

MISTS OF AKUMA

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MISTS OF AKUMA

EASTERN FANTASY NOIR STEAMPUNK FOR FIFTH EDITION.

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With your help we'll craft a 200+ page tome filled to the brim with evocative, **original** artwork from a host of talented illustrators, truly breathing life into the dying world of Soburin! A score of races, nearly two dozen major clans and prefectures, a host of new backgrounds, loads of new class options, and much more await you!

Either way, please enjoy this small sampling of the diverse and exotic world of *Mists of Akuma*!!

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THE MISTS OF AKUMA CAMPAIGN SETTING

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

What will you find in the complete *Mists of Akuma 5th Edition* campaign setting?

- Scores of beautiful, brand new illustrations from several talented artists to truly depict the unique world of Soburin in all of its dark, gritty glory
- Detailed workings of Sanbaoshi, the capital of Soburin and home to the Imperial Palace of the Masuto Dynasty
- Information on the Star of the North, Chikan, one of the unique scientific prefectures of Soburin
- A section on Nagabuki, Gem of the South and one of Soburin's most traditional states
- The 23 great clans of Soburin, each with statistics for a unique Bengoshi (government agent) and henchman
- Five different imperial dragons and over a dozen oni, filling your game with exciting new monsters especially suited for eastern fantasy
- A treasure trove of new class options!
Bushibot Martial Archetype, Circle of Blight, Circle of Shifting, Clockwork Adept Arcane Tradition, College of the Gun Priest, Detective Rogue Archetype, Herbalist Rogue Archetype, Kami Divine Domain, Mage Arcane Tradition, Martial Artist Monastic Tradition, Ninja Rogue Archetype, Priest Monastic Tradition, Samurai Sacred Oath, Tattoed Monastic Tradition, Shinobibot Archetype, Tsukumogami Hunter Ranger Archetype, Wu-Jen Warlock Pacts (with four patrons for every season of Soburin)
- New races for players in Soburin!
Humans (Soburi, Ceramian, and Ropaeo), Bakemono, Enjin, Hengeyokai (of the Cat, Dog, Monkey, Rat, Crane, Fox, and Spider varieties), Kappa, Mutants, Necroji, Oni-Touched, Psonorous, Pyon, Shikome, Steametic, Tanuki, Tengu, Umibo
- Dozens of new feats for spellcasters, warriors, and deadly martial artists
- Eastern armor and weapons, and a retinue of steampunk equipment
- Two new attributes to instill flavor into your game: Dignity and Haitoku

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KANDEN AND THE INNOCUOUS KANZASHI

Situated a few miles from the walls of Sanbaoshi, Masama Nipyurēta's home was like estates of any of the Masuto Imperial family's prized bengoshi officials: a sprawling fortress, practically a miniature city unto itself. Tightening the fittings on his augmetics and waiting for the nearby guard to turn her attention elsewhere, Kanden made a crouching dash for the wall and dived into its moat after a rapid sprint just as she began walking away. Ignoring most of the virulent toxins within the water the undead ninja approached the far shore, fitting nekode onto his natural (albeit fleshless) hand before sliding the metal digits of his augmetic into the bamboo bulwark. Ascending in a bound and using a few punctuated strikes, Kanden crossed over the top of the wall—wincing in pain at the electrified razorwire on its outside edge but easily enduring a shock that would kill a human—and into Masama Nipyurēta's estate before the sentry turned back around.

Leaping onto an adjacent rooftop and crouching against the inside of the wall, Kanden assessed the security of the estate. More samurai (many with augmetics replacing their eyes or ears) wandered about the grounds and with so many enhanced warriors at his disposal, the necroji ninja thought, the masters were sure to garner valuable information from Nipyurēta. Mentally recalling the maps he'd been given and orienting himself with the front gate of the manor, Kanden silently jumped across buildings, keen to avoid detection and carefully watching the perimeter wall for any signs of sentries. Listening for the hiss of escaping pressure from one of their augmetics he carefully circled the second floor of the main house, working towards the northeastern corner and the Masuto bengoshi's private study. Carefully unlocking a window and sliding it to the side, he slipped into the building and approached a table holding a tray of combs, ointments, and salves.

Kanden reached into his pocket and produced the item the masters had spent thousands of imperial pieces crafting: a simple kanzashi. A casual observer would never notice it, but behind the comb's sheen of lacquered wood were antennae and receivers, able to record sounds and transmit them across great distances. Most importantly the item looked absolutely identical to one of Bengoshi Nipyurēta's personal items, something sure to be near many private discussions of import. Taking the original kanzashi and breaking it between the mechanical fingers of his hand augmetic, Kanden depressed a small imperfection on its replacement, activating the device before slipping back out the window.

Dropping back to the ground to avoid the wall sentries and running along the perimeter of the fortress, Kanden spotted an opening forming between the guards stalking atop the bulwark. Bounding up on piston-powered steam augmetics, the necroji landed deftly atop a building, exposed for only a moment. Crouching low and judging how far of a leap would be needed to pass entirely over the wall, the modulated voice of a samurai bellowed out and caused the ninja to stumble, falling forward and back to the estate's grounds, "HALT!"

A NECROJI NINJA & ONI LORD NOKAO'S FORTRESS

For the hundredth time as he trekked the mountains of Osore, Kanden damned the Bengoshi Masama Nipyurēta. The winds here were cold enough to chill even his skeletal form and the experience was only slightly preferable to the graphically depictive alternative presented to him after the servant of the Masuto imperial family discovered the trespassing ninja—though he'd tried to strike it from his mind, he couldn't help but think of all the necroji that must have gone through that rice mill already. Maybe freezing to death was the true punishment for his crime, Kanden mused to himself.

Scrambling over a stretch of rockface by jamming his augmetic hand into the ice, he crested yet another peak to reveal a fortress among the crags below him. Not only far removed from the one he'd penetrated just a week before, this estate was extremely different for a much more obvious reason—the ruler of this place was undoubtedly as monstrous as Bengoshi Nipyurēta, but oni lord Satsuji Nokao was considerate enough to appear that way. Satsuji was well known for his ruthlessness and Kanden believed it when the bengoshi explained that the ogre wu-jen had already dispatched a half dozen agents sent here for the Fan-Hand of Saru-No-Ō. The monstrous warlock was feared throughout the Osore prefecture as a butcherer, and the necroji's hackles dropped a bit as he gazed over the sprawling castle grounds and realized that its overlord was not present. Short, spindly goblin sentries sat in one of the towers on the fortress' corners, but the bakemono were clearly new recruits and not very smart (one had even managed to doze off to sleep); even from here Kanden could sense that defeating them would be easy.

Flitting off of an icy peak as a gale picked up and concealed by the snow, Kanden unleashed the pistons in his powerful legs to propel him a dozen paces in a leap down into the nearest guard tower, killing an unsuspecting bakemono instantly with a vicious kick to soften his landing. The sentry's partner stumbled backwards as the ninja rolled to a knee, crouching low and unleashing his leg again to batter the remaining guard against a pylon. As he easily crushed the life from the armored goblin's body, Kanden thought that the shinobi which failed to infiltrate this place must have been fools indeed to have been undone by such miserable creatures.

Then something caught his undead eye—obscured by the swirling white tempest and recessed back into the far guard tower to his north, the necroji could just make out the form of another bakemono guard, this one using a large blinded lantern to flash a sequence in his direction. As the sentry blocked and unblocked the light in a pattern Kanden desperately tried to deconstruct, the ninja picked up a large fan held by one of the dead creatures and flashed back the exact same sequence before leaping down onto the perimeter wall, bounding forward as quickly as possible. Hopefully the bakemono would be confused by his ruse long enough for him to reach them and cut them down; either way, this mission wasn't going to be as easy as he'd expected.

BENGOSHI NIPYURĒTA'S REVENGE

It seemed that Kanden's true purpose in infiltrating the home of Masama NipyurĒta, servant of the imperial Musata family, had been discovered—though he was quite sure that the technological duplicate of the bengoshi's kanzashi was too perfect a replication to have given him away, the crushed remains of the original comb could have caused the current situation in which the necroji found himself. After returning from the oni lord's castle to hand over a decanter highly valued by the ogre wu-jen that formerly owned it, the undead ninja was nearly decapitated by Bengoshi NipyurĒta's attendant samurai before throwing down a smoke bomb and disappearing in the black fog. Led onward by warriors equipped with advanced electrolenses or high-functioning hornears, the lord's lackeys gave chase and Kanden lured them towards the Chōkōsōbiru bamboo forest, hoping to lose them among the thickets.

After a mile of looping trails in a route he'd hoped would throw his pursuers off, the necroji realized with a sinking sensation that they had managed to surround him, many of the samurai simply cutting down the woods around them rather than falling for his ploy. Nearing the two closest torchlights, Kanden activated the Fan-Hand of Saru-No-Ō augmetic replacing his hand, switching the blades to on and sending a gust of wind that extinguished the lights of many of his pursuers. Only the radiance of the moon shone down now, leaving the ninja in an ideal position: most of his enemies were not at home in the darkness, but to him it was practically daylight.

Lurching from the east came a huge samurai wielding a tetsubo, dashing forward so quickly that Kanden was forced to take her strike into his raised arms. Most of the club's impact resonated across his skeletal body, softening the blow, and in response he stabbed into her exposed neck with his metallic hand, ripping out her throat in a grisly and satisfying slurch. Before he could disappear in the gap she left in the encroaching circle of warriors one of the woman's slender allies leapt forward on steamleg augmetics not unlike Kanden's, landing a katana strike that nearly lopped off his bony arm and destroyed the Fan-Hand of Saru-No-Ō. Replying in kind, the ninja kicked him away with a telescopic leg and followed it with a flurry of poisoned kunai, quickly downing the man.

Then a pair of samurai began to charge at the necroji from either side and Kanden realized that he might not ever leave this place. The unadorned swordsmen had no augmetics but flitted forward quickly all the same, slashing away as they sprinted forward. Behind each the woods were crashing down onto the ground in cacophonous waves, every swipe of their blades so perfect that all of the bamboo stalks stood tall for a few moments after being cut before sliding down onto the forest floor and pitching down onto the ground. Reaching into concealed compartments in his robes, Kanden unleashed a half dozen kunai at each of his assailants but they easily smacked the daggers out of the air before reaching him and the last thing he sees is the keen edge of a katana glittering in the moonlight, the sharp steel only a fraction of an inch from his unliving eye.

NEW RACE: NECROJI

NECROJI TRAITS

Your necroji character has an assortment of inborn abilities, driven by fell Ropaeo science and magic worked into your very bones—the last remaining parts of your living body.

Ability Score Increase. Your Constitution score increases by 1.

Age. Necroji are mature when created and as undead they are effectively immortal.

Alignment. Necroji are almost always some variation of evil, though a few have become legendary for their good deeds.

Size. Necroji are between 5 and 6 feet in height and though the skeleton of their original bodies only weighs a few dozen pounds, all of the machinery that animates them makes their total weight in excess of 250 pounds. Your size is Medium.

Speed. Your base walking speed is 30 feet.

Darkvision. Powered by electricity, your senses are able to see far more than the average human. You can see in dim light within 60 feet of you as if it were bright light, and in darkness as if it were dim light. You can't discern color in darkness, only shades of gray.

Undead Abomination. You gain resistance to cold, lightning, necrotic, poison, and bludgeoning damage. You do not need to eat, drink water, or breathe, and you are immune to the poisoned condition. You still require a resting period that emulates sleep in order to recharge your inner workings.

Unliving Freak. You gain disadvantage on social skill checks made against humanoids. You never suffer disadvantage on Intimidation checks.

Vulnerability. You gain vulnerability to radiant damage.

CAPITAL BLACK MARKETS

The sharp smell of solder filled the air, insufficiently masked by a musky incense that filled the small, dark room. Dai-Lan stood surrounded by shelves stuffed with inconsequential toys and bits—though some might even have value, they were just a front for the store's real purpose.

Lan's pack lay heavy against his belly, both literally and figuratively. He was eager to sell it; there was no telling when the Imperial Guard would make their next pass through the district. He drummed his fingers over the package once again until the shop's owner—a mousy man who wore clothing far too large for him—finally appeared.

"I've got some new product." Lan proposed, skipping over the formal greeting on account of the bad feeling he had. They would have minutes, at best. "But I am in a hurry, so..." he trailed off as he dumped out the cloth onto the table, the metal clanking heavily.

Nothing was particularly fragile, but the shopkeeper picked up each piece like it might fall apart at any second, examining them carefully from every angle: a small, powerful air compressor; a clockwork hand with a concealed, spring-mounted blade inside; a mouthpiece that enabled you to speak in a half-dozen different voices. None of it was particularly dangerous or even valuable—but all of it was just on the other side of Sanbaoshi law.

"I have some other pieces you might be interested in," the shopkeeper drawled, producing a tiny yet complex sphere from within the folds of one of his sleeves, "This doodad, for example, can walk and even carry out simple instructions."

Dai-Lan lacked the humor for this tired routine. "I have no need for toys. I am interested in gold." The fact that every time he claimed to be in a rush, the shopkeeper would offer him a toy frustrated him greatly.

"I have a shirt made of golden chain," the man offered. "It would go well with your complexion."

"Coin. Imperial stamp. No more playing." Lan frowned, causing his lips to purse and his ears to stick out unusually far from the sides of his head (even when he was in human form).

"Fine, fine," the old man replied, looking at him wryly. "How does one hundred and fifty sound?"

It sounded like highway robbery but it compared favorably to getting thrown into prison—they don't treat hengeyokai very well on the inside, even in the Imperial Prefecture. "Good enough. Quickly, I was not joking when I said I was in a hurry."

The man behind the counter raised his eyebrows in half surprise, not expecting such a deal to have been accepted, and opened a concealed panel in one wall to reveal what must have been thousands of coins.

But Lan didn't have a chance to count, or even collect. The door to the shop slammed open—all the more worryingly because Lan had locked it behind him—and he heard the sound of heavy footprints on the bamboo floor. A guard wearing imperial mountain armor, no doubt.

"Sorry, too late." Lan muttered quietly, sweeping everything on the counter into the pack slung across his chest. Not wasting a motion, he leapt up over the tabletop—but Dai-Lan the man didn't land on the other side. Instead there was a small monkey with slate-gray hair and golden eyes darting out the back of the shop.

"It isn't what it looks like..." Lan heard the man exclaim to one of the guards who wasn't attempting to follow him. At least the man didn't know Lan's name—and neither did he know the name of the shopkeeper. Anonymity was the best protection in the black market. So long as he could outrun the heavily armed fellow that was already falling behind, he'd be home free...

A MONKĪ AND THE PEOPLE OF THE CAPITAL

Sanbaoshi was enjoying its first cloudless day in over a week. Not that it had been raining, but it had been mostly overcast, and it was nice to be out in the sun. Dai-Lan wasn't the only one to think so—today the capital's streets were absolutely packed.

Which is why Lan wasn't on the streets. He was up on the third story roof, surrounded by tiny gears, springs, and plates of metal, and a single solid clockwork piece of complexity that went beyond even his understanding. The space was exactly large enough for the work he was doing and the monkī hengeyokai sat calmly and cross-legged as his hands worked, allowing his mind to free itself from the physical demands of dismantling and reassembling clockwork.

As he tinkered his breathing steadied. The dreaded Mists of Akuma were all but forgotten on a day like today, and the air was warm and clear. He smelled fresh baking bread from nearby, and roasted pork dumplings. He heard the clamor of a hundred voices, the slapping of a thousand sandals on the paved streets, the clatter of coins and the soft tinkle of the small metal pieces in his hands—he was a part of the living, breathing city.

Looking down at the throng below with his mind unfocused, Lan began to recognize faces in the crowd. Some he had seen many times before, others he had known intimately. Most he was seeing now for the first time, or he had only seen in passing.

There, he recognized Gon-Baolin. An exception to Lan's rule never to learn the names of his customers, Baolin was unique in that most of his body was now clockwork. His true nature hidden beneath elaborate and colorful robes, Baolin looked on the street more like a masked cripple. Those he passed beside gave him a wide berth for fear of catching some strange disease, not knowing that thanks to his mechanical lungs, Baolin might be the city's only survivor if such a sickness were to strike.

Further down the street he recognized the flash of steel hurled high into the air. He knew the owner of those knives: his one-time lover Sho-Kim. She was an expert with a sword, masquerading as a simple street performer. Lan didn't know the truth behind her, but she claimed to be a masterless samurai from before the coming of the mists—it wouldn't be impossible, but if it were true it would mean she wasn't the human she claimed to be, as she would have to be over a hundred years old (not a spritely and shapely young woman in her twenties). But then, despite appearances Lan wasn't human either.

A click from his hands drew his attention. Lan looked down to see that the reassembly was complete: a clockwork hand with long, thin fingers. With a twist of a knob, each finger splayed out into long, flat blades, engraved upon which was a pattern of a dragon battling a tiger. The fan-hand augmetic was a common sight in Chikan, the "Star of the North", where they combatted the Mists of Akuma just by blowing it away.

Fools.

Still, now that it had been cleaned and fixed it would be worth a pretty penny to the right person. Maybe Baolin was in the market for a new hand...

HENGEYOKAI AND A DIRTY JOB

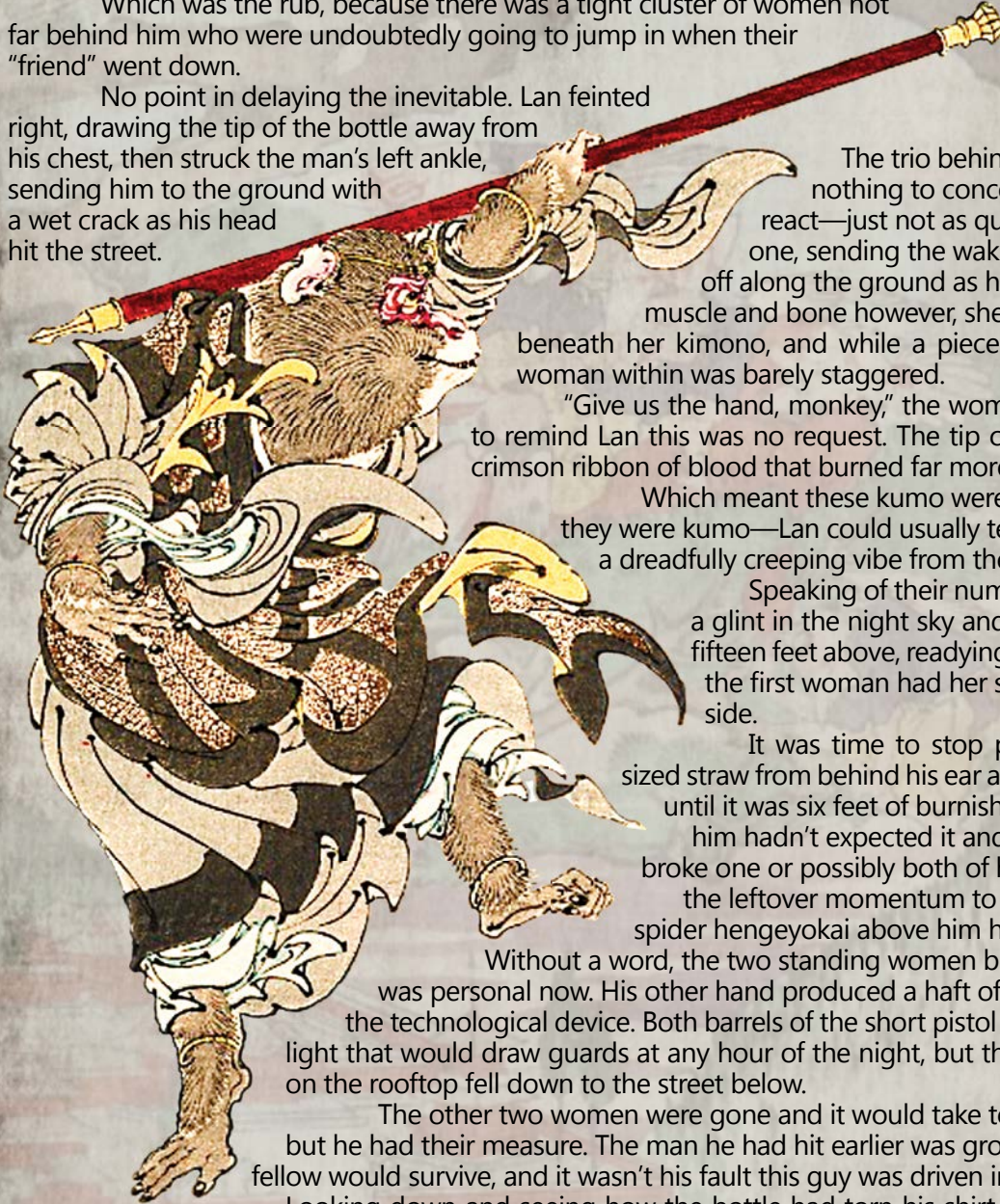
NEW ITEM: FAN-HAND

Shards of broken glass flew everywhere, crashing against the walls and skidding along the ground. It stopped only where it stuck to droplets of blood that had been splattered onto the paved stones moments before.

The jagged tip of the broken bottle was nothing to sneeze at, the monk knew, but the man behind it was hardly a seasoned warrior. Not that Lan truly considered himself to be either seasoned or a warrior, but he was a disciplined and capable combatant—his opponent with the bottle, well, he was there to soften Lan up.

Which was the rub, because there was a tight cluster of women not far behind him who were undoubtedly going to jump in when their “friend” went down.

No point in delaying the inevitable. Lan feinted right, drawing the tip of the bottle away from his chest, then struck the man’s left ankle, sending him to the ground with a wet crack as his head hit the street.



The trio behind him, women in loose kimonos that did nothing to conceal their blades or fangs, were quick to react—just not as quick as Lan had been. He struck the arm of one, sending the wakizashi she had begun to draw scattering off along the ground as he kned another in the chest. Rather than muscle and bone however, she was wearing some sort of ceramic armor beneath her kimono, and while a piece of plating cracked from the impact the woman within was barely staggered.

“Give us the hand, monkey,” the woman called out, bringing her blade around to remind Lan this was no request. The tip caught him just above the eye, drawing a crimson ribbon of blood that burned far more than it should.

Which meant these kumo were using poison. At least he was pretty sure they were kumo—Lan could usually tell if someone wasn’t human—and he got a dreadfully creeping vibe from the trio.

Speaking of their number, he had lost the third. His eyes caught a glint in the night sky and Lan saw that she had managed to climb fifteen feet above, readying throwing knives in each hand. As she did, the first woman had her sword again, pinning Lan from the other side.

It was time to stop playing around. He plucked a toothpick-sized straw from behind his ear and swung it around; as it span it expanded until it was six feet of burnished wood and brass. The kumo in front of him hadn’t expected it and even as she raised her blade to parry, he broke one or possibly both of her arms with the force of the blow, using the leftover momentum to spin around and catch the kunai that the spider hengeyokai above him had thrown.

Without a word, the two standing women began to flee in different directions—but it was personal now. His other hand produced a haft of polished metal and pulled the trigger on the technological device. Both barrels of the short pistol went off with a thunderclap and a flash of light that would draw guards at any hour of the night, but the bullets found their mark and the kumo on the rooftop fell down to the street below.

The other two women were gone and it would take too long to reload or chase them down—but he had their measure. The man he had hit earlier was groaning. Good, Lan thought; he hoped the fellow would survive, and it wasn’t his fault this guy was driven into this mess.

Looking down and seeing how the bottle had torn his shirt open, Lan lamented that he’d need a replacement. Rather than pay for it himself he tore a string of coins from the fallen kumo’s neck, his ears pricking up as the sound of people approaching came from around the corner. Not keen on being pinned for any more murders, Lan vaulted up the wall and vanished into the night, leaving the unfortunate drunk to explain things to the Imperial Guard.

FAN-HAND AUGMETIC (FAN NO TE)

Uncommon; +1 Haitoku

You can cast the *gust of wind* spell without the need for material or verbal components, using Haitoku as your spellcasting trait. You may use your fan-hand a number of times equal to proficiency bonus before you require a long rest.

Alternatively, you can use your fan-hand to cast *feather fall* instead of *gust of wind*, but may only target yourself when doing so.

You become proficient at striking with your fan-hand as a light weapon that deals 1d6 slashing damage.

A fan-hand has 30 hit points.



A PRIESTESS' MYSTERY AT YOMOKITA

Hibike Natsuko and the snake spirit Hiba (her ever-present kami guide) cautiously made their way into the village of Yomokita. Despite being the most productive mining village in the region, the streets were largely empty and quiet, with only a few lights in the windows.

"I don't like this," Natsu muttered.

Try this. You'll like it even less. For an instant Hiba allowed her to briefly see as he could and she was suddenly aware that while the swamp was physically at the other end of the village, spiritually speaking it had almost engulfed the entire settlement. Before she could ask about the anomaly the familiar sound of chanting drifted to her ears—someone was trying to appease the kami.

A young girl in apprentice's robes sat near the edge of the swamp at a small, obviously hastily erected shrine. Not even the most devout could find fault with the fervency of the girl's chanting, however. Her voice was hoarse, but she clutched the ceremonial gohei wand tightly with her trembling fingers.

Natsu approached slowly, stopping a few feet from the shrine. Clearing her throat startled the girl, causing the amateur devotee to nearly knock over the small shrine and its offering of fuki stalks. Hiba chose this inopportune moment to enter the corporeal world and the girl flailed still more before throwing herself on her face in a bow. "Are you the great snake of the swamp?" the young miko maiden asked quietly, peering through her fingers at the two. Natsu had to concentrate to not snort in laughter as Hiba arched his body vainly.

"No, child. My name is Natsuko. I'm a priestess, and this is my kami guide, Hiba-sama. We heard about the swamp and came to investigate." The girl looked up at this, her eyes brimming with tears.

"You can't!" She lunged forward and took ahold of Natsu's ankle. "It'll eat you just like it ate Kuzo-sensei!"

Natsu frowned. She hadn't heard that the swamp was deadly to humans yet—it must be more advanced than they had initially thought. She knelt down and smoothed back the child's hair. "Tell me what's wrong, little one. Start from the beginning."

The story spilled out of the girl in a torrent of sobbing explanations tinged with the guilt of personal failure. The swamp had come up from seemingly nowhere some weeks ago and had grown to impressive size within a few days as the village's herd of goats disappeared. Then a few of the children went missing. Kuzo, the settlement's priest, had attempted to first communicate with then console whatever kami had brought the swamp in its wake, but after it took the children the village pushed him to act directly. Three days ago after a night spent in prayer and preparation he had ventured into the swamp, leaving his apprentice—the young Uruzami—to tend the shrine in his absence.

He had not returned.

"It's all right, Uru-chan," Natsuko said, gently detaching the child from her leg. "Hiba and I will find the bottom of this."

"And by *this*," Hiba hissed in her ear, "I hope you don't mean that creature's stomach."

NATSUKO AND THE HEART OF THE SWAMP

Well it's not a stomach. Hiba offered unhelpfully as Natsuko struggled to free herself from the vines at the bottom of the pool. But I guess I'll see you in your next lifetime, right?

Hiba! she thought furiously at him. *I don't have any children, remember? There will be no 'next time'!*

Oh, right, the snake spirit relented. *Fine then.* There was a burst of warmth in her chest and flash of golden light as the vines fell away and Natsu kicked her way to the surface. She gulped air into her burning lungs and floundered onto the bank of the pool, grasping weakly at her fallen staff.

"So it's not a kami creating the swamp," she muttered between coughing up dirty water.

It's the swamp itself, Hiba agreed as the mound of half-rotted swamp grasses rose up before them again.

Natsu groped for her exorcism slips, thankful for the magic that she had imbued them with that kept the ink from running.

"Hiba," she panted as the slip of paper started to glow with blue fire, "I need you to look for any weak points." The kami hissed his affirmative, and she could feel the ghostly tickle of his incorporeal form flexing. The priestess flung the paper at the malformed kami; it flew through the air like an arrow, sticking to the creature's skin and igniting it with holy fire. Giving a burbling roar, the strange monster embodying the swamp's energies raked its tree branch claws at Natsu, tearing a gash in her leg. Snatching up her staff, she managed to put distance between the two of them as the slip continued to burn.

I need a focus point, Hiba hissed in her mind, *The swamp's energy is all over.*

Nodding, Natsu reached to her belt where her prayer beads hung, the feel of the well-worn wood comforting in her hand. They were not her personal set, but one handed down from her mother, and her grandmother before her and so on, all the way back to when Hiba had first merged with their bloodline. Chanting to herself, she focused the bead's power into honing Hiba's spiritual senses and was rewarded with a triumphant hiss.

There! Suddenly Hiba's sight was her sight and she could sense a point at the kami's center. It had never been an animal or plant—it was an item of some sort, corrupted into the monster before her. The Mists must have tainted it. We have to end this, Hiba hissed, all of his usual humor gone.

Stashing her ancestral beads, Natsuko instead grabbed at her own set, the one she had been gifted with the day she completed her training. Dodging in between the creature's attacks she gripped her staff in both hands, focusing her devotion; a snake of golden light formed around it and she struck out at the monster, the weapon passing effortlessly through grass and logs alike until it hit the center.

The kami roared again, falling apart as a shining bell was knocked from its body—a shrine bell, she realized, taking a knee as the swamp began to shrink around her.

A PRIESTESS' WORK IS NEVER DONE

"When your new sensei gets here you'll have to teach them to tend it in the same way. All right, Uru-chan?" Natsuko said as she lit the last of the ceremonial candles. Together the two of them had erected a small but sturdy shrine to the bell and made the necessary offerings. With any luck the ritual would keep the corruption in the item at bay and the kami inside of it appeased. Of course it might turn into tsukumogami any time—even Hiba couldn't be certain when the Mists of Akuma were involved. At any rate she was no hunter of the things, so it would have to be someone else's problem.

"Of course, Natsuko-sama," Uruzaki said solemnly. It wasn't fair—leaving her like this—but there was no helping it. Hiba's presence eventually made the kami of the area more active so they'd have to move on or risk disrupting the village further.

"I think you've got a bright future ahead of you. Hiba-sama says that your prayers kept the swamp from overtaking the village after Kuzo-san disappeared." Hiba hissed fussily that he certainly did not, but Natsu ignored him. "Here, you should have this." She pressed a set of clay prayer beads into the girl's hand. "I found it after the swamp dried up."

"They were Kuzo-sensei's," Uruzaki said, sniffing. She clutched them to her chest and stared at the patch of bare earth beyond the village where the swamp had appeared. "But Natsuko-sama, there's something that bothers me. We don't have the mists very often up here, and I've never heard of a missing bell at the shrine."

Natsu bit her lip in thought. If the bell hadn't come from here, how had it gotten to the mountain top? "It might have come with a merchant," she proposed. "Or it laid dormant for a long time. Kami move slowly."

That's not it, and you know it. But the girl seemed satisfied, at least for the moment.

"There's a shrine not far from here. I'll have them send someone out to teach you and help guard this place. And I've talked to the village elder; she'll make sure that the offerings start again and that you're fed."

Only after you threatened to bring the kami of the mountain down on her.

Natsuko stood and adjusted the slips at her belt, trying to blink back a few tears. "You'll be fine until then. You're a brave girl, Uru-chan."

The girl turned then and gave her a tight hug before backing off embarrassed, giving a deep bow instead. "Thank you, Natsuko-sama. I will try to do you proud!"

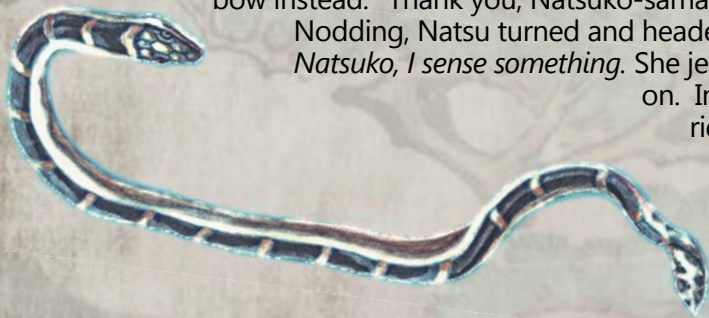
Nodding, Natsu turned and headed towards the trail before she could be tempted to stay.

Natsuko, I sense something. She jerked her head up in the direction that Hiba was focused on. In the distance she could make out a small pond on the next ridge. That hadn't been there yesterday—and there was another beyond that.

And another.

It traveled, Hiba said, incredulous for once.

Natsu stared forward grimly. "And it left seeds."



NOBARU'S MASQUERADE

The clatter of wooden sandals echoed into the night as an otherwise empty alley in Daibendo played host to the two women. One was a collection of unkempt hair, a tattered kimono, soft skin, a young face, and lost, empty eyes. The other was far older with flowing, ash-colored hair, scholar's robes twice her size, a landscape of wrinkles, and a look of utter annoyance. The two were a sight to behold, sprinting through the alley faster than its roaming dogs could flee from their approach.

This part of Daibendo was usually empty at this hour, shared only by the rare patrol after curfew—not that any guard would dare arrest Nobaru. She was well known in the city and drawing the old woman's ire was nowhere on the list of a guard's duties so they kept their distance. The alley led past the settlement to the beach beyond and the clatter of sandals drowned under the soft sands, kicking up black grains in every direction. Each woman slowed as they slogged through the sands, plodding through until reaching the edge of the water. Here the young woman stopped and Nobaru followed suit; the girl turned around, her eyes the color of rust with blood spilling forth from the edges.

"Enough, witch!" screamed the girl. Her voice shook the sands and her hair fell away in thick clumps, lost among the onyx sands underfoot. A fissure split on the left side of her scalp and rent its way down the rest of her face. From within emerged a long, slender, chitinous leg that darted out and almost grazed Nobaru. A second leg burst forth, followed by two more. The segments of her legs bent inward, planting in the sands and lifting the girl's body as they stretched.

The old woman stared on as transformation continued. "I know what you are," Nobaru threatened.

"You are a fool and know only lies," hissed the creature, spitting a horrid acid the color of spoiled wine, boiling the sands beneath as it hit the ground.

"Tell me then," continued Nobaru, "why do you hide in the mists?"

A rasping chuckle rose up in the creature, escaping through the girl's mouth and the chasm in her head. "Old woman, we do not hide—to hide implies that we are afraid. No, we are not hiding, but lying in wait for our time to strike!" She spat the word with poison, the acid shooting straight at Nobaru's chest. The woman vaulted away in time to avoid it, crashing into the sand.

Nobaru leapt to her feet to see the creature fleeing across the water at an inhuman speed; she could not catch her like this. The aged and weathered skin covering her own body molted away to reveal thick, sapphire scales beneath a long serpentine frame. Taking to the air in pursuit of the monster, Tsunaro the Great Bolt moved far more swiftly but her quarry had a significant lead—in just a few seconds, it escaped. The imperial dragon watched as the creature disappeared into the Mists of Akuma below, roaring in annoyance and turning away to fly off into the night sky.

A PAPER KAMI & IMPERIAL DRAGON

Even for a library the building was deathly quiet. Nobaru slipped past the guards with relative ease, their ward seemingly found within their eyelids instead of within the Library of Scrolls. She did not fault them for their lax vigilance—they knew not what was kept inside.

The Library of Scrolls was the smallest library in all of Sanbaoshi and the perfect hiding place for lost tomes. The building mostly held artwork from the distant past: paintings, poems, and great tales detailing old myths and legends that some say still held power. Each was a marvel even for the common folk, but there was truth to the tales told about some of the relics.

Nobaru moved past shelves of parchment, gliding as if walking on a bed of air. At the furthest end of the library sat a small table topped with cups and saucers arranged in preparation for the morning's tea ceremony. She moved the table aside with an ease unbecoming of a senior such as herself and with a long, sharp nail she cut into the rug below, revealing a trap door in the wooden floor. Beneath it she found a massive room filled with bookcases stuffed with all manner of tomes and scrolls.

The old woman began her search, walking through the aisles of meticulously catalogued annals, chronicles, and files. After hours of combing she was finally at the bookcase she sought. Reaching for the tome she required, the scrolls surrounding it spilled forth in an avalanche of paper. Nobaru jumped back and watched as the scrolls folded upon themselves into a mass that grew larger and larger before taking the shape of a paper lion, squatting down before her and ready to pounce. It shook its mane, causing the parchment to crumple and rip before folding back on itself to repair any imperfections with a musical quality that rang out in a grinding hum.

"What you seek is forbidden," warned the lion in a cacophony of ruffles.

"I know what I seek guardian," spat Nobaru in aggravation. "The Mists of Akuma are a peril that's remained for too long. It is imperative I learn more about them. Now stand down—you would not be the first paper kami I've faced."

The lion roared and leapt at the elderly woman, swiping at her face with its claws, but Nobaru ducked under the beast with uncanny grace. As it landed the kami refolded itself into a mantis, lashing out at her with razor-barbed legs and striking true, slicing her arm. With an enraged growl she gave the mantis a kick and it fell apart into scrolls that quickly refolded into a swarm of paper monkeys. The primates overwhelmed Nobaru, drowning her in a pile of parchment before a mighty roar rang forth and parchment exploded in every direction. From beneath rose a long, serpentine dragon clad in turquoise scales. The paper was still.

Tsunaro the Great Bolt snatched a tome from the shelf and returned to the surface, deigning not to assume her lesser form and flowing through the air with ease, coiling her body through the passages before slinking out of the building. The guards remained ignorant in their slumber as the imperial dragon floated away into the night sky.

PAPER KAMI

Large monstrosity (kami), Neutral

Armor Class 18 (2 natural)

Hit Points 90 (12d10+24)

Speed 40 ft., climb 20 ft., fly 30 ft. (hover)

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 Common, Draconic

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 each turn.

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.



NEW CREATURE: PAPER KAMI

TSUNARO'S WARNING

The daimyo's patience was wearing thin—the old woman sought an audience with him but seemed intent to speak only of falsehoods and ghost stories.

"Honored Nobaru," he proclaimed, leaning forward on his ornate cushion, "I do—and always have—trusted your scholarly word. What you speak of today is lunacy. Whatever creatures threaten us, be they the tsukumogami from beyond the Great Divide or something worse, we have been more than capable of defending our great city. Now you say that an army is amassing within the mists? It is pure foolishness. None of our scouting fleet has made any report of such activity."

Nobaru scowled in irritation. "Yes, my lord, yet I speak nothing but truths in your court. This is why I believe that an alliance with Fuson is—"

"Enough!" bellowed the daimyo, causing his guards to flinch. "To even propose such a thing with the heretics of Fuson is a great offense in my court and you best keep such thoughts to yourself if you wish to leave here with your honor intact. Now, do you have something else to inform me of or are you done here?"

She gave a heavy sigh, looking down at her feet. "My lord, it is my intention to gather as much assistance in this matter as possible. I plead that you consider—"

"Guards," he interrupted, "deal with Lady Nobaru. She clearly has forgotten to whom she speaks."

The guards marched forward, swords in hands, but the elderly woman drew her fan and caught the first samurai's katana. The fan collapsed around the steel blade and she pulled it away, letting the weapon sink into the wood below. The other guard was closing in on her and with a flick of her wrist, the closed fan flew forth and struck him in the temple, staggering him for a brief instant.

It was enough time for Nobaru to spring forth and drive her fists into the man's belly, tossing him back and reeling in pain. The first guard rushed up, dagger in hand, and swung wildly at the surprisingly strong and dextrous elder. She ducked beneath the attacks and tripped him with a stiff kick.

"Call off your men," ordered Nobaru, standing on the guard's chest.

A panel slid open at the far end of the room, revealing a dozen guards that spilled forth wielding spears, swords, and staves. The squad surrounded Nobaru, weapons intently held in her direction. Exasperated, she let loose and roared in anger as her skin tore away, a layer of azure scales appearing from beneath. The guards stepped back as they watched the old woman stretch into the shape of a snake-like dragon, causing the daimyo's eyes to grow wide in terror.

"Pathetic daimyo," growled the dragon. "I offered you a chance to work together for the good of Daisanji. Instead, you rebuff me and threaten me with your toy soldiers. Know this, fool: the legions of the Mists of Akuma approach—and I will let them take your pitiful life." A crash rang out as the imperial dragon broke through the ceiling, lost to the night sky.

KARROOC'S FEVERISH OBSESSION

I never had much love for the smog, constantly billowing like wet coal in the sky, its arms coiling around and into everything that made the lands of my ancestors so...repulsive. Feeling like a stranger in your homeland for nearly all of one's life can drive a person out into the unknown, to settle on alien shores. I could tell you horror stories of Ropaeo—but why bother? Even if most of the Soburi still treat me like the outsider I am, at least that silence hangs heavy with the scent of cherry blossoms in the spring.

My interest in the Soburi began at a young age with a curiosity for their pointed ears, delicate tea ceremonies, and fierce Imperial Dragons (even if the latter were only whispered stories). It wasn't until actually coming to their shores that I learned things were far more real than I had ever imagined as a child. The fantastical stories of the Battle of Gyakusatsu had been told to me but I always fancied myself fairly intelligent, discerning even. Who was I to believe such stories?

Everything I had discounted in my youth, years later, I learned to be true.

It was late into my fourth decade when I first came to the Imperial City of Sanbaoshi—by invitation of all things, much to my surprise. My name renown had gradually grown in the south, known as a talented and fortunate wanderer or a foreign thorn (or "toge" in the local tongue) depending on whom spoke of me. It wasn't surprising when my mysterious benefactor (Bengoshi Kesao I later learned) claimed he had no hand in an attempt on my life, though our brief alliance was undoubtedly spoiled by the poison that nearly killed me.

While many say I was lucky to survive, I am not so sure. In my fevered moments, as the poison coursed through my veins, I saw so many wonders and finally experienced the true peace I hoped to discover in Soburin. It may have only come in small, brief moments, but it came nonetheless. My visions were ecstatic—a kaleidoscope of meditating, half-animal monks on rooftops, peaceful kami with broken teeth. Most impressive was a single ray of the sun's light that grew and expanded, filtering through the mists that rolled darkly onto the broken beaches I once looked excitedly on to cascade around a single Soburi woman, her hand brushing up against me as Bengoshi Kesao's men bore me out into the streets to meet my presumed death.

When I awoke I was penniless and dirty, but still breathing. What little kindness the Imperial Capital was willing to show as monks stepped past and I supped with urchins too curious to know better, I learned harshly as my body slowly recovered. It took days of scrounging but I was soon again hobbling out into the lands I couldn't help but love, even as the cruel whispers of a once proud people reminded me that all would question my dignity and purpose.

But I knew I had to continue onward to seek out the majestic creatures that once filled my youthful mind with vigor and wonder.

Such was—and remains—my obsession.

TORII GATE OF THE TOADS

When the fact that I had lost access to the fabled Library of Scrolls finally settled upon me, I was somewhat saddened, but in my despair I remembered the words of the Great Sage Kioshi of Namida: "Let no man suffer for living." I was alive and more than just that, able to continue my research and my journey—in that I counted my blessings, such as they were. Still that loss bit deeply and in its own way, affected my dignity. With that in heart and mind, I set off for Konbo, in the lands to the south.

Crossing the border into Osore was no small feat and had it not been for the humble and wise guidance of a mute monk—whom I discovered, happily drinking from a small, ceramic bottle of sake by an old shrine in the small mountainside village of Saihaku—I may have not made it past the torii gate. Perhaps some of the old spirits from that shrine were smiling on the pair of us (temporary traveling companions as we were) on our way to a prefecture where science was still embraced and encouraged by Clan Osore. My hopes were that I might use their libraries, since the clan had once allied itself to the Kengen and might still be open to outsiders like me. I didn't express this to the two guards, however; with their green armor and faceplates styled to resemble a fierce toad, it seemed to be a poor idea. Instead I explained that I was accompanying my new friend to his home in Konbo. He only nodded, smiled, and hiccupped to accent my point. The samurai, likely more interested in returning to their tea than talking with two clanless fools, nodded and waved us through.

It took us the better part of a week to reach the riverside city. Konbo was nestled inside what could only be described as "the rice bowl" of Osore, with all of the surrounding hills terraced and filled with farmers tending to their paddies. It was a city cast in golds, greens, and bright reds, the clan banners billowing back and forth in the winds. Just beyond the settlement the river terminated, itself littered with hundreds of junks, some bellowing exhaust, others bobbing up and down on the water in serene silence.

As soon as we crossed into the city formal my quiet companion waved and departed, still sipping from his little ceramic bottle. I spent several hours wandering, lost in thought and marveling at the little technological wonders that defined the city. Making my way to the docks I found a small army of engines pumping a mixture of steam and smoke up into the air. The shouts, the smells, all of it called to me and it wasn't long before I found myself hired out for the day, helping to unload the cargo from a junker called Engimono. With the setting of the all-too-pale sun I joined the regular dockhands in a local tavern and soon learned of a curiosity that piqued my interest—they had heard that a fabled technological relic called the Fan-Hand of Saru-No-Ō was in the city of Chikan, not far from their next destination (the port city of Jinkosugu).

By the evening's end, I had made arrangements to join them.

CHALLENGE IN CHIKAN

I didn't have many plans when I headed for Konbo, only my suspicions. With spring upon us the weather warmed and I was reminded of my youth—it made me want to set out on new journeys, to discover the secrets of the Imperial Dragons that had brought me to Sorubin so long ago—but the changing season provided its own challenges as well. As the weather warmed the natural fogs, especially in the lowlands, became unspoken borders. While I had seen the real Mists of Akuma before (with their telltale deep violet smoke), not everyone had. Worse, everyone knew the mists changed men and as a result, few wanted to take unnecessary risks.

Luckily for the crew and I, our junker made it to Jinkosugu without issue. The crew cried out, "Yatta!" when we finally pulled into the small bay, and before noon I was walking toward Chikan. The settlement was, in many ways, the northern cousin of Konbo; it had its differences, but they were subtle. Rumored to be built atop the bones of a fallen Imperial Dragon, Chikan differed in its reverence for the past and more so for their (some say heretical) traditions. While others prefectures might still hold tight to three millennia of long-practiced traditions, many in Chikan had adopted more modern ways. It made sense that I might learn more of the fabled Fan-Hand of Saru-No-Ō here, as well as gain some of the lost lore about the dragons I so admired.

Most of my afternoon was spent gathering information from the locals I met, and were it not for my tender age I fear many would have ignored me and passed me by. However enough did not, and before dusk I was wandering the city's narrow, dirty alleys looking for a shop called The Forgotten Forge, a place supposedly owned by a foreigner like me. After several hours navigating the byzantine streets and shortly before true night fell I found the store, a dim light glowing through its shuttered and locked windows.

It took me a few breaths to work up the courage to knock—there was an unnatural feeling about this place and while I wasn't one to believe in "auras," something about this shop struck me as foreboding. I raised my hand to knock but before I did, the door cracked open.

The amber light that leaked out from inside had a warming glow but it wasn't nearly as comforting as I might have hoped. I found myself in a small room, no more than a large closet really, with two chairs and a single, small black table. Two cups of tea rest on it, both still steaming. Although there were two chairs, both were empty. I quickly removed my sandals and took a seat.

Then, over an old, crackling speaker, a voice called out. "Mr Karrooc," it said (in perfect Ropaeon, I might add), "you have traveled far for a secret. If you are willing to work on behalf of my bengoshi, you will have it."

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 with normal ability score increases without lowering a character's Haitoku. Otherwise, the GM can choose to increase Dignity (lowering Haitoku) based on how a character acts. At the end of a gaming session, if a character was seen defending the law, protecting against wanton malice, or has otherwise distinguished themselves (such as finishing a mission for a Bengoshi), the GM can increase the character's Dignity by 1 or more (assuming of course that at least one witness survived to spread the word).

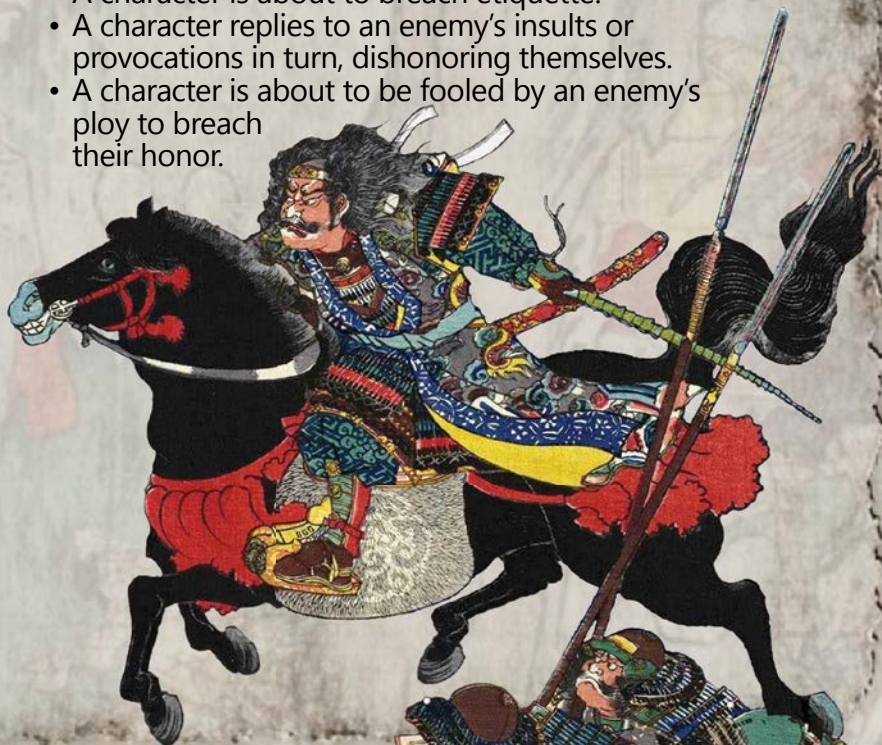
Dignity Checks. Dignity checks can be used much like Charisma, when how honorable a character is plays an impact on a social situation. Generally, if the Culture skill is applicable, Dignity may be used with it.

The GM might also call for a Dignity check in the following instances:

- A character is unsure on how to act honorably.
- A character is surrendering but attempting to retain the respect of their allies and enemies.
- A character wants to know another character's Dignity score (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 with how honorable they are thought to be.
- 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.



ANCESTRAL WEAPON

By showing your inherited weapon great reverence, devotion, and care, you unlock the ancestral power stored within it.

- Choose a weapon that is not part of an augmetic or a firearm. This becomes your ancestral weapon. You treat your ancestral weapon with the same reverence you would a holy book or symbol. Accordingly, you never willingly part with your ancestral weapon—you may not sell it, lend it to others, or otherwise abandon it. If for any reason your ancestral weapon is taken from you, you must do everything in your power to recover it.

Alternatively, you may choose two weapons with the Light quality.

- Your ancestral weapon can be enchanted to grant a bonus to attack and damage. Enchanting your ancestral weapon costs 500 gp per point of enchantment it gains, up to a maximum enchantment bonus of +3 (though your weapon may have a total enchantment bonus equal to your proficiency bonus, the most it can add to attack and damage is +3).
- You may also grant your ancestral weapon the following magical abilities, costing 1 enchantment point each. Increasing the enchantment bonus of your ancestral weapon or altering its abilities requires a ritual that takes 1 hour per enchantment bonus. You require a long rest after changing the enchantments on your ancestral weapon. Any effect enchantment listed below) may only be chosen once.

If you chose two weapons, the maximum total enchantment bonus either ancestral weapon can have is reduced by 2.

Bloody. Each time you deal a critical hit with your ancestral weapon, your weapon's magical damage bonus repeats itself against the target at the start of its turn every round until the wound is stanching with a successful Wisdom (Medicine) check (DC 8 + your ancestral weapon's total enchantment bonus). The wound also closes if the target receives magical healing.

Elemental (2 points). Choose one of the following types of energy: acid, cold, fire, lightning, poison, psychic, or thunder. Your ancestral weapon deals an additional 1d4 damage of that energy type. This damage multiplies on a critical hit.

Forceful. When striking a creature or object that is immune to bludgeoning, piercing, or slashing damage, the creature treats their immunity as resistance instead. By selecting this enchantment effect a second time, your weapon ignores a creature's immunity or resistance to bludgeoning, piercing, or slashing damage.

Graceful. While wielding your ancestral weapon, your AC increases by an amount equal to its magical bonus to attack and damage. If you possess two ancestral weapons, only the highest magical bonus to attack and damage adds to your AC (not both).

Lethal. When your ancestral weapon deals critical hit damage, you double your damage modifiers when calculating critical hit damage.

Sharp. When attacking a target wearing armor, you receive an additional +2 bonus to the attack roll.



DAINAMO OMIRYŌ

Uncommon; +1d4 Haitoku

Despite being highly illegal and banned for trade in most of the scientific prefectures, these are highly sought after all of Soburin. Whenever a creature with a dainamo omiryō casts a damage dealing spell granted by a feat or racial feature, there is a 20% chance the magic is absorbed by the augmetic.

The dainamo omiryō can hold a number of spell levels equal to the creature's proficiency bonus.

Once the dainamo omiryō is at full capacity, the creature can spend an action and bonus action to fire it, dealing the creature's Strength modifier plus 1d10 force damage per spell level in a 75 foot line (a Dexterity saving throw against DC 8 + your Constitution modifier + your proficiency bonus halves damage) or at a single target within 150 feet (on a critical hit, roll the damage dice a second time as normal).

A fully-charged dainamo omiryō must be released within 1 minute or it explodes, dealing force damage to the creature wearing it (no saving throw).

SWORD ARM AUGMETIC

Rare; +1d4 Haitoku

A fairly recent creation, this rare blend of Ceramian science and Soburi martial arts is only utilized by the most dedicated warriors or the truly paranoid—those that would rather lose a hand than ever find themselves unarmed. A sword arm augmetic has the Light and Finesse qualities, deals 1d10 slashing damage, and once installed into a creature grants proficiency. Sword arm augmetics cannot be combined with any other augmetics.

By spending a bonus action to activate the vibrating gearwork within the augmetic, a creature can increase the damage their sword arm deals by 1d6 (this damage multiplies on a critical hit). Any checks made to disarm another creature gain advantage while the sword arm augmetic is vibrating.

Once activated a sword arm augmetic vibrates for one minute. After using this quality of a sword arm augmetic for a number of minutes equal to proficiency bonus a long rest is required before the quality can be activated again.



THE PREFECTURES OF SOBURIN

There are a total of twenty three prefectures (and possibly more if the Kickstarter finds two special backers!) ruled over by the direct descendants of the Imperial Siblings and Masuto Imperial Family. *Mists of Akuma* is a noir game with a narrower scope than other campaign settings however, focusing instead on the details of life in just three regions:

The capital of the Imperial Prefecture, Sanbaoshi, a metropolis that tentatively embraces technology but is still steeped in the traditions of Soburin's past.

Chikan, Star of the North, where science is a part of everyday life and the Mists of Akuma are kept at bay with turbines, fans, and other machines that create powerful blasts of air.

Nagabuki, Gem of the South, is within the martial prefecture of Ikari and home to the monastic order of tattooed monks, utilizing magic to treat those afflicted by the fell fogs.

Traditions kept alive since the millennia long Ichizoku Wars caused different magical and martial disciplines to develop as much as the drafting enforced by foreign invaders during the historically more recent Kengen Occupation, informing the nature of each clan's bengoshi and henchmen as well as their culture.

SANBAOSHI

The Masuto rose to power at the end of the Ichizoku Wars, leveraging something against the Imperial Dragons that allowed their upstart forces—mostly paid ronin and spellswords—to finally overcome the armies of the 22 warring clans. Once she had assumed authority, Sohei Masuto cemented her family's place in Soburin by claiming the center of the continent as their own, governing from the heart of the landmass and creating a bulwark against the greatest clan rivalries. The tactic worked and from the capital of Sanbaoshi a Masuto has ruled as Emperor for an almost 1500 unbroken years.

Ceramia invaders recognized the great value of the Imperial Capital immediately, targeting it in the Battle of Gyakusatsu and breaking the will of Soburin in a violent display of superior warfare that cowed the continent. Using it as their beachhead, advanced science became more and more common in Sanbaoshi as the Kengen Occupation wore on for over a century. Today, 50 years since the fall of the Kengen (the last remnants of Ceramian and Ropaeo forces still alive after the War of Kaiyo's apocalyptic end on the other side of the Great Divide), many of their technologies are banned. The most violent or invasive machinery is forbidden, as are some even innocuous items, but others remain: electric lanterns are everywhere, tinkerers' shops can be found all throughout the metropolis, and samurai fitted with steel augmetics walk the city's streets.

As the central seat of government Sanbaoshi is a place of great intrigue among the bengoshi of the clans. Each of these functionaries is constantly at work for their lords, working to undermine their rivals and raise their patron's esteem as well as their own. The Imperial Guard is *constantly* chasing down suspicious persons and the Imperial Capital has countless potential agents to spare—adventurers are common here, easy to manipulate, and cost only a few Imperial Pieces (so any bengoshi worth their salt is never in short supply of either).

Emperor Hitoshi Masuto's tolerance for technology, the city's strategic location, and the flurry of nightly activity that keeps its defenders occupied has made the capital a hotbed for smuggling. The trade of illegal goods is a constant problem in Sanbaoshi, fueled by bengoshi using the illicit devices for all manner of immoral aims and technologists looking to make a profit by outfitting adventurers with cutting-edge augmetics. It doesn't help that some of the largest concentrations of Ceramian and Ropaeo communities still in Soburin can be found in the Imperial Capital. These gaijin are by and large unwanted (spurned for

continuing on the destructive paths of their foreign ancestors) but as long as they serve a purpose to the clans' functionaries, they are sure to remain a thorn in the side of the Imperial Guard.

Seishin Nohantā

With technology from before the rise of Emperor Hitoshi common all over the metropolis, tsukumogami—items that animate into creatures, usually of the violent sort—are a frequent problem. To combat and respond to the threat an elite team of tsukumogami hunters are utterly dedicated to Sanbaoshi and prowl its streets, protecting citizens from magical harm. The Seishin Nohantā are a common watchful presence and although they are honor sworn not to directly interfere with the mundane troubles of ne'er-do-wells and criminals in the city, they often act as sentries on behalf of the Imperial Guard, reporting on anyone suspicious that falls under their watchful gaze.



CHIKAN, STAR OF THE NORTH

Most of Soburin's lords resisted the Kengen Occupation in all its forms, but a few embraced scientific knowledge and have worked to improve upon it. The Supai were one such clan; when the foreign invaders finally fell half a century ago, Lord Shachō Supai brought together the greatest diviners of the land to see what the future had in store for her prefecture. Though the enormity and totality of the danger represented by the Mists of Akuma remained shrouded to them, how it would descend onto Soburin was as clear as day. Seizing on the technological advances of Ceramian and Ropaeo immigrants, Lord Shachō instituted laboratories and schools to educate her kin on the secrets of science—to great effect.

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

With such a prevalence for technology and the dangers of tsukumogami omnipresent, Chikan has adopted a throwaway culture when it comes to personal effects. Hunters that specialize in detecting and tracking the strange creatures are a frequent sight, though only those in dire need or of malevolent intent can stand to tolerate the distasteful behavior prevalent throughout the settlement. They are never in short supply however—even during the destruction festivals—as with every month that passes more and more villages and cities throughout Soburin have come to adopt the wind machines manufactured in Chikan, making it a frequent harbor for legitimate traders and smugglers alike.

NAGABUKI, GEM OF THE SOUTH

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

Ceramian soldiers may be a thing of the past but the marks of their imposed rule are still fresh all over Nagabuki. Already militant since before the Ichizoku Wars began, the Ikari were one of the last clans to relent to the Kengen Occupation and as punishment for their resilience the foreign invaders chose the most troublesome race to make the martial clan coexist with. The Gem of the South changed to match the the city's needs during the times of imprisonment (as they are known to the enjin), changing much of its historical layout to be far more like a fortress than that of a bustling settlement—tall walls surround Nagabuki, always at a greater heighter than any nearby buildings and a sizable distance from the tallest structures.

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



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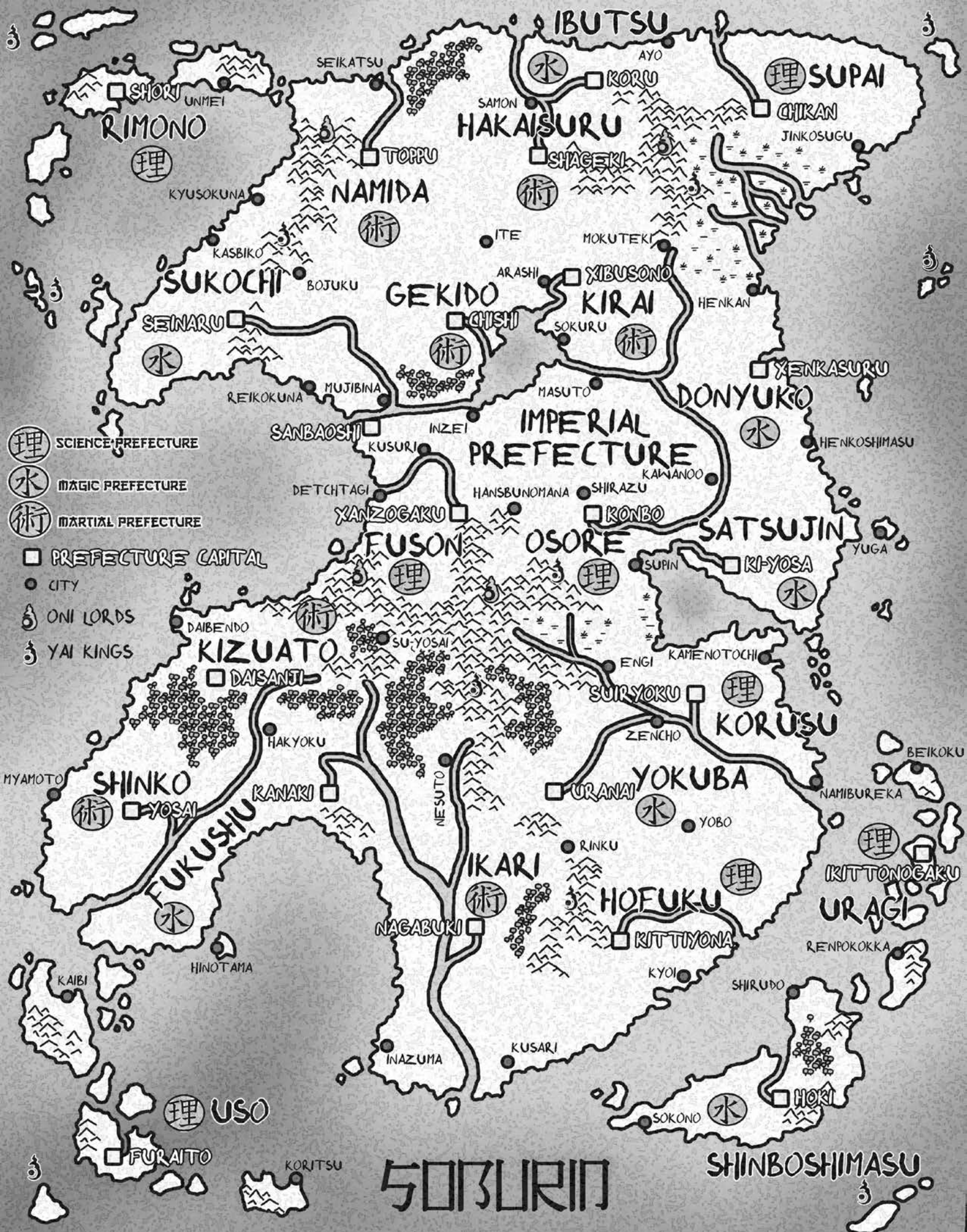
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