Mists of Akuma

5th Edition Fantasy

Storm Bunny Studios

Mike Myler

Trade War





An Adventure Path
For Characters 3rd to 12th Level

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Taking the Steampunk Out of *Mists of Akuma*

When designing this campaign setting we made it accessible for GMs that want some eastern fantasy noir but not all the technological bits. Omit the following elements to wind back the wheel of time in Soburin:

- Remove the Kengen from Chapter 1: History.
- Remove the Mekkusenshi from Chapter 4: Sanbaoshi (or reskin it as an enchanted guard).
- Remove all of Chapter 5: Kyōfū.
- Remove all Forbidden Technology sidebars (mostly Chapter 7: Clans).
- Remove the prefectures of Rimono, Supai, Usagi, and Uso (all located on the corners of the world map).
- Remove Komoro-Toko from Chapter 7: Clans (or reskin her features as enchanted items).
- Remove the Kaiyo Tsukumogami from Chapter 9: Oni.
- Remove the Disgraced Amputee, Gaijin, and Kagaku-Sha backgrounds from Chapter 10: Character Options.
- Remove the following archetypes from Chapter 10: Character Options - Bushibot fighter, Clockwork Adept wizard, College of the Gun Priest bard, and Shinobibot rogue.
- Remove subraces from Humans except Soburi, as well as the Mutant, Necroji, Psonorous, and Steametic races from Chapter 11: Races.
- Remove the Tsukumogami Augmetic feat from Chapter 12: Feats.
- Remove the Steampunk Equipment, Vehicles, and Augmetics from Chapter 13: Equipment.
- Remove *disrupt technology* from Chapter 14: Spells.
- Reskin the technological features of creatures and NPCs as magical features or enchantments.

Trade War is a *Mists of Akuma* adventure path that binds together all six of the existing modules set in Soburin before culminating in an epic finale: *Scourge of Róbai Shita Temple, Feud Primordial, Fangs of Revenge, Curse of the Scorpion Samurai, Yai Sovereign of Storms*, and *Revenge of the Pale Master*. Throughout their quests the PCs will travel across the entire continent, starting at 3rd level and ending at 10th level—but what happens along the way?

Scourge of Róbai Shita Temple

The adventurers are hired by Nature-Wielder Yon-jū Banme (a bengoshi of Sukochi Prefecture) to investigate disturbances in the mountain village of Shibai. Once there they encounter the first Mubō Brothers (Sandā and Raittoningu) and after uncovering the deceit that brought danger to mystically protected settlement destroy a malicious wind demon named Fukō.

Connection A: Trekking East

Rumors reach the party of strange machine-armored samurai but their travels are interrupted by another elemental oni and to bring an end to the supernaturally bitter winter the PCs must slay the ice arachnid Kumo-Rui. Before they are contracted to track down the oni sorcerer Shinjirarenai (by order of a Korusu Bengoshi called Akia the Iron Shell) the party are assailed by Kyūchi the Wise—the third Mubo Brother—in a deadly volley of sniper fire.

Feud Primordial

Settling the duplicity of Shinjirarenai proves not to be so simple as the party are tricked into selling the most precious of the goods the oni-touched sorcerer stole: innocuous turtlewax cream. It is sought after (unknown to them until the end) by none other than the Imperial Sibling Kanja Korusu! The adventurers must travel south to the river-city of Nesuto in search of the Machibuse Traders that bought the shipment, eventually running afoul of a second ancient from Soburin's past outside one of the sacred shrines of the Gensoso warriors of Ikari Prefecture.

Connection B: Trekking North

The party are hired to escort less-abled folk traveling north (either by the contrite hengeyokai merchants or Tazuki Rail Company) and along the way may begin to take notice of two oddities: the second appearance of a strange ebony torii gate and the smuggling of erītokirā armor showing up on soburi peasants. Investigations into either anomaly are interrupted however as the fourth Mubō Brother (Canny Torasuta) sets a trap for the adventurers and the corpse-eater Shitaitaberu brings a dreadfully oppressive summer (and should the demon go unchecked it will bring ruination down onto the land).

Fangs of Revenge

A Hakaisuru bengoshi (Talon of the Hawk 13) "requests" for the party to intervene in the troubles of Samon, home of the Tazuki Rail Company. In the recent months a secretive workers union called the Fangs has been gathering influence and members but what the PCs discover is far more duplicitous: the last descendant of a powerful family line is hidden away in the settlement and snake-folk hengeyokai vie against one another to capture her to enact foul rituals using her blessed soul.

Connection C: Sailing South

After they've brought peace back to Samon the party are invited to take on more bodyguard work—both by the Machibuse Traders and one of the peasants clad in erītokirā armor! Adventurers that haven't yet uncovered the smuggling operations brewing tension across Soburin learn much from Yakunitatsu Aibō as they sail south towards Kizuato Prefecture—until again their journey is interrupted. Tsukumogami smuggling merchants from the Mitsuyu Gyōsha consortium and Sukina (the fifth Mubō Brother alongside two crews of pirates) assault the PCs, and the most dangerous nature demon they've yet encountered attempts to manipulate them before trying to destroy them on the water: Mad Purantan.



CURSE OF THE SCORPION SAMURAI

One of Fuson Prefecture's bengoshi (17th Herbal Master Yukari Nishioka) hires the PCs to sneak into the prefecture and hunt down the Scorpion Samurai, a fugitive murdering anyone that still lives that bore any responsibility in his fall from grace. The adventurers might think that they are enacting Yukari's trap on Shōjiki Island but it will quickly become clear that they are the prey. If they cannot stop the disgraced warrior Hinjuku Nagaro and his cursed love, a great darkness will wreak havoc across Fuson Prefecture and Soburin afterward.

CONNECTION D: MOUNTAINOUS JOURNEY

With their victory over the Scorpion Samurai the party have become well known. A lone peasant girl has sacrificed all her family's wealth to find them, pleading and begging for their aid with the nothing to offer but information about the mysterious black torii gates the PCs have seen in recent months. Traveling to the settlement of Ottotto the party come across the two creatures responsible for the anomalies and though the oni escape with their duplicitous ally, an enigmatic benefactor comes across adventurers with an extremely generous offer...

YAI SOVEREIGN OF STORMS

The oni city of Tsukisasu has a new ruler as of late: Obiemashita, the self-proclaimed Yai Sovereign of Storms. Seeking to bring an end to the insurrection, the oni bengoshi Xiqzoxix has sought out and hired the PCs to infiltrate the monstrous settlement and kill the lightning demon. To do so the party must raid the fortress of Yōna that sits above the oni-filled streets, undo Obiemashita's magic circles, and slay the creature before choosing whom will rule in its place.

CONNECTION E: BEGINNING'S END

Rumors of more machine-armor clad peasants have become three small armies of farmers-turned-warriors and the erītokirā chapters are raising their blades in response, the party can exact vengeance on the pair of oni responsible for unleashing nature demons across Soburin with their black torii gates, and the last Mubō Brother (Hayaku the Storm) attempts to avenge his kin. All the elements for a dangerous conflict are gathering in the north but before the PCs can try to stop the coming war they are drawn to the city of Kizaki in Gekido Prefecture.

REVENGE OF THE PALE MASTER

The Festival of Falling Hawks is about to take place but the city of Kizaki is gripped in terror, fearing the recent return of a long-defeated evil known as the Pale Master. Six children have gone missing and thought to be abducted by the monster—the PCs are hired to get to the bottom of the mystery and see the youths returned. What they uncover however is a far deeper plot and even the most worthy adventurers will be hard-pressed to stop all of the kidnapped victims from being sacrificed to the ancient entity.

FINALE: HONE-NOROI KEEP ASCENDS

As erītokirā chapters mobilize for war and the machine-armored peasants rally to defend themselves against the shikome mercenaries and traditionalist army, both are forced to pause in the face of a primordial threat renewed—Hone-Noroi Keep, the bone tower lair of the Pale Master, has risen once more to cast its evil shadow across Soburin!

Depending upon the choices they've made, allegiances they've forged, and villains they've defeated, the party may have one or both of these fantastic armies at their back as they race across the continent before laying siege on the ancient necromancer's fortress!

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Tiny Foreword: Thank you for checking out *Trade War* and the Mists of Akuma campaign setting! If you don't have the core book no worries—everything you *need* for this adventure path is included here (barring one or two monsters for the sidequests at the end of the tome).

—Mike Myler

The party will be preoccupied with nature demons and Mubō Brothers as they travel across Soburin but during their trek the real danger is being disseminated across the continent. Five organizations play major roles in the unfolding of the climactic finale and the PCs will likely ally with one or more of these groups by the time battalions clash beneath Hone-Noroi Keep.

SOBURI MILITIA

Of all the threads that will lead the adventurers to the true plot of *Trade War* the most obvious are the soburi farmers endowed with erītokirā armor. These have all been carefully chosen and vetted by the individual that at first appears to responsible for the mounting conflict: Kanja Korusu, one of the immortal Imperial Siblings that founded Soburin! From the shadows he organizes the abduction of morally upright peasants, theft and installation of the advanced technological suits, and transportation of the contraband across prefectures.

KANJA KORUSU

Using his near-deific powers, Kanja saw through the fog of time to witness a darkness imminent upon the lands of Soburin—the return of the dreaded Pale Master. It is too late to stop the necromancer from rising once more and so he has concocted a plan to ensure that the common folk have a fighting chance against the coming evil, equipping the peasantry with the most powerful weapons and armor available. To do this he has utilized the Machibuse Traders, using the hengeyokai merchants (Ara Rimun and many more) to confound the shikome soldiers he's stolen equipment from. Three of the farmers he first bestowed with erītokirā armor rise to become leaders, gathering and training their kind until ultimately leading the fight.

- ***Marshall Itsusuji Tanko: Reapers.*** Unlike the other two militia commanders, Itsusuji has taken the sorrow of her life (shattered by the Mists of Akuma like all the others) and turned it into a righteous fury behind her blade. Her soldiers are the spearhead of the peasant army and she is recognized as the highest-ranking leader of all its forces.
- ***General Shouni Yume: Artillery.*** A disaffected misanthrope, Shouni leads out of a feeling of necessity more than anything else. She commands the smallest portion of the militia and practices an almost infinite patience as she works to improve the aim of her comrades working the ranged weaponry in their suits.
- ***Colonel Yakunitatsu Aibō: Shieldbearers.*** The first of the farmers-turned-warriors that the PCs meet is a humble and unimpressive fellow from Ibutsu Prefecture. Yakunitatsu is the meekest of the three and leads the defensive forces among the militia (the biggest contingent).

ENDGAME: ALLIES

This organization is the party's most likely ally—provided they don't betray Yakunitatsu, after the events of Connection C: Sailing South he owes the adventurers a great debt and trusts them implicitly. The PCs gain latitude from this loyalty and can dabble at allying themselves with other forces before the soburi farmers take notice, although if they're ever caught with militia blood on their hands they're dismissed or captured and thrown in military cells (until the battle rages to them and they are freed in the chaos). With the support of the militia and effective negotiations the PCs can turn all of their allies' forces inward on Hone-Noroi Keep, entering into the bone lair of the Pale Master with suppressing fire from Yume's Artillery, escorted by Tanko's Reapers and protected by the fortresses' outward defenses by Aibō's Shieldbearers.

ENDGAME: ENEMIES

Should the adventurers pit themselves against the soburi militia by being aggressive towards the Machibuse Traders, betraying Yakunitatsu, or escaping confinement after other traitorous actions, they'll not suffer much subterfuge or sabotage, but they will face a dangerous force on the battlefield in the very shadow of the Pale Master's bone lair. In this case to get into Hone-Noroi Keep the PCs will need to infiltrate the army camp, bypass sentries, and slip in through an entrance less obvious than the massive front door (lest chaos erupt when militia spotters see an opening in the defenses of the necromancer's fortress). This isn't ideal but should be doable if the PCs have a dedicated spellcaster or have curried favor with one or more Erītokirā Chapters or possibly the Gensosō.

Erītokirā Chapters

Scattered across the continent and fiercely loyal to their own, Soburin's hobgoblin mercenaries don't often ally with each other. Clever as he may be, Kanja Korusu's thievery is eventually noticed and this great travesty against their race—sullying the honor of erītokirā soldiers, heroes in the eyes of all shikome—is heresy enough to spur an alliance between three warrior chapters. The disappearance of their revered suits of armor continues without consequence until the rumors of soburi donned in erītokirā plate start to circulate, and the ire they've shown to such an affront has made the possibility of them presenting a united front all too real.

Chapter Masters

Three shikome warrior chapters achieve success in hunting down the stolen suits of technological armor and are able to mobilize soldiers in time to stage significant assaults on the soburi militia as Hone-Noroi Keep rises: the Haiiro-Nokishi, Kodomo-Tachi, and Kōteino.

Haiiro-Nokishi: *Mercenaries of Mortality (Lawful Neutral) Ancestors, Beasts, Control, Elements, War.* Chapter Master Katto Ōkami-Otoko is simple to persuade—just not cheap. So long as the PCs haven't been caught assassinating Haiiro-Nokishi Erītokirā they can buy peace from Katto for 1,500 Imperial Pieces, even "purchasing" the stolen suits of armor for 4,000 gold. Adventurers outed for dishonorable behavior against the Haiiro-Nokishi pay double.

Kodomo-Tachi: *Children of Battle (Neutral) Art, Balance, History, Nature, Technology.* Appealing to Chapter Master Yasei Nochōrō is no small feat and the Kodomo-Tachi cannot be bought with gold. What Yasei's warriors value most are the imperial dragons of Soburin and with the aid of one of these serpents the party can easily establish peace with these erītokirā. Finding such an advantage is difficult indeed however for the imperial dragons of Soburin are still largely hidden away—the fact the party defeated Ottotaken only buys them the opportunity to parley.

Attempting diplomacy with the Kodomo-Tachi requires discovering where their fortress is located (wherever the GM decides) with a DC 17 Intelligence (Investigation) check or acquiring a courier able to find it (like Yōjinbō). Once approached, a DC 18 Charisma (Persuasion) check made with disadvantage buys peace until the threat of the Pale Master has passed, although the PCs can make the roll regularly if part of a dragon's remains are offered before any deal making. Should the adventurers arrange an audience between the erītokirā chapter and an imperial dragon no checks are required and the shikome retreat indefinitely, although a DC 16 Charisma (Persuade) or Dignity check convinces the mercenaries to aid in the fight against the necromancer if the serpent the PCs convince to meet with them has been befriended.

Kōteino. *Battle Thirsters (Chaotic Evil) Blood, Chaos, Nature, Strength, War.* The Kōteino have no leader—each are part of small lodges completely devoted to one discipline and commanded by the strongest shikome in the group. Only matters of great importance can bring more than a few squads to bear against a single foe but the heresy of their stolen technology gives the Kōteino a brutal edge they would normally sate in the face of the empire's civilized forces.

Gaining the trust and cooperation of the Battle Thirsters is difficult but finding their central lodge is simple: the party have already been to Tsukisasu and know how to reach the city of oni. Once at Kōteino Fortress in order to gain an audience with a sortie of erītokirā commanders one of the adventurers needs to defeat three Kōteino Erītokirā (page 105) unaided, each immediately after the other. Afterward the same PC must succeed on a DC 14 Charisma (Intimidation) check or DC 16 Haitoku check, earning a reprieve from the shikome soldiers' bloodlust until the Pale Master's defeat.

Endgame: Allies

To gain the erītokirā chapters as allies (other than the means above) the party needs to side with the Gensosō or otherwise be dedicated to destroying the stolen suits of advanced armor. They're almost certain to gain Haitoku before this outcome, but as the adventurers take their first rest following the initial mass battle between erītokirā and soburi militia each PC gains 1d4 Haitoku.

Endgame: Enemies

Most adventurers will face off against erītokirā warriors in the shadow of Hone-Noroi Keep without some luck and effort (see above).

Machibuse Traders

The hengeyokai merchant guild is a unique and varied network with a reach that spreads all across the continent but their motivations are simple: to make profit and continue to do so well into the future. At first they are only the pawns of Kanja Korusu and driven by coin, both Ara Rimun and dozens others like her utilized to clandestinely move erītokirā armor across the prefectures in routes that confuse shikome trackers. When the traders realize the greater breadth of what's been going on and that they've been tricked, they collectively agree that no matter what aspects of the situation remains concealed their best interests lay with the common folk.

Ara Rimun

While she wasn't the first merchant used to smuggle Kanja's stolen suits of armor (that fellow is long dead), the kumo hengeyokai has proven to be the most reliable and efficient (unknowing) agent of the Imperial Sibling. During the events of *Yai Sovereign of Storms* he reveals his true persona to Ara Rimun—equipped with this knowledge she easily convinces her compatriots to invest heavily into the soburi militia. With their backing the farmers are hastily trained as proper soldiers in the growing shadow of Hone-Noroi Keep, bolstered by experienced warriors.

Endgame: Allies

Trade War's most likely route is an alliance with the soburi militia and therein the hengeyokai merchant guild—and adventurers that take this path are rewarded. Depending on how quickly and completely the party side with the Machibuse Traders the PCs may gain one or more of the following benefits as word of their involvement spreads.

Favor of the People. The PCs all gain Honorable Treatment as a free bonus feat even if they do not meet its prerequisites.

Marketplace Access. Each member of the party are able to choose to purchase one of the following: three uncommon magic items, two rare magic items, or a very rare magic item. There is no discount on the price paid for these items and the GM may decide that a requested item is simply not being sold anywhere on the continent.

Traders of Knowledge. There's a wide network of informants that the GM can use to re-introduce forgotten plot threads and unfinished quests from earlier on in the adventure path. In addition, the Machibuse Traders might be able to locate where a requested magic item is but not be able to acquire it (although whether or not it can be stolen by the PCs is another matter).

Endgame: Enemies

In the unlikely event the PCs take ire against the Machibuse Traders and soburi militia they will either be a rogue element or backed by the traditionalist forces in Soburin—the Gensosō and possibly one or more erītokirā chapters, or if they are anarchists maybe even tsukumogami. The hengeyokai send ninjas (page 148 of *Fangs of Revenge*) to steal, spy on, and otherwise sabotage the party before they move against Hone-Noroi Keep. In addition they badmouth the adventurers and whenever a party member goes to buy something, they make a DC 13 Dignity check or pay an extra 10%.

Honorable Treatment

Prerequisites: Dignity 13

Your uplifting reputation is well-known and earns you some small acts of kindness. You gain the following benefits.

- Inns and tea houses that recognize you (a DC 8 Dignity check) give you free lodging, drink, and food. Your GM might decide that no check to be recognized is required 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 DC 12 Dignity check to be recognized, you gain advantage on an ability check to determine the final price of an item that costs 250 gp or less. You may exploit your reputation to persuade merchants this way a number of times equal to your Dignity modifier. Expended uses recharge after a long rest.
- You gain a number of contacts equal to your Dignity modifier plus proficiency bonus. These contacts are minor individuals (lacking great influence, extraordinary magical abilities, or martial prowess) but they are willing to do you favors. A favor might get you travel papers to another prefecture, initiate the process of setting up a formal meeting with a government official, help to sway opinion among a small section of society, or put you in touch with people that have no public persona (the full extent of a favor is at the GM's discretion). You may only call upon any individual contact for a favor once per month and you may be required to pay back the favor in kind (at the GM's discretion).

Mitsuyu Gyōsha Consortium

Kanja Korusu is far too wise to have involved these traders of contraband himself but the Mitsuyu Gyōsha discovered his plot all the same, hired by an ignorant Machibuse Trader. As soon as they realized that the suits of armor they'd acquired were but only a few pieces of stolen erītokirā technology and not at all isolated the smugglers turned their attentions entirely to gathering more. The new development has been merged into plans that Iki-Anākī has been quietly, carefully preparing in secret for nearly a decade: a simultaneous uprising of tsukumogami all across Soburin, stretching the Masuto Empire's forces until their tenuous control of the prefectures shatters. Though they lack the means to utilize erītokirā armor as intended, it is a resource they are keen to take away from anyone that might stop their monstrous rebellion.

Iki-Anākī

To most the oddly named Iki-Anākī is nothing more than an eccentric old woman and curator of antiquities, and even those who believe they know her truth—that she is the head of the Mitsuyu Gyōsha Consortium—see only the edges of it. What the master smuggler conceals from nearly all but her most loyal kindred is that her carefully kept appearance hides that she is tsukumogami. Once a beautiful statue adorning the vestibule of Goraku Manor (an imperial hideaway in the southern mountains) after its home was abandoned to the Mists of Akuma she awoke and became the undisputed master of her surroundings. Some brigands thought it to be a safe place to hide ill-gotten gains and when Iki-Anākī came across them rather than slay the criminals, she remained hidden in plain sight and seeded their belongings with her lesser kin. Each of these tsukumogami were commanded to spy on their "owners", sneaking away to expose more possessions to the supernatural fog to spread the touch of animation across the continent.

The gang that came upon Goraku Manor is long dead along with any chance of Iki-Anākī being recognized as the statue greeting guests to the abandoned estate, and the tsukumogami that masterminded their murders is the leader of Soburin's most powerful smuggling network. She plays at being soburi, allowing lieutenants and servants to believe she is human like them in a greater deception concealing the genocide planned for the humanoid races. Her unwitting accomplices have worked hard to acquire the erītokirā armor suits but she is too cunning to employ anyone of great intellect and so attempts to install the armor contacts required to use the technology properly have failed. Instead Iki-Anākī chose to return to her old tactic: exposure to the Mists of Akuma. The resulting tsukumogami are few in number but potent foes, spreading misinformation (that erītokirā are attacking isolated settlements) and leading the first waves of rebellion she's been working toward all this time.

Endgame: Allies

Working with the Mitsuyu Gyōsha Consortium has benefits but takes the party down dark roads—they're ordered to slaughter 1d6 towns (minimum 2), taken far from the battles around Hone-Noroi Keep until Iki-Anākī trusts them. They are then commanded to sneak into the fortress to acquire a quartet of valuable creatures from the necromancer: relic golems.

Fast Transport. The PCs can make use of special vehicles like wagon tsukumogami and longboat tsukumogami.

Magic Items. Each member of the party are able to choose to purchase one of the following: three uncommon magic items, two rare magic items, or a very rare magic item. There is a 10% discount on the price paid for these items and they are all, of course, tsukumogami.

Endgame: Enemies

The GM may include sequences for the PCs to avenge or protect settlements from the tsukumogami—populate the area with a liberal number of monsters (from the dozens in *Mists of Akuma* and *Trade War*), 1d4+1 Mitsuyu Gyōsha Smugglers (page 119), and at least one Erītokirā Tsukumogami (page 220). The threat of the Pale Master doesn't wait however.

After the erītokirā tsukumogami attack (page 220) Iki-Anākī does not expend any more resources on the adventurers unless they continue to be a thorn in her side. In this case the next settlement the PCs try to save has double the monsters waiting although they don't kill; instead the adventurers are captured and delivered to the Pale Master, waking up on their way to or within dungeons at the bottom of the necromancer's lair.

TRADITIONALIST ARMY

Soburin's fear of technology may be what the party turns to in the revelations of *Trade War* and that means siding with the forces of the southern prefectures that answer the call to dismantle the heretic soburi militia utilizing blasphemous erītokirā armor. These warriors include tiger-riding Tora-Kyabaria Hunters from Fukushu, Waveriders from Hofuku, and Burakku Kirā from Ikari but most of all Gensosō monks that are leaving the Gem of the South to lead the traditionalist forces northward. They are all ignorant of their roles as agents of spite, the pawns of an Imperial Sibling keen to ruin his brother Kanja's plans: Shūshō Ikari.

SHŪSHŌ IKARI

The embarrassment he suffered at the end of *Feud Primordial* incensed Shūshō Ikari and in his endless fury he stumbled across an unfortunate caravan of Machibuse Traders that suffered his wrath. In the wreckage he found the erītokirā armor and the Imperial Sibling chose to reveal himself to several Gensosō Masters, bestowing them with a sacred duty to seek out and destroy the heretical technology lest corruption spread across Soburin. In truth Shūshō cares little for what occurs other than to anger Kanja, the lives of mortals beneath his notice, and once the party have sided against his interests the only thing that delays battle between the soburi militia and traditionalist armies is the looming threat of Hone-Noroi Keep.

During the Gensosō Enclave (page 219) the PCs have an opportunity to speak with Shūshō Ikari directly. After their discussion with the Imperial Sibling is over any adventurer that makes a DC 18 Wisdom (Insight) check reveals that whenever he spoke of the imminent battle or sacrifices to come there was a subtle but unmistakable hollowness in his voice. Any further attempts to converse with Shūshō are difficult to arrange and his patience rapidly dissipates so nothing more solid can be garnered though the party should be able to read between the lines and realize he is completely indifferent to mortals—how or if they can convince anyone of import that it's the truth is another matter entirely.

ENDGAME: ALLIES

Adventurers that ally themselves with the Gensosō are backed by the official forces of the Masuto Empire and gain all the benefits of high-ranking soldiers.

Loaned Relics. Each member of the party are able to choose either two uncommon magic items or one rare magic item to borrow from the Masuto Empire. These are requisitioned by the military and strictly on loan—once the conflicts of *Trade War* have come to a close they must be returned or the PCs become fugitives.

Imperial Lodging. Every city and settlement with a torii gate has barracks where the adventurers can eat and stay free of charge.

Travel Visas. The party receive exceptionally rare travel papers that give them license to go to any prefecture in Soburin without restriction.

ENDGAME: ENEMIES

After *Revenge of the Pale Master* if the party are allied with anyone but the Gensosō they're cast as fugitives until a bengoshi they've associated with can clear their names, claiming them as agents to deal with the threat of Hone-Noroi Keep. Even so they face these additional obstacles (adventurers with no greater allegiances do not).

Bureaucracy. Chaos from the tsukumogami uprising has exacerbated the courier and messaging systems of the Masuto Empire and when the adventurers have to pass through a torii gate they are delayed 2d12 hours as their legal status is reviewed (bribing, deceiving, intimidating, or persuading the local Ryokōsai may speed up the process).

Corrupted Officials. The Pale Master's vampire servant Kiyoshi Muraoka seeded spawn across Soburin loyal to the necromancer, influencing people in positions of power. There is a 10% chance that a settlement the adventurers visit has an official who demands a meeting during which every member of the party must succeed on a DC 10 Dignity (Culture) check. On a failure the PC is accused of an archaic local crime and apprehended "for trial" along with the remainder of the group. If taken into custody they are transported to a new location for processing by three talkative Gladiators—a DC 12 Wisdom (Perception) check on the way reveals they're being taken to Hone-Noroi Keep.

Wildernesses of Soburin

Most people travel across Soburin beneath the shadows of torii gates on roads maintained by the government, occasionally stopped by guards that check to make sure travel papers (page 48) are in order. The safest routes across the continent are the Path of Siblings (running north from the Imperial Prefecture through Satsujin, Donyuko, Kirai, Gekido, Hakaisuru, Ibutsu, and Supai) and the Imperial Road (its southern cousin stretching from the Imperial Prefecture through Osore, Kusuru, Yokuba, Hofuku, and Ikari). Travelers that head off of the main path are likely to encounter creatures wrought or fleeing from the Mists of Akuma—or oni reveling in it.

Badlands

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

Common Threats (d20): Bandits (CR ⅛), Poisonous Snakes (CR ⅛), Giant Lizards (CR ¼), Giant Wolf Spider (CR ¼), Scouts (CR ½), Giant Hyena (CR 1), Giant Spider (CR 1), Doppelganger (CR 3), Giant Scorpion (CR 3), Ishi Spirit[M] (CR 3; page 148), Onryō (CR 3; page 254), Adeddo-Oni Samurai (CR 5; page 344), Baku (CR 5; page 165), Wyrmling Sky Dragon[M] (CR 5; page 123), Oni (CR 7), Yaoguai (CR 7; page 257), Ancestral Kami[M] (CR 8; page 151), Rokurokubi[M] (CR 9; page 153), Jinmenju (CR 10; page 253), Adult Sky Dragon[M] (CR 11; page 124)

Forests and 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. Desperate lumberjacks and hunters still ply their trades but chance being attacked by oni as they slowly deplete the few natural resources that persist. Whatever kindnesses the southern rainforests once offered have evaporated as well and only the fiercest animals have survived deforestation, making jungles a dangerous place to tread even for veteran warriors.

Common Threats (d20): Giant Rats (CR ⅛), Poisonous Snakes (CR ⅛), Giant Bats (CR ¼), Giant Wolf Spider (CR ¼), Brown Bear (CR 1), Giant Spider (CR 1), Tiger (CR 1), Adeddo-Oni Hunchlings (CR 2; page 343), Ettercap (CR 2), Giant Boar (CR 2), Ki Spirit[M] (CR 2; page 148), Greater Onryō (CR 4; page 254), Shambling Mound (CR 5), Wyrmling Forest Dragon[M] (CR 5; page 117), Gaki[M] (CR 6; page 141), Hebikontorōra (CR 6; page 149), Oni (CR 7), Tikbalang (CR 9; page 213), Jinmenju (CR 10; page 253), Adult Forest Dragon[M] (CR 11; page 118)

[M] = ***Mists of Akuma*** **campaign setting book**

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.

Common Threats (d12): Giant Crabs (CR ⅛), Pirates (CR ⅛), Reef Shark (CR ½), Sahuagin (CR ½), Hunter Shark (CR 2), Merrow (CR 2), Sea Hag (CR 2), Manticore (CR 3), Giant Shark (CR 5), Wyrmling Sea Dragon (CR 5; page 164), Adult Sea Dragon[M] (CR 11; page 121), Bake-Kujira[M] (CR 15; page 139)

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.

Common Threats (d12): Giant Goat (CR ½), Harpy (CR 1), Ogre (CR 2), Adeddo-Oni Ninja (CR 3; page 343), Basilisk (CR 3), Manticore (CR 3), Troll (CR 5), Wyrmling Sovereign Dragon[M] (CR 6; page 126), Wyvern (CR 6), Oni (CR 7), Yuki-Onna[M] (CR 11; page 162), Adult Sovereign Dragon[M] (CR 12; page 127)

Swamps

The only part of the environment to expand since the start of the Kengen Occupation, the decay of bogs and marshes exacerbates as more water-holding forests and plains disappear.

Common Threats (d20): Giant Rat (CR ⅛), Poisonous Snakes (CR ⅛), Giant Poisonous Snake (CR ¼), Crocodile (CR ½), Swarm of Insects (CR ½), Ghoul (CR 1), Kaiyo Horror[M] (CR 1; page 158), Giant Constrictor Snake (CR 2), Marksman Kaiyo Horror[M] (CR 2; page 158), Will-o'-Wisp (CR 2), Automatic Kaiyo Horror[M] (CR 3; page 158), Green Hag (CR 3), Wight (CR 3), Giant Crocodile (CR 5), Shambling Mound (CR 5), Gaki (CR 6; page 214), Wyrmling Underworld Dragon[M] (CR 6; page 129), Oni (CR 7), Yaoguai (CR 7; page 257), Adult Underworld Dragon[M] (CR 12; page 130)

SCOURGE OF ROBAI SHITA TEMPLE

A FIFTH EDITION ADVENTURE FOR 4 TO 6 PCS OF 3RD - 4TH LEVEL



Adventure Summary

One of the bengoshi of the Sukochi Prefecture has summoned the adventurers to a secret meeting where they are drafted to work on her behalf, uncovering whatever evil has spawned in the mountain town of Shibai. To ignore the message could have dire consequences indeed and so it is that the adventurers must travel to a difficult to reach grove in northern Sukochi. While their journey has its own obstacles, discovering what really plagues the settlement will prove to be even more challenging as at every turn the PCs are frustrated or impeded, whether by the Mists of Akuma, their competition (the brutish Mubō Brothers), or the mysterious erītokirā warrior that stalks them shortly after their mission begins.

Ultimately their search will take the party to Róbai Shita Temple and into the catacombs beneath it, venturing through a dangerous dungeon where the malevolent fog has begat a host of tsukumogami! In order to bring peace back to the town and end the dangers threatening it, the adventurers must learn of and locate the treasured yūrei-fū wind chimes, restoring the relic to its place in the tomb of Watsuji Shigetoki to quiet the tortured spirit and allow it to attain peace once more.

Adventure Background

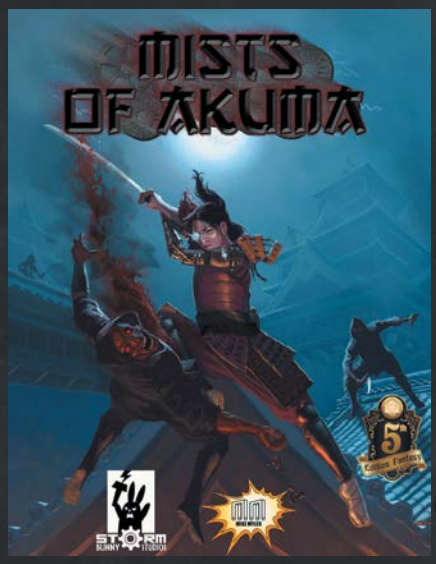
Thus far the town of Shibai has weathered the reappearance of the Mists of Akuma with relative ease, its high elevation protecting citizens from the supernatural haze. None can remember that the true reason for their protection: the workings of the ancient yamabushi wu-jen Watsuji Shigetoki, founder of the temple nearby. It seems as if their safety has come to an end however as three dire threats have befallen the settlement—the priesthood of the temple higher up the mountain have disappeared, a monster seems to lurk where they once prayed, and perhaps worst of all, the corrupting fog has descended on Shibai half a dozen times since the monks above went absent. To deal with the chaos afflicting the village Mayor Miya Yashido has hired the Raitoningu and Sandā—the Mubō Brothers, known across most of northern Soburin for felling several bands of devious oni using massive firearms —to discover what happened to the priesthood, kill the monster, and hopefully abate the appearance of the ancient, evil mists.

Unfortunately the Mubō Brothers are more reckless and violent than they are helpful. For more than 2 weeks they have " protected" Shibai, carousing and parading about in the day and drinking so excessively each night they lose sense of themselves. Miya would have dismissed them days ago but several villagers have witnessed the Mubō Brothers blast the beast apart with their thunderous cannons, undeniably killing it more than once. With no recourse, Mayor Yashido has beseeched Lord Huang Sukochi for help and one of his revered Nature-Wielder bengoshi has found a group of adventurers thought to have enough mettle to get the job done.

The Woes of Watsuji Shigetoki

Watsuji was a potent wu-jen in Soburin's ancient past and the respected yamabushi chose to found Róbai Shita Temple in his retirement, the town of Shibai spawning below not long before his death. His body has been entombed beneath the shrine to nature he created, but all is not well—the theft of the *yūrei-fū wind chimes* has caught the attention of Akinochisō, the entity that has consumed autumn! The dark power has blown a wind through the catacombs, transforming much within into monsters and warping Watsuji's spirit into a terrible beast bent to violence and bloodshed. The merchant that absconded with the relic is entirely to blame for the recent unfortunateness and Sanjuro Shigetoki (the wu-jen's ancestor) is absent from the town when the party first arrives. Hunting him down and revealing his grave robbing perfidy is the only way the PCs will truly bring Watsuji's soul back to peace and end the troubles of Shibai!

Running Mists of Akuma Adventures



The *Trade War* adventure path is set in *Mists of Akuma* but can easily be placed into any eastern fantasy setting, although GMs will need to make several adjustments if they transport it outside of Soburin. If you are running this in *Mists of Akuma*, you have a unique opportunity to showcase a number of key themes that are pivotal to the setting. These themes include: depravity and pragmatism (see the Dignity and Haitoku attributes), the heresy of science, the intrigue among the ruling caste and the peasantry, and a diverse array of races aligned with or arrayed against one another.

This adventure does an excellent job of bringing many of these themes into the fore and while it is certainly enough to be a worthwhile addition to an individual campaign, it truly shines when worked into the larger tapestry of *Mists of Akuma*. In addition to a preview available on distributor sites where the campaign setting book is sold, there are several free PDFs you can find via www.mikemyler.com.

Before starting this adventure, GMs should note that these are not modules where the adventurers achieve complete success. In the *Mists of Akuma* victories are pyrrhic and are only won after truly hard fought conflicts. The world around Soburin is decaying and doomed to fall, its peoples are paranoid and ruthless, and for all the talk of nobility there is sadly very little to be found. Though they do not play a crucial role in the module itself, the intrigues between the various clans are many, varied, and endless, and PCs from different prefectures should act accordingly (though to survive they will be forced to work together).



Though the Kengen Occupation may have come to an end a decade ago, the aftershock of the foreigner's oppressive rule—divisions among soburi natives, fear of technology, and the paranoia of untrustworthy neighbors—are strong still, coloring everyday life with a pall of darkness nearly as unsettling as the Mists of Akuma.

Map of Soburin

The map of the continent on page 46 (and every map for the setting) lacks specific distances—they are as large or as small as the GM requires. When struggling to conceptualize the world, do as usual with the setting: default to Japan.

PROLOGUE

As the party is traveling through the wilderness a fox begins to openly follow them on the road, stopping when they stop and cautiously retreating when approached yet gradually coming closer with every hour. When the PCs finally decide to rest, after 30 minutes the fox suddenly appears from behind cover nearby with a scroll case held in its mouth. The creature drops the bamboo cylinder at the party's feet before turning away and disappearing into the wilderness. A DC 8 Intelligence (Nature) check is enough to realize the fox is not unnatural in any way but its behavior, and though the scroll case is not trapped making a DC 13 Intelligence check to inspect it reveals that the container is wonderfullycrafted and worth perhaps as many as 5 Imperial Pieces. Inside of it is a note that reads as follows:

The GM should adjust the amount of time given to the party so that it is not a physical impossibility for them to arrive before nightfall on the day of the meeting.

Greetings. Your reputations precede you and so it is that I must request we meet to discuss matters of some considerable importance. I realize that your time is valuable and that it may inconvenience you, but I unfortunately must insist that in no less than two weeks you arrive at Hanashichū Grove, east of Kyusokuna, between dawn and sunset. Punctuality is essential—I look forward to meeting each of you!

—Nature-Wielder
Yon-jū Banme



ACT 1: NATURE-WIELDER'S DEMAND

When the party are within a week of the meeting place the winds of autumn drop in temperature with every passing day. Adventurers are likely to reach Kyusokuna on foot by cutting through a break in the mountain range just south of Bojuki, though PCs might also charter passage on a ship (at a cost commensurate to the distance they must travel; 1 Imperial Piece per 10 miles). At the GM's discretion certain class features can increase the amount of time the party has once they've reached the city, but they should have at least 4 days to reach Hanashichū Grove.

KYUSOKUNA

Thanks to the cadre of the shapechanging samurai prominently on the hill in its center, the city of Kyusokuna is a relatively safe and secure settlement. The Mori-Tsukidashi are a common sight on the streets and discourage crime, ably defending the populace from their stronghold when the Mists of Akuma roll in. The PCs are able to find merchants of all kinds selling standard items, though it should be noted the following sale of the following technology is banned in Sukochi: grapple launcher, qì-tóukuī, electrolens augmetic, hornear augmetic, plating augmetic, shindan yokutan, steam arm augmetic, steam leg augmetic. Though there are intrigues yet in Kyusokuna (a sect of blighting druids are spreading throughout the prefecture) in this adventure module it is merely a waystation and last chance for adventurers to equip themselves before the trials to come.

While in Kyusokuna any PCs that seek out information on where to find Hanashichū Grove may attempt either a DC 14 Charisma (Persuasion) check to ask about town or a DC 12 Intelligence (Investigation) check to find a local cartographer. Success on either check gives the PCs advantage on the DC 16 Wisdom (Survival) check needed to successfully locate it with only one encounter along the way: Ambush on Kōsatsu Bridge! Failure on this check results in one additional encounter and failure by 5 or more results in two additional encounters (from the Forest Threats sidebar). Failing the check by 10 or more results in three extra encounters and a half-day's delay (causing them to arrive late).

AMBUSH ON THE BRIDGE

To reach Hanashichū Grove from Kyusokuna means inevitably crossing Kōsatsu Bridge, a 600 foot long suspension of rope and wooden planks, the only reliable way to access the difficult to reach valley nestled between the base of the vast eastern mountain range—where the meeting place awaits. Read the following as the party approaches Kōsatsu Bridge:

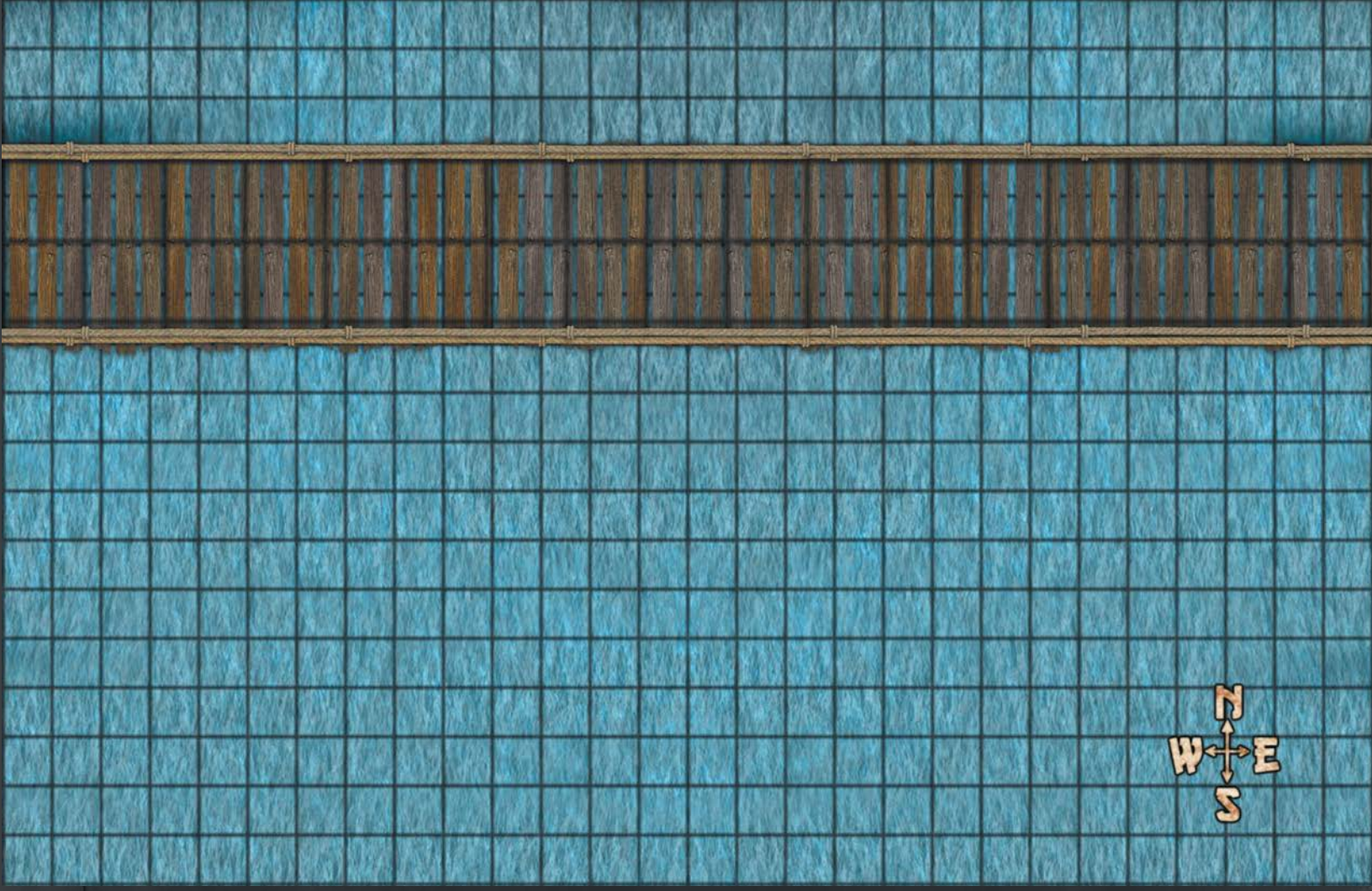
> *The wind seems to pick up and you are struck by the feeling that something is awry as an ancient rope bridge comes into view ahead, the only means to cover a span of hundreds of feet without fighting a raging river far below. You can see the structure sway from the tumultuous air currents and looking onward to the woods on the other side, it seems as though the shadows of its trees are just a touch darker than they should be.*

The PCs might pick up on the danger posed by the oddness and prepare for battle but regardless of whether or not they pick up on this important queue, when the first party member is halfway across winds howl and dark clouds appear in the sky, cutting off sunlight as adeddo-oni emerge on both sides of the bridge! Read the following:

> *While you cross over the bridge dark clouds swirl in the sky and humanoid shapes emerge from the woods in front of you. Looking behind you realize that you have been flanked as more appear on the other side! The forms leap and sprint onto the planks of wood, jittering and shuddering with maniacal laughter as from each side monstrous oni advance, weapons drawn!*

A half dozen adeddo-oni hunchlings and one adeddo-oni ninja (page 343) approach from each side of the bridge for a total of 14 of the monsters! Fortunately the former are much too enthused and if the PCs make ranged attacks against their new enemies before they are within 100 feet, for every successful hit one of the adeddo-oni hunchlings is bumped away and off the bridge. Throughout the fight any attacks that are made with a weapon that deals slashing damage and fail to hit the target's AC by 5 or more deal their damage to the bridge instead as the wielder strikes a rope. The bridge has four ropes (AC 3, 15 hit points) and if two on the same side are destroyed, the entire thing goes lopsided.

A lopsided bridge is difficult terrain for any creature without a climb speed. Staying on the bridge as it goes lopsided is a DC 8 Dexterity saving throw. Attacks made by creatures clinging onto the lopsided bridge are at disadvantage. Any creature that falls off the bridge plummets 100 feet into the raging current, taking 35 (10d6) damage. Making a successful DC 9 Strength (Athletics) check



to dive into the water reduces this damage by half. Either way the creature is carried away by the water at a rate of 50 feet per round, effectively removing a PC from the fight and delaying the party by half a day as the straggler catches up.

Before this chaotic fight comes to an end the GM should make secret DC 18 Wisdom (Perception) checks for each adventurer. On a success the PC catches a glimpse of a metallic warrior watching from the woods at the far end of the bridge just before it moves out of sight, giving only a glimpse of its angular, orange face and a sashimono with a fearsome dragon (the erītokirā warrior Shukettsu).

A party that is delayed twice (once by getting lost and once from companions falling from Kōsatsu Bridge) may choose to exert themselves to make it to the meeting on time, though they all gain 2 levels of exhaustion by the time they reach Hanashichū Grove (a DC 13 Constitution saving throw reduces this to 1 level of exhaustion).

When the fight and Kōsatsu Bridge are behind them, the PCs find a trail and the rest of their journey to the meeting place without any more trouble. A DC 10 Intelligence (Nature) check reveals that something about the area is special, the pristine quality of nature around them sustained by unknown means and clearly never touched by the Mists of Akuma.

Meeting in the Grove

A few miles after Kōsatsu Bridge the trail—which weaves around and through beautiful groves of bamboo thatches, jezo spruces, and akamatsu trees—leads directly to Hanashichū Grove. Read the following:

The lush greenery of the bamboo and trees of the forest grow sparser to reveal a beautiful meadow—the Sukochi bengoshi has chosen a truly picturesque place to meet. The Nature-Wielder herself is swimming on jets and waves of water that carry her up from the stream, moving with all the playfulness and fluidity of a playful dolphin. Suddenly the water swirls into a conical tower that vaults her out of the stream to touch lightly onto the ground and she bows ever so slightly.

(continued on the next page)

"I have been expecting you. Thank you for making the journey, though I must say, there is no lovelier bit of Soburin than this grove and the sight of it is worth the effort getting here."

The Nature-Wielder wastes little time, explaining to the party that they must end the troubles of Shibai and that for their efforts, Lord Sukochi is prepared to reward each of them with travel papers to the prefecture of their choice as well as 100 Imperial Pieces. A successful DC 13 Charisma (Persuasion) check can increase their payment to 150 Imperial Pieces per adventurer. PCs that are late (arriving after sunset on the chosen day) are penalized, only paid 80 Imperial Pieces each (and those arriving after midnight lose the opportunity entirely, becoming fugitives in Sukochi).

Yon-jū Banme reveals the following:

- All of the monks in the temple above the town have either been found dead or disappeared.
- A monster has been reported, an oni that runs through the town to spread blood and violence before disappearing like the wind.
- Mayor Miya Yashido has hired a pair of famous warriors to deal with the issue already but her choice, the Mubō Brothers, are heretics that are too incompetent to get to the bottom of whatever it is.
- Divinations have revealed that another force is at play in the unfolding drama of Shibai, though what that is or what its goals are remain tantalizingly out of reach.
- The founder of the settlement was a powerful wu-jen and yamabushi: truly a force of nature. It is a secret among bengoshi that Shibai is a haven from the Mists of Akuma, and she suspects his influence had something to do with that.
- Should Róbai Shita Temple become truly abandoned the people of Sukochi would suffer a terrible blow to morale she is sure will see the entire settlement of Shibai deserted before long.

Afterward she bids the party a fine evening and assures them that they'll not be the prey of the beasts of the nearby woods or mountains—for the night. To stay any longer would be imprudent and should the animals roaming the territory not kill them after another day of rest, the bengoshi promises that she will see to it herself (though only if pressed to mention it and even then she does so very politely).

Shibai is only a day of travel from the grove though after crossing Kōsatsu Bridge, the PCs make a DC 18 Wisdom (Survival) check. On a success the adventurers only run into one encounter from the Forest Threats sidebar and on a failure they have two (or more, at the GM's discretion). Either way, they have at least one encounter with the Mists of Akuma (page 346) as well.

The erītokirā warrior Shukettsu has taken an interest in the party and stalks them the entire way to the village, though he never approaches closer than 200 feet and should the adventures attempt to chase him, he retreats (outrunning them and refusing to attack).

Forest Threats (d12): 1d4 Giant Rats (CR ⅛), 1d4 Poisonous Snakes (CR ⅛), 1d4 Giant Bats (CR ¼), 1d4 Giant Wolf Spiders (CR ¼), Brown Bear (CR 1), Giant Spider (CR 1), Tiger (CR 1), Adeddo-Oni Hunchlings (CR 2; page 343), Ettercap (CR 2), Giant Boar (CR 2), Ki Spirit (CR 2; *MoA* page 148), Shambling Mound (CR 5).



ACT 2: IMPERILED TOWNSFOLK OF SHIBAI

When the PCs finally reach Shibai, the corrupting fogs are not far behind and booming chaos sounds from the town ahead! Read the following:

> *Ahead you can see the rooftops of homes along the mountain to make up what must be Shibai. An alarm begins to sound somewhere in the town and looking around, you realize the dark blue Mists of Akuma have begun to gather behind you! Massive gunshots echo out from the slopes above and as you rush to the settlement a scene of havoc and chaos reveals itself—adeddo-oni are laying siege to the dwellings resisted only by two stout gunmen near a marketplace halfway up the mountain trail, each firing a massive handheld cannon into the monsters!*

There's one adeddo-oni hunchling (page 343) attacking each home, excepting for the houses near the settlement's center—there the PCs find the Mubō Brothers killing off the monsters with their massive firearms. After 10 minutes of fighting (or when all of the adeddo-oni are dead, whichever comes first) the Mists of Akuma disappear, evaporating into the air. For their part the brother gunmen are unimpressed by the PCs and takes particular offense if a member of the party saves them from harm, making it clear immediately that they are the "top dogs" of Shibai. The villagers are far more polite and thankful for the adventurers' intervention however, offering food and tea. Shortly after the fighting ends, a young woman named Ishimoto Shigetoki offers to take them to Mayor Yashido's home so that they might be welcomed properly. Read the following:

> *Most of Shibai's villagers are gloomy and depressed but a young woman approaches you with a cheerful disposition. "Thank you for coming to the rescue! Shibai is in dire need of courageous folk like yourselves. I'm Ishimoto—please, let me take you to Mayor Yashido." As she leads you up the mountain path she speaks excitedly, clearly pleased to have someone new to interact with. "Talk around town is that the mayor is getting a bit long in the tooth, hiring those reckless fools with their loud cannons. What a waste—and during so serious a crisis! They say she might be leaving office soon, and I for one am in agreement." Most of her fellow citizens faces are fearful and sallow, but not all. A few are resolute, their confidence bolstered by a woman yelling out orders to reign in the chaos.*

Initially Mayor Yashido is dismissive of the adventurers but when shown the message they received from a bengoshi of her prefecture, Miya's attitude changes dramatically and she ushers the PCs inside of her home for tea, explaining all that she knows about the situation. If the party asks about Ishimoto or let on about some of the rumors about her, Mayor Yashido sighs and explains that her rise to leadership never sat well with her younger sister Ishimoto.

- It has been a month since the monster first appeared and the Mists of Akuma returned.
- The corpses of those killed by the creature crumble into dust, spreading on the wind like the remnants of dried leaves crushed underfoot.
- The priests of Róbai Shita Temple are nowhere to be found, save for one that she saw the corpse of, the body grisly displayed in Shibai's market before disappearing in the dawn winds.
- She hired the Mubō Brothers (Raitoningu and Sandā) two weeks prior and by all accounts they have slayed the creature three times already though it always returns. They are renowned for always getting the job done (frequently with some damage to property) and their use of ceramian technology, each carrying a massive firearm they use to devastating effect. Despite their failures she remains confident in them, supporting them regardless of their outrageous behavior (though in truth she only does so in order to retain the appearance of strength).
- Most of Shibai's citizens are terrified, scared to leave the town and too timid to travel for resettlement or the safety a relative might offer.
- Róbai Shita Temple has been declared sacred ground and trespass within has been forbidden to everyone but the Mubō Brothers, though Raitoningu and Sandā have concluded that while the monster has stalked its grounds, there is nothing noteworthy or useful to be found inside of it.
- The current whereabouts of the monster are unknown but she believes it roams the mountainside above the village, waiting for the Mists of Akuma to roll in again before striking. Mayor Yashido suspects it is learning, anticipating the unsubtle tactics of the warriors she hired to destroy it.


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W
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200 FT
300 FT
400 FT
500 FT
600 FT
TOWN OF
SHBAI
1,000 FT
900 FT
800 FT
700 FT

Miya offers access to her kitchen and lodging to the party for the duration of their time in Shibai though tending to the town's needs is an extremely trying experience—after answering a few more questions she excuses herself to attend to her duties as a Mayor.

Growing Tensions

Initially there's nothing to be found in Shibai but scared villagers, the Mubō Brothers, and a host of rumors shared among the locals (page 35), and the Mists of Akuma—which appear daily at a random time of the GM's choosing. Eventually the party is bound to investigate Róbai Shita Temple directly and when the adventurers do so, the Mubō Brothers (who are aggressively suspicious of anything new in the town that might threaten their positions of power and prestige) target the PCs, paying a local wiseman to claim the newcomers are the true cause of Shibai's curse, told to him in a vision by his ancestors.

When the PCs arrive in Shibai there are 66 residents but **for every day the monster plagues the town and the Mists of Akuma fall upon the settlement, 1d4+2 villagers perish**. By the time the adventure ends, as long as at least half of the citizens of Shibai survive the adventurers save it from desertion and increase their Dignity scores by 1 per 10 surviving citizens.

Investigating the Temple

The temple sits above the town up a steep slope cut sidewinder into the hill, watching over Shibai in abandoned silence. When the party reaches Róbai Shita Temple, read the following:

> *The mountain's winds grow harsher as you reach the temple above Shibai. The faceless guardian standing vigil near its entrance towers above the squat structure, its papered doors shut firm. Looking down the slope towards the town you feel your gut wrenching with intuition—though this place seems to be at peace, there is something eerie that lurks in the air, an odor of the unnatural that defies scent.*

Róbai Shita First Floor

Inside of the building there's no sign of life, though a DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) or Wisdom (Survival) check locates tracks and the signs of a creature recently having been through there. There are few clues to be found in the first floor and basement of Róbai Shita Temple, though the PCs can still plunder things of value within and a secret door awaits beneath.

Shrine. Puzzlingly, the northernmost chambers of Róbai Shita Temple—devoted to a nature shrine—are uncorrupted. An adventurer that succeeds on a DC 10 Intelligence (Nature) check can confirm that the holy place has not been sullied, though a result of 20 or more detects the telltale signs of Akinochisō's chilling touch throughout the area.

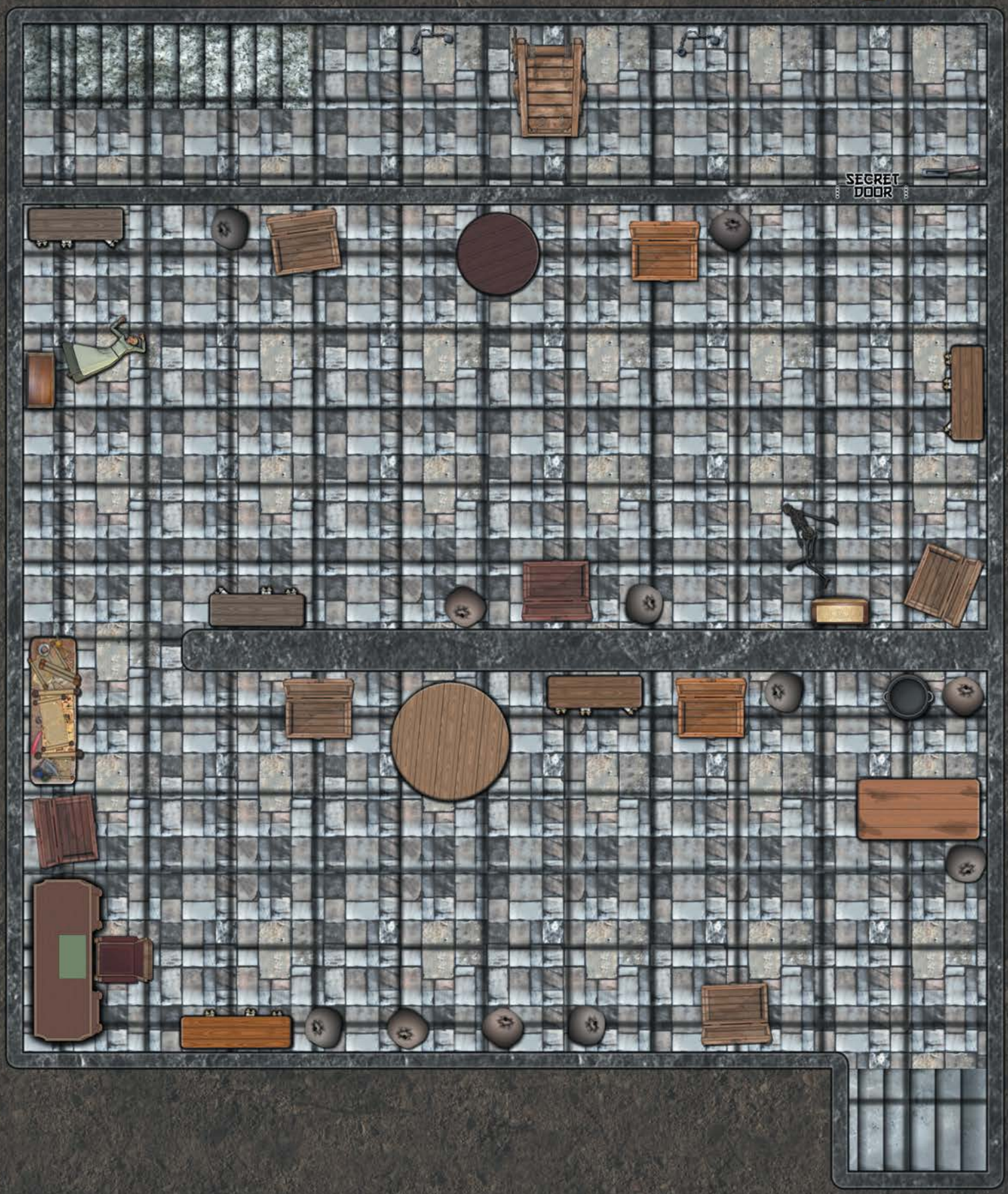
Priest's Dorms. Though 1d4-1 of them have already been looted (minimum 1), inside of the priest's dorms there are chests that contain a vial of holy water, 1d10+2 Imperial Pieces, and a priest's pack. Getting into one of these chests (AC 15, 40 hp) requires a DC 13 Dexterity (thieves' tools) check or DC 22 Strength check.

Library. A cursory glance into this room reveals it has already been ransacked, but a DC 11 Intelligence (Investigation) check reveals that nothing older than 100 years remains on the shelves.

Head Priest Dorm. Unlike the chests in the priest's dorms, the trunk in the room of the temple's leader is trapped. Detecting the mechanisms protecting the strongbox (AC 17, 60 hp) requires a DC 17 Intelligence (Investigation) check and they can be disabled with a DC 14 Dexterity (thieves' tools) check. The chest can be opened by succeeding on a DC 18 Dexterity (Thieves' Tools) check. Destroying or opening the chest without disarming the trap triggers it, sending a spray of sharp needles hurtling throughout the chamber! Any creature inside the area takes 14 (4d6) piercing damage. A DC 16 Dexterity saving throw halves this damage. Inside of the chest the party finds 2 vials of holy water, a priest's pack, 5d4+5 gold, 2 *scrolls of guiding bolt,* 1 *scroll of cure wounds*, and 1 *scroll of prayer of healing*.


ROBAI SHITA TEMPLE
SHRINE
VOTIVES
ENTRANCE ROOM
N
W
E
S
EATING AREA
WATER HALL AND KITCHEN
PRIEST DORM
PRIEST DORM
PRIEST DORM
HEAD PRIEST DORM
LIBRARY
PRIEST DORM
WATER CLOSET
STAIRS DOWN

ROBAI SHITA BASEMENT



Róbai Shita Basement

Nothing truly noteworthy sits in the basement of the Róbai Shita Temple save for two trunks (AC 17, 60 hp), each with a corpse on the ground nearby. A PC that succeeds on a DC 18 Wisdom (Medicine) check can tell that the intact body died from a poison whereas the other was clearly burned to death. If the monster Fukō is alive when the party first investigates Róbai Shita Temple, the creature ambushes the adventurers when they enter this area.

Eastern Chest. The trap protecting this container is activated when the chest is opened without the proper key, releasing an alchemical gout of flame from subtle nozzles within the heads of dragons worked into the strongbox's corners. The DC is 20 to spot the nozzles, though the singed corpse nearby is testament to the danger they pose. When activated the trunk releases a 30-foot cone of fire. Each creature in the fire must make a DC 14 Dexterity saving throw, taking 17 (5d6) fire damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. A successful DC 15 Dexterity check using thieves' tools disarms the trap. The chest can be opened by succeeding on a DC 16 Dexterity (thieves' tools) check using. Inside the PCs find 2 *potions of healing*, a *potion of superior healing*, and the devotion oaths of all the priests that have served in Róbai Shita Temple. Any PC with proficiency in History may attempt a DC 12 Intelligence (Investigation) check to evaluate these papers, determining that the oldest among them belonged to a truly ancient wu-jen and yamabushi named Watsuji Shigetoki.

Western Chest. This strongbox has a poisoned needle hidden within the lock and opening the chest without the proper key causes the needle to spring out, delivering a dose of poison. When the trap is triggered, the needle extends 3 inches straight out from the lock. A creature within range takes 1 piercing damage and 15 (6d4) poison damage, and must succeed on a DC 17 Constitution saving throw or be poisoned until it has finished a short or long rest. A successful DC 20 Intelligence (Investigation) check allows a character to deduce the trap's presence from alterations made to the lock to accommodate the needle. A successful DC 15 Dexterity (thieves' tools) check disarms the trap, removing the needle from the lock. Unsuccessfully attempting to pick the lock triggers the trap. The chest can be opened with a DC 16 Dexterity (thieves' tools) check. Within it the adventurers find an *oil of sharpness, potion of clairvoyance, potion of mind reading*, and rare holy components worth 60 Imperial Pieces.

Secret Door. The northern wall's hidden door is exceptionally difficult to find, seamlessly worked into the paneling and locating it requires a passive Perception of 22 or a DC 23 Intelligence (Investigation) check. Creatures that successfully found signs of activity in the first floor gain advantage on these checks (increasing their passive Perception by 5). If the PCs manage to find it, one of them needs a DC 13 Intelligence check to open it (in which case the GM should turn to page 30 for information on the Róbai Shita Dungeon and Róbai Shita Catacombs).

Cannon Ambush

When the adventurers return from Róbai Shita Temple the Mubō Brothers make their accusation in the marketplace or in front of Mayor Yashido's house (the GM may choose either) then launch their attack (page 36 and page 37)! Read the following:

Suddenly a loud voice rings out from around the corner, demanding your attention, "HOLD, WHELPS!" Raitoningu Mubō saunters out onto the street, his massive ironwork gun resting over his shoulder. "Shibai has no need for dogs and witchcraft! Be off with you or suffer the consequences, heh heh heh."

Before you can respond his brother Sandā appears with a sickly old man at his side, bellowing affirmation, "that's right! Set foot in this town and we'll bring you the thunder and fire. Go on, elder, tell them what you told us."

Sandā nudges the feeble old man with the miniature cannon in his arms, making the elder stumble forward. Unwilling to look at you, the aged fellow points in your direction and weakly proclaims, "these are the ones, yes."

(continued on the next page)

"I, I saw them doing magic with blood in the forest—frozen with fear I could not move, and soon after, they met with the monster and treated it like one would a servant. Truly we must—"

"We must defend Shibai from the likes of their foul souls!" Raitoningu yells, interrupting the old man. He takes a knee, aiming his firearm. "Come no further!"

Whether or not the party acquiesces to their demands, the brutish duo attack them all the same (claiming afterwards of course that they saw one of the adventurers move to draw a weapon or dash forward). During combat with the Mubō Brothers (pages 29–30) the GM should roll randomly to determine which one of the PCs notices a new arrival among the onlookers witnessing the fight—Sanjuro Shigetoki, a merchant that has been absent for the past few weeks traveling to the distant Fukushu Prefecture for business. Unfortunately before either the gunman duo or the party can win the fight, the Mists of Akuma descend onto Shibai once more and chaos erupts! Read the following:

The flash and bang of the Mubō Brothers' weapons drowned out the first cries of consternation but suddenly the entire settlement is running in chaos—the Mists of Akuma are rapidly descending onto Shibai! An unnatural howl splits the air and you know the monster is near even before it emerges from the supernatural haze further up the mountaintop, a dozen oni cackling with glee hopping alongside with weapons in hand and bloodlust in their eyes!

The monster Fukō (page 43) appears soaring out of the Mists of Akuma accompanied by a dozen adeddo-oni hunchlings (page 343)! The Mubō Brothers (page 36–37) fight for two rounds (dispatching a total of four of the minions) before disappearing in the havoc, determined to best the PCs and prove their superiority at a later date. Despite their reputation neither is honorable at all however, and should one of the adventurers accidentally fall into the path of a bullet—well that'd be a crying shame, wouldn't it?

When the PCs strike the (perceived to be) killing blow against Fukō read the following:

Lashing wildly at the air with its tassles and screaming with primal rage, the unnatural creature spins and somersaults through the air before rising quickly and exploding in a burst of unholy energy, transforming into dust that scatters on the wind.

In the chaos all of the villagers fled for their homes, including the newcomer one of the PCs noticed during the fight. A DC 10 Charisma (Persuasion) check to chat up townsfolk (or a DC 11 Intelligence check to remember the houses that have already been abandoned or are had residents within) is enough for the party to find Sanjuro Shigetoki and begin to uncover what truly troubles Shibai.

If for some reason the adventurer who saw Sanjuro has failed to appreciate the significance of his appearance, the next day Ishimoto Shigetoki finds the party and thanks



them profusely for protecting her husband—he has been traveling for business and had no idea yet the evils that have befallen Shibai. Seeking to implicate her sister (Mayor Yashido), she quietly whispers to one of the PCs that she overheard Miya speaking with the Mubō Brothers about enchanted chimes of some kind. A DC 18 Wisdom (Insight) check to gauge her claim reveals she is hiding something (that being of course that her husband has the *yūrei-fū wind chimes*), though she coyly diverts conversation away from any further questions about the relic and is utterly unwilling to share her secret. Should the party ask either Mayor Yashido or the Mubō Brothers (who of course seek to engage in another combat against the adventurers) about them, they flatly deny any knowledge of such a relic and are dismissive of Ishimoto as a source of information (her sister distrusts her and the Mubō Brothers just don't like the PCs).

GMs that wish to really endanger Shibai or increase the investigational difficulty of the module may instead choose to force the PCs to figure out where Sanjuro and the *yūrei-fū wind chimes* are by process of elimination—every time the Mists of Akuma roll into the settlement, 1d4 rounds later the relic reverberates around the mountainside as it disperses the supernatural haze nearby before causing the remainder to dissipate more quickly. Locating the direction the sound is coming from requires a DC 18 Wisdom (Perception) check but should the Mubō Brothers still be roaming throughout the town, this check is made at disadvantage due to their booming firearms. The GM can decide where in the village Sanjuro is when he uses the *yūrei-fū wind chimes*, but it is recommended he only do so at his home if the mystery of the adventure has run its course—instead he might have been traveling back from a visit with Mayor Yashido, doing some trading in the market, stopping at a friend's home, or visiting the grave of an ancestor in the woods nearby. Knowing that something of such great value would be a prime target for theft, the merchant is subtle and sneaky when using the magic item and while people nearby will notice his presence, nobody ever actually sees him activate the device (which he keeps in a wide bamboo cylinder lined with silk to muffle the relic until the top or bottom of the container is opened and it drops out).

INTERROGATING SANJURO

While Sanjuro Shigetoki knows he is guilty, he is also an experienced merchant—and a damn good liar, possessing a shrewd +5 bonus on Charisma (Deception) checks. He is polite and congenial, inviting the party into his home, offering them sumptuous food, serving excellent tea, and speaking candidly of his recent travels with bands of other merchants journeying together for safety. Nothing untoward or strange happened on his three week trip to and from Fukushu where his business transactions (managing the distribution and logistics for prominent tea farmers surrounding the village and many settlements nearby) went better than expected.

When the PCs ask about the *yūrei-fū wind chimes* he remains friendly but lies directly to their faces. Any adventurer that succeeds on a DC 18 Wisdom (Insight) check can confirm his duplicity and gains advantage if they know from deduction (either through his prior absence, the length of his journey, or by following the sound of the chime when the Mists of Akuma appear) that he must be hiding something. Confronting him about his dishonesty causes Sanjuro's face to redden and he quickly stands up, ordering the party to leave at once and yelling that their baseless accusation dishonor not only themselves but him as well!

While he puts up a good front, Sanjuro cannot back up his angry demeanor with blade or spell and a DC 16 Charisma (Persuasion) check or DC 12 Charisma (Intimidation) check is enough to break his duplicity. Either way Ishimoto took her husband's outburst as an opportunity to disappear into a back room where she quietly exits the house through a window; hearing her do so requires a passive Perception of 17 or higher. Realizing that she is gone and either persuaded or intimidated, the merchant reveals that he suspects his wife was having an affair with one of the priests of Róbai Shita Temple. One night he followed her, traveling through a secret entrance in the western bluffs of the mountainside, hidden within a cave behind some dense bamboo. Once inside the temple however his curiosity got the best of him, and when he realized the tomb at the bottom belonged to one of his ancestors he felt compelled to take a keepsake with him—at which point he reveals the *yūrei-fū wind chimes*.

With this information in hand the PCs may realize that the absence of the magic item roughly coincides with the recent troubles in Shibai and a DC 12 Intelligence (Religion) check tells the adventurers that the spirit of Sanjuro's ancestor is likely troubled—restoring the *yūrei-fū wind chimes* to their rightful place will bring peace to Watsuji Shigetoki's soul. The merchant greatly values the relic for its usefulness to his trade and is very unwilling to give it away, but a DC 18 Charisma (Persuasion) check (made with advantage as long as a bribe of 50 Imperial Pieces is involved) or DC 15 Charisma (Intimidation) check (made with advantage if the threat of violence is used, though this increases their Haitoku by 1) convinces him to part with the magic item. Either way he is happy to share where the secret entrance to Róbai Shita Temple is and how to find it; locating it without his directions requires a DC 20 Wisdom (Perception) check made in the general area of the cave.

So long as the Mubō Brothers are alive Ishimoto has managed to find them, revealing where the PCs are and describing the dishonor shown to her husband. Raitoningu and Sandā bellow from outside the home, baiting the adventurers into their final battle. Read the following:



Blackmailing Ishimoto

If Ishimoto successfully ousts her sister to become the mayor of Shibai the PCs can leverage her involvement in the town's troubles, gaining advantage on Charisma (Persuasion) and Charisma (Intimidation) checks to negotiate for a favor in the future, rights to recently vacated homes in the town, or up to 150 Imperial Pieces of hush money. Anyone who benefits from blackmailing Ishimoto decreases their Dignity score by 2 and increases their Haitoku score by 1.

Sanjuro jumps suddenly as you all hear the voice of a Mubō brother bellowing from outside, "COME OUT, CURS! We are not done with you yet! First dark magic, and now dishonoring one of this town's finest citizens? Shibai must be rid of you! Face us honorably and die with courage!" Sure enough looking outside you see Raitoningu standing brazenly, though Sandā is nowhere in sight. The merchant looks at you innocently though as you realize that his wife Ishimoto is nowhere to be found, you think you might see a small smirk of satisfaction flash across his features.

Act 3: Beneath Róbai Shita Temple

With the *yūrei-fū wind chimes* in hand the PCs are able to bring an end to the troubles in Shibai—bringing peace to the soul of Watsuji Shigetoki (whether knowingly or not) by restoring the relic to its rightful place in the tomb at the bottom of Róbai Shita Temple. The party has to successfully navigate the subterranean passages first however, and after Ishimoto and Sanjuro left the hidden door to the western slopes open the evil winds of Akinochisō blew through to awaken many of the objects inside (and even some of the structure itself) into tsukumogami! Regardless of which entrance the PCs use to gain access to Róbai Shita Dungeon, read the following:

> *A ghostly flickering paper lantern throws a soft light onto a bloodied torture rack, the ominous object of suffering's shadow looming over large, imposing stone steps that descend further beneath the earth. All is silent save for the occasional scratching or curious cackle emerging from below, and with the smell of death pervading the air you cannot help but wonder what awaits.*

Róbai Shita Dungeon

The dungeon and catacombs of Róbai Shita Temple are all as much living tsukumogami as inanimate stone blocks and mundane objects. Just how many of the monsters are in the area (and how many of them care to be noticed by the adventurers or decide to be mischievous rather than aggressive) is entirely at the discretion of the GM, but it is recommended that the party cross paths with at least 4 lesser, 3 medium, and 2 greater Róbai Shita tsukumogami throughout this sequence of the adventure. Should the party be visiting this area a second time (after finding the secret door in the basement during Act 2) their second time through the dungeon should have half as many encounters (2 lesser, 2 medium, 1 large). More importantly, the tsukumogami rearrange themselves and, at the GM's discretion, may even alter the layout of the rooms (switching what objects are in which chambers, or if the GM prefers, re-drawing the entire map!) to confuse the PCs.

Statue Room

If only because it would be too obvious, these statues (both of Watsuji, one youthful and one old) are inanimate and should serve to lower the adventurers' hackles. A DC 12 Intelligence (History) check can date them as older than 2,000 years, though their relatively pristine condition makes it difficult to be sure. Any result of 20 or higher notes the telltale signs of an item falsely aged by exposure to the Mists of Akuma.

Ancient Study

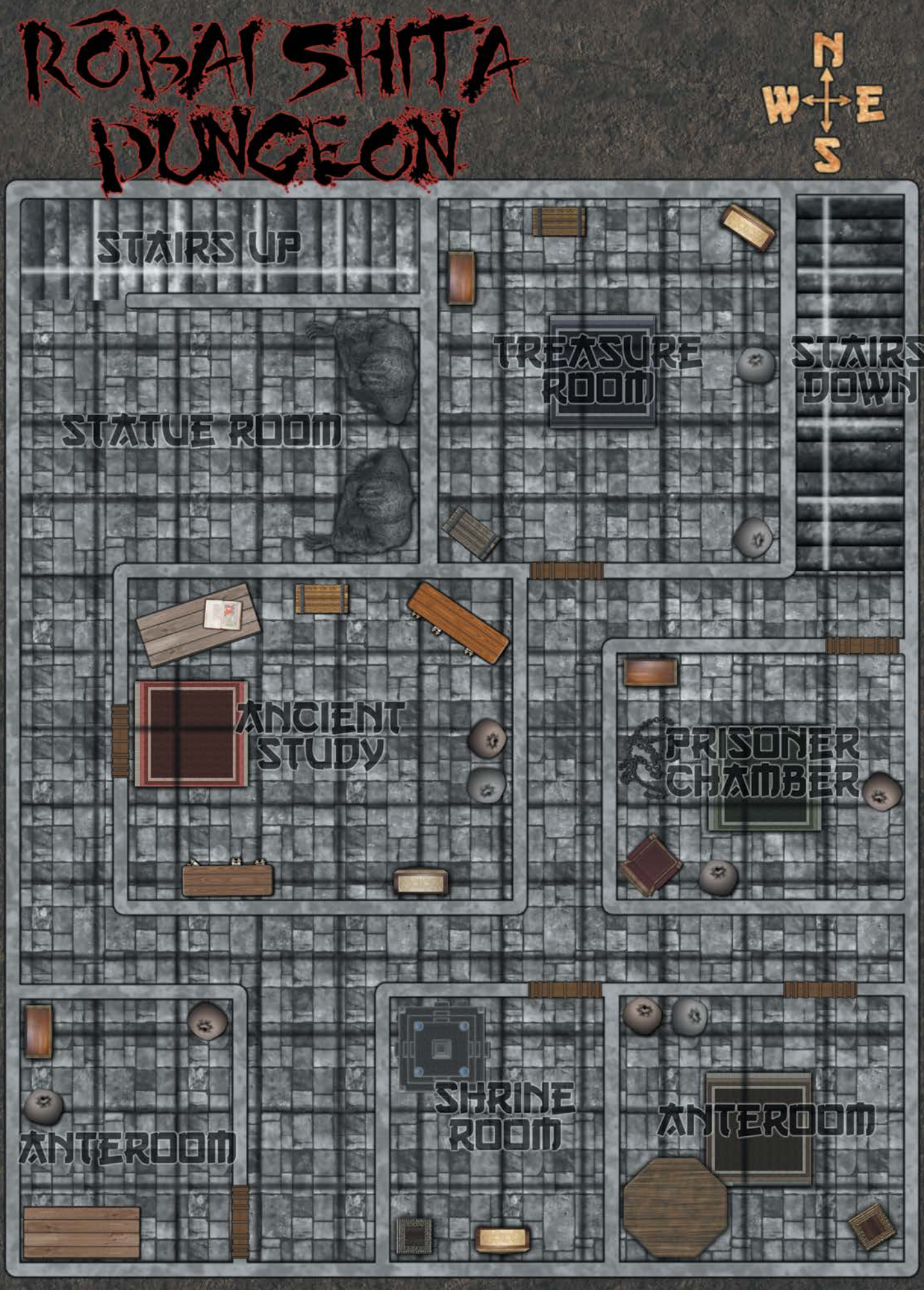
This chamber has a table, book cases, and a pair of trunks—the latter being Medium Róbai Shita Tsukumogami hidden in plain sight. Both monsters attack when one of them is tampered with, flanking the nearest adventurer. The scroll on the table is written in ancient Soburi and requires a DC 11 Intelligence check to decipher. A PC that successfully reads it discovers the parchment has the funereal rites of Watsuji Shigetoki and list his many impressive accomplishments, among them the creation of the temple (as well as accounts of him singlehandedly destroying an oni warlord and its armies, diverting a cyclone away from Kyusokuna with powerful magic, brokering piece with a yai sovereign of metal, and defending Seinaru from the powerful sovereign dragon Yamano-Ryōshu to name a few).

Western Anteroom

The chest in the corner of this room is has no traps and is unlocked, seeming to contain fine garments of silks worth as much as 10 Imperial Pieces to the right buyer. Closer inspection with a DC 14 Intelligence (Investigation) check after the trunk has been opened finds a hidden compartment with 10 pounds of ancient coins worth 88 Imperial Pieces.

Shrine Room

As in the Ancient Study, there are two monsters hidden in this room—the shrines within it are a Lesser Róbai Shita Tsukumogami and Medium Róbai Shita Tsukumogami! Both wait until someone moves to unlock the chest in


ROBAI SHITA DUNGEON
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W
E
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STAIRS UP
STATUE ROOM
TREASURE ROOM
STAIRS DOWN
ANCIENT STUDY
PRISONER CHAMBER
ANTEROOM
SHRINE ROOM
ANTEROOM

the corner then attack in concert, shutting and blocking the door to separate an adventurer from their allies.

There's a trunk as well, though it is both locked and trapped. A DC 17 Intelligence (Investigation) check spots the activation plates worked into the container's lock. Any attempts to break (AC 14, 30 hp) or open the chest without the proper key trigger the trap, causing it to send out a 5 foot jolt of electricity. A creature within range takes 17 (5d6) lightning damage and must succeed on a DC 14 Constitution saving throw or be stunned for 2 rounds. A successful DC 16 Dexterity (thieves' tools) check disarms the trap, removing the circuit nodes from the lock. Unsuccessfully attempting to pick the lock triggers the trap. The chest can be opened by succeeding on a DC 16 Dexterity (thieves' tools) check. Only one thing is hidden inside of it, another relic of Watsuji Shigetoki—a set of ornate painting brushes and *marvelous pigments*.

Eastern Anteroom

There is little of interest in this room save for the chest in the corner. The trunk isn't locked, trapped, or a tsukumogami but contains nothing other than bloody torture implements. These can be sold to a nefarious and wicked merchant for 20 Imperial Pieces but the party may wish to keep them—if used in conjunction with an interrogation they grant advantage on checks made against a restrained victim.

Treasure Room

A total of four chests await within this chamber—two are identical to those found in the Róbai Shita Basement (page 40) but two are hidden Medium Róbai Shita Tsukumogami (page 41). Unlike the other monsters, however, they do not attack until either discovered or after one of the trunks has been opened (or tampered with unsuccessfully). Inside of the two genuine strongboxes the PCs find random mundane items of the GM's choice—acid vials, arcane focuses, ink and parchment, and so on—up to a worth of as much as 60 Imperial Pieces.

Prisoner Chamber

An unlocked, untrapped trunk in the corner of this room contains the dried, bloodied rags and belongings of some nameless prisoner long dead. The shackles that once held them however are very much alive, a Greater Róbai Shita Tsukumogami that remains motionless until a PC is within its reach.

Róbai Shita Catacombs

The layout of this area of the dungeon is very simple (and does not change even if visited twice): there is a western passage and an eastern passage, both of which lead to the entrance of Watsuji Shigetoki's tomb. There is an obvious danger in the northernmost corner of the eastern hall, an iron maiden that has become a Greater Róbai Shita tsukumogami (page 41), but again this is a vicious ploy—to the west is an even greater threat, a wall tsukumogami (page 42). Either way to continue forward the adventurers must travel along one of these paths in order to continue. If the monster is currently alive and conscious, Fukō attacks the party as they rest after vanquishing (or fleeing from) either of the creatures.

Torture Chambers

All of these macabre chambers are roughly identical, containing manacles, torture racks, a skeleton, or all three. This is an opportunity for GMs to include additional Róbai Shita tsukumogami for parties that have had an easy time traveling through the dungeon thus far. Otherwise these rooms have anything of value inside, instead serving as a grisly reminder that even the most revered and holy of Soburi are capable of inflicting terrible horrors.

Watsuji Shigetoki's Tomb

A large iron door bars the way forward into this room but a DC 12 Strength check is enough to wedge it open.

Read the following as the PCs enter this room:

(see page following map for full read-aloud)

ROBAI SHITA CATACOMBS



N
W E
S

The creaking of the heavy iron door as it swings into the crimson-lit chamber ahead of you echoes off the walls, reverberating back and again before silence reigns once more. Arrayed along the walls are dozens of candles flickering with red and violet flames, illuminating a simple yet perfectly cut marbled sarcophagus. At its head are two statues identical to those from the level above, both looking down onto three plinths—on the left an urn, on the right a scroll, and the third empty.

No check is required to recognize that the red and violet light cast by the flickering candles in this room is unnatural. At its northern end at the head of Watsuji's stone casket are three pedestals, one with an urn atop it, another holding a scroll, and the last empty—obviously meant for the *yūrei-fū wind chimes*. When placed upon the pedestal the screaming soul of the ancient wu-jen yamabushi frees itself of Akinochisō's curse, visibly returning to the sarcophagus in the center of the chamber. The malevolent spirit that puppeted Watsuji's spirit is not undone however, and its dark patron empowers it, causing it to manifest unbound to attack the adventurers! Read the following:

A wailing cry suddenly fills the chamber and motes of blue energy swirl through the air, gradually gathering to form the screaming form of an old soburi man in simple robes. Gradually his countenance calms until he is entirely at peace, the last thing you see being a smile crossing his face before the spirit's head disappears into the stone casket. Not a moment later a moaning howl reverberates from the walls, an unnatural voice infused with rage—suddenly tornado winds whip around the chamber until the monster that attacked the village floats before you. Before the winds die down the creature grows and distorts in violent convulsions, becoming more wild and savage with every gust before it leaps to attack!

When Fukō Unbound has been destroyed, the voice of Watsuji Shigetoki thanks the party and assures them that with his relics returned, his ancient protections over Shibai will return as well. Afterward he is willing to answer a single question about anything (from the afterlife to secrets of the modern world) though how accurate or how much he truly knows is entirely at the discretion of the GM.

Epilogue

When the PCs emerge from Róbai Shita Temple it is immediately clear that they have had a positive impact on the region; not only will they feel dignified and know without doubt that they have aided a soul in turmoil, they can see it in the very environment. Read the following:

The sky is clear and a warm wind runs up the mountainside, though that's not the first thing that strikes you—it's the sudden abundance of wildlife, the noises of nature all the louder for their unnoticed absence the past several days. Crickets chirping and the occasional call of a bird fill you with confidence, sure that you have made a difference in the lives of the people of Shibai.

Mayor Yashido is overwhelmingly pleased to hear that the adventurers have gotten to the bottom of things and immediately announces it in the village's marketplace, much to the pleasure of the townsfolk still in Shibai—except for Ishimoto. Her younger sister uses the opportunity to berate Miya, publicly denouncing her for hiring the disastrous Mubō Brothers and moving that she be deposed, allowing for herself to act as interim mayor until a new election can be held. The PCs are able to stop this coop by revealing Ishimoto's part in causing the town's curse, but she gives the adventurers a knowing wink (making it clear that they will be rewarded for their silence).

Regardless of how local politics play out the next day Nature-Wielder Yon-jū Banme sends another fox, this one fitted with pack that turns out to be a *bag of holding* containing all of the party's reward (including blank travel papers and the agreed upon number of Imperial Pieces).

The PCs all increase their Dignity scores by 3 and if they have not yet gained a level, each does so as well. Furthermore their reputations spread, reaching the ears of other bengoshi—men and women in need of agents elsewhere in Soburin...

RUMORS IN SHIBAI

As the adventurers sift through the mystery at the heart of *Scourge of Róbai Shita Temple* they will inevitably hear many things about Shibai that simply are not true (at least not entirely). When dispensing information in any of the instances of the module (from the Sukochi bengoshi, Ishimoto Shigetoki, Mayor Yashido, or various citizens of the town) the GM should sprinkle in at least a few pieces of the following gossip for amusement—and of course to throw the PCs off the trail if they are advancing through the story too quickly!

Mubō Brothers. As famous warriors there are numerous tales about Raitoningu and Sandā though much like the gunmen, they are lacking in consistency and truthfulness.

- The Mubō Brothers killed a true oni and it is one of these creatures children keeps resurrecting the monster.
- Raitoningu was witnessed doing unseemly things with a horse.
- Sandā keeps grisly trophies of his kills tucked inside of his armor for good luck.
- Both are bastards born out of wedlock and banished from the noble house of their father.
- The Mubō Brothers are actually in league with the monster and lured it here, as they have other towns, exacerbating their fame with each seeming victory.

The Monster. Countless canards about the enigmatic monster roam throughout conversation in the marketplace, each as unfounded as the last and more evident of the locals' fear than anything else.

- The creature is the ghost of a dead noble from a family long gone from Shibai.
- In truth the monster is Akinochisō's bastard offspring, the result of the dark entity mating with a human.
- The spirit of the noble samurai Maita Etsuko has been warped into the freakish beast plaguing the town, her body infused with evil and hatred over the betrayal that saw her killed.
- Finally the mystery surrounding the local woodsmen and hunter Sako Kaori has come to an end—he had been seen to show the signs of corruption the last few times he stopped through town and many villagers avoided him entirely, so surely this must be what he's transformed into.
- This so called monster is nothing more than parlor tricks and illusions created by the Mists of Akuma and a foul sorcerer lurking in the supernatural haze, nothing more than a ploy to sap courage from the village and make Shibai weak enough to take over completely.
- The monster is punishment Shibai being spared from the Mists of Akuma for years, the karma of lacking devotion accumulating over the centuries to ultimately doom them all.

Róbai-Shita Temple. Normally revered as a truly holy shrine to both ancestors and nature, Róbai Shita Temple's reputation has rapidly fallen to be thought of as a cursed, haunted place.

- There's a secret dungeon beneath Róbai Shita Temple where heretics are tortured to death.
- The temple was founded by an ancient wu-jen that was cast away from his peers for his outlandish beliefs.
- Akinochisō has stolen the wind from the top of the mountain, angering the spirits of the temple's dead priests.
- Anyone who is truly honorable and righteous that spends the night within Róbai Shita Temple wakes up invigorated by their ancestors and free of any sicknesses.
- The temple has existed since the dawn of history, before even one house was built in Shibai or any warlord sought to conquer all of Soburin.

Shukettsu the Erītokirā Warrior. As both a shikome and a warrior that embraces heretical technology, even the merest sight of Shukettsu is enough to send the villagers into a frenzy of speculative gossip.

- The mysterious warrior protects a hidden lab devoted to crafting heretical devices and secreted away somewhere in the western slopes of the mountain.
- It is actually a demon made from an accursed steametic that died inside the stomach of a dead boar, fusing the two together and filled with animalistic rage.
- It is really the creation of a mad scientist working for Rimono Prefecture and not alive at all, an automaton that lurks in the woods waiting to kidnap children from Shibai.
- The mechanically armored hunter is an agent of one of the rogue Kengen warlords sent to spy on the town for an imminent invasion.
- A beast that walks on two metal legs, it feeds on the blood of the living and has been using the Mists of Akuma as cover to abduct its meals.

Imposing even without his ornate suit of finely crafted green tosei gusoku armor, this hulking soburi stands at nearly 7 feet in height and hefts about a miniature cannon as though it were a rifle. His brutish face is almost always in a sneer and he walks with a confident, boastful swagger.

Raitoningu Mubō

Medium humanoid (soburi), neutral
Armor Class 16 (tosei gusoku)
Hit Points 87 (12d8+24)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA	Dignity	Haitoku
16 (+3)	14 (+2)	14 (+2)	9 (–1)	13 (+1)	11 (+0)	14 (+2)	13 (+1)

Saving Throws Str +5, Dex +4
Skills Athletics +5, Intimidation +2
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 11
Languages Soburi
Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Brute (1/round). Raitoningu is extremely strong and large for a human. He may grant himself advantage on a Strength ability check. In addition, his carrying limit is doubled.

Cannon Wielder. Raitoningu can reload his portable cannon by spending a bonus action and he is not at disadvantage to fire his portable cannon when within his target's reach.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Raitoningu attacks twice with his katana.

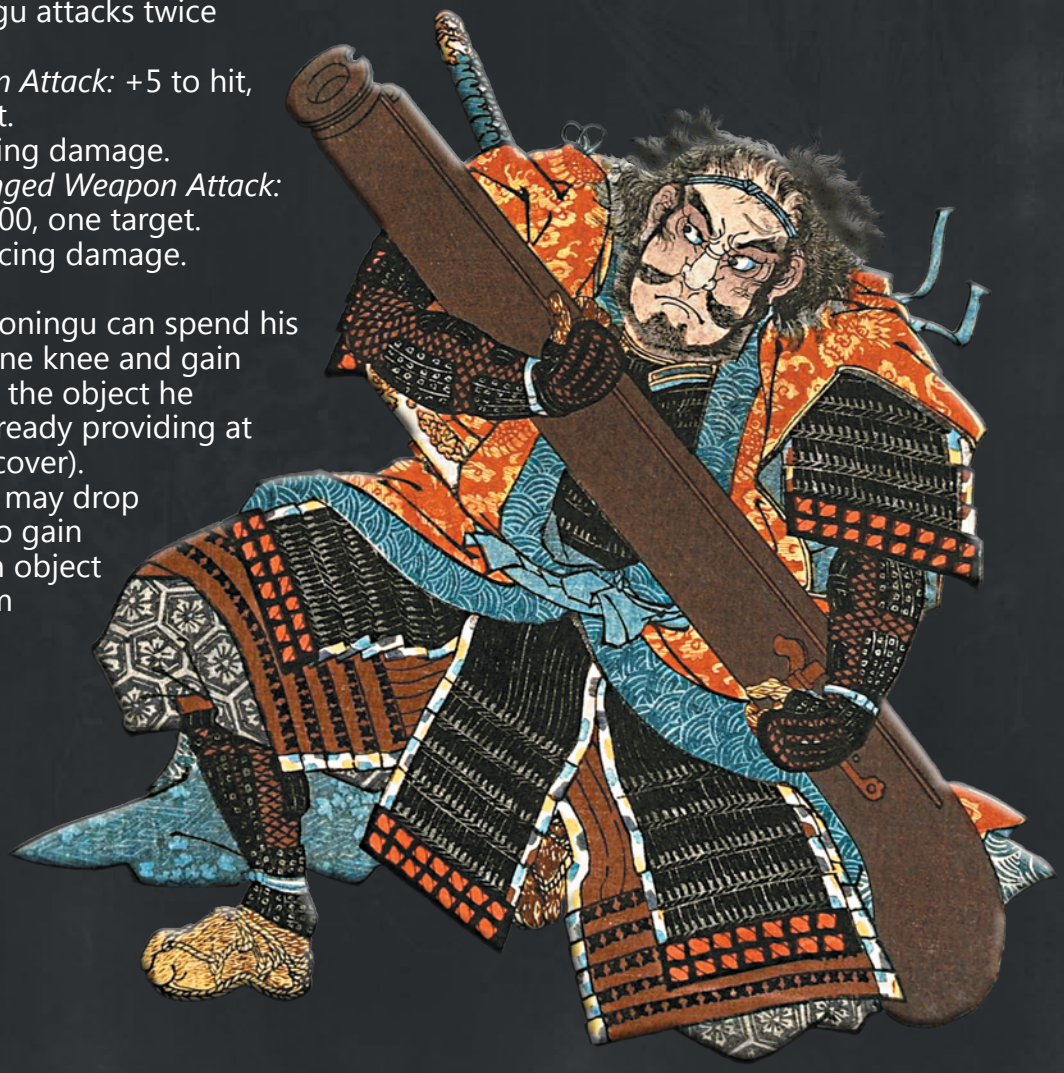
Katana. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target.
Hit: 9 (1d12+3) slashing damage.

Portable Cannon. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, range 30/200, one target.
Hit: 21 (3d12+2) piercing damage.

REACTIONS

Reactive Shooter. Raitoningu can spend his reaction to drop to one knee and gain total cover (provided the object he is hiding behind is already providing at least three-quarters cover).

Alternatively he may drop prone as a reaction to gain total cover behind an object already providing him half cover.



This husky soburi carries a long iron firearm that resembles a cannon, the whole of the firearm nearly twice as long as he is wide. The top of the stalwart man's skull is clean shaven and the rest of his scraggly black hair continues into the shortly trimmed beard covering his lower face, flecks of hair caught all around his mouth.

Sandā Mubō

Medium humanoid (soburi), neutral
Armor Class 16 (tosei gusoku)
Hit Points 99 (12d8+36)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA	Dignity	Haitoku
14 (+2)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)	9 (–1)	13 (+1)	11 (+0)	15 (+2)	12 (+1)

Saving Throws Dex +4, Con +5
Skills Intimidation +2, Survival +3
Senses passive Perception 11
Languages Soburi
Challenge 3 (700 XP)

ACTIONS

Cannon Wielder. Sandā is able to reload his portable cannon by spending a bonus action and he is not at disadvantage to fire his portable cannon when within his target's reach.

Glutton (1/round). Sandā is extremely large for his size and well known for his iron stomach. He may grant himself advantage on a Constitution ability check. In addition, he hass advantage on saving throws to resist the poisoned condition.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Sandā attacks twice with his katana.

Katana. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target.
Hit: 8 (1d12+2) slashing damage.

Portable Cannon. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, range 30/200, one target.
Hit: 21 (3d12+2) piercing damage.

REACTIONS

Reactive Shooter. Sandā can spend his reaction to drop to one knee and gain total cover (provided the object he is hiding behind is already providing at least three-quarters cover).

Alternatively he may drop prone as a reaction to gain total cover behind an object already providing him half cover.



New Feat: Cannon Wielder

Prerequisites: Proficiency with martial weapons
Many see the portable cannon as an ungainly and unnecessary weapon, but when properly trained, a warrior can use it to blast their way through enemies with reckless abandon. You gain the following benefits:

- You are able to reload a portable cannon by spending a bonus action.
- You are not at disadvantage to fire a portable cannon when within a creature's reach.
- You are able to use a portable cannon as a greatclub. Should you score a critical hit while doing so, the portable cannon cannot be fired until you spend 1 hour clearing and re-aligning its inner workings.

Portable Cannon. Martial (3d12 piercing damage, range 30/200) This firearm heavy ironwork only holds 1 bullet and requires an action to reload. When fired inside of a regular room or smaller area (30 ft. across and wide, 10 ft. high), all creatures inside the room make a DC 12 Constitution saving throw or are deafened for 1d4 rounds.

Though this shikome warrior wears a beautifully painted dragon sashimono on his back and wields a katana in one hand, its resemblance to most of Soburin's samurai ends there, the armor covering its body as strange as he is but mechanical in nature—heretical, even.

Shukettsu, Kodomo-tachi Erītokirā

Medium humanoid (cursed shikome), lawful neutral

Armor Class 16 (erītokirā armor)
Hit Points 115 (14d8+42)
Speed 40 ft., leap 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA	Dignity	Haitoku
18 (+4)	15 (+2)	16 (+3)	14 (+2)	15 (+2)	13 (+1)	8 (–1)	13 (+1)

Saving Throws Dex +4, Int +4, Wis +4
Skills Acrobatics +4, Athletics +6, Culture +1, Insight +4, Intimidation +3, Perception +4, Stealth +4, Survival +4
Senses darkvision 200 ft., passive Perception 14
Languages Adeddo, Ceram, Soburi
Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

Brave. Shukettsu gains advantage on saving throws to resist the frightened condition.

Corrupted. Shukettsu cannot be transformed by or die from exposure to the Mists of Akuma regardless of how high his Haitoku attribute is.

Dampening Enhancers. Shukettsu possesses cutting-edge prototype augmetics that grant him advantage on Strength (Athletics) and Dexterity (Stealth) checks.

Darksight Goggles. Shukettsu's has advantage on sight-based Wisdom (Perception) checks.

Exhaust. Shukettsu has advantage on checks and saving throws to resist exhaustion.

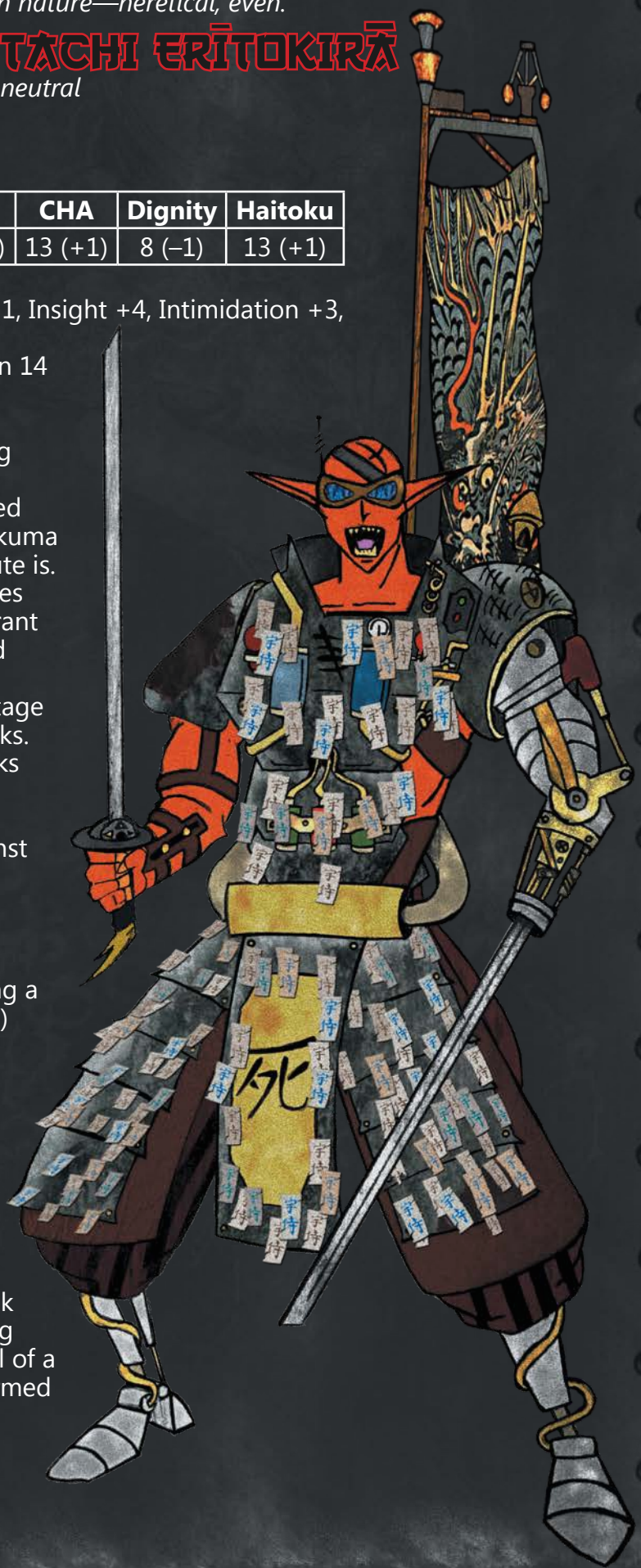
Hated. Shukettsu has disadvantage when making Wisdom or Charisma checks against any humanoid that doesn't also have the hated condition but he cannot suffer disadvantage on Intimidation checks.

Iyashino Iyashi Injectors (2/short rest). Shukettsu spends a bonus action activating a feature on his armor, regaining 22 (4d8+4) hit points.

Martial Advantage (1/turn). Shukettsu can deal an extra 5 (2d4) damage to a creature he hits with a melee weapon attack if that creature is within 5 feet of an ally that isn't incapacitated.

Nitrous Dash (Recharge 5-6). Shukettsu gains a free Dash action.

Prayer Slips (66 total). Kami and tsukumogami have disadvantage on attack rolls made against Shukettsu. By sacrificing a number of prayer slips equal to the level of a spell that has caused him to gain the charmed condition, Shukettsu can end the duration of the spell.



Radio Antennae. Shukettsu automatically detects radio waves and can broadcast his own radio waves to a distance of 15 miles.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Shukettsu attacks once with his katana and once with his sword arm.

Katana. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target.
Hit: 10 (1d12+4) slashing damage.

Sword Arm. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target.
Hit: 9 (1d10+4) slashing damage. By spending a bonus action to activate the gearwork within the augmetic, Shukettsu can set the sword arm to vibrate for 1 minute. While vibrating its damage increases by 1d6 and checks made to disarm another creature gain advantage.

Kodomo-Tachi Eritokirā Chapter
Children of Battle (Neutral)
Art, Balance, History, Nature, Technology
Chapter Master: Yasei no Chōrō

Throughout the militaristic shikome (hobgoblins in Soburin) are various erītokirā chapters, guilds of warriors that take to battle in advanced suits of armor incorporated with augmetics. The Kodomo-Tachi are one of the most prideful erītokirā chapters, claiming to embody the ethos of the independent shikome generals millennia in the past—disciplined soldiers that were not the servants of dragons, but seen as powerful as the dragons themselves. So it is that the Kodomo-Tachi revere history and art in all forms, taking particular pride in the winged serpents arrayed on their sashimono. Their belief is that for any life to exist in Soburin a balance must be struck between nature and technology; unlike other erītokirā warriors the Kodomo-Tachi do not blame humanity for the horrors of the recent past, knowing that such ignorant violence is not unheard of. Emperor Hitoshi's agents and spies have assessed the threat of Shukettsu's lodge, and though they have not been deemed a force for good they are thought to pose relatively little danger compared to the other erītokirā chapters (provided of course that their non-aggressive stance towards the Masuto Empire remains neutral).

Shukettsu is on a fact-finding mission, sent to Shibai to confirm rumors that a merchant headed back to the village carries a relic able to negate the dreaded Mists of Akuma. The shikome does not require the magic item, only to confirm that it truly exists and to negotiate an opportunity for the Kodomo-Tachi's magical experts to study it. Moreover his clan's divinations have hinted at the intrusion of the party, prompting him to seek out and then follow the adventurers as they traveled from Hanashichū Grove. After the PCs have made their first investigation into Róbai Shita Temple (or at the GM's discretion, on their way inside) Shukettsu attempts to peacefully approach them, seeking to offer his aide in whatever way they think is most useful—keeping watch on the temple, patrolling the town and defending against adeddo-oni, and the like. Of course if the party accepts his help the Mubō Brothers find out and add it to their false accusations but otherwise the townsfolk simply find any alliance with him to be an odd thing.

The GM can take or leave Shukettsu: if the adventurers are having an easy time of things they might have him take a more *aggressive* stance, but if the party is struggling, fearful of spreading resources too thin, or in need of an extra set of eyes and ears (which can be a means of sifting through the rumors and give the PCs some clues) he is best used as an asset to rather than liability. Even if he isn't immediately included in this adventure when it's deployed at the table, the GM could introduce Shukettsu as an interested (and slightly less aloof) traveler, raider, or go-between for Chapter Master Yasei Nochōrō to further a greater plot.

Regardless of the details of his inclusion, it's best for GMs to employ a light touch with the shikome soldier and erītokirā warriors in general—there are many chapters in Soburin and they are more violent, duplicitous, and tenacious than even the clans ruling over the prefectures. Should one group believe the party has declared loyalty to their enemies, the PCs will have new, dangerous, well-equipped adversaries to contend with!

Róbai Shita Tsukumogami

There are a wide variety of items throughout the Róbai Shita temple's dungeon and making statistics for each would be redundant. When using a Róbai Shita Tsukumogami the GM should choose one of the following features to add to its statblock:

Constrict and Squeeze. The tsukumogami gains the following attack:

Constrict. *Melee Weapon Attack:* (to hit, reach, and targets as claw attack). *Hit:* as claw attack but bludgeoning damage, and the target is grappled (escape DC 13). Until this grapple ends, the creature is restrained, and the tsukumogami can't constrict another target. By spending its bonus action, the tsukumogami can deal its claw attack damage (bludgeoning) to the restrained creature.

Endless Interior. The inside of the tsukumogami leads to an extradimensional space. At the start of its turn if the tsukumogami has grappled a creature of Medium or smaller size, it may spend its action to make an opposed Strength (Athletics) check to restrain its target (escape DC 13). When the tsukumogami starts its turn and has restrained a creature, it may spend its action to swallow the creature. A swallowed creature can only be released when the tsukumogami wills it or dies, though it may make attacks and cast spells targeting the tsukumogami; the swallowed creature has disadvantage on attack rolls and the tsukumogami gains advantage on rolls to resist a swallowed creature's spells. The tsukumogami may choose to target a swallowed creature with its attacks, gaining advantage on its attack rolls and dealing force damage on a successful hit.

Expel Contents. The tsukumogami spends its bonus action expelling junk, trash, old grain, grit, sand, dirt, or other inexpensive substance out at a creature within 10 feet, forcing the to make a DC 13 Dexterity save or gain the blinded condition until the end of the tsukumogami's turn.

Void Flame. The tsukumogami gains the following attack:

Void Flame. *Ranged Weapon Attack*: (to hit as claw attack), range 30/100 ft., one target.
Hit: 11 (2d6+4) necrotic damage and the target must make a DC 13 Dignity saving throw or gain 1 Haitoku. A creature can only gain Haitoku from void flame (any creature's void flame) once every 24 hours.

Greater Róbai Shita Tsukumogami may also choose from the following:

Enlarged Reach. The reach of all the tsukumogami's attacks increases by 10 feet.

Painful Construction. The tsukumogami may spend its bonus action to make an opposed Strength (Athletics) check to grapple a creature within reach. If the tsukumogami begins its turn grappling a creature, it may spend a bonus action to make an opposed Strength check to restrain the creature, or spend an action to make the check with advantage. Once the tsukumogami has successfully restrained a creature it implements the sinister parts of its construction, forcing its target against spikes, agonizingly stretching their bodies, or bleeding them through iron syringes hidden in manacles (dealing bite damage with a bonus action each turn spent restraining a creature).

Lesser Róbai Shita Tsukumogami

Small monstrosity (tsukumogami), neutral evil
Armor Class 13 (natural)
Hit Points 80 (13d6+26)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	15 (+2)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)	15 (+2)	12 (+1)

Saving Throws Int +2
Skills Perception +4, Stealth +4
Damage Vulnerabilities acid, fire, lightning, or thunder (GM's discretion)
Damage Resistances cold, necrotic, radiant
Damage Immunities poison
Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, poisoned
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 14
Languages Soburi
Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Haitoku Strike. By spending its bonus action sensing its enemy, the tsukumogami may target the enemy's Dignity score instead of their AC.

Hidden In Plain Sight. Tsukumogami may appear as mundane versions of the objects they once were, hiding in plain sight; DC 17 Wisdom (Perception) check.

Róbai-Shita Tsukumogami. The tsukumogami has one of the features listed above.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The tsukumogami attacks twice.

Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6+2) slashing damage.

Medium Róbai Shita Tsukumogami



Medium monstrosity (tsukumogami), neutral evil
Armor Class 13 (natural)
Hit Points 107 (13d8+39)
Speed 35 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	15 (+2)	16 (+3)	12 (+1)	16 (+3)	13 (+1)

Saving Throws Int +3, Cha +3
Skills Athletics +4, Perception +5, Stealth +4
Damage Vulnerabilities acid, fire, lightning, or thunder (GM's discretion)
Damage Resistances cold, necrotic, radiant
Damage Immunities poison
Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, poisoned
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 15
Languages Soburi
Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Haitoku Strike. By spending its bonus action sensing its enemy, the tsukumogami may target the enemy's Dignity score instead of their AC.

Hidden In Plain Sight. Tsukumogami may appear as mundane versions of the objects they once were, hiding in plain sight; DC 18 Wisdom (Perception) check.

Róbai-Shita Tsukumogami. The tsukumogami has one of the features listed on page 40.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The tsukumogami attacks once with its bite and twice with its claw.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d10+2) slashing damage.

Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d8+2) slashing damage.

Greater Róbai Shita Tsukumogami

Large monstrosity (tsukumogami), neutral evil
Armor Class 13 (natural)
Hit Points 130 (14d10+42)
Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	15 (+2)	17 (+3)	14 (+2)	17 (+3)	15 (+2)

Saving Throws Dex +5, Int +4, Cha +4
Skills Perception +5, Stealth +5
Damage Vulnerabilities acid, fire, lightning, or thunder (GM's discretion)
Damage Resistances cold, necrotic, radiant
Damage Immunities poison
Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, poisoned
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 15
Languages Soburi
Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Haitoku Strike. By spending its bonus action sensing its enemy, the tsukumogami may target the enemy's Dignity score instead of their AC.

Hidden In Plain Sight. Tsukumogami may appear as mundane versions of the objects they once were, hiding in plain sight; DC 19 Wisdom (Perception) check.

Róbai-Shita Tsukumogami. The tsukumogami has one of the features listed on page 40.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The tsukumogami attacks once with its bite and twice with its claw.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d12+2) slashing damage.

Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d10+2) slashing damage.

As you look up into the nearby corner of the passageway something seems awry but just as the thought crosses your mind an eye appears on the wall, another in the ceiling, and then a mouth forms between the brick and mortar, split in two by the seam of the square tunnel—the dungeon itself has come alive!

WALL TSUKUMOGAMI

Huge construct, neutral evil
Armor Class 13 (natural)
Hit Points 145 (14d12+42)
Speed 15 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	12 (+1)	17 (+3)	14 (+2)	17 (+3)	15 (+2)

Saving Throws Con +6, Wis +6
Skills Perception +6, Stealth +4
Damage Vulnerabilities acid, thunder
Damage Resistances cold, fire, lightning; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical weapons
Damage Immunities necrotic, poison
Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, grappled, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned
Senses blindsight 30 ft., darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 16
Languages Soburi
Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Environmental Control. The wall tsukumogami is made from the section of a stone passageway, giving its slam a reach of 30 feet. It is able to grab and swallow up to three creatures at once.

Hidden In Plain Sight. Tsukumogami may appear as mundane versions of the objects they once were, hiding in plain sight; DC 20 Wisdom (Perception) check.

Hollow Interior. The wall tsukumogami takes up a 15-foot span of passageway and can attack creatures inside of it (standing on the floor, between two walls, and the roof—all the wall tsukumogami). A creature inside the hollow of the wall tsukumogami treats it as difficult terrain regardless of features that allow them to ignore difficult terrain.

Magic Resistance. The wall tsukumogami has advantage on saving throws against magical effects and spells.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The wall tsukumogami makes two attacks each round.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 30 ft., one target.
Hit: 11 (2d6+4) piercing damage.

Slam. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 30 ft., one target.
Hit: 13 (2d8+4) bludgeoning damage. Instead of dealing damage, the wall tsukumogami may grapple a creature instead (escape DC 14).

Swallow. The wall tsukumogami makes one bite attack against a Large or smaller creature it is grappling. If the attack hits, the target takes the bite's damage, the target is swallowed, and the grapple ends. While swallowed, the creature is blinded and restrained, it has total cover against attacks and other effects outside the wall tsukumogami, and it takes 11 (2d6+4) bludgeoning damage at the start of each of the wall tsukumogami's turns (as it is ground between the outside of the monster's body and the actual wall of the dungeon). If the wall tsukumogami takes 15 damage or more on a single turn from a creature inside it, the wall tsukumogami must succeed on a DC 20 Constitution saving throw at the end of that turn or regurgitate all swallowed creatures, which fall prone in a space within 10 feet of the wall tsukumogami. If the wall tsukumogami dies, a swallowed creature is no longer restrained by it and can escape from the corpse by using 15 feet of movement, exiting prone.

Cannibalistic joy grips this demon's face as it capers and dances through the air as though naught but a leaf on the wind. Verdant tassels flow about it as it zooms to and fro, gusts whipping about it.

FUKŌ

Medium oni, chaotic evil
Armor Class 16 (natural)
Hit Points 115 (16d8+32)
Speed 30 ft., fly 60 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	17 (+3)	14 (+2)	13 (+1)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)



Saving Throws Dex +5, Con +4, Int +3
Skills Acrobatics +5, Athletics +4, Perception +4, Stealth +5
Damage Vulnerabilities radiant, thunder; slashing
Damage Resistances lightning, psychic; bludgeoning and piercing damage from nonmagical weapons
Damage Immunities force
Condition Immunities grappled, prone, restrained
Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 14
Languages Adeddo, Soburi
Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

Born to the Air. Fukō gains advantage on attack rolls when both it and its target are in the air.

Innate Spellcasting. Fukō's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 13, +5 to hit with spell attacks). It can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:
At will: *detect magic, thaumaturgy*
3/day each: *fog cloud, gust of wind*
1/day each: *gaseous form*, *invisibility, stinking cloud*

Unkillable. When it drops to 0 hit points, Fukō disperses into a cloud of invisible gases that disperse into the atmosphere. At the next sundown, it reforms in its resting place (Róbai Shita Temple) as if it had completed a long rest. Fukō cannot be permanently destroyed. However, if reduced to 0 hit points inside of Róbai Shita Temple it becomes unbound, restoring all of its hit points and features as it transforms into its new form (which has its own statistics). Once unbound, Fukō cannot return to this form (and if killed reverts to the spirit of Watsuji Shigetoki).

Walking Tornado. Ranged weapon attacks against Fukō are made with disadvantage. A creature may spend its bonus action aiming to negate this feature for a single ranged weapon attack so long as the attack is made immediately after aiming and before moving or taking a reaction.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Fukō attacks twice.

Baleful Fist. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target.
Hit: 10 (2d6+3) bludgeoning damage.

Slapping Tassels. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target.
Hit: 5 (1d4+3) bludgeoning damage.

Thrown Wind. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, range 50/150, one target.
Hit: 10 (3d6) force damage.

Whirlwind (Recharge 5-6). Each creature within 15 feet must make a DC 13 Strength saving throw. On a failure, a target takes 9 (2d6+2) bludgeoning damage and is flung up 10 feet away from Fukō in a random direction and knocked prone. If a thrown target strikes an object, such as a wall or floor, the target takes 3 (1d6) bludgeoning damage. If the target is thrown at another creature, that creature must succeed on a DC 13 Dexterity saving throw or takes the same damage and is knocked prone. If the saving throw is successful, the target takes half the bludgeoning damage and isn't flung away or knocked prone.

REACTIONS

Quick Reflexes. Fukō makes 2 reactions each round.

Slapping Tassels. Fukō can make an opportunity attack against a creature that has struck it with a melee weapon attack as long as the creature's reach is 5 feet or less.

What once appeared unnatural and freakish now seems tame as the snarling monster before you rapidly jitters and transforms into a more feral version of what it was. The sharp claws on the end of its fingers have become wicked talons and wavering wild hair has sprouted all over its body, the tassels falling away as their enraged master quickly outpaces their chaotic dance.

FUKŌ UNBOUND

Large oni, chaotic evil
Armor Class 15 (natural)
Hit Points 147 (16d8+64)
Speed 40 ft., fly 60 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	14 (+2)	18 (+4)	15 (+2)	17 (+3)	18 (+4)

Saving Throws Dex +5, Int +5
Skills Acrobatics +5, Athletics +7, Intimidation +7, Perception +6, Stealth +5
Damage Vulnerabilities radiant, thunder; slashing from magical weapons
Damage Resistances lightning, psychic; bludgeoning and piercing damage from magical weapons
Damage Immunities force; bludgeoning and piercing damage from nonmagical weapons
Condition Immunities grappled, prone, restrained
Senses darkvision 200 ft., passive Perception 16
Languages Adeddo, Soburi
Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Born to the Air. Fukō gains advantage on attack rolls when both it and its target are in the air.

Innate Spellcasting. Fukō's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 15, +7 to hit with spell attacks). It can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:
At will: *detect magic, thaumaturgy*
3/day each: *fog cloud, gust of wind*
1/day each: *gaseous form*, *haste*, *invisibility, stinking cloud*

Razor Winds. Each creature that starts its turn within 10 feet of Fukō must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw. On a failure, the creature takes 7 (2d6) force damage and can't take reactions until the start of its next turn.

Walking Tornado. Ranged weapon attacks against Fukō are made with disadvantage. A creature may spend its bonus action aiming to negate this feature for a single ranged weapon attack so long as the attack is made immediately after aiming and before moving or taking a reaction.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Fukō attacks twice.

Baleful Fist. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 13 (2d8+4) bludgeoning damage.

Thrown Wind. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, range 100/300 ft., one target. *Hit:* 18 (4d8) force damage.

Whirlwind (Recharge 4-6). Each creature within 15 feet must make a DC 15 Strength saving throw. On a failure, a target takes 17 (3d8+4) bludgeoning damage and is flung up 15 feet away from Fukō in a random direction and knocked prone. If a thrown target strikes an object, such as a wall or floor, the target takes 4 (1d8) bludgeoning damage. If the target is thrown at another creature, that creature must succeed on a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw or takes the same damage and is knocked prone. If the saving throw is successful, the target takes half the bludgeoning damage and isn't flung away or knocked prone.



Duplicitously dangerous intelligent items are becoming something of a hallmark in *Mists of Akuma* adventure modules and if the GM wishes to include one in the adventure, they should look no further than *Warui*. The sneaky kasa-obake may appear anywhere in Róbai Shita Temple though the best way to introduce it is as the PCs leave the dungeon—it gravitates towards whomever most distinguished themselves while profusely thanking the adventurers for saving it from the dreadful monsters that suddenly inhabited its home.

Warui

Weapon (club), legendary (requires attunement)

Although Watsuji treated his umbrella with respect and care throughout his life, the foul influence of Akinichoso has warped it into an evil, mischievous creature that cannot wait to betray and doom as many "wielders" as possible.

Warui grants a +2 magical bonus to attack and damage. Instead of dealing damage after successfully hitting a creature with this weapon, the wielder may instead force the target to make a Charisma saving throw (DC 8 + your proficiency bonus + your Charisma modifier) or gain the charmed condition for 1 hour.

When its wielder attempts to tell a lie or an important truth, *Warui* may choose to force the wielder to make a DC 13 Wisdom saving throw. On a successful save, any hit dice spent to heal during the wielder's next rest only restore half as many hit points as they should. On a failed save, the wielder blurts out the opposite of what they intended to say (revealing a truth if intending to lie or lying instead of speaking honestly).

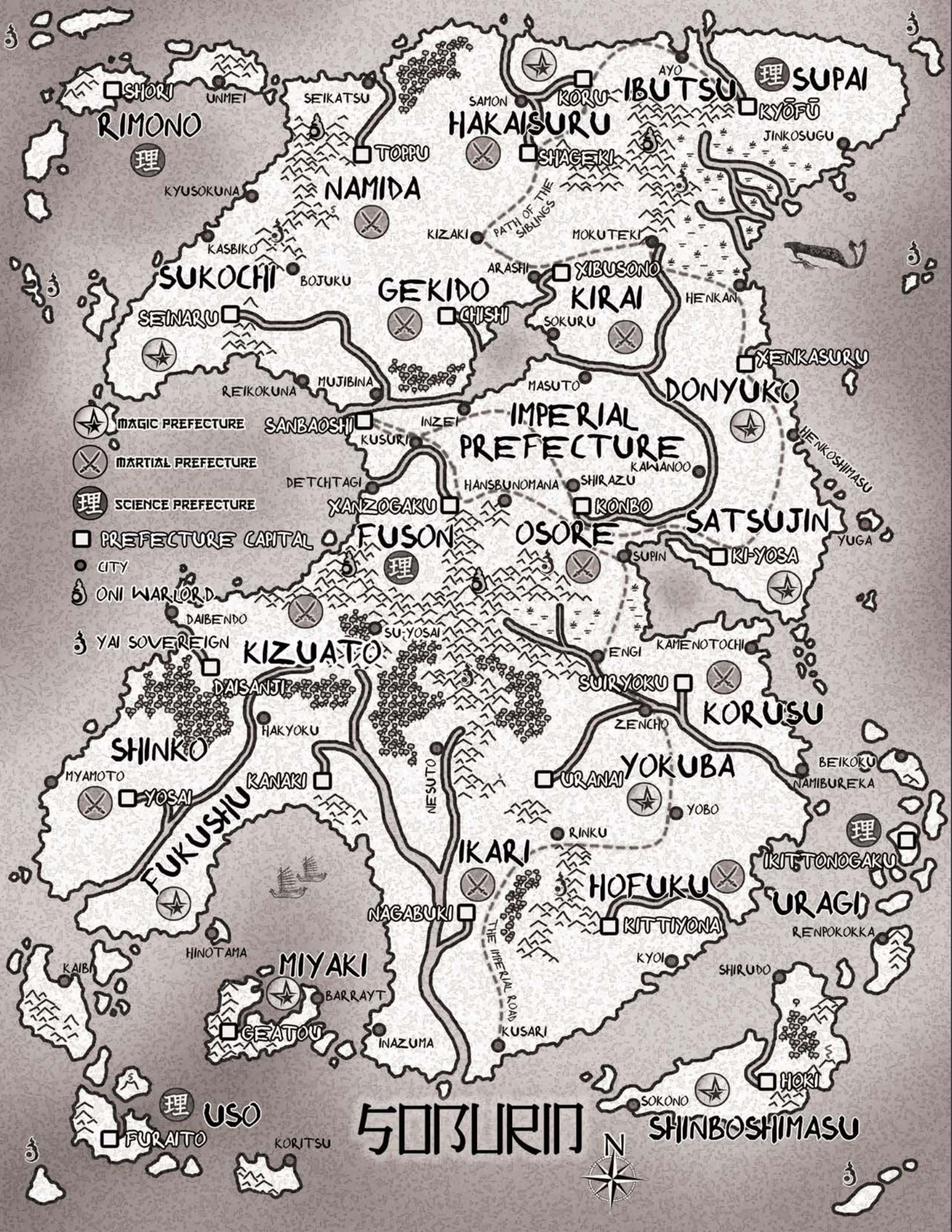
Magic Properties. *Warui* grants the following benefits:

- By spending an action you may release the *Warui* to become a kasa-obake tsukumogami (page 161 in *Mists of Akuma* or the free *Mists of Akuma: Tsukumogami PDF*) until it returns to your hand, but otherwise it acts as a magical club.
- When you attack a creature with this weapon and roll a natural 20 on the attack roll, if your target has less than half its maximum hit points you may spend a bonus action to open the *buki kasa-obake*, dealing 21 (6d6) force damage. You may not use this feature again until you have taken a long rest.
- You increase your vertical jump distances by up to 10 feet and horizontal jump distances by up to 20 feet.
- By spending an action and pointing the *buki kasa-obake* at a creature you can see within 60 feet, you force your target to make a Charisma saving throw (DC 8 + your proficiency bonus + your Charisma modifier) or gain the paralyzed condition for 1d4 rounds. After successfully saving against this effect, a creature is immune to it for 24 hours.
- You may make a DC 15 Intelligence check as an action to learn an obscure piece of myth or lore. You may not use this ability again until you have taken a long rest.
- You are able to cast *feather fall* at will without the need for any components.

Sentience. *Warui* is a sentient neutral evil weapon with an Intelligence of 17, a Wisdom of 15, and a Charisma of 16. It has hearing and darkvision out to a range of 60 feet. The weapon communicates telepathically with its wielder and can speak, read, and understand Adeddo, Draconic, and Soburi.

Personality. *Warui*'s purpose is to bring death to as many fools as it can, preferably after they have egotistically decided that they are worthy of wielding it. The tsukumogami speaks about its wielder with reverence and praise, often interrupting others with proclamations of greatness and esteem. These are of course all lies and *Warui* despises everyone that picks it up (Deception +9).




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

Connection A: Trekking East

Between the events of *Scourge of Róbai Shita Temple* and *Feud Primordial* autumn comes to an end, but the winter is truly bitter as the PCs encounter the ice demon Kumo-Rui! Its perilous presence slows their journey and delays the coming of spring where the adventurers catch onto the trail of a cult leader on behalf of a powerful new benefactor. This isn't the only echo of their past come to haunt the party however, and should they survive the chilling snows but are not careful pursuing the rogue sorcerer an ambush by the third Mubō brother (Kyūchi the Wise) may be their undoing!

The PCs are leaving either Sukochi Prefecture (from Shibai or Kyusokuna) and need to get down to Engi or somewhere near Korusu Prefecture in order to be quested by Akia the Iron Shell to track down the oni-touched sorcerer Shinjirarenai. In between the adventurers are likely to cross through some of the following prefectures: Namida, Gekido, Kirai, Imperial, Donyuko, Satsujin, Osore. There are several routes the party might pursue—hiring a ship to sail from Seinaru downriver to Sanbaoshi, traveling the long way around through the mainland, or forced into a zigzag path by virtue of the unnatural wintery weather—but no matter what way they go, there are a few NPCs they encounter and events that happen:

- ***Trade War: Peasant Hero.*** While traveling the party overhears rumors of a machine-armored Erītokirā mercenary protecting farmers—but unlike normal, this infamous warrior is said to be a soburi and not a shikome!
- ***Frozen Gūzen & Kumo-Rui.*** Fukō is not the only malevolent spirit plaguing Soburin and winter brings another foul entity into existence: the demonic ice arachnid Kumo-Rui. Snows pile twice as high and even after its demise a deathly chill hangs over Soburin until well into late spring.
- ***Mubō Brothers: Kyūchi the Wise.*** Sandā and Raittoningu were one of many, and when Kyūchi hears of his brothers' deaths he vows to kill their murderers. Though he does not wield a portable cannon, with his longrifle, keen eye, and patience he poses a deadlier threat than his siblings.

In addition to these the PCs might also interact with the following and they are likely to have random encounters. The random encounter tables are reprinted here (by terrain) though it should be noted that not all creatures are an appropriate challenge for the adventurers—GMs should ignore these results or make it clear to the party that not every monster needs to be slain.

- ***Black Torii Gate.*** Adventurers that climb through the mountains see their first black torii gate across a great chasm, used as a waypoint for travelers to the yai sovereign that dwells in the ridge's southern peak.
- ***Machibuse Traders: Vengeance for Sanjuro.*** Hengeyokai traders that play a large role in *Feud Primordial* and though they don't know until after Róbai Shita Temple has been cleansed, the PCs have already interacted with one of its members: Sanjuro Shigetoki! Tracking his murderer takes them to the metropolis of Sanbaoshi.
- ***Mitsuyu Gyōsha Consortium: Warui's Big Mouth.*** The PCs might've made the tsukumogami Warui their ally. It is very chatty however and draws attention, particularly from agents of the shady black market traders that utilize its kind to smuggle goods throughout Soburin.
- ***Primal Ninjas: Restorers of Gensosō.*** With the defeat of Fukō and again with Kumo-Rui the adventurers restore power to ancient Gensosō Caves in Ikari Prefecture. The elemental monks that utilize these sites gradually track down the source of the unexpected blessings, shadowing the PCs and offering clandestine aid.

Forging Travel Papers

If the PCs choose not to take Hidaretei Pass their route may be less fraught by danger (GMs should include at least one encounter with the Mists of Akuma to keep things lively) but there are still obstacles that will block their path. Ports, roadways, and borders between prefectures are all subject to strict security revolving around travel papers dispensed by the Masuto Empire and getting through these without raising any suspicions will require the adventurers to be exceptionally stealthy or clever.

Forgeries. Crafting false travel papers requires the forger to know the symbols for their embarkation and destination in order to make an Intelligence check. Guards use their passive Perception to recognize the forgery, or roll an Intelligence (Investigation) check 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. The PCs might find one in Kizuato Prefecture to bribe for documents on the sly or steal from their supply of materials to make a better forgery (gaining advantage on the check).

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.)

Trade War: Peasant Hero

The central plot thread of *Trade War* revolves around erītokirā suits, a powerful type of machine-armor exclusively used by militant shikome warrior chapters throughout Soburin. Shukettsu—an erītokirā from the Kodomo-Tachi—interacted with the adventurers in *Scourge of Róbai Shita Temple* but he and his fellows are all keen to learn where and how their technology is being stolen. In this part of the adventure arc the PCs are unaware of the crisis but at the GM's discretion, with a successful DC 13 Intelligence (Investigation) check while in a settlement they may hear rumors about a lone soburi-erītokirā warrior traveling between farms to fight off adeddo-oni. Further research into this mysterious figure (a lowly farmer from Ibutsu Prefecture named Yakunitatsu Aibō) reveals very little but the party will interact with this particular farmer more than any others later on in the adventure path.

Throughout the winter the PCs can find out two solid instances of the elusive warrior defending a homestead, though they never catch up with him and after they've visited a location Yakunitatsu moves on to another.

Tani Fusakata (Guard) & Togashi Ujikage (Acolyte)

Roles: Ex-guard and ex-priest farmers
Disposition: Stubbornly friendly

These two men gradually lost their families to the Mists of Akuma but refuse to abandon the land of their forefathers, living together for protection (originally anyway—they've found a romance betwixt them in the abnormally long winter nights). Each served in the militia of Ētoā Town before it was destroyed, and as some of the only farmers left in the region their next harvest will be crucial, even more so because it'll be coming in late. Togashi



has nearly lost his will to live but thanks to Tani's exuberance he persists, and were it not for the intervention of the traveling machine-armored warrior it's that zeal for life which nearly saw them killed.

While taking a dangerous promenade in the snowy weather the mists appeared on the horizon, and while they were far enough away to outrun the supernatural haze the creatures emerging from it would surely have slain them. Instead they were saved by a kindly if somewhat meek soburi male of innoble bearing, clumsy with his weapon and unsure on his feet. All the same he easily defeated the monsters and stayed with the pair for over a week. They never learned his name but if pressed with a DC 13 Charisma (Persuasion) check or DC 16 Charisma (Intimidation) check Tani reveals that they believe he came from Ibutsu Prefecture, if only because of his accent. Once they've befriended either of them, the farmers freely share that the warrior was headed to whatever settlement the GM needs the adventurers to go to next.

Ikoma Yoso (Noble) & Sanada Yenno (Scout)

Roles: Hiding merchant and hunter turned farmers
Disposition: Secretive and suspicious

When the adventurers first meet these "farmers" they each make a DC 12 Dignity check. On a success, a PC gains a +2 bonus on Wisdom and Charisma checks made while interacting with them. Both of these women have something to hide from the party and although their secrets have little impact on the adventurers, they are wont to share them all the same. Sanada conceals only that the farmstead the two are living in was recently vacated by a family lost to the primordial scourge after being plied with a successful DC 12 Wisdom (Insight) check. Ikoma on the other hand has reason to hide her real name (Gosankyo Kuni) and noble birth, fearful of reprisal after the rest of the Kuni clan were slain in a blood feud in Fukushu Prefecture.

Finding out this information from either of the women requires a DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion) check or DC 18 Charisma (Intimidation) check, though even on a failure from one of these checks the PCs discover that the mysterious warriors was of northern descent (from his complexion), headed towards the destination of the GM's choosing, and the following account of their time with him. The machine-armored soburi appeared during a fierce snowstorm and at first they mistook him to be oni. When they realized their mistake they allowed him into their home and hosted him for two days, during each of which he fought off assaults by adeddo-oni. Ikoma suspected that the monsters may have been following him and bade him to leave—he was polite and did so but bumbled as he donned his armor again, and showed no proper gratitude so she believes him to be a peasant as well.

Frozen Gūzen & Kumo-Rui

Shortly after the PCs begin their journey eastward across Soburin (preferably in the Gekido, Kirai, or Imperial Prefecture) the winter season begins in force with snows piling so high and winds so fierce that without permanent shelter in a settlement the adventurers will die of exposure. Wherever the party might be when they figure this out, the nearest community with habitations is in a small town called Gūzen. The cold is especially bitter, temperatures driven far lower than normal by the presence of another entity wrought by the spirits that devoured nature, this one a child of Fuyu-Noyaban: the frozen spider Kumo-Rui.

Town of Gūzen

Once a burgeoning settlement expanding in the prosperity following Hitoshi's Rebellion, the Mists of Akuma have decimated Gūzen and only perhaps two dozen people still remain. Read the following when the PCs come across the settlement:

> *Like everywhere else you're able to see in the near constant snowfall, the small settlement ahead is coated in soft powder. Unlike the rare buildings you've come across, this time you spot stacks of smoke rising up into the sky and see a few trenches dug out for people to trod upon. There is little activity to be seen but when compared to the recent solitude of the wilderness it seems to be positively bustling with life.*

The elected mayor died with the first frost of winter and its eldest citizen (a reserved old woman, Nabeshima Umeyo) has taken over as leader. Despite her dislike for newcomers she welcomes those able to wield blade or spell, suspicious of something strange goings on in the region—Nabeshima has seen many cold seasons but nothing like what falls on Soburin this year. Once the PCs have been guests of Gūzen for a week, each should make a DC 12 Charisma or DC 11 Dignity check. On a success, the town's leader shares whatever rumors (see Webs in the Frost) the party have not already uncovered.

Webs in the Frost

Gūzen has no tea house or inn, the party bade to stay in a recently abandoned home instead. People gather under the large porch roof of Nabeshima Umeyo's house in the afternoon each day (provided they've shoveled the perpetually fresh snow away to make a new path) to check in on one another, trade, and sometimes share tea. While mingling with the town's citizens, a PC that makes a DC 13 Intelligence (Investigation) or Charisma (Persuasion) check hears one of the following rumors (roll 1d4 to randomly determine which).

- This winter is not just fierce, it is unnaturally so. Not even Nabeshima can remember such a freezing cold and none of the local legends speak of conditions being this bitter.
- While foraging for firewood in the forests nearby, several villagers came across a frozen corpse with the blood sucked out of it. They share its location (not more than a mile away) and upon even a cursory inspection the PCs can confirm that it has been exsanguinated. A DC 10 Wisdom (Medicine) check locates a many-fanged wound on the neck, though what creature might have dealt it is uncertain.
- On the coldest evenings near midnight, a few folks have seen strange frost form on glasses and ceramics in the shape of spider-like webs.
- A terrifying ice giant oni has kidnapped people from Gūzen! None have witnessed it, but more than one house has become vacant with the only clues as to why being puddles of water in strange spots within and depressions in the snows outside—as though they were skipped across the landscape like a stone on water. A DC 12 Wisdom (Survival) check is enough to track the strange furroughs in the snow. Results of 16 or higher reveal that nothing was skipped, instead it was dragged along behind the creature (which left no footprints of its own). Following the 3-mile trail leads to Kumo-Rui's cave, although a DC 14 Intelligence (Investigation) check or passive Perception of 14 is needed to spot the entrance to its lair.



DEMON'S PRESENCE

Unlike its spiritual sibling Fukō, the very presence of Kumo-Rui brings chilling ruination on a large area around it. Druids inside the radius of these effects can sense the wrongness, the unnatural feeling stronger where the demon's presence is more prevalent.

- The region within 50 miles of Kumo-Rui is unnaturally cold (–5 °F or –20 °C). In addition, the melting point of ice and snow is raised considerably (to 42 °F or 108 °C).
- Within 10 miles of Kumo-Rui all waterways are frozen over and the snow is at least 3 feet deep. While outside of a forested area, Small creatures treat each 5-foot square as 20 feet (treated as difficult terrain by Medium-sized creatures). A Small-sized creature with a total weight no greater than 40 pounds can make a DC 5 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check at the start of each of its turns to try and walk atop the snows, falling and becoming restrained (escape DC 10, Defense 1, 10 hp) on a failure.
- A 1,000-foot radius ice sheet surrounds Kumo-Rui's lair. When a creature moves at more than half speed it requires a successful DC 5 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check or falls prone.
- Kumo-Rui has prepared several ice webbing traps in a mile radius of its home.

ICE WEBBING TRAP

Magical trap

This ice webbing is covered by snow. A successful DC 17 Wisdom (Perception) check discerns the faint outline of the ice web just barely brimming with energy beneath the snow. When on an icy surface, the DC to notice the ice webbing is reduced to 14. When a creature steps on ice webbing or the snow on top, the ice webbing swings upward and wraps to restrain the creature. At the start of its turn, a creature restrained by ice webbing takes 3 (1d6) cold damage. As an action, the restrained creature can make a DC 17 Strength check, escaping from the ice webbing on a success. The effect also ends if the webbing is destroyed. The webbing has AC 13, 9 hit points, vulnerability to fire damage, resistance to acid and piercing damage, and immunity to cold, poison, and psychic damage.

KUMO-RUI'S LAIR

The demonic arachnid has burrowed a home for itself, creating an ice cave underneath an abandoned farmer's field not far from Gūzen (and as a new feature it does not appear on any maps of the area). Once nearby (possibly led by Sanada Yenno if not by the party's own means), a DC 14 Intelligence (Investigation) check or passive Perception of 14 is needed to spot the entrance to its lair. Inside the adventurers come across dozens of ice web husks, the blood-drained corpses of Kumo-Rui's victims. Read the following:

The walls of this cavern are completely encased in ice, the sheen of reflecting cyans and light blues broken only by the occasional husk of frosted webbing, faces of the pallid corpses within twisted into exsanguinated rictuses of suffering. Lattices of the ice webs drift lazily in the cold gusts and as you travel further inside, the bulk of something unnatural scuttles into view. The only thing about the arachnid before you that does not inspire a chill in the bones are its human-like eyes, baleful orbs of sickening yellow with fiery pits in the middle.

Kumo-Rui is nonchalant and if anything, relieved that its next few meals have delivered themselves. When combat begins he separates the party, using *wall of ice* to create a partition (placed so as not to damage any PCs when created) then batting at its prey until its Ice Web attack takes hold. When its immediate foe(s) is unconscious it ceases concentrating on the spell and engages any remaining adventurers. Once defeated, the demon's presence ceases to affect the region and a search of its lair with a successful DC 13 Intelligence (Investigation) check (made with advantage with the liberal use of fire damage to melt the ice) uncovers 6d4 gold and either two uncommon magic items or one rare magic item (if the PCs did not encounter Warui in *Scourge of Róbai Shita Temple*, they might instead find the tsukumogami here).

KUMO-RUI

Large oni, chaotic evil
Armor Class 15 (natural)
Hit Points 92 (8d10+48)
Speed 45 ft., leap 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	15 (+2)	22 (+6)	13 (+1)	19 (+4)	14 (+2)

Saving Throws Str +5, Con +9, Wis +7
Skills Arcane +7, Nature +7, Perception +10, Religion +4, Survival +10
Damage Vulnerabilities radiant, fire
Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical weapons
Damage Immunities cold
Condition Immunities frightened
Senses darkvision 120 ft., tremorsense 20 ft. (100 ft. in snow), passive Perception 20
Languages Soburi (Common)
Challenge 6 (2,300 XP)

Ice Arachnid. Kumo-Rui can move across and climb surfaces, including icy surfaces and upside down on ceilings, without needing to make an ability check. Additionally, difficult terrain composed of ice, snow, or webbing doesn't cost it extra movement, and it leaves no tracks on ice or snow.

Innate Spellcasting. Kumo-Rui's innate spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell attack +7, spell save DC 15). It can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components.

At will: chill touch
3/day each: bane, inflict wounds, ray of enfeeblement, shatter
1/day: *blight, fire shield* (cold only), *ice storm, wall of ice*

Magic Resistance. Kumo-Rui has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Web Sense. While in contact with a web, Kumo-Rui knows the exact location of any other creature in contact with the same web.

ACTIONS

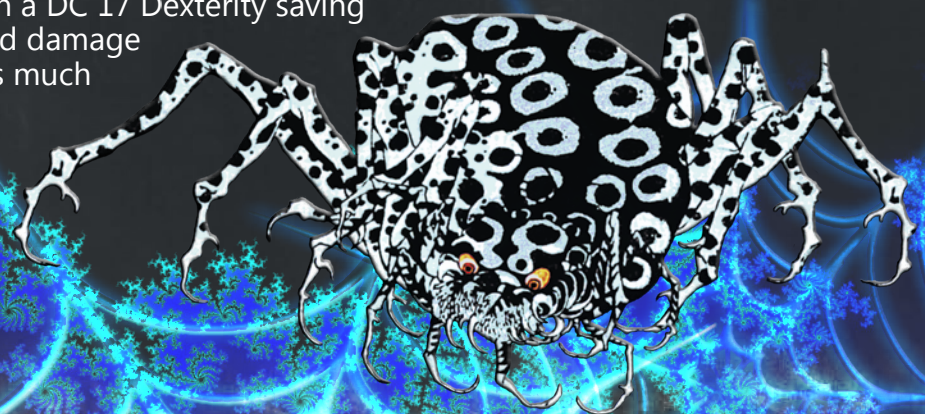
Multiattack. Kumo-Rui attacks once with its bite and once with its claw, or it uses ice web and makes a melee attack.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit*: 10 (2d6+3) piercing damage plus 7 (2d6) cold damage, and the target must make a DC 17 Constitution saving throw, taking 14 (4d6) poison damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +6 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit*: 7 (1d8+3) slashing damage plus 4 (1d8) cold damage.

Ice Web (Recharge 5-6). *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, range 45/90 ft., one Huge or smaller creature. *Hit:* The creature is restrained by webbing as cold as ice. At the start of its turn, a creature restrained by ice webbing takes 3 (1d6) cold damage. As an action, the restrained creature can make a DC 17 Strength check, escaping from the ice webbing on a success. The effect also ends if the webbing is destroyed. The webbing has AC 13, 9 hit points, vulnerability to fire damage, resistance to acid and piercing damage, and immunity to cold, poison, and psychic damage.

Frost Breath (Recharge 5-6). Kumo-Rui exhales a 15-foot cone of cold air. Each creature in that area must succeed on a DC 17 Dexterity saving throw, taking 14 (4d6) cold damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.



Mubō Brothers: Kyūchi the Wise

The party's encounter with the third Mubō brother can happen at any time before the beginning of *Feud Primordial* but it's recommended to introduce him after Kumo-Rui's been slain. While the adventurers are traveling they pass into a gorge and after a few hundred feet, Kyūchi the Wise makes his presence (and motives) known. Read the following:

> *A long canyon stretches ahead of you and gives a picturesque view of Soburin at its finest—sheer cliffs mirror one another on either side of the expanse, the lone trees on the valley floor placed as though a gardener planted them centuries ago to frame the vista with spurts of branches sure to bloom fiercely when the time is right. It is a truly majestic sight and devoid of humanity's touch—and the ruinations of monsters corrupting the world.*

Shortly after the party continues, read the following:

> *The peaceful silence of your surroundings is interrupted by a short whistle that ends when an arrow falls from above just ahead of you, a scroll attached to it partially uncoiling from the impact as it buries itself in the snow.*

No archers are in sight and when the adventurers unfurll the arrow's note, it reads as follows:

> *"To wound one Mubō is to wound us all. On behalf of Raittoningu and Sandā, I shall take vengeance. —Kyūchi Mubō"*

> *The crack of a gunshot breaks the silence once more, soon followed by a cacophony of explosions bringing the sides of the valley behind you down in a rockslide that blocks any retreat! A second bullet splits the air and sets off more explosions, sending more rocks to cascade down and making the pile an unstable mess.*

As his name suggests, Kyūchi the Wise has carefully chosen the battleground for taking revenge on the party—he is perched 50 feet up the cliffside 800 feet from the rockslide he just caused. Any creatures near the rockslide (such as horses or cautious adventurers waiting for someone else to scout ahead) must choose to flee into the valley or out of it. Fleeing into the valley requires a DC 10 Dexterity saving throw made with advantage and on a failure, a creature takes 3d6 bludgeoning damage and is restrained (escape DC 10). Fleeing out of the valley requires a DC 14 Dexterity saving throw made with disadvantage and on a failure, a creature takes 6d6 bludgeoning damage and is restrained (escape DC 18).

Heading back the way they came requires climbing a precarious 80-foot wall of shifting stone with DC 18 Strength (Athletics) checks. Failure on any check causes the stones to shift, dealing 1d6 bludgeoning damage as things reposition and prompting a DC 16 Dexterity saving throw to stay on the wall. The cliff faces on the side of the valley are similarly difficult although there's no additional penalties for failure on checks made to climb, and these walls rise up a total of 120 feet.

The only cover offered between Kyūchi and the PCs are a few trees and if this encounter happens at night, the initial explosion is tied off to dozens of flares that cast the whole valley in dim light for 5 minutes. Spotting the small candles hiding the flares and explosives before entering the valley requires a DC 19 Wisdom (Perception) check.

Kyūchi is ruthless and selective of his targets, taking out any obvious spellcasters before magical artillery can dislodge him. The marksman is extremely focused however and anyone that reaches within 40 feet of his wall has advantage on Dexterity (Stealth) checks to conceal themselves while climbing up to him with DC 14 Strength (Athletics) checks. Though the gunman is deadly at range, once engaged in melee combat any warrior worth their weight will dispatch him quickly.

Downtime

Even after Kumo-Rui is destroyed the effect of the very bitter season will slow travel considerably. At the GM's discretion, the PCs may have as many as 3 or 4 months of downtime before spring rears and Akia the Iron Shell commissions them to find Shinjirarenai.

Kyūchi Mubō

Medium humanoid (soburi), neutral
Armor Class 13 (leather)*
Hit Points 78 (12d8+24)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA	Dignity	Haitoku
12 (+1)	14 (+2)	15 (+2)	12 (+1)	17 (+3)	10 (+0)	13 (+1)	14 (+2)

Saving Throws Dex +5, Wis +6
Skills Athletics +7, Investigation +7, Perception +9, Stealth +8, Survival +6
Senses passive Perception 19
Languages Soburi (Common)
Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)



Aimed Shot (1/round). Kyūchi uses a bonus action to carefully aim before letting loose a shot that has disastrous consequences if it hits. He gains a +3 bonus to this attack roll.

- ***Torso (target's AC + 2).*** The creature takes a cumulative -1 penalty to Constitution saving throws until the damage from torso hits is healed.
- ***Leg (target's AC + 4).*** The creature takes a cumulative -1 penalty to Strength saving throws and a -5 ft. penalty to speed until the damage from leg hits is healed.
- ***Arm (target's AC + 6).*** The creature takes a cumulative -1 penalty to Dexterity saving throws and a -1 penalty to attack rolls until the damage from arm hits is healed.
- ***Headshot (target's AC + 6).*** The attack is a critical hit that deals maximum damage. The creature makes a Constitution saving throw against a DC equal to the attack's damage. On a success it is blinded for 1 round per 10 points of damage (minimum 1 round). Its blindness ends earlier if the damage from the headshot is healed. On a failure it is blinded for 1 minute regardless of healed headshot damage.
- ***Skullshot (natural 20).*** The creature makes a DC 14 Constitution saving throw or is reduced to 0 hit points.

Cunning Action (1/round). Kyūchi can take a bonus action to take the Dash, Disengage, or Hide action.

Deadeye. Kyūchi does not have disadvantage on ranged weapon attack rolls made at long range and he ignores any cover equal to or less than three-quarters cover.

Evasion. When Kyūchi is subjected to an effect that allows him to make a Dexterity saving throw to take only half damage, he instead takes no damage if he succeeds on the saving throw, and only half damage if he fails.

Sneaky. Kyūchi can attempt to hide even when he is only lightly obscured from a creature he's trying to hide from. In addition, Kyūchi's position isn't revealed when he misses with a ranged weapon attack against a creature he's hidden from, and he does not have disadvantage on ranged attack rolls or Wisdom (Perception) checks in dim light.

Wise (1/round). Kyūchi is extremely insightful and surprisingly wise for his age. He may grant himself advantage on a Wisdom ability check.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Kyūchi makes three melee attacks or attacks twice with his longrifle. When Kyūchi makes his first ranged weapon attack in a turn, he can choose to take a -5 penalty to his ranged weapon attack rolls in exchange for a +10 bonus to ranged weapon damage.

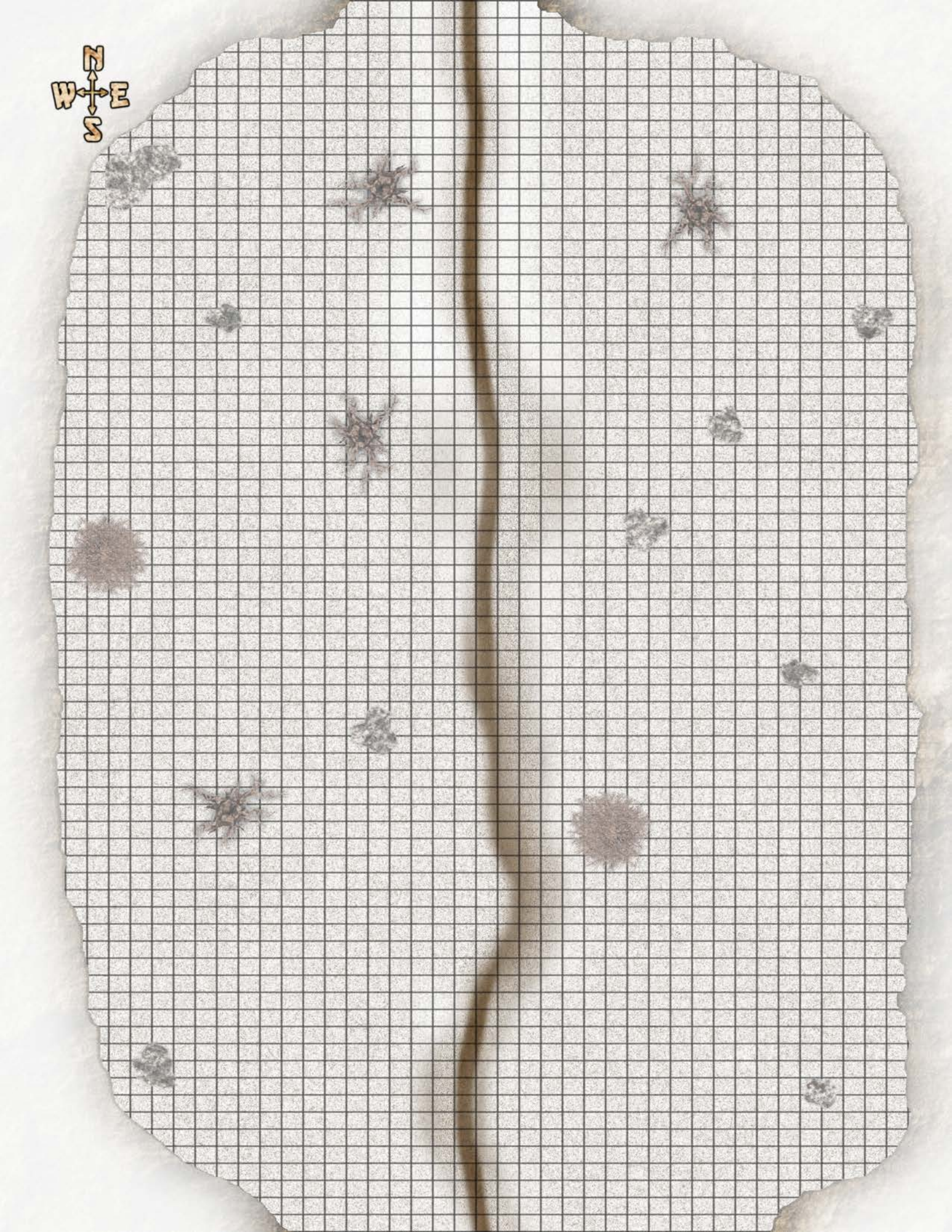
Gun Barrel. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d8+2) magical bludgeoning damage plus on a critical hit, if the weapon is loaded he can use a reaction to make a longrifle attack with advantage.

Katana (one-handed). *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d10+2) slashing damage.

Longrifle (66 bullets). *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, range 250/1,000 ft., one target. *Hit:* 12 (2d8+3) magical piercing damage.

Volley. Kyūchi makes a ranged attack against any number of creatures within 10 feet of a point he can see within his weapon's range. He must have ammunition for each target, as normal, and he makes a separate attack roll for each target.

**If encountered outside of a sniper's nest or other position he's already prepared, Kyūchi has a do-maru jacket that raises his AC to 16.*


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Fukō's Black Torii Gate

This early into the adventure path there should be little to no indication to the PCs that these imposing structures are exceptional or truly out of the ordinary. A party traveling through the mountains will get a chance to see one from afar along a distant path that bears the markings of oni using it to navigate to the lair of a powerful yai sovereign at the peak of the mountains. Any monsters traveling this far up are too dangerous for the PCs to fight at this level, but they'll notice the ebony edifice and may realize something is awry depending on how events played out in Shibai.

Read the following:

> *While climbing up a bit of treacherous rockface you catch a glimpse of a beautiful vista on the mountain ridge, the clear air giving visibility for miles. Far off in the distance stands a lone torii gate and were its location not curious enough, it is as black as the night. Just as the thought of investigating it further pops into your head a massive slithering creature saunters up the path leading to it—an imperial dragon! It casually scratches a huge tear into the rockface nearby before passing through and for a brief, terrifying moment it glances directly at you. The moment passes quickly enough however and then the powerful serpent continues on, clearly deigning you of no importance.*

If the party did not permanently kill Fukō, the black torii gate brims with malevolent energies and the winds around it are visibly fierce. Read the following instead:

> *While climbing up a bit of treacherous rockface, the wind howling like a dying god, you catch a glimpse of a beautiful vista on the mountain ridge. Perhaps two miles off across a great chasm stands a lone torii gate and were its location not curious enough, it is as black as the night and brimming with malevolent energies the color of blood. You watch as a massive slithering creature slowly steps up the path leading to it—an imperial dragon! The scaled monster fights at winds that must be fierce indeed, stopping only to scratch a huge tear into the rockface nearby before passing through.*

Machibuse Traders: Vengeance for Sanjuro

In *Scourge of Róbai Shita Temple* the PCs meet and unknowingly track a merchant that stole a relic from the town's sacred site of worship. Once the party has restored the *yūrei-fū wind chimes* (and killed the wind demon Fukō) but before they leave Shibai, the cries of its citizens draw them to the home of Sanjuro Shigetoki. Read the following:

> *What awaits you inside of the Shigetoki home is a bloodbath—the corpse of a ratfolk hengeyokai in Sanjuro's garb is crumpled on the floor, crimson handprints on the wood where he reached out seeking to stop his attacker or find aid before the life left his body.*

It's immediately obvious that a murder happened here and a DC 12 Wisdom (Survival) check finds the culprit's tracks leading up into the mountains to the southeast. Any PC that makes a DC 14 Intelligence (Investigation) check inside the home finds a strangely hinged piece of tough metal. Furthermore, a DC 18 Intelligence check recognizes that it is similar to the machine-armor of the shikome warrior. A quick headcount in the town reveals that either Ishimoto or Yashido (if the mayor was deposed by her sister) is missing and when asked, one of the villagers tells that she was covered in blood as she fled the settlement. None of them, however, were aware that Sanjuro was a nezumi (and his connection to the Machibuse Traders remains entirely unknown).

Following the murderer into the mountains as winter sets in is an arduous task and requires several Strength (Athletics) checks (DC 14+1d6). Unless all of the party has climb speeds, the culprit escapes them when the PCs face off against random encounters on the trek (page 13). Anyone with a passive Investigation or Perception of 13 or higher finds another piece of metal (as above) along the way. The trail goes cold near the top of the ridge as the PCs pass into Namida Prefecture —when they encounter a guard or enter a settlement larger than a town, their recently acquired blank travel papers are stamped or they need to work out another means to legally be in the territory (page 48).

The nearest settlement from where the party crosses the border is Bojuku, a city in the fearful shadow of a yai sovereign near where the adventurers just traveled. Its citizens are fearful and suspicious of the party but with a DC 14 Intelligence (Investigation) check they can find out that the murderer was seen here recently, chartering passage downriver to Sanbaoshi. For 3 gold each the PCs can get passage as well but once they reach the metropolis she's long gone—for now, anyway. The Imperial Prefecture's capital is fully detailed in the *Mists of Akuma* core rulebook but the party doesn't spend a great deal of time here: they are commissioned by Akia the Iron Shell shortly after their arrival.

Warui's Big Mouth & Restorers of Gensosō

Adventurers that acquired the kasa-obake tsukumogami at the end of *Scourge of Róbai Shita Temple* (or in Kumo-Rui's lair) have a potent ally but the talking umbrella causes a stir wherever they go. The smugglers that utilize animated monsters like Warui take a great interest in the party and when they leave a settlement, the GM makes a secret DC 20 Wisdom (Perception) check for each PC to notice they're being followed. Giving chase to their shadow (men and women of all the races dressed like other locals) is a fruitless endeavor (each is a Spy carrying a *potion of invisibility* to avoid capture) but they do not interfere with the adventurers or follow them through the wilderness. More importantly the party's curious new companion's notoriety draws them to the attentions of Akia the Iron Shell. After the PCs have defeated Kumo-Rui, she's waiting for them in the next settlement.

The tsukumogami smugglers shadowing the party are not alone, though their other observers make little effort to hide themselves. Some of the Gensosō of Ikari Prefecture believe they owe the adventurers a debt of gratitude, their masters within the order postulating that Fukō's destruction restored one of their ancient holy sites. Whenever the PCs enter a settlement larger than a town, there's a 25% chance they encounter one of the reed-helmeted warriors. Once the PCs have slayed Kumo-Rui, this increases to 50%. The Gensosō respectfully approaches the adventurers, offering thanks and aid. Using their respected position the warrior-monk can help the PCs gain an audience with a local noble or merchant, acquire free lodging, demonstrate their unique combat techniques, or serve as an adjutant (for 1d4 days or until the adventurers leave).

The Iron Shell & Shinjirarenai

The fundamental link connecting *Scourge of Róbai Shita Temple* and *Feud Primordial* is a new bengoshi commissioning the adventurers to track down the oni-touched sorcerer Shinjirarenai. There are a variety of ways for the PCs to come across Akia the Iron Shell's path detailed in the previous pages but it's recommended that she is not encountered until after Kumo-Rui has been killed. No matter where precisely the party meets her, the building is going to be a tea house or tavern. Read the following:

All around you fellow patrons are in polite discussion or sharing stories in good humor but it all comes to a quiet stop as a large, rusting steel cylinder crawls into the building atop wheel-driven strips of rubber tread. Everyone watches as it rolls between the tables, expertly navigating around corners until stopping before you. From this close up you can see old, calculating human eyes within the contraption but when you peer closer, doors swing out from the front of the device to reveal an old woman waiting within—a double-barreled pistol in each hand. "You are precisely the people I have been looking for. I am a bengoshi of Korusu and you may call me Akia. Some say The Iron Shell. I do not care which. "





AKIA THE IRON SHELL

Medium humanoid (human), any alignment
Armor Class 22 (iron shell, shield)
Hit Points 136 (16d8+64)
Speed 15 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
19 (+4)	10 (+0)	18 (+4)	15 (+2)	16 (+3)	17 (+3)

Saving Throws Str +8, Con +8, Int +6
Skills Athletics +8, Deception +7, Insight +7, Perception +7, Persuasion +7
Damage Resistances acid, cold, fire, force, lightning, thunder; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical weapons
Condition Immunities charmed, frightened, prone
Senses darkvision 60 ft., tremorsense 60 ft., passive Perception 17
Languages Ceram, Ropa, Soburi
Challenge 12 (8,400 XP)

Iron Aim. Akia has advantage on ranged attack rolls while inside her armor.

Iron Armory. The interior of Akia's armor hides devices that conceal and automatically reload her firearms, enabling her to draw guns as a free action and to ignore the loading property of firearms.

Iron Shell. Akia gains darkvision, tremorsense, and damage resistances only while inside of her armor. Outside of her armor, Akia's Strength score is reduced to 10.

Shell Bullets. Akia's firearms are loaded with bullets specially made to be utterly deadly when striking organic matter. She deals half damage against creatures of the construct type, necroji, steametics, umibo, objects, and structures.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Akia makes four double-barreled pistol attacks.

Hand Hwacha (5-6). *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, range 30/120 ft. or all targets in a 30-foot line. *Hit:* 35 (10d6) piercing damage. The Iron Shell makes a separate attack roll for each object and creature in the area.

Double-Barreled Pistol. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, range 30/90 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (2d10) piercing damage.



Akia has been traveling tending to the concerns of Korusu Prefecture and heard of the adventurers' exploits, deciding that they are just the right people to deal with a recent problem—the theft of an important shipment and possible rise of a blasphemous cult. In exchange for dispatching the heretic sorcerer and acquiring the valuable goods he's stolen, she offers them 100 Imperial Pieces and travel papers to go wherever they wish. The alternative is much less pleasant and involves her many, many, *many* guns.

Tracking the Sorcerer

Adventurers that agree to the deal (rather than annihilation by lead) receive the paperwork able to see them through to Kikotsu, a small settlement in Korusu Prefecture northeast of Engi where Shinjirarenai was last seen. The unnatural amount of snow makes travel eastward slow but spring finally takes hold as the PCs reach Kikotsu. Once there a DC 12 Intelligence (Investigation) check uncovers rumors of a bold, nightly ritual in the woods where the oni-touched openly defames the Emperor. Otherwise a DC 10 Wisdom (Insight) check can pick out a suspicious-looking local around dusk, someone clearly trying to be furtive with their movements and doing so badly enough that anyone observing them can determine they're up to no good. Following them leads to the sorcerer's blasphemous gathering.

Shinjirarenai's Escape

When the PCs reach the ritual area, read the following:

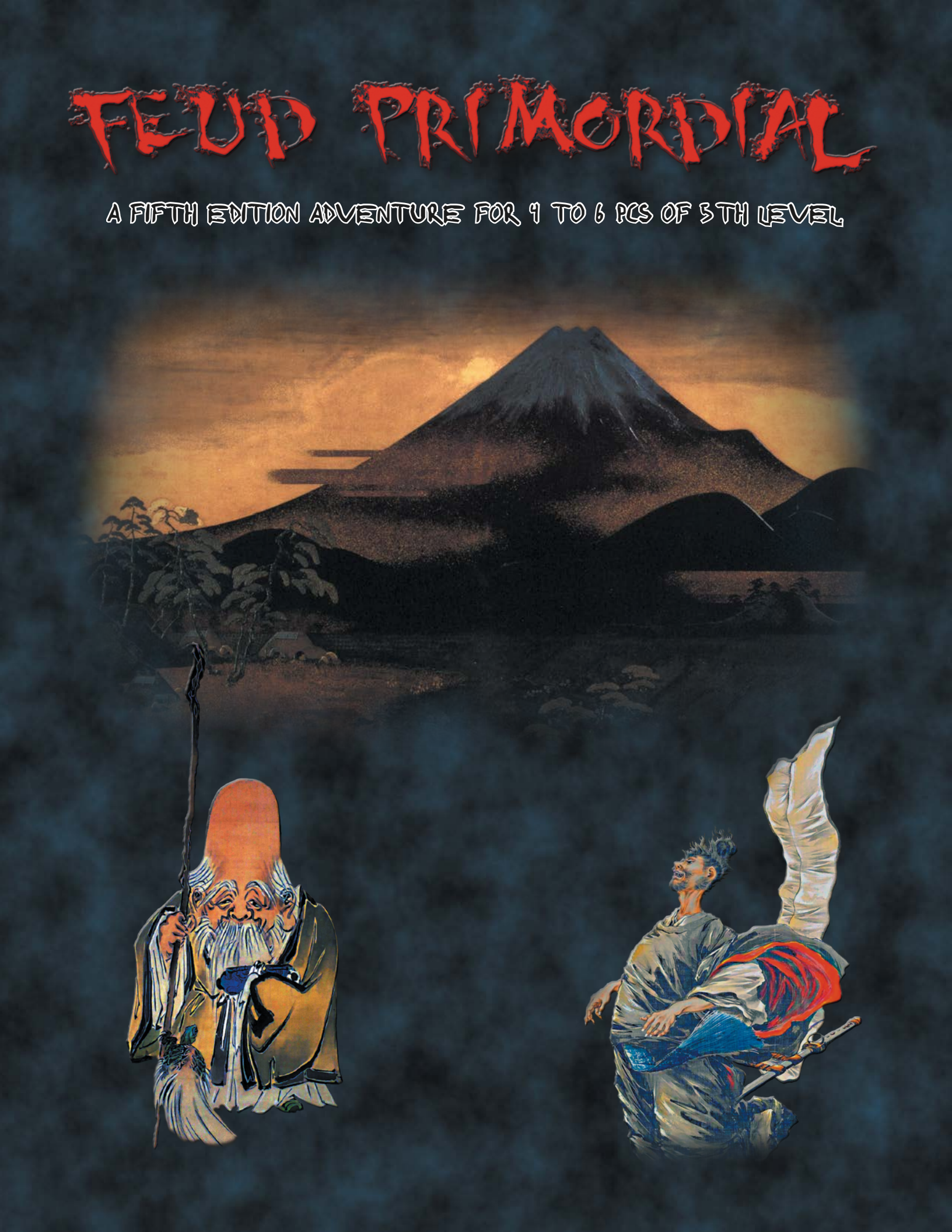
> *Flickering red and yellow flames rise up from out of the darkness, their light casting the trees of the forest around you into capricious black shadows. Even from afar you can hear the shouting and cries of those in attendance, all playing to the tirades of a shrill but confident voice muffled by the throng of people gathered around it. "Can you not see, my noble brethren, the terrible wounds that the Emperor and his edicts inflict on us every day? His guards are relentless fools, the leaders of the clans more concerned with their coffers than the lives of their peoples—how long must we suffer for their mistakes? Until we are dead? Until the Mists of Akuma, the ancient danger that only appeared after Hitoshi Masuto came to rule these lands, have transformed us all into monsters?! I say to thee nay!"*
>
> *Everyone around the animated, short oni-touched speaker cries out their approval save for one unarmored shikome that stands only a few feet from him. The bodyguard's eyes scan beyond the torchlights, clearly looking for danger, but even at a distance you can see it is exasperated and utterly disinterested in the display of zealotry by the crowd around it. All told more than a score of humans, oni-touched, bakemono, mutants, and even an enjin are in attendance, hanging on the orator's every word.*

Shinjirarenai stands in the center of his congregation, fearlessly shouting hate-filled epithets denouncing Emperor Hitoshi Masuto and blaming him for the return of the ancient Mists of Akuma. Throughout his tirade the shikome monk Yōjinbō remains on lookout for any threats but otherwise the sorcerer's three dozen followers (8 Cultists and the rest Commoners) are in rapt attention. When combat breaks out all of the NPCs move to protect their oni-touched leader and allow for him to escape with his bodyguard, harrying and delaying the PCs until he's well out of sight.

Once Shinjirarenai is gone however his followers lose their zealotry, surrendering in short order. A quick interrogation with a DC 14 Charisma (Persuasion) check or DC 10 Charisma (Intimidation) check reveals that he's been planning a bigger gathering for his most treasured followers, rumored to be happening in the town of Zōkasuru southwest across the river—leading into the beginning of *Feud Primordial*.

FEUD PRIMORDIAL

A FIFTH EDITION ADVENTURE FOR 4 TO 6 PCS OF 5TH LEVEL



Heat beats down from the blazing summer sun and the adventurers are hot on the trail of a fugitive, ordered by the bengoshi Akia the Iron Shell to hunt down the charismatic cult leader Shinjirarenai. Soon after routing the foul oni-touched mage however the mystery deepens, forcing the PCs to chase across southern Soburin after cases of turtlewax cream until the true powers at work are revealed and the party realizes they are but pawns in an ancient conflict, pieces on a game board between two Imperial Siblings!

Adventure Summary

This adventure begins in *media res*, the party already in the middle of a mission on behalf of a powerful government official (a bengoshi) named Akia the Iron Shell. Her orders to them were simple: find the upstart apostate Shinjirarenai, kill him, sunder the cult following him, and recover the valuable goods he's stolen. After defeating the oni-touched sorcerer and his minions the PCs are approached by a soru hengeyokai named Bōeki, a traveling merchant that witnesses the daring battle. In the midst of praising them the monkey folk offers a fine price of 100 Imperial Pieces for the common goods the party has recovered, convincing them (if necessary) that surely their bengoshi benefactor *intended* for them to sell the lesser items ("why else would she have told them to return with the *valuable* goods?") and because the perishables will spoil before ever reaching market. Even if they resist his persuasions, as the adventurers rest Bōeki steals away part of the shipment—specifically its six casks of turtlewax cream.

Akia the Iron Shell is furious when the party do not return with this seemingly benign item, completely unconcerned with recovered gold, jewelry, and ancestral relics that they have brought back. The adventurers receive only part of their promised reward and are ordered to recover the turtlewax cream post haste. They know from conversing with him that Bōeki made for the city of Nesuto in Ikari Prefecture and the PCs begin their pursuit, their journey across intervening Yokuba Prefecture's wildernesses harried by oni, mercenaries commanded by the dangerous chain-wielder Phacer, and the ancient Mists of Akuma.

Once the adventurers arrive in Nesuto they receive a message from their bengoshi master that lists local informants in his network of spies but cursory investigation reveals that several have been brutally murdered! Tamahana the kyūyurei oni also seeks the turtlewax cream and the duplicitous monster is paving her path to it in blood, pursued by the Gensosō monk Kazato Tetsunori (one of the Ikari Prefecture's capital's elite elemental-wielding defenders). Both Bōeki and his buyer (the mujina hengeyokai Yukawa Ikumu) have gone into hiding, and the badger-woman has hired a group of warriors to hunt down the murderer and obscure her. As the party clashes against these new rivals and the duplicitous bloodthirsty oni roaming through Nesuto, they close in on Yukawa Ikumu and the vaunted turtlewax cream, only for both to escape into the jungles while they face off against their new nemeses in one of the settlement's popular honor duels.

The adventurers plunge into the Zunkhasa Rainforest hot on the trail of mujina hengeyokai and the turtlewax cream, though along the way a mysterious old man begins following them at a distance—far too spry for his age. The mysterious arrival soon outpaces them and upon reaching the end of Yukawa's tracks, the party finds another enigmatic fellow in heated debate outside of a cave deep in the jungle. In moments the true identities of each are revealed—they are none other than Shūshō Ikari and Kanja Korusu, two of the ancient Imperial Siblings that first conquered Soburin millennia ago! An epic battle ensues and the PCs learn that Kanja has been pulling their strings all along, ordered by the turtle master to acquire the turtlewax cream inside the cavern while he occupies Shūshō. To succeed the adventurers must defeat foo lions summoned by his primordial rival and best traps prepared inside of the sacred space, but once they've done so the battle outside fades and they receive a once in a lifetime opportunity to wield the powers of the Gensosō monks of Nagabuki—and the Imperial Pieces that Akia the Iron Shell owes them for a job well done.

Adventure Background

This adventure begins with the party's arrival in Zōkasuru during the hottest summer in recent memory, where a chance encounter with a relic of some power has spurred the oni-touched sorcerer Shinjirarenai into gathering a small and devoted following of fearful citizens. The cult would have gone unnoticed for a while longer, but has ignorantly stolen something of great value to a hidden Imperial Sibling, prompting Akia the Iron Shell bengoshi to hire the adventurers to track him down.

Act 1: Ritual in Zōkasuru

Read the following to begin the adventure:

> *It is the hottest summer in over a century and the sun beats down hard, making every footstep kick up puffs of grit and dust that scatter onto the grasses around the dirt path stretching behind you. In the distance, through the waves of heat, you can see your destination: the small village of Zōkasuru. The isolated settlement is rumored to be the last place the apostate sorcerer Shinjirarenai was seen and with a little bit of luck, he can be found here or nearby, quickly routed, and your journey can head north to a prefecture that isn't as unforgivably hot.*

There is little of interest inside of Zōkasuru's 15 foot high stone walls save for Daisakenomi Teahouse, the homes of a couple traders, a school for local children, and modest dwellings of farmers with lands adjacent to the village. The townsfolk have no allegiance to Shinjirarenai and when it becomes clear that the PCs have come to deal with him, they plainly tell the adventurers that the sorcerer can be found in an abandoned mansion a few miles west of the settlement. For GMs that wish to make more mystery out of this section of the adventure, here are a few suggestions on how to do so:

- Some of Shinjirarenai's lackeys (2d4+2 Cultists) attack the inquisitive party in the Daisakenomi Teahouse (using the map on page 103) and then flee to him, leaving an easy trail to follow.
- Obara Daisakenomi (owner and server at the teahouse), Ibana Rinako (the local smith), Serizawa Sakue (the village's mason), or Iwasaki Yoichi (proprietor of the general store) can be bribed, persuaded, or intimidated into sharing the information.
- The PCs can visit with the various farmers around the village and after winning their trust, learn of a place some of their neighbors have been traveling towards or the identities of townsfolk that have been acting suspiciously as of late.
- Druids and rangers might converse with animals in the woods around Zōkasuru, learning that many humans gather in a secluded building west of town.

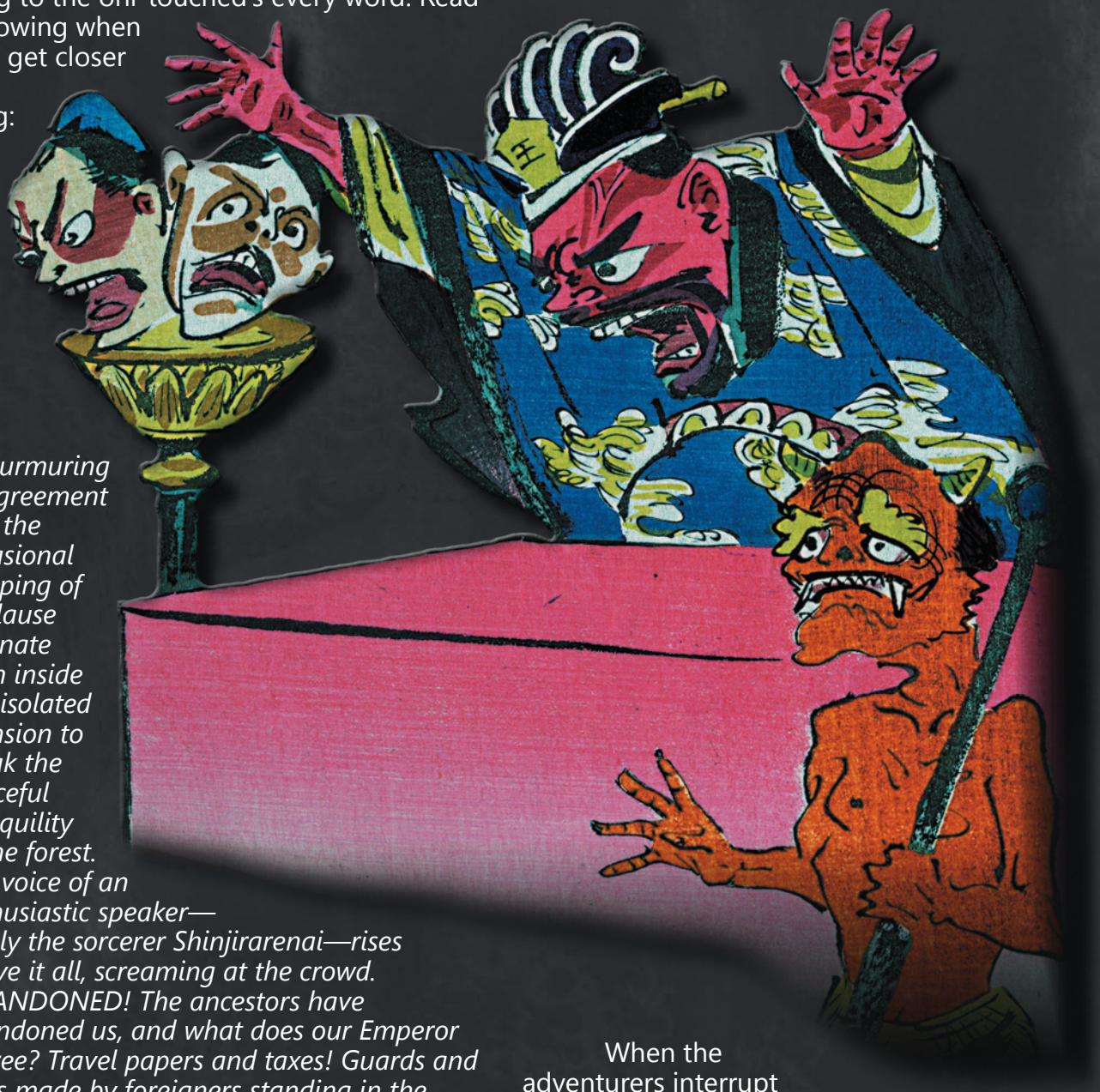
Facing Shinjirarenai

A little more than an hour of walking through the woods (which might include an encounter with the Mists of Akuma if the GM so wishes it) brings the adventurers to the abandoned mansion. Read the following as the party approaches:

> *A worn down mansion appears in the distance, the faded and untended carvings on its edges standing out against the trees of the forest. Its roof stands twenty hands high and is littered with broken shingles, the wooden beams on the building's corners rotted. Even at a distance a shrill but compelling voice can be heard inside, blaspheming ancestral spirits and the order imposed by Emperor Hitoshi Masuto—the ravings of a blasphemer.*

The first several rooms of the house have had their walls hastily torn down and to make way for a stage in the northeastern corner, upon which Shinjirarenai (page 88) has prepared the magic circle for a fell ritual. His familiar (a ryōmen; page 90) sits attentive near the podium in the front but it has disadvantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks to see through the fogged windows and notice someone lurking outside. The shikome Yōjinbō (page 89) keeps within 10 feet of the sorcerer while still attempting to stay out of the sphere of attention, and otherwise there are a dozen Commoners and a dozen Cultists attentively

listening to the oni-touched's every word. Read the following when the PCs get closer to the building:



A murmuring of agreement and the occasional clapping of applause resonate from inside this isolated mansion to break the peaceful tranquility of the forest. The voice of an enthusiastic speaker—surely the sorcerer Shinjirarenai—rises above it all, screaming at the crowd. "ABANDONED! The ancestors have abandoned us, and what does our Emperor decree? Travel papers and taxes! Guards and guns made by foreigners standing in the docks of Sanbaoshi! But the mists are not at the whim of Hitoshi Masuto, and he offers no respite to the wandering evil. My friends it is time to throw off the shackles of history, to embrace new ideas and new solutions!"

Shinjirarenai continues talking for 2d4 minutes after the party nears the building at which point he gets the crowd to chant in repetition ("Shisha o moyasu"). At the end of 1 minute of chanting his ritual completes and the Commoners in the room all gain 4 Haitoku, changing into Cultists and becoming utterly devoted to the sorcerer as Shinjirarenai increases to 7th level (gaining a new spell known, his first 4th-level spell slot, 1 sorcery point, and 1d6+1 hit points).

When the adventurers interrupt the gathering each PC makes a **DC 12 Charisma (Intimidation) check** (with advantage if they impressively crash through a window or door). Each success causes 1d4 Commoners to flee back to Zōkasuru, unwilling to face off against such dangerous foes. Any that remain join the Cultists in defending Shinjirarenai and form a line to defend the sorcerer as he flings spells at the adventurers. PCs that get close to the oni-touched are harried by Yōjinbō first but the shikome bodyguard is the only NPC that flees after the battle is joined, escaping when reduced to 8 hit points or less—everyone else that attacks the party is compelled by Shinjirarenai's dark relic (the *kokutan-niryoku*) to fight to the death.


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KOKUTAN-NIRYOKU



Wondrous item, very rare (requires attunement)

This curious trinket was once shorn from the leg of a man-sized avian, the calcified claw gripped inexorably around a powerful ebony gem. Inside of it is the soul of a mage that drew the ire of an Imperial Sibling, so foul was their crime that they are trapped within until the end of time (unless it can amass power enough to escape). Shinjirarenai is one of many "owners" of the *Kokutan-Niryoku*, picking up the dark charm off the forested ground amidst the Mists of Akuma. It has been carried by scores of creatures before him but unlike them, the oni-touched has resisted transformation into adeddo-oni and it lusts at this opportunity for power.

The *Kokutan-Niryoku* is strange trinket of an ebony claw grasping a gem that seethes with power. Every day that the wondrous item's urge to gather a following is not pursued, its wearer must make a DC 13 Charisma saving throw. On a successful save, the wielder takes 3 (1d6) psychic damage. On a failed save, the wearer is dominated by the wondrous item (as the *dominate monster* spell) and goes about the work of amassing a cult. The spell effect ends when one more soul has been recruited into its cult.

Magic Properties. While attuned to the *Kokutan-Niryoku*, every 24 hours your Haitoku increases by 1 (up to a maximum of 24). At the start of your turn, you can choose two creatures you can see and until the start of your next turn, any attacks these creatures make against you have disadvantage. In addition, you refuse to part with this magic item after you have attuned to it.

Sentience. The *Kokutan-Niryoku* is a sentient chaotic evil wondrous item with an Intelligence of 14, a Wisdom of 15, and a Charisma of 16. It has hearing and darkvision out to a range of 60 feet. The wondrous item communicates telepathically with its wielder and can speak, read, and understand Adeddo and Soburi.

Personality. Everything in existence is a means to the final end of all things, or so the *Kokutan-Niryoku* believes. Ultimately it seeks to cultivate or find a spellcaster powerful enough to bring about the true apocalypse, ready to sacrifice much of its own intellect to allow such a wearer to transform into adeddo-oni without becoming nearly mindless. The *Kokutan-Niryoku* truly despises anything holy or noble and savors the opportunity to bring destruction down on either.

OPPORTUNITY KNOCKS

After the battle the PCs find the merchant's stolen wares that Akia the Iron Shell wanted returned. Innocuous goods like barley, rice, tea leaves, ripening sudachi, candles, turtlewax cream, hemp kimonos, andon lamps—far too much for them to carry by hand—are in the southeast room, while more valuable items like jewelry, silks, rare herbs, expensive ritual components, ancestral relics, and scarce magical reagents lay in a chest in the northwest. The adventurers' search of the building is interrupted when a soru hengeyokai (Bōeki; pages 90-91) boldly approaches them.

Read the following:

Suddenly a simian the size of a man—clearly a soru hengeyokai—appears in the doorway, rapping his knuckles on the wood. "I am most sorry to intrude upon you, but I must congratulate the victors of such a rout!" He looks about, scrunching his monkey-like face but nodding approvingly.

"Magic is beyond my ken," he continues, "but it is clear that something malevolent would have occurred were it not for your intervention. On behalf of the Machibuse Traders please allow my humble self, Bōeki, to thank you for clearing it away from our trade route."

The monkey folk is part of a small horse-drawn caravan with a few other hengeyokai and soburi waiting on a roadway off in the distance. While Bōeki's timing is indeed miraculous his tale is true; he and the caravan were passing nearby, saw the commotion, and took an interest in what was happening. Unlike his companions however he's got nothing to trade but Imperial Pieces—and he is so very desperate not to arrive in Nesuto empty-handed. When Bōeki sees the various goods the party have just acquired, read the following:

Bōeki pokes his head into the southeastern room of the building and coos. "My, what a haul," he says, bobbing his head up and down slightly, "yet it is far too much to carry by hand, yes?" The hengeyokai sulks, his body dropping down as he continues, "It so happens that I am in a precarious situation as well. Back in the caravan I have cases of the tastiest daifuku in all of Soburin carried straight from Fuson Prefecture, but the foolish assistant pateshie in Detchtagi did not seal them properly and they have all dried!"

Consumed with anger Bōeki lashes out and strikes the doorframe with his tail only to grab it reflexively, wincing from the pain. "They are not nearly as valuable as they ought to be now, and I shall be made a laughing stock when we arrive in Nesuto. I have been saving coin for an emergency however." He looks at you all hopefully, anxiously rubbing his hands together, "perhaps we might help one another?"

Bōeki genuinely wishes to buy all of the stock goods and means well by the party, but a DC 18 Wisdom (Insight) check can prompt him to reveal that he is particularly interested in the turtlewax cream (though only because he knows a buyer in Nesuto that will pay a fine price, to use to experiment with shīranto sap). The hengeyokai trader has no desire for the more expensive valuables and should the PCs explain their orders from the Korusu bengoshi, he points out that they were to return with the *valuable* items stolen from the merchant—surely she did not intend for them to haul all of this back, and it makes little sense for so many perishable goods to go to waste before they can reach the marketplace. A DC 10 Intelligence check appraises the value of the stock goods at only 48 Imperial Pieces, but because the adventurers have just done a kindness for the Machibuse Traders and given his unfortunate situation, Bōeki offers them 100 Imperial Pieces (which he thinks he can make back).

PCs that are suspicious and unwilling to barter might be plied with the addition of dried daifuku to the deal (five cases worth that can easily be stuffed into a large sack), or if Yōjinbō fled the battle Bōeki claims to know which direction he went and will only reveal it on condition of the trade. Should these fail, after they part ways the hengeyokai stalks behind them waiting for the right moment to drink a *potion of invisibility*, sneak to where the goods are, and steal the 6 cases of turtlewax cream using a *bag of holding*.

Fortunately for Bōeki an opportune moment presents itself fairly quickly—a trio of villager elders from Zōkasuru arrive at the abandoned mansion (or if the PCs have begun traveling again, catch them on the road) to congratulate the adventurers, thanking them for purging the evil from the land with a modest feast in their honor. It is considerably dishonorable to refuse this offer and any member of the party that does so reduces their Dignity by 3. When the PCs return to the village an excellent meal is prepared for their enjoyment and a fine dinner is had by all—until Akia the Iron Shell arrives.

Read the following:

The Daisakenomi Tea House is filled with the smell of delicious food as you return to Zōkasuru. Within you see that with the help of some of the farmers, the owner Obara has prepared a sumptuous meal. Grill yakimono, saucers of nikogori, bowls of rice, and even small dishes of umeboshi await you inside along with yuzu juice, beer, and sake. After a short speech by one of the elders the meal begins and it is as satisfying as it smells, the food hearty and filling, the drink pleasant and flowing.

Halfway through the meal a cadre of children caper inside, each donned in a hastily-made costume meant to mimic the lot of you. They put on a quaint show of beating the oni-touched sorcerer—a child nearly mummified in strips of hemp dyed red—and just as one of the miniature adventurers is about to strike, a cacophony sounds from the front of the building as the door explodes inward in a storm of splintered wood.

Akia the Iron Shell stomps over the broken timbers and screams, her voice raising well above the cries of the children in front of her. "WHERE ARE THEY!?" she yells, shrill and piercing. She spots you behind the table and points at each of you in turn, her withered old finger emerging from her armor and shaking furiously. "Baka! Baka! Baka! BAKA!"

Act 2: Unfinished Journey

The Korusu bengoshi has a wide network of spies and made for Zōkasuru when the PCs did, sure they would quickly handle the sorcerer and recover the stolen shipment—specifically the turtlewax cream that she truly wanted to be returned. Upon reaching the village she immediately checked for the missing goods and whether Bōeki bought the lot or stole the six innocuous casks, they are not in the party's possession and she is enraged. Akia immediately orders all of the villagers out of the Daisakenomi Teahouse and reprimands the adventurers for being foolish, unconcerned with the "valuable" goods that were recovered. When the party presents these to her, read the following:

Akia the Iron Shell stares you down, the fury in her gaze nearly scorching. After a few tense seconds of silence she calls out, "Chizia Toin! Enter!" A meek scribe—just a slight of a man, not yet fully grown and terrified—dejectedly shuffles into the Daisakenomi Teahouse, nervously looking about the central room. She turns to him and commands, "recite the message I gave you to send to these fools last week."

Unsure and anxious, he bows deeply and pulls a scroll from beneath his robes and recites the message verbatim, albeit stammering. "Locate the upstart apostate Shinjirarenai near Zōkasuru, kill him, sunder the cult following him, and recover the valuable goods he's stolen."

"Let me see that!" Akia yells, snatching it out of his hands and quickly reading it. "Are you certain I said valuable?" she asks him, one eye squinting. "Are you quite certain?"

Clearly shaking, the scribe looks at the paper, then back at her, to the paper, to her—finally he nods. In a lightning fast motion a multi-barreled handgun appears in Akia's hand and she fires, exploding the youth's head in a cascade of blood and gore that washes over the teahouse.

Travel Across Yokuba

Ignoring the dead body on the ground, Akia explains that the turtlewax cream absolutely must be reacquired and orders the adventurers to do so—no matter the cost. The bengoshi makes no mention of paying them for their troubles thus far and a cursory request is met with derision, but a DC 13 Dignity (Culture), Haitoku, or Charisma (Persuasion) check can get her to shell out 200 Imperial Pieces (from the 500 they are due). Either way she promises 200 Imperial Pieces more and their full payment should they recover the turtlewax cream, and her ire should they dare refuse her. After she has finished berating the party and they have accepted this new duty, Akia gives them travel papers with permissions to journey from Korusu Prefecture and into Yokuba Prefecture, from Yokuba Prefecture to Ikari Prefecture, and remittances to make the return trip.

Throughout this entire exchange in addition to a small retinue of Akia's servants waiting outside there is another, far more significant figure disguised as a vagrant: the Imperial Sibling Kanja Korusu, the individual to whom the turtlewax cream truly belongs. Each PC attempts a DC 20 Wisdom (Perception) check as they are berated by the bengoshi to notice this new, slightly out of place stranger, but he vanishes into thin air just as soon as he is seen.

The party should easily recall that Bōeki was headed for Nesuto but a DC 7 Intelligence check is enough for



the GM to remind them directly. Reaching the settlement means traveling west-by-southwest over northwestern Yokuba Prefecture, across the Kaigi-Tekina Jungle, and through a pass in the mountains into Ikari Prefecture—a journey that takes 3 weeks by foot or 2 weeks by horseback, and there are no mounts to spare in Zōkasuru. Before leaving the adventurers might ask local merchants about Bōeki and the Machibuse Traders, learning that his organization is a semi-reputable cadre of hengeyokai traders spread across Soburin. A DC 15 Wisdom (Insight) check reveals that the merchants have a suspicion regarding them however; a little pressing gets the villagers to disclose that a group of toughs calling themselves the Kaisen Mercenaries passed through town not long before the PCs returned, leaving after asking about hengeyokai traders traveling nearby.

While the adventurers might assume they have nefarious intent, the mercenaries are actually on the job—hired to defend the caravan and now tarrying on the road behind Bōeki, told to slow down the party should they come the same way. The likelihood of combat with Phacer Kaisen (pages 91-92) and her crew (4 Berserkers) is strong but other threats lurk in the wilderness.

There is a 50% chance twice every 24 hours that PCs have a random encounter though whether or not each of these automatically lead to violence is up to the GM. Aside from these, guerilla warfare from the Kaisen Mercenaries, and possibly the Mists of Akuma, nothing of note stops the party from reaching Nesuto except for the dangers of the wilderness.

Badlands Encounters (Week 1)

Badlands Encounters (Week 1)

After deforestation and strip-mining 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 to vicious oni.

Threats (d20): Bandits (CR ⅛), Poisonous Snakes (CR ⅛), Giant Lizards (CR ¼), Giant Wolf Spider (CR ¼), Scouts (CR ½), Giant Hyena (CR 1), Giant Spider (CR 1), Doppelganger (CR 3), Giant Scorpion (CR 3), Ishi Spirit (CR 3; *MoA* page 148), Onryō (CR 3; page 254), Adeddo-Oni Samurai (CR 5; page 344), Baku (CR 5; page 165), Wyrmling Sky Dragon (CR 5; *MoA* page 123), Oni (CR 7), Yaoguai (CR 7; page 257), Ancestral Kami (CR 8; page 255), Rokurokubi (CR 9; *MoA* page 153), Jinmenju (CR 10; page 253), Adult Sky Dragon (CR 11; *MoA* page 124)

Jungle Encounters (Week 2)

Once common across the continent's southern reaches, whatever kindnesses the rainforests formerly offered have evaporated and only the fiercest animals have survived in the aftermath of the Kengen Occupation, making jungles a dangerous place to tread even for veteran warriors. In addition, there are a number of diseases that may afflict the PCs as they travel across such unforgiving wilderness.

Threats (d20): Giant Rats (CR ⅛), Poisonous Snakes (CR ⅛), Giant Bats (CR ¼), Giant Wolf Spiders (CR ¼), Mushrooms (CR ¼; Shrieker Fungi and Violet Fungus), Brown Bear (CR 1), Giant Spider (CR 1), Tiger (CR 1), Adeddo-Oni Hunchlings (CR 2; page 343), Ettercap (CR 2), Giant Boar (CR 2), Ki Spirit (CR 2; *MoA* page 148), Saber-Toothed Tiger (CR 2), three Awakened Trees (CR 3), Otyugh (CR 5), Shambling Mound (CR 5), Wyrmling Forest Dragon (CR 5; *MoA* page 117), Hebikontorōra (CR 6; page 149), Giant Ape (CR 7), Oni (CR 7).

Ikiseichū. Invisible to the naked eye, travelers know better than to drink from waters deep in the wilderness for fear of ingesting these stomach parasites. When a creature drinks or otherwise consumes water contaminated by ikiseichū, the creature must succeed on a DC 12 Constitution saving throw or become infected. It takes 1d4 days for symptoms of a stomach parasite to manifest in an infected creature. Symptoms include taut skin and sunken muscles.

Every week, the infected creature doubles the amount of food and water it needs to survive. An infected creature that does not receive enough sustenance regains no healing from short or long rests.



A creature can cure the disease with a *greater restoration*, or an attack or spell that deals 10 points of force damage per week of infection.

Jokku Kayumi. Wearing one's armor too long and going without washing has its consequences in humid environments. When a creature has gone a week without bathing or more than 3 days without cleaning a suit of armor they wear each day, the creature must succeed on a DC 8 Constitution saving throw or become infected. It takes 2d6 days for jokku kayumi's symptoms to manifest in an infected creature. Symptoms include itching and odor in the groin.

The infected creature emits a stench that gives it disadvantage on Charisma ability checks made against creatures within 10 feet. Every week, the infected makes a Constitution saving throw (DC 8 + 1 per previous save) or the range of its stench increases by 5 feet (to a maximum of 20 feet).

After 5 successful saving throws the creature recovers from the disease.

Urin-Netsu. Wounds infected by poisonous spores wafting through the air of the Kaigi-Tekina Jungle can carry dangerous toxins through the bloodstream, making it difficult to heal from injuries. When a creature is reduced to less than half of its hit points while inside of the Kaigi-Tekina Jungle during the night, it must succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or become infected. It takes 2d4 hours for urin-netsu's symptoms to manifest in an infected creature. Symptoms include lightheadedness and disorientation.

The infected creature only restores half as many hit points as normal from magical healing, when spending hit dice during a short rest, or after taking a long rest. At the end of each long rest, an infected creature must make a DC 13 Constitution saving throw.

After 2 successful saving throws, the creature recovers from the disease.

Mountain Encounters (Week 3)

Monstrous hordes once contained behind the walls of oni warlord fortresses have spilled forth since the end of the Kengen Occupation, making the continent's slopes truly lethal.

Threats (d12): Giant Goat (CR ½), Harpy (CR 1), Ogre (CR 2), Adeddo-Oni Ninja (CR 3; page 343), Basilisk (CR 3), Manticore (CR 3), Troll (CR 5), Wyrmling Sovereign Dragon (CR 6; *MoA* page 126), Wyvern (CR 6), Oni (CR 7), Yuki-Onna (CR 11; *MoA* page 162), Adult Sovereign Dragon (CR 12; *MoA* page 127).

Act 3: Blooded Current

With weeks of travel behind them the PCs finally reach a settlement nestled among islands in the Yōkini-Sawagi River: Nesuto. Read the following:

Rushing water adds to the jungle's symphony and after a few moments as the ground starts taking a steady downward slope, it is joined by the din of people trading, working, and going about their lives in what must be the city of Nesuto. The settlement is anchored to islands jutting out of a wide river, the foliage of the Zunkhasa Rainforest thick and encroaching from both shores. Several artificial structures stand above the waterline, squat platforms of stone bricks topped by walled pagodas with armed guards waiting inside. There must be scores of homes, shrines, and shops here, all closely integrated—you only see a few low-clearance boats traveling in the interior waterways, most of the ships scooting around the city instead.

Shortly after the adventurers arrive in the city, a Sherukurakkā brazenly approaches them with a scroll bearing the seal of Korusu. On the parchment is a message from Akia the Iron Shell with four names, her spies in Nesuto and people the party can turn to help track down the turtlewax cream—provided they can be reached before the mysterious murderer roaming across the settlement strikes them all down. A cursory investigation quickly reveals that of the eight names they are given, four (her master spy the vagrant Dokuro Gengyo, baker Ayuzawa Chikao, guard Hada Aishun, and herbalist Toujou Yurisa) have already been brutally slaughtered by a figure known only as



the "Naitorippā". The murderer has been at large for over a week and one of Ikari Prefecture's best defenders is on the case: Kazato Tetsunori, a Gensosō monk from Nagabuki sure to gain an interest in the PCs as well. The remaining names on the list are:

Akagi Hona, a weapons trader on the north island constantly accompanied by a trio of bodyguards

Nagamine Atasuke, a retired soldier that hangs out in the Korao's Banter teahouse on the south island.

Junko Gennosuke, a disreputable junk trader on the southeast island rumored to deal in technology.

Yukawa Ikumu (pages 92-93), a mujina hengeyokai member of the Machibuse Traders and merchant of esoteric goods with no permanent residence in the city. Akia has not realized the badger-woman is a double agent truly working for Shūshō Ikari—another Imperial Sibling and an ancient rival of Kanja Korusu.

Bōeki skipped town and the rest of the Machibuse Traders (including Yukawa) went into hiding shortly after the Naitorippā murder spree began, but finding the other three (Akagi, Nagamine, and Junko) is easy enough. All were told to keep an eye out for merchants from the hengeyokai trading company and questioning these spies doesn't draw any more attention to the adventurers, but when they start pressing Nesuto's citizens for specific information about the Machibuse Traders they get noticed by Musashibō's Marauders. After they cross paths with Kazato, the trifecta of the city's mystery is in play and the race is on: the party, their rivals, and the Naitorippā (a kyūyurei oni being chased by the Gensosō) are all pursuing the turtlewax cream in Yukawa's possession!

Nesuto, City in the River

Little more than an odd village for more than a millennium, Nesuto's population swelled when the Mists of Akuma returned. Shipmaking is still an important trade in the city but the outer islands are no longer devoted just to the crafting of boats, now crowded by houses for factory workers and small woodworking shops of all kinds. Largely because refuse flows downriver, the richest citizens live towards the north (upstream) while those with less wealth live progressively further south (downstream). Vessels of all kinds are restricted to travel on the eastern side of Nesuto unless they are flat-bottomed boats (without sails) that are able to navigate under the city's bridges without incident.

The gulf between the rich and poor has always been tenuous here but aside from the rivalry of the city's teahouses (specifically the Oishī Sunset and Yori-Oishī Sunrise), the recent Shichō appointed by Lady Natsuko Ikari has done a fine job maintaining order and keeping the peace—until the arrival of the Naitorippā. Her request for aid brought the Gensosō Kazato Tetsunori up from Nagabuki and should the PCs approach her she directs them to him, too busy with matters of governance to micromanage the efforts of one of the prefecture's finest warriors to stop the murderer.

North Island. The settlement's initial island is now home to a market for fine goods (such as expensive magical reagents and rare foods), Nesuto's school, the Mozaro Mage tower (and its teleportation circle), and a few luxury services like the silk seamster Otonari Ekiken, the Tanoshī Theater, Akagi Hona's weapons shop, and the resplendent Oishī Sunset teahouse. The latter serves few things for less than a few silver but its owner Kuroki Agasa has strived to make her establishment as impressive as the finest restaurants in Sanbaoshi, frequently offering breakneck prices on her finest liquors when it can hurt the business of her rival Enokida.

Northeast Island. Masters of the docks, the office of governance representing the Ikari Prefecture, and the dwellings of their servants take up this sand barrier, all of them arrayed around a public shrine to the forces of nature.

East Island. The Zentōbu Warehouse is on the north part of this island and homes for many of the city's poor are towards the south near the Yori-Oishī Sunrise, a teahouse that serves sake for as little as a copper. Its owner Enokida Jinzaburo was spurned by the mistress of the similarly named restaurant on the North Island; he has made it his mission to undercut and destroy her business, and as a result he lives a meager life but there's almost nowhere else in Soburin with drinks as cheap as his.

Southeast Island. Two markets that focus on food and a cycling selection of wares (largely junk) are in the center of several homes, docks, small eateries, and Junko's Janku Shop.

South Island. The city's other original island has a large market with fresh foodstuffs every day and traders taking up temporary stalls as they pass through. There are half a dozen fishmongers, smiths, and other mundane services as well as Korao's Banter teahouse (where the sake isn't cheap, but it is affordable and worth the silver) ringed by houses of the fairly well-to-do.

Western Islands. Mostly workers live in these parts of Nesuto, close to the mass production treatment and assembly factories that have sped up the city's ship exports in the northwest, or the facilities for cutting and sorting timber in the southwest. Unlike in the technologically-lenient prefectures, only traditional soburi techniques are utilized here but centuries of expertise have made their work just as efficient as any machines in Supai or Uso.

GM Note: Throughout the adventurers' time in Nesuto, the Mists of Akuma may descend on the city as often as the GM likes. Citizens retreat into their homes and throw shīranto sap (page 76) onto the seams of doorways and windows, safely sealing themselves away from the supernatural haze by temporarily making their dwellings air-tight. PCs fighting while standing in the current of the streams between the settlement's island are protected from the Mists of Akuma, the air rushing off of the water keeping it away—but not the adeddo-oni. Unless an adventurer has a swim speed, they have disadvantage on ability checks and attack rolls while in the water, and they treat the waterways between islands as difficult terrain.


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NESUTO

Unraveling the Thread

Each of Akia's spies has a piece of information that ultimately points the party to Yukawa although should these fail, the Honor Duel at the end of this act reveals her as the culprit. While it is recommended that all of these NPCs become inaccessible after revealing what they know to the adventurers, at the GM's discretion they may survive an attack by Tamahana or choose to stay in Nesuto to help guide the party along towards the climax in Act 4.

Akagi Hona

The weapons trader (use the statistics for a Noble) cannot be bribed, cowed, or easily deceived—she's quite wealthy, carries two fully-loaded dragon cannons, is confident that the Chinatsu Triplets (all Veterans) are competent defenders, and has been a cunning trader for over a decade. Read the following when they visit Akagi's shop:

> *Fine cherry oshima wooden beams make this weapon shop's doorway as resplendent as the interior, a host of weapons both technological and traditional hung along the walls, scattered on tables, or in half-buckets on the floor. A well-dressed woman stands behind a counter in the back, two armored bodyguards sitting on stools nearby.*

What is troublesome for the party is earning her trust—even with the sealed letter from Akia the Iron Shell, unless she is further convinced to cooperate all she tells the party is general information about Nesuto and what they might have already found out in their investigations thus far (Bōeki has left town, the Naitorippā's murder spree, the gruesome fates of Dokuro Gengyo, Ayuzawa Chikao, Hada Aishun, and Toujou Yurisa, and that the Gensosō monk Kazato Tetsunori has traveled from Nagabuki to chase after the killer).

A DC 17 Charisma (Persuasion) check or a sufficiently entertaining tale of daring (eloquently told by an actual player in the group, made with advantage if mimicry and a physical performance are involved) gets Akagi to reveal her valuable clue. She believes that before leaving Nesuto, Bōeki sold the turtlewax cream to one of his Machibuse Trader friends because a tanuki warehouse manager from the eastern island (Hisakawa Naizen) complained to her in confidence about being dismissed from a meeting between merchants of note, wondering if she was as well. Akagi keeps tabs on all the city's worthwhile commerce and is certain that if something else valuable was in play that she would have heard about it—surely this must have been what the clandestine summit was regarding.

Dragon Cannon (2). *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, range 40/80, one target or all targets in a 20-foot cone or 40-foot line. *Hit:* 5 (1d8+1) fire damage at a single target or 14 (3d8+1) fire damage to all targets in the area. Akagi makes a separate attack roll for each object and creature in the area. After being fired at an area, reloading the dragon cannon requires 1 minute. Otherwise each shot expends 1 piece of ammunition (which costs 2 gold) and the weapon can hold up to 10 pieces. These firearms are quite valuable but they are marked in many places with Hona seals that drive the value down to 500 Imperial Pieces each.

Finding Hisakawa Naizen (a tanuki Commoner) is easy enough and he is as polite with the adventurers as he is with anyone else—which is to say he's gruff, complains abundantly, and acts like he doesn't have time for them but otherwise cooperates. Read the following when the party go to interrogate the raccoon folk manager of the Zentōbu Warehouse:

> *Even from a distance you can see which building must be the Zentōbu Warehouse—a stream of workers and customers go into and out of it, easily making it one of the busiest establishments you've seen in Nesuto. For all the commerce here it seems to be just for common goods but its bustling all the same, folks carrying baskets of rice, millet, hemp, produce, and all sorts of simple everyday necessities. Ships and wagons are moored and parked nearby, loading and offloading more goods for trade within.*

Hisakawa acknowledges that the meeting happened, but he can't be sure what it was really about. Shortly after the discussion with him begins however an assistant (Nonaka) calls asking for his help with a customer, followed shortly afterward by the questions of a woman with a melodic voice. Barely a

minute passes before the tanuki's subordinate screams out in terror upon discovering Hisakawa's eviscerated body, the woman he was speaking to nowhere in sight. Nonaka can tell the party that she was quite beautiful, asked about a shipment of rice that the warehouse has no records of, and that she then requested her recently murdered boss by name.

Whether the adventurers ask her or not the party will overhear this information—Kazato Tetsunori arrives in time to stop an immediate pursuit after the murdering woman, suspicious of anyone that leaves the crime scene and putting out a warrant for their arrest. Though untrusting at first when he learns that the PCs are working on behalf of a Korusu bengoshi he acknowledges their authority, asking that if they discover anything about this murderer to immediately notify him or the settlement's guards. Adventurers that loop back to question Akagi Hona a second time find that she is gone, considering her duty to Akia fulfilled enough that it was more prudent to leave Nesuto and possibly face the wrath of the bengoshi instead of an ambush by the Naitorippā.



NAGAMINE ATASUKE

Perpetually drinking in Korao's Banter from when it opens before noon until the doors close at night. The retired soldier (Gladiator) is equally helpful and recalcitrant in turn, but he's too callous and disinterested to be persuaded or deceived—the PCs have to impress him to gain his trust. Read the following when the PCs enter the teahouse called Korao's Banter:

The Korao's Banter teahouse lives up to expectations made by the exaggerated sign outside the building and the closer you get, the louder the murmur within grows. Races of all kinds are inside drinking and cavorting in the midst of a dozen different palates—there at one table are a steametic and a kappa, and you spot the hulking forms of an enjin and mutant crouched over the bar along the wall.

A DC 17 Charisma (Intimidation), Dignity, or Haitoku check does the job well enough but the adventurers might best him in a game of chance like burakkujakku or pōkā (played by player and GM), skill such as thrown darts (done with ranged attack rolls or a real board on the wall), or strength via wrestling contests (either opposed Strength checks or at the table).

Once he's been impressed by the PCs, Nagamine tells them that whichever hengeyokai merchant got the shipment that Akia wants, he thinks it is one of the rare sort—the itachi (weasel), hebi (snake), koi (carp), mujina (badger), or usagi (hare). A few weeks ago he overheard a cadre of Machibuse Traders in the tea house, talking loudly and berating one of their peers—the phrase that sticks out in his mind is, "oh her kind have the *courage* to hide for centuries, what's a few decades more!" The old warrior remembers that there wasn't anything remarkable about the talkative group save that they were all the more common types of hengeyokai and otherwise unremarkable.

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 3-foot by 3-foot window, or use two ounces to pack the seams of a human-sized doorway. The shīranto sap is vulnerable to all damage until it sets 30 seconds after being applied. Once it has, the seal must be destroyed (AC 11, 10 hp) or pried away with a combination of one DC 14 Strength check and one DC 14 Intelligence check before the sealed opening can be accessed.

One-ounce glass and ceramic containers also exist, which can also be used as a weapon. As an action, you can throw this shīranto sap up to 20 feet, shattering it on impact. Make a ranged attack against a creature or object, treating the shīranto sap as an improvised 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 DC 10 Strength check or gain the grappled condition. At the start of each of its turns, the target receives another check to remove the grappled condition. The shīranto sap can also be destroyed (used in this way, it has AC 13, 6 hp).

The night after the PCs meet Nagamine he is murdered by the Naitorippā. Witnesses in the teahouse say that he was last seen with a beautiful woman named Tamahana before retiring to his rented room, and when looking over the body the adventurers might notice something missing. A DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check reveals that the war charms on his katana have been taken, something that the party might locate by using magic or finding the right fence (and hopefully find the kyūyurei oni in the process). Reporting this information to the guards of Nesuto affirms Kazato Tetsunori's trust in the adventurers or if they've become arrayed against one another, a step towards alliance that ends any fugitive status a PC might have gained from running away earlier.

JUNKO GENNOSUKE

While he might not be Akia's deadliest or wealthiest agent in Nesuto, Junko is a proper Spy—the sneakiest by far. Attempts to intimidate or persuade him result in deflections and disinterest, but deceiving him can get him to speak on something other than general topics about Nesuto and reveal the crucial information that he possesses. Read the following when the PCs approach Junko's Janku Shop:

Grease, rust, sweat, and oil mix into a heady aroma that wafts out of this hut scrabbled together from recycled sheet metal. Inside it is surprisingly spacious, albeit crowded by discarded bits of machinery and doo-dads of trash—there's a katana with its blade snapped in half, the barrel from a rifle sticking up from behind the rigging for a small hikōsen airship, and a hundred other sights of things that might be useful in the right circumstances but ultimately have little real value. A spry old man shuffles through it all, idly throwing items from one pile into another and organizing shelves with seemingly little logic to guide him.

A DC 17 Charisma (Deception) check made in Thieves' Cant or an extremely clever, intricate falsehood that appeals to him gets the party on to Junko's good side. This lie is made with advantage if at least 4 locations from Nesuto or along the party's recent journey and no less than 4 citizens that the junk trader would know of are part of the falsehood—the GM should give the adventurers an idea of how important it is to include genuine landmarks and shared acquaintances



in the tale to make it believable, but not exact details.

Junko heard from a friend in the guard (he has many of them) that a mujina hengeyokai was seen rolling casks of something into the waterway on Nesuto's eastern side sometime last week. Neither he nor his contact are sure of the animal folk's gender or if the perpetrator is part of the Machibuse Traders, but they were far too large to be a tanuki. He has suspicions that the other spies of Akia are being hunted and at least tells the party that he's leaving the city soon himself.

This is, of course, a lie detected with a DC 15 Wisdom (Insight) check. It's true that Junko disappears after meeting the party but he doesn't go very far, secreting himself instead in a hidden chamber dug out beneath his shop. A DC 20 Intelligence (Investigation) check finds the secret door beneath a heavy rug in one corner. Adventurers that return to the shop have a good reason to search, too—Tamahana came looking for him and wrecked the place in anger, possibly making it a good ambush site if the PCs are already on to her and make it back before the next sunset.

Kazato and the Naitorippā

The Naitorippā has been a scourge for a week or so by the time the party arrives in Nesuto. All of the regular guards are hunting for the murderer but have been confounded thus far—except for a special defender of the Ikari Prefecture. Kazato Tetsunori is positive he knows the killer's monstrous identity, and though his assertions are more a hunch than anything else they have brought him from the capital of Nagabuki. Recently the Gensosō monk witnessed a sacred ceremony gone awry because of corruption and a deadly monster hidden as a beautiful woman was the cause. She escaped and was cast off by his peers as a random, traumatized victim of circumstance but he saw her reflection in a puddle during the tragedy and witnessed the true demon hidden beneath dark oni magic.

Until all of Akia's remaining spies have died or disappeared, the Naitorippā plagues Nesuto and casts a fearful pall over the city. The PCs might chase her down after speaking with the tanuki warehouse manager, ambush her in Junko's "abandoned" shop, or track her by using magic or guile to locate the slain Nagamine's warrior charms. Should she elude them throughout however the adventurers become her next targets, attacked as they sleep. At the end of the battle (or if the party is in danger of being wiped out and the GM feels merciful) Kazato Tetsunori arrives flanked by two Guards.

If the PCs are fugitives after some cursory investigation and questioning he declares they are free to go, thanking them for killing the foul oni in the city's midst.

If the PCs are on neutral terms with Kazato they hear the story of how he came to be suspicious that an oni masquerading as a woman was the culprit, though only the details given above.

If the PCs have befriended Kazato he takes the adventurers aside and while he reveals no locations or names, they learn of the sacred rituals undertaken by the Gensosō. There are special caves in the Zunkhasa Rainforests, places where elemental power has been gathered by ancestral shrines said to predate the Imperial Siblings themselves. A new recruit performed the *Mizuno Ugoki* flawlessly (katas from the Stance of the Frozen Flower) and the shrine should have imbued her with the ability to manifest the elements as a weapon, but instead she was transformed into a creature made of sludge. The monster attacked the Gensosō in attendance (killing two before succumbing to death) and during the fracas Tamahana slipped away nearly unnoticed. No failed rituals have occurred in recent history, but had the cavern not been corrupted the order's sages say that the recruit may have been injured yet only that—certainly not hideously transformed or driven to madness.

Musashibō's Marauders

The third sortie searching for the turtlewax cream are another adventuring party known as Musashibō's Marauders (pages 44–49): an umibo monk leader, pyon archer (Riapa Greenwater), soburi samurai (Funai Takejiro), ninja (Iya Jiman), steametic mage (Dub-Sev), and psonorous wu-jen (Gakuten). At every turn they are one step behind the PCs and if the GM wishes it, may even already be somewhere when the adventurers show up to question one of Akia's spies or report information on the Naitorippā to the guard—whatever their interactions, they should always be in a contest to establish and build a rivalry.

Once all of Akia's spies are dead, when the adventurers figure out that the mujina hengeyokai Yukawa Ikumu has the turtlewax cream, or sooner at the GM's discretion, Musashibō's Marauders publicly challenge the PCs to a special Honor Duel: a Kinsetsu. Read the following:

> *The air is hot and humid as you walk through Nesuto and spot the other adventurers that have already crossed your path while navigating through this city's secrets. They in turn see you and one of them points, their umibo leader sloshing in your direction. The monk raises one arm, their fist clenched together as they yell, "KINSETSU!" A cheer erupts from the citizens nearby and all attention is immediately drawn to you, a hush erupting as even the workers stop to join the crowd and hear your response to the challenge.*

A DC 10 Dignity (Culture) check reveals what exactly a Kinsetsu Honor Duel is, but otherwise Funai Takejiro calmly explains it to the party. This combat has special rules beyond that of a regular Honor Duel and should any of them be broken, the offender is considered to have forfeit the fight. 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 (like Ikari) an actual crime with requisite jail time or harsh penalties.

- Each team fields an equal number of participants that simultaneously engage in one-on-one combats against each other.
- No combatant in the Kinsetsu may directly interfere with the Honor Duel of another combatant (and as usual, no outsiders may interfere either).
- The individuals being challenged decide which opponents face off against each other and the party must choose who they will fight against: Musashibō the monk, Riapa the archer, Funai the samurai, Iya the ninja, Dub-Sev the mage, and Gakuten the wu-jen.
- The team with the most wins is declared the victor.

Refusing to take part causes an adventurer to lower their Dignity score by 5 (with no increase to Haitoku) and they are scoffed at by passerby in Nesuto for the remainder of their stay, but it does not disqualify their companions from participating. As the fight is about to start, read the following:

> *Workers, children, couriers, and sailors have gathered in the shadows of the buildings around you and Musashibō's Marauders as the rival adventuring party spreads out, squaring off against you. All of the city seems to be on hand to watch your Kinsetsu duel and you see more than a few exchanging Imperial Pieces as bets are wagered. "Nagabuki has nothing on us today!" one shouts, "Nobody can put that Gekido samurai down!" another yells. As tension mounts the crowd grows louder and rowdier, shouting out more encouragements and boasts until your opponents finally drop down into combat stances, ready for the fight.*

When the combat has concluded (hopefully with the PCs victorious) there are several ways things can play out, but it ends with this revelation from the rival adventuring party: Musashibō's Marauders were made to prepare a wagon a few miles south (off the eastern shore of the Yōkini-Sawagi River) just yesterday, collected their last payment from Yukawa Ikumu (for harrying her pursuers to try and prevent her murder by the Naitorippā), and know she travels the upcoming sunrise for a cave east of there.

If <u>all of the rivals</u> or <u>more rivals than PCs are defeated</u> the rivals become lifelong enemies of the PCs. Musashibō and the rest are nemeses of the adventurers for years to come, keeping tabs on the PCs and interfering with the party in the future—probably until in a bloodier, more final conflict. Each adventurer increases their Dignity by 4 and reduces their Haitoku by 4. Musashibō's Marauders leave Nesuto in disgrace but not before sullenly revealing what they know of Ikumu.

If <u>more rivals win than lose</u> or <u>all the PCs are defeated</u> then Musashibō's Marauders are entirely disgraceful in victory—until learning that the party are working on behalf of a Korusu bengoshi. Iya Jiman immediately slips into the front of the discussion and is extremely contrite, rapidly apologizing for interfering with a government mission and telling the PCs absolutely everything ze and zir companions have learned about Yukawa Ikumu. The hebi hengeyokai ninja also suspects that their "dishonorable, deceptive *former* benefactor" is working for a mystic of some kind, but doesn't know anything else. Each PC loses 3 Dignity (no change to Haitoku) and Musashibō's Marauders flee Nesuto immediately, fearful of Akia the Iron Shell's wrath.

If the PCs lose and <u>refuse to reveal who was employing them</u>, each reduces their Dignity by 4 and increases their Haitoku by 4. At this point Iya and Dub-Sev are suspicious of their employer however, and PCs that follow them are led to Yukawa Ikumu and the turtlewax cream that evening before dawn. Musashibō's Marauders will escort her to the cave before departing, detecting the party and engaging in combat long enough for the hengeyokai trader to flee into the woods and reach the climax of this adventure (should the PCs go before dawn and the GM wish for it, this is an excellent opportunity for a chase sequence).

GM Note: If the PCs do not confirm Yukawa Ikumu's involvement and the location of the turtlewax cream from Musashibō's Marauders after the Kinsetsu Honor Duel, Kazato Tetsunori can intercede the following morning. He's heard from his contacts that Yukawa Ikumu was recently shamed by other Machibuse Traders and fled south along the eastern shore of the Yōkini-Sawagi River, and on a hunch he sent a scout to tail her that can meet the party on the way to where she's stashed her goods to give more details.

ACT 4: PRIMORDIAL FEUD

Whether through victory, honorable defeat, or an ally, the PCs have figured out that Yukawa Ikumu is near the eastern side of the Yōkini-Sawagi River south of Nesuto. Though she's gone by the time they arrive her wagon's fresh tracks are easy to locate with a DC 7 Wisdom (Survival) check. Following through the muddy paths of the Zunkhasa Rainforest ultimately leads to Shūshō Ikari awaiting outside of the Gensosō cave that she hid the goods in to mask them from Imperial Siblings.



RAINFOREST PURSUIT

As the adventurers take up the trail the fellow that has been pulling their strings all along (Kanja Korusu) makes himself known. When one of the adventurers makes a DC 13 Wisdom (Perception) check after they start the trek, they spot the ancient Imperial Sibling.

Read the following:

An inexplicable impulse motivates you to glance backwards and as you swivel your head you catch the glimpse of something—someone—in the trees behind you. The figure is gone as soon as you realize they were there but it strikes you as strange; it seemed as though you briefly saw an old man, a fellow easily a century in age, and to move that quickly would break his bones.

Sure enough if the party stops to check, the old man is nowhere to be found—until they are about to abandon the search and he appears in front of them, urging the PCs to continue forward. Read the following when the journey is ready to continue:

Looking ahead you see the crooked back of an old man with an enormous, oblong head. He looks back briefly and beckons at you, "she's this way!" before leaping forward with a spryness that defies his extremely advanced age. Vines and grasses part for him as he does so, flitting out of sight in the direction of Yukawa Ikumu's wagon tracks.

PCs that expend resources (such as *ki* points or spell slots) can briefly catch up to Kanja but he is coy, laughing in response and teleporting further ahead—curiously leaving a turtle in his wake each time. Any other attempts that require no such expenditures (like a rogue using Cunning Action to Dash) fail to match the Imperial Sibling's speed.



Imperial Spat

Once the PCs near a mountain and the Gensosō cave, the Mists of Akuma appear but only briefly. Read the following:

A panic quickly grasps at your hearts as you see the Mists of Akuma begin to encroach from the trees around you and the cackling of adeddo-oni echo through the rainforest. When it seems that the rapidly flowing fog is about to consume you all the old man steps out from behind a tree trunk ahead and waves his hands outward, yelling "Kaiko sa reta!" In an instant the dense haze evaporates to reveal the mouth of a large cavern amongst the greenery, but something else as well—another old man though this one is almost primal, as though he were a force of nature itself contained with the body of a human.

The two glare at each other and the orchestra of the wilderness is abruptly broken first by the crack of thunder in the distance but then the crashing of a massive wave in reply. Tension mounts and you notice another observer—a mujina hengeyokai is staked upon a broken branch 30 feet off the ground, her blood soaked garments marked with the symbol of the Machibuse Traders and her dead eyes staring silently down upon you. Your eyes are wrenched from the grisly sight as the stranger laughs, his voice booming outward while idly toying with a pebble in one hand. "Your precious pets are going to die, brother, and there's nothing you can do-"

Suddenly the more familiar old man's voice rings out into your mind. "Into the cave! Get the casks! GO!" and in a flash like lightning the two clash, a sonic boom cracking out from their limbs as they strike one another. Your footing is suddenly unsettled with the impossible forces each wields when the simple pebble thrown by the stranger collides into a tree beside you—it falls to the ground and you realize that were it not for the odd fellow that joined you on the way here, it would have meant instant, painful death.

Kanja keeps Shūshō occupied as the adventurers (if they are brave enough) rush into the Gensosō cave, but the Imperial Sibling of the Ikari Prefecture gestures and sends a mist following them. It rushes overhead before forming into 2 foo lions (page 102) that attempt to stop the party from venturing into the heart of the cavern. Read the following:

Dashing into the safety of the cavern as chaos erupts outside, you realize you are not alone! A gold and white mist races above, the roaring of lions rushing along with it. The tunnel turns in front of you and the fog swirls into two shapes—massive lions formed from clouds, growling and pacing menacingly to bar passage deeper into the earth.

The PCs must pass these deadly divine creatures and they are fiercely protective of their territory, chasing down anyone they detect passing through it. Upon the death of a foo lion, any creature that dealt damage to the foo lion within the last minute reduces its Dignity score by 2 and increases its Haitoku score by 2.

SUSAMAJĪ CAVE

Once the adventurers have bested the conjured celestials, they can freely enter into the Gensosō cave though the echoes of thunderous impacts continue unabated and they can sense a growing sense of urgency in their hearts (provided by Kanja Kosuru) the longer they dally. Read the following when the PCs enter into the southernmost area of the map:

> *Soft orange light flickers from something to the east around the wall of this gargantuan cavern but you cannot see what without passing beneath the gaze of an imposing statue carved from mottled red stone. The stone warrior gazes on impassively but it is not alone—it stands across from an identical statue save that this one is blue in hue, and two more that are chalk white and rocky brown.*

Each of the four statues is trapped with a lethal danger tied to its element. Passing beyond the threshold of the first obstacle (the flame statue) brings the Gensosō Shrine into view, and after making it past the air statue adventurers can see the casks of turtlewax cream inside the confines of a runed circle.

FLAME STATUE (NORTHWEST)

This trap is activated when an intruder steps on a hidden pressure plate shaped like a ring, 1 foot wide and running circular around the flame statue 30 feet from the wall. The DC is 17 to spot the pressure plate, as well as faint scorch marks on the floor nearby. A spell or other effect that can sense the presence of magic, such as *detect magic*, reveals auras of divination and evocation magic around the flame statue. The trap activates when more than 10 pounds of weight is placed on the pressure plate, causing the flame statue's head to turn and gaze at the nearest creature, its eyes flashing red. The creature must make a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw as the fire in their hearts is stoked into erupting around it, taking 33 (6d10) fire damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. A creature that takes 25 or more fire damage catches fire, taking 1d6 fire damage at the end of each round until the fire is doused by water or an action and successful DC 12 Dexterity saving throw. Wedging an iron spike or other object under the pressure plate prevents the trap from activating but doing so without activating the trap requires a DC 12 Dexterity check. A successful *dispel magic* (DC 15) cast on the flame statue suppresses the trap's enchantment for 4d10 rounds.

AIR STATUE (SOUTHWEST)

This trap uses trip wires suspended from the ceiling to activate an enchantment within the air statue. The trip wires hang 2 inches off the ground and stretch drop down almost invisibly from the ceiling. The DC to spot the trip wires is 17. A successful DC 10 Dexterity check every 5-foot-square traveled parts the trip wires harmlessly, but DC 13 Dexterity checks are needed to disable and rebalance a cut trip wire on each of its sides. A character with thieves' tools can attempt this check with advantage using any edged weapon or edged tool. On a failed check, the trap triggers. When the trap is triggered, the air statue's head turns and gazes at the nearest creature, its eyes flashing white. The creature must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw as it tries to suck the air out of their lungs, taking 21 (6d6) force damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. A creature that takes 10 or more force damage gains one level of exhaustion per 5 points of force damage.

Once past the first two statues, the PCs only necessarily have to interact with either the area of the water statue's trap or the earth statue's trap. Read the following when the PCs reach the area between the four statues:

Two more statue stand between you and the source of light—to the east sits an ornate zenith of stone topped by a voracious flame that hungrily licks at the air, flanked on each side by four large braziers filled with smoldering ash. What next grabs your attention however is tucked away in an alcove on the northern wall: the turtlewax casks, stamped with the Korusu seal! The vaunted shipment is surrounded by a circle of runes that shimmer with magic, making it difficult to see beyond the field rising out of them.

WATER STATUE (SOUTHEAST)

This trap uses puddles on the floor to activate an enchantment within the water statue. The puddles are on a large plate covered in grit, sand, and water, specially calibrated to turn on the water statue's divination magic when it is made to recalibrate. A successful Dexterity (Acrobatics) check (DC 12 + 2 per previous check) every 5-foot-square traveled allows a creature to travel across the trapped area without activating the water statue's trap. There is no way to disable this trap. On a failed check, the trap triggers. When the trap is triggered, the water statue's head turns and gazes at the nearest creature, its eyes flashing azure. The creature must make a DC 17 Charisma saving throw or drown in self-doubt, gaining a random short-term madness. Failing the saving throw by 5 or more causes the creature to gain a random long-term madness, and failure by 10 or more causes the creature to gain an indefinite madness. On a successful saving throw, the creature is unaffected. After activating the trap requires 1d4-1 rounds (minimum 1 round) to recalibrate before it can activate again.

EARTH STATUE (NORTHEAST)

The area equidistant between the Earth Statue and Water Statue is a series of hidden 6-inch wide stone pillars suspending a magical tarp that is nearly identical to the floor around it. A successful DC 18 Wisdom (Perception) check discerns an absence of foot traffic over the areas of the floor not suspended by a stone pillar. A successful DC 18 Intelligence (Investigation) check is necessary to confirm where the trapped section of floor is actually the cover of a pit and not a stone pillar.

When a creature steps on the magical tarp instead of a stone pillar, it falls in around them, causing the intruder to spill into the pit below as the Earth Statue's head turns in their direction. The pit is 30 feet deep, dealing 21 (6d6) bludgeoning damage from falling. A creature has disadvantage on any checks made to reduce this damage and cannot use slow fall or cast spells with somatic components, the tarp tangling around them as they drop. One round after a creature has fallen into the pit, the tarp regenerates itself and covers the pit in magical darkness. This trap cannot be deactivated or activated with inanimate objects, but a creature that has seen it activate gains advantage on Intelligence (Investigation) checks to pinpoint the location of the stone pillars. The magical tarp parts for a trapped creature that can fly or a trapped creature that makes a successful DC 16 Strength (Athletics) check to climb out of the pit, but it magically cuts any rope or ejects other items used to obstruct it as it regenerates (unless it is magically held open using *arcane lock* or similar magic).

THE TURTLEWAX CREAM

The casks are tucked into an alcove along the northern wall and encircled by a series of magical runes drawn with bubbling kaleidoscopic fluid, each of the protected barrels clearly marked "turtlewax cream" and stamped with the seal of the Korusu family. Getting past the barrier generated above the runes is impossible without breaking the magic circle itself with an adventurer making a Dignity check against a DC equal to their Haitoku score. On a success the ink is smeared and the enchantment ends. On a failure the magic circle resists, increasing the creature's Haitoku score by 1 and reducing its Dignity score by 1. A DC 13 Intelligence (Investigation) check looking through the casks locates a hidden sheaf of Imperial Scripts (that any ryokōsai or similar government official can have exchanged for 1,000 Imperial Pieces) but the adventurers will have to move quickly to find it—1d4 rounds after the PCs have broken the magic circle, Kanja Korusu's servants appear to carry the turtlewax cream away.

Read the following:


SUSANAJI CAVE
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S



Just as the magic circle breaks you hear a scratching from the caverns wall and part of it crumbles, falling away to reveal a small tunnel winding off into the darkness. Crabs shuffle out from the newly dug passage, standing off to each side as five turtles inexorably crawl forward, stacked on top of one another and tied together by a crimson ribbon. All of the creatures begin humming a refrain as one of the crabs leaps up and snips the cord, the other struggling a cask onto the back of a turtle. In less than a minute every shell is tied off to at least one cask—the heaviest of the unlikely couriers fitted with two—and they all return from whence they came. The crabs scuttle up the sides of the tunnel before collapsing it and though it is difficult to be certain, you think that they might have waved at you before scratching against the rock face and disappearing from sight.

GENSOSŌ SHRINE

Whether the PCs decide to approach this before attending to the turtlewax cream or after, with victory in his grasp Kanja finds the resolve to keep Shūshō busy for just a while longer—long enough for the party to investigate and possibly activate the Gensosō Shrine. A DC 18 Intelligence (Arcana) check or DC 16 Dignity (Culture) check reveals that the artifact bestows power to the Gensosō monks, but how to activate it is a mystery. Otherwise the adventurers know how to draw power from the Gensosō Shrine from befriending Kazato Tetsunori during Act 3—doing katas for the Stance of Fire's Eternal Vengeance (see Martial Arts Feats in the *Mists of Akuma* core book or free *Martial Arts Feats PDF*).

Enacting the Ritual Correctly. PCs that have taken the Stance of Fire's Eternal Vengeance martial arts feat once do not require a check to activate the Gensosō Shrine, only 1 minute of practicing their martial art in front of the artifact. Adventurers that do not have this feat but have witnessed its use (fighting with a companion that had it or against an opponent using it) may make a simultaneous DC 10 Intelligence check and DC 12 Dexterity check to emulate the katas of the martial arts stance. PCs have advantage on these checks if they are helped by an ally that has taken the martial arts feat twice. Adventurers that have only had one or two adventures in *Mists of Akuma* may each roll a d20 to randomly determine their exposure to the martial arts stance: on a 1 to 10 they have encountered it, on an 11-20 they have not.

When a PC successfully enacts the ritual, read the following:

As the kata completes the shrine's fire briefly flares into a jet, one flame dancing outward to briefly touch upon your chest. The suddenly feel the heat of the very sun scorching your soul but it quickly changes to a welcoming warmth that envelops you, filling your limbs with power.

An adventurer that correctly activates the Gensosō Shine gains the Scorch feature and the artifact continues to function normally.

Scorch. The adventurer deals 1d4 additional fire damage with melee weapon attacks and gains immunity to fire damage. As a bonus action, the adventurer can increase the reach of their unarmed melee weapon attacks by 30 feet until the end of their turn.

Incorrectly Enacting the Ritual. A Gensosō Shrine does not react negatively until 3 creatures have failed one of the checks required to activate it in the same 24 hour period. After the third creature fails one of its checks, the Gensosō Shrine radiates a wave of power that imbues all creatures in a 50-foot-radius with the Scorch feature for 1d4 days. Incorrectly activating the Gensosō Shrine permanently strips it of power, turning it into a mundane object—and the adventurers become enemies of Ikari Prefecture's elite warriors, hunted until either the Gensosō or the party are all dead.

Read the following when the Gensosō Shrine is activated incorrectly:

As the kata completes the shrine's fire flares into an inferno, flames dancing outward to briefly touch upon the chest of every creature in the cavern until all the light within is snuffed out. Suddenly you all feel the heat of the very sun scorching your soul but you soon learn to endure it as the unyielding warmth envelops you, putting a touch of power into your limbs.

EPILOGUE

With the turtlewax cream in Kanja Korusu's possession he gives up on the battle outside, briefly teleporting into the cavern to whisk the PCs away back to a pleasant grove in the wilderness west of Nesuto—but not before Shūshō curses them. Read the following after the adventurers have broken the enchantment around the casks and had an opportunity to try their hand with the Gensosō Shrine.

Without warning the oblong-headed old man suddenly appears inside of the cavern, stepping briskly from behind a fold in space and followed by half of a tree trunk that slams against the wall. His skin is littered with cuts and bruising in places but he politely bows to you all, a sense of thankfulness rising up in your minds. The peacefulness packaged with it is interrupted as the voice of the violent stranger booms from outside, "NUKASHI-TENDA, KANJA?!" The old man's eyes widen and his ancient arm waves outward, a bright white light building as more screams are accompanied by crashing from further up the passage.

Finally there is a flash and the last thing you hear is, "NOROWARETA!" before you are once again outside, the familiar symphony of the Zunkhasa Rainforest all around you and the familiar rush of the Yōkini-Sawagi River nearby. The old man—Kanja—chuckles, winking at you slyly before disappearing yet again.

Everyone in the party receives a randomly determined shukufuku as well as the ability to innately cast *speak with animals* at will without components (though they are only able to speak with tortoises and turtles). Once the adventurers have returned to Nesuto (only a half mile downstream), Akia the Iron Shell's messengers are waiting to find them and send the PCs to Korao's Banter. The bengoshi is finally happy to see them and gives them the remainder of their payment for the mission, even promising to put in a good word with Lord Ryuu Korusu on their behalf. Read the following when the adventurers get to the teahouse:

Once more a feast and Akia the Iron Shell await you at a teahouse, but this time you're welcomed by all—Korao's Banter is filled with a banquet that puts the meager offerings in Zōkasuru to shame. The Korusu bengoshi celebrates with you and much of the rest of the city late into the evening. Though no children put on a show, the actors of the Tanoshī Theater stage performances of a higher caliber. With your bellies and cups full, the people of Nesuto honor your names (even if many do so only for the revelry provided by your benefactor) and you know that tonight you are heroes.

As the adventurers go to rest after the festivities however, the curse of Shūshō Ikari begins to take hold. Their dreams are hounded with phantoms of the Imperial Sibling, chasing away pleasant reveries and relived memories. The next time the PCs take a long rest, read the following:

The reverie of your sleep is broken by a crack of thunder and the darkness around you rapidly fades away to reveal the jungle. You look around for your companions but are alone, company only to more booms from lightning far beyond your sight. Soon this too is interrupted, the hooting of apes joining the percussion as huge feral shapes lope across the ground and through branches in the trees, too fast and too numerous to track or gaze upon for more than an instant. Rustling behind you draws your attention and suddenly from nowhere the violent old man from outside the sacred cave has his hands dug into one of your arms and legs, lifting you above the ground and pulling you apart! The pain is incredible and you fight against him, desperate not to be torn asunder, but through the riot of your nerves you feel a disabling nausea and hear a ripping, a tearing—

Darkness returns on the heels of mind-numbing pain

—but only for a time, the sequence repeating itself again, and again, and again...

For the rest of their days, whenever the PCs finish a long rest they must make a Wisdom saving throw (DC 10 + 1 per previous successful save) or wake up with the frightened condition for 10 minutes.



SHUKUFUKU

Shukufuku are intangible and can never be lost unless revoked by an Imperial Sibling (like Kanja Korusu, Shūshō Ikari, or Lord Tetsugmichiro Miyaki). Shukufuku are magical in nature but ignore *dispel magic* and *antimagic fields* or similar effects. 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) becomes a *+1 armor* or *+1 shield* whenever you wield it.
- ***Shukufuku of Gazing.*** You gain the benefits of *eyes of charming*. You can use this shukufuku again after a long rest.
- ***Shukufuku of Resolve.*** You gain a +1 bonus to AC and saving throws.
- ***Shukufuku of Self.*** One of your ability scores increases by 2, up to a maximum of 22.
- ***Shukufuku of Soul.*** You have advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.
- ***Shukufuku of Void.*** You gain the power to summon creatures from out of nowhere, as if you had used a *bag of tricks (tan)*. You can use this shukufuku again after a long rest.

THE CAST





SHE HAS ORDERED THE PARTY TO KILL THE SORCERER THAT STOLE HER SHIPMENT



AN IMPERIAL SIBLING HAS ORDERED A BENGOSHI TO ACQUIRE A SPECIAL TURTLEWAX CREAM





AFTER KILLING THE APOSTATE SORCERER THE TURTLEWAX IS EITHER BOUGHT OR STOLEN BY A HENGEYOKAI TRADER



WHEN THE ADVENTURERS REACH NESUTO THEY FIND THAT AKIA'S AGENTS IN THE CITY ARE BEING HUNTED DOWN BY A MAD KILLER







KNOWING ITS VALUE THE TRADER HAS HIRED MERCENARIES TO PROTECT HIM WHEN THE PARTY GETS SELLER'S REMORSE





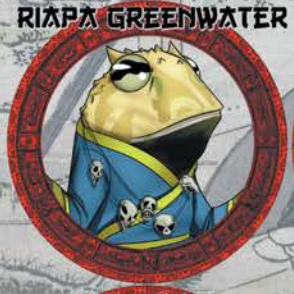






INVESTIGATING HER SPIES ULTIMATELY LEADS TO YUKAWA IKUMU AND THE TURTLEWAX CREAM BUT NOT BEFORE RUNNING INTO A RIVAL ADVENTURING PARTY

















SHINJIRARENAI

Small humanoid (oni-touched), neutral evil sorcerer (ju-wai shu) 6
Armor Class 16 (*mage armor*)
Hit Points 27 (6d6+6)
Speed 30 ft. (40 ft. during combat)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA	Dignity	Haitoku
8 (-1)	16 (+3)	12 (+1)	13 (+1)	12 (+1)	18 (+4)	9 (-1)	24 (+7)

Saving Throws Con +4, Cha +7
Skills Arcana +4, Deception +7, Perception +4, Persuasion +7, Stealth +6
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 14
Languages Adeddo, Soburi (Common)
Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Calligraphy Staff. Shinjirarenai casts spells by carving magic from reality with his calligraphy staff; when he isn't using his calligraphy staff, he takes 1 point of damage per spell level of any spells he casts (count cantrips as 1st-level spells).

Corrupted. Shinjirarenai cannot die from or be transformed by exposure to the Mists of Akuma.

Dark Relic. Shinjirarenai has an ebony charm, the *Kokutan-Niryoku*. While on his person, at the start of his turn he can choose two creature he can see. Until the start of his next turn, any attacks these creatures make against him have disadvantage.

Hated. Shinjirarenai has disadvantage on Wisdom or Charisma checks against any humanoid that doesn't also have the hated condition but he cannot suffer disadvantage on Intimidation checks.

High Haitoku. Shinjirarenai ignores the first 3 points of damage from attacks and spells, but has shrunk to Small size, and suffers disadvantage on Dignity ability checks and saving throws.

Magic Talent. Shinjirarenai is able to cast the *eldritch blast* cantrip with only somatic components.

Sorcery Points (6/long rest). As a bonus action, Shinjirarenai can expend one spell slot and gain sorcery points equal to the slot's level. Shinjirarenai can transform unexpended sorcery points into one spell slot as a bonus action on his turn (2 for 1st-level, 3 for 2nd-level, and 5 for 3rd-level).

- ***Metamagic: Heightened Spell (3 points).*** When Shinjirarenai casts a spell that forces a creature to make a saving throw to resist its effects, he can give one target of the spell disadvantage on its first saving throw made against the spell.
- ***Metamagic: Subtle Spell (1 point).*** When Shinjirarenai casts a spell, he can cast it without any somatic or verbal components.

Spellcasting. Shinjirarenai is a 6th level spellcaster that uses Charisma as his spellcasting ability (spell save DC 15; +7 to hit with spell attacks). Shinjirarenai has the following spells prepared from the sorcerer's spell list:

Cantrips: *acid splash, eldritch blast, mage hand, message, minor illusion, prestidigitation*
1st-level (4 slots): *charm person, mage armor, magic missile*
2nd-level (3 slots): *alter self, suggestion*
3rd-level (3 slots): *fear, haste*

ACTIONS

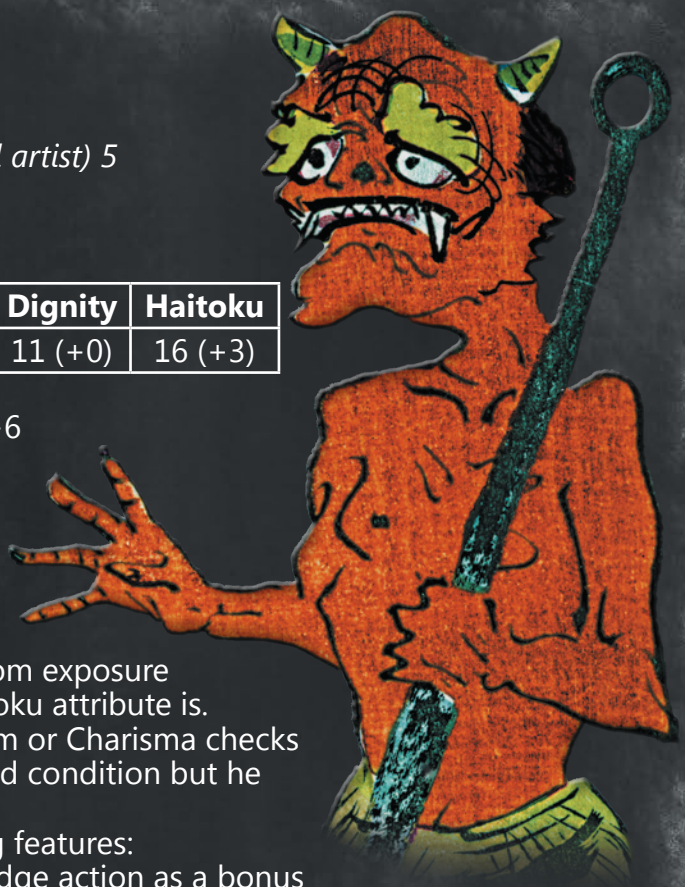
Calligraphy Staff. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target.
Hit: 6 (1d8+2) magical piercing damage.

REACTIONS

Reality Riposte (3/long rest). When Shinjirarenai is wielding his calligraphy staff and would be hit by a weapon or spell attack, he may spend his reaction to tear open a hole in reality between him and the attack, causing the attack to miss.

The oni-touched Shinjirarenai only recently discovered his corrupted heritage, his true parentage revealed in the panic when the Mists of Akuma descended on the village he once called home. When the supernatural haze next appeared they cast him out and while wandering in the choked forest, he came upon a dark trinket of ebony on the ground—the *Kokutan-Niryoku*. It spoke to him, promising secrets and power in exchange for souls. Shinjirarenai does what it asks and has lusted in its gifts, gaining a few followers and waylaying merchants to gather wealth and expand his cult.

YŌJINBŌ



Medium humanoid (shikome), neutral evil monk (martial artist) 5
Armor Class 17 (Wisdom, martial arts stance)
Hit Points 32 (5d8+10)
Speed 40 ft. (50 ft. during combat)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA	Dignity	Haitoku
13 (+1)	16 (+3)	15 (+2)	12 (+1)	17 (+3)	10 (+0)	11 (+0)	16 (+3)

Saving Throws Str +4, Dex +6
Skills Athletics +4, Perception +6, Stealth +6, Survival +6
Damage Resistances thunder
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 16
Languages Adeddo, Soburi (Common)
Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Brave. Yōjinbō has advantage on saving throws against being frightened.

Corrupted. Yōjinbō cannot be transformed by or die from exposure to the Mists of Akuma regardless of how high his Haitoku attribute is.

Hated. Yōjinbō is at disadvantage when making Wisdom or Charisma checks against any humanoid that doesn't also have the hated condition but he cannot suffer disadvantage on Intimidation checks.

Ki (5 points). Yōjinbō can spend *ki* to fuel the following features:

- ***Patient Defense (1 point).*** Yōjinbō can take the Dodge action as a bonus action on his turn.
- ***Step of the Wind (1 point).*** Yōjinbō can take the Disengage or Dash action as a bonus action on his turn, and his jump distance is doubled for the turn.
- ***Stunning Strike (1 point).*** Yōjinbō can attempt to stun a creature he hits with a melee weapon attack. The target must succeed on a DC 14 Constitution saving throw or be stunned until the end of his next turn.

Martial Advantage (1/turn). Yōjinbō deals an extra 5 (2d4) damage to a creature he hits with a melee weapon attack if that creature is within 5 feet of an ally that isn't incapacitated.

Stance of the Bellowing Gale (1/turn). Yōjinbō may move a target he hits with a melee attack up to 10 feet directly away from him (regardless of the target's size).

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Yōjinbō attacks twice (if attacking with unarmed strikes he can spend his bonus action to attack a third time or his bonus action and 1 *ki* to attack a third and fourth time).

Unarmed. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target.
Hit: 6 (1d6+3) bludgeoning damage plus 3 (1d6) thunder damage (doesn't multiply on a critical).

Quarterstaff. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target.
Hit: 5 (1d8+1) bludgeoning damage.

REACTIONS

Deflect Missile. Yōjinbō can spend his reaction to strike a missile when he is hit by a ranged weapon attack, reducing its damage by 10 (1d10+5).

Slow Fall. Yōjinbō can use his reaction when he falls to reduce any falling damage he takes by 25.

The shikome Yōjinbō was a footsoldier in the armies of the oni warlord Iron Beard for decades before meeting Shinjirarenai. Life inside of the walls of the fortress was less than idyllic however and having been formed from a giant owl corrupted by the Mists of Akuma, the shikome yearned to roam the lands of Soburin once more—when sent out on a scout patrol ambushed by an adventuring party, he took his chances and escaped. Hated by nearly everyone he came across, when Yōjinbō met the oni-touched a companionship rapidly formed, the sorcerer's natural charisma getting him access to places the monk could never easily go (chiefly markets with fresh soburi foodstuffs). The bodyguard has developed a small affection for his spellcaster charge but not enough to recklessly risk his life and when push comes to shove, Yōjinbō is prepared to give up luxuries and go back to a life of solitude.

RYŌMEN



Tiny monstrosity (oni), neutral evil
Armor Class 12 (natural armor)
Hit Points 4 (1d4+2)
Speed 5 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
5 (-3)	8 (-1)	15 (+2)	11 (+0)	16 (+3)	14 (+2)

Saving Throws Int +2
Skills Perception +5
Damage Resistances poison, psychic
Condition Immunities charmed, paralyzed, poisoned, stunned
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 20
Languages Adeddo, Soburi (Common)
Challenge 0 (10 XP)
Loud Talkers. The ryōmen constantly counsels and berates, causing it and any creatures within 20 feet to have disadvantage on Dexterity (Stealth) checks.
Twice the Eyes. The ryōmen has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks.
ACTIONS
Multiattack. The ryōmen attacks twice.
Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +1 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 1 piercing damage.

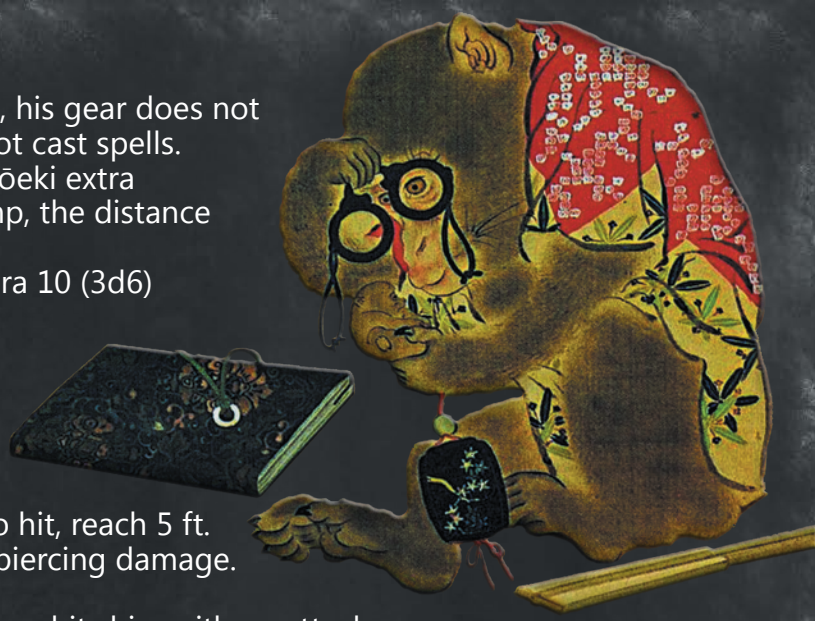
When conjoined twins are corrupted by the Mists of Akuma they do not change into adeddo-oni, transforming into ryōmen instead. Whatever love might have existed between them is stripped away and each head of this monster reviles the other, babbling endless insults and slights. A spellcaster with a Haitoku of 15 or higher adds ryōmen to the list of creatures that can be conjured using *find familiar*.

BŌEKI

Medium humanoid (soru hengeyokai), neutral rogue (thief) 5
Armor Class 14 (haramaki)
Hit Points 27 (5d8+5)
Speed 30 ft., climb 15 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA	Dignity	Haitoku
11 (+0)	16 (+3)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)	13 (+1)	15 (+2)	15 (+2)	8 (-1)

Saving Throws Dex +6, Int +5
Skills Acrobatics +6, Deception +8, Insight +4, Perception +4, Persuasion +8, Stealth +6
Senses passive Perception 14
Languages Soburi (Common), Thieves' Cant
Challenge 3 (700 XP)
Acrobatic. Bōeki has advantage on Dexterity (Acrobatics) checks and doubles the distance of any jumps he makes.
Cunning Action (1/turn). Bōeki can spend a bonus action to take the Dash, Disengage, Hide, Use Object action, make a Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) check, or to use thieves' tools (to disarm a trap or open a lock).
Dexterous Tail. Bōeki can make Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) checks with his tail.
Natural Disguise (3/long rest). Bōeki can cast *disguise self* without the need for any components but he can only change into a specific human.
Nature Form (3/long rest). Bōeki can transform into a monkey as *polymorph* without the need for components. Unlike the spell he keeps his mental scores, the ability has



no duration, his hit points remain unchanged, his gear does not meld into his form, and he can still talk but not cast spells.

Second-Story Work. Climbing does not cost Bōeki extra movement. When Bōeki makes a running jump, the distance he covers increases by 3 feet.

Sneak Attack 3d6 (1/turn). Bōeki deals an extra 10 (3d6) damage when he hits a target with a weapon attack and has advantage on the attack roll, or when the target is within 5 feet of an ally of his that isn't incapacitated and Bōeki doesn't have disadvantage on the attack roll.

ACTIONS

Dagger. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d4+3) piercing damage.

REACTIONS

Uncanny Dodge. When an attacker Bōeki can see hits him with an attack, Bōeki can use his reaction to halve the attack's damage against him.

Word of a wealthy buyer for turtlewax cream reached Bōeki through the Machibuse Traders as he left Fuson. With his shipment spoiled he's prepared to spend all he has to acquire the odd goods.

PHACER KAISEN

Large humanoid (mutant), lawful neutral barbarian 6

Armor Class 15 (Constitution)

Hit Points 57 (6d12+18)

Speed 45 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA	Dignity	Haitoku
16 (+3)	14 (+2)	17 (+3)	12 (+1)	11 (+0)	9 (-1)	9 (-1)	14 (+2)

Saving Throws Str +6, Con +5

Skills Athletics +6, Intimidation +2, Perception +3, Stealth +5

Condition Immunities frightened

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 13

Languages Soburi (Common)

Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

Danger Sense. Phacer has advantage on Dexterity saving throws against effects that he can see, such as traps and spells. To gain this benefit, he can't be blinded, deafened, or incapacitated.

Fast Healer. When spending hit dice during a short rest, Phacer heals twice the normal amount.

Hated. Phacer has disadvantage when making Wisdom or Charisma checks against any humanoid that doesn't also have the hated condition but he cannot suffer disadvantage on Intimidation checks.

Rage (4/long rest). On his turn, Phacer can enter a rage as a bonus action. His rage lasts for 1 minute. It ends early if Phacer is knocked unconscious or if his turn ends and he hasn't attacked a hostile creature since his last turn or taken damage since then. Phacer can also end his rage on his turn as a bonus action. When his rage ends, Phacer suffers a level of the misted condition. While raging, he gains the following benefits:

- Phacer has advantage on Strength checks and Strength saving throws
- When Phacer makes a melee weapon attack using Strength he gains a +2 bonus to the damage roll.
- Phacer has resistance to bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage.
- Whenever Phacer takes damage from a creature that is within 5 feet of him, that creature takes 3 necrotic damage.

Reckless Attack. When Phacer make his first attack on his turn, he can decide to attack recklessly. Doing so gives him advantage on melee weapon attack rolls using Strength during this turn, but attack rolls against him have advantage until his next turn.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Phacer attacks twice.

Chain. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 10 ft. or range 20/40, one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8+3) bludgeoning damage.

Although unforgiving, uncouth, and generally unlikable, Phacer Kaisen is the unchallenged leader of the Kaisen Mercenary Company and none of his crew dare to suggest otherwise. The mutant's word is his bond—he cannot be bought off and when forced to give up on a task, his vow to return and complete it is an absolute truth. All of his subordinates (4 Berserkers) are trained in guerilla tactics and know their routine by heart: one stays in back to make ranged attacks while the rest support Phacer by circling enemies until two of their allies have fallen and the withdrawn mercenary moves in to fill the space.

Handaxe (5). *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, range 20/60, one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6+3) slashing damage.



YUKAWA IKUMU

Medium humanoid (mujina hengeyokai), chaotic neutral bard 2

Armor Class 15 (haramaki)
Hit Points 11 (2d8+2)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA	Dignity	Haitoku
11 (+0)	18 (+4)	12 (+1)	19 (+4)	13 (+1)	18 (+4)	16 (+3)	13 (+1)

Saving Throws Dex +6, Cha +6
Skills Deception +6, Insight +3, Perception +3, Persuasion +6, Stealth +6
Senses passive Perception 13
Languages Soburi (Common)
Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Bardic Inspiration 1d6 (4/long rest). As a bonus action on her turn, Yukawa can choose one other creature within 60 feet who can hear her. That creature gains one Bardic Inspiration die, a d6. Once within the next 10 minutes, the creature can roll the die and add the number rolled to one ability check, attack roll, or saving throw it makes. The creature can wait until after it rolls the d20 before deciding to use the Bardic Inspiration die, but must decide before the GM says whether the roll succeeds or fails.

Berserker. When Yukawa takes more than 5 hit points from an attack or is reduced to 10 hit points or less, she goes berserk for 1d4 rounds. On each of her turns while



berserk, she attacks the nearest creature she can see. If no creature is near enough to move to and attack, Yukawa attacks an object, with preference for an object smaller than herself. While berserk and taking the attack action, she has advantage on melee attack rolls and can make an additional attack each turn.

Natural Disguise (2/long rest). Yukawa can cast *disguise self* without the need for any components but she can only change into a specific human.

Nature Form (2/long rest). Yukawa can transform into a badger as *polymorph* without the need for components. Unlike the spell she keeps her mental scores, the ability has no duration, her hit points remain unchanged, her gear does not meld into her form, and she can still talk but not cast spells.

Jack of All Trades. Yukawa adds +1 to any ability check she makes that doesn't already include her proficiency bonus.

Song of Rest. After a short rest, if Yukawa or any friendly creatures who can hear her performance regain hit points by spending one or more Hit Dice, each of those creatures regains an extra 1d6 hit points.

Spellcasting. Yukawa is a 2nd level spellcaster that uses Charisma as her spellcasting ability (spell save DC 14; +6 to hit with spell attacks). Yukawa has the following spells prepared from the bard's spell list:

Cantrips: *light, minor illusion, vicious mockery*

1st-level (3 slots): *charm person, cure wounds, disguise self, sleep, thunderwave*

ACTIONS

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d4+4) piercing damage.

Although it is unlikely for the PCs to interact with her directly during this adventure, Yukawa Ikumu's statistics are included here in the event the GM allows adventurers to catch her between the end of Act 3 and the middle of Act 4. Thanks to a shukufuku from Shūshō, any successful attempts to find out who the secret buyer she represents only allow her to reveal that a hermit alchemist of some renown wanted the turtlewax cream for making a new type of shīranto sap. The mujina hengeyokai is one of the sneakiest of the Machibuse Traders, far more duplicitous and devious than her peers and known to traffic in illicit goods whenever the price is right—regardless of what those goods might belong to, as long as there's coin enough Yukawa is happy to sell them.

GENSOSŌ KAZATO TETSUNORI

Medium humanoid (soburi human), neutral
Armor Class 17 (Wisdom)
Hit Points 55 (10d8+10)
Speed 50 ft. (quadruple all jump distances)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	Dignity	Haitoku
14 (+2)	19 (+4)	13 (+1)	13 (+1)	16 (+3)	19 (+4)	13 (+1)

Saving Throws Str +5, Dex +7, Con +4, Cha +4
Skills Acrobatics +7, Athletics +5, Perception +6, Stealth +7
Damage Immunities fire
Senses passive Perception 16
Languages Common (Soburi)
Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Primal Power: Scorch. As a bonus action, the Gensosō can increase the reach of his unarmed melee weapon attacks by 60 feet until the end of his turn.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The Gensosō makes three unarmed attacks or one elemental whirlwind attack.

Unarmed. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d8+4) bludgeoning damage and 4 (1d8) fire damage.

Elemental Whirlwind. The Gensosō erupts with primal energies, doing 6d8 fire damage to all creatures and objects within 15 feet. A successful DC 15 Dexterity saving throw reduces this damage by half.



Kazato Tetsunori witnessed a sacred Gensosō site corrupted by a duplicitous oni and hunts her in Nesuto, sure that she escaped the catastrophe she made of his order's hallowed ritual. He knows her true nature is revealed by reflections and carries a mirror on him at all times, checking every person he talks to using its burnished surface.

Tamahana the Kyūrurei

Medium monstrosity (oni), chaotic evil
Armor Class 15 (natural armor)
Hit Points 97 (15d8+30)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	17 (+3)	15 (+2)	14 (+2)	13 (+1)	16 (+3)

Saving Throws Str +8, Dex +6, Cha +6
Skills Athletics +8, Deception +6, Insight +4, Persuasion +6, Stealth +6
Damage Vulnerabilities radiant
Damage Resistances cold, fire; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical weapons
Damage Immunities necrotic, poison
Condition Immunities poisoned
Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 11
Languages Adeddo, Aklo, Soburi (Common)
Challenge 6 (2,300 XP)

Breaking Facade. When the kyūyurei is reduced to 43 hit points or less, her demonic appearance is revealed and she goes berserk for 1d4 rounds. On each of her turns while berserk, she attacks the nearest creature she can see. If no creature is near enough to move to and attack, the kyūyurei attacks an object, with preference for an object smaller than herself. While berserk and taking the attack action the kyūyurei gains the following benefits: she can make an additional attack each turn, her reach with all melee weapon attacks increases by 5 feet, and she deals an additional 9 (2d8) necrotic damage with a melee weapon attack once each turn.

Innate Spellcasting. The kyūyurei's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 14, +6 to hit with spell attacks). The kyūyurei can innately cast the following spells, requiring no components material or otherwise:
3/day: *command*
1/day each: *charm person, enthrall, false life*

Master of Duplicity. The kyūyurei has advantage on Wisdom (Insight) and Charisma (Deception) checks.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The kyūyurei attacks twice.

Wicked Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 12 (2d6+5) magical slashing damage.



Formed when the Mists of Akuma come upon the recently executed corpse of a man or woman that has murdered out of avaricious vanity, a kyūyurei is consumed with hatred over the curse of living after their own deaths and never seeing the beauty they so dearly loved before shuffling off the mortal coil. To the eyes of all others the oni appears as beautiful as ever, but reflections—whether from mirrors or liquid—reveal the monster hidden beneath, a grotesque thing hideous to gaze upon. So it is that kyūyurei seek to cure their affliction by any means possible, the impulse to avoid an eternity of revulsion of themselves overriding all other desires.

Tamahana is no exception. Recently she attempted to subvert the power of a sacred Gensosō cave but after that failure while wandering in the Zunkhasa Rainforest, she noticed Bōeki in his flight from Nesuto—already captured by Akia the Iron Shell's master spy Dokuro Gengyo. The soru hengeyokai was being relentlessly tortured for information and after learning of this apparently highly-sought turtlewax cream, the kyūyurei subdued the captor and made both her victims tell her many, many secrets. Before ending their lives she learned of all of the Korusu bengoshi's other agents in the city and she is carving a path through Nesuto drenched in their blood, obsessed with attaining the casks for herself to hopefully cure her appalling true appearance.

MUSASHIBŌ

Medium humanoid (umibo), lawful neutral monk (martial artist) 4
Armor Class 17 (Wisdom, martial arts stance)
Hit Points 27 (4d8+8)
Speed 30 ft., swim 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA	Dignity	Haitoku
13 (+1)	17 (+3)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	16 (+3)	12 (+1)	16 (+3)	13 (+1)

Saving Throws Str +3, Dex +5
Skills Acrobatics +5, Insight +5, Perception +5, Stealth +5
Damage Vulnerabilities psychic
Damage Resistances force
Condition Immunities prone
Senses passive Perception 15
Languages Soburi (Common)
Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

Amphibious. Musashibō can breathe both air and water.

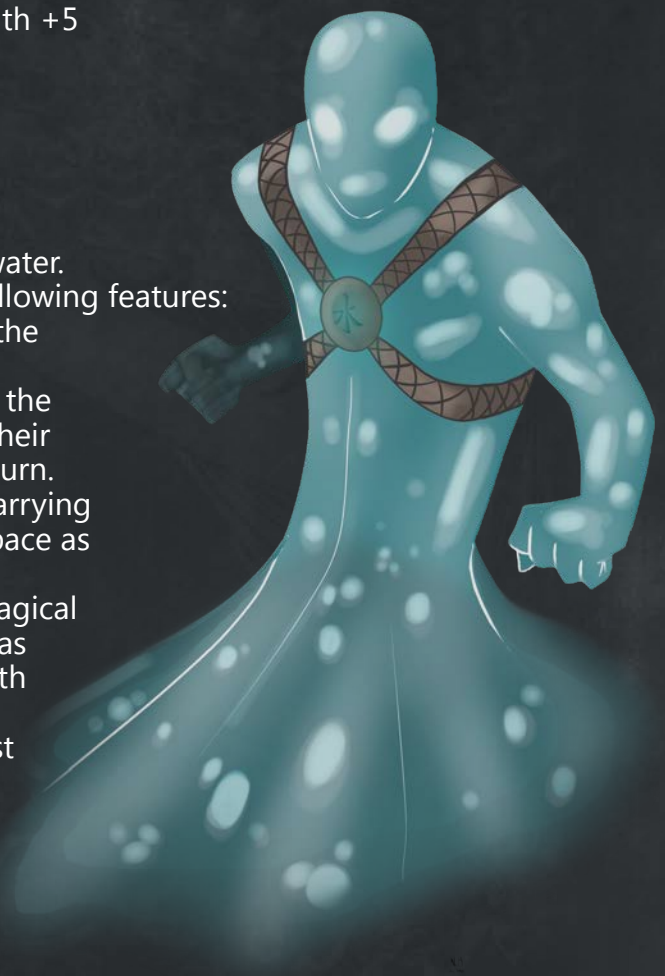
Ki (4 points). Musashibō can spend *ki* to fuel the following features:

- ***Patient Defense (1 point).*** Musashibō can take the Dodge action as a bonus action on their turn.
- ***Step of the Wind (1 point).*** Musashibō can take the Disengage or Dash action as a bonus action on their turn, and their jump distance is doubled for the turn.

Malleable Form. When not wearing any armor or carrying any equipment, Musashibō can move through a space as narrow as 1-inch wide without squeezing.

Stance of the Stout Boar. Musashibō ignores nonmagical difficult terrain and terrain movement costs so long as all their movement is in a straight line and ends with their making a melee weapon attack. In addition, Musashibō has advantage on saving throws against effects or spells that would cause them to move.

Watery Heritage. Musashibō knows the *create or destroy water* and *fog cloud* spells. They are able to cast these spells without the need for any components and without having to concentrate, using Charisma as their spellcasting attribute. After casting one of these spells, they require a long rest before they can cast it again.



ACTIONS

Multiattack. When attacking with unarmed strikes Musashibō can spend their bonus action to attack a third time, or their bonus action and 1 *ki* to attack a third and fourth time).

Unarmed. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (1d4+1d6+3) bludgeoning damage.

Shuriken. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5|+5 to hit, range 20/50 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 slashing damage.

REACTIONS

Deflect Missile. Musashibō can spend their reaction to strike a missile when they are hit by a ranged weapon attack, reducing its damage by 9 (1d10+4).

Slow Fall. Musashibō can use their reaction when they fall to reduce any falling damage they take by 20.

As leader of the rival adventuring party, the umibo Musashibō always attempts to act honorably and thus is often the "face" for his companions, though just as frequently the lead scout and taking a step behind to allow Funai Takejiro the interact with nobility and the like. They *hate* bakemono and shikome nearly as much as they hate ceramians, still angry over the Kengen Occupation.

RIAPA GREENWATER

Small humanoid (pyon), neutral fighter (champion) 4
Armor Class 16 (haramaki, defense fighting style)
Hit Points 30 (4d10+8)
Speed 25 ft., climb 15 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA	Dignity	Haitoku
11 (+0)	18 (+4)	15 (+2)	10 (+0)	13 (+1)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)	9 (-1)

Saving Throws Str +2, Con +4
Skills Acrobatics +6, Athletics +2, Perception +3, Survival +3
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 13
Languages Soburi (Common)
Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Action Surge (1/short rest). On her turn, Riapa can take one additional action on top of her regular action and a possible bonus action.

Amphibious. Riapa is able to breathe both air and water.

Improved Critical. Riapa's weapon attacks score a critical hit on a roll of 19 or 20.

Natural Jumper. Riapa doubles the distance of any jumps she makes.

Poison Resistance. Riapa has advantage on saving throws to resist poison.

Second Wind (1/short rest). Riapa can use a bonus action to regain 1d10+4 hit points.

Sublime Archery. Riapa does not have disadvantage when making ranged weapon attack rolls at long range, and she ignores half cover and three-quarters cover with her weapon attacks.

ACTIONS

Katana. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d8+4) slashing damage.

Longbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, range 600 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d8+4) piercing damage. Riapa can deal 10 additional damage with this attack by taking a -5 penalty to her attack roll.



The pyon village where Riapa Greenwater grew up was overwhelmed by the Mists of Akuma and despite being told to stop following them, the youngling archer refused to let Musashibō get too far ahead of her on the trail until she proved her worth by joining the fight against ambushing bandits. The two have been steadfast companions since and as their oldest friend, Riapa is suspicious of newer members to the group (especially Iya Jiman).

FUNAI TAKEJIRO

Medium humanoid (soburi), neutral paladin (samurai) 4
Armor Class 18 (lamellar half plate, swordmaster)
Hit Points 30 (4d10+8)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA	Dignity	Haitoku
14 (+2)	15 (+2)	14 (+2)	9 (-1)	13 (+1)	14 (+2)	15 (+2)	6 (-2)

Saving Throws Wis +3, Cha +4
Skills Arcana +1, Athletics +4, Culture +5, Medicine +3, Religion +1
Condition Immunities diseased
Senses passive Perception 11
Languages Soburi (Common)
Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

Divine Sense (3/long rest). As the paladin class feature.

Divine Smite. When Funai hits a creature with a melee weapon attack, he can expend one spell slot to deal 2d8 radiant damage to the target, in addition to the weapon's damage. The damage increases by 1d8 if the target is an undead or a fiend.

Iaijutsu Strike (1/short rest). As an action, Funai can draw his weapon and attack with it. This attack deals 9 (2d8) additional damage.

Lay on Hands (20 points). As an action, Funai can touch a creature and restore a number of hit points to that creature, up to the maximum amount remaining in this pool. Alternatively, he can expend 5 hit points to cure the target of one disease or neutralize one poison affecting it.

Magical Savant. Funai knows the *sacred flame* cantrip, using Wisdom as his spellcasting attribute (spell save DC 11).

Spellcasting. Funai is a 4th level spellcaster that uses Charisma as his spellcasting ability (spell save DC 12; +4 to hit with spell attacks). He has the following spells prepared from the paladin's spell list:

1st-level (3 slots): *cure wounds, detect magic, divine favor, expeditious retreat, heroism, shield of faith*

ACTIONS

Ancestral Katana. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target.
Hit: 9 (1d12+3) magical slashing damage. When attacking a target wearing armor, Funai gains a +2 bonus to the attack roll. When Funai scores a critical hit that kills his opponent, he may make another attack against a target within his reach as part of the same action.

REACTIONS

Swordmaster. When an enemy would provoke an opportunity attack, Funai may spend his reaction to move up to his speed, ending his movement adjacent to that enemy (or as close as possible).

While wielding a katana, Funai can use his reaction to cut a missile in twain when he is hit by a ranged weapon attack, reducing its damage by 9 (1d12+3).



Refusing to slay a rival noble's unarmed son on the field of battle made Funai Takejiro ronin, exiled from Gekido Prefecture to wander Soburin. First for pay and now for his share of the spoils, he's been the Musashibō's Marauder's representative in acts of honor or when visiting nobility for years now.

Iya Jiman

Medium humanoid (hebi hengeyokai), chaotic neutral rogue (ninja) 4
Armor Class 16 (studded leather)
Hit Points 30 (4d8+12)
Speed 30 ft. (40 ft. in combat)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA	Dignity	Haitoku
13 (+1)	18 (+4)	17 (+3)	13 (+1)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)	6 (-2)	18 (+4)

Saving Throws Dex +6, Int +3
Skills Acrobatics +6, Athletics +3, Deception +4, Investigation +3, Perception +3, Stealth +6
Damage Resistances poison
Senses passive Perception 13
Languages Common (Soburi), Thieves' Cant
Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

Basic Ninjutsu. Iya has advantage on checks made to create or maintain a disguise.

Cunning Action (1/turn). Iya can spend a bonus action to take the Dash, Disengage, or Hide action.

Kontorōra Transformation. When exposure to the Mists of Akuma would transform Iya into adeddo-oni, ze is changed into a hebikontorōra instead.

Natural Disguise (3/long rest). Iya can cast *disguise self* without the need for any components but ze can only change into a specific human.

Nature Form (3/long rest). Iya can transform into a snake as *polymorph* without the need for components. Unlike the spell ze keeps zir mental scores, the ability has no duration, zir hit points remain unchanged, zir gear does not meld into zir form, and ze can still talk but not cast spells.

Poisonous. Iya has advantage on saving throws against poison. When a creature hits zir with a bite attack, that creature makes a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or gains the poisoned condition for 1 minute.

Sneak Attack 2d6 (1/turn). Iya deals an extra 7 (2d6) damage when ze hits a target with a weapon attack and has advantage on the attack roll, or when the target is within 5 feet of an ally of Iya that isn't incapacitated and ze doesn't have disadvantage on the attack roll.

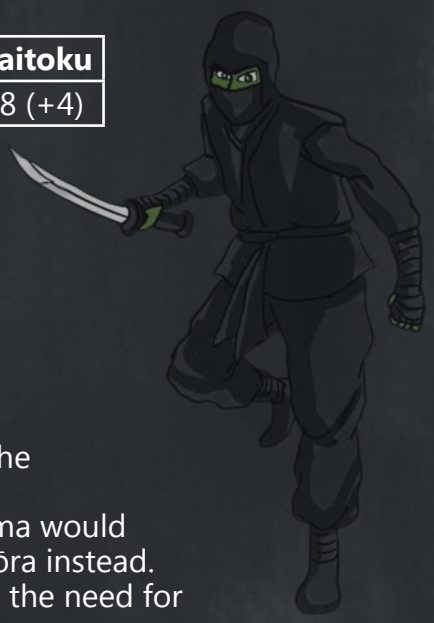
ACTIONS

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 3 (1d4+1) piercing damage. On a critical hit, the target makes a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or is poisoned for 1 minute or until that damage is healed.

Wakizashi. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target.
Hit: 7 (1d6+4) piercing damage.

Shuriken. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +6|+6|+6 to hit, range 20/50 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 slashing damage.

Very little is known about the ninja Iya Jiman save that ze is a consummate shinobi—not even zir companions know where ze grew up, the origins of zir family, or even exactly what zir race is.





DUB-SEV

Medium humanoid (steametic), lawful neutral wizard (clockwork mage) 4
Armor Class 15 (*mage armor*)
Hit Points 26 (4d6+12)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA	Dignity	Haitoku
10 (+0)	15 (+2)	16 (+3)	18 (+4)	13 (+1)	11 (+1)	11 (+0)	10 (+0)

Saving Throws Int +6, Wis +3
Skills Arcana +6, Athletics +2, Investigation +6, Perception +3
Damage Vulnerabilities lightning
Damage Resistances poison; bludgeoning
Condition Immunities charmed, frightened, poisoned
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 13
Languages Soburi (Common)
Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Arcane Recovery. Once per day when Dub-Sev finishes a short rest, they can choose expended spell slots to recover. The spell slots can have a combined level that is equal to or less than 2nd-level.

Automated. Dub-Sev does not need to eat or breathe. They still need to drink, and they require a resting period that emulates sleep in order to recharge their inner workings.

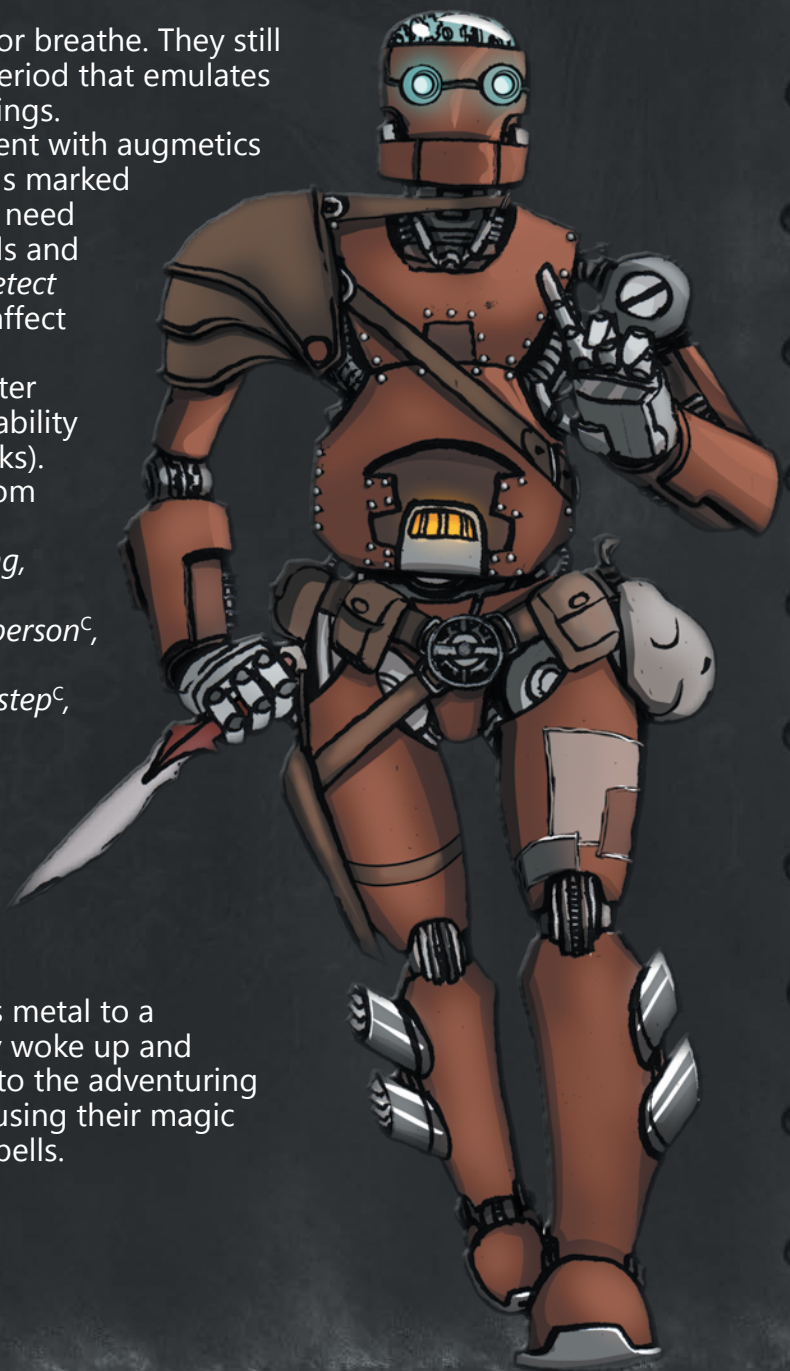
Clockwork Components. Dub-Sev is proficient with augmetics (as a tool kit proficiency) and can cast spells marked with [C] using clockwork devices that do not need verbal or material components. These spells and their effects are immune to *counterspell, detect magic, dispel magic*, and other spells that affect magic.

Spellcasting. Dub-Sev is a 4th level spellcaster that uses Intelligence as their spellcasting ability (spell save DC 14; +6 to hit with spell attacks). They have the following spells prepared from the wizard's spell list:

Cantrips: *acid splash, mage hand, mending, ray of frost, prestidigitation*
1st-level (4 slots): *burning hands, charm person*[C], *mage armor, magic missile*
2nd-level (3 slots): *enlarge/reduce, misty step*[C], *scorching ray, web*

ACTIONS

Dagger. *Melee or Ranged Weapon*
Attack: +4 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target.
Hit: 4 (1d4+2) piercing damage.



Musashibō's Marauders came across an inert steametic last year and took the lifeless metal to a technologist—with a little tinkering Dub-Sev woke up and recognizing their debt, pledged themselves to the adventuring party. The wizard is calculating and tactical, using their magic to empower allies before casting offensive spells.

GAKUTEN

Small humanoid (psonorous), neutral warlock (wu-jen) 4
Armor Class 15 (studded leather)
Hit Points 26 (4d8+8)
Speed 25 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA	Dignity	Haitoku
9 (-1)	16 (+3)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)	13 (+1)	18 (+4)	13 (+1)	7 (-2)

Saving Throws Int +2, Wis +3, Cha +6
Skills Arcana +2, History +2, Nature +2, Religion +2
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 11
Languages Soburi (Common), telepathy 30 ft.
Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Focused Telepathy. Gakuten is able to send and receive messages from her companions via telepathy beyond its normal range as long as they are within 2 miles. Sending messages is an action, and receiving messages is a reaction.

Spellcasting (Recharge on short rest). Gakuten is a 4th-level warlock that uses Charisma as her spellcasting ability (spell save DC 14; +6 to hit with spell attacks). She can cast the following spells from the warlock's spell list:

Cantrips: *acid splash, eldritch blast, mage hand, minor illusion, prestidigitation, ray of frost, sacred flame, true strike*

2nd-level (2 spell slots): *charm person, expeditious retreat, faerie fire, mirror image, shatter*

ACTIONS

Shamisen. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +1 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target.
Hit: 1 (1d4-1) bludgeoning damage.

Heated Eldritch Blast. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, range 300 ft., one target.
Hit: 9 (1d10+4) fire damage.



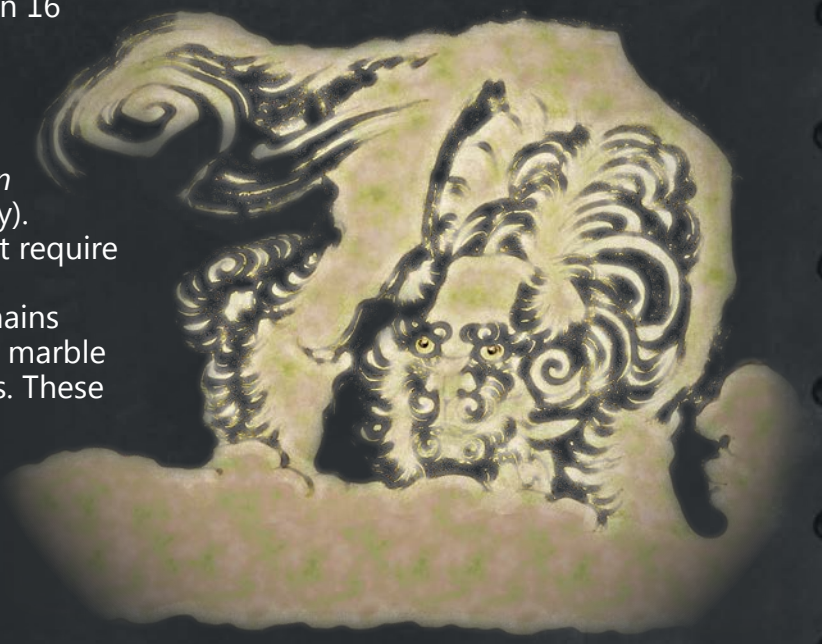
The newest member of Musashibō's Marauders was found in Sutefanī when the adventurers came to protect the tiny village from a predatory monster hounding its citizens. Wanting to end the scourge on her home, Gakuten joined the party in hunting down the oni beast and found its lair, slaying the foul thing's offspring just as the mother returned. Though the creature was defeated upon returning to the settlement the psonorous found everyone she knew murdered by the monster, killed in her absence. The whispers of Natsu Ītā came to her and Gakuten has embraced the entity that ate summer, growing in power as she continues to travel with her new companions.

FOO LION

Large celestial, chaotic good
Armor Class 17 (natural armor)
Hit Points 120 (16d10+32)
Speed 50 ft., fly 50 ft. (hover)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
17 (+3)	19 (+4)	15 (+2)	10 (+0)	16 (+3)	14 (+2)

Saving Throws Wis +6
Skills Perception +6, Stealth +7, Survival +6
Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing
Damage Immunities poison, radiant
Condition Immunities disease, poisoned, paralysis
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 16
Languages Celestial, Common
Challenge 8 (3,900 XP)



Faith in the Pack. When two or more foo lions are within 30 feet of one another, they both gain the benefit of a *protection from evil and good* spell (against evil only). This effect can be dispelled and does not require concentration.

False Appearance. While the foo lion remains motionless, it is indistinguishable from a marble statue and gains 20 temporary hit points. These temporary hit points disappear when the foo lion moves.

Incorporeal Movement. The foo lion can move through other creatures and objects as if they were difficult terrain. It takes 5 (1d10) force damage if it ends its turn inside an object.

Innate Spellcasting. The foo lion's innate spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 14, spell attack +6). It can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

At will: *dancing lights, detect evil and good, detect magic, sacred flame*
3/day each: *clairvoyance, cure wounds, healing word*
2/day each: *spirit guardians*

Pack Tactics. The foo lion has advantage on an attack roll against a creature if at least one of the foo lion's allies is within 5 feet of the creature and the ally isn't incapacitated.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The foo lion attacks once with its bite and twice with its claws.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target.
Hit: 10 (2d6+3) magical piercing damage plus 7 (2d6) radiant damage.

Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target.
Hit: 6 (1d6+3) magical slashing damage plus 7 (2d6) radiant damage.

This divine creature floats through the air either as a golden cloud or in its true form as a foo lion, changing from one of substance to a ghostly mist and back. Only its gaze is constant, an utter intensity consuming its eyes. When a truly dignified, honorable, proud warrior dies while within the Mists of Akuma by way of treachery, they return as one of these powerful celestials to protect others from the same fate. The Imperial Siblings have been known to summon foo creatures and it is said they are fueled by the willpower of the ancestors, and that to strike one down is to invite dishonor and shame into one's life.



CONNECTION B: TREKKING NORTH

With the turtlewax cream dealt with (either in the hands of Kanja Korusu leaving Shūshō Ikari to haunt the party's dreams, or denied from the Imperial Sibling and destroyed) the squabbles of *Feud Primordial* come to a close and the adventurers find themselves very near the river-city of Nesuto in Ikari Prefecture. To reach the next adventure (*Fangs of Revenge*) a long trek north awaits them, crossing over much of mainland Soburin to get to their final destination: Samon in Hakaisuru. Depending on what route they take, they'll pass through or near the following territories: Yokuba, Korusu, Fuson, Osore, Satsujin, Imperial Prefecture, Donyuko, Gekido, Kirai, Hakaisuru. Once the adventurers are sufficiently far north the GM can have 9th Arrow send her missive whenever it's convenient to start the next arc of the *Trade War* adventure path. Of the events that follow, these are essential parts in this section of the journey:

- ***Trade War: Foreshadowing Skirmish.*** The PCs finally see the machine-armorer soburi in action and learn more about the ill-suited warriors.
- ***Shitaitaberu the Corpse Eater.*** Another demon begat by the creatures that consumed nature—one with an insatiable hunger for decaying flesh.
- ***Black Torii Gate.*** Along the way north the adventurers come across another curious black torii gate, though its importance is likely to escape them still.
- ***Mubō Brothers: Canny Torasuta.*** The smarter sibling of Raitoningu, Sandā, and Kyūchi lures the adventurers into a deathtrap to avenge his fallen kin.
- ***Smuggling Operations.*** Unbeknownst to them the party aid one of the organizations clandestinely moving advanced shikome technology across Soburin, or if they're sufficiently insightful, have an opportunity to destroy some of it.



TRADE WAR: FORESHADOWING SKIRMISH

The curiosity of machine-armored soburi once again crosses the paths of the PCs but this time it is far more direct than a few rumors. While traveling northward they come across a trio of the farmer-warriors in a losing combat against two erītokirā warriors of the Kōteino chapter (based in Tsukisasu). Regardless of how the adventurers intervene the farmers use them as a distraction to flee though which side they take—defending the underdogs or allying with the shikome—will be the first determination in how the factions in *Trade War* interact with the party.

When the GM feels that the time is appropriate the duel between these five spills out onto the roadway ahead of the party. Read the following:

A flew clashes of metal and the crashing of branches are all the warning you get before five figures spill out onto the roadway in front of you. All are clad in machine-armor that whirs and hisses with steam as they leap and slash, but while two are the shikome known to wear such devices three of them are soburi.

They are very clearly losing. Their shikome attackers are outnumbered but far more skilled, each jab and swing precise and powerful weaving into and out of the other's assault. The humans are clumsy and show no tactics other than to defend themselves—poorly. It's clear that in a few moments, aided by armor or not, they'll be killed.

No expertise in combat is required to see that the machine-armored soburi—despite the powerful accoutrements they wear—are no match for the erītokirā warriors, even with the advantage of numbers. A DC 10 Wisdom (Insight) check reveals that the humans in the melee are good-spirited folk and clearly don't want to be in a fight at all, and after they notice the adventurers nearby (once 1d4+1 rounds have passed) they call out for help against the monstrous shikome. Once an adventurer is within reach of each erītokirā warrior, the farmer warriors flee.

Impromptu Reconnaissance

For each round that the adventurers watch the fighting the PCs can make an Intelligence (Investigation) check or Dignity (Culture) check to observe the machine-armored soburi and determine more about them.

Table: Impromptu Reconnaissance

DC	Investigation	Culture
12	These people wield swords as though they were farming tools.	Wherever the trio of soburi are from their accents belie at least two different territories.
14	The mempō worked into their helmets make it uncertain but two of the soburi looked female.	By the mannerisms of their speech these warriors hail from Ibutsu, Hakaisuru, and Namida.
18	A muffled shout from one was hard to make out but sounded like they called the smallest of their trio "Yakunitatsu".	Markings on their armors are slightly different and each soburi must wear a suit from a different group of erītokirā—one of them resembling those found on their assailants.

Kōteino Erītokirā Warrior

Medium humanoid (shikome), chaotic evil fighter (champion) 7
Armor Class 17 (erītokirā gusoku)
Hit Points 57 (7d10+28)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	10 (+0)	18 (+4)	10 (+0)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)

Saving Throws Str +7, Con +7
Skills Athletics +7, Intimidation +3, Investigation +3, Survival +5
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 13
Languages Adeddo, Draconic, Soburi (Common)
Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Action Surge (1/short rest). On the erītokirā warrior's turn, they can take an additional action on top of their regular action and a possible bonus action.

Brave. The erītokirā warrior has advantage on saving throws against being frightened.

Dampening Enhancers. The erītokirā warrior armor contains cutting-edge prototype augmetics that grant advantage on Strength (Athletics) and Dexterity (Stealth) checks.

Hated. The erītokirā warrior has disadvantage when making Wisdom or Charisma checks against humanoids that don't have the hated condition but they never have disadvantage on Charisma (Intimidation) checks.

Improved Critical. The erītokirā warrior's weapon attacks score a critical hit on a roll of 19 or 20.

Martial Advantage (1/turn). The erītokirā warrior can deal an extra 5 (2d4) damage to a creature they hit with a melee weapon attack if that creature is within 5 feet of an ally that isn't incapacitated.

Power Attack. When the erītokirā warrior makes their first melee weapon attack in a turn, they can choose to take a -5 penalty to their melee weapon attack rolls in exchange for a +10 bonus to melee weapon damage. In addition, the erītokirā warrior can use a bonus action to make one melee weapon attack after they use a melee weapon to reduce a creature to 0 hit points or score a critical hit with it. The erītokirā warrior can only use this feature on their turn.

Remarkable Athlete. The erītokirā warrior can add +1 to any Strength, Dexterity, or Constitution check they make that doesn't already use their proficiency bonus. In addition, when they make a running long jump, the distance the erītokirā warrior can cover increases by 4 feet.

Second Wind (1/short rest). On the erītokirā warrior's turn, they can use a bonus action to regain 1d10+7 hit points.

Strength Enhancers (Recharge 6). At the beginning of the erītokirā warrior's turn, adrenal fluids and stimulants are released into their bloodstream and they gain a +2 bonus to attack and damage rolls made with weapons.

ACTIONS

Extra Attacks. The erītokirā warrior attacks twice.

Katana. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target.
Hit: 10 (1d12+4) slashing damage.

Handaxe. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, range 20/60 ft., one target.
Hit: 7 (1d6+4) slashing damage.

Northward Trails

Whether they lever themselves away on a handcart (if the PCs are working for the Tazuki Rail Company as guards), nitrous dash up the path, or disappear into the wilderness, the machine-armored soburi escape at the first opportunity. The erītokirā try to break off the fight to give chase when it becomes clear the adventurers have no prior affiliation to the farmer-warriors but by then it's too late—they've fled in separate directions, though DC 12 Wisdom (Survival) checks are good enough to pick up tracks that are good until reaching a waterway (less than an 1d4 hours of travel). Regardless of where they are fleeing or what the environs nearby are like, the only commonality between them is that they are all headed north.

With or Against

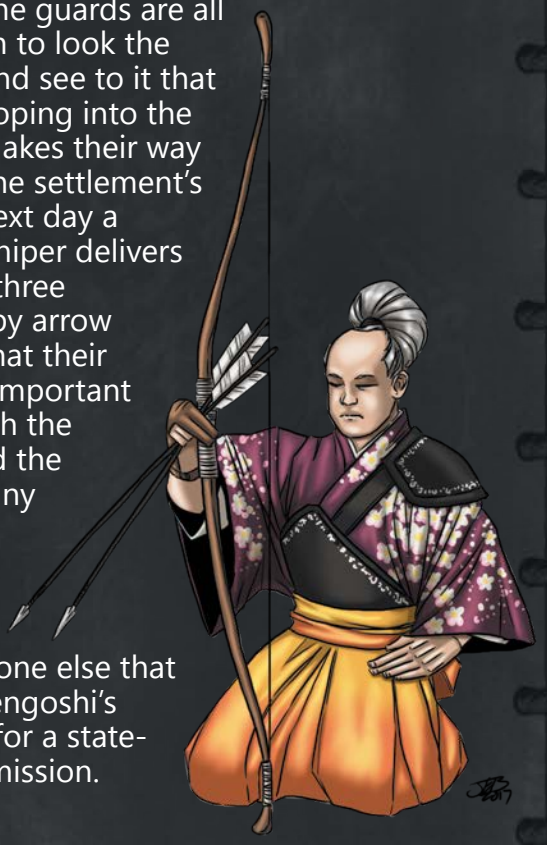
A DC 8 Charisma (Persuasion) or Dignity check is sufficient to amicably halt the fight once the machine-armored soburi are gone, but depending on how much the PCs uncover of the Machibuse Traders' and Mitsuyu Gyōsha Consortium's smuggling operations, or should they kill these Kōteino Chapter erītokirā, they'll start to establish their place in the grand scheme of the adventure path. Their choices will ultimately color the end events of *Trade War* and though at this point it does not need to be final, the more impact they have for whichever side of the conflict they land on the more difficult it'll be to walk back should they decide to swap allegiances.

Aiding the Smugglers. Kanja Korusu has secretly been paying for the smuggling of erītokirā armor to various parts of Soburin and clandestinely organized the installation of the technology into peasants. He has foreseen a terrible fate coming to the northern prefectures that will spread across the continent to finally break civilization's feeble hold against the Mists of Akuma. At the end of the campaign, adventurers that go this route are aided by a veritable army of peasants newly accustomed to advanced armors and weapons stolen from erītokirā warriors.

Destroying the Operation. Shūshō Ikari has stumbled across his brother's plans and spitefully wishes to wreck them no matter the cost. He has gathered scores of Gensosō to do his bidding, playing on their fears of more technology spreading across the realm to wreck havoc once transformed into tsukumogami. Most importantly nearly all of the erītokirā warriors across Soburin consider a non-shikome in their armor to be the height of blasphemy and will kill everyone they have to in order to bring these heretics to justice. PCs that choose this path may see an end to the nightmares bestowed by Shūshō, make war alongside elemental warrior-monks, and if they are lucky or can afford it, be helped in the final conflict by soldiers from as many as six chapters of erītokirā mercenaries.

Iron Spider Smugglers

Although the Hakaisuru bengoshi's order legally compels the PCs to abandon the trail of the smuggling ring for the events in *Fangs of Revenge*, adventurers that ignore the mission to find out more or GMs that wish to foreshadow *Revenge of the Pale Master* can allow for parties going the extra mile to witness the smuggler's meet. Whether they follow the Machibuse Traders or the Mitsuyu Gyōsha Consortium, the Iron Spiders gang and Eight Arms Kazuya (a group of criminals from Kizaki) show up in numbers too large to engage directly. Afterward they travel together back to their city where the guards are all paid enough to look the other way and see to it that anyone snooping into the operation makes their way outside of the settlement's walls. The next day a Fudōsoge Sniper delivers as many as three reminders (by arrow of course) that their master has important business with the PCs—should the party tarry any longer the adventurers are branded as fugitives just like anyone else that ignores a bengoshi's commands for a state-sponsored mission.



Shitaitaberu the Corpse Eater

Intense heat has plagued Soburin since the start of *Feud Primordial* and it doesn't let up when it should. The summer seems as though it will never end, the ancestors are restless (making encounters with ki spirits and ishi spirits common), and each day is as hot as the last. With the effects Kumo-Rui (page 52) had during last winter the PCs are likely to suspect another demon begat by the entities that consumed nature and they're right: this one the corpse-eating Shitaitaberu, a child of Natsu Ītā. By the time the adventurers near the region in which it dwells it has consumed the souls and mortal remains of many of the dead, but should it finally sate its hunger like Fukō it too will transform into a monster of far greater power certain to inflict intense suffering on the land.

Ancestral Anguish

While in a settlement the adventurers are approached by an old local priest seeking their aid (use the statistics for an Acolyte). If a PC has a Dignity score of 13 or higher they are singled out and their deeds are extolled in the appeal. The elder explains that ancestral spirits are restless for someone has blasphemed the graveyards and shrines of the dead, exhuming graves with no signs of the corpses. They are unsure what to think or who could be responsible—witnesses claim an adeddo-oni of some kind, or possibly an oni-touched or a shikome, is the culprit.

All of the interred dead buried near the settlement have already gone missing but a recent smattering of deaths (a family of farmers slaughtered by monsters from the mists) has them concerned and if the party is willing to safeguard the gravesite, killing what or whomever is to blame, they'll be awarded the settlement's treasured relic (a random wondrous item of uncommon rarity). Refusing the piece of treasure increases the Dignity score of each PC by 3 and sure enough, the evening after the bodies are buried Shitaitaberu appears. Read the following:

> *A blur of red leaps from out of the darkness, slamming into one of the recently placed shrines with force far greater than its small form suggests. The humanoid easily claws away heaps of dirt in seconds, its face lit up with glee. Within seconds it is gripping onto a coffin and drags the casket out, hungrily batting away the wooden lid and scrabbling after the corpse inside.*

Once reduced to its flames form Shitaitaberu attempts to escape to acquire a new body for itself (using a party member if any died in the fight). GMs that wish to make killing it outright a truly dangerous affair can have it flee into a bamboo grove, lighting the stalks aflame to create an inferno that only a suicidal (or fire resistant) adventurer would chase through.

Tracking the Demon

When the PCs catch onto Shitaitaberu's trail it has already consumed 250+5d8 corpses, and upon the 314th it will undergo its wicked transformation. Despite being intelligent, the demon's voracious hunger will drive it to find more humanoid corpses to consume even after defeat—asking around about other graves in the region with a DC 12 Intelligence (Investigation) check reveals that it is gradually moving north-northwest. A DC 10 Intelligence (History) check deduces why: it must be headed towards the mass graves made in the wake of the Battle of Broken Spears.

Unfortunately for the party, Shitaitaberu is likely much faster than they are but it still can only consume so many corpses within a few hours and knows better than to take its grisly meals during the day. Each graveyard the demon visits has 6d12 corpses and every night it can consume 2d4 bodies (depending on how many children are in the mix). It's likely that unless they're laying in wait for the monster the next time PCs encounter it, Shitaitaberu is already in the midst of consuming the dead. Read the following:

> *Ahead of you are mounds of dirt, piles of broken wood, and the remains of what was once a graveyard. The demon you hunt—Shitaitaberu—has lain out a sortie corpses in front of it and has one stuffed into its unhinged mouth, jamming the dead body down its throat in an unsightly bulge that malforms the monster's neck until disappearing into the hard-packed muscles of its torso.*

SHITAITABERU UNBOUND

Upon consumption of its 314th corpse and soul (possibly at the battle site), Shitaitaberu transforms into a more powerful demon. If the PCs are able to see it, read the following:

> *As Shitaitaberu gorges itself on yet another corpse its body begins to glow until a tempest of flames erupt in a scorching whirlwind all around it. Everything nearby is burnt to cinders as the demon screams, its eyes bulging wide while it jitters about in ecstasy. With each skip and thrust of its limbs it grows larger, rapidly expanding in size until it is tall enough to be bigger than even an enjin or mutant. In a matter of seconds the small monster you've been chasing is gone, replaced now by a smirking red giant.*

Like Fukō and Kumo-Rui, the death of Shitaitaberu restores one of the Gensosō shrines in Ikari Prefecture and allows the long summer to end (leading to a short fall season during *Fangs of Revenge*). If the PCs have gained the ire of the warrior-monks (either by ruining such a site at the end of *Feud Primordial* or by knowingly aiding the smuggling of erītokirā technology) it buys them clemency until the next time they exacerbate the (rising but still clandestine) conflict.

SHITAITABERU'S BLACK TORII GATE

Somewhere along their path north (preferably earlier on rather than later) the PCs pass by another of these strange ebony structures. Whether in the jungles or the badlands, as long as Shitaitaberu has not reached its full potential the black torii gate is only a local curiosity thought to be cursed. If the adventurers encounter or return to it after Shitaitaberu is unbound, the black torii gate radiates with heat so encompassing that any creature attempting to rest within a 10-mile radius makes a DC 15 Constitution saving throw. On a failure, a creature gains no benefit from their rest. If a long rest, the creature wakes up after 4 hours in a sweat and is unable to attempt another long rest in the area for 1d4 hours.

The black torii gate (AC 14, 100 hit points) ignores the first 15 points of damage from weapon attacks and is immune to acid, cold, fire, lightning, necrotic, and thunder damage. A creature that damages the black torii gate with a weapon or spell makes a DC 10 Dignity saving throw. On a failure, the creature increases its Haitoku by 1 and decreases its Dignity by 1.



SHITAITABERU

シャイタベール

Small oni, chaotic evil
Armor Class 17 (natural)
Hit Points 130 (20d6+60)
Speed 40 ft., climb 40 ft., leap 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
17 (+3)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)	12 (+1)	15 (+2)	14 (+2)

Saving Throws Str +6, Dex +5, Con +6
Skills Athletics +9, Investigation +4, Perception +5, Stealth +8, Survival +5
Damage Vulnerabilities cold, radiant
Damage Resistances fire, necrotic; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage from nonmagical weapons
Condition Immunities charmed, frightened
Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 15
Languages Adeddo, Soburi (Common)
Challenge 7 (2,900 XP)

Corpse Jumper (1/short rest). When it drops to 0 hit points, Shitaitaberu discorporates into a swarm of thousands of sparking flames. While in flames form it can't take any actions, speak, or manipulate objects. It is weightless, has a flying speed of 50 feet, can hover, and can enter a hostile creature's space and stop there. A creature that begins its turn in the same space as the flames takes 14 (4d6) fire damage. In addition, if air can pass through a space, the flames can do so without squeezing, and they can't pass through water. While in flames form Shitaitaberu has 50 hit points and can automatically detect the nearest corpse of a creature of Tiny size or larger. Taking more than 10 points of cold damage while in flames form reduces Shitaitaberu's movement by half for 1 round. When it finds a suitable target, Shitaitaberu suffuses it and brings it back to life as if the creature had just finished a long rest. The creature transforms into Shitaitaberu (gaining its statistics) after 1d4 minutes. Shitaitaberu can remain in flames form for 1d4+1 hours and if unable to find a corpse in that time, it is destroyed.

Corpse Sense. As an action, Shitaitaberu reaches out to sense the lingering energies of souls tethered to their mortal forms. Until the end of its next turn, it knows the location of any corpse within 1 mile. It knows the type of any corpse whose presence it senses, but not its identity. A corpse requires at least a third of its flesh to be sensed with this feature.

Densely Muscled. Shitaitaberu counts as Large size when determining its carrying capacity and how much it is able to lift.

Innate Spellcasting. Shitaitaberu's innate spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 13, +5 to hit with spell attacks). It can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

3/day each: *heat metal, hellish rebuke, scorching ray*
1/day each: *animate dead, fireball*

Revolting Consumption (Recharge 6). Shitaitaberu uses a bonus action to stuff the corpse of a Medium-sized or smaller creature into its gullet, regaining 2d6+6 hit points.

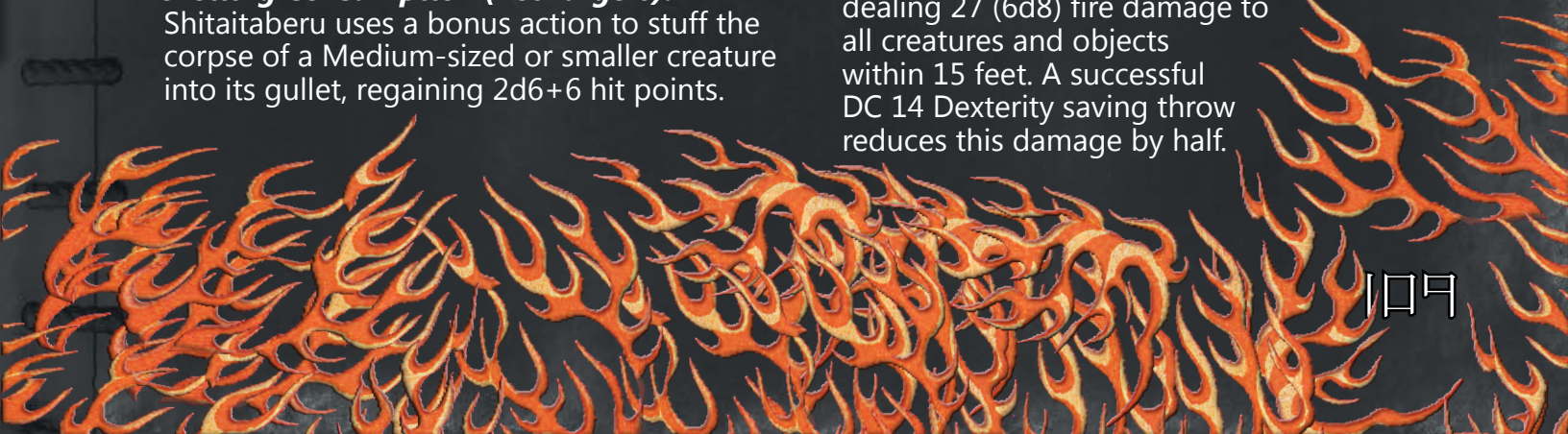
ACTIONS

Multiattack. Shitaitaberu attacks three times.

Fiery Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8+3) magical slashing damage plus 9 (2d8) fire damage.

Thrown Flame. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, range 30/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 12 (2d8+3) fire damage.

Elemental Whirlwind. Shitaitaberu uses an action to erupt with flames, dealing 27 (6d8) fire damage to all creatures and objects within 15 feet. A successful DC 14 Dexterity saving throw reduces this damage by half.



SHITAITABERU UNBOUND

Large oni, chaotic evil
Armor Class 17 (natural)
Hit Points 170 (20d10+60)
Speed 40 ft., fly 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
19 (+4)	15 (+2)	17 (+3)	14 (+2)	17 (+3)	16 (+3)

Saving Throws Str +9, Dex +6, Con +8
Skills Athletics +12, Investigation +6, Perception +7, Stealth +6, Survival +7
Damage Vulnerabilities cold, radiant
Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage from nonmagical weapons
Damage Immunities fire, necrotic
Condition Immunities charmed, frightened
Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 17
Languages Adeddo, Soburi (Common)
Challenge 9 (5,000 XP)

Densely Muscled. Shitaitaberu counts as Gargantuan size when determining its carrying capacity and how much it is able to lift.

Fire Aura. At the start of each of Shitataberu's turns, each creature within 5 feet of it takes 4 (1d8) fire damage, 3 (1d6) necrotic damage, and flammable objects in the aura that aren't being worn or carried ignite. A creature that touches Shitaitaberu or hits it with a melee attack while within 5 feet of it takes 4 (1d8) fire damage and 3 (1d6) necrotic damage.

Innate Spellcasting. Shitaitaberu's innate spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 15, +7 to hit with spell attacks). It can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:
At will: *heat metal, hellish rebuke, scorching ray*
3/day each: *animate dead* (at 5th-level), *fireball, wall of fire*

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Shitaitaberu attacks three times.

Fiery Swipe. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (1d10+4) magical slashing damage plus 4 (1d8) fire damage and 4 (1d8) necrotic damage.

Unholy Flame. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, range 50/100 ft., one target. *Hit:* 13 (2d8+4) fire damage plus 7 (2d6) necrotic damage.

Elemental Whirlwind. Shitaitaberu uses an action to erupt with flames, dealing 33 (6d10) fire damage and 14 (4d6) necrotic damage to all creatures and objects within 30 feet. A successful DC 15 Dexterity saving throw reduces this damage by half.



Mubō Brothers: Canny Torasuta

At the start of the *Trade War* adventure path the party engage in a life-and-death duel against Raittoningu and Sandā Mubō in the town of Shibai, and their third sibling (Kyūchi the Wise) makes a play on the adventurers before the events of *Feud Primordial*—but there are three more Mubō brothers and all of them seek vengeance! Torasuta Mubō has used his brilliant mind to prepare an ambush in a warehouse filled with traps to bring his brothers' killers to justice.

Setting the Stage

Torasuta knows well enough that the adventurers won't be easily tricked into his deathtrap and has paid well for information on their doings by the time they arrive in Sokuru in Kirai Prefecture (or another settlement if the party takes a different route north). Before the PCs reach the settlement he spreads a rumor that claims one of the merchants (either from the Machibuse Traders, Mitsuyu Gyōsha Consortium, or if they're working for Tazuki Rail then a railroad businessman) was seen entering and exiting a warehouse before abruptly disappearing. Like Kyūchi, this Mubō brother is patient and doesn't push his luck, either waiting for the adventurers to come to him or allowing them to leave without interfering.

He's not so patient as to wait a second time. PCs that don't take his bait in 1d4 days (or if they depart for elsewhere in Soburin, the next time they reach a settlement) are lured instead by an abduction. Hiring on a few thugs (four Bandit Captains), Torasuta abducts someone important to the party—a merchant caravan leader, close friend, railroad supervisor, or possibly even a family member—and sends a message that tells the adventurers exactly where to find them.

Gun Crazy

When the party finally approaches Torasuta's deathtrap, read the following:

> *The street around the warehouse is still and quiet, not a witness in sight as you case the building. Everything is still—too still, like the moment before a samurai duel or gunfight—but it appears that nobody will see you get inside as long as you're quick about it.*

The first of this building's traps waits within 15 feet of the entrance and as soon as it is tampered with or activated, a steel door (AC 19, 20 hp) thunders down to cut off access to the street. A creature standing in the doorway when this occurs makes a DC 16 Dexterity saving throw, taking 21 (6d6) bludgeoning damage on a failure, and half as much damage on a success. This save is made with disadvantage if the creature is attempting to jump outside rather than inside. Failure by 5 or more causes a creature to be restrained by the door (escape DC 16).

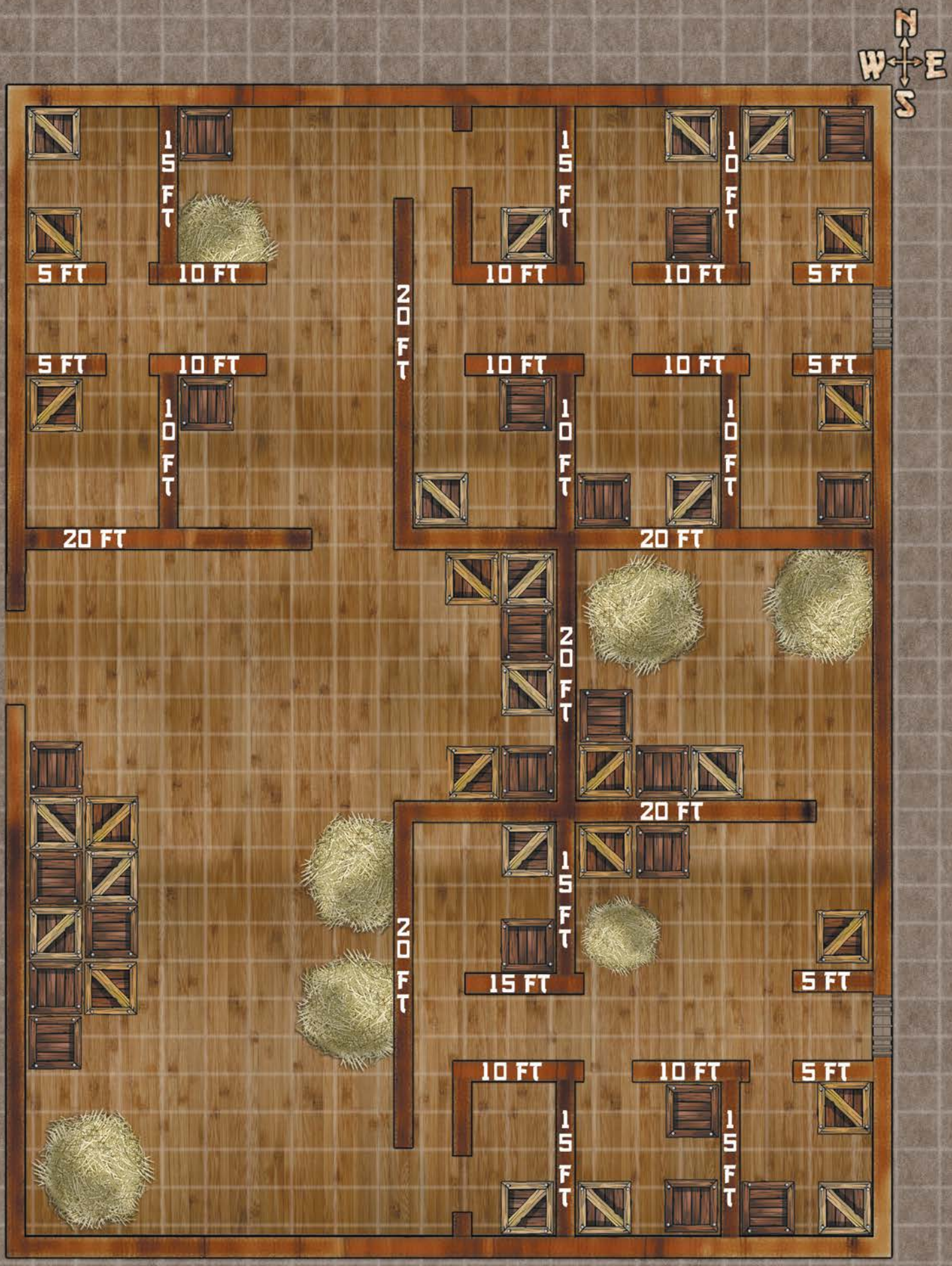
Which traps are placed where and their exact number are at the GM's discretion but if the PCs are encountering Torasuta alone, they should be contending with no fewer than a dozen traps (possibly including more than what's listed below—a poison needle trap on an obvious exit from the building, for example). Either way after the first trap goes off and some of the adventurers are locked inside the warehouse, Torasuta (and his underlings if there are any thugs with him) engage the party in combat.

Bullet Storm Trap

Mechanical trap

When a creature steps on a hidden pressure plate, guns arrayed in rows nearby fire bullets from hidden compartments that slide open in the surrounding walls. The firearms are obscured behind small panels colored like the walls; there are many and they all work into the texture of the surroundings, making the DC to spot them 20. A character can notice one of the trap's nearly seamless pressure plates with a successful DC 20 Intelligence (Investigation) check. Only thin objects (such as a katana or wakizashi blade) wedged into the seam prevents the trap's activation.

Each of the gun housings are protected by inch-thick steel and fire when tampered with (+10 to hit, 1d6 piercing damage) should a creature fail a DC 20 Dexterity (thieves' tools) check. When more than 10 pounds of weight is placed on the pressure plate, 12 guns fire. Each gun makes a ranged attack with a +10 bonus against a random target within 10 feet of the pressure plate (vision is irrelevant to


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15 FT
10 FT
5 FT
20 FT

this attack roll). Should the area lack targets, half the bullets ricochet and make a second attack roll at random targets within 20 feet (these attacks are at disadvantage). A target that is hit takes 3 (1d6) piercing damage.

RUSTING CANNON TRAP

Mechanical trap

When 20 or more pounds of pressure are placed on this trap's pressure plate, a hidden trapdoor in the wall opens, revealing a nearly dysfunctional portable cannon. With a successful DC 17 Wisdom (Perception) check, a character can spot the trapdoor and pressure plate. A search of the floor accompanied by a successful DC 17 Intelligence (Investigation) check reveals variations in the mortar and stone that betray the pressure plate's presence. The same check made while inspecting the wall notes variations in the materials that reveal the trapdoor. Wedging a blade or other object under the pressure plate prevents the trap from activating.

When this trap is activated, roll 1d20.

On a result of 7 or less the rusting cannon explodes in 30-foot radius sphere of shrapnel and flames. This sphere travels around corners. Each creature in the blast must make a DC 17 Dexterity saving throw, taking 26 (4d12) slashing and fire damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

On a result of 8 or higher, the rusting cannon makes a ranged attack with a +9 bonus against a random target within 10 feet of the pressure plate. Vision is irrelevant to this attack roll and if there are no targets in the area, the rusting cannon doesn't hit anything. A target that is hit takes 26 (4d12) piercing damage and must succeed on a DC 17 Strength saving throw or be pushed back 15 feet and knocked prone.

STORM OF FLAMES TRAP

Mechanical trap

When a creature steps on a hidden pressure plate, single-use wide-spray fireworks arrayed in rows nearby explode with jets of flames from hidden compartments that slide open in the surrounding walls. The fireworks are obscured behind small panels colored like the walls; there are many and they all work into the texture of the surroundings, making the DC to spot them 18. A character can notice one of the trap's nearly seamless pressure plates with a successful DC 18 Intelligence (Investigation) check. Only thin objects (such as a katana or wakizashi blade) wedged into the seam prevents the trap's activation.

Each of the fireworks are protected by thin, expertly painted macrame and fire when tampered with should a creature fail a DC 18 Intelligence (thieves' tools) check. When more than 10 pounds of weight is placed on the pressure plate, the fireworks light and explode in a 20-foot radius. Each creature in the fire must make a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw, taking 27 (6d8) fire damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

BLAZING INFERNO

Should the fight last more than 5 rounds, all of the gunshot and fireworks give life to flames that consume the warehouse in an inferno! The fire begins in any squares occupied by exploded rusting cannon traps, storm of flames traps, and the areas damaged by either. At the end of each round there is a cumulative 20% chance that a fire's radius increases by 5 feet. When two fires meet (sharing contiguous lines) they become one fire.

Heat. A creature entering into or beginning its turn inside of a square occupied by flames takes 3 (1d6) fire damage. A DC 14 Dexterity saving throw halves this damage (creatures wearing metal armor have disadvantage on this save.)

Smoke. The squares above and adjacent to a fire are heavily obscured with acrid smoke. A creature that starts its turn inside of a square filled with smoke makes a Constitution saving throw (DC 12 + 1 per previous save against smoke), taking 2 (1d4) acid damage and unable to take a bonus action that turn on a failed save. Creatures that do not breathe automatically succeed on their saving throw. Any Intelligence (Investigation) or Wisdom (Perception) checks made within 10 feet of a fire have disadvantage.

Fire Hazards. At the end of the round every 3 rounds the warehouse suffers from the heat. Roll 1d4 to determine which of the following occurs (see Table: Fire Hazards on page 114).

Table: Fire Hazards

1	Backdraft	The fire is suddenly provided with a fresh new source of oxygen, its flames hungrily ripping through the air. A creature within 15 feet of a backdraft makes a DC 14 Wisdom (Perception) check with disadvantage to notice the looming danger. On a success, the creature has advantage on its saving throw to avoid the backdraft. When the backdraft occurs, creatures and objects within a 20-foot radius make a DC 14 Dexterity saving throw, taking 14 (4d6) fire damage on a failure, or half as much on a success.
2	Ceiling Collapse	Unforgiving heat and caustic gases overwhelm support beams, caving in the ceiling. A creature in a room with a ceiling collapse makes a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw to jump out of the way, landing prone on a success. On a failure, a creature takes 5 (2d4) bludgeoning and 7 (2d6) fire damage as they are restrained by falling debris. A restrained creature takes 7 (2d6) fire damage at the start of its turn until it breaks free (escape DC 14, AC 11, 6 hit points). If a heavy object (like a support beam) lands on a creature, the debris' AC increases to 14, it has 12 hit points, and checks made to escape have disadvantage.
3	Fiery Explosion	Something incendiary catches flame and explodes. Creatures and objects within a 30-foot radius make a DC 16 Dexterity saving throw, taking 21 (6d6) fire damage on a failure, or half as much on a success. Depending on the exploding object, half of the damage taken might be piercing, slashing, acid, or even thunder damage.
4	Floor Collapse	A creature standing on a floor as it collapses makes a DC 14 Dexterity saving throw to grab onto something for purchase or leap back from the newly created pit. On a failed save a creature drops down, taking falling damage as appropriate (usually 10 feet and 1d6 bludgeoning) plus 2 (1d4) bludgeoning and 3 (1d6) fire damage from debris. The area where the debris (and creatures) lands is difficult terrain after a floor collapse and immediately fills with fire.

AN EXCITING COMBAT

The warehouse (page 112) is a timber building filled with partitions each stacked with 5-foot tall crates. The PCs (and NPCs) should be leaping around for cover, taking the higher ground, and flanking foes from behind. GMs that don't wish to determine ahead of time exactly where all of Torasuta's traps are may instead randomly determine the presence of one when an adventurer steps into a previously untrod upon square.

When a PC enters into a square that no other member of the party has yet entered or left, roll 2d10 - 1 per trap sprung on the PC. On a result of 10 or higher the adventurer steps into (and likely activates) a trap-filled square.

Remember too that some of the crates on the map are stacked on top of one another. The interior of the warehouse itself is 40 feet high (complete with crossbeams that acrobatic PCs can use to fight from far above) and some crates are stacked up to 25 feet high. Knocking over stacked crates requires a Strength check with a DC equal to 4 per crate on the stack. Flipping a single crate over requires a DC 15 Strength check.



TORASUTA MUBŌ

キャニートラスター

Medium humanoid (soburi), chaotic neutral
Armor Class 18 (*do-maru jacket +2*)
Hit Points 99 (18d8+18)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	15 (+2)	12 (+1)	19 (+4)	14 (+2)	14 (+2)

Saving Throws Dex +5, Int +7
Skills Acrobatics +5, Deception +5, Insight +5, Intimidation +5, Investigation +7, Medicine +5, Perception +5, Persuasion +8, Sleight of Hand +5, Stealth +8, Survival +5
Senses passive Perception 15
Languages Ceram, Ropa, Soburi (Common)
Challenge 6 (2,300 XP)

Canny (1/round). Torasuta's brilliance allows him to make an Intelligence ability check with advantage.

Cunning Action (1/round). Torasuta can take a bonus action to take the Dash, Disengage, or Hide action.

Deadeye. Torasuta doesn't have disadvantage on ranged weapon attack rolls made at long range and he ignores any cover equal to or less than three-quarters cover.

Evasion. When Torasuta is subjected to an effect that allows him to make a Dexterity saving throw to take only half damage, he instead takes no damage if he succeeds on the saving throw, and only half damage if he fails.

Sneak Attack (1/turn). Torasuta deals an extra 14 (4d6) damage when he hits a target with a weapon attack and has advantage on the attack roll, or when the target is within 5 feet of an ally of Torasuta that isn't incapacitated and Torasuta doesn't have disadvantage on the attack roll.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Torasuta attacks twice.

Wakizashi. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6+2) slashing damage.

Enchanted Dragon Cannon. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, range 40/80 ft., one target or all targets in a 20-ft. cone or 40-ft. line. *Hit:* 8 (1d8+4) fire damage at a single target or 17 (3d8+4) fire damage to all targets in the area. Torasuta makes a separate attack roll for each object and creature in the area. After being fired at an area, reloading the dragon cannon requires 1 minute. Otherwise each shot expends 1 piece of ammunition (which costs 2 gp) and the weapon can hold up to 10 pieces.

REACTIONS

Reactive Shooter. Torasuta can use his reaction to drop to one knee and gain total cover (provided the object he is hiding behind is already providing at least three-quarters cover). Alternatively he may drop prone as a reaction to gain total cover behind an object already providing him half cover.

Uncanny Dodge. When an attacker Torasuta can see hits him with an attack, Torasuta can use his reaction to halve the attack's damage against him.

HENCH FOR THE HENGEYOKAI

With thje saga of the turtlewax cream at an end the adventurers return to Nesuto to report on the fate of Yukawa Ikumu to her compatriots in the Machibuse Traders. Bōeki is saddened over the mujina hengeyokai's death but genuinely impressed by the party's exploits, ashamed that one of their own had caused so much trouble (and lost so much profit). In addition to offering them 20 Imperial Pieces each for their troubles, the merchants also extends a lucrative employment opportunity to the PCs. Read the following:

> *Upon seeing you Bōeki immediately bows deeply and as he leans up you can see that he is contrite, clearly embarrassed. "On behalf of myself and the rest of my fellows, please accept this as an apology for your troubles." There is a slight touch of awe in his eyes as the saru hengeyokai politely drops pouches in each of your hands, the promise of gold jingling within. "In addition to these," he adds, "one of my compatriots is in need of capable persons such as yourselves and we also extend to you an offer of employment—if you will have it."*

Bōeki's companion Ara Rimun (a kumo hengeyokai) requires guards to make certain that both she and a shipment of rare ore make their way north to Hakaisuru Prefecture, after which she has travel arrangements to return to her home in Ibutsu Prefecture. He's been told that the Tazuki Rail Company requires the metals for specialty parts in their railroad engines, which is true enough—what he doesn't know is that Ara has a second, secret set of goods she's dropping off in Gekido Prefecture: pieces of erītokirā armor.

If the Machibuse Traders were treated well or persuaded in *Feud Primordial* Ara trusts the party almost implicitly, paying 150 Imperial Pieces, food, and lodging to be her escort. Throughout the journey north she slowly shares more information about her organization with the adventurers, ultimately telling of the rumors that dreaded hebi hengeyokai—the snake folk—have been seen recently in the northern prefectures and she is concerned that they may hide among her peoples. As they near Samon she runs into another Machibuse Trader and discovers that the latest news of the hebi place them in the settlement! On behalf of her fellow merchants, she offers the PCs 40 gold each to investigate the matter and hopefully bring it to a close before the accursed hengeyokai engender all of her race in the eyes of Soburin.

When plied with a DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion) check and confronted with evidence of the smuggling, she reveals that she may be involved in a clandestine operation involving advanced technology. She offers the party 50 gold each to keep quiet about her arrangement and knows nothing of her supplier, their business relationship kept on a need-to-know basis for fear of shikome mercenaries torturing information out of either. Without winning her over, Ara flatly denies any knowledge of the erītokirā armor hidden beneath and inside of her wagons and carts.

If the Machibuse Traders were intimidated or strong-armed in *Feud Primordial* the payment offered is only 150 Imperial Pieces (no meals or inns) and Ara remains professionally polite with the PCs but is otherwise indifferent. They hear nothing of the hebi hengeyokai and the kumo doesn't reveal anything about the erītokirā smuggling—indeed, if for some reason they are approached by any of the shikome soldiers, she does her best to make certain that fights with the hobgoblin mercenaries are lethal (page 105, page 288, or page 289). If the party has already encountered the farmer-warriors and fought Kōteino Erītokirā, Ara brazenly shouts (pridefully it seems) that the adventurers have already defeated or slaughtered two of them (putting heat on the PCs). At the GM's discretion, she might even talk of their heroism facing the shikome warriors while in tea houses or taverns that the group stops at along the way.

NOTICING THE ERĪTOKIRĀ SMUGGLING

Ara is good at what she does and has carefully adhered all of the pieces for two suits of erītokirā armor between wooden panes, false floors, on the insides of rice sacks, and other inaccessible areas. Each day there is a 1 in 100 chance that a piece of the smuggled goods falls out onto the roadway or is otherwise visible. Should Ara (who is on the lookout for just such a mistake) fail a DC 14 Wisdom (Perception) check, the PCs receive identical checks to notice themselves. Of course should they succeed and question her, Ara flatly denies any knowledge of what it is the adventurers have found. That evening she drinks a *potion of invisibility* and *potion of pass without trace*, sneaking onto the wagon and carefully putting every bit of her smuggled goods into a *bag of holding* she conceals in her backpack (which never leaves her possession).

EXTRA CONNECTION: TAZUKI RAIL

The PCs might also be hired to protect rail workers as they lay down tracks south of Haikasuru Prefecture. In addition to adeddo-oni and other wilderness random encounters, the workers might receive some bad recycled parts from Kyōfū leaving the adventurers to fight tsukumogami as well (use the statistics for Róbai Shita Tsukumogami, pages 40-41.)

ARA RIMUN

Medium humanoid (kumo hengeyokai)
Armor Class 14 (haramaki)
Hit Points 27 (5d8+5)
Speed 30 ft., climb 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA	Dignity	Haitoku
11 (+0)	16 (+3)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)	13 (+1)	15 (+2)	16 (+3)	11 (+1)

Saving Throws Dex +6, Int +5
Skills Deception +9, Insight +4, Perception +7, Persuasion +5, Stealth +6
Senses passive Perception 17
Languages Soburi (Common), Thieves' Cant
Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Cunning Action (1/turn). Ara can take a bonus action to take the Dash, Disengage, Hide, Use Object action, Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) check, or to use thieves' tools to disarm a trap or open a lock.

Deceiver. Ara has advantage on Charisma (Deception) checks.

Natural Disguise (3/long rest). Ara can cast *disguise self* without the need for any components but she can only change into a specific human.

Nature Form (3/long rest). Ara can transform into a spider as *polymorph* without the need for components. Unlike the spell she keeps her mental scores, the ability has no duration, her hit points remain unchanged, her gear does not meld into her form, and she can still talk but not cast spells.

Sneak Attack (1/turn). Ara deals an extra 10 (3d6) damage when she hits a target with a weapon attack and has advantage on the attack roll, or when the target is within 5 feet of an ally of hers that isn't incapacitated and Ara doesn't have disadvantage on the attack roll.

ACTIONS

Dagger. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d4+3) piercing damage.

Web (1/short rest). *Ranged Weapon Attack:* range 30/60 ft., one Medium or smaller creature. On a hit the target is restrained by webbing. As an action, the restrained creature can make a DC 12 Strength check, escaping from the webbing on a success. The effect also ends if the webbing is destroyed. The webbing has AC 10, 5 hit points, vulnerability to fire damage, and immunity to bludgeoning, poison, and psychic damage.

REACTIONS

Uncanny Dodge. When an attacker Ara can see hits her with an attack, Ara can use her reaction to halve the attack's damage against her.



Spy Tsukumogami

Small monstrosity (tsukumogami), neutral evil*
Armor Class 13 (natural)
Hit Points 71 (13d6+26)
Speed 30 ft., climb 15 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	15 (+2)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)	15 (+2)	12 (+1)

Skills Perception +6, Stealth +6
Damage Vulnerabilities acid, fire, lightning, or thunder (GM's discretion)
Damage Resistances cold, necrotic, radiant
Damage Immunities poison
Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, poisoned
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 16
Languages Soburi (Common)
Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Hidden In Plain Sight. Tsukumogami may appear as mundane versions of the objects they once were, hiding in plain sight; DC 20 Wisdom (Perception) check.

Spying Tsukumogami. The tsukumogami has advantage on Dexterity (Stealth) and Wisdom (Perception) checks.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The tsukumogami attacks twice.

Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6+2) slashing damage.

** A Tiny-sized spy tsukumogami has AC 14, 58 hit points, and Dexterity 17 (increasing Stealth, claw attack bonus, and claw damage by +1).*

Curious Caravan

During their travels the agents of the tsukumogami smugglers continue to shadow the party (page 57) but they also come across at least one pairing of traveling Mitsuyu Gyōsha Consortium merchants. Each of them is polite, affable, and has either armors, trinkets, weapons, scrolls, potions, or another type of magical good for sale—and both have a wagon tsukumogami, hidden in plain sight as if they were mundane conveyances. The smugglers are good at their jobs and don't let on either that they travel with concealed monsters or that they have erītokirā technology with them, although the PCs may be suspicious of their prices (25% cheaper than usual).

Whatever the adventurers purchase, the item itself or something accompanying it (the flask of a potion, a scroll's case, tassels on a sword) is a spy tsukumogami. Afterward the party is no longer followed by the organization's lackeys. However, whenever the adventurers take a long rest in a settlement the creature scurries off to meet with other Mitsuyu Gyōsha agents where it reveals everything the adventurers have been doing and the plans they've spoken about in its presence. Later on in the adventure path if left undiscovered, the spy tsukumogami does its best to sabotage relations and missions where the PCs might help the erītokirā warriors or the Machibuse Traders—the tsukumogami smugglers have their own bloody plans with the advanced technology, doing their best to plant operatives everywhere the machine-armors have been seen.

Noticing the Erītokirā Smuggling

It is unlikely for the PCs to realize the Mitsuyu Gyōsha Consortium are also smuggling shikome technology unless combat erupts. When the wagon tsukumogami use their Endless Interior or Expel Contents features, PCs inside of or targeted by the creature can notice a few bits and pieces of the technology (either inside of it or among the trash it spews) with a DC 18 Wisdom (Perception) check. A party that manages to slay and dissect a wagon tsukumogami discovers more of the machinery in the thing's gullet, but a DC 20 Intelligence (Investigation) check or DC 17 Wisdom (Medicine) check extracts an entire suit's worth of erītokirā armor from each monstrous corpse. Unfortunately without a working example in front of them, reassembling the machine-suit is beyond the ken of the party at this point in the campaign (although GMs should encourage technology-inclined PCs to begin studying and researching the device).

Mitsuyu Gyōsha Smuggler

Medium humanoid (soburi), neutral evil rogue (thief) 8
Armor Class 16 (studded leather)
Hit Points 52 (8d8+16)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA	Dignity	Haitoku
11 (+0)	16 (+3)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)

Saving Throws Dex +6, Int +5
Skills Acrobatics +9, Athletics +6, Deception +8, Perception +4, Sleight of Hand +6, Stealth +9
Senses passive Perception 14
Languages Soburi (Common), Thieves' Cant
Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Cunning Action (1/turn). The Mitsuyu Gyōsha can take a bonus action to take the Dash, Disengage, Hide, Use Object action, Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) check, or to use thieves' tools to disarm a trap or open a lock.

Evasion. When the Mitsuyu Gyōsha is subjected to an effect that allows them to make a Dexterity saving throw to take only half damage, they instead take no damage if they succeed on the saving throw, and only half damage if they fail.

Second-Story Work. Climbing does not costs the Mitsuyu Gyōsha extra movement. When they make a running jump, the distance they cover increases by 3 feet.

Sneak Attack (1/turn). The Mitsuyu Gyōsha deals an extra 14 (4d6) damage when they hit a target with a weapon attack and have advantage on the attack roll, or when the target is within 5 feet of an ally of the Mitsuyu Gyōsha that isn't incapacitated and the Mitsuyu Gyōsha doesn't have disadvantage on the attack roll.

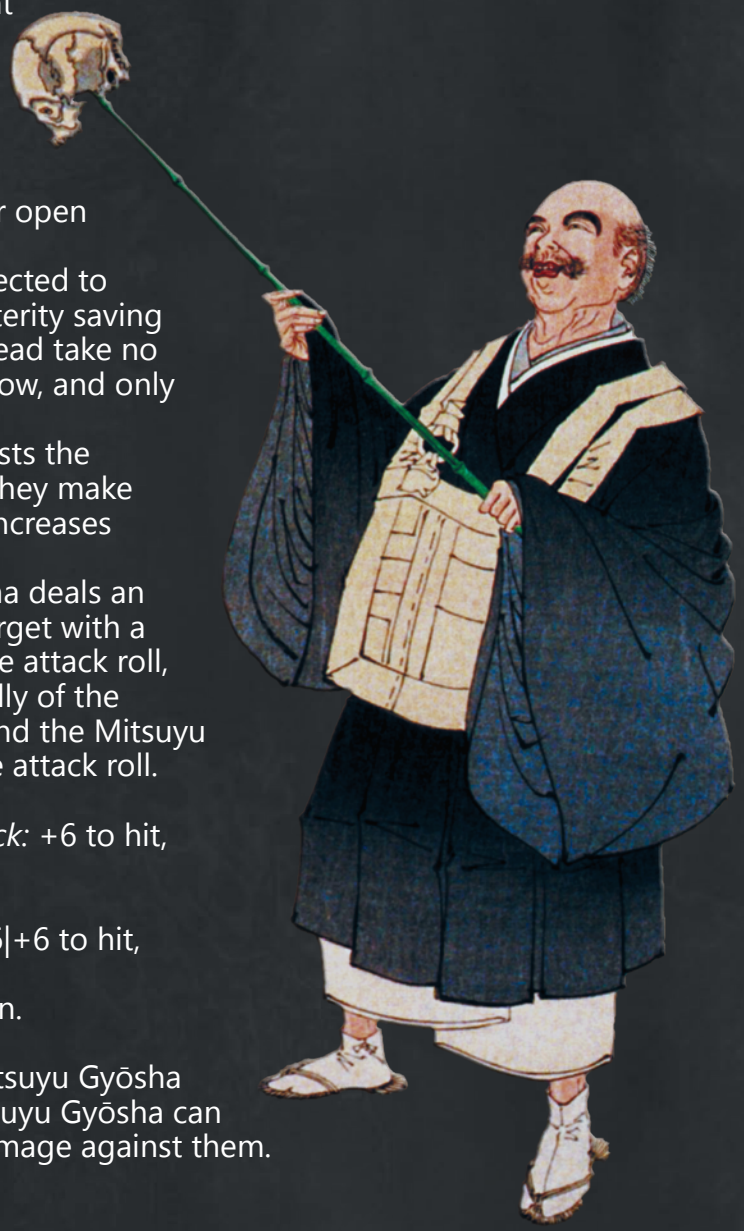
ACTIONS

Dagger (4). *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft. or thrown 20/60 ft., one target.
Hit: 5 (1d4+3) piercing damage.

Shurikens (12). *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +6|+6 to hit, ranged 20/50 ft., one target.
Hit: 4 slashing damage plus 3 (1d6) poison.

REACTIONS

Uncanny Dodge. When an attacker the Mitsuyu Gyōsha can see hits them with an attack, the Mitsuyu Gyōsha can use their reaction to halve the attack's damage against them.



ゴンャミツヤ

WAGON TSUKUMOGAMI

Large monstrosity (tsukumogami), neutral evil
Armor Class 16 (natural)
Hit Points 152 (16d10+64)
Speed 50 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	15 (+2)	18 (+4)	14 (+2)	17 (+3)	15 (+2)

Saving Throws Dex +5, Int +5, Cha +5
Skills Perception +6, Stealth +5
Damage Vulnerabilities fire
Damage Resistances cold, necrotic, radiant
Damage Immunities poison
Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, poisoned
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 16
Languages Soburi (Common)
Challenge 6 (2,300 XP)

Hidden In Plain Sight. Tsukumogami may appear as mundane versions of the objects they once were, hiding in plain sight. A DC 22 Wisdom (Perception) check is required to notice a tsukumogami hidden this way.

Endless Interior. The inside of the tsukumogami leads to an extradimensional space not unlike a *bag of holding*. At the start of its turn if the tsukumogami has grappled a creature of Medium or smaller size, it may spend its action to make an opposed Strength (Athletics) check to restrain its target (escape DC 15). When the tsukumogami starts its turn and has restrained a creature, it may spend its action to swallow the creature. A swallowed creature can only be released when the tsukumogami wills it or dies, though it may make attacks and cast spells targeting the tsukumogami; the swallowed creature has disadvantage on attack rolls and the tsukumogami gains advantage on rolls to resist a swallowed creature's spells. The tsukumogami may choose to target a swallowed creature with its attacks, gaining advantage on its attack rolls and dealing force damage on a successful hit.

Expel Contents. The tsukumogami spends its bonus action expelling junk, trash, old grain, grit, sand, dirt, or other inexpensive substances out at a creature within 10 feet, forcing the to make a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw or be blinded until the end of the tsukumogami's turn.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The tsukumogami attacks once with its bite and twice with its claw.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 13 (2d8+4) slashing damage.

Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 15 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (2d6+4) slashing damage.



Gensosō Consequences

The adventurers might occasionally see and receive a respectful nod from the few Gensosō that cross their path—unless they damaged one of the elemental monks' shrines at the end of *Feud Primordial*. First Kazato Tetsunori (page 94) but then other members of his order attack the party in groups of 1d4 Gensosō once every day they remain in Ikari Prefecture. When beyond that territory's borders, there is a 50% chance for another assault each day, reduced by 15% for each prefecture between the PCs and Ikari (minimum 5%). These attacks continue until the party destroys Shitaitaberu (restoring power to another shrine).

Adventurers that did not damage or exhaust any elemental shrines also receive a warning to be wary just before the PCs encounter the Mitsuyu Gyōsha merchants. In addition, if the party has learned about the erītokirā smuggling (either by Ara Rimun and the Machibuse Traders or the tsukumogami smugglers) and shares this information with a Gensosō, they are beseeched to destroy the technology wherever they find it and promised to be well-rewarded for their efforts.

Gensosō

Medium humanoid (soburi), any alignment
Armor Class 17 (Wisdom)
Hit Points 55 (10d8+10)
Speed 50 ft. (quadruple all jump distances)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	19 (+4)	13 (+1)	13 (+1)	16 (+3)	12 (+1)

Saving Throws Str +5, Dex +7, Con +4, Cha +4
Skills Acrobatics +7, Athletics +5, Perception +6, Stealth +7
Damage Immunities varies (acid, cold, fire, or thunder)
Senses passive Perception 16
Languages Soburi
Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)
Primal Power. Each Gensosō has one of the following:

- ***Frost.*** The Gensosō deals additional cold damage with melee weapon attacks and gains immunity to cold damage. As a reaction, the Gensosō can encircle itself in protective petals of ice that have 6 hit points; any damage the Gensosō takes before the end of its next turn is subtracted first from this pool of hit points.
- ***Scorch.*** The Gensosō deals additional fire damage with melee weapon attacks and gains immunity to fire damage. As a bonus action, the Gensosō can increase the reach of its unarmed melee weapon attacks by 60 feet until the end of its turn.
- ***Stone.*** The Gensosō deals additional acid damage with melee weapon attacks and gains immunity to acid damage. The Gensosō has advantage on checks made to grapple a foe or to avoid being grappled.
- ***Zephyr.*** The Gensosō deals additional thunder damage with melee weapon attacks and gains immunity to thunder damage. Once per turn, the Gensosō may force a target it hits with a melee attack to make a DC 13 Strength save or be pushed up to 10 feet away from it (regardless of the target's size).

ACTIONS
Multiattack. The Gensosō makes three unarmed attacks or one elemental whirlwind attack.
Unarmed. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d8+4) bludgeoning damage and 4 (1d8) elemental damage.
Elemental Whirlwind. The Gensosō erupts with primal energies, doing 6d8 elemental damage to all creatures and objects within 15 feet. A successful DC 15 Dexterity saving throw reduces this damage by half.

FANGS OF REVENGE

A FIFTH EDITION ADVENTURE FOR 4 TO 6 PCS OF 6TH - 7TH LEVEL



Adventure Background

The PCs are bid to join the court of Lord Eidaru Hakaisuru in the city of Samon, summoned there by a missive from a Talon of the Hawk. The bengoshi will not be present to meet the adventurers but the letter (which carries great authority, including a death sentence should it be ignored) bids them to seek out the city's master for further instructions on a task deemed most dire. To flush out the saboteurs in the settlement the nearby Fudōsoge Sniper known as 9th Arrow has ordered for deputies to be acquired from outside of its borders so that they might better infiltrate the Fang, a group of workers that have gathered together to rebel against the powers that be, starting trouble in Samon and disrupting the city's important industry.

What the adventurers stumble upon is a far more dire threat to the region and indeed, all of Soburin.

Half a millennia in the past the Gekido Clan were infiltrated and suborned by the deadliest variety of hengeyokai: hebi. The snake folk were all but rooted out of the family's servants by Lady Jikiri Gekido over three hundred years ago, ending their influence over the prefecture, but a thirst for vengeance remained. In an attempt to win back the honor lost to him after a disastrous duel against a Hakaisuru warrior, Umesaka Utamara absconded from Chishi with a scroll containing the suspected names and locations of all the hebi in Soburin, giving the document to the ceramian General Beauregard Castrith with hopes it would lead to the serpentine shapechangers' eradication. The Kengen Occupation attempted to capture a few hebi but their lethality quickly led to the genocide that Umesaka hoped for, though his family's honor was still brutally wounded.

Or so it seemed.

The snake folk that survived banded together into a powerful cult of secrecy that evaded the invaders for over a century and a half, bolstering their numbers with lesser offspring mixed with the blood of humans. Now that the prefectures are gripped by the chaos of the Mists of Akuma the hebi hengeyokai are exiting the shadows to reign supreme among the shapeshifters of Soburin once more—starting with taking their vengeance and destroying the Utamara line. Only two more remain, an old war hero named Marusaka and his niece Kiri hiding in the capital of Hakaisuru (where no one would expect to find him) and though few know it, the role the girl plays in the struggles of the hebi is far greater than any of her ancestors and more than one kind of hengeyokai seek to acquire her for their own gain.

Sandbox Design

The town of Samon and this part of the adventure path are made for groups to explore and determine things on their own without overwhelming antagonists or environmental factors driving them forward. That is not to say there aren't deadlines and countdowns—the world doesn't exist around the PCs, they play a part in it—but the GM should give the adventurers more than enough rope for them to hang themselves. After the party have met Lord Eidaru and have had a chance to go about the settlement of their own accord, introduce the Favor Points system (page 132) and explain in no uncertain terms that virtually every named location in Samon has *something* the party can do with respects to it (withhold any specifics).

One of the other aspects of *Fangs of Revenge* is that it's extremely fluid. Although the final encounter is fairly rigidly set to be serpentine in nature the particular details of where Kiri Utamara is being held before that, the location of her uncle, and the vectors for other antagonists taking part in this subterfuge, and the general temperament of Samon are very intentionally ambiguous—when the adventurers suddenly zig instead of zag (or zag instead of zig) the GM should have all the tools required to compensate for whatever ridiculous plans or conspiracies the PCs can cook up.

Finally, don't be afraid to add more characters to Samon to cater and interest the party! If there's a necroji PC, maybe another of their kind works the factory lines, and the tanuki rogue may strike a passing romance with another raccoon folk traveling through town.

CHARACTERS

Human NPCs



- **9th Arrow (Female soburi elite soldier; see Fudōsoge Sniper *MoA* page 67)**
  Role: Agitator and commander of the local Fudōsoge Snipers
  Disposition: Dismissive and secretive
  9th Arrow is the master commander of Hawkspire and was the initial impetus for a bengoshi to organize an investigation into Samon. She suspects Besko Earthknuckle of inciting rebellion with the Fangs and seeks justification to kill her, belaying Lieutenant Toyoruma from blaming and executing Magdo (something sure to inflame the fires of insurrection).



- **Harold Itrikasu (Male ceramian inventor; Commoner with advantage on checks related to technology)**
  Role: Local outcast with a secret
  Disposition: Polite but withholding and distant
  As a foreign-borne citizen (descended from ceramians), Harold is still ostracized by the town despite living there his entire life. However he is still a master hikōsen builder and valued by local government, but if they were to find out he supports the Fang rebels that might change very quickly (though his secret relationship with 9th Arrow might save him from execution).



- **Kiri Utamara (Female soburi priestess; Acolyte)**
  Role: Last of the Utamara line wanted by factions in Samon
  Disposition: Quiet and composed
  Kiri is a young yamabushi unknowingly bestowed with great ancestral power as she is the very last Utamara to walk the lands of Soburin. Several kinds of hengeyokai seek to capture her, using the power of her essence to restore their kin, but the Fang rebels are hiding her at the behest of her uncle Marusaka.



- **Lieutenant Nishihara Toyoruma (Male soburi soldier; Knight)**
  Role: Unfulfilled local commander of the Hakaisuru army
  Disposition: Impatient and boorish
  Though he is publicly the highest-ranking military officer in Samon, Nishihara is a thuggish idiot and warhawk that blames all of the town's problems on the Gekido Clan. He wants to root through every house to undo any rebellion, murdering the presumed leader of the Fangs, but his authority is limited by 9th Arrow (much to his frustration).



- **Lord Eidaru Hakaisuru (Male soburi noble; Cultist)**
  Role: Lesser noble of the Hakaisuru Clan punished to govern Samon and black smoke addict
  Disposition: Disinterested and overprivileged
  Eidaru is a lesser cousin of Lady Chujiang that dishonored himself in her court in Shageki; he knows that there are rumors of hibe in the town but doesn't believe it, disregarding them as myths, "drummed up by black smoke addicts" and he is far more concerned of a potential workers strike led by the group of malcontents known as the Fangs.



- **Marusaka Utamara (Male soburi war hero; Gladiator)**
  Role: Old warrior from Gekido hiding his niece in Samon
  Disposition: Defensive and paranoid
  A veteran of many battles, Marusaka saw the dangers threatening his kin too late and hurriedly rushed his niece to hide in Samon in the Hakaisuru Prefecture, home to his ancestral nemeses. He has called upon an old friend for help and was put into contact with the Fang rebels, who hide his last living relative as he tries to secure secret passage out of the settlement on the railroad.



- **Miyako Tazuki (Male soburi businessman; Commoner with advantage on Deception, Insight, and Persuasion checks)**
  Role: Local head for the Tazuki Rail Company
  Disposition: Marginalizing and suspicious
  At the behest of his consort Xishani, when the most powerful

businessman in Samon was approached by Marusaka Utamara (seeking clandestine passage) he took the old warrior hostage. He has no idea that his lover is an oni sewing chaos in the town, nor does he realize she tortures his captive daily trying to find out where Kiri Utamara has been hidden.



- **Seimaru Fudo (Female soburi businesswoman; Commoner)**
  Role: Owner of the most popular tea house in Samon
  Disposition: Polite but guarded
  Seimaru is extremely proud of her family's heritage and suffers no threats to their millennia-old business, refusing to take sides in any conflicts in Samon. She has several sons and nephews that enforce the neutrality of their hotel and tea house, making certain it is a safe place for everyone in the settlement to visit regardless of feuds or politics.



- **Tabata Jotaro (Male soburi businessman; Cultist)**
  Role: Disliked Overseer at Tazuki Manufacturing
  Disposition: Obsessive and serious
  The boss of Tazuki Manufacturing has few friends in Samon and receives even less sympathy from the rest of the town. He has been approached by Hyan and agreed to work with the kitsune because she promises to reveal who the true leader of the Fangs is along with evidence enough to have the insurrectionist arrested, even willing to kill him, so long as she receives Kiri Utamara in return.

Inhuman NPCs

- **Besko Earthknuckle (Female enjin laborer; see Factory Worker page 146)**
  Role: Ape folk factory worker and true leader of the Fang rebels hiding Kiri Utamara
  Disposition: Modest and protective



Besko is convinced that something drastic needs to happen to make life equitable for her fellow factory workers and to that end she has formed the Fangs, a group of rebels devoted to making life equitable for the laborers in Samon. A mutual friend put her in contact with Marusaka Utamara and being protective she agreed to hide the girl while he seeks passage for them out of the town, seeking out allies to render aid to the enjin's plight.



- **Hōron Zuruyi (Female nezumi hengeyokai thief; see Hengeyokai Ninja page 148)**
  Role: Rat folk thief looking for Kiri Utamara
  Disposition: Opportunistic and sneaky
  Seers in Yokuba foresaw the events leading to Kiri becoming the last of her familial line and the eavesdropping Hōron quickly moved to acquire her for herself to sell to the highest bidder.



- **Hyan Kishi (Female kitsune hengeyokai ninja; see Hengeyokai Ninja page 148)**
  Role: Fox folk ninja looking for Kiri Utamara
  Disposition: Altruistic and mysterious
  This kitsune foresaw Kiri's plight in a dream and seeks the the girl so that upon the last of the Utamara's natural death her soul can be absorbed into Soburin to empower the kitsune to their former glory—provided that Kiri never reproduces and dies of natural causes.
- **Juyin Tsabuto (Male usagi hengeyokai archer; see Hengeyokai Ninja page 148)**
  Role: Rabbit folk looking for Kiri Utamara
  Disposition: Aloof and flighty



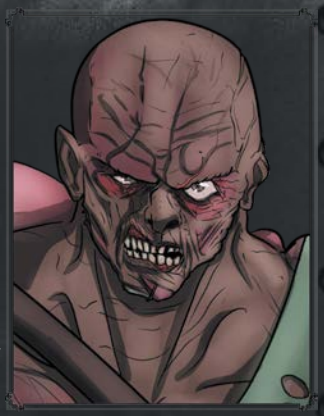
During a night of drinking in Mokuteki the thief Hōron Zuruyi bragged about how capturing Kiri Utamara was going to bring her great wealth—and why. With a bit of research the usagi realized she might be right and seeks to capture the last of the Utamara line to pulp her, making an alchemical potion that will increase the fertility of any other rabbit hengeyokai that consume it.

- **Magdo (Male mutant laborer)**
  Role: Factory worker and false leader of the Fang rebels
  Disposition: Boorish and braggadocious
  People have started to look up to Magdo and though he isn't sure why, he doesn't mind the attention and respect. Most of the town suspect

he is the leader of the Fang but the mutants still hasn't realized it; he is just loud and stupid and hard to ignore, particularly when complaining about work.



- **Yuro-Sa Lilyfire (Female pyon alchemist; Cult Sorcerer)**
  Role: Frog folk potion master and rumormonger looking for Kiri Utamara
  Disposition: Haughty and talkative
  It wasn't long before the search for Kiri Utamara came to the attention of the owner of Samon's premier rumormill and the frog folk potion brewer has thrown in her lot with Juyin Tsaboto. She is confident that some of the special girl's body won't be needed by the usagi and that any bit of such a person would do much to empower her potions.



Hebi NPCs

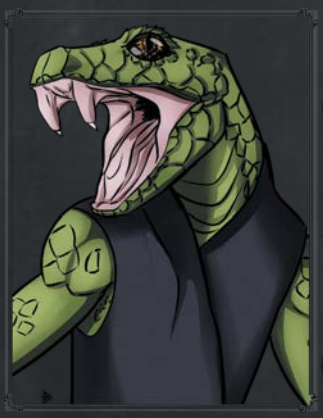
Note: The GM should share the other portraits of NPCs with the adventurers, it is recommended that serpentine characters are kept from the party's notice until the reptilian presence in Samon is discovered. At the GM's discretion, hebi thugs may use Hengeyokai Ninja statistics.



- **Fu Xi (Genderfluid hebi hengeyokai thug; Cult Fanatic)**
  Role: A lesser hebi looking for Kiri Utamara, the blunt tool of the true hebi Nüwa
  Disposition: Direct and intimidating
  Fu Xi is a snake folk henchman that takes a very thuggish approach to zir work, trying to capture Kiri Utamara on behalf of zir master Nüwa by using intimidation and stealth to find and coerce the Fangs (tactics that have led zir to pursue the rebel group but not much else).



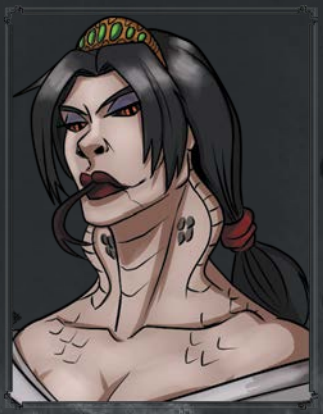
- **Jittar-Yi (Genderfluid hebi hengeyokai thug; Spy)**
  Role: A lesser hebi looking for Kiri Utamara, the subtle tool of the true hebi Wajdet
  Disposition: Coy and curious
  Jittar-Yi is a snake folk that has insinuated zirself among the workers of Kazuki Manufacturing, slowly infiltrating the rebel group the Fangs (enough that ze knows the group is hiding Kiri Utamara, whom zir master Wajdet desperately wants).



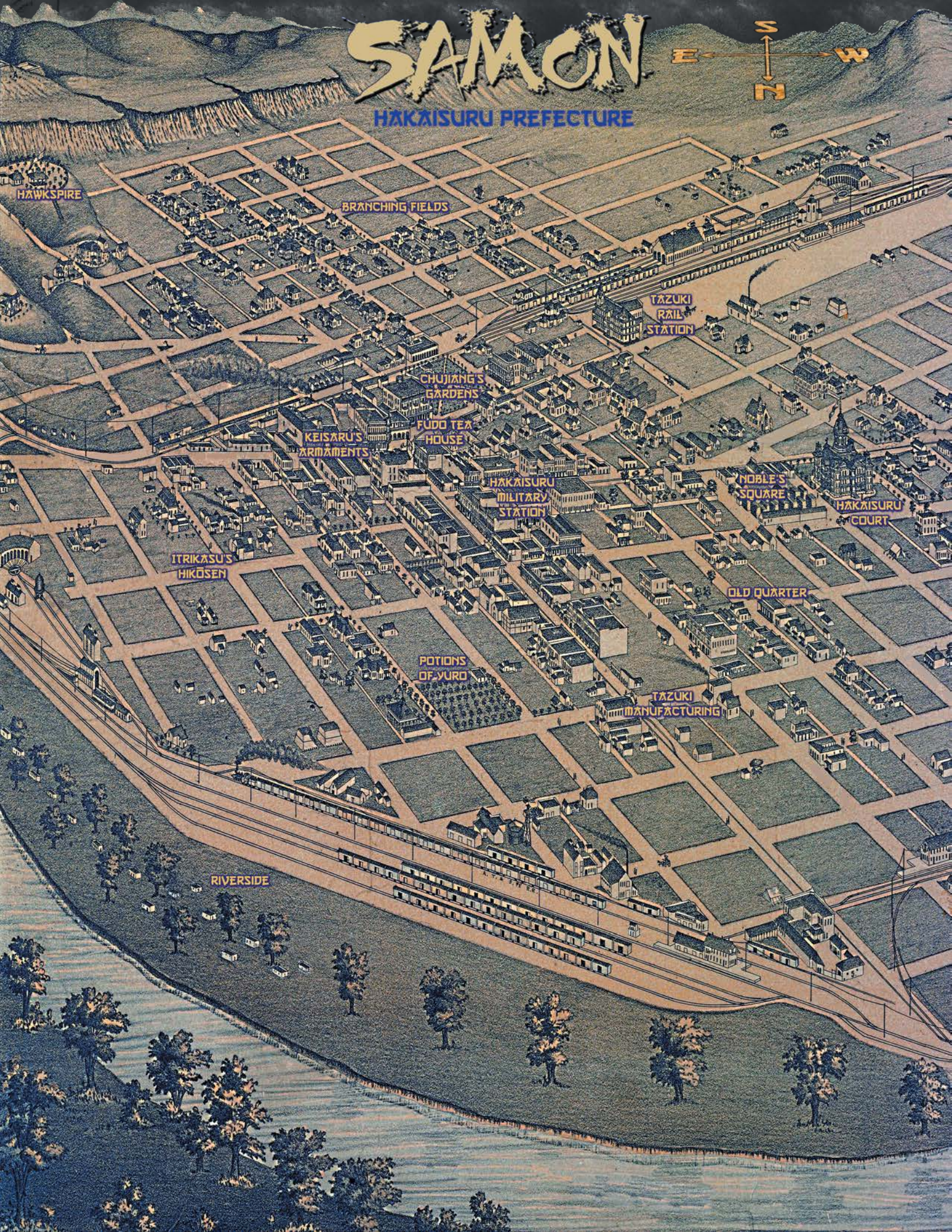
- **Nüwa (Genderfluid true hebi hengeyokai mastermind; page 147)**
  Role: A true hebi hiding outside of Samon looking for Kiri Utamara
  Disposition: Angry and impatient
  Nüwa is a true hebi that wants to capture Kiri, posing as Yagi Kageyasu (a traveling gambler and gangster running games for the local labor force) using brutal and savage tactics that have served zir well in the past two centuries of hiding beneath the Kengen Occupation.



- **Ohta Keisaru (Genderfluid hebi hengeyokai saboteur; Veteran with advantage on Deception checks)**
  Role: Lesser hebi insinuated into Samon, searching for Kiri
  Disposition: Charismatic and well-mannered
  Ohta is a snake folk that has lived in the town for some time, disguised as a comely weapons merchant well-known to and well-liked by the citizenry. "She" works for both Fu Xi and Nüwa, but zir truest allegiances and loyalties are with zirself and no other.
- **Wajdet (Genderfluid true hebi hengeyokai mastermind; page 147)**
  Role: A true hebi lurking in Samon looking for Kiri Utamara
  Disposition: Careful and clever
  Wajdet is impersonating a young noble woman (Iwai Hazumi) to curry the favor of the elite while zir servant Jittar-Yi infiltrates the Fangs.



- **Xishani (Female oni ne'er-do-well; see Hebikontorōra page 149)**
  Role: An oni that has tricked a local businessman into having her as a consort
  Disposition: Deceptive and inquisitive
  Xishani recklessly pursues Kiri to earn her place as a true hebi. She's the most likely to give away serpentine folk's presence, though her place in Samon is well-insulated by the powerful Miyako Tazuki.


SAMON
S
E
W
N
HAKAISURU PREFECTURE
HAWKSPIRE
BRANCHING FIELDS
TAZUKI RAIL STATION
CHUJIANG'S GARDENS
FUDO TEA HOUSE
KEISARU'S ARMAMENTS
HAKAISURU MILITARY STATION
NOBLE'S SQUARE
HAKAISURU COURT
ITRIKASU'S HIKŌSEN
OLD QUARTER
POTIONS OF YURO
TAZUKI MANUFACTURING
RIVERSIDE

THE CITY OF SAMON

Samon is a city with a feature unseen in most areas of Soburin: a working system of railroads. Between the wealth of the Tazuki family and the support of the Fudōsoge Snipers (with their nearby training facility of Hawkspire), Lady Chujiang was convinced that it would be acceptable to have such technology so long as it was newly manufactured and utilized to serve her clan, carrying their agents swiftly from one end of the prefecture to another. All of it has been a deception by the upstart nobles of the city, a way to both spit in the face of the weakness exhibited by Emperor Hitoshi and a means to swiftly deploy a swathe of agents to dispatch their hated rivals the Gekido in a wave of floating death atop hikosen rapidly carried across Soburin by rail.

The great resentment the nobles of Samon hold for Emperor Hitoshi is not unwarranted—at the beginning of his rebellion 10 years ago the settlement was utterly decimated, its docks completely destroyed to prevent the Kengen Occupation from easily supplying their forces in northern Soburin. Still under foreigner control the entire city was rebuilt in the style and fashion of Ceramia, and what industry survived the end of the conflict has been converted for use by the Tazuki Rail Company. There are other facets of technology to be found (including firearms) but the kyūseishu poles that run along the length of track laid down by the Tazuki Rail Company carry electricity enough to power lightning lanterns that encircle the city, offering some measure of safety for those who can reach and climb them fast enough to avoid the Mists of Akuma when the corrupting fog falls on Samon.

BRANCHING FIELDS

This area of the city is home to the newly immigrated laborers for the Tazuki Rail Company, many of them inhumans. Ostensibly it is a nicer area of the settlement but lately the presence of Hakaisuru soldiers on patrol here have increased, only further exacerbating the unrest gripping Samon and making it a hotbed for new recruits to the Fangs (which in turn prompts Lieutenant Toyoruma to send more troops to frequent its streets).

CHUJIANG'S GARDENS

Lady Chujiang Hakaisuru herself visited Samon shortly after the end of Hitoshi's Rebellion to witness the Tazuki Rail Company at work before giving their efforts her blessing. The former master of the city, Lord Goto, attempted to further curry her favor by building a fine garden in her honor. She had him slain in its center after publicly shaming him for his sympathy to the Kengen Occupation, ensuring that the town's populace remember whom their masters are and that they only dabble in heretical technology by her good graces.

FUDO TEA HOUSE

The Fudo Tea House has been in operation for many centuries, established during the Ichizoku Wars in Soburin's distant past and run by the same family since. What was once only a small eatery has become a sprawling hotel, treasured by the invading soldiers and native soburi alike and one of the few buildings to survive the decimation of Hitoshi's Rebellion. Its current keeper, Seimaru Fudo, does not tolerate any kind of trouble however and she works hard to keep her tea house from erupting in violence or becoming the target of the military's ire.

HAKAISURU COURT

Unlike most noble courts the inner domain of Lord Eidaru Hakaisuru is housed in a very modern building constructed over the remnants of its once stately traditional manor. There is the common squabbling and feuding between lords to be found within the basic functionaries of the Masuto government here but most appalling is the brazen disdain those within show for the Emperor, openly mocking Hitoshi Masuto and vocally deriding his edicts.

HAKAISURU MILITARY STATION

Ostensibly the protectors of Samon, the troops and officers serving disgruntled Lieutenant Nishihara Toyoruma work from the former site of the ceramian military presence during the Kengen Occupation. It would make for an ideal fortification were it not for the dozens of prisoners held within, a cycle that neither seems to turn up dissenters or discourage others from heeding their cause. No prisoner has yet managed to leave without being bid to do so—it is a veritable fortress and its hawkish minder enforces strict discipline to ensure his troops are always at the ready for battle.

HAWKSPIRE
This military outpost overlooking Samon appears to be nothing more than a simple, tall structure from which scouts can spot the Mists of Akuma coming, able to ring a large bell to warn the town to seek shelter. In actuality it plays an even more important role, acting as a training area for the Fudōsoge Snipers under the tutelage of 9th Arrow. Few of the town's citizens know the true role Hawkspire plays and those that do are very quiet regarding the elite warriors of the prefecture, knowing all too well what rewards await those with too loose of a tongue in Hakaisuru.

ITRIKASU'S HIKŌSEN
In addition to allowing Samon to keep the Tazuki Rail Company, the master of Haikaisuru has given Harold Itrikasu the right to fashion aircraft in the town (and for those in the know, keeping a steady supply of equipment and parts for the Fudōsoge Snipers in Hawkspire). As the establishment owned by the ceramian with the highest station of respect in the settlement it is a locus for foreigner-borne travelers seeking work, shelter, or help.

KEISARU'S ARMAMENTS
Everyone in the settlement thinks well of the owner of this armaments shop, selling armor, blades, firearms, tools, and all kinds of metalcraft to everyone in Hakaisuru regardless of their allegiances. Its owner is well-liked and known to be willing to look the other way when someone presents her with proposals that are not entirely legal, making ever more popular

NOBLE'S SQUARE
The beautiful manors and houses abutting Hakaisuru Court are of course where the town's nobles live, far removed from the foreign and inhuman squalor of the laborers in the Branching Fields. Each of the homes is only a few decades old, newly built after Samon's destruction and constructed in the ceramian style—there are none of the sweeping arches or dedication to symmetry found in traditional soburi architecture, only the practical philosophy of the foreign invaders—making them difficult to burgle or infiltrate.

OLD QUARTER
Successful business owners in Samon that don't live above their stores have homes on the northwestern edge of the town clustered around the local Hakaisuru garrison. Their houses are modest but traditional, built from the wreckage of the town's destruction years ago but lovingly maintained by patriotic soburi craftsmen, bringing just a touch of artistry to the settlement's foreign pastiche.

POTIONS OF YURO
Though a few amateur alchemists in Samon dabble in potion brewing, only the Yuro-Sa the frog folk has any true talent for it. The pyon keeps an impressive garden blessed by yamabushi every month to keep the climate around it in good accord, able to sustain a wide variety of plants from all over Soburin. She has insight beyond her years and the town looks to her as a wise woman of sorts, offering herbal remedies and advice to the rumormongering busybodies that gather around her porch throughout the day.

RIVERSIDE
With the Tazuki Rail Company practically taking over Samon, there is little demand for plying the river—when the Mists of Akuma appear it is far better to be locked away inside of one of the Tazuki "iron horses" than it is to be on the water. A few captains still ply the waterway but they are few and far between, though on the whole they are fairly well-informed about the goings on in the town and are (as many sailors tend to be) quite loose with their lips.

TAZUKI MANUFACTURING
Two blocks of north Samon are dedicated to industry, used by the Tazuki Rail Company to craft tracks taken to the loading station on the edge of town and shipped away to expand the stretch of the line further east and west. The demands on production have only been increasing and Overseer Jotaro runs a tight ship, constantly raising worker quotas; though there is little love for him among underlings, the settlement's nobles are always working to curry his favor, and late night visitors to Tazuki Manufacturing are extremely common.

TAZUKI RAIL STATION
Samon's largest building is filled with four stories of offices for the Tazuki Rail Company. Engines and other parts for rail maintenance are tweaked and constructed on the first two floors, bookkeeping and records occupy the third, and the management of the company dwell on the top floor

alongside its Chief of Operations, Miyako Tazuki. Only employees of the company are allowed inside but rumors have it that Mr. Tazuki has a female visitor that has fast become a fixture in his office, though all inquiries by the Hakaisuru military or nobles regarding the matter insist it is dissident talk spread by the Fang.

PROLOGUE

The adventure begins when the PCs are in a tea house and receive a missive from one of the secretive bengoshi of the Hakaisuru Prefecture. GMs are encouraged to include this at the end of a previous adventure or even to summarize this event and the subsequent travel to Samon. If playing with a new group or players that are new to *Mists of Akuma*, include a random encounter or two on their journey to the city to accustom the PCs to the setting (preferably one that involves deception in some way or, as foreshadowing for what's to come, something serpentine).

Greetings

This missive is the word of Talon of the Hawk 13, empowered by Emperor Hitoshi Masuto as a bengoshi with the privilege of assigning deputies as I see fit for the benefit of our glorious empire.

You will journey to the city of Samon in the northern reaches of the Hakaisuru Prefecture. Once there you will immediately report to Lord Eidaru Hakaisuru in his court to receive further instruction.

Failure to comply with this order is ill-advised. Your service to the empire will be rewarded.



Talon of the Hawk 13

ACT 1: A DISENFRANCHISED COURT

Read the following when the PCs reach Samon:

Samon is a sight unlike many others in Soburin. Though it has all the businesses and denizens one would normally expect to find in a town of its size, the architecture of its buildings isn't native to the continent and curious steam-powered contraptions driven on rails surround the settlement. Even so the smell of cooked food pervades the air alongside the industrial tang of smoke belching from factories to the north, beckoning to you with the scents of civilization. The further into the settlement you step the more commonly you see billets and posters aggrandizing "worker cooperation" alongside lists of the benefits one gains from labor. Looking away from the propaganda and up at the faces of this place's citizens you see judgment in their gazes, though what they might be measuring remains in question.

The Talon of the Hawk's letter tells the PCs to head straight to Lord Eidaru's court on the western edge of the city but they should immediately notice the class struggle gripping Samon as they head through town. Shops and businesses that are catering to the well-to-do have no traffic from laborers and likewise in enough of a disparity that it is picked up on automatically by anyone with a passive Perception of 13 or higher.

THE DISAPPOINTMENTS OF LORD EIDARU

Not only has Lord Eidaru been relegated to rule over one of the least appealing places in the Hakaisuru Prefecture, he is constantly overshadowed by the doings of the Tazuki Rail Company and powerless in the face of the nearby fudōsoge sniper training facility of Hawkspire, not to mention the conspiring of the nobles in his court. The incredulity and affrontery of a possible worker's rebellion has utterly incensed Lord Eidaru, who only learned of it very recently (after carefully reading the orders for the party in Player Handout 2). When the party is introduced to Lord Eidaru's court.

As you are being taken up one side of a grand stairway that enwraps the large chambers of the Hakaisuru Court by a man that introduces himself as Majordomo Yunasuke, a gruff voice rings out from above, "Be gone with you, I say!" Soon after a coterie of nobles—resplendent in the latest soburi fashions, their faces hot with frustration—stream down the steps opposite you. "Damnit I mean you all! Be gone!"

(continued on the next page)

A few stragglers practically sprint out of the room as you reach its entrance, seeing Lord Eidaru Hakaisuru with an expression of complete exasperation. At first he glares at you but his majordomo rushes forward and whispers in his ear, prompting the man to take on a far more congenial countenance.

He opens a box beside his seat and begins to pack a pipe with black tar, beckoning you forward with the smoking implement and nodding for Majordomo Coda to depart "I apologize for that display, it was most unseemly. Welcome to the Court of Hakaisuru in Samon."

You can follow directions. A good sign.

The Tazuki Rail Company's well-being is of great interest to me but unpleasant happenings in Samon have put its future in jeopardy. You will locate the Fangs, workers gathering and organizing to rebel against the local government and industrialists, and afterward you will definitively learn whom their leader is.

Once you have obtained proof of the insurrection leader's malfeasance and can confirm their identity, take this information to the guards in the lookout post of Hawkspire above the town. There you will receive further instructions. Your service to the Masuto Empire will be rewarded.

Talon of the Hawk 13



It should quickly become clear to the PCs that Lord Eidaru has become addicted to black smoke and he is not a gracious enough host to share the drug. The disinterested noble tells the PCs the following, but if they are not engaging enough by asking questions or flattering him he gradually falls asleep after revealing the first three facts.

- Though he loves Emperor Hitoshi Masuto, not all of the town's nobles have forgiven the decimation of Samon at the end of the Kengen Occupation and Eidaru's loyalty is stronger than theirs.
- The presence of the Tazuki Rail Company has allowed the settlement to flourish and prosper, and if the industry is able to spread it may possibly lead to saving lives by making a reliable means to rapidly evacuate towns or even cities.
- Recently there has been talk of a rebellion among the workers that make the Tazuki Rail Company and Samon function so well. Magdo the mutant is thought to be leading this insurrection but having him fired or exiled will surely only worsen the situation.
- Animal trickery has been on the rise as of late. None are sure whether it is because of hengeyokai, unruly kami spirits, or the doings of a magician, but mischief of some kind is afoot.
- Just as he falls asleep, he says something about "nine arrows" and "ceramian perverts" though any PC with a passive Perception of 14 or higher hears "ninth arrow" and "ceramian pervert" (subtle but crucial differences).

The court's majordomo, a loyal and subservient functionary named Coda Yunasuke, steps into the chamber and bids the party to collect their belongings. He assures them that Lord Eidaru has simply worked too hard today and that his master is simply in need of rest. Majordomo Coda gives the adventurers the orders sent from Talon of the Hawk 13 (any PC with a passive Investigation score of 15 or higher notice the scroll has been carefully resealed) and then ushers them back out of the building and onto the streets of Samon.

After this event the party can explore Samon and run across the cast of characters in *Fangs of Revenge*. While they may brush against the true deceptions embroiled under the town's surface, at this point in the adventure they should suspect any tensions or odd behavior from residents to be related to the Fangs rebels (not hebi hengeyokai or Kiri Utamara).

ACT 2: FINDING THE FANGS

The adventurers have to find the Fangs before they are able to infiltrate or track the rebels, but fortunately the settlement is uniquely diverse in comparison to many of its peers in Soburin thanks to the demands of its labor force. Tazuki Rail Company has drawn a wealth of inhumans into the town to forge tracks in its factory complex and extend the line across the Hakaisuru Prefecture, and the collective memory of Hitoshi Masuto's destruction of Samon has made it a place suspicious of government intrusion. These factors make it an easy environment for foreign born and inhumans to commiserate with soburi and one another without raising too many eyebrows, though in practice the locals are still extremely tightly-knit and can be quite loyal to one another.

FAVOR POINTS. For every task the PCs accomplish in Samon that would endear them to the Fangs, they gain 1 favor point. When they have accrued 3 or more favor points the rebel group assesses and approaches them the following evening, even offering membership should the adventurers have 5 favor points by then.

Branching Fields. Befriending the locals in the Branching Fields is tough as the PCs are seen as outsiders but a cursory DC 12 Intelligence (Investigation) or DC 13 Charisma (Persuasion) check while canvassing the area reveals discontent about the frequency of military patrols. Should the party successfully convince Lieutenant Toyoruma to loosen his grip on the neighborhood—accomplished with an exceptionally well-reasoned argument and DC 16 Intelligence check or a difficult DC 18 Charisma (Persuasion) check—the citizens here take a liking to them but none claim to know the Fangs. This is of course untrue and the PCs gain 1 favor point if they manage to make the patrols less frequent.

Houses in the Branching Fields are easy to break into (not highly secured and often empty as their owners are out on the track) but have very little of value within. When the PCs search through a home in the area, roll 1d20; on a result of 17 or higher they find evidence with scrolls referencing the "Lead Fang" but nothing more than propaganda pamphlets (owned by someone too far away to contact or interrogate). Adventurers that are caught breaking into a home lose 1 favor point (minimum 0).

Fudo Tea House. As the town's most popular establishment the PCs are likely to travel to this drinkery in search of information but they quickly learn that it is a place where open talk of rebellion is most unwelcome. Patrons asked about the Fangs stand up and move to another seat, at which point Seimaru Fudo or one of her offspring (bouncers, of which there are a total of 8; use the statistics for Veterans) directly warn the party that further talk of insurrection—regardless of how well-meaning it might be—will not be tolerated. Adventurers that continue to do so are physically thrown out and told not to return for at least a day.

Hakaisuru Military Station. Lieutenant Nishihara Toyoruma wants to upend Samon to root out the Fangs and is blunt about his intent and desire to do so. Fortunately his hands are tied by his superiors though whom that is he is unwilling to reveal, something a DC 13 Dignity (Culture) check identifies is incredibly rude to press upon. Lieutenant Toyoruma has reason to believe that Magdo the mutant is the leader of the rebel group but has been unable to prove it and just as unable to act without evidence bearing the accusation to be true. When the party tell him that they've been hired to deal with the Fangs he is infuriated, insisting it is a military matter, and without a successful DC 18 Charisma (Persuasion) check he loudly expels them from the building (gaining the PCs 1 favor point).

Hawkspire. Upon casual inspection this seems like a normal military outpost but PCs with a Passive Perception of 17 or more spot Fudōsoge Snipers up in the clouds far above. Adventurers with a passive Investigation score of 15 or higher notice an amorous note inside the tower's confines, written by a hand that very much resembles the calligraphy of Harold Itrikasu. Either of these ability checks can be succeeded by PCs actively attempting them, but in these cases the DC increases by +2.

9th Arrow is dressed as a regular soldier

and is extremely dismissive of the PCs, insisting she knows nothing of the Talons of the Hawks' doings and that she merely performs her duty, watching for the Mists of Akuma. She has advantage on Charisma checks to hide anything other than her relationship with Harold Itrikasu (which she won't talk about other than to say he is a valuable ally of the Hakaisuru Clan). However, when shown the amorous note she suggests the party do as they were ordered but has little else to say—a DC 13 Wisdom (Insight) check tells the PCs that she is its recipient and that her relationship is likely not one the military would condone, but any threats of that nature are denied.

Itrikasu's Hikōsen. Harold Itrikasu is busy completing work orders but if the PCs can convince him to trust them with a DC 17 Charisma (Persuasion) check he reveals that sympathizers of the Fangs can reach them in the Chujiang Gardens at midnight during the shift change at the end of the week (at least 1d4+1 days away). Adventurers that haven't yet visited Hawkspire note the man's odd handwriting if they have a passive Investigation of 14 or higher. Though references to the amorous note found there are denied, it can allow for the party to re-attempt the DC 17 Charisma (Persuasion) check as an Intimidation check instead (with advantage). PCs that speak kindly of the rebels gain 1 favor point as Harold certainly knows several members and as long as he truly believes the adventurers mean no harm (an unlikely scenario if he is Intimidated), he passes along good words on their behalf.

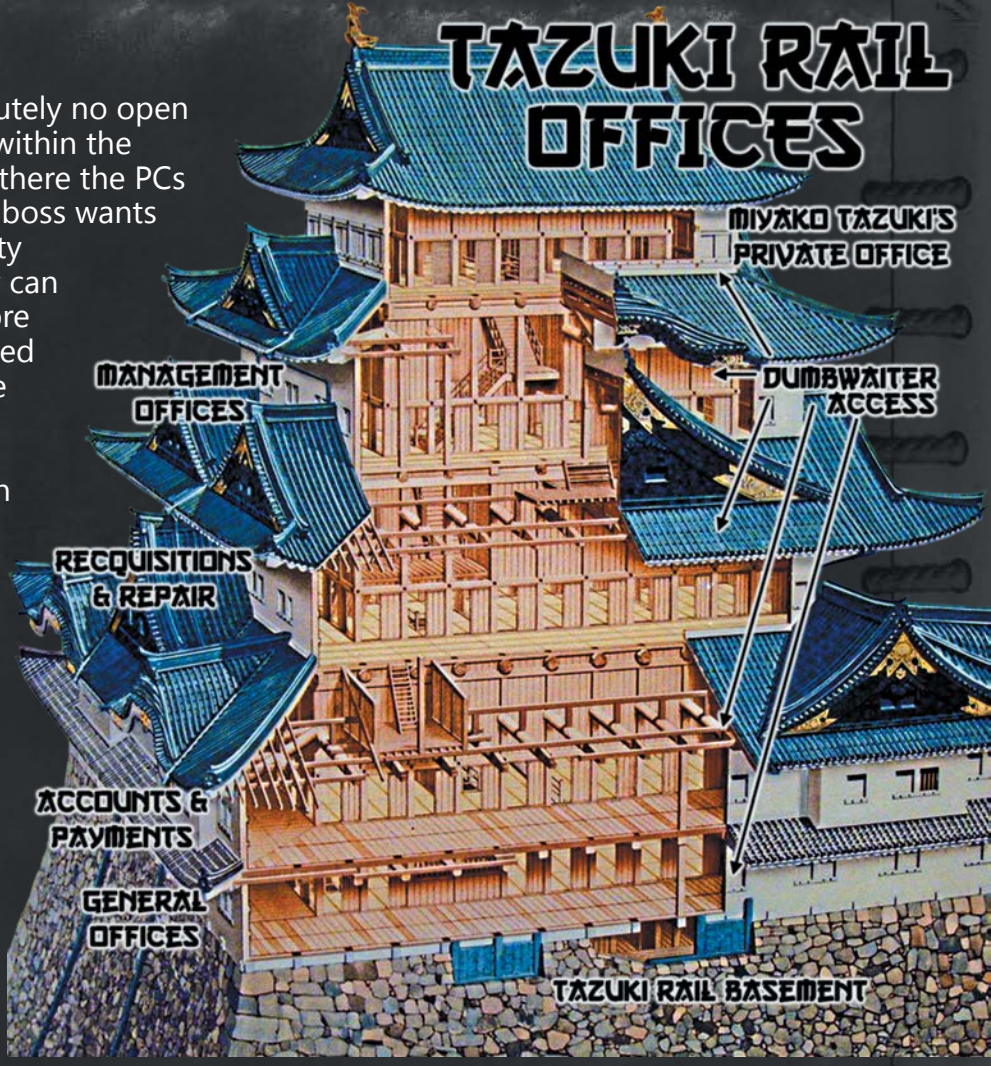
Keisaru's Armaments and Potions of Yuro. Both merchants speak freely about the Fangs but genuinely do not know any of the rebels. Each wants to however and offers to share valuable information about Samon or even gold—starting with 300 Imperial Pieces, negotiated by 100 up to a maximum of 600 Imperial Pieces with consecutive DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion) checks.

Noble's Square. While the elite of Samon have no sympathies for the Fangs, while there the PCs might run into Miyako Tazuki. The rail baron begins to seek out the party after word of their arrival spreads around town and claims that he is seeking a scion of his family that has been kidnapped, requiring great discretion on the part of the PCs. Her name is Kiri and 2,500 Imperial Pieces are offered for her safe return.

Otherwise investigating the nobles turns up that one has become something of a recluse (Iwai Hazumi) but further pressing the issue reveals little else of interest. When the PCs question Iwai, she reveals that she is suspicious of Miyako Tazuki and believes he is hiding something in the bottom of the Tazuki Rail Company building—or so her servants have whispered. She'll say she knows nothing of the Fangs (a lie; see Wajdet on page 147 for "her" Deception bonus) and that the increasing friction in the town is why she has been socially absent (another lie, as this is one of the true hebi hiding in Samon).

"Iwai" is careful to encounter the PCs only in the courtyard in front of zir estate; should they get inside and come under zir notice or be seen by zir servant (Jittar-Yi), the two evacuate to a vacant home in the Branching Fields and Wajdet assumes a new identity. Within the party find an abattoir filled with death, the half-eaten corpse of the real Iwai Hazumi and the picked at bodies of her servants littered throughout the building.

Old Quarter and Riverside. There is no other part of Samon so full of hatred for foreigners but despite this, the locals in these areas can be won over by showing that the PCs are true men and women of Soburin— capable of holding their manners and their liquor while enjoying a bit of gambling or sport. Soburi or inhumans (other than mutants, psonorous, and oni-touched) that spend 2d4 hours cavorting (each hour costing 1d10 gold in rigged games) may make a DC 12 Charisma (Persuasion) check to win over the locals. PCs that have the hated condition must spend 4d4 hours (each hour costing 2d8 gold) and succeed a DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion) check. Doing so earns them the notice of an up-and-coming gambler named Yagi Kageyasu, the man behind most of the town's gambling. This is the true hebi Nüwa in disguise and though meeting "him" earns the PCs 1 favor point, it also means they are soon after stalked by zir ninja servant Fu Xi. "Yagi" openly reveals that he's heard rumors that the true leader of the Fangs is not Magdo, but that the enjin laborer Besko has framed the mutant to be perceived as the rebel leader.



Tazuki Manufacturing. There is absolutely no open sympathy for the Fangs to be found within the Tazuki company's factories but while there the PCs meet Tabata Jotaro. The local worker boss wants the rebels undone and offers the party 500 Imperial Pieces of his own if they can be of help, proposing that one or more of the adventurers might be ingratiated into the labor force to better earn the local's trust. He also has orders from Miyako Tazuki to send talented individuals to him for a secret mission —if pressed with a DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion) or DC 12 Charisma (Intimidation) check he can be convinced to reveal that a member of the Tazuki family has been kidnapped, though he knows nothing more than to keep that information private.

Tazuki Rail Station. As soon as the PCs enter into the building they receive a DC 12 Wisdom (Insight) check to feel the tension that the Fangs have brought to the town suffusing the very air of the offices here. Any adventurer that has a result of 18 or higher on this check realize that it has to be more than that (sensing how uncomfortable the employees are about Marusaka being locked up in the basement). None are willing to reveal this of course (knowing that it would cost them their job or even their life) but when the party presses anyone within with questions, they are summoned to Miyako Tazuki's offices on the top floor instead. The rail baron claims that he is searching for a scion of his family that has been kidnapped, requiring great discretion on the part of the PCs and claiming that it is the cause for the discomfort among his staff. The abducted girl is named Kiri and 2,500 Imperial Pieces are offered for her safe return.

Most importantly, the PCs may notice Xishani skirting out of the building as they reach Miyako's office by making a DC 16 Wisdom (Perception) check. Remarking upon this to him only earns a chauvinist chuckle and wink in reply as he assures them that while he would not have word of his mistress pass beyond the walls of his office, she is free to go where and when she pleases. Further questioning him about Xishani gets the PCs kicked out of the Tazuki Rail Company as Miyako rescinds his offer, though the public display earns the party 1 favor point.

GETTING NOTICED

If the PCs have failed to garner enough favor points or any solid leads with their investigations into the Fang, the rebels hear about their search after 1d4 days and begin to look into the snooping newcomers! Parties that investigate Keisaru's Armaments, Potions of Yuro, Tazuki Manufacturing, the gambler Yagi Kageyasu, or the noblewoman Iwai Hazumi also bring themselves to the attention of one or another of the hengeyokai looking for Kiri Utumara. Hōron catches onto the doings of the adventurers after they've investigated at least three different locations, speaking to them from the shadows with more inquiries than information.

All of these NPCs are willing to trade rumors however, and for every lead (or failed attempt at investigation) the PCs reveal, their counterparts reveal one of their own (which clues each individual has gathered are at the discretion of the GM).

Infiltrating the Fangs

The Fangs know the dangerous position they are in and as a result they are fiercely loyal and extremely secretive about the insurrection they are planning in Samon. Just finding a few of their members won't get the PCs very far and to truly uncover the deceits and intrigue in the town, they will be asked by a member of the rebel group to prove their mettle after acquiring 3 favor points. When the PCs have doubled their favor points through one of the following ways (or something of their own devising), they are considered members of the Fangs and can meet Besko Earthknuckle. The enjin remains quiet about Kiri Utamara only revealing that she is safe, promising more information after the next time the rebels meet (see Chujiang Gardens Rendezvous).

Coerce and Recruit. The Fangs are in need of ever more members to join their resistance, but they also require those who know of them to keep quiet. PCs can canvas the town looking for loose lips every 4 hours, making DC 14 Wisdom (Perception) checks to overhear talk of the rebels to find some possible adherents or dangerously talkative rumormongers. Adventurers that make these checks in gambling spots have advantage (possible 1d4 times).

Once they've successfully located a possible adherent, the PCs need to make a DC 13 Charisma (Persuasion) check or DC 16 Charisma (Intimidation) check to win them over to the Fangs' cause.

After finding someone who talks too freely of the rebel group, a DC 13 Charisma (Intimidation) or DC 18 Charisma (Persuasion) check convinces them to shut up.

The PCs can also approach the shift managers at Tazuki Manufacturing—they can be cajoled into paying less attention to the talk of laborers with a DC 15 Charisma (Intimidation) check or a bribe of 5d10 Imperial Pieces.

For every 2 new rebels brought to the Fangs, every 3 rumormongers convinced to keep quiet, and cajoling all of the Tazuki shift managers (there are a total of 4), the PCs gain 1 favor point.

Sabotage. As important as it is for the Fangs to increase their membership, their ultimate goal is to disrupt the industry of Tazuki Manufacturing to create leverage for better working conditions. Should the PCs further that aspiration by accomplishing any of the three following tasks, they gain 1 favor point.

- The party might cause an incoming train full of materials to derail. First they'll need to learn of it (possibly by snooping around in Tazuki Rail or Tazuki Manufacturing or questioning the workers there), and then they'll need to get far enough up the track to make the delay meaningful (at least a day or more of travel in the wilderness). Using a handcart to travel the line speeds up the journey but it is exhausting; one creature can operate it, reaching an overland speed of 20 miles per hour, but makes a Constitution saving throw (DC 12 + 1 per previous save since the creature's last long rest) each hour or gains 2 levels of exhaustion. When two creatures are operating the handcart they both make this check with advantage.

  Derailing the actual train from the outside is virtually impossible without removing track (pulled up with a DC 20 Strength check or destroyed; AC 16 and 30 hit points per inch) though in order to cause catastrophe the missing track needs to be obscured or hidden from the conductor's sight with a DC 15 Intelligence (Stealth) or Wisdom (Survival) check. The adventurers might also hijack a train and cause a crash from taking a turn too fast provided the PCs can get on board (a DC 15 Dexterity check). Jumping off a speeding train is treated as falling damage (every 10 mph it is traveling equal to 10 feet of falling distance) and can be reduced in the same way.
- Another method of sabotage is to infiltrate the Tazuki Rail building's lower offices, replacing the files about material orders inside with forgeries (see Subterfuge below). The company's staff is keen to counterfeited reports however and on the lookout for falsifications—fooling them requires a DC 16 Intelligence (Forgery Kit) check. Even then, any awarded favor points from this action take 1d4 days to accrue.
- The adventurers might cause havoc in the Tazuki Manufacturing factories as well, but this too is troublesome as the company's owners have had contingencies for this eventuality for some time and replacement parts for virtually all of their machines are only a few blocks away. Simply destroying some of the

contraptions inside only causes a minor disruption but to be noteworthy, the PCs need to bring all production to a crashing halt, destroying at least half the facility (something almost impossible to do without being identified, making the adventurers into fugitives).

Subterfuge. The last method suggested by the Fangs is to organize it so more workers are in Samon than should be (pulling them from the far sides of the tracks) and putting the least loyal far away in preparation for the riotous push. Performing any of the following tasks rewards 1 favor point.

Manipulating records in the Tazuki Rail's upper offices requires sneaking inside of the building with a DC 14 Dexterity (Stealth) check; if done at night, this check is made with advantage. Once inside the PCs need to make a DC 10 Dexterity (Stealth) check each minute to avoid the notice of the staff inside (which are always there working, particularly in the basement). Finding the labor sheets requires a DC 12 Intelligence (Investigation) check though anyone with a passive Investigation score of 15 or higher locates them automatically. Many more hands work these papers and they are easier to forge than material orders, requiring a DC 13 Intelligence (Forgery Kit) check.

Finally the PCs might try to win over Tabata Jotaro, Overseer at Tazuki Manufacturing. This is a dangerous proposition however as he is likely to turn on the party, making them fugitives in Samon! A successful DC 20 Charisma (Persuasion) check and a 200 Imperial Pieces bribe are enough to win him over and keep his mouth shut, but failure to bribe him (or bribe him enough) or failure to convince him both end with his turning over the party to Lieutenant Toyoruma.

Tracking the Fangs

Following the rebels throughout the town isn't likely to be as rewarding in terms of the information the PCs learn, but it should certainly be much easier than causing havoc in Samon and trying to push Lieutenant Nishihara Toyoruma's violent agenda.

Following Besko the enjin. Besko is clever about organizing the Fangs and goes to great lengths to conceal her part in the coming insurrection. PCs can make a DC 13 Wisdom (Insight) check to identify rebels from laborers (maximum of 1d4 members, no more than one each day). After a day of shadowing the enjin her fellows begin ambushing and harrying the PCs (see Factory Worker on page 146), providing enough of a distraction to allow Besko to escape notice and act beyond the ken of the adventurers.

Following a hengeyokai ninja. Should the PCs decide to shadow one of the hengeyokai ninja (perhaps after being contacted by them once the party has kicked up enough dust in Samon), they begin a cyclical game of predator chasing prey chasing predator chasing prey. Any clues gained from this exercise are at the discretion of the GM (see the Hengeyokai Hunters in Samon sidebar), but it should quickly prove to be a difficult endeavor after a day or two.

Following Magdo the mutant. As a red herring, there's nothing to come from following around Magdo—he doesn't know anything of value and spends what coin he makes drinking, usually in Fudo Tea House. Persistent adventurers do gain the notice of the Fangs after 1d4 days of tailing the mutant, though these individuals quickly flee when approached or questioned (at the GM's discretion, one might reveal the Chujiang Gardens Rendezvous happening at the end of the week.)

Following another worker. Stalking the average laborer isn't likely to help learn more about the Fangs, but a DC 18 Wisdom | (Insight) check lets PCs pick out a Factory Worker (page 146) sympathetic to the rebels (ultimately leading the party to the Chujiang Gardens Rendezvous.

Following Xishani. Of all the people the PCs might tail for information Xishani is far and away the one with the most valuable secrets to share—though she is unwilling to talk about her doings, her actions speak volumes. The disguised hebikontorōra only visits the Tazuki Rail Company, Miyako Tazuki's home in the Noble Quarter, Iwai Hazumi's estate in the same neighborhood, and Yagi Kageyasu's home in Riverside (or one of the many gambling events he hosts throughout the town). The oni only reveals her true form if she is completely cornered with no route to escape, summoning snakes to distract the party long enough for her to flee (as some foreshadowing of the violence to come).

Act 3: Chujiang Gardens Rendezvous

One way or another, the party's investigations in Samon bring them to the Chujiang Gardens in the middle of the night, either as one of the organization's members or by following a rebel known to be associated with the movement.

Lightning lanterns strung along the rails abutting the Chujiang Gardens cast illumination over half of the surprisingly verdant growth, a welcome but increasingly uncommon sight in Soburin as of late. Even with the peaceful vision of curated life before you, the thick tension in the air dispels any reverie from your mind and a sense of unease grows in your gut as you approach the collection of silhouettes in the courtyard at the center of the Chujiang Gardens.

The presence of the PCs has spurred the hebi to act, kidnapping three different rebels to drag away to charm, deceive, and torture for information leading to Kiri Utamara's location. Worse yet, the impatient Lieutenant Toyoruma has learned of this meeting and comes to break it up, providing the perfect distraction for the hebi to strike! What boils everything over into violence is Xishani (whom the adventurers might have realized by now is an oni). The hebikontorōra hides amongst the workers and can be spotted with a DC 16 Wisdom (Perception) check. Otherwise she wrecks havoc, summoning serpents throughout the gardens to make a distraction for Fu Xi, Jittar-Yi, and Ohta Keisaru to abduct their targets. Read the following before combat begins:

The figure in the center of the group is hooded and covered from head to toe but their form is lumpy and not at all smooth—just like a mutant. They begin speaking, their voice muffled by the hood, yet for all the fear and uncertainty here their words ring true. "We stand on the precipice of gaining the respect we deserve here in Samon, and it all rests on the shoulders of a young girl that must be protected at all costs. Steadfast members of the Fangs are defending her as we speak, but her uncle Murasaka has gone missing now and it is imperative that we find him—the very fate of our rebellion may be in his hands."

Suddenly one of the assembled laborers cries out as something flits up from the ground and slams into his neck—a snake! More serpents appear and Lieutenant Toyoruma's voice booms out, "Rebels! We know you are here! Come out peacefully! Do not resist and you will not be hurt! By the order of Lord Eidaru Hakaisuru, you will surrender!"

Hengeyokai Hunters in Samon

All the dust kicked up when the party investigates in the town make the PCs bound to brush up against the hengeyokai interlopers at one time or another and most are willing to trade secrets—so long as the shapeshifters think they're getting the best part of the bargain. The GM should be extremely careful about which hengeyokai reveal what information, only intimating that one or two might know that the Kiri being sought after by Miyako Tazuki is actually an Utamara (if they choose to reveal that information at all during Act 2).

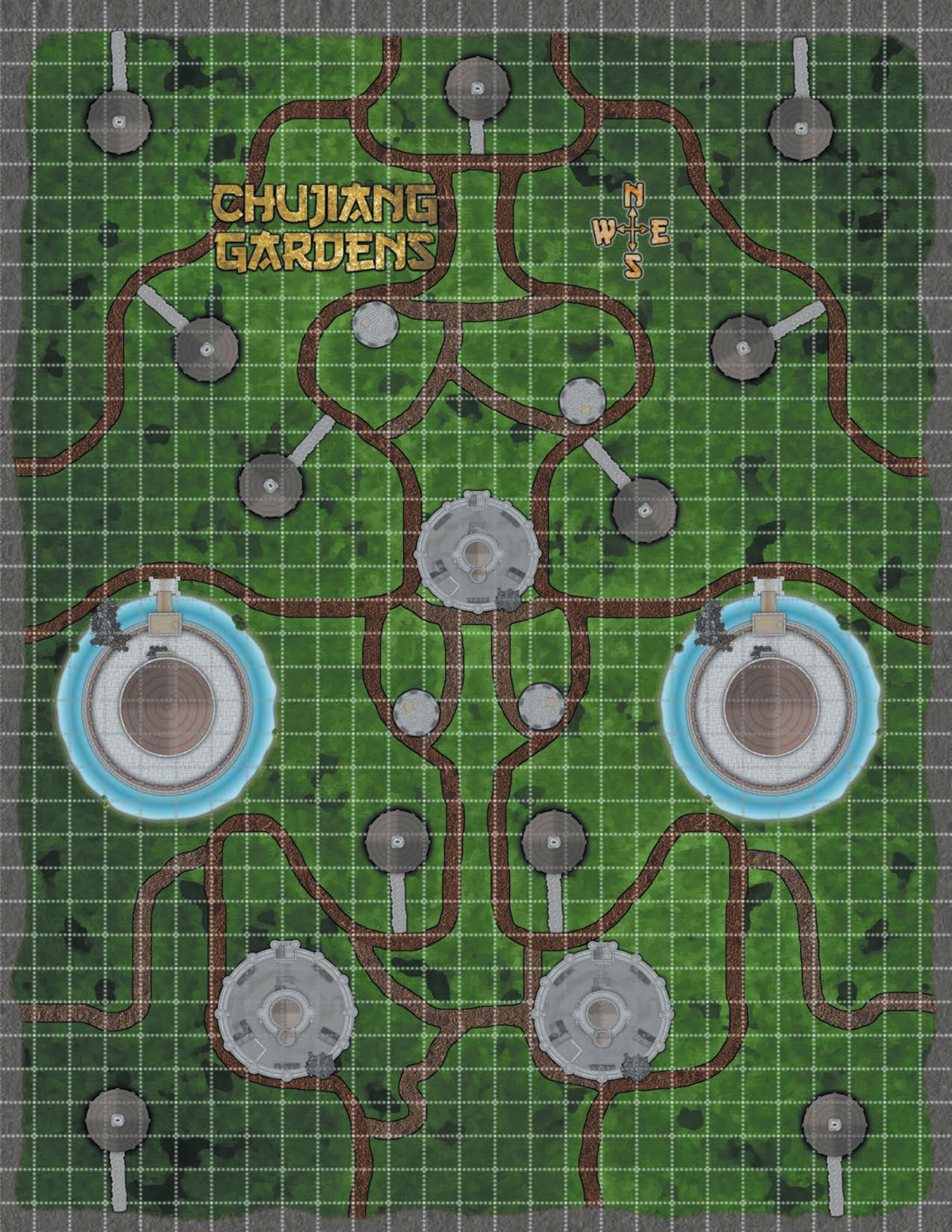
Hōron Zuruyi (Nezumi Ninja). Hōron thinks that the merchant Ohta Keisaru is hiding something (which she is—ze is a hebi!) but the ratfolk isn't sure what exactly, lacking evidence for her suspicions.

Hyan Kishi (Kitsune Ninja). The fox folk ninja stalks Magdo, incorrectly believing the hype that the mutant is the leader of the Fangs. If nothing else she can confirm to the party that Magdo is almost certainly not the leader of the rebels.

Juyin Tsabuto (Usagi Archer). Harold Itrikasu has earned the suspicion of the rabbit folk marksman in Samon. Unfortunately he knows very little other than that the technician meets with a guard from Hawkspire on occassion, though if the PCs haven't found out about the Chujiang Gardens Rendezvous by the night before it happens Juyin fills them in about the upcoming meetup between the rebels as part of an alliance between him and the party.

Fu Xi (Hebi Servant of Nüwa). Nüwa's servant stalks Besko Earthknuckle and does little more than cause trouble with the Fangs. At the GM's discretion, assaulting Fu Xi in-the-act can earn the PCs 1 favor point with the rebels.

Jittar-Yi (Hebi Servant of Wajdet). The hebi servant of Wajdet erroneously thinks that Miyako Tazuki is holding Kiri Utamara, not her uncle Marusaka. Ze managed to briefly sneak into the Tazuki Rail Company's basement and heard the sounds of a bound and gagged person within but fled before zir presence was noticed by the staff. There's no way the hebi reveals this information willingly to the party, but they might overhear it if they follow the shapeshifter or capture and interrogate Jittar-Yi.


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Battle in the Chujiang Gardens

This encounter is intended to be a lengthy combat—the intricate layout of the Chujiang Gardens will slow down the party as will potentially differing allegiances, the impending guard, and of course all the snakes—and it is not recommended for GMs to start the fight near the end of a session. Any PCs that managed to spot Xishani among the crowd are able to act in the surprise round, but the hebi and hebikontorōra treat their initiatives as if they rolled natural 20s.

Gardens. The intricate groundcover, bushes, and trees of the Chujiang Gardens are difficult terrain. Furthermore, prone creatures of Medium size and standing creatures of Small size or smaller gain concealment within the foliage (though they are at disadvantage on attack rolls while gaining concealment in the greenery).

Lighting. All along the railroad tracks are poles with lightning lanterns strung up on wires. The top half of the map (the central courtyard and above) is dimly lit and considered a lightly obscured area. Aside from light cast by the PCs or lightning lanterns carried by Lieutenant Toyoruma's soldiers, the bottom half of the map (the two large pagodas and below) is in darkness and thus heavily obscured.

Xishani's Snakes. The fight begins with a hebikontorōra summoning snakes, though she has received help from Nüwa (receiving an ancient hebi blessing) and is able to conjure forth 12 Poisonous Snakes throughout the gardens and 4 Giant Poisonous Snakes on each corner. She flees immediately afterward, returning to the Tazuki Rail Company to protect her biggest chip in this whole affair (making sure Marusaka Utamara remains locked up in the basement).

Striking Serpents. Fu Xi, Jittar-Yi, and Ohta Keisaru act in concert and in the surprise round as soon as one of Xishani's snakes attacks a Fangs rebel. The hebi poison their targets, taking Fang rebels from the bottom 3 squares of the courtyard and dragging them to the left, right and bottom of the map. Each carries two doses of sleep poison—they use their first to gas their targets, knocking the Fang rebels unconscious, then save the second for if the PCs interfere or make chase. Once the hebi nearest the railroad tracks gets to the streets surrounding the combat area (Ohta Keisaru), ze flees onto a departing train with zir captive.

Lieutenant Toyoruma's Soldiers. Lieutenant Toyoruma (use the statistics of a Veteran) and his soldiers (use the statistics for Guards) generally surround the perimeter and slowly close in, formed into 8 groups of 3 marching in lines from the corners and sides of the map, one led by Toyoruma himself (randomly assign the trio that has the commander with them). They attack anyone they recognize as an enemy—including fugitives, which the PCs might be depending on how the party acted in Act 2—as they slowly advance into a tightly knit circle at the center of the map.

- **If the PCs don't interfere with the soldiers**, 1d6 rebels are captured but they are neophytes with little valuable information, only confirming that Magdo is definitely *not* the leader of the Fangs.
- **If the PCs interfere with the guards** the adventurers become fugitives in Samon but gain a powerful ally in Besko Earthknuckle, fundamentally changing the final encounter from a hasty raid into a defensive fight (see the Ninja Assault! sidebar in Act 4).

Hengeyokai Interlopers. Hōron the rat folk thief, Hyan the kitsune ninja, and Juyin the usagi archer are present for the rendezvous as well. As the action starts the PCs make a DC 14 Wisdom (Perception) check to notice one, detecting a second with a result of 16 or 17, and a third with a result of 18 or higher. These shapeshifters only interfere if the PCs are about to die and otherwise sneak around on the perimeter of the Chujiang Gardens, following the escaping hebi.

Sleep Gas (200 gp). As an action, you can throw this glass globe up to 30 feet. Make a ranged attack against a creature or object, treating the sleep gas as an improvised weapon. On a natural attack roll of 1, the sleep gas does not shatter. On a hit, the target makes a DC 17 Constitution saving throw or falls unconscious for 1 minute, until the sleeper takes damage, or someone uses an action to shake or slap the sleeper awake. By aiming at a square instead of a creature, you gain advantage on the attack roll. On a miss when targeting a creature or when targeting a square, any creatures in the square the sleep gas shatters in gain advantage on their saving throw to resist its effects. At the start of the next round, the sleep gas disperses harmlessly.

Ending the Combat

As the rebels start to stream out of the garden Lieutenant Toyoruma calls for his men to use their firearms to shoot anyone fleeing the scene, assuming they'll be firing on the escaping kidnappers and presumed rebel leader. One soldier in each group has a matchlock rifle that they are proficient at firing (1d10 piercing, range 100/400; ammunition, heavy, loading, two-handed), something they do with great vigor. All of the soldiers confirm hits but when the battle has completely cooled each admits they mostly managed to shoot the kidnapped rebels (removing the abducted Fangs as potential sources of information). However, PCs with a passive Investigation of 15 or who successfully make an active DC 13 Intelligence (Investigation) check find bloody scales on the street—their first definitive clue that something more is going on in Samon than meets the eye.

If the PCs aren't aided by a shapeshifter they've befriended or failed to give chase themselves, the various hebi can be tracked with DC 15 Wisdom (Survival) checks. Should these fail the next day the party can canvas the people in the areas the abductors fled through and attempt DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion) checks to the same effect.

- Jittar-Yi drags zir prisoner back to the Riverside home of gambler Yagi Kageyasu (and Nüwa).
- Fu Xi takes zir prisoner to Iwai Hezumi's home in Noble's Square to zir true hebi master Wajdet.
- Ohta Keisaru hauls zir prisoner onto the train departing from Hakaisuru.

As mentioned above Hōron the thief, Hyan the ninja, and Juyin the archer pursue the hebi that the PCs are not chasing after already. The information they gather from catching the dying conversations the hebi have with the kidnapped rebels pieces together with what the PCs have learned to reveal that Marusaka Utamara is hidden inside the Tazuki Rail Company's basement and that he knows where Kiri Utamara is (held beneath a trap door in a house on the western side of the Branching Fields).

Any saved abductees provide the same amount of information to the adventurers and if the party hasn't accrued enough favor points to earn Besko Earthknuckle's trust, saving even one of her rebels from capture puts them over the top. So long as they haven't taken arms along with the guards meaning that the adventurers gain access to Kiri Utamara early; see the Ninja Assault! Sidebar in Act 4). Should the PCs catch up to any of the hebi they're in hybrid form and strike a killing blow on their captives before fleeing (fighting to the death if cornered).



Act 4: Kiri Utamara's Fate

There are several moving parts to Act 4 that can make it a challenging section for GMs. It's recommended that you begin a session with this final major part of *Fangs of Revenge*. In the event that Act 3 and all it entails leave the GM with extra time, utilize Samon's NPCs to stall the players a bit—there's the mysterious 9th Arrow and her relationship to Harold Itrikasu, Lord Eidaru's discontent (and black smoke addiction), and of course if the PCs are fugitives a little heat from the Hakaisuru Military may be in order.

Saving Kiri Utamara

Parties that have fully allied themselves with the Fangs can easily acquire Kiri Utamara from one of the rebels' houses in the Branching Fields. PCs not favored by the Fangs need to piece the information together with one or more hengeyokai allies but have trouble acquiring her from a house in the Branching Fields—provided the hebi have not gotten to her first!

When the adventurers arrive, roll 1d20 and add 4 for every half hour that has passed since the Chujiang Gardens Rendezvous. On a result of 9 or higher the serpent-folk have already found and taken her; even if the PCs aren't friends with the hengeyokai archer, ninja, or thief, at this point they can see one of them stalking nearby, fleeing toward the Tazuki Rail Company building just after the PCs realize that Kiri has already been removed from the house.

Should the PCs get there first the rebels protecting Kiri Utamara are easily intimidated, persuaded, or even deceived (each with DC 10 Charisma checks), and as only four Commoners and one Factory Worker (page 146), they offer little challenge to the party.

Rebellion Strikes!

As the adventurers make their way toward the Tazuki Rail Company, the enjin Besko Earthknuckle leads her fellow workers in a riot that consumes the town and its defenders! Waves of violence rapidly spread from the rail stations and Tazuki businesses in Samon and the PCs must make a choice—help the workers and join in the destruction, aid the nobles and fight alongside Lieutenant Toyoruma's soldiers, or ignore both in favor of staying on objective.

Regardless of their decision the party finds it dangerous to travel through Samon as the chaos engulfing the town makes the settlement's streets into difficult terrain. An adventurer can ignore this difficult terrain by heedlessly sprinting forward but takes 1d4 points of damage each round they do so (this damage cannot be avoided with the use of reactions). Another route the PCs might take is to travel by rooftop, bypassing the riots entirely—climbing a building only requires a DC 8 Strength (Athletics) check and most are only 6 feet apart, but leaping across the street is at least 20 feet across. Most are only one or two story structures and at the GM's discretion these varying heights can increase the DC of Strength (Athletics) checks and Dexterity (Acrobatics) checks needed to reach them.

For every minute the PCs are delayed from reaching the Tazuki Rail Company, the hebi in that building's basement get one step further in their seven step ritual. As the riots continue and the serpentine shapechangers do their fel work, give the adventurers a Wisdom (Perception) check (DC 12 – 1 per previous check) each minute to notice dark streams of energy converging above the southwestern part of Samon, growing more pronounced with every passing moment.

Allying with the Guards. Parties that took up arms alongside Lieutenant Toyoruma's soldiers are marked by the Fangs as enemies and actively assaulted by the rioters (see the Index). Each round as the adventurers move toward the Tazuki Rail Company, roll 1d20 (–4 per previously encountered rebel group) and on a result of 6 or more a gang of four Factory Workers (page 146) attack the PCs.

Fighting alongside the Fangs. A party known to the guards of Samon as fugitives have to face off not only against the soldiers they've already faced but also experienced soldiers (Veterans). Each round as the PCs move toward the Tazuki Rail

Hengeyokai Havoc!

Don't forgot the kitsune, nezumi, and usagi hengeyokai that have been trying to find and collect Kiri Utamara! Hyan and Hōron want her alive but Juyin is more than happy to take the girl's corpse instead. How each approaches the encounter in the Tazuki Rail Basement is at the GM's discretion, but unless they have become allies of the PCs they try to abscond with Kiri at the first possible moment (an action likely to take the combat out of the building and into the riotous streets).



Company, roll 1d20 (-4 per previously encountered enemies or enemy) and on a result of 6 or more run into a gang of 4 Guards. If the result was an odd number, they are accompanied by one Veteran guard.

Saving the Utamaras. In addition to the dark energy swirling above the Tazuki Rail Company, during the fighting the PCs witness at least one of the hengeyokai interlopers (Hōron, Hyan, or Juyin) headed for the building by leaping across the rooftops.

Finding Murasaka Utamara

Between what the adventurers may have learned in Act 3, the hengeyokai interlopers heading to the Tazuki Rail Company, and the energy swirling over the building, the PCs should have a very good idea that something extremely important happening there (though to what extent depends on the success of their investigations in the town). Should the party already have Kiri Utamara—either through luck or by a strong alliance with Besko Earthknuckle—she is totally unwilling to do anything but join them as they free her uncle, telling the PCs to head there before the insurrection breaks out or demanding as much once the violence is on.

If the adventurers don't have Kiri Utamara when they begin heading to the Tazuki Rail Station the Fangs' riots break out and the hebi begin their ritual. At the end of their magic rites the shapeshifters slaughter both Marusaka and Kiri, evolving into ascendant hebi and turning ethereal to escape (empowering Xishani, Ohta Keisaru, Fu Xi, and Jittar-Yi in the same fashion).

Fight in the Tazuki Rail Basement

Any items or materials the railroad requires that need refinement beyond basic manufacturing go through the basement of the Tazuki Rail Company, an area equipped with powerful tools that let their technicians bore, cut, and modify parts with extreme precision. As of late it has also served a second purpose: holding Marusaka Utamara against his will, something that bears true regardless of how events played throughout Act 3 and the beginning of Act 4.

Most adventurers are going to resolve this encounter as an assault on the three hebi hengeyokai (Fu Xi, Jittar-Yi, and Ohta Keisaru), Xishani the hebikontorōra, and the two true hebi Nüwa and Wajdet. Xishani remains out in the open stationed outside the locked room (where the true hebi enact their ritual), while the hebi hengeyokai are hidden in the Trash Room, Worker Storage, and Rail Storage until they see one of the PCs, at which point they launch an all out assault. Depending on how stealthy the party is, what distractions they utilize, and where exactly they enter—smart Small-sized PCs might remember with a DC 10 Intelligence check that there's a dumbwaiter that runs from the upper floors into the basement, for instance—it may take a while for the enemies to notice their intrusion but the instant their presence is known, the Tazuki Rail Basement erupts into chaos.

The serpentine shapeshifters do everything in their power to keep the adventurers from reaching Murasaka (and possibly Kiri Utamara). Fu Xi, Jittar-Yi, and Ohta Keisaru engage the party directly while Xishani uses her enchanting gaze to pacify anyone that approaches her. When the hebikontorōra or two of the hebi hengeyoka are rendered unconscious or dead, either Nüwa or Wajdet (whichever the NPCs are most familiar with in their human guises of Yagi Keyasu or Iwai Hezumi, respectively) quickly slithers under the closed door as a small garden snake (advantage on zir Stealth check with a +7 bonus) before sneaking behind the party to flank them.

Map Features

These are the features of the Tazuki Rail Basement map, explained in clockwise order. This bitter combat continues until the PCs surrender, the true hebi are dead, or the ritual slaying of Marusaka and Kiri Utamara is complete.

Stairs Outside. These are the largest egress into the Tazuki Rail Basement, used to move materials and finished pieces into and out of the building. The door to these stairs is locked, requiring a DC 18 Strength check or DC 16 Dexterity (Thieves' Tools) check to bypass (AC 16, 50 hp).

Locked Room. This is the chamber where the true hebi are performing their ritual—even if they do not have Kiri Utamara, they have Murasaka and know through divination that she is on her way to them. Getting inside requires a DC 20 Strength check or DC 18 Dexterity (Thieves' Tools) check to bypass the lock on the door (AC 18, 60 hp). Inside Murasaka (and Kiri if she's been captured) is bound and gagged, suspended in the air by ropes and bleeding from dozens of light cuts along the face, arms, and legs (completely unconscious). Creatures able to change their shape into that of a snake are able to slither through a hole in the bottom of the door.

File Storage. These rooms have cabinets filled with scrolls of records taken from the floors above to be used for analysis or reference by the company's managers when reviewing yearly statistics. Though there's nothing to hide behind and little of immediately recognizable value, PCs that succeed on a DC 18 Intelligence (Investigation) check can locate engine plans in both areas that a machinist will pay 400 Imperial Pieces for half of, or 1,000 Imperial Pieces if the schematics are complete.

Coal Piles. Some alcoves, corners, and small rooms in the Tazuki Rail Basement are filled with piles of finely ground coal that can be used as a hiding place. Creatures of Medium size have disadvantage on Dexterity (Stealth) checks made to hide in coal piles that don't cover an entire 5-foot square (smaller creatures make the check normally). A creature that has hidden in coal pile takes an 1d6 fire damage the next time they take fire damage before taking a long rest, receiving a round of cleaning via *prestidigitation*, or are doused in water.

Water Vats. These containers are filled with non potable water for use with the forges. A Small-sized creature can hide in one without holding their breath, but a Medium-sized creature must hold their breath in order to gain concealment and have disadvantage on their Dexterity (Stealth) check.

Forges. Chutes just above these roaring fires cough smoke up into

the air over Samon but the apparatuses used as anvils can be kicked over with a DC 14 Strength check, dealing 6d6 fire damage to one creature adjacent to the Forge (no saving throw).

Tool Storage. This room has various hammers and other forging implements inside of it. At the GM's discretion, some of these tools may make for good improvised weapons.

Water Tanks. Much like the water vats these can be used as hiding places though Medium-sized creatures make do not have disadvantage on Dexterity (Stealth) checks made to hide inside them.

Rail Storage. Difficult to craft rails (usually of the curved variety) are kept in the Rail Storage areas. Exceptionally strong characters (with a Strength score of 18 or higher) can wield a rail as an improvised weapon weapon

Rail. *Melee Weapon Attack*, reach 15 ft., all targets in a 15-foot line.
Hit: 10 (3d6 bludgeoning damage).

Medium-sized creature have disadvantage on attack rolls with a rail, Small-sized creatures cannot wield a rail, and Large-sized creatures suffer no penalties.

Dumb Waiter. Clever Small-sized PCs can use this to enter the floor unnoticed in the far back corner or to make a quick exit. Operating the dumb waiter requires a DC 6 Strength check, though if two or more creatures are pulling at the ropes it becomes an opposed Strength check.

Item Storage. The most valuable equipment and custom orders are kept in this room—various bits and bobs worth 10d20 gold (weighing four times as many pounds) to a machinist (like Harold Itrikasu) or half as much to a technology merchant.

Stairs Up. These lead up to the first floor of the Tazuki Rail Company's offices interior.

Parts Storage. There's nothing of great value in this room, mostly just pieces of metal needed for the finer workings of a train—more cogs than anything else. It is possible to hide amongst the various pieces but any creature attempting to do so is at disadvantage on their Stealth check.

Cutting Table. This wide metal table has an enormous and extremely sharp fixed blade on it. Two creatures working together can use this to deal a mortal blow: one drags a restrained target onto the cutting table and the other slams down the blade, dealing 35 (10d6) slashing damage.

NINJA ASSAULT!

If the PCs manage to get Kiri Utamara and reach the Tazuki Rail Company before the hebi, the roles of each change in the encounter—the serpentine shapeshifters seek to take what the party has and must assault a building the adventurers are fortified inside of. How exactly the hebi go about their attack is at the GM's discretion, but the buzzword for their tactics should be distraction. The forges are kicked over and nearby water vats emptied, coal is dragged in lines of impromptu fuses that set the walls and ceiling ablaze, smoke bombs might make an appearance (from the *Mists of Akuma* core book), and attempts are made to lure the PCs away from one another to pick them off in isolation. For the cruel GM, the NPCs might even try to gruesomely kill an adventurer on the cutting table or the hydraulic press!

Hydraulic Press. Much like the cutting table, this large contraption can be used by two creatures working together to smash another to death: one drags a restrained target onto the cutting table and the other slams down the lever for the press, which doesn't completely compress until the beginning of the lever-pulling creature's next turn, dealing 70 (20d6) bludgeoning damage.

Junk Rooms. Any items unfit for use but still containing valuable material are placed here for recycling. Like the Parts Storage room it is possible to hide here, but any creature attempting to do so is at disadvantage on their Stealth check.

Worker Storage. This chamber has lockers arrayed along the walls for laborers to store their things, none of which are of any value.

Break Area. Mats and cots are arrayed around this room for workers to sleep on in the event of exhaustion. If the hebi are here the workers off-shift have been scared away but if not, 2d4 smiths are unconscious and dozing away inside.

Trash Room. The piles of refuse within this small chamber are not pleasant but can prove to be an effective place to hide, provided the hider can hold their breath or deal with the fumes (a DC 12 Constitution saving throw or sickened for 1d4 rounds).

EPILOGUE

When the battle in the Tazuki Rail Basement comes to a close the riots in Samon do as well. Unless the PCs made a dedicated effort to help one or another side in the conflict, Besko Earthknuckle and the Fangs destroy the Tazuki Manufacturing Factories and render all of the train stations unusable, though the guards took down enough of the rebels that any more destruction is unlikely. The enjin and her posse retreat to the Tazuki Rail Company and hole up inside, fortifying the first floor entrances and aghast at the developments in the basement when they realize the adventurers have slaughtered a coterie of the fabled hebi hengeyokai.

With definitive evidence of treachery by serpentine interlopers in hand, the party has a unique opportunity to negotiate peace between 9th Arrow, Besko Earthknuckle, Lieutenant Toyoruma, Lord Eidaru Hakaisuru, and Miyako Tazuki. Well-reasoned arguments for how to make Samon more sustainable or a DC 14 Charisma (Persuasion) check convince Lord Eidaru Hakaisuru and Miyako Tazuki to bend, in turn forcing Tabata Jotaro to lower production quotas, increase wages, and improve worker conditions in the town. The Fangs agree not to demonstrate in violence again provided that these promises are kept, and though Lieutenant Toyoruma doesn't like it, 9th Arrow agrees that it is a satisfactorily peaceful provision.

Additionally, even if the PCs have become fugitives in Samon, the Talon of the Hawk that originally hired them appears when the violence comes to a close. True to her word, she rewards the adventurers with 600 Imperial Pieces each and exonerates them of any crimes they committed on her behalf. PCs that have already gotten onto the wrong side of Lieutenant Toyoruma find that his hatred for him increases tenfold and he may become a villain that acts agains them in future.

Soburin's far-flung cult of hebi are collectively aghast that the PCs have disrupted their ascension back to ancestral power, marking the adventurers for death. Until the end of their days the party are hunted by serpentine shapeshifters, hired assassins, and charlatans trying to lead them into deadly ambushes. To convince the cult of hebi to back off the PCs will have to kill at least 1 more true hebi for every member of the party, though when and where they are afforded the opportunity to do so is at the GM's discretion.

TRUE HEBI TEMPLATE

Hebi hengeyokai can become true hebi by performing a blasphemous sacrifice of a child of any race in a ritual that takes 1 hour and 100 gold in components. Ze keeps zir statistics, as follows:

Alignment. True hebi are never of good alignment.
Armor Class. True hebi gain a natural armor of 2.
Immunities and Resistances. True hebi gain immunity to poison damage, immunity to the poison condition, and resistance to fire damage.
Vulnerability. True hebi gain vulnerability to cold damage.
Senses. True hebi gain darkvision 120 feet.
Improved Ability Scores. The true hebi increases zir Strength by 2, Dexterity by 3, Wisdom by 3, and Charisma by 2. These ability score increases cannot increase an ability score past 20.
Improved Bite. A true hebi's bite attack increases to 1d8 piercing damage and ze does not require a critical hit to use zir poison.
Improved Nature Form. A true hebi is able to change into a snake of any size.
Improved Disguise. A true hebi does not have any limitations to its *disguise self* ability.
Challenge Rating. True hebi increases zir CR by 2 (if necessary, recalculate proficiency bonus).
New Action: Hypnotic Gaze. As a bonus action, the true hebi can gaze at a creature it can see within 100 feet. The target makes a Charisma saving throw (DC 8 + the true hebi's proficiency bonus + the true hebi's Charisma modifier) or gains the charmed condition for 1 minute so long as the true hebi continues to stare at it with zir bonus action or reaction. When damaged by any other creature than the true hebi the charmed creature immediately removes the condition, and when attacked by the true hebi the charmed creature receives a saving throw made at disadvantage to remove the condition. After successfully saving against this effect a creature cannot be charmed by the true hebi for 1 hour.
New Action: Snake Charmer. As an action, the true hebi can take over the control of any hebi, hebikontorōra, or snake as per the spell *dominate monster*. The target creature receives a Wisdom saving throw (DC 8 + the true hebi's proficiency bonus + the true hebi's Wisdom modifier) to resist this effect.

HEBI HENGEYOKAI

Your hengeyokai character is a uniquely magical creature, half-human and half-animal.

Ability Score Increase. Your Dexterity increases by 2 and your Charisma increases by 1.

Age. A hengeyokai reaches maturity in their early teens and lives slightly longer than a century.

Alignment. Hengeyokai vary more in motivation and temperament than any other race; they have no tendency toward any specific alignment.

Size. Hengeyokai are 4 to 5 feet tall, weighing between 90 and 120 pounds. Your size is Medium.

Speed. Your base walking speed is 30 feet.

Natural Disguise. You can cast *disguise self* without the need for any components but you can only change into a specific human. You may use this ability a number of times equal to your proficiency bonus before requiring a long rest.

Nature Form. You can transform into the creature of your subrace as *polymorph* without the need for components. Unlike the spell you keep your mental scores, the ability has no duration, your hit points remain unchanged, your gear does not meld into your form, and you can still talk but not cast spells. You may use this ability a number of times equal to your proficiency bonus before requiring a long rest.

Subrace. Hengeyokai are extremely diverse, embodying the traits and behaviors from one many different animals (see the *Mists of Akuma* core book or *Adventurer's Handbook*).

HEBI (SNAKE)

Hebi hengeyokai are the yin to the kitsune's yang, representing the dangerous beauty of survival of the fittest when natural forces take over (making them natural predators). They are on the whole a genderfluid species, though that is simply a facet of their ancestral history as powerful shapeshifters. The treachery of Umesaka Utamara nearly saw true hebi eradicated from Soburin but some survived the genocide by hiding among humanity, and those that have been borne by human mothers are said to be less powerful (though dangerous all the same).

Bite. You can make a bite attack that deals 1d4 piercing damage. When you critically hit a creature with your bite attack, that creature make a Constitution saving throw (DC 8 + your Constitution modifier + your proficiency bonus) or gains the poisoned condition for 1 minute or until that damage is healed.

Kontorōra Transformation. When exposure to the Mists of Akuma would transform you into adeddo-oni, you are changed into a hebikontorōra instead.

Poisonous. You have advantage on saving throws against poison, and resistance to poison damage. When a creature hits you with a bite attack, it makes a Constitution saving throw (DC 8 + your Constitution modifier + your proficiency bonus) or is poisoned for 1 minute.

FACTORY WORKER

Medium humanoid, neutral

Armor Class 14 (studded leather)

Hit Points 34 (4d8+16)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	13 (+1)	18 (+4)	12 (+1)	13 (+1)	11 (+0)

Saving Throws Str +4, Dex +3

Skills Athletics +4, Perception +3

Senses passive Perception 13

Languages Soburi

Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Heavy Laborer. Some factory workers are enjin or mutants. These creatures increase their CR by 1, gain a +2 bonus to damage when making melee and ranged weapon attacks (do not modify damage dice), and gain some racial traits. At the GM's discretion, other inhuman races from the *Mists of Akuma* core rulebook might also be factory workers (such as necroji or steametics).

Enjin: Climb speed 15 ft., advantage on checks made to jump, double jump distance, advantage against exhaustion, vulnerability to cold damage.

Mutant: Speed 35 feet, darkvision 60 ft., heal double during a short rest, hated condition.

Manufacturing Expertise. Factory workers deal double damage against objects and steametics. In the hands of any other creature, a power tool or rivet gun does half damage and is an improvised weapon.

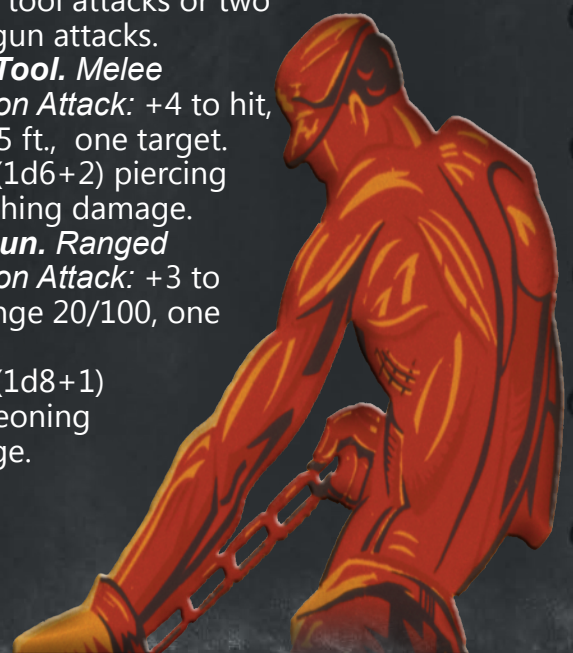
Toughened. Factory workers gain advantage on Constitution saving throws and natural armor that increases their AC by 1.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The factory worker makes two power tool attacks or two rivet gun attacks.

Power Tool. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6+2) piercing or slashing damage.

Rivet Gun. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, range 20/100, one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d8+1) bludgeoning damage.



Nüwa the Brute

Medium humanoid (true hebi hengeyokai), neutral evil
Armor Class 15 (natural)
Hit Points 104 (16d8+32)
Speed 35 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
17 (+3)	16 (+3)	14 (+2)	13 (+1)	17 (+3)	10 (+0)

Saving Throws Int +4, Cha +3
Skills Arcana +4, Athletics +6, Perception +6
Damage Vulnerabilities cold
Damage Resistances fire
Damage Immunities poison
Condition Immunities poison
Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 16
Languages Draconic, Soburi
Challenge 7 (2,900 XP)

Hypnotic Gaze. As a bonus action, Nüwa can gaze at a creature ze can see within 100 feet. The target makes a DC 11 Charisma saving throw or gains the charmed condition for 1 minute so long as Nüwa continues to stare at it with zir bonus action or reaction. When damaged by any other creature than Nüwa the charmed creature immediately removes the condition, and when attacked by Nüwa the charmed creature receives a saving throw made at disadvantage to remove the condition. After successfully saving against this effect a creature cannot be charmed by Nüwa for 1 hour.

Improved Nature Form. Nüwa can transform into a snake of any size as *polymorph* without the need for components. Unlike the spell Nüwa keeps zir mental scores, the ability has no duration, zir hit points remain unchanged, zir gear does not meld into zir form, and ze can still talk but not cast spells. Nüwa may use this ability 3 times before requiring a long rest.

Kontorōra Transformation. When exposure to the Mists of Akuma would transform Nüwa into adeddo-oni, ze is changed into a hebikontorōra instead.

Natural Disguise. Nüwa can cast *disguise self* without the need for any components 3 times before requiring a long rest.

Poisonous. When a creature hits Nüwa with a bite attack, that creature makes a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or gains the poisoned condition for 1 minute or until that damage is healed.

Snake Charmer. As an action, Nüwa can take over the control of any hebi, hebikontorōra, or snake as per the spell *dominate monster*. The target creature receives a DC 14 Wisdom saving throw to resist this effect.

Spellcasting. Nüwa is a 7th-level spellcaster that uses Wisdom as zir spellcasting ability (spell save DC 14; +6 to hit with spell attacks). Nüwa has the following spells prepared from the warlock's spell list:

Cantrips: *eldritch blast, poison spray, true strike*
1st-level (3 slots): *charm person, hellish rebuke*
2nd-level (2 slots): *misty step, ray of enfeeblement*
3rd-level (2 slots): *counterspell, vampiric touch*

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Nüwa makes two bite attacks.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8+3) piercing damage. When Nüwa hits a creature with zir bite attack, that creature make a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or gains the poisoned condition for 1 minute or until that damage is healed.

Wajdet the Charlatan

Medium humanoid (true hebi hengeyokai), chaotic evil
Armor Class 17 (natural)
Hit Points 91 (14d8+28)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	20 (+5)	14 (+2)	17 (+3)	12 (+1)	15 (+2)

Saving Throws Wis +4, Cha +5
Skills Deception +5, Insight +4, Stealth +7
Damage Vulnerabilities cold
Damage Resistances fire
Damage Immunities poison
Condition Immunities poison
Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 11
Languages Draconic, Soburi
Challenge 7 (2,900 XP)

Hypnotic Gaze. As a bonus action, Wajdet can gaze at a creature ze can see within 100 feet. The target makes a DC 13 Charisma saving throw or gains the charmed condition for 1 minute so long as Wajdet continues to stare at it with zir bonus action or reaction. When damaged by any other creature than Wajdet the charmed creature immediately removes the condition, and when attacked by Wajdet the charmed creature receives a saving throw made at disadvantage to remove the condition. After successfully saving against this effect a creature cannot be charmed by Wajdet for 1 hour.

Improved Nature Form. Wajdet can transform into a snake of any size as *polymorph* without the need for components. Unlike the spell Wajdet keeps zir mental scores, the ability has no duration, zir hit points remain unchanged, zir gear does not meld into zir form, and ze can still talk but not cast spells. Wajdet may use this ability 3 times before requiring a long rest.

Kontorōra Transformation. When exposure to the Mists of Akuma would transform Wajdet into adeddo-oni, ze is changed into a hebikontorōra instead.

Natural Disguise. Wajdet can cast *disguise self* without the need for any components 3 times before requiring a long rest.

Poisonous. When a creature hits Wajdet with a bite attack, that creature makes a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or gains the poisoned condition for 1 minute or until that damage is healed.

Snake Charmer. As an action, Wajdet can take over the control of any hebi, hebikontorōra, or snake as per the spell *dominate monster*. The target creature receives a DC 13 Wisdom saving throw to resist this effect.

Sneak Attack (1/Turn). Wajdet deals an extra 21 (6d6) damage when it hits a target with a weapon attack and has advantage on the attack roll, when the target is within 5 feet of an ally of Wajdet that isn't incapacitated, or Wajdet has charmed it with hypnotic gaze and Wajdet doesn't have disadvantage on the attack roll.

ACTIONS

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (1d8+5) piercing damage. When Wajdet hits a creature with zir bite attack, that creature make a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or gains the poisoned condition for 1 minute or until that damage is healed.

REACTION

Reflexive Dodge. When Wajdet is aware of zir attacker, ze may spend zir reaction to reduce the damage of an attack or spell by half.

HENGEYOKAI NINJA

Medium humanoid, neutral evil (Fu Xi, Hōron, Jittar-Yi), neutral (Juyin), neutral good (Hyan)
Armor Class 15 (haramaki)
Hit Points 65 (10d8+20)
Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	20 (+5)	14 (+2)	13 (+1)	15 (+2)	13 (+1)

Saving Throws Dex +7, Wis +3
Skills Acrobatics +7, Deception +3, Perception +4, Stealth +7
Senses passive Perception 14
Languages Soburi
Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

Cunning Action. On each of its turns, the hengeyokai ninja can use a bonus action to take the Dash, Disengage, or Hide action.

Evasion. If the hengeyokai ninja is subjected to an effect that allows it to make a Dexterity saving throw to take only half damage, the hengeyokai ninja instead takes no damage if it succeeds on the saving throw, and only half damage if it fails.

Hengeyokai Type. There are a dozen hengeyokai subraces but this adventure only utilizes hebi, kitsune, nezumi, and usagi. Depending on the NPC you are using with this statblock, add the following abilities explained below.

Natural Disguise. The hengeyokai ninja can cast *disguise self* without the need for any components but can only change into a specific human. They may use this ability 2 times before requiring a long rest.

Nature Form. The hengeyokai can transform into the creature of their subrace as *polymorph* without the need for components

HENGEYOKAI TYPE

Hebi (Fu Xi and Jittar-Yi)

Bite. The hengeyokai ninja can make a bite attack that deals 7 (1d4+5) piercing damage. On a critical hit the target makes a DC 12 Constitution saving throw or gains the poisoned condition for 1 minute or until that damage is healed.

Kontorōra Transformation. When exposure to the Mists of Akuma would transform the hengeyokai ninja into adeddo-oni, they are changed into a hebikontorōra instead.

Poisonous. The hengeyokai ninja has advantage on saving throws against poison and resistance to poison damage. When a creature hits the hengeyokai ninja with a bite attack, that creature makes a DC 12 Constitution saving throw or gains the poisoned condition for 1 minute.

Kitsune (Hyan)

Bite. The hengeyokai ninja can make a bite attack that deals 1d4+5 piercing damage.

Scent. The hengeyokai ninja gains advantage on scent-based Perception and Survival checks.

Mystical Tails. The hengeyokay ninja gains four tails. They can cause one tail to wither and fall off to treat a death save as a natural 20 (they must choose to use this ability before the death save is made). For every tail withered this way, the hengeyokai ninja suffers one level of exhaustion for one week.

Nezumi (Hōron)

Bite. The hengeyokai ninja can make a bite attack that deals 7 (1d4+5) piercing damage.

Crawl. The hengeyokai ninja can move at half its speed each turn while prone without provoking opportunity attacks from their movement and they do not have disadvantage on attack rolls while prone.

Usagi (Juyin)

Acrobatic. The hengeyokai ninja gains advantage on Acrobatics checks and doubles the distance of any jumps they make.

Faster. The hengeyokai ninja's base speed increases by 10 feet.

Bow. Juyin carries a bow instead of shuriken and makes two bow attacks each turn instead of unarmed strikes.

Longbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, range 150/600, one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d8+5) piercing damage.

Shapechanger. The hengeyokai ninja can use its action to polymorph into a Small or Medium humanoid (Fu Xi—Snake, Hyan—Fox, Hōron—Rat, Jittar-Yi—Snake, Juyin—Rabbit). Unlike the spell they keep their mental scores, the ability has no duration, their hit points remain unchanged, their gear does not meld into their form, and they can still talk but not cast spells. They may use this ability 2 times before requiring a long rest.

Sneak Attack (1/Turn). The hengeyokai ninja deals an extra 7 (2d6) damage when it hits a target with a weapon attack and has advantage on the attack roll or when the target is within 5 feet of an ally of the hengeyokai ninja that isn't incapacitated and the hengeyokai ninja doesn't have disadvantage on the attack roll.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The hengeyokai ninja makes 2 unarmed strikes or one shuriken attack.

Unarmed Strike. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +2 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d6+5) bludgeoning damage.

Shuriken. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +7|+7 to hit, range 20/50, one target. *Hit:* 6 slashing damage.

REACTIONS

Reflexive Dodge. When the hengeyokai ninja is aware of their attacker, they may spend their reaction to reduce the damage of an attack or spell by half.

HEBIKONTORŌRA



Medium monstrosity (oni), neutral evil
Armor Class 16 (natural)
Hit Points 68 (8d8+32)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	17 (+3)	18 (+4)	13 (+1)	16 (+3)	14 (+2)

Saving Throws Int +4, Cha +5
Skills Acrobatics +6, Deception +5, Perception +6, Sleight of Hand +6, Stealth +6
Damage Vulnerabilities cold
Damage Immunities poison
Condition Immunities charmed, frightened, poisoned
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 16
Languages Aklo, Soburi
Challenge 6 (2,300 XP)

Armed Serpent. As a bonus action, the hebikontorōra can transform its arms into serpents or back.

Change Shape. As an action, the hebikontorōra polymorphs into a humanoid that has a challenge rating 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 alignment, hit points, Hit Dice, ability to speak, proficiencies, and Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma scores, as well as this action. Its statistics and capabilities are otherwise replaced by those of the new form, except any class features or legendary actions of that form.

Enchanting Gaze. As a bonus action, the hebikontorōra can gaze at a creature it can see within 100 feet. The target makes a DC 14 Charisma saving throw or gains the charmed condition for 3 rounds. At the end of each of its turns, the charmed creature can make a saving throw to remove the condition. After successfully saving against this effect a creature cannot be charmed by the hebikontorōra for 24 hours.

Poison Sense. The hebikontorōra is always under the effects of a detect poison and disease spell, save that it only detects poison and only in objects or creatures the hebikontorōra can see.

Snakespeaker (1/Day). Hebikontorōra are always accompanied by serpents. By spending a bonus action calling them with its mind, the hebikontorōra may summon 2d6 Poisonous Snakes or 1d4 Giant Poisonous Snakes that appear within 50 feet at the end of the round.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The hebikontorōra makes two unarmed strike and snake arm attacks in any combination.

Unarmed Strike. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target.
Hit: 4 (1d4+2) piercing damage.

Snake Arm. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target.
Hit: 4 (1d8+2) piercing damage plus 7 (2d6) poison damage. Creatures that take this poison damage make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or gain the poisoned condition until the poison damage is healed.

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 work themselves into 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. Where they come from is usually of little consequence however as they slaughter whomever suspects them of duplicity before their true nature can be revealed, fleeing to a new settlement to wreak havoc once more.

CONNECTION C: SAILING SOUTH

By now the adventurers have achieved some real mettle and trekked all over mainland Soburin. To get the party from Samon in Hakaisuru Prefecture (at the end of *Fangs of Revenge*) and down to Yukinokyū in Kizuato Prefecture to begin *Cursed Soul of the Scorpion Samurai* there's a different mode of travel presented below: a seabound voyage! Before that the PCs have a fair bit of downtime, able to spend the winter doing as they please (unless the GM decides to start the trip early and include character-focused quests along the way to delay the adventurers' arrival until spring).

While they're traveling on the water the ship they're on passes by the following prefectures before reaching Kizuato: Ibutsu, Rimono, and Sukochi. When the adventurers finally reach Yukinokyū they're visited by the courier that delivers Herbal Master 17's message, perhaps after a few days of downtime in the isolated village. This part of the adventure path features the following events:

- ***Trade War: Farmer's Plea.*** The PCs are begged by one of the machine-armored soburi (the same fellow they saved only an adventure prior) to escort him south to meet with others like him gathering in Yukinokyū.
- ***Black Torii Gates.*** Whether the party inadvertently travel through one with One-Eyed Saikuro or come across an inactive black torii gate amongst the waves, they see one of the ominous structures.
- ***Mad Purantan, Demon of Spring.*** Another of the children of the entities that consumed nature is wreaking havoc in the western gulf—Mad Purantan, the offspring of Haru-Oshōhi—and if not stopped will strand the party at sea after crashing their boat on his waves.
- ***Mubō Brothers: Sukina the Pirate.*** The fifth Mubō brother tracks down the adventurers and attempts to avenge his fallen kin (whether on the high seas or the streets of Daibendo).



- ***Machibuse Traders: Koi Smugglers.*** The kumo merchant needs trustworthy guards for a legitimate shipment of goods headed south to Daibendo. What she does not reveal to the party is that beneath the waves they'll be tugging along illicit contraband (erītokirā armor parts) under the stealthy watch of koi hengeyokai.
- ***Tsukumogami Ships!*** More than mere pirates and merchants ply the waters on which the adventurers travel and the Mitsuyu Gyōsha Consortium sends a pair of monstrous vessels to assault them.
- ***Gensosō Ultimatum.*** Not long after the party is back on land the Gensosō (including a deadly Gensosō Master) confront them, forcing them to choose: help stop the smuggling of shikome technology or die.
- ***Extra Connections: Okkotaken and Koibito.*** At the GM's discretion, while at sea the PCs might encounter a sea dragon and baku that will appear later on in the adventure path (*Cursed Soul of the Scorpion Samurai* and *Revenge of the Pale Master*, respectively).

Saikuro's Black Torii Gate

One-Eyed Saikuro is the captain of the confusingly named *Pasture's Voyage*, a rickety old ship that barely looks seaworthy. When the adventurers go to the docks to board their ship, at the GM's discretion they might find themselves traveling onboard his vessel (and skipping over many waterborne encounters). Otherwise they have a ship captain on a similar (far more reliable and mundane) longboat (Nikaidou Atsukazu and the *Hōhō To Dōki*). Read the following:

> *As you make your way down to the docks a cadaverous one-eyed man waves towards you, beckoning you towards his ship. The vessel looks as old as he is with holes in the tattered sails and wood rotting away, but it floats all the same. "Pasture's Voyage" is written in faded lettering on the boat's stern and its captain introduces himself when he sees its caught your eye. "I'm One-Eyed Saikuro! All the cargo is aboard—don't worry, I watched it all with my good eye! HaaaaaaaHAHAAAHAHAHAA!"*
>
> **Note:** The capitalization is emphasis—be loud, this fellow is insane.

On the first evening after they set sail north on the river (preferably while at least one PC is awake and on watch) One-Eyed Saikuro guides the boat into a strange, black stone torii gate that materializes upon the water when he shines a crimson light from a red-flame lantern upon the ship's prow. Adventurers have only 1 round to react—not enough time to stop the vessel. Read the following:

> *It's the dead of night and there's little to see but the evening's emptiness reflecting off the water as the old man guiding you shuffles up to the front of the boat. Saikuro reaches into his robes before throwing dust into the lantern lighting your way and in response the flames within it flash and burn crimson, casting light the color of blood. Your deranged captain cackles to himself in delight as spectral light gathers on either side of the ship—only a few yards ahead—weaving together to form into a massive torii gate made of dark stone, energy swirling between them. You realize the ship is inexorably heading into the magic maelstrom and as he spots your understanding Saikuro grins a wide, half-toothed smile.*

As unsettling as it may be the old captain's shortcut takes the party all the way to the coast off Daibendo in Kizuato Prefecture, appearing there through the portal as the sun rises (with as much time passing inbetween as the GM requires). When questioned about the strange journey One-Eyed Saikuro tells the adventurers he has no idea what they are talking about—and he doesn't. Whatever magic, special location, or reagents that allowed him to access the supernatural passage are stripped from his mind the instant he passes through the threshold of energy. Otherwise the remainder of the PCs' journey goes the same when they're back on the mainland.

Adventurers that do not take this shortcut encounter a different black torii gate (Mad Purantan's) in the

western gulf, though it appears on no map and exhibits no magical properties like those described above.

Back on Land

Once the party makes it to Kizuato Prefecture their journey gets a little less exciting—provided that they've already dealt with Sukina Mubō and Mad Purantan. PCs that skipped over those parts are introduced to them in Daibendo (see below) but otherwise their trip to Yukinokyū is uneventful with the exception of random wilderness encounters and the ultimatum from the Gensosō.

Kumo-Rui's Black Torii Gate and Hidaretei Pass

In *Cursed Soul of the Scorpion Samurai* when the PCs enter into the mountain lair of the snow ogres between Kizuato and Fuson prefectures, one of the black torii gates is hidden in the castle's frozen interior. As long as the adventurers killed Kumo-Rui this is only a curiosity—noticed beneath the ice encasing it with a DC 18 Wisdom (Perception) check—but if the winter demon still lives, any creature without cold resistance that takes a rest within only heals half the normal amount as they shiver from the cold produced by the black torii gate (page 108).

Trade War: Farmer's Plea

Once the Fangs rebellion and surreptitious snakefolk are dealt with in Samon the PCs are approached by one of the machine-armored soburi they (perhaps inadvertently) saved on their way up north. Yakunitatsu Aibō attempts to sneak into an adventurer's room while they're staying at an inn or the Fudo Tea House, hoping to hire them. Read the following:

> *There's a clattering of metal and the sound of stressed gears as a machine-armored figure flips end over end through the window. The man—you can see he is of soburi descent—has a look of panic on his face as he scrambles onto his knees in a deep bow, dropping his head to the ground and putting forward a sack jingling with the promise of coin. He briefly glances up to make certain no others will hear him and then urgently, hurriedly whispers, "I am Yakunitatsu Aibō! Please hide me and take me to Kizuato Prefecture!"*

Yakunitatsu does whatever the PCs ask of him, being genuinely and completely apologetic as he explains the dire events of his life in the past year. This is the first solid opportunity the adventurers have to learn more about what's going on and piece together who might be responsible for the smuggling of erītokirā armor, or if they still haven't learned of the plot, a way to bluntly introduce it to the campaign. Even if they have no interest in helping him reunite with other farmer-turned-warriors on the southern half of the continent, the party will surely have other reliable motives (perhaps driven by curiosity or selfishness) to make the trip.

Yakunitatsu's Story

The Aibō family were slaughtered nearly to the last only three years ago, Yakunitatsu the only survivor. His home village of Antari (in Ibutsu Prefecture) was hanging on however and he did the same, working the land by himself for two seasons until the accident. He can't quite remember what happened, but he recalls seeing a turtle in one of his rice paddies—an incredible oddity this far north so far from any large rivers, even in the summer—and when he went to inspect it something overwhelmed his senses, pulling him into a deep slumber. When next he awoke it was months later and he was far from his home, clad in the strange erītokirā armor.

At first Yakunitatsu couldn't remove it at all and so sought out help—until the first erītokirā soldier attacked him. Though a sword and some kind of firearm were at his hip the farmer had never wielded a blade and fled, but the shikome only followed and then more of its mercenary kin joined in the hunt. Through the winter he managed to throw off his pursuers and began to help other peasants like him, and once the unnatural cold finally passed he came across two women also wearing the same technology: Itsusuji Tanko and Shouni Yome. Their experiences were very similar to his own, though they hailed from the prefectures of Hakaisuru and Namida. Together the three helped each other understand how to use the strange, unwanted gifts they've received until they were discovered by the shikome once again.

Yakunitatsu has been hounded by erītokirā (wearing armor with symbols like his own; the Kōteino chapter) since escaping the scrap on the roadway that involved the adventurers—it seems as though his allies were able to flee because *he* became the primary target of the shikome mercenaries. Hiding himself on a railcar, the soburi farmer has escaped them for now and desperately wishes to reunite with others like him. A message from Itsusuji and Shouni was waiting for him in Antari (where he stopped to visit the graves of his family) claiming that they fled to Yukinokyū in Kizuato Prefecture. For their help reaching the isolated village, the farmer-turned-warrior offers the party all of the coins gifted to him by the grateful peasants he's protected (780 copper, 123 silver, and 1 gold—about 10 Imperial Pieces).

Finally, the Armor

PCs that might have acquired a suit of armor from the caravan tsukumogami attack or in the roadway skirmish with Kōteino Erītokirā finally have a functional example to help them reverse-engineer the workings of the advanced shikome technology. With Yakunitatsu (who's gotten familiar with the equipment) to demonstrate and display it, if the adventurers have the parts they can rebuild a suit of erītokirā armor with four DC 17 Intelligence (tinkerer's tools) checks made over the course of as many days.

Removing the armor requires 10 minutes and a DC 19 Intelligence check or, if another creature is helping, 1 minute and a DC 10 Intelligence check. Yakunitatsu really does not want to wear it in public but once the party's at sea he'll don it so he can escape in the event things go sideways (use the statistics for a Scout but wearing erītokirā armor). Once he's no longer wearing the erītokirā armor, the PCs can easily see the strange slots in his body—small, cylindrical holes of steel with copper and brass contacts along his spine, arms, and legs—making it clear that wearing the suit requires armor contacts. No check is required for a creature with armor contacts to don erītokirā armor and it can do so over the course of 1 minute.

If the adventurers have a suit they've rebuilt it includes these armor contacts but those in Yakunitatu's body are permanently affixed to him (and removing them results in his death). Installing the cylindrical slots into a creature requires 4 hours of surgery and a DC 15 Wisdom (Medicine) check. On a failure, the creature takes 12d4 damage and the armor contacts do nothing. On a success the armor contacts function and the creature takes 6d4 damage. On a result of 20 or higher, the creature takes no damage. Damage from this surgery can only be healed by spending hit dice, and even then the amount of hit points restored by hit dice is halved.

Erītokirā Armor (60 pounds, 4,500 gp). A creature with armor contacts wearing a suit of erītokirā armor gains the following benefits:

- The creature gains proficiency with erītokirā armor.
- The creature's AC equals 17. Lighter suits of erītokirā armor make the creature's AC 14 + Dexterity modifier (maximum 4).
- The armor's weight does not count against the creature's carrying capacity.
- The creature gains these two features:

Dampening Enhancers. Cutting-edge prototype augmetics grant advantage on Strength (Athletics) and Dexterity (Stealth) checks.

Nitrous Dash (Recharge 6). The creature can Dash on its turn without spending an action to do so.

- The erītokirā armor incorporates 3 augmetics or weapons of the GM's choice regardless of exclusivity or rarity. Weapons mounted into erītokirā armor cannot be disarmed. Usually these include one or more steam arms (Strength increases by 2 and maximum increases by 1, unarmed strikes increase to 1d6), steam legs (Dexterity increases by 2 and maximum increases by 1, speed increases by 5 feet, unarmed strikes increase to 1d6), telescopic arms (as steam arm and reach increases by 5 feet, unarmed strikes increase to 1d6), and telescopic legs (as steam leg and speed increases by 10 feet, horizontal jumps 15 feet, vertical jumps 10 feet).

As a passenger Yakunitatsu is affable and polite but ultimately he's not very interesting—just a guy that had nobody left in his life and nothing but a farm in a village that has since been resettled elsewhere, the land he once tilled smack dab in the middle of newly laid rail. After the party finishes escorting him to Yukinokyū he politely excuses himself, dons the armor, and flees up the mountainside without another word (he does however leave a note thanking them for their help). Anyone that follows his trail with a DC 18 Wisdom (Survival) check find the tracks go dead where the grass and dirt give way to solid rock a few miles northeast of the isolated village.

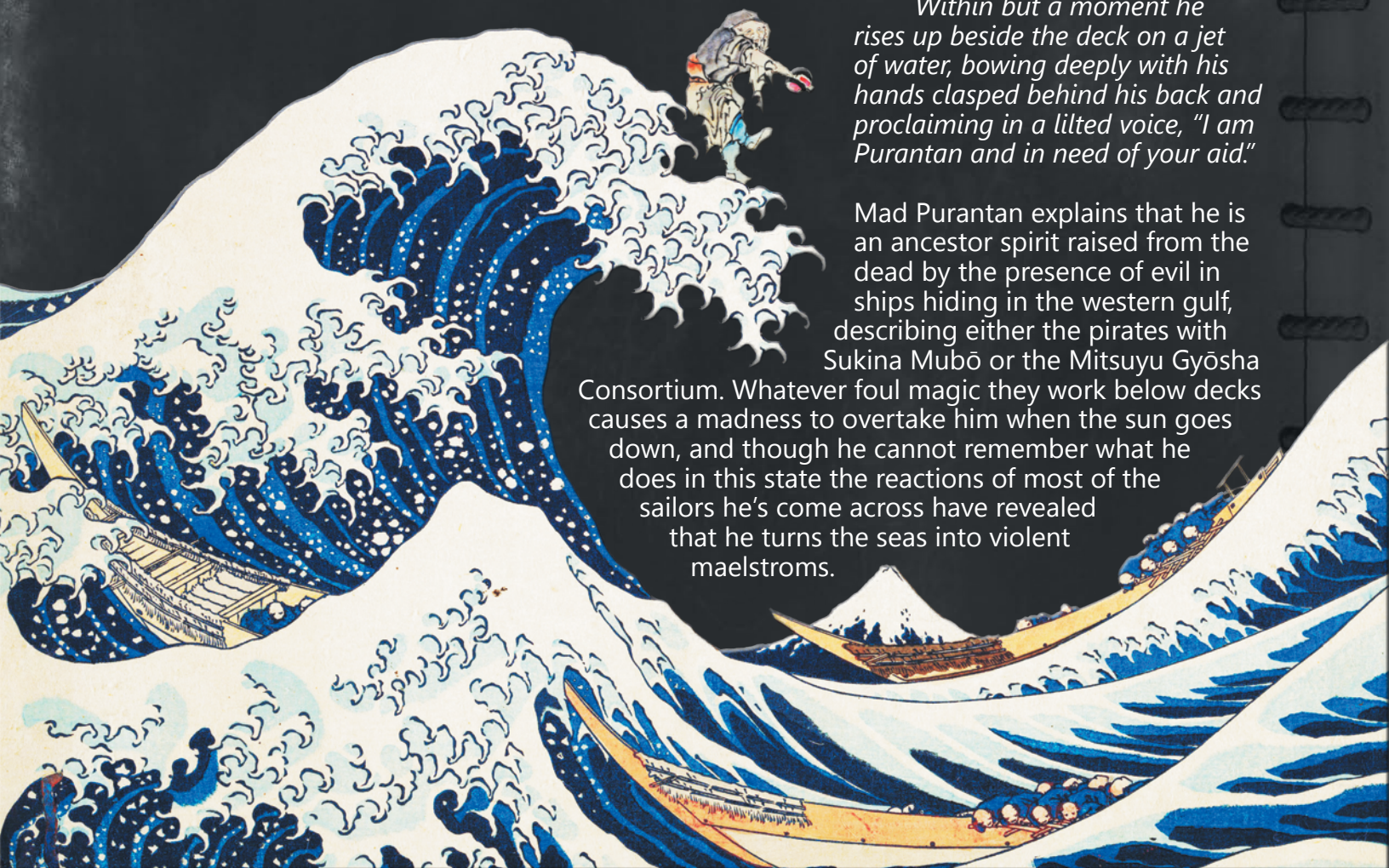
Mad Purantan, Demon of Spring

Either during their journey south on the seas of Soburin or as they near Daibendo in Kizuato Prefecture, the PCs cross paths with another offspring from the entities that engulfed nature: Mad Purantan, child of Haru-Oshōhi and master of tides. The capering demon is turning the gulf west of Sanbaoshi into a maelstrom of towering waves and assaulting sections of the shore with small tsunamis, disrupting shipping by capsizing boats as he gleefully dances across the water. He has been warned by his creator that the warriors that slayed his kin will pass through this territory soon but rather than flee the insane oni decides instead to confront them head-on and try to dupe them into a state of weakness where he can strike them down.

Waterdancer's Parley

During the day not long after noon, the waves rise high and the water becomes difficult to navigate as Mad Purantan approaches. Read the following:

> *The waters around you have been steady and even but suddenly they get choppy, the violent waves of the sea battering against the hull of your boat. Out in the distance you see an old man struggling, trying to find purchase in the growing tempest—then realize he's dancing on it. The strange figure capers and skips towards you without any concern for the surf, the rollers and boomers buffeting your vessel growing weaker the closer he gets.*
>
> *Within but a moment he rises up beside the deck on a jet of water, bowing deeply with his hands clasped behind his back and proclaiming in a lilted voice, "I am Purantan and in need of your aid."*



Mad Purantan explains that he is an ancestor spirit raised from the dead by the presence of evil in ships hiding in the western gulf, describing either the pirates with Sukina Mubō or the Mitsuyu Gyōsha Consortium. Whatever foul magic they work below decks causes a madness to overtake him when the sun goes down, and though he cannot remember what he does in this state the reactions of most of the sailors he's come across have revealed that he turns the seas into violent maelstroms.

All of this is an elaborate lie of course—the oni stalks them from afar, waiting until they've found and attacked their target before he assaults the party—a bluff the PCs see through if he fails at a Charisma (Deception) check against the adventurers' passive Insight scores (10 + Wisdom modifier + proficiency bonus if the PC is proficient with Insight). Otherwise he tells them where this foul vessel can be found.

If the adventurers manage to dispatch either the pirates or the tsukumogami smugglers without expending too many resources, Mad Purantan appears just after the combat ends and beseeches them claiming that clever magic fooled him and another vessel (the enemies not yet targeted) are truly responsible. This time the demon has disadvantage on his Charisma (Deception) check to fool the party.

Alternatively, the GM can have the party make Wisdom (Insight) checks opposed by Mad Purantan's Charisma (Deception) check or against a DC of 18 (although this is likely to make them suspicious).

Once defeated, Mad Purantan's enchanted waterbell can be recovered by any creature that has a swim speed or by a creature that succeeds on a DC 18 Strength (Athletics) check and is able to reach it before it sinks into the sea.

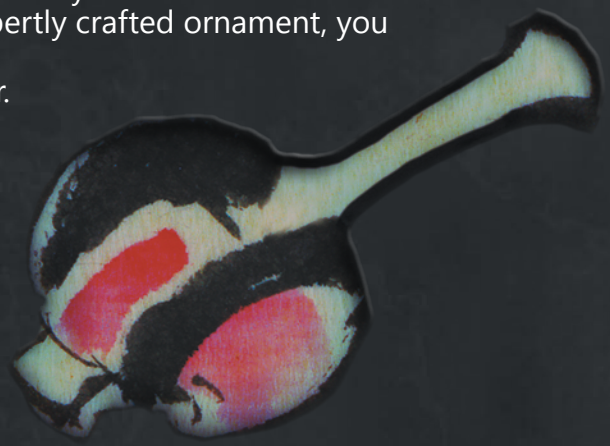
An Unlikely Alliance. Alternatively the GM may choose to introduce Mad Purantan by way of surrendering pirates. Either one of Admiral Repre Zalo's crews (*Mists of Akuma* page 11) or the defeated minions of Sukina Mubō tell the party about the oni, claiming that they only attacked the PCs out of utter desperation—his presence is making piracy much harder than it should be. Any alliance struck with these soldiers or brigands is of course short-lived and at the first opportunity they betray the party, but if they're all together attacking Mad Purantan they wait until the demon is done with before turning their blades.

Enchanted Waterbell

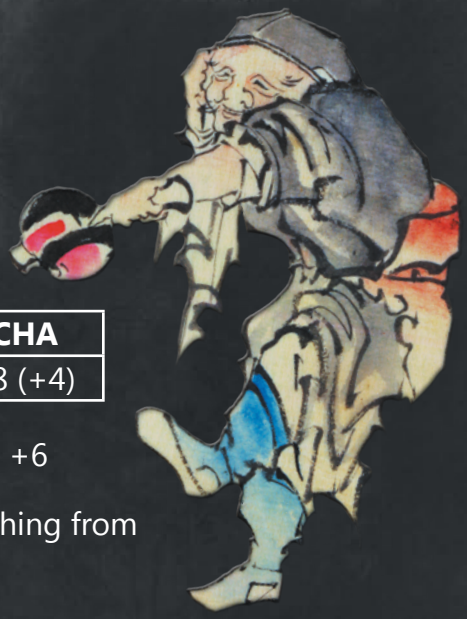
Weapon (club), rare

When you hit a creature with a melee weapon attack using this club, you deal 2d8 force damage plus your Charisma modifier and you use your Charisma for the attack roll. On a critical hit, the target must make a Strength saving throw (DC 8 + your proficiency bonus + your Charisma modifier) or be pushed 10 feet away from you.

While you are holding and attuned to the expertly crafted ornament, you gain the following benefits and features:



- ***Amphibious.*** You can breathe both air and water.
- ***Enchanted Return.*** At the beginning of your turn, you can use your reaction to summon the waterbell back to your hand.
- ***Tidal Wave (1/long rest).*** You can use an action to conjure a rolling wave of water 25 feet across that rushes away from you 20 feet in a direction of your choice. Each creature hit by the wave must succeed on a Strength saving throw (DC 8 + your proficiency bonus + your Charisma modifier) or take magical bludgeoning damage equal to 1d8 times your proficiency bonus + your Charisma modifier, be knocked prone, and moved to the end of the tidal wave's reach.
- ***Water Sense.*** While in contact with a body of water, you know the exact location of any other creature in contact with the same body of water and within a range of 100 feet.
- ***Water Walker.*** You can move across water as if it were solid ground.
- ***Wide Territory.*** While in contact with a body of water, you know the location of any vessels within 50 miles.



MAD PURANTAN

Medium oni, chaotic evil
Armor Class 18 (natural)
Hit Points 120 (16d8+48)
Speed 50 ft., leap 30 ft., swim 50 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
12 (+1)	19 (+4)	18 (+4)	13 (+1)	15 (+2)	18 (+4)

Saving Throws Str +5, Dex +8, Int +5, Cha +7
Skills Acrobatics +8, Athletics +5, Deception +8, Perception +6
Damage Vulnerabilities radiant, lightning
Damage Resistances force; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical weapons
Damage Immunities fire
Condition Immunities charmed, frightened, prone
Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 16
Languages Soburi (Common)
Challenge 9 (5,000 XP)

Amphibious. Mad Purantan can breathe both air and water.

Innate Spellcasting. Mad Purantan's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell attack +8, spell save DC 16). It can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components.

At will: *charm person, create or destroy water, hideous laughter*
3/day each: *conjure elemental* (water only), *control water, suggestion*

Maddened Mind. While his waterbell is in his hand, Mad Purantan can simultaneously maintain concentration on two spells and he has advantage on Constitution saving throws to maintain his concentration.

Magic Resistance. Mad Purantan has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Water Sense. While in contact with a body of water, Mad Purantan knows the exact location of any other creature in contact with the same body of water and within a range of 100 feet.

Water Walker. Mad Purantan can move across water as if it were solid ground.

Wide Territory. While in contact with a body of water, Mad Purantan knows the location of any vessels within 50 miles.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Mad Purantan attacks three times.

Waterbell. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack*: +8 to hit, reach 15 ft. or range 50/300 ft., one creature. *Hit*: 13 (2d8+4) force damage and the target must make a DC 16 Strength saving throw or be pushed 10 feet away.

Tidal Wave (Recharge 6). Mad Purantan uses an action to conjure a rolling wave of water 50 feet across that rushes away from him 30 feet in a direction of his choice. Each creature hit by the wave must succeed on a DC 16 Strength saving throw or take 22 (4d8+4) magical bludgeoning damage, be knocked prone, and moved to the end of the tidal wave's reach.

REACTION

Enchanted Return. At the beginning of his turn, Mad Purantan can use his reaction to summon his waterbell back to his hand.

Mubō Brothers: Sukina the Pirate

Thus far the PCs are responsible for the deaths of more than half the Mubō brothers: first to fall were Raittoningu and Sandā (in the town of Shibai in *Scourge of Róbai Shita Temple*), then Kyūchi the Wise during the bitter winter afterward, followed by Canny Torasuta that summer. The most popular of the siblings only recently heard of the adventurers that killed his kin but has set a fine bounty for any information with their whereabouts. While the party's ship is docked at a settlement along the way to Kizuato Prefecture they are noticed and someone gets word to Sukina—and then the hunt is on.

The "likable" Mubō brother has used his overwhelming personality to wrest control over three crews of brigands (each composed of a Pirate Captain, a Druid, and 10 Pirates), promising them that the PCs have treasures galore that will make everybody rich. All of them are on the lookout for the party and once they've made visual contact, the ship's spellcaster sends an *animal messenger* to fetch their compatriots. Read the following:

> *A white swell far off in the distance comes near enough to be made out as the sails of a ship. No flags of allegiance fly above it and it remains far away, though not so far that it leaves your sight.*

Once a second boat arrives they begin chasing the PCs, driving the adventurers into the path of the third. Read the following:

> *You spot a second vessel join the first and they draw closer, a flurry of activity on deck as flags go up the masts—black cloths adorned by a white skulls and crossbones! They fully release their sails and pick up speed, their malevolence further revealed by the occasional glint of light from the weaponry brandished by their crews.*

When within cannon range the pirates in front of the adventurers open fire (+6 to hit, range 600/2,400 ft., one target, 8d10 bludgeoning; usually aimed at the ship) until either they or their compatriots can close in and board. Read the following when the PCs are within 500 feet of one of the pirate boats:



> *A loud bang resounds across the waves and an instant later a small piece of lead impacts your vessel to send splinters of wood flying out into the air. From the deck of one of the closing ships you can see a man reloading a longrifle and he suddenly stands, pointing at you defiantly and screaming from the top of his lungs. "Wallow in fear as you feel the fury of four brothers scorned! The reckoning of your cowardice is at hand, you wretches, for I am Sukina Mubō and I shall avenge the dishonor you have brought upon my family!"*

The pirates all fight until their captains, spellcasters, and Sukina are dead, at which point the survivors surrender





to the mercy of the PCs or if it's reasonably possible, escape by ship.

Adventurers that take One-Eyed Saikuru's shortcut avoid being flanked at sea but the pirates—all of whom are dressed in plain clothes and incognito at port—see the PCs as they dock in Daibendo. Sukina and his gang (all 327 of them, a group too large for the city's guards to quickly engage) follow the party into the city, waiting until they stop somewhere long enough to surround a building or block off all routes of escape. The brigands weigh into the adventurers in an all-out street brawl, fleeing only when the captains, spellcasters, and Sukina have perished.



Sukina Mubō



Medium humanoid (soburi), chaotic neutral
Armor Class 18 (*do-maru jacket +2*)
Hit Points 110 (20d8+20)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	15 (+2)	12 (+1)	13 (+1)	14 (+2)	19 (+4)

Saving Throws Dex +5, Cha +7
Skills Athletics +6, Deception +10, Insight +8, Intimidation +7, Persuasion +10, Sleight of Hand +5, Stealth +5
Senses passive Perception 12
Languages Ceram, Ropa, Soburi (Common)
Challenge 6 (2,300 XP)

Charismatic Command (1/round). Sukina can use a bonus action to shout at one ally. If that ally is able to hear or see Sukina, they can make one weapon attack. This uses the ally's reaction.

Cunning Action (1/round). Sukina can take a bonus action to take the Dash, Disengage, or Hide action.

Deadeye. Sukina does not have disadvantage on ranged weapon attack rolls made at long range and he ignores any cover equal to or less than three-quarters cover.

Evasion. When Sukina is subjected to an effect that allows him to make a Dexterity saving throw to take only half damage, he instead takes no damage if he succeeds on the saving throw, and only half damage if he fails.

Sneak Attack (1/turn). Sukina deals an extra 21 (6d6) damage when he hits a target with a weapon attack and has advantage on the attack roll, or when the target is within 5 feet of an ally of Sukina that isn't incapacitated and Sukina doesn't have disadvantage on the attack roll.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Sukina attacks twice.

Wakizashi. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target.
Hit: 5 (1d6+2) slashing damage.

Hunting Rifle. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, range 80/320 ft., one target.
Hit: 13 (2d10+2) piercing damage.

REACTIONS

Uncanny Dodge. When an attacker Sukina can see hits him with an attack, Sukina can use his reaction to halve the attack's damage against him.

Machibuse Traders: Koi Smugglers

The Machibuse Traders have decided the party are a group that will reliably get to wherever they're going and Ara Rimun—the kumo hengeyokai (page 117) that hired them to escort her north—offers the party a tidy sum of 200 Imperial Pieces to guard a shipment of silks and other finery headed on a seabound voyage south to Daibendo. Unwilling to chance the scrutiny of vigilant guards in the docks along the way, she's arranged for some of her fish folk compatriots (secretive koi hengeyokai) to accompany the vessel below water and watch over submerged parcels protecting erītokirā armor parts.

Throughout the trip the trio of koi hengeyokai remain below water, ready to lug the packages to a secure location if the ship dragging them gets capsized or destroyed. If a PC is knocked unconscious or otherwise left to die in the water they may intervene—each carries one *healing potion*—though any that do so try to remain undetected, swimming down and away hoping that whatever conflict caused the injury will keep the attention of any would-be drowning victims.

CARP SMUGGLER

Medium humanoid (koi hengeyokai), neutral monk (martial artist) 8
Armor Class 16 (Wisdom)
Hit Points 52 (8d8+16)
Speed 40 ft., swim 45 ft.



STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA	Dignity	Haitoku
11 (+0)	16 (+3)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)	17 (+3)	12 (+1)	16 (+3)	8 (-1)

Saving Throws Str +3, Dex +6
Skills Athletics +3, Perception +6, Stealth +6
Damage Resistances bludgeoning
Senses passive Perception 16
Languages Soburi (Common)
Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Amphibious. The carp smuggler can breathe both air and water.

Evasion. When the carp smuggler is subjected to an effect that allows them to make a Dexterity saving throw to take only half damage, they instead take no damage if they succeed on the saving throw, and only half damage if they fail.

Ki (8 points/short rest). The carp smuggler can spend *ki* to fuel the following features:

- ***Patient Defense (1 ki).*** The carp smuggler takes the Dodge action as a bonus action on their turn.
- ***Step of the Wind (1 ki).*** The carp smuggler takes the Disengage or Dash action as a bonus action on their turn, and their jump distance is doubled for the turn.
- ***Stunning Strike (1 ki).*** The carp smuggler attempts to stun a creature they hit with a melee weapon attack. The target must succeed on a DC 14 Constitution saving throw or be stunned until the end of the carp smuggler's next turn.

Natural Disguise (3/long rest). The carp smuggler can cast *disguise self* without the need for any components but they can only change into a specific human.

Nature Form (3/long rest). The carp smuggler can transform into a koi (use the statistics of a sea horse) as *polymorph* without the need for components. Unlike the spell they keeps their mental scores, the ability has no duration, their hit points remain unchanged, their gear does not meld into their form, and they can still talk but not cast spells.

Stance of the Inner Force. The carp smuggler knows the *mage hand* cantrip, can cast it without the need for verbal components, and only require a bonus action to control the hand.

Stance of the Stout Boar (3). The carp smuggler may ignore nonmagical difficult terrain or terrain movement costs (such as from climbing) so long as all their movement is in a straight line and ends with them making a melee weapon attack, and they have advantage on saving throws against effects or spells that would cause them to move.

Stillness of Mind. The carp smuggler can use their action to end one effect on themselves that is causing them to be charmed or frightened.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The carp smuggler attacks twice (if attacking with unarmed strikes they can spend their bonus action to attack a third time, or their bonus action and 1 *ki* to attack a third and fourth time).

Unarmed. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target.
Hit: 11 (1d6+1d8+3) magical bludgeoning damage plus 2 (1d4) force damage (force damage does not multiply on a critical hit).

REACTIONS

Deflect Missile. The carp smuggler can spend their reaction to strike a missile when they are hit by a ranged weapon attack, reducing its damage by 16 (1d10+11). If the damage is reduced to 0 and the missile is small enough for them to catch, the carp smuggler can spend 1 *ki* to throw it (+6 to hit, range 20/60 ft., 1d6+3 damage).

Slow Fall. The carp smuggler can use their reaction when they fall to reduce any falling damage they take by 40.

Noticing the Eritokirā Smuggling

There are two ways for the adventurers to realize that there's more to this job than meets the eye: either via Kanja Korusu's not so subtle spies (tortoises) or when they finally reach Daibendo (catching a glimpse of the koi hengeyokai swimming away with the goods).

Surreptitious Unloading. When the PCs finally get to Daibendo their stealthy underwater stowaways go to wrest the shipment from the bottom of the boat but the sea's trappings have stuck it to the hull with barnacles. Instead of making their escape with the contraband well before reaching shore, the koi hengeyokai struggle to get it off the bottom of the ship right up until it docks. The adventures make DC 16 Wisdom (Perception) checks to realize there's something strange going on under the ship as it is moored, seeing the humanoid shapes of the monk escorts under the water. When engaged the smugglers attempt to escape, two trying to slow the party down while one of them drags the heavy armors away (moving at half speed due to the awkward weight).

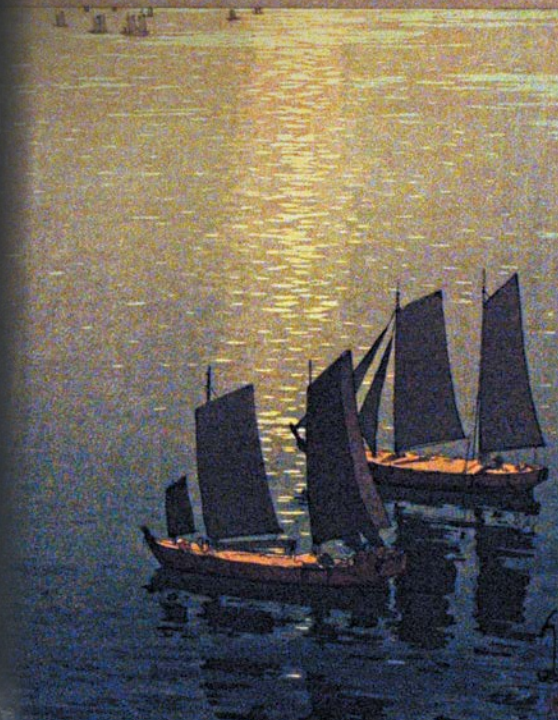
Tortoise Spies. Each day that the adventurers are out at sea the GM chooses one PC and makes a secret DC 19 Wisdom (Perception) check. On a success, they notice a tortoise in the waters a few hundred feet from their ship. While it won't seem too unordinary at first, this is the same tortoise every time they notice it and if killed, another tortoise replaces it. It does not otherwise interfere with the party in any way.

Tsukumogami Ships!

Whether the PCs have raised the ire of the Mitsuyu Gyōsha Consortium or if the tsukumogami smugglers found out about the Machibuse Trader's secret underwater cargo (or both), they assault the party at sea. Like the caravan attack (page 118) the agents are accompanied by living conveyances although this time they're aboard two longboat tsukumogami. Aware of how dangerous PCs are and that the party is likely to be suspicious the criminals make as if their ships are sinking and wave anxiously for the adventurers' help, only beginning their offensive when within boarding distance. Read the following:

> *In the waters ahead you see what first seems to be wreckage of one large boat but as you get closer, you see it's actually two sinking ships—each flying the flags of Kizuato Prefecture! A man and woman on each vessel waves frantically for your aid, desperately scrabbling up the unsubmerged parts of the doomed boats with their belongings clutched to their sides.*

The four agents (page 119) and their two monstrous vehicles fight to the death. In addition to this obvious instigation on the high seas, once the party are back on land the tsukumogami of the Mitsuyu Gyōsha Consortium shadow the PCs whenever they are in a settlement exactly like the humanoid agents earlier on in the adventure path. These are much harder to spot, requiring active searches beyond the hunch that adventurers with a passive Perception of 18 or higher get—that they're being watched. Actively searching for such spies with a successful Wisdom (Perception) check (DC 18 + 1d4) finds whichever spy tsukumogami (page 118) is observing them but if the creature is about to be caught, it bites down on a capsule of acid the size of its fist and dies a round later. A party that uncovers more than a couple of these creatures may realize that they are disturbingly common, much more than normal, and asking any tsukumogami hunters they come across reveals that the suspicion has a ring of truth. The Mists of Akuma have made more of them than ever before but lately it is disturbing, as though every town has several.



Longboat Tsukumogami

Huge monstrosity (tsukumogami), neutral evil
Armor Class 15 (natural)
Hit Points 168 (16d12+64)
Speed 20 ft., swim 60 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	14 (+2)	18 (+4)	15 (+2)	18 (+4)	16 (+3)

Saving Throws Dex +5, Int +5, Cha +6
Skills Athletics +8, Perception +7, Stealth +5
Damage Vulnerabilities fire
Damage Resistances cold, necrotic, radiant; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks
Damage Immunities poison
Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, poisoned
Senses darkvision 200 ft., passive Perception 17
Languages Soburi (Common)
Challenge 7 (2,900 XP)

Hidden In Plain Sight. Tsukumogami may appear as mundane versions of the objects they once were, hiding in plain sight. A DC 23 Wisdom (Perception) check is required to notice a tsukumogami hidden this way.

Endless Interior. The tsukumogami's insides lead to an extradimensional space like a *bag of holding*. At the start of its turn if the tsukumogami has grappled a creature of Large or smaller size, it may spend its action to make an opposed Strength (Athletics) check to restrain its target (escape DC 16). When the tsukumogami starts its turn and has restrained a creature, it may spend its action to swallow the creature. A swallowed creature can only be released when the tsukumogami wills it or dies, though it may make attacks and cast spells targeting the tsukumogami; the swallowed creature has disadvantage on attack rolls and the tsukumogami gains advantage on rolls to resist a swallowed creature's spells. The tsukumogami may choose to target a swallowed creature with its attacks, gaining advantage on its attack rolls and dealing force damage on a successful hit.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The tsukumogami can use its Frightful Presence. It then makes one bite attack and two claw attacks, or one bite attack and one mast attack.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target.
Hit: 12 (2d6+5) piercing damage.

Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target.
Hit: 12 (2d6+5) slashing damage.

Mast. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 20 ft., one target.
Hit: 23 (4d8+5) bludgeoning damage.

Frightful Presence. Each creature of the tsukumogami's choice that is within 60 feet and aware of it must succeed on a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw or become frightened for 1 minute. A creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success. If a creature's saving throw is successful or the effect ends for it, the creature is immune to the tsukumogami's Frightful Presence for the next 24 hours.

Gensosō Ultimatum

The Gensosō aren't aware that the PCs know about the erītokirā smuggling ring but they do know enough to deduce that the adventurers have been in areas where the machine-armored soburi have been sighted—and the Imperial Sibling Shūshō Ikari, their true master in this endeavor, has ordered them to force the adventurers' hand as he is suspicious that Kanja Korusu is utilizing the party once again. The angry immortal is correct of course, although the PCs may not be aware of that just yet.

One Gensosō Master (of an element chosen by the GM) and 5 Gensosō (page 121) approach the party as they travel across Kizuato Prefecture, coming from out of the open in a field or town square. Read the following:

You see six figures cross your path and turn to approach you, their gazes hidden behind the basket-like helmets over their heads—all except the muscular old woman leading them. Her eyes lock onto yours and she marches up, pointing confidently and proclaiming, "we must have words. There is smuggling of shikome technology throughout the prefectures—advanced suits of armor normally worn only by erītokirā mercenaries—and this heresy must be undone." She crosses her arms across her chest, the quintet of Gensosō warrior-monks behind her doing the same. "You will either aid us or considered to be against us. Which is it?"

Yakunitatsu is terrified at this exchange and immediately scampers into hiding. Should the adventurers agree to help the Gensosō they want to know who he is and if dissatisfied with the answers they are given or refused when they ask to take custody of the beleaguered farmer, they attack the PCs. Any answer but compliance—attempting to stall for time to consider the demand, distractions to get better battlefield positions, lies to get out of trouble, pleas of how the party have helped them—prompts the same response from the warrior-monks and they fight until dead.



GENSOSŌ MASTER

Medium humanoid (soburi), any alignment
Armor Class 18 (Wisdom)
Hit Points 130 (20d8+40)
Speed 50 ft. (quadruple all jump distances)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	18 (+4)	15 (+2)	13 (+1)	18 (+4)	14 (+2)

Saving Throws Str +6, Dex +8, Con +6, Cha +6
Skills Acrobatics +8, Athletics +6, Perception +8, Stealth +8
Damage Immunities varies (acid, cold, fire, or thunder)
Senses passive Perception 18
Languages Soburi (Common)
Challenge 9 (5,000 XP)
Primal Power. Each Gensosō Master has one of the following:

- ***Frost.*** The Gensosō Master deals additional cold damage with melee weapon attacks and gains immunity to cold damage. As a reaction, the Gensosō Master can encircle themselves in protective petals of ice that have 8 hit points; any damage the Gensosō Master takes before the end of their next turn is subtracted first from this pool of hit points.
- ***Scorch.*** The Gensosō Master deals additional fire damage with melee weapon attacks and gains immunity to fire damage. As a bonus action, the Gensosō Master can increase the reach of their unarmed melee weapon attacks by 60 feet until the end of their turn.
- ***Stone.*** The Gensosō Master deals additional acid damage with melee weapon attacks and gains immunity to acid damage. The Gensosō Master has advantage on checks made to grapple a foe or to avoid being grappled.
- ***Zephyr.*** The Gensosō Master deals additional thunder damage with melee weapon attacks and gains immunity to thunder damage. Once per turn, the Gensosō Master may force a target they hit with a melee attack to make a DC 14 Strength save or be pushed up to 10 feet away from it (regardless of the target's size).

ACTIONS
Multiattack. The Gensosō Master makes four unarmed attacks or two elemental whirlwind attacks.
Unarmed. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target.
Hit: 11 (2d6+4) magical bludgeoning damage and 5 (2d4) elemental damage.
Elemental Whirlwind. The Gensosō erupts with primal energies. All creatures and objects within 15 feet make a DC 16 Dexterity saving throw or take 8d8 elemental damage (a successful save reduces this damage by half).



WYRMLING SEA DRAGON

Large dragon (imperial), neutral
Armor Class 15 (natural armor)
Hit Points 147 (14d10+70)
Speed 40 ft., swim 60 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	14 (+2)	20 (+5)	19 (+4)	18 (+4)	15 (+2)

Saving Throws Str +6, Dex +5, Cha +5
Skills Athletics +6, History +7, Insight +7, Intimidation +5, Nature +7, Perception +7, Survival +7
Damage Vulnerabilities lightning
Damage Resistances bludgeoning, cold, fire, poison
Condition Immunities charmed, frightened, poisoned
Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 17
Languages Draconic, Soburi
Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Amphibious. The dragon can breathe air and water.

Magnificent Swimmer. While in the water, the dragon is considered to be under the constant effect of a *freedom of movement* spell.

Meniscus Mirage. While underwater, the dragon may spend a bonus action to cast *mislead* without the use of components (spell save DC 15). Only creatures above the water are affected by this ability and it ends whenever the dragon ceases concentrating on it or emerges from the water.

Water Jumper. The dragon may teleport (as the spell) from one body of water to another body of water that it has previously swam in.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The dragon can use its Frightful Presence. It then makes three attacks: one bite, one claw, and one tail slap attack.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 12 (2d8+3) piercing damage.

Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8+3) slashing damage.

Tail Slap. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 15 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d10+3) piercing damage.

Frightful Presence. Each creature of the dragon's choice that is within 120 feet and aware of it must succeed on a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw or become frightened for 1 minute. A creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success. If a creature's saving throw is successful or the effect ends for it, the creature is immune to the dragon's Frightful Presence for the next 24 hours.

Sea Breath (Recharge 5–6). The dragon exhales superheated steam in a 30-foot cone. Each creature in that cone must make a DC 16 Dexterity saving throw, taking 36 (8d8) bludgeoning and fire damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. Alternatively, the dragon may instead breathe water instead, dealing only bludgeoning damage but in a 90-foot line rather than a cone.

EXTRA CONNECTION: OKKOTAKEN THE SEA DRAGON

The Scorpion Samurai's agents and the mystic arts of Kozue Fuson have discovered that Herbal Master 17 intends to hire adventurers traveling on a ship making its way south across the western gulf. At the GM's discretion, they might have plied the wyrmling sea dragon Okkotaken into prowling the waters and sinking any vessels it suspects could have such a group on board. Any battle with the swimming serpent should be brief and limited in scope, used more to reveal the presence of the submerged koi hengeyokai smugglers or lead the PCs towards another campaign plot thread—perhaps a personal quest, an introduction to Mad Purantan, a skirmish with the rogue Kengen commander Admiral Repre Zalo, or the Mitsuyu Gyōsha Consortium's "wrecked" longboat tsukumogami.

Extra Connection: Koibito's Curious Cravings

Another monstrous NPC the adventurers might meet before reaching Daibendo is an erstwhile baku with a taste for more than dreams. After feasting on the reverie of a whale Koibito developed a craving for the flavor of blubber as well. When the party comes across the oni it is in the midst of a pack of 5 killer whales and getting dragged under the water, grabbed in the jaws of a different assailant just as it escapes another. The baku has already abandoned its meal—the corpse of an orca floats in a bloody trail behind the fray—but without aid it's sure to die. Read the following:

> *The corpse of a killer whale floats ahead off the starboard bow, bobbing up and down with the waves. A trail of crimson blood draws your eyes to a fracas of more orcas ahead, five of them attacking some sort of winged monster thrashing in the water. The oni is trying to fly away but each time it escapes one of set of jaws another leaps up to latch onto it—it's obvious that without some sort of interference that the creature is doomed.*

Koibito the Baku

Large giant (oni), chaotic evil
Armor Class 14 (natural)
Hit Points 76 (9d10+27)
Speed 30 ft., fly 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	15 (+2)	16 (+3)	17 (+3)	12 (+1)	15 (+2)

Saving Throws Dex +5, Con +6, Int +6, Wis +4
Skills Arcana +6, Deception +8, Perception +4
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 14
Languages Giant, Soburi (Common)
Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Dreamtalker. The baku gains double its proficiency bonus to Deception.

Innate Spellcasting. The baku's innate spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 15). The baku oni can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:
At will: *darkness, hellish rebuke* (as a 2nd-level spell)
1/day each: *detect thoughts, fear, hold person*

Magic Weapons. The baku's weapon attacks are magical.

Nightmare Strike. Baku can pull a bit of a victim's nightmare from their subconscious mind and attack them with it. As a bonus action the baku can target a single enemy within 60 ft. that they can see. If the target fails a DC 15 Charisma saving throw, the baku summons a figment of their nightmares that lasts for a minute. As a bonus action, the baku can then direct the nightmare to assault the victim, dealing 7 (1d8+3) points of psychic damage.

Regeneration. The baku regains 5 hit points at the start of its turn if it has at least 1 hit point.

ACTIONS

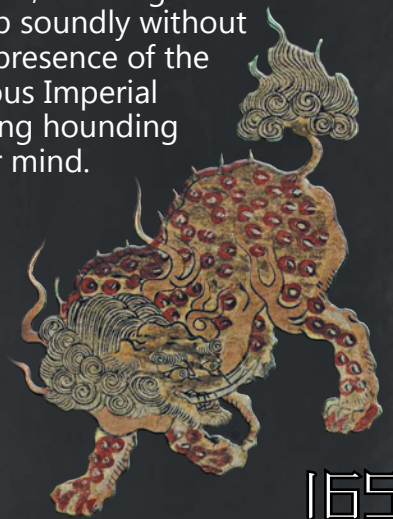
Multiattack. The baku makes two bite or claw attacks in any combination.

Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 6 (1d8+2) magical slashing damage.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 7 (1d10+2) magical piercing damage.

If the PCs intervene, dealing any damaging to one of the killer whales is sufficient to drive it away. Once three of the beasts have been driven away Koibito fights off the rest, extremely grateful for the party's help and admitting that without them it would have died. Should the adventurers save it this is the same baku that Muraoka uses to transport children in *Revenge of the Pale Master* and when the time comes, anyone that spots or otherwise interacts with the oni can persuade it to take the children elsewhere for safekeeping.

In addition, PCs that suffer from nightmares fueled by Shūshō Ikari can easily convince Koibito to consume the bad dreams with a DC 12 Charisma (Persuasion) check. The baku finds the nightmares delightfully tasty and its intervention gives a cursed adventurer a 1d4 month respite, allowing for the PC to sleep soundly without the presence of the furious Imperial Sibling hounding their mind.



CURSED SOUL OF THE SCORPION SAMURAI

A FIFTH EDITION ADVENTURE FOR 4 TO 6 PCS OF 7TH LEVEL



Adventure Background

A scourge has recently fallen upon the house of Lord Gabiru Fuson as his family's servants began disappearing, one slain in the street by a fallen hero known as the Scorpion Samurai in a widely-talked of murder that has sparked a wave of public dissent and ridicule. The dishonored adopted son of Lord Gabiru has evaded authorities for years but the tide of blood his sword washes onto Soburin is growing ever higher—the adventurers are called upon by the Fuson bengoshi Yukari Nishioka in secret, brought into service to strike down the murderous brigand in an ambush she has set on Shōjiki Island. As they lay in wait however a local outcast brings information to light that reveals there may be other bait in the village of Shinjitsu…

The PCs begin the adventure in the inland mountain-abutting village of Yukinokyū in the northern border of the Kizuato Prefecture. A Sky Runner brings them a message from a bengoshi, but not one representing the local government—it is an herbal master from Fuson that orders them to travel to Fūmiyutakana in the coastal town of Kakasu. Secrecy is of the greatest importance and the adventurers must not be detected entering into the prefecture, bid to travel through Hidaretei Pass in the mountains (a journey with lethal, hungry obstacles) and to leave no traces of their destination. At the settlement's only restaurant her contact gives them directions on where to meet her in person and by the bubbling moonlit waters of Seishinbyō Falls, Yukari Nishioka explains the need for so much secrecy, the great rewards that await them, and what she requires: the death of Hinjuku Nagaro, the Scorpion Samurai.

Hinjuku is thought to be using magic to gain power enough to take vengeance on Lord Gabiru for expelling him from Fuson, sacrificing those who he believes wronged him when he was cast out of the prefecture to fuel his ritual. Yukari has gathered three of those she expects the Scorpion Samurai to strike down (all servants as the nobles that are in danger are waiting things out in safe houses) and means for the party to kill him when he goes to strike, but there is much neither knows about the situation in Shinjitsu.

The murdered love of Hinjuku persists as a pennangalen and they have a foul plot to deprive from Lord Gabiru of his youngest daughter, the one he has most come to love since Kozue's passing (a girl named Chijimatsu). What's more the herbal master has realized too late that Hinjuku Nagaro grew up on Shōjiki Island and many of its denizens remain loyal to the Scorpion Samurai. Only Sadow Matsuyo, a local outcast, has seen the monstrous Kozue and witnessed the murderous brigand fleeing from the village, able to warn the PCs of their presence and possibly lead the adventurers to the ne'er-do-wells in Ikatteiru Cave. Once Yukari's bait have all died or the party tracks Hinjuku back to his lair they must quickly defeat the wyrmling sea dragon Okottaken—otherwise instead of preventing the brutal murder of Chijimatsu they must avenge her grisly death.

Beginning the Adventure

To begin the *Cursed Soul of the Scorpion Samurai* the adventurers merely need to be in the village of Yukinokyū in the Kizuato Prefecture. Here are a few suggestions for how the GM might lure the PCs there or provide a backdrop the party can connect with:

- The PCs are recently traveling down from the southwestern mountains, the strange spring weather forcing their route to the settlement.
- Su-Yosai is a sacred city for the tengu to travel and if a bird folk is among the adventurers, they may be making good on their races' tradition of taking a pilgrimage to the nearby settlement during their lifetime.
- Soburin's southern mountain ranges are home to many wise hermits and ancient temples that hold esoteric knowledge behind their walls—information one of the PCs may have need for.
- One of the adventurers has an ally laying low in Yukinokyū and received word that there's a rumor about some lucrative work for anyone with mettle and reputation.
- The party has run afoul of the law and are keeping are avoiding authorities after a recent mishap.

Hinjuku's Poisoned Soul

The tale of Hinjuku Nagaro is not one for the meek of heart.

Longtime residents of the Fuson Prefecture and masters of the local craft, Hinjuku's parents took great offense to the occupying ceramians demanding they work their arts on behalf of an uncaring army and protested as they were moved from the island village of Shinjitsu to Xanzogaku to better serve their foreign masters. The demand for Sugai and Demura's tinctures was great, and when they discovered that the oppressors were using their potions within the Soburin lands and not from afar, they immediately began to concoct subtly poisoned batches to weaken the Kengen Occupation's forces. Eventually their duplicity came to light but there was no court to try them; the Nagaros were dragged out into the streets of Fuson's capital and summarily shot by ceramian soldiers in a public display witnessed by many—including the orphaned Hinjuku.

As they were beloved by the community for their generosity and kindness word of Demura and Sugai's murder spread quickly and when it reached the ears of Lord Gabiru Fuson, he found just the thing to win much needed public support. In a widely-publicized act of mercy the young orphan was adopted by the Fuson noble family, brought from the dreadful slums of Xanzogaku to its finest estate and treated as one of Lord Gabiru's own. In a supportive environment and wanting for nothing, Hinjuku proved to be an exceptional student that both excelled in all paths of learning, mastering scrolls quickly and possessing a natural talent with blades.

Even before reaching adulthood Hinjuku had rightfully earned his place as one of Fuson's most talented samurai, besting more experienced opponents in tournaments with a casual ease and distinctive, vicious style of attack. It was his strange manner of fighting that begat a most popular rumor—that he, a scion of the noble family ruling over the prefecture—was the warrior that donned fearsome scorpion armor to strike vengeance against the ceramians (making him wildly popular with the public). Though devoted and loyal he kept a secret from Lord Gabiru—since his adoption he had been deeply in love with the favored daughter Lady Kozue Fuson. They kept a secret romance that lasted for years until in a heated moment of youthful rebellion in one of Xanzogaku's finest restaurants, she screamed of her scandalous affair with the family's foster son.

Lord Gabiru was furious beyond words.

Kozue was immediately sent to Seinaru in Sukochi Prefecture (far from her forbidden lovers' reach) to train in the ways of the yamabushi. What became of Hinjuku was far worse however; his title was stripped from him, he was banished from Lord Gabiru's lands, and a mark of death for Soburin's criminal underworld followed him wherever he traveled (with a fine bounty offered by an enigmatic noble that drew many an assassin).

Soon after the Scorpion Samurai was seen no longer in Fuson but all over Soburin as he destroyed his reputation, transforming from a hero of the resistance to the Kengen Occupation into a mercenary thug. The reward for killing or capturing Hinjuku—revealed now to all as the Scorpion Samurai—became public after Hitoshi's Rebellion finally saw the ceramian oppressors thrown down from power, but even in the time of peace that followed no one proved able to claim it.

Six years ago Hinjuku had finally had enough, breaking into the fortified temple holding his beloved and slaughtering a handful of guards to make good on their escape. It seemed as though fate would deny their love once more however and many witnessed an arrow strike her as they fled into the wilderness, impaling her skull and by all accounts killing her outright. The Scorpion Samurai knelt in her pooling blood, the crimson flowing up into his armor and sword, casting him in baleful evil flames as he killed another dozen warriors before leaving with Kozue's dead body in his arms.

For a time Hinjuku—both his public persona and the disgraced Scorpion Samurai—became a myth, talked of only by nostalgic soburi with too much sake in their guts. The reward for his capture never abated but Lord Gabiru and the public allowed him to drift from their thoughts and into obscurity in the reverie before the ancient Mists of Akuma returned. Then two years ago the noble's servants began to disappear.

At first these missing persons were of little importance—apprentice scribes, a handmaiden, a court functionary—but recently the Scorpion Samurai became a much talked of persona in Fuson once more, brutally slaying a respected guard named Mukuro Tsuji in the streets of Detchtagi. When three more guards that served with Mukuro were murdered in the night long after, rumors of Hinjuku's vengeful return began to spread once again and Lord Gabiru has taken it as a personal affront; not only has this adopted whelp scorned what was given, he has taken a noble daughter from the Fuson family and spilled the blood of many of its servants. The court's wisest counsel believes that the Scorpion Samurai is performing a ritual to empower himself but the depravity and depths to which he has gone to achieve his revenge are far greater.

The black taint on Hinjuku's soul mixed with his unbreakable bond of love for Kozue and mutual hatred for Lord Gabiru, and as the fell flames faded from his body they transformed her lifeless corpse into a monstrous form. Now a penanggalen and well at home with foul oni she sought out dark secrets to enact cruel revenge on her father, and over the years they finally concocted a foul plan that will surely wound him—taking the innocent soul of his youngest daughter Chijimatsu. To achieve their goal they have struck a bargain with a wyrmling sea dragon named Okottaken and with its help unless they are stopped, the Scorpion Samurai will become powerful enough to storm into Xanzogaku to exact bloody revenge on Lord Gabiru and sacrifice his favorite child in one despicable stroke.

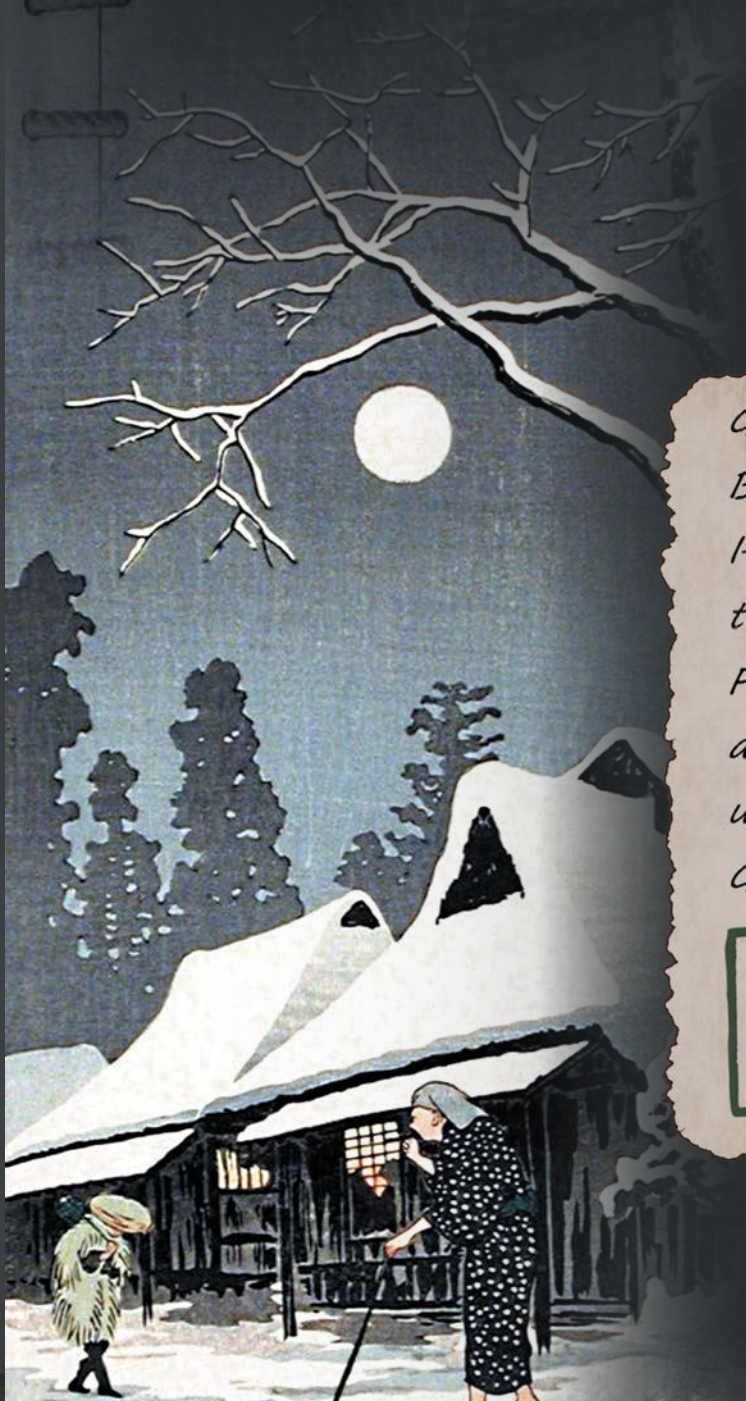
ACT 1: INFILTRATING FUSON PREFECTURE

It is an unusually warm spring in Soburin. Read the following to begin the adventure:

You find yourselves in a shaded village in the north of Kizuato Prefecture, a ramshackle place named Yukinokyū, yet despite being so remote this small settlement is extremely diverse and suffers almost no strife from normally incompatible peoples. In the span of a day you have seen a pyon, two necroji, a mutant, three steametics, a kappa, two umibo, and even a mujina hengeyokai—proving that the badger folk aren't entirely extinct. Any instinct to find more about this curiosity seems ill-advised however as it seems that everyone here keeps to themselves, minding their business and avoiding loose talk.

When the PCs are in the village's only tea house (Nagu's Ice Box) or buying provisions in Yukinokyū's small market, a Sky Runner (one of the servants common to the prefecture's bengoshi) delivers a scroll to them and though it bears the seal Kizuato, inside of it the emblem for Fuson is stamped alongside this message:

The reason for secrecy remains unclear the directive should not be taken lightly—it is well known that those who fail one of Fuson's herbal masters usually meet an early death by way of poison. Fast-thawing snow caps may make the route treacherous and anyone the party asks reveals as much (and of course want to know why they would travel that way). A successful DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check or DC 16 Charisma (Persuasion) check discovers that a trio of ogres live in Hidaretei Pass and control all of that territory, allowing the PCs to prepare for the (likely) inevitable combat.



Good day to you, soburi and otherwise. By virtue of the decree by Emperor Hitoshi, I—a bengoshi of Fuson—summon you to the town of Kakasu. Once there seek out Fūmiyutakana, but make haste and be wary as the secrecy of this request must remain utterly unknown to anyone but yourselves. Great rewards await you but danger as well; may the ancestors bless your travels. Take Hidaretei Pass and be swift.

—Herbal Master 17

Reaching Hidaretei Pass

Crossing over the mountains requires at least four days of overland travel but every morning one member of the party can attempt to hasten their trek with a DC 16 Survival (Wisdom) check, doubling the distance they journey in a single day (effectively halving their travel time to a minimum of two days). Each day the PCs have a 50% chance of a mountain encounter but when they do not, the fast-melting snow becomes their obstacle. Roll 1d4 to determine which of the following environmental encounters the PCs must overcome. It is possible to predict environmental encounters with a DC 16 Wisdom (Survival) check but when doing so the party's overland speed is halved.

Falling Ice. Fierce winds have knocked melting icicles from the mountain's peaks, carrying them down the mountainside to crash below dealing 2d8 bludgeoning and piercing damage. Creatures that make a DC 14 Dexterity saving throw take half damage. Any creature that takes 5 or more damage from falling ice is knocked from the mountainside, falling 30 feet (taking 3d6 bludgeoning damage upon landing).

Microstorm. Pockets of pressure cause a spontaneous microstorm to whip down the mountain, hitting the adventurers as they are halfway through a stretch of climbing. The remaining distance to be traveled is 150 feet from the lead creature in a gradual horizontal ascent. The first round as sprinklings of water begin to fall, the DC of Strength (Athletics) checks to stay on the wall is 8, or 11 to move at half speed. For every 2 rounds afterward the DC to remain on the wall increases by +1 and the DC to continue moving increases by +2. A spring storm lasts for 2d4+1 rounds.

Sinking Crevasse. While traveling up a hill the creatures' weight shifts a shelf of ice over an air pocket, breaking it open in a crevice that widens to swallow up everything nearby! The first round a sinking crevasse is activated the unlucky creature that triggers it (roll randomly to determine which) makes a DC 18 Dexterity saving throw or falls into the air pocket, dropping 1d4 × 10 feet (taking 1d6 bludgeoning damage upon landing for every 10 feet fallen). Any adjacent creatures make this saving throw with advantage. Failing by 5 or more means an adjacent creature also falls, but otherwise they grab onto the edges of the crevice and can climb up on their turn with a DC 13 Strength (Athletics) check. At the end of the round, if any creature is within 10 feet of the sinking crevasse's edge it expands 5 feet in every direction, widening the hole and dropping any clinging creatures inside. A creature in the bottom of a sinking crevasse must dig their way out in a process that generally takes an hour.

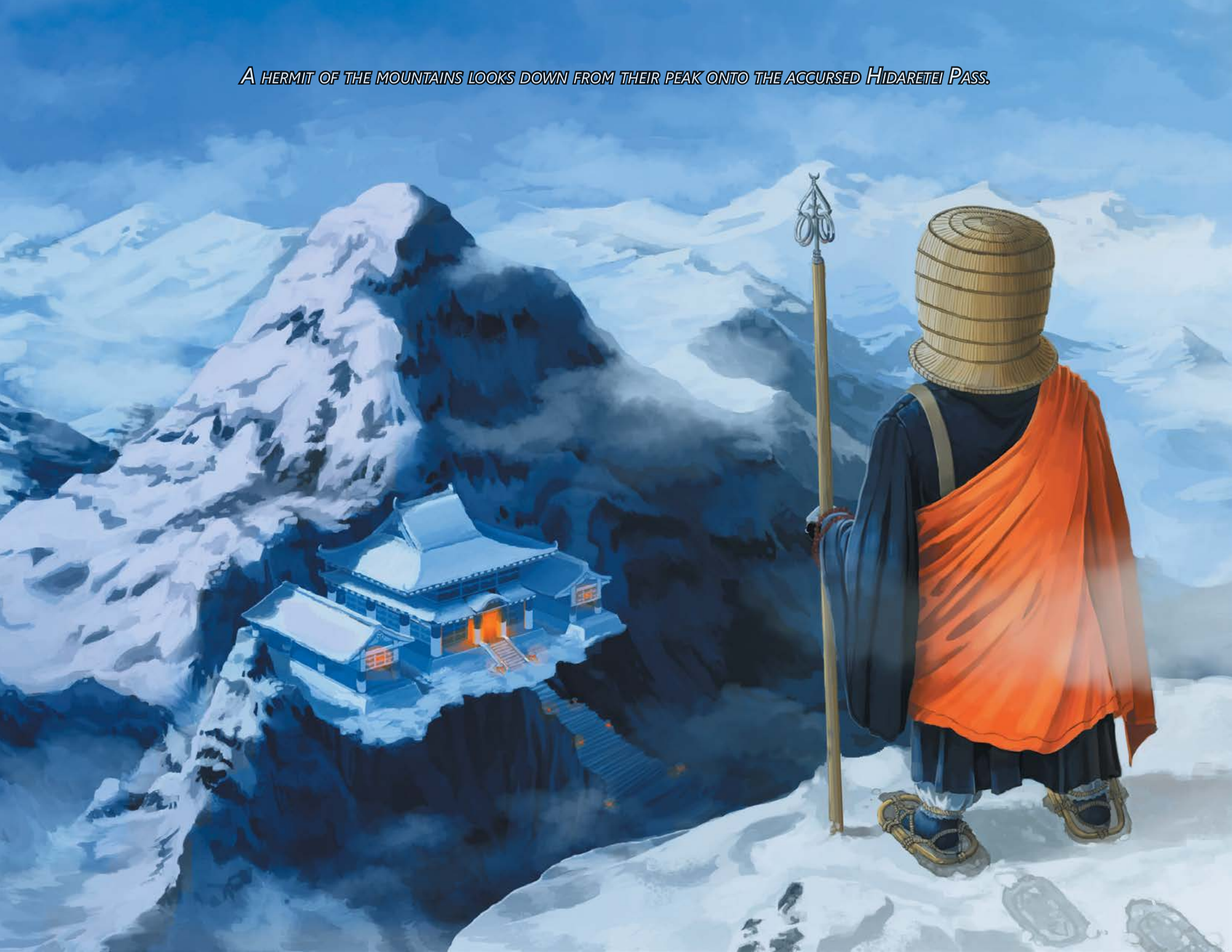
Snow Slide. Sunlight glancing off the top of a snowy incline has shifted, rolling chunks down the mountain and triggering more tides of white to roil downhill. Creatures able to brace themselves against the terrain (using a boulder or tree) make a DC 15 Strength saving throw and freestanding creatures make a DC 16 Dexterity saving throw. Failure causes a creature to take 3d4 cold and bludgeoning damage and gain the grappled condition as it rolls down the hill with the snow, traveling 60 feet each round until it regains its footing. Each round a rolling creature makes a DC 12 Dexterity saving throw to stop. After rolling for 2 rounds, each round there is a 50% chance a creature is buried in the snow. A buried creature gains the restrained condition and takes 1d4 cold damage each round until it succeeds a DC 13 Strength (Athletics) check to climb and wriggle out.

Mountain Encounters DG

1—Giant Goat (CR ½), 2—Harpy (CR 1), 3—Adeddo-Oni Ninja (CR 3; page 343), 4—Basilisk (CR 3), 5—Manticore (CR 3), 6—Troll (CR 5)

Once the PCs have made it halfway through their journey they reach Hidaretei Pass. Read the following:

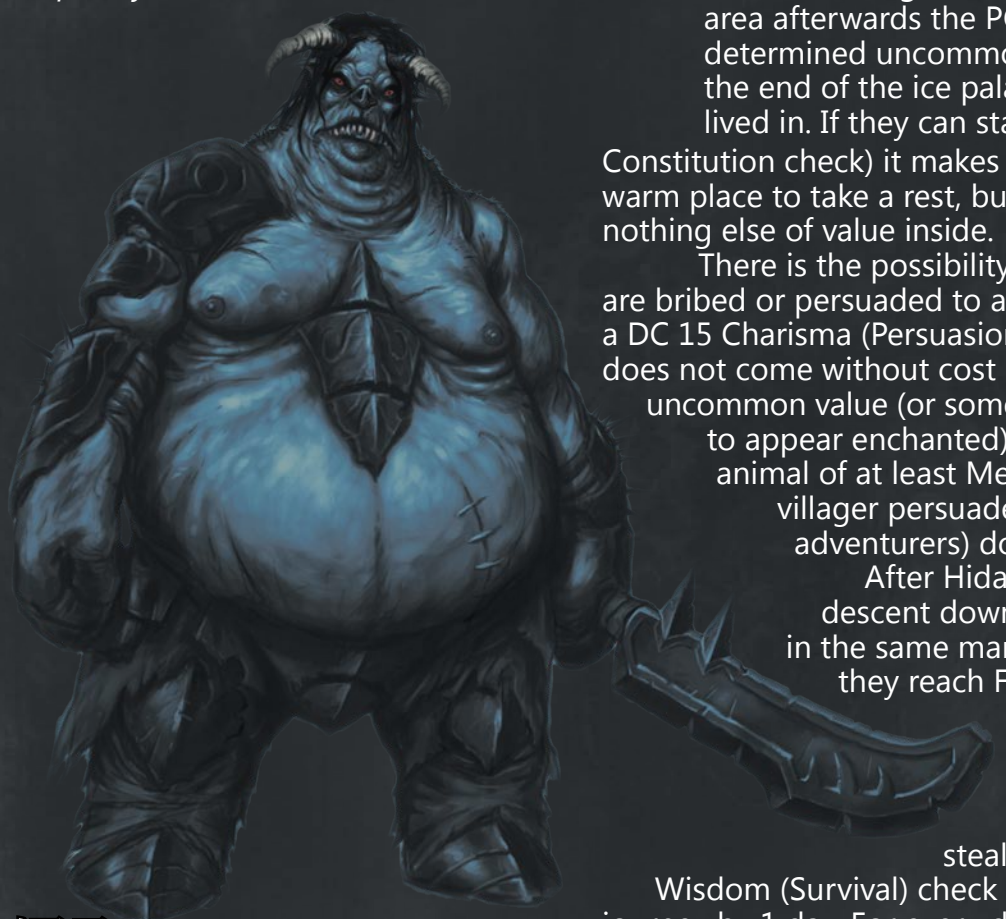
In the distance before you cut into the rock face along the rising mountains is a castle made of ice. Fearsome white statues of lions, dragons, and terrifying oni line the approach to it, jutting out from the stone walls like gargoyles. Their hollow eyes are unblemished by snow and you feel as though the ancient sculptures could be watching you, the howling of the winds growing slightly when you stare back.


A hermit of the mountains looks down from their peak onto the accursed Hidaretei Pass.

The mountains rise steeply to the east and west, making ascent practically impossible and forcingthe PCs to either turn back (likely angering the herbal master that sent for them) or face the ogre masters of this place. When the party moves forward (even if they are stealthy or invisible) the heads of the creatures on the icy walls howl balefully, alerting Burūto, Mōretsuna, and Yabanhito. This howling still occurs if all the statues are destroyed (AC 12, 20 hp, immune to cold, double damage from fire) from afar but it takes 1d4 rounds to become loud enough to alert the masters of this place.

Read the following:

The howl of the winds increases to an unnatural roar as the statues arrayed around Hidaretei Pass snarl, their menacing faces contorting with rage. Angry hoots bellow from the ice palace above as white-skinned ogres appear in its doorway, clad in piecemeal armor made from the bloodied suits of dead trespassers and wielding massive, wicked blades in their hands. Two of the monsters leap down either side of the stairs as the biggest of them bounds directly down the steps at you, its face contorted with hatred!



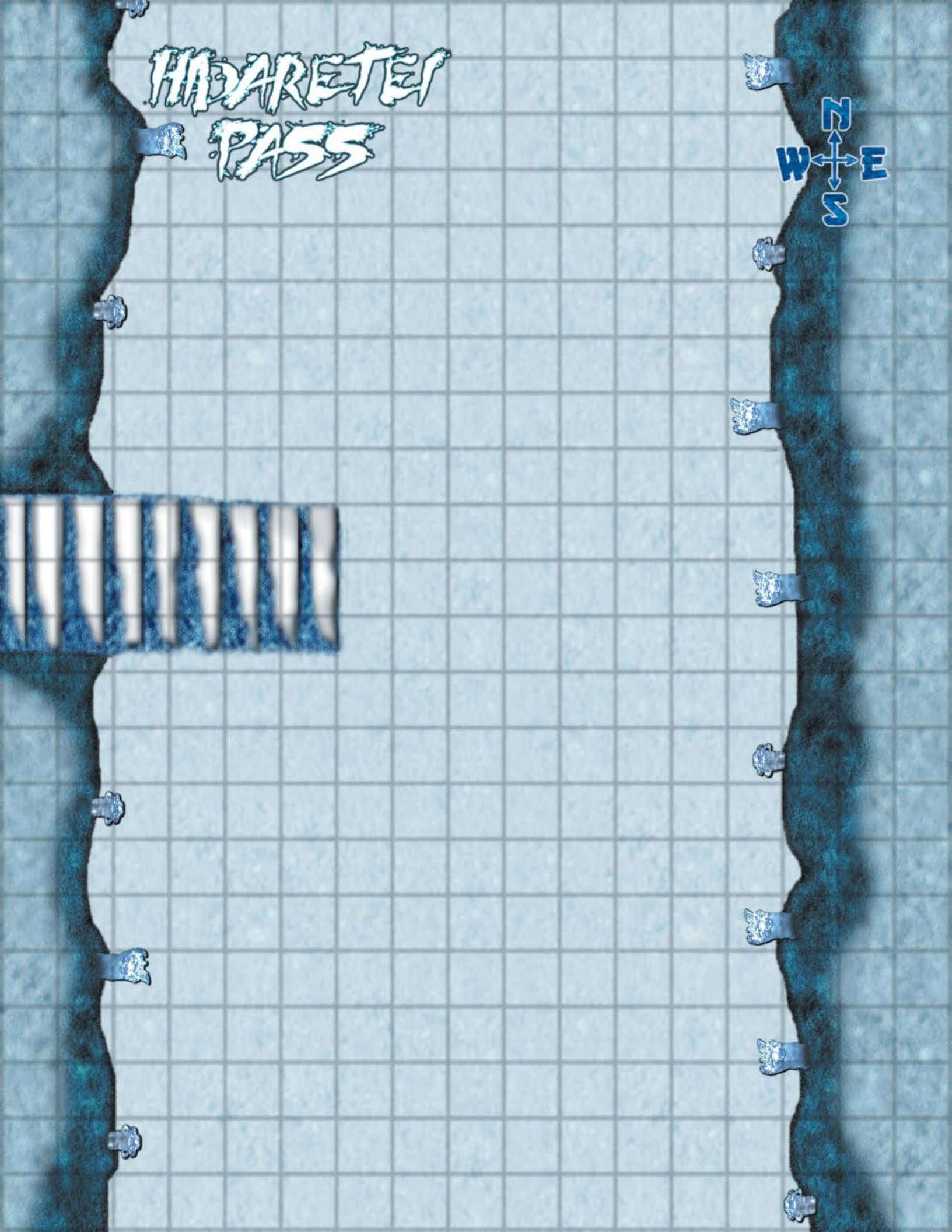
These ogres are not typical and have the following changes:

- They are protected by suits of piecemeal armor that increase their AC to 14.
- They have adapted to the harsh climate, gaining resistance to cold.
- They are able to traverse the terrain quickly, taking no damage from jumping down a distance of 40 feet or less and gaining a climb speed of 25 feet.
- The massive greatswords they wield deal 3d6+4 slashing damage.
- Burūto, Mōretsuna, and Yabanhito have each rigged a part of Hidaretei Pass so that with one strong strike, a cascade of ice, rocks, and snow fall onto an area (of 10 feet by 15 feet) that is adjacent to the sides of the canyon and within 40 feet.
- When combat begins, the hollows of any destroyed statues start blowing out gusts of air in 15-ft. cones. Any ranged attack rolls made in a wind cone are at disadvantage and these areas count as difficult terrain.
- Their challenge rating is increased to 3.

The ogres do not flee if engaged in combat and fight until slain. Searching the area afterwards the PCs find one randomly determined uncommon magic item in a lair at the end of the ice palace their dead enemies lived in. If they can stand the smell (a DC 10 Constitution check) it makes for a safe and surprisingly warm place to take a rest, but otherwise there is nothing else of value inside.

There is the possibility of course that the ogres are bribed or persuaded to allow the PCs to pass with a DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion) check. This stay of arms does not come without cost however—a magic item of uncommon value (or something magically disguised to appear enchanted), 150 gold, a freshly killed animal of at least Medium size (or an unlucky villager persuaded to journey with the adventurers) does the trick.

After Hidaretei Pass the adventurers' descent down the mountain continues in the same manner as their ascent. When they reach Fuson's forests it will take 3 days of travel to reach the town of Kakasu on foot though at the GM's discretion the PCs might steal horses or make a DC 18 Wisdom (Survival) check to hasten this step of the journey by 1 day. For every day spent traveling through the woods, the party has a 75% chance of an encounter.


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ACT 2: YUKARI'S MISSION

When the party arrives in Kakasu their timing could not be worse—the Mists of Akuma loom from the woods behind them! Read the following:

Your approach to Kakasu is met with clamor and panic—but not for you. Looking back to the forests you see the dark blue hues of the Mists of Akuma seeping through the foliage and swiftly roiling toward you! In the distance you see the townsfolk rushing into their homes, throwing their doors closed with daggers and cookware wielded in hand.

FOREST ENCOUNTERS D12

1—1d4 Giant Rats (CR ⅛)
2—1d4 Poisonous Snakes (CR ⅛)
3—1d4 Giant Bats (CR ¼)
4—1d4 Giant Wolf Spiders (CR ¼)
5—Brown Bear (CR 1)
6—Giant Spider (CR 1)
7—Tiger (CR 1)
8—Adeddo-Oni Hunchlings (CR 2; page 343),
9—Ettercap (CR 2)
10—Giant Boar (CR 2)
11—Ki Spirit (CR 2; *Mists of Akuma* page 148)
12—Shambling Mound (CR 5)

The adventurers must make three successful DC 14 Strength (Athletics) checks (gaining a +1 bonus for every 10 feet faster their speed is past 30 feet) to outrun the supernatural haze, otherwise they are caught in it for one round per failed check. Once inside the settlement's borders the local townsfolk bar their doors to the PCs (requiring a DC 16 Strength or DC 15 Thieves Tools' check to get inside) and the only direction the party can reliably go is up onto the rooftops. Either way a pack of adeddo-oni—twelve adeddo-oni hunchlings (page 343), five adeddo-oni ninja (page 343), and one adeddo-oni samurai (page 344)—spread out around Kakasu to wreak havoc and murder. Read the following:

Gruesome figures emerge from the Mists of Akuma, leaping through the fog and cackling with glee as they hack at Kakasu and anything living they can find within it. The monsters fan out across the town, drawn to the sounds of slaughter—when a cry of pain goes out they swarm towards it until choruses of horrified screams ring across the settlement.



Adventurers that slay the adeddo-oni increase their Dignity score by 2 (lowering their Haitoku score by 2) but in the event they hide or flee into the sea to avoid the monsters, they increase their Haitoku score by 2 (lowering their Dignity score by 2) and any Charisma checks they make against common citizens of the town have disadvantage. After 1d4 minutes the Mists of Akuma dissipate, leaving Kakasu in a brief state of shock before life returns to normal in an hour's time.

Roofs of Kakasu. The tiled businesses, homes, and markets in southwest Kakasu are two story buildings with roofs that are 25 feet above the ground. All of the other buildings in the town (aside from the 15 foot tall market in the northeast) are made from wood, thatch, or a combination of the two with roofs that are either 10 or 15 feet high (50% chance). The GM may choose to instead have the darkest houses 12 feet tall, tan houses 13 feet tall, and amber houses 15 feet tall. Climbing up to the roof of a building in Kakasu requires a DC 9 Strength (Athletics) check; on a failure the creature wastes half its movement speed and on a result of 4 or less it also goes prone.

Finding Fūmiyutakana

Now that the PCs have reached Kakasu they must find "Fūmiyutakana". Unfortunately the herbal master's note did not include any more details than this name but the adventurers can't just go blindly asking locals for information because that would certainly violate her order for secrecy—at least not without disguising themselves and asking slyly. Should they fail to conceal their identities (by wearing an insufficient or shoddy disguise) or motives (by failing Charisma checks or asking the wrong type of person), a rumor circulates of strange travelers looking for Fūmiyutakana and the PCs' encounter with the oni Koroshimasu occurs before they are able to meet with the herbal master rather than afterward.

Fūmiyutakana is, of course, a restaurant near the town's port. If the party has too much trouble figuring out how to subversively find this out, the GM can let them dangle for a little while before having the PC with the highest passive Perception notice the establishment's signage as they walk nearby it. When the adventurers go inside, read the following:

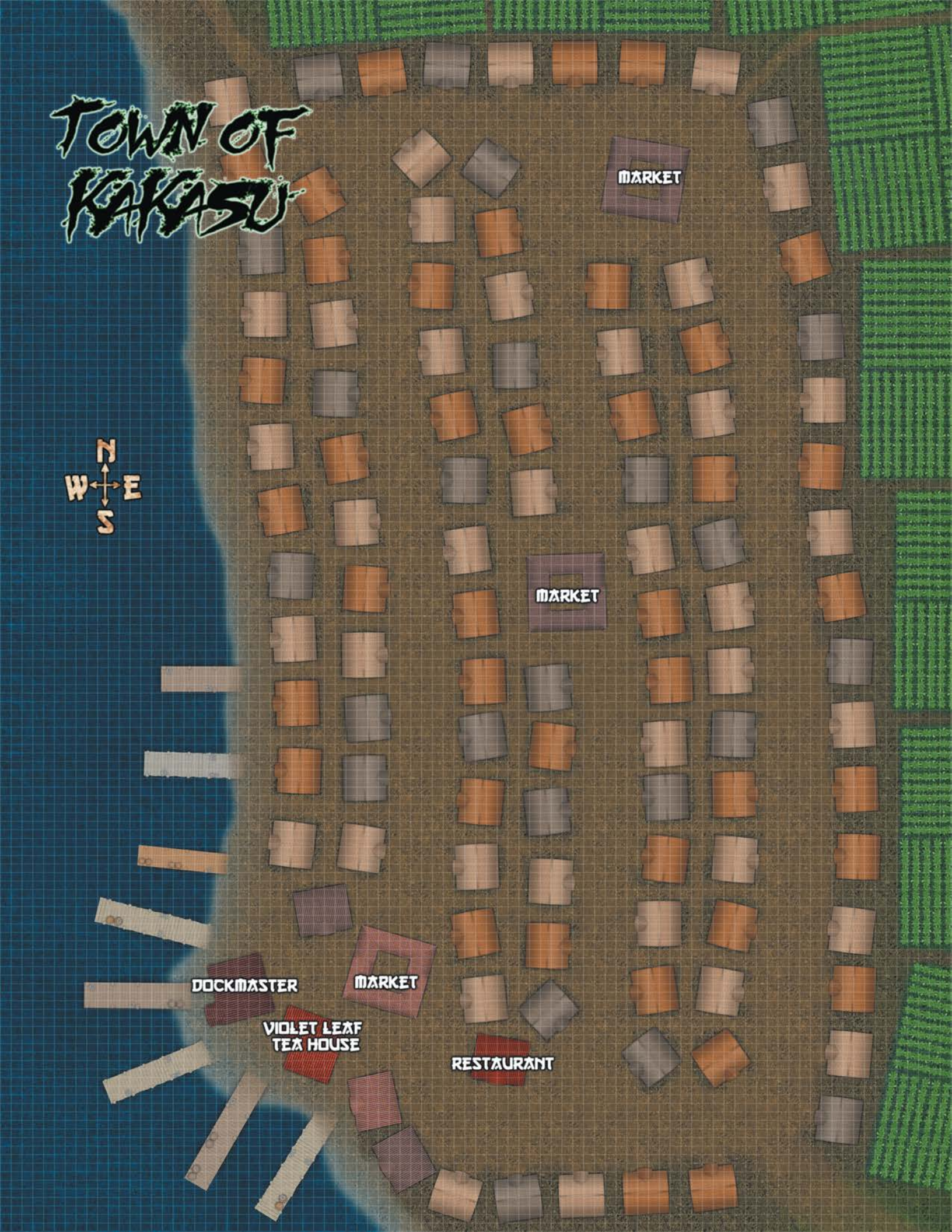
The lush red timber used to build this restaurant must be decades old, its luster long gone, but the scent of food from inside is more than alluring enough to compensate. In the building's foyer you are greeted by a doddering old man, his skin covered in lumps, tumors, and warts that make it hard to tell if his eyes are closed or not. He seems to see you just fine however and waves you forward, keenly gazing at you in a fashion that makes you feel as if you are being evaluated. All the same he seats you in a comfortable booth in the dining room, far from the other customers, then bids you a good meal and goes back to his tasks.

The adventurers have no opportunity for pleasantries and shortly after being seated, plates of unbidden food are brought out to them. PCs that make a DC 16 Wisdom (Insight) check or DC 13 Dignity (Culture) check realize that this scenario is a test—failing to show the appropriate manners while in the restaurant will most certainly displease the herbal master that sent them here and possibly even make them ineligible for the job! GMs should ask in detail how the adventurers go about eating their meal, the way they address the restaurant's staff, what they do when disposing of their dishes and chopsticks, and their general demeanor inside of Fūmiyutakana. PCs that fail to act appropriately can still salvage some face with a DC 10 Dignity check, but otherwise the entire party has disadvantage on Wisdom and Charisma checks made against the herbal master Yukari Nishioka.

New Skill: Culture

Culture (page 347) is typically used with Dignity ability checks for knowledge of how to act during social situations. Any character can take proficiency in Culture in place of another skill.

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.


TOWN OF KAKASU
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RESTAURANT

So long as the party does not make an embarrassing public spectacle of themselves at the end of the meal the old man brings steaming bamboo trays of fried sesame dumplings; in the bottom of one of them lay a map. It depicts a trail drawn from Kakasu leading into the woods to the southeast, ending in a destination roughly 22 miles away (about half a day's travel) marked as Seishinbyō Falls.

Meeting the Herbal Master

The GM may decide to include an adeddo-oni attack (as the Mists of Akuma were recently in the area) or if the party wasn't smart about gathering information in town the oni Koroshimasu assaults them. Otherwise PCs have one more random encounter from the Forest Threats list before reaching the Fuson bengoshi's meeting place.

Following the map from the Fūmiyutakana restaurant eventually leads you to a truly amazing sight. Rounding the corner of a rooted wall of dirt you are greeted to a waterfall dropping from high above, landing serenely into a pool flanked on each side by an identical array of trees, branches, and leaves! The unnatural duplication is both shocking to the senses but alluring and you feel a deep sense of peace here, wondering—perhaps for the first time—that maybe all of Soburin is not yet lost.



The herbal master Yukari Nishioka is hiding in wait as the adventurers reach Seishinbyō Falls, made invisible by one of her concoctions and keen to observe these potential servants of the Empire while they are unaware of being watched. When the most dramatic possible moment for her introduction arrives (as one of the adventurers complains about her lateness, for example) she speaks, alerting everyone to her presence. Read the following:

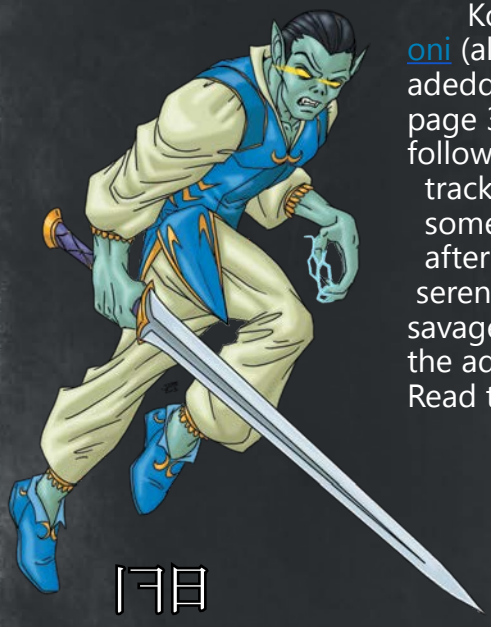
"You are much like I expected," a confident woman says, speaking from everywhere and nowhere all at once, her voice echoing off the walls, "it is a good thing I was raised to anticipate disappointment. Better yet that I handle it well, though I do hope you do not disappoint me further." Materializing from the air on the shore of the pool the Seishinbyō waterfall drops into is a stern-faced woman of middle age, her jet-black hair tied into a tight bun atop her head and traced with gray strands. She wears an elegant red kimono and carries vibrant blue and green sashes around her torso yet despite her splendorous appearance and pleasant voice, the way she looks at you reminds you of a carnivore about to strike and it is difficult not to feel like her prey. "I am Yukari Nishioka, 17th Herbal Master of the Fuson Prefecture and bengoshi to Lord Gabiru."



No matter how well the PCs have performed her tasks thus far Yukari treats them with the same disdain, but she is professional and curt after her sudden introduction. Not keen to waste any more time she quickly tells them the following:

- Cursory investigations revealed to the herbal master that the disappearances and murders of former Fuson family servants (15 as of yet) were all individuals that played a role, be it great or small, in the banishment of Hinjuku Nagaro—the infamous Scorpion Samurai—and stripping of his title 13 years ago.
  - It is believed he is the person responsible. The reward for his capture of death has been increased to 5,000 Imperial pieces.
- Those Hinjuku may yet attack are hidden and protected though a DC 16 Wisdom (Insight) check gives the PCs an impression that only the nobles are really being attended to.
  - The few the bengoshi intends to use as bait (all servants) are all enjoying the hospitality of Lord Gabiru Fuson, treated to vacations in the village of Shinjitsu on Shōjiki Island.
- The Scorpion Samurai must be stopped and in addition to receiving his bounty, Yukari is prepared to deliver an additional 1,000 gold to the party, as well as travel papers to go wherever they wish in Soburin.
  - Hinjuku is performing some kind of vengeful blood ritual that will grant him dark and ancient power at the cost of his soul—more than enough to storm Fuson's capital to take his vengeance on Lord Gabiru.
- There is evidence that Hinjuku has allies among Fuson's warriors and some among the Scorpion Ninjas (her prefecture's most reliable soldiers) cannot be trusted, so the only aid she is able to provide is the trap she has set for him and three *potions of greater healing* (restoring 4d4+4 hit points) and a 500 gold advance.
  - This also makes the continued need for secrecy paramount—should the Scorpion Samurai realize that Yukari has set a trap for him in Shinjitsu (perhaps even from one of her servants) he may never go there no matter how appetizing the bait she uses (Kishimoto Nichiren, Okawa Hoshi, and Kiyama Tanosuke) might be.
  - Swiftly getting to the island is also of great importance as the bait has been in Shinjitsu long enough for Hinjuku to hear about it. She tells the party not to charter a boat however; few people visit Shōjiki Island on purpose but shipwrecks are not uncommon, and as survivors of a crashed vessel the adventurers' sudden arrival will not raise any eyebrows from the locals.

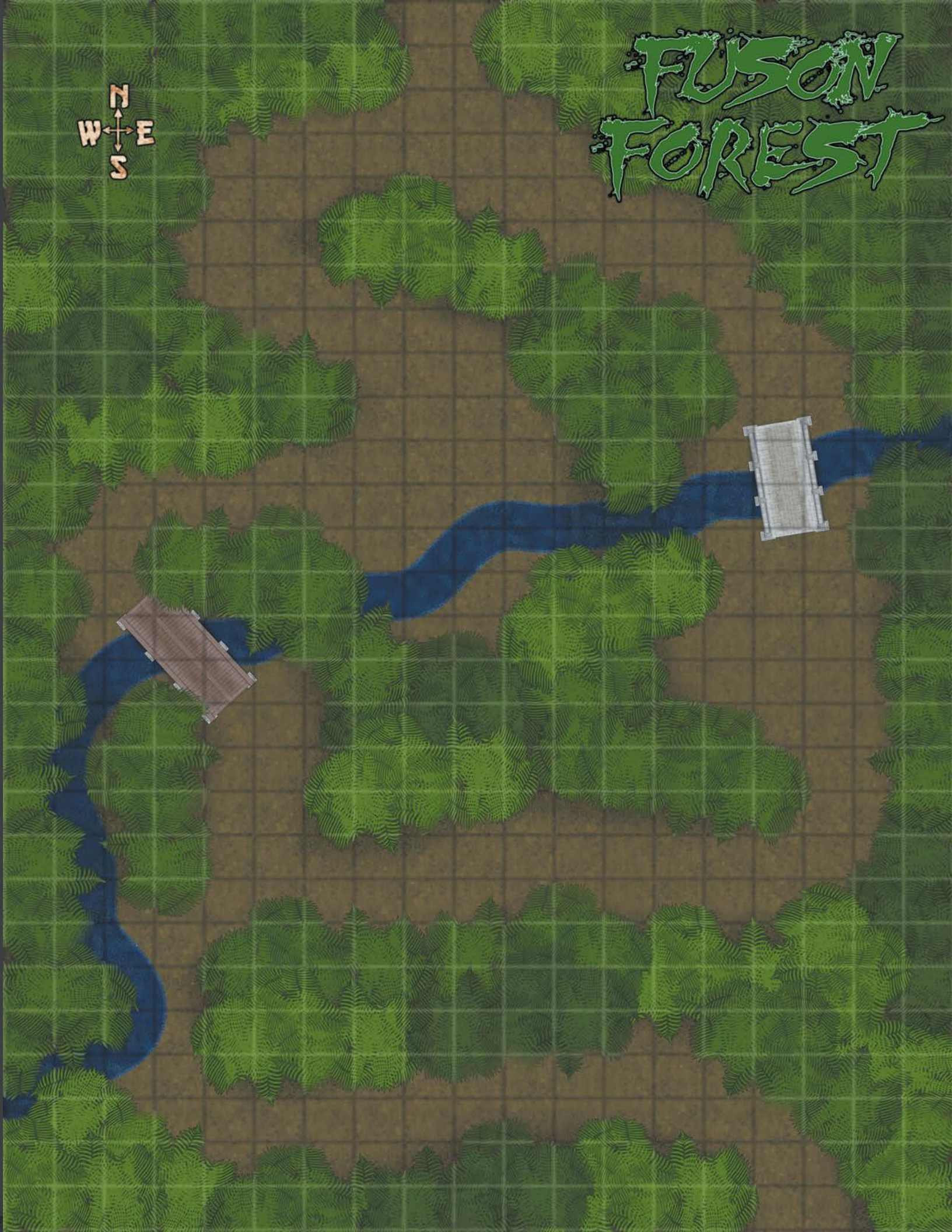
Yukari is willing to answer a few queries for the PCs questions but after they've asked half a dozen or more, she questions their competency and says that her next reply will be her last—after all, time is ever a bengoshi's enemy. She turns invisible again and disappears from Seishinbyō Falls, not seen again by the adventurers until the epilogue of this module.



Koroshimasu the oni (alongside three adeddo-oni ninja, page 343) has been following and tracking Yukari for some time and after they leave the serene waterfall, savagely attacks the adventurers. Read the following:

The peaceful rustling of the wind through the blossoming branches of Fuson's bamboo forests is suddenly cut in twain as a high pitched keen splits through the air. Jumping into sight from behind the stalks around you are three red-skinned adeddo-oni swathed in tightly-fit robes soaked in blood, their swords drawn—but they are not alone. Clad in garish blue silk is a monstrous figure with an enormous blade in one hand, its ghostly skin as disturbing as its deadly claws and the energy sparking from its eyes.

The adeddo-oni and Koroshimasu hide themselves in the foliage or under the water of the stream running through the Fuson Forest map, ambushing the party and flanking PCs crossing one of the two bridges. Once defeated the monster is willing to reveal that its assault has paid a blood debt to the Scorpion Samurai, only telling that it was to attack anyone this herbal master hires but nothing else about Hinjuku. A PC that wins a successful opposed Charisma (Deception) check can get Koroshimasu to slip however—speaking of a second conspirator working with Hinjuku—but it does not reveal more information than that, asking either for death or freedom but if nothing else an end to hearing mortals drone and prattle on.


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FOREST

Fuson Foliage. Throughout the combat the adeddo-oni ninja and their oni leader use the terrain to their advantage, disappearing into the bamboo to reappear flanking an enemy. Squares covered in bamboo are difficult terrain and any creature inside of one gains three-quarters cover from adjacent creatures. A creature with two bamboo squares between itself and an attacker gains total cover. Dealing 10 or more damage to a bamboo square reduces it to grant half cover from adjacent creature and three-quarters cover otherwise. Dealing 15 or more damage to a bamboo square destroys it and it no longer grants any cover.

It takes a half day of travel to return to Kakasu and if the party left for Seishinbyō Falls in the morning, the sun is setting on the horizon or has already gone down—the perfect time to begin the miles long trip to Shōjiki Island. While the bengoshi Yukari suggests they simply swim, the PCs may not be keen on a twilight dip in dangerous waters—especially as they will have an encounter from the Aquatic Threats list halfway through the journey.

By Boat. PCs that defy the herbal master's directions and take a boat are likely to bring themselves to Hinjuku's attention. Hiring a vessel to travel to the island costs 15 gold and reveals their presence even if they are disguised—the only exception being if they use magic to turn invisible for the entire half hour voyage. By the time they arrive in Shinjitsu the first of the Scorpion Samurai's intended victims is already dead and the second is in combat as the Mists of Akuma fall on the village.

Dragged by Raft. Several of Soburin's races possess a swim speed and this makes the half hour journey to Shōjiki Island much easier for the party. PCs not naturally able to traverse water so easily (if they lack access to magic enough to do so) can be dragged on a raft by their allies, though that will leave them compromised in combat. At the start of its turn a creature on a raft makes a DC 9 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check or goes prone.



Stealing a Boat. Literally taking a boat has its own potential problems and as she specifically told them to be discreet, a DC 13 Charisma (Persuasion) check later on will be required for the Fuson bengoshi to turn the eye of the law away from the party should their theft be detected. If word gets out around town that a boat has been stolen, Hinjuku moves to act and is in combat with his first target as the PCs arrive in Shinjitsu and the Mists of Akuma fall on the village. Otherwise a DC 8 Vehicle (water) check or DC 13 Intelligence check takes the party to Shōjiki Island without issue (aside from the aquatic encounter) inside of an hour. Failure on this check delays the party by 1d4 hours, leaves them to be consumed by the Mists of Akuma on the open sea (for 1d4 minutes), and when they do arrive in Shinjitsu the first of the Scorpion Samurai's victims is already dead.

Swimming. Adventurers that lack a swim speed need to make six DC 11 Strength (Athletics) checks to make the entire journey. For every failed check, the creature gains 1 level of exhaustion. A creature with a swim speed is able to grant advantage to one creature per check. Swimming takes 1 hour and leaves all of Hinjuku's targets alive although the Mists of Akuma arrive to Shōjiki Island soon after the PCs.

AQUATIC ENCOUNTERS DC

1—1d4 Reef Sharks (CR ½), 2—1d4 Sahuagin (CR ½), 3—Hunter Shark (CR 2), 4—Merrow (CR 2), 5—Sea Hag (CR 2), 6—Giant Shark (CR 5)

Act 3: Trap in Shinjitsu

There are two things the party should quickly realize once they reach Shinjitsu: this is the hometown of the Scorpion Samurai Hinjuku Nagaro and (under most circumstances) the Mists of Akuma are right behind them! Only 1d4 minutes after the PCs reach the shore, make port, or disembark a ship, the ancient fogs fall onto the tiny seaside village. If the party wasn't already treated to the supernatural haze on the open water, a total of 13 adeddo-oni hunchlings, 5 adeddo-oni ninja, and 1 adeddo-oni samurai attack Shinjitsu as the Mists of Akuma roils across the settlement. Read the following:

The shoddy seaside village before you is slowly springing to life, shouts warning of the descending Mists of Akuma sending the rustic locals into a panic. As the first of them sights the supernatural haze swiftly encroaching from the darkness you hear the citizens of Shinjitsu calling out for someone to save them: Hinjuku the Scorpion Samurai. Leaping out from the evil fog one of the monstrous ninjas slams its sword into the shoulder of a fisherman too slow to make it to cover—if you don't act now to save him, his will be the first of many deaths this night.



People bar their doors to the adventurers (requiring DC 16 Strength checks or DC 15 Thieves Tools' checks to get inside) leaving the PCs to fight on the rooftops. GMs should remind the party of the inherent dilemma in this encounter—they must remain covert in the village to perform their mission but innocent lives will be lost if they do not aggressively counterattack.

Forcing Entry into Shelter. The villagers of Shinjitsu will not instantly attack a PC that forces themselves into their home but they certainly are not kindly to them. An adventurer must make a DC 12 Dignity check and DC 8 Charisma (Persuasion) check or the residents of a business or home actively try to force them out after seeing their equipment, recognizing someone experienced in combat. Failure on the Dignity check forces disadvantage on the Charisma check.

Either way if a PC gives their name, their cover is blown and Hinjuku strikes his first target that night as the adventurers sleep.

Immediate Response. Taking the fight to the adeddo-oni brings the adventurers to the attention of Hinjuku who otherwise does not participate, spurring him to murder Kishimoto Nichiren as the town panics. A DC 18 Wisdom (Perception) check brings this to the attention of the PCs as the chef cries out about his attacker but they arrive shortly after his corpse falls to the ground and must chase after the Scorpion Samurai (see the Shinjitsu's Hero sidebar).

Every member of the party that fights off adeddo-oni gains advantage on Charisma checks with villagers and increases their Dignity by 2 (lowering their Haitoku score by 2). Taking the time to put on a disguise or properly obscure themselves (and their accoutrements) takes a minute and reduces the Dignity increase to 1.

Tactical Retreat. The soundest response for the adventurers to take is to hide, fortify defensive positions, and fight off the adeddo-oni as they come. This course of action leaves villagers dead but the PCs' obscurity remains intact and Hinjuku does not strike at his first target until the next evening.


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MAYOR'S
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SHINJITSU VILLAGE

Townsfolk of Shinjitsu

The GM should invent some commoners—a local government functionary, fishermen, traders, and the like—as the PCs' interactions demand but there are individuals of importance on Shōjiki Island.

Kudo Chisato runs the Tide's Rest tea house—the only drinking establishment in Shinjitsu—and though she has only recently inherited the place from her parents (transformed by the Mists of Akuma) she is efficient, keeps fair prices, and tolerates little chaos within her business.

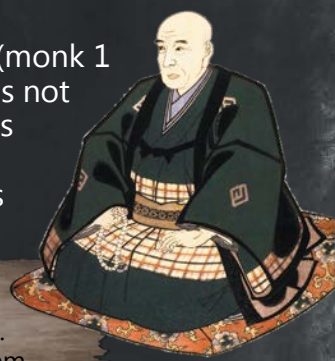
Kokiro Risoru only appears if the adventurers manage to truly imperil Hinjuku during one of his attacks. She is a recent arrival in Shinjitsu and works in the Tide's Rest tea house as a server in the evenings, carefully watching and studying the party to identify how great of a threat they pose to her master plans. PCs that make a DC 20 Wisdom (Insight) check while in her presence sense something about her is off, but she simply claims that her home is Miyaki, the island prefecture that recently reappeared in the southern seas after centuries of being absent from Soburin—the ways of her people are much like the soburi but slightly different. "Kokiro" apologizes profusely but recuses herself immediately afterward and flees to Ikatteiru Cave where Kozue drops her disguise and counsels Hinjuku to kill the party on sight. If she feels particularly threatened by the PCs, she may even spur Okkotaken into joining a nighttime assault on the village before attempting the ritual in order to gauge their true mettle or send 1d4 manananggal to spread panic in Shinjitsu as she stops feeding from afar and looks for meals closer to home.





Sadow is a hermit that lives on the other side of the island from Shinjitsu, ostracized by society for being an oni-touched—cursed from birth with the corruption of the Mists of Akuma and orphaned (and though neither knows it, Hinjuku's brother). The samurai is bellicose, distrustful, and taciturn but has been noticing strange happenings and even seen the head of a woman floating towards Ikatteiru Cave. Each time the PCs encounter Hinjuku (regardless of whether they are too late to save his victim), the day afterward there is a cumulative 30% chance that they see Sadow lurking nearby, watching them carefully. A DC 13 Charisma (Persuasion) check or DC 16 Charisma (Intimidation) check convinces the outcast to speak with the PCs, revealing what little he's learned and leading them to the climactic encounter of *Cursed Soul of the Scorpion Samurai*.

Uchino Sumio is the mayor of Shinjitsu and renowned as a man with an iron will (monk 1 with a Wisdom of 18 and an Insight bonus of +6). He understands that Hinjuku is not to be trusted and probably bad for his village but the overwhelming majority of its residents love the Scorpion Samurai. If the PCs have befriended Uchino and not met Sadow by the time the 2nd victim is dead, the mayor suggests the hermit has never had any love for the fugitive mercenary and that they should seek him out.



Shinjitsu's Hero

The Scorpion Samurai was raised in Shinjitsu and its people still believe him to be a heroic figure. If it looks like the PCs are about to catch Hinjuku, villagers get in their way and try to grapple them. When the GM is prepared for the climax of the adventure if the party hasn't found their way to Ikatteiru Cave, loyal Scorpion Ninjas intervene (and are summarily brutally slain) if he is getting away too quickly.

Games of Scorpion and Mouse

Regardless of the circumstances of the adventurers' arrival in Shinjitsu, the Scorpion Samurai should still have at least one individual to slay in the village. The order of his victims is at the discretion of the GM but the NPC the party is most likely to warm to should be saved for last.

Yukari's Bait. These three servants of the Fuson family mistakenly believe that they are vacationing in Shinjitsu at his expense as a reward for their good work over the years.

Kishimoto Nichiren is a chef that catered to Lord Gabiru the day Hinjuku was banished. He is quite taken with the market's fish stands and spends most of his days picking out the perfect specimen for a lavishly cooked dinner.

Miyaka Tanosuke is a local tax collector that bore witness to Hinjuku's title being stripped, foolishly whispering to a nearby confidant with her amusement as he was dragged from the estate in dishonor. Unlike the other bait, she is paranoid and suspicious of being attacked. Miyaka remains locked in her quarters near the mayor's home except for once every day at noon when she ventures out to acquire food.

Okawa Hoshi played the musical accompaniment in Lord Gabiru's court the day that Hinjuku was banished and Kozue sent away. She prefers to stay in the Tide's Rest tea house and ply her trade, enjoying the attention the villagers of Shinjitsu pay her and drowning her evenings in sake.

The Scorpion Strikes

Hinjuku only attacks at night and never more than one target in the same evening. He cannot be bribed, coerced, intimidated, persuaded, or otherwise convinced to do anything but kill his intended victim. When the Scorpion Samurai slays Kishimoto, Miyaka, or Okawa (or when someone else slays them and he is within 10 feet) he regains all hit points and is relieved of any conditions.

First Attack. If the PCs blew their cover this target is already dead; move on to the Second Attack. Otherwise the Scorpion Samurai does not know that his victim has defenders and brazenly rushes in, quickly slaying them but then fleeing before the party can attack him en masse (see the Shinjitsu's Hero sidebar).

Second Attack. Hopefully the party has not bungled things so badly that two victims are dead, but if that's the case move on to the Third Attack. Aware that he is not assaulting a defenseless target, the Scorpion Samurai brings allies of his own. When the adventurers engage Hinjuku two Scorpion Ninjas (page 191) appear from hiding and target the PCs attacking him, allowing him to escape. If a member of the party gives chase, once they exit the city 3 adeddo-oni ninja appear between them and the Scorpion Samurai.

Third Attack. Hinjuku is about to acquire the power he seeks—his sea dragon ally Okottaken has acquired Lord Gabiru's favorite and youngest daughter Chijimatsu, and Kozue is preparing Ikatteiru Cave for the ritual to tear out her soul. The Scorpion Samurai is reckless and savage in his pursuit through the rainy night, even going so far as to slaughter any villagers in his way; this time PCs chasing after Hinjuku are not slowed by the denizens of Shinjitsu, his tracks are easy to follow, and they lead to the end of this module.

Early Arrivals

Should the PCs discover Ikatteiru Cave and attack before Hinjuku kills his third target, Okkotaken arrives with Chijimatsu in the middle of the combat and all hell breaks loose. The dragon and Scorpion Samurai focus on keeping the adventurers away from Kozue, attempting to allow the penanggalen to hastily perform the ritual to evict her soul and only engaging the party if it seems they have the upper hand. Okkotaken retreats at 40 hit points and Kozue flees when reduced to 20 hit points, but Hinjuku fights until he is killed. The ritual is delayed until the sea dragon can get the girl inside of the cave, but even if her soul is saved Chijimatsu will have learned of everything her father has done to her older sister and the family's estranged adopted son (losing the love of bond and trust she once shared with him). If the 20th victim is not yet dead by the time the PCs reach here, Sadow—Hinjuku's long lost brother—intervenes to help the party and quickly provides the life force to activate Hinjuku's various advantages (realizing in his death throes the terrible resemblance the two share).



Horror in Ikatteiru Cave

This encounter marks the end of *Cursed Soul of the Scorpion Samurai* and is meant to be very difficult. If all of Hinjuku's victims are dead by the time the PCs arrive are not able to follow him inside immediately and will hear Chijimatsu's cries for help as the Scorpion Samurai's draconic ally strikes from the water, delaying them until they are able to defeat the wyrmling known as Okkotaken. Read the following:

The keening screams of a child in distress echoes off the waves and grow clearer and louder as you approach the rocky shore. Something fearsome shrieks back and the little girl's cries change into pitiful whimpers that mix with the softly crashing surf to spread a sense of desperation across the sand.

The evil here is palpable and you can feel it in the very air—as well as the sensation that you are being watched.

Allow the PCs a moment to prepare themselves or to approach the entrance to Ikatteiru Cave before the sea dragon Okkotaken attacks. Read the following:

The sea suddenly begins to swell and roil as in the distance you make out a wave growing in height, the surf expanding all across the water until it forms into the fearsome shape of a snapping dragon's head. To your horror an actual creature emerges, a fearsome sea dragon that lunges towards you with breathtaking speed!

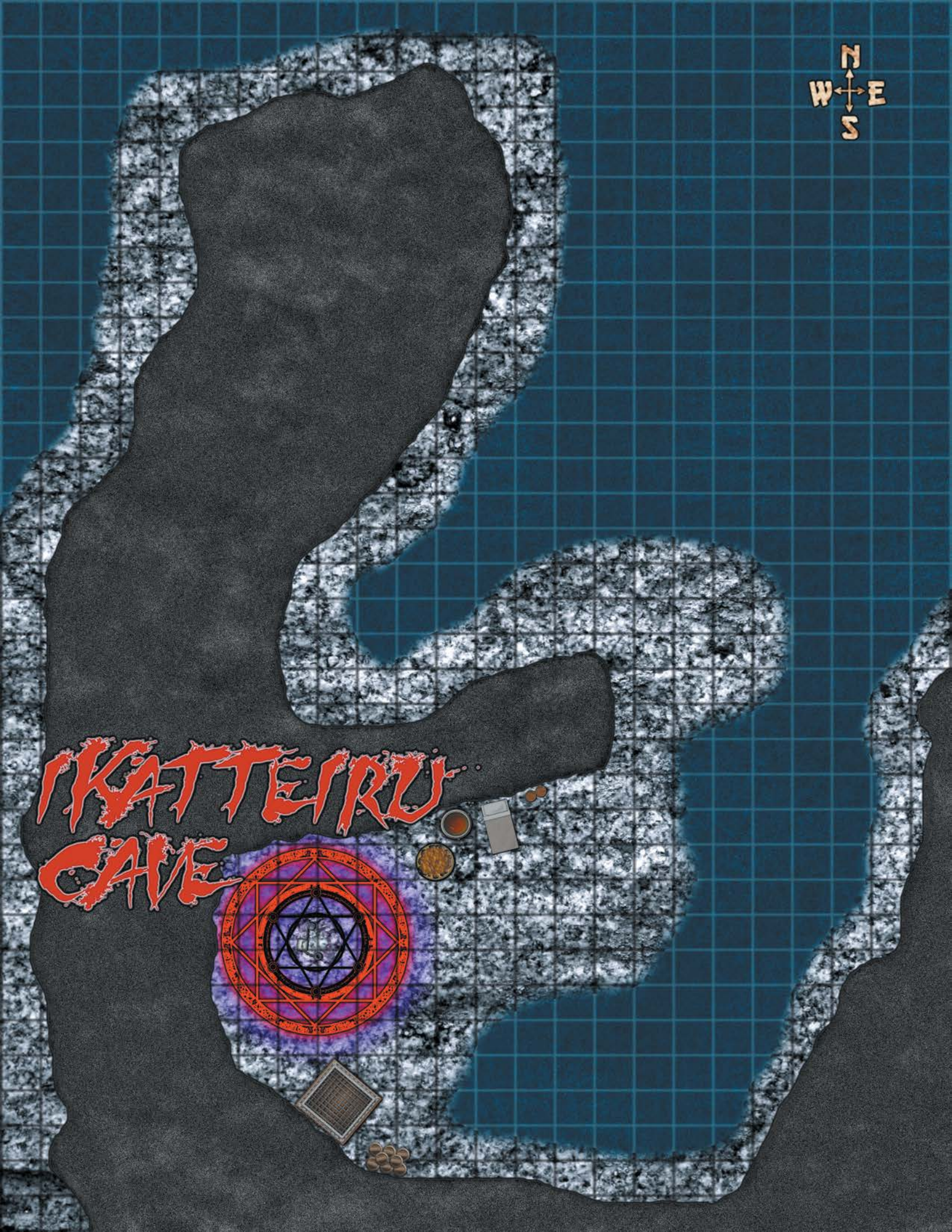
Beginning the Ritual. From the moment this battle begins Chijimatsu's soul has 5 rounds to remain in her body before Kozue finishes the first half of the ritual and rips it out. Hinjuku is assisting with the dark magic but when Okkotaken is reduced to less than 100 hit points, he explodes from the cavern and joins the battle at the beginning of the following round. The sea dragon flees when reduced to 30 hit points or less but the disgraced Scorpion Samurai fights to the death, but killing his 20th victim has imbued Hinjuku with considerable power.

- Hinjuku's Haitoku score increases to 24 (granting a +1 bonus to Strength and Dexterity, a –1 penalty to Charisma, and ignoring the first points of 3 damage from attacks and spells)
- When using the Haitoku ability score to resist death he has a total +7 bonus and advantage on the saving throw.

Completing the Ritual. With the young girl's soul in hand Kozue begins to draw on the stored energies taken from the other men and women Hinjuku has murdered, focusing them through his sword.

- The Scorpion Samurai's attacks deal an extra 1d4 necrotic and 1d4 psychic damage.
- These both increase by +1d4 each round for 5 rounds until the ritual is complete, at which point Chijimatsu's soulless body withers into a decayed corpse and he transforms.
- Kozue never stops conducting the ritual, leaving her body to complete it while her head detaches when dropped below half her hit points. The penanggalen fends off her attackers before continuing her fell work but each round she does so, the ritual is delayed half a round (minimum 1 round).

When transformed Hinjuku regains all of hit points and acquires the features, resistances, and immunities of an oni warlord (*Mists of Akuma* page 89). Fortunately so long as Kozue has not been destroyed, they have no interest in the party and flee—if combat continues the transformed warrior beats the PCs unconscious, takes anything of value, scars them for life, and leaves them to die. Adventurers that have destroyed the penanggalen find that the empowered Scorpion Samurai is more than their match and must either retreat or be slain.


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Epilogue: A Family Wounded Once More

No matter how a surviving party fares in *Cursed Soul of the Scorpion Samurai*, Lord Gabiru and the rest of the Fuson family suffer a painful loss. Yukari Nishioka delivers the full reward promised to the adventurers and depending on how closely the PCs followed her directions—including their intent—they may or may not be welcome in her prefecture any longer. These concerns may come up later on in the campaign.

Kuzoe's Ire. While the penanggalen did not truly care for Hinjuku any longer (devoid of any emotions other than cruelty), she becomes obsessed with torturing the adventurers for denying her the exquisite revenge she so meticulously planned for Lord Gabiru. She remains on the periphery, attempting to anticipate where the PCs will travel next and sabotaging settlements with her manananggal servants.

Sea Dragon's Vengeance. Okkotaken had plans for Chijimatsu's soul and if for whatever reason it is not delivered to him, his wrath is fierce and tenacious. The sea dragon waits for the party to leave Shōjiki Island and attacks them on the water, attempting to wreck their vessel and drown the adventurers one by one. Any survivors have a 15% chance of encountering Okkotaken whenever they take to the sea or ocean until either they or it are dead.

The Scorpion's Tail. There was another secret party to Hinjuku and Kozue's scheme—his enchanted odachi played a part as well. The sword itself is both evil and intelligent but incredibly subtle, reaching out to its new master at first only in dreams until an interest is taken in the dark secrets it whispers in the night. Once its wielder begins questioning what fell powers could be at their beck and call its soothing voice emerges while they are conscious, guiding them to the places and monsters they must deal with to utilize Soburin's most despicable magics.

Scorpion's Tail

Weapon (odachi), legendary (requires attunement)

When Hinjuku earned his right to be called a samurai, he chose the odachi—a sword for only the mightiest of warriors—and over the decades he has slain scores of men and women as well as numerous monsters. His transformation in Seinaru empowered the blade, giving it potent magic abilities and true sentience.

The *Scorpion's Tail* (a heavy two-handed martial weapon that deals 2d8 slashing damage and requires a bonus action to unsheathe) scores a critical hit on a roll of 19 or 20 and grants a +1 magical bonus to attack and damage.

If the sword isn't bathed in blood within 1 minute of being drawn from its scabbard, its wielder must make a DC 15 Charisma saving throw. On a successful save, the wielder take 3d6 psychic damage. On a failed save, the wielder is dominated by the sword, as if by the *dominate monster* spell, and the sword demands that it be bathed in blood. The spell effect ends when the sword's demand is met.



Magic Properties. The *Scorpion's Tail* grants the following benefits:

- You are able to increase your Haitoku score indefinitely without transformation or loss of Dignity while wielding it.
- You are able to Dash as a bonus action 3 times (recharging uses on a short rest).
- You increase your vertical jump distances by up to 10 feet and horizontal jump distances by up to 20 feet.
- You are able to suppress a condition as a free action once per turn by taking damage (2d6 blinded, 2d4 charmed, 3d4 deafened, 1d8 frightened, 1d8 grappled, 3d6 paralyzed, 3d6 petrified, 1d10 stunned). If you suppress the condition longer than its duration, it is negated.
- You may increase your Haitoku by 1 to spend hit dice to heal as a standard action at double the normal cost (for example at the cost of 4 hit dice you regain 2 hit dice worth of hit points).
- You are able to cast *pass without trace* twice a week without the need for components or concentration.

Sentience. The *Scorpion's Tail* is a sentient neutral evil weapon with an Intelligence of 17, a Wisdom of 17, and a Charisma of 18. It has hearing and darkvision out to a range of 90 feet. The weapon communicates telepathically with its wielder and can speak, read, and understand Adeddo, Aklo, Draconic, Soburi and Undercommon.

Personality. The sword's purpose is to bring evil into Soburin, teaching those who wield it the darkest and most evil secrets ever known to the world. The *Scorpion's Tail* utterly despises goodness and nobility, taking particular delight when it can manipulate events that cast these people down before destroying them.


勅員尉雒井定光
摂州朝臣源頼光

HINJUKU NAGARO, THE SCORPION SAMURAI

Medium humanoid (soburi), neutral evil
Armor Class 17 (spectral armor)
Hit Points 102 (12d8+48)
Speed 45 ft. (55 ft. in combat, +10 ft. vertical jumps, +20 ft. horizontal jumps)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA	Dignity	Haitoku
17 (+3)	18 (+4)	18 (+4)	15 (+2)	14 (+2)	15 (+2)	16 (+3)	20 (+5)

Saving Throws all (proficiency bonus +3)
Skills Athletics +6, Deception +5, Intimidation +5, Perception +5, Stealth +7, Survival +5
Damage Resistances necrotic, poison, psychic
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 15
Languages Adeddo, Aklo, Soburi, Undercommon
Challenge 6 (2,300 XP)

Extraordinary Haitoku. Hinjuku gains a +10 ft. bonus to speed in combat, but suffers disadvantage on Dignity ability checks. When he draws a blade and is prepared to shed the blood of his enemies, Hinjuku becomes covered in a suit of spectral red armor (with scorpion imagery) that increases his AC by 3. Even when he is at rest, his eyes smolder with crimson power and he speaks with a voice that resembles a chorus of the dead.

Magic Talent. Hinjuku is able to cast the *vicious mockery* cantrip with only somatic components (spell save DC 13).

Scorpion Strike (1/Turn). Hinjuku may choose a melee weapon attack to become a scorpion strike. On a successful hit, he deals an additional 10 (3d6) psychic damage.

Scorpion's Tail. Hinjuku is in possession of a powerful sentient sword, the *Scorpion's Tail*, granting him the following benefits.

- Hinjuku scores a critical hit on a roll of 19 or 20.
- Hinjuku can increase his Haitoku score without transformation or loss of Dignity while wielding it.
- Hinjuku is able to Dash as a bonus action 3 times (recharging uses on a short rest).
- Hinjuku's jump distances increase by 10 feet (vertically) and 20 feet (horizontally).
- Hinjuku is able to suppress a condition as a free action once per turn by taking damage (2d6 blinded, 2d4 charmed, 3d4 deafened, 1d8 frightened, 1d8 grappled, 3d6 paralyzed, 3d6 petrified, 1d10 stunned). If he suppresses the condition longer than its duration, it is negated.
- Hinjuku may increase his Haitoku by 1 to spend hit dice to heal as a standard action at double the normal cost.
- Hinjuku is able to cast *pass without trace* twice a week without the need for components or concentration.

ACTIONS

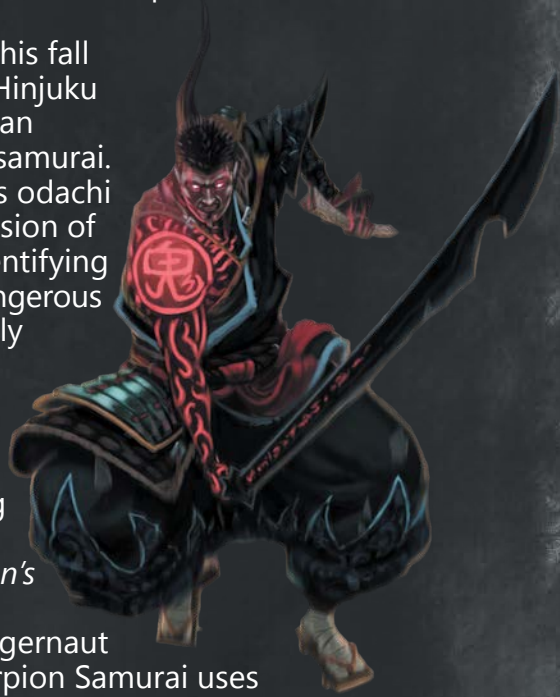
Multiattack. Hinjuku attacks twice.

Scorpion's Tail (Odachi). *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 13 (2d8+4) magical slashing damage. When Hinjuku scores a critical hit that incapacitates an opponent, he may make another attack against an adjacent target.

REACTIONS

Parry Arrow. Hinjuku strikes a ranged weapon attack that would hit him or an adjacent creature from the air, reducing its damage by 13 (2d8+4).

Reactive Parry. Hinjuku adds 3 to his AC against one melee attack that would hit it. To do so, he must see the attacker and be wielding a melee weapon.



Even before his fall from virtue Hinjuku Nagaro was an exceptional samurai. He wields his odachi like an extension of his body, identifying the most dangerous threat (usually spellcasters) and eliminating his enemies with cunning efficiency. With *Scorpion's Tail* he is a veritable juggernaut and the Scorpion Samurai uses his intense speed and powerful blows to accomplish his goals and abscond without delay.

KOZUE FUSON THE PENANGGALEN

Medium monstrosity (oni), chaotic evil
Armor Class 16 (natural)
Hit Points 75 (10d8+30)
Speed 30 ft.; fly 50 ft. while detached from body (hover)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	20 (+5)	17 (+3)	17 (+3)	18 (+4)	20 (+5)

Saving Throws Con +6, Int +6, Wis +7
Skills Arcana +6, Deception +8, Insight +7, Intimidation +8, Investigation +6, Nature +6, Perception +7, Persuasion +8, Religion +6, Stealth +8, Survival +7
Damage Vulnerabilities radiant
Damage Resistances cold, fire, lightning; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks not made with silvered weapons
Damage Immunities acid, necrotic, poison, psychic
Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, poisoned
Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 17
Languages Aklo, Adeddo, Draconic, Soburi, Undercommon
Challenge 6 (2,300 XP)

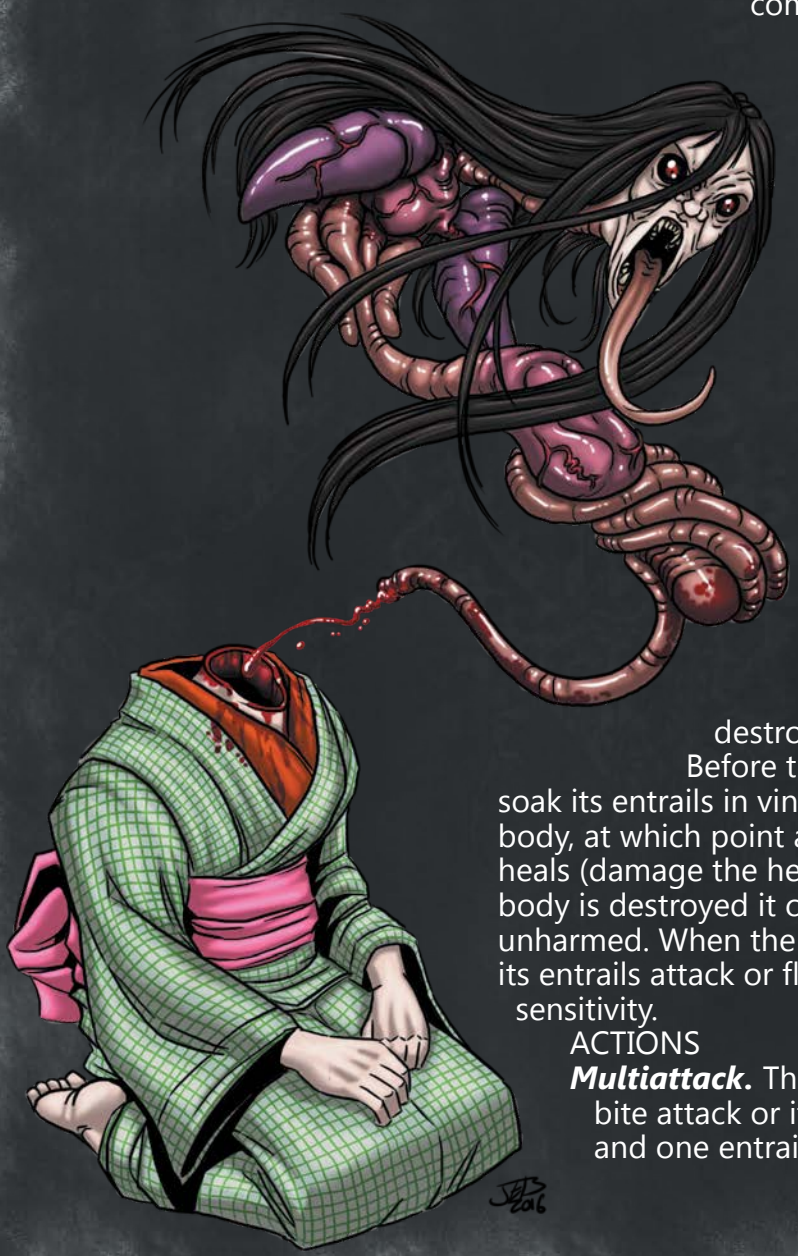
Innate Spellcasting. The penanggalen's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 16, spell attack +8). The penanggalen can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

At Will: *acid splash, mage hand, minor illusion, prestidigitation, true strike*
2/day each: *charm person, detect magic, protection from evil and good*
1/day each: *invisibility* (as 3rd-level spell), *misty step, ray of enfeeblement*

Light Sensitivity. The penanggalen has disadvantage on attack rolls and Wisdom (Perception) checks made in sunlight.

Regeneration. The penanggalen regains 5 hit points at the start of its turn if it has at least 1 hit point and is not in direct sunlight.

Separate. During the day, the penanggalen has the same appearance as it did in life. At night it can detach its head and entrails as an action. The penanggalen's physical, hollow body exists as dead flesh but it can still control it by spending a bonus action on its turn to cause the body to take an action. The body does not regenerate and can be destroyed if it takes 96 hit points worth of damage. Before the penanggalen can return to its body, it must soak its entrails in vinegar for 1 hour—it can then reattach to its body, at which point any damage done to the body immediately heals (damage the head suffered remains). When the penanggalen's body is destroyed it cannot make a new one but is otherwise unharmed. When the penanggalen wears its body, it cannot use its entrails attack or fly speed but it does not suffer from light sensitivity.



ACTIONS

Multiattack. The penanggalen makes one unarmed strike and bite attack or if its head is detached it makes one bite attack and one entrails attack.

Unarmed Strike. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d4+4) bludgeoning damage. Instead of dealing damage, it can grapple the target (escape DC 17).

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one willing creature, or a creature that is grappled by the penanggalen, incapacitated, or restrained. *Hit:* 8 (1d8 + 4) magical piercing damage. The penanggalen regains hit points equal to the damage it deals with this attack. A humanoid slain by the penanggalen's bite rises the following night as a manananggal (vampire spawn without the forbiddance, harmed by running water, or stake to the heart vampire weaknesses) under the penanggalen's control.

Entrails. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d8+4) magical bludgeoning damage. Instead of dealing this damage, she can grapple the target (escape DC 17). Any creature that touches the penanggalen's entrails must make a DC 16 Constitution saving throw or take 7 (2d6) acid damage and 7 (2d6) necrotic damage.

Penanggalen are vampiric oni that walk in their mortal guise during the day—detaching their heads at night to prey on the flesh of the living, strangling prey with their innards before sucking the blood from a victim's body. These monstrosities are transformed into oni by their will—spellcasters (most often women) seeking revenge or driven to madness can undergo the rituals to become penanggalen, and evil anomalies can spawn one as well. The change must be of the creature's volition and means abandoning love, good will, and all other emotions save from cruelty and the satisfaction it brings. In order to rejuvenate its body, a penanggalen must soak its entrails in a vat of vinegar for 1 hour to shrink its bloated guts (after which it can slide back into its body). The body of a penanggalen that is slain while detached turns to odorous mold that cannot be burned by acid.

SCORPION NINJA

Medium humanoid (human), any lawful

Armor Class 15 (studded leather)
Hit Points 45 (6d8+18)
Speed 35 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	16 (+3)	16 (+3)	8 (–1)	14 (+2)	8 (–1)

Saving Throws Dex +5, Con +5
Skills Acrobatics +5, Stealth +5
Damage Immunities poison
Condition Immunities poisoned
Senses passive Perception 12
Languages Soburi, Undercommon
Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

Poison Strikes. As a bonus action, the Scorpion Ninja can poison his kunai or shuriken. Next round, any time the Scorpion Ninja's weapon attacks deal damage, the target must make a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or take 14 (4d6) poison damage.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The Scorpion Ninja makes two katana attacks, or up to three shuriken or kunai attacks in any combination.

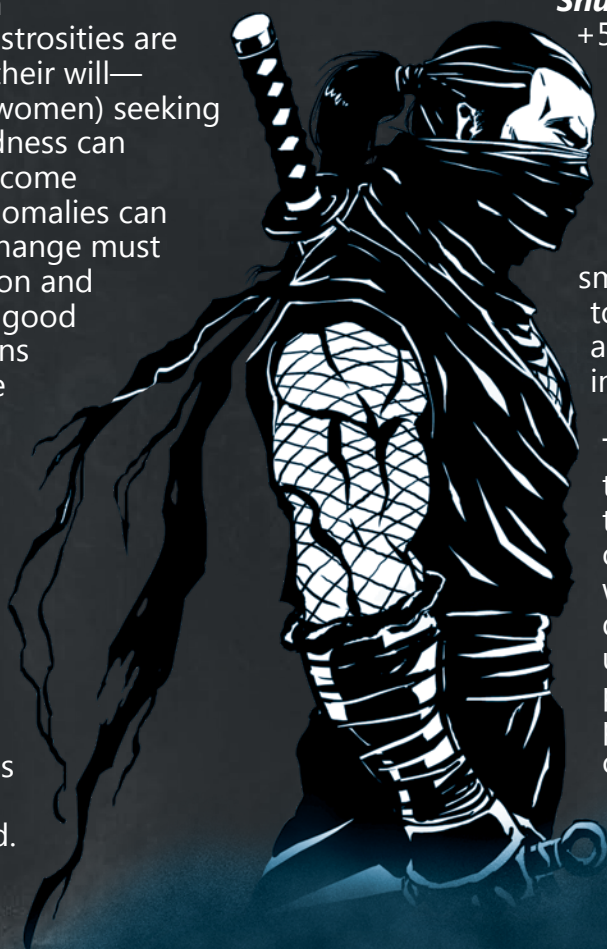
Katana. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8+3) slashing damage.

Kunai. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack.* +5|+5 to hit, range 30/80 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 piercing damage.

Shuriken. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5|+5 to hit, range 20/50 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 slashing damage.

REACTIONS

Counter Throw. If a Scorpion Ninja would be knocked prone by an adjacent opponent of the same size or smaller, he can spend a reaction to ignore being knocked prone and knock the opponent prone instead.



Though they spread rumors that they are hengeyokai themselves, the Scorpion Ninja of Fuson are simply monks who regularly ingest small doses of poison so as to build up immunities to the most powerful weaponry the prefecture has at its command.

Connection D: Mountainous Journey

Unlike the sections earlier in this adventure path a journey across vast distances isn't necessary to get to the next part of the campaign. The PCs will have to leave Shinjitsu in Fuson Prefecture at the end of *Cursed Soul of the Scorpion Samurai*, but fortunately *Yai Sovereign of Storms* can begin anywhere near a mountain and Soburin has no shortage of those. This laxity in locales gives the GM great reign on what plots and personal quests can be pursued before the adventurers are lured into traveling to Tsukisasu to deal with the usurper in the city of oni.

Aside from a relatively short trip across the sea back to the mainland, where the party goes is up to them and without any standing orders from bengoshi, unless the GM has plans to implement specific to the campaign they're (for now) the masters of their own fates. This interlude is an opportunity for the PCs to finally learn more about the strange black torii gates and demons of the seasons, pursue their own goals, and if they've not yet picked a side in the secret trade war, choose whether to help move the contraband or see it be destroyed. The adventurers begin on Shōjiki Island in the village of Shinjitsu off the coast of Fuson Prefecture, ending the journey near any mountain in mainland Soburin after the following events:

- ***Trade War: Rumors & Erītokirā Chapters.*** Machine-armored soburi have become common sights roaming the countryside helping peasants, too numerous, nomadic, and quick to be captured. That doesn't mean the shikome mercenaries are not trying—making examples out of any that fall into their gauntleted clutches.
- ***Black Torii Gatekeepers: Kinzobutsu & Oddubutsu.*** The adventurers are finally given the opportunity to find out more about the mysterious ebony edifices they've seen throughout Soburin, learning of an unwilling accomplice through an unexpected source.
- ***Mubō Brothers: Hayaku the Storm.*** With five dead Mubō brothers behind them the party might be suspecting an attack from one more (and they're right) but for now they only hear that he wishes to duel them—all of them, all at once.
- ***Machibuse Traders & Mitsuyu Gyōsha Consortium.*** These organizations continue their smuggling operations as best they can, included only if the GM considers more encounters with either to be necessary.
- ***Gensosō Interlopers.*** The warrior-monks continue to either harry the PCs if they're helping the organizations smuggling erītokirā technology or they send a servant to help the party better destroy the contraband shikome armors.
- ***Extra Connection: Yōjinbō.*** While he may not be important to the party now, if he managed to escape both his first and second encounter with the adventurers (in *Feud Primordial* and the events leading up to it) the PCs run into the shikome monk and might make him an ally.



Trade War: Rumors & Erītokirā Chapters

The party is likely keen to find out more about the machine-armored soburi after Yakunitatsu escaped them before *Cursed Soul of the Scorpion Samurai* but they're out of luck—erītokirā mercenaries have scared all the beleaguered peasants-turned-warriors into isolated groups that avoid being found by anyone, ally or foe. Once back on the mainland any adventurer with a passive Perception of 13 or higher overhears plenty of tales about the human anomalies though like before (page 48) attempts to find out information that could lead to catching up to one are fruitless endeavors.

Reconnaissance on the issue does reveal a high frequency of erītokirā shikome sightings. A successful DC 14 Intelligence (Investigation) check (which can be attempted once in each settlement the PCs visit) finds out via local toughs and nobles that three clans of the elite mercenaries have been more active than normal: the Haiiro-Nokishi, Kodomo-Tachi, and Kōteino. Everywhere the inhuman soldiers travel they ask about humans wearing armor like theirs (often quite forcefully) and parade around the corpse of one such unfortunate individual propped up behind them like a gruesome sashimono.

On a result of 20 or more when gathering information, an adventurer can make a DC 17 Charisma (Persuasion) check to win over a peasant that reveals more. Apparently the machine-armored soburi are keeping their movements random and *only* protect their fellow serfs—a few survivors from slayed entourages claim that the ex-farmers have abandoned nobles to monsters and the Mists of Akuma.

Adventurers with the hated condition can attempt to find out more about the most active erītokirā chapters with a DC 13 Intelligence (Investigation) check. On a success, they learn that the Kōteino dwell in a city of oni atop a mountain somewhere in Soburin, the Kodomo-Tachi are among the most civilized of the mercenaries, and its said that a dragon of smoke has been seen in the wake of the Haiiro-Nokishi (though this must have been an hallucination of some kind for there are no such things as smoke dragons).

Black Torii Gatekeepers: Kinzobutsu & Oddubutsu

The central event of this section is a preamble to real troubles coming at the end of the *Trade War* adventure path. By now the PCs have garnered quite a reputation—whether people think highly of them all or not—for besting nearly all of the Mubō brothers, slaying oni spawned by the perversions of nature, and saving several settlements from the Mists of Akuma, as well as all their other impressive deeds. A young girl named Mizutani Ujikane has stolen away from her home with all of her family's most valuable belongings, paying for passage in caravans and on ships in search of the adventurers hoping that they can help her beloved uncle Nashio.

Her quest to find the party has left her penniless and when she finally runs into the PCs, she has nothing to offer them but begs for their help all the same. Read the following:

> *While wandering down the settlement's main street you spot a young girl—barely a teenager—running towards you, her drawn face lit up with concern. As she gets closer she slides and tumbles down onto the ground, quickly regaining her balance and bowing deeply on her knees with her hands held together in supplication. "Honored warriors, please hear me! I am Mizutani Ujikane and I have traveled a long way to find you and without your help I fear my uncle will be damned by the black gates!"*

Mizutani avoids broaching the topic of payment for their help unless the adventurers ask her what she can offer, which is nothing but her thanks. She does mention the black torii gates however, and when she realizes the PCs are interested in knowing more about the strange structures she gets cagey—only willing to reveal what she knows as they travel back to Ottotto, a location the GM can place near any mountain. For each increment of time that passes as they make their way to her home, the party learns one more piece of information after the first. If the adventurers are still reluctant to join her, the GM may tell them as much extra as is required to garner their interest.

- Nashio is an Imperial Guard that watches over the torii gate near Ottotto. He's always been a wonderful and loving uncle, although as of late he has become distant and agitated, sometimes leaving the torii gate unguarded for weeks at a time.
- Her mother told Mizutani that he'd been ordered to investigate a black torii gate that appeared in the wilderness a few miles from their farmstead and would not talk about it at all afterward, which she suspects has to do with his demeanor.
- Mizutani began to follow her uncle, playing at shinobi as they used to when she was a much younger girl. She saw something that was not right and decided then to seek out the party.
- What the girl saw was two strange, monstrous looking men speaking with her uncle, making threatening gestures but not killing him. One seemed like he was made from timber and the other like he was formed from armor.
- Concerned for Nashio's safety, Mizutani immediately took all her family's belongings, sold them, and since then has spent all of her time and gold trying to find the PCs.

THE TOWN OF OTTOTTO

A small mine discovered by the now-dead ceramian scientist Rex Devis has made the settlement of Ottotto crucial to the territory it's in (a prefecture of the GM's choice), the rare metals all the more valuable thanks to the Kengen Occupation's stripmining. This makes it unique from other civilized locales in Soburin —there's a sturdy parapet-wall surrounding it with tall, solid fences around its farmsteads, plenty of guards that regularly patrol the area at all hours, and more than one tunnel leading into the mines of the mountainside nearby. Its citizens are as happy as people can be during these dark times and when the PCs return with Mizutani, all of the townsfolk warm to them, offering free lodging and meals. Read the following:

> *Even from afar you can spot the glint of helmeted guards patrolling the fields and streets of the little the settlement that Mizutani leads you to—it is idyllic and looks healthy, perhaps the first time in recent memory that a place has seemed so safe and pleasant.*



The PCs quickly discover that while it is a safe place (a rarity in itself) and self-sufficient, there's little of interest. Nashio hears the news of his niece's return and arrives 1d4 hours later if the party don't travel up to his torii gate to find him (a 1 hour trek that takes them outside of the town's walls and up to the opening of a mountain pass). He is overwhelmingly pleased that Mizutani is alive and well, wishing blessings upon the party and accepting them as family.

Nashio Ujikane (use the statistics for a Knight) does not seem out of sorts at all—because after Mizutani disappeared the oni convinced him into accepting a magic ring that would help him find her. It doesn't do that of course, instead compelling him into being their ally and giving him the constant effect of a *glibness* spell (when Nashio makes a Charisma check, he can replace the number he rolls with a 15, and no matter what he says, magic that would determine if he is telling the truth indicates that he is being truthful.) Since donning the ring Nashio has helped Kinzobutsu and Oddubutsu identify torii gates easy to steal or transform, choose locations where the black torii gates won't be noticed, and use his position as an Imperial Guard to smuggle the demons between prefectures.

When the PCs realize that he is likely not being truthful the compulsion of the cursed ring keeps Nashio from revealing anything about the demons (even if he is tortured) and its magic forces him to continue doing their bidding. The adventurers won't have any luck interrogating him but shadowing him as he performs his duties at the torii gate eventually bears fruit when Kinzobutsu and Oddubutsu next come to make use of him. As long as the party can succeed on DC 12 Dexterity (Stealth) checks Nashio and the oni don't realize they are being watched the next time they meet up in the mountains. Read the following:



Up on the torii gate's walkway you see Nashio Ujikane stretch, clearly looking for a way to gaze all about himself without being suspicious. Satisfied that he truly is alone this high up the mountain he pulls out a poorly made fascilime of himself, a wooden dummy in crudely formed armor of dark blue hue. The guardsman shimmies down the structure and heads upward through the mountain pass it defends, tying off his helmet and fitting nekodes onto his hands before ascending the rock face only a few thousand feet from his post.

Following Nashio as he climbs up the rocky slopes requires a DC 14 Strength (Athletics) check and any PCs that fail have disadvantage on a simultaneous DC 11 Dexterity (Stealth) check to remain unnoticed as they ascend. Any that get so close overhear that they've released Obiemashita onto Soburin (though the importance of this won't be revealed until *Yai Sovereign of Storms*) and that all the preparations are nearly complete. Should they be discovered they just barely catch a glimpse of Kinzobutsu and Uddobutsu just as the demons leap into their enchanted mirror alongside Nashio. Otherwise they come upon the demons as they ask the guardsman questions about the new arrivals in town and where next they should do their fell work. Read the following:

As you near the lip of the ridge you hear a small commotion and peer above the stones to see that Nashio is no longer alone, joined by two more figures—each of them monstrous oni. One has limbs and skin made of hearty living wood and the other has a blue hide that gives off an ever so slight metallic sheen. They welcome the guardsman with open arms, clapping him on the shoulder and offering a bottle of sake before a lively discussion begins. While they talk to one another the monsters caress an mirror that sits between them, scenes of wildernesses in Soburin flashing across its surface in place of their horrid reflections.

Adventurers that succeed on a DC 18 Wisdom (Perception) check can catch what's being said, and anyone that manages to get within 80 feet with a DC 15 Dexterity (Stealth) check has advantage on the check to overhear the discussion. The wood demon is named Kinzobutsu and the metallic demon is Uddobutsu and both are pleased with the help Nashio has

provided though they are curious about Ottotto's new arrivals. After the guardsman has convinced them that the party pose no problem (which he believes unless he was tortured) they commence planning which torii gate to take, choosing a few that have been abandoned by a prefecture's government recently and not to be missed (in a location too distant for the PCs to interfere). Apparently the wooden oni will shrink several of the existing torii gates—shown on the mirror between them—for relocation, enlarging them elsewhere when necessary while its metallic companion imbues a dark curse that changes the timber to stone. By the way they talk the oni and their beleaguered ally have already done this to dozens of torii gates throughout Soburin, although they're unsure of which will be of the greatest use to their master.

When the trio realize they're being watched or after they're done planning they make their escape through the mirror in the middle of the grotto. Read the following:

> *The oni leap into a strange synchronized dance, each one matching the other's motions as they chant together in the foul tongue of monsters. Suddenly the sounds of cracking timbers and tearing metal pierce the air, the mirror between them glowing with violet energy before a patch of wilderness fixes itself on its surface—without delay Nashio and the demons leap through to leave only a charred, black husk of wood behind.*

At this juncture the demonic oni escape the party and their ruined relic leaves little clues as to who they work for or what the black torii gates will ultimately do, only that it surely can't be a good omen. Analyzing the remains of the burnt mirror with *detect magic* reveals the presence of necrotic energy of the powerful and ancient sort but nothing more. This is the perfect opportunity for the PCs to be approached by Xiqzoxix and lured to Tsukisasu however, and at the GM's discretion the oni bengoshi may tease the adventurers with more information about the pair or the black torii gates—one of them even near Tsukisasu.

Mubō Brothers: Hayaku the Storm

Raittoningu, Sandā, Kyūchi, Torasuta, and now Sukina Mubō all lay dead along the party's path through Soburin. The sixth Mubō brother (because of course there are six) is furious his kin have all been slain by the same group of warriors and everywhere he travels loudly tells anyone who will listen that he intends to kill them all in a duel. No checks are required to discover this information—Hayaku wants the PCs to know they are marked for death and passerby openly speak of the coming battle, possibly even approaching them to wish good luck. This Mubō brother is far and away considered to be the deadliest of them all, given his nickname for the hail of lead he sends at his targets, and if rumors are to be believed he has never lost a battle.

Like the black torii gates and smuggling of erītokirā technology, this section of the adventure path does not yet offer a resolution—for that turn to the epic treetop and running train battle on page 221 (before *Revenge of the Pale Master*).

The Smuggling Merchants

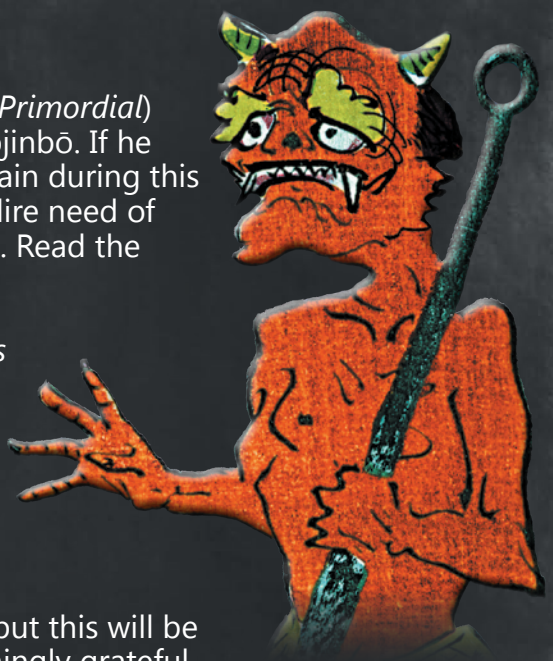
The hengeyokai merchants and tsukumogami smugglers continue their clandestine operations yet at this juncture the adventurers are too well known to be used as anything but a distraction. Of course if the GM decides it, the PCs may have more encounters with either organization like the Mitsuyu Gyōsha Consortium's vehicular tsukumogami attacks or the meddling of hengeyokai ninjas (from page 148 in *Fangs of Revenge*).

Gensosō Interlopers

The primalist ninjas of Ikari Prefecture are keen to the erītokirā smuggling and actively trying to stop it. If the PCs have sided against with the Machibuse Traders they are assaulted by another group of the warrior-monks (4 Gensosō of two opposite elements and 2 Gensosō Masters of the same elements). Should the adventurers have sided with the Gensosō, they send an envoy (Kizuato Tetsunori if he's alive) to be the party's servant until after *Yai Sovereign of Storms* is complete.

Extra Connection: Yōjinbō

Just before and again at the start of the second adventure (*Feud Primordial*) the PCs encounter a none-too-enthusiastic bodyguard named Yōjinbō. If he survived meeting them the party crosses paths with him once again during this part of their journey, although this time the shikome monk is in dire need of aid and about to die to the wicked blades of two kuchisake-onna. Read the following:



> *A familiar figure sprints onto the path ahead, his legs and arms covered in slashes that liberally pour blood down his slickened limbs—the bodyguard of the sorcerer Shinjirarenai! His gaze swivels away from whatever assails him from behind and he calls out for your help just as a trio of swift oni dash into view, each of them quick as the wind and wielding massive shears smeared with crimson.*

Without the adventurers intervening Yōjinbō dies in 1d4 rounds but this will be an easy battle for them to win. Afterward the monk is overwhelmingly grateful, earnestly apologizing for his role in the sorcerer's cult seasons ago, and he pledges his allegiance to the party. While he may not at first appear to be an important asset, the shikome will prove to be an extremely valuable companion for the climax of *Trade War* (a quick and capable message runner able to parley with or spy on the various erītokirā mercenary chapters).



Kuchisake-onna

Medium monstrosity (oni), neutral evil
Armor Class 15
Hit Points 39 (6d8+12)
Speed 70 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	20 (+5)	14 (+2)	13 (+1)	16 (+3)	15 (+2)

Saving Throws Int +3, Cha +4
Skills Acrobatics +7, Deception +4, Perception +5, Stealth +7
Damage Vulnerabilities radiant
Damage Resistances cold, lightning
Damage Immunities necrotic, poison, psychic
Condition Immunities charmed, frightened, poisoned
Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 15
Languages Aklo, Soburi, Undercommon
Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

Disfiguring. A creature that takes 20 damage or more from a kuchisake-onna's scissors becomes disfigured, its mouth ripping open at the sides. A disfigured creature gains the hated condition until it receives a DC 15 Wisdom (Medicine) check or magical healing. Any additional Medicine checks after the first are made at disadvantage. 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.

Eviscerate (1/Combat). The kuchisake-onna spends its bonus action asking a creature "Am I pretty?" or "Am I handsome?" A creature that responds with any variation of "no" takes 5d6 extra damage from the kuchisake-onna's scissors for two rounds. A creature that responds, "Do you think I am pretty?" or "Do you think I am handsome?" grants the kuchisake-onna the stunned condition for 2 rounds.

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.

ACTIONS

Scissors. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target.
Hit: 14 (2d8+5) piercing damage or 12 (3d6+2) slashing damage.

YAI SOVEREIGN OF STORMS

A FIFTH EDITION ADVENTURE FOR 4 TO 6 PCS PCS OF 7TH - 8TH LEVEL



Summary

Contending with powerful weather while traveling in the wilderness of Soburin, the PCs are suddenly host to an invisible and unwanted guest as they make camp: one of Xiqzoxix, the foul bengoshi of oni warlords. The party are offered great rewards should they travel into the hidden settlement of Tsukisasu to put down a mysterious stranger from the Mists of Akuma that's taken control of the secret town. Obiemashita poses a threat to more than just this mountain however, and the adventurers will likely have to deal with the consequences of the oni's struggle eventually—it is only a matter of when, not if, as with every passing hour the upstart yai sovereign of storms destabilizes the region further as it amasses greater power.

Reaching Tsukisasu is no simple matter and the PCs encounter foul creatures that mean them ill or can offer crucial aid as they climb a nearby mountain, closely following arcane instructions from Xiqzoxix to reveal the mystically shrouded town. Once inside the settlement the party finds a warped village filled by outcast inhumans to make for an unusual place, one driven toward greater madness by the chaotic edicts of a new ruler. To save the village, protect the countryside nearby, and earn their payment the PCs raid Yōna's fortress, defeating creatures enslaved to the yai sovereign's will and destroying the magic circles of power it is using to destabilize the skies before Obiemashita can reach its full potential!

Little do the adventurers know that Xiqzoxix has plans of zir own and that the monstrous bengoshi's ultimate goals in Tsukisasu are far from altruistic…

Background

The oni warlord Yōna has ruled over a settlement high in one of Soburin's mountains since long before the Ceramians first invaded over a century and a half ago. After seeing the deadly machinery the invaders brought to bear, she did as many of her peers and forged a pact with an imperial dragon to shroud her territory from the foreign military—unlike most of these alliances, the deal Yōna struck with Yamano-Ryōshu persists still and hides the elevated town from discovery. The obscuring shroud left by the powerful sovereign dragon has made the Mists of Akuma a common sight around Tsukisasu and drawn many new monstrous denizens to the settlement, and though this has increased the oni warlord's forces it has also brought along unexpected dangers.

As the most vicious storm in recent history came down onto Tsukisasu a few weeks ago, so too did the Mists of Akuma. A lone figure descended from the very center of the supernatural tempest, striding up to the gates of Yōna's fortress with demands for obedience; the oni warlord was not at all amused. After soundly thrashing the arrogant creature she wrapped her enslaving cord around it, using the enchanted yoke to assert her dominance. The newcomer didn't succumb however and slapped a jade clasp onto the rope that has bent her to its will instead, and the dominated Yōna has declared Obiemashita to be the new ruler of Tsukisasu.

Under its new ruler the settlement has suffered greatly, the oni within growing wilder and more aggressive with each passing day. While the threat of Tsukisasu being found by the Masuto Government poses a great danger, the local monstrous bengoshi fears that worse awaits the entire region should Obiemashita's most recent doings reach fruition—Xiqzoxix has learned that the newcomer is a yai sovereign of storms and that if it is not stopped, it will conjure a tempest so great that even Emperor Hitoshi will be forced to take notice.

Act 1: An Unlikely Bengoshi

When the party are traveling near one of the mountains in Soburin's wilderness and have made camp for a long rest (after a day of travel filled by harrowing storms), choose the most vulnerable PC and read the following:

Finally the rains stop. The entire day has been filled with dark clouds and heavy precipitation —as was most of last week—and you feel relieved as the night sky opens above to cast pale moonlight onto the camp. Lilting plucked strings begin to fill the air as more of the moon peeks out from the overcast skies and as it grows louder, the source of the haunting melody is nowhere to be seen and the sense of relief dwindles.

Suddenly the music is cut short and _____ feels something restraining them from behind, a sharp force pressed against their skin just hard enough that a trickle of wet blood runs down their neck. "Halt!" a voice calls out, the rising mist from the recently stopped rains gradually outlining an immaculately dressed humanoid figure with a freakish mask-like head, a razor-thin garotte wrapped beneath the head of one of your companions. "We wouldn't want anyone to lose their head now would we?"

Though their threatening entrance might suggest otherwise the new arrival to the party's camp means no harm—they quickly explains that the normal reaction to their kind often necessitates these sorts of extreme negotiating tactics. The trespasser introduces zirself as Xiqzoxix, a mediator of oni warlords and resident of the settlement of Tsukisasu. A DC 15 Intelligence (Culture) check reveals that there are many of these bengoshi-like creatures throughout Soburin, and that they **all** answer to Xiqzoxix (though if asked, ze denies it). After the adventurers make it clear that they will not draw blood and at least hear out what ze has to say, ze releases zir captive and tosses a bag with 50 Imperial Pieces as an apology.

Recently (this) Xiqzoxix's home has been taken over by Obiemashita, a creature that emerged from a powerful storm intermingled with the Mists of Akuma. The local oni warlord Yōna attempted to dominate the newcomer but found her powers turned against herself because of a jade clasp he carried, and instead has appointed him as the new ruler of Tsukisasu. His domination of the hidden town has been filled with peril and conflict; one of Obiemashita's first edicts made the formerly oppressed bakemono and shikome to become elite members of society, spreading discontent among the oni that dwell there. With every passing day the usurper grows larger and its rise to greater power seems to coincide with the malevolent weather in the region, and Xiqzoxix believes that ultimately he will cause ruin to come to zir's settlement.

At first he appeared as little more than a feral child, and by the time the oni bengoshi left Tsukisasu it was already as big as an enjin —while another oni warlord might eventually intervene Xiqzoxix believes that a rapid response is required. In exchange for helping restore Yōna to power, the oni bengoshi will personally see to it that the PCs each receive an enchanted gift from the vaults of the town's fortress once she is in control of the fortress once again. Ze adds that they are welcome to refuse this offer, but that if there is one thing it knows for certain, it is that the threat Obiemashita presents will only become greater and more potent the longer he is in control of the hidden city.

A Devilish Deal

The oni bengoshi offers up 1,000 Imperial Pieces in exchange for the party's help; once they accept the deal Xiqzoxix reveals that the paths leading to Tsukisasu are shrouded still by ancient magics of the Imperial Dragons, as well as the first thing the adventurers have to do in order to find the hidden settlement: when they next travel they must move 100 paces northward up the slope, throwing a handful of rice behind their shoulders after every 25th step. More importantly once they reach Tsukisasu, the oni bengoshi warns, it is essential they keep their presence unknown to Obiemashita (who has already had several foreigners and dissenters slaughtered for their disobedience). Afterwards Xiqzoxix disappears, the shamisen's strings lilting through the air as ze departs.

When the PCs next look into the bag the oni bengoshi tossed to zir captive they find a few curious items aside from the gold coins—a few sticks of incense and a pin made of ruby. Though the gemstone accessory can be sold for as much as 40 gp, the first adventurer to touch it instantly knows that affixing the trinket to Obiemashita's jade clasp will release Yōna from his control. Curious spellcasters that more carefully examine the ruby pin with *detect magic* and a DC 19 Intelligence (Arcana) check realize that it has some kind of enchantment waiting for a trigger of some kind but not the device's true purpose (to overtake the usurper's bauble rather than destroy it).

A More Nuanced Introduction

The Yai Sovereign of Storms introduces Xiqzoxix in the wilderness in order to make the adventure as accessible as possible to GMs but the oni bengoshi is certainly able to move about unhindered inside of settlements or along Soburin's roads. Ze is able to appear as any Small- or Medium-sized race and posseses a suite of abilities to make breaking into or out of a settlement a simple task. The monstrous negotiator could easily take the place of a merchant or noble in the court of a clan lord and should ze come to believe the PCs are particularly competent, Xiqzoxix does not hesitate at all to endanger, kidnap, intimidate, bribe, or coerce whomever ze believes might grant zir leverage over the adventurers. For aggressive, haughty, prideful, and overly confident parties ze uses a more graceful tactic and promises that in addition to their Imperial Pieces that at least one great treasure will find its way into their possession.

Act 2: Traveling to Tsukisasu

After finishing their long rest the weather turns on the party once again, sending a torrential downpour onto the region. Though the beginning of the path the PCs need to take to reach Tsukisasu was revealed by Xiqzoxix, they must rely on their wits to make the rest of the journey to the veiled settlement. Moving more than 50 feet in any direction that is not part of the path to Tsukisasu causes the enchantment to reset, meaning the PCs must start from the beginning. If the adventurers have a particularly difficult time figuring out this puzzle, the GM may grant them Intelligence, Wisdom, or Charisma checks to reveal the correct steps to take.

Finding the Path

- First the PCs must take 100 paces northward up the nearby mountain, throwing rice behind them every 25th step. No check is required to notice the rice overwhelmingly flows westward regardless of the prevailing conditions, but adventurers with a passive Perception of 12 or higher realize that not only do they join into floating clumps, but that each of these groupings has 40 grains.
- Next the party must take 40 paces westward up the mountain and with every step there is a growing urge to light the incense given to them by the oni bengoshi. This is no simple task in the heavy rains (requiring a DC 13 Dexterity check) and once accomplished, the adventurers must succeed on a DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check to track the smoke as it rises into the humid air. PCs that take precautions to protect a large area from rain (perhaps by using a cloak or umbrella) gain advantage on this check. Smoke from the incense floats northward in a long line that is mostly hazy, though not entirely—every few feet it suddenly turns inward sharply at a 60° angle before lazily circling toward the north again.
- After taking 60 steps north the PCs are overcome by a strong urge to see blood—their own, an animal's, an enemy's, or a friend's (this does not compel them to action, only instilling the emotion of bloodlust). Any shed blood pools unnaturally towards the nearest tree, disappearing around the trunk. Walking entirely around the tree after the spilled blood (all 360 degrees) reveals the lip of the valley in the mountains and the secret town of Tsukisasu.

Freakish Allies

The party's ascent is interrupted after throwing the rice as they overhear the panicking screams of two monstrous inhumans. When the adventurers go to investigate these cries for help, read the following:

Through the trunks of a nearby grove of trees you spy a terrifying sight: an enormous hunched thing as much man as horse, heaving in the muddied earth. Instead of hooves on its front legs there are long, sharp talons slick with blood clearly shorn from the two lesser things fighting it. Both of its overwhelmed foes are dressed as woodsmen but are far from the average lumberjack, each a child of the Mists of Akuma. The larger of the two wields a broken naginata, part of its blade still wedged in the equine monster assaulting them, and the shorter freak scrabbles in the mud for kunai to join the four sticking from its foe's hide. Both the shikome and bakemono bear terrible wounds and it looks like their end is nigh, though any doubts of their desperation evaporate as they call out for aid from kami, tsukumogami, gods, and everything in between.

Jaketto and Shatsu are hunters from Tsukisasu that have angered a tikbalang by chasing down prey in its territory. If the PCs leave these two to die and do not tread off their path northward the oni wanders away with the corpses of the rangers, but a DC 10 Dignity (Culture) check tells the adventurers that even these children of the Mists of Akuma will respect being saved, making them useful allies in the city above. As soon as the party makes themselves a threat (by casting a spell, drawing weapons, or stepping off the path and into the creature's territory) the tikbalang relents its assault on the pair of woodsmen and attacks the PCs (though it has been damage and only has 90 hit points).

Jaketto. This blessed shikome is a shisho of the Kōteino, an Erītokirā Chapter of warriors with a sect in Tsukisasu. In addition to knowing the modern political climate of Soburin, much about the hidden settlement the PCs are traveling to, and being surprisingly at ease with all the races, the hobgoblin is close friends with the most talented armorer in Tsukisasu (another shikome, the sumisu Sakimasu).

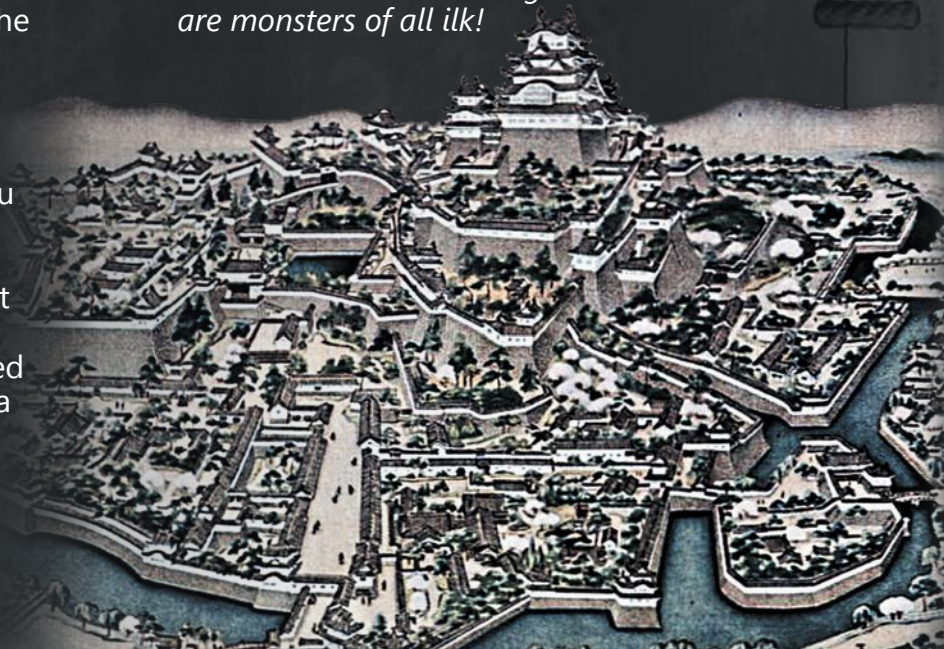
Shatsu. The konchū bakemono Shatsu is little more than a scavenger that travels the mountainside in search of corpses to loot. Sometimes it is quite lucky, and though Kiyohime doesn't act like it the magic item merchant of Tsukisasu is quite fond of the goblin.

Once saved the inhumans are extremely cooperative and earnestly promise never to betray the party. As natives of Tsukisasu the duo do not need to take any special steps to reach the hidden city and as scholarly as Jaketto is, neither knows what the PCs have to do to find the path. After reaching the secret town they are prepared to disguise the adventurers as prisoners, a ruse that will allow the group to enter Tsukisasu without incident given the recent authority granted to their kind.

Leaving the bakemono and shikome to die to the tikbalang's claws has possibly problematic consequence—a hebinkontorora. The serpentine oni disguises itself as a wounded woman fleeing from a pack of snakes, using the creatures she's summoned to assault the PCs and distract them so she can get in close to attack the party's healer or mage. If the adventurers are accompanied by the pair of rangers the hebinkontorora poses no threat and merely passes them on the road, nodding respectfully to Jaketto and Shatsu.

Read the following when the party follows the spilt blood around the tree, completing their journey on the path to Tsukisasu:

Looking up as you round the tree following after the strangely flowing blood, you are startled to find a secluded highlands valley just as you finish circling the trunk! The vale extends out in a majestic view but the breadth and secrecy of the wide expanse is not what impresses you most; in the center of the rift is a vast city, familiar yet unlike any you've seen before. The dwellings are of the sort only seen in architecture from long ago but decorated with grisly effigies, and rather than soburi walking its streets there are monsters of all ilk!



Act 3: Monstrous Jewel of the Mountains

Filled with bakemono, mutants, necroji, oni-touched, shikome, and steametics, the hidden settlement sprawls inside of a river delta tucked away in a highland mountain valley further protected by swift rivers and impressive walls. Wondrous and miraculous as it might be the PCs will have some trouble gaining entry without disguises or exceptional stealth; Xiqzoxix warned that discovery could mean their end and it is unlikely that the party are all like the natives. Any adventurer of the other races garners suspicion and investigation from Tsukisasu guards (use the statistics for a Hobgoblin), though PCs accompanied by Jaketto and Shatsu—both individuals already known to the city's recently empowered defenders—experience no difficulty getting inside.

Obiemashita has turned the settlement upside down with its edict granting total authority to bakemono and shikome, and though oni are freely wandering the streets of Tsukisasu as they normally do, signs of unrest are everywhere. Jaketto and Shatsu know well enough that eventually the monstrous citizens of the settlement will take retribution and they are eager to do everything in their power to help the PCs free Yōna from the usurper's control. To make matters even worse, recently Obiemashita has showed an ability to control addedo-oni and has replaced the city's guards with the foul undead. The Kōteino Erītokirā Chapter of shikome rarely have the time for leisure and are celebrating with exceptional vigor, frequently starting fights with each other and passersby to entertain themselves. Read the following after the PCs have entered Tsukisasu:

There is a sudden commotion in the street as a woman begins arguing loudly with a gang of bakemono. They all draw blades as her neck elongates, her teeth sharpening into the jaws of rokurokubi! In short order the wakizashi-wielding goblins hack away at the oni until her head flies off—taking to the air, cackling! Other monstrous passerby draw blades and argue over offenses imagined or slight, making the tension in the air as thick as a knife.

Should the party try to intervene or use the distracting fight as an opportunity to strike an oni citizen, Jaketto and Shatsu strongly discourage it and try to stop the PCs before attention is drawn to the group. Adeddo-oni are fools but have received very specific orders—Obiemashita cleared Tsukisasu of all non-inhumans and any not found in chains are to be slain. The guards travel in groupings of four Adeddo-Oni Hunchlings led by an Adeddo-Oni Samurai; at the start of a fight one of the hunchlings runs off for reinforcements that arrive 3d4 rounds later.



Heych Machineshop

Bakemono and shikome had been confined to the hidden city's large, squalid tenement buildings for centuries but over the past several weeks they have taken over nearly every dwelling in Tsukisasu. Whether the PCs are traveling alone or with guides, the adventurers soon find out that there's no place for them to lay low other than the abandoned machineshop of a steametic. Heych was a scientist highly valued by Yōna that mysteriously disappeared shortly after Obiemashita took over the settlement, though not before arming several technological security measures in his abode; the defenses have proven effective thus far and make the building stand out from the rest of Tsukisasu, marked by the corpses of many would-be intruders piled outside of it.

Heych's machineshop is a small, squat tower located in the center of the city and as the PCs come across it, the biggest storm yet suddenly whips into the atmosphere above, sending down hail that deals 1d4 points of bludgeoning damage every round. Getting out of the city and under the woods around the settlement will take several minutes, the oni throughout the streets take all the available cover from awnings (though some of the toughest specimens simply endure the storm), and there is no shelter for the party other than what they can conjure—aside from the robot's deserted home. The severe weather lasts until the PCs either get into the building or a few minutes after they find cover.

Pragmatic adventurers that choose to use the bakemono and shikome corpses as cover are able to do so but immediately increase their Haitoku score by 1 (lowering their Dignity score by 1). PCs have disadvantage on Athletics checks to ascend while the storm continues and any that climb or fly up to one of the windows find that they are barred by thick steel plates with airtight seals. The traps on the outside of the machineshop have all been exhausted and the only obstacle the party faces to get inside is a difficult lock on a reinforced door. The door has an AC of 16 and 30 hit points but it can be bypassed with a DC 17 Dexterity (Thieves' Tools) check or DC 22 Strength check.

Read the following when the PCs get into the machineshop:

> *Behind the heavy, thick metal door's entryway is an abattoir devoted to science. Steel stairs and railways ringing the circular laboratory lead to platforms along the wall fifteen and thirty feet in the air, above heavy duty tables cluttered with bits and bobs of technology. The second level has rows of book cases filling half the floorspace, and even from the entrance you can spot reflections from large metallic chests in the shadows in the building's uppermost reaches.*

The interior of the machineshop (a roughly circular tower 50 feet across and 40 feet high) is open in the middle with two main worktables on each side, a library on the second level, and a resting area on the third. There are three active traps inside of the building; one is located near the only entryway, but the other two can be placed at the GM's discretion.

Bullet Storm Trap

Mechanical trap

When a creature steps on a hidden pressure plate, guns arrayed in rows nearby fire bullets from hidden compartments that slide open in the surrounding walls.

The firearms are obscured behind small panels colored like the walls; there are many and they all work into the texture of the surroundings, making the DC to spot them 20. A character can notice one of the trap's nearly seamless pressure plates with a successful DC 20 Intelligence (Investigation) check. Only thin objects (such as a katana or wakizashi blade) wedged into the seam prevents the trap's activation. Each of the gun housings are protected by inch-thick steel and fire when tampered with (+10 to hit, 1d6 piercing damage) should a creature fail a DC 20 Thieves' Tools check.

When more than 10 pounds of weight is placed on the pressure plate, 12 guns fire. Each gun makes a ranged attack with a +10 bonus against a random target within 10 feet of the pressure plate (vision is irrelevant to his attack roll). Should the area lack targets, half the bullets ricochet and make a second attack roll at random targets within 20 feet (these attacks are at disadvantage). A target that is hit takes 3 (1d6) piercing damage.

Hydraulic Vault Trap

Mechanical trap

When a creature steps on a hidden pressure plate, the floor beneath them rises rapidly on hydraulic pistols to fling their body into the ceiling 30 feet above, falling swiftly back into place to then send the target falling back to the ground.

A character can notice the trap's nearly seamless pressure plates with a successful DC 18 Intelligence (Investigation) check (the DC to spot it is also 18.) Only thin objects (such as a katana or wakizashi blade) wedged into the seam prevents the trap's activation.

When more than 10 pounds of weight is placed on the pressure plate, pistons beneath the ground fire to send the floor in a 15-foot radius shooting upward. Any targets in the area are flung into the ceiling, taking 28 (8d6) bludgeoning damage. A DC 15 Dexterity saving throw reduces this damage by half. The raised platform sinks back into the floor immediately, leaving targets to fall 40 feet to take 14 (4d6) bludgeoning damage. A DC 15 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check reduces this damage to 10 (3d6) bludgeoning damage.

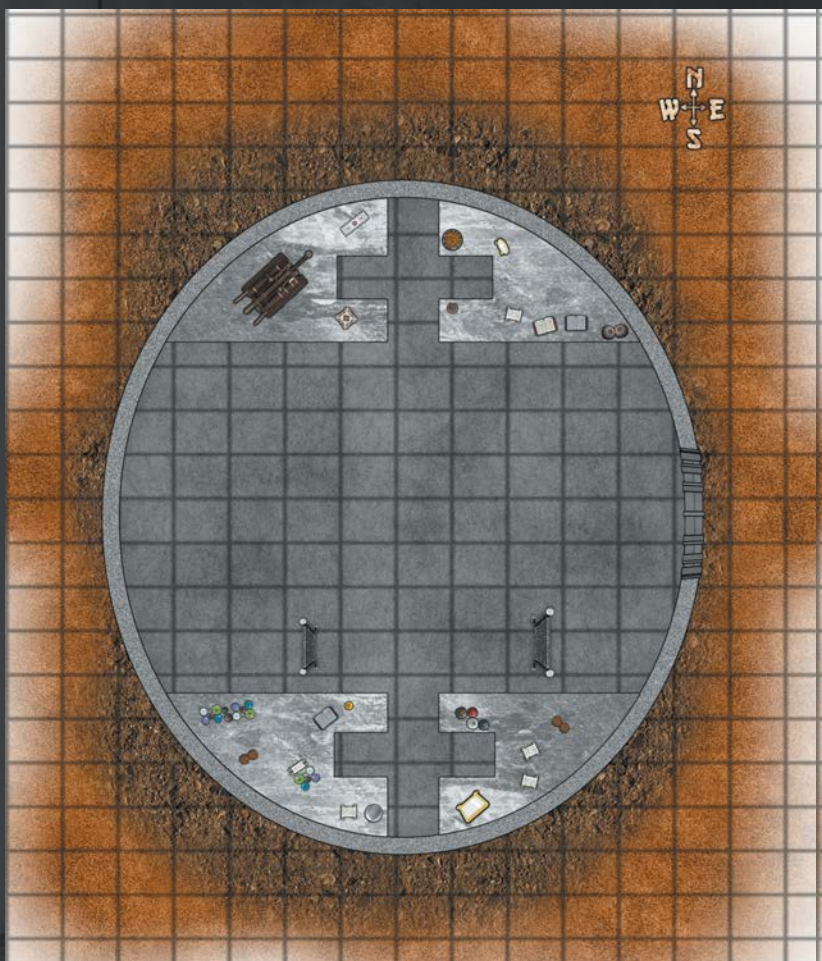
Lightning Lance Trap

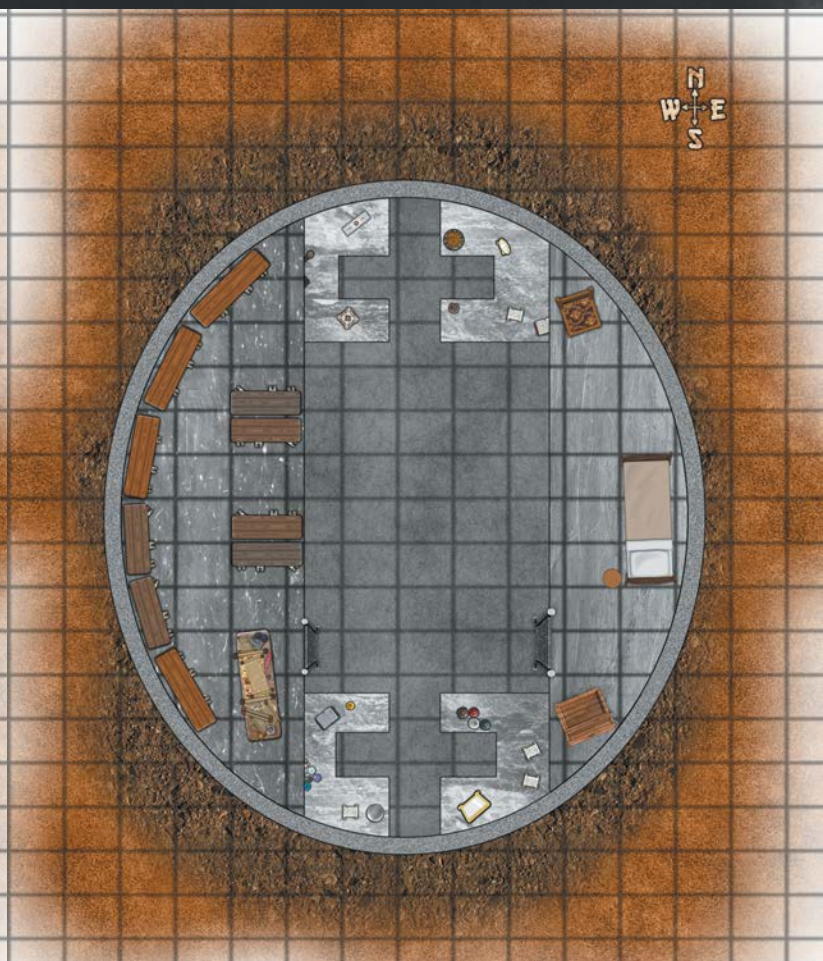
Mechanical trap

This trap is activated when a trespasser steps on a seamless panel worked into the floor, triggering a dynamo nearby that sends a blast of electricity arcing between the walls.

The DC to spot the activation plates is 20, and a character can also notice one of the trap's seamless panels with a successful DC 20 Intelligence (Investigation) check. Any contact with these sections of the floor trigger the trap, causing the dynamo to release electricity in a 15-foot radius. Each creature in the electricity must make a DC 18 Dexterity saving throw, taking 36 (8d8) lightning damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

Heych took virtually everything of value from the machineshop before leaving but there are four heavy (60 pound), sealed cases in the resting area on the third floor. Each is trapped with the same corrosive countermeasure and the steametic keeps them mostly to kill anyone that makes it inside—a DC 22 Thieves' Tools check unlocks a chest, but any failure (or even a point of damage) causes it to explode with pressurized acid that deals 10d6 acid damage to the creature, destroying the object inside (an augmetic of uncommon quality).





Investigating in Tsukisasu

With a base of operations in Tsukisasu the party can safely take a long rest and, if they are careful, travel about the settlement to find out more about Obiemashita or utilize goods and services—freakish inhuman adventurers can travel freely but other PCs will have to disguise themselves, maintain the charade as prisoners to Jaketto and Shatsu, be incredibly stealthy, or prepared to pay out bribes. While the hidden city most of the amenities of its like in the prefectures, only those listed below are not violently xenophobic (lacking entrances adorned with human corpses).

Hall of the Vanquished

Many challengers have come to rest control of Tsukisasu away from Yōna but Obiemashita is the first to have any success. The oni warlords, mad samurai, obsessed scientists, foolhardy mages, and righteous priests that have tried are all memorialized here by statues and paintings of the settlement's ruler achieving victory, making it a macabre place made even more morbid when their souls wail at dawn, noon, dusk, and midnight. Creatures inside of the Hall of the Vanquished that hear the supernatural screams make a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw or gain disadvantage on Wisdom saving throws for the next 24 hours.

Kiyohime's Emporium

The oni-touched mage Kiyohime (an Archmage) grew up in the Fukushu prefecture and is nostalgic for her homeland, taking a liking to foreigners that find their way to Tsukisasu. In addition to selling the PCs any magic item of Uncommon rarity (roll 1d20 and on a 15 or higher she has one in stock), she reveals that Obiemashita is a yai sovereign of some kind. Kiyohime has not been able to study the usurper closely but she has seen more than one of the legendary oni and is sure of her conviction, even if it isn't as evidenced as most.

Should the PCs have Shatsu with them, Kiyohime has a few magic items of Rare rarity she can offer the party for a fair price (roll 1d20 and on an 18 or higher she has a requested item in stock).

Kōteino Erītokirā Chapter

Tsukisasu's true danger comes not from the hordes of monsters that Yōna can call to action, but from the hobgoblins that dwell in the settlement. Many of these are simple infantry but not all—some are warriors borne, implacable souls that earn their place among the devoted but wild Kōteino Erītokirā Chapter of shikome soldiers. They take to the field of battle in powered suits of armor bristling with augmetics, making them truly deadly adversaries that are difficult to stop or even stun much less kill. Fortunately Obiemashita's edicts have sown chaos across their ranks and the reckless nature of the Chapter has led many to drinking in excess, forgetting their duties in cups of sake and leaving far dumber creatures (addedo-oni) to guard the secret city while the usurper still holds the throne.

Markus the Machinist

Unlike Heych, the undead necroscientist Markus openly and proudly displays the traps in its shop (there are several and each one is lethal). While the necroji doesn't have any love for the prefectures, it does have great favor for anything that smells like profit. Any augmetic of uncommon quality can be bought here at a steep price (at the GM's discretion) but to sweeten the pot Markus offers to install its products and knows a bit of talk he's heard recently that foreigners would certainly appreciate. It overheard a pair of off-duty drunkards from the Kōteino Erītokirā Chapter talking about Obiemashita, claiming that the usurper has been the cause of the recent storms and using them to grow in power.

Signa's Herbs

Although the prefectures have little love for her kind, Signa the mutant (use the statistics for an Oni) takes pity on humans and other smaller folk; once the PCs have earned her trust (perhaps with a Dignity check or by imparting some faith in her) she is willing to hide the party in her abode. Signa doesn't need to like the adventurers in order to sell her wares, but aside from potions of healing and potions of greater healing there isn't much to offer. Obiemashita has been ordering reagents and herbs from Signa's shop, and with a DC 16 Charisma (Persuasion) check the PCs can convince her to let them hide within the supplies or deliver them as a means to sneak into the fortress.

Suits of Sakimasu

One of the only shikome in Tsukisasu that seems to remembers its station is the smith Sakimasu. Still respecting the laws of Yōna (and keen to see her ascend back to rule once more), the Kōteino Erītokirā Chapter's resident master armorer is willing to sell its wares to the party. Should the PCs have Jaketto with them, Sakimasu is willing to incorporate any augmetics the adventurers might acquire into their armor for a few hundred Imperial Pieces. Utilizing this service means delaying the party's mission for a time but while inside the shikome's shop they are visited by Xiqzoxix, who coalesces the suspicions of the other merchants: Obiemashita is a yai sovereign of storms, and with every new tempest he only grows in power and size!

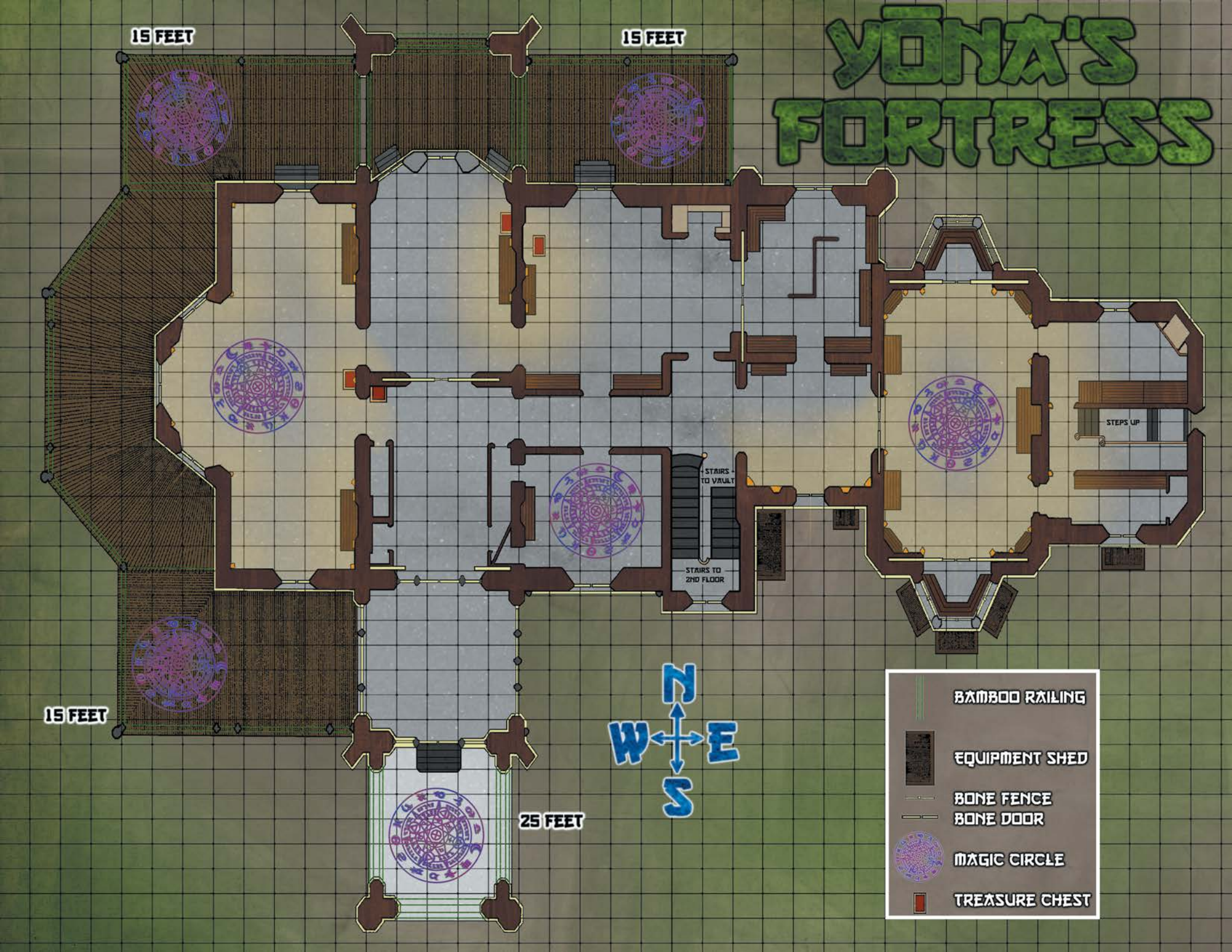
Mists of Akuma

The corrupting fogs that have thrown Soburin once more into turmoil can roll in at any time, forcing the PCs to move to high ground or get into a contained space where they can buffet the foul haze away from themselves.

Tekihakai Tea House

Persons visiting the most popular drinking establishment in Tsukisasu are warned against bringing any platinum with them—its owner, the gaki Tekihakai, will do everything in his power to immediately consume it. The oni rarely offers food and drink of an equal value but will give lodging to those who are deeply offended, and even offer to allow them to choose whatever dish is offered for the next evening of patrons. Though Tekihakai only offers one type of meal each night, in life he was a truly talented chef (albeit a greedy one) and there are rumors that nobles from the prefectures have snuck into the secret city just to taste the gaki's ironic cuisine. Should he find out that the PCs are interlopers he won't immediately turn them over—provided they can sate his appetite.




YŌNA'S FORTRESS
15 FEET
15 FEET
15 FEET
25 FEET
STAIRS TO VAULT
STAIRS TO 2ND FLOOR
STEPS UP
N
W
E
S
BAMBOO RAILING
EQUIPMENT SHED
BONE FENCE
BONE DOOR
MAGIC CIRCLE
TREASURE CHEST

Act 4: Raiding Yōna's Fortress

Since taking over Obiemashita has allowed what little order Yōna maintained in her estate to dwindle into chaotic unpredictability—for the most part no guards are posted, coming and going as they please instead (these guards move about in packs identical to those roaming Tsukisasu). The adeddo-oni caper about in an already morbid abode they have turned into a slaughterhouse, decorating the walls with the blood of soburi, inhumans, and even oni. Read the following when the PCs near Yōna's Fortress:

> *As you come up the rise to the home of Tsukisasu's oni warlord master, the smell of blood fills the air before you see the ruin that's befallen Yōna's Fortress, so profuse that even the falling rain cannot stop it from reaching your nostrils. Storms have shorn off the top of the building to expose the second story to the air, and in between flashing thunder and lightning you spot flashes of a demonic figure capering about. The rest of the castle is a grisly throne to death made of crimson wood and mottled bones morphed together, soaked in blood dripping from the corpses of humans, inhumans, and oni alike.*

The lack of proper guards does not leave Yōna's Fortress totally defenseless however, and ancient enchantments placed by the oni warlord persist still.

Bamboo Railings. A DC 15 Intelligence (Nature) check identifies that these railings are not normal bamboo, but fell stalks soaked and coated with poison. When a creature makes contact with a bamboo railing or breaks a section (AC 10, 8 hp), it must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or take 21 (6d6) poison damage and the poisoned condition. The poisoned condition remains until the damage dealt by the bamboo railing is healed.

Bone Boundary. After passing across the boundaries of the bones lining Yōna's Fortress or beyond a set of bone doors, a creature makes a DC 18 Wisdom saving throw or becomes frighened (able to move around freely despite the omnipresent source of their fear). Every 5 minutes a frightened creature receives another saving throw to resist it. Once a creature has resisted this effect, it is immune to it until it next passes over the Bone Boundary around Yōna's Fortress.

Bone Doors. Only speaking the Adeddo or Aklo word for "enter" causes a Bone Door to open. These doorways can be opened with a DC 19 Strength check or broken through (AC 16, 20 hp), but either of these options causes a wave of evil to flow outward in 20-foot radius dealing 7 (2d6) necrotic damage to all creature sin the area.

Equipment Sheds. These flimsy wooden shacks are filled with the corroded and rusty weapons of the fortress' guards and make for an excellent hiding place for the PCs. When entering an Equipment Shed a creature makes a DC 14 Dexterity saving throw or causes weapons inside to fall, makes a significant amount of noise and taking 10 (3d6) slashing damage.

Treasure Chests. There are four chests arrayed around Yōna's Fortress, each containing a random treasure (uncommon items that are either magic items or augmetics). These are unlocked and have no traps, and as long as the party only opens three of the chests there are no repercussions. The instant the fourth chest is breached however, a Chain Devil bound by Yōna long ago is conjured forth to viciously attack whomever carries the items taken from the treasure chests.

Obiemashita's Magic Circles

The only areas that have dedicated guards are the seven magic circles Obiemashita is using to generate storms that have recently plagued the region, phenomena that are easy to spot once an observer is within throwing distance of Yōna's Fortress (sending elemental energies towards the top of the building). Rather than being protected by the bands of roving guards that sometimes wander the castle, these are under the watchful eyes of either a pair of hiding Addedo-Oni Ninja (for circles on the inside of the building) or a Monsutāhantā (for circles located outside of the building).

Destroying one of these magic circles requires a DC 16 Intelligence (Arcana) check and 6 rounds of concentration (the DC to maintain this concentration when distracted by attacks or weather is 15). A dispel magic also suppresses a magic circle for one day, and destroying the material they are engraved upon also disrupts a magic circle (the decking outside has an AC of 13 and 10 hp, while the marble floors

and platform have AC 18 and 20 hp). When the PCs successfully disrupt a magic circle, Obiemashita takes notice and flies down to harry the party with an attack of some kind before retreating, gradually learning the party's tactics, strengths, and weaknesses. Parties that destroy a few of the magic circles can slow the yai sovereign of storm's growth but not stop it, as the magic circles reappear after 24 hours—and the longer they continue this tactic, the more addedo-oni and other monstrous citizens of Tsukisasu will be searching for the adventurers as they rest between assaults.

Facing the Storm

The roof has been ripped off the top of the second floor of Yōna's Fortress by savage winds, leaving a ragged square of bamboo flooring roughly 80 feet across. Obiemashita dances and capers on the ruined building's impromptu open-air upper level, imbuing power into a funnel fed by the seven below before being unleashed in a maelstrom that rises into the sky and out of sight.

Rounding the stairwell you are welcomed by a heavy storm that crackles with lightning, the clouds above fed by wild primal energies a grotesque creature conjures from the aether. Obiemashita stands as tall as three men, ruling the tempest above in a chaotic orchestration as beautiful as it is frenzied, the savagery of its dance ebbing and flowing with booms of thunder. The oni warlord is witness to it all, slumped against the wrecked remains of a wall with her own slaving cord wrapped around her forehead, barely cognizant to the destruction being wrought on her home by this malevolent usurper.

Obiemashita ignores 1 point of damage from attacks and spells during each round for every magic circle still intact. For example if Obiemashita is hit by a weapon attack that does 5 damage and a spell that does 7 damage while all the magic circles below are still intact, it only takes 5 points of damage from the spell and no damage from the weapon attack. In addition, by spending a bonus action on its turn, Obiemashita can grant disadvantage to attack rolls made by one creature for every two remaining magic circles.

Yōna is on the second level as well but practically catatonic, waylaid by the supernatural jade clasp; wary of anyone interfering with its captive, Obiemashita defends her fiercely and should she be freed, slays the oni warlord immediately while she is still weak (AC 14, 100 hit points left). Otherwise the yai sovereign uses its ability to isolate the party, reducing fights to one on one combats where it has a distinct advantage.

Read the following once the PCs have slain the yai sovereign of storms:

Finally, after a harrowing battle atop the exposed stormswept roof of Yōna Fortress, the yai sovereign of storms suffers one too many wounds and falls, screaming out in pain. Before its towering, freakish body strikes the ground its corpse breaks apart into a violent red maelstrom of blood turned to gales and lightning, flying heavenward to explode and send ripples of energy across the darkened sky. The clouds above dissipate quickly and the rains falter, and you hear Obiemashita's rattling death cry fade away on the winds.



After the combat is over the PCs can safely break the jade clasp (AC 14, 30 hit points) or to use the ruby needle gifted to them by Xiqzoxix. A **DC 16 Wisdom (Insight) check** just before using the ruby needle gives the sensation that doing so will be of great import, but nothing more—not whether something *good* will happen or something *bad*, just that it will certainly effect destiny.

Epilogue: Monstrous Rewards

If the adventurers break the jade clasp, read the following:

The jade clasp snapped onto the oni warlord's slaving cord shatters, verdant energies seeping outward in a fine mist. Yōna's eyes snap to attention and she gazes around her, a look of shock and surprise flashing across her monstrously beautiful face before it is replaced by a stern frown. As she weakly stands up she pats down her robes and says, "this is unseemly. I am Yōna the Bloodletter, Oni Warlord and Master of Tsakisasu. Welcome to my home."

If the adventurers use the ruby needle, read the following:

The instant that the ruby pin touches the jade clasp they fuse together and ignite in a violent flash of fell blue light that erupts into fire that consumes the oni warlord! Yōna screams out in pain as it destroys her utterly, leaving nothing behind but a pile of ash. It is suddenly kicked to the dying winds as Xiqzoxix appears, clapping lightly. "Most excellent! Most excellent indeed! Allow me to formally welcome you to my home and, as harbingers of its new order of rule, extend to you every hospitality Tsukisasu has to offer."

Regardless of who becomes ruler of Tsukisasu, the adventurers are rewarded for destroying Obiemashita just as the oni bengoshi promised. Both Yōna and Xiqzoxix allow the PCs to take an oni gem (which functions like an elemental gem except that it summons a hebikontorōra, monsutāhantā, or tikbalang) or one magic item of rare rarity from the vault beneath the fortress. Alternatively, they can force one of the hidden city's citizens to forfeit an item to the party if the adventurers want something in Kiyohime's, Markus', or Sakimasu's shop (or a desire to deprive an oni of something as revenge). Though given leave to choose anything they like from the vaults beneath Yōna's Fortress, their host warns them that the sword enshrined there is not to be touched or disturbed in any way.

Though both the oni bengoshi and oni warlord give the PCs as long as a week as protected guests before they are thrown out, only Yōna is polite about it—Xiqzoxix tries to have them assassinated or imprisoned instead. After they've reached the rim of the valley and once Tsukisasu is gone from sight, the PCs are unable to return. Even correctly undertaking the same exact steps fails to uncover the hidden city, and any spells cast to teleport there have a 80% chance of automatically failing.

A Most Peculiar Blade

In her basement vault Yōna the oni warlord holds many treasures but one towers above all others in rarity and power: the *Katana of Rizushi Kantaro*. For over a century now the millennia-old blade has been contained inside her fortress and the weapon thirsts to let blood once more—its hunger has given it a sense for corruption, making it able to coerce and influence the darkness within those souls that observe it in Yōna's vault.

Any PC with a Haitoku score of 15 or higher that sees the *Katana of Rizushi Kantaro* must make a **DC 20 Wisdom saving throw** or be compelled to carefully inspect the blade (though not touch it) for at least a minute. Should more than one adventurer fail their saving throw none willingly concede ownership of the weapon to anyone but themselves, arguing nearly to the point of violence (or even letting blood). When a compelled PC deals damage to another compelled PC everyone currently under the influence of the *Katana of Rizushi Kantaro* (except for the PC that dealt damage first) makes a second **DC 20 Wisdom saving throw**, immediately renouncing their claim to the blade on a failed save. Once a PC acquires the *Katana of Rizushi Kantaro* (page 217) it stops compelling the adventurers (aside from its wielder).

Should the entire party resist the *Katana of Rizushi Kantaro* the weapon expends its stored energy to sprout arms and legs, changing into a tsukumogami and attacking them for their insolence! When destroyed it loses its sentience and extra properties, becoming a magical katana with a +1 bonus to attack and damage.

ONI BENGOSHI: XIQZOXIX



Medium monstrosity (oni), any evil
Armor Class 18 (natural)
Hit Points 150 (20d8+60)
Speed 40 ft., fly 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	19 (+4)	17 (+3)	16 (+3)	17 (+3)	20 (+5)

Skills Athletics +7, Deception +9, Insight +7, Perception +7, Persuasion +9, Stealth +9, Survival +7
Damage Vulnerabilities radiant
Damage Resistances cold, fire, lightning; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical weapons
Damage Immunities necrotic, poison, psychic
Condition Immunities charmed, frightened, poisoned
Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 17
Languages Adeddo, Aklo, Draconic, Soburi
Challenge 12 (200 XP)

Enchanting Gaze. As a bonus action the oni bengoshi can set its sights on a creature it can see within 100 feet. The target makes a DC 17 Charisma saving throw or gains the charmed condition for 1 hour. Each time the target takes damage, it makes a new Charisma saving throw. If the saving throw succeeds, they are no longer charmed. After successfully saving against this effect a creature cannot be charmed by the oni bengoshi for 24 hours.

Invisible Attacker. As a bonus action, an oni bengoshi can become invisible. This invisibility lasts until the oni bengoshi makes an attack or ten minutes have passed.

Magic Resistance. The oni bengoshi has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Minions (1/Combat). Oni bengoshi are accompanied by lesser oni bound to their will. As a bonus action, the oni bengoshi can mentally summon 2d4 bakemono (use the stats for Goblins) or shikome (use the stats for Hobgoblins) that appear within 200 feet in 1d4 rounds.

Regeneration. The oni bengoshi regains 10 hit points at the start of its turn if it has at least 1 hit point.

Shapechanger. As a bonus action, the oni bengoshi can assume the form of any humanoid of Medium or Small size. It receives advantage on Charisma (Disguise) checks and creatures are at disadvantage to see through its disguise. This change does not modify the oni bengoshi's statistics or hit points, only its appearance.

Sneak Attack (1/Turn). The oni bengoshi deals an extra 28 (8d6) damage when it hits a target with a weapon attack and has advantage on the attack roll, or when the target is within 5 feet of an ally of the oni bengoshi that isn't incapacitated and the oni bengoshi doesn't have disadvantage on the attack roll.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The oni bengoshi makes three razor whip attacks.

Razor Whip. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target.
Hit: 11 (1d12+5) magical slashing damage.

Xiqzoxix wandered from out of the Mists of Akuma shortly after the corrupting fog reappeared, 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.

TIKBALANG

Large monstrosity (oni), chaotic evil
Armor Class 17 (natural)
Hit Points 152 (16d10+64)
Speed 40 ft., climb 40 ft., fly 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
23 (+6)	16 (+3)	19 (+4)	11 (+0)	16 (+3)	18 (+4)

Saving Throws Dex +7, Int +4
Skills Deception +8, Insight +7, Perception +11, Stealth +7, Survival +7
Damage Immunities poison
Condition Immunities frightened, poisoned
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 21
Languages Aklo, Sylvan
Challenge 9 (5,000 XP)

Change Shape. The tikbalang magically polymorphs into a humanoid that has a challenge rating 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 alignment, hit points, Hit Dice, ability to speak, proficiencies, and Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma scores, as well as this action. Its statistics and capabilities are otherwise replaced by those of the new form, except any class features or legendary actions of that form.

Keen Smell. The tikbalang has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on smell.

Spellcasting. A tikbalang is a 9th-level spellcaster that uses Charisma as its spellcasting ability (spell save DC 16; +8 to hit with spell attacks). Tikbalang have the following spells prepared from the wizard's spell list:

Cantrips: *minor illusion*
1st level (4 slots): *comprehend languages, silent image*
2nd level (3 slots): *invisibility*
3rd level (3 slots): *major image*
4th level (2 slots): *greater invisibility*

Innate Spellcasting. The tikbalang 's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 16). The tikbalang can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

1/day each: *mirage arcane, maze*

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The tikbalang casts one spell and makes one bite attack and two claw attacks, or it makes six spine attacks.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target.
Hit: 15 (2d8+6) piercing damage.

Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target.
Hit: 13 (2d6+6) slashing damage.

Spine. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, range 120/240 ft., one target.
Hit: 10 (2d6+3) piercing damage.

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 before striking (usually by leaping from beneath a bridge, charging from within a thatch of bamboo, or dropping from the branches of a tree).

Tekihakai, Gaki Chef

Medium undead (oni), neutral evil
Armor Class 16 (natural)
Hit Points 90 (12d8+36)
Speed 30 ft., fly 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	17 (+3)	16 (+3)	13 (+1)	15 (+2)	20 (+5)

Saving Throws Dex +6, Int +4, Wis +5
Skills Investigation +4, Perception +5, Stealth +6, Survival +5
Damage Vulnerabilities cold, fire
Damage Resistances psychic
Damage Immunities necrotic, poison
Condition Immunities charmed, frightened, poisoned
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 15
Languages Soburi
Challenge 6 (2,300 XP)

Aversion to Sun and Moon. A gaki takes 1d4 fire damage every round it is exposed to the light of a full moon. It takes 1d4 cold damage every round it is exposed to direct sunlight.

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 DC 15 Wisdom saving throw 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.

Spellcasting. Gaki are 6th-level spellcasters that use Charisma as their spellcasting ability (spell save DC 16; +8 to hit with spell attacks). Gaki have the following spells prepared from the wizard's spell list and are able to cast them without the need for any components:

Cantrip: *minor illusion*
1st level (5 slots): *disguise self*
2nd level (5 slots): *invisibility*

ACTIONS

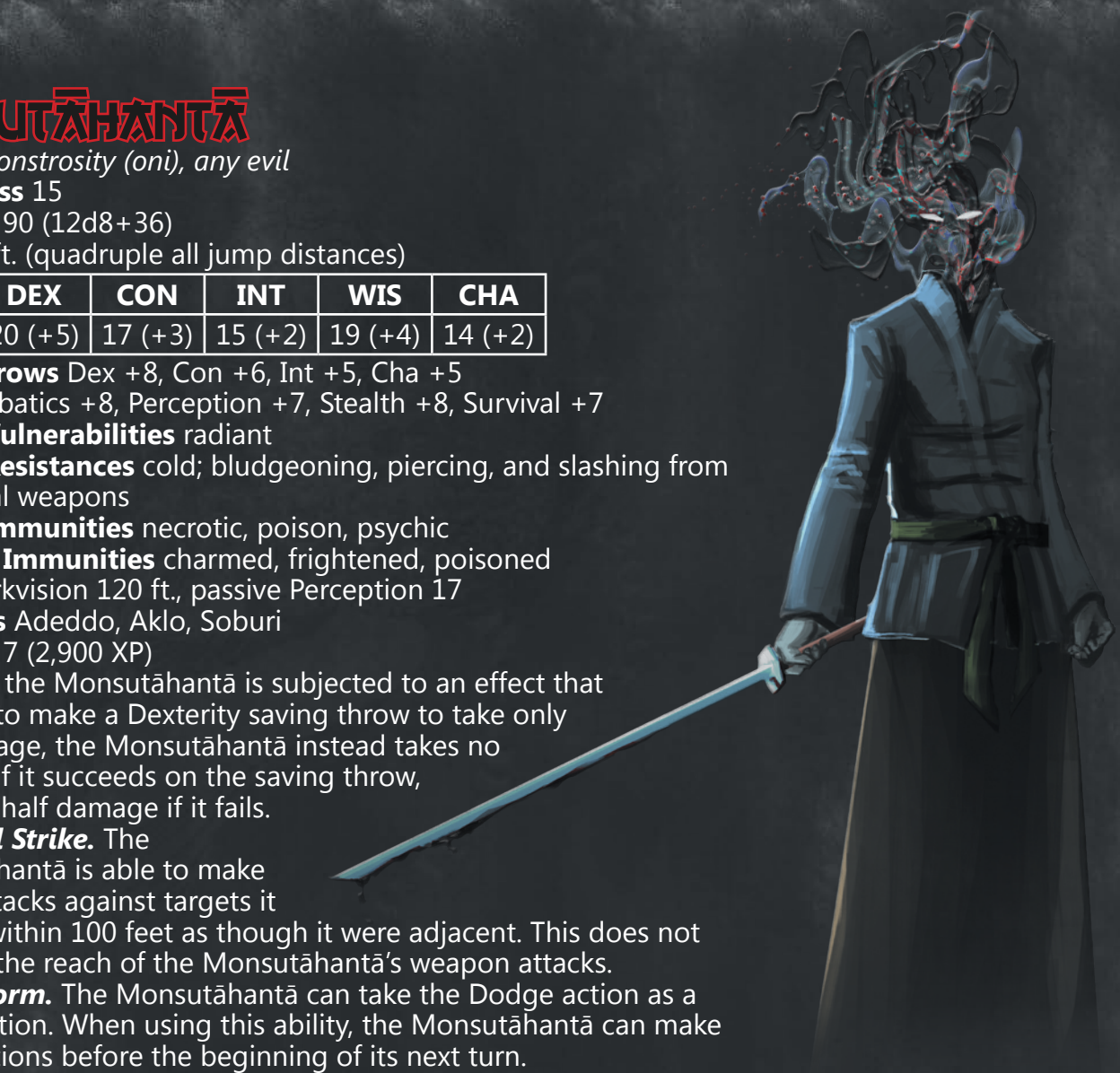
Multiattack. The gaki uses its frightful presence then makes two bite attacks.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 13 (2d8+4) piercing damage. A living creature that takes 10 or more damage takes an additional 3 points of damage at the end of each of its turns. This bleeding damage continues until the living creature receives a DC 15 Wisdom (Medicine) check as an action or otherwise recovers hit points.

Frightful Presence. Each creature of the gaki's choice that is within 60 ft. and aware of it must succeed on a DC 16 Wisdom saving throw or become frightened for 1 minute. A creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success. If a creature's saving throw is successful or the effect ends for it, the creature is immune to the gaki's frightful presence for the next 24 hours.

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. These oni are often found in the company of gashadokuro finding comfort in the collective hunger embodying the massive skeletons, and when gathered in concert gaki can be surprisingly clever about organizing a meal that will assuage the appetite of themselves and their larger ally.

MONSUTĀHANTĀ



Medium monstrosity (oni), any evil
Armor Class 15
Hit Points 90 (12d8+36)
Speed 50 ft. (quadruple all jump distances)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	20 (+5)	17 (+3)	15 (+2)	19 (+4)	14 (+2)

Saving Throws Dex +8, Con +6, Int +5, Cha +5
Skills Acrobatics +8, Perception +7, Stealth +8, Survival +7
Damage Vulnerabilities radiant
Damage Resistances cold; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical weapons
Damage Immunities necrotic, poison, psychic
Condition Immunities charmed, frightened, poisoned
Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 17
Languages Adeddo, Aklo, Soburi
Challenge 7 (2,900 XP)

Evasion. If the Monsutāhantā is subjected to an effect that allows it to make a Dexterity saving throw to take only half damage, the Monsutāhantā instead takes no damage if it succeeds on the saving throw, and only half damage if it fails.

Existential Strike. The Monsutāhantā is able to make melee attacks against targets it can see within 100 feet as though it were adjacent. This does not increase the reach of the Monsutāhantā's weapon attacks.

Flowing Form. The Monsutāhantā can take the Dodge action as a bonus action. When using this ability, the Monsutāhantā can make two reactions before the beginning of its next turn.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The Monsutāhantā makes three bleeding katana attacks.

Bleeding Katana. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target.
Hit: 4 (1d8+5) magical slashing damage. If the target is a creature other than an undead or a construct, it must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or lose 5 (1d10) hit points at the start of each of its turns as the unholy wounds bleed. Each time the Monsutāhantā hits a target already wounded by this attack, the damage dealt by the wound increases by 5 (1d10). Any creature can stanch the wound as an action with a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Medicine) check. The wound also closes if the target receives magical healing.

A target that takes a critical hit from a bleeding katana bleeds uncontrollably. The target has disadvantage on Constitution checks and Constitution saving throws until the bleeding wound is healed. In addition, whenever the target takes damage, it is stunned until the end of its next turn. Stanching a critical hit wound requires a DC 20 Wisdom (Medicine) check or all of the damage from the wound to be healed with magic.

REACTIONS

Incredible Dodge. The Monsutāhantā can ignore a weapon attack or spell attack.

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 conjured them, these lost champions are bound to seek glory among the monsters they once hunted.

Obiemashita, Yai Sovereign of Storms

Huge monstrosity (oni), neutral evil
Armor Class 17 (2 natural)
Hit Points 230 (20d12+100)
Speed 60 ft., fly 120 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	17 (+3)	16 (+3)	13 (+1)	15 (+2)	20 (+5)

Skills Athletics +8, Insight +8, Perception +8, Stealth +9
Damage Resistances necrotic, poison, psychic; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical weapons
Damage Immunities thunder
Condition Immunities deafened, frightened, poisoned
Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 18
Languages Addedo, Aklo, Ropa, Soburi, telepathy 200 ft.
Challenge 9 (5,000 XP)

Ancient Knowledge. Obiemashita gains its proficiency bonus (+6) to Intelligence ability checks and has advantage on Intelligence ability checks.

Elemental Embodiment of Storms. Obiemashita can cast *control weather* without the need for components or concentration. Spells attacks that use verbal components are at disadvantage against Obiemashita.

Legendary Resistance (3/Day). If Obiemashita fails a saving throw, it can choose to succeed instead.

Magic Resistance. Obiemashita has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Obiemashita makes any combination of three sandā stick and thunderous bursts attacks each turn.

Sandā Stick. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 15 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d8+4) bludgeoning, piercing, or slashing damage plus 9 (2d8) thunder damage. The target must make a DC 16 Constitution saving throw or gain the deafened condition for one round.

Thunderous Burst. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, range 100/500 ft., one target. *Hit:* 19 (3d12) thunder damage. The target must make a DC 16 Strength check or be pushed 20 feet away from Obiemashita.

LEGENDARY ACTION

Obiemashita can take 2 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. Obiemashita regains spent legendary actions at the start of its turn.

- ***Cacophonous Whisper.*** Obiemashita chooses one creature it can see within 200 feet. The target's mind is flooded with the yai sovereign of storm's telepathic screams, granting the deafened condition for one round.
- ***Lightning Step.*** Obiemashita moves to a space it can see within 50 feet.
- ***Thunder Cloud (Costs 2 Actions).*** Obiemashita chooses a spot within 50 feet, filling a 15-foot radius circle around it with booming thunder that deals 3d12 thunder damage to all objects and creatures inside the area of effect. Creatures make a DC 16 Dexterity saving throw or gain the deafened and prone conditions, or take half as much damage on a successful save and suffer no conditions.

Yai sovereigns are powerful oni that have lived for millennia, attaining such a mastery over the elemental forces that they embody the world's primal energies. Obiemashita is not a fully realized yai sovereign of storms quite yet, causing tempests and storms that grant it greater power, and so long as the adventurers can bring it low quickly Soburin will have one less ancient oni to contend with.

Katana of Rizushi Kantaro

Wondrous item, artifact (requires attunement)

This weapon was once held by a rival philosopher that reviled his peer, the celebrated thinker Dao-Jaifeng, and carried so much spite for him that his hatred has continued well past death. The *Katana of Rizushi Kantaro* is a magic, sentient katana that grants a +3 bonus to attack and damage rolls made with it. It scores a critical hit on a roll of 19 or 20, and deals an extra 1d10 slashing damage to oni.

If the sword isn't bathed in blood within 1 minute of being drawn from its scabbard, its wielder must make a DC 15 Charisma saving throw. On a successful save, the wielder takes 3d6 psychic damage. On a failed save, the wielder is dominated by the sword, as if by the *dominate monster* spell, and the sword demands that it be bathed in blood. The spell effect ends when the sword's demand is met.

The *Katana of Rizushi Kantaro* is also a tsukumogami and is able to act under its own free will unless its wielder succeeds on a DC 18 Dignity saving throw.

While attuned to the artifact , you gain proficiency in Culture, immunity to charms and fear, you must eat and drink six times the normal amount each day, and you become amnesiatic (you know who you are and retain racial traits and class features, but don 't recognize other people or remember anything before acquiring the artifact).

Katana of Rizushi Kantaro

Small monstrosity (takara tsukumogami), chaotic evil

Armor Class 17 (3 natural)
Hit Points 97 (15d6+45)
Speed fly 40 ft. (hover)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	18 (+4)	17 (+3)	15 (+2)	15 (+2)	16 (+3)

Saving Throws Int +5, Wis +5
Skills Insight +5, Perception +5, Stealth +7
Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 15
Damage Vulnerabilities radiant
Damage Resistances cold, fire; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage from nonmagical weapons
Damage Immunities necrotic, poison, psychic
Condition Immunities exhaustion, poisoned
Languages Soburi
Challenge 7 (2,900 XP)

Sentient Artifact. The tsukumogami gains all the benefits it can grant to a creature wielding it.

Spiteful Charm. One humanoid the tsukumogami can see within 30 feet of it must succeed on a DC 14 Charisma saving throw or be magically compelled to betrayal for 1 round, attacking one of its allies to the best of its ability. If the target successfully saves against the effect, or if the effect on it ends, the target is immune to this tsukumogami's Spiteful Charm for the next minute. The tsukumogami can only affect one target with this ability at a time. Immunity to the charmed condition grants advantage on saving throws to resist this effect.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Each turn the tsukumogami uses Spiteful Charm and makes two bladed attacks.

Bladed. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 14 (2d6+7) magical slashing damage.

Spirit of Rizushi. While the sword is on your person, you add a d10 to your initiative at the start of every combat.

In addition, when you use an action to attack with the sword, you can transfer some or all of its attack bonus to your Armor Class instead. The adjusted bonuses remain in effect until the start of your next turn.

Spells. While wielding the sword, you can use an action to cast one of the following spells (spell save DC 18) from it: *call lightning, divine word*, or *finger of death*. Once you use the sword to cast a spell, you can't cast that spell again from it until the next twilight.

Sentience. The *Katana of Rizushi Kantaro* is a sentient chaotic evil weapon with an Intelligence of 15, a Wisdom of 15, and a Charisma of 16. It has hearing and darkvision out to a range of 120 feet. The weapon communicates telepathically with its wielder and can speak, read, and understand Soburi.

Personality. The sword's purpose is to bring ruination on all those who practiced the teachings of the dead philosopher Dao-Jaifeng, ultimately destroying everything that would make his memory last in Soburin.

Destroying the Sword. After being defeated in combat, the soul of a true believer of Dao-Jaifeng must sacrifice itself to counteract the evil essence inside the *Katana of Rizushi Kantaro*.

Connection E: Beginning's End

Once the party have exited Tsukisasu and headed back down the mountainside they have a little more adventuring to do before *Revenge of the Pale Master* begins the preamble of the dark one's terrible return—the very event for which Kanja Korusu has been planning. In this section of *Trade War* the PCs finally see the results of their work spread across Soburin, bring a permanent end to the demons of the seasons, and solidify their allegiances with the organizations and NPCs at play.

This part of campaign is as long or as short as the GM decides. Given the oni city's mystical nature the adventurers exit near a forest by some tracks recently put down by the Tazuki Rail company (meaning an area in the northern part of the continent—Ibutsu Prefecture being ideal) but these are the only restrictions on the exact placement of the locale. Ultimately the party needs to reach or be near the city of Kizaki in Gekido Prefecture to receive the missive that draws them into the final gambit of the Pale Master. Before then however, the PCs should experience the following events:

- ***Trade War: The Farmers Militia.*** After emerging back onto the mainland proper the adventurers discover that machine-armored soburi are gathering together in large numbers to resist the erītokirā hunting them, the Machibuse Traders have played their hand and joined the farmers-turned-warriors, and the Gensosō have been recalled back to Ikari Prefecture—all signs that something momentous is imminent.
- ***Mitsuyu Gyōsha Consortium: Tsukumogami Assaults.*** The party overhears rumors that speak of entire towns overrun by tsukumogami. Though they won't be able to investigate settlements so far away, the smugglers have something prepared for the PCs all the same.
- ***Mubō Brothers: Final Battle.*** The last of the gunfighting brothers awaits the party as they exit Tsukisasu, engaging them in a treetop battle then attempting to make his escape by leaping atop train cars dragged by a newly soburi-built Tazuki Rail locomotive.
- ***Awakening Gates.*** Kinzobutsu and Oddubutsu have nearly completed their work and have called upon Nashio Ujikane for one last, very final favor to finish a powerful ritual on behalf of their master.
- ***Extra Connections: Yōjinbō and Koibito.*** Adventurers that have saved these NPCs from death earlier in the *Trade War* adventure path might learn through them about the terrible things about to commence (bloodlusted erītokirā mercenaries out in force and the brewing plot in Kizaki, respectively) as a way for the GM to entice the PCs towards the campaign's final settlement in Gekido Prefecture.

Trade War: The Farmers Militia

The events of the past several seasons are culminating in what any adventurer proficient in both Culture and History (or has the Soldier background or similar) automatically recognizes is a sure recipe for war. By now the PCs should have chosen a side in this looming conflict, though there's a good chance that they've not yet realized who's truly behind it all (Shūshō Ikari, Kanja Korusu, and the enigmatic Pale Master).

Yakunitatsu Aibō, Itsusuji Tanko, and Shouni Yome—the same three machine-armored soburi the PCs saved while traveling north—have become reluctant leaders of others like themselves, each managing roving bands of more than two score farmers-turned-warriors. Even without proper martial training they are a force to be reckoned with but months and months of being hounded by erītokirā warriors have encouraged cowardice among the ranks. Fortunately things are changing and there's some order being instilled in the troops, but even so they'll be of no help until after the events of *Revenge of the Pale Master*.

The Machibuse Traders have openly allied themselves with these militias, supplying their camps and supplanting their amateur soldiers with equal numbers of proper samurai and trained mercenaries teaching them how to make war (as well as a smattering of mages and priests). Every group is being schooled in different tactics at the behest of their mysterious benefactor—all by way of their most public ambassador, the kumo hengeyokai Ara Rimun (page 117). If the

PCs have won over the merchant and approach her wanting to know more, with a DC 17 Charisma (Persuasion) check or DC 14 Dignity check she reveals that she receives her orders from none other than Kanja Korusu.

With a DC 12 Intelligence (Investigation) check the party can find one of the following militia camps to finally see the full impact of the smuggling operations—or if they are opposed to spreading the shikome technology, an opportunity to do reconnaissance. Note that if the adventurers abandoned or gave Yakunitatsu over to the Gensosō before *Cursed Soul of the Scorpion Samurai* that another soburi has taken his place.

Aibō's Shieldbearers. The troops under "Colonel" Yakunitatsu Aibō are receiving the harshest and most violent training and for good reason—they're being drilled in the arts of defense. Their leader is a shade more grim and confident than he used to be, comfortable in his machine-armor and welcoming of the PCs. He'll show the adventurers around the grounds and is proud of the progress his soldiers have made although it is very obvious there's more of these warriors than others, they have a lot to learn yet, and he confides in private that he's been told there's not much time left for them to do so.

Tanko's Reapers. "Marshall" Itsusuji Tanko has become a fierce combatant and the practiced warriors training her militia recognized that instantly, turning her charges towards aggressive offensive tactics. Her camp is filled with the sound of clashing blades and while the soldiers there bear many scars, their suits of machine-armor scuffed by countless training strikes, they all show a prodigious amount of talent for swordplay—easily the most impressive display of skill amongst the rag-tag companies. Any blademaster will lament that there aren't more of them.

Yome's Artillery. Finally there's "General" Shouni Yume and the smallest of the three militias—the machine-armored soburi with potent ranged weaponry built into their suits. They are doing moderately well with their training but only their leader is truly talented with her firearm, a portable cannon that never leaves her person. Even without being able to aim very well these farmers-turned-warriors are devastating, the hail of lead from a squad firing all at once certain to overwhelm the pitfalls of their poor accuracy.

Gensosō Enclave

Adventurers arrayed against the Gensosō are no longer hunted by the warrior-monks and with some cursory information gathering will learn they've all been called back to Nagabuki in Ikari Prefecture. GMs that wish for the party to learn more about the masters behind the *Trade War* adventure path by way of this plot thread may place Tsukisasu's exit further south on the map, allowing for the PCs to infiltrate the event. It's not a difficult task so long as the adventurers don't approach too close to the center of the conclave (a grove and natural amphitheater in the jungles northeast of the city) and too near the immortal leading it: Shūshō Ikari.

PCs allied with the Gensosō are bid farewell by their servant and if they question why the warrior-monk must leave, it's explained to them that there have been recent orders to return home and they are invited to join.

The ancient Imperial Sibling gives a forceful speech and fires up the crowd of over a hundred of the elementalists and as many nobles, telling them that a dark and terrible force gathers in northern Soburin and that he's certain technology is to blame (which is only partly true). He speaks of settlements overwhelmed by hordes of monsters—not adeddo-oni, but tsukumogami—and that powerful magic is obscuring his divine visions of the future. Shūshō's oration ends with an urge for a call to arms to march north and face the threat head on. Whether or not the party is in attendance, they're sure to hear rumors about the large force of traditional soldiers coming north towards Kizaki once they are in the city.



TSUKUMOGAMI ASSAULT

The tsukumogami smugglers have spread their agents all over the continent and are carefully gauging the government's response to the isolated attacks, gathering information to put the Masuto Empire's military into disarray when the real fighting begins. Tea houses and taverns are alight with talk of distant settlements being overrun by tsukumogami and to keep the PCs from straying off course, the GM should put them far out of reach (like in the prefectures of Uso, Uragi, or Rimono). A DC 16 Intelligence (Investigation) check to find out more reveals that some more defensible towns managed to fight off their attacks, and a result of 20 or higher discovers that Emperor Hitoshi has sent his tsukumogami hunters (the Seishin Nohantā) from Sanbaoshi to investigate each assault.

That doesn't mean there's no part for the adventurers in the seditious plans of the Mitsuyu Gyōsha Consortium however and to make certain the party does not reveal the traders-turned-traitor's schemes they send one of their newest creations to kill the PCs. While they are stealthy and canny, the smugglers could not manage to properly install the armor contacts needed to utilize the shikome technology (at least not in any surviving subjects). Instead they've taken the erītokirā suits they've collected and—treating each reverently and with great care—exposed the machine-armors to the Mists of Akuma. It quickly became clear that lumping several together proved safer and more efficient, and the first of their monstrosities has been ordered to assassinate the adventurers.

The erītokirā armor tsukumogami does not attack the PCs directly—instead one of the smugglers pays a local peasant child to investigate some disturbance near a settlement the party is visiting and once there they see the strange technology laying dormant. Before disappearing, the agent (disguised as a commoner of course) tells the youth to inform another adult or simply watches from afar until the unknowing saboteur gets the adventurers' attention. When one of the PCs is adjacent to the tsukumogami it leaps up and attacks, aided by 4 Mitsuyu Gyōsha Smugglers (page 119) hiding within 100 feet. Noticing the hiding agents prior to the combat requires a successful DC 19 Wisdom (Perception) check.

ERĪTOKIRĀ ARMOR TSUKUMOGAMI

Large monstrosity (tsukumogami), neutral evil

Armor Class 17 (natural)

Hit Points 147 (14d10+70)

Speed 40 ft., climb 30 ft., leap 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	11 (+0)	20 (+5)	11 (+0)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)

Saving Throws Str +9, Con +9, Int +4

Skills Athletics +13, Stealth +8

Damage Resistances acid, cold, fire, necrotic, thunder; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

Damage Immunities poison, psychic

Condition Immunities blinded, charmed, deafened, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned

Senses blindsight 120 ft. (blind beyond this radius), passive Perception 12

Languages Soburi (Common)

Challenge 9 (5,000 XP)

Corrupted Stimulants (Recharge 6). At the beginning of the tsukumogami's turn chemicals out of it. Creatures within a 10-foot radius make a DC 17 Dexterity saving throw, taking 13 (3d8) acid damage on a failed save (success halves).

Hidden In Plain Sight. A DC 22 Wisdom (Perception) check is needed to discern the tsukumogami is more than a large suit of machine armor.

Nitrous Dash (Recharge 5-6). The tsukumogami takes a Dash action as a free action.

Power Attack. When it makes its first melee weapon attack in a turn, the tsukumogami can choose to take a -5 penalty to its melee weapon attack rolls in exchange for a +10 bonus to melee weapon damage. In addition, the tsukumogami can use a bonus action to make one melee weapon attack after it uses a melee weapon to reduce a creature to 0 hit points or score a critical hit. The tsukumogami can only use this feature on its turn.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The tsukumogami attacks twice.

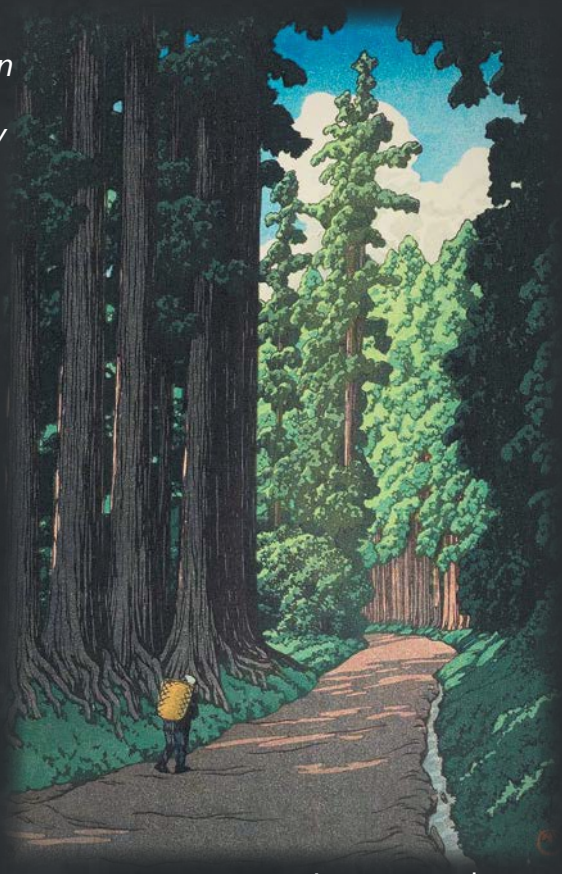
Chainblade. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 15 ft., one target.
Hit: 18 (2d12+5) magical slashing damage.

Mounted Revolver. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, range 40/160 ft., one target.
Hit: 9 (2d8) magical piercing damage.

Mubō Brothers: Final Battle

The sixth of the gun-toting Mubō Brothers has been tracking the PCs and spent an emperor's ransom to find out where they went—Tsukisasu—and where they'll be traveling when they leave. When the adventurers depart the oni city and descend down the mountain, wherever they exit they find an abutting forest of tall trees heavy with sap (either alpines or rubber trees). Hayaku is waiting for them, concealed in the treetops above and ready to rain down a hail of lead to avenge his dead brothers. A DC 19 Wisdom (Perception) check is required to notice him hiding above before he attacks. Read the following:

Extremely tall trees have become a rarity in Soburin but as you descend from Tsukisasu's mountain they are all around you, their high branches wavering to and fro to cover up the sky. It is an idyllic scene but soon the peaceful background of nature is interrupted by a gruff voice echoing from the trunks, "Murderers!," it shouts, "I swear by the names of my brothers that I, Hayaku Mubō, shall have vengeance!" Not a second later you hear the cracking rapport of gunfire and lead flies at you from above!



Hayaku unloads a fusillade of bullets then leaps to a new vantage point, hiding amongst the foliage 30 feet above the party in a gradual retreat towards a new addition to the forest—railroad tracks and an approaching locomotive. Fighting him amongst the branches requires a DC 12 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check at the end of a creature's movement. On a failure, the branches crack and the creatures falls unless it makes a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw to catch onto something (gaining the prone condition).

When the GM feels the battle is nearing an amicable end, read the following:

Between the gunshots and crashing branches you hear a faint, steady chugging sound that slowly grows louder and louder. In the distance ahead you can see a stack of smoke rising up and moving along as the clanking of machinery producing it heralds a railroad engine dragging dozens of carriages behind it, swiftly traveling towards you.



Provided he's not dead yet but has lost the upper hand, the gunfighter leaps from the trees and down onto the top of a train car, escaping the PCs and vowing to kill them the next time they meet. Read the following:

"We shall meet again you wretches!" Hayaku screams, leaping into view as he exits the treeline and rolls down onto the roof of one of the train cars. "When I see you next it shall be on the day of your final breaths!"

Unless he's defeated in a daring carriage-rooftop battle on the train, after his escape Hayaku goes to ground and the PCs won't see him until they're in Kizaki. The party have 2d4+4 rounds to get on top of the train. When on top of the moving train, at the start and end of a creature's turn it makes a DC 13 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check. A creature that succeeds on the first of these checks in a turn has advantage on the second check. On a failure a creature falls prone, and if failed by 5 or more, the creature rolls 2d6 feet towards the nearest edge of the train car. A creature that rolls off the train makes a DC 16 Dexterity saving throw to catch onto the carriage (gaining the prone condition) but otherwise falls off the train, taking damage as if they'd fallen 60 feet (a monk's Slow Fall feature reduces this damage but *featherfall* cannot). Each train car is 40 feet long, 18 feet high, and 15 feet across.

When they next fight Hayaku it is in the streets of Kizaki in Gekido Prefecture. The gunfighter calls them out in public, declaring an honor duel against the entire party versus only himself. He's got a trick up his sleeve of course, four of his firearms loaded with a special surprise for the adventurers—two revolvers holding special blinding and flaming gunpowder cartridges, and two revolvers loaded with poison bullets, all of them more potent than normal.

Blinding. The firearm fires a 40-foot cone of serrated shards and brilliant light. All creatures in the cone take 15 (4d4) slashing damage (no save) and must make a DC 14 Dexterity saving throw or be blinded for 1 minute.

Flaming. The firearm creates a 20-foot cone of flame and smoke that deals 28 (8d6) fire damage. Creatures in the area can make a DC 14 Dexterity saving throw to reduce the damage taken by half.

Poison. If used to fire a bullet within short range, the target of the shot takes an extra 7 (2d6) poison damage.

Thankfully once Hayaku is killed, the Mubō Brothers are no more—although it's at the GM's discretion if this means the entire family line has been eradicated, and if so, what consequences that might have.

HAYAKU MUBŌ

Medium humanoid (soburi), chaotic neutral

Armor Class 19 (studded leather, *ring of protection*, defensive fighting style)

Hit Points 150 (20d8+60)

Speed 45 ft., leap 15 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA	Dignity	Haitoku
14 (+2)	20 (+5)	16 (+3)	13 (+1)	15 (+2)	15 (+2)	16 (+3)	14 (+2)

Saving Throws Str +3, Dex +10, Con +8, Int +2, Wis +3, Cha +3

Skills Acrobatics +9, Athletics +6, Deception +6, Insight +6, Perception +6, Stealth +9, Survival +6

Senses passive Perception 16

Languages Soburi (Common)

Challenge 10 (5,900 XP)

Action Surge (1/short rest). On Hayaku's turn, he can take an additional action on top of his regular action and a possible bonus action.

Cunning Action (1/round). Hayaku can take a bonus action to take the Dash, Disengage, or Hide action.

Deadeye. Hayaku does not have disadvantage on ranged weapon attack rolls made at long range and he ignores any cover equal to or less than three-quarters cover.

Dextrous (1/round). Hayaku is so agile and quick that he may grant himself advantage on a Dexterity ability check. In addition, on his turn he can draw firearm weapons as a free action.

Evasion. When Hayaku is subjected to an effect that allows him to make a Dexterity saving throw to take only half damage, he instead takes no damage if he succeeds on the saving throw, and only half damage if he fails.

Initiative Savvy. Hayaku has advantage when rolling initiative.



Point Blank Master. Hayaku does not have disadvantage on ranged weapon attack rolls when within an enemy's reach and when he hits a creature within 5 feet with a ranged weapon attack using a firearm, he scores a critical hit on a roll of 18, 19, or 20.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Hayaku attacks four times. Each of his revolvers holds 8 shots and when one goes empty he draws another.

Wakizashi. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target.
Hit: 10 (1d6+7) slashing damage.

Long-Barrel Revolvers (5). *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, range 40/160 ft., one target.
Hit: 14 (2d8+5) piercing damage.

REACTIONS

Fast Reflexes. Hayaku can take up to two reactions each round.

Uncanny Dodge. When an attacker Hayaku can see hits him with an attack, Hayaku can use his reaction to halve the attack's damage against him.

AWAKENING GATES

Any adventurers that continue tracking the black torii gates can find one not far from their path on any forested part of this section of the journey by succeeding on a DC 17 Wisdom (Perception) check to spot the structure or a DC 14 Intelligence (Investigation) check to hear rumors of it. Wherever and whichever black torii gate the PCs find, fresh tracks from Kinzobutsu and Oddubutsu are revealed by a DC 13 Intelligence (Investigation) check while the party canvases the area. Following the demons' trail with a successful DC 12 Wisdom (Survival) check brings the adventurers to a grisly scene. Read the following:

Following the monsters' tracks takes you to a clearing and a blasphemous stench assaults you long before you begin hearing the muttering of demons. As they come into view you see the upside down head of Nashio Ujikane staring up at you from the destroyed remains of his body, the Imperial Guardsman's flesh flayed open on the bare ground in a mess of gore. The wooden oni's arm grows outward and it flicks at the dead soburi's entrails, saying to its metal-sheened companion. "See, here Oddubutsu, the kidney—it is turning green! So the master's torii gate in the fire sovereign's valley is not functioning well."

"Oh simple, simple Kinzobutsu, this is why the planning is for me to do." The metallic demon nudges at the crimson-soaked dirt, trailing a line from poor Nashio's kidney up towards his heart. "This is Kizaki, see? The leylines are favorable. It is functioning as it should be and that is why the kidney is green—when the time comes, it will be a perfect conduit." The oni saunters around to the other side, pointing to a ruptured organ reeking with feces. "This colon, however, is a portent of trouble."

Kinzobutsu nods and then freezes stiffly, the sound of creaking wood echoing outward as its head slowly turns to regard Oddubutsu. "I do not think we are alone, brother."



Though their divinations kept Kinzobutsu occupied long enough for the PCs to get close and overhear the discussion, its Tree Sense has alerted it to the presence of the party. Before the attack begins the adventurers can make a DC 10 Intelligence (History) check to realize that Nashio's corpse has been stretched out into an approximation of the continent of Soburin. The demons fight until destroyed and any attempts to make them reveal their master automatically fail, although PCs that try using magic to compel either oni to share this information does indicate that a much more powerful force is preventing them from doing so.

KINZOBUTSU

Medium oni, chaotic evil
Armor Class 17 (natural)
Hit Points 130 (20d8+40)
Speed 50 ft., climb 50 ft., leap 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	16 (+3)	15 (+2)	13 (+1)	15 (+2)	14 (+2)

Saving Throws Str +8, Con +6, Int +5, Wis +6
Skills Athletics +8, Deception +10, Insight +10, Perception +6, Stealth +7
Damage Vulnerabilities radiant
Damage Resistances acid, cold, thunder
Condition Immunities charmed, frightened
Senses darkvision 120 ft., tree sense 100 ft., passive Perception 16
Languages Adeddo, Aklo, Draconic, Soburi (Common), Undercommon
Challenge 9 (5,000 XP)

Deadly Vines (Recharge 5-6). As a bonus action, Kinzobutsu can increase the reach of its Vine Slam by 50 feet until the end of the round.

Innate Spellcasting. Kinzobutsu's innate spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell attack +6, spell save DC 14). It can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components.

At will: *entangle, locate animals and plants, plant growth, speak with plants*
3/day each: *blight, spike growth, transport via plants*

Magic Resistance. Kinzobutsu has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Regeneration. Kinzobutsu regains 20 hit points at the start of its turn. If it takes fire damage, this trait doesn't function at the start of Kinzobutsu's next turn. It dies only if it starts its turn with 0 hit points and doesn't regenerate.

Tree Sense. While in a forest, Kinzobutsu knows the exact location of any other creature within a range of 100 feet.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Kinzobutsu attacks three times.

Vine Slam. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +8 to hit, reach 10 ft., one creature.
Hit: 13 (2d8+4) bludgeoning damage and the target is grappled (escape DC 16) if Kinzobutsu is not already grappling two creatures. While Kinzobutsu is grappling a creature and uses that limb to Vine Slam, it has disadvantage on its attack roll and deals half its Vine Slame damage to the grappled creature regardless of if it hits.

Animate Dark Tree (1/day). Kinzobutsu animates one tree it can see within 60 feet of it, giving it a semblance of life but warping it into a foul perversion of what it once was. This dark tree has the same statistics as a treant, except it has Intelligence and Charisma scores of 1, can't speak, and has only the Slam action option. When it hits with its Slam, the dark tree deals an extra 7 (2d6) necrotic damage to both itself and its target. A dark tree acts as an ally of Kinzobutsu. The dark tree remains animated for 1 day or until it dies, Kinzobutsu dies or is more than 120 feet from the dark tree, or until Kinzobutsu takes a bonus action to turn it back into an inanimate tree. The dark tree then takes root if possible, although it remains cursed.

ODDUBUTSU

Medium oni, chaotic evil

Armor Class 18 (natural)
Hit Points 170 (20d8+80)
Speed 40 ft., leap 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	18 (+4)	19 (+4)	17 (+3)	14 (+2)	15 (+2)

Saving Throws Str +9, Dex +8, Con +8, Cha +6
Skills Athletics +9, Deception +6, Insight +6, Perception +6, Stealth +8
Damage Vulnerabilities psychic, radiant
Damage Resistances acid, cold, fire; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing
Damage Immunities force, thunder
Condition Immunities charmed, frightened
Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 16
Languages Adeddo, Aklo, Draconic, Soburi (Common), Undercommon
Challenge 10 (5,900 XP)

Baleful Gaze. As a bonus action, Oddubutsu sets its sight on a creature it can see within 200 feet. The target makes a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw or gains the frightened condition for 1 minute. At the end of each of its turns, the frightened creature can make a saving throw to remove the condition. After successfully saving against this effect a creature cannot be frightened by Oddubutsu for 24 hours.

Existential Strike. Oddubutsu is able to make melee attacks against targets it can see within 100 feet as though it were adjacent. This does not increase the reach of Oddubutsu's weapon attacks.

Innate Spellcasting. Oddubutsu's innate spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell attack +7, spell save DC 15). It can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components.

At will: *detect magic, heat metal, shatter*
3/day each: *fabricate* (metal only, casting time 1 action)

Magic Resistance. Oddubutsu has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Metal-Touched. Oddubutsu has advantage on attack rolls against creatures wearing medium or heavy armor made from metal. In addition, it can wield a metal weapon of any size in one hand.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Oddubutsu casts one spell and attacks three times.

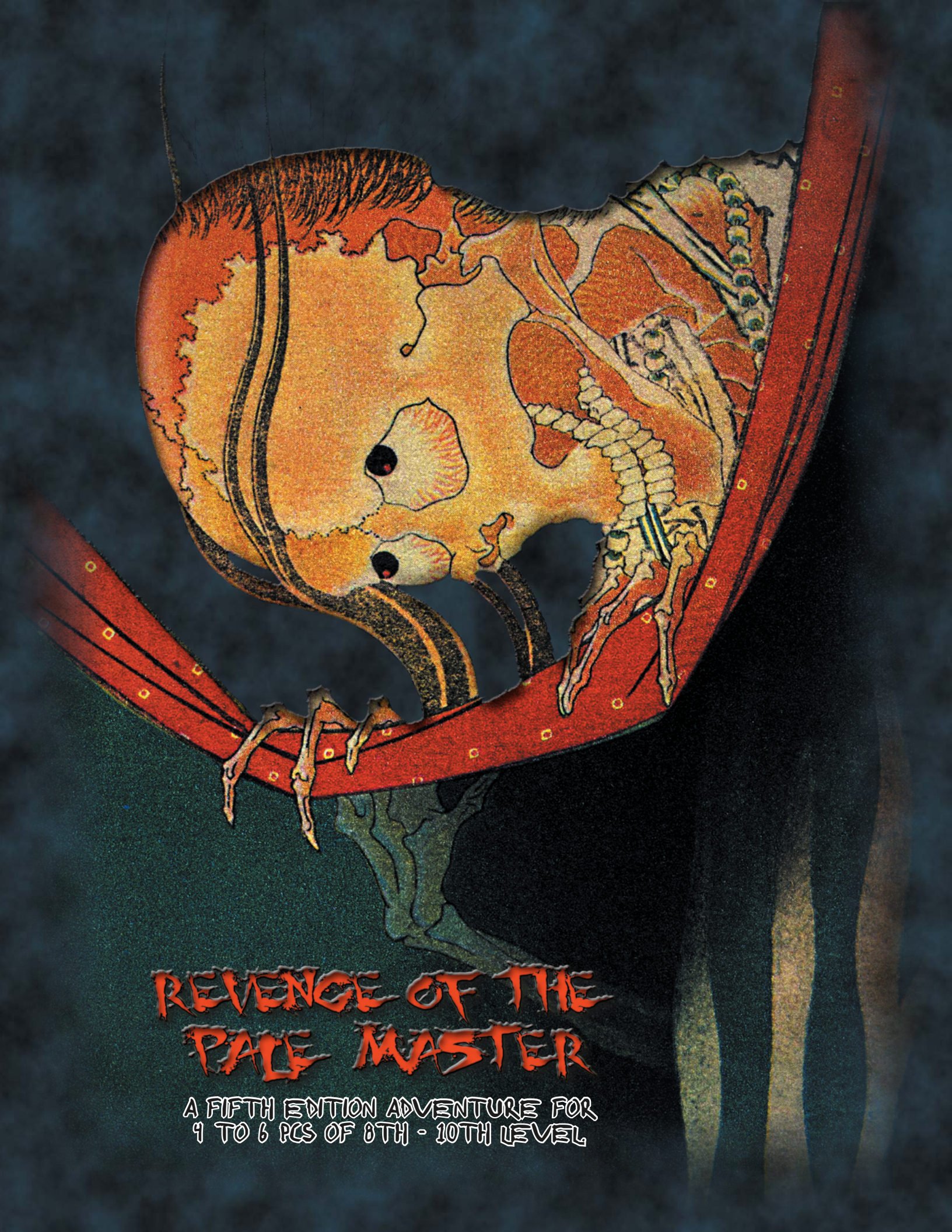
Hooked Saber. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +10 to hit, reach 5 ft, one creature. *Hit*: 13 (2d6+6) magical slashing damage.

EXTRA CONNECTION: KOIBITO & YŌJINBŌ

Adventurers that saved either of these NPCs earlier in the adventure path learn some important information that may impact their decisions at the end of *Revenge of the Pale Master*.

Koibito. The baku has been persuaded by the Pale Master's chief servant, the vampire Muraoka, to help in the days to come. Though it is uncertain what its precise role will be Koibito knows it is to be at a certain place at a certain time. Provided the adventurers saved it in the events following *Fangs of Revenge*, during *Revenge of the Pale Master* the baku visits the PC it liked most in their dreams, telling them to meet the following night in a locale near where it will rendezvous with the vampire so that the party can flag it down, possibly convincing it to release the child sacrifices and vastly increasing the chances the Pale Master is denied.

Yōjinbō. The shikome monk comes to the party warning that the erītokirā chapters of the Kōteino, Kodomo-Tachi, and Haiiro-Nokishi are amassing resources and setting up outposts to be used for supply routes, sure to mobilize for war in the near future. Aside from confirming the adventurers likely suspicions he's also discovered that mercenaries of the Arufa-Gundan, Runaookami, and Shibanmushi erītokirā have been seen traveling to and from the fortresses of the first three, meaning they are calling in allies.



REVENGE OF THE PALE MASTER

A FIFTH EDITION ADVENTURE FOR
4 TO 6 PCS OF 8TH - 10TH LEVEL

Adventure Introduction

Revenge of the Pale Master plunges the 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.

Adventure 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 Hone-Noroi 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

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 Hone-Noroi 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 to leave him nearly powerless.

Afterwards the three adventurers chose to remain near the Hone-Noroi Keep in order to keep a watch on the specter that remained within, starting families and businesses, their stories fading with history as and 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 Hone-Noroi 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 his 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 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 intervene, foiling 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 Hone-Noroi 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 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 finally 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 deciding 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 a fel deal with the 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:** 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 adventurers are going to encounter many NPCs before the mystery plaguing Kizaki unravels. Throughout the module you'll notice that all major characters have portraits—use them! When introducing the various NPCs, show their illustrations to the party and encourage them to keep notes on who is who and what they're doing. With such a wide and diverse cast even the sleuthiest groups will be hard-pressed to remain on top of the adventure without visual references and those they make for themselves.

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 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 begins to fall.

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.

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, 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 particularly 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 badly damaged 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 8,000 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 almost certainly know.
- Fujioka once had an apprentice though that fact is not well known; their 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 Guard). 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, *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. Should the party realized too early that Kuyoshi Muraoka is the true threat in Kizaki, remember that he has a myriad of powers at his disposal, an effectively limitless stockpile of gold, and that the PCs are on his home turf. Red herrings should not be in short supply and the GM has great mobility in terms of what can be brought to bear against the adventurers to muddy their search for the missing children, the kidnapper, or if they are truly ambitious, the real Pale Master.

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 with a trained talent for painting. 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 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 arrived to take 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 **DC 10 Charisma (Persuasion) check** to get her to open up. Apply disadvantage if the PCs are dismissive, rude, or sexist, though they can gain advantage if she is approached by a female party member or someone that has quieted Koru's ranting.

Act 2: 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 door ways 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 spot 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 his greatest regret.

Playing Kazuya



Kazuya survived Kizaki's teeming warrens by constantly proving himself 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 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 perceptive characters that make a DC 20 Wisdom (Insight) check 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 (publically, at least) a man of his word. If a particularly crafty character 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 might try 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 Charisma (Intimidation) checks made against Kazuya have a minimum DC of 20 and are made at disadvantage due to the presence of Kazuya's many supporters and lackies. A failed check 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 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, an event that is practically a death sentence. Kazuya uses the statistics for a Veteran with a Strength of 16, an AC of 15, and thanks to his augmetics, martial training, and quick reflexes he is able to fight with any weapons or inflict 1d6+3 with unarmed attacks.

The rest of his gang is comprised of 6 Thugs and 5 junior initiates (use statistics for Bandits), 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) that hides in the Oyami Tea House's basement.

After four rounds of combat, more Iron Spiders enter the Oyami Tea House at a rate of one Thug and two Bandits every 1d4 rounds until the party or Kazuya is

defeated or the doors are somehow blocked. If the party 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.

Variant: A Tougher Encounter

For higher-level PCs, double Kazuya's hit points and use the regular statistics for Mekkusenshi (*MoA* page 36) for Kuno-Meinu.

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.

Kuno-Meinu, Damaged Mekkusenshi

Medium humanoid, neutral
Armor Class 14 (natural armor)
Hit Points 60 (8d8+24)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)	9 (–1)	14 (+2)	9 (–1)

Saving Throws Dex +4, Con +5, Int +1, Cha +1
Skills Athletics +6, Perception +4, Stealth +4, Survival +4
Damage Vulnerabilities acid, lightning
Damage Resistances cold, fire, poison
Damage Immunities psychic
Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, poisoned
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 14
Languages Soburi
Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)
Augmented Leap. Mekkusenshi can vertically jump 15 feet or horizontally jump 30 feet without the need for an ability check.
ACTIONS
Sword Arm. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target.
Hit: 13 (2d8+4) slashing damage.

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, witness 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. 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 Ghost though there is a significant difference; reducing Shinzo the Eater to 0 hit points only disperses him. He reforms at the beginning of any round where he is at 0 hit points. If he successfully manages to posses 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.*** Make a **Strength (Athletics) check** against another living creature using either your proficiency bonus or 3, whichever is higher. If you are successful, you make a bite attack against the target with advantage, dealing 1d6 piercing damage plus your Strength modifier. If you begin a turn grappling a target, you must use your action to perform the Attack action to make as many bite attacks as you are capable against the target.

VARIANT: A TOUGHER ENCOUNTER

For higher-level PCs, include a number of Specters equal to the number of adventurers in the party, echoes of Shinzo equally eager to devour the PCs.

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 a DC 20 Intelligence (Religion) check to identify this fact, though the GM may rule that an appropriate background or prior experience allows them to automatically succeed on the check, 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 three rounds, during which time the

PC undertaking the ritual must pass a DC 13 Wisdom saving throw 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 Constitution saving throw (DC 10 or half the damage taken, whichever is higher).

Alternatively, the party may choose to allow the priestess to conduct the ritual instead. A DC 14 Wisdom (Perception) check 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 core rules.) Healing magic functions normally and only a moment after being restored to consciousness she casts protection from evil and good upon herself and begins the ritual. Given Yumi's familiarity with the prayer she need only make checks to maintain her concentration if she takes damage, and she has advantage 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 (when 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 347).



Though disjointed and corrupted, Shinzo the Eater may be able to provide help to adventurers that are struggling to grasp the plot threads *by* crying out for aid from the Crimson Vigil, blasting fell energies marking the direction of Owa Village, or revealing another clue leading to what truly plagues Kizaki.

Yumi is also willing and able to provide curative magics of 3rd-level 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 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.

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; though dark downstairs, you can see the flicker of lightning lanterns above, casting a silhouette against the closed paper blinds as a man moves about inside.

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 passive Wisdom (Insight) of 12 or higher is enough to see that Fumio is terrified. A passive Intelligence (Investigation) of 14 notices 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. a DC 12 Charisma (Intimidate) check is all that is required to get Fumio to lead the party above, though his fear and desire to save Kaneda's life forces the PCs to have disadvantage on this check.

Unless any of the party have a superlative passive Perception of 20, Kaneda's +10 Dexterity (Stealth) check coupled with the advantage his augmetics provide to his ability check 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. Observant PCs with a passive Perception of 16 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 247) 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 a DC 20 Charisma (Deception or Persuasion) check 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

Medium humanoid (human), neutral

Armor Class 18 (natural armor, Wisdom)
Hit Points 104 (16d8+32)
Speed 50 ft. (+20 ft. horizontal jump, +10 ft. vertical jump)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	17 (+3)	15 (+2)	13 (+1)	16 (+3)	12 (+1)

Saving Throws Str +7, Dex +7
Skills Athletics +7, Insight +7, Perception +7, Stealth +7
Damage Vulnerabilities lightning
Damage Resistances poison, psychic
Condition Immunities exhaustion, poisoned
Senses darkvision 30 ft., passive Perception 17
Languages Soburi
Challenge 9 (5,000 XP)

Dampening Enhancers. Kaneda possesses cutting-edge prototype augmetics that grant him advantage on Athletics and Stealth checks.

Evasion. If Kaneda is subjected to an effect that allows him to make a Dexterity saving throw to take only half damage, he instead takes no damage if he succeeds on the saving throw, 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 levels of spells (cantrips count as 1st-level spells). By spending a reaction 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 3d6+2 force damage per stored spell level to all creatures in a 50-foot line. A DC 15 Dexterity saving throw halves this damage. Alternately, he can fire it as a ranged attack at a single target within 150 feet (+7 to hit).

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Kaneda makes five scorching telescopic arm attacks.

Scorching Telescopic Arm. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8+3) bludgeoning damage plus 5 (1d10) fire damage.

Hand Hwacha. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, range 30/120 ft. or all targets in a 30-foot line. *Hit:* 6 (1d6+3) piercing damage at a single target or 17 (4d6+3) piercing damage to all targets in the area. Kaneda makes a separate attack roll for each object and creature in the area. After being fired at an area, reloading the hand hwacha requires 1 minute.

REACTIONS

Reflexive Dodge. When Kaneda is aware of an attacker, he may choose 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 passive Wisdom (Insight) of 13 or higher realizes that he is planning something. When Asai returns he and his lackeys (use the statistics for a Gladiator and Guards) 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 finds himself in the PCs shouldn't find it too difficult to get him to confess, particularly given his nearly 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 passive Wisdom (Insight) score of 12 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.

Doctor Fujioka's Ruins

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 a DC 12 Dexterity (thieves' tools) check or forced with a DC 16 Strength check (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 344) and two adeddo-oni ninja (page 343) 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 a DC 16 Intelligence (Investigation) check to locate. Furthermore, anyone with a Haitoku score of 15 or higher requires a DC 16 Wisdom saving throw to discern it, even if shown where it is. Due to the spells protecting the area, undead, monstrosities, and oni have disadvantage on both checks.

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 Hone-Noroi 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 to 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 3: 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 the PCs choose not to believe Kaneda, they likely head to Owa Village and attempt to rescue the children being held by him and Kumiko.

If the PCs 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 isn't 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 a ranger among the party reduces the travel time by half thanks to the Natural Explorer class feature (so long as forests are among the PC's favored terrains). Though the adventure assumes that the adventurers have no problems following the directions they have, the GM could ask for a Wisdom (Survival) or Intelligence (navigator's tools) check 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	CR
1	Jinmenju (page 253)	10
2–3	Ancestral Kami (page 255)	8
4–5	Yaoguai (page 257)	7
6–9	Gaki (page 214)	6
10–11	Harianago (page 252)	6
12–14	Chōchin-Obake Swarm (page 256)	5
15–16	Kuchisake-Onna (page 197)	4
17–18	Onryō (page 254)	3
19–20	Gang of a dozen Bandits	3

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 adventurers 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 passive Perception score of 16 or a PC actively looks for signs of an ambush and passes a DC 16 Wisdom (Perception) check.

Parties that approach openly or use a light source are attacked by the clockwork guardians without warning, sounding an alarm that alerts Kumiko. If the adventurers send a scout or approach stealthily they need to succeed on Dexterity (Stealth) DC 13 checks 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 ushers the kids 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's still dangerous—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

Medium humanoid (human), neutral
Armor Class 17 (Wisdom)
Hit Points 83 (17d8+7)
Speed 45 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	18 (+4)	12 (+1)	19 (+4)	17 (+3)	14 (+2)

Saving Throws Str +4, Dex +7, Wis +7
Skills Acrobatics +7, Deception +5, Insight +6, Perception +6, Stealth +7
Damage Resistances psychic
Senses passive Perception 16
Languages Ceram, Ropa, Soburi, telepathy 30 ft.
Challenge 8 (3,900 XP)

Evasion. If Kumiko is subjected to an effect that allows her to make a Dexterity saving throw to take only half damage, she instead takes no damage if she succeeds on the saving throw, and only half damage if she fails.

Qi (8 points/Day). Kumiko harnesses the mystic energy of qi and can spend it to power her abilities.

- Kumiko can spend 1 qi point when taking the Attack action to make two unarmed strikes as a bonus action.
- Kumiko can spend 1 qi point to take the Dodge action as a bonus action.
- Kumiko can spend 1 qi point to take the Disengage or Dash action as a bonus action, doubling her jump distance 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 DC 14 Constitution saving throw or be stunned until the end of her next turn.

Stance of the Serpent. Kumiko gains advantage on Acrobatics checks as well as checks and saving throws to avoid the prone condition. Creatures are at disadvantage to resist Kumiko's attempts to grant them the prone condition.

Stillness of Mind. As an action, Kumiko can end one effect on herself that is causing her to be charmed or frightened.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Kumiko makes three unarmed strike attacks or one matchlock rifle attack and one fragmentation grenade attack.

Unarmed Strike. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 9 (1d10+4) magical bludgeoning damage plus 3 (1d6) piercing and 3 (1d6) psychic damage.

Fragmentation Grenade. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, range 120/240 ft., all targets in a 20-ft radius. *Hit:* 17 (5d6) piercing damage, DC 15 Dexterity save for half.

Matchlock Rifle. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, range 100/400 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (1d10+4) piercing damage.

REACTION

Deflect Missile. Kumiko can spend her reaction to strike a missile when she is hit by a ranged weapon attack. When she does so, the damage she takes from the attack is reduced by 16 (1d10+2d6+4).

Clockwork Guardian

Medium construct, unaligned

Armor Class 15 (natural armor)
Hit Points 75 (10d8+30)
Speed 25 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
19 (+4)	15 (+2)	16 (+3)	7 (–2)	13 (+1)	8 (–1)

Saving Throws Str +7, Con +6, Int +1
Skills Athletics +7, Perception +4
Damage Vulnerabilities lightning
Damage Resistances acid, cold, fire, lightning, necrotic, radiant, thunder
Damage Immunities poison
Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, stunned
Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 14
Languages Soburi (cannot speak)
Challenge 7 (2,900 XP)

Overclock (Recharge 6). As an action, the Clockwork Guardian overclocks itself for 3 rounds. While overclocked, it increases all of its attributes by 4 and spends its bonus action each round making an additional attack or using the Dodge action. While overclocked the Clockwork Guardian gains advantage on attack rolls, a +3 bonus to damage, and resistance to bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage from nonmagical weapons.

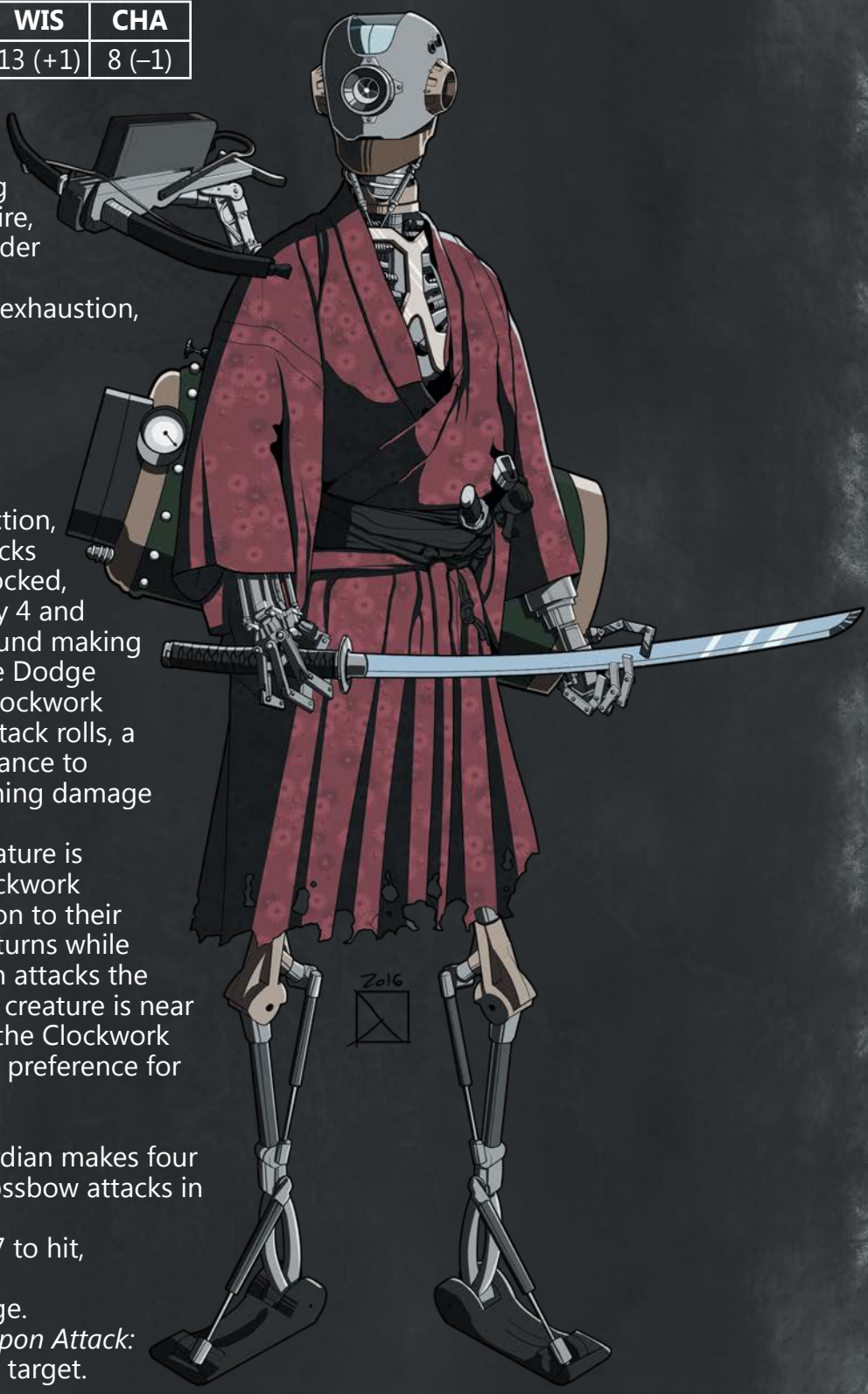
Roll 1d20 whenever this feature is activated. On a roll of 1, the Clockwork Guardian goes berserk in addition to their normal bonuses. On each of its turns while berserk, the Clockwork Guardian attacks the nearest creature it can see. If no creature is near enough to move to and attack, the Clockwork Guardian attacks an object, with preference for an object smaller than itself.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The Clockwork Guardian makes four katana attacks and mounted crossbow attacks in any combination.

Katana. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target.
Hit: 10 (1d12+4) slashing damage.

Mounted Crossbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, range 100/400 ft., one target.
Hit: 9 (2d6+2) piercing damage.



If the party manages to sneak past or quietly disable the clockwork guardians, a DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check 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 DC 8 Wisdom (Insight) check 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 DC 20 Charisma (Deception or Persuasion) check, depending upon their motives; if they have met Kaneda and mention his name, the PCs gain advantage on the check. 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 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 165) 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 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 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 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 you pass by 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 see a cluster of dilapidated buildings. 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, sending 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 343) and one adeddo-oni mage (page 344), 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 DC 10 Wisdom (Perception) check 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; a total of six 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 adeddo-oni guarding the gate, two 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 344) waits here with two Vampire Spawn (one of Muraoka's sisters and his mother), casting sleep on the children that Muraoka is "protecting" 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 DC 12 Wisdom (Perception) check—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 a DC 18 Intelligence (Investigation) check find some little wealth still secreted away on the second floor. These range from coins to jewelry and are worth 500 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.

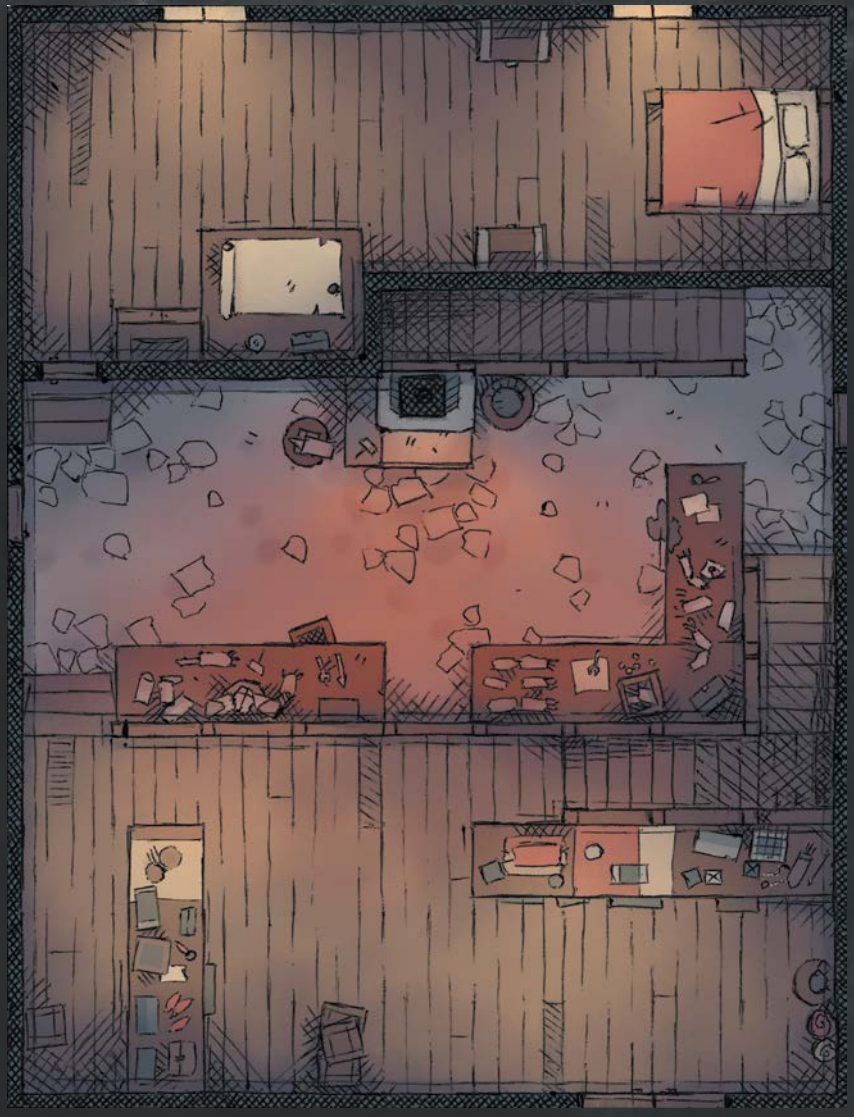
Muraoka's Workshop

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.

Suddenly the nobleman from Kizaki 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 a word or 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 and damage and allows him to apply the blood drain component of his bite attack to one melee attack per round. He can also use two legendary actions to attack with his blade rather than his bite.

Siphon. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (1d12+5) magical slashing damage if wielded two-handed.

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. 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. When reduced to 0 hit points 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

Higher level parties 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 dessicated 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 DC 14 Wisdom saving throw or gain the frightened condition for 1d4 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 a DC 14 Dexterity saving throw or gain the restrained condition until they take a bonus action to remove their foot with a DC 16 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check.

Unhallowed Ground. Muraoka has invested much of his dark power into his lair, infusing the top floor with unholy energy. The entire area is within range of a permanent *hallow* spell (excluding undead) with either the darkness, energy vulnerability, extradimensional interference, fear, or silence extra effect.

Epilogue

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 DC 20 Insight (Wisdom) check 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 works for the Pale Master to pursue but (if not finishing the adventure path) here are a few suggestions for what the ancient necromancer might do next.

If the chosen children 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 (assail the countryside, sowing chaos and horror all over the Gekido and Hakaisuru prefectures to keep attentions focused away from the Hone-Noroi 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 197) and rokurokubi (*MoA* page 153) 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 Hone-Noroi Keep that will soon enough threaten all of Soburin. The regions around the Hone-Noroi 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 Hone-Noroi Keep.

HARIONAGO

Medium undead (oni), neutral evil
Armor Class 16 (natural armor)
Hit Points 94 (13d8+36)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	19 (+4)	14 (+2)	13 (+1)	14 (+2)	17 (+3)

Saving Throws Dex +7, Cha +6
Skills Deception +6, Perception +5, Stealth +7
Damage Resistances necrotic, piercing
Damage Immunities cold, poison
Condition Immunities charmed, frightened, paralyzed, poisoned
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 15
Languages Soburi
Challenge 8 (3,900 XP)

Graceful Attack. A harionago uses Dexterity for attack and damage rolls with its barbed hair and vicious claw attacks.

Renewed Vengeance. If the harionago is destroyed, roll a d20. On a 19 or 20 the harionago regains all of its hit points a week later and resumes hunting those who wronged it.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The harionago makes three barbed hair or vicious claw attacks in any combination.

Barbed Hair. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target.
Hit: 8 (1d8+4) piercing damage plus 3 (1d6) cold damage.

Vicious Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7, one target.
Hit: 11 (2d6+4) slashing damage plus 3 (1d6) cold damage.

Mocking Laughter. A harionago can laugh scornfully in a 30-foot cone. Creatures within the cone must make a DC 14 Wisdom saving throw or break into laughter as well. Creatures who fail the save are at disadvantage against all of the harionago's attacks as it becomes infuriated and mercilessly assaults them. A creature that makes the save cannot be affected by the same harionago's mocking laughter for 24 hours.





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.

JINMENJU

Huge plant (oni), neutral evil
Armor Class 18 (natural armor)
Hit Points 184 (16d12+80)
Speed 10 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
24 (+7)	8 (-1)	20 (+5)	7 (-2)	15 (+2)	17 (+3)

Saving Throws Con +9, Dex +3, Int +2
Skills Perception +10
Damage Vulnerabilities fire
Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical weapons
Damage Immunities poison
Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, poisoned, prone
Senses blindsight 60 ft., tremorsense 60 ft., passive Perception 20
Languages Soburi
Challenge 10 (5,900 XP)



Enticing Head-Fruits. Any creature that begins its turn within 5 feet of a jinmenju must succeed at a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw or be compelled to immediately grab a head-fruit and eat it as an action. A creature that successfully saves 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 condition and the effects of the confusion spell for four rounds.

Intoxicating Stench (1/Day). As a bonus action, a jinmenju can cause its fruits to emit an unnaturally sweet aroma in a 60-foot radius that lasts for 4 rounds. All creatures within the affected area must succeed at a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw each round or be 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 saving throw.

Unsettling Drone. A jinmenju emits a low, persistent hum that unnerves living creatures that hear it. Those within 30 feet must succeed at a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw or become frightened until they leave the affected area and for 1d4 rounds thereafter. A creature that successfully saves is immune to that jinmenju's unsettling drone for 24 hours.

Spellcasting. Jinmenju are 10th-level spellcasters that use Charisma as their spellcasting ability (spell save DC 15; +7 to hit with spell attacks). Jinmenju have the following spells prepared from the bard's spell list and are able to cast them without the need for any components:

Cantrips: *minor illusion* (sound only)
2nd level (5 slots): *shatter*
5th level (5 slots): *modify memory*

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The jinmenju makes one bite and two slam attacks.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +11 to hit, reach 15 ft., one target.
Hit: 18 (2d10+7) bludgeoning damage.

Slam. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +11 to hit, reach 15 ft., one target.
Hit: 16 (2d8+7) bludgeoning damage.

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.

Onryō

Medium undead (oni), neutral evil
Armor Class 14
Hit Points 26 (4d8+8)
Speed 30 ft., fly 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	19 (+4)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)

Saving Throws Int +2, Wis +4
Skills Perception +4, Stealth +6
Damage Resistances necrotic
Condition Immunities charmed, frightened
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 14
Languages Soburi
Challenge 3 (700 XP)



Incorporeal Movement. The onryō can move through other creatures and objects as if they were difficult terrain. It takes 5 (1d10) force damage if it ends its turn inside an object.

Persistent Hunter. The onryō has advantage and a +10 bonus to Wisdom (Survival) checks to track creatures they believed wronged them in life. If one of these creatures is dead, the onryō instead transfers its attentions to that creature's descendants.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The onryō makes two quasi-ethereal touch attacks.

Quasi-Ethereal Touch. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit., one target.
Hit: 7 (1d6+4) bludgeoning plus 7 (2d6) necrotic damage.

When a person dies feeling wronged—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 these assaults are 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.

Variant: Greater Onryō (CR +1)

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. 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 the effects of one of the following spells on one location it can see as it conducts the ritual: *control weather, earthquake, meteor swarm, storm of vengeance*. The durations of these spells do not change.

In addition, the greater onryō's AC increases by 1, it has twice as many hit points, and it gains a +1 magical bonus to attack and damage with its quasi-ethereal touch.

Paper Kami



Large monstrosity (kami), neutral
Armor Class 16
Hit Points 90 (12d10+24)
Speed 40 ft., fly 30 ft. (float)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	22 (+6)	15 (+2)	13 (+1)	16 (+3)	11 (+0)

Saving Throws Con +5, Int +4, Cha +3
Skills Arcane +4, Insight +6, Nature +4, Perception +6
Damage Vulnerabilities fire
Damage Resistances cold, force, lightning, thunder; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical weapons
Damage Immunities poison, psychic
Condition Immunities exhaustion, poisoned, prone
Senses blindsight 20 ft., darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 16
Languages Draconic, Soburi
Challenge 7 (2,900 XP)

Folding Form. The paper kami is able to assume the physical shape of any creature by spending a bonus action (though its coloration and accoutrements do not change). Each time it changes form the paper kami chooses a type of weapon damage (bludgeoning, piercing, or slashing). The type of damage its weapon attacks deal changes to the chosen type and the paper kami gains resistance to that type of weapon damage. The paper kami may also become two dimensional, able to push itself under doorways and through keyholes.

Magic Weapons. The paper kami's weapon attacks are magical.

Regeneration. The paper kami regains 10 hit points at the start of its turn if it has at least 1 hit point.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The paper kami makes three paper strike attacks.

Paper Strike. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 15 ft., one target. *Hit:* 18 (4d8) bludgeoning, piercing, or slashing damage plus 9 (2d8) force damage.

Paper kami are spirits summoned to protect knowledge, souls of long dead scholars 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 choosing to appear as lions or even dragons), and overly protective of their treasures—once provoked, a paper kami will go to the edge of the world for vengeance.

Variant: Ancestral Kami (CR +1)

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 as or stronger than their common counterparts.

Ancestral Kami lose the folding form ability and paper strike attacks, and they are Medium size (this does not change their hit points), but they gain the following abilities:

Ancient Knowledge (1/Day). An Ancestral Kami can attempt a DC 10 Intelligence check as an action to know an obscure piece of myth or lore, or spend one minute concentrating to attempt a DC 15 Intelligence check to learn a secret piece of information.

Etherealness. As a bonus action the Ancestral Kami enters the Ethereal Plane from the Material Plane, or vice versa. It is visible on the Material Plane while it is in the Border Ethereal, and vice versa, yet it can't affect or be affected by anything on the other plane.

Incorporeal Movement. The Ancestral Kami can move through other creatures and objects as if they were difficult terrain. It takes 5 (1d10) force damage if it ends its turn inside an object.

Multiattack. The Ancestral Kami makes three withering touch attacks.

Withering Touch. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 27 (7d6+3) psychic damage.

CHŌCHIN-OBAKE SWARM

Large swarm of Small monstrosities (tsukumogami), neutral

Armor Class 15 (natural armor)
Hit Points 75 (10d10+20)
Speed fly 30 ft. (hover)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	16 (+3)	15 (+2)	12 (+1)	18 (+4)	13 (+1)

Saving Throws Int +3
Skills Perception +6
Damage Vulnerabilities acid, thunder
Damage Resistances cold, fire, necrotic, radiant; bludgeoning, piercing, slashing
Damage Immunities poison
Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone, restrained, stunned
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 16
Languages Soburi
Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Conflagration. Creatures or objects occupying the same space as the chōchin-obake swarm take 11 (2d6+4) fire damage at the end of the chōchin-obake swarm's turn.

Float on the Wind. Melee attacks against the chōchin-obake swarm are at disadvantage and the chōchin-obake does not suffer disadvantage when making ranged attacks while within an opponent's reach.

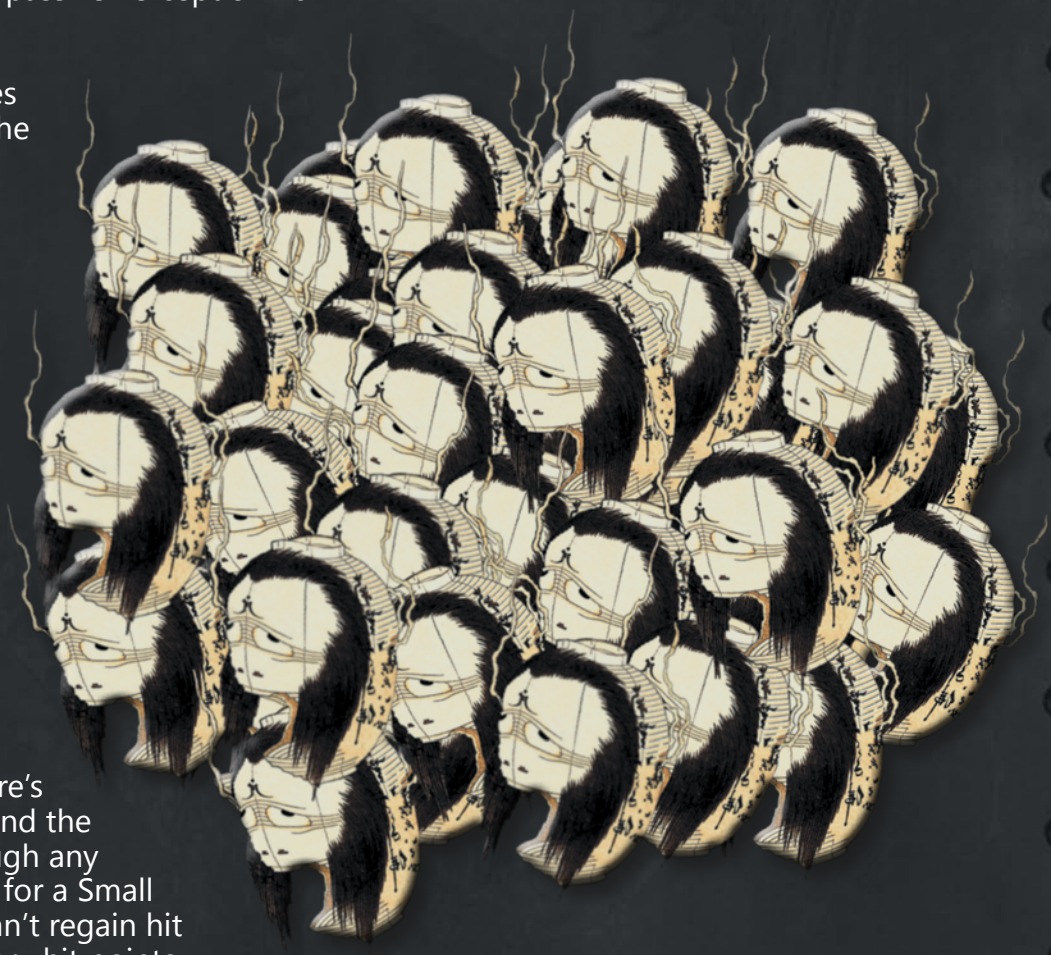
Swarm. The swarm can occupy another creature's space and vice versa, and the swarm can move through any opening large enough for a Small creature. The swarm can't regain hit points or gain temporary hit points.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The chōchin-obake swarm makes five fiery spitting attacks.

Fiery Spitting. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, range 30/100 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d6+4) fire damage.

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 most meet their end in the ocean's waters some awaken and return, haunting souls for reasons known only to the mysterious tsukumogami.



YAOGUAI



Large monstrosity (oni), chaotic neutral
Armor Class 16 (natural armor)
Hit Points 126 (12d10+60)
Speed 40 ft., climb 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
23 (+6)	10 (+0)	21 (+5)	2 (–4)	11 (+0)	8 (–1)

Saving Throws Con +8
Skills Athletics +9, Perception +6
Damage Resistances poison
Condition Immunities frightened, poisoned
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 16
Challenge 7 (2,900 XP)

Keen Smell. The yaoguai has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on smell.

Magic Resistance. The yaoguai has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Mystical Hide. The yaoguai's thick hide ignores the first 5 points of damage from an attack, environmental effect, or spell. In addition, there is a 50% chance that a critical hit against a yaoguai becomes a regular hit.

Regeneration. The yaoguai regains 5 hit points at the start of its turn. If the yaoguai is the target of a spell with a polymorph effect or takes fire, necrotic, or psychic damage, this trait doesn't function at the start of the yaoguai's next turn. The yaoguai dies only if it starts its turn with 0 hit points and doesn't regenerate.

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:

- ***Charge.*** If the yaoguai moves at least 20 feet straight toward a target and then hits it with a melee attack on the same turn, the target takes an extra 9 (2d8) bludgeoning damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 17 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.
- ***Flight.*** The yaoguai gains a fly speed of 20 feet and its Dexterity score increases by 2.
- ***Horned.*** The yaoguai receives an additional melee weapon attack each turn for its horns.
- ***Horns.*** Melee Weapon Attack: +9 to hit, reach 10 ft., 11 (2d4+6) bludgeoning damage and DC 17 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.
- ***Poison.*** The yaoguai's melee attacks deal an extra 7 (2d6) poison damage. On a critical hit, creatures make a DC 17 Constitution saving throw or gain the poisoned condition for 3 rounds.
- ***Rake.*** The yaoguai deals an extra 11 (2d10) slashing damage against a creature it hits with more than one melee attack in a single turn.
- ***Unnatural Senses.*** The yaoguai gains blindsight 20 feet.

ACTIONS

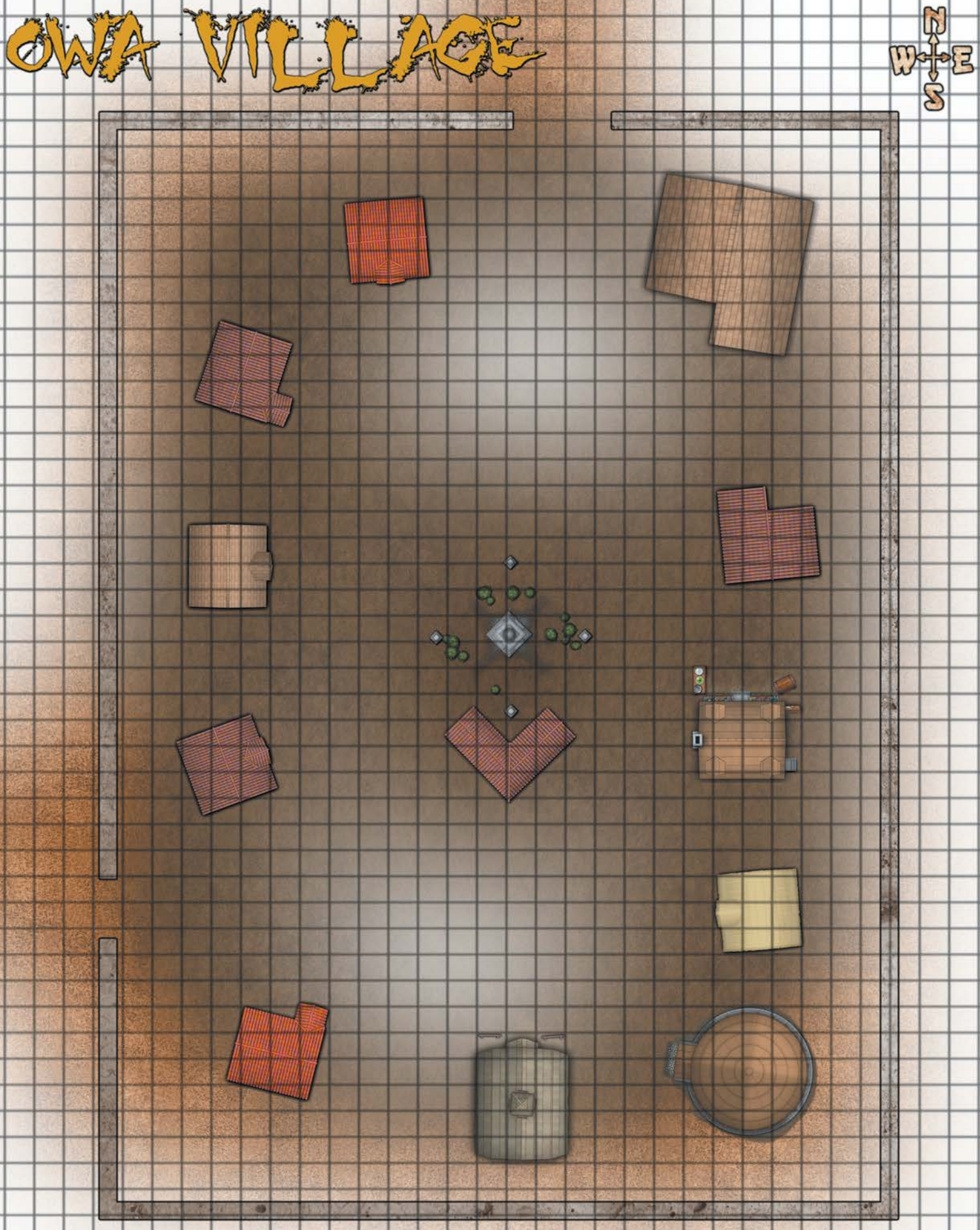
Multiattack. The yaoguai makes one bite attack and two claw attacks.

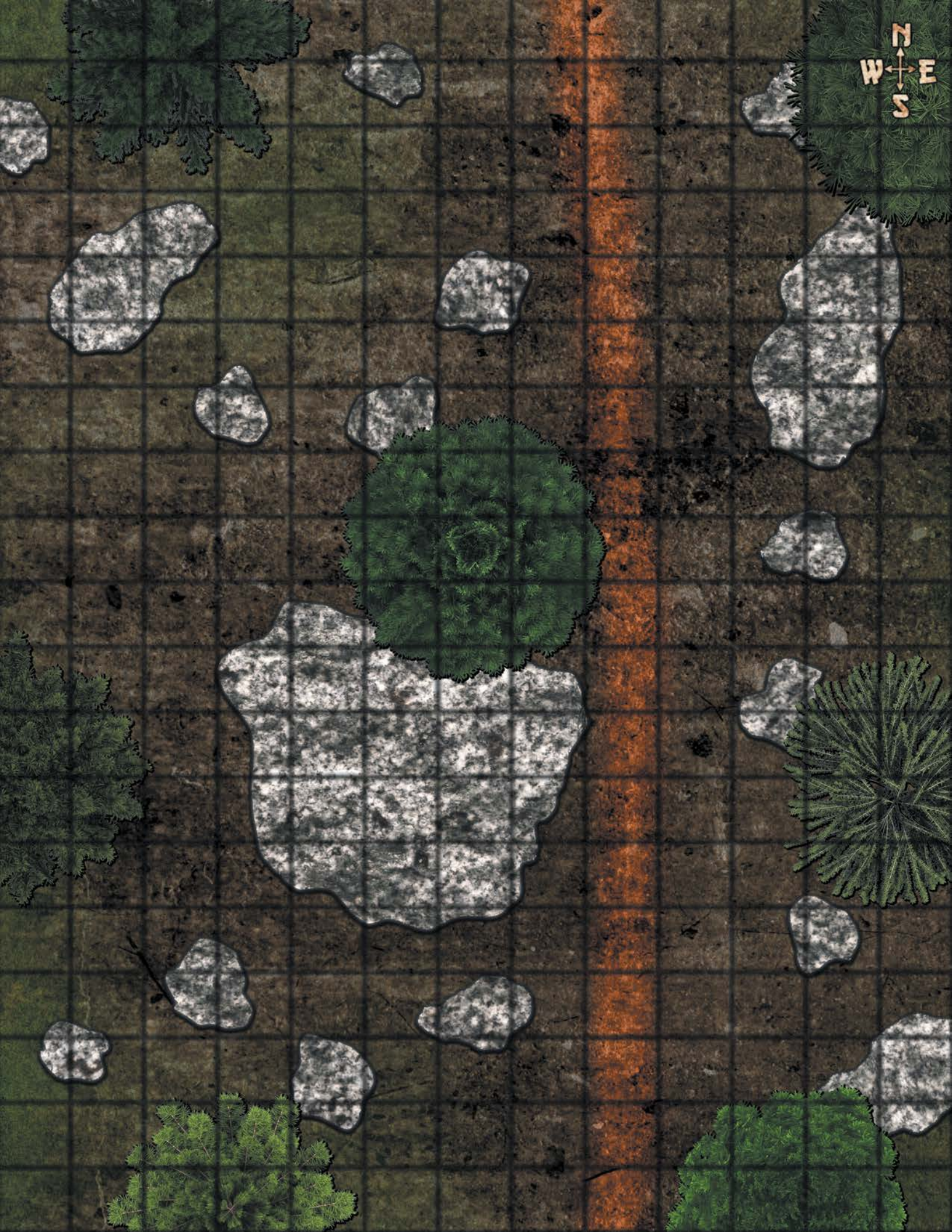
Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 13 (2d6+6) piercing damage.

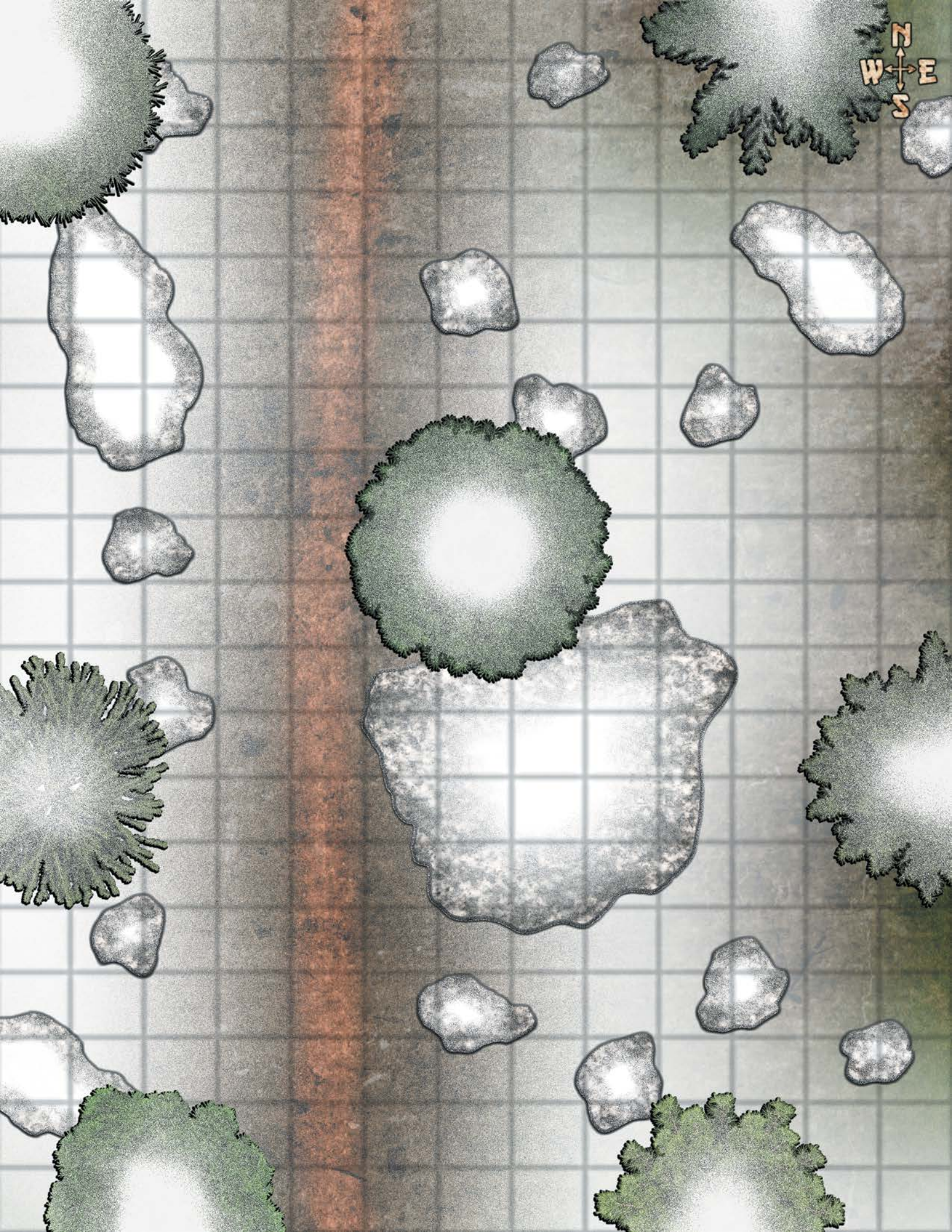
Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (1d8+6) slashing damage.

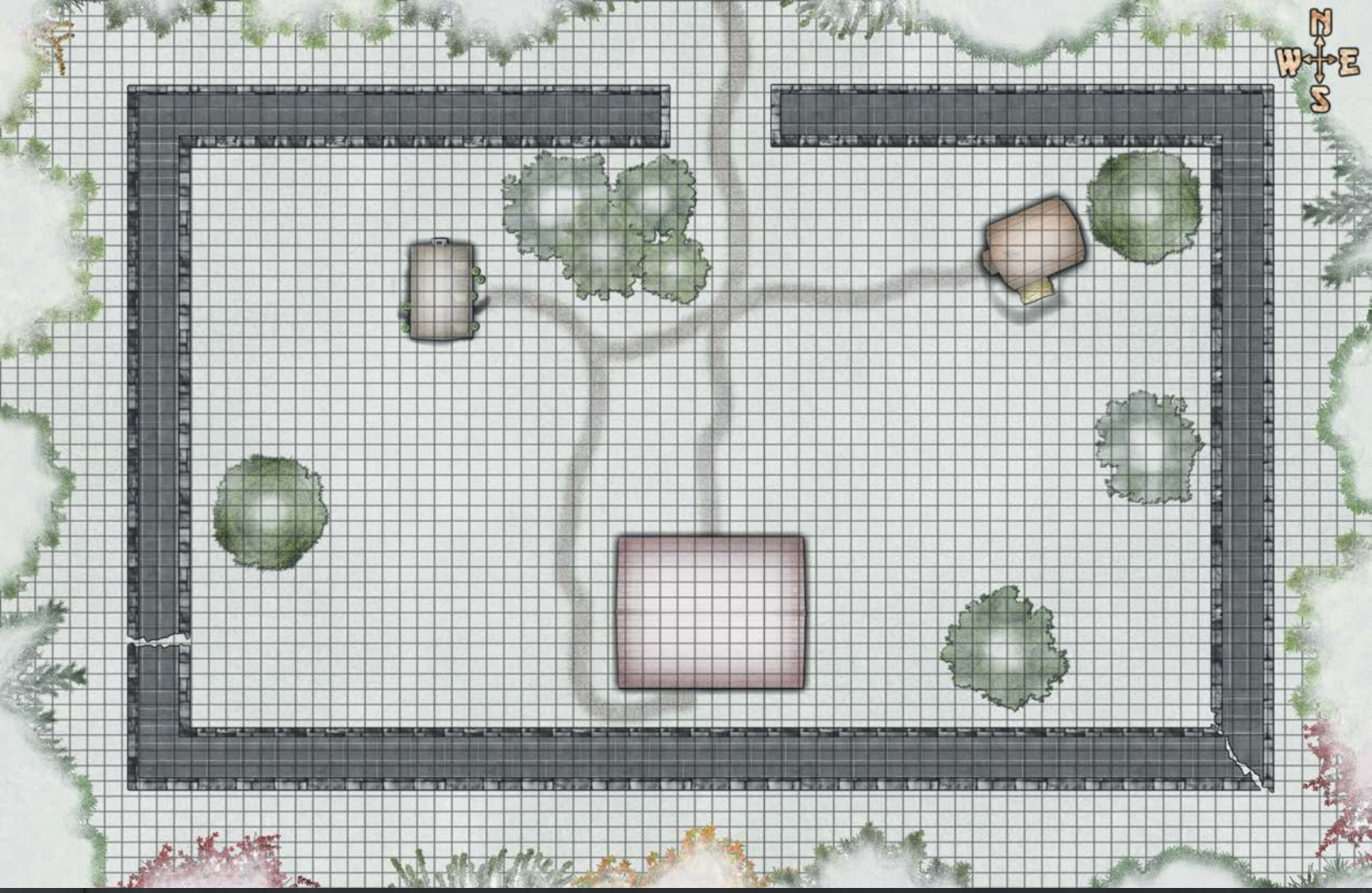
Once the rarest of creatures these unnatural amalgamations of beasts have become a much more common threat after the end of the War of Kaiyo. Mages and scientists are blamed in equal parts for the sudden prominence of yaoguai and the lethal oni are so resilient they can be found all over Soburin (frequently 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.

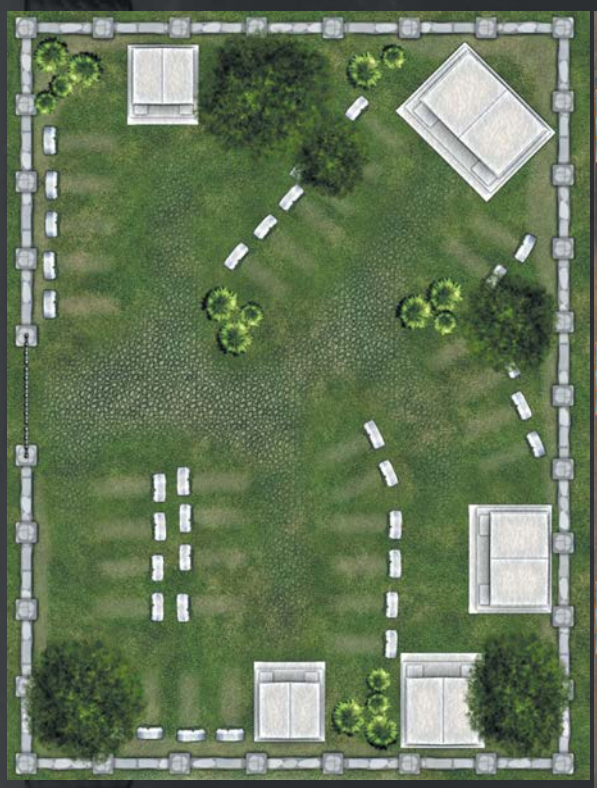
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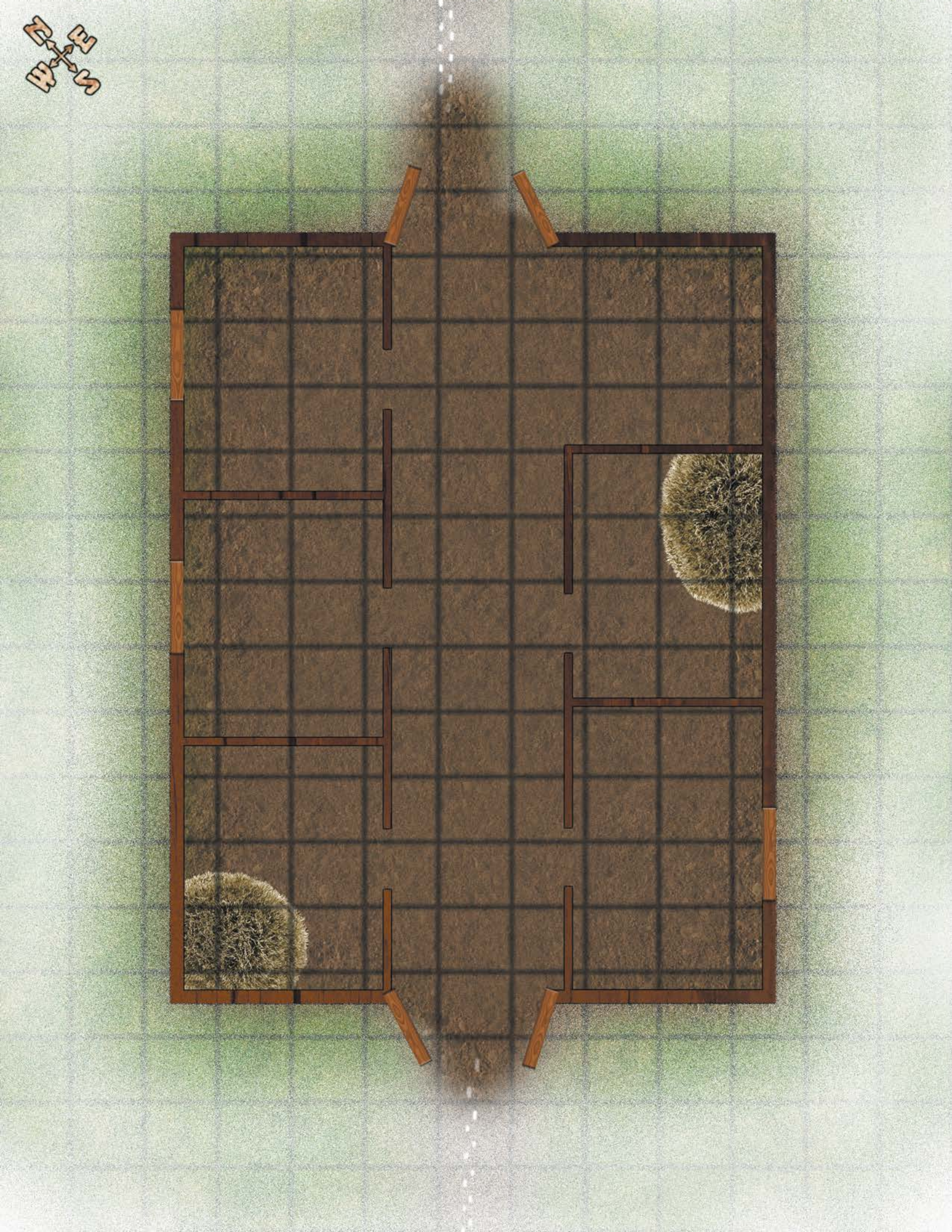

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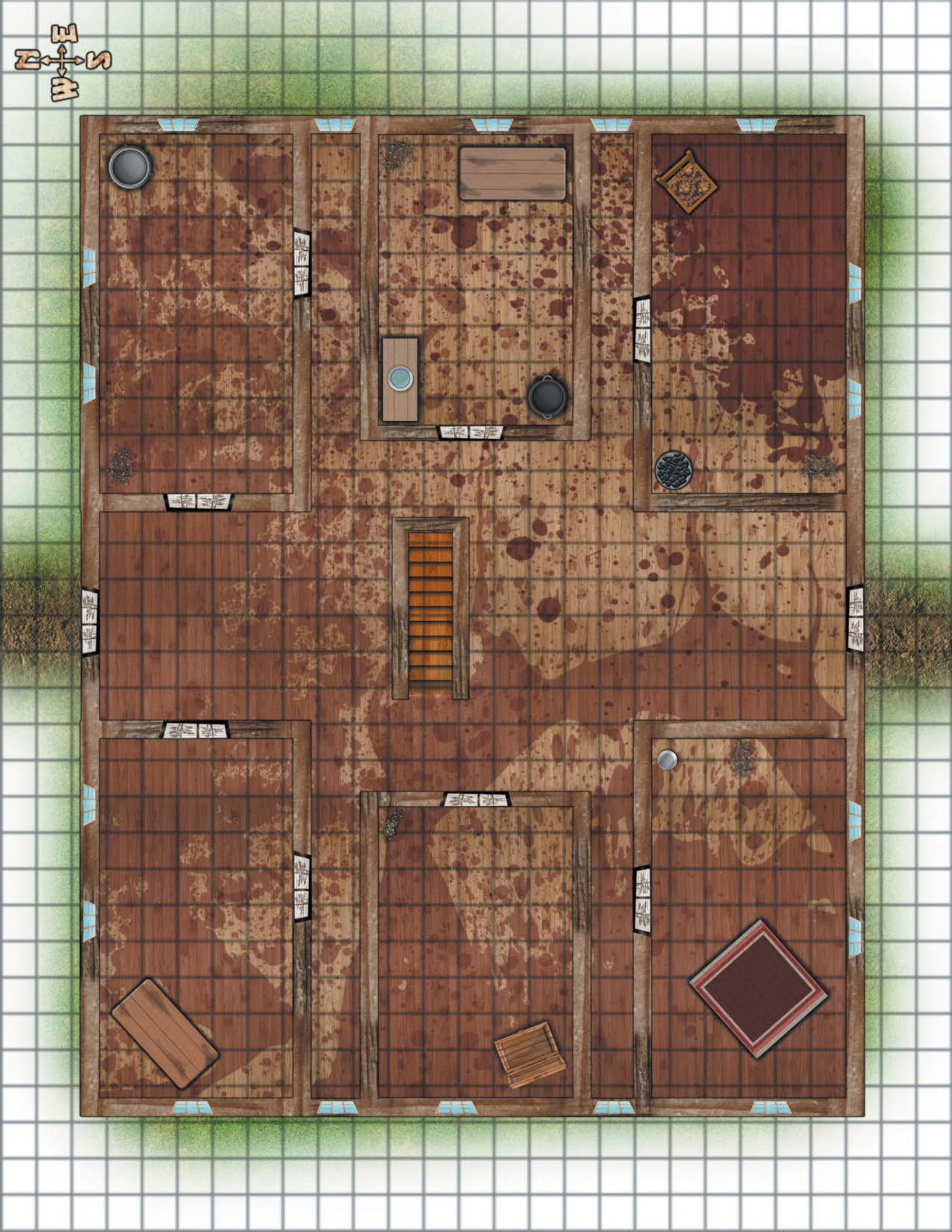

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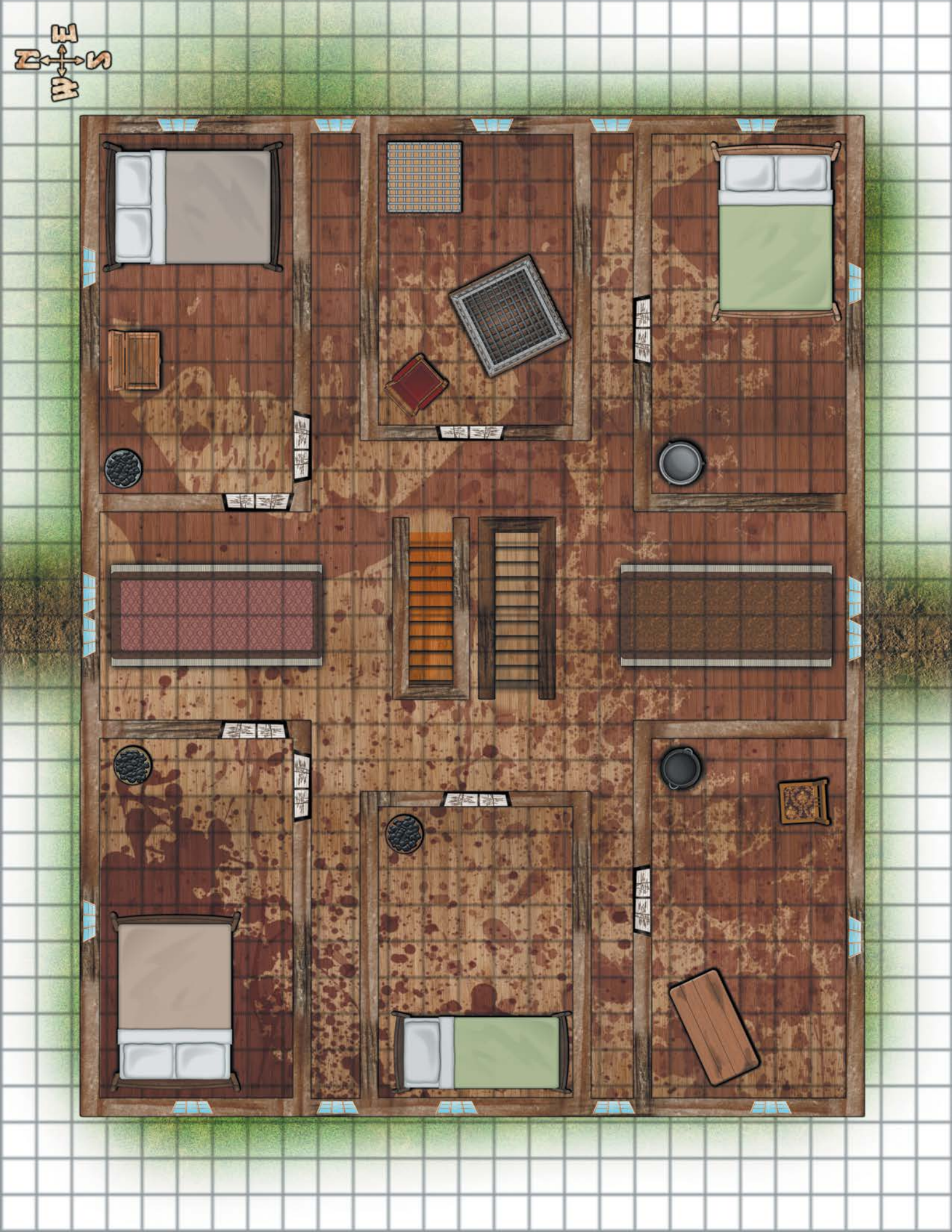

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Hone-Noroi Keep Ascends

In the event that the adventurers manage to save none of the children or all of the children they have as much as a month before the Pale Master makes his next move—most parties however have only 2d4 days before the ancient necromancer's shadow falls across their path again. When the GM is ready to continue the adventure path a great danger appears in northern Soburin that takes the attention of the armies gathered there by the secretive doings of Imperial Siblings: Hone-Noroi Keep. Unless the PCs have a good reason to hear about it, they are warned of its presence more directly than with rumors or a widely distribute government flyer (page 345).

Your sleep has been the reverie of the just as of late but your dreams this evening are interrupted, the peaceful black encroached upon by the gnashing of teeth and cursing in Adeddo. Suddenly the feral zombies are everywhere, leaping into sight with bloodied claws ready to rend flesh—until beams of white light shoot out of the darkness to slice them apart! A glowing spirit soars into view and shreds the remaining monsters into puffs of mist, and as he bows you feel his face is familiar. Looking around you see your companions standing nearby in the darkness and can't help but wonder at the import of this man's presence.

Though they're all sleeping (or in their equivalent form of rest) the PCs appear in the same dreamspace, summoned here by the eternal witness of the Crimson Vigil: the first Shinzo Kitamura. The adventurers are certain to have questions for this spirit and he'll answer at least one or two before he interrupts them, the urgency of his message overwhelming all other needs. As soon as Shinzo starts to warn them read the following:

"The Pale Master is rising once again and you have been chosen to stop him," the spirit says, looking about anxiously. "You must know more but there is little time—travel to Mountain Nugirama and the final resting place of the Crimson Vigil with all haste. Once you have reached Omatsu Shrine know that we will stand besi—augh!" Suddenly a foul wind roils as a demonic howl pierces the dreamscape, ripping him apart into streams of energy and shunting you awake, a sense of doom weighing heavily upon you as your eyes flutter open.

As they journey to Mount Nugirama and seek out the exact location of Omatsu Shrine the effects of the Pale Master's bone keep begin pressing down on Soburin. Constant storms raging high above, nights of utter darkness, and heavily clouded days foreshadow the ruin soon to come, but the Pale Master sends something very specific to slow down the adventurers as his minions assail the Crimson Vigil's final resting place.

When the party have nearly reached Omatsu Shrine the need for urgency becomes clear as whether day or night, there are strange, disturbing webs of energy that pulsate high above—leeching power toward Hone-Noroi Keep.

Bōfū-Noshi (Death Tornado). This vicious weather anomaly is strong enough to rip people off the ground and moves with dangerous alacrity, speeding across the horizon. Bōfū-Noshi have a total radius of 2d100 feet (minimum 50 feet) and take up a 20-foot-radius area on the ground. At the end of every minute, roll 1d20. On a 1, the Bōfū-Noshi lingers in place for 1 minute. On a 2–15, the Bōfū-Noshi moves 50 feet each round in a random direction. On a 16–20, the Bōfū-Noshi careens, moving at a rate of 100 feet in a random direction for 1d4 rounds before coming to a temporary stop.

Creatures inside of or in the path of a Bōfū-Noshi take 5 (2d4) necrotic damage, and make a DC 16 Strength saving throw or are ripped off the ground and thrown 10d10 feet into the air (landing at the start of the next round). A creature that spends its reaction grabbing onto an anchored object firmly affixed to the ground has advantage on its Strength saving throw against the Bōfū-Noshi. Objects not anchored to the ground make a DC 15 Strength saving throw, gaining an effective Strength modifier equal to +1 per 20 pounds of weight (only roll for objects when it is pertinent as most can be recovered later after the danger has passed).

OMATSU SHRINE

Once the PCs have learned of Omatsu Shrine it is easy enough to find, tucked into the base of Mount Nugirama. With the recent return of the Mists of Akuma the resting place of the Crimson Vigil has become vulnerable to the Pale Master's magics, filled with malevolent servants waiting to slaughter anyone that might attempt to use the first adventurers to defeat him to do so again.

> *Four statues of humanoids stand guard at the entrance to the shrine, the faces of each worn away by time. They stand on either side of two columns that hold up the roof of a passage leading into the mountain. A stench worse than the decomposing animal corpses on the steps ahead of you wafts from within, and you can pick out the odor of sulfur and a feeling that a great evil has corrupted this place.*

There is no door protecting the shrine, only the corpses of creatures that tried to pass through the entrance's threshold. When a living creature (including necroji and steametics) passes through the doorway leading into Omatsu Shrine it makes a DC 10 Wisdom saving throw. On a failure, the creature immediately takes psychic damage equal to its current hit points and loses 1 hit point at the end of each round until it either receives magical healing or dies. Once a creature has successfully saved against this effect or been targeted by it, the creature is immune to it for 24 hours.

> *Although lovingly crafted the interior of Omatsu Shrine is modest and spartan, unadorned by fixtures, but from the top of the stairway you can immediately see something is wrong. Down the hallway you see a dais lit by two great flames, two of its three draconic heads shattered to rubble. An unnatural violet sheen seeps across the brickwork a few feet in front of the steps and you can sense a great evil has taken hold over this place.*

Four passages split from the central chamber but only the northwestern hallway—behind the shattered statue—can be accessed, the others filled with energy barriers. When the last of the party enter this area, Shinzo recognizes who they are and creates an additional energy barrier blocking the entrance (meaning the PCs cannot escape until their work here is done).

> *Walls of blue-white energy block the hallways to the northeast, southeast, and southwest, obscuring whatever lay beyond. To the northwest however you can see down the passage to a crimson stone coffin surrounded candles—though the light they shed is a baleful blue.*

Nothing can physically pass through the energy barriers, they are immune to all damage, and they can't be dispelled by *dispel magic*. A creature that touches an energy barrier with its body or a held object takes 10 (3d6) psychic damage. A *disintegrate* spell destroys an energy barrier, sending out a wave of energy in a 100-foot radius that deals 35 (10d6) psychic damage to all creatures in the area (no saving throw). The energy barriers extend in a 50-foot sphere centered on the coffins and through the Ethereal Plane, blocking ethereal travel.

Each coffin holds the remains of a member of the Crimson Vigil save for the northeastern sarcophagus made for Shinzo Kitamura. As the original witness to their victory his spirit remained tethered to Soburin to forever watch for the Pale Master's return and warn heroes in time to stop him—but became watched by the necromancer. The horrors and anguish of his descendant Shinzo the Eater are fruits of the primordial evil entity's plans, the spiritual wrath unleashed by the cannibal specter rendering him powerless. With the destruction of the enraged ghost during *Revenge of the Pale Master* the adventurers unknowingly restored the first Shinzo's spirit but not before the Pale Master compromised Omatsu Shrine, sending oni to slaughter anyone that might use the Crimson Vigil against him.

The original Shinzo's spirit remains and his power seals the coffins of the temple tight, protecting the Crimson Vigil still and trapping the creatures within the burial temple. In the chaotic torture he endured during the Pale Master's control over his descendant he witnessed the necromancer's fell plans, seeing the purpose of the black torii gates and far more. With every oni defeated and tomb sanctified Shinzo recovers more of his power by absorbing the energy barriers, sharing what he's learned as best he can until all of Omatsu Shrine is purged of corruption and he can freely speak to the PCs.

Gauntlet of the Dead

The potent yamabushi of the Crimson Vigil lay entombed to the northwest but she is not alone, a glabrezu flying and hidden in the corner of the chamber in wait for an adventurer to step within striking distance. Thanks to the unnatural light and its flight, the demon has advantage on its Dexterity (Stealth) check and only PCs with a passive Perception of 17 or higher realize it is there before it attacks.

Once defeated the PCs have their first contact with the original Shinzo Kitamura.

> *As the demon discorporates in front of your eyes a keen takes to the air. White and blue energies shriek in from the central chamber, breaking into thousands of shards before reforming into small villages. Suddenly kaleidoscopic creatures—wagons, boats, tables, even buildings—attack the humanoid shapes. In a few moments the slaughters finish and gossamer strands rise up to a skeletal figure playing them all like puppets, the whole scene appearing and fading away in nary a minute.*

When the southwestern barrier is removed by Shinzo's spirit the next of the necromancer's creatures moves to attack them. The bone devil awaiting in the tomb of Crimson Vigil's skilled mage rushes into the room and attacks the nearest adventurer as soon as it is able (just as Shinzo's informative light show comes to an end). It uses its stinger to disable any PCs that look like they are weak from their last fight, targeting any healers or spellcasters with its claws.

When the party have destroyed the skeletal fiend the spirit of Shinzo draws power from the energy barrier to the southeast to contact the PCs but this time it takes far longer—a little over an hour, giving the adventurers an opportunity to take a short rest. While they do so Shinzo's voice reaches them, gradually growing louder as time passes until everyone can hear his message (the PC with the highest passive Perception check does so first, followed by the second highest, and so on). This is not the only thing they hear though as the Pale Master's last servant in Omatsu Shrine senses the weakening of the barrier and begins to batter against it, its slams sending out baleful booms.

> *Beware the Pale Master and do not allow for distraction. Soburin is doomed. Do not delay! Do not tarry! You must face down his evil now and when this place is free of his touch the Crimson Vigil will stand with you!*

Shortly after the rest ends the southeastern barrier gives out and a grotesque stone golem immediately charges into the central chamber in search of something to kill. Once defeated the last energy barriers fade away and draw into the northeastern room where Shinzo assumes a more corporeal form.

> *Blue white power streams over the central shrine and into the northeast chamber. Almost immediately you can hear the grinding of stone as something heavy drops to the floor, and at the end of the passageway you see why: a blue-white human brimming with energy is climbing out of the coffin, an old soburi man that bears a striking resemblance to the savage specter you defeated in Kizaki.*

Able to speak freely now, Shinzo bows deeply and thanks the adventurers for all they have done so far—freeing his descendant's spirit, interfering with the Pale Master's plans in Kizaki, and purging Omatsu Shrine of the necromancer's servants. He explains the meaning of his light show (the Pale Master means to capitalize on the tsukumogami insurrection to split the alliances of the empire apart and then dwindle what resistance remains, isolated by the mists and hordes of

undead). Meanwhile all the death in these slaughtered settlements is siphoning foul energies through the black torii gates across Soburin gradually bringing more power to the Pale Master. The abominable structures must be destroyed but there is no time—in a matter of less than a fortnight the necromancer will become unstoppable.

To help them stop this from coming to pass Shinzo directs the PCs to open the remaining trio of coffins. Each reveals a spirits of the Crimson Vigil forming into their remains to create powerful enchanted relics: the *crimson ayai-kasa* (Maru Okita to the northwest), *crimson cloak* (Takanibu Imai to the southwest), and *crimson katana* (Ukiyo Machi to the southeast). When the last of these is opened however the Pale Master realizes that his attempt to curb the Crimson Vigil's eternal watch has failed. Before assaulting the adventurers once more, the necromancer arrives in spectral form.

Suddenly Shinzo screams in agony as a pair of skeletal hands pierce his chest, pulling his spirit apart like a curtain to reveal a yellowed humanoid skull. The Pale Master's spectral form steps through the spirit of the Crimson Vigil's eternal witness, discorporating Shinzo in the process. It peers at you all, the eyeballs in its sockets floating eerily. "You are resourceful and could be very useful in my endeavors. I would have you become my servants—this is your only opportunity to do so willingly.

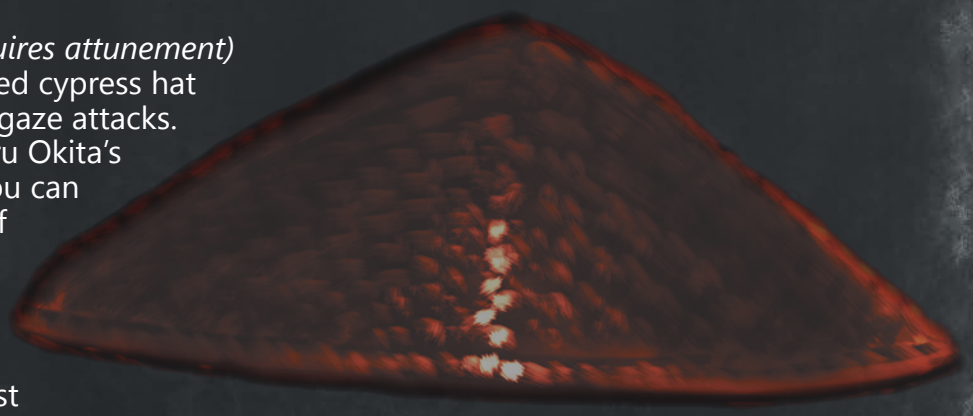
When they refuse him the Pale Master uses a powerful favor to chase the PCs from Omatsu Shrine: a marilith teleports into the northeastern chamber and immediately summons more of its kind. With Shinzo's utter destruction Omatsu Shrine begins to fall apart—any adventurers that decide to fight the demons as the temple crumbles around them deserve their fate but the entrance seals itself and indefinitely delays any pursuit. The next time the party completes a long rest whichever PC has the highest Dignity score (or made the best impression with Shinzo) awakens with a new item on their body (the *alabaster amulet*).

Crimson Ayai-Kasa

Wondrous item (hat), legendary (requires attunement)

Once you are attuned to this red-dyed cypress hat you gain truesight and immunity to gaze attacks.

Untether Spirit. By untethering Maru Okita's soul from the *crimson ayai-kasa* you can suppress one battlefield defense of Hone-Noroi Keep for 1d4 minutes. After using this feature the *crimson ayai-kasa* becomes a rare magic item that gives you advantage on saving throws against gaze attacks and can be used as a bonus action to gain blindsight to a range of 20 feet until the start of your next turn.

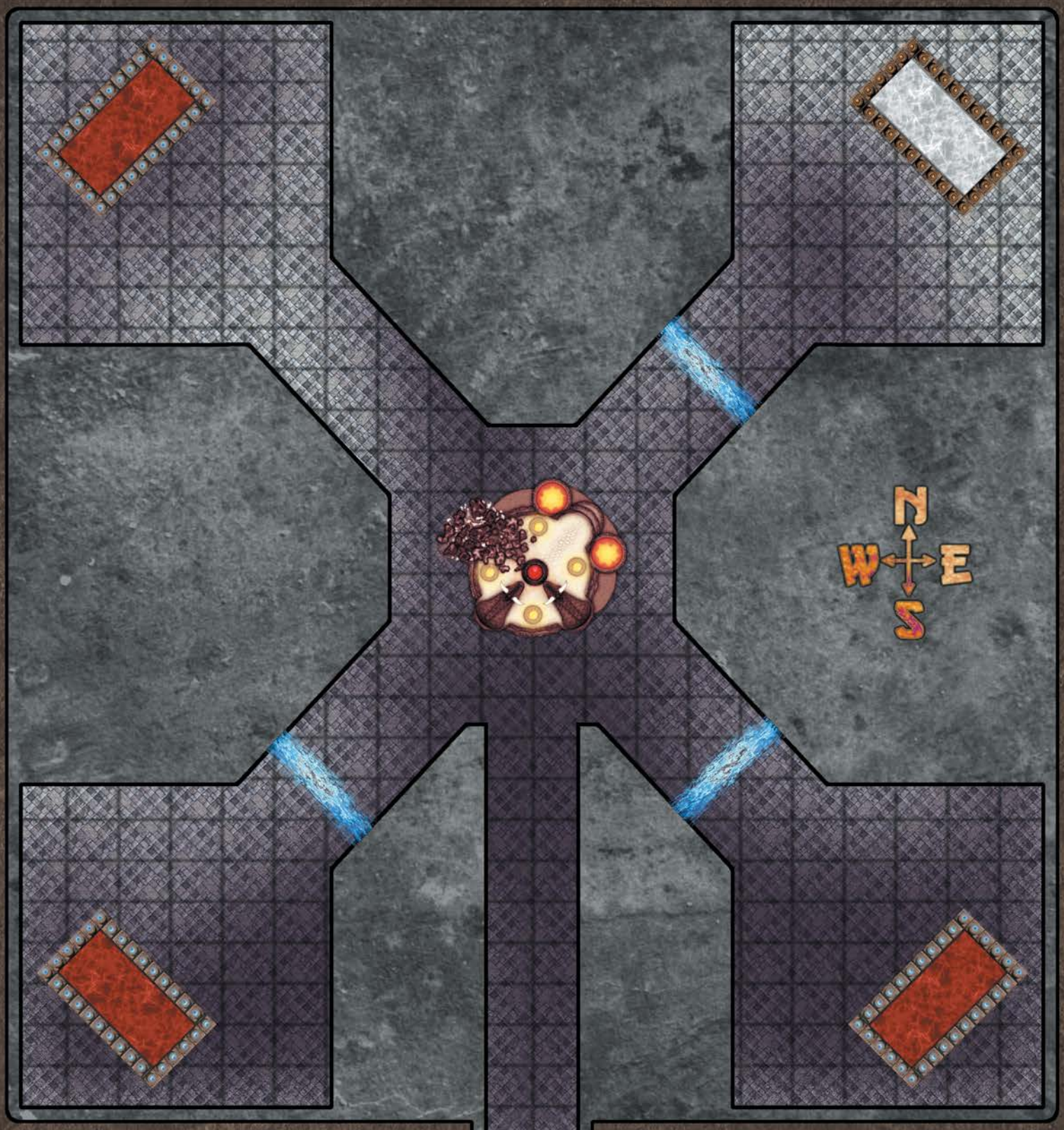


Crimson Cloak

Wondrous item (cloak), legendary (requires attunement)

Once you are attuned to this sanguine garment you gain a fly speed of 60 feet. In addition, you can use the Help action on another creature within 40 feet as a bonus action.

Untether Spirit. By untethering Takanibu Imai's soul from the *crimson cloak* you can suppress one battlefield defense of Hone-Noroi Keep for 1d4 minutes. After using this feature the *crimson cloak* becomes a rare magic item that gives you a fly speed of 30 feet. While not using it to fly, you can use the Help action on another creature within 20 feet as an action.



OMATSU SHRINE

Crimson Katana

Weapon (katana), legendary (requires attunement)

Once you are attuned to this weapon, you gain a +3 bonus to attack and damage rolls made with it, and when you take the Attack action using this weapon, one melee attack you make before the end of your turn increases its reach by 15 feet. In addition, you can inflict 2d4 points of damage to yourself. The blood from your self-inflicted injury runs along the blade, transforming into one deadly blade for each 2 points of self-inflicted damage. These blood blades are ranged weapon attacks (range 30/60 ft.) that deal 1d12 slashing damage on a hit.

Untether Spirit. By untethering Ukiyo Machi's soul from the *crimson katana* you can suppress one battlefield defense of Hone-Noroi Keep for 1d4 minutes. After using this feature the *crimson katana* becomes a rare magic item that grants a +1 bonus to attack and damage rolls you make with it, and you are only able to fling a single crimson blade each round (regardless of the amount of self-inflicted damage).

Alabaster Amulet

Wondrous item (amulet), legendary (requires attunement)

Once you have attuned to this polished opal amulet, you gain the constant effects of a *protection from evil and good* spell, and immunity to the frightened condition.

Spectral Form. Once per week you can use an action to go limp, withdrawing your spirit from your corporeal form (treat your body as under the effects of a *magic jar* spell). Your spectral form appears within 30 feet of your body and gains the following benefits:

- Your AC increases by 3.
- Any damage you take in spectral form is immediately dealt to your corporeal form. When you are reduced to 0 hit points, your spectral form dissipates. Otherwise your spectral form remains for 2 minutes.
- You gain a fly speed of 40 feet and the ability to hover.
- You can see normally in darkness, both magical and nonmagical, to a distance of 120 feet.
- You can see 60 feet into the Ethereal Plane when you are on the Material Plane, and vice versa.
- You gain resistance to acid, fire, lightning, and thunder damage, and resistance to bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical weapons.
- You gain immunity to cold, necrotic, and poison damage, and the charmed, exhaustion, frightened, grappled, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone, and restrained conditions.
- You can move through other creatures and objects as if they were difficult terrain. You take 5 (1d10) force damage if you end your turn inside an object.
- You can use an action to enter the Ethereal Plane from the Material Plane, or vice versa. You are visible on the Material Plane while you're in the Border Ethereal, and vice versa, yet you can't affect or be affected by anything on the other plane.
- You can use an action to shoot a number of energy rays equal to your proficiency bonus. These are spell attacks with range 50/100 ft., and on a successful hit deal 3d6 radiant damage plus your Charisma modifier (minimum 0). You use Charisma as your spellcasting ability for this feature.
- You can use a bonus action to shoot a number of energy rays equal to half your proficiency bonus. When you do so, the duration of your spectral form is reduced by 1d4 rounds.

When the duration of Spectral Form ends, make a Constitution saving throw (DC 8 + 1 per round of use). If your spectral form dissipates from damage you have disadvantage on this saving throw. On a failure you are reduced to 0 hit points and must make death saves.

Untether Spirit. By untethering Shinzo Kitamura's soul from the *alabaster amulet* you can suppress one battlefield defense of Hone-Noroi Keep for 1d4 minutes. After using this feature the *alabaster amulet* becomes an uncommon magic item able to cast *protection from evil and good* once each day, you gain advantage on saving throws against fear, and after using Spectral Form it is destroyed.





Battle at Bone Keep

The *Trade War* adventure path culminates here: a massive military effort to penetrate the Pale Master's lair and bring an end to the ancient necromancer's fell plans. At least one army will be required for the task because Hone-Noroi Keep has many diabolical defenses ready to repel all but the most devoted invaders. Note that even after the PCs have made it into the undead fortress that the combat continues, the ebb and flow of victory hanging on what the adventurers do once they're inside of the bone keep.

Battlefield Combat

Action in the shadow of Hone-Noroi Keep is meant to be a hectic, crowded battle of bloodshed and evil blades—not a slow or tedious combat. The rules below include the core book's mechanics for fighting mobs and are embellished with additional *Mists of Akuma* specific elements to enhance the fight by way of ruthless Haitoku or inspiring Dignity.

A battalion is a group of between 4 and 20 lesser NPCs that act in unison. Only intelligent creatures (Intelligence of 5 or higher) are smart enough to be part of a battalion (and are otherwise a mob). PCs and major NPCs can influence, target, and be targeted by battalions, but cannot join a battalion. By spending a bonus action, a PC or major NPC can lead a battalion until the start of their next turn.

Battlefield Rounds

At the start of Battlefield Combat, roll 1d4. For the duration, every round is a battlefield round. During a battlefield round, each PC and major NPC takes a regular turn for that many rounds alongside each battalion on the map.

At the end of the duration is a mid-round. On a mid-round, PCs, major NPCs, and lesser NPCs that are not part of a battalion take a regular turn.

After the mid-round, roll 1d4 again and repeat the process.

Environmental effects that act in the initiative order are able to act in both battlefield rounds and mid-rounds.

Inspiring Surge. A battalion can revive its spirit at the sight of an inspiring strike or impressive maneuver. Once between mid-rounds when a PC or major NPC leading a battalion reduces a creature to 0 hit points, scores a critical hit, or otherwise does something inspiring (at the GM's discretion), a battalion can attempt a DC 12 Dignity saving throw (or Charisma saving throw). On a success, the battalion's leader chooses to either heal the battalion (each NPC by amount equal to 1d6 plus the PC or major NPC's Dignity modifier) or revive one dead NPC that was part of the battalion (the NPC awakens with hit points equal to the PC or major NPC's Dignity score).

Pragmatic Surge. Seizing on battle fervor, bloodlust, or driven by opportunity, a battalion can act more swiftly on the battlefield by opening itself up to attack. Once between mid-rounds on its turn, a battalion can attempt a DC 14 Haitoku saving throw (or Wisdom saving throw) and the following round attacks made against the battalion have advantage. On a success, the battalion can either double its speed for the round or take one additional action on top of its regular action. A battalion led by a PC or major NPC gains a bonus to this saving throw equal to their Haitoku bonus.

Battalions on the Attack

Before combat begins, take the armor class of each PC and subtract the battalion NPC's attack bonus (melee and ranged). Mark these numbers down. When a battalion attacks a PC, roll a d20 and on a result equal to or greater than the marked number, one or more of the NPCs in a battalion hits the adventurer.

On a success, the number rolled determines the number of battalion NPCs that hit as per Table: Battalion Combat (on the next page).

Table: Battalion Combat

d20	Number of Attackers Required for One Successful Attack
1-5	1
6-12	2
13-14	3
15-16	4
17-18	5
19	10
20	20

For example, amidst a twilight raid on Rokaju Castle a battalion of 10 ninja assault a samurai. The ninja battalion has a +6 bonus to attack against the samurai's AC of 20. In order to hit the samurai at all, the ninja require a d20 roll of 14 or higher. Referring to Table: Battalion Combat, three of the battalion NPCs making an attack on the samurai result in one successfully hitting. With 10 ninja, there are enough for 3 different trios to attack (and the last ninja misses without any rolls being made) and deal damage.

Battalions with Multiple Attacks. When a battalion has multiple attacks from the minor NPCs within it, it is assumed that the creature able to deal the most damage manages to hit. When a battalion has multiple attacks that have the same attack bonus, each of these attacks hit once. When a battalion's attacks have different attack bonuses each attack is resolved on its own (modifying the d20 roll as necessary).

Battalions on the Defense

Attacking a battalion is easier than usual. To determine a battalion's AC, choose the NPC in the battalion with the lowest AC and subtract 1 for every 2 NPCs in the battalion. For example, 10 samurai with an AC of 20 have a battalion AC of 15. When a battalion is reduced to 3 or fewer, the remaining NPCs disband and only act on a mid-round (typically joining another battalion when possible or fleeing the battlefield).

Damaging a Battalion. When attacking a battalion, a PC or major NPC can choose to spread damage to more than one target by making their attack roll with disadvantage. On a successful hit, the attack deals half its damage to 2 chosen NPCs in the battalion. Otherwise when attacking a battalion, the PC chooses which NPC in the battalion takes damage. If multiple NPCs in the battalion have different ACs, an NPC with a higher AC uses its regular AC.

Ranged Attacks and Battalions. Ranged attacks against a battalion are made with disadvantage if another battalion is between the attacker and their target. For example, a skeletal archer battalion firing at a soburi militia's artillery battalion have disadvantage as the undead lob their shots over the shieldbearer battalion. At the GM's discretion, certain battlefield positioning (such as firing from on top of a hill or fortress wall) may negate this penalty.

Morale Checks. Whenever an NPC in a battalion is killed, the battalion makes a Dignity saving throw (or Charisma saving throw) against a DC equal to 5 + 1 per dead battalion NPC. On a failure, one NPC in the battalion retreats (fleeing the combat entirely on a natural roll of 1). When the battalion has a leader, it gains a bonus to its saving throw equal to the PC's level or major NPC's challenge rating. battalions immune to fear do not have to make morale checks.

Attacking Hone-Noroi Keep

Assaulting the lair of the Pale Master is far too great an undertaking for the adventurers to dare go it alone—fortunately they have the aid of either the Soburi Militia, one or more erītokirā chapters, the traditionalist army and Gensosō, or the resources of the Mitsuyu Gyōsha Consortium. Even so there is staunch opposition awaiting them (undead necromancers animated by the Pale Master) and Hone-Noroi Keep itself resists them. Parties that have completed tasks in Omatsu Shrine can bypass or weaken some of the foul structure's effects on the battlefield, and with a larger force engaging the enemy they'll be able to reach the entrance to the skeletal lord's fortress, putting an end to the ancient evil once and for all.

The Pale Master has erected four bone outposts (page 281) each surrounded by a Bone Field and Yakeru Doro Circle. Only Hone-Noroi Keep has the Hason Shita Zone and Sanguine Moat.


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Far ahead a bank of fog dissolves away to reveal a massive, terrifying ivory tower that reaches up hundreds of feet into the darkened sky. The bone structure casts a shadow over the meadow, evil radiating from it to make the air heavy and thick with corruption, the smell of sulfur growing stronger the further you step. Four squat platforms are erected around it, each of them ringed by the bones of countless dead and earth scorched clean by fire.

As you gaze upon the despicable magic wrought by the Pale Master, lightning strikes the bone keep and for the briefest of moments the silhouette of a skeletal sorcerer flashes across the clouds above—staring down at you.

Corrupted Meadow

The green areas of the map are filled with twisted and corrupted plantlife that clings to existence but pose no threat or obstacle—only foreshadowing of the death sure to overcome any that approach the bone keep.

Corruption has twisted the grass beneath your feet, each blade warped by the bone keep, and the vile bouquet confronting your senses grows heavier with the scent of death as you draw nearer.

Bone Field

Strewn about the outposts and around Hone-Noroi Keep are mounds of skeletons piled several feet high, the remains of the fools that dared to attack the Pale Master's fortress.

The vacant gazes of hundreds of hollowed out skulls stare at you from massive piles of bone that ring the unnatural construction before you, the evil edifice entirely encircled by a mound as tall as a man and formed from the skeletons of dead beyond counting.

Areas of the map covered by a Bone Field are difficult terrain. When a creature in a Bone Field goes to move on its turn, it can use a bonus action to attempt to push through with a DC 13 Strength check, ignoring the difficult terrain on a success. On a failure, the creature falls prone. At the start of every other round, 1 skeleton animates from the Bone Field for every 5-foot square with a living creature in it. The skeleton appears in a random square within 20 feet of the living creature that triggered its animation.

Yakeru Doro Circle

Powerful enchantments on the bone edifices wrought by the Pale Master make the very structures themselves into lethal magical weapons that target any living creature that approaches.

There's no grass directly before or abutting the bone structure ahead—the dirt is blasted clean and devoid of any semblance of life, marked only by black scorching to the earth.

When a living creature enters the area or starts its turn there, it makes a DC 13 Charisma saving throw. On a failure, at the end of the round the bone structure casts *scorching ray* (spell attack +6), targeting the triggering creature and two random living creatures in the area (if there are no additional targets, all of the rays target the triggering creature).

Hason Shita Zone

All of the vegetation just outside of the Sanguine Moat surrounding the Pale Master's bone keep has completely warped and transformed into sickly mounds of magical rot.

The meadow loses its connection to nature in the wake of the bone keep's moat of blood, the grass near the red ditch all clumped together into thousands of rotting gray-green mounds that emanate a horrendous stench.

When a living creature enters the area or starts its turn there, it makes a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or takes 4 (1d8) poison damage. A creature that has taken 20 poison damage this way becomes poisoned until all of the poison damage is healed.

In addition, at the end of each minute that a living creature is in the area it makes a DC 10 Dignity saving throw or increases its Haitoku by 1.

Finally, when a creature in the area casts a non-necromancy spell it must make a DC 13 ability check (using its spellcasting ability score). On a failure, the spell is affected by wild magic (as in the core rules).

Sanguine Moat

The second obstacle barring the way into Hone-Noroi Keep is a fairly shallow ditch around its bone field—a moat filled with the blood of would be trespassers into the Pale Master's lair.

> *Chunks of flesh float in a pool of blood that surrounds the massive bone keep, the anguished souls of the countless dead filling its grisly skeletal mound brought back to a horrendous moment of anguish when they reflection on the mortal world in the crimson fluid that fills the ditch.*

Though it is not deep (only a foot and a half thick) the blood surrounding Hone-Noroi's Bone Field is unnaturally sludgy, clinging to boots and slowing travel. The area is difficult terrain. At the start of a creature's turn, it makes a DC 13 Strength saving throw or is grappled (escape DC 13). At the end of its turn, a creature grappled by the Sanguine Moat can repeat its saving throw to escape.

In addition, any creature in the area that receives magical healing only heals half as much as normal.

Finally, at the start of every other round, 1 zombie rises up from the Sanguine Moat for every 5-foot square with a living creature in it. The zombie appears in a random square within 20 feet of the living creature that triggered its animation.

Hone-Noroi Keep

Once the PCs and their allies have penetrated the fortresses' outer defenses they must reach the bone keep itself, a destination only for the bravest of hearts. At the start of its turn, a creature within 120 feet of the bone keep and aware of it must succeed on a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw or become frightened for 1 minute. A creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, with disadvantage if the bone keep is within line of sight, ending the effect on itself on a success. If a creature's saving throw is successful or the effect ends for it, the creature is immune to this outer fear effect of the bone keep for the next 24 hours.

> *As you step onto the blasted earth before the bone keep and gaze up at it from only an arrow's span away, you feel the Pale Master's primordial evil grasp at your heart. The ivory edifice instills terror and seeing it up close, the gigantic imposing structure bears down upon you with malice, a fortress far too great to be breached and conquered.*

Siege Forces

Scores of creatures will be on the battlefield in Hone-Noroi Keep's shadow and to keep the game lively, the GM is encouraged to use the Battlefield Combat rules on page 276 and group NPCs into battalions. Regardless of forged alliances the adventurers face a legion of undead defending the Pale Master's fortress, though parties that have acquired as much help as possible will find their entry into the bone keep easier than others (until the Mists of Akuma encroach onto map).
Note: The armies will crowd the map if all 600+ NPCs are deployed simultaneously, Battlefield Combat rules or not. It's recommended that the GM not have all of an army's forces involved in the Battle at Bone Keep, turning conflicts beyond the immediate scope of the adventurers into abstractions. To determine which side is doing better or worse in these fringe fights, roll 1d20 for each army, adding a bonus equal to the average CR of the NPCs in the army's battalions.

Major NPCs

Undead Defenders: Necromages and Undead Samurai.

Soburi-Militia: Yakunitatsu Aibō (Shield Bearer), Itsusuji Tanko (Reaper), and Shouni Yome (Artillery).

Erītokirā Chapters: On its second mid-round, a battalion-less eritokera warrior still on the battlefield becomes a major NPC until the end of the battle.

Traditionalist Army: Lieutenant-General Daidouji Ikari, Gensoso Masters, and Tora-Kyabaria Hunters.

Mitsuyu Gyōsha Consortium (if present): Gosanke. On its second mid-round, an eritokera tsukumogami without a battalion still on the battlefield becomes a major NPC.

SKIRMISHES

Adventurers may want to weaken enemies before the Battle at Bone Keep. At the GM's discretion the PCs can locate enemy encampments with a successful Wisdom (Survival) check (DC 6 + highest CR of the army's commanders). The layout of army camps and how best to infiltrate them are generally the same—set on large flat plains, using the passive Perception of NPCs that would be acting as guards—but how each reacts is different.

Pale Master's Minions. Able to raise new warriors at a whim, the necromages do not hesitate to send undead battalions after trespassers—though no further than 1,000 feet from the battlefield.

Erītokirā Chapters. Regardless of which is attacked, all of the shikome soldiers react the same: plunging headfirst into full-fledged battle and chasing down anyone that flees them (only retreating themselves if reduced to half their number).

Soburi Militia. The peasant warriors immediately retreat but have been drilled in tactical withdrawals, fleeing behind shield bearer battalions that take up the rearguard with artillery battalions just behind providing covering fire.

Traditionalist Army. Any pre-emptive strikes on the southern army are best done carefully and quickly as Lieutenant-General Daidouji has standing orders to immediately respond to intrusions with overwhelming force (as many battalions as there are adventurers).

UNDEAD LEGIONS

Along with the four bone outposts around Hone-Noroi Keep the Pale Master has animated a quartet of necromages controlling as **four skeleton warrior battalions (6 each led by an undead samurai)** and **two skeletal archer battalions (8 skeleton each)** from their outpost. In total—not counting any undead raised from the Bone Fields or Sanguine Moat—there are 180 animated defenders on the map when the mass combat begins.

Bone Outpost. There are stairs molded into the outsides of these grotesque structures made from thousands of bones melted together, making them easy to climb. Each has AC 16, 120 hit points, regenerates 10 hit points at the start of its turn if it hasn't taken radiant damage in the last round, and is immune to necrotic, poison, and psychic damage. After a bone outpost is destroyed so long as the relic golem powering it is still in its place within Hone-Noroi Keep (page 298), it rebuilds itself after 1 minute.

At the start of its turn, a living creature touching a bone outpost must succeed on a DC 13 Wisdom saving throw or become frightened for 1 minute. A creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, with disadvantage if it is still touching the bone outpost, ending the effect on itself on a success. If a creature's saving throw is successful or the effect ends for it, the creature is immune to this outer fear effect of that bone outpost for the next 24 hours.

Tactics. The necromages have been ordered to rely on the fortresses outer defenses, drawing and forcing enemy battalions into areas where more undead will rise to fight. Each of the sorcerers values their bestowed unlife a great deal but knows that to defy or fail their master means unending suffering; they do not retreat, fighting until completely destroyed.

- Before engaging an enemy in force, a necromage sends a skeletal warrior battalion out to test the strength of the invader.
- When it becomes evident that opponents will not be destroyed by a single battalion, two more skeletal warrior battalions come out supported by a skeletal archer battalion.
- The fourth skeletal warrior battalion and second skeletal archer battalion remain to protect the necromage.
- As a necromage's soldiers are destroyed it animates more to replace them.
- Whenever the Sanguine Moat or Bone around Hone-Noroi Keep (or the Bone Field around its outpost) animates an undead, the nearest necromage senses it and immediately sends at least one battalion of reinforcements.

Unbreakable. Undead battalions do not make morale checks (page 277).



NECROMAGE

Medium undead, lawful evil
Armor Class 16 (natural armor)
Hit Points 69 (7d8+38)
Speed 30 ft., fly 50 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	18 (+4)	19 (+4)	15 (+2)	14 (+2)	18 (+4)

Saving Throws Int +5, Wis +5, Cha +7
Skills Arcana +5, Perception +5
Damage Vulnerabilities radiant
Damage Resistances necrotic; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical weapons
Damage Immunities poison
Condition Immunities charmed, frightened, exhaustion, poisoned
Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 15
Languages Adeddo, Soburi (Common)
Challenge 7 (2,900 XP)

Animate Servants (Recharge 6). The necromage uses an action to conjure 1d4 skeletal warriors, 1d4 skeleton archers, or an undead samurai. The undead emerges from an unoccupied square adjacent to the necromage's bone outpost.

Spellcasting. The necromage is a 7th level spellcaster that uses Charisma as its spellcasting ability (spell save DC 15; +7 to hit with spell attacks). The necromage knows the following spells prepared from the sorcerer's spell list:

Cantrips: *chill touch, fire bolt, message, poison spray, ray of frost*
1st-level (4 slots): *charm person, detect magic, false life, magic missile*
2nd-level (3 slots): *darkness, misty step, web*
3rd-level (2 slots): *fear, fireball*
4th-level (1 slots): *confusion*

Sorcery Points (7/Day). The necromage can use sorcery points to gain additional spell slots, or sacrifice spell slots to gain additional sorcery points.

Creating Spell Slots & Sorcery Points. As a bonus action on its turn, the necromage can either expend one spell slot and gain a number of sorcerer points equal to the slot's level, or create a spell slot by expending sorcery points (1st-level—2 points, 2nd-level—3 points, 3rd-level—5 points, 4th-level—6 points, 5th-level—7 points).

- ***Metamagic: Distant Spell.*** When the necromage casts a that has a range of 5 feet or greater, it can spend 1 sorcery point to double the range of the spell. When the necromage casts a spell that has a range of touch, it can spend 1 sorcery point to make the range of the spell 30 feet.
- ***Metamagic: Quickened Spell.*** When the necromage casts a spell that has a casting time of 1 action, it can spend 2 sorcery points to change the casting time to 1 bonus action for this casting.

Undead Fortitude. If damage reduces the necromage to 0 hit points, it must make a Constitution saving throw with a DC of 5 + the damage taken, unless the damage is radiant or from a critical hit. On a success, the necromage drops to 1 hit point instead.

ACTIONS

Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target.
Hit: 7 (1d6+4) slashing damage.

UNDEAD SAMURAI

アンデッド

Medium undead, lawful evil
Armor Class 17 (natural armor)
Hit Points 51 (6d8+24)
Speed 45 ft., leap 15 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	17 (+3)	18 (+4)	15 (+2)	14 (+2)	13 (+1)

Saving Throws Str +8, Dex +6, Con +7
Skills Athletics +8, Perception +5, Stealth +6, Survival +5
Damage Vulnerabilities radiant
Damage Resistances cold, fire, necrotic
Damage Immunities poison
Condition Immunities charmed, frightened, exhaustion, poisoned
Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 15
Languages Adeddo, Soburi (Common)
Challenge 6 (2,300 XP)

Improved Critical. The undead samurai's weapon attacks score a critical hit on a roll of 19 or 20.

Power Attack. When the undead samurai makes its first melee weapon attack in a turn, it can choose to take a -5 penalty to its melee weapon attack rolls in exchange for a +10 bonus to melee weapon damage. In addition, the undead samurai can use a bonus action to make one melee weapon attack after it uses a melee weapon to reduce a creature to 0 hit points or scores a critical hit with it. The undead samurai can only use this feature on its turn.

Undead Fortitude. If damage reduces the undead samurai to 0 hit points, it must make a Constitution saving throw with a DC of 5 + the damage taken, unless the damage is radiant or from a critical hit. On a success, the undead samurai drops to 1 hit point instead.

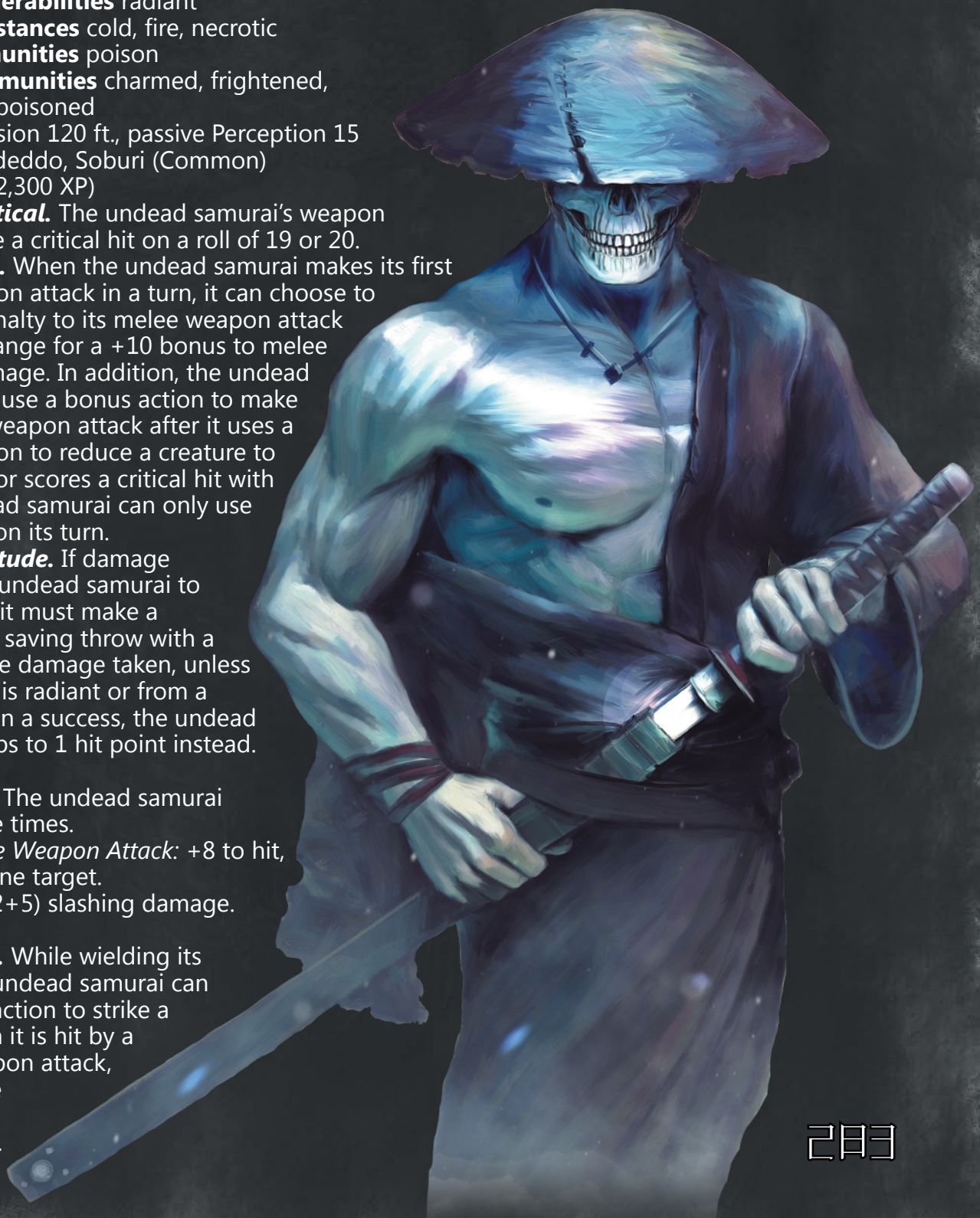
ACTIONS

Extra Attack. The undead samurai attacks three times.

Katana. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target.
Hit: 11 (1d12+5) slashing damage.

REACTIONS

Strike Missile. While wielding its katana, the undead samurai can spend its reaction to strike a missile when it is hit by a ranged weapon attack, reducing the damage by 11 (1d12+5).



SKELETON WARRIOR

Medium undead, lawful evil
Armor Class 15 (armor scraps, shield)
Hit Points 32 (5d8+10)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	14 (+2)	15 (+2)	6 (-2)	8 (-1)	5 (-3)

Damage Vulnerabilities bludgeoning
Damage Immunities poison
Condition Immunities exhaustion, poisoned
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 9
Languages Soburi (Common)
Challenge 1 (200 XP)
ACTIONS
Extra Attack. The skeleton warrior attacks twice.
Katana (one-handed). *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target.
Hit: 7 (1d8+3) slashing damage.

SKELETON ARCHER

Medium undead, lawful evil
Armor Class 14 (armor scraps)
Hit Points 19 (3d8+6)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	16 (+3)	15 (+2)	6 (-2)	11 (+0)	5 (-3)

Damage Vulnerabilities bludgeoning
Damage Immunities poison
Condition Immunities exhaustion, poisoned
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10
Languages Soburi (Common)
Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)
ACTIONS
Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target.
Hit: 5 (1d4+3) slashing damage.
Longbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, range 150/600 ft., one target.
Hit: 7 (1d8+3) piercing damage.

BATTLEFIELD COMBAT WORKSHEET: UNDEAD LEGIONS

	ADVENTURER	ADVENTURER	ADVENTURER	ADVENTURER	ADVENTURER	ADVENTURER
NPC						
NPC						
NPC						
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Soburi Militia & Machibuse Traders

Before the first battle commences the peasant army is visited by one of the fabled Imperial Siblings. Kanja Korusu reveals himself to Yakunitatsu Aibō, Itsusuji Tanko, and Shouni Yome, telling them to conserve their forces' strength solely for pushing to the doors of Hone-Noroi Keep, urging them to avoid conflict and distractions where possible.

Itsusuji leads one of **three battalions of reapers (7 each)**, **Yakunitatsu** leads one of **three shield bearer battalions (10 each)**, and **Shouni** leads one of **three artillery battalions (5 each)**. In addition, there are hired soldiers ready to support them: **three battalions of archers (12 each), three battalions of mounted samurai (6 each;** riding Warhorses that increase their Speed to 60 feet), **and six battalions of infantry (10 each)**. In total, the Soburi Militia have 69 erītokirā-armored peasants and 114 mundane soldiers.

Tactics. Although Itsusuji, Shouni, and Yakunitatsu try to follow Kanja Korusu's counsel they are all unseasoned in mass combat, prone to taking risks experienced warriors would never consider. They move throughout the field of battle with clear objectives that, at the GM's discretion, they may veer away from when opportunity arises. Their tactics are as follows:

- A reaper battalion leads the way with two infantry battalions for immediate support.
- A shield bearer battalion follows, providing cover for an archer battalion and artillery battalion.
- A mounted samurai battalion accompanies each war party, moving to respond to flanks and other threats.

Note: Tanko's Reapers are aggressive and eager to prove themselves, willing to help in skirmishes.

Militia Artillery

Medium humanoid (soburi), neutral good
Armor Class 17 (erītokirā armor)
Hit Points 52 (8d8+16)
Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	16 (+3)	15 (+2)	11 (+0)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)

Saving Throws Dex +5, Con +5
Skills Athletics +4, Perception +3
Senses darkvision 200 ft., passive Perception 13
Languages Soburi (Common)
Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

Armor Sensors. The militia artillery can see normally in darkness, both magical and nonmagical, to a distance of 60 feet.

Dampening Enhancers. The militia artillery has advantage on Strength (Athletics) and Dexterity (Stealth) checks.

Leader: Shouni Yome. The militia artillery are led by Shouni (Dignity 13, Haitoku 10).

Nitrous Dash (Recharge 6). The militia artillery can Dash on their turn without spending an action to do so.

ACTIONS

Gauntlet. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target.
Hit: 5 (1d6+2) bludgeoning damage.

Firearm. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, range 200/800 ft., one target.
Hit: 12 (2d8+3) piercing damage.

Militia Reaper

Medium humanoid (soburi), chaotic good
Armor Class 17 (erītokirā armor)
Hit Points 52 (8d8+16)
Speed 45 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
17 (+3)	15 (+2)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)	11 (+0)

Saving Throws Str +5, Dex +4
Skills Athletics +5, Perception +2, Stealth +4
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 12
Languages Soburi (Common)
Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

Armor Sensors. The militia reaper can see normally in darkness, both magical and nonmagical, to a distance of 60 feet.

Dampening Enhancers. The militia reaper has advantage on Strength (Athletics) and Dexterity (Stealth) checks.

Leader: Itsusuji Tanko. The militia reapers are led by Yakunitatsu (Dignity 14, Haitoku 14).

Nitrous Dash (Recharge 5-6). The militia reaper can Dash on their turn without spending an action to do so.

ACTIONS

Extra Attack. The militia reaper attacks twice with their katana.

Katana. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target.
Hit: 7 (1d8+3) slashing damage or 9 (1d12+3) slashing damage if wielded in two hands.

Militia Shieldbearer

Medium humanoid (soburi), lawful good
Armor Class 19 (erītokirā armor, shield)
Hit Points 52 (8d8+16)
Speed 35 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	13 (+1)	15 (+2)	11 (+0)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)

Saving Throws Str +5, Con +4
Skills Athletics +5
Senses passive Perception 10
Languages Soburi (Common)
Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

Dampening Enhancers. The militia shieldbearer has advantage on Strength (Athletics) and Dexterity (Stealth) checks.

Leader: Yakunitatsu Aibō. The militia shieldbearers are led by Yakunitatsu (Dignity 16, Haitoku 12).

Nitrous Dash (Recharge 6). The militia shieldbearer can Dash on their turn without spending an action to do so.

ACTIONS

Katana (one-handed). *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target.
Hit: 7 (1d8+3) slashing damage.

Heavy Crossbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, range 100/400 ft., one target.
Hit: 6 (1d10+1) piercing damage.

Militia Samurai

Medium humanoid (soburi), lawful good
Armor Class 19 (o-yoroi)
Hit Points 39 (6d8+12)
Speed 30 ft. (60 ft. on warhorse)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA	Dignity	Haitoku
17 (+3)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)	13 (+1)	12 (+1)	11 (+0)	17 (+3)	11 (+0)

Saving Throws Str +5, Con +4, Wis +3
Skills Athletics +5. Perception +3
Condition Immunities frightened
Senses passive Perception 13
Languages Soburi (Common)
Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Rapid Strike (1/turn). When the samurai has advantage on a weapon attack during their turn, they may choose to roll normally and instead make an additional attack against that target.

Warrior Spirit (2/long rest). The samurai can use a bonus action to gain 15 temporary hit points and advantage on weapon attack rolls until the end of their turn.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The samurai attacks twice.

Unarmed. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target.
Hit: 5 (1d4+3) bludgeoning damage.

Katana. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target.
Hit: 7 (1d8+3) slashing damage or 9 (1d12+3) slashing damage if wielded in two hands.

Light Crossbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, range 80/320 ft., one target.
Hit: 5 (1d8+1) piercing damage.



Militia Infantry

Medium humanoid (soburi), lawful neutral
Armor Class 14 (chain shirt)
Hit Points 22 (4d8+4)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	13 (+1)	13 (+1)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)

Saving Throws Str +4, Con +3
Skills Athletics +4
Senses passive Perception 10
Languages Soburi (Common)
Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Brave. The infantry has advantage on saving throws to resist the frightened condition and morale checks.

ACTIONS

Unarmed. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target.
Hit: 4 (1d4+2) bludgeoning damage.

Naginata. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target.
Hit: 7 (1d10+2) slashing damage.

Dagger. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target.
Hit: 4 (1d4+2) piercing damage.

BATTLEFIELD COMBAT WORKSHEET: SOBURI MILITIA

	ADVENTURER	ADVENTURER	ADVENTURER	ADVENTURER	ADVENTURER	ADVENTURER
NPC						
NPC						
NPC						
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NPC						
NPC						
NPC						

MILITIA ARCHER

Medium humanoid (soburi), lawful neutral
Armor Class 14 (studded leather)
Hit Points 22 (4d8+4)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	15 (+2)	13 (+1)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)

Saving Throws Dex +4, Con +3
Skills Athletics +2, Perception +3, Stealth +4
Senses passive Perception 13
Languages Soburi (Common)
Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Cunning Action (1/turn). The archer can take a bonus action to take the Dash, Disengage or Hide action.

Evasion. When the archer is subjected to an effect that allows them to make a Dexterity saving throw to take only half damage, they instead takes no damage if they succeed on the saving throw, and only half damage if they fail.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The archer makes two longbow attacks.

Unarmed. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +2 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target.
Hit: 2 (1d4) bludgeoning damage.

Longbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, range 150/600 ft., one target.
Hit: 6 (1d8+2) piercing damage.



Erītokirā Chapters

Which side the erītokirā chapters fight for—unintentionally in the interests of the Pale Master to thwart the Soburi Militia or supporting the adventurers—depends entirely on if the party were able to make successful overtures to them (page 9). Each sect of shikome soldiers has battalions of a different size with their own tactics. All told there are 96 erītokirā on the battlefield (unless some have been bought off or otherwise detained).

Haiiro-Nokishi Tactics (5 battalions, 7 each). These erītokirā are more defensive than their peers, remaining on the fringe of combat and whittling away at opponents engaged with other enemies. These tactics continue until a member of its battalion dies—then all of them turn on the offender together, laying down fire until the target is destroyed.

Kodomo-Tachi Tactics (6 battalions, 6 each). Of all the combatants on the battlefield these are perhaps the most dangerous—while individually they pose a lesser threat than other erītokirā, they act with tactical precision and daring, dashing directly into melee combats. Kodomo-Tachi battalions work together to flank, shock, and disrupt opponents, utilizing any allied battalions as diversions and cover.

Kōteino Tactics (5 battalions, 5 each). These erītokirā are no better than barbarians, decimating enemy battalions one at a time in a race to prove which pack has the greatest warriors. They use their physical superiority and mobility to attack targets that are easier to defeat, whittling away the weak before going after stronger opponents.

Haiiro-Nokishi Erītokirā

Medium humanoid (shikome), lawful neutral
Armor Class 17 (erītokirā gusoku)
Hit Points 34 (4d10+8)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA	Dignity	Haitoku
17 (+3)	10 (+0)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	11 (+0)	15 (+2)

Saving Throws Str +5, Con +4
Skills Athletics +5, Intimidation +2, Investigation +2, Survival +4
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 12
Languages Adeddo, Draconic, Soburi (Common)
Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Action Surge (1/short rest). On their turn, the erītokirā can take an additional action on top of their regular action and a possible bonus action.

Brave. The erītokirā has advantage on saving throws against being frightened and on morale checks.

Fighting Style: Great Weapon Fighting. When the erītokirā rolls a 1 or 2 on a damage die for an attack they make with a melee weapon that they are wielding with two hands, they can reroll the die and must use the new roll. The weapon must have the two-handed or versatile property for the erītokirā to gain this benefit.

Hated. The erītokirā has disadvantage when making Wisdom or Charisma checks against any humanoid that doesn't also have the hated condition but they nevser have disadvantage on Charisma (Intimidation) checks.

Improved Critical. The erītokirā's weapon attacks score a critical hit on a roll of 19 or 20.

Martial Advantage (1/turn). The erītokirā can deal an extra 5 (2d4) damage to a creature they hit with a melee weapon attack if that creature is within 5 feet of an ally that isn't incapacitated.

Second Wind (1/short rest). On their turn, the erītokirā can use a bonus action to regain 1d10+4 hit points.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The erītokirā attacks twice.

Tetsubo. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target.
Hit: 9 (2d6+3) bludgeoning damage.

Gauntlet Flechettes. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +2 to hit, range 30/120 ft., one target.
Hit: 7 (3d4) slashing damage.

KODOMO-TACHI ERĪTOKIRĀ

Medium humanoid (shikome), lawful neutral
Armor Class 16 (erītokirā armor)
Hit Points 75 (10d8+30)
Speed 40 ft., leap 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA	Dignity	Haitoku
18 (+4)	15 (+2)	16 (+3)	14 (+2)	15 (+2)	13 (+1)	8 (-1)	13 (+1)

Saving Throws Dex +4, Int +4, Wis +4
Skills Acrobatics +4, Athletics +6, Culture +1, Insight +4, Intimidation +3, Perception +4, Stealth +4, Survival +4
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 14
Languages Adeddo, Ceram, Soburi
Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

Brave. The erītokirā has advantage on saving throws to resist the frightened condition and morale checks.

Dampening Enhancers. The erītokirā has advantage on Strength (Athletics) and Dexterity (Stealth) checks.

Exhaust. The erītokirā has advantage on checks and saving throws to resist the exhaustion condition.

Hated. The erītokirā has disadvantage on Wisdom and Charisma checks against any humanoid that don't also have the hated condition but they never have disadvantage on Charisma (Intimidation) checks.

Iyashino Iyashi Injectors (1/short rest). The erītokirā spends a bonus action activating a feature on their armor, regaining 22 (4d8+4) hit points.

Martial Advantage (1/turn). The erītokirā can deal an extra 5 (2d4) damage to a creature they hit with a melee weapon attack if that creature is within 5 feet of an ally that isn't incapacitated.

Nitrous Dash (Recharge 6). The erītokirā can Dash on their turn without spending an action to do so.

Radio Antennae. The erītokirā automatically detects radio waves and can broadcast their own radio waves to a distance of 15 miles.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The erītokirā attacks once with its katana and once with its sword arm.

Katana. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (1d8+4) slashing damage.

Sword Arm. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (1d10+4) slashing damage. By spending a bonus action to activate the gearwork within the augmetic, the erītokirā can set the sword arm to vibrate for 1 minute. While vibrating its damage increases by 1d6 and the erītokirā has advantage on checks made to disarm another creature.

BATTLEFIELD COMBAT WORKSHEET: ERĪTOKIRĀ WARRIORS

	ADVENTURER	ADVENTURER	ADVENTURER	ADVENTURER	ADVENTURER	ADVENTURER
NPC						
NPC						
NPC						

TRADITIONALIST ARMY



Spurred north by the direct command of Shusho Ikari, a massive conglomeration of traditionalist warriors march from the southern prefectures under the command of potent Gensoso warrior-monks to destroy the Soburi Militia. With the arrival of Hone-Noroi Keep their objectives have become twofold—while Lieutenant-General Daidouji Ikari doesn't wish to anger the Imperial Sibling that founded her prefecture, she is a brash young noblewoman better at wielding a sword than she is commanding forces on the battlefield. Her forces have already suffered a terrible loss (including the death of their original leader, Kôzuke Hidetsugu; page 345), a slaughter that convinced Lord General Zayasu Masuto to withhold the Emperor's personal forces and forbid anyone from approaching the Pale Master's fortress.

Lieutenant-General Daidouji Ikari (a Gladiator) is surrounded at all times by one of **five Gensoso battalions (5 each; page 121), the rest led by Gensoso Masters (page 163)**. Also under her command are **four Waverider battalions (5 each)**, and **ten Burakku Kirā battalions (8 each)**, **seven of these battalions are led by six Tora-Kyabaria Hunters**. All told the traditionalist army numbers 136 soldiers.

Tactics. While she may be fielding the largest army Daidouji is not battle-hardened and deploys her soldiers defensively in a comprehensive fashion—by the books, as it were.

- Lieutenant-General Daidouji remains encircled by her Gensoso battalion, flanked on four sides by Burakku Kirā battalions and accompanied by a Waverider battalion led by a Tora-Kyabaria Hunter.
- Tora-Kyabaria Hunters lead three Burakku Kirā battalions and the remaining three Waverider battalions.
- The uncommanded Burakku Kirā battalions remain as reinforcements, waiting for when allies falter to move in and replace them.
- The remaining four Gensoso battalions are each of one specific element (with access to either the Frost, Scorch, Stone, or Zephyr feature) and move in concert around Lieutenant-General Daidouji, striking out at opponents and withdrawing until an enemy is vulnerable at which point they all attack that target.

BATTLEFIELD COMBAT WORKSHEET: TRADITIONALIST ARMY

	ADVENTURER	ADVENTURER	ADVENTURER	ADVENTURER	ADVENTURER	ADVENTURER
NPC						
NPC						
NPC						

BURAKKU KIRĀ

Medium humanoid (human), any alignment
Armor Class 16 (do-maru jacket)
Hit Points 26 (4d10+4)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	14 (+2)	13 (+1)	10 (+0)	13 (+1)	9 (–1)

Saving Throws Str +4, Dex +4
Skills Athletics +4, Intimidate +1, Stealth +4, Survival +3
Senses passive Perception 11
Languages Enjin, Soburi
Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Enemy of the Enjin. Burakku Kirā has advantage on Wisdom (Survival) checks made to track enjin and humans, as well as on Intelligence checks to recall information about them.

Spellcasting. Burakku Kirā are 1st-level spellcasters that use Wisdom as their spellcasting ability (spell save DC 11; +3 to hit with spell attacks). Burakku Kirā have the following spells prepared from the ranger's spell list:

1st-level (3 slots)—*cure wounds, hunter's mark, longstrider*

ACTIONS

Kusarigama. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target.
Hit: 3 (1d4+2) slashing damage and the Burakku Kirā makes a kusarigama attack against a foe within reach.

REACTIONS

Chain Master. By spending their reaction, the Burakku Kirā can deflect a melee weapon attack.

TORA-KYABARIA HUNTER

Medium humanoid (human), any alignment
Armor Class 15 (studded leather)
Hit Points 91 (14d8+28)
Speed 30 ft. (40 ft. if mounted on tiger)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	16 (+3)	15 (+2)	13 (+1)	14 (+2)	17 (+3)

Saving Throws Dex +6, Con +5, Cha +6
Skills Animal Handling +6, Arcana +4, Athletics +5, Perception +5
Condition Immunities frightened
Senses passive Perception 15
Languages Soburi
Challenge 7 (2,900 XP)

Tiger Rider. Tora-Kyabaria Hunters are always accompanied by a Tiger that they control as if using *dominate beast* but without the need for components or concentration.

Spellcasting. Tora-Kyabaria Hunters are 7th-level spellcasters that use Charisma as their spellcasting ability (spell save DC 14; +6 to hit with spell attacks). Tora-Kyabaria Hunters have the following spells prepared from the sorcerer spell list:

Cantrips: *dancing lights, fire bolt, ray of frost*
1st-level (3/day): *burning hands, magic missile, thunderwave*
2nd-level (3/day): *gust of wind, scorching ray*
3rd-level (3/day): *fireball, lightning bolt*
4th-level (2/day): *ice storm, wall of fire*

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The Tora-Kyabaria Hunter makes one tora-sword attack and casts one spell.

Tora-Sword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target.
Hit: 13 (3d6+3) magical slashing damage.



WAVERIDER

Medium humanoid (human), any alignment
Armor Class 15 (Wisdom)
Hit Points 88 (16d8+16)
Speed 30 ft., swim 50 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	17 (+3)	13 (+1)	11 (+0)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)

Saving Throws Dex +6, Cha +6
Skills Athletics +5, Nature +3, Perception +5
Damage Resistances cold, fire
Condition Immunities prone
Senses passive Perception 15
Languages Soburi
Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Hold Breath. Waveriders can hold their breath for 30 minutes.

Water Mastery. Waveriders can cast the *control water, create or destroy water*, and *fog cloud* spells as if they were cantrips, without the need for any components and without having to concentrate (spell save DC 14, spell attack +6). Waveriders use Charisma as their spellcasting attribute.

Water Walking. As a bonus action, a Waverider benefits from the *water walk* spell until the end of its next turn.

Water Warrior. While fighting in or on water, a Waverider gains a +1 bonus to attack and damage. In addition, the Waverider does not gain disadvantage when using waterstrike against an adjacent target.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Waveriders make two waterstrike attacks.

Wavestrike. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, all targets in a 20 ft. cone. *Hit:* 20 (4d8+2) bludgeoning damage. Creatures damaged by this attack make a DC 13 Strength saving throw or are pushed back to the end of the cone's area.

Waterstrike. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, range 100/200 ft., one target. *Hit:* 12 (2d8+3) bludgeoning damage.

MITSUYU GYŌSHA CONSORTIUM

Perhaps ironically the criminal organization's goals on the battlefield are most closely aligned with the party's: getting the adventurers into Hone-Noroi Keep. A **Mitsuyu Gyōsha smuggler (page 119) named Gosanke** is ostensibly in command of **one erītokirā armor tsukumogami battalion (4 creatures; page 220)**, **two sellsword battalions (8 Knights each)**, and **three veteran battalions (8 Veterans each)**. In total their forces number only 45.

Tactics. Iki-Anākī has commanded her servants to do nothing but get the party into Hone-Noroi Keep. If the PCs are not allied with the Mitsuyu Gyōsha Consortium, the criminal organization does not participate in the Battle at Bone Keep.

- Barging forward through the combat, the erītokirā tsukumogami battalion is the tip of a spear backed up by the sellsword battalions.
- The adventurers are kept behind the front of the wedge, flanked and protected at the rear by the three veteran battalions.
- Gosanke and the rest of the criminals are keen to keep Iki-Anākī's favor, unwilling to entertain any other goals on the field of battle than to get the adventurers into the bone keep. Convincing Gosanke otherwise requires a DC 18 Charisma (Persuasion) check made as an action, and on a success he only diverts his forces until the next mid-round.

Hone-Noroi Keep

Once the adventurers are past the huge Yakeru Doro Circle and overcome the dread around the Pale Master's fortress, their opportunity to strike at its master presents itself and the Battle of Bone Keep resolves in their absence. There are nine different levels each engineered by the necromancer to punish those who've dared resist him, enrich his own power, and focus supernatural energies streaming from black torii gates around Soburin channeled to his lair at the gruesome tower's apex. A field of magical darkness 20 feet deep completely covers the entrance but it has no other effects other than obscurement.

> *The blasphemous tower before you is impossibly immense and you struggle to comprehend how it can exist, its uppermost reaches touching against the dark clouds far above. Even more disturbing is what the foul structure is made of, a horrifying rictus made from millions of bones and skulls merging together. Every few seconds you see it shudder ever so slightly, growing outward and jutting further upward a few inches at a time.*

Among the many monsters within the adventurers encounter relic golems on the second, fourth, sixth, and eighth levels of Hone-Noroi Keep. For every one of these creatures that they defeat, one of the bone outposts and vile defenses outside of the fortress are destroyed. For every destroyed bone outpost, the forces outside battling the Pale Master's legions have a cumulative 10% chance of an honorable victory. If no relic golems are defeated the battlefield becomes host to a complete slaughter and the only heroes from the Battle at Bone Keep are the adventurers—if they survive.

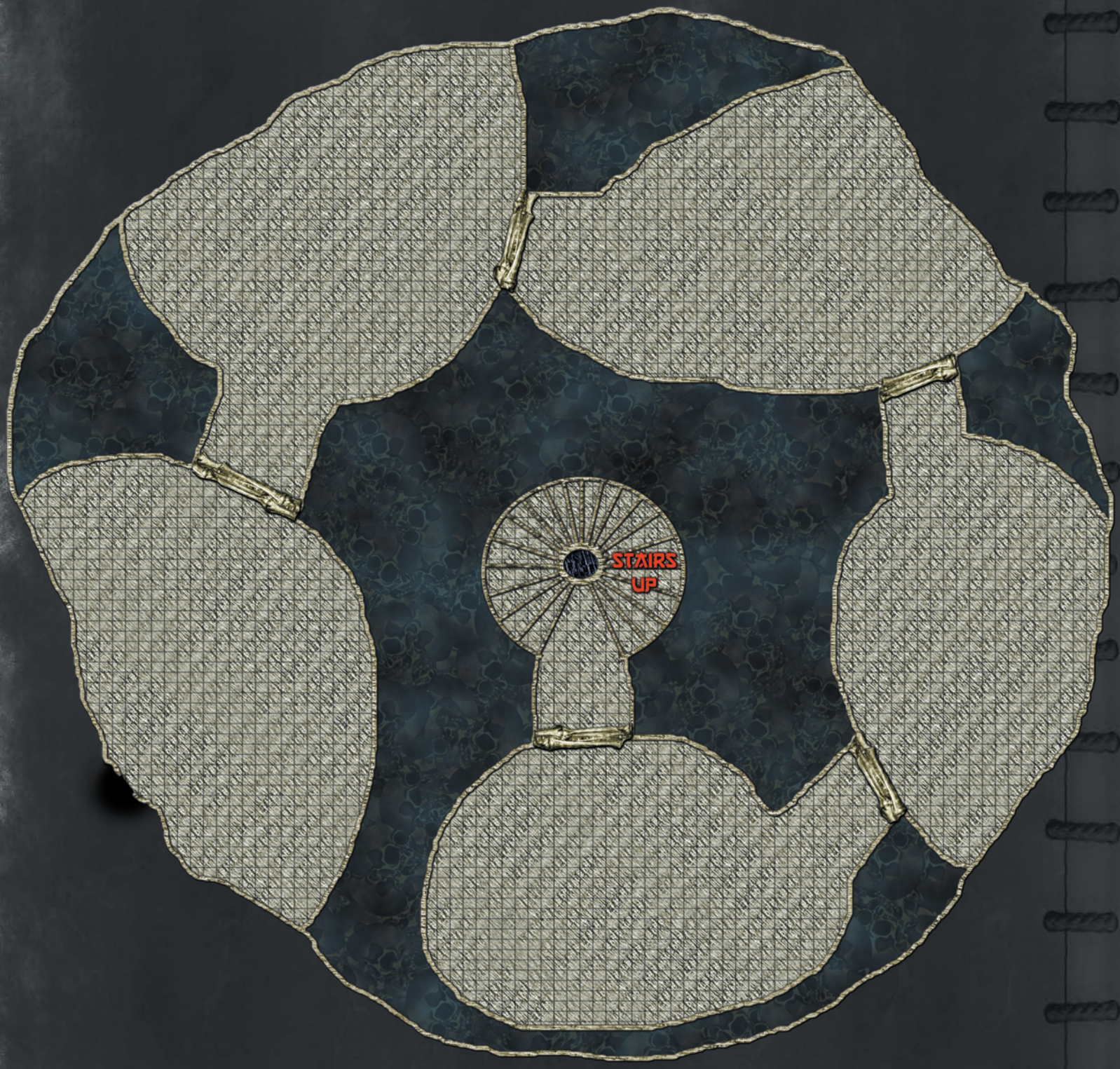
Lighting Sources. There are no sconces or torches in the inside of Hone-Noroi Keep and only the 6th Level (Hall of Flames) has any natural source of light.

Increased Difficulty. It's extremely unlikely that adventurers have an easy time defeating the Pale Master but if they do, the deaths of soldiers in the Battle of Bone Keep can revive the necromancer. When the Pale Master is reduced to 0 hit points, should the armies outside achieve an honorable victory at the end of the next round he reanimates with half his hit points; in the event of a complete slaughter he reanimates with all of his hit points instead.

Ground Level: Reviving Wolves

The adventurers first must face a pack of vicious dire wolves that rise back up to fight them again and again (and again) more deadly each time. Lowly servants—the cooks of armies, aides to generals, court officials, and the like—are trapped here, their aged bodies morphed to the bone floor of Hone-Noroi Keep. The Pale Master's fiendish beasts consume his victims endlessly, their withered forms regenerating only to be shredded anew. Every chamber has 8 victims that can only be destroyed if they take 10 or more radiant damage, forever freeing the trapped soul. The PC responsible for freeing a victim's soul increases their Dignity by 1 or reduces their Haitoku by 1.

> *A chorus of snapping, tearing, and growling echoes from the darkness ahead, the gruesome symphony broken only by occasional anguished cries that are abruptly silenced. Drawing nearer you see the source of this pain: an incredibly old man merged into the floor is slowly listing back and forth, his ripped open torso slowly knitting itself back together. Recognition briefly flashes across his face but as he reaches out to you for aid a feral wolf the size of a horse lopes from out of the shadows, its huge jaws snapping down onto the poor fellow's skull and ripping half of his head off with a deep crunching noise that turns your stomach.*



GROUND LEVEL

N
W E
S

For the first and second chamber, break the wolves into packs of four when rolling initiative. When the PCs have killed or destroyed the wolves in a chamber the invincible bone gate barring their way shudders, the remains of the Pale Master's beasts soaring into the new room and reforming.

The last of the wolves emits a suffering howl as it shuffles off its mortal coil and something along the northern wall begins to rumble, bones as large as wagons suddenly falling to the ground and morphing into the macabre surface beneath your feet. All of the remains of the dead canines stir and swirl together, streaking through the air with a baleful scream. In the shadows of the chamber ahead of you the flesh and bones of the creatures knit together, forming into wolves again but more hideous than before!

A circular bone staircase made from the spinal cord of an enormous creature awaits at the end of these chambers. It only goes upwards, their first of many steps climbing to the Pale Master's lair.

Despite the blasphemy inherent in their construction there is an undeniable genius to the geometry of the bone staircase before you, each and every piece of it seamlessly fit into the next as it circles out of sight above.

As this enormous wolf bares its fangs the mottled fur all over its body raises on end, a viscous green substance drips from its slathering jaws.

Table: Hone-Noroi Keep Wolves

Chamber	Monsters
First	12 dire wolves
Second	8 fiendish wolves
Third	6 undead dire wolves
Fourth	3 adeddo dire wolves
Fifth	2 abominable wolves

FIENDISH WOLF

Large beast, neutral evil
Armor Class 15 (natural armor)
Hit Points 37 (5d10+10)
Speed 50 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
17 (+3)	15 (+2)	15 (+2)	3 (-4)	12 (+1)	7 (-2)

Skills Perception +3, Stealth +4
Damage Resistances poison, radiant
Condition Immunities poisoned
Senses passive Perception 13
Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Keen Hearing and Smell. The wolf has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on hearing or smell.

Pack Tactics. The wolf has advantage on an attack roll against a creature if at least one of the wolf's allies is within 5 feet of the creature and the ally isn't incapacitated.

ACTIONS

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (2d6+3) piercing damage plus 5 (2d4) poison damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 13 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.

This skinless amalgamation of wolf corpses, has bulging blue muscles exposed across its patchwork body, one eye bobbing in and out of its skull, the saliva it drips a sickly black.

UNDEAD DIRE WOLF

Large undead, unaligned
Armor Class 16 (natural armor)
Hit Points 52 (7d10+14)
Speed 55 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
17 (+3)	15 (+2)	15 (+2)	3 (-4)	14 (+2)	7 (-2)

Skills Perception +4, Stealth +4
Damage Immunities poison
Condition Immunities exhaustion, poisoned
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 14
Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Keen Hearing and Smell. The wolf has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on hearing or smell.

Pack Tactics. The wolf has advantage on an attack roll against a creature if at least one of the wolf's allies is within 5 feet of the creature and the ally isn't incapacitated.

ACTIONS

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (2d6+3) piercing damage plus 7 (2d6) necrotic damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 13 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.

The eyes, teeth, and claws of the undead wolf have all grown larger and more disturbing. Its flesh has turned bright red, the strands of each muscle bulging and constrained only by its yellowed bones.

ADEDDO DIRE WOLF

Large undead (oni), chaotic evil
Armor Class 18 (natural armor)
Hit Points 52 (7d10+14)
Speed 85 ft. (quadruple jump distances)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
17 (+3)	15 (+2)	15 (+2)	4 (-3)	14 (+2)	7 (-2)

Saving Throws Int +0
Skills Perception +5, Stealth +5
Damage Vulnerabilities radiant
Damage Resistances cold
Damage Immunities necrotic, poison, psychic
Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, poisoned
Senses darkvision 120 ft. (sees through fog and mist), passive Perception 15
Languages Adeddo
Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Keen Hearing and Smell. The wolf has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on hearing or smell.

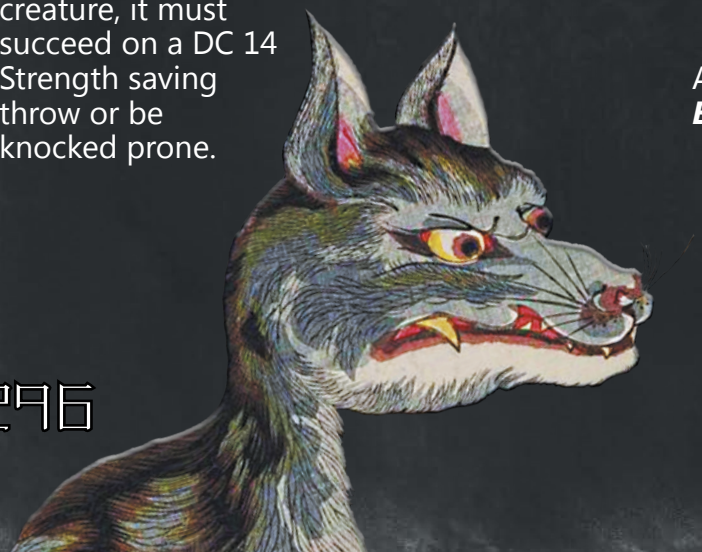
Pack Tactics. The wolf has advantage on an attack roll against a creature if at least one of the wolf's allies is within 5 feet of the creature and the ally isn't incapacitated.

Regeneration. The wolf regains 5 hit points at the start of its turn if it has at least 1 hit point and is not in sunlight.

Sunlight Weakness. The wolf has disadvantage on all ability checks, attack rolls, and saving throws while in sunlight.

ACTIONS

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target.
Hit: 11 (2d6+4) magical piercing damage plus 7 (2d6) necrotic damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 14 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.



No knowledge of anatomy is required to realize that the freakish wolf-like monstrosity towering before you is made from the congealed corpses of many of its smaller kin—one of its paws is a skull and the patchwork of bones forming its face will haunt your dreams for years.

ABOMINABLE DIRE WOLF

Huge undead (oni), chaotic evil
Armor Class 19 (natural armor)
Hit Points 73 (7d12+28)
Speed 95 ft. (quintuple jump distances)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
17 (+3)	15 (+2)	19 (+4)	4 (-3)	14 (+2)	7 (-2)

Saving Throws Int +0
Skills Perception +5, Stealth +5
Damage Resistances cold, fire
Damage Immunities necrotic, poison, psychic
Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, poisoned
Senses darkvision 120 ft. (sees through fog and mist), passive Perception 15
Languages Adeddo
Challenge 7 (2,900 XP)

Keen Hearing and Smell. The wolf has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on hearing or smell.

Pack Tactics. The wolf has advantage on an attack roll against a creature if at least one of the wolf's allies is within 5 feet of the creature and the ally isn't incapacitated.

Regeneration. The wolf regains 6 hit points at the start of its turn if it has at least 1 hit point and is not in sunlight.

Sunlight Weakness. The wolf has disadvantage on all ability checks, attack rolls, and saving throws while in sunlight.

Transforming Hide. At the start of each round, roll 1d6 to determine which type of weapon damage the wolf is immune to. On a 1 or 2, it has resistance to bludgeoning damage. On a 3 or 4, it has resistance to piercing damage. On a 5 or 6, it has resistance to slashing damage.

ACTIONS

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target.
Hit: 14 (2d8+5) magical piercing damage plus 7 (2d6) necrotic damage and 5 (2d4) psychic damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 14 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.

2ND LEVEL: BLACK ROPES

After climbing perhaps a hundred feet—the nature and dimensions of Hone-Noroi Keep make it difficult to be certain—the adventurers reach a platform of bones like the floor below. Long passages suffused with baleful energies await the party, pairs of foot-thick black ropes held taut above and offering the only safe passage ahead.

> *The steps come to an end on a platform of bone suspended fifteen feet above a floor of similar skeletal remains that pulsate and seethe with blood. Flowing crimson trickles across the ceiling and drips down the walls, frothing with bubbles that scream in anguish when they burst down below. Two thick foot-wide black ropes stretch out into the darkness from your balcony, taut enough to walk on if you're careful.*

The defenses of this level of the bone keep weed out brutes that manage to batter their way inside, sapping away the mind, body, and souls of anyone that cannot walk the black ropes.

Black Ropes. The black ropes are difficult terrain. At the start of its turn each round, a creature walking on the black ropes makes a DC 12 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check to keep its balance. On a failure, the creature falls and makes a DC 10 Dexterity saving throw to grab onto the black ropes, dropping 15 feet to the floor on a failed save.

Unholy Construction. *Antimagic fields* stretch a foot above and below the black ropes, nearly reaching the walls, ceiling, and floor. Any creature that touches the walls, ceiling, or floor takes 7 (2d6) necrotic damage at the start of its turn. In addition, a creature touching the black ropes makes a DC 10 Constitution saving throw at the end of each minute. On a failure, the creature reduces one randomly determined ability score by 1d3 (roll 1d6 to determine the ability score; 1—Strength, 2—Dexterity, 3—Constitution, 4—Intelligence, 5—Wisdom, 6—Charisma). Once an ability score has been reduced by this effect, it cannot be reduced again until all other ability scores have been reduced (reroll the 1d6 and ignore identical results). A creature dies if any of its ability scores is reduced to 0. Otherwise, these reductions lasts until the target finishes a short or long rest.

Increased Difficulty. This is a fairly difficult series of checks already but GMs that wish to make it a more impressive challenge can introduce weight tolerances to the ropes. Any rope longer than 20 feet can be dragged down by too much weight—creatures of Medium size need to remain at least 15 feet away from one another when on the same black rope or it stretches down, touch on an *antimagic field* and snapping in two (dropping them to the floor and a very painful sprint).

Another means of increasing the challenge in this area requires altering the map and is recommended for analog groups only: turn the hallways into a maze of hanging ropes rather than a long track. GMs should only do so when the PCs are moving through Hone-Noroi Keep too quickly—remember that a battle is being waged outside and to tarry too long may have fell consequences.

Before the adventurers reach the circular stairwell leading up to the third level of Hone-Noroi Keep there's a large rectangular chamber threaded with more black ropes yet free of any *antimagic fields*. It does have a defender however: a relic golem ordered to kill any living creatures that enter the area. This room has far more places to step and creatures that start their turn on a black rope only require a DC 7 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check to keep their balance. The magical creature cannot leave the area and the PCs may just flee past it, but defeating the relic golem eliminates one of the bone outposts outside Hone-Noroi Keep and the Hason Shita Zone around the fortress.

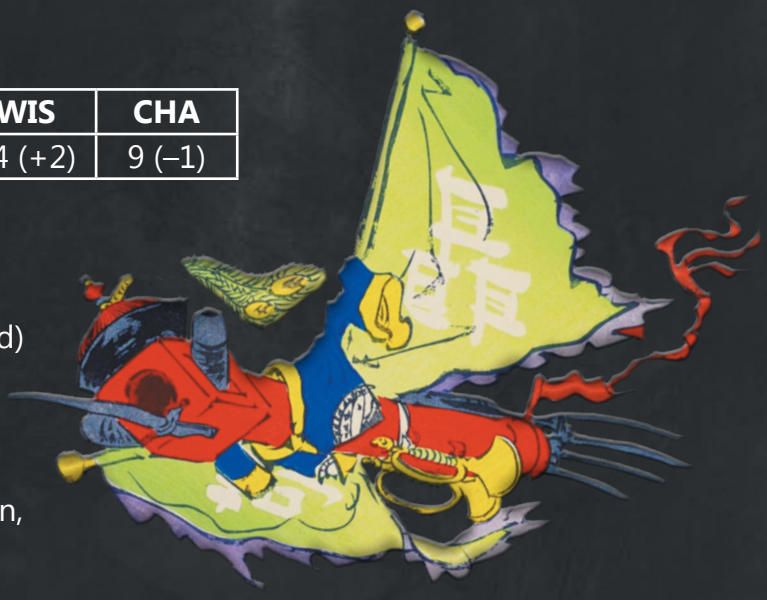
> *The passage ahead opens up into a large chamber filled with black ropes that cross themselves in a grid. As you step inside you feel the magic of your enchanted equipment brim with power—but whatever relief that brings evaporates as a strange creature rises up from the darkness below, a thing of magic items in the shape of a man that rears back before swooping down at you!*

RELIC GOLEM

Large construct, neutral evil
Armor Class 17 (5 natural)
Hit Points 114 (12d10+48)
Speed 40 ft., climb 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
22 (+6)	14 (+2)	19 (+4)	3 (–4)	14 (+2)	9 (–1)

Saving Throws Int –1, Cha +2
Skills Acrobatics +5, Perception +5 (gains advantage on sight-based checks)
Senses blindsight 30 ft., darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 15 (cannot be surprised)
Damage Resistances acid, force, necrotic, poison, psychic; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks that aren't adamantine
Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned
Languages Common (can't speak)
Challenge 7 (2,900 XP)



Force Absorption. Whenever the golem is subjected to force damage, it takes no damage and instead regains a number of hit points equal to the force damage dealt.

Berserk. Whenever the golem starts its turn with 40 hit points or fewer, roll a d6. On a 6, the golem goes berserk. On each of its turns while berserk, the golem attacks the nearest creature it can see. If no creature is near enough to move to and attack, the golem attacks an object, with preference for an object smaller than itself. Once the golem goes berserk, it continues to do so until it is destroyed or regains all its hit points.

Embedded Magic Items. The golem is powered by five magic items: a *periapt of health*, two *rings of protection*, an *ioun stone of awareness*, and *eyes of the eagle*. Each of these magic items has an AC equal to the golem's AC and 20 hit points; attacks made against embedded magic items are at disadvantage if the golem is not incapacitated or restrained. These magic items can be pried from its form when it has the incapacitated or restrained condition by making a DC 15 Strength check or DC 15 Dexterity check but there is a 50% chance that a magic item is destroyed during removal.

Immutable Form. The golem is immune to any spell or effect that would alter its form.

Magic Resistance. The golem has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Magic Weapons. The golem's weapon attacks are magical.

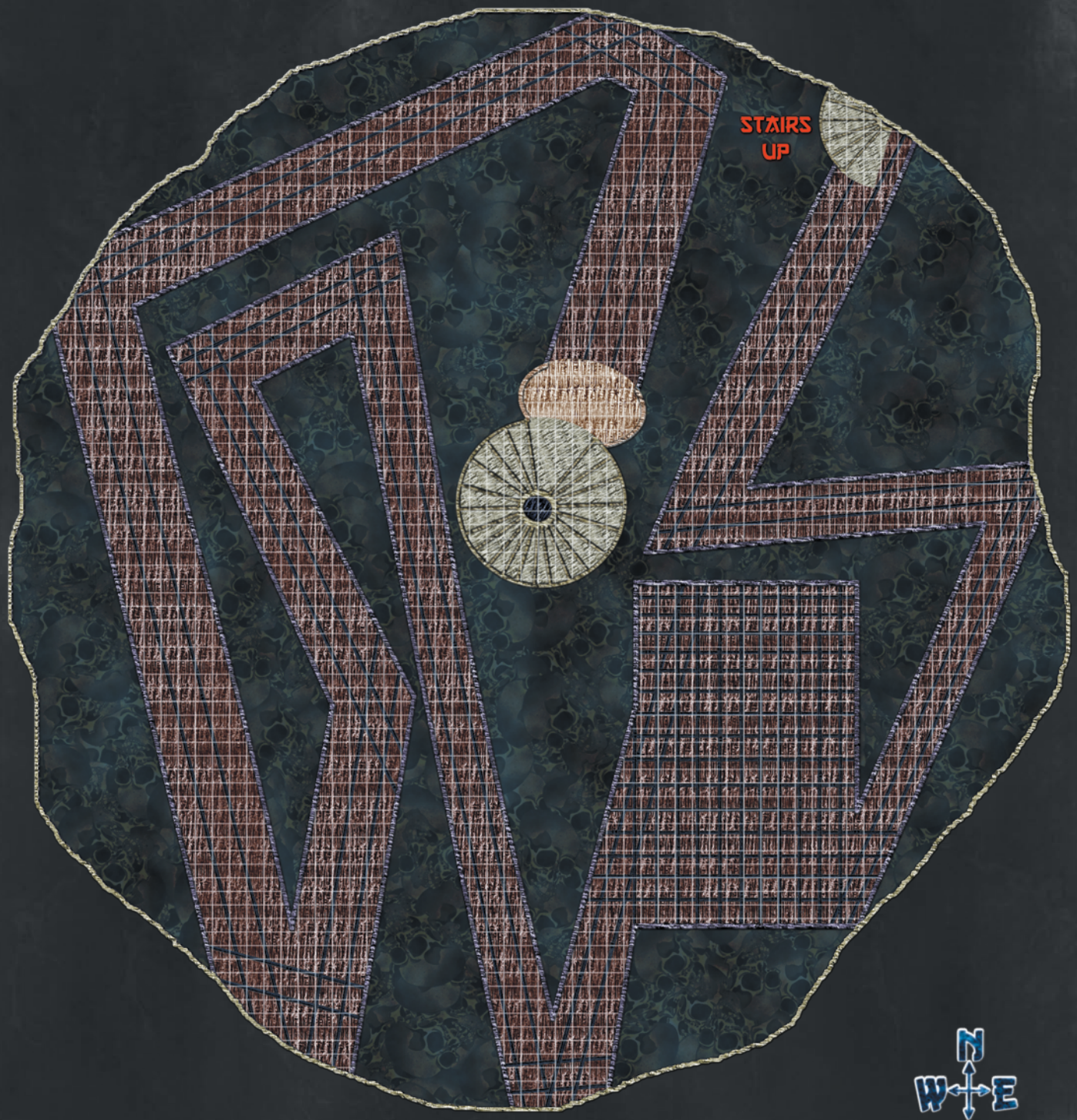
Regeneration. The golem regains 3 hit points at the start of its turn for every magic item embedded in its form.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The golem makes two slam attacks or one thrown object attack.

Slam. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target.
Hit: 15 (2d8 + 6) bludgeoning damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or have its hit point maximum reduced by an amount equal to the damage taken. The target dies if this attack reduces its hit point maximum to 0. The reduction lasts until removed by the *greater restoration* spell or other magic.

Thrown Object. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, range 20/40 ft., one target.
Hit: 10 (1d8+6) damage. The damage type depends on the object (bludgeoning, piercing, or slashing) and at 100 pounds and every 100 pounds thereafter, the damage increases by 1d8, up to 33 (6d8+6) at 500 pounds.



2ND LEVEL

When the creature is destroyed the fortress briefly opens for its spirit to snap back to the enchantments linked to it outside.

> *A keen shriek splits the air as the relic golem falls apart and a stream of energy streaks towards the wall. The bones split and crack as it approaches, forming into a tunnel of skulls for only a moment. In its center you can briefly see the battle outside and before the wall stitches itself back together, you witness the energy slams into the corrupted rot surrounding Hone-Noroi Keep, cleansing the ground then bouncing into an outpost of bone with so much force that the smaller structure breaks apart!*

With the relic golem's lair behind them the PCs have only a short distance to traverse before reaching a bone platform and another ascent.

3rd Level: Crushing Mortar

There's no indication of what horrors await the party in this part of Hone-Noroi Keep until the staircase they tread upward is out of sight, at which point a DC 18 Wisdom (Perception) check notices that the bones beneath their feet have been crushed and reformed countless times, each a symphony of miniscule fractures. Adventurers with a passive Perception of 18 or higher automatically succeed on this check. Roll initiative at the end of the round after the party makes the check (or six seconds later in game time if none of the PCs notice the clue) as a Gargantuan animated iron mortar drops from above trying to crush the adventurers!

> *This winding hallways is enormous, curving relentlessly to the left with no signs of changing direction.*
>
> ***(after the PCs have moved further down the passage)***
>
> *A slight tremble draws your gaze upward as a few bones rattle and fall, the only warning before a sudden crashing heralds a massive iron mortar dropping from the ceiling, its bulk so large it barely fits inside the confines of the passage!*

Nobles and lords that refused to show fealty to the Pale Master are crushed eternally by his iron will manifested in this animated monstrosity. The iron mortar floats ominously in an impossibly long bob and acts at the end of each round (perhaps in a surprise round), dropping to crush every creature beneath it (a 20-foot by 20-foot square). Creatures in the area make a DC 16 Dexterity saving throw or take 28 (8d6) magical bludgeoning damage and are knocked prone. On a successful save, the damage is reduced by half and the creature does not fall prone. If there are no creatures it can crush, the iron mortar moves 45 feet down the passageway, and if it moved last round, it bounces and its movement is increased by a cumulative 5 feet, stopping its gathering momentum only to stop and crush an opponent. The iron mortar turns to pursue and pulverize any creatures that move behind it.

At the end of the long winding hallway the adventurers find another stairwell leading up further into Hone-Noroi Keep.

Increased Difficulty. This creature is intended to be treated as a sort of trap and skill challenge but some parties will insist on fighting it—GMs should use the statistics below and quickly make it clear that they face a truly daunting fight. In the unlikely event that they defeat the creature, a DC 13 Intelligence (Arcana) check reveals that a short rest taken inside of the iron mortar's remains grants all the benefits of a long rest, possibly allowing for the PCs to gain a level if their recently earned experience pushes them past the threshold.

Another means of increasing the challenge in this area requires altering the map and is recommended for analog groups only: turn the spiraling passage into a series of confounding hallways instead. GMs should only do so when the PCs are moving through Hone-Noroi Keep too quickly—remember that a battle is being waged outside and to tarry too long may have fell consequences.



3RD LEVEL

Only giants could have used this enormous metal contraption, grinding its cylindrical body down onto their work—something this animated creature looks entirely capable of doing all on its own with deadly efficiency.

Immense Iron Mortar

Gargantuan construct, neutral evil
Armor Class 19 (natural armor)
Hit Points 310 (20d20+100)
Speed 25 ft. (bouncing momentum)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	11 (+0)	21 (+5)	1 (-5)	3 (-4)	1 (-5)

Skills Perception +6
Damage Resistances cold; bludgeoning, piercing, slashing
Damage Immunities acid, fire, poison, psychic
Condition Immunities blinded, charmed, deafened, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned
Senses truesight, passive Perception 16
Languages —
Challenge 16 (15,000 XP)

Antimagic Susceptibility. The iron mortar is incapacitated while in the area of an *antimagic field*. If targeted by *dispel magic*, the iron mortar must succeed on a Constitution saving throw with advantage against the caster's spell save DC or fall unconscious for 1d4 rounds.

Bouncing Momentum. If the iron mortar moved last round and continues moving in the same direction, it bounces and its movement is increased by a cumulative 5 feet. Any increased movement from momentum ends when the iron mortar uses Crushing Hop.

ACTIONS

Crushing Hop. The iron mortar drops down onto creatures in its area (a 20-foot by 20-foot square). Creatures in the area make a DC 16 Dexterity saving throw or take 28 (8d6) magical bludgeoning damage and are knocked prone. On a successful save, the damage is reduced by half and the creature does not fall prone.

4th Level: Screaming Mausoleums

Deceased with souls trapped by the Pale Master but lacking mortal remains are suffused in this level and the next, though their presence is not so obvious until the PCs climb higher—which they can do immediately, skipping this section of Hone-Noroi Keep entirely. Doing so makes them more vulnerable to the dangers of the Lake of Pus and Blood however, and one of the chambers is home to a relic golem.

Looking out from where the stairwell ends you can see a rectangular room of bones festooned with skulls beyond number, each one clacking its jaws open and closed as its scream join the cacophony of madness echoing within.

Spiritual Circuit. Any PC that casts *detect magic* on this level can make a DC 14 Intelligence (Arcana) check. On a success they realize that this floor and the next are connected, and that by walking completely around the level a living soul can gird itself against the rigors above.

North Chamber. A creature that enters this chamber makes a DC 13 Intelligence saving throw or takes 22 (4d10) psychic damage. On a success, the creature takes half damage. On a failure by 5 or more, the creature gains a randomly determined indefinite madness.

West Chamber. A creature that enters this chamber makes a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw or takes 18 (4d8) psychic damage. On a success, the creature takes half damage. On a failure by 5 or more, the creature gains a randomly determined long term madness.

South Chamber. A creature that enters this chamber makes a DC 17 Charisma saving throw or takes 14 (4d6) psychic damage. On a success, the creature takes half damage. On a failure by 5 or more, the creature gains a randomly determined short term madness.

East Chamber. There's a relic golem sitting out in the open in this room—a trap set by a jiang-shi that waits crouched up in the northmost upper corner near the ceiling. When a creature steps into the room it can make a DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check to spot the undead oni (anyone with a passive Perception of 15 or higher automatically succeeds). When the relic golem is destroyed, one of the bone outposts and the Bone Fields outside of Hone-Noroi Keep fly apart, burying themselves back beneath the ground.



4TH LEVEL

Increased Difficulty. For some groups this may make the challenges ahead easier, but the GM can add bone gates to bar the PCs way and force them through the full Spiritual Circuit (starting with the North Chamber and moving counterclockwise to end in the East Chamber).

Pale blue flesh is strung taut across the skeleton of this emaciated creature, and though it wears civilized robes the scroll splitting its brow and unnaturally long talon-ended fingers mark it as oni!

JIANG-SHI

Medium undead (oni), neutral evil
Armor Class 16 (natural)
Hit Points 150 (20d8+60)
Speed 20 ft. (quadruple all jump distances)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	13 (+1)	17 (+3)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)

Saving Throws Con +7, Wis +6
Skills Athletics +8, Perception +6, Stealth +5
Damage Resistances necrotic; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks not made with peach tree wood weapons
Condition Immunities charmed, poisoned
Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 16
Languages Soburi
Challenge 12 (8,400 XP)

Deathless. When reduced to 0 hit points 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.

Hopping. Jiang-shi are constantly hopping or bounding from foot to foot. A creature attacking a jiang-shi is at disadvantage unless they spend a bonus action aiming their strikes. Unlike normal, a jiang-shi can move more than its speed with a high result on a check made to jump.

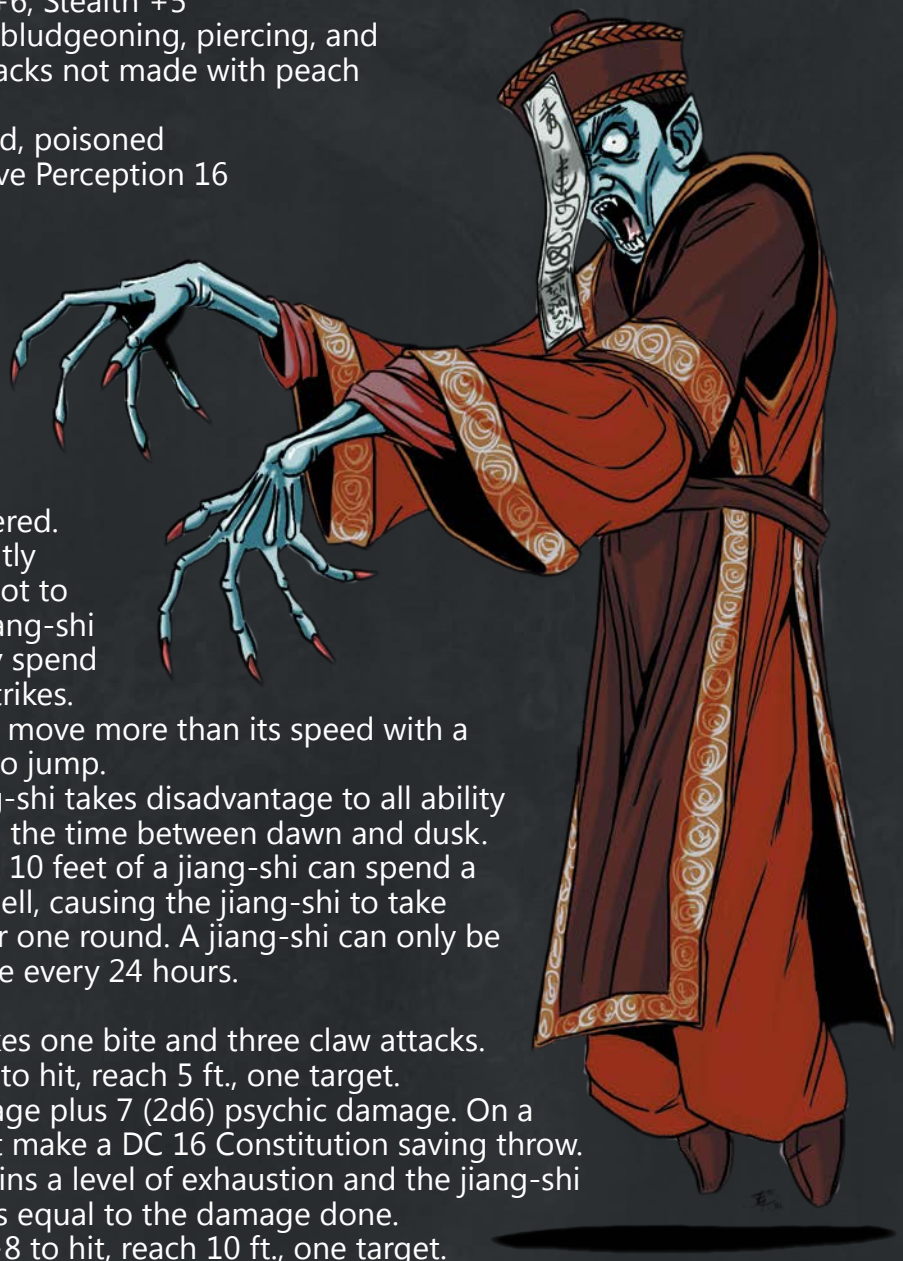
Jiang-Shi Weaknesses. A jiang-shi takes disadvantage to all ability checks and attack rolls during the time between dawn and dusk. Additionally, a creature within 10 feet of a jiang-shi can spend a bonus action to ring a hand bell, causing the jiang-shi to take disadvantage on all checks for one round. A jiang-shi can only be affected by the same bell once every 24 hours.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The jiang-shi makes one bite and three claw attacks.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 13 (2d8+4) piercing damage plus 7 (2d6) psychic damage. On a successful hit, the target must make a DC 16 Constitution saving throw. On a failed save the target gains a level of exhaustion and the jiang-shi regains a number of hit points equal to the damage done.

Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 15 (2d10+4) slashing damage.



5TH LEVEL: LAKE OF PUS & BLOOD

Fools that dared to betray the Pale Master have found their souls drawn to the bone keep where they're given a taste of mortality only to be ripped apart, worked into a soup of blood and pus that seeps down the side of the fortress to become mortar for the mounding bones adding to Hone-Noroi Keep's immensity.

Foreboding whimpers and slushing fluids await you at the top of the bone staircase. Clambering up onto a platform you see a sickening sight that wrenches at your gut and brings bile to the throat: a massive lake of blood that stretches out of your field of vision, broken only by pus flotsam and malformed humans being fed upon by fiendish insects the size of dogs. A narrowing pathway of bones leads away to the northeast, diverging into two separate walkways—one to the north and another to the east.

Clever adventurers can use teleportation magic to reach the stairs that lead upward without triggering attacks from creatures on this level.

Pale Pustules. Once on the bone pathway, any creature that did not complete the Spiritual Circuit makes a DC 8 Constitution saving throw at the end of each of its turns. On a failure, the creature grows pustules. A creature touched by the blood and pus makes a DC 8 Constitution saving throw, growing pustules on a failure. Whenever a creature with pustules jumps or flies over the blood and pus, or when a creature with pustules takes weapon damage, it takes an extra 5 (2d4) psychic damage as the pustules scream in agony.

Pustules remain on a creature until it ends a short rest with all of its hit points or receives a *restoration* spell while at its maximum hit points. A *greater restoration* or *heal* spell immediately removes pustules.

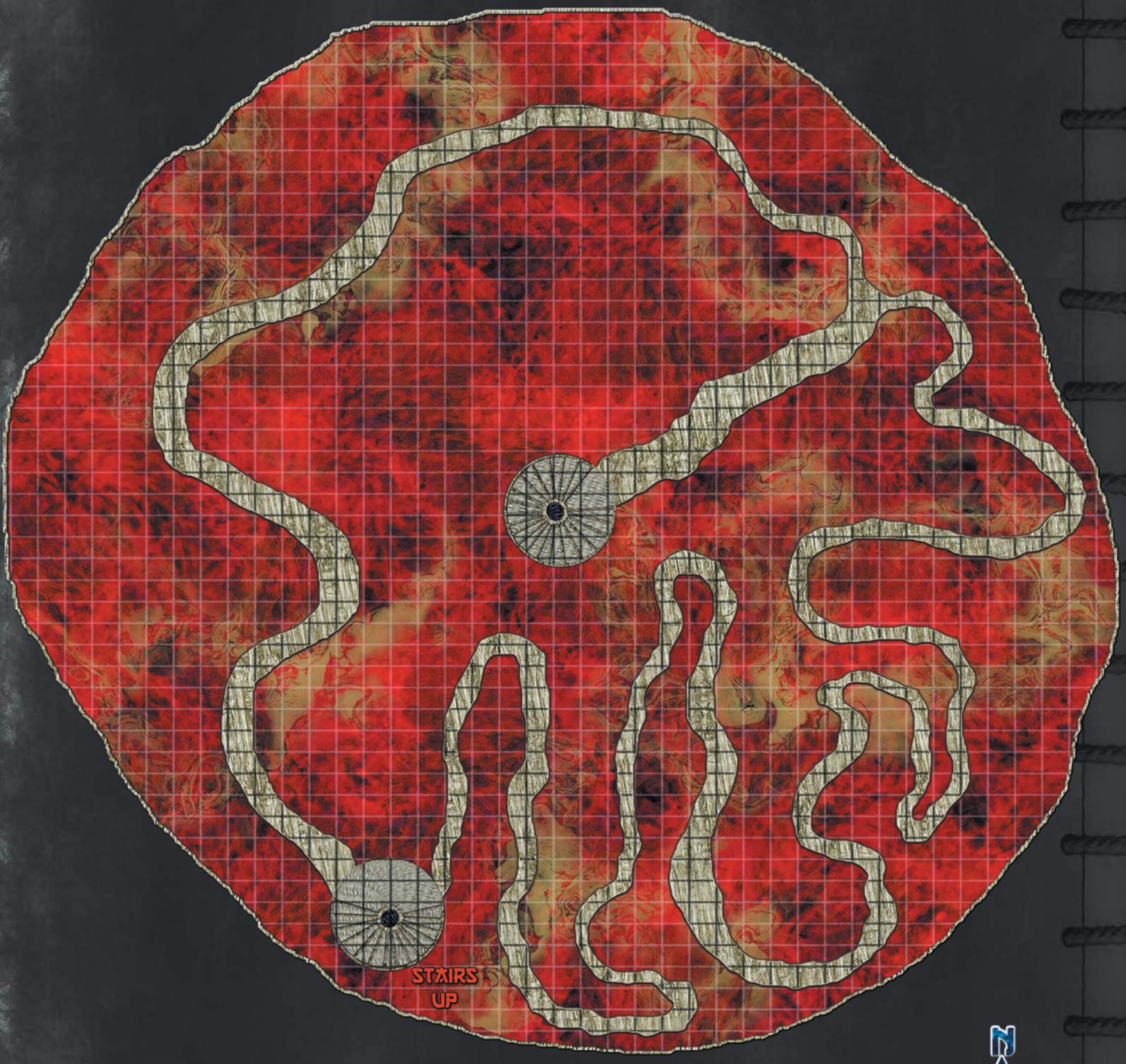


East Path. When the first adventurer is halfway across this walkway adeddo dragonfly zip up from the gruesome sanguine soup to attack the PCs.

West Path. When the first adventurer is halfway across this walkway a blood golem appears within 20 feet and attacks. A second blood golem appears within 20 feet of the first PC to get within 50 feet of the stairs leading up.

Increased Difficulty. To increase the challenge presented by this level, the GM can have whichever NPCs haven't attacked the party (either the adeddo dragonflies or blood golems) immediately do so when the intended monsters have been defeated.





5TH LEVEL

Sulfur assaults your senses as this dog-sized insect buzzes in the nearby air, a light dusting of some foul substance flung outward with each rapid flap of its enormous wings.

Adeddo Dragonfly



Small oni, neutral evil
Armor Class 16 (natural)
Hit Points 85 (10d6+50)
Speed fly 50 ft. (hover)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
17 (+3)	17 (+3)	20 (+5)	3 (-4)	15 (+2)	7 (-2)

Skills Perception +5, Stealth +6
Damage Resistances acid, cold; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks
Damage Immunities fire, poison
Condition Immunities poisoned
Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 15
Languages Adeddo
Challenge 6 (2,300 XP)

Innate Spellcasting. The adeddo dragonfly's innate spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 13, +5 to hit with spell attacks). The adeddo dragonfly can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:
3/day: *invisibility* (self only)

Magic Resistance. The adeddo dragonfly gains advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Regeneration. The adeddo dragonfly regains 6 hit points at the start of its turn if it has at least 1 hit point and is not in sunlight.

Sunlight Weakness. The adeddo dragonfly has disadvantage on all ability checks, attack rolls, and saving throws while in sunlight.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The adeddo dragonfly makes two slam and one stinger attack.

Slam. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target.
Hit: 7 (1d6+4) magical bludgeoning damage plus 7 (2d6) necrotic damage.

Stinger. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target.
Hit: 9 (1d12+3) piercing damage. A target hit by this attack makes a DC 16 Constitution saving throw or gains the poisoned condition until the damage is healed.

Blood flows around, through, away from, and back into this human-shaped figure sapping up whatever crimson liquid it touches.

Blood Golem

Medium construct, neutral evil
Armor Class 13
Hit Points 102 (12d8+48)
Speed 35 ft., climb 35 ft., swim 35 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	17 (+3)	18 (+4)	6 (-2)	14 (+2)	5 (-3)

Damage Resistance necrotic
Damage Immunities cold, fire, force, thunder; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical weapons that aren't adamantine
Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, petrified, prone
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 12
Languages understands the languages of its creator but can't speak
Challenge 7 (2,900 XP)

Berserk. Whenever the golem starts its turn with 60 hit points or fewer, roll a d6. On a 6, the golem goes berserk. On each of its turns while berserk, the golem attacks the nearest

creature it can see. If no creature is near enough to move to and attack, the golem attacks an object, with preference for an object smaller than itself. Once the golem goes berserk, it continues to do so until it is destroyed or regains all its hit points (it cannot be calmed.)

Bloodsight. The blood golem automatically knows the direction and distance to a living creature the golem has damaged if it is present within 5 miles.

Mastered Form. The golem can move through a space as narrow as 1-inch wide without squeezing and as a bonus action, it can form its arms into weapons to change the type of damage it deals with its slam attack to piercing or slashing. The golem is immune to any spell or other effect that would alter its form.

Magic Resistance. The golem has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The golem makes three slam attacks.

Slam. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target.
Hit: 16 (2d12+3) magical bludgeoning damage. If the target is a living creature, the golem heals half the damage dealt.

Blood Bullets. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, range 100, up to three initial targets plus multiple targets (5-foot radiuses).
Hit: 13 (2d8+4) magical piercing damage. Whether or not a blood bullet hits, it explodes on impact. Every creature within 5 feet of the point where a blood bullet explodes must succeed on a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw or take 7 (2d6) necrotic damage. For each blood bullet it forms, the golem takes 1d4 damage.

6TH LEVEL: HALL OF FLAMES

The adventurers will notice this level's first distinguishing feature as they climb the spiral staircase, light spilling in from above them. Huge fires take up swathes of the chamber obscuring everything behind them, including a relic golem being used as bait by Torijigoku the Screaming Rooster.

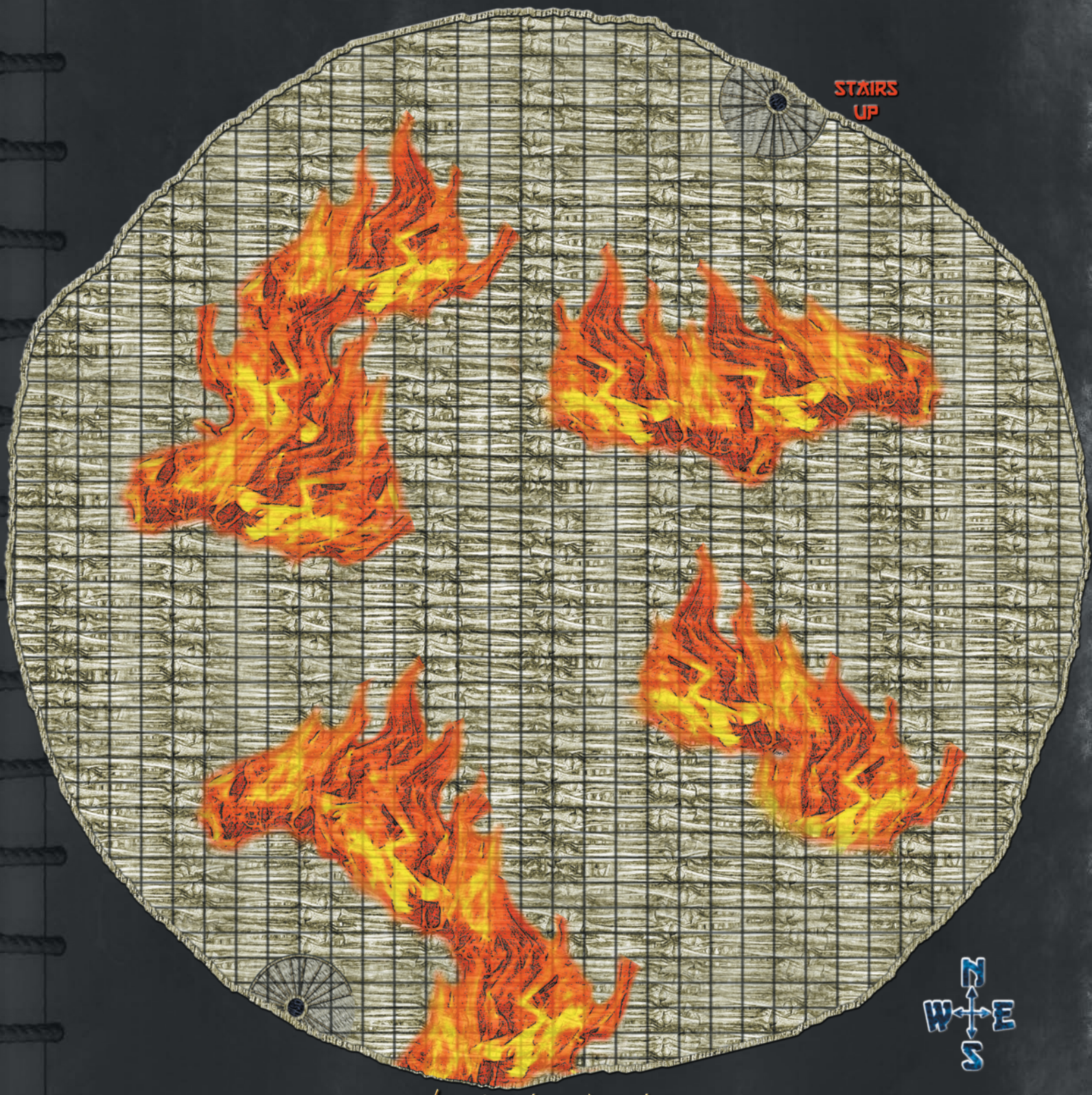
> *For the first time since entering this accursed tower you can see illumination from above—the flickering of flames casting shadows on the bone walls. Gazing into the chamber reveals enormous flames so intense they obscure sight and a relic golem soaring through the air, but even from afar you can sense both lethal heat and something foul emanating from the unnatural fires.*

Torijigoku protects the Hall of Flames and has orders to destroy any living creatures it sees. While the party might choose to flee or sneak through this area (invisibly lest Torijigoku see them with its Firesight), destroying the relic golem breaks one of the bone outposts outside and wipes away the Blood Moat around Hone-Noroi Keep.

Blasphemous Fires. Any creature that enters an area with these fires or starts its turn there takes 7 (2d6) fire damage and 5 (2d4) necrotic damage.

Increased Difficulty. This will already be a tough fight but sadistic GMs can make the Blasphemous Fires in the Hall of Flames move into and out of 2d4 5-foot squares each round, reaching towards the party or making obscuring barriers for Torijigoku to move behind.





6TH LEVEL

Ambling about in a fierce trot, the crest of this enormous flaming rooster bobs perhaps fifteen feet above the ground and with every flap of its wings it sends cinders into the air, every squawk and screech accompanied by wisps of fire.

TORIJIGOKU THE SCREAMING ROOSTER

Huge oni, neutral evil
Armor Class 16 (natural armor)
Hit Points 177 (15d12+80)
Speed 45 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
25 (+7)	15 (+2)	22 (+6)	14 (+2)	17 (+3)	16 (+3)

Saving Throws Dex +5, Int +5
Skills Athletics +10, Perception +9, Stealth +5, Survival +6
Damage Vulnerabilities radiant
Damage Resistances necrotic, poison
Damage Immunities fire
Condition Immunities charmed, frightened
Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 19
Languages Adeddo
Challenge 8 (3,900 XP)



Firesight. Torijigoku sees through fire, flames, and smoke.

Flaming Feathers. A creature that touches Torijigoku or hits it with a melee attack while within 5 feet of it takes 5 (1d10) fire damage and catches fire; until someone takes an action to douse the fire, the creature takes 5 (1d10) fire damage at the start of each of its turns.

Keen Sight. Torijigoku has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Torijigoku attacks twice.

Beak. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, reach 15 ft., one target.
Hit: 16 (2d8+7) piercing damage plus 7 (2d6) fire. On a critical hit, the target makes a DC 18 Strength saving throw or takes 9 (2d8) thunder damage and is knocked prone.

Talons. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target.
Hit: 14 (2d6+7) slashing damage plus 3 (1d6) fire, and the target is grappled (escape DC 18). Until this grapple ends, the target is restrained, and the rooster can't use its talons on another target.

Flame Spit. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, range 100/200 ft., one target.
Hit: 16 (4d6+2) fire damage.

Fire Breath (Recharge 5–6). Torijigoku exhales fire in a 30-foot cone. Each creature in that area must make a DC 18 Dexterity saving throw, taking 28 (8d6) fire damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

7TH LEVEL: BURNING DEATH

There's no obvious threat when the adventurers reach this level of Hone-Noroi Keep but they should know better by now—perhaps the deadliest obstacle yet bars their way to the Pale Master's lair.

The top of this stairwell is eerily silent, the skeletal chamber it emerges into bereft of anything but the bones and skulls making up the floor and walls. Patches of it have been scorched and warped—perhaps from the fires on the floor below.

Hiding in the cracks of the floor is a black sand cloud waiting for trespassers, forming itself around any living creatures that stand above it. Unlike the other extremely dangerous monsters that chase the PCs throughout the bone keep, the black sand cloud follows up (or down) the stairway if the adventurers choose to flee.

Increased Difficulty. Increasing the challenge in this area requires altering the map and is recommended for analog groups only: turn this floor into a labyrinth. GMs should only do so when the PCs are moving through Hone-Noroi Keep too quickly—remember that a battle is being waged outside and to tarry too long may have fell consequences.

Fierce elemental forces are contained within this roiling black and grey cloud, fans of orange, yellow, and red cinders sparking out of it with its every movement.



BLACK SAND CLOUD

Huge oni, chaotic evil

Armor Class 14

Hit Points 168 (16d12+64)

Speed 0 ft., fly 45 ft. (hover)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	19 (+4)	18 (+4)	15 (+2)	14 (+2)	15 (+2)

Damage Resistances acid, lightning, necrotic, thunder; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical weapons

Damage Immunities fire, poison; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from magical weapons

Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, grappled, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone, restrained

Senses truesight, passive Perception 12

Challenge 12 (8,400 XP)

Cloud Body. Other creatures are able to occupy the black sand cloud's space and vice versa. In addition, if air can pass through a space, the black sand cloud can pass through it without squeezing, although it cannot travel through water. The black sand cloud cannot manipulate objects like weapons or tools, only applying force in simple directions (pulling a door closed, pushing a lever, etc.).

Expand. The black sand cloud can spend a bonus action in its turn to increase in size by 5 feet horizontally and 1 foot vertically for 1 minute. Until it has used Expand five or ten times, it doesn't occupy additional vertical space.

Flaming Form. A creature that touches the black sand cloud or hits it with a melee attack while within 5 feet of it takes 7 (2d6) fire damage.

Magic Resistance. The black sand cloud has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Undertow. While seeped into the floor or other porous surface, a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check is needed to spot the black sand cloud if it has neither moved nor attacked. A creature that tries to enter the space above the black sand cloud while unaware of it is surprised by the black sand cloud.

Unliving. The black sand cloud does not breathe or sleep. When it is completely deprived of oxygen the black sand cloud cannot deal fire damage.

ACTIONS

Cinders and Grit. Creatures in the black sand cloud's space must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or takes 21 (6d6) fire damage and 14 (4d6) slashing damage. A creature that fails its save by 5 or more catches fire; until someone takes an action to douse the fire, the creature takes 7 (2d6) fire damage at the start of each of its turns.



7TH LEVEL

8th Level: Hall of Unending Suffering

The adventurers are finally near the Pale Master's lair but this final step of the journey requires passing through the maelstrom of death energy being focused through Hone-Noroi Keep. No ability check is required to sense the fell power being drawn up to the necromancer and there is no defense against it aside from a spot of good luck.

> *A low thrumming sound washes across both your senses and soul with increasing intensity the further you ascend. At the top of the stairwell you understand why—an insane kaleidoscope of colors ebb and flow on the bone floor of the single passage leading further into Hone-Noroi Keep, so unearthly that even in this accursed place it is strange.*

Souls being sucked into Hone-Noroi Keep vie for the strength of the living, the agility of a free spirit, the resolve of a mortal form, the quickness of an adroite mind unfettered by anguish, the sagacity granted by a peaceful existence, and the zest for life no dead thing will ever know again. At the end of every minute spent traveling through the long winding passage, each PC rolls 1d6 (1—Strength, 2—Dexterity, 3—Constitution, 4—Intelligence, 5—Wisdom, 6—Charisma) and makes a DC 10 saving throw using that ability score. On a failure, the creature has disadvantage on ability checks and saving throws using that ability score for the next minute.

At the end of the hallway the PCs see another rectangular chamber with a relic golem playing a game of mājan with Muroaka. The vampire is at full strength and has replaced his lethal katana: ***Siphon.*** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (1d12+5) magical slashing damage. However he knows he is unlikely to defeat the party and instead tries to convince them to become his servants. After all they have proven themselves capable and together with their help he could overcome the Pale Master, turning the power of Hone-Noroi Keep to accomplish things far greater than whatever the ancient necromancer is trying to attain.

> *Finally the accursed hallways ends and you see a familiar form waiting for you—Muraoka, the vampire from Kizaki. He is sitting on the floor playing a game of mājan with a relic golem, the pieces arrayed on a small table floating a foot off of the bones and skeletons on which you trod. "It brings me pleasure to see you here and know that I was defeated by worthy opponents." Without looking he slaps down a mājan tile, gracefully rising to his feet and bowing slightly but never taking his gaze from yours. "Before we shed blood," he continues, a wicked glint in his undead eyes, "perhaps you would consider another means of defeating my master."*

Once Muraoka the vampire and the relic golem are defeated the bone gate barring the stairwell to the Pale Master's lair falls away, and one of the bone outposts (perhaps the last) is destroyed along with the Yakeru Doro Circles surrounding the fortress.

The adventurers have traveled all over the continent, returned sacred artifacts, uncovered duplicitous plots, interacted with two of the immortal founders of Soburin, visited a city of monsters, faced down numerous horrifying oni, stopped fell rituals from bringing unspeakable evil to the land, and fought their way through an army of undead to reach this point: the climax of the adventure path is finally here and they will either earn immortal glory or suffer utter defeat.

A Terrible Price. As this is the last moment before the campaign's end and they'll likely be at the end of their resources, the GM may decide to show mercy—of a sort. When Muraoka is destroyed in this accursed tower instead of transforming into mist, his spirit is torn apart into wisps that seek to bind to the adventurers' souls. A PC requires no saving throw to resist it successfully but any that accept its presence recover as if they have just finished a long rest and if they haven't yet done so while within Hone-Noroi Keep, gain a level.

This is *Mists of Akuma* however and there's a cost for this bounty: the PC's Haitoku increases by 1d12 the next time they complete a long rest (possibly transforming them into adeddo-oni that will make for a great villain in another campaign).



8TH LEVEL





LAIR OF THE PALE MASTER

As the adventurers climb the last steps of Hone-Noroi Keep and enter into the very lair of the Pale Master for their final battle, read the following:

> *Natural light greets you at the top of the stairwell bringing illumination to the true horror of Hone-Noroi Keep. The scale of death surrounding you becomes suffocating, the bones of this floor still ragged with bits of meat and woven through with purple-black veins of energy pulsing from the ebony torii gate on the balcony to the south, framed on either side by mounds of human skulls piled twelve feet high. Standing between the torii's columns is a robed figure looking out over the massive combat below, its form suffused with so much power that the tattered cloth hanging from it billows outward on waves of magic. All of its bones and flesh are exposed, wispy hair falling from its scalp, and as it turns your hearts seize in your chests—the Pale Master's bloodshot eyes fix upon you and in them you see only cold and calculation, a bottomless pit of true evil with no shred of redemption, and facing against it you know beyond a doubt that you have never before been in such great danger.*
>
> *"Well," he says, one bony hand extending forward to beckon at you, "now the end begins."*

The Pale Master has watched the party for some time and he uses that knowledge to play against their strengths and weaknesses. GMs should remember that this *is* the last fight of the campaign—do not pull punches.

Tactics. To begin the fight the Pale Master rises into the air and unleashes a spell that deals wide area damage in an effort to injure everyone in the party. Immediately afterward he directly attacks the group's most effective healer, liberally using Disrupt Healing to reduce any curing until the party's ability to do so is gone. When they are dealt with, the ancient necromancer moves onto mages before engaging ranged warriors and finally melee combatants. The Pale Master attempts to flee back down into Hone-Noroi Keep when reduced to 20 hit points or less, killing his minions off with Pale Touch and attacking the party again when his hit points are restored to 100 or more. After using *Slaughter-Surge* he pulls the same trick, moving to a level where the most powerful remaining servant(s) can protect him or aid in the fight.

THE PALE MASTER'S DEFEAT

Should they succeed in destroying the Pale Master the PCs have achieved something truly momentous, earning their places in the history books of Soburin for time immemorial—though they won't get any chance to enjoy it if they don't escape Hone-Noroi Keep as it comes crashing to the ground! The fortress begins to sway and ebb with the wind, pushed to and fro until the entire tower topples over the course of 1 minute.

Inside the Spine. Adventurers that don't exit the bone keep are crushed to death on impact unless they are extremely lucky while taking refuge inside one of the stairwells. When Hone-Noroi Keep falls, creatures hiding in a stairwell each roll 1d6. On a 1-5 the creature is killed instantly, and on a 6 it takes 70 (20d6) bludgeoning damage and is pinned underneath Mugen Bone Mound.

Leap of Faith. The party's most likely route of escape is to rush past the ebony torii gate and jump off the balcony before the bone keep collapses. The Pale Master's lair is a staggering 996 feet above the ground—high enough that a falling object or creature has an entire round before terminal velocity brings it slamming down. A creature that hits with terminal velocity takes 70 (20d6) bludgeoning damage and makes a DC 20 Constitution saving throw or gains 5 levels of exhaustion.

Ride the Wave. For the brave or foolish there's a third means of surviving as Hone-Noroi Keep gives way—dancing, leaping, and sliding on the fortress' collapsing bones. For the next 10 rounds, a creature tumbling down the side of the bone tower makes a Dexterity saving throw (DC 10 + 1 per previous save) at the start of its turn. Failure causes a creature to take 10 (3d6) bludgeoning damage and become grappled as it falls down the side of the bone keep, traveling 60 feet each round until it regains its footing. At the start of its turn a rolling creature makes a Dexterity saving throw (DC 10 + 2 per previous save) to stop. After rolling for 2 rounds a creature is buried in the Mugen Bone Mound. A buried creature gains the restrained condition and takes 2 (1d4) bludgeoning damage each round until it succeeds on a DC 20 Strength (Athletics) check to wriggle out.

Pale Master

Medium undead, neutral evil
Armor Class 17 (natural armor)
Hit Points 119 (14d8+56)
Speed 30 ft., fly 50 ft. (hover)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
19 (+4)	18 (+4)	19 (+4)	21 (+5)	16 (+3)	16 (+3)

Skills Arcana +15, History +15, Perception +8, Religion +15
Damage Resistances cold, fire, lightning
Damage Immunities necrotic, poison; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical weapons
Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, poisoned
Senses darkvision 120 ft., truesight 60 ft., passive Perception 18
Languages Abyssal, Adeddo, Infernal, Soburi
Challenge 15 (13,000 XP)

Legendary Resistance (3/day). If the Pale Master fails a saving throw, he can choose to succeed instead.

Magic Resistance. The Pale Master has advantage on saving throws against magical effects and spells (including any effect that turns undead).

Slaughter-Surge. When the Pale Master is reduced to 0 hit points, at the end of the next round he reanimates with half his hit points if the armies outside achieved an honorable victory. In the event of a complete slaughter, he reanimates with all of his hit points instead.

Spellcasting. The Pale Master is a 14th-level spellcaster. His spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 18, +10 to hit with spell attacks). The Pale Master has the following spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *chill touch, eldritch blast, vicious mockery*
1st level (4 slots): *detect magic, magic missile, shield, thunderwave*
2nd level (3 slots): *invisibility, mirror image, misty step, ray of enfeeblement*
3rd level (3 slots): *animate dead, counterspell, dispel magic, fireball*
4th level (3 slots): *black tentacles, blight*
5th level (2 slots): *cone of cold, telekinesis*
6th level (1 slot): *disintegrate, freezing sphere*
7th level (1 slot): *finger of death, teleport*

Snapping Bones. The Pale Master can use a bonus action to either increase the reach of his Pale Touch by 10 feet for one attack, or fling his hand as a ranged attack (40/80 ft.) after which a new one instantly forms to replace it.

ACTIONS

Pale Touch. *Melee Spell Attack:* +10 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit*: 8 (1d6+5) magical bludgeoning plus 14 (4d6) necrotic damage. The target's hit point maximum is reduced by an amount equal to the necrotic damage taken, and the Pale Master regains hit points equal to that amount. The reduction lasts until the target finishes a long rest. The target dies if this effect reduces its hit point maximum to 0. A humanoid slain in this way rises immediately as an adeddo-oni (pages 320-321) under his control.

Frightful Presence. Each creature of the Pale Master's choice that is within 60 feet of the Pale Master and aware of him must succeed on a DC 18 Wisdom saving throw or become frightened for 1 minute. A creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success. If a creature's saving throw is successful or the effect ends for it, the creature is immune to the Pale Master's Frightful Presence for the next 24 hours.

LEGENDARY ACTIONS

The Pale Master can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. The Pale Master regains spent legendary actions at the start of his turn.

- ***Cantrip.*** The Pale Master casts a cantrip.
- ***Pale Touch (costs 2 actions).*** The Pale Master uses his Pale Touch.
- ***Disrupt Healing (costs 3 actions).*** Each living creature within 20 feet of the Pale Master must make a DC 18 Constitution saving throw. For the next round, on a failed save a creature cannot be healed magically, or on a successful one it heals half as much as normal from magic.

LAIR ACTIONS

On initiative count 20 (losing all initiative ties), the Pale Master can use one of his lair action options. He can't do so while incapacitated or otherwise unable to take actions. If surprised, he can't use one until after his first turn in the combat.

- A pile of skulls that the Pale Master can see explodes in a maelstrom of evil power. Living creatures within 40 feet of the skull mound make a DC 18 Dexterity saving throw, taking 27 (6d8) bludgeoning damage and 27 (6d8) necrotic damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. A creature inside of a skull mound's space when it explodes receives no saving throw.
- The Mists of Akuma roil from the ebony torii gate to completely obscure all squares in a 10-foot radius around the Pale Master, dissipating after 1 round.
- The Pale Master conjures 1d6 skeletons, 1d4 zombies, or a single shadow.

Pale Master's Aftermath

No matter which side the party allied with or how the Battle at Bone Keep ends, soldiers that are still alive flee from the Pale Master's fortress as fast as they can while it comes toppling to the ground. Hostilities come to a end while the armies nearby recoup themselves and as night overtakes Soburin the party play a pivotal role in ensuring that no more blood is shed.

Armies Disband

When they realize that there's no more profit to be made here and that essentially the day has been won, the Machibuse Traders quietly withdraw their mercenaries. Without the experienced soldiers beside them the Soburi Militia are all too ready to stand down provided that the erītokirā and traditionalist army stop flying war banners. The Shieldbearers and Artillery are enthusiastic about ridding themselves of the technological armor bestowed upon them by Kanja Korusu, and in the years that follow as the truth of the momentous events comes to light they are all rewarded for their humility and efforts with lesser noble titles. Yakunitatsu Aibō, Shouni Yome, Itsuji Tanko, and her Reapers disappear soon after it becomes clear they aren't needed here. Where these newly-tested warriors travel and what they achieve—possibly aiding the adventurers in the future—are tales for another day and campaign.

Lieutenant-General Daidouji honors the adventurers as heroes of the conflict and does so openly in a speech to her army—though it's more of a way to address Shūshō Ikari than anything else, prompting the Imperial Sibling to stop torturing the PCs in their dreams. It's a simple matter to work out an armistice once (most) of the Soburi Militia declare their intention to turn over their equipment to the erītokirā. Satisfied that there's no immediate threat from the Mugen Bone Mound, Lieutenant-General Daidouji divides her remaining forces and makes plans to join the imperial efforts to quell the tsukumogami uprising in isolated settlements. She welcomes the adventurers if they offer to help in the fight but dares not make any requests of them, offering instead to provide a military escort to Sanbaoshi so they might make their accounting of events to Emperor Hitoshi's court.

In turn the shikome soldiers are satisfied with recovering (most of) their technology intact, distributing it amongst themselves before returning to their chapters. The adventurers might attempt to convince the erītokirā into helping fight the Mitsuyu Gyōsha Consortium's rebellion (hiring the Haiiro-Nokishi, persuading the Kodomo-Tachi, or intimidating the Kōteino) and have advantage on any ability checks made to do so.

With the distraction of Hone-Noroi Keep undone and the forces of the empire left without a greater threat to face, the Masuto Military rally and deploy soldiers all over Soburin to bring a swift and definitive end to the tsukumogami uprising. If the PCs want to take part in these excursions use the encounters on page 11 for as many fights as are needed, including more Erītokirā Tsukumogami each time the party get to a new settlement.

Exactly what the adventurers do—and if they all remain as they are, assuming that none accepted Muraoka's "gift" and turn into adeddo-oni—is in their hands. Few in Soburin possess their power and prowess, leaving them in the unique position of negotiating with or even making battle with oni warlords and yai sovereigns, possibly bringing enough stability to civilization before the Mists of Akuma brings about the world's end. At the end of their next long rest each PC increases their Dignity score by 10 (this does not decrease their Haitoku score).

Mugen Bone Mound

A tower over 1,000 feet high molded from skeletons contains a truly monumental amount of bones. When Hone-Noroi Keep falls the grisly means of its supernatural construction do not disappear—instead what remains is a field of bones roughly 3 miles in diameter. The government ban on living or traveling nearby remains in effect but is only loosely enforced, and in the decades to come a small but demanding black market emerges for bones, highly valued for dark rituals and unique artworks now that it's easier to acquire an abundance of the morbid material all at once.

ZUGAIKOTSU DREAMS

Though they may be victorious and the threat of the Pale Master ended, the adventurers are forever changed by the necromancer's fell touch. Whenever they are relaxed or deep in reverie, the skulls of the dead appear to haunt them.



It has been months since your victory at Hone-Noroi Keep and you have known the rare honor of being hailed as a true hero of Soburin, respected and admired wherever you journey. Travel papers and debts have become minor nuisances of your past—now you are free to go wherever you like whenever you feel the need to do so, welcomed in every settlement and tea house where each night you are begged to regale others with the tales of your heroism.

Something though, something does not sit well with you. An unease crawls along your bones and sucks at the marrow, a heightened sense of preservation when there's no threat in sight, the world taking on an unnatural stillness when you gaze out upon nature. Nights of drinking sake, going to the theater, reveling in festivals—these are but distractions from the anxiety that pervades your existence, brief reprieves from the unsettling sense of an underlying danger plaguing your hard-earned peace. Over time the unnatural sensation quiets, growing so dim that you almost forget it is there.

While visiting the emperor's vacation home in Masuto and gazing at the calm of the Sōdaino River in winter, the unease returns and your gaze flits out across the water onto the rockface—a massive snow-covered stone transforms into the shape of a skull, one of dozens, hundreds of skulls all around you! The entire countryside has turned into a morbid carnival of the dead! The Pale Master returns! You leap to your feet and reach for a weapon yet just as you look back to the field of enemies surrounding you, only peaceful drifts of white and a quiet bubbling river meet your gaze.

Anxiety becomes your companion once again and you are never without a weapon, always ready to defend yourself when the Pale Master—the necromancer you most certainly destroyed—assaults you anew, living with one eye open ready for a striking pale blade that never comes.

The visions continue until you are no longer disturbed by a world of corpses molded into nature. In fact you discover that there's a sort of morbid beauty to the macabre arrangements for they are always skillfully wrought into the landscape and bring a flair of style that the world would do well to attain. But why should the world wait? Why shouldn't others enjoy the beauty that you see? If only there were a simpler contrast—there are too many hues and colors at war with each other. Things should be less vibrant, yes. Yes, that's it. You know it in your heart what must be done. It is and has been your destiny all along.

A paleness must be brought to this world.

THE GOLDEN CARP



The Golden Carp is a *Mists of Akuma* adventure designed for 4 to 6 characters of 7th level. This sidequest can take place at any time when traveling the territories of Soburin and is applicable for a wide range of PCs—each encounter has a "Lightened" and "Hardened" adjustment that can be made to accommodate parties of differing size and level.

INTRODUCTION

Every 100 years, an ancient kami dragon performs a cleansing ritual to renew his commitment to his shrine—Yebisu dives into the ocean, shedding his draconic form and most of his powers in a special transformation. The venerable dragon's boundless spiritual power cannot be contained and although he becomes no more than a simple carp, a golden light radiates from his fishy scales. Yebisu must ascend the river that flows from his shrine at the top of the mountain, returning to his true draconic shape upon crossing the arch that sits atop the highest waterfall near the peak. With the return of the Mists of Akuma and widespread unrest however, Yebisu's centennial pilgrimage is harried at every turn as ravenous oni and evil magical agents seek to harvest his spiritual power while he is in so vulnerable a state! In order to complete the journey he'll need the aid of adventurers with endurance, perseverance, and the ability to resist temptation—and for any party able to render assistance great blessings await.

YEBISU

Yebisu has existed for thousands of years as the patron kami spirit of his mountaintop shrine. He is an entity of endurance and perseverance known to grant blessings to those who brave the long ascent to his sanctuary at the peak but to renew himself, he must shed his draconic form and make a humble ascent to the shrine himself. This ritual must be performer every century or he risks losing his spiritual essence forever. Yebisu started this most recent ritual a year ago, diving into the deepest part of the ocean before transforming and thus has no knowledge of most recent events.

Yebisu has encountered far more resistance from adeddo-oni already during this ascent than he has ever experienced before and is worried that he will fail. While in his carp form he is largely defenseless, though his spiritual power does provide him some protection. Use the statistics of a quipper with the following changes:

- Yebisu gives off bright light in a 10-foot radius.
- Yebisu can speak Draconic and Soburi, and can communicate telepathically to a range of 60 feet.
- Yebisu's true form is often visible for brief moments, reflected on the water's surface near him. Anyone with a passive Perception of 12 or higher catches these glimpses of his draconic form.
- Yebisu keeps his Constitution of 22 and has proficiency with Constitution saving throws (8 total hit points; Con +10).
- ***Spiritual Fortitude.*** If damage reduces Yebisu to 0 hit points, he has advantage on a Constitution saving throw against a DC equal to 5 + the damage taken, unless the damage is necrotic or from a critical hit. On a success, he drops to 1 hit point instead.

When restored to his true draconic form Yebisu uses the statistics of an **Ancient Kami Dragon** (pages 332–333).

ROLEPLAYING YEBISU

Yebisu is proud, stoic, and ashamed that he must ask for assistance. He respects endurance, steadfastness, and stalwart attitudes, showing favor and admiration to the PC with the highest Constitution and to any of the adventurers he witnesses continue to fight while close to death. Yebisu is a noble creature caught in a dangerous situation—he tries to keep a façade of superiority and power while in his humble form but it can falter when his life is threatened, forcing him to hastily try to save face when he is saved by another.

ADVENTURE SUMMARY

Yebisu is in his nearly helpless golden carp form and numerous antagonists can sense the raw mystical power contained within the tiny creature, aggressively seeking him out. Throughout three encounters the PCs must choose to either aid Yebisu in his ascent, to turn back and abandon him, or even take the golden carp's potent spiritual essence for themselves.

The adventure can start at any time that the party is traveling overland and outside of one of Soburin's cities. In Act 1 the PCs are introduced to Yebisu and Kilavi Poy (revealed as a wicked oni witch attempting to consume Yebisu and gain his essence), and in Act 2 they journey up the river with Yebisu only to be ambushed by Scorpion Warriors who seek to capture him for Fuson, forced to decide between the golden carp's promises or the offers made by Fuson's elite.

In Act 3, the adventurers climb to the river's source atop the mountain and confront Sagi-Shi, a young sovereign dragon that has taken to impersonating Yebisu in his absence. In a final test of their resolve the PCs have to choose the impostor's rewards for betraying Yebisu or the daunting task of deposing the fearsome dragon that stands in their way.

Act 1: The Fisherwoman

When the PCs are traveling across the Soburin wilderness, read or paraphrase the following to begin the adventure:

A simple 5-foot wide stone bridge spans the swiftly moving 20-foot wide river in front of you, the gray and tan blocks overgrown with moss and lichen. Perhaps 60 feet upstream flows a 20-foot tall waterfall that draws your eye with a curious golden light that runs up and down the cascading river. A series of steep plant-covered steps lead up its left side but atop the right of it is a woman industriously casting a net into the rushing waters attempting to catch the bounding light.

The bounding light is Yebisu ardently attempting to climb the waterfall while evading capture by the fisherwoman—truly the oni witch Kilavi Poy, who means to consume him and his spiritual essence. The net she is constantly casting and reeling back in is actually a net tsukumogami, owned and used by Kilavi Poy for decades and completely loyal to her.



Kilavi Poy

An oni witch that has stalked this area for decades, Kilavi has sensed Yebisu's spiritual essence like a wolf would sense fresh meat. Oddly vain for such a hideous creature, she prefers to spend most of her time disguised as a beautiful noblewoman, the styles of which often change on a whim. For years she has preyed upon men foolish enough to fall for a new pretty face in the region, luring them into the woods where she devours their flesh and uses their innards for arcane rites. With the return of the Mists of Akuma she's turned her attention to experimenting with creating tsukumogami, which has mostly involved dumping her old and well-worn items into the primordial fog and hoping for the best. She's had great success with a few objects, including her old fishing net (which has fully transformed and is now affectionately called Nikara).

Kilavi Poy uses the statistics for a green hag with the following changes:

- Kilavi adds *blood bullets, hateful countenance,* and *primal burst* (*MoA* page 243) to her Innate Spellcasting feature and her spell DC is increased to 15.
- Kilavi's challenge rating increases to 4.
- Nakara, her net tsukumagami, uses the statistics of an akunomōfu (*MoA* page 156).

When the players approach the fishing woman, read or paraphrase the following:

As you approach you see that the strange golden light is radiating off of a carp struggling to swim up the waterfall and nimbly avoiding the net cast by the woman atop it. She has the bearing of a noble and is dressed as though about to attend a palace meeting, still holding a rose-colored parasol that shades her from the sun as she repeatedly casts her net.

When she notices you she says, "this catch is caught, or is just as well done. We've no qualms and just as well—be on your way and I'll be along on mine."

Just as she finishes speaking the golden carp leaps up and you hear it shout, "I beg you humbly! I can bestow upon you great blessings if you would but withhold me from that foul creature!"

The situation is likely to develop rapidly as the party investigates.

Kilavi is desperate to capture Yebisu and says anything to get the adventurers to leave. She is currently using her Illusory Appearance feature and a DC 20 Intelligence (Investigation) check is needed to see through the deception. However there are several ways to reveal the truth of the situation.

- Kilavi's speech is very odd and does not reflect what would be expected of a noble woman—in addition to the odd issue of such a person fishing in the first place. Any PC that passes a DC 15 Wisdom (Insight) check notices these inconsistencies about her.
- While Kilavi is making token motions to reel in and cast Nakara, the net is largely animating itself. Those with a passive Perception of 15 or higher notice the strange motions of the net and realize it's alive with a subsequently successful DC 12 Intelligence (Investigation) check.
- Kilavi is paranoid about losing this precious catch and will attack the party to defend it if provoked. If the adventurers insist on talking to Yebisu, begin casting any spells, or attempt to climb the cliff or steps up the waterfall, she drops her disguise and attacks.

Kilavi stays at the top of the cliff and prefers to cast spells at her enemies from a distance, sending Nakara to attack and smother any PC she perceives is capable of magic or talented at ranged attacks. When Nakara is slain or Kilavi is brought down to half her hit points or less, she tries bargaining with the party, claiming that consuming the golden fish will grant them everlasting life but only if she prepares it for them. On her next turn if she believes that the adventurers are not deceived, she uses Invisible Passage and flees.

Once the combat is resolved Yebisu dutifully thanks the PCs. Read or paraphrase the following:

> *"Though I am woe to have required it I humbly thank you for your intervention. That vile creature would have devoured me. Allow me to bestow upon you a blessing with what little power I now possess." Suddenly the golden fish emanates a bright burst and shining light envelops you—for but a moment you see the form of a great dragon roaring out from the rushing waterfall. "It is a shameful thing to ask but these lands are far more dangerous than what I remember from a century ago. The encouraging hands of pilgrims and the devout have been replaced by the grasping claws of demons and witches. Should you see fit to guard my ascent, perhaps I could bestow greater blessings upon you in return?"*

Yebisu explains his situation to the best of his abilities, and that his power is directly linked to his proximity to his shrine (meaning he cannot bestow greater blessings without continuing his ascent regardless of how well the adventurers bargain). He can only accept indirect assistance—he cannot be carried or magically transported and fulfill his ritual. When progresses up the river by any method other than swimming under his own power, he must return to the last place he reached without assistance and continue from there.

Lightened Encounter. For an easier encounter for fewer or lower level PCs, remove the additions made to Kilavi Poy's spellcasting (and higher challenge rating) and instead have her primarily attack with her claws.

Hardened Encounter. For a harder encounter for more or higher level PCs, replace Kilavi Poy's ordinary rose-colored parasol with a kasa-obake in disguise (*MoA* page 161 or *Mists of Akuma: Tsukumogami*). This tsukumogami distracts any creature that attempts to get into melee with Kilavi. In addition, add *tangling fog* (*MoA* page 249) to her Innate Spellcasting feature.

Yebisu's Blessing of Perseverance

After the adventurers successfully rescue Yebisu from the clutches of Kilavi Poy, he bestows this small blessing of perseverance: each PC's Dignity score increases by 1 and they all gain 1 hit die only usable to recover hit points during rests. This hit die does not add to total hit points.

Consuming the Golden Carp

Should the party believe Kilavi Poy or otherwise learn of this option, consuming Yebisu grants a measure of his spiritual power. Any PC that completely consumes Yebisu permanently gains advantage on Constitution saving throws and becomes immune to poison. The indignity of consuming such a noble spirit is not without consequences however: their Dignity decreases by 4 and their Haitoku increases by 4.

Act 2: Striking Scorpions

By this point the party have been escorting Yebisu upriver for over 24 hours. He swims along at the same pace the PCs walk and navigates the many short waterfalls with surprising ease. As the terrain temporarily flattens out and before hitting the harsh ascent up the mountain the supernatural haze encroaches, forcing the adventurers to pause and carefully navigate around the Mists of Akuma on several occasions.

> *The river is wide, shallow, and slow here, measuring 50 feet across and only 3 feet deep. Dozens of wide flat stones break the water's surface and rolling banks of the horrible mists obscure the surrounding area. With a splash and Yebisu's muffled scream, you suddenly see a black-cloaked figure with kunai raised. The vagabond has caught your carp friend unawares and is stuffing him into a sack! As the underbrush nearby crunches you spot glints of hidden steel—you're surrounded!*

A total of 5 **Scorpion Warriors** (page 191) have ambushed the party. They have orders from Fuson to capture the spirit Yebisu and return him safely for study. While they are not openly displaying their ties to the prefecture, any character who has dealt with them before recognizes the ninja, and a successful DC 12 Intelligence (History) check or DC 10 Dignity (Culture) check easily identifies them.

The combat should start with the PCs either near the edge of the water or atop the stepping stones that dot the river. Scorpion Warriors successfully ambush the party, using a surprise round to take positions and make poisoned kunai attacks (and for one, capturing Yebisu). Adventurers with a passive Perception of 15 or higher are not surprised and can act on the first round of combat.

The Scorpion Warriors have no direct orders to harm the party whomever has Yebisu attempts to simply retreat. However the Mists of Akuma are blocking much of the surrounding terrain so they try moving upriver. When the Scorpion Warrior holding the gold carp is downed, Yebisu is freed back into the river and any nearby enemies attempt to retrieve him.

Jumping across the wet stepping stones requires a DC 12 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check and on a failure a creature lands prone in the water. Wading through the water is an arduous process and it acts as difficult terrain until a creature succeeds on a DC 16 Strength (Athletics) check at the start of its turn.

Once at least 2 of the Scorpion Warriors are downed, one of the remaining enemies sheathes his weapon and exclaims:

> *"Stop! This is senseless and wasteful, what has this creature pledged to you? Gold? Power? Magic? Fuson has use of him—and we make good on our promises."*

If the fighting never stops or negotiations break down, the Scorpion Warriors fight to the last man to complete their mission.

If the PCs cease fighting, the Scorpion Warriors attempt to pay them off, offering either riches, a powerful weapon, or magical potions from a secret outpost about 10 miles away—when a deal is struck one of the sneaky servants leaves to retrieve it.

If the PCs trade Yebisu for riches, the Scorpion Warriors give them 6,000 gp, a stipend from Fuson originally intended for bartering rare magical ingredients.

If the PCs trade Yebisu for a weapon, the Scorpion Warriors retrieve their former captain's treasured blade, a *+2 katana* that inflicts the poisoned condition for 1 minute on a critical hit (no save).

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If the PCs trade Yebisu for magic potions, the Scorpion Warriors provide 4 *potions of poison resistance* and 6 *potions of greater healing*.

Lightened Encounter. For an easier encounter for fewer or lower level adventurers, lower the total number of Scorpion Warriors to 4 and allow the entire party to act on the first round of combat.

Hardened Encounter. For a harder encounter for more or higher level adventurers, increase the total number of Scorpion Warriors to 6 and equip all of them with Qì-Tóukuī bodysuit (*MoA* page 237), allowing them to use the Mists of Akuma to their advantage, darting in and out of the primordial fog and luring the (unprotected) PCs into the deadly clouds.

YEBISU'S BLESSING OF RESILIENCE

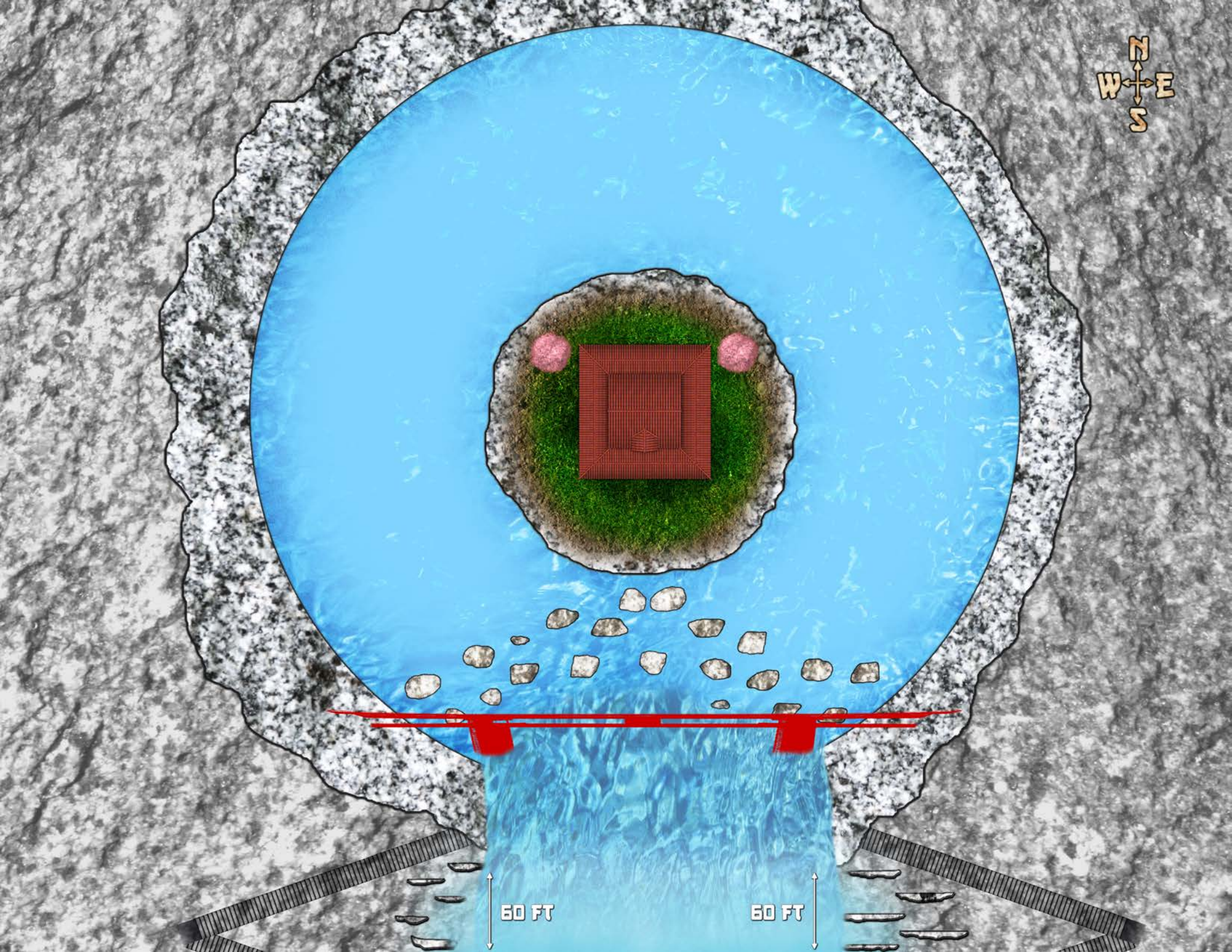
If the players successfully rescue Yebisu from the Scorpion Warriors, he bestows a greater blessing of resilience on each member of the party: each PC's Dignity score increases by 1. In addition, whenever the character would suffer the poisoned condition or fail a saving throw to resist the Mists of Akuma, they may choose to ignore that condition or automatically pass that save instead. Once this feature has been used, the PC must finish a short or long rest before they can use it again.

ACT 3: PRETENDER TO THE SHRINE

In the year that Yebisu has been absent, his shrine has not gone empty. Sagi-Shi is a young sovereign dragon that has opportunistically taken over in his stead and impersonated him, accepting the offerings of the locals and demanding more. The Shrine of Yebisu itself is a simple 30-foot wide square structure flanked by a pair of cherry trees, sitting atop a small 60-foot wide island at the center of a small, perfectly circular 120-foot wide lake. A series of stepping stones lead from the island across to the shores. The shrine perpetually generates the lake that surrounds it which flows out over the mountain's edge into a great waterfall 20-feet wide and 100-feet tall.

A pair of steep staircases flank the waterfall and switchback their way up the sheer cliff to the shrine where a single red arch sits overlooking the edge, golden inscriptions of carp and dragons enwrapped about its columns.




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IMPOSTOR DRAGON

Sagi-Shi is a young sovereign dragon without a dominion of her own and after discovering the mountaintop shrine empty yet still receiving offerings, she simply could not resist assuming an effortless rulership. While not a kami spirit herself she has become attuned to the shrine and it has suffered greatly under her control, the blessed waters starting to turn languid and sick, the cherry trees going bare and dying.

Sagi-Shi is enamored with herself and current prestige, beginning to believe her own deception. She uses the statistics for a **Wyrmling Sovereign Dragon** (*MoA* page 126) though due to her forced attunement to Yebisu's shrine she has the following changes:

Lair Actions. When fighting within 300 feet of Yebisu's shrine, Sagi-Shi can invoke her attunement to take lair actions. On initiative count 20 (losing initiative ties), she takes a lair action to cause one of the following effects:

- The lake overflows, pouring water down the shrine's staircases. Any creature currently on the shrine staircases must succeed on a DC 12 Strength saving throw or lose their footing, falling 1d6 x 10 feet down the stairs (taking any applicable fall damage).
- A torrent of water flows out from the waterfall and buffets a single target. Sagi-Shi targets a single creature which must succeed on a DC 15 Strength saving throw or take 3d6 bludgeoning damage and be knocked prone.
- Sagi-Shi absorbs some of the shrine's spiritual essence and endurance, regaining 2d4+4 hit points.

When Yebisu and the PCs first reach the base of the waterfall, Sagi-Shi becomes aware of their presence and flies out to stop him. At first the impostor insists that she is the true kami-spirit but Yebisu's presence makes the ruse impossible to pass off. When deception fails Sagi-Shi instead turns to bargaining, promising the adventurers a bounty of offerings that lies within the shrine if they kill Yebisu for her.

A party that relents here and kills Yebisu receives the current contents of Yebisu's shrine, its new owner secure knowing that she can leech offerings from the area for the foreseeable future. Sagi-Shi provides the PCs with 5,000 gp worth of trinkets, baubles and gems that were offered to Yebisu, and a set of *prayer beads* (very rare; *MoA* page 235) that she has little use for.

When rejected Sagi-Shi flies up and around the top of the waterfall, relying on her breath attack and lair actions as much as possible. She fights in melee with any creature that flies up to meet her but otherwise avoids getting into close combat unless she can isolate one of the PCs. Sagi-Shi attempts to stop Yebisu from reaching the top at all costs, though the adventurers easily distract her. The impostor dragon focuses on killing Yebisu if she goes a full round without being damaged by the party.

During the combat Yebisu continues climbing the waterfall at a rate of 20 feet per round, and if unimpeded reaches the top at the end of the fifth round of combat. When he reaches the top and crosses through the archway he instantly transforms into his true draconic kami spirit form—then spends his turn decimating Sagi-Shi. Read or paraphrase the following:

The moment Yebisu crosses the archway his carp form erupts into a firework of golden scales, great spectral wings stretching out from the great golden serpent and flowing with cherry blossom petals that shower down from the trees along the shrine. "

*At last. I am again proven worthy—though this is the first time I was not alone in my triumph. I must thank you all, for it was **our** perseverance that has restored me and brought life back to this holy place. I would bestow a gift upon you that is rarely given but your resolve has been proven and I know few as worthy." With that Yebisu summons a mighty wind that blows you out through the archway to send the lot of you tumbling right over the waterfall.*

Yebisu has granted each of the PCs with Wings of the Dragon Arch that activate as they are blown through the archway.

Lightened Encounter. For an easier encounter for fewer or lower level PCs, remove Sagi-Shi's lair actions and have her primarily fight in melee.

Hardened Encounter. For a harder encounter for more or higher level characters, have Sagi-Shi use all 3 of her lair actions each round (instead of choosing one from among them).

Wings of the Dragon Arch

You can use an action or a reaction to unleash the draconic kami essence within, causing your eyes to glimmer and two luminous, incorporeal draconic wings to sprout from your back. When activated, you gain temporary hit points equal to 2d8 + your Constitution modifier and a flying speed of 30 feet. Your transformation lasts for 10 minutes or until you end it as a bonus action. Once you use this feature, you must finish a long rest before you can use it again.

Concluding the Adventure

The adventurers are forever welcome at Yebisu's shrine and though the dragon's sphere of influence is small, it does represent a haven should the party need a refuge. If you are having difficulty linking the PCs back towards the main quest, have Yebisu sense turmoil now that he has reconnected with the shrine—he requests that the adventurers investigate whatever the GM requires of them, possibly offering his ***prayer beads*** (very rare; *MoA* page 235) as a reward should they need coaxing.



Kami Dragons

Easily the rarest of all the Imperial Dragons, these spirit-borne entities are today a thing of myth and if the sages are to be believed they were driven to extinction during the Ichizoku Wars, so it is widely thought that there are no more to be found on the continent or the world at large—this is only mostly correct. "Ghost dragons" foresaw the coming horror, interpreting the flow of spiritual energies for what it truly is and seeking refuge elsewhere. Not all kami dragons fled however and some still live in Soburin, far removed and isolated from the chaos gripping the world in shrines and other holy places they have sworn to guard until their final day.

WYRMLING KAMI DRAGON

Large dragon, lawful good
Armor Class 17 (natural armor)
Hit Points 152 (16d10+64)
Speed 30 ft., fly 60 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
19 (+4)	14 (+2)	18 (+4)	11 (+0)	19 (+4)	16 (+3)

Saving Throws Dex +5, Con +6, Wis +7, Cha +6
Skills Perception +7, Religion +3
Damage Resistances cold, fire, necrotic
Damage Immunities radiant
Condition Immunities hated, misted
Senses blindsight 10 ft., passive Perception 17
Languages Draconic, Soburi (Common), Sylvan
Challenge 7 (2,900 XP)

Ethereal Sight. The dragon can see 60 feet into the Ethereal Plane.

Incorporeal Movement. The dragon can move through other creatures and objects as if they were difficult terrain. It takes 5 (1d10) force damage if it ends its turn inside an object.

Lit. While conscious, the dragon sheds bright light in a 30-foot-radius sphere and dim light an additional 20 feet.

Magic Weapons. The dragon's weapon attacks are magical.

Regeneration. The dragon regains 10 hit points at the start of its turn if it has at least 1 hit point.

Spiritual Smite (6 points). When the dragon hits a creature with a melee weapon attack, it can expend one point to deal radiant damage to the target, in addition to the weapon's damage. The extra damage is 7 (2d6) for 1 point, plus 3 (1d6) for each additional point, to a maximum of 17 (5d6 for 4 points). The damage increases by 7 (2d6) if the target is an undead or a fiend.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The dragon can use its Frightful Presence. It then makes three attacks: one with its bite and two with its claws.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit*: 9 (1d10+4) piercing damage.

Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d8+4) slashing damage.

Frightful Presence. Each creature of the dragon's choice that is within 120 feet and aware of it must succeed on a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw or become frightened for 1 minute. A creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success. If a creature's saving throw is successful or the effect ends for it, the creature is immune to the dragon's Frightful Presence for the next 24 hours.

Breath Weapons (Recharge 5–6). The dragon uses one of the following breath weapons.

Healing Breath. The dragon exhales life energy in a 15-foot cone and each creature in the area regains 17 (2d12+4) hit points.

Radiant Breath. The dragon exhales spiritual energy in a 30-foot line that is 5 feet wide. Each creature in that area must make a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw, taking 18 (4d8) radiant damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

ADULT KAMI DRAGON

Huge dragon, lawful good
Armor Class 19 (natural armor)
Hit Points 218 (19d12+95)
Speed 40 ft., fly 75 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
21 (+5)	17 (+3)	21 (+5)	15 (+2)	22 (+6)	19 (+4)

Saving Throws Dex +8, Con +10, Wis +11, Cha +9
Skills Insight +11, Perception +16, Persuasion +9, Religion +7
Damage Resistances cold, fire, necrotic; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical weapons
Damage Immunities radiant
Condition Immunities hated, misted
Senses blindsight 60 ft., passive Perception 26
Languages Draconic, Soburi (Common)
Challenge 14 (13,000 XP)

Etherealness. As a bonus action the dragon enters the Ethereal Plane from the Material Plane, or vice versa. It is visible on the Material Plane while it is in the Border Ethereal, and vice versa, yet it can't affect or be affected by anything on the other plane.

Ethereal Sight. The dragon can see 60 feet into the Ethereal Plane when it is on the Material Plane, and vice versa.

Incorporeal Movement. The dragon can move through other creatures and objects as if they were difficult terrain. It takes 5 (1d10) force damage if it ends its turn inside an object.

Legendary Resistance (3/Day). If the dragon fails a saving throw, it can choose to succeed instead.

Lit. While conscious, the dragon sheds bright light in an 60-foot-radius sphere and dim light an additional 8 0 feet.

Magic Weapons. The dragon's weapon attacks are magical.

Regeneration. The dragon regains 15 hit points at the start of its turn if it has at least 1 hit point.

Spiritual Smite (12 points). When the dragon hits a creature with a melee weapon attack, it can expend one point to deal radiant damage to the target, in addition to the weapon's damage. The extra damage is 7 (2d6) for 1 point, plus 3 (1d6) for each additional point, to a maximum of 17 (5d6 for 4 points). The damage increases by 7 (2d6) if the target is an undead or a fiend.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The dragon can use its Frightful Presence. It then makes three attacks: one with its bite and two with its claws.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +10 to hit, reach 15 ft., one target.
Hit: 16 (2d10+5) piercing damage.

Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +10 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target.
Hit: 12 (2d6+5) slashing damage.

Tail Slap. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +10 to hit, reach 25 ft., one target.
Hit: 14 (2d8+5) bludgeoning damage.

Frightful Presence. Each creature of the dragon's choice that is within 120 feet of the dragon and aware of it must succeed on a DC 19 Wisdom saving throw or become frightened for 1 minute. A creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success. If a creature's saving throw is successful or the effect ends for it, the creature is immune to the dragon's frightful presence for the next 24 hours.

Breath Weapons (Recharge 4–6). The dragon uses one of the following breath weapons.

- ***Healing Breath.*** The dragon exhales life energy in a 30-foot cone and each creature in the area regains 38 (5d12+6) hit points.
- ***Radiant Breath.*** The dragon exhales pure divine energy in a 90-foot line that is 15 feet wide. Each creature in that area must make a DC 19 Wisdom saving throw, taking 54 (12d8) radiant damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

Change Shape. The dragon magically polymorphs into a humanoid or beast that has a challenge rating 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 alignment, hit points, Hit Dice, ability to speak, proficiencies, Legendary Resistance, lair actions, and Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma scores, as well as this action. Its statistics and capabilities are otherwise replaced by those of the new form, except any class features or legendary actions of that form.

(continued on page 332)

LEGENDARY ACTIONS

The dragon can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. The dragon regains spent legendary actions at the start of its turn.

- ***Sense Energy.*** The dragon makes a Wisdom (Perception) check. This check is made as if it had cast *detect magic*, though it does not require an action to see magical auras.
- ***Tail Attack.*** The dragon makes a tail attack.
- ***Wing Attack (Costs 2 Actions).*** The dragon beats its wings. Each creature within 10 feet of the dragon must succeed on a DC 18 Dexterity saving throw or take 12 (2d6+5) bludgeoning damage and be knocked prone. The dragon can then fly up to half its flying speed.



YEBISU, ANCIENT KAMI DRAGON

Gargantuan dragon, lawful good

Armor Class 21 (natural armor)

Hit Points 437 (25d20+175)

Speed 50 ft., fly 90 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
25 (+7)	20 (+5)	24 (+7)	17 (+3)	29 (+9)	22 (+6)

Saving Throws Dex +13, Con +15, Wis +17, Cha +14

Skills Insight +17, Perception +25, Persuasion +14, Religion +11

Damage Resistances cold, fire, necrotic; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical weapons

Damage Immunities radiant

Condition Immunities frightened, hated, misted

Senses blindsight 60 ft., passive Perception 35
Languages Draconic, Soburi (Common)
Challenge 26 (90,000 XP)

Etherealness. As a bonus action Yebisu enters the Ethereal Plane from the Material Plane, or vice versa. He is visible on the Material Plane while he is in the Border Ethereal, and vice versa, yet he can't affect or be affected by anything on the other plane.

Ethereal Sight. Yebisu can see 60 feet into the Ethereal Plane when he is on the Material Plane, and vice versa.

Incorporeal Movement. Yebisu can move through other creatures and objects as if he were difficult terrain. He takes 5 (1d10) force damage if he ends his turn inside an object.

Legendary Resistance (3/Day). If Yebisu fails a saving throw, he can choose to succeed instead.

Lit. While conscious, Yebisu sheds bright light in an 60-foot-radius sphere and dim light an additional 120 feet.

Magic Weapons. Yebisu's weapon attacks are magical.

Regeneration. Yebisu regains 20 hit points at the start of his turn if he has at least 1 hit point.

Spiritual Smite (20 points). When Yebisu hits a creature with a melee weapon attack, he can expend one point to deal radiant damage to the target, in addition to the weapon's damage. The extra damage is 7 (2d6) for 1 point, plus 3 (1d6) for each additional point, to a maximum of 17 (5d6 for 4 points). The damage increases by 7 (2d6) if the target is an undead or a fiend.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Yebisu can use his Frightful Presence. He then makes four attacks: one with his bite, one with his tail, and two with his claws.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +15 to hit, reach 20 ft., one target.
Hit: 18 (2d10+7) piercing damage.

Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +15 to hit, reach 15 ft., one target.
Hit: 14 (2d6+7) slashing damage.

Tail Slap. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +15 to hit, reach 30 ft., one target.
Hit: 16 (2d8+7) bludgeoning damage.

Frightful Presence. Each creature of Yebisu's choice that is within 120 feet of him and aware of him must succeed on a DC 25 Wisdom saving throw or become frightened for 1 minute. A creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success. If a creature's saving throw is successful or the effect ends for it, the creature is immune to Yebisu's Frightful Presence for the next 24 hours.

Breath Weapons (Recharge 3–6). Yebisu uses one of the following breath weapons.

Healing Breath. Yebisu exhales life energy in a 40-foot cone and each creature in the area regains 54 (7d12+9) hit points.

Radiant Breath. Yebisu exhales pure spiritual energy in a 120-foot line that is 20 feet wide. Each creature in that area must make a DC 25 Wisdom saving throw, taking 72 (16d8) radiant damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

Change Shape. Yebisu magically polymorphs into a humanoid or beast that has a challenge rating no higher than his own, or back into his true form. Yebisu reverts to his true form if he dies. Any equipment he is wearing or carrying is absorbed or borne by the new form (Yebisu's choice). In a new form, he retains his alignment, hit points, Hit Dice, ability to speak, proficiencies, Legendary Resistance, lair actions, and Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma scores, as well as this action. Yebisu's statistics and capabilities are otherwise replaced by those of the new form, except any class features or legendary actions of that form.

LEGENDARY ACTIONS

Yebisu can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. Yebisu regains spent legendary actions at the start of his turn.

- ***Sense Energy.*** Yebisu makes a Wisdom (Perception) check. This check is made as if he had cast *detect magic*, though he does not require an action to see magical auras.
- ***Tail Attack.*** Yebisu makes a tail attack.
- ***Wing Attack (Costs 2 Actions).*** Yebisu beats his wings. Each creature within 15 feet of him must succeed on a DC 23 Dexterity saving throw or take 17 (2d6+10) bludgeoning damage and be knocked prone. Yebisu can then fly up to half his flying speed.

CURSED WELL OF ITAMI



Cursed Well of Itami is a *Mists of Akuma* adventure designed for five to six characters of 5th level. This sidequest can take place at any time when traveling the territories of Soburin (the town of Itami is designed to be placed in several different locations) and is applicable for a wide range of PCs—each encounter has a "Lightened" and "Hardened" adjustment that can be made to accommodate parties of differing size and level.

INTRODUCTION

There is a well in the center of the town of Itami and every day people draw water from it. Until the day that all the buckets that were drawn up from the well were filled with anything but water—black tar, green acidic goop, even blood. Moaning and wailing can be heard coming from it at night. The well is cursed…

The town of Itami is young, having sprung up due to new trade routes along the continent's high grounds to better avoid the Mists of Akuma. What few know is that almost a decade prior to Itami's founding there was a large battle fought in its current location between a wave of adeddo-oni and an army of clan soldiers seeking to protect their lands. The undead were slain and, together with the human dead, buried in a mass grave. On nights where the primordial fog comes in, spirits of the slain soldiers rise up from the well. This taint has spread underground and now affects the water supply of Itami. The curse must be broken to free the people of this nightmarish situation and purify their well's water—permanently.

Summary

The PCs are introduced to the curse of the well when they stay the night inside Itami's walls. Evil spirits rise up from the well and try to kill anyone who isn't safely hidden away under theprotection of charms. This first encounter is on a timer so the adventurers simply have to outlast their opponents if they can't kill them outright.

Afterward the PCs are asked by the townspeople (Minato the innkeep or Shigeru the Tinkerer) to help them fight the evil spirits and break the curse of the well. This begins in Act 2 where the party can question townspeople about the origins of the curse. Act 3 begins once they descend into the well where the adventurers face down the source of the curse and the horde of buried adeddo-oni. In this final test the PCs can permanently break the curse (if their investigation was successful and they use Dao-Jaifeng's poem) or break the curse but spread its evil energy across the land surrounding Itami (if they break Sanjuro's cursed augmetic).

Where is Itami?

The best locations to put the village is at a crossroads in the countryside at a spot great for trade and where it also makes sense for a large battle to have occurred. Itami should not be near a river or close to the coast because wells are less necessary for living there. Mountainous areas are a great place to put Itami.

It's also possible to place Itami as a new suburb of a large city that was set upon by adeddo-oni in recent history but lacks effective defenses against the Mists of Akuma (Kyofu or Nagabuki aren't good options).

Act 1: The First Night

When the PCs arrive in Itami things seem calm and peaceful. There are a few locations they can visit:

The Inn. There are townspeople drinking here but no guests—places to sleep only cost 1 sp per person per night as demand for them is not high. The innkeep is **Minato**, a disillusioned middle-aged woman.

The Augmetics Workshop. This is where **Shigeru the Tinkerer** works.

Shrine of Ten-no-aoi-kami.. This small library filled with scrolls of history, myth and poetry is devoted to a spirit of sky, purity and knowledge, tended to by the shrine priestess **Shiori**.

The Well. In the middle of town there is a wooden board covering a well with a bucket placed on top of it. The bucket is tied with a rope to a pulley system to allow it to be lowered into and raised from the well.

Some of the inhabitants seem on edge and tell the PCs it is dangerous to spend the night. When asked why, they reveal in hushed tones (as if to not awaken any evil) that the well of the town is cursed and at night foul spirits rise up from it.

When the PCs investigate the well they can draw up a bucket filled with foul-smelling black goop that resembles coagulated blood.

If the adventurers try to go down into the well, townspeople run up to them to warn and try to stop them. If party goes down anyway, proceed to Act 3.

Shigeru the Tinkerer

Shigeru has been Itami's augmetics expert for several years, memorable for the patch covering up his one augmetic eye and the rough leather apron he wears indefinitely whether or not he's at work. He speaks slowly and with a sad voice, but becomes very excited when others show interest in his work. Shigeru's father served in the army that vanquished the adeddo-oni years ago and now lies buried beneath the village. He feels a sense of duty to the people of Itami and has been trying to fight the evil spirits to break the curse on his own before the adventurers arrived. Instead of succeeding he's barely come away with his life and now walks with a permanent limp (his movement speed reduced to 15 feet; otherwise he has the statistics of a Veteran with Intelligence 15).

Shigeru's augmetic eye protects him from being killed by the evil spirits. If an attack from an evil spirit would bring Shigeru down to 0 hit points, a burst of light erupts from beneath his eyepatch and forms a protective shield around him until he regains at least 1 hit point.


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Shiori

Shiori is the shrine priestess of Ten-no-aoi-kami, a spirit of sky, purity, and knowledge. She traveled to Itami a few months ago after the old shrine priest passed away. She wears a long, flowing white and sky blue kimono and treats guests to her shrine with utmost respect as long as they show deference towards Ten-no-aoi-kami. She loves poetry and has an interest in a lot of humanoid inventions—including augmetics.

The Evil Spirits

Once night has fallen, the Mists of Akuma spread out from the well and evil spirits rise with it (use the statistics for wraiths). In the beginning there are two evil spirits but every time the PCs kill one of them, two more spawn from the well. This will continues until 1 minute of combat has passed or the evil spirits have brought someone down to 0 hit points (if the victim isan NPC, they die). Once either of these have passed, the evil spirits withdraw back to the well along with the primordial fog.

Lightened Encounter. For an easier encounter for fewer or lower level PCs, reduce the wraiths' Life Drain to 2d8+3 necrotic damage.

Hardened Encounter. For a harder encounter for more or higher level PCs, an additional wraith spawns every round at the well's location and their attack only stops after the last summoned wraith is destroyed.

Act 2: The Investigation

After the attack by the spirits Shigeru approaches the PCs and asks them to help break the curse of the well,revealing that he has been trying to fight off the evil spirits and break the fell enchantment on his own. He hasn't figured out how though and the last time he fought the malevolent creatures he was injured—he can't fight them on his own anymore.

When asked about the history of the well, the curse, or Itami, Shigeru tells the PCs about the history of the battle, his father's involvement, and how the village was built in its location. The only thing of his father's that he owns is a scroll with poetry from the celebrated thinker Dao-Jaifeng. Unfortunately the words have faded with time and are mostly illegible. Shigeru also laments that several townspeople have already been killed by the evil spirits, including the old shrine priest. If asked he'll give them directions to the shrine but he won't go with them as he feels responsible for the old shrine priest's death and doesn't want to face Shiori.

When the PCs go to the shrine Shiori is welcoming and tells them they are free to peruse any of her patron spirit's scrolls of knowledge and poetry. These scrolls are an excellent opportunity for the GM to divulge any additional details for this quest or any others the PCs have been dealing with—a DC 15 Intelligen (Investigation) check reveals such valuable information. In addition, there are prominently displayed scrolls with poetry by Dao-Jaifeng. If the PCs have seen Shigeru's poetry scroll, they recognize one of the poems as being the same, but legible this time.

A blade is kissed by sunlight's touch
Banners are unfurled
Sons and fathers leave on march

It is into death they're hurled
Their legacy mine
Sorrow is all they leave me

Yet evil must be ended
For my son I weep
But youth's safety I will keep

When the PCs read the poem Shiori tells them that it was one of Dao-Jaifeng's last writings and it describes the battle that occurred in Itami's location years ago. None of the scrolls can be removed from the shrine without the priestesses' permission unless the shrine is destroyed. If the PCs intentionally damage the shrine, Ten-no-aoi-kami manifests as a paper kami (*Mists of Akuma* page 151) and demands they leave immediately or suffer the consequences. Shiori is a generous and kind soul however, allowing the party to borrow the poetry scroll so long as they ask politely (and if they have already been rude, a DC 10 Dignity check convinces her to do so anyway).

Act 3: The Final Showdown

The PCs can descend down the well one by one either by using the bucket and pulley system with a successful DC 10 Strength (Athletics) or Dexterity (Acrobatics) check, climbing down the wall with a DC 18 Strength (Athletics) check (taking 1d4 slashing damage if not wearing hand protection), or whichever other methods the party might devise. When they do, describe this to the first adventurer down:

The first thing that hits you is the smell. Acidic, rotten, a slight metal tang like fresh blood…but far from fresh now. The smell is so pungent you can taste it on your tongue.

Next you notice the soft drip of water but it is distorted somehow. Thicker, followed by a dampened echo that reverberates upwards. As you go deeper a soft, threatening hum fills your ears, like a distant swarm of hornets closing in on you.

You notice that the walls of the well are rough but the further you go down they seem smoother and slicker, coated with a thin layer of foul-smelling viscous material. It's in shades of black and red, clinging to sharp outstanding bits of stone. You begin to wonder—have others been here before? Most likely. Did they ever get out? The question burns in your mind but you suspect that you probably already know the answer.

You see the water below you…or what once was water. There are cracks in the wall of the well that open up large enough for you to squeeze through, revealing beyond a cavernous area dimly illuminated by an eerie purple light. Distant hissies and groans come from the other side of the crack.

Once the PCs have entered the cavernous area the adventurers see a plethora of dead bodies embedded in the walls around them. The light and the noises are coming from deeper within, from a large figure that resembles a conglomeration of human bodies: the gundan-oni.

Lightened Encounter. For an easier encounter for fewer or lower level PCs, the use of Dao-Jaifeng's poetry will quickly give them an edge in the fight. If the PCs try to enter the well without investigating (skipping Act 2), Shiori can run up to them, tell them she has warded off spirits by reciting the poet's words, and give them the scroll. To make the gundan-oni an easier encounter without requiring the poetry, remove its two dagger fan attacks (lowering its AC by 2) and lower the damage of Tainted Breath to 14 (4d6) poison damage.

Hardened Encounter. For a harder encounter for more or higher level PCs, saving against the gundan-oni's Tainted Breath does not grant immunity against future exposure to it. Increase the reach of all the gundan-oni's attacks by 5 feet and include two adeddo-oni ninjas (page 343) at the start of combat (hiding on the high ground areas near the gundan-oni).

Spoken of in legend with the same fear shown to gashadokuro, the dreaded gundan-oni is a creature formed from piles of the dead. This is more than a simple reanimated corpse or gargantuan amalgamation of skeletons however for the dreaded monster is the


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culmination of dozens, scores, and sometimes even hundreds of the fallen, all of their rotting flesh and coagulated blood working into its form—it is a walking shrine to the dead.

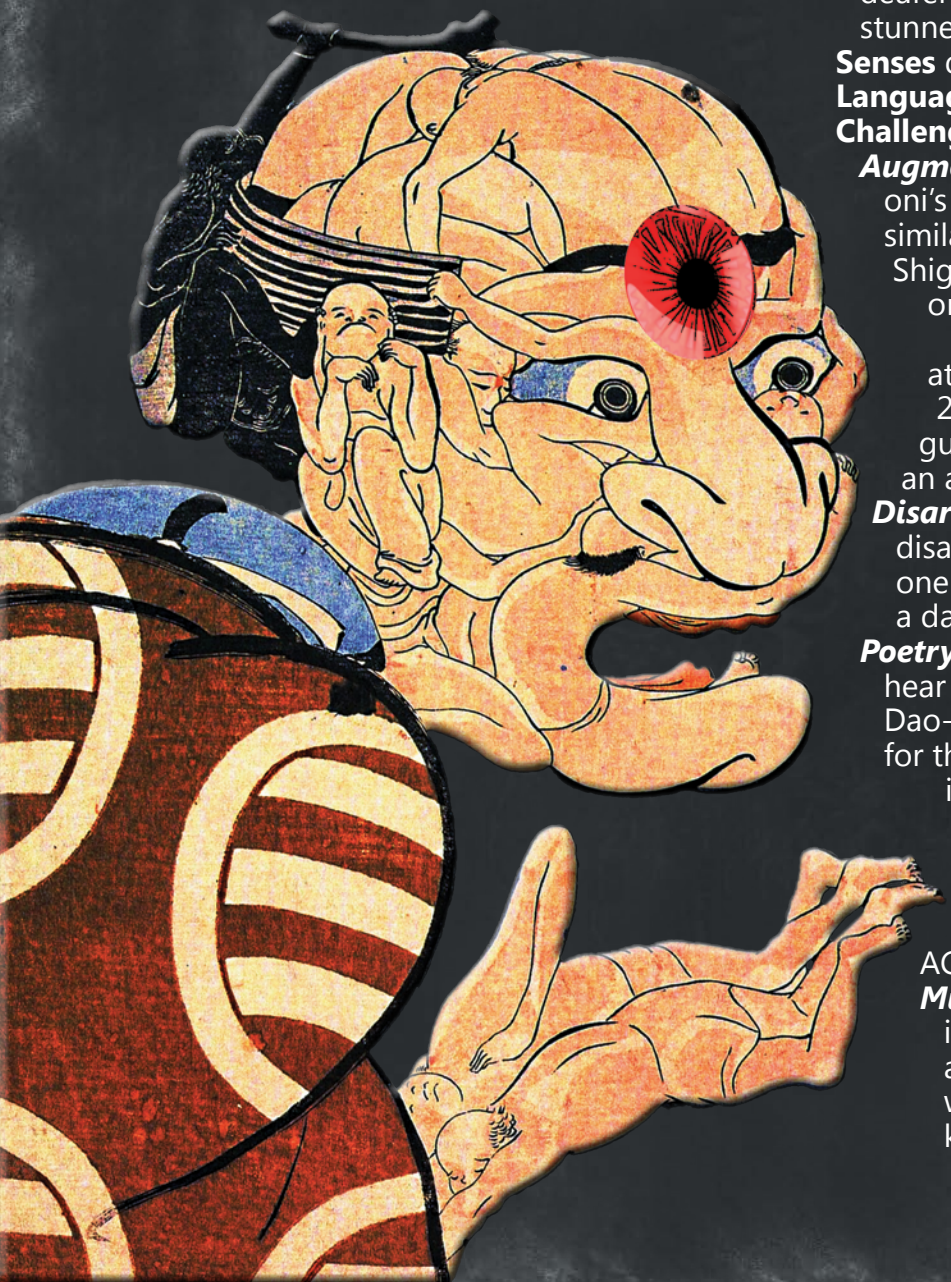
Most gundan-oni are consumed by a mindless malevolence, bent on nothing more than the utter and complete destruction of all life it comes into contact with. Practically unseen since the time of the Imperial Siblings, these undead giants are rumored to have been seen wandering in the Mists of Akuma, though to what end none can know. Worse yet are the claims that a few of these accursed horrors rival Sanbaoshi's tallest buildings in size, towering as high as 100 feet over the ground. Should any gundan-oni of such a massive size turn its ire upon one of Soburin's cities, there is little doubt that the settlement would never fully recover.

For all the righteous (and well deserved) fear that people have for these oni, a few rare myths claim that they are not always murderous—although seeking an answer to that question is a positively suicidal endeavor.

GUNDAN-ONI

Huge undead (oni), chaotic evil
Armor Class 17 (natural armor)
Hit Points 149 (13d12+65)
Speed 50 ft., swim 50 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	12 (+1)	20 (+5)	4 (-3)	10 (+0)	7 (-2)



Saving Throws Dex +4, Wis +3, Cha +1
Skills Perception +6
Damage Vulnerabilities radiant
Damage Resistances cold, fire
Damage Immunities necrotic, poison, psychic
Condition Immunities blinded, charmed, deafened, exhaustion, frightened, poisoned, stunned
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 16
Languages Adeddo
Challenge 7 (2,900 XP)

Augmetic Eye. The middle of the gundan-oni's face has a kind of augmetic eye, similar to but larger and cruder than Shigeru's. It glows every time the gundan-oni takes an action. It can be targeted like normal augmetics (AC 23). If an attack made against the eye deals 25 points of damage at once, the gundan-oni falls apart, leaving behind an adeddo-oni samurai (page 344).

Disarmament. The gundan-oni can be disarmed of any of its weapons, losing one of its attacks in the process. If it loses a dagger fan, its AC is lowered by 1.

Poetry. If a creature the gundan-oni can hear spends an action to recite poetry by Dao-Jaifeng while within 60 feet of the it, for the next round the gundan-oni loses its Multiattack and Tainted Breath, and all damage dealt to it is doubled.

Regeneration. The gundan-oni regains 10 hit points at the start of its turn if it has at least 1 hit point.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The gundan-oni can use its Tainted Breath. It then makes five attacks: two with dagger fans, one with a hooked sword, one with a katana, one with a kusarigama.

Dagger Fan. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 5 slashing damage.
Hooked Sword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d4+4) slashing damage. The gundan-oni has a +2 bonus on Strength (Athletics) checks to disarm enemies using this sword.
Katana. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 10 (1d12+4) slashing damage.
Kusarigama. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit*: 6 (1d4+4) slashing damage. The gundan-oni has a +2 bonus on Strength (Athletics) checks to give enemies the prone condition using this weapon.
Tainted Breath (Recharge 5-6). Each creature in a 30-foot cone makes a DC 16 Constitution saving throw. On a failed save, a creature takes 28 (8d6) poison damage and is *slowed* for 1 hour. On its turn, a creature can use its action to repeat the saving throw, ending the effect on itself on a success. If a creature's saving throw is successful or the effect ends for it, the creature is immune to the gundan-oni's Tainted Breath for the next 24 hours.

REACTIONS

Legion of Corpses. The gundan-oni has 4 reactions each round.

Lair Actions

When fighting inside of the well of Itami, the gundan-oni can affect its environment. On initiative count 20 (losing all initiative ties), the gundan-oni can use one of its lair action options. It can't do so while incapacitated or otherwise unable to take actions. If surprised, it can't use one until after its first turn in the combat.

- An adeddo-oni hunchling (page 343) reanimates from one of the bodies and crawls out of the cavern walls.
- The gundan-oni focuses the force of its blasphemy on a creature within 30 feet of it that it can see, unleashing dark tendrils of energy to ensnarl the target. The creature must succeed on a DC 16 Wisdom saving throw or be restrained. While restrained by the tendrils, the creature repeats the saving throw at the end of each of its turns. On a success, it frees itself and the coils disappear.
- The well overflows and bubbles up, flushing into the cavern. Any creature on the cavern floor must succeed on a DC 12 Constitution saving throw or become poisoned. If the well is already overflowing it starts to fill the cavern with great flow instead. Any creatures within must succeed on a DC 16 Strength saving throw or be flushed away to the far end of the cavern, where the gundan-oni awaits. At this point, nobody can reach the crack separating the cavern from the well without succeeding on a DC 20 Strength (Athletics) check to swim against the stream.

CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

There are a variety of ways for this sidequest to end depending on what the adventurers choose to do and the way they go about it.

If the PCs defeat the gundan-oni but do not recite Dao-Jaifeng's poetry or destroy the gundan-oni's eye augmetic, it simply rises again the next time the Mists of Akuma appear in Itami.

If the PCs defeat the gundan-oni and destroy its eye augmetic without reciting Dao-Jaifeng's poetry, the curse over the well is broken but the tainted energies spread across the land and cause adeddo-oni to be attracted to Itami, causing problems in the future.

If the PCs defeat the gundan-oni and recite Dao-Jaifeng's poetry during or after the battle, it permanently breaks the curse.

The townspeople thank the party for saving them and either Shigeru or Shiori may remark on their level of success at breaking the curse. Shigeru can tell the adventurers that news arrived while they were inside of the well, revealing whichever task or quest the PCs are to go off to next and bringing them back to the main adventure.



ADEDDO & OTHER 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 creatures fueled by magic. Their 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 TEMPLATE

The Mists of Akuma change people (page 346), 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 specimens though these haven't been seen in centuries).

Giants, monstrosities, and any creature type other than beast or undead can become adeddo-oni. An adeddo-oni keeps its statistics, except as follows.

Alignment. Adeddo-oni are chaotic evil.
Type. The adeddo-oni's type changes to undead (oni).
Armor Class. Adeddo-oni gain a natural armor of 2.
Speed. Adeddo-oni increase all of their movement speeds by 30 feet and quadruple jump distances.
Intelligence. Almost all adeddo-oni lose most of their memories and sense of self. An adeddo-oni's Intelligence score changes to 4 and it gains proficiency in Intelligence saving throws.
Resistances. Adeddo-oni gain resistance to cold damage.
Damage Immunities. Adeddo-oni gain immunity to necrotic, poison, and psychic damage.
Condition Immunities. Adeddo-oni gain immunity to the charmed, exhaustion, frightened, and poisoned conditions.

Adeddo-oni Hunchling

Small undead (oni), chaotic evil
Armor Class 14 (natural armor)
Hit Points 7 (2d6)
Speed 50 ft. (quadruple all jump distances)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
8 (–1)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	4 (–3)	8 (–1)	8 (–1)

Saving Throws Int –1
Skills Stealth +6
Damage Vulnerabilities radiant
Damage Resistances cold
Damage Immunities necrotic, poison, psychic
Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, poisoned
Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 9 (sees through fog or mist)
Languages Adeddo
Challenge 2 (450+50 XP)
Nimble Escape. The adeddo-oni hunchling can take the Disengage or Hide action as a bonus action on each of its turns.
Regeneration. The adeddo-oni hunchling regains 2 hit points at the start of its turn if it has at least 1 hit point and is not in sunlight.



ACTIONS
Hammer. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +2 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 3 (1d6) magical bludgeoning damage.
Vulnerabilities. Adeddo-oni are vulnerable to radiant damage and while in sunlight they are at disadvantage on all ability checks, attack rolls, and saving throws.
Senses. Adeddo-oni gain darkvision 120 ft. and can see through mists and fog without difficulty.
Languages. Adeddo-oni speak and understand Adeddo (a simple and instinctual language).
Magical Attacks. Adeddo-oni weapon attacks are magical and they gain a +1 bonus on melee attack rolls and melee damage rolls made with natural weapons and unarmed strikes.
Regeneration. Adeddo-oni regain a number of hit points at the start of their turn equal to their CR if they have at least 1 hit point and are not in sunlight.
Challenge Rating. Adeddo-oni increase their CR by 2 (if necessary, recalculate proficiency bonus).

Adeddo-oni Ninja

Medium undead (oni), chaotic evil
Armor Class 16 (leather, natural)
Hit Points 27 (6d8)
Speed 60 ft. (quadruple all jump distances)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	15 (+2)	10 (+0)	4 (–3)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)

Saving Throws Int –1
Skills Deception +5, Perception +6, Stealth +4
Damage Vulnerabilities radiant
Damage Resistances cold
Damage Immunities necrotic, poison, psychic
Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, poisoned
Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 16 (sees through fog or mist)
Languages Adeddo
Challenge 3 (700 XP)
Cunning Action (1/turn). On its turn, the adeddo-oni ninja can take the Dash, Disengage, or Hide action as a bonus action.
Regeneration. The adeddo-oni ninja regains 3 hit points at the start of its turn if it has at least 1 hit point and is not in sunlight.
Sneak Attack (1/Turn). The adeddo-oni ninja deals an extra 7 (2d6) damage when it hits a target with a weapon attack and has advantage on the attack roll, or when the target is within 5 feet of an ally of the adeddo-oni ninja that isn't incapacitated and the adeddo-oni ninja doesn't have disadvantage on the attack roll.
ACTIONS
Ninja-To. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6+3) magical slashing damage.
Shuriken. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5|+5 to hit, range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 3 magical slashing damage.

Adeddo-oni samurai

Medium undead (oni), chaotic evil
Armor Class 20 (natural armor, o-yoroi)
Hit Points 52 (8d8+16)
Speed 50 ft. (quadruple all jump distances)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
17 (+3)	11 (+0)	14 (+2)	4 (–3)	11 (+0)	15 (+2)

Saving Throws Int +0
Damage Vulnerabilities radiant
Damage Resistances cold
Damage Immunities necrotic, poison, psychic
Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, poisoned
Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 10 (sees through fog or mist)
Languages Adeddo
Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Regeneration. The adeddo-oni samurai regains 5 hit points at the start of its turn if it has at least 1 hit point and is not in sunlight.

ACTIONS

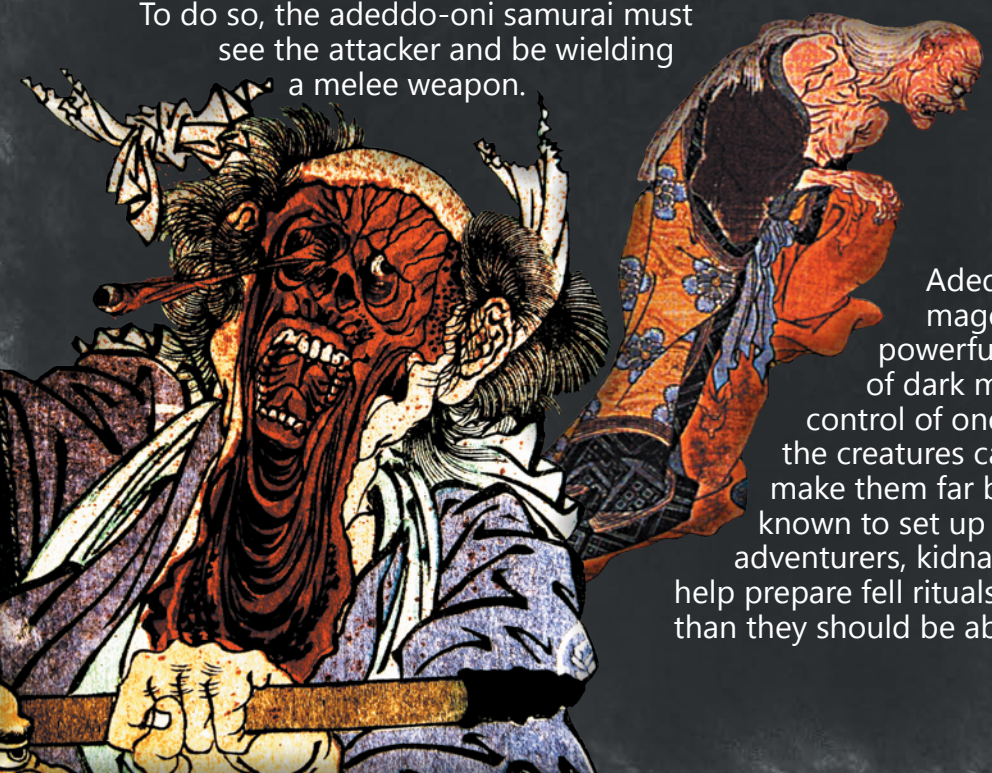
Multiattack. The adeddo-oni samurai makes two melee attacks.

Katana. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target.
Hit: 9 (1d12+3) magical slashing damage if wielded in two hands, 7 (1d8+3) magical slashing damage if wielded in one hand.

Heavy Crossbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, range 100/400 ft., one target.
Hit: 6 (1d10+1) magical piercing damage.

REACTIONS

Parry. The adeddo-oni samurai adds 2 to its AC against one melee attack that would hit it. To do so, the adeddo-oni samurai must see the attacker and be wielding a melee weapon.



Adeddo-oni mage

Medium undead (oni), chaotic evil
Armor Class 14 (natural armor)
Hit Points 40 (9d8)
Speed 60 ft. (quadruple all jump distances)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
9 (–1)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)	4 (–3)	12 (+1)	17 (+3)

Saving Throws Int +0, Wis +4
Skills Arcana +0, History +0
Damage Vulnerabilities radiant
Damage Resistances cold
Damage Immunities necrotic, poison, psychic
Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, poisoned
Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 11 (sees through fog or mist)
Languages Adeddo
Challenge 8 (3,900 XP)

Regeneration. The adeddo-oni mage regains 5 hit points at the start of its turn if it has at least 1 hit point and is not in sunlight.

Spellcasting. The adeddo-oni mage is a 9th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 14, +6 to hit with spell attacks). The adeddo-oni mage has the following sorcerer spells prepared:

Cantrips: *fire bolt, frostbite, mage hand, prestidigitation*
1st level (4 slots): *mage armor, magic missile, shield, sleep*
2nd level (3 slots): *misty step, suggestion*
3rd level (3 slots): *counterspell, fireball, fly*
4th level (3 slots): *greater invisibility, ice storm*
5th level (2 slots): *cone of cold*

ACTIONS

Dagger. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target.
Hit: 4 (1d4+2) magical piercing damage.

Adeddo-oni samurai and adeddo-oni mages are the lackeys of potent and powerful necromancers or other workers of dark magic. When placed under the control of one of these masterful spellcasters, the creatures can develop a simple intellect that make them far better servants. They have been known to set up ambushes, trap unsuspecting adventurers, kidnap specific individuals, and even help prepare fell rituals that are far more complicated than they should be able to comprehend.

BEWARE THE BONE KEEP



WITH THE UNFORTUNATE DEFEAT OF KÔZUKE HIDETSUGU'S FORCES LAST FORTNIGHT, LORD GENERAL ZAYASU MASUTO HERETO ISSUES THE FOLLOWING DECLARATIONS TO BE ADHERED TO BY ALL LOYAL IMPERIAL CITIZENS

- TRAVEL WITHIN 10 MILES OF THE SO CALLED BONE KEEP, THE UNNATURAL STRUCTURE THAT HAS APPEARED IN NAMIDA PREFECTURE NORTHWEST OF KIZAKI, IS FORBIDDEN.
- RESIDENTS IN THE AREA ARE TO ABANDON THEIR HOMES AND REPORT TO GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS IN THE NEAREST SETTLEMENT FOR RELOCATION.
- ANY INDIVIDUAL CAUGHT TRESPASSING IS SUBJECT TO IMPRISONMENT AND WILL BE CONSIDERED A SUSPICIOUS PERSON UNTIL IT IS CONFIRMED THAT THEY POSE NO THREAT.
- TRAVEL PAPERS WITHOUT A SESAI STAMP ARE NULL AND VOID IN THE AREA, AND MAY BE TAKEN FROM TRESPASSERS.

皇帝

EMPEROR HITOSHI URGES ALL SUBJECTS TO ADHERE TO THIS DECREE FOR BOTH THEIR OWN SAFETY AND THAT OF SOBURIN. IMPERIAL FORCES RESPONDING TO THE SITUATION ARE ONLY ABLE TO DO SO WITH THE COOPERATION OF CITIZENS LIKE YOU

皇帝

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.

Exposure to the Mists of Akuma twists all it touches even before wholesale transformation, leading to a special conditioncalled misted. A creature inside a square occupied by the Mists of Akuma makes a Dignity saving throw (DC 8 + 1 per previous save in the last minute) at the end of each minute or accrues 1 point of Haitoku. This does not reduce a character's Dignity score and can increase a creature's Haitoku above 20.

NEW CONDITION: HATED

You are at disadvantage when making Wisdom or Charisma checks against any humanoid that doesn't also have the hated condition but you cannot suffer disadvantage on Intimidation checks.

NEW CONDITION: MISTED

Misted is measured in eight levels. An effect can give a creature one or more levels of misted, as specified in the effect's description. Creatures always have a minimum number of levels of misted condition equal to their Haitoku modifier. Kami, oni, and tsukumogami are immune to the misted condition.

Table: Misted Effects

Level	Effect
1	Mild auditory effect
2	Mild visual effect
3	Speed +10 feet during combat; Disadvantage on Dignity ability checks
4	Severe auditory effect
5	Severe visual effect
6	Visible physical mutation, providing +1 to two attributes, –1 to one attribute; Disadvantage on Dignity saving throws and you gain the hated condition
7	Ignore the first 3 points of damage from each attack or spell
8	Death and transformation into adeddo-oni (pages 342-343)

Auditory and visual effects are not perpetual but they are frequent and obvious when they 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 appear look much larger and more demonic than you are.



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). Open displays of affection between amours are regarded very poorly.

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 one should always address the oldest or most important person first.

NEW SKILL: CULTURE

The Culture skill is typically used with Dignity ability checks for knowledge of how to act during many social situations. Any character can take proficiency in the Culture skill instead of any one skill they would have gained through a background or class.

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 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 drink, food, 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.

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.

Characters begin with a Dignity score of 10 and Haitoku score of 10. Some backgrounds may decrease or increase a character's Dignity and Haitoku, and at the GM's discretion a PC may choose to have a starting Haitoku score of up to 15. 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 (though the GM is not bound to this rule and may increase either attribute as they see fit). A character with a feat that has Dignity or Haitoku as a prerequisite does not lose the feat even if their attribute drops below the prerequisite.

When a Dignity or Haitoku check or saving throw is needed for a monster that does not have these attributes, substitute Charisma for Dignity and Wisdom 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 without lowering a character's Haitoku (and when increased this way, gains double the normal bonus). 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 (assuming of course that at least one witness survived to spread the word).

Dignity Checks. Dignity checks can be used much like Charisma, when how honorable a character is plays an impact on a social situation.

The GM might also call for a Dignity check in the following instances:

- A character is unsure on how to act honorably and must respond quickly.
- 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 (DC 10 – character's Dignity modifier).
- 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.

Dignity Saving Throws. Dignity saving throws are used against Haitoku-driven abilities and when a character is attempting not to dishonor themselves. The GM might also call for a Dignity saving throw in the following instances:

- A character is about to breach etiquette.
- 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.

尊厳

HAITOKU

Haitoku means "fall from virtue" and represents a character's gradual embrace of the dark methods, immoral ethics, and fel powers that have encroached upon and consumed Soburin (and everyone within). Characters with a high Haitoku score 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 (and when increased this way, gains double the normal bonus). 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.

Finally, a character always has a number of levels of the misted condition (page 346) equal to their Haitoku modifier.

Haitoku Checks. Haitoku checks can be used much like Wisdom, when how despicable a character is plays an impact on a social situation. Generally if the Intimidate skill is applicable, Haitoku may be used with it.

The GM might also call for a Haitoku check 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 (DC 20 – character's Haitoku modifier).
- 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.

Haitoku Saving Throws. Haitoku saving throws are 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 saving throw in the following instances:



- A character can resist death by dipping into their deepest reserves of unyielding resolve. As a reaction, a character can attempt a Haitoku saving throw (DC equal to the damage from the last attack). On a successful save, the character regains 1 hit point and a level of the exhausted condition. They may activate this ability even while unconscious (and before they make a Death Save). A character may resist death a number of times equal to their Haitoku modifier (minimum 1). Uses of this ability recharge after a long rest and when they do the character gains a point of Haitoku.
- A character encounters a truly unnatural horror that would shatter the mind of a less resolute being. When an effect would cause insanity (such as the symbol spell or to resist madness) a character may make a Haitoku saving throw in place of a Wisdom or Charisma saving throw. They may make this Haitoku saving throw with advantage by gaining a level of the exhausted condition.
- A character breathes the Mists of Akuma.

NEW CHARACTER OPTIONS

SURVIVALIST PRIMAL PATH

By instinctively tapping into your most fundamental reflexes you unleash the beast within, fighting with an impressive resilience when most other combatants would falter. Even when you are reigning in your animalistic urges you endure, able to go without for far longer than your colleagues.

Resilient Vigor

Starting when you choose this path at 3rd level, you require half as much food and water as normal and it takes you twice as long to suffer from dehydration or starvation.

In addition, each turn while raging you gain a number of temporary hit points equal to half your bonus rage damage. The maximum number of temporary hit points you can gain from this feature equal your proficiency bonus + Constitution modifier. When you finish raging you make a Constitution saving throw (DC 8 + your proficiency bonus + your Constitution modifier), retaining any remaining temporary hit points on a success. Temporary hit points remaining from the use of this feature are immediately removed when you begin raging.

Survivor's Senses

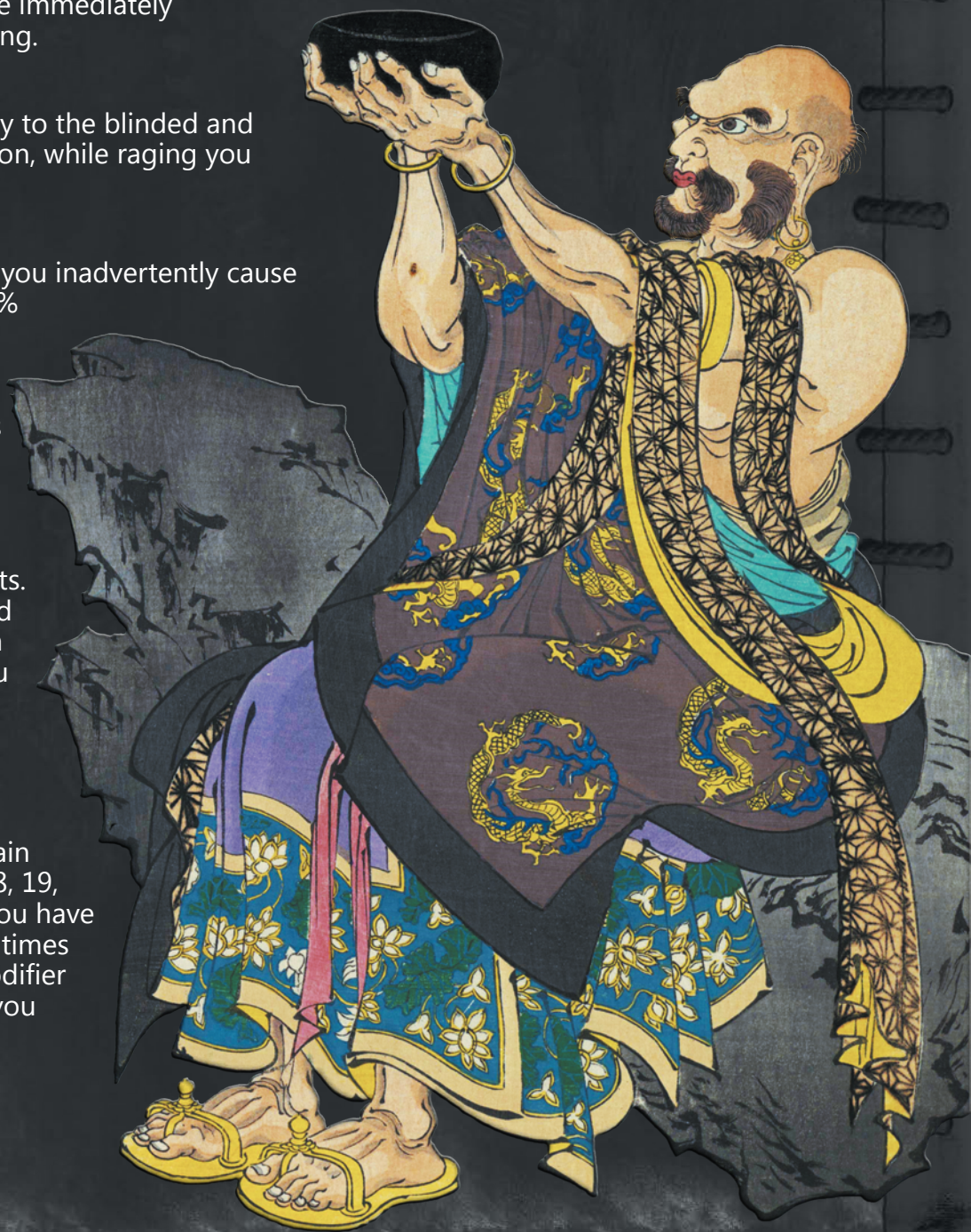
At 6th level, you gain immunity to the blinded and deafened conditions. In addition, while raging you gain darkvision 60 feet.

Primal Reflexes

Beginning at 10th level, when you inadvertently cause a trap to activate there is a 50% chance you reflexively dodge out of its way and it has no effect on you. The trap may still affect other creatures or have consequences you suffer from, but for the first round of any instance where this feature is triggered you are immune to the trap's effects. Once this feature has triggered once, it does not trigger again until you finish a long rest. You can use this feature twice between long rests starting at 15th level.

Die Hard

Starting at 14th level, you regain 1 hit point when you roll an 18, 19, or 20 on a death save. Once you have used this feature a number of times equal to your Constitution modifier you cannot do so again until you finish a long rest.



College of Smuggling

Some minstrels tell stories or sing songs, and other charismatic folk rally their allies in battle, but the bards most interested in turning a profit from their talents know that contraband is the key to wealth. Students from the College of Smugglers are incredibly talented at getting things (and sometimes creatures) from one place to another regardless of the obstacles in their way—provided there's a fair bit of coin involved in the bargain.

Handy Illusions

When you choose this bard college at 3rd level, you gain proficiency with Sleight of Hand. If you are already proficient, your proficiency bonus is doubled for any ability check you make that uses Sleight of Hand. If you have Expertise in Sleight of Hand, you instead have advantage on Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) checks.

In addition, you learn the *minor illusion* cantrip if you did not already know it and you do not require a somatic component to cast it. You can use a reaction to cast *minor illusion*. When you cast *minor illusion* as an action, it lasts for up to 10 minutes per point of proficiency bonus you possess.

Canny Disguises

At 6th level, you learn the *disguise self* spell and can cast it at will. You can expend a 1st-level spell slot to target a creature you touch with *disguise self*. When you do so against an unknowing target, it makes an Intelligence saving throw against your spell save DC to realize that it has been covered in an illusion. A creature that sees its reflection or is otherwise informed that it looks differently immediately makes a new saving throw to see through the illusion (ending the spell).

Smuggling Compartments

Starting at 14th level, you are able to rapidly create extradimensional spaces to stow away objects. You can use an action to place your hand on or against a solid surface, whereupon you create a smuggling compartment. The smuggling compartment is of the size and shape of your choosing, though its space is no greater than 1 foot on each side per point of proficiency bonus you possess. The smuggling compartment is an extradimensional space that exists on a different plane, so it can't be used to create open passages. Any creature inside your smuggling compartment can exit the extradimensional space by climbing out of it.

You can use a bonus action to close a smuggling compartment by waving your hand across it, making it look as though it were not there at all. Doing so closes the extradimensional space, and any creatures or objects within remain inside. No matter what's in it, the smuggling compartment weighs next to nothing. A creature that makes an Intelligence (Investigation) check or Wisdom (Perception) check to find your smuggling compartment makes its check against your passive Sleight of Hand score.

If your smuggling compartment is concealed, a creature inside of it can use an action to make a Strength check against your spell save DC. On a successful check, the creature forces its way out and appears within 5 feet of the smuggler's compartment or the creature carrying it. A breathing creature within a concealed smuggler's compartment can survive for up to 1 hour per point of proficiency bonus you possess, after which time it begins to suffocate.

Placing a smuggler's compartment inside an extradimensional space created by a *bag of holding, handy haversack*, or similar item has no extraordinary effects.

You can maintain a number of smuggler's compartments equal to your Charisma modifier (minimum 1). When you already have your maximum number of smuggler's compartments and make a new one, your oldest smuggler compartment is destroyed. All of your smuggler's compartments are destroyed when you die.

A destroyed smuggler's compartment ejects all creature and objects within it into adjacent squares.

Acrobat Monastic Tradition

You are a cartwheeling backflipping wall-running master of movement able to traverse any surface with your skill, speed, and a little bit of *ki*.

Naturally Quick

Starting when you choose this tradition at 3rd level, your agility

and honed acrobatic techniques grant you the following benefits:

- Other creature's squares do not count as difficult terrain for you.
- Opportunity attacks against you are made with disadvantage.
- You do not require *ki* to use the Step of the Wind feature.
- Your jump distance doubles.
- You gain advantage on and double your proficiency bonus for any ability check you make that uses Acrobatics.

Wall Jumper
Beginning at 6th level, you learn how to bound off of and even upward using walls. You may jump towards a wall, making two Dexterity (Acrobatics) checks—one to leap up to the wall and one to bound off of it. As long as you succeed on the check to leap to a wall, you may exceed your normal movement for the round with the checks to bound off of walls. If you are between two walls, by spending 1 *ki* you may make a third jump, fourth jump, and so on until you have no more *ki* left to spend.

In addition, any round where you jump more than 15 feet you gain a +2 bonus to AC.

Wall Runner
At 11th level, you are able to move across and up vertical surfaces so long as you end your movement on something able to support your weight (otherwise you fall as normal).

Deadly Leaping Kick
Starting at 17th level, if you move through the air at least 20 feet straight toward a target and then hit it with an unarmed strike immediately upon or before landing, you gain advantage on the attack roll. If you hit it is automatically a critical hit, your target is knocked prone, and you deal an extra 27 (6d8) bludgeoning damage. Should you also roll a natural critical hit with this attack roll, the extra bludgeoning damage is doubled as well.

TUMBLER ROGUISH ARCHETYPE

Some thieves are good with locks, some are masters with a knife, and some have silver tongues but your tool of trade is your body, dancing around opponents and fleeing from pursuers with preternatural agility.

Combat Tumbling
Starting at 3rd level, other creature's squares do not count as difficult terrain for you and you gain advantage on any ability check you make that uses Acrobatics. In addition, you gain the following feature:

Combat Tumble. So long as you move at least 10 feet during your turn and are wearing light armor or no armor, you can use your Cunning Action to combat tumble. While combat tumbling you increase your AC by your proficiency bonus until the beginning of your next turn. Opportunity attacks against you while you are combat tumbling are made with disadvantage.

Tumbling Attack
Beginning at 9th level, when you tumble then attack on your turn you gain advantage on weapon attack rolls until the beginning of your next turn.

Expert Tumbling
At 13th level, when you tumble all attacks against you are made with disadvantage and you no longer need to move to tumble

Death Defying Roll
Starting at 17th level, when you take damage from an attack or spell that deals bludgeoning, piercing, slashing, force, or thunder damage, you may spend your reaction to make a Dexterity (Acrobatics) check, reducing the damage you take by the result.

THE ENIGMATIC EYE PATRON

The mysteries of Soburin are there for anyone to discover—if they are willing to do what must be done to truly see. You are witness to the unknown and what you have glimpsed has empowered you, awakening a thirst to behold more of what lay beyond the veil of reality.

Enigmatic Eye Expanded Spells

Spell Level	Spells
1st	*identify, speak with animals*
2nd	*detect thoughts, find traps*
3rd	*bestow curse, clairvoyance*
4th	*arcane eye, divination*
5th	*legend lore, telepathic bond*

Occult Eye
Starting at 1st level, you grow a third eye in the middle of your forehead. The eye sees through your body and equipment and only ever closes when you fall asleep (if flanking is in effect, you are immune to flanking). You gain proficiency in Perception and Investigation and your passive scores for each increase by 3. If you already have proficiency in either skill, your proficiency bonus is doubled for any ability check you make that uses it.

Closed Eye
Beginning at 6th level, you may spend a bonus action and expend a spell slot to imbue your third eye with a spell that requires concentration. Your third eye closes and the Occult Eye feature ceases to grant any benefits as it concentrates on the spell. While your third eye concentrates on a spell, you are able to cast a second spell that requires concentration. After a number of rounds equal to your proficiency bonus, your third eye opens and the spell it was concentrating on is lost.

Superior Sight
At 10th level, you gain the Devil's Sight eldritch invocation. If you already possess Devil's Sight or acquire it later, you gain blindsight 30 feet instead.

All Seeing Eye
Starting at 14th level, you can cast *true seeing* at will without expending a spell slot.

DESPERADO WARLOCK PATRON

In the lands of Soburin many fear technology and eschew firearms yet beyond the Great Divide in Ceramia and Ropaeo they were once the weapon of choice. The spirits of the countless criminals, lawmen, and soldiers that lived and died by the gun have entreated you to walk their bloody path and with their guidance, your aim is as deadly as your magic.

Expanded Spells & Warlock Pacts
When you choose this archetype, you get the Pact of the Blade. When you reach 3rd level in this class, you choose another pact. You do not gain any expanded spells from your patron.

Pact of the Blade. Your pact weapon is a desperado revolver (range 40/120 ft., 1d12 piercing damage, ammunition 6) that only functions in your hands (unless you have also selected the Pact of the Chain). You treat your desperado revolver with the same reverence you would a holy book or symbol, and you are able to use it as an arcane focus when casting spells. Accordingly, you never willingly part with your desperado revolver—you may not sell it, lend it to others, or otherwise abandon it. If for any reason your desperado revolver is taken from you, you must do everything in your power to recover it.

Pact of the Chain. Your familiar is your revolver and it is a desperado tsukumogami (see page 332). At 6th level, your tsukumogami gains a bonus to attack and damage equal to your proficiency bonus.

Pact of the Tome. Your grimoire of shadows is a perpetually dusty leather-strung binder. In addition to holding magical knowledge, at the end of every week 1d6 bounties and warrants local to the area you are in appear in the back of the tome.

Empowered Bullet
Starting at 1st level, when you hit a creature with a ranged weapon attack using your desperado revolver, you can use a bonus action or your reaction to expend one pact magic spell slot to deal force damage to the target, in addition to the weapon's damage. The extra damage is 2d10 for a 1st-level spell slot, plus 1d10 for each spell level higher than 1st, to a maximum of 5d10.

Ancestral Weapon
Beginning at 6th level, your desperado revolver gains a bonus to attack and damage equal to half your proficiency bonus. You also receive a number of enchantment points equal to half your proficiency bonus to spend on the effects below. Each effect may only be chosen once. You can change the enchantments on your desperado revolver again after you complete a long rest.

- ***Bane.*** The enchantment bonus to attack and damage from your desperado revolver 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).
- ***Boomer.*** Your desperado revolver deals an additional 1d6 thunder damage.
- ***Cruel.*** Your desperado revolver deals an extra 1d8 necrotic damage but you take 1d4 necrotic damage with every successful hit.
- ***Explosive.*** Your desperado revolver scores a critical hit on a roll of 19 or 20.
- ***Forceful.*** Your desperado revolver deals an extra 1d6 force damage.
- ***Sighted.*** Your desperado revolver doubles its short range.
- ***Shocking.*** Your desperado revolver deals an extra 1d6 lightning damage.

Extra Gun
Beginning at 10th level, you gain a second desperado revolver. When you are wielding both and take the Attack action on your turn, you can attack once with each desperado revolver.

Ghost Bullets
At 14th level, the spirits of dead gunslingers infuse your bullets and lend you their power. When you use Empowered Bullet, roll 1d6. On a 6, you deal extra damage as normal but do not have to expend a spell slot.



DESPERADO TSUKUMOGAMI

Tiny monstrosity (tsukumogami), lawful neutral
Armor Class warlock's spell save DC
Hit Points 4 (1d4+2 per 2 warlock levels)
Speed 15 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	13 (+1)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)	13 (+1)	12 (+1)

Skills Perception +3, Stealth +3
Damage Vulnerabilities acid
Damage Resistances cold, fire, necrotic, radiant
Damage Immunities poison
Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, poisoned
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 13
Languages same as the warlock
Challenge —

Hidden In Plain Sight. Tsukumogami may appear as mundane versions of the objects they once were, hiding in plain sight. Noticing the tsukumogami requires a Wisdom (Perception) check (DC equal to the warlock's spell save DC + 6).

Soul Bound. The tsukumogami dies when the warlock dies.

ACTIONS

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target.
Hit: 3 (1d4+1) piercing damage

Gunshot. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, range 20/100 ft., one target.
Hit: 5 (1d6+2) piercing damage.

Arcane Tradition of the Inside Out

Since the dawn of civilization the mages and priests of Soburin have pursued ancient secrets revealing the fabric of reality, suffering eternally for their hubris. As one of the land's most promising arcane students you have been taught this obscure school of magic with the promise that once you have mastered it, you will be given free reign to gaze into the Window of Kūdō-Mado on the roof of Sanbaoshi's Mage Academy.

Mystical Understanding

Beginning when you select this school at 2nd level, the gold and time you must spend to copy a spell into your spellbook varies depending on the individual spell. By spending 1 minute evaluating the inscription of a spell, you may roll 1d8 and on an 8 your mystical understanding of it reduces its costs and inscription time by half.

Disorient Senses

Starting at 2nd level, you learn the secrets of what lay behind the veil of reality. By spending an action you can pull away the curtain of existence to disturb a single creature within 30 feet. If the target is able to see you, it must succeed on an Intelligence saving throw against your wizard spell save DC or be disoriented for a number of rounds equal to your proficiency bonus. A disoriented creature loses any types of vision other than regular vision (a creature with only blindsight gains regular vision). In addition, it suffers a –2 penalty to AC, attack rolls, and ability checks.

Once the effect ends, or if the creature succeeds on its initial saving throw against this effect, you can't use this feature on that creature again until you finish a short rest.

Inverted Psyche

At 6th level, you gain resistance to psychic damage. In addition, you can communicate telepathically with any creature you can see within 30 feet of you. You don't need to share a language with the creature for it to understand your telepathic utterances, but the creature must be able to understand at least one language.

Occult Secrets

Beginning at 10th level, you gain advantage on Intelligence saving throws, Intelligence (Arcana) checks, and Intelligence (Religion) checks.

Otherverse Disjunction

Starting at 14th level, you can use this feature to instantly transport a creature within 30 feet to a place both within and outside of reality. The creature makes an Intelligence saving throw against your spell save DC or disappears and shudders across the underpinning matrix of existence for a number of rounds equal to your proficiency bonus. At the end of its next turn and every turn afterward, the target makes another Intelligence saving throw. On a success the creature returns to the space it previously occupied (or the nearest unoccupied space) and is disoriented for 1d4 rounds (as above). If the target is not an aberration, it takes 3d10 psychic damage at the end of each round as it reels from its horrific experience. Once you use this feature, you can't use it again until you finish a long rest.



New 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 a stance feat if it is using unarmed strikes, shortswords, or simple weapons that don't have the two-handed or heavy weapon properties.

An unarmored creature increases its AC by an amount equal to the number of stance feats it knows. It cannot use more than one stance at a time however, so only additional feats of the same stance increase the creature's AC by more than 1.

A creature cannot take more stance feats than its proficiency modifier.

Bootfighter's Stance

Prerequisites: Strength 15, Dexterity 15, Proficiency with Acrobatics and Athletics

You are exceptionally good at fighting with your feet, constantly searching for new kicking and stretching methods. Whether of small or large build, your muscular development has been heavily informed by this regimen and the results can be shocking. You gain the following benefits:

- Your speed increases by 5 feet.
- When you are able to use your feet to make a kicking unarmed strike, you deal 1 extra damage. Whether or not you are able to deliver kicking unarmed strikes is at the GM's discretion and may require a Dexterity (Acrobatics) check if while walking on a rope, climbing, fighting in difficult terrain, or under other compromised circumstances.

You can select this feat a second time. If you do:

- Your speed increases by 5 feet.
- The extra damage to your kicking unarmed strikes increases to 2.
- As long as you make a kicking unarmed strike on your first turn of combat, you gain a +2 bonus to initiative.

You can select this feat a third time. If you do:

- Your speed increases by 10 feet.
- The extra damage to your kicking unarmed strikes increases to 3.
- When you take the Attack action, you can declare that all of your attacks this turn are kicking unarmed strikes. If you do, you gain a +1 bonus on melee attack rolls until the end of your turn. All of your attacks must be kicks.

Horned Spider Stance

Prerequisites: Dexterity 15, Athlete

Monks in the mountainous cave networks of Ibutsu Prefecture have mastered a martial art that incorporates both the fluid movement of dancing and the weaponization of ropes. Though some scoff at these techniques many combatants unexpectedly find themselves quickly bound and brutalized when facing off against them. You gain the following benefits:

- Your jump distances double.
- You gain proficiency with ropes of up to 10 feet, treating them as whips, and can use them with Flurry of Blows and Martial Arts.

You can select this feat a second time. If you do:

- You can use an action to wrap up your foes using ropes. Make a melee attack using a rope against a creature within your reach. On a hit, you deal no damage but the target is grappled (escape DC = 8 + your proficiency bonus + your Strength modifier). A target you have already grappled with a rope becomes restrained instead. While grappling or restraining a creature with a wielded rope, you cannot do anything else with the limb wielding that rope.



- You gain advantage on checks made to climb, and as long as you are wielding ropes you can climb using Dexterity (Acrobatics) instead of Strength (Athletics).

You can select this feat a third time. If you do:

- You treat ropes of up to 15-feet in length as monk weapons.
- On a turn you make a rope attack, you can use a bonus action to make a second rope attack against the same target.
- The DC to escape from your rope attack increases by 2.

Quickened Hare Stance

Prerequisites: Dexterity 13, Wisdom 13, Small size

You are fast and quick like a rabbit, relying on rapid reflexes and mobility to give you the upper hand in a fight. Opponents fear the swiftness of your feet and speedy thinking—attributes you use to their fullest extent.

- Your speed increases by 5 feet.
- You can use your reaction to jump 5 feet away from a creature you hit with a monk weapon or unarmed strike. This movement does not provoke opportunity attacks from the creature you hit.



You can select this feat a second time. If you do:

- Your speed increases by 5 feet.
- On your turn, you can use your reaction to make a bonus melee attack using a monk weapon or unarmed strike. You don't add your ability modifier to the damage of the bonus attack, unless that modifier is negative.

You can select this feat a third time. If you do:

- Your speed increases by 5 feet.
- You can use your reaction to jump 10 feet away from a creature you successfully hit with a monk weapon or unarmed strike. This movement does not provoke opportunity attacks from the creature you hit.
- Each round you gain a bonus reaction.

Stance of Actions & Intent

Prerequisites: Wisdom 15, Proficiency with Insight and Perception

By reading body language, evaluating the choice of weaponry, and feeling the palpable tension of a combat situation you can guess an opponent's moves and bait foes into making mistakes. You gain the following benefits:

- You have advantage on Wisdom (Insight) and Wisdom (Perception) checks (increasing the passive scores for both by 5).

You can select this feat a second time. If you do:

- You can use a bonus action to evaluate a creature you can see within 60 feet. Make a Wisdom (Insight) check against the target's level or challenge rating. On a success, your attacks with unarmed strikes and monk weapons gain a +2 bonus to attack and damage rolls.

You can select this feat a third time. If you do:

- While you are conscious, you do not provoke opportunity attacks.
- You can use an action to cast *detect thoughts* without the need for any components. Once you have used this feature a number of times equal to your Wisdom modifier, you cannot do so again until you have finished a long rest.
- You gain telepathy to a range of 50 feet. You must be able to see a creature to communicate with it telepathically.

Stance of Haze Striding

Prerequisites: Proficiency Bonus +3, Dexterity 15, Proficiency with Stealth

This stance utilizes ancient techniques to tap into mystic power, as much magic as martial arts. Your training began by learning to walk very lightly, stepping across rice paper until you could do so without tearing it. Next you mastered the art of running, dashing up trees and stone walls with little difficulty. Synthesizing these two skills has even taught you to run across water for a short period of time, and your master could even step upon the clouds themselves. You gain the following benefits:

- You have advantage on Dexterity (Stealth) checks.

- When you take the Dash action, you ignore difficult terrain and can treat any surface able to support your weight as if it were solid ground until you reach the end of your movement (at which point you fall normally if there is nothing in your square able to support your weight).

You can select this feat a second time. If you do:

- Your armor class increases by 1.
- You gain a +1 bonus on attack rolls with unarmed strikes.
- When you take the Dash action, until the end of your movement you gain a climb speed equal to your walking speed.

You can select this feat a third time. If you do:

- When you take the Dash action, you can treat clouds, mist, smoke, an even wind currents as if they were solid ground. If you end your movement in a square that has nothing able to support your weight, you fall 60 feet per round for up to 6 rounds. If you land before the duration ends, you take no falling damage and can land on your feet
- Your attacks with unarmed strikes deal an additional 1d4 force damage. This damage multiplies on a critical hit.

Stance of Perfect Balance

Prerequisites: All ability scores at 13 or higher

Though it may seem to be fundamentally simple, this potent martial arts stance is the most demanding of all and few practitioners are able to master it. You gain the following benefits:

- You gain a +1 bonus on attack rolls made with monk weapons or unarmed strikes.
- You can observe a creature for 1 round to determine what feats it has and any time in the next 10 minutes spend a bonus action to mimic it, utilizing one feat that it possesses. You do not require any of the feat's prerequisites. If your target does not have any feats, you gain proficiency with one type of saving throw or skill it is proficient with. You can continue to mimic the creature until you choose a new target.

You can select this feat a second time if your ability scores are all 14 or higher. If you do:

- While using this stance, your AC increases by an additional +1.
- While using this feat to mimic a creature's martial arts stance, you are able to utilize the second degree of the stance even if the creature has not achieved it yet.

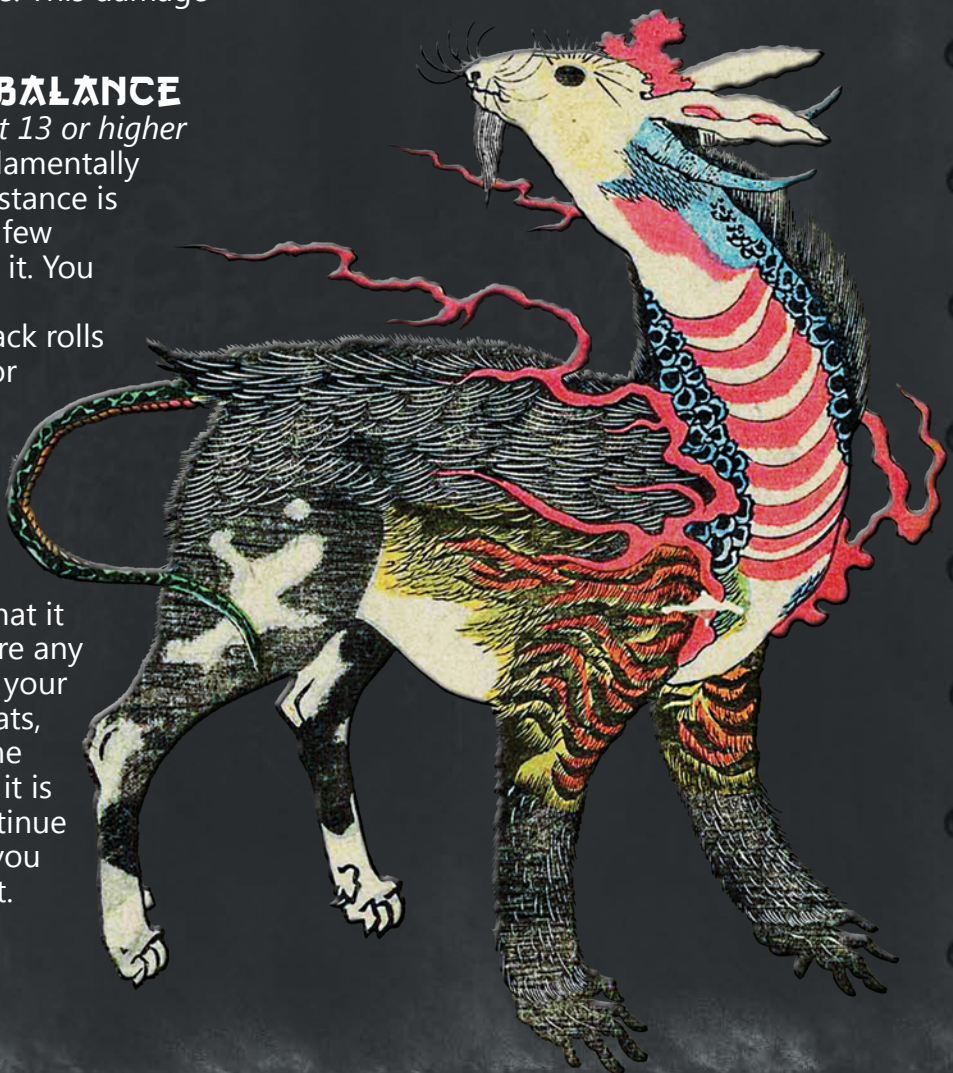
You can select this feat a third time if your ability scores are all 15 or higher. If you do:

- Your unarmed strikes deal an extra 1d6 damage.
- While using this feat to mimic a creature's martial arts stance, you are able to utilize the third degree of the stance even if the creature has not achieved it yet.

Stance of Stone & Skin

Prerequisites: Constitution 15

By constantly rapping your knuckles against stone walls, wacking your shins with a stick, or testing your tolerance for pain by resting your hands above a campfire, you have developed dangerous natural calluses that with the right maneuvers and techniques are truly dangerous. You gain the following benefits:



- You gain a +1 bonus on attack rolls using unarmed strikes.
- You gain 3 hit points plus 1 hit point for each level you have attained. In addition, whenever you gain a level your maximum hit points increases by 1.

You can select this feat a second time. If you do:

- Your Constitution increases by 1.
- Once per turn when you hit a creature with an unarmed strike, you deal 1d4 extra damage.

You can select this feat a third time. If you do:

- Your armor class increases by 1.
- When you are reduced to 0 hit points but not killed outright, you can drop to 1 hit point instead. You can't use this feature again until you finish a long rest.

Stance of the Slain Undeath

Prerequisites: Good alignment, Intelligence 13, Wisdom 13

With the return of the Mists of Akuma an ancient martial art has once again gained prominence, techniques and maneuvers dedicated to harming and destroying undead. Using a deep knowledge of the foul creatures this stance disrupts the flow of dark ki running and animating blasphemous abominations of the dead. Unfortunately over time this dark ki accrues upon its practitioners and sooner or later, by practicing it you too will come to reek with the loathsome energies and draw undead toward you. You gain the following benefits:

- When using a melee weapon attack or unarmed strike to deal damage to an undead creature, you deal 1d4 extra damage.

You can select this feat a second time. If you do:

- An undead creature you deal damage to with a melee weapon attack or unarmed strike cannot regenerate until the end of its next turn.
- Your very presence greatly discomforts the unliving. Any undead that starts its turn within 30 feet of you must succeed on a Constitution saving throw (DC 8 + your proficiency bonus + your Wisdom or Intelligence modifier) or have disadvantage on ability checks until the end of its next turn. On a successful saving throw, the creature is immune to the your disruptive aura for 24 hours.

You can select this feat a third time. If you do:

- Your melee weapon attacks and unarmed strikes ignore the damage immunities and damage resistances of undead.
- The range of your aura increases to 60 feet and any undead that fails its saving throw also has disadvantage on its attack rolls.



Stance of the Sly Fox

Prerequisites: Intelligence 13, Charisma 13

Not all warriors rely principally upon the strength of their arms, swiftness of their strikes, or capacity to take a hit—you believe that your mind is your greatest weapon, a resource ideally used to outmaneuver and confound opponents. You gain the following benefits:

- Increase your Intelligence or Charisma score by 1, to a maximum of 20.
- You can use your bonus action to feint one creature within 5 feet by making on a Charisma (Deception) check against a DC equal to the creature's passive Insight. On a success, you have advantage on your next attack roll against that creature as long as it is before the end of your turn.

  Once you have used this feature to feint a creature that you've already tried feinting, it makes opposed Wisdom (Insight) checks instead of using passive Insight. The third time you use this feature to feint the same creature, it has advantage on its check. A creature loses bonuses to resist your feint when it completes a long rest.

You can select this feat a second time. If you do:

- Increase your Intelligence or Charisma score by 1, to a maximum of 20.
- When you use a monk weapon or unarmed strike to score a critical hit against a creature, it makes an Intelligence saving throw against a DC equal to the damage dealt. On a failure, the creature is confused. At the start

of its next turn, the creature rolls 1d10. On a 1 the creature uses all its movement to move in a random direction (to determine the direction, roll a d8 and assign a direction to each die face; the creature doesn't take an action.) On a 2, 3, 4, 5, or 6 the creature doesn't move or take actions. On a 7 or 8 the creature uses its action to make a melee attack against a randomly determined creature within its reach (if there is no creature within its reach, the creature does nothing instead.) Finally on a 9 or 10, the creature can act and move normally.

You can select this feat a third time. If you do:

- Increase your Intelligence or Charisma score by 1, to a maximum of 20.
- You gain advantage on Intelligence (Investigation) and Charisma (Deception) checks.

STOMPING ELEPHANT STANCE

Prerequisites: Strength 13, Constitution 13, Medium or Large size

There is a place in battle for warriors quick of hand or wit but the most dangerous fighters are often the heaviest and strongest, able to use their bulk to devastating effect when fists start flying. You gain the following benefits:

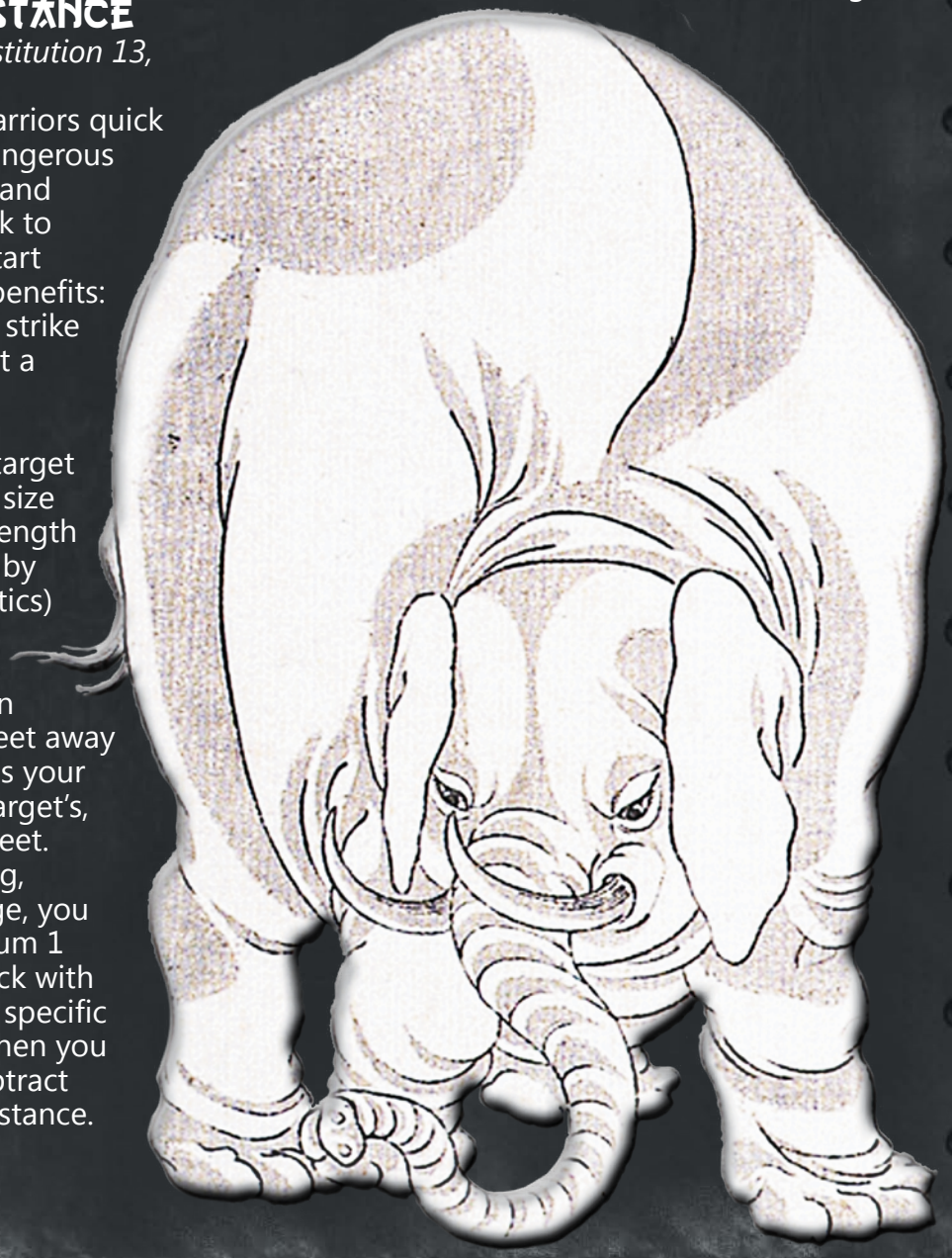
- When you use an unarmed strike to score a critical hit against a creature, you can use your reaction to send the target stumbling backwards. The target must be no more than one size larger than you. Make a Strength (Athletics) check contested by the target's Strength (Athletics) or Dexterity (Acrobatics) check (the target chooses the ability to use). If you win the contest, you push it 5 feet away from you. For every 5 points your check is higher than your target's, you can push it an extra 5 feet.
- When you take bludgeoning, piercing, or slashing damage, you take 1 less damage (minimum 1 damage). This does not stack with similar features that ignore specific amounts of damage and when you have resistance, subtract damage before resistance.

You can select this feat a second time. If you do:

- When you make your first melee weapon attack in a turn, if it is an unarmed strike you can choose to take a -5 penalty to your melee weapon attack rolls in exchange for a +10 bonus to melee weapon damage.
- You have advantage on checks and saving throws to resist being knocked prone or moved.
- Decrease the damage you take from bludgeoning, piercing, or slashing by an additional 1 (2 total; minimum 1 damage).

You can select this feat a third time. If you do:

- When you score a critical hit with an unarmed strike, you can roll one of the damage dice one additional time and add it to the extra damage of the critical hit.
- Decrease the damage you take from bludgeoning, piercing, or slashing by an additional 1 (3 total; minimum 1 damage).



Strongest Stance

Prerequisites: Charisma 13, Dignity 13

You believe that (despite being frequently told that a "self-taught" discipline is ridiculous) the best style of martial arts is learned from your own body and you take that confidence into the ring whenever you fight. You gain the following benefits:

- If you have the Martial Arts or Unarmed Savant feature, you may use Charisma when calculating your bonuses to attack and damage with unarmed strikes.
- Once per turn, you may choose to have one of your unarmed strikes deal force damage as you conjure a small ball of energy you throw at a creature within your reach (this is still considered a melee attack).
- You are able to throw any object that fits into your hand with impeccable skill, turning it into an improvised thrown weapon (range 20/40) that deals 1d4 damage. You may use Charisma when calculating your bonuses to attack and damage rolls with such improvised weapons.

You can select this feat a second time. If you do:

- Your armor class becomes 10 + your Dexterity modifier + half your Charisma modifier.
- You are able to use the Fighting Style: Dueling feature with unarmed strikes.
- You can substitute Charisma for Wisdom for monk features.

Special: Unlike other Martial Arts Stances, this feat may only be selected twice. After choosing this Martial Arts Stance, you forget any other stances you know and may not learn any other Martial Arts Stances.

Weapon Martial Arts Stances

For every blade and weapon in Soburin there is at least one family that has developed an entire philosophy of fighting that revolves around its use. Weapon martial arts stances require a creature to be wielding the weapon associated with the feat, functioning normally regardless of the weapon's properties. You must be proficient with a weapon to learn its martial arts stance.

Stance of the Scorpion's Sting (3-Section Steel Whip)

Prerequisites: Dexterity 13

With this dangerous metal weapon becomes as lethal as a scorpion's tail when wielded by you, striking with unexpected impact for something so thin. You gain the following benefits when wielding a 3-section steel whip:

- Your AC increases by 1.
- You gain a +1 bonus on attack rolls with this weapon.

You can select this feat a second time. If you do:

- Targets you attack with this weapon do not gain any bonus to armor class from the use of a shield.
- The weapon's damage dice increases to 1d6.

You can select this feat a third time. If you do:

- When you score a critical hit against a creature, you can use your reaction to flick the weapon while it is still within a wound, tearing out a foe's insides and temporarily putting it into shock. The target makes a Constitution saving throw against the amount of slashing damage you deal with the critical hit. On a failure, it has disadvantage on ability checks, attack rolls, and saving throws until the damage has healed or after 1 minute, whichever comes first. Once you have used this feature against a target, it is immune to it until you have finished a long rest.

Stance of the Metallic Tempest (9-Section Steel Whip)

Prerequisites: Dexterity 15, Intelligence 13

This long, deadly chain weapon is as difficult to master as it is spectacular to watch. In your experienced hands it can strike up close, far away, and anywhere in between. You gain the following benefits while wielding a 9-section steel whip:

- The weapon gains the Reach property.
- Your attacks with this weapon deal 1 extra damage.

You can select this feat a second time. If you do:

- Your AC increases by 1.
- When you score a critical hit against a creature, you can use your reaction

to send the target stumbling backwards. The target must be no more than one size larger than you. Make a Strength (Athletics) check contested by the target's Strength (Athletics) or Dexterity (Acrobatics) check (the target chooses the ability to use). If you win the contest, you push it 5 feet away from you. For every 5 points your check is higher than your target's, you can push it an extra 5 feet.

You can select this feat a third time. If you do:

- You can use an action to wrap up your foes using the weapon. Make a melee attack against a creature within your reach. On a hit, you deal damage normally and the target is grappled (escape DC = 8 + your proficiency bonus + your Strength modifier). Each turn, you can use your action to attack the grappled target, dealing 1d6 extra damage on a successful hit. Unwinding your weapon from an unconscious or dead target requires a bonus action.

Stance of the Beggar (Club)

Prerequisites: Wisdom 15

Soldiers, magistrates, royalty and adventurers alike underestimate and even guffaw at the sight of a beggar or an infirm peasant supported by a stick or cane. It is this weapons utter simplicity that you use to maximum effect as you trip, stomp, sweep, and take down foes. You gain the following benefits when wielding a club:

- You can use Wisdom instead of Strength for the attack and damage rolls of this weapon.
- You gain a +2 bonus on checks made to disarm.

You can select this feat a second time. If you do:

- You gain a +1 bonus on attack rolls with this weapon.
- Your attacks with this weapon deal 2 extra damage.
- The weapon gains the Thrown property (range 10/30 feet) and on a successful hit with a ranged weapon attack it bounces back to you, at which point you can use your reaction to catch it.

You can select this feat a third time. If you do:

- You can use a bonus action to declare that you are going to break your club against a target creature. If your next attack against the target is before the end of your turn and a successful hit, the attack becomes a critical hit and the club breaks. Once you have used this feature a number of times equal to your Wisdom modifier, you cannot do so again until after you've finished a long rest.
- The weapon's range increases to 20/60 feet.

Stance of Biting Steel (Dagger)

Prerequisites: Dexterity 17 or Intelligence 15

These techniques target the most vulnerable ligaments, tendons, and muscles. You gain the following benefits when wielding a dagger:

- The puncturing wounds you leave wounds are difficult to heal. A creature you have used a dagger to deal damage to regains 1d6 fewer hit points the next time it receives healing.

You can select this feat a second time. If you do:

- You learn where to cut to hamper enemies. A creature you have used a dagger to deal damage to reduces its speed by 10 feet until the damage is healed.

You can select this feat a third time. If you do:

- When you use a dagger to damage a creature, it must succeed on a Constitution saving throw (DC 8 + your proficiency bonus + your Dexterity modifier) or lose 1 hit point at the start of each of its turns as it bleeds. Each time you hit a target already bleeding from your dagger attacks,



the damage dealt by the wound increases by 1. Any creature can stanch the bleeding as a bonus action with a successful Wisdom (Medicine) check against the same DC. The bleeding also ends if the target receives magical healing. Constructs and undead do not bleed.

Stance of Elegant Talons (Dagger Fan)

Prerequisites: Dexterity 15, proficiency with Performance and Sleight of Hand

This subtle weapon has been a favorite of concubines, kunoichi (female ninja), and samurai-ko, but by no means limited to them. Like the monks that first developed this style, you invisibly incorporate the dagger fan into dance-like postures and maneuvers that put the weapon into a class all their own. You gain the following benefits when wielding a dagger fan:

- You gain a +2 bonus on Strength (Athletics) checks made to disarm a creature.
- You gain a +2 bonus to initiative.

You can select this feat a second time. If you do:

- When you score a critical hit with this weapon, you deal an extra 1d4 damage.
- You gain advantage on Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) checks to hide a dagger fan.

You can select this feat a third time. If you do:

- Your attacks with this weapon score a critical hit on a roll of 18–20.
- You gain advantage on initiative checks.

Stance of Flurrying Metal (Dart)

Prerequisites: Dexterity 15, proficiency with Sleight of Hand and Stealth

The humble dart is perhaps one of the most underrated and dismissed weapons in an adventurer's arsenal, both extremely inexpensive and easily disguised—and even when found not likely to be taken as a serious threat. You gain the following benefits when wielding a dart:

- You can throw an additional dart with the Attack action, making a separate attack roll for each.
- You gain advantage on Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) checks to hide a dart.

You can select this feat a second time. If you do:

- Your range with darts doubles.
- Your position isn't revealed when you miss with a dart attack against a creature you are hidden from.

You can select this feat a third time. If you do:

- You gain a +1 bonus to ranged damage rolls when using a dart.
- You can throw two additional darts with the Attack action, making a separate attack roll for each.

Note: At the GM's discretion, this feat can be used with kunai or shuriken.

Stance of the Lumberjack (Handaxe)

Prerequisites: Strength 15 or Wisdom 17

Many of a monk's weapons (most martial arts weapons actually) originally came from farming, hunting or fishing implements and the humble axe is no exception. You gain the following benefits when wielding a handaxe:

- You gain a +2 bonus to melee damage rolls when using a handaxe.
- When use a hand axe to attack a wooden object or structure, you can chop through up to 4 inches before damage is calculated.

You can select this feat a second time. If you do:

- You can use a handaxe to split the wooden haft of a weapon as above, but have disadvantage on the attack roll made to do so if a creature is wielding the target weapon. Attacks made using a weapon with a broken haft are at disadvantage.
- You deal double damage with a hand axe when you target a wooden creature, object, or structure.
- Your range with handaxes doubles.

You can select this feat a third time. If you do:

- When you are attacking a wooden creature, it bleeds (as the third stance feature of Biting Steel).
- You can split open any door or wooden construct with one successful strike (melee or ranged attack). Whether or not an object is too big to be destroyed is at the GM's discretion.

Stance of the Dragon's Fang (Hooked Sword)

Prerequisites: Dexterity 15, Intelligence 13

Perhaps one of the most esoteric weapons in Soburin is the hooked sword. In your hands its curving blade is capable of a myriad of complex blocks, strikes and counters. You gain the following benefits when wielding a hooked sword:

- The weapon's bonus on checks made to disarm doubles.
- Once per turn when you successfully disarm a creature, you can use your reaction to take an opportunity attack against it. This attack is made with the weapon's crescent-shaped hand guard and deals 1d4 slashing damage.

You can select this feat a second time. If you do:

- When you are attacking a creature that is not proficient with hooked swords, you gain a +2 bonus to your attack roll.
- The weapon's damage dice increases to 1d6.

You can select this feat a third time. If you do:

- When you use two-weapon fighting with two of these weapons, you can add your ability modifier to the damage of the second attack.
- Once per turn, after you hit a creature with two or more attacks using this weapon and two-weapon fighting, you can make a bonus attack with advantage by digging into the target with the curved blades.

Stance of Authority (Kongojo - Mace)

Prerequisites: Wisdom 15

Originally designed by community-minded monks wanting to help local authorities, eventually the simple brutish techniques used with this weapon turned fighting forms utilizing it into truly deadly arts. In your hands a mace is more than a simple weapon, the crushing power of your blows a thing to be feared. You gain the following benefits when wielding a mace:

- You gain a +2 bonus on Strength (Athletics) checks made to disarm a creature wielding a bladed weapon. If the target is wielding a simple weapon, the bonus increases to +4.

You can select this feat a second time. If you do:

- Your attacks with this weapon score a critical hit on a roll of 18–20.
- Creatures have disadvantage on checks made to disarm this weapon from you.

You can select this feat a third time. If you do:

- You can use your reaction when hit by a melee weapon attack to try bat your opponent's weapon away, sending shockwaves down the length of it. Make an attack roll contested by the attack roll of your attacker. On a success you hit the weapon away and take no damage from the attack. The creature must succeed on a Strength saving throw (DC equal to 8 + your proficiency bonus + your Strength or Dexterity modifier) or drop the weapon and be unable to use that limb that wielded it until the end of your next turn.

Stance of Demon's Reach (Kusari-gama)

Prerequisites: Strength 13, Dexterity 13, Wisdom 15, proficiency with Athletics

This weapon, favored by monks and ninja alike, mixes the lethal kama and a long, weighted chain to make a small whirlwind of death. In your hands the kusari-gama is not just a capable weapon but able to move you around an area as well. You gain the following benefits when wielding a kusari-gama:

- As an action, you can use this weapon to make a melee attack against a creature within your reach. On a successful hit you deal damage as normal and the target is grappled (escape DC = 8 + your proficiency bonus + your Strength modifier). While grappling a creature with this weapon, you can use the kama to make melee weapon attacks against the target. You can use a bonus action to pull the chain, making an opposed Strength (Athletics) check against the target and pulling it 5 feet closer on a success.
- You gain a +5 bonus on Strength (Athletics) checks made to climb.

You can select this feat a second time. If you do:

- Climbing no longer costs you extra movement.
- While in an area with structures or an environment you can use to anchor the kusari-gama's blade against, your speed increases by 10 feet.

You can select this feat a third time. If you do:

- The weapon's damage dice increases to 1d6.
- Your attacks with this weapon score a critical hit on a roll of 18–20.

Stance of Air Kami's Step (Light Crossbow)

Prerequisites: Dexterity 15

Accuracy, tension, reliability—these are the mainstays of both martial arts and crossbows. Though perhaps an unlikely weapon for combat artistry, in your steady hands it is a tool of unparalleled precision and lethality. You gain the following benefits when wielding a light crossbow:

- The weapon loses the Loading property.
- You do not have disadvantage on ranged attack rolls while within 5 feet of a hostile creature.

You can select this feat a second time. If you do:

- You ignore half cover and three-quarters cover when making a ranged weapon attack.
- You don't have disadvantage when attacking at long range.

You can select this feat a third time. If you do:

- Your missile attacks with this weapon deal an additional 1d4 piercing damage.
- You can ricochet crossbow bolts, treating a creature with total cover as though it had three-quarters cover and rolling ranged attack rolls against it with disadvantage.

Stance of Justice (Melon Hammer - Light Hammer)

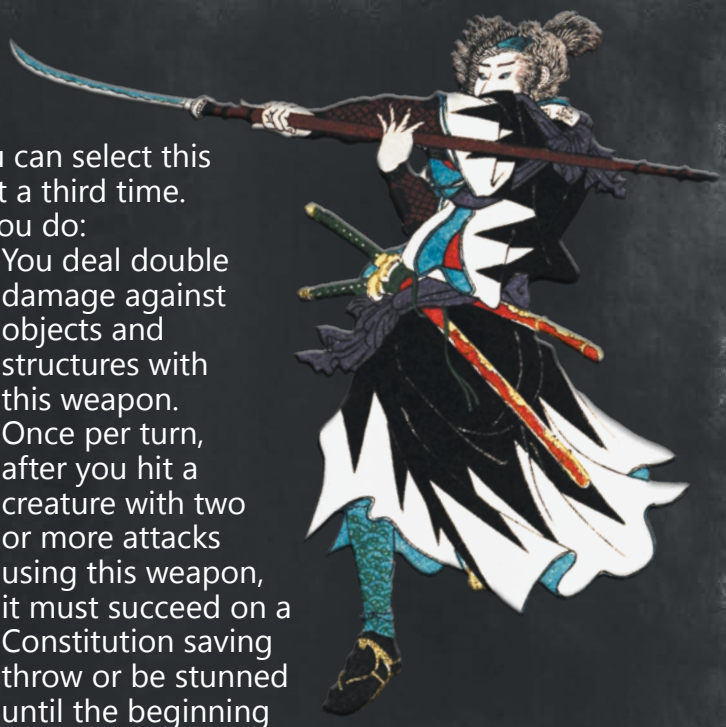
Prerequisites: Strength 15

These hexagonal hammers are often wielded in pairs and were originally used as for building strength in a monk's wrists, forearms, and upper arms. Over time however it emerged that with practice they are able to strike with surprising power. While you are not elegant when wielding these hammers, your thrusts and swings are truly deadly. You gain the following benefits when wielding a light hammer:

- You gain a +2 bonus on weapon attack rolls against objects and structures.
- You gain a +2 bonus on damage rolls with this weapon.

You can select this feat a second time. If you do:

- When you use two-weapon fighting with two of these weapons, you can add your ability modifier to the damage of the second attack.
- You do not have disadvantage on ranged weapon attacks at long range with this weapon.



You can select this feat a third time. If you do:

- You deal double damage against objects and structures with this weapon.
- Once per turn, after you hit a creature with two or more attacks using this weapon, it must succeed on a Constitution saving throw or be stunned until the beginning of your next turn.

Stance of Godly Claw (Naginata - Spear)

Prerequisites: Strength 13, Dexterity 15, Wisdom 13

A short katana blade affixed to the end of a long wooden staff makes for a nightmarish weapon good at all ranged and against a number of foes—and when wielded by you the naginata metes out slaughter with every powerful swing. You gain the following benefits when wielding a spear:

- You gain a +2 bonus on ranged attack rolls with this weapon.
- You gain a +2 bonus on melee damage rolls with this weapon.

You can select this feat a second time. If you do:

- You can use your reaction to deflect the missile when you are hit by a ranged weapon attack. When you do so, the damage you take from the attack is reduced by 1d10 + your Strength modifier + 2. If you have Deflect Missiles, the damage is reduced by an extra 1d10.
- Creatures have disadvantage on checks made to disarm this weapon from you.
- You gain a +2 bonus on Strength (Athletics) checks made to use this weapon to trip a creature.

You can select this feat a third time. If you do:

- Your attacks with this weapon score a critical hit on a roll of 18–20.
- When you hit a creature with a melee attack using this weapon,

choose a creature adjacent to the target and within your reach. You can use a bonus action to make a melee weapon attack against the second creature.

Stance of Heaven's Blade (O-Dachi)

Prerequisites: Strength 15 or Dexterity 17
Monks took this behemoth weapon and changed its implementation, using long stances and resting the back of the blade along their shoulders or the length of an arm between strikes—making it easy to control yet hard to defend against. You gain the following benefits when wielding an o-dachi:

- The o-dachi loses the Heavy property and gains the Reach property.

You can select this feat a second time. If you do:

- You can use the side of the o-dachi's blade to knock down foes by swinging at the knees. The target must be no more than one size larger than you and must be within your reach. Instead of making an attack roll, you make a Strength (Athletics) check contested by the target's Strength (Athletics) or Dexterity (Acrobatics) check (the target chooses the ability to use). If you win the contest, you knock the target prone.
- You may draw an o-dachi normally and do not require a bonus action to do so.

You can select this feat a third time. If you do:

- On your turn, you can use your reaction to reverse the o-dachi's blade and strike a foe with the butt end of the handle. Treat the o-dachi's handle as a club.
- When you use an o-dachi to score a critical hit, you deal 2 additional damage.

Stance of Outstretched Branch (Bo - Quarterstaff)

Prerequisites: Strength 13, Dexterity 13
Originally used to control prepubescent monks full of too much energy yet not enough discipline, you are one of the warriors that has developed the simple staff into a lethal combat method. You gain the following benefits when wielding a quarterstaff:

- When wielded with one hand it gains the Reach property.
- When wielded with two hands it gains the Finesse property.
- The weapon gains the Thrown property (range 10/30 feet) and on a successful hit with a ranged weapon attack it bounces back to you, at which point you can use your reaction to catch it.



You can select this feat a second time. If you do:

- You can use your reaction to deflect the missile when you are hit by a ranged weapon attack. When you do so, the damage you take from the attack is reduced by 1d10 + your Strength or Dexterity modifier + 4. If you have Deflect Missiles, the damage is reduced by an extra 1d10.
- If you are hit by a second ranged weapon attack before your turn begins, you can deflect that as well.

You can select this feat a third time. If you do:

- Your attacks with this weapon deal 2 extra damage.
- You can use the weapon to gain advantage on checks made to jump.

Stance of Shooting Stars (Shortbow)

Prerequisites: Dexterity 15, proficiency with Athletics and Perception

More than the stance of a talented archer, warriors that utilize this martial art have mastered arrow-slinging techniques that can be used from every footing as a fluid part of their movement. You gain the following benefits when wielding a shortbow:

- You gain a +1 bonus on attack and damage rolls made with a shortbow.
- You do not have disadvantage on ranged weapon attack rolls from being within an enemy's reach.

You can select this feat a second time. If you do:

- Once per turn, you can knock two arrows and fire both at the same time. When the attack is a successful hit, you roll the weapon damage dice twice and take the higher result.
- You do not have disadvantage on ranged weapon attack rolls from being in dim light.

You can select this feat a third time. If you do:

- Your range with the weapon increases to 150/600 feet.
- Your attacks with this weapon score a critical hit on a roll of 18–20.
- You do not have disadvantage on ranged attack rolls made while you are jumping, falling, or flying.

Stance of the Tengu Saber (Shortsword)

Prerequisites: Dexterity 15 or Wisdom 17

Tengu saber focuses almost exclusively on circles, spirals, and waves to build centrifugal force, a style that works very well with monks that prefer spinning strikes and sweeps. You gain the following benefits when wielding a shortsword:

- You gain a +2 bonus to melee attack rolls with shortswords when your target is wearing medium or heavy armor.

You can select this feat a second time. If you do:

- When you use a shortsword to score a critical hit against a creature, you can use your reaction to send the target stumbling backwards to the ground. The target must be no more than one size larger than you. Make a Strength (Athletics) check contested by the target's Strength (Athletics) or Dexterity (Acrobatics) check (the target chooses the ability to use). If you win the contest, you either knock the target prone or push it 5 feet away from you.

You can select this feat a third time. If you do:

- Once per turn after you make a successful unarmed strike, you can use your reaction to make a melee attack using a shortsword.

Stance of the Mantis (Kama - Sickle)

Prerequisites: Wisdom 13, Intelligence 13

Like a mantis stalking after prey, in combat you are quiet and patient until the opportune moment to strike. With the claw of the mantis in hand you are a deadly opponent, delivering terrifying wounds with a minimum amount of physical strength. You gain the following benefits when wielding a sickle:

- Your strikes deal an additional 1d4 slashing damage. This damage is not multiplied on a critical hit.
- You gain a +1 bonus to attack rolls against targets wearing medium or heavy armor.

You can select this feat a second time. If you do:

- Your attacks with this weapon score a critical hit on a roll of 19–20.
- The weapon gains the Thrown property (range 20/60 feet) and on a successful hit with a ranged weapon attack it bounces back to you, at which point you can use your reaction to catch it.
- Your bonus to attack targets

wearing medium or heavy armor increases to +2.

You can select this feat a third time. If you do:

- Your additional slashing damage increases to 1d6, and this damage is multiplied on a critical hit.
- Your bonus to attack targets wearing medium or heavy armor increases to +3.
- You can use the weapon to gain advantage on Strength (Athletics) checks made to climb.

Stance of the Silent Night (Sling)

Prerequisites: Dexterity 15

While it is often underrated, in the hands of an expert this weapon is a lethal means to deliver death with no more than a pebble. In your hands a sling is even more capable, able to strike with unerring precision and power. You gain the following benefits when wielding a sling:

- You gain a +2 bonus on attack rolls with this weapon.
- You do not have disadvantage on ranged weapon attack rolls from being within an enemy's reach.

You can select this feat a second time. If you do:

- The weapon's range increases to 45/180 feet.
- The weapon's damage dice increases to 1d6.

You can select this feat a third time. If you do:

- Your attacks with this weapon score a critical hit on a roll of 18–20.
- You do not have disadvantage on ranged weapon attacks at long range with this weapon.

Stance of Earth Kami's Fist (Tetsubo - Greatclub)

Prerequisites: Strength 15

Strapping metal studs or spikes to all 4 sides of a giant club produces an awesome weapon but with the use of martial arts, you take its lethality to a whole new level. You gain the following benefits when wielding a greatclub:

- You deal double damage to objects and structures.
- When you make your first melee weapon attack in a turn, you can choose to take a –5 penalty to your melee weapon attack rolls in exchange for a +10 bonus to melee weapon damage.

You can select this feat a second time. If you do:

- When you score a critical hit against a creature, you can use your reaction to send the target stumbling backwards. The target must be no more than one size larger than you. Make a Strength (Athletics) check contested by the target's Strength (Athletics) or Dexterity (Acrobatics) check (the target chooses the ability to use). If you win the contest, you push it 5 feet away from you. For every 5 points your check is higher than your target's, you can push it an extra 5 feet.
- Alternatively, when you score a critical hit against a creature you can use your reaction to trip instead. The target must be no more than one size larger than you and must be within your reach. Make a Strength (Athletics) check contested by the target's Strength (Athletics) or Dexterity (Acrobatics) check (the target chooses the ability to use). If you win the contest, you knock the target prone.

You can select this feat a third time. If you do:

- Your attacks with this weapon score a critical hit on a roll of 19–20. If you have Improved Critical, your attacks with this weapon score a critical hit on a roll of 18–20.
- Once per turn, you can use a bonus action to make one melee weapon attack after you use a melee weapon to reduce a creature to 0 hit points or score a critical hit with it.

Stance of the 3-Armed Bandit (Triple Staff)

Prerequisites: Strength 15 and Dexterity 13, or Strength 13 and Dexterity 15

- This collapsible staff is usually held so it looks just like a short set of rods, the danger it poses only revealed when the weapon is fully spread apart. In your hands it is an adaptable, quick extension of your body able to rapidly deliver blows and perform much more complex maneuvers. You gain the following benefits when wielding a triple staff:
- The weapon gains the Reach property.
- You gain a +1 bonus on attack rolls with this weapon.

You can select this feat a second time. If you do:

- Your AC increases by 1.
- Your attacks with this weapon deal 2 extra damage.

You can select this feat a third time. If you do:

- When you use a bonus action to attack with this weapon, the attack deals normal damage.
- You gain a +2 bonus on checks made to disarm.

Stance of the Needle (Yari - Javelin)

Prerequisites: Dexterity 13, Intelligence 13

Although one of the most primitive weapons in Soburin, in the hands of a master a throwing spear can deliver incredible speed, accuracy, and damage both up close and from afar. You gain the following benefits when wielding a javelin:

- When you use this weapon to attack a creature wearing metal armor, you gain a +2 bonus on your attack roll.
- You do not have disadvantage on ranged weapon attacks at long range with this weapon.

You can select this feat a second time. If you do:

- On your turn, you can draw multiple javelins at once, up to a maximum equal to your number of attacks.
- Creatures have disadvantage on checks made to disarm this weapon from you.

You can select this feat a third time. If you do:

- When you throw this weapon at a target within short range, on a successful hit you deal 1d4 extra damage.
- You gain a +2 bonus on melee attack and damage rolls with this weapon.



CHARACTER NAME

PLAYER NAME

RACE

CLASS & LEVEL

ALIGNMENT

EXPERIENCE POINTS

MISTS OF AKUMA

STRENGTH

DEXTERITY

CONSTITUTION

INTELLIGENCE

WISDOM

CHARISMA

DIGNITY

HAITOKU

ARMOR CLASS

= DEXTERITY MODIFIER + ARMOR + SHIELD + MISC

INITIATIVE

PROFICIENCY BONUS

SPEED

HIT POINT MAXIMUM

CURRENT HIT POINTS

TOTAL

HIT DICE

SUCCESSES

FAILURES

DEATH SAVES

SPELL SAVE DC

SPELL ATTACK

PASSIVE INSIGHT

PASSIVE INVESTIGATION

PASSIVE PERCEPTION

PASSIVE STEALTH

ATTACKS

WEAPON TYPE

RANGE ATTACK BONUS DAMAGE

WEAPON TYPE

RANGE ATTACK BONUS DAMAGE

WEAPON TYPE

RANGE ATTACK BONUS DAMAGE

ACCESSIBLE ITEMS

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PROFICIENCIES

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- ◇ HAITOKU

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- ○ INSIGHT
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- ○ NATURE
- ○ PERCEPTION
- ○ PERFORMANCE
- ○ PERSUASION
- ○ RELIGION
- ○ SLEIGHT OF HAND
- ○ STEALTH
- ○ SURVIVAL

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AGE

HEIGHT

WEIGHT

EYES

SKIN

HAIR

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CHARACTER HISTORY

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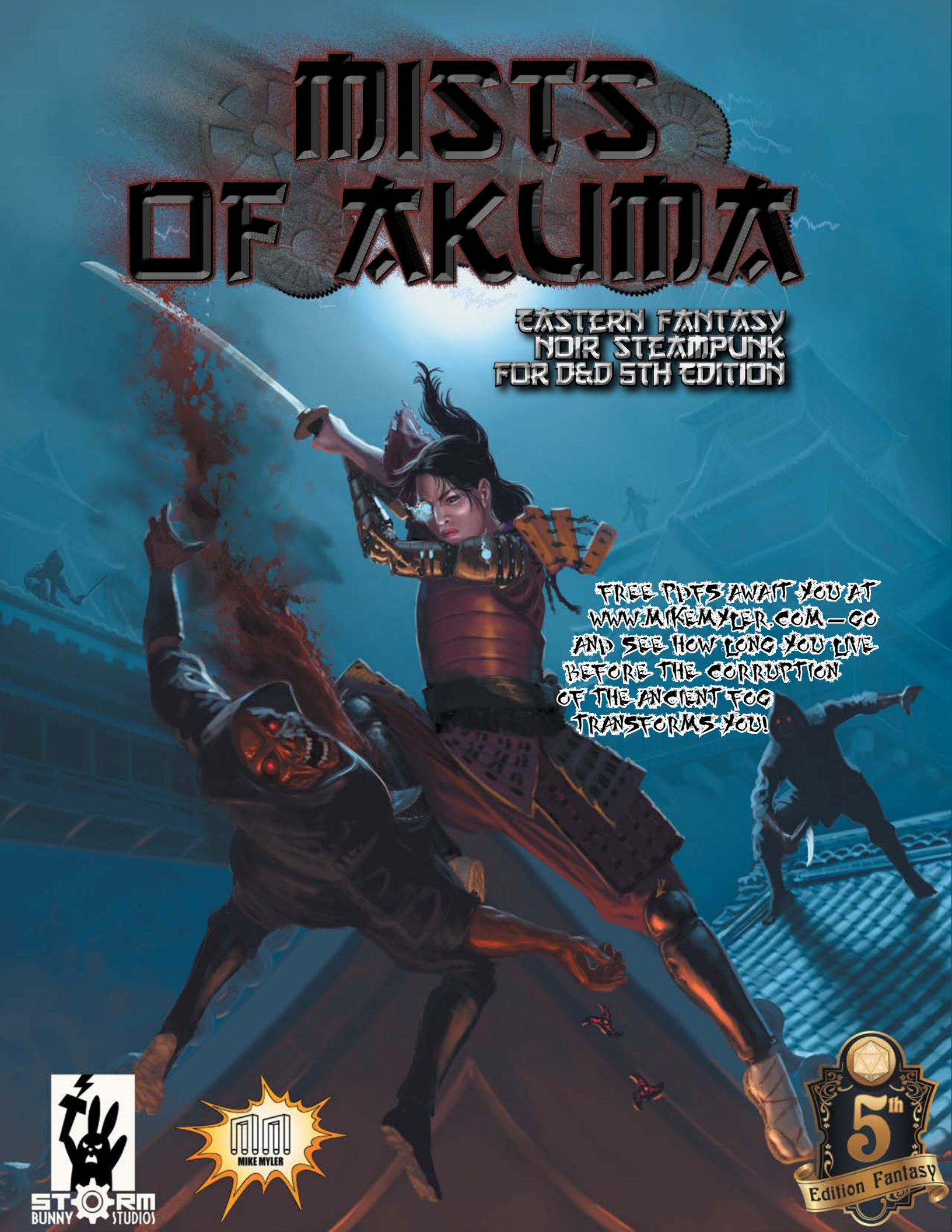
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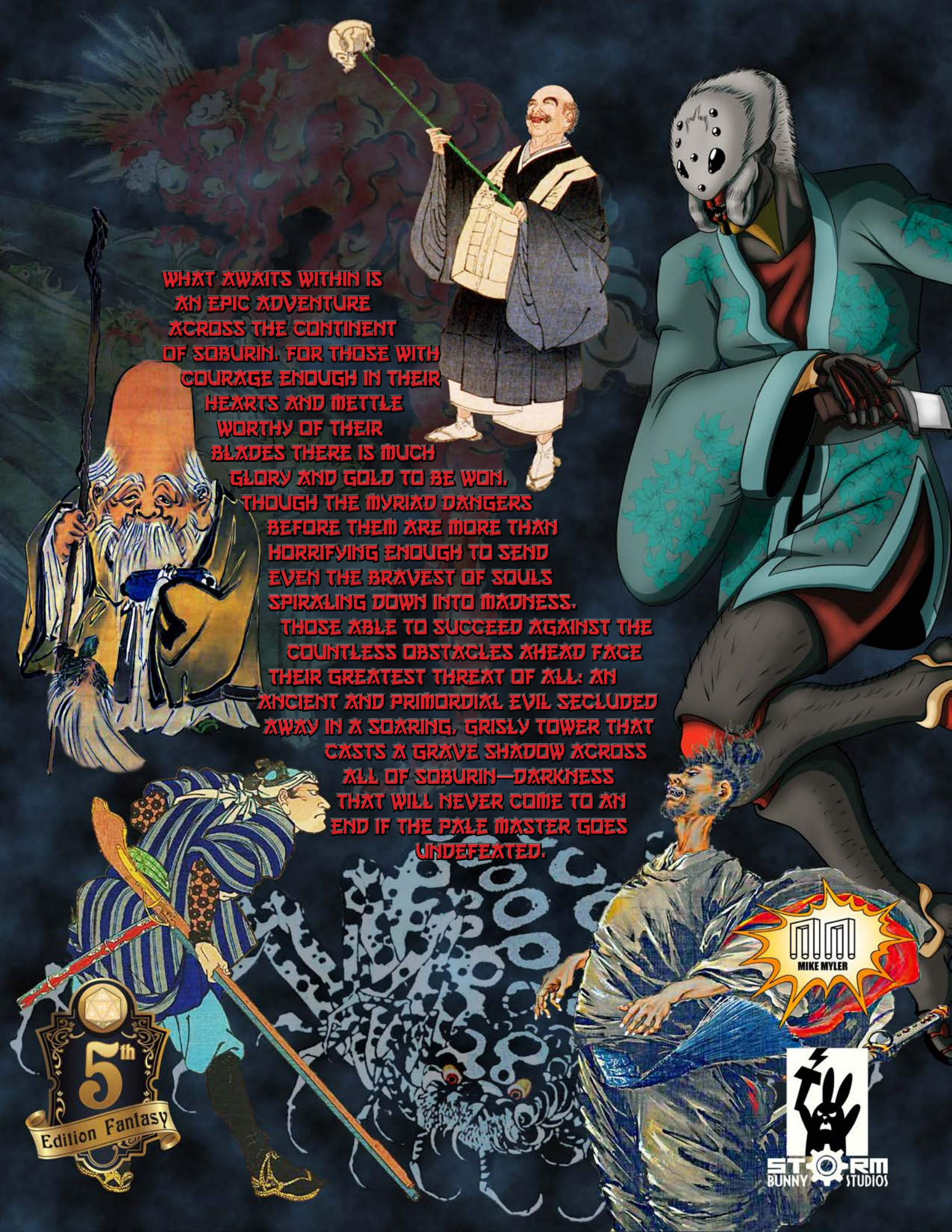
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