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不朽の恨み

GRUDGE IMMORTAL

LAMENTATIONS
FLAME PRINCESS
WEIRD AND AWKWARD PUBLISHING
COMPATIBLE PRODUCT





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GRUDGE IMMORTAL

“THE ARROGANT DO NOT LONG ENDURE:
THEY ARE LIKE A DREAM ONE NIGHT IN SPRING.
THE BOLD AND BRAVE PERISH IN THE END:
THEY ARE AS DUST BEFORE THE WIND.”

- THE TALE OF THE HEIKE

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INTRODUCTION

Year 1543.

Swept off its course by a storm, a Chinese junk heading for Macau was forced to land on the island of Tanegashima, south of Japan. Among its crew were the Portuguese explorers António da Mota and Francisco Zeimoto. The first Europeans to set foot on Japanese soil.

Fascinated by the efficiency of Western matchlock muskets, Japanese feudal lords quickly began to mass produce them, seeking to gain the upper hand in their nationwide conflict (known as *Sengoku Jidai*, “Age of Warring States”).

After this first promising contact, Portuguese ships started sailing for Japan every year, mainly carrying silk and porcelain from China. The Emperor of China had prohibited any contact with Japan because of their pirate raids (*Wakō*), thus creating the perfect opportunity for Portuguese to take on the role of intermediaries.

This is the origin of the *Nanban bōeki* (“Trade with Southern Barbarians”), commonly called Nanban Trade.

In 1549, the Jesuit missionary Francis Xavier began his evangelization of Japan.

Starting from 1557, a single Portuguese carrack (twice to three times the size of a regular galleon) with exclusive trading rights is bound for Japan every year.

Year 1564.

A large scale slave trade has developed between Portugal and Japan, mostly supported by the Christianized feudal lords of Kyūshū, the southernmost main island of Japan. Jesuit evangelists themselves have no qualms about using violence to spread the Faith or defend their material interests.

Challenged by ruthless *Wakō* pirates and smugglers, Europeans have their carracks escorted by smaller but powerfully armed galleons and crewed by hundreds of combat-capable sailors.

It is an age of discovery, exploration and greed; of violence, war and suffering.

IT IS AN AGE OF ADVENTURE.



IN THE PAST...

On April 25, 1185, the fleets of the Minamoto and Taira clans (also known as Genji and Heike, respectively) battled at Dan-no-Ura, in the Shimonoseki Strait. This was the culmination of a long campaign against the Taira, who had gained power over Japan with a coup d'état.

Outnumbered and betrayed by one of their generals, the Taira suffered crushing defeat: most of their samurai committed suicide during the battle to avoid being taken prisoners, and Minamoto archers rained arrows on the ship transporting the seven-year-old Emperor Antoku.

Taira no Tokiko, grandmother of the Emperor, drowned herself along with the boy; the samurai on the ship flung the three Imperial Regalia into the waters: the Minamoto recovered the holy mirror Yata no Kagami and sacred jewel Yasakani no Magatama, but the sword Kusanagi no Tsurugi, born from the blood of the serpent Yamata no Orochi, was forever lost.

The Taira were utterly destroyed, their name surviving only in Japanese epics and in folklore legends such as the one concerning the Heike crabs, whose shells are said to contain the soul of fallen samurai. And indeed, those bizarre shells resemble an angered samurai face (seriously, look them up on the internet).

Here is where known history ends, and where our stranger tale begins.

Deep beneath the waves of Dan-no-Ura, drowned by water and blood, Tokiko felt her fingers close around the divine sword. Upon her very death, the weapon offered her visions of vengeance. With time, the spirit of the Taira would be reborn as something immortal, neither alive nor dead.

They would be resurrected as beings of raw power, fury made into a physical form, sworn to drink the blood of every last of the Minamoto.

Tokiko entrusted the otherworldly blade with her family's vengeance.

THE ADVENTURE

Player characters are among the crew of a Portuguese galleon that recently survived a pirate raid followed by a storm, and is undergoing repair at Kuroshima, an island off the coast of Bungo province in Kyūshū.

While in Kuroshima, the player characters hear interesting rumors about the nearby island of Takashima (see column on the right). The adventure assumes the player characters then decide to reach Takashima and explore it.

Upon their arrival on Takashima and during their exploration, the player characters may discover the following:

- ❖ The villagers obtain their silver from the spirits at the Shintō shrine, in exchange for male children.
- ❖ Three days ago, Wakō pirates have taken refuge in a secluded bay on the island and raided the village.
- ❖ The island is a Heavenly Ark, left behind during the Age of the Gods.
- ❖ Within the Ark, the sword Kusanagi has resurrected lady Tokiko as a twisted revenant with undead abominations at her service. The arrival of the pirates, whose leader is of Minamoto blood, has driven these horrors into a murderous frenzy.

Provided that the player characters emerge *victorious* (read: alive) from the scenario, this adventure could mark the beginning of a Japanese campaign!

❖ RUMORS

ALL CHARACTERS will know that the island's villagers are quite secretive. They engage in the barest minimum commerce and often pay with small fragments of silver.

CLERICS will know that Takashima is said to be home to powerful *Kami* gods of the sea. A small shrine sits atop the island's tallest point.

MAGIC-USERS will know that the silver fragments are covered in glyphs, suggesting some kind of esoteric origin.

CURRENCY

While this adventure uses a silver money standard, it should be noted that 16th century Japan had several forms of currency, from round copper *zeni* to precious golden *ryō*.

Throughout this adventure, the silver piece equivalents for prices, treasures and valuables is given where needed to allow for smoother gameplay.

LANGUAGE

All player characters are assumed to speak Portuguese in addition to their native language. They can also understand very basic Japanese speech, but sustaining a proper conversation or reading any written Japanese will require use of the Languages skill at a -2 penalty.

Needless to say, the *Comprehend Languages* spell can prove very useful.

WEAPONS

For the sake of simplicity, any eastern weapons that have a close enough English counterpart are simply presented as that (such as a spear instead of a *yari*, or an arquebus instead of a *tanegashima-teppō*).

Other weapons, such as the *katana* or *naginata*, are specific and unique enough to deserve being called with their proper name. Player characters are likely to be unfamiliar with these exotic weapons; the Referee might decide to impose a -2 penalty to hit with them (training with the weapon should remove this penalty).

ARMORS

Human opponents in the adventure are either unarmored (Armor Class 12) or wear one of the following armor types:

- ❖ **DŌ-MARU:** Leather or metal scale armor (AC 16; +1 encumbrance points).
- ❖ **JINGASA:** Conical iron hat (AC +1; +1 to physical damage saving throws).
- ❖ **TATAMI:** Light, portable folding armor (AC 14).

PLAYER CHARACTERS

When creating characters for this adventure, bear in mind that Portuguese ships counted among their crews people from all over Europe, Africa, Arabia, China and Korea. Firearms are definitely a thing (especially the arquebus) while armors generally don't go beyond leather and are often accompanied by a morion helmet. Melee weapons go from the estoc and rapier to the crude but effective axe, cutlass, dagger and hammer.

INSPIRATION

Players and Referees who are interested in a Weird Horror Japanese setting might get the right vibes from the following:

- ❖ **KAGEMUSHĀ:** 1980 movie.
- ❖ **KOJIKI:** 8th century chronicle.
- ❖ **KUON:** 2004 videogame.
- ❖ **KURONEKO:** 1968 movie.
- ❖ **KWAIDĀN:** 1965 movie.
- ❖ **NIOH:** 2017 videogame.
- ❖ **TALE OF THE HEIKE:** 14th century epic poem.

❖ EXOTIC WEAPONS

KATANA: Medium weapon (d8), piercing or slashing. One-handed.

KUSARIGAMA: Complex weapon consisting of a metal chain capped by a sickle on one end and by a steel weight on the other. Two-handed. Price: 10 sp.

The weighted end can be used to disarm, pull or restrain opponents up to 10' away (as per the grappling rules, but requiring no free hands and allowing no free attack from the defender). The sickle is a minor weapon (d4, -2 to hit targets with an unadjusted Armor Class of 15 or better).

NAGINATA: Polearm weapon (d8), piercing or slashing. Two-handed.

NODACHI: Great weapon (d10), slashing. Two-handed.

TAKASHIMA ISLAND



The real-world Takashima (literally “Tall Island”) is an uninhabited, heavily forested island in the Bungo Channel. There is no drinking water, electricity, or gas: the only buildings are half a dozen bungalows along its Western shore (it is a summer campground).

Our version of Takashima is far more bizarre (and historically inaccurate).

THE DIVINE ARK

In times long forgotten, when the Gods of Japan descended from the heavenly plains above, they did so aboard Heavenly Stone Arks (*Ama no Iwafune*). We would probably consider them more of a building than a ship, but their divine magic allowed for travel along the bridges of

rainbow light that connect Earth with the lands of Sky and Moon.

One such vessel shipwrecked off the Eastern coast of Kyûshû. What caused it to fall and crash amidst the sea is left for the Referee to determine; perhaps some kind of malfunction, a battle between gods, or the attack of a dreadful beast. Whatever the reason, the Ark was abandoned by its occupants and left to sink halfway into the ocean.

Decades became centuries, and the Ark was first covered in dirt, then grass, then forest. Mortals initially worshipped it, then buried their honored dead within its stone hull, and eventually forgot the very reason of their veneration. Humans tend to have a somewhat short memory.

❖ TRAVEL TO TAKASHIMA

TRANSPORT VIA BOAT from Kuroshima to the fishing village in Takashima takes about 3 hours (5 on a rainy day) and costs 4 sp per person. The boatman will then return on a morning chosen in advance by the player characters; the trip back to Kuroshima costs another 4 sp per person.

PURCHASING A BOAT will cost 20 sp. The trip will be as simple and uneventful as the Referee chooses it to be. I suggest ominous dark clouds and sudden downpours.

In the aftermath of Dan-no-Ura, the sword Kusanagi led Tokiko and the souls of the Taira to this place. It had memories of the Age of the Gods, and the Taira's thirst for blood was all it needed to further its own ends.

KUSANAGI NO TSURUGI

The “Grass-cutting Sword”, originally known as *Ame no Murakumo no Tsurugi*, or “Heavenly Sword of Gathering Clouds”. It was found by the storm god Susanoo within the fourth tail of the eight-headed, eight-tailed dragon serpent Yamata no Orochi.

While seemingly made of bright green metal, the weapon is a section of Orochi’s spine: its flesh was rock, its blood was poison, and its bones and scales were steel. While the other Imperial Regalia were of divine craftsmanship, the sword is one fragment of a demonic soul, and all it seeks is to become whole again.

Kusanagi no Tsurugi is a Chaotic magical sword that deals $1d8$ damage and treats all targets as unarmored. Whenever a mortal (such as a player character) chooses

to wield it in battle, they must first save versus Poison or permanently reduce their maximum Hit Points by one. The sword can also be used to control winds (deflecting arrows, causing storms, dousing fires...) but doing so requires a save versus Poison; failure means the wielder is suffocated and loses Hit Points until they drop to zero.

All Hit Points that are lost because of the sword (by the ones who wield it, or by the ones harmed by its blade) are stored within it. At the time of this adventure, the amount is $230 + 4d10$ Hit Points; once it reaches 300 , Yamata no Orochi will be reborn from the sword, possibly spelling doom for all of Japan and nearby lands (this is beyond the scope of this adventure, but I suggest giving Yamata no Orochi 300 Hit Points, for the sake of coherence).

In addition to this, the Kusanagi no Tsurugi will show glimpses of the Age of the Gods to those in its vicinity. It favors particularly cruel and murderous events.

Needless to say, the authorities will relentlessly hunt down anyone who is said to be carrying this ancestral treasure.



TAKASHIMA ISLAND



TOKIKO'S REBIRTH

It took almost four centuries for Tokiko to take on a new form, that of a cursed cadaver floating around in a swirling cloud of sealife and dark red blood. She had brought the souls of her warriors to the Ark, and slowly proceeded to place them into the many corpses buried within the vessel's hold. The resulting undead are twisted abominations, merging the traits of humans and arthropods: *Umi Oni*, the Sea Ogres.

Strangely enough, Tokiko was unable to find a corpse fit for the child-emperor's soul. For years she has been giving silver from the Ark to the locals in exchange for male children, but her attempts so far have all been unsuccessful.

ISLAND LOCATIONS

Most of Takashima's coast consists of harsh cliffs overhanging the sea, while a few sand shores allow for easier landing (these are shown on the map above). The main locations are summarized within the following pages; some are then detailed within a dedicated chapter.

❖ Fishing Village

The only settlement on the island housed about two dozen souls... until four days ago, when the pirates raided the village leaving next to no survivors. Then, many of the bandits were slaughtered by Tokiko and her Sea Ogres, turning the place into a ghastly and gruesome scene.

For more on the village, see page 15.

❖ Narrow Cave

About 5' wide and 10' tall, the opening of this cavern is completely hidden unless someone explicitly searches this section of the cliffs. It is so narrow that characters can only proceed in single file within it, wet, and completely dark.

It gradually descends for the first 400', with seawater reaching a person's waist by that point (the smell is awful); then it ascends for another 100' before reaching the Ark's core (see page 26).

❖ Northern Shore

The longest sand shore in the island can be reached through a slippery path descending from the forest above.

60' to the west lies the bloated carcass of a shark, washed ashore by a storm. Two pirates, Daichi and Hikaru, are planning to flee the island on their own (the two are lovers) and stole some of the crew's loot and provisions (60 sp and a week's worth of rations), which they hid within a sack placed inside the carcass. A rowboat is concealed within the bushes nearby. If the player characters visit this area during the day, there is a 20% chance of Daichi and Hikaru being here.

900' to the East, where the sand gives way to the rocks, is a wide cave with low, irregular ceilings (3' to 4' above the water). Characters swimming in the dark for about 60' will find themselves in a large cavern, around 90' in diameter and guard-

ed by two Sea Ogres. Past the creature, a seemingly endless (1150' long) succession of cramped caverns filled with brackish water, rotting algae and revolting arthropods eventually leads to the Ark's core (see page 26).

❖ SEA OGRE (UMI ONI)

ARMOR: as Leather (14)

HIT DICE: 2; 9 hp

MOVE: 90'

ATTACKS: id6 misshapen limb; *or* id4 miasmatic spit at range 10'

MORALE: 12 (flee from daylight)

Wretched corpses, bloated by corruption and driven by the decayed and vicious intellects of fallen Taira soldiers. Each a shambling forest of claws, pincers and barbs, drooling and leaking a dark purple ichor. They have standard undead immunities, and will always flee from daylight. Each ogre wears ancient silver jewelry for id6 sp.

❖ PIRATE

ARMOR: Tatami and jingasa (15)

1st level Fighter; 8 hp

MOVE: 120'

ATTACKS: id6 spear; *or* id8 katana; *or* id8 arquebus (ignores 5 Armor)

MORALE: 7

Each pirate usually carries id4 + 2 sp in coins, a gourd bottle half filled with water or saké, plus food and ammunition if they need it.

❖ Pirate Camp

The crew of pirates led by the imposing warrior Kuma (“Bear”) sought refuge within a small inlet along the northeastern coast of Takashima, their junk partially damaged by a storm three days ago (note: the Referee might choose to have these pirates be part of the group that attacked the player characters’ galleon).

Kuma (whose real name is Noburo) is the illegitimate son of a Takeda noble from Honshū. The Takeda clan is a branch of the Minamoto, making Noburo one of their descendants.

For more on the camp, see page 19.

❖ Shrine

Resting atop the tallest point in the island, this Shintō shrine was originally dedicated to the worship of a nameless god of water through a sacred well plunging into the depths of the island. The well is in fact a shaft descending 40' before it breaks into the upper section of the Ark, where quarters were located (see page 26).

For more on the shrine, see page 21.

❖ Southern Shore

A wide bay, its clear sand dotted by the charred remains of half a dozen huts consumed by a fire many years ago. Jagged bits of pottery can be found everywhere in the sand. At night, the place is haunted by the wailing of the ones who lost their lives in the flames. The ghosts are harmless, but manifest as a thick white fog smelling of burnt flesh and embers, which fills the bay and reduces visibility to about 10'.



The path to this shore is a gentle slope from atop the cliffs; about 20' east of it lies the entrance to a deep, damp cavern. Its ceiling is a garden of dripping stalagmites, its walls decorated with rough carvings of swirling patterns and humanoid figures armed with round shields and short, double-edged swords. This place is more than a thousand years old: the original inhabitants of the island brought their dead to the Ark through this passage.

The entrance to the Ark's core (see page 26) lies 450' ahead into the cavern.

FOREST PATH

With the exception of the Narrow Cave, all locations on the island are connected by stony, overgrown paths (shown in red on the map). They are large enough for horses, donkeys and other mounts, but unfit for a cart or wagon. The rest of Takashima is covered in thick forests which considerably hinder exploration.

Roughly every hour the player characters spend exploring the island, roll for a random encounter on the table below. Each encounter may only take place once.

D6 ♦ FOREST AND ROAD ENCOUNTERS

- PIRATE CORPSES, one male, one female, and one unrecognizable, forming a gruesome mound. Bite marks, chests torn open, limbs severed, skulls crushed. Some gear is salvageable: a katana, a spear, an arquebus (fired recently), two tatami armors, two jingasa hats and coins for 3d8 sp.
- A STRAY DOG, its dark brown fur stained with blood, but uninjured. The dog is of *kai ken* breed, hungry and scared (Armor 12, 1 HD, 7 hp, Move 180', Morale 8, bites for 1d6 damage). Her name is Rai and she belongs to one of the pirates, Yori. If the dog is returned to him, Yori will be very grateful.
- A SURVIVOR from the village, Haru, attacks the group (Armor 12, Level 0, 6 hp, Move 120', Morale 5, attacks with a crude cudgel for 1d6 damage). He is in shock because of the recent events: while he might agree to follow the player characters, he dies of terror the moment he sees any supernatural creature.
- LARGE PUDDLES OF MUD show human footprints along with more bizarre markings, such as those left by the tip of a spear or curved blade (these are the Sea Ogres' footprints). There is blood in the mud.
- A ROUGH STONE STATUE, vaguely resembling a humanoid holding a fish in each hand. It is firmly planted into the ground.
- A SMALL HUT, its hearth cold. On the ground, shattered bowls of rotten food crawling with worms. The hut belonged to a local madwoman, whose corpse can be found not far from here, her throat torn open by a blade. Hidden beneath the ruined wooden floor is an onyx buddhist rosary worth 12 sp.

FISHING VILLAGE



The people of Takashima are known to be a secluded and isolated community. They subsist on seafood and their commerce with outsiders is limited to rice and whatever cannot be made or found on the island. Even when this happens, only the village elder Hayate and one or two helpers have been seen purchasing goods.

Despite their dislike for outsiders, the fishermen were not openly hostile towards anyone approaching the island, and no actual weapon can be found in the village (though many fishing and sailing tools can double as weapons if necessary).

SILVER OF THE GODS

Thirty years ago, the locals lived in poverty. The sea was not generous with them, and every day was a matter of choosing between having food to eat and having goods to barter.

One day young Tsubaki, the priestess tending to the shrine, told the people of Takashima that the gods of the well had spoken to her. Immediately, the locals

begged her to intercede with the spirits and persuade them to grant prosperity.

The gods of the well (which is to say, Tokiko) agreed, but asked for a “small” compensation: a male child, that they would take to their kingdom beneath the waves. Desperate for a chance to improve their condition, the villagers threw a young boy into the well, and were rewarded with two crates’ worth of silver.

Roughly every year since that day, Tsubaki has gifted the “gods of the well” with a new male human child: some were born within the community, but many were silently kidnapped by the fishermen in far away ports. The spirits didn’t seem to care where they came from.

THE VILLAGE NOW

For a place whose people do little to no commerce, the village would be in remarkable condition; the buildings well-kept, the boats ready to sail. However, the past days have turned the area into a ghastly sight.

There are two main areas to the village, separated by a 15' tall sliding wooden gate that is currently half-open.

❖ Shore

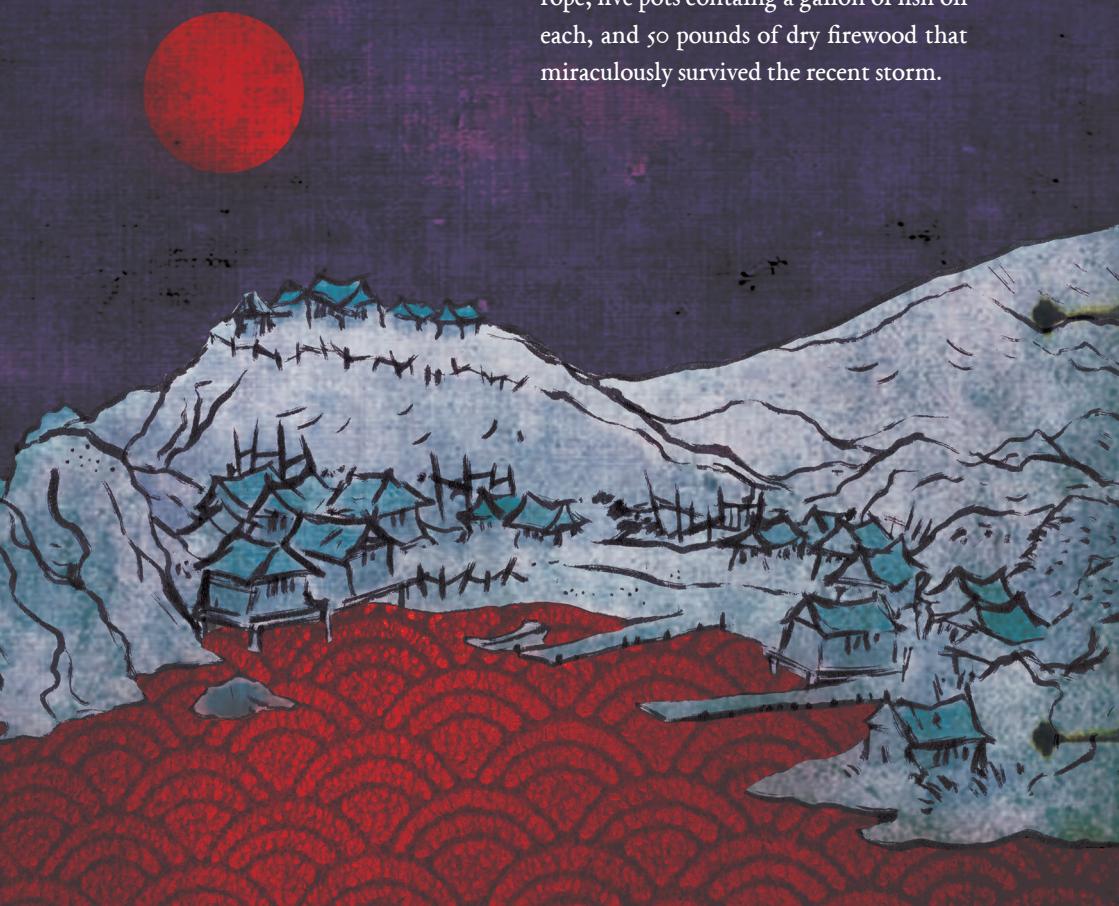
By far the largest section of the village, it is level with the sea. Two piers extend into the waters; several fishing boats float nearby, empty and silent.

The white sand is littered with corpses: young and old, male and female, dressed in simple clothing. Stabbed, slashed, maimed. No adult men, since they were sent to war by the local lords.

There are sixteen huts and a warehouse along the shore.

The huts hide yet more corpses, the wooden walls splintered and smeared with blood, the pottery crushed and strewn outside, embers from the fireplace mixing with gore and mud. If the player characters thoroughly search the huts (an operation requiring $1d3$ hours) they will find coins and unremarkable jewels for 8d6 sp.

The warehouse had its door kicked down, and the floor is covered with ruined sailing and fishing equipment. The player characters may be able to salvage 300' of rope, five pots containing a gallon of fish oil each, and 50 pounds of dry firewood that miraculously survived the recent storm.



❖ Hill

Past the gate, a muddy path leads up towards a steep hill overlooking the shore. This was the village elder's home, a large building with two small huts next to it.

The huts were torn to shreds by the storm, as well as whatever was inside: nets and tools are scattered all over the place.

The house is in marginally better condition, having lost part of its roof to the wind. Its interior was flooded by the downpour, and several corpses are strewn around both inside the building and in the muck surrounding it. Most look like the ones on the shore, but four wear tattered armors and carry weapons, some salvageable (two katana and three spears).

The corpses on the hill bear different wounds from those on the shore: they have been dismembered, impaled on the fences, eaten and disemboweled, seemingly by a strong and vicious beast.

Inside the house, a small trapdoor can be found open: a sturdy ladder leads to a chamber 30' underground. The room is roughly 10' by 10' with a 7' ceiling, and empty save for the corpse of an old man lying on the dirt. It appears he fell down the shaft and broke his neck. The eastern wall is dirt and rubble; the other walls and ceiling are made of stone and decorated with swirling geometric patterns smoothly carved into the surface (this was the frontal section of the Ark's bow, crushed by the impact).

WHAT HAPPENED?

Many of the pirates that landed on Takashima knew of the rumors concerning the locals' silver. Kuma gave orders no to raid the village, since the crew was tired and hurt from the recent storm. Six pirates disobeyed and approached the settlement from the East, the locals (mostly children and women) unable to stop them.

When the village elder Hayate refused to show them the silver cache, the bandits began slaughtering any villager in sight (these are the corpses found on the shore). Hayate finally yielded and led the pirates to the trapdoor in his house; they pushed him down (that's his corpse at the bottom of the ladder) and, while two brought the silver to Kuma, the remaining four chose to stay and "clean up", but were ultimately slain by a group of Sea Ogres that emerged from the forest. The monsters made no distinction between pirate and villager, which is why corpses appear torn to pieces by some wild animal.

AT NIGHT

If player characters visit the village after twilight, they will notice swarms of head-sized, blue-white flaming globes floating along the shore and amidst the buildings. These Demon Fires (*Onibi*) cast an otherworldly light on the area. While initially harmless, Demon Fires will swarm towards any living being that approaches within 10' of one of them. When this

happens, 1d6 Demon Fires surround the character, who must save versus Paralysis or lose hit points equal to the number of orbs that surrounded them (if killed this way, the character's soul will transform into an *Onibi* during the following night). A character who successfully saves will notice the cackling skulls inside the blue flame, and get away before the spirits begin to drain their life essence. A person can be affected by Demon Fires only once every 24 hours (regardless of whether they save or not). The spirits cannot be harmed, but count as 1 Hit Die undead for the effects of the *Turn Undead* spell.

The player characters will also hear loud sobbing noises coming from the top of the hill, where Demon Fires cannot be found. If they investigate, they will see a small, ugly woman dressed in rags, her weeping face partially hidden by oily black hair. This Weeping Hag (*Yonaki Babā*) appears to be mourning the dead on the hill, but faint traces of laughter can be heard among her sobbing as if she were secretly mocking them. This apparition was born of the forest madwoman's resentment towards the villagers who had cast her out (see the small hut encounter on page 14).

❖ WEEPING HAG (YONAKI BABĀ)

ARMOR: as Unarmored (12)

HIT DICE: 2; 12 hp

MOVE: 120'

ATTACKS: special, see below

MORALE: 12

The hag never attacks, eerily crawling away from anyone attempting to harm her (she is corporeal). If reduced to 0 hp, she will vanish while laughing hysterically. In order to permanently kill the creature, she must be sprinkled with salt or holy water the exact moment she vanishes. She is *not* undead, and whatever is done to the corpse of the madwoman will not affect the hag.

Each round, all living characters able to hear the hag's weeping and within 60' of her must save versus Magic or be overwhelmed by sadness until she has vanished or is more than 240' away.

A sad character cries uncontrollably and must roll twice and take the worst result on ability checks, attack rolls, saving throws and skill rolls. Furthermore, the victim will suffer a random misfortune (see below) in 5d8 *real-time* minutes (the Referee should set a timer). A character can only ever suffer one misfortune from a Weeping Hag.

D6 ❖ MISFORTUNE

- 1 If outdoors, the character is hit by lightning and takes 3d6 damage.
- 2 Next time the character rolls a 4 on any die, they must save versus Poison or die on the spot, cackling madly, their skin and hair turning white.
- 3-4 The character is struck by fever, permanently losing 1 point of Constitution.
- 5-6 A random item carried by the character disappears.

PIRATE CAMP



Of the twelve members of Kuma's crew, only five are still alive. They are currently holed up within the roofed aft of their junk ship, the Ox (*Ushi*), berthed 60' from the shore. Each night, Tokiko and her Sea Ogres attack the camp: the pirates try to keep them away until dawn, when the monsters retreat. The gunshots can be heard from anywhere on the island.

The survivors' names are Daichi (M), Hikaru (M), "Kuma" (M), Suzume (F), Yori (M). Kuma is the only one who speaks some Portuguese and may be able to understand the player characters.

DEAD MEMBERS OF THE CREW

In case you need their names:

Aiko (F), in the forest

Jirō (M), in the forest

Naoki (M), in the forest

Chō (F), in the village

Isamu (M), in the village

Kazuo (M), in the village

Rin (F), in the village

❖ "KUMA" (NOBURO)

ARMOR: Do-maru (16)

3rd level Fighter; 21 hp (currently 13 hp)

MOVE: 120'

ATTACKS: 1d10 two-handed iron club

MORALE: 9

Impressive and extremely hairy, Noburo really looks like a bear. Despite having been wounded, he will fight fiercely. He wears the key to the iron chest stored inside the junk (see next page).

❖ PIRATE

ARMOR: Tatami and jingasa (15)

1st level Fighter; 8 hp

MOVE: 120'

ATTACKS: 1d6 spear; or 1d8 katana; or 1d8 arquebus (ignores 5 Armor); Suzume wields a kusarigama (d4, see p. 8)

MORALE: 7

Each pirate usually carries 1d4 + 2 sp in coins, a gourd bottle half filled with water or saké, plus food and ammunition if they need it.

THE PIRATES' TALE

Naoki and Suzume were the two pirates who carried the villagers' silver to Kuma. Shortly after their return, the camp was attacked by Tokiko and her Sea Ogres. Kuma was wounded by Tokiko; Aiko, Jirō and Naoki fled into the woods. The group was saved by the lights of dawn, which the creatures seem to be afraid of.

Since then, the pirates have moved from their camp to the ship and only set foot on the island during the day, gathering provisions (they hoarded all food they found, enough for weeks) and waiting for Kuma to get better. They might even ask the player characters to join them so they can man the ship and leave.

THE TREASURE

Aboard the Ox are three barrels of black powder (explosion forces all within 30' to save versus Breath Weapon or take 2d8 damage), silver from the village (1200 sp) and a locked iron chest with coins and jewels for 450 sp. Among these is a jade hairpin (370 sp) decorated with five ivory swallows: the wearer is immune to nonmagical poisons. However, the item is cursed: the fifth time it is worn by the same person, a large mouth will open on the back of their head. They will need to eat twice as much, and lose 1 point of Constitution for each day they fail to do so. If it drops to 6 or lower, they die and the head detaches from the body, the second mouth gaining full control and growing hair strands to move (Armor 12, 1 HD, 3 hp, move 180', Morale 6, bites for 1d4 damage). *Remove Curse* can prevent this.

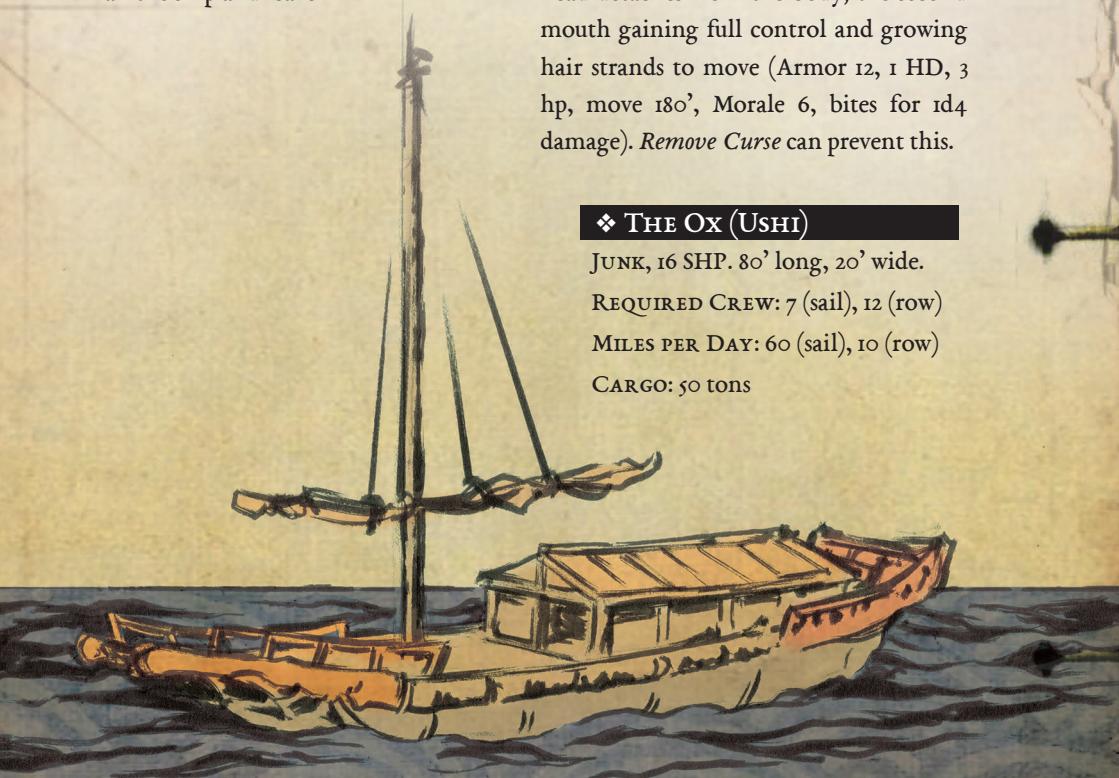
❖ THE OX (USHI)

JUNK, 16 SHP. 80' long, 20' wide.

REQUIRED CREW: 7 (sail), 12 (row)

MILES PER DAY: 60 (sail), 10 (row)

CARGO: 50 tons



SHRINE

Perched on the southern side of the tallest hill in Takashima, this small Shintō shrine was built in the past to properly-worship the water gods believed to inhabit a large, bizarre-looking stone well.

The well is a shaft leading to the Ark 40' below; when Tokiko regained consciousness as a vengeful spirit three decades ago, she chose to impersonate the sea god worshipped by the villagers.

❖ Defiled Well

Right outside the *torii* gate marking the entrance of the shrine is a small well used by the locals to wash their hands and mouth before visiting the sacred grounds (cleanliness is a core concept of Shintō). The well, however, has been defiled: blood can be found on its edge and staining the ground, forming a trail leading to the gate.

Stuck inside the well is the upside-down corpse of a middle-aged wom-

an dressed in a white and red garb, stained by algae, dirt and dried blood. She appears to have been stabbed several times; her mouth, throat and lungs are filled with seawater, rotten algae and small pale arthropods. This is priestess Tsubaki, who tried to stop the enraged Tokiko as she emerged from the well two nights ago: the revenant stabbed the priestess with the *Kusanagi*, then drowned her to death with her magic.

Tsubaki carries an expended prayer scroll of *Turn Undead*, written in Jap-



anese, and a gourd bottle containing a handful of blessed salt (functions the same way as holy water, dealing $1d8$ damage to magical beings).

❖ Sacred Ground

Past the wooden *torii* gate, a short (25') muddy path leads to the main building. The path is flanked by ten small stone lanterns (*tōrō*), five on each side, whose top can be removed to place a light within. If all ten are lit and the characters rest nearby, they each recover $1d3$ extra hit points.

❖ Ema Board

Near the main building's entrance is a wooden board where several small wooden plaques with Japanese inscriptions have been left hanging. A pile of clear plaques rests on the ground right below the board, next to a small crate holding silver from the village for a total of 26 sp. These wooden plaques are called *ema* (literally “picture-horse”) and represent offerings for the God of the Well. In the past, people used to gift horses to shrines in exchange for good favor; if a character is able to read the hanging *ema*, they will find words of prayer and gratitude towards the deity.

A character who writes a prayer on an empty *ema* and hangs it on the board, leaving at least 5 sp worth of items in the crate, will be able to reroll their next failed attack roll or saving throw. They must then keep the new result.

❖ Tsubaki's Hut

The blood trail near the outside well ends at the door of a small hut whose thatched roof has been crushed by the storm. The hut has no windows and counts two rooms only: the first served as a kitchen and living room, the second is a bedroom accessible through a sliding door. The roof in the bedroom is intact, and a simple wooden shelf holds an ornate fan worth 150 sp, two porcelain bowls filled with blessed salt (for a total of three uses), a lacquered box containing silver from the village for 34 sp, and four prayer scrolls written in Japanese: two scrolls of *Speak with Dead*, one scroll of *Forbiddance* and one scroll of *Cure Light Wounds*.

❖ Honden

The main building housing the “dwelling of the god” (*shintai*) is called a *honden*. Its doors battered and unhinged, the roof of this single large room fared no better than that of the nearby hut. In the center of the room is a massive well 10 feet in diameter, its ancient unknown stone carved in swirling patterns. The well is dark, reeking of rotten sealife and stagnant, brackish water. It leads to the Ark 40' below, the smooth surface making it impossible to descend without a rope.

Each night, Tokiko will emerge from the well and fly towards the pirate camp, ignoring anyone nearby unless attacked. Sea Ogres cannot climb out of the well.

DIVINE ARK



A remnant from the Age of the Gods, the Ark has many entrances and currently acts as an hideout for Tokiko and her Sea Ogres.

The recent arrival of the pirates reawakened Tokiko's thirst for Minamoto blood, but the revenant and her servants are not yet strong enough to overcome the pirates or leave the island. Furthermore, they cannot tolerate the light of day.

INSIDE THE ARK

The walls, floor, ceiling and stairs within the Ark seem to have been smoothly carved from a single block of unknown, ivory-grey stone. No cracks, no fissures, no sharp edges or angles: the whole complex just seems to "flow". Unless otherwise stated, the ceilings are 10' high and the walls are decorated with the ubiquitous swirling patterns, resembling waves or clouds.

All areas Tokiko and the Sea Ogres have access to are coated in dark red slime and purple ichor, reeking like the depths of the sea and teeming with arthropods.

❖ Metal Doors

All doors are made from a meteoric metal resembling opaque, tarnished bronze (let's call it *celestial ore*). There are no handles or locks; if touched, they simply slide open to the side with a hissing sound, and close back if touched again. Do your best spaceship sounds!

❖ Light Barriers

Even after all these centuries, part of the Ark's original systems is still operative. Clay centurions protect its depths, and light barriers block certain passageways.

These light barriers (see the Ark's map on page 26) resemble a smooth, glowing surface of milky white substance. They cannot be crossed by innately magical beings (such as Tokiko, her Sea Ogres, or summoned creatures). A lawful character can simply traverse the barrier; once they do so, they can no longer see or feel it (as if it had never been there).

Non-lawful characters who touch the barrier are swallowed by it and must prove

they are worthy of passage.

These characters find themselves in a circular room, 20' in diameter, and hear a loud voice say, in their native language: "Show devotion". The walls, floor and ceiling are made of glowing ivory stone, and there is no entrance or exit. Lying on the floor is a humanoid figure dressed in filthy grey rags, its skin white and its long black hair infested by $1d4+2$ enormous centipedes. The creature appears to have no sex and no face (its visage has no features), and while seemingly alive it does not respond to any interaction. On the floor are ceramic pots equal to the number of centipedes, next to a wooden bucket filled with clear water and a wooden ladle.

In order to pass, a character must remove the centipedes and place each of them in a separate pot (save against Poison or lose 2 hit points from their venom). Then, they must clean the creature from its filth using water from the bucket.

If more than one character is present, all it takes is for one of them to go through the process.

Once this has been done, the character(s) will be blinded for a second, then find themselves within a similar room, this time with a large pool of warm water in the center. All characters who enter this pool will emerge on the other side of the light barrier, which will cease to exist for them too.

If any of the steps is performed incor-

rectly, the trial will "reset" to its beginning. Again, the character(s) will be blinded and find themselves in the first room. When a character emerges from the barrier, they will be in the same condition as when they entered: dry and wearing all their equipment. The hit point loss caused by centipedes is not healed, however (but the bite marks disappear).

Once a character has proved their devotion once, they will be able to traverse the barriers as if they were lawful.

TOKIKO & SEA OGRES

When the player characters land on Takashima, there are nineteen Sea Ogres on the island: the Referee should take note of this number, as it is possible for the group to kill them all. Each day, Tokiko will create a new Sea Ogre by placing the soul of a Taira samurai (from those stored within area 12) inside a corpse taken from area 17.

Each night, Tokiko emerges from the sacred well in the shrine and flies towards the pirates' ship; if the well is blocked, she will use the passage leading to the Northern Shore (see page 12), since she is NOT incorporeal. Sea Ogres will use this passage as well, and join their mistress.

If the player characters visit the Ark at night, it is perfectly possible they might encounter no resistance, only to be surprised by the monsters returning to the dungeon at the break of dawn.

D8 ♦ TOKIKO'S POSITION WITHIN THE ARK DURING THE DAY

- 1 Area 2, silently watching the stone bed. If encountered here, she is surprised.
- 2-4 Area 11, moving towards the stairs leading to area 17.
- 5 Area 12, gathering a soul to create a Sea Ogre.
- 6-8 Area 17, searching for suitable corpses.

DI2 ♦ SEA OGRES' POSITION WITHIN THE ARK DURING THE DAY

1-2	Area 3 (max 2)	5	Area 10 (max 1)	9-10	Area 17
3	Area 4 (max 2)	6-7	Area 11	11	Area 18 (max 1)
4	Area 5 (max 2)	8	Area 13	12	Area 19 (max 1)

♦ TAIRA NO TOKIKO

ARMOR: as Chain (16)

HIT DICE: 6; 44 hp

MOVE: 120' (flight)

ATTACKS: 1d8 sword (see *Kusanagi no Tsurugi*, page 10); or 1d4/1d4 claw-like nails; or one target in sight must save versus Poison or lose 1d6 hp as their lungs fill with brackish water

MORALE: 12 (flee from daylight/refl.)

Tokiko (shown on the cover) appears as a rotting corpse, barely held together by swarms of crabs and arthropods crawling around in a cloud of dark, sticky blood. One could almost see the outline and bright colors of a regal kimono. Because of her compound nature, Tokiko takes half damage from cutting and piercing weapons; she takes double damage from area attacks (explosives, splashed holy water...) and normal damage from all other sources.

She has normal undead immunities and will always flee from daylight, or if she sees her own reflection. That is why she broke all mirrors she found in the Ark.

♦ SEA OGRE (UMI ONI)

ARMOR: as Leather (14)

HIT DICE: 2; 9 hp

MOVE: 90'

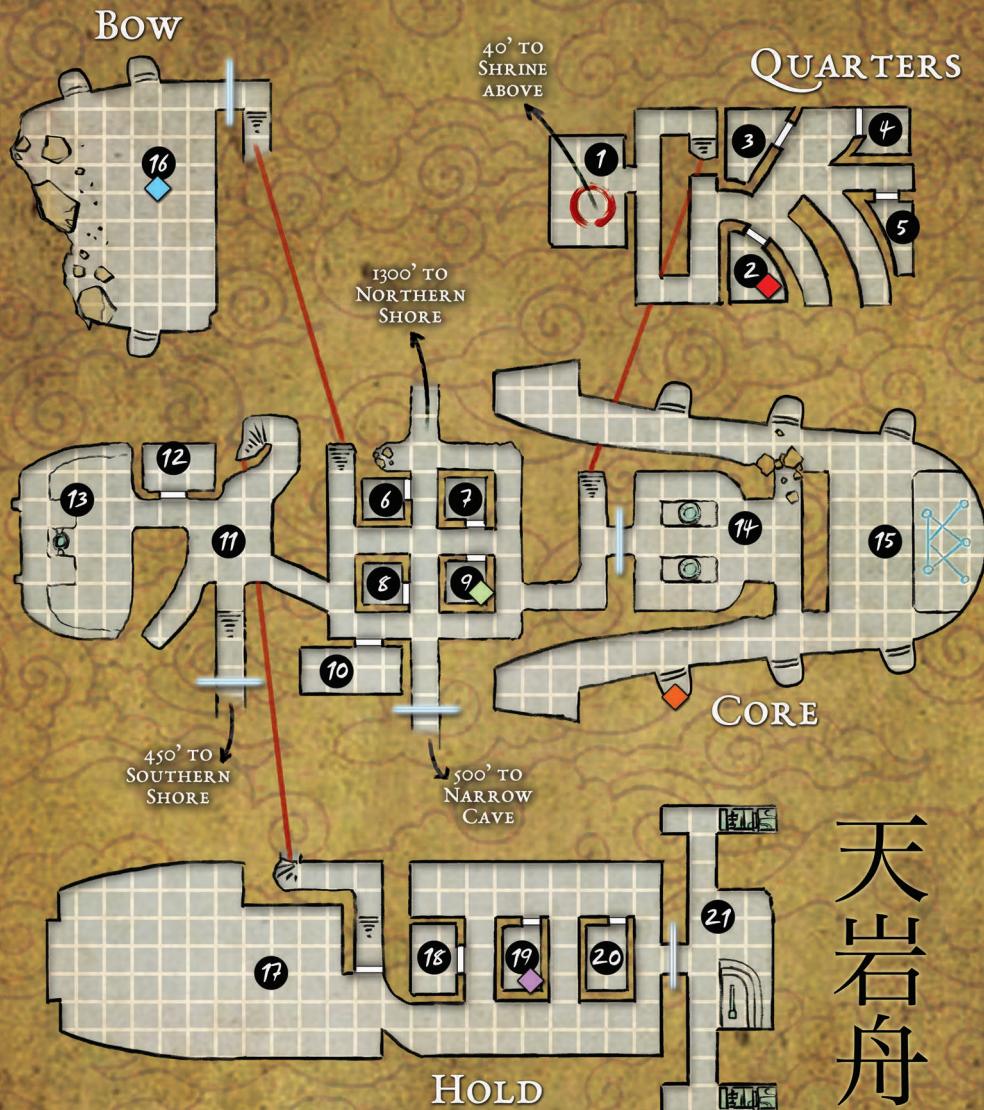
ATTACKS: 1d6 misshapen limb; or 1d4 miasmatic spit at range 10'

MORALE: 12 (flee from daylight)

Sea Ogres have standard undead immunities, and will always flee from daylight. Each ogre wears ancient silver jewelry for 1d6 sp.

TOKIKO'S VOICE

Despite being an intelligent undead, Tokiko is unable to understand the words of the living. She taunts and insults enemies in combat, but anyone who is not a Sea Ogre (or the now dead priestess Tsubaki) will only hear gargling, choking and retching noises coming from her mouth, as if she were constantly and agonizingly drowning.



❖ ROOM FEATURES SUMMARY (MAGICAL ITEMS UNDERLINED)

- 1 Damp chamber under the well. Moss. Arthropods crawling in red-purple ichor.
- 2 Child-sized stone bed. Altar with arranged fragments of mirror (2 sp) and a single jade cylinder holding Emperor Antoku's soul, worth 5 sp. If opened and the soul disperses, Tokiko immediately rushes here, enraged. Fire navigator.
- 3 Single stone bed. Small shelf with scattered fragments of mirror (3 sp).
- 4 Double stone bed. Clay animal figurines on the ground (60 sp each). Move if not watched, eat each other if touching.
- 5 Single stone bed. Cleansing tea set (box 300 sp; each cup 30 sp)
- 6 Waves pattern. Bronze throne. Corpse/throne can teach *Strange Waters II* once.
- 7 Flames pattern. Copper throne. Corpse/throne can teach *Resist Fire* once.
- 8 Clouds pattern. Silver throne. Corpse/throne can teach *Gust of Wind* once.
- 9 Mountain pattern. Stone throne, no corpse. Wind navigator.
- 10 "Storage". Broken remains of clay centurion. Two clay urns filled with oil.
- 11 Eighteen male children corpses in various states of decay (from several years ago to no more than a couple weeks). Tokiko's "failed experiments".
- 12 Metal rack holds 64 cylinders with souls. 23 empty cylinders on floor. 5 sp each.
- 13 Three 10' diameter glass discs held vertical by metal supports. One shattered, other two show areas of the island (pirate camp & fishing village). Huge tarnished bronze bell can be rung 1/day to cast *Turn Undead* as a 3rd level Cleric.
- 14 Silver (240 sp) and gold (380 sp) braziers rooted in stone altars. If both are lit and navigators are in place, Ark engines may activate.
- 15 Altar of navigation. Within each alcove is a **CLAY CENTURION**. Earth navigator.
- 16 Sixteen corpses (each has silver jewels for 2d6 sp). In each alcove is a corpse clutching an unbreakable metal spear. Small bronze mirror (42 sp). Water navigator.
- 17 144 corpses, submerged in a dark bloody muck crawling with pale arthropods. 60 of them still wear silver jewels (2d6 sp per body), 84 don't. Fragments of silver ornaments for 5d6 sp piled up near the door.
Corridors surrounding rooms 18, 19, 20 are soaked in bloody muck; fragments of shattered clay centurions can be found on the ground.
- 18 Two corpses on the ground, no jewels. Supernatural creatures do not enter.
- 19 Monstrous hermit crab dwelling inside clay centurion torso. Void navigator.
- 20 Vat of living clay. Can create clay creature (1/day).
- 21 Ark engines (northernmost engine broken; both contain lightwater).
Damaged rudder operates southernmost engine. Three **CLAY CENTURIONS**.

❖ HEAVENLY NAVIGATORS

Earth (1/day AC 18); Fire (1/day *Remove Fear*); Void (roll twice and keep best when saving vs. Magic); Water (1/day *Cure Light Wounds*); Wind (roll twice and keep best when saving vs. Breath Weapon). Worth 100 sp each. For detailed information, see page 28.

HEAVENLY NAVIGATORS

Their appearance similar to prehistoric clay figurines (known as *Dogū*), these eight-inch tall statuettes were left behind by the Gods when they abandoned the Ark. Over countless centuries, they were scattered all over the divine wreckage.

Seemingly made of painted clay, Navigators are composed of an unknown material and cannot be destroyed by non-magical means. Each is worth 100 sp.

When it comes to their function, each Navigator is tied to one of the five Great Elements (earth, fire, void, water, wind) and allows a person carrying it to produce a magical effect once per day. The balance between these core aspects of matter allowed Arks to move across rainbow rivers connecting our Earth to the lands of Sun and Moon (see *The Last Flight*, page 35).

❖ NAVIGATORS LIST

EARTH NAVIGATOR, rusty orange, no hole on its back. Heavy, as if filled with sand. Bearer can increase its Armor Class to 18 (1/day).

FIRE NAVIGATOR, blood red, has an upwards pointing triangular hole on its back. Ash can be found inside. Bearer can cast *Remove Fear* (1/day).

VOID NAVIGATOR, dull purple, has a circular hole on its back. Its entire inner surface is covered in circuit-like patterns. Bearer rolls twice and keeps the best roll when saving against Magic.

WATER NAVIGATOR, deep blue, six holes form a hexagon on its back. Filled with ever-replenishing water. Bearer can cast *Cure Light Wounds* (1/day).

WIND NAVIGATOR, vivid green, has a downwards pointing triangular hole on its back. Empty. Bearer rolls twice and keeps the best roll when saving against Breath Weapon.



QUARTERS

This is where Gods spent most of their time during their travels aboard the Ark.

❖ 1. Under the Well

The giant stone well worshipped inside the shrine was once the only mast of the Ark; whatever means were used to move within the well have been lost to time, and the stonelike inner surface of the shaft is completely smooth except for the occasional swirling carvings.

The chamber at the bottom is damp and covered in moss, its floor hidden by an inch-thick layer of red-purple ichor. Chunks of debris emerge from the sticky substance, and swarms of innocuous but disgustingly pale arthropods (crabs, centipedes, spiders) crawl and swim inside the brackish muck.

❖ 2. Antoku's Chamber

A rectangular bed, made of the same ivory-grey stone as the rest of the Ark, rises from the floor. It is rather small, fit for a ten-year-old child, perhaps a young deity. The worthless fragments of a bronze mirror (2 sp), shattered by an enraged Tokiko, were neatly piled up on a stone shelf emerging from the southern wall alongside the Fire Navigator (see *Heavenly Navigators*, page 28).

Tokiko intends for this place to become the child-emperor's room once she manages to find a suitable corpse for his soul;

indeed, a ten-inch long, two-inch wide jade cylinder storing Antoku's trapped soul rests on the stone bed. Its rough surface bears no decoration, and the movement of the liquid soul inside can be felt by anyone holding it. It is worth 5 sp. If the upper half of the cylinder is uncorked, Antoku's soul breaks free of its prison with a bloodcurdling scream and an eruption of dark ichor in a shape resembling the screaming visage of a child. This immediately alerts Tokiko (she arrives within one Turn, regardless of her current position).

❖ 3. Empty Chamber

A single, adult-sized stone bed emerges from the western wall, right under a small shelf. Fragments of a large shattered bronze mirror (3 sp) lie on the floor.

❖ 4. Animals' Chamber

A wide double bed, also made of the Ark's stone, emerges from the eastern wall. Scattered on the floor in front of the bed are five fist-sized figurines made of clay, each shaped in the features of an animal (a boar, a cat, a dog, a sparrow and a tiger). When no one is watching, the figurines slowly move towards their "prey" and away from their "predator".

- ❖ **BOAR:** Flees from tiger.
- ❖ **CAT:** Hunts sparrow, flees from dog.
- ❖ **DOG:** Hunts cat, flees from tiger.
- ❖ **SPARROW:** Flees from everyone.
- ❖ **TIGER:** Hunts everyone.

Each animal moves at the same speed, which means they will never touch each other unless someone else causes them to do so; when a predator comes in contact with its prey, the prey disappears after 1d6 minutes. Each animal figurine is worth 60 sp, but we all know the characters will simply drop them in the same bag, thus ending up with a very lonely (albeit very satisfied) tiger statuette.



❖ 5. Narrow Chamber

An adult-sized stone bed emerges from the southern wall and takes up most of the space in this room. Resting atop the stone is a small but very heavy box made of celestial ore, graced with coiling patterns of golden, serpentine scales. Within the box are four porcelain tea cups, each a pristine white. Inside the box's lid, a golden inlay portrays an androgynous figure raising a cup towards a snake-like creature, which bares its fangs and recoils from the cup. The humanoid figure is extremely simple,

but they seem to be wearing a long tunic covering everything but their head, forearms and feet. Their hair is combed up in a bizarre, three-pointed fashion, and a cascade of circular shapes (perhaps beads or similar ornaments) shrouds their face and falls to about halfway down their torso.

The box itself is worth 300 sp; each cup is worth 30 sp. The cups are also imbued with a strong cleansing magic, granting them the ability to remove all poisons from any drink or food poured into them. However, the cups' magic has waned over the centuries, and there's a 30% chance of the purification failing to take place.

The cups are also extremely fragile, although this is easily solved by wrapping them with some fabric or other soft material.

A lawful character that moves within 30 feet of the metallic box will feel a dim and almost calming sense of warmth emanating from it.



CORE

This is the central level of the Ark, housing its ancient engines and command bridge. With the exception of the shrine's well, all entrances to the Ark connect to this level.

❖ 6. Throne of Water

One of four massive square columns, each tied to a primal element. The chamber within each column is made accessible through a sliding metal door, and originally served as a place of meditation for the Gods. The prehistoric dwellers of Takashima, however, used these rooms to bury three of their most respected priests and priestesses (room 9 was not used).

The inner and outer walls of this column are carved in a pattern reminiscent of sea waves; inside is a large bronze throne, firmly lodged into the stone. Sitting on the throne is a mummified corpse, its chin resting on one hand in a somewhat pensive pose. It exudes a slight warmth.

The throne is worth 120 sp, but removing it from the wall requires proper tools (such as pickaxes) and at least an hour of very noisy efforts. If a character sits on the throne or casts *Speak With Dead* on the corpse, they will gain the ability to cast the spell *Strange Waters II* once per day (*Speak With Dead* has no other effect, since the corpse has been here for centuries). When either of these happens, the latent energy present in the chamber will

permanently dissipate, making it impossible for another character to learn the *Strange Waters II* spell here.

❖ 7. Throne of Fire

Similar to the Throne of Water, but the walls are decorated with coiling flames surging towards the roof.

The throne in this chamber is made of copper, and worth 90 sp. The corpse on the throne sits in the same thoughtful pose.

The first time a character sits on the throne or casts *Speak with Dead* on the corpse, they will gain the ability to cast *Resist Fire* once per day.

❖ 8. Throne of Air

Similar to the Throne of Water, but the walls are decorated with swirling clouds.

The throne in this chamber is made of silver, and worth 200 sp. The corpse on the throne sits in the same thoughtful pose.

The first time a character sits on the throne or casts *Speak with Dead* on the corpse, they will gain the ability to cast *Gust of Wind* once per day.

❖ 9. Throne of Earth

The walls of this chamber are carved in a rough, jagged pattern resembling a mountain range. There is a stone throne, merged with the floor itself (it cannot be removed). No corpse can be found, but the Wind Navigator (see *Heavenly Navigators*, page 28) lies on one of the armrests.

❖ 10. Storage

The sliding door leading to this room is partially stuck, and can only open half-way. The place is empty except for two heavy clay urns, each containing about a gallon of flammable oil. Lying on the ground and coated in nauseous ichor are fragments of burnt clay and a multitude of rectangular plates of varying size, all made of celestial ore. This is all that is left of a clay centurion, a divine construct that was tasked with guarding this area. It is up to the GM to determine who (or what) destroyed the centurion.

❖ 11. The Failures

Partially submerged within the sludge on the floor are the rotten corpses of eighteen male children, each in a different state of decay and swarming with arthropods. The most recent has probably been dead for less than three weeks, and the oldest is little more than a skeleton. All of them had their neck broken; a careful examination of the more intact corpses reveals they were tied or restrained.

These are Tokiko's failed experiments, the children kidnapped by the villagers and killed for Antoku's soul to possess them. This process has never been successful: the young child-emperor has retained some of his sanity and purposefully resists the process. Tokiko doesn't know this, or perhaps she refuses to acknowledge it.

❖ 12. Chamber of Souls

A thick, ichorous muck covers the entire floor. Resting against the northmost wall is a metallic rack made of celestial ore, holding a total of 64 ten-inch long, two-inch wide jade cylinders, identical to the one that can be found in Antoku's Chamber (page 29). Each of these cylinders stores the soul of a Taira samurai, which will break free with a frightening screaming if the cylinder's upper half is uncorked (this produces a fair amount of noise, but unlike Antoku's cylinder it will not supernaturally alert Tokiko). The shifting weight of the trapped souls can be felt by anyone holding a cylinder.

Lying on the floor are 23 empty cylinders; these belonged to those souls who have already been placed into a corpse and created a Sea Ogre.

Each jade cylinder is worth 5 sp; the ones that still contain a soul can be worth much more to someone interested in such... experiments.

❖ 13. Control Bridge

Three large metallic supports (crafted from celestial ore) rise from this room's western wall, shaped like crescent moons. Originally, each of them held a thin glass disc, ten feet in diameter. When the Ark crashed into the sea, one of them fell from its support and shattered on the floor.

The discs relay images from outside the Ark, and were used primarily for nava-

tion and orientation. Currently, one of them displays a side view of the fishing village, while the other shows the pirate camp. The discs do not relay smells or sounds; and while they can pivot on the metallic supports, this has no effect on the displayed images. If removed from their support, they appear to be common glass (albeit very clean and extremely fragile). If returned to their support, they display the same images as before.

The floor in this chamber presents a raised section (its shape can be seen on the Ark's map; see page 26) which supports a massive tarnished bronze bell standing in the very center of the room. The bell has a truncated cone shape, and is decorated with horizontal bands and natural patterns reminiscent of spiders and dragonflies. It was placed here in ancient times by local worshippers, and still retains some of its magic: once per day, if struck with sufficient force, the ringing bell will produce the *Turn Undead* spell, as if cast by a 3rd level Cleric.

If the bell is removed from this room (it is worth 80 sp), its magic dissipates and is forever lost.

❖ 14. Altars of Sun and Moon

The swirling patterns carved into the walls of this area shine with a pulsing, white-blue light. The floor has not been soiled by Tokiko's ichor. Two massive altars rise from the ground, covered in smooth, dimly glowing carvings that form a maze of vein-like lines.

On top of each altar is a wide brazier (9 feet in diameter). The northmost brazier is made of gold (380 sp) and the southmost brazier is made of silver (240 sp); thick metallic roots connect each of them to the stone below, and it would take hours to remove them (even with the appropriate tools).

As long as the braziers are still attached to the altars, any flammable substance (such as oil) that is placed into them and lit will burn forever and never extinguish, instead emitting a constant beam of warm light rising towards the ceiling.

The braziers are part of the Ark's navigation system: one represents the Land of Sun (gold) and the other represents the Land of Moon (silver), the two Divine Domains (see *The Last Flight*, page 35).



❖ CLAY CENTURION

ARMOR: as Chain (16)

HIT DICE: 1; 1 hp

MOVE: 60'

ATTACKS: 1d6 sword; or three centurions may focus their gaze on a living target who must save versus Magic or fall asleep (as per the *Sleep* spell).

MORALE: 12 (bound to an area)

Wet clay statues animated by divine magic and coated in plates of celestial ore. They produce unnerving, clattering sounds and are invulnerable to all damage unless heated (such as with a torch or by throwing and igniting lamp oil). They are not living creatures.



❖ 15. Altar of Navigation

The floor and walls show the same characteristics as those in area 14, including the dim light from the carvings. A mound of rubble partially blocks the way from area 14 towards the north corridor.

Within each of the three alcoves along the north corridor is a dormant clay centurion, an armored construct created by the Gods to protect the inner areas of the Ark. The south corridor presents three alcoves as well, but only two are occupied by clay centurions: the westernmost alcove is empty but for the Earth Navigator (see *Heavenly Navigators*, page 28).

All clay centurions in this area activate whenever an intruder enters the corresponding corridor; as long as characters

remain in area 14, the centurions will lay dormant. Additionally, they will not chase anyone past a light barrier.

The most prominent and important feature of this area is, however, the large platform occupying most of the eastern room. Its surface is smooth except for wide, glowing lines connecting five identical holes, their disposition resembling two overlapping triangles (as can be seen on the Ark's map; see page 26). The holes are cylindrical and about ten inches deep, their bottom presenting two slots that can perfectly fit a Heavenly Navigator's feet (if the characters have already found one or more Navigators, they will have no trouble noticing this detail).

THE LAST FLIGHT

If a Heavenly Navigator is placed inside each of the cylindrical holes in the Altar of Navigation (area 15) and both braziers on the Altars of Sun and Moon (area 14) are lit, the wall carvings in the entire Ark will begin pulsing with bright orange light. A fist-sized globe of solid light will appear between the two braziers, charged with static electricity. The globe cannot be moved except along an invisible line connecting the two braziers: if moved towards the golden brazier, the Ark will sail for the Land of Sun; if moved towards the silver brazier, the Ark will sail for the Land of Moon.

Regardless of the destination, Takashima and everything nearby (including creatures and people) will be obliterated. The Ark's damaged hull will likely not withstand the journey, killing anyone transported by it. However, there's no reason a Referee should not instead allow the group to reach their divine destination which, while beyond the scope of this module, can be an adventure site in and of itself. Using the *Forbiddance* spell allows the group to remain on Earth when the Ark departs, surviving the catastrophe.

BOW

This section of the Ark was originally much longer, but it experienced the most damage upon impact with Earth. The bow's front ended up being the underground room beneath the village elder's home.

❖ 16. Burial Room

The primitive dwellers of Takashima buried their most honored dead in this chamber. There are sixteen mummified corpses lying on the floor, arranged in four rows of four corpses. Each body wears silver ornaments for 2d6 sp; these jewels are carved with the same esoteric symbols found on the fragments used as currency

by the islanders.

Two objects were carefully placed in the center of the room: the Water Navigator (see *Heavenly Navigators*, page 28) and a palm-sized, circular bronze mirror decorated with motifs resembling a swarm of dragonflies (it is worth 42 sp). Strangely enough, the mirror is still polished.

Within each of the three alcoves (a fourth alcove was swallowed by dirt and fallen rubble) stands a mummified body clutching a short spear. These spears are made of celestial ore, deal 1d6+1 damage, and cannot be bent, broken, damaged or destroyed unless by supernatural means. They resemble bamboo spears with a leaf-shaped tip.

HOLD

This is the lowest level of the Ark. Its original function is unknown, but the first inhabitants of the island used it as a mass grave for those who were not considered worthy of burial within the upper levels.

❖ 17. Mound of Corpses

This large area is completely filled with mummified corpses, unceremoniously strewn around and submerged in knee-high purple ichor. There are 144 bodies in total: 60 of them wear silver jewelry for 2d6 sp each, while the remaining 84 were stripped of it by Tokiko when she gathered silver for the villagers. A pile of shattered silver ornaments (worth 5d6 sp in total) lies near the sliding door leading to this area from the Core above.

❖ 18. The Lovers

This chamber is empty except for two mummified corpses lying on the floor. They don't wear any ornaments. There is no ichor in this room, and any magical creature will not be able to enter, as if pushed away by an invisible force.

❖ 19. Crab's Nest

The filth and sticky ichor on the floor are almost knee-high here. Floating in the substance is the Void Navigator (see *Heavenly Navigators*, page 28).

What looks like the upper armor of a clay centurion resting against the southern wall is actually the scavenged dwelling of a monstrous hermit crab. This old, deformed crustacean has fed on Tokiko's ichor for years, becoming aggressive and highly territorial.

❖ HERMIT CRAB

ARMOR: as Chain (16); as Leather (14) once reduced to 8 hp or less

HIT DICE: 2; 12 hp

MOVE: 60'

ATTACKS: 1d6/1d6 pincers

MORALE: 7



❖ 20. Clay Vat

Most of this room is occupied by a five-feet tall stone vat, filled with magical wet clay emanating a slight warmth. The vat appears to be rising from the floor itself, not unlike the stone beds in the Ark's quarters.

A character can focus on the magical clay for $2d6$ minutes to create a clay creature: it has the same statistics as a clay centurion, except for an AC of 12 (unarmored) and the fact it carries no weapons. The creature cannot speak, but it is tireless and will obey the commands of its creator as best as it can, despite being incapable of understanding complex instructions or acting with precision and subtlety.

It will take 24 hours for the clay vat to magically refill itself and be able to produce another creature.

❖ 21. Ark Engines

Similarly to areas 14 and 15, the carvings in this section of the Ark are still pulsing with dim, white-blue light, and the floors are free of any ichor.

Inside the central room is a raised platform that can be reached through a set of curved stone steps; atop the platform is a lever resembling a ship's rudder, made of celestial ore. This device could originally rotate up to 90° to either side, regulating the Ark's turbines (see below), but is now badly damaged and almost stuck, requiring at least two people to move.

❖ CLAY CENTURION

ARMOR: as Chain (16)

HIT DICE: 1; 1 hp

MOVE: 60'

ATTACKS: $1d6$ sword; or three centurions may focus their gaze on a living target who must save versus Magic or fall asleep (as per the *Sleep* spell).

MORALE: 12 (bound to an area)

Clay centurions are invulnerable to all damage unless heated. They are not living creatures.

This room is guarded by three clay centurions, which will awaken as soon as someone crosses the light barrier, but will not chase anyone past it.

Side corridors lead from here to two smaller chambers, each containing one of the Ark's turbine engines. Each engine appears as a massive cylinder of celestial ore, ten feet in diameter, with thousands of smaller plates arranged to form multiple spiraling fans. While the fans in the northmost engine are permanently broken, those in the southmost engine still open and close when the lever in the central chamber is moved.

Where each turbine's axis would normally be, an arm-shaped support rises from the engine and holds a large, almost-flat metallic bowl. The bowl can be freely removed from the support, and is filled to the brim with about half a gal-

lon of semi-transparent, luminous golden liquid: *lightwater*.

Much like the Ark itself, lightwater is a lost marvel from the Age of Gods, distilled from the very clouds forming the Divine Domains. Its exact function within the Ark's engines could be summarized as that of a cooling/stabilizing liquid; however, its properties are much greater and... unpredictable, especially if it is consumed by a mortal. When a nearby living being is about to die, lightwater glows brightly for a few minutes.

In case a character drinks lightwater, roll a d10 on the table below.

CENTURION KIDNAPPERS

If the Referee wants clay centurions to be more than simple guardians, they may implement the following rule: when a character is put to sleep and captured by centurions, they bring the victim to area 21 and feed them lightwater. This automatically triggers the second effect from the table below, killing the character and creating a new centurion.

D10 ♦ LIGHTWATER

- 1 The character is immediately killed, vanishing into a cloud of sparkling dust. Its weapons and worn gear are destroyed in the same manner. Items carried within bags or backpacks are safe, however.
- 2 As above, but the character's vital energy is transferred to area 20, where it enters the vat and creates a new clay centurion, which immediately heads to area 21. This clay centurion has AC 12 (since it wears no celestial ore plating) and carries no weapons.
- 3 As above, but the character's will and conscience remain intact within the new body. Have fun getting used to your new existence as a clay creature!
- 4-6 The character immediately loses 1d3 points of Intelligence and gains that many points of Wisdom.
- 7-9 The character immediately loses 1d3 points of Wisdom and gains that many points of Intelligence.
- 10 The character regains 3d4 hit points and can now read all languages, but loses the senses of smell and taste.



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YEAR 1564.

A group of Western explorers reaches Japan on Portuguese ships.

Lured by the promise of silver, they set foot on the island of Takashima...

...only to come face to face with its ancient horrors.