at that time, accepting anyone able to prove themselves able with a blade. Over time, the government changed, the times changed, and, most of all, the needs of the Amaki nation changed. The Amaki nation had expanded to cover more land area than ever, and soon found that they were not alone in their dimension. A war-like race of dbees, the Larhold (see South America 2), occupied a vast area of wilderness that had, as yet, gone unexplored. The Larhold were still primitive and had technology no higher than the equivalent of the iron age though the Blue Flame Shamanism was beginning to surface at this time. The Amaki were still primitive, by today's standards, but had developed psionics. These two races were nearly equal, except for one thing. The Amaki had formal training in the arts of war, developed tactics, and were much more skilled in hand to hand combat.

In the end, the Amaki won the war, pushing the Larhold further into the wilderness, but at great cost to the people in the number of lives lost and the amount of money spent. The government slowly began to decay, forcing the people to take over. This caused problems with who should be the leader. Each clan believed they were sole heirs to the right and civil war ensued for nearly three-quarters of a century. In the end, no one ruled. Instead, the vast landscape that made up the Amaki nation was split up, each clan ruling a different region.

The impact on the House of Swords, though not as profound, changed what many Amaki thought of as honor. While each family clan fought each other, the House of Swords remained neutral, not taking sides with any one house. Over the next fifty years, the House of Swords began to recruit and admit only Amaki who showed potential with psionics. They developed these students' skills into focused power and skill with swords. The House of Swords began to train the most highly skilled swordsmen, and the most deadly. The House of Swords training began with regular swords, the youngsters focusing their psychic energy into developing fighting ability with sabres and cutlasses. Later, on their day of graduation, the graduating Amaki will call forth a psi-sword.

These newly trained soldiers returned to their family clans, evening the score or, in some cases, giving a clan a great advantage. Another twenty-five years passed, and the civil war ended. The

six remaining clans, now calling themselves Houses, and the House of Swords formed an alliance. The alliance created a council composed of the ruler of each House, and two elders from the House of Swords for a total of eight elders. The House of Swords has academies located in the capital city of each clan's region, allowing it to remain perfectly neutral in the event of another war. The alliance has lasted since.

After three hundred years of peace (only the occasional skirmish with the Larhold) the Great Cataclysm took place on Rifts Earth, opening a rift in space to the Amaki dimension. Several hundred Amaki, from various Houses and cities, were transported to Rifts Earth, including teachers from the House of Swords.

By the time the Amaki began to appear on Rifts Earth, the Larhold had already been rifted into an area about fifty miles to the south and had begun to wander north. This caused several small skirmishes between the barbarians (as most of the people of what is now the Silver River Republics referred to the Larhold) and several of the human supremacist kingdoms.

Soon after the Amaki had been rifted in, they created a small city, isolated from much of the world. By the time Cordoba, Achilles and Lagarto even knew the Amaki had settled on the peninsula, the Amaki had created a new republic. The Republic was composed primarily of humans and Amaki, but dozens of other d-bee races are known to make homes in New Babylon, including True Atlanteans, Felinoids, and some of the more civilized lizard men.

During the course of the Republic's development, the Houses became more closely allied with each other, though the House of Swords continued to remain neutral. The six Houses make up a ruling council, composed of one delegate from each House, not necessarily the ruling elder of that House, along with two delegates from the House of Swords. This form of government has been a great asset for the Republic, keeping peace in the Republic.

The House of Swords remains the neutral party, even now, as a potential war with Cordoba looms on the horizon. The House of Swords now, not only training new Duelists (for more information on the Duelist R.C.C., pick up World Book 9: South America 2), but also hiring the Duelist's services out to other houses. You see, when the Amaki (or whatever race aspires to become a duelist) joins the House of Swords, he becomes a member of the House of Swords and gives up all rights and privileges afforded by his or her original House.

Not only does the House of Swords sell Duelists' services to other houses, but also to the ruling council. Few citizens are aware of the implications of this, and none are sure of exactly what takes place on these "confidential missions." What truly happens varies with the desired outcome of the counsel. Duelists are sent on spy/espionage missions, assassination and can even be sent out as a soldier. The most common missions are that of a spy. Duelists are sent to spy only in regions that are unaware of New Babylon and its citizens. Current nations with Amaki agents planted nearby or directly in the government include Tritonia (see Rifts: Underseas), Lazlo, the Coalition States, and Camelot. The Amaki have been responsible for few assassinations, though they can claim credit for some, such as the death of Doctor Victor Smythe in the Coalition States and even one of King Wyjolta's predecessors in the Tarnow Kingdom.

The House of Swords has, throughout Amaki history, been a neutral party. However, with the relocation to Rifts Earth, the House of Swords has become a source of rumor among the people, wondering what truly happens inside the House. All Duelists are sworn to silence. Any who reveal too much about the inner workings of the House of Swords is summarily hunted down and executed, along with the people to whom the Duelist revealed the information. Needless to say, few ever dare to reveal anything.

Well, there you have it. My interpretation of the House of Swords, including a little addition to the Amaki history. I hope you enjoyed it. Keep an eye out for more information on New Babylon,

especially descriptions and histories about each Amaki House. Feel free to email me anytime and give me feedback.

Article Written By: Thoth
thoth@interkan.net
26 January 1999