

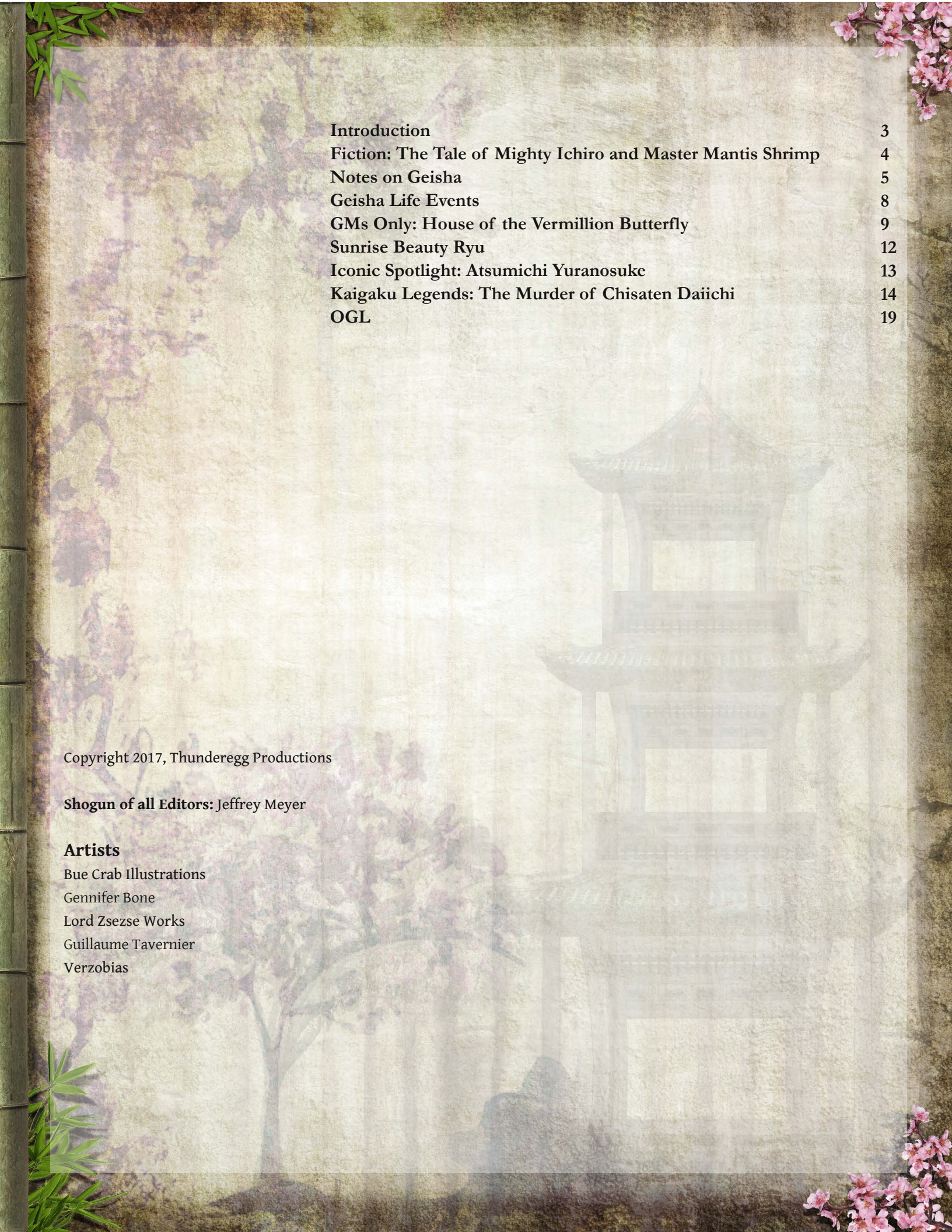
KAIQAKU

Vol. 01

Issue 01



Chronicles of the Geisha



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Hi!

Welcome to the first issue of the Kaigaku Chronicle, a new ezine supporting the Kaigaku RPG from Thunderegg Productions. It's compatible with both the forthcoming premium version and the free version, which is already out and available here: <http://tinyurl.com/KaigakuFree>. As a note, I'm about to update the free version with some of the edited copy from the premium version. So while it'll still have no artwork and only 8 character schools (as opposed to the 26 in the premium version) it's going to be more polished.

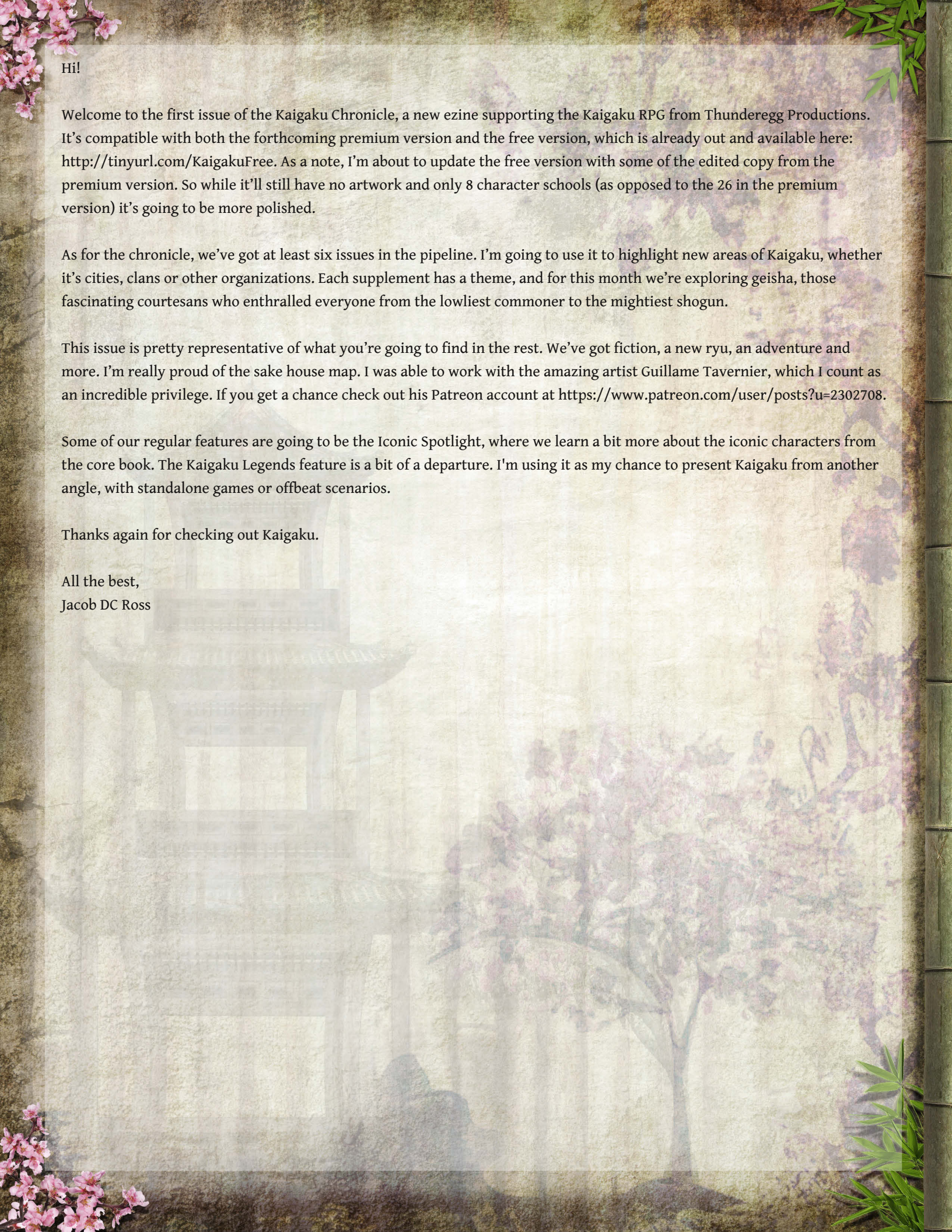
As for the chronicle, we've got at least six issues in the pipeline. I'm going to use it to highlight new areas of Kaigaku, whether it's cities, clans or other organizations. Each supplement has a theme, and for this month we're exploring geisha, those fascinating courtesans who enthralled everyone from the lowliest commoner to the mightiest shogun.

This issue is pretty representative of what you're going to find in the rest. We've got fiction, a new ryu, an adventure and more. I'm really proud of the sake house map. I was able to work with the amazing artist Guillame Tavernier, which I count as an incredible privilege. If you get a chance check out his Patreon account at <https://www.patreon.com/user/posts?u=2302708>.

Some of our regular features are going to be the Iconic Spotlight, where we learn a bit more about the iconic characters from the core book. The Kaigaku Legends feature is a bit of a departure. I'm using it as my chance to present Kaigaku from another angle, with standalone games or offbeat scenarios.

Thanks again for checking out Kaigaku.

All the best,
Jacob DC Ross



The Tale of Mighty Ichiro and Master Mantis Shrimp

"Another cup, for each of us, woman," the bandit leader fairly roared to the beautiful young server, "It's been a very good day and we deserve a celebration."

"Oh, my lord, I'm sure that you do," the geisha purred in a falsetto as she poured sake into Might Ichiro's waiting cup, "but you flatter your slave girl too much."

"You don't have to do that with me. Look at ya, you're the prettiest girl in this whole province. I wouldn't waste my time with anything less."

"As you say," the young lady bowed, her porcelain white makeup barely concealed her blush.

"I killed a man today," he stated plainly, "the villagers, they hate me. They don't see what I do for them. Hired the "legendary" Master Mantis Shrimp to take me out. Fastest blade in the Empire, he said. Well, he wasn't."

"Oh, my lord is brave and strong. Do favor me with the story," the geisha's eyes grew wide and she scooted up nuzzle the massive ronin, "Were you hurt? Do you require care?"

Mighty Ichiro smiled broadly as he looked down at his companion. "No, it wasn't like that. I was out for my morning walk, going to guard the Bridge at Autumn River."

The man always referred to his occupation as an honorable calling, defending the populace. The village peasants called it highway robbery, though never to the fearsome warrior's face.

"The oak leaves near me rustled fiercely, and then there he was, right in front of me. You should have seen him, all flowing robes and wild hair. Not much to him, though.

"The fool called out a challenge, "Your days of tyranny are over, Mighty Ichiro, I come to you in the name of justice for Akimori Village!" Shouting like he was someone. You know I'd never even heard of Master Mantis Shrimp before today, and I've been all through the Empire!"

"Oh, Mighty Ichiro, what an upstart to challenge you!"

"He was small, but he was fast. Had his blade out and ready. He charged, point forward. It was a simple matter to sidestep and slap him down with the back of my hand as he passed.

"He rolled with the strike and was up quickly. But by then I had my club in my hand. We played, back and forth. He thought he was getting the best of me, but I made sure never to commit to a stroke wide enough to keep me off balance.

"We were on the bridge, just him and me and the roaring water. He didn't expect me to use my secret technique, Ichiro's Thunder. I made like to swing again, and he'd grown too confident, moved right into it as I thrust the club forward into his gut.

"Cracked his armor and doubled him over. He was gasping like a fish on a boat when I grabbed his purse, picked him up by the neck and flung him into the stream. That was the end of Master Mantis Shrimp!"

Ichiro bellowed in delight as if he'd just told the funniest story of his life. "And I got to keep the fee those fool villagers paid him."

"Oh, mighty Ichiro," the geisha cooed now in her natural, throaty voice, "such a wonderful tale, but forgive me, somewhat incorrect."

"Eh?" Mighty Ichiro grunted in annoyed confusion, "What's that? You think I'm lying, girl?"

"Oh, no," the geisha leaned in close, "only mistaken. That was not Master Mantis Shrimp."

Mighty Ichiro started to reply but found that the words would not come. A sharp pain in his chest drew his gaze down to the blossoming red pool seeping into his kimono.

With a wicked smile she reached and snatched the dying man's ill-gotten coin purse, "This is mine."

Ichiro fell to the ground with a thud while Master Mantis Shrimp casually wiped her blade clean, stood and strode the exit. She'd have only minutes to get on the road if she was going to make her appointment with the village elders of Himega tomorrow. Apparently they were having problems with a stealthy ninja assassin and required her services. Only the best would do.

Notes on Geisha

Geisha are a Japanese tradition dating back centuries. In the real world they're often romanticized as the ideal of beauty, grace and charm. For this essay I'm combining my research and years of interest with my own fictional touches for more dramatic play. Like with all other parts of Kaigaku, I want you to have enough information to do what you want, while not providing too much and crowding out your vision.

As a note, while the very earliest of what became geisha were sometimes also prostitutes, this is a reputation that the respectable tradition of entertaining hostesses works very hard to shed. A true geisha is not a prostitute, and for many reasons you won't ever find them portrayed as such in an official Kaigaku publication. Consider that the very first firefighters, the Roman Corps de Vigiles, were slaves who liked to start fires so they could put them out and earn their freedom. Is it fair to call modern-day firefighters arsonists? Rant over.

In Kaigaku folks of every status level live to revel at the end of a long day. Geisha provide entertainment by singing, dancing, reciting poetry, serving alcohol and more. As the demand for more novel and refined entertainment grows, the operations of geisha expand and their tradition becomes more codified and artisanal. Their society is one truly apart from mainstream culture, and it's called the Flower World.

At the poorest sake house you'll find a bartender who has his prettiest daughter sway through the crowds, chanting energetic songs to get the rowdy peasants to buy more liquor. The finest establishments offer private rooms for parties or individuals, who spend the night entertained by a woman who's spent years of her life dedicated to learning how to capture attention and hearts. Geisha of the highest order are very expensive and are only affordable to elite lords and courtiers who gladly spend fortunes on their services.

Geisha Training

Like all traditions in Kaigaku, geisha are serious business. A young girl begins her training sometimes even as a toddler. If she's considered pretty enough and of good

temper at this young age poor peasant parents often sell their child to a recruiter who finds a house for the initiate to serve.

Early apprentices merely watch from a distance or assist a higher woman in getting dressed and putting on her makeup or styling her coif. These are all considered useful and valuable pursuits, as a geisha's hair, makeup and clothing are all "trade secrets" jealously guarded by house masters. From this stage a girl who demonstrates that she can make herself presentable and move with grace gets promoted to a serving girl. She wanders through the main room of the hall, pouring sake.

A server may speak or make flirtatious nods and gestures, but she must be careful because she risks punishment if she steps out of line. For this reason most servers say nothing and make no eye contact with customers for at least their first full year in this position. Graduation to a higher station happens when a girl finally manages to display the charm associated with a true geisha. The lady of the house is always watching and knows when a student is finally confident and competent enough to advance.

Full geisha are allowed to take the stage and perform songs, dances and even comedy skits. The popular image of a geisha is a serene and reserved woman, but this is usually only at the highest levels of society, and even then it's not always true. Performers know to give their clients what they truly want.

Geisha Appearance

Not all geisha wear full white powder. This is usually compulsory for servers and newly-minted geisha, but it's optional at higher levels and patrons often want to see a woman's true face. Some may never decide to show their face, hiding behind veils and cosmetics to enhance their mysterious allure.

A geisha's career is dependent upon the quality of her wardrobe. Upon advancing past server she can upgrade beyond a simple dress to a much more elaborate kimono. Her lady usually provides the first outfit, which naturally puts the young woman into debt.

Geisha costumes are made from fine silk and very colorful. There is a secret code among the women of the Flower World signaled by the pleats of their garments, as well as its graphic designs. High-paying patrons are generally the only outsiders who are ever taught the code (which varies from region to region), and they spend hours watching the women pass through, delighting themselves as they discover a story known only to they and their geisha companions.

Various graphic designs include abstract symbols similar to samurai mon crests, representations of elements, animals and places as well as plants, stars and the moon. They're often adorned by small charms called netsuke. Popular images include cherry blossoms, dragonflies and wind. Every season there is a race for tailors and geisha to outdo one another with more sophisticated and exotic imagery.

A woman might be known for undergoing multiple time-consuming costume changes throughout the evening, or for one specific dress. It's considered a mark of high favor if a geisha wears her signature outfit to a performance.

Geisha Life

A hostess' career does not last forever. While a woman might entertain well into middle age, most retire by either marrying a wealthy patron or by saving enough to start their own sake house or school. Some are simply invited to become permanent courtiers for a clan, given positions of authority and respect.

A married geisha leaves the Flower World behind. She might still run instruction in her home, or a business on the side, but she definitely no longer performs duties as a personal companion.

Geisha fall into the caste of peasants, usually merchants, but are typically viewed with greater respect if they work in high-class establishments. A geisha who marries a samurai becomes a samurai. She likely spends her days in court, networking on behalf of her new clan, or if she's less savvy painting or writing in her studio. It's very rare for a geisha to become a bushi, but it's not unheard of for one to serve as an officer in an army as an advisor to a general who values their unique insights.

Geisha Characters

It's easy to create a geisha character. They're usually courtiers or ninja (more on that later), with Geisha listed as their Station. These characters can travel the empire if another PC is their patron, or if one of the other PCs' lord is also the geisha's patron. As with anything in Kaigaku, the only limit is your imagination.

Geisha are very good at getting people to talk. The wealthy and successful love to brag about themselves and their exploits. Many geisha find themselves in possession of clan secrets just by virtue of being around loose-lipped fools.

With all the information that they gather, geisha make excellent spies. If they dress in their finery they're often allowed to pass wherever they please, as most folks assume that they were invited in. Any rumors that some geisha train as assassins are, of course, hurtful and untrue.

It's up to you if there exist large-scale spy networks of house ladies who maintain rings of intelligence gatherers to blackmail powerful lords and secretly exert great influence on politics. Of course, where's the fun in a world without that?

Things to Know:

- * You perform using instruments such as the biwa (flute) or shamisen (banjo).
- * Most liquor is sake (brewed rice wine), but you also serve umeshi (plum wine) and shochu (distilled rice hard liquor).
- * Fine sake is served chilled, inferior stuff is served hot.
- * Speak and smile with your eyes more than with your mouth.
- * Purr in a high voice, act shy.
- * It can take hours to get your hair done. Letting it fall is a sign of deep affection and favor.
- * Research a lord's history when you perform at his castle. Flatter him with a thrilling account of his ancestors' bravery.
- * Men can be geisha, too.

Geisha in Campaigns

Geisha make for very dramatic NPCs. You can choose to set a campaign almost entirely in the Flower World, with various geisha houses serving as the settings of adventures. Since they're frequented by merchants, farmers, criminals and samurai alike you can treat them as social nexuses that lead to all manner of adventures.

If all or most of the players want to be geisha you can differentiate their abilities by allowing them to take various courtier or even ninja ryu, simply renaming them to something not connected to a specific clan. A campaign such as this could be all about rising in the ranks of geisha and coming into contact with the elite of Kaigaku. These PCs might not ever attend court, but through their nightly sessions with powerful courtiers they could find themselves on the fringes of palace society, receiving glimpses into an alien world and even occasionally affecting politics at an Imperial level.

Samurai can seek to become a geisha's patron. A special performer with an intoxicating beauty and a matchless wit can steal the heart of anyone. Patronage is a mutually agreed relationship, where a man supports a geisha's schooling, retinue and other expenses. It's not a sexual or even a romantic relationship, but an artistic one.

How much does it cost to be a geisha's patron? Too much. Anyone who patronizes a geisha only does so with one whose prestige is in accord with his own status. It might be affordable to support a low-class geisha, but a powerful courtier simply does not have anything to do with any but the most talented and acclaimed performers.

What does a patron get out of the relationship? Society views a patron as a person of outstanding taste and vision. Other geisha devotees appreciate that patrons bring the best hostesses to the forefront. As a geisha rises through the ranks of her profession she brings great honor and prestige upon her patron. The earlier in a geisha's career that a patronage relationship begins the more credit a patron can take for himself. Being a patron also opens many more doors at court, since the elite want the best geisha to perform at their parties.

Geisha Ranks

Geisha begin their training as very young girls, only watching from a distance. During this time they are known as minarai. Once they reach the age of 15 they become maiko, or servers. Essentially a waitress, a maiko moves throughout the house keeping customers drinking.

Maiko also learn the basics of cosmetics and dress, and begin to perform along side others in skits, but they don't act alone. A senior geisha who trains the younger girls is called oneesan, or big sister. Generally an oneesan still carries some of the debt of her training and finishes working it off. Once she's free a senior geisha can seek out employment at any house. Finding a patron is the fastest way out of debt. If a geisha wishes to marry, her suitor must pay off her debt.

A senior geisha who runs a house is an okaasan, or mother. Okaasan in the most prestigious houses are dowagers with the power to set fashion and other social mores throughout their city or district. While not a samurai a dowager gets the same level of respect in court as a district-level officer.

Geisha Life Events

Roll here at character creation, before selecting skills and Contacts, to determine your character's background.

How did you come to this life? Roll 1d6.

- 1 Born untouchable and sold at age three to a recruiter.
- 2 The child of a famous geisha, you have a legacy to maintain.
- 3 Sponsored by your wealthy merchant parents.
- 4 A ninja using a geisha career as a legitimate cover.
- 5 Left home to follow a geisha you saw walking the street.
- 6 Roll again and take that result if it's different, or this result if you roll it again. You are a samurai secretly moonlighting as a geisha in the hopes of disappearing into anonymity.

What are you best known for? Roll 1d8.

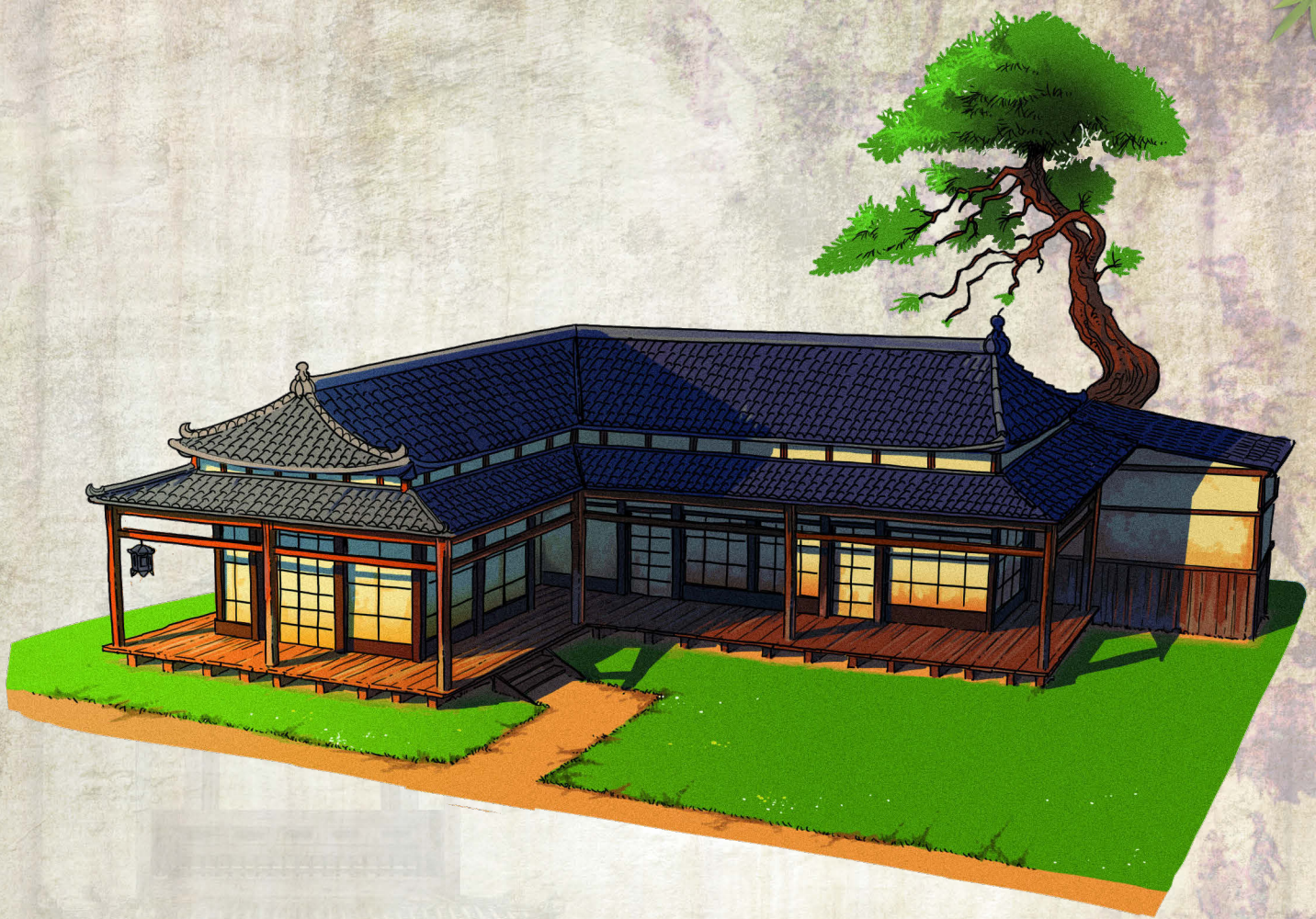
- 1 Your impeccable fashion sense. Gain a Superior kimono with the Beauty trait.
- 2 Your network of hangers-on. Gain an extra Level 1 Contact.
- 3 Your financial acumen. You own a small share in the sake house.
- 4 Your side pursuits. You have a horse and fine riding clothes.
- 5 Your knowledge of history. Gain a -2 bonus to storytelling.
- 6 Your expensive tastes. Clients give you more expensive gifts.
- 7 Your underworld connections. Gain access to criminal hangouts.
- 8 Your biting wit. Do an extra +2 damage in social combat.

Whom can you count on for support? Roll 1d8.

- 1 Your Oneesan. She is tough but fair.
- 2 A kindly old merchant who always has sweets for you.
- 3 An innkeeper who will give you a room for a song.
- 4 A magistrate who has your back if things get dangerous.
- 5 A psychotic criminal enforcer with a soft spot for you.
- 6 A courtier at the local lord's court.
- 7 An ascetic who wants you to give up your materialistic ways.
- 8 A gaijin enthralled with your voice.

Who is your rival? Roll 1d4.

- 1 Your onesan, who resents your beauty.
- 2 A spurned samurai.
- 3 A fellow geisha.
- 4 An unknown official who thinks you saw too much.



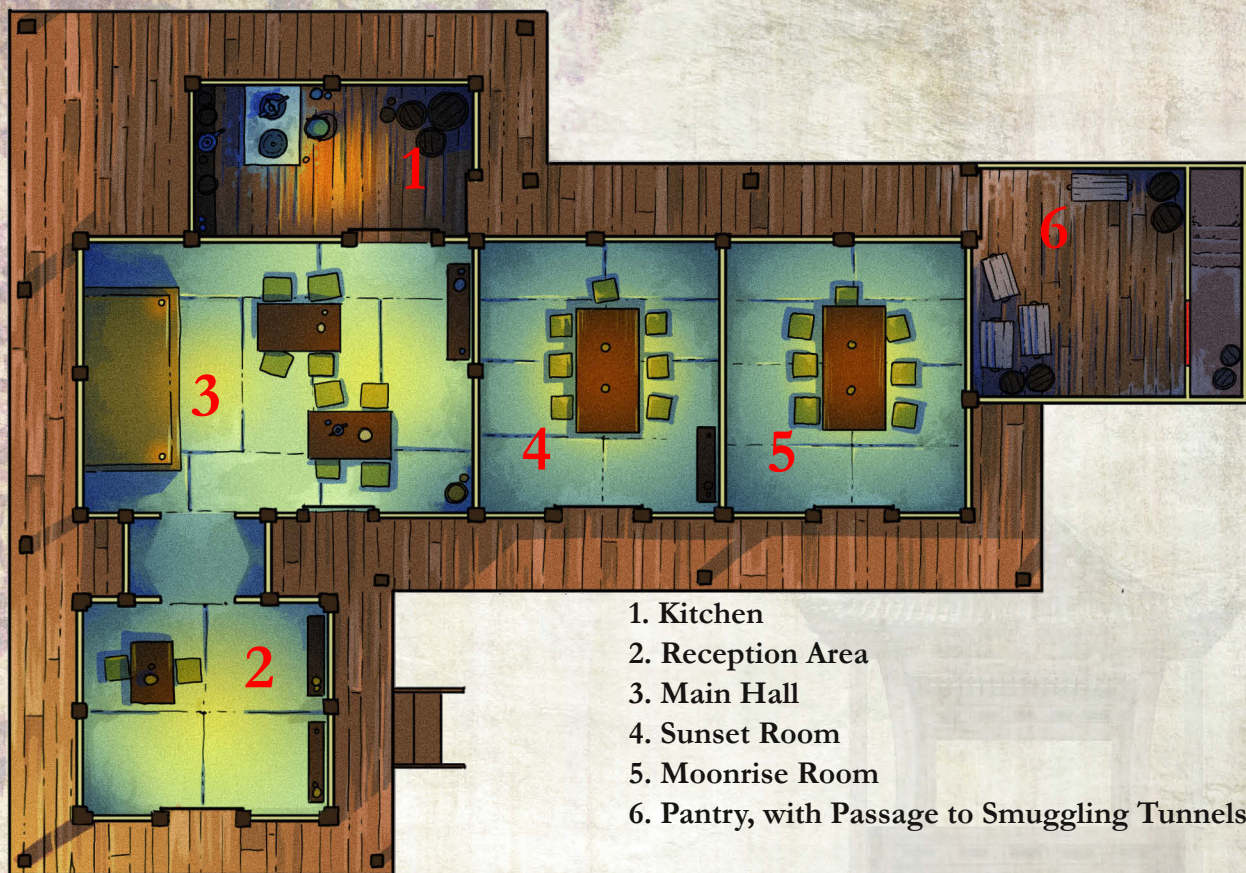
House of the Vermillion Butterfly

The House of the Vermillion Butterfly is one of many such places in the bustling city of Harayama. While it's not the most glamorous place in the Floating District, it's one of the most connected. You can use it as a representative location for any sake house that your players choose to visit.

It's run by a woman named Madam Asahi, or Sunrise, who's been in the geisha game for decades, though she doesn't look a day over twenty. Everyone, absolutely everyone, in Harayama knows Asahi. Any player can take her as a Level 1 Contact at the beginning of the game, or after encountering her. Be warned that even for her close friends Sunrise never does anything without reciprocation.

Sunrise is single, though she's had various patrons over the years. She has a number of odd customs, all of which serve to profit her enterprise. Every geisha in her house must wear Sunrise's signature apple blossom scent, which she obtains under exclusive contract from a secret artisan. Geisha also favor their clients with "love marks", which are chop stamps that bear the emblem of the House of the Vermillion Butterfly, as well as a smaller symbol denoting the individual geisha.

This is all so that whenever a guest commits or is the victim of a crime savvy investigators know to visit Sunrise immediately. Sunrise always cooperates with the law, though her memory usually is somewhat foggy until she gets a promise from the investigator to divert patrols from some area or another within the city on a certain evening, usually the nearby docks, warehouses or the Vermillion Butterfly itself.



1. Kitchen
2. Reception Area
3. Main Hall
4. Sunset Room
5. Moonrise Room
6. Pantry, with Passage to Smuggling Tunnels

Encounters

Use this sheet to create your own adventures.

D6 Encounter

- 1 Rumor overheard. Roll on Rumor Table.
- 2 1d10 drunken ronin start causing trouble.
- 3 Your personal seal, coin purse or other item is stolen by a pickpocket.
- 4 A beautiful geisha entrances you and a rival. Roll Charisma to vie for their attention.
- 5 A group of gaijin sailors walk in, ready to drink.
- 6 Sunrise' favorite server spills shochu on a drunken, high-ranking courtier from a rival clan.

D6 Rumor

- 1 Smugglers are going to be running contraband at the docks tonight.
- 2 A city official is massing resources to take action against an enemy.
- 3 A rare beauty at another sake house needs a patron to get her out of her contract so she can work at the Vermillion Butterfly.
- 4 Last week a geisha coming home from a performance at lord Daiichi's castle disappeared and hasn't been seen since.
- 5 The most elegant ladies in the city are going wild for the merchant Hide's special mochi sweets. He only makes one batch a week, and anyone who can get their hands on some to give as a gift will gain the favor of the recipient.
- 6 A certain silver jinrikisha taxi stops only for people waving a special handkerchief. Its silent pullers take you to a secret sake house run by an unknown benefactor. Most folks believe that this is where the truly powerful in Harayama congregate to relax and make deals.

Vermillion Butterfly Player Handout



1. Kitchen
2. Reception Area
3. Main Hall
4. Sunset Room
5. Moonrise Room
6. Pantry

Winged Dreams Network

Lady Sunrise is one of the most prominent geisha dowagers in Kaigaku. She runs her establishment with the same discipline that a general runs his army. This, combined with the beauty and skill of her hostesses makes Sunrise' establishment very attractive to the samurai caste. Men and women from all over the Empire come to see her geisha perform, and they drink. When they drink they talk, and when they talk Lady Sunrise is always listening.

She keeps a ledger of everything that she and her trusted women overhear. Any spymaster who looked through her journal would be shocked to realize that Sunrise is privy to more intelligence than any other individual in the city.

Lady Sunrise is but one of several dowagers who operate the Winged Dreams, a loose network that shares intelligence for the purpose of blackmail or selling secrets through third and fourth parties. Their other purpose is to eliminate the threat that an lecherous samurai may pose to their geisha and any other women in the Empire, though not even the most suspicious local magistrate suspects her of being involved in anything that deep.



Sunrise Beauty

This ryu teaches geisha how to be masters of their art, and how to use that art for the benefit of Lady Sunrise and her endeavors. Nobody ever thinks of a geisha as a threat until it's too late.

Type: Courtier or Ninja

Weapon of Choice: Knives

Tier 1: Flattering Submission

Your words are soothing enough to draw out a reserved individual into feeling comfortable in your presence. If you Intensify when you make a Charisma roll to draw someone to you or to keep them from leaving they will stay unless called away on a true emergency. You don't need to Intensify if you offer the target alcohol or a song.

Tier 2: The Unseen Threat

Search as they may, nobody will ever find the dagger in your kimono. If you are in your geisha regalia you can use your geisha- or dance-related skills as a bonus to your knife attacks.

Tier 3: The Center of the Flower World

Your music can bring peace to a battlefield or cause a riot in a monastery. Intensify when you sing or play an instrument to cause NPCs to be considered -X HD for the purposes of determining penalties to actions against them by low-level PCs, where X is your Sunrise Beauty tier rank. This effect ends when you take another action besides playing. This applies to both social and combat events.

Tier 4: Dance of Blades

When you fight with a knife you add +2 to your Dexterity for defense rolls and can also apply your geisha- or dance-related skills as a bonus.

Tier 5: The World in Your Hand

You may now take other actions while you use your Tier 3 technique, including nods, hand gestures and so on. Intensify twice and make a Charisma roll to impart a simple meaning to your gestures that your intended recipient can understand. This allows you to direct allies' attention or actions wherever you need it to be.

Atsumichi Yuranosuke

The Atsumichi are mainly respected for their political prowess, but the young warrior Yuranosuke does his best to make sure that the other clans also fear their blades. And his best is very, very impressive. In times of war Yuranosuke always volunteers for front-line infantry duty. He can very nearly keep up with a cavalry charge and always surprises the enemy ranks, tearing through rows of men and leaving chaos behind him.

When the clans are at peace Yuranosuke volunteers to serve in Watanabe lands, helping them fend off the Kheren steppe raiders' various incursions, or he fights alongside whomever is currently dealing with the upstart indigenous Uriwane tribes. The reason for this is that he hopes through his own example to cause fear of the Atsumichi to keep other clans from ever attacking them in the first place.

Despite his reputation Yuranosuke does not relish warfare. The horrors he saw in his first battle were enough for him to vow that he would do as much of the fighting for his clan that he could so that others would never have such a terrible weight on their consciences.

In Our Next Issue

By the time the next issue is ready we hope to have the premium version of the Kaigaku RPG in your hands. It's very nearly ready for press. I'm excited for it, and I hope that you'll see from this magazine how much fun it's going to be.

We're going to focus on ninja in issue two. You'll peak behind the curtain at these masters of stealth to see why and how they do what they do. Get some new tricks of your own with the dangerous Fire Snail school and discover the mysteries of one of Kaigaku's lesser clans.

The Kaigaku Legends feature next month is an adventure that's actually a Kaigaku folk tale. Play the role of legendary hero Umiji in his fight against the Beast King as he tries to rescue the kidnapped princess. The scenario is going to be playable solo so you GMs can have some fun before you run the adventure for your group!

We'll continue the Iconic Spotlight with a look at the young princess Chisaten Kaihime. There are some more surprises in store so stay in touch. Check us out at the official Kaigaku RPG Google+ community to keep informed of the latest news and to connect with other players.



The Murder of Chisaten Daiichi

This is a standalone game that takes place within the world of Kaigaku. You can have it be part of a scenario by having the players use their own PCs, rather than the guests. There are suggestions for running this as a straight RPG adventure with Kaigaku at the end of the rules.

Game Setup

What you need:

A sheet of paper and a pencil for each player

A character for each player

29 cards with clues on them (Index cards work well)

The Story

Lord Chisaten Daiichi, governor of Harayama, is throwing his annual banquet at the House of the Vermillion Butterfly. He's invited representatives of the clans to be his guests. An anonymous note delivered to the party states that one of the guests, which include various courtiers and Daiichi's bodyguard, Chisaten Kenzo, is an assassin. Pick the role of one of the guests and work to save Lord Daiichi before it's too late!

Separate the Motives, Rooms, Weapons and Guests into separate piles, shuffle them and then take one random card from each pile. Without looking, put them aside into an envelope.

Deal out cards based on the number of players

3: 7 each, with 5 assigned to rooms

4: 5 each, with 6 assigned to rooms

5: 4 each, with 6 assigned to rooms

6: 4 each, with 2 assigned to rooms

Place the cards assigned to rooms on your playing surface, noting to which room you have them assigned.

The goal is to determine the secret cards hidden in the envelope, which tell you the identity of the would-be assassin, as well as their motive, weapon and site of attack. Randomly determine who goes first, then have the first player make their deduction. Turns pass to your left.

Make a deduction of three out of the four elements, Motive, Room, Weapon or Character. Starting with the player to your left and running along that way, each

player states whether or not they have one of those cards in their hand. They show you one, and only one, of the cards that match your terms. If one player has any of those cards, none of the other players need to confirm or deny. If nobody has any of the cards that you deduced you may look at one of the cards in a room (note it in your sheet and put it back).

With each clue you learn you can eliminate that clue from the list of possible results. Once you know all of the cards on the table and in other players' hands you can definitively identify the hidden cards.

If you want to make a guess, on your turn you announce that you're going to identify the assassin and apprehend them. State your conclusions and then check the envelope without telling anyone what it contains. If you're right then you've successfully stopped the assassin from killing Chisaten Daiichi. If you happen to be playing as the assassin you instead get to make a villainous monologue, describing why you're attacking Lord Daiichi, where and with which weapon as you strike him down!

Card List

Rooms

Kitchen
Reception Area
Main Hall
Sunset Room
Moonrise Room
Pantry

Characters

Atsumichi Ryohei
Chisaten Kenzo
Kakujima Shintaro
Kondo Daigoro
Morimoto Mayako
Shirai Mina
Toguchi Masa
Watanabe Kojuro

Weapon

No-dachi
Katana
Wakizashi
Kanabo
Sai
Ninja-to
Kama
Kusarigama

Motive

Revenge
Jealousy
Blackmail
Love Triangle
Money
Madness
Political



Atsumichi Ryohei

Ryohei is a man who enjoys the finer things in life, and to him nothing is finer than the prestige that comes from being invited to this annual feast. He goes back a long time with Lord Daiichi; the two men have been friends since boyhood. Ryohei is one of the few people who genuinely likes the city governor.

Considered politically lazy by his clansmen, Ryohei does not wish to advance any farther in Kaigaku's courts. If he ends up in another city he knows that he won't find anyone else to put up with his bribe-taking and lack of oversight.

Chisaten Daiichi

The tyrant of Harayama is widely despised. He allows criminals to run roughshod over peasants and passes laws that benefit only those rich enough to afford his favor. Daiichi is so far above the law in Harayama and so well-entrenched into the Emperor's inner circle that many people consider him untouchable.

Every year Daiichi throws a party at the House of the Vermillion Butterfly displaying his family's heirloom weaponry. All attendees are instructed to wear their most ancient garb. He invites only the most elite members of each clan's courts and spends his time soliciting bribes or all but daring the guests to strike him down.



Chisaten Kenzo

Kenzo is Daiichi's yojimbo. For generations his family has served as guardians to Lord Daiichi's line. Kenzo knows of Daiichi's terrible vices and cruel ways better than anyone else. As a man of virtue he is repulsed by the governor, but he also feels bound to his duty.

Kenzo would love nothing more than to take his master's life, but he can't find a way to reconcile his views of bushido with his personal desires. Daiichi knows this and he smugly believes that Kenzo could never muster the will to attack.





Kakujima Shintaro

Shintaro is unlike the majority of his clansmen in that he views their subjugation by the empire as a positive thing because it brings them under the protection of Kaigaku's powerful samurai. This dainty merchant courtier has no faith in his kinsmen's military force.

Widely considered an ineffectual fop, Shintaro seems to have no will of his own. He blindly obeys every pronouncement from Daiichi and gives his wholehearted assent even for policies that adversely affect the Kakujima clan. This pathetic behavior seems to be working, as Daiichi finally invited Shintaro to a social event.

Kondo Daigoro

The polar opposite of Shintaro, Daigoro is a forthright man who's renowned for putting the good of others ahead of his own. He speaks out boldly, dangerously so, against Daiichi's actions.

There's never been any friendship between the two men, and Daigoro is surprised that he was invited. In his youth Daigoro trained as a warrior, and his old instincts are telling him that this is going to be his only chance to take action against the villainous lord.



Morimoto Mayako

Mayako is a rising star within the Morimoto. She's made her reputation by means of a series of daring political ventures, bringing down any rivals for advancement. Rumors fly but so far nobody has uncovered anything definite on her activities.

Mayako is certain that Daiichi knows of her methods, but she can't tell whether or not he approves. Her most recent coup was ousting Daiichi's nephew from the city by exposing his clumsy attempts at graft. Whatever Mayako plans for the night depends solely on how she judges Daiichi to view her actions.





Shirai Mina

Mina is the most unlikely guest at tonight's festivities. She's Daiichi's betrothed. It's generally considered bad form to introduce one's wife to one's favored geisha, and the House of the Vermillion Butterfly is where Daiichi's companion, Lady Sunrise, performs.

It's no secret that Mina doesn't want to marry Daiichi, especially considering the rumors of the circumstances of his first wife's demise. She's made comments to handmaidens and friends to this effect and that so far she can't find any way out of her situation.

Toguchi Masa

Masa is the head of the Toguchi delegation to Harayama. He spends his days in the court, lobbying for his clan's interests. By night, he's a far more sinister man.

Masa is a sociopath who runs Daiichi's secret police. After he retires to his chambers Masa finishes the evening by reviewing orders and dispatching enforcers to silence those inconvenient to the city governor. It's been weeks since his last assignment, and Masa is growing antsy.



Watanabe Kojuro

Kojuro is a master tactician who's a veteran of dozens of campaigns against the Kheren barbarians. He's always preferred to be out on the field of battle, fighting with steel, instead of in the courts, bickering over social niceties.

A thoughtless remark to his lord's wife got Kojuro assigned to Harayama, far from his clan's lands. Kojuro's stuck here until he finishes his task, which is to get approval from the governor to expand the Watanabe's embassy complex. Unfortunately Kojuro's lord was able to call in a favor from Daiichi, who gave his word to refuse permission so that Kojuro can waste away in the cramped city, far from his beloved home territory.



KAIGAKU

Mystery

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Atsumichi Ryohei



Chisaten Kenzo



Kakujima Shintaro



Kondo Daigoro



Morimoto Mayako



Shirai Mina



Toguchi Masa



Watanabe Sanjuro

Blackmail

Jealousy

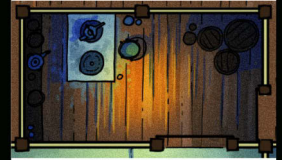
Love Triangle

Madness

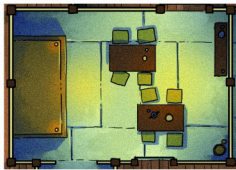
Money

Political

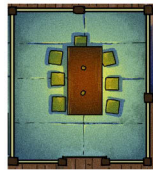
Revenge



Kitchen



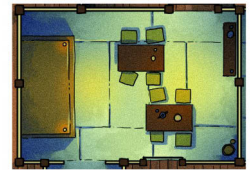
Main Hall



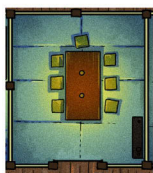
Moonrise Room



Pantry



Reception Area



Sunset Room



Kama



Kanabo



Katana



Kusarigama



Ninja-to



No-dachi



Sai



Wakizashi

Instructions

Print out the card sheets on cardstock. You can print out three copies of the page with the backs, then flip them over and insert so that the card fronts print over them on the other side.

Running Mysteries- GMs Only

This game makes an excellent scenario generator. If you want to come up with a random murder mystery you can randomly select a motive, location, murder weapon and perpetrator.

One way to make the mystery dependent not just on rolls of the dice but also on the players' reasoning skills is to have their successful roleplaying conversations and rolls dispense clues. What I like to do is categorize the suspects according to weapon skills, friendliness towards the victim and so on. Your clues exclude or highlight various categories.

So, for instance, if for this session your players get a clue that states "The katana is not missing", then the players would cast their suspicions on suspects who favor other weapons. You can use this method to set up all sorts of cases, from this adventure The Murder of Chisaten Daiichi, where you prevent a murder, to cases involving successful murders.

If you ever played the Carmen Sandiego games as a child, you'll find this approach familiar. In those games you gathered clues one at a time, generally based on the thief's appearance, which you used to whittle down suspects from a list until only one remained who fit all the criteria.

When you run a mystery in this manner, create a grid of 12 suspects to start. Then create a first category, for the purposes of this article let's say kimono color. Four of the suspects wear red, four wear blue and four wear yellow. Create a second category, say favored weapon, and have four suspects favor katana, four favor knives and four favor guns.

Start a grid of twelve squares long and three squares tall. The top row is color, red is 1, blue is 2, yellow is 3. Fill the top row in 1, 1, 1, 1, 2, 2, 2, 2, 3, 3, 3, 3. The second row is weapons. 1 is katana, 2 is knives and 3 is guns. Fill it in like this: 1, 2, 3, 1, 2, 3, 1, 2, 3, 1, 2, 3. Now create the final category, gangs, There are two major gangs in this story, the Sharks and the Wolves. Sharks are 1, Wolves are 2. Fill the third row in like this: 1, 2, 1, 2, 1, 2, 1, 2, 1, 2, 1, 2. This creates 12 unique sets of suspects. Read each column going down to see how each suspect is different

from the others. To find out who is guilty your PCs have to determine all three criteria.

Sometimes it might feel like only the investigator types are getting the spotlight. You can help spread some of the glory by giving insights to other characters. A battle-hardened bushi could notice by how an NPC carries himself which weapons he happens to favor. Ascetics could question a character and determine his philosophical leanings, and perhaps his group affiliations, based on the answers.

Another approach is to use Einstein's Riddle. Logic puzzles consist of a number of variables, say a person's name, his clan, his city of residence and the year of his birth. You start out not knowing anything but with a list of clues. A clue might state "The samurai who lives in Harayama was born after the samurai from the Kondo clan". From there you could infer that the samurai from the Kondo clan does not live in Harayama, nor is he the youngest of the group. You can run a mystery this way by having the PCs trying to track down unknown persons or connect them to a crime, event or place by means of witness testimony. Each interview yields a different clue and the PCs can use it to piece together the truth.

If you're in the mood to play Kaigaku (or another game), but your playgroup isn't around you can use these methods to create random mysteries for yourself. In the case of the first type of story, where you make the grid of 12 suspects, simply roll randomly to determine which group in a category gets eliminated by a clue. It's best to meet all the suspects before you start eliminating them. As for the Einstein riddle approach you could randomly eliminate two pairings of variables with each clue, but it can be a bit tricky if you're not used to logic puzzles.

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