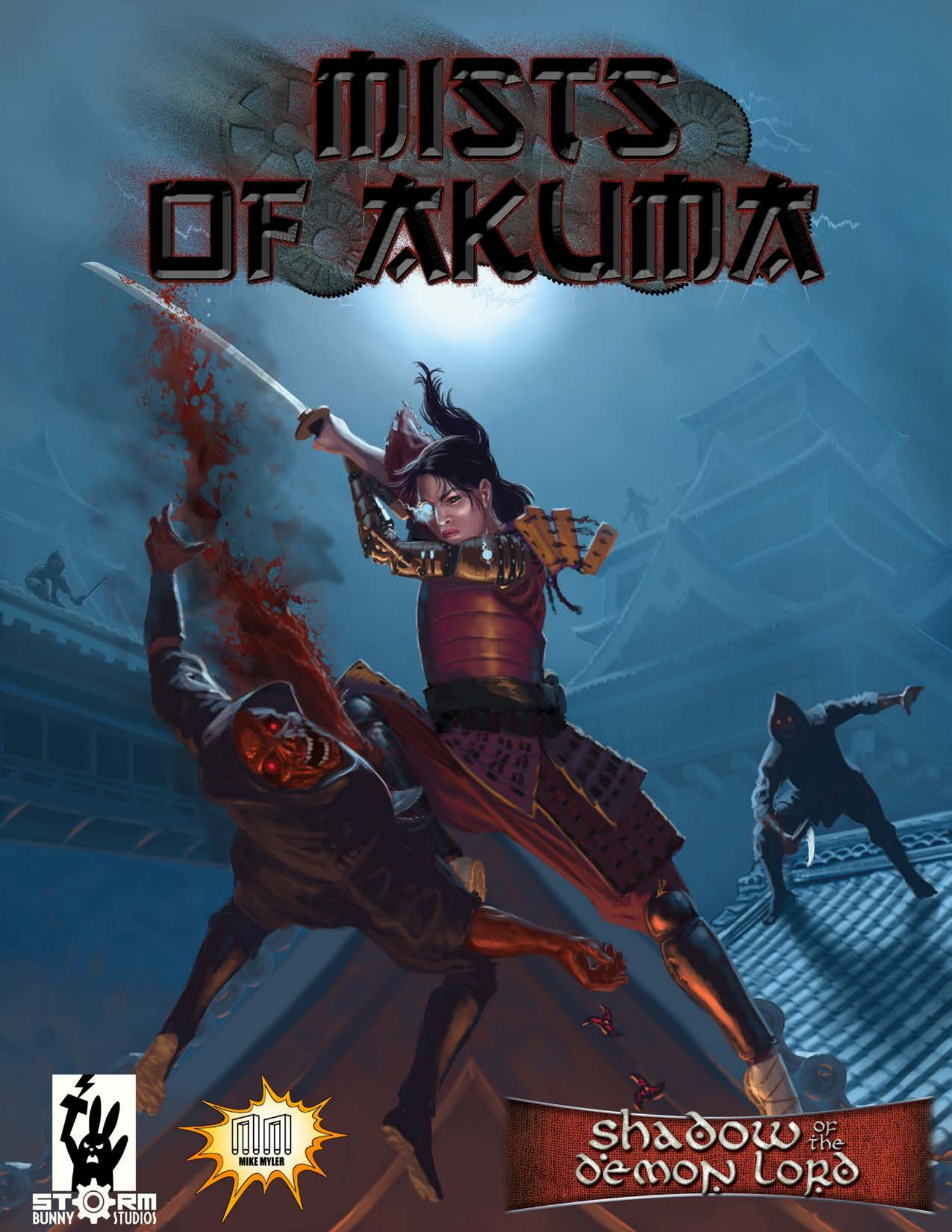
MISTS OF AKUMA
STORM BUNNY STUDIOS
MIKE MYLER
shadow of the demon lord

MISTS OF AKUMA

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FOREWORD

If you were one of our Kickstarter backers thank you for supporting the project! The entire team worked extremely hard to put together an amazing world and it is our utmost pleasure to put it into your hands. On the illustrative side our art team blew the doors right off the hinges and their artwork just explodes off the page, and the writing by the design team is just as impressive! While there are excellent stories throughout *Mists of Akuma* you're going to find that the tales you weave will be just as compelling or even more so—please tell us about them! E-mail mistsofakuma@gmail.com with your adventures and tell us what enemies you vanquish in Soburin!

SURVIVAL IN A DYING WORLD

For a century and a half foreigners oppressed Soburin's peoples by way of advanced technology, subjugating the inhuman races and poisoning the soburi's relationship with the diverse cultures of the realms. Fifty years after invading the Ceramians and Ropaeo destroyed themselves with heretical science, allowing Hitoshi's Rebellion to restore the Masuto Dynasty to power; yet all is not well.

An ancient corrupting fog from legend has begun to roil across the continent, flowing over the prefectures before receding without rhyme or reason and leaving legions of monstrous freaks in its wake. What little peace they knew has been stripped away once more as monsters from myth reappear to savage civilization and as the fell haze grows more prominent, the lengths that people go to in order to survive only descend further and further toward depravity.

Mists of Akuma is a decaying world and Soburin is an exhausted continent—both the land itself and its survivors have suffered greatly for several generations—and desperation grows with every season that passes. In lands that were once bound by honor everything has become a means to an end and few bother to justify their actions, more still hiding the evidence of their vileness and casting responsibility onto a rival; friends betray friends, parents betray children, and lovers betray one another.

Survival in the *Mists of Akuma* is not a goal to aspire to but a benchmark to measure upon: you will die or you will fall to corruption, it is only a question of which and when. What few victories you can claim as your own will be pyrrhic, but before your end you will mark the very world with the prowess of your deeds and forever be known as a legend in the dying lands of Soburin.

AN UNFORGIVING PACE: While Soburin has experienced times of peace in its long history, the era of the invasion by Ceramia, the Kengen Occupation that followed, and the current times are consumed by bloodshed, evil, and violence. *Shadow of the Demon Lord* campaigns set in *Mists of Akuma* should begin in protected settlements removed from the lowlands and not yet consumed by the supernatural haze, towns and villages where the party is only likely to encounter very weak enemies like a couple bakemono (**goblins**), **bandits**, **cultists**, **tiny monsters** or a shikome (**hobgoblin**), a **small monster**, or a lone **rogue kengen soldier** (page 12). It is recommended that the first several levels of a game remain in this relatively safe area which, when the PCs are powerful enough—generally after they've achieved their first expert path—is utterly destroyed by addedo-oni, the corrupting fog, and tsukumogami, forcing the party to travel elsewhere. From this point on level advancement should slow slightly but otherwise continue like any other *Shadow of the Demon Lord* campaign.

Soburin's finest warriors were arrayed across the fields outside of Sanbaoshi, all of the clans' armies gathered together and united under the nobori of Empress Iko Masuto. My chest swelled with pride as the men and women of Korusu fell into rank, but breath was stolen from me as I looked up towards the clouds and my eyes fell upon the first wonder of that fateful day: Chitanharikēn. The grand serpent was as majestic as the poems written to honor the Imperial Dragon and a murmur of consternation spread across the assembled troops as its powerful kin—Daokoshazi, terror of the woods—appeared nearby. I joined the other commanders as we screamed for our soldiers to fall into rank and that the enemy would soon be upon us.

The invaders were a people not unlike the children of the Imperial Siblings, but savage and violent, perverting nature to fell ends: ceramians. Their foul machines would come to leave an intense impression on us all—what sort of power but magic could send a carriage soaring through the sky or summon the lightning of a storm? Foolishly I thought the rumors mattered not; with the might of the Imperial Dragons and the united front of the twenty-three clans, this "technology" was sure to be a trivial advantage.

How wrong I was.

Massive waves suddenly appeared off the western shore—Sekainami had engaged something beyond my sight, sending water flying higher into the air than the tallest spires of the Masuto Imperial Palace. The legendary sea dragon roared so loudly that a tremor shook the very ground just as I finally caught sight of our foes and a gasp escaped my lips as the first of their ships emerged from the clouds, wheeling across the sky and out of the reach of Chitanharikēn's claws. Flashes erupted from the front of the sleek vessel's nose and the thing barked like a cur, sending clouds of dirt into the air before ripping apart a contingent of Ikari samurai like a thousand bloody demons.

Cries erupted as wounded warriors fell to the earth, maddened by pain and screaming for merciful deaths. Yamano-Ryōshu soared into the sky, the golden serpent's ascension bringing a ripple of inspiration through the united soburi before me, their retributive cries drowned out as it unleashed a cacophonous roar that sent a dozen of the loathsome aircraft falling from the sky. It was a brief reprieve of the slaughter that was to come however, and just as soon as the Imperial Dragon's powerful voice faded thrice as many of the enemy came tearing through the clouds.

Samurai and spellswords alike fell by the hundreds as more metal was spat down onto the fields, the grass quickly turning crimson from the blood of thousands of soldiers, ebbing red out into the ocean like a disease. Our forces responded as best they could but the finest archer's arrows fell short of the flying ships and the few that found purchase were as leaves on the wind.

Metal boxes the size of pagodas floated in from the fog off shore, and for a brief moment we men and women of Soburin felt that victory could be within our grasp—but only for a brief moment. When they reached the sands the enemy spilled forth carrying strange weapons, and though a few fell to Hakaisuru snipers, charging samurai began falling by the dozens as electricity ripped across the ground, fusing sand into glass and lighting the fields aflame. Brave as they were my troops began to fray, unsettled and dropping from formation as one fleed by the battlefield, followed by another deserter, chased by two more. Mentally noting their names I screamed for order among those that remained and we bravely marshalled alongside our brothers and sisters, but a crashing vessel struck the skull of Gyakusatsu and the feared void dragon fell from the sky, its limp body crashing into the sand.

When the first of the imperial dragons fell and Sekainami turned to flee—it was then I knew that the battle was truly lost.

Many fine warriors died that day but my closest students fought on beside me, forcing a truly righteous assault that pushed back a corps of the lightning-slinging enemy as more of the great serpent allies of Empress Iko fled from the battlefield. Were it not for the sacrifice of my loyal troops, Lord Toreishī Gekido and Lady Mantikoa Sukochi might never have survived the battle, and we did not accept surrender until the very last.

The ceramians had arrived and the Battle of Gyakusatsu was theirs.

—A recounting of the Battle of Gyakusatsu
General Nandemoya Korusu, 3314

CHAPTER 1: HISTORY

It has been over three and a half millennia since the dawn of mankind. Monsoons are more and more common with the reappearance of the roiling, demon-spewing Mists of Akuma, and the sun's light grows duller with every day that passes after the end of the War of Kaiyo more than a century ago. A pall of darkness has fallen on the continent of Soburin, and even its greatest heroes are mired in the petty intrigues and never-ending slights of aggressive clans. Spellswords and mercenaries cross the countryside in search of fortune, leaving the poor and meek to fend for themselves or die in the harsh reality of a broken world where technology has been either abandoned as heresy or perilously embraced.

HISTORY OF SOBURIN

For time immemorial the continent of Soburin has kept its borders tightly closed, separated from the rest of the world by the Great Divide and free from foreign influence. Embracing magic and a feudalistic way of life, martial and cultural arts flourished as pursuit of the sciences waned by the decree of nearly all the greatest lords. An idyllic, leisurely path to the future was laid out by the Masuto Imperial Dynasty after their ascent in the end of the 2,000 year long Ichizoku Wars, and through intelligent governance and the astute use of agents of the state utilizing magic, peace reigned for over a millenia.

Life changed forever when a fleet of steel gunships from Ceramia sailed into the skies above the capital of Sanbaoshi in 3301. Laden with explosive weapons and lightning-powered machines, their superior technology and massive numbers quickly wrested authority from the hands of Empress Iko, forcing open Soburin's national borders to the world at large and drafting its peoples back to a life of war. Magical and martial education became mandatory for all citizens, their lives codified and run by the Kengen (a wing of the ceramian military devoted to

subjugation). Across the Great Divide the planet's other two continents were engrossed in a conflict all their own: the War of Kaiyo. Looking for resources and any edge against the forces of Ropaeo, the people of Ceramia enlisted the continent of Soburin to their cause, subjugating all of the inhuman races into the cities of the prefectures. Soburi mages and warriors were employed to horrifying effect on the battlefield, raising the stakes of the momentous conflict raging on the other side of the edge of the world until their scientists developed weapons that wrought destruction on a global scale.

In 3406 all contact with the continents across the Great Divide ceased and the War of Kaiyo came to an abrupt end—nearly all parties sent across the edge of the world failed to return, and the few that did spoke of omnipresent death dealt out by great and terrifying horrors. Even after being cut off from Ceramia, the Kengen Occupation held onto power for five decades before being deposed, overwhelmed by a rebellion under the leadership of Hitoshi Masuto. His final victory in Sanbaoshi led to the reinstatement of the Masuto Imperial Dynasty, sending all of Soburin's immigrants to ground as he immediately declared a reprisal of all foreign influences.

By 3458 after only two years of relative peace the lands of Soburin became a dangerous place once more for peasant and noble alike. A long succession of militant clans are settling back into century-old positions of power opposing one another, and the few lords to embrace technology do so at the peril of their feudal servants (many have already fallen to cries of heresy and the blades of paranoid neighbors). Regions that were stripped of resources by the ceramians suffer greatly under the political machinations of their leaders, and though Emperor Hitoshi was an inspiring commander he is proving a poor ruler. To make matters worse, strange mists have begun to spill out of the Great Divide, bringing demons and the horrors of the war across the threshold with them.

In 3465 to consolidate control thousands of bengoshi were dispatched, representatives empowered to hire and deputize citizens on behalf of Emperor Hitoshi and the other lords of the land. These agents root out sedition and erase the influence of the other continents from Soburin, striking down scientists that experiment beyond the boundaries of imperial decree and unveiling the plots of rogue Kengen warlords. Turning their focus away from war and back toward the intricacies of magic, farseers urge for a quick solution to the Mists of Akuma, fearing that the world will be doomed should the fogs come to consume all of Soburin.

While the bengoshi have gone a long way in bringing peace and security to the realms, the political maneuver that so many commended Emperor Hitoshi for making has already begun to backfire. Many of the clans' functionaries utilize their powers to infiltrate, sabotage, and injure their rivals, gradually returning Soburin to the chaos of its past. Small, fierce battles between the forces of different prefectures are becoming more and more frequent, and exacerbated by the remnants of the ceramian and ropaeo militaries. Between the Mists of Akuma, scheming foreign generals, and the infighting of the clans, it is only a matter of time before the weakened government of Soburin collapses, sending this world's last bastion of survival into bloody, chaotic oblivion.

ROGUE KENGEN GENERALS

Soburin has become a land of spellswords and samurai where deceit and suspicion are a part of daily life—a constant struggle ruled by heresy and fueled by betrayal. Each of the 24 clans seeks to increase their power and prestige no matter the cost, even as mercenaries and mages abound on the declining roads and cities they control. Ceramia and Ropaeo are no more, but their shadow still lingers across the land—the precarious authority of the Masuto Imperial Dynasty wanes as the surviving Kengen warlords regroup and prepare for a rebellion of their own. With the Mists of Akuma roiling across the land it is only a matter of time before Emperor Hitoshi loses his authority over Soburin.

While mechanical tsukumogami litter the prefectures and create an omnipresent threat of their own, there are six greater dangers that remain from the War of Kaiyo in a much more familiar form, foreign as they may be: the surviving generals of Ceramia and Ropaeo. Under the protection of the merchants who profited under the exploitation of Soburin's natural resources

and small-minded allies catapulted to power through the subjugation of the continent's inhumans, the remaining Kengen generals continue to claim that their advanced sciences will bring about a better world. They muster rogue armies supplied by hidden caches of technology, assault the fortresses seemingly at random, and always work to undermine the Masuto Dynasty and the relative standing of the clans.

Rogue Kengen Generals and Rogue Kengen Soldiers share statistics that are modified slightly depending on the specialty of their forces.

OVERSEER FRENEZA GENUILO is the former chief science officer of the Kengen Occupation, a mad genius with a particular hatred for the umibo and a burning desire to learn their secrets (particularly what happened to the fūkaze elemental folk that disappeared over a century ago). She and her warriors are masters of lightning technology, said to have a mobile base that still soars the skies above Soburin.

OVERSEER FRENEZA GENUILO (ADD 2 DIFFICULTY STEPS)

Freneza's Agility and Intellect increase by 1, and she gains 1 boon on all Intellect challenge rolls. Her jetpack (Defense 20, Health 30) gives her Flier 20. She is able to cast each Technomancy spell of rank 3 or lower one time before requiring a rest (Power 4).

FRENEZA SOLDIERS (ADD 2 DIFFICULTY STEPS)

Freneza's soldiers gain 1 boon on all Intellect challenge rolls and have jetpacks (Defense 15, Health 20) that give them Flier 15. Their firearms deal 3d6 lightning damage on a successful hit and gain 1 boon on attack rolls targeting creatures wearing metal armor.

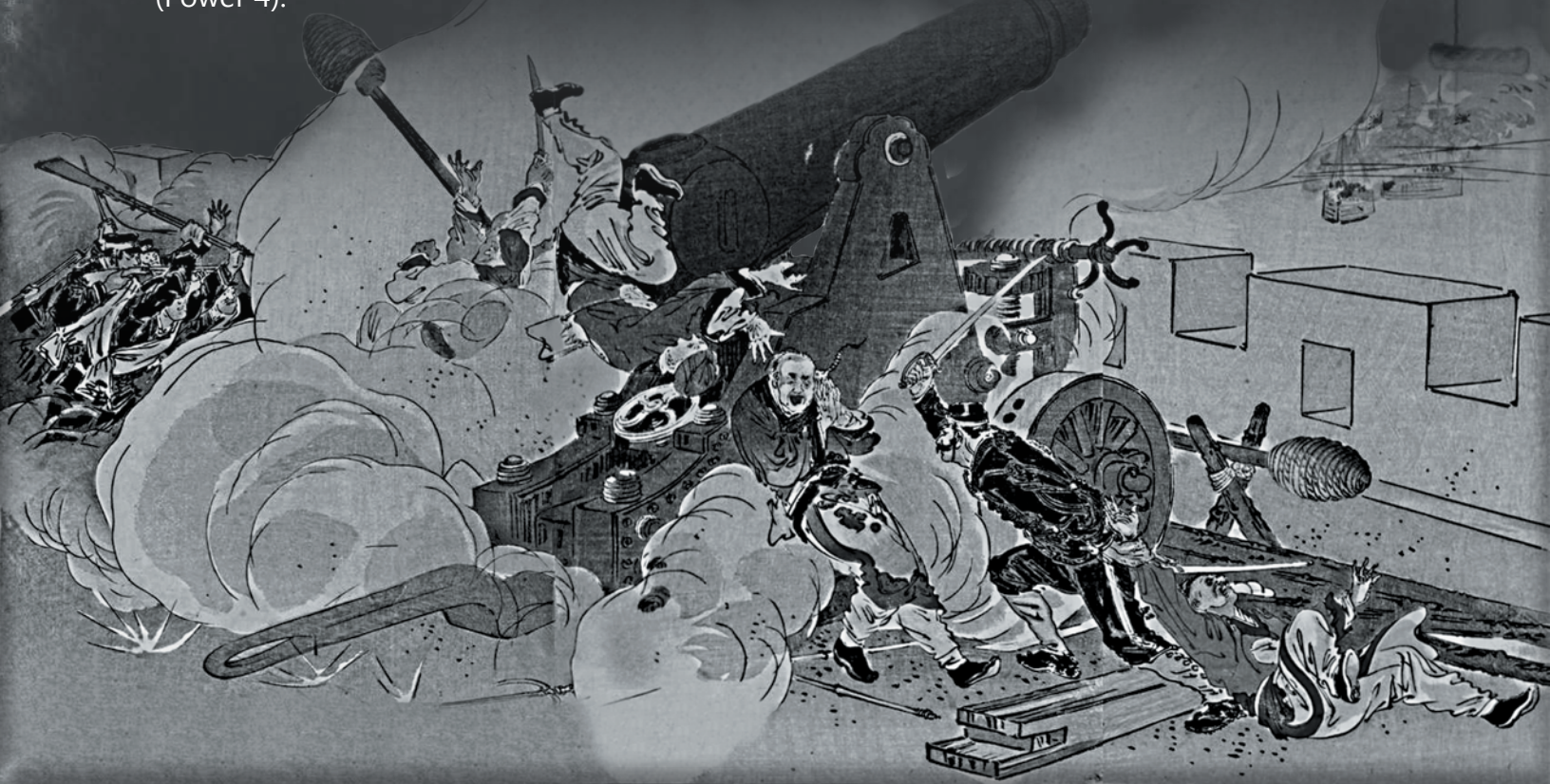
WARLORD KOLERAJ BATELANO hates all of the Soburi, blaming their conscription for the apocalypse across the Great Divide. Of all the Kengen he is far and away the most violent—survivors are only rarely left behind his army's bloody path. They travel from fortress to fortress, slaughtering everything within and turning what remains into a deathtrap before moving to the next target.

WARLORD KOLERAJ BATELANO (ADD 2 DIFFICULTY STEPS)

Koleraj's Strength increases by 2, he gains 1 boon on all Strength challenge rolls, and he ignores the first 2 points of damage from any source. Each turn he may take a second move at half speed and make one additional attack when attacking.

KOLERAJ SOLDIERS (ADD 2 DIFFICULTY STEPS)

Koleraj's soldiers gain 1 boon on all Strength challenge rolls. When one of their allies is adjacent to their opponent, the soldiers deal +1d6 damage.



GENERAL KUPRAN STELISTO was one of Ropaeo's most talented infiltrators, insinuating himself into soburi society in a wide variety of guises and training all of his soldiers to do the same. Many consider him to be the most dangerous of the Kengen, able to strike without warning before slipping back into obscurity too quickly for any defense to be mounted.

GENERAL KUPRAN STELISTO (ADD 1 DIFFICULTY STEP)

Kupran's Will increases by 2, he gains 1 boon on all Will challenge rolls. Each turn he may spend a minor activity to hide and he is able to hide without obscurement or cover. His attacks deal poison damage, and any creature that has taken damage from his attacks gains the poisoned affliction until that damage is healed.

KUPRAN SOLDIERS (ADD 1 DIFFICULTY STEP)

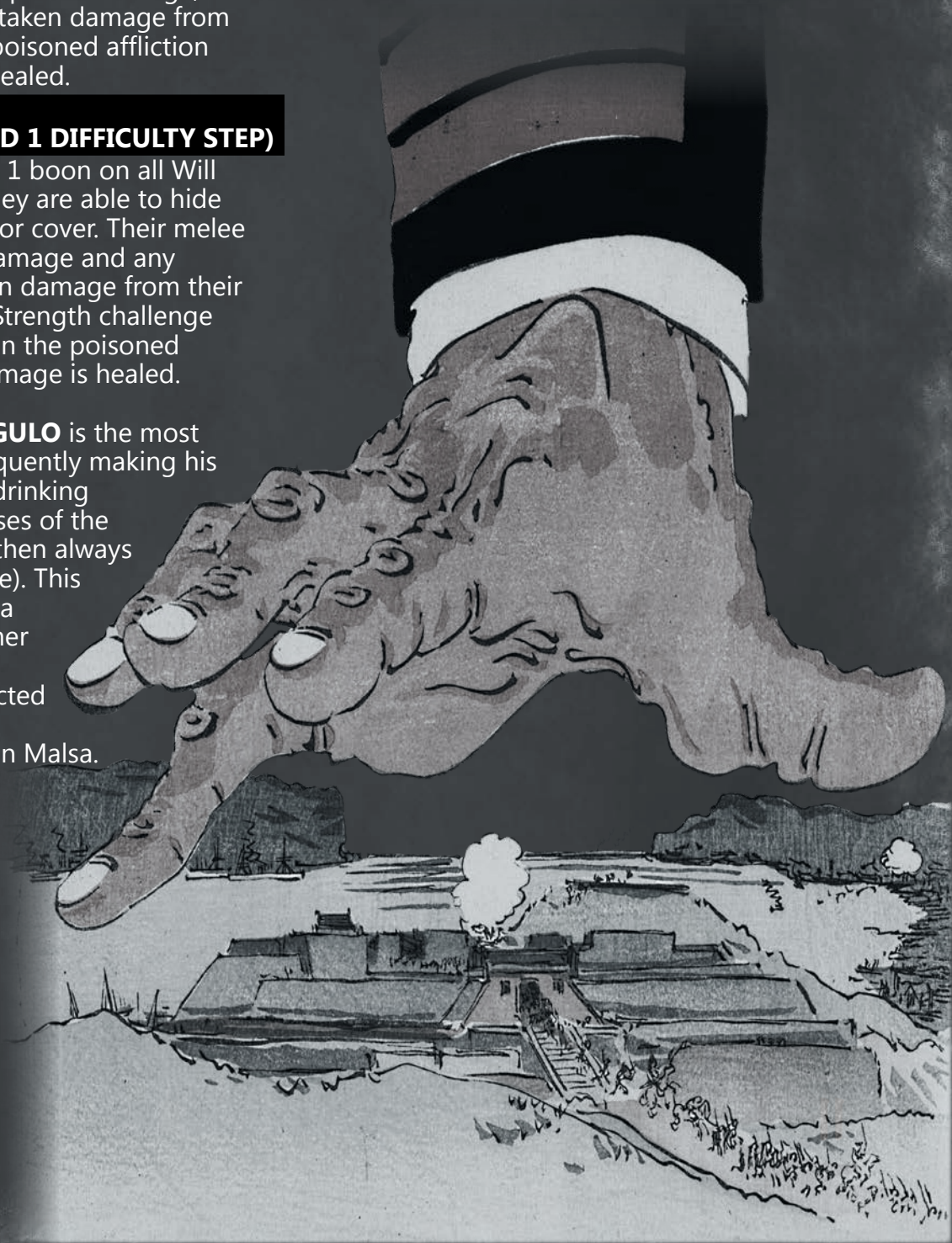
Kupran's soldiers gain 1 boon on all Will challenge rolls, and they are able to hide without concealment or cover. Their melee attacks deal poison damage and any creature that has taken damage from their attacks must make a Strength challenge roll with 1 bane or gain the poisoned affliction until that damage is healed.

COMMANDER MALSA GULO is the most public of the Kengen, frequently making his presence well known by drinking excessively in the teahouses of the various prefectures (and then always narrowly escaping capture). This foolish demeanor is only a facade and no other former general of Ceramia (or Ropaeo) is as well-connected and supported by the merchants of Soburin than Malsa.

Malsa and her soldiers have the standard statistics for a Rogue Kengen General and Rogue Kengen Soldiers.

ADMIRAL REPRE ZALO was one of Ropaeo's finest sailors and a true master of seacraft. She and her band of soldiers still ply the waters around Soburin, though since the end of the War of Kaiyo they have been joined by numerous native pirates and brigands that bring with them valuable intelligence on the maritime doings of the Masuto government.

Repre and his soldiers have the standard statistics for a Rogue Kengen General (save that she gains 2 boons to navigate or pilot a nautical vehicle) and Rogue Kengen Soldiers.



LIEUTENANT-GENERAL SOVAGA KASOJ is spoken of in hushed tones as "The Mad Gambler" due to his knack for hit-and-run tactics and an aggressive drive that many falsely interpret as a deathwish. His penchant for ambushes and striking when it is least expected has been the doom for many a soburi commander, and his very presence makes all opposing soldiers conscious of the dangers posed by a seeming weakness among the Kengen.

LIEUTENANT-GENERAL SOVAGA KASOJ (ADD 2 DIFFICULTY STEPS)

Sovaga's Agility increases by 2, his speed increases to 15, and he gains 1 boon on all Agility challenge rolls. On his turn he may take a second move at half speed and when attacking makes one additional attack.

SOVAGA SOLDIERS (ADD 2 DIFFICULTY STEPS)

Sovaga's soldiers gain 1 boon on all Agility challenge rolls. Each turn they may take an additional move at half speed and when attacking a creature adjacent to one of their allies, Sovaga's soldiers deal 1d6 additional damage.

ROGUE KENGEN GENERAL — DIFFICULTY 25

Size 1 human (ceramian or ropaeo)
Perception 14 (+4)
Defense 17 (hard leather); **Health** 40
Strength 12 (+2), **Agility** 15 (+5), **Intellect** 14 (+4), **Will** 14 (+4)
Speed 10
Immune frightened
Reflexive Dodge Once per turn, when a Rogue Kengen General is aware of their attacker, they may halve the damage the attack deals.
Legendary Tactician Once per turn, a Rogue Kengen General can either chastise a target (imposing 1 bane on their attack rolls against the Rogue Kengen General or granting granting 1 boon to challenge rolls it makes to resist the target's attacks) or command a Rogue Kengen Soldier within earshot, allowing that target to immediately take an action.
Technological Adept The Rogue Kengen General gains 1 boon on challenge rolls made to activate, build, conceal, hide, or understand technology.

ATTACK OPTIONS
Pommel (melee) +2 with 1 boon (1d6)
Saber (melee) +2 with 1 boon (2d6)
Kengen Revolver (medium range) +5 with 1 boon (3d6)

SPECIAL ATTACKS
Double Attack The Rogue Kengen General attacks twice with its saber or once with its pommel and once with its kengen revolver.

ROGUE KENGEN SOLDIER — DIFFICULTY 5

Size 1 human (ceramian or ropaeo)
Perception 11 (+1)
Defense 15 (hard leather); **Health** 20
Strength 12 (+2), **Agility** 13 (+3), **Intellect** 11 (+1), **Will** 12 (+2)
Speed 10

ATTACK OPTIONS
Bayonet (melee) +2 with 1 boon (2d6)
Hunting Rifle (long range) +3 with 1 boon (2d6+1)
Squad Tactics When in combat with other creatures that have this ability, at the start of each round a Rogue Kengen Soldier gains either a boon to attack rolls or imposes 1 bane to attacks made against them. The boon or bane lasts until the end of the Rogue Kengen Soldier's turn.

At first it seemed that my finest victory was achieved when the last of the damnable ceramians surrendered but as the years take their toll, I fear that my greatest battles are yet to come. Truly none of my predecessors—save for perhaps the great founder—had fought so hard for the empire.

I am at my wit's end and wonder how (or dare I think it, if) the great Masuto Dynasty will endure the death and corruption that threatens to engulf us all.

Even the most renowned of my ancestors (Sohei, bless her magnificence) must have had an easier time wrangling the clans than what has befallen my rule. The lords that once flocked to my banner have either perished in battle or have been taken by age, and their upstart children bring me nothing but frustration. Lords Yakushi, Dainichi, and Shaka have allied with Lady Taho and Askuku, continuing the heretical teachings of the blasphemous gaijin. They cannot appreciate the danger of the heresies in which they dabble, or that the blood of their kin paves the paths on which they tread. Fuson, Rimono, Supai, Uragi, and Uso have become ostracized by all of the mainland—and rightly so. Who can foretell what hideous things might result from their recklessness?

Perhaps I will threaten sanctions and embargoes on them once again, and station more soldiers along their torii gates. My counsels have warned me that trade has flagged since the institution of travel papers was renewed, but there was no reasonable alternative; the return of the Mists of Akuma poses a danger greater than anything the gaijin unleashed in their despicable war. We must return to the old ways to respond to this ancient threat, no matter the cost to the imperial coffers.

Though my advisors have not allowed me to admit it to the court, I believe that my negligence has cost Soburin many a noble soul—I ignored too many pleas and responded too slowly to the fell haze, as ignorant of the corruption that encroaches the lands of my sovereignty as foolish Shaka is to the evils of science. It was not until I saw what it did to that poor man that I knew something must be done. I shall never forget the adeddo-oni's screams as the mekkusenshi dragged it into the palace's garden, how it scrabbled and fought without regard for itself. Kyōretsuna slew the wretched thing before it could gnaw off one of its arms, and as her katana sliced its head away I wondered if such a monstrosity deserved so quick a death.

They tell me that the freakish aberrations now number in the thousands—possibly tens of thousands—and that more join the horde with every passing day. The finest of scholars from every prefecture still sift through the Library of Scrolls, but we know nothing more than before save that the fel fog hasn't been seen since long before the Ichizoku Wars.

While a great danger is posed by the Mists of Akuma, there are worse things still haunting my reign. Only a month ago another wave of horrors from the War of Kaiyo assailed Shinboshimasu. As wretched as the adeddo-oni might be, there can be nothing worse than the unholy machines of the gaijin gone mad. Lady Daikoku brought the gun barrel from one of the blasphemous monsters to my court—the rest of the mammoth cannon could not fit through any of the palace doors. She lamented that more than fifty spellswords and samurai fell before the creature finally died, and that it was only one among many.

My days have become filled with nothing but fearful reports from timid servants and pleas for help by an endless stream of subjects. Rumors, too, each more incredible than the last—the latest claims that one of the Imperial Siblings has returned, bringing an entire island with him. What a sight that would be!

The years of my rule have withered my body and mind, and something must be done if Soburin is to be saved; even in my youth I would not have been able to meet the tasks of my station and now it is an impossibility to lead the people. Lady Pingdeng of the Namida Clan and Lord Taishan Korusu approached me with a most innovative idea yesterday, and the more I think on it the more I believe they have divined a solution. After this evening's tea I will begin the motions to bring into action agents able to dispense my justice to better heal the empire's wounds and cut out infection where it spreads—these bengoshi shall be the arbiters of my rule's salvation and over time we will come to know true peace among the prefectures.

Perhaps I <u>can</u> save Soburin once more.

—Hitoshi Masuto, Emperor of Soburin, 14th of Roku-Gatsu, 3464

SHORI
UNMEI
RIMONO
SEIKATSU
TOPPU
NAMIDA
KYUSOKUNA
KASBIKO
BOJUKU
SUKOCHI
SEINARU
REIKOKUNA
MUJIBINA
SANBAOSHI
KUSURI
DETCHTAGI
XANZOGAKU
DAIBENDO
SU-YOSAI
KIZUATO
DAISANJI
HAKYOKU
SHINKO
MYAMOTO
YOSAI
KANAKI
FUKUSHU
HINOTAMA
KAIBI
MIYAKI
BARRAYT
GEATOU
INAZUMA
USO
FURAITO
KORITSU
SAMON
KORU
HAKAISURU
SHAGEKI
KIZAKI
PATH OF THE SIBLINGS
ARASHI
XIBUSONO
GEKIDO
CHISHI
MASUTO
INZEI
IMPERIAL PREFECTURE
HANSBUNOMANA
SHIRAZU
KONBO
FUSON
OSORE
NESUTO
NAGABUKI
THE IMPERIAL ROAD
KUSARI
AYO
IBUTSU
KYŌFŪ
JINKOSUGU
SUPAI
MOKUTEKI
HENKAN
KIRAI
SOKURU
XENKASURU
DONYUKO
HENKOSHIMASU
KAWANOO
SATSUJIN
YUGA
SUPIN
KI-YOSA
ENGI
KAMENOTOCHI
SUIRYOKU
KORUSU
ZENCHO
URANAI
YOKUBA
BEIKOKU
NAMIBUREKA
YOBO
RINKU
IKARI
IKITTONOGAKU
HOFUKU
KITTIYONA
URAGI
RENPOKOKKA
KYOI
SHIRUDO
HOKI
SOKONO
SHINBOSHIMASU
SORURIN
N
MAGIC PREFECTURE
MARTIAL PREFECTURE
SCIENCE PREFECTURE
PREFECTURE CAPITAL
CITY
ONI WARLORD
YAI SOVEREIGN

CHAPTER 2: SOBURIN

THE MISTS OF AKUMA

While each prefecture of the realm is unique from each other some dangers plague all of Soburin. Chaotic oni, Imperial Dragons, and rogue Kengen generals each pose a great threat to the clans but nothing menaces the continent like the Mists of Akuma. The corrupting fog is remembered through whispered myths from the ancient past (before even the Ichizoku Wars) and it has returned once more to terrify the populace, sowing chaos across the land. Since their reappearance demons and oni have been growing more common, but worse than that is what happens to men or beasts who find themselves exposed to the cursed haze for too long—changing into horrific monsters intent only on bloodlust and violence.

Even before wholesale transformation exposure to the Mists of Akuma twists all it touches, leading to a special affliction called misted. A creature inside a square occupied by the Mists of Akuma makes a Dignity challenge roll (with 1 bane per previous challenge roll in the last minute, maximum of 4 banes) at the end of each round or accrues 1 point of Haitoku. Accumulating Haitoku in this way does not reduce a character's Dignity score.

NEW AFFLICTION: HATED

You suffer 2 bane when making social challenge rolls against any humanoid that doesn't also have the hated affliction but you never suffer bane on challenge rolls made to intimidate humanoids.

NEW TRAIT: LEAP

A creature with a leap movement speed adds this number to the number of yards it can jump horizontally (half the number for vertical jumps). It does not allow you to jump distances greater than your speed.

NEW AFFLICTION: MISTED

Misted is measured in ten levels. Effects can give a creature one or more levels of misted (specified in an effect's description) and creatures always have a minimum number misted affliction levels equal to their Haitoku modifier. Oni and tsukumogami are immune to the misted affliction. When playing in *Mists of Akuma* this replaces Corruption (creatures, effects, and spells from *Shadow of the Demon Lord* increase or decrease Insanity instead).

Table: Misted Effects

Level	Effect
1	None
2	1 boon on intimidation challenge rolls
3	Mild auditory effect
4	Mild visual effect
5	Speed +4 during combat; 1 bane on Dignity challenge rolls
6	Severe auditory effect
7	Severe visual effect
8	Visible mutation, increase two attributes by 1, reduce one attribute by 1; 2 banes on Dignity challenge rolls
9	Ignore first 3 points of damage from each attack or spell
10	Take half damage from unholy, double damage from holy*, and fail all Dignity challenge rolls
11	Death and transformation into adeddo-oni (page 130)

Auditory and visual effects are frequent and obvious when they do occur. Some example effects are:

Mild Auditory Effect A disembodied voice repeats everything you say in a barely audible whisper.

Mild Visual Effect Your hands and feet smolder with red energy during your katas, in battle or out.

Severe Auditory Effect Whenever you draw your weapon a clap of thunder echoes around you.

Severe Visual Effect Whenever your ire is raised (even slightly), your image stretches and distorts to make you look much larger and more demonic than you are.

Visible Mutations (1d6) 1—One hand or limb is much larger than normal; 2—Your hair writhes and grasps at things; 3—Hard scabs and sores of dead flesh cover your body; 4—Your eyes become like an oni's, without pupils and hard to look at without feeling revulsion; 5—Your teeth become yellowed, sharp, and give off an offensive putrid odor; 6—Your skin hangs off your bones and your hair turns into semi-rigid spines.

BENGOSHI

The coming of the Mists of Akuma nearly broke the Imperial government, forcing Emperor Hitoshi Masuto to give the clans tools they could use to maintain order—functionaries able to enact change without bureaucratic obstacles. Able to deputize citizens with the authority of a prefecture (and threaten those who refuse to accept a task with the penalty of expulsion or even death), bengoshi have brought order to the chaos gripping the realm and quelled the most monstrous threats to Soburin. Yet these new agents are the source of countless problems of their own, using their power and influence to advance their own position or ruin a rival as often as they protect the countryside.

Bengoshi are highly respected despite their limitations and failings, well known in their communities and instantly recognizable due to the special seals they wear. Most soburi put great trust into their clan functionary, making the government agents incredibly well-informed. Indeed, concealing something from one of these honored nobles is an achievement—they are insightful, extremely well-versed in intrigue, and masters of deceit to the last. It is said only a true fool attempts to lie to a bengoshi.

Perhaps most important is how highly bengoshi are held by society: the word of one of these functionaries is as good as law and they themselves are bound by no rules save for those directly from Emperor Hitoshi or one of the clan lords. Attacking a bengoshi (even if provoked) is almost always a death sentence but that does not prevent assassins, brigands, or angry would-be deputies from assaulting the government agents. As deadly as they are cunning, these officials rarely need to resort to legal action—no matter the size or prowess their attackers—and deal out quick death with keen blades, cutting-edge augmetics, or powerful spells.

The bengoshi hailing from the prefectures are reflections of the clan they represent, sometimes flanked (either clandestinely or ostentatiously) by dutiful guards that answer only to them. These hand-picked warriors are among the best the clans can muster, either masters of the weapon of their kin, talented magic users, or equipped with incredible technology. Each entry in Chapter 7: Clans has details on the various types of bengoshi (and henchgoshi) to be found throughout Soburin.

THE GREAT DIVIDE

Far beyond the horizon, a vast wall of energy known as the Great Divide separates the lands of the Masuto Empire from the rest of the world. Beyond the deadly threshold water from the ocean falls down to disappear into the core of the planet in an endless cascade. Aquifers throughout the continent—protected by bitterly defended strongholds—constantly gush forth water, creating mighty rivers that fill the seas with a steady supply.

There are few things capable of both crossing the Great Divide and surviving the journey. Though Ceramia and Ropaeo had at one time mastered the practice, much of that knowledge has died alongside their culture and history. Occasionally survivors come through the threshold on salvaged aircraft only to crash into the salty waters not far beyond; the luckiest make landfall on Soburin, as anyone dropped into the drink too near the edge is invariably dragged down the waterfalls and into the abyss. Some manage to survive the crash and limp to the coasts or are picked up by traveling ships.

Buccaneers are a common sight so far offshore, using the wild winds of the threshold and the current at the crest of the endless waterfall to swiftly sail away from heavier government ships. There is great danger in their technique however—the faster a vessel travels the more likely it is to go over the edge, plummeting to destruction. Though many of these maritime brigands are without loyalty to anyone but themselves a sizable number sail under the banner of Rogue Kengen General Zalo, working in concert to plague Soburin's waters with piracy.

A far greater danger lurks beyond the Great Divide: tsukumogami arisen from the destroyed lands of Ceramia and Ropaeo. Though few of the awakened warmachines have traversed the vast gulf, either propelled by powerful explosions or riding along a surviving aerial vehicle, the impact of each is dramatic. Almost as bad as the immediate destruction is the panic they invoke and with each appearance, rumors spread across Soburin claiming that countless more hide behind the threshold. None of the clans approve of the pirates that ply the ocean, but they have recognized that the brigands provide a valuable service by being the first warning sign whenever the violent technological monsters rear their ugly heads.

Torii Gates

The prefectures of Soburin are largely defined by natural borders—bogs, mountains, or rivers too troublesome for most people to journey across on foot. To regulate travel and control contraband, the Masuto government operates a series of torii gates along the boundaries of the prefectures. Soldiers (mostly archers) are always poised around the base and atop these massive gates. These guards stop anyone they see traveling into or out of a realm (with force if necessary) to check travel papers, rummage through belongings, and make sure that oni are not hiding among groups of travelers.

After the reappearance of the Mists of Akuma Emperor Hitoshi ordered that all torii gates be fitted with stakes on either side of their columns to facilitate extended platforms to accommodate the terrified populace that flock to them whenever the corrupting fog rolls in. The guards usually take advantage of these instances of sheltering to question and survey refugees, ferret out fugitives from other prefectures, capture valuable political prisoners, or worse.

Across the Edge of the World

There are two major obstacles to overcome before travel across the Great Divide is even possible.

First, one must be capable of nonmagical flight—perhaps through a technological vehicle. The rift of the divide is nearly bottomless and the strange powers of it make magical flight unpredictable in the rare case it is even possible. Each round an Agility challenge roll with 3 banes is required for a pilot to control their vehicle.

Second (and more important), one must be capable of surviving the storm-like conditions of the Great Divide itself. At the end every round within the divide, creatures and objects take 1d6 damage each round from all of the following types: acid, cold, fire, force, lightning, and thunder.

Finally, even the well-prepared can find themselves in trouble from the constant fluctuations of the energy field, which varies constantly in size. Each minute the field fluctuates, expanding or contracting to 1d6 x 50 yards wide.

Travel Papers

Though the geography of Soburin goes a long way to keeping the prefectures apart from one another, the various clan lords collectively agreed that the trading practices established during the Kengen Occupation remain. Many claimed that the strict rules of commerce keep the merchants of the realms from avoiding taxation, but in truth most are interested in keeping their enemies from easily placing saboteurs.

Journeying without travel papers is justification for search, imprisonment by local authorities or government agents, or seizure of property. A healthy and robust black market has emerged to provide false documentation to those with coin enough to afford it, but otherwise they must be obtained from official sources like bengoshi, clan lords, or ryokōsai (see Chapter 3: Culture & Religion).

Bengoshi Bengoshi never require travel papers but they possess their own seals and stamps for granting them to others, frequently doing so as a reward for aid or information.

Forgeries Crafting false travel papers requires the forger to know the symbols for their embarkation and destination in order to make an Intellect challenge roll. Guards use their Perception to recognize the forgery, or gaining 1 boon if they scrutinize it carefully.

Ryokōsai Every clan has an allotted number of functionaries dispersed throughout their settlements devoted solely to checking, making, and tracking travel papers.

Seals These durable metallic or gemstone tokens are extremely valuable, minted by the treasurer of the imperial family. Possession of a forged seal is a crime punishable by death.

Stamps Every clan has its own stamp with variations for every season, altering slightly with every year that passes. Travel papers with expired stamps are immediately destroyed (though many people save them "as souvenirs", frequently altering the documents later for sale on the black market.)

Dear Kireina,

Once again Yosai has proven to me that life in the city is full of the unexpected.

My mentorship with Kinni Gametsu continues to be a success and she assures me that before long I will be taking the lead in negotiations with the sailors here. We plan to expand the reach of the business and Kinni thinks that rice from Komura might soon be eaten as far north as Sokuru! I worry that she might be indulging too greatly in black smoke—it is a foul substance but many here swear by it, preferring it even to sake—last week she fell so ill after a late night at the tea house that I had to conduct important meetings on her behalf. While her sickness concerns me she was so pleased by my performance that when an invitation to a banquet at Lady Zhuanlun Shinko's home arrived, she insisted I join her. I was overwhelmed with pride! Make sure to get a good look at Fei-Lung's face when you tell him!

The courts of the Shinko Clan are said to be among the most polite and tolerant in all of the prefectures, and though I worried that my manners might mark me as a peasant there was no need for concern. Quite the opposite! I'm told we were treated to a rare sight that evening courtesy of Gēro Ohirakima, a man I hope you never meet. They spoke well of Gēro as the food was brought out—he was a retired samurai that single-handedly saved Lady Zhuanlun from an assassin's blade only a few days before, earning his place among the nobility—but all compliments came to an end after he arrived, far later than any of the other guests. He was clearly drunk as well; I could smell the alcohol wafting off of him, the scent of cheap sake filling the hall.

Before sitting down Gēro stumbled over to her ladyship, pulling a small box from inside his scarf with a jingling I barely heard. A small gasp escaped many of the other guests as we realized he wore armor beneath his silks and though I remained silent at first, even I was aghast when he extended the present with one swaying hand, letting it lie on the floor after the poorly-wrapped box slipped from his fingers. The smile on Lady Zhuanlun's face remained unwavering and she merely laughed politely, bidding the swordsman to take his place at the table, but Kinni gave me a look I've come to know means that something is dreadfully wrong.

It was simply more than could be believed, my dearest Kireina—Gēro's table manners were as atrocious as Fei-Lung's on his worst, drunkest day. Kinni had warned me long ago never to speak of business before a meal is complete but as you might imagine, that did not stop Gēro from offering to take on the other guests as students in his new dojo. Worse yet he ate only dumplings, and he finished all of them, even licking the sauce from his bowl! Like a beast! All the while as more and more of the table came to glare at him, Lady Zhuanlun's smile was unflinching, but her eyes spoke volumes. With every disgraceful gesture and disrespectful action they seemed to become more intense, and I knew that what Kinni suspected was true.

The final straw broke as Gēro pushed his bowl forward, belched, and placed his chopsticks inside.

I know what you are thinking Kireina, and the court's reaction was even worse than when Fei-Lung did it in old Rōjin's food hall. Almost as one the lords and merchants around the table rose in disgust, demanding that he apologize for acting the savage. Lady Zhuanlun stood gallantly, expecting an apology, and though Gēro might have meant to bow as he got up off the floor he tripped forward, accidentally slapping her across the face.

Gēro began slurring out what I suspect was an excuse but Lady Zhuanlun silenced him with a word, stripping him of his title right then and there! Her retainers took the drunk samurai by the arms, lifting him into the air as he struggled and screamed obscenities. They didn't even allow him to don his shoes before throwing him (and them!) into the street. A band of musicians entered soon after, followed by a taikomochi that sang a beautiful song of Shinko's triumphs, as pleasant and illuminating as the rest of the evening.

Kinni is calling for me so I must go, but I pray that this missive and the attached wages find you well—soon enough you shall join me here in Yosai, where hopefully you will never witness a buffoon like Gēro.

—Until we meet once more,
Tōrīterā Sensōchīfu

CHAPTER 3: CULTURE

Despite the decay of the world around them—or perhaps because of it—the citizens of Soburin strongly adhere to ancient traditions of etiquette and respect. An inappropriately timed offer, insulting gift, or brazen word can be as dangerous to one's well-being as any crime, making those capable of navigating the intrigue of a noble's court as in demand as talented swordsmen (if not more).

General Etiquette Punctuality is of the utmost importance. When presenting or receiving items, one does so with both hands (provided that they have two hands). Public displays of affection between amours are regarded very poorly.

Honor Duels Honor duels are not uncommon but when someone of high social status is accused or challenged by someone of lower standing, they may substitute a champion to battle on their behalf. Interfering in an Honor Duel is tantamount to blasphemy and in some prefectures a crime with harsh penalties and requisite jail time.

Greetings It is extremely impolite not to greet someone before beginning conversation, formally bowing and wishing the person to have a good day. When greeting a group only one bow is necessary but it is essential to address the oldest or most important person first.

Being a Guest When entering a dwelling one ties off their weapon inside its sheath and removes their shoes, armor, or winter clothing before passing through the doorway to inside. When leaving a domicile, a guest dons their armor or winter clothing outside of the building. When hosting someone (regardless of who or why) it is rude not to offer food, drink, or similar, and when imbibing alcohol or using black smoke inside someone's residence, doing so without sharing or explicit permission is the height of rudeness. It is phenomenally impolite to invite oneself into someone else's home or outing.

Eating When toasting, one taps the table twice (not their glass). Leaving chopsticks in an empty bowl signifies death and is a sign that the patron has no intent on returning. One samples all available dishes at a meal and leaves a small bit of food on their plate as a sign of gratitude to the host's graciousness. Perhaps most importantly at events that include a meal, talking about business before the food is finished is taboo.

Tea Houses Every tea house has its own set of rules and manners but for most establishments, wearing one's shoes and armor is not frowned upon. Patrons are expected to wait for a server or host before sitting or placing an order, and depending on the caliber of the tea house there may be security above and beyond the local guards.

Lords and Bengoshi Only the wealthy, influential, or those who have achieved great things merit the attention of a noble court, but ignoring an invitation from one is ill-fated. Not answering the summons of a bengoshi or lord can be grounds for arrest or even death depending on one's societal standing. Being summoned to a court does not necessitate a gift, though it is generally a good idea—however small the gesture—but if one requests the meeting a gift is absolutely required. Drawing a blade or threatening a bengoshi or lord is grounds for immediate execution; though it is not law, arriving too early or late for such a meeting does not bode well and some say leads to the same end.

Court Etiquette Courts are managed by a lord's majordomo (sometimes a geisha or taikomochi). Interrupting anyone in court with something other than an affirmation is frowned upon, and interrupting the host is widely seen as a direct insult. It is expected for every guest to have an entertaining anecdote, notable skill, or talent to display if the host and other guests begin to share their own. Bringing drink, drugs, or food (either for oneself or everyone assembled) is rude because it is expected for the host to offer refreshments and entertainment. Bringing a tsukumogami to court, regardless of reason or importance, is reason enough for one to find themselves being ejected (or worse).

Giving Gifts Being invited to an event imposes the need to provide gifts to the host, though the presentation of a gift is at least as important as the actual gift itself. It is common for the giver of a gift to open it and present it with both hands, and though it is uncommon, not accepting a gift happens—accepting a gift creates an unspoken obligation on the recipient, one that they may not always desire.

Gifts should be neither too cheap nor too expensive—typically between one and ten Imperial Pieces when coming from a serf, or 10–50 Imperial Pieces for someone of higher station. Clan lords often exchange gifts that range from hundreds to thousands of Imperial Pieces. During Seibo (a winter holiday) and Chūgen (a summer holiday), students and serfs give gifts to their teachers and lords. The most common types of gifts are omiyage (souvenirs brought home from a trip) or temiyage (specialty drink, food, or other items brought from one's home town).

Impolite Gifts

Though some even numbers are thought to be good luck, items that prominently display the numbers 4 or 9 (homonyms for the Soburi words for death and torture) are extremely rude to gift.

When gifting a wedding or other ceremony of union, mirrors, ceramics, glass, scissors, and knives are inappropriate because of their symbology for breaking or cutting the relationship.

When giving a gift for the opening of a new shop or a christening of a new home, anything related to fire (ashtrays, incense holders, stoves, heaters, or black smoke lighters) is considered impolite unless requested.

When giving a gift to an older person, it is rude to give anything related to the foot as it is seen as though one is stomping on their elder.

Clocks and watches symbolize mortality, and red ink is seen as severe criticism or a form of protest. Pajamas and other gifts for comfortable sleeping are generally well regarded but can also imply that one wishes to see the recipient stay ridden to their bed.

Servants of Comfort & Entertainment Geishas and taikomochi are status symbols and some are even celebrities, usually with a clan lord as one of their retainers. These respected entertainers are trained from a young age, studying traditional instruments (the shamisen, shakuhachi, and drums) and mastering many games, traditional songs and dances, calligraphy, tea ceremony, literature, and poetry. A geisha or taikomochi must be wooed with gifts and demonstrations, but after gaining one's respect they can be hired to host parties or banquets, paid by how many incense sticks they burn while performing their duties. Truly great services on behalf of an influential clan lord are often paid in parcels of land or with the assignment of a courtesan, but even then, only with the geisha or taikomochi's consent.

RELIGION

Soburin has no true gods and is instead home to many beings of mythical power—including the Imperial Siblings, yai sovereigns, and most prominently, kami.

Kami and Placating the Spirits Many entities travel the invisible roads that crisscross Soburin but the best known and most liked among them are kami—spirits as ancient as the continent itself. While little is certain about their true nature, they are known to gather near places, items, and people of great influence, age, or power. While some whisper this is to forward agendas only kami can fathom, only those who regularly interact with them (priests and yamabushi) can even guess at their true purpose.

Regardless of the spirits' aims, all those live and work in the desolate, struggling lands of Soburin know that honoring the kami (either as a form of true reverence or to placate the wrathful ones) is a daily tradition only the foolish would dare mock. While they may be invisible to most, the spirits affect the world around them in real and tangible ways—responsible for a bit of fair weather here, an accident there, or the occasional run of good luck. Others have come to learn that especially ancient kami wield incredible power, growing so potent that they can animate objects and manifest their will in the world of the waking. It is these spirits that the people of the prefectures fear and respect the most, knowing all too well the repercussions that befall those who dishonor them.

Most of the men and women of Soburin, both commoner and noble alike, walk gently in the sacred places said to house the kami and do not dare to tempt their wrath. This tradition of respect extends to those who display special powers or stumble upon unique talents (especially before puberty); either could have ties to the spirits, and the wise know that to placate them is to invite their blessing rather than ill will. Doing so properly is no small affair and many try their own hand before ultimately seeking out a skilled yamabushi—an ascetic hermit frequently found in the wilderness—to perform the necessary honorific rites. When one cannot find a trained priest, attempts to placate the kami might include everything from the giving of gifts, titles, and most frequently, the building of shrines (places where they are invited to dwell in honor and peace).

Godless, Immortal Spirits In many ways the kami are the final vestiges of true soburi faith, occupying roles common to the divine servants of other religions—even when their gifts are as fickle as the seasons some represent. There are renowned kami who have accumulated power and prestige equal to that of lesser gods in other cultures, and might command entire temples staffed by circles of wu-jen sworn to their service. While not common, these holy sites—hidden deep in the mountains, cloaked from both the people of Soburin and oni alike—house servants dedicated to expanding their master's influence, championing them the same way a samurai would honor a feudal lord.

When they weaken one can expect strange sights and wondrous events as their magic and the majesty of the invisible world flood out into the stark light of the waking. Whether or not these spirits are truly immortal remains a secret known only to a few; these kami might manifest earthly bodies and challenge their foes to combat or reside in their hidden homes, forcing powerful yamabushi, monks, or others to travel to them, using their willpower and magical acumen to evade conflict rather than confront it.

NEW ATTRIBUTES: DIGNITY AND HAITOKU

In the lands of Soburin few people are truly honorable—most of those who claim to be hide their duplicitous ways behind hearsay, rumor, and the appearance of nobility. When playing in a game set in *Mists of Akuma*, two new ability scores come into play that are emblematic of the struggle against the overwhelming nature of the world that grinds down all the living souls within it: Dignity and Haitoku. These abilities function just like any other ability score, with the exceptions detailed below.

At character creation a character has a Dignity score of 10 and Haitoku score of 10. Some backgrounds may decrease or increase a character's Dignity and Haitoku, as the GM sees fit, and a player may choose to have a starting Haitoku score of up to 13. Unlike normal, these attributes are not limited to a score between 1 and 20, and are directly related to one another. After character creation, most increases to Dignity reduce a character's Haitoku by the same amount, and most increases to Haitoku reduce a character's Dignity by the same amount.

Should you ever need to make a Dignity or Haitoku challenge roll for a monster that does not have these attributes, substitute Intellect for Dignity and Will for Haitoku.

DIGNITY

Dignity isn't an actual measure of a character's devotion to a set of principles or how virtuous they might be—it is an indicator of how well they carry their dutiful nature (if they have one) and how honorable others *perceive* them to be. The reputation of a character with a high Dignity carries weight and garners them recognition, both generally and with Bengoshi or among other characters with high Dignity.

Dignity can be raised through normal ability score increases at double the normal increase without lowering a character's Haitoku. Otherwise, the GM can choose to increase Dignity (lowering Haitoku) based on how a character acts (although they are not *required* to do so every time Dignity increases). At the end of a gaming session, if a character was seen defending the law, protecting against wanton malice, or has otherwise distinguished themselves (such as finishing a mission for a bengoshi), the GM can increase the character's Dignity by 1 or more (assuming of course that at least one witness survived to spread the word).

Dignity Challenge Rolls Dignity challenge rolls can be made when how honorable a character is plays an impact on a social situation. They can also be used against Haitoku-driven abilities and when a character is attempting not to dishonor themselves. The GM might also call for a Dignity challenge roll in the following instances:

- A character is unsure on how to act honorably.
- A character is surrendering but attempting to retain the respect of their allies and enemies.
- A character wants to know another character's Dignity score (target number equal to the target's Dignity score).
- A character wishes to utilize the appropriate etiquette in a social situation that is complex or tense.
- A character wants to influence another character through their social standing.
- A character wants to acquire travel papers from a Torii Gate when they would not normally be able to.
- A character replies to an enemy's insults or provocations in turn, dishonoring themselves.
- A character is about to be fooled by an enemy's ploy to breach their honor.
- A character wishes to know whether or not they recognize the name of a noble or the lineage of a samurai.

HAITOKU

Haitoku means "fall from virtue" and represents a character's gradual embrace of the dark methods, immoral ethics, and fell powers that have encroached upon and consumed Soburin (and everyone within). Characters with a high Haitoku score will do whatever is necessary to achieve their goals—endangering children and the infirm, sacrificing the lives of others, committing a settlement to bloody reprisal from a rival town, or even dooming a region by disrupting a powerful relic for their own gain—and it taints their soul. This severe disposition can be recognized by others who share a willingness to be cutthroat, and some truly embody their depravity to unlock powerful abilities beyond the ken of mortal men.

Haitoku can be raised through normal ability score increases without lowering a character's Dignity. Otherwise, the GM can choose to increase Haitoku (lowering Dignity) based on how a character acts (although they are not *required* to do so every time Haitoku increases). At the end of a gaming session, if a character was seen breaking the law, engaging in wanton violence, or has otherwise committed an immoral act, the GM can increase the character's Haitoku by 1.

Finally, a character always has a number of levels of the misted affliction (page 15) equal to their Haitoku modifier.

Haitoku Challenge Rolls Haitoku challenge rolls can be used much like Will, when how despicable a character is plays an impact on a social situation. It can also be used against Dignity-driven abilities or when a character pushes their body and mind beyond their limitations. The GM might also call for a Haitoku challenge roll in the following instances:

- A character is unsure of whether they are going to endanger others with their direct actions.
- A character wants to know another character's Haitoku score (target number equal to the target's Haitoku score).
- A character wishes to unlock the secrets of a powerful item, activating it with the implacable and unending perseverance of their spirit.
- A character wants to influence another character by revealing how depraved they are willing to be and that no consequence or measure can stop them.
- A character can resist death by dipping into their deepest reserves of unyielding resolve. As a triggered action, a character can attempt a Haitoku challenge roll. On a success, the character heals 1 damage and gains the fatigued affliction. They may activate this ability even while unconscious. A character may resist death a number of times equal to their Haitoku modifier (minimum 1). Uses of this ability recharge after a rest, at which point the character increases its Haitoku by 1 for each time it succeeded.
- A character encounters a truly unnatural horror that would shatter the mind of a less resolute being. When an effect would cause insanity or madness a character may make a Haitoku challenge roll in place of a Will challenge roll. They may make this Haitoku challenge roll with 1 boon by gaining a level of the fatigued affliction until they finish a rest.
- A character breathes the Mists of Akuma.
- A character wishes to sense how dangerous a demon, oni, or tsukumogami is.
- A character wishes to determine whether or not a given area is cursed by fell energies.

Utsukushī grit her teeth, focusing on keeping hold of the bucking dragonfly kite's wing even as the steel augmetics where her arms used to be began to spray steam from the exertion. The vapor combined with the smoke from the vehicle itself and mingled into clouds that obscured the rampway adjoining the building's top floor, turning the panoply of Sanbaoshi's countless lights into a kaleidoscope gradually suffocated by the exhaust the damnable piece of Uso technology was coughing into the Koshaji Mercantile House. The evening had not gone as she had planned, though the Masuto Bengoshi was right—Gairo Koshaji was certainly guilty of something.

As per the powerful government official's orders (and on pain of death for failure or refusal, she thought dryly), Utsukushī and her companions left the Apple Blossom Teahouse with full bellies only to be waylaid by a group of thugs swathed in black. Fortunately they were no match for her steel or Omoomoshī's thunderous blasts (and certainly not Shibōnotoko's uncanny knack for striking opponents where they were weakest) but when the Imperial Guard arrived her allies collectively decided that it would be easier to abscond rather than explain the situation, fleeing down alleyways until the tanuki thief could lure their pursuers into a dead end and climb away to safety. Undeterred by the cutthroats they continued on to the Peasant's Ward, wary of any sign of the authorities along the way.

Looking in through a window in the back alley behind the Koshaji Mercantile House Utsukushī had spotted a figure fiddling with something on the thick, worn oak countertop, urging her allies to be as quiet as possible as they broke into Gairo Koshaji's place of business. Though they had managed to slip into the shop and remain beneath his notice, once confronted combat broke out almost immediately and a half dozen thugs—dressed in the same fashion as those from not an hour before—descended into the room. Behind the crashing of cheap antiquities that followed in the brutal melee Utsukushī's artificial ears (one of her many ceramian relics) had picked out the cough of an engine on the second floor and she sprinted up to find the trader strapped into the flying contraption, about to flee and take her freedom (or possibly her life) with him.

That wasn't going to happen.

Over the raucous noise of the engine Utsukushī could hear him screaming to let go but she wouldn't have it; the thunder of Omoomoshī's magic had ceased, meaning that only aid or death lay behind her. Suddenly Gairo's ranting slowed, replaced by a chanting she recognized as a spell only as she realized how good of a friend this man might turn out to be—after all, he clearly had connections. Letting her resistance drop just a little and grabbing onto his outstretched hand, the duo exploded out of the steam and exhaust to soar out above the streets of Sanbaoshi. Momentarily taking in the sight of the Imperial Prefecture's capital, Utsukushī looked oddly at Gairo as her new companion released his grip on the apparatus with his left hand to work at something on the arm holding her up, twisting away metal from his skin.

With a sickening lurch she realized what the dastardly merchant was doing (and what he'd done to her mind) just as his forearm fell away, clenching and unclenching its fist mindlessly as she dropped onto a rooftop thirty feet below. Hitting the building hard Utsukushī broke her fall as well as something in her shoulder, a loud clang from pieces of her left arm snapping before she came to a stop. The dragonfly kite picked up speed and flew onward, belching black smoke behind it in a trail until it was nothing but a silhouette against the pale moon.

Then it was gone.

Hefting the sophisticated prosthetic in her own crude, steel hands, Utsukushī looked out on Sanbaoshi's rooftops with rage rising inside her. Gairo Koshaji might have escaped her grasp tonight but he would not enjoy his victory for long and she vowed to herself then and there: *the next time we meet, that merchant is getting beaten to death with his own f&%*ing fist*.

CHAPTER 4: SANBAOSHI

IMPERIAL CAPITAL OF THE MASUTO DYNASTY

A sprawling metropolis emblematic of the continent at large, the Imperial Capital is a tableau of technology alongside the traditions of Soburin's past and home to the rulers of the land: the Masuto Dynasty. The Kengen Occupation respectfully allowed the native soburi to keep most of the city's culture intact but the large ceramian presence left an indelible mark on the settlement, most visible in the electricity-powered lanterns that illuminate the urban waterways day and night.

The Masuto rose to power at the end of the Ichizoku Wars, leveraging something still-unknown against the Imperial Dragons that allowed their upstart forces—mostly paid ronin and spellswords—to finally overcome the armies of the 23 warring clans.

Once she had assumed authority, Sohei Masuto cemented her family's place in Soburin by claiming the center of the continent as their own. The imperial capital of Sanbaoshi has been a bulwark of stability since, safe from the greatest clan rivalries and ruled by a Masuto as Emperor for almost 1,500 years.

THRONE OF POWER

Ceramian invaders recognized the great value of the Imperial Capital immediately, targeting it in the Battle of Gyakusatsu and breaking the defenders' will in a display of superior weaponry and tactics that swiftly cowed the continent. This technology spread across Soburin and the metropolis over the next century as the Kengen Occupation wore on—today, 50 years after the fall of the foreign oppressors, science and technology are not so well loved. The most violent or invasive machinery is

forbidden entirely as are some even innocuous items. Others remain: lightning lanterns are everywhere, tinkerers' shops can be found all throughout the metropolis, and samurai fitted with steel augmetics walk the city's streets.

As the central seat of government Sanbaoshi is a place of much intrigue among the bengoshi of the clans. Each of these functionaries is constantly toiling for their lords, working to undermine their rivals and raise their patron's esteem as well as their own. The Imperial Guard is constantly chasing down suspicious persons but the capital has countless potential agents to spare: adventurers flock to the city for reasons of all kinds and prove easy to manipulate for only a few Imperial Pieces.

Emperor Hitoshi Masuto's tolerance for technology, the settlement's strategic location, and the flurry of nightly activity that keeps its defenders occupied has made the capital a hotbed for smuggling. The trade of illegal goods is a constant problem in Sanbaoshi fueled by bengoshi using the illicit devices for all manner of immoral aims and technologists looking to make a profit by outfitting adventurers with cutting-edge augmetics; it doesn't help that some of the largest concentrations of ceramian and ropaeo communities surviving in Soburin are those in the Imperial Capital. These gaijin are by and large unwanted, spurned under the belief they will continue on the destructive paths of their foreign ancestors, but as long as they serve a purpose to the clans' functionaries they are sure to remain a thorn in the side of the Imperial Guard.

Seishin Nohantā

With technology from before the rise of Emperor Hitoshi common all over the metropolis, tsukumogami—items that awaken into creatures, usually of the violent sort—are a frequent problem. To combat and respond to the threat an elite team of tsukumogami hunters prowl the streets of the metropolis protecting citizens from harm. The Seishin Nohantā are a common presence in Sanbaoshi and though utterly devoted to the city, they are sworn not to allow mundane criminals to distract them from their task; they often act as sentries on behalf of the Imperial Guard instead, reporting anyone or anything suspicious that passes under their watch.

Combating the Mists of Akuma

Sanbaoshi is a sprawling city and has no single dedicated way to protect the populace when the Mists of Akuma roll in. Through most of the metropolis there are teams of fansābanto, Gasu-Heishi, and Kūki Meiji that move quickly and proactively to gather citizens together in comparatively safe locations, while in richer districts (like the Heavenly Estates, Yōhei Ward, and Masuto Imperial Palace) people make use of hikōsen or anzen-sei boxes. Of course no protection is perfect, for even the most secure shelter or dutiful guardian can be sabotaged or distracted for the right price.

Anzen-Sei Boxes These large, elaborately decorated capsules can be hermetically sealed from within, giving a small group of people days to wait out the corrupting fog in safety (and often comfort) before the air runs out.

Fansābanto Groups of monks fitted with fan no te augmetics (page 216) protect their charges with powerful gusts of wind—for a price that few can pay.

Gasu-Heishi Elite soldiers are chosen from the Imperial Guard and fitted with sealed armor and qì-tóukuī masks to protect them entirely from the effects of the Mists of Akuma; so armored, they patrol the streets slaughtering the monsters that emerge from the fel haze.

Hikōsen Floating at all times over the city, these small blimps offer supposedly absolute safety from the Mists of Akuma and the bloody chaos it heralds—provided one can afford to buy and maintain one (page 215).

Kūki Meiji Equipped with scrolls for spells specifically to combat the corrupting fog, these spellcasters are typically stationed at the heart of each district to protect as much of the populace as possible with their specialized magic.

Underworld of the Imperial Capital

Both the Path of the Siblings and the Imperial Road end in Sanbaoshi, making the settlement a locus for trade—and crime. Each of the clans reach deep into the underpinnings of the Imperial Capital, funding gangs that manipulate and influence the criminal elements of society, spies in noble houses, laborers who watch the goings on at the docks, and a network of informants who learn what little they can from the information that slips out of the Masuto Imperial Palace. Freelance muggers, pickpockets, and thieves are common throughout all but the richest districts, working in the shadows and doing their best to avoid the attentions of the Imperial Guard and rivals alike. With a high rate of turnover, the crime lords are always seeking more members for their organizations, often coercing inductees with violence when coin fails.

Mitsuyu Gyōsha Consortium

Keen to the rate at which tsukumogami were manifesting after the Mists of Akuma reappeared, some of Soburin's crime lords saw an opportunity rather than a new obstacle. These tsukumogami were intelligent, and able to blend in with their surroundings in a way that even a master shinobi could not—what if their talents could be harnessed? Thus the Mitsuyu Gyōsha was born.

The humanoid members of this ultra-secretive organization of thieves, spies, and smugglers are accompanied at all times by a tsukumogami either bribed, coerced or bound to serve them, usually hiding in plain sight as a regular mundane piece of equipment. The criminal guild's collective power and influence isn't known for certain but most suspect they have as much of an impact on Soburin as any of the individual prefectures, and possibly even the Masuto Dynasty. Their agents are rife in Sanbaoshi, using the center of trade to devastating effect both to absorb information and to throw pursuers off their trail.

Sanbaoshi Sewers

The 7th emperor of Soburin began construction of a system of sewers beneath Sanbaoshi, but the extensive subterranean network wasn't completed until near the end of the 9th's rule. During the Kengen Occupation many of these passages were further expanded by imperial loyalists as part of a defense effort. The largest chambers housed newly trained warriors or were used as supply depots for Hitoshi's Rebellion. Since then they've been adapted to opposite ends—hiding Kengen scientists and secret factories in the depths of the Imperial Capital. Amoral scientists are far from the worst things to wander the underground conduits however, and they often ally with oni using the sewers as a quick means to enter or flee from the city relatively undetected, or to escape pursuers and throw the Imperial Guard off their trail. The two groups work together, the Kengen providing a means for the monsters to easily flee and the oni kidnapping test subjects or providing protection when the corrupting fog rolls in. The two groups also keep alliances with many of the criminal elements of Sanbaoshi, who keep the eyes of the city away from them in exchange for the occasional service.

Despite the beasts and slavers in the tunnels the citizens of the poorest districts of the metropolis frequently flee into the city's sewers rather than face the Mists of Akuma. Dozens or hundreds of people disappear each time the fel haze falls, assumed to have been transformed into added-oni. While some do indeed succumb to such a fate, in truth many live on chained to tasks of industry and worked to the bone by monstrous overseers or scientists, but their suffering does not end there; once their usefulness on the production lines reaches its end they are often used as the fodder for unethical experimentation.

Masuto Imperial Palace

The rulers of Soburin have lived in the Imperial Palace for over fifteen hundred years, preserving their ancestors' place in history by improving and maintaining the estate even during the Kengen Occupation. Very little about the grounds are known to the general public—trespassers within its high walls are frequently sentenced to death.

The grounds themselves are ringed by high, adamantine-framed gates, and the entire building is guarded by numerous abjurations to protect the rulers of the continent from both attack and intrigue. The most impressive of such spells allows the entire palace to seal itself air-tight in mere moments, every opening covered with inch-thick adamantine. Yet

beyond even that the palace is directly surrounded by the Bushi School (the headquarters of the Imperial Guard) and the Mage School, all of whom arrive in moments to defend Emperor Hitoshi.

When building the Imperial Palace taller proved infeasible and acquiring the properties adjacent to the estate became too expensive, its owners began to instead expand downward. So it is that the mansion of the Masuto Dynasty is like an iceberg: only the smallest part of it is visible from the surface. Catacombs underneath the city run all the way into the countryside miles away, used by the few servants that can be bribed to smuggle subtle tsukumogami or information in or out of the hallowed grounds. In a few instances the passages under the Imperial Palace (pre-dating the sewers of the settlement by centuries) have even been used by the Masuto to bring in contentious diplomats, high-profile prisoners, and other visitors (or worse) that might bring shame or invite trepidation in the populace.

Bushi School and Imperial Guard

Master of Arms Kyōretsuna Ichigeki runs a tight operation much like her ancestors before her—maybe even more so thanks to the Mists of Akuma. Under her direct guidance the Bushi School relentlessly trains new recruits for the Imperial Guard, the best among them receiving schooling in secret martial arts known only to the emperor's protectors or trained to become Gasu-Heishi.

House of Iryōno While many healers from Fuson have shops in the districts of Sanbaoshi and there are chirurgeons in bloodhouses throughout the city, the most intense (and normally illegal) surgeries and medical "miracles" happen within the Imperial Guard's medical facility. In the interests of remaining familiar with the breadth of technology in Soburin, Emperor Hitoshi decreed that the fleshcrafters of the House of Iryōno to be unbound by the laws of any prefecture while in pursuit of their craft. As a result an Imperial Guard must be utterly without merit or truly dead in order to leave the ranks of the emperor's protectors.

Imperial Torii Gates There is no grander (or safer) sight in Sanbaoshi than the Imperial Torii Gates. This series of massive structures is lined with lightning lanterns that flicker day and night, offering a grandiose entrance for those invited to the Imperial Palace. Many of the wealthiest people within the city have moved near them, paying great sums of coin to ensure that their security atop a torii gate is assured when the Mists of Akuma descend on the Imperial Capital.

Surēta Tower This imposing monument to the Imperial Guard stands ten stories high and serves as a testament to their skill and bravery. At least once each day a foolish new recruit enters the tower in an attempt to leap up the ranks but no such upstart has ever been able to reach the top floor, most receiving grievous injuries that must be healed by House of Iryōno—who often transform such dishonorably ambitious soldiers into mekkusenshi.

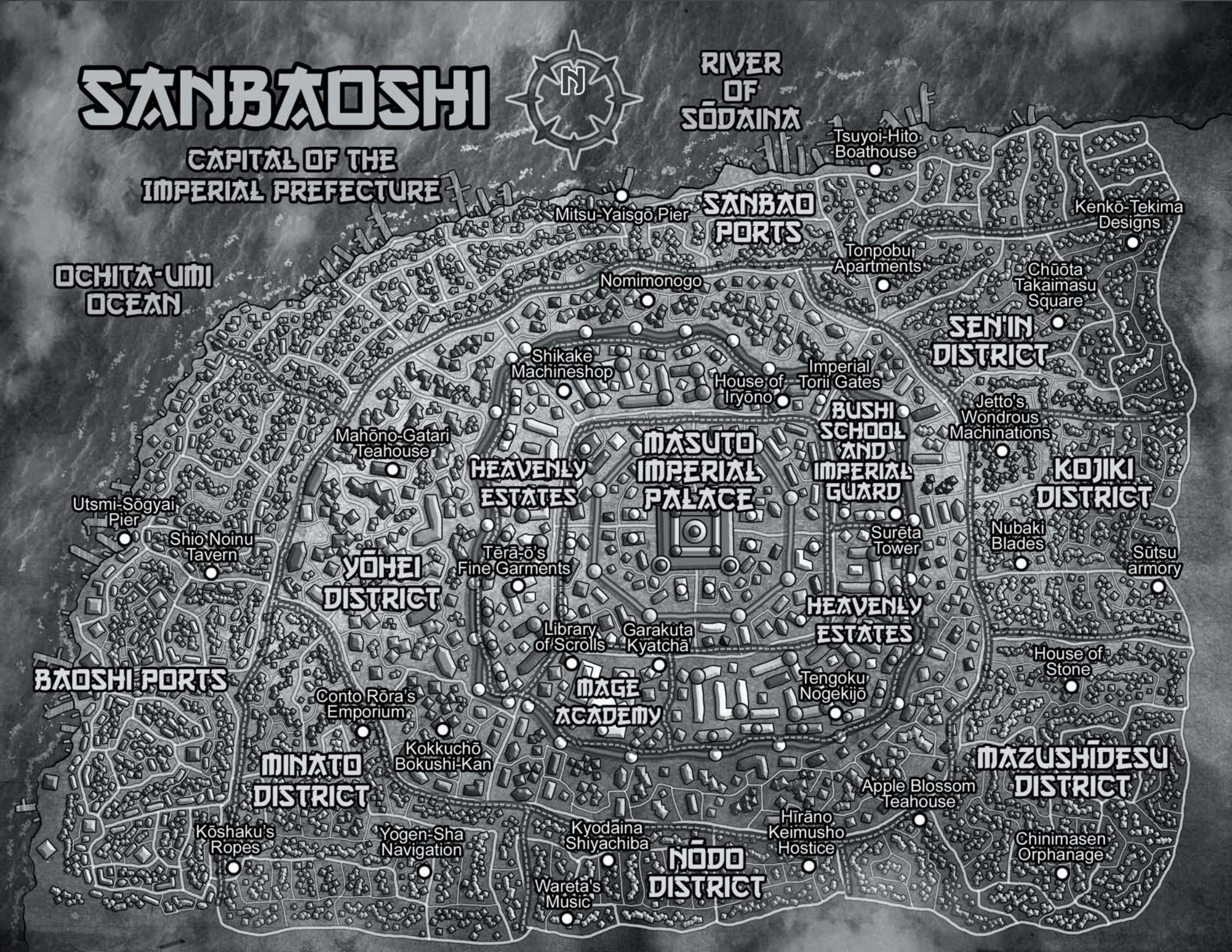
Mage Academy

Magic is as integral to the protection of Emperor Hitoshi as the Imperial Guard, and the Imperial Palace has been flanked by the pagodas of the academy since the establishment of the city at the end of the Ichizoku Wars. The current Magemaster, Ākumeiji Kuchikukan, has held the position since the Ceramians invaded and many wonder what arcana he has unlocked that has allowed him to be so ancient.

Garakuta Kyatchā At the very top of the academy's highest towers sits a complicated arcane device of brass and gold, painstakingly crafted by the greatest seers of Soburin. Whenever the Mists of Akuma are about to descend onto the city, the Garakuta Kyatchā shines with a baleful crimson light that warns the citizens of Sanbaoshi to flee to safety.

Library of Scrolls The Masuto Dynasty has long been a proponent of magic, working for over a thousand years to accumulate and codify Soburin's most powerful spells inside this heavily-fortified library. Paper kami (page 141) hide among the cases of ancient scrolls and parchment, tearing to shreds those who would unlawfully remove any of the texts within.

Window of Kūdō-Mado In the basement of the Library of Scrolls is a portal that opens into a place known as the Void. Only those granted express permission by Emperor Hitoshi are allowed to witness the anomaly—it is said that to some it can reveal the future, though how it determines whom to share destiny with remains a frustrating mystery to Sanbaoshi's scholars.


SANBAOSHI
CAPITAL OF THE IMPERIAL PREFECTURE
N
RIVER OF SŌDAINA
OCHITA-UMI OCEAN
Tsuyoi-Hito Boathouse
Mitsu-Yaisgō Pier
SANBAO PORTS
Kenkō-Tekima Designs
Tonpobu Apartments
Nomimonogo
Chūōta Takaimasu Square
SENIN DISTRICT
Shikake Machineshop
House of Iryono
Imperial Torii Gates
Jetto's Wondrous Machinations
BUSHI SCHOOL AND IMPERIAL GUARD
Mahōno-Gatari Teahouse
HEAVENLY ESTATES
MASUTO IMPERIAL PALACE
KOJIKI DISTRICT
Utsmi-Sōgyai Pier
Shio Noinu Tavern
Surēta Tower
Nubaki Blades
Sūtsu armory
Tērā-ō's Fine Garments
YŌHEI DISTRICT
HEAVENLY ESTATES
Library of Scrolls
Garakuta Kyatchā
House of Stone
BAOSHI PORTS
Tengoku Nogekijō
MAGE ACADEMY
Conto Rōra's Emporium
Kokkuchō Bokushi-Kan
MAZUSHIDESU DISTRICT
MINATO DISTRICT
Apple Blossom Teahouse
Hīrāno Keimusho Hostice
Kōshaku's Ropes
Yogen-Sha Navigation
Kyodaina Shiyachiba
NŌDO DISTRICT
Chinimasen Orphanage
Wareta's Music

Heavenly Estates

The splendor and ostentation of the Imperial Palace is matched only by the manses surrounding it: the Heavenly Estates. Only the most honored and successful military commanders are able to live here alongside the continent's master merchants, usually as retainers of the various vacation homes owned by the lords of each of the clans (hosting nobles when they visit Emperor Hitoshi). It is far and away the most pleasant part of Sanbaoshi; its paved stone roads are free from all but the boldest criminals and its theaters are considered home to Soburin's greatest works of art.

Shikake Machineshop Kuīntokei Shikake is one of Soburin's most brilliant mechanical minds. Though many feel she wastes her talents making clockwork trinkets or fanciful gifts for the clans, they don't know her true purposes in Sanbaoshi. For years she has secretly developed the most cutting-edge technologies, smuggling prototypes into the sewers of the Imperial Capital to be tested and then mass-produced—there are even hushed rumors among those who know of her doings that she is responsible for the grisly ketsueki shokubai (page 217).

Tengoku Nogekijō Seats for every single show that has ever played in the "theater of heaven" have sold out and actors have literally killed for roles on Sanbaoshi's most coveted stage. Esteemed Actor-Manager Dirkutā Hibon has run the the Tengoku Nogekijō for decades and is said to have the ear of all the highest clan lords (including Emperor Hitoshi), making her one of the most influential people in the Imperial Capital. There's talk that some of her bunraku puppets are more than they seem and tsukumogami hunters often find their senses baffled in the confines of the theater, but their protests to the Imperial Palace have so far fallen on deaf ears.

Tērā-ō's Fine Garments Sanbaoshi boasts the continent's most talented tailor, a seamster without peer with a knack for the art that borders on the supernatural. Tērā-ō Kiyasa has an alternate persona and function within the Imperial Capital however—he is also Kurai Torēdā, proprietor of the subterranean Rokudenashi Trading House. As the metropolis' most clandestine and efficient fence he barters, buys, and sells all goods regardless of the law or morality, taking a particular interest in the corpses of textile tsukumogami or even live specimens to harvest their enchanted fibers for his highly-sought after clothing.

Yōhei Ward

Locals often say that this district is the safest in the city and they may well be right—the vast majority of homes are owned by retired samurai and spellswords, deadly with a blade or deft at the use of magic. Enough cutpurses have bled to death on the cobbled roadways of the Yōhei Ward that the practice is almost unheard of on its streets, drawing traders and the best culinary institutions to the area long ago. It is a popular destination for nobles and serfs alike though there are more of the former to be found as the price of an expertly cooked meal rises with each year as crop yields dwindle. Nearly all of the finest teahouses of Sanbaoshi are located in this quarter as well, catering to both the high and low-end clientele of metropolis to make a melting pot where the rich and poor rub elbows and drink side-by-side (until the light of the Garakuta Kyatchā illuminates the sky).

Kokkuchō Bokushi-Kan There is no restaurant in Sanbaoshi more popular than Kokkuchō Bokushi-Kan; tables must be reserved months in advance and even take-out orders have to be placed weeks ahead of time. After a robbery attempt took the life of the original owner (Kinguheddo Ōochōri), his son pleaded to Emperor Hitoshi for additional protection and the ruler of Soburin agreed. Now two mekkusenshi stand guard at the business' doors day and night like grotesque statues of man and machine, only ever leaving (one at a time) to deliver the emperor's daily order of miwaku-tekina dumplings. A scandal awaits in the Kokkuchō Bokushi-Kan kitchens however—their most prized dishes are prepared by a tsukumogami chef, the animated wok Chūkanabe (an instrument that claims to be the reincarnation of Kinguheddo Ōochōri himself). Since it took over the back of the restaurant the demand for miwaku-tekina dumplings has skyrocketed as each person who consumes them finds themselves compelled to eat the delicious

delicacy again (requiring a Will challenge roll with 2 bane every 24 hours for one week to avoid doing everything possible to acquire more of them).

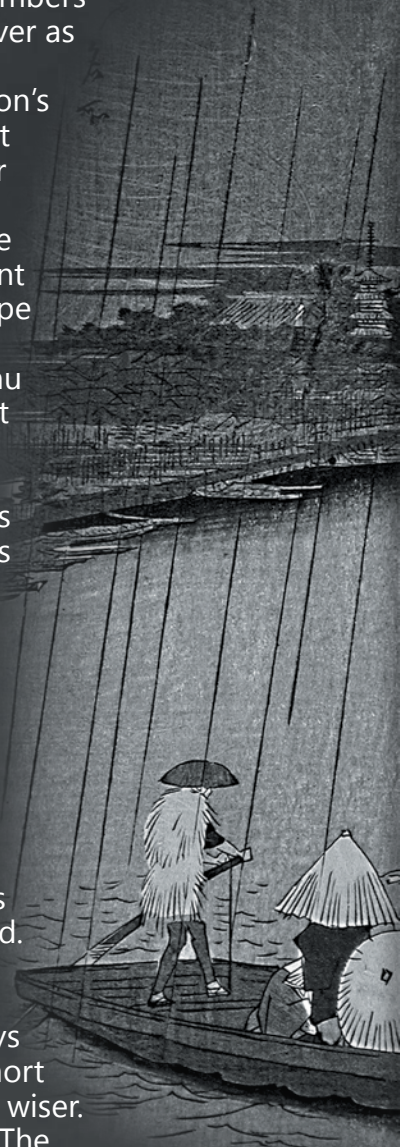
Mahōno-Gatari Teahouse The Mahōno-Gatari is the most wondrous and exclusive teahouse to be found in the Imperial Capital, only allowing very particular patrons to gain entry: one must be capable of great works of magic, a member of one of the great clans, or carry a special seal. Inside is the most lush and comfortable drinking establishment in Sanbaoshi, able to offer concoctions that cater to every taste and preference regardless of scarcity or season. Bottles pour themselves, cups float to their imbibers, and some of the city's finest songs melodically wind through the air at all hours in the enchanted confines of the Mahōno-Gatari.

Nomimonogo For those too poor to afford tickets to one of Sanbaoshi's theaters, there is no better entertainment than a night in the Nominogo. Notorious for being the drinking hole of many alcoholic samurai (both active and retired), its aged rooms have been host to the most thrilling recountings of battles to be heard in the Imperial Capital—and their impromptu reenactments, performances that frequently end with brawls that spill into the streets of the Yōhei Ward.

BAOSHI PORTS & SANBAO HARBOR

Sanbaoshi's crucial placement in the center of the continent puts the metropolis at the end of the Sōdaina River, making it home to countless boats that go into and out of the docks every day. A strong dichotomy has formed on the settlement's shores creating two very different anchorages along the coast: merchants with high value goods, the favor of the clans, or coin enough for the privilege to moor their vessels in splendorous Sanbao Harbor, while all the rest use the Baoshi Ports. For every new piece of equipment, freshly crafted boat, or member of the Imperial Guard patrolling the former, the latter offers an outdated object soon to become tsukumogami, derelict ship, or a buccaneer in hiding.

Mitsu-Yaisgō Pier and Utsmi-Sōgyai Pier These seemingly abandoned piers are reserved by the Mitsuyu Gyōsha Consortium for when one of their members is in trouble. They are never as abandoned as they seem however—the organization's agents are always present nearby and ready to offer help to one of their kin.



Shio Noinu Tavern There is a drinking establishment in Sanbaoshi for every type of individual looking to imbibe but the Shio Noinu in the Baoshi Ports is best known for being a place filled with mariners of all stripes—legitimate sailors knock elbows with pirates from the edge of the world every night. In addition to serving brigands and seafarers, the tavern's location in the poorer port has made it a favorite place for black market dealers and smugglers to meet, negotiate, and sometimes even exchange contraband. No one seems to know who exactly owns the Shio Noinu but it is always staffed and never runs short of sake, leaving none the wiser.

Tsuyoi-Hito Boathouse The Imperial Guard keeps a sizable force in Sanbao Harbor at all times, maintaining the ships of the Tsuyoi-Hito as well as any other vessels their commanders order to be refitted or repaired. Rumors have persisted for a long time that the last Shipmaster before the War of Kaiyo (Senchō Sensuikan) built a hidden warehouse somewhere beneath the Tsuyoi-Hito Boathouse, using the space to build a vessel capable of traveling under the water without the aid of magic.

LOW QUARTER

The lowest and outer regions of the Imperial Capital are home to its poorest citizens. Once this meant they would be the first to fall victim to the occasional flooding of the Sōdaina River, but now they are also the first to suffer when the Mists of Akuma roll onto the

metropolis. Businesses of all kinds line streets crowded with apartment buildings, the aroma of the densely packed citizenry somewhat abated by notoriously competitive food stands on nearly every corner.

There is a love for the arts even in Sanbaoshi's most destitute wards however, and in addition to many sculptures of Soburin's past heroes (most of them so weathered by age they're unrecognizable), there are dozens of theaters, from Minato to Sen'In. Some suspect that if not for these entertainment houses, the Imperial Guard would never visit the Low Quarter at all, their lack of concern for the wellbeing of Sanbaoshi's downtrodden neighborhoods evidenced by the strong presence of the city's thieves' guilds.

Kojiki District

Almost exclusively, the denizens of the Sanbaoshi's Kojiki District work for the Imperial Guard or the Bushi School—the clang of anvils ring out late into the night from the armorers and weaponsmiths that line its streets, and all of the restaurants and teahouses are prepared to serve in bulk (and their offerings taste like it). Though the emperor's protectors also have their own dedicated forges, they frequently barter deals for goods in bulk with the Armorer's Guild, Bladeforgers Union, and Clockwork Coalition. These groups were established to maintain the purity of Soburin forges during the Kengen Occupation, but remained together afterward to better resist gangs (and for the improved buying and selling power their alliances offer).

Jetto's Wondrous Machinations One of the only ceramians in Sanbaoshi to retain prominence after the return of the Masuto Dynasty, Fauruga Jetto became the Chief of the Clockwork Coalition almost by default and has held onto the position with an iron grip despite his advanced age. The venerable scientist earned the favor of Emperor Hitoshi by providing him with delightful devices, each one more entertaining than the last. These are more than toys however; Fauruga is secretly allied with rogue Kengen General Koleraj Batelano, using the gadgets he sends to the Masuto palace to spy on military operations, sending the information back to the bloodthirsty warlord via small dragonfly constructs.

Nubaki Blades Fuketsu Nubaki is the head of the Bladeforger's Guild, appointed by her peers because of her unmatched talent. Once a soldier sworn to the Namida Clan, she suffered a terrible injury that robbed her of half her sight and the ability to feel pain. After refusing augmetics of any kind she cut a swathe of blood through the other prefectures in the Battle of Four Swords, taking her bounties and buying the secrets of Soburin's finest smiths before setting up her own shop in the Imperial Capital. Every few months, enemies from her murderous past appear to trouble Fuketsu but none yet have done more than inconvenience her.

Sūtsu Armory The Armorer's Guild is led by Chairman Kegareta Sūtsu, the 44th of his name to work a forge for the Imperial Guard inside the Kojiki District. Though other shops briefly eclipsed the quality of his family's armaments after the last master smith (his mother, Sieyaru Sūtsu) passed away, recently a new quality of his work has brought orders from across Soburin: Kegareta's armors activate the blood of the ancestors of Soburin's clans (page 208). Nobles and samurai related to the Imperial Siblings wait outside his shop for days to be fitted, and though it has brought him great fortune Kegareta grows more anxious with every passing day. The master smith hides a terrible secret—he uses a byproduct from the construction of ketsueki shokubai to make the magic work and cannot explain how or why it does. To acquire enough material to meet demand he has taken to providing armor to the criminal gangs beneath the city (something that could cost him both the loss of his family's honor and his life should the authorities ever find out).

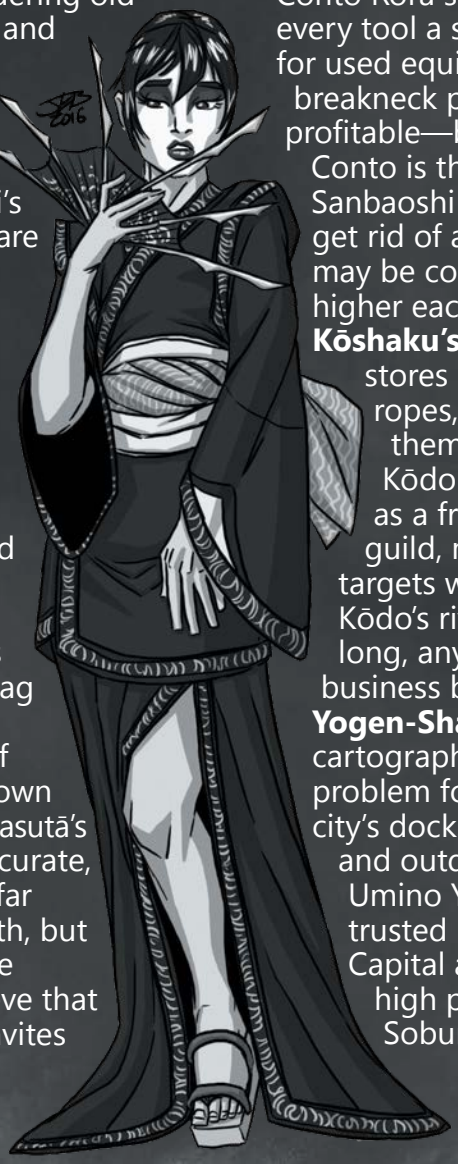
Mazushīdesu District

The lowest-lying district of Sanbaoshi is home to the poorest of the Imperial Capital's populace—both the dregs of society and honest, hardworking citizens whose work takes them to the farms outside the city. Their naivete and desperation is easily manipulated into fear (especially of the crime that runs rampant throughout) and more mobs have originated in the Mazushīdesu District than anywhere else in the metropolis.

Apple Blossom Teahouse Despite the mystery that surrounds it, there is no other establishment in the Low Quarter with a reputation as renowned as the Apple Blossom Teahouse. Patrons receive the same respectful and courteous service regardless of wealth or heritage, and blades have never been drawn within its walls. With the exception of Fei-Hung the Barkeep, each and every servant in the inn is identical: beautiful and androgynous. Unknown to all but the most well-informed denizens of Sanbaoshi, the Apple Blossom is home to the Desunōto Assassins; the ruthless killers work the tables between missions to remain humble, making certain that the secret of their hideout never slips out to the Imperial Capital.

Chinimasen Orphanage With virtually nowhere else to go in the Imperial Capital, children without parents can find a home in the Chinimasen Orphanage. The orphanage's master, the doddering old Arimasen Itaidu, puts visitors and investigators at ease with the clean and ordered structure of the place and her polite demeanor. This is all a ruse; Arimasen is one of Sanbaoshi's crime lords, and her charges are made to pickpocket coin day and night. Those who return with too little are tended to by Gōmon—a sophisticated enchanted puppet that delights in punishing their bad behaviour—and any that fail four times in a row are remanded to the factories and laboratories beneath the metropolis.

House of Stone The district's most popular seer is an old hag known only as Gēmumasutā, working with a small group of fortune tellers collectively known as the House of Stone. Gēmumasutā's predictions are not *always* accurate, occasionally sending people far astray from their destined path, but when they bear truth, they are unerring in detail. Many believe that visiting the House of Stone invites bad luck, and that for some the wishes they make come true with results that are too fortunate to be believed—and usually are, coming to pass in the worst possible fashion (enforced by the magic of one of Sanbaoshi's most secretive criminal gangs).



Minato District

There are so many dockworkers, seafaring shops, and fish markets in the Minato District that many consider it to simply be an extension of the Baoshi Ports. While pirates on the run lay low in its alleyways and pleasure houses stand on near every corner, one other unsavory feature truly sets the area apart: there are more accesses to the sewers of Sanbaoshi here than in any other part of the metropolis. Kidnappers are a common threat in the Minato District, taking test subjects or factory workers for the complex subterranean machinations of the Imperial Capital, and children are rarely seen on its cobbled roads.

Conto Rōra's Emporium Running what is easily the busiest shop in the Minato District, Conto Rōra supplies the Baoshi Ports with every tool a sailor could need by bartering for used equipment to refurbish and resell at breakneck prices. The practice isn't very profitable—but it doesn't need to be, as Conto is the premier man to talk to in Sanbaoshi if you're trying to clandestinely get rid of a dead body. The price to do so may be costly indeed however, rising ever higher each time the service is used.

Kōshaku's Ropes There are countless stores in the Imperial Capital that sell ropes, wires, and cords—only a few of them better than those woven by Kōdo Kōshaku. The store also serves as a front for the Shimegoro assassin guild, murderers for hire that kill their targets with cables and line stolen from Kōdo's rivals (insuring that before too long, any competitors are put out of business by the Imperial Guard).

Yogen-Sha Navigation Acquiring cartography in Sanbaoshi is a common problem for shipmasters mooring in the city's docks where untrustworthy forgeries and outdated maps are commonplace. Umino Yogen-Sha is one of the most trusted mapmakers in the Imperial Capital and though she commands a high price for her depictions of Soburin, they are very accurate.

Nōdo District

Heavily influenced by the Mage School just across the Yōhei Ward, the Nōdo District is home to more reagent markets, charlatan enchanters, fortune-tellers, and poor mages than any other part of Sanbaoshi. Disfigurements like malformed bodies, hideous tumors, and bulging bloodshot eyes are a common sight as rogue spellcasters or students of the Mage School are always offering coin to those willing to subject their bodies to arcane experimentation. Of all the districts in the Low Quarter, Nōdo receives by far the most attention from the Imperial Guard—fel rituals and masquerading oni are both frequent threats in the city and effort is put into preventing that chaos from spilling up toward the Heavenly Estates. The tsukumogami-hunting Seishin Nohantā are notably prevalent all over the Nōdo District, both because the living objects are drawn to the latent magic in the area and to make sure the city's regular defenders are capable of responding quickly when needed.

Hīrāno Keimusho Hostice When healing is required but the advanced techniques offered in the Yōhei Ward aren't affordable, people go to the Hīrāno Keimusho Hostice or one of its many satellite stations. To supplement their low prices the hospice occasionally claims a severely injured person has passed away—ultimately putting these wounded patients through brainwashing before sale into slavery beneath the city.

Kyodaina Shiyachiba The biggest reagent market in Sanbaoshi also offers the rarest herbs, spices, and magical accoutrements in the city, provided you can navigate the complicated streets and rules it follows. Beyond magical reagents, some of the the market's many stalls hide pieces of banned technology, traded under the notice of the Imperial Guard (and for an extra bit of coin the merchants will even organize a surgeon to install their illegal augmetics.)

Wareta's Music Norobīto Wareta is a true artisan, having mastered the creation of many kinds of instruments in her childhood —a prodigy of Soburin's cultural arts that emerged as the Kengen Occupation dwindled to an end. She judges those who walk into her shop very carefully, selling her wares to those she likes least at the lowest prices—usually giving them instruments cursed to bring them trouble. There are rumors that Norobīto also makes special cases for some clients, containers able to block the senses of tsukumogami hunters from seeing the magical creatures living inside.

Sen'In District

The second most protected area of the Low Quarter is home to the dockmasters of Sanbao Harbor, the attendants to the nobles of the Heavenly Estates and the servants for the masters of the Yōhei Ward. There are more restaurants than food stands on the old cobble streets of the Sen'In District and a notably larger number of inns to accommodate travelers coming out of the nearby docks, making the area's streets a frequently contested battleground for Sanbaoshi's criminal gangs.

Chūōta Takaimasu Square Imperial Guards are almost never seen in the very center of the Sen'In District, staying clear from the area so the city's gangs can fight out their problems with minimum violence to bystanders. Unsurprisingly it is also a perfect place for illegal transactions, though which criminals hold the most sway there changes daily and only a fool enters the square without checking whom to pay tribute to for doing business outside of the notice of the emperor's protectors.

Kenkō-Tekina Designs When a servant from the Heavenly Estates or Yōhei Ward commits a grave enough mistake that they are permanently harmed by their master, Hizashi Kenkō and Bayesu Tekina provide them with augmetics at prices low enough that they can retain the bit of hearing, sight, or faculty that was taken from them as penance. The seemingly affordable payment plans for the prostheses are in truth completely unfair but is often the only option available, locking many of the Sen'In District's wounded citizens into lifelong debt to pay for the injurious mistake they made at work.

Tonpobu Apartments These many-floored buildings offer amenities lacking in almost every other part of the Low Quarter—running water, rudimentary electric lightning, and even heating. The structures have gradually grown higher every year and they now overlap on one another in a mishmash of architecture that creates a maze of streets the locals call the Tonpobu Tunnels, an area of the metropolis that criminals run to when they need to lose pursuers but want to avoid the passages beneath Sanbaoshi.

Ochita-Umi Ocean & Sōdaina River

Sanbaoshi's chief export is fish, both freshwater catches from the Sōdaina River and the bounty of the Ochita-Umi Ocean. The metropolis' impressive defenses long ago dissuaded piracy along this part of the coast, but other dangers still occasionally rise from the waters to threaten the Imperial Capital—bakekujira are not unheard of, nor are worse things from across the Great Divide. Fortunately the city is well-equipped to fend off attack, its shores watched over day and night by soldiers equipped with electrolens augmetics and other sensory equipment able to detect hostile forces at impressive range.

Mark VII Defense Cannons Despite Sanbaoshi's general disdain for technology, after the last surge of Kaiyo tsukumogami crossed the Great Divide the metropolis' many dissenting voices relented and Emperor Hitoshi had no choice but to install powerful defenses. The best cannons ceramian science can offer now run along the shores of the capital and each of the powerful machines is always accompanied by an alert Seishin Nohantā, prepared to cut it down should a spirit possess the siege weapon.

Tsuyoi-Hito While some oni attempt to walk into Sanbaoshi masquerading as a serf or even a member of the Imperial Guard, likely more try to sneak through the sewers so as to remain beneath the notice of the city's protectors. The Tsuyoi-Hito pilot numerous boat patrols that check for travel papers on junkers, find monsters lurking in the water, or uncover smugglers bringing contraband into or out of the Imperial Capital.

Masuto Tsukumogami

Every item owned by Emperor Masuto, his close relatives, and the highest government officials are treated with great care and carefully monitored. With the valuable information one of these objects might offer once animated and properly persuaded, the punishment for stealing or abetting in the theft of a personal effect owned by one of these individuals is death. As with any crime in Soburin however, there's always someone able (or foolish) and willing to risk their lives for the sake of coin and the offers for a genuine Masuto Tsukumogami are great indeed.

Masuto Dynasty

For centuries the whole of Soburin has been ruled not so much by the Masuto Dynasty's scions as it has their coin purses—they have proven time and again that anyone can be bought for the right price, even imperial dragons. While all the other clans and prefectures were made to house an inhuman race, the cities of the Imperial Prefecture avoided such punishment and throughout the Kengen Occupation continued to receive special treatment from the ceramian military. Bribery is the most common tactic for Masuto's agents to employ (the nobility themselves rarely allowing their hands to be dirtied) but they are not above intimidation, and in order for the dynasty to maintain power they have shown that they are willing to work with anyone if it is profitable for them to do so.

Masuto are notoriously elitist, thoroughly spoiled, and supremely manipulative—though they take care not to injure their rivals so much that it ever affects the clan's standing in a serious fashion. Even so, trouble brews in the Imperial Prefecture; the disparity of wealth between the rich and poor has become overwhelming, and with the appearance of the lost Imperial Sibling many of the lesser lords are slowly inching toward allegiance to one of Soburin's founding fathers (seeking protection from the Mists of Akuma over more coin.) The threat of insurrection may yet be small but Emperor Hitoshi grows more suspicious and paranoid with every year that passes, and before too long a reckoning sure to bathe the Imperial Palace in the blood of nobles will reign down the line of the Masuto Clan.

Forbidden Technology

Dainamo omiryō, denki shīrudo, firearms (anything larger than a rifle is not allowed to be traded without special permits), ketsueki shokubai, uso flyer, venom spitter.

Masuto Bengoshi the best equipped and most arduously trained agents of the government in all of Soburin, implacable masters of deceit and statecraft that are at home with subterfuge regardless of their situation. They are masters of combat, trained to use their gear with deadly efficiency (and should they be overwhelmed, flanked by shinobi oathed to die for their master).

MASUTO BENGOSHI — DIFFICULTY 250

Size 1 human (soburi)
Perception 20 (+10); truesight
Defense 20 (soft leather, magic items); **Health** 130
Strength 11 (+1), **Agility** 17 (+7), **Intellect** 16 (+6), **Will** 15 (+5)
Speed 14
Immune charmed, compelled, frightened, poisoned, psychic damage
Reflexive Dodge As a minor activity when the Masuto Bengoshi is aware of its attacker, it may reduce the damage of an attack by half.
Dignified The Masuto Bengoshi has a Dignity score of 20.
Enchanted Equipment The Masuto Bengoshi gains some of its bonuses (to Defense, truesight, and its immunities) from the magic items it carries (its gi and two rings).
Imperial Favor Once per turn, the Masuto Bengoshi may reroll any challenge roll it has failed.
Social Adept The Masuto Bengoshi gains 1 boon on challenge rolls made to deceive or detect deception.
Tutored The Masuto Bengoshi gains 1 boon on any challenge rolls to recall information.

ATTACK OPTIONS
Magic Katana (melee) +1 plus 3 boons (3d6 damage) or +7 with 1 boon (2d6+2 damage)
Masuto Rod (medium range) +7 with 1 boon (3d6+2 damage)

SPECIAL ATTACKS
Triple Attack The Masuto Bengoshi attacks three times with its magic katana or three times with its masuto rod.

SPECIAL ACTIONS
Paid Retinue Masuto Bengoshi are never truly without allies. By spending an action calling them with a secret sign (noticeable with a Perception challenge roll with 3 bane) the Masuto Bengoshi summons 2d6 ninjas (use the statistics for Bandits) who emerge within 20 yards at the end of the round. Once the Masuto Bengoshi has used Paid Retinue, it cannot do so for 1d6 rounds.

Masuto Commissars are raised up from the ranks of the Gasu-Heshi after surviving a dozen encounters with the Mists of Akuma. Induction involves rigorous training and cutting-edge augmetics that make them deadly on the battlefield, using their customized o-yoroi armor to lay waste to foes with katanas charged by deadly electricity from their suits.

MASUTO COMMISSAR — DIFFICULTY 100

Size 1 human (soburi)
Perception 12 (+2 plus 1 boon); darksight
Defense 19 (o-yoroi); **Health** 75
Strength 15 (+5), **Agility** 13 (+3), **Intellect** 12 (+2), **Will** 14 (+4)
Speed 8
Immune charmed, compelled, frightened
Commanding Authority As a triggered action on its turn, the Masuto Commissar can grant an action to one ally that is within 20 yards and able to hear them. This action must be taken before the end of the Masuto Commissar's turn.

ATTACK OPTIONS
Sword (melee) +5 with 1 boon (1d6+2 damage plus 1d6 lightning damage)
Pistol (medium range) +3 with 2 boons (2d6+1 damage)

SPECIAL ATTACKS
Double Attack The Masuto Commissar attacks twice with its sword or twice with its pistol.

SPECIAL ACTIONS
Paid Retinue By spending an action calling them with a secret sign (noticeable with a Perception challenge roll made with 2 bane) the Masuto Commissar summons 1d6 ninjas (use the statistics for Bandits) who emerge within 30 yards at the end of the round. Once the Masuto Commissar has used Paid Retinue, it cannot do so for 1d3 minutes.

END OF THE ROUND
Propulsors The Masuto Commissar can move 20 yards in a straight line.

These mechanical warriors were once men and women, aspirants to the Imperial Guard that foolishly thought themselves above their peers, daring to ascend Surēta Tower rather than show humility. After the masters of the Bushi School lay waste to their bodies, inductees that are still alive are taken to the House of Iryōno where Emperor Hitoshi pays for their augmentation, making them more machine than human.

MEKKUSENSHI — DIFFICULTY 25

Size 1 human (construct)
Perception 13 (+3); darksight, sightless (short range)
Defense 15; **Health** 30
Strength 16 (+6), **Agility** 13 (+3), **Intellect** 8 (–2), **Will** 12 (+2)
Speed 14; leap 5
Immune damage from disease or psychic; asleep, charmed, compelled, diseased, fatigued, frightened, poisoned
Mechanical Resistance The Mekkusenshi takes half damage from cold, fire, and poison.
Vulnerability The Mekkusenshi takes double damage from acid and lightning.

ATTACK OPTIONS
Sword Arm (melee) +6 (1d6+2)
Gun Arm (long range) +3 with 1 boon (1d6+2)

SPECIAL ATTACK
Double Attack The Mekkusenshi attacks twice with its sword arm or twice with its gun arm.

When calls started to ring out from the guards manning the jidōka-sensu fans along the walls of the city, Shakaitsu—the head of our escort—urged us to hurry through the rest of the Highborn District and into the royal grounds before the Mists of Akuma reached Kyōfū. Looking toward the north I could already spot the telltale signs of the corrupting fog, a distant torunēdo-sentōki in fierce combat with two adeddo-oni. Fortunately the honored warrior was more than up to the task and its whirring blades slashed through the undead easily. As quickly as they fell more appeared, spurring us to run all the quicker.

Passing across the Highborn District and into the Supai Estates the higōshi fans in the grates below kicked on, blowing the supernatural haze fast approaching us up and away from the streets. Just as we began to feel some relief, thinking the danger was contained, a great and raucous cry came down from the Shinsei-Sukui Mountains. A threat as deadly as the Mists of Akuma rushed toward Kyōfū—bakemono, gaki, jiang-shi, tikbalang, yaoguai, and worse led by a massive oni warlord, towering as high as one of the blades on the Ōkī-Kaiten Fan above.

We stood stunned, momentarily unsure whether we should press onward until one of the guardsmen of Kyōfū traveling with us suddenly cried out, a demonic woman's gory scissors having sliced his body nearly in half. My servants unleashed bullets and magic on the thing as the poor fellow breathed his last, sending it scurrying off into the city, but after taking sight Hagrid here—a fine marksman by any standard—spotted the sashimono of the dreaded Sanshōo. As you might know, the Erītokirā Chapter of shikome is infamous for their bloodthirsty efficiency and ability to infiltrate even the most impregnable of fortresses.

Warned of the danger by my manservant we quickly dove for cover in your gardens as Shakaitsu and his guards charged the armored shikome; it is my sad duty to report that though they fought valiantly, they were no match for the technology wielded by the Sanshōo. Each and every one of the Kyōfū guards escorting us sacrificed themselves, taking several of the oni warlord's soldiers with them into death, and we are honored that they protected us so ferociously.

At Lukas' direction—which I thought was wise given the circumstances—we retreated toward the southeastern veranda and circled under the roof of the tenbō-dai gifted to the great Lady Shachō by my father Akira. Hagrid is quite at home with technology of all kinds and he quickly deciphered its controls, activating the device and giving the Sanshōo pause as Shakaitsu's last warrior fell. Were it not for this gun priest's brilliance, I assure you that we would be dead today because the whirring protrusions of the humble little structure sent many of the shikome's bullets astray.

We held our ground for what seemed like hours though it could not have been more than a few minutes; as the Mists of Akuma grew denser above us, the Erītokirā soldiers took cover themselves and a terrible firefight consumed your gardens, which while necessary to our survival will be something for which I will forever be shamed. Even aided though we were aided by the machinery in the tenbō-dai the shikome warriors were as bold as they are freakish, gradually coming nearer to us as Hagrid ran low on shot and Lukas' magic neared exhaustion.

Truly, I wondered if my life's thread was destined to be cut short.

It was then that the great Ōkī-Kaiten of the Mirai Mechanus Quarter finished deploying, the massive fan blades spinning to blow the Mists of Akuma entirely away from Kyōfū. The adeddo-oni capering about in the distance retreated, as did the oni warlord and many of its monstrous horde—but not the Sanshōo. The squad of Erītokirā were pressing on, apparently quite taken with Hagrid's gun and keen to acquire it, and only the intervention of your blessed torunēdo-sentōki saved us. They came down like falling cherry blossoms, spinning through the sky before descending on the assaulting shikome with clangs of steel or the slicing of flesh. So reinforced, my manservants unleashed the last of their resources and together we made quick work of the foes so brazen as to invade your very home.

That, my Dear Lord Dainichi, is why I was late for this most gracious appointment—I ask a thousand apologies for my impertinence and am compelled to beseech your infinite patience and wisdom, appropriately famed as it is throughout the Supai Prefecture and all of Soburin besides. I assure you that no other circumstances would have delayed me, and that in the future, I will never make you wait on my arrival ever again.

—Testimony of Kichini Tomimashita, Mirai Mechanus Merchant

CHAPTER 5: KYŌFŪ

STAR OF THE NORTH

Most of Soburin's lords resisted the Kengen Occupation in all its forms, but a few embraced ceramian science and have even worked to improve upon it; the Supai among them. When the War of Kaiyo ended over half a century ago Lady Shachō Supai brought together the greatest diviners of the land to see what the future had in store for her prefecture. Though the enormity and totality of the danger represented by the Mists of Akuma remained shrouded to them, how it would descend onto the world was as clear as day. Seizing the expertise of ceramian and ropaeo immigrants, Lady Shachō instituted laboratories and schools to educate her kin on the secrets of science—to great effect.

Though she died six years ago (some say to a shinobi's blade) the wisdom of her judgment holds true and today the seat of the prefecture's power is protected by vast, powerful vortices that turn the Mists of AKuma back whenever it falls on the city. The ranks of the Supai are commonly fitted with fan hand augmetics for when the fell fog catches them outside of Kyōfū's walls, making them a deadly and swift asset on the battlefield (able to charge at ranged enemy lines without fear).

Technology advances in quality each year and Kyōfū has adopted a throwaway culture—for a person to keep personal effects for more than a few years is almost unheard of. The accumulation of junk has lead to tsukumogami becoming omnipresent, and hunters that specialize in detecting and tracking the strange creatures are a frequent sight (though only those in dire need or of malevolent intent can stand to tolerate the distasteful behavior prevalent throughout the city.)

With every month that passes the trash only accumulates as more and more villages throughout Soburin have come to adopt the wind machines manufactured in Kyōfū, making

it a frequent harbor for legitimate traders and smugglers alike. Yamabushi and kami clerics that have seen the Star of the North say it is a cursed place, doomed to destruction; rumors persist that the settlement is built upon the bones of an ancient imperial dragon of prodigious size, and that it is only a matter of time before the spirits broken in the Destruction Forges animate its corpse.

Combating the Mists of Akuma

The City of Fans is aptly named, home to an overwhelming variety of the devices in magical, mechanical, and mundane designs. Kyōfū's citizens are rarely found without at least one fan on their person, and they have been taught the most effective ways to use them to blow away dangerous gasses—the Supai Clan's answer to the threat of corruption posed by the Mists of Akuma.

Higōshi Fans The Highborn District, both Mechanus Quarters, the Supai Estates, and Windswept Way all have many grated areas with fans underfoot that create great updrafts, cleaning the air and replacing it with fresh mountain breezes drawn from the Shinsei-Sukui Mountains to the west. In and around the Destruction Forges these relentlessly blow air up and away, sending a constant plume of pollution high above the settlement, and creating a black streak against the stark white of the north that is visible for miles.

Jidōka-Sensu All along the city's outermost bulwark are automated fans that blow air away from Kyōfū when the Mists of Akuma begin to encroach on the settlement, the first and most rapid form of defense. When the Ōkī-Kaiten and Ōkī-Koogi Fans have been activated, the jidōka-sensu are turned inwards to create safe areas for torunēdo-sentōki to mete out destruction on the addedo-oni that quickly swarm up the walls.

Ōkī-Kaiten and Ōkī-Koogi Fans These enormous fans tower over the Mechanus Quarters and when activated create massive distortions in the air that blow the Mists of Akuma away from the Star of the North—taking anything airborne along with it and generating terrible disruptions in nearby weather patterns. The Ōkī-Kaiten stands above the Unmei Mechanus Quarter, thrusting into the sky like a vengeful claw until deployed, at which point it begins spinning so rapidly it becomes nearly invisible. Despite needing constant maintenance and attention, the Ōkī-Koogi above the Mirai Mechanus Quarter are looked upon more kindly by Kyōfū's populace and in some cases even revered—its arrays of more traditional fans each have the name of a great warrior or scientist that has distinguished themselves in the eyes of the leaders of the Supai Clan, and to earn a place among them is considered one of the greatest honors a Supaian can achieve.

Torunēdo-Sentōki These fanatical warriors have completely given themselves over to Supai engineers, receiving a vast suite of augmetics that make them into literal storms of metal and wind. Many of Kyōfū's youth apply to this order but few can withstand the invasive surgeries required to join them, seeking out glory instead in a place where they will not be shamed for their failure.

Destruction Festivals

No other settlement in Soburin has remained as productive and industrious as the Star of the North—most are hamstrung by a lack of scientific insight (such as that brought by foreigners) or, more prominently, access to resources. The city's success is largely due to the cultural practices instituted by the Supai Clan and embraced by many of their charges. Well aware of the dangers posed by tsukumogami and fearful of the consequences that befall those too reliant on technology, Lord Dainichi Supai organized the first Destruction Festival shortly after coming to power and the tradition has become beloved by the city's residents, looked forward to for months by all its citizens as well as the farmers eking out a living in the countryside.

At the height of every season anyone can bring their unwanted goods to one of the Blusters and trade it for Imperial Pieces. Each piece of junk is evaluated by a materials scientist, filling the Destruction Forges with enough durable refuse for the mass-production facilities of Kyōfū to recycle into new goods throughout the year. Conjurers and shamans have warned that with every festival fragments of would-be souls are shunted into the sky like toxin, and that some day there will be a reckoning from the world of spirits.

Mechanus Rivalry

Lady Shachō Supai's schools blossomed into three principal institutions: the Kiso-Chishiki Academies for Kyōfū's youth, and for more advanced studies, the Rekishiya University and Unmei College. Though both are leaders in the field of augmetics and blaze technological trails that are far in advance of the other scientific prefectures, there is a potent rivalry between them that often flares up to dominate the attention of the city at large.

School of Rekishiya Accepting that technological evolution is a part of life in modern Soburin, this philosophy espouses a hybridization of traditional methodology and scientific advancement. Fan no te hands built by followers of the School of Rekishiya are made to form into flat, wide koogi that flutter rapidly to generate wind.

Unmei Way These engineers and inventors have completely abandoned their roots to adopt the ceramian approach to science, simultaneously absorbing the foreign culture as well. Fan no te hands constructed by students of the Unmei Way are composed of a variety of blades that rapidly spin to create powerful gusts of wind.

The Blusters

Fenced-in from the rest of Kyōfū by an inner bulwark to "keep the peace" and "better enable equitable trading", the Blusters are where the majority of torunēdo-sentōki are stationed alongside guards ever-prepared to deploy onto the city's outer wall. Anyone entering into or exiting the settlement must do so through these sectioned-off areas, presenting or acquiring travel papers from Supai Ryokōsai before they can get into or out of the district. Rumors among the city's underworld claim there is a second reason for the Blusters—they would make a powerful secondary fortification line should Kyōfū's torii gates fall to an overwhelming wave of addedo-oni.

North The devoted torunēdo-sentōki that do not make it into the honor guard of Lord Dainichi are stationed in the North Bluster, deploying around the walled bay of the Uzumakimasu River and acting as the officiators of the city's docks.

East Fewer torunēdo-sentōki are stationed here than any other district in Kyōfū where they patrol, stretched thin across the northeastern and eastern walls.

South Torunēdo-sentōki here oversee the foreigners in the Cultural District. Though the public has no reason to suspect it yet, they have orders to keep people inside of that borough should the rivalry between Mechanus adherents erupt into bloodshed.

Cultural District

Not all of the Star of the North is made available to outsiders. Newcomers to the city are restricted to living and working in the Cultural District—a diverse place filled with inns, massage parlors, restaurants, shops, tea houses, and theaters that cater to all types. Ceramian or ropeao immigrants are required to live here for at least one year before they can move to one of the other districts unless they can secure paperwork from Dokusen Industrial, the Romaji-Shoyū League, or one of the independent craftsmen in Kyōfū that specifically grants rights to a specific living situation provided by their employer (oftentimes in the Poor District).

Konran-Gekijō Theater Located where the Cultural District meets the Destruction Forges and Kako Mechanus Quarter, the fiery recycling sector is frequently used as a foreboding backdrop in the city's most popular plays. Nowhere else witnesses so many of the elite rub elbows with those beneath their station and the house is regularly packed with people eager to be entertained. Despite its popularity there are rumors that folks sometimes disappear inside—no remains have ever been found and most people assume that any corpses are tossed into the forges to the west.

Teppōkō's Firearms Marksmen across Soburin claim there is no better gunsmith to be found than Jū Teppōkō. Directly after graduating from the Kiso-Chishiki Academies she invented the hand hwacha (page 213) and instantly gained national prominence. Her designs and prototypes are said to be far more advanced than other firearms, and both the Dokusen Industrial mercantile family and Romaji-Shoyū League constantly vie to buy (or steal) them. Several thieves have unsuccessfully tried to mug Jū as she goes about her business in Kyōfū, leading to the circulation of tales that the bullets she carries are enchanted with steel wrought from the slag of proto-tsukumogami melted down in the Destruction Forges.

KYŌFŪ
CITY OF FANS
SUPAI PREFECTURE
UZUMAKIMASU RIVER
Asenburu Lines
Suramu Steppes
POOR QUARTER
EAST BLUSTER
Sukai-Teikoku Docks
Dokusen Industrial
NORTH BLUSTER
MIRAI MECHANICS QUARTER
Rekishya University
KAKO MECHANICS QUARTER
HIGHBORN DISTRICT
SUPAI ESTATES
Unmei College
Romaji-Shoyū League
DESTRUCTION FORGES
Office of the Risosu-Kanri
Gomi Kantoku Office
CULTURAL DISTRICT
Konran-Gekijō Theater
Ishi-Seikatsu Sutīra Surgical Services
Jinkōsōgu Market
Teppōkō's Firearms
Kiso-Chisiki Academies
SOUTH BLUSTER
WINDSWEPT WAY
SHINSEI-SUKUI MOUNTAINS
N

Destruction Forges

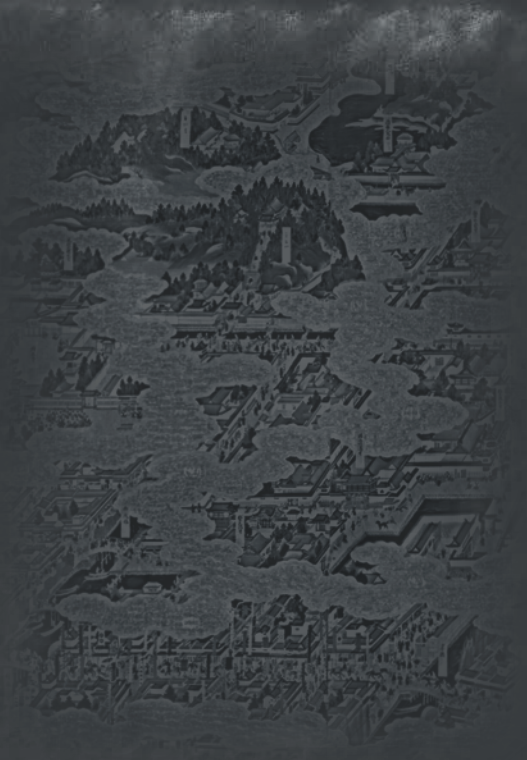
During the seasonal Destruction Festivals smoke rises from this sector of Kyōfū in truly impressive gouts—but the polluted plume of the forges is never ending, belching smog into the sky all throughout the year. Junk traders and smelters are everywhere, operating huge forges here that reprocess old goods brought to the city from all over Supai. The northern streets of the Destruction Forges are hotly contested, the metal merchants there playing both the Mechanus Quarters against one another and exploiting whatever resources are scarcest to maximize profits.

Ashimoto Tunnels The higōshi fans in the Destruction Forges are the biggest in the city and almost always kept on to keep the heat and gasses of the sector's refineries rising up and away from the Star of the North. To provide refreshment and avoid sucking air toward the settlement tunnels have been bored all the way to the Shinsei-Sukui Mountains; it is from here that the Chippokena thieves' guild (a gang of small-sized criminals) accesses those passages for smuggling, traveling throughout Kyōfū by means of the blustery accessways worked beneath much of the city for maintaining the machinery.

Junkmaster Gomi Kantoku While Gomi Kantoku does not wield the influence over industry enjoyed by the Risōsu-Kanri in the Supai Estates, the Junkmaster plays an essential role in the Destruction Forges that makes him the most important man in the sector (and considered the next in line for the more prestigious position). He is constantly seeking a way to leverage power over Yuriko Shizuka, manipulating the prices of goods brought to be recycled in the forges, controlling the accessibility of heavy maintenance equipment, and playing the Mechanus Quarters against each other until one can provide the aid he requires to attain a loftier title.

Highborn District

After Lady Shachō's diviners foresaw the Mists of Akuma nearly all of Supai's nobility consolidated their estates into the prefecture's capital. What has resulted is a maze-like sector of towered manses and walled-in palaces built as high as the winds of Kyōfū will tolerate. In between these ostentatious, fortified homes are the finest shops in the prefecture,



making it a popular place for wealthy visitors—provided they can secure permission to go.

Ishi-Seikatsu Sutīra Surgical Services The finest augmetic surgeon to be found outside the Mechanus Quarters sells her expertise to the highest bidder without any concern for what conflicts might arise from her art. Obsessed with tackling bigger challenges regardless of legality, Ishi-Seikatsu's talents are sought after by countless warriors as she is thought to be able to install anything into any creature.

Sukai-Teitoku Docks There is a fledgling fleet of recovered aircraft kept by the clan lords of Supai and many of these ships make port in the Highborn District of Kyōfū, docking beside the Captains of the Sky. Though the docks sit on the border to the Supai Estates, all vessels give a wide berth to the propeller-powered vehicles gifted to Lord Dainichi by the Rekishiya and Unmei headmasters.

Mechanus Quarters

Kyōfū's two largest boroughs are dominated by the presence of the scientific schools that crafted the giant fans looming over the city. All of the industry therein is overseen by the professors of one of those two schools, or by the interests of powerful merchants. The production facilities that craft components too delicate or complex for the Poor Quarter are almost exclusively forged in the shadow of the settlement's greatest academic institutions,

and the manufacturing processes they use are fiercely defended from competitors. The Kako Quarter looks much like any district found in any settlement throughout the scientific prefectures, but it is said that nowhere else is as emblematic of ceramian culture as the Mirai Quarter (heavy with the scent of foreign spiced meats and frosted light pastries).

Dokusen Industrial An inspirational example of a family that rose to great prominence from out of nothing, the newly rich and ennobled Dokusen have become national heroes thanks to connections to ceramian scientists and ties to the fugitive Overseer Freneza Genuilo. They were the first to master foreign mass-production techniques, allowing them to oversaturate the augmetic market with low pricing that near-instantly made them beloved by the people and just as quickly utterly destroyed many established businesses of Supai—creating nemeses all over the prefecture.

Romaji-Shoyū League In response to the market blowout caused by Dokusen Industrial a collection of old-rich families joined together in the Kako Quarter in order to remain solvent after their profits plummeted. Though their products are still more expensive than their biggest competitors, they follow the Rekishiya philosophy and make items that are far more pleasing to soburi aesthetics.

Rekishiya University The current court poet of Emperor Hitoshi Masuto, Kasen Rekishiya, is a direct descendant of the founder of Rekishiya University and as a member of the scholarly line, one of the institution's most lauded graduates. The school is looked on as favorably by soburi as nearly any scientific endeavor can be, embracing the continent's past as well as its future. Headmaster Tensai Muyūbyō keeps her students on a tight leash working on projects realized by the Kako Quarter's factories, constantly searching for new uses for their creations.

Unmei College Folks that travel through Supai claim that Unmei College is not only home to foreigners but that even its buildings are not native to Soburin. There is some truth to this claim—nowhere else is as friendly to ceramians (many of whom pay exorbitant prices to the Chippokena to be smuggled inside).

POOR QUARTER

The largest district of Kyōfū is also its most populated, filled with production lines that have the lowest possible margins of error. Factories here run day and night, chewing through the lowest sections of society in endless forging and preparatory tasks that anyone can easily accomplish. Some more talented workers live in the area but are employed in the Mechanus Quarter, making enough coin for a smattering of restaurants and entertainment houses to persist amongst the crowded tenements and apartment buildings that make up the district.

Asenburu Lines Creatures can usually count the number of places openly friendly to the robotic race in Soburin using only their fingers (or the nearest equivalents) and their freedoms in the Star of the North were hard won. The steametic factory in the Poor Quarter is completely transparent about the long production lines that hug the northern wall of Kyōfū, allowing students from both Rekishiya University and Unmei College to come research the methods of their creation.

Suramu Steppes Dwellings are stacked on one another throughout nearly all of Kyōfū but nowhere is it as pronounced as it is in the Suramu Steppes in the Poor Quarter. Dozens upon dozens of homes sit upon one another in four haphazard pyramids, each festooned with metal stairways like vines on tree trunks. The eldest residents live in the winding hallways on the ground while younger folk dwell in the precariously balanced rooms on top.

SUPAI ESTATES

The most protected part of Kyōfū is home to almost the entire Supai Clan, protected by the Shinsei-Sukui Mountains to the west and the rest of the prefecture's capital to the east. The whole of the Supai Estates are shielded from below by enormous higōshi fans but every mechanical fan ever gifted to Lord Dainichi Supai or his predecessor is mounted in the streets, making it imminently defensible should the corrupting Mists of Akuma to ever threaten the nobility that live there.

Lord Dainichi's Aerosphere All access to the innermost court of the Supai Clan requires crossing a magical sphere of tempest winds. Listening in on the doings of the court or infiltrating the area is practically impossible without access to the

tokens of authority (enchanted baubles that allow one to cross the barrier safely) so closely held by Lord Dainichi's personal torunēdo-sentōki honor guard. Should it ever be breached there are rumors that the entire inner structure of the palace can be jettisoned into the sky, flying to safety in the Shinsei-Sukui Mountains.

Risōsu-Kanri Yuriko Shizuka A relatively new office created by Lord Dainichi upon the commencement of the first Destruction Festival, the position of Risōsu-Kanri has proven to be highly desirable. Though the Junkmaster of the Destruction Forges handles the minutiae of day-to-day recycling, the Risōsu-Kanri has discretion over material projections, output quotas, and price ceilings—ultimately controlling the flow of limited resources in Kyōfū.

Windswept Way

Travel papers approved by Supai Ryokōsai are typically for people bound for Windswept Way, home to the majority of the Star of the North's augmetic surgeons and independent machine shops.

Kiso-Chishiki Academies All of Kyōfū's children are required to receive a minimal, general education in this sprawling series of buildings before pursuing their own lives. The brightest and most obedient excel into either Rekishiya University or Unmei College, but the undisciplined and dim-witted learn valuable skills as well—typically by getting hands-on practice with industrial tasks ideal for their small hands. After a failure by the defenses on the southern wall necessitated a gruesome slaughter of children-turned-addedo-oni, higōshi fans were constructed around all of the Kisho-Chishiki Academies to insure that such a foul occurrence never happens again.

Jinkōsōgu Market Supai's thriving black market for augmetics operates in the under-pinnings of this popular square of merchant stands. To those who know the right people to speak to it is a place where augmetics of any quality can be bought and sold, though usually only inferior, used, or broken pieces are available at prices appreciably under market value (and customers are not always warned to beware).

Around Interference

Astute geographers note that the scientific prefectures are located on the corners of the continent where their settlements were more easily introduced to technology during the Kengen Occupation. Additionally they suffer the least interference from the mountains of Soburin making the trade of information between them far faster than elsewhere. Emperor Hitoshi Masuto has agents constantly surveilling the areas between these settlements, scanning for any sign of cohesion or collective subterfuge against his rule by the lords embracing heretical technology.

Erītokirā Saboteurs

The Sanshōo are not the only Erītokirā Chapter with battle brothers in Kyōfū and it is rumored that every one of the shikome warrior factions has at least one soldier in the settlement, placed in a position where they can easily access augmetics and technology too difficult to produce without cutting-edge facilities. Lord Dainichi Supai is not completely deaf to warnings of the hobgoblin saboteurs but in truth cares very little about their presence unless violence is raised—as far as he is concerned they are simply doing business. Officially however there are expectations to be kept and to that end one of his bengoshi (page 109), Asami Shizuka, is utterly devoted to rooting out, exposing, and capturing or killing the shikome warriors.

From her offices in the Dattehaidei Detective Division (in an alleyway in Windsept Way that borders the Cultural District), Asami works with small teams of investigators to find Erītokirā Chapters hiding within Kyōfū, typically by following improperly filed orders for exports from the Mirai or Kako Mechanus Quarters. Although usually quite a boring job as of late many of her agents have disappeared or abruptly left the prefecture, leaving Asami to suspect that something very big is about to go down in the City of Fans. Not keen to appear weak to her superiors and peers, she has wasted no time or effort in acquiring responsible and effective replacements from the adventurers common to Kyōfū; there are never enough deputized detectives to be had but with the ample financial backing provided by Lord Dainichi and the Supai Clan, there's always coin available for those brave or nosey enough to take on the job.

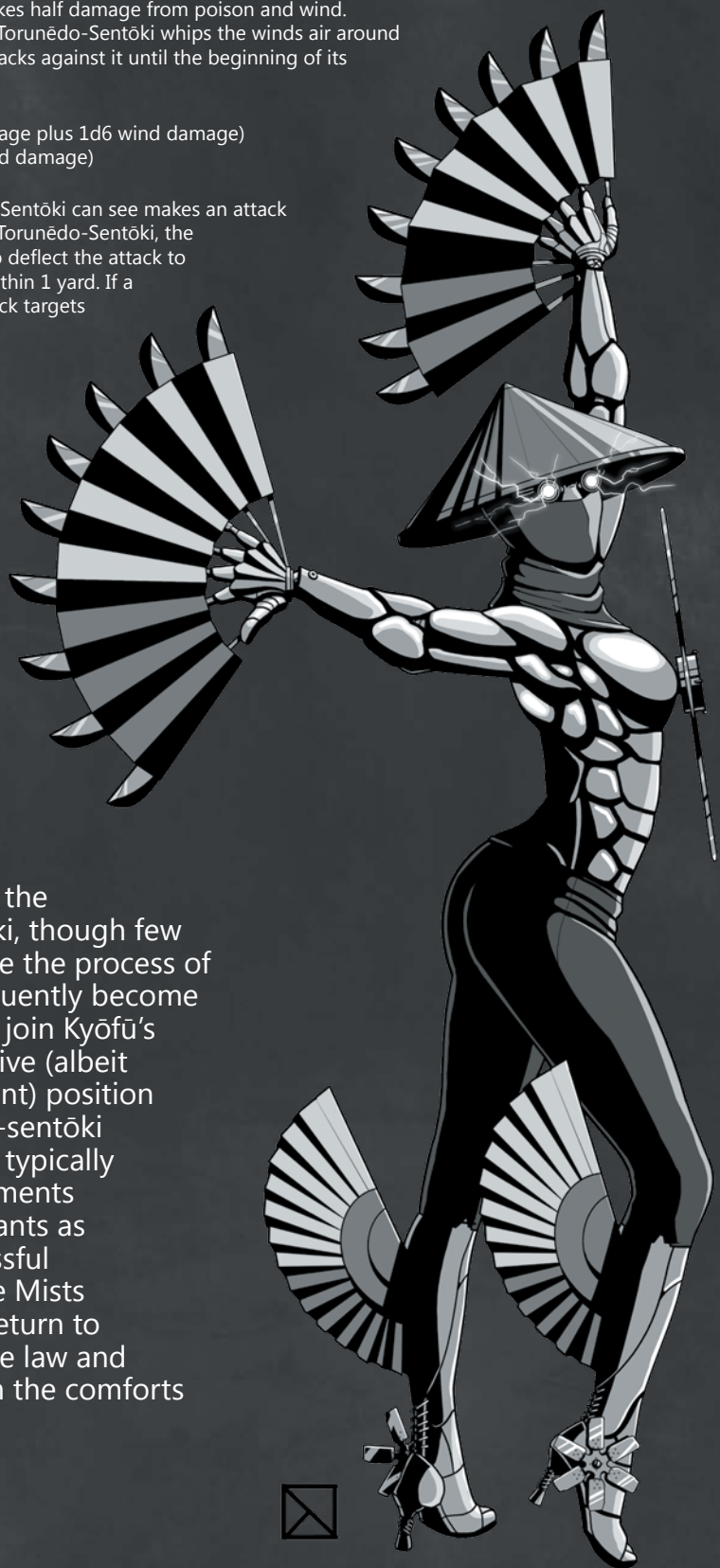
TORUNĒDO-SENTŌKI DIFFICULTY 50

Size 1 human (soburi)
Perception 12 (+2 plus 1 boon); darksight
Defense 16; **Health** 50
Strength 14 (+4), **Agility** 15 (+5), **Intellect** 12 (+2), **Will** 13 (+3)
Speed 10; flier 20
Immune fatigued, prone
Mechanical Resistances The Torunēdo-Sentōki takes half damage from poison and wind.
Personal Tempest Instead of taking its move, the Torunēdo-Sentōki whips the winds air around it and imposes 1 bane on all ranged weapon attacks against it until the beginning of its next turn.

ATTACK OPTIONS
Propeller Hand (melee) +4 with 1 boon (2d6 damage plus 1d6 wind damage)
Wind Blast (short range) +5 with 1 boon (3d6 wind damage)

SPECIAL ACTIONS
Deflecting Blades When a creature the Torunēdo-Sentōki can see makes an attack roll using a ranged weapon or spell against the Torunēdo-Sentōki, the Torunēdo-Sentōki can use its triggered action to deflect the attack to instead target a randomly determined square within 1 yard. If a creature or object occupies that square, the attack targets that creature or object.

END OF THE ROUND
Endless Gusts The Torunēdo-Sentōki blows a gale of wind in a cone 30 yards long that disperses vapors, fog, smoke, and gas from the area. Unprotected flames gutter out, and lightweight objects are blown to the nearest edge of the area. For the next round each creature in the area must get a success on a Strength challenge roll or be moved 1d6 yards away from the Torunēdo-Sentōki. Flying creatures make the roll with 1 bane.
Shredding Grapple A creature grabbing or grabbed by the Torunēdo-Sentōki takes 2d6 damage.



Students that prove themselves to be physically superior but a poor fit for the Kiso-Chishiki Academies are encouraged to join the fanatical order of Torunēdo-Sentōki, though few have the resolve and zeal to endure the process of induction. Rejected applicants frequently become fansābanto in Sanbaoshi or simply join Kyōfū's city guard, hoping for a less intensive (albeit more poorly paid and less important) position as a minor officer. When torunēdo-sentōki are not in the City of Fans they are typically traveling in between Supai's settlements assigning recently promoted aspirants as defenders, allowing the few successful enough to survive attacks from the Mists of Akuma to climb the ranks and return to the prefecture's capital, keeping the law and fighting alongside their peers from the comforts of civilization.

Hiyoribō had found himself in situations like this a dozen times before but rarely did they escalate so quickly.

Just yesterday he'd managed to acquire travel papers that granted entry to the Fukushu Prefecture (not an easy thing to do for an oni-touched, especially a ronin) and he was eagerly looking forward to once more know the kindness of a woman in Hakyoku he'd saved from bandits only two years ago. The desire for romantic company was Hiyoribō's greatest weakness and he once again reprimanded himself as Junichi Nobuko, a retainer for the Ikari Clan, brandished her katana in the heavy rains that had assaulted Nagabuki all day. The water ran an inch deep down the Boulevard of Honor and a symphony rang out from the gutters adorning the Keizei Market beside them to underpin the grave scene about to play out.

The jingling of her elaborate earrings caught Hiyoribō's attention prompting her to glare at him with renewed ferocity, her arms hardening like steel as she held her blade unwavering in the rain-slick air. "Again, here, even as I prepare to cut you down? I know ronin are honorless but you are truly despicable. Even for one born corrupted." The look on Junichi's face made it clear that there was no getting out of this and he reluctantly let the heavily-weighted end of his kusarigama drop from his right hand.

Hiyoribō's mind jumped back to the previous evening as he left the ryokōsai's office, stopping in the Pewter Quarter for another batch of Shoōhinna's pork buns before leaving for Hakyoku. While waiting he idly watched the inside of a nearby tea house, appreciating the song of a beautiful geisha so much that he found himself clapping when she finished. A woman with beautifully jeweled ears and an ornate headdress stood from the crowd and stomped into the street, nothing but rage in her eyes; within moments a heated exchange erupted and not long after an honor duel declared.

The oni-touched stopped reflecting on how he could avoid yet more of this sort of altercation in the future as the samurai darted forward with her katana poised for either a powerful sweeping strike or precise stab. Hiyoribō didn't like either of those options and flipped backward, spinning the chain of the kusarigama to ward her away long enough to clamber up a tabi merchant's shop—Junichi's versatile weapon wouldn't be as much of an asset on the slick rooftops as his expert footwork.

"Do not run from me Hiyoribō Kanami!", she bellowed, bounding off a table of tarped-over clothing to land lightly a few roofs away. "I am a retainer of the Ikari Clan! Flee from this fight and you'll become a fugitive wanted all over the prefecture!"

Reaching toward his belt and grabbing a few shuriken to throw as she closed the distance between them he replied, "I know who your masters are you crazy bitch, but this need not end in death! It was a beautiful song and I was lucky to hear it! That is all!" Despite his marksmanship she effortlessly batted the throwing stars from mid-air, landing within striking distance and lashing out in blows made clumsy by the slippery shingles they stood upon. Falling backwards in a dodge Hiyoribō rolled away from her, drawing out the length of his weapon and tossing the sickle as he took to knee.

Junichi stepped aside from the hasty throw and batted the weapon down but not before the oni-touched could cinch, nearly disarming her. The samurai resisted and in response Hiyoribō flipped forward rapidly, drawing his slacked chain closer before throwing it out to lasso more of her blade until they were locked in a grapple and the chance of being stabbed was greatly reduced. A flurry of savage kicks and headbutts followed before he decided to draw on his heritage, flaring his veins with power and sending a massive jolt of electricity into Junichi that made her stagger backwards.

She reached out to catch her katana as it sailed out of her grasp but slipped on a slick shingle and fell to the street below in a flurry of curses that would make a Ryōshi pirate blush in shame. Hiyoribō bucked his weapon and caught the sword in one hand, flourishing it proudly and yelling, "See here, people of Nagabuki! I have taken the sword of Junichi Nobuko, retainer of the Ikari Clan! By the rights of combat I declare her defeat—the honor duel has ended!"

Though many eyes below were fixed on him none would dare clap for the victory of an oni-touched ronin over one of the city's most respected warriors but that didn't bother Hiyoribō in the slightest—if anything it only made him even more eager to leave the Gem of the South all the sooner.

CHAPTER 6: NAGABUKI

GEM OF THE SOUTH

The Ikari are one of Soburin's most violent clans, made all the deadlier by having to tame much of the continent's jungles. Their warriors are masters of the lethal kusarigama, a long chain-sickle that helps them traverse the claustrophobic wilderness with almost as much ease as the enjin that live there—ape-like people that the foreign invaders disastrously attempted to force into submission within Ikari cities. The prefecture's traditions of martial study made it easy for them to handle the insurrection that followed and though Nesuto to the north housed more of the simian wildmen Nagabuki's size made it the ideal place for keeping the most rebellious enjin, turning the settlement and its residents as hard as the bark of a tapok tree.

Ceramian soldiers may be a thing of the past but the marks of their imposed rule are still fresh all over Nagabuki. Militant before even the Ichizoku Wars began, the Ikari were the last clan to relent to oppression and as punishment for their resilience the foreigners forced them to serve as hosts to the most troublesome inhumans on the continent. The Gem of the South adapted to match the city's needs during the times of imprisonment (as it is known to the enjin), changing much of its historical layout to be far more like a fortress than that of a bustling settlement and today there are tall walls surrounding Nagabuki, the top of the ramparts rising above even the highest structures within.

Combating the Mists of Akuma

To unify the bloodthirsty lords within her borders, Lady Wuguan declared most technology illegal in the Ikari Prefecture. Though enforcement of these restrictions may be wanting, they have led Nagabuki to embrace ancient traditions to defend against the Mists of Akuma. Warrior orders with records dating back to the Ichizoku Wars—reinvigorated by their enforced service in the War of Kaiyo—have flocked from all over Soburin to the Gem of the South, keenly watching the soldiers training in the Nagabuki Guard for the finest recruitment prospects.

Gensosō Guards Fallen to obscurity and myth, these foregone martial artists appeared from out of nowhere to become champions of Hitoshi's Rebellion, tapping into a primal power that overwhelmed the Kengen loyalists that remained in Nagabuki. Many of the continent's finest tattoo artists are members of the order, marking the legendary warrior-monks with beautiful illustrations that warn those who stand against them of what dangerous techniques they wield.

Lung Tattoos When traveling in Nagabuki it is more common to see a person with a magical tattoo emblazoned on their chest than otherwise, as nearly all of the city's populace has received artwork empowered with the *lungs of Akuma* (page 222) in case the corrupting fog creeps into the settlement. Indentured servitude to shop owners is a frequent means for the poor to afford these enchanted illustrations, and though the disparity of wealth in Nagabuki grows ever greater the practice is becoming more popular as the threat of the fell haze rears more often with every passing season.

Way of the Tattooed Pagoda

The inspiring jungles of the Ikari Prefecture drew out the mysticism of the clan's few mages and priests, and before the Ichizoku Wars' end enchanted tattoos had become culturally tied to Nagabuki. Artwork inscribed onto skin—sometimes magically—is a common sight among warriors, used to mark their rank or as a way to commemorate their deeds. Soburin's most famous arcane artists specializing in crafting mystical illustrations on the body are found here and combatants looking for a traditional way to amplify their prowess travel to the Gem of the South in search of its magical tattooists.

Shīranto Sap Drawn from black ash trees common to the jungles that survived the deforestation of the Kengen Occupation, this thick syrup can be boiled down and mixed with a few other commonly found plants to make a waxy glue that expands into a durable foam when dried. Tales of its successful use as a means to seal fortresses and homes has become widespread, prompting many soburi to seek it out to caulk the entrances to small hideaways dug beneath their dwellings (despite warnings of these panic rooms becoming impromptu tombs).

Sobietachi Walls Designed by ceramian engineers at the start of the Kengen Occupation (both to keep enjin in and to isolate ape folk that escaped capture), there are no taller walls to be found anywhere else in the prefectures. Though only the barriers around the Silver District and Gold District are fully intact, shīranto sap is lacquered and smeared all over the outer ramparts of the outer wall and the bulwark has only failed to stop the Mists of Akuma from filling Nagabuki's streets with corrupting haze a few times—something Lady Wuguan frequently recounts in the Imperial Court, shaming rivals that have embraced heretical science.

Fortress of Tradition

Long ago the Ikari Clan were famed for their many warrior clans, mastering the crafting of armor and weapons in Nagabuki and making it the center of the continent's metal trade long before the ceramians invaded—accessible both by land (along The Imperial Road) or by boat (on the Yōkini-Sawagi River). During the millennia of peaceful rule under the Masuto Dynasty the mercantile interests of the settlement changed but their demand for material bent toward artistic expression more than martial need, leading serious crafters and artisans to head to the Gem of the South in order to acquire the finest components of their crafts.

Opening a shop in Nagabuki is no simple matter; artisans and merchants alike need permission from Lady Wuguan (a daunting task) before renting or buying property in the city, and even then it only allows them to live and operate for one year in the Tin Quarter (leading many to forge

false papers that distract guards long enough for them to escape with their cart-shop). After this induction period business owners may petition to set up shop in a new district, but the doings of the Ikari Courts are fraught with bureaucracy, graft, and politics that favor seniority and the rich, regulating where different types of shops can open.

Whether the main floor of a building is a business or home, there is inevitably another above it; nearly every structure in Nagabuki reaches up or arches across the streets, making a dizzying skyscape of overhanging dwellings within the towering Sobietachi Walls. When it rains in Nagabuki—an especially frequent occurrence—the metropolis creates thousands of waterfalls from rooftop gutters that drain into centuries-old sewers before emptying into the Yōkini-Sawagi River.

Broadways of Nagabuki

Two hundred years ago there were bustling businesses and beautiful homes built into the interior of Nagabuki's far less impressive walls, home to artisans inspired by the views from atop the modest ramparts that once protected the city. The invading ceramians were keen to crush the spirit of rebellion in Ikari however, and their first act—ostensibly in order to build the far greater bulwark that still stands today—was to demolish large areas of the settlement. The ruins were paved over by war machines, and throughout the Kengen Occupation monuments to the foreigners were put on display there for the soburi under their rule to see every day, solidifying in the minds of the defeated that the battle was over.

Boulevard of Honor With so many warriors gathered in one place it is no wonder that Honor Duels are common occurrences in Nagabuki. Samurai frequently meet to duel on the easternmost border of the city and the citizens know it—the area is almost always populated by idlers hoping to become spectators.

Lane of Glory The northern broadway of the city became a place of vice almost as soon as it was built. Unlike the chaotic market that reigned under foreign oppression, pricing is now controlled by well-established gangs of harlots that rule the business of street prostitution in Nagabuki (influence they fiercely protect within their territories).

Lane of Victory

Little remains of the mosaics and frescoes that the foreigners used to decorate the southern wall around the docks to the Yōkini-Sawagi River; nearly all of the artwork was ripped down or vandalized by soburi at the dawn of Hitoshi's Rebellion. Word of the lane being used as a meeting place for foreign-loyalists has spread to the Nagabuki Guard and though it is closely watched, most ceramians and ropaeo know that should they have no alternative there are friends to be made in the shadows of the War of Kaiyo's destroyed heroes.

Monument March Perhaps the most galling of the Kengen Occupation's contributions to Nagabuki were the 300 statues that lined the western side of the settlement, symbolically watching the soburi from the direction of the oppressors' distant homeland. The city's native warriors relished casting down the carvings of their persecutors only a decade ago and at the direction of Lady Wuguan's Court, with every month that passes a new memorialization of an Ikari hero is installed to replace the crumbled remains of their persecutors—facing west toward Ceramia.

Fortified Defenses

Even without Lady Wuguan's re-institution of conscription within the city—a measure at first protested but ultimately accepted as a fair practice with the Mists of Akuma descending on Soburin—there is no other settlement in Soburin as well-manned and protected as Nagabuki (save for, perhaps, the Imperial Prefecture). Every citizen's service has taught them to value the metropolis and that a united effort is to their benefit, and in addition to the common guards another force protects the Gem of the South: the Gensosō.

Gensosō Warrior-Monks Tapping into a primal power that once ran rampant through Ikari's jungles, these martial artists are the greatest defenders of Nagabuki and some of the continent's most famous combatants. They hone their techniques in the Frost, Scorch, Stone, and Zephyr Monasteries, only leaving when dutifully patrolling the city, ordered to by a sensei (or bengoshi), or to induct new members in the jungles outside the metropolis' walls. Rumors claim that they take aspirants to perform a secret ritual in sacred jungle caves that brimmed with elemental power before the War of Kaiyo, but none have ever confirmed the tales.

Ikari Barracks All of Nagabuki's sword-worthy citizens are made to serve at least two years with the Nagabuki Guard and while doing so are made to live in the large, fort-like barracks at the top of the Iron Quarter. This practice of conscription causes some strife but ultimately strengthens the Gem of the South twofold—the Sobietachi Walls are always amply defended and those who patrol the city are well known to the people they are oathbound to protect.

Training Fields Open for use by individual schools as well as the city's defenders, this area is often jokingly called the "Unending Theater" by seasoned Nagabuki guards for the sounds of combat that can be heard day and night. Gensosō sensei frequently wander the grounds in search of fighters with the potential to master the primal martial arts and the Mists of Akuma have prompted ever more men and women to try their luck dueling other students, hoping to be seen by the elite warrior-monks and chosen to learn the order's secret techniques.

Gold District

The Gem of the South's oldest merchant families charge a fine price for their goods and services in the Gold District, selling to customers fat from expensive meals in restaurants that have operated for centuries and bedazzled by the luxury shops brought in via heavy bribes to Nagabuki nobles.

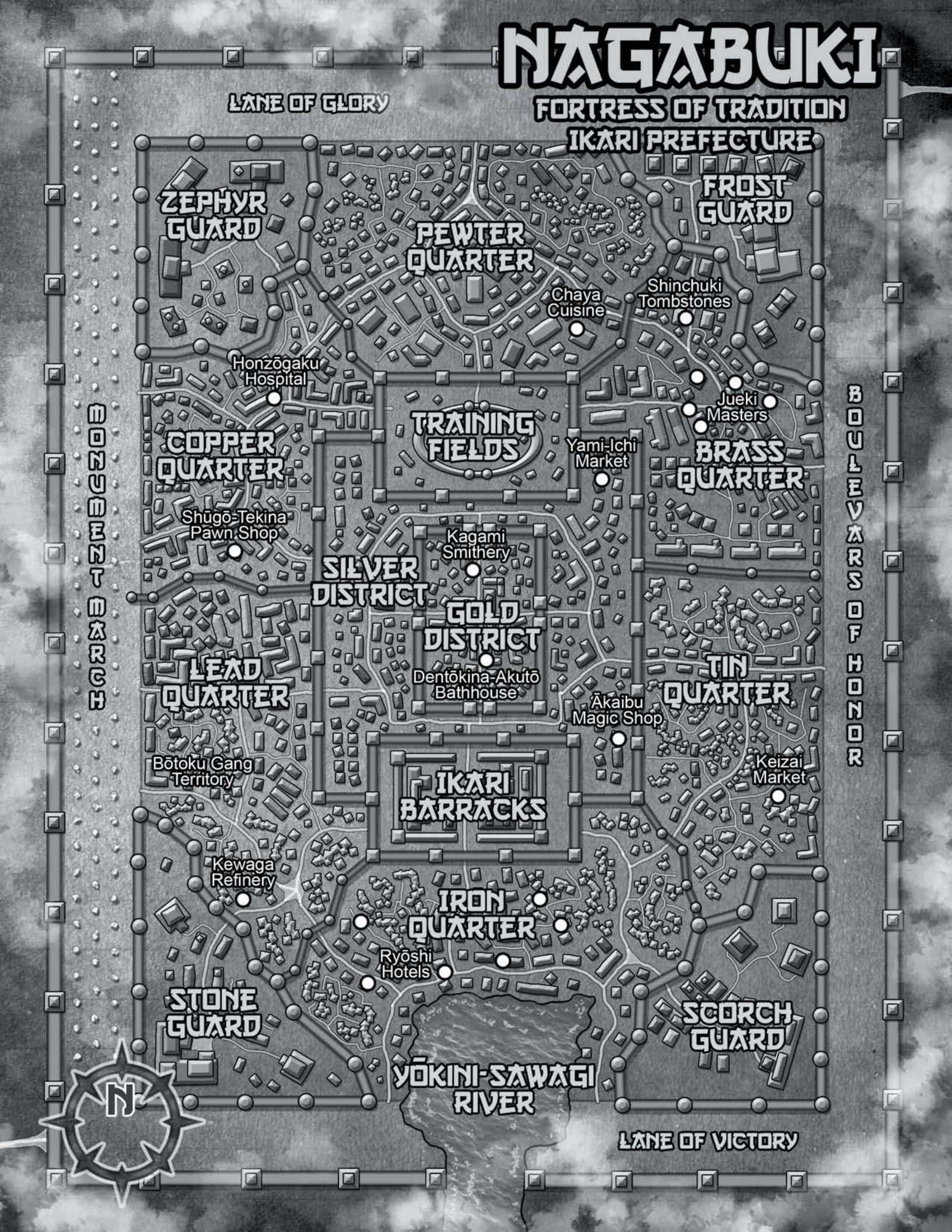
Dentōkina-Akutō Bathhouse Several bathhouses can be found in Nagabuki but the Dentōkina-Akutō is infamous among the most influential citizens, a home away from home for the affluent, powerful criminals, and soburi military officers. Debauchery is commonplace inside its walls and rumors claim that there is no activity one cannot indulge within—provided that enough Imperial Pieces are involved.

Kagami Smithery Built on the labors of generations of men and women that created the metal links used to survive in Ikari (and bind enjin), the Kagami Smithery has grown into a vast production facility of traditional soburi methods. Though they may not make their product as fast as others, their protected techniques and access to the purest materials produce the most dependable chains in all of Soburin.

Silver District

During the Kengen Occupation the Koshaji merchant family bribed and cajoled their oppressors into allowing the center of Nagabuki to house the negotiators of commerce, making it home to brokers and intermediaries that paid in both blood and coin to remain after Hitoshi's Rebellion. Aside from a few jewelers and respected restaurants, bulk good dealers and liaisons continue to be the most common traders in this area of the city.

Ākaibu Magic Shop This institution run by Keiko Ākaibu sells a most rare commodity: magic items. Gaining an audience with her requires no small bit of maneuvering, and even then not everyone is given leave to shop within. Those who do should be wary—many a spurned customer has complained that they received a curse with their purchase. The fact that *all* of these claims come from the same type of people (often thought to be dishonorable and untrustworthy) has caused demand for floortime there to diminish slightly, though if it bothers the owner she shows no signs of it.


NAGABUKI
FORTRESS OF TRADITION
IKARI PREFECTURE
LANE OF GLORY
ZEPHYR GUARD
PEWTER QUARTER
FROST GUARD
Chaya Cuisine
Shinchuki Tombstones
Honzōgaku Hospital
Jueki Masters
TRAINING FIELDS
COPPER QUARTER
Yami-Ichi Market
BRASS QUARTER
MONUMENT MARCH
BOULEVARDS OF HONOR
Shūgō-Tekina Pawn Shop
Kagami Smithery
SILVER DISTRICT
GOLD DISTRICT
LEAD QUARTER
Dentōkina-Akutō Bathhouse
TIN QUARTER
Ākaibu Magic Shop
Bōtoku Gang Territory
IKARI BARRACKS
Keizai Market
Kewaga Refinery
IRON QUARTER
Ryōshi Hotels
STONE GUARD
SCORCH GUARD
YŌKINI-SAWAGI RIVER
N
LANE OF VICTORY

Yami-Ichi Market Lax enforcement of Lady Wuguan's technology-banning decree has allowed a thriving black market to develop here under the auspices of bulk traders, supplied as much by merchants with more wealth than sense as by Ryōshi pirates keen to unload goods stolen from Fukushu and Hofuku junks.

Brass Quarter

Ceramian production facilities once dominated this area for over a century but they've since been torn down and replaced by traditional artisans. Though these neighborhoods lagged behind their peers for a time, the sharp rise in demand for containers able to reliably store shīranto sap has made this district one of the most popular parts of Nagabuki.

Jueki Masters In addition to making all types of brass objects (fixtures, pots, and simple jewelry) and containers needed for Nagabuki's prime export, the Brass Quarter is home to a guild of soburi alchemists that are said to process better shīranto sap than anyone else on the continent.

Shinchūki Tombstones It is a common practice throughout the prefectures to memorialize great events and peoples with brass plaques; the Shinchūki Tombstones company seems to produce them at a rate that defies the limitations of their craft. Investigations have revealed no forbidden technology but no foul play either—many believe they are making their memoriams *before* they are needed, with unerring accuracy that can only be borne from dark magics.

Copper Quarter

Despite its name the Copper Quarter has much less to do with metal than the other sections of Nagabuki—it is instead where simpler goods are bought and sold like staple foods, simple textiles, and mundane items. The past decade has seen a huge influx of immigrants from the countryside and now the area is overpopulated with laborers eager to secure work, usually finding only illicit employment or turning to the wanting mercy of the streets.

Honzōgaku Hospital Enterprising herbalist merchants salvaged the gutted remains of a ceramian hospital after Hitoshi's Rebellion and continue using it today, cutting a tidy profit from the explorers injured by the jungle or Burakku Kirā wounded by enjin. The more traditional medicines practiced today are largely to abate the Mists of Akuma, and acupuncturists, despite questionable success rates, are becoming a common sight. Still, they are finding it difficult to earn the public's trust as tales of a masked killer who uses the same sort of needles increase in frequency each week.

Shūgō-Tekina Pawn Shop Beneath the notice of Lady Wuguan Ikari's Court and the defenders of Nagabuki, the Shūgō-Tekina family has changed their shop from a place for antiquities into a front for the Mitsuyu Gyōsha Consortium—and business has never been better. Thanks to the Gem of the South's love for tradition, tsukumogami are a frequent sight and the agents of the criminal network are constantly bringing in new awakened items for Xianghua Shūgō-Tekina to smuggle out of the city.

Iron Quarter

The vast majority of ore coming into the Gem of the South is iron brought along The Imperial Road or down the Yōkini-Sawagi River. Hotels, teahouses, and bathhouses crowd streets beside fisheries and freight yards catering to the docks, making it Nagabuki's most lively area.

Ryōshi Hotels Several inns quietly cater almost specifically to vagabonds and pirates (commonly known as The Fishermen). Disguised as descendants of ceramian sailors, the Ryōshi sell their charade by making use of illegal technology to better direct tensions away from Ikari, feeding a hunt for the descendents of foreign invaders instead.

Yōkini-Sawagi River Timber from the jungles is shipped up this river to Nesuto in the north, metals travel from all over into Nagabuki on it waters, and finished armaments forged in the Gem of the South head downstream to Kusari before being distributed all over Soburin.

Lead Quarter

Forced to adopt the large-scale processing of lead by the Kengen Occupation, this part of Nagabuki carries the greatest burden left by the oppressors—it has begun to suffer from bouts of madness, its peoples agitated from even the slightest dishonor.

Bōtoku Gang Though they are ultimately cowards prone to giving up when presented with a substantial obstacle, the sheer number of disenfranchised soburi that have joined these criminals make them a viable threat. A few among them are true villains working in concert with larger illicit organizations, but their skills have kept Lady Wuguan Ikari and her court from learning of their true plans.

Kegawa Refinery Some Umi Kuraiyā have heard that this lead refinery has been aiding rogue Kengen generals, but the city guard are reticent to intervene—suspecting that the rash of attacks on Fushuku and Hofuku fortresses are connected, they're keen to keep their rivals occupied as long as possible.

Hordes of the Jungle

At first the Mists of Akuma only posed an immediate threat against Nagabuki and the other settlements of Ikari, but with every passing year more undead make their way out of the jungles to climb the walls of the city as the corrupting fog rolls in. Lady Wuguan's bengoshi have focused their efforts on discovering why but so far have not publicly revealed what is going on—and for good reason. Shovels and other digging tools are crudely hidden throughout the jungle, used by the undead to unearth and expose the corpses of warriors fallen long ago; it is these poor souls that are dragged up by the supernatural haze to begin violent unlives assailing the lands they once championed. Panic is sure to set in the instant people know where the adeddo-oni are coming from and that their revered ancestors have been driven by dark powers to seek bloodshed on their kin, and Lady Wuguan's servants are as busy hiding the truth as they are defending against it.

Pewter Quarter

Smiths that specialize in making alchemical fixtures, clothing accessories, and silverware ply their trade here in the company of numerous restaurants trying to gain a foothold in Nagabuki.

Chaya Cuisine Rumored to make the best food in the Gem of the South and known for affordable prices, this sushi house has expanded into multiple locations and its owner Bōdanno possesses a remarkable influence throughout the city (and is secretly the best fence in all of the Ikari Prefecture, be that for information or goods.)

Gomoku Yakisoba Guild A cadre of secretive tattoo artists work for cheap in this district, switching up shops to avoid being caught for their dangerous pranks—inscribing whatever amuses them on their customers. Though these are sometimes the most well done tattoos, they are usually offensive and made available at a low price that makes most sensible patrons wary.

Tin Quarter

Businesses and immigrants new to Nagabuki are required to spend one year in the Tin Quarter no matter whom they are or what they sell. The area is a complete mishmash of goods and services, and many a customer has been fooled into buying from an inexperienced craftsman or shoddy counterfeiter only to find the offender has moved or left for another settlement.

Petenshi Guides Ostensibly guides to the city for travelers, these charlatans are really a group of forgers that specialize in fake credentials or travel papers for ceramians and ropaeo to open up shops or journey into and out of Nagabuki.

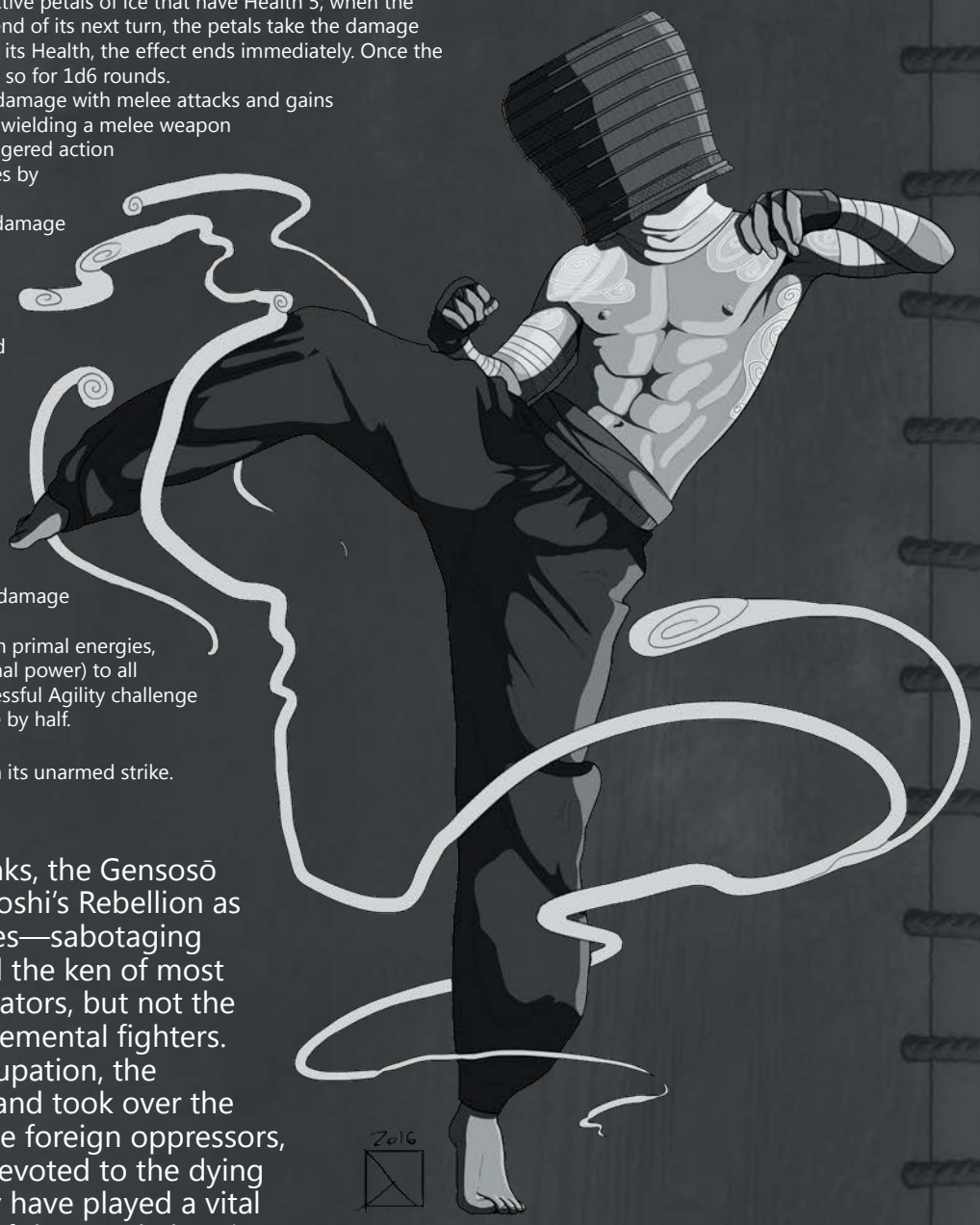
Keizai Market One can find nearly anything in the Tin Quarter's most popular marketplace. Buyers should beware however, as the businesses and shops change from day to day when their owners finish requirements to Lady Wuguan Ikari before moving to more profitable areas of the city, thus making virtually all sales here final transactions—no matter how good or bad the product.

GENSOSŌ DIFFICULTY 50

Size 1 human (soburi)
Perception 13 (+3)
Defense 17; **Health** 40
Strength 12 (+2), **Agility** 14 (+4), **Intellect** 10 (+0), **Will** 13 (+3)
Speed 16; leap 4
Immune varies by primal power (acid, cold, fire, or wind)
Primal Power Each Gensosō has one of the following:

- **Frost** The Gensosō deals 1d6 extra cold damage with melee attacks and gains immunity to damage from cold. When targeted by a weapon or spell attack the Gensosō can spend its triggered action to encircle itself in protective petals of ice that have Health 5; when the Gensosō would take damage before the end of its next turn, the petals take the damage instead. If the petal's damage total equals its Health, the effect ends immediately. Once the Gensosō has used this ability it cannot do so for 1d6 rounds.
- **Scorch** The Gensosō deals 1d6 extra fire damage with melee attacks and gains immunity to damage from fire. When not wielding a melee weapon on its turn, the Gensosō can spend its triggered action to increase the reach of its unarmed strikes by 10 yards until the end of the round.
- **Stone** The Gensosō deals 1d6 extra acid damage with melee attacks and gains immunity to damage from acid. The Gensosō gains 2 boons on challenge rolls made to grab a foe or to avoid being grabbed.
- **Zephyr** The Gensosō deals 1d6 extra wind damage with melee attacks and gains immunity to damage from wind. Once each turn, the Gensosō may force a target it hits with a melee attack to make a Strength challenge roll (made with 1 bane) or be pushed up to 3 yards away from it (regardless of the target's size).

ATTACK OPTIONS
Unarmed Strike (melee) +4 with 1 boon (1d6 damage plus 1d6 Primal Power)
Elemental Whirlwind The Gensosō erupts with primal energies, dealing 4d6 damage (determined by its primal power) to all creatures and objects within 5 yards. A successful Agility challenge roll (made with 1 bane) reduces this damage by half.
SPECIAL ATTACKS
Double Attack The Gensosō attacks twice with its unarmed strike.



As much shinobi as warrior-monks, the Gensosō became soldiers essential to Hitoshi's Rebellion as soon as they revealed themselves—sabotaging ceramian weaponry was beyond the ken of most unarmed and unequipped infiltrators, but not the primal powers wielded by the elemental fighters. After the fall of the Kengen Occupation, the Gensosō returned to Nagabuki and took over the fortifications that once house the foreign oppressors, consecrating them as temples devoted to the dying spirits of nature. Since then they have played a vital role in the defense of the Gem of the South, beating back addedo-oni that swim beneath the Sobietachi Wall (along the bed of the Yōkini-Sawagi River) in displays of skill and spectacle so impressive that they are usually the subjects of the settlement's stage plays. Their potent martial arts techniques and training have been shrouded in mystery for time immemorial but even so the Gensosō are known to travel in specific parts of the nearby jungle, rumored to tread near caves said to be imbued with the power of nature.

WILDERNESSES OF SOBURIN

Most people avoid rural areas and travel across Soburin beneath the shadows of torii gates on roads maintained by the government, occasionally stopped by guards (**Patrollers**, **Mercenaries**, and sometimes even **Veterans**) that check to make sure travel papers (page 17) are in order. To the north the most prominent roadway is the Path of the Siblings (running from the Imperial Prefecture through Satsujin, Donyuko, Kirai, Gekido, Hakaisuru, Ibutsu, and Supai) and its cousin to the south is the Imperial Road (beginning in the Imperial Prefecture and crossing Osore, Kusuru, Yokuba, Hofuku, and Ikari), and these are far and away the safest routes in within the continent.

The focus of *Mists of Akuma* is on gameplay in cities and while this book has little focus on regions surrounding settlements, adventurers will inevitably find reason enough to journey beyond the intended urban scope.

BADLANDS

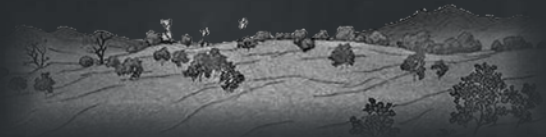
After overforestation and stripmining by foreigners during the Kengen Occupation the lands of Soburin were in a poor state and the aftermath of the War of Kaiyo's end has made recovery an impossibility. The vast majority of the continent's wilderness has been reduced to badlands that are practically worthless for cultivation—and frequently home vicious oni.

3d6 Badlands Encounter Table

3d6	Encounter
3–4	1d3+2 **Addeddo-Hunchling**
5	2 **Onryo** seeking vengeance
6	An **Addeddo-Samurai** appears and challenges a PC to a duel
7	2d6 **Bandits**
8	2d6 Snakes (**Small Animal** with poisonous trait)
9	Giant Lizard (**Medium Animal**) and 1d3+2 Snakes (**Tiny Animal** with poisonous trait)
10–11	Nothing
12–13	Mists of Akuma
14	Broken down and stripped war machines (**Kaiyo Tsukumogami**)
15	Field of rusted weapons and tattered banners of war
16	A petrified tree and a few paver stones marking the place where a road once existed
17	1-mile-long row of crosses each of which bears a crucified animated corpse (either all creatures with the hated affliction or all humanoids without it)
18	Helpful (a village of mutants offering a safe place to rest or information on nearby places or nomads warning of upcoming weather or the Mists of Akuma nearby)

Badlands Creature Encounters

3d6	Creature	Difficulty
3	**Bandit**	1
4	Snake (**Tiny Animal** with poisonous trait)	1
5	**Poltergeist**	5
6	**Addeddo-Oni Hunchling**	10
7	Giant Lizard (**Medium Animal**)	25
8	**Ishi Spirit**	25
9	**Onryo**	25
10	**Veteran**	25
11	**Adeddo-Oni Samurai**	50
12	**Baku**	50
13	**Ogre**	50
14	**Stranglevine**	50
15	**Yaoguai**	50
16	**Ancestral Kami**	100
17	**Rokurokubi**	100
18	**Jinmenju**	250



Forests & Jungles

Few wooded areas remain in Soburin but they are rampant with aggressive plants that seem to claw at existence as if they know they are doomed. Beleaguered lumberjacks and desperate hunters still ply their trades but chance being attacked by oni with every day that passes, slowly depleting the few natural resources that persist. Though once common across the continent's southern reaches, whatever kindnesses the rainforests formerly offered have evaporated as well and only the fiercest animals have survived deforestation, making jungles a dangerous place to tread even for veteran warriors.

Forest & Jungle Creature Encounters

3d6	Creature	Difficulty
3	**Adeddo-Oni Hunchling**	10
4	Boar (**Medium Animal**)	10
5	**Ki Spirit**	10
6	**Large Spider**	10
7	**Adeddo-Oni Ninja**	25
8	**Nisse**	25
9	**Rot Maiden**	25
10	**Shadoweaver**	25
11	**Spriggan**	25
12	**Bear**	50
13	**Dryad**	50
14	**Fungal Hulk**	50
15	Stranglevine	50
16	Tiger (**Great Cat**)	50
17	**Jinmenju**	250
18	**Wyrmling Forest Dragon**	100

Forest & Jungle Encounter Table

3d6	Encounter
3	2d6 Lumberjacks & Hunters working their profession
4–7	Mists of Akuma
8–11	Addeddo-Oni Attack (2d6 **Hunchlings**, 2 **Ninjas**, *or* 1 **Ninja** and 1d6 **Hunchlings**)
12–15	Ambush by 1d3+1 **Shadow Weavers**
16	2 **Stranglevines** lure PCs to feast upon them
17	**Grizzly Bear** and 1d3 Cubs (**Medium Animals**)
18	**Wyrmling Forest Dragon**

Lakes, Rivers, and Oceans

The waterways of Soburin are polluted by industrial waste and dirtied by the remnants of war, their once delicate ecosystems ravaged by exploitation during the Kengen Occupation. Aquatic predators run rampant, making travel on the water a deadly proposition.

Aquatic Encounter Table

3d6	Encounter
3	Friendly Umibo offer advice or cleaning their waters
4–7	1d3 Reef Sharks (**Medium Animals** with aquatic trait)
8–11	Nothing
12–15	Mists of Akuma
16–17	2d6 Pirates (**Brigand/ Pickpocket**) and 2d6 crewman (**Bandits**) waylaying ships
18	Legendary **Bake-Kujira** appears on the horizon

Aquatic Creature Encounters

3d6	Creature	Difficulty
3	**Asrai** (*Terrible Beauty* 39)	5
4	Piranhas (**Animal Swarm** with aquatic trait)	5
5	Giant Crab (**Medium Animal** with swimmer trait)	10
6	**Merrow** (*Terrible Beauty* 46)	10
7	Pirates (**Brigands/ Pickpockets**)	10
8	Reef Shark (**Medium Animal** with aquatic trait) 10	
9	**Shrieking Eel**	10
10	**Lizardman**	25
11	**Mog** (*Demon Lord Companion* page 48)	25
12	**Tiger Shark** (Large Animal)	25
13	**Fossergrim** (*Glorious Death* 27)	100
14	**Living Tar**	100
15	**Water Genie**	100
16	**Wyrmling Sea Dragon**	100
17	**Sea Serpent** (*Glorious Death* 34)	250
18	**Bake-Kujira**	500

MOUNTAINS

Shortly after the Kengen Occupation began the oni warlords retreated into the mountains, their kingdoms hidden by the magics of Imperial Dragons. Though they have since spread back into the lowlands of Soburin the monstrous hordes once contained behind their walls have spilled forth, making the continent's slopes truly lethal.

Mountains Encounter Table

3d6	Encounters
3	Beset by tengu seeking Trade
4–7	1d6+2 **Adeddo-Oni Hunchlings**
8–11	Nothing
12–15	Ambush by 1d6 **Brigands** and 2d6 **Bandits**
16–17	Mists of Akuma
18	**Wyrmling Sovereign Dragon**

Mountain Creature Encounters

3d6	Creature	Difficulty
3	**Brigand**	10
4	Giant Ram (**Medium Animal**)	10
5	**Vampire Bat**	10
6	**Adeddo-Oni Ninja**	25
7	**Emerald Darter**	25
8	**Griffon**	50
9	**Harpy**	50
10	**Muttering Maw**	50
11	**Ogre**	50
12	**Stone Worm**	50
13	**Earth Genie**	100
14	**Ettin**	100
15	**Yuki-Onna**	100
16	**Adult Sovereign Dragon**	250
17	**Manticore**	250
18	**Troll**	250

SWAMPS

Soburin's swamps are the only part of the environment to expand since the start of the Kengen Occupation, the decay of bogs and marshes exacerbated as more water-holding forests and plains disappear.

Swamps Encounter Table

3d6	Encounter
3	Ascetic pyon offer shelter in their Lilypad Temples.
4–7	1d3 Giant Snakes (**Medium Animal** with poisonous trait)
8–11	Nothing
12–15	Mists of Akuma
16–17	**Ghoul** wielding **Kaiyo Auto-Pistols** out to protect its land
18	**Wyrmling Underworld Dragon**

Swamp Creature Encounters

3d6	Creature	Difficulty
3	Viper (**Small Animal** with poisonous trait)	1
4	**Zombie**	5
5	Barracuda (**Medium Animal** with poisonous trait)	10
6	**Barrow Wight**	25
7	**Crocodile** (Large Animal)	25
8	**Ghoul**	25
9	**Kaiyo Horror Auto-Pistol**	25
10	**Kaiyo Horror Rifle**	25
11	**Lizardman**	25
12	**Lurk**	50
13	**Mog** (*Demon Lord's Companion* page 48)	25
14	**Ogre**	50
15	**Stranglevine**	50
16	**Yaoguai**	50
17	**Slime Brute** (*Demon Lord's Companion* page 49)	100
18	**Wyrmling Underworld Dragon**	100

Dantōjutsu firmly gripped her katana, a hiss of steam billowing from the ironwork of her arm. On the other side of the alleyway a small gang of bakemono—mure, judging by how they appeared out of nowhere—began crawling forth from the shadows in the guise of goblins. Watching the eyes of her ambushers carefully, for a brief moment the tension in the air was as sharp as any blade. One of her opponents charged at Dantōjutsu but she waited until the last possible moment, rapidly shuffling back and iaijutsu striking in a powerful blow that lopped the monster's head clean off. A short and pitiful wail erupted from one of the freakish little creatures down the way and grabbed her attention; when she saw the axe cleaving from the bakemono's shoulder down to its torso, Dantōjutsu wondered if her situation was deteriorating. Then two more of the little wretches dropped to the street, arrows in their heads, and the familiar silhouette of Uchikudaku Namida swaggered into view.

It was then she knew that things were not looking good, but gazing upward to see the archer above she thought, *how much worse can my night get?* She already knew who it was but the sniper had honor enough to pull down his mempo and reveal sunken, sallow features before braying at her, "The moon is high tonight, Dantōjutsu Gekido. They say it is a fine thing to die under a full moon."

The samurai gripped the hilt of her weapon more lightly than before, slowly inching the blade to where she could use it to parry either the axe-wielding giant or the bowman above. "Indeed they do, Koshi. The Hakaisuru are truly blessed to have such good fortune."

Koshi's face contorted into a grimace that matched the fearsomeness of his mask and his partner's bellowing laughter filled the alleyway, a gush of malicious mirth erupting from Uchikudaku's barreled chest until a crash of tiles onto the paved stones of the Yōhei Ward drew everyone's attention across the way from the archer. A gasp escaped Dantōjutsu as she recognized the crouched warrior on the rooftop above her—Foshuku Kirai, the Blood Butcher.

Well, she thought to herself, *I was wrong. This is worse.*

Foshoku didn't spit out insults or goad any of the other warriors—it was not necessary. They had all seen the maddened monk fight before and Uchikudaku's face bore a scar from the last time they had met. A gust of wind brought the hum of Sanbaoshi's lanterns with it as she growled, her voice like blood gurgling from an emaciated thing about to die before and croaking two words that brought dread to Dantōjutsu's heart: "Honor duel."

For a long, tense moment they eyed one another, waiting for any sign of weakness or retreat until a crash in the distance interrupted the near silence. As a shriek of tearing metal rebounded into the alleyway Foshuku sprung towards Koshi, the archer letting loose two arrows as he scrambled down the roof to escape the Blood Butcher, sending tiles down toward where Uchikudaku previously stood—the mammoth was already charging at Dantōjutsu, his axe held high and prepared for a killing blow. Though not as strong as her opponent the samurai was fast and when he brought the blade down she smacked it aside with a savage strike of her own, hitting the haft of his weapon with her katana and kicking out with a trip that sent him stumbling into the building beside her.

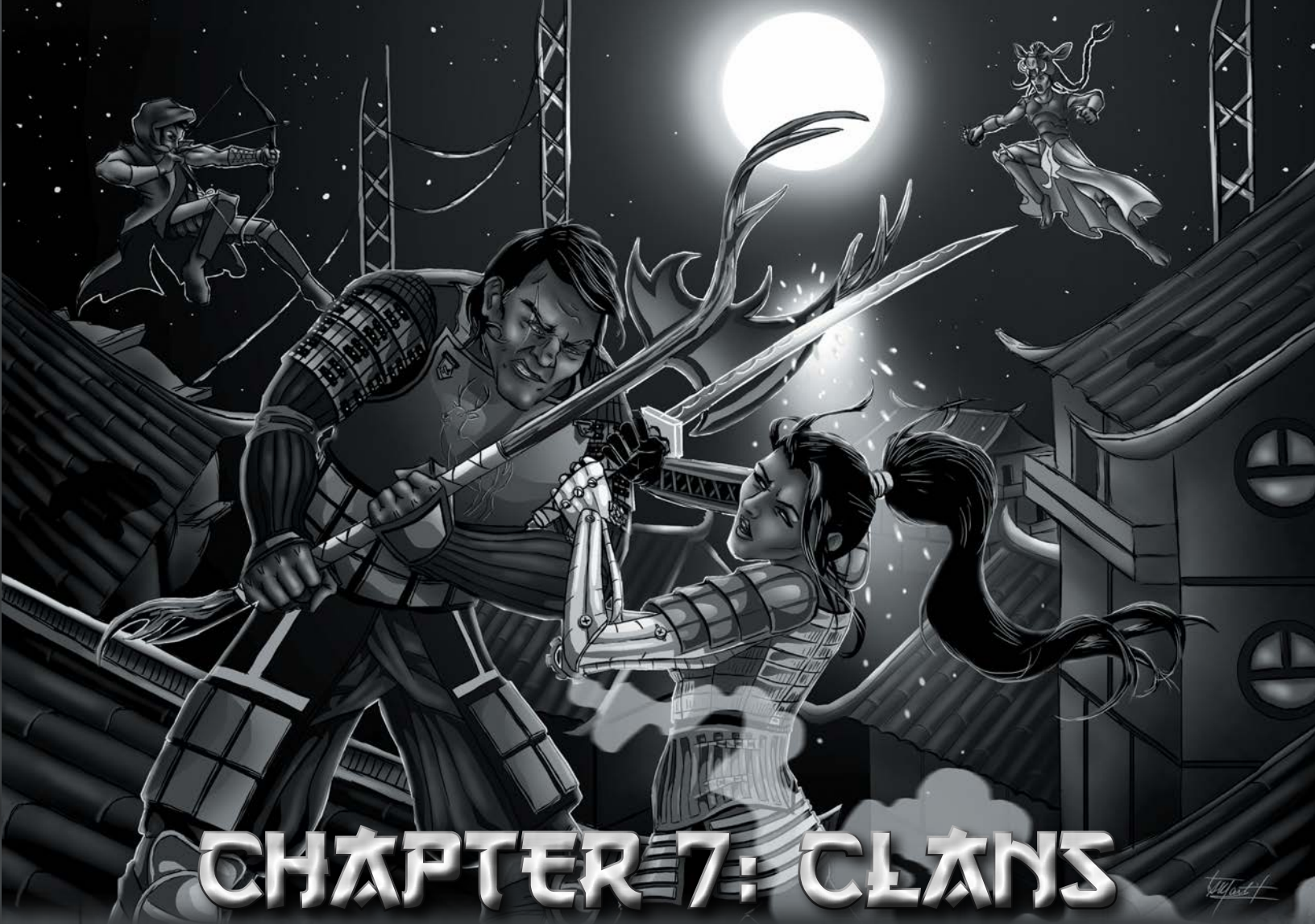
The Blood Butcher hopped up and laughed as Koshi completely lost his footing, nearly falling from the rooftop four stories above and catching onto the edge at the last possible second. Dantōjutsu only had a moment to reflect on how much she yearned to see the highborn Hakaisuru archer fall to an ignoble death, his delicate fingers filled with splinters from digging into the wood—but Uchikudaku's assault continued leaving her nothing to do but dodge, parry, and respond with ripostes in a flurry of metal. The titan's strength was quickly proving too great and as they locked blades, Dantōjutsu's metal arm popped and hissed with stress.

Just as all seemed lost, a powerful authoritative voice rung out over the alleyway, "***STOP!***" The speaker's tone carried so much weight it seemed to have a gravity all its own, demanding even Foshuku to take notice as a regally dressed woman stepped from out of the darkness. "By the decree of Emperor Hitoshi Masuto, I demand you all stand down now."

Everyone gave pause save for Koshi, who took the opportunity to swing down to a nearby balcony before hopping to crouch opposite the newcomer. "Who," he asked brazenly, his mempo drawn up to almost hide his sneer, "dares to command a retainer of the Hakaisuru?"

"Saiminutsu Kakemasu," the woman said, her face as impassive as stone. "Bengoshi of the Imperial Dynasty of Masuto."

Damnit, Dantōjutsu thought, *wrong again*.



CHAPTER 7: CLANS

Millennia ago the Imperial Siblings established order in Soburin, founding and ruling over the prefectures until their deaths. Over the next twenty centuries their offspring fought for prestige and territory in the Ichizoku Wars until Sohei Masuto established the Masuto Dynasty, beginning an age of imperial rule that granted peace to the realms for more than a thousand years. Yet her descendant Emperor Hitoshi Masuto is as far removed from being an ideal ruler as Soburin is from the prosperity of its past. The authority of a clan inside its borders is absolute and for better or worse they each carve dangerous paths into the future.

The shocking reappearance of Miyaki and a true Imperial Sibling have failed to shake the adroite leaders of the prefectures from their perches of power, the Mists of Akuma drawing the people ever further under their sway, and the current heads of the clans are cruel, spiteful, and concerned only with their own well-being. They vie for resources dwindled by the Kengen Occupation and are paranoid of oni assaults, the guns of the rogue foreign generals, or the blades of ancestral nemeses. Settlements wall themselves in both socially and physically, forts are manned with full companies of soldiers, and the last reliable blessings of nature—aquifers, one of the few resources not ruined by the invaders—are prepared for sieges in the event of a disastrous retreat.

To resist the Mists of Akuma the prefectures rely on different defenses, sometimes even utilizing the heretical sciences—while every clan has warriors and mages only a handful risk Emperor Hitoshi's wrath and embrace technology. An enmity exists between them all and tension grows with every passing season over the inevitable conflict brewing; magical prefectures distrust their martial counterparts because their fighters become terrors when consumed by the corrupting fog; martial prefectures fear that the weakened spirits of nature mean that their magical peers rely on a force that cannot be depended upon; scientific prefectures despise both and are equally hated, convinced that the other clans are holding Soburin back from the only thing that can save it.

DONYUKO

Donyuko's residents have always strived for self-perfection. This focus on improvement directed the prefecture during the ancient Ichizoku Wars, pushing the people to join in the fighting not for the sake of stopping the conflict but to challenge themselves in the fires of battle. When the Masuto Dynasty ended the hostilities between clans those who had used combat as a proving grounds for their skill searched for a new means of improving their own bodies, ultimately turning to the arcane arts.

The invaders found this tradition for improvement was a perfect foundation for developing soldiers to win the War of Kaiyo. Their experiments pushed the spells of Donyuko to new heights of power and though some test subjects exhibited immense strength, sharp reflexes, and nigh indestructible bodies, others were not so lucky. Many subjects were disfigured or deformed, their mutations passed on through generations, and though for most it was a minimal change (such as a misshapen body part or strangely colored skin) others grew extra limbs, beastly claws, or fangs. The ceramians were quick to try to control these newly changed people, promoting the ideal of self-perfection and equating the cursed with monsters—forcing a rift between them and the rest of the untainted citizens that lasted until Emperor Hitoshi's eventual decree of equal rights between the ordinary and the Enhanced.

As the War of Kaiyo raged on the ceramians searched for alternate avenues to continue the improvement of their soldiers, and sorting the various hengeyokai eventually saw the saru brought to Donyuko. The mystical primates were initially considered for conscription but since the experiments had been focused on humans for so long, the saru proved immune. They were released, allowed to live their lives in **Henkan**, and ignored by the invaders in the pursuit for better soldiers.

Today the Enhanced are integrated into everyday life as any other resident—on the surface many of them appear to be ordinary, but one never knows if someone in Donyuko possesses extraordinary abilities (except perhaps for those with an appearance that some would consider monstrous.) Most seek to continue their lives in normalcy making an awkwardness felt by all as ordinary citi--zens exhibit tremendous fear of being replaced by Enhanced, spurring the smuggling of technology to even the playing field. The monkey hengeyokai go largely unnoticed; in the eyes of ordinary people the saru are their kin, untouched by the cruel experiments of the ceramians. The mystical primates sometimes even rally with the causes that attempt to put an end to the Enhanced, falling prey to the same hatred as their human cousins.

ENHANCED TEMPLATE (ADD 1 DIFFICULTY STEP)

Enhanced Attributes Choose two attributes. The Enhanced increases each of these attributes by 2.
Senses The Enhanced gains darksight.
Damage Resistance The Enhanced takes half damage from weapon damage and one type of energy damage.
Magical Attacks The Enhanced gains 1 boon to its attack rolls and a +1 bonus to its damage rolls.

When the Mists of Akuma reappeared in Donyuko it the Enhanced proved highly resistant or even immune to the corrupting fog. As a means to protect its population they shifted their homes, moving ordinary people inland and pushing the Enhanced to the shores, many settling in **Henkoshimasu**. For months they lived without any concern for the fel haze but recently most have lost whatever immunity they once possessed, spurring them to panic.

Lady Hotei Donyuko (herself an Enhanced) holds an unfortunate position—with any attempt to gain further acceptance she is called out as holding favor for her kind, and when she refrains from doing so she is criticized by the Enhanced as unwilling to aid her people. At this time the only cause her subjects can unanimously rally behind is finding some way to deal with the Mists of Akuma, but the fighting between the two groups prevents much work from getting done in that regard.

The people of Donyuko are fiercely dedicated to their individual causes. The spirit of self-perfection continues to live on (Enhanced or otherwise) and this motivation to do better in one's lives leads to a significant selfishness in the prefecture's population. This indomitable spirit and passion for seeking challenge has inspired many to try to face the horrors of the Mists of Akuma themselves, begetting heroes—and corpses of the fallen—aplenty.

FORBIDDEN TECHNOLOGY

Electroheart augmetic, electrolens augmetic, energized pylon augmetic, hornear augmetic, plating augmetic

XENKA-JIN (Six Children of Xenkasuru) DIFFICULTY 50

Size 1 human (enhanced soburi)
Perception 14 (+4); darksight
Defense 14; **Health** 45
Strength 14 (+4), **Agility** 14 (+4), **Intellect** 14 (+4), **Will** 14 (+4)
Speed 14; leap 4
Amazing The Xenka-Jin gains 1 boon on all challenge rolls and takes half damage from weapons.
Enhanced Focus Each Xenka-Jin has one of the following:

- **Chikara (Strength)** The Xenka-Jin gains 1 boon on Strength challenge rolls. Its Strength score increases by 2.
- **Dokusō-Tekina (Agility)** The Xenka-Jin gains 1 boon on Agility challenge rolls. Its Agility score increases by 2.
- **Kenpō (Will)** The Xenka-Jin gains 1 boon on Will challenge rolls. Its Will score increases by 2.
- **Kiyō-sa (Intellect)** The Xenka-Jin gains 1 boon on Intellect challenge rolls. Its Intellect score increases by 2.
- **Miryoku (Dignity)** The Xenka-Jin gains 1 boon on Dignity challenge rolls. Its Dignity score is 18.
- **Qi (Haitoku)** The Xenka-Jin 1 boon on Haitoku challenge rolls and is immune to the misted affliction. Its Haitoku score is 18.

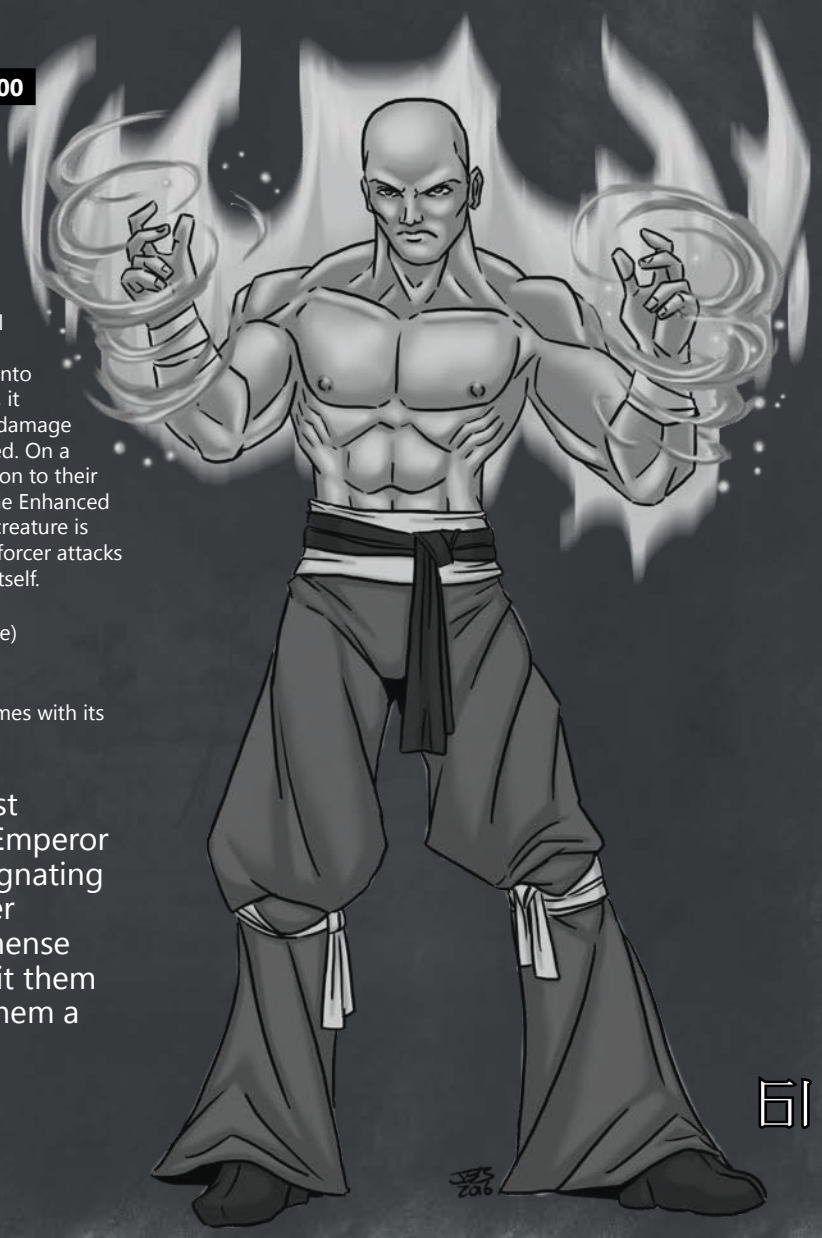
ATTACK OPTIONS
Unarmed Strike (melee) +4 with 1 boon (1d6+2 damage)
SPECIAL ATTACKS
Double Attack The Xenka-Jin attacks twice with its unarmed strike.

Unable to publicly support or decry the Enhanced of the prefecture without sparking turmoil, Lady Hotei Donyuko decided to support her kin in secrecy. To this end she enlisted the assistance of her best advisors and arcanists to create a group of heroes to enforce her will, six individuals each representing perfection of one facet of the body or mind—Chikara (Strength), Dokusō-Tekina (Agility), Kenpō (Will), Kiyō-sa (Intellect), Miryoku (Dignity), Qi (Haitoku). Together they took on the name of **Xenkasuru** and travel Donyuko, teaching about acceptance of the Enhanced.

DONYUKO BENGOSHI

ENHANCED ENFORCER DIFFICULTY 100

Size 1 human (soburi)
Perception 16 (+6); darksight
Defense 17; **Health** 90
Strength 16 (+6), **Agility** 17 (+7), **Intellect** 16 (+6), **Will** 17 (+7)
Speed 14; leap 6
Immune damage from poison; charmed, compelled, frightened, poisoned
Exceptional The Enhanced Enforcer gains 2 boons on all challenge rolls and takes half damage from weapons.
Taiyo-Ken As an action, the Enhanced Enforcer can tap into a well of inner power for 1 minute. While powered up, it gains 1 boon on attack rolls and deals an extra +1d6 damage with attacks. Roll 1d20 whenever this ability is activated. On a roll of 1, the Enhanced Enforcer goes berserk in addition to their normal bonuses. On each of its turns while berserk, the Enhanced Enforcer attacks the nearest creature it can see. If no creature is near enough to move to and attack, the Enhanced Enforcer attacks an object, with preference for an object smaller than itself.
ATTACK OPTIONS
Unarmed Strike (melee) +6 with 1 boon (1d6+2 damage)
Kamehameha (short range) +7 (2d6+2 holy damage)
SPECIAL ATTACKS
Multiple Attack The Enhanced Enforcer attacks three times with its unarmed strike or twice with its kamehameha.



Lady Hotei Donyuko gathered the most powerful among the Enhanced when Emperor Hitoshi established the bengoshi, designating these exceptional servants to act as her functionaries. They are capable of immense feats of strength and agility that permit them to chase criminals for hours, earning them a reputation as cold, relentless hunters.

FUKUSHU

The Fukushu Clan have always been extremely direct with nobility answering threats against them or their prefecture with deft samurai astride powerful tigers. Lord Hasuji Fukushu himself led the Tora-Kyabaria into battle alongside his deadliest samurai retainers when the ceramians invaded and though they struck fear into the hearts of their foreign enemies, it was not long before superior technology laid waste to their forces and left the clan's leader dead on the battlefield. Ignorant to the cultural practices of Soburin the military commanders of the Kengen Occupation chose Fukushu as the site for neko to resettle—and they could not have chosen more ill-suited bedfellows.

Cat hengeyokai bristled at how the humans brazenly used majestic tigers as mounts—scornful of the treatment of their distant kin—and the growing unrest spurred the widow Lady Fujiko Fukushu to order for heightened security measures which were only met with more resentment. This ultimately led to the historic Hanran Shippai massacre, where a resurgence of rebellious neko were put down with overwhelming physical force and extreme prejudice. With her forces in ruins Fukushu's leader pivoted to embrace magic and quickly gathered the greatest evokers from across Soburin to share the secrets of their craft in the prefecture, transforming the traditionally martial clan into an arcane powerhouse. Her attempts to quell the angry cat hengeyokai were at their very best only a partial success; neko are notoriously similar to the animals they so closely resemble (difficult to earn respect from, though persistent and proactive allies once won over) and they never truly accepted their subjugation.

Lord Jurojin has continued on in his mother's footsteps, keeping the crescent prefecture's many settlements staffed with powerful spellswords trained to use evocation magic (like *cone of cold* and *fireball*) to freeze, burn, and blow the Mists of Akuma away from his subjects. The Fukushu Court is filled with potent mages alongside veteran Tora-Kyabaria commanders, providing arcane knowledge and sound tactical advice for dealing with the other prefectures (in particular the sudden reappearance of Miyaki, a dangerous element to be so near).

Disciplined warriors astride their lethal mounts, Tora-Kyabaria are the premier soldiers of Lord Jurojin's military and revered by both noble and commoner alike. Aspirants travel to the island village of **Hinotama** to learn the practices of the sacred warrior order, capturing their tiger ally in the wild jungles there or proving unworthy in death. Afterward each is given a territory to range across and tends to the settlements within as well as they are able.

The wounds of the Kengen Occupation have not yet scarred over and the older neko of Fukushu still vividly remember the the Hanran Shippai massacre. Their tolerance for the vaunted tiger-riders has reached a seeming calm, but beneath the surface a reckoning stirs. Many of the cat hengeyokai who chose to remain in the prefecture do so only to lay in wait near either **Hakyoku** or **Inazuma**, preparing to strike revenge in the name of their ancestors and bring the traditions of the Tora-Kyabaria warriors to an ignoble end. Though fickle and capricious, the neko are as wily as their former subjugators and they've become even more dangerous after the end of the foreign threat. Lately they have taken to luring the prized defenders of Fukushu out into the wilderness before slaughtering the rider, though never the tigers—almost all of which choose to return to the jungles of their own free will.

Bound as they are to various ancient loyalties—made in sacred oaths that date back to the Ichizoku Wars—the clan is surprisingly cunning and despite their ironclad allegiances remain difficult to predict. Most nobility lives in **Kanaki** alongside Lord Jurojin and truly potent evokers, never leaving after Lady Fujiko consolidated her family in the region's capital. The specific cultural practices and habits of the prefecture lead its populace to be chaotic, unpredictable, and in the current struggle for survival usually self-serving—furthering their own goals or those of their family (usually either the former or both, but rarely only the latter). Despite all that fukushi are loyal when bound by an oath, making them surprisingly potent allies.

FORBIDDEN TECHNOLOGY

Firearms, dainamo omiryō, fan no te, hornear augmetic, plating augmetic, shindan yokutan, steam arm augmetic, steam leg augmetic, sword arm augmetic, telescopic arm augmetic, telescopic leg augmetic, venom spitter

TORA-KYABARIA HUNTER — DIFFICULTY 50

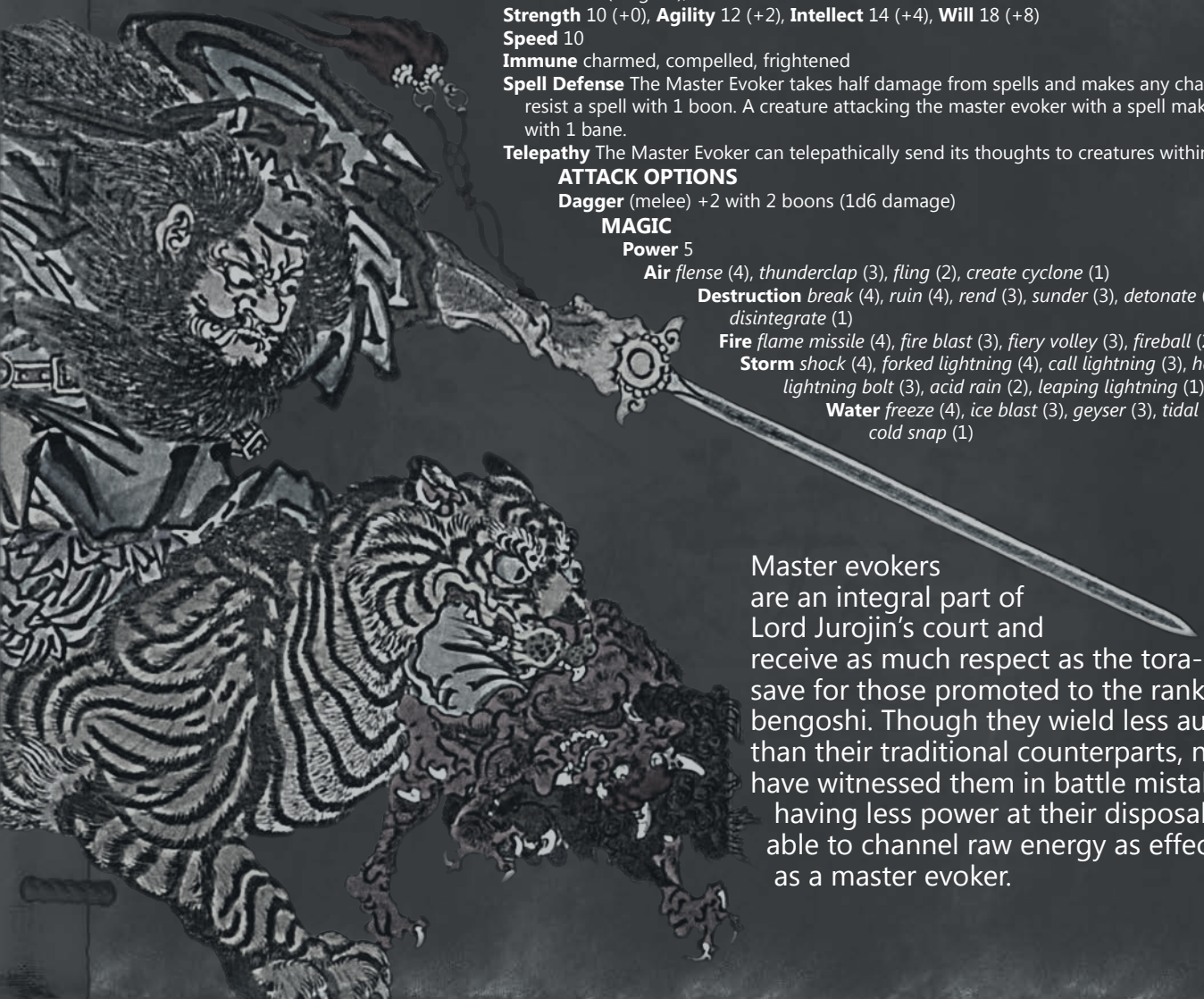
Size 1 soburi
Perception 12 (+2)
Defense 15 (hard leather); **Health** 45
Strength 12 (+2), **Agility** 14 (+4), **Intellect** 13 (+3), **Will** 12 (+2)
Speed 10; 12 if mounted
Immune frightened
Tiger Rider Tora-Kyabaria Hunters are always accompanied by a tiger (a size 2 **Great Cat**) magically charmed to follow their commands.
ATTACK OPTIONS
Tora Sword (melee) +4 with 1 boon (1d6+3 damage)
SPECIAL ATTACKS
Spell Fighting The Tora-Kyabaria Hunter attacks with its Tora Sword and casts a spell that normally requires the use of an action to cast.
MAGIC
Power 3
Air *flense* (3), *thunderclap* (2)
Fire *flame missile* (3), *fire blast* (2), *fiery volley* (1)
Storm *shock* (3), *forked lightning* (2), *call lightning* (1)
Water *freeze* (3), *ice blast* (2), *geyser* (1)

Though once simple masters of the martial arts, today these men and women are trained in evocation magic to complement their dangerous feline companion and prowess with a blade. Within the confines of the Fukushu Prefecture they act with nearly the same authority granted to bengoshi, hunting down the clan's enemies and any criminals that become infamous enough to disrupt the peace (a term that is frequently used quite loosely).

FUKUSHU BENGOSHI

MASTER EVOKER — DIFFICULTY 100

Size 1 human (soburi)
Perception 14 (+4); sightless (medium range)
Defense 17 (magical); **Health** 70
Strength 10 (+0), **Agility** 12 (+2), **Intellect** 14 (+4), **Will** 18 (+8)
Speed 10
Immune charmed, compelled, frightened
Spell Defense The Master Evoker takes half damage from spells and makes any challenge roll to resist a spell with 1 boon. A creature attacking the master evoker with a spell makes the attack roll with 1 bane.
Telepathy The Master Evoker can telepathically send its thoughts to creatures within medium range.
ATTACK OPTIONS
Dagger (melee) +2 with 2 boons (1d6 damage)
MAGIC
Power 5
Air *flense* (4), *thunderclap* (3), *fling* (2), *create cyclone* (1)
Destruction *break* (4), *ruin* (4), *rend* (3), *sunder* (3), *detonate* (2), *destroy* (2), *disintegrate* (1)
Fire *flame missile* (4), *fire blast* (3), *fiery volley* (3), *fireball* (2), *immolate* (1)
Storm *shock* (4), *forked lightning* (4), *call lightning* (3), *hail storm* (3), *lightning bolt* (3), *acid rain* (2), *leaping lightning* (1)
Water *freeze* (4), *ice blast* (3), *geyser* (3), *tidal forces* (2), *cold snap* (1)



Master evokers are an integral part of Lord Jurojin's court and receive as much respect as the tora-kyabaria, save for those promoted to the rank of bengoshi. Though they wield less authority than their traditional counterparts, none who have witnessed them in battle mistake them as having less power at their disposal—few are able to channel raw energy as effectively as a master evoker.

FUSON

Many feel that alchemy is magic, poison is immoral, and that substances capable of producing extraordinary effects without arcane or divine power are no different than foreigner science. Those of Fuson disagree and even before the Kengen Occupation had been distilling every plant and animal product they could discover or invent. It is often said in Fuson that there is no such thing as a poison, only a poisonous dose.

Lord Yakushi Fuson and his ancestors have always tried to stay pragmatic regarding the use of their work. His grandfather Lord Gabiru Fuson made a path to stay neutral in Hitoshi's Rebellion so as to better provide healing tinctures to both sides and ease the suffering of war as much as possible—and for the profit of their clan. While this pact was one of neutrality most of Soburin still resents Fuson for what they see as a "foreign alliance" and suspect some longer-term foul play. The only written copy of the original oath is sealed away deep in the Fuson Mansion vaults in Xanzogaku, far from prying eyes. To this day the prefecture's scientists produce poisons and healing items in equal proportion, selling them at a fair price to any takers (soburi or otherwise).

The most infamous of these scientists are the Brotherhood of Dokusatsu-Sha. Their enormous greenhouse and laboratory perches just below Fuson Mansion, growing poisonous plants and raising venomous animals in great quantities that would be illegal anywhere else in Soburin. This eye-catching structure of glass and crystal allows anyone to come to watch the brothers work from a safe distance. Though they are called "brothers", the name is a misnomer—at all times they wear full-body protective gear and heavy face masks, revealing not so much as an inch of skin. It is assumed that they are both male and human from their builds, but as they never leave their greenhouse or even pass so much as a parcel in or out, nobody is quite certain of the truth or how their products make their way onto the streets.

Like the rest of the prefecture, **Xanzogaku** is thick with virulent wildlife and plants of all kinds (including hundreds of distinct species of scorpions). While for the most part the fauna are resilient against the effects of the Mists of Akuma, they are not immune; when the supernatural phenomenon appears in Fuson dozens of bakemono (goblins born from lesser creatures corrupted and killed by the fog) follow shortly thereafter to terrorize the land. At dawn the day after the fel haze rolls out—and annually during a festival called Yurei No Hi—villagers tear through the city to root out the freakish monsters hiding within. It is rumored that the practice is a perfect cover for a guild of assassins lurking in the shadows, though none living claim it with any certainty.

While the people of Fuson are considered uncivilized or even evil by many who refuse to honor their use of poison, they are collectively a very peaceful people. Their interests are generally scholarly and they see the insects and plants under their care as an integral part of the community; to cut down a plant or animal in the street is seen no differently as an attack against a person with the same ferocity. All living things (except for oni) are considered deserving of respect and it is not uncommon to see children replanting weeds from in between paving stones rather than simply plucking them.

The capital Xanzogaku is the final large city before reaching Sanbaoshi along the Imperial Road. Surrounded by mountains and high above sea level, much of Fuson's territory is immune to all but the most severe bouts of the Mists of Akuma. When the corrupting fogs roll in thickly enough, people simply retreat higher still into towers common in towns and cities throughout the region. West of Xanzogaku is **Detchtagi**, a small port vastly overshadowed by Sanbaoshi to its north. So close to the capital, it is a haven for those who wish to avoid their wares being too closely observed in the imperial port—especially because in Fuson, poison and narcotics are counted and tallied no differently than grain. Hidden from the eye of these "clever" smugglers is that the security within Detchtagi is more thorough than its northern cousin: Fuson's herbal masters magically scan every good that passes through the port to ensure they are what they appear to be, free of disease or deception.

FORBIDDEN TECHNOLOGY

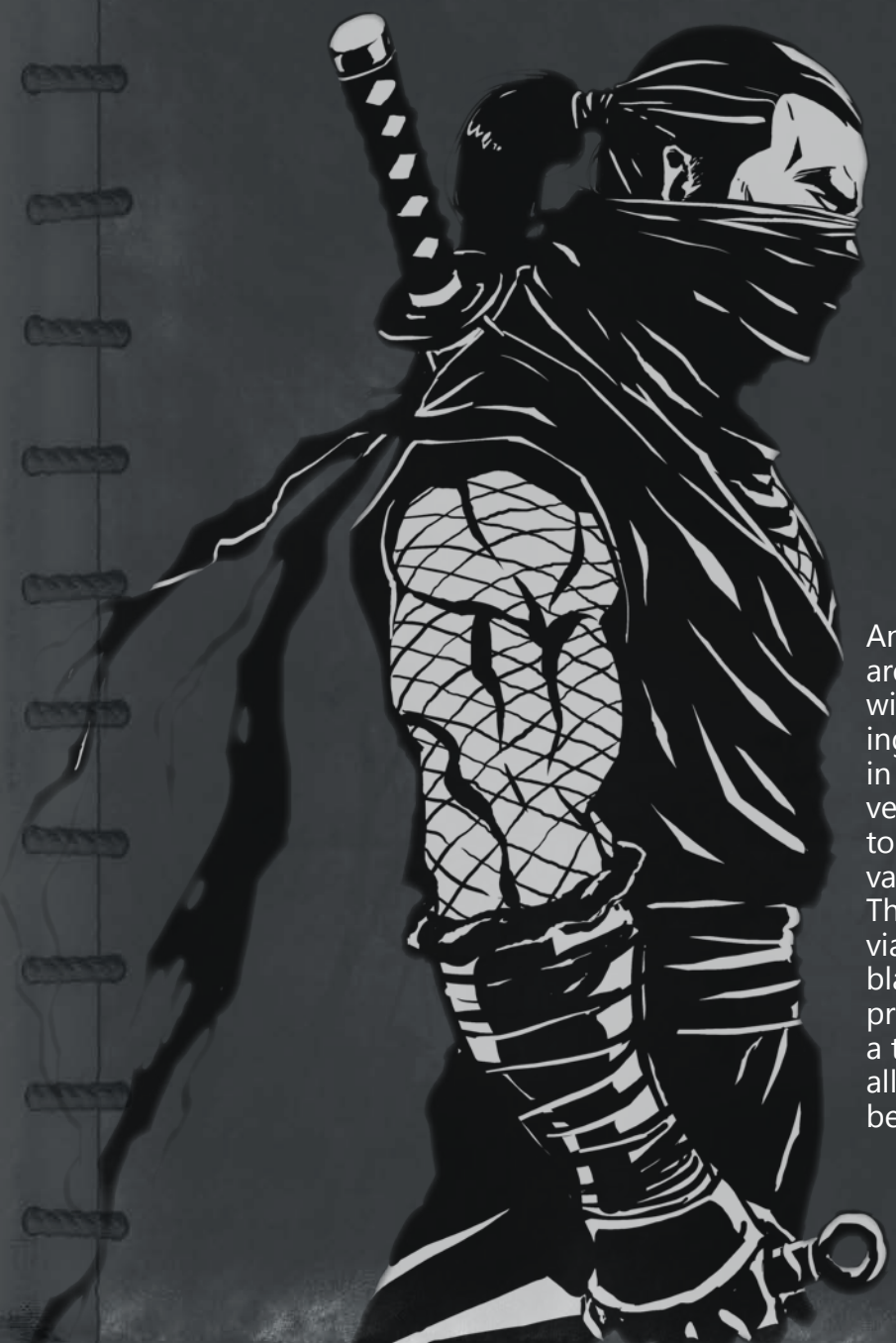
While it is legal and almost expected to trade poison in Fuson, gunpowder and firearms of all kinds are considered wasteful and disrespectful.

SCORPION WARRIOR — DIFFICULTY 50

Size 1 human (soburi)
Perception 12 (+2)
Defense 15; **Health** 50
Strength 12 (+2), **Agility** 15 (+5), **Intellect** 10 (+0), **Will** 12 (+2)
Speed 12; leap 3
Immune damage from poison; poisoned
Counter Throw When a creature would knock the Scorpion Warrior prone, the Scorpion Warrior can spend its triggered action to knock its opponent prone instead.
Sneaky The Scorpion Warrior gains 1 boon on Stealth challenge rolls.

ATTACK OPTIONS
Wakizashi (melee) +5 with 1 boon (1d6+2 damage plus 1d6 poison damage)
Kunai (medium range) +5 with 1 boon (1d6 damage plus 1d6 poison damage)

SPECIAL ATTACKS
Multiattack The Scorpion Warrior attacks twice with its wakizashi or three times with its kunai.
Poisoned Blades Constantly adding small catalysts and reagents to its sheathes, the weapons used by the Scorpion Warrior always have a basic poison on them (that deals 1d6 poison damage with no save).
Scorpion Strikes By spending its triggered action a Scorpion Warrior can apply a special poison to its weapon(s). Next round, any time the scorpion warrior's attacks deal damage, the target must make a Strength challenge roll with 1 bane or gain the poisoned affliction for 1 minute.



Though they spread rumors that they are hengeyokai themselves, the scorpion warriors of Fuson are simply monks who regularly ingest small doses of poison so as to build up immunities to the most powerful weapon the prefecture has at its command. Of the various minions among the bengoshi of Soburin these are some of the most fractious, each of its members belonging to one or another clan with its own allegiances beyond Lord Yakushi Fuson's interests, regularly taking action against their peers with assassinations and sneak attacks (knowing full well that being caught means death either way).

FUSON BENGOSHI

HERBAL MASTER — DIFFICULTY 100

Size 1 human (soburi)
Perception 16 (+6)
Defense 14; **Health** 90
Strength 10 (+0), **Agility** 14 (+4), **Intellect** 16 (+6), **Will** 13 (+3)
Speed 10
Immune damage from poison; charmed, compelled, frightened, poisoned
Unassuming Observer Charmed and compelled creatures cannot target the Herbal Master with their attacks. The Herbal Master can attempt to hide even when being observed.

ATTACK OPTIONS
Subtle Blade (melee) +4 with 2 boons (1d6 damage plus 3d6 poison damage and Virulent Blade)

SPECIAL ATTACKS
Virulent Blade A creature damaged by the Herbal Master's subtle blade must make a Strength challenge roll with 2 bane or gains the poisoned affliction until the poisoned damage they have taken is healed. If the creature is already poisoned, it takes an extra 1d6 poison damage instead.

Analytical scientists, these bengoshi are always looking for courageous souls willing to brave the wilderness and collect ingredients for some of the potions that are in higher demand, or even live specimens of venomous creatures. Some even go so far as to hire brave souls explicitly to ingest new or variant chemicals of a wide variety of toxicity. Their most potent poisons they carry not in vials, but inside the sheathes of their subtle blades. These long, thin, and carefully prepared weapons are almost hollow, but for a thin cotton rope weaved through the steel, allowing it to store poison for a dozen blows before needing to be replaced.

GEKIDO

After initial skirmishes the ceramians found the diehard bravery of the Gekido Clan's warriors to be daunting in the best of conditions and terrifying in closed ranks. With a nearly maddened zeal their soldiers charged enemy lines and fortifications without fear of death, rapidly gaining back ground wherever the foreigners made incursions into their borders. The invaders response was nearly as brutal and swift as Gekido blades; entire battalions of technology-laden infantry marched over the plains, blotting out the fields of crops as far as the eye could see. There was no defense against such an overwhelming force and the soburi were forced into surrender—though some say they never truly accepted the defeat.

As the first of the clans from the Battle of Broken Spears to fall to the gaijin, Gekido suffered immediate ridicule and spite; already bristling with rage for their nemeses, the clan's lords devised a means to strike revenge both on their rivals and the invading foreigners. Throughout the Kengen Occupation they sent their warriors on suicidal missions against ceramian institutions and encampments along the borders of their prefecture, always disguised as ancestral adversaries—so much chaos was sewn throughout Gekido that martial law reigned, making conscription of forces or subjugation of an inhuman race an impossibility and enabling a strong network of insurrectionists to gather for Hitoshi's Rebellion.

Gekido's answer to the Mists of Akuma is just as lacking in respect for life. Clan lords make large traditional fans widely available to all their subjects at no cost, but citizens are made to surround nobles when the corrupting fog appears to push it away with wind. The most corrupted individuals are forced to the outside of these groups and slaughtered as soon as any signs of transformation are seen. Despite the bloodshed that follows them, merchants in need of merciless bodyguards travel to Reikokuna or Mujibina to hire foolhardy fortune seekers willing to cut down commoners for good coin before setting north on the Path of the Siblings.

The Mantis Reavers are perhaps the only defenders of the prefecture genuinely concerned with the welfare of the people. Truly lethal combatants bestowed by Lady Qinguang with the right to don armor and wield weapons of advanced science, a place in this order of warriors is earned by besting a renowned fighter from each of the rival clans (Hakaisuru, Kirai, and Namida). Even proximity to a Mantis Reaver cannot guarantee safety from slaughter however as the samurai among them grow more and more ruthless—some, rumors claim, even throwing off their oaths. These disgruntled soldiers have lost confidence in the clan's leadership and are plotting a massive assault on the chief Gekido estate in Chishi in coop with Lord Monami (a more direct descendant of the beloved hero General Komuku Gekido). As **Kizaki** (page 229) grows more and more industrial (exploiting its place on the Path of the Siblings and cornering inland trade of technology) the dissent between the Mantis Reavers grows ever greater.

When journeying it is wise to be wary of a traveler from Gekido; the clan's suicidal and heartless tactics have rubbed off on their subjects, making them dangerously single-minded and devoted to achieving their goals no matter the cost. Though utterly ruthless there is a tendency of humility among soburi from the prefecture, likely bred from a willingness to sacrifice themselves and a tendency toward strong discipline.

BATTLE OF BROKEN SPEARS

A centuries-old rivalry has persisted within the four territories sitting directly north of the Imperial Prefecture, shaping their culture and politics for generations. After the Ichizoku Wars they continued to fight over borders before the violence culminated in a fierce battle that ended in a stalemate between the four forces and a warning from the continent's capital that if war was to be made, a grand host would march to join them. The generals of each side agreed to an honor combat and—all masters of the spear and evenly matched—their melee lasted for hours until nearly as one they fell to the ground dead of exhaustion. None of the newly empowered commanders would admit to defeat and all four prefectures' forces nearly slaughtered one another before battalions from Sanbaoshi arrived to enforce order. Since then Gekido, Hakaisuru, Kirai, and Namida have all adopted new weapons and still disagree over who lost, making squabbles between their people a common occurrence.

FORBIDDEN TECHNOLOGY

Firearms, uso flyer, dainamo omiryō, denki shīrudo, electroheart augmetic, energized pylon augmetic, ketsueki shokubai, shindan yokutan, venom spitter

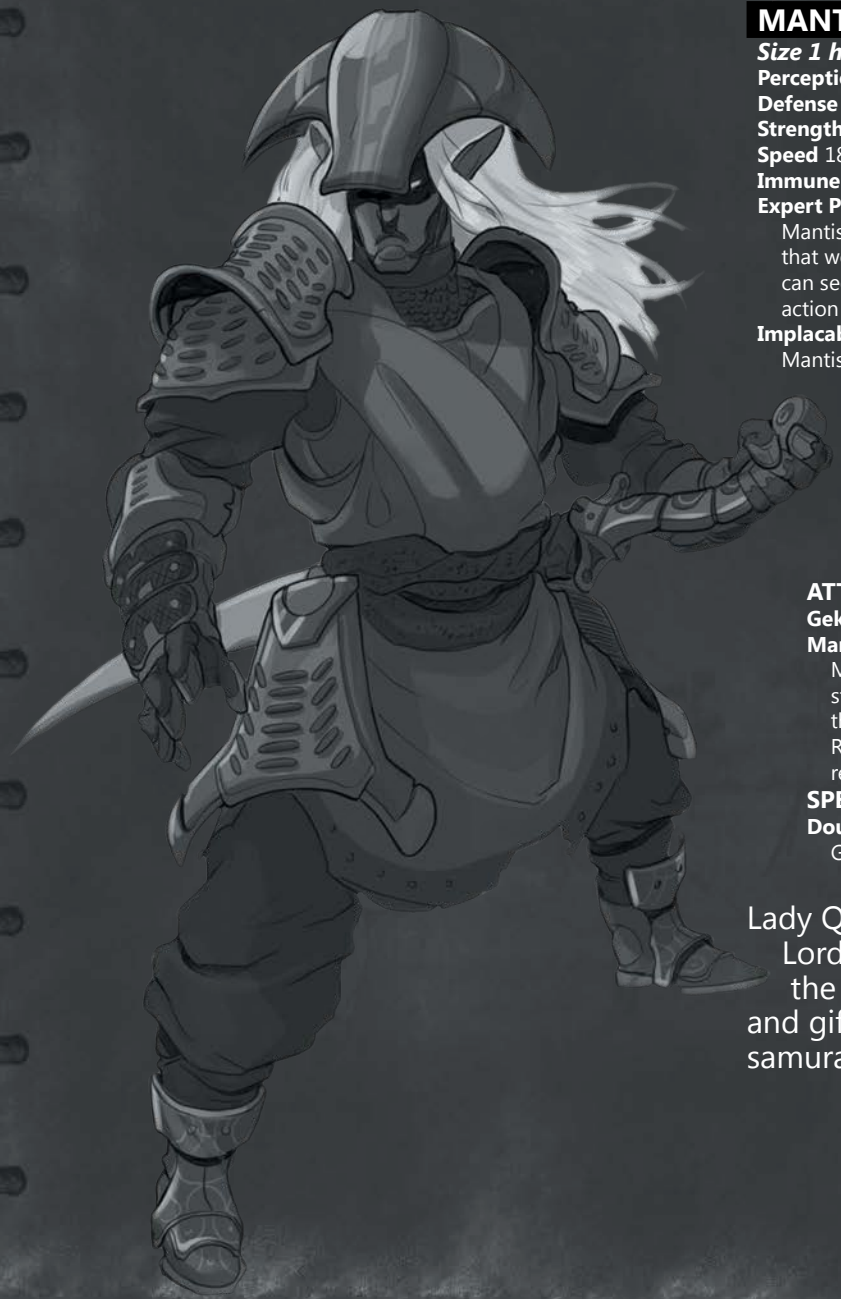
MANTIS REAVER — DIFFICULTY 50

Size 1 human (soburi)
Perception 14 (+4)
Defense 15 (soft leather); **Health** 45
Strength 16 (+6), **Agility** 14 (+4), **Intellect** 12 (+2), **Will** 14 (+4)
Speed 14; leap 2
Expert Parry When the Mantis Reaver would be hit by a melee attack, it may spend its triggered action to add 5 to its defense against that attack. To do so, the Mantis Reaver must be wielding a melee weapon and see the attacker.

ATTACK OPTIONS
Gekido-Katana (melee) +6 with 1 boon (2d6+2 damage)
Hirikiri Strike The Mantis Reaver may make a melee attack against an adjacent creature and deals an additional 4d6 damage, but whether or not the attack hits it takes an amount of damage equal to half the damage it deals (or would deal) with that attack.

SPECIAL ATTACKS
Multiattack The Mantis Reaver makes a hiriki strike or two Gekido-katana attacks.

Defeating rivals from the other three prefectures of the Battle of Broken Spears requires a warrior to be courageous, strong, cunning, and ruthless—all traits emblematic of the Mantis Reavers. Equipped with armaments and swords forged before the War of Kaiyo's end by smiths from across the Great Divide, these fierce samurai wander Gekido and beyond at the behest of their patrons taking on whatever tasks they are assigned without regard for their own welfare.



GEKIDO BENGOSHI

MANTIS RAPTOR — DIFFICULTY 100

Size 1 human (soburi)
Perception 14 (+4); darksight
Defense 18 (haramaki); **Health** 85
Strength 16 (+6), **Agility** 17 (+7), **Intellect** 14 (+4), **Will** 16 (+6)
Speed 18; leap 6
Immune charmed, compelled, frightened
Expert Parry Once per round without spending an action the Mantis Raptor adds 5 to its defense against the next melee attack that would hit it as long as it is wielding a melee weapon and can see the attacker. The Mantis Raptor may spend its triggered action to do so twice in 1 round.
Implacable Resolve Once per turn when making a challenge roll the Mantis Raptor rolls twice and takes the best result.
Parry Arrow When a ranged weapon attack would hit the Mantis Raptor or pass within its reach, it may spend its triggered action to reduce the attack's damage by 3d6+2.
Swordmaster When an enemy would provoke an opportunity attack, the Mantis Raptor may spend its triggered action to move up to 15 yards, ending its movement adjacent to that enemy.

ATTACK OPTIONS
Gekido-katana (melee) +7 with 1 boon (2d6+2)
Mantis Strike Once per turn before making its attack roll, the Mantis Raptor may choose to make an attack into a mantis strike. If the attack hits, it deals an extra 2d6 damage. When this attack renders a creature unconscious, the Mantis Raptor makes one additional attack at a creature within reach.

SPECIAL ATTACKS
Double Attack The Mantis Raptor attacks twice with its Gekido-katana.

Lady Qinguang keeps a secret alliance with Lord Dainichi Supai, taking the very best of the Mantis Reavers to become bengoshi and gifting them with augmetics that make the samurai even faster, stronger, and deadlier.

HAKAISURU

There is great enmity between the four clans of the Battle of Broken Spears but no other clan that still adheres to tradition is as hated as the Hakaisuru. For centuries they have consistently raised the finest marksmen Soburin has had to offer, revolutionizing archery and using it to terrifying effect on the battlefield. When ceramian warships landed in the Battle of Gyakusatsu, it was hawk archers piercing the metal hulls that eventually managed to down several airships by targeting pilots. Though they did not have to subjugate any other race during the Kengen Occupation, the region's tradition of marksmanship led to more of their peoples being drafted into the distant War of Kaiyo than any other; as a result no prefecture bears more ill will for foreigners and every boy and girl is trained in the use of a bow regardless of station or vocation. Folk native to this prefecture are aloof but quick to act, precise in their words and deeds, and very severe in demeanor. In the eyes of many Hakaisuru sensei, there is no trying—one either does or they do not.

Known for their long-range assassins since the very start of the Ichizoku Wars, some tales claim that General Bishamon Hakaisuru killed men from as far away as half a mile before the Battle of Broken Spears ended his life long ago. Despite their deep hatred for Ceramia and the heretical sciences there is a begrudging acceptance that sometimes a firearm is superior to a bow, so many of the prefecture's warriors train in the use of both. Hunting has long since been a popular pastime but the forests (depleted by the Kengen Occupation) now have little game, leaving only the most talented (usually falconers) the opportunity to succeed.

All over the prefecture are tall, sturdy wooden pillars with platforms (each large enough for two men to stand astride) set along the length starting about 25 feet up. These kyūseishu poles are notoriously difficult to climb up and most every person native to Hakaisuru carries a roped arrow specifically for clambering to safety when the Mists of Akuma appear. At the very top of some of these posts are enclosed boxes large enough for a person to comfortably sit inside of, used by Fudōsoge Snipers before or after they go on a mission (interfered with only by fools with a deathwish).

The Fudōsoge Snipers are an elite order of marksmen with rites they can trace across thousands of years, some say as far back as the first bow and arrow in Soburin. Only warriors that show truly fanatical devotion to the Hakaisuru Clan (nobles who maintain that this collection of assassins does not exist) have any hope of joining the honored squad of archers, and one's talents must be truly sublime to pass the trials required of all new entrants in the mountains above **Shageki**. When gifted their weapons—traditional bows infused and empowered by technology to fire arrows at limitless distances—a Fudōsoge Sniper loses part of their soul, the bit of essence many believe to be mercy. The weapons are still powerful in the hands of another warrior but lose potency and cannot be re-attuned to dispense a different energy than the last arrow it fired. Though their practices are shrouded in mystery a popular rumor in tea houses in the region claims that as their final test a Fudōsoge Sniper must pierce the eye of a diving hawk with an arrow while plummeting through the air themselves. Officially they may not exist but few doubt that they are servants of the prefecture's leaders.

While the truce between the four clan lords after the Battle of Broken Spears has held all but the most potent rivalries at bay for decades, a growing faction of Hakaisuru nobles in **Samon** desire the blood of their ancestral enemies at any cost now that the Kengen Occupation is behind them. Several squads of Fudōsoge Snipers have been brought into their fold and it is only a matter of time before they ignore Lady Chujiang's wishes and order the death of their nemeses in Gekido, Kirai, and Namida—an event certain to result in far wider bloodshed. There are rumors that already, dozens of Fudōsoge Snipers await in the skies above Hakaisuru's nemeses prepared to rain down death the instant that the call to strike goes out.

FORBIDDEN TECHNOLOGY

Uso flyer, dainamo omiryō, denki shīrudo, electro-heart augmetic, electrolens augmetic, energized pylon augmetic, fan no te, hornear augmetic, ketsueki shokubai, plauting augmetic, shindan yokutan, steam arm augmetic, steam leg augmetic, sword arm augmetic, telescopic arm augmetic, telescopic leg augmetic, venom spitter

FUDŌSOGE SNIPER — DIFFICULTY 50

Size 1 human (soburi)
Perception 16 (+6); shadowsight
Defense 17 (haramaki); **Health** 40
Strength 11 (+1), **Agility** 16 (+6), **Intellect** 12 (+2), **Will** 12 (+2)
Speed 10; flier 8 (light hikōsen and parachute)
Intuitive Dodge As long as it is aware of and can see the attack, a Fudōsoge Sniper can spend its triggered action to ignore one ranged weapon attack or one ranged spell targeting it.
Airborne Killer Fudōsoge Snipers travel with a small inflatable light hikōsen and parachute (page 215).

ATTACK OPTIONS
Unarmed Strike (melee]) +1 with 1 boon (1d6 damage)
Daikonran Bow (long range) +6 with 1 boon (1d6+2 damage plus 1d6 lightning, psychic, or wind damage)
Daikonran Wielder In the hands of a Fudōsoge Sniper, a daikonran bow has a range of sight. As a minor activity, the Fudōsoge Sniper can change the type of elemental damage the daikonran bow deals to lightning, psychic, or wind.

SPECIAL ATTACKS
Double Attack The Fudōsoge Sniper attacks twice with its daikonran bow.

Fudōsoge snipers are carried high into the sky on light hikōsen, using their survival training to stay in the air for days or even weeks waiting for the right moment to descend and unleash a hellish rain of arrows on their target. After assassinating their quarry, these incredibly patient marksmen drop out of sight on parachutes. When gifted their weapons—traditional bows infused and empowered by technology to fire arrows at limitless distances—a fudōsoge sniper loses part of their soul, the bit of essence many believe to be mercy. The weapons are still powerful in the hands of another warrior, but lose potency and cannot be re-attuned to dispense a different energy than the last arrow it fired.

HAKAISURU BENGOSHI

TALON OF THE HAWK — DIFFICULTY 100

Size 1 human (soburi)
Perception 18 (+8); shadowsight
Defense 18; **Health** 60
Strength 13 (+3), **Agility** 18 (+8), **Intellect** 14 (+4), **Will** 17 (+7)
Speed 14; leap 4
Immune charmed, compelled, frightened
Incredible Dodge By spending its triggered action, the Talon of the Hawk may ignore one attack or spell targeting it.

ATTACK OPTIONS
Talon Strike (melee) +3 with 2 boons (2d6+1 damage)
Daikonran Bow (long range) +8 (1d6+2 damage plus 1d6+1 lightning, psychic, or wind damage)
Daikonran Wielder In the hands of a Talon of the Hawk, a daikonran bow has a range of sight. As a minor activity, the Talon of the Hawk can change the type of elemental damage the daikonran bow deals to lightning, psychic, or wind.

SPECIAL ATTACKS
Double Attack The Talon of the Hawk attacks twice with its talon strike or daikonran bow.

The bengoshi of the Hakaisuru prefecture are all former fudōsoge snipers with impeccable records, their loyalty to Lady Chujiang thought to be impeachable. When their rank is raised to this new public office, the master martial artists of the clan teach a talon of the hawk truly vicious techniques that make them into even deadlier archers as well as truly lethal unarmed combatants.

HOFUKU

Though Hofuku were once the masters of the seas around Soburin, the superior technology of the foreign invaders took that away as electricity-powered ships unleashed hellish death from the massive firearms mounted along their decks. The Hofuku Clan lost countless vessels (both military and merchant) to the ceramian's gunboats—both in the Battle of Gyakusatsu and the century of oppression that followed—that some suspect the clan will never truly recover from.

For the centuries before the foreign oppression the people of Hofuku were well known for a reverence and deep respect for the umibo—so the ceramians corralled all the water folk they could and forced the prefecture to keep watchful eyes on their captives at all times. Whatever good will existed between them has worn thin across the decades, their strong relationship forever poisoned by the influence of the gaijin. To keep the slippery elementals under control they utilized powerful machines to generate psychic fences that gradually drained the primal race of psionic power in a dubious intentional design drafted after the traitorous Hofuku sage Hoji Kanyaki revealed the water folk's secrets to the oppressors (a fact the umibo vow never to forget).

Held back by a strong unwillingness to utilize vessels built using foreign technology and still crippled from the widespread destruction wrought by the ceramian navy, the prefecture's once thriving maritime economy is struggling to reassert itself. The world's decay has further slowed their reascension as the bounty of the sea dwindles with every passing year, and the Mists of Akuma have made all avenues of recovery all the more difficult. Citizens of Hofuku literally live and die by the staff—each person carries a stave and hardened polyester sheet, trained to submerge themselves in water when the corrupting fog rolls in and breathing from the air pocket dragged down with them. Worse yet a dreadful legend from ancient parables has reappeared: whales risen from the dead. Few settlements survive long after the first sighting of a bake-kujira (page 131) nearby and the prefecture's shores have gradually grown sparser as more seaside towns are abandoned or lost to unexpected attacks.

The gaijin disruption of Hofuku's culture has spurred the creation of the fast-growing Mizu-Girai cult, devoted to the destruction of the umibo. Their agents can be found discretely brewing and dumping poisons that target the water folk from as far northwest as the capital of **Kittiyona** and all along the Magassutaffu River. Lord Songdi Hofuku's youth has made him deaf to the fearful plights brought to him by the elementals' ambassadors, considering their hardships to be a fanciful explanation for pollution still leaking into the land from heretical technology left behind by the foreign invaders and not something done with malevolent intent. As the waterway becomes more toxic many umibo choose to return to the sea or to live in **Kyoi** under the shadow of the Waverider Temple, watching with scorn as other races train in the use of techniques once known only to them.

Waveriders were once exclusively umibo, true masters of the water and rumored to be able to become one with the very surf. During the Kengen Occupation the true Waverider disciples were hunted down by the ceramian navy and many disappeared—some into the custody of the foreign invaders and remanded to fell scientific laboratories, others drifting away into the waters around the continent to find common ground with the aquatic yai sovereigns. Today a new sect of Waveriders prevails but these are only soburi that have co-opted the secrets of the water warriors; though powerful, they are to their predecessors as a ripple is to a tsunami.

Lord Songdi Hofuku and the rest of his clan are balanced in their actions like the staffs they champion, as aggressive as they are defensive and moving from one trial to the next in a fluid manner that makes them extremely versatile opponents. They are unyielding and forceful when encountering an obstacle that cannot be avoided, doing whatever is required to overcome it. People from the prefecture are fairly similar to their rulers—fair, objective, reserved, well-rounded, and pragmatic—but carry suspicion for those unknown to them, ever wary of invaders since the ceramians carried Soburin down into chaos.

FORBIDDEN TECHNOLOGY

Dainamo omiryō, denki shīrudo, electroheart augmetic, energized pylon augmetic, ketsueki shokubai, venom spitter

WAVERIDER — DIFFICULTY 50

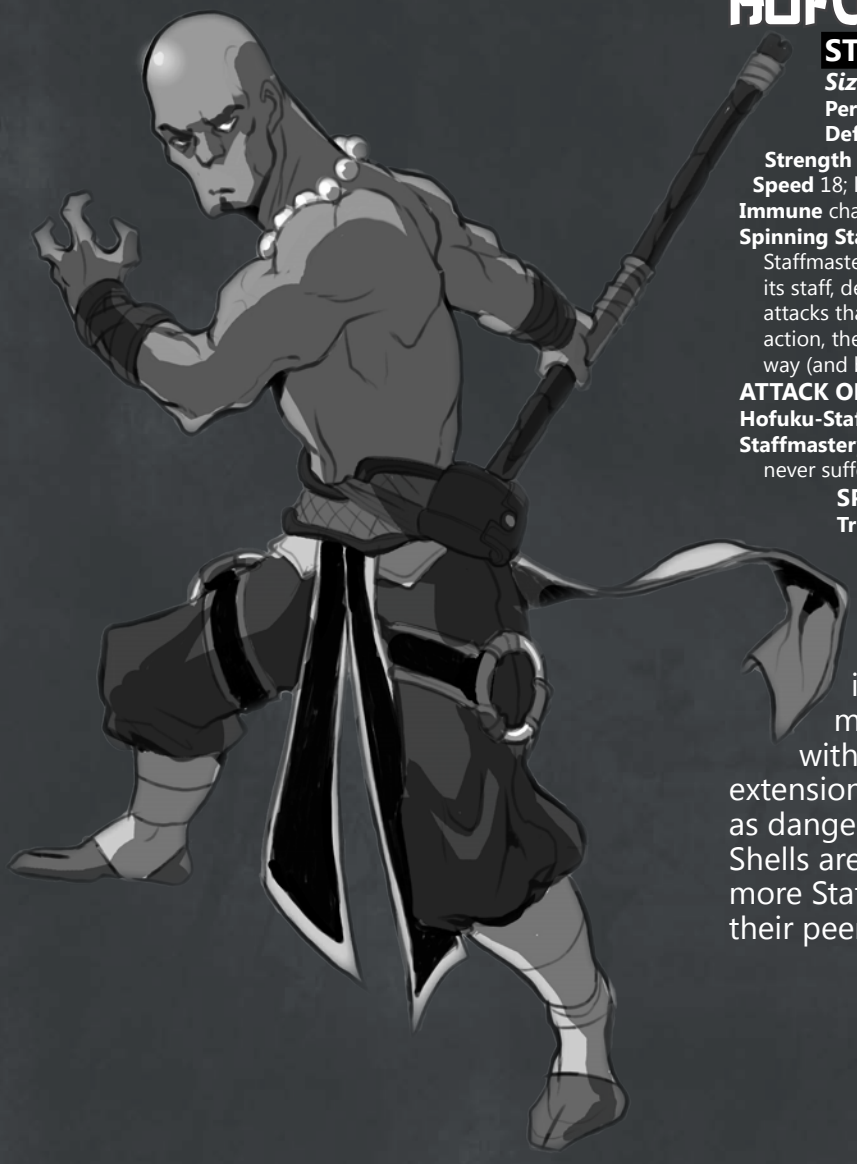
Size 1 human (soburi)
Perception 13 (+3)
Defense 15; **Health** 45
Strength 13 (+3), **Agility** 15 (+5), **Intellect** 11 (+1), **Will** 15 (+5)
Speed 10; swimmer 18
Immune prone
Aqueous Resistance The Waverider takes half damage from cold and fire.
Hold Breath The Waverider can hold its breath for 30 minutes.
Water Walking The Waverider may spend its concentration to walk on water as if it were solid ground.

ATTACK OPTIONS
Wavestrike (melee; reach 6-yard cone) +3 against each target (1d6 damage and the creature must succeed on a Strength challenge roll or be moved 1d6 yards away from the Waverider)
Waterstrike (medium range) +5 with 1 boon (2d6 damage)
Water Warrior While fighting in or on water, a Waverider gains a 1 boon to attacks. In addition, the Waverider does not suffer a bane when using waterstrike against an adjacent target.

SPECIAL ATTACKS
Double Attack The Waverider attacks twice with its waterstrike.

MAGIC
Power 3
Water *freeze* (4), *produce water* (4), *drown* (4), *ice blast* (3), *wellspring of life* (3), *geyser* (2), *wave* (2), *sphere of water* (1), *tidal forces* (1)

Waveriders are respected by most denizens of Hofuku and looked to as figures of authority, but the umibo aware that the knowledge used by the order was stolen still harbor a deep hatred for the water warriors.



HOFUKU BENGOSHI

STAFFMASTER — DIFFICULTY 100

Size 1 human (soburi)
Perception 15 (+5)
Defense 17 (haramaki); **Health** 80
Strength 14 (+4), **Agility** 16 (+6), **Intellect** 15 (+5), **Will** 16 (+6)
Speed 18; leap 5 (10 with staff)
Immune charmed, compelled, frightened
Spinning Staff At the beginning of its turn during combat the Staffmaster can spend its triggered action to defensively spin its staff, deflecting the first 2 damage dealing spells or weapon attacks that would strike it before the end of the round. As an action, the Staffmaster can deflect up to 3 attacks in the same way (and by spending both, up to 5 attacks).

ATTACK OPTIONS
Hofuku-Staff (melee; reach +1) +6 with 1 boon (1d6+2 damage)
Staffmastery Staffmasters cannot be disarmed of their staff and never suffer banes on attacks made with a staff.

SPECIAL ATTACKS
Triple Attack The Staffmaster attacks three times with its Hofuku-staff.

Staffmasters are devoted retainers to the Hofuku Clan that have intensively studied the prefecture's most ancient martial arts, so at home with a stave that it is practically an extension of their bodies. Though they are not as dangerous as other bengoshi, only the Iron Shells are better at defending themselves and more Staffmasters walk Soburin than any of their peers.

IBUTSU

With their reputation as Soburin's most elegant and gracious hosts it was not surprising when the Ibutsu Clan welcomed the overwhelming invasion with benevolence and generosity. After the struggle faced in other prefectures the ceramians were initially suspicious but soon grew fond of the fine food and high treatment offered to them; as their enemies feasted the soburi in power met in **Koru**, plotting on how best to utilize the comfort being assumed by their oppressors. While other clans were outraged at Ibutsu's apparent betrayal, the spiders' agents worked in secret. Utilizing their knack for teleportation magics, their mages hid many of the clan's numbers from prying eyes—particularly its existent population of kumo hengeyokai. This proved particularly useful when those governing the Kengen Occupation, recognizing the prevalent spider iconography prevalent in the prefecture, forced the arachnid shapechangers to settle there.

While outwardly they were resettled into slums in the cities, the kumo hengeyokai were socially—if secretly—welcomed. The patient, deliberate, and merciless nature of the kumo had always been admired by the Ibutsu, who utilized their unique abilities for assassination for years. While usually solitary types the displaced spider hengeyokai came to embrace the Ibutsu sentiment of each individual being a strand in the great web. Arachnid folk slums soon became hotspots of loyalist activities and sentiment, with kumo being secretly smuggled out via magic to train in the ways of the Jentorukumo, Ibutsu's finest spies.

When the time to throw off the shackles of the invaders came the Ibutsu were well in position with Jentorukumo agents posing as entertainers, servants, and the like poised to take out key targets all over Soburin. Ibutsu mages finally made their entrance, using the element of surprise and cloud-based spells to eradicate concentrations of the invaders in confusing fogs of slaughter. While this insurrection was not without its casualties the movement served to draw the bonds of respect between the humans and shapechangers of the Ibutsu even closer; in the present day this has put the clan at a distinct advantage, lacking the internal struggle of a disgruntled hengeyokai populace. It also helps to serve the prefecture when the Mists of Akuma roll in, with some mages teleporting the rich while others hold back the corrupting haze from middle-class areas with their own cloud magics, and kumo helping the poor up to web-supported safe zones with their innate wall-climbing abilities.

This idealized social web was not always Ibutsu's main priority—it was once known for assassinations and social intrigue before the ascent of Lady Kikukiyo Ibutsu. The ancestor of the prefecture's current leader Lady Fukurokujin Ibutsu formed what would later become the Jentorukumo, bringing the rest of the region to heel with several well-placed poisonings by agents schooled in **Ayo**. To replace the self-destructive ways of the past Lady Kikukiyo enacted social reforms that brought the region together as a whole with the idea that all are strands of a great web, and thus all must do their part. Present-day natives Ibutsu still hold to these ideals; the success of the prefecture depends on its reputation for politeness, social grace, and unwavering hospitality, and any member of the community who presents a conflicting image is harshly shunned. Personal ambitions are encouraged, as they are believed to promote growth and excellence, but these should always be kept discreet, especially from outsiders.

Ibutsu is not without its unrest however; in the wake of Ibutsu's occupation, a generation of young revolutionaries has risen up to challenge the subtle, seemingly passive ways of their clan, viewing it instead as apathy and weakness. Calling themselves the Tsuchigumo after the earth spider—ostensibly for their down-to-earth concerns—these youths have been working both socially, via pamphlets and revolutionist plays, and martially, through ambush-style banditry. This unrest is currently on a small scale but Ibutsu's interconnected social web could be in jeopardy if the disruptions escalate. Of course the Jentorukumo cannot allow this to happen, and the mounting conflict between the two groups will be hazardous to all involved.

FORBIDDEN TECHNOLOGY

Qì-tóukuī, uso flyer, dainamo omiryō, denki shīrudo, electroheart augmetic, electrolens augmetic, energized pylon augmetic, fan no te, hornear augmetic, ketsueki shokubai, plating augmetic, shindan yokutan, steam arm augmetic, steam leg augmetic, sword arm augmetic, telescopic arm augmetic, telescopic leg augmetic

JENTORUKUMO AGENT — DIFFICULTY 50

Size 1 human (soburi)
Perception 14 (+4)
Defense 15 (haramaki); **Health** 45
Strength 10 (+0), **Agility** 14 (+4), **Intellect** 14 (+4), **Will** 13 (+3)
Speed 10; climber 10
Sneaky Magic The Jentorukumo Agent does not need to gesture or speak the words when castings its spells.

ATTACK OPTIONS
3-Section Steel Whip (melee; reach +1) +0 with 2 boons (1d6 damage)
Kunai (medium range) +4 with 1 boon (1d6 damage)

SPECIAL ATTACKS
Multiple Attack The Jentorukumo Agent attacks four times with its 3-section steel whip or three times with its kunai.

MAGIC
Power 3
Enchantment *bewitch* (4), *charm* (3), *allure* (2)
Illusion *disguise* (4), *invisibility* (2)

There is little standard appearance among Jentorukumo Agents since they look like whoever they need to at the time—a smiling server at the teahouse, the graceful entertainer on stage, or even a beggar on the street could all be among the group of expert spies and assassins. While most of them are human, kumo hengeyokai make up a large portion of their ranks as well (and possess the Hengeyokai ability of a Death Crow, page 101, save that they transform into a spider instead).

IBUTSU BENGOSHI

CLOUD SUMMONER — DIFFICULTY 100

Size 1 human (soburi)
Perception 17 (+7); sees through fog or mist
Defense 16 (magic); **Health** 85
Strength 11 (+1), **Agility** 10 (+0), **Intellect** 17 (+7), **Will** 15 (+5)
Speed 10
Immune charmed, compelled, frightened
Cloud Affinity Whenever a cloud is involved in a challenge roll, the Cloud Summoner rolls twice and takes the best result.
Magic Resistance The Cloud Summoner gains 1 boon on challenge rolls to resist spells.

ATTACK OPTIONS
Kusarigama (melee; reach +1) +1 with 2 boons (1d6 damage)

MAGIC
Power 5
Air *evoke gale* (4), *bestow flight* (3)
Destruction *evaporate* (2)
Storm *fog* (4), *freezing fog* (4), *poisonous fog* (3), *hail storm* (2), *acid rain* (1)
Teleportation *dismiss* (4), *fetch* (4), *division* (4), *hole of glory* (4), *swap* (4), *remove* (3), *shortcut* (3), *boundless step* (3), *fuse* (3), *portals* (2), *travel* (1)
Transformation *mist form* (3)

When confronted with the creeping threat of the Mists of Akuma, the magic users of Ibutsu decided to fight the supernatural phenomena with some of their own, using cloud-like spells to push back the corrupting fog. Their work and dedication has led to the development of new magic for this purpose, and none wield it as effectively as the Cloud Summoners. Masters of both teleportation and cloud magics, their maneuverability and control of mist is second to none but their motives and actions are not always benevolent, however, as the same magic can also be used for crowd control in the event of a panic induced by the fell haze, sometimes leading to the deaths of dozens of poorer citizens. While their control is as subtle and elegant as everything else in Ibutsu, it is no less absolute.

IKARI

Once fisherman, itamae, and artists, the Ikari redefined themselves when the iron ships of Ceramia sailed over Soburin. Peaceful seas became violent as the invaders descended and the prefecture's people took up weapons to offer the most pronounced resistance against the foreigners, their uprising continuing well after Empress Iko ordered surrender. With their fall the Kengen Occupation began and Ikari's forces were quickly repurposed to control the continent's enjin population as recompense for their disobedience.

At the direction of the ceramians (who originally wanted to breed the silver-backed savages for war) Ikari military patrols rounded up the youngest of the enjin, separating parents from their offspring and engendering a new hatred that even the foreigners weren't quite prepared for. While this led to bloody clashes all along the coasts and deeper in their neighboring forests, the Ikari were eventually successful, quelling the enjin in the same way the Kengen had crushed their will—with an iron boot. The ape folk haven't forgotten the clan's dominance and today there is a clear enmity between the two, often breaking out into violent clashes.

Ikari's focus on culture changed rapidly during the Kengen Occupation, their people finding an ancestral thrill in combat suddenly renewed. Before the invasion their greatest military concern was a rivalry of borders, working against the Fukushu Clan and Hofuku Clan in bitter disputes over territorial waters. When the ceramians arrived and forced the Ikari to subjugate the enjin (who the clan had come to largely ignore, left to be free in the prefecture's jungles) they were forced to master a whole new side of warfare.

Enjin hunter-warriors still make up a noticeable section of the population today; the Burakku Kirā stalk the forests culling the ape folk and ensuring those they once imprisoned don't rise up in a united front. While many argue that the order perpetuates conflict and erases all attempts at peace, others claim that their actions establish a much needed boundary—especially for those who brave the wilderness in search of shīranto sap.

Already shattered by the oppression of the invaders, Clan Ikari's once amicable relationship with the enjin has only been worsened by the approaching dread brought by the Mists of Akuma. Left with little technology in the south to keep the evil haze at bay they have once again wandered into enjin lands to strip the dwindled native jungles, either for the shīranto sap from black ash (used to seal homes and business, page 213), wood from oshima cherry trees (prized for construction, particularly in the lumber settlement of **Nesuto**), or for the myriad herbs needed by herbalists all over Soburin. As word of its use spreads the surrounding prefectures have begun seeking out shīranto sap as well—hoping to add yet another layer to their defenses against the corrupting fog—furthering its demand and prompting ever more incursions into already deadly rainforests.

Most soburi from Ikari view enjin as little more than savage apes with a rudimentary understanding of tools but a small collective has grown sympathetic to their plight. The Lady of Six Silvers (rumored to be Natsuko Ikari) and her retinue champion a unification between the clan and their former charges, working from **Nagabuki** to consolidate the forces of ape folk in the jungles as a bulwark against the yai sovereigns that dwell in the mountains.

Mastery over the Kusarigama has become the focus of martial schools in **Kusari**. Though the Ikari didn't create the weapon they adopted its use long ago and while all instruments of war are subjects of study, a reverence is kept for those able to master the fluid nature of the chained blade, viewed as a natural extension of a warrior's will (one that keeps a combatant out of an enjin's superior reach).

While devious and prone to perpetuating old hatreds, the people of Ikari conduct themselves with honor, keeping contracts and upholding oaths. When it comes to culling the spreading enjin population (a rite of passage among the clan's warriors) they are ruthless and sometimes even chaotic. Old hatreds die hard however and the Ikari are no exception.

FORBIDDEN TECHNOLOGY

While many prefectures have outlawed the heretical sciences within their borders, the Ikari have done so only in name, to perpetuate the illusion that they are advancing traditional Soburin values. Most illegal technology traded inside their borders has only light penalties for offenders but there is a single exception: the manufacture or sale of ketsueki shokubai carries a death sentence.

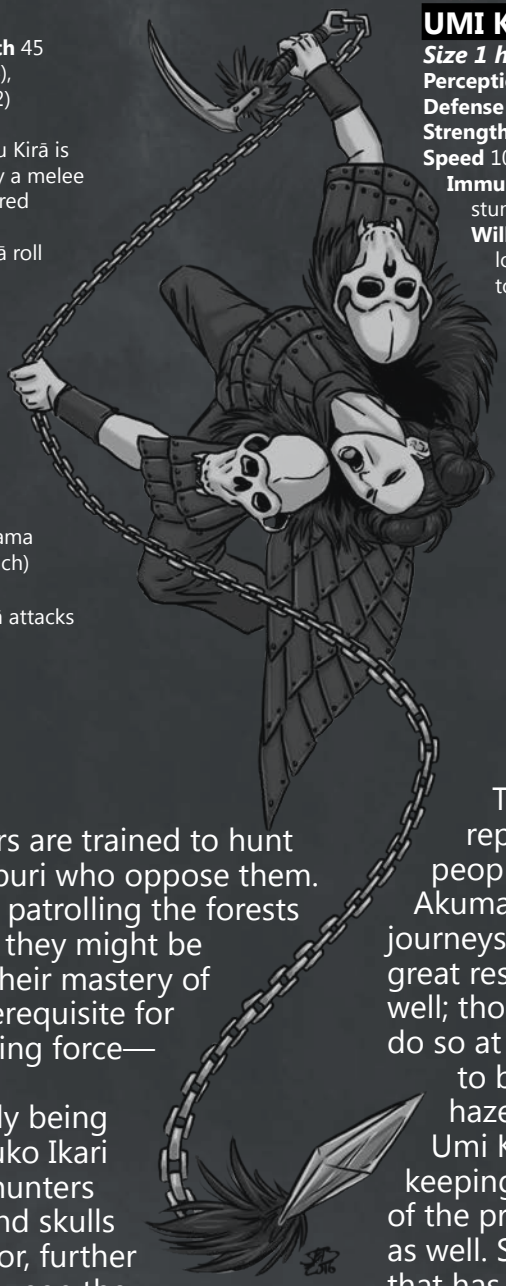
BURAKKU KIRĀ — DIFFICULTY 50

Size 1 human (soburi)
Perception 10 (+0)
Defense 16 (hard leather); **Health** 45
Strength 14 (+4), **Agility** 14 (+4), **Intellect** 10 (+10), **Will** 12 (+2)
Speed 10
Chain Master When the Burakku Kirā is about to be successfully hit by a melee attack, it may spend its triggered action to deflect it.
Enemy of the Enjin Burakku Kirā roll twice and take the best result when tracking enjin and humans, as well as when they make Intellect challenge rolls to recall information about either.

ATTACK OPTIONS
Kusarigama (melee; reach +1) +4 with 1 boon (1d6 damage and on a successful hit, the Burakku Kirā makes a kusarigama attack against a foe within reach)

SPECIAL ATTACKS
Double Attack The Burakku Kirā attacks twice with its kusarigama.

MAGIC
Power 2
Battle *celerity* (2)
Divination *psychometry* (2)
Life *cure* (2)



Clan Ikari's elite soldiers are trained to hunt both enjin and any soburi who oppose them. Most spend their days patrolling the forests of their prefecture but they might be found anywhere that their mastery of the kusarigama—a prerequisite for joining their elite fighting force—is needed.

Despite explicitly being ordered by Lady Natsuko Ikari not to many of these hunters wear the grisly skins and skulls of enjin with their armor, further stoking the hatred between the ape folk and the rest of the prefecture. Shortly after her edict several of the warriors went missing with nothing but signs of a powerfully violent conflict left in their wake. Investigations into the disappearances yielded some successes at first, but every party that followed the tracks of the attackers' into the jungles failed to return.

Though they keep it secret from the public at large, the Burakku Kirā brim with anger now that further pursuit of the kidnappers has been forbidden by Lady Natsuko and any capable adventurer that has earned their trust is offered a handsome 100 Imperial pieces for solving the mystery.

IKARI BENGOSHI

UMI KURAIYĀ — DIFFICULTY 100

Size 1 human (soburi)
Perception 16 (+6)
Defense 16 (hard leather); **Health** 70
Strength 10 (+0), **Agility** 14 (+4), **Intellect** 16 (+6), **Will** 15 (+5)
Speed 10
Immune charmed, compelled, frightened, immobilized, stunned
Will of the Ikari The Umi Kuraiyā's soul is imbued with the long memories of their predecessors, granting it 1 boon to challenge rolls.

ATTACK OPTIONS
Wakizashi (melee) +4 with 2 boons (1d6+4 damage)

SPECIAL ATTACKS
Spell Fighting The Umi Kuraiyā attacks with its wakizashi and casts a spell that normally requires the use of an action to cast.

MAGIC
Power 5
Curse *hex* (4), *frighten* (4), *hobble* (4), *pain* (4), *vulnerability* (3), *weakness* (3), *dread* (2)
Enchantment *bewitch* (4), *charm* (4), *command* (4), *compel* (3), *implant suggestion* (2), *enslave* (1)

END OF THE ROUND
Curse of the Sea The Umi Kuraiyā utters a single, secret phrase that imposes 1 bane to all challenge rolls a target within 10 yards makes until the end of the next round.

The mouthpieces of Clan Ikari have represented their heritage as a seafaring people since long before the Mists of Akuma made anything short of coastal journeys deadly. The Umi Kuraiyā still carry great respect but now tremendous power as well; those who venture out into the sea often do so at their behest, hunting pirates feared to be bringing the taint of the accursed haze back to the mainland.

Umi Kuraiyā are also masters of lore, keeping in practice not only the sea shanties of the prefectures ancestors but their legends as well. Some speak of an ancient Bake-Kujira that has lurked along the Edge of the World since before the rise of the Imperial Siblings, a monster rumored to be as old as the planet itself. Their long-winded poems claim that when the world is near its end a child will be born with the mark of the draconian undead whale, able to control the immeasurably powerful creature. The bengoshi of Ikari are naturally frantically searching for the fated one, often allowing their focus on the intricate games of power played by their peers to slip as more resources are devoted to locating the destined youth—an advantage that is sure to allow them to raise Lady Natsuko (or themselves) to new heights of power.

KIRAI

Warriors from Kirai have long been infamous across Soburin for their incredible ferocity, utilizing savage martial arts developed by masters long before even the Ichizoku Wars—combat techniques as blunt, direct, and punishing as those that wield them. The bloodthirstiness and deadly hand-to-hand skills of the Kirai Clan's warriors made them the second-most drafted soldiers during the Kengen Occupation, sending nearly as many of their young men and women off to die in the War of Kaiyo as their hated nemeses the Haikasuru and instilling a great hatred for both the ceramians and ropaeo. Many of their veterans became addicted to combat drugs while soldiering afar, passing on their dependency to their children and continuing the cycle of violence in the region that gripped the prefecture during the century of foreign rule.

After Hitoshi's Rebellion the lands of Kirai experienced a period of intense criminal enterprise driven by a thriving market for sentō-yaku stemming from **Sokuru**, and in a sickening irony the widespread addictions have been sated by the reappearance of the dreaded Mists of Akuma. In the corrupting fogs the defenders of Kirai found something that fulfilled their dependency: the supernatural haze itself (page 167). This salvation is quickly proving to be hazardous as the more people who indulge in the foul fog, the more feral and savage their society becomes. A black market still exists in Kirai but now instead of catering to narcotics it focuses on devices developed in the other prefectures, bought and used illegally to combat the ancient phenomena (although most settlements have been practically abandoned by any sort of lawful order, making trade more a matter of survival).

The scant law that still remains in the territory is enforced by the Monks of the Tusk, barbaric warriors that exclusively protect the military officers of the Kirai Clan (often former members of the order themselves) from their garrison in the capital of **Xibusono**. Making the same mistakes as their distant ancestors the leaders of Kirai are interpreting failing villages and fleeing subjects as weak, believing that the prefecture is stronger without them. Foodstocks have steadily decreased as more peasants and small villages fall to the Mists of Akuma and now the only farmers left are those with high-reaching homes or properties close enough to a torii gate to climb to safety (most of which are near the mountainous city of **Mokuteki**, the last bastion of significant traditional trade in the prefecture). Many suspect that before long the serfs of Kirai will reprise the inaction of their leaders, rising up against in bloody rebellion—with so many citizens having been touched by the corrupting fogs, it truly is only a matter of time. The rogue Kengen generals are well aware of this impending insurrection, hiding their forces in the region's untended wilds in wait for the perfect moment to strike and establish strongholds that will allow them to subjugate Soburin once more.

Descendants of the Kirai Clan are savage, swift, and above all effective. There is little that can stop a daughter or son of Kirai from rapidly approaching a target, dealing mortal blows, and retreating before a proper response can be made, making them incredibly frustrating combatants both politically and on the battlefield. Fearlessness is as prized by their people as aggression, and great value is placed on strength and resilience—a Kirai is sooner to intimidate rather than persuade (assuming they have not already struck).

Sentō-Yaku (50 gc) Whereas once the foreign military filled the blood of drafted Kirai warriors with a vast suite of combat drugs before deploying them on the battlefield, only the cheapest of these remains in use on Soburin now that the War of Kaiyo has destroyed Ceramia and Ropaeo. This cocktail of stimulants and painkillers is easily found in Kirai or Usagi—and far harder elsewhere—but those who use it are dangerous companions to travel beside; sentō-yaku addicts are violent and will do anything in order to acquire more.

As an action a creature can expel this small aerosol into their lungs, gaining several benefits for 1d6 rounds: they roll twice and take the best result when making attack rolls, they take half damage from all attacks and spells, and they gain a 6 yard increase to speed for 1d6 rounds. After its effects cease, the imbiber makes a Strength challenge roll (with 1 bane per dose of sentō-yaku in the last week) or gain fatigue for 3 hours per each dose of sentō-yaku taken in the last day. This fatigue remains until the imbiber takes more sentō-yaku or makes another challenge roll 24 hours later.

FORBIDDEN TECHNOLOGY

The trade of all ceramian and ropaeo technology is forbidden in Kirai, though those responsible for regulating the markets pay little attention.

MONK OF THE TUSK — DIFFICULTY 50

Size 1 human (soburi)
Perception 14 (+4)
Defense 15; **Health** 50
Strength 15 (+5), **Agility** 15 (+5), **Intellect** 11 (+1), **Will** 14 (+4)
Speed 14
Immune frightened, misted

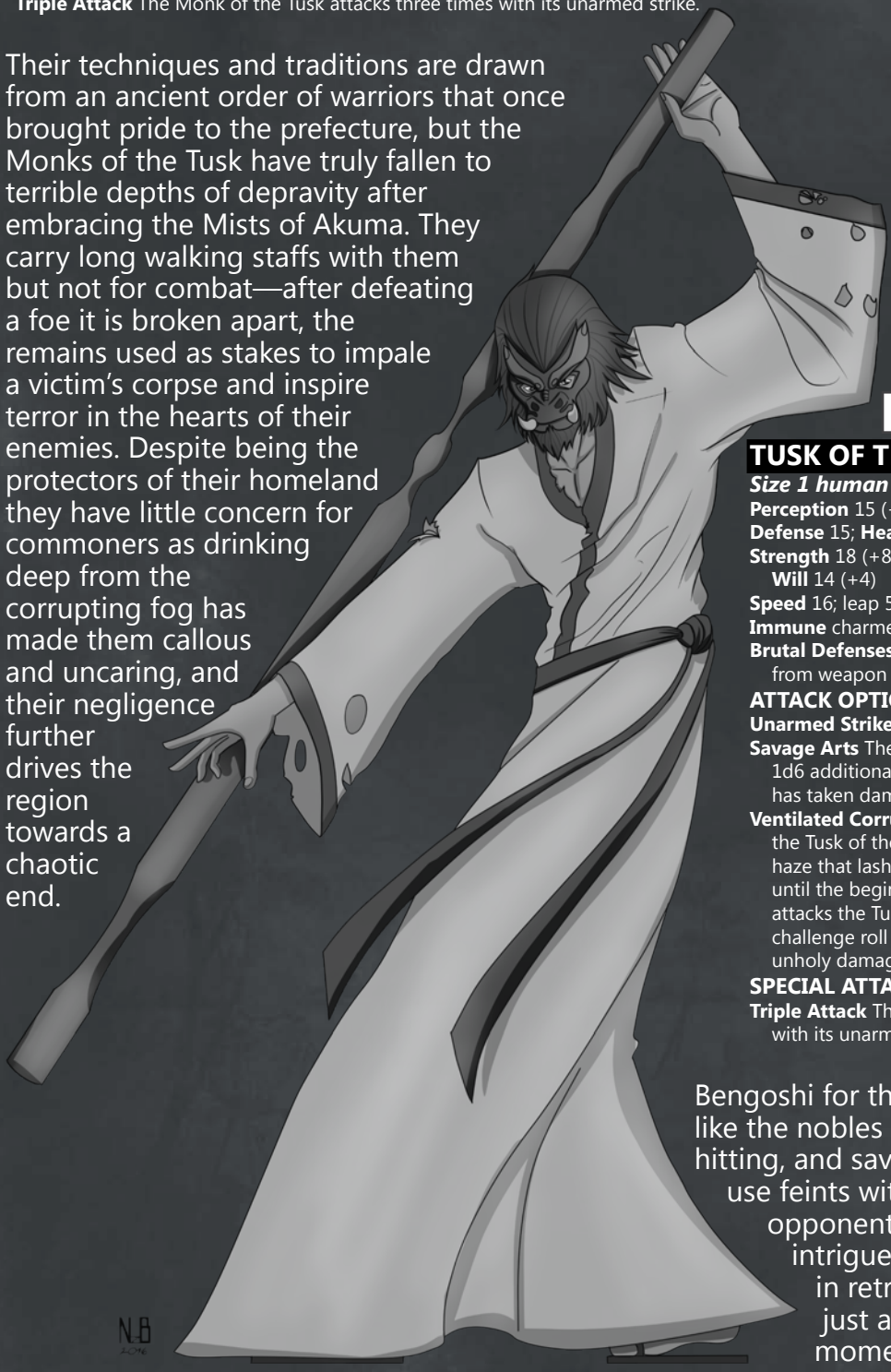
ATTACK OPTIONS

Unarmed Strike (melee) +5 with 1 boon (1d6 damage plus the target makes a Strength challenge roll with 1 bane or is grabbed)
Bonebreaker. Once per turn after successfully grabbing a creature the Monk of the Tusk breaks its bones, reducing its Strength score. The grabbed creature must make a Strength challenge roll with 1 bane and on a failure, they lower their Strength score by 2 points and take 1d6 damage. A creature can regain lost Strength points by taking rests.
Brutal Arts The Monk of the Tusk's unarmed strikes deal 1d6 additional damage when attacking creatures it has used its bonebreaker ability against.

SPECIAL ATTACKS

Triple Attack The Monk of the Tusk attacks three times with its unarmed strike.

Their techniques and traditions are drawn from an ancient order of warriors that once brought pride to the prefecture, but the Monks of the Tusk have truly fallen to terrible depths of depravity after embracing the Mists of Akuma. They carry long walking staffs with them but not for combat—after defeating a foe it is broken apart, the remains used as stakes to impale a victim's corpse and inspire terror in the hearts of their enemies. Despite being the protectors of their homeland they have little concern for commoners as drinking deep from the corrupting fog has made them callous and uncaring, and their negligence further drives the region towards a chaotic end.



KIRAI BENGOSHI

TUSK OF THE BOAR — DIFFICULTY 100

Size 1 human (soburi)
Perception 15 (+5)
Defense 15; **Health** 75
Strength 18 (+8), **Agility** 17 (+7), **Intellect** 15 (+5), **Will** 14 (+4)
Speed 16; leap 5
Immune charmed, compelled, frightened, misted
Brutal Defenses The Tusk of the Boar takes half damage from weapon attacks.

ATTACK OPTIONS

Unarmed Strike (melee) +8 (1d6+1 damage)
Savage Arts The Tusk of the Boar's unarmed strikes deal 1d6 additional damage when attacking a creature that has taken damage.
Ventilated Corruption By spending its triggered action, the Tusk of the Boar may surround itself with a dark haze that lashes out at any creatures who attack it until the beginning of its next turn. Any creature that attacks the Tusk of the Boar must make an Agility challenge roll with 2 bane, taking 1d6 points of unholy damage on a failure.

SPECIAL ATTACKS

Triple Attack The Tusk of the Boar attacks three times with its unarmed strike.

Bengoshi for the Kirai Clan are very much like the nobles they represent—fast, hard hitting, and savage. Tusks of the Boar often use feints within feints to overwhelm an opponent (whether in combat or intrigue), disappearing suddenly in retreat and reappearing just as swiftly when the moment to strike arrives.

KIZUATO

Bloodshed is all Kizuato has ever known—and they are masters at it, unable to escape conflict even in times of peace. During the Ichizuko Wars the prefecture flourished as what seemed like endless fighting would ravage Soburin forever but afterwards its peoples suffered a sort of identity crisis; some of the population felt it was time to move past the ingrained culture of war, while others could not abandon their fighting spirit. The nobles of Kizuato were the biggest profiteers of all and they chose to continue hostilities, if only among themselves. Whether grabbing land, reviving ancient rivalries, or making petty squabbles, they continued to find reasons to fight and Kizuato paid for their altercations. Unfortunately few could stand against their armies and when the invaders landed, the foreign military was welcomed with open arms.

The ceramians were seen by the nobility as saviors, arriving to wrest the prefecture from the terrible clutches of peace; the foreigners could do no wrong. Soon the leaders of Kizuato were asked to enact terrible war crimes (a task they were all too willing to follow) and atrocities spilled forth from the prefecture like the very blood of the men and women sent to the War of Kaiyo. Of all the horrors committed the worst were those taken against the tengu of Soburin. In the eyes of the invaders the bird folk were inferior beings, lesser even than the shapeshifting kurēn remanded to Satsujin. The tengu found themselves rounded up and delivered to Kizuato to unwillingly participate in cruel experiments in the name of furthering warfare, subjected to tests of the body and mind with new, strange weapons ranging from the physical to the arcane and worse. Those who survived or managed to avoid the terrible tests were kept as simple servants, and it was these same avians that became the downfall of old Kizuato.

After the War of Kaiyo a civil war began as the tengu throughout the prefecture rose up against the nobles that had enacted such cruelties against their people, mounting attacks and sabotage throughout the end of the Kengen Occupation. Hitoshi's Rebellion finally cast the foreign oppressors down and the bird folk found allies in the humans that assisted with the decades of insurrection, and together they returned to the only habit they knew: conflict. Yet the new leaders of Kizuato fell to infighting once more, just like their predecessors—until the Mists of Akuma descended upon their lands.

For once there was peace between the people of Kizuato as they united against a common enemy they could never truly defeat. The prefecture focused its energies to combat the creatures that threatened their home and with this newfound camaraderie, a sense of egotism spread to mercenary and spellsword alike. Kizuato had survived for millennia with only its own wits and skill, and many found it a point of pride to continue to fight without the use of technology they believed removed the honor of combat.

This pride is something that is known to all of Soburin. The people of Kizuato are painted as imperious, arrogant opportunists that are not worthy of trust—the common knowledge is that they house only thieves and liars, a stereotype of some truth. Anyone setting out on a journey expecting violence, however, seeks out companions and mercenaries from Kizuato first as they are known to be extremely loyal once their allegiance is bought.

Lady Biancheng Kizuato, the first female leader of the clan since the Kengen Occupation, does her best to focus the efforts of the rest of the prefecture towards the defense of its people. Not only has she organized a number of military groups to combat the Mists of Akuma in **Daisanji**, but she also worked to bring the scholars of **Daibendo** together to study what they can about the corrupting fog and share their information with the rest of Soburin in hopes of returning to an ordinary life.

Most of the prefecture is allied under the banner of combating the supernatural haze, but other than this uniting factor a number of differences run throughout the populace. The biggest of these is the treatment of the tengu, the rampant xenophobia that brought the bird folk to Kizuato living on in the hearts of its people. A large number of avians feel similarly, content to live their lives separate from the rest of society in the holy city of **Su-Yosai**.

FORBIDDEN TECHNOLOGY

Firearms, grapple launcher, uso flyer, dainamo omiryō, denki shīrudo, electrolens augmetic, fan no te hand, plating augmetic, steam arm augmetic, steam leg augmetic, sword arm augmetic, telescopic arm augmetic, telescopic leg augmetic, venom spitter

SKY RUNNER — DIFFICULTY 50

Size ½ tengu
Perception 14 (+4)
Defense 14; **Health** 55
Strength 10 (+0), **Agility** 14 (+4), **Intellect** 12 (+2), **Will** 14 (+4)
Speed 8; flier 10
Tengu The Sky Runner takes half damage from cold and double damage from fire.
Kiteflyer The Sky Runner gains 2 boons to control its kite.

ATTACK OPTIONS
Wakizashi (melee) +4 with 1 boon (1d6+2 damage)
Fragmentation Grenade (short range) +4. When a grenade reaches its target, or if it encounters a solid creature or object before then, it explodes. The explosion deals 2d6 damage from fire to everything in a sphere with a 1-yard radius centered on the target or a point within the creature's or object's space. Each creature in the area that gets a success on an Agility challenge roll with 1 bane takes half the damage.
Needle Rain The Sky Runner drops dense metal spikes through any square it flies over during its move. Any creatures below the path of the Sky Runner makes an Agility challenge roll with 1 bane or takes 2d6 damage and gains the immobilized affliction (escaping requires a Strength challenge roll with 1 bane at the end of the round).

SPECIAL ATTACKS
Double Attack The Sky Runner attacks twice with its wakizashi.

When the tengu of Kizuato gained their freedom, many of the daimyo saw them as a perfect tool to aid with the conflict against the Mists of Akuma. The avians' abilities allowed for an approach to warfare hardly seen outside of Uso: air combat. One group of the bird folk equipped themselves with large kites that allow for traveling great distances, and from their dizzying vantage points the Sky Runners are free to rain fire on their enemies or make surprise attacks from above.

After reaching an accord between the High Samurai, Herbal Masters, Imperial Rebuilders, Master Evokers, and Umi Kuraiyā many of Kizuato's infamous Sky Runners have taken to acting as couriers for nearby bengoshi to earn a bit of extra coin (though only the bravest avians live long enough to enjoy it).

KIZUATO BENGOSHI

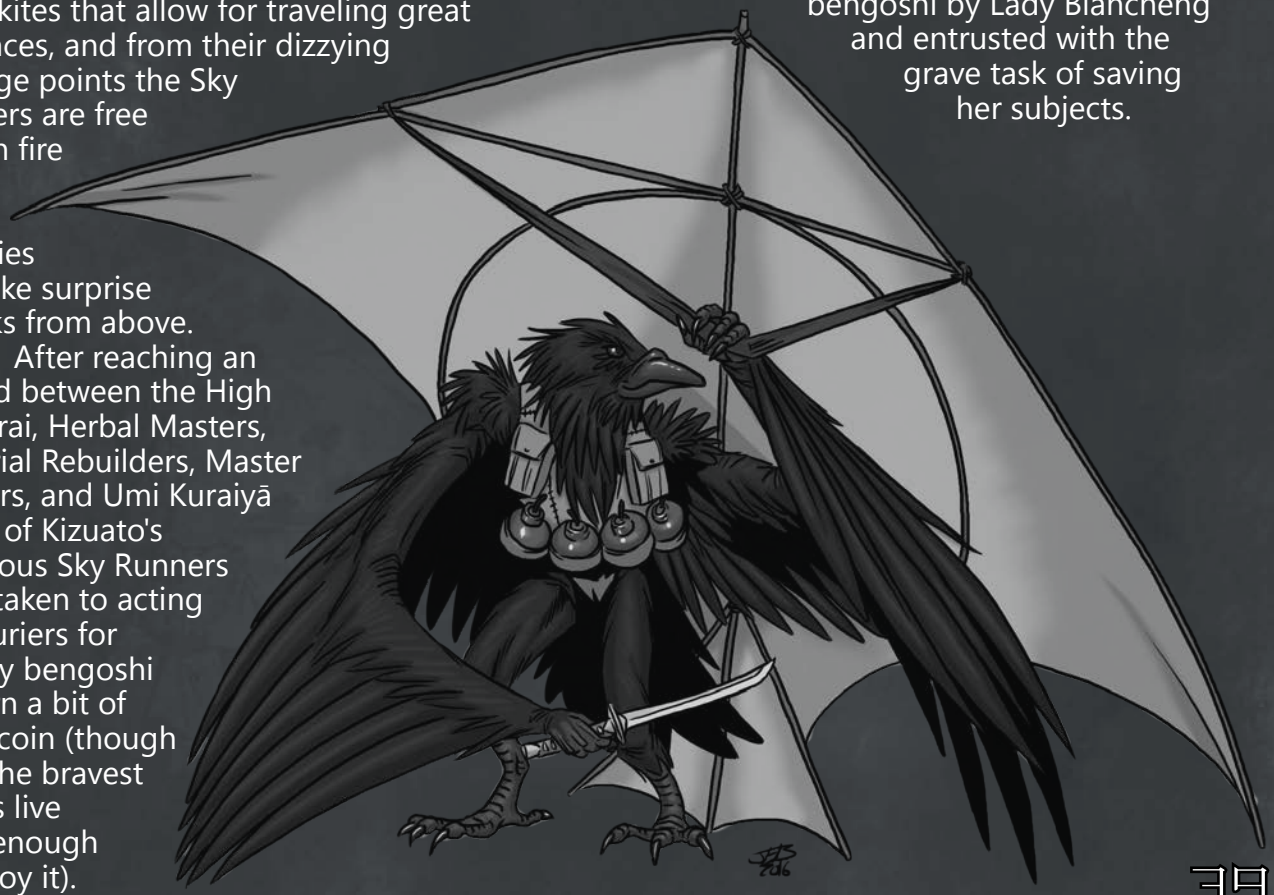
HIGH SAMURAI — DIFFICULTY 100

Size 1 human (soburi)
Perception 17 (+7)
Defense 19 (o-yoroi); **Health** 80
Strength 17 (+7), **Agility** 10 (+0), **Intellect** 12 (+2), **Will** 16 (+6)
Speed 8
Immune charmed, compelled, frightened

ATTACK OPTIONS
Katana Strike (melee) +7 with 1 boon (3d6 damage)
Iaijutsu Strike When the High Samurai's first attack in a combat hits, it can spend its triggered action to deal an extra 2d6 damage.

SPECIAL ATTACKS
Dashing Strike When the High Samurai takes the charge action, if it moves in a straight line from its origin square to its final square, its attack deals 2d6 extra damage on a successful hit.
Double Attack The High Samurai attacks twice with its katana strike.

Tradition in Kizuato allows for any person to challenge a daimyo that is seen as unworthy or incapable of their position—unsurprisingly, nobles come and go frequently but as a show of good faith (or to prevent any former daimyo from returning for their seat) many keep their predecessors as allies. These former nobles gain the title of high samurai and are entrusted with enforcing the daimyo's will within their claim of the prefecture, enshrined to the powerful position of bengoshi by Lady Biancheng and entrusted with the grave task of saving her subjects.



KORUSU

Resistance against the ceramian invaders was bitter, bloody, difficult, and over fairly quickly all across Soburin, but nowhere was the fighting as hard or as disgracefully lost as in Korusu. General Zhiajo Korusu (a brilliant tactician and revered hero who won herself fame by leading a campaign that felled a yai sovereign, making the waters east of the prefecture safe to travel) led the defense of the mainland, holding fast against the foreign military. After the Battle of Gyakusatsu she consolidated her forces with those of Osore, Satsujin, and Yokuba to create a powerful defensive line that stretched across the prefectures to protect the Imperial Capital's flank with a wall of samurai and spellswords reinforced by spirit folk filling the sky with storms. When the Imperial Prefecture fell Zhiajo was meeting with other generals in Hansbunomana—leaving her open to a betrayal from within. Seeing the opportunity to take vengeance for a slight against his grandfather by hers, Lieutenant-General Gorou Satsujin turned his force against Korusu's. In their commander's absence her officers fell back to their own capital of **Suiryoku** after the unexpected traitorous attack, granting the invaders another critical foothold on the continent and precipitating the fall of countless soburi battalions. General Zhiajo returned only in time to die during the intense and bloody battle that ultimately saw her home city fall.

The people of Korusu are just as stubborn and implacable as their regional hero, attributes that led the ceramians to force kappa (a race just as obstinate and unyielding) to resettle there. Refuges for the turtle folk were built into the prefecture's cities and walled off from the settlements around them, but this did little to improve their inevitably violent conflicts. Fights between kappa and soburi became frequent, almost spilling out into open revolt several times until the codification of duels. As soon as blood was first spilled each side chose one of their own to represent them in a regulated combat and the winner was in the right—a practice that today is a common way to resolve disagreements of all kinds within Korusu borders. A subtle reminder of the discord remains as after several hundred clan retainers died in duels against the turtle folk, Lord Ryuu Korusu changed his clan's favored weapon from whips to hammers (armaments far better suited to crack shells).

After the Mists of Akuma reappeared Korusu nobles took inspiration from the race they came to despise during the Kengen Occupation, crafting massive thin-walled domes of iron (not unlike anzen-sei boxes, page 26) carried by their entourage wherever they go and placed in the center of settlements. When the corrupting fog falls they retreat beneath these metal shells, inviting in those they deem worthy before servants throw the lever—sending spring-loaded stilts to drive counterweights that drop the shell at incredible speed, trapping additional breathable air beneath and crushing anything under its edges. Though people within often suffer terrible nosebleeds or ruptured eardrums, the simple devices provide ample protection from the legions that swarm through the fel haze outside.

Sherukurakkā were begun specifically to pacify the kappa—deadly with a maul, stronger, and more resilient than their opponents—and their traditions are continued through schools in the city of **Namibureka**. Tensions with the kappabuchi villages grow tauter every day as rumors abound of a noble that wanders the prefecture offering sanctuary only to turtle folk when the Mists of Akuma appear but the kappa are never seen again and rumors suggest that something foul is being done to these poor souls beneath **Kamenotochii**. The lack of response from Lord Korusu has prompted several lesser kappa families to quietly work together in secret, preparing to overtake the noble estates and demand to know what fate has befallen their missing brothers and sisters.

The Korusu military is famous for weathering all-out assaults that drive foes to weakness, using defensive posturing as a weapon unto itself. As a fighting force they are much like those they defend—willful and obstinate, rarely deviating from a path once they have chosen it and unappeased by anything other than what they desired. Adventuring groups seek out warriors from this prefecture in the hopes of finding someone able to hold the line; though it can be challenging to convince a Korusu to take up a new cause, they rarely falter when it comes time to put up their guard.

FORBIDDEN TECHNOLOGY

Uso flyer, dainamo omiryō, denki shīrudo, ketsueki shokubai, venom spitter

SHERUKURAKKĀ — DIFFICULTY 50

Size 1 human (soburi)
Perception 11 (+1)
Defense 19 (o-yoroi); **Health** 45
Strength 16 (+6), **Agility** 10 (+0), **Intellect** 11 (+1), **Will** 14 (+4)
Speed 8

ATTACK OPTIONS

Maul (melee]) +6 (3d6+6 damage, or 24 to an object)
Maul Master The Sherukurakkā adds its Strength modifier to damage with its weapon attacks so long as it is wielding a heavy weapon.
Siege Monster The Sherukurakkā gains 1 boon when attacking objects and structures.

SPECIAL ATTACKS

Forceful Sweep The Sherukurakkā spins its maul about with great force, making a single attack roll with 2 boons and applying that attack roll against all targets within 3 yards. Creatures struck by this attack take half damage from the Sherukurakkā's maul attack and make a Strength challenge roll with 1 bane or are knocked prone.

Sherukurakkā are a relatively new order of warriors in Korusu but beloved by the native soburi there, seen as the champions in what is sure to be a longstanding feud with the kappa. The mammoth warriors of this order ponderously criss-cross the prefecture in search of oni and bandits, though as often as not they unfairly prey on the turtle folk they were originally founded to suppress.

These enormous warriors are well known for being prodigious eaters and that to interrupt them during a meal is a sure way to quickly meet a remarkably painful death at the end of a powerfully swung hammer.

KORUSU BENGOSHI

IRON SHELL — DIFFICULTY 100

Size 1 human (soburi)
Perception 16 (+6); darksight, sightless
Defense 22 (iron shell); **Health** 50
Strength 19 (+9), **Agility** 10 (+0), **Intellect** 16 (+6), **Will** 16 (+6)
Speed 6
Immune charmed, compelled, frightened, prone
Iron Shell The Iron Shell takes half damage from all attacks except from psychic. If removed from its armor, the Iron Shell loses this property and its Strength is reduced to 8.
Iron Armory The interior of the Iron Shell's armor hides devices that conceal and automatically reload its firearms, enabling the Iron Shell to ignore the reload property of firearms.

ATTACK OPTIONS

Pistol (medium range) +0 with 3 boons (2d6 damage)
Hand Hwacha The Iron Shell makes a single ranged attack roll with 2 boons and applies that attack roll to all targets in a 10-yard-line. Creatures struck by this attack take 6d6 damage, or half as much damage with a successful Agility challenge roll with 2 bane.
Shell Bullets The Iron Shell's firearms are loaded with bullets specially made for their guns that make the firearms deadly when striking organic matter. Iron Shells deal half damage against constructs, necroji, steametics, umibo, objects, and structures.

SPECIAL ATTACKS

Rapid Fire The Iron Shell attacks three times with its pistol.

Despite the seeming frailty of many of these aged retainers of the Korusu Clan, the old men and women that call themselves Iron Shells are immensely strong and truly deadly when forced into conflict. Using specially made armor from the scientific prefectures (purchased for many thousands of Imperial Pieces through backchannels only available to society's elite), Korusu bengoshi wander Soburin instilling Lord Taishan's wishes and sabotaging the doings of their rivals with an incredible talent for insulating themselves from retribution.

MIYAKI

In the course of an evening the very fabric of Soburin's political firmament shook as the Miyaki Prefecture suddenly appeared in the southern seas. With it returned a lost Imperial Sibling carefully purged from the archives—Lord Tetsuichiro Miyaki. A true romantic, the young noble had fallen in love with a kami and followed her willingly into her wispy demesne, delving into a bank of corrupting fog his brothers and sisters had forbidden anyone from entering. Such a foolish act could never be forgiven in their eyes and all traces of the lovestruck youth were stricken from official records; yet it seems love has truly conquered all.

In the summer of 3464 a great landmass pulled itself from the Mists of Akuma, already bristling with a thriving population, cultural identity, and industrial economy that could truly rivalany other region of Soburin (including the Imperial Prefecture). The lost and forgotten make up the bulk of the population: sailors thrown overboard during a storm or those that wandered too far into somewhere they should not have been. No one really remembers how they arrived on the island, just that they had and they were grateful to be alive. Those that call Miyaki home have adapted to the threats of the fel haze so common to their formerly isolated atoll, embracing it wholeheartedly and seemingly without consequence (making their presence all the more suspicious).

A renowned group of scouts—Mistwalkers—are fast becoming known across the prefectures for their unique ability to traverse the corrupting fog virtually unharmed, a protection they extend to their charges. Many ceramians and ropaeo walk Miyaki (despite its absence during the Kengen Occupation) content and at peace with soburi from the mainland their kin once subjugated; and for all the island's many unique traits this is perhaps the most remarkable.

Miyaki has proven to be a viable neutral ground for the many factions wrestling for control of Soburin. This is not to say that intrigue is not unknown on the island, only that the amalgam of cultures make any serious conflicts pointless. Add to this the mysterious Kurōn that act as Lord Tetsuichiro's bengoshi, and there is little that poses a threat or remains hidden to him for long. To help maintain a balance of power between the prefectures some of the best diplomats in the nation are trained

at Gyakusatsu University in **Geatou**, a school also known for its advances in forensic techniques (allowing for the rise of detective agencies that quickly found demand in the employ of clan lords). More and more nobles flock to **Barrayt** to conduct peaceful business in a way only allowed in Miyaki, where the unspoken rule of the prefecture is "if it hurts no one", making narcotics and slavery the only two avenues of trade truly forbidden within its borders.

While to the casual observer the prefecture seems to maintain an idyllic existence with little internal conflict, a growing cult seeks to venerate not Lord Tetsuichiro (or his kami spirit wife Sutefanī) but the Mists of Akuma instead, seeing the corrupting fog as a living entity worthy of worship. Their organization is establishing a foothold in Miyaki, especially amongst new arrivals outcast from their original homes and looking for acceptance—the corrupting fog is only too eager to embrace the lost and disenfranchised.

The truest danger to the island is from the Imperial Prefecture where Emperor Hitoshi sees Lord Tetsuichiro as a threat and fears that the original Imperial Sibling's return to Soburin might mean war will spread from court to court. Whatever designs the ancient noble has on the throne are yet to be known but with the apparent blessing of the Mists of Akuma many cannot help but speculate and wonder what powerful secrets are known to him.

Miyaki was suspiciously bereft of the long-lived inhuman races when it reappeared but the trepidation that causes among Soburi is scant; more gurēsu (page 171) walk the undefiled lands of the island than can be found on the whole of the mainland. In a decaying world being consumed by the mistakes of the past, Lord Tetsuichiro's return is thought to be a signal from the ancestors to light the path of Soburin's salvation—a beacon through the supernatural haze encroaching on the realms. Skepticism abounds however and many question the seeming righteousness of the Kurōns (troubled by the uncanny likeness all the bengoshi share), the clan's disturbing comfort with the Mists of Akuma, and what (if any) violence will result from a power struggle against Emperor Masuto.

When the Mists of Akuma descend the prefecture's guards—Mistwalkers one and all—gather citizens behind their sashimono, fighting off adeddo-oni and taking their charges to safety. Though they are reticent to engage in military action the commanders of Miyaki act in much the same way, appearing suddenly on the battlefield and marshaling allies under their banners before engaging an enemy. People from the island are similarly tempered; one can expect a Miyaki to be cautious, decisive, and transparent in their doings and motives, despite any suspicions that might be leveled against them.

SHUKUFUKU

Many people from across Soburin travel to Miyaki in the hopes of having an audience with Lord Tetsuichiro, petitioning for a touch of his supernatural grace in return for tales of great achievements and notable deeds. His unerring mastery of intrigue easily cuts through those that try to deceive him, but to the few truly noble travelers that have accomplished something worthy of respect he grants a sliver of his immortal power, a shufukuku.

Shukufuku are intangible and can never be lost unless revoked by Lord Tetsuichiro. Shukufuku are magical in nature but ignore effects that would negate a spell or other type of magic. While it is phenomenally rare for a character to receive more than one shukufuku it is not unheard of, but even then, multiple shukufuku that grant the same bonuses do not stack.

Shukufuku of Fortification One nonmagic armor or shield you are wearing (or wielding) causes creatures attacking you to do so with 1 bane.

Shukufuku of Gazing You gain the ability to cast the *charm* spell without the need to speak the words or wield any implements. After using this shukufuku twice you require a rest before it can be used again.

Shukufuku of Resolve You gain a +1 bonus to Defense and challenge rolls.

Shukufuku of Self One of your ability scores increases by 1, up to a maximum of 21.

Shukufuku of Soul You gain 1 boon when making challenge rolls to resist spells and other magical effects.

Shukufuku of Void You gain the power to summon creatures from out of nowhere by spending an action, as if you had cast *call medium animal*. You can use this shukufuku again after taking a rest.

KURŌNNŌRUK DIFFICULTY 50

Size 1 human (soburi)

Perception 15 (+5); darksight, sees through fog or mist
Defense 14; **Health** 60
Strength 14 (+4), **Agility** 14 (+4), **Intellect** 15 (+5), **Will** 15 (+5)
Speed 10; leap 3
Immune charmed, compelled, frightened, misted, poisoned, stunned
Deflecting Mist Once per turn when hit with a melee weapon attack or melee spell attack, the Kurōnnōruk can spend its triggered action to negate it.
Mysterious Resistance The Kurōnnōruk takes half damage from poison and psychic.
Wavering Form Creatures have 1 bane on their first attack roll against the Kurōnnōruk each turn. An attacker is immune to this effect if it doesn't rely on sight, such as if they have sightless, or if they can see through illusions, as with truesight.
Mistwalker While inside the Mists of Akuma, the Kurōnnōruk only requires a challenge roll against corruption at the end of every rest. By spending 1 minute performing a special ritual, the Kurōnnōruk may extend this protection to 6 creatures for one day. While inside the Mists of Akuma, the Kurōnnōruk's overland speed and the overland speed of creatures under its protection are doubled (this does not effect movement speeds in combat).
Dissipate When destroyed, the Kurōnnōruk and all of its equipment revert to mist.

ATTACK OPTIONS

Unarmed Strike (melee) +4 with 1 boon (1d6+2 damage and on a natural roll of 19 or 20, the target makes a Dignity challenge roll with 1 bane or increases its Haitoku by 1)
Striking Mist Before it attacks, the Kurōnnōruk can spend its triggered action to increase the reach of its unarmed strikes (by 10 yards) until the end of the round.

SPECIAL ATTACKS

Double Attack The Kurōnnōruk attacks twice with its unarmed strike.

Kurōnnōruk are easily seen all over Miyaki, distinguished by their stylized robes and prominently displayed clan symbols, but they are far more cunning and subtle when traveling on the mainland. Infiltrating throughout the prefectures and gathering all the information they can, these eyes and ears of Lord Tetsuichiro are everywhere in Soburin—disguised as servants in noble courts, stowed away in the rafters of theaters, masquerading as toughs in tea houses of ill repute, and making as beggars outside the homes of influential diplomats.

Many patriotic citizens of Miyaki have beseeched Lord Tetsuichiro with requests to become part of this secretive order of warriors but none have ever succeeded, each and every one sent away in disappointment (though sometimes with a shukufuku). Among Soburin's clan lords there are dark rumors that the Kurōnnōruk are not even men and women, but instead perverse creations of magic. Their means of finding this information —by torturing and slaying the agents of Miyaki—makes it difficult to disseminate without dreadful repercussions.

The bengoshi of the Masuto Clan go to great lengths to stop the spread a pernicious rumor that claims each and every city in Soburin has at least a trio of these mysterious ninja working inside of it, manipulating events to fall in Miyaki's favor. Due to the curious nature of these warriors, the 200 Imperial Pieces offer for the capture of a live agent of Miyaki is only extended to the most trusted and capable servants.

MIYAKI BENGOSHI

KURŌN — DIFFICULTY 250

Size 1 human (soburi)

Perception 18 (+8); darksight, sees through fog or mist
Defense 18; **Health** 120
Strength 18 (+8), **Agility** 18 (+8), **Intellect** 19 (+9), **Will** 19 (+9)
Speed 20; leap 7
Immune charmed, compelled, frightened, misted, poisoned, stunned
Deflecting Mist Once per turn when hit with a melee weapon attack or melee spell attack, the Kurōn can spend its triggered action to negate it.
Mastered Wavering Form Creatures have 1 bane on attack rolls against the Kurōn. An attacker is immune to this effect if it doesn't rely on sight, such as if they have sightless, or if they can see through illusions, as with truesight.
Mysterious Resistance The Kurōn takes half damage from poison and psychic.
Mistwalker While inside the Mists of Akuma, the Kurōn only requires a challenge roll against corruption at the end of every rest. By spending 1 minute performing a special ritual, the Kurōn may extend this protection to 12 creatures for one day. While inside the Mists of Akuma, the Kurōn's overland speed and the overland speed of creatures under its protection are doubled (this does not affect movement speeds in combat).
Dissipate When destroyed, the Kurōn and all of its equipment revert to mist.

ATTACK OPTIONS

Unarmed Strike (melee) +8 with 1 boon (2d6+1 damage and on a natural roll of 19 or 20, the target makes a Dignity challenge roll with 2 bane or increases its Haitoku by 2)
Striking Mist Before it attacks, the Kurōn can spend its triggered action to increase the reach of its unarmed strikes (by 20 yards) until the end of the round.

SPECIAL ATTACKS

Quadruple Attack The Kurōn attacks four times with its unarmed strike.

SPECIAL ACTIONS

Mist Clone As an action, the Kurōn makes an imperfect copy of itself (a Kurōnnōruk). The Kurōn is in constant telepathic contact with its Kurōnnōruks and can sense everything a Kurōnnōruk senses. The Kurōn may only have 18 Kurōnnōruk at a time. (**GM Note** Actual Kurōn—the original creature—only very rarely have all of their clones and Kurōnnōruk in one place, usually deployed across Soburin in countless schemes and intrigues that require perfect synchronicity for success.)
Mist Substitution After performing a 10 minute ritual, the Kurōn makes a clone of itself that can be stored in any container (a flask, folded piece of paper, small box, or similar item) and released as an action. This clone has the same statistics as the Kurōn, except that it only has 60 Health. The Kurōn is in constant telepathic contact with its clone and can sense everything the clone senses as a minor activity. When destroyed, the clone and all of its equipment revert to mist. The Kurōn may only have 4 clones at a time.

FORBIDDEN TECHNOLOGY

Trading in Barrayt has virtually no restrictions but as long as a merchant can prove that what they are selling does not harm another individual in any significant way (such as drugs or slavery) they are permitted to trade their wares in all of Miyaki.

Little is known about these mysterious functionaries of Lord Tetsuichiro save that they are extremely dangerous and can appear to be in many places at one time (though most erroneously believe this is surely some parlor trick of illusion). The curious resemblance Kurōn have to one another has led to a prevailing belief that the total number of Miyaki bengoshi is only limited by the rumors that exist about them, and any that find out the truth of the matter rarely live long enough to spread disbelief. Adding to the mystery surrounding them, in living memory not a single one of these potent warriors has been unmasked, giving rise to the speculation that they may not even be human but duplicitous oni instead, the forerunners of an invasion led by the enigmatic isle from which they hail.

NAMIDA

Namida was once a wooded land with forests of bamboo, tapok, and more from border to border. Instead of drafting soldiers from the idyllic region to fight in the War of Kaiyo the foreign invaders put its men and women to work ruthlessly consuming the groves until the land was nearly scoured bare. Throughout the Kengen Occupation no other prefecture saw as much sabotage as Namida—despite pain of death for even assisting with one of these attacks on ceramian salvage teams, resistance continued until it became the first rallying point in Emperor Hitoshi's successful rebellion nearly a decade ago.

With a culture and economy dependent on wood the Namida Clan has been hard pressed since the end of the foreign oppression and struggling to feed their subjects. Their methods for dealing with the reappearance of the Mists of Akuma have not been much help—throughout the prefecture's settlements and scattered in the wildernesss are deep, excavated pits surrounded by foot-wide long tunnels and topped with strange fluted structures. These takibishōheki have always been a part of the land and a mystery to all but the most learned sages, though now they are being sought out and used to craft large bonfires when the corrupting fog falls. As the fel haze rolls in citizens huddle into these enclosures, bringing as much wood as they can carry and relying on the plumes of smoke from the flames to ward off the more dangerous Mists of Akuma while the fires themselves discourage adeddo-oni alongside their many axe blades.

Unemployment in Namida is ridiculously high—more people do not have a means to feed themselves than those who do. Banditry has become extremely common and Lady Pingdeng Namida has ordered the prefecture's elite warriors to enforce the law by any means necessary, even acting as stand-in bengoshi if none are present. Amputations in the region are frequent and despite an overall hatred for technology, overwhelming demand has led to steam prosthetics becoming legal and many lords have increased loyalty among their serfs and warriors by offering to replace lost hands or feet. If this continues much longer many believe the prefecture of Namida may shatter into warring bands, each rallied by a different greedy noble.

The Shinku-Kikori are virtually all that stand between the prefecture and true lawlessness, driven by their ancestors to pick up axes of their family and inspired with a thirst to exact vengeance on the ceramians that stripped their lands of resources. Already too few in number they focus their attentions on Bojuku, a city constantly under threat from a yai sovereign in the nearby mountains. Lady Pingden's closest relatives have exhausted most of their political power to consolidate the guards in Toppu—and there are rumors that a truly despicable plan is being set into motion, allowing southern Namida to fail and releasing those lands to their hated nemeses the Gekido. As the seasons pass these duplicitous nobles are subtly pushing for reforms and laws that are dividing the commoners, ensuring that a civil war soon comes to pass that will end with the prefecture fortifying itself around the capital.

Namida's people are known to be dedicated, dependable, determined, and rugged although they are unpredictable and flighty until their axes have bitten deep. Like the stag on their sashimono they possess great and varied strengths, yet remain careful until there is nothing to do but take action. All of the prefecture's citizens hate both ceramians and ropaeo, knowing that their lands will never again be the bountiful place of their forefathers after the actions of the foreign invaders. The Shinku-Kikori loathe the gaijin more than any others and bristle at the sight of augmetics becoming more common wherever they travel—only a scant few suspect that this is one of the many ploys their leaders are using to drive wedges of dissent across Namida. Many outsiders look in on the prefecture from outside of it, patiently waiting for the foolish hubris of Namida's nobles to leave it open to attack.

FORBIDDEN TECHNOLOGY

Firearms, grapple launcher, qì-tóukuī, uso flyer, dainamo omiryō, denki shīrudo, electroheart augmetic, electrolens augmetic, energized pylon augmetic, fan no te, hornear augmetic, ketsueki shokubai, plating augmetic, shindan yokutan, venom spitter

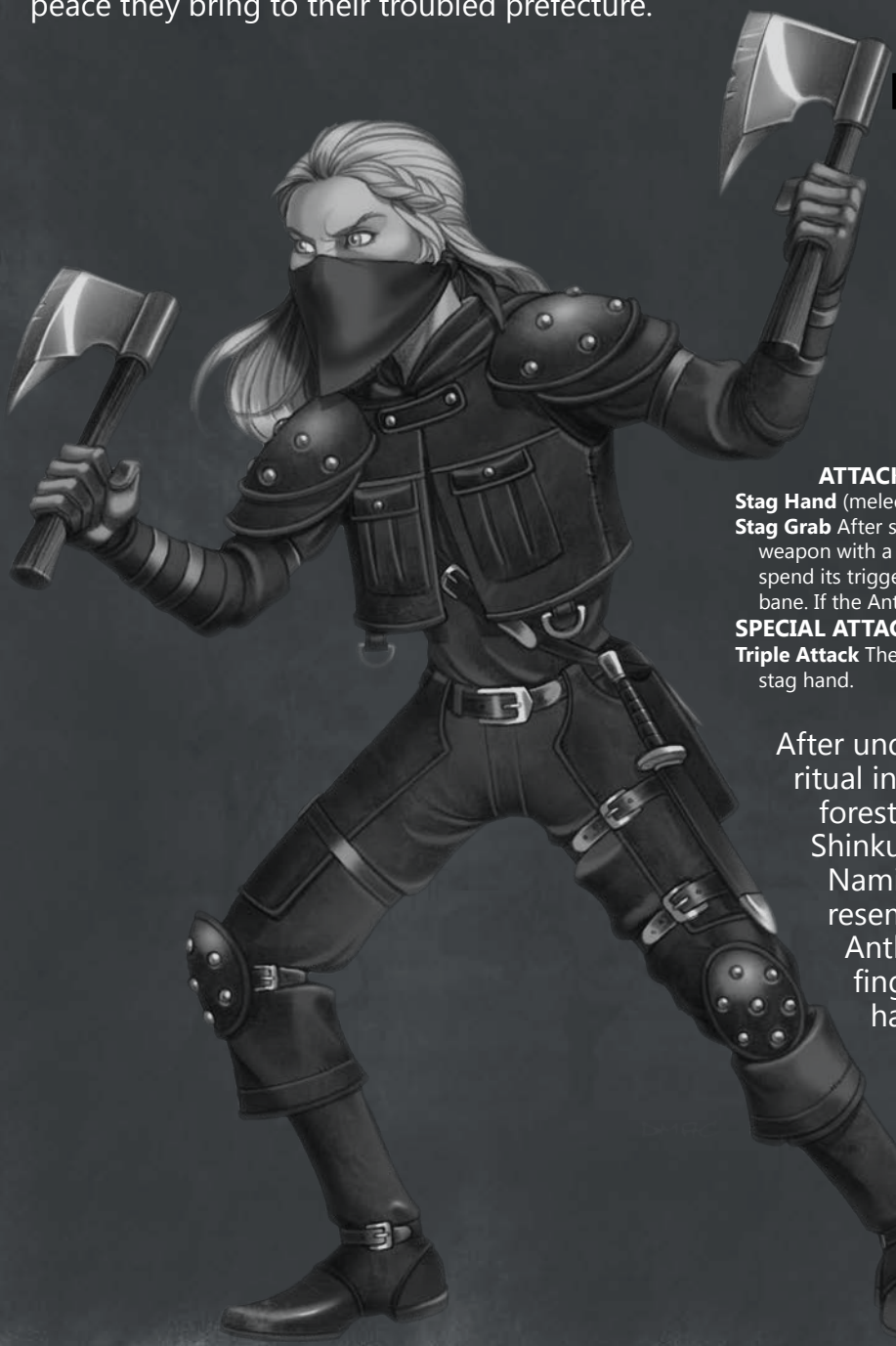
SHINKU-KIKORI DIFFICULTY 50

Size 1 human (soburi)
Perception 12 (+2)
Defense 15 (hard leather); **Health** 45
Strength 15 (+5), **Agility** 13 (+3), **Intellect** 12 (+2), **Will** 13 (+3)
Speed 10; climber 8
Deflecting Blade Once per turn, the Shinku-Kikori can deflect a ranged weapon attack or ranged spell attack while they are wielding at least one axe.
Axe Catcher The Shinku-Kikori impart their axes with a touch of magic as they throw them, causing them to return to their hand immediately afterward so long as the Shinku-Kikori is able to catch it.

ATTACK OPTIONS
Shinku-Axe (melee) +5 with 1 boon (1d6+2 damage)
Throwing Axe (short range) +3 with 2 boons (1d6+2 damage)

SPECIAL ATTACKS
Double Attack The Shunku-Kikori attacks twice with its shinku-axe or throwing axe.

The spirits of the dead compel some descendants to seek out the offspring of those that ruined Namida's forests, leading them to join the Shinku-Kikori and take vengeance regardless of what consequences might follow. Beholden as they are to their ancestors, these deadly wielders of the axe are honored and revered for what little prosperity and peace they bring to their troubled prefecture.



NAMIDA BENGOSHI

ANTLER OF THE STAG DIFFICULTY 100

Size 1 human (soburi)
Perception 15 (+5); darksight
Defense 19 (natural); **Health** 65
Strength 16 (+6), **Agility** 17 (+7), **Intellect** 15 (+5), **Will** 16 (+6)
Speed 18; leap 8
Immune charmed, compelled, frightened, stunned
Evasion When the Antler of the Stag is subjected to an effect that allows it to make an Agility challenge roll to take only half damage, the Antler of the Stag instead takes no damage if it succeeds on the challenge roll, and only half damage if it fails.

ATTACK OPTIONS
Stag Hand (melee; reach +5) +6 with 1 boon (1d6+3 damage)
Stag Grab After successfully striking a foe who is wielding a weapon with a stag hand attack, the Antler of the Stag can spend its triggered action to make a Strength challenge with 1 bane. If the Antler of the Stag succeeds, the target is disarmed.

SPECIAL ATTACKS
Triple Attack The Antler of the Stag attacks three times with its stag hand.

After undergoing an ancient and strange ritual in the deepest groves of the few forests remaining in the prefecture, Shinku-Kikori utterly devoted to the Namida Clan subtly transform to resemble the stag on their banners. Antlers of the Stag can stretch their fingers into many-pronged digits as hard and varied as their namesake, their skin becomes resilient, and they bound with an inhuman dexterity; due to their hardiness and loyalty, Lady Pingdend Namida exclusively drafts her bengoshi from these warriors.

ONI WARLORDS & YAI SOVEREIGNS

Oni, powerful spirits more akin to demons than the forces of nature they embody, have always been a danger in the wildernesses and frontiers of Soburin. In centuries past noble mages and samurai quelled their threat and during the Kengen Occupation the most powerful monstrous lords retreated from civilization to an extent that many believed they were nothing more than myth. In truth the oni warlords were merely waiting for the day that the technology of the invaders wrought self-destruction—just as the fel prophecies of their bones-reading seers foretold. During this long period of hiding they allied with the Imperial Dragons, using the serpents' magic to conceal their fortresses from gaijin eyes and cloud thoughts of the strongholds in the minds of humans.

The monstrous lords of Soburin seek to upend the prefectures, take control of the territories their kind ruled over millennia ago, and to unseat Emperor Hitoshi Masuto to truly cast down the age of soburi rule. Their fortresses in the wilderness teem with bakemono and shikome that emerged from the Mists of Akuma to be pressed into service, used as infantry fodder against the brunt of civilized forces so that more dangerous soldiers might wreak havoc unhindered. Yai sovereigns lair in the mountains, beneath the waves, in the skies above, and in Soburin's few volcanoes; their servants are the elemental creatures that can survive in their hazardous homes (worshiping them as gods) or even less powerful oni warlords who chafe under the servitude.

There are rumors that, despite hostilities, some oni warlords and yai sovereigns have banded together to make exploratory strikes against isolated settlements in the prefectures. These masters of monsters know no depths to their depravity and dishonor, willing to ally even with the rogue Kengen generals if it means causing chaos in Soburin. Their current methods—using the subtler oni to infiltrate the prefectures, assaulting settlements at twilight, summoning unspeakable horrors into the heart of a city, laying curses upon clan lords, and all other methods of evil—are proving too slow in spreading terror across the realms. Should any of their greater plans come to fruition or the oni warlords and yai sovereign present a united front, the Masuto Dynasty may fall forever.

Bakemono and shikome are not the only denizens in oni-warlord fortresses—mutants, necroji, oni-touched, and steametics often find homes there after experiencing what civilization harbors for their kinds. These places are far from pleasant and designed to turn those that dwell there towards anger, greed, selfishness, and xenophobism. Not everyone that leaves these settlements is a bane however and the few souls able to endure their time within are colored to dislike the traits of their former peers, harboring a particular hatred for oni warlords and anyone else that might attempt to wrest control of their minds.

FORBIDDEN TECHNOLOGY

None of the oni warlords forbid technology of any kind (some among them actively crave it) but certain enchanted items (such as *prayer beads*) might be considered contraband.

MONSUTĀHANTĀ DIFFICULTY 100

Size 1 frightening oni

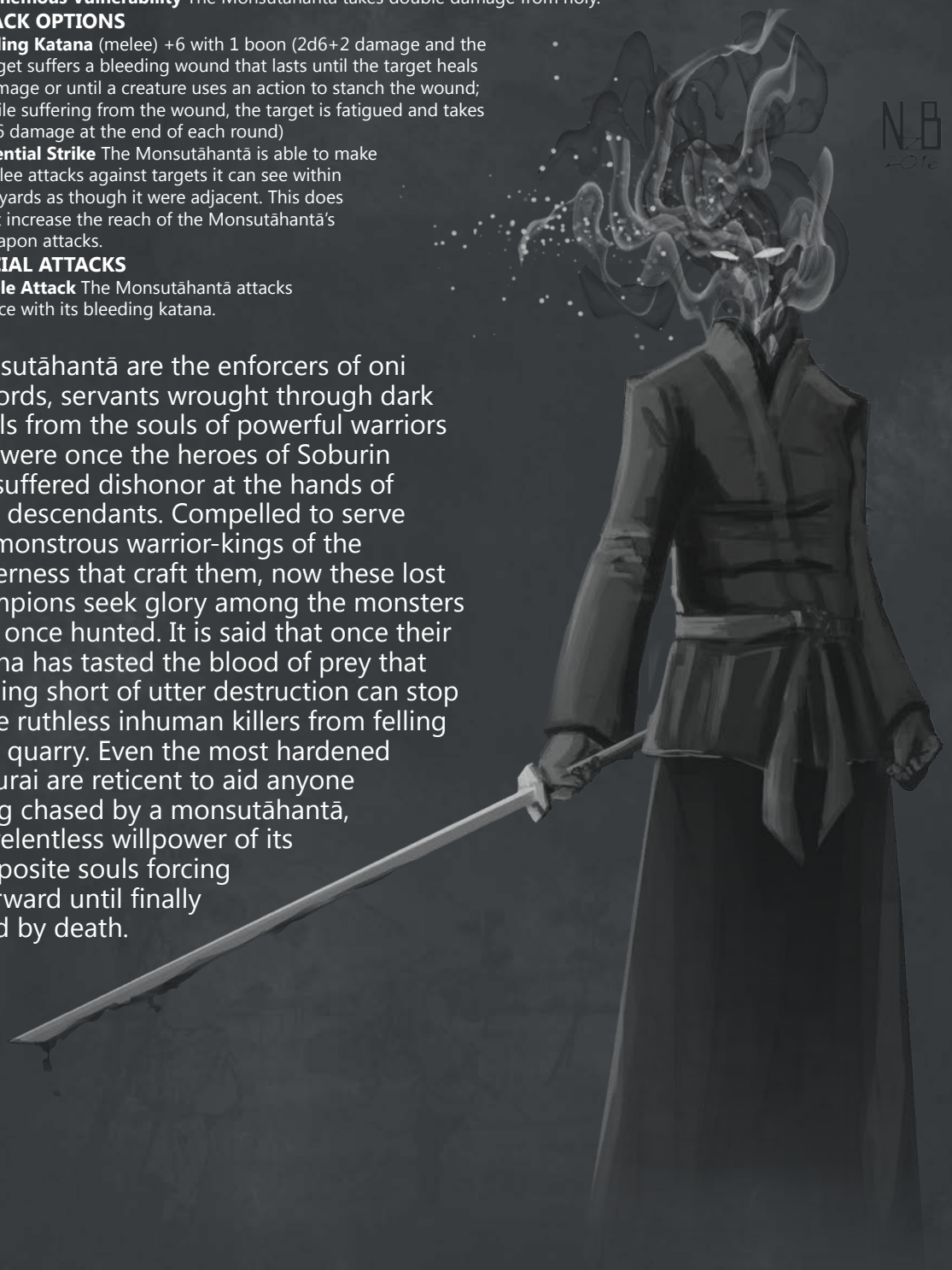
Perception 14 (+14); darksight
Defense 16; **Health** 60
Strength 14 (+4), **Agility** 16 (+6), **Intellect** 14 (+4), **Will** 16 (+6)
Speed 18; leap 8
Immune damage from poison, psychic, and unholy; charmed, compelled, frightened, poisoned
Blasphemous Resistance The Monsutāhantā takes half damage from cold and weapons.
Evasion When the Monsutāhantā is subjected to an effect that allows it to make an Agility challenge roll to take only half damage, the Monsutāhantā instead takes no damage if it succeeds on the challenge roll, and only half damage if it fails.
Incredible Dodge Once per turn, the Monsutāhantā can ignore a weapon attack or spell attack.
Blasphemous Vulnerability The Monsutāhantā takes double damage from holy.

ATTACK OPTIONS

Bleeding Katana (melee) +6 with 1 boon (2d6+2 damage and the target suffers a bleeding wound that lasts until the target heals damage or until a creature uses an action to stanch the wound; while suffering from the wound, the target is fatigued and takes 1d6 damage at the end of each round)
Existential Strike The Monsutāhantā is able to make melee attacks against targets it can see within 35 yards as though it were adjacent. This does not increase the reach of the Monsutāhantā's weapon attacks.

SPECIAL ATTACKS

Double Attack The Monsutāhantā attacks twice with its bleeding katana.



Monsutāhantā are the enforcers of oni warlords, servants wrought through dark rituals from the souls of powerful warriors that were once the heroes of Soburin but suffered dishonor at the hands of their descendants. Compelled to serve the monstrous warrior-kings of the wilderness that craft them, now these lost champions seek glory among the monsters they once hunted. It is said that once their katana has tasted the blood of prey that nothing short of utter destruction can stop these ruthless inhuman killers from felling their quarry. Even the most hardened samurai are reticent to aid anyone being chased by a monsutāhantā, the relentless willpower of its composite souls forcing it forward until finally sated by death.

ONI BENGOSHI

XIQZOXIX — DIFFICULTY 250

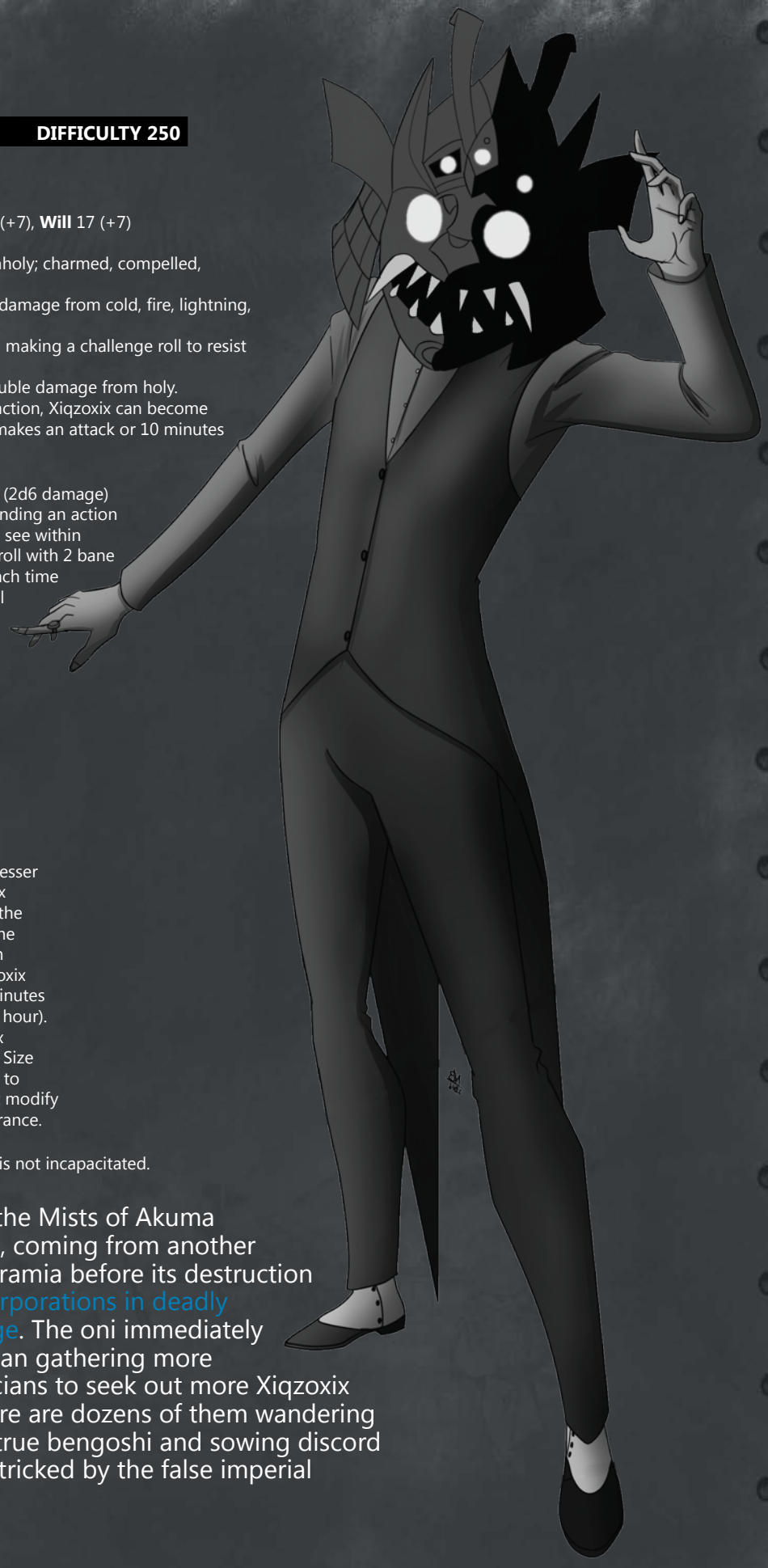
Size 1 horrifying oni
Perception 17 (+7); darksight
Defense 18; **Health** 120 (Regeneration)
Strength 15 (+5), **Agility** 18 (+8), **Intellect** 17 (+7), **Will** 17 (+7)
Speed 14; flier 14
Immune damage from poison, psychic, and unholy; charmed, compelled, frightened, poisoned
Blasphemous Resistances Xiqzoxix takes half damage from cold, fire, lightning, and weapons.
Magic Resistance Xiqzoxix gains 1 boon when making a challenge roll to resist spells and magical effects.
Blasphemous Vulnerability Xiqzoxix takes double damage from holy.
Invisible Attacker By spendings its triggered action, Xiqzoxix can become invisible. This invisibility lasts until Xiqzoxix makes an attack or 10 minutes have passed.

ATTACK OPTIONS
Razor Whip (melee; reach +2) +8 with 1 boon (2d6 damage)
Enchanting Gaze Once per round without spending an action Xiqzoxix can set its sight on a creature it can see within 30 yards. The target makes a Will challenge roll with 2 bane or gains the charmed affliction for 1 hour. Each time the target takes damage, it makes a new Will challenge roll. If the challenge roll succeeds, they are no longer charmed. After successfully resisting against this effect a creature cannot be charmed by Xiqzoxix for 24 hours.

SPECIAL ATTACKS
Sneak Attack Once per turn after successfully hitting a creature adjacent to one of its allies, Xiqzoxix deals 2d6 extra damage.
Triple Attack Xiqzoxix attacks three times with its razor whip.

SPECIAL ACTIONS
Minions Xiqzoxix are always accompanied by lesser oni bound to their will. As an action, Xiqzoxix may mentally summon 2d6 bakemono (use the statistics for **Goblins**) or 1d6 shikome (use the statistics for **Hobgoblins**) that appear within 60 yards at the end of the round. Once Xiqzoxix has used Minions, it cannot do so for 1d6 minutes (and if it has summoned 13 or more allies, 1 hour).
Shapechanger By spending an action, Xiqzoxix assumes the form of any human of Size 1 or Size 1/2. It gains 3 boon on challenge rolls made to maintain this disguise. This change does not modify Xiqzoxix's statistics or Health, only its appearance.

END OF THE ROUND
Regeneration Xiqzoxix heals 2d6 damage if it is not incapacitated.

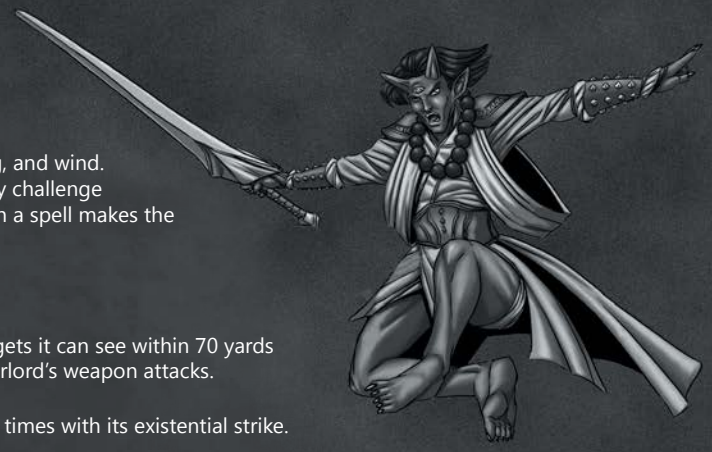


Xiqzoxix wandered from out of the Mists of Akuma shortly after the mists appeared, coming from another plane of existence not unlike Ceramia before its destruction —a place ruled over by hypercorporations in deadly games of intrigue and subterfuge. The oni immediately felt at home in Soburin and began gathering more like themselves, using oni magicians to seek out more Xiqzoxix across the dimensions. Now there are dozens of them wandering the prefectures, impersonating true bengoshi and sowing discord with every band of adventurers tricked by the false imperial functionaries.

ONI WARLORD — DIFFICULTY 500

Size 3 horrifying oni

Perception 14 (+4); darksight, truesight
Defense 20; **Health** 200 (Regeneration)
Strength 18 (+8), **Agility** 16 (+6), **Intellect** 14 (+4), **Will** 16 (+6)
Speed 18; climber 10
Immune damage from poison, psychic, or unholy; charmed, compelled, frightened, poisoned
Oni Resistances The Oni Warlord takes half damage from cold, fire, lightning, and wind.
Spell Defense The Oni Warlord takes half damage from spells and makes any challenge roll to resist a spell with 2 boons. A creature attacking the Oni Warlord with a spell makes the attack roll with 2 bane.
Vulnerability The Oni Warlord takes double damage from holy.



ATTACK OPTIONS

Katana (melee) +8 with 2 boons (3d6+2 damage)
Existential Strike The Oni Warlord is able to make melee attacks against targets it can see within 70 yards as though it were adjacent. This does not increase the reach of the Oni Warlord's weapon attacks.

SPECIAL ATTACKS

Multiple Attacks The Oni Warlord attacks four times with its katana or three times with its existential strike.

SPECIAL ACTIONS

Minions Oni Warlords are always accompanied by lesser oni enslaved to their will. By spending an action calling them with its mind, the Oni Warlord may summon 3d6 bakemono (use the statistics for **Goblins**), 2d6 shikome (use the statistics for **Hobgoblins**), or any two oni (with difficulty ratings of 50 or lower) that appear within 60 yards at the end of the round. Once the Oni Warlord uses Minions, it cannot do so again for 1 minute (and if it has summoned 20 or more allies, 1 hour).
Slaving Cord As an action, the Oni Warlord can tie its slaving cord to any creature with the grabbed affliction by succeeding on a Strength challenge roll against a target number equal to the creature's Strength (no roll is required to use this ability against a defenseless or unconscious creature). On a success, at the end of each round the creature gains the immobilized affliction and must succeed on a Will challenge roll with 1 bane or fall under the Oni Warlord's control, gaining the compelled affliction for 5 minutes. If an immobilized creature remains inside the slaving cord for one minute while already compelled, they must succeed an additional Will challenge roll with 2 bane or the duration of the effect increases to 5 days. Creatures that spend an entire hour wrapped in the Oni Warlord's slaving cord while compelled must succeed a Will challenge roll with 3 bane or become its thrall for 5 weeks (or even longer, at the GM's discretion).

END OF THE ROUND

Regeneration The Oni Warlord heals 4d6 damage at the end of each round that it is not incapacitated.

The few regions of wilderness remaining in Soburin are home to oni warlords that rule over their territories with iron fists, destroying any signs of disrespect or insurrection. Once these warrior-kings of the wilds had pacts with the Imperial Dragons (hiding their fortresses throughout the Kengen Occupation) but these alliances have dissolved and now the most ambitious of the monstrous commanders look to their peers with an eye on the lands (and peoples) of the prefectures.

YAI SOVEREIGN — DIFFICULTY 750

Size 5 horrifying oni

Perception 20 (+10); darksight, truesight
Defense 20; **Health** 300
Strength 21 (+11), **Agility** 20 (+10), **Intellect** 20 (+10), **Will** 22 (+12)
Speed 20
Immune damage from poison or unholy; charmed, compelled, fatigued, frightened, poisoned
Legendary Resistance Once per turn when the Yai Sovereign fails a challenge roll made to resist taking damage, it can choose to succeed instead. Once the Yai Sovereign uses Legendary Resistance, it cannot do so again for 1d6 rounds.
Spell Defense The Yai Sovereign takes half damage from spells and makes any challenge roll to resist a spell with 3 boons. A creature attacking the Yai Sovereign with a spell makes the attack roll with 3 bane.
Ancient Knowledge The Yai Sovereign gains 2 boons on Intellect challenge rolls made to recall information.
Telepathy The Yai Sovereign can communicate telepathically within 70 yards.

ATTACK OPTIONS

Sovereign Weapon (melee) +11 with 1 boon (3d6 damage plus 1d6 elemental damage)
Elemental Attack (long range) +10 with 1 boon (4d6 damage)

SPECIAL ATTACKS

Multiple Attacks The Yai Sovereign attacks three times with its sovereign weapon or twice with its elemental attack.

SPECIAL ACTIONS

Territorial Control Yai Sovereigns are capable of extending their senses across their territory (as *clairvoyance*). At the GM's discretion, a Yai Sovereign can cause natural disasters within their territory (like tornadoes, earthquakes, whirlpools, volcanic eruptions, and so on) by spending 10 minutes undertaking ancient rituals.

ELEMENTAL EMBODIMENT

Yai Sovereigns are avatars of nature that personify the power of air, earth, fire, metal, water, and wood. In addition to the normal abilities for a Yai Sovereign and a weapon emblematic of its element, choose one of the corresponding options:

- **Air** flier 30, sightless, immunity to damage from lightning, lightning damage to sovereign weapon attacks, and at the end of the round it is able to summon a **Wind Genie** with its triggered action (after doing so it cannot do so again for 1 hour).
- **Earth** tunnel, immunity to damage from acid, acid damage to sovereign weapon attacks, and at the end of the round it is able to summon an **Earth Genie** with its triggered action (after doing so it cannot do so again for 1 hour).
- **Flame** flier 20, immunity to damage from fire, fire damage to sovereign weapon attacks, and at the end of the round it is able to summon a **Fire Genie** with its triggered action (after doing so it cannot do so again for 1 hour).
- **Metal** the Yai Sovereign takes half damage from weapons that are not enchanted, increases damage to sovereign weapon attacks, when targeting the Yai Sovereign of Metal attacks made with weapons that are part metal are made with 1 bane, and at the end of the round it is able to summon a construct with a difficulty of 100 or less with its triggered action (after doing so it cannot do so again for 1 hour).
- **Water** swimmer 30, immunity to damage from cold, cold damage to sovereign weapon attacks, and at the end of the round it is able to summon a **Water Genie** with its triggered action (after doing so it cannot do so again for 1 hour).
- **Wood** climber 20, immunity to damage from poison, poison damage to sovereign weapon attacks, the Yai Sovereign of Wood heals 3d6 damage at the end of the round if it is not incapacitated, when targeting the Yai Sovereign of Wood attacks made with weapons that are part wood are made with 1 bane, and at the end of the round it is able to summon a plant or huge monster with the plant subtype with a difficulty of 100 or less with its triggered action (after doing so it cannot do so again for 1 hour).

END OF THE ROUND

At the end of the round, the Yai Sovereign takes one of the following actions.

Elemental Attack The Yai Sovereign makes an elemental attack.

Elemental Cloud The Yai Sovereign chooses a spot within 40 yards, filling a 10-yard-radius circle around it with its element (bolts of electricity, streams of acid, licking fires, metallic shards, freezing jets, or wooden splinters) dealing 3d6 damage to all the objects and creatures inside the area of effect. Creatures make an Agility challenge roll with 2 bane, gaining the prone affliction on a failure or taking only half damage with a success.

Elemental Stride The Yai Sovereign can use 1 yard of its move to step magically into an area of its element within its reach and emerge from a second area of its element within long range of the first area, appearing in an unoccupied space within 1 yard of the second area. Both areas of element must be large enough to accommodate the Yai Sovereign.

Yai sovereigns are powerful oni that have lived for millennia, attaining such a mastery over the elemental forces of Soburin that they embody the world's primal energies. Rather than fight against the superior scientific weaponry of the overwhelming armadas, these monstrous lords struck alliances to protect themselves during the Kengen Occupation, making the ceramian invasion free from elemental entanglements. Now that a Masuto Emperor rules once more however, they have begun to test the limits of his authority and seek to stake out great territories of their own once again. Each yai sovereign lives in a fortress devoted to their element (either in the air, beneath the sea, in one of Soburin's few remaining forests, atop a mountain, or within the firmament) and rules over courts of elemental creatures less potent than themselves, waiting for a moment to strike against the prefectures and claim greater swathes of land as theirs.

OSORE

The Osore Clan enjoyed a peaceful coexistence with the local pyon population before the Kengen Occupation began, farming the realms' southern swamplands and delivering everything from reeds to exotic spider silks to be sold at the famed floating market in Konbo. This relationship was in many ways a model to many of the prefectures around them; where others sometimes struggled with inhumans, Osore developed a subtle, gentle relationship with the frog folk and over time, learned their tribal spirits and meditative ways. When the ceramians arrived this relationship changed as the pyon stepped up and aided the clan—as well as all of their allies—against the foreigners that looked to dominate their lands. Although the prefecture fought bravely they were defeated after the Satsuijin Clan's betrayal following the Battle of Gyakusatsu, broken as a whole but strengthening the alliance between Osore and the amphibians they had grown to respect and admire. After surrendering they volunteered to manage Soburin's pyon population, knowing the frog folks' ways well enough to safeguard against cruelty and abuse throughout the Kengen Occupation and further cementing their bonds with one another.

Carefully setting up secret enclaves throughout the prefecture under the watchful gaze of disapproving ceramian officers, the Osore Clan expertly camouflaged their doings from foreign scouts by embracing fogs summoned up by orders of swampwalkers (shamans that have known Soburin's bogs since before the Ichizoku Wars). These shrouded territories became places free from oppressive influences and encouraging of exploration, both of the inner and outer worlds; Osore and their pyon allies spent days within learning and meditating, focusing on the mysteries of life and using the quiet marshlands around them as a mirror to the soul. Whereas others came to fear the reappearing Mists of Akuma their people developed an odd, if tranquil appreciation for the corrupting fog thanks to the mystics of the swamps—with a deep understanding of corruption and decay from their time in study, Osore warriors have honed a limited ability to control the supernatural phenomena. Though their techniques are not as nuanced as those of the Miyaki Clan, they are just as effective and sought after.

The Seven Leaves are a small group of mystics that wield great influence in Osore, at the forefront of the clan's research into the truth behind the Mists of Akuma and putting the swamps to good use by turning the once hidden enclaves into natural laboratories where the connection of the swampwalkers can be studied and fully understood. These are not as widespread as some believe but their output is nothing short of spectacular and in fact, it is fairly common for mystics or even scientists studying the supernatural haze to make special trips to their most prominent (and easily discovered) encampments near **Engi**, **Hansbunomana**, **Shirazu**, and **Supin** to either learn more about the fel fogs or at least return with some hopeful new insight.

Of course finding a swampwalker enclave is no small affair even without the shrouding mists of the swampwalkers and any who seeking one out are bound to discover another of the Osore Clan's secrets—the numanojanpā. Trained to fight side by side in their native marshes these human and pyon ninjas enjoy a connection to the surrounding lands that makes them truly deadly. Using special techniques designed to ease their movement in and around their native bogs, these elite swampwalkers hunt down the clan's enemies, guard their enclaves, and spring traps on anyone foolish enough to wage war against the otherwise peaceful Osore. The shinobi are not only found within the bogs however, and have been seen as far north as Rimono and as far south as Uragi, combing across the scientific prefectures for reasons and purposes unknown; despite protests taken from his peers directly to Lord Huang Osore, the amphibian ninjas continue their curious work.

FORBIDDEN TECHNOLOGY

The people of the Osore Clan frown on much of the technology popular among the invaders of Soburin (banning the trade of any firearms or advanced prostheses) but this is especially true of the denki shīrudo and ketsueki shokubai; their sale, installation, or repair is strictly forbidden inside the prefecture, carrying sentences of not only heavy fines but also imprisonment.

NUMANOJANPĀ — DIFFICULTY 50

Size ½ pyon
Perception 12 (+2); darksight
Defense 16 (soft leather); **Health** 45
Strength 10 (+0), **Agility** 15 (+5), **Intellect** 12 (+2), **Will** 13 (+3)
Speed 8; climber 6, leap 15
Mist Meditation By spending an action, the Numanojanpā may cast *iridescent shield* without the need for any words of power or implements. Once the Numanojanpā has used Mist Meditation, it cannot do so again until it has finished a rest.
Reflexive Dodge When the Numanojanpā is aware of an attacker, it may spend its triggered action to reduce the damage of an attack or spell by half.

ATTACK OPTIONS
Triple Staff (melee) +0 with 2 boons (1d6 damage)
Shuriken (short range) +5 with 1 boon (1d3+1 damage])

SPECIAL ATTACKS
Multiple Attack The Numanojanpā attacks three times with its triple staff or five times with its shuriken.

END OF THE ROUND
Mist Jump The Numanojanpā may instantly engulf itself in swamp mists , turning invisible for 1d3 rounds and teleporting up to 20 yards away to any unoccupied space it can see. Once the Numanojanpā uses Mist Jump, it cannot do so for 1d6 rounds.

Commonly known as mist jumpers, these warriors are utterly dedicated to their clan—silent, skilled, and deadly ninjas that haunt the dwindling swamps like ghosts. They patrol their enclaves and hunt down Lord Huang Osore's enemies when needed, wielding the chosen weapon of the Osore Clan and working from the shadows to eliminate foolish trespassers in their sacred homelands.

OSORE BENGOSHI

NUMANOJANPĀ SENMONKA — DIFFICULTY 100

Size 1 human (soburi)
Perception 15 (+5); darksight
Defense 18 (*arcane armor*); **Health** 70
Strength 11 (+1), **Agility** 16 (+6), **Intellect** 15 (+5), **Will** 15 (+5)
Speed 10; leap 16
Immune damage from wind; charmed, compelled, frightened
Invocations The Numanojanpā Senmonka can cast *arcane armor, disguise,* and *fog* without the need for implements or speaking the words. The Numanojanpā Senmonka does not need to maintain concentration on any of these spells.

ATTACK OPTIONS
Fall Winds (medium range) +6 with 1 boon (3d6 thunder damage)
Mistfire As an action, the Numanojanpā Senmonka may instantly ignite standing fog from a point it chooses within 40 yards, dealing 5d6 points of fire damage to all creatures in a 10-yard radius. A successful Agility challenge roll with 1 bane halves this damage.

SPECIAL ATTACKS
Double Attack The Numanojanpā Senmonka attacks twice with its fall winds.

MAGIC
Power 5
Enchantment *charm* (3), *command* (3), *question* (2), *compel* (2), *mind bondage* (1), *cower* (1)
Illusion *figment* (4), *thimblerig* (4), *glamer* (3), *invisibility* (3), *decoy* (2), *phantasm* (2), *mirage* (1)
Teleportation *dismiss* (4), *fetch* (4), *remove* (3), *shortcut* (3), *boundless step* (2), *fuse* (2), *travel* (1)

Numanojanpā senmonka are frequently called the Masters of the Mist and represent the living will of Lord Huang Osore. Although their liege dislikes dispatching his most trusted servants, he allows these esteemed mystics to travel to places touched by the Mists of Akuma knowing that they have a call to understand the corrupting fog that even he cannot fully grasp.

RIMONO

The islands of Rimono's physical isolation spared it from the worst ravages of the Kengen Occupation's fall but not from a far more vicious foe: its own failing economy. When foreigners first arrived in Soburin they did not lead with guns and bombs, but diplomats and spies. Many fell under their sway but none more than Rimono's capital of Shori, and before the first troop ships landed the northwesternmost prefecture was entirely under the invaders' sway. By the time the fighting truly began the islands were not just a safe haven for ceramian forces but a series of military factories growing fat on the spoils of war. The Rimono people plundered the mountains and fields for the metal and fuel to build technologically-advanced war machines—but nothing in greater quantities than explosives.

Collapsing almost overnight after Hitoshi's Rebellion, the island prefecture suffered greatly when they lost the masters who had sustained them, made enemies of their own countrymen, and poisoned their own lands. Rich lords were ignorant to the cries of the lower classes, casually blaming them for Rimono's poor turn of fortune without admitting their own hand in the matter or offering support to the growing desperate throng. Less than a month after Emperor Masuto's return to the throne the masses rose up in bloody rebellion. Many rich families lost everything overnight, including their lives, yet ultimately the insurrection changed little for the people who needed it the most. Surviving aristocrats doubled and tripled their protections while commoners that ascended in the insurrection joined them in their lavish estates, homes paved with the blood of poverty-stricken workers.

Only the covert support of the rogue Kengen generals (and the even more secretive support of a handful of other territories) keep the few surviving Rimono cities alive, paying their bills in grain as much as coin. The lords of **Shori** plow heedlessly forward, still producing greater and more dangerous weapons of destruction as the prefecture slowly implodes. There are such a plethora of these devices that some are simply abandoned after their creation; warehouses litter the city, each lined with explosive shells and components of ceramian war machines. Those desperate or brave enough often steal into these lightly-guarded buildings to find something they might later sell, not realizing the stolen weapons are typically the same ones used to arm their oppressors. Worse yet many of the dusty pieces of technology are nearing a century in age, beginning to stir as dangerous tsukumogami.

From within her palace at the peak of Shori, Lady Taho Rimono is either cruel or ignorant of the growing dangers as her family is still wealthy and well-armed, nearly unscathed from the rebellion less than a decade ago. She passively watches as vigilantes have begun to take to the street to solve the city's problems with violence and somberly waits as the death toll climbs from each sighting of the Mists of Akuma. When the supernatural haze rolls in the citizenry mostly retreat to carefully shielded bunkers throughout the cities, pressing hundreds of desperate and often heavily-armed people into tight confines for hours or sometimes days at a time. It is not unknown for these shelters to erupt in violence—or flames—before the corrupting fogs have receded, causing the prefecture's population to decline even faster than slow starvation would predict.

Rimono's citizens have worse problems than their leader's indifference. The Chika have begun to ruthlessly blot out crime in Shori—not for the good of the people, but to remove competition. Although barely-organized criminal group recently found unification against a common foe: Kōmoro Toko. This masked figure strikes back against the Chika to a mixed reaction from the populace. Some see the masked and weaponless samurai as a dangerous criminal, while others others praise him as a savior. The Chika understand the truth—that in their hostile takeover of the city, Kōmoro Toko is nothing but trouble.

The second largest city in Rimono is **Unmei**, a reflection of Shori but with notably less devotion to the invaders, suffering from an equally less dramatic fall. Outbreaks of violence and acts of desperation are not as common as in the prefecture's capital but much of the settlement is abandoned, leaving only a meager fishing industry hunched in the remaining skeleton of the formerly sprawling metropolis.

FORBIDDEN TECHNOLOGY

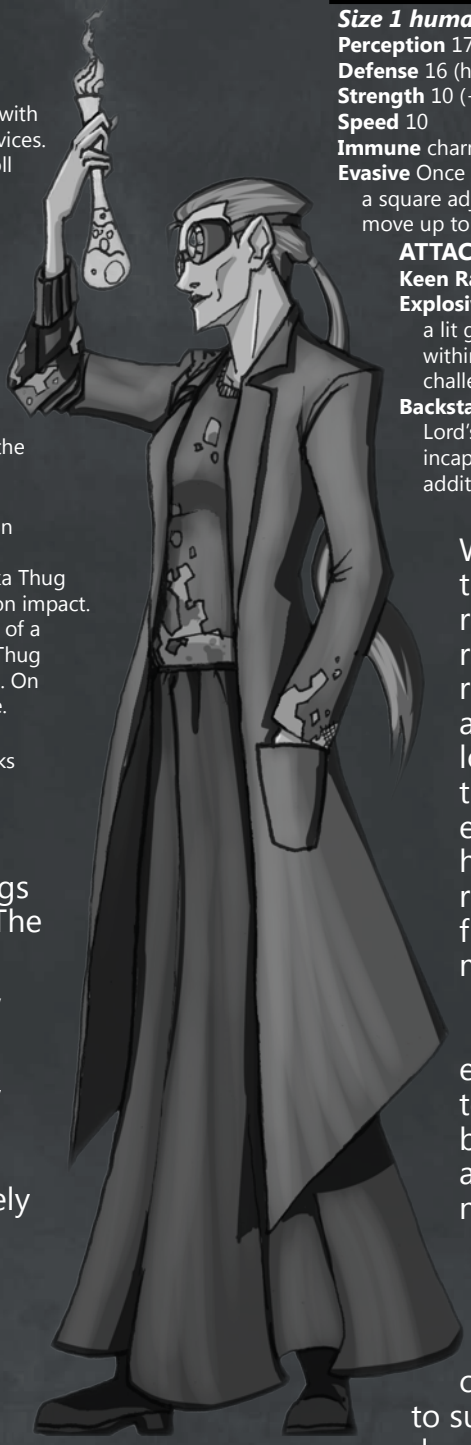
As though it would somehow apologize for supporting the gaijin oppressors, there is a great deal of "law" detailing how "ceramian technology" or "ropaeo arms" are outright illegal (mostly augmetics and firearms).

CHIKA THUG — DIFFICULTY 25

Size 1 human (soburi)
Perception 10 (+0)
Defense 13 (hard leather); **Health** 25
Strength 12 (+2), **Agility** 11 (+1), **Intellect** 10 (+0), **Will** 10 (+0)
Speed 10
Explosive Chika Thugs are equipped with dozens of low-quality explosive devices. Whenever they take fire damage roll 1d6; on a 1 or 2, they explode and deal 4d6 fire damage to all creatures within 3 yards.
Self-Detonate When a Chika Thug would take damage, it can hurl itself up to 3 yards in any direction. At the end of this movement they explode, dealing 4d6 fire damage to all creatures within 3 yards (including themselves). This does not trigger the Chika Thug's explosive ability.

ATTACK OPTIONS
Chikahammer (melee) +2 with 1 boon (1d6+2 damage)
Crude Grenade As an action the Chika Thug tosses a lit grenade that explodes on impact. All creatures within a 2-yard-radius of a point within 10 yards of the Chika Thug must make an Agility challenge roll. On a failure, they take 2d6 fire damage.

SPECIAL ATTACKS
Double Attack The Chika Thug attacks twice with its chikahammer.



Like many of Rimono's homeless masses, the thugs who follow the orders of The Chika are desperate and with nowhere else to turn, they arm themselves with whatever old, salvaged, and broken weapons they are able to collect from the ruins of the city around them. Unfortunately for the settlements other residents that usually means discarded ammunitions and explosives, making what would be a bunch of rowdy ne'er-do-wells into a truly dangerous group of individuals that pose a serious threat to even the best defended generals, merchants, and nobles. The worst sins of the Chika Gang are the blight they force on Rimono—it is exceptionally difficult to convince a patron to donate funds for building repair when it has been blasted and blown apart two or three times before.

RIMONO BENGOSHI

EXPLOSIVE LORD — DIFFICULTY 100

Size 1 human (soburi)
Perception 17 (+7); darksight
Defense 16 (hard leather); **Health** 85
Strength 10 (+0), **Agility** 14 (+4), **Intellect** 17 (+7), **Will** 13 (+3)
Speed 10
Immune charmed, compelled, frightened
Evasive Once per turn when a hostile creature would move into a square adjacent to an Explosive Lord, the Explosive Lord can move up to 2 yards.

ATTACK OPTIONS
Keen Rapier (melee) +4 with 2 boons (1d6+4 damage)
Explosive Grenade As an action, the Explosive Lord throws a lit grenade. All creature within a 3-yard radius of a point within 20 yards of the Explosive Lord must make an Agility challenge roll with 1 bane or take 5d6 fire damage.
Backstab Once per turn if at least one of the Explosive Lord's allies is within 1 yard of a creature and the ally isn't incapacitated, an Explosive Lord and that ally both do an additional 3d6 damage with melee weapon attacks.

With Rimono falling on such hard times, the agents of the empire routinely hire mercenaries to quell riots or delve into the now-haunted ruins of many of the prefecture's abandoned manor houses to locate lost treasures. Of course many of the so-called treasures they seek are experimental ceramian weapons, hidden in almost-forgotten or recently-rediscovered laboratories frequently concealed beneath such manor houses—including their own.

Just as the prefecture and its capital have been ravaged by their easily won loyalty to the invaders, so too are its intended saviors fractured by their own ambitions and greed. Of all Soburin's bengoshi Rimono's are notorious for offering the cheapest rewards, sometimes not even paying even for a job well done. This hasn't made them any less popular however as the funds are certainly not wasted, diverted instead to supplying the components, facilities, and precise tools the various Explosive Lords across the prefecture require for their confidential experimentations. Despite the secretive nature of their research there is a dangerously fierce competition between them when focuses of study converge and rather than do the work Lady Taho Rimono appointed them to accomplish, they sabotage each other (often ending with valuable machines in the hands of adventurers).

KŌMORO TOKO (YANE SAYO) DIFFICULTY 250

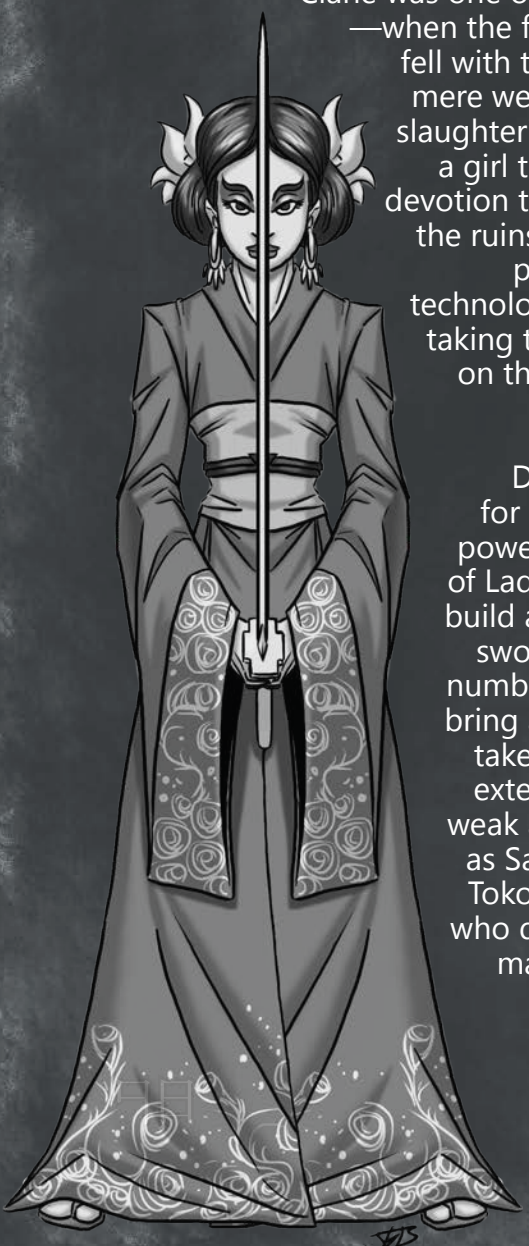
Size 1 human (soburi)
Perception 15 (+5); darksight
Defense 18 (hard leather); **Health** 125
Strength 14 (+4), **Agility** 16 (+6), **Intellect** 15 (+5), **Will** 17 (+7)
Speed 14; leap 4
Immune charmed, compelled, fatigued, frightened
Enchanted Armor Kōmoro Toko takes half damage from weapons that are not enchanted.
Kōmoro Cape When Kōmoro Toko would fall she may instead choose to glide on her cape, traveling 1 yard horizontally for every 1 yard she falls. Even when she does not glide, she never takes damage from falling and always lands on her feet.

ATTACK OPTIONS
Katana (melee) +4 with 3 boons (3d6 damage) or +6 with 2 boons (2d6 damage)
Kōmoro Shuriken (medium range) +6 with 2 boons (1d6+3 damage)
Imposing Glare Once per turn, one creature able to see Kōmoro Toko must make a Will challenge roll with 2 bane or become frightened for 1d6 rounds. With her triggered action Kōmoro Toko may use this ability against a creature she has already frightened, extending the duration to 1d6 minutes on a second failed Will challenge roll with 2 bane.

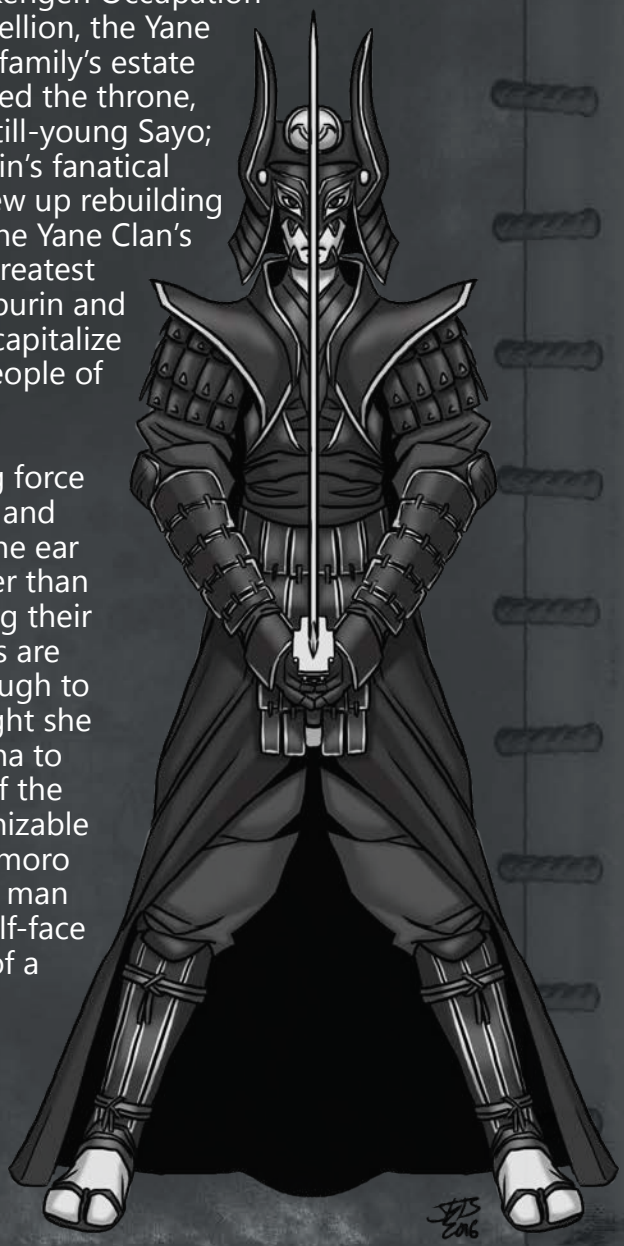
SPECIAL ATTACKS
Multiple Attacks Kōmoro Toko attacks three times with her katana or five times with her kōmoro shuriken.

SPECIAL ACTIONS
Exceptional Resources If given 24 hours Kōmoro Toko can collect, purchase, or craft a high-quality item that grants her 3 boons to any specific challenge roll. She may carry up to five exceptional resources at any one time.
Two Identities Yane Sayo and Kōmoro Toko are one and the same. While she is assuming one persona any attempt to locate the other persona fails, as though they did not exist. Any attempt to identify the two identities as one another (without evidence, such as witnessing her changing identities) requires an Intellect challenge roll with 4 bane. Changing identities takes 1 minute, as much a mental change as it is a change in clothing and manner.

Rising spectacularly during the War of Kaiyo to become the richest family in Shori, the Yane Clane was one of the biggest beneficiaries of the Kengen Occupation—when the foreigners fell during Hitoshi's Rebellion, the Yane fell with them. Rebels in Shori stormed the family's estate mere weeks after Emperor Masuto reclaimed the throne, slaughtering nearly everyone save for the still-young Sayo; a girl that never fully subscribed to her kin's fanatical devotion to the Kengen Occupation. She grew up rebuilding the ruins of her home and consolidating the Yane Clan's power, rediscovering some of the greatest technological prototypes to ever grace Soburin and taking them to battle against those who capitalize on the constant threats faced by the people of Rimono.



During the day Sayo Yane is a rising force for stability in Shiro, using her wealth and power to rebuild the city. She vies for the ear of Lady Taho Rimono to sow crops rather than build arms, knowing that without beating their swords into plowshares, the city's days are numbered. This alone has not been enough to bring about change however, and by night she takes to the streets in a second persona to exterminate those taking advantage of the weak and poor: Kōmoro Toko. Unrecognizable as Sayo even to her closest friends, Kōmoro Toko is perceived as a powerfully-built man who dresses in samurai armor with a half-face mask that resembles a bat (instead of a traditional oni).



During the day Sayo Yane is a force for stability in Shiro, using her wealth and influence to rebuild the city. She vies for the ear of Lady Taho Rimono to sow crops rather than build arms, knowing that without beating their swords into plowshares, the city's days are numbered. This alone has not been enough to bring about change however, and by night she takes to the streets in a second persona to exterminate those taking advantage of the weak and poor: Kōmoro Toko. Unrecognizable as Sayo even to her closest friends, Kōmoro Toko is seen to be a powerfully-built man dressed in samurai armor with a mempo that resembles a bat (instead of a traditional oni). The disparate heads of Shori's gangs have ceased their territorial disputes to meet the threat of Sayo's alternate persona, hatching plans within plans to capture the vigilante and consolidate their control over Rimono's last viable city before it's too late to be profitable.

KŌMORO TOKO'S MENAGERIE

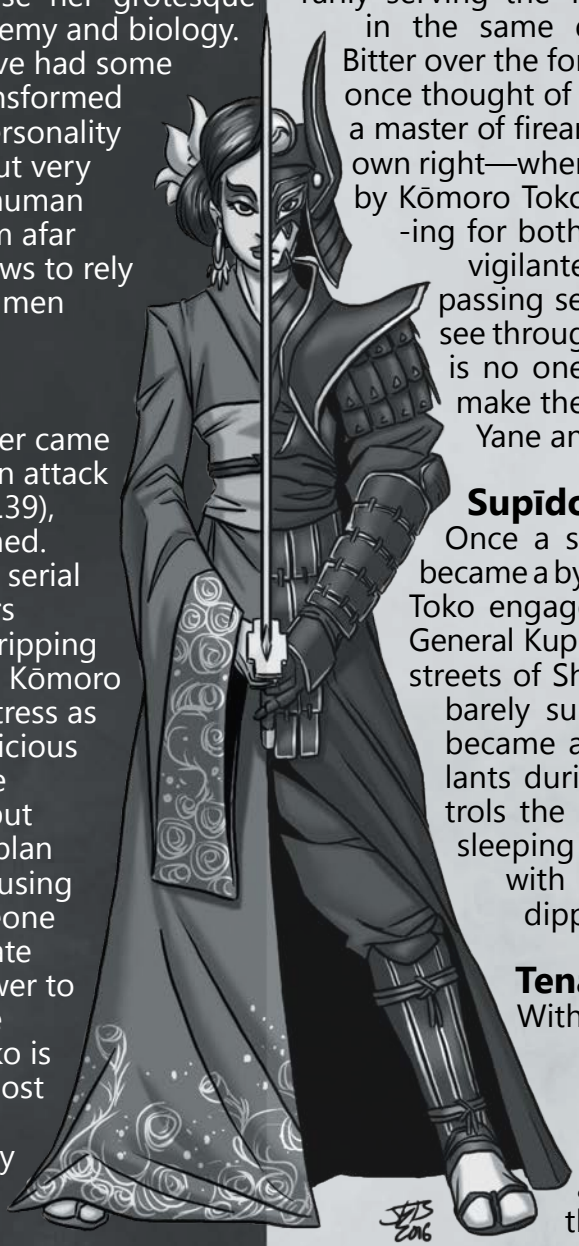
The gang leaders of the Chika are as varied and different as the crimes they are responsible for, sharing only one commonality—a deep and abiding hatred for Kōmoro Toko.

Dokutājikiru/Joshi Haido

Dokutājikiru is a well-meaning mutant scientist (and supporter of both Sayo Yane and Kōmoro Toko) that sought to reverse her grotesque transformation through alchemy and biology. Years of experimentation have had some success, but when she is transformed into Joshi Haido a vicious personality emerges alongside latent (but very potent) psychic power. Her human persona leads the Chika from afar as—unknowingly—Sayo grows to rely on the mutant scientist's acumen more and more.

Hōtai-Gao

Shigeko Yasuko's acting career came to a halt after she suffered an attack by a kuchisake-onna (page 139), surviving but forever deformed. Shortly thereafter a string of serial murderers and copycat killers plagued Shori for months, gripping the metropolis in terror until Kōmoro Toko revealed the former actress as the true perpetrator of the vicious crimes. After a pitched battle Shigeko fled into the night but with every brilliantly insane plan she launches—frequently causing an innocuous injury to someone so that she might impersonate them, using positions of power to wage massive attacks on the public at large—Kōmoro Toko is harder pressed each time. Most of the Chika fear her and remand operational authority to her when she shows any interest in their doings.



Sogeki Araiguma

Young Sogeki won her freedom via obscure laws of extradition when her family, temporarily serving the Yane Clan, were destroyed in the same disaster that befell Sayo. Bitter over the fortune left to the human she once thought of as a friend, Sogeki became a master of firearms and a mercenary in her own right—where she was frequently foiled by Kōmoro Toko. The raccoon folk's loathing for both the noblewoman and her vigilante persona grow with every passing season, and should she ever see through her blinding hatred there is no one else in Shori so ready to make the connection between Sayo Yane and Kōmoro Toko.

Supīdojankī the Northwind

Once a simple courier, Supīdojankī became a bystander casualty as Kōmoro Toko engaged spies of rogue Kengen General Kupran Stelisto (page 11) in the streets of Shori. The crane hengeyokai barely survived the experience but became addicted to combat stimulants during recovery. He now controls the narcotics trade in the city, sleeping during the day and training with the sword at night (while dipping into his own supply).

Tenagazaru

With their guild's elders slain by the Chika, these saru hengeyokai are little more than thugs dressed as shinobi, stealing whatever and wherever they can.

SATSUJIN

Not all of Soburin's clans held out against the ceramian invaders to their last warrior. While there was no love for the gaiijin among the Satsujin they ultimately surrendered their prefecture after the betrayal following the Battle of Gyakusatsu came to light—a memory still vivid enough in soburi minds that it plagues their current leader Lord Benten in the Imperial Court. When General Zhiajo Korusu was absent from her critical place in the defensive line protecting the eastern side of the Imperial Prefecture following Sanbaoshi's disastrous fall, Lieutenant-General Gorou Satsujin saw an opportunity to take vengeance for a slight from generations past: his great-grandfather and grandfather lost their lives to a Donyuko attack where promised Korusu reinforcements never came, retreating in the face of battle and leaving them to die. Sensing the weakness of Korusu's soldiers without a leader he turned his forces onto hers and opened up a break in the defenses, allowing the foreigner armies to break through to central Soburin. Tactically minded officers and historians know that the defeat of the prefectures was inevitable, but to the layman and the weak-willed the Satsujin are thought of as the first traitors that allowed for the oppression of the Kengen Occupation.

Though he did not intend for it (or live long enough to truly benefit, dying to poison before Masuto fell), Lieutenant-General Gorou Satsujin's betrayal won great leniency for his prefecture during the Kengen Occupation. The clan was charged with subjugating bird hengeyokai but did little to enforce the edict and as a result, for nearly a century and a half the kurēn have been one of the only common inhuman sights in the settlements of Soburin (and all told, more escaped resettlement than were captured). Crane folk are aloof, flighty, and strike rapidly when the moment is right—traits that served them well in military subversion leading up to the foreign oppressors' fall. Those that were caught became servants of noble estates or the ceramian military, acting as couriers and frequently supplying both sides with bad information until uniting to play a truly pivotal role in Hitoshi's Rebellion; were it not for the communication network provided by the kurēn and Satsujin Clan, it would have taken much longer for the Masuto Dynasty to rightfully rule once more.

Satsujin's salvation came from their ancestors, souls affirmed and strengthened by the disastrous revenge against Korusu a hundred and fifty years past—when the Mists of Akuma first fell the prefecture was already prepared, warned in advance by the spirits of the dead to evacuate the settlements the corrupting fog was destined to touch. Each of the clan's nobles carries a sacred inherited relic on their person at all times, a focus for their forebearers to warn them (typically through dreams) of which villages and cities are soon to suffer the fel haze, as well enchanted whistles whose piercing shrill can be heard for miles to signal for retreat to high ground.

From the capital of **Ki-Yosa**, Lord Benten Satsujin works towards the recovery of the prefecture, fighting against the active distrust and skepticism the rest of Soburin holds for his people. The Death Crows (kurēn that have sworn oaths to defend their lord) are his eyes, ears, and hands throughout both the prefecture and abroad, living in shadows to cut down the clan's foes under the auspices of protecting nature. In the island city of **Yuga** the Death Crows are learning of a cult that gains ever greater influence, their beliefs that the world is coming to an end finding adherents all over the continent. The Sekaina Nanbasen are as faithful as they are insane, introducing catalysts (be they cursed magics or heretical technology) throughout the realms in an attempt to spur the apocalypse ever sooner.

Descendants of Satsujin are infamous for striking enemies when they are most exposed without regard for long-term consequences. This general distrust is quite justified—people from this prefecture are arrogant, assuming, merciless, and smug. For all their faults they are above all wise, boasting about as much whenever the opportunity arises, and can be truly genius tacticians (when able to resist the urge to attack a vulnerable foe). Placing confidence into a warrior from Satsujin is still something that most soburi are unwilling to do, and the freedom granted by the invaders continues to make it all the harder for spellswords and warriors from the region to find worthwhile allies.

FORBIDDEN TECHNOLOGY

Uso flyer, dainamo omiryō, deniku shīrudo, ketsueki shokubai, telescopic arm augmetic, telescopic leg augmetic, venom spitter

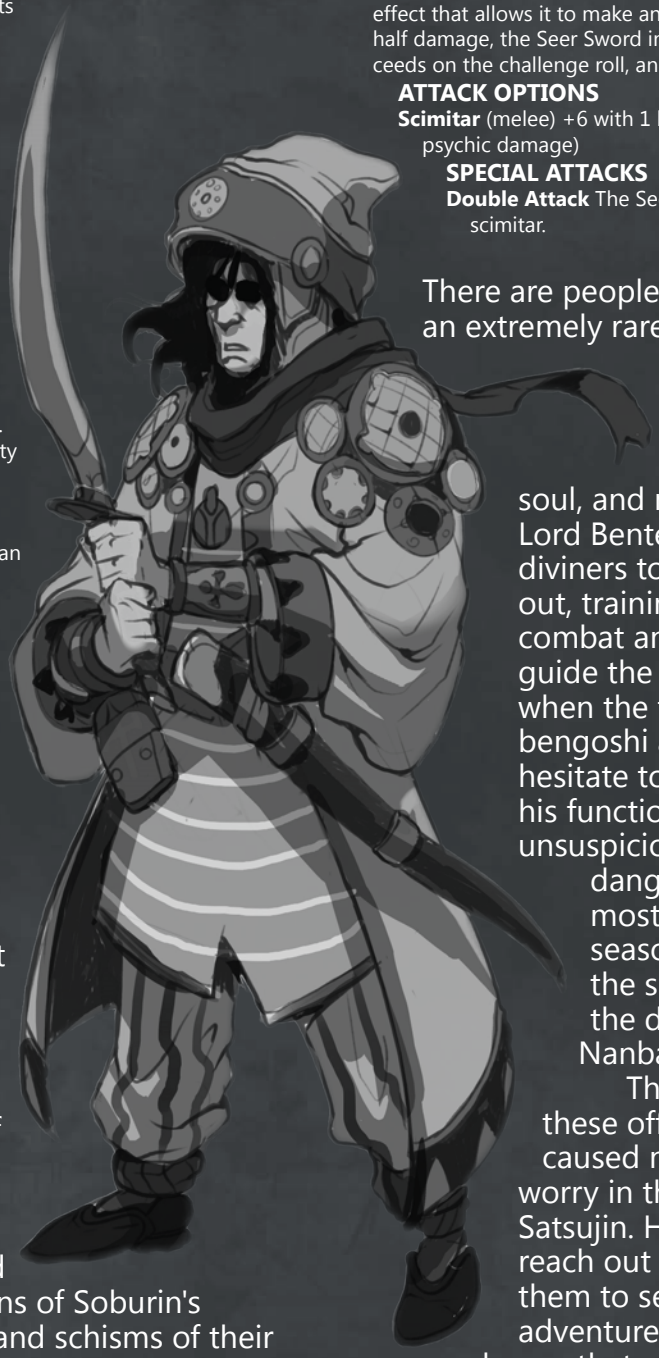
DEATH CROW — DIFFICULTY 50

Size 1 humanoid (hengeyokai)
Perception 13 (+3)
Defense 15; **Health** 40
Strength 12 (+2), **Agility** 15 (+5), **Intellect** 13 (+3), **Will** 14 (+4)
Speed 10; flier 10
Evasion If the Death Crow is subjected to an effect that allows it to make an Agility challenge roll to take only half damage, the Death Crow instead takes no damage if it succeeds on the challenge roll, and only half damage if it fails.
Preternatural Grace The Death Crow gains 2 boons when making challenge rolls to resist the prone affliction.
Kurēn Flight The Death Crow loses its flier speed if it carries more than half its carrying capacity or does not have both hands free.

ATTACK OPTIONS
Unarmed Strike (melee) +5 with 1 boon (1d6+2 damage)

SPECIAL ATTACKS
Triple Attack The Death Crow attacks three times with its unarmed strike.

SPECIAL ACTIONS
Hengeyokai The Death Crow can transform into a crane as the *improved animal shape* spell without the need for speaking the words or wielding implements. It keeps its mental scores, the ability has no duration, its Health remain unchanged, and its gear does not meld into its form.
Natural Disguise. The Death Crow can cast *disguise* without the need for speaking the words or wielding implements but can only change into a specific human.



Death Crows ostensibly stalk after "those who disrupt the natural cycle of life" but truthfully they target threats to Lord Benten and the Satsujin Clan. Their presence almost always means that Satsujin manipulation is either already taking place or soon to be, but as the Sekaina Nanbasen gain prominence more of the flock is being called back to the prefecture to combat the mad cult. They are a well-organized group as far as the minions of Soburin's bengoshi are concerned and schisms of their loyalty are rare, but something about the enigmatic sect they are hunting has caused a surprising amount of consternation and anxiety as rumors of an impossible to cure disease afflicting their members spread throughout the prefectures.

SATSUJIN BENGOSHI

SEER SWORD — DIFFICULTY 100

Size 1 human (soburi)
Perception 22 (+12); darksight, sightless
Defense 19 (Will); **Health** 65
Strength 12 (+2), **Agility** 16 (+6), **Intellect** 16 (+6), **Will** 16 (+6)
Speed 10
Immune blinded, charmed, compelled, deafened, frightened
Divined Dodge On its turn the Seer Sword can spend its triggered action to impose 1 bane on all attacks made against it until the end of the round **Evasion** If the Seer Sword is subjected to an effect that allows it to make an Agility challenge roll to take only half damage, the Seer Sword instead takes no damage if it succeeds on the challenge roll, and only half damage if it fails.

ATTACK OPTIONS
Scimitar (melee) +6 with 1 boon (1d6 damage plus 2d6 psychic damage)

SPECIAL ATTACKS
Double Attack The Seer Sword attacks twice with its scimitar.

There are people in Satsujin that share an extremely rare and impressive connection with their ancestors, granting them insight into the beyond, the human soul, and modern day Soburin. Lord Benten has used his own diviners to seek these individuals out, training them in both combat and intrigue to better guide the clan to their destiny; when the time to designate bengoshi arrived he did not hesitate to make the Seer Swords his functionaries. He remains unsuspicious but an ominous danger lurks among his most trusted agents—each season, more and more of the seers join the ranks of the doomsaying Sekaina Nanbasen.

The rash of betrayal by these officers of the state has caused no small amount of worry in the court of Lord Benten Satsujin. He has gone so far as to reach out to his relatives, urging them to send competent adventures to him directly in the hopes that someone will come forth with the resolve required to get to the bottom of the debacle. Several groups have delved into the mystery but unless their success has been kept a secret, none have made any progress (mounting up the panic).

SHINBOSHIMASU

The Battle of Gyakusatsu and the disastrous Satsujin Betrayal were far from the shores of Shinboshimasu, and though they stood in the shadow of a prefecture swiftly won over by the invading foreigners they remained committed to the Masuto Dynasty well after defeat became inevitable, laying down arms only when Empress Iko herself gave the order to do so. While the ceramian officers that came to rule the region did not relish losing troops they saw the honor in this stalwart defense—likening the loyalty of the island prefecture to dogs in a colloquialism from their homeland—and it only made sense to the gaijin to force the canine hengeyokai to resettle there during the Kengen Occupation. The determined inu and devoted soldiers of Shinboshimasu grew stronger together however and became a linchpin in Hitoshi's Rebellion, working alongside one another with a unique compatibility that gave their forces a decided advantage on the battlefield. This companionship continues today and it is uncommon to find dog hengeyokai journeying in groups that don't contain at least one other traveler from the southeasternmost prefecture.

While most of Soburin's races did not fare well under the oppression of the Kengen Occupation, the inu were an exception: they are notoriously easy to get along with and made wonderful immigrants to Shinboshimasu. The dog hengeyokai's natural tendency for optimism and aptitude for protecting others led many to master abjuration, and their preference for the discipline spread throughout the prefecture to play a crucial role in their success in liberating Uragi shortly after Hitoshi's Rebellion began. Their loyalty to the emperor ultimately won them great rewards in the short period of peace that followed and inu are almost always embraced by soburi wherever they go.

When the Mists of Akuma reappeared many people were drawn to the high-ground capital of **Hoki** in an attempt to escape the corrupting fog. Unable to contain the entire prefecture's population within the city, master abjurers devised an effective (if somewhat unusual) means of protecting the region. The very firmament beneath each of Shinboshimasu's settlements has been enchanted so as to repel the foul haze—preventing it from coming within two feet of the ground. So long as one crawls the dark phenomenon remains safely above them, making it a popular destination for the smaller races.

Loyal Companions (Ancestral Blessing)

Prerequisites: Dog hengeyokai with an ally that has this ancestral blessing or a dog hengeyokai ally with this ancestral blessing

You and your ally have traveled together for a long time and have faced trials that forced you to rely on one another. While adjacent to your ally, one of you may gain 1 boon on a single challenge roll or attack roll. Once you have used this ability, you must wait 2d6 rounds before you can do so again. At 6th level you only have to wait 1d6 rounds, and at 10th level you only have to wait 1d3 rounds. You cannot use this ability if you or your ally is incapacitated.

This is not all that defends them however and warriors dispatched by Lady Daikoku wander the island with a mind to shield her citizens. The Canine Orphans accept all soldiers into their ranks regardless of one's past or station, provided that an aspirant accepts the strict moral code they follow. These warriors always help someone that petitions them for aid, never abandon their allies or duty, protect their homeland with their very lives, and undo any evil that they come across. While this proves difficult to uphold, adhering to the oaths of the Canine Orphans means a new life and new allies, stalwart companions that will die before turning to betrayal.

There are many who fail to conduct themselves within the bounds of these weighty promises and though Shinboshimasu has known great deeds by their members, it is is plagued by the shadows of the Canine Orphans. Excommunicated members have begun banding together in **Shirudo** and **Sokono** under a banner christened the Blooded Wolves, swearing anew to cast down their former allies. Masquerading in the livery of the order and causing chaos among its warriors, their true selves are revealed only when the Mists of Akuma fall and they don qì-tóukuī masks (page 214) to slaughter the people crawling along the ground trying to avoid corruption.

Shinboshimasu are honorable to a fault, telegraphing their intent and made vulnerable by their unflinching morality. This naivetewould certainly be their downfall but the dependability and perseverance of soburi from this prefecture win them many allies that admire their noble way of life.

FORBIDDEN TECHNOLOGY

Firearms, qì-tóukuī, uso flyer, dainamo omiryō, denki shīrudo, fan no te, hornear augmetic, plating augmetic, venom spitter

CANINE ORPHAN — DIFFICULTY 50

Size 1 human (soburi)
Perception 11 (+1)
Defense 14 (soft leather); **Health** 40
Strength 14 (+4), **Agility** 13 (+3), **Intellect** 11 (+1), **Will** 13 (+3)
Speed 10
Loyal Defense As an action, the Canine Orphan can impose 1 bane to melee attack rolls made against one creature adjacent to it for 1 round.
United Strength Once per turn while the Canine Orphan is adjacent to another Canine Orphan, it gains 1 boon to an attack roll or challenge roll of its choice.

ATTACK OPTIONS
Wakizashi (melee) +4 with 1 boon (1d6+2 damage)
Longbow (long range) +3 with 1 boon (1d6+1 damage)
Martial Advantage Once per turn the Canine Orphan deals an extra 1d6 damage to a creature it hits with a weapon attack if that creature is within 2 yards of an ally of the Canine Orphan that isn't incapacitated.

SPECIAL ATTACK
Double Attack The Canine Orphan attacks twice with its wakizashi or twice with its longbow.

While individually they are not incredible combatants, one should always be wary of striking a Canine Orphan—to attack one of these soldiers is to wage war on their pack.

SHINBOSHIMASU BENGOSHI

MASTER ABJURER — DIFFICULTY 100

Size 1 human (soburi)
Perception 18 (+8)
Defense 22; **Health** 65
Strength 10 (+0), **Agility** 14 (+4), **Intellect** 18 (+8), **Will** 16 (+6)
Speed 10
Immune charmed, compelled, frightened
Abjurer's Defenses The Master Abjurer takes half damage from all attacks.
Counterspell When targeted by a spell or included inside of a spell's area of effect, the Master Abjurer can spend its triggered action to counter it.
Magic Resistance The Master Abjurer gains 1 boon on challenge rolls made to resist spells.

ATTACK OPTIONS
Walking Stick (melee) +0 with 3 boons (1d6 damage)

SPECIAL ACTIONS
Master of Canine Orphans Master Abjurers are never alone and always have allies nearby. As an action the Master Abjurer can call out to them, summoning 2d6 **Canine Orphans** that appear within 70 yards at the end of the round. Once the Master Abjurer has used Master of Canine Orphans, it cannot do so for 1d6 minutes (and if it has summoned 10 or more allies, 1 hour).

MAGIC
Power 5
Arcana *arcane armor* (4), *magic dart* (4), *arcane shield* (4), *arcane sight* (4), *unerring darts* (4), *explosive darts* (3), *arcane lightning* (3), *destroy magic* (3), *harness magic* (2), *arcane retribution* (1)
Protection *magic lock* (4), *secure site* (4), *evade* (4), *force field* (4), *sanctuary* (4), *vigilance* (3), *vigor* (3), *protection from spells* (3), *protective field* (3), *invulnerability* (2), *globe of negation* (1)

It was natural for Lady Daikoku to make her Master Abjurers Shinboshimasu's bengoshi, trusting that their ability to protect their Canine Orphan bodyguards is more than ample. Even when caught alone these mages are able to defend themselves until aid arrives, though they are reticent to kill and more likely to imprison anyone foolish enough to attack them.

SHINKO

After the Ichizoku Wars the Shinko found their lands in disarray. Fighting had displaced many of Soburin's tanuki and as an act of goodwill, a message was sent out by the nobility bespeaking of a fellowship that brought the raccoon folk and people of Shinko together, working united to rebuild the prefecture and create a new place welcoming those who needed shelter. The people and the tanuki lived in peace for many centuries, flourishing alongside each other—until the foreigner's gunships arrived.

The ceramians brought with them great cruelty and Shinko, a safe haven for years, became a war machine. The people were forced to create new weapons, armor, and other equipment for use in the War of Kaiyo, and throughout the Kengen Occupation the foreign invaders worked the prefecture to the breaking point. Soon entire villages disappeared as people died from exhaustion, unfortunate accidents, or the merciless subjugation of their oppressors.

Foreign commanders prospered from the overproduction in the war economy while the prefecture of Shinko wasted away around them. To prevent the further loss of human life the ceramians began to subtly make use of more tanuki labor, instilling into the people of Shinko an undercurrent of cruelty towards the raccoon folk. A sudden proposal from the master of **Yosai** to enslave the tanuki blindsided the tree dwellers and the almost unanimous agreement was even more of a shock—almost overnight, alliances dissolved and the raccoon folk were disenfranchised. Even with the tanuki encompassing the majority of the labor force things grew worse for the people of Shinko. The invaders enforced stricter requirements, pushing production further, and the tanuki barely survived the severe workload; the pressures of meeting the increased demand were stresses sadistically transferred on to the tanuki, making their lives unending toil and woe.

With the rise of Emperor Hitoshi and the fall of the Kengen Occupation, Shinko found itself set in its ways; although the war machine was stopped tanuki remained slaves and at this point had become a staple of life in the prefecture. Little protest was made when they were used to isolate the territory, raising great walls and fortresses through their labor, and there was no end in sight to the subjugation suffered by the raccoon folk. When the Mists of Akuma descended their isolationist attitude and the defenses erected around them allowed the Shinko Clan to keep the corrupting fog's horrors at bay. This developed into a focus on self-preservation and self-reliance—farmers used practices to maximize crops, warriors trained in defensive techniques, scholars stole away secrets from elsewhere to aid the prefecture, and the nobility invested in the people until soon the population grew to rely solely on each other.

In Shinko a trusted ally is invaluable—they are neighborly and amicable, helping each other out as best they can to improve life for all, something easily seen in groups like the Shields of Kabé, who travel throughout the prefecture from **Miyamoto** to provide assistance to those who live in the remote parts of the territory. The kindness of Shinko is starkly contrasted by their continued use of raccoon folk as slaves. A portion of the population demands that tanuki be released after their decades of oppression while others argue that the raccoon folk are the backbone of the prefecture's continued sustainability. The tanuki seem intent to keep quiet for now and wait out the situation in peace, eager for the moment to flee, fall, or possibly even fight.

For now Lady Zhuanlun Shinko is content to leave Shinko to continue to debate the matter of slavery, focusing instead on keeping her lands safe from the threat of the Mists of Akuma. Although some of her people cry out to assist their neighboring prefectures, Lady Shinko is more set in her ways than ever, appointing daimyo throughout the prefecture to block any further attempts to break their isolationism. The only outsiders allowed into Shinko are bengoshi or those sent by the government functionaries; however, with their introduction a number of other undesirables are slipping into the area. These deviants range from refugees looking to escape the corrupting fogs, to warlords looking to steal combat secrets, and spies from the other prefectures. Propaganda is rife throughout Shinko pushing for the opening of borders and tensions rise as the people grow divided, the remainder of Soburin watching on and waiting to strike once chaos takes hold.

FORBIDDEN TECHNOLOGY
Firearms, dainamo omiryō, venom spitter

SHIELD OF KABÉ — DIFFICULTY 50

Size 1 human (soburi)
Perception 10 (+0)
Defense 19 (plate and large shield); **Health** 45
Strength 14 (+4), **Agility** 10 (+0), **Intellect** 10 (+0), **Will** 11 (+1)
Speed 10
Protective Shield When a creature the Shield of Kabé can see attacks an ally within 2 yards, it can spend its triggered action to impose 2 bane on the attack roll as long as the Shield of Kabé is wielding a shield.

ATTACK OPTIONS
Large Shield (melee) +4 with 1 boon (1d3 damage plus Pushing Blow)
Spear (melee) +4 with 1 boon (1d6 damage)
Pushing Blow The Shield of Kabé shoves an adjacent target 1d6 yards. A target that makes a successful Strength challenge roll reduces this distance by a number of yards equal to the number of points the roll is succeeded by. The distance is also reduced by 1 for every size category the target is larger than the Shield of Kabé.

SPECIAL ATTACKS
Quadruple Attack The Shield of Kabé attacks twice with its large shield and twice with its spear.

SHINKO BENGOSHI

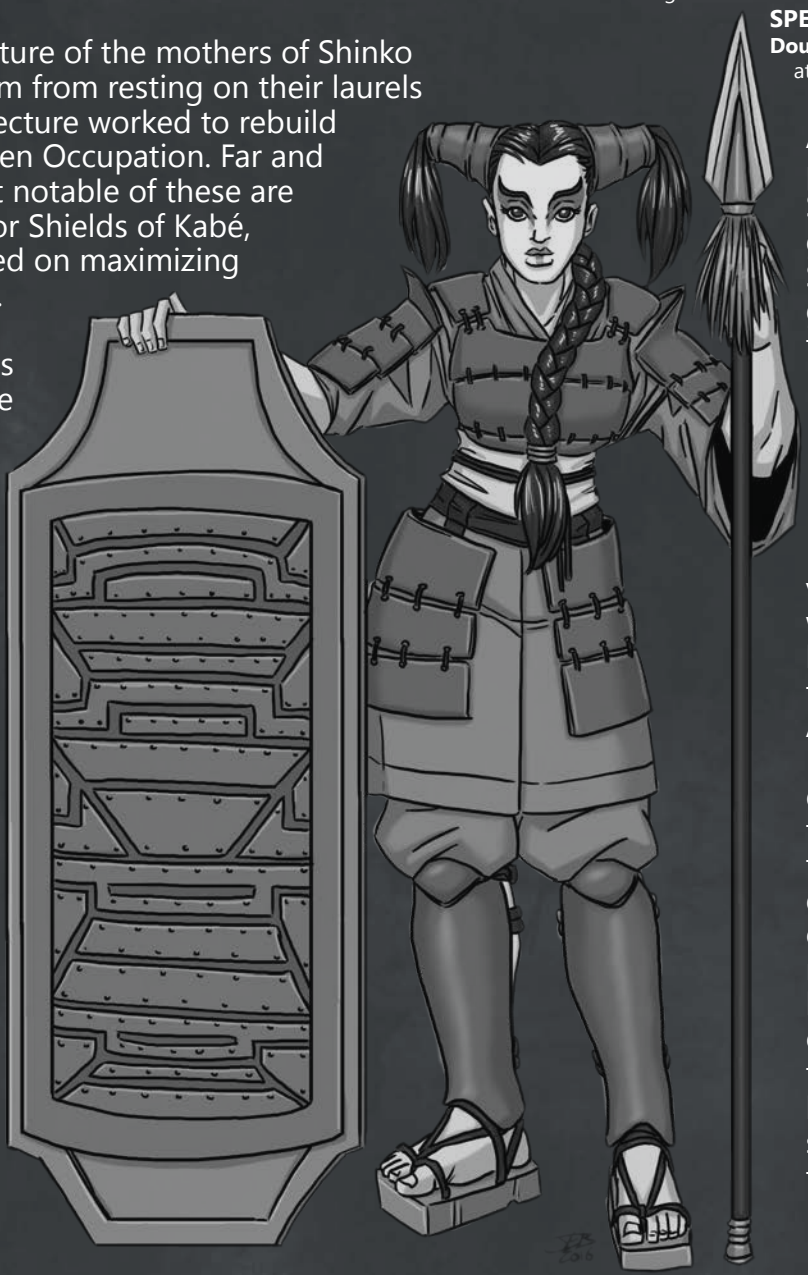
IMPERIAL REBUILDER — DIFFICULTY 100

Size 1 human (soburi)
Perception 16 (+6)
Defense 16 (tosei gusoku); **Health** 70
Strength 17 (+7), **Agility** 10 (+0), **Intellect** 16 (+6), **Will** 11 (+1)
Speed 10
Immune charmed, compelled, frightened

ATTACK OPTIONS
O-dachi (melee) +7 (3d6+2 damage)
Imperial Trapper Once per turn the Imperial Rebuilder throws down a saw-toothed steel trap within 5 yards that snaps shut when a creature steps on a pressure plate in the center. The trap blends in with its surroundings and a creature requires a Perception challenge roll with 2 bane to pick it out from the 1-yard square it rests in (a creature that sees it being thrown suffers no bane). A creature that steps in the same square as the trap must succeed on an Agility challenge roll with 2 bane or take 6d6 damage and gain the immobilized affliction. A creature can use its action to make a Strength challenge roll with 1 bane, freeing itself or another creature within its reach on a success. Each failed challenge roll deals 2d6 damage to the trapped creature.

SPECIAL ATTACKS
Double Attack The Imperial Rebuilder attacks twice with its o-dachi.

The helpful nature of the mothers of Shinko prevented them from resting on their laurels while the prefecture worked to rebuild after the Kengen Occupation. Far and away the most notable of these are the lady warrior Shields of Kabé, fighters focused on maximizing their defenses. These women travel the lands aiding all those that need aid, either by offering help in the homes of elders or defending villages from the horrors of the Mists of Akuma. Unwilling to allow injustice to overtake Soburin, they frequently take on the duties of local law enforcement that have lapsed in effectiveness.



As part of the rebuilding process that restored Shinko to its former glory, Lady Zhuanlun Shinko created small groups of builders tasked with traveling across the prefecture to organize the process. These individuals ranged from experts loggers, architects, masons, and other veteran tradesmen that were instrumental with building the defenses that hold the Mists of Akuma at bay. When Emperor Hitoshi declared for the clans to select bengoshi there were none more qualified to hold the office in Shinko, though now their isolationist beliefs wane and many of the groups find themselves torn between whether to serve their people or the Masuto Dynasty.

SUKOCHI

Word of Sukochi's nature-wielders reached the ears of ceramian generals shortly after their weather masters brought down aircraft in the Battle of Gyakusatsu. Summoned storms and tempests were all that (Imperial Dragons aside) the soburi could rely on against superior technology. Massive waves of foreign vessels assaulted the prefecture immediately afterward, the brunt of the invaders' forces slamming into Sukochi like the head of a maul. As more and more of the gaijin landed on his shores Lord Huang beseeched the spirits of nature for aid—in response they compelled kitsune, some of their most devout servants, to journey there from all over Soburin. Before the War of Kaiyo wounded the powers behind the seasons the fox hengeyokai were considered the most blessed of their kind and possessed powers unmatched by their shapechanging kin, but even their gifts were not enough to save the prefecture from defeat.

The ceramians took advantage of Lord Huang's call for allies and penned the wily kitsune within Sukochi, not allowing for the opportunity to quell such a powerful force of insurrection to slip away. Of all the prefectures made to subjugate inhumans theirs was one of the smoothest transitions, looked upon by both soburi and fox hengeyokai as an opportunity to work together and refine their collective reverence for nature. As the Kengen Occupation dragged on, it was their paired efforts that sustained the oversown fields and ravaged forests at all—were it not for yamabushi in Sukochi, Soburin would surely have already been lost to decay.

Fox hengeyokai felt nature's impending doom even before the end of the War of Kaiyo but it was most profound in Sukochi where tails began to fall off as soon as the foreigners' unleashed fel weapons across the Great Divide, their powers rapidly fading within weeks. This has only made kitsune even more resilient in their character and just as wily, often using their knack for avoiding death to ingenious effect. Many of their kind still revere nature and become druids or yamabushi (or both), but the majority employ more of their wits than magic.

When the Mists of Akuma first fell on Sukochi it was the kitsune priests of **Seinaru** that produced deliverance by calling once more on the blessings of nature. Their yamabushi brought back an ancient spell long thought to be forgotten, drawing the lifeforce from the very firmament to encapsulate creatures in a large, protective plant (page 224). Though the spell is simple enough for even a novice spellcaster and slowly spreading across Soburin, many are reticent to adopt it as it leaves one unable to defend themselves and utterly vulnerable to attack.

As their yamabushi strive to restore nature a force of warriors has been assembled at the behest of Lord Ebishu to ensure peace through the prefecture and keep tabs on his enemies. Ranging from their barracks in **Kyusokuna** this cadre of samurai have been renounced by their former clans, brought to Sukochi because of their specialized skills and one unique talent—the ability to assume the forms of beasts championed by the families that abandoned them. They are becoming an increasingly stronger presence in **Kasbiko** as a sect of secretive druids there continue to dabble with power from the dark patrons, erroneously thinking that experimentation will bring them the insight they need to heal the wounds left on the soul of Soburin and fight the Mists of Akuma. A few have already fallen to the corrupting fog, becoming a blight on the very prefecture (page 166) that so reveres nature and spreading chaos throughout the central regions of Sukochi (and for those who believe tea house rumors, crafting alliances with a yai sovereign in the mountains to the east).

The prefecture of Sukochi produces soburi that are very much at home in the wilderness and staunch believers in natural order—the strong survive and the weak are thinned from the herd. Their understanding of the world also encourages complimentary forces (remora have their place with sharks) and a preference for natural subtlety; spies disguise themselves as animals, magicians utilize beasts for infiltration or transform abductees into animals, and weather-wielders conjure storms to cover their doings.

FORBIDDEN TECHNOLOGY

Grapple launcher, qì-tóukuī, electrolens augmetic, hornear augmetic, plating augmetic, shindan yokutan, steam arm augmetic, steam leg augmetic

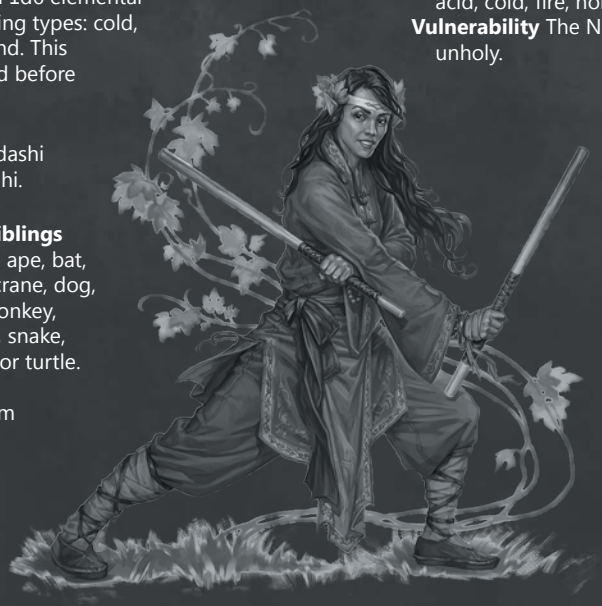
MORI-TSUKIDASHI — DIFFICULTY 50

Size 1 human (soburi)
Perception 12 (+2)
Defense 16 (do-maru); **Health** 45
Strength 14 (+4), **Agility** 13 (+3), **Intellect** 12 (+2), **Will** 13 (+3)
Speed 10
Immune frightened

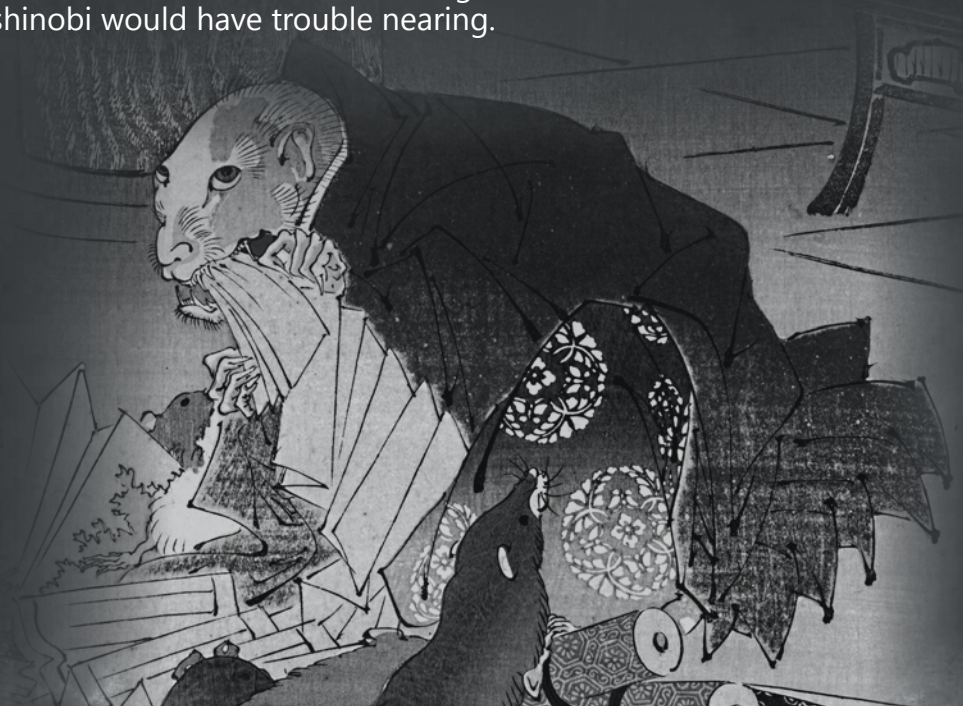
ATTACK OPTIONS
Wakizashi (melee) +4 with 1 boon (1d6+2 damage plus 1d6 elemental damage)
Blessings of Sukochi The Mori-Tsukidashi's weapon attacks deal an extra 1d6 elemental damage of one of the following types: cold, fire, lightning, thunder, or wind. This damage type can be changed before the Mori-Tsukidashi attacks.

SPECIAL ATTACKS
Double Attack The Mori-Tsukidashi attacks twice with its wakizashi.

SPECIAL ACTIONS
Descendant of the Imperial Siblings Choose one of the following: ape, bat, bear, boar, bull, chameleon, crane, dog, dragonfly, fox, frog, hawk, monkey, praying mantis, rat, scorpion, snake, spider, stag, swordfish, tiger, or turtle. By spending an action the Mori-Tsukidashi can transform into the creature as though under the effects of *improved animal shape*. The Mori-Tsukidashi keeps its mental scores and its Health remains unchanged.



Becoming a member of the Mori-Tsukidashi is a dubious honor—samurai must be able to prove direct descent from the Imperial Siblings to join their ranks, leaving only the dishonored and disenfranchised to seek the order out. Though they are meant to protect Sukochi these warriors often infiltrate other prefectures and act as spies for Lord Ebishu, using their shapeshifting abilities to overhear conversations even the greatest shinobi would have trouble nearing.



SUKOCHI BENGOSHI

NATURE-WIELDER — DIFFICULTY 100

Size 1 human (soburi)
Perception 15 (+5); darksight
Defense 20 (Will); **Health** 65
Strength 12 (+2), **Agility** 15 (+5), **Intellect** 15 (+5), **Will** 15 (+5)
Speed 18; climber 18, flier 18, swimmer 18
Immune damage from poison; charmed, compelled, frightened, poisoned
Nature Resistances The Nature-Wielder takes half damage from acid, cold, fire, holy, lightning, psychic, thunder, and wind.
Vulnerability The Nature-Wielder takes double damage from unholy.

ATTACK OPTIONS
Club (melee) +5 with 2 boons (1d6 damage plus 2d6 elemental damage)
Nature-Wielder The Nature-Wielder's attacks deal an additional 2d6 elemental damage of one of the following types: acid, cold, fire, holy, lightning, poison, psychic, thunder, or wind. This damage type can be changed before the Nature-Wielder attacks.

SPECIAL ATTACKS
Double Attack The Nature-Wielder attacks twice with its club.

MAGIC
Power 5
Nature *magic acorns* (4), *oak hide* (4), *healing berries* (4), *overgrowth* (4), *shillelagh* (4), *ensnaring vines* (4), *fiery pinecones* (4), *brambles* (3), *forest walk* (3), *wrath of nature* (2), *form of the oak guardian* (1)
Primal *hide from animals* (4), *beast tongue* (4), *befriend animal* (4), *call small animal* (4), *call medium animal* (3), *call large animal* (2), *call huge animal* (1)

Nature-Wielders lost many of their order to the Kengen Occupation; hiding and protecting them from the foreign invaders was a critical task that all of Sukochi took to heart. Few remain and their power has dwindled greatly, but Lord Ebishu saw no better minders of his subjects' futures and made these druid-monks into the bengoshi of his prefecture. They are seen by all the common folk of Soburin as one of the last pure vestiges of their shared past and they trust the elemental warriors implicitly (making it all the more dangerous to cross one).

SUPAI

Center of the augmetic revolution, there are more people in Supai with augmetics than perhaps all the rest of Soburin. Tinkerers of all kinds (steametics in particular) work throughout the prefecture to create new and exciting ways in which to modify themselves, competing with one another constantly to gain fame and fortune by outdoing their rivals. Despite their popularity prosthetics of even the most basic kind are prohibitively expensive. It might be considered the cutting edge in fashion to have the most recent sort of augmetic in the latest style, but few can afford even a single, simple piece. As a result a growing market is taking advantage of the constant turnover in the lower classes, buying and selling "hand-me-down" pieces at a fraction of their normal price. Amongst the lower classes this practice is spreading far beyond merely augmetics, with an entire black market consisting exclusively of items that wealthier clients have thrown away.

For those who cannot afford a proper augmetic or to have theirs replaced nearly constantly, a new style of art has evolved—that of plating. Plates are lightweight steel or ceramic that attach to the exterior of an augmetic—or even specialized piercings in flesh. These decorations range from practical, swappable coverings to keep dirt and grime out of gears to elaborate works of art or heavy protective armor. The most impressive perform all these tasks at once, are enchanted ceramic plates that are harder and lighter than steel, or are able to change their appearance at will between one of dozens of elaborately painted scenes.

Unsurprisingly with the popularity of augmetics and the steametics walking the street, any technology (or magical devices) that disrupt mechanical or electrical machines are strictly outlawed. Sentences for possession or sale of such devices are extremely harsh and the soldiers of the prefecture have full authority to detain anyone they need to (indefinitely and without trial) when such contraptions are involved.

This obsession with augmetics originated during the Kengen Occupation as the inhabitants of Supai strove to imitate their conquerors. Before the foreign invasion Supaians instead sought to mimic the Imperial Capital, the center of wealth and intrigue they are so distantly separated from. After the War of Kaiyo the prefecture had a great opportunity at hand and seized control of as many airships as they could; with this new fleet they could effortlessly skirt the mountains and swamps that had so long proven barriers to their expansion. With every ship that fails the entire fleet sees less and less use—ferrying only important supplies and rich merchants between **Kyōfū** and the small base-camps on the western side of the mountains. The Captains of the Sky, an independent group of craftsmen of ropeao descent, are taking advantage of this by crafting crude but effective airborne vessels of their own. They ferry anyone who cannot afford the steep fees of the official Supai Fleet, though not all whom they pick up arrives at their destination.

Supai has finally developed a true identity of its own since the Kengen Occupation—even if only for now. Though they still spend an inordinate amount of time attempting to mimic the styles of Sanbaoshi, they have embraced their culture as craftsmen and augmenters of the physical form. Piercings and tattoos are ubiquitous, every change to the outside intended to represent who a person is on the inside.

While the process of augmenting leaves one susceptible to the Mists of Akuma, the prefecture believes they can defeat the dread haze through the use of science. Fans of all shapes and sizes are everywhere throughout the region and vary widely in form if not function, from hand- to building-sized, and are discarded nearly daily for the newest style. Every settlement has at least one "wind tower", a standalone building with an enormous fan at the top capable of pulling fresh air out of the skies above and down into the village to keep the corrupting fog away.

The city of **Jinkosugu** has a tenuous and not quite secret alliance with the Kengen warlord Freneza Genuilo. She and her soldiers are tolerated in the city because they are constantly producing greater technologies for Lord Dainichi, donating most of the significant proceeds. Access to her laboratories is strictly regulated and due to the electrical weapons her soldiers use, few are willing to test their luck to peek inside.

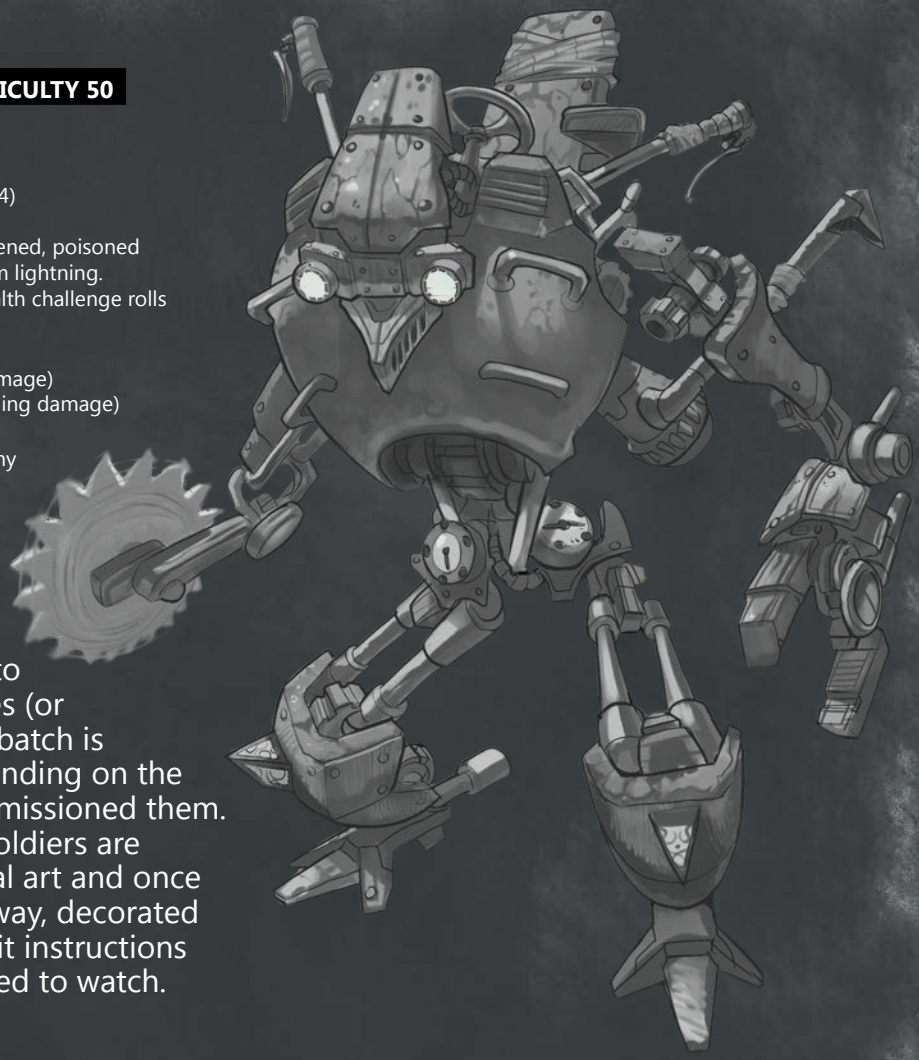
FORBIDDEN TECHNOLOGY
Denki shīrudo and all magic items that deals lightning damage

STEAM SOLDIER — DIFFICULTY 50

Size 1 humanoid (steametic)
Perception 12 (+2); darksight
Defense 14; **Health** 50
Strength 15 (+5), **Agility** 10 (+0), **Intellect** 5 (–5), **Will** 6 (–4)
Speed 16
Immune damage from poison; charmed, compelled, frightened, poisoned
Vulnerability The Steam Soldier takes double damage from lightning.
False Statuary The Steam Soldier gains 3 boons on all Stealth challenge rolls made to appear as a statue or similar art object.

ATTACK OPTIONS
Spinning Blade (melee; reach +1) +5 with 1 boon (1d6 damage)
Shock Lancet (medium range) +0 with 2 boons (1d6 lightning damage)

SPECIAL ATTACKS
Triple Attack The Steam Soldier attacks three times with any combination of its shock lancet and spinning blade.



Steam Soldiers are steametics but only technically—unlike most members of their race, they aren't truly self-aware and understand little more than basic combat strategy. Built dozens at a time to stand as tireless sentinels over the graves (or occasionally the palaces) of Supai, each batch is slightly different from one another depending on the needs (and wealth) of the one who commissioned them. Despite their functional nature, Steam Soldiers are considered more to be a form of spiritual art and once completed, originally identical in every way, decorated and posed elaborately then given explicit instructions to guard whatever ward they were created to watch.

SUPAI BENGOSHI

AUGMETIC SCIENTIST — DIFFICULTY 100

Size 1 human (soburi)
Perception 18 (+8); darksight
Defense 16; **Health** 55
Strength 16 (+6), **Agility** 16 (+6), **Intellect** 18 (+8), **Will** 14 (+4)
Speed 12; flier 16
Immune damage from poison; charmed, compelled, fatigued, frightened, poisoned
Augmetic Resistances The Augmetic Scientist takes half damage from fire and weapons.
Heart of Flames When an Augmetic Scientist would take fire damage, it can instead spend its triggered action to redirect the heat from around them into a boiler built into their bodies. This boiler rapidly heats for 1 round for every 4 points of fire damage the augmetic scientist would have taken, and grants them 1 boon on all Strength and Agility challenge rolls and attack rolls, as well as immunity to damage from cold.
Rebreather Augmetic The Augmetic Scientist is immune to any airborne toxins and effects, and can survive unaffected within the Mists of Akuma for up to 24 hours.
Vulnerability The Augmetic Scientist takes double damage from lightning.

ATTACK OPTIONS
Extendable Steam Arm (melee; reach +3) +6 with 1 boon (1d6+3 damage)
Integrated Wrist Gun (long range) +6 with 1 boon (1d6+3 damage)
Fire Breath The Augmetic Scientist sprays flames in a 10-yard-long cone from a point it can reach. Everything in the area takes 4d6 + 6 damage. Each creature in the area must make an Agility challenge roll with 2 banes. On a failure, the creature takes 4d6 + 5 extra damage and catches fire. Once the Augmetic Scientist uses fire breath, it cannot do so again for 1 round.

SPECIAL ATTACKS
Triple Attack The Augmetic Scientist attacks three times in any combination with its extendable steam arm and integrated wrist gun.

Seeing the mercenaries they hire as subjects as much as employees, Augmetic Scientists often prefer to offer any mercenaries they hire the option of being paid in prototype augmetics. These devices typically work perfectly fine and would be valued far above whatever the normal rate for the task at hand would be. The key, of course, is that is they only *usually* work, and even when they do there can be dramatic side-effects. Augmetic Scientists expect detailed notes and reports regularly about the status and functioning of the piece. Those who follow instructions often receive upgrades (to other prototype parts) while those who simply leave with their pay are hunted down so that their parts can be reclaimed.

URAGI

Ceramians invading the Uragi Prefecture had a nearly insurmountable task before them—its citizens went to ground among the many islands, using their environment as a weapon as much as any blade. In response foreign soldiers fell upon the southeastern isles in great numbers, burning away resistance wherever it was found. Uragi's capital **Ikkitonogaku** was among the first to submit to the gaijin oppressors, ground beneath the heel of the technology-laden military and turned into a massive production facility to support their foothold. This brought shame to all of the prefecture and the memory of their rapid defeat (bloody and hard fought as it may have been) is still as vivid in their minds as their desire for vengeance. Yet for all their hatred for ceramians, they have oddly common ground with ropaeo (something many attribute to a shared tendency for manipulation).

Uragi culture has always had a scholastic interest in biology but the introduction of high technology truly brought them to obsession and depravity, polluting and warping their very bodies to defend against the Mists of Akuma. Experiments began under strict supervision during the Kengen Occupation as soburi students were encouraged to pursue the extremes of their interests and after Hitoshi's Rebellion, there was no limit in what their doctors might try. When the corrupting fogs appeared and began to wreak havoc, Lord Shaka Uragi turned to the finest scientists he could find for an answer to the ancient evil. Their reply came in the form of totsu-zenigen: cultures of bacteria that transform their host in a wide variety of ways (often with dramatic side effects). The fact that many strains of totsu-zenigen are the work of ropaeo scientists hiding throughout the prefecture (largely in **Renpokokka**) is a well-kept secret; some foolish merchants have lost their lives for speaking of it. Their presence does serve a fine purpose for Lord Shaka however, driving trade into Uragi thanks to his allowance for all technology to be bought and sold within the borders of his domain.

Lord Shaka is surely aware of these fugitive foreigners but the depths of his deceptions are as deep as the ocean east of Uragi. One of his many tools are the Yūkaihan Gekai, a secretive shinobi clan that utilizes scientific devices as they kidnap people from all over Soburin to undertake experiments too dangerous for inside their own prefecture. The subjects are frequently unaware of the bodily invasion but not always; havoc has erupted in more than one settlement after someone awakens as a nightmarish monster. What strikes terror into the hearts of those who know of these ninja is that they answer only to Lord Shaka himself—indeed they seem utterly incapable of communicating to anyone else—meaning that their presence always bodes ill. Talk of an underwater facility in **Beikoku**, an inescapable prison for recaptured subjects, has only worsened these fears.

Said to be the most stalwart descendants of the Imperial Siblings, the people of Uragi are incredibly patient, impassive, ruthless, and subtle, sometimes waiting in plain sight for years before their true goals are achieved in the fruition of intricate plans. To be Uragi is to play games within games, to be the pawn in many subtle conflicts in service of many masters—those who know their origins watch them carefully. In war Uragi once let loose foreign species of pests to disrupt an enemy's crops but in the chaos of modern Soburin they resort to long-term poisoning, subtle biomechanical conditioning (gradually luring a target without being noticed, leading them into a vulnerable place where death seems innocuous), and other almost imperceptible forms of hostility.

TOTSU-ZENIGEN

These biological cultures are an ultimate heresy in other prefectures but in Uragi they are a common protection from the Mists of Akuma. Necroji and steametics can never benefit from totsu-zenigen, but all other non-construct creatures treat a totsu-zenigen as a slotless enchanted item.

Chūōna (Rare) You are unaffected by the Mists of Akuma, but have 1 bane on non-Intimidation social challenge rolls as your skin turns transparent.

Hoppō (Common) You treat your misted affliction as 2 levels lower, but you suffer 1 bane on Strength challenge rolls as your bones are eaten away from the inside.

Nanpōno (Common) You gain 1 boon when making challenge rolls against the Mists of Akuma but you take double damage from holy and are unable to rest in sunlight.

FORBIDDEN TECHNOLOGY

There are no laws whatsoever restricting trade of technology in Uragi.

URAGIMON — DIFFICULTY 50

Size 1 humanoid (soburi)
Perception 14 (+4); darksight
Defense 15; **Health** 40 (Regeneration)
Strength 15 (+5), **Agility** 15 (+5), **Intellect** 7 (–3), **Will** 14 (+4)
Speed 14; climber 8, swimmer 10
Immune damage from poison; frightened, misted, poison
Uragimon Resistances Uragimon take half damage from cold and fire.
Vulnerability Uragimon take double damage from unholy.

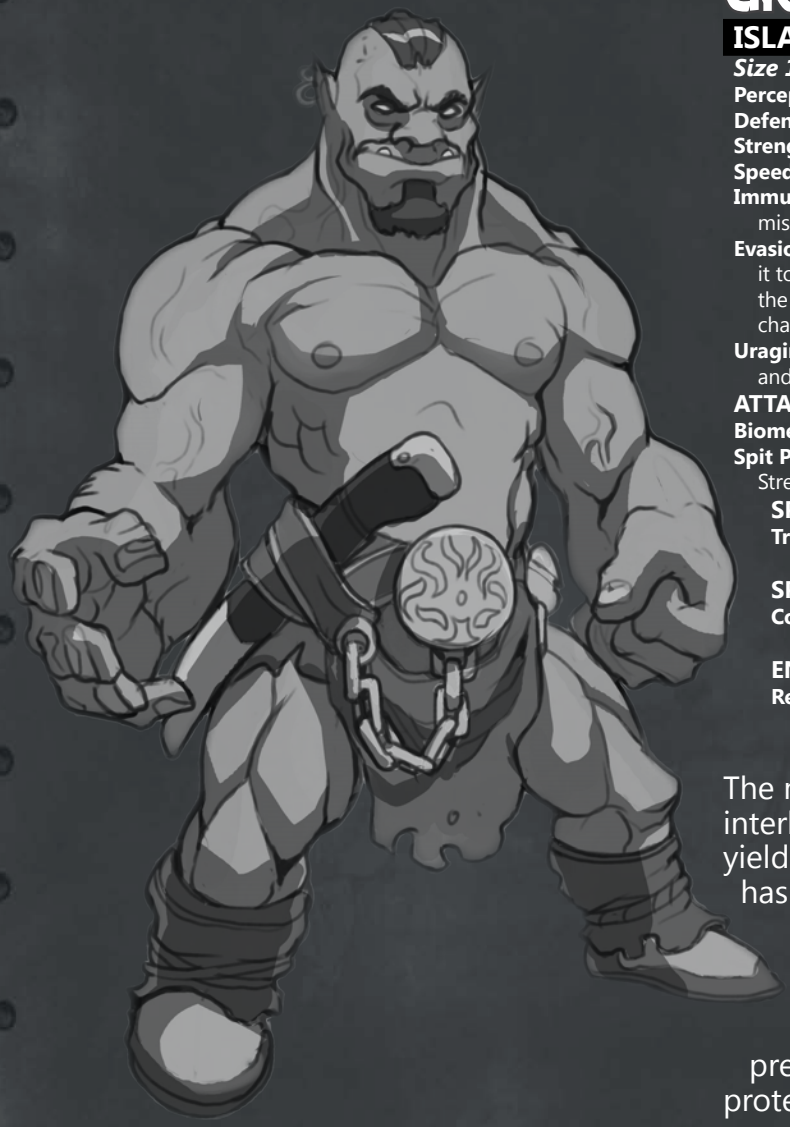
ATTACK OPTIONS
Giant Fist (melee) +5 with 1 boon (1d6+3 damage and the Uragimon may attempt to grab its target)
Giant Machete (melee) +5 with 1 boon (2d6 damage)

SPECIAL ATTACKS
Double Attack The Uragimon attacks twice with any combination of its giant fist and giant machete.

SPECIAL ACTIONS
Coiled Leap Instead of its regular move the Uragimon moves 20 yards in any direction so long as it does so in a straight line.

END OF THE ROUND
Regeneration The Uragimon heals 1d6 damage if it is not incapacitated.

Fugitive ropaeo scientists started a secret breeding program in the capital of the prefecture early in the Kengen Occupation, infiltrating Ikittonogaku shortly after the ceramians claimed it as their own. Their experiments bore fruit in time to play a critical role in Hitoshi's Rebellion, but since then Uragimon have become dangerous (if dull-minded) servants of the Island Vipers.



URAGI BENGOSHI

ISLAND VIPER — DIFFICULTY 100

Size 1 humanoid (soburi)
Perception 18 (+8); darksight
Defense 19; **Health** 65 (Regeneration)
Strength 14 (+4), **Agility** 19 (+9), **Intellect** 14 (+4), **Will** 15 (+5)
Speed 18
Immune damage from poison; charmed, compelled, frightened, misted, poisoned
Evasion When the Island Viper is subjected to an effect that allows it to make an Agility challenge roll to take only half damage, the Island Viper instead takes no damage if it succeeds on the challenge roll, and only half damage if it fails.
Uragimon Resistances Island Vipers take half damage from cold and fire.

ATTACK OPTIONS
Biomechanical Strike (melee) +9 (2d6 damage)
Spit Poison (short range) +9 (2d6 poison damage; a successful Strength challenge roll reduces this damage by half)

SPECIAL ATTACKS
Triple Attack The Island Viper attacks twice with its biomechanical strike and once with spit poison.

SPECIAL ACTIONS
Coiled Leap Instead of its regular move the Island Viper moves 20 yards in any direction so long as it does so in a straight line.

END OF THE ROUND
Regeneration The Island Viper heals 2d6 damage if it is not incapacitated.

The most exceptional Uragimon have been interbred with the noble Uragi bloodline, yielding far more cunning offspring. Lord Shaka has made these distant relations into bengoshi and though there has been doubt regarding the wisdom of his choice, their effectiveness cannot be questioned as they are bringing ruin to the other prefectures of Soburin while ably protecting the isles of the southeast.

USO

Difficult to conquer like the other island prefectures, Uso's presence in the sky pre-dated the Kengen Occupation by several generations and a glider pilot was the first to spot the invaders, catching a glimpse of unidentified crafts on the horizon. Fleeing to the mountains and using their knowledge of the terrain and squads of gliders to harry the opposition, eventually they were let be and the foreign presence on the islands was restricted to the cities of **Kaibo** and **Furaito**. Given how few people remained in the prefecture's settlements it made little sense for the foreign military to use the region as much more than a site for supply stations (despite frequent aerial bombardments). This influx of new technology intrigued the Uso people however, and bit by bit ceramian machines made their way out of the cities and into the hands of soburi engineers. Eventually this gave birth to the first mechanized fliers (some of which didn't result in casualties) and by the time of Hitoshis' Rebellion they had become masters of the sky, raining fire from above.

The finest of these pilots became known as the Akitsu, able to operate both gliders and fliers through all manner of conditions. In the present day they serve as advance scouts, crack shots, and bombers for the rest of the prefecture, and are said to be able to drop a projectile through the eye of a needle and while clearly exaggerations, these claims are not far from the mark. Perhaps their most important service is spotting the Mists of Akuma—when this happens a pilot shoots off a flare, setting the rest of Uso's preparations into effect. While they do not have the same jurisdiction as bengoshi they are still held in awe by most of the populace, giving them a considerable amount of authority and making their training areas in **Koritsu** a place of reverence.

At the first sighting of a flare a series of beacons are lit that span to the coasts of Uso's islands to warn the populace, many of whom take to the skies themselves. The richest of the prefecture have opulent hovering crafts (page 215) draped in silks and provisioned with both necessities and luxuries, while merchants and wealthy or respected citizenry band together into hikōsen large enough for several families. The lowest citizenry who can afford to board a hovercraft find themselves on rickety vehicles with few safety features, and the most unlucky are left on the ground, usually resorting to rigging otherwise useless fliers into impromptu fans to blow the corrupting fog away (to varying results of success). With how easily its people soar through the skies, Uso has a thriving market for technology from all over Soburin and devices able to counter the corrupting fog are always in high demand, rarely dropping greatly in supply.

While they have banded together for mutual protection and the sharing of ideas, the people of Uso are largely individualistic with each member encouraged—and even expected—to take their own time and space for innovation, especially those of artistic or mechanical merit. This practice sometimes produces great technological or artistic breakthroughs and almost always pushes the boundaries of acceptability and fashion; consequently the work of Uso artists is often in great demand among those with experimental tastes. Those who cannot or choose not to create often enable those who do by running galleries, staffing workshops, and selling the tools and supplies of various trades. Socially the Uso people are rarely forward unless the topic of conversation touches on one they are personally invested in, at which point they can talk for hours. They are often unswervingly dedicated to their respective crafts, willing to endanger life, limb, and sanity in the process of creation.

This eccentricity and acceptance has its limits, however; a group of ropaeo necroscientists have recently attempted integration into soburi society by the good graces of Lady Askuku Uso, with mixed results. Their presence has been begrudgingly allowed as long as they keep largely to their own neighborhoods and give up on their previous professions—while these individuals have been granted amnesty, their arts have not. A committee of ropaeo have formed recently in order to petition otherwise, generating dangerous amounts of societal tension among those who support and those who oppose the concept.

FORBIDDEN TECHNOLOGY

Dainamo omiryō, denki shīrudo, ketsueki shokubai, venom spitter

Masters of the sky, these elite pilots patrol over both land and sea and are able to survive aloft as long as necessary depending on the nature of their mission. Akitsu Flyers are often highly skilled with both firearms and explosives, making them deadly to those below.

AKITSU FLYER — DIFFICULTY 50

Size 1 human (soburi)

Perception 12 (+2)

Defense 16 (do-maru); **Health** 45

Strength 11 (+1), **Agility** 13 (+3), **Intellect** 12 (+2), **Will** 14 (+4)

Speed 10; flier 20 (while in uso-flyer) or flier 26 (while in uso-kite)

Barrel Roll When the Akitsu Flyer can see its attacker, it can spend its triggered action to ignore one ranged weapon attack or one ranged spell attack.

Flyer Mastery The Akitsu Flyer gains 2 boons on any challenge rolls to control the uso-flyer or uso-kite it is piloting.

ATTACK OPTIONS

Fragmentation Grenade (long range) +3. When a grenade reaches its target, or if it encounters a solid creature or object before then, it explodes. The explosion deals 2d6 damage from fire to everything in a sphere with a 5-yard radius centered on the target or a point within the creature's or object's space. Each creature in the area that gets a success on an Agility challenge roll with takes half the damage.

Rifle (long range) +3 (2d6 damage)

Artful Aim While piloting an uso-flyer or uso-kite (page 215), an Akitsu Flyer gains 1 boon on ranged weapon attacks with thrown weapons or firearms and increases their range to long range.

SPECIAL ATTACKS

Double Attack The Akitsu Flyer attacks twice with its fragmentation grenade or once with its fragmentation grenade and once with its rifle.

USO BENGOSHI

SKY ADEPT — DIFFICULTY 100

Size 1 human (soburi)

Perception 20 (+10)

Defense 17 (hard leather); **Health** 85

Strength 11 (+1), **Agility** 15 (+5), **Intellect** 15 (+5), **Will** 16 (+6)

Speed 10; flier 22 (while in uso-flyer) or flier 28 (while in uso-kite)

Immune charmed, compelled, fatigued, frightened

Intuitive Barrel Roll By spending a triggered action, a Sky Adept can ignore one ranged weapon attack or one ranged spell attack.

Flyer Mastery The Sky Adept adds 3 boons on any challenge rolls to control the uso-flyer or uso-kite it is piloting.

Flyer's Reflexes The Sky Adept has 2 triggered actions each turn.

ATTACK OPTIONS

Fragmentation Grenade (long range) +5. When a grenade reaches its target, or if it encounters a solid creature or object before then, it explodes. The explosion deals 4d6 damage from fire to everything in a sphere with a 5-yard radius centered on the target or a point within the creature's or object's space. Each creature in the area that gets a success on an Agility challenge roll with 1 bane takes half the damage.

Uso-Rifle (long range) +5 (2d6+1 damage)

Artful Aim While piloting an uso-flyer or uso-kite (page 215), a Sky Adept gains 1 boon on ranged weapon attacks with thrown weapons or firearms and increases their range to long range.

SPECIAL ATTACKS

Double Attack The Sky Adept attacks twice with its fragmentation grenade or once with its fragmentation grenade and once with its Uso-rifle.

SPECIAL ACTIONS

Wind Manipulation The Sky Adept can manipulate air currents through supernatural techniques, summoning a howling wind that disperses vapors, fog, smoke, and gas from the area for 1 minute. Unprotected flames gutter out, and lightweight objects are blown to the nearest edge of the area. While active the winds impose 2 bane on ranged weapon attacks targeting the Sky Adept. Once the Sky Adept has used Wind Manipulation, it cannot do so for 1 minute.

Representing the very best that the Akitsu have to offer, bengoshi from Uso are truly one with the skies. Some are even said to have not touched the ground since they first received their rank, communicating only with fellow pilots and via special message drops.

YOKUBA

Haunting images of the long-deceased once roamed Soburin and though the descendants of the Imperial Sibling Yokuba could see them and make contact, even then only with those to whom they had a connection. Gradually, rituals and spells were refined to allow for greater communication with spirits and by the time the foreigners first appeared they could see not only into the past but throughout the present as well. Their prescience became indispensable during the War of Kaiyo and their abilities led the ceramians to cruelly take advantage of Yokuba in the years to come. The invaders recognized that the powers of divination were invaluable and spurred seers to improve upon their unique talents, forcing the prefecture's seers to refine their methods even further, straining the minds and bodies of Yokuba's people. Soon they were even looking into the future, finding knowledge and secrets best left alone—but the Kengen Occupation's commanders thirsted for more.

In 3404 the people of **Uranai** gathered in masses for what would be the greatest ritual yet and after a week of meditation and preparation they collectively tapped into the furthest vision of the future yet known. They found a world untroubled by the ceramian military but filled with wicked mists that consumed the continent—a vision from which only a handful of people awoke. They described terrible, alien horrors from within the corrupting fog and the imminent fall of humanity. Keen to avoid the unrest this might cause the Wakers were silenced by their oppressive masters, the remaining Sleepers hidden throughout Yokuba. Much to their dismay the foreigners soon learned that this ritual had weakened the power the prefecture's natives drew from, diminishing it until the window of time closed and fueling them with desperation until Hitoshi's Rebellion cast the oppressive gaijin down.

Emperor Hitoshi rose to power as the Yokuba Clan expected and with his ascent came an increase in the land's hauntings—hundreds of echoes from the past descended upon the prefecture. Many of these souls cried out in desperate pleas and tormented agony, but as they were unlike the ancestral spirits that Yokuba had known previously, arms were taken up in response. Now the Spirit Hunters of Yokuba travel the region from their head--quarters in **Yobo**, searching for their quarry and utterly intent on putting an end to what they believe to be a menace to their homeland.

Yokuba is an altogether different place than it once was. The majority of the prefecture's economy is focused on the quest for knowledge and information (to be sold to the highest bidder), and the abilities of its people make for the greatest reconnaissance in Soburin. Folk from all walks of life—nobles, commoners, soldiers, and students—all seek the guidance of Yokuba, but only the most rich and influential are able to purchase the very limited power of prophecy available within its borders (usually in **Zencho**'s fortune markets), abilities that so far have yet to be incorrect.

Lady Nomashi Yokuba leads the prefecture with a fractured understanding of the current day and what is yet to come. She relives the event in Uranai when tapping into the energy of the future she saw, a time that to her is the present day, frequently interrupted by seemingly out of order visions of fate. While she has kept her mind so far—sending out warnings to areas soon to be consumed by the Mists of Akuma when she can see clearly—her will is slowly waning as she delegates more of her duties to advisors.

The ceramians used Yokuba's divinatory powers to seek out and sadistically hunt down rat hengeyokai, gathering them into the prefecture. Believed to be less than worthless—even more so than any of their animal cousins—the nezumi were experts at hiding but stood no chance at avoiding the seers of the south, and once resettled the oppressive invaders keenly watched with the nigh-omniscient Eyes of Yokuba for any hints of rebellion from the rodent folk. The citizens are not necessarily untrusting of the nezumi, having grown accustomed to their presence.

Known to be great planners and deliberate actors, the prefecture's population displays an exceptional patience that has prevented Yokuba from drinking too deeply in the rivers of time—though with Lady Nomashi's weakening grasp on reality, many fear that will soon come to an end.

FORBIDDEN TECHNOLOGY

Electrolens augmetic, hornear augmetic, ketsueki shokubai, shindan yokutan

SPIRIT HUNTER — DIFFICULTY 50

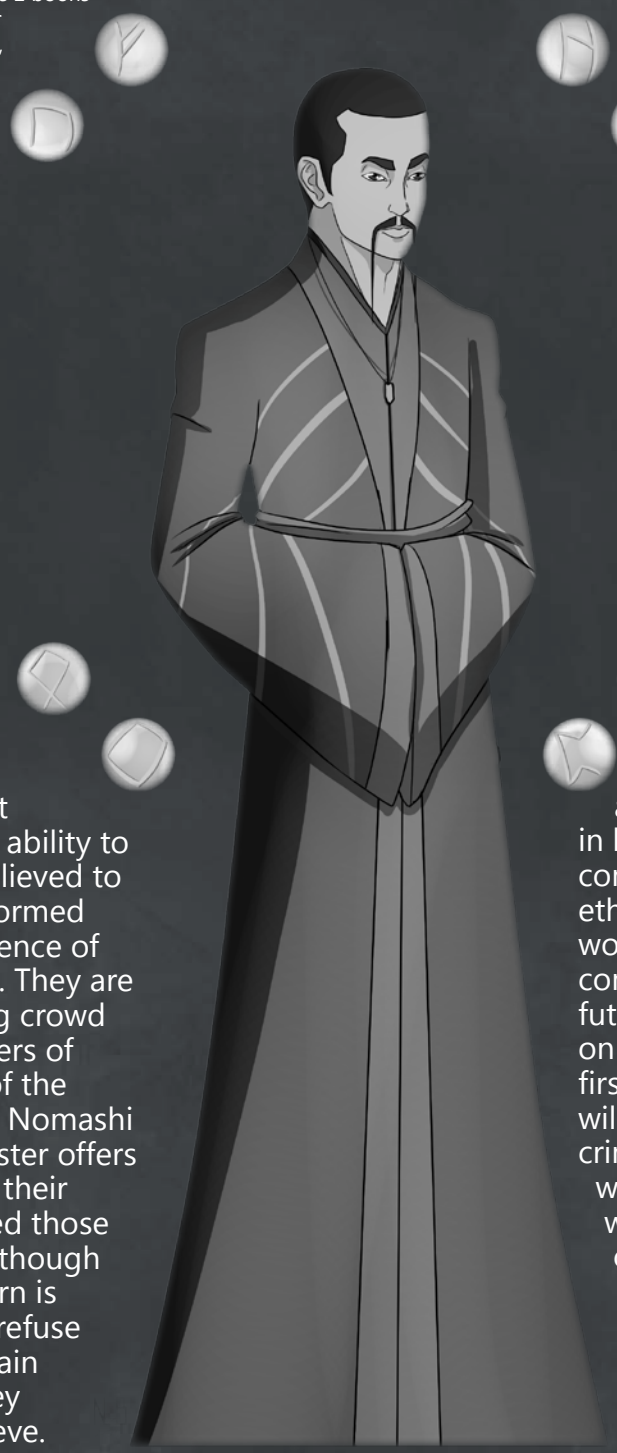
Size 1 human (soburi)
Perception 10 (+0); darksight
Defense 16 (hard leather, small shield); **Health** 45
Strength 11 (+1), **Agility** 13 (+3), **Intellect** 10 (+0), **Will** 15 (+5)
Speed 10
Immune damage from psychic; frightened
Spirit Resistances The Spirit Hunter takes half damage from magical sources (such as ghosts, kami, spirits, and spells).
Spirit Sight The Spirit Hunter is able to see ghosts, kami, and spirits that are within range of its vision regardless of concealment or spells like *invisibility*.

ATTACK OPTIONS
Tetsubo (melee) +1 with 2 boons (2d6 damage)
Whip (melee; reach +2) +3 with 1 boon (1d6 damage)
Longbow (long range) +3 with 1 boon (1d6+1 damage)
Spirit Bane The Spirit Hunter gains 2 boons when making a challenge roll or attack roll against a ghost, kami, or spirit.

SPECIAL ATTACKS
Double Attack The Spirit Hunter attacks twice with its tetsubo, twice with its whip, or twice with its longbow.

SPECIAL ACTIONS
Spirit Knowledge Once per turn as a minor activity the Spirit Hunter can learn the abilities and statistics of any ghost, kami, or spirit of Difficulty 100 or less. They must be able to see or hear the target to use this ability.

Spirit Hunters are the disorganized, self-appointed warriors who seek out ghosts roaming the prefecture. Although they are a relatively new tradition, already there are many groups and families that take great pride in their ability to locate the phantoms believed to be evil manifestations formed from the latent malevolence of the Kengen Occupation. They are a rowdy and self-serving crowd and only follow the orders of the bengoshi because of the stern command of Lady Nomashi Yokuba. Their noble master offers something in return for their service and it has enticed those that accepted her deal, though what they'll gain in return is something they utterly refuse to reveal—even upon pain of death, something they seem too eager to achieve.



YOKUBA BENGOSHI

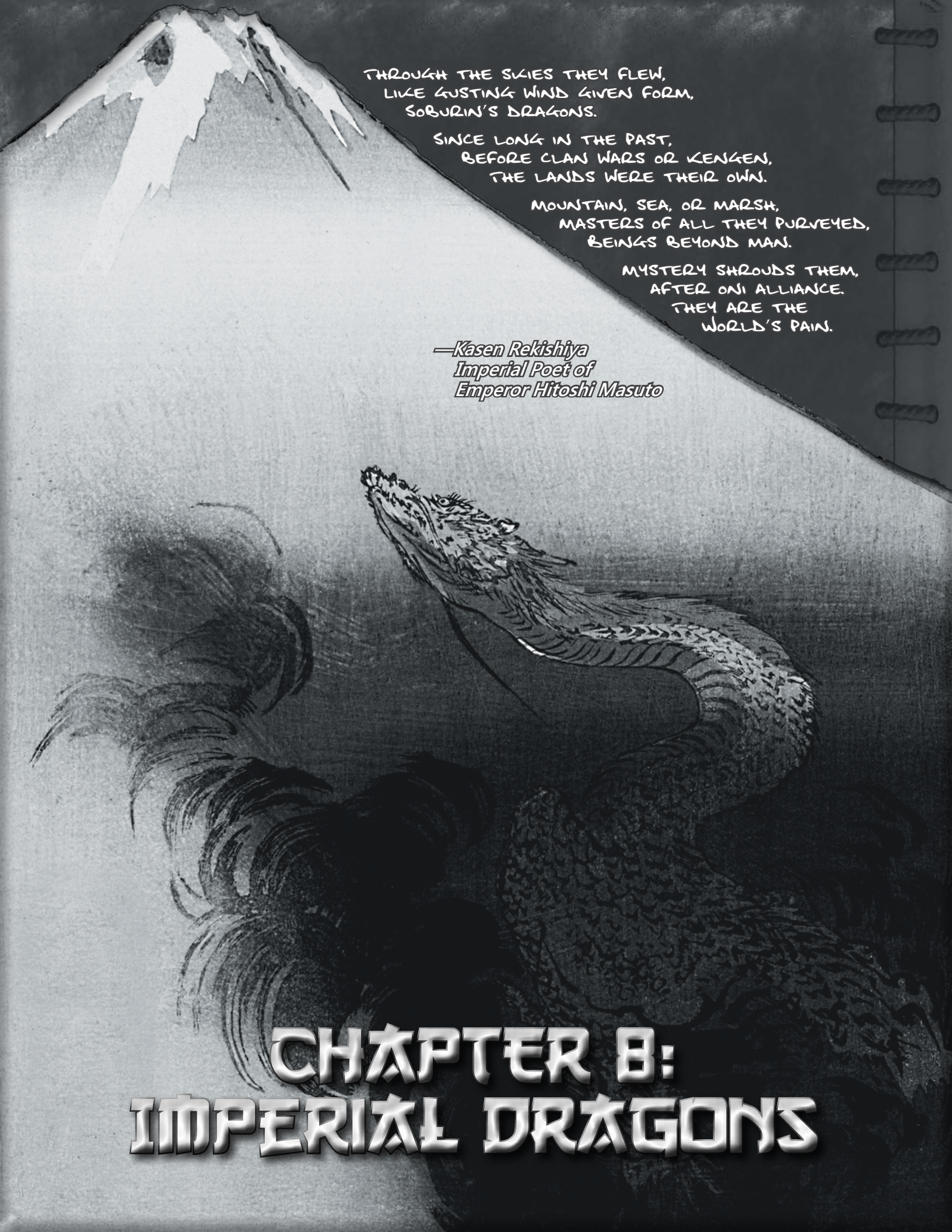
EYE OF YOKUBA — DIFFICULTY 100

Size 1 human (soburi)
Perception 26 (+16); darksight, sightless
Defense 18; **Health** 65
Strength 10 (+0), **Agility** 13 (+3), **Intellect** 18 (+8), **Will** 18 (+8)
Speed 10
Immune damage from psychic; charmed, compelled, frightened
Intuitive Dodge When hit by an attack or spell, the Eye of Yokuba may spend its triggered action to reduce the damage it takes by half.
Forecasting The Eye of Yokuba gains 1 boon on all challenge rolls.
Telepathy The Eye of Yokuba can communicate telepathically within a range of 60 yards.

ATTACK OPTIONS
Fateful Shiv (melee) +0 with 3 boons (1d6 damage plus 5d6 psychic damage)

MAGIC
Power 5
Divination *eavesdrop* (4), *epiphany* (4), *augur* (4), *foretell* (4), *psychometry* (4), *reading* (4), *truth ear* (4), *see the future* (3), *locate* (3), *vision* (2), *clairvoyance* (1)

Lady Nomashi Yokuba found appointing the bengoshi of her prefecture to be a relatively simple matter; they contacted her first. Numbering among the elite seers and oracles of Yokuba, these diviners are capable of finding wrongdoing shortly before they are committed and though instrumental in keeping crime at a minimum, concerns are growing over the ethical implications of their work. Those accused of committing a crime in the future are being brought in on their orders and while at first these were lauded as wild successes, the most recent criminals were not brought in with any evidence of their wrongdoing other than the claims by an Eye of Yokuba. Rumors circulate claiming that the man was close to a political rival and many fear they may be next.



CHAPTER 8: IMPERIAL DRAGONS

Imperial Dragons

In Soburin's ancient past before the Mists of Akuma or the Kengen Occupation, prior to the idyllic rule of the original Masuto Empress Iko and even the Ichizoku Wars, majestic creatures ruled the realm, grand serpents unmatched in prestige and power. These were the Imperial Dragons of Soburin though they were not known as such then. The earliest historical records speak of great miracles and horrible atrocities attributed to powerful entities—vengeful Kutabare destroying Wasure Island, the aquifer of Fukanō borne aloft through the will of Subarashīdesu, Sunēkuman cutting through the earth to form the marshes of Supai. For countless years the enormous serpents were the ultimate authority of the realms, the arbiters of final justice and virtually unopposed saved by one another. Only when the Imperial Siblings rose to power nearly four millennia ago (twenty-two brothers and sisters if the stories are true, each a master of both magic and blade) were the dragons confronted by equals.

The Imperial Siblings

Unbearable violence descended as the Imperial Siblings waged war on the serpents of the land, sea, and sky. Overwhelming supernatural onslaught forced soburi and inhuman alike to band together under these martial legends, leaders of great battles and slayers of dozens of the great dragons—though as many armies were slaughtered as grand serpents. The mythical creatures eventually relented, striking agreements with their foes for tribute and territory in exchange for the cessation of hostilities. In victory each of the Imperial Siblings came to rule over their own region of Soburin and the borders of the prefectures they claimed remain almost unchanged today.

Serpents of the Ichizoku Wars

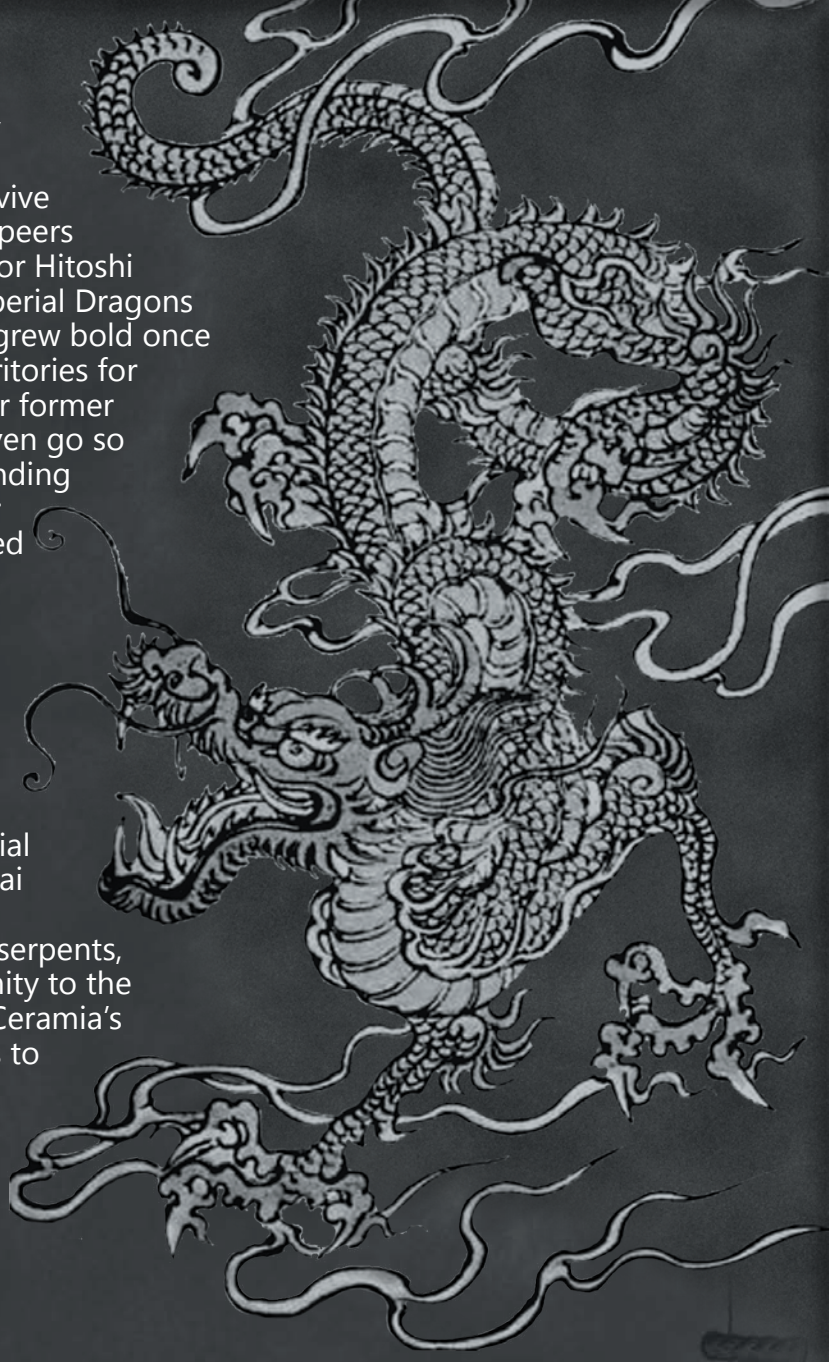
Shown great deference by the peoples they once slaughtered, the Imperial Dragons watched with growing amusement as the years passed and the plans of their enemies faltered. The children of the Imperial Siblings grew apart with every decade, losing respect for one another and increasing in avarice with every generation until small skirmishes over borders exploded into the Ichizoku Wars. For over two thousand years the clans engaged in bloody conflicts with one another, engaging in alliances as often as subterfuge with death in battle the ultimate fate of nearly every man and woman in Soburin, little changing other than strategies as new generals replaced the old.

Many clans used great hoards of treasure to bribe the Imperial Dragons into joining battles of the Ichizoku Wars, typically to face off "against" another dragon. Though none of these battles claimed draconic lives the death tolls were greater even than when the Imperial Siblings faced down the grand serpents, and now the clashes are the subject of epic ballads, poems, and plays all over Soburin (often aggrandizing the mythical creatures as much as the soburi heroes that survived encountering them). Scholars suspect that the end of the Imperial Dragons' involvement in the Ichizoku Wars and the rise of the 23rd family—the merchant ancestors of Emperor Hitoshi Masuto—are not unrelated events. These historical theories are supported by the long and enduring peace that came after the end of the millennia-long conflict, as the leaders of each clan recognized the authority of the Masuto family thanks to the influence of the great serpents that so easily slaughtered their warriors. With the Ichizoku Wars over the Imperial Dragons retreated to the mountains and wilderness of Soburin to live among the oni, away from the blades and spells of the prefectures to ultimately become little more than myth.

Cowed by the Kengen Occupation

Though they may once have been the masters of the skies over Soburin, even the Imperial Dragons were undone by the fleets of airborne technological wonders from Ceramia. Responding to a summons from the Masuto Dynasty the majestic serpents fought valiantly in the Battle of Gyakusatsu before it became clear that between advanced weapons and enormous numbers, the invaders would ultimately emerge victorious. Retreating back into the wilderness the dragons called on the oni warlords who lived among them, warning that they too would be undone by the foreigners. Eventually a new alliance was struck: the grand serpents would use their mystical powers to craft shrouds to hide themselves and the fortresses of their hosts from the occupying soldiers while the oni warlords offered the lives of their servants to repel any that penetrated the befuddling wards.

In this way they lay hidden from discovery for over a century, allowing many supernatural denizens of the wilderness and mountains to survive the Kengen Occupation while their independent peers did not. Once the danger had passed and Emperor Hitoshi had established his rule the alliance between Imperial Dragons and oni warlords faltered. The Imperial Dragons grew bold once more and have brazenly begun claiming new territories for themselves in the wilds—often in the face of their former allies. Those far from the Imperial government even go so far as to lands settled by the mortal races, demanding tribute and obedience within the borders of their fiefdoms. Still shrouded in mystery and considered myth across most of Soburin, the grand serpents see little resistance to their return. Yet as they grow bolder with every passing day, it is only a matter of time before a reckoning comes, either by ancient claw or enchanted blade.



Rivalry of Sovereigns

The Imperial Dragons have always been at odds with not only the descendants of the Imperial Siblings, but the greatest oni lords as well—the yai sovereigns. These masters of the elements have always chafed at the mere presence of the great serpents, jealous of their power and hateful of their immunity to the most potent oni magic. Even the appearance of Ceramia's military failed to persuade these opposing forces to bury their rivalry and throughout the Kengen Occupation the few Imperial Dragons that the invaders were able to find only did so thanks to the manipulations of the yai sovereigns.

More than anything else the Imperial Dragons yearn to tear down these powerful oni and watch their grand fortresses crumble, to watch them fall once and for all to serpentine might. Many soburi have sworn to help remove the yai sovereigns from power, though those who do are as foolish as they are bold. The Imperial Dragons care little for anything but themselves and most of these aspiring-heroes lose their lives in draconic schemes before so much as setting foot into one of the yai sovereigns' lairs.

Imperial Ancestries

Imperial Dragons are not beholden to tyranny or benevolence because of their ancestry—only predisposed to fall towards evil or rise to nobility (though most are of the former variety). Overcoming these predispositions makes one of them truly noteworthy, like the legendary underworld dragon Tsuki the Rising Moon, lauded as a hero in Soburin's history for valuing the lives of all the clan's retainers as well as their serfs. Usually an Imperial Dragon settles on a pattern of behavior around adulthood, rarely deviating from it once it has chosen to act as its ancestors or to defy its inner nature.

Additionally, all imperial dragons possess the following ability:

Change Shape As an action, the dragon magically shapechanges into a humanoid or beast that has a difficulty no higher than its own, or back into its true form. It reverts to its true form if it dies. Any equipment it is wearing or carrying is absorbed or borne by the new form (the dragon's choice). In a new form, the dragon retains its Health, ability to speak, Intellect, Will, and this action. Its statistics and capabilities are otherwise replaced by those of the new form.

FOREST DRAGONS

Of all the Imperial Dragons none are as malicious and senselessly violent as those that dwell in Soburin's dwindling forests. Even before the Kengen Occupation stripped the land these majestic creatures were feared for their bloodlust, known for slaughtering even those that appeased them. Rumors of bloody serpentine tyrants roaming the wilderness have reached many noble ears, but the clan lords are typically too fearful—or weak—to respond with force.

WYRMLING FOREST DRAGON — DIFFICULTY 100

Size 2 frightening dragon
Perception 14 (+4); darksight
Defense 17; **Health** 75
Strength 16 (+6), **Agility** 13 (+3), **Intellect** 14 (+4), **Will** 14 (+4)
Speed 18; climber, flier (swoop)
Immune damage from acid and poison; charmed, compelled, dazed, frightened, poisoned, sleep, stunned
Spell Defense A dragon takes half damage from spells and makes any challenge roll to resist a spell with 1 boon. A creature attacking the dragon with a spell makes the attack roll with 1 bane.
Vulnerability The dragon takes double damage from fire.
Camouflaging Scales As a triggered action the dragon can Hide in partially obscured areas, even while being observed. It gains 3 boons on Stealth challenge rolls made using this trait.

ATTACK OPTIONS
Claws (melee) +6 with 1 boon (1d6+1 damage)
Teeth (melee) +6 with 1 boon (1d6 plus 1d6 acid damage)

SPECIAL ATTACKS
Flurry of Attacks The dragon attacks twice with its claws and once with its bite.
Spew Splinters The dragon sprays poisonous wooden splinters in a 20-yard-line from a point it can reach. Everything in the area takes 2d6 + 6 damage. Each creature in the area must make a Strength challenge roll. On a failure, the creature takes 1d6 extra poison damage and is poisoned for 1 minute. A creature that is already poisoned takes +1d6 extra poison damage. Once the dragon uses Spew Splinters, it cannot do so again for 1 round.

ADULT FOREST DRAGON — DIFFICULTY 250

Size 3 frightening dragon
Perception 15 (+5); darksight
Defense 19; **Health** 140
Strength 17 (+7), **Agility** 14 (+4), **Intellect** 15 (+5), **Will** 15 (+5)
Speed 20; climber, flier (swoop)
Immune damage from acid and poison; charmed, compelled, dazed, frightened, poisoned, sleep, stunned
Spell Defense A dragon takes half damage from spells and makes any challenge roll to resist a spell with 2 boons. A creature attacking the dragon with a spell makes the attack roll with 2 bane.
Vulnerability The dragon takes double damage from fire.
Camouflaging Scales As a triggered action the dragon can Hide in partially obscured areas, even while being observed. It gains 3 boons on Stealth challenge rolls made using this trait.
Magic Detection The dragon is under the constant effects of the *arcane sight* spell.

ATTACK OPTIONS
Claws (melee) +7 with 1 boon (2d6+2 damage)
Teeth (melee) +7 with 1 boon (2d6+2 plus 1d6 acid damage)

SPECIAL ATTACKS
Flurry of Attacks The dragon attacks twice with its claws and once with its bite.
Spew Splinters The dragon sprays poisonous wooden splinters in a 20-yard-line from a point it can reach. Everything in the area takes 3d6 damage. Each creature in the area must make a Strength challenge roll. On a failure, the creature takes 2d6 extra poison damage and is poisoned for 1 minute. A creature that is already poisoned takes +1d6 extra poison damage. Once the dragon uses Spew Splinters, it cannot do so again for 1 round.

DAOKOSHAZI, ANCIENT FOREST DRAGON — DIFFICULTY 750

Size 4 horrifying dragon
Perception 16 (+6); darksight
Defense 21; **Health** 250
Strength 18 (+8), **Agility** 15 (+5), **Intellect** 16 (+6), **Will** 16 (+6)
Speed 22; climber, flier (swoop)
Immune damage from acid and poison; charmed, compelled, dazed, frightened, poisoned, sleep, stunned
Pain Threshold Attacks that deal 6 damage or less deal no damage to the dragon.
Spell Defense A dragon takes half damage from spells and makes any challenge roll to resist a spell with 3 boons. A creature attacking the dragon with a spell makes the attack roll with 3 bane.
Vulnerability The dragon takes double damage from fire.
Camouflaging Scales As a triggered action the dragon can Hide in partially obscured areas, even while being observed. It gains 3 boons on Stealth challenge rolls made using this trait.
Magic Detection The dragon is under the constant effects of the *arcane sight* spell.

ATTACK OPTIONS
Claws (melee) +8 with 3 boons (3d6+2 damage)
Teeth (melee) +8 with 3 boons (3d6+2 plus 1d6 acid damage)

SPECIAL ATTACKS
Flurry of Attacks The dragon attacks twice with its claws and once with its bite.
Spew Splinters The dragon sprays poisonous wooden splinters in a 20-yard-line from a point it can reach. Everything in the area takes 4d6 damage. Each creature in the area must make a Strength challenge roll. On a failure, the creature takes 2d6 + 6 extra poison damage and is poisoned for 1 minute. A creature that is already poisoned takes +1d6 extra poison damage. Once the dragon uses Spew Splinters, it cannot do so again for 1 round.

END OF THE ROUND
Wooden Whirlwind The dragon unleashes primal forces that rip apart the trees nearby. It chooses a group of trees within long range, causing them to explode in a 20 yards long, 10 yard high, 2 yard wide whirlwind of splinters. This whirlwind travels forward in a straight line, dealing 3d6 damage to anything whose space it enters. Each unsecured object damaged in this way is moved 1d6 yards in a direction the dragon chooses. Each creature damaged in this way must make a Strength challenge roll with 2 banes. On a failure, it is moved 1d6 yards in a direction the dragon chooses, takes 2d6 poison damage, and falls prone. On a success, it just takes half the damage (no poison damage).

SEA DRAGONS

Soburin's wildest Imperial Dragons are as capricious and chaotic as the waves in which they swim. Though not as malevolent as their wooded cousins, sea dragons are notorious for being fickle and loyal only to themselves, turning on allies in ferocious and vicious betrayals the moment it suits them. The water yai sovereigns pay great bounties for the heads of any that can be found wandering the depths, with some saying that a million Imperial Pieces would be a just price for someone capable of felling Seikanami.

WYRMLING SEA DRAGON — DIFFICULTY 100

Size 2 frightening dragon
Perception 16 (+6); darksight
Defense 17; **Health** 80
Strength 15 (+5), **Agility** 14 (+4), **Intellect** 16 (+6), **Will** 16 (+6)
Speed 14; swimmer 20
Immune damage from acid and poison; charmed, compelled, dazed, frightened, poisoned, sleep, stunned
Dragon Resistances The dragon takes half damage from cold and fire.
Spell Defense A dragon takes half damage from spells and makes any challenge roll to resist a spell with 1 boon. A creature attacking the dragon with a spell makes the attack roll with 1 bane.
Vulnerability The dragon takes double damage from lightning.
Amphibious The dragon can breathe air and water.
Magnificent Swimmer While in the water, the dragon is immune to the fatigued, grabbed, immobilized, impaired, and slowed afflictions.
Meniscus Mirage While in the water, the dragon is able to cast *glamer* and *invisibility* without the need for concentration, wielding the implements, or speaking the words.

ATTACK OPTIONS
Claws (melee) +5 with 1 boon (1d6+1 damage)
Teeth (melee) +5 with 1 boon (1d6+1 damage plus 1d6 cold damage)
Tail (melee; reach +1) +5 with 1 boon (1d6+2 damage)

SPECIAL ATTACKS
Flurry of Attacks The dragon attacks once with its claws, once with its bite, and once with its tail.
Spew Water The dragon sprays superheated steam in a 10-yard-cone from a point it can reach. Everything in the area takes 2d6 fire damage. Each creature in the area must make a Strength challenge roll. On a failure, the creature takes 1d6 extra fire damage. Alternatively, the dragon may spew a geyser of water in a 30-yard line, dealing regular damage instead and giving creatures that fail their Strength challenge roll the prone affliction. Once the dragon uses Spew Water, it cannot do so again for 1 round.

SPECIAL ACTIONS
Water Jumper The dragon teleports (as *travel*) from one body of water to another body of water that it has previously swam in.

ADULT SEA DRAGON — DIFFICULTY 250

Size 3 frightening dragon
Perception 17 (+7); darksight
Defense 19; **Health** 155
Strength 16 (+6), **Agility** 15 (+5), **Intellect** 17 (+7), **Will** 17 (+7)
Speed 16; swimmer 30
Immune damage from acid and poison; charmed, compelled, dazed, frightened, poisoned, sleep, stunned
Dragon Resistances The dragon takes half damage from cold and fire.
Spell Defense A dragon takes half damage from spells and makes any challenge roll to resist a spell with 2 boons. A creature attacking the dragon with a spell makes the attack roll with 2 bane.
Vulnerability The dragon takes double damage from lightning.
Amphibious The dragon can breathe air and water.
Magic Detection The dragon is under the constant effects of the *arcane sight* spell.
Magnificent Swimmer While in the water, the dragon is immune to the fatigued, grabbed, immobilized, impaired, and slowed afflictions.
Meniscus Mirage While in the water, the dragon is able to cast *glamer* and *invisibility* without the need for concentration, wielding the implements, or speaking the words.

ATTACK OPTIONS
Claws (melee) +6 with 2 boons (2d6+2 damage)
Teeth (melee) +6 with 2 boons (2d6+2 damage plus 1d6 cold damage)
Tail (melee; reach +1) +5 with 2 boons (2d6+3 damage)

SPECIAL ATTACKS
Flurry of Attacks The dragon attacks once with its claws, once with its bite, and once with its tail.
Spew Water The dragon sprays superheated steam in a 15-yard-cone from a point it can reach. Everything in the area takes 3d6 fire damage. Each creature in the area must make a Strength challenge roll. On a failure, the creature takes 2d6 extra fire damage. Alternatively, the dragon may spew a geyser of water in a 40-yard line, dealing regular damage instead and giving creatures that fail their Strength challenge roll the prone affliction. Once the dragon uses Spew Water, it cannot do so again for 1 round.
Tidal Wave The dragon conjures a rolling wave of water 10 yards across that rushes away from it 20 yards in a direction of its choice. Each creature hit by the wave must succeed on a Strength challenge roll or take 3d6 damage, gain the prone affliction, and moved to the end of the tidal wave's reach.

SPECIAL ACTIONS
Water Jumper The dragon teleports (as *travel*) from one body of water to another body of water that it has previously swam in.

SEKAINAMI, ANCIENT SEA DRAGON DIFFICULTY 750

Size 4 horrifying dragon
Perception 18 (+8); darksight
Defense 22; **Health** 265
Strength 17 (+7), **Agility** 16 (+6), **Intellect** 18 (+8), **Will** 18 (+8)
Speed 20; swimmer 40
Immune damage from acid and poison; charmed, compelled, dazed, frightened, poisoned, sleep, stunned
Dragon Resistances The dragon takes half damage from cold and fire.
Pain Threshold Attacks that deal 6 damage or less deal no damage to the dragon.
Spell Defense A dragon takes half damage from spells and makes any challenge roll to resist a spell with 3 boons. A creature attacking the dragon with a spell makes the attack roll with 3 bane.
Vulnerability The dragon takes double damage from lightning.
Amphibious The dragon can breathe air and water.
Magic Detection The dragon is under the constant effects of the *arcane sight* spell.
Magnificent Swimmer While in the water, the dragon is immune to the fatigued, grabbed, immobilized, impaired, and slowed afflictions.
Meniscus Mirage While in the water, the dragon is able to cast *glamer* and *invisibility* without the need for concentration, wielding the implements, or speaking the words.

ATTACK OPTIONS
Claws (melee) +7 with 2 boons (3d6+3 damage)
Teeth (melee) +7 with 2 boons (3d6+3 damage plus 1d6 cold damage)
Tail (melee; reach +1) +7 with 2 boons (3d6+3 damage)

SPECIAL ATTACKS
Flurry of Attacks The dragon attacks once with its claws, once with its bite, and once with its tail.
Spew Water The dragon sprays superheated steam in a 20-yard-cone from a point it can reach. Everything in the area takes 4d6 fire damage. Each creature in the area must make a Strength challenge roll. On a failure, the creature takes 2d6 + 6 extra fire damage. Alternatively, the dragon may spew a geyser of water in a 50-yard line, dealing regular damage instead and giving creatures that fail their Strength challenge roll the prone affliction. Once the dragon uses Spew Water, it cannot do so again for 1 round.
Tidal Wave The dragon conjures a rolling wave of water 10 yards across that rushes away from it 20 yards in a direction of its choice. Each creature hit by the wave must succeed on a Strength challenge roll or takes 4d6 damage, gains the prone affliction, and is moved to the end of the tidal wave's reach.

SPECIAL ACTIONS
Water Jumper The dragon teleports (as the *travel* spell) from one body of water to another body of water that it has previously swam in.

END OF THE ROUND
Tidal Forces Each creature that is not a sea dragon and within long range of the dragon must make a Strength challenge roll with 1 bane. A creature in or in contact with a liquid makes the roll with 3 banes. On a failure, the creature is moved 2d6 yards away from the dragon if within 10 yards of it, or 2d6 yards toward the dragon if more than 10 yards from it. If the creature encounters an obstacle before moving the full distance, it takes 2 damage for each yard it was prevented from moving.

SKY DRAGONS

Soburin's skies are home to the most reliable and fairest of the Imperial Dragons, serpents that are said to be as much a part of the clouds as anything else. Sky dragons have long been misconceived as entities of good but they are only bound by their personal laws and no other. This still makes them more benign than any of their kin but even these moralistic creatures are dangerous to trust as their schemes are complex beyond most mortals' understanding.

WYRMLING SKY DRAGON DIFFICULTY 100

Size 2 frightening dragon
Perception 16 (+6); darksight (sees through fog or mist)
Defense 18; **Health** 75
Strength 14 (+4), **Agility** 18 (+8), **Intellect** 16 (+6), **Will** 16 (+6)
Speed 14; flier 20 (swoop)
Immune damage from lightning; charmed, compelled, dazed, frightened, sleep, stunned
Dragon Resistances The dragon takes half damage from cold, fire and wind.
Spell Defense A dragon takes half damage from spells and makes any challenge roll to resist a spell with 1 boon. A creature attacking the dragon with a spell makes the attack roll with 1 bane.
Vulnerability The dragon takes double damage from unholy.
Magnificent Flier While in the air, the dragon is immune to the fatigued, grabbed, immobilized, impaired, and slowed afflictions.

ATTACK OPTIONS
Claws (melee) +4 with 1 boon (1d6+1 damage)
Teeth (melee) +4 with 1 boon (1d6 damage plus 1d6 lightning damage)

SPECIAL ATTACKS
Flurry of Attacks The dragon attacks once with its claws and twice with its bite.
Spew Lightning The dragon sprays electricity in a 10-yard-cone or 20-yard-line from a point it can reach. Everything in the area takes 2d6 lightning damage. Each creature in the area must make a Strength challenge roll; targets wearing metal armor make this roll with 1 bane. On a failure, the creature takes 1d6 extra lightning damage. Once the dragon uses Spew Lightning, it cannot do so again for 1 round.

SPECIAL ACTIONS
Commanding Voice Once per round without spending an action the dragon twists the mind of a creature able to hear and understand it. The target makes an Intellect challenge roll and on a failure gains the charmed affliction for 1d6 rounds or until the dragon deals damage to it.
Mysterious Fog Once per round the dragon casts the *fog* spell without the need for wielding the implements, spending an action, concentrating, or speaking the words. Clouds made this way persist until the dragon is 200 yards or more away from mists it has created, wills its fogs to cease, or is incapacitated.

ADULT SKY DRAGON DIFFICULTY 250

Size 3 frightening dragon

Perception 17 (+7); darksight (sees through fog or mist)
Defense 20; **Health** 150
Strength 15 (+5), **Agility** 19 (+9), **Intellect** 17 (+7), **Will** 17 (+7)
Speed 16; flier 30 (swoop)
Immune damage from lightning; charmed, compelled, dazed, frightened, sleep, stunned
Dragon Resistances The dragon takes half damage from cold, fire and wind.
Spell Defense A dragon takes half damage from spells and makes any challenge roll to resist a spell with 2 boons. A creature attacking the dragon with a spell makes the attack roll with 2 bane.
Vulnerability The dragon takes double damage from unholy.
Magic Detection The dragon is under the constant effects of the *arcane sight* spell.
Magnificent Flier While in the air, the dragon is immune to the fatigued, grabbed, immobilized, impaired, and slowed afflictions.

ATTACK OPTIONS

Claws (melee) +5 with 2 boons (2d6+2 damage)
Teeth (melee) +5 with 2 boons (2d6+1 damage plus 1d6 lightning damage)

SPECIAL ATTACKS

Flurry of Attacks The dragon attacks once with its claws and twice with its bite.
Spew Lightning The dragon sprays electricity in a 15-yard-cone or 40-yard-line from a point it can reach. Everything in the area takes 3d6 lightning damage. Each creature in the area must make a Strength challenge roll; targets wearing metal armor make this roll with 2 bane. On a failure, the creature takes 2d6 extra lightning damage. Once the dragon uses Spew Lightning, it cannot do so again for 1 round.

SPECIAL ACTIONS

Commanding Voice Once per round without spending an action the dragon twists the mind of a creature able to hear and understand it. The target makes an Intellect challenge roll and on a failure gains the charmed affliction for 2d6 rounds or until the dragon deals damage to it.
Mysterious Fog Once per round the dragon casts the *fog* spell without the need for wielding the implements, spending an action, concentrating, or speaking the words. Clouds made this way persist until the dragon is 200 yards or more away from mists it has created, wills its fogs to cease, or is incapacitated.

CHITANHARIKĒN, ANCIENT SKY DRAGON DIFFICULTY 750

Size 4 horrifying dragon

Perception 18 (+8); darksight (sees through fog or mist)
Defense 22; **Health** 245
Strength 16 (+6), **Agility** 20 (+10), **Intellect** 18 (+8), **Will** 18 (+8)
Speed 20; flier 40 (swoop)
Immune damage from lightning; charmed, compelled, dazed, frightened, sleep, stunned
Dragon Resistances The dragon takes half damage from cold, fire and wind.
Pain Threshold Attacks that deal 6 damage or less deal no damage to the dragon.
Spell Defense A dragon takes half damage from spells and makes any challenge roll to resist a spell with 3 boons. A creature attacking the dragon with a spell makes the attack roll with 3 bane.
Vulnerability The dragon takes double damage from unholy.
Magic Detection The dragon is under the constant effects of the *arcane sight* spell.
Magnificent Flier While in the air, the dragon is immune to the fatigued, grabbed, immobilized, impaired, and slowed afflictions.

ATTACK OPTIONS

Claws (melee) +6 with 3 boons (3d6+1 damage)
Teeth (melee) +6 with 3 boons (3d6+2 damage plus 2d6 lightning damage)

SPECIAL ATTACKS

Flurry of Attacks The dragon attacks once with its claws and twice with its bite.
Spew Lightning The dragon sprays electricity in a 20-yard-cone or 60-yard-line from a point it can reach. Everything in the area takes 4d6 lightning damage. Each creature in the area must make a Strength challenge roll; targets wearing metal armor make this roll with 3 bane. On a failure, the creature takes 2d6+6 extra lightning damage. Once the dragon uses Spew Lightning, it cannot do so again for 1 round.

SPECIAL ACTIONS

Commanding Voice Once per round without spending an action the dragon twists the mind of a creature able to hear and understand it. The target makes an Intellect challenge roll and on a failure gains the charmed affliction for 3d6 rounds or until the dragon deals damage to it.
Mysterious Fog Once per round the dragon casts the *fog* spell without the need for wielding the implements, spending an action, concentrating, or speaking the words. Clouds made this way persist until the dragon is 200 yards or more away from mists it has created, wills its fogs to cease, or is incapacitated.

END OF THE ROUND

Howling Wind Each creature that is not a sky dragon and that is within long range of the dragon must make a Strength challenge roll, making the roll with 2 banes if it is smaller than the dragon. On a failure, the creature is moved 2d6 yards away from the genie and falls prone. If the creature encounters an obstacle before moving the full distance, it takes 2 damage for each yard it was prevented from moving.

SOVEREIGN DRAGONS

The most mystical and duplicitous Imperial Dragons seek enlightenment on the peaks of Soburin's mountains, looking down on the settlements under their tyrannical control while pondering the mysteries of existence. Part of their tributes always involve the transcription of deeds into the mountaintop lairs painstakingly carved out by their thralls, and for all their vaunted magical might, sovereign dragons are known to share one weakness: pride.

WYRMLING SOVEREIGN DRAGON DIFFICULTY 100

Size 2 frightening dragon
Perception 18 (+8); darksight
Defense 15; **Health** 65
Strength 14 (+4), **Agility** 13 (+3), **Intellect** 18 (+8), **Will** 18 (+8)
Speed 14; climber 14, flier 14
Immune damage from thunder; charmed, compelled, dazed, frightened, sleep, stunned
Dragon Resistances The dragon takes half damage from cold, fire, and lightning.
Spell Defense A dragon takes half damage from spells and makes any challenge roll to resist a spell with 1 boon. A creature attacking the dragon with a spell makes the attack roll with 1 bane.

ATTACK OPTIONS
Claws (melee) +4 with 1 boon (1d6 damage)
Teeth (melee) +4 with 1 boon (1d6+2 damage plus 1d6 thunder)

SPECIAL ATTACKS
Flurry of Attacks The dragon attacks twice with its claws and once with its bite.
Spew Cacophony The dragon bellows soundwaves in a 10-yard-cone from a point it can reach. Everything in the area takes 2d6 thunder damage. Each creature in the area must make a Strength challenge roll. On a failure, the creature takes 1d6 extra thunder damage and gains the deafened affliction for 1 minute. Once the dragon uses Spew Cacophony, it cannot do so again for 1 round.

SPECIAL ACTIONS
Gold Armor The dragon can use its action to conjure an extra layer of gold scales that increase its defense by 3 and grant immunity to damage from one source. This source is a type of energy (like psychic or wind) or weapons (anything that deals 1d6 or less). These scales remain for 1d6+4 rounds.
Steal Spell When a creature within medium range casts a spell, the dragon can use a triggered action to make an Intellect attack roll against the triggering creature's Intellect. On a success, the spell has no effect and the dragon gains one casting of the spell that was cast. The dragon retains this casting until it expends it to cast the spell or until the dragon completes a rest, at which point it fades from its mind. The dragon can only hold 1 stolen spell at a time.

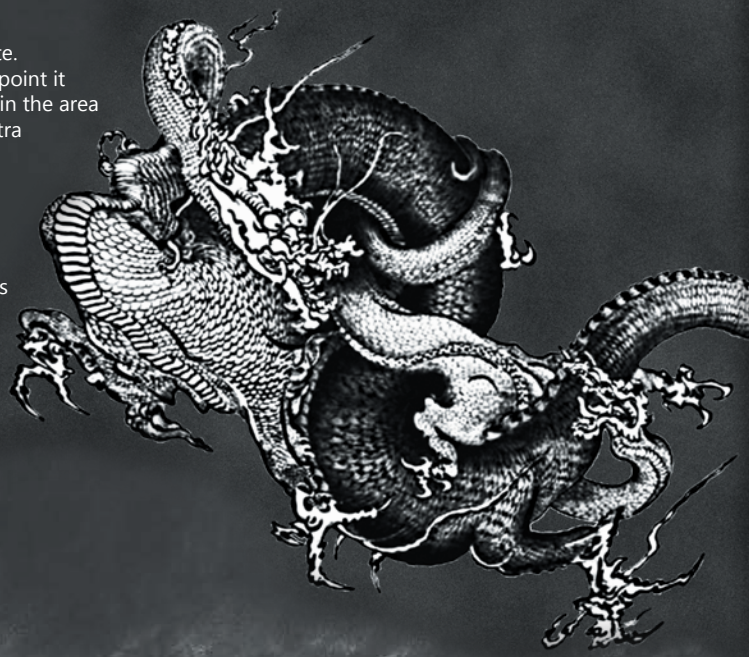
ADULT SOVEREIGN DRAGON DIFFICULTY 250

Size 3 frightening dragon
Perception 19 (+9); darksight
Defense 16; **Health** 120
Strength 15 (+5), **Agility** 14 (+4), **Intellect** 19 (+9), **Will** 19 (+9)
Speed 16; climber 16, flier 16
Immune damage from thunder; charmed, compelled, dazed, frightened, sleep, stunned
Dragon Resistances The dragon takes half damage from cold, fire, and lightning.
Spell Defense A dragon takes half damage from spells and makes any challenge roll to resist a spell with 2 boons. A creature attacking the dragon with a spell makes the attack roll with 2 bane.
Magic Detection The dragon is under the constant effects of the *arcane sight* spell.

ATTACK OPTIONS
Claws (melee) +5 with 2 boons (2d6+1 damage)
Teeth (melee) +5 with 2 boons (2d6+2 damage plus 1d6 thunder)

SPECIAL ATTACKS
Flurry of Attacks The dragon attacks twice with its claws and once with its bite.
Spew Cacophony The dragon bellows soundwaves in a 15-yard-cone from a point it can reach. Everything in the area takes 3d6 thunder damage. Each creature in the area must make a Strength challenge roll. On a failure, the creature takes 2d6 extra thunder damage and gains the deafened affliction for 1 minute. Once the dragon uses Spew Cacophony, it cannot do so again for 1 round.

SPECIAL ACTIONS
Gold Armor The dragon can use its action to conjure an extra layer of gold scales that increase its defense by 3 and grant immunity to damage from one source. This source is a type of energy (like psychic or wind) or weapons (anything that deals 1d6+2 or less). These scales remain for 1 minute.
Steal Spell When a creature within medium range casts a spell, the dragon can use a triggered action to make an Intellect attack roll against the triggering creature's Intellect. On a success, the spell has no effect and the dragon gains one casting of the spell that was cast. The dragon retains this casting until it expends it to cast the spell or until the dragon completes a rest, at which point it fades from its mind. The dragon can only hold 2 stolen spells at a time.



YAMANO-RYŌSHU, ANCIENT SOVEREIGN DRAGON DIFFICULTY 750

Size 4 horrifying dragon
Perception 20 (+10); darksight
Defense 20; **Health** 220
Strength 16 (+6), **Agility** 15 (+5), **Intellect** 20 (+10), **Will** 20 (+10)
Speed 18; climber 18, flier 18
Immune damage from thunder; charmed, compelled, dazed, frightened, sleep, stunned
Dragon Resistances The dragon takes half damage from cold, fire, and lightning.
Pain Threshold Attacks that deal 6 damage or less deal no damage to the dragon.
Spell Defense A dragon takes half damage from spells and makes any challenge roll to resist a spell with 3 boons. A creature attacking the dragon with a spell makes the attack roll with 3 bane.
Magic Detection The dragon is under the constant effects of the *arcane sight* spell.

ATTACK OPTIONS
Claws (melee) +6 with 3 boons (3d6+2 damage)
Teeth (melee) +6 with 3 boons (3d6+3 damage plus 1d6 thunder damage)

SPECIAL ATTACKS
Flurry of Attacks The dragon attacks twice with its claws and once with its bite.
Spew Cacophony The dragon bellows soundwaves in a 20-yard-cone from a point it can reach. Everything in the area takes 4d6 thunder damage. Each creature in the area must make a Strength challenge roll. On a failure, the creature takes 2d6+6 extra thunder damage and gains the deafened affliction for 1d6 minutes. Once the dragon uses Spew Cacophony, it cannot do so again for 1 round.

SPECIAL ACTIONS
Gold Armor The dragon can use its action to conjure an extra layer of gold scales that increase its defense by 3 and grant immunity to damage from one source. This source is a type of energy (like psychic or wind) or weapons (anything that deals 2d6 or less). These scales remain for 1d6 minutes.
Steal Spell When a creature within medium range casts a spell, the dragon can use a triggered action to make an Intellect attack roll against the triggering creature's Intellect. On a success, the spell has no effect and the dragon gains one casting of the spell that was cast. The dragon retains this casting until it expends it to cast the spell or until the dragon completes a rest, at which point it fades from its mind. The dragon can only hold 3 stolen spells at a time.

END OF THE ROUND
Magic Maelstrom The dragon casts *wild magic* without the need for speaking the words or wielding the implements (reroll a result of 1, 9–13, or 20). Roll 1d6. On a 2–5, creatures within the spell's radius are unaffected by a *wild magic* result of 14 or above and the dragon ignores a result of 13 or less. On a 6, the dragon is unaffected by this casting of the spell.

UNDERWORLD DRAGONS

Far beneath the earth and stone of Soburin are dark creatures that rarely see the light of day. Though in the ancient past their seclusion made them weak, the corruption suffusing the world has instead kindled something deep within the subterranean dragons. Underworld dragons crawl forth from their eggs just as their ancestors did but the energies unleashed from the War of Kaiyo mutate them, twisting their muscles into unnaturally efficient shapes that make them amongst the strongest and fastest of their kind.

WYRMLING UNDERWORLD DRAGON DIFFICULTY 100

Size 2 frightening dragon
Perception 14 (+4); darksight, sightless
Defense 17; **Health** 90
Strength 16 (+6), **Agility** 16 (+6), **Intellect** 14 (+4), **Will** 14 (+4)
Speed 14; flier 20, swimmer 14
Immune damage from poison and unholy; charmed, compelled, dazed, frightened, poisoned, sleep, stunned
Dragon Resistances The dragon takes half damage from cold.
Spell Defense A dragon takes half damage from spells and makes any challenge roll to resist a spell with 1 boon. A creature attacking the dragon with a spell makes the attack roll with 1 bane.
Vulnerability The dragon takes double damage from holy.
Amphibious The dragon can breathe air and water.

ATTACK OPTIONS
Claws (melee) +6 with 1 boon (1d6 damage)
Teeth (melee) +6 with 1 boon (1d6 damage plus 1d6 unholy damage)

SPECIAL ATTACKS
Flurry of Attacks The dragon attacks once with its claws and twice with its bite.
Spew Undermist The dragon vomits out mist in a 20-yard-cone from a point it can reach. Everything in the area takes 2d6 + 6 unholy damage. Each creature in the area must make a Strength challenge roll. On a failure, the creature takes 2d6 extra unholy damage and gains the blinded affliction for 1 round. Once the dragon uses Spew Undermist, it cannot do so again for 1 round.

SPECIAL ACTIONS
Tunnel The dragon moves up to half its Speed through earth, sand, stone, rock, or other material of similar consistency. It leaves a 1-yard-diameter tunnel behind it.

ADULT UNDERWORLD DRAGON DIFFICULTY 250

Size 3 frightening dragon
Perception 15 (+5); darksight, sightless
Defense 19; **Health** 170
Strength 17 (+7), **Agility** 17 (+7), **Intellect** 15 (+5), **Will** 15 (+5)
Speed 16; flier 25, swimmer 16
Immune damage from poison and unholy; charmed, compelled, dazed, frightened, poisoned, sleep, stunned
Dragon Resistances The dragon takes half damage from cold.
Spell Defense A dragon takes half damage from spells and makes any challenge roll to resist a spell with 2 boons. A creature attacking the dragon with a spell makes the attack roll with 2 bane.
Vulnerability The dragon takes double damage from holy.
Amphibious The dragon can breathe air and water.
Magic Detection The dragon is under the constant effects of the *arcane sight* spell.

ATTACK OPTIONS
Claws (melee) +7 with 1 boon (2d6+1 damage)
Teeth (melee) +7 with 1 boon (2d6+2 damage plus 1d6 unholy damage)

SPECIAL ATTACKS
Flurry of Attacks The dragon attacks once with its claws and twice with its bite.
Spew Undermist The dragon vomits out mist in a 30-yard-cone from a point it can reach. Everything in the area takes 3d6 unholy damage. Each creature in the area must make a Strength challenge roll. On a failure, the creature takes 2d6 extra unholy damage and gains the blinded affliction for 1d6 rounds. Once the dragon uses Spew Undermist, it cannot do so again for 1 round.

SPECIAL ACTIONS
Tunnel The dragon moves up to half its Speed through earth, sand, stone, rock, or other material of similar consistency. It leaves a 2-yard-diameter tunnel behind it.

HAKANOKISHI, ANCIENT UNDERWORLD DRAGON DIFFICULTY 750

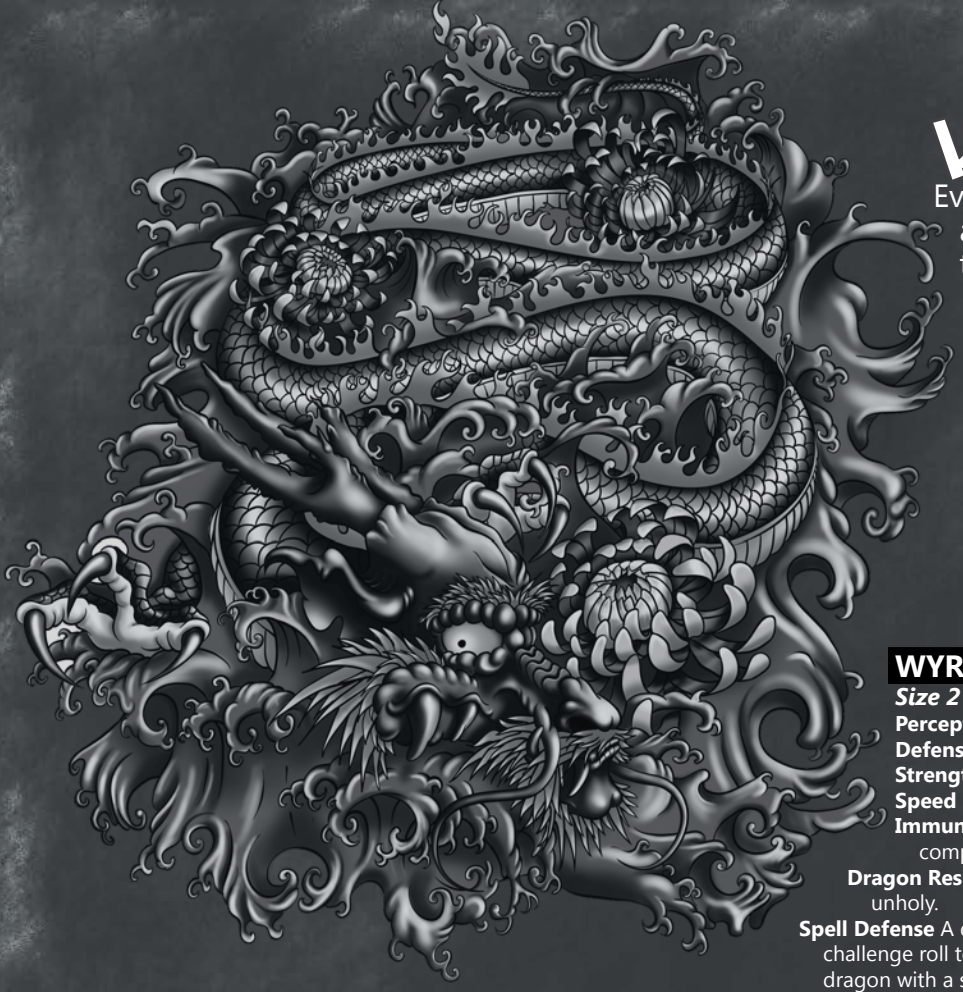
Size 4 horrifying dragon
Perception 16 (+6); darksight, sightless
Defense 21; **Health** 270
Strength 18 (+8), **Agility** 18 (+8), **Intellect** 16 (+6), **Will** 16 (+6)
Speed 20; flier 30, swimmer 20
Immune damage from poison and unholy; charmed, compelled, dazed, frightened, poisoned, sleep, stunned
Dragon Resistances The dragon takes half damage from cold.
Pain Threshold Attacks that deal 6 damage or less deal no damage to the dragon.
Spell Defense A dragon takes half damage from spells and makes any challenge roll to resist a spell with 3 boons. A creature attacking the dragon with a spell makes the attack roll with 3 bane.
Vulnerability The dragon takes double damage from holy.
Amphibious The dragon can breathe air and water.
Magic Detection The dragon is under the constant effects of the *arcane sight* spell.

ATTACK OPTIONS
Claws (melee) +8 with 2 boons (3d6+2 damage)
Teeth (melee) +8 with 2 boons (3d6+3 damage plus 1d6 unholy damage)

SPECIAL ATTACKS
Flurry of Attacks The dragon attacks once with its claws and twice with its bite.
Spew Undermist The dragon vomits out mist in a 40-yard-cone from a point it can reach. Everything in the area takes 4d6 unholy damage. Each creature in the area must make a Strength challenge roll. On a failure, the creature takes 2d6+6 extra unholy damage and gains the blinded affliction for 1 minute. Once the dragon uses Spew Undermist, it cannot do so again for 1 round.

SPECIAL ACTIONS
Tunnel The dragon moves up to half its Speed through earth, sand, stone, rock, or other material of similar consistency. It leaves a 3-yard-diameter tunnel behind it.

END OF THE ROUND
Quaking Presence The ground shakes and heaves violently within 20 yards of the dragon if it is contact, becoming difficult terrain until the end of the next round. Each creature that is not an underworld dragon and standing in the area must make an Agility challenge roll with 1 bane. On a failure, it takes 1d6 damage and falls prone. Any structure in contact with the area takes 2d6 damage. A structure destroyed by this damage collapses, and everything inside or under it takes 4d6 + 10 damage. Creatures on top of the structure might take falling damage when it collapses.



VOID DRAGONS

Even the prideful sovereign dragons and potent underworld dragons fear their most mysterious kin—Imperial Dragons that have traveled too deeply into the unknown, seeing something in the beyond that forever changed them. These enigmas are legends even among Soburin's grandest serpents, the deadliest and most powerful of their kind with motives that are impossible to foresee, shrouded from all.

WYRMLING VOID DRAGON DIFFICULTY 100

Size 2 frightening dragon
Perception 16 (+6); darksight, sightless
Defense 18; **Health** 65
Strength 16 (+6), **Agility** 16 (+6), **Intellect** 16 (+6), **Will** 16 (+6)
Speed 14; flier 20 (swoop)
Immune damage from cold, poison and psychic; charmed, compelled, dazed, frightened, poisoned, sleep, stunned
Dragon Resistances The dragon takes half damage from holy and unholy.
Spell Defense A dragon takes half damage from spells and makes any challenge roll to resist a spell with 1 boon. A creature attacking the dragon with a spell makes the attack roll with 1 bane.
Breathless The dragon does not breathe.
Step of the Void Once per turn the dragon can cast *shortcut* without the need for wielding the implements or speaking the words. As an action it can cast *travel* in the same manner.

ATTACK OPTIONS
Claws (melee) +6 with 1 boon (1d6 damage)
Teeth (melee) +6 with 1 boon (1d6 damage plus 1d6 psychic damage)

SPECIAL ATTACKS
Flurry of Attacks The dragon attacks once with its claws and twice with its bite.
Spew Void The dragon spits out nothingness in a 10-yard-cone or 20-yard-line from a point it can reach. Everything in the area takes 2d6 psychic damage. Each creature in the area must make a Will challenge roll. On a failure, the creature takes 1d6 extra psychic damage and gains the slowed affliction for 1d6 rounds. Once the dragon uses Spew Void, it cannot do so again for 1 round.

SPECIAL ACTIONS
Veil of the Beyond The dragon can spend its triggered action to turn itself invisible for 1 minute or until it makes an attack.

END OF THE ROUND
Gaze of the Kūdō-Mado The dragon stares at one creature within medium range that is able to see it, causing the creature to make a Will challenge roll or suffer from confusion (the madness) for 1d6 rounds.

ADULT VOID DRAGON DIFFICULTY 250

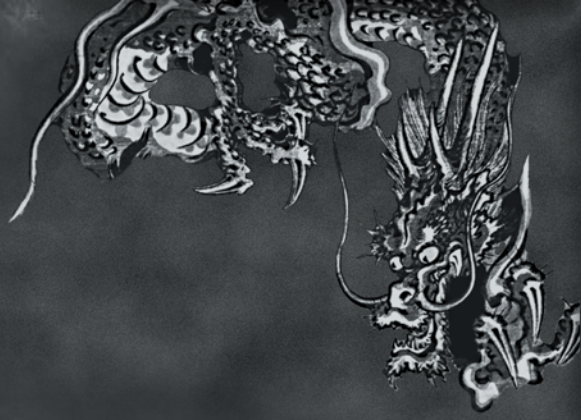
Size 3 frightening dragon
Perception 17 (+7); darksight, sightless
Defense 20; **Health** 120
Strength 17 (+7), **Agility** 17 (+7), **Intellect** 17 (+7), **Will** 17 (+7)
Speed 16; flier 25 (swoop)
Immune damage from cold, poison and psychic; charmed, compelled, dazed, frightened, poisoned, sleep, stunned
Dragon Resistances The dragon takes half damage from holy and unholy.
Spell Defense A dragon takes half damage from spells and makes any challenge roll to resist a spell with 2 boons. A creature attacking the dragon with a spell makes the attack roll with 2 bane.
Breathless The dragon does not breathe.
Magic Detection The dragon is under the constant effects of the *arcane sight* spell.
Step of the Void Once per turn the dragon can cast *shortcut* without the need for wielding the implements or speaking the words. As an action it can cast *travel* in the same manner.

ATTACK OPTIONS
Claws (melee) +7 with 1 boon (2d6+2 damage)
Teeth (melee) +7 with 1 boon (2d6+1 damage plus 1d6 psychic damage)

SPECIAL ATTACKS
Flurry of Attacks The dragon attacks once with its claws and twice with its bite.
Spew Void The dragon spits out nothingness in a 15-yard-cone or 30-yard-line from a point it can reach. Everything in the area takes 3d6 psychic damage. Each creature in the area must make a Will challenge roll. On a failure, the creature takes 2d6 extra psychic damage and gains the slowed affliction for 1 minute. Once the dragon uses Spew Void, it cannot do so again for 1 round.

SPECIAL ACTIONS
Veil of the Beyond The dragon can spend its triggered action to turn itself invisible for 1d6 minutes or until it uses Spew Void.

END OF THE ROUND
Gaze of the Kūdō-Mado The dragon stares at up to 1d3 creatures within medium range that are able to see it, causing them to make Will challenge rolls with 1 bane or suffer from confusion (the madness) for 2d6 rounds.



BOIDOKŌTEI, ANCIENT VOID DRAGON DIFFICULTY 750

Size 4 horrifying dragon

Perception 18 (+8); darksight, sightless
Defense 22; **Health** 240
Strength 18 (+8), **Agility** 18 (+8), **Intellect** 18 (+8), **Will** 18 (+8)
Speed 20; flier 30 (swoop)
Immune damage from cold and poison; charmed, compelled, dazed, frightened, poisoned, sleep, stunned
Dragon Resistances The dragon takes half damage from holy and unholy.
Pain Threshold Attacks that deal 6 damage or less deal no damage to the dragon.
Spell Defense A dragon takes half damage from spells and makes any challenge roll to resist a spell with 3 boons. A creature attacking the dragon with a spell makes the attack roll with 3 bane.
Vulnerability The dragon takes double damage from psychic.

Breathless The dragon does not breathe.
Magic Detection The dragon is under the constant effects of the *arcane sight* spell.
Step of the Void Once per turn the dragon can cast *shortcut* without the need for wielding the implements or speaking the words. As an action it can cast *travel* in the same manner.

ATTACK OPTIONS

Claws (melee) +8 with 2 boons (3d6+2 damage)
Teeth (melee) +8 with 2 boons (3d6+2 damage plus 1d6 psychic damage)

SPECIAL ATTACKS

Flurry of Attacks The dragon attacks once with its claws and twice with its bite.
Spew Void The dragon spits out nothingness in a 20-yard-cone or 40-yard-line from a point it can reach. Everything in the area takes 4d6 psychic damage. Each creature in the area must make a Will challenge roll. On a failure, the creature takes 2d6+6 extra psychic damage and gains the slowed affliction for 1d6 minutes. Once the dragon uses Spew Void, it cannot do so again for 1 round.

SPECIAL ACTIONS

Veil of the Beyond The dragon can spend its triggered action to turn itself invisible for 1 hour or until it uses Spew Void.

END OF THE ROUND

Gaze of the Kūdō-Mado The dragon stares at all creatures within medium range that are able to see it, causing them to make Will challenge roll with 2 banes or suffer from confusion (the madness) for 2d6 rounds (minimum 1 minute).
Void Portals The dragon casts *dark portals* without the need for speaking the words or wielding the implements. Unlike normal, the cubes it creates disappear at the start of the dragon's next turn (reappearing in new spaces that it chooses at the end of that round).

Kī~Tsu slashed at something above his shoulder, ducking down and swiping outward in a move that threw his entire body into the blow—a desperate gambit that left him vulnerable and exposed. His katana rang true however, cutting into and then through the long neck of a lunging rokurokubi, its fangs bared. The monster's body went limp and fell behind the samurai as he ran forward but the thing's head merely took to the air and laughed, disappearing into the dust being thrown against the night sky by demonic winds.

The tanuki samurai pitched himself forward and urged his companions to follow but the gesture was unnecessary; Kanden landed in front of him before bounding again (the necroji's telescopic legs propelling him faster than the tanuki could possibly run) and Kyōryokuna floated rapidly through the gales. The nezumi hengeyokai had made a fine accounting of herself in the now-flaming fortress receding behind them, using her magic to distract its oni warlord owner long enough to effect their escape. Some illusions and conjured elementals would not delay such a powerful entity for long though and Kī~Tsu knew that every adversary between them and the gate to the Daraku Woods would mean precious seconds of delay—each slain monster buying more time for the master of this place to retaliate.

Just then a cacophonous roar rang out from the stronghold behind the trespassers, so loud and great that the flames alighting the fortress guttered out. Kyōryokuna shouted a warning made intelligible from the winds before gesturing towards the approaching outer wall, conjuring a ball of fire by chanting words so powerful that her rat tail nearly stood on end. A ball of magical flame exploded against the ramshackle bulwark, sending bodies flying and to Kī~Tsu's horror most of them—even those missing an arm or leg—quickly scrambled up from the ground, screaming in rage and rapidly crossing the badlands with all the vigor of a hungry predator.

"Both of you," Kanden yelled, a cluster of something in his hands, "follow me and bear right—I promise I'm the smartest undead out here!" The ninja bounded once more and spread his arms wide at the apex of his leap, throwing the black baubles into the dirt and creating a vast field of smoke that blocked their enemies from sight. He disappeared into the blackness, followed by the mage and then, reluctantly, Kī~Tsu as well. Each felt a tremor of fear as they plunged through the haze, the sounds of the adeddo-oni around them filling the air with dread. A seeming eternity later the trio emerged from the smoke within sight of the gate leading outside of the fortress. Freedom was so near that the adventurers could almost smell it.

Then the earth began to shift, the dried and cracked dirt yawning open like firmament in an earthquake. A rumbling overtook the grounds and something massive rose up, a huge ochre-yellow form expanding until it loomed over them all like a mountain. "*GASHADOKURO!*" Kī~Tsu yelled, sheathing his katana and scrambling for the matchlock pistols hanging from his belt, reflexively crouching and unleashing two shots of lead at the creature. The bullets slammed into its massive bones and sent shards scattering outward but it hardly seemed to notice, standing to its full height to nearly dwarf the fortress behind them.

Already well ahead of Kyōryokuna and the tanuki samurai, the Kanden bounded through the towering undead's legs and threw crimson red flasks up into its rib cage before disappearing past the gate. The containers exploded with fire and force, confusing the monstrosity long enough for the nezumi mage to use her magic to disappear from sight. Only Kī~Tsu remained—with a horde of rabid oni behind him. The gashadokuro slammed its huge fist into the ground between the raccoon folk and his salvation, giving Kī~Tsu a mad idea. Rather than sprinting to escape he climbed up on the titanic skeleton's fist, letting it carry him into the air before leaping with the arm's momentum to soar well beyond the gate. Hitting the ground hard the tanuki bounced downhill, dislocating his shoulder and tail before rolling and sliding down the slope, briefly blacking out from the pain.

Regaining consciousness the small samurai's vision saw Kanden's grotesque skeletal face backlit by the moon and blunted by the dirtied windstorm. It was hard to tell but he thought there might be a smile in the undead's teeth as he was dragged onto a makeshift sled. "Don't worry," the ninja said, the sound of enraged oni coming from back and above, "the worst is behind us."

CHAPTER 9: ONI

Kami are mystical **spirits**. Their forms, motivations, and purposes are wide and varied, but many are empowered by shared belief and ancient magic. Some are tied to sites of power or embody objects to manifest themselves, but there is no rule or reason binding them all save for a deep reverence for tradition.

Oni are **demon**-like monsters begat from a vast variety of evil means and they have become frighteningly frequent after the reappearance of the Mists of Akuma. While they are all magical in a sense, some have obvious powers while others are little more than physically superior killing machines.

Tsukumogami are items that have awakened, becoming living **constructs** fueled by magic. They have powers that defy explanation, drawn from the nature of their construction and how they were treated for their century of existence before manifesting sentience.

ADEDDO-ONI

The Mists of Akuma change people (page 15), transforming them into abominations with malevolent dead hearts that beat with a thirst for blood. Some scholars believe that the jabbering of adeddo-oni is more than the nonsensical chatter it sounds like, and that despite their apparent mindlessness, the undead possess some level of intelligence. Military commanders agree with this assessment, convinced that the preternatural battlefield acumen shown by hordes of the creatures is a sign of a commanding presence among the adeddo-oni (and ancient legends tell of truly brilliant adeddo-oni, though these have not been seen for centuries).

ADEDDO-ONI TEMPLATE

Giants, monstrosities, and any creature type other than beast can become adeddo-oni—animals transform into shikome (page 195) and insects become bakemono (page 174). An adeddo-oni keeps its statistics, except as follows.

ADEDDO-ONI — ADD 1 DIFFICULTY STEP

Health +10
Intellect The creature's Intellect changes to 4.
Frightening The creature becomes frightening. If it is already frightening, it becomes horrifying instead.
Senses The creature's Perception is 15, it gains darksight, and it can see through mists and fog without difficulty.
Defense The creature's defense increases by 1.
Speed The creature's speed increases by 6 and it gains leap 4.
Immunities The creature gains immunity to damage from unholy, poison, and psychic, as well as charmed, fatigued, frightened, and poisoned.
Adeddo-Oni Resistance The creature takes half damage from cold.
Sunlight Weakness The creature abhors sunlight, suffering 3 bane on all attack rolls and challenge rolls while within it.
Vulnerability The creature takes double damage from holy.
Languages The creature speaks and understands Adeddo (a simple and instinctual language).
Magic Attacks The creature gains a +1 bonus on attack rolls and damage rolls.
Regeneration The creature heals 1d6 damage at the end of each round that it is not incapacitated or in sunlight. At Difficulty 50 and higher, the creature heals 2d6 damage.

ADEDDO-ONI HUNCHLING — DIFFICULTY 10

Size ½ frightening oni
Perception 15 (+5); darksight (sees through fog or mist)
Defense 14; **Health** 10 (Regeneration)
Strength 8 (–2), **Agility** 14 (+4), **Intellect** 4 (–6), **Will** 11 (+1)
Speed 14; leap 4
Immunities damage from poison, psychic, and unholy; charmed, fatigued, frightened, and poisoned
Adeddo-Oni Resistance The Adeddo-Oni Hunchling takes half damage from cold.
Sunlight Weakness The Adeddo-Oni Hunchling abhors sunlight, suffering 3 bane on all attack rolls and challenge rolls while within it.
Vulnerability The Adeddo-Oni Hunchling takes double damage from holy.
Sneaky Bugger The Adeddo-Oni Hunchling gains 1 boon when making Stealth challenge rolls.

ATTACK OPTIONS

Hammer (melee) –1 with 1 bane (2d6+1 damage)

END OF THE ROUND

Regeneration The Adeddo-Oni Hunchling heals 1d6 damage at the end of each round that it is not incapacitated or in sunlight.

ADEDDO-ONI NINJA — DIFFICULTY 25

Size 1 frightening oni
Perception 15 (+5); darksight (sees through fog or mist)
Defense 16 (hard leather); **Health** 20 (Regeneration)
Strength 12 (+2), **Agility** 15 (+5), **Intellect** 4 (–6), **Will** 13 (+3)
Speed 16; leap 4
Immunities damage from poison, psychic, and unholy; charmed, fatigued, frightened, and poisoned
Adeddo-Oni Resistance The Adeddo-Oni Ninja takes half damage from cold.
Sunlight Weakness The Adeddo-Oni Ninja abhors sunlight, suffering 3 bane on all attack rolls and challenge rolls while within it.
Vulnerability The Adeddo-Oni Ninja takes double damage from holy and abhors sunlight.
Sneaky Bugger The Adeddo-Oni Ninja gains 2 boons when making Stealth challenge rolls.

ATTACK OPTIONS

Ninja-To (melee) +6 (1d6+3 damage)
Shuriken (short range) +6 (1d3+2 damage)
Backstab Once per turn if at least one of the Adeddo-Oni Ninja's allies is within 1 yard of a creature and the ally isn't incapacitated, the Adeddo-Oni Ninja deals an additional 1d6 damage with an attack.

SPECIAL ATTACKS

Double Attack The Adeddo-Oni Ninja attacks twice with its shuriken.

END OF THE ROUND

Regeneration The Adeddo-Oni Ninja heals 1d6 damage at the end of each round that it is not incapacitated or in sunlight.

ADEDDO-ONI MAGE — DIFFICULTY 50

Size 1 frightening oni
Perception 15 (+5); darksight (sees through fog or mist)
Defense 16 (*arcane armor*); **Health** 30 (Regeneration)
Strength 10 (+0), **Agility** 14 (+4), **Intellect** 4 (–6), **Will** 15 (+5)
Speed 14; leap 4
Immunities damage from poison, psychic, and unholy; charmed, fatigued, frightened, and poisoned
Adeddo-Oni Resistance The Adeddo-Oni Mage takes half damage from cold.
Sunlight Weakness The Adeddo-Oni Mage abhors sunlight, suffering 3 bane on all attack rolls and challenge rolls while within it.
Vulnerability The Adeddo-Oni Mage takes double damage from holy.

ATTACK OPTIONS

Dagger (melee) +5 with 1 boon (1d3+1 damage)

MAGIC

Power 5
Air *flense* (3), *thunderclap* (2), *fling* (1)
Destruction *break* (4), *ruin* (4), *rend* (3), *sunder* (3), *detonate* (2), *destroy* (1)
Fire *flame missile* (4), *fire blast* (3), *fiery volley* (2), *fireball* (1), *immolate* (1)
Storm *shock* (4), *forked lightning* (4), *call lightning* (3), *hail storm* (2), *lightning bolt* (1)
Water *freeze* (4), *ice blast* (4), *geyser* (3), *tidal forces* (2), *cold snap* (1)

END OF THE ROUND

Regeneration The Adeddo-Oni Mage heals 2d6 damage at the end of each round that it is not incapacitated or in sunlight.

ADEDDO-ONI SAMURAI — DIFFICULTY 50

Size 1 frightening oni

Perception 15 (+5); darksight (sees through fog or mist)
Defense 19 (o-yoroi); **Health** 45 (Regeneration)
Strength 16 (+6), **Agility** 10 (+0), **Intellect** 4 (–6), **Will** 15 (+5)
Speed 14; leap 4
Immunities damage from poison, psychic, and unholy; charmed, fatigued, frightened, and poisoned
Adeddo-Oni Resistance The Adeddo-Oni Samurai takes half damage from cold.
Parry As long as it wields its katana, the Adeddo-Oni Samurai adds 1 to its Defense whenever it can see its opponent using a melee or ranged weapon against them.
Sunlight Weakness The Adeddo-Oni Samurai abhors sunlight, suffering 3 bane on all attack rolls and challenge rolls while within it.
Vulnerability The Adeddo-Oni Samurai takes double damage from holy.

ATTACK OPTIONS

Katana (melee) +7 (3d6 damage)
Crossbow (long range) +1 with 2 boons (2d6+1 damage)

SPECIAL ATTACKS

Double Attack The Adeddo-Oni Samurai attacks twice with its katana.

END OF THE ROUND

Regeneration The Adeddo-Oni Samurai heals 2d6 damage at the end of each round that it is not incapacitated or in sunlight.

BAKE-KUJIRA — DIFFICULTY 500

Size 10 horrifying oni

Perception 3 (–7); darksight, sightless
Defense 18; **Health** 220
Strength 22 (+12), **Agility** 8 (–2), **Intellect** 3 (–7), **Will** 13 (+3)
Speed 6; swimmer 20
Immune damage from unholy, poison, and psychic; charmed, fatigued, frightened, poisoned, prone
Pain Threshold Attacks that deal 5 damage or less deal no damage to the Bake-Kujira.
Supernatural Resistances The Bake-Kujira takes half damage from cold and fire.
Vulnerability The Bake-Kujira takes double damage from lightning.
Echolocation While deafened the Bake-Kujira loses its sightless sense. It gains 2 boons on sound-based Perception challenge rolls.
Undead Parasites A 10-yard-radius cloud of undead fish and sea birds surrounds a bake-kujira. Creatures starting their turn within the cloud must succeed at a Will challenge roll or take 2d6 unholy damage and gain the poisoned affliction until the beginning of their next turn.

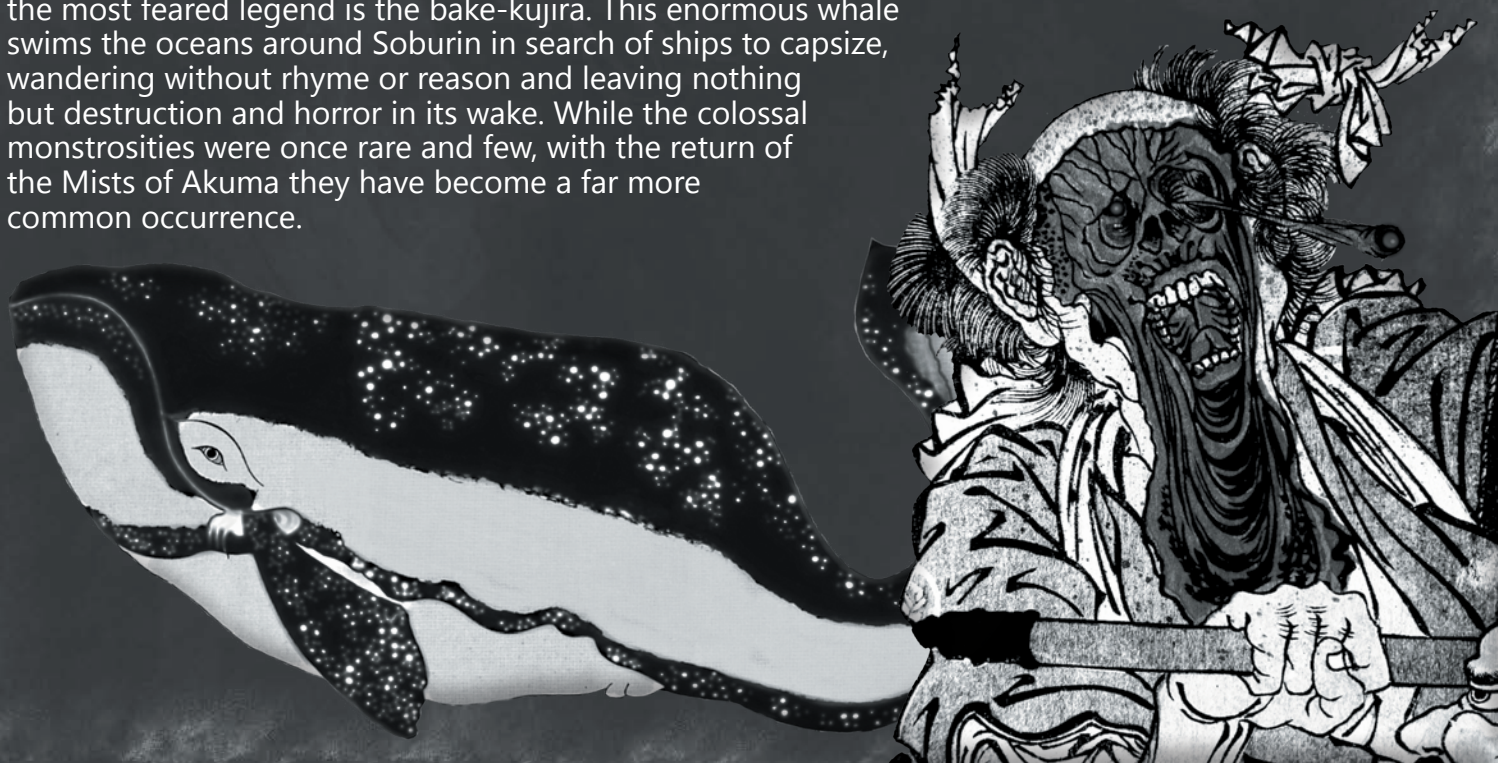
ATTACK OPTIONS

Bite (melee) +12 (4d6 damage)
Tail Slap (melee; reach +2) +12 (3d6+12 damage)
Leviathan's Wail The bake-kujira sings a haunting tune. Living creatures within 40 yards must succeed at a Will challenge roll or gain the charmed affliction until the end of the bake-kujira's next turn.
Resonating Song The Bake-Kujira lets loose a powerful song in a 20-yard-cone from a point it can reach. Everything in the area takes 6d6 + 12 thunder damage. Each creature in the area must make an Agility challenge roll; if underwater, a target suffers 2 bane on this challenge roll. On a failure, the creature takes 2d6 extra thunder damage. After taking 20 or more thunder damage from this attack, a creature gains the deafened affliction. Once the Bake-Kujira uses Resonating Song, it cannot do so again for 1 round.

SPECIAL ATTACKS

Double Attack The Bake-Kujira attacks once with its bite and once with its tail slap.

The pirates at the edge of the world have many stories and myths, but the most feared legend is the bake-kujira. This enormous whale swims the oceans around Soburin in search of ships to capsize, wandering without rhyme or reason and leaving nothing but destruction and horror in its wake. While the colossal monstrosities were once rare and few, with the return of the Mists of Akuma they have become a far more common occurrence.



BAKU **DIFFICULTY 50**

Size 2 oni

Perception 16 (+6); darksight

Defense 15; **Health** 35 (Regeneration)

Strength 14 (+4), **Agility** 15 (+5), **Intellect** 16 (+6), **Will** 13 (+3)

Speed 10; flier 10 (swoop)

Dreamtalker The baku gains 2 boons when making Deception challenge rolls.

ATTACK OPTIONS

Bite (melee) +4 with 1 boon (1d6+2 damage)

Claw (melee) +4 with 1 boon (1d6+2 damage)

Nightmare Strike By spending an action, the Baku pulls a bit of a victim's nightmare from their subconscious mind and attacks them with it. The Baku targets a single enemy within medium range that it can see. If the target fails an Intellect challenge roll, the Baku summons a figment of their nightmares that lasts for a minute. Once each round without spending an action, the Baku can direct a nightmare summoned this way to assault its victim, dealing 2d6+6 psychic damage. After taking damage from a nightmare, a creature cannot take damage this way again for 1d6 rounds.

SPECIAL ATTACKS

Double Attack The Baku attacks once with its bite and once with its claw.

MAGIC

Power 3

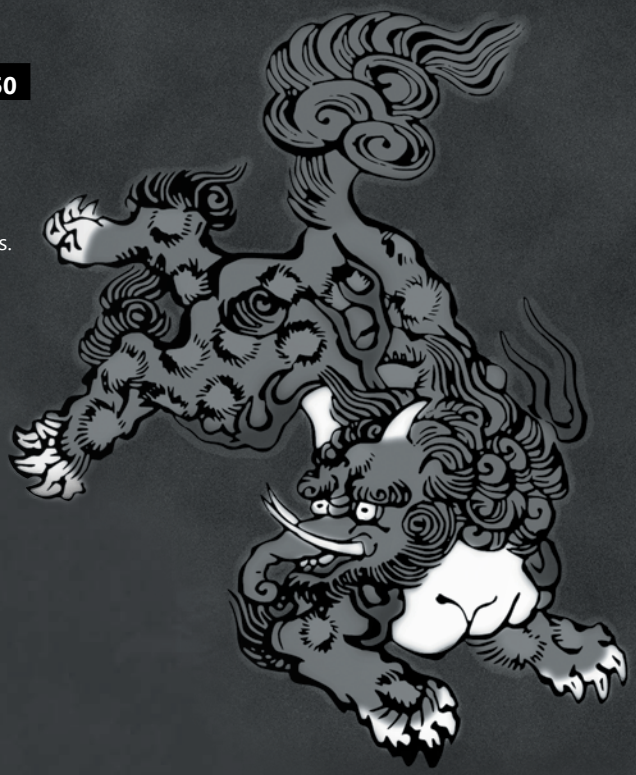
Curse *frighten* (2)

Enchantment *question* (4), *cower* (3)

Shadow *darkness* (4), *shadow dart* (3)

END OF THE ROUND

Regeneration The Baku heals 2d6 damage at the end of each round that it is not incapacitated.



Like many of the oni that roam the burned-out ruins, desolate mountain peaks, and other sinister summits of Soburin, the baku are fearsome foes who easily dominate many of the lesser creatures they encounter, forcing some to servitude while aligning with more powerful entities. Wicked to the core, the oni are infamous things of terror that most mortals dread, but they are more than just that—they are creatures that quite literally create nightmares.

Eater of Nightmares

While all oni are terrible to some degree, baku are worse than most.

Cannibals that prize sentient flesh of all kinds, baku crave the meat of those who died drenched in their own fear. This trait puzzles many of Soburin's great sages but some have suggested that baku share a special connection with the Mists of Akuma that pains them; something that only supping on the terror-fueled nightmares of their meals ever truly eases.

Nightmare Caller

While baku share many traits with other oni they display a special connection to the psychic realm of dreams—a place they feed upon and, when feeling exceptionally predatory, open up to mortals they are actively hunting. While the monsters mostly operate on the Material Plane, feeding on dreams and nightmares of the sleeping, they can (when extremely focused) snatch nightmares from the realms hidden within. With these nightmares in hand some baku can shape fragments of a creature's subconscious into weapons of devastating power, turning them against their enemies.

GAKI DIFFICULTY 50

Size 1 frightening oni
Perception 13 (+3); darksight
Defense 14; **Health** 50
Strength 15 (+5), **Agility** 14 (+4), **Intellect** 13 (+3), **Will** 12 (+2)
Speed 10; flier 10
Immune damage from unholy or poison; charmed, frightened, poisoned
Compulsive Hunger Though it does not need to eat, a Gaki is consumed with an endless hunger and believes that it might return to its mortal form or achieve peace should it consume the right combination of drink, food, and flesh. A Gaki that finds a corpse or is offered flowers, food, holy water, or wine must succeed at a Will challenge roll with 1 bane or spend the next turn trying to consume it. The Gaki's narrow neck prevents it from swallowing more than a tiny amount, and it gives up after 1 round of attempting to do so. A Gaki that consumes holy water in this way is not harmed by it.

ATTACK OPTIONS
Bite (melee; reach +2) +5 with 1 boon (1d6+2 damage and once a living target has taken 5 or more damage from the Gaki's bite, the target suffers a bleeding wound that lasts until it heals damage or until a creature uses an action to stanch the wound; while suffering from the wound, the target takes 1d3 damage at the end of each round)

SPECIAL ATTACKS
Double Attack The Gaki attacks twice with its bite.

SPECIAL ACTIONS
Oni Magic The Gaki can cast *disguise*, *figment,* and *invisibility* without the need for speaking the words, wielding the implements, or concentrating.

END OF THE ROUND
Burned By Natural Light The Gaki takes 2d6 damage if in an area lit by sunlight or exposed to the light of a full moon.

Greedy and avaricious souls that fail to find peace in the afterlife never truly leave Soburin, their spirits instead transforming into insatiable oni. Unsurprisingly gaki are one of the most common types of monsters to prey on the prefectures, wandering throughout ruins and the wilderness in a constant search to sate their unending appetite. Though they can be cunning predators gaki are not able to think much further than their next meal, eating as much as possible (engorging their elongated necks) before relenting.

GASHADOKURO DIFFICULTY 750

Size 9 horrifying oni
Perception 16 (+6); darksight
Defense 18; **Health** 200 (Regeneration)
Strength 20 (+10), **Agility** 13 (+3), **Intellect** 2 (–8), **Will** 16 (+6)
Speed 10
Immune damage from poison, psychic, and unholy; charmed, compelled, diseased, fatigued, frightened, poisoned
Pain Threshold Attacks that deal 5 damage or less deal no damage to the Gashadokuro.
Gashadokuro Resistances The Gashadokuro takes half damage from cold, fire, lightning, wind, and weapons.
Immense Strength The Gashadokuro makes Strength challenge rolls with 2 boons.
Vulnerability The Gashadokuro takes double damage from holy.

ATTACK OPTIONS
Bite (melee) +10 with 1 boon (4d6 damage and the Gashadokuro is healed half as much as the damage dealt)
Claw (melee) +10 with 1 boon (4d6 damage and if the target fails a Strength or Agility challenge roll with 2 bane it is grabbed)

SPECIAL ATTACKS
Double Attack The Gashadokuro attacks once with its bite and once with its claw but must target different creatures with each attack.

SPECIAL ACTIONS
Invisible Stalker The Gashadokuro turns invisible (as the spell *invisibility*).

END OF THE ROUND
Epic Adversary Roll 1d3 + 1 to determine how many actions the Gashadokuro can use during the next round. The Gashadokuro can use these actions during any turn and can do so before its enemies act. Each time the Gashadokuro uses an action, it can move up to its Speed before or after the action.
Regeneration The Gashadokuro heals 1d6 damage at the end of each round that it is not incapacitated or has not taken holy damage. After taking damage from *exorcism slips* (page 219), this ability stops functioning for 1d6 rounds.
Voracious Eater The Gashadokuro can attempt to decapitate a creature it has grabbed. The target must succeed an Agility challenge roll with 1 bane or become injured. Creatures that are already injured must succeed on this challenge roll or die. The Gashadokuro heals by an amount equal to the Healing Rate of a creature that dies this way.

Famine has long been a hardship in Soburin—particularly in remote areas—and when it claims many lives their hunger continues even beyond death. Said to be formed from the bones of those who died of starvation, the gashadokuro roams the countryside after midnight always seeking to sate its hunger by biting off the heads of hapless travelers and drinking their blood. Surprisingly stealthy for their size, the only warning of an invisible gashadokuro is a loud ringing in the ears.

RESTING TERRORS

Gashadokuro are hard to miss once roused in the late twilight, but they are not incapacitated between dawn and midnight. When the sun's rays first appear on the eastern horizon the undead titans return to their lairs—often pastures, sparse woods, or mountainsides—where they lay upon the ground, gradually sinking and blending into the terrain until there is nothing extraordinary about the area save for a few slight disfigurements. Creatures that near a resting gashadokuro require a Perception of 17 or higher to realize the danger before them.

Morbid and grotesque as it might be, some smiths in Soburin (particularly among oni warlords) have been known to craft weapons and armor from the remains of destroyed gashadokuro. These enchanted relics can be fashioned into numerous different iterations but they all ultimately grant the same supernatural bonuses.

GASHADOKU ARMOR

While wearing this armor you gain 2 boons on challenge rolls made to resist the frightened affliction and to resist spells or effects from oni and undead creatures.

GASHADOKU BLADE

You gain 1 boon on attack rolls made with this weapon. When you attack a creature with this weapon and roll 20+ on the attack roll, the target gains the frightened affliction for 1d6 rounds.

HARIANAGO — DIFFICULTY 100

Size 1 frightening oni

Perception 13 (+3); darksight
Defense 16; **Health** 90
Strength 10 (+0), **Agility** 16 (+6), **Intellect** 13 (+3), **Will** 14 (+4)
Speed 10
Immune damage from cold, poison; charmed, frightened, immobilized, poisoned
Harianago Resistances The Harianago takes half damage from unholy.

ATTACK OPTIONS

Barbed Hair (melee; reach +2) +6 with 1 boon (1d6+4 damage)
Claw (melee) +6 with 1 boon (2d6+2 damage)

SPECIAL ATTACKS

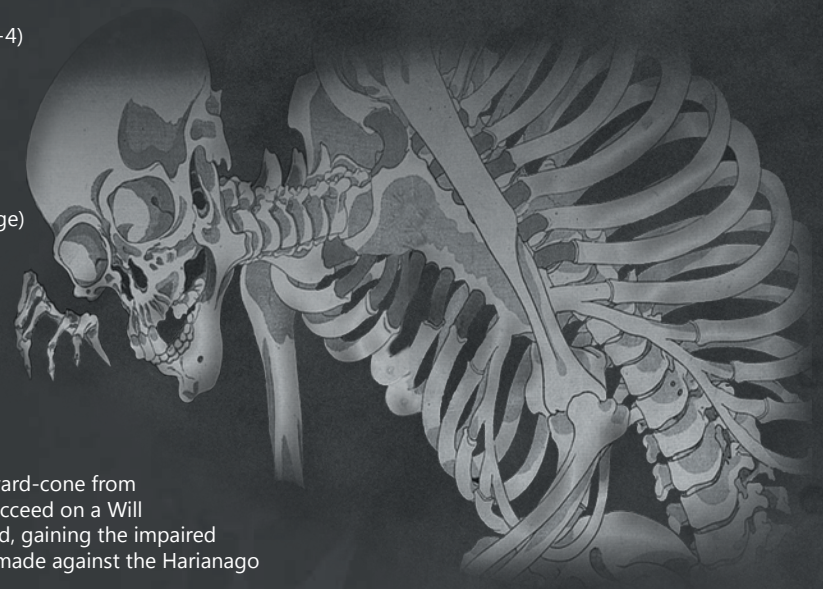
Double Attack The Harianago attacks twice with any combination of its barbed hair and claw.

SPECIAL ACTIONS

Renewed Vengeance If the Harionago is destroyed, roll a d20. On a 19 or 20 the Harionago is fully restored a week later and resumes hunting those who wronged it.

END OF THE ROUND

Mocking Laughter The Harianago laughs scornfully in a 10-yard-cone from a point that it can reach. Creatures within the cone must succeed on a Will challenge roll with 1 bane or break into laughter for 1 round, gaining the impaired and slowed afflictions and suffering 1 bane on attack rolls made against the Harianago as their laughter infuriates it.



When an innocent young lover is tragically murdered, especially by their beloved, the harionago is the horrific result. Twisted by the injustice of their death, these oni wander the countryside looking for revenge, driven by a rage so strong that even if destroyed they can rise again, never to rest until their murderer is dead.

A harionago's taste for violence is not limited, however; when they encounter any who they feel resembles their former lover (and the likeness need not be strong) they attack with extreme prejudice, cackling eerily all the while. Though it is a rare occurrence, harionago have been known to join forces with oni warlords when promised their vengeance. While they are no longer human it is not overly difficult for a harianago to travel amongst society, making them the perfect agents for infiltrating a settlement to sabotage its defenses before a legion of monsters descends and wrecks havoc.

HEBIKONTORŌRA — DIFFICULTY 50

Size 1 frightening oni
Perception 13 (+3); darksight
Defense 14; **Health** 45
Strength 13 (+3), **Agility** 14 (+4), **Intellect** 13 (+3), **Will** 15 (+5)
Speed 10
Immune damage from poison; charmed, frightened, poisoned
Vulnerability The Hebikontorōra takes double damage from cold.
Enchanting Gaze Once each round without spending an action the Hebikontorōra can gaze at a creature it can see within 40 yards. The target either succeeds on Will challenge roll with 1 bane or gains the charmed affliction for 1 minute. At the end of each of its turns, the charmed creature can make a Will challenge roll to remove the affliction. After successfully saving against this effect a creature cannot be charmed by the Hebikontorōra for 24 hours.
Poison Sense The Hebikontorōra automatically detects the presence of any poison with medium range.

ATTACK OPTIONS
Unarmed Strike (melee) +4 with 1 boon (1d6+2 damage)
Snake Arm (melee; reach +1) +4 with 1 boon (1d6 damage plus Poison)
Poison The target must make a Strength challenge roll with 1 bane. On a failure, it takes 1d6 damage and becomes poisoned for 1 minute. If it is already poisoned, the target instead takes 1d6 extra damage.

SPECIAL ATTACKS
Double Attack The Hebikontorōra attacks twice with its snake arm or twice with its unarmed strike.

SPECIAL ACTIONS
Armed Serpent Once per turn the Hebikontorōra can transform its arms into serpents or back.
Change Shape As an action, the Hebikontorōra changes into a humanoid that has a difficulty no higher than its own, or back into its true form. It reverts to its true form if it dies. Any equipment it is wearing or carrying is absorbed or borne by the new form (the Hebikontorōra's choice). In a new form, the Hebikontorōra retains its Health, ability to speak, Intellect and Will scores, as well as this action. Its statistics and capabilities are otherwise replaced by those of the new form.
Snakespeaker Hebikontorōra are always accompanied by serpents. By spending an action calling them with its mind, the Hebikontorōra may summon 2d6 **Tiny Animals** (snakes), 1d6 **Small Animals** (snakes), 1d3 **Medium Animals** (snakes), or 1 **Large Animal** (snake) that appear within 12 yards at the end of the round. These snakes reduce the number of damage dice for their bite attacks by one step but have the Poison attack talent (The target must make a Strength challenge roll. On a failure, it takes 1d6 damage and becomes poisoned for 1 minute. If the target is already poisoned, it instead takes 1d6 extra damage.). Once the Hebikontorōra uses Snakespeaker, it cannot do so again for 1 minute (and if it has summoned 13 or more allies, 1 hour).

Hebikontorōra were once only a threat in the jungles and forests of the southern prefectures but after the Kengen Occupation the cold-blooded predators have been seen as far north as Kirai. Able to seamlessly blend in with society, these oni use their natural beauty, cunning, and mystical powers to achieve positions of power (even swaying the minds of clan lords). None are certain how these horrors originate but there are countless legends—some say that the corpses of forlorn lovers that take their own lives shed their skin to become hebikontorōra, or that they are what becomes of reptiles that die in the Mists of Akuma. Regardless of their origins they slaughter whomever suspects them of duplicity before their true nature can be revealed, fleeing to a new settlement to wreak havoc once more.

JIANG-SHI — DIFFICULTY 100

Size 1 horrifying oni undead
Perception 12 (+2); darksight
Defense 16; **Health** 90
Strength 16 (+6), **Agility** 14 (+4), **Intellect** 12 (+2), **Will** 14 (+4)
Speed 8; leap 8
Immune damage from unholy; charmed, compelled, diseased, fatigued, poisoned
Hopping Jiang-Shi are constantly hopping or bounding from foot to foot. A creature attacking the Jiang-Shi does so with 1 bane unless they are taking a slow turn and the Jiang-Shi's movement does not trigger free attacks. On its turn the Jiang-Shi can move double its speed for the round if it makes an Agility challenge roll to jump further.
Jiang-Shi Resistances The Jiang-Shi takes half damage from attacks made by weapons not made of peach tree wood.
Jiang-Shi Weaknesses A Jiang-Shi has 3 bane when making attack rolls and challenge rolls during the time between dawn and dusk. Additionally, a character within short range of a Jiang-Shi can spend a minor activity to ring a hand bell, causing the Jiang-Shi to take 2 bane on all attack rolls and challenge rolls for 1 round. A Jiang-Shi can only be affected by the same bell once every 24 hours.

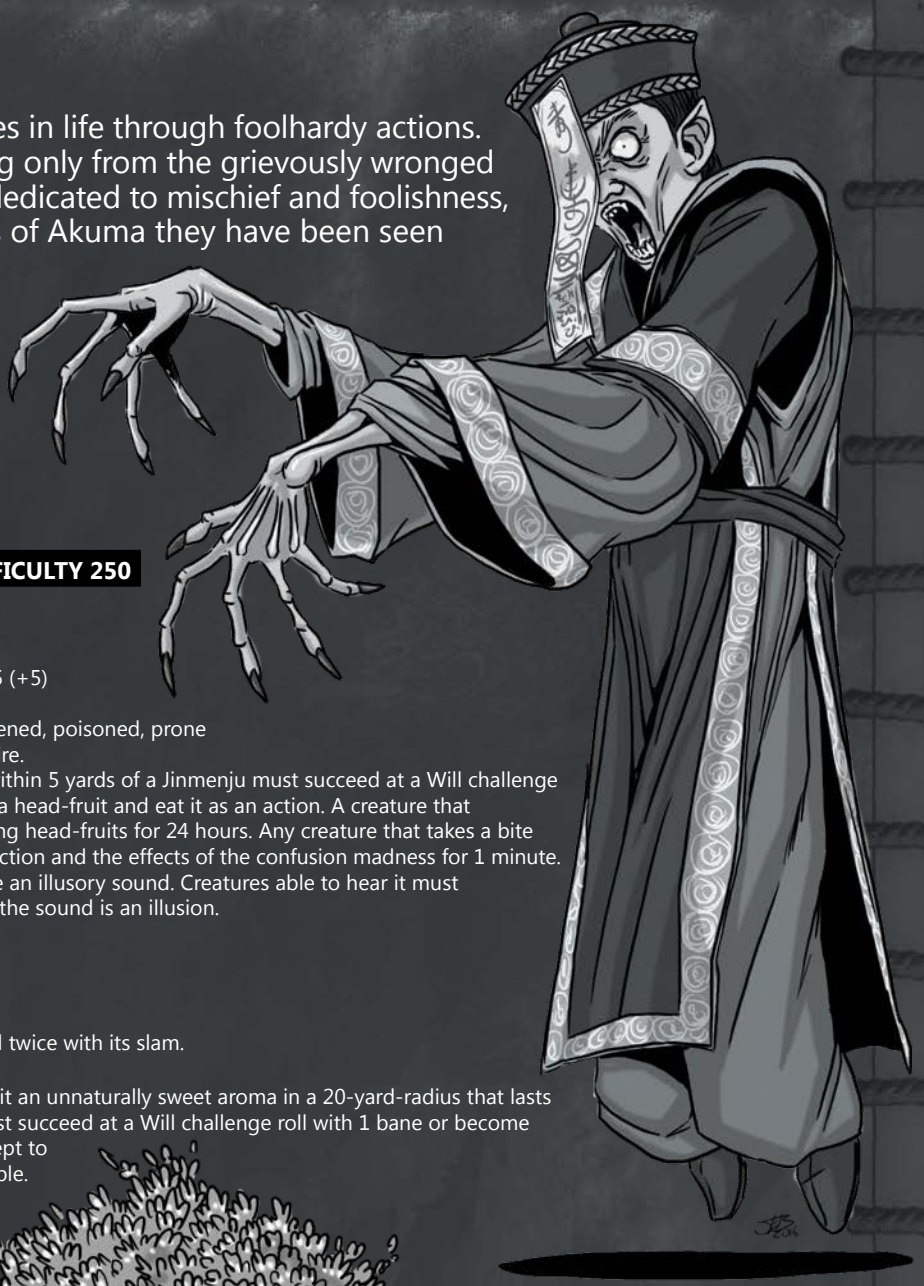
ATTACK OPTIONS
Bite (melee) +6 with 1 boon (1d6+4 damage plus Chi Engorge)
Claw (melee) +6 with 1 boon (1d6+2 damage)
Chi Engorge A creature hit by the Jiang-Shi's bite attack makes a Will challenge roll with 2 bane. On a failure, the target gains the fatigued affliction and the Jiang-Shi heals an amount of damage equal to the damage dealt.

SPECIAL ATTACKS
Triple Attack The Jiang-Shi attacks once with its bite and twice with its claw.

SPECIAL ACTIONS
Deathless When reduced to 0 Health a Jiang-Shi crumbles to dust, reforming one hour later in the same area that it was destroyed unless it is destroyed with a weapon made of peach tree wood or its remains are scattered.

Jiang-shi are the reanimated corpses of the dishonored dead—those who were not buried properly, or whose graves have gone untended for many years—or of men

and women who dishonored themselves in life through foolhardy actions. They were once a rare occurrence, rising only from the grievously wronged or when a worldly soul had been truly dedicated to mischief and foolishness, but with the reappearance of the Mists of Akuma they have been seen more and more often in bodies not buried deep enough (or not buried at all). Jiang-shi have an unquenchable thirst for life energy (*qi*) and spend their nights on the prowl for it; to this end many pledge their service to an oni warlord, lending their skills in exchange for a steady food source.



JINMENJU — DIFFICULTY 250

Size 3 horrifying oni

Perception 20 (+10); sightless
Defense 16; **Health** 130
Strength 20 (+10), **Agility** 8 (–2), **Intellect** 7 (–3), **Will** 15 (+5)
Speed 4
Immune damage from poison; charmed, fatigued, frightened, poisoned, prone
Vulnerability The Jinmenju takes double damage from fire.
Enticing Head-Fruits Any creature that begins its turn within 5 yards of a Jinmenju must succeed at a Will challenge roll with 1 bane or be compelled to immediately grab a head-fruit and eat it as an action. A creature that successfully resists is immune to that Jinmenju's enticing head-fruits for 24 hours. Any creature that takes a bite out of a head-fruit suffers from both the poisoned affliction and the effects of the confusion madness for 1 minute.
Sound Mimicry Once each turn the Jinmenju may create an illusory sound. Creatures able to hear it must succeed on a Will challenge roll with 2 bane to realize the sound is an illusion.

ATTACK OPTIONS

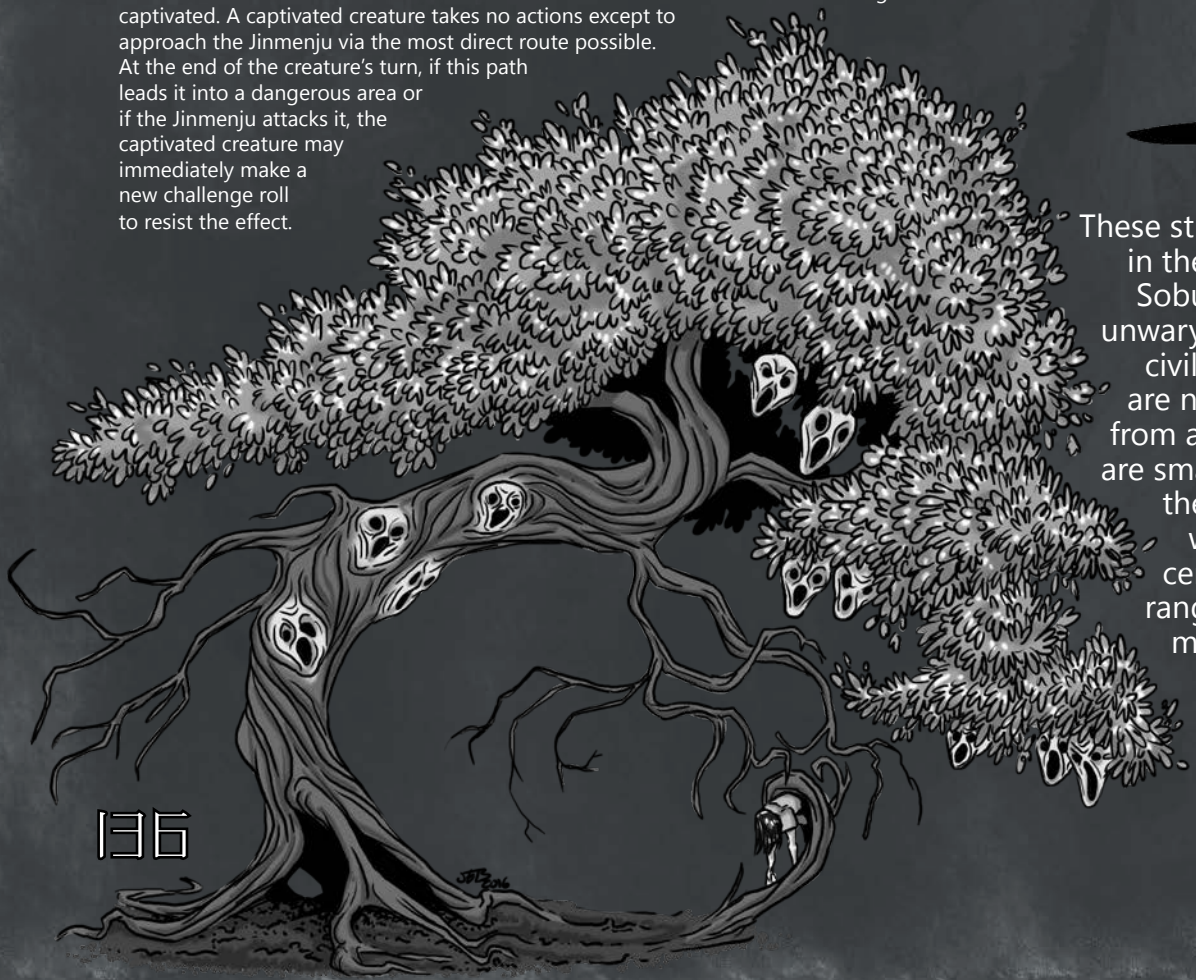
Bite (melee) +10 (2d6+2 damage)
Slam (melee; reach +1) +10 (3d6+1 damage)

SPECIAL ATTACKS

Triple Attack The Jinmenju attacks once with its bite and twice with its slam.

END OF THE ROUND

Intoxicating Stench The Jinmenju causes its fruits to emit an unnaturally sweet aroma in a 20-yard-radius that lasts for 1 minute. All creatures within the affected area must succeed at a Will challenge roll with 1 bane or become captivated. A captivated creature takes no actions except to approach the Jinmenju via the most direct route possible. At the end of the creature's turn, if this path leads it into a dangerous area or if the Jinmenju attacks it, the captivated creature may immediately make a new challenge roll to resist the effect.



These strange plants grow in the wildernesses of Soburin, preying on unwary travelers far from civilization. Jinmenju are not often identified from a safe distance and are smart enough to hide themselves in places where victims are certain to get within range of their abilities, making them one of the continent's greatest dangers.

JOROGUMO DIFFICULTY 100

Size 1 frightening oni
Perception 13 (+3); darksight
Defense 17; **Health** 90
Strength 12 (+2), **Agility** 17 (+7), **Intellect** 13 (+3), **Will** 11 (+1)
Speed 10; climber 17
Immune damage from poison; charmed, compelled, diseased, poisoned
Spider Climb The Jorogumo can climb difficult surfaces, including upside down on ceilings, without needing to make challenge rolls.

ATTACK OPTIONS
Wakizashi (melee) +7 with 1 boon (1d6+2 damage)
Leg Talon (melee) +7 (1d6 damage)
Web The Jorogumo makes an attack roll at short range. On a hit the target is immobilized by webbing. As an action, the immobilized creature can make a Strength challenge roll with 1 bane, escaping from the webbing on a success. The effect also ends if the webbing is destroyed. The webbing has Defense 10, Health 10, takes double damage from fire, and is immune to poison and psychic damage. Once the Jorogumo has used this ability, it cannot do so again for 1 round.

SPECIAL ATTACKS
Multiattack The Jorogumo attacks once with its web and three times with its leg talon or it attacks three times with any combination of its wakizashi and leg talon.

SPECIAL ACTIONS
Alluring Presence Each creature of the Jorogumo's choice within 20 yards must make an Intellect challenge roll with 1 bane or become charmed for 1 minute. A creature can repeat its challenge roll at the end of each of the round, ending the effect on itself on a success. If a creature has been attacked by the jorogumo in the past 24 hours, they gain 2 boonson their challenge roll.
Spiderspeaker Jorogumo are always accompanied by arachnids. By spending an action calling them with its mind, the Jorogumo may summon 3d6 **Tiny Animals** (spiders), 2d6 **Small Animals** (spiders), 1d6 **Medium Animals** (spiders), 2 **Large Animals** (spiders), or 1 **Huge Animal** (spider) that appear within 15 yards at the end of the round. Once the Jorogumo uses Spiderspeaker, it cannot do so again for 1 minute (and if it has summoned 13 or more allies, 1 hour).
Webwalker Jorogumo are never immobilized by their own webs, can move across them at full speed, and see creatures touching their webs as if they were sightless. A creature that enters a space containing the webs becomes immobilized. It can use an action to make a Strength challenge roll with 1 bane. A success removes this affliction as the creature pulls free from the webs. Perception challenge rolls to spot the webs are made with 1 bane.

MAGIC
Power 3
Enchantment *bewitch* (4), *command* (3), *implant suggestion* (1)
Illusion *disguise* (4), *figment* (3), *glamer* (2)

Beautiful and savage, jorogumo are some of Sorubin's deadliest denizens. Frequently viewed as apparitions of supernatural power and unearthly presence, tales of the eight-legged horrors dominate the myths and folklore of the prefectures. Although there are men and women that discount this legend—attributing the oni's actions to everything from assassination attempts, to ceramian propaganda, to the long memories of unpunished infidelities—nothing could be further from the truth. The jorogumo, rare as they are, walk the hidden misty vales and fog shrouded coastal waters luring the unwary to their doom.

WEAVER OF DOOM

Jorogumo delight in bringing doom and betraying trust. Unlike other oni who only relish such deception they excel at it, especially over time—crafting tales and betrayals that can span generations before coming to light. For jorogumo there is no satisfaction to be had in simple deception or the instant reveal and they take great pains to weave layers of misfortune, reveling in the untimely and sudden doom unleashed on not just a family or clan, but entire villages and (for those with the tenacity for longer games) entire prefectures.

JOROGUMO NESTS

Jorogumo are thought to be deadly and unbeatable foes (enemies that only the most stalwart samurai or experienced wu-jen would dare meet in open combat) however this is only partly true. Those who can still hear the spirits of nature tell tale that the jorogumo are at their weakest when the oni seek out mortal mates of equal power and malice. For 3 short months afterward they grow bloated and visibly monstrous before finally spewing forth a spawn of young that destroy both their mother and each other, fighting until only one offspring remains.

KI SPIRIT DIFFICULTY 10

Size 1 kami

Perception 14 (+4)

Defense 13; **Health** 20

Strength 10 (+0), **Agility** 13 (+3), **Intellect** 10 (+0), **Will** 14 (+4)

Speed 10; flier 10 (swoop)

Insubstantial The Ki Spirit takes half damage from weapons, can move through solid objects and other creatures, and ignores the effects of moving across difficult terrain.

Kami Resistance The Ki Spirit takes half damage from unholy.

Tree Bound The Ki Spirit lives only as long as its bonded tree. Whatever damage is done to the bonded tree (Defense 5, Health 30) is also done to the Ki Spirit and cutting down the bonded tree reduces the creature to 0 Health. The next round the Ki Spirit must make a Will challenge roll with 1 bane or die. On a success, the spirit may choose to go dormant for a year and a day in order to restore its bonded tree.

ATTACK OPTIONS

Lashing Branch (melee; reach +1) +0 with 2 boons (1d6 damage)

Razor Leaf (medium range) +3 with 1 boon (1d6 damage)

Intoxicating Fragrance The Ki Spirit exhales a cloud of sweet scent in a 10-yard-cone from a point it can reach. Creatures within the cone must make a Strength challenge roll or takes 2d6 poison damage and gains the poisoned affliction for 1d6 rounds.

SPECIAL ATTACKS

Double Attack The Ki Spirit attacks twice with any combination of its lashing branch and razor leaf.

SPECIAL ACTIONS

Shield of Blossoms As an action the Ki Spirit can surround itself with a whirl of cherry tree petals, increasing its Defense to 18 for 2 rounds.

END OF THE ROUND

Verdant Regeneration The Ki Spirit can merge with its bonded tree in order to restore its corporeal form. While merged with its bonded tree the Ki Spirit heals 5 damage and loses affliction of its choice at the start of each turn. A creature must have a Perception score of 14 or higher to notice a Ki Spirit's presence within its bonded tree. The ki spirit can emerge from its bonded tree at the start of its turn.

Kami vary greatly in terms of both size and appearance, though the more powerful are notably less mobile. The spirit of a small pool or a single tree is likely to be small and of modest power, while the kami of an ancient grove or a revered mountain can be a creature of titanic stature and strength. The Mists of Akuma have had unpredictable effects however, and kami of all sizes are being corrupted or driven mad by the corrupting fog's foul influence. Often appearing as slender, attractive youths, ki spirits are among the least of the kami, content to spend their ponderous lives protecting remote groves or bantering with their fellows on cherry-tree-lined streets. While they are normally neutral creatures, there are stories of massive sakura trees housing ki spirits of immense power and goodness—as well as horror stories of withered trees with angry, vengeful kami lurking within.

VARIANT: ISHI SPIRIT

Ki spirits are not exclusively housed within trees and can also occupy stone and earth. At the GM's discretion there might be other kami that inhabit long-burning fires, prominent areas of water, tempests of highborn winds, or other facets of nature; their abilities are similar to those of ki spirits and ishi spirits but flavored to match the environment that begat them.

ISHI SPIRIT DIFFICULTY 25

Size 1 kami

Perception 14 (+4)

Defense 15; **Health** 25

Strength 15 (+5), **Agility** 13 (+3), **Intellect** 10 (+0), **Will** 14 (+4)

Speed 10

Insubstantial The Ishi Spirit takes half damage from weapons, can move through solid objects and other creatures, and ignores the effects of moving across difficult terrain.

Kami Resistance The Ishi Spirit takes half damage from unholy.

Stone Bound The Ishi Spirit lives only as long as its bonded stone persists. Whatever damage is done to the bonded stone (Defense 5, Health 40) is also done to the Ishi Spirit and breaking the bonded stone reduces the creature to 0 Health. The next round the Ishi Spirit must make a Will challenge roll or die. On a success, the spirit may choose to go dormant for a year and a day in order to restore its bonded stone.

ATTACK OPTIONS

Slam (melee) +5 with 1 boon (1d6+2 damage)

Pebble (short range) +3 with 1 boon (1d6+1 damage)

SPECIAL ATTACKS

Double Attack The Ishi Spirit attacks twice with its slam or twice with its pebble.

END OF THE ROUND

Earth Regeneration The Ishi Spirit can merge with its bonded stone in order to restore its corporeal form. While merged with its bonded stone the Ishi Spirit heals 5 damage and loses an affliction of its choice at the start of each round. A creature must have a Perception score of 16 or higher to notice an Ishi Spirit's presence within its bonded stone. The ishi spirit can emerge from its bonded stone at the start of its turn.

ABOUT KAMI

While they are occasionally mistaken for ghosts or oni, kami are instead the spirits of the world itself. Once rare and quiet beings, the disruptions in Soburin have made more of them active. This has had varying effects on the people of the prefectures as most kami are neither good nor evil, they simply protect nature and adapt to its changes. Kami are not always without an obvious source—the spirits of great heroes and leaders who were venerated after death can also become kami (page 141). Unlike their nature-based kin, they are more likely to take an interest in current events and the fate of their descendants.

Rarely, a kami will bond with a mortal (page 154) or occasionally a member of their bloodline, lending powers in exchange for advancing their goals.

KUCHISAKE-ONNA — DIFFICULTY 25

Size 1 horrifying oni
Perception 13 (+3); darksight
Defense 16; **Health** 25
Strength 14 (+4), **Agility** 16 (+6), **Intellect** 13 (+3), **Will** 15 (+5)
Speed 22
Immune damage from poison, psychic, or unholy; charmed, diseased, frightened, poisoned
Kuchisake-Onna Resistances The Kuchisake-Onna takes half damage from cold and lightning.
Vulnerability The Kuchisake-Onna takes double damage from holy.
Unerring Tracker After wounding a creature, the Kuchisake-Onna is unerringly able to track it so long as it remains on the same plane of existence.

ATTACK OPTIONS
Unholy Scissors (melee) +6 (2d6 damage plus Disfiguring)
Disfiguring A creature that takes damage from the Kuchisake-Onna's scissors makes a Strength challenge roll or becomes disfigured, its mouth ripping open at the sides. While injured or becoming injured from this damage, a creature has 1 bane to the roll. A disfigured creature has 2 bane when making challenge rolls in social situations until it receives an Intellect challenge roll to tend to the wounds or magical healing. Any additional challenge rolls made to remove this affliction after the first are made with 1 cumulative bane. If the creature does not receive healing within 2 hours of being disfigured, the damage becomes permanent. A creature that dies while disfigured rises as a Kuchisake-Onna.

SPECIAL ACTIONS
Eviscerate The Kuchisake-Onna spends its triggered action asking a creature "Am I pretty?" or "Am I handsome?". A creature that responds with any variation of "no" takes 2d6 extra damage from the Kuchisake-Onna's scissor weapon attacks until the end of the next round. A creature that responds, "Do you think I am pretty?" or "Do you think I am handsome?" gives the Kuchisake-Onna the stunned affliction until the end of the next round.

Kuchisake-onna are emblematic of the violent cycle that dominates Soburin, ruthlessly attacking those which displease them and creating more of themselves with every surviving victim. Notorious saboteurs that frequently join the service of oni warlords, kuchisake-onna sneak through city streets sowing terror among the populace, inspiring paranoia in entire settlements or even prefectures. Creatures permanently disfigured by one of these feared oni gradually grow to be more ruthless, savage, and bloodthirsty, taking great offense at the smallest slights and aggressively responding to anyone that brings to light their gruesome mutilation.

ONRYŌ DIFFICULTY 25

Size 1 frightening oni undead
Perception 11 (+1); darksight
Defense 15; **Health** 20
Strength 11 (+1), **Agility** 15 (+5), **Intellect** 11 (+1), **Will** 13 (+3)
Speed 10; flier 8
Immune damage from unholy; charmed, frightened, poisoned
Insubstantial The Onryō takes half damage from weapons, can move through solid objects and other creatures, and ignores the effects of moving across difficult terrain.
Persistent Hunter The Onryō gains 3 boons on challenge rolls to track those it believes wronged it in life. If that creature is dead, the Onryō instead transfers its attentions to that creature's descendants.

ATTACK OPTIONS
Quasi-Ethereal Touch (melee) +5 with 1 boon (2d6+3 psychic damage)

When a person dies feeling wronged—such as from a spouse's infidelity or the disinheritance of a relative—their bodies may rise up to correct the injustice done to them. This vengeance rarely limits itself to the actual perpetrator and the onryō often continues lashing out at any unlucky enough to be in its path; usually this is as simple as a physical attack but since the Mists of Akuma reappeared there have been rumors of stronger onryō, beings capable of great disasters such as famine, plague, and earthquakes.

Onryō with the capacity for causing natural disasters are much like their less powerful counterparts, but are able to wield the elements through great concentration, effort, and spite.

GREATER ONRYŌ DIFFICULTY 50

Size 1 horrifying oni undead
Perception 13 (+3); darksight
Defense 16; **Health** 45
Strength 12 (+2), **Agility** 16 (+6), **Intellect** 13 (+3), **Will** 15 (+5)
Speed 10; flier 8
Immune damage from unholy; charmed, frightened, poisoned
Insubstantial The Greater Onryō takes half damage from weapons, can move through solid objects and other creatures, and ignores the effects of moving across difficult terrain.
Persistent Hunter The Greater Onryō gains 3 boons on challenge rolls to track those it believes wronged it in life. If that creature is dead, the Onryō instead transfers its attentions to that creature's descendants.

ATTACK OPTIONS
Quasi-Ethereal Touch (melee) +5 with 1 boon (1d6+5 psychic damage)

SPECIAL ATTACKS
Double Attack The Greater Onryō attacks twice with its quasi-ethereal touch.

SPECIAL ACTIONS
Catastrophic Ritual By undertaking an hour long ritual (requiring blood sacrifices in specific patterns around their target, usually a week long process) a Greater Onryō can unleash one of the following natural disasters on a location it can see as it conducts the ritual: conjure a tornado or powerful storm, cause an earthquake, unleash a wildfire, trigger a tsunami, or erupt a volcano. Note that only a target with the necessary components (like a seaside town or a village near the base of a volcano) are viable for certain effects (like a tsunami or volcanic eruption). The Greater Onryō's control over this effect continues for 1 hour after the ritual reaches its climax or until it ceases to concentrate on the ritual.

PAPER KAMI — DIFFICULTY 50

Size 2 kami
Perception 14 (+4); darksight
Defense 17; **Health** 45 (Regeneration)
Strength 16 (+6), **Agility** 17 (+7), **Intellect** 14 (+4), **Will** 14 (+4)
Speed 14; flier 10
Immune damage from poison or psychic; fatigued, poison, prone
Kami Resistances The Paper Kami takes half damage from cold, lightning, thunder, and wind.
Vulnerability The Paper Kami takes double damage from fire.

ATTACK OPTIONS
Paper Strike (melee; reach +1) +6 (1d6+2 damage)

SPECIAL ATTACKS
Triple Attack The Paper Kami attacks three times with its paper strike.

SPECIAL ACTIONS
Folding Form Once per turn, the Paper Kami is able to assume the physical shape of any creature (though its coloration and accoutrements do not change). Each time it changes form the Paper Kami may choose to be affected as though it cast *greater animal shape*. The Paper Kami may also become two dimensional, able to push itself under doorways and through keyholes.

END OF THE ROUND
Regeneration The Paper Kami heals 1d6 damage at the end of each round that it is not incapacitated.

Paper kami are spirits summoned to protect knowledge, conjured by powerful mages to guard repositories of scrolls or legendary books filled with forbidden secrets. They are ageless creatures and wisened by time, and though they are swift and pliable their magic gives them immense strength. While many think them evil they are not actually malevolent, only haughty, prideful (often so much so that they choose to appear as lions, dragons, and other highly respected creatures), and overly protective of their treasures—once provoked, a paper kami will go to the edge of the world to take vengeance. Like the ancestral spirits of legendary samurai, paper kami are extremely honorable and will not allow for unbecoming conduct to pass within their sight without intervening. Many enterprising thieves have used this to their advantage to distract one of the guardians away but even while away from its lair, a paper kami can sense if an object under its protection has been tampered with (and anyone that can't escape before its return is likely to meet a grisly end). When one of these spirits needs to reacquire an artifact taken from their territory they will send enchanted missives to honorable adventurers it has encountered, beseeching their aid (either to protect its charges or hunt down burglars) in exchange for powerful lore.

VARIANT: ANCESTRAL KAMI

Though not as frequent as nature kami or bound spirits, the souls of the dead in Soburin can sometimes manifest as powerful otherworldly beings that are as strong or stronger than their common counterparts.

ANCESTRAL KAMI — DIFFICULTY 100

Size 1 kami
Perception 14 (+4); darksight
Defense 16; **Health** 65(Regeneration)
Strength 11 (+1), **Agility** 17 (+7), **Intellect** 14 (+4), **Will** 14 (+4)
Speed 14; flier 10
Immune damage from poison or psychic; fatigued, poison, prone
Insubstantial The Ancestral Kami takes half damage from weapons, can move through solid objects and other creatures, and ignores the effects of moving across difficult terrain.
Kami Resistances The Ancestral Kami takes half damage from cold, lightning, thunder, and wind.

ATTACK OPTIONS
Withering Touch (melee) +7 (2d6+2 damage)

SPECIAL ATTACKS
Double Attack The Ancestral Kami attacks twice with its withering touch.

SPECIAL ACTIONS
Ancestral Knowledge By spending an action attempting an Intellect challenge roll, an Ancestral Kami may learn an obscure piece of myth or lore. By spending a minute instead, the Ancestral Kami learns a secret piece of information on a successful Intellect challenge roll with 2 bane.

END OF THE ROUND
Regeneration The Ancestral Kami heals 1d6 damage at the end of each round that it is not incapacitated.

QIRIN — DIFFICULTY 50

Size 2 kami

Perception 16 (+6); darksight
Defense 17; **Health** 45
Strength 15 (+5), **Agility** 17 (+7), **Intellect** 14 (+4), **Will** 14 (+4)
Speed 20; flier 24

Flames of Fortune The Qirin is surrounded by licking flames that deal 1d6 fire damage to any creature that attacks it with a melee weapon. At the beginning of its turn the Qirin may suppress these flames to gain 1 boon on any attack roll or challenge it makes before the start of its next turn. If the qirin has a rider, it may grant this benefit to the rider instead.

Qirin Resistances The Qirin takes half damage from cold, fire, lightning, and wind.

Spell Defense The Qirin takes half damage from spells and makes any challenge roll to resist a spell with 1 boon. A creature attacking the Qirin with a spell makes the attack roll with 1 bane.

Magic Detection The Qirin is under the constant effects of the *arcane sight* spell.

ATTACK OPTIONS

Gore (melee) +5 with 1 boon (2d6+2 damage)
Hoof (melee) +5 with 1 boon (1d6+1 damage)

Powerful Charge When the Qirin takes the charge action and successfully hits with its gore attack, the target takes an extra 1d6 damage and is knocked prone if the Qirin succeeds on a Strength challenge roll.

Spew Fire The Qirin sprays flames in a 5-yard-long cone from a point it can reach. Everything in the area takes 3d6 damage. Each creature in the area must make an Agility challenge roll. On a failure, the creature takes 1d6 extra damage and catches fire. Once the Qirin uses Spew Fire, it cannot do so again for 1d3 rounds.

SPECIAL ATTACKS

Double Attack The Qirin attacks once with its gore and once with its hoof.

SPECIAL ACTIONS

Blessing of Luck The Qirin blesses up to four creatures, granting each 1 boon that can be used on any attack roll or challenge roll. A blessed creature chooses to use this ability after a roll is made but before its results are revealed. Once the Qirin uses Blessing of Luck, it cannot do so again for 1 day.

MAGIC

Power 4
Enchantment *bewitch* (4), *command* (2), *implant suggestion* (1)
Life *life sense* (4), *minor healing* (4), *cure* (3), *fount of life* (3), *light healing* (3), *moderate healing* (2), *vitality burst* (2)
Storm *fog* (4), *freezing fog* (3), *call lightning* (2)

In Soburin's ancient past the qirin were as common as Imperial Dragons and even greater in power, rivaling the very spirits of nature in potency and influence. Legends claim that each of the Imperial Siblings once had a qirin that advised their court and though many noble estates feature detailed statues of these mystic animals, the last time one visited a clan was millennia ago. Their numbers have gradually dwindled over the centuries and with every passing year they grew fewer and weaker—now they are among the rarest of creatures, as uncommon as the kindness and goodwill they are known for. It is thought that the decay of the world and their disappearance are related, and sages go to great lengths in their research of these mythical creatures, sometimes spending their entire lives in a fruitless search to see one in the flesh.

ROKUROKUBI — DIFFICULTY 100

Size 1 horrifying oni

Perception 15 (+5); darksight
Defense 17 (haramaki); **Health** 90
Strength 16 (+6), **Agility** 16 (+6), **Intellect** 15 (+5), **Will** 16 (+6)
Speed 10
Immune charmed, compelled, frightened, sleep

Spell Defense The Rokurokubi takes half damage from spells and makes any challenge roll to resist a spell with 2 boons. A creature attacking the Rokurokubi with a spell makes the attack roll with 2 bane.

ATTACK OPTIONS

Bite (melee; reach +3) +6 with 1 boon (2d6+3 damage plus Mute Curse)

Mute Curse A creature damaged by the Rokurokubi's bite attack makes a Will challenge roll or loses its voice and turns mute until that damage is healed.

SPECIAL ATTACKS

Spell Fighting The Rokurokubi attacks twice with its bite and casts a spell that normally requires the use of an action to cast.

SPECIAL ACTIONS

Nightfall Aura The Rokurokubi creates an aura of darkness and silence around itself (as the *darkness* and *still the air* spells) with a radius of 5 yards. The Rokurokubi is immune to the effects of its aura and can dismiss the effect as a minor activity.

MAGIC

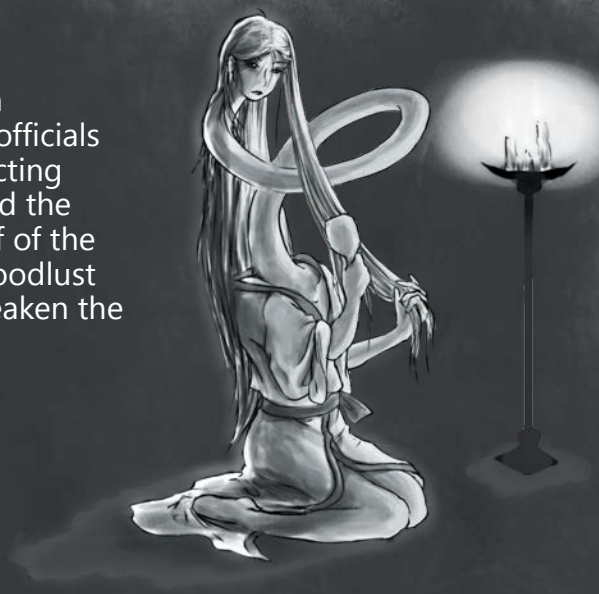
Power 5
Curse *hex* (4), *frighten* (4), *hobble* (4), *pain* (4), *vulnerability* (3), *weakness* (3), *dread* (2)
Enchantment *charm* (3), *command* (3), *question* (2), *compel* (2), *mind bondage* (1), *cower* (1)
Illusion *figment* (4), *thimblerig* (4), *glamer* (3), *invisibility* (3), *decoy* (2), *phantasm* (2), *mirage* (1)
Storm *fog* (4), *freezing fog* (4), *poisonous fog* (3), *hail storm* (2), *acid rain* (1)

END OF THE ROUND

Detachable Head When it has 5 or more Health at the end of the turn Rokurokubi can detach its head from its body. The head has half of the Rokurokubi's current Health, a Defense of 20, and the flier 20 trait, but it cannot cast spells. If the Rokurokubi's body is destroyed while the head is detached, the head regrows the body in 24 hours.

When a person passes away because they have been unduly harmed by another—wickedly manipulated into their demise or slain while defenseless—their body might restore itself and transform into a rokurokubi. Though it speaks and has a mind, these oni are soulless bloodthirsty wreakers of havoc with no greater goal than to inflict pain and

suffering. Using their magical abilities to masquerade in settlements, rokurokubi cajole, deceive, and intimidate officials to organize for the largest groups of prey possible, enacting massacres that fill Soburin's cities with corpses and flood the streets red with blood. Many rokurokubi work on behalf of the oni warlords or yai sovereigns, focusing their hateful bloodlust on strategic locations in the prefectures to gradually weaken the clans' control (receiving powerful secrets in return).



TIKBALANG — DIFFICULTY 100

Size 2 horrifying oni

Perception 15 (+5); darksight
Defense 17; **Health** 95
Strength 19 (+9), **Agility** 15 (+5), **Intellect** 11 (+1), **Will** 15 (+5)
Speed 14; climber 14, flier 10
Immune damage from poison; charmed, frightened, poisoned
Sound Mimicry Once each turn the Tikbalang may create an illusory sound. Creatures able to hear it must succeed on a Will challenge roll with 2 bane to realize the sound is an illusion. The Tikbalang gains 2 boons on challenge rolls to mimic sounds (including accents and speech patterns) it has listened to for at least 10 minutes.

ATTACK OPTIONS

Bite (melee) +9 (2d6 damage)
Claw (melee; reach +1) +9 (1d6 damage)
Spine (short range) +5 with 1 boon (1d6 damage)

SPECIAL ATTACKS

Multiple Attack The Tikbalang attacks five times with its spine or attacks once with its bite, once with its claw, and casts a spell that normally requires the use of an action to cast.

SPECIAL ACTIONS

Change Shape As an action, the Tikbalang changes into a humanoid that has a difficulty no higher than its own, or back into its true form. It reverts to its true form if it dies. Any equipment it is wearing or carrying is absorbed or borne by the new form (the Tikbalang's choice). In a new form, the Tikbalang retains its Health, ability to speak, Intellect and Will scores, as well as this action. Its statistics and capabilities are otherwise replaced by those of the new form.

MAGIC

Power 4
Illusion *clamor* (4), *figment* (4), *vertigo* (4), *glamer* (3), *invisibility* (3), *phantasm* (2), *mirage* (1)

Long ago tikbalang were guardians of the forests and jungles in southern Soburin, but the Kengen Occupation's destruction of so much of the continent's wilderness has turned these mystical creatures into nearly feral, deranged beasts. The oni use their magic to confuse and confound travelers that near their territory, attempting to drive prey mad with illusions and mimicry before striking (usually by leaping from beneath a bridge, charging from within a thatch of bamboo, or dropping from the branches of a tree).

TSUKUMOGAMI

On the 100th birthday of an item there is a chance that it might suddenly animate of its own accord, growing a combination of limbs, eyes, and sometimes a mouth, along with a disposition that matches how well it has been treated in its century of existence. With all of the magic throughout Soburin these creatures have always been a part of the realm but after the second coming of the Mists of Akuma they have become practically omnipresent.

Within the corrupting fogs an item can decay far more quickly than normal, accruing years of age in mere moments; a week old pair of sandals might animate after spending only minutes in the Mists of Akuma. Worse yet are the relics from the War of Kaiyo. Many of the ceramian's weapons and combat machines are reaching their 100th birthdays, and the years have rarely been kind to them. These tsukumogami are feared and hated, often cited as the primary reason for the imperial decrees against the use of technology.

A tsukumogami is not always violent or vengeful however, and those that experienced respect and kind treatment—frequently the possessions of people that have lived peaceful lives—are often benevolent creatures highly valued by society at large. Helping those who once owned them in bizarre and sometimes initially misunderstood ways, these animated objects are protected by the persons that know them, looked upon as signs of good fortune.

Consoling Tsukumogami Many priests and sages make their daily coin by performing rituals to appease spirits, be they kami, tsukumogami, or yōkai. Fortunately the expertise of exacting rites is not completely necessary to comfort a tsukumogami's spirit—even peasants are able to say the appropriate prayers and make the correct gestures. Consoling a tsukumogami before it awakens takes an uninterrupted hour and a Dignity or Intellect challenge roll. Consoling an already awakened tsukumogami is a Dignity or Intellect challenge roll with 1 additional bane if it has been injured by the consoler. At the GM's discretion, some tsukumogami cannot be consoled (even on 20+ rolls). Depending on the Difficulty of the tsukumogami, the challenge roll to console it is made with a boon (negating the bane for an injured awakened tsukumogami) or banes: Difficulty 1–5 (1 boon), Difficulty 10–25 (1 bane), Difficulty 50 (2 banes), Difficulty 100 (5 banes), Difficulty 250 (7 banes), Difficulty 500 (12 banes).

Hidden in Plain Sight Tsukumogami may hide their features to appear as mundane versions of the objects they once were. Noticing a tsukumogami hidden this way requires a Perception challenge roll with 3 bane.

Making a Tsukumogami Most nearly any object can be a tsukumogami! If pressed for time, use a small or medium construct with one of the following tsukumogami abilities: critical accuracy, destroyer, float on the wind (and flier 8), folding, frightening, knowing gaze, open ears, unerring gaze.

Mitsuyu Gyōsha Consortium Keen to the accelerated rate at which tsukumogami were manifesting, some of the crime lords of Soburin's cities saw an opportunity rather than an obstacle. These rapidly appearing creatures were intelligent and able to blend in with their surroundings in a way that even a master shinobi could not—what if their talents could be harnessed? Thus the Mitsuyu Gyōsha was born. Humanoid members of this secretive organization of thieves, spies, and smugglers are accompanied at all times by a tsukumogami either bribed or bound to serve them, usually hiding in plain sight as a regular mundane piece of equipment. The criminal guild's collective power and influence isn't known for certain, but most suspect they have as much of an impact on Soburin as any of the prefectures (and possibly rival even the imperial family in clout).

Takara Tsukumogami Enchanted relics from the distant past of Soburin—crafted during the two millennia long Ichizoku Wars and perhaps even before—can also become tsukumogami. Unlike the machines from the War of Kaiyo or a commoner's umbrella, these powerful magical items are even more potent when they become animated and always have an ego to match. Though once only legend, takara tsukumogami have become a horrifying reality for many citizens of Soburin after the reappearance of the Mists of Akuma. These objects awaken after their 1,000th birthday and are often megalomaniacal, seeking to control entire settlements or even prefectures through influence, fear, and

violence if necessary. Takara tsukumogami are known to possess a warrior or mage to enact their will, but the most dangerous of these creature are those insane few that seek out alliances with the many kaiyo tsukumogami that wander on the other side of the Great Divide, helping vast hordes of the animated death machines cross the edge of the world to wreak havoc on the realm.

AKUNOMŌFU, BLANKET TSUKUMOGAMI DIFFICULTY 25

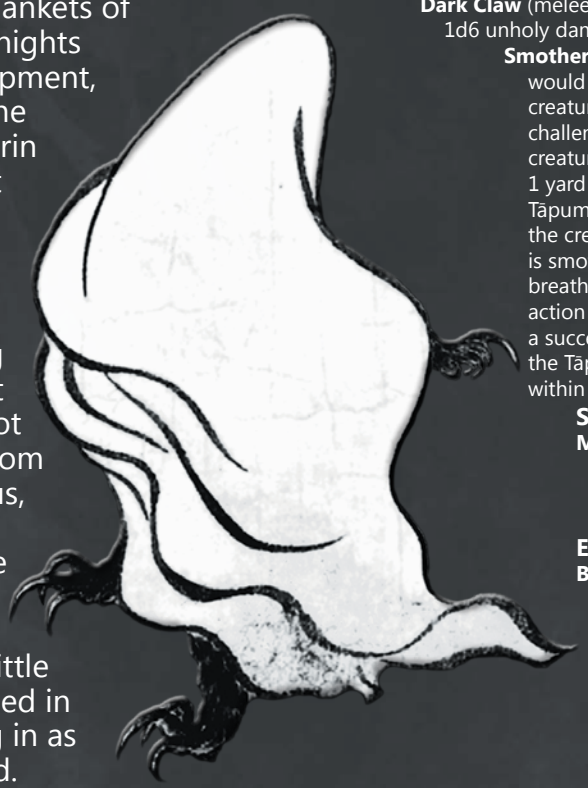
Size 1 tsukumogami
Perception 9 (–1); darksight, sightless
Defense 15; **Health** 30
Strength 14 (+4), **Agility** 15 (+5), **Intellect** 9 (–1), **Will** 13 (+3)
Speed 10; climber 10
Immune damage from unholy; charmed, fatigued, frightened, poison
Tsukumogami Resistance The Akunomōfu takes half damage from acid, cold, fire, holy, lightning, and thunder.
Folding The Akunomōfu may become two dimensional, able to push itself under doorways and through narrow spaces.

ATTACK OPTIONS
Dark Claw (melee) +4 with 1 boon (1d6 damage plus 1d3 unholy damage)
Smother As the Akunomōfu takes its move if it would enter the space of a Size 2 or smaller creature, the creature makes an Agility challenge roll. On a success, the creature can choose to push the Akunomōfu 1 yard back or to the side. On a failure, the Akunomōfu enters the creature's space, and the creature takes 2d6 unholy damage and is smothered. The smothered creature can't breathe but can try to escape by taking an action to make a Strength challenge roll with 1 bane. On a success, the creature escapes and shoves the Akunomōfu into a space of its choice within 1 yard.

SPECIAL ATTACKS
Multiple Attacks The Akunomōfu attacks twice with is dark claw or once with its smother and once with its dark claw.

END OF THE ROUND
Baleful Energies A creature smothered by the Akunomōfu takes 1d6 unholy damage and gains the fatigued affliction for +1d6 cumulative rounds.

Akunomōfu were once the blankets of soldiers, soiled by countless nights in the dirt, used to pack equipment, or otherwise abused. Of all the tsukumogami native to Soburin these are viewed as the most despicable and evil, a sign of foreshadowing for terrible events on the horizon and hated by all. The Mitsuyu Gyōsha are keen to acquiring tsukumogami of all kinds but favor these in particular as not only are akunomōfu borne from items that are truly ubiquitous, they are able to reach and hide within areas inaccessible to larger, bulkier servants (thus making perfect spies). Wild akunomōfu show very little restraint and are single-minded in their pursuit of prey, drinking in as much of a victim's *qi* as blood.



VARIANT: LARGER CANVASES

There are many cloth-like materials once used by the invading armies that have since fallen to ruination but not all, and some of these tarps and hardened sheets have survived long enough to become tsukumogami just as cruel as their smaller counterparts. The Mitsuyu Gyōsha avoid these superior specimens, knowing all too well that even the deadliest warrior is hard pressed when fighting one of the titanic monstrosities.

TĀPUMŌFU, BLANKET TSUKUMOGAMI DIFFICULTY 50

Size 2 tsukumogami
Perception 10 (+0); darksight, sightless
Defense 16; **Health** 55
Strength 15 (+5), **Agility** 16 (+6), **Intellect** 10 (+0), **Will** 14 (+4)
Speed 12; climber 12
Immune damage from unholy; charmed, fatigued, frightened, poison
Tsukumogami Resistance The Tāpumōfu takes half damage from acid, cold, fire, holy, lightning, and thunder.
Folding The Tāpumōfu may become two dimensional, able to push itself under doorways and through narrow spaces.

ATTACK OPTIONS
Dark Claw (melee) +5 with 1 boon (1d6 damage plus 1d6 unholy damage)
Smother As the Tāpumōfu takes its move if it would enter the space of a Size 3 or smaller creature, the creature makes an Agility challenge roll with 1 bane. On a success, the creature can choose to push the Tāpumōfu 1 yard back or to the side. On a failure, the Tāpumōfu enters the creature's space, and the creature takes 3d6 unholy damage and is smothered. The smothered creature can't breathe but can try to escape by taking an action to make a Strength challenge roll. On a success, the creature escapes and shoves the Tāpumōfu into a space of its choice within 1 yard.

SPECIAL ATTACKS
Multiple Attacks The Tāpumōfu attacks three times with its dark claw or once with its smother and twice with its dark claw.

END OF THE ROUND
Baleful Energies A creature smothered by the Tapumōfu takes 2d6 unholy damage and gains the fatigued affliction for +1d6 cumulative rounds.

CHŌCHIN-OBAKE DIFFICULTY 10

Size 1/2 tsukumogami
Perception 12 (+2); darksight
Defense 13; **Health** 15
Strength 10 (+0), **Agility** 13 (+3), **Intellect** 12 (+2), **Will** 15 (+5)
Speed flier 10 (swoop)
Immune damage from poison; fatigued, poisoned
Float on the Wind The Chōchin-Obake imposes 1 bane on melee attack rolls against it.
Tsukumogami Resistances The Chōchin-Obake takes half damage from cold, fire, holy, and unholy.
Vulnerability The Chōchin-Obake takes double damage from acid and wind.

ATTACK OPTIONS
Fiery Spit (short range) +3 with 1 boon (2d6 fire damage)

MAGIC
Power 3
Enchantment *charm* (3), *command* (3), *question* (3), *compel* (2), *cower* (1)

Historically the most common type of tsukumogami created by Soburin's peoples are chōchin-obake, paper lanterns cast away from settlements in *Loi Krathong* rituals. These elaborate festivals culminate with the release of many lanterns into the air and out to sea in an attempt to appease the entire spirit world with a legion of united gestures. While the vast majority meet their end in the ocean's waters, some awaken and return, haunting souls for reasons known only to the mysterious tsukumogami.

CHŌCHIN-OBAKE SWARM DIFFICULTY 25

Size 2 tsukumogami (swarm)
Perception 12 (+2); darksight
Defense 13; **Health** 30
Strength 10 (+0), **Agility** 13 (+3), **Intellect** 12 (+2), **Will** 15 (+5)
Speed flier 10 (swoop)
Immune damage from poison; charmed, fatigued, frightened, immobilized, poisoned, prone, stunned
Float on the Wind Melee attacks against the Chōchin-Obake Swarm are at 1 bane.
Swarm When moving, the Chōchin-Obake Swarm can move freely through openings large enough to permit the passage of a Size ½ creature and through the spaces of other creatures. Other creatures can enter the Chōchin-Obake Swarm's space and move through it. The Chōchin-Obake Swarm's space counts as difficult terrain. The Chōchin-Obake Swarm takes half damage from effects that use an attack roll and double damage from effects that require it to make a challenge roll.
Tsukumogami Resistances The Chōchin-Obake Swarm takes half damage from cold, fire, holy, and unholy.
Vulnerability The Chōchin-Obake Swarm takes double damage from acid and wind.

ATTACK OPTIONS
Fiery Spit (short range) +3 with 1 boon (2d6 fire damage)

SPECIAL ATTACKS
Fiery Flurry The Chōchin-Obake Swarm attacks three different targets with its fiery spit.

END OF THE ROUND
Conflagration Each creature that isn't a swarm that is in the swarm's space or within 1 yard of it must make an Agility challenge roll. On a failure, the creature takes 2d6 fire damage.

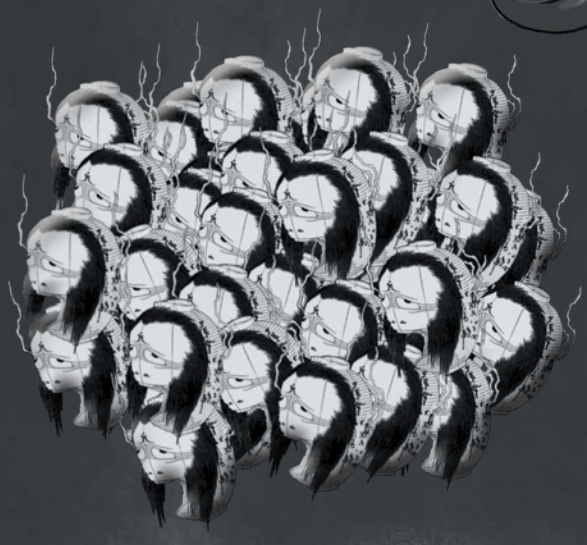
KAIYO HORROR: PISTOL DIFFICULTY 10

Size 1/4 frightening tsukumogami
Perception 13 (+3); darksight
Defense 13; **Health** 15
Strength 7 (–3), **Agility** 12 (+2), **Intellect** 13 (+3), **Will** 13 (+3)
Speed 8
Immune damage from poison; charmed, fatigued, frightened, poisoned
Kaiyo Resistance The Kaiyo Horror takes half damage from fire.
Vulnerability The Kaiyo Horror takes double damage from lightning.
Telepathy The Kaiyo Horror can communicate telepathically within 20 yards.

ATTACK OPTIONS
Bite (melee) –3 with 2 boons (1d3 damage)
Gunshot (medium range) +2 with 1 boon (2d6 damage)
Critical Accuracy When the Kaiyo Horror rolls 20+ with its bite attack, its target is unable to speak for 2 rounds. When the Kaiyo Horror rolls 20+ with its gunshot, its target is blinded for 2 rounds.

SPECIAL ATTACKS
Double Attack The Kaiyo Horror attacks once with its bite and once with its gunshot.

SPECIAL ACTIONS
Blasting Hop When the Kaiyo Horror takes the charge action it can move 20 yards in any direction in a straight line.
Unerring Gaze By spending its triggered action the Kaiyo Horror gains 1 boon on its next gunshot attack. By spending an action it grants 1 boon to the first ranged weapon attack made by one creature it can see within 10 yards.



KAIYO HORROR: AUTOPISTOL — DIFFICULTY 25

Size 1/4 frightening tsukumogami
Perception 13 (+3); darksight
Defense 13; **Health** 20
Strength 7 (–3), **Agility** 13 (+3), **Intellect** 13 (+3), **Will** 13 (+3)
Speed 8
Immune damage from poison; charmed, fatigued, frightened, poisoned
Kaiyo Resistance The Kaiyo Horror takes half damage from fire.
Vulnerability The Kaiyo Horror takes double damage from lightning.
Telepathy The Kaiyo Horror can communicate telepathically within 20 yards.

ATTACK OPTIONS
Bite (melee) –3 with 1 boon (1d3 damage)
Gunshot (medium range) +3 with 1 boon (1d6 damage)
Critical Accuracy When the Kaiyo Horror rolls 20+ with its bite attack, its target is unable to speak for 2 rounds. When the Kaiyo Horror rolls 20+ with its gunshot attack, its target is blinded for 2 rounds.

SPECIAL ATTACKS
Double Attack The Kaiyo Horror attacks once with its bite and twice with its gunshot or three times with its gunshot.

SPECIAL ACTIONS
Blasting Hop When the Kaiyo Horror takes the charge action it can move 20 yards in any direction in a straight line.
Unerring Gaze By spending its triggered action the Kaiyo Horror gains 1 boon on its next gunshot attack. By spending an action it grants 1 boon to the first ranged weapon attack made by one creature it can see within 10 yards.

KAIYO HORROR: RIFLE — DIFFICULTY 25

Size 1/4 frightening tsukumogami
Perception 13 (+3); darksight
Defense 14; **Health** 30
Strength 8 (–2), **Agility** 13 (+3), **Intellect** 13 (+3), **Will** 13 (+3)
Speed 8
Immune damage from poison; charmed, fatigued, frightened, poisoned
Kaiyo Resistance The Kaiyo Horror takes half damage from fire.
Vulnerability The Kaiyo Horror takes double damage from lightning.
Telepathy The Kaiyo Horror can communicate telepathically within 20 yards.

ATTACK OPTIONS
Gunshot (long range) +3 with 1 boon (1d6+2 damage)
Critical Accuracy When the Kaiyo Horror rolls 20+ with its gunshot attack, its target is blinded for 1d6+1 rounds.

SPECIAL ATTACKS
Double Attack The Kaiyo Horror attacks twice with its gunshot.

SPECIAL ACTIONS
Propelling Blast When the Kaiyo Horror takes its movement it may move 20 yards in any direction in a straight line instead.
Unerring Gaze By spending its triggered action the Kaiyo Horror gains 1 boon on its next gunshot attack. By spending an action it grants 1 boon to the first ranged weapon attack made by one creature it can see within 20 yards.

The War of Kaiyo lasted for over a century and though it was waged across the Great Divide, the lands of Soburin are still at the mercy of ceramian and ropaeo machines of death. Left behind in the apocalyptic wasteland that persists across the edge of the world, these contraptions have awoken and some have braved the energy threshold to wander Soburin in search of enemies to unleash their unending malice upon—sometimes allowing a merchant or warrior to carry them for weeks (or even years) before suddenly attacking.

KAIYO MENAGERIES

As ghoulish as it may be some truly despicable nobles not only keep heretical technology, but actively seek out kaiyo horrors as well. These insane collectors keep zoos of the violent and deadly tsukumogami far from sight, and it is rare for someone to be given a tour of one of these lethal menageries without ultimately becoming a meal for the freakish creatures within. A subdued kaiyo horror can garner quite a fine price on the black market, but only fools and the truly cunning manage to barter such deals without suffering mortal harm.

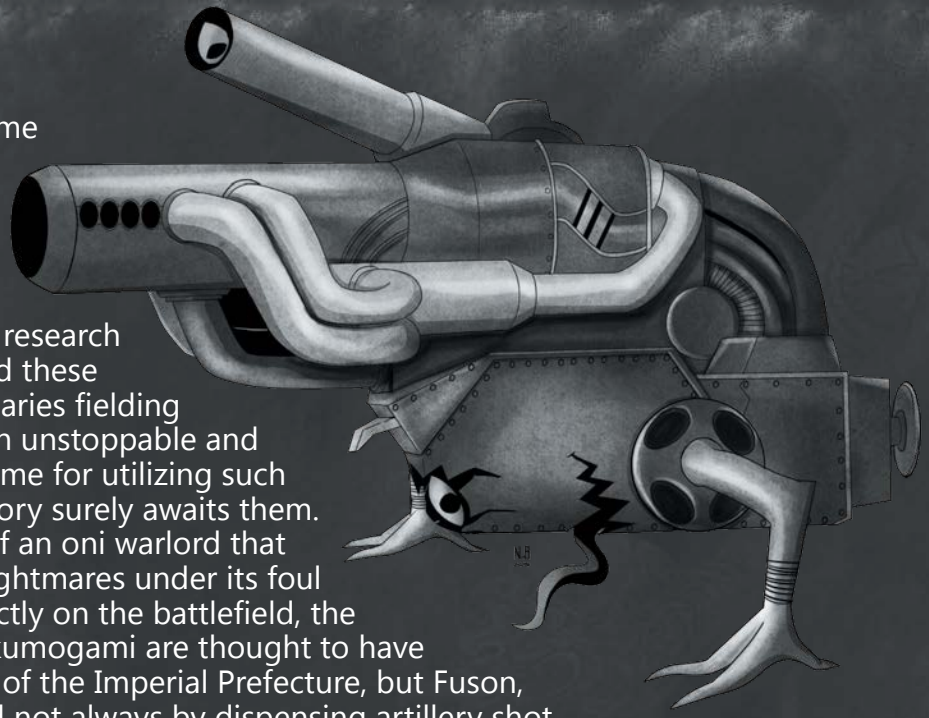
KAIYO NIGHTMARE (ARTILLERY CANNON) — DIFFICULTY 100

Size 3 horrifying tsukumogami
Perception 15 (+5); darksight
Defense 16; **Health** 100
Strength 18 (+8), **Agility** 13 (+3), **Intellect** 8 (–2), **Will** 15 (+5)
Speed 10
Immune damage from poison; charmed, fatigued, frightened, poisoned
Kaiyo Resistances The Kaiyo Nightmare takes half damage from acid, cold, fire, thunder, and wind.
Vulnerability The Kaiyo Nightmare takes double damage from lightning.
Telepathy The Kaiyo Nightmare can communicate telepathically within 40 yards.

ATTACK OPTIONS
Barrel Slam (melee; reach +1) +8 (3d6+4 damage)
Cannon (long range) +3 with 2 boons (4d6 damage plus Collateral Damage)
Explosive Shot The Kaiyo Nightmare unleashes a ball of energy explodes from a point it chooses within medium range, spreading into an 8-yard sphere. Each creature in the area takes 3d6 + 2 damage and must make a Strength challenge roll. It is knocked prone on a failure, or just takes half the damage on a success.
Collateral Damage When the Kaiyo Nightmare makes a cannon attack, any creatures adjacent to the square it hits make an Agility challenge roll with 1 bane or take half the damage dealt.

SPECIAL ACTIONS
Propelling Blast When the Kaiyo Nightmare takes its move it may move 30 yards in any direction in a straight line instead.

Crossing the Great Divide is no simple task even for monstrosities of war and it is rare for a Kaiyo Horror to appear by itself in Soburin—only the most powerful are capable of making the journey alone. By packing their barrels with highly explosive shells the artillery cannons of the ceramian and ropaeo armies propel their massive bulks across the sky, through the energy threshold at the edge of the world and into Soburin's oceans. Kaiyo Nightmares that don't run afoul of a yai sovereign's domain blast themselves ashore, wreaking havoc on a scale not seen since Hitoshi's Rebellion and claiming countless lives before being felled.



There are rumors that some mechanical tsukumogami live free in the prefectures, wooed or captured by the clan lords that embrace the heretical sciences—though whether or not they are being collected for research or war remains unknown. Should these claims prove to be true the militaries fielding Kaiyo Nightmares would be nigh unstoppable and however hated they might become for utilizing such heinous creatures, a bloody victory surely awaits them.

Even more fell tales tell of an oni warlord that has gathered a host of Kaiyo Nightmares under its foul banner. Though never seen directly on the battlefield, the presence of these collected tsukumogami are thought to have been felt in not only the border of the Imperial Prefecture, but Fuson, Kizuato, and Osore as well—and not always by dispensing artillery shot. Several castle strongholds along the northern ranges of Soburin's southern mountains have been lost, overrun by oni that parachute down from the sky or simply slam into the fortifications with great force after being fired from the mouth of a Kaiyo Nightmare. Whomever is truly responsible for these assaults practices total warfare however, and the few survivors have offered little knowledge save that these tsukumogami are part of a great host of warriors, one surely destined to make itself known soon enough.

KAIYO TERROR (MUNITIONS TRAIN) DIFFICULTY 250

Size 5 horrifying tsukumogami
Perception 15 (+5); darksight
Defense 17; **Health** 155
Strength 22 (+12), **Agility** 11 (+1), **Intellect** 15 (+2), **Will** 18 (+8)
Speed 18
Immune damage from poison; charmed, fatigued, frightened, poisoned
Kaiyo Resistances The Kaiyo Terror takes half damage from acid, cold, fire, thunder, and wind.
Vulnerability The Kaiyo Terror takes double damage from lightning.
Lined Movement The Kaiyo Terror can only travel in straight lines once it has begun its move. At the beginning of its turn, a Kaiyo Terror can change direction by 45 degrees by reducing its speed that round by 3.

ATTACK OPTIONS
Bite (melee) +12 (3d6 damage plus Swallow on attack roll 20+)
Nose Cannon (long range) +1 with 3 boons (6d6 damage and any creatures adjacent to a hit target make an Agility challenge roll with 1 bane or take half damage as well)
Charging Slam When the Kaiyo Terror takes the charge action, it gains 1 boon and on a hit it deals 2d6 extra damage and the target makes a Strength challenge roll or is knocked prone. The Kaiyo Terror may spend its triggered action to make a bite attack against a creature it knocks down and uses swallow on a successful hit.
Destroyer The Kaiyo Terror gains 2 boons on attack rolls made against objects and deals double damage when using its bite to damage an object.
Explosive Shot The Kaiyo Terror unleashes a ball of energy explodes from a point it chooses within medium range, spreading into an 8-yard sphere. Each creature in the area takes 3d6 + 2 damage and must make a Strength challenge roll with 1 bane. It is knocked prone on a failure, or just takes half the damage on a success.
Swallow If the target is smaller than the Kaiyo Terror, it must make an Agility challenge roll with 1 bane. On a failure, the target is swallowed. The Kaiyo Terror can only swallow one creature a turn. A swallowed creature is defenseless, moves with the Kaiyo Terror, and cannot perceive anything outside the tsukumogami's body. At the end of each round, the swallowed creature takes 2d6 damage from the Kaiyo Terror's digestive juices. If the tsukumogami becomes incapacitated, it vomits forth any creatures it has swallowed. Each lands prone in an open space within 1 yard of the Kaiyo Terror.

SPECIAL ATTACKS
Triple Attack The Kaiyo Terror attacks twice with its bite and once with its nose cannon.

The Kaiyo Terror is nary a rumor spread through teahouses across Soburin, inspiring great fear in the populace and emboldening the national hatred for technology. Were the people of the continent to know that these monsters already lurk throughout the prefectures—swallowing prey whole and keeping them alive for days or even weeks before digesting them—mass panic would surely ensue.

KASA-OBAKE, UMBRELLA TSUKUMOGAMI DIFFICULTY 10

Size ½ tsukumogami
Perception 12 (+2); darksight
Defense 13; **Health** 15
Strength 12 (+2), **Agility** 13 (+3), **Intellect** 12 (+2), **Will** 14 (+4)
Speed 10; flier 6 (swoop)
Immune damage from poison; fatigued, poisoned
Tsukumogami Resistances The Kasa-Obake takes half damage from cold, holy, and unholy.
Vulnerability The Kasa-Obake takes double damage from fire.

ATTACK OPTIONS
Talon (melee) +2 with 1 boon (1d6+2 damage)
Tongue (melee; reach +1) +3 with 1 boon (the target makes a Will challenge roll with 1 bane or gains the charmed affliction for 1 hour)

SPECIAL ATTACKS
Double Attack The Kasa-Obake attacks once with its talon and once with its tongue.

SPECIAL ACTIONS
Open Ear By spending an action the Kasa-Obake can attempt an Intellect challenge roll to know an obscure piece of myth or lore. Instead it may spend one minute concentrating to attempt an Intellect challenge roll with 2 bane to learn a secret piece of information.

END OF THE ROUND
Knowing Gaze The Kasa-Obake can force a target creature that can see it to look into its eye and make an Intellect challenge roll or gain the immobilized affliction for 1d6 rounds. Once the Kasa-Obake has used Knowing Gaze, it cannot do so again for 1d6 rounds.

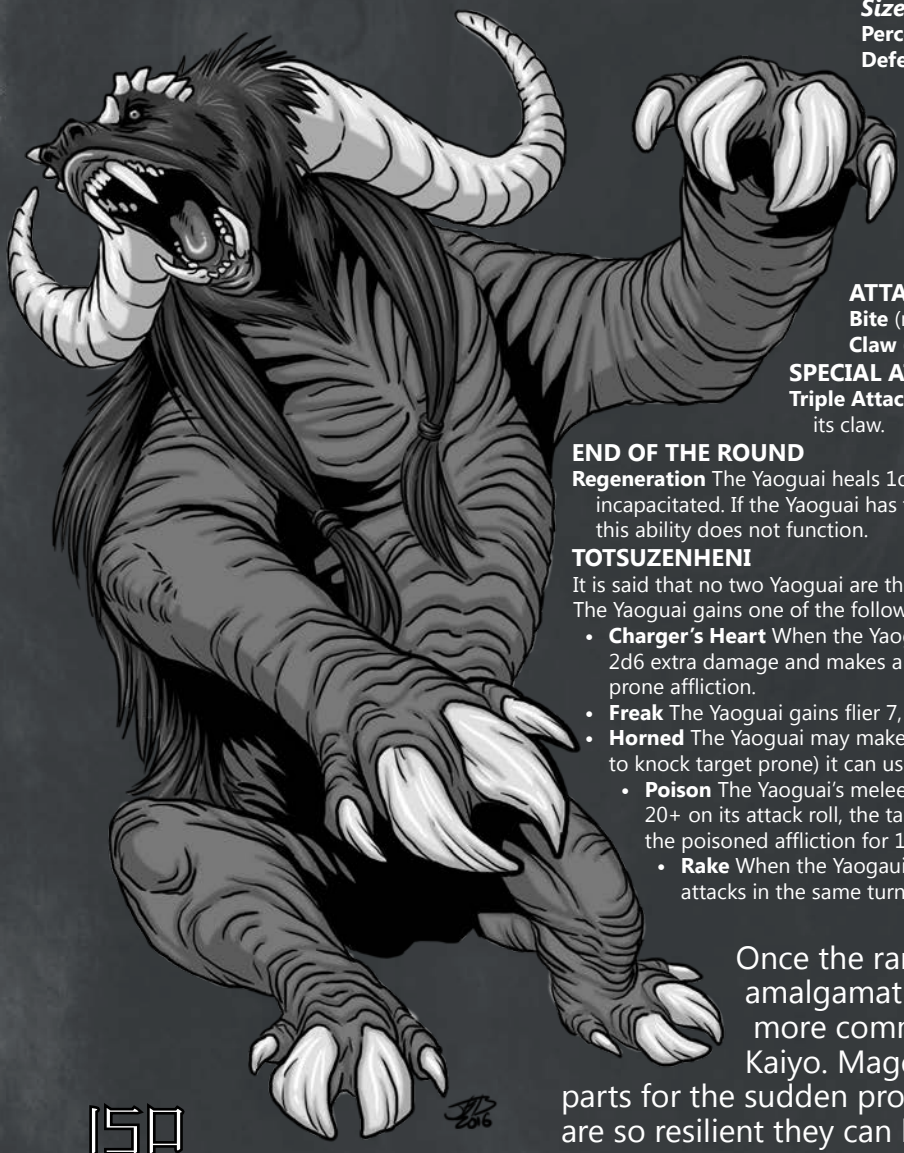
Having a place of prominence near the entrance to a house during their inanimate years as umbrellas, Kasa-Obake are insightful and keen to the doings of humanoids. Once one of these tsukumogami awakens they usually remain in the home they spent the most time in, even long after the original owner dies. Kasa-Obake are frequently among the most friendly living objects to be found in Soburin, though they are not always very well liked due to their love for gossip.

There are legends that tell of kasa-obake allying with truly potent warriors, becoming a weapon in their arsenal. While it is certainly one of the most infrequent occurrences in the history of Soburin, these stories are easily among the most popular subjects for tea house tales and stage plays.

Buki Kasa-Obake
By spending an action you may release the buki kasa-obake to become a Kasa-Obiake until it returns to your hand, but otherwise it acts as a club. You gain 1 boon when making attacks with the buki kasa-bake. Instead of dealing damage to a creature with this weapon, you may instead make a Will challenge roll to give the target the charmed affliction.

When you attack a creature with this weapon and roll 20+ on the attack roll, if your target has the injured affliction you may spend your triggered action to open the buki kasa-obake inside of your target, dealing 3d6 damage. You may not use this ability again for 24 hours.

By spending an action and pointing the buki kasa-obake at a creature you can see within 20 yards, you force your target to make an Intellect challenge roll with 1 bane or gain the immobilized affliction for 1d6 rounds. After successfully saving against this effect, a creature is immune to it for 24 hours. Once each day you may make an Intellect challenge roll with 1 bane as an action to learn an obscure piece of myth or lore.



YAOGUAI — DIFFICULTY 50

Size 2 frightening oni
Perception 15 (+5); darksight
Defense 15; **Health** 50 (Regeneration)
Strength 17 (+7), **Agility** 10 (+0), **Intellect** 4 (–6), **Will** 10 (+0)
Speed 14; climber 14
Immune damage from poison; fatigued, frightened, poisoned
Mystical Hide The Yaoguai's thick hide allows it to ignore the first 3 points of damage from an attack, environmental effect, or spell.

ATTACK OPTIONS
Bite (melee) +7 (1d6+1 damage)
Claw (melee) +7 (1d6 damage)

SPECIAL ATTACKS
Triple Attack The Yaogaui attacks once with its bite and twice with its claw.

END OF THE ROUND
Regeneration The Yaoguai heals 1d6 damage at the end of each round that it is not incapacitated. If the Yaoguai has taken fire, psychic, or unholy damage in the last round this ability does not function.

TOTSUZENHENI
It is said that no two Yaoguai are the same and that each carries a special talent all its own. The Yaoguai gains one of the following traits:

- **Charger's Heart** When the Yaoguai hits a target after taking the charge action it deals 2d6 extra damage and makes a Strength challenge roll with 1 boon to give the target the prone affliction.
- **Freak** The Yaoguai gains flier 7, sightless, and its Agility score increases by 1.
- **Horned** The Yaoguai may make a horn attack (2d6 damage and Strength challenge roll to knock target prone) it can use in place of its bite.
  - **Poison** The Yaoguai's melee attacks deal an extra 1d6 poison damage. When it rolls 20+ on its attack roll, the target makes a Strength challenge roll with 1 bane or gains the poisoned affliction for 1d6 rounds.
    - **Rake** When the Yaogaui successfully hits a creature with more than one of its attacks in the same turn, its last attack deals an extra 1d6 damage.

Once the rarest of creatures these unnatural amalgamations of beasts have become a much more common threat after the end of the War of Kaiyo. Mages and scientists are blamed in equal parts for the sudden prominence of yaoguai, and the lethal oni are so resilient they can be found all over Soburin (frequently

taking large territories in the most inhospitable regions and devouring anything that wanders nearby). Yaoguai hide is highly valued by artificers and magical craftsmen alike, and the mangled remains of ambitious hunters have become the telltale sign that one of these chimeric oni lair nearby.

YUKI-ONNA — DIFFICULTY 100

Size 1 frightening oni
Perception 12 (+2)
Defense 16; **Health** 80
Strength 13 (+3), **Agility** 15 (+5), **Intellect** 12 (+2), **Will** 16 (+6)
Speed 10
Immune damage from cold; frightened, poisoned
Vulnerability The Yuki-Onna takes double damage from fire.
Trackless Step A Yuki-Onna, while a creature of flesh, leaves no footprints in the snow. Checks made to track the Yuki-Onna by visual means have 2 bane.

ATTACK OPTIONS
Icy Claw (melee) +3 with 2 boons (1d6 damage plus 1d6 cold damage)
Chill Breath The Yuki-Onna breathes out super chilled air in a 10-yard-long cone from a point it can reach. Everything in the area takes 2d6+2 cold damage. Each creature in the area must make a Strength challenge roll. On a failure, the creature becomes immobilized for 1d6 rounds as it is encased in ice. At the end of the round, an encased creature can make a Strength challenge roll with 1 bane to break free and remove the immobilized affliction. Once the Yuki-Onna uses Chill Breath, it cannot do so again for 1 round.
Freezing Kiss The Yuki-Onna makes a melee attack with a +5 bonus. On a successful hit, the target takes 4d6 cold damage and makes an opposed Strength challenge roll or gains the immobilized affliction for 2d6 rounds as they are frozen by the intense chill of the Yuki-Onna's soul. Once the Yuki-Onna uses Freezing Kiss, it cannot do so again for 1 round.

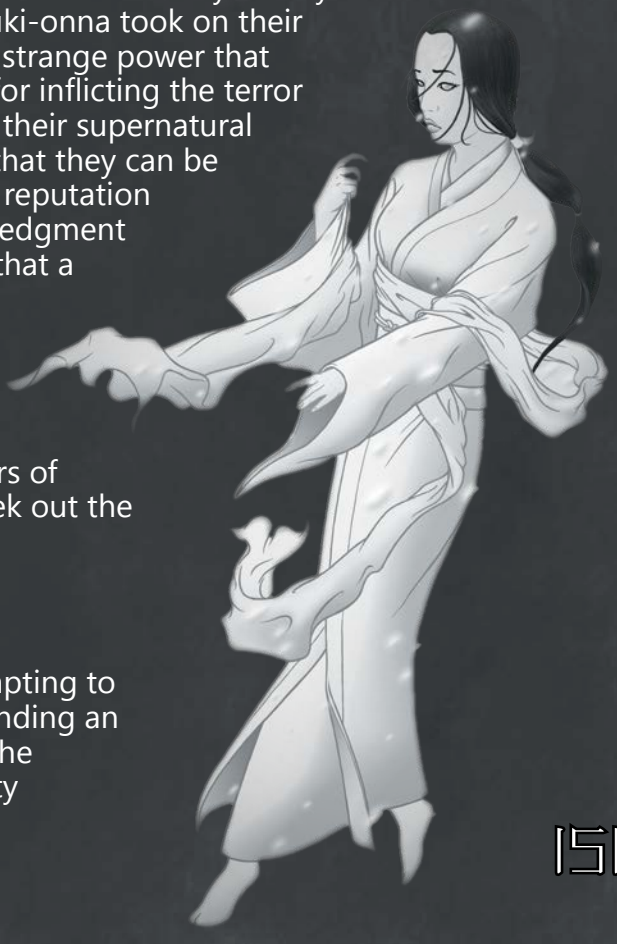
SPECIAL ATTACKS
Double Attack The Yuki-Onna attacks twice with its icy claw and once with its chill breath or freezing kiss.

SPECIAL ACTIONS
Piercing Gaze On its turn, the Yuki-Onna can cause 1 creature frightened by it to become charmed instead.

MAGIC
Power 5
Storm *fog* (4)
Transformation *mask* (4), *mist form* (2)
Water *freeze* (4), *ice blast* (3), *cold snap* (2)

Traditionally known as snow women, yuki-onna might be of either gender but no matter what their appearance they are always stunningly attractive and incredibly deadly. Thought to once be kami of flurries and snow the yuki-onna took on their current form with the coming of Fuyu-Noyaban, the strange power that has subsumed Winter. Now they seem to exist only for inflicting the terror and biting cold of the season on others, often using their supernatural attractiveness to lure unsuspecting victims close so that they can be frozen with a touch or a kiss. Despite their fearsome reputation some travelers have been spared, usually in acknowledgment of their own beauty—there have even been rumors that a yuki-onna has married a mortal, though there is no evidence to confirm this.

A yuki-onna has never been seen in the company of an oni warlord, leading credence to the idea that they serve Fuyu-Noyaban alone. Locks of their hair are highly valued by the monstrous rulers of the wilderness though the few foolish enough to seek out the powerfully enchanted strands rarely live very long.



YUKI-ONNA LOCKS

You take half damage from cold and creatures attempting to track you by visual means do so with 2 bane. By spending an action, you can breathe out super-chilled air as per the Yuki-Onna's Chill Breath attack. After using this ability you cannot do so again for 24 hours.

"Scum like you are not welcome here," the grizzled man brayed. All over the tea house patrons hooted in support, some even removing the peace bonds from their weapons. "Leave now."

Irezumi Gakusei was not surprised—since her transformation it was the reaction she had come to expect from strangers. Though her natural beauty was amplified by the magnificent tattoos scribed onto her body, most people saw only the small horns jutting from her skull and the glowing veins underneath her skin: signs of an oni-touched. "Scum. It is said that one can only know others that are like oneself." She drew a scroll from beneath her robe, letting it unfurl before dropping it onto the bamboo floor. "The Narazumo Gang would certainly know scum when they saw it, so perhaps you are right?"

The insulter, Kazei Narazumo, stood up in response to draw his wakizashi and startled all around him save for a nearby servant holding an empty tray. "You trying to die, freak? We can handle tha—". In a flash of movement the waiter dropped the platter and stepped in behind the much larger man, a dagger held against the gang leader's throat.

"Can you?" the servant asked, his skin gradually turning mottled green, the familiar shell of Irezumi's kappa companion morphing from a figmentary robe. "I am not so sure. What say you, Irezumi?" Mijai Okamei asked, provocation lilting in his voice. "20 Imperial Pieces says none of them leave this place."

More of the customers stood in response, their faces as hard as stone and every one of them grasping at the hilt of a weapon. A crash from the back of the tea house grabbed everyone's attention as a burly woman with a Narazumo headband came flying through the doorway followed not long after by Shisaku the shikome, its eyes bloodshot. Gasps erupted from around the room as metal escaped from sheathes but this was only the beginning of a crescendo of panic as the last of Irezumi's crew made her presence known—Kikai made no attempt at subtlety as she stomped into the building, shaking the bamboo floors and walls with the force of her massive footsteps. Turning his blade up and slashing at Mijai's wrist, Kazei had just long enough to scream, "Narazumo, attack!" before the kappa cut the gang leader's throat wide open, dropping the body and casting a spell that placed him behind Kikai's gigantic mutant bulk and safely outside.

Irezumi leapt forward, drawing on the power of one of her tattoos to become a blur of motion that confounded the criminals that went to cut her down. She unleashed a kick that caved in the chest of one of her foes, sending the man tumbling towards Shisaku as the lean savage screamed in rage, black mists roiling from its form. In its dark haze the hobgoblin pummeled the fool to death before bounding to a new target, howling in frenzy while staying alert enough to prevent any enemies from escaping out the entryway.

Meanwhile Kikai was laying waste to the majority of the Narazumo Gang, her bulky form made all the deadlier by the enormous ironwork device replacing her arm. From behind her Mijai unleashed elemental hell that mercilessly battered the lawbreakers and sent their kunai and shuriken scattering into the woodwork on demon-borne winds. The mutant's fan no te had sliced through too many bodies already, the sharp blades slick with gore and its inner workings jammed by flesh, but it didn't matter much—she merely started clubbing the thieves to death, roaring in concert with Shisaku and reveling in the bloodshed.

Irezumi kept moving in the thick of the melee, magically ripping tattoos from her skin and blocking Narazumo strikes with the enchanted artwork. The spectacle and danger she presented kept their attention long enough for Kikai to remain mobile and deadly, leaving only the true masters of the gang to contend with. Clearly outmatched they dropped their weapons to the floor, letting the blades clatter on the tatami mats as the remnants of their allies drowned in their own blood. "We surrender," one yelled, her arms raised above her head as she dropped to her knees alongside a few other fighters. "Take us to the guard, or whatever lord it is you're working for. We are clearly defeated."

Picking up one of their swords and playfully examining its balance, Shisaku sauntered forwards while looking at its companions expectantly. For a long moment there was only the lament and wailing of the dying, pitiful mewlings that matched the blood-stained abattoir the tea house had become—then without warning the hobgoblin turned in a flash and slashed down, severing the woman's spine in a brutal, merciless stroke.

The bengoshi had said nothing about prisoners.

CHAPTER 10: CHARACTER OPTIONS

BUSHIBOT STORY DEVELOPMENT

D6	Story Development
1	Samurai have a katana stuck up their backsides and unlike them, you embrace the technology developed for combat and have been showing anyone who dares you how wrong the uptight warriors are.
2	After suffering a grievous injury to one of your eyes or ears, you pooled your secret savings to acquire the best iron replacement coin can buy.
3	The gang you've joined has started taking a strange new drug that makes it easier for your body to accept augmetics.
4	You've heard the spirit of the machine whispering to you and you listen for its voice, fanatically writing down everything it tells you even when it makes little or no sense as you fill your body with technology.
5	With one of your nemeses dead at your feet, you hacked away at the corpse and claimed a grisly trophy that you will have with you always.
6	You pissed off the wrong person and wake up one morning without a piece of your body, an ugly augmetic where it used to be.

All of the standard character paths can be found throughout Soburin though some—artificers, engineers, and technomancers in particular—are less common. Other options, presented below, are new to this land of heretical technology and ancient mysteries.

BUSHIBOT EXPERT PATH

Embracing ceramian science, you have undergone extensive conditioning and learned special techniques that make incorporating steam-powered augmetics into your body a seamless process.

Level 3 Bushibot

Attributes Increase two by 1
Characteristics Health +5
Languages and Professions You can speak another language or you add a common or martial profession.
Augmetic Familiarity You gain 1 boon on challenge rolls made to activate, build, conceal, hide, or understand technology.
Installed Augmetic You gain an electrolens augmetic and hornear augmetic without having to increase your Haitoku score.

Level 6 Bushibot

Characteristics Health +5
More Augmetics You gain either steam arms, steam legs, or one steam arm and one steam leg. These augmetics do not increase your Haitoku.
Fighter Talent Choose a fighter talent from the Fighter Expert Path in the core rulebook.

Level 9 Master Bushibot

Characteristics Health +5
Many Augmetics You gain either telescopic arms, telescopic legs, or one telescopic arm and one telescopic leg. These augmetics do not increase your Haitoku.
Augmetic Overcharge You may spend a triggered action to overcharge all of your augmetics. Any abilities or bonuses they grant double their effects for 2d6 rounds. Once you have used this ability, you cannot do so again for 1d6 minutes.

HERBALIST EXPERT PATH

Though technology remained stagnant in Soburin for a long time and has recently become a thing of heresy in many prefectures, the ancient arts of the apothecary are still sought out and even revered. You are a master of natural alchemy, utilizing the energy of your spirit and herbal concoctions to incredible effect.

HERBALIST STORY DEVELOPMENT

D6	Story Development
1	You found an herbalist's hut in the woods, put everything you could into a sack, and haven't looked back since.
2	The ghosts of an herbalist ancestor has begun haunting your dreams, teaching you their mixing techniques as you sleep.
3	Potions can taste *good*. *Really good*. So good that learning how to make them became essential.
4	Buying potions is much more expensive than making them yourself, especially after you contracted a rare and dubious disease that requires regular treatment to suppress it.
5	You witnessed someone suffer greatly from taking a dose of bad medicine and swore that you would do whatever you could to save others from the same fate.
6	Relying too much on spells or technology is a weakness but potions always do the trick and after witnessing an herbalist in action, you decided to learn their tricks.

Level 3 Herbalist

Attributes Increase any two by 1
Characteristics Health +5
Languages and Professions You can speak another language or add a profession.
Brew Healing Potion With 10 minutes of work and an alchemist's kit you are able to craft a *healing potion*. Once you have used Brew Healing a number of times equal to your Intellect modifier, you cannot do so again until taking a rest.
Brew Steroid With 1 hour of work and an alchemist's kit, you are able to craft a potion that increases a creature's Strength or Agility attribute by 1d3 for 1 minute. Once you have used Brew Steroid you cannot do so again until after you have taken a rest. This steroid expires after 24 hours.

Level 6 Herbalist

Characteristics Health +5
Brew Rare Potion With 1 hour of work and an alchemist's kit, you are able to craft any potion of rare availability (paying half the potion's cost in materials).
Brew Stimulant With 1 hour of work and an alchemist's kit, you are able to craft a potion that increases a creature's Intellect or Will attribute by 1d3 for 10 minutes. Once you have used Brew Stimulant you cannot do so again until after you have taken a rest. This stimulant expires after 24 hours.

Level 9 Master Herbalist

Characteristics Health +5
Brew Exotic With 1 hour of work and an alchemist's kit, you are able to craft any potion of exotic availability (paying half the potion's cost in materials).
Better Brews Your steroids and stimulants increase an attribute by 1d6 instead of 1d3, last for 1 hour, and expire after a number of days equal to your Intellect modifier.
Poison Master You are immune to damage from poison and the poisoned affliction.

KAMI GUIDE EXPERT PATH

Many spirits wander the world of Soburin—in addition to the tsukumogami that have become commonplace since the Mists of Akuma, there are also ethereal beings known as kami. Divine scholars devoted to understanding, assuaging, or destroying these magical creatures gain superlative abilities to deal with them, making them true warriors of the supernatural.

Level 3 Kami Guide

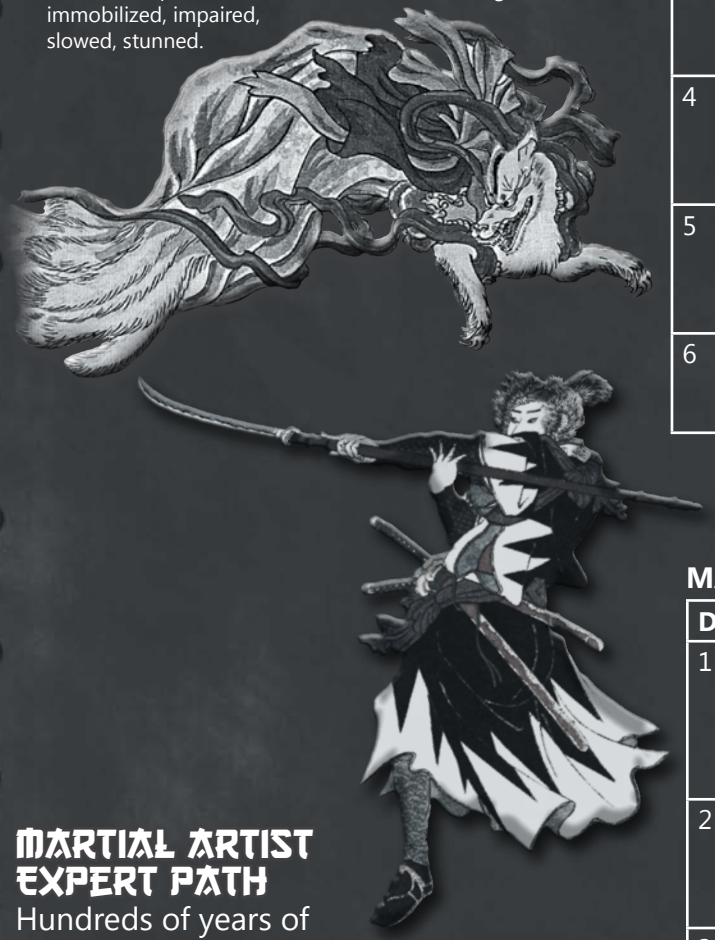
Attributes Increase two by 1
Characteristics Health +2, Power +1
Languages and Professions You can speak another language or add a profession.
Magic You discover the Spirit tradition or learn one spell.
Kami Companion You find a kami spirit that becomes your companion. Your kami spirit uses the statistics of a Tiny Animal with the Insubstantial talent (it takes half damage from weapons, can move through solid objects and other creatures, and ignores the effects of moving across difficult terrain) and Health equal to double your Healing Rate. Though it is unable to attack, you can cast spells with a range of touch through your kami companion.
Fortify Your kami companion uses its action to touch a creature, relieving it one of the following afflictions: asleep, compelled, dazed, deafened, frightened, poisoned, prone. Once Fortify has been used a number of times equal to your Will modifier, your kami companion requires a rest before it can do so again.

Level 6 Kami Guide

Characteristics Health +2
Magic You learn one spell.
Blessed Awareness Your kami companion uses its action to peek into the aether and share its sight with you. You gain the sightless trait with a range in yards equal to double your level.

Level 9 Master Kami Guide

Characteristics Health +2, Power +1
Magic You learn one spell.
Improved Fortify The afflictions your kami companion is able to relieve expands: blinded, charmed, diseased, grabbed, immobilized, impaired, slowed, stunned.



MARTIAL ARTIST EXPERT PATH

Hundreds of years of warfare have led the clans of Soburin to develop dozens of powerful martial arts forms. You seek to master yourself and the world by learning as many of them as you can, turning your body into a weapon of terrifying power.

Level 3 Martial Artist

Attributes Increase two by 1
Characteristics Health +5
Martial Arts You learn one martial arts stance.

Level 6 Martial Artist

Characteristics Health +5
Martial Arts You learn one martial arts stance. The number of martial arts stances you can use at the same time increases by 1.

Level 9 Master Martial Artist

Characteristics Health +5
Martial Arts You learn one martial arts stance. The number of martial arts stances you can use at the same time increases by 2.

KAMI GUIDE STORY DEVELOPMENT

D6	Story Development
1	The spirits of your ancestors pestered and annoyed you until it became necessary to learn how to assuage them.
2	After stealing a cursed item from a tomb you had to learn how to fight spirits to save your soul.
3	You grew up in a village without any spiritual guidance and saw a plague of darkness overtake it, swearing to yourself that you would never allow another town to suffer from the evils of malignant spirits.
4	A sharp blade used to seem more reliable but after seeing a spirit monger wreak havoc you've decided that there's greater glory on the dark path of subjugating kami.
5	The ancestors of a nemesis family have destroyed your own life or those of your relatives—to even the score you'll master the annihilation of their entire line, both past and present.
6	For reasons kept shrouded from you a spirit has decided to become your companion regardless of whether or not you want it around.

MARTIAL ARTIST STORY DEVELOPMENT

D6	Story Development
1	You have become the last living practitioner from your martial arts school after the rest of your peers were slaughtered by rivals. It falls to you to continue the traditions, teach it to a new generation, and take revenge!
2	The hermit that took you under their wing after whupping your ass has utterly disappeared leaving you only with questions and the tools they taught you.
3	Discovering a great betrayal by your master, you cowardly murdered them as they slept and then went on the run. Their rivals have offered you safe havens however, teaching you dark secrets of the martial arts as a reward for your devious deed.
4	After stumbling into a sacred cave you have vanquished a powerful spirit, infusing you with knowledge of the martial arts.
5	Your dreams are flooded with the memories of your ancestor's adventures, guiding you to some greater purpose and instilling their mastery of combat.
6	With a family still suffering from the invasion of the ceramians, falling back on the honed, ancient traditions of Soburin's warriors is the only way to honor your ancestors.

Martial Arts Stances

Martial arts have long since been a factor of life in Soburin, and over millennia countless distinct styles have evolved. These schools are represented below through stances: particular ways of thinking or moving. A creature gains the benefits of their stances if they are using unarmed strikes or weapons with the finesse property. An unarmored creature increases its Defense by an amount equal to the number of martial arts stances s it knows plus half its Will modifier (greater learning of a stance counts as a second known stance).

Stance of Fire's Eternal Vengeance

Your strikes are made deadlier by your fury, scorching your enemies with the flames of your inner fire. Your strikes deal an additional 1d3 fire damage and you take half damage from fire. In addition, you learn the following special attack: **Tatsumaki** As an action, you erupt with the fury of your inner fire, dealing 1d6 fire damage per level to all creatures and objects within a 5-yard-radius. An Agility challenge roll with 1 bane reduces this damage by half. Once you have use Tatsumaki you cannot do so again until after you have finished a rest.

Greater Learning By learning this stance a second time your additional fire damage increases to 1d6, you gain immunity to damage from fire, and you may use Tatsumaki twice before requiring a rest.

Stance of the Bellowing Gale

Using powerful techniques that focus on lightning fast movement, the very air around you reverberates with every blow, sending shockwaves along with your punches and kicks. Your strikes deal an additional 1d3 wind damage and you take half damage from wind. The reach of your melee attacks increases by +2.

Greater Learning By learning this stance a second time your additional wind damage increases to 1d6 and you gain immunity to damage from wind. Once per turn when you hit a creature with a melee attack, you may automatically move them 3 yards away from you (regardless of the target's size).

Stance of the Clear Mind

You have come to understand that true combat is as much mental effort as physical trial. Exploiting the psyche of your enemies against them, you imbue your strikes with the force of your mind—to devastating effect. Your strikes deal an additional 1d3 psychic damage and you take half damage from psychic. You are able to communicate telepathically within 10 yards.

Greater Learning By learning this stance a second time your additional psychic damage increases to 1d6 and you gain immunity to damage from psychic. The range of your telepathy increases to 40 yards.

Stance of the Evanescent Sun

Your nobility shines beyond the confines of your soul, blessing your physical blows with divine power. Your strikes deal an additional 1d3 holy damage and you take half damage from holy. In addition, you learn the following special action: **Tōchi** By spending an action concentrating you are able to create a ball of light that floats 3 yards in front of you, shining light in a 5-yard radius. Only creatures you choose are able to see this light. The light remains for a number of hours equal to your Will modifier (minimum 1). Once you have used Tōchi, you cannot do so again until after you have finished a rest.

Greater Learning By learning this stance a second time your additional holy damage increases to 1d6 and you gain immunity to damage from holy. You gain unlimited uses of Tōchi.

Stance of the Breaking Stone

You've learned to strike with a resonance that corrodes creatures and objects on a level beyond understanding, weakening virtually everything but the most impervious targets. Your strikes deal an additional 1d3 acid damage and you take half damage from acid. You gain 1 boon on challenge rolls to grab or avoid being grabbed.

Greater Learning By learning this stance a second time your additional acid damage increases to 1d6 and you gain immunity to damage from acid. You gain 2 boons on challenge rolls made to grab or avoid being grabbed.

Stance of the Frozen Flower

Your body is a conduit for the heat of life, as attuned to the flow of energy around you as water. By exerting your will you can dampen the ambient temperature, granting your strikes a deadly chill. Your strikes deal an additional 1d3 cold damage and you take half damage from cold. In addition, you learn the following special action: **Ice Petals** By using your triggered action you can flash-freeze the air around you, encircling yourself in protective petals of ice. These ice petals have an amount of Health equal to your Will and when you would take damage, the petals take the damage instead. If the petal's damage total equals its Health, the effect ends immediately. Once you have used Ice Petals a number of times equal to your Will modifier (minimum 1), you cannot do so again until after you have finished a rest.

Greater Learning By learning this stance a second time your additional cold damage increases to 1d6 and you gain immunity to damage from cold. Your ice petals have a Health equal to double your Will.

Stance of the Furious Storm

Your movements are incredibly efficient, maximizing friction and generating deadly shocks that empower your blows with electricity. Your strikes deal an additional 1d3 lightning damage and you take half damage from lightning. You triple the distance of any jumps you make.

Greater Learning By learning this stance a second time your additional lightning damage increases to 1d6 and you gain immunity to damage from lightning. You quadruple the distance of any jumps you make.

Stance of the Inner Force

A truly potent spirit empowers your martial arts, making your attacks punch through the very fabric of reality. Your strikes deal an additional 1d3 thunder damage and you take half damage from thunder. You can move through spaces occupied by other creatures without squeezing and spend your triggered action to ignore a free attack made against you for moving out of an enemy's reach.

Greater Learning By learning this stance a second time your additional thunder damage increases to 1d6 and you gain immunity to damage from thunder. You cannot be deafened and when you roll 20+ on a melee attack roll, the target is deafened for 1d6 rounds.

Stance of the Poisoned River

Through rigorous immunization and the controlled consumption of toxins, you have made your body a shrine to poison and are able to imbue some of it into your strikes. Your strikes deal an additional 1d3 poison damage, you take half damage from poison, and you gain 3 boons when making challenge rolls to resist the poisoned affliction.

Greater Learning By learning this stance a second time your additional poison damage increases to 1d6 and you gain immunity to poison and the poisoned affliction. When you roll 20+ on a melee attack roll, the target is poisoned for 1d6 rounds.

Stance of the Stout Boar

You utilize powerful techniques that emphasize your bulk to make your strikes truly lethal. Your unarmed strikes deal an additional 1d3 damage. You ignore difficult terrain so long as all your movement is in a straight line and ends with you making a melee weapon attack. You gain 3 boons on challenge rolls against effects or spells that would physically move you (but not being compelled to move, for instance).

Greater Learning By learning this stance a second time your unarmed strikes deal an additional 1d6 damage and when you take the Charge action, 2d6 damage. You cannot be physically moved by effects or spells.

Stance of the Striking Serpent

You strike and move with a deft grace, using your impressive speed to thrust and cut your enemies with calculated strikes. Your unarmed strikes deal an additional 1d3 damage and once per round you may gain 1 boon on an Agility challenge roll.

Greater Learning By learning this stance a second time your unarmed strikes deal an additional 1d6 damage and once per round you may gain 2 boons on an Agility challenge roll.

Stance of the Tiger's Claw

Your attacks are powerful and made with a commitment that rends the flesh of your opponents, making you a truly fearsome combatant. Your unarmed strikes deal an additional 1d3 damage and you learn the following action: **Otakebi** You may roar as an action to to force all creatures able to hear you to make a Will challenge roll. On a failure, a creature gains the frightened affliction for 1d6 rounds. Once you have used Otakebi, you cannot do so again until you have finished a rest.

Greater Learning By learning this stance a second time your unarmed strikes deal an additional 1d6 damage and you may use Otakebi twice before requiring a rest.

Stance of the Waning Moon

Your soul has been corrupted by the dark entities that consumed the great spirits of nature. These dark patrons have blessed you with their corrupting touch, making your targets wither and decay with every strike. Your strikes deal an additional 1d3 unholy damage and you take half damage from unholy. When you roll 20+ with a melee attack, your target gains the diseased affliction for 1d6 minutes.

Greater Learning By learning this stance a second time your unarmed strikes deal an additional 1d6 unholy damage and you gain immunity to damage from unholy. When you roll 20+ with a melee attack, your target gains the diseased affliction.

Ninja Expert Path

Funded by Soburin's elite, clans of spies and assassins have honed their techniques over centuries to become the undisputed eyes, ears, and silent blades of the ruling class. You work to master their techniques, gradually becoming an undetectable warrior able to penetrate even the most well-guarded fortress.

Level 3 Ninja

Attributes Increase two by 1

Characteristics Perception +1, Health +3

Languages and Professions You can speak another language or add a profession.

Disguise Expertise If you have a disguise kit, you can use an action to expend a use from the kit to don a disguise.

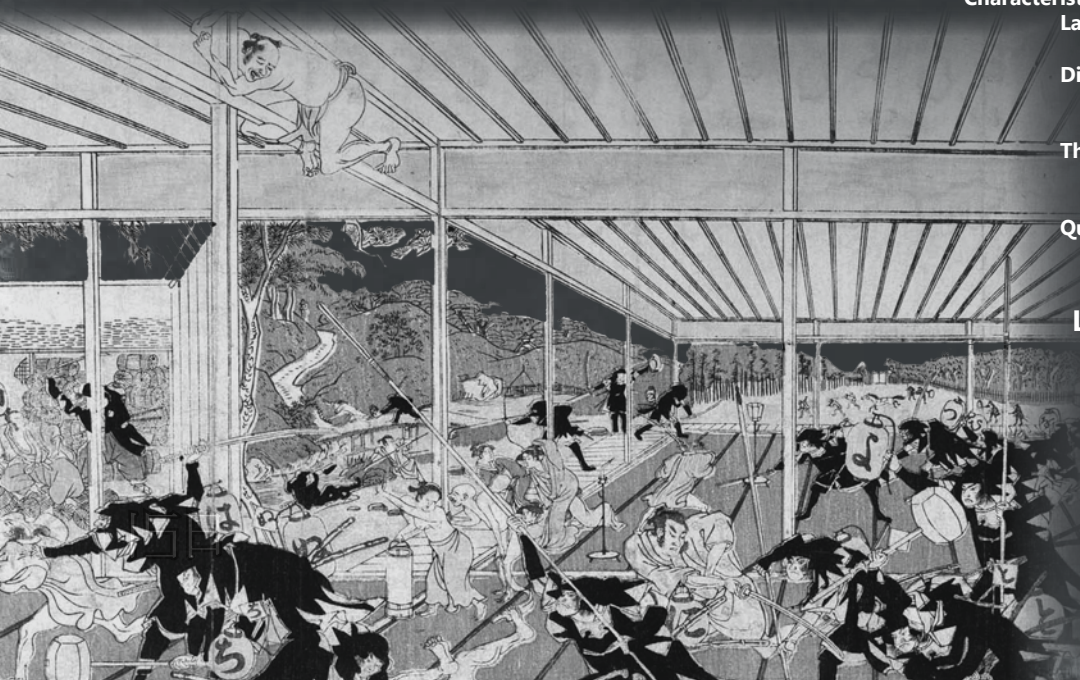
Thievery Talent Choose one thievery talent from those listed for the Thief Expert Path in the core rulebook.

Quick Reflexes You can use a triggered action on your turn to hide or retreat.

Level 6 Ninja

Characteristics Perception +1, Health +3

Assassinate When a surprised creature or a creature from which you are hidden takes damage from your attack, it must make a Strength challenge roll. On a failure, it takes damage equal to its Health.



Manufacture Poison You can use an action and an alchemist's kit to create a dose of poison. You must spend at least 1 minute concentrating, during which time you use the kit and special ingredients worth 5 cp. At the end of this time, you create one dose of poison (see Chapter 6 in the core rulebook). The poison retains potency until you complete a rest.

Level 9 Master Ninja

Characteristics Perception +1, Health +3
Leaper You gain 2 boons on challenge rolls made to jump.
Stealth Mastery You gain 2 boons on challenge rolls made to conceal something, create a disguise, or hide.
Thievery Talent Choose one thievery talent from those listed for the Thief Expert Path in the core rulebook.
Weightless Step You step as if you were as light as a feather. Checks made to track you by visual means have 3 bane and you are able to move across any surface, regardless of whether or not it would support your weight, so long as you end on a square that you are able to stand on.

PRIVATE EYE EXPERT PATH

Delving into the political intrigues of Soburin's two dozen great clans and the fractured society left after the end of the War of Kaiyo requires a keen mind, quick wit, and razor sharp instincts. You are perfectly suited for the task and use your considerable intellect to survive or even thrive in the social chaos.

PRIVATE EYE STORY DEVELOPMENT

D6	Story Development
1	You were framed in your youth and uncovering falsehoods has been an obsession ever since.
2	After helping out a few friends word got out that you get things done and investigating professionally became inevitabile.
3	In an uncaring and angry world your sense of justice is one of the only reliable things you can fall back on. You've had to learn skills to enact your values and if people want to pay you for it, why not?
4	Your mother was a private eye, you grandfather was a private eye, and you'll never hear the end of it if you don't pick up the mantle.
5	Reasons for being a private eye? Sure you've got those, complete with diagrams on page 47 in that *How to be a Detective in 10 Easy Lessons* book you bought through the Imperial Post.
6	Somebody said, "Follow that guy", so you followed him. Somebody said, "Find that female", so you found her. And what do you get out of it? 1 Imperial Piece a day and expenses, and if you think that buys a lot of fancy tea these days, you're crazy.

NINJA STORY DEVELOPMENT

D6	Story Development
1	You were born to a shinobi clan and set out from the secret village you grew up in because it was destroyed or you have come at odds with your elders; either way it is time to prove yourself by finding your own glory in Soburin mastering what you witnessed there.
2	The spirit of one of your ancestors, themselves a legendary ninja, haunts you until you accept their tutelage.
3	Your family owed a great debt to a shinobi clan and you are taken as an indentured servant. When it became clear you could master ninjutsu you were made a student instead, but your peers think little of you, your tasks are lowly, and your worth is questioned constantly.
4	Much to your surprise your humble and modest parents had a secret past as hunted ninja, their nemeses' revenge seeing them killed in their sleep. An aging master shinobi witnessed the attack and before passing away warned you of their fate, trained you with the skills you will need to take your vengeance.
5	While traveling in the woods you found a small shrine with a masterfully crafted dagger. Upon touching it you awakened the ghost of an ancient ninja that has taught you the ways of his shinobi clan upon the promise that you finish the quest he began long ago.
6	The bastard child of a noble, you were sent to a shinobi village and taught the ways of the ninja so that you might still be of use to your uncaring parent. This knowledge was trapped away from you with hypnotic techniques but they have since been called upon, unlocking years of training you never knew of.

Level 3 Private Eye

Attributes Increase two by 1
Characteristics Perception +2, Health +3
Languages and Professions You can speak two more languages or you add a common or criminal profession.
Investigation Points You receive a number of investigation points equal to your group's level. You may spend an investigation point as a triggered action to add 1 boon to a non-combat Intellect or Will challenge roll. You may choose to spend an investigation point after the die has been rolled but must do so before the results are revealed. You regain any expended investigation points when you finish a rest.

Level 6 Private Eye

Characteristics Perception +1, Health +3
Smart Fighting You may use investigation points on attack rolls.

Level 9 Private Eye

Characteristics Perception +1, Health +3
Implacable Resolve Your total number of investigation points increases by an amount equal to your Intellect modifier. You may use them on all challenge rolls.

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Samurai Expert Path

The most potent and disciplined warriors of Soburin wield both magic and steel—you are one such warrior, a master of a blade magically empowered by the spirits of your ancestors.

Samurai Doctrine

The Samurai Doctrine binds a warrior to the seven codes of Bushido. These warriors are also commonly bound to a feudal lord, doing as their masters bid throughout the prefectures of Soburin (though not all: ronin are masterless samurai, who do as they see fit and travel freely). Samurai hold themselves to the highest codes of conduct, treating the code of Bushido as inviolate law, frequently warping their interpretations to the limit in order to match their needs. There are usually strong traditions among samurai families that encourage daughters and sons to master the blade as well as the power of their ancestors, making some family names legendary in Soburin. To serve the code of Bushido and die a glorious death are the highest and most important tasks any samurai can hope to achieve.

Tenets of the Samurai

Benevolence In victory you are capable of mercy, and in defeat you are capable of humility.
Courage You resist fear. Bravery is your constant companion.
Honor Mindful of your own standing in society, you respect the abilities, talents, and station of others.
Loyalty You never abandon your allies or knowingly refuse the orders of your lord.
Righteousness Your beliefs are as strong as steel.
Sincerity You do not needlessly conceal your desires or motives.
Self-Control You are always in control of yourself and your emotions.

Level 3 Samurai

Attributes Increase two by 1
Characteristics Health +5
Ancestral Weapon You gain the Ancestral Weapon ancestral blessing. If you already possess this ancestral blessing, you gain Swordmaster instead.

Level 6 Samurai

Characteristics Health +5
Dashing Strike You learn how to charge forward and through an enemy, making a devastating blow only truly felt after you have rushed past them. As an action, you may make a single melee weapon attack against your foe in between moving your speed. This movement must be in a straight line and take you through the space of the target of your attack. Regardless of if your attack hits, this movement doesn't provoke free attacks. If your attack hits and your movement both begins and ends outside of your target's reach, you deal an additional 1d6 damage per two levels. Once you have used Dashing Strike, you cannot do so again for 2d6 rounds.
Iaijutsu Strike You learn to draw and strike in one deadly flourish. As an action, you can declare an Iajutsu Strike to draw your weapon and attack with it, dealing 1d3 additional damage per level. Once you have used Iaijutsu Strike, you cannot do so again in the same combat.

Level 9 Master Samurai

Characteristics Health +5
Honor Challenge By spending an action pointing at a target and declaring it, you can make an Honor Challenge, gaining 1 boon on attacks against the target. Until combat ends or one of you gains the unconscious affliction, you take half damage from attacks and spells made by creatures other than the target of your Honor Challenge. Any attacks you make against creatures other than the target of your Honor Challenge are at 3 bane and deal half damage. Once you have used Honor Challenge, you cannot do so again until you have finished a rest.
Master of the Blade The damage from your Dashing Strike and Iaijutsu Strike increases to 1d6 per level and you are able to use Dashing Strike after 1d6 rounds.

SAMURAI STORY DEVELOPMENT

D6	Story Development
1	You have seen the horrors of both war and peace—the hearts of humanity are dark indeed and the evil overtaking Soburin swallows honor like a fading moon being consumed in a sky of black clouds. All that you can do is live and hone your technique with a sword; how honorable such a life can be is as disappointing as existence.
2	As the 13th child of a noble you are considered to be bad luck and are taught the way of the samurai with hopes you'll die in battle before causing woe to the family or dishonor to its name.
3	Absconding with a katana in the chaos following an honor duel, you tricked and cajoled your way into service for a noble lord. Just as you began to feel comfortable questions about your origins started to circulate and rather than face losing the title you have worked so hard for, you have requested instead to serve on the most dangerous missions or quest to acquire a legendary relic on their behalf.
4	You are but one of many in a long line of samurai but unlike your ancestors, you attempted to escape your fate after completing your training. The past has caught up with you however and your lord demands either your service or your head, forcing you to remaster the techniques you tried to abandon as a matter of survival.
5	A wandering samurai found you as an orphan when you tried to pick their pocket. Rather than punish you all at once they forced a local lord to make you their apprentice—in their stewardship you learned the ways of blood and steel. When a powerful oni killed your master it stripped their memory (and everything they taught you) from your mind but your teacher's spirit has returned, demanding you seek vengeance and training you all over again.
6	Finding a damaged helmet in the wilderness brought you into contact with the spirit of an expert samurai that has agreed to teach you her secrets in exchange for helping her descendants in one way or another.

SHINOBIBOT EXPERT PATH

Many of the ninja clans changed dramatically with the coming of the ceramians, utilizing science in place of the more mundane arts of ninjutsu. Through a regimen of concoctions and meditation, your body has become a shrine to technology that gradually incorporates more and more augmetics into your physical form.

Level 3 Shinobibot

Attributes Increase two by 1
Characteristics Perception +1, Health +3
Languages and Professions You can speak another language or you add a common or criminal profession.
Augmetic Familiarity You gain 1 boon on challenge rolls made to activate, build, conceal, hide, or understand technology.
Installed Augmetic You gain an electrolens augmetic and hornear augmetic without having to increase your Haitoku score.
Quick Reflexes You can use a triggered action on your turn to hide or retreat.

Level 6 Shinobibot

Characteristics Perception +1, Health +3
More Augmetics You gain either steam arms, steam legs, or one steam arm and one steam leg. These augmetics do not increase your Haitoku.
Thievery Talent Choose one thievery talent from those listed for the Thief Expert Path in the core rulebook.

Level 9 Master Shinobibot

Characteristics Perception +1, Health +3
Many Augmetics You gain either telescopic arms, telescopic legs, or one telescopic arm and one telescopic leg. These augmetics do not increase your Haitoku.
Thievery Talent Choose one thievery talent from those listed for the Thief Expert Path in the core rulebook.

SHINOBIBOT STORY DEVELOPMENT

D6	Story Development
1	Failing to earn your place with a shinobi clan, you turned to technology to provide the edge that disciplined training has denied you.
2	After suffering a series of grievous wounds the only way to save your life was with the implementation of augmetics to replace your damaged biological parts.
3	In desperation you sold your most treasured possessions to buy augmetics to become the perfect thief.
4	You joined an influential gang of ne'er-do-wells that requires all if its members to have augmetics.
5	One day you were kidnapped off the street and woke up with technology imbedded in your body.
6	You turned to technology to make yourself stealthy using the money saved for an education from mages or proper warriors.

TATTOOED MONK EXPERT PATH

While there are countless martial disciplines that dot the countryside of Soburin, the monastic tradition of the Ikari Prefecture is legendary. Known as the Way of the Tattooed Pagoda, these spiritual warriors focus on a mix of meditation, pain tolerance, martial skill, and artistic expression, all of which they channel through elaborate tattoos across their bodies to produce fantastic magical effects. While the monks who champion the Way of the Tattooed Pagoda are often serene individuals, they are deadly opponents when they decide violence is required.

Level 3 Tattooed Monk

Attributes Increase two by 1

Characteristics Health +3, Power +1

Magic You learn one spell that is permanently tattooed onto your body. Casting this spell requires touching the tattoo as part of wielding the implements.

Tattooed Magic You gain the ability to activate the tattoos on your body to produce magical effects. Choose two of the following spells. You may spend an action to cast one of these spells (using Will as your spellcasting attribute if necessary) on yourself without the need for speaking the words (only wielding the implement—your tattoo): *arcane armor, beast within, celerity, distort appearance, flowing form, mask, minor healing, swiftness*. You may only cast these spells once each before you require a rest to do so again.

Level 6 Tattooed Monk

Characteristics Health +5

Magic You learn one spell that is permanently tattooed onto your body. Casting this spell requires touching the tattoo as part of wielding the implements.

Tattooed Defense Your connection to your tattoos strengthens considerably, allowing you to rearrange them on your body, moving quickly to defend you against incoming attacks. As a triggered action you can cause one of your tattoos to flow off your body to intercede with an attack (be that melee, ranged, or spell), absorbing an amount of damage equal to your Will modifier. Once you have used this ability a number of times equal to your Will modifier, you cannot do so again until after you have finished a rest.

Level 9 Master Tattooed Monk

Characteristics Health +3, Power +1

Magic You learn one spell that is permanently tattooed onto your body. Casting this spell requires touching the tattoo as part of wielding the implements.

Tattoo Flurry You may spend an action detaching a number of tattoos equal to your Will modifier and throwing them at short range as though they were daggers, using your Will modifier for attack rolls. These tattoos reappear on your body the following round regardless of whether or not you hit your target.

TATTOOED MONK STORY DEVELOPMENT

D6	Story Development
1	After receiving a tattoo to commemorate a recent victory or accomplishment you found out it was enchanted in some way and have since gained a level of mastery over its magic.
2	As your defeated opponent died on the floor they told you a secret phrase and promised that great reward awaits anyone that speaks it in Nagabuki. Shortly after reaching the city and doing so you were abducted, beaten senseless daily, and forced to mimic the tactics of your oppressors until proving yourself worthy and gaining your first magical tattoo.
3	On their deathbed your favorite relative told you to seek out the tattooed monks of Nagabuki. They recognized your ancestry and have taught you their ways (without an overly-violent introduction against your will).
4	A monk that challenged you to an Honor Duel poured all of themselves into one final fearsome attack that nearly beat you, but you survived and slayed them. One of their tattoos appeared on your face the next day and after finding their order you were trained to master their magic (though the marking will never leave).
5	Abducted by a shadowy cult, you awoke and found the skin of another creature grafted onto your body. Before you escaped their clutches the marking was burned into your own skin and the tattooed monks of Nagabuki found you, revealing their secret techniques and combat disciplines.
6	One of your ancestors was a tattooed monk and they haunt you, badgering and tormenting until you accept their powerful gifts of mystical markings, knowledge, and the quest that dragged their restless soul to you.

TSUKUMOGAMI HUNTER EXPERT PATH

Once rare, the number of spirit-animated objects have been growing throughout Soburin with each passing year, as have the tsukumogami hunters who protect people from them. These brave warriors specialize in tracking and fighting living items, using their abilities to appease the creatures or wrathfully strike them down. The ways of these mystical stalkers are not inborn talents but techniques honed and refined over the course of centuries, taught from sensei to apprentice—though their relationship is unique indeed, both supernatural and synchronized.

Level 3 Tsukumogami Hunter

Attributes Increase two by 1

Characteristics Health +3, Power +1

Magic You discover the Ancestral Tradition.

Languages and Professions You can speak another language or you add a profession.

Object Sensei An item close to you reveals itself as a tsukumogami with the spirit of a former tsukumogami hunter. Your sensei has the statistics of a **Small Construct** though its type is tsukumogami and it has Health equal to double your Healing Rate. Your sensei is either good or evil, teaching you different talents depending on which you choose. If your sensei dies, you can conjure a replacement in a ritual made during a rest. The ritual costs a number of gold crowns equal to your group's level. You can have only one sensei a time.

Evil: Your sensei's Strength and Agility increase by 1 and it gains the following action: **Wrathful Energies** By spending an action, your sensei can coat your weapon in fell supernatural energies that causes the next creature you hit with an attack to make a Will challenge roll or gain the impaired affliction for 1 minute. Once your sensei has used Wrathful Energies a number of times equal to your Will modifier, it cannot do so again until it has finished a rest.

Good: Your sensei's Intellect and Will increase by 1 and it gains a bonus to Defense equal to its Will modifier. In addition, it learns the following action: **Restoring Command** As an action, your sensei can choose a creature within 20 yards to heal an amount equal to its healing rate. Once your sensei has used Restoring Command a number of times equal to the sensei's Will modifier, it cannot do so again until it has finished a rest.

Tsukumogami Sense As an action, you may search for tsukumogami nearby. You know if there is a tsukumogami within 10 yards of you, as well as where it is located. This sense penetrates most barriers but is blocked by 1 ft. of stone, 1 in. of common metal, a thin sheet of lead, or 3 yards of wood or dirt.

Level 6 Tsukumogami Hunter

Characteristics Health +5

Tsukumoknow As a triggered action you can learn the abilities and statistics of any tsukumogami with a maximum hit point total 5 times or less yours. You must be able to see or hear the tsukumogami to use this ability.

Evil: Your sensei's Strength or Agility increase by 1 and when using Wrathful Energies it also causes your weapon to deal +1d6 poison damage.

Good: Your sensei's Intellect or Will increase by 1 and it learns the following action: **Mystical Shield** When the sensei sees a creature within 20 yards about to be hit by a weapon or spell attack, as a triggered action your sensei can protect it with a mystical shield. This barrier has an amount of Health equal to the sensei's Will and when the creature would take damage, the mystical shield takes the damage instead. If the mystical shield's damage total equals its Health, the effect ends immediately. Once your sensei has used used Mystical Shield a number of times equal to the sensei's Will modifier, it cannot do so until it has finished a rest.

GETTING INK

In Soburin tattoos are viewed as a form of art as well as a rite of passage. Many individuals getting a tattoo often mark their affiliation to a particular organization, philosophy, or even spiritual path. For some this might be as simple as a clan mark but it could also be something as detailed as a full body piece that marks the passing of a loved one or a new union. Dragons, elements, nature scenes, clan symbols, and similar markings are all popular choices for tattoos.

The cost of getting a tattoo is normally based on the time and detail required, ranging between 1 and 5 Imperial Pieces (larger, more elaborate artwork can cost as much as 10 gc or more.) When calculating the time it takes to get a tattoo it is generally safe to assume it takes approximately thirty minutes for every Imperial Piece spent.

TSUKUMOGAMI HUNTER STORY DEVELOPMENT

D6	Story Development
1	While looking through a shop one of the items grew a mouth and pleaded with you to be taken away. You pocketed it and ever since it has insisted that it can offer you great power, that it knows much of other tsukumogami and their mystical secrets.
2	A prized family heirloom has transformed into a creature and claims to embody the spirit of one of your grandparents. It knows things that only they would know but sometimes it acts suspiciously and won't explain why or what it was doing.
3	You had the sneaking suspicion of being watched everywhere you went for weeks, eventually figuring out that a small item seemed to always be in the room. With patience you managed to catch it in the act of moving and then formed a powerful bond though you still don't know why it was following you.
4	The favor you had with a lord was ruined when you unknowingly carried a tsukumogami into their court, earning yourself their ire instead. You slaughtered many of the creatures until one joined you in the bloodshed, malevolently turning on its kin or fighting to protect you. The two of you have made a compact and since become inseparable.
5	An item a merchant practically forced on you kept on appearing around you no matter how many times you threw it away. When you went to destroy it, it revealed itself as a tsukumogami and asked for mercy in exchange for its service and potent magical abilities.
6	When walking through a market you were drawn to a stall and felt compelled to buy a trinket. The next day when holding it in your hand it grew limbs and a mouth, revealing itself as a tsukumogami and asking for help in a quest that it must complete.

Level 9 Master Tsukumogami Hunter

Characteristics Health +3, Power +1
Magic You discover the Blood & Bone Tradition or the Mists Tradition.
Tsukumogami Slayer You gain 2 boons on attack rolls made against tsukumogami.
Evil: Your sensei's Strength and Agility increase by 1 and when attacking it makes two attacks.
Good: Your sensei's Intellect and Will increase by 1 and it gains the following action: **Fortunate Blessing** As an action, your sensei may bless a creature it can see within 20 yards with supernatural luck. The creature gains 1 boon that it can add to one attack roll or challenge roll. Your sensei can only grant one of these blessings at a time. Once your sensei has used Fortunate Blessing a number of times equal to the sensei's Will modifier, it cannot do so again until it has finished a rest.

WU-JEN EXPERT PATH

The people of Soburin were once in touch with the natural world, but their highest magical arts were subverted by the Kengen Occupation and militarized for use in the War of Kaiyo. In the absence of proper stewards dark powers subverted nature, and now those who seek an arcane path to better understand the cycle of life must sacrifice themselves to the entities that have seized the machinations behind elemental balance. Though the gifts you receive can force you to change how they go about your life, the blessings granted to you are potent.

When selecting this class, a wu-jen either chooses to make a pact with one patron in particular (maintaining a connection regardless of the season) or to worship the patron of the current season as it changes (in which case the wu-jen's abilities change over time). Once this choice is made, it cannot be changed.

Natsu Ītā is
The sunshine and sky consumed.
Summer is no more.

All the blossoms fall,
Akinochisō remains.
Autumn is no more.

Even the cold is frozen
inside Fuyu-Noyaban.
Winter is no more.

Chaos and entropy
reign with Haru-Oshōhi.
Spring has left the world.

—Kasen Rekishiya

Level 3 Wu-Jen

Attributes Increase two by 1
Characteristics Health +2, Power +1
Magic You discover the Nature tradition or learn one spell.
Dark Pact Depending on what season it is, you have access to a second different magic tradition via a different dark power: summer (Natsu Ītā—Fire tradition), fall (Akinochisō—Air tradition), winter (Fuyu-Noyaban—Water tradition), spring (Haru-Oshōhi—Storm tradition). While you have access to this magic tradition, you take half damage from attacks made by its primary elements (summer—fire, fall—wind, winter—cold, spring—lightning).

Level 6 Wu-Jen

Characteristics Health +2
Magic You discover the Forbidden tradition or learn one spell.
Dark Protection Depending on what season it is, you gain immunity to damage from one of the elements (summer—cold, fall—lightning, winter—fire, spring—wind).

Level 9 Master Wu-Jen

Characteristics Health +2, Power +1
Dark Jaunt By spending an action, a creature you can see within 30 yards is transported to the abode of whichever dark power you are currently being blessed by—either the warped home of Natsu Ītā (taking fire damage), the decaying and fetid abode of Akinochisō (taking wind damage), the twisted realm of Fuyu-Noyaban (taking cold damage), or the maligned and chaotic lair of Haru-Oshōhi (taking lightning damage). Make a Will challenge roll. On a failure the target is only there for 1 round but on a success the target remains there for 1d6+1 rounds. At the end of each round in one of these realms, the target takes an amount of damage equal to 2d6 times your Power. Once you have used Dark Jaunt a number of times equal to your Will modifier, you must finish a rest before you can do so again.

Wu-Jen Taboos

A wu-jen's devotion must be total and complete for their patron to grant them supernatural blessings—they must live their life without breaking the taboos of their patron. Many of these forbidden activities may seem insignificant to others but should a wu-jen violate any of them, they lose the ability to cast spells (and cantrips) and lose any resistances or immunities granted by their pact until after the next dawn or dusk (whichever is further away). A wu-jen must choose two taboos at 3rd level, and one additional taboo every time they take this path.

- Cannot eat meat or take a living pet.
- Cannot own more than you can carry, or any exceptionally precious metals like platinum or large gems.
- Must make a daily offering such as food, flowers, or incense worth 1 ss or more to one or more spirits.
- Cannot bathe or cut your hair.
- Cannot touch a dead body, and cannot take items from the dead unless they were willingly bequeathed to you or from the very recently deceased.
- Cannot drink alcohol or smoke any substance for pleasure.
- Cannot sit or sleep facing a certain direction.

WU-JEN STORY DEVELOPMENT

D6	Story Development
1	Dark spirits and evil ghosts plagued your dreams until you finally agreed to work on their behalf. They have imbued you with great power and dangerous knowledge though at what cost you are still not certain.
2	Seeking a way to save Soburin you have struck a deal with the dark forces that have consumed nature, hoping to find a weakness from within but seduced by the power you've gained in the fel exchange.
3	While lost in the wilderness you came upon a curious animal that spoke to you with a voice drawn from beyond Soburin. Exhausted, hungry, and tired you agreed to work on its behalf and were renewed with potent supernatural abilities.
4	After a particularly tragic event you heard whispers from the shadows worsening your mental state, softly cackling over the ruination of the world. Only the strong and courageous would survive it said, only those willing to do whatever must be done. In your moment of weakness you made a pact with the mysterious entity and since then you have learned that the destroyers of nature are your new masters though whether or not you truly care is hard to say.
5	Drawn to a cult seeking the salvation of Soburin you were tricked into accepting the blessings of the dark spirits that consumed nature. The power they have given you is tantalizing and impossible to resist, and whether your peers delude themselves into thinking that they are their own masters or that the world might yet be saved, you have gained deadly control over magic and knowledge of fel secrets that strike fear into the hearts of your enemies—something you've developed a taste for.
6	A coin came into your possession that you found you could not part with. Whenever it left your person violent thoughts clouded your mind and it was the only thing able to quell your bloodlust until one day the coin was gone and before the next sunrise, you had murdered a family in your madness. Panicking you called out to any entity in the cosmos that would hear you for aid—and some answered you, promising to conceal your horrifying deed in exchange for your service. Foolishly you accepted their deal and since then have learned foul secrets and knowledge that make you frequently wonder if death might have been a blessing.

PLAYING A WU-JEN

A wu-jen in Soburin is far different from a run-of-the-mill nature-based spellcaster (or for that matter, any nature-based path). Of all the character options presented in both his chapter and the next, none sum up what *Mists of Akuma* is really about nearly as well: corruption and despair in a decaying, dying world.

Whatever they might have been in the distant past is long behind them and the wu-jen of the present day are not individuals to be taken lightly. They have seen what horrors await the races of Soburin and know (undeniably, in the very core of their being) just how wounded the world is after the horrifying events of the War of Kaiyo. There is no doubt in their minds that the heretical weapons of the foreign armies have rendered an injury that might never heal, and whether hopeless or spiteful the notion that there is no salvation is never far from their thoughts. This does not necessarily mean that a wu-jen must be despondent or melancholy, but they are certainly more disposed to pragmatism and therefore compromise (so long as the ultimate ends serve their goals).

It is not uncommon for a wu-jen to display auditory and visual effects reflecting the terrible and despicable pacts they have forged with the entities that have subsumed nature. Sometimes these can be mistaken as manifestations of Haitoku (and very well may overlap if the wu-jen has truly lost themselves to dark, great powers), but sometimes they are more subtle; an umibo wu-jen might find their watery bodies becoming dirtier with each day, and hengeyokai wu-jen might appear to be more feral in their animal forms. How exactly a wu-jen's horrendous sacrifice might make itself known is at the discretion of the GM and the player, but it should be a major part of that character's roleplay—the pact forged with Natsu Ītā, Akinochisō, Fuyu-Noyaban and/or Haru-Oshōhi is not one to be taken lightly.

Blight Druid Master Path

While wu-jen make pacts with the dark entities that control the somber seasons of Soburin, there are those that worship these fell entities directly and revel in the malevolent decay of the world around them.

Level 7 Blight Druid

Attributes Increase three by 1
Characteristics Health +2, Power +1
Languages and Professions You can speak another language or add a profession.
Magic You discover the Destruction tradition or learn one Destruction spell.
Blessings of Akinochisō and Natsu Ītā You take half damage from unholy, gain 1 boon on challenge rolls to resist the misted affliction, and require half as much food and water as normal. In addition, you take half damage from a specific type of energy determined by the season: summer—fire, autumn—wind, winter—cold, spring—lightning.

Level 10 Blight Druid

Characteristics Health +2
Magic You learn one spell or gain Defiler (page 207).
Blessings of Fuyu-Noyaban and Haru-Oshōhi You are immune to damage from unholy, immunity to Haitoku increases from the Mists of Akuma, and no longer require food or water.
Blight the Soul. By spending an action, you can force a creature you can see to make a Will challenge roll with 1 bane. On a failure, a creature that takes half damage from or has immunity to one element of your choice decreases by one step (from immunity to half damage, from half damage to normal damage, or from normal damage to double damage). This effect lasts for 1d6 rounds. Once you have used Blight the Soul, you must wait 1 minute before you can do so again.

Gun Priest Master Path

Gun priests are a devoted, militant lot whose understanding of the firearm is seconded only to their mastery of magic, both arcane and divine. They study with great commitment, hoping to master these talents to create the ultimate weapon. While most gun priests are ceramian or ropaeo, the occasional soburi also takes up this calling. Militant and studious warriors frequently found defending technology, these adventurers often travel with other technology-loving heretics or even scientists, frequently acting as long-range artillery or snipers. Some gun priests choose a lonelier path, joining mercenary companies where they can apply their magical and martial talents in the heat of battle.

Level 7 Gun Priest

Attributes Increase three by 1
Characteristics Health +5
Languages and Professions You can speak another language or add a profession.

Vested Gun You choose one firearm to become your vested gun, focusing your magical energies upon it. Upon choosing your vested gun, you undergo a religious ceremony that binds you to it. Anyone else that tries to use your vested gun suffers 2 bane to attack rolls with it.

You treat your vested gun with the same reverence you would a holy book or symbol, and you are able to use it as both an arcane or divine focus when casting spells. Accordingly, you never willingly part with your vested gun—you may not sell it, lend it to others, or otherwise abandon it. If for any reason your vested gun is taken from you, you must do everything in your power to recover it.

Your vested gun can be enchanted to grant a bonus to attack rolls and damage equal to 1/5th your level. Enchanting your vested gun costs 500 gc per point of bonus it gains. Increasing the enchantment bonus of your vested gun or altering its abilities requires a ritual that takes one full day.

You also receive a number of enchantment points equal to your bonus to attack rolls and damage. Each effect may only be chosen once. You can change the enchantments on your gun again after you complete a rest.

Bane The bonus to attack and damage from your vested gun is doubled against one specific type of named creature (such as dragon, human, shikome, ogre, or hengeyokai). Against all other types of creatures your enchantment bonus is halved (minimum +1).

Booming Your vested gun deals an additional 1d3 thunder damage.

Cruel Your vested gun deals an additional 1d6 unholy damage but you take 1d3 unholy damage with every successful hit.

Electrified Your vested gun deals an additional 1d3 lightning damage.

Powerful Your vested gun deals an additional 1d3 wind damage.

Sighted By spending your triggered action you can grant yourself 1 boon on ranged attack rolls for 1 round.

Level 10 Gun Priest

Characteristics Health +5

Gun Master You can fire your vested gun twice when attacking. The Booming, Electrified, and Powerful enchantments increase in potency to 1d6. The Cruel enchantment increases in potency to 2d6 (1d6 to you).

Ju-Wai Shu Master Path

You are imbued with the blood of truly powerful workers of magic, an embodiment of the underlying raw energies of the cosmos. With this great ancestral gift you can not only conjure spells, but tear away the veil of reality to stupendous effect.

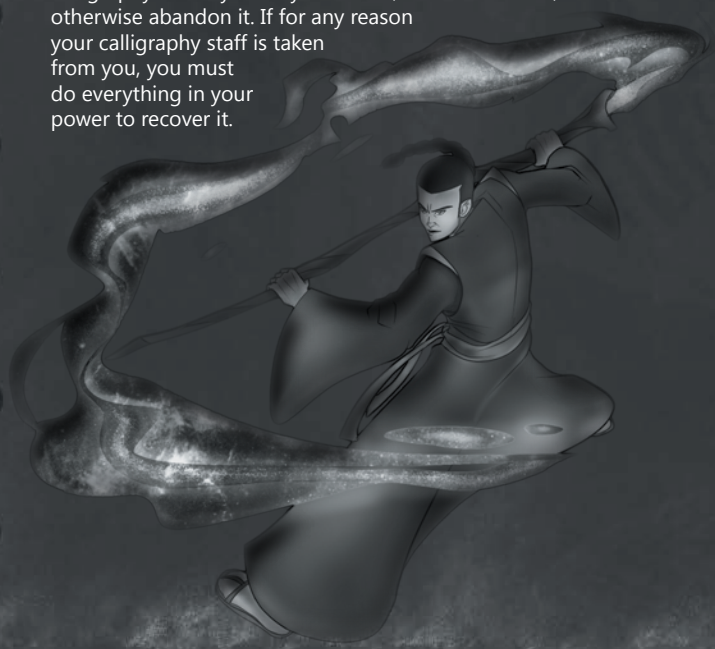
Level 7 Ju-Wai Shu

Attributes Increase three by 1

Characteristics Health +2, Power +1

Languages and Professions You can speak another language or add a profession.

Calligraphy Staff You can perform a day long ritual to imbue power into a special spear called a calligraphy staff. Your calligraphy staff grants you 1 boon on attacks with spells, an additional +1d6 damage when you cast a spell that deals damage, and increases your Power by +1. Anyone else that tries to use your calligraphy staff suffers 2 bane. You cast your spells by carving magic from reality with your calligraphy staff; when not using your calligraphy staff, you are at 1 bane on any spells you cast, your Power is reduced by 2, and you take 1d6 points of damage per spell rank when casting a spell as you expose your fingers while cutting barehanded into the veil. You treat your calligraphy staff with the same reverence you would a holy book or symbol, and you are able to use it as your implement when casting spells. Accordingly, you never willingly part with your calligraphy staff—you may not sell it, lend it to others, or otherwise abandon it. If for any reason your calligraphy staff is taken from you, you must do everything in your power to recover it.



Reality Riposte When you are wielding your calligraphy staff and would be hit by a weapon or spell attack, you may spend your triggered action to tear open a hole in reality between you and the attack, causing the attack to miss. Once you have used Reality Riposte a number of times equal to your Intellect modifier, you require a rest before you can do so again.

Level 10 Ju-Wai Shu

Characteristics Health +2

Empowered Spellcasting When you are wielding your calligraphy staff you may spend your triggered action to strengthen the magic, gaining 2 boons to a spell attack. This extreme exposure to the aether leaves you vulnerable, incurring 1 bane on all challenge rolls you make to resist spells until the start of your next turn.

Ju-Wai Shu Strike When you are wielding your calligraphy staff and target a creature with a spell, you may force it to suffer 2 bane on the challenge roll to resist it. Once you have used Ju-Wai Shu Strike a number of times equal to your Intellect modifier, you require a rest before you can do so again.

Misted Rager Master Path

Great power hides within the Mists of Akuma and you are not afraid of calling on it to lay waste to your foes.

Level 7 Misted Rager

Attributes Increase three by 1

Characteristics Health +5

Fearless You gain immunity to the frightened affliction.

Misted Rage While in combat a dark mist weeps off your body. At the end of the round any creatures adjacent to you takes 1d6 unholy damage. You may exempt a number of creatures equal to half your Will modifier. When combat ends you gain the fatigued affliction for twice as long as the combat lasted.

Level 10 Misted Rager

Characteristics Health +5

Exertion Resistance While in combat you are immune to the Mists of Akuma and misted affliction.

Furious Misted Rage The damage of your misted rage increases to 2d6.

Mists in the Blood No matter how high your Haitoku score is, you can never be transformed into adeddo-oni.

CHARACTER PROFESSIONS

Many of the standard professions can work as well in *Mists of Akuma* as they do in gothic fantasy but there are some specifically common to Soburin. When taking a Soburin Profession during character creation, you are unable to benefit from a second profession (though you are welcome to take one for flavor purposes, it taught you no skills and does not alter your Dignity or Haitoku).

SOBURIN PROFESSIONS

Soburin professions may not be selected as part of a character path.

Disgraced Amputee (+2 Haitoku, –2 Dignity)
Once a proud warrior devoted to a clan, you disgraced yourself in their eyes either through battle or incompetency. You are missing one of your limbs (either cut off as punishment or lost in battle) and it has been replaced with a costly steam augmetic. You begin play with a steam arm augmetic or steam leg augmetic. At the GM's discretion, you may have a plating augmetic instead. You gain 1 boon on any challenge rolls made to repair and maintain any augmetics.

Gaijin (+1 Haitoku, –2 Dignity)
You are ceramian or ropaeo, either by blood or creed, and you embrace it despite the open hatred it sometimes brings. An outcast almost everywhere you tread, you find aid from the remnants of the Kengen—banding together against the natives of Soburin with the aim to assert control over the continent once more. You do not hide your heritage unless it is absolutely necessary, causing people to dislike you and possibly barring you entry or service at some businesses. Most of the time this proves to be a hindrance, but many merchants utilize the Kengen warlords to smuggle contraband and technology across the prefectures. As long as the settlement you are in has 100 or more people, you are able to locate a merchant that will sell you technological items (pistols, muskets, bullets, bombs, gunpowder, and more at the GM's discretion) at half price.

Kagaku-Sha (+1 Haitoku, –3 Dignity)
Despite their heretical nature you have embraced the sciences and technologies brought to Soburin by the ceramians and ropaeo. You work to uncover the mysteries of the universe through careful study, dissecting creatures and performing experiments to further your understanding. You can spend 1 hour and 10 gc worth of materials to construct a Size ¼ clockwork device (with a Defense of 8 + your Intellect modifier, with Health equal to 1/10th your maximum Health). The device functions for 24 hours after it is created unless you spend 1 hour maintaining it, which resets the duration it will function to 24 hours. You can use your action to dismantle your clockwork device, reclaiming the materials used to create it. You can have up to two such devices active at a time. When you choose this profession, choose one of the following devices that you are able to craft:

Audio Box. When opened, this audio box plays a single song at a moderate volume. The box stops playing when it reaches the song's end or when it is closed. With 10 minutes of tinkering, you can cause the audio box to emulate a voice you have heard speak for at least 1 minute. This causes the audio box to play 1 minute of speech that anyone listening to must make an Intellect challenge roll with 2 bane to recognize it is not the real person speaking. After being used to play speech in this way, the audio box is destroyed.

Clockwork Figurine. This figurine is a clockwork animal, monster, or person, such as a frog, mouse, bird, dragon, or soldier. When placed on the ground, the figurine moves across the ground on each of your turns in a random direction, moving a number of yards equal to your level. It makes noises as appropriate to the creature it represents.

Profession Type	Dignity	Haitoku
Academic	+2	–1
Common	+1	+0
Criminal	–3	+2
Martial	+1	+1
Religious	+3	–3
Wilderness	–1	+0

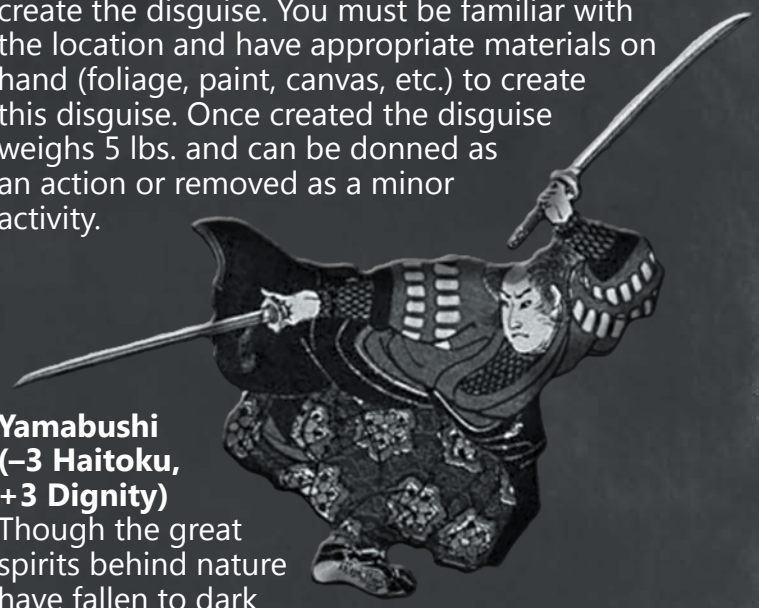
Fire Box. The device produces a miniature flame which you can use to light a candle, torch, or campfire. Using the device this way requires your action. As an action you can rig the fire box and throw it within short range, causing it to explode at the end of the round to deal 1d6 fire damage to all creatures in a 5-yard-radius. An Agility challenge roll halves this damage. The rigged fire box can be thrown up to 10 yards as an action.

Pragmatist (+2 Haitoku, –1 Dignity)
Someone in your past betrayed you, you witnessed or suffered a great tragedy, or you have risen above and beyond your peers. You have had a hard life and have learned the truth of things in Soburin—surviving is only possible if you are willing to do whatever it takes. Whenever your Haitoku score increases, you receive a Dignity challenge roll against a target number equal to your Haitoku score. On a successful save, you may either avoid increasing your Haitoku score or avoid decreasing your Dignity score, but not both.

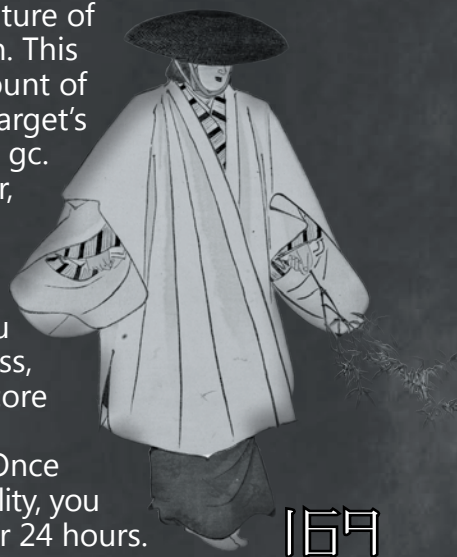
Ronin (+1 Haitoku, –2 Dignity)
You were once an honorable warrior devoted to a lord of Soburin but you were either dismissed or they died, leaving you masterless. You roam the prefectures in search of glory, revenge, or simply to find your next meal. When you are reduced to 0 Health but not killed outright, you can drop to 1 Health instead. After using this ability you cannot do so again for 24 hours.

Roustabout (+3 Haitoku, –3 Dignity)
The will to fight *drives you*. It doesn't matter who you are fighting—allies, enemies, guards, criminals, farmers, wild ox, sea serpents—you just want to *fight*. Your dream is to find a combatant who is truly worthy of ending your life, honing your own skills with each bloody victory you achieve. Your Haitoku score does not increase when you use the attribute ability to avoid going unconscious.

Shinobi (+1 Haitoku, –1 Dignity)
You have been trained in the most ancient techniques of ninjutsu and are a true practitioner of the art, a genuine shadow warrior of Soburin. At the behest of your clan (almost always at the will of a lord) you infiltrate fortresses, sabotage military campaigns, spy on rival prefectures, and even poison or assassinate those you are ordered to kill. You are able to craft a disguise in 1 minute so long as suitable materials are available. Spending an hour or more crafting a disguise grants you 1 boon on the challenge roll. This disguise allows you to blend in with your surroundings like camouflage, allowing you to hide without cover in a specific square chosen at the time you create the disguise. You must be familiar with the location and have appropriate materials on hand (foliage, paint, canvas, etc.) to create this disguise. Once created the disguise weighs 5 lbs. and can be donned as an action or removed as a minor activity.



Yamabushi (–3 Haitoku, +3 Dignity)
Though the great spirits behind nature have fallen to dark entities, enough of their essence remains to imbue the truly devoted with a shred of their divine power. You have forsaken society and lived in accordance with nature in the disparate wilderness of Soburin, meditating on what can possibly be done to heal the world before its death becomes inevitable. You may spend an hour meditating and preparing an intricate ritual that can relieve a creature of some of its corruption. This ritual requires an amount of incense equal to the target's Haitoku score times 1 gc. At the end of the hour, the target makes a Dignity challenge roll (target number equal to the target's Haitoku score) and on a success, reduces its Haitoku score by 1d6 (this does not increase its Dignity). Once you have used this ability, you cannot do so again for 24 hours.



Though she was warned that it was unlike any other business she'd ever seen, Kireina was thrilled when the Katsu-Taishō Tea House hired her on as a server. Leaving her home village was a difficult journey but a necessary one, and no matter how trying her new occupation might be she told herself she would meet the challenges it brought on.

That was before she met her first kappa.

Kireina didn't really feel that the turtle folk were that scary to look at—she had seen far worse already in her first week of work and a walking, talking amphibian couldn't compete with an oni-touched or enjin in terms of fearsomeness. No what troubled her about kappa was the way they smelled, a potent stench that pervaded every bit of air around them. When Kireina complained to Jikiko about it he explained it was their glands and that without the smell they would need to be in water. He chidingly added that it was a good thing because without customers like the kappa, Old Aijin wouldn't need to hire new workers like her.

Girding against the shock that still came with entering the main floor, Kireina pinched her arm to steel her resolve before passing under the noren curtain and into the central dining area of the Katsu-Taishō Tea House. The rank odor of rotten eggs immediately reached her nostrils and she wrinkled her nose, hoisting her serving tray up with both hands to cover her face and hurrying to deliver the first drink on her list, hoping her displeasure at the smell of a kappa wouldn't show too brazenly. Kireina had never been one much for alcohol but the concoctions here were far stranger than any back in Komura; if she had ever possessed an inkling for drink, the bouquet of her night's work would have been more than enough to convince her to abstain.

The first mug—ceramic and fashioned to resemble a cat with one arm upraised to hold a hollowed-out bit of bamboo—was filled with a murky brown liquid that was so sickly sweet, Old Aijin made the new servers smell it over and over again until they could hold their pleasant expressions without grimacing. A frog-woman had ordered it and she eagerly sipped at the straw, bowing a bit drunkenly at Kireina before triumphantly slapping a mājan tile down on one of the tea house's tables.

Standing up in excitement the pyon's compatriots pointed and shouted at one another until Jikiko yelled from the doorway for them to settle down. Kireina waited for each to be seated again before moving around the table to the strange man made of gears, carefully and delicately placing a black cube that crackled with a hum of power. She had been warned by the other staff about the seiteki boxes—they were quite fragile, and breaking one open could scar a person for life—but the humanoid mass of metal nodded at her appreciatively before dipping one finger into the weird contraption and shuffling its own mājan tiles in a gesture that almost seemed absent-minded.

As odd as most of what she serves is, the saucer of salt on Kireina's tray filled her with a curiosity matched only by her wonder at the next customer around the table. Tales of umibo were common back in Komura but only the elders had ever seen them, and their descriptions did not at all live up to the experience of being in the presence of one of the water folk. The sound of surf accompanied their every movement and the way their forms constantly shifted entranced Kireina, bringing her a sense of calm and peace she had not known since childhood. Its swirling blue and white head nodded at the servant girl, a pleasant voice bubbling forth from somewhere above its neck thanking her in perfect Soburi.

Despite herself Kireina blushed but the redness in her cheeks rapidly changed to burning frustration as she approached the kappa at the table, the smell of sulfur overpowering her nostrils. As sweet as her first drink had been, the turtle folk's beverage smelled twice as rotten and she set it onto the table as quickly as she could manage without being impolite. The amphibious patron looked up at her curiously before grabbing it himself, the bit of slime on his hands wiping onto a long stalk of grass wrapped around the bamboo and glistening as he took a sip, nodding appreciatively.

It took nearly all of Kireina's willpower to bow to the table without making a face and she mentally reprimanded herself—the night was sure to bring more customers and if she was ever going to get comfortable with working here, smells were the least of her worries.

CHAPTER 11: ANCESTRIES

Once brimming with the power of nature, varied races and cultures have long been a part of Soburin's history. The dreadful Kengen Occupation and catastrophic end to the War of Kaiyo spelled doom for some of these unique people, but brought forth new ones to replace them, continuing the cycle of life in the prefectures in a perversion of the mindful peace they once knew. Despite the great strife caused by the distant conflict and the foreign invaders, the surviving races persist and find a way to survive in the decaying world.

In addition to the standard races (which might appear through magical mishap or from the Mists of Akuma) the following races are available for PCs.

FORGOTTEN PEOPLES OF SOBURIN

GURĒSU AND SPIRIT FOLK

Tied as they were to the very firmament, the Kengen Occupation killed off most of the elemental children by proxy as the land was stripped of all that made them whole—only the water folk, the umibo, remain.

While folk of the spirits are all but extinct and not selectable as a player race, soburi have known gurēsu for a long time and view them benevolently like the psonorous (albeit with less enthusiasm and more reverence). PCs that wish to share a deep connection to the elements may play a gurēsu with the permission of the GM.

Creating A Gurēsu

Starting Attribute Scores Strength 9, Agility 11, Intellect 10, Will 10.
Perception equals your Intellect score + 1
Defense equals your Agility score
Health equals your Strength score
Healing Rate equals one-quarter your Health, round down
Size 1, **Speed** 11, **Power** 0
Damage 0, **Insanity** 0, **Corruption** 0
Languages and Professions You speak the Common Tongue.
Technoversion You are at 2 bane when attempting to activate, craft, deactivate, identify, repair, or use technology.
Shadowsight You see into areas obscured by shadows as if those areas were lit.
Elemental Blood You are part elemental, your soul tied to the seasons of Soburin Soburin. You learn a spell and gain defensive benefits depending on which element you are associated with: Fall—*wind blast*, you take half damage from wind; Summer—*flame missile*, you take half damage from fire; Spring—*shock*, you take half damage from lightning; Winter—*freeze*, you take half damage from cold.

Level 4 Expert Gurēsu

Characteristics Health +4

You either learn one spell or gain Completed Self.

Elemental Scion Instead of taking half damage from an element, Elemental Blood now grants you immunity. In addition, you learn a spell depending on the element you are associated with: Fall—*thunderclap*; Summer—*flaming shroud*; Spring—*call lightning*; Winter—*geyser* (although your column of water is freezing cold and requires Strength challenge rolls to resist).

Korobokuru

At the start of the Ichizoku Wars, long before the ceramians invaded, the stout folk of Soburin retreated into the mountains of the continent. They have been aloof and scarce ever since, staying within the walls of their oft-underground fortresses and fighting off the encroaching bakemono and shikome without aid or calling for assistance. Their ways are mysterious and the few that travel along the surface or interact with the world at large keep the secrets of their kind to themselves.

Korobokuru have the standard statistics for dwarves except they begin play with an Intellect of 11, gain the Yoroi Gishi trait, and at 4th level increase one ability score by 1.

Yoroi Gishi You are able to incorporate a number of augmetics (page 215) equal to your Intellect modifier into a suit of heavy armor but you must already have the augmetic and it costs 5 gc in materials to integrate it. It takes you one day of forging to incorporate an uncommon augmetic or one week of forging to incorporate a rare augmetic.

HUMAN

A dread silence hung in the air as his sister leapt to her feet, hands on the hilt of her katana. The faintest flicker of energy pulsed from her fingertips and down the length of the blade, causing a faint blue light to shine outwards and inciting a hum that joined the pitter patter of drumming rain outside and making the Storm Orchestra Teahouse feel ethereal and ghostly. Across the room a thuggish fellow twice her size clambered off the floor, effortlessly kicking one of his huge feet through a side table and shattering it into pieces before beckoning her to attack with a calloused hand.

Humans have always been the most prevalent race on Soburin but with the reduced population growth of the other humanoids on the continent during the Kengen Occupation and influx of refugees from the War of Kaiyo, they are more dominant than ever before. The native soburi are shaped by history, inheriting enchanted powers or perfected techniques from generations of forefathers devoted to magical or martial warfare. Even foreigners are molded by a violent past—ceramians have an inclination for technology that makes them adept with deadly sciences while ropaeo are naturally lethal artists of wordplay. Regardless of their heritage, humans in Soburin are adaptable, plucky, and capable of both great acts of goodness and profoundly evil deeds.

Lifeblood of Soburin

Soburi are well known for their aptitude for either magical or martial arts despite their tendency to adhere to antiquity and their natural slenderness. A touch of magic runs in the blood of most humans of soburi heritage (said to be from the spirit folk once common to the prefectures) while in others great physical fitness has been a part of everyday life for generations of ancestors, making them

perfect physical specimens.

Ceramians are olive-toned or tan in complexion with severe features that match the fierce intelligence in their eyes. They are broader in build and taller than other humans, usually dressing in the most modern fashions available and equipped with the heretical scientific machinery of their culture.

Ropaeo are the palest humans, often with blond or red hair and soft, easy to trust faces. Of all humanity they are usually the most attractive and have the greatest sense of presence, dressed in the finest clothing appropriate for the local populace.

Caretakers of a Dying World

The state of humanity on Soburin's shores has been contentious since long before the Kengen Occupation. Since the War of Kaiyo's end the decay of the planet has not served to unite the world's three reigning cultures of humanity but instead led each to become more desperate to survive—and great enmity remains between the ceramians, ropaeo, and soburi.

The continent's native human population are nostalgic for the millennium of peace after the enduring Ichizoku Wars, clinging to the ways of their ancestors and eager to rid themselves of the detritus left from the foreign invasion. Ceramians are far more optimistic and forward-minded, fervent in their belief that the world might be saved by furthering the scientific achievements of the past. As adaptive and reactionary as their forefathers, the ropaeo are confident that the only path to the future lay in evolving with the times and utilizing whatever resources are necessary to survive.

Cities of Soburin

Settlements across the continent—already thinned by the ruthless military drafts of the Kengen Occupation—have become even scarcer since the reappearance of the Mists of Akuma. Smaller villages and hamlets are occupied only by the hardiest and luckiest soburi as few are courageous enough to live in the wilderness. Those that do are usually on farms with fortified buildings and attached housing facilities supported by clan guardsmen to defend against adeddo-oni. Most people lack the fortitude to live outside of the cities, choosing the security of an urban life over the freedom beyond defended walls.

The prefectures are ruled over by feudal lords that live within the cities, protected by hardened samurai retainers and spellswords. These nobles are the ultimate authority for the people of Soburin and answer to none save the head of their family, Emperor Hitoshi, or bengoshi. Most people live and die without having any more than a glance at a powerful lord but some step down from their elevated status to abuse or bully their subjects, knowing that there are rarely consequences for their actions. Retired soldiers and mercenaries are common outside of the walls of settlements, selling their services as caravan guards or acting as couriers (a profession that has suffered greatly from the sudden dangers overrunning the continent).

Remnants of Oppression

The Kengen Occupation left subtler scars on Soburin than the relics of technology discarded by the ceramian military. Whereas once all of the myriad races on the continent coexisted in relative peace, the forced subjugation by foreign humans have turned the other native peoples against humanity. Regardless of their culture humans are very conscious of how the events of the past century and a half have colored the racial tensions of the world today. There is no love for the ceramians or ropaeo, but the longer-lived races (such as kappa or umibo) remember the days when the soburi were the only humans to be found.

Human Names

Soburi take great pride in the naming of their offspring, often honoring their ancestors when doing so. Ceramians and ropaeo are more ambitious, naming children after heroes and legends with the hope that they'll be influenced to attain greater achievements.

Male Names: Akio, Gorou, Katsuro, Masao, Ryuu, Satoshi, Toshi, Yutaka
Female Names: Asami, Hajime, Junichi, Maiko, Reiko, Shigeko, Tsukiko, Yuriko
Ceramian Family Names: Bainhill, Felsword, Koldwynd, Myllwinne, Smith, Ulfang
Ropaeo Family Names: Arsenin, Dreaddi, Forsythe, Leisy, Ruggeri, Sessyrio
Soburi Family Names: Akihiro, Eiko, Hiromi, Kanami, Miyamoto, Nobuko, Shizuka, Yasuko

Creating A Ceramian

Starting Attribute Scores Strength 9, Agility 10, Intellect 11, Will 10. Choose one attribute and increase it by 1.
Perception equals your Intellect score
Defense equals your Agility score
Health equals your Strength score
Healing Rate equals one-quarter your Health, round down
Size 1, **Speed** 10, **Power** 0
Damage 0, **Insanity** 0, **Corruption** 0
Languages and Professions You speak Ceramian and Soburi, and you can either speak one additional language or add a random profession.
Foreigner You are at 1 bane on social challenge rolls made against Soburi.
Natural Technologist You gain 1 boon on challenge rolls made to activate, build, conceal, deactivate, hide, identify, repair, or understand technology.

Level 4 Expert Ceramian

Characteristics Health +5
You either learn one spell, gain Artificer's Bag, or gain Determined (Level 4 Expert Human, *Shadow of the Demon Lord*).
Artificer's Bag You have a bag filled with spare parts you use to create equipment you need. You measure the number of parts in gold crowns, though the parts are worthless to anyone other than you or another artificer. The gc value of these spare parts is equal to twice your group level.
You can use an action to begin assembling parts from your bag into a suit of armor, a weapon, ammunition, or an engineering item by spending parts from the bag with a value equal to the item's price. It takes 1 minute to create the object, during which time you must concentrate and use a tool kit. At the end of this time, you have a finished piece of equipment that remains until you complete a rest, at which point it collapses into spare parts once more.
When you complete a rest, you replenish the parts in your Artificer's Bag, up to your normal maximum value in gc.
If you lose your Artificer's Bag, you can create a replacement. It costs a number of gold crowns equal to your group's level. You can have only one Artificer's Bag at a time but if you acquire this ability through the Artificer expert path, it takes you only 30 seconds to create objects.

Creating A Ropaeo

Starting Attribute Scores Strength 10, Agility 10, Intellect 11, Will 9. Choose one attribute and increase it by 1.
Perception equals your Intellect score + 1
Defense equals your Agility score
Health equals your Strength score
Healing Rate equals one-quarter your Health, round down
Size 1, **Speed** 10, **Power** 0
Damage 0, **Insanity** 0, **Corruption** 0
Languages and Professions You speak the Common Tongue and Ropa, and you can either speak one additional language or add a random profession.
Exotic Foreigner You are at 1 bane on non-deception related social challenge rolls made against Soburi.
Master Infiltrator You gain 1 boon and never suffer bane on challenge rolls made to deceive or resist deception.

Level 4 Expert Ropaeo

Characteristics Health +5
You either learn one spell, gain Charlatan, or gain Determined (Level 4 Expert Human, *Shadow of the Demon Lord*).
Charlatan You gain 2 boonson challenge rolls made to don, fix, or remove a disguise. You decide what the disguise looks like and are limited only by the materials at hand and the following restrictions. You can increase or decrease the target's apparent height or weight by up to 20 percent. You can change the appearance of the target's clothing and equipment (and may mask sounds it normally makes, to a degree).

Creating A Soburi

Starting Attribute Scores Strength 10, Agility 10, Intellect 10, Will 10. Choose one attribute and increase it by 1.
Perception equals your Intellect score
Defense equals your Agility score
Health equals your Strength score
Healing Rate equals one-quarter your Health, round down
Size 1, **Speed** 10, **Power** 0
Damage 0, **Insanity** 0, **Corruption** 0
Languages and Professions You speak the Common Tongue, and you can either speak one additional language or add a random profession.
Ancestral Power Your ancestors had a strong tradition of either practicing magic (superu) or soldiery (tatakai), so great that some of their experience has passed on with their blood.
Superu You learn one of the following spells: *augmented attack, break, burning beam, celerity, earth spike, erratic bolt, flame missile, freeze, hex, magic acorns, magic dart, ruin, shock*.
Tatakai Your unarmed strike damage increases to 1d3.

Level 4 Expert Soburi

Characteristics Health +5
Ancestral Power Your connection to your ancestors strengthens. Alternatively, you may choose to gain Determined (Level 4 Expert Human, *Shadow of the Demon Lord*).
Superu You discover one tradition of magic or learn one spell.
Tatakai Your unarmed strike damage increases to 1d6 and you deal an additional +1d6 damage with all weapon attacks.

BAKEMONO

"No, idiot!" its kumogatarui kin whispered in a decrepit voice dripping with venomous distaste. "We only want the shiny bits, the pieces not from this place. You will know when you see. They look like magic but not magic. Now get in and open door or I slash!" Looking out at the street and seeing no witnesses, the mure reached within itself and felt for the dark things that made up its malformed soul. In the shadows of the streets it changed, its red-orange skin dissolving as its insides transformed into thousands of spiders that scurried at the shop's entryway, crawling through the edges around the door and forming into a swarm within—a moment later the bakemono reappeared and threw the latch, allowing its scurrilous companions to sneak inside.

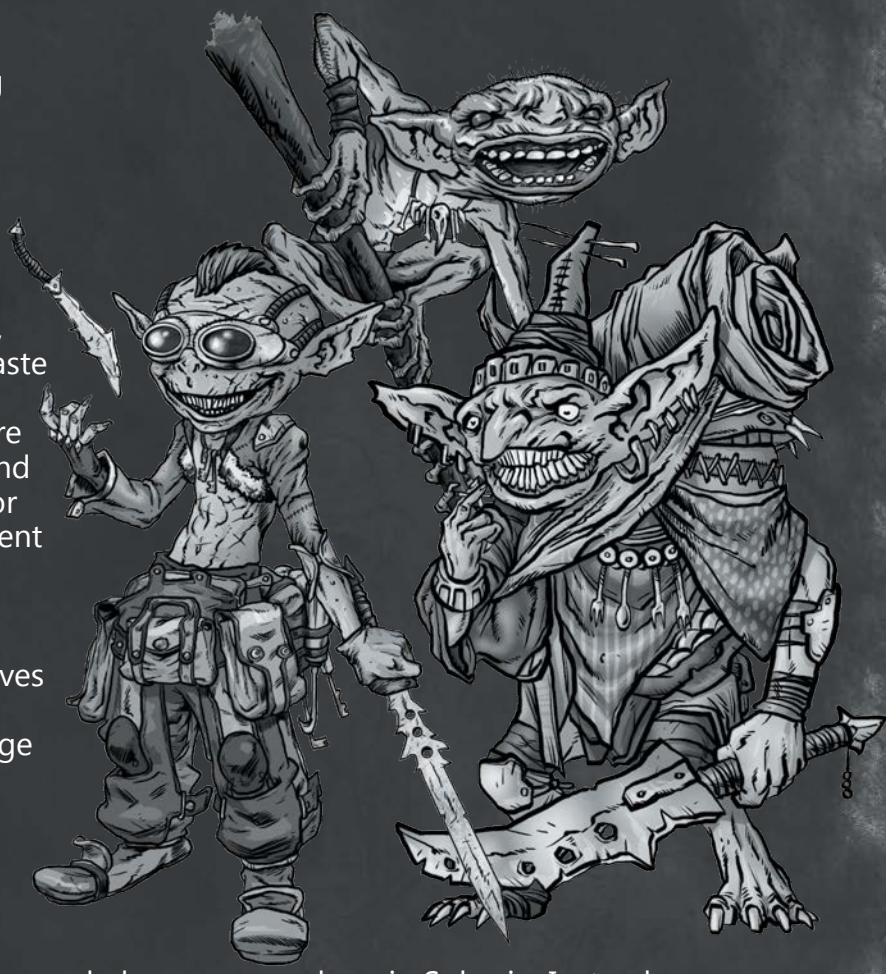
An ancient threat in Soburin, bakemono are perhaps the lowliest sentient life forms and one of the most reviled races in the prefectures. Only barely tolerated by the clans (and often outright attacked regardless of local law) these amalgamations of insects and arachnids had been something of a rarity before the invasion of the ceramians, but with the return of the Mists of Akuma they have become increasingly common. Like the creatures they are borne from, bakemono live off of what

other humanoids consider the detritus of civilization. Those that don't either hide in Soburin's underground tunnels (embracing an insectile mentality) typically fall under the sway of oni warlords among countless others of their kind, drafted as soldiers by the masters of the wilderness.

Goblins of Soburin

Bakemono are short but compact, resilient, and preternaturally quick. Despite the distaste and hatred much of Soburin has for these agile little humanoids, their unique traits are highly sought after by ignoble criminals (and sometimes, rumors claim, even clan lords or bengoshi) and they prevail against the violent discrimination that assails their kind.

All bakemono have orange-red skin with prominent (usually rotting) teeth and wide jaws—able to seriously harm themselves or another creature with a bite—but only konchū have yellow eyes filled with a strange madness and the deviousness so many attribute to the race. Kumogatarui are exceptionally lean and light of foot with eyes as green as their venomous blood. Mure are even spindlier, looking on others with a savage gaze as black as night.



Infestation of the Prefectures

Soburin has known bakemono for millennia and though some generations of soburi thought them to be folklore or myth, goblins have since become as common as any of the races subjugated during the Kengen Occupation. Not all of society's hatred for these creatures is unjustified—they are almost all incredibly greedy and many of the legends regarding bakemono include heroes that trick them by exploiting their avarice. After wandering out of the Mists of Akuma utterly alone in a dying world with no allies to lend support, it is no surprise that bakemono commonly find a place in the criminal parts of society. There are few moral codes and little love for ethics among these foul humanoids and the rare few that give consideration to the greater good are practically philosopher kings (and usually tough survivors besides).

Insects of Society

Their natural compulsion for greed makes cohabitation a difficult prospect at best and there are no settlements exclusively of bakemono anywhere in Soburin. Instead gangs of these creatures are common, as they know their talents can be used to fel effect when combined, and few outside of their race treat them with even a modicum of respect. The strongest or most devious among these goblins naturally rise to lead their kin (if there is no greater warrior leading them), hiring out the group to whatever parties can entice them. Groups of violent bakemono are one of the most common threats in the tunnels beneath the continent, waiting to ambush korobokuru or even oni that wander into their territory.

Oni warlords have long kept bakemono among their soldiers—enslaving them with magic if necessary—and are well aware that the prefectures have grown to tolerate the presence of the goblins. The masters of the wilderness exploit this weakness, infiltrating settlements as advance scouts that pave the way for more powerful oni saboteurs to bring terror and chaos to Soburin's cities. Rumors persist that some of these bakemono have penetrated as deeply as the estates of clan lords, using despicable magic to influence the decisions of the imperial courts.

Hive Mentality

While they are independent of mind and have free will, bakemono tend to ally themselves with other bakemono as well as oni-touched and shikome—humanoids all affected by the Mists of Akuma. Sharing the world's hatred further drives these races together and the latter two frequently act as leaders of goblin gangs, using their charges to break into shops, prepare poisons, or carry out deeds that other criminals might deem too foul.

Bakemono Names

Bakemono naming conventions are as savage and short as they are. These creatures lack true genders themselves though if it suits them they adopt the persona of a man or woman as the moment demands.

Bakemono Names: Agi, Dezza, Fuk, Gat, Hurn, Jak, Lars, Nith, Pep, Raz, Taz, Zaz

Creating A Bakemono

Starting Attribute Scores Strength 8, Agility 12, Intellect 10, Will 9.
Perception equals your Intellect score + 1
Defense equals your Agility score
Health equals your Strength score
Healing Rate equals one-quarter your Health, round down
Size 1/2, **Speed** 10, **Power** 0
Damage 0, **Insanity** 0, **Corruption** 0
Languages and Professions You speak Adeddo and the Common Tongue.
Hated You gain the hated affliction. You suffer 2 bane when making social challenge rolls against any humanoid that doesn't also have the hated affliction but you never suffer bane on challenge rolls made to intimidate humanoids.
Bite You gain a bite attack that does 1d3 damage.
Shadowsight You see in areas obscured by shadows as if those areas were lit.
Adeddo Blood There are three distinct kinds of bakemono, each with its own unique set of abilities. Choose one of the following:
- **Konchū** You gain darksight, you are immune to damage from disease, and you gain immunity to the diseased affliction.
- **Kumogatarui** You gain 1 boon on challenge rolls made to jump and take half damage from poison.
- **Mure** You gain darksight and 1 boon on attack rolls made against swarms.

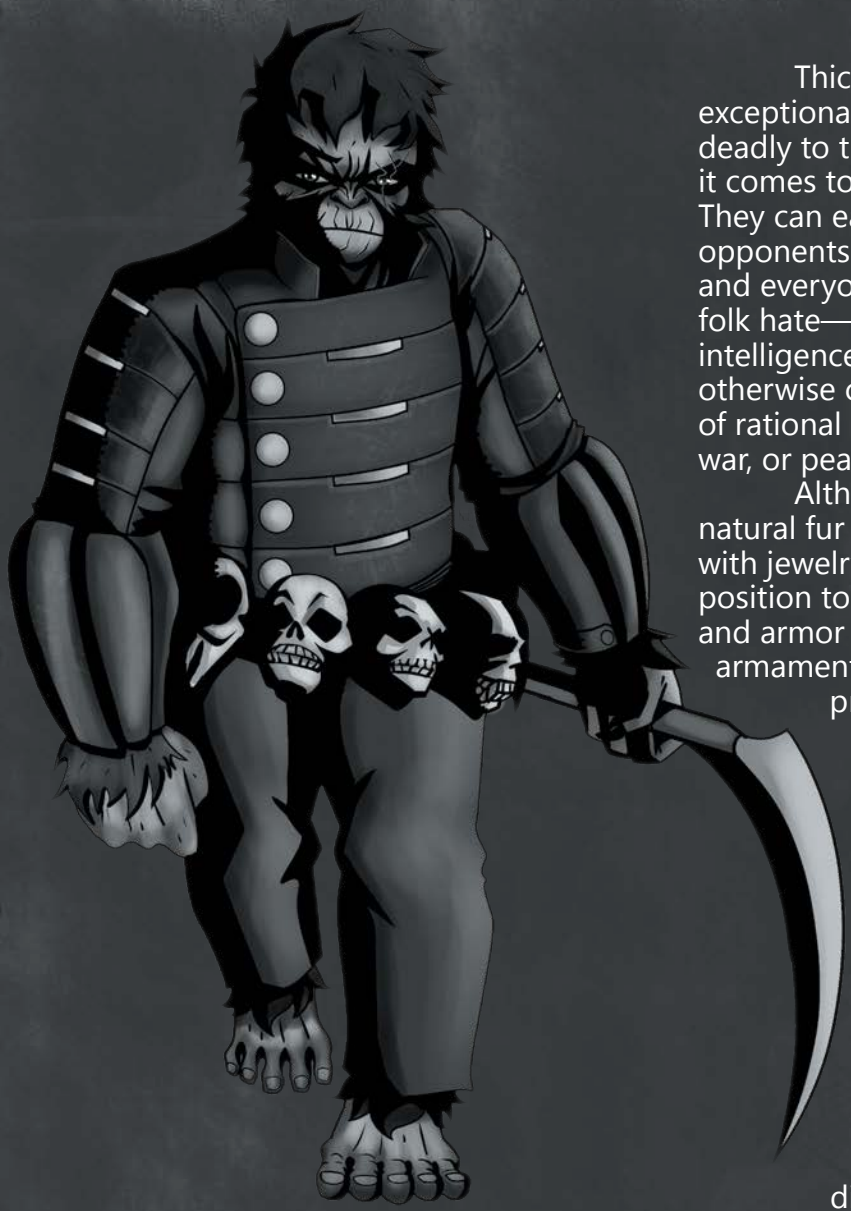
Level 4 Expert Bakemono

Characteristics Health +4
You either learn one spell or increase an attribute by 1.
Adeddo Soul Your connection to the corrupted creatures that make up your being strengthens
- **Konchū** You are able to sense with sightless but only for dead creatures, creatures at 0 Health, demons, devils, oni, undead, and creatures with 5 or more misted levels.
- **Kumogatarui** You are immune to damage from poison and the poisoned affliction. You double the distance of any jumps you make.
- **Mure** As an action, you can transform your body into a swarm of insects for as long as 1 minute. You have the statistics of an Animal Swarm, but your Health does not change and you keep your Intellect and Will scores. Reverting to your normal form is a minor activity. Any damage you sustain in your swarm form carries over to your normal form when you revert. If reduced to 0 Health in your swarm form, you automatically revert to your natural form and go unconscious. After using this ability you need to finish a rest before you can do so again.

ENJIN

A seasoned scout and accomplished climber, Ji Yeana crept silently through the tall grasses at the edge of the jungle. She didn't need to see or hear the approaching party to easily determine their nature—the jingling of their chains and uneasy laughter told her they were seeking younglings. Although the enjin did not relish violence the livelihood of both her offspring and her tribe sometimes demanded it, and as the Ikari scout came within reach Ji Yeana sprung from cover, pummeling him while wheeling to disarm an accompanying burakku kirā before either could yell out warning. Letting loose a raging howl her sisters leapt into battle like lightning from the canopy above and suddenly the air filled with screams, the iron smell of blood, and a thickening crimson mist.

The enjin are no strangers to violence; it is as much a part of their history as it is their very bodies and most agree the ape folk were perfected for brutality by nature then further refined for combat by ceramian masters. Although modern scholars suspect their history of tribalism as the cause for their warlike and xenophobic tendencies, those who have watched the enjin evolve out of the mists of time know the truth—they have always known violence. This fact is as true today as it was when the foreign invaders forced the Ikari Clan to round up, break, and press them into a far away war neither truly embraced. That this scarred them both physically and culturally is another fact few can deny, making the enjin a race that struggles daily with a reality carved from their dark, iron-chained past.



Silver-Backed Nobles

The ape folk are a race easily spotted in a crowd, standing between seven and ten feet to tower over both enemies and allies alike. Identified from other primates by their distinctive fur patterns (ranging from deep blacks to bright silvers as they age) it is no wonder that the enjin have long been the source of as much awe as they are fear. Were they no more than the simple beasts they resemble many might write the ape folk off as a cruel byproduct of nature, a perfect storm wrapped tightly behind layers of muscle, determination, and a fury few could ever hope to contain. The enjin are not simple beasts however and most possess an intelligence as keen as any human's, with the full capacity for murder or mercy should they demand either—of all Soburin's races this alone makes them all the more dangerous.

Thick and well-muscled, enjin have exceptionally powerful limbs that make them deadly to the smaller races, particularly when it comes to direct physical confrontations. They can easily reach most foes, plucking opponents up to throw like the toy of a child, and everyone—including the Ikari many ape folk hate—knows it. Thankfully it is this same intelligence that frees the enjin from their otherwise crippling past, making them capable of rational decisions whether for diplomacy, war, or peace.

Although most ape folk prefer their natural fur coats some alphas adorn themselves with jewelry and trinkets to display their position to outsiders. This extends to weapons and armor as well, though those who do don armaments prefer light and piecemeal protection that allows for their full range of movement.

The Alphas

The enjin have trained for war for centuries. Long before the ceramians dominated Soburin (and even during the Kengen Occupation when Ikari servants snapped up and enslaved their young) the ape folk spent countless hours playing at mock battles and wrestling one another. For most enjin engaging in activities that displayed their strengths and defined their social structure were ways to be identified to rise as the alphas—all instinctively knowing that no tribe would survive without one. While the old challenges of yesteryear no longer plague the ape folk in the same ways they used to, they still demand some of each troop to stand as the alphas, a social norm they expect even among those who aren't enjin (a tradition that can cause some confusion among outsiders and in those stupid enough to challenge them, far worse.)

Marauding Troops

While mock battles between tribes are important and help to define alphas they also lead to something that every enjin (and most Ikari) have come to truly fear: the marauding troop. First seen during the Kengen Occupation these collections of (normally female) ape folk united to recover their offspring, ignoring alphas and

storming off until either they recovered their children, had killed everyone responsible for taking their young, or were themselves broken. Given their collective rage, massive strength, and maternal dedication this was a frequent sight during the early days of the foreign oppression, at least until the ceramians learned to abduct incrementally. Today these squads are far less common but still occur—when they do, enjin from miles away steer clear of the gathered marauding trop, knowing full well they will be hell bent on laying waste to everything in their path to achieve their goals.

Roving Bands

While most races establish and defend settlements the ape folk do not—at least not in the traditional sense. For the enjin the whole of the jungle is home and the region they claim is based on a simple equation: are they currently occupying it? While most tribes steer clear of one another and verbally drive away their fellows, they are not above leaving markers (often the broken corpses of their enemies hung limbless from trees) as a warning to trespassers. Surprisingly these ancient traditions continue, allowing the ape folk to rove about the jungles as they please while keeping conflict to a normal minimum. Where the rainforests have shrunk most significantly however, the opposite has occurred and given rise to the understanding that the best way to eliminate local enjin populations is to systematically reduce their territory.

Enjin Young

Ape folk breed much more slowly than many other races and as a result tend to spend a lot of attention on their young, with both parents taking months away from their normal duties to rear their offspring. Great celebrations are held when a child is brought into the tribe, which often provides for the new family by maintaining shelters, hunting food, or protecting the newborn. Of course it is for this same reason that when ripped from their homes by outsiders, enjin young unleash an unrivaled rage.

The Secret Peace

Although nearly all enjin openly engage the Ikari and ceramians, there is a small but growing percentage who see the bigger threat facing them. These ape folk quietly work in the shadows, whispering to alphas and looking toward diplomacy in place of war with the hope that collective strength will prevail against the Mists of Akuma—which they know threatens them far more than many are wont to admit. Although they are still a minority those who embrace the secret peace are growing in number with every passing season.

Deed Naming

Most enjin take their names at maturity and rarely before—like many of their traditions this is something the ape folk hold sacred and treat with a grave seriousness few understand. When an enjin takes a name it does so for life and rarely deviates from it or adopts monickers; this act is not taken lightly and as a social norm they always choose their own names (they are never bestowed by others, parents or otherwise). Unlike some races ape folk don't make important distinctions between gender when taking names, basing them solely on a physical characteristic or deed.

Enjin Names: Blackaxe, Furytongue, Longarm, Nofang, Silvernose, Threeskulls
Troop Names: Troops often adopt the name of their alphas. Common names include: Threeskull's Squad, Furytongue's Marauders, Bloodthirst's Troop, and so on.

Creating An Enjin

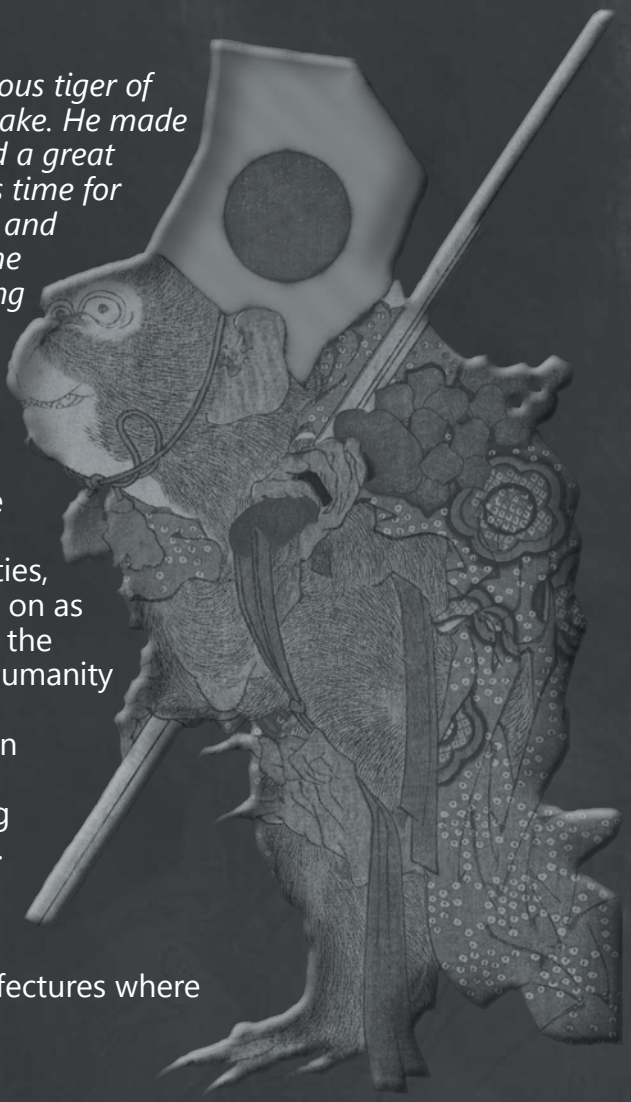
Starting Attribute Scores Strength 12, Agility 9, Intellect 9, Will 10.
Perception equals your Intellect score + 2
Defense equals your Agility score
Health equals your Strength score
Healing Rate equals one-quarter your Health, round down
Size 2, **Speed** 10, **Power** 0
Damage 0, **Insanity** 0, **Corruption** 0
Languages and Professions You speak the Common Tongue, and you can either speak one additional language or add a random profession.
Climber You gain climber equal to your speed –2.
Leaper You gain 1 boon on challenge rolls made to jump.
Primal Fervor. You gain 1 boon on challenge rolls made to resist the fatigued affliction.
Expensive Fitting You cannot wear regular armor and it must be custom made or heavily tailored in order to fit you, increasing its cost by 250%.
Vulnerability You take double damage from cold.

Level 4 Expert Enjin

Characteristics Health +5
You either learn one spell or gain Expert Leaper.
Expert Leaper You gain Leap with a speed equal to your Strength.

HENGEYOKAI

Giryun's dreams were haunted yet again—a tremendous tiger of shadow and rage howled in his mind, stirring him awake. He made his way out of his hut to find the elders circled around a great bonfire, its flames rising far above the rooftops. It was time for him to become the new shaman. He stepped forward and again saw the shadow of the beast within. This time he was not afraid and took the rage into his heart, soothing the beast. The elders gave a knowing nod; the spirit was in good hands and they could rest once more.



Legends state that at the birth of Soburin all of the races were considered equals in the shaping of the land. The animals eventually chose to live simple but fulfilling lives while the humans dreamed for something more, leading to their complicated societies, yet there were some that could not choose and lived on as both animal and human—these are the hengeyokai, the animal kin. Hengeyokai have always lived alongside humanity but over the centuries the shapeshifters have found themselves seen as a lower caste; never more so than during the Kengen Occupation. The prefectures that oppressed them were masters of arcane arts, making the containment of the hengeyokai relatively simple. Today the hengeyokai are generally accepted in Soburin, having spread across the land in the years after Hitoshi's Rebellion, though they still encounter subtle discrimination, particularly in the magical prefectures where prejudices have been ingrained over decades.

Children of the Wilds

Hengeyokai are a unique mix of animal and human, blending the defining features of the soburi and a parent animal, such as a dog or a crane. They resemble their parent animals but are capable of walking upright and using their claws or talons much as a human typically would hands. Hengeyokai are slightly smaller when compared to ordinary humans but this drawback is easily made up for by their excellent reflexes and tough bodies.

Hengeyokai can transform themselves into an animal of their kind or fully as a human. In humanoid form they resemble one of the other races of Soburin—with some animalistic features. Although they are capable of hiding such characteristics while in their human form most hengeyokai choose to keep a number of these animalistic attributes visible—whether pointed ears and sharp teeth or whiskers and oddly shaped eyes.

Packs of Soburin

Hengeyokai culture varies greatly between subraces and regions. Most of the shapeshifters live together in small communities known as packs, ranging from close-knit family units to sizable communities. Members of a pack work together to provide for one another, sharing food and shelter, remaining flexible so that members may join and leave as they see fit.

A pack has two different leaders—one representing physical might and the other spiritual power. A physical pack leader generally rises to the position by competing against the other members of the pack while spiritual leaders find themselves chosen by their kin or a learned elder. Both types of leaders change frequently, allowing for the position to be filled by anyone as need demands.

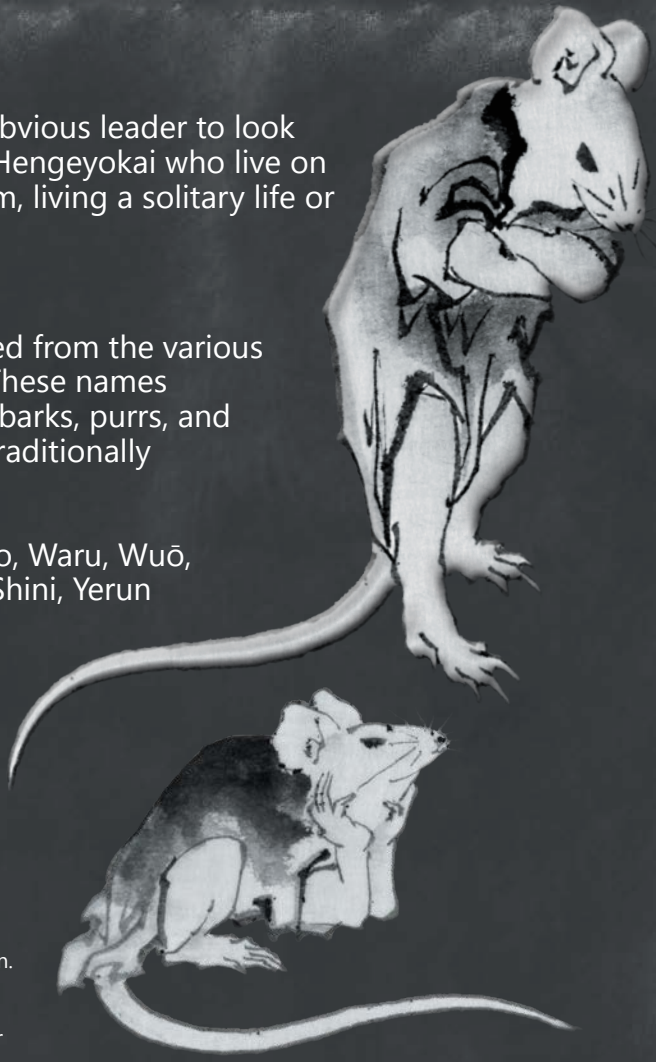
Hengeyokai that live away from a pack tend to gravitate towards similar groups. These might be good friends, neighbors, or close allies, but a hengeyokai may find

themselves vulnerable or uncertain without an obvious leader to look toward (sometimes stepping up to fill the role). Hengeyokai who live on their own usually stay hidden in their animal form, living a solitary life or among others of its parent animal.

Hengeyokai Names

Hengeyokai names vary greatly but are all derived from the various calls and cries of a hengeyokai's parent animal. These names incorporate subtle, almost imperceptible chirps, barks, purrs, and hisses in their pronunciation. Family names are traditionally composed from the name of the pack's leader.

Male Names: Aru, Buru, Hōron, Juyin, Riyan, Siyo, Waru, Wuō,
Female Names: Ara, Eri, Hyan, Iya, Miyun, Rira, Shini, Yerun
Family Names: Chindosu, Ein, Jiman, Kisho, Ningyu, Rimun, Tsabuto, Zuruyi



Creating A Hengeyokai

Starting Attribute Scores Strength 10, Agility 10, Intellect 10, Will 10.
Perception equals your Intellect score + 1
Defense equals your Agility score
Health equals your Strength score
Healing Rate equals one-quarter your Health, round down
Size 1, **Speed** 10, **Power** 0
Damage 0, **Insanity** 0, **Corruption** 0
Languages and Professions You speak the Common Tongue, and you can either speak one additional language or add a random profession.
Animal Shape As an action, you change into a Tiny Animal or Small Animal determined by your specific ancestry that has a difficulty no higher than your level, or back into your true form. You revert to your true form if you die. Any equipment you are wearing or carrying is absorbed or borne by the new form (your choice). In a new form, you retain your Health, ability to speak, Intellect and Will scores, as well as this action. Your statistics and capabilities are otherwise replaced by those of the new form (as *improved animal form*).
Human Shape As an action, you change into a specific human form. Any equipment you are wearing or carrying is borne by the new form. In your new form, you retain all your scores, as well as this action.
Hengeyokai-Kin You gain specific abilities determined by which animal you are related to.
- **Inu (Dog)** Your kind were forced to resettle with the Shinboshimasu Clan (page 102). Your Strength increases by 1. You gain 1 boon on scent-based challenge rolls.
- **Kitsune (Fox)** The vast majority of your kin were herded into the holy cities of the Sukochi Prefecture (page 106). Your Intellect increases by 1. You gain a bite attack that deals 1d6 damage.
- **Kumo (Spider)** The foreign invaders made your ancestors centralize in the Ibutsu Prefecture (page 72). You gain climber equal to your Agility.
- **Kurēn (Crane)** The Satsujin Prefecture (page 100) became the home for most of your kind during the Kengen Occupation. You gain Flier 5 but only when both hands are free and you are carrying no more than half your maximum carrying limit.
- **Neko (Cat)** Fukushu (page 62) is the territory where the ceramian military subjugated your forebears. Once per round you gain 1 boon on a challenge roll made to resist a creature ability or spell.
- **Nezumi (Rat)** The nezumi of years past were resettled in the Yokuba Prefecture (page 114). You gain a bite attack that does 1d6 damage and 1 boon on challenge rolls to resist gaining the prone affliction.
- **Saru (Monkey)** Though they escaped much of the terrors of the Kengen Occupation, the saru were gathered and controlled in the Donyuko Prefecture (page 60). You have a tail that grants you two extra minor activities each round. You are unable to carry a weapon or shield with your tail, but you are able to use it while climbing and to manipulate fine objects. You may perform legerdemain with your tail (like picking pockets) but you suffer 1 bane when doing so.

Level 4 Expert Hengeyokai

Characteristics Health +4
You either learn one spell or gain Hengeyokai-Shinzoku.
Hengeyokai-Shinzoku Your connection to nature enhances and your inherent abilities strengthen.
- **Inu (Dog)** Your speed increases by 4, your Perception increases by +1, and you gain a bite attack that deals 1d6+2 damage.
- **Kitsune (Fox)** You gain one tail for every year of life (maximum 9). You are unable to carry a weapon or shield with your tail, nor can you manipulate fine objects. You can cause one tail to wither and fall off to heal your healing rate as a triggered action and remove an affliction. After a tail has withered this way, you gain the fatigued affliction for 1 hour and cannot use this ability again until you have finished a rest.
- **Kumo (Spider)** You are able to shoot webs by spending action to make an attack roll at short range. On a hit the target is immobilized by webbing. As an action, the immobilized creature can make a Strength challenge roll with 1 bane, escaping from the webbing on a success. The effect also ends if the webbing is destroyed. The webbing has Defense 10, Health 5, takes double damage from fire, and is immune to poison and psychic damage. Once you have used this ability, you cannot do so until you have finished a rest.
- **Kurēn (Crane)** You gain immunity to the prone affliction.
- **Neko (Cat)** You gain 1 boon on Stealth challenge rolls (2 boons for hearing-related Stealth challenge rolls), you are able to hide in partially obscured areas, and you take half damage from falls of 10 yards or less (any damage you take from falling from a greater height still reduces the last 10 yards).
- **Nezumi (Rat)** While prone, you can crawl without provoking free attacks from your movement and you do not give creatures boons to attack you while prone.
- **Saru (Monkey)** You gain climber equal to your speed –2, leap equal to double your Agility modifier (minimum 2), and 2 boons on challenge rolls made to jump.

SOTCHOKUNA KIZUTSUME, AVENGING GADGETEER OF THE ABUSED DIFFICULTY 50

Size 1 humanoid (neko hengeyokai)

Perception 16 (+6); scent

Defense 16 (do-maru); **Health** 85

Strength 11 (+1), **Agility** 15 (+5), **Intellect** 16 (+6), **Will** 15 (+5)

Speed 10

Gadgeteer Sotchokuna has the Kagaku-Sha profession and gains 1 boon on challenge rolls made to activate, build, conceal, hide, or understand technology (2 boons if he uses his any-tool).

Mashinno-Yūjin Sotchokuna is always accompanied by a clockwork feline named Mashinno-Yūjin (use the statistics for a **Great Cat** that is Size 1/2, immune to damage from poison, and immune to the compelled, fatigued, and poisoned afflictions).

Neko Hengeyokai Sotchokuna has all the racial traits of a neko hengeyokai of 4th level.

ATTACK OPTIONS

Enchanted Any-Tool (melee) +5 with 1 boon (2d6 damage)

Pistol (medium range) +5 with 1 boon (2d6 damage)

SPECIAL ATTACKS

Multiattack Sotchokuna attacks three times with his any-tool or twice with his pistol.

SPECIAL ACTIONS

Clockwork Swarm By spending an action calling them with a subvocal purr (noticeable with a Perception challenge roll made with 2 bane) Sotchokuna summons 1d3 clockwork rat swarms (use the statistics for an **Animal Swarm** that is immune to damage from poison and the compelled, fatigued, and poisoned afflictions) that emerges within 30 yards at the end of the round. While he has a summoned swarm, Sotchokuna can spend his triggered action to direct it. Once Sotchokuna has used Clockwork Swarm 3 times, he cannot do so again until he finishes a rest.

SECRET HENGEYOKAI

Not all of Soburin's hengeyokai survived the oppression of the Kengen Occupation and several disappeared. They are rarer even than gurēsu but some have been seen since the end of the War of Kaiyo, often fearful of discovery and disguised as another race.

Itachi (Weasel) Already known for being rogues and ne'er-do-wells, the ceramians made an example of their power and the severity of their edicts by mass-slaughtering the itachi hengeyokai.

Level 1: You gain a bite attack that does 1d6 damage and 2 boons on challenge rolls to squeeze into or out of narrow openings or hard to reach places. You can move through spaces occupied by other creatures without squeezing and do not provoke free attacks while doing so.

Level 4 Expert: You gain 1 boon on Stealth challenge rolls (2 boons for hearing-related Stealth challenge rolls) and are able to hide in partially obscured areas.

Koi (Carp) After some were witnessed dismantling the psionic cages the ceramians crafted for imprisoning the umibo, the foreign oppressors offered high bounties for koi hengeyokai corpses.

Level 1: Your Speed is reduced to 8 but you gain swimmer 10 and are able to breathe both air and water.

Level 4 Expert: You take half damage from cold and psychic. While in water, you gain 1 boon on attack rolls and challenge rolls, and creatures attacking you do so with 1 bane.

Mujina (Badger) Feral when cornered, mujina hengeyokai could not be subjugated and most met death straight in the eye at the end of foreign gun barrels.

Level 1: You gain a bite attack that deals 1d6 damage and 1 boon on scent-based Perception challenge rolls.

Level 4 Expert: When you gain the injured affliction you go berserk for 1d6 rounds. On each of your turns while berserk, you attack the nearest creature you can see. If no creature is near enough to move to and attack, you attack an object, with preference for an object smaller than yourself. While berserk and attacking, you gain 1 boon to melee attack rolls and make an additional attack each turn.

Usagi (Hare) Rumors that usagi fur brought good fortune saw most of these hengeyokai killed for their pelts.

Level 1: Your speed increases to 12, you gain 1 boon on challenge rolls made to jump, and you double the distance of any jumps you make.

Level 4 Expert: Your speed increases by 4. Once per round when you or an ally you can see rolls a natural 1 on an attack roll or challenge roll, you may spend your triggered action to reroll.

"Let me tell you a story," the silver-haired, blue-eyed stranger began, appearing from the corner of the crowded izakaya—as dew in the cold of morning, he simply was.

A silence rippled among the rough and tired men that came nightly to drink away the weight of a long day in the fields. The wispy outsider took no notice of the growing tension (or perhaps relished it) seeing it as an unspoken challenge. Smiling mischievously, he gracefully reaching into a leather bag at his hip, producing a brass ball the size of an acorn and a fine needle. Winking, he said, "stop me if you've heard it."

"Once upon a time there was a little girl named Sakiko that believed in monsters. Not moss-covered kappa laying in wait at the river, or vicious blunt-tusked ogres lurking in caves—no" he continued, stabbing the needle into the ball before pulling it away, brandishing it like dagger, "she believed in monsters that hid deep down in a nearly-drained bottle of sake or the mistakenly-charred edges of an overcooked meal." The crowd's silence gave way to uneasy tittering as he spoke, each word carrying more import. "A terrible beast of rage and fury, pouncing upon a single word spoken at the wrong time or heard in the wrong way."

The odd stranger locked eyes with each man in turn, save one that shied from his gaze. "Sakiko learned to stay silent, staying this way for a long time, forsaking much of her youth until one miraculous event—she met a talking cat. This was no dream, but a wondrous and magical feline that told stories about dragons and princesses..." The charismatic visitor raised his eyes again, skipping over his audience and landing his gaze on the one man disinterested in his tale."...and never once asked about her mother's bruises, ripped clothes, or broken bones."

A single bead of sweat ran down the man's face.

"Sakiko was so happy to have found a friend that she rushed home immediately and told everyone in the village—a grave mistake. The monster beat her for lying and making him look like a fool and sent her to bed without dinner." He stood up, moving the bauble from one hand to the other. "The next morning the monster was looming over her, the smell of cheap rice wine on his breath. I found your storyteller, he hissed, dropping a wet furry mass into her mat before stomping away."

"The young girl screamed when she discovered it was a dead cat, its body bloated from the river. The monster, rife with the scent of alcohol, only laughed. Sakiko gently stroked the poor animal. It wasn't her friend—her magical companion was gray with piercing blue eyes and subtle black stripes, as though he was pretending to be a tiger—but she had seen this orange tabby before. Still, she thought the poor creature had died because of her and fell into a fit of crying."

Captivated, one by one the men in the izakaya followed the stranger's gaze. "The talking cat was never seen again and Sakiko carried on as best she could, flitting away from the monster whenever possible, and—like the whole village had before her—said nothing. One day a stranger came, accompanied by whirring clockwork mice that ducked in and out of ill-repaired walls and torn shoji, sometimes with a snake or a centipede caught between copper and brass teeth. His oddness matched his mirth and he made the entire village laugh, including Sakiko, who even forgot about the monster, for a moment. The little girl went to the toymaker with a look of wonder thought lost after her friend left and asked, How do you make them do that? Mice shouldn't do that. The toymaker smiled and winked a blue eye at her, Animals shouldn't speak either, should they?"

"Sakiko's eyes lit up and she hugged him tightly. I have something I forgot to give you before I left, and he pointed atop her house. It was beautiful: a silver clockwork cat with black stripes and sapphire eyes, just like her talking cat." The men in the bar grew silent once more; they had seen a toy like that recently—Tanaka's little girl Yuri found one curled up on the foot of her mat, unseen motors within rumbling like a contented purr.

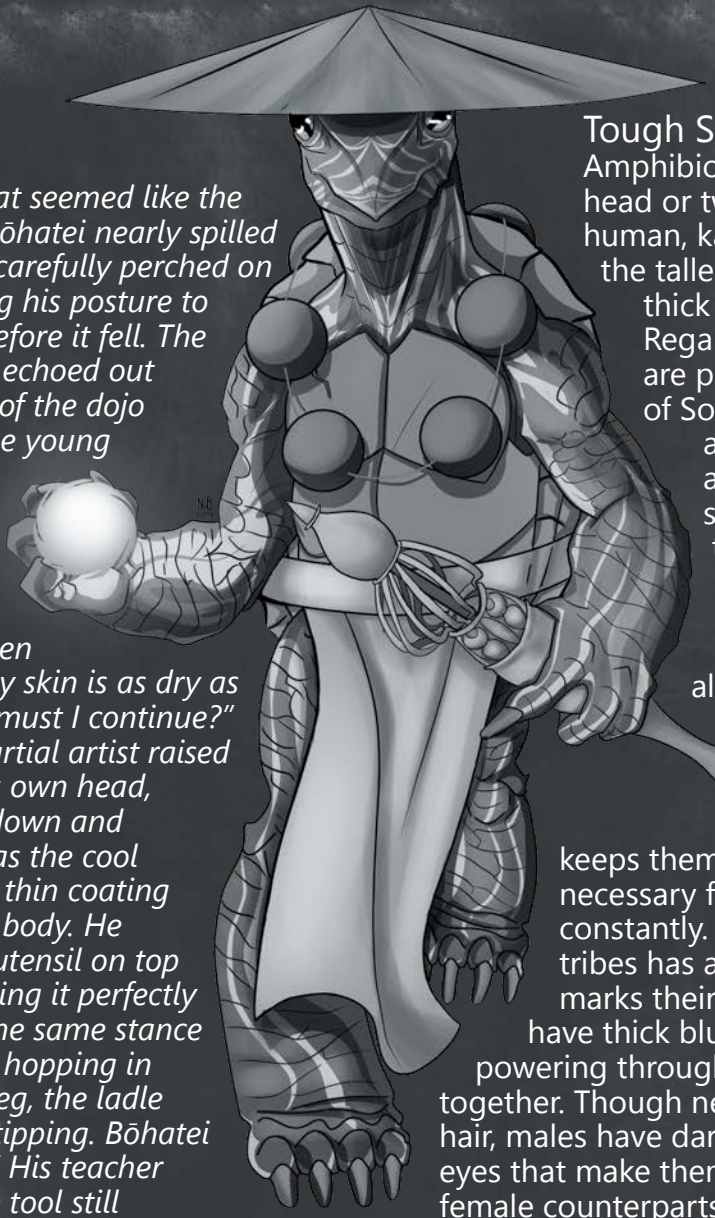
The stranger made a final stab at the ball. "I have something to do tonight and you won't see me after, the visitor told Sakiko, Go with your mother to your aunt's for dinner. I hear she makes wonderful fish. They did, leaving the monster sleeping in a drunken stupor. Ask anyone that was near that night and they might say they saw the toymaker leaving the village—but his small army of mice, their ruby eyes burning with an inner fire, swarmed through the walls of the monster's house. Only a muffled cry came from within, the last trace of the monster ever having been, and all the while a clockwork cat watched from the roof."

For the first time since the silver-haired stranger appeared, the man in the back—Tanaka—met his gaze, his eyes wide with fear. With a pop the brass ball unfolded itself into a small mouse with ruby eyes.

Tanaka screamed and the strange visitor grinned.

*"Oh, you **have** heard this story before."*

KAPPA



Looking up for what seemed like the thousandth time Bōhatei nearly spilled the bowl of water carefully perched on his head, correcting his posture to compensate just before it fell. The sound of footsteps echoed out from the shadows of the dojo behind him and the young kappa's sensei calmly walked into view, a ladle of water in hand. "Master," Bōhatei pleaded, "it has been three hours and my skin is as dry as sand. Please, why must I continue?" Silently the old martial artist raised the bowl above his own head, pouring it upside down and breathing in fully as the cool water restored the thin coating of slime across his body. He placed the empty utensil on top of his skull, balancing it perfectly before assuming the same stance as his student and hopping in place from leg to leg, the ladle never so much as tipping. Bōhatei sighed, "Tradition." His teacher nodded sagely, the tool still frustratingly standing on end.

No other race accepted the realities of the Kengen Occupation as stalwartly as the long-lived kappa—though only after their toughest detractors were defeated in duels by lightning-spewing ceramian weaponry. Bound as always by tradition the turtle folk of Soburin suffered through subjugation with tenacity, stubbornly holding onto their cultural beliefs and practices regardless of the edicts of the invaders. The kappa have long memories; they remember the peace before the coming of the foreigners and their burning hatred for gaijin is nearly unmatched. Moreover the worship of ancestors fundamental to the prefectures is most strongly embodied among the turtle folk, and the rarest of their kind are so old that their grandparents' grandparents lived during the times of the Imperial Siblings, able to tell legends secondhand.

Tough Shelled

Amphibious humanoids that stand a head or two shorter than the average human, kappa often weigh more than the taller races because of the heavy, thick shells on their backs. Regardless of their stature they are perhaps the most stubborn of Soburin's peoples and can be as unmoving as a boulder in a stream. There is a common saying among soburi that throwing a kappa off-balance can be a sign of good fortune, though the few foolish enough to try it almost always come to regret making an enemy for life.

The turtle folk are covered in a moist slick slime that keeps them hydrated, making it necessary for them to drink near constantly. Each of the many kappa tribes has a particular pattern that marks their bodies, though all of them have thick blunted claws that are ideal for powering through the water when flattened together. Though neither gender has any hair, males have dark markings near their eyes that make them distinct from their female counterparts.

Slow and Steady

Kappa are some of Soburin's most long-lived peoples, remembering with incredible clarity entire generations of the other races that live and die as the centuries pass. Tradition is an essential part of their lives, repeating centuries old rites they now guide their young in doing. Though the turtle folk were in high demand during the Ichizoku Wars long ago they have always remained distant from conflict and are ever on the defensive. It does not happen often but when violence arises within or between tribes they rarely attack one another; instead they choose champions to participate in unarmed duels of submission. Imperial scholars are reticent to admit that the kappa are the originators of Honor Duels in the prefectures (page 19) and falsely claim the Imperial Siblings first established the tradition, though it is well known that the turtle folk are responsible for the practice.

Tribal chieftains are always the oldest members of their clan regardless of gender or occupation. The wisdom of years guides their hand and it is with strength tested by time that they lead their people onward. All of a settlement's kappa take turns educating the youth, making for cohesive societies where everyone knows one another and are equally respected. Turtle folk are not entirely inflexible but once they have made up their mind it is nearly impossible to influence them—they are firm in their footing, be it argumentative or literal—and they look through a large prism that encompasses a much longer worldview than most other races know.

Kappabuchi

There were once coves and shorelines all over Soburin where turtle folk dwelt together but during the Kengen Occupation they were forced to move to the Korusu Prefecture. After the foreign invaders fell many kappa returned to their ancestral homes only to find them in ruin, forced to either rebuild or seek out another settlement for their tribe. Kappabuchi villages are usually built out of stone and on or very near the water, though recently a scant few have reestablished themselves underneath the waves to better avoid meddling humans and the corrupting Mists of Akuma.

Some have recognized that the arrival of ceramians and ropaeo mark a change in the world's current and choose to forge a new path in the cities of the soburi, establishing new villages within urban centers and welcoming all of their kind to join them. Fortunately there are many jobs perfectly suited to kappa throughout the prefectures—nearly all have shores on a major river or coastline where the turtle folk can take to the water. The defensive nature and talents of kappa also make them excellent soldiers, though their tendency to not engage in violence until provoked makes them better bodyguards than infantry.

True Children of Nature

The only race that might be more in tune with nature than kappa are the umibo, and some scholars believe that the disappearance of the other elemental kin is a sign that the world is doomed or at the very least fundamentally changing. Only the old wise men and wise women of the turtle folk know for certain, sensing with their natural connection to the planet that something is terribly wrong.

Natural Traditions

Kappa hate seeing the fading beauty of Soburin polluted or wasted in any way and to even spill a cup of water on accident is shameful. Many of their traditions focus on cleansing the land, finding the most corrupt or toxic regions and repairing them. Yamabushi are highly respected among the turtle folk—sometimes carrying as much influence as tribal chieftains—and all kappabuchi have at least one priest among their number.

Kappa Names

Kappa almost always name their children after distant ancestors, believing that the souls are one in the same in part if not in whole. Recently there have been newborns that are instead named in honor of nature, their parents hoping that their show of devotion will help mend the wounds of the world or inspire their offspring to save it.

Male Names: Bōhatei, Gōjōna, Hankō, Kīpu, Shūnenbukai, Sōki
Female Names: Gankona, Koi-No, Omoidashi, Shubi, Tenioenai, Ugokimasen
Tribal Names: Dakyō, Gādo, Kakuho, Mamoru, Oboete, Tentō-Dekina

Creating A Kappa

Starting Attribute Scores Strength 9, Agility 10, Intellect 10, Will 11.
Perception equals your Intellect score
Defense equals your Agility score + 2
Health equals your Strength score + 4
Healing Rate equals one-quarter your Health, round down
Size 1, **Speed** 10, **Power** 0
Damage 0, **Insanity** 0, **Corruption** 0
Languages and Professions You speak the Common Tongue, and you can either speak one additional language or add a random profession.
Amphibious You are able to breathe both air and water.
Kappa Shell When prone you must spend an action and your move to stand up.
Steady Feet You gain 1 boon on challenge rolls made to resist the prone affliction.
Vulnerability You take double damage from lightning.

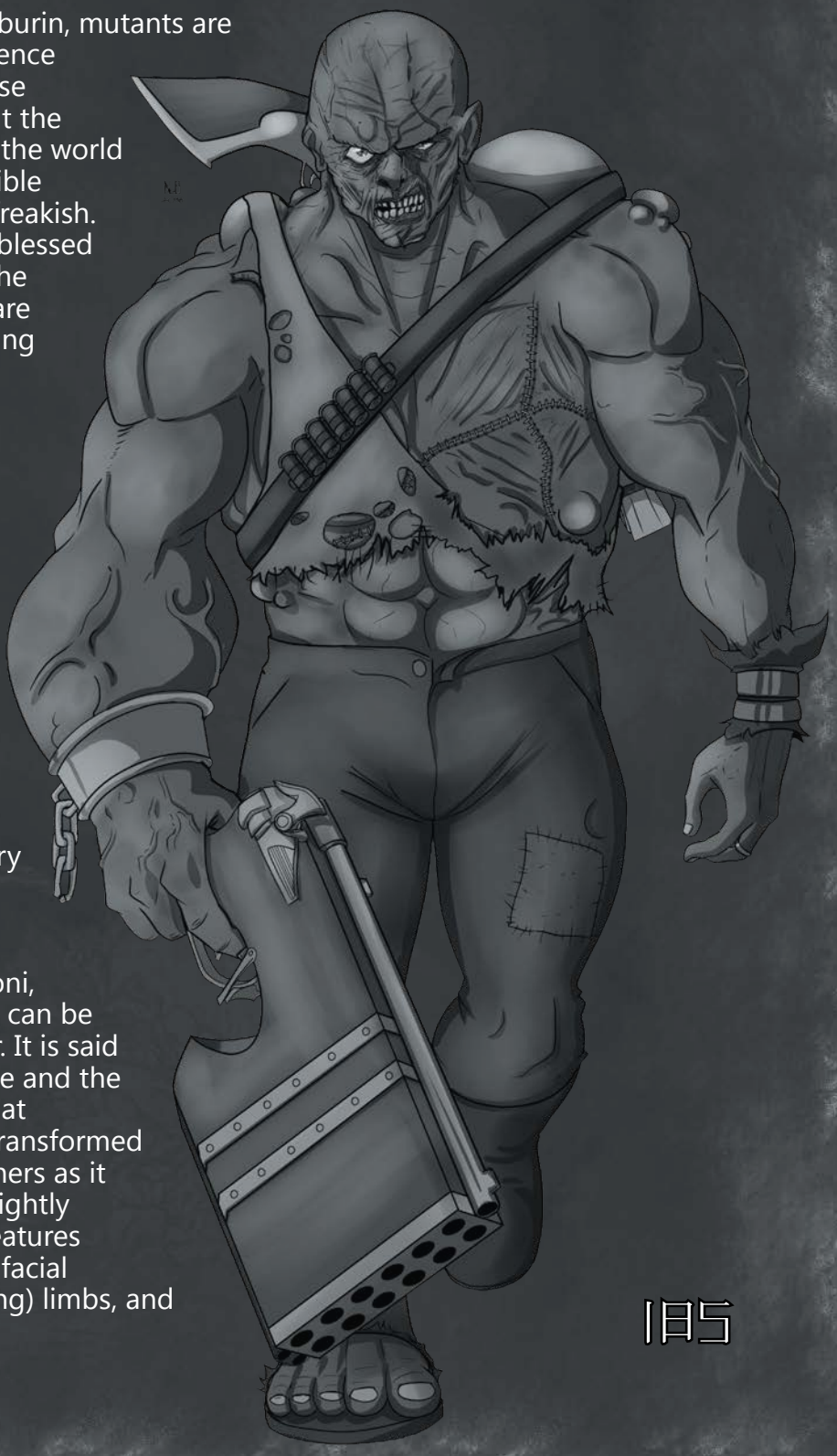
Level 4 Expert Kappa

Characteristics Health +5
You either learn one spell or increase an attribute by 1.
Natural Swimmer You gain swimmer equal to your Agility. While in water, you gain 1 boon on attack rolls and challenge rolls, and creatures attacking you do so with 1 bane.

MUTANT

Gasker looked back over her shoulder and could already see the townsfolk whispering among one another, the sight of her causing a stir in the small village and prompting many to hatefully exclaim that she might be oni. She sighed wearily, idly massaging the long scar across her huge abdomen—a mark from the last time a village turned on her—before making sure her tetsubo wasn't peace-bonded. The innkeep that let her sleep in his stable ran out to protest, showing them the sack of Imperial Peces Gasker had given him as payment for shelter and meals. Cries of anger and the jingling of coins striking the dirt came from behind her and she picked up her pace, hoping that none of her soon-to-be attackers kept their horses already saddled and silently wishing good fortune to her beleaguered protector in the angry crowd dwindling out of sight behind her.

Far and away the most feared race in Soburin, mutants are walking reminders of the terrors that science unleashed in the War of Kaiyo. Once these enormous monstrosities were human but the horrendous energies across the edge of the world have transformed them, granting incredible resilience at the cost of becoming truly freakish. While they are cursed, mutants are also blessed in a way—though feared and hated by the planet's last bastion of civilization, they are well-suited to the rigors of living in a dying world.



Giants of the Wastes

Destined to loneliness because of their freakish appearance, mutants are self-reliant survivors that learn most of their skills on their own. Despite the harsh treatment they receive from others and the darkness this often begets in their hearts the massive humanoids can be truly valuable allies to those that prove themselves to be dependable and trustworthy. The physical superiority of mutants make them valued by all the violent forces of Soburin—rogue Kengen generals, military commanders, and even gang leaders—regardless of how much they may be feared and despised.

Rivaled in size only by enjin and oni, mutants tower over regular humans and can be twice as wide as a broad chested warrior. It is said that no two mutants are exactly the same and the biologists of Uragi have hypothesized that whatever force across the Great Divide transformed the giants must have killed countless others as it seems every one of them reacted to it slightly differently. All mutants do share some features though never in the same arrangement: facial disfigurement, misshapen (usually bulging) limbs, and tumorous growths about their bodies.

Survivors Borne

One of the newest races in the world, mutants have little shared culture and the few that are capable of remembering their past lives usually choose to forget them. Already outcast because of their appearance, mutants are often naive about the traditions of others and lack any themselves, further ostracizing them from the rest of Soburin. Most mutants are hardened to the harsh treatment of not only their kind but the other discriminated races as well—they are frequently friends to bakemono, necroji, steametics, oni-touched, and shikome—and generally accepting of anyone seeking to spend time with them (provided they are not obviously being exploited).

Mutants have few shared tendencies save for an incredible will to survive and each is as different from one another as the unique tumors on their massive forms. Talk and rumors of enormous, twisted mages are not unheard of but for the most part mutants capitalize on their physical superiority and size to become potent warriors. Even the spellcasters among them know how imposing their bodies can be, and ultimately only the kindest and most benign of their number fall back on methods of coercion other than intimidation.

Fringe Bordertowns

When drawn to their own kind mutants form surprisingly democratic societies far from civilization, on the very fringes of the least hospitable lands of the prefectures. These settlements are always in areas that can accommodate the giants' prodigious size—within harsh mountain peaks, on the badlands at the edge of dying plains, and along seaside crags too dangerous for lesser creatures. Though each citizen is expected to help their fellows there's usually at least a few smaller non-mutants living among them able to offer shelter to visitors as well. Lacking the resources and access to materials enjoyed by other races, the homes and businesses in these villages are typically primitive and equipped with tall, sturdy poles that tower more than twenty feet up in the sky (to climb to avoid the Mists of Akuma). The citizens of these settlements work simple jobs and live simple lives, attempting to achieve a sense of peace from the chaos and decay all around them.

Naturally brawny, quick of foot, and able to recover from injuries at a remarkable pace, mutants are naturally superior laborers. Mass production forges in the scientific prefectures actively seek them out to work the lines and their talents make them exceptional soldiers or pirates. When a mutant falls to criminal activity they are not hard to notice or physically track, but difficult to capture or find—the distrustful fear many have for their kind becomes outright terror when one of the giants loses respect for the law.

Native Mutants At the GM's discretion one of the following alternate racial abilities may be taken by a native mutant by lowering its healing rate by 2.

Otherwalker As an action, you will your body to become ethereal for 1 minute. You take half damage from weapons, can move through solid objects and other creatures, and ignore the effects of moving across difficult terrain. Once you have used Otherwalker, you cannot do so until you have finished a rest.

Unnatural Shroud As an action you turn invisible for 3 rounds. Once you have used Unnatural Shroud, you cannot do so until you have finished a rest.

Mutant Names

Mutant names are drawn from the technology and science of the lands they fled from, one of the only legacies they carry aside from their freakish forms.

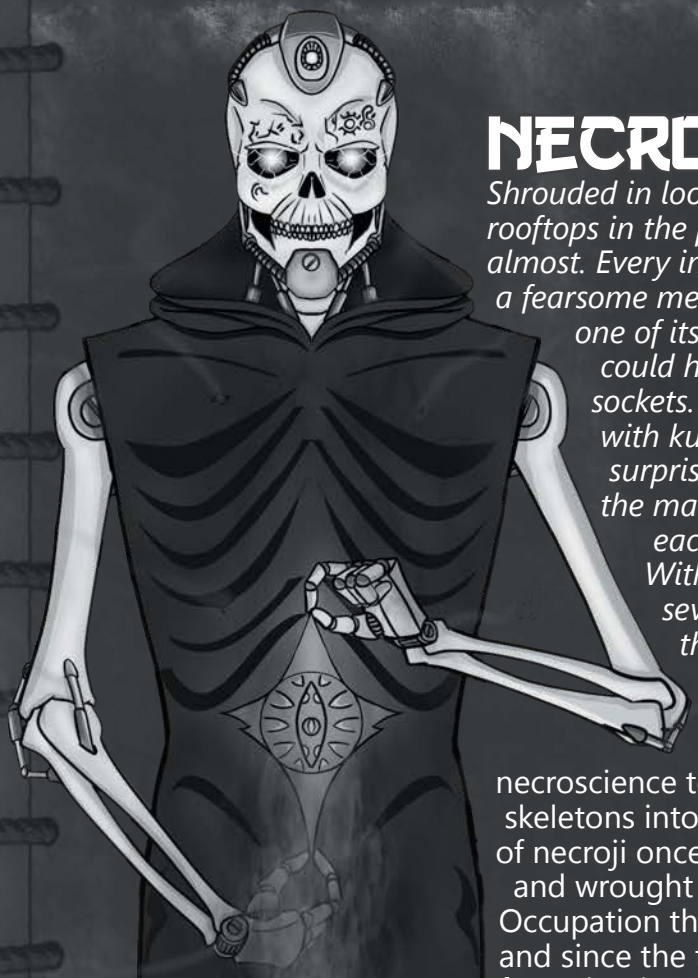
Male Names: Furnast, Hoven, Razr, Transter
Female Names: Automab, Gasker, Karr, Signa

Creating A Mutant

Starting Attribute Scores Strength 11, Agility 11, Intellect 9, Will 10. Choose either Strength or Agility and increase it by 1.
Perception equals your Intellect score + 1
Defense equals your Agility score
Health equals your Strength score
Healing Rate equals one-quarter your Health + 2, round down
Size 2, **Speed** 12, **Power** 0
Damage 0, **Insanity** 0, **Corruption** 0
Languages and Professions You speak the Common Tongue, and you can either speak one additional language or add a random profession.
Shadowsight You see in areas obscured by shadows as if those areas were lit.
Expensive Fitting You cannot wear regular armor and it must be custom made or heavily tailored in order to fit you, increasing its cost by 250%.
Hated You gain the hated affliction. You suffer 2 bane when making social challenge rolls against any humanoid that doesn't also have the hated affliction but you never suffer bane on challenge rolls made to intimidate humanoids.

Level 4 Expert Mutant

Characteristics Health +5
You either learn one spell or increase one attribute by 1.
Darksight You can see in areas obscured by shadows or darkness within medium range as if those areas were lit. Beyond this distance, you treat darkness as shadows and shadows as lit.
Exceptional Reputation Your Dignity increases by 2. If you have a Dignity of 14 or higher and a Haitoku of 5 or less, you lose the hated affliction.



NECROJI

Shrouded in loose-fitting black clothes and bounding across the rooftops in the pale moonlight made Kanden almost look human—almost. Every inch of its skeletal form was swabbed in ebony silks and a fearsome mempo (carved to look like a snarling tiger, the symbol of one of its employer's enemy clans) covered its face, but nothing could hide the pulsing energy in the ninja's hollowed eye sockets. Flipping through the air and filling his spindly fingers with kunai, Kanden landed in front of its quarry completely surprising the doomed fellow. As the necroji's gaze fell upon the man it unleashed throwing daggers, lethal poison coating each, emitting a shout of pain as two found their mark. Without delay it scrambled back up the wall, leaping over several streets before a cry of terrifying discovery pierced the night behind it.

Ropaeo knew no shame for their part of the War of Kaiyo, utilizing a foul and now-lost art called necroscience to raise the dead from their graves. Transformed from skeletons into powerful soldiers to bolster ropaeo's armies, legions of necroji once walked the battlefields across the edge of the world and wrought chaos on the forces of Ceramia. During the Kengen Occupation the undead made amazing infiltrators and saboteurs, and since the fall of the distant continents some have emerged from the threshold to bring terror to the lands of the prefectures. Cursed by their descendants with an unlife that can only be cut short through a violent end, these walking abominations of foreign ancestry are as much a mystery to the people of Soburin as they are yet another heretical horror left by their defeated enemies.

Undead Abominations

It is immediately apparent what necroji are when seen in the light of day or within a lightning lantern's radiance—undead empowered by science and infused with technology that animates their skeletal form. As inhuman as their appearance suggests, most necroji easily fit into the shadows of society in Soburin and are very at home waiting in the darkness with their blades drawn. Rarely taught morality, they are incredibly pragmatic and do whatever is required of them to survive in a world predicated to fear and despise them.

Formerly human (or at least humanoids; there is some debate on the matter), necroji are about as tall as they were in life and though far thinner often weigh more due to the technology woven throughout their bodies. Well aware of the fear that most of Soburin has for both science and the unnatural, the undead automatons hide themselves beneath many layers of clothing or armor, exposing as little of their grotesque forms as possible (though the violet energy seeping from their metallic parts and their burning crimson eyes are difficult to hide). It is difficult to mistake necroji for simple skeletons; in addition to cables and wiring snaking through their bones, magical runes inscribed on their skulls lock away the souls enabling the machinery that animates them and make it abundantly clear they are more than meets the eye.

Necrotic Nuisances

Every necroji is an amalgamation of its ancestors, a skeleton infused with fragments of nine souls that each carry a partial recollection of their former lives. All of these memories coalesce into one personality that incorporates the traditions and rites of its constituent parts, making their sense of culture a pastiche of a foreign past. Marked by their visibly distinct physiology, necroji do not fit into society as well as the living races and keep to the shadows and their disguises as often as possible when commoners are afoot, rarely adopting the customs and mannerisms of Soburin without being forced to do so.

Far too individualistic and already ruled over by amalgamated souls, necroji rarely unite in forces larger than a half dozen of their kind, making the creation of an undead settlement unheard of. These dead squads utilize their unnatural talents to wage guerilla warfare as bandits, working to secure isolated places of their own and protection from the Mists of Akuma—for though they are not alive, they prove just as susceptible to the fell haze as anyone else and are keen to avoid it. Entirely ruthless, the grotesque automatons have become a staple of the shinobi clans of the prefectures, used to infiltrate and sabotage locales with defenses too hazardous for conventional ninja to penetrate.

It is a rare thing for a necroji to embrace anything but maliciousness; most of their ropaeo ancestors eschewed kindness and the very nature of the necroscience that animates them is predicated towards evil. More than any other reason is the races' weakness to holy powers—their vulnerability instills in them a revulsion for the forces that most consider to be distilled manifestations of good. Coupled with the roles society so often thrusts upon them, walking the path of the righteous it is an almost insurmountable task for the undead automatons.

Masters of the Shadows

Necroji have no settlements of their own and instead exist hidden in the shadows and back alleys of Soburin's cities or in the wildernesses too far removed from the prefectures to be any concern. Some still bear allegiance to the ropaeo (working for General Kupran Stelisto or Admiral Repre Zalo) but most are loyal only to themselves, leading lives of solitude briefly interrupted by the occasional opportunity for a specialized, profitable task. There are no better scouts to be found than the necroji—their resilient construction make them able to travel beneath the notice of most defenders and their extreme patience (which can easily last for days or even weeks) allows them to exploit any opportunity. The most skilled among them command high prices for their services, sometimes taking on students to learn their individual synthesis of the best ancient ropaeo techniques and what they've learned in Soburin.

Different Combat Models

At the GM's discretion you may choose to take one of these racial traits and Intellect 10.

Cleaner You were designed to wade into close-quarters fighting, slaying foes with pistoned blows. Your Strength increases by 1.
Infiltrator Your frame is more balanced and streamlined than other necroji. Your Agility increases by 1.

Necroji Names

Named by their creators or by drawing inspiration from mixed memories upon their re-activation, necroji are known by the cultural tenets of their ropaeo past.

Necroji Names: Arman, Darja, Erig, Guilherme, Ionut, João, Lukas, Nela, Simona, Vid, Žan

Creating A Necroji

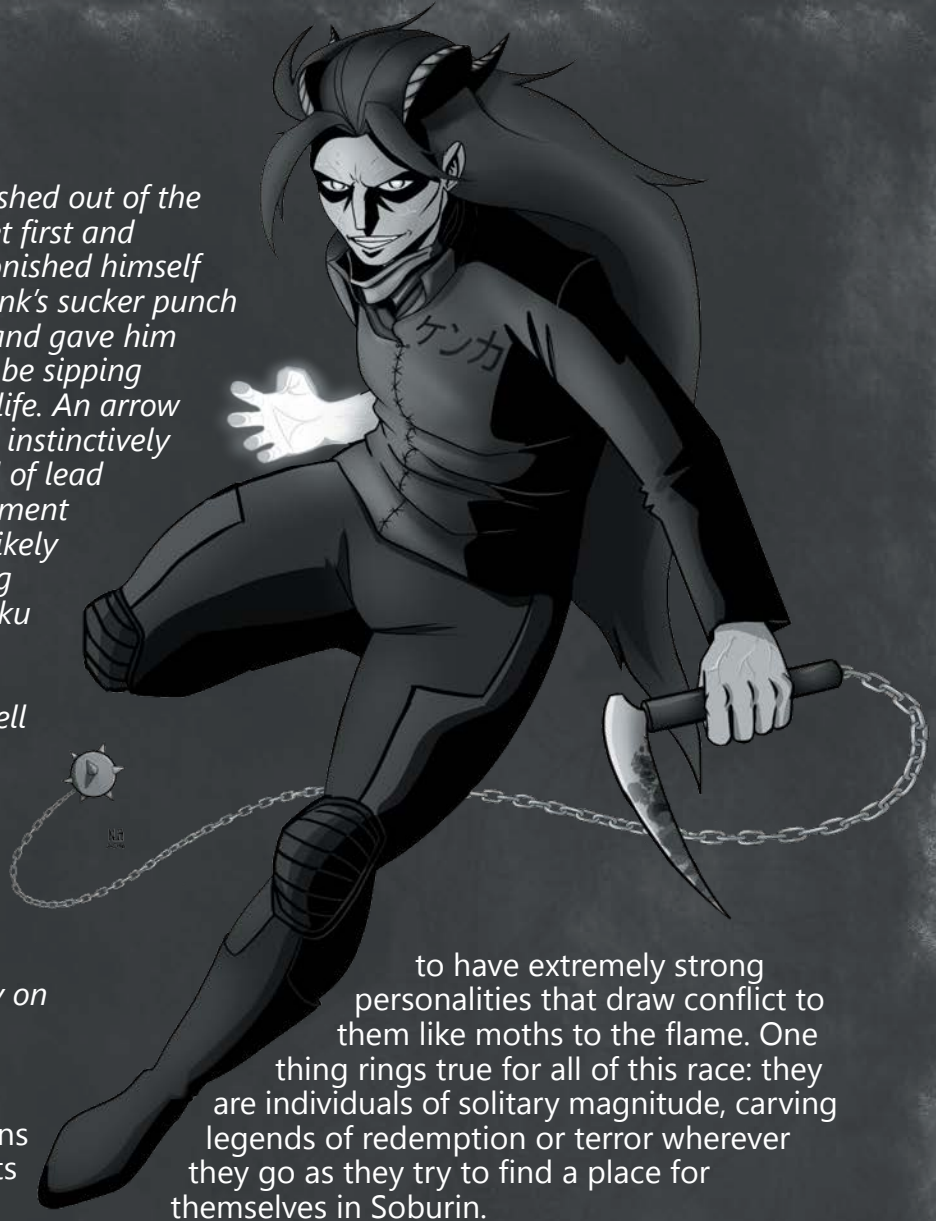
Starting Attribute Scores Strength 10, Agility 9, Intellect 11, Will 10. Choose one attribute and increase it by 1.
Perception equals your Intellect score
Defense equals your Agility score + 1
Health equals your Strength score
Healing Rate equals one-quarter your Health, round down
Size 1, **Speed** 8, **Power** 0
Damage 0, **Insanity** 0, **Corruption** 0
Languages and Professions You speak the Common Tongue, and you can either speak one additional language or add a random profession.
Immune damage from disease or poison; diseased, poisoned
Shadowsight You see in areas obscured by shadows as if those areas were lit.
Undead Abomination You take half damage from cold and unholy. You do not need to eat, drink water, or breathe but still require a resting period to recharge your inner workings.
Hated You gain the hated affliction. You suffer 2 bane when making social challenge rolls against any humanoid that doesn't also have the hated affliction but you never suffer bane on challenge rolls made to intimidate humanoids.
Vulnerability You take double damage from holy.

Level 4 Expert Necroji

Characteristics Health +4
You either learn one spell or increase an attribute by 1.
Darksight You can see in areas obscured by shadows or darkness within medium range as if those areas were lit. Beyond this distance, you treat darkness as shadows and shadows as lit. If you already possess darksight (perhaps from electrolens augmetics or the sniper ability) you gain sightless to a range of 5 yards instead.

ONI-TOUCHED

Amanojaku tucked into a roll as he crashed out of the window and into the street, landing feet first and breaking into a swift sprint as he admonished himself for not being more aware. The first drunk's sucker punch had smudged the makeup on his face and gave him away—had he been more careful, he'd be sipping tea right now instead of fleeing for his life. An arrow flitted by his head and the oni-touched instinctively ducked around a street corner as a hail of lead shot flew past where he was only a moment ago, tearing a food cart to pieces and likely killing the old soburi working it. Casting a glance back at his pursuers Amanojaku grabbed a quartet of shuriken and let them fly in a haphazard throw toward the angry villagers, but even as a few fell more came up from behind and only further enraged. Looking towards his avenue of escape he could hear another band of enraged men and women coming toward him and he let flow more of his inherent power, his veins lighting up as he leapt up onto the rooftops and temporary safety on a cloud of blue fire followed only by exclamations of discontent.



Oni-touched are the children of humans conceived after corruption by the Mists of Akuma, even newer to the lands of the prefectures than mutants or psonorous. Though they are raised like other children (albeit by parents that tend to be harsher than others) at puberty their bodies change and morph to reveal the tainted blood of their heritage, leading most to become orphans as they reach maturity. Walking reminders of the terrifying ancient evil that threatens all of Soburin, the polluted bloodlines of oni-touched set them apart as the race most reviled by soburi, hated even more than the ceramians or ropaeo.

Offspring of Akuma

Typically abandoned by their families and communities, there is a strong tendency for oni-touched to be self-reliant survivors. Despite the fear their appearance engenders in most of the other races the supernatural beauty granted by their contaminated ancestry cannot be denied—combined with their independent nature, oni-touched tend to have extremely strong personalities that draw conflict to them like moths to the flame. One thing rings true for all of this race: they are individuals of solitary magnitude, carving legends of redemption or terror wherever they go as they try to find a place for themselves in Soburin.

Though drawn from human stock oni-touched tend to be much taller and wider than their parents, making them physically imposing even when disguised. Some grow small horns along their shoulderblades, neck, limbs, or skull, but even more noticeable are the unnatural veins running across their reddish skin—when oni-touched use their inborn magical abilities these blood vessels flare with power that no reasonable amount of wax or cloth can hide. Still more variations occur to humans transformed in the womb by the Mists of Akuma and new kinds of oni-touched appear throughout the prefectures every day.

Humanity Corrupted

There are ancient tales that speak of soburi changed by the Mists of Akuma but not reduced into adeddo-oni, mages and warriors who instead went on to be reviled by history for complicity with yai sovereigns or oni warlords. Though not seen for millennia

an overwhelming hatred for these figures persists today, used alongside rumors of monstrous violence to drown out the few voices of reason that sometimes speak in defense of these corrupted beings. The oni-touched have little choice but to withstand the fear and loathing of the other races however, as the few that choose to live outside civilization rarely survive long thanks to the superstitions of ignorant farmers and the hardbitten folk of the frontiers.

Regardless of what many believe oni-touched are not actually inherently evil—the few that continue to receive affection and direction from their families often grow to be just as moral and ethical as any other ceramian, ropaeo, or soburi. This is unfortunately a rarity and many oni-touched are drawn towards malice and wickedness however, perpetuating the notion that the corruption affects their minds and souls as well as their bodies. Many oni-touched share a wistful love for the arts and take up a craft with the same seriousness they would for mastering blades or spells, devoting a disproportionate amount of resources and time to creating a masterpiece that bridges the gap from their lost humanity.

Oni-touched are as individualistic as their unique mutations and as different from one another as humans are. The predilection many seem to have for depravity or dishonor are almost entirely the result of nurture over nature, and it is not unusual for one to harbor a deep hatred for a specific prefecture or settlement that abandoned and discarded them. As is common among the dispossessed, few oni-touched believe in united fronts and most are suspicious of groups that seek to include them, wary of being disowned yet again.

Hidden in Plain Sight

There are tales of oni-touched villages hidden away in secure, difficult to reach locales, but few living souls can confirm these secret settlements. Many choose instead to hide among humanity in the cities of Soburin, using makeup or magic to conceal their true nature for as long as they possibly can before being outed and forced to move on. To complete their charade oni-touched refrain from using their most spectacular talents, accepting menial tasks and simple occupations to avoid notoriety (and therein suspicion). Not all are concerned about remaining discrete however—there are some that revel in the power they wield, ever thirsty for more opportunities, to shed ever more blood.

Masters of the Mists

One thing remains true among the various oni-touched all over Soburin: they are seemingly immune to the Mists of Akuma. This has led many clan lords to seek them out as honor guards despite the revulsion shown by their courts, allowing the corrupted humans into imperial estates and treating them with the same outward respect received by esteemed samurai and spellswords. Though it sows discontent, the oni-touched's ability to walk unharmed through the dark haze lets them insure that these vaunted places in society remain within their grasp (intimidating or slaughtering their detractors when the fell fogs appear, dispatching of any witnesses in the enclosed spaces the fleeing nobles hide within).

Oni-Touched Names

Many oni-touched have the names common to the culture of their progenitors something about the changes to the minds and souls of their parents instill an urge to give offspring "unique" names that have been planted by the dark forces driving the Mists of Akuma.

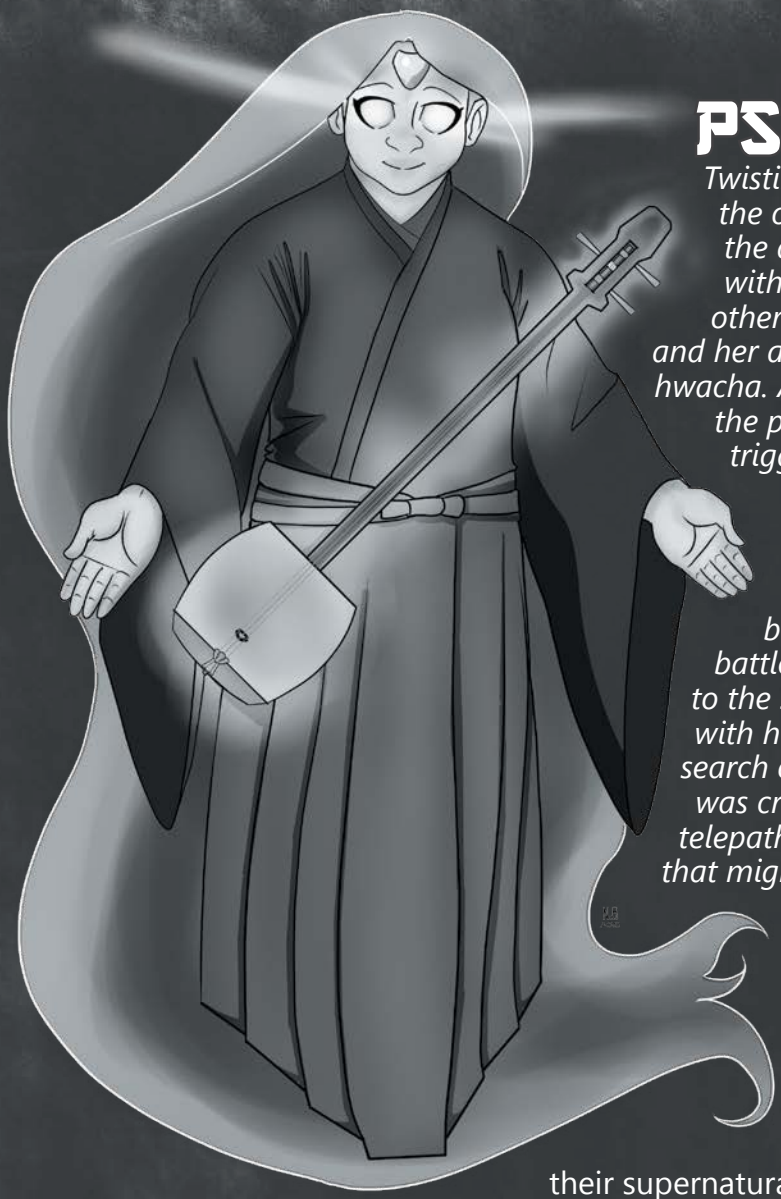
Male Names: Amanojaku, Betobeto, Furaribi, Gagoze, Hiyoribō, Samebito
Female Names: Enenra, Hiderigami, Itsumade, Kiyohime, Raijū, Tōfu-Kozō

Creating An Oni-Touched

Starting Attribute Scores Strength 10, Agility 10, Intellect 10, Will 10. Choose one attribute and increase it by 1.
Perception equals your Intellect score
Defense equals your Agility score
Health equals your Strength score
Healing Rate equals one-quarter your Health, round down
Size 1, **Speed** 12, **Power** 0
Damage 0, **Insanity** 0, **Corruption** 0
Languages and Professions You speak Adeddo and the Common Tongue, and you can either speak one additional language or add a random profession.
Darksight You can see in areas obscured by shadows or darkness within medium range as if those areas were lit. Beyond this distance, you treat darkness as shadows and shadows as lit
Magic Talent Choose one rank 0 spell. You are able to cast this spell without the need for speaking the words or wielding the implements. If an attribute is required for spellcasting, you use Will.
Master Infiltrator You gain 1 boon and never suffer bane on challenge rolls made to deceive or to resist deception.
Hated You gain the hated affliction. You suffer 2 bane when making social challenge rolls against any humanoid that doesn't also have the hated affliction but you never suffer bane on challenge rolls made to intimidate humanoids.

Level 4 Expert Oni-Touched

Characteristics Health +5
You either learn one spell or increase one attribute by 1.
Corrupted You cannot die from or be transformed by exposure to the Mists of Akuma regardless of how high your Haitoku is.



PSONOROUS

Twisting through the air and out of the path of the oni's supernatural scissors, Enmusubi closed the door behind the bloodthirsty murderer with a telekinetic thrust from one hand. In her other was a gift from the bengoshi that sent her and her allies here: a strange firearm called a hand hwacha. As the kuchisake-onna lunged at her again the psonorous quickly took aim and pulled the trigger, sending a veritable storm of lead down the pistol's thirteen barrels and directly at the deformed woman attacking her. Quick as it might have been, the creature was only fast enough to avoid a few of the bullets and several found their mark—the battle was ended, the kuchisake-onna slumping to the stone floor with a wet thud. Reaching out with her powerful mind Enmusubi called out in search of survivors, floating above the blood that was creeping across the floor and making her telepathic voice as soothing as possible for anyone that might be fearfully hiding.

Sages from the Imperial Court postulate that for every cursed mutant that crawls onto the shores of Soburin, a blessed psonorous finds their way to the lands of the prefectures as well. These mentally-empowered creatures possess an otherworldly beauty matched only by their supernatural powers and though they are short-lived, most have a love for life that makes them almost universally beloved. Psonorous spend their abbreviated lives bringing light and peace to the decaying world before they are inevitably snuffed out like the bright-burning candles they are.

Children of Light

Psonorous are a rarity among rarities in a dying world, regularly embodying the finest qualities of any of the sentient races. Though they may not all be joyful, each is as imbued with good will as they are mental prowess—a resource they are never lacking. Confident, courageous, forthright, polite, and trustworthy, psonorous receive far better treatment than their equally mutated counterparts thanks to their angelic appearance and affable natures. The fact that psonorous have supernatural talents is immediately obvious to most observers due to the psionic power brimming off of the small-statured humanoids, and few make any effort to hide the unique gems emerging from their foreheads.

Candles in the Darkness

Scientists and scholars alike have very little understanding of the psychic humanoids from across the Great Divide save for postulations that the small race are children exposed to the same energies that result in mutants. Crossing the edge of the world scrambles the memories of psonorous—leaving them with a confusing amnesia once they reach Soburin—but they are almost always met with open arms by the communities they come upon, quickly coming to think of these settlements as the only homes they've ever known.

The powerful mental abilities they possess make psonorous excellent commanders and powerful combatants yet they prefer to find peaceful resolutions whenever possible. The trusting nature and naivete of these benign creatures are also something that the duplicitous of Soburin have learned to exploit—more than one village has had its gates opened to bandits in the night that have tricked a benevolent psonorous into allowing them entry.

Enlightening Civilization

The short life spans (only a few decades at most) and rarity of psonorous have made it impossible for them to form settlements of their own. Instead they spread all across the prefectures, usually in the company of nobles or merchants that make use of their psychic abilities for intrigue (often without the mental scions ever realizing the true part they play). Criminal gangs go out of their way to maintain complex charades for psonorous under their sway, slowly morphing the psionic asset to their way of thinking.

Distinct Mutations

Psonorous can have countless distinct variations as a result of their transformation by the apocalyptic energies across the edge of the world. At the GM's discretion, you may choose to take one of these racial traits instead of the psonorous' increase to Agility.

Invasive Mind By spending an action, you may make an Intellect attack roll against the Intelligence of a creature you can see within medium range. On a success, you are able to read the target's mind for 1 round. Once you have used Invasive Mind a number of times equal to your power (minimum 1), you cannot do so until you have finished a rest.

Mental Calibration As a triggered action, you can determine the health of a creature you can see, and its current hit point total. Unwilling creatures receive a Will challenge roll to resist this effect. When a creature successfully resists Mental Calibration it is immune to it for the next 24 hours.

Shield Mind (Grounded only) As a triggered action, you can grant 1 boon to a Will challenge roll being made by a creature within range of your telepathy. Once you have used Shield Mind a number of times equal to your Will modifier, you cannot do so again until have finished a rest.

Telekinetic Flight (Airborn only) When you are carrying no more than half your carrying limit, you gain Flier 4.

Psonorous Names

Arriving in Soburin without any knowledge of their true names, psonorous are often christened by local soburi with angelic titles from myths and folklore, honoring helpful spirits that blessed a settlement's ancestors.

Male Names: Caoguojiu, Hanxiangzi, Li-Tieguai, Lüdong, Xiangu, Zhongli-Quan
Female Names: Apsara, Enmusubi, Futokku, Gakuten, Karura, Tennyo

Creating A Psonorous

Starting Attribute Scores Strength 8, Agility 11, Intellect 10, Will 10.
Perception equals your Intellect score
Defense equals your Agility score
Health equals your Strength score
Healing Rate equals one-quarter your Health, round down
Size 1/2, **Speed** 8, **Power** 0
Damage 0, **Insanity** 0, **Corruption** 0
Languages and Professions You speak the Common Tongue.
Metacreative By spending an action you can telekinetically move unattended objects (of a weight no greater than double your Intellect score) within 5 yards.
Shadowsight You see in areas obscured by shadows as if those areas were lit.
Telepathy You can communicate telepathically within 20 yards.
Mental Focus All psonorous manifest one of two different types of abilities. Choose one of the following:
- **Airborn** Your Will becomes 11. You can use Metacreative as a triggered action.
- **Grounded** Your Intellect becomes 11. You are able to mentally communicate over great distances with creatures well known to you. After spending at least a week with another creature, you are able to send and receive messages from them via telepathy as long as they are within range (one mile per 2 levels you possess). Sending messages is an action and receiving messages is a triggered action.

Level 4 Expert Psonorous

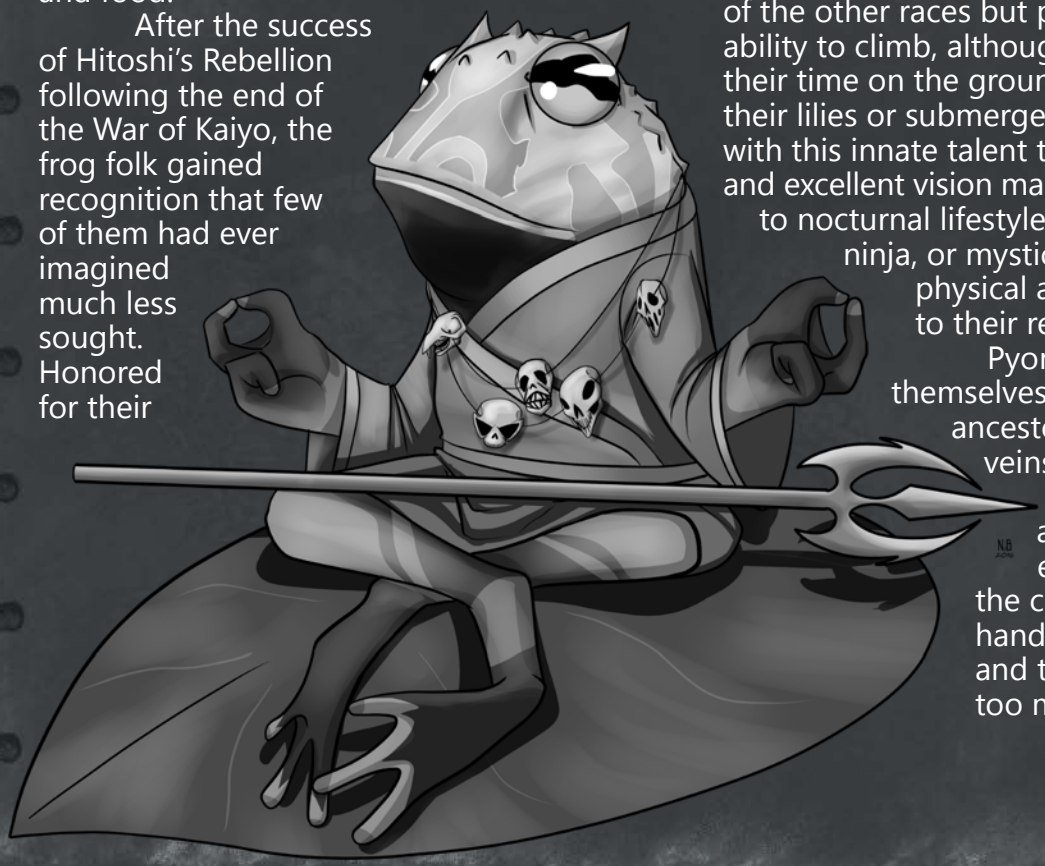
Characteristics Health +4
You either learn one spell or increase one attribute by 1. Either way your mental focus increases.
Darksight You can see in areas obscured by shadows or darkness within medium range as if those areas were lit. Beyond this distance, you treat darkness as shadows and shadows as lit.
Airborn You do not actually walk on the ground, but instead float just above it. You are immune to the prone affliction unless grabbed or unconscious, and you can use your triggered action when you fall to reduce any falling damage you take by an amount equal to five times your level. You are not able to float on any surface that would not normally support your weight. You leave no tracks and creatures tracking you must do so by scent.
Grounded You gain 1 boon on Will challenge rolls made to resist abilities and spells.

PYON

Meditating on his lily pad in the heart of the Hikuidesu Swamp, Yuto had a sudden, disturbing vision as the mists around him darkened to a crimson red and snaked out to touch him. Reacting suddenly he shifted to the left and felt the pad dip into the water. Fearing he'd sink further and more than just a little alarmed, the pyon tried to correct his mistake by leaning to the right. The pad only fell further, rocking slightly and sending ripples across the rest of the pond to upset his fellow students. He looked up and gave an apologetic, low croak as his master began floating gently toward him, frowning.

Originally a peaceful and reflective people who took only what they needed from the swamps around them, the pyon were changed by the Kengen Occupation. Driven to protect their marshes and allies inside the Osore Prefecture (with which they've long had peaceful relations) the frog folk quickly learned to harness their inner hunter and did a great deal to defend against those who would dominate their homes. While the collective defense of Soburin wasn't enough to repel the invaders the pyon played a significant role, performing lightning fast raids against foreigner patrols, destroying supply lines, and poisoning their enemy's stockpiles of water and food.

After the success of Hitoshi's Rebellion following the end of the War of Kaiyo, the frog folk gained recognition that few of them had ever imagined much less sought. Honored for their swift blades and deadly tactics, the pyon were welcomed into Osore and invited to share their ways with their allies—further cementing the longstanding alliance. In a show of respect the clan outfitted all of their soldiers with emerald colored armor and grinning faceplates to better identify their ancient connection with the frog folk. Though initially put off by the gesture, the pyon eventually embraced and adopted the iconography themselves.



Emerald Hunter-Mystics

Today many pyon have returned to the peaceful lives they once lived, retreating to their swamplands to raise spawn of their own. Although a rare few of their kind wish ill upon others those who were raised in the shadows of war (or worse, in the shadows of those who would celebrate the horrors of war) continue to train for a life of conflict, using their skills to ward away the Osore Clan's enemies as well as the Mists of Akuma.

The Long Leapers of War

Naturally dexterous and able to outdistance most creatures their size in a few leaps, the pyon suffered far more than many of Soburin's denizens when it came to their exploitation by the ceramians. Today many pyon are reclaiming their physical strengths, marking them as dangerous hunters, quick messengers, and excellent scouts. They lack the speed of some of the other races but pyon possess a natural ability to climb, although they tend to enjoy their time on the ground (lounging restfully on their lilies or submerged in swamp water). Along with this innate talent their natural colorations and excellent vision make the frog folk adaptable to nocturnal lifestyles as tribal hunters, deadly ninja, or mystical guides—drawing both physical and spiritual adventurers to their respective swamps.

Pyon do not produce toxins themselves but the blood of their ancestors still runs through their veins, granting them a natural resistance to poisons of all kinds. A fact that, when eventually discovered by the ceramians, led to their handling of many poisons and toxins (costing far too many their lives).

The Sacred Swamp Walkers

Much of what defines the pyon today arises from their treatment in the past, both by the Osore Clan and the ceramians who enslaved them. Those who were forced into the bloody wars no longer croak their deep, bellowing swamp dirges, but the frog folk have made a point to remember the pain of their forefathers so that they might never again face the brutality of such oppression. A greater need for a vigilant warrior class resulted and these protectors watch from the dark, patiently waiting for when they must strike. Conversely, spiritual and mystical pursuits among pyon have been reinforced to create a new tradition of tribal scholar-warriors, many of whom focus on developing martial skills that naturally capitalize on their strengths. All of this spirals inward for their peoples leading to what many call the *Sacred Art of Right Balance*, which the frog folk often symbolize as an individual pyon resting gently on a single lily. This is as much a spiritual pursuit as it is a philosophy leading outsiders to assume that these apparently gentle creatures are not as fierce as the Osore portray them—although nothing could be further from the truth.

Frog folk society embraces their history as warriors but the task of each individual pyon is theirs to choose alone and elders are quick to remind younger generations of this simple fact. Nothing defines them like their swamps and they work tirelessly to make those marshes precisely what they want as a race. As one would expect, pyon openly interpret this in a wide variety of ways with as many leaving their tribes on spiritual quests as those who elect to remain, looking ever onward into their inner realms and seeking perfect balance on an imperfect lily.

The Emerald Clades

Pyon tend to form roving collectives that align themselves to specific clades of lilies, building cool, compact homes along the banks of the swamps in which they live (almost invariably focusing on a central grouping of carefully tended lilies). Outsiders often note the frog folk focus on the inner activity of their settlements, their eldest members resting in the center with younglings while adults patrol the perimeter, carefully watching for predators or catching food.

Most pyon clades are led by elders and this is especially true in remote groups where outsiders are uncommon. As one moves closer to human settlements this power structure shifts as some frog folk adopt outsider ideas and, to an extent, ruling structures. Those born with mystical abilities are almost always afforded special treatment and when possible groomed for leadership. As natural hunter-gatherers pyon in remote regions rarely take on particular professions but as they move closer to civilization this changes; those who dwell closest to the Osore Clan's cities often take up alchemy and herbalism or in some instances more violent professions—only the exceptionally gifted frog folk are recruited to become Numanojanpā, although this trend has greatly subsided since the end of the Kengen Occupation.

Pyon Names

Frog folk have an interesting and fairly specific naming convention that they associate with gender, although this tradition is designed to help outsiders more than it is the pyon themselves (who innately recognize the coloration patterns that determine sex): adding special suffixes to their names that indicates their gender. For male pyon the suffix –pa is added while females include the suffix –sa. Family names are a much simpler matter, adopted from the environment and generally signifying the spawn from which they were hatched.

Male Names: Hara-pa, Ryota-pa, Yuki-pa
Female Names: Kohara-sa, Hinata-sa, Ria-sa
Family Names: Bluemist, Greenwater, Ghostmist, Lilyfire, Wettertouch

Creating A Pyon

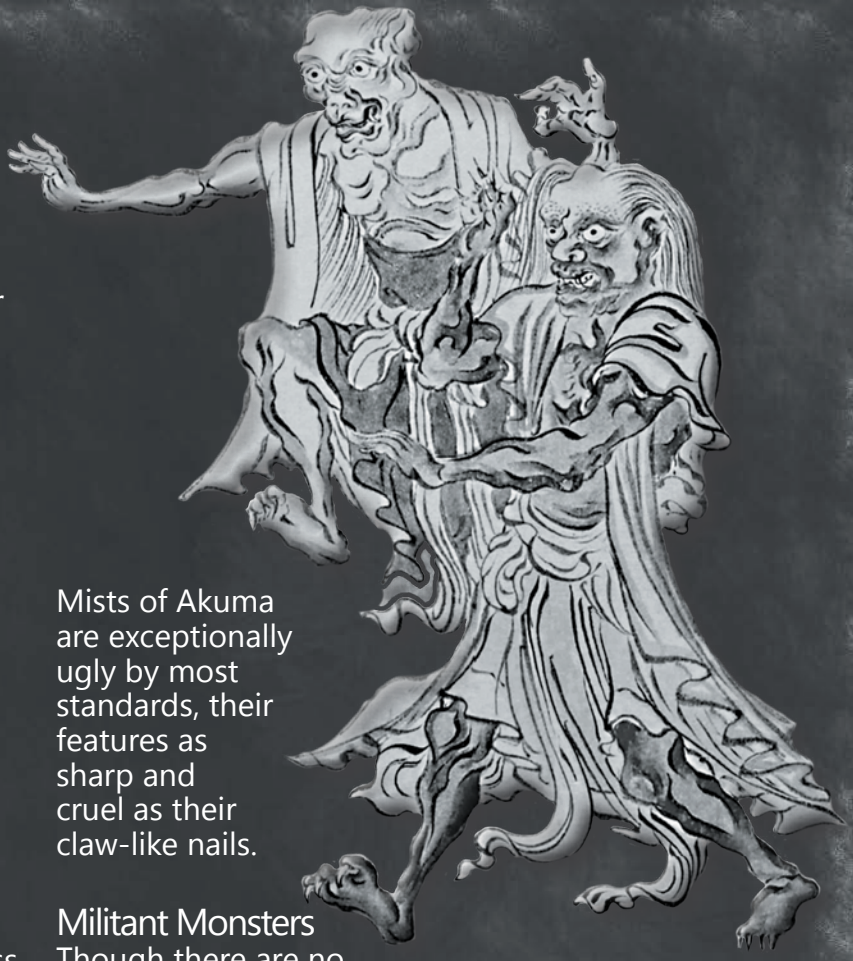
Starting Attribute Scores Strength 9, Agility 11, Intellect 10, Will 10. Choose one attribute and increase it by 1.
Perception equals your Intellect score
Defense equals your Agility score
Health equals your Strength score
Healing Rate equals one-quarter your Health, round down
Size 1/2, **Speed** 8, **Power** 0
Damage 0, **Insanity** 0, **Corruption** 0
Languages and Professions You speak the Common Tongue, and you can either speak one additional language or add a random profession.
Amphibious You are able to breathe both air and water.
Climber You gain climber equal to your speed –2.
Natural Jumper You gain 1 boon on challenge rolls made to jump.
Poison Resistance You gain 1 boon on challenge rolls made to resist the poisoned affliction and take half damage from poison.
Shadowsight You see in areas obscured by shadows as if those areas were lit.

Level 4 Expert Pyon

Characteristics Health +4
You either learn one spell or increase an attribute by 1.
Darksight You can see in areas obscured by shadows or darkness within medium range as if those areas were lit. Beyond this distance, you treat darkness as shadows and shadows as lit.
Leaper You gain Leap equal to your Agility. Unlike normal, you can leap distances greater than your regular speed.

SHIKOME

Waiting silently atop the bough of a tree not a half mile into the haunted Daraku Forests, Hisame gripped the blade of its wakizashi tightly in one grotesque red hand as the other firmly grasped the knotted wood, both tense with anticipation. Only a few feet below walked an unsuspecting trio of yamabushi that sauntered without a care in the world, blissfully unaware of the fate about to befall them. The shikome waited until the perfect moment before dropping down from above, slashing its blade down into the crease of one of their necks and ending the man's life immediately. His partners screamed, fleeing into the brush and unknowingly rushing toward the next ambush—exactly as planned.



Mists of Akuma are exceptionally ugly by most standards, their features as sharp and cruel as their claw-like nails.

While lesser creatures that fall to the Mists of Akuma become bakemono, larger beasts transform into something else entirely: the brutal shikome. For as devious and sneaky as their shorter kin are, these hobgoblins are natural fighters—brazen warriors that possess an impressive will as fear-inspiring as their martial prowess, making them a true threat to the prefectures. Oni warlords take advantage of this natural militancy and recruit shikome as soldiers in their armies, granting them greater authority with every successful battle. Their most powerful trait may be the potent hatred they have for the other peoples of Soburin, an edge that makes them all the more ruthless.

Akuma Born

Shikome are bloodthirsty and violent but have a strong sense of discipline that serves them well by making it easier to survive on the fringes of the wilderness, forge a place for themselves in society, or endure under the command of an oni warlord. As much as they are hated, even veteran samurai have to admit (with some reluctance) that shikome are not lacking for bravery, either on the battlefield or in life, and their tactical way of thinking only makes them seem all the bolder.

There are two distinct breeds of hobgoblins—some have skin as red as fresh blood and others are as white as a ghost—but nearly all shikome are taller than most humanoids and exceptionally lean, almost as though their bodies have been stretched out. Regardless of their type these offspring of the

Militant Monsters

Though there are no writings by their kind in the vaunted halls of the Library of Scrolls in Sanbaoshi, hidden athenaeums in the mountains and within the walls of oni fortresses contain the battle scripture of prolific shikome warriors and master forgers. These heroes of the hobgoblins are rightly despised by soburi and honored by their descendants, demonized as murderers from before the ascent of the Imperial Siblings and used as the inspiring figures that soldiers in Erītokirā Chapters aspire to emulate. The impact they have had on Soburin is undeniable regardless of how loathed human sages are to admit it—the most telling evidence of all being their mastery of the martial arts stances, some rumored to be the relics of ancestral shikome monks long ago.

Inside of the prefectures shikome rely on discipline to belay their desire to shed blood until the moment to strike is upon them, a difficult task given how much they tend to hate the other races. This shared revulsion makes them hard to get along with as well but the hobgoblins' tactically-minded attitudes result in them valuing members from the other races as a matter of utility (a relationship often mistaken as friendship). Those working for or under the thrall of oni warlords fall into military lifestyles, earning rank based on how

many notable foes they've slain or for great achievements that set them apart from their peers. When blades are drawn, shikome—regardless of their allegiance or type—prefer to fight in close quarters using short blades, riding the thrill that comes from killing up close.

Erītokirā Chapters

Shikome that embrace the shattered past of their race inevitably join an Erītokirā Chapter, a collection of warriors that devote themselves entirely to the edicts and philosophies of the great hobgoblin heroes of the ancient past. These soldiers are zealous to the extreme, taking the word of their founder as law and defending their battle brothers against any that dare speak against the order's beliefs. Beholden only to their chapter leader, the bands of elite killers offer their services to anyone able to pay the large sums of Imperial Pieces required to infiltrate an enemy stronghold, assassinate a traveling dignitary, and (if rumors are true) to even bring ruin to an entire settlement. Every Erītokirā Chapter is manned by shikome infantry, scouts, and commanders, but aside from their leader the most respected roles fall to shisho (librarians to record their deeds) and sumisu (smiths to craft ever more armor and weaponry).

While they are a rarity, there are hobgoblins to be found in Soburin's settlements living alongside the peoples they loathe. The shikome that integrate into society are usually remanded to menial labor but quickly distinguish themselves no matter their job, though most of these find their station in an occupation (whether that be in the docks, a farmstead, or as part of a legitimate business) is ultimately limited by the discrimination against their race. The only exception to this are traitor sumisu—these smiths are sought out by the pragmatic and wealthy because of their incredible creations (weaving magic and science) but they are always difficult to find as their former battle-brothers seek them with murderous intent.

Batle Brothers

There is no greater honor to the disciplined shikome than to be accepted into an Erītokirā Chapter. The oaths sworn there are of the highest import and taken with utmost seriousness, driving those that take them to accept tasks that end with their death or their mission's success—and many of the hobgoblins that endure society are there by the direct orders of their chapter leader. At the GM's discretion, you may choose to take the shadowsight trait instead of darksight and gain one of the following:

Shisho (Blessed only) You are tasked with maintaining and restoring the history of your race. You gain 1 boon on challenge rolls made to recall historical information. As a triggered action you can inspire an ally able to hear you, allowing them to reroll a single attack roll or challenge roll.

Sumisu (Cursed only) You have a talent for crafting armor and (by using secrets stolen from the korobokuru) are even able to incorporate technology into your creations. You are able to incorporate a number of augmetics (page 215) equal to your Intellect modifier into a suit of heavy armor but you must already have the augmetic and it costs 5 gold in materials to integrate it. It takes you one day of forging to incorporate an uncommon augmetic or one week of forging to incorporate a rare augmetic.

Shikome Names

Shikome have simple names that are easy to call out and recognize in the heat of battle.

Shikome Names: Burēku, Gai, Hitto, Katto, Kirikizu, Kurasshu, Piasu, Sakimasu, Shukettsu
Erītokirā Chapters: Arufa-Gundan, Haiiro-Nokishi, Karasugādo, Kodomo-Tachi, Kōteino, Kurai-Tenshi, Runaookami, Sanshō̄o

Creating A Shikome

Starting Attribute Scores Strength 11, Agility 10, Intellect 10, Will 10. Choose Intellect or Will and increase it by 1.
Perception equals your Intellect score
Defense equals your Agility score
Health equals your Strength score
Healing Rate equals one-quarter your Health, round down
Size 1, **Speed** 10, **Power** 0
Damage 0, **Insanity** 0, **Corruption** 0
Languages and Professions You speak Adeddo and the Common Tongue, and you can either speak one additional language or add a random profession.
Brave You gain 1 boon on challenge rolls made to resist the frightened affliction.
Darksight You can see in areas obscured by shadows or darkness within medium range as if those areas were lit. Beyond this distance, you treat darkness as shadows and shadows as lit.
Hated You have the hated affliction. You suffer 2 bane when making social challenge rolls against any humanoid that doesn't also have the hated affliction but you never suffer bane on challenge rolls made to intimidate humanoids.
Adeddo Origin Shikome are begat by the Mists of Akuma when it claims beasts, gaining different abilities depending on if they were prey (blessed) or predator (cursed). Choose one of the following:
Blessed When your Haitoku score increases, your Dignity does not decrease.
Cursed You gain 2 boonson challenge rolls made to resist the Mists of Akuma.

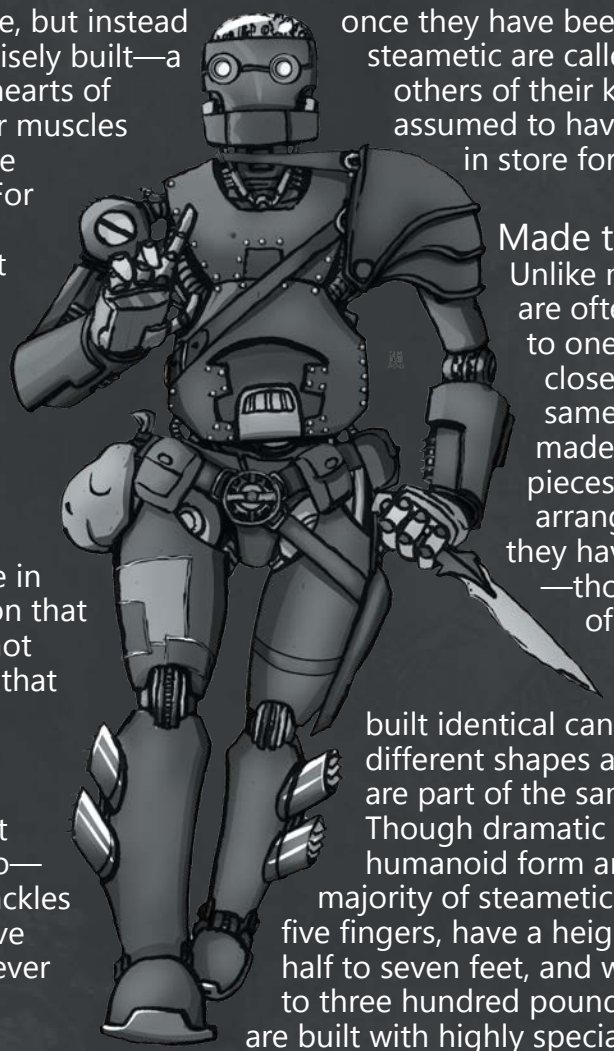
Level 4 Expert Shikome

Characteristics Health +5
You either learn one spell or increase one of your attributes by 1.
Blessed You cannot be transformed by or die from exposure to the Mists of Akuma regardless of how high your Haitoku attribute is.
Cursed Once per turn, you can deal 1d6 additional damage to a creature you hit with a melee weapon attack if that creature is within 2 yards of an ally that is able to make attacks.

STEAMETIC

Stepping into the factory was like stepping into another world. Every one of the steametics working there moved in perfect and eerily silent precision with one another. They knew their tasks implicitly—not a single one moving out of line until the whistle blew—and all at once they erupted in casual conversation like that too had been planned.

Steametics are not a natural race, but instead purposefully designed and precisely built—a clockwork people powered by hearts of steam. Their limbs are iron, their muscles pistons, and their minds intricate networks of gears and wheels. For this reason many people see steametics not as truly alive, but instead as complex mimicries. They obviously disagree with this, believing that their self-awareness alone makes them "alive"; their opponents instead argue that since they lack souls, they cannot be "alive" as it has been defined since the dawn of mankind. Most take neither side in the debate, adopting the opinion that whether they are truly alive or not makes no difference to the fact that steametics exist.



Steametic Awakening

Steametic are a new people that are still learning what—and who—they are. Many still bear the shackles of their original purpose: to serve as expendable warriors in whatever conflict their ceramian creators ordered them toward. For most steametics their purpose is decided before they are even built, either by the factory where they are assembled or the individual who constructed them.

This decision is partly made during the construction process—a steametic destined for heavy labor is built more heavily, for instance—but more than that it is expressly stated to them upon their "birth". The process (called "awakening" by some) refers to the moment when a steametic first changes from an inanimate construction of metal gears to a fully sentient creature.

Exactly *why* steametics come to life as they do is a mystery lost alongside their original inventors. Even the most brilliant soburi scholars cannot determine precisely where the minds of these clockwork soldiers originate from—or how it is so easy to replicate regardless of the wide variety of form and function. Of even larger mystery is why some steametics do not awaken immediately despite being physically identical to their brethren. In rare cases a steametic waits minutes or even hours before springing to life once they have been completed. These steametic are called the twice-born by others of their kind and are often assumed to have some great destiny in store for them (for good or ill).

Made to Order

Unlike many races steametics are often physically identical to one another. Those built close together and in the same factory might be made of precisely the same pieces in precisely the same arrangement. Accordingly they have similar personalities—though more akin to that of twins than of truly perfect copies.

Those who are not built identical can have dramatically different shapes and sizes—and all are part of the same steametic race. Though dramatic departures from the humanoid form are not unknown, the majority of steametics fall between two to five fingers, have a height from four and a half to seven feet, and weigh between one to three hundred pounds. Some steametics are built with highly specialized tools or more limbs, ranging from climbing treads and saw blades to tracked-wheels and jackhammers.

One of the few features all steametics share is their heads—distinct and boxy, with a crudely humanoid face made of lights, sensors, and a voice box. This head doesn't contain their entire life-essence, however; while a steametic missing a head is likely in a fatally dangerous situation, the loss of a head is not itself immediately fatal. If the head is quickly and correctly reattached—a process roughly as complex as reattaching a living creature's severed limb (an Intellect

challenge roll with 2 banes)—a steametic can survive an injury that would have proven fatal to most mortal creatures.

Structure in All Things

Steametics are made of precisely ordered gears, springs, and pulleys, and they are understandably obsessed with the order of all things. This does not mean that they will always follow rules set forth by others, even legitimate authorities—instead they have their own internal set of strict rules governing their behavior. Often these rules and the local laws do align but not always, and those who find themselves disagreed with by a steametic find that they have an uphill battle to win the argument.

This obsession with order is reflected in all aspects of their lives and habits as well; steametic workplaces are orderly, packed neatly, and have detailed lists and logs. They distrust emotions—which they claim to have though outsiders cannot be truly sure—and prefer a well-reasoned argument to any passionate plea. When a steametic becomes disordered, it is typically seen as the first sign of a slowly dying mind. What few robotic authorities exist feel that ending the life of a disordered among their kind is more akin to putting a dying animal out of its misery than outright murder.

Factory Life

Steametics do not have any cities of their own, instead living in factory-like districts in human settlements wherever they can establish themselves. At the heart of these gridded streets full of boxy buildings one can always find a birthing factory where new steametics are constructed. These workshops are clean to the point of being sterile and precisely ordered; dozens if not hundreds of their kind can be found working in one of these plants on any given day, utilizing careful precision to assemble the next of their growing race. It requires hundreds of days worth of labor and hundreds of pounds of precisely cut metal pieces to assemble a new steametic, which are given their names and purpose within seconds of awakening.

Despite the sacredness that steametics treat the creation of their own kind they eagerly welcome any willing mind and able body into their factories to assist in the process. They call these outsiders inventor-cousins and provide them with as much detail as they are willing to absorb in the process. The collective hope is that each bright mind who learns how to build one of their kind might do so—or they might develop some new or useful variation that can improve the strength of their race overall.

Oftentimes inventor-cousins do just that, offering their thoughts to the factory-fathers who oversee all work or taking copies of plans home to begin the process on their own. Rarely do these new designs bear fruit but as failed attempts can almost always be recycled (except for those who attack their inventors), nearly any innovation is experimented upon.

Steametic Names

Steametics are genderless and while some adopt some minor gender-like features in imitation of other races, the vast majority of them refer to one another and themselves through a name gifted to them by their creator upon their awakening (typically based on a code that is determined by their original purpose or design).

Names: Aitti, Cittee, Deez, Dub-Sev, Heych, Millown, Noot, Onne, Sevveni, Threh, Zeta

Creating A Steametic

Starting Attribute Scores Strength 11, Agility 10, Intellect 10, Will 9. Choose one attribute and increase it by 1.
Perception equals your Intellect score
Defense equals your Agility score + 1
Health equals your Strength score
Healing Rate equals one-quarter your Health, round down
Size 1, **Speed** 10, **Power** 0
Damage 0, **Insanity** 0, **Corruption** 0
Languages and Professions You speak the Common Tongue.
Immune damage from disease or poison; diseased, poisoned
Darksight You can see in areas obscured by shadows or darkness within medium range as if those areas were lit. Beyond this distance, you treat darkness as shadows and shadows as lit.
Automated You take half damage from psychic. You do not need to eat or breathe. You still need to drink and you require a resting period that emulates sleep in order to recharge your inner workings. When you make a challenge roll to resist taking lightning damage, you are at 1 bane.
Immunity diseased, poisoned
Steametic Resistances You gain 1 boon on challenge rolls made to resist the charmed, compelled, and frightened afflictions.
Vulnerability You take double damage from acid and lightning.

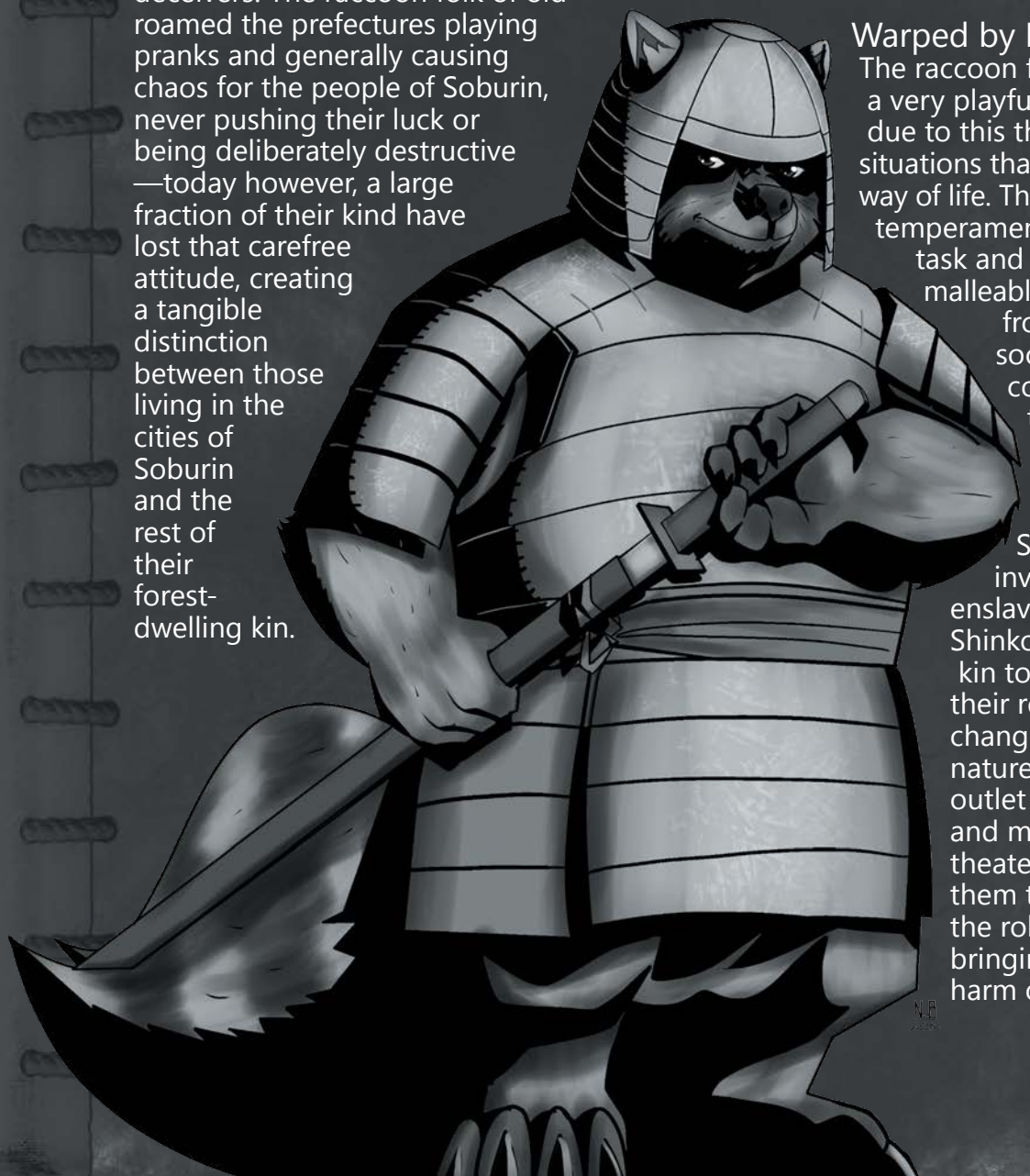
Level 4 Expert Steametic

Characteristics Health +5
You either learn one spell or gain Modification.
Modification You get improvements crafted onto your physical body. Choose one of the following:
Climbing Treads You ignore difficult terrain from climbing and gain 2 boons on challenge rolls made to balance and resist the prone affliction. Standing up from prone requires an action and move.
Extra Arm You have a small extra arm. You are able carry a small item (such as a one-handed weapon, small shield, or potion) in this arm, but you cannot wield anything larger. Drawing or stowing an item is a minor activity granted twice on a fast turn and four times on a slow turn.
Jackhammer or Sawblade Hand A desire to destroy runs through your circuit relays. Your unarmed strikes deal 2d6 damage.

TANUKI

Kina returned to the village every few seasons to check up on Ji but every year they seemed to grow more distant. While Kina had adapted well to her new home among the trees, it seemed that Ji only grew more complacent with his life as a farm hand. She thought to raise his spirits so she placed a gourd with a painted face in the fields where he could find it, watching for hours as he toiled until eventually coming upon her fruit. The slightest of smiles emerged on his face but quickly fled as his father came out to scold him for wasting time—she could only stand to watch him for a few minutes longer before returning to the forest, her heart all the heavier.

Depending on where one finds them tanuki are either melancholy laborers or tricky deceivers. The raccoon folk of old roamed the prefectures playing pranks and generally causing chaos for the people of Soburin, never pushing their luck or being deliberately destructive—today however, a large fraction of their kind have lost that carefree attitude, creating a tangible distinction between those living in the cities of Soburin and the rest of their forest-dwelling kin.



Once of the Forest

Tanuki are creatures originally from the forests of Soburin where they were reminiscent of large raccoon-men. Since being pulled away from their woodland homes they have adopted more sedentary lifestyles and today are heftier in shape than their ancestors, causing them to become portly like the secretive korobokuru.

Tanuki stand at the height of a human child but weigh twice as much but despite their portly appearance, their small stature hides a surprising strength and even more unexpected agility. Their furs range from brownish reds to light grays (depending on the region their forebearers hailed from) and the raccoon folk sport sharp claws that allow them to climb trees with ease as well as lengthy tails capable of holding on to objects. Every tanuki has a unique set of markings on its face allowing for them to be easily distinguished from one another.

Warped by Detainment

The raccoon folk of Soburin are typically a very playful and relaxed people, and due to this they often find themselves in situations that completely challenge their way of life. Thankfully this same easygoing temperament makes adapting a simple task and as such they have a living, malleable, piecemeal culture formed from parts taken from the societies around them. These constant changes throughout the history of the tanuki eventually culminated in the diverse raccoon folk of today.

Subjugation by the ceramian invaders and their subsequent enslavement by the people of Shinko caused the tanuki's urban kin to lose a large portion of their rebellious spark. This drastic change in the raccoon folk's nature left them without an outlet for their mischievousness and many took on forms of theater, as acting allowed for them to play at least play at the role of pranksters without bringing about any unnecessary harm or attention.

Bunki-Mura of Soburin

With the end of the Kengen Occupation many tanuki sought to return to their old lives among the forests of Soburin—the raccoon folk found that their bodies were not entirely fit for the old way of living so they instead established homes in the treetops to better accommodate their new lifestyles. These bunki-mura (or branch homes) are impressive villages that hold hundreds of tanuki, even allowing outsiders to visit with ease, and with the return to their ancestral homes the raccoon folk of the bunki-muras came back their trickster ways. Not all of these settlements are the same and a few of the communities are more relaxed than mischievous, as the tanuki who live within came to realize (often the hard way) that their old ways could lead to occasional pranks that prove detrimental to their new treetop homes.

Betrayed But Forgiving

The tanuki live very accepting lives, learning to work together even after dire circumstances and unfavorable encounters with their neighbors. Nowhere is this more apparent than in Shinko—even after decades of enslavement that continues to this day, the raccoon folk calmly endure until the day their enslavement will end so they can return to being equals with the soburi they still wish to call friends.

Tanuki Bōru

Male tanuki are easily picked out from females and notable for their sizable bōru, oversized organs that legends say are capable of great feats such as crushing foes or allowing the raccoon folk to change shape. It is these bōru that provide the tanuki their ability to create illusions.

Tanuki Names

Tanuki take their names from the forest that they were born in, choosing personal titles based on the plants and animals that live there. The concept of family names are relatively new to the raccoon folk (a practice adopted from humans) and they find them to be yet another way to express their unique nature.

Male Names: Doremo, Hano, Imani, Ki, Matsi, Sho, Tatsu, Yusuki

Female Names: Amana, Gara, Hane, Kusa, Numene, Ramia, Shinri, Yarane

Family Names: Bikimen, Fujin, Kirarun, Nandan, Rutoru, Tsunamo, Watsu, Yinaru

Creating A Tanuki

Starting Attribute Scores Strength 9, Agility 11, Intellect 11, Will 10.
Perception equals your Intellect score
Defense equals your Agility score
Health equals your Strength score
Healing Rate equals one-quarter your Health, round down
Size 1/2, **Speed** 10, **Power** 0
Damage 0, **Insanity** 0, **Corruption** 0
Languages and Professions You speak the Common Tongue, and you can either speak one additional language or add a random profession.
Ancient Talent You learn the *figment* spell.
Climber You gain climber equal to your speed –2.
Subtle Tail You have a tail. You are unable to carry a weapon or shield with your tail, nor can you manipulate fine objects, but you gain 1 boon when passing secret messages or otherwise communicating using your tail.
Vulnerability You take double damage from thunder.
Kengen Impression While the tanuki are still one race of sentient humanoids, there are important differences between those who live with the humans of Soburin and those who don't. Choose one of the following:
Forest As a forest tanuki you are part of a treetop Bunki-Mura and very much at home in the wilderness. Though most of your people are only now returning to the forest and the ways of your ancestors, the transition has been easier than expected. Your Perception increases by 2.
Urban As an urban tanuki you've found a place somewhere in the cities of Soburin. During the Kengen Occupation the ceramians forced your ancestors into unnatural living conditions and they suffered discrimination and worse—as a result you've inherited a talent for surviving in a thriving settlement even when you are not wanted. Your Agility increases by 1.

Level 4 Expert Tanuki

Characteristics Health +4
You either learn one spell or increase one attribute by 1.
Forest You gain shadowsight and discover the Illusion tradition or learn one Illusion spell.
Urban You gain 1 boon on Stealth challenge rolls made in urban environments and ignore difficult terrain in urban environents. you are able to wield your tail like a club with the finesse quality. When doing so, you gain a +2 bonus to Speed and your attacks with it deal 1d6 extra damage.

TENGU

The sun rose on Yana as Jika set out for the day and the tengu tightened the strap on her satchel before taking flight. Diving towards the next peak below the city, cool mountain air rushed past her face and as she approached she spotted her mark: the golden mountain lily. The rare flower bloomed only once every three years and Jika always arrived in Yana too late to find it herself. This time however she had made sure to remain in the settlement rather than make the pilgrimage. Her plunge rocketed her towards the plant yet just as she was to land, she saw a gray blur arrive from the opposite direction—she was not the only one here for the uncommon blossom. The two avians looked at each other before sharing a laugh and setting off towards Yana together, getting to know each other along the way; the golden mountain's bounty had done its work, uniting two disparate feathers in a wing destined to begin a great flock.

The bird folk of Soburin are small creatures that make up for their size with tremendous tenacity. Their persistence rarely wins the avians friends however, as many see this resolve as obnoxious at best or a threat at worst. With so many years of living with this perception most of the bird folk are able to ignore the thoughts of others and live without care of their judgement—this carefree attitude is something rarely seen in the prefectures as of late, leading many tengu to speculate that members of the other races are envious of their way of life.

The People of the Mountains

Tengu aren't as large as humans but what they lack in size they make up for with wisdom and exceptional agility, making them a formidable force to be reckoned with. Their exceptional senses give the bird folk an awareness that notices details and tells of a foe that most would miss and allow them to excel even in situations of extreme adversity. These talents complement those of vagabonds, leading many to pursue those paths and creating an untrustworthy perception of the avians.

All tengu are clad in a thick covering of feathers which range in color from jet black to ashy gray, their eyes shades of yellows and red with the occasional chestnut gaze. Their oily plumage make the avians better able to resist the cold winds of the mountains but are easily flammable, exemplified in the instinctive aversion to fire that most of the bird folk have. They offer no protection against weapons however, and thus many tengu wear armor if they are to enter combat even though it often restricts their flight.

Each tengu's arms are lined with a number of large feathers that form wings before ending in talons, giving them the power to take to the skies while still permitting the tengu to dexterously handle objects with their hand-like appendages—these are primarily for gripping and are used by most for self-defense only as a last resort. While tengu can theoretically fly anywhere they like their wings are designed for short distance excursions and travel by foot is generally quicker than taking to the air.

Living Flocks of Soburin

The tengu of Soburin originally made their homes in the mountains but have been forced out over the ages with the rise of yai sovereigns and oni warlords among the peaks. This migration fractured the avians, who broke apart into small flocks that descended down onto the prefectures to seek out new lives. These clutches move together, sharing resources and information to help one another establish resources and security,

some remaining as nomads for generations. Most eventually dissipate however—once a few members of a flock break away it is not long before their fellows move on as well. Many of these disenfranchised tengu still searching for a proper life gravitate together, forming new flocks all the time.

Over the centuries the bird folk acclimated to life on the lowlands, establishing small, semi-permanent communities in places with easy access to open skies such as forests and coasts. These settlements are composed of a number of flocks (sometimes up to a few dozen) working in tandem with one another; these "great flocks" rarely establish designated leaders, as bird folk step up to the needs of the community as required of them and then step down if there is a better avian for a given task. While primarily composed of tengu outsiders are not unheard of in these groups, though the flighty nature of the bird folk makes it difficult for anyone else to keep up.

On an individual level tengu are generally seen as fickle by non-tengu. The bird folk would argue that they wish to live a fulfilling life, finding new homes, new companions, and new experiences when they feel it is fitting. As the years pass most avians settle with a given community or set of allies (having found enough variety in life to decide what works best for them) leading people in Soburin to reunite with tengu decades after first meeting.

Su-Yosai, the Summit

Of the original remaining avian settlements Su-Yosai stands as the largest, perched atop the continent's southern mountains and remaining a focal point in the life of every tengu in Soburin. The city's remote location means that only bird folk and those utterly dedicated to visit can reach the city, but the harsh approach is not the only thing preventing access as the mountain range is also home to yai sovereigns and oni warlords, keeping only the bravest or most foolish travelers from attempting to reach the summit.

Su-Yosai sits as a haven for tengu, housing flocks that count their heritage back to the days before the Ichizoku Wars. The tribal beliefs of the bird folk lives on here as well as in the other mountain cities, knowledges that ranges from the history of the avians in Soburin to ancient medicines and esoteric martial arts. Within a decade of adulthood all tengu feel an innate compulsion to visit Su-Yosai and reintegrate with the livelihood of their ancestors for at least a few weeks; during this time they learn about their culture, heroes, and kin before most return home, though some choose to remain in the city to perpetuate traditions for future tengu.

Throughout their life tengu hear the song of Su-Yosai call to them on occasion. Most can ignore the pull of the mountain, only sometimes making second pilgrimages to the city or one of its satellite settlements. They believe that this song calls to tengu again if they were not properly fulfilled during their first visit—as some never hear the song again—but regardless of the reason every bird folk feels the compulsion of Su-Yosai at least once in their life, something only ignored by a small handful that insist their resistance is nothing of consequence.

Tengu Names

The transitive nature of a flock produces a number of names in a tengu's life. Whenever a new clutch is formed they adopt a new name following a basic structure; from there, a tengu may adopt portions of a previous flock into its title, providing a living and mutable name that encompasses the crucial elements of their life.

Male Names: Chiaki, Grinko, Inani, Kurao, Kizuro, Rinkin, Ti, Zutaru
Female Names: Azaka, Chizuro, Grana, Lazaro, Rinna, Tia, Zatara
Flock Names: Ati, Ino, Kozu, Rani, Tozo, Zeto

Creating A Tengu

Starting Attribute Scores Strength 9, Agility 11, Intellect 9, Will 11. Choose one attribute and increase it by 1.
Perception equals your Intellect score
Defense equals your Agility score
Health equals your Strength score
Healing Rate equals one-quarter your Health, round down
Size 1/2, **Speed** 8, **Power** 0
Damage 0, **Insanity** 0, **Corruption** 0
Languages and Professions You speak the Common Tongue, and you can either speak one additional language or add a random profession.
Flight You gain Flier 5 but only when you have both hands free and are not carrying more than half your carrying limit.
Natural Entertainer You gain 1 boon on challenge rolls made to perform legerdemain (like picking pockets) or put on a performance for a crowd.
Plumage You take half damage from cold.
Vulnerability You take double damage from fire.

Level 4 Expert Tengu

Characteristics Health +4
You either learn one spell or Stronger Wings.
Stronger Wings Your flier trait increases to equal to your Agility and you may fly while carrying up to your carrying limit.

UMIBO

The battered thief was already looking for another exit as she slammed the door behind her. Immediately she felt a sense of dread as she realized there was no way out—the pantry was practically a jail cell. After only a few seconds she could hear footsteps chasing down the hallway but they quickly ended with a splash, as though someone threw out the contents of a bucket onto the polished stone floor. Propping her back against the door to buy time she frantically thought of what to do before looking down to see water rushing about her feet, realizing only too late that her efforts to escape were dashed. Pooling up in the center of the chamber in the Stance of the Frozen Flower was an umibo, and worse yet, the elemental folk was a monk.

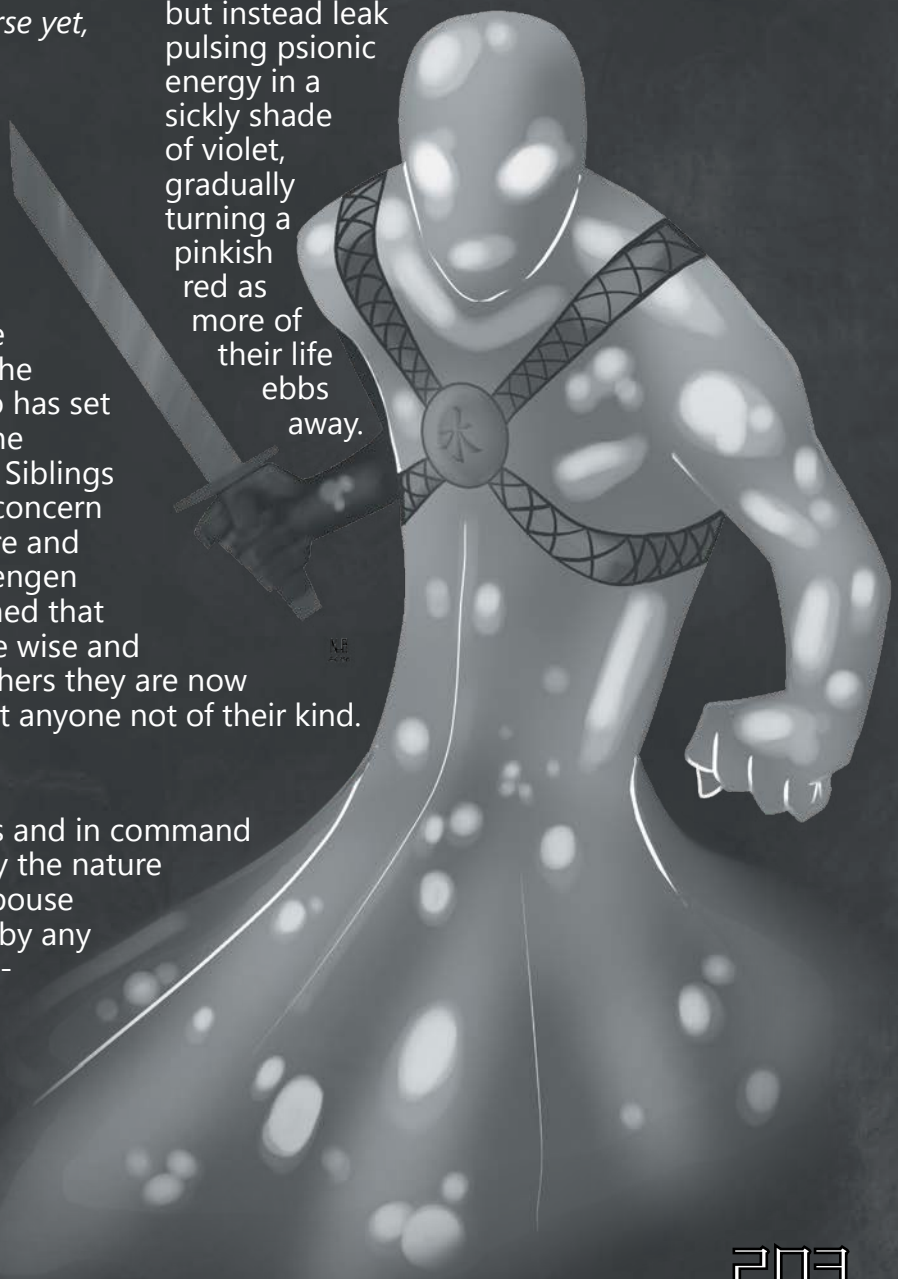
To the umibo the life of a human is only a drop in the sea of time and for many centuries it was believed that the mystical water people were immortal. Though this is untrue they are extremely long-lived, wandering Soburin for more years even than the oldest kappa. True embodiments of the elements, the primal nature of umibo has set them apart from the other races of the prefectures since before the Imperial Siblings—and made them a prime target of concern for the invading ceramians. To capture and imprison the water folk during the Kengen Occupation fel sciences were unleashed that changed them; where once they were wise and benevolent creatures accepting of others they are now mysterious and skeptical, slow to trust anyone not of their kind.

Ever Fluid

Extremely wise from their many years and in command of a strong presence strengthened by the nature of their creation, umibo generally espouse peace but are definitely not pacifists by any measure. While they are usually even-tempered there is no other race—even the enjin—that suffered as much under the ceramians' rule and rages so strongly against imprisonment. Already mystical creatures umibo easily take to magic and some bear truly ancient arcane secrets privy only to the eldest of their people.

First emerging from the seas of Soburin in the age before the Ichizoku Wars, umibo adopted human forms to earn the soburi's trust. Today their psionic abilities are stretched nearly to the limit just holding their forms together and when they die, an umibo disperses into water unless one of their kind subsumes their lifeforce.

Umibo are dramatically different than humans, being taller, much heavier, and lacking facial features entirely. Many people fail to recognize different umibo from one another, claiming that "they all look alike." In truth the water folk are all unique, leaving signatures of psychic resonance, possessing specific currents within their form, and differing in the hue and clarity of the liquid making up their interior. When wounded umibo do not bleed crimson but instead leak pulsing psionic energy in a sickly shade of violet, gradually turning a pinkish red as more of their life ebbs away.



Flowing Free

Yamabushi believe that the water folk are formed from a great whirlpool of souls filled by their predecessors, composed of the essences of those most devoted to nature. There used to be other elementals—damako of the wood, fūkaze of the air, irin of the metal, kahi of the fire, suchi of the earth—but the Kengen Occupation inadvertently brought about their end (the damako and irin dying out as the prefectures were stripped bare of resources, while the suchi, kahi, and fūkaze disappeared shortly after the dreadful Battle of Gyakusatsu.) The umibo were captured by ceramian invaders and imprisoned using weapons and pens of psychic force that extended through the seabed in the Hofuku Prefecture. Over the years these dark machines gradually made the water people weaker to the psionic power they had once mastered, resulting in the diminished umibo of today.

While they share a deep bond and respect with kappa, umibo are skeptical of surface dwellers. The water folk are fearful of technology and rightfully so—not only were they terribly abused by it during the Kengen Occupation, for every Kaiyo horror seen above the water five are said to walk along the seabed. Most soburi see the umibo as blessings when they choose to travel the prefectures and it is considered the height of rudeness to show them disrespect.

Youthful umibo are optimistic, believing that with faith a better future awaits Soburin; they are generally proactive, even-tempered, respectful, and loyal. The oldest are the furthest removed from these tendencies however, adopting a bitter hatred that has tainted them with an urge to take revenge on surface dwellers and warped the usual likable qualities of their race into laziness, imposition, disrespect, and a lack of faith. It is rare to find an umibo deep inland (they subsist on salt, trying to remain near the sea) though when witnessing a water folk in the interior of the continent one knows that they are pursuing a truly dire task.

Kessai Villages

Under the waters of Soburin's seas are aquatic settlements called kessai, villages where umibo live in a utopian fashion without most traditional structures of authority. These are located below places where natural eddies and whirlpools are common—not only due to their subconscious desire to be near a phenomena like the one that begat them (bringing with it a sense of wholeness), but also to make it difficult for the surface dwelling races to attack them. Legends claim that the Imperial Siblings' weapons are hidden beneath the sands of kessai all around the continent, but as many pay homage to the yai sovereigns of water few explorers have had the courage to test these tales.

Umibo Names

As they are genderless, umibo sometimes alter their forms slightly to match the perceptions of those around them but choose their names based on the most faithful yamabushi essence within their soul.

Umibo Names: Benkei, Chōisai, Gwanzan, Hōzōin, Hyash, In'ei, Kannushi, Musashibō, Saitō, Sōkaku, Yagyū , Yosaemon

Creating An Umibo

Starting Attribute Scores Strength 9, Agility 10, Intellect 10, Will 11. Choose one attribute and increase it by 1.
Perception equals your Intellect score
Defense equals your Agility score
Health equals your Strength score
Healing Rate equals one-quarter your Health, round down
Size 1, **Speed** 8, swimmer 10, **Power** 0
Damage 0, **Insanity** 0, **Corruption** 0
Languages and Professions You speak the Common Tongue, and you can either speak one additional language or add a random profession.
Amphibious You can breathe both air and water.
Immunity prone (if required to stand up it does not cost you any move)
Malleable Form When not wearing any armor you can move through openings wide enough to permit the passage of water.
Psychic Death When you die if another umibo does not assimilate your essence within 1 minute, psionic energy roils from a point within your space out to a number of yards equal to your group level. Every creature in the area makes a Will challenge roll with 1 bane or suffers 1 bane on Intellect and Will challenge rolls for 1 hour.
Watery Heritage You learn the *fog* and *produce water* spells. You are able to cast these spells without needing to speak the words or wield implements.
Vulnerability You take double damage from psychic.

Level 4 Expert Umibo

Characteristics Health +5
You either learn one spell or gain Master of Form.
Master of Form Some umibo retain more control over their form, retaining vestiges of the power that their race once knew before the Kengen Occupation. Choose one of the following:
Fast Forming You are able to don or remove any suit of armor by spending an action. You cannot be grabbed or immobilized, and you can
freely move through spaces occupied by creatures.
Purge The water that makes up your body is clear and pure. You can attempt to hide even when you are being observed. A creature that tries to enter your space while unaware of you is surprised by you.

Moving through the corrupting haze with grim determination in his slate-gray eyes, Goei Ryokōsho thanked his ancestors for the stolen techniques he had garnered from a samurai of the Miyaki Clan—weird as they were, all that time afar had taught the lost prefecture's warriors some truly useful secrets. "Stay close to me and move quickly," he yelled back at his companions, "when we get out of the fog the demons will abate! Move, damn you!" His blade was already wet with the foul blood of monsters and he had no intention of spilling any more of his own.

Varsythia rolled beneath his larger ally's legs and bounded up to unleash a golden-lighted axe-kick into an adeddo-oni's jaw while vaulting over it. The hunchling's head went flying and its chest crumbled into ash, giving her a moment to scream back, "that is easier said than done, woodsman! How much longer must we maintain our defenses?!"

"Too long!" their enormous fellow boomed, his gigantic hands weaving through the air to create a beautiful petal of ice between an undead samurai's katana and his neck. Only a trickle of blood leaked out onto the enjin's fur and the ape-man roared in rage, grabbing a hunchling and slamming it into his attacker to send both assailants rolling back into the Mists of Akuma. "We're going to tire eventually Goei, so get us the hell out of here!"

"*You are too trusting of this fool! You will all die here!*" For a brief moment the ranger strongly considered stopping right there to tear Meiwaku free and live out his life as an amputee. "*All of you shall be consumed by the darkness of this land! Nothing could possibly bring me more satisfaction than watching Goei be ripped apart by so—*"

Goei wasn't having it and slammed his tsukumogami augmetic into an adeddo-oni, filling the thing's mouth with undead flesh before cutting his freakish assailant down with his katana. Glancing to the west he finally saw some subdued rays of light—salvation. "There!" he called out, "we are nearly free! Move if you want to live!" Spitting out the creature's flesh Meiwaku started to rant again but Goei just slammed him into a tree trunk as he burst out of the darkness and into a shaded forest. Sheathing his sword and drawing a longbow the ranger began to loose arrows at the foes closest to Aisufōmu, buying the enjin enough time to pick up Varsythia and throw her clear over the ranger's shoulder.

"RUN!," the ape-man shouted, tumbling toward his companions as his last ice petal broke under the force of an adeddo-oni shuriken. Goei continued to retreat, the twang of his longbow resounding as the small psonorous woman behind him found her footing and unleashed kunai into the undead clamoring after Aisufōmu. The enormous monk abandoned any sensible defense and simply charged out of the mists, emerging into the woods with a half dozen hunchlings clinging to his fur.

Goei started focusing his fire on the armored monster giving chase, unleashing the last of his quiver in an attempt to slow him down. The undead samurai stalked forward unheeded and stopped only when it reached the edge of the forest's shadow, seething hatred in its bloodshot eyes. It screamed in near-mindless rage at the escaping group, the Mists of Akuma roiling behind it as more of the foul things appeared in the haze. Storing his weapons Goei slammed Meiwaku into one of the screaming hunchlings crawling on Aisufōmu and cracked its skull open like a clamshell. Looking up at the sky while Varsythia helped destroy the rest of the creatures that the enjin carried out of the corrupting haze, the ranger saw the sun was starting to dip toward the western horizon and he immediately began marching away from the woods.

"We're not done here!" the psonorous yelled, struggling to kill the last two hunchlings that braved the sunlight. The small monk was covered in cuts and bruises, and the giant Aisufōmu wavered on his feet as he flung his final attacker to an ignoble death a few dozen yards away.

"There's no time," Goei said sternly, pointing toward the sunset. "We might have as many as thirty minutes before they give chase and if I'm to throw them off our trail, we can't drop pace for at least a few miles."

The ranger grimaced as Meiwaku chimed in, "*we finally agree on something,*" and Goei crouched to slam his tsukumogami augmetic into the ground, grinding the thing's face in the dirt for the thousandth time.

Chapter 12: Ancestral Blessings

Many different martial arts disciplines developed during the centuries of conflict that consumed Soburin before the the Kengen Occupation and since the disastrous end of the War of Kaiyo, even more exotic techniques have reappeared to utilize the dark energies unleashed on the world. If your ancestral blessing grants a spell you are not capable of casting, once you have cast the spell you require a rest before you can do so again. During character creation each adventurer chooses one ancestral blessing; instead of taking an Ancestral Blessing, a character may choose to learn a martial arts stance (see the Martial Artist expert path on page 155).

Ancestral Weapon

By showing your inherited weapon great reverence, devotion, and care, you unlock the ancestral power stored within it.

- Choose a two-handed weapon (or two one-handed weapons) that is not a firearm or part of an augmetic. This becomes your ancestral weapon. You treat your ancestral weapon with the same reverence you would a holy book or symbol. Accordingly, you never willingly part with your ancestral weapon—you may not sell it, lend it to others, or otherwise abandon it. If for any reason your ancestral weapon is taken from you, you must do everything in your power to recover it.
- Your ancestral weapon can be enchanted to grant a bonus to attack rolls and damage equal to 1/5th your level. Enchanting your ancestral weapon costs 500 gc per point of bonus it gains. Increasing the enchantment bonus of your ancestral weapon or altering its abilities requires a ritual that takes one full day.
- You also receive a number of enchantment points equal to your bonus to attack rolls and damage. Each effect may only be chosen once. You can change the enchantments on your ancestral weapon again after you complete a rest.

Bloody When you roll 20+ on an attack roll with your ancestral weapon, your target takes your weapon's enchantment bonus damage at the end of every round until the wound is stanched with a successful Intellect challenge roll or the target receives magical healing.

Elemental (2 points) Choose one of the following types of energy: acid, cold, fire, lightning, poison, psychic, thunder, or wind. Your ancestral weapon deals an additional 1d3 damage of that energy type.

Forceful When striking a creature or object that takes half damage from weapons, your ancestral weapon deals damage normally.

Graceful The first time you attack with your ancestral weapon on each of your turns, you can transfer some or all of your weapon's bonus to attack and damage to your Defense instead. For instance, you could reduce your bonus on attack and damage rolls by 1, and gain a +1 bonus to Defense. If you possess two ancestral weapons, you must reduce both weapons' bonus to attack and damage.

Sharp When attacking a target wearing armor, you receive a 1 boon with your ancestral weapon.

Deductive Mind

You are of a keen and investigative mind, able to piece together important details from the clues at hand no matter how little they might seem to amount to.

- When making an Intellect challenge roll, you may choose to instead make a Sleuth check. This may be declared at any time before the Intellect challenge roll is made, or after rolling if the result of the check is 13 or less. After making a Sleuth check, you cannot make another until you have taken a rest.
- A Sleuth check reveals any information an equivalent challenge roll to investigate or search would uncover, but it always reveals *something* that can proceed the adventure. The quality of the information you deduce depends on your check and the location you are in—a GM can always decide there is no information in the current location relevant to your current adventure, and provide only a clue leading towards a more relevant location. Alternately, for a phenomenal check in a relevant location, a GM might reveal the current location or base of the antagonist.

  For example, Bunaga the shinobibot makes an Intellect challenge roll to search a rice mill and gets a result of just 8, finding only the remains of a shattered teacup on the building's main floor. He really wants to know more so he declares the challenge roll to have been a Sleuth check, and Bunaga deduces that the type of paints used on the ceramic shards are only available in the city of Henkoshimasu in the Donyuko Prefecture—the Imperial Capital of Sanbaoshi has only one paint dealer that hails from there.

  Hiro the private eye makes an Intellect challenge roll and feels as if he's got luck on his side—he declares the check to be a Sleuth check before rolling, then gets a result of 21! He looks over the same ceramic shards Bunaga found and realizes that they are covered in a fine dust particulate with traces of red gunpowder, a compound only an alchemist could craft. Furthermore, only one scientist in Sanbaoshi is known for crafting red gunpowder and he has recently gone missing. Tasting the substance, Hiro realizes that there is salt (likely from the sea, meaning the alchemist is somewhere near the docks) mixed alongside a few grains of kafun pollen, a fern that only grows along the sands south of the Imperial Capital. Its creator must be somewhere in the southwesternmost reaches of the Peasant Ward!

Defiler

Prerequisites: Ability to cast spells

You are able to amplify the power of your spells by drawing upon the inherent energy within the lands of Soburin, leaving decay and weakness in your wake. Infusing your magic with the lifeforce of the planet is no small feat but increases your potency immensely.

- Before casting a spell with a casting time of one action or less, you may spend your triggered action to defile the land around you. This defiles an area of land in a 2-yard-radius times the rank of the spell. Your spell gains one of the following benefits.
  - If the spell requires you to make an attack roll, you make it with 1 boon.
  - Creatures making challenge rolls to resist the spell make their rolls with 1 bane.
  - Increase the size of the spell's area by 50%.
  - If the spell deals damage, it deals 1d6 extra damage.
  - If the spell heals damage, it heals 1d6 extra damage.
  - After casting the spell, make a Dignity challenge roll or increase your Haitoku score by 1 and reduce your Dignity score by 1. For the purposes of this ability, a rank 0 spell counts as a rank 1 spell. Land that has already been defiled cannot be defiled again.

Descendant of the Imperial Siblings

Prerequisites: Soburi ancestry, not a member of the Masuto or Miyaki clans

The power of Soburin runs exceptionally strongly in your blood and by tapping into the inherited strength of your ancestors, you are able to transform into one of the creatures revered by the Imperial Siblings. You gain the following benefits.

- Choose any clan of Soburin other than Masuto or Miyaki. By spending an action you can transform into the creature associated with that clan (ape, bat, bear, boar, bull, chameleon, crane, dog, dragonfly, fox, frog, hawk, monkey, praying mantis, rat, scorpion, snake, spider, stag, swordfish, tiger, or turtle) as though under the effects of *improved animal shape*. Reverting to your regular form is a triggered action taken at the end of the round. This ability lasts for 1 minute and once you have used it a number of times equal to your Will modifier (minimum 1), you cannot do so again until you have finished a rest.

Devoted Follower

Your reputation has brought you an implacable companion that seeks to emulate your greatness and follow in your footsteps.

- You gain the services of a companion. This companion may have small differences (like a different height, weight, ancestry, gender, or disposition) but otherwise has the same statistics you did when you were half your current level, beginning play with attribute modifiers equal to half your positive bonuses (so if you have a Strength of 12, your companion begins with a Strength of 11), or 10. At every even level, your companion gains a level (taking the same character options that you did for 1st level when you reach 2nd level). Your companion initially trusts you implicitly and performs tasks you give them so long as they are not illegal, suicidal, or in direct opposition to their (and therein your) regular beliefs. Your GM may decide that certain orders you give require a Dignity challenge roll with 1 or more bane. If your companion dies, you lose 2d3 Dignity and must wait one month before recruiting a new companion.

Honorable Treatment

Your uplifting reputation is well-known and earns you some small acts of kindness.

- Inns and teahouses that recognize you (make a Dignity challenge roll with 1 boon) give you free lodging, drink, and food. Your GM might decide that no challenge roll is required to be recognized because someone who works in the establishment knows you already or has seen you recently.
- You may convince merchants to sell you goods for a more modest price. If you succeed on a Dignity challenge roll, you gain 1 boon any challenge rolls

to determine the final price of an item that costs 250 gc or less. Once you have exploited your reputation to persuade merchants this way a number of times equal to your Dignity modifier, you cannot do so again for 1 week.

- You may convince merchants to sell you goods for a more modest price or even give them to you as gifts. If you succeed on a Dignity challenge roll, you receive one item in small amounts or minor in nature (like Common clothing, food, or other items and services costing 1gc or less). To determine the final price of Common and Uncommon items that cost less than 200gc, you make a Dignity challenge roll with 1 boon. On a success, you pay 10% less than normal and on 20+ you pay 20% less than normal. Once you have exploited your reputation to persuade merchants this way a number of times equal to your Dignity modifier, you cannot do so again for 1 week and you may be required to pay back the favor in kind (at the GM's discretion).
- You sometimes find Rare or even Exotic items not normally available (for being in a place where it may be forbidden or lacking the populace required for such an expensive and unique sale).

Honored Assemblage

Your renown has spread far and wide, and the further word spreads, the more people come to serve you and help achieve your goals.

- You gain the services of a number of NPCs equal to triple your Dignity modifier. These NPCs will not aid you in combat or needlessly risk their lives on your behalf, but they will agree to most other tasks you ask of them (such as casting non-aggressive spells, acting as informants, providing distractions, acting as couriers, guarding you as you sleep, or serving as the staff in your estate). Use the statistics for **bandits**, **commoners**, **cultists**, **initiates of the old faith**, and **patrollers** for your followers. You may also have **apprentice witch** or **apprentice wizard** followers but these count as two followers each, and **brigand**, **hired killer**, **mercenary**, or **pickpocket** followers count as three followers each.

Instinctual Killer

Your gaze can instill fear in your opponent, showing what true ruthlessness is before a blade is even drawn.

- You may stare down one opponent who you can see and can see you as a triggered action, forcing them to make a Haitoku challenge roll. If the target fails, they gain the frightened affliction for 1d6 rounds. Once you have used this ability a number of times equal to your Haitoku modifier (minimum 1) you must finish a rest before you can stare down an opponent again.

Leafkiller Elementalist

Prerequisites: Ability to cast spells

Drawing on the natural power locked within verdant growth, you exploit the gifts of nature to bring primal power to your spells, making them as potent as possible.

- You can draw forth the energy from a piece of inert wood, destroying 20 pounds per point of power you possess once per day. This grants you a number of spell points equal to your Power x 2 (minimum 1). When you cast a spell of a rank equal to half your Power or less, you can spend spell points equal to 1 + the spell's rank to cast the spell without expending a casting of it or to cast a spell (equal to half your power or less) for which you have no castings remaining. Once you have used this ability you cannot do so again until you complete a rest, and after using it a number of times equal to your Will modifier you cannot do so again for 1 week.

Master Forger

You are a consummate artist when it comes to replicating signatures, keen to the precise details of stamps and watermarkings, knowledgeable of the types of ink and paper stock used for official documents, and familiar with all of the handwriting eccentricities of the authorities.

- You gain 1 boon on challenge rolls made to create forgeries.
- You gain 2 boons on challenge rolls made to create false Travel Papers to cross prefectures.
- You know the name of at least one ryokōsai (page 17) in every prefecture and you gain 1 boon on challenge rolls made in conjunction with bribes for guards at any torii gate.

Metallic Shredder

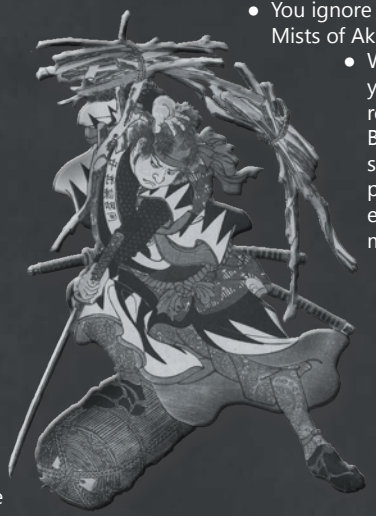
Prerequisites: Ability to cast spells

Utilizing ancient techniques and exploiting the primal essence of metallic elements, you are able to achieve truly powerful magical effects that enhance your eldritch blasts and spells.

- You may sacrifice a fragment of metal with a value of 1 gc per spell rank while casting a spell. Doing so causes the metal to crumble to rust, but grants you 1 boon on an associated spell attack or 1 bane on challenge rolls made to resist the spell. Once you have used this ability a number of times equal to your Will modifier (minimum 1), you cannot do so again until you have finished a rest.

Mistwalker

The Miyaki Clan have had centuries to master the Mists of Akuma and you have learned their secrets—to truly exploit the fell fogs one does not allow themselves to be consumed, but bypasses the haze entirely.



- You ignore areas of difficult terrain while in the Mists of Akuma.
- While inside the Mists of Akuma, you only require a challenge roll to resist corruption at the end of a rest. By spending 1 minute performing a special ritual, you may extend this protection to a number of creatures equal to your Intellect modifier + Will modifier(minimum 1).
- While inside the Mists of Akuma, your overland speed and the overland speed of creatures under your protection is doubled (this does not affect movement speeds in combat).

Mist Warrior

After breathing fully from the otherworldly Mists of Akuma something within you changed. Now you have incredible abilities that transcend understanding, almost as though the corrupting fogs have become a part of you.

- When you use the Retreat action any attacks made against you until the end of the round are at 1 bane. Until the end of your next turn, any attacks you make have 1 bane.

- You may cast *shortcut* without the need for any wielded implements or spoken words. Once you have used this ability you cannot do so until you have finished a rest.
- When you use the Defend action, add your Intellect modifier or Will modifier to your Defense (whichever is higher).

Nature Touched

Interaction with the foul Mists of Akuma has touched something deep within you, unlocking a connection with nature that empowers you with incredible talents and abilities unheard of within the civilized regions of Soburin. You gain the following benefits.

- You take half damage from poison.
- After taking a rest, choose either cold or fire. You take half damage from the chosen element until the next time you rest.
- You learn *beast within* or *hide from animals* and may cast the chosen spell without the need for any wielded implements or spoken words. Once you have used this ability you cannot do so until you have finished a rest.

Scribe Magical Tattoos

Prerequisites: Ability to cast spells

Utilizing specially prepared inks and carefully crafted styluses, you are able to craft wondrous tattoos imbued with magic.

- By spending one hour per spell rank, you may draw a tattoo on a creature that grants them a single casting of a spell that you know (this requires you to expend a spell as if you had cast it). The casting time for the spell does not change, but the creature does not require any implements or spoken words to cast the spell aside from their tattoo. A creature cannot hold more spell ranks in magical tattoos than half its level or Will modifier (minimum 1). It costs 20 gc per spell rank to scribe a magical tattoo (10 gc for rank 0 spells).

Shameless Combatant

Your words and mannerisms bite deeply, driving an enemy that you insult to attack the target of vitriol that you desire.

- You may insult and dishonor one opponent who can hear you as a triggered action, forcing them to make a Dignity challenge roll against a target number equal to your Haitoku. If the target fails, they must approach you or one of your allies on their next turn and attack to the best of their abilities. Once you have used this ability a number of times equal to your Haitoku modifier (minimum 1), you cannot do so until you finish a rest.

Swordmaster

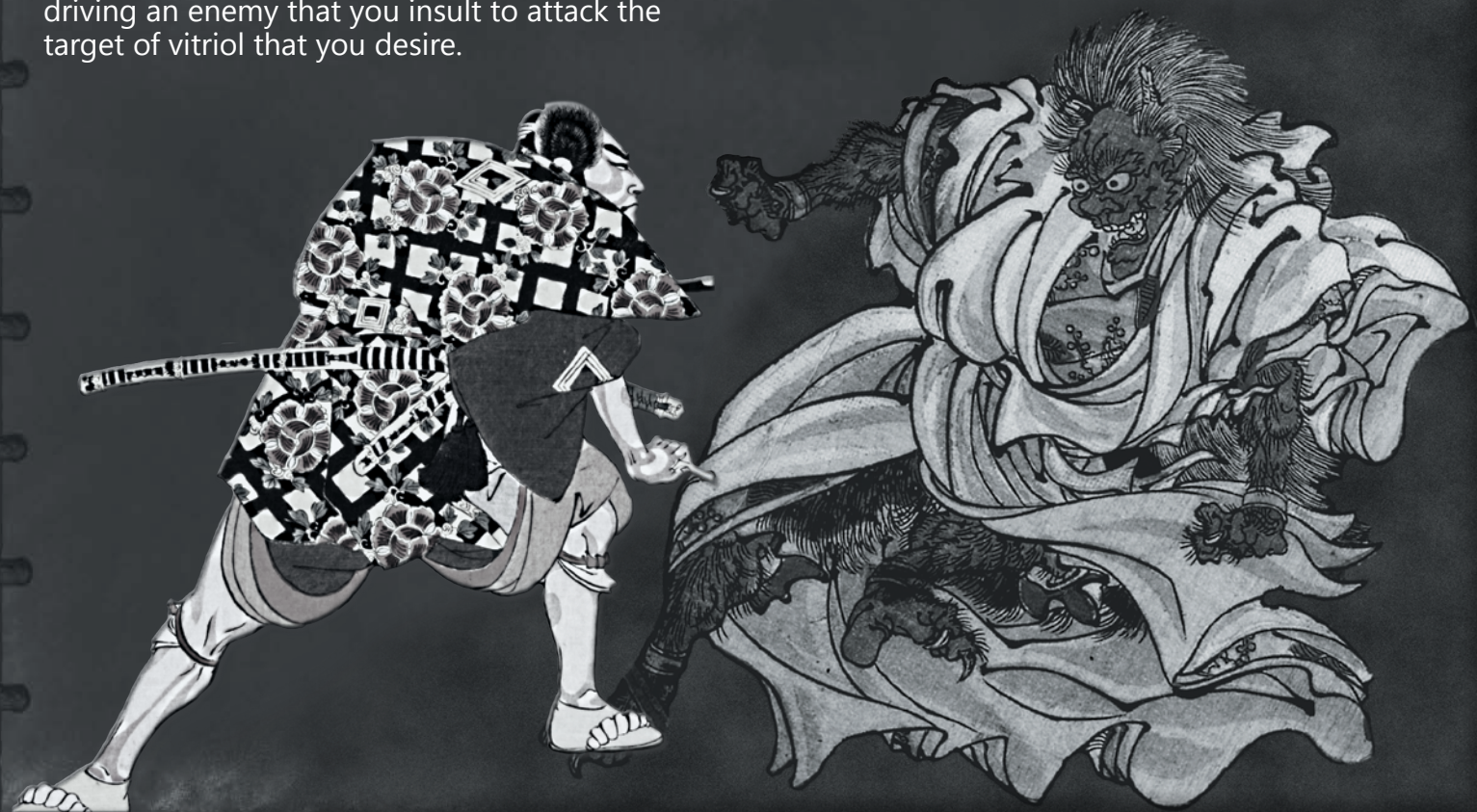
You live and die by your talents with a blade—and you often live well.

- When you are wielding a katana and incapacitate an opponent, you may make another attack against a target within your reach as part of the same action.
- When an enemy would provoke a free attack, you may spend your triggered action to move up to your speed, ending your movement adjacent to that enemy.
- While wielding a katana, you can use your triggered action to cut a missile in twain when you are hit by a ranged weapon attack. When you do so, the damage you take from the attack is reduced by the damage roll of your katana melee attack.
- You gain a +1 bonus to Defense while wielding a katana in both hands or in one hand with your off-hand free.

Tsukumogami Augmetic

Congratulations, you've got an augmetic. Though you did not initially know it, your augmetic is quite old—100 years old, to be precise—and after being installed it awakens as a tsukumogami!

- Your augmetic counts as an enchanted relic that grants a +1 bonus to attack rolls and damage.
- Your augmetic becomes a sentient item built by the GM. It may have abilities similar to other tsukumogami (page 144), those granted to a vested gun (166), or the enchantment effects of an ancestral weapon (page 206). No matter the source of its abilities, your tsukumogami augmetic has no more abilities than 1/5th your level.
- Your augmetic's disposition is determined by the GM (though it should be informed by how the augmetic's previous user maintained and treated it).



"Come in, come in!" a well-manicured owner yelled as Dōmyaku poked his misshapen head into the storefront's doorway. The rare act of kindness from a human surprised the bakemono and it shuffled inside cautiously, suspiciously eyeing the room for signs of an ambush. "Welcome to my shop, welcome!" the middle-aged man continued, "I am Marius Barzweil, merchant and purveyor of curiosities both great and small. Please take a seat, remove your shoes—only if you like, of course. Please think of this place as my home, and know that my home is yours!"

This was a truly unique occurrence for Dōmyaku and it wasn't sure what to make of this merchant but if anyone was waiting to attack, they would need to be invisible (which was a risk it was willing to take). The bakemono fell onto the silk pillows covering a chair in front of the shop's lacquered countertop, taking in the impressive array of gadgets hanging around the store and nodding in appreciation. On the far wall from the entrance were weapons of all kinds ranging from finely crafted katanas to steel whips, kusarigama, and firearms forged by numerous talented, artistic gunsmiths. The adjoining walls were similarly crowded though instead of blades there were esoteric contraptions of mechanical design hanging by the dozens. Telescopic arm and leg prostheses framed scores of steam- and lightning-powered devices—body plating, electrohearts, energized pylons, fan no te hands, sword arms—but that wasn't all. Marius Barzweil's shop was located in a city in the Uragi Prefecture, a part of Soburin where there were virtually no restrictions on technology. Nothing was stored under the table and pieces illegal elsewhere were proudly displayed in front of Dōmyaku.

"What might you be seeking today, my friend?" Marius grabbed at a tall kettle, pouring two cups of wholesome-smelling tea. He handed one to the bakemono and bowed politely, sipping from his own to show that it was unadulterated. Dōmyaku eyed its counterpart carefully, taking the man's measure and placing the merchant's subtle accent: he had to be ropaeo. "I have many wares and I can assure you that they are each in fine working condition. You will find no better deals in Beikoku than within these walls and it is my great pleasure to show you that which you most desire!"

Dōmyaku adjusted its posture, sitting up straighter and crossing its legs—there was something it wanted here, an item nearly impossible to acquire anywhere outside of Uragi, and falling into this ropaeo's relaxing trap would only drive the price up. At first the bakemono hadn't believed in the tales of human warriors eating the hearts of their enemies; how could they with such dull teeth? Then it witnessed a monk in Rinku get assaulted in an alleyway, only to chase down the last of her attackers with blood still running down from her mouth, a foul metal architecture revealed where her jaw should have been. Rumors in the tea houses that night were rife with talk of a warrior with a "ketsueki shokubai", eating the hearts of criminals in the street.

"I think I know," Marius said, gingerly picking up an unbelievably realistic arm prosthetic from the wall. "My specialist can modify this to match your skin. Watch and be amazed!" The ropaeo twisted something at the limb's base and the hand unfolded, revealing a corroded nozzle hidden within. "Never go unarmed!"

The bakemono shook its head and cleared its throat, rubbing its hands on its neck. "No," Dōmyaku replied, "not quite. I am looking for something more...intimate."

Though a look of curiosity overtook Marius' smiling visage for a moment he quickly recognized the hint for what it was, nodding enthusiastically as recognition flashed across his face. "But of course! As I said before, only the best for you!" The merchant shuffled back behind the counter and pulled out a piece of steel artifice more complicated than anything on open display, treating it with even greater care than the last item. "A ketsueki shokubai—did you know that no other prefecture is progressive enough to allow these for sale save for Uragi? Truly we are blessed to have so intelligent a leader as Lord Shaka. There are some very minor complications from having one installed, but when aren't there?"

Despite itself Dōmyaku smiled and Marius' grin only grew wider in response.

CHAPTER 13: EQUIPMENT

Most of the armor and weapons available in any medieval fantasy world can be found in Soburin but are referred to by different names (for instance, a battleaxe is called a *fu* and *tetsubo* are mauls). Firearms and prosthetics are well known (if not commonly accepted) and other technologies more akin to that of a scientific renaissance can be found as well depending on where one is—though for every prefecture with clockwork soldiers and guns that spit lightning, there are three that adhere to more traditional tools.

EASTERN ARMOR

Do-Maru Jacket This suit of armor is worn like a short coat and made mostly of lamellar plates worn fastened over a silk shirt. The light weight and flexibility of do-maru allows greater mobility than other armors without sacrificing protection. Do-maru can be donned as though it were light armor. A creature wearing do-maru.

Haramaki Commonly called a belly-warmer, a haramaki is a series of articulated metal plates or chains that are tied around the torso with a silken sash. The wearer of a haramaki gains 1 boon on challenge rolls made to conceal their armor as a simple sash.

O-Yoroi Armor More commonly called "great armor", o-yoroi is an exceptionally solid and heavy suit comprised of layers of silk, lamellar, chain, and plate that protect the entire body, head to toe. Though this armor offers unparalleled protection, it likewise is of unparalleled weight, requiring a wearer to have tremendous strength to avoid being crushed by its components. Any character wearing o-yoroi has their speed reduced by 2 and suffer 1 bane on Stealth challenge rolls.

Tameshi Gusoku Tameshi gusoku is an evolution of the tosei gusoku, with a second layer of replaceable ceramic plating within. While this ceramic plating is intact, any attacks with a firearm against a character wearing a suit of tameshi gusoku are at 1 bane. However, whenever the wearer is hit with a 20+ attack roll, roll 1d6; on a 1, the plates shatter and lose their protective value. These plates cannot be replaced while the armor is worn (replacement plates weigh 5 lbs. and cost 3 gc.) The wearer of tameshi gusoku suffers 1 bane on Stealth challenge rolls.

Tosei Gusoku This full suit of armor is made of carefully fitted steel and iron plates, protecting the chest, shoulders and head, with chain worn over silk to protect the legs and arms. The wide-brimmed helmet is typically worn with a detachable mask that depicts a snarling demon or other ferocious creature. Unsettling gusoku masks grant wearers 1 boon on challenge rolls made to Intimidate (and cost 2 gc).

Eastern Weaponry

3-Section Steel Whip A metal handle is connected by a short chain to two short bars, the second of which is tipped with a sharpened spike. When attacking, a creature wielding this weapon may spend its triggered action to make an additional attack with 2 banes that deals half damage.

9-Section Steel Whip Made of short segments of hard-edged metal carefully connected by short chains, this weapon has a handle at one end and a sharpened metal spike at the other. When attacking, a creature wielding this weapon may spend its triggered action to make an additional attack with 2 banes that deals half damage.

Any-Tool A wooden handle containing over a dozen small, durable mechanical components, these items are as useful for combat as they are for modifying and maintaining technology. By spending a triggered action, a wielder can change an any-tool to be optimized for inflicting damage. The any-tool can be used in place of most tool kits.

Dagger Fan This large paper or tin fan has a metal frame, the tips of which are sharpened to create a cutting edge.

Hooked Sword These sharpened blades are hooked on the end in protrusions that bend back toward the handle. A creature wielding a hooked sword gains 1 boon on challenge rolls to disarm an opponent and opponents suffer 1 bane when attempting to disarm them.

Locking Garrote (Price: 3 gc, Availability: Uncommon) A thin, metal wire runs between a pair of steel handles that each contain half of a locking mechanism. The wielder can spend a triggered action to lock the garrote handles together, freeing their hands while leaving the target suffocating. Unlocking a locked garrote requires an Agility challenge roll with 1 bane, a Strength challenge roll with 2 bane, or a key designed for it. A locked garrote has a Defense of 12 and Health 10, but other creatures attacking it suffer 2 bane.

Armor	Defense	Price	Availability
Clothing (No Strength Requirement)			
Haramaki	Agility + 1	1 gc	C
Medium Armor (Requires Strength 13 or higher)			
Do-Maru Jacket	Agility + 3	3 gc	U
Tosei Gusoku	16	8 gc	R
Heavy Armor (Requires Strength 15 or higher)			
Tameshi Gusoku	17	15 gc	R
O-yoroi	19	30 gc	R

Katana Wielded by many samurai and viewed as the most honorable weapon a warrior might wield, this long, carefully forged sword has a slight curve to better cut through leather and silk armor—and the flesh beneath. While wielding a katana with two hands, you cannot use the weapon's finesse quality.

Kunai A small, weighted throwing knife, typically with a ring on the butt end so it can be hung on a string or hook. When attacking, a creature wielding this weapon may spend its triggered action to throw an additional kunai with 2 banes that deals half damage.

Kusarigama This is a small, scythe-like weapon typically affixed to the end of a short, weighted chain that can be used as a grip to swing the weapon at a longer reach. A creature wielding a kusarigama gains 1 boon on challenge rolls to give an opponent the prone affliction and opponents suffer 1 bane when attempting to give the wielder the prone affliction.

Odachi The blade of this sword is four feet or longer, making it a far more intimidating weapon than the more popular katana. Drawing or sheathing an odachi requires an action or minor activity and triggered action.

Shuriken A small, thin throwing knife that is typically star-shaped. When attacking, a creature wielding this weapon may spend its triggered action to throw an additional shuriken with 2 banes that deals half damage.

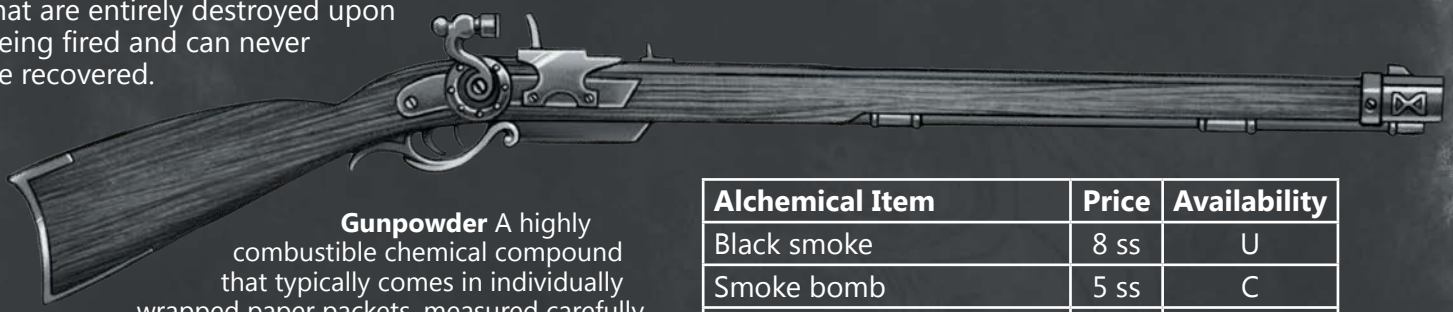
Triple Staff Three heavy metal or wooden bars, connected in a row by short chains. When attacking, a creature wielding this weapon may spend its triggered action to make an additional attack with 2 banes that deals half damage.

Alchemical Items

Black Smoke Smoked by criminals, injured veterans, reprobates, and dastardly nobles alike, this drug is processed from the pollen of a popular, sweet-smelling flower easy to grow throughout Soburin. When smoked, the imbiber feels a sense of euphoria, gains 10 temporary Health, and gains 1 boon on challenge rolls to resist spells or certain afflictions (charmed, compelled, fatigued, frightened) for the next hour. After its effects cease, the imbiber makes a Strength challenge roll with 1 bane per dose of black smoke in the last month or becomes fatigued for 4d6 hours. This affliction can only be removed by waiting until the end of the duration or imbibing more black smoke.

Name	Damage	Hands	Properties	Price	Availability
Basic Melee Weapon					
Any-tool	1d6	One	Finesse	3 gc	U
Swift Melee Weapons (Requires Strength or Agility 11 or higher)					
3-section steel whip	1d6	One	Finesse, special	1 gc	C
Dagger fan	1	One	Defensive +1, finesse	2 gc	U
Hooked sword	1d6	One	Finesse, special	2 gc	U
Kusarigama	1d6	Two	Finesse, reach +1, special	3 gc	U
Triple staff	2d6	Two	Finesse, special	3 gc	C
Military Melee Weapons (Requires Strength 11 or higher)					
9-section steel whip	3d6	Two	Finesse, reach +1, special	3 gc	U
Katana	3d6	Two	Versatile (one-handed 2d6, finesse)	6 gc	U
Odachi	3d6+2	Two	Reach +1, special	7 gc	R
Ranged Weapons					
Hand hwacha	2d6	One	Misfire, range (medium), reload (13), special, uses bullets	20 gc	R
Kunai	1d6	Off	Thrown, range (medium), special	5 ss	U
Shuriken	1d3+1	Off	Thrown, range (short), special	2 ss	C

Though proper firearms were introduced to Soburin during the War of Kaiyo in the hands of ceramian soldiers and ropaeo pirates, gunpowder itself is said to have originated here centuries before that in the invention of fireworks, recorded back as far as twelve-hundred years ago. Firearms have come a long way since the first clumsy cannons brought forth in the war, ultimately evolving into the relatively simple to use handheld weapons of today. Yet—like all technology from distant shores—their acceptance across the continent is inconsistent. Some prefectures outlaw firearms altogether, while others embrace and even openly equip their soldiers with them. Unlike most weapons that use ammunition, firearms use bullets that are entirely destroyed upon being fired and can never be recovered.



Gunpowder A highly combustible chemical compound that typically comes in individually wrapped paper packets, measured carefully to provide enough power to fire a single bullet.

Gunpowder, **Magic** This gunpowder is laced with crystalline shards that imbue any bullet fired with energy, granting a +1 bonus to damage on a successful hit.

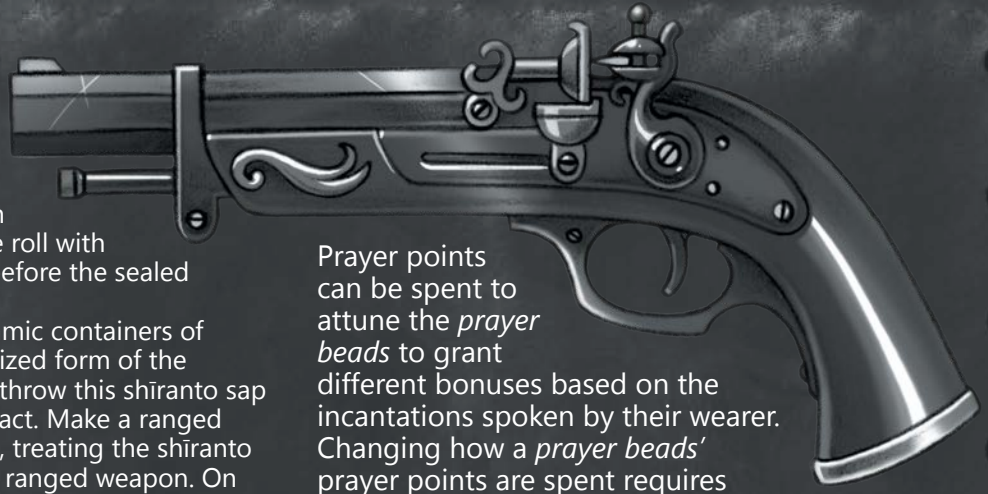
Gunpowder, **Poison** This gunpowder is laced with toxic chemicals, causing a bullet to trail a cloud of toxins behind it when fired. If used to fire a bullet within short range, the target of the shot takes an additional 1d6 poison damage.

Hand Hwacha This thirteen-barreled pistol is unwieldy but can fire either one or thirteen shots at once. Firing all thirteen shots at once flings a lead storm in a 10-yard-line. Targets in the area make an Agility challenge roll with one bane or take 4d6 piercing damage. When all thirteen shots are fired, the hand hwacha requires one minute and thirteen bullets to reload before it can be used again.

Alchemical Item	Price	Availability
Black smoke	8 ss	U
Smoke bomb	5 ss	C
Shīranto sap	1 gc	C
Bullets and gunpowder (5)	2 ss	U
Magic gunpowder	5 ss	R
Poison gunpowder	1 gc	R
Blinding shot	3 gc	R
Flaming shot	3 gc	R

Shīranto Sap This sickly brown substance, typically stored in a brass urn, quickly sticks to surfaces and expands into foam when exposed to the air. A typical urn holds 8 ounces of shīranto sap.

As an action, a creature can use one ounce of shīranto sap to fill a hole 1-foot in diameter, seal a 1-yard by 1-yard window, or use two ounces to pack the seams of a human-sized doorway. The shīranto sap takes double damage from all attacks until it sets 30 seconds after being applied.



Once it has, the seal must be destroyed (Defense 11, Health 20) or pried away with a combination of one Strength challenge roll with 1 bane and one Intellect challenge roll with 1 bane (made as a single action) before the sealed opening can be accessed.

One-ounce glass and ceramic containers of shīranto sap are the most weaponized form of the concoction. As an action, you can throw this shīranto sap up to 7 yards, shattering it on impact. Make a ranged attack against a creature or object, treating the shīranto sap as an improvised one-handed ranged weapon. On a hit, the target becomes covered in rapidly expanding shīranto sap that inhibits movement. At the start of your next turn, the shīranto sap hardens, and the target must make a Strength challenge roll or gain the immobilized affliction. At the start of each of its turns, the target receives another challenge roll to remove the immobilized affliction. The shīranto sap can also be destroyed (used in this way, it has Defense 13, Health 6).

Shot, Blinding This special gunpowder is mixed with colorful chemicals and tiny shards of glass and ceramic, creating a blinding, stinging cloud of searing glass when used in a firearm. When used to load a firearm instead of a bullet and gunpowder, the firearm fires a 10-yard-cone of serrated shards and brilliant light. All creatures in the cone take 1d6 points of damage and must make an Agility challenge roll or gain the blinded affliction for 1 minute.

Shot, Flaming This special gunpowder has less nitrate than most, causing it to burn slower—releasing a great cloud of smoke and flame when loaded into a firearm instead of a bullet. When fired, it creates a 7-yard-cone of flame and smoke that deals 2d6 fire damage. Creatures in the area can make an Agility challenge roll to reduce the damage taken by half.

Smoke Bomb A small wrapped packet of gunpowder and slow-burning chemicals, when struck or thrown against a hard surface, this bomb erupts in a cloud of smoke that fills the target square and spreads to all adjacent squares at a rate of one per round. Characters in the cloud of smoke have 1 bane on attack rolls but gain total obscurement. The smoke dissipates in 1d6 rounds or when exposed to a faint or stronger wind.

Prayer Beads (Enchanted Relic)

These clay, ceramic, or wooden beads are created spontaneously after being used repeatedly to focus prayers and spiritual energy for long periods of time. *Prayer beads* have a number of prayer points depending on their rarity.

Common These prayer beads have been used for between 1 and 5 years. They have 2 prayer points.
Uncommon These prayer beads have been used for between 6 and 20 years. They have 4 prayer points.
Rare These prayer beads have been used for between 21 and 100 years. They have 6 prayer points.
Exotic These prayer beads have been used for more than a century. They have 8 prayer points.

Prayer points can be spent to attune the *prayer beads* to grant different bonuses based on the incantations spoken by their wearer. Changing how a *prayer beads'* prayer points are spent requires attunement over the course of one week where the character allocating the prayer points must spend at least four hours each day in meditation with the *prayer beads*. Prayer points can be spent the following ways, with their cost in prayer points noted by parentheses. The effects of *prayer beads* do not stack.

Sacred Armor (2) Your Defense increases by 1.
Sacred Body (1) You gain a +1 bonus to on either Strength or Agility challenge rolls.
Sacred Save (1) You gain a +1 bonus to on either Intellect or Will challenge rolls.
Sacred Skill (2) You gain 1 boon on challenge rolls to accomplish a specific task (such as hiding, lying, or perceiving).
Sacred Strike (2) You gain a +1 bonus to attack rolls and damage.

Steampunk Equipment

Prejudice against the Kengen Occupation and fear of tsukumogami have made technology heresy in most of the prefectures but despite this, works of scientific artifice have found their way into everyday lives of citizens across Soburin. Some use machines as tools, others as a weapon, and others still as a means for survival. Whatever the motive, technology is powerful, dangerous, and deserves to be carefully considered before being adopted for use.

Steampunk Item	Price	Availability
Light singijeon	3 gc	U
Heavy singijeon	5 gc	R
Grapple launcher	2 gc	C
Qì-Tóukuī mask	1 gc	U
Qì-Tóukuī bodysuit	varies	E

Grapple Launcher This specially designed firearm is mounted with a winch and a 50-yard spool of lightweight rope. This rope is in turn mounted to a grappling hook light enough to be fired its entire distance by a single dose of gunpowder. Re-spooling the rope and grapple requires one minute.

Qì-Tóukuī Qì-tóukuī come in a wide variety of shapes and forms, though altogether can be categorized as either face-masks or bodysuits. A face-mask is a

Ship	Price	Speed	Crew	Passengers	Cargo (tons)	Defense	Health	Special
Light hikōsen	10 gc	Flier 8	1	0	0	14	10	double damage from fire
Medium hikōsen	20 gc	Flier 6	1	5	0	13	20	double damage from fire
Heavy hikōsen	40 gc	Flier 4	1	20	½	12	40	double damage from fire
Parachute	2 gc	Special	1	0	0	10	10	—
Uso-Flyer	75 gc	Flier 12	1	1	1	13	40	—
Uso-Kite	50 gc	Flier 16	1	0	0	15	25	—

specialized mask that covers the wearer's eyes, nose, and mouth with a sealed filter. A creature wearing a qì-tóukuī mask takes half damage from poison gas and 2 boons on challenge rolls to resist gaining the poisoned affliction from gas (and on challenge rolls against the Mists of Akuma). A qì-tóukuī mask can be disarmed like it were a weapon.

Bodysuits cover a creature's entire body but must be integrated into a specialized suit of armor, hermetically sealing it to the outside and granting the wearer immunity to poison damage and the poisoned affliction (as well as the Mists of Akuma). A qì-tóukuī bodysuit costs 5gc, plus half the base cost of the armor it is integrated to. Once a wearer of qì-tóukuī bodysuit has taken 20 points of damage, the suit is too damaged to protect the wearer, functioning like a qì-tóukuī mask until repaired (2 gc).

Singijeon, Light Lit on fire immediately before launching, these specially treated arrows can be fired from a firearm or a standard bow and contain a carefully wrapped packet of gunpowder that explodes on (or immediately after) impact. Attacks made with singijeon suffer 1 bane and do 1d6 damage on a successful hit. Once struck, the target can make an Agility challenge roll with 1 bane as a triggered action to pull the singijeon out and throw it in an adjacent square or else it explodes immediately, doing 4d6 fire damage. If the singijeon was discarded, the damage is done to a creature in the target square; an Agility challenge roll with 1 bane reduces the damage by half.

Singijeon, Heavy Very similar to a light singijeon, the heavy version is much larger and can only be fired from a two-handed firearm. When it strikes a target it deals 2d6 damage and when it explodes it deals 8d6 fire damage.

VEHICLES

Most all the prefectures have boats that ply the waters of Soburin, but some utilize vehicles that take to the air as well.

Hikōsen It takes 10 minutes to inflate these tight silk tarps with gases lighter than air, and stoke a fire in the metal cages beneath, causing the blimp-like frame to rise into the air. Once activated the hikōsen floats up and gains the flier trait, though it may be slower depending on the weight on its bamboo carriage.

Parachute Thick, tightly-woven sheets of silk and thin bamboo rods are carefully set into this backpack. As a triggered action, a falling creature can pull on the ripcord to deploy the parachute. The creature's rate of descent slows to 20 yards per round. By making an Agility challenge roll, the creature can move up 3 yards horizontally for every 2 yards fallen, up to their maximum speed.

Uso-Flyer This horse-size contraption of light steel plates and hefty engine uses a half-dozen insect-like wings that seem implausibly small to carry it aloft into the air. Rather than admitting defeat in the face of gravity, the vehicle proves remarkably nimble, capable of supporting a driver and passenger along with a small amount of cargo.

Uso-Kite A smaller version of the uso flyer, this device is faster and more affordable but is usable only by the pilot, easier to damage, and has no capacity to carry equipment.

AUGMETICS

Augmetics are a broad class of items similar in many ways to enchanted items. Unlike an enchanted item, however, augmetics are "installed" in a creature, permanently welded to their form and flesh until death or violence separates them. Though the process is well-known across Soburin, it is also typically shunned. This taboo largely arises from the ceramian (or sometimes ropaeo) origin of the technology, a sore reminder of the painful Kengen wars. Yet even where augmetics are accepted they are employed with caution: modifying the body leaves one susceptible to corruption from the Mists of Akuma.

Installing Augmetics Installing an augmetic to a wearer requires an Intellect challenge roll (target number equal to 14 – the wearer's Strength modifier) over the course of 8 hours and the surgery does damage to the wearer

Augmetic	Haitoku	Price	Availability
Dainamo Omiryō	2	25 gc	R
Denki Shīrudo	1	6 gc	R
Electroheart	2	10 gc	E
Electrolens	1	5 gc	C
Energized Pylon	3	60 gc	U
Fan No Te Hand	1	20 gc	U
Hornear	1	15 gc	C
Ketsueki Shokubai	2	10 gc	E
Plating	2	30 gc	C
Plating Piercing	2	5 gc	C
Shindan Yokutan	1	15 gc	U
Shoulder Mount	3	30 gc	C
Steam Arm	3	60 gc	U
Steam Leg	1	10 gc	U
Sword Arm	1	8 gc	R
Telescopic Arm	1	10 gc	R
Telescopic Leg	2	15 gc	R
Venom Spitter	6	6 gc	R

equal to half their Health. Attacks made against an augmetic target the wearer's Defense + 6.

Dainamo Omiryō Despite being highly illegal and banned for trade in most of the scientific prefectures, dainamo omiryō are some of the most highly sought after augmetics in all of Soburin. This tear-shaped arcane engine is entirely self-contained and installed in a wearer's chest or on their shoulder. Whenever the wearer casts a damage dealing spell, as long as there is space enough in the dainamo omiryō roll 1d6. On a 1, the magic is absorbed by the augmetic (causing the spell effect to fail). The dainamo omiryō can hold a number of spell ranks equal to half the wearer's level (minimum 1) until the next time the wearer takes a rest (at which point the absorbed spells dissipate). Once the dainamo omiryō has gained a charge the wearer can spend an action to fire it, dealing 2d6 damage per charged spell rank expended plus the wearer's Strength modifier in a 25-yard-line. An Agility challenge roll with 1 bane halves the damage.

Alternatively, a dainamo omiryō can be fired as a ranged attack at a single target within 50 yards.

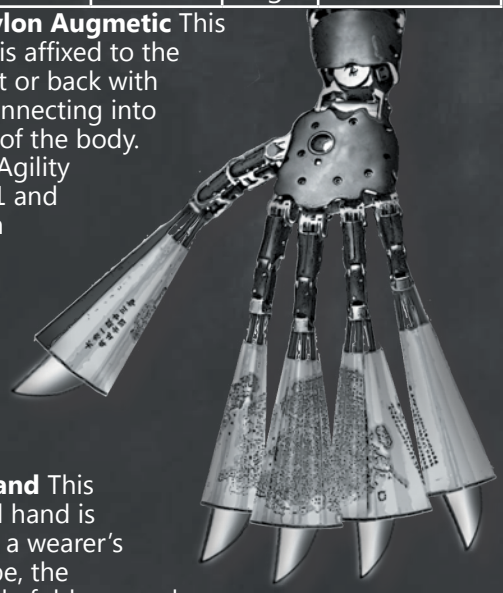
A fully-charged dainamo omiryō must be fired within 1 minute or it releases the energy in a sudden burst, which is harmless to the device but deals its damage to the wearer and all creatures and objects in a 3-yard-radius. Rank 0 spells count as rank 1 spells for the purposes of a dainamo omiryō. A dainamo omiryō has 25 Health.

Denki Shīrudo (Necroji and Steametic only) This collection of wires runs throughout the wearer's body, generating a faint electric hum. This electric field interferes with a wearer's naturally occurring bioelectric field, making it exclusive to necroji and steametics. When struck by a melee weapon attack, the wearer may spend its triggered action to deal lightning damage to its attacker (1d6 per charge spent). The denki shīrudo has 6 charges and the wearer chooses how many to spend when activating it. 1 charge is restored with each rest, 2 charges if the wearer drinks half a gold worth of alcohol during the rest. A denki shīrudo has 30 Health.

Electroheart Augmetic This series of pumps and valves is mounted directly around the wearer's heart, all but invisible to the outside. The wearer gains immunity to the fatigued and slowed afflictions but takes double damage from lightning. This augmetic cannot be targeted by attacks.

Electrolens Augmetic This large eyepiece crackles with energy, granting its wearer darksight. An electrolens has 20 Health.

Energized Pylon Augmetic This large battery is affixed to the wearer's chest or back with thick wires connecting into various parts of the body. The wearer's Agility increases by 1 and the maximum score for its Agility increases by 1. An energized pylon has 30 Health.



Fan No Te Hand This long-fingered hand is affixed where a wearer's hand would be, the accordion-style folds on each fingertip allowing them to unfold into small fans. The wearer can cast the *evoke gale* spell without the need for speaking the words. Alternatively, the wearer can use its fan hand to glide as if it were a parachute (page 215). Once the wearer has used these abilities 3 times, the wearer cannot do so again until it finishes a rest. The wearer's unarmed strike damage increases to 1d6. A fan no te hand has 25 Health.

Hornear Augmetic This long brass horn is mounted into a wearer's ear, more than tripling in size on the exterior end. The wearer gains 1 boon on sound-based Perception challenge rolls and becomes able to hear all the frequencies animals can hear. By installing a second hornear augmetic the wearer gains sightless to a range of 5 yards. A hornear has 20 Health.

Ketsueki Shokubai (non-necroji, non-steametic) While it may be powerful, the ketsueki shokubai frequently turns those who have it bloodthirsty, making it reviled in all the prefectures save for Uragi. The cunning device is subversive in design, requiring only a small mechanism installed in a wearer's mouth and throat, sometimes replacing the wearer's entire lower jaw.

In order to gain one of the following benefits from its ketsueki shokubai, the wearer must consume the heart of a humanoid (or beast of size 1 or larger) within 1 minute of a creature's death. Extracting a heart from a dying creature requires an action, and extracting the heart from a living creature requires an attack that deals 5 or more damage and reduces a target's Health to 0 or less. Removing the heart from a humanoid immediately kills it.

Consuming the heart requires a triggered action and grants the following bonuses for 1 minute.

- 1 boon on attack rolls and challenge rolls
- A +2 bonus to Defense
- Your Speed increases by 4

A ketsueki shokubai inspires a hunger within the wearer. When not activated within a week, the hunger makes the wearer increasingly vicious, almost to the point of making it feral. For every week it is not activated, the wearer of the ketsueki shokubai makes non-Intimidation social challenge rolls with a cumulative 1 bane.

This augmetic cannot be targeted by attacks.

Plating Augmetic This heavy metal plate is mounted directly to the wearer's skeleton. The wearer's Defense increases by 2. A plating augmetic cannot be targeted by attacks or spells.

Plating Piercing This light ceramic plate is mounted to heavy piercings in a wearer's skin. The wearer's Defense increases by 1. A plating piercing has 15 Health and can be disarmed as though it were a shield.

Shindan Yokutan (Kurēn Hengeyokai or Tengu only) Designed by a ropaeo scientist obsessed with the bone structures of avian humanoids, these metallic wing tips are fitted with circuitry that is pressed into the flesh beneath a kurēn hengeyokai or tengu's plumage. By spending a minor activity touching an adjacent creature, the wearer with this augmetic can determine how much damage the touched creature has and its normal maximum Health. The wearer of a shindan yokutan increases its unarmed damage by 1d3 but its flier speed is reduced by 1.

Shoulder Mount This metallic plate is bolted to the wearer's shoulder blade, leaving only a rounded branch pushing out and up just beside the wearer's ear. It can easily support up to 10 pounds of weight—typically a firearm or crossbow. So long as the wearer has at least one hand free, they can make a ranged attack with a weapon affixed to a shoulder mount as a triggered action. Attaching or removing a weapon from a shoulder mount that takes one minute.

Steam Arm Augmetic This metal and piston arm is mounted over a wearer's severed arm stump. The wearer's Strength increases by 1 and the maximum score for its Strength increases by 1. The wearer's unarmed strike damage with this limb increases to 1d3. A steam arm has 30 Health.

Steam Leg Augmetic This clockwork prosthesis is installed over a wearer's severed leg, above the knee. The wearer's Speed increases by 2, it gains 1 boon on challenge rolls made to jump, and its unarmed strike damage with this limb increases to 1d3. A steam leg has 30 Health.

Sword Arm Augmetic A fairly recent creation, this rare blend of ceramian science and soburimartial arts is only utilized by the most dedicated warriors or the truly paranoid—those that would rather lose a hand than ever find themselves unarmed. This blend of alloys and electric components is installed over a wearer's missing wrist or arm like a steam arm, but has a short, curved blade at the end instead of a fingered hand. The wearer's unarmed strike damage with this limb increases to 2d6. Sword arm augmetics cannot be combined with any other augmetics nor can they be disarmed.

By spending a minor activity to activate the gearwork within the augmetic, the wearer can vibrate their sword arm for 1 minute. While vibrating the damage done by a sword arm increases by 1d6+2 and the wearer gains 1 boon on attacks and challenge rolls made with it. Once the sword arm has vibrated for 3 minutes it cannot vibrate again until the wearer has finished a rest.

A sword arm has 40 Health.

Telescopic Arm Augmetic Almost identical to a steam arm, a telescopic arm also includes a hefty piston installed between a wearer's wrist and elbow or their elbow and shoulder. The wearer's reach increases by +1, or +2 with two telescopic arm augmetics installed. The wearer's unarmed strike damage with this limb increases to 1d6.

A telescopic arm has 30 Health.

Telescopic Leg Augmetic A telescopic leg is a variation on the steam leg but includes a heavy piston installed between a wearer's knee and ankle, or hip and knee. For each telescopic leg augmetic installed the wearer's Speed increases by 2 and it gains Leap 2. The wearer's unarmed strike damage with this limb increases to 1d6.

A telescopic leg has 30 Health.

Venom Spitter A creature with this realistic artificial arm can spend a minor activity to deploy a hidden weapon (similar to a hand crossbow) inside of it. The wearer can fire the venom spitter as an attack or as a triggered action during an attack. The weapon works like a hand crossbow but deals 2d6 poison damage. A venom spitter draws its chemical ammunition from a gland grafted into the wearer's body. Once the venom spitter has been fired four times, the wearer cannot do so again until it has finished a rest. The grafted gland inside it causes the wearer to suffer 1 bane on challenge rolls made to resist the poisoned affliction.

A venom spitter has 25 Health.

Raising his odachi high into the air, its long steel edge reflecting pale moonlight from the west and the fires of the Izon Volcano to the east, Shortclaw finished casting his spell and stabbed himself deeply in the leg. The ape-man's ears heard a cry answering his own as an adeddo-oni samurai charging up the torii gate screamed in reply, nearly split in half as the enjin's bloody magic took hold.

At his feet the psonorous Hanxiangzi was conjuring sanguine magic of his own, gripping a dagger by the blade instead of fiercely stabbing himself. Chanting, the sorcerer gestured towards his foes causing the crimson liquid dripping from his hand to fly upward, forming into bullets that careened toward a massive skeleton dragging itself up from the ash. Bone shattered and fragmented as the missiles slammed into the gashadokuro but it seemed unphased, the creature's enormous head swiveling from side to side to take in the battle before it, mixing with the volcanic light to seem like a ghastly lantern in a kabuki show.

"Now might not be the time for that spell, Shortclaw!" his kumo companion screamed, weaving her own magic to disassemble the sword arm of a corrupted bushibot before it could slice into her flesh. She dodged low and spoke powerful arcane words toward Izon behind them, drawing forth embers that embroiled the adeddo-oni in flames before kicking it off of the torii gate's platform. "We have no idea how long the mists will last or how many of these damned things are down there right now!"

Floating up and away from Natsuko while hissing, "*I will invessstigate,*" the snake spirit Hibe rose above the fray to see how many of the undead swarmed below before adding, "*it isss not good*." Its master only swore in reply, thanking every kami she could that she'd had the foresight to prepare a plethora of exorcism slips before leaving camp. As more of the evil creatures braying for her enchanted gurēsu blood clambered up the torii gate she drew forth a handful of the enchanted scripts, turning meaningfully toward the gashadokuro about to assault them—if given leave it could destroy the platform and kill them all. With its usual timing her spirit companion suggested, "*perhapsss the gigantic monssster should be your firssst concern?*"

Her enjin ally dropped his odachi and drew two katanas, screaming, "retreat to inside my reach! I'll keep them back long enough for you to fell it!" In response a dozen hunchlings rushed to meet his steel but his companions knew to heed Shortclaw's word and paid the lesser creatures no mind, instead moving to focus on the deadly gashadokuro now towering above them. Tokutoku assailed it first, insulting the titan's ancestors and causing bits of the skeleton's form to crack as Hanxiangzi conjured more blood bullets toward the seams made by the kumo's attack.

Natsuko fanned a quartet of exorcism slips in each hand, waiting for the creature to raise one of its arms before splaying hers out and letting them fly into the air. Each of the holy papers swiftly shot toward the immense skeleton, ignorant of the volcanic updrafts sending ash up into roiling mists below and latching onto it with licking blue flames. A horrendous cry rang out from the gashadokuro as its house-sized bone fists rebounded back, moments before crushing the torii gate, withering under the spells being cast by Tokutoku and Hanxiangzi as it dropped back into the ash.

Hibe hissed triumphantly but its jubilance disappeared under a bloodthirsty roar from the adeddo-oni below, the undead's efforts seeming to redouble as more surged up the torii gate. A leaping samurai latched onto Shortclaw despite the enjin's impaling strike, nearly ignoring the blade sticking out of its back and scratching furiously at the ape-man to rip out chunks of fur and flesh before being cast aside with the katana still in it. "Take mine!" Tokutoku yelped, weaving low to dodge an undead ninja's sword while unsheathing her own, "just keep these damn things off me!"

The enjin peered over the platform's edge before grimly nodding his assent and grabbing the smaller blade but he wished he hadn't. "I hope you've got more of those scripts Natsuko," he yelled, "because there's a hell of a lot more adeddo down there!" He roared then and leapt into the undead swiping at Hanxiangzi, lopping off heads and crushing hunchlings under his huge feet.

Natsuko spared a look down herself and saw that Shortclaw was right: dozens if not scores of the corrupted were scrabbling below, fighting amongst one another to climb the torii gate all the sooner. Reaching into her pack she suddenly felt a cold grip her at odds with the volcanic warmth from nearby Izon—only 9 exorcism slips left.

CHAPTER 14: SPELLS

ANCESTRAL TRADITION - WILL

Calling on the power of one's ancestors has long been a revered tradition of magic in Soburin and with the recent turmoil gripping the prefectures it has become more popular than ever before. The GM may permit a follower of the spiritual tradition (from *Demon Lord's Companion*) to learn spells from this tradition and vice versa.

In addition to those listed below, the following spells are available to this tradition: rank 0—*light*, rank 1—*flash, persistent light*.

DETECT SPIRITS **ANCESTRAL UTILITY 0**

Duration 1 hour

For the duration you sense the presence of kami and spirits (any creature with the insubstantial trait) within 10 yards. The spell can penetrate most barriers, but it is blocked by 1 foot of stone, 1 inch of common metal, a thin sheet of lead, or 1 yard of wood or dirt.

SPIRITUAL STRIKE **ANCESTRAL ATTACK 0**

You tap into the power of your ancestors and lash out, damaging the very soul of your target. Make a Will attack roll against the target's Will. On a success, the target takes 1d6 psychic damage.

Attack Roll 20+ The target also becomes impaired until the end of the next round.

ANCESTRAL VENGEANCE **ANCESTRAL ATTACK 1**

You grasp upon an heirloom and call upon your ancestors, decrying the crimes and deeds of one creature you can see within short range. The target makes a Will challenge roll with 1 bane or takes 2d6 psychic damage (3d6 damage if it is undead or oni). This psychic damage ignores immunities and traits that reduce psychic damage.

EXORCISM SLIPS **ANCESTRAL ATTACK 2**

Target 2d3 + Will modifier slips of paper

Duration 1 day

You touch slips of paper and imbue them with magic. You or someone else can make a ranged attack with one of the slips by throwing it at any target in short range. If someone else attacks with the slip, that attacker adds your Will modifier, not theirs, to the attack roll. On a hit, the target takes

3d6 holy damage. Hit or miss, the spell then ends on the slip. If you cast this spell again, the spell ends early on any slips still affected by it. When cast as a rank 4 spell, you enchant 2d6 + Will modifier slips of paper.

HENGEYOKAI SPIRIT ANCESTRAL UTILITY 2

Target one creature
Duration 1 hour
You call upon a surge of animalistic energy to grant the target primal powers. The target gains the abilities of a hengeyokai (page 179) whose given animal's blood you use as part of the casting. This only applies to Hengeyokai-Kin traits, such as a kumo's climber (7) and web ability (you do not gain Animal Shape or Human Shape). Hengeyokai are not affected by their own animal's blood, but can gain new temporary features for the duration of the spell or instantly regain the use of a Hengeyokai-Kin ability.

GHOST NEEDLE ANCESTRAL ATTACK 3

Area A sphere with a 3-yard radius centered on a point within long range
When you cast this spell you fling an enchanted needle into the air and the voices of your ancestors shatter it into a rain of sharp metal-ethereal death. Any creature in the area makes a Will challenge roll or takes 4d6 psychic damage and gains the immobilized affliction as the ghost needles pin them in place. At the end of the round, a creature immobilized by this spell may make a new Will challenge roll to remove the affliction. Spells that alter a creature's form (such as *mist form*) or magically transport a creature (like *shortcut*) cannot be used on a creature immobilized by this spell.

SPIRIT TEA ANCESTRAL UTILITY 3

Duration 1 minute
You imbue a simple cup of tea with spiritual energy, enabling any creature that drinks it to become like the kami. For the duration of the spell, the drinker gains the following abilities:

Ancestral Knowledge
By spending an action attempting an Intellect challenge roll, the target may learn an obscure piece of myth or lore.

Flier 5

Immune The target gains immunity to damage from poison or psychic as well as immunity to the fatigued, poison, and prone afflictions.

Insubstantial The target takes half damage from weapons, can move through solid objects and other creatures, and ignores the effects of moving across difficult terrain.

Regeneration The target heals 1d6 damage at the end of each round that it is not incapacitated.

VOICE OF THE KAMI ANCESTRAL ATTACK 4

Duration 1 hour or until discharged (see text)
Taking a deep breath you fill your lungs with energy, imbuing you with the voice of the spirits themselves and giving your words immense power.

As an action, you may let forth a great shout in the ancient tongue of your ancestry. Each creature caught in a 10-yard-cone (from a point you can reach within your space) must make a Will challenge roll, taking 3d6 thunder damage and 5d6 psychic damage on a failure, or half as much with a success. Creatures who fail are also affected by the deafened affliction and frightened affliction for a number of minutes equal to your Will modifier.

After the spell is cast, it lasts for the duration or until the shout is discharged. During this time you cannot speak any more softly than a shout without triggering the effect, and cannot speak any language other than your ancestral tongue.

SPHERE OF SEASONS ANCESTRAL ATTACK 5

Target A point in space within long range
Duration 1 minute

Elemental energies roil through a 5-yard-radius sphere centered on the target or on a point in the creature's or object's space. Inside the area of the spell you force the wheel of seasons to temporarily change according to your whims. You may use this spell to grant a blessing or a curse, but the decision must be made when the spell is cast. In either case, this spell also grants you the racial abilities of gurēsu (page 171). You may exclude a number of creatures equal to your Will modifier. You may choose to effect the following changes:

Summer Using a pressed leaf you call upon Natsu Īta, the power that has eaten summer.
Bane—Creatures that start their turn within or enter into the spell's area must make a Strength challenge roll with 2 banes or become fatigued and impaired while in the spell's area and 1 minute afterward.
Boon—Creatures that start their turn within or enter into the spell's area roll twice when making melee attack rolls and take the best result.

Autumn Using a dried, fallen leaf, you beseech Akinochisō, the consumer of autumn.
Bane—Creatures that start their turn within or enter into the spell's area must make a Will challenge roll with 2 banes or become frightened and impaired while in the spell's area and 1 minute afterward. The affected area counts as the source of fear.
Boon—Creatures that start their turn within or enter into the spell's area roll twice when making ranged attack rolls and take the best result.

Winter Using a bare twig, you focus the fury of Fuyu-Noyaban, destroyer of winter.
Bane—Creatures that start their turn within or enter into the spell's area must make a Strength challenge roll with 2 banes or become blinded and impaired while in the spell's area and 1 minute afterward.
Boon—Creatures that start their turn within or enter into the spell's area gains a bonus to Defense equal to your power.

Spring Using a preserved flower, you tap into the essence of Haru-Oshōhi, spring's murderer.
Bane—Creatures that start their turn within or enter into the spell's area must make a Will challenge roll with 2 banes or become impaired and poisoned while in the spell's area and 1 minute afterward.
Boon—Creatures that end their turn within or enter into the spell's area heal half their healing rate. Creatures can only benefit from this boon once every 1d3 rounds.

BLOOD & BONE TRADITION - WILL

Soburin's history was forged in the fires of battle, the throne of imperial rule built on the blood and bones of warriors and mages alike. The magic of flesh is one of the most brutal and feared throughout the prefectures, used by all of the clans due to its powerful spells and the reaction they engender among enemy forces. Despite how grisly the art may be those who utilize it are highly respected—it is a foolish thing to cross a practitioner of blood and bone.

In addition to those listed below, the following spells are available to this tradition: rank 1—*celerity*, rank 2—*shrieking skull*, rank 3—*part bone from flesh*.

DETECT BLOOD BLOOD & BONE UTILITY 0

Duration 10 minutes

Take 1 damage. You are able to sense blood within 5 yards. Creatures that are concealed by a higher rank spell or invisibility are immune to the effects of this spell.

SANGUINE STRIKE BLOOD & BONE ATTACK 0

As part of casting this spell, you make an attack with a weapon. You make the attack roll with 1 bane but can use Intellect instead of the attack's normal attribute. You are healed half as much damage as the attack deals to the target (maximum 4).

STRIKE WITHIN & WITHOUT BLOOD & BONE ATTACK 1

Target one creature you can see within long range

You hit yourself with the weapon you are wielding, using sanguine magic to also strike the target. You deal double damage to the target and you take half the damage yourself. The damage you deal to the creature and yourself ignores immunities.

BLADE ATTRACTION BLOOD & BONE ATTACK 2
Target one creature you can see within short range
Duration 1 minute
Take 3 damage. A mystical aura surrounds the target, making attacks against the creature more effective and painful if it fails a Strength challenge roll against your Will challenge roll. For the duration of the spell, every weapon attack that deals damage to the creature deals an extra 1d6 damage.
Will Challenge Roll 20+ The target takes an extra 2d6 damage from weapon attacks.

BLOOD BULLETS BLOOD & BONE ATTACK 3
Take 4 damage. When you cast this spell, you spill blood from your palm by drawing an enchanted pattern onto it with a bladed weapon. Your blood rises from your hand and forms up to five bullets you fling at your enemies, divided as you choose among the targets. For each bullet, make a Will attack roll against the target's Defense. On a success, the target takes 2d6 damage.
Attack Roll 20+ The target suffers a bleeding wound that lasts until the target heals damage or until a creature uses an action to stanch the wound; while suffering from the wound, the target is fatigued and takes 1d3 damage at the end of each round.

SANGUINE FORTIFICATION BLOOD & BONE UTILITY 4
Target one creature you can touch
Duration 1 hour
Take 5 damage. You congeal the target's blood, harden its bones, and exert its heart, turning the target into a juggernaut. The target immediately takes 3d6 damage but for the duration of the spell it ignores the first 2 points of damage from any attack, gains immunity to the dazed, diseased, impaired, poisoned, slowed, and stunned afflictions, and gains a +2 bonus to Defense, attack rolls, and weapon damage rolls. When the spell ends the target is fatigued for 1d6 hours and enemies gain 1 boon on attack rolls against it.

BLOOD & BONE WALL BLOOD & BONE UTILITY 5
Area A line, 30 yards long, 8 yards high, and 3 yards wide originating from a point within long range
Duration 1 hour
Take 6 damage. A magical wall of solid bone, made from the blood-drenched skeletons and skulls of fallen warriors, fills the area and remains for the duration or until destroyed. The wall totally covers everything behind it. Each 1-yard cube of wall has Defense 10 and Health 75 (it has immunity to damage from psychic and unholy) and disappears when destroyed, but a destroyed cube of wall might collapse other cubes of wall, causing them to explode and deal 4d6 damage in a 2-yard-radius. A creature takes half the damage with a success on a Strength challenge roll.

The wall doesn't need to be vertical or rest on any firm foundation. It must, however, connect to at least one solid point (though its weight is not an issue and it balances perfectly). Thus, you can use this spell to bridge a chasm or create a ramp.

At the end of each round, any creature adjacent to the wall takes 3d6 damage at the end of their turn. A creature takes half the damage with a success on a Strength challenge roll.

MISTS TRADITION - INTELLECT

In the ancient past of Soburin there were mages who mastered the Mists of Akuma but they became a thing of myth and legend for centuries. Their tradition of magic has only returned with the island of Miyaki, kept alive and strong by the lost prefecture. With the dangerous fog an omnipresent threat it has resurged in popularity, spreading across the continent almost as quickly as the supernatural haze itself.

In addition to those listed below, the following spells are available to this tradition: rank 0—*fog*, rank 1—*freezing fog*, rank 2—*poisonous fog*, rank 3—*mist form*.

FREEZE THE BREATH MISTS ATTACK 0
The very air in the lungs of the target freezes. Make a Will attack roll against the target's Agility. On a success, the target takes 1d6 cold damage.
Attack Roll 20+ The target also becomes slowed until the end of the next round.

LUNGS OF AKUMA MISTS UTILITY 0
Target one creature per point of Intellect modifier
Duration 1 minute
You grant the targets of your spell immunity to the Mists of Akuma for the duration.

MIST LADDER MISTS UTILITY 1
Area one 10 yard high square
Duration 1 minute
You reach out into the air as you cast this spell, grabbing at the very firmament of existence and wrenching it into smoke that you form into a ladder. The ladder has no weight, and you are able to handle it regardless of length though it cannot be used as a weapon. The mist ladder is always rigid and steady; it does not require support or an object to lean against—you simply place it in the position you desire and climb. A mist ladder can be positioned horizontally to be used as a bridge but moving across it faster than half your speed without falling off requires an Agility challenge roll with 1 bane).

HATEFUL COUNTENANCE **MISTS ATTACK 2**
Target one creature within short range
Duration 1 hour
Make a Will challenge roll with 1 boon or gain 1 Haitoku. You draw on your own inner hatred and disgust, letting it spew forth in a torrent of abominable spite that seeps over your target, changing their demeanor and how they are perceived. The target unknowingly makes a Will challenge roll or gains the hated affliction (page 15) for the duration of the spell.

MISTY WEAPONRY **MISTS UTILITY 3**
Target weapons wielded by up to 6 creatures
Duration 1 minute
Make a Will challenge roll or gain 1 Haitoku. You draw upon the Mists of Akuma, wreathing it around the weapons of your allies. For the duration of the spell these weapons deal 1d6 additional damage in the hands of their wielders and grant their wielder's 1 boon on attack rolls.
Attack Roll 20+ The wielder of a misty weapon deals deal 2d6 additional damage instead.

TANGLING FOG **MISTS ATTACK 4**
Area A sphere with a 5-yard radius centered on a point within medium range
Duration 1 minute
You touch upon the Mists of Akuma to draw out a dangerous fog that spreads through the area (around corners) and lingers for the duration. The area is heavily obscured and any creature that ends the round inside of it must make a Strength challenge roll or gain the immobilized affliction and take 1d6 damage. At the end of the round the immobilized creature receives a new challenge roll to break free but suffers a cumulative 1 bane for each consecutive round it is immobilized as the fog twines more tightly around it.

CLOUD WALL **MISTS UTILITY 5**
Area A line, 30 yards long, 8 yards high, and 1 yard wide originating from a point within long range
Duration 1 hour
Make a Dignity challenge roll or gain 2 Haitoku. A translucent wall of fog fills the area and remains for the duration. The wall totally covers everything behind it. Creatures in the area or moving into the area are blinded. The wall is not an object that can be damaged (and thus breached) and it stays for the duration or until a strong wind (at least 20 miles per hour) disperses it after 1d6 rounds.

Naturally-formed fogs, oni, and the Mists of Akuma cannot pass through the wall. Fog- and cloud-like conjuration effects are also unable to pass through. Any creature that passes through or touches the wall gains 1d6 Haitoku.

SOBURIN SPELLS

In addition to its own traditions all of the spells in the core rulebook can be found in Soburin, but there's more at work in the prefectures within the usual magic repertoires.

SUKOCHI SHELL NATURE UTILITY 0

Target a number of creatures equal to your Will modifier
Range short
Duration 1 hour
As long as a targeted creature does not move before the end of the round an air-tight vegetable shell grows around them, protecting from the harmful effects of any gasses outside of it. The vegetable shell has Defense 7 and Health equal to your Healing Rate, but appears to be nothing more than a strange plant to passerby with a Perception less than your Will. The vegetable shell provides enough oxygen for the creature to breathe comfortably for 10 minutes, after which the plant rots and dissipates into ash.

DETECT SHAPECHANGER DIVINATION UTILITY 1

Duration 1 hour
For the duration you sense the presence of shapechangers within 10 yards. If you sense a shapechanger in this way, you can use your action to see a faint aura around any visible creature in the area that is under a shapeshifting effect and you learn how it is transformed (via spell, ancestry ability, path ability, or otherwise). The spell can penetrate most barriers, but it is blocked by 1 foot of stone, 1 inch of common metal, a thin sheet of lead, or 1 yard of wood or dirt.

DETECT TSUKUMOGAMI DIVINATION UTILITY 1

Duration 10 minutes
For the duration you sense the presence of tsukumogami within 5 yards. If you sense a tsukumogami in this way, you can use your action to see a faint aura around any visible tsukumogami (including any that are hiding, though an invisible creature remains concealed). The spell can penetrate most barriers, but it is blocked by 1 foot of stone, 1 inch of common metal, a thin sheet of lead, or 1 yard of wood or dirt.

PRIMAL BURST CONJURATION ATTACK 1

Target A point in space within short range
You fling a bit of energy at an object composed of one of the elements: air, earth, fire, metal, water, or wood. When it reaches the target, it explodes and unleashes elemental energies (the spell does not noticeably affect the structure of the target item.) The effects of the burst depend on the element that makes up the target item:

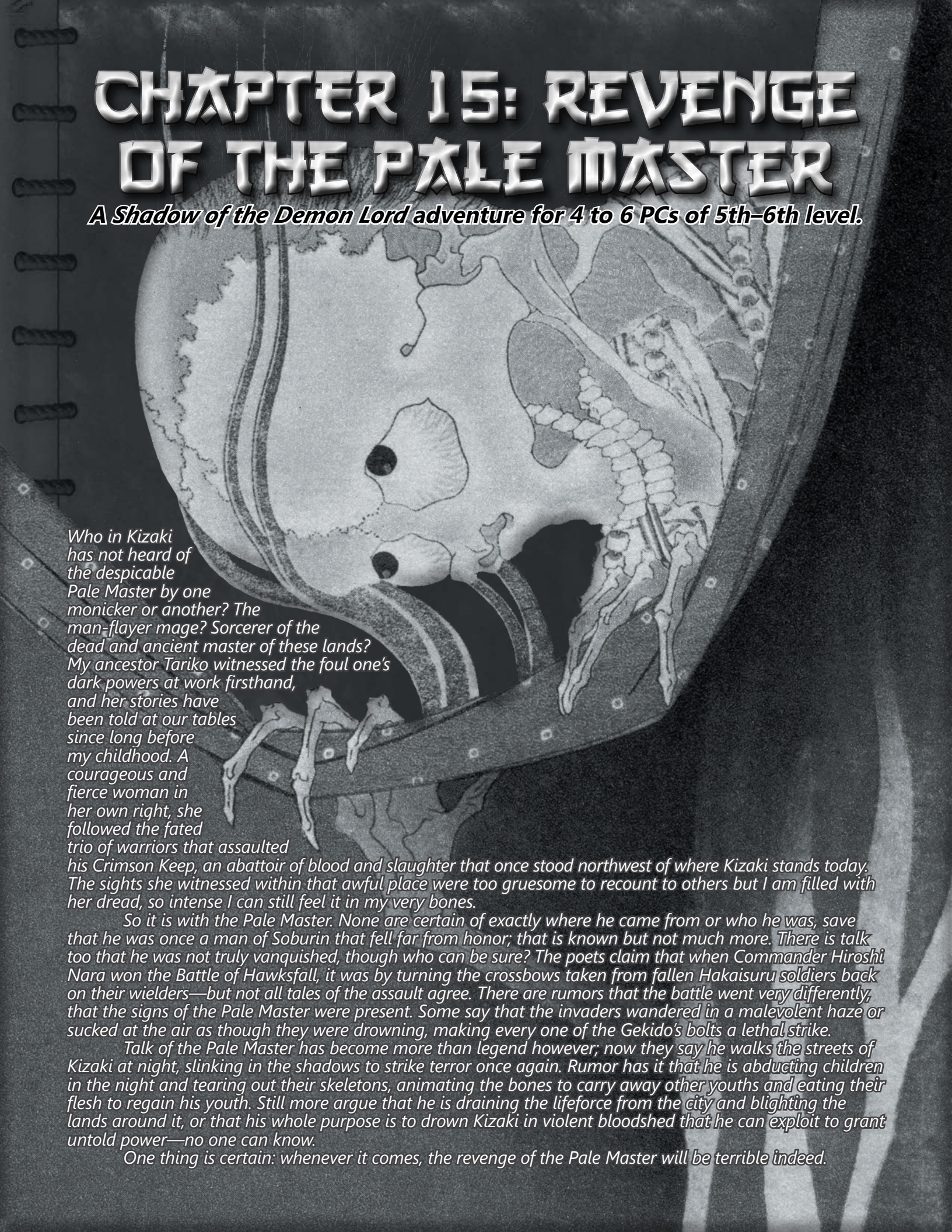
- **Air** The item unleashes a small tornado that grants all ranged attacks within 10 yards 1 bane until the end of the next round.
- **Earth** The item flings clump of dirt. Creatures within 3 yards of the object take 2d6 damage. A successful Strength challenge roll against your Intellect negates this damage.
- **Fire** The flames shoot out glowing sparks. Creatures within 3 yards of the object take 2d6 fire damage. A successful Agility challenge roll against your Intellect negates this damage.
- **Metal** The item explodes with shards of metal. Creatures within 3 yards of the object take 2d6 damage. A successful Agility challenge roll against your Intellect reduces this damage by half.
- **Water** The item unleashes a vortex of mist and fog that grants all melee attacks within 5 yards 1 bane until the end of the next round.
- **Wood** The item bursts with splinters. Creatures within 3 yards of the object take 2d6 damage. A successful Strength challenge roll against your Intellect reduces this damage by half.

DISRUPT TECHNOLOGY TECHNOMANCY ATTACK 2

Target one technological object, augmetic, construct, necroji, or steametic within short range
Duration 1 minute
You cover the targeted object (such as a technological device or vehicle) or creature (such as an augmented creature or steametic) in a fine mist. The target must make a Strength challenge roll with 1 bane. Unattended objects automatically fail. On a failure the target is rendered unusable, unable to use the affected augmetic, or defenseless (in the case of creatures) for the duration of the spell.

CHAPTER 15: REVENGE OF THE PALE MASTER

A *Shadow of the Demon Lord* adventure for 4 to 6 PCs of 5th–6th level.



Who in Kizaki has not heard of the despicable Pale Master by one monicker or another? The man-flayer mage? Sorcerer of the dead and ancient master of these lands? My ancestor Tariko witnessed the foul one's dark powers at work firsthand, and her stories have been told at our tables since long before my childhood. A courageous and fierce woman in her own right, she followed the fated trio of warriors that assaulted his Crimson Keep, an abattoir of blood and slaughter that once stood northwest of where Kizaki stands today. The sights she witnessed within that awful place were too gruesome to recount to others but I am filled with her dread, so intense I can still feel it in my very bones.

So it is with the Pale Master. None are certain of exactly where he came from or who he was, save that he was once a man of Soburin that fell far from honor; that is known but not much more. There is talk too that he was not truly vanquished, though who can be sure? The poets claim that when Commander Hiroshi Nara won the Battle of Hawksfall, it was by turning the crossbows taken from fallen Hakaisuru soldiers back on their wielders—but not all tales of the assault agree. There are rumors that the battle went very differently, that the signs of the Pale Master were present. Some say that the invaders wandered in a malevolent haze or sucked at the air as though they were drowning, making every one of the Gekido's bolts a lethal strike.

Talk of the Pale Master has become more than legend however; now they say he walks the streets of Kizaki at night, slinking in the shadows to strike terror once again. Rumor has it that he is abducting children in the night and tearing out their skeletons, animating the bones to carry away other youths and eating their flesh to regain his youth. Still more argue that he is draining the lifeforce from the city and blighting the lands around it, or that his whole purpose is to drown Kizaki in violent bloodshed that he can exploit to grant untold power—no one can know.

One thing is certain: whenever it comes, the revenge of the Pale Master will be terrible indeed.

Introduction

Revenge of the Pale Master plunges adventurers into the rusted heart of the industrial city of Kizaki on the eve of a great evil's reawakening. At its heart lies a mystery, and GMs running this module are encouraged to build tension and an aura of danger as the PCs uncover the secret history that casts a long shadow upon the future of this settlement in Gekido Prefecture. Part of the adventure's tension is based upon the ticking clock—the party arrives as night falls on the eve before the Festival of Falling Hawks, giving them less than 24 hours to uncover the truth and take action against those they believe to be the villains of the story.

Overview

Revenge of the Pale Master takes place in the city of Kizaki just before the Festival of Falling Hawks, a celebration commemorating the victory by militia under the command of Hiroshi Nara, a heroic administrator given command by his Gekido masters as they retreated before a Hakaisuru attack. The Gekido and the Hakaisuru clans, both powerful and warlike, have fought constantly for over a century—numerous cities have been ground under the heels of their great armies and Kizaki had been abandoned to the same fate. To the astonishment of everyone Hiroshi Nara managed a historic defeat of a force that was larger, better trained, and equipped. What few know is that the victory of Hawksfall was made possible by the assistance of a malevolent specter known in legend as the Pale Master, a foul undead mage who seeks to restore itself to a blasphemous facsimile of life.

Ichizo Ando—vicious and cruel, both feared and hated by samurai and commoner alike—ruled Kizaki and the surrounding lands for decades before being slain. He murdered his family in order to obtain power, was known to eat the flesh of captured enemies, and flayed any servants or subordinates that displeased him. These stories and others (detailing all manner of macabre practices) were whispered among his subjects and beyond but despite the horrible nature of the tales they paled in comparison to the truth. Trained by a demonologist that spread his practices under the guise of an itinerant teacher, Ichizo developed an insatiable lust for power that sped him along the descent into darkness. As he aged and his mastery grew he began to lust after immortality, delving into necromancy, and from the Crimson Keep he sought out forbidden secrets and cast fel rituals that demanded blood sacrifice on an appalling scale. Ichizo's evil and gradual necromantic transformation eventually garnered him the moniker "the Pale Master" by his remaining subordinates, a name spoken with utter dread

Eventually knowledge of Ichizo's blasphemous quest for immortality made its way to the ears of those capable of challenging him and a trio of famous adventurers were sought out in secret by a young nobleman named Shinzo Kitamura to free his land from the Pale Master's monstrous rule. These three—a potent yamabushi named Maru Okita, the famous samurai duelist Ukiyo Machi, and a mage of great skill named Takanibu Imai—made their way to the Crimson Keep with Shinzo and attacked Ichizo while he was performing a great magical rite. They killed him but not before he transformed into a disembodied specter, twisted by the disrupted energies, and in an attempt to constrain his evil Maru invoked a great sutra that required the blood of all three heroes, anchoring the Pale Master's soul to the seat of his rule before it could drift free and leaving him nearly powerless.

Afterwards the three adventurers chose to remain near the Crimson Keep in order to keep a watch on the specter that remained within, starting families and businesses, and their stories faded with history as much was forgotten to the passage of time. Only the young Shinzo kept the memory of what had happened alive, eventually passing on the knowledge of what lay within the forbidden tower to a small few who in turn did the same from generation to generation, calling their small order the Crimson Vigil.

Impotent and insubstantial the Pale Master was trapped within the walls of the Crimson Keep for nearly four centuries until the Mists of Akuma began to flow over the lands of the prefectures. The evil of the forbidden tower and its master attracted the corrupting fog, the malefic energies of the supernatural haze weakening binding spells and eventually allowing the Pale Master to influence the living world once more. He gathered knowledge and used his growing power to acquire minions (finding adeddo-oni to be particularly easy to control), ever-seeking a way to free himself and restore his corporeal form. Eventually he discovered that

he could accomplish both using the blood of those that had disrupted his ritual and bound him centuries before. When he discovered that the descendants of his captors lived in Kizaki he planted a minion within the city to take action at the first opportunity—the Battle of Hawksfall. In exchange for one child from each of the families ten years after the victory he promised, the Pale Master offered to defend Kizaki with supernatural magics when the Hakaisuru launched their impending attack.

Thinking that the cost of three lives would be a small price to pay for the salvation of the city Hiroshi Nara accepted the offer and when the Hakaisuru attacked the Pale Master worked his foul magics. The minds of their enemies were clouded, their breath stolen from their lungs, and his minions assaulted them from the shadows and made commanders disappear in the night. Hiroshi became a hero and (always a pragmatic man) he sought to complete his end of the bargain a decade later when a servant of the necromancer came calling—neither he nor the Pale Master could have imagined that a young doctor and wizard named Seiya Fujioka would foil their plans.

Seiya was a refugee who had come to Kizaki along with his sister Kumiko after their village was destroyed in the very beginnings of Hitoshi's Rebellion, a stark reminder by the Kengen Occupation that dissidents would not be tolerated. The pair were taken in by a kindly physician and Seiya followed in his footsteps, learning the craft and becoming the the newest (and last) member of the Crimson Vigil. As part of his duties he kept track of the adventurers' descendants under the guise of their doctor and as he carefully watched the Crimson Keep for any signs of the ancient evil within, gained some mastery of wizardry. When he discovered the Pale Master's plans for the children he sought to foil them, taking the youths away and hiding them in his home before the servants of the necromancer were able to find them. Unfortunately Seiya underestimated his enemies and they were quickly discovered; in the ensuing struggle his home caught fire. Despite being mortally wounded he managed to escape with the single surviving child, Kaneda Moto, who suffers still from the terrible burns acquired during their escape.

The two fled to the dwelling of Fujioka's sister Kumiko, an engineer who had married into a street gang after failing to adjust to polite society. She hid them and brought the doctor's apprentice, Fumio Oda, who saved the boy (though his body was ruined by the flames) and did what he could to ease Seiya's passing. After her brother died Kumiko turned his corpse over to the city watch, claiming that she found him on her doorstep alone according to the plan that she crafted with him before he expired, hoping to deflect suspicion. Knowing that the minions of the Pale Master would continue to hunt for the boy and already ostracized by her departed brother's new reputation as a murderer of children (the gossip of which also destroyed her marriage) she traveled with Kaneda to the remote ruins of the settlement they'd fled from a decade before: Owa Village.

Kumiko crafted augmetic limbs for Kaneda and in the years that followed he grew from a wounded child into a young man consumed with a desire to revenge himself against the creature that destroyed his life. Though she was something of an older sister and caregiver at first—given that they were only separated by eight years—the feelings they shared for one another became more complex as Kaneda grew older. The nature of their relationship strayed into murky territory and they both loved each other fiercely, having no one else to depend upon, and Kumiko hoped that it might be enough to steer him onto a different path. When the realization took hold that she could not quell the fires of his rage she taught him everything that she'd learned about fighting and technology in the hopes of making him strong enough to survive the coming conflict.

Now, a decade later, the two have put their plan to thwart the Pale Master's return into motion. Like his savior, Kaneda abducted three of the six children that the ancient necromancer has chosen for the ritual and returned them to Kumiko in the hopes of keeping them safe. Desperate to find a way to defeat Muraoka (the Pale Master's servant within the city), Kaneda foolishly tried to make his way into the secret room below the doctor's home only to be attacked by adeddo-oni that damaged his clockwork guardians and nearly killed him, forcing him to take shelter with the doctor that once saved his life, Fumio Oda. As he lays fighting a supernatural disease, those that will decide Kizaki's future make their way to meet with the monster that has insinuated himself among the city's leaders in the service of the Pale Master...

CAST

1. **Ichizo Ando, the Pale Master**
2. **Founders of The Crimson Vigil** – Maru Okita, Ukiyo Machi, and Takanibu Imai, a priestess, samurai, and mage that imprisoned the Pale Master.
3. **Hiroshi Nara** – Commander that made deal with Pale Master (deceased).
4. **Administrator Sanjuro Nara** – Son of Hiroshi and current ruler of Kizaki.
5. **Kiyoshi Muraoka** – The Pale Master's agent inside of the city and the true master of Kizaki.
6. **Seiji Kagawa, Keiko Moto, and Tadao Otoro** – Children that have gone missing, feared to be abducted by the Pale Master.
7. **Etsuko Gensai, Takuma Mazawa, Yuzuki Tabuchi** – Children protected by Kiyoshi Muraoka (who suspects they might be abducted next).
8. **Doctor Seiya Fujioka** – A doctor thought to be the Pale Master of legend because of his abduction and murder of six children a decade ago (deceased).
9. **Kumiko Fujioka** – The sister of Doctor Seiya Fujioka that nursed Kaneda Moto (the survivor of the tragic events a decade ago) back to health.
10. **Kaneda Moto** – A badly burned victim of the Pale Master's vile attempt to abduct children a decade ago.
11. **Doctor Fumio Oda** – The former apprentice of the late Doctor Seiya Fujioka, insulated from the Pale Master's treachery by his wealthy family.
12. **Guard Captain Arata Asai** – The no-nonsense head of the city watch in Kizaki.
13. **Shiro the Gate Guard** – A soldier in Kizaki's city watch.
14. **Koru Kagawa** – A stonemason who blames Doctor Seiya Fujioka for the death of his brother ten years ago, he is the father of Seiji Kagawa and greatly concerned that his son is missing.
15. **Reiko Otoro** – Widower who lost an older sister to the Pale Master ten years ago, her husband to tragedy in the past year, and most recently Tadao Otoro (her abducted son).
16. **Miki Moto** – A painter whose daughter Keiko is missing, she believes her brother Kaneda Moto was killed by the Pale Master a decade ago dead.
17. **Eight Arms Kazuya** – Master of the Iron Spiders gang and former husband of Kumiko Fujioka .
18. **Yumi Muramoto** – Priestess and minder of the Graveyard of the Damned in Kizaki.
19. **Juro and Sango Muramoto** – Son and Daughter of Yumi Muramoto.
20. **Shinzo the Eater** – The ghost of a cannibalistic murderer descendant of Shinzo Kitamura that lurks in the Kizaki Graveyard, brought to madness and despair before rising once more.

The City of Kizaki

Kizaki is something of a rarity on the mainland of Soburin—willingly embracing heretical technology, a dark parallel of the cities in Fuson to the south. Despite this it shares many of the same attributes as other settlements in Gekido Prefecture and beyond.

The guards focus their attentions almost exclusively on the Canal District, Luxury District, and Market District, but between Administrator Sanjuro's high-strung demeanor as of late, rumors of the Pale Master's return, and the anniversary of a victory over Haikasuru, the walls of Kizaki are well-manned and anyone attempting to flee from the city is likely to be stopped by blade and bow.

Canal District The upper-middle class live here in large manors alongside the most affluent businesses and shops on the wide roadways that this district boasts. Famous actors, geisha, physicians, taikomochi, and other lesser celebrities make their home in the Canal District, traveling around Kizaki by waterway on masterfully crafted vessels.

Factory District The massive influx of citizens after the reappearance of the Mists of Akuma has sustained the industrial groundwork laid during the Kengen Occupation and despite a general disdain for technology in mainland Soburin, there is no shortage of heretical science within the walls of these production facilities. Many of the augmetics found in Gekido are crafted here and thus are an extremely common sight in Kizaki.

Industrial District Meeting the needs of industry during the times of foreign oppression necessitated the development of refinement facilities in Kizaki and the smelters haven't stopped burning since, belching smoke into the air above the city. Although it is known across the Gekido Prefecture as a reliable place for ceramian and ropaeo to find employment, the hardiest laborers and most recalcitrant soburi work here as well.

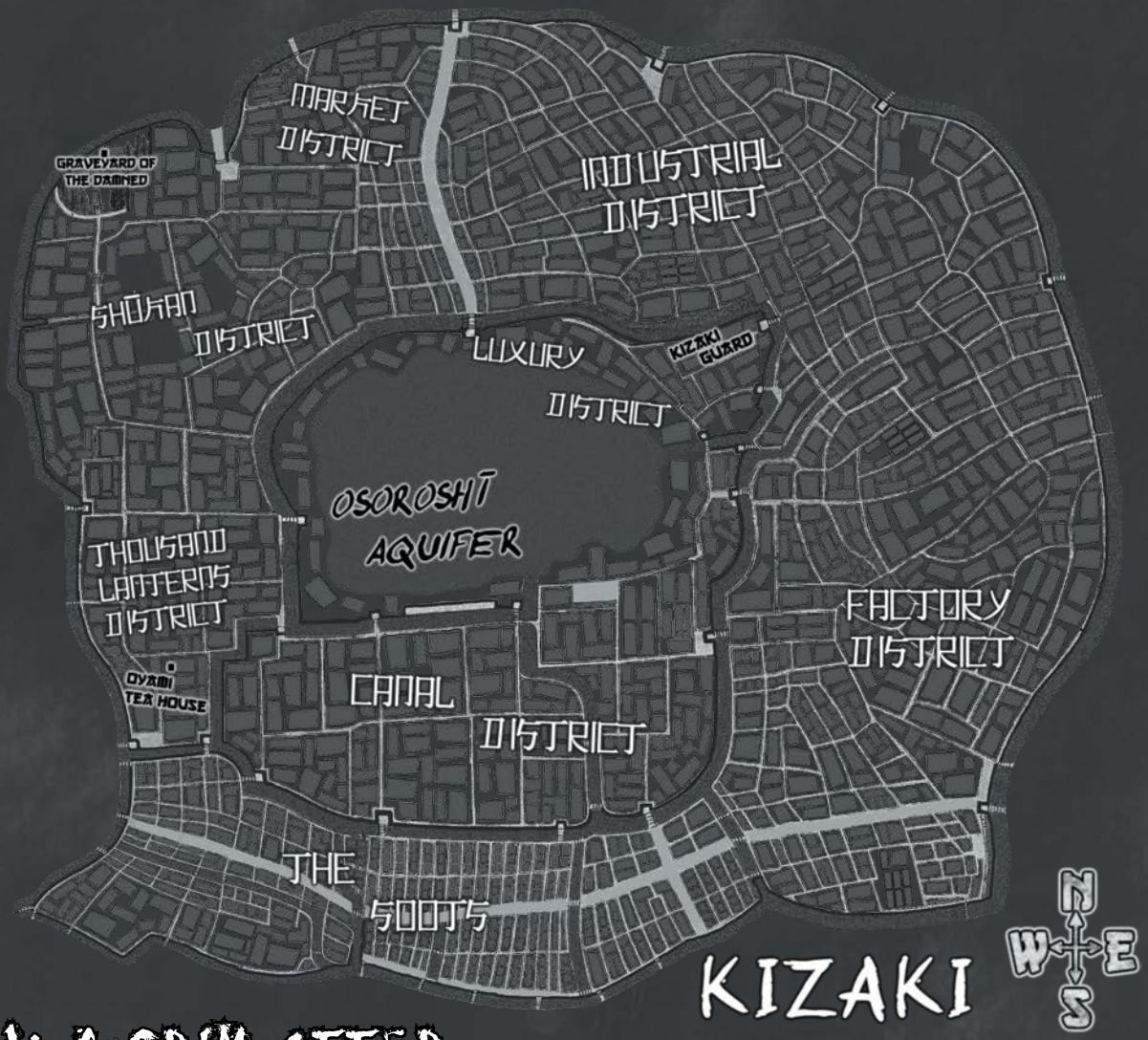
Luxury District The truly rich live in sizable mansions arrayed around the Ōroshi Aquifer, rarely ever setting foot on city streets and almost exclusively partaking in the settlement's finer offerings by means of opulent rafts along the canals of Kizaki.

Market District With its central location on the Path of the Siblings commerce has always been a major part of Kizaki, though today the buying and selling dominating the Market District is largely confined to the products made here instead of elsewhere. Anything legal to trade in the Gekido Prefecture (page 66) can be found in this area of the city and for the canny or loose of coin, contraband is everywhere.

Shūkan District Clerks, managers, smiths, and other occupations that can earn a respectable living have modest homes in this middle-class area of the settlement. Affordable merchants and restaurants dot the area and offer their wares at reasonable prices, though patrons are expected to keep good manners and several of Kizaki's business owners employ gangs to offer protection when the city's guards are lacking (a frequent problem).

The Soots Despite being the largest part of Kizaki's population the city's poor almost exclusively live in the slums of the Soots, a lawless sprawl of tenement housing and cramped apartments for workers to slink back to between shifts. Cheap restaurants and tea houses dot the area along with mundane shops but very few offer anything of value or even a fair deal.

Thousand Lanterns District One never has far to look when searching for crime in Kizaki but the worst illicit businesses and toughest gangs can be found in the Thousand Lanterns. Easily the seediest area of the settlement, it seems as though the cycle of openly traded illegal technology, amoral pawnbrokers, and augmented thugs begat by the foreign oppressors will never end. The Iron Spider gang controls this part of the city and they show no signs of giving ground regardless of missing children, the Festival of Falling Hawks, or practically anything other than the command of their leader Kazuya.



ACT 1: A GRIM OFFER

As the adventure begins the PCs have rushed to Kizaki from the inn of a nearby city to answer a desperate summons by Administrator Sanjuro Nara, who is offering a hefty sum for the timely recovery of children that have gone missing in the early hours of the morning. After a hard day's ride the party arrives just as dusk falls.

CRIMSON BLOSSOM COURT

Read the following to begin the adventure:

As you round the bend Kizaki opens up before you—large walls scored from past cannon fire encircle an industrial city whose cramped streets and filthy canals are choked with towering tenements and a large factory district that belches noxious smoke into the darkening sky to shroud the settlement in perpetual smog. Upon presenting your contract at the gate, a nervous young guard who introduces himself as Shiro ushers you quickly toward the city center where a modicum of luxury creeps through the oppressive industrial gloom and squalor. Shiro refuses to answer any questions, but you can sense an aura of fear that many of the city's inhabitants that you pass seem to share, a stark contrast to the celebratory banners draped across streets and hanging from buildings to announce the Festival of Falling Hawks.

You eventually find yourselves at a gate leading into the walled home of one of the city's wealthy elite. Hard-eyed guards grant you entry into a wilting garden, no different than the rest of the settlement's plantlife,

AN UNUSUAL BENGOSHI

If the PCs are reticent to grab onto the leading thread of this mystery, the GM may decide that Kiyoshi Muraoka has managed to achieve the position of bengoshi and used his seal in the message that reaches the party—making refusing his summons a dire mistake, both to their social standing and their health (page 16).

with the exception of a single cherry tree in full bloom—though its blossoms are a startling crimson rather than pink. As you enter the lavish home you hear an argument from one of the rooms that you pass as the guard takes you onto the back patio where you find three men waiting. The first is well dressed and handsome, though he looks tired and his eyes seem haunted by worry.

"Welcome to Kizaki," he says, bowing slightly. "I am Sanjuro Nara. I have the honor of governing the city on behalf of the noble Lady Qinguang Gekido." He gestures to the slightly older and lithe man to his right, who smiles and bows. "This is Kiyoshi Muraoka. He owns the home that you now stand in; he is my advisor and a great friend to Kizaki." The administrator next gestures to a heavy-set fellow well into his later years, dressed in armor and bearing a sword on his hip. As the larger man grunts and bows perfunctorily, he is introduced as Arata Asai, the captain of Kizaki's guard.

Administrator Sanjuro quickly drains a full cup of saki, his hands shaking slightly. Kiyoshi Muraoka slides forward, offering an apologetic smile. "My guests" he says in a voice both deep and rich, "I'm afraid that we have little time for pleasantries. Shall we begin?"

The young administrator has only recently been made aware of the terrible pact to which he has been made a party. Sanjuro grew up worshiping his father and has not taken the news of the appalling dealings with the Pale Master well, though he has chosen to honor the bargain as he fears the possibility of losing his reputation (and position), has a true desire to save his city, and is utterly terrified of Muraoka. He does what he can to conceal his state, allowing Muraoka to do most of the talking during their conversation.

His fear is well placed—Muraoka isn't human and hasn't been for a long time. He is actually a vampire, and a servant of the true Pale Master. He wants to acquire the sacrifices for his master's ritual of re-embodiment, which can only occur on the anniversary of his own death (an event that coincides with the Festival of Falling Hawks by his own design). He has only agreed to hire adventurers to search for the missing children because he values the appearance of action in the eyes of the public and his own minions haven't proved adept.

During the course of the discussion, Muraoka relates the following:

- The supposed perpetrator is believed to be Seiya Fujioka. Fujioka and his sister Kumiko arrived in Kizaki as orphaned refugees. He became a local doctor while she became involved with a local gang.
- Exactly a decade ago on the eve of the Festival of Falling Hawks, Seiya attempted to abduct six children from three families that he had cared for. When the guard found him he burned down the building and attempted to escape to his sister, a local criminal—all of the children perished in the fire.
- When the guards sorted through the wreckage they found all manner of occult paraphernalia and a mostly destroyed journal. Alongside incomplete passages ranting about sacrifices and immortality, Seiya had proclaimed himself the Pale Master.
- His sister Kumiko turned his body over to the authorities, attended his funeral, and—disgraced and publicly vilified because of the revelations about Seiya—disappeared shortly thereafter.
- The victims this time are the children of the siblings of his previous victims, all taken from their homes within hours of one another. Their names are Seiji Kagawa, Tadao Otori, and Keiko Moto. One parent caught a glimpse of their assailant and said that he was strangely familiar to her.
- Other children that may be targeted (Etsuko Gensai, Takuma Mazawa, Yuzuki Tabuchi), all relatives of the original victims, have been moved to a secure location and placed under guard by Muraoka to ensure that they cannot come to harm.
- Fujioka's journal suggested that the eve of Hawksfall was significant and that they suspect that whatever Fujioka plans will occur then. Additionally, Administrator Sanjuro would like to announce the safe return of the children during his speech at the celebration.
- Muraoka will be traveling to his villa with the children under his protection and their parents shortly after this interview. Administrator Sanjuro and Guard Captain Arata Asai are naturally in charge here.
- Muraoka has generously offered to pay 400 Imperial Pieces for the safe return of the children.

In relation to leads, Muraoka suggests the following.

- Fujioka's sister Kumiko was a member of the Iron Spiders (a local gang from the Thousand Lanterns District) and before disappearing was married to the man that is now their leader.
- The ruin of Fujioka's home is located in the Shūkan District and reports of strange visitors at night have reached the ears' of the watch in the past couple of days.
- Seiya's remains are kept at the Graveyard of the Damned, a remote cemetery where the cremated corpses of murderers, madmen, and others believed to be at higher risk of rising as undead are kept—if Fujioka has returned from the dead, the priest would certainly know.
- Fujioka once had an apprentice though that fact is not well known; the apprentice's family was reasonably affluent and spent a great deal of money to distance their son from the scandal but he may well still reside within the city.

If the party asks for a guide Muraoka suggests to Administrator Sanjuro that Shiro (the guard the party met at the gate) serve in that capacity (treat him as a **Patroller**). Shiro is not terribly bright or well informed but he does know the city well and can guide the players if need be. If they ask him for advice or any insight he declines to answer, fearing that he could be blamed if the PCs fail to rescue the children.

Playing the City Fathers

Administrator Sanjuro Nara is normally confident, genial, and well-spoken though now he is a man at the brink, pushed to the edge of his composure and sanity by recent revelations. Sanjuro has turned to drink and even casual scrutiny reveals a man that is constantly near the point of a breakdown. If anyone asks about his troubled demeanor he blames the rigors of office for his worries, though the truth is much different.

Guard Captain Arata Asai is sullen, taciturn, and brutish, with just enough cunning and instinct to be dangerous. He uses the law as a pretense but until recently he kept his corruption and excess within the bounds of what Sanjuro's father considered acceptable. Now he is thoroughly Muraoka's creature, holding the new administrator in barely concealed contempt as Sanjuro has crumbled in front of him.

Kiyoshi Muraoka is friendly and engaging, projecting an aura of decisive confidence that people usually find magnetic. In fact, this persona is a mask that conceals a vicious and inhuman predator. He despises the living and considers them to be cattle at best and toys at worst, though he has practiced concealing this for more than a century and has become highly skilled at deception.

It is important that when portraying the above characters that the GM remembers that, at its heart, the *Revenge of the Pale Master* is a mystery. Giving too much of Muraoka's nature away in his depiction may ruin the adventure—a few subtle hints provide suspense and doubt but too many will erase uncertainty and quickly reveal him as the villain.

Families of the Victims

Muraoka has invited the families of the missing victims to his home to wait for news of their missing children. While he has already interviewed them, the party may decide that they would like to inquire themselves.

Koru Kagawa is large and bullish man in his late twenties that works as a mason. His younger brother was abducted during the incident a decade ago

and he has nursed a hatred for Seiya Fujioka ever since—he is absolutely convinced that the Pale Master has returned as a specter, but neither he nor his wife saw anything early this morning when his child disappeared.

Reiko Otoro is a petite and pretty woman in her early twenties that lost an older sister a decade ago. She married a wealthy merchant who died last year, and the horror of losing her son has driven her over the edge. Reiko can barely speak and simply shakes her head while crying silently when asked if she saw anything.

Miki Moto is a lithe and short haired woman in her mid-twenties that is a talented and successful painter. She doesn't know it but her older brother Kaneda was the only child of the six to escape ten years ago and she has long since written him off as dead. She is strong willed and outspoken, and has responded to the situation with anger. The fact that Miki has a child without ever taking a husband has given her something of a reputation though she isn't bothered by the opinions of others, and and her great skill has given her and her daughter a comfortable life. Unlike Koru, she never believed that "the Doctor," (as she refers to Seiya) had anything to do with what happened—she and him had been close when she was a child, and she was never convinced that he meant her (or anyone else) any harm.

When Kaneda took his niece she was up painting and somehow sensed that something was awry. Kaneda had only ever seen his niece from a distance and was momentarily overcome by the rush of affection and loss that he felt for her upon slipping in through her window. When Miki entered her daughter's room she found her brother looming over her daughter's bed and the two locked eyes for a moment in the dim light. Though she did not recognize him—a decade and his burns offering a compelling disguise—she was struck by a profound familiarity that overcame her in turn. Kaneda didn't speak but the love and regret on his face was plain even as he vanished out the window with her daughter. Miki told Muraoka what she saw but he publically dismissed her account as a grief-fueled distortion while developing his own suspicions.

The parents have been placed in a small dining room where food and strong drink have been provided. When the party enters Koru and Miki lapse into a sullen silence—Koru snapped at her when she again suggested that the doctor might not be the culprit and the two have been arguing ever since. When the party begins to question the group Koru immediately attempts to dominate the conversation, loudly and repeatedly stating that the Pale Master (Doctor Seiya Fujioka) has returned as a foul spirit to continue his evil work and that even as a boy, Koru sensed the evil within Seiya. Miki is tired of being dismissed and seethes in silence unless asked directly but even then, the party must succeed at a **Will challenge roll** to get her to open up. Apply 1 bane if the PCs are dismissive, rude, or sexist, though they can gain 1 boon if she is approached by a female party member or someone that has quieted Koru's ranting.

Addedo-oni Attack!

If the GM wishes to extend this act of the adventure, the supernatural fog plaguing the empire may fall on Kizaki and it is just as vulnerable to the Mists of Akuma as any other city in Soburin! Each time the foul haze falls the guards close the settlement's gates and call for everyone to seek shelter for at least 2 hours (using a loud, impossible to miss warning siren protected at all times by at least a pair of guards). Anyone found during these quarantines is treated suspiciously if they are not in the midst of combat with addedo-oni or fleeing from the monsters. Anyone already known to a patrol may be able to talk their way out of any trouble, but otherwise the only persons permitted to walk the streets during an attack are those with special written permissions from Administrator Sanjuro Nara or Kiyoshi Muraoka. Any adventurers discovered outside the parameters listed above are ordered to surrender and if they resist, attacked and subdued (though the guards are not willing to kill and will bind and heal anyone that goes unconscious).

Act II: Streets of Ash

An Encounter at the Oyami Tea House

Having been pointed in the direction of a lead the party makes their way to the Oyami Tea House, the stomping grounds of the Iron Spiders (the gang that the supposed Pale Master's sister, Kumiko, was once a member of). The Oyami Tea House sits in the Thousand Lanterns district between a brothel and a black smoke parlor near the border of the Soots—a miserable place filled with the destitute and the desperate. The term 'tea house' is hardly accurate; as the party approaches, read the following:

You find the Oyami Tea House at the end of a small cul de sac nestled between a brothel and a black smoke den in the seedy strip of the Thousand Lanterns district that borders the Soots. The streets are thick with ragged drug addicts, wary gamblers, and other poor souls along with heavily-augmented thugs that eschew shirts in order to show off tattoos of mechanical spiders, brass webs, and other similar adornments that mark the store fronts and doorways leading to the various businesses that they are ever near.

When you make your way up the steps and into the Oyami Tea House you are assaulted by the foul stench of unwashed humanity as well as cries of victory and defeat intermixing into an unintelligible roar. Laborers, peddlers, and professional gamblers alike sit around nearly a dozen tables rolling dice and playing Oicho-kabu, with hanafuda shuffled by steady eyed dealers, throwing down mājan tiles, or facing off in games of rōmaji. Geisha and taikomochi move through the crowd in worn satin kimonos that both reveal and conceal in a tantalizing blend while trying to entreat players next door.

On the far side of the room, past tables filled by oni-touched gamblers and other dicers of all races, your eyes fall upon an older man sitting on a balcony guarded by two thugs that tower over most of the other patrons of the Oyami Tea House. He has a salt and pepper top knot and a short beard, and like the rest of his gang is sporting the dull glint of a metal limb and elaborate tattoos depicting iron spiders on webs of brass and bronze that cover a torso heavy with muscle. He's easily two decades older than the rest of his crew, but if anything it only adds to the menace radiating from the man—there's no doubt in your mind that you've found Eight Arms Kazuya."

The Oyami Tea House is a gambling den run by the Iron Spiders Gang under the merciless and tyrannical leadership of Eight Arms Kazuya. When the party enters, Kazuya is being entertained by at least five full-fledged gang members and a number of lesser prospects. Like so many other gangsters, Kazuya is largely a product of his environment; a war refugee ultimately forced to run with a vicious pack of half-feral child criminals in order to have a chance of surviving in the poorest and most dangerous parts of Kizaki. He proved strong and cunning but the streets shaved away all but a glimmer of Kazuya's humanity before he was fifteen.

As the party was led to believe, Kazuya and Kumiko Fujioka were married—though that ended long ago—and he knows a great deal about her origins and those of her brother. In fact Kazuya grew up in and escaped Owa Village with both Seiya and Kumiko, though their fates took them in different directions after their refugee group arrived in Kizaki. By the time they'd reunited Kazuya had already been hardened by the streets. Perhaps she managed to see the man he might have been under the man that he was, or perhaps he fooled her into thinking that she had; one way or another, they were together for a time. When Kumiko disappeared around the time of the fire that supposedly consumed her brother a decade ago, Kazuya claimed that Seiya (who he also believes is the Pale Master) had dragged her away and murdered her, though more astute PCs might notice that the timeline of his account doesn't quite match up with actual events.

Despite what he told everyone however, Kumiko wasn't taken. After her brother was accused of the kidnappings she suffered a brief nervous breakdown, losing the child she carried. Kazuya—ever a violent man—flew into a fit and attacked her, beating

her badly before she was able to wound him with his own knife and flee. Given that she and Kazuya had always discussed heading back home and rebuilding Owa to escape the city, he is nearly certain that she made her way there afterward. Though he cannot admit it even to himself, not following her is the great regret of his life.

PLAYING KAZUYA

Kazuya survived Kizaki's teeming warrens by constantly proving to be the most ruthless and fearsome among his competitors. Now that he's climbed into a position of authority he is careful to maintain a constant facade of absolute strength in front of his subordinates and other onlookers, particularly as he has crept into his fifth decade. He is fully aware that to show weakness opens him to attacks by those below him and Kazuya meets these threats head-on.

GETTING THE INFORMATION

Initially Eight Arms Kazuya likely won't be inclined to speak to the party at all unless one or more of the characters has a tie to the underworld that he feels may be profitable. He treats any pleas to aid the authorities with incredible contempt (indeed, he still wears the shackles he shattered after escaping his most recent stint of imprisonment, a way to show defiance and disrespect to Administrator Sanjuro) and snubs the party for it, if only to assert his dominance in the situation. Bribery, the promise of profit, the persuasion of one of his guards or subordinates, or a particularly good gambling run may secure the PCs an audience.

Given the sensitive nature of the topic, the group needs to present a compelling argument after they manage to speak to Kazuya to convince him to voice his suspicions regarding Kumiko's location. He may seem suspicious and dismissive but adventurers that make a **Perception challenge roll with 2 bane** notice a hint of surprise and the pain of an old wound when the topic of Kumiko Fujioka is broached, though he utterly dismisses any assertions to that fact as ridiculous (particularly if any of his subordinates are within earshot).

Bribery Kazuya is a criminal at heart and his primary interest is money. If the party can make him a significant offer, he is willing to trade information so long as he believes that they pose no threat to Kumiko. The closer the party is to the truth already (and the more they reveal to him), the less he will insist they pay.

Gambling Kazuya is a man of his word (publically, at least). If a crafty PC is able to appeal to his competitive edge via a game of chance, they may be able to place wagers against the knowledge he holds.

Persuasion. If a character is intuitive enough to divine that he has some feeling for his long lost wife, they may be able to convince Kazuya that she needs their help.

Intimidation Threatening Kazuya almost certainly leads to bloodshed—he is not a man easily given to fear and when surrounded by loyal soldiers in the center of his power he is even less likely to back down. Any challenge rolls made to intimidate Kazuya require a result of 20+ and are made with 1 bane due to the presence of Kazuya's many supporters and lackies. A failed attempt provokes a fight, though if the party appears particularly formidable he demands they leave on pain of death first. Regardless of failure or success, PCs that attempt to intimidate Kazuya make an enemy for life.

Violence When violence erupts most of the patrons, prostitutes, and employees scatter, darting towards exits and doorways to other rooms. Kazuya and his gang ruthlessly fight almost to the last man and show no mercy. Nearly all of them understand that to lose is to expose themselves to attacks by rival gangs—practically a death sentence.

Kazuya uses the statistics for a **Veteran** with a Strength of 15, a Defense of 18, and thanks to his augmetics, martial training, and quick reflexes he is able to inflict 2d6 damage with unarmed attacks.

The rest of his gang is comprised of **4 Hired Killers** and **4 Mercenaries** as well as the Iron Spiders' ace-in-the-hole: Kuno-Meinu, a damaged mekkusenshi bought from disreputable merchants in Sanbaoshi and brainwashed to believe that Kazuya is Emperor Hitoshi himself (use the statistics for a **Mekkusenshi** on

page 36), hiding in the Oyami Tea House's basement.

After 4 rounds of combat, more Iron Spiders enter the Oyami Tea House at a rate of **1 Hired Killer and 1 Mercenary every 1d3 rounds** until the party or Kazuya is defeated or the doors are somehow blocked. If the party somehow manages to take Kazuya alive, he still isn't likely to reveal what he knows—though he might be more open to persuasion than he was previously.

Graveyard of the Damned

As the PCs approach, read the following:

As the road turns the buildings fall away to reveal a small forest nestled against the walls of the city, a surprising sight considering Kizaki's industrial character. The grove is shrouded in an unsettling silence and along the road you pass small shrines containing monstrous figures with small offerings scattered about—as you pass, their eyes seem to follow you hungrily. After a few minutes you see a stout wall encircling what must be the Graveyard of the Damned, a cemetery that terminates in a sacred arch covered with wards. A small house rests along the road just outside the gate.

Suddenly a victorious shriek thick with hunger and malice splits the silence. A boy runs out of the house towards you, nearly falling as he reaches your party. "Help! Please! A hungry ghost has taken my sister and mother!" he begs, his face lined with tears. "My mother is the priestess here, you must help her!"

The Graveyard of the Damned is an old cemetery located in a small and mostly dead forest tucked between the modest homes of the Shūkan District and the Market District along Kizaki's northwestern wall. While it was once a revered place when the city was first founded it is no longer—now the grounds are home to the interred ashes of those who were evil and mad in life in the hope of making it more difficult for them to return to the mortal world to plague the living. The graveyard is funded by the city and cared for by a priest that maintains the wards and sees to the rituals and prayers that deter the vicious dead from returning. For centuries they have been successful but as the Mists of Akuma spread across the land their power has waned. The current caretaker is a priestess in her thirties named Yumi Muramoto. She inherited the position from her father and has lived in the small cottage with only her daughter Sango and her son Juro since her husband was killed in a robbery while returning from his job as a factory clerk.

Unfortunately one of the cemetery's most vicious inhabitants, a serial killer named Shinzo the Eater that was recently interred after being killed by the watch, has burst forth from the grave. A tragic victim of a conflict of which he was an unwilling participant and fated by his name to a dreadful end, as a child Shinzo found himself the only survivor of a Hakaisuru raid on the small town where his family ran a traveller's inn. When the attack occurred they took shelter in the cellar where a stray cannonball collapsed the building atop them, killing everyone except for Shinzo and trapping him in the rubble with only the corpse of his sister Haruka for company. Days passed and his mind broke—drawing the attentions of the Pale Master. Having been named after his ancestor (Shinzo Kitamura, founder of the Crimson Vigil), the necromancer saw an opportunity to forever dishonor the name and touched the already shattered youth's psyche. Driven by hunger and corrupted by the ancient evil, Shinzo resorted to eating her corpse, trapped in the dark and sobbing even as he forced her flesh down his throat.

Days later he was rescued and eventually placed in an orphanage but he never truly escaped those terrible days in the dark; constantly tormented by dreams of fire, darkness, and the terrible taste of flesh. When he finally came of age and was released he found work in another inn before eventually succumbing to the terrible hunger that had been born within him. By the time he was caught Shinzo had murdered and devoured nine young women, each of them resembling his sister. His torments in the hells below have distilled his madness and hunger—separating it from the broken child that first spawned it and giving it a life of its own—and the preparations for the Pale Master's ritual have provided that fragment with the means to drag itself back into the world of the living.

Upon rising he was drawn to the priestess' daughter Sango, her innocence,

youth, and resemblance to his sister guiding him like a moth to a flame, compelling him to drag her back to a mausoleum and slowly devour her. The Priestess Yumi immediately gathered her divine accoutrements and made her way to the spirit's grave to subdue it, but fueled by the Mists of Akuma it was more powerful than she was capable of dealing with.

The cemetery is not very large—the only enclosed building within its boundaries is a large temple that is currently glowing with spectral light from the partially open door. When the party enters, read the following:

A scream of terror slowly transforms into a wail of pain as it echoes from inside the simple brick temple in the center of the cemetery. Within you find an altar on an upraised dias surrounded by images of penitents being castigated in different hells. A priestess lay on the ground, dark blood pooling from her head, while on the altar itself is a trembling young girl that bears a resemblance to the unconscious woman. Tears stream from the corner of her eyes, though she seems incapable of moving otherwise. There is a ragged red wound on her bicep where the flesh has been torn away.

Floating above her is the spectral form of an older man, though death has twisted him into a creature out of nightmare. He is translucent and the spectral light that fills the chamber pours out of him. He finishes chewing and swallows before his gaunt features twist into a mad rictus of hunger, ghostly lips drawn back from sharpened teeth.

He looks at you and screams, "More morsels? Good! I am so, so HUNGRY!"

Treat Shinzo as a **Phantom** though there are some significant differences: reducing Shinzo the Eater to 0 Health only disperses him. He reforms at the end any round where he is at 0 Health. He can also attempt to use the following action:

Possession Shinzo makes a Will attack roll against the target creature's Will. On a success, it disappears and enters the creature's body, replacing the creature's Intellect and Will with its own and supplanting the creature's personality. Shinzo makes a prisoner of the possessed creature's soul and learns everything the creature knows and remembers. When the possession ends, the possessed creature has no recollection of what happened while Shinzo was in control and does not know of the possession. A facial features of a creature possessed by Shinzo become taut and stretched, revealing the back of the mouth and the flesh around their eyeballs. Shinzo can be forced out of the creature's body, usually by magic. Once forced out, Shinzo must make a Will challenge roll. On a success, it appears in an open space of its choice within 10 yards of that creature. On a failure, Shinzo disappears into the Void. Once Shinzo has used Possession, he cannot do so for 1d6 rounds.

If he successfully manages to possess a target, Shinzo attempts to use that target to bite and devour the other adventurers. The possessed character foregoes weapon attacks, instead gaining the following action:

Ravenous Assault You gain the following Bite attack that you must use every round against another living creature (using your Strength modifier or +5, whichever is higher). If you begin your turn grabbing or grabbed by a creature, you make an additional **Bite** attack against the target instead.

Bite (melee) either Strength bonus or +5 each with 2 boons (2d6+5)

Echoes of Shinzo eager to devour the PCs appear at the end of the first round of combat (a number of **Poltergeists** equal to the number of adventurers in the party).

The only way to banish Shinzo the Eater back to the aether from which he dragged himself is to complete the ritual prayer that the priestess was planning to conduct herself. A PC attempting the task must first pass an **Intellect challenge roll with 1 bane** to identify this fact, though the GM may rule that an appropriate background or prior experience allows them to automatically succeed on the challenge roll, as does searching Yumi for two or more rounds. One way or the other, the adventurer must gather the priestess' satchel and begin the invocation with the components inside. The process takes 3 rounds, during which time the PC undertaking the ritual must pass a **Will challenge roll** to maintain his or her concentration while chanting, employing the appropriate gestures and syllables. Unless Shinzo is actively possessing a character he does everything that he can to disrupt the prayer ritual. Any damage that he does to the character conducting the prayer forces a **Will challenge roll with 1 bane**.

Alternatively, the party may choose to allow the priestess to conduct the ritual instead. A **Will challenge roll with 1 bane** reveals that Yumi is breathing shallowly, although she is unconscious and slowly bleeding to death (make death saves for her at the end of every round, as per the normal rules.) Healing magic functions normally and only a moment after being restored to consciousness she casts *sanctuary* upon herself and begins the ritual. Given Yumi's familiarity with the prayer she need only make Will challenge rolls to maintain her concentration if she takes damage, and she gains 1 boon when doing so.

Assuming that Yumi survives the encounter she moves to her daughter and heals her while doing her best to console the girl, though the horror of the event is likely to leave deep marks. She then escorts the party back to her small home with a protective arm around her daughter and after seeing to the child's immediate needs, the priestess asks the party what brought them to the Graveyard of the Damned.

Over the course of their conversation she reveals the following:

- Yumi was a young acolyte when Seiya Fujioka was killed. While she does not know whether or not he was guilty of the horrible crimes he was accused of, she does know that her old mentor (a somewhat famous adventuring priest in his prime known as Iron Soul Rokurou) thought highly of the doctor and the two often spent many hours talking at least a few evenings out of every month. During these conversations they would discuss some sort of old local legend, though she was not privy to the actual content.
- Yumi is certain that Doctor Seiya Fujioka was dead—she helped to prepare and then cremate the body. She hasn't sensed anything that would lead her to believe that the Pale Master has returned from the afterlife and is skeptical of the rumors regarding him.
- Last night (on the evening that the children disappeared) she noticed a strange male figure in the cemetery near Seiya Fujioka's grave. Though it was dark and there was something unsettling about him, she did not sense anything unnatural; when the figure heard her he turned and ran, leaping easily over the wall. Given that the fence is nearly eight feet high, that is a superhuman feat.
- When she checked Fujioka's grave the next morning she found freshly cut flowers placed upon it, but it was otherwise undisturbed.
- Seiya Fujioka's grave has only ever had two others visitors. The first was his sister Kumiko, though she stopped coming months after his death. The other is Doctor Fumio Oda from the Canal District. He has treated her children in the past as a sort of personal tithe for taking care of Seiya's grave, though he's never revealed as much to anyone. She can provide the PCs with his address and offers to do so as long as the party remain respectful in her home (page 19).

Yumi is also willing and able to provide curative magics of spell rank 1 or below in light of the fact that the PCs saved the lives of her and her daughter. Regardless of what happens over the course of the rest of their investigation, the party will have earned a staunch ally in the priestess.

All of the above assume that both Yumi and her daughter survive their horrible ordeal. If the party spends too long discussing what to do or exploring around the cemetery before entering the temple in the center, they may well find Sango dead, her throat torn out by her spectral attacker. While this is largely up to the GM, more than two or three minutes of in game time should likely be enough to ensure her demise. If Sango dies her mother Yumi is inconsolable, wracked with grief and guilt, utterly incapable of providing any meaningful assistance to the adventurers.

★ Tougher Encounter

For higher-level PCs, include up to twice as many **Poltergeists** as there are adventurers.

Shinzo's Secret

Disjointed and corrupted as he may have become, Shinzo the Eater may be able to summon enough of his sanity to communicate with his ancestor and provide some aid for adventurers that are struggling to grasp the plot threads in *Revenge of the Pale Master*. He may cry out for aid from the Crimson Vigil, blast otherwordly energies marking the direction of Owa Village, or otherwise leave a clue as to what is truly going on in Kizaki.

THE DOCTOR IS IN

Doctor Fumio Oda was never a brave boy but he was kind and brilliant in a quiet sort of way that endeared him to Doctor Fujioka, who hoped that he may one day help the lad find his courage and induct him into the Crimson Vigil. Whether that may have been possible or not became an impossible question after the abductions and the fire. Kumiko brought Kaneda and Seiya to Fumio, and though he was incapable of keeping his teacher from death he saved the child (albeit with deep scars and not completely curing him, the shock of his burns too great to heal). As a young man Fumio couldn't believe that the doctor would be capable of evil but his cowardice stopped him from speaking out on Seiya's behalf, allowing his family to use both their wealth and their influence to insulate him and their name from the horrific events. He completed his training under another doctor and in time quietly opened a practice that he still maintains—the only link to his old life are his memories and his occasional visits to the Graveyard of the Damned.

When the party makes their way to Doctor Fumio's residence, read the following:

The canal district is a startling contrast to the Soots and Kizaki's many working class neighborhoods. Here, large homes sit upon broad lanes running along the canals while well-dressed men and women leisurely stroll with their retinues into and out of fine restaurants, shops, and tea houses all festooned with banners celebrating the Festival of Falling Hawks. Doctor Fumio's residence sits on Green Lotus Lane between a fine tailor and maker of gramophones and other musical mechanical devices. Music and laughter can be heard within and though no lights are on downstairs, you can see the flicker of lightning lanterns above, casting a silhouette against the closed paper blinds as a man moves about the room.

Doctor Fumio Doctor Fumio Oda is tall and slim with light hair and kind eyes. Despite his size however, he seems somehow smaller than he should, a manifestation of his meek nature. He dresses well but not ostentatiously, and he walks with a cane: a byproduct of a riding accident as a child. He is quiet and attentive in conversation, as well as a gracious host.

After suffering serious injury by Muraoka's adeddo-oni while trying to enter the concealed chamber below the ruins of Seiya Fujioka's abandoned home, Kaneda made his way to Doctor Fumio's with the help of his remaining clockwork guardians, Kumiko having kept track of her brother's apprentice over the intervening years. When Kaneda appeared battered and bleeding in his apartment along with two heavily damaged automatons, he knew immediately who the stranger was and set himself to the task of saving the young man's life just as he had done a decade ago.

Though Fumio has stabilized him and helped him to regain consciousness, the doctor can't fix Kaneda's augmetics, which were also heavily damaged. While Kaneda is still capable of moving, he desperately needs them repaired if he is to survive another combat.

If the party simply pounds on the door, Fumio helps Kaneda hide in a small concealed room that he discovered after purchasing the building, then attempts to quickly clean up the mess before making his way downstairs. He strives to convince the party to move along but though he is an excellent doctor, he lacks the composure for intrigue. A **Perception score of 12** is enough to see that Fumio is terrified and a **Perception score of 14 or higher** spots of blood on his collar, sleeves, and hands.

He first tries to politely convince the adventurers to leave and then lamely leans upon his social status, making threats about "knowing people in positions of authority," though these claims quickly fall flat if the party discloses that they're

working directly for Administrator Sanjuro. Ultimately an **Intellect challenge roll with 1 bane** is all that is required to get Fumio to lead the party above, though his fear and desire to save Kaneda's life is clear to see.

Unless any of the party have a superlative **Perception score of 20**, Kaneda's Stealth bonuses coupled with the advantage his augmetics provide allow him to easily stay hidden when the PCs arrive. After the party enters the apartment above, read the following:

Oda leads you up the stairs and into the apartment above his physician's practice. The rooms within are simple but well-appointed, though something has clearly just happened —bloodied rags dangle out of a refuse bin and there's a large dark stain on the divan with what looks to be a medical bag stuffed clumsily below it. The doctor's eyes follow yours and he breaks into a cold sweat, terror apparent on his face. There is a moment of silence that is suddenly broken by the sound of hammer cocking.

When you glance towards the bedroom a lean young man in a pair of peasant's breeches and light tabi leans heavily against the doorframe with one hand while aiming a hand hwacha at you with the other. His hair is a ragged mess and both his arms and legs are augmetic, though heavily damaged. He has several freshly bandaged wounds, though they pale in comparison to the hideous burn scars that cover his torso and the left side of his thin face now twisted with pain, hostility, and grim resolve. "So Muraoka needs mercenaries to kill children now?" he growls, "Not if I have anything to say about it."

Despite his burns Kaneda bears a striking resemblance to his sister Miki, who the party may have met at Muraoka's manor in the center of Kizaki (page 230). Observant PCs with a **Perception score of 13 or higher** that spoke to Miki for any length of time immediately notice the resemblance. Kaneda is coiled more tightly than a watch spring and takes his readied action to fire at the first sign of violence before retreating back into the bedroom. His clockwork guardians (page 245) are inside the bedroom with him and ready to throw themselves in the way of anyone that attacks their creator, offering up their lives to defend him.

If combat does not immediately break out Kaneda is willing to talk—though far from afraid of the party, he is aware of his own limitations and particularly his wounds. He also doesn't wish to see Doctor Oda harmed, a man to whom he feels he owes a great debt.

Playing Kaneda

Kaneda is intelligent, intuitive, and clever, but also deeply scarred—both physically and psychologically—and recent events have left him unstable. He is distrustful of anyone that he doesn't know very well and almost entirely consumed with a desire for vengeance against Muraoka. Kumiko's presence and the recent experience of seeing his niece are the only things that have prevented Kaneda from losing himself. If asked to explain what he meant, Kaneda reveals the following:

- Muraoka is not human—he is actually an immortal blood drinking monster that serves an even greater power known as the Pale Master.
- The Pale Master is not Seiya Fujioka. Doctor Fujioka was in fact the last of a secret order known as the Crimson Vigil, a group sworn to prevent the real Pale Master from rising again.
- Fujioka did abduct the children a decade ago but that was only after he discovered that Muraoka was working with the Administrator Hiroshi (Sanjuro's father) to deliver them to the true Pale Master.
- Fujioka and the other five children died that night; Kaneda only survived because of Seiya and Kumiko's bravery and the skill of Doctor Oda.
- The three children the PCs are looking for are hidden somewhere safe but the rest are in grave danger as Muraoka's protection is a lie and he certainly planning to sacrifice the remaining youths for his dark master.

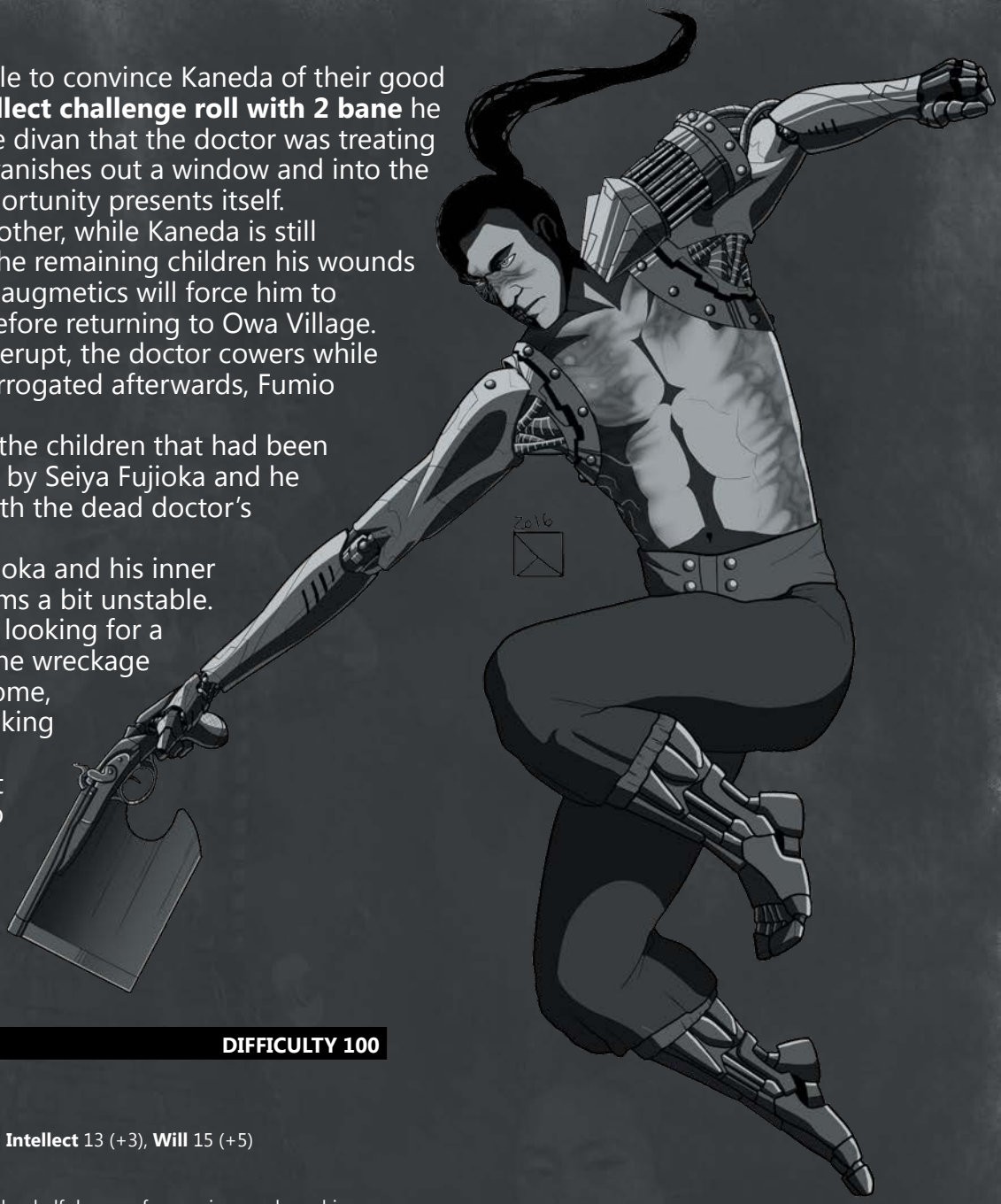
Kaneda doesn't know where Muraoka's ancestral villa is though he suspects that Doctor Fujioka had figured it out (which was why he was attempting to gain entry to the doctor's secret room when he was attacked). He can tell them how to get into the secret chamber but warns the party that there are still adeddo-oni waiting in the ruined house to ambush anyone who comes looking. He also suspects that Administrator Sanjuro may know where Muraoka's home might be.

If the party is able to convince Kaneda of their good intentions with an **Intellect challenge roll with 2 bane** he collapses back onto the divan that the doctor was treating him on. Otherwise he vanishes out a window and into the shadows when the opportunity presents itself.

One way or the other, while Kaneda is still determined to rescue the remaining children his wounds and the damage to his augmetics will force him to disappear and repair before returning to Owa Village.

If violence does erupt, the doctor cowers while Kaneda escapes. If interrogated afterwards, Fumio reveals the following:

- Kaneda was one of the children that had been taken a decade ago by Seiya Fujioka and he has been staying with the dead doctor's sister, Kumiko.
- Kaneda wants Muraoka and his inner circle dead and seems a bit unstable.
- Kaneda was injured looking for a secret chamber in the wreckage of Seiya Fujioka's home, claiming he was looking for a red stone.
- Fumio suspects that Kaneda and Kumiko are residing in the doctor's old home but cannot confirm the suspicion.



KANEDA MOTO — DIFFICULTY 100

Size 1 human (soburi)
Perception 15 (+5); darksight
Defense 17; **Health** 80
Strength 15 (+5), **Agility** 16 (+6), **Intellect** 13 (+3), **Will** 15 (+5)
Speed 16; leap 4
Immune fatigued, poisoned
Augmetic Resistances Kaneda takes half damage from poison and psychic.
Evasion When Kaneda is subjected to an effect that allows him to make an Agility challenge roll to take only half damage, he instead takes no damage if he succeeds on the challenge roll, and only half damage if he fails.
Modified Dainamo Omiryō When Kaneda is the target of a spell, roll 1d20; on a result of 10 or less, he draws the magic into his modified dainamo omiryō. The device can hold up to 4 ranks of spells (rank 0 spells count as rank 1 spells). By spending a triggered action immediately after a spell is cast at him or an action after he has absorbed one or more spells, Kaneda can fire blasts of raw energy that deal 1d6 damage per stored spell rank to all creatures in a 50-foot line. An Agility challenge roll with 2 bane halves this damage. Alternately, he can fire it as a ranged attack at a single target within 50 yards (with a +6 bonus to hit).
Vulnerability Kaneda takes double damage from lightning.
Dampening Enhancers Kaneda possesses cutting-edge prototype augmetics that grant him 2 boons on Stealth challenge rolls and challenge rolls made to jump or tumble.

ATTACK OPTIONS
Scorching Telescopic Arm (melee; reach +2) +5 with 1 boon (1d6 damage plus 1d6 fire damage)
Hand Hwacha Shot (medium range) +6 with 1 boon (2d6 damage)
Hand Hwacha Blast Kaneda makes a single ranged attack roll with 2 boons and applies that attack roll to all targets in a 10-yard line. Creatures struck by this attack take 4d6 damage, or half as much damage with a successful Agility challenge roll with 2 banes. Once Kaneda has used this attack, he cannot do so for 1 minute.

SPECIAL ATTACKS
Triple Strike Kaneda attacks three times with its scorching telescopic arm or hwacha shot.

SPECIAL ACTIONS
Reflexive Dodge When Kaneda is aware of an attacker, he may spend his triggered action to reduce the damage of an attack or spell by half.

A BROKEN MAN

The party may choose to have another conversation with Administrator Sanjuro after speaking to Kaneda. Unlike before he is now very drunk, for though Muraoka forbade him from imbibing any more alcohol he began again as soon as the evil agent left. Guard Captain Arata Asai is entirely Muraoka's creature and knows not to let anyone near Sanjuro Nara when he's in this condition. Captain Asai meets the party when they return to Muraoka's estate, taking them into a side room and firmly stating that the administrator is busy "with matters of governance." Should the adventurers continue to press him for access, he demands to know what they plan to "trouble the administrator with," eventually agreeing to accompany them to see Sanjuro.

A canny PC may excuse themselves under some pretense and try to find Administrator Sanjuro on their own. He is in the library drinking, staring at the fire, and wallowing in misery. Sake has given him courage and he's been throwing empty bottles and glasses at a portrait of Muraoka above the mantle, half-hoping in his stupor that the torturous servant of the Pale Master will simply kill him, though he still fears for what may become of his family.

When Sanjuro eventually reveals something critical during the course of the conversation—including Muraoka's nature, his plans for the children, or his location—Captain Asai quietly excuses himself and goes to acquire guards that share his loyalty to the vampire. Anyone with a **Will of 12 or higher** realizes that he is planning something. When Asai returns he and his lackeys (use the statistics for a **Veteran**, **4 Mercenaries**, and **5 Patrollers**) attack the party without pretense, using the opportunity to attempt to kill Administrator Sanjuro and blame it on the adventurers. While Muraoka would be furious by the whole affair and likely dismember him, Captain Asai mistakenly thinks that he'll be rewarded for helping to keep the evil secrets of the true Pale Master's servant.

Given the state that Sanjuro is in the PCs shouldn't find it too difficult to get him to confess (particularly given his overpowering guilt and obvious intoxication).

- Muraoka's ancestral home is located several hours away in the mountains of the city. He has sent messengers there before and provides the party with directions to reach the villa.
- Muraoka is an inhuman monster that seems to be immortal and averse to the light of day.
- Muraoka works for an even greater power, the Pale Master, and it was on its behalf that he took the children.
- Doctor Seiya Fujioka was innocent of any wrongdoing but Muraoka has been encouraging Sanjuro to pin the past events on him.
- If the Pale Master does not get its sacrifices it will stop providing any protection to the city. Sanjuro believes that this would almost certainly mean Kizaki's destruction.

PLAYING ASAI

Guard Captain Arata Asai is a violent, greedy, small-minded, and thuggish bully with just enough instinct and cunning to be dangerous. He barely hides the contempt he holds for the new administrator, a fact that anyone with a **Will of 11 or higher** easily notices.

If Captain Asai or one of his guards have been made extremely suspicious one of them is already drinking in the library with Sanjuro, excusing themselves when the PCs step within to go and acquire reinforcements before attacking.

THE RUINS OF FUJIOKA'S HOME

After speaking with Doctor Fumio Oda, the PCs may choose to investigate the ruined home of Seiya Fujioka. It is located in the Canal District on a relatively large walled plot of land that once contained a noble house and a spacious garden with trees and other greenery. Now the place of healing and safety is a mostly collapsed ruin, the once beautiful garden a tangled and overgrown snarl of dying trees. Both gates through the stone wall have been locked and can be opened with an **Agility challenge roll** or forced with a **Strength challenge roll with 1 bane** (though the latter makes enough noise that the undead waiting within are able to hear it).

The ruin of the home itself has lost its upper floor but the the skeleton of the building remains intact, including a maze-like collection of old stone walls where the adeddo-oni that Kaneda didn't kill before still lurk. An adeddo-oni samurai (page 131) and two adeddo-oni ninja (page 130) watch the entrance to the basement and attack anyone who approaches it that isn't Muraoka.

As the party may have learned, Doctor Fujioka did in fact maintain a secret bolthole below his home that withstood the fire above—because of its warding magics against the unnatural, Muraoka and his minions had been unable to find it despite being perilously close on multiple occasions. The entrance is located against the northern wall of the ruined basement of the estate and requires an **Intellect challenge roll with 1 bane** to locate. Furthermore, anyone with a Haitoku score of 15 or higher requires a **Will challenge roll with 1 bane** to discern it, even if shown where it is. Due to the spells protecting the area, undead, monstrosities, and oni suffer 3 bane on these challenge rolls.

Inside the characters encounter a treasure trove of lore—Seiya Fujioka and those that came before him had devoted their lives to opposing the Pale Master and they learned much doing so. There are several journals and accounts of Ichizo Ando's evil in life (including some items that Ando himself wrote) and on the walls are a detailed map of the Crimson Keep, a very old photograph of a young Muraoka, and genealogies of the family trees of the adventurers' descendants. The doctor's own journal details his plan to take the children and keep them safe from harm—at this point, the GM may choose to simply synopsize the background of the adventure in full. The PCs also discover a map that shows the location of Muraoka's villa east of Kizaki.

Act III: Festival of Fire

By the end of the second act of *Revenge of the Pale Master* the party has likely discovered the location of Owa Village from either Eight Arms Kazuya, Kaneda Moto, the ghost of Shinzo the Eater, or another means. The PCs have also likely been told of Muraoka's monstrous nature and of his plans to sacrifice the children that he has offered to "protect" in his villa outside of the city, forcing the adventurers to make a choice. One way or the other, their decision will have dire repercussions for the future of Kizaki.

As the city prepares for the Festival of Falling Hawks—including preparations for a massive fireworks display, games, music, and food that typically spills from the main square throughout the city—the PCs leave Kizaki behind.

If they choose not to believe Kaneda, they likely head to Owa Village and attempt to rescue the children being held by he and Kumiko.

If they believe Kaneda, they likely discovered the location of Muraoka's Villa either by uncovering the secret room in the ruins of Fujioka's home or by interrogating Administrator Sanjuro.

Traveling from Kizaki

Much of the travel time outside of Kizaki is not due to distance, but rather the roughness of the terrain. The region was remote prior to the bloodshed of Hitoshi's Rebellion and now it is almost entirely uninhabited, meaning that the roads are overgrown, bridges are either sagging or missing, and paths disappeared. Having anyone with the Guide, Academic (Navigation), Tracker or a similar Nature-based profession reduces the travel time by half. Though the adventure assumes that the adventurers have no problems following

the directions they have, the GM could ask for an **Intellect challenge roll** and have failure affect travel time (though this could affect the overall timeline).

While this adventure does not assume any random encounters, should the PCs be well ahead of schedule, the GM is free to include an encounter to tempt them off track.

D20	Random Encounter	Difficulty
1	Jinmenju (page 136)	250
2–3	Ancestral Kami (page 141)	100
4–6	Harianago (page 134)	100
7–9	Gaki (page 133)	50
10–12	Yaogaui (page 150)	50
13–15	Chōchin-Obake Swarm (page 146)	25
16–18	Kuchisake-Onna (page 139)	25
19–20	Gang of a dozen **Bandits**	12

OWA VILLAGE

Located three hours west of Kizaki, Owa Village was a remote community of nearly two hundred men, women, and children before war found it nearly twenty years ago at the very inception of Hitoshi's Rebellion. Now it has a population of two—plus three children that Kumiko and Kaneda have hidden there.

Read the following as the PCs approach:

Following the directions that you were given you head southeast, slowing your pace as the road turns into a broken path that meanders through a dying forest. You pass the occasional remains of villagers that likely perished in the fighting more than twenty years ago, still lying where they breathed their last and picked clean by scavengers.

Eventually, you come to an old stone gate revealing the ruins of Owa Village beyond the wreck of the wall that once surrounded it. Two dozen burned out huts stand in small clusters around an old well, and the husk of what may have once been a meeting hall or temple. Throughout the whole of the settlement trees thrust up through the ruins, and unlike the road leading here, no remains can be seen.

Owa Village is protected by three clockwork guardians that Kumiko created. Two hide motionlessly in ruined huts located near the old gate while the third lies similarly hidden behind the hovel that Kumiko and Kaneda share. The constructs remain undetected unless someone in the party has a **Perception score of 15** or a PC actively looks for signs of an ambush and passes a **Perception challenge roll with 2 bane**.

Parties that approach openly or use a visible light source are seen automatically and the clockwork guardians attack without warning, sounding an alarm that alerts Kumiko. If the adventurers send a scout or approach stealthily they need to succeed on **Stealth challenge roll with 1 bane** in order to avoid alerting the constructs. PCs that are are able to make it into the village and investigate before discovering Kumiko and the children, find a small garden, a goat pen, and the graves of the neighbors that Kumiko and Kaneda could find enough of to bury after they returned home.

If Kumiko is alerted she quickly ushers the children into the concealed cellar that she's converted into a surprisingly extensive workshop below and throws a rug over the trap door before arming herself and stepping out into the village. Though it has been many years since she was an assassin for the Iron Spiders she is still a dangerous combatant—skilled, augmetically enhanced, and capable of making the best possible use of her superior knowledge of the settlement to inflict as much harm as possible. Kumiko is armed with a lovingly modified rifle and several explosive grenades, and if all else fails she resorts to hand to hand combat. She fights to the death if necessary to protect the children, though she is not suicidal and does her utmost to survive while accomplishing her goal.

KUMIKO FUJIOKA **DIFFICULTY 100**

Size 1 human (soburi)

Perception 16 (+6)

Defense 17; **Health** 85

Strength 12 (+2), **Agility** 17 (+7), **Intellect** 16 (+6), **Will** 16 (+6)

Speed 16

Deflect Missile Once per turn Kumiko can reduce the damage of a ranged weapon attack by 2d6.

Evasion When Kumiko is subjected to an effect that allows her to make an Agility challenge roll to take only half damage, she instead takes no damage if she succeeds on the challenge roll, and only half damage if she fails.

Focused Mind Kumiko takes half damage from psychic and at the start of her turn can spend a triggered action to recover from the charmed, compelled, or frightened afflictions.

Stance of the Serpent Kumiko gains 2 boonson challenge rolls made to jump or tumble as well as challenge rolls made to resist the prone affliction. She gains 2 boonswhen attempting to cause a creature to go prone.

Telepathy Kumiko can communicate telepathically within 10 yards.

ATTACK OPTIONS

Unarmed Strike (melee) +7 (1d6 damage)

Fragmentation Grenade As an action Kumiko tosses a lit grenade that explodes on impact. All creatures within a 10-yard-radius of a point within 10 yards of Kumiko must make an Agility challenge roll with 2 banes. On a failure, they take 6d6 fire damage.

Rifle (long range) +3 with 1 boon (2d6 damage)

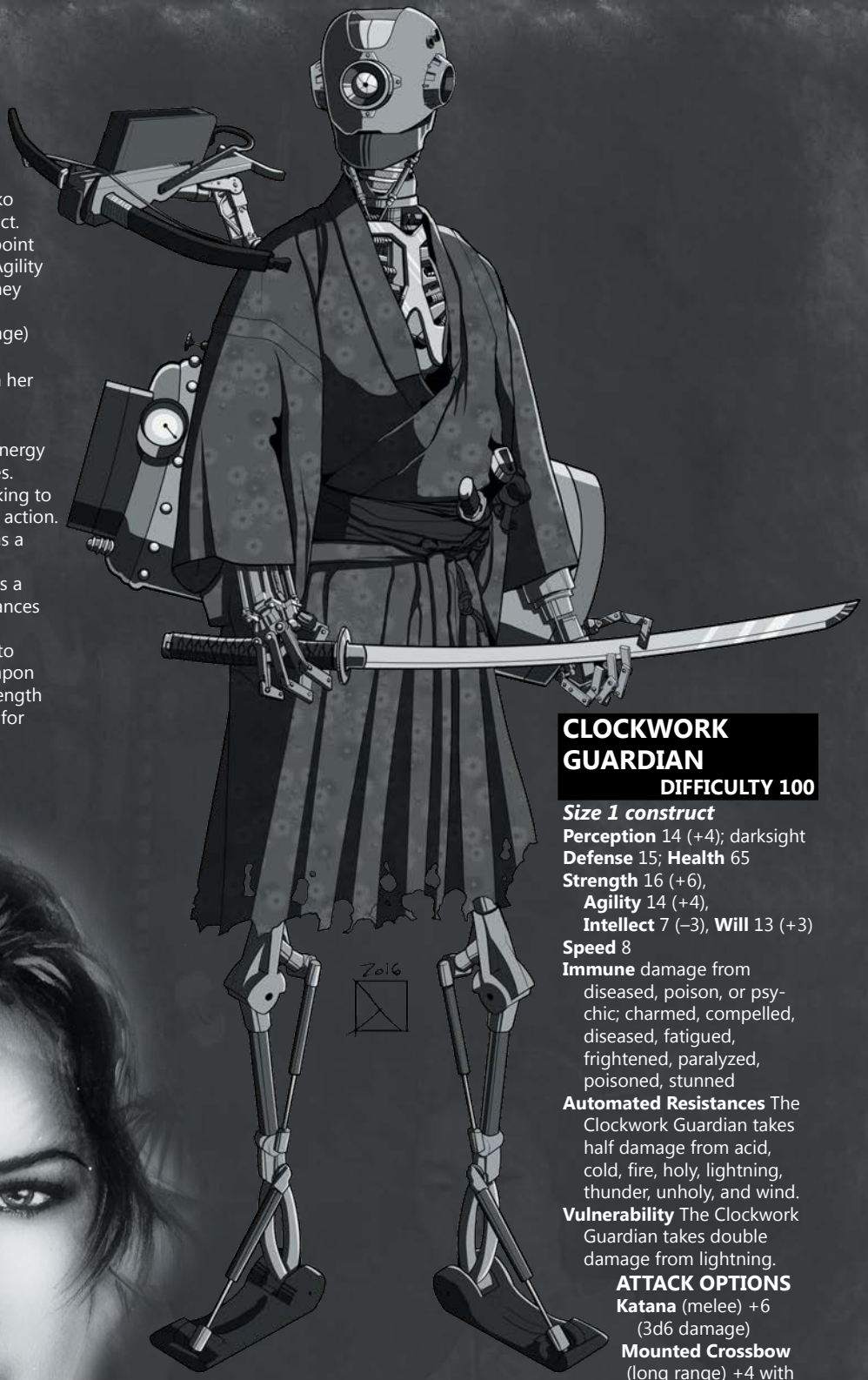
SPECIAL ATTACKS

Triple Attack Kumiko attacks four times with her unarmed strike or twice with her rifle.

SPECIAL ACTIONS

***Qi* (6 points)** Kumiko harnesses the mystic energy of *qi* and can spend it to power her abilities.

- Kumiko can spend 1 *qi* point when attacking to make two unarmed strikes as a triggered action.
- Kumiko can spend 1 *qi* point to Defend as a triggered action.
- Kumiko can spend 1 *qi* point to Retreat as a triggered action, doubling her jump distances for the turn.
- Kumiko can spend 1 *qi* point to attempt to stun a creature she hits with a melee weapon attack. The target must succeed on a Strength challenge roll with 2 bane or be stunned for 1 round.



CLOCKWORK GUARDIAN

DIFFICULTY 100

Size 1 construct

Perception 14 (+4); darksight

Defense 15; **Health** 65

Strength 16 (+6), **Agility** 14 (+4), **Intellect** 7 (–3), **Will** 13 (+3)

Speed 8

Immune damage from diseased, poison, or psychic; charmed, compelled, diseased, fatigued, frightened, paralyzed, poisoned, stunned

Automated Resistances The Clockwork Guardian takes half damage from acid, cold, fire, holy, lightning, thunder, unholy, and wind.

Vulnerability The Clockwork Guardian takes double damage from lightning.

ATTACK OPTIONS

Katana (melee) +6 (3d6 damage)

Mounted Crossbow (long range) +4 with 1 boon (2d6 damage)

SPECIAL ATTACKS

Double Attack The Clockwork Guardian attacks once with its katana and once with its mounted crossbow.

SPECIAL ACTIONS

Overclock As an action, the Clockwork Guardian overclocks itself for 1 minute. While overclocked, it gains a +1 bonus on all challenge rolls and damage rolls, and spends its triggered action each round making an additional attack or using the Defend action. While overclocked the Clockwork Guardian gains 1 boon on attack rolls and takes half damage from weapons. Roll 1d20 whenever this ability is activated. On a roll of 1, the Clockwork Guardian goes berserk in addition to its normal bonuses. On each of its turns while berserk, the Clockwork Guardian attacks the nearest creature it can see. If no creature is near enough to move to and attack, the Clockwork Guardian attacks an object, with preference for an object smaller than itself.

If the party manages to sneak past or quietly disable the clockwork guardians, a **Perception challenge roll with 1 bane** reveals a sliver of light and the hint of a song echoing from a mostly intact cabin near the center of the town. Kumiko is inside trying to entertain the children with a play using clockwork toys that she made for Kaneda many years ago while they sit on the floor eating a simple but hearty bowl of stew. A **Will challenge roll with 1 boon** reveals that she means the children no harm whatsoever.

Should the party make themselves known at this point, Kumiko interposes herself between the PCs and the children, attempting to stall until her guardians can engage and doing what she can to get the youths to safety. It takes the clockwork guardians a few rounds to travel to the hut from their hiding places but the adventurers can convince her of their good intentions in the interim by passing a **Will challenge roll with 2 bane**, depending upon their motives; if they have met Kaneda and mention his name, the PCs gain 2 boons on the challenge roll. On a success she refrains from signaling her clockwork guardians to attack, though she still needs far more convincing to trust the party completely.

If the party wounds or kills Kumiko the children she was protecting react with horror and confusion—if the PCs try to explain to them that she meant them harm, they deny that possibility outright. Should the adventurers race back to Kizaki they may yet make it in time for the Festival of Falling Hawks; a gate guard quickly escorts them to Muraoka's villa, where Asai and his guards take the youths from them and furnish the party with payment. Asai tells the PCs and any of the parents that may respond to the adventurers' return that a priestess will check them for corruption before returning them to their families, but they are instead taken to a glade just outside of the city where Muraoka has a baku (page 132) waiting to deliver the children to his villa (a journey made much faster via flight than on foot). The party is then invited to partake in the celebrations, honored as heroes of Kizaki in an irony the vampire finds deeply satisfying.

If Sanjuro is still present and the hour of his opening speech at the celebration hasn't arrived, he drunkenly asks the PCs to accompany him after the children have been transported away. News of their success spreads quickly and if they accept the adventurers are introduced as heroes, though the citizens and officials to which he makes them known are quite put off by the administrator's obvious intoxication. When he finally gives his speech, Sanjuro talks about the great cost of their prosperity, a cost that was paid in blood by the innocent—tears form in his eyes and he finishes by thanking the heroes of the night and his father, who made the city's salvation possible.

MURAOKA'S VILLA

Muraoka Villa is located four hours east of Kizaki in one of the few true forests remaining in the Gekido Prefecture. None of the foreigner's scientists ever figured out why so many soldiers died there of all places and it remained relatively untouched throughout the Kengen Occupation thanks to the influence of the Pale Master.

When the players depart Kizaki for Muraoka's Villa, read the following:

Leaving the city via the eastern gate and traveling for nearly an hour through the dwindling woods that surround Kizaki, you eventually find yourselves on an overgrown path that winds into the nearby mountains. It looks unused, except for a set of recent wagon tracks and the footprints of four heavily-burdened men. The only signs of habitation along the road are the husks of long abandoned homes or villages every few miles.

Eventually you come to a stone wall and through the trees beyond you can see a cluster of dilapidated buildings. Above the canopy, a three story manor house rises above both the trees and the other buildings

around it. An eldritch light emanates from a window on its highest floor that sends a subconscious shiver of fear down your spine and an ominous presence radiates from out of the shadowed woods on the other side of the gate leading inside.

While it was his home when he was a mortal aristocrat, Muraoka's Villa has gone uncared for decades and is little more than a dilapidated ruin. The wooded area between the outer wall and the actual villa itself is patrolled by adeddo-oni that he has bound to his will over time; the largest group is composed of **11 adeddo-hunchlings** (page 130) and one **adeddo-oni mage** (page 130), who are currently waiting in the trees just inside of the gate. Short of *invisibility,* it is impossible for the party to sneak through the gate without attracting their attention and being attacked. The adventurers will fare better if they instead attempt to locate a damaged section of the wall, or simply scale it. Skirting the wall and making a **Perception challenge roll** identifies a part of the bulwark they can easily scale or pull down to get inside.

The buildings and the first floor of the manor are inhabited by the remnants of Muraoka's household, though like their master they are no longer human. Instead his sisters, wife, and trusted servants have spent the last century as **vampire spawn** (use the statistics for **High Cultists**, or **Vampire Brood** from page 34 of *Tombs of Desolation*); a total of **6 of the creatures** haunt the ruins of their former home while stalking traders and nearby villages for sustenance. Thankfully the vampire spawn's greed for blood prevents them from alerting their brood mates when sighting the party, hoping to claim the feast for themselves. Consequently unless the PCs are particularly loud or draw the fight from its current location, the vampire spawn can be dispatched in small groups.

Grounds

In addition to the adeddo-oni guarding the gate, 2 vampire spawn (once Muraoka's servants) stalk the grounds, seeking anyone or anything who manages to slip by the guards.

Stable

An **adeddo-oni mage** (page 130) waits here with two vampire spawn (one of Muraoka's sisters and his mother), using chemicals to put the children that Muraoka is "protecting" to sleep and feasting on the flesh of their parents (brought along as the vampire promised). They have orders to keep the children alive if possible but these monsters are bloodthirsty—as soon as one of them is slain, the others turn to murder a captive in response.

Manor House

The building that was once the summer home of Kiyoshi Muraoka is in disrepair, neglected for decades (possibly even centuries) and nearly as much a ruin as Doctor Fujioka's destroyed home. A pair of vampire spawn—which are recognized as Muraoka's siblings with a **Will challenge roll**—are picking apart the corpse of an unfortunate peasant in the foyer and slink away at the first signs of intrusion into the Manor House, knowing from experience that remaining hidden is the best way to lure prey into being vulnerably isolated before striking.

Servants Quarters

Most of the Manor House has been stripped of valuables by daring thieves (many of which became food for the vampire spawn) but persistent adventurers that make an **Intellect challenge roll with 2 bane** find some little wealth still secreted away on the second floor. These range from coins to jewelry and are worth 100 gold all told, though if anyone dons the items (including a ruby ring, a jade necklace, and an azure bracelet) Muraoka recognizes the bauble as something stolen from his mother and—affronted by the thievery—focuses his attacks on the wearer.

Muraoka's Workshop

Upon the party ascending to the top floor of the Manor House, read the following:

The third floor was once a grand workshop, though it has fallen to the same disrepair as the floors below and is at least as gruesome. Tables strewn with outdated technology and grisly experiments lay beside the rotting remains of several corpses in different states of decay, almost all of them with faces twisted into rictuses of terrible pain.

(continued on the next page)

Suddenly the nobleman from Kizaki, Kiyoshi Muraoka, appears from a stairway leading to the roof, almost as if he was there since the moment you arrived. He smiles, though now there is no warmth or pretense of humanity in it, his fangs visible and bloody. He descends slowly, each step deliberate and inhumanly graceful, as if he was floating—without saying a word or making a movement, a katana flowing with crimson red energy appears in one of his hands the instant before he dashes forward with a speed that defies sight!

Confronting Muraoka

Even without his minions Muraoka is a dangerous adversary—the **Vampire** was a highly skilled swordsman in life and has had more than a century to master his unnatural gifts. He wields a katana named *Siphon* that grants him a +1 bonus to attack rolls and damage, and allows him to apply his Blood Drain directly through it once per round:

Siphon (melee) +6 with 2 boons (3d6+1 plus 3d6 Blood Drain).

Hazy shrouds summoned by the Pale Master hang above Muraoka's home, giving him little to fear from the sun even at the height of noon, and he fights with deadly cunning. The vampire focuses on lightly-armored spellcasters first, making full use of his abilities to turn or disable other threats. After the end of the first round of combat, any minions still prowling the grounds immediately make to protect their master, arriving in 1d3 rounds (roll individually for each creature).

While he desires victory for his master, Muraoka values his own continued existence more and flees at the first credible sign that he is in true danger. If he is somehow reduced to 0 Health Muraoka retreats to his resting place, which is located behind a false wall in a partially collapsed corner of the basement that is nearly impossible to discover or access without magic.

Variant: A Tougher Encounter

Experienced parties of adventurers will be on a more even ground when fighting Muraoka and to make for even footing, the top floors of the manor are more and more decayed.

Hidden Corpses Muraoka sometimes puts the bodies of his victims in the rafters of his workshop, leaving their desiccated remains in precarious positions that are not at all sturdy. Each turn when a PC takes the Attack or Dash action in a square no one has passed through, roll 1d6 and on a 1 a corpse falls, forcing the PC to make a **Will challenge roll with 1 bane** or gain the frightened affliction for 1d6 rounds.

Rotted Floorboards The manor's top floor is not in good repair and many of the wooden planks have decayed considerably, breaking apart under the weight of armored boots and the footwork of combat. Whenever a PC enters a square no one has passed through, roll 1d6 and on a 2 or 3 the floorboard breaks apart, forcing the PC to make an **Agility challenge roll with 1 bane** or gain the immobilized affliction until they spend their move to try to remove their foot with an **Agility challenge roll with 1 bane**.

Unhallowed Ground Muraoka has invested much of his dark power into his lair, infusing the top floor with unholy energy. The entire area causes creatures other than undead to suffer 1 bane on challenge rolls to resist taking damage or gaining afflictions.

Aftermath

One way or the other, the party's actions are sure to have affected Kizaki's future.

- If the children were recovered in time to be returned to Kizaki before the festival begins and are flown to Murakoa's villa, their souls are offered up to the true Pale Master, greatly increasing his ability to affect and influence the world around him, bringing him ever closer to his goal of regaining his corporeal form in order to reclaim his domain. He continues to honor his agreement and keeps Kizaki safe but only does so because it serves his ends.
- If the chosen children (Seiji Kagawa, Keiko Moto, and Tadao Otoro, hidden in Owa Village) are not rescued before Muraoka departs to conduct the ritual he instead uses those under his protection in their stead (Etsuko Gensai, Takuma Mazawa, Yuzuki Tabuchi). While the sacrifice still serves to feed the Pale Master an incomplete offering is not enough to dramatically increase his power, though it helps to ensure his eventual return. Kumiko's death goes largely unnoticed if she is slain and Kaneda swears vengeance upon those responsible, pursuing it with a fervor that made his single-minded devotion to the Crimson Vigil's mandate seem diffident by comparison (creating an enemy that could bedevil the party throughout the campaign). His augmentations make him a dangerous physical combatant and he took naturally to Kumiko's lessons—and obviously he can exhibit great patience, perhaps his deadliest skill. Muraoka offers the adventurers half the promised amount, citing that their lateness could well have cost the city dearly; a **Will challenge roll with 3 bane** reveals that in truth he is completely unconcerned, though whatever suspicions are raised among the PCs come too late to be meaningfully acted upon.
- If the party uncovers the truth and acts against Muraoka they may have saved the lives of the children and staved off the Pale Master's return—though not without cost. Ichizo Ando was vengeful and monstrous in life and his undeath has only heightened these qualities; he uses his influence to once again bring war to Kizaki, hoping to force the city's rulers to capitulate to his will and help him in his quest for immortality. Administrator Sanjuro offers half the gold promised by Muraoka, promising that the rest will go to the defense of Kizaki (something he fears will be all too necessary without the protection offered by the city's despicable ally).

Plans of the Pale Master

GMs are encouraged to sprout their own foul workings for the Pale Master to pursue after the events of this adventure but here are a few suggestions for what the ancient necromancer might do next.

If the chosen children (Seiji Kagawa, Keiko Moto, and Tadao Otoro) were sacrificed according to the Pale Master's ritual: Kizaki is protected but none of the lands or settlements nearby are so lucky. Adeddo-oni and far worse (any oni from Chapter 9) assail the countryside, sowing chaos and horror all over the Gekido and Hakaisuru prefectures to keep attentions focused away from the Crimson Keep.

If the chosen children were saved and the other trio were sacrificed to the Pale Master: The Pale Master grows slightly in power and takes out his ire on the party, sending kuchisake-onna (page 139) and rokurokubi (page 142) assassins to capture them, working out a means to rip the PCs' souls from the aether.

If none of the children are saved and they are all sacrificed to the Pale Master: With his plans working perfectly Kizaki is saved, but now that the Pale Master is restored to his full power he acts quietly and with great subtlety, hatching horrors in the Crimson Keep that will soon enough threaten all of Soburin. The regions around the Crimson Keep experience a long period of peace as the Mists of Akuma seem to recede, but this is only a facade and the horrors that the ancient necromancer finally unleashes consolidate the area as the first part of the dark, warped kingdom that emerges.

If all of the children were saved from the dark ritual of the Pale Master: No words can describe the incredible rage of the Pale Master and he makes killing the PCs the chief concern of Muraoka. The vampire and his spawn stalk the party wherever they go, striking when they are most vulnerable and dragging them—one by one, alive—back to the Crimson Keep.

MONSTERS BY DIFFICULTY

DIFFICULTY 5
Rogue Kengen Soldier

DIFFICULTY 10
Adeddo-Oni-Hunchling
Chōchin-Obake, Lantern Tsukumogami
Kaiyo Horror, Pistol Tsukumogami
Kasa-Obake, Umbrella Tsukumogami
Kupran's Kengen Soldiers
Ki Spirit

DIFFICULTY 25
Adeddo-Oni-Ninja
Akunomōfu, Blanket Tsukumogami
Chika Thug
Chōchin-Obake Swarm
Ishi Spirit
Kaiyo Horror, Autopistol Tsukumogami
Kaiyo Horror, Rifle Tsukumogami
Koleraj's Kengen Soldiers
Kuchisake-Onna
Freneza's Soldiers
Rogue Kengen General
Mekkusenshi
Onryō
Sovaga's Kengen Soldiers

DIFFICULTY 50
Adeddo-Oni-Mage
Adeddo-Oni-Samurai
Akitsu Flyer
Baku
Burakku Kirā
Canine Orphan
Death Crow
Fudōsoge snipers
Gaki
Gekido Bengoshi: Mantis Raptor
General Kupran Stelisto
Greater onryō
Jentorukumo Agents
Kurōnnōruk
Mantis Reavers.
Monk of the Tusk
Mori-Tsukidashi
Numanojanpā
Paper Kami
Qirin
Scorpion Warrior
Sherukurakkā
Shinku-Kikori
Shield of Kabe
Sky Runner
Steam Soldier
Spirit Hunter
Tāpumōfu, Blanket Tsukumogami
Tora-Kyabaria Hunters
Torunēdo-Sentōki
Uragimon
Waveriders
Xenka-Jin
Yaoguai

DIFFICULTY 100
Ancestral Kami
Antler Of The Stag
Augmetic Scientist
Cloud Summoner
Enhanced Enforcer
Explosive Lord
Eye of Yokuba
Harionago
Hebikontorōra
Herbal Master
High Samurai
Imperial Rebuilder
Iron Shell
Island Viper
Jiang-shi
Jorogumo
Kaiyo Nightmare
Kaneda Moto
Lieutenant-General Sovaga Kasoj
Master Abjurer
Master Evoker
Masuto Comissar
Monsutāhantā
Nature-Wielder
Numanojanpā Senmonka
Overseer Freneza Genuilo
Rokurokubi
Seer Sword
Sky Adept
Staffmaster
Talon of the Hawk
Tusk Of The Boar
Umi Kuraiyā
Tikbalang
Warlord Koleraj Batelano
Wyrmling Forest Dragon
Wyrmling Sea Dragon
Wyrmling Sky Dragon
Wyrmling Sovereign Dragon
Wyrmling Underworld Dragon
Wyrmling Void Dragon
Yuki-Onna

DIFFICULTY 250
Adult Forest Dragon
Adult Sea Dragon
Adult Sky Dragon
Adult Sovereign Dragon
Adult Underworld Dragon
Adult Void Dragon
Jinmenju
Kaiyo Terror
Kōmoro Toko (Yane Sayo)
Kurōn
Masuto Bengoshi
Xiqzoxix

DIFFICULTY 500
Bake-Kujira
Oni Warlord

DIFFICULTY 750
Boidokōtei, Ancient Void Dragon
Chitanharikēn, Ancient Sky Dragon
Daokoshazi, Ancient Forest Dragon
Gashadokuro
Hakanokishi, Ancient Underworld Dragon
Sekainami, Ancient Sea Dragon
Yai Sovereign
Yamano-Ryōshu, Ancient Sovereign Dragon

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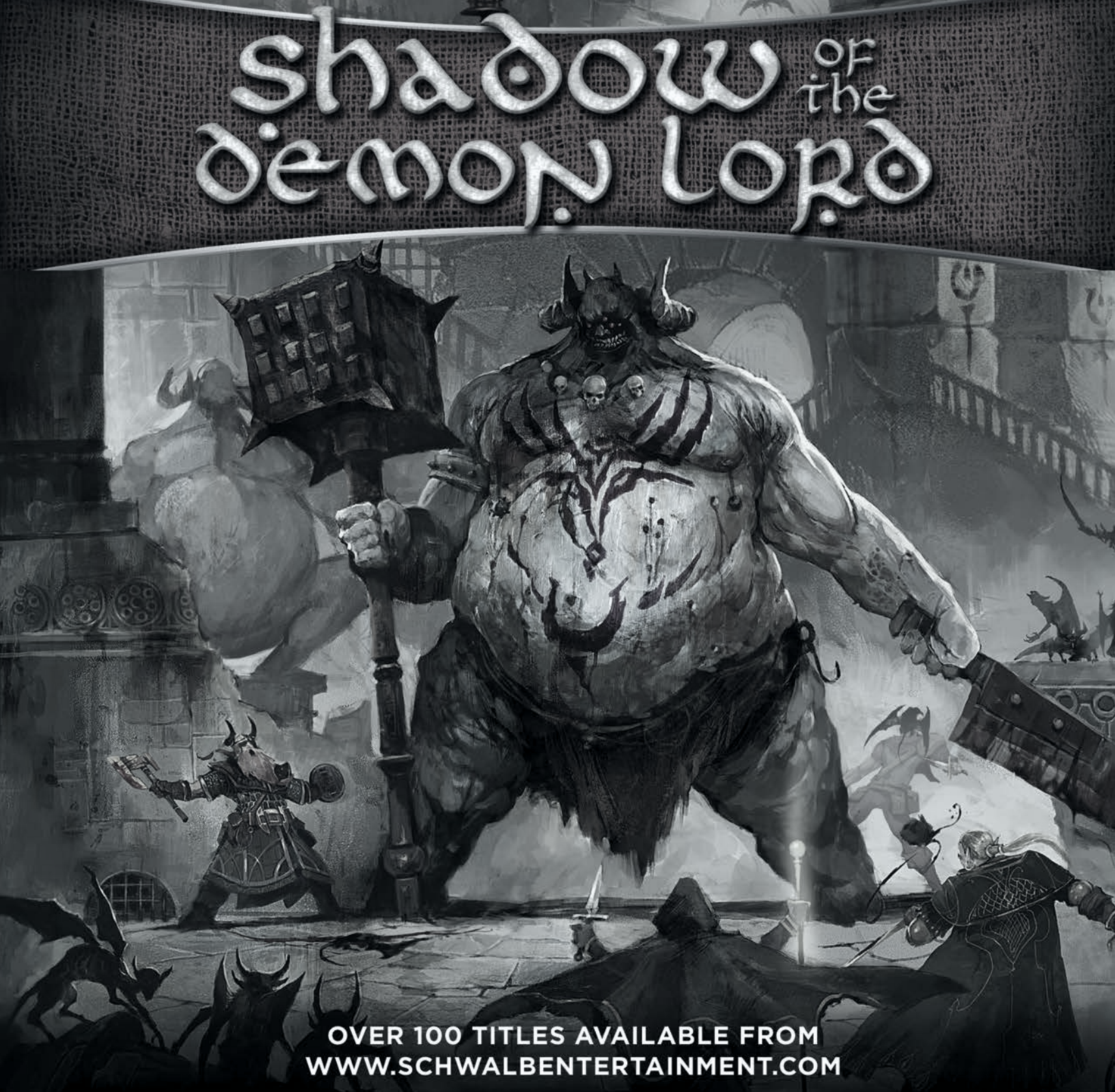

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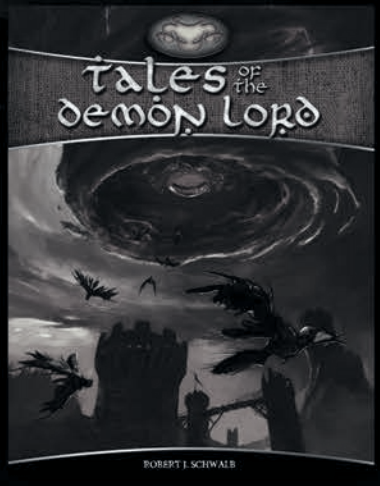

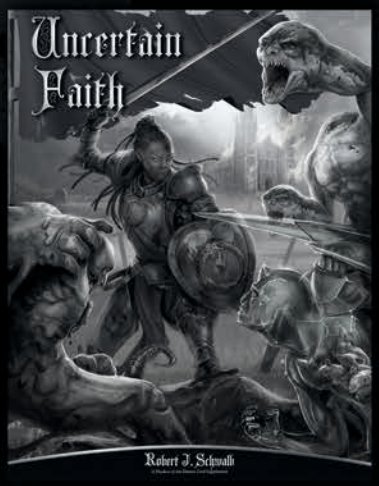

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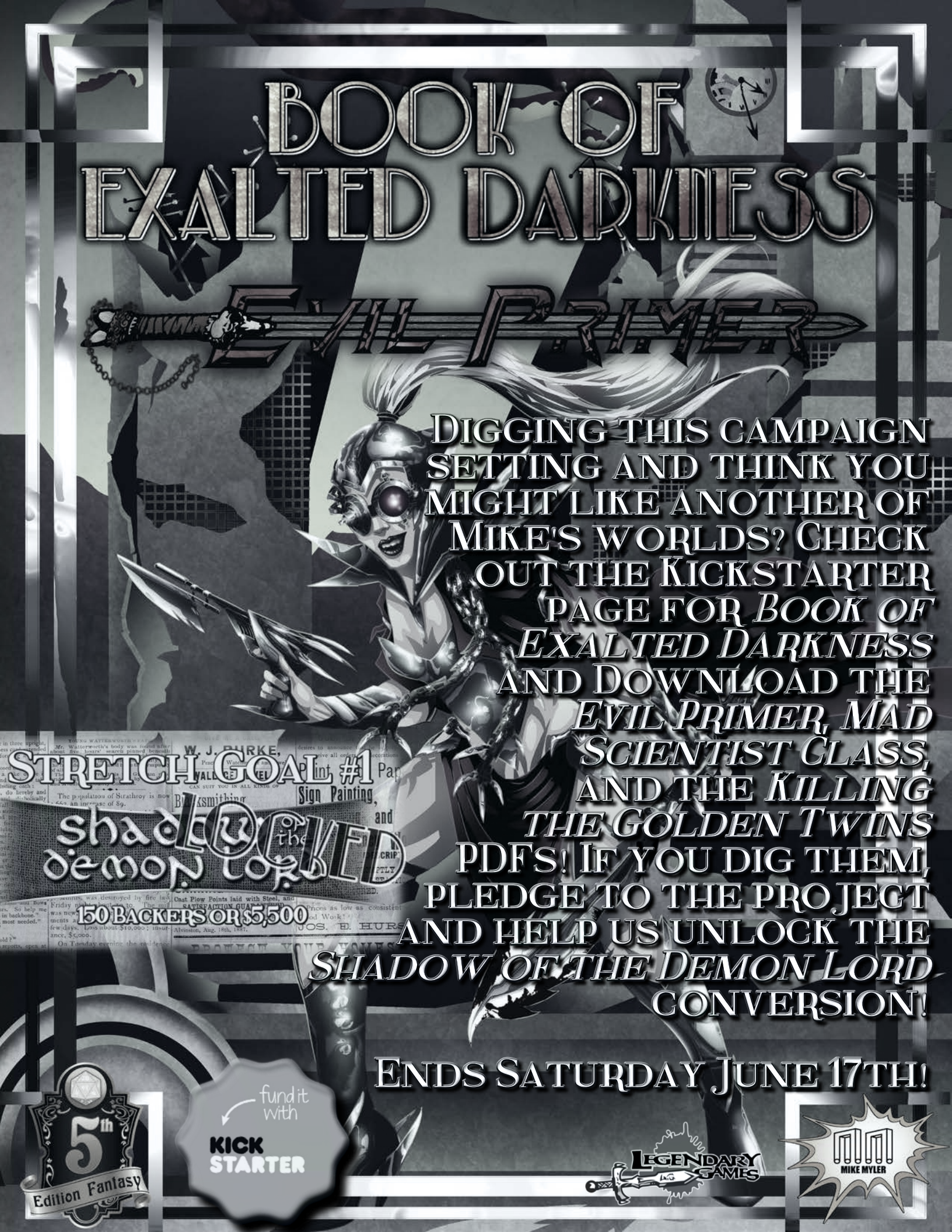
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