I'm not a robot



The soul reapers of Bleach are a central part of the story, in addition to the worlds of the living and the dead, but they can be a bit complicated to explain, both in the context of the series and their history in Japanese literature, due in part to some aspects about them being lost in translation. However, as the series goes on, viewers learn more and more about the soul reapers, including what kinds they are, what they are capable of, and even what they have brought about in the past, with audiences getting to learn these things firsthand through Ichigo. And, as mentioned, they also have an interesting history outside the series, including where they surprisingly got their start. 10 They Were Originally Shinigami In the original Japanese version of the series, the soul reapers were called "shinigami," creatures associated with death from Japanese fiction. Their exact definition has varied over the years, with them serving as psychopomps who help souls enter the afterlife or even being undead humans themselves that prey on the living. As their exact role changes from time to time, their appearance varies from skeletal or corpse-like to looking perfectly human. At times, they get conflated with similar creatures from foreign folklore. Because of their unique nature, it can be tricky to come up with an English translation of "shinigami." The Viz translation of Bleach went with "soul reapers," which had been approved by creator Tite Kubo, likely as a reference to Death serving as "the Grim Reaper." Although they appear frequently in Japanese anime and manga, shinigami are not actually from traditional Japanese mythology. The word "shinigami" is believed to come from Japanese translations of Western works that feature a personification of death, such as the Grimm Brothers fairy tale, Godfather Death, and the Italian opera, Crispino e la comare, which conflates the figure with a fairy or witch, depending on the translation. In both stories, a character makes a deal with the figure to become a rich doctor, only for the protagonist to grow arrogant. In the fairy tale, when the hero tries to save a princess from death in the hopes of marrying her, he pays with his life. Death's counterpart in the opera is a bit more merciful, allowing the hero to repent the error of his ways. The fairy tale is also known for inspiring the Japanese rakugo comedy, "Shinigami no hanashi," or "Story Of The Shinigami." In Bleach, soul reapers are unearthly beings that live in a world parallel to the living world and take the souls of the dead to the Soul Society. They are normally invisible to regular humans but can be seen among those with strong spiritual powers. As they are spiritual beings, it's possible for souls to train to become soul reapers, but aristocratic soul reapers tend to be born in the spirit world as spirits. Soul reapers can reproduce with humans, as the protagonist Ichigo and his sisters are the children of a shinigami father and a human mother. While it's believed that they are not the first such children born to such a pair, very little information is known about their predecessors, suggesting it is still a rare occurrence. There's also such a thing as a substitute soul reaper. The success rate at becoming a substitute soul reaper is low and the powers obtained usually are still limited and temporary. Added to this, granting a soul reaper's powers to a human is also officially prohibited by Soul Society. When a human does become a soul reaper, as in the case of Ichigo, who initially gained a share of Rukia Kuchiki's power, it is usually required for them to leave their bodies with the help of soul candy or some other special device, similar to astral projections, although the soul reaper's body needs to be taken care in the periods when the soul has left it. Because a body is effectively dead without a soul, substitutes may often allow another spirit to take temporary possession of their body, as Kon often takes over Ichigo's body. Generally, the role of a soul reaper, at least in the Bleach universe, can be divided into three main roles, at least in connexion to the human worlds: Soul Burial, Soul Governance, and Hollow Cleansing. Interestingly, they seem to earn a salary for their work and can even earn bounties for their work with Hollows. "Soul Burial," also known as "Soul Funeral," involves bringing souls to the spirit world, including sending evil souls to Hell. "Soul Governance" involves regulating the flow of spirit-related activity within the Human World and the Spirit World. "Hollow Cleansing" involves cleansing the sins of wandering spirits known as "Hollows." For starters, soul reapers tend to age better than humans and can live for thousands of years. They also tend to survive injuries that would kill a normal human, but they still can be mortally wounded. They also tend to have great spiritual powers, although this comes at an interesting cost: unlike other spirits, they need to eat. They can cast powerful "Kidō" spells for both direct attacks and support. In addition to this, they are also known for using supernatural Zanpakutō swords, which they usually keep on their person. As mentioned, soul reapers can have different appearances in fiction and this is just as true in the world of Bleach. Some of them look perfectly human, but others have a variety of appearance variations, with some even resembling animals. One notable example of the latter is Sajin Komamura, who resembles a wolf. He's also over 9 feet tall and weighs over 600 pounds, making him gigantic compared to the average human. One trademark of the soul reaper is the "Shihakushō," a black kimono, usually paired with a white undergarment. Some personalization is allowed, from wearing scarves or shortening sleeves. The black uniform helps to contrast them with the Quincies, who favor white. As the soul reapers tend to be on the side of the protagonist, this effectively serves as a subversion of associating light with good and dark with evil, at least to the audiences' perspective. For thousands of years, the soul reapers have been rivals with the Quincies. The main source of conflict is the fact that they disagree on what to do with the Hollows. As mentioned, soul reapers prefer to cleanse them of their sins, although they are not against punishing them for sins committed in life. The Quincies would rather just kill them. While the soul reapers' point-of-view is usually given the benefit of the audience's perspective, the Quincies are not entirely vilified, as the soul reapers have been shown to underestimate the Hollows, but the Quincies' actions have also been shown to be a threat to existence itself, although they themselves fear death. The anime has a tendency to add villains who turned evil due to the machinations of the Soul Society, such as the Dark Ones, Captain Amagai, and Kusaka. While this could initially just be blamed on the changes in the adaptation, the manga would reveal its incarnation of the soul reapers also had some blood on their hands, too. According to the manga, the soul reapers sealed away the Soul King, effectively creating different worlds, and being the reason people can die and become Hollows, to begin with. Naturally, this also created the conflict with the Quincies. NEXT: Bleach: 10 Things Anime-Only Fans Don’t Know About The History Of Soul Society Skip to content Shinigami (死神, death god(s); Viz "Soul Reaper(s)") are guardians of the souls who are going through the circle of transmigration between the World of the Living and Soul Society. Having been called Balancers (調整者 (バランサー), Baransā; Japanese for "Regulators") in ancient times,[1][2][3] they purify Hollows who do evil in the World of the Living and ensure the safe crossing of souls — the Pluses who have lost their way after death — by giving them a soul burial.[4] Shinigami are the opposite of the Quincy.[5] Overview[] Shinigami are unearthly beings living in a world ruled by a different logic than the World of the Living. They possess high Reiryoku and a body of Reishi. They are invisible to those without spiritual powers.[6] When Souls with exceptional spiritual energy train their bodies, they reach the level of Shinigami. The most talented of them become affiliated with various organizations like the Gotei 13 and the Onmitsukidō. The majority of potential Shinigami are born among the residents of the Seireitei, but in some rare cases are born in the Rukongai.[7] Shinigami receive salaries, like workers in the Human World[8][9] and also earn bounties for defeating Hollows.[10] Retirement from further military duties can occur, though this is rare.[11][12] All Shinigami have vents at their wrists which release their Reiatsu. If they are blocked off, the Shinigami in question would be incinerated by their own Reiatsu from the inside out.[13] If a Shinigami's Saketsu (鎖結, Chain Binding; Viz "Chain") and Hakusui (魄睡, Soul Sleep) are pierced, their spiritual powers are sealed up and they most likely can never regain their lost powers again.[14][15] Shinigami have a number of supernatural abilities: Longevity: Shinigami can live for far longer and likewise age much slower than Humans. Byakuya Kuchiki, one of the youngest current Gotei 13 captains, appeared to be a teenager 110 years before the White Invasion.[16] When Rukia Kuchiki first met Ichigo Kurosaki, she stated to be at least 160 years old.[17] Shunsui Kyōraku, Jūshirō Ukitake, and Kenpachi Zaraki are hundreds of years old,[18][19] Retsu Unohana is over 1,000 years old,[20] and Chōjirō Sasakibe, Ōetsu Nimaiya, and Ichibē Hyōsube have lived for over 2,000 years.[21] Despite all their immense ages, they still appear and perform in their prime.[22][23][24] Genryūsai Shigekuni Yamamoto, the oldest known Shinigami, was middle-aged when he was still an instructor at the Shin'ō Academy 2,100 years before the White Invasion[25] and hundreds of years before the Quincy Blood War.[18] Enhanced Durability and Endurance: While Shinigami can be injured and killed like regular Humans, it takes considerably more attack power and greater injuries to kill a Shinigami than it would to kill Humans.[26][27] Some Shinigami have sustained multiple slash and stab wounds,[28] completely ignored dismemberment,[29] and even survived horizontal bifurcation with treatment.[30] Decapitation is the only guaranteed method of outright killing a Shinigami.[31] Reiryoku: Shinigami naturally possess high levels of Spiritual Power,[7] which varies greatly in magnitude with the strength of a Shinigami. The more power a Shinigami has, the sharper their movements will be.[32] A consequence of having Spiritual Power is that unlike powerless spirits, Shinigami need to eat.[33] Reiatsu: Reiatsu is the pressure exerted from a Shinigami's Reiryoku, and is used for their various techniques. The Reiatsu of a Shinigami will continue to flow for as long as the heart is still beating; if the heart beats, it is impossible for the Reiatsu to cease. Due to this, prisoners, such as Aizen, who cannot have their heart stopped by any executioner in Soul Society are kept in Muken.[34] Zanpakutō: A Shinigami weapon, its shape is typically similar to a Japanese katana. Low ranking officers are issued an Asauchi sword, but high-ranking officers arm themselves with unique swords generated from their own souls.[35] A Zanpakutō is a physical manifestation of this force concentrated into a blade.[36] All Shinigami have a Zanpakutō, but not all of them carry one with them. Its shape differs depending on its owner.[6] Visored[] Main article: Visored Shinigami who have gained Hollow abilities, through Hollowfication, and use those abilities to gain power far exceeding and beyond that of a normal Shinigami or Hollow. Initially treated as Hollow-adjacent and considered to be enemies of Soul Society,[37] they are later formally recognized as Shinigami with some members occupying Lieutenant- or Captain-level positions in the Gotei 13.[38] Exiled Shinigami[] There are some Shinigami who exist in exile, namely Yoruichi Shihōin, Tessai Tsukabishi, and Kisuke Urahara.[39] They will work with the Shinigami at times but still remain in exile.[40] Appearance[] Most Shinigami appear like average Humans. There are, however, a few Shinigami who are less Human-like in appearance. For example, there are much greater variations in body-sizes between Shinigami than between Humans, with small childlike Shinigami such as the 109 cm tall Yachiru Kusajishi[41] and giant Shinigami such as Sajin Komamura, who is 288 cm tall.[42] Variations do not just occur in size but in overall appearance, too, the most notable example being Captain Komamura, who is an anthropomorphic wolf.[42] Shihakushō (死覇装, Death-Conquering Garb): The black kimono worn by Shinigami. It is customary to wear a white undergarment underneath. Some wear bright colored scarves with it or shorten the sleeves.[6] They commonly carry their Zanpakutō, which is in most cases tied to their obi sash.[43] Duties[] World of the Living[] Konsō (魂葬, Soul Burial): the process by which a Shinigami sends wandering Pluses in the Human World to Soul Society if they are good in life or Hell if their life was full of evil acts (such as murders, theft, etc.). Konsō is performed by using the hilt of the Shinigami's Zanpakutō, tapping the soul on their forehead and transporting them to the afterlife.[44] Hollow Cleansing: When a Shinigami slays a Hollow with their Zanpakutō, they cleanse their sins. Once this takes place, a Hollow will return to its former state as a Plus and is led into Soul Society. This is called sublimation. Souls that live in Soul Society are reborn again into the Human World. Not all Hollows are sent to the Soul Society. Since Zanpakutō are only capable of cleansing sins committed after becoming a Hollow, Hollows that committed serious crimes when they were still Human are sent to Hell when they are slain.[45] Soul Governance: Shinigami are responsible for governing the flow of spirits between the Human World and Soul Society. This is commonly carried out by balancing the total number of souls by moving and managing them in the Human world. All of the soul-related jobs are under their authority.[46] Training[] Shinōreijutsuin (真央霊術院, Spiritual Arts Academy): An educational organization with a 2,000-year-old history, founded by Genryūsai Shigekuni Yamamoto. It was once called the Shinigami Academy. It changed to Spiritual Arts Academy when it developed into an institute for the next generation of the Kidō Corps and Onmitsukidō as well the Gotei 13. In the Rukongai, it is still referred to as the Shinigami Academy. The Shinigami Academy is one of two groups that is not under the jurisdiction of the Central 46 Chambers.[47] Combat[] Zankensoki (「斬」「拳」「走」「鬼」, Cut-Fist-Run-Spirit): Basic Shinigami fighting techniques. Zan refers to sword fighting techniques. Ken refers to unarmed fighting techniques. So refers to moving techniques. Ki refers to Kidō.[48] According to Sōsuke Aizen, each technique requires a certain level of power, and mastery is determined by one's own potential.[49] Hakuda: An unarmed fighting technique that makes use of one's own body in a fight.[7] Hohō: The name for all high-speed fighting movements based on the art of Shunpo.[7] Kidō: Advanced spells that require strong spiritual power: Hadō and Bakudō.[7] Mission Aids[] To aid in their missions, particularly when said missions involve more than simply dispatching a Hollow, Shinigami have a number of unique items to assist them in their duties. Jigokuchō: The butterflies that Shinigami use to lead them to the World of the Living. They are also used as messengers in Soul Society.[50] Spiritual Limiter: All Shinigami captains and lieutenants have their spiritual energy reduced by about 80% when they enter the Human World by use of a spiritual limit, represented by a seal called the Gentei Reīn (限定霊印, Soul-Limiting Symbol; Viz "Spirit Restriction Seal"), which resembles the symbol unique to their Division, in order not to cause unnecessarily high damage while there. In extreme cases, where their full power is needed, they can request a limit release. The command to release the seal is Gentei Kaijo (限定解除, Limiter Release; Viz "Restriction Removal").[51][52] Denreishinki: A vital tool for any Shinigami stationed in the Real World, this variation on a cell phone functions both as a regular phone and as a communication line with the Soul Society. It receives information about the time and exact location of a Hollow's emergence via GPS. A Shinigami's kills are also recorded in the phone and can be used as currency (according to the bounty placed on each Hollow).[53] Zajiku (座軸, Set Axis; Viz "Target Axis"): Similar in function to a Denreishinki, this scroll-like object lists a Shinigami's targets and instructions for their mission.[54] Gokon Tekkō: A glove which has a skull symbol on it, which can be used to force the soul out of a body.[55] Kisuke Urahara also has a skull symbol on the end of his cane, which can be used in the same manner.[56] A large amount of newly manufactured Soul Candies. Artificial Souls: Souls designed by Shinigami scientists to separate a Shinigami's spirit from a Gigai, should they be inhabiting one, or to evict stubborn spirits from their corpses if necessary. It is commonly called Soul Candy, as the Shinigami Women's Association complained that the name "Artificial Soul" was not cute and had it changed.[57] Modified Souls: Artificial souls designed to enhance regular Human physiology, making them capable of battling Hollows equally. The Mod-Souls are condensed into tiny, candy-like orbs and placed into corpses to achieve their function as soldiers to combat Hollows. The Mod-Souls were exterminated after the experiment was halted due to ethical reasons since they were intended to be used to reanimate Human corpses to use as weapons against the Hollows. But there are still a small amount left; namely Kon, Ririn, Kurōdo, and Noba.[58] Kikanshinki (記換神機, Account-Replacing Spirit Device; Viz "Celestial Text Messenger"): A memory substitution device used on humans who have seen Shinigami or Hollows. Also called Kiokuchikan (記憶置換, Memory Replacement).[59] When used, a bird's head pops from the top of the device and produces a puff of smoke. The Human it is used on is knocked unconscious and wakes up a while later with a new memory. However, the new memory that the Human acquires is random and often based on the limits of what they will believe. For example, Ichigo's family merely believed they slept through a truck crashing into their house when it was used on them. Conversely, Orihime Inoue, who has a much more active imagination, believed that her house was attacked by a yakuza gunman.[60] Substitute Shinigami[] A Substitute Shinigami (死神代行, Shinigami Daikō) is a human who became Shinigami by obtaining another Shinigami's power, or by going through a much harder and riskier process to transform him/herself into one. Obtaining another Shinigami's power is done by thrusting his/her Zanpakutō into the person's chest who wants to obtain the power. However, the percentage of success is low.[61] In the case of success, the person normally obtains around half of the Shinigami's power[62], and only temporarily at that.[61] The transferral of a Shinigami's powers to a Human is forbidden by the Soul Society.[63] In the case of the individual borrowing the power being a Human, several difficulties arise, illustrated by the example of Ichigo. In order to be able to fight as a Shinigami, he has to leave his body and get into soul state, which can only be by use of a Gokon Tekkō or Soul Candy. In the former case, his body needs to be taken care of until he finishes his job and re-enters it.[64][65] If a Substitute Shinigami appears, Soul Society gives that Shinigami a special badge which they use to monitor and restrict the Substitute. However, the Substitute is told that it is a license which is given to Substitutes that prove beneficial to Soul Society to allow them to do their work and identify them as a Substitute.[66][67] The badge alerts the user if Hollows are nearby via an alarm sound which can only be heard by the owner and the item itself is only visible to other spiritually aware beings.[68] The Badge can also allow the soul to leave the body.[69] Trivia[] In Ryōgo Narita's novel Bleach: Spirits Are Forever With You, Shinigami lifespans are implied to be even longer, as Sōya Azashiro, who had not achieved immortality, was sentenced to 19,250 years in Muken.[70] In Narita's novel Bleach: Can't Fear Your Own World, the Royal Guard are revealed to have eternal life granted by their Ōken, as Ichibē has defended the Soul King for over a million years without growing older.[71] Nimaiya had also been alive since before Yamamoto even had a Zanpakutō,[72] yet by the time of the Quincy Blood War, has not aged in the same way as the now elderly Shinigami.[24] In Bleach JET Kubo spoke about the pay and housing for Shinigami.[73] Captains receive an initial salary of ¥2,000,000 per month, from there a raise is issued through each fiscal year and a performance based merit system. They are also assigned Captain's Chambers to live in.[73] Lieutenants receive an initial salary of ¥700,000 per month. If a Lieutenant takes an additional job, like Hisagi with the Seireitei Communication they can earn an additional salary from that.[73] An ordinary Division member earns ¥200,000 as a starting Salary. As they rise in the ranks they earn raises.[73] In NO BREATHES FROM HELL, it is shown that officers can live in the Officer Mansion district. Ikkaku Madarame also owns a Martial Arts Dojo there.[74] See also[] List of Shinigami Soul Society Gotei 13 Onmitsukidō Kidō Corps References[] []

Share — copy and redistribute the material in any medium or format for any purpose, even commercially. Adapt — remix, transform, and build upon the material for any purpose, even commercially. The licensor cannot revoke these freedoms as long as you follow the license terms. Attribution — You must give appropriate credit , provide a link to the license, and indicate if changes were made . You may do so in any reasonable manner, but not in any way that suggests the licensor endorses you or your use. ShareAlike — If you remix, transform, or build upon the material, you must distribute your contributions under the same license as the original. No additional restrictions — You may not apply legal terms or technological measures that legally restrict others from doing anything the license permits. You do not have to comply with the license for elements of the material in the public domain or where your use is permitted by an applicable exception or limitation . No warranties are given. The license may not give you all of the permissions necessary for your intended use. For example, other rights such as publicity, privacy, or moral rights may limit how you use the material.

Skip to content Shinigami (死神, death god(s); Viz "Soul Reaper(s)") are guardians of the souls who are going through the circle of transmigration between the World of the Living and Soul Society. Having been called Balancers (調整者 (バランサー), Baransā; Japanese for "Regulators") in ancient times,[1][2][3] they purify Hollows who do evil in the World of the Living and ensure the safe crossing of souls — the Pluses who have lost their way after death — by giving them a soul burial.[4] Shinigami are the opposite of the Quincy.[5] Overview[] Shinigami are unearthly beings living in a world ruled by a different logic than the World of the Living. They possess high Reiryoku and a body of Reishi. They are invisible to those without spiritual powers.[6] When Souls with exceptional spiritual energy train their bodies, they reach the level of Shinigami. The most talented of them become affiliated with various organizations like the Gotei 13 and the Onmitsukidō. The majority of potential Shinigami are born among the residents of the Seireitei, but in some rare cases are born in the Rukongai.[7] Shinigami receive salaries, like workers in the Human World[8][9] and also earn bounties for defeating Hollows.[10] Retirement from further military duties can occur, though this is rare.[11][12] All Shinigami have vents at their wrists which release their Reiatsu. If they are blocked off, the Shinigami in question would be incinerated by their own Reiatsu from the inside out.[13] If a Shinigami's Saketsu (鎖結, Chain Binding; Viz "Chain") and Hakusui (魄睡, Soul Sleep) are pierced, their spiritual powers are sealed up and they most likely can never regain their lost powers again.[14][15] Shinigami have a number of supernatural abilities: Longevity: Shinigami can live for far longer and likewise age much slower than Humans. Byakuya Kuchiki, one of the youngest current Gotei 13 captains, appeared to be a teenager 110 years before the White Invasion.[16] When Rukia Kuchiki first met Ichigo Kurosaki, she stated to be at least 160 years old.[17] Shunsui Kyōraku, Jūshirō Ukitake, and Kenpachi Zaraki are hundreds of years old,[18][19] Retsu Unohana is over 1,000 years old,[20] and Chōjirō Sasakibe, Ōetsu Nimaiya, and Ichibē Hyōsube have lived for over 2,000 years.[21] Despite all their immense ages, they still appear and perform in their prime.[22][23][24] Genryūsai Shigekuni Yamamoto, the oldest known Shinigami, was middle-aged when he was still an instructor at the Shin'ō Academy 2,100 years before the White Invasion[25] and hundreds of years before the Quincy Blood War.[18] Enhanced Durability and Endurance: While Shinigami can be injured and killed like regular Humans, it takes considerably more attack power and greater injuries to kill a Shinigami than it would to kill Humans.[26][27] Some Shinigami have sustained multiple slash and stab wounds,[28] completely ignored dismemberment,[29] and even survived horizontal bifurcation with treatment.[30] Decapitation is the only guaranteed method of outright killing a Shinigami.[31] Reiryoku: Shinigami naturally possess high levels of Spiritual Power,[7] which varies greatly in magnitude with the strength of a Shinigami. The more power a Shinigami has, the sharper their movements will be.[32] A consequence of having Spiritual Power is that unlike powerless spirits, Shinigami need to eat.[33] Reiatsu: Reiatsu is the pressure exerted from a Shinigami's Reiryoku, and is used for their various techniques. The Reiatsu of a Shinigami will continue to flow for as long as the heart is still beating; if the heart beats, it is impossible for the Reiatsu to cease. Due to this, prisoners, such as Aizen, who cannot have their heart stopped by any executioner in Soul Society are kept in Muken.[34] Zanpakutō: A Shinigami weapon, its shape is typically similar to a Japanese katana. Low ranking officers are issued an Asauchi sword, but high-ranking officers arm themselves with unique swords generated from their own souls.[35] A Zanpakutō is a physical manifestation of this force concentrated into a blade.[36] All Shinigami have a Zanpakutō, but not all of them carry one with them. Its shape differs depending on its owner.[6] Visored[] Main article: Visored Shinigami who have gained Hollow abilities, through Hollowfication, and use those abilities to gain power far exceeding and beyond that of a normal Shinigami or Hollow. Initially treated as Hollow-adjacent and considered to be enemies of Soul Society,[37] they are later formally recognized as Shinigami with some members occupying Lieutenant- or Captain-level positions in the Gotei 13.[38] Exiled Shinigami[] There are some Shinigami who exist in exile, namely Yoruichi Shihōin, Tessai Tsukabishi, and Kisuke Urahara.[39] They will work with the Shinigami at times but still remain in exile.[40] Appearance[] Most Shinigami appear like average Humans. There are, however, a few Shinigami who are less Human-like in appearance. For example, there are much greater variations in body-sizes between Shinigami than between Humans, with small childlike Shinigami such as the 109 cm tall Yachiru Kusajishi[41] and giant Shinigami such as Sajin Komamura, who is 288 cm tall.[42] Variations do not just occur in size but in overall appearance, too, the most notable example being Captain Komamura, who is an anthropomorphic wolf.[42] Shihakushō (死覇装, Death-Conquering Garb): The black kimono worn by Shinigami. It is customary to wear a white undergarment underneath. Some wear bright colored scarves with it or shorten the sleeves.[6] They commonly carry their Zanpakutō, which is in most cases tied to their obi sash.[43] Duties[] World of the Living[] Konsō (魂葬, Soul Burial): the process by which a Shinigami sends wandering Pluses in the Human World to Soul Society if they are good in life or Hell if their life was full of evil acts (such as murders, theft, etc.). Konsō is performed by using the hilt of the Shinigami's Zanpakutō, tapping the soul on their forehead and transporting them to the afterlife.[44] Hollow Cleansing: When a Shinigami slays a Hollow with their Zanpakutō, they cleanse their sins. Once this takes place, a Hollow will return to its former state as a Plus and is led into Soul Society. This is called sublimation. Souls that live in Soul Society are reborn again into the Human World. Not all Hollows are sent to the Soul Society. Since Zanpakutō are only capable of cleansing sins committed after becoming a Hollow, Hollows that committed serious crimes when they were still Human are sent to Hell when they are slain.[45] Soul Governance: Shinigami are responsible for governing the flow of spirits between the Human World and Soul Society. This is commonly carried out by balancing the total number of souls by moving and managing them in the Human world. All of the soul-related jobs are under their authority.[46] Training[] Shinōreijutsuin (真央霊術院, Spiritual Arts Academy): An educational organization with a 2,000-year-old history, founded by Genryūsai Shigekuni Yamamoto. It was once called the Shinigami Academy. It changed to Spiritual Arts Academy when it developed into an institute for the next generation of the Kidō Corps and Onmitsukidō as well the Gotei 13. In the Rukongai, it is still referred to as the Shinigami Academy. The Shinigami Academy is one of two groups that is not under the jurisdiction of the Central 46 Chambers.[47] Combat[] Zankensoki (「斬」「拳」「走」「鬼」, Cut-Fist-Run-Spirit): Basic Shinigami fighting techniques. Zan refers to sword fighting techniques. Ken refers to unarmed fighting techniques. So refers to moving techniques. Ki refers to Kidō.[48] According to Sōsuke Aizen, each technique requires a certain level of power, and mastery is determined by one's own potential.[49] Hakuda: An unarmed fighting technique that makes use of one's own body in a fight.[7] Hohō: The name for all high-speed fighting movements based on the art of Shunpo.[7] Kidō: Advanced spells that require strong spiritual power: Hadō and Bakudō.[7] Mission Aids[] To aid in their missions, particularly when said missions involve more than simply dispatching a Hollow, Shinigami have a number of unique items to assist them in their duties. Jigokuchō: The butterflies that Shinigami use to lead them to the World of the Living. They are also used as messengers in Soul Society.[50] Spiritual Limiter: All Shinigami captains and lieutenants have their spiritual energy reduced by about 80% when they enter the Human World by use of a spiritual limit, represented by a seal called the Gentei Reīn (限定霊印, Soul-Limiting Symbol; Viz "Spirit Restriction Seal"), which resembles the symbol unique to their Division, in order not to cause unnecessarily high damage while there. In extreme cases, where their full power is needed, they can request a limit release. The command to release the seal is Gentei Kaijo (限定解除, Limiter Release; Viz "Restriction Removal").[51][52] Denreishinki: A vital tool for any Shinigami stationed in the Real World, this variation on a cell phone functions both as a regular phone and as a communication line with the Soul Society. It receives information about the time and exact location of a Hollow's emergence via GPS. A Shinigami's kills are also recorded in the phone and can be used as currency (according to the bounty placed on each Hollow).[53] Zajiku (座軸, Set Axis; Viz "Target Axis"): Similar in function to a Denreishinki, this scroll-like object lists a Shinigami's targets and instructions for their mission.[54] Gokon Tekkō: A glove which has a skull symbol on it, which can be used to force the soul out of a body.[55] Kisuke Urahara also has a skull symbol on the end of his cane, which can be used in the same manner.[56] A large amount of newly manufactured Soul Candies. Artificial Souls: Souls designed by Shinigami scientists to separate a Shinigami's spirit from a Gigai, should they be inhabiting one, or to evict stubborn spirits from their corpses if necessary. It is commonly called Soul Candy, as the Shinigami Women's Association complained that the name "Artificial Soul" was not cute and had it changed.[57] Modified Souls: Artificial souls designed to enhance regular Human physiology, making them capable of battling Hollows equally. The Mod-Souls are condensed into tiny, candy-like orbs and placed into corpses to achieve their function as soldiers to combat Hollows. The Mod-Souls were exterminated after the experiment was halted due to ethical reasons since they were intended to be used to reanimate Human corpses to use as weapons against the Hollows. But there are still a small amount left; namely Kon, Ririn, Kurōdo, and Noba.[58] Kikanshinki (記換神機, Account-Replacing Spirit Device; Viz "Celestial Text Messenger"): A memory substitution device used on humans who have seen Shinigami or Hollows. Also called Kiokuchikan (記憶置換, Memory Replacement).[59] When used, a bird's head pops from the top of the device and produces a puff of smoke. The Human it is used on is knocked unconscious and wakes up a while later with a new memory. However, the new memory that the Human acquires is random and often based on the limits of what they will believe. For example, Ichigo's family merely believed they slept through a truck crashing into their house when it was used on them. Conversely, Orihime Inoue, who has a much more active imagination, believed that her house was attacked by a yakuza gunman.[60] Substitute Shinigami[] A Substitute Shinigami (死神代行, Shinigami Daikō) is a human who became Shinigami by obtaining another Shinigami's power, or by going through a much harder and riskier process to transform him/herself into one. Obtaining another Shinigami's power is done by thrusting his/her Zanpakutō into the person's chest who wants to obtain the power. However, the percentage of success is low.[61] In the case of success, the person normally obtains around half of the Shinigami's power[62], and only temporarily at that.[61] The transferral of a Shinigami's powers to a Human is forbidden by the Soul Society.[63] In the case of the individual borrowing the power being a Human, several difficulties arise, illustrated by the example of Ichigo. In order to be able to fight as a Shinigami, he has to leave his body and get into soul state, which can only be by use of a Gokon Tekkō or Soul Candy. In the former case, his body needs to be taken care of until he finishes his job and re-enters it.[64][65] If a Substitute Shinigami appears, Soul Society gives that Shinigami a special badge which they use to monitor and restrict the Substitute. However, the Substitute is told that it is a license which is given to Substitutes that prove beneficial to Soul Society to allow them to do their work and identify them as a Substitute.[66][67] The badge alerts the user if Hollows are nearby via an alarm sound which can only be heard by the owner and the item itself is only visible to other spiritually aware beings.[68] The Badge can also allow the soul to leave the body.[69] Trivia[] In Ryōgo Narita's novel Bleach: Spirits Are Forever With You, Shinigami lifespans are implied to be even longer, as Sōya Azashiro, who had not achieved immortality, was sentenced to 19,250 years in Muken.[70] In Narita's novel Bleach: Can't Fear Your Own World, the Royal Guard are revealed to have eternal life granted by their Ōken, as Ichibē has defended the Soul King for over a million years without growing older.[71] Nimaiya had also been alive since before Yamamoto even had a Zanpakutō,[72] yet by the time of the Quincy Blood War, has not aged in the same way as the now elderly Shinigami.[24] In Bleach JET Kubo spoke about the pay and housing for Shinigami.[73] Captains receive an initial salary of ¥2,000,000 per month, from there a raise is issued through each fiscal year and a performance based merit system. They are also assigned Captain's Chambers to live in.[73] Lieutenants receive an initial salary of ¥700,000 per month. If a Lieutenant takes an additional job, like Hisagi with the Seireitei Communication they can earn an additional salary from that.[73] An ordinary Division member earns ¥200,000 as a starting Salary. As they rise in the ranks they earn raises.[73] In NO BREATHES FROM HELL, it is shown that officers can live in the Officer Mansion district. Ikkaku Madarame also owns a Martial Arts Dojo there.[74] See also[] List of Shinigami Soul Society Gotei 13 Onmitsukidō Kidō Corps References[] [] Bleach had some fun reverse-isekai vibes at first, with Rukia Kuchiki being a Soul Reaper out of her element in Karakura Town, but that didn't last long. Once Ichigo Kurosaki and his friends ventured into the Soul Society to rescue Rukia, they met many more Soul Reapers, which was a wake-up call for all of them. In the process, Bleach fleshed out how the Gotei 13 functioned, because there is much more to being a Soul Reaper than hunting Hollows in the world of the living. Over time, Bleach expanded the ranks, groups, and duties of the Soul Reapers, which helped make the Soul Society an easier and more comfortable place for the anime to navigate, and it also gave the Soul Reapers a variety of ways to fight and command one another. Extensive organization was essential when the Soul Reapers ended up fighting foes like Sosuke Aizen's Arrancar army and the Wandenreich. Ordinary Soul Reapers Have a Hands-On Role in the Cycle of Souls Low-Ranked Soul Reapers Often Visit the World of the Living Image by studio Pierrot. The majority of Soul Reapers in the Gotei 13 are either seated officers or unranked Soul Reapers, all of whom rank far below the Captains and Lieutenants in the 13 court guard squads. Each squad has a number of seated officers, with 3rd seat officers being one rank below Lieutenants, who in turn are one rank below Captains. Seated officers may be stronger and more experienced than unranked Soul Reapers, but even a 3rd seat officer will have just a fraction of a Lieutenant's or Captain's spirit energy and combat prowess. These officers are a long way from having bankai, though they will certainly have shikai, at least, which is a bare minimum requirement for being a ranked officer. For that matter, even unranked Soul Reapers may have shikai, though they will pale in comparison to a Lieutenant's or a Captain's. Related On top of having sever complex power systems that interact with each other, the long history of Bleach characters leads to some strange lore. Aside from their sheer numbers and limited combat prowess, low-ranked Soul Reapers are also noted for their hands-on role in the great cycle of souls that the distant Soul King regulates. While upper-ranked officers often have administrative duties to attend to, low-ranked Soul Reapers often patrol the world of the living to dispatch Hollows and escort Souls to the waiting Soul Society — which was how Ichigo ended up meeting Rukia in Bleach's first episode. Rukia was performing routine work on behalf of squad 13 as a seated officer ranking well below Captain Jushiro Ukitake. Thus, low-ranked Soul Reapers are the ones who are on the front lines in the never-ending war against Hollows, and they are the face of the Soul Society to the souls of the recently deceased. For that reason, unranked Soul Reapers may need some people skills to make Souls feel comfortable for the pending journey to the afterlife. There are usually 13 Lieutenants in the Soul Society, one for each squad, though there is some room for flexibility. It's actually possible for a squad to have two or more Lieutenants, though that goes against custom and is rarely done. In a given squad, the Lieutenant is the second-in-command, answering directly to the Captain and serving as an extension of that Captain's authority. In daily life, Lieutenants have a hands-on role in managing a particular squad of the Gotei 13, meaning they must have and exercise some serious leadership skills. Although daily life isn't often seen in the Bleach anime, it's still a confirmed part of the lore. Lieutenants might even assume total command of a squad if the Captain is unavailable or killed, so each Lieutenant must be ready for that to happen under dire circumstances, such as in the Thousand-Year Blood War story arc. Lieutenants are paid well and many customize their outfits, which may be a narrative tool to make the important Lieutenant characters stand out from the rest of their squads. As for their combat abilities, Lieutenants rank right below Captains, always having shikai and sometimes even having their own bankai, if they're capable of such a thing. Bankai is not required for a Lieutenant to keep their rank, but if they do, it's a promising sign and makes them even more worthy of succeeding their Captains when necessary. Notable examples in Bleach's story include Renji Abarai of Squad 6 and Chojiro Sasakibe of Squad 1, and it's all but certain that Shuhei Hisagi of Squad 9 has achieved bankai as well. The 13 Captains are the core of the Gotei 13, being the unquestioned authority of all Soul Reapers and the most powerful Soul Reapers by far. Each Captain wields enormous power in battle, mainly in terms of their sheer spirit energy or pressure, their training and experience, kido spells, and their zanpakuto releases. All Captains can perform shikai and bankai, even if some Captains have proven highly reluctant to use bankai, and proficiency in bankai is generally a requirement for this rank. A bankai is nearly always a Captain's ace in the hole, and by extension, that bankai is the ultimate weapon of the entire squad. The villainous Sosuke Aizen once noted how each Captain is the equivalent of a major fighting force. The exact numbers aren't clear, but there's no doubt it would take a few hundred low-ranked Soul Reapers to equal a single Captain on the battlefield. Related Many of the Bleach anime's best villains have a certain badass aura that makes just as much of an impression as their strength. Not only are Captains the utlimate authority and combat power of each squad, but they are also a reflection of what that squad is like — or vice versa. A Captain's abilities and personality may greatly shape how a squad functions, such as ex-Captain Yoruichi Shihoin and current Captain Sui-Feng of Squad 2 setting a good example as elite ninjas. Meanwhile, Captain Mayuri Kurotsuchi represents Squad 12's focus on science, and Captain Kenpachi Zaraki of Squad 11 embodies his squad's focus on aggressive non-kido combat and impeccable warrior honor. In that way, Captains may serve as role models for all of their officers, especially if the Captains work to reinforce that image or have outgoing personalities. It's also suggested in Bleach lore that only Captains may end up being promoted to an even loftier position — a spot in the ultra-elite Royal Guard. Image by Studio Pierrot. The small but powerful Royal Guard unit was only recently shown in the Bleach anime, since its members have a special role in the grand scheme of things. While the soldiers and officers of the Gotei 13 are tasked with defending the Seireitei from all invaders, the Royal Guard only protects the Soul King himself, hence this unit's name. This fact caused some tension when the Royal Guard members visited the Gotei 13's officers, with Captain Sui-Feng suggesting the Royal Guard should have helped the Gotei 13 defend the Seireitei from Yhwach's invading army. However, the Royal Guard sternly rejected the idea, since their duty lay elsewhere. Combat-wise, the five members of the Royal Guard rarely ever need to fight, since hardly anyone can even reach the Soul King's palace, let alone threaten it, and purifying Hollows in the world of the living is far beneath the Royal Guard's members. However, if the Royal Guard does need to fight, the members can unleash incredible power, with these five Soul Reapers having more power than the entire Gotei 13 combined. One major example was when Senjumaru Shutara activated her bankai, a weapon which caused all three worlds to tremble. The members of the Royal Guard are all Soul Reapers who made historic contributions to the Soul Society, leaving permanent marks on the world. That is the requirement for anyone to join this team, ensuring that precious few Soul Reapers ever end up with the duty of guarding the Soul King. Senjumaru invented Soul Reaper uniforms, to name one, and Ichibe Hyosube was the one who gave names to everything, even the word "zanpakuto." Fans may also note how the members of the Royal Guard can even form the key to the Soul King's palace with their own bones, a key called the Oken. Aizen sought this treasure, but never claimed it. Imgae via Pierrot Studio The Kido Corps is one of a few extra organizations found within the Seireitei, a group that is not integrated into any of the 13 court guard squads. The Kido Corps rarely appears Bleach, though this group did play a minor supporting role in a flashback sequence focusing on the Visoreds' origins. As per the name, the Kido Corps is all about expert use of kido spells in place of zanpakuto or martial arts skills, recruiting kido-savvy graduates of the Shin'o Academy to fill its ranks. The Kido Corps has a few noteworthy roles in the Soul Society, including providing military aid when needed, opening Senkaimon gates to and from the world of the living, and releasing the Sokyoku for executions. Related Some of Bleach's worst twists from both the manga and anime aged much better than fans expected. Few members of the Kido Corps are known by name, though Bleach fans have at least met the previous Kido Corps Commander and the second-in-command. A century ago, a man named Tessai Tsukabishi commanded the entire Kido Corps, with a fancy blue and red robe over his shihakusho uniform as a badge of office. Ranking right below him was Hachigen Ushoda. Both of them ended up exiled from the Soul Society after Aizen Holllowfied some Soul Reaper officers, with Tessai ending up as Kisuke Urahara's employee in the Urahara Shoten shop, while Hachigen went into hiding with his fellow Visoreds. Their successors in the Kido Corps are unknown. Image via Studio Pierrot Not unlike the Kido Corps, the Onmitsukido is a major military branch in the Soul Society rarely seen in Bleach, but is still important for the Soul Society's functions. This group is not directly in the Gotei 13's chain of command, though the various commanders of the Onmitsukido often double as the Captain of Squad 2, creating a link between those two groups. The Onmitsukido is further split into various divisions, each with their own job, such as the combat-oriented Executive Militia and the Secret Remote Unit. The members of the Onmitsukido are rarely seen using zanpakuto, instead relying on martial arts to get the job done. While the Gotei 13 is the "normal" security force in the Soul Society, the Onmitsukido is the interior security force, often tasked with dealing with rogue Soul Reapers or dissidents elsewhere. Two major Bleach characters have ties with the Onmitsukido, those being Yoruichi and her protege, Sui-Feng/Soi Fon. Both of them are martial arts experts, to the point Yoruichi has never been seen using her zanpakuto or even kido spells in Bleach's main story. However, these two Soul Reapers do have access to a special technique named Shunko, one that Yoruichi invented before Sui-Fang later independently developed it as well. Shunko may not be a standard technique in the Onmitsukido, but it is a fair reflection of how this group operates, with Yoruichi and Sui-Feng using Shunko to greatly boost their martial arts and speed as the ultimate ninja Soul Reapers. Most likely, the rest of the Onmitsukido's members aren't powerful enough or talented enough to train and use Shunko, but they can still look up to Yoruichi and Sui-Feng as powerful commanders who can set a good example with its usage in the field of battle. Release Date 2004 - 2023-00-00 Network TV Tokyo, TV Osaka, TV Aichi, TVh, TVQ, TSC, BS TV Tokyo Showrunner Tite Kubo Directors Mitsutaka Noshitani, Junya Koshida, Hodaka Kuramoto, Yasuto Nishikata, Hiroaki Nishimura, Kazunori Mizuno, Akira Shimizu, Rokou Ogiwara, Kazunobu Shimizu, Akane Inoue, Hikaru Murata, Tomoko Hiramuki, Kazuo Nogami, Taiji Kawanishi, Shigeki Hatakeyama, Eiko Nishi, Takushi Kimura, Koji Aritomi, Ogura Shirakawa, Kiyomu Fukuda, Yukio Okazaki, Mitsue Yamazaki, Yasuhiro Matsumura, Eitarou Ano Writers Masahiro Okubo, Masashi Sogo, Kenta Shimoyama, Genki Yoshimura, Kazuyuki Fudeyasu, Rika Nakase, Michiko Yokote, Natsuko Takahashi, Kento Shimoyama In Japanese culture, Shinigami is referred to as a death god. Like the grim reaper in western culture, these spirits of death guide souls from the living world to the hereafter. Shinigami takes on many different forms in anime and manga, usually as main characters that act as servants of death. In bleach, Shinigami are referred to as soul reapers. They play the role of a Japanese samurai that maintains peace and order in the afterlife by regulating and governing souls. They also purify the realm of the living by eradicating the monstrous soul-eating spirit known as hollows. The Gotei 13 (13 Division Imperial Guard) serves as the military order of the Shinigami. And like any military force, they use ranks to determine the position and responsibilities of Shinigamis. The Gotei 13 is a corps that has done away with the seniority-based rank structure in favor of a merit-based hierarchy that is based on evidence of ability, experience, and power. Below is a list of the ranks from lowest to highest. Academy Student Substitute Shinigami Seated Officers Lieutenant Captain Captain Commander bleach academy student The Shinigami Academy is an institution that trains souls with spiritual powers for the Shinigami military forces. The shinigami academy accepts applications from everyone. To be admitted, applicants must, however, pass an entrance exam and provide proof of having some spiritual energy. Students at the academy learn how to control and use their Reiatsu and Shinigami combat forms (Hakuda, Hoho, Kido, and Zanjutsu). They also learn how to conduct Soul Burials and interact with the spirit of their Zanpakuto (sword). The curriculum at the Institution is taught over six years, however, extraordinarily talented students like Tshiro Hitsugaya, Kaien Shiba, and Gin Ichimaru have been known to graduate from the academy earlier. Upon completion of the Academy’s coursework, students are expected to apply to join a Gotei 13 division or other forces of the Shinigami. Substitute Shinigami – Kurosaki ichigo and Kugo Ginjo A Substitute Shinigami is birthed when a Shinigami plunges his/her zanpakutou into a human’s heart. The likelihood of success is low. However, if successful, the person often gains access to only a temporary portion of the shinigami’s power. However, in the case of Ichigo Kurosaki, he absorbed the entire powers of Shinigami Rukia Kuchiki due to his innate spiritual pressure. This practice is forbidden by the Soul Society and attracts a death sentence as proved by Rukia’s punishment. But when it happens, the substitute shinigami is invited to soul society and given a special badge that monitors and restrict the substitute. There are only two Substitute Shinigami in the history of soul society, Ichigo Kurosaki and Kugo Ginjo. Gujo evolved into a villain, whilst Ichigo grew to become the series’ resilient protagonist. Graduates from the Shinigami academy apply to join the Gotei force. This application is reviewed and accepted by one of the 13 divisions, assigning them to the rank of the seated officer. Seated officers are members of a division numbered from rank three down to twenty. They are somewhat correspondent to junior and non-commissioned officers of real-life military forces. Seated officers are usually strong and well-versed in the art of hakuda, hoho, kido, and zanjutsu. They also usually have a shikai, the first upgraded form of a Zanpakuto. These officers work their way up to become a lieutenant by getting stronger and completing missions. Bleach Gotei 13 Lieutenants Lieutenants can also be regarded as the vice-captain. They serve as a division’s second-in-command and the captain’s right hand. The lieutenant is in command of the division while the captain is away until the captain returns or a replacement is appointed. They can be identified by a distinctive badge strapped to their left arm that bears the symbol of their division. Lieutenants generally have access to their zanpaktou’s shikai alone (except for Renji Abarai who can use bankai). Although their level isn’t close to that of a seated officer. bleach gotei 13 captains Captains serve as the commanding officer of a division in charge of tactical planning and execution. They are regarded as the most powerful in a division. Stronger than a lieutenant by five times and an average seated officer by 10 times. Strength, experience, and most importantly, mastery of bankai are what set captains apart from other lower-ranked officers. They are usually identified by their white haori, which has been glued with the Gotei 13 symbol and the corresponding division number. To be promoted to captain rank, lieutenants or lower ranks officers must pass the Captain Proficiency Test, which necessitates mastery of bankai. This test requires a minimum of three current captains to be present, one of whom must be the captain-commander. Another method to advance in rank is to get a personal recommendation from at least six captains and approval from at least three of the seven remaining captains. The last and most unusual means to advance to captain is to challenge and defeat the division’s current captain in a duel before a crowd of at least 200 witnesses from the captain’s division. captain commander shigekuni yamamoto The Captain-Commander is the highest rank in the Gotei 13 corps. They serve as the commanding officer and supreme leader of the entire Gotei 13. This rank gives the officer the right to oversee the general operations of the Gotei 13, Onmitsukido, and Kido Corps when the welfare of Soul Society is at risk. The first officer to occupy this position was Captain Genrysai Shigekuni Yamamoto of the 1st Division. He established the Gotei 13 and presided over it for more than a millennium before passing away. Yamamoto was subordinate to one while serving as captain-commander. Shunsui Kyraku, the current captain-commander, is, nevertheless, accountable to the Central 46 Chambers, who elected him after captain Yamamoto’s passing. An officer must be extremely powerful and have a long list of notable accomplishments to be elected by the Central 46 Chambers to the position of captain commander. Read more: Best Bleach Anime Watch Order Ichigo has always been a substitute Shinigami since the beginning of the series. He didn’t advance in rank despite being powerful enough to become a captain or even a captain commander. Ichigo was an outcast and not truly acknowledged in the ranking system since he was a substitute Shinigami. CharacterRanksKurosaki IchigoSubstitute ShinigamiGenrysai Shigekuni YamamotoEx-Captain CommanderShunsui Kyōraku1st Division CaptainSuì-Fēng2nd Division CaptainRōjūrō Ōtoribashi3rd Division CaptainIsane Kotetsu4th Division CaptainShinji Hirako5th Division CaptainByakuya Kuchiki6th Division CaptainTetsuzaemon Iba7th Division CaptainLisa Yadōmaru8th Division CaptainKensei Muguruma9th Division CaptainTōshirō Hitsugaya10th Division CaptainKenpachi Zaraki11th Division CaptainMayuri Kurotsuchi12th Division CaptainRukia Kuchiki13th Division CaptainNanao Ise1st Division LieutenantGenshirō Okikiba1st Division LieutenantMarechiyo Ōmaeda2nd Division LieutenantIzuru Kira3rd Division LieutenantKiyone Kotetsu4th Division LieutenantMomo Hinamori5th Division LieutenantRenji Abarai6th Division LieutenantAtau Rindō7th Division LieutenantYuyu Yayahara8th Division LieutenantShūhei Hisagi9th Division LieutenantMashiro Kuna9th Division LieutenantRangiku Matsumoto10th Division LieutenantIkkaku Madarame11th Division LieutenantAkon12th Division LieutenantSentarō Kotsubaki13th Division Lieutenant