

# Shugenja Guide

by argent

## Table of Contents

1 – Cover

2 – Table of Contents

3 – Shugenja Role Overview

4 – Shugenja Rules

6 – DOs and DON'Ts

7 – Advantages/Disadvantages

8 – Tier System

9 – Tier X

10 – Tier I

13 – Tier II

17 – Tier III

20 – Tier 0

22 – Closing Thoughts

## General Shugenja Overview

You're a holy man who can communicate with spirits. Everyone can speak to the spirits in Rokugan, but in your case, they actually talk back. Mechanically, you're the most flexible character type in L5R 4e. You have access to the same skills that everybody else has and while you don't have Techniques, in a lot of cases spells are stronger than Techniques. With the right spell selection you can be a better bushi and/or a better courtier, or with good spell selection, better than both. You shouldn't do this for multiple reasons that should be obvious. Instead, you need to make sure your party, aka your fellow samurai succeed with your support. Everyone in Rokugan has a role to play, but you can certainly make them better at it, and then do the things that they literally can't.

## Shugenja Rules

- Spellcasting
  - Every spell has an element associated with it. You have a number of elemental spell slots equal to your Ring. So if you have 3 Agility and 3 Intelligence, your Fire ring is 3, therefore you have 3 Fire spell slots that you can use to cast a Fire spell of any rank.
  - Every spell has a Mastery rank associated with it. Each spell has its own mastery rank. The maximum mastery of a spell you can cast is determined by your total Insight Rank modified by your Affinity/Deficiency.
  - The roll to cast a spell is your (Shugenja School Rank(s) + Ring of the matching Element) Keep (Ring of the Matching Element). In our example from above, let's say we're an Insight rank 2 Shugenja. We would roll 5k3 when you cast your Fire spells.
  - Affinity/Deficiency essentially raise/lower your Mastery of the Elements. Void can never be an Affinity/Deficiency unless you pick your own Affinity/Deficiency and have the Ishiken-do Advantage.
    - Affinity means you get +1k0 to Spellcasting rolls of that Element and when you get to pick your free spells at level up, you can pick spells of one Mastery rank higher than your Insight rank. If you have Fire affinity at rank 1 and pick spells, you could pick Fire spells of Rank 1 and 2.
    - Conversely, Deficiency means you get -1k0 to Spellcasting of that Element and you must pick spells of one Mastery rank lower than your Insight for that Element. If you have Earth deficiency, at Insight rank 1, you couldn't pick any Earth spells as your starting spells. At Insight rank 2, you could only pick Earth 1 spells.
  - Spellcraft and Spellcasting are two different things! However, 5 ranks in Spellcraft will give you +1k0 on your Spellcasting rolls.
  - The TN for spellcasting is 5 + (Spell Mastery Rank x 5). So a Fire 3 spell would have a TN of 20. As per normal, Raises increase the TN by 5.
  - Void slots can be used for spells of any element. The same spellcasting rules from above apply.
    - If you're an Ishiken, you have access to special Void spells and then have the choice of using your Void spell slots for spells of any element or the Voidspells.
- Spellcasting Time
  - It takes a number of complex actions equal to the mastery of the spell to cast it. A Fire 3 spell will take 3 Complex Actions to cast.
  - You can call Raises to cast the spell faster, where One Raise = one less Complex Action. This can't be reduced to 0. Obviously, calling Raises increases TN, so be careful.
- Importuning
  - Importuning lets you cast any spell you potentially have access to, but it's gated behind three checks and two spell slots.
  - First, cast Commune with the spirit of the relevant element as normal.
  - Make a Spellcraft (Importune)/Ring of the matching element, with a TN of 15 higher than the spell's normal spellcasting TN. This takes 5 minutes per spell mastery of your character going "come onn" over and over again.
  - If you succeeded, you have access to this spell for one hour, and the Spellcasting roll is the spell's baseline TN + 15
- Magic Duels aka Taryu-Jiai
  - Full rules are on pg 184 in the Book of Fire.
  - Pick one of four Elements (no Void).

- Assessment. Spellcraft/Void. Whoever wins learns the Ring the opponent selected and the Rank in the Ring. 10 or more means you learn School Rank or Void Rank. You can bail during this step.
- Empower. Nothing happens except for concentration. Free Actions only otherwise.
- Strike. Opposed Spellcasting rolls. Winner deals 2k2 damage +1k1 per 5 point difference. Loser inflicts 1k1.
- Winner is whoever inflicted the most damage (if non-lethal) or death if lethal.

## DO:

- Buffs. A bushi that can move faster, swing harder, and so on will go through your enemies like a hot knife through butter.
- Control. This isn't D&D where there's plenty of control spells – no Grease, or Sleep, or Web – but that's okay, you're still brokedick as fuck. Conjure walls of earth, overlay illusions of heat and fire, make your infiltrator literally invisible, and so on.
- AoE damage. You're really the only one who can reliably do it. Don't go overboard, but one, maybe two spells (ideally ones that do something else) that can wipe out a squad of baddies would be worthwhile.
- Utility. Talk across the empire, illusions, healing – if there's something that your bushi or courtiers can't do, then you should pick those things up.
- Importune spells you don't have. Some spells are very situational. Don't waste your "free" spell slots learning them. You can give up two spell slots to get the exact right spell for the situation. More on that later.
- Talk to spirits. You're the only one who can and even if you're not doing an investigation-heavy game, being able to talk to the local spirits is always worthwhile to keep you informed. If you are doing investigation, even though spirit testimony is inadmissible, it's still a valuable thing for you to follow up on.
- Go for 3 in all your Rings as fast as possible. Rings = spell slots. Spell slots = good. Once you have that, go for Void 4. Or have a Ring that starts out at 4 if you want to specialize in a type of magic.
- Spend time researching new spells. It doesn't cost XP to make spell scrolls. If you're not doing anything else, you should be researching.
- Memorize some emergency spells. Some spells are very useful to always have access and it's not inconceivable that you don't have your scroll satchel on you. Memorize some spells that you absolutely need to have access to.

## DON'T:

- Single-target damage. Yes, sometimes it's acceptable, especially if you need to deal with something that regular steel won't work against, but generally speaking most of your spells will barely outpace a bushi. Buff the bushi instead.
- Replicate skills and abilities. If your Courtier can discern what someone's Disadvantages are, don't waste a spell slot or even bothering learning a spell that lets you do this. Some redundancy is fine, but you have other shit.
- Neglect your skills. You're likely to have good Rings, so utilize them. One rank + 3 in a Ring is 4k3 which is enough to have an 83% chance of success on an average skill check. Spend a VP to make it 5k4 to have a good chance to get TN 20. Have a combat skill too in case you do need to defend yourself.
- Use magic where the mundane suffices. If a person is only barely wounded, don't use Regrow the Wound, use Medicine. If your Infiltrator needs a distraction, throw a rock, instead of Gift of Wind.
- Over-memorize spells. It costs XP and doesn't raise your Insight.
- Use Maho. It's surprisingly weak and Taint is incurable.

## Advantages/Disadvantages:

### Good

- Friendly Kami. +1k1 to the basic shugenja spells. Very solid especially in an investigation-heavy game.
- Higher Purpose. You need XP more so than others. Get this.
- Ishiken-do. A lot of the Void spells are very good. It IS expensive, however.
- Luck. It's always good and worthwhile. Even though unless you're Water-deficient, you start with a spell that's as strong as Luck, it's still good.
- Crab Hands/Crafty/Sage/Sensation/Soul of Artistry. Since you are likely to have relatively high Rings, these are worthwhile for you. Sage more so than others because people expect the shugenja to be a font of knowledge. Do not disappoint them.
- Fascination. This one is a cheap 1 point and it makes sense for a Shugenja to be fascinated by harmless things that other people don't understand.
- Wrath of the Kami. It's flavorful but also, if you're a shugenja yourself, you're not likely to engage in a spell-slinging duel, but rather taryu-jiai, special shugenja duels.

### Bad

- Elemental Blessing. The amount of XP saved isn't worth it.
- Enlightened. Same.
- Forbidden Knowledge: Maho. You would think that learning the horrible blood rites would be worthwhile. But fact is, most Maho is actually really garbage and it destroys your immortal soul (and your character knows IC that this exists) so unless you can become some sort of undead, don't bother.
- Friend of the Elements. Unfortunately, this won't give you Free Raises on Spellcasting. It has some use if you're interrupted while casting spells frequently, but it's a bit of a trap option.
- Magic Resistance. The increase is too low and it doesn't protect you against most things that you'd care about. Shugenja aren't going to be slinging spells at each other too often.
- Cursed by the Realm: Maigo no Musha. Very bad since this is like, 50% of what you do.
- Dark Fate. This isn't bad for shugenja, it's just bad in general. 3 points for causing the Kaiu Wall to fall? Yeah okay.
- Disbeliever. It CAN work but mechanically speaking, since you'd need to deal with other shugenja for scrolls, collaborative research, or even going back to your dojo, it's very harsh for not enough points.
- Elemental Imbalance. No. You don't want your spells going haywire. Even if your Willpower is high, it's not worth the points.
- Momoku. This MIGHT seem tempting, because you might think you don't need Void Points because you have spell slots. No. You need them for the higher mastery spells.
- Touch of the Void. While it might seem fine, you'd lose your spells any time you spend a Void Point on spellcasting.

### Tier System:

The tier system assumes a permissive RAW GM.

**Tier X** – The cream of the crop. Top tier. Extremely useful in almost every single situation. Potentially game breaking.

**Tier I** – Good. Strong effects, flexibility, both. Could potentially be stronger than the Tier X but in more specific circumstances.

**Tier II** – Average. Nothing too bad, perfectly valid.

**Tier III** – You can almost always find a better spell to use unless it's a highly specific set of circumstances when the spell shows up. If the highly specific circumstances arise, Importune for it.

**Tier 0** – Unless the spell is perfectly tailor made for the EXACT situation, you're always better off using another spell.



## Tier X

Call the Spirit (Air 4) – Summon ANY spirit from ANY spirit realm. Yes, there's a risk and there's no guarantee of service, but the sheer versatility makes this spell fantastic. You could also use it to drop Oni into pits, etc.

False Realm (Air 4) – Illusions that fool all the senses but the touch. So incredibly powerful, especially since it affects such a large area for so long. This spell can win entire battles or decorate castles or do almost anything.

Cloud the Mind (Air 5) – Social repercussions aside, you can re-write a person's memories over a week. Extremely flexible and powerful.

Embrace of Kenro-ji-Jin (Earth 2) – This spell is ridiculously good. It has a ridiculous duration and since you can see beneath the ground, you can just bypass any physical obstacle. You can use it for spying, travel, assassinations, etc.

Wall of Earth (Earth 4) – Much like in D&D, conjuring a wall is useful in almost every single circumstance. Whether in a skirmish, battle, or construction, having the ability to conjure a barrier or structure is worthwhile. I suppose it could be used in social conflicts as well (give your courtier a platform to talk loudly from).

Reversal of Fortunes (Water 1) – You get a free reroll, once per round. This is the Lucky Advantage taken 3 times. More if you Raise. And you get to choose between the rolls. The only downside to this spell is that it can't really affect extended rolls, but in almost all circumstances this spell is the best thing you can cast.

Ever Changing Waves (Water 5) – You get to change into any mundane animal AND keep your spellcasting. The possibilities are endless.

Divide the Soul (Void 5) – You make a copy of yourself. Doesn't have great duration, but doubling your action economy is very powerful, even if only one of you can cast spells. The fact that your clone appears within line of sight is just extra icing.

Unmake the World (Void 6) – A save-or-die in the game and in a lot of cases the thing doesn't get a save. Ridiculously good. Without GM fiat, it can wipe out a Kami.

## Tier I

Benten's Touch (Air 2) – Adds +1k1 + your Air for 1 hour. This is incredibly good. Either become as good as a Courtier yourself or give your Courtier a massive buff. So good.

Mists of Illusions (Air 2) – They don't last very long, but you can craft illusions of anything stationary. Use this for cover, setting traps, getting the courtier to fall into the decorative pond, etc. Very flexible.

Secrets on the Wind (Air 2) – Spy on people at a distance assuming you've been to that place before.

Essence of Air (Air 3) – Pass through solid barriers. It's not a Tier X because it has a short duration and your Water Ring is halved.

The Eye Shall Not See (Air 3) – Almost as good as true invisibility, but the restrictions on it make it slightly less useful. On the other hand it does protect you from other senses.

Mask of Wind (Air 3) – Long duration disguise as anybody else, even some non-humans.

Gift of Wind (Air 4) – Invisibility. So many uses.

Know the Mind (Air 4) – It's a shame the duration is so short, but even so it's a very powerful spell. Used creatively it can get a person to think about anything.

Netsuke of Wind (Air 4) – Even though it's only 1 hour, being able to conjure ANY item is very powerful. In fact, I would say this is borderline Tier X.

Symbol of Air (Air 4) – The Sleep effect lasts for a very long time. Use this if you want to capture the people who are trying to pass into the warded area.

Echoes on the Breeze (Air 5) – A cellphone that works across the entire Empire. Yes.

Legion of the Moon (Air 5) – AoE invisibility. Important to note that if you interact with objects, invisibility isn't broken.

Wrath of the Kaze-no-Kami (Hurricane) (Air 6) – It can devastate entire armies but less good against shelters.

Tetsubo of Earth (Earth 1) – Good damage, Knockdown is a powerful effect, and Heavy weapons are a good skill.

Force of Will (Earth 2) – You make someone invulnerable for 2 rounds and can potentially extend the duration to 4 rounds, at range. Incredible.

Hands of Clay (Earth 2) – Bypass almost any barrier by climbing it. Good duration.

Bonds of Ningen-Do (Earth 3) – While this is a highly specialized spiritual spell, the fact that you can bind any spirit to your service with no save is very potent and the only thing that keeps it from being Tier 0 is that the spirit will now hate you. Also the fact that it can't affect ALL spirits. Still, very good.

Earth Kami's Blessing (Earth 3) – While this spell is very simple and not very flexible it's hard to beat the utility. You gain 66% more max Wounds. One of the strongest buffs.

Earthquake (Earth 5) – This isn't a flexible spell but it's just so powerful. This spell can end a siege with a single cast.

Katana of Fire (Fire 1) – Since it acts like a katana, you can spend Void on increasing damage and if you have the weapon skill, you can add your Honor to the damage, making it strictly better than a mundane Katana. Doesn't last for too long though.

Fiery Wrath (Fire 3) – You can destroy an entire castle easily with this. Everything flammable in a single structure will catch on fire at the same time. The fire won't spread to the surrounding buildings, but if you need to take out the central keep of a castle, this is your spell. Not flexible but powerful.

Shining Light (Fire 3) – Debuff and damage for a good amount of duration.

Death of Flame (Fire 4) – Incredibly strong debuff that renders a person unable to do all form of melee combat, even if you don't concentrate.

The Mending Forge\* (Fire 4) – This spell is very strong assuming you can get all the pieces, which means it's very much up to GM interpretation of what counts as the pieces of an item. Even so, the power to be able to reforge a valuable item in a single action is strong – and you could use it to repair things that are large, like bridges and walls.

Wall of Fire (Fire 4) – It's not a very versatile spell, but the fact that the spell lasts for a whole hour and you can do 6k6 damage in the meanwhile? The sheer amount of damage you can output with this spell is stronger than most other damaging spells.

Path to Inner Peace (Water 1) – The most basic healing spell, but since the TN is so low, you can heal a lot of wounds with it.

Rejuvenating Vapors (Water 2) – Recovering spells is always strong and this one lets you recover your most versatile spell slots. Even stronger if you have a second Shugenja in the party AND it can clear exhaustion and fatigue. It does so much.

Regrow the Wound (Water 3) – The fact that this spell can be maintained without line of sight after it's been cast means that you can basically prevent one person from dying for the duration of an entire battle, while you're safely ensconced somewhere else.

Silent Waters (Water 3) – You can do some silly things with this, but it does require two spells rather than one. Still, being able to activate a healing spell on a snap of the fingers or something is pretty worthwhile.

The Path Not Taken (Water 4) – Even though this is a spell that only affects Shugenja, the fact that you can get bonus spells if you have Void 5 AND the fact that you always get at least 2 spells for the price of 1 (since the minimum Ring you have is 2, and this is just a single spell).

Ebb & Flow of Battle (Water 4) – Mobility is the key to warfare. The fact that your dudes get to move twice and fast and keep their simple actions for other things is so strong.

Symbol of Water (Water 4) – Fear 7 means TN 35 Willpower check. That is hard to match. Use this to chase people away from a warded area.

Power of the Ocean (Water 5) – Maybe one of the strongest buffs? Hard to say but damn is this spell good. Recover all your Void points at least 4 times and a low-level regeneration and no food, drink, or sleep. Yes, it KOs the person afterwards, but if they haven't accomplished all they needed to do in that time probably means it was impossible anyway.

Suitengu's Embrace (Water 5) – Even if you don't outright kill the target, you can take them out for at least 4 rounds even if they succeed on their Stamina rolls.

Boundless Sight (Void 1) – Short duration scrying at a good range.

Drawing the Void (Void 1) – Recover all your Void in a single action. There are skills that can do that, but you can do this at any point and faster. Might be worth keeping this spell memorized.

Sense Void (Void 1) – It's good because it doesn't care about things like barriers or lighting and the fact that you can concentrate makes it very good if you need to do watch, sneak around, etc.

The Void's Caress (Void 1) – Being able to negate a good deal of Mental or Spiritual disadvantages is very worthwhile, since they can come up in nasty times and fixing them temporarily is oh so worth it.

Altering the Course (Void 2) – Spend multiple Void points per roll. Coupled with Drawing the Void and/or Kharmic Intent means you can easily push your rolls past 10k10.

Reach Through the Void (Void 2) – Telekinesis is always powerful and useful.

Echoes in the Void (Void 3) – Mind-reading is always powerful and this one is strictly better than the air version, since it lasts for as long as you want.

Kharmic Intent (Void 3) – Share your massive Void Pool with another or use them to get more Void points for yourself.

Void Release (Void 3) – Denying your opposition Void Points is very strong especially if they have a school that has Techniques requiring them.

Fill with Emptiness (Void 4) – Recover Void Points for other people.

Rise of the Ashes (Void 6) – While you can't directly resurrect someone with this spell, you can practically do so. This spell can prevent almost any negative circumstance from affecting the protected character. This person can be you.

## Tier II

By the Light of the Moon (Air 1) – Useful in an investigation setting.

Legacy of the Kaze-no-kami (Air 1) – Decent communication effect.

Nature's Touch (Air 1) – The problem is that the animals don't talk back. Still, explaining something detailed to an animal can be worth it.

Tempest of Air (Air 1) – Crappy damage, but good AoE with Knockdown.

To Seek the Truth (Air 1) – A decent stopgap spell. Note that this doesn't affect physical effects. Still, useful if a Courtier you're favoring is shaken by something. Can also counter magical fear.

Way of Deception (Air 1) – A no-frills illusion. Better with raises.

Your Heart's Enemy (Air 3) – Fear 4 effect vs a single target, not a bad thing.

Call Upon the Wind (Air 2) – Even minor flight can be useful though it's slow and doesn't have a long duration.

Hidden Visage (Air 2) – A weaker version of Mask of Wind that is useful for a generic disguise, but you can do less with it.

Whispering Wind (Air 2) – Strong, but unfortunately very limited. If used within the limitations, pretty damn powerful.

Summoning the Gale (Air 3) – Good if you're a bunch of melee dudes who want to ruin a bunch of archers. Great for ship combat. Maybe not so good otherwise.

Summon Fog (Air 3) – Fog is always useful and it has a good area.

Draw Back the Shadows (Air 5) – Dedicated anti-illusion effect that is useful for all tiers and affects non-shugenja illusions as well.

Slayer's Knives\*(Air 5) – It does AoE damage in a small radius and Knockdown with a slightly above average TN. Not the best, not the worst.

The False Legion (Air 6) – Being able to make your force appear larger or have your force be split or whatever can be useful, but circumstantial. For optimal effectiveness, you can combine your fake soldiers with real ones. A bit too high-level for what it does though.

Rise, Air (Air 6) – All the Rise effects are powerful.

Armor of Earth (Earth 1) – Good buff but the speed reduction kind of hurts, unless your target has a Water Ring of 3+.

Earth's Stagnation (Earth 1) – Not a bad debuff if you're chasing someone down.

Earth's Touch (Earth 1) – Good buff if you know what you're about to get into, plus it lasts a long time.

Elemental Ward (Earth 1) – Situationally very strong.

Jade Strike (Earth 1) – Indispensable when dealing with Shadowlands, useless otherwise.

Soul of Stone (Earth 1) – Drop this on someone who is bad at Court stuff so that they don't make an ass of themselves. Otherwise pretty bad.

Grasp of Earth (Earth 2) – Good debuff even better with raises.

Earth's Protection (Earth 3) – Very good anti-hostile magic, but it does mean that you're not casting other stuff. Only useful in a situation where you have more spells incoming that you'd like to deal with.

Armor of the Emperor (Earth 4) – This spell would easily be a Tier 1 but the fact that it only affects yourself is rough. There are ways around it, but at that point you're spending two spells. Even so, this is a potent spell, applying Reduction per die.

Symbol of Earth (Earth 4) – Not bad, but the debuffs don't last for too long.

Tomb of Jade (Earth 4) – It's a very specific spell but it can instagib a Tainted entity AND can generate some temporary jade that can be used against other creatures of the Shadowlands. Very useful under those circumstances, useless otherwise.

Strike at the Roots (Earth 5) – Strong debuff but it requires a Contested Roll. Better with Raises.

The Kami's Strength (Earth 5) – Turns a single person into a combat beast. Strong buff but the slowdown hurts.

The Kami's Will (Earth 5) – Another strong but situational buff.

Rise, Earth (Earth 6) – All the Rise effects are powerful.

Biting Steel (Fire 1) – Solid combat damage buff.

Burning Kiss of Steel (Fire 1) – Solid combat to-hit buff. Better duration.

Extinguish (Fire 1) – Super useful when you need to put out a fire.

Never Alone (Fire 1) – Not a bad buff. Duration short and the conditional early ending sucks.

The Fires from Within (Fire 2) – Damage is good and it can hit multiple targets but is this the optimal thing you could be doing during your turn? Tail and Breath of the Fire Dragon are better.

Hurried Steps (Fire 2) – It's a very good spell if you need to fire off a powerful Fire effect but it is of limited utility otherwise.

Mental Quickness (Fire 3) – This spell is hampered only by its short duration, otherwise +0k3 to all your Intelligence-based rolls. That's ridiculous. Even with the limited duration it's still very worthwhile.

Relentless Heat (Fire 2) – Not a bad buff, but Shining Light is better.

Tail of the Fire Dragon (Fire 2) – The damage is good and pretty good for a short skirmish.

Breath of the Fire Dragon (Fire 3) – Good AoE damage but you could be doing other things. That said if you need to get a lot of dudes with a non-strenuous spellcasting attack it's pretty good.

The Fist of Osano-Wo (Fire 3) – Strong AoE effect. If you need to ruin the day of a bunch of city dwellers, this spell is ace. Otherwise there are better ones.

Hungry Blade\* (Fire 3) – Numerically one of the strongest damage buffs. You have a 30% chance of exploding per kept die.

Light of the Sun (Fire 5) – If you want to separate friend from foe and want the foes dead, this spell is pretty good. The normal folk will take some damage but be fine.

Follow the Flame (Fire 5) – A good damaging spell that can hit multiple targets and do crazy damage, which can be worthwhile under some circumstances.

Beam of the Inferno (Fire 6) – Well, if you need to make sure something is definitely dead, cast this spell.

Clarity of Purpose (Water 1) – Not a bad buff for a short skirmish.

Reflections of Pan Ku (Water 1) – The Identify spell. Good for investigation.

Cloak of the Miya (Water 2) – Decent defensive self-buff.

Reflective Pool (Water 2) – Short range scrying.

Stand Against the Waves (Water 2) – A target gets an extra action to make an attack. Cast this on your bushi so that they get to attack 3 times a round which is enough to kill most other humans.

Visions of the Future (Water 3) – The spell itself is good but it depends on how much information you get from the GM.

Dominion of Suitengu (Water 4) – Long distance scrying.

Heart of the Water Dragon (Water 4) – Good healing buff that doesn't require Concentration and very useful if someone wades into the thick of combat. Duration short otherwise.

The Final Bond (Water 5) – Good way to keep tab on loved ones or important items. No real value otherwise but very good at its job.

Hands of the Tides (Water 5) – Swap positions between willing targets. Very good if you want to swap places with your "siege breaker."

Rise, Water (Water 6) – All the Rise spells are good.

Water's Sweet Clarity (Water 6) – Depends entirely on the GM.

Drink of your Essence (Void 2) – Gauge a person.

The Empty Voice (Void 2) – Good for stealthy spellcasting and there are a lot of decent low-rank spells that could be cast like this.

False Whispers (Void 2) – Incredible for social situations.

Severed from the Stream (Void 2) – Decent debuff but draining Void Points directly is probably better.

Moment of Clarity (Void 3) – Very good spell hampered by the short duration.

Read the Essence (Void 3) – Get a better idea about an item and who used it, great for investigation.

Balance of the Elements (Void 3) – Solid buff. Interesting duration.

Draw Closed the Veil (Void 4) – Great spell under specific anti-spirit circumstances.

Ring of the Void (Void 6) – Depends entirely on the GM.



## **Tier III**

Blessed Wind (Air 1) – It's not actually a terrible spell but it's awfully limited and prevents you from spellcasting.

Cloak of Night (Air 1) – Too easy to defeat this spell.

Token of Memory (Air 1) – It has some niche uses but there's better stuff out there.

Yari of Air (Air 1) – Spears is not a popular Skill and the base DR is low. The free Raise isn't bad but you only get the one.

Wolf's Proposal (Air 2) – It might not be bad to increase your perceived Honor but if the spell expires or someone figures it out, you'll lose Honor anyway.

Striking the Storm (Air 3) – It's pretty solid defense but losing communication sucks. Also duration is self and it lasts for no time at all.

Courage of the Seven Thunders (Earth 1) – It's not an awful spell but it's a bit limited in that it only works against fear and the duration isn't that long. It's good if you know you're going into a situation with Fear, otherwise skip it for something else.

Jurojin's Balm (Earth 1) – A spell of limited utility. Importune for it instead.

Be the Mountain (Earth 2) – Very strong defense but it restricts your movement too much.

The Mountain's Feet (Earth 2) – Worthwhile under some highly specific circumstances, otherwise not so much. Importune if you need it.

Wholeness of the World (Earth 2) – The number of effects that can affect your Rings are rather limited.

Sharing the Strength of Many (Earth 3) – Not completely awful, but there's better spells out there that give stronger bonuses.

Strength of the Crow (Earth 3) – This spell is actually very strong but TOO specific. Importune for it if you need it.

The Wolf's Mercy (Earth 3) – It's an average debuff but there are many other ones out there that do something better.

Essence of Earth (Earth 4) – Not a terrible buff but again there's better ones. Importune if you need it.

Fires of Purity (Fire 1) – It has some niche applications but the fact that there's no friend-or-foe differentiation hurts.

Fury of Osano-Wo (Fire 1) – It's meh damage with a meh rider. There are better things out there.

Enticing Dance of the Flame (Fire 2) – It's okay AoE fire damage that can set fires. It's not awful but there are better options.

Ward of Purity (Fire 2) – This spell either solves campaigns or is useless. Too situational, so just importune.

Ravenous Swarms (Fire 3) – Not a bad anti-Shugenja spell, but very limited effects otherwise and Fires from Within is better even if it loses the rider.

Defense of the Firestorm (Fire 4) – Not a bad defensive buff but it doesn't last too long and it's too high level.

Symbol of Fire (Fire 4) – It's not awful but it's not likely to kill anyone unless they're real scrubs, the debuff doesn't last long enough to be of value, and the other Symbols are better.

Ward of Thunder (Fire 4) – It's a solid buff but too specific. Importune.

Destructive Wave (Fire 5) – Incredible damage when you need to clear a space around you. There are better damage spells though and it has no utility otherwise.

Wings of the Phoenix (Fire 5) – Too high rank, but if for some reason you don't get Air spells, it could be handy.

The Soul's Blade (Fire 6) – It's a good buff but Fire 6 means you need a TN of 35. You're better off doing other buffs.

Bo of Water (Water 1) – If Tetsubo of Earth didn't exist, this would be Tier II.

Ebbing Strength (Water 1) – It's a buff and debuff at the same time so there's better options. Importune if you need it.

Spirit of the Water (Water 1) – Okay for extra movement or some other minor actions but the duration makes it too weak.

Sympathetic Energies (Water 1) – This could be used to transfer some Self-only buffs on others so it has some utility. You could importune but really there are better things you could be doing.

Inari's Blessing (Water 2) – Just carry food with you. If you absolutely are screwed, out in the Burning Sands or something, importune for it.

The Ties that Bind (Water 2) – It has its uses but there could be other spells you learn first. Importune.

Wisdom and Clarity (Water 2) – It's a question of how the ruling of this spell is interpreted. If it's that you only have perfect recall of what you read while under the effects of the spell and you can only have perfect recall during the spell, then it's a Tier III. If you have perfect recall even when the spell ends, then it's a Tier I.

Near to Ice (Water 3) – Importune for this one if you need it because there are spells that do similar things and better.

Strike of the Tsunami (Water 3) – The TN of the Knockdown is too low and the damage kind of piddly. You can do better.

Walking Upon the Waves (Water 3) – It's a useful spell but you're probably better off importuning for it unless you frequently deal with this.

Water Kami's Blessing (Water 3) – It's not a bad buff but too situational and better buffs exist. Importune.

Strike of the Flowing Water (Water 4) – Too restrictive. Just buff the damage instead or do something else.

See Through Lies (Void 1) – This spell isn't really bad but there are other ways to find this out. If you lack these other methods, grab this spell.

Unbound Essence (Void 5) – WHEEEEEEE.

## **Tier 0**

The Kami's Whisper (Air 2) – Or you can use any of the other illusion spells. Or fake it using natural skills like Hunting. And it can't even do anything overly worthwhile.

Minor Binding (Earth 1) – It's too restrictive with its targets and why would you want to capture instead of killing? Do something else.

Earth Becomes Sky (Earth 2) – The damage is too low and while Jade is nice you can just do Jade Strike.

Purge the Taint (Earth 3) – Or just set everything on fire. Really, there's not much use for it AND it can render the ground useless anyway. If you need to use this spell, something is seriously wrong. I mean unless you cast it inside the Festering Pit or something.

Major Binding (Earth 5) – Takes too long to cast and too high level.

Essence of Jade (Earth 6) – It's a very solid defensive spell but at this point there are other better spells you could be casting.

Envious Flames (Fire 1) – I guess if you're fighting another Shugenja, you can do this but you can also just do more damage.

The Fires that Cleanse (Fire 1) – Damage is too low, shit is on fire, and everybody hates you. Do something else.

The Raging Forge (Fire 1) – It has some utility but you can just get some spit and polish instead.

Disrupt the Aura (Fire 2) – Or you could just do more damage. Yes it can have some very highly specific uses so I suppose you could importune.

Haze of Battle (Fire 3) – Very weak debuff. There are better ones out there. Better in social situations but again, better options.

Everburning Rage (Fire 5) – Knock someone out for 1 Round, possibly more with Raises at a high TN. Or you could do real damage. Or anything else. No point. I guess you can importune it if you want to torture someone, but you should have eta for that.

Globe of the Everlasting Sun (Fire 6) – This spell has its uses but they are so restrictive. That's not to say you can't get this spell but if you can easily cast a Fire 6 spell, then maybe just importune for it instead.

The Rushing Wave (Water 1) – This would be better if it lasted longer and with Raises it can, but you can and should be doing other things.

Speed of the Waterfall (Water 1) – It might be useful in a niche speed-based build, but beyond that niche it has practically no use.

Wave Borne Speed (Water 2) – Would've been good if you could increase duration. Since you can't, it's garbage.

Flow Through the Void (Void 1) – Or you can just use Summon to conjure more pure elemental stuff. The fact that the stuff has to be pure makes this spell suck. Otherwise, it could be worthwhile (turn a chunk of solid pure stone into air so you can get at something). It can be used but it's so limited.

Touch the Emptiness (Void 1) – Crap damage and the debuff is bad. Do something else with your time.

Void Strike (Void 4) – You have the power of the Void and you're using it to deal weaksauce damage. What are you doing?

### Closing Thoughts:

Having read this guide, you probably still won't have any idea of what the hell you're doing. Just YOLO it and do some shit, it'll probably be okay. It's hard (but not impossible) to fuck up a shugenja. Complain about it on the Internet, that'll help.