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Gamemaster's Guide to Kaidan

Setting Guide for the Kaidan setting of Japanese Horror



Jonathan McAnulty

Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Compatible

Kaidan

RiP

Rite Publishing Presents:

Gamemaster's Guide to Kaidan

a Gamemaster's Setting Guide to theKaidan setting of Japanese Horror (PFRPG)

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Table of Contents

Foreword 3
Developer's Note 4
Introduction to Kaidan 5
Chapter One: A Brief History of Kaidan. 7
Chapter Two: Races of Kaidan 16
Chapter Three: Religions of Kaidan 43
Chapter Four: Tenmei and the Realms of Kaidan . . 57
Chapter Five: The Land of Kaidan. 68
Chapter Six: Life in Kaidan. 134
Chapter Seven: Death in Kaidan 145
Chapter Eight: Adventuring in Kaidan. 156
Chapter Nine: Magic in Kaidan 176
Appendix One: Calendar of Kaidan 208
Appendix Two: Feats of Kaidan. 209
Appendix Three: New Monsters of Kaidan 213
Appendix Four: Inspiration 214
Appendix Five: Glossary 216
Patrons 218
OGL 219



Kikuiwa Hammer
See Magic Items, page 202

Foreword

This isn't the domain of zombies, serial murderers, and cyclopean aliens. You won't find the dread of Mr. Hyde, Frankenstein, or Dracula here. Don't expect the relentless visions of *Audition*, *Parasite Eve*, or *Uzamaki* either. Hundreds of years and tens of thousands of miles will pass before those young terrors take shape.

Before them came something more fundamental, more visceral, embodiments of fears passed down through stories, faith, and instincts born of a world more full of mysteries and shadows.

That is the world of Kaidan.

You might be familiar with the children of these terrors, films such as *Dark Water*, *Ju-on*, or *Ringu*, unnerving glimpses into an age and place where inky waters hide backdoors to Hell and no one escapes karmic revenge. Abandon what you think you know about terror, your preconceptions about hawthorn stakes and steepled sanctuaries, and step into the nightmares of a world both unsettlingly alien and absolutely true. For all the depth and dark artistry poured into Kaidan, the dread here isn't born purely of imagination, but of fears that once and still do walk corners of the Earth, sleep-stealing menaces for which many readers will be utterly unprepared.

I know, because I wasn't.

As one of the architects behind Paizo Publishing's Pathfinder Adventure Path, I direct and produce significant portions of that publication's two yearly campaigns. The Jade Regent Adventure Path—the Pathfinder Roleplaying Game's foray into Asian-inspired fantasy—proved especially exciting and challenging as it meant delving into the fiction and folklore of a tradition far different and geographically distant from our usual roots in European legendry and Western literature. Longtime readers of Pathfinder Adventure Path—especially the Carrion Crown Adventure Path—likely know my predilections for world folklore and gothic horror. As such, I'd read Lafcadio Hearn's *Kwaidan: Stories and Studies of Strange Things*—an English speaker's easiest entry point to the traditional ghost stories of Japan—and numerous works by the father of the Japanese mystery story, Edogawa Rampo. Add to those a smattering of horror anime and manga, and I well know how much of an expert on Japanese traditions and terror that doesn't make me—and to pull off the Jade Regent Adventure Path, experts were what I needed.

Rite Publishing's *Heroes of the Jade Oath* had already attracted my attention, blazing a trail into the same realms of Asian fantasy we intended to travel with Pathfinder. Tracking that fantastic work back to its source led me to Frank Carr, Steven D. Russell, and Mike Tumey, all of whom ended up contributing fantastic work to the Jade Regent Adventure Path, bringing with them a depth of research, experience, and authenticity no unacclimated designers would have been able to muster for a project with such rapid deadlines. It didn't take more than an assignment or two for that group to note my relatively dark tastes and suggest I check out their campaign arc introducing the world of Kaidan.

I'm not sure that inviting one into a realm of deathless child despots and dishonored samurai, spider-bodied witches and jealous forest guardians, broken vows and poisoned ambitions, can be considered particularly friendly—or, in my case, particularly fair—but I dove into it nonetheless. It was not what I expected. Most forays into Asian fantasy attempt to be comprehensive, losing nuances of mood and motive behind impossibly deadly swords and simulated wirework. I found that Kaidan discounts the completist's vision of Asian fantasy, instead focusing on the horrors and hopes of a single nation, exploring Japan through elaborations upon that nation's folktales and nightmares. This skewed vision of a half-familiar world goes far beyond recasting knights as samurai and goblins as kappa, choosing another, more poignant touchstone: dread. Layers of mystifying traditions and mysterious beliefs become fascinating nuances, daring readers to explore and learn how a culture so distinct from our own cultivated fears both remarkably familiar and spine-chillingly alien.

That what began with *The Gift*, *Dim Spirit*, and *Dark Path* has culminated in this book is no grim miracle. Rather, it's a testimonial to the scholarship and passion of author Jonathan McAnulty, the dedication of the book's contributors and editors, and the support of a wildly enthusiastic community. Whether you've come to Kaidan seeking adventure in a world rich in mood and dark detail, or to lose yourself in terrors unfettered by centuries of Western clichés, you'll find a gaming experience like no other, one that presents a world of unique beauty, powerful beliefs, and honored tradition, but then dares to harrow the nightmares and dark desires of a cultural psyche gripped by delusion, rage, desire, and terror's psyche that, for most of us, is uncomfortably unfamiliar.

This is the world of Kaidan. Beware, because this nightmare is not your own.

F. Wesley Schneider
Editor-in-Chief, Paizo Publishing

Developer's Note

Being a Japanese American, a Japanophile, an amateur historian, a collector of translated Japanese ghost stories and folklore, and a lover of all things creepy and Gothic horror, it should be no surprise that as an avid roleplaying gamer, I've always wanted to create my own Japanese horror setting. Because of my heritage and interest in history, it was always paramount that if created such a setting, it would need to possess more authenticity in presentation than previously published Japan analogs.

Don't get me wrong, though I certainly enjoyed *Oriental Adventures* when it was first released in 1985, as well as other Asian settings subsequently published, as someone more familiar with Japanese culture, history and folklore than your average afficianado, there were many aspects that I considered mistakes, misspellings and concepts taken out of context. I wanted my setting to do a better job; to be more authentic was an important goal.

One goal, I wanted to tie in Buddhist concepts and spiritual nature of Japan, more intrinsically to the setting. The goal of Buddhism is to escape the Wheel of Life reincarnation cycle and attain enlightenment, and because most do not achieve enlightenment, being trapped on the wheel had to have real meaning in the game. The Buddhist reincarnation cycle has six stations, considered it's own kind of hell. They are heaven, asuras, human, animal, hungry ghost and hell. My invention was to tie these six stations into the social caste system, with a couple added castes to fit the six. Heaven is the aristocracy, asuras is the samurai caste, human is the commoner caste, animal are the non-humans, hungry ghost are the "untouchables" of society, and hell is a literal hell called Jigoku, home of the oni.

By tying the social caste system with the reincarnation cycle together, the culture, races, religion, spiritual concepts, and ghost story tradition of ancient Japan are neatly packaged in a single set of mechanics, consisting of karma and the reincarnation cycle. While a slight departure from being truly authentic, it ties the horror setting well together, unifying many of ancient Japan's aspects in a unique way.

Kaidan is an archaic Japanese word that means "ghost story" or "strange occurrence," which as a horror setting my more aptly translates to "a land of ghost stories," and is why I named it so. Interestingly, there was a ghost story telling game played by samurai from the 1500s up to the end of the 19th century called "hyaku monogatari kaidan kai," which tranlates to "a collection of 100 ghost stories" which was played by up to a dozen participants.

Sitting within a circle of 100 lit candles, each samurai would tell a short ghost story or eerie occurrence, and when the tale was told, each would wet their fingers and extinguish a candle. Once all 100 tales were told, 100 candles extinguished, the act of playing the game was perceived as a kind of summoning ritual, inviting a powerful demon to challenge the participants. In a way, it was kind of Bloody Mary game seeking to scare the participants out of the circle before it's completion, as a test of bravery for the samurai.

I think it is especially appropriate to reincarnate a samurai ghost story telling game into a roleplaying game setting.

In closing, while the Kaidan setting of Japanese horror is my homebrew concept creation, it could not have come into existence without the critical help of Steven D. Russell (whose loss I still mourn), the author, Jonathan McAnulty and the many additional authors, game designers, editors, and artists, as well as those who've contributed funds through Kickstarter and other patronage programs.

I am deeply indebted to all contributors and I thank you for allowing me to bring one of my dreams into life as a publication.

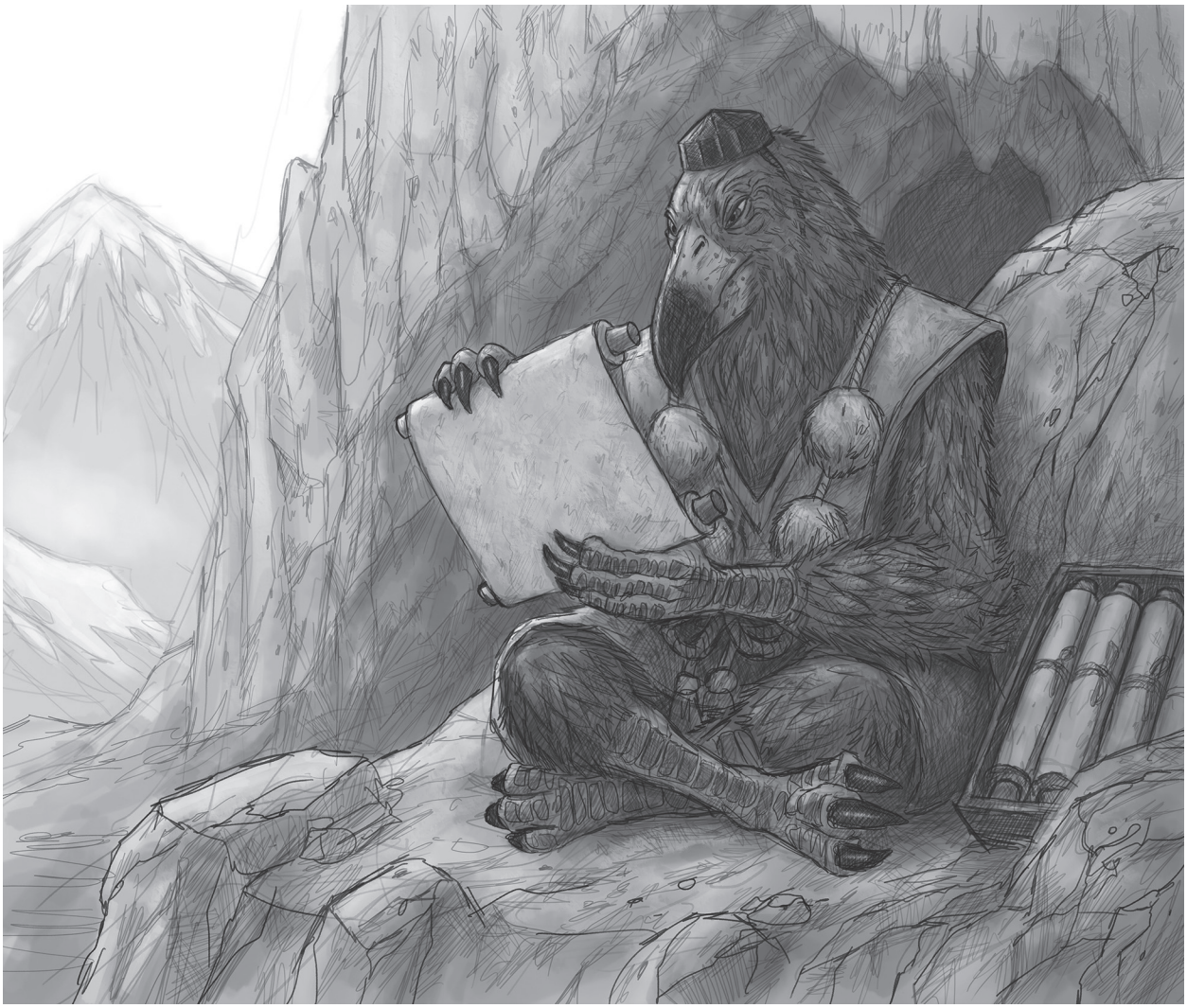
Michael K. Tumey
Concept Creator, Developer and Cartographer

An Introduction to Kaidan

You hold in your hands a guide-book to a land of horror, fantasy, mystery and adventure. You hold in your hands the Guide to Kaidan. We hope you enjoy it.

Kaidan is the brain-child of Michael Tumey. Michael is of partial Japanese descent and had never been completely satisfied with how Japan, with all its myths and legends, had been used in other fantasy settings, combining, as they tended to do, the Samurai tropes of Japan, with the myths and legends of other Asian countries, such as China and Korea. While such blending of settings is not a bad thing, in and of itself, indeed the fantasy genre is full of the examples of such blendings from other cultures so that French inspired Paladins battle Greek based Minotaurs alongside non-human allies largely derived from the imaginations of an English author, Michael wanted a setting more true to its Japanese roots, and the history of Japan. At the same time, he conceived of a timeline where the Miyamoto clan lost their great war with the Taira clan when the latter rose from the dead as undead overlords. Thus was born the seeds of Kaidan.

I was brought on board initially, to rework the ideas Michael had for adventure modules set in Kaidan and these adventures became The Curse



of the Golden Spear Trilogy. We also worked to produce several smaller setting books detailing Samurai, Yakuza, Kappa, Henge and Tengu in Kaidan. Along the way someone suggested we produce an actual guide-book to all of Kaidan, and we set out to do just that.

Working on Kaidan has been both challenging and edifying. As far as challenges go, Kaidan is intentionally constrained by a limited set of source material: we wanted it to be as authentically Japanese as possible. On the other hand, we didn't want to simply reproduce Japan – it needed to be unique enough in its own right to serve as a viable game setting. We wanted to walk a line between being derivative and being original, producing a setting that felt immediately like medieval Japan while still being novel enough in its own right to justify its existence and creation. You will have to judge how well we succeeded, but within Kaidan you can, if you want, recreate ***The Seven Samurai*** as a viable game scenario, or you can have your PCs go toe to toe against a vampiric pirate over-lord with an army of undead servants and shadowy ninja at his beck and call. There is room in Kaidan for all of the ghost stories of ancient Japan, many of which served as actual inspiration for Kaidanese events, and there is room for you to create your own legends.

A related challenge in creating Kaidan was in the use of religion in the setting. Japan is very much a land shaped by the religions of Shinto and Buddhism, and it is almost impossible to recreate Japan without those religions. At the same time, it is always potentially insulting to people of a particular faith when their faith is made a part of a fantasy world. As a person of faith myself, I wanted to be respectful of the faith of others. The Yokinto faith described in this book is admittedly Shinto with a thin veneer of fantasy painted on it. At the same time, I have striven to be as true to the actual doctrines and practices of Shinto as I, in my limited knowledge can be, and use the religion is a positive force. I think we succeeded in that. Zaoism was a bit trickier. Anyone familiar with Buddhism can see the similarities between Zaoism and Buddhism, and there is no doubt that Zaoism is one of the driving forces for evil in the setting. However, before any take offense, let me point out two things. Similarity is not the same as equality and Zaoism is most certainly not Buddhism. I tried to be careful in making them alike but different. Different enough that the former is but a reflection of the latter. Secondly, the form of Zaoism currently practiced in Kaidan is only one form of what is meant to be a larger religion, and as anyone acquainted with religion knows, even the best of faiths can be hijacked by twisted men who twist faith to their own ends. Such is what has happened in Kaidan.

One of the other challenges of Kaidan was creating the land as a viable setting for horror based campaigns. Horror can be hard to get right in a level based role-playing game, where PCs get progressively more powerful; and it is too easy to fall into camp and cliché. There are several things that, I think, make Kaidan work for horror-themed games, and those are discussed further on in the book, so I will not rehash them here. Again, you must be the judge of how well we succeeded, but it is to be hoped that those who play in Kaidan will experience some genuine moments of discomfort and horror, while still having enough fun to come back for more of the same.

But producing this book has also been quite rewarding in its own way. When I started some years ago, what I knew about medieval Japan was largely limited to my exposure to the movies of Akira Kurosawa and Hayao Miyazaki. While that might not be a bad place to start (and both those directors are commended to you as excellent sources for inspiration), it was hardly sufficient. Since then I have read quite a bit, studied quite a bit, and exposed myself to many more relevant movies and shows. I know enough to know that there's still a lot I don't know, but I also know I know a whole lot more than I used to about Japan, its history, its religions, its customs, its myths, and its culture. And my Japanese vocabulary has likewise been much improved. So while I am not an expert, this project has made me much more knowledgeable about a subject that is, of itself, interesting and rewarding.

I would hope, and I do hope, that you find your perusal of this manuscript to be as worthwhile, as interesting, and as rewarding, as it was to develop and write it. And I hope that you find in Kaidan a land worthy of your game and your adventures.

Jonathan McAnulty, 5-19-2015

Chapter 1: A Brief History of Kaidan

In the Beginning...

The oldest of tales, those still told by the yokai, speak of a time before there was land. The ocean was vast, featureless and dark, for there were not yet lights in the sky. The gods of heaven looked down upon the waters, and, desiring to create something more, they placed a lantern in the sky to better work in the darkness.

Thus was the moon born.

As the moon reflected upon the still waters, the mighty celestial spirits fashioned a fierce, flaming naginata. Reaching out from the heavens they touched the ocean surface with the fiery blade. The waters boiled and forth came land.

Thus were born the islands that today are called Kaidan.

Delighting in their creation, the gods sent many of their children to live upon this new land. These are the kami – the spirits which dwell within all things.

The kami were happy for a while but there was no warmth to be had. Snow and ice multiplied and many of the kami, those which loved heat, grew cold and miserable, crying aloud to their celestial parents for relief. In answer, the gods placed their great naginata in the sky and its fire brought warmth and joy. Yet the fire burned too hot, and, after a time, the land began to scorch and the very earth billowed forth fire. Those of the kami who had loved the cold were displeased, and now it was their turn to cry out for reprieve. Thus the gods decided to alternate between the light and the dark. They set both the flaming spear and the moon into motion so that they might circle the land. Likewise, to better please all their children, they allowed for both a time of cold and a time of heat. Thus were made day and night, winter and summer.

In time, the gods brought forth other children to live on the land. First the yokai and then men. They bid these mortal children to heed well the wisdom of the immortal kami, and for a time it was so...

Kaidan's Prehistory

The islands which comprise the realm of Kaidan were, true to the legends of the yokai, born of fire and water. Volcanic forces erupting below the ocean floor thrust up rocks and sediment to form the fertile mountainous terrain of the archipelago. The old tales are also true in this regard: the kami were the first inhabitants of the islands. The nexus of fire, water, soil and air which gave birth to the islands was of such a nature as to make the 'veil' between the planes thin, so that many elemental spirits migrated into the material realm and fused their essence to that of the newly formed land. While a great number of these kami were lesser entities, there were others, mighty elemental potentates, which wielded tremendous power. These latter claimed vast territories, joining themselves to the very mountains and rivers of the land while the lesser spirits made homes for themselves within the rocks, plants, streams, and, eventually, even within animals.

The animals to which the spirits attached themselves were, as would be expected, altered and became the progenitors of new races. Chief amongst these new races were the yokai – intelligent humanoid races possessing both an elemental and an animal heritage. The yokai, making their homes within the forests, and upon the mountains of the islands, called their lands '*Wa.*' These early yokai were intensely spiritual, and though their religion was a simple affair, with few rituals and no priesthood, their reverence for the manifold kami, which they worshiped, was sincere and devout.

In time, others made their way to the shores of Wa. The first of these were the Anu, seafaring humans who came from the north in primitive boats scarcely suitable for ocean travel. Finding the land of Wa to be good, they gave up their boats and instead took up farming and hunting, settling all across the northern shores of Genshu. The Anu, a fair skinned race with dark brown hair, though skilled hunters, were a peaceful people. They soon became close allies and firm friends with the native yokai, the henge in particular, though they did not adopt the yokai religion, maintaining instead their own shamanistic practices.

The second group of immigrants to the archipelago came from the north-east: the korobokuru. The korobokuru were a short race of people, scarcely half the height of the Anu. The men sported heavy



beards and the women grew their hair long, nearly to the ground. Being better boatmen then the Anu, the korobokuru lived for many years primarily as fishermen along the northeast shores of Anshu. As their numbers grew, more and more of the race took up hunting, migrating inland, away from the ocean. As they migrated, they did so moving westward and southward, establishing villages throughout Anshu, and eventually on the northern shores of Yonshu. This migration brought them into contact with the yokai, who the korobokuru, like the Anu before them, befriended. Unlike the Anu, the korobokuru came to adopt many of the religious habits of the yokai, though they blended the worship of the kami with their own worship of tribal totems, having a preference for animal spirits. Indeed, a significant segment of the korobokuru maintained a belief that the yokai, with their animalistic features, were servants of the gods and treated all yokai as being semi-divine. The yokai did little to dispel such beliefs and, in some places, yokai were wont to using korobokuru as servants.

For several hundred years, the Anu, the korobokuru and the yokai prospered, building small communities throughout the archipelago. It was an era of peace, but like all such things, it could not last. The catalyst which brought change was the coming of the Children of the Sun.

The Children of the Sun

The Children of the Sun, tribes of sun-worshiping men, came from the west in boats little better than those the Anu had first arrived in, many years before. They were a black haired people, slim of build, and marginally darker in coloration than the Anu. Settling first upon the southern shores of Yonshu, they found the new land to be good. The forests were full of prey, the ocean teemed with fish, and the soil yielded forth crops in abundance. Soon the villages of these new settlers were spread across the islands.

In time, just as the Anu and the korobokuru had done, the Children of the Sun encountered the Yokai and learned of their ways regarding the kami. Being sun worshipers who venerated a small pantheon of nature deities, the Children of the Sun found much to like in the yokai religion and readily incorporated it into their own practices and beliefs, calling the new amalgamation Yokinto. They deified the kami and freely offered them gifts as children of the gods. The kami, in turn, blessed these men, just as they had blessed the yokai before them.

The Children of the Sun were prolific, and, moving east from Yonshu, they soon began establishing villages all along western Anshu, dividing the land according to clan and tribe. Each clan was essentially autonomous, ruled over by a clan patriarch or matriarch; there was no king and no central government. Conflicts between clans, when they inevitably arose, were settled by the clans themselves, sometimes with diplomacy or, more increasingly, through armed conflict. As time progressed, minor wars between the clans became frequent. Alliances began to be formed so that clans might better stand against their enemies. Though the majority of these alliances shifted and changed with some frequency, a few of the clans, through skillful negotiations, wise affiliations, and skill in battle, laid the groundwork for continued ascendancy.

Meanwhile, as the clans began to establish a pecking order, the archipelago saw the introduction of two new developments, each, in its own way, destined to change the political climate of Wa.

The first of these, the introduction of rice, marked a turning point in the relationship between men and yokai, and the beginning of the true ascendancy of men in Wa. Rice, which was brought to the archipelago via the same ocean routes as those first traveled by the Children of the Sun, proved to be a welcome addition to the diet of the islanders. First grown on Yonshu, cultivation of the plant spread quickly to Anshu and rice soon became the chief grain of Wa. In addition to being well suited to the climate and soils of both Yonshu and Anshu, rice had the additional benefit of being easy to store for extended periods of time. Village chieftains, and other influential clansmen, began to build up stockpiles of rice and within a few generations rice became the chief commodity used in bartering. Indeed rice served not only as a food, but also as the very currency of the islands. The poor were characterized by their lack of rice, the rich by their vast stores of the same.

The second major historical development at this time was the arrival of the Oni.

The volcanic energies which formed the islands had created perpetual spiritual foci, weaknesses in the metaphysical curtains between the planes. It was this weakness which had allowed for the initial mass migration of the kami to the archipelago, but the rift between the planes had never healed, and, over the ages, new elemental entities had continued to populate the islands, drawn through the planes by events manifesting great spiritual energies. Each tsunami brought with it a few more water spirits. Each earthquake caused an influx of earth spirits. And great storms would give rise to new air spirits. Yet the elemental planes were not the only spiritual realm to which Wa was connected. The hellish plane of Jigoku, populated by demons and a host of evil spirits, was another, and the doors to this realm were opened by acts of savagery and violence.

As men began to war with other men, the demons from Jigoku, the oni, found they could enter the material realm, and, like the kami before them, join themselves to it. Yet, whereas the kami primarily fused their essence with various aspects of the natural world, the oni joined themselves to flesh, possessing unborn host bodies and corrupting them into new and vile shapes. In particular, the oni found easy prey on the island of Kura, which had become home to a variety of giant-bloods and goblin-kin, creatures which had migrated south from the home-lands of the original Anu. Over a period of years, the oni decimated the entire island of its original inhabitants, using their bodies as the progenitors of a multitude of oni-kind.

The number of oni able to move in to and out of the material world was small at first, but as violence among men increased on the archipelago, so too did the number of oni. Initially the oni were satisfied with causing minor problems, but as events allowed their numbers to grow, so too did their influence. They soon grew so bold as to seek the corruption of the kami and the creation of ever greater grief for Wa.

The Warlords

Two hundred years after first setting foot on the southern shores of Yonshu, the Children of the Sun, though latecomers to the isles, were arguably the predominate culture of Wa. Their ability to grow and store rice gave them a distinct advantage over the yokai, Anu and korobokuru, who were still subsisting largely as hunters and gatherers. The introduction of bronze and iron implements to the equation, following the same ocean routes as the Children of the Sun and rice, erased all doubts as to which culture was in the ascendancy.

Imported bronze was used primarily for decorations and farm implements, the latter allowing greater productivity in agricultural endeavors, no mean thing in and of itself. Yet it was iron which brought the greater cultural change, for iron allowed for the creation of reliably efficient weapons and those clans which acquired

such weapons soon possessed a distinct advantage over those that did not. Clan heads with a martial disposition were quick to adapt to the innovation of iron in battle and it did not take long for the more aggressive clans to subdue their neighbors, demanding tribute in the form of rice. This redistribution of rice through the point of a sword allowed war-like clans to grow richer while the more peaceful clans grew steadily poorer.

The rising war lords were not satisfied with merely conquering their fellow men. Many of them turned on the yokai and the korobokuru, driving these races away from the coastal regions and into the mountainous interiors of Anshu and Yonshu. Likewise, the Anu, which had, by this time, established villages on the northern shores of both Anshu and Yonshu were driven violently back to Genshu.

Besides affecting the relationships between the different races, the violent actions of these warlords had another serious consequence: they opened wide the gates to Jingoku, allowing oni to flood into the archipelago in unprecedented numbers. The consequences of this demonic migration were soon felt by all, as a small army of oni, led by Kagutsuchi, a fire demon capable of taking the form of a great dragon, moved out from Kura Isle, conquering the Atosa peninsula on Genshu. Kagutsuchi laid waste to large swathes of land and built for himself a wooden fortress from which to rule. Soon thereafter a second contingent of oni invaded Yonshu, and a third overran the southern isle of Ryuki. Each subsequent oni force was led by a different oni-lord and each established their own fiefdoms, enslaving men and yokai alike.

Ekibiogami, lord of pestilence and plague, was the oni-lord who swept across Yonshu. When there were none left to resist him, his slaves built for him an opulent castle in the midst of the island. This castle was made in mockery of the castles of men, and within, Ekibiogami and his minions would torment a different soul each night, before feasting on the flesh of the same. So great was his reach that many of the men of Yonshu fled across the Naga Strait to Anshu.

The oni-lord who conquered Ryuki was no less than Amatsu-Mikaboshi, a great power in his own right, one of the greatest of the Lords of Jingoku. Being more far-sighted and wiser than either Ekibiogami or Kagutshuchi, Amatsu-Mikaboshi devoted a great portion of his energies to the building of a strong and mighty fortress of stone, making his foothold in the world secure. As his fortress, Ishi-no-Kabe, was being built, a process that took over a hundred and twenty years, Amatsu-Mikaboshi sent his minions, time and again, against the clans on the eastern shores of Anshu. His raiders killed many, but took many more as slaves to work upon the walls of Ishi-no-kabe. As time passed, the army, and the power, of Amatsu-Mikaboshi grew.

Despite the threat posed by the oni, for two hundred years no effective move was made against any of them. The weapons of men were too few and the magic of the oni was too strong. As well, excepting for the occasional raids made by oni bands, life upon Anshu went on much as it had before, though men who looked westward, across the sea, did so in fear.

It was upon Yonshu that men first fought successfully against the oni, and they did not do it alone. A young tengu by the name of Sojobo had spent many years mastering the art of the sword, the first tengu to do so. Besides his skill with the blade, he had also power over earth and air, being a mighty wizard-warrior with wisdom beyond his years. Sojobo rallied men and tengu to his cause and, selecting the most skilled from among his disciples, he formed a powerful band of elite warriors with which to challenge Ekibiogami and his minions. Within a year, not an oni was to be found on all of Yonshu and the castle of Ekibiogami was burned to the ground. Sojobo's tengu followers built him a great shrine upon the top of the mountains, and he ascended to become the guardian of Yonshu and the first of the immortal daitengu.

Despite the success of Sojobo, it would be another hundred years before the next oni-lord was defeated and his defeat would come at the hands of a woman.

Queen Himiko

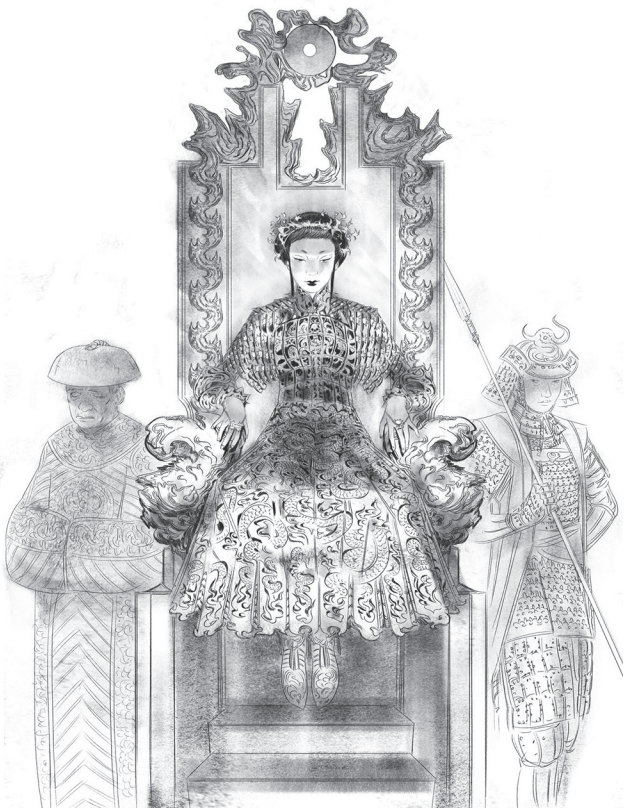
Himiko was a young noble woman of the powerful Tenpi clan, one of the oldest and most powerful of the clans of Wa. Her forefathers had consolidated many of the clans of northern Anshu under their banner even before Himiko's ascendancy to the head of the clan, though their gains were dwarfed by hers. Himiko's success was directly attributable to two factors. The first of these was the discovery of iron deposits within her lands, the first such discovery upon the whole of Wa. With iron readily available, Himiko did not have to rely upon the importation of the metal, as did all the other warlords of Wa, and could thus equip her warriors in a style better than even the minions of the oni. The second factor which contributed to her success was her skill in the arcane arts.

As a young girl, Himiko had been fascinated with magic and quickly learned all that the shamans of her people could teach her. Not content with their meager offerings, she made many experimentations of her own, even going so far as to capture and torture oni in order to learn their secrets. Himiko became skilled in enchantments and illusions, but it was her eventual mastery of necromancy which allowed her to lead an army onto Genshu and lay siege to the fortress of Kagutsuchi. After a three month siege, Himiko's army razed the demon's stronghold and Himiko herself bound the oni-lord and cut him into eight pieces. Seven of the eight pieces of the demon were hidden far from one another in secret places. The eighth piece Himiko kept for herself and fashioned into a mighty heirloom of power.

The victory over Kagutsuchi brought Himiko incredible acclaim and the allegiance of many of the clan-heads of northern Anshu, a hundred full told. She adopted the title of Queen, and dwelt within a great palace, served by a thousand maidens and a single eunuch-mute. Though she possessed the title, she left the actual duties of rulership to her youngest brother, Waka, devoting the bulk of her time to further arcane studies. As she grew older, her experiments grew darker and, prior to her death, rumors concerning Himiko's practice of human sacrifice and cannibalism abounded. She was buried in a great mound, as was the custom of that day. Contrary to custom, her brother interred the thousand maidens, and the eunuch, in the burial-mound as well, sealing them in while they were still alive.

The Imperial Age

The nephew of Himiko, Tarasi Nakatsuhiko, following the death of his father Waka, settled further south, as he sought to strengthen the alliances his illustrious aunt had forged. Though an able administrator, he was not to rule long. His wife, Tarashihime, was a prophetess who had, in her youth, served as a shrine maiden for her clan. On the day of the New Year of Nakatsuhiko's first year of rule, Tarashihime had a vision of the sun-goddess, Amaterasu, who told her that the time was right for the defeat of Amatsu-Mikaboshi. Upon awakening, Tarashihime told her husband of her vision, but her husband, being cowardly, refused to consider the venture and was subsequently cursed by the gods. He was dead within a month.



Tarashihime, upon the death of her husband, took up the mantle of leadership and adopted the name Jingu under which to govern. Queen Jingu was pregnant with child and, through divination, she knew it to be a son. From almost the first, she spent her time as queen doing little other than preparing her people for war. Many foundries were built during her reign, and every man that could bear arms was equipped and trained for that day in which her son, Ojin, would lead them into battle.

Ojin was born under a multitude of auspicious signs and, as he matured, it soon became clear that, among men, he had no equal in either strength or wisdom. Fair of face and keen of wit, Ojin would, over the course of his lengthy rule, prove himself, time and again, to be both blessed of heaven and a more-than-capable leader. His mother's foresight in preparing their people for battle proved fortuitous, for, upon the eve of Ojin's sixteenth birthday, an army of fiends landed upon the southern shores of Anshu. Over the course of three hundred years, Amatsu-Mikaboshi had not been idle. Beyond the building of his fortress, he had also amassed a great legion of oni with which to conquer. His oni armies pushed aggressively north, at first meeting little resistance, for the southern clans of Anshu were yet

disorganized and leaderless. But then the armies of northern Anshu rose to meet the oni and the first great Oni-War was well and truly joined.

Battles raged across Anshu for ten years, until, in response to a vision, Ojin sent his three best warriors on three separate quests for mighty relics with which to turn the tide of battle. The first, a bronze mirror forged in kami fire, was found upon Genshu in an oni lair by the hero Momotaro. Named Yata-no-Kagami, the mirror granted any who held it the ability to see all things as they truly were. The second relic, a magatama, or sacred jewel in the shape of a curved tear, named Yasakani, was found in the keeping of the mighty daitengu, Sojobo, on Yonshu. It was fetched by the henge hero, Kachi. The third item was a celestial sword, Ame-no-Murakumo-no-Tsurugi, a relic of the sun-goddess, and was bound with such spells as to make it lethal to all oni, including Amatsu-Mikaboshi, who was immune to the weapons of men. The sword had been buried within the mound of Himiko and was, in fact, the same blade which had been used against Kagutsuchi. The mighty hero, Arima, who was also the first Kaidanese warrior to ride a horse, an animal introduced to Kaidan during the reign of Ojin, led a group of seven warriors into the mound and was the only one to return alive, refusing to thereafter discuss what he had seen within.

Armed with the three relics, Ojin personally led the fight against the oni horde, driving them from Anshu. He then led a large host onto the isle of Ryuki. The battle for Ryuki lasted for eight months, but with mighty magics and the blessings of heaven, the armies of men vanquished Amatsu-Mikaboshi and lay waste to his fortress.

Following the end of the Oni-War, Ojin proclaimed himself emperor of all of Wa and established his capital in the Anshu city of Akyo. This marked the first year of what would be known as the Imperial Age. Ojin ruled for another fifty years, and had many accomplishments to his name, including the introduction of writing to the islands, and the aforementioned horses. When he died, rulership passed to his son Sazaki, thus beginning a continual line of succession.

Though the descendants of Ojin retained the title of emperor, none of them possessed the authority enjoyed by their illustrious ancestor. Rather, throughout the years to follow, though they collected tribute from the clans and were honored in word and title, they became little more than first among equals in relationship to the various chieftains of Anshu. Moreover, the clan heads of those families living on Yonshu and Genshu were seldom more than nominally under the leadership of the Emperor and often their tributes were late or non-existent.

Zaoism and The Growth of The State

Following the rise of the Imperial family, the next major development in the history of the islands was the introduction of a new religion, Zaoism, which, like rice and iron, came to Wa from across the sea, being carried in the hearts of priests who arrived on Anshu in the three hundred and second year of the Imperial Age. The years between the establishment of the throne and the coming of Zaoism had seen a continued growth in the divide between the rich (those who had rice) and the poor (those who had little rice, even when they grew it) as well as in the bureaucracy of governance. The clans were now clearly divided between those with political power and those with none, and within those clans which possessed power, there was much jockeying for positions and appointments.

Zaoism eventually found favor with those in power because, as part of its doctrine, it advocated a strict caste system, with each lesser caste being, by virtue of their very nature, subservient to the caste above it. The people of Wa, through their adherence to Yokinto, which vilified those whose occupation might bring them into contact with the dead, and through the great disparity between the poor and the powerful, already possessed something like a caste system. The growth of Zaoism simply codified and reinforced this paradigm.

The introduction of Zaoism, which encouraged its adherents to study the Zaoist scriptures, also brought about a greater interest in other scholarly pursuits including poetry, literature, and the arcane arts. For the first time, nobles regularly employed court wizards and sages, and each noble family sought to patronize various Zaoist monks and priests, both in an attempt to gain divine favor, and as a mark of social standing. It became not uncommon for lesser sons of great houses to enter into the Zaoist priesthood, and several Zaoist martial schools, the Sohei monks, came into being about this time.

In the four hundred and thirtieth year of the Imperial Age, the Emperor Monmu-tenmo, fearing a renewed threat of oni upon the outer islands, instituted a draft and embarked on a quest to purge the land of all demons. Though Monmu's army was only temporary, it momentarily strengthened the power and prestige of the Imperial throne. The draft was revived seventy four years later by Emperor Kammu to subjugate what he deemed to be a growing northern rebellion. He claimed, for the sake of polity, that he feared a renewed threat from the oni, but, while there was a purge of

demon-kind, most of the fighting was done against men, especially the Anu. It was a campaign with many long-term repercussions. Firstly, following an initial poor showing by the army, Kammu appointed a trusted general to take command and gave him the title, though only temporarily, of Shogun. Secondly, the campaign greatly affected the racial and ethnic balance of Wa. The few Anu who survived this ordeal either went into hiding or were subjugated into the empire as lesser citizens of the eta caste. During the course of this war, the yokai of both Genshu and Anshu severed their ties with the race of men and retreated into the mountains and woods. Only upon Yonshu were there still close ties between humanity and the yokai, and even there it grew strained. Finally, after the war, Kammu rewarded his soldiers with land, much of it on western Anshu and southern Genshu. Many of these soldiers began new clan lines, and the most successful of these would form the core of what would come to be known as samurai clans.

In the meantime, Monmu's daughter Ahe, upon becoming Empress, had established a permanent capital in Heian-kyo, thus marking the beginning of what would later be considered the golden age of Wa. Kammu, during his reign, moved the capital to Fukuhara-kyo, where it remains to this day, but the trappings of a central bureaucracy were, by this time, almost fully developed.

Ironically, even as the central government grew stronger, the authority of the Emperor, which had peaked with Kammu, began once more to wane, with true power residing with the clan daimyos and powerful officials of the court. Some of the farming clans, in order to be better represented in the court, and to gain in prestige, pooled their resources and formed military units. The sons of the heads of these clans were taught in the martial arts, in religion and in etiquette. These warriors-scholars began to form an unwritten code of conduct, called bushido, and became known as samurai, meaning "those who served."

Following the death of Kammu, several of the more powerful clans, coveting control of the Imperial throne, maneuvered to marry their children into the imperial line so as to have a legitimate claim to succession. Thus were born the seeds of a great civil war.

The Minamoto Rebellion

Two predominant clans arose in power, each with legitimate and powerful ties to the Imperial throne, and each possessing a great antipathy towards the other. These two rival clans were the Minamoto and the Taira. The Taira clan was smaller, with fewer resources. The Minamoto clan was larger and wealthier, but most of their holdings were on eastern Anshu. Through shrewd leadership, deft political maneuvering, and not a little ruthlessness, Kiyomori, head of the Taira, captured the office of the Emperor for his infant grandson, Anotku. Unfortunately, Kiyomori died shortly thereafter and his sons lacked his wisdom and presence. Sensing weakness, the Minamoto clan rebelled and declared open war on their rivals, claiming the succession rightfully belonged to them.

The ensuing war was a bitterly fought affair, with many great and heroic deeds being done on both sides. For a little over five years, the war swept back and forth, drawing all clans into the fray. Yet as the war raged on, the inevitable outcome became ever clearer. The Taira clan was too small, the Minamoto clan too wealthy, and slowly but surely, in battle after battle, the Taira warriors were forced ever back. Finally, the remnants of the Taira clan marshaled a fleet of boats on the south end of Ryuki, in the shadow of the ruined fortress of the oni-lord, and prepared for a final push north, back to the capital. They were ambushed by a much larger fleet of Minamoto vessels as they drew near Nito. The warriors of both sides fought valiantly aboard the small boats, but the Taira warriors were overwhelmed.

When, at the last, it became clear that the battle was hopeless, the young emperor was cradled in the arms of his grandmother, Tokiko, who, like her late husband, was a follower of the Dark Wheel school of Zaoism. Gathering with all the exiled Imperial Court, and all her loyal hand-maidens, she prepared to cast herself and her grandson into the sea. Yet before she leapt, she uttered forth a dreadful curse. While the exact wording of the curse has been lost to time, it is known that she cursed the world and all the gods therein for allowing events to transpire as they had. She cursed both heaven and hell and shouted aloud for all to hear, "Would that my grandson would reign for a thousand years." Then she and all those with her, including many of the remaining Taira warriors, sacrificed themselves to the sea.

So dreadful was the curse, and so potent was the sacrifice, that the sun grew dim for seven days. For seven days oni poured forth into the world. For seven days, death would not come for any man. For seven days, a mist roiled up from the watery mass grave of the Taira, covering all the islands and the ocean thereabout. It was a dread and awful time, but what happened afterward was worse. At the

end of the week, the gates of Jigoku slammed shut once more and the gates of Yomi, the realm of the dead, were reopened. The Imperial Court, rejoined by a resurrected Kiyomori, rose from the depths of the sea and sailed to Fukuhara-kyo where they bloodily slew all those Minamoto they found, reclaiming the Imperial throne.

Thus began the first year of the Eternal Throne. Wa was a land cursed and those that dwelt therein renamed it Kaidan.

The Curse

The initial ramifications of the curse were soon obvious. Kaidan was a land cut off from all of the planes, save two: Jingoku and Yomi. A perpetual mist encircled the archipelago, hovering just above the ocean waters, and none could enter or leave through the mist apart from the will of the Imperial Throne. Those who dwelt within Kaidan were trapped, with death the only apparent release.

Yet, the curse had a far more reaching consequence, one with greater scope for tragedy. Within Kaidan, the process of soul creation and migration, so common to all the multiverse, had come to a halt. No new souls were being made in Kaidan and no souls could leave Kaidan for the hereafter. Those that died spent a brief period of time in Yomi, typically seven days, and were then forcefully reborn in accordance with the doctrine of Zaoist reincarnation. Thus, not even death could serve as a true release from the growing horrors of Kaidan.

As time progressed, more and more of those who died within Kaidan, including yokai and korobokuru alike, were reborn, not as babes, but as dread yurei: malevolent undead spirits. The lack of new souls, combined with growth in the populations of both the living and the dead, led to something new, the advent of tamashinaki, the soulless. The tamashinaki, formed when a soulless body, whether of man or beast, became host to a malevolent elemental spirit, had a penchant for violence and a taste for blood. Though the Kaidanese came to recognize the signs of the condition, they could do little to stop the phenomenon.

Besides all of this, the violence of the civil war, the opening of the gates of Jingoku during the seven dark days following the utterance of the curse, and the continued violence thereafter, meant that there were, once more, legions of oni working mischief and evil within the land.

The Rise of the Shogun

Though Antoku sits upon the throne of Kaidan, an undying emperor, with his grandmother eternally at his side, he is not the true power of Kaidan. Within a year of his hellish resurrection, Kiyomori "accepted" the title of Seii Tai Shogun. He quickly consolidated his power by executing those daimyo who had joined the Minamoto rebellion and appointed others in their place. He also rewarded many of his best soldiers with clan-titles and land. Beyond this, he confiscated Yokinto shrines, exalted loyal Zaoist priests to positions of power and made the Kuraikuruma branch of Zaoism the official religion of Kaidan, even to the point of codifying the caste structure of the island. He made it illegal, under penalty of death, for any to pretend to be from a caste other than that to which they were born.

Once his power-base was secure on Anshu, the Shogun turned his attention to Genshu and then to Yonshu, both of which had, to date, enjoyed a certain level of autonomy from the Imperial powers, Yonshu especially. With a certain ruthlessness, Kiyomori fully subjugated both islands and apportioned them into districts under daimyo loyal to himself.

It did not take very long, indeed, a single generation, for the nobility to realize that their Emperor and their Shogun were both unaging and, more to the point, undying. While the undead nature of the regime fomented some level of rebellion, the subtle preaching of the Kuraikuruma priest helped ease the way to an acceptance of necromancy as the chosen vehicle of perfection and, before long, the nobility itself turned to various means by which to cross from life to unlife. Those that failed to do so were eventually replaced by others who favored the course, so that, in time, each of the Kaidan daimyo was an undead ruler, swearing allegiance to an undead shogun who served, at least in theory, in the name of an undead emperor.

The Second Oni War

In the hundred and fifty second year of the Eternal Throne, the oni once more made their presence felt and the island descended into a second great war of man versus oni. The threat arose first on Genshu, as oni flowed out of the mountains in great numbers, but their forces soon overflowed onto the other islands as well. The oni had several leaders, though none with the stature, or power, of Amatsu-Mikaboshi. Each of the oni generals had their own goals and many sought to establish their own separate fiefdoms.

The shogun acted forcefully and decisively to counter the oni, but, even so, the war raged for thirty-six years, here and there. Beyond accounting for a great deal of death and suffering, it also entrenched the role of the samurai as warriors within the culture. While soldiers were drafted from every caste, it was the samurai who led the way. By the end of the war, the land was battle weary, but there was a glut of trained fighting men with few talents other than their skill at arms and no hope of gainful employment. This situation led to several cultural changes, including the rise of the yakuza within the eta-hinnin castes, and an increased recognition of the wisdom of training samurai in skills other than mere war-making.

Kaidan Today

It has been seven hundred and nineteen years since the rise of the Eternal Emperor, Antoku. Kaidan today is a land still possessed of great natural beauty, but it is also a land full of dark despair. It is a land where the cycle of life is broken; where nature is at war with man; where the dead rule the living; and there is no hope of improvement.

In the villages, the common man tries to eke out a meager living, knowing that violent death can come at any time. In the forests and mountains, the yokai hide away from the eyes of men, ever fearful of being found and hunted. In the fortresses, the samurai train in matters of both war and peace, so as to be able to fully serve the undying nobles. And for their part, the nobles, bored with their very undying existence, yet trapped by their own choices and fears, seek out ever more profane pleasures.

Nowhere in Kaidan is there peace and the arm of the shogun reaches to every corner of the archipelago as he strives to keep the people firmly in his grasp. Yet he lacks complete control. The ranks of the yamabushi begin to grow as men seek for spiritual release. The murmurs of rebellion can be heard in every caste, and even among the ever-loyal samurai, there are always those who question the power and worth of their noble lords. Ghosts, ghouls, demons, and other horrors lurk in the shadows, ever-present reminders that there are other powers besides those of the shogun.

The broken cycle (no new souls being made, no souls leaving), combined with an ever-increasing population means that the number of tamashanaki also increases, so much so that in recent years the Shogunate has begun to allow foreigners to once more dock their ships upon the shores of Kaidan, in the hope of entrapping fresh souls. This is not without danger for the regime, for the gaijin bring with them new ideas, and sometimes even new heroes, but need outweighs risk.

It has been seven hundred and nineteen years since the rise of the Eternal Emperor, Antoku. Kaidan today is a land full of danger, mystery, magic and beauty. It is a land of horrors, some subtle, many less so. It is a land where the people need heroes to hold back the darkness, even if but for a moment.



Chapter 2: Races of Kaidan

The Uninvited Wedding Guest

On a fine spring morning, a farmer traveled to visit his brother, who was getting married in a nearby village. The farmer's route took him through a forest, and, as he was in no hurry, he chose a little-traveled path, the better to enjoy the scenery. When the farmer stopped to eat his lunch of rice balls, he sat a little off the path, in the cool shade next to a small brook. As he ate, he became aware of a passing party, and, glancing out through the leaves of the undergrowth, he spied a parade of strange folk, all dressed as if for a wedding. At the head of the parade was a beautiful bride escorted by two foxes. Gazing at this face or that, the farmer noticed that more than one of them had fox-like faces and not a few had tails sticking out behind them.

"Surely this is a fox wedding," thought the farmer, "And that must be a kitsune princess at the lead. I would dearly love to see more." And, as he was already dressed for a wedding, he insolently decided to join the march. Acting for all the world like he was a part of the proceedings, he slipped boldly into the line.

At last the procession arrived at its destination, a secluded shrine, and there, waiting to greet the bride's party was the party of the groom. The wedding followed the usual course and afterward there were many tables laid out among the trees around the shrine for a grand wedding feast.

"Now I shall feast upon some fine food indeed," thought the farmer, but he noticed that, prior to being seated, each of the guests approached the newlyweds and offered them a gift. It so happened that he had a gift with him, a finely carved wooden bowl meant for his brother and his brother's bride, but he thought it would be best to offer it to the fox couple instead, as he was at their wedding.

So, with the same boldness with which he had stolen into the wedding party, the farmer stepped forward, bowed low, and offered the couple his gift. The bride accepted it and the groom thanked the farmer, but the groom's father spoke up.

"Tell me good sir," said the elderly fox, "I do not recognize you. With which party did you arrive?"

"The bride's party," answered the farmer truthfully.

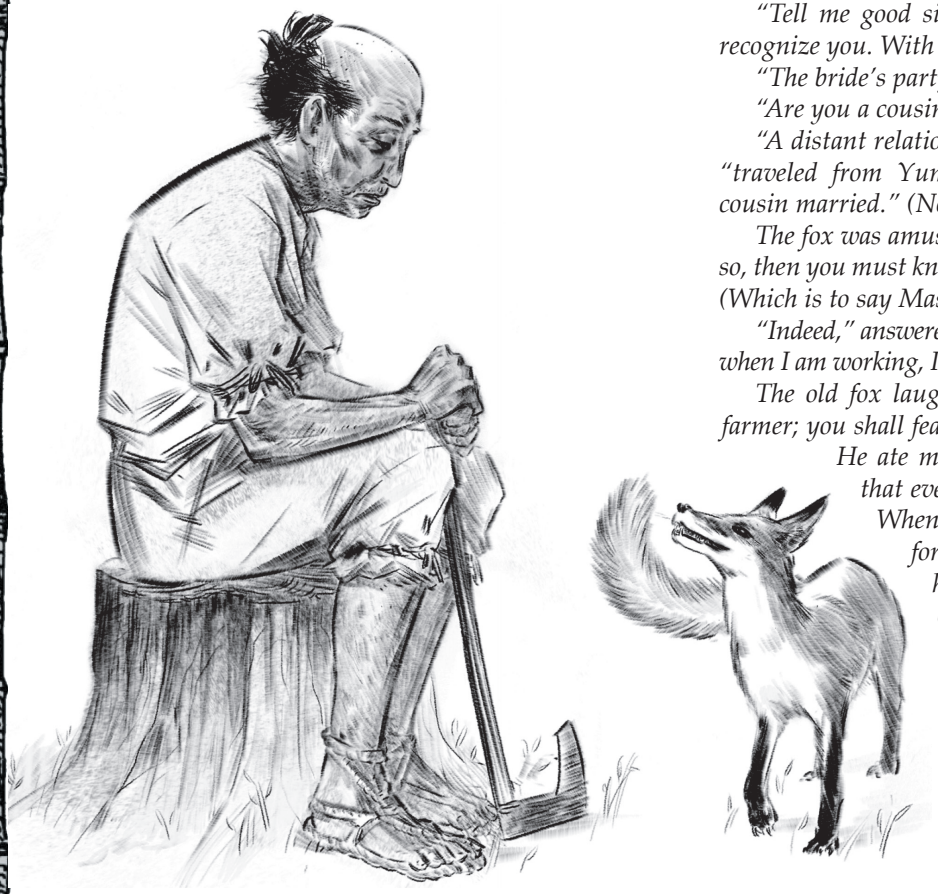
"Are you a cousin of the bride?"

"A distant relation," said the farmer, less truthfully, "traveled from Yume mountain to see my beautiful cousin married." (Now Yume means a dream.)

The fox was amused. "Are you indeed from Yume? If so, then you must know my good friend Darehitori-san." (Which is to say Master Nobody).

"Indeed," answered the farmer, growing bolder, "Often when I am working, I see Darehitori about in the fields."

The old fox laughed. "You are a clever man, for a farmer; you shall feast with us." And so the farmer did. He ate much food and drank much sake, so that eventually he fell into a deep slumber. When he awoke, he was at the edge of the forest, near to his brother's village. In his pouch, he discovered a great sum of money and a small bit of fox-fur. He gave a portion of the money to his brother, as a wedding gift, and he used much of the remainder to build a great shrine in his own village, in memory of the kitsune who had been so generous to their uninvited wedding guest.



The Races of Kaidan

Though humans cover the vast majority of Kaidan, they are far from alone on the islands. The Kami have dwelt upon the islands since long before men ever set foot upon their shores. Within the woods, streams and mountains, these powerful spirits make their homes, helping some and punishing others. Other races dwell in the regions unclaimed by men: the diminutive korobokuru, the shapeshifting henge and the mysterious kitsune all make their homes in the woods of Kaidan, hidden from human eyes by cunning and by magic. Besides the streams and ponds of Kaidan lair turtle-like kappa, who want little more than to be left alone. And high in the mountains, tengu dwell, perfecting their swordsmanship and meditating upon methods to defeat the forces of the Shogunate. Besides all these, the land is full of vile oni, many of whom wear the shape of men and stir up trouble in plain sight. This chapter deals with the primary humanoid races of Kaidan. The Oni and Kami races shall be discussed elsewhere.

Anu (Human)

A primitive people, the anu continue to live as they have always lived. Though anu once covered all of Genshu and the northern reaches of Anshu and Yonshu, they have been driven out of the majority of their former holdings and now dwell primarily upon the isle of Genshu, in the Haruma and Genjima provinces. A few of the families of the Kaidanese might, if they chose, claim some amount of anu ancestry, for in older times, before the persecution arose, there was some intermarriage between the two peoples.

The anu primarily subsist on hunting, and, unlike the Kaidanese, the primary staple of the anu diet is meat. They hunt bear, deer, rabbits, birds, fish, and just about anything else they deem edible. Though their primary weapons are spears and arrows, they utilize traps and poisons alike to great effect so that they rarely go hungry. It is their skill in forest-craft which has, heretofore, prevented their extinction at the hands of the Kaidanese.

Physical Description

The Anu, the men in particular, stand slightly taller than the average Kaidanese, and possess a heavier build. They have ruddy, weathered complexions, a result of exposure to the elements as much as genetics, wide brows, and dark hair. The men sport full, bushy beards in which they take great pride, and no anu man ever shaves after reaching a certain age. Both men and women cut their hair level with their shoulders. Likewise, both sexes of the anu are fond of earrings, which they fashion from wood and grape-vines.

While anu men do not employ tattoos, all the women do. The blue-inked tattoos decorating the anu women are of two forms. The first sort of tattoo, which is applied to girls as young as five or six, are geometric patterns applied to the hands and arms as protection against demonic or spiritual possession. The second form of tattoo is applied to the upper lips like a mustache when an anu girl reaches a marriageable age and it is illegal in anu communities for men to marry girls not possessing a mustache tattoo. Though not all anu tribes remember the fact, they adopted the use of these tattoos from the Korobokuru as a sign of their friendship with that diminutive race.

Society

The anu live primitively, as hunter-gatherers. They make their homes in simple reed-thatch huts, and fashion weapons of stone and wood. They possess little in the way of metal craft, utilizing primitive weapons in both their hunting and war-making. Any metal weapons or armor they possess has been taken or purchased from the Kaidanese. Despite the primitiveness of their weapons, anu are deadly hunters, in large part because of the poisons they employ on their arrow-heads and spears.

Somewhat in contrast to their otherwise primitive lifestyles, the anu have a great fondness for clothing of various styles and the typical anu owns a wide variety of garments. The majority of their garments are fashioned from simple fabrics woven from tree fibers, the elm in particular, but in colder weather the anu dress in leather garments crafted from bird skin, fish skin, bear hides and other leathers. For work and hunting, the anu wear plain, undecorated clothes, but for more formal occasions, their clothing is heavily embroidered or appliquéd. Besides their traditional clothes, the anu will also, when they can, purchase cotton fabrics and garments from the Kaidanese, and in matters of fashion they are quite open to Kaidanese influence.

Each anu family and village is patriarchal, with men taking the lead in hunting, war-making, religion and most heavy manual labor. However, the anu trace their family lines through their mothers, not their fathers, and inheritance is always

passed down through the women of a family. Anu women retain the practice, handed down through many generations, of wearing elaborately woven girdles beneath their other garments. The weaves used in these girdles is unique to each family, a sign of the maternal lineage of that family, and these girdles are never to be seen by men, not even the husbands of the woman wearing the girdle.

The chief of each village leads in all matters related to religion and war. His word over such subjects is considered final. This sense of allegiance to a single chieftain is one of the reasons the anu have had little success in fighting against the Kaidanese, for, even though various villages might unite for a common cause, they rarely coordinate strategies behind a single commander. Instead, each village fights as its chief deems best. The exception to the supremacy of the village chief is in matters of criminal law, where it is traditional for a jury of villagers to hear each case and render a verdict. In matters related to criminal law, the anu have a strong sense of property rights, up to and including the wildlife around each village. Hunting in anu territory is considered theft, and those caught doing so are subject to heavy fines, imposed by the village in question.



Relations with Other Races

By and large, the anu want little more than to be left alone by the Kaidanese, but that desire has often proven futile in the past. The Kaidanese look down upon the Anu, considering them dirty, hairy and smelly. They nick-name the anu "Inu," which means "dogs," and consider them in all ways inferior. Anu living among the Kaidanese are considered as the lowest of the Eta-Hinin caste and are routinely subject to abuse and scorn. It is illegal for Kaidanese to buy and sell with the Anu, but there are some merchants who are willing to take the risk, as the anu are steady suppliers of feathers and leather-goods.

The anu get along better with the Yokai and the Korobokuru, though interaction between the races is less common than it once was. Anu consider the yokai to be spiritual teachers and the korobokuru to be spiritual brothers. The korobokuru return this sentiment, and are quite accepting of the anu so that if an anu village lies close to a Korobokuru village, the two offer each other mutual support, even up to including the sharing of hunting rights.

Opinions concerning the anu among the Yokai vary. The kappa are fondest of the Anu, enjoying their company in small doses and occasionally doing what they can to aid them. Henge treat with them, albeit cautiously. Though the Tengu sympathize with the oppression suffered by the Anu, as a whole, they view the anu as undisciplined, ill-mannered and uncouth, and to be avoided if at all possible. The Kitsune, for their part, treat the anu much as they do any other humans.

Alignment and Religion

The anu religion is a blend of yokai animism and primitive shamanism. The anu have adopted the yokai view of the world, seeing within all things a divine spirit. At the same time, the anu continue to chiefly venerate three deities: the god they call The Bear, the goddess they call The Hearth, and a third deity called The Sea. Their worship of the Bear, in particular, is a complex thing. They believe that the Bear provides them meat and clothing, and the hunting and killing of bears is a central part of the worship of this deity. At the same time, they honor and respect all bears as being an aspect of their deity, praying to the animals both before and after eating them. Each year, the chief of a village adopts a bear cub, which is raised for two years and then ritually hunted and slain. The festival attached to the killing of this bear is the chief festival of the Anu. In matters related to health and sickness, the

The Languages of Kaidan

The common tongue spoken in much of the rest of the world is not the chief language of Kaidan, though there are those who understand it, having learned it from gaijin travelers. The language of the empire is Kaidanese, a tongue significantly different from the common tongue in both grammar and linguistic style. Besides Kaidanese, there are several other languages and dialects employed upon the islands. The language of the anu is called Anuitak, and it is a language unique to the anu people. The oni employ two languages other than Kaidanese. The oni high tongue is a derivative of Infernal, though oni native to the material plane are more likely to employ a hybrid form of the giant tongue, incorporating terms from both Kaidanese and Infernal into their speech. The yokai tongue is closely related to Sylvan and speakers of one can easily understand speakers of the other, though exact pronunciations differ. Curiously, the kappa use a different language amongst themselves, one linguistically related to the Goblin tongue. Likewise, the tengu have their own tongue, one suited to their beaked mouths, but with some commonality to the yokai tongue. The korobokuru have their own language as well and its vocabulary and structure shows a relationship to the Halfling tongue spoken elsewhere. Finally the Kami speak a number of languages, but are most familiar with Celestial and with the elemental tongues. The dialect used by Kaidanese Kami with these languages does not differ markedly to the use of the languages outside of Kaidan.

When languages for a Kaidan race are given in this book, if they have linguistic relative in the world outside Kaidan, the more common language will be used, with the racial dialect in parenthesis such as: Goblin (kappa). While this has no effect on campaigns set solely within Kaidan, for characters who originate outside of Kaidan, who may not speak Kaidanese, it gives a point of reference as to which languages they might be able to understand. It is suggested however, that the ease of translating from one dialect to another require a Linguistic check, able to be made untrained by any speaker of the tongue in question. Note that if this system is used, each speaker must make a check to understand the other, so that it is possible for one speaker to be understood without understanding the other. Suggested difficulties for translation are as follows.

Languages being Used By Two Different Speakers	Difficulty of Translating From One Dialect to Another	Modifiers
Oni High Tongue and Infernal	DC 12	—
Oni Common Tongue and Giant	DC 18	-2 DC if the Giant speaker knows either Infernal or Kaidanese
Yokai and Sylvan	DC 16	—
Kappa and Goblin	DC 14	—
Korobokuru and Halfling	DC 18	-2 if the Halfling speaker knows either Sylvan or Kaidanese

anu pray to The Hearth. In matters of weather and fortune, they pray to The Sea.

Though traditionalists at heart, maintaining a way of life handed down through the generations, the anu tend towards a good-hearted neutrality. They have a strong sense of right and wrong, but rarely feel compelled to act outside of their own personal sphere of influence. Their traditions teach them that if they were to abandon their way of life, and the worship of their gods, great tragedy would befall the entire world. What this tragedy might entail, they have forgotten. Beyond their adherence to this duty, they feel that the evils of the world beyond their villages are too much for them to ever solve, so they do not try.

Despite their strong moral code in matters related to property and tradition, the anu feel no compulsion against lying and routinely tell others what they think will be most pleasing to the hearer. This has led some to view the anu as untrustworthy, although the anu will rarely deceive for personal profit.

Occupations

Although, as with any group, there are those who excel in various endeavors, there are few true specialists of any sort among the Anu. The majority of anu men are hunters while the women work at weaving and cloth making. Each anu is expected to be proficient in those duties required for survival and be capable of supporting his or her families and villages as necessary. The anu have no priests, no bureaucracy beyond village law, no smiths, no professional soldiers, and no scholars. The village chief leads in all matters of import, except rendering verdicts for crimes; and cultural lore is passed from generation to generation orally.

Racial Traits

The anu are human, possessing the following racial traits in common with all humans: +2 to One Ability score, Medium, Normal Speed. Anu also possess the following racial traits:

Anu Hunter: anu gain a +2 racial bonus to Craft (poison) and Craft (trapmaking). Additionally, when making a Perception check to notice traps in a forest setting, the anu's familiarity with such things grants him a +2 competence bonus to his roll. This trait replaces the bonus feat Humans normally receive as a racial trait.

Hardy Stock: anu gain a +1 bonus to hp per HD. This trait replaces the Skilled racial trait.

Languages: anu begin play speaking Anuitak, the language of their tribes, and Kaidanese. Anu with high intelligence scores can choose from the following languages: Common, Sylvan (yokai), Goblin (kappa), Giant (oni), and Halfling (korobokuru).

Alternate Racial Traits

The following racial traits can be used in place of the standard anu racial traits.

Skilled Seamstress: The anu is more skilled in matters of clothes making than hunting. She gains a +2 racial bonus to Craft (leather), Craft (cloth) and Craft (clothing). So long as the anu is the sole worker involved in making a specific item of clothing, from start to finish (including the weaving of the cloth or the cutting of the leather), the value of that items of clothing increases by 50% because of the anu's skill and attention to detail. This trait replaces the anu Hunter trait.

Skilled Storyteller: The anu spent far more of his youth listening to the stories of his people than he did listening to instruction in matters of hunting. He gains a +2 racial bonus to Knowledge (history) and Perform (oratory). In matters of history relating to the Anu, or when Performing before an anu audience, these bonuses are doubled. This trait replaces the anu Hunter trait.

Stealthy Hunter: The anu is quite skilled in moving silently in pursuit of prey. The anu gains a bonus equal to half his hit dice to all Stealth checks, and, when moving stealthily, his speed increases by +1 ft. per 2 levels. Note that in combat situations, such bonuses to speed have no effect in less than 5 ft. increments so that a +6 ft. bonus to speed is effectively a +5 ft bonus in combat. This trait replaces the Hardy Stock trait.

Henge

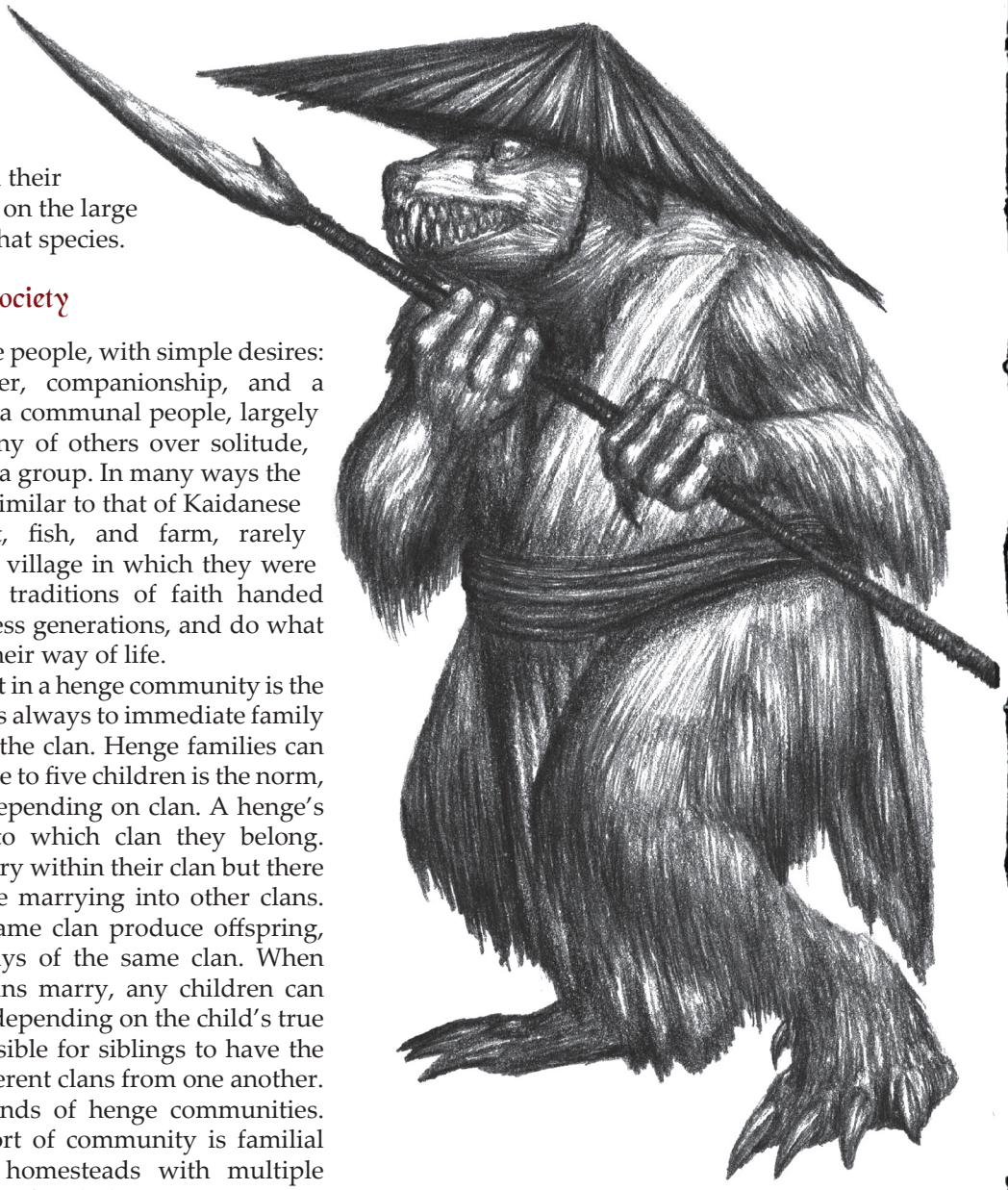
The henge are a group of shape-changing clans able to take three forms: that of a human, that of an animal and that of a humanoid with an animal's head. Their anthropomorphic third form is their true shape and should they be struck with cold iron while in one of their other forms, they revert to this shape. Of all the yokai, the henge are the most numerous and their villages lie here and there throughout Kaidan, almost always hidden in deep woods away from human eyes.

The henge are hunters and farmers, living off and with the land that they love. They are also magicians, shape-shifters and tricksters. Most henge enjoy a good joke, though the nature of their humor differs from clan to clan, for each henge clan has its own unique personality. Nevertheless, henge are united together by a common heritage, a common faith in the kami, and a common set of enemies: the oni and the shogunate.

Physical Descriptions

There are a multitude of henge types, but seven clans are, in particular, predominate: the mujina (badger), the neko (cat), the inu (dog), the usagi (hare), the saru (monkey), the nezumi (rat), and the tanuki (raccoon-dog). Every henge can adopt the animal form of their clan, or the form of a human. They also can wear their true shape, an anthropomorphic humanoid with the head of their animal shape. In each case, whether as human, animal, or the hybrid form, the form and shape of the henge is uniquely theirs.

In human and humanoid forms, the henge stands slightly taller than the average Kaidanese human and their animal form is always on the large side for a member of that species.



Society

The henge are a simple people, with simple desires: food, clothing, shelter, companionship, and a good laugh. They are a communal people, largely preferring the company of others over solitude, feeling safest when in a group. In many ways the henge live lives very similar to that of Kaidanese peasants. They hunt, fish, and farm, rarely traveling far from the village in which they were born. They maintain traditions of faith handed down through countless generations, and do what they can to preserve their way of life.

The basic social unit in a henge community is the family; henge loyalty is always to immediate family first and only then to the clan. Henge families can be quite large, but three to five children is the norm, with some variance depending on clan. A henge's true form indicates to which clan they belong. Henge most often marry within their clan but there are instances of henge marrying into other clans. When henge of the same clan produce offspring, the children are always of the same clan. When henge of different clans marry, any children can belong to either clan, depending on the child's true form, so that it is possible for siblings to have the same parents, but different clans from one another.

There are three kinds of henge communities. The most common sort of community is familial in nature: extended homesteads with multiple generations of the same family living in proximity to one another. Such communities can grow quickly from one generation to the next, especially in families with many sons. When such an endeavor experiences true success, it frequently forms the basis for the second sort of community: a clan village. Clan villages are generally comprised of four or five families, with the head of each family, whether a patriarch or a matriarch, serving as one of the village elders. The third sort of community, one in which the clans mix, is the rarest sort, though the oldest and largest of henge villages are mostly of this nature. These villages are also led by village elders, though the elders are selected by reason of age or ability, rather than their position within a given family.

Though some among the henge, such as the inu and the usagi, excel in war, the henge are not, by nature, warlike. They prefer solving their problems through wit and cunning, rather than brute force. When facing an enemy, guile, deception and mockery are their favorite weapons; and they would much rather laugh at the foolishness of an opponent than see him broken and bloody on the field of battle. When henge must take up arms, they prefer to arrange things so that the outcome of all things is already tilted well in their favor. As one henge wiseman said, "Successful leaders win the war and then go to battle, unsuccessful leaders go to battle only to lose the war."

The Major Henge Clans

Each henge clan has its own unique personality. A brief summary of each clan is as follows:

The Inu Batsu (dog clan): Loyal and steadfast, the inu batsu have a fondness for heroic tales full of strong moral virtues, and the clan produces the majority of the henge warriors. Though generally kind and thoughtful of others, the inu batsu have something of a reputation for impulsive behavior and quick tempers.

The Mujina Batsu (badger clan): Thoughtful and earnest are the watchwords of the mujina batsu. Whether conceiving a masterful trick or planning for the coming year, the mujina put much forethought into all that they do. This tendency to want to plan ahead leads many of the mujina to hoard, as they hate discarding anything that might one day be useful.

The Neko Batsu (cat clan): More than any other of the henge, the neko batsu have a predisposition towards malicious humors and cruelty. This, combined with a poorly defined sense of property, so that they often take anything not obviously claimed, gives them a bad reputation among humans and henge alike.

The Nezumi Batsu (rat clan): The nezumi tend to be both humble and learned. Even a simple nezumi farmer is likely to have mastery in some field of academic lore, and, more often than not, monastic training besides. However, despite their love of knowledge and learning, they are otherwise dispossessed of worldly ambition and rarely put their talents to use in advancing themselves in the world.

The Saru Batsu (monkey clan): Even by the standards of the henge, the saru are an incorrigible group of tricksters and practical jokers, with a reputation for being annoying, lazy and foolish. Despite this, they are often highly talented and clever, and, when properly motivated, can accomplish truly spectacular feats.

The Tanuki Batsu (raccoon-dog clan): The tanuki form the backbone of henge society. Not only are they the most numerous of the clans, but they are diligent in both play and chores. The tanuki are surpassed only by the saru in their love of a good joke, but the tanuki is far more likely to put serious time and energy into making sure his jokes work out exactly as planned. Despite their love of a jest, they are equally as diligent in more serious matters and there are no henge clans more productive.

The Usagi Batsu (hare clan): Quick footed and quick witted, the usagi batsu are renowned travelers and explorers. Even those who have not traveled far are likely to have explored every square inch of their local environment. Despite their love of travel, they love their families even more and their families are some of the largest among the henge. Many henge warriors come from the usagi batsu and they are masters of the bow and spear.

Relations with Other Races

The henge were once quite close with humanity, but the foolishness and excesses of mankind led to estrangement so that the henge choose to mostly isolate themselves from the Kaidanese. Some few henge choose to live among men, often as spies for their home villages, and some few humans still find acceptance in henge communities, but the majority of either race wants little to do with the other. When henge interact with the Kaidanese, it is most often as tricksters, using their magics and abilities to make the humans look foolish. The saru and the tanuki, in particular, delight in such sport. Yet the henge know that humanity far outnumbers them and that in direct conflict the Kaidanese would doubtlessly gain the upper hand, so they avoid large scale entanglements.

Among the yokai, henge villages serve as crossroads for the various races and kappa, tengu and kitsune alike can be found buying or selling in henge markets. Henge are less martial minded and stoic than the tengu, but they admire the heroic qualities of the tengu race. Trade between henge and tengu is common, with the henge supplying the tengu with food in exchange for weapons and other metal-work.

Henge tolerate the kappa in small doses, for though the henge largely dislike the coarseness of the turtle-like yokai, they appreciate the kappas' love of laughter and cheer. Kappa frequently attend henge festivals and the henge are glad to welcome them at such times.

Henge see within the kitsune kindred spirits, and are quite respectful of their fox cousins, yet the wise among the henge understand the fox, though primal and potentially very powerful, do not always use the best judgment, and thus henge children are warned against close companionship with kitsune.

Henge maintain a curious relationship with the korobokuru. On the one hand, they tend to think of the korobokuru as being rather primitive and childlike, feeling a sense of responsibility for the well-being of the other race, much as a parent might feel for a backwards child. On the other hand, most henge find the worship and veneration of the korobokuru somewhat unsettling, and though they don't actively discourage it, they often find themselves avoiding greater interactions with the korobokuru because of it.

Alignment and Religion

Henge are a very religious people. It was they who taught the way of Yokinto to humanity and the henge continue to practice their faith much as they always have. It is the rare henge settlement which does not have a Yokinto shrine, and the oldest of henge villages are built around ancient sites of power and wonder. Yokinto priests, even humans priests, garner great respect from henge and henge always listen respectfully to what such individuals have to say.

Beyond religion, there is great variance among the henge in matters of disposition and alignment. While each hengeyokai individual is unique, the henge clans to tend to produce certain mindsets within their members. The inu are known as possessing good and upright natures; always mindful of doing what is right. The mujina have the reputation for being highly organized in both deed and thought. The neko, conversely, resent being bound by rules and generally do as they please. The nezumi, while not as regimented as the mujina, are nonetheless sticklers for tradition and tend towards kindliness and generosity. The usage strive for as few rules as possible, though they are seldom as free-spirited as the neko, and, like the nezumi, they are kindly in their habits. The saru display a tendency towards chaos in both manners and life; though seldom malicious, they exhibit a typical thoughtlessness towards the feelings of others. Finally, the tanuki are a mixture of extremes, balancing diligence and sloth, creativity and order in a single package. There are of course, individuals within each clan who do not conform to the standard, yet within henge society, the exceptions often prove the rule.

Occupations

Despite their traditional way of life, the henge do not enforce the same sort of class structure so heavily regimented by the shogunate and henge are free to pick their own path in life according to their skills, aptitudes and opportunities. The majority of the henge work as either farmers or hunters, but a henge community might also possesses smiths, academics, priests, warriors, monks, and even learned wizards.

Though most henge choose to remain in the places in which they were planted, following the paths walked by their fathers and grandfathers before that, in every generation some henge strike out upon new paths for themselves, choosing alternate vocations from those of their parents. Likewise, henge with an obvious aptitude for martial or academic pursuits will be encouraged in such paths, and families will gladly apprentice out their most talented children to respected masters for training.

Henge Alignment in Meta-Game Terms

The various clans are inclined toward the following alignments.

Inu: Lawful Good
Mujina: Lawful
Neko: Chaotic
Nezumi: Good
Saru: Chaotic Neutral
Tanuki: Neutral Good
Usagi: Neutral Good



Henge Racial Traits

When creating a hengeyokai, first determine the animal associated with the hengeyokai. Each hengeyokai clan has a different set of ability score adjustments and different racial bonuses.

Badger (Mujina): +2 Constitution, +2 Wisdom, -2 Charisma; +2 racial bonus to Heal and Knowledge (religion)

Cat (Neko): +2 Dexterity, +2 Intelligence, -2 Wisdom; +2 racial bonus to Climb and Stealth

Dog (Inu): +2 Strength, +2 Wisdom, -2 Dexterity; +2 racial bonus to Sense Motive and Survival

Hare (Usagi): +2 Dexterity, +2 Intelligence, -2 Constitution; base speed 40 feet

Monkey (Saru): +2 Dexterity, +2 Charisma, -2 Wisdom; +2 racial bonus to Acrobatics and Climb

Rat (Nezumi): +2 Dexterity, +2 Wisdom, -2 Charisma; +2 racial bonus to Knowledge (nature) and Stealth

Raccoon-Dog (Tanuki): +2 Constitution, +2 Wisdom, -2 Charisma; +2 racial bonus to Disable Device and Stealth

All hengeyokai have the following traits

Medium: Hengeyokai are Medium creatures and have no bonuses or penalties due to size.

Low-light Vision: Hengeyokai can see twice as far as humans in conditions of dim light.

Normal Speed: Hengeyokai (except for the hare clan) have a base speed of 30 feet.

Keen Senses: Hengeyokai receive a +2 racial bonus to Perception checks.

Multitalented: Hengeyokai choose two favored classes at first level. Whenever they advance a level in either of these classes, they may choose either +1 skill point or +1 hit point.

Shapechanger: A hengeyokai's true form is that of a humanoid with the face of an animal. The animal is that of its clan. A hengeyokai may change shape, appearing either as a human or in the natural form of her clan animal (*alter self*, *beastshape I*). A hengeyokai's human features are always the same, as are her animal features, and these features are uniquely hers. That is, a hengeyokai cannot choose to take the shape or form of another person or animal in order to disguise herself without access to other abilities or powers. A hengeyokai can revert to her natural form at will. She may adopt her alternate forms a number of times per day equal to 1/2 her character level (minimum 1) and remain in a given form indefinitely.

Yokai traits: Hengeyokai always count Stealth and Survival as class skills.

Weapon Familiarity: Hengeyokai are proficient with the great club, long bow, and spear.

Hengeyokai Weakness: Hengeyokai are susceptible to cold iron. Cold iron weapons always do +1 damage against them. Moreover, a hengeyokai in an alternate racial form, when struck with cold iron, reverts instantly to her true shape.

Languages: Hengeyokai begin play speaking Kaidanese and Sylvan (yokai). Hengeyokai with high Intelligence scores can choose from the following languages: Anuitak, Celestial, Common, Halfling (korobokuru), Giant (oni), Goblin (kappa) and Tengu.

Alternate Racial Traits

The following racial traits can be used in place of the standard Henge racial traits.

Bestial: The wild animal spirit is stronger in some hengeyokai. Hengeyokai with this racial trait possess a bite attack that does 1d4 points of damage and a claw attack that does 1d3 points of damage. They have -2 Intelligence and suffer a -2 penalty to any Charisma-based skill check.

Mixed Marriage: Some henge born to parents of differing clans must learn from an early age to understand and appreciate differing points of view and cultural differences. These henge gain a +2 racial bonus to Diplomacy and Sense Motive and Sense Motive is always a class skill for them. These bonuses replace all other racial skill bonuses and the 40 foot base speed of the Usagi.

Small: The animal heritage of some hengeyokai is seen in their small stature. The natural form (but not the human form) of these henge is Small sized (+1 AC, +1 attack, -1 CMB/CMD). When they move from their natural form to their human form, their possessions do not change size with them.

Priest Training: Yokai who are trained from youth in the profession of the priesthood are very knowledgeable about the spirit world, but have less practical experience with relating to actual people. These yokai have a -2 racial penalty to Sense Motive and Diplomacy, but gain a bonus to Knowledge (religion) equal to 1/2 their class level (minimum 1). This trait replaces Multitalented.

Tengu Training: It is not unheard of for a tengu to take on a talented henge as a student. Henge with this ability are proficient with all swords and gain a racial bonus to Acrobatics equal to 1/2 their class level (this stacks with the +2 racial bonus enjoyed by the saru). This trait replaces Multitalented. Henge with this ability are not as skilled in their shape-changing ability and are only able to adopt an alternate form a number of times per week equal to 1/2 her character level (minimum 1).

Kaidanese (Human)

Despite their late arrival to the archipelago, the Kaidanese are unquestionably the dominant race of Kaidan. Their aggressive expansion, made possible by their use of steel and iron, as well as by their adoption of rice as a crop has continued, almost from the first, unchecked, except for two fierce wars with the oni; yet even against the oni the Kaidanese were ultimately successful.

The Kaidanese subsist on a diet composed largely of grains, the chief being rice, supplemented by fish, pork and fowl. Due to both cultural and religious reasons, the Kaidanese do not eat great amounts of meat. In some part because it is such a metal-poor country, Kaidan culture is founded on the use of rice, both as a food and as a marker of wealth. Land is deemed valuable, because of its use to grow food and those who own and control the land control those who live upon the land. The land is currently titled under the Nobility and the Samurai beneath them and it is for the sake of these groups that the farmers toil.

Since the rise of the Undying Emperor and the Shogun, the Kaidanese have been a people cursed and all the land, and those that live upon it, have been cursed with them. The Kaidanese do not speak often about their undead rulers, but they live in constant fear of the same, and all their activities, regardless of caste, are colored by the heavy burdens imposed by the mere existence of the nobility.

Physical Descriptions

The Kaidanese are a light skinned, dark haired people with dark eyes and pronounced epicanthic folds. They tend to possess light builds and are marginally shorter than the average human, with the typical Kaidanese male standing about 5 ft. 7 in. and weighing 140 lbs. Females are approximately 5 inches shorter on the average and about forty pounds lighter. Exact height and weight varies greatly depending on both diet and musculature; a well-fed samurai is very likely to be both taller and heavier than a Kaidanese farmer because of an improved diet.

While some Kaidanese men grow beards, their facial hair is typically sparse and most men are clean shaven. Kaidanese hair is straight and, while the exact style of a man's hair varies depending upon his caste, the women tend to allow their hair to grow as long as possible.

The Kaidanese dress in a variety of garments according to wealth, caste and occasion, but on the whole, they favor loose, flowing clothing over tight, restrictive garments.

Society

Kaidanese culture is stratified into four distinct castes, each with its own unique traditions, values, and leaders. At the top of Kaidanese culture are the undying emperor, the Shogun, and the undead nobility: ever ruling, never dying; ever consuming souls, lives and dreams alike. The Samurai serve the nobility and operate the bureaucracy of the empire, maintaining peace with sword and bow, punishing all who transgress against the Shogun and the Daimyo. The farmers and peasants work the land, growing crops in the hopes that they might share in a small portion of the land's bounty; theirs is a life of poverty, drudgery and hopelessness. Beneath even the farmer are the unclean: the eta-hinin. Living on the fringes of Kaidanese society, the eta-hinin perform the tasks others deem undesirable, but, in return, they know the greatest amount of freedom of all the Kaidanese, so long as they avoid angering the Samurai and the Nobility. More on Kaidanese society can be found in **Chapter 4: Tenmei and the Realms of Kaidan**.

Relations with Other Races

The Kaidanese seek to dominate all the other races of Kaidan. They view the anu as barbarians, fit only for scorn and ridicule. They superstitiously fear the yokai, frequently and ignorantly classifying the yokai alongside goblins, demons and yurei spirits. The Kaidanese maintain a similar superstitious tradition concerning the korobokuru, thinking of them as a group of wood spirits or wood goblins. All in all, the Kaidanese either fear or despise the races they share their land with and it is rarer and rarer to find a member of the Kaidanese culture, regardless of caste, who understands and appreciates the true nature of the yokai and the other creatures of the woods and mountains.

Alignment and Religion

The Kaidanese practice two religions side by side: Yokinto and Zaoism. While this seems odd to the uninitiated, both religions have come to perform differing functions in Kaidanese society. Yokinto is the religion of life, and makes its presence known in rituals pertaining to life: marriages and births, plantings and harvests, the reverencing of the wonders of the natural world. Zaoism is the Kaidanese religion of the soul and of death and makes its presence felt in contemplation of such things and in funerals. Zaoism is also the religion of the Court and it is a variation of Zaoism which is at the heart of the curse which lies over all of Kaidan. More on both Yokinto and Zaoism can be found in **Chapter 3: The Religions of Kaidan**.

In matters of alignment, Kaidanese run the gamut, with a tendency towards Law, especially among the leadership of each caste. Government authorities are most often evil and all the nobility, without exception, are evil, those with consciences having long since been killed.

Occupations

Kaidanese occupations vary depending upon the caste of the individual. Kaidanese nobility occupy their time with the study of the fine arts, academic and arcane pursuits, and the study of Zaoism. The nobility also practice darker arts, including torture, blood sacrifice and ritual cannibalism, but these are as much hobbies as true vocations.

Samurai serve first and foremost as warriors and soldiers, but each samurai is likely to have another occupation which occupies just as much, if not more, of his time. Samurai occupations vary depending upon clan, but include accounting and bookkeeping, artistic endeavors, horse-raising, government work, weapon and armor smithing, fishing, and even, in some rare cases, farming. The majority of Zaoist priests and monks are drawn from the ranks of the samurai.

The peasantry of Kaidan work as farmers, fishers, loggers, and merchants. Rarely some of the peasantry are drafted to work as guards or soldiers, but only if there is a shortage of Samurai in a given area. Some peasants, fleeing their life, turn to banditry. Still others serve as Yokinto priests.

Occupations among the eta-hinin include grave-digging and morticianary work, leather-working, butchery, and sewage labor. The ranks of the eta-hinin also include Kaidanese entertainers, prostitutes, geisha, gamblers, thieves, and the infamous yakuza.

Racial Traits

Kaidanese are human and have the following racial traits: +2 to One Ability Score, Medium, Normal Speed, Bonus Feat, Skilled.

Languages: Kaidanese humans begin play speaking Kaidanese. Humans with a high intelligence score can choose to learn any language they want, though the following languages are the ones most common to Kaidan: Anuitak, Celestial, Draconic, Giant (oni), Goblin (kappa), Halfling (korobokuru), Infernal (oni), Sylvan (yokai) and Tengu.

Alternate Racial Traits

The following racial traits can be used in place of the standard human racial traits.

Korobokuru Heritage: In times past, legends speak of humans and korobokuru giving their children to one another in marriage and in some families the heritage of such unions remain. Kaidanese with this trait are 6 inches shorter and 24 pounds lighter when determining height and weight. They have a +2 racial bonus to Dexterity and suffer -2 to their Strength score (and they cannot apply their +2 to One Ability Score to Strength). They begin play speaking Halfling (korobokuru) and gain a +2 racial bonus to Acrobatics. They may also, once per day, receive a +1 Luck bonus to any one saving throw, though the use of this ability must be announced before dice are rolled. This ability replaces Bonus Feat.

Tengu Raised: Though it is now extremely rare, the tengu will still sometimes train young humans of a particularly noble spirit, and sometimes even adopt stray human infants. Humans with this trait begin play speaking Sylvan (yokai), have a +3 racial bonus to Acrobatics and are proficient with all swords. However, because they have not been raised among humans, within human society, they suffer a -2 penalty to Knowledge (local) and a -2 penalty to all Diplomacy checks made to interact with other humans. This trait replaces Bonus Feat.

Unclean and Unwanted: Growing up among the disenfranchised, poor and undesirable elements of Kaidanese society, some Kaidanese learn to be quick and resilient. They gain a +2 racial bonus to Stealth and Sleight of Hand checks. They also gain a +1 bonus to Fortitude and Reflex saves. This trait replaces Skilled.

Yokai Friend: Though other Kaidanese fear the yokai, there are those who understand them and

remember ancient friendships and passwords. Besides this, and despite the animus between the races, the yokai have been known to adopt human orphans, raising them with their own children. Such Kaidanese begin play speaking Sylvan (yokai), have a +2 racial bonus to Knowledge (nature) and a racial bonus to all Diplomacy checks made in interactions with the Yokai equal to 1/2 class level. This trait replaces Skilled.

Kappa

Dwelling beside the streams, rivers and lakes of Kaidan, kappa are a small race of turtle-like humanoids. Despite their appearance, they are warm-blooded, quasi-mammalian creatures. Perhaps the most curious feature on a kappa is the bowl atop its head, embedded in the skull, which holds water within it. So long as the bowl contains water, the kappa possesses a strength which belies its small size. If the bowl should be emptied of water, the kappa is vastly weakened until it is replenished.

Kappa have a love of wrestling, crude humor and good food. They are inordinately fond of cucumbers. Kappa tend to live either alone or with their mates, preferring a general solitude to large crowds. This is not to say they are antisocial. Kappa enjoy company in measure and their gatherings are riotous affairs, full of brawling, drinking and eating. Kappa are long lived, with a wait and see attitude to most problems. Their response to the encroachments of man has been to withdraw into further and further seclusion, thinking that the shogunate, like all things, must eventually come to an end.

Physical Descriptions

Kappa stand about two-and-a-half feet tall and look like a stooped anthropomorphic turtle, complete with shell. They possess webbed hands and feet, large, beak like noses and knobby, wrinkled skin. Skin color is most often a shade of green, speckled with brown, or dark green spots, though there are yellow, and even some blue-toned kappa. Kappa have a multitude of teeth, suitable for eating both vegetables and meat alike (fish and cucumbers being their favorite of each). Kappa hair is dark, sparse and scraggly, with male kappa often shaving the little hair they have from their scalps.



The most notable feature on a kappa is the bowl of water embedded into the skull of each kappa.

Kappa do not wear much in the way of clothing, simple loin-cloths for the men and loose tunics for the women are as far as they go in any effort to be modest. Though kappa warriors do sometimes wear armor designed especially for them, they shed such armor whenever possible.

Society

Kappa appear to be rather solitary creatures, living either alone or with their spouses. Kappa families are small, and young kappa leave their parents soon after reaching maturity. It is the rare kappa who do not make their homes near a remote and isolated stretch of water, far from any neighbors. Yet this belies the actual attachment kappa have for one another, and the deep affection kappa hold for those they call friends. Perhaps it is because of their solitary lifestyles that social ties are one of the most important aspects of a kappa's life. After leaving home, kappa sometimes travel the countryside in small groups. The friendships made within these groups are lifelong and kappa often encourage their children to marry the children of the traveling companions of their youth. Likewise, a kappa's family, both extended and immediate, is of vital importance to the emotional well-being of kappa, and kappa know all of their relations, no matter how tenuous the connection.

Likewise, despite the fact that there are almost no kappa villages in existence, a kappa knows every other kappa for miles around him and all such kappa are considered "neighbors." The importance of such connections to a kappa is such that, should any of their relatives, neighbors or friends express a need, so long as such requests are not overly frequent, a kappa will do all he can to assist with such needs, even at great cost to himself.

Kappa prefer to be self-sufficient, crafting most of their tools, utensils, furniture and buildings themselves. They gather their own food when possible, primarily living off of fish and underwater vegetation; though sometimes kappa living overly close to humans resort to minor thefts of vegetables to supplement their diets. When kappa do gather with others of their kinds, it is either to discuss serious business (and any kappa has the freedom to call for an assembly of kappa) or to celebrate. Kappa greatly enjoy their celebrations, and even most serious meetings devolve into loud, boisterous affairs filled with food, wrestling and laughter. Kappa observe semi-annual family reunions but also hold more frequent local gatherings to commemorate new homes, celebrate births, marriages and the like.

Unfortunately for non-kappa, one of the greatest amusements in a kappa's life is tormenting those who do not share their sense of humor. Following their gatherings, and often after having too much to drink, kappa, either singly or in gangs, frequently seek out someone with whom to wrestle. Humans are a favorite target and kappa can be far from gentle in their wrestling matches. Kappa, particularly drunk kappa, find the sound of breaking bones to be hilarious. Despite this kind of behavior, kappa are not necessarily malicious in nature, and when friendship is given, it is given for life.

Relations with Other Races

The kappa's penchant for crude humor, love of physical competition (wrestling in particular) and general lack of social graces cause many to look upon kappa as humorous annoyances. Humans think of kappa as water goblins and tell many tales about kappa drowning children and eating their flesh. The tengu find kappa to be annoyances best avoided. Henge appreciate the presence of kappa at festivals and feasts, enjoying their antics during such occasions, but find their lack of purpose in life to be otherwise worrisome. Kitsune think of kappa as a natural part of the natural order, but not necessarily a part with which they desire to have a great deal of contact. They find the kappa to be boorish and thus to be avoided. The korobokuru venerate the kappa as embodiments of strength and water, and would never dream of challenging kappa or accepting the challenge of a kappa.

For their part, kappa understand the manner in which others view their race and simply don't care. They think of humans as natural targets for their humor, and humans are the objects of many of the kappa's biggest and grandest pranks. The kappa have no love for samurai or for the shogunate, thinking of both as bullies in need of being humbled a peg or two. Despite this attitude, kappa do little in any practical way to oppose the human's system of government. Kappa are fond of the korobokuru, though quite willing to take advantage of the other's superstitious awe; however, any jokes played upon the anu tend to be both good natured and ultimately harmless. The kappa are likewise fond of the henge. Though they view the work ethic of the henge as tiresome, the average kappa would

think twice before doing anything to estrange a henge neighbor, if for no other reason than they appreciate the other's cooking and the likelihood of being invited to feast days. The standoffish nature of the kitsune in relationship to the kappa colors much of the interaction between those two races, so that, outside of henge markets, or chance meetings in the woods, the two races seldom cross paths. When they do meet, kappa tend to make an attempt at cordiality, but their lack of etiquette is dearly felt by the fox people.

Alignment and Religion

Kappa are, among the yokai, the most lax in matters of faith. They venerate the kami, but they do so in their own haphazard fashion, more often neglecting their spiritual duties than not. Female kappa tend to be more inclined to spiritual matters than their male counterparts and if a kappa home has a shrine, it is a good guess that the wife is the one who attends to it. Nevertheless, such laziness in matters of religion does not imply a lack of faith on the part of the kappa. They honor the idea of the kami inwardly, even if their outward actions might be wanting, and should they encounter one who is openly disrespectful of the kami, most kappa will not hesitate to challenge that individual or otherwise plan some form of punishment for such behavior.

Kappa are an undisciplined lot, living life with a carefree attitude towards all but the most pressing of concerns. They are not actually malicious, though their humor can tend towards cruelty, especially towards those whom they dislike. Many kappa are Chaotic Neutral in alignment, tending towards true neutrality.

Occupations

Most kappa don't actively pursue specific vocations, choosing instead to develop only those skills deemed necessary for survival at any given time. If they need food, they study how to grow it or fish. If they need furniture, they work at woodworking for a time. This means that most kappa are capable in many areas, but seldom master anything. When young, many kappa have a short-lived desire for adventure and excitement, and during this period of wanderlust, they will learn those skills necessary for defense. It is during this period of their lives, in particular, that most kappa truly learn their martial skills, developing their own styles of wrestling, grappling and fighting. While most kappa soon leave the path of adventure, settling down and learning the more practical skills of fishing, woodworking and underwater gardening, the tradition does insure that the average kappa has more than a little ability to defend themselves, their property and their loved ones when called upon to do so.

Rarely, a kappa may feel compelled to advance his or her learning in a specific direction, studying either wizardry, monastic disciplines, or the Yokinto faith. Those kappa that continue in such vocations are among the most respected and revered of kappa kind (at least by other kappa). Still, while all kappa give respect to such individuals, very few feel compelled to emulate them.

Kappa Racial Traits

+2 Strength Kappa are surprisingly strong for their size.

Small: Kappa are Small creatures and gain a +1 size bonus to their AC, a +1 size bonus on attack rolls and a +4 size bonus on Stealth checks.

Slow Speed: Kappa have a base speed of 20 feet.

Low-light Vision: Kappa can see twice as far as humans in conditions of dim light.

Shell: Kappa have a natural armor bonus of +2.

Natural Swimmers: Kappa have a swim speed of 40 feet and as such they do not require a Swim check in order to Swim under normal circumstances. They have a +8 racial bonus to Swim checks to perform a special action or avoid a hazard. Though kappa cannot breathe water, they are able hold their breath for a number of rounds equal to four times their Constitution score before making drowning checks, nor do standard or full-round actions reduce this time.

Natural Wrestlers: Kappa do not suffer the normal penalties to CMB and CMD for being small. They do receive a +1 racial bonus to both CMB and CMD.

Yokai traits: Kappa always count Stealth and Survival as class skills.

Claws: Kappa have a natural claw attack which deals 1d3 points of damage.

Weapon Familiarity: Kappa treat any weapon with the word "kappa" in its name as a martial weapon.

Kappa Weakness: Each kappa has an indentation on the top of its head which holds water. This water will not tip out in the normal course of events, including Acrobatic checks and combat. A kappa may voluntarily drain his own water, or another

may force it out. Those who successfully grapple a kappa may, as a full-round action, attempt a combat maneuver which will drain some of the kappa's water. Each such successful check inflicts 2 points of Strength and Dexterity damage to the kappa; Strength and Dexterity may not be lowered below 6 in this way. (Disabled and otherwise helpless kappa may be drained without a check at the same rate.) A kappa can restore any ability damage inflicted in this way by submersing himself in water for one round.

Languages: Kappa begin play speaking Kaidanese and Goblin (kappa). Kappa with a high Intelligence score can choose from the following languages: Anuitak, Aquan, Celestial, Common, Giant (oni), and Sylvan (yokai).

Alternate Racial Traits

The following racial traits replace or complement the above kappa racial traits. Consult your GM before selecting any of these options.

Hard-Shelled: Some kappa have a harder shell. Kappa with this racial trait possess a natural AC bonus of +4. These kappa are a little less limber and suffer a -2 penalty to attack rolls.

Soft-shelled: Some kappa have a softer shell. Kappa with this racial trait possess a natural AC bonus of only +1. These Kappa are a little more limber than other kappa and have a +2 bonus to Acrobatic checks.

Kitsune

At first glance, one might be excused for thinking the kitsune to be a race of the henge, but the two are very different. The kitsune are born as mundane foxes but develop intellect and awareness over the course of a very long life. Not all of the foxes of Kaidan can become true kitsune; many, even of those born to kitsune parents, live only a few short years before succumbing to accident, disease or old age. Yet some foxes do not die as the others do. They go right on living and, given enough time, they develop wondrous magical powers and a keen intellect.

Kitsune have no true villages of their own, outside of fox enclaves. Indeed, it is common for kitsune to spend the majority of their time as foxes, living among foxes. (For this reason, the Kaidanese peasants treat all foxes somewhat respectfully, for they do not know which ones might be magical and thus dangerous.) Other kitsune live on the fringes of human or henge society, carefully watching how others behave so that they might better emulate those with whom they wish to interact.

Physical Descriptions

Kitsune, in their natural form, look exactly like other foxes, except for the fact that, as they grow in power, they grow extra tails. In their fox shape, kitsune stand between 14 and 18 inches high at the shoulders and measure 20 to 32 inches long, not counting their tails, which are roughly two-thirds as long as their bodies. Kaidanese foxes weigh between 6 and 20 pounds, being thin and long in form. Male kitsune are slightly larger than their female counterparts. The fur color of the Kaidanese fox is predominately a rusty red, but variations are plentiful, with colors ranging from dusty browns to vibrant reds, and there are even a few foxes born with either black or white fur.

Each kitsune is able to choose a single humanoid form to change into. This shape is unique to the kitsune, and, apart from other magics, is readily discernable as the individual kitsune. Most kitsune choose to appear as a member of the species they have observed the most, though a few choose more whimsical shapes. Some kitsune even adopt an anthropomorphic fox shape, appearing as one of the henge. The humanoid size and shape of a kitsune is completely dependent upon the race chosen and appears as an attractive member of that species.

Kitsune can be very long lived, and the more powerful they are, the longer they tend to live. Although kitsune experience the effects of age, their humanoid shape does not, and this shape, no matter how old the kitsune, will normally remain unchanging in appearance. When a kitsune chooses its humanoid shape, it also chooses the age it wishes that shape to appear to be.

Society

Kitsune society is a vague sort of thing, partly because there simply aren't enough magical kitsune to form a true society and partly because each kitsune, by reason of her own experiences is her own unique person, molded by those things she has observed in the process of gaining her intelligence. There are, however, in general, two sorts of kitsune: settled and itinerant. Settled kitsune are those who have claimed a territory, often in connection with another kitsune: their mate. Itinerant kitsune wander where they will, seeing new sites, meeting new people, and searching for their place in the world.

Regardless of their exact life experiences, all kitsune share some common urges and desires. Kitsune have a great fondness for food. While they

are not all gluttons, exactly, it is the rare kitsune who does not relish eating. Due to their biological nature and their innate magical skills, kitsune burn through calories quickly, using the energy to fuel their powers. All kitsune are also astute observers of other creatures. A kitsune regularly spends much time in fox shape just watching things, trying to learn more about the object of their study. They are especially fond of observing various humanoids going about their daily business. All kitsune are also natural tricksters. They think it great fun to use their natural abilities to play pranks on the unwary and scare the timid. With few exceptions, a kitsune's second greatest pleasure in life is in showing off its cleverness. However, a kitsune's greatest desire, a need which is primal in the species, is to find a mate. Kitsune may not recognize this need consciously, and kitsune are very choosy about picking a true mate, but it is omnipresent within the race nonetheless. And when a kitsune does choose a life-mate, it is indeed for life and time; should love be lost, either through death or rejection, it is not to be regained.

The happiest of kitsune are those who find another of their kind and marry them. Though the couple may travel for a time, they eventually find a region they like and settle so as to raise their offspring in a true home. The children of these unions are marginally more likely to develop intelligence than the average fox, but the majority of the offspring still live and die without ever developing their own powers. Kitsune couples normally take this in stride, feeling just as protective of their mundane children as they do their magical offspring. As kitsune live hundreds of years, and as they, in the manner of foxes everywhere, tend to produce a litter of fox cubs each year, kitsune couples frequently end up with extensive fox families and not more than a few magical children with which to share their lives. These fox enclaves may contain numerous dens, scattered over a wide territory, but all foxes within the family are under the protection of the dominant kitsune pair.

Kitsune who come into awareness alone, apart from others of their kind to guide them, frequently become enamored of the societies with which they



mingle. Thus it is not unknown for a kitsune to fall in love with one not of their kind; normally an attractive member of the race with which the kitsune most often mingles. This happens less often than some might suppose, but, as such things make good stories, tales are often told of such occurrences. The marriage of a kitsune to a non-kitsune is likely to end tragically, either because the mate, upon learning the kitsune's true nature rejects the kitsune, or because the kitsune naturally outlives their beloved, and, as already mentioned, kitsune give their hearts to but one in their lifetime.

The offspring of kitsune and non-kitsune are never true foxes, but neither are they true to the race of their non-kitsune parent, though their form, at birth, is like unto it. The magical nature of the kitsune finds its way into the blood of their offspring, producing great sorcerers and shape-changers.

Relations with Other Races

The Kaidanese, as a culture, regard the kitsune with superstitious awe. The word kitsune is Kaidanese for "fox," and there is no distinction made, in the language or the culture, between those foxes with magical ability and those without. Most Kaidanese refuse to hunt foxes, for fear of reprisal, but this is not universal and there are more than a few skeptics in the population who, having killed foxes, without suffering harm, discount the possibility of any foxes being magical, marking up such tales to the imaginations of their fellow man. In some locales, no doubt due to the deeds of ignoble and cruel kitsune, all foxes have an evil name, and are regarded as little better than demons in disguise.

The Anu, like their Kaidanese neighbors, view all foxes with superstitious suspicion, though not with nearly the same level of dread and awe. In anu mythology, the fox is sometimes a minor god and thus the magical workings of a few foxes merely reinforces previously held dogmas. The korobokuru, in a similar fashion, consider the kitsune to be godlike, venerating them even above the henge, possibly because the fox people are more rare.

Among the yokai, the henge get along best with the kitsune, for the two races share much in common, though most henge are respectfully cautious around the kitsune, wary of their power and mildly distrustful of their ways. The wise among the henge caution their neighbors not to become overly entangled with the affairs of the kitsune, as tragedy often accompanies the fox people. Of the henge, the tanuki are most fond of the kitsune, mostly based on a mutually shared sense of humor.

For their part, the kitsune view most other races either as objects of study or as potential targets for pranks. They have an especial fondness for humans, though that fondness is not normally reciprocated in kind, and most kitsune, when they choose their alternate form, choose to be human. It is because of their fondness for humanity that humanity is most often the subject of kitsune humor. Those kitsune who do not focus their attentions on humans, very likely turn instead to observing and interacting with the henge, with whom they most easily relate. Kitsune have no great fondness for kappa, finding their crudity objectionable, their lack of purpose puzzling, and their love of swimming odd. They likewise do not fully understand the tengu, finding the bird-men to be strange to their sensibilities. They do not object to the tengu in the same way they do the kappa, and some kitsune spend some time observing the tengu, but such kitsune normally give up the endeavor after a time to take up other pursuits of greater interest.

Alignment and Religion

Kitsune have no religion of their own, instead adopting the beliefs of those with whom they spend the most time. Nevertheless, kitsune can be among the most fanatic of believers, latching on strongly to their adopted faiths. Among the Kaidanese, more than one kitsune has taken it upon himself to enforce the dogmas of Zaoism, so that some tales go so far as to portray the fox people as being devout servants of the Mujiga Zao in his heavenly court. Other kitsune, having spent more time among the henge, take up residence near old, remote Yokinto shrines, serving as priests in the same.

Kitsune likewise have no set alignment, though, as a whole, they tend towards chaos rather than law and goodness rather than evil. Evil kitsune, however, do exist, though they are seldom evil for evil's sake; rather, more often than not, they, having suffered grievous loss or harm, have become instruments of unthinking vengeance.

Kitsune Racial Traits

Fey: Kitsune have the fey creature type and yokai subtype.

-4 Strength, +2 Dexterity, +2 Charisma: Kitsune are quick and self-assured but physically weak.

Small: Kitsune are Small and gain a +1 size bonus to AC, a +1 size bonus on attack rolls, a -1 penalty to CMB and CMD, and a +4 size bonus on Stealth checks.

Fast Speed: Kitsune have a base speed of 40 ft.

Low-Light Vision: Kitsune can see twice as far as humans in conditions of dim light.

Quadruped: Kitsune, in their fox shapes, have four feet, but no hands. They are unable to hold items, such as wands, weapons, and shields. Kitsune are able to wear items made specifically for their shape and use certain magic items with body slots, but any item requiring hands is unusable without the proper feats. Kitsune, in their fox shape, have a +4 to CMD against Trip attacks.

Scent: Kitsune have the scent ability.

Bite: Kitsune possess a natural bite attack that inflicts 1d4 damage on a hit.

Fox Tails: Kitsune have one or more fox tails and can use their tails for somatic spell components. Kitsune with a single character level have only one tail, but kitsune gain an additional tail for every 2 character levels thereafter.

Quick Tongue: Kitsune receive a +2 racial bonus on Bluff skill checks.

Yokai traits: Kitsune always count Stealth and Survival as class skills.

Alternate Form: As a standard action, Kitsune can transform into a specific humanoid at will as a supernatural ability. (Except as indicated here, this ability is identical to the change shape universal monster ability in the *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary*.) The first time a kitsune transforms, it must choose a single humanoid type within one size category of small to be its alternative form and that choice cannot be undone. For PCs, the choice should be made at character creation. A kitsune normally chooses to appear as an attractive specimen of whatever race it chooses, though this is not always the case. While in humanoid form, the kitsune loses the ability to use the following traits: fast speed, quadruped, scent, natural weapon, tails, and fox magic. The kitsune's fox form is its natural state and it reverts back to that upon death.

Fox Tells: When in its alternate form, if a kitsune fails a Will save, for any reason, a part of its magical disguise slips for 1d4 rounds, revealing some aspect of its true form. This tell can be any number of things, including obvious fox ears, fox tails, fox whiskers, pointed teeth, or the like. Any creature who can see the kitsune, and who succeeds on a Perception check, notices this slip in the disguise. The DC of the check is equal to 17 minus the amount by which the Will save was failed.

Fox Magic: Kitsune have the ability to use a special form of magic called fox magic. They may use these innate supernatural effects a number of times per day equal to the number of fox tails they possess (that is, 1/ day at 1st level, 2/day at 3rd level, and so on). Each effect requires one use of the kitsune's daily fox magic (unless indicated otherwise). The first effect gained by a kitsune is Fox Trick, other abilities must be purchased as feats. The caster level for these effects is equal to the kitsune's character level. The DCs for effects are equal to 10 + the number of the kitsune's fox tails + the kitsune's Charisma modifier.

Fox Trick: The kitsune chooses a single cantrip and can cast this cantrip three times per day for each use of one Fox Magic. As soon as the cantrip is cast once, the use of Fox Magic is considered completed. The second and third use of the cantrip must occur within 24 hours of the first, or they are lost.

Fox Tongue: Kitsune can speak with foxes at will, as with *speak with animal*.

Languages: Kitsune can speak Kaidanese, Fox, and Sylvan (yokai). Kitsune with a high enough Intelligence score can choose any of the following as a bonus language: Anuitak, Common, Halfling (korobokuru), Giant (oni), and Tengu.

Occupations

Most kitsune have no clear-cut occupation. They live as foxes, hunting their food, sleeping in dens, or out in the open, and enjoying life as it comes. Those kitsune who choose to live among other races, in disguise, adopt whatever occupation is at hand. Those kitsune who do pursue a single calling are likely to serve as priests, oracles, or traveling entertainers. Some few kitsune take to thievery, a task for which their skills and abilities make them highly suited.

Alternate Racial Traits

Fox Warrior: Some kitsune are fiercer than others. This kitsune, in addition to its bite attack, has two claw attacks which deal 1d3 damage each. By utilizing Fox Magic, the kitsune gains a bonus to attack and damage rolls made with its bite attack. The bonus is equal to the kitsune's Charisma modifier and last for three rounds. This trait replaces Fox Trick and Quick Tongue.

Night Fox: While all foxes are nocturnal, some are true creatures of the dark. These kitsune are often

marked by jet black fur. The kitsune has darkvision 30 ft. and a +4 racial bonus to Stealth checks made to hid in dim light or less. By utilizing Fox Magic, the kitsune is able to extinguish surrounding non-magical lights, such as torches and lanterns. The kitsune can extinguish one light no brighter than a lantern per HD per use of this ability. This trait replaces Scent and Fox Trick.

Thieving Fox: Sneaky and cunning, some kitsune have an aptitude for thievery and theft. This kitsune has a +2 racial bonus to Stealth and can utilize Fox Magic to gain an additional bonus to both Stealth and Sleight of Hand checks equal to the Kitsune's Charisma modifier. The bonuses granted by Fox Magic last for three rounds. This trait replaces Fox Trick and Quick Tongue.

Quick Shifter: Some kitsune are capable of changing shape in the twinkling of an eye. This kitsune is able to change shape as a swift action instead of a standard action. This trait replaces Fox Trick.

Korobokuru

The short-statured korobokuru once had settlements scattered across the whole of Kaidan, but today they are a race in decline, pushed further and further into the dark recesses of the forests by the encroachments of the Kaidanese. The korobokuru have never, as a race, been aggressive. They prefer to respond to true threats passively. They retreat rather than fight and some say their original journey to the shores of Kaidan was made as a retreat from evil elsewhere and that such a mentality has always been their cultural marker.

Much like the Anu, the korobokuru are a simple people, dwelling in primitive villages deep in the woods and subsisting primarily as fishermen and hunter-gatherers, though they do grow small herb and vegetable gardens in the areas around their homes. Unlike the Anu, the korobokuru prefer fish and vegetables, especially wild gourds, fuki and sukanpo, to red meat, though they readily eat the latter when it is what is available. The korobokuru make their homes in the ground, digging out their houses and covering them with bamboo or wooden ceilings, which they then bury beneath domes of earth. In many villages, the homes are connected by narrow tunnels so that the korobokuru can easily travel from one dwelling to another without ever venturing out into the open. It is quite common for korobokuru to allow gourd plants and fuki alike to completely overgrow their earthen homes, providing both camouflage and food.

Physical Descriptions

The korobokuru are a short, slim humanoid race, standing only about two and a half feet tall. They possess slightly pointed ears, and large eyes, but are otherwise very similar in appearance to humans, except for their diminutive size. Korobokuru grow thick hair atop their heads, which the women of the race traditionally wear long, with braids. The men, for their part, are heavily bearded. Korobokuru skin color tends to be a pale almond color, and their hair is most often a dark shade of brown. Eye colors tend toward hazels and greens.

Korobokuru do not often wear shoes, preferring the feel of the earth beneath their feet, and the soles of their feet are quite thick. They dress in loose-fitting tunics and leggings made from either leather or tree-based fabrics. Clothes worn at home are dyed either red or green, but clothing meant for traveling or work outside the home will be colored so as to better blend into the environment. Korobokuru heavily utilize small, dried gourds as both containers and as canteens, and most korobokuru met away from home will have several on their person. Additionally, korobokuru are very fond of head coverings and very rarely venture forth from their houses without something upon their head, whether that be a hat, scarf, or something similar.

Many korobokuru, especially in the northern regions of Kaidan, make extensive use of tattoos upon the arms and face. They prefer geometric patterns of blue or black ink. While some korobokuru shamans imbue their tattoos with mystical energies, for most korobokuru, these are merely cosmetic body markings.

Society

Hierarchy within korobokuru society is determined solely by age, with the younger being subordinate to the older. Within families, this means the oldest surviving member of a family, whether male or female, is head of that family. Within the village, the oldest member is village chief, again regardless of gender. Korobokuru are very respectful towards age and consider that the oldest are both the toughest and the wisest of their number.

In matters other than leadership, gender roles are very much the norm, with the men serving as hunters, fishermen and scouts, while the women occupy themselves with gardening, clothes making, and tending to the homes. Some occupations, such as pottery work and cooking, are done by both

men and women, often collectively. Korobokuru are monogamous, with each couple typically having between five and eight children. Despite a high birth-rate, their high mortality rate, among both infants and adults, keeps the korobokuru population stable and most grown korobokuru have only one or two living siblings.

A key feature of korobokuru society is the drive to avoid conflict, in almost all its forms. Korobokuru have no love of warfare and master weapons solely for the purpose of hunting food. Their folk heroes are those individuals who, through cleverness, stealth and discretion, avoid situations of strife. Korobokuru are especially bothered by the idea of intelligent individuals killing other thinking beings. A korobokuru who breaks the social taboo against killing other sentient beings, even in defense, is shunned by all his family and friends and is forced to leave his village. Korobokuru legends teach that they fled across the ocean to avoid war and they do all that they can to uphold their legacy of pacifism. Being a carefree, easy-natured people, major familial disputes are rare, and when they do occur, the disgruntled party, if there can be no reconciliation, leaves to begin a new home elsewhere.

Korobokuru greatly delight in eating and there is nearly always something cooking atop their fires in their earthen homes. Anu have a saying, "The smell of stew among the fuki means the korobokuru are underfoot." Still, the korobokuru are seldom so nourished as to be overweight. Their lives are a daily struggle against larger, more powerful forces and it is only through their wit and skill that they manage to keep themselves fed and alive. Despite this, they are largely a cheerful people, always optimistic for better things to come and always willing to help those they like, without regard for the possibility of repayment. Anu villages with korobokuru neighbors often find gifts of well-made pottery or finely carved ornaments left outside their homes come dawn.

Despite the korobokuru racial norms, there are some exceptions to the rule. Specifically, upon the isle of Genshu, there are villages of korobokuru descended from individuals who were long enslaved by the oni. These korobokuru have been defiled and have descended into feral savagery. They practice cannibalism, foul magics, and revel in bloodshed. Tales of these wicked korobokuru fill other korobokuru with loathing, fear and dread and to speak of them without cause is taboo.

Relations with Other Races

The korobokuru have traditionally always been closest to the anu and, except for those few villages which have turned to darkness, the korobokuru maintain their ancient friendships. While they will not fight on behalf of the anu, korobokuru scouts often provide intelligence to the anu concerning the movements of any Kaidanese forces in their area. The korobokuru have little reason to trust in the Kaidanese, and though they will sometimes befriend this human or that, they mostly try to avoid the men of Kaidan, regardless of caste. Because of the skill of the korobokuru in avoiding detection, most Kaidanese consider the korobokuru to be little more than fairy tales to be told to children and reports of sightings of the smaller race in the woods is most often greeted with skepticism.

The yokai generally know where to find korobokuru villages near them, for the small men revere the yokai as quasi-divine beings, totems made flesh, offering them food, trinkets and other small gifts whenever the two races meet. Unscrupulous yokai, especially among the tengu, sometimes



take advantage of this, but most find it slightly discomforting to be so venerated. The kitsune sometimes take to observing the korobokuru, but seldom find them to be as interesting as either human or henge.

Alignment and Religion

The korobokuru have maintained a tradition of shamanism and animistic totemism throughout the years. The religion has little in the way of dogma, though there are numerous signs of the religion in every korobokuru home, and as a whole, the race is very devout to their faith. The korobokuru venerate animal spirits, especially den-dwelling animals, and pray to the same. Each family adopts a particular animal as its own, building small house-shrines to that animal and filling their homes with tokens of that creature: including furs, skulls, carvings and clay statues. Those korobokuru who venerate an animal related to one of the yokai races, such as fox, badgers, or rabbits, consider the relevant yokai race to be the embodiment of the spirits they worship and go out of their way to seek the approval of such beings. Korobokuru shamans maintain a druidic tradition of magics, predating the arrival of the korobokuru to the shores of Kaidan. While korobokuru have some familiarity with Yokinto, they do not practice it, nor do they follow the teachings of Zaoism, though they, like all creatures in Kaidan, are affected by the broken wheel and tenmei.

Korobokuru have a strong tendency toward neutrality and general tendency toward goodness, but, as in all races, some individuals are more controlling or selfish than others. Few korobokuru feel so strongly about any given ideal or issue to be confrontational or dogmatic on the subject.

Korobokuru Racial Traits

+2 Dexterity, +2 Wisdom, -2 Strength Korobokuru are stealthy and even tempered, but their small frame makes them weaker than the larger races.

Small: Korobokuru are Small creatures and gain a +1 size bonus to their AC, a +1 size bonus to attack rolls, a -1 penalty to their Combat Maneuver Bonus and Combat Maneuver Defense, and a +4 size bonus on Stealth checks.

Slow Speed: Korobokuru have a base speed of 20 feet.

Stealthy: Korobokuru receive a +2 racial bonus on all Stealth skill checks.

Keen Senses: Korobokuru receive a +2 racial bonus on all Perception skill checks.

Calm: Korobokuru are naturally calm and self-possessed and have a +1 racial bonus on all saving throws made to resist mind-affecting effects.

Forestborn: Korobokuru are most at home in the woods and have a +1 racial bonus to all Climb, Perception, Stealth and Survival rolls made in a forest setting. These bonuses stack with those provided by Keen Senses and Stealthy. Korobokuru also have a +1 bonus to all attack rolls and saving throws made when in a forest environment.

Loathe Conflict: Because of their natural loathing of conflict, korobokuru have a -2 penalty to all attack rolls made against non-animals. This penalty, in a forest setting, is reduced to -1 because of the bonus granted by the Forestborn trait.

Weapon Familiarity: Korobokuru are proficient with slings, spears and bows and treat any weapon with the word korobokuru in its name as a martial weapon.

Languages: Korobokuru begin play speaking Halfling (Korobokuru) and Anuitak. Korobokuru with high Intelligence scores can choose from the following: Common, Goblin (Kappa), Kaidanese, and Sylvan (Yokai).

Occupations

Korobokuru villages have few true specialized occupations, except the role of the shaman. The males all serve as hunters and fishermen, and though some show greater aptitude at given tasks, each is expected to carry his own weight and help provide for his own family. Within the ranks of the hunters, the most talented are known as scouts and these individuals are called upon to act as spies and sentries for the rest, a task for which they receive no special remuneration other than the respect of their peers. While the korobokuru do practice property rights (indeed korobokuru families are quite possessive of their heirlooms), and do understand the use of coins as a system of payment, they operate within their own communities strictly on a system of bartering, and, even outside of their communities, have little to do with the business of buying or selling much of anything at market.

Female korobokuru are trained in different tasks than the men, and are more inclined toward artistic endeavors. Among the women there is also more of a tendency to specialize in given roles, depending on aptitude, and the women are more likely to do various tasks expecting those they do it for to return the favor in some fashion. For example, a skilled tattooist, a role always held by the women, will expect her work to be repaid with food, skins, or other goods. Likewise, skilled weavers or seamstresses will find others in the village who are willing to do their housework and chores in exchange for the creation of clothes, hats and beddings.

Many korobokuru, men and women alike, have considerable skill at carving and pottery work, though these pursuits are considered activities to be pursued for pleasure as much as for any practical application.

Alternate Racial Traits

Artist: Korobokuru who spend more time creating than hunting are not quite as alert as their comrades, having turned their eyes inward rather than outward. These korobokuru have a +2 racial bonus on all Craft skill checks. This trait replaces keen senses.

Oni-tainted: Those korobokuru who have been tainted by years of servitude to the oni are very different from their fellows. They are both more skittish and more violent. They have a +1 bonus to initiative checks and a +1 bonus on attack rolls when flanking but they have a -1 penalty to all Will saves. This trait replaces Calm and Loath Conflict.

Outcast: Those korobokuru who have been cast out of their villages lose their calm self-assurance, becoming wary and nervous. They have a +2 racial bonus to initiative. This trait replaces Calm.

Tengu

Dwelling in their mountain villages, the bird-like tengu seek spiritual perfection through swordplay. Tengu legends say that they are a creation of both earth and wind, and the swift sword represents the spiritual union of these two divergent elements in tengu thought. Tengu admire grace, beauty, speed and clear-cut lines and their sword styles reflect this. All tengu have some training with blades, but they recognize that not all of their number will perfect the art of the sword and thus, while the swordmaster occupies the place of highest honor in tengu society, most tengu busy themselves with other tasks, such as is necessary for survival in the mountains.

In ages past, the tengu trained human warriors and sought to spread their philosophies throughout Kaidanese society, but the rise of the undying emperor and the ascension of the Shogun has caused the tengu, as a whole, to turn against mankind. Now the tengu plot how they might thwart and ultimately overthrow the shogunate. Unfortunately, the tengu are good at crafting such plans but slow to ever begin carrying them out.

Physical Descriptions

The majority of tengu are black-feathered bird-like humanoids possessing beaks and bird-like claws for both hands and feet. Tengu possess a passing similarity to crows, though the tengu, in fairness, claim that crows possess a passing similarity to them. A subset of tengu, dwelling primarily upon Eastern Genshu and northern Anshu, possess brown feathers and hooked beaks.

Male and female tengu possess an equal average height, but the males tend to be slightly heavier in build.

Tengu prefer brightly colored, flowing garments which do not restrict movement. They do not often wear leather garments, except for armor, preferring plant-based cloths and silks. Tengu have a penchant for shiny objects, a preference reflected in their love of metal jewelry and adornments.

Society

Tengu villages commonly have elders who pass judgment on wrong-doers and settle minor disputes, but there are few actual laws governing tengu society. Despite this, there is a rigid structure to tengu interaction with each tengu knowing who their superiors are. This structure is defined by the master-student relationship, with the master of one's own master having authority over one's self. This hierarchy begins at birth, with the children answerable to their parents who are in turn answerable to another. Once a tengu serves as a student of a particular teacher, regardless of the subject, that tengu

remains always in the debt of their old master and therefore answerable to them. A tengu is loath to act in a manner that might bring shame to their teachers and so strive to live in a way pleasing to their superiors. At the same time, tengu are a very individualistic race, defining honor as loyalty to one's own ideals. This dichotomy between the social need to submit to higher tengu and the drive to be true to self colors all their actions, with many tengu resolving to excel so that they are master and not student.

At the pinnacle of tengu society are those who have mastered their skills above all others, with the ultimate and most desirable skill being the art of the sword. Swordmasters are held in reverence by all tengu and other masters acknowledge their superiority. The master of masters, the undisputed authority of each tengu mountain is the daitengu who dwells within a shrine atop the mountain. No matter how many tengu villages reside on a single mountain, that mountain only ever has a single daitengu. Though a daitengu is, in theory, the most capable swordsman on his mountain, he is so much more to the tengu who live below him. He serves as a spiritual leader, a high ideal, and an embodiment of what it means to be tengu. He is, in the mind of his tengu, the mountain and the mountain is he. For this reason, when a daitengu ascends to his office, he takes the name of the mountain as his own. Each daitengu is immortal so long as he remains within his shrine and he holds his office until another bests him in mortal combat, at which time the new daitengu adopts his name, office and powers. The daitengu is the true head of all the tengu upon his mountain, and though he passes few edicts, his word is final and all tengu abide by it. In matters of spiritual concern, or to resolve weighty conflicts both internal and external, tengu travel up the mountain to the shrine to seek the daitengu's wisdom.

Just as the daitengu resides atop the mountain, so too, on the mountain slopes, the relative height of tengu dwellings reveals the relationship between the tengu, with more important tengu dwelling higher than their neighbors. Even within a family, the higher the room in the house, the more important the tengu within. One familiar with this can thus readily discern the various ranks of



individual tengu, and thus their skill within their profession, by identifying where their home is in relationship to other tengu.

Tengu are not as sexualized as mammalian races, and only about a third of all tengu ever marry and mate. Adultery is unknown in the society and marriage is a lifelong affair based on mutual respect and philosophical compatibility. When a divorce does occur, normally because of some irreconcilable philosophical difference, it is a mark of shame for all parties involved. There are few gender-specific roles in tengu culture, though a slightly higher percentage of swordmasters are male; a fact primarily attributable to their heavier frames rather than any gender preference. Unmated tengu women do not lay eggs and therefore only about a third of all tengu ever become parents. Perhaps for this reason, tengu young are considered an especially valuable part of every tengu village and are often quite spoiled due to the multitude of "aunties" and "uncles" watching over their well-being.

While the majority of tengu are of the "crow" variety, there are several villages of "kite" tengu on Genshu and Anshu. These tengu have brown feathers, hooked beaks and are more savage in temperament than their cousins, though their social structure is markedly similar. Besides appearance, three things distinguish the kite tengu from their kin. Firstly they make a habit of riding gigantic wild boar into battle, secondly they fight more often with spears than with swords, and thirdly they do not smelt their own metal.

Relations with Other Races

Tengu, upon meeting others for the first time, often challenge their new acquaintance to a duel, an activity that has given tengu the reputation for being a violent race. In truth, tengu do this merely as a means of establishing rank and testing the mettle of others. Non-warriors familiar with tengu know that it is often best to merely acknowledge their superiority at sword-play and then challenge them to compete in some other activity. In long established relationships, such as occurs between neighboring tengu and henge villages, no such challenge occurs as the tengu are already aware of the relative relationship between the various individuals within each village. Tengu maintain good relations with henge, trading them metals and providing some occasional aid in times of emergency. In turn, the henge provide the tengu with food and information. The relationship, maintained since time immemorial, is mutually beneficial to all involved.

Tengu tend to think of kitsune as a relative of the henge, but they are cautious about challenging the trickster race, as experience has shown not all such challenges are met with the right attitude. Tengu that dwell near kitsune enclaves are careful to keep an eye on the fox people but know that the kitsune, when properly persuaded, make good spies and so maintain a cordial relationship.

Tengu think of wrestling as uncivilized and see the kappa's fixation on the sport as proof of the other's barbaric nature. Kappa behavior seldom breaks this stereotype in the eyes of tengu. Thus, tengu tend to dislike the kappa race as a whole, though they admire the tenacity and sometimes humor of the kappa, and make exceptions for individuals within the race.

The tengu have no high regard for the lifestyles and philosophies of the anu and the korobokuru, the latter in particular because of their pacifist beliefs, yet at the same time, they see within them both a romantic ideal of the struggle of the oppressed against overpowering forces and are likely to help both races when able. Though, at the same time, most tengu are not above taking advantage of the superstitious beliefs of the korobokuru in order to manipulate members of that race to their own advantage.

The Kaidanese regime, the shogunate in particular, is abhorrent to the tengu. Tengu, the youth in particular, plot tirelessly to bring down the Kaidanese government, but their numbers are too few and their plans seldom come to fruition. Despite their animosity towards the Kaidanese system of government, tengu are not universally against the whole of humanity and in ages past the tengu accepted human students. Likewise, the yamabushi movement has had a tremendous impact on tengu thought and the tengu have developed their own branch of that faith, utilizing the yamabushi as priests above even Yokinto-trained tengu.

Alignment and Religion

Though tengu once practiced Yokinto in a manner very similar to the henge, today they are devout followers of the doctrines and methods of the

yamabushi, though their particular branch of that hybrid faith has some distinctions from the practices of their human "brethren," including a greater emphasis on traditional Yokinto rituals, a distinct lack of permanent monasteries, and the use of the sword in combat as the primary weapon of choice. While part of this quick conversion had somewhat to do with the fact that the martial priesthood practiced by the yamabushi was appealing to tengu sensibilities, the opposition of the shogun to the religion possibly had more than a little to do with their readiness to adopt the faith as their own.

Itinerant tengu-yamabushi serve the spiritual needs of their kin, performing weddings, consecrating small shrines and combating evil spirits and the undead wherever they are found. Unlike their human brethren, the tengu-yamabushi do not have established monasteries or schools in which to train their followers. Instead, a student wishing to train with one of these spiritual sword-masters must travel each day with his teacher from place to place, learning not just sword-skills and meditation techniques, but also how to best serve the needs of the tengu communities. For this reason, the number of tengu-yamabushi remains fairly small, despite the appeal of the faith to all tengu.

Tengu revere both the earth and the air, teaching that they are the product of a love affair between a mountain and the wind. A tengu mountain always has two shrines upon its surface. The first shrine is normally built partway up the mountain, typically near a tengu village, and is a shrine to the mountain itself. This shrine is tended to by the yamabushi, though no one yamabushi ever spends more than a day or two within its walls. The second shrine, built atop the mountain, is a shrine dedicated to the wind. This latter shrine also serves as the shrine of the daitengu and the daitengu lives within and maintains the shrine as part of his duties. While the mountain shrine is often visited by the local tengu, the wind shrine is normally only visited when there is a pressing need to see the daitengu.

Despite their strict social structure and opposition to the shogunate, the majority of tengu are personally neutral in alignment, not willing to take sides in most matters of right or wrong. There is a tendency towards goodness over evil, but tengu philosophy teaches that each individual should practice those things that seem best to them personally, rather than abiding by the dictates of others.

Occupations

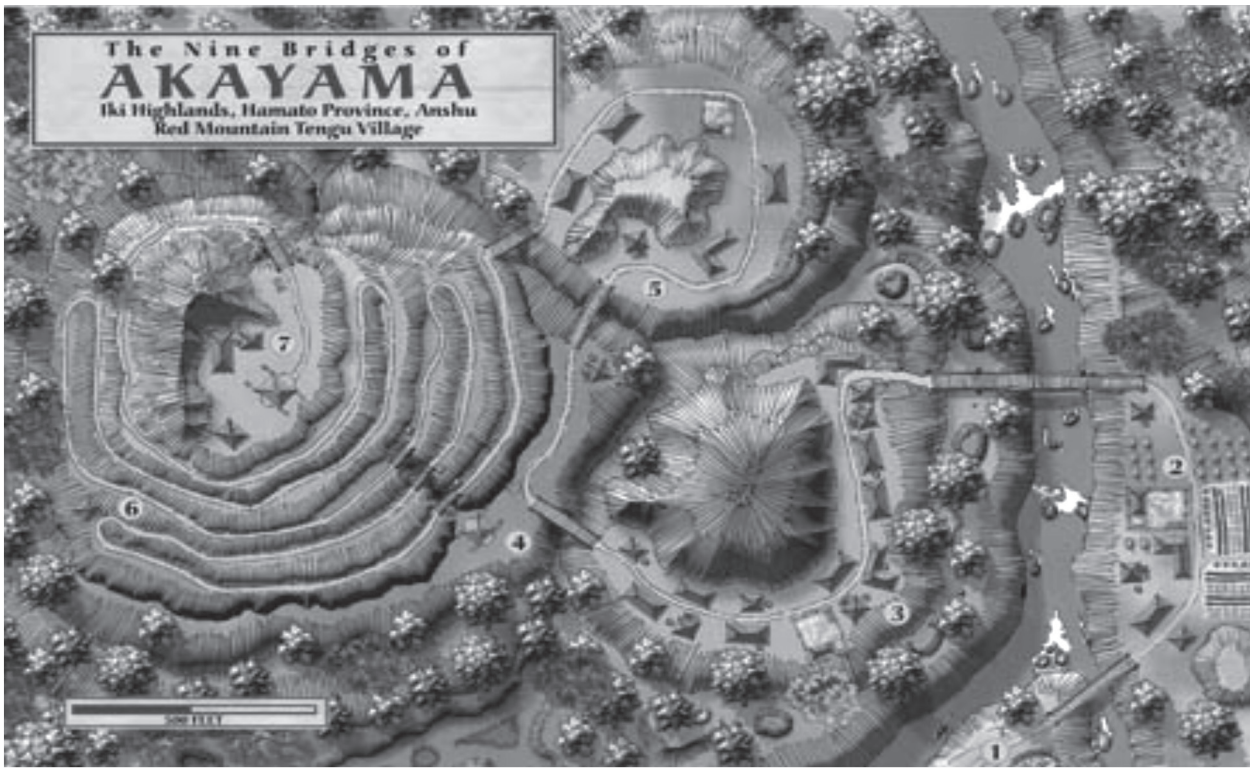
While the idealized tengu spends his days in martial training and spiritual meditation, life does not permit all tengu to so abide. In truth, only a select few spend their time devoted to the excellent art of the sword, the rest labor to feed themselves and their families, and to strengthen their communities through their collective labors. Tengu tend to be very specialized in their work, focusing on excelling at a particular vocation to the exclusion of others. Among tengu villagers, common occupations include lumberman, stonework, hunter, smith, fletcher, and teacher. Many tengu also make a living by scouring the mountains for readily mined ore. Tengu do not mine deep, and so are always looking for new surface deposits of iron and copper. Occupations also include, of course, the path of the yamabushi and the path of the swordmaster. Most tengu give consideration, at some point in their youth, to following such a career, but only those with true talent and dedication are accepted by the masters for instruction.

There are few tengu farmers, though most tengu maintain private herb gardens near their dwellings. Those foodstuffs they cannot hunt or grow themselves, they trade for with the henge. There are likewise few tengu who spend their time exclusively teaching, rather, each tengu takes it upon him- or herself to teach younger tengu who apprentice under them, providing instruction in their craft as well in other related matters, such as reading and writing.

Most tengu, beyond their primary occupation, also pursue a number of other activities, often with the same fervor and dedication they apply to their vocation. These hobbies include calligraphy, poetry, painting, music, and the collecting of shiny objects. And of course, all tengu, even if they are not acceptable to the masters, still spend some time practicing their skills with the sword.

Tengu Racial Traits

+2 Dexterity, -2 Constitution, +2 Wisdom Tengu are quick, with sharp insights into life, but their bones and frames are frailer than some other races.



Medium: Tengu are Medium creatures and have no bonuses or penalties due to their size.

Normal Speed: Tengu have a base speed of 30 feet.

Low-Light Vision: Tengu can see twice as far as humans in conditions of dim light.

Bite: Tengu have a natural bite attack that inflicts 1d3 points of damage on a hit. If the tengu is otherwise unarmed, it is a primary attack; otherwise it is a secondary attack.

Yokai Subtype: Tengu always count Survival and Stealth as class skills.

Sneaky: Tengu gain a +2 racial bonus on Perception and Stealth.

Gifted Linguist: Tengu gain a +4 racial bonus on Linguistic checks, and learn 2 languages each time they gain a rank in Linguistics, rather than 1 language.

Sword Trained: Tengu are trained from birth in the use of swords and as a result are automatically proficient with sword-like weapons (including bastard swords, daggers, elven curve blades and katanas, falchions, greatswords, kukris, longswords, punching daggers, rapiers, scimitars, short swords, and two-bladed swords).

Languages: Tengu begin play speaking common and Tengu. Tengu with high Intelligence scores can choose any language as a bonus language, except secret languages such as Druidic.

Alternate Racial Traits

Boar Rider: The boar-riding tengu of Genshu spend much time with dire boars and are quite skilled at handling them. These tengu gain a +2 racial bonus to Ride and Handle Animal checks. This ability replaces sneaky.

Kite Tengu: Kite tengu are more savage than the typical black-feathered tengu. These tengu have a +2 bonus on Intimidate and Survival checks. This trait replaces the sneaky trait.

Spear Trained: The boar-riding tengu of Genshu frequently employ spears and quarterstaffs as their primary weapon. These tengu are automatically proficient with staff- and spear-like weapons (including shortspears, quarterstaffs, longspears, spears, tridents, lances, and ransuers). This trait replaces sword trained.

Starting Ages, Heights, and Weights

Random Starting Ages

Race	Adulthood	Barbarian, Rogue, Sorcerer	Bard, Fighter, Ranger, Samurai, Paladin, Ranger	Cleric, Druid Monk, Wizard
Henge	14 years	+1d6	+2d6	+3d6
Human	15 years	+1d4	+1d6	+2d6
Kappa	14 years	+2d4	+4d4	+6d4
Kitsune	6d20 years	+1d4	+3d6	+6d10
Korobokuru	20 years	+2d4	+2d6	+3d6
Tengu	11 years	+1d4	+2d4	+3d4

Hengeyokai Age Table

Race	Middle Aged	Old	Venerable	Maximum age
Henge	40 years	90 years	150 years	150+2d10 years
Human	35 years	53 years	70 years	70+2d20 years
Kappa	100 years	300 years	500 years	500+7d20 years
Kitsune	200 years	600 years	1000 years	400+2d100 per tail years
Korobokuru	50 years	75 years	100 years	100+4d20 years
Tengu	30 years	45 years	55 years	55+2d6 years

Hengeyokai height and weight table

Race, Gender	Base Ht.	Base Wt.	Modifier	Weight Multiplier
Anu, Human (male)	4 ft. 8 in.	120 lbs.	+2d10 inches	x 5 lbs.
Anu, Human (female)	4 ft. 2 in.	90 lbs.	+2d10 inches	x 5 lbs.
Henge (male)	4 ft. 10 in.	120 lbs.	+2d10 inches	x 5 lbs.
Henge (female)	4 ft. 5 in.	85 lbs.	+2d10 inches	x 5 lbs.
Kaidanese Human (male)	4 ft. 8 in.	110 lbs.	+2d10 inches	x 4 lbs.
Kaidanese Human (female)	4 ft. 3 inch	70 lbs.	+2d10 inches	x 4 lbs.
Kappa (male and female)	22 inches	10 lbs.	+2d4 inches	x5 lbs.
Kitsune, humanoid (male)			as the race chosen	
Kitsune, humanoid (female)			as the race chosen	
Korobokuru (male)	2 ft. 3 inches	27 lbs.	+2d4 inches	x 1 lb.
Korobokuru (female)	2 ft.	20 lbs.	+2d4 inches	x 1 lb.
Tengu (male)	4 ft. 6 in.	90 lbs.	+2d6 inches	x 2 lbs.
Tengu (female)	4 ft. 6 in.	70 lbs.	+2d6 inches	x 2 lbs.

Chapter 3: The Religions of Kaidan

The Purification of Inagazi

As the Yokai tell the tale, the gods placed a blazing Naginata in the sky with which to light the day. However, the men of Kaidan have a different tale concerning the birth of the Sun.

When the great god Inagazi-no-mikoto lost his wife, driven by grief, he foolishly sought for her in the dread halls of Yomi. There, after a long journey, fraught with danger, he, at the last, found his beloved. Alas, the most terrible sight in all his dark travails was the visage of his wife, rotting, covered with maggots and filth. Horrified, he fled from her presence and she, in turn, angered at his reaction, pursued that she might slay him. Chased by both his wife, and her eight ghastly servants, the Shikome, Inagazi at last burst forth from the realm of the dead and sealed the entrance behind him.

Recognizing his foolishness, and the unclean taint yet lingering in his eyes and on his flesh, Inagazi sought to purify himself in the clean waters of the ocean. Dressing himself in a robe of white, and taking up a ladle, he poured the water upon his head. He poured it in his right eye and washed out the Sun, his daughter. He poured it in his left eye and washed out the Moon, his son. He rinsed his mouth and gave birth to the great god of storms and wind. Finally he poured the water upon his hands and thus was he cleansed.



The yokinto priests use this story to illustrate the dangers of doing that which is unnatural, the foulness of death, and the necessity of purification. Zaoist priests utilize the same tale but in a different way. They point out that it was the interaction of life and death which gave rise to the immortal Sun. They also tell the tale as a reminder of the divine nature of the Sun, the celestial grand-matriarch of the Imperial family.

To fully understand Kaidan, one must understand the religions of the islands, for the twin faiths of yokinto and zaoism have been influential in shaping the land into what it is today. Kaidan is a very spiritual land, though some observers, used to more traditional faiths, might be excused for thinking the Kaidanese people largely irreligious. While yokinto shrines are plentiful across the archipelago, and while many of the towns and

cities feature zaoist temples and monasteries, there are no weekly days of worship, no public animal sacrifices, and, apart from festivals, few assemblies of the faithful.

Regardless, the faith of the people of Kaidan runs deep and expresses itself in a plethora of small rites and rituals each day. The samurai who burns incense each morning prior to donning his sword and armor, the family which bows in thankful prayer and claps before partaking of their noon meal, and the farmer who leaves a small bit of rice each evening in front of the great tree in his yard are all expressing their devotion to their religious heritage.

Of the two faiths, the yokinto religion is the older. It predates the influence of humanity upon the islands, having been taught to men by the yokai. It is yokinto which plays the most obvious role in the day-to-day activities of the majority of the islanders, providing a framework through which the Kaidanese interact with the material world around them. Yet this is not to say that zaoism is unimportant. To the contrary, since its introduction to the archipelago, there have been few forces so determinative to the course of events as zaoism. Philosophically, spiritually and politically, it has irrevocably shaped what it means to be Kaidanese, for just as yokinto directs the manner in which the Kaidanese people interact with the material world, for better or for worse, zaoism is the vehicle by which the Kaidanese have come to understand their immortal souls.

Yokintoism: Kaidan's First Faith

Before men ever arrived in their crude ships to the shores of Kaidan, the yokai worshiped and revered the manifold kami of the island. The yokai believed that all things had a kami, or spiritual essence, and thus all things were potentially holy, though an object's kami might not be manifest. Those things that were particularly notable, such as a breathtaking view, an ancient tree, or a mighty river, were deemed to possess greater power, including the power to make intercession on behalf of the supplicant with other, lesser kami. The yokai faith was a simple thing, consisting of the erection of small shrines and the leaving of gifts for the kami at places of import and awe. Yokai priests were unknown, though a few of the henge devoted themselves to the caring of the primitive shrines.

The Children of the Sun, when they arrived on the island, were sun-worshippers, devoted to a small pantheon of nature deities, but open to the possibility of other gods of which they knew not. Befriending the yokai, the men quickly adopted the beliefs and practices of the same, incorporating elements of their older faith with their new, naming the resulting conglomeration, *yokinto,* which can be translated as "The Way of the Yokai." The men began teaching that the sun goddess whom they had previously worshiped was, in fact, the queen of the kami and the divine nature spirits the men had traditionally revered were deemed to be her court, the celestial kami. For their part, the men introduced the yokai to the concept of a priesthood, so that, in time, henge and tengu alike began to fill such a role in their respective communities.

While the yokinto faith retains, at its core, the basic simplicity of the early yokai rituals, its practitioners likewise maintain a flexibility of thought which allows them to easily incorporate and mold new ideas and philosophies as they arise. These two impulses have worked to create a certain harmonized dichotomy which gives yokinto strength and durability. On the one hand, yokintoism is a pragmatic faith, willing to accept new rituals, spells, or doctrines which seem efficient and practical in helping the faithful cope with life and the spiritual aspects of the same. On the other hand, the yokinto religion is steeped in tradition and a love for the simple things of life so that, no matter how the world changes, yokinto remains largely unchanged.

This is not to say that there are no doctrinal divisions among the practitioners of yokinto, for there are. Like all religious movements, yokinto has had its share of strife. There are at least three major denominations within the faith. Firstly there are yokinto fundamentalists, who call their faith Koyokinto ("Old Yokinto") and who revere only the kami of the material world: the spirits of woods, streams, mountains, rocks, and the like. These practitioners, which include many yokai, do not accept the worship of the celestial kami and reject many of the innovations made by men in regards to the rituals of the faith. They believe the goal of yokinto is harmony between the worshiper and the world in which he lives and they trust this goal is met through both simple supplications and an increased understanding of the way of the natural world. Koyokinto has fewer shrines than the other sects of yokintoism, and those shrines that are affiliated with this movement are apt to be simpler affairs, often built in such a way as to incorporate the surrounding environment into the design of the shrine.

The second major strain of yokinto are those who would describe themselves as orthodox. Priests of this movement, like their fundamentalist brethren, revere the kami of the material world, but they also believe in the celestial court of the kami and the supremacy of the sun goddess. Over the years, due to the eclectic nature of the faith, the number of recognized deities within the yokinto pantheon has grown, but even so, the basic rituals of orthodox yokinto priests differ little from those of their fundamentalist brethren, except perhaps that there is a greater emphasis on the sacredness of the shrine and the need for ritual purification. This is the form of yokinto practiced by the majority of the Kaidanese. Though exact customs and doctrines may differ from region to region, there is enough uniformity that a traveler may feel comfortable if he worships in a yokinto shrine far from his own home.

The final form of yokintoism is Imperial Yokinto. Though Zaoism is the official imperial religion, when the Eternal Emperor came to power, the Shogun, heedless of the blasphemy, took control of thirteen of the nation's most prestigious shrines and began a process of harnessing the yokinto faith for his own ends. While many of the rituals of Imperial Yokintoism are outwardly similar to the more traditional strains of the religion, the mindset and underlying philosophies are subtly different. The kami are given lip-service, but the true focus of the faith is upon the person of the Emperor as the direct descendant of the sun goddess, and the stated purpose of the movement is the harmony of present day Kaidan with its ancient past. More conservative priests tend to regard the priests of Imperial Yokinto as misguided, or even as heretics, but their criticism of the same tends to be very quiet and subtle, for they fear bringing the wrath of the Shogun down upon themselves. The shrines affiliated with Imperial Yokinto are magnificent structures, resplendent in their ostentatious glory. Indeed, as those affiliated with Imperial Yokinto move further away from their spiritual roots, there is an ever greater focus on the shrine as a sacred thing in and of itself.

Zaoism: The Dark Wheel

Unlike yokinto, zaoism was an import to the archipelago. Based on the teachings of the Mujiga Zao, zaoism began as a philosophy but has since become a major religion with multiple branches. The form of zaoism officially sanctioned in Kaidan is known as *Kuraikuruma*, meaning the dark wheel or dark vehicle. To understand zaoism, it is helpful to know something of its history.



Sujima Mujiga, a philosopher prince, disillusioned by the suffering he saw in the world around him, turned his mind to the study of the body and the soul. His spiritual quest led him on a pilgrimage across the many lands as he sought out the greatest of teachers. He studied under monks, learning how to train the body to perfection. He sat at the feet of aged priests and learned of the gods and of the power of prayer. He journeyed into forbidden places and served under dread necromancers, raising corpses and commanding them. Finally, viewing each of the paths he had studied as having some truth, but being fully satisfied with none of them, he undertook one last pilgrimage. It is said that he walked to the very gates of death and gazed within that dread realm, seeing within it a stark reflection of all the suffering of the world. There he stood for a day and a month until at last death held no more fear for him and thus no power over him. So cleansed, he returned to the world of men and began to teach students how they too might free themselves from the dread of dying and the suffering of the mortal world.

The tri-fold legs of zaoism are the recognition of the universality of the distress of sentient beings,

the recognition that distress in all its forms is a condition caused by the desires, fears and ignorance of sentient beings, and the recognition that suffering can be overcome through the teachings of the Zao. Mujiga taught that by following a certain set of principles, the path of the Zao, sentient beings could lift their mind and their soul above the distress of the world, freeing the inner spirit from the bonds of flesh and allowing it to return to a state of perfect union with the universe.

Soon after Mujiga's departure from the world, zaoism divided into two distinct movements, one focused on nihilism and the other on achieving a state of perfection apart from nihilism. The philosophy of each was reflected in their interpretation of the manner of Mujiga's departure. The Nihilist believed that Mujiga, having imparted his wisdom to his students chose to dissolve himself and be undone, becoming one with all. The Perfectionist believed that Mujiga, having imparted his wisdom, left his mortal frame behind and ascended to divinity. Out of each primary division, there have arisen a multitude of Zaoist schools, philosophies, sects, cults and disciplines.

The Kuraikuruma school of thought is a branch of Zaoist Perfectionism. Kuraikuruma, like much of zaoism, teaches that all life is a constant circle of perpetual distress and discomfort and only through escaping the circle of life can one fully escape distress. However, where Kuraikuruma differs is in its full embrace of necromancy as the means by which one escapes life. The Kuraikuruma scriptures tell of how the Mujiga Zao embraced undeath, thus escaping life and the bonds of the flesh.

Zaoism in Kaidan

Six hundred years before the rise of the Eternal Emperor, zaoism was officially introduced to the Imperial Court. It was already an old religion, having been in existence for over a thousand years. Indeed, some modern Kaidanese priests argue that the first royal practitioner of Kuraikuruma was Queen Himiko, four hundred years earlier. Though such claims are spurious, the antiquity of zaoism cannot be denied.

While zaoism was not immediately embraced by the populace at large, or even indeed, by most of the court, within a hundred years it had been firmly established, alongside yokinto, as a viable faith. Interestingly, yokinto priests were among the first to accept the new religion, many of them teaching that Mujiga was a celestial being, a consort of the queen of heaven. He was thus enshrined early on as one of the yokinto gods and in this form, his teachings slowly made their way into the heart of the culture.

Within the nobility, officials found the caste system promoted by zaoism to be highly appealing, and zaoism eventually replaced yokinto as the religion of the Imperial Court. While Nihilistic doctrines were known in the court, they never gained prominence, as the Perfectionism school was more appealing to the Kaidanese sensibilities. Indeed, for some time, even in the court, zaoism was primarily understood as a vehicle for magics, or sutras, by which the faithful could obtain health and prosperity. Formal zaoist doctrines were seldom studied but zaoist spells and magicians were in popular demand.

As the zaoist faith matured within the Kaidanese culture, and as zaoist dogmas began to be more fully understood, noble clans began to divide concerning which form of zaoism was to be preferred. Two main camps dominated the debate, both of them, ironically enough, following the teachings of foreign priests who had immigrated to the islands to further the zaoist cause. The first of these priests, blind Nij'gan, promoted Tenraikuruma, the Divine Wheel, which taught that the Zao Mujiga was, and always had been, one of the gods, and that he had descended to earth to teach men the path of Zao. Nij'gan's doctrines fit well with what most Kaidanese already believed concerning Mujiga and was thus popular. As Nij'gan was also a devout believer in the supremacy of the noble caste over the lesser castes, he found great patronage among the nobility. The name of the second priest was Kaiku and, in public, he espoused the doctrines of the Go-no-Ryoku, the Word of Power, which stressed the use of magic and rituals as the key to enlightenment. However, in private, with his most trusted disciples, he advocated Kuraikuruma as the ultimate way of truth. Indeed, Kaiku had been driven from his own lands for the practice of necromancy, but he found sanctuary among the Kaidanese and, such was his influence, a great temple was built for him atop Mount Sumi, near the capital.

When the Minamoto and the Taira clans went to war, though it was not the primary motivator, it is worth noting that the Minamoto were advocates of Tenraikuruma and the Taira, as became afterward clear, were firm disciples of the tenets of Kuraikuruma.

The Sohei

Following the introduction of zaoism to Kaidan, and the subsequent growth in power, popularity, and prestige, zaoist temples began training warriors, virtual small armies, to defend their property. These warrior monks came to be known as the *sohei* and, in time, the sohei schools became influential in their own right. Prior to the Minamoto rebellion, there were several branches of the sohei, representing both the religious division within the zaoist community and the political division within the country. When the Shogun took power, he destroyed every sohei school which had sided with the Minamoto. Those schools which remained had the choice to convert to the imperially approved doctrines of Kuraikuruma, or join their late brothers in the grave. Most chose to convert, though there were those who went into hiding.

The sohei ostensibly represent the secular power of the zaoist faith, and, technically, the sohei are not under the leadership of the Shogun, answering instead to their spiritual leaders. In theory, the sohei are elite fighters, devoted to their faith and the quest for enlightenment and spiritual perfection. In truth, very few sohei schools ever act contrary to the will of the state, a great number of sohei are little better than armed and trained thugs, and far too many of the monastical heads are corrupt, willing to sell the services of their men as mercenaries in the service of the Shogun.

Designer's Note: Not All Monks are Monks

The word monk, throughout this book, is used to describe an individual belonging to a martial monastic order, but such persons, be they yamabushi or sohei, are not necessarily members of the actual monk class. Yamabushi are just as likely to be paladins, fighters, or warriors. Sohei are typically warriors or fighters.

Warrior Archetype: Religious Warrior

Whether sohei or yamabushi, Kaidan has many religious schools and monasteries that train small armies of warriors dedicated to their sect or faith. These warriors are not as well trained as fighters, but, in large numbers, they are nonetheless forces to be reckoned with. This archetype is for creating such NPCs.

A Kaidanese warrior affiliated with a religious organization has the following class features.

The religious warrior's class skills are Acrobatics (Dex), Climb (Str), Craft (Int), Intimidate (Cha), Knowledge (religion) (Int), Profession (Wis), and Ride (Dex).

Skill Ranks per level: 2 + Int modifier

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: The religious warrior is proficient in the use of all simple and martial weapons, with the naginata and tetsubo, and with all light and medium armors.

Righteous Defender *(Ex)*: When fighting within the grounds of a building or complex dedicated to the warrior's faith, the warrior gains a +1 morale bonus to all attack rolls and all saving throws made to resist fear.

The Yamabushi

Following the ascension of the Eternal Emperor to the Flowered Throne of Heaven, there arose a new order of religious monks, the Yamabushi. These men attempted to pragmatically wed traditional zaoist elements with many of the ancient beliefs of yokinto. Their movement was given impetus by the observable reality of the broken wheel of reincarnation. Whereas the Kuraikuruma and Imperial Yokinto priests emphasized the supremacy of the Emperor and the Shogun, and full submission to them as the highest duty of all men, the yamabushi taught that a proper renewed reverence for the natural world and the manifold kami, coupled with strict zaoist ascetics, was the means by which men would eventually conquer the darkness of their world and escape its suffering. The initial reaction of the Shogun to these teachings was swift and harsh, but many of the yamabushi managed to escape the reaches of the government, establishing shrines and monasteries in remote reaches of the archipelago. While the yamabushi are officially illegal, there exists today something of an uneasy truce between the monks and the government, as many of the monasteries have come to serve as bulwarks against forces the shogunate deems to be even more dangerous than the doctrines of the monks. For their part, the monks are typically careful not to overtly preach things deemed treasonous. Though the yamabushi religion began among men, its practices have been adopted by some of the yokai, especially the tengu.

Paladin Archetype: Yamabushi

Among the yamabushi, there are those who derive supernatural powers from a combination of inner strength and spiritual enlightenment. Some harness great energy by linking their souls to Yomi. There are others who gain power through a connection to the Kami. Regardless of the exact path to transcendence, such yamabushi are true foes to be reckoned with. While many yamabushi are ascetic hermits, removed from the cares of the world, others, descending from their monastical mountain retreats, seek to battle evil wherever they find it.

A yamabushi paladin has the following class features.

Class Skills: Climb (Str), Craft (Int), Diplomacy (Cha), Handle Animal (Cha), Heal (Wis), Knowledge (nature) (Int), Knowledge (religion) (Int), Profession (Wis), Sense Motive (Wis), and Spellcraft (Int).

Skill Ranks per Level: 2 + Int modifier.

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: Yamabushi are proficient with all simple and martial weapons and with the naginata. They are proficient with light and medium armor and with shields.

Weapon Focus: Yamabushi gain Weapon Focus as a class bonus feat. This feat replaces the paladin's heavy armor proficiency.

Detect Undead *(Su)*: At will, the yamabushi can *detect undead*, as the spell. At first level yamabushi can, as a move action, concentrate on a single individual within 60 feet and determine if it is undead, as well as the relative power of the undead. At 10th level, the use of this ability becomes a free action, though only one individual may be targeted a round. At 20th level the yamabushi is immediately aware of all undead within 60 feet and their relative strength. This ability replaces the paladin's *detect evil* ability.

Damage Undead *(Su)*: Beginning at 2nd level, the yamabushi's attacks against undead are especially effective. The yamabushi may add his Charisma modifier to all attack and damage rolls made against undead. If the yamabushi uses his smite evil ability to target an undead, the first successful attack deals extra damage equal to 2 points of damage per yamabushi level instead of the normal extra point of damage per class level. This ability replaces Lay on Hands.

Domain: At 4th level, when a yamabushi gains the ability to cast spells, he gains access to one of the following cleric domains (Air, Animal, Glory, Knowledge, or Strength). His effective cleric level for this domain is equal to his paladin level -3. When choosing spells, the first spell in each spell slot must be the appropriate domain spell, though the number of spells he may cast per day is unchanged.

Channel Positive Energy *(Su)*: When a yamabushi reaches 4th level, he gains the supernatural ability to channel positive energy like a cleric. A yamabushi may do this a number of times per day equal to his Charisma modifier, but otherwise uses his class level as his effective cleric level when channeling positive energy.

Expert Healer *(Ex)*: Beginning at 4th level, the yamabushi may add 1/2 his class level to all Heal checks. This ability replaces Mercy.

Divine Bond *(Su)*: At 5th level, the yamabushi forms a divine bond with either Yomi or a Kami. Once the bond is chosen, it cannot be changed.

If the yamabushi forms a bond with Yomi, he can enhance his weapon. This ability works in all respects as the standard paladin ability: only the source of the ability's power is changed.

If the yamabushi forms a bond with a Kami, he gains the ability to call upon the service of an unusually intelligent, strong, or loyal animal to aid him in battle. This animal is considered an outsider with an Intelligence score of at least 6, but otherwise functions as a druid's animal companion, using the yamabushi's paladin level as his effective druid level. If the yamabushi already possesses an animal companion, through the Animal domain, add 2 to the effective druid level when this option is chosen. The yamabushi cannot magically summon the animal companion to his side and if the animal companion dies, the yamabushi may not summon another animal for 60 days or until he gains a paladin level, whichever comes first. During this 60 day period, the yamabushi takes a -1 penalty on attack and weapon damage rolls. At 11th level the animal companion gains the celestial simple template.

Observer of Nature *(Ex)*: At 6th level, the yamabushi may make Knowledge (nature) checks untrained. If the yamabushi possesses skill ranks in Knowledge (nature) he may add 1/2 his class level to all Knowledge (nature) checks.

Champion of Nature *(Su)*: At 20th level, a yamabushi becomes a conduit for the powers of Yomi and the kami. His DR increases to 10/evil. Whenever he uses smite evil and successfully strikes an undead foe, the target takes an additional 200 points of damage (10 per class level). This immediately ends the smite evil attempt regardless of whether the creature survived the attack. Furthermore, when the yamabushi channels positive energy, the healing or damage is maximized.

Goryo Shinko

Another religious movement within Kaidan is *goryo shinko*, the worship of "noble ghosts." A sub-cult of the imperial yokinto shrines, the doctrine is based on the idea that the dead can be venerated and, through that veneration, encouraged to become protectors of the living. Angry spirits of the dead are called *onryo* and are rightly feared. Through proper worship and rituals, these onryo, it is believed, can be turned to *goryo*, beneficent spirits. Relatedly, the Shogun encourages this practice and subtly insinuates through loyal priests that the undead daimyo should themselves be considered goryo. In some provinces, the daimyo take this practice a step further and encourage the zaoist and yokinto priests alike to erect shrines and temples to their "goryo" masters, in effect deifying themselves.

Mitama: A Kami's "Fire"

While yokinto shrines do not typically house an actual kami, for the true kami make their own homes within the natural elements of the world, they do frequently contain a portion of their kami's essence, or *mitama* (lit. honorable spirit). Yokinto priests, when they dedicate a shrine, perform a ritual of devotion, called *kanjo,* during which they entrap the mitama within the shrine's go-shintai. This does nothing to the kami itself, but it does grant the shrine a potential guardian which knowledgeable priests can unleash in times of need.

The mitama, when it manifests, typically does so as an elemental creature of fire, earth, water or air (though some do manifest as one of the quasi-elements, such as mud or smoke) in the shape of a great animal. The size and power of the essence depends on the age and the popularity of the shrine (as the kami essence gains power through the veneration and devotion of yokinto worshippers), as well as the power of the kami being venerated.

A single kami can be used, via the kanjo ritual, to power any number of shrines, and there are some individual kami with hundreds or thousands of shrines devoted to them, each containing a representation of the kami's mitama. Yokinto priests liken the ritual of kanjo to the lighting of a candle from a greater fire. The fire can light any number of candles without losing its own identity or power.

Yokinto Shrines

At the heart of the yokinto religion is the yokinto shrine. While the kami are the objects of reverence, the shrine is the focus through which the worship is most often directed. It is before or within the shrine that prayers are offered, petitions are made, and the faithful leave tokens of their devout reverence.

The shrine, in yokinto thought, houses a kami, or at the least, a portion of that kami's spirit-essence. At the heart of most shrines is a *go-shintai*, sometimes also called a *mitamashiro:* an object which houses the essence of the kami. The shintai is often a concave mirror of polished metal, but other objects can be used, such as a sword, a jewel or magatama, a wand, a plant, or even a statue. Contrarily, some of the older and more fundamentalist shrines have no go-shintai within the shrine, but instead the worshippers consider the actual object being revered, be it a mountain, tree, waterfall or what-have-you, to be the actual shintai.

The go-shintai, when it is housed within the shrine, is kept within a room or building called the *hondan.* Few, other than the priest and shrine maidens, ever enter the hondan. Rather, the majority of worshippers gather within the *haiden* (Hall of Worship), which is often connected to the hondan via a *heidan* (Hall of Offerings). Other typical features of a yokinto shrine include the *chōzuya* (a font or basin of water with which the worshippers can purify themselves before entering the haiden), the *sandō* (an approach to the shrine), *setsumasusha* (small shrines), and a fence around the shrine called a *tamagaki.* Almost all shrines also feature a *torii,* a characteristic gate signifying the presence of a shrine.

Cultural Note: Female Priests?

By tradition, the role of priest, in both the yokinto and zaoist faiths, is most often filled by a man. While women can receive religious training, it is hard for them to find acceptance as true leaders in the faith. This rule does not hold as true in yokai societies, where women priests, while not as common as their male counterparts, are not unheard of. In zaoism, women trained as priests are referred to as nuns, and live apart from their male counterparts, within their own, separate complexes. These zaoist nuns seldom lead or instruct men, but are most often utilized by other women as spiritual advisors. In yokinto, most women desiring to play a role in the religious life of their community seek training as miko shrine maidens.

Cleric Archetype: Kannushi Priest

The typical kannushi is a shrine caretaker, a spiritual adviser to his community, and an exorcist. He seeks to facilitate the interaction between his congregants and the kami, while also protecting those under his care from the ravages of less benign spirits. They understand that the world is filled with unseen forces and that men who wish to survive and prosper should seek to understand those forces. Kannushi are called upon by their community to bless harvests, houses, and marriages. They settle disputes, instruct the young, and devote themselves to meditation and prayer when not otherwise engaged. They never conduct funerals and consider the touch of death to be unclean, requiring ritual purification.

A kannushi has the following class features.

Alignment: Any non-evil.

Class Skills: The kannushi's class skills are Appraise (Int), Bluff (Cha), Craft (Int), Diplomacy (Cha), Heal (Wis), Knowledge (history) (Int), Knowledge (local), Knowledge (nature) (Int), Knowledge (religion) (Int), Linguistics (Int), Profession (Wis), Sense Motive (Wis), Spellcraft (Int), and Survival (Wis).

Skill Ranks per Level: 4 + Int modifier.

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: Kannushi are proficient with all simple weapons, as well as with light and medium armors.

Domains: A kannushi chooses only one domain at first level, and must choose from one of the following domains – Air, Animal, Community, Earth, Fire, Glory, Healing, Plant, or Water.

Eschew Focus: The kannushi does not require a divine-focus to cast his divine spells or channel energy. He draws the power from within himself and from his connection to, and understanding of, the kami.

Exorcist: A kannushi must channel positive energy. When channeling energy to heal the living, a kannushi suffers -1 to each die rolled. When channeling energy to affect undead, a kannushi adds +1 to each die rolled. At 8th level, the kannushi no longer suffers the penalty to rolls made for healing. At 12th level, if the kannushi channels energy to affect undead as a full round action (taking no more than a 5-foot step), the bonus increases to +2 per die rolled.

Shrine Bond: A kannushi can form a bond with a particular shrine. In order to form this bond, the shrine must possess a viable go-shintai, and the kannushi must spend at least eight hours a day, for two weeks, caring for the shrine and praying within. When within 1 mile/level of the shrine, all spells cast by the kannushi gain +1 DC. Spells cast outside this range suffer a -1 DC. Additionally, when within range of his shrine, once per day, the kannushi can cast any one spell he has access to but has not prepared so long as the spell is 1 level lower than the maximum level he can cast. A kannushi who chooses to form a bond with a new shrine forfeits his bond to his old shrine as soon as the new bond is formed.

Spirit Empathy: The kannushi receives a bonus equal to 1/2 his HD (minimum 1) when making a Diplomacy or Sense Motive check against a creature possessing a kami, fey or elemental type or subtype.

Blessed Tongue: Beginning at 1st level, once per day, a kannushi may pray over a building or structure, blessing it so that all skill checks made within the building benefit from a +1 morale bonus. The blessing cannot affect more rooms than the priest has class levels, and if the structure has more rooms, the priest chooses which rooms are affected. Likewise, for the purpose of the blessing, rooms of greater than 100 square feet, count as multiple rooms, with each 100 square feet of space, or fraction thereof, counting as one room. Blessing a structure in this way requires the use of sacred oils and incense, the cost of which is equal to 10 gp per "room" blessed.

At 5th level, once a week, the kannushi may also bless an area of land, the area being no greater than an acre per class level. The blessing, in addition to granting all skill checks for a month made within the area a +1 morale bonus (as within a blessed building), also causes the plants on the land to benefit as from the enrichment effect of *plant growth*. The cost of this blessing is 10 gp per acre blessed.

Blessed Touch: Beginning at 3rd level, kannushi can bless a person or creature other than themselves, so that the one blessed receives a +1 morale bonus to all skill checks, saving throws, and attack rolls for 24 hours. A kannushi may bless a number of people per day equal to his Charisma modifier (min 1).

Blessed Presence: Beginning at 8th level, the presence of the kannushi priest is anathema to evil spirits. All undead within 20 feet of the priest suffer a -1 penalty to all skill checks, saving throws, and attack rolls for as long as they remain within the aura's range (no saving throw). All spells with the evil descriptor targeting individuals within the aura, including the priest's, have a -1 DC.

In addition to the larger shrines described above, Kaidan is filled with many more, smaller shrines. Within the woods and along the streets of Kaidan, it is not uncommon to come across small shrines called *hokora.* Likewise, during festivals, smaller, portable shrines, called *mikoshi,* are carried through the streets of a village or town in celebration. And, in many devout homes, small shrines called *kamidana* sit atop shelves, surrounded by the trappings of the yokinto faith. So long as each such shrine contains a shintai which has been blessed through kanjo (see the **Mitama: A Kami's "Fire"** sidebar), it is considered a true shrine.

The large public shrines are served by *kannushi* priests, *miko* shrine maidens, and the family members of the same (who are often studying to follow in the footsteps of their parents). The responsibility for the care and upkeep of a particular shrine is often kept within the same family for generations (there is no prohibition against yokinto clergy marrying), though these families may sometimes take on the training of students from outside the family.

Zaoist Temples

Though the Mujiga Zao is held by the Kaidanese to be divine, zaoism, at its core, is not a traditional religion focused on the worship of the Mujiga Zao. Rather it is a collection of philosophies and tenets by which an individual can attempt to move beyond the suffering cycle of life and death. While prayers are made to the Mujiga Zao, each adherent is ultimately responsible for his or her own "salvation." Relatedly, zaoist temples are not places of communal worship, but instead function as centers of religious thought, study and meditation.

While differing branches of zaoism utilize different temple layouts, Kaidanese temples of the kuraikuruma school have developed certain commonalities. A set of three gates, similar in design to yokinto torii and representing the tri-fold legs of zaoism, mark the entrance of a temple. These gates are almost always on the south side of the complex. Standing between the first and second set of gates are the *niō*, a pair of fearsome statues suggestive of oni. In the center of the temple is the *zaodō* (Hall of the Zao). The zaodō contains either a fearsome statue of the Mujiga Zao, or else a statue of one of the saints of the Kuraikuruma sect. By tradition, each statue possesses some subtle reminder of death, such a skeletal hand or foot, and is surrounded by a great wheel featuring emblems or symbols reminding the faithful of the dark cycle of life. Laity are seldom allowed into the zaodō, though some zaodō are not enclosed and may be separated from the courtyard of the temple by little more than a small wooden barrier-fence. The zaodō may also be used to house important artifacts or treasures belonging to the temple, though if these are truly valuable they are often kept in a basement chamber. Beyond the zaodō is the *zaotō* (pagoda of the Zao), a tall, three-storied structure used to house the remains of deceased zaoist priests and nuns. In many temples the zaotō is little more than a mausoleum, but in some of the older or more powerful temples, it serves as "living" quarters for those clergy which have achieved undeath. To the west of the zaodō is the *kyōzō*, or library, and east of the zaodō is the *kō-dō*, or lecture hall. Each temple also contains living quarters for the priests, a *shōrō* (belfry), a *kuin* (kitchen and office), a toilet and a bath. It is common for a temple to be surrounded by a tall, decorative wall.

Because of the nature of kuraikuruma zaoism, priests are encouraged to engage in the intellectual study of necromancy. And, though only seven monasteries within Kaidan are officially sanctioned for the training of kuraikuruma spellcasting priests, some initiates pursue such matters on their own and there are more than a few who understand the arcane necromantic arts. It should not be surprising then that many temples have hidden rooms devoted to foul and bloody rituals and it is not uncommon for either the zaodō or the zaotō to have subterranean chambers.

Sohei Monasteries

It should not be surprising that the sohei monasteries, being zaoistic, bear some similarity to zaoist temples. Like the temples, the monasteries are entered through a triple-gate (complete with niō) and possess a zaodō, a kō-dō, and a shōrō. The monasteries never have a zaotō, and less than half of them contain a kyōzō. Likewise, the zaodō is seldom in the center of the complex, that space being utilized to provide a training yard. Instead the shrine is more typically located toward the rear. The monasteries also contain barracks for the warriors, armories, a mess hall, a kitchen, toilet and private quarters for the monastical leaders.

Cleric Archetype: Kuraikuruma Priest/Nun

The kuraikuruma school of zaoism is a religion filled with secrets. Most of the observants, including those who serve the public as priests, see only the surface of the faith's actual doctrines: those tenets most useful for keeping the populace submissive and docile. Publically, the emphasis is on death, rebirth and submitting to one's fate lest something worse befall one. Privately, there is a fixation on escaping the wheel of life through undeath. It is a religion of darkness, where the truly enlightened learn to draw on profane energies in order to empower themselves. The shogun maintains seven imperially financed monasteries where devout priests and nuns may be trained in these dark arts. Such individuals, once trained and fully indoctrinated, act as the ultimate enforcement arm of the faith within Kaidan. Each of the monasteries is devoted to one of the seven domains available to kuraikuruma clergy.

A kuraikuruma priest has the following class features.

Alignment: Any non-chaotic.

Class Skills: The kuraikuruma priest's class skills are Appraise (Int), Bluff (Cha), Craft (Int), Diplomacy (Cha), Intimidate (Cha), Knowledge (arcana), Knowledge (history) (Int), Knowledge (nobility), Knowledge (religion) (Int), Linguistics (Int), Profession (Wis), Sense Motive (Wis), Stealth (Dex), and Spellcraft (Int).

Skill Ranks per Level: 2+ Int modifier.

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: kuraikuruma priest are proficient with all simple weapons and with the shakujo, as well as with light and medium armors.

Domains: A kuraikuruma priest chooses only one domain at first level, and must choose from one of the following domains – Darkness, Death, Earth, Evil, Fire, Law, or Nobility.

Shakujo Bond: Beyond being the traditional weapon of the kuraikuruma priesthood, a shakujo also serves as a focus for the priest's energies, facilitating his ability to channel negative energy and cast spells. Each kuraikuruma priest possesses a masterwork shakujo bonded to himself and, for the purpose of casting spells or channeling energy, the shakujo functions in most respects as a holy symbol or divine focus. A kuraikuruma priest cannot channel energy without his shakujo, though if he does not have his bonded shakujo, he may still attempt to cast spells requiring a divine focus. If he does so, he must make a Spellcraft check where the DC is equal to 10 plus twice the level of the spell in order to successfully cast the spell, and even if successful, the spell is at -1 DC. A priest who uses another priest's shakujo gains a +4 bonus to the Spellcraft check, but still takes the penalty on spell DC if successful.

A kuraikuruma priest who uses his shakujo in conjunction with a combat manuever (trip or blind) receives a bonus to the attempt equal to 1/2 his class level (min 1).

At 8th level, a kuraikuruma priest gains the ability to store spells in his shakujo, casting them as a standard action. To store a spell, he must cast it upon the shakujo, paying any cost in materials as necessary. He may store a number of spells equal to his Wisdom modifier, but he may not store more than one spell of any particular spell level using this ability. That is, he could have one 1st level spell and one 2nd level spell stored, but not two 2nd level spells. Once the spells are cast out of the shakujo, they are used up. Spells stored in the shakujo may be replaced by casting new ones in, without penalty.

A priest may enchant his shakujo as either a weapon or a staff, should he choose to do so, though normal costs apply to do so and he must possess the prerequisite feats. If the bonded shakujo is damaged, it is restored to full hit points the next time the priest prepares his spells. A priest who bonds with a new shakujo must spend one week in meditation and spend 200 gp per level to purchase incense and sacred oils to use in creating the bond.

Dark Smite: Beginning at 1st level, when attacking with his shakujo, the priest is considered to have the Channel Smite feat.

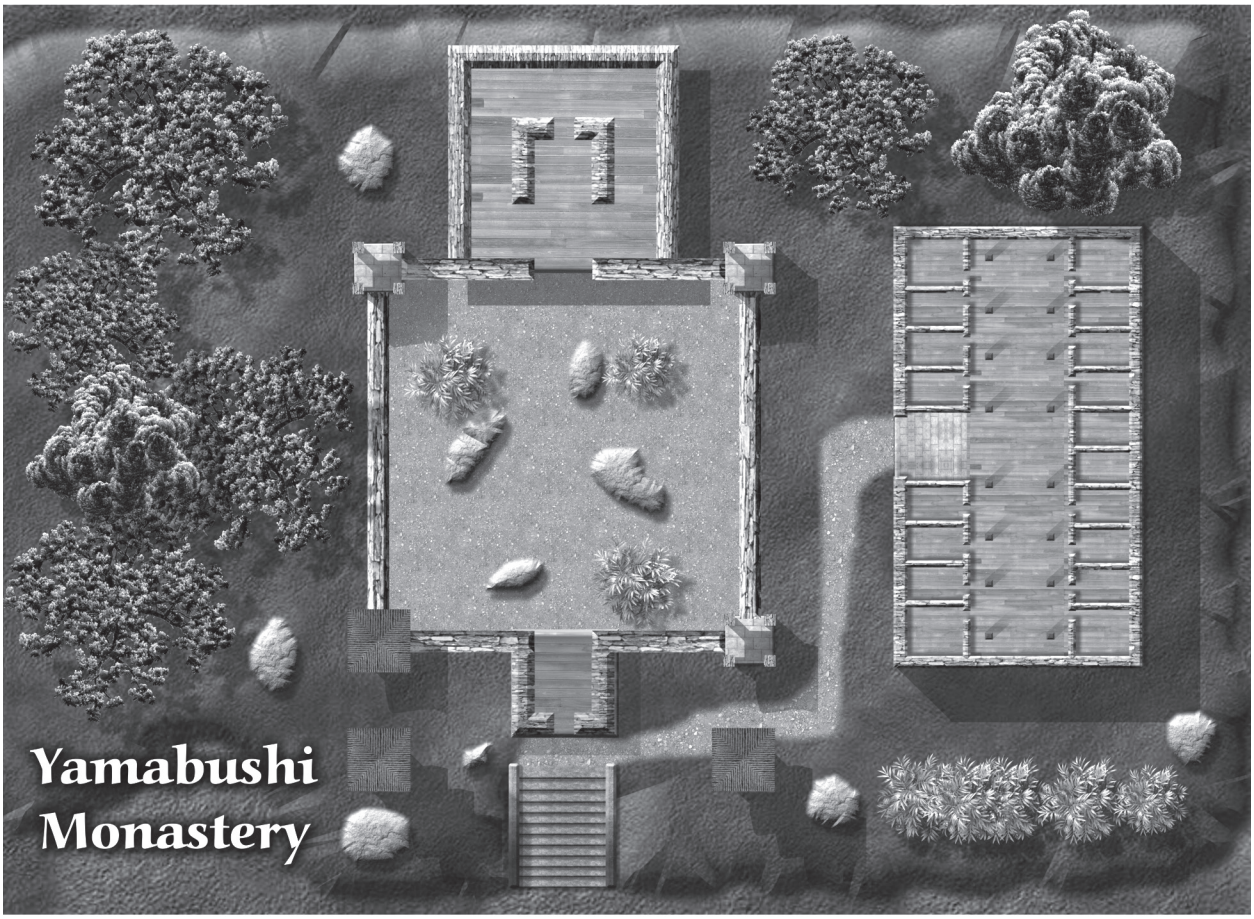
Channel Energy: Regardless of alignment, a kuraikuruma priest channels negative energy.

Mechanical Note: Religious Characters and Spellcasting

Not every yokinto priest is a spell caster. Few zaoist priests can actually channel negative energy. As regards class, a good majority of Kaidanese priests are experts, specializing in training related to religious needs. This is not to say that all priests lack true power. Specialized training is available to those with the right aptitude, though those temples and shrines capable of passing on such training guard their secrets with care, refusing to teach the majority that seek such skills. Relatedly, many yamabushi are mere warriors or fighters, but there are yamabushi monasteries where the pure of heart can learn to channel divine energies.

Yamabushi Monasteries

There is very little uniformity among the various yamabushi monasteries. These small complexes are generally found in remote mountainous regions. Typically, a yamabushi monastery is centered around a yokinto-style hondan with a shintai, though there are a few that instead feature a statue of the Mujiga Zao (in which case the central shrine area is more properly classified as a zaodō). Likewise, yamabushi monasteries freely borrow from both yokinto and traditional zaoist design so that a monastery is just as likely to have a zaoist shōrō as it is to have a yokinto haiden or chōzuya. Many yamabushi monasteries feature a zaoist meditation garden, a thing not normally utilized in the modern kuraikuruma-controlled zaoist temples. Additionally, a yamabushi monastery will have quarters for the yamabushi, a bath and toilet, and a kitchen, an armory and a training yard.



Oracle Archetype: Miko, Shrine Maiden

Among the shrine maidens, there are those who are blessed with an especial sensitivity to and connection with the kami. These rare women are held in awe by yokinto faithful, who honor them and are, in turn, honored when such a one serves within their shrine. While miko oracles rarely adventure, upon occasion, one will be sent on a task by the kami of their region.

A miko oracle has the following class features.

The miko's class skills are Craft (Int), Diplomacy (Cha), Heal (Wis), Knowledge (history) (Int), Knowledge (religion) (Int), Perform (dance and percussion in particular) (Cha), Profession (Wis), Sense Motive (Wis), and Spellcraft (Int).

Alignment: Any non-evil.

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: Miko are proficient with all simple weapons, light armors and shields (except tower shields).

Skilled Dancer: A miko gains the Skill Focus (Perform [dance]) feat in place of the oracle's medium armor proficiency.

Oracle's Curse *(Ex)*: A miko can take one of the following curses: clouded vision, haunted, or tongues.

Mystery: A miko can choose from one of the following mysteries: ancestor, battle, heavens, kami*, life, lore, nature, shrine*, wind, wood.

Kami (new mystery)

Class Skills: An oracle with the kami mystery adds Knowledge (nature), Knowledge (planes), Stealth and Survival to her class skills.

Bonus Spells: *pass without trace* (2nd), *soften earth and stone* (4th), *summon nature's ally iii* (6th), *death ward* (8th), *true seeing* (10th), *animate objects* (12th), *animate plants* (14th), *summon nature's ally viii* (16th), *summon kami** (18th).

Revelations: An oracle with the kami mystery can choose from any of the following Revelations.

Bonded Animal (Su): You gain the service of an unusually intelligent, strong and loyal animal companion. This animal functions as a druid's animal companion, using your oracle level as your effective druid level. Bonded animals have an Intelligence score of at least 6.

Elemental Resistance (Ex): Choose a single elemental damage type (acid, cold, electricity, or fire). You gain resistance 5 to that elemental type. This resistance increases to 10 at 5th level, 20 at 11th level and at 20th level you are immune to that energy type. This revelation may be taken more than once and applied to a different elemental damage type.

Elemental Walk (Su): Beginning at 3rd level you may walk across the surface of water as if walking on solid ground, as with *water walk*. You may use this ability a number of rounds per day equal to twice your oracle level and the rounds do not have to be consecutive. Beginning at 7th level, you may utilize this ability to cross air in the same way, as with *air walk*. At 11th level you may walk across fire, as if it were solid, and while you do so, you are temporarily immune to the heat of the fire you are crossing, though not to other fires. You must be at least 3rd level to take this ability.

Kami Warrior (Su): You can summon the essence of a kami into yourself, growing stronger for battle. You gain a +2 bonus to Strength, a +4 bonus to Dexterity and a +4 dodge bonus to AC. Your base attack bonus equals your oracle level. Additionally, when using this ability, you may, each round, choose an elemental damage type (either fire or cold) and all of your attacks do +1d4 damage of this type for that round. This amount increases to +2d4 at 15th level and +3d4 at 20th level. You may use this revelation a number of rounds per day equal to 1/2 your oracle level and the rounds need not be consecutive. You must be at least 11th level to take this revelation.

Natural Resistance (Ex): Once per day, when in a natural setting, whenever you fail a saving throw that would cause you to take ability damage (such as with drain or poison) or take hit point damage (such as from a *fireball*), you may attempt that saving throw again, with a +4 insight bonus on the roll. At 7th and 15th levels you may use this ability one additional time per day.

Nature Runner (Ex): When you are in a natural setting, above the ground, your base speed increases by 5 ft. Moreover, when making a charge attack, vegetation does not count as blocking your path (though it may still decrease your speed). At 5th level, 10th level and 15th level, your base speed increases by another 5 ft., so long as you are in the appropriate setting.

Nature's Fury (Su): Once per day, as a standard action, you can cause the world around to lash out against a selected target within 60 ft. of yourself, so that it is struck by flying rocks, attacking branches, waves of water, or even just buffets of solid air. The target takes 1d6 points of bludgeoning damage per your oracle level, though it may attempt a Reflex save to take half damage. You gain an additional use of this ability at 5th level and at every 5 levels thereafter.

Nature's Sight (Su): Living creatures and plants do not block your sight out to a distance of 10 ft. per oracle level. While such objects remain visible to you, you can see clearly everything beyond, or in, them as well. While this does not allow you to see invisible things, it does allow you to see creatures that are trying to hide within range of your clear vision. Additionally, while, you can see through these things, they still potentially block your movement and your line of sight for ranged attacks. At 7th level, you gain the ability to clearly hear anything said within the range of your clear sight. At 10th level, as you have adjusted to this ability, you gain a bonus to Perception equal to 1/2 your oracle level.

Speak with Animals (Ex): Choose a specific kind of animal (fox, hawk, etc.). You gain the ability to converse with that type of animal as if you were under the effects of *speak with animal*. You gain the ability to communicate with an additional kind of animal for every 3 oracle levels you have attained.

Speak with Elements (Ex): Choose a specific element (air, earth, fire, or water). You gain an ability to speak the language associated with that element (Aquan, Auran, Ignan, or Terran). You also gain the ability to speak with elements of that type who are not normally able to communicate with speech, as if with *speak with animals*. At 6th, 12th and 18th levels you may add an additional elemental-associated language and you also gain the ability to speak to elements of that type. At 20th level, you gain the ability to speak with all elementals, even those of a sub-type.

Wisdom of the Kami (Su): Once per day you may spend ten minutes, uninterrupted, meditating and communing with the spirits around you so that you gain insight into a question. When you use this ability, you may immediately make one Knowledge check, adding your oracle level as a bonus to the roll. You do not have to be trained in the Knowledge skill you are utilizing, though if you are trained, you add your skill bonuses as normal. You gain an additional use of this ability at 5th, 9th, 13th, 17th and 20th levels.

Final Revelation: At 20th level, your understanding of the kami is complete. You may, as a standard action, meld yourself with any natural object, as with *meld into stone*, but including plants, soil, or even pools of water, and you may remain in these objects for as long as you desire. Once per day, you can cast *elemental body IV* on yourself as a spell-like ability.

Shrine (New Mystery)

Class Skills: An oracle with the shrine mystery adds Bluff, Knowledge (local), and Perception to her class skills.

Bonus Spells: *bless* (2nd), *augury* (4th), *bestow curse* (6th), *dismissal* (8th), *hallow* (10th), *geas/quest* (12th), *control weather* (14th), *spell immunity, greater* (16th), *miracle* (18th).

Elemental Blast (Su): You can summon an elemental blast, dealing either cold, fire or electricity damage. The blast has a range of 100 ft. and is a 20-ft. radius burst. All within the targeted area take 1d6 points of damage of the appropriate type per oracle level you possess. A successful Reflex save halves the damage. You may use this ability once a day at 7th level. At 11th level and every 4 levels thereafter you gain another use per day of this ability. You must be at least 7th level to take this revelation.

Friend to the Animals (Ex): As the nature mystery revelation.

Fortune Teller (Sp): You may cast *augury* a number of times per day equal to half your oracle level, but you must ask a question concerning an action to be performed by someone other than yourself and the results can be from up to 24 hours into the future.

Shrine Bond (Ex): You may bond with a shrine that possesses a go-shintai. Bonding with a shrine takes two weeks of meditating within or before the shrine, eight hours each day. You may have only one bonded shrine at a time, but may switch to a new shrine at any time, so long as you spend the two weeks bonding. When bonded with a shrine, all your spells cast within 1 mile of your shrine have a +1 to DC. All those cast beyond this limit have a

-1 to DC. At 3rd level, when you are within 100 ft. of your shrine, you have a bonus to diplomacy and sense motive equal to 1/2 your oracle level. At 7th level, when resting within 50 ft. of your shrine you heal at twice the normal rate. At 11th level, when within 200 ft. of your shrine, you gain a +2 bonus to all saving throws and this bonus increases by another +2 at 15th level. If the shrine is moved or the shrine's shintai is moved out of the shrine, the bond is broken, and either the shrine or the shintai must be returned to its appropriate place or else a new bond must be created.

Shrine Clarity (Su): You are aware of everything that goes on within a certain range from your shrine's shintai. Within this range, creatures cannot hide from you, you cannot be surprised, and you gain a bonus to both initiative and Perception equal to 1/2 your oracle level. The range of this ability is equal to 20 ft. per oracle level. You must have a bonded shrine to use this ability.

Shrine Dancer (Ex): Your natural grace grants you a +1 dodge bonus to your AC and a +1 bonus to initiative. These bonuses increase by an additional +1 at 5th, 10th, 15th and 20th levels. At 6th level, you gain either Weapon Finesse or Improved Unarmed Strike.

Shrine Performer (Ex): You gain a bonus to Perform checks equal to 1/2 your level and may use your Perform skills to inspire courage (as a bard). You may do this for a number of rounds equal to 1/2 your oracle level + your Charisma modifier, though the rounds need not be consecutive.

Shrine of Truth (Su): Your connection to your shrine allows you to see to the heart of those who seek your aid. When within 20 ft. per oracle level of your shrine's go-shintai, you can instantly tell when a speaker is lying to you. At 11th level, so long as you are within this range, you benefit from *true seeing.* You must be 5th level to take this revelation and you must have a bonded shrine to benefit from it.

Shrine Recall (Su): Your deep connection to your shrine allows you to supernaturally travel back to it instantly, no matter the distance. You may, when away from your bonded shrine, as a standard action, teleport yourself back to your shrine, as with *word of recall*. You may do this once a day at 11th level and an additional time per day every three levels after that. You must be 11th level to take this revelation and you must have a bonded shrine to use this ability.

Shrine Warrior (Ex): When within 20 ft. per oracle level of your shrine's go-shintai, your ability to fight improves. Your base attack bonus is equal to your oracle level, you gain a +2 morale bonus to all attack and damage rolls, you gain a +8 dodge bonus to your AC, your base speed improves by 10 ft and you gain the Improved Critical feat with any weapon you use. You can use this ability for 1 round for every 2 oracle levels you possess and the rounds need not be consecutive. You must be at least 11th level to take this revelation and you must have a bonded shrine to use this ability.

Speak with Elements (Ex): As the kami mystery revelation.

Speak with Location (Sp): You may commune with any setting and learn what it has experienced or seen. You must spend 1 minute meditating in a chosen setting. At the end of this time, you can speak with that setting. This functions as the *speak with plants* spell, except with the setting immediately around you (radius 5 ft.). You may use this ability for 1 minute per oracle level but the minutes need not be consecutive. At 11th level, the setting must be a natural setting (field, yard, stream, woods, etc) but at 15th level you may use it in any setting including interior spaces. You must be at least 11th level to take this revelation.

Strength of Life (Ex): You gain the Toughness feat and a bonus to saving throws to resist negative energy effects equal to 1/2 your oracle level.

Wisdom of the Kami (Su): As the kami mystery revelation.

Final Revelation: Your awareness of your shrine and its surroundings is complete. All ranges from shrine bonded revelations are doubled. You may, when you are within 400 ft. of your shrine's shintai, teleport to any other spot within the same range, as with *dimension door*. Furthermore, when within 400 ft. of your shrine, you are energized, gaining a +4 bonus to Constitution and Charisma. You may also speak directly to the kami of your shrine, asking it up to 20 yes or no questions a day, as with *commune,* except the questions need not all be asked at the same time.

Chapter 4: Tenmei and The Realms of Kaidan

Of Kiyo and Kata-no-Hichi

There are many versions of the story of Kiyo and Kata-no-Hichi, but the following is the one most popular in the Capital.

A samurai of skill, rank and honor, Kata-no-Hichi dwelt in the Fuchi Monastery where he prayed seven times a day to the Zao Mujiga and kept himself untainted by either strong drink or women. Each day he would commit a new scripture to memory, compose a single poem, and meditate upon a matter of calligraphy. Thus he progressed towards enlightenment and spiritual purity. All regarded him with admiration.

A young woman, fair of face, Kiyo served in the tea-house down the path from the monastery. This tea-house, called the Dragon's Claw, featured many attractions, but of all of these, Kiyo was most beloved. There she drew great admiration for her looks, her grace and the beauty of her voice; but she, despite her lowly station, turned away many lovesick suitors, thinking none were good enough for her.

The monks, Kata-no-Hichi among them, were well warned to avoid such places, lest they lose their way and fall prey to karuma. It came to pass that Kata-no-Hichi, on the way back to the monastery from a meeting with his master, found himself caught by a terrible storm, and, seeking shelter, he entered into the Dragon's Claw to keep himself dry. There he chanced to espy the lovely Kiyo, and his heart was smitten.

That night, though he knew it to be wrong, he made the journey from the monastery to the sinful establishment, so that he might once more see the woman who held his heart. He did so again the next night, and the night thereafter, and she, in kind, returned his affections, thinking at last she had found a love worthy of her beauty. Alas for the young samurai, no longer did he meditate upon the sutras, instead his days were filled with longing and his mind was filled with visions of love. No longer did he rise above the world, but his heart was instead drawn steadily downward by the lure of the flesh.

In the course of time, the affair was discovered and the Taisho commanded Kata-no-Hichi to cease his foolish behavior, conduct himself like a man, and act his station. Reluctantly the young samurai complied, though he wrote a final letter to his beloved. Kiyo, upon receiving the letter, fell into a bitter rage and vowed vengeance on the one whom so scorned her. In her madness, she sought out a yokai witch, who taught her how to transform herself into a great demonic serpent. In this form, the woman scaled the walls of the monastery and entered into her lover's chambers. Awakening, he cried out and fled to hide, taking refuge in the monastery's great bell. The serpent, knowing where Kata-no-Hichi hid, knocked the bell from its perch, so that it fell to the ground with great tumult, trapping the samurai within. The fiery serpent then wrapped itself around the bell and began to



squeeze tight. So great was the heat of her wrath that the very bell began to melt. Poor Kata-no-Hichi, within the bell, could do nothing but scream in pain and terror as the metal seared his flesh.

The occupants of the monastery, awakened by the noise of the bell and the screams of Kata-no-Hichi, began to fill the yard. There they beheld, with trepidation, the fearsome demon-snake. They kept back from the serpent and its great heat, watching the unfolding events with horror.

The serpent continued to press the bell ever tighter and the heat continued to grow ever fiercer. The samurai continued to shout ever more loudly in his pain. Flames began to smolder upon the metal and upon the scales of the snake. The abbot, fearing the fire might destroy the monastery, commenced to fervently pray to the Zao, and his fellow priest followed his example. As their prayers rose skyward, they mingled with the cries of the trapped man.

Finally at the last, as the noise reached a great crescendo, serpent, bell and all erupted into a fierce inferno. Yet, because of the pious prayers of the monks, the fire affected nothing else within the monastery except bell, beast and samurai. When the fire was done, there were only a few charred bones and a great mass of twisted bronze: a testament to the fury of karuma and the wrath of tenmei scorned.

Of Caste

The stratification of Kaidanese society began with the introduction of rice to the islands: a commodity used as money, capable of being hoarded, and thus capable of enriching some above others. With the progression of time, the gap between the rich, those with great stores of rice, and the poor, those with little, grew substantially. The practice of yokinto eventually led to a second stratification: the creation of a caste of individuals who worked with corpses. This category included executioners, butchers, tanners, and those who buried the dead. Yokinto teaches that such work is unclean, tainting the very soul, and thus, those who make their living doing such things, though they might not necessarily be poor, are inferior. This unclean caste was called *Eta.* A second class of outcast arose, the *Hinin.* This group was composed of criminals, gamblers, prostitutes, and the like. As laws began to take shape, the Eta and the Hinin alike were forbidden to own property useful for farming and were prohibited from marrying non-outcast. As a result, over time, the Eta and the Hinin intermingled, and in some places it became impossible to tell one from the other.

Even as the Eta and Hinin were being marginalized within Kaidanese society, the advent of the Warlords, prior to the Imperial Age, led to a breaking of the general peace between the various races. The yokai were pushed out of the lands of men and the korobokuru were driven into hiding. In a similar vein, the Children of the Sun made war against the Anu and drove them north. These actions led to a mutual distrust on all sides, and, as the situation worsened, it was the rare individual who was able to look past outward appearance and racial differences. The Kaidanese became a people highly distrustful of any who were different than they.

By the time Zaoism arrived in Kaidan, there were already at least five distinct social classifications on the island: the nobles, the rich-landowners, the poor farmers, the outcasts and finally, the yokai, Anu and the like. To this mix, zaoism introduced the idea of *karuma:* sinful actions which led to a cycle of suffering. The zaoist priests taught that when men died, they were reborn and that the actions of one's previous life would affect the situation of the next. Such effects were most often adverse. Only, the zaoist said, by following the teachings of the Zao Mujiga could one rise through this cycle and eventually escape it. The Kaidanese came to call the concept *tenmei,* a reference to the rising of the sun in the morning. As surely as the gods made the sun to rise, so too would they require men to do penance for their misdeeds. Thus, the station into which one was born was a sure sign of the will of the gods. To go against it was to commit even further karuma—a great sin.

The exact strictures of the Kaidanese caste system varied over the years. At times it was possible for a farmer to distinguish himself enough to be granted lands and title, and there were those among the rich who might rise in fortune, or fall. Even this was deemed to be the work of tenmei, for it was deemed impossible for a man to rise and fall apart from it. Yet, the general trend was toward an ever more rigid structure of segregation and social stratification.

And then arose the curse. The great powers of darkness which answered the mighty curse of the Imperial Matriarch worked to bind the strictures of Kuraikuruma zaoism upon all the land. One's rank at birth is inviolate, tenmei, and, by decree of the Shogun, it is illegal for any

person of Kaidan to act in a manner contrary to the customs and laws of their caste or to marry outside of their caste. While these laws are seldom fully enforced, many tales are told among the people of the dread fates which befall those who go against tenmei.

According to the doctrines of the Kuraikuruma, there are six seats upon the wheel of life: heaven's seat, the seat of the asuras, the seat of man, the seat of the unclean, the seat of the beast, and the seat of demons. These seats are also called realms, and the realm into which one is born signifies, in theory, the purity of the soul. However, the purer the soul, the greater the taint of sin, and so, those in heaven's seat who fail to escape the taint of karuma are reborn into the seat of the demons and must begin the cycle anew. This is the theory. In practice, the cycle in Kaidan is badly broken, tainted by the horrors of dark necromancy, the pride of the nobility and the dearth of new souls. Nobody in Kaidan is capable of rising above the dark wheel of tenmei.

The Heavenly Realm: the Caste of the Nobility

Prior to the solidifying of tenmei under the Curse, the nobility of Kaidan was a more fluid thing, with men rising and falling in power due to the vagaries of wealth and conquest. Following the Curse, the ranks of the nobility were sealed to those few families who were either related to the Imperial family or who wielded enough power to be considered peers of the same. The number was further reduced when the Emperor arose from his watery grave and the Taira slaughtered the Minamoto and all their allies. The Shogun, in subsequent years, divided up the land into provinces, or imperial *han,* a word signifying the estate of a warrior. The imperial han were defined as areas capable of producing at least 10,000 koku, that is, enough rice to feed 10,000 men for 1 year. Most of the han, in point of fact, produce much more rice than this, but some are richer than others. Overseeing each han is a *daimyo.* Originally, the term daimyo literally referred to any holder of a large tract of private land, but the term has, over the years, come to be applied only to the provincial governors, of which there are twenty-six.

Within their province, the word of the daimyo is law. They possess military and policing powers, judicial authority, the right to tax their holdings as they see fit, and the right to pass such regulations as they deem proper. Each han is thus something of a miniature kingdom. However, the daimyo are not themselves unregulated. They are held in check by the Shogun, who retains absolute oversight over their activities. Each daimyo must prepare an annual report on all activity within their control. This report includes an accounting for matters financial, legal, and martial. The Shogun has the right to audit any of the provinces at any time, and should a report be deemed questionable, he is quick to exercise this power. In addition, each han must offer annual tribute to the Shogun, with said tribute being a percentage of the provincial yield. It is customary for a daimyo to include any number of things with the tribute in an attempt to curry favor with the Shogun, and a typical tribute will have some amounts of gold, weapons, armors, relics, and art in addition to the rice.

In addition to audits and tribute, the Shogun also requires the daimyo to practice *sankin-kotai*, whereby the daimyo each spend every other year in the capital. Under this law, the daimyo must maintain estates within Fukuhara-kyo, housing their families therein. In theory, this is meant to ensure the Shogun has potential hostages, should any particular daimyo attempt to rebel. In practice, it is questionable how effective such hostages would be, as the daimyo have, following in the footsteps of the Imperial family, embraced undeath, and their human passions are not what they once were. Besides which, there remains scarcely a living noble in all of Kaidan.

It took only a generation for the nobility to realize their Shogun and all his kin were undying, indeed undead. The Shogun's elevation of Kuraikuruma and the all too real threat of an undesirable rebirth quickly caused many of the nobility to turn to the study and practice of necromancy. One after another, the great lords of Kaidan embraced undeath, in one fashion or another. The Shogun gave his approval to such activities and quickly promoted the most powerful of these undead nobles to the most prestigious of positions. Understanding which way the winds were blowing, even more nobles followed suit and those who did not were soon displaced. Where the noble lord's led, their families followed. Many households were turned by their own undead



chieftains as these newly made monsters sought to slack new hungers. Some were turned more willingly. Others struggled, fled, or were simply slain out of hand. Because of tenmei, dead nobles could only reincarnate into noble families. Yet the many deaths of the nobles, coupled with the undead nature of the rest, meant that there were not enough noble bodies into which the spirits of the nobles could be reborn so that, subsequently, even those that were slain often returned as undead spirits, ghosts and ghouls. There are many monsters which haunt Kaidan, and a large number of them were noble-born.

Ruling over all of this are the dual figures of the Emperor and the Shogun. Of these two, the Shogun is the true power, though the Emperor is not without standing. However, trapped as he is in the body of an undying boy, and having a mental state only a little more advanced, the Emperor has few real desires for political power. He dwells within his opulent palace, attended by his undying grandmother and a legion of servants. On the surface, the workings of the palace appear almost mundane, yet there is a dark cauldron of evil just below the surface and few living souls dare venture for an audience with the titular ruler of Kaidan. The majority of the palace servants are imperial family, undead creatures who rose from the waters of the Naga Sea alongside their boy-emperor. They appear human by day, but their needs and hungers are far from benign. The remaining palace occupants are loyal samurai retainers, calloused by years of exposure to the horrors that surround them. These guard the palace and the grounds, sometimes serving also as assassins against those that have displeased either the emperor or his grandmother. Like his kin, the emperor's undead nature, and long years spent surrounded by nothing but depraved evil, has given him unnatural tastes and habits, but so long as these are satisfied, he is content.

Not so the Shogun. Though his immediate hungers differ little from those of the rest of the

imperial family, his desires are quite far-reaching and plentiful. He relishes in maintaining total control over a land that had once seemingly rejected him and all his clan. His days and nights are spent in constant meditation upon the needs of the authoritarian state he has created and the means by which he can better control the archipelago. He is constantly seeking new sources of power and his hunger for control is never fully satisfied. Like the emperor, the Shogun "lives" surrounded by undead kin and servants. He also maintains a retinue of attaches through which he communicates to the military, the various daimyo and with other noble houses. Additionally, he employs several trusted assassins, wizards, priests, and alchemists, maintaining them all within his palace.

Because of sankin-kotai, the majority of the nobility resides within the capital itself. Their estates, like that of the emperor and the Shogun, are outwardly opulent, but the veneer is thin and the rot stretches deep. Few of the nobles come out during the day, even fewer show their faces to the public. Yet at night, their palaces are alight and full of ghoulish activity. It is not uncommon to hear screams of pain from within the walls of the estates, and the Kaidanese masses do their best to avoid both offending their lords and coming to their attention for any reason. Too many who enter through the gates of the nobility fail to ever return.

The Asura Realm: the Caste of the Samurai

While their caste is commonly referred to as buke, many samurai have, in their pride, come to prefer the foreign term, "asura," to refer to their station on the wheel. A term which came to Kaidan with zaoism, asura refers to a semi-divine being, akin to the gods. It is thus the samurai see themselves in relationship to the nobles, whom they serve.

The samurai are a much larger caste than the nobles, yet not so plentiful as the peasants and farmers beneath them. A warrior caste, the samurai nonetheless provide the bulwark of the bureaucracy by which Kaidan is maintained. While each samurai is expected to maintain an ability with sword and bow, in times of peace, he is also expected to serve his clan in other ways. Samurai are encouraged to spend as much time in scholarly pursuits as they do in martial pursuits (with many samurai youth being sent to monasteries for schooling as early as eight years of age) and a large number of samurai work most of their lives as accountants, store-keepers, and record-keepers. Others patrol as a police-force within larger cities, or within a province. Some clans even practice farming or horse-raising. However, despite this emphasis on skills other than war, samurai see themselves first and foremost as warriors, maintaining a strict code of conduct and finding honor in utter devotion to their lords.

The word samurai denotes one who serves the nobility, and the culture and mindset of the samurai is entirely devoted to this concept. Their lives, they are taught, are never their own, and, no matter their rank, there is always one above them to whom they owe their very lives. Their society is, in its own way, a cult of death, fixated on the goal of dying for their lord, if need be. Tied into this is the samurai's unique code of honor, bushido, an unwritten code governing their every word and deed. For the samurai, honor is achieved through success for their lord in whatever task he gives them. Dishonor is found in failure. Death is preferable to dishonor and thus, a samurai who fails at an important task will often deem it reasonable to kill himself, to cleanse his soul of the dishonor. While this seems a strange thing to a non-samurai, such thinking is embedded into the culture and from an early age they are taught such things as, "the way of the warrior is the way of death," and "do not value your life, for a warrior that values his life can never display true courage."

Each clan and each individual samurai possesses a rank according to his income, measured in koku. Large clans, with vast holdings, may be small fiefdoms, with the samurai head possessing almost as much power and authority as a daimyo. Others are smaller affairs, encompassing little more than a small town and the surrounding fields. Like the ranks of the nobility, the ranks of the samurai, prior to the onset of the Curse, were somewhat fluid. Warriors, despite a common birth, who proved themselves in battle might be given land and the ability to found a new clan. Families which lost their fortunes might find themselves bereft of all titles and little better than common farmers. Following the onset of divine tenmei, all samurai are born to their caste and there is little a clan can do to better itself except through competing with rival clans for land and prestige.

By law, samurai are entitled to wear the daisho—a term referring to a matched set of blades, one short and one long—specifically a matched katana and wakizashi. Any non-samurai found wearing or using these weapons are subject, by law, to death. While the daisho has come to be the hallmark of the samurai, these are scarcely the only weapons samurai train in. Indeed, the yumi, or bow, was, and still is, the preferred weapon of many samurai, and the ability to shoot a bow from horseback is prized just as highly as ability with a sword among this warrior caste. Besides the yumi and the katana, many samurai clans are encouraged by their clan-head to practice with a variety of weapons so that they might be ready for any eventuality. Still, among the clans there is a growing cult of the sword, with some beginning to teach that it is the sword which holds the soul of a samurai, much to the chagrin of some of the more traditional and pragmatic.

Spiritually, the samurai occupy a rather sad and contradictory place. They are warriors, and the business of killing, according to the tenets of yokinto, makes them habitually unclean. Likewise, their conduct as warriors is antithetical to the doctrines of zaoism which says that killing damages the soul and makes one unfit for advancement on the wheel. Even so, tenmei places them into the role of warrior, and they are thus, by divine mandate, called to such a life. Added to this is the sad reality that, even were a samurai to attain enlightenment and advance so that he could be reborn as a noble, the conduct of the nobles has made such advancement impossible. Subsequently, the most noble of the samurai are those also most likely to return from the grave as insane, vengeful spirits trapped between worlds. Even so, because of their culture, most samurai accept their fates stoically, even contemplatively. A great number of the most famous of zaoist priests and monks are drawn from the samurai caste, and it is not uncommon for notable warriors to spend some time in a zaoist monastery, receiving religious training.



While nobles tend to be concentrated in Fukuhara-kyo and, to a lesser extent, the provincial capitals, samurai and samurai communities are found throughout Kaidan, providing a network of governance and bureaucratic oversight through which the nobles retain control of the populace. Each samurai enclave serves as both an outpost of the central government and a center of military strength. Depending on the size of the clan and thus the number of samurai capable of serving in battle, clan heads wear either the title of taisho (meaning general), or monogashira (meaning captain). All male samurai over the age of eighteen are expected to be capable and ready for battle whenever ordered to fight.

Women of the samurai caste are not expected to be able to fight in battle, though the cultural mentality of utter service, death upon command, and absolute honor extends to them as well, and there are some women who have, through skill at arms, found grudging acceptance as warriors. Samurai women are more typically encouraged to pursue scholarly activities, bettering their minds, so that they might be fit companions for their men. They are thus, in addition to other duties they may have as wives and mothers, encouraged to read, practice calligraphy and write poetry. Strangely, in Kaidan, there are two distinct forms of writing, one utilized by men and the other by women (no doubt arising and being accentuated by the fact that men and women are sent to different schools in which to be taught), so that men can seldom read the writing

of women and women seldom understand that which is written by men.

Samurai, due to culture and tenmei, are stratified from both the nobles, whom they serve, and the peasants, over which they lord. Samurai may be ordered to kill themselves at any time by their noble lord or the head of their clan, but they may also, at any time, and for any reason they deem appropriate, kill any non-samurai who offends them. With two exceptions, samurai generally do not fraternize with non-samurai. The two exceptions are within the realm of zaoism, in which it is possible (though increasingly rare) for a peasant-born to yet achieve some measure of greatness, and in marriage. While samurai typically marry within the caste, it is legal for them to take a wife or mistress (or in the case of women, a husband or lover) from the ranks of the peasantry. Children born to such unions are considered samurai.

The Human Realm: the Caste of Common Man

No other group of Kaidanese is so hurt by tenmei as the Human Caste. Comprising the majority of the population of Kaidan, this caste possesses little in the way of property, even less in the way of rights, and almost nothing by way of hope. They live at the pleasure of the samurai, suffer from the whims of weather and fortune, are the frequent victims of the machinations and proffered temptations of the Yakuza gang-lords, live in constant terror of the unknown dangers of night, forest and mountain, and, when they die, they know they will have nothing better to look forward to, except more of the same.

Property ownership works differently from one region of Kaidan to another, depending on the whims of the samurai and daimyo in each region, but seldom do any of the peasants, the hyakushou (farmers) in particular, own the land upon which they live and work. Rarely the land will be communal property, belonging to an entire village; more often it will be considered the property of a samurai lord or daimyo. For the privilege of working this land for their masters, the hyakushou is allowed the privilege of retaining a small amount of what he grows or harvests, often barely enough for him and his family to survive upon. The rest is carried to the palaces and castles of the samurai as a tribute tax.

In ages past, many soldiers were drafted from the ranks of the common man. Now, under the samurai, few of the peasantry are ever allowed to own weapons. Those who are discovered carrying weapons are judged to be either thieves (having stolen the weapons from a samurai) or else rebels who are subject to immediate death. Because of the harsh penalties, and because of the teachings of zaoism, few peasants actually aspire to the use of a weapon. Those few who do learn martial skills learn to use such things as might be readily available, such as staffs, or else they learn to hide their weapons from sight.

From time to time, in this village or that, some individual will begin preaching rebellion, perhaps even enjoying some measure of success in rallying support. Less high-minded rebels who manage to successfully flee the samurai most often end up joining bandit gangs. Such gangs may contain members from nearly every caste, but the bulk of their membership is comprised of men who were born into the Human Caste. Individuals and movements espousing the heresy of rebellion (a sin against both the Shogun and tenmei), when discovered, are quickly stamped out by the samurai, and those that support such movements are put to the sword. Ringleaders, if they are lucky, will be tortured and then executed. If they are unlucky, they may find themselves suffering even after death.

Despite all of this, Kaidanese peasants continue to struggle against the world, finding some small solace in tradition and their yokinto faith. Largely uneducated and illiterate, owning very little they can call their own, these hardy folk work as farmers, woodsmen, craftsmen, fishermen, merchants and sometimes even as priests. The majority take up the trade practiced by their father and his father before him. They till the same land, fish the same shores, and hunt within the same forests as their forefathers, seldom traveling far from the village in which they were born.

Village life, regardless of whether the village is a farming community, a fishing community, or even a forest-village, follows much the same pattern throughout Kaidan. Young men are taught from an early age to fulfill the role their father before them filled. Young women are likewise taught to do the work their mother does. Women perform much of the manual labor in a Kaidanese village, both in and out of the home. The delineation between those jobs performed by men and those performed by women is deeply ingrained and

it is considered almost a matter of tenmei that it should be that way. Marriage is valued, even expected, of all villagers, but fidelity within a marriage is less valued. Affairs are common and generally accepted as a means of temporarily escaping the many sorrows of life. Drunkenness, particularly among the men, is also common, and sake is considered in many villages to be one of the most important byproducts of the rice harvest. Apart from such pleasures, the only other bright spots in village life tend to be the annual festivals. At such times, the whole community will gather in celebration, dancing through the streets, singing and taking the day off from labors. Old age in most villages is uncommon; those that manage to achieve it are revered for the wisdom they have obtained, and the oldest individuals within a village are considered the leaders of that village, regardless of their family name.

The Unclean Realm: the Caste of the Hinin-Eta

The Unclean Caste of Kaidan, also sometimes referred to as the hungry-ghost caste, while originally two distinct bodies of people, has long since merged into a single, largely unified, whole. While the unclean caste is, in matters of tenmei, considered inferior to the human caste, it is not unusual for those of the hinin-eta to be nominally better off than their immediate superiors. The social and religious stratification which caused certain jobs to be considered unclean also means that those who engage in such jobs are treated differently by both those in authority, and those with whom they deal. Namely, the hinin-eta tend to be paid directly for their goods and services so that the caste, unlike other Kaidanese castes, operates under a crude capitalistic system which allows for the possibility of a better standard of living.

This is not to say that all of the hinin-eta are rich. To the contrary, many of them are nearly as destitute as the poorest of farmers. Yet the opportunity for advancement within the hinin-eta caste is there and individuals have the opportunity to rise from poverty to wealth through a combination of skill, cunning, and ruthlessness.

At the dark heart of the hinin-eta caste is the Yakuza brotherhood. An organization which initially arose as a means to defend hinin activities and property from roving gangs, this fraternity of loosely associated "families" now controls most of the wealth and activity of their caste. While they publically eschew theft and other crimes which might harm their communities, there is little else they will not engage in. Prostitution, gambling, drugs, kidnapping, and extortion are all part and parcel of a typical yakuza gang's repertoire. Operating out of tea-houses and *bakuto* parlors, the yakuza provide protection for their neighbors, a variety of entertainments and distractions for interested parties, loans for individuals in need, and illicit contraband for those seeking to buy goods restricted by the Shogunate. All of their services come with a price, often a steep one, and many poor souls have found themselves slaves to the yakuza because they were unable to pay.

The yakuza life is a life of violence and risk. Gang members are expected to be able to fight and to kill for the honor of their yakuza families. The tactics of the gangs often provoke violent reactions in those who have been pushed to the edge. There is always the danger of samurai intervention and prosecution. Moreover, oft-times the surest path to the top of a gang is over the bodies of those who stand in your way, and many a yakuza member has met his death at the hands of an ambitious brother. Nevertheless, there is an ever ready number of young men, and even women, willing to join their local yakuza, viewing it as the only hope for an escape from drudgery and poverty.

Though the yakuza's reach extends throughout the entirety of their caste, and, though they represent the surest path to power and wealth within the caste, there are many more members of the hinin-eta which refuse to join and who seek to make their way through life untainted by the violent tactics of their fellow caste mates. These souls work at their labors and live their lives as best as they can. Careers within the hinin-eta caste tend to take one of two shapes. Those of eta descent typically work as tanners, butchers or morticians. Those of hinin descent most often work as entertainers. Even in these fields, however, the yakuza exert influence, and often have some degree of oversight.

Though the hinin-eta are not taxed directly by the Shogunate, their caste does not completely escape imperial oversight and hinin-eta village heads must pay an annual tribute for the land they occupy. In regions where the yakuza are in control, the money is collected by the gangs, in the name of the Shogun, and they are seldom averse to collecting more than is necessary and skimming off the profits for themselves.

The unique place of the hinin-eta within Kaidanese society means that they are an amalgamation of various cultural idiosyncrasies and yet they are unique in their attitudes. Though lacking the piety of the other castes, they are still to be found going through the motions of zaoist and yokinto worship, seeing within the spiritual forces that can be bribed and bargained with. Within the interplay between yakuza heads and their bokan warriors, there are echoes of the relationship between nobleman and samurai, with the oyuban encouraging the young bokan to place duty to their yakuza family before all else, even life. Indeed, the attitude of many of the yakuza warriors mirrors the morbid sentiments of the samurai—as tenmei insures rebirth, dishonor is to be feared more than death itself, though yakuza ideas about honor differ markedly from samurai ideals.

There is one other group belonging to the unclean realm worthy of mention—the Anu. These northern barbarians, though distinct from the larger Kaidanese society, cannot nevertheless escape tenmei. When they die, they are reborn into the caste at large and an unclean soul may in one life be born Anu, only to be reborn in the next life into a yakuza family. Perhaps it is for this reason, as much as any other, that the hinin-eta rarely discriminate against the Anu and are more accepting of outsiders to the culture than other Kaidanese.

The Beast Realm: the Caste of the Yokai

The yokai, and the korobokuru with them, occupy the beast realm within the dark wheel. Rather than being a unified whole, the various races which comprise this particular "caste" each possess their own unique cultures. The tengu live high in the mountains where they can experience the interplay between mountain and sky. The kappa, which dwell near rivers, lakes and deep, stream-fed ponds, seek solitary lives only occasionally interrupted by social interactions—interactions which invariably feature coarse jokes and wrestling. The henge, perhaps the largest group of yokai, dwell in villages deep within the mountain forests, as do the korobokuru.

While all of these races at one time enjoyed good relationships with humanity, such goodwill has now been largely lost. Now the yokai fear discovery by the Shogunate, despise the curse humanity has brought to the islands, and hate all who would despoil their forests and mountains. This is not to say that all interaction with humans is at an end. The henge, in human form, frequently visit human villages, either to spy or to purchase goods. The tengu, upon occasion, still agree to train noble humans in the art of the sword. The kappa have been known to waylay passersby and challenge them to a wrestling match, heedless of race. Yet, for the most part, such interactions grow rarer and rarer as the yokai grow ever more secluded. These races rightly view the Shogunate as being hostile to themselves and wisely choose to hide their homes from discovery.

Socially and spiritually, tenmei has affected each group within the yokai caste slightly differently.

The kappa largely seek to ignore the whole thing. Their long lives insure that, barring



some accident, they rarely must worry about reincarnation and many of them hope the curse will be lifted before ever they see old age. While many kappa have died not having seen the curse end in their lifetime, for the most part, they view it as a human and henge affair and simply seek to live their lives as they always have. While they, like all yokai, despise the authority of the Shogun, their displeasure seldom manifests in overt displays of rebellion, though if a lone samurai or government bureaucrat should somehow find himself confronted by a gang of kappa, he can be assured of being the target of both crude humor and physical violence.

The tengu approach the reality of the dark wheel philosophically, seeing within their multiple lives the opportunity to find perfection in their martial trainings and self-discipline. Unique among the yokai, the tengu, though they reject the doctrines of Kuraikuruma, have embraced other aspects of zaoism, even to the point of developing their own schools of yamabushi. The tengu are among the most active of the yokai in resisting the Shogun, with young tengu often seeking to undertake daring missions to disrupt Shogunate plans. While it is questionable how effective, overall, tengu resistance is in thwarting Shogun will, they nevertheless look forward with hope to that day when they can be instrumental in the downfall of their hated enemy.

The henge, of all the yokai, are the most bitter concerning tenmei and the dark wheel upon which they are trapped. A very spiritual people with a great love for the natural balance, the blight upon their world darkens their souls, causing many to be despondent. While outwardly they profess to find security and comfort in their ancient traditions, many inwardly feel a sense of hopelessness and despair. Though they do not voice such thoughts aloud, many are privately of the opinion that theirs is a race in decline. Thus, though the henge are the most numerous of the yokai, and, arguably, the best situated to actually effect change, their racial lethargy means that they seldom do much to overtly confront or thwart human machinations.

Diagram of the Wheel of Life



The korobokuru, besides not actually being yokai, are also the least populous of the races which inhabit the beast realm. These diminutive individuals continue to live life much as they always have, dwelling in simple pit houses, hunting daily for food, worshipping the kami and the yokai near which they dwell, and largely keeping out of the sight of humans. Of all the races, the korobokuru are perhaps unique in their full embrace of tenmei, for the dream of every korobokuru is to be reborn as a yokai, and, though they do not actively seek or court death, neither do they fear it, seeing within it the opportunity to be reborn as one of their gods in the flesh.

The Demon Realm: the Caste of the Oni

One might be excused for thinking that oni, being demonic entities from the hellish realm of Jigoku, would be exempt from the forces of tenmei and the turning of the dark wheel; yet even the oni find themselves caught by the Curse, though, for the most part, it does not greatly affect their behavior.

Oni are, in some ways, distinct from other creatures. Beyond their obvious supernatural powers, their souls, such as they are, originated in Jigoku and, when they die, those souls return to that same dark realm, unlike men and yokai whose souls go to Yomi. In other ways, they are typically mortal, with bodies that require sustenance and which can be slain. One aspect of their mortality is their ability to physically reproduce after their kind, should they choose to do so. Such births, though rare, were always one of the easiest ways for an oni spirit to travel from Jigoku into the mortal world and tenmei has done nothing to change that situation.

Oni, under tenmei, operate much as any other mortal creatures would, with some few exceptions, the first being the aforementioned fact that their souls migrate through Jigoku rather than Yomi. An additional difference is that oni spirits can sometimes still possess certain humanoid creatures, should such creatures find their way into Kaidan. Ogres, goblins, giants, and the like, are all bound, under tenmei, to the Demon Realm, and therefore, as such, their bodies are fair targets for oni possession. Absent such a body, some powerful oni spirits can possess lesser oni bodies, transforming them, after possession, into a body like unto that which they have lost. If no such body is available, as is often the case, then oni must bide their time in Jigoku, waiting for a chance to get back. Oni, unique among those caught in tenmei, most often retain full possession of their memories during death and rebirth. This makes them all the more dangerous.

Oni, on the material plane, lack a true cohesive society. Theirs is a culture in which the strong dominate and command the weak, with each individual desiring to be served, rather than serve. Thus, while some of the lesser oni may congregate together with like kind, most oni seek to avoid those stronger than themselves, if possible, while finding other oni over which to lord it. However, when an oni is commanded by a stronger oni, the weaker rarely rebels outright or flees the situation. Rather the weaker endure it for as long as they must, lest things go worse for them.

Within Jigoku, oni society is more structured, with oni lords ruling over a militaristic feudal structure. There are many oni lords, each with their own domains, but the great lord of Jigoku is Emma Daio, a god of death, judgment, and rebirth. While he often seems to give his oni free reign to do as they will, he plays a great game with mortal souls and the realm of Kaidan, towards an end only he knows and he frequently commands individual oni upon particular tasks according to his unknown plans. His lieutenants, the great oni lords, each have their own goals and plans, but they all heed the will of Emma and carry out his instructions as he gives them.

For their part, most oni are not overly concerned with the scheming of their great lords. They do what they are told when they are told to do it, but otherwise busy themselves with their own plots and mischiefs. Oni are a gluttonous, greedy lot who revel in the misfortune of others. Their schemes are dependent upon their powers and intellect, but all of them work towards similar goals: causing misfortune and calamity for mortals while indulging their own appetites.

Chapter 5: The Land of Kaidan

The Dragon and the Bear

In ancient days, so the tales say, there was no mountain on Genshu and the Great Mountain Ryuuji did not rise above the fields of Itaro and Onari. In those days, the Kaidan sea was empty, there were no small islands such as now lie between the three larger islands. In those days, there was no emperor, and no men dwelt along the bountiful shores of Kaidan. It was a time of gods and spirits; a time of power and mystery.

In these ancient days, there dwelt within the sea, the great god Auiryuo and there dwelt upon the land the great god Yuuhi-kuma'o. Auiryuo sometimes walked as a man, sometimes he swum in the shape of a whale, but in truth he was a great dragon, as long as the Joto Strait and as mighty as five thousand men of valor. Yuuhi-kuma'o also sometimes walked as a man, and oft he took the shape of a mighty shark, but in truth he was a great bear, of a stature no less impressive than that possessed by the mighty Auiryuo.

For many years, the great bear and the noble dragon lived in peace, dwelling in harmony and joy. There were no closer companions; as brothers they were and they had all things in common. Yuuhi-kuma'o would visit often the palace of the sea dragon and many and long were the days spent by Auiryuo in the mighty halls of the bear king.

Alas, the joy of these two friends awoke the envy of a mighty demon, some say the dark king of the dead himself, and in his jealous wrath, this demon took the form of a small, subtle serpent and crept unseen into the hall of Yuuhi-kuma'o. As the bear king slept, the demon slithered up and into Yuuhi-kuma'o's ear. The small demon-snake found a comfortable spot in the head of his host and began secreting venom from his mouth. When the mighty bear awoke, his head burned with an agonizing fire and his heart raced. In his agony, he lashed out, not knowing what he did.

Deep in his palace, Auiryuo, hearing the great roar of Yuuhi-kuma'o, rushed to see what had happened. Imagine his horror when, arriving at the door of his friend's, he found a great slaughter. The bear, in his madness, had killed his wife, children, and all his servants.

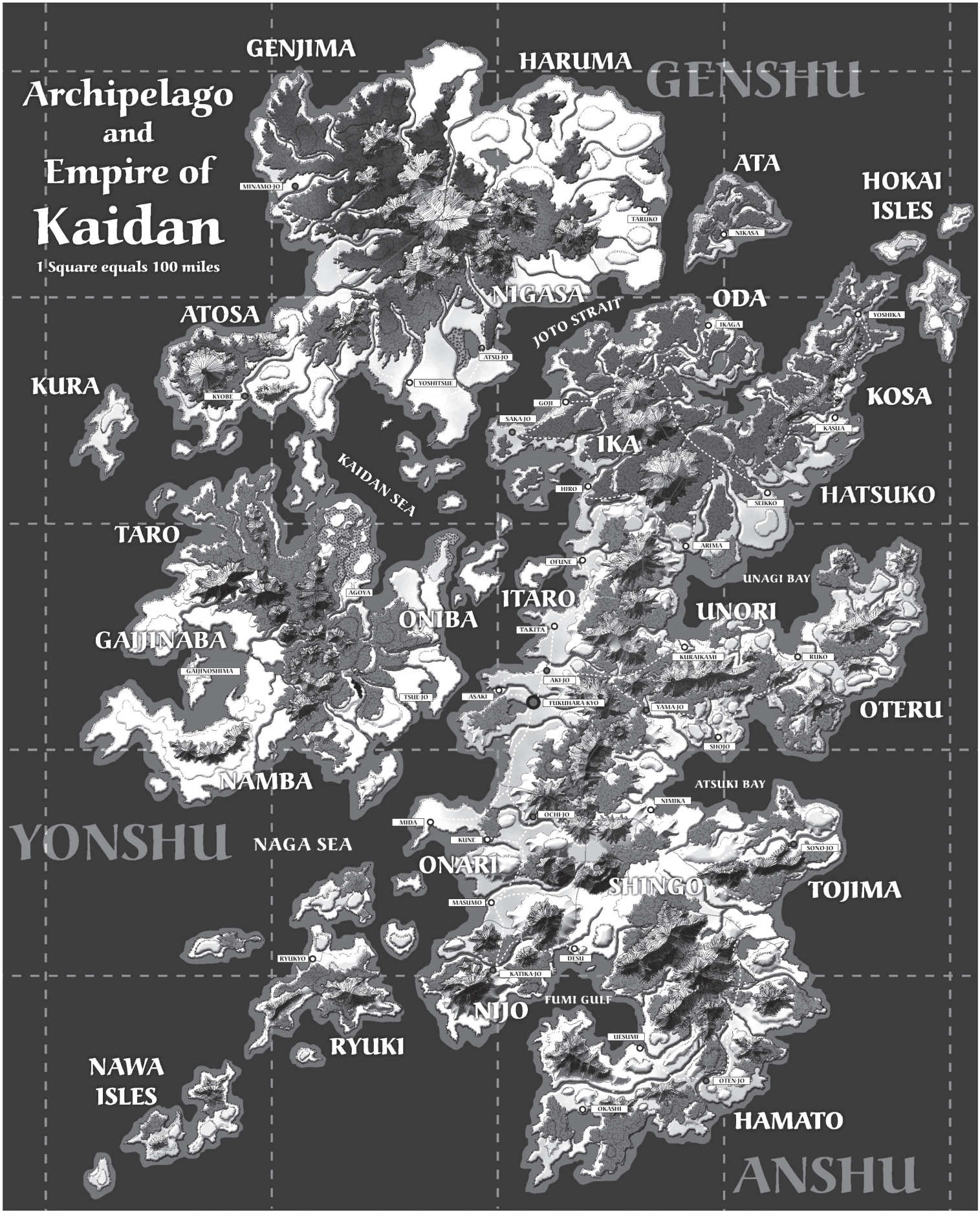
"What have you done!" cried the dragon. But Yuuhi-kuma'o hardly seemed to know who he was. In his agony he turned upon his friend, with fangs and claws. The first blow was so fierce that scales rained down from Auiryuo's hide and, falling in the Kaidan Sea, they became the many islands that lie there now, the Ryuufin. Auiryo sought to defend himself, but the onslaught was fierce. Back and forth the two once-friends fought, and great was the destruction wrought.

At the last, Auiryuo was forced to flee. Alighting upon Anshu, he breathed his last Where he fell, he became the great Garyuu mountain range of which Mount Ryuuji is the heart. As the dragon fled, Yuuhi-kuma'o arose to pursue, but he too was greatly weakened, and he could not. As the poison continued to eat at his mind, he laid down and fell into a deep and dark sleep. He is Mount Kuma and he only slumbers, yet in pain, which is why the land of Genshu quakes and groans at times.

Kaidan is an archipelago containing three primary islands, Genshu, Yonshu, and Anshu. In addition to these three islands, the Empire additionally recognizes forty two smaller islands as being Kaidan territory, though there are many additional islands scattered throughout the Kaidan and Eastern Seas which are not to be found on any state-sanctioned map.

The islands, which are volcanic in origin, are comprised primarily of wooded mountains, with less than a third of the islands being plains. There are several active volcanoes scattered across the archipelago, and though major eruptions are fairly rare, earthquakes are common, especially on the northern island of Genshu. There are many rivers on the islands, but they are uniformly short, averaging about 30-40 miles in length, with the longest river, the Zenyato-gawa of Hamato province, measuring just under a hundred miles in length. Due to the narrow, mountainous geography of Kaidan, rivers flow fast and steep at their source, slowing and widening only as they pass through the narrow plains of the islands. Waterfalls are frequent in the mountains and, indeed, several rivers are little more than one continuous string of falls.

Kaidan enjoys a relatively mild climate through most of the year, with tropical regions in the south graduating up to a cool temperate clime in the north, and four distinct seasons throughout. This is not to say that the weather never presents difficulties to the inhabitants. Snowfall in the winter is common


Archipelago and Empire of Kaidan
1 Square equals 100 miles
GENJIMA
HARUMA
GENSHU
ATA
HOKAI ISLES
MINAMO-JO
TARUKO
NIKASA
NIGASA
ODA
JOTO STRAIT
ATOSA
YOSHIKA
IKAGA
ATSU-JO
KURA
YOSHITSUE
KYOBE
KOSA
GOJI
SAKA-JO
KASUA
IKA
KAIDAN SEA
HIRO
SEIKKO
HATSUKO
TARO
ARIMA
OFUNE
UNAGI BAY
AGOYA
ITARO
UNORI
ONIBA
TAKITA
GAIJINABA
KURAIKAMI
RUKO
GAIJINOSHIMA
AKI-JO
ASAKI
TSUE-JO
FUKUHARA-KYO
YAMA-JO
OTERU
SHOJO
NAMBA
ATSUKI BAY
NIMIKA
OCHI-JO
MIDA
YONSHU
NAGA SEA
KUNE
SONO-JO
ONARI
SHINGO
TOJIMA
MASUMO
RYUKYO
DESU
KATIKA-JO
NIJO
FUMI GULF
UESUMI
RYUKI
NAWA ISLES
OTEN-JO
OKASHI
HAMATO
ANSHU

and can, at times, be quite heavy, especially in the mountains, and more so the further north one travels. Spring, marked by blooming trees and blossoming flowers is quite pleasant, at least until the rainy season begins in the month of *Minatsuki,* which marks the transition between spring and summer. Following the rain comes a period of high humidity and heat. The end of summer brings an end to the heat, but it also brings the onset of the typhoon season. While typhoons can strike at any time during the year, they are most common in the months of *Nagatsuki* and *Kamiarisuki.* Offsetting the dangers of the typhoons is the beauty of the mountains during the fall, as the trees upon the slopes mantel themselves in cloaks of scarlet and orange.

The rest of this chapter presents a more detailed look at specific areas of Kaidan. Areas of interest are grouped together under six overarching geographical locations: **Genshu, Yonshu, Anshu, Kaidan Sea, Naga Sea** and **Eastern Sea.** Within the context of each of these larger areas, individual provinces, smaller islands, and notable geographic features (such as bays) will be discussed. Each province and island includes sections describing the region's **Government; Flora; Fauna; Mountains; Rivers and Lakes; Cities, Towns, and Areas of Interest;** the region's **Economy;** and lastly, **Secrets of the Region**.

Genshu

Though it is the second largest of the three main islands of Kaidan, Genshu is the most sparsely populated, at least as concerns the Kaidanese. Genshu was the original home island of the Anu and there are yet many of that people scattered across the island, especially in Haruma and Genjima provinces. There are likewise many korobokuru and tengu villages on Genshu, indeed there are almost as many tengu dwelling on Genshu as on the whole of the rest of Kaidan combined.

Though many years have passed since the defeat of the Oni Lord, Kagutsuchi, the scars of his presence have never fully healed. Atosa province still has an evil name, and there are many ruins scattered and dungeons scattered across the region from that time period. Likewise, a sizeable portion of the korobokuru of Genjima province remain demon worshippers to this day, having been slaves of the oni for three hundred years. Nor are these korobokuru alone in their corruption. From time to time, oni-cults surface among the Kaidanese, and no matter how fiercely they are put down by the daimyo, there always seem to be more ready to take their place.

Genshu has the coldest climate of all the islands. Summers are milder and drier than elsewhere in Kaidan and winter snow-fall is heavier. Genshu is also the most seismically active of the islands, with minor earthquakes being so common as to pass often unnoticed by the inhabitants. Over a half a dozen active volcanoes dot the island, the most notorious being Mount Hinomoto in Atosa province.

Lord Taira no Hatchiborimaro, second cousin to the Emperor and known commonly as Lord Ashikuma rules as daimyo of Nigasa Province and is the undisputed master of Genshu. Territories under his control include the four provinces of Genshu, Ata province, Kura Isle, and several of the northern Ryuufin islands.

Atosa Province

Best known as the once-home of the fire-demon Kagutsuchi, Atosa province is a beautiful and fertile province filled with gently rolling hills and thick, lush forests. Despite its great beauty and bounty, it has been sparsely settled by the Kaidanese. The yokai also largely avoid the land, for it has an evil and not entirely undeserved reputation to this day. The forests of Atosa are filled with the ruins of dungeons and minor oni abound yet in the land, as do many other dread monsters. Because of the abundance of ruins and monsters, Atosa is often the destination of would-be heroes and treasure hunters. Though the majority of these adventurers perish in ignominy, enough succeed in finding artifacts and treasures so as to assure that there are always a few more arriving in the port of Kyobe each day.

Flora

Atosa is a mixture of heavy forests and rolling grasslands,but possesses little in the way of farmed land. Spruce and firs abound, though not quite so thickly as in Genjima and Haruma. Birch can be found scattered throughout the region, and beech trees are also not uncommon. The majority of the forests, however, are comprised of deciduous trees, primarily oaks, with ashwood, elm and basswood intermingled, dwarf bamboo forming the heaviest undergrowth.

Fauna

As elsewhere on Genshu, bears and spotted deer are common in Atosa, though there are more black bears than brown. Wolves are also prevalent within Atosa. Genshu wolves possess large, narrow heads and long, curved canines, giving them a somewhat distinct appearance. Birds are abundant throughout, and include giant eagles, giant hawks, sea eagles, puffins, grouse, woodpeckers, tits, and owls. There are also numerous foxes in Atosa, though relatively few of the magical variety. Atosa foxes often possess a vividly bright scarlet coloration, and are nicknamed *kitsunehi*, fire-foxes. Smaller mammals include rabbits, weasels, martens, raccoon dogs, and bats. The most common snake in Atosa is the mamushi, a viper, though the bite is rarely fatal.

Mountains

Atosa has contains few tall mountains, but is filled with numerous low-level peaks and rolling hills. The most famous mountain in Atosa is **Mount Hinomoto**, an active volcano whose fires can sometimes be seen from as far away as Kura island and Taro province in Yonshu. Hinomoto'yama is overshadowed by its taller sister peak, **Mount Hinodiwa**, also a volcano, but not quite as active. While the top of Hinomoto is kept barren by the lava flow, vegetation grows heavily upon Hinodiwa and every few years, normally in the fall, one can expect a major fire, ignited by the lava, to sweep the slopes.

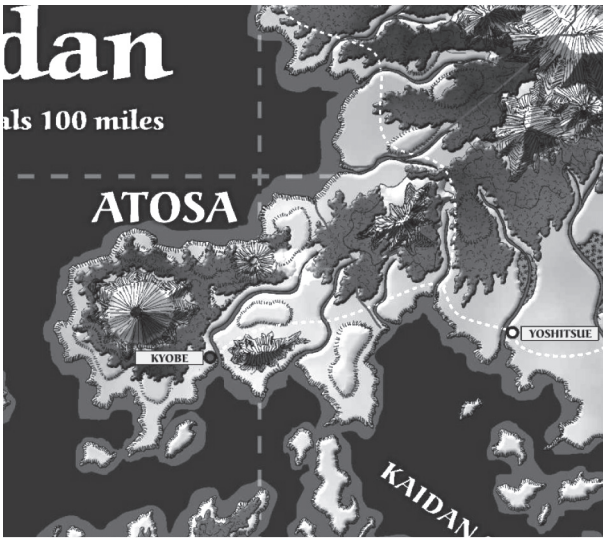
Another Atosa mountain, infamous in its history, is **Mount Onikirui**, atop which once stood the fortress of Kagutshuchi. Though nothing remains of the surface ruins, the mountain is honeycombed with dungeons. Evil creatures, including oni-brutes, often lair within these maze-like tunnels. Lord Kurashima maintains a perpetual bounty on oni killed in the province and adventurers seeking the bounty are well advised to begin their quest upon and under Oniki.

Rivers and Lakes

Jakubi-gawa is the primary river in Atosa. Most of the farms of Atosa lie near to the banks of the Jakubi as do nearly half the villages in the province. The province's second major river, the **Ookami-gawa**, is forty miles long. It is named after the large number of wolves which patrol its length and farmers along the Ookami-gawa are in constant conflict with these creatures.

Government

Atosa is ruled by Lord Kurashima no Takeshiko, who bears the twin distinctions of being the last, to this point, daimyo appointed by the Shogun and of being the only daimyo with no discernible pedigree.



Lord Kurashima has ruled his province for only two hundred and seven years and is something of an enigma. The previous daimyo, Otayama no Daijiromaro, who, according to rumor, had fallen out of favor with the Shogun, was, along with all his household, destroyed in a single night by Lord Kurashima and his retainers, who immediately thereafter took up residence in the provincial palace. Such was the obvious power of Kurashima and his followers that few openly questioned his right to do as he had done. And none dared question, openly or privately, after emissaries from both Fukuhara-kyo and Atsu-jo arrived congratulating Lord Kurashima on his new position. Exactly who Kurashima is, or where he came from remains a mystery to all, excepting the Shogun.

Kurashima is nominally under the oversight of Lord Ashikuma of Atsu-jo, but there is seldom evidence of this oversight within Atosa, and it is apparent to most observers that Kurashima is very much his own man. The daimyo maintains a small and unpretentious household, comprised of hand-selected retainers, most of whom arrived at the same time he did and who each fulfill any number of functions. The provincial cabinet is likewise sparse, but competent. Taxes within the province are kept low; they are, in fact, the lowest in the entire empire. Regulations are also few, and it is well known that such regulations as exist are easily bypassed, so long as coins are paid to the right official. The combination of low taxes and light regulation has led to an influx of smugglers, pirates and like ilk into Kyobe, a situation much approved of by the daimyo, who sometimes titles himself, only partially in jest, as *Kaizokuou*, the pirate king.

Cities, Towns, and Areas of Interest

Kyobe is the largest city of Atosa and the provincial capital. A port city built at the mouth of the Jakubi, its harbor is well situated and can house seventy ships in dock. Kyobe sees considerable trade, including commerce from pirates and smugglers. All traders know to pay a percentage of their profits to the port-master, who in turn pays the daimyo, and so long as such niceties are observed, few questions are ever asked of ship captians as to where their merchandise came from. Because of the influx of smugglers, it is only natural that the yakuza also has a presence in the city, but Gojiko the head of the local yakuza family is careful to never cross the daimyo in any way and routinely feeds Lord Kurashima information concerning goods being moved through the city.

Kyobe, City of Smugglers, Provincial Capital of Atosa

NE small city
Corruption +2; **Crime** +2; **Economy** +1; **Law** +0; **Lore** +2; **Society** +1
Qualities: notorious, prosperous, racially intolerant (non-human), strategic location
Danger +15

DEMOGRAPHICS

Government overlord (Lord Kurashima)
Population 5100 (5001 humans, 99 disguised yokai)

NOTABLE NPCS

Daimyo Lord Kurashima (NE male human advanced vampire necrotic warrior 20)
Port Master Ujitoru Hajimisako (LE male human aristocrat 6)
Yakuza Kumicho Gojiko (LE male human rogue 9)

MARKETPLACE

Base Value 6800 gp; **Purchase Limit** 50,000; **Spellcasting** 6th
Minor Items 4d4; **Medium Items** 3d4; **Major Items** 1d6

There are several small villages along the Jakubi, the largest two of which are **Ashi** and **Sanjo.** Ashi is under the control of the Shimakabe samurai clan, who are responsible for the oversight of all agricultural activity in the province and the fortress town serves double duty as a center of bureaucratic activity and as a remote storage depot for the daimyo's troops. Sanjo, located just five miles from Kyobe is also a farming community, but a good deal of its income is derived from adventurer's heading deeper into Atosa who use Sanjo as a base of operations.

Along the Ookami, the largest community is **Mouhiokami,** a hinin-eta village. Mouhiokami has made something of a name for itself in the province by the distinct taste of its saki, though for many years it has primarily supported itself by the production of tanned leather, including wolf-pelts.

Shojona is a small village southwest of Kyobe on the narrow Atosa peninsula. The village, which consists mostly of fishermen, is notable for the ancient yokinto shrine on a hill just outside the village proper. The shrine is served entirely by unmarried miko and legend says that seven virgin priestesses gave their lives sanctifying the area from the presence of demons, so that no oni can come within three miles of the shrine.

Economy

Though Atosa, with its fertile river valley and volcanic soil has the potential to be a major food-producer, its reputation as an evil place has kept farmers from migrating in large numbers to the region. Lord Kurashima has taken some steps to change this, offering land to any samurai clan who will agree to establish and protect farms on that land for a period of not less than ten years. The amount of rice and other grains grown in the region has more than doubled in the last fifty years, so that the province is self sustaining, but there is not yet enough produce to export.

Secrets of the Region

Lord Kurashima is an ancient vampire who, many years before the curse befell Kaidan, sailed far to the west seeking adventure. In these distant lands he acquired much necromantic knowledge and his vampiric condition. Returning to Kaidan after much time away, he gave the Shogun many of the secrets he had acquired, namely the means by which to create and train necrotic warriors, in exchange for a position and a title. After serving the Shogun as an assassin for hundreds of years, he was finally granted an exalted position and the title of daimyo over Atosa province, provided he killed the previous daimyo, who the Shogun suspected of conspiring with oni. Kurashima is loyal to the Shogun in his own way, but is not as constrained as his peers by traditional Kaidanese philosophies. Lord Kurashima has secretly established a martial school about midway between Kyobe and Mount Hinomoto, called the Fortress of Fire. Here small groups of necromantic warriors are trained, some of which he retains as personal guards, but many of

whom he hires out to other daimyo, who wish, for one reason or another to avoid using the warriors trained by the Shogunate.

Though Kagutshuchi was slain and his body scattered, many oni mistakenly believe that he buried his heart somewhere beneath the Mount Onikirui, and they continue to search for it, believing that it is his heart, not his body that is key to his rebirth. In truth, his heart is buried within Queen Himiko's burial mound on Anshu.

Mount Hinomoto produces more than lava. Fire elementals periodically descend from the mountain burning everything in their path. The volcano is one of four ancient gateways to the plane of fire. However, due to the Kaidan Curse, while it sometimes opens so as to allows entrance into the material plane, there is no discernible way of exiting through it from Kaidan.

Genjima Province

The youngest province in the empire, Genjima is a wild, rugged, untamed wilderness full of beasts, monsters and spirits. Few Kaidanese live within the territory, and those that do are mostly confined to the immediate area around Minamo-jo. There are, however, an ever increasing number of Anu, Korobokuru and Yokai migrating into the mountains of Genjima, driven west by the hostility of the Haruma regime. Though the few Kaidanese who do live outside of Minamo-jo have, traditionally, managed to live in peace with their neighbors, often living according to traditions long forgotten elsewhere in the Empire, there is a growing tension in the land, and fear that conflict might soon break out, likely to the detriment of the Kaidanese, at least in the short term.

Flora

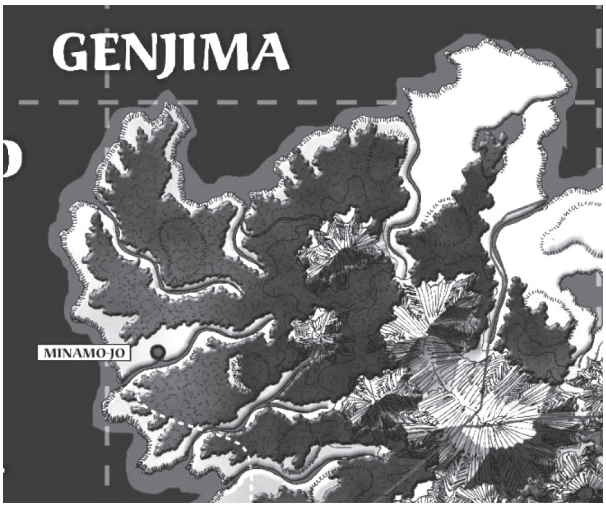
The province of Genjima is heavily wooded, with farmed land being scarce. Deciduous trees, such as oak and ashwood are most plentiful, but there is a goodly amount of spruce and fir trees in the region,especially as one begins climbing up into the mountains, and maple, beech and birch trees are not uncommon. The thick undergrowth in the forest is mostly comprised of dwarf bamboo varieties. The tallest mountain peaks possess a discernable timber line, above which grows only shrubs , creeping pines and a variety of grasses and wild-flowers. Marshlands are plentiful along the river valleys and in the spring these regions bloom with a multitude of flowers.

Fauna

Spotted deer abound within the woods of Genjima. Bear are also numerous and include black bears, brown bears and even a few dire bears. Genshu wolves roam freely through the province; foxes lair there also. Along the coast, especially in the north, seals and sea otters are plentiful. Other mammals common to the region include martens, rabbits, bats, and a variety of small rodents. Though birds are abundant everywhere on Genshu, there is an especial number of them in Genjima and of great variety: over two hundred species can be found in the province. Larger birds include giant eagles and giant owls in the mountains; sea eagles and gulls near the coast, especially in the north and south where there are many crags and rocky cliffs; and red-crowned cranes, which live in the marshes in the spring and summer. There are three species of swans in the province, but the most famous are the great black swans of Kokochoukouko which possess wingspans of up to twelve feet and have been known to attack humans. Smaller birds include woodpeckers, tits, ducks, finches, blue robins, warblers and grouse, just to name a few.

Mountains

The **Horakuma** mountain range divides Genjima from Haruma and Niigasa. **Mount Kuma**, which sits in all three provinces, is the largest mountain in the range, its snow-capped peak dominating the entire island. Numerous caves, from which the mountains draws their name, and some of which extend for mile into the earth, honeycomb the entire range and while many of them do provide homes for the region's bears, they also make suitable lairs for other, even more dangerous creatures. **Mount**



Neyuki, which bears snow sometimes into the late spring and early summer, is an active volcano and despite its snow covered appearance, there are numerous hot springs along its slopes, many of which feed into the Onsui-gawa. **Mount Chisasan**, in the north of the Horakuma range, is a tengu mountain and the Chisasan Daitengu bears the reputation, throughout Kaidan, as being the wisest of the wise so that even other daitengu sometimes seek his advice in matters.

Rivers and Lakes

The **Onsui River** flows from mount Neyuki and is fed by numerous hot springs, so that, even in the winter, its waters, as they flow down the mountains, are warm to the touch. The Onsui-gawa valley is one of the most lush in the entire province and there are dozens of non-Kaidanese villages along its length, including the largest settlement of Kappa in all of Kaidan. The **Minawa River** is named for the foamy appearance of its waters, a trait caused by the combination of the naturally occurring volcanic chemicals within the water and the many porous volcanic rocks along its rapidly flowing length. The majority of the Kaidanese settlers in Genjima live along the **Ebisu River**, noted for both its placid waters and the great variety of leeches which make their homes in the marshes along its length. In the north-east corner of Genjima lies **Kokochoukouko.** The waters of this volcanic lake are always warm and provide, in the winter months, a haven for waterfowl of all sorts, including a species of savage black swans.

Government

Lord Sengawa no Kenjuro has served as Daimyo of Genjima for three-hundred and four years, much to everyone's displeasure, including his own. Sengawa, once-lord of Ika province, quite rightly views his duties as daimyo of the backwater province of Genjima as a sign of the Shogun's displeasure with him and dwells in dark bitterness, always brooding upon his exile to the region and the sorry hand he has been dealt. He hates everyone with a passion, but has a special hatred for those under his rule, a hatred voiced through burdensome taxes and heavy-handed punishments for any and all infractions, both real and imagined. As a token of Sengawa's disgrace, and the low esteem in which the province is held, there has traditionally been little communication between Minamo-jo and the rest of the empire, excepting annual reminders of the need to pay the Shogun his tribute and quadrennial emissaries sent from Atsu-jo to "inspect" regional stability and growth. In truth these inspections are merely opportunities, exercised by Lord Ashikuma, to exact money from Sengawa and remind him of his humiliation. Kenjuro, as part of his punishment, is not required to spend any time in the capital, as are all the rest of the daimyo but is instead forced to remain forever within his city upon pain of death.

Despite the daimyo's cruel and capricious nature, his actual power does not extend much beyond Minamoto-jo and the Ebisu river valley for he simply lacks the man-power to keep the entire region in check. Nevertheless, within his area of control, all live in constant dread of a visit from the daimyo's masked enforcers who take captive who they will on the slightest of pretenses. Those so taken are never heard from again.

Cities, Towns, and Areas of Interest

The capital of the province, **Minamo-jo** is built upon a river island in the midst of the slow-moving Ebisu river. The daimyo's palace complex, though suitably large, is rather poorly cared for and, like the rest of the city, has a worn, dirty look. Empty buildings are common in Minamo-jo, a constant reminder to the citizens which remain of the fate awaiting any who displease the daimyo or his undead minions. A citywide curfew is imposed on the citizens of Minamo-jo and any caught breaking it are summarily killed and eaten by roaming bands of ghouls under the daimyo's control. There are no bridges to the island upon which Minamo-jo is built and reaching the city requires traveling by boat or ferry across the river waters, effectively making the city a prison for those within. Entering the city is a right freely granted, but leaving is not. Only those with special dispensation from the daimyo, such as his enforcers, are allowed to board the ferries out of the city. Some, driven by fear and desperation, try to swim out of the city, but the giant leeches in the river make this a dangerous business.

Minamo-jo, City of Ghouls, Provincial Capital of Genjima

CE Large town
Corruption +4; **Crime** -1; **Economy** -3; **Law** +1; **Lore** +0; **Society** -4
Qualities: impoverished, insular, hunted, strategic location, superstitious
Danger +25

DEMOGRAPHICS

Government overlord (Lord Sengawa)
Population 2440 (2300 humans, 140 ghouls)

NOTABLE NPCS

Daimyo Lord Sengawa (CE male human ghoul lord cleric 10)
Chief Enforcer Gogakiko (CE male human ghoul fighter 4/Rogue 3)

MARKETPLACE

Base Value 800 gp; **Purchase Limit** 5,000; **Spellcasting** 3rd
Minor Items 1d6; **Medium Items** 1d4; **Major Items** 1d2

Upriver from Minamo-jo is the small samurai-farming community of **Koruiaza**. Though it is the largest Kaidanese settlement outside of Minamo-jo, the village currently boasts only a hundred and twenty members. Established by the Horonjo samurai clan on land ostensibly given as a reward, the small splinter clan has struggled for many years to make a go of it. The current head, Atsuko, is a far-seeing man, who has arranged, through visits to Gaijinoshima, to buy gaijin seeds. Several of the foreign plants, including corn and apples, have proved highly successful for the region and Koruiaza can boasts it has the largest, indeed the only, apple orchard in all of Kaidan. Koruiaza's success in this venture has attracted some interest from other neighboring villages and Kaidanese all along the Ebisu river valley look upon Horonjo Atsuko as the head man of the region.

Horonjo Clan

LN Small poor samurai clan (120 members)
Honor +5, **Morale** +2, **Lore** +2, **Society** -2
Lord Sengawa of Minamo Castle, Daimyo of Genjima province (gloomy, vengeful, vicious)
Monogashira Horonjo Atsuko NG Expert 2/Samurai 4 (just,romantic, thoughtful)
Clan Qualities gloomy, honorable, thoughtful

NOTABLE MEMBERS

Wife of Atsuko, Kiniki LG aristocrat 2
Orchard Master Horonjo Tashiko LN Expert 4/Samurai 1
Clan Enterprises farming
Purchase Limit 2,500; **Import Limit** 6,000

Doko is a kappa "village" built on the Onsui-gawa. A collection of kappa houses stretched over a two mile area of deep-river, Doko has the distinction of being the largest such enclave in all of Kaidan. Of less cultural distinction, though much, much larger, is the Henge town of **Sunimapa**, four miles downriver from Doko. Originally a Neko-henge village, the community has grown, attracting henge of all variety. Sunimapa serves as a meeting place for kappa, tengu, henge, Anu and korobokuru alike and its market, held bi-weekly, is the largest in all of Genjima.

Economy

Genjima is the poorest of all the provinces in the empire, having little commercial interaction with the rest of Kaidan. The rice commonly grown on Anshu and Yonshu do not do well in Genjima, and the shorter growing season means that those Kaidanese who have moved into the province have fewer crops available to them. Fishing is the most common occupation among the Kaidanese, though there are a few horse ranches along the river and Ebisu horses can bring a good price on Anshu.

Secrets of the Region

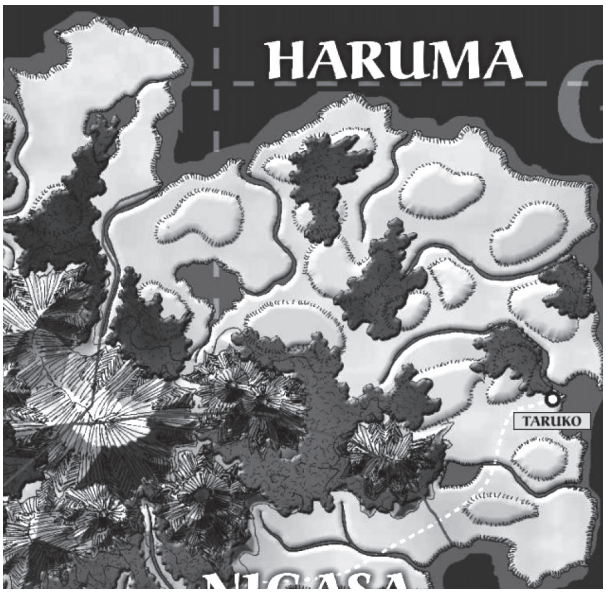
Lord Sengawa is a ghoul-lord, and, though he seldom dines upon his subjects in public, he does little to conceal his nature from the people of Minamo-jo, who live in constant fear of being eaten by their daimyo. It was his lack of "discretion" in concealing his nature which caused the Shogun to banish him to Genjima. However, the Shogun keeps Sengawa alive because the ghoul-lord has the unprecedented ability to mentally communicate with all ghouls within fifty miles of himself and the shogun believes this ability might well prove useful to the empire at some point in the future.

Horonjo Atsuko, mindful of the situation in Haruma, is fearful of an Anu uprising in the province, and has begun taking steps to prepare for such an eventuality. Though his actions are quite illegal, he has established ties with nearby Henge and Anu villages and has begun trading with the same. He has also sent his youngest son to Mount Chisasan to be trained by the tengu.

The coast-dwelling henge of northern Genjima have recently begun experiencing a multitude of unexplained disappearances. The cause, unbeknownst to them, is giant dragon-turtle which has been feeding ashore at nights. Three different villages have banded together to offer a reward to any heroes that can put an end to whatever is happening.

Haruma Province

Well-watered Haruma has one of the largest area of non-mountainous land of any province in Kaidan. Full of gently rolling, wooded hills, Haruma is also home to large areas of marshes,



numerous small lakes, and an abundance of grass-land. For many years, the possible bounties of the province went seemingly unnoticed, but in the last thirty years, the Kaidanese have began an aggressive push to expand their control of the region. Settlers have been imported from regions of Anshu and fresh batches of soldiers seem to arrive in Taruko almost daily for the growing war against those Anu and Henge dwelling in the untamed northern reaches.

Flora

Haruma contains grasslands, marshes, forested hills, foot-hills, and mountainous terrain and each of these terrain types possess their own unique foliage. Grasses and flowering plants grow thickly in both the marshes and the grasslands, creating a colorful tapestry in the spring. Along the rivers, grasses, rushes and reeds abound, as do bamboo stands and woods. Oak, maple, elm, ashwood and a variety of bamboo comprise the majority of the lowland forests, with firs , spruce and larch becoming more common the closer one gets to the mountains. Within the mountainous regions, deciduous and coniferous trees grow almost equally abundantly. Above the timberline, one may still find creeping pines and small, hardy, flowering plants. Of particular note, and found only on the eastern slopes of the Horakuma mountains, is the small tenguhana, a lavender flower which blooms during the first full moon of spring. Yokai claim the petals have power to hinder and harm the undead.

Fauna

Black bear live in goodly numbers on the flatter areas of Haruma, with brown bear being more common in the mountainous regions. Spotted deer and boar alike thrive in the forests and grass-lands, and there are many beaver, river otters, and martens in the wet-lands. There are wolves in the foothills, though not as many as elsewhere on Genjima. Foxes, however, are numerous. , As one nears the mountains, small herds of Serow can be found making their homes among the rocky hills. Sea otters are common all along the coast, and seals and even some walruses can be found along the northern coastline. Haruma is home to both the shimafukurou, a species of very large owls, and the red-crane. Red-cranes, which are sometimes found on other parts of the island in the spring and summer, live all year round in Haruma and all the cranes of the Island winter in Haruma's wet-lands. As elsewhere on the island, birds are plentiful in the province, and there are an especially large number of waterfowl, including swans, geese, ducks and gulls. The most common snake in Haruma is the green rat snake.

Mountains

The **Horakuma** mountain range divides Haruma from Genjima and the **Kuraiwa** range serves as a border with Niigasa. **Mount Kuma** lies at the trisection of all three of the provinces, towering above all the mountains around it. Though not a proper tengu mountain, there is a tengu sword school high on the Haruma side of Mount Kuma. There are two active volcano peaks in the Kuraiwa range on the Haruma side, **Mount Katan** and **Mount Kushisai**, and while Katan is the larger of the two, Kushisai is the more active. About a hundred years previously, attempts to find iron in the Kuraiwa range turned up coal and there are now a number of coal mines in the foothills of the Kuraiwa range, near to Taruko, with several mines being located on squat **Mount Kobito.**

Rivers and Lakes

The **Ikeikecho-gawa,** an extremely swift river with numerous falls and rapids, flows north from the Horakuma range near to the border with Genjima. The cold water of the Ikeikecho is home to numerous fish, including salmon, and many yokai make their home along its length. Inland in the province, there are a multitude of small rivers which both feed the wetlands and flow out of the wetlands to the ocean. The largest of these rivers is the **Anukuma-gawa**, a wide, slow-moving, river.

Battles have been especially fierce around the Anukuma, and the Kaidanese, moving upriver on ships, have managed to seize control of much of its length, driving out the Anu.

Gingitsuneko is a crater lake. Though portions of the lake are heated by hot-springs, the temperature of the lake is rarely as warm as Kokochoukouko to the north. Nevertheless, even in winter the lake is rarely iced over and provides a home for numerous fish and fowl. Large number of magical kitsune dwell in the area, as do henge, and four separate Kaidanese military expeditions to the lake region have gone completely missing.

A majority of those Kaidanese living in the province live near the **Takinashi-gawa**, or around the shores of **Taruko.** Though not a sizeable lake, Taruko, for which the capital province is named, provides water to numerous farms and to the city itself. Rice seemingly grows better around the lake than anywhere else in the province and the local farmers have developed unique strains of rice well suited to the region. South of Taruko, the swift **Takiyao-gawa** has fewer farms than the Takinashi, but many wealthy families maintain estates along its scenic length. One such estate is the Daimyo's summer palace.

Government

The daimyo of Haruma is **Lord Tozaka no Noriyasuko**, a giant of a man who has ruled his province for three hundred and fifty years. Unlike many other Kaidanese daimyo, Lord Tozaka seems to be bursting with life and vitality. Standing a little under eight feet tall, the nobleman can often be seen sweeping energetically through his palace personally commanding this individual or that. A man of exacting standards in matters of efficiency and duty, Tozaka has no qualms delegating responsibilities to trusted underlings, but the daimyo also feels no compunction against personally involving himself in matters both political and private and often gives seemingly capricious edicts to his subordinates concerning how they must conduct themselves both in and out of court. All those who serve Lord Tozaka strive their hardest to please him, no matter the command, for failure to comply with his wishes brings terrible retribution. The torture chambers of Lord Tozaka have a dread reputation and a swift death is far preferable to the weeks of agonizing pain Tozaka inflicts upon his victims.

Though Tozaka is daimyo, it is well recognized that he is not the true master of Haruma, but instead serves largely as a puppet to the more influential Lord Ashikuma of Niigasa. The military venture into northern Haruma, for instance, though much relished by Lord Tozaka is all the doing of Ashikuma and though regular reports are made to Tozaka, it is Ashikuma who determines how the campaign will be conducted. Though other's might chaff at such a situation, Lord Tozaka seems quite content with the status quo.

Administratively, Haruma has few arduous regulations and fairly reasonable taxes, though the recent military activity has caused both to increase in size and effect. Samurai clans are expected to make annual reports to the daimyo but, apart from seemingly whimsical edicts occasionally made by the daimyo, clan heads have great latitude in how they conduct business within their houses. Because of the war against the Anu and the Yokai, Haruma is currently the only province in Kaidan where non-samurai are allowed to receive state-sanctioned training in arms as a soldier, though a peasant must "volunteer" for no less than ten years of military duty in exchange for such training. Despite this, the ratio of peasant to samurai in the military is still quite small and most non-samurai soldiers are given little more than menial duties such as ditch digging, cooking and the like.

Cities, Towns, and Areas of Interest

Taruko, built on and near lake Taruko, about a mile from the ocean shore, is the capital of Haruma province. The lake creates a scenic locale in which to live and many Samurai houses maintain large gardened estates in the city, and the noble quarters are said by some to rival those of Fukuhara-kyo in their beauty. The daimyo's palace complex is not built on the edge of the lake, but instead lies on an artificial island in the lake, reachable by a bridge from the mainland. Built in a circular pattern around the noble's area is the commercial quarters of Taruko where numerous merchant shops, inns and taverns do a thriving business. Though Taruko proper has no harbor of its own, the harbor town of **Sashijo** has been subsumed by the needs of the larger community and few differentiate between the two. Sashijo is a large town in its own right, second only to Taruko in its size, and is likewise full of activity. Besides the commerce passing through the harbor, there are numerous tea houses and gambling dens in the town, and currently two different yakuza families are vying for control of these businesses. Outside of Taruko and Sashijo, there are numerous small Kaidanese farming villages, but none yet of any noteworthy size.

Taruko, Scenic Lakeside City, Provincial Capital of Haruma

LE Small City
Corruption +2; **Crime** +1; **Economy** +3; **Law** +2; **Lore** +2; **Society** +0
Qualities: prosperous, racially intolerant (non-Kaidanese), rumormongering citizens, tourist attraction
Danger +5

DEMOGRAPHICS

Government overlord (Lord Tozaka)
Population 5150 (5070 humans, 80 disguised yokai)

NOTABLE NPCS

Daimyo Lord Tozaka (LE male human variant vampire samurai 5/aristocrat 8)
Head of the Haruma military, Taisho Teramoto Taromaro (LE male human samurai 8/aristocrat 4)

MARKETPLACE

Base Value 6,000 gp; **Purchase Limit** 37,500 gp; **Spellcasting** 6th
Minor Items 4d4; **Medium Items** 3d4; **Major Items** 1d6

A silver kitsune of great age and wisdom dwells on the northwest shores of Gingitsuneko lake. The matriarch of a sizeable enclave of kitsune, including over three dozen magical kitsune, this powerful vixen serves as priestess and queen to the entire lake region, including four henge villages and a large coalition of kappa. The largest of the henge villages, **Dakano**, on the southeast shore of the lake, is fortified and possesses a standing guard comprised of well trained dog, rabbit and badger henge.

The largest Anu village in Haruma, **Poropkotan**, on the shores of Anukuma was destroyed five years ago by Samurai. The village is now a burnt ruin and said to be haunted. Certainly, the last group of Samurai to camp in the area was slain in a rather grisly manner and their burnt corpses were later discovered drifting down-river. The village of **Sarurunkotan** ten miles southwest of Gingitsuneko, is now the largest such community and many Anu, pushed west, have begun to make homes in that region, determined to make a united stand against the Kaidanese. Others continue on west and north, passing into Genjima.

The Akubayama clan of Samurai, horsemen by trade, maintain a large fortress, **Anajino'akumekou**, on the southern border near to Niigasa, where they raise and train war-horses. These samurai have, of late, had an increasing amount of trouble with oni-brutes descending from the mountains and stealing their horses.

Economy

As a province, Haruma is just now coming into its own. Industry west of Taruko, driven by coal and iron mines, agriculture in the region of Taruko, and the influx of samurai and settlers has created something of an economic boom in the capital. New houses and buildings are being erected on a nearly daily basis, nearby villages are thriving, and, so long as one stays out of the daimyo's torture chambers, there is the real possibility of prosperity for citizens of every caste.

The increased economic fortunes of the province has largely been made possible thanks to a recent growth in rice farms near to Taruko. Though many of the strains of rice grown on Ansu are not suitable for the climate of Genshu, varieties of rice that will do well have been isolated and this has led to a great increase in food production. Moreover, the rice of Taruko is well suited for the production of sake and vinegar, and both of these are produced in great quantities in and around Taruko. The iron mines in the province produce just enough iron to keep them profitable. More productive are the coal mines and the black rocks dug out of the earth are used throughout Haruma for cooking and heating.

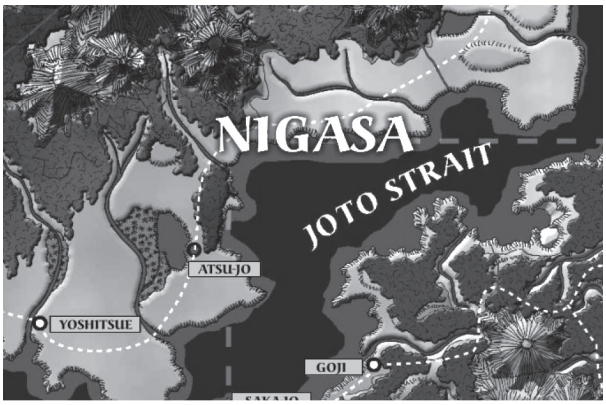
Secrets of the Region

While expansionist policies by the Kaidanese are publically responsible for the military activity in the region, these policies mask more sinister motives. Just as the need for souls for the growing population of Anshu has compelled the Shogunate to open the borders of Kaidan to gaijin, so too it is hoped that a continual set of battles and deaths in Haruma will additionally offset the problem. However, the increase in violence has also served to increase the number of oni on Genshu. Great numbers of oni are beginning to mass on the slopes of Mount Katan, and unknown to the Kaidanese, work has begun on a new oni fortress. It is only a matter of time before oni begin descending in great numbers upon both Haruma and Niigasa.

Though Lord Tozaka has few of the outward hallmarks of an undead fiend, he possesses a rather fearful vampiric nature, allowing him to drain the life-force of those who are in great pain, thus maintaining his strength, health and great vitality. His hours spent torturing those who displease him are in truth feeding sessions. Despite his life-like appearance, Tozaka is fully undead with all their normal strengths and weaknesses.

Niigasa Province

The chief and oldest province of Genshu, Niigasa has been part of the Kaidanese empire for five hundred and ninety-seven years and has had the same daimyo for the entire time. It is the most heavily settled province of Genshu, and the richest, though little of the wealth finds its way to the farmers and peasants which comprise the bulk of the population. The oldest Kaidanese villages lie along the coast of Niigasa, but there has been a gradual push northward as the population has grown, a thing made all the more feasible by the extensive and well watered flat lands which lie between the sea and the mountains.



Flora

The province of Niigasa is primarily wooded, though there are large grasslands and marshes near to the rivers in the central part of the province. The forest are largely deciduous but there are a great many coniferous trees in the higher elevations and a variety of bamboo plants can be found growing intermingled with the oak and maple. Though they are not native to the island, ornamental cherry trees and mulberry trees were introduced to Genshu hundreds of years ago and now both sorts of trees are found throughout Niigasa, especially near to the coast. Other common trees include elm, birch, beech, ashwood, spruce, and larch. Though lacking the full variety of neighboring Haruma, Niigasa nevertheless boasts a wide assortment of flowering plants and spring is always a colorful thing in the province.

Fauna

Niigasa possesses less bear than the other provinces of Genshu, due primarily to hunting, but both brown and black bear can still be found in the forests and there are still some dire bear in the mountainous regions. Wolves are common in the west and north reaches of the province, but, like the bear, have been hunted extensively in the settled regions of the province. Because of the decrease in bear and wolves, and because the animal is rarely hunted by the Kaidanese, spotted deer are most prolific in Niigasa and are something of a nuisance. Boar also abound in the province and occasionally there are even reports of giant boar near the mountains. In the north-east portion of Niigasa, where the mountains create an area of rocky foot-hills there are a large number of serow. Horses were introduced to the island by the Kaidanese and there are now herds of wild horses in the grasslands nearest to the coast. Other mammals common to the province include beaver, river otters, squirrels, and fox. In the mountains, there are both giant eagles and giant owls, but the owls are more common on the southern sides of the mountains than the eagles. Red Cranes are a common sight throughout the province in the spring and summer, but they fly north into Haruma for the winter. Gulls abound along the coast, and there are often sea eagles to be seen in the west portions of the province. Songbirds are everywhere in the forests and grasslands of the province and their music fills the air constantly. The two most common snakes in the province are the mildly venomous mamushi, and the green rat snake.

Mountains

Mount Hikuyuki, in the west of Niigasa is topped by a crater lake and is an active volcano. Though it seldom produces more than smoke and steam, it erupted violently only twenty five years ago, destroying a village at the foot of the mountain and creating the lake which now lies atop it. The hot springs around the mountain are a favorite resting stop for those traveling on the road between Yoshitsue and Kyobe. On the northern slop of the same mountain, there are several bandit camps.

The northern border of Niigasa is marked by two mountain ranges. The **Horakuma** mountain range divides the province from Genjima and the **Kuraiwa** range marks the border with Haruma. **Mount Ichiji** is a tall volcano peak in the Horakuma range and is known to be the home of many fire oni. Lying somewhat between the two mountain ranges is **Mount Eiheisan**, also a volcano, though not a very active one. Adventurers are often drawn to Eiheisan, for there are tales that a wondrous palace of gold is hidden on its slopes. Despite many quests to find this palace, no quester has ever returned from the search laden with riches.

Rivers and Lakes

There are two primary rivers in Niigasa, the **Kagenekosama-gawa** and the **Dakou-gawa.** The Kagenekosama flows broadly and swiftly from the mountains. In the spring it is prone to flooding and its cold waters have destroyed more than one village which built to close to its banks. The Dakou-gawa is a much slower river and its annual floods much less hazardous. Many farming villages line the shores of the Dakou and the river mouth, which is nearly two miles wide by the time it flows into the sea serves as a harbor for the fishing town of Yoshitsue.

Lake Aoporoko boast crystal clear water, a multitude of fresh water fish and a great number of turtles, so many that its nickname is "Kameko," that is, "Turtle Lake". Best known for the city of Atsu-jo, the lake also boasts a number of underwater caverns. These caverns serve as homes for giant turtle as well as water-breathing kappa.

Government

When the Shogun's forces subdued Genshu six hundred thirty years prior, the Shogun gave control of the island to his second cousin, Lord Taira no Hatchiborimaro, who has ruled the island ever since as daimyo of Niigasa province. So as not to cause confusion, and, more importantly, so as not to cause offense to his powerful kin, Hatchiborimaro adopted the surname Ashikuma for daily use. While he lacks the cunning of his cousin, Lord Ashikuma is no less ruthless, and he maintains on iron grip on his province, exactly enforcing all imperial edicts and doing all in his power to advance the causes of the Shogun. To this end he employs nearly two thousand samurai as guards, soldiers, and enforcers, and his men are constantly patrolling Niigasa.

The bureaucracy of Niigasa is extensive, and as invasive as anywhere on Kaidan. All non-samurai must have travel papers if they are to leave their village, and no individual lowlier than a samurai is allowed to own a horse or carry a sword. Taxes are high and plentiful, and paperwork extensive. Every transaction is expected to be properly documented and every birth and death duly recorded. Licenses are required to build, to farm, and even to fish, regardless of caste. While not everyone is conscientious to keep every regulation as they should, infractions are punished severely with fines, beating, and in extreme cases, death.

Cities, Towns, and Areas of Interest

Atsu-jo is the capital of Niigasa province, and the largest city of Genshu. The daimyo's palace in Atsu-jo is the third largest palace complex in all of Kaidan, behind only the Shogun's palace and the Emperor's palace in sheer size, though it lacks somewhat of the grandeur and beauty of some other palaces. The palace is seated in the heart of the government village, which, headquartering the combined offices of the government of Atsu-jo, Niigasa, and Genshu, is nearly a self contained community containing homes, guest homes, minor palaces, bureaucratic offices, warehouses, workshops, museums, libraries, gardens, fishing ponds, stables, armories and more. Signs of zaoism is everywhere in Atsu-jo, as is appropriate for a city maintaining the cause of the empire. There is a private zaoist temple in the palace, two in the government village and four more in the city proper. Disputes between the members of these temples are not uncommon, sometimes breaking out into open violence in the streets.

Atsu-jo, Jewel of Genshu, Provincial Capital of Niigasa

LE Large City
Corruption +1; **Crime** +2; **Economy** +3; **Law** +3; **Lore** +2; **Society** +2
Qualities: holy site, pious, prosperous, racially intolerant (non-kaidanese), tourist attraction
Danger +10

DEMOGRAPHICS

Government overlord (Lord Ashikuma)
Population 10,021 (9,735 humans, 282 disguised yokai, 4 kappa)

NOTABLE NPCS

Daimyo Lord Ashikuma (LE male human lich wizard 16)
Head of the Genshu military, Taisho Chosokura Ryotaro (LE male human samurai 14)

MARKETPLACE

Base Value 12,000 gp; **Purchase Limit** 75,000; **Spellcasting** 9th
Minor Items 4d4; **Medium Items** 3d4; **Major Items** 1d6

The second largest community in Niigasa is **Yoshitsue,** which serves as the primary harbor of the province. Built upriver on the wide, slow-

moving Dakou-gawa, the village houses both visiting ships and its own small fleet of fishing vessels. The Nishasakiko Samurai clan is in charge of providing security to the town, protecting the ships from pirates and those traveling on the roads from bandits.

The samurai village of **Kishashakou** is located about halfway between the Dakou-gawa and the Kagenekosama-gawa. The Kishasha clan has the largest herd of horses in Niigasa, and take great pride in their skills and their horses. The village conducts an annual festival in which Samurai from across Kaidan journey to compete against one another in tests of horsemanship. The festival champions receive geldings, money, and weapons.

Economy

Niigasa is most famous throughout Kaidan for its horses and there are over twenty samurai clans in the province whose primary occupation is horse raising. Despite the prominence of horses in the mind of the populace, the majority of the Kaidanese in Niigasa work as fisherman and crabbers, both on the sea and on Aoporoko. Inland, along the rivers, there are a large number of farms. Rice grows better in Niigasa than elsewhere on Genshu, but the rice season is still shortened and almost as many farmers grow millet and more than a few grow buckwheat, and, though the latter has been introduced only recently, it is growing in popularity. Still, it is the horse trade which indisputably brings the most income into the province from the rest of Kaidan.

Secrets of the Region

The kappa of Lake Aoporoko are loosely organized and led by a kappa yokinto priest. They conduct periodic raids upon the nets and boats of the men of Atsu-jo, doing what they can to make life harder for those living by the lake.

Bandits are common on the road near to Mount Hikuyuki, and though the daimyo's patrols regularly raid the bandit camps, killing scores of the bandits each month, there always seem to be more to take the place of the fallen. The bandits are led by a Sorceror calling himself, *Shounetsujigoku no Haitei*, the dethroned king of hell. Despite this pretentious name, there is nothing overly infernal about the man, but he has so far managed to elude all samurai sent to capture him.

The daimyo is a lich, with both arcane and divine magics at his disposal. While governing does not allow him as much time to pursue arcane studies as he would like, he still keeps his hand in necromantic experiments, maintaining a set of labs and dungeons beneath his palace. His phylactery is an iron zaoist statue kept in secret chambers beneath the palace temple.

While many wonder why the daimyo allows open warfare between the temples of Atsu-jo, the truth is that the daimyo encourages such competition as a means of making his priests and nuns more dangerous and ruthless. Offering various promises of promotion and reward, he continues to manipulate the various zaoist temples into their vendettas against one another.

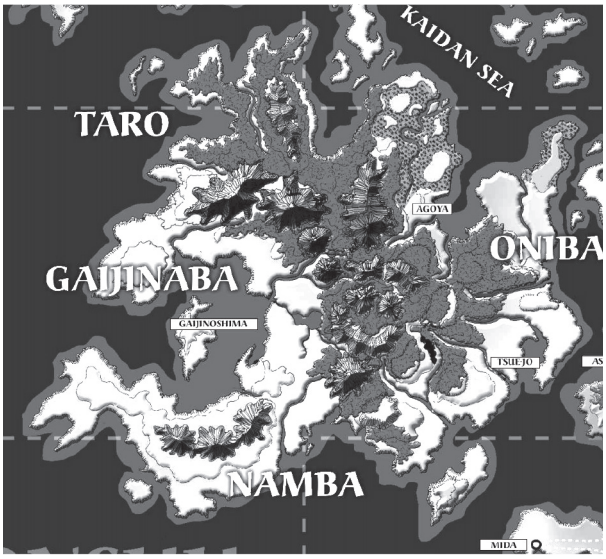
Yonshu

The smallest of the three main islands of Kaidan, Yonshu nevertheless has a larger population than Genshu, though only marginally. Containing just a single city of notable size, the population of Yonshu is dispersed in a number of villages and towns, especially along the south-eastern coast. Yokai were once plentiful on Yonshu, but their numbers in recent years have greatly decreased. Likewise, the korobokuru, once plentiful all along the western shores are now seldom seen, though they still have several small villages scattered across the island.

Tengu maintain a strong presence in both Gaijinaba and Taro provinces and there are two daitengu shrines on the island. In olden days, the ties between tengu and men were strongest on Yonshu and many tengu long for a return to the old relationship, a longing which only increases their anger at the Shogun and his daimyo. This anger most often bubbles to the surface in Taro, where the daimyo there must contest regularly with tengu plots and incursions.

The climate of Yonshu is completely typical of Kaidan. Snow falls in the winter. Late spring brings rain, and a hot humidity settles in for the summer. Typhoons mark the end of summer and the beginning of fall. Earthquakes are not quite as frequent in Yonshu as on Genshu or even Anshu, and there are only two active volcanoes on the island.

The daimyo of Oniba province, Lord Hachiwara Otsuka, serves as overlord of Yonshu. His territories include the island of Iwakarei, home of the town of Gaijinoshima, the small island of Kaineko, and the Ryuufin islands between Atosa and Gaijinaba provinces.



Gaijinaba Province

When the shogun decided to open the archipelago to commerce with gaijin traders, the small, rocky island of Iwakarei was chosen to serve as the focal point of such interactions and the province of Iniba was given oversight of the venture. In recognition of this change in status, the province was renamed Gaijinaba and the tiny fishing village of Kareiji was renamed Gaijinoshima. Each year, the number of traders who find their way to Gaijinoshima seems to increase, and the wealth of the province likewise has grown substantially. The situation has also led to an increase in the power and prestige of the Gaijinaba yakuza and there are few places in Kaidan where the yakuza holds more power or wealth.

Flora

Gaijinaba is heavily wooded, especially as one moves away from the coast. Pine trees dominate the coastal hills and dunes but as one moves into higher elevations, there is an incredible variety of tree types including oak, pine, cypress, cedar, rock oak, katsura, elms, camillia, holly, mulberry, camphor laurel, and beeches. In the mountains, the cedars are capable of achieving great size, with certain specimens being over a thousand years in age and massive in their dimensions. Bamboo grasses comprise the most common sort of undergrowth in the forests, but there are also large numbers of fern and madder. Bamboo groves grow sporadically on the northern reaches of the province, but the plant is found abundantly in the eastern mountains. Non-forested regions of Gaijinaba are primarily grasslands in the western portion of the provinces, with a few small marshes near to the rivers. To the north-east this situation is reversed, with most of the non-forested areas being marsh, interspersed with smaller areas of rolling grassland.

Fauna

Outside of Genshu, Gaijinaba is one of the few places in Kaidan were one can find brown bear, though there numbers are never great. Black bear are more common, especially in the lower mountain regions. Boar are plentiful in the woods, and there are dire boar in the mountains. Spotted deer are also plentiful, especially in those lower forests abutting grasslands. Wolves, of the small Anshu variety, are not uncommon, though they are more often seen in the northern half of the province, away from the more heavily settled regions south of Lake Toukako. Other common mammals include fox, squirrels, raccoon dogs and rats. Gaijinaba seems to boast more snakes than any other province on the island. Species include rat snakes, pit vipers, and the magical bachi-hebi. Also of note in the region is the great number of large insects in the mountain forests, including giant centipedes and giant stag beetles. Concerning birds, aquatic fowl, ducks and geese in particular, are numerous, and swans are not an uncommon sight, especially around Lake Toukako. Gulls and albatrosses both fly in great number, especially around Iwakarei, which has long been home to a breeding population of these birds. Along the coast, one may also find tits, sandpipers and terns. In the interior bird species often encountered include sparrowhawks, bunting, grouse, doves, woodpeckers, orioles, and starlings. A species of black cranes are endemic to the north-east marshes, migrating from the southern portions of the marsh in winter and flying back to the northern reaches in the summer.

Mountains

Mount Karujigun is the tallest mountain on Yonshu. There are numerous tengu villages on the side of this great mountain and high atop its snow capped peak lies the Karujigan Shrine, the daitengu of which is said to have the special power to summon birds to do his bidding. **Mount Daigaro**, in the center of the island is also a tengu mountain, and is the site of the very first daitengu shrine. The tengu of Daigaro operate several small iron mines, the locations of which are well kept secrets, known only to the tengu. **Mount Sekioni**, south of Daigaro, is the site of an ancient oni castle. This castle, once home to Ekibiogami, was razed to the

ground by a coalition of men and tengu in ancient days. Despite this destruction, the castle continues to appear from time to time to travelers, and more than one wanderer has sought shelter within, never to be heard from again. Lava tubes crisscross the central mountains of Gaijinaba, including Daigaro-san and Sekioni-san. These tubes, called the Dark Path by the tengu, are home to many monsters.

Rivers and Lakes

The **Takouna-gawa** is a swift flowing river that cascades down from the mountains. Its cold waters feed into the larger **Mimaeroo-gawa**, the broad waters of which abounds with fish and turtles. Many kappa dwell along the Mimaeroo, making their homes in well concealed tunnels dug into the river banks. To the south, the **Zaamiko-gawa**, adorned with numerous small farming villages flows south and into the province of Namba.

Lake Toukako is the largest lake in all of Yonshu and is said to be the deepest lake in all of Kaidan. There are several Kaidanese villages around the lake, and the daimyo maintains a summer palace on its shores. Despite this, henge live near to the eastern shores of the lake, and there are no less than four korobokuru villages hidden around the lake. Toukako is fed by two rivers, the **Koonichan-gawa** and the **Kabaki-gawa**, the latter of which also flows out of the lake and to the ocean. In the north-east, flowing through swamps and marshes is the **Daijarukubi-gawa**, home to numerous kappa and rat-clan henge.

Government

Lord Mizawa Matashirokata has ruled over Gaijinaba for five hundred thirty-four years. He maintains a modest palace in Kurakage and a second palace near Lake Toukako. Despite the length of his rule, only a select handful of his subjects have ever seen the daimyo. Nobody is allowed within his palaces, except for elite samurai of the Daibenzake clan, who deliver orders and edicts to the appropriate offices and officers in the name of the daimyo. In truth, Mizawa serves as little more than a figurehead, enforcing the will of Lord Hachiwara of Oniba and insuring that taxes and duties are delivered on time. He rarely passes a law of his own initiative, and, due to his peculiar nature, has little real interest in advancing his province.

Imperial control of much of the province is marginal; though patrols routinely travel the roads around Uesaki and Kurakage, most of the northern reaches of the province and the mountainous interior never see a samurai. Likewise, true control of Gaijinoshima has been willingly turned over to the Yakuza, so that the samurai do not have to sully themselves by dealing with foreigners, whom they consider as uncouth and uncivilized. Because of this, the northern portion of the province is largely lawless, a haven for bandits and those wishing to escape the reach of the Kaidanese government.

Cities, Towns, and Areas of Interest

Kurakage, a samurai town under the control of the Daibenzake clan, is the capital of the province, but it is not the largest community. Bothy **Uesaki** and **Gaijinoshima** are bigger and busier. And, though the daimyo's palace is in Kurakage, the provincial bureaucracy operates out of Uesaki, which also maintains a fortified castle for the samurai who patrol the province. The officials of Uesaki have direct oversight over Gaijinoshima, which is reached via ferry from the mainland. Each day, officers from Uesaki travel to Gaijinoshima and each night they travel home again.

Uesaki, Chief Town of Gaijinaba

LE Large Town
Corruption +3; **Crime** -2; **Economy** +2; **Law** +3; **Lore** +0; **Society** -2
Qualities: prosperous, racially intolerant (non-kaidanese), strategic location
Danger +5

DEMOGRAPHICS

Government overlord (Prefect Otazei)
Population 4,021 (4009 humans, 12 disguised yokai)

NOTABLE NPCS

Prefect Otazei Chozun(LE male human Aristocrat 7)
Head of the Yonshu military, Taisho Nakasaga Katatsune (LE male human samurai 8)

MARKETPLACE

Base Value 2,800 gp; **Purchase Limit** 15,000; **Spellcasting** 5th
Minor Items 3d4; **Medium Items** 2d4; **Major Items** 1d4

The primary road of the province, maintained at the expense of the daimyo, travels from Kurakage to Uesaki and then north into the mountains and across to the village of **Agoya**, a lumber town. From Agoya, the road travels south into Oniba. As the road crosses through the mountains, it is known as the daitengu road, a concession to the legend of Sojobo.

There are numerous henge and tengu villages in the province, especially in the mountains and

northern marshes. Of particular note are the villages of **Komanshinu**, near to the mouths of the Daijarukubi-gawa, and **Shimatenju** on the slopes of Daigoro-kei. Komanshinu, comprised primarily of nezumi henge, maintains a large henge marketplace, but is best known as the home of the nezumi wizard, Shinumota. Shimatenju is home to a dozen noteworthy tengu sword masters, and tengu from across Kaidan travel there in hopes of entering one of the schools. The tengu village is also the village closest to the Daigoro daitengu shrine and serves as a waystop for those tengu planning on climbing the mountain to see the daitengu.

Economy

The influx of gaijin merchant ships into Gaijinoshima has served to greatly improve the economic situation of the province, even though a majority of the goods and money moving through the harbor find their way to Oniba, and Itaro. Gaijinoshima and Uesaki in particular have grown tremendously since the opening of the islands to outsiders. Because of the trade situation, merchants in Gaijinaba are more likely to be accepting of foreign coin than merchants elsewhere in Kaidan, though gaijin will still be charged almost double of what locals are charged for goods and services.

Rice is grown throughout the southern parts of the province, but not in so great a quantity as to do more than provide for necessary tribute and survival. Lumber is felled in the north-east, in Agoya and other, surrounding small villages. This wood is primarily taken to Tsue-jo, though some of the more exotic woods make their way to Anshu and Gaijinoshima. In addition to these things, the province also produces a great number of entertainers and hired thugs. These individuals from the hinin-eta class find easy employment in Tsue-jo, Aki-jo and even north in Kyobe.

Secrets of the Region

The daitengu of the Daigaro peak is the oldest living tengu in all of Kaidan and the first of all the daitengu, the legendary Sojobo. He has never been beaten in combat and is incredibly wise and powerful, a master of both sword and magics. The tengu of Yonshu view him as a god. The shrine is very difficult to reach, short of flight, and its exact location is a secret known only to those who have managed to make the arduous climb up the steep face of the mountain top.

Lord Mizawa is a true ghost, incorporeal and only partially dwelling in the present. Having murdered his family before taking his own life, his days are spent replaying the argument he had with his oldest son concerning loyalty to the Shogun, an argument that escalates into the grisly reenactment, each night, of his families demise. Despite this repetitive drama, he maintains just enough sanity to continue with the business of governing and notice the passing of days and seasons. Mizawa is not tied to a specific locale and is able to travel freely, both to Fukuhara-kyo, as required, and to his lake-side palace during those summers he is in residence. No matter his location, the only difference in his haunted routine is the change of scenery. Only the true-death of the Shogun would free Lord Mizawa from his tortured existence.

The tengu sword schools of Daigaro-kei have a long tradition of accepting all students who show aptitude, regardless of race. In the past, they have trained many human heroes and hope to continue that tradtition, but in recent generations, human applicants have been few and unworthy. Such unworthy students are killed, rather than allowing them to return and possibly betray the location of tengu settlements.

The prefect of Uesaki is a secret gaijinophile, having an inordinate fondness for all things non-kaidanese. Being quite aware of official imperial dogmas concerning things foreign, not to mention the attitudes of his peers, he is quite careful to keep his obsession to himself. However, he has, over the years, amassed a considerable collection of gaijin paraphernalia, including books, scrolls, maps, weapons, paintings, clothing, and the like.

The purpose of allowing gaijin into Kaidan is to increase the number of souls in the empire, so as to decrease the number of soulless bodies born. To this end, it is the responsibility of Lord Mizawa to provide for the deaths of a percentage of all the gaijin who enter the harbor. These deaths are mostly made to look like accidents, or bar fights, so as to not arouse suspicion in the gaijin merchants, but they are, by and large, very much intentional. Recently, for the same ends, certain samurai clans have been ordered to begin buying slaves so that they might transport these slaves to Oniba for slaughter.

Namba Province

Namba is a rocky, mountainous province devoid of major forests, full of dangerous reptiles and not so suited to farming as other areas of Yonshu. As a result, it is the most sparsely settled of the four provinces on the island and has no large towns or

villages. Rather, small familial fishing villages dot the northern coast of Namba, facing Gaijinoshima, while the southern half of the province is the territory of the secretive Takakage and Tanezumikage clans. In years past, Namba was used as a place of exile for disgraced politicians, generals and other figures of import. Today, shipments of condemned men are still sent to its shores and entrusted into the hands of the two aforementioned samurai clans.

Flora

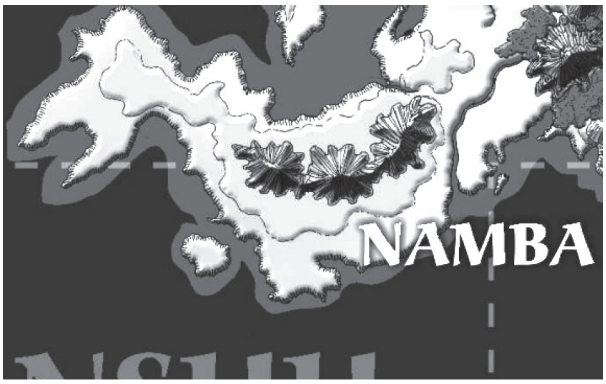
Scraggly pines and rock-oaks dot the mountainous landscape of Namba, interspersed with holly, oak, and elm. Small, coarse shrubs, such as willow, privet and spirea are common both in the mountains and throughout the lower grasslands, especially along the regions small, fast flowing streams. Also common to both mountains and lowlands are a large are a large variety of wild-grasses, bamboo grasses and stilt grasses.

Fauna

Brown bears and Anshu wolves are both found in the province, though these predators must compete with the large reptilian creatures endemic to the region and are thus less plentiful than might otherwise be the case. There are four distinct species of giant lizards in the province, ranging in size from four foot body lengths to fifteen foot body lengths. In the mountains one can also encounter a species of giant rock viper which can be quite deadly, especially in the summer. Despite these predators, there are both deer and boar in Namba; the deer being a breed of spotted deer smaller than those found on the rest of the island, and well suited to the rocky environment. The region also possesses foxes, several varieties of ground squirrel, rats, rabbits, and, along the coasts, otters. There are fewer birds in Namba than elsewhere on Genshu, both because of the scarcity of woodlands, and because of bird-eating giant geckos, but a variety of starlings, doves and other field birds do call the region home.

Mountains

Namba has three primary mountain peaks. **Mount Namji,** is the largest of the three peaks, and is home to the castle of the Takakage clan. The castle of the Tanezumikage clan is built on **Mount Rouiwao, a volcanic mountain**, though eruptions are rare, and **Mount Enzanhaisho**, also a minorly active volcano, is distinguished by numerous ruins of stone, including the remains, near to its base, of an ancient prison-castle.



Rivers and Lakes

Namba has numerous small streams which cascade from mountain to sea, but only one major river, the **Zaamiko-gawa**, which flows out of Gaijinaba. Those rice farms which do exist in the province are mostly found on the east side of this wide, swift river.

Government

Shadow-lord, **Nagakage no Katsuyorio** serves as Daimyo of Namba, maintaining a palace on a small island off of the southern coast of the province. A select few of the Takakage and Tanezumikage clans are allowed within the palace and they are forbidden to speak of what they see there, except to convey the will of their lord and master to his subjects. Bureaucracy within the province is almost nonexistent, just enough to make sure that peasants make timely shipments of rice and dried fish to the two samurai clans and that duties are fully paid to the Shogun and Emperor. Unfortunately for the peasants involved in supplying both fish and rice, both the Takakage and Tanezumikage operate independently to make sure their own needs are provided for and impose duties without heed for the demands being made their sister clan. Likewise, both clans, while answerable to Lord Nagakage are also directly answerable to the Shogun himself and every year, as part of their duty, and in addition to any other offers of tribute, they are each required to send two dozen of their best warriors to Fukuhara-kyo to serve at the Shogun's pleasure for a year.

Cities, Towns, and Areas of Interest

The two samurai clans long ago killed or drove off the tengu, henge and korobokuru in the central, mountainous region of the province, but a few small enclaves of yokai manage to survive in hiding in the west of Namba. The largest such settlement is **Kimojorota**, an eclectic subterranean village of badger, rabbit and rat henge served by a kitsune priest and led by a grizzled tengu warrior named Hishatak.

The largest fishing village along the northern coast is simply called **Kashi** by the nearby locals, for it is where they take their dried fish to sell. The village has only seventy people, but, besides the fish-market, it also hosts an annual festival which is attended by nearly every fisherman (and their families) living along the coast.

While the daimyo, and the taisho of the two samurai clans maintain castles, there are no true villages associated with these castles, rather the many members of each clan live either in isolated cabins and huts or else in small enclaves scattered throughout the territory. They move as necessary for their training regimes, and according to changes in their standing within the clan, with the more influential living in or near one of the castles.

Economy

There is little in the way of a true economy in Namba, excepting monies earned by the two samurai clans for work done outside the province, primarily on Anshu.

Secrets of the Region

The two samurai clans, the Takakage and Tanezumikage, under the direction of Lord Nagakage, jointly comprise the Yowakage school of assassination, one of the six major schools of shinobi in Kaidan. Yowakage shinobi focus on stealth and the unseen strike. The members of each clan train fiercely from an early age, working always towards the goal of being one of those warriors chosen annually to serve the Shogun. Though not every warrior can be so chosen, others are rented out by their taisho as mercenary assassins, with few questions ever asked. The only job the clans will not take is the assassination of a daimyo. Though the two clans are interrelated, with members often marrying between the clans, they maintain a fierce, sometimes deadly competition, as they vie for the approval of their lords.

Takakage Clan

LE Large samurai clan (6209 members)
Honor +1, **Morale** +4, **Lore** +2, **Society** -5
Lord Nagakage of Nagakage Castle, Daimyo of Namba province (devious, ruthless, vengeful)
Taisho Takakage Masamitsuko LE Ninja 12/ Samurai 6 (devious,stern, stubborn)
Clan Qualities devious, stubborn, vicious

NOTABLE MEMBERS

Overseer of the clan registry, Lady Takakage Sueme LE Expert 3/Ninja 6
Master of arms, Lord Takakage Katsujiro LN Ninja 3/Fighter 12
Master of shadows, Takakage Katayoriro LE Ninja 15
Clan Enterprises craftsmen, land, mercenary, soldiering
Purchase Limit 25,000; **Import Limit** 50,000

Lord Nagakage is a mighty shadow lord, with the ability to control multitudes of lesser shadows. Once a month, he secretly leaves his castle to choose a random victim upon which to feed. The victim, once drained of life, rises as a shadow under the control of Nagakage and further swells the ranks of his minions within and under his island fortress. Besides his control over undead shadows, he also possesses the ability to call and control snakes, a fact not well known, even to his lieutenants.

There are iron deposits on both Rouiwao and Ezanhaisho,but, though the two clans jointly operate one small mine using slave labor, the deposits have been little utilized and the two clans are careful to keep knowledge of these deposits a closely guarded secret. Swords manufactured in Namba can fetch a high price outside of the province, but they are rarely given to non-clan members and even more rarely sold by the clans.

Oniba Province

Oniba, the chief province of Yonshu, is a verdant region of thick forests and fertile river valleys. The most heavily populated of the four Yonshu provinces, Oniba has profited greatly from the increased commerce in nearby Gaijinoshima, whilst simultaneously managing to keep itself mostly unsullied from gaijin influence. Farming communities are plentiful along the many streams and rivers, and logging continues to thrive north of the Anikigawa. As one heads further west into the province, into the foothills of the mountains of Gaijinaba, the forests become thicker and darker. The Kaidanese seldom venture into these mountain woods, for they are full of yokai and other dangers.

Flora

Cedar, oak, pine, together with elms and beeches, fill the woods of Oniba. To the south, mulberry is common, having been cultivated and encouraged by the silk farmers of the province. Other cultivated trees include nashi, kaki and peach trees. Bamboo is also plentiful. In the wooded region of the three brothers, there are numerous stands of giant bamboo The grasslands east of the forests is filled with smaller bamboo, a variety of small shrub plants, such as willow shrubs and privet, and a variety of grasses, of which susuki is the most common.

Fauna

Black bears are common in the northern forests of oniba, though they are also seen sometimes in the south. Boar are also common, and dire boar can be found near the mountains. Some of the dire boar are thought to be intelligent by the yokai, and they do not hunt these animals. Wolves, of the smaller Anshu variety, are rare but not unknown in the forests. Spotted deer are plentiful, especially, in the northern forests and grasslands. Smaller mammals include rabbits, squirrels, martens, otters, and fox. Along the north-east coast of Oniba, one can sometimes see seals, especially in the winter. A variety of songbirds can be found in both the woods and the river-valleys. Black cranes, from the marshes of Gaijinaba, are sometimes seen also in Oniba, especially in the late spring and summer. Hawks, owls and sparrowhawks are common, as are, along the coast, gulls and albatross. In the deep woods, enclaves of giant spiders are a common danger. There seem to be very few poisonous snakes in Oniba, though there is a species of blue-banded, black-headed sea snakes which fishermen know to either avoid or kill on sight because of its toxicity. Green rat snakes are common, as are other small serpents such as keelbacks and oddtooth snakes.

Mountains

Oniba is one of only two Kaidanese provinces which has no mountains of note (the other being Hatsuko on Anshu), though the eastern foothills of the Gaijinaba mountains begin within the province.

Rivers and Lakes

Oniba is full of rivers and streams. The three large rivers flowing through the center of the province are known collectively as the three brothers and Kaidanese legends say that they were formed by the spirits of the first three men who settled on Yonshu, though the yokai dismiss this claim, saying that the rivers were formed by the souls of three yokai who swore allegiance to one another and to the land. The northernmost of the three river is the **Anikigawa,** the second is the **Jikigawa** and the third is the **Batteigawa.** The land between the Anikigawa and the Jikigawa is full of marshes and is known provincially as *Komushioukoku*, "The Kingdom of the Flies." The Batteigawa is the slowest of the three rivers and Tsue-jo, the provincial capital, is build on a river island in the midst of it.

South of three brothers is the **Kuwabara-gawa**,named for the many mulberry-silk plantations along its length. To the north, the **Kurotsuru'no-gawa** flows northward. This river is named for the black cranes which nest along its length in the summer, though these cranes winter to the north-west, in the marshes of Gaihinaba.



Government

Oniba is the oldest of the Yonshu provinces, being the first of the regions subdued by the Shogun on the island, however, Lord Hachiwara no Otsuka has served as Daimyo of Oniba for only three hundred ten years. Prior to this, he had oversight of Shingo province and his success there prompted the Daimyo to send him to serve in Oniba, for there had been, to that point, continued rebellion in Taro and Oniba alike. Lord Hachiwara acted decisively to quell the rebellion and established order over all those parts of the island easily reached by Samurai. He repaired the main roads of the island and then began working to improve the economy. His success has been noteworthy, though his methods are brutal, cruel, and manipulative. Hachiwara is one of the most conniving and far thinking of all the Daimyo of Kaidan and he maintains contingency plans for nearly every undertaking and possibility, including the fall of the Kaidanese empire. Those who cross him can rest assured that their downfall is only a matter of time, and that their end will be unpleasant.

Oniba serves as the chief province of Yonshu, and records of nearly everything of note on the island, including births and deaths of all samurai (though not peasants or eta-hinin) are meticulously kept. Likewise, in keeping with the attitude of the daimyo, the daimyo collects taxes only from samurai, who, he expects, will in turn take from the lower castes, with whom he would rather not deal. Taxes are high, but not so high as to stifle further economic growth and all taxes are "regressive," taking a higher percentage from those who have less. In this way, Hachiwara ensures sure that his samurai have a sense that if they but work harder, they can keep just a little more.

Samurai patrol the province regularly, and swift retribution is brought to all who are even suspected of insubordination or rebellion. Even more dreaded are the daimyo's assassins and private enforcers. It is not unheard for relatives of a suspected traitor to awaken of a morning and discover that whilst they slept, their kin was tortured and slain in the night, the body being left for all to see, a grisly warning.

Cities, Towns, and Areas of Interest

The capital of Oniba, and the chief city of Yonshu is **Tsue-jo**, which is located in the midst of the Batteigawa, with some settlements on the northern shores of the same. Towering above the rest of the city, and with dungeons buried deep below as well, is the palace complex of Lord Hachiwara. The noble quarters of the city lie below the palace complex, and outside of this region are the businesses and homes of the rest of the populace. The city features a grand zaoist temple outside the palace, and a smaller, private zaoist temple in the palace. The city temple is the largest in all of Yonshu, and has a hundred priest and a hundred and forty trained soldier-monks.

Tsue-jo, Chief City of Yonshu, Provincial Capital of Oniba

LE Small City
Corruption +1; **Crime** -2; **Economy** +3; **Law** +5; **Lore** +1; **Society** -1
Qualities: militant, prosperous, racially intolerant (non-kaidanese, non-human), strategic location
Danger +5

DEMOGRAPHICS

Government overlord (daimyo, Lord Hachiwara)
Population 10,000 (human only)

NOTABLE NPCS

Daimyo, Lord Hachiwara(LE male dread wight human wizard 8)
Exalted Captain of the Palace Guard, Lord Damoko Shinichi (LE human fighter 9)
Chief Minister of Zaoism, Lord Fuiwara Hoto (LE human inquisitor 9)

MARKETPLACE

Base Value 5600 gp; **Purchase Limit** 37,500 gp; **Spellcasting** 6th
Minor Items 4d4; **Medium Items** 3d4; **Major Items** 1d6 (Kaidanese only)

Hara is a large town on the east shore of the Kuwabara-gawa and the center of silk production on Yonshu. Besides the manufacture of silk cloth, Hara also serves as an inspection gateway for merchandise coming into the province from Gaijinaba. A large contigent of samurai is always stationed in Hara, and the town boasts a half-dozen storehouses and armories for the daimyo's soldiers.

As in the region of the three brothers, so along the **Kurotsuru-no-gawa**, there are many small farming villages. While most of these are inhabited by peasants, the Byoudenchi samurai clan maintains three different villages, including the village of Hachikoyama, which has both the clan castle and the notable Kino Taisha, a shrine dedicated to one of the clan's great warriors. The clan protects the region from bandits, manages farms, and has, of late, began breeding horses, with the goal of achieving a larger breed suitable for both farm labor and carrying heavily armored warriors.

In the forest west of the river valleys, there are many small henge villages hidden from the eyes of men. One of the oldest of these is **Kitsumura**. Built around an ancient fox statue, the isolated village has 200 henge of various clans. To the north is the slightly larger henge village of **Aspertamu**, which serves as a training ground for henge warriors and as a minor commercial hub for henge and tengu goods, especially copper from the north, iron from the mountains and silk from the south. There are a half a dozen tiny henge villages north of the Kuwabara-gawa, which having stolen silk worms from the human villages south of them, focus on silk production. These villages are ever alert for the presence of samurai, but two sibling wizards of the rat clan use magics to help keep humans from finding them.

Economy

Without a doubt, Oniba is the most prosperous province in Genshu, comparing favorably with some of the more prosperous provinces of Anshu. It was not always thus. A hundred years previously,

Oniba was still something of a backwater province,known chiefly for its exotic woods, but Lord Hachiwara has done much in recent years to improve the region, encouraging greater amounts of farming and financing silk farms in the region of Hara. Currently, more rice is grown in Oniba than in all of the other three provinces of Genshu combined, and Oniba rice, cultivated with a slightly rounder grain than rice grown elsewhere in Kaidan, is becoming quite popular in the imperial capital. Oniba silk is not quite so popular on Anshu, but it sells very well to the gaijin traders in Gaijinoshima, who buy over half of the silk manufactured in the province, readily trading steel and gold for the fabric. While the increase in economic wealth is only marginally felt by the peasant masses, the samurai families of Tsue-jo, and the province at large, are slowly amassing stockpiles of silk, rice and steel and the economic influence of these families continues to grow.

Secrets of the Region

Though it is only marginally a secret within the province, two of the leading samurai families of Genshu, the Kinhara and the Kumagawa, have each been siphoning steel and gold from the shipments passing through the region. The Kinhara oversee the traffic passing through Hara and are notoriously corrupt. The Kumagawa, who handle security and law enforcement in Tsue-jo, including handling oversight of the harbor, are only marginally better. Lord Hachiwara is aware of their thefts, but both families are very generous in their tribute to the daimyo and sometimes very useful to him, and so he abides their larceny without reporting it to the Shogun's officials.

Hidden in the marshy swampland on the northeastern Oniba peninsula, is an evil castle called Nakikabejou. This castle is filled with oni, the largest collection of the demons on the island of Yonshu. Led by a Hebi-no-onna witch, the oni use the castle as a base of operations from which they conduct raids and plot great evil for the Kaidanese. While the daimyo knows of the castle's existence, the oni's magic's keep him from discerning its exact location.

A hundred and seventy years ago, a bandit king named Ochoka waged war upon the forces of the daimyo, but was ultimately crushed. His castle, hidden in the northern woods of Oniba was rumored to be filled with great treasures, but it has never been found by the many would be treasure seekers that sought it. Recently, a peasant lad hunting boar came across the hidden entrance to Ochoka's lair and, upon entering, was possessed by the ghost of Ochoka. Now the bandit king, in his new body, is once more amassing followers with which to make war upon Lord Hachiwara.

Oniba province contains one of the three sacred bamboo groves of the yokai (the other two being found in Ika and Unori provinces). The bamboo of the grove has stalks five to ten feet wide, towering hundreds of feet into the air. It is kept by a small cadre of henge priests, who kill any humans who attempt to settle near to the grove.

Taro Province

A region abounding with forests and teeming with wildlife, Taro is sparsely settled, but nevertheless plays a part in the empire as a source of copper, gold and sometimes iron. The people of Taro are a rugged, irreligious lot, accustomed to harsh conditions and harsh work. Though the province lacks any large communities, there are numerous small mining villages scattered around the mountains, subsisting primarily on hunting and small gardens. There are also a large number of henge in the province, though they keep their villages small and well hidden from the men that traipse through the territory.

Flora

Oak is the most common of trees within Taro province, followed by elm, maple, pine, and cedar. There are many bamboo groves within the woods. Cypress is also common, as are Laurel and fir trees. Pale willow trees grow along the Kindoriimu-gawa, and the Kaidanese miners believe that each of these trees contains the souls of the dead. Bamboo grasses, along with a variety of shrubs and wild-flowers, form the undergrowth in the forest. Along the coast there are narrow grasslands, seldom more than half a mile wide, full of wild flowers, a variety of grasses, including stilt grasses, and hardy shrubs. Along the Kindoriimou-gawa, wild rice grows naturally, providing a seasonal staple to the diet of the local miners.

Fauna

Black bear, spotted deer, anshu wolves, fox, tanaki and boar are all plentiful in Taro. Numerous squirrels and rodents also fill the forests, and the men of the region have little trouble keeping themselves supplied with meat. Upon occasion, giant white deer, standing nearly twelve feet high at the shoulder are seen in the woods, but wise



men refuse to hunt these. There are a large number of birds in the province, including hawks, tits, woodpeckers, grouse, owls, doves, starlings and sea-birds, such as gulls. While there are snakes in Taro, they are not as common as further south, and the yokai teach that the white deer keep them away. However, there are two different species of sea snakes that swim the waters near to the coast, both venemous.

Mountains

The small range of mountains in northeastern Taro features many marbled layers of colorful rock and is called the **Kanchikuzasho.** The two primary peaks in the range are Aki and Mansho. Small mining villages, often having no more than ten or twenty individuals, dot the mountains and foothills of this region. To the south, the mountains are larger, but less populated, at least by the Kaidanese. The largest peak in Taro is **Ekashidanna**.

Rivers and Lakes

The chief river of the province is the **Kindoriimu-gawa**. Provincial legend says that some of the early settlers of the region found chunks of gold just lying along a stretch of the river and subsequently became wealthy. However, no such gold deposits have been found in living memory. Many of the miners maintain houses near to the river in which they winter. Henge tend to live on the west side of the river, further away from the mountains and the mining camps. The **Kiriyuuka-gawa**, a shorter river, known for its thick fogs, has something of a sinister reputation, with many stories being told about those who have gone missing in the mists along its banks. Nevertheless, there are farms all along its shores, especially on the southern side, and the majority of the rice grown in the province comes from this river valley.

Government

The daimyo of Taro Province, Lord Nijoioji no Dainomoto, has ruled his territory for three hundred ninety years and is called the wandering daimyo. He maintains no fixed palace, but wanders his territory with his two hundred strong retinue of ever-silent masked samurai warriors in attendance. Though he appears to keep no records, and there is no bureaucracy to speak of in the province, the daimyo seems to always be aware of everything going on within his province, including what laws are being broken, and who has paid their taxes and tributes and who has not. Village chieftains, and the heads of those few samurai clans living in the province, are responsible for collecting duties owed and the daimyo himself, as he wanders, collects these monies and goods, carrying them with him wherever he goes. On those very rare occassions where the duties are not ready when the daimyo calls, the offending individual responsible for their collection is publically tortured and crucified by the daimyo's attendants. More than one reckless bandit chieftain has taken it into his head to steal the provincial taxes from the daimyo and has perished, along with his men, in the attempt.

When not moving, the daimyo rests in a large and lavish tent-pavilion, the insides of which, it is rumored by the populace, is larger than the outside, and contains many dread and awful chambers. When the daimyo is absent from the province, due to being called to the Capital, where he does maintain a small estate, his lieutenant and second-in-command, Bojokoji Shinchokazu wanders the land in his stead.

Cities, Towns, and Areas of Interest

The largest henge village in Taro is **Wikomaz'cho**. This community of Tanaki henge, located in the northern foothills of Ekashidanna operates a profitable copper mine, and supplies copper ore and worked bronze alike to the henge of Yonshu. Two small villages of korobokuru and small henge farms near the Kiriyuuka-gawa supply Wikomaz'cho with food, for the rocky land around the village is useless for farming. Tengu dwell in number around Ekashidanna, and though it has no tengu shrine of its own atop the mountain, within the village of **Hazizizah,** which does possess a notable earth-shrine, there is talk of establishing one.

The largest human settlement in Taro centers around the **Niyari Itai Tavern**, a fortified establishment offering rooms and meals to travelers. Many miners have built houses in the vicinity and, if danger threatens, they know they can find refuge within the tavern walls. This community may have only a hundred people during the summer, but during the winter, it swells to five or six hundred.

Nayari Itai Tavern, Mining Community

CN Village/Town
Corruption -1; **Crime** -5; **Economy** +0; **Law** +2; **Lore** +0; **Society** +1
Qualities: insular, prosperous, superstitious
Danger +0

DEMOGRAPHICS

Government autocracy (Ryoichi, proprietor)
Population 100-500 (mostly human)

NOTABLE NPCS

Proprietor, Ryoichi (CN human fighter 7)
Chief Cook, Shoniko (LN human expert 5)
Retired Mercenary, Ronin, Nishinuma Himochimitsu (LN human ranger 9)

MARKETPLACE

Base Value 650 gp; **Purchase Limit** 3,750 gp; **Spellcasting** 1st
Minor Items 2d4; **Medium Items** 1d4; **Major Items** none

At the mouth of the Kiryiyuu-gawa is the village of **Sokojo,** which maintains a harbor. While some traffic from the region passes through this small harbor, most ore from the mines is shipped up the Kindoriimu-gawa, to the village of **Sajouwa,** where it is loaded onto ships and hauled to Kyobe. Pirates often attempt to attack such vessels and there is good money to be made for those willing to protect these shipments across the strait.

Economy

The principle export of the province, and its sole economic foundation, is mining. Most of the miners are hungry, poor, and desperate, but they press on, spurred by dreams of a large strike which they can use to found a true village and establish their house. There are few samurai in the province, and no clan settlements. Samurai ronin provide the majority of protection for ore shipments, and they sometimes hunt bandits. A few of the samurai are small groups sent by large clans to see whether or not any of the land is worth claiming and exploiting. As of yet, no samurai have concluded that it is worth the trouble.

Secrets of the Region

Lord Nijoioji is a powerful undead necromancer who maintains a personal squadron of two hundred undead warriors at all times. His warriors are so armored as to hide their skeletal appearance, but they never eat, sleep, and seldom do they fail at their duties. When any of his warriors falls in battle, the daimyo merely seeks out still-living warriors with which to replace them. More than one bandit camp, having been located and destroyed by the daimyo, has furnished replacements for those guards lost in battle.

A bad-tempered white river dragon lairs within the Kiryiyuu-gawa, coming up, occasionally, with the fog, to feast upon those that are desecrating his land with their very presence. His ire seldom lasts long enough for him to do more than kill and eat one or two farmers a month.

Despite the large numbers of humans upon the Kanchikusazo mountains, there are still tengu in the region. These tengu have taken to dwelling in villages carved into the mountain, rather than on the surface. The majority of miners which stumble across these hidden cavernous villages are killed, but some few manage to befriend the tengu and keep them abreast of developments in the province.

Anshu

The chief island and the heart of the Kaidanese empire, Anshu defines what it means to be Kaidanese. A little over 350 miles long, from north to south, and two hundred miles across from its easternmost point to the western shores of Oteru province, Anshu is the largest of all the islands in the archipelago and, by far, the most heavily populated by humans and yokai alike. There are over twice as many Kaidanese on Anshu as on both Genshu and Yonshu combined. While the yokai are not nearly so numerous, henge villages are hidden all through the mountainous regions of central Anshu, with their numbers being especially concentrated in those regions north of Itaro province. Kappa, on the other hand, are found primarily south of Itaro, though there are also a good number of kappa who dwell in Oda province. Tengu are not as heavily represented on Anshu as one might expect, with many of the northern tengu clans having migrated further north to Genshu over the last four hundred years, but there are still tengu villages in the southern half of Anshu, especially in Shingo and Tojima provinces.

The climate of Anshu varies considerably from north to south. Northern Anshu possesses a cool temperate clime, but as one heads south, the climate warms to tropical. Summers are much hotter and more humid in the south, and winters are harder with more snow, in the north. There are a number of volcanoes on Anshu, and though most of them are not visibly active, eruptions are not unknown

and earthquakes are common. In part because of the volcanic nature of the island, the soil is fertile throughout and vegetation grows thick and lush.

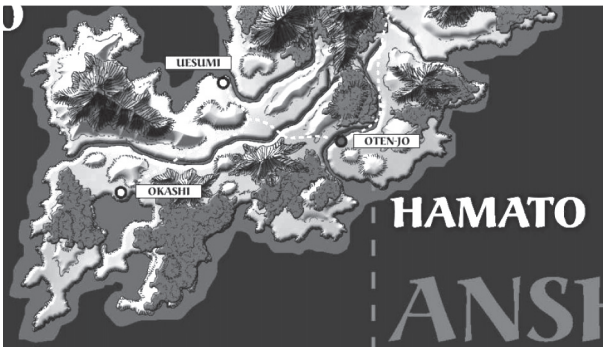
Politically, the entire island is the purview of the Shogun, whose word is law throughout. More locally, the island is split into three regions, with so that there are three daimyo who oversee both their own province and who maintain oversight over neighboring provinces. These chief provinces are Ika, Itaro, and Nijo.

Hamato Province

The southern-most province of Kaidan, Hamato is a lush tropical region, well watered by numerous rivers. Hamato can boast both the largest mountain on Anshu, the longest river in all of Kaidan, and the largest fresh-water lake. It is also the warmest of all the provinces. In the summer, humidity along the coast is high and the heat can be quite severe. The southern coast is also subject to habitual late summer storms. Temperatures in the mountains are cooler, and dangers from hurricanes is somewhat lessened. For this reason, many of the wealthy of Oten-jo maintain summer estates further upriver and inland. Hamato province is subordinate to Nijo province.

Flora

Hamato is full of broad leaved evergreens, such as chinquapin's and evergreen oaks. Other trees include mangroves, chestnuts, cycads, and even pine and cedar. Bamboo is very common, as are reed plants along the rivers. Wild and domestic azaleas alike grow abundantly in the province, and, in the spring the flowers create whole fields of color. While the azaleas are prized for their colors, they are cultivated in Hamato as much for their toxins as for their beauty. Fruit is also grown throughout Hamato. Grapes, a plant imported well before the rise of the Shogun, are grown around Uesumi, though not in as great a number as in either Onari or Nijo. Various citrus trees, the yuzu, sudachi and kinkan in particular, are grown in orchards throughout the province and, recently, oranges, called *kan* by the Kaidanese, have also been introduced to the region, by way of Gaijinaba. Other fruits grown include kaki, ume, and some peaches. In the forests, bamboo grasses, ferns and smaller varieties of bamboo form the largest part of the undergrowth. Rice is grown all along the rivers, and, after Onari, Hamato is the largest producer of rice in Kaidan.



Fauna

Though black bear may sometimes be found in the mountains, their numbers are low in the region. Deer and wolves are far more numerous. Boar also live in Hamato, though the species of boar found in the province is both smaller and more aggressive than their cousins further north. Rabbits, squirrels, otters, raccoon dogs, and fox also dwell in great numbers in the province, as do rats and other rodents. Sea snakes are common within the tumi gulf, and there are a number of snakes and small lizards which make the region their home. There are many birds in Hamato. Quail and pheasant occur in large numbers. Duck, swan and geese all make their homes upon the rivers and lakes. Other water birds include stork, heron, loons, grebe, cormorant, egrets and sandpipers. Inland are eagles, hawks, sparrowhawks, kites, owls and buzzards. A variety of small birds, such as buntings, finches, robins, doves and woodpeckers fill the forests. Upon occasion, giant craps come ashore along the eastern coast of Hamato and their meat, though dangerous to obtain, is considered a special delicacy in Oten-jo.

Mountains

North Hamato is dominated by the "seven peaks" of the massive **Gensengan** mountains, of which **Mount Hashikami** is the chief. Hashikami is the largest mountain in Anshu and is considered a holy mountain by tengu, henge and humans alike. Hashikami has a reputation as a fearsome volcano, but it is not visibly active and has had no eruption in over five hundred years. Nevertheless, its sides still quake every other year or so. Smaller than Hashikami is its sister mountain, **Mount Neyuki-no-jihi**, which, even in the summer, routinely possesses snow atop its summit. Neyuki-o-jihi is a tengu mountain, and the Neyuki daitengu is said to be a master of snow and cold.

Overlooking the Fumi Gulf is **Mount Natamushi**, famous for its both its giant insects and for being home to the Futuhitotachi sword masters. Near to Lake Zatouyashi is **Mount Zataku**, atop which is built the infamous Tattoichi Temple. More than one samurai lord has been exiled to this mountain, so that, despite its pedigree and extensive libraries, the temple has an ill reputation as a prison to which men go to die. Near to the eastern shore is **Mount Enkoubero**, the only visibly active volcano in Hamato. Despite its name, the mountain produces far more smoke than fire, and many fanciful stories are told about the monsters which lair within the depths of the mountain. South of Enkoubero-san is **Mount Hitode-hana**, upon whose slopes grow a variety of healing herbs. The Chiyu Amadaishi nunnery is located in the north-western foothills of the mountain.

Rivers and Lakes

The longest river in all of Kaidan is the **Zenyato-gawa** which, when measured from source to mouth is just under a hundred miles in length. Small rice producing villages are found all along the length of this placid river, and many shrines as well. North of the Zenyato-gawa is the **Reisengawa.** While there are less rice paddies along the swift Reisengawa, there are many more orchards, and the citrus fruits grown in this region have a good reputation. Further north yet is the rapid **Shunmesengawa,** whose waters cascade down from the heart of the Gensengan range and into the Fumi gulf. Men seldom travel along the Shunmesengawa, for it is henge territory and the henge (and their tengu allies) defend it vigorously.

The **Ayahana-gawa** flows south from the Gensengan, past Oten-jo and into the Hamato bay. There are many rice farms along the eastern shores of the Ayahana-gawa and the western shores are heavily wooded. Most notable about the river are the many ornamental cherry trees planted along its length so that as one travels the river in the spring, there are many miles of flowering trees. Noble families maintain summer homes further upriver from Oten-jo, where the air is normally cooler in the hot months. The **Choryu-gawa** is a shorter river north-east from the Ayahana and it flows past the northern slopes of Mount Hitode-hana. Several villages, growing both rice and orchard crops, can be found along this river. North of Mount Enkoubero is the **Irodaburu-gawa.** Fed by two smaller rivers, the red watered **Akadeido-gawa** and the green tinged **Aogawa,** the waters of the Irodaburu-gawa maintain a vivid swirled coloring of red and green the entire length of the river. Few humans live along the Irodaburu, but Kappa are fond of the river and there are several families of kappa which make their home near the strangely colored waters.

Lake Zatoumushi is the largest body of fresh-water in Kaidan and the town of Okashi is built on its northern shore. The lake is primarily known for its large, sometimes even giant, fish, and for the many insects which dwell along its shore-lines, including over fifty species of arachnids, and an unusual breed of eyeless bees renowned for their red honey. There are two lakes in northern Hamato. The smaller of the two, **Lake Koankou,** lies nestled within the Gensengan and tengu and henge alike have dwellings around it. The other, **Lake Shigeasago**, is itself the second largest lake on Anshu. A solitary castle, **Shirokarasu no Joukaku** guards the western shores and the road that runs by it.

Government

Lord Taira no Noritsune, nephew of the Shogun, serves as daimyo of Hamato and has been in control of the region since just before the rise of the Shogun. When the Emperor arose from his watery grave, Noritsune was one of those who arose with him. As the emperor's forces moved north to reclaim the capital, Noritsune broke from the company and led a legion of undead samurai in the overthrow of the Minamoto forces stationed in Oten-jo. He has reigned ever since, brutally killing any who openly oppose the Emperor or the Shogun, and generously rewarding those who show slavish devotion to the same.

Taxes and duties, for those favored by the daimyo, are low, but for all others they are cruelly high, creating a great economic gulf between a few families of power and the rest of the citizens of the province. Because of a desire to rise in favor in the eyes of the daimyo, samurai violently enforce all the laws and regulations of the province. Slight infractions are often punished by immediate execution, so that peasants live in constant fear of their martial oppressors, and lower ranked samurai are ever humble and dutiful in the presence of their superiors. Provincial laws reflect the dichotomy of expectations between those in favor and the rest of the populace. Horses, all weapons, and even the possession of precious metals are forbidden to the lower classes. Among the samurai, families in favor are afforded privileges of dress and comportment which reflects their exalted status.

Though Lord Taira is nominally under the oversight of Lord Sugasora of Nijo, Noritsune regards this as a mere matter of bureaucratic formality and in no way considers himself subject to the commands of the other, excepting those commands which come directly from the Shogun's offices. In truth, Noritsune somewhat resents that he was not chosen to oversee the four southern provinces and upon occasion he "asserts" himself to make it clear that he is his own man.

Cities, Towns, and Areas of Interest

The capital of the province, **Oten-jo**, is known as, "the city of a thousand pleasures," though some knowledgeable wags instead call it, "the city of a thousand poisons." A decadent city, perhaps the most-so in all of Kaidan, Oten-jo offers vice for every taste. Not surprisingly, the yakuza maintain a strong presence in the city, operating tea-houses, gambling halls, drug dens, theaters, and the like. The city is famous throughout Kaidan for its actors, and many of the most famous of Kaidan's plays have originated in Oten-jo. The daimyo's palace, set atop the highest hill in the city, is perhaps the most opulent such construct in all the realm, but the many estates around it rival it in both size and grandeur; so much so that the noble families of Oten-jo consider their estates are no less grand than those found in Fukuhara-kyo.

Built on the northern shores of Lake Zatoumushi, **Okashi** is a large fishing town under the control of the Katakawakushi clan. Though most of the fish drawn from the lake are used as food, the lake is also home to a rare species of venomous cat-fish, and the Katakawakushi pay a good price for any of these caught alive. The coastal town of **Uesemi** is the chief port of the province, shipping rice and citrus fruits to Desu, Asaki, Tsue-jo and other ports north.

There are several notable monasteries, shrines and temples in Hamato. The **Futuhitotachi** sword school is housed in the Yamabushi temple of the same name on Mount Natamushi. The monks of this school are experts in sword-play, one of the few yamabushi schools to emphasize the weapon. Their master is said to be able to draw his sword, kill his opponent and sheathe the sword once more, all without seeming to even move. The **Tattoichi Temple** atop mount Zataku is renowned for being a place of exile for samurai lords, but its chief function is to train zaoist scholars in ancient texts and necromantic lore. The temple contains the largest known collection of necromantic material in Kaidan. Contrarily, they **Chiyu Amadaishi** nunnery of Mounte Hitode-hana is known as a place of healing. The sisters there are trained in the art of medicine and wealthy patrons travel from all over Kaidan to the nunnery to seek cures for their maladies.

Tamardaro is a henge village on the Shunmesengawa. The village itself is fortified and there are several other fortifications the henge have built further downriver, so approach up river is very dangerous for those that would attack the henge. The village is home to many seasoned warriors, but it is also home to a well-established henge academy of wizardry. Up the mountain from Tamardaro is the tengu village of Sendai. **Sendai** is the chief tengu village on Mount Neyuki-no-jihi, and is known for the skill of its sword smiths, as well as its large shrine.

Economy

Second only to Itaro, Hamato is among the wealthiest of Kaidan's provinces. A large part of this is due to agriculture. Hamato produces a great amount of rice, only Onari province produces more. Unlike Onari, Hamato also produces a great deal of fruits it is able to export to other provinces, the chief customer being Itaro. Its citrus crops in particular bring money into the province as the fruits are more capable of being packed and stored than many other crops. The second cause of Hamato's wealth is no less important than the first, however. Hamato has the most profitable gold mines in all of Kaidan. These mines can be found in Mount Zataku and the southern Gensengan.

Secrets of the Region

More than once, samurai have been sent up the Shunmesengawa in an attempt to pacify the area and drive the henge from Tamardaro. All have

Anshu Wolves

The wolves native to Anshu island are notable for their small size, being among the smallest species of wolves in the world. They grow only thirty to thirty five inches in length, standing twelve inches tall at the shoulder. Despite their small size, they are aggressive hunters and packs routinely bring down deer. Unless driven by extreme hunger, they avoid attacking humans and yokai. Since ancient times, yokinto priests have taught that the Anshu wolf is a sacred animal, and devout followers of yokinto will refuse to hunt or kill Anshu wolves. Though endemic to Anshu island, these wolves were, in ages past, transported to Yonshu and packs are now common on that island as well.

met with failure and death. The rough, rocky terrain and the skill of the henge in defending their home-territory has made such military excursions difficult, to say the least. More than this, the henge have a secret weapon. The town is built atop a nexus between the plane of water, the plane of earth, and the material plane. Though travel from the material plane is difficult, the wizards in the Tamardaro academy have mastered the art of summoning forth elementals to fight for them.

Though it is far from the chief export of the province, Hamato is the leading producer of poisons in Kaidan. This is in large part due to the activities of the Katakawakushi clan. This clan is a practitioner of Choroieimen, one of Kaidan's six schools of shinobi, a school of assissination focused on poisons and toxins. The clan maintains holdings in Oten-jo, Okashi, and along the Zenyato-gawa. Besides deriving toxins from plants and native animals, certain of the family also use magic to breed new species of venomous animals.

Though the Chiyu Amadaishi nunnery is known for its healing, the head of the temple has been the same woman for over four-hundred years, a fact only a very few know. This undying zaoist nun is a fearsome vampiric monster who feeds on the pain and suffering of others. She is also able to transfer health from one individual, most often a peasant, in order to provide healing for another, such as a wealthy client. Though the majority of women in the nunnery do not realize the true nature of their order, a select few serve the Head Daishi as faithful disciples, forming a close knit coven of evil necromantic witches.

The rumors concerning the Neyuki daitengu are true. Besides being a master swordsman, he is able to control the weather atop his mountain, and is the master of several freezing attacks, abilities granted by the shrine itself. The shrine's go-shintai was formed from a large crystal, the heart of a slain ice elemental.

Hatsuko Province

A province of rolling hills, fertile fields, lush woods, and small villages, Hatsuko is known as a province of rebellion and ghosts. As the birthplace of the Minamoto clan, Hatsuko saw heavy fighting following the ascension of the Shogun. The ruins of three cities and numerous castle attest to the wrath of the undying Taira, and many restless spirits of slain samurai haunt the fields and woods of the region. Though the rebellion is long since over, Hatsuko is still very much a land in conflict. Besides the violent hauntings of the unquiet dead, the daimyo of Hatsuko maintains a longstanding feud with the daimyo of Kosa province and skirmishes between samurai clans aligned with either side are common.

Flora

The woods of Hatsuko are primarily deciduous, with oak, maple and elm being most common. Sugi, and a variety of pines can also be found, especially as one nears the mountains of Ika province. In the south, cherry and mulberry trees have been introduced, so that there are large stands of these, and cultivated sugi is also common near to villages. Other trees include beeches, willows, and larch. The rivers and streams banks are full of reeds, and there are a variety of grasses and bamboos to be found in untended fields.

Fauna

Deer are numerous in the province, but other large animals such as wolves and bear, though sometimes seen, are rare. Foxes are more common, especially near to rivers and streams. South of Seikko, herds of wild horses roam the hills, descendants of horses left masterless in battle. Other mammals include rabbits, raccoon dogs, and various small rodents but in some places there are only rats and mice to be found. Birds, excepting owls and buzzards are uncommon, especially between the three rivers, but nearer to Ika they appear in greater numbers and sea birds, such as gulls and sea eagles, still live near to the coast. Those with knowledge understand that the presence of so many haunted areas within the province has an unsettling affect on animals, and those animals of a migratory nature, such as birds, have learned to avoid the region. Snakes seem less bothered by the atmosphere of the province and live, unhindered by predators, in great numbers, feeding on the many rats that likewise remain. While most of these snakes, such as rat snakes and oddtooth snakes, are non venomous, there is a species of unnaturally toxic black vipers which is every year responsible for many deaths.

Mountains

Hatsuko, though possessing many rolling hills, is one of only two Kaidanese provinces with no major mountains it can call its own, although the foothills of western Kochiyama lie within its demesne.



Rivers and Lakes

There are three major rivers in Hatsuko and the majority of villages lie somewhere within the three river valleys. The eastern river, the **Shimidasukawa,** is a slow moving river full of brackish waters and ugly fish. Despite the evil reputation of the river, some still choose to live alongside it, and the chief town of the province, Seikko, is built at the mouth of the river. The middle river, the **Rarigunki-gawa** flows along the richest farmland in all of Hatsuko, but the region is sparsely settled due to the many ghost haunting the battlefields of the region. The western river, the **Saisiki-gawa,** is more heavily settled than either of its two sisters, and a number of small farming villages lie along the road running north from Arima.

Government

The Daimyo of Hatsuko is **Lord Suwanuma no Michitakehiko**, a devout Zaoist with the ability to command the dead. He has ruled the province for five hundred eighty-nine years. The palace of Lord Suwanuma is a modest complex, dominated by a massive Zaoist temple. The Daimyo and his court spend a large part of their time in religious pursuits, delegating most of the actual governing to lesser officials. A trio of samurai clans serve as the enforcement arms of the daimyo, brutally ensuring that all pay their duties and violently quelling even the hint of rebellion. Taxes and duties in the province are standard, albeit strictly enforced. Zaoist priests are afforded special privileges within the province and can easily find employment with the daimyo or the provincial government. Such priests, especially those of the Yureibushi school, are both revered and feared by populace.

Lord Suwanuma was one of the dead raised alongside the emperor and the Shogun, and he takes this fact as evidence of his standing with the shogun. While it is true that some of his eccentricities, such as his feud with Lord Shimoshika have been overlooked, his standing is not quite as good as he might imagine it is. Nevertheless, because of his prior loyalty to the emperor, and because of his power to control the dead, a power quite useful in controlling Hatsuko, the daimyo feels emboldened to sometimes go beyond the expressed wishes of his own lord and master.

Cities, Towns, and Areas of Interest

The chief community of the province is **Seikko,** a harbor town built at the mouth of the Simidasukawa, where the river flows into the Unagi Bay. The town is well situated to grow, and were it not for the unfortunate circumstances of the province, it would doubtlessly be bigger. The harbor is deep and generally mild in regards to weather. The fish near to the harbor are abundant, though the river is rumored to cause strange mutations in those that dwell near the mouth. The town is dominated by the daimyo's palace complex and the grand temple at the center of the complex. There are nearly a hundred zaoist priests in the town at any given time, and these individuals have the authority to dispense death as they will, and, as such, are feared by all. The three major samurai clans serving the daimyo each maintain modest estates near to the palace, although their larger holdings are removed from the community.

The town of **Arima** is slightly larger than Seikko, sees more commerce, but nonetheless has less influence politically. Situated along the road from Itaro to Kosa province, and protected both arcanely and geographically from the undead haunting the province, Arima serves as a waystop for travelers, merchants and the like. The walled community is owned and protected by the Tsuzaka clan, which maintains a castle and horse herds north of the town.

Rising out of the midst of the forest between the Rarigunki-gawa and the Saisiki-gawa, is the dark **tower of Kagayakyou**, an ancient necromancer and devotee of Zaoism. Kagayakyou dwells alone except for those students he sometimes takes, and those visitors he deigns to receive. It is said that the wizard has the ear of the Shogun and the daimyo, though the relationship is unclear.

Though the majority of yokai long ago left Hatsuko, there are yet communities of henge in the north, near to Mount Kochiyama in Itaro province. **Kumi** is the largest such henge community, the home of an ancient yokai shrine dedicated to the spirit of the giant sugi dominating the center of the village. The power of the shrine's keepers is renowned among the henge, who credit them with keeping humans at bay during times of war

and upheaval. Near to Kumi is the Onshitakurmi enclave, a school of archery run by a grizzled rabbit henge names Arkuman.

Economy

Though it was once among the wealthiest of lands in Kaidan, Hatsuko now has little in the way of an economy. The devastation of war, the wrath of the Shogun, and the large numbers of dead haunting the land all work to keep the territory impoverished. Nevertheless there is wealth hidden in the land for those with the courage to find it. Ancient weapons, stores of gold, and other treasures lie buried in ruins and scattered across haunted battlefields. Every year a few desperate souls endeavor to plunder the buried riches of the land, but the majority of them join the legions of those they would rob. One commodity imported out of the province is horses, and Hatsuko horses have a reputation for fierceness and fearlessness.

Secrets of the Region

Lord Suwanuma has long been an enemy of Lord Shimoshika of Kosa and this animosity is reflected in an unofficial attitude of war towards the neighboring province. While no one is foolish enough to put such things in writing, for the wrath of the Shogun can be fierce, it is understood that Samurai who wish to rise in the esteem of the daimyo should do what they can to harass or kill samurai loyal to Kosa. Kosa samurai traveling through the region have been often attacked and more than one shipment of goods passing through the region, bound for Kosa, has gone missing. Officially such actions are blamed on bandits or rogue elements, but few are fooled and as matters escalate, it is probable that the shogun will be forced to take action.

Lord Suwanuma is well known, by virtue of his zaoist training, to be able to command and control the incorporeal dead. Slightly less well known is that he is also able to maintain such control over a great distance. He also has the ability to manipulate souls and spiritual energies so that he can transfer his own soul into another's body, or switch the souls of others; a factor that allows him to create spies by planting the souls of those loyal to him into the bodies of those loyal to his enemies. Some Kosa samurai, captured within his province, have been subsequently released, their bodies no longer their own.

The Shimidasukawa is tainted by the bodies of the many who have died along its length. The sludge that sometimes flows down the river is ectoplasmic ooze, seeping up from the river bottom. While most of this ooze is only mildly dangerous, some of it manifests extreme malevolence and negative energies. Such manifestations have caused the death of many who have come into contact with it. Another related danger is the presence of actual undead within the river, aquatic zombies, skeletons, ghouls and the like. These creatures are inactive during the day, and the nights of the full moon, but at other times they roam the river water, sometimes even coming ashore during the new moon.

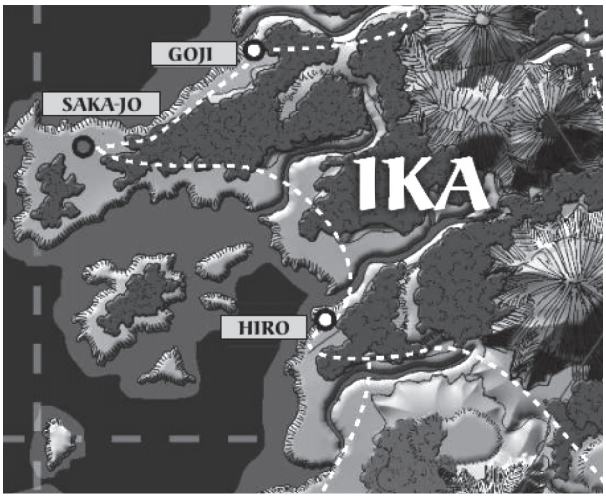
Kagayakyou, who dwells alone in a black tower in the midst of the province, is an undead necromancer. While his arcane powers over the dead are rumored throughout the empire, as is the fact that he sometimes counsels the Shogun, few realize that he was once called Kaikou and that it was he who brought Kuraikuruma to Kaidan. While not truly a god, as some of his followers believe, he is nonetheless the most powerful spellcaster in all the archipelago and fanatical about the faith he helped to establish.

Ika Province

Ika can rightly boast that it was the birthplace of the Imperial throne and the rise of the Kaidanese civilization, for it was in Ika that iron was first discovered on the island, and it was in Ika that Queen Himiko was born and rose to power. Though the imperial presence long ago moved southward, Ika continues to remember its former glory. A heavily wooded land, full of mystical beauty, Ika is full of ruined castles and hidden ruins, the remnants of deserted towns and abandoned clan holdings. Yokai dwell in great numbers in the woods, oftentimes in the very spots humans once lived, and tengu thrive in the mountains. Meanwhile, in the northern foothills of Mount Ikoyama humans are once more mining for iron, digging deeper than ever before.

Flora

Sugi trees grow throughout the province, many reaching massive sizes rarely seen elsewhere. Oak and pine likewise reach great sizes. Wild cherry trees grow abundantly, especially between the Shisakatoki-gawa and the Sakegoten-gawa. Other trees include maples, elms, rock-oak, mulberry, larches, and beech. A large variety of bamboo also grows in the province, and bamboo grass makes up the chief undergrowth of the forests. Reeds line the rivers and there are several species of grasses which grow nearer to the ocean, susuki being the most prevalent.



Fauna

Spotted deer fill the woods, providing food for the wolves, which also roam in number. Likewise common are black bear and fox. Most mammals common to Anshu, including weasel, rabbits, raccoon dogs, and squirrel can be found somewhere in Ika. Birds are seen frequently, especially in the woods. Common varieties include finches, owls, hawks, woodpeckers, tits, and sparrows. In the winter, the province sees some migration of song birds and water-fowl from out of Genshu, though ducks and geese can be found throughout the year along the rivers. Eagles are common near the mountains, and gulls and other seabirds are ubiquitous along the coast.

Mountains

Three mountain peaks dominate the eastern border of Ika: **Mount Ikoyama**, **Mount Shugenji**, and **Mount Haji**, Of these, Mount Ikoyama is the most important to the Kaidanese, for iron is mined in the northern foothills of the mountain. Mount Haji, whose slopes descend to the east into Oda province, is a tengu mountain, and the Haji Daitengu is revered for his knowledge of languages. It is said that he is able to speak every language on the planet and most of those spoken throughout the planes. The tengu of Mount Haji are the most scholastic of all the Kaidanese tengu and they maintain several temple-libraries, albeit these libraries are each guarded by highly skilled swordmasters.

Rivers and Lakes

The **Habagobo-gawa** is the broadest river in all of Kaidan, being over a mile in width for the majority of its length, and in some places stretching nearly two miles across. The Choudaihashi, the bridge crossing the river northeast of Hiro is one of the greatest feats of engineering in all of Kaidan. North of Habagbo is the **Shisakatoki-gawa,** another broad, slow river. Kappa and henge dwell peacefully near to the Shisakatoki-gawa, unmolested by the Kaidanese, who maintain no villages along the river, east of the Imperial road. Further north yet is the **Sakegoten-gawa.** Lumbering villages lie all along the Sakegoten-gawa, and the river provides not only an abundance of fish to feed the villagers, but also a means by which logs are transported to Goji, where they are sawed and shaped. Flowing to the north, down out of the mountains and into the Joto Strait, is the swift, **Gashigashi-gawa.** No humans reside along this river, but many yokai do.

Government

Lord Sakakikuma no Kinjaro has ruled over Ika province for three hundred and forty-two years. He closely follows Imperial policies as regarding taxation and bureaucracy, and is an effective, albeit unimaginative manager of provincial affairs. Beyond those areas obviously within the control of the Kaidan empire, Lord Sakakikuma has little ambition for extending the reach of his rule: larger holdings would entail greater responsibility, and, while he handles his duties competently, at least as relates to Ika, he is far more interested in indulging his carnal desires than he is in adding to his workload. Indeed, having marginal oversight of Oda, Kosa and Hatsuro provinces as well, Lord Sakakikuma is inclined to think his workload overly large. Yet, the truth is, he exercises his authority over these neighboring provinces but lightly, doing little more than collecting their taxes and taking their reports. It is in part due to his lax oversight that Hatsuko and Kosa have been able to maintain their warring ways with one another for so long.

Government is ever-present in Ika, but not generally overbearing, and the natural bounties of the province, and the skill and dedication of its people, allows the province to thrive in spite of the Daimyo's disinterest. While there are few truly wealthy people in Ika province, there are likewise fewer impoverished than one might find elsewhere in Kaidan. On the whole, the natives of the province view the Daimyo and his men as merely a factor of life to be dealt with and then ignored, as far as possible; and the nature of the daimyo's ambitions allows such an attitude to prosper.

The daimyo's appetites for food and music are well known to all, as is the fact that each evening, a different woman from the province is brought

to his palace. The women leave the palace in the morning with no memory of what transpires within the palace, but no signs of any physical harm. As resisting the summons can bring death to husbands, sons, or other male relatives, and as there seems to be little harm done, most willingly comply with the obnoxious practice.

Cities, Towns, and Areas of Interest

The chief city of the province is **Saka-jo**, which serves as the daimyo's seat. Saka-jo is a fortress city, built atop three hills, and walled about. The daimyo's palace in the center of the the city is less large than some others in Kaidan, but is easily the best guarded. Saka-jo is best known for the weapons produced within its walls, and some of the empires chief sword-makers reside in Saka-jo. North of the Saka-jo, is the port town of **Komi,** which serves the sea-going transportation needs of the larger, land-bound, city and is little more than a sea-side outpost of the former.

Hiro is primarily a farming town, the largest in Ika, and the second largest human community in Ika, but it true importance lies in the services it provides to the daimyo's bureaucracy. The town serves as a hub for rice duties, with farmers from northern Itaro and along the Habagobo-gawa bringing their rice to Hiro. Hiro supplies nearly all the rice used in Saka-jo, and the communities further north in both Ika and Oda. Additionally, the town is tasked with guarding, repairing and maintaining upkeep on the Choudaihashi, the vast two mile long bridge that crosses the Habagobo-gawa.

The large town of **Goji** is renowned for the ships built there, but it is also one of the chief lumber towns in all of Kaidan, and large timbers are shipped from Goji for use in in many building projects throughout the islands.

East of the Shisakatoki-gawa, well hidden in the foothills of Shugenji-san, is the henge town of **Tapa-mi**, one of the oldest and largest henge communities in all of Kaidan. Many ancient magics keep the town hidden from unwanted eyes, and only those who have been there before can easily find the community. Nevertheless, Tapa-mi sees many henge, kappa and tengu visitors daily, and its many inns and taverns do a brisk business. Besides possessing several schools for the training of yokai in fields martial, arcane and divine, Tapa-mi also boast a shrine dedicated to a spring of healing water and the priests that maintain this shrine are generous in sharing its gifts to those with true need.

Tapa-mi, Town of Yokai Wizards

NG Large town
Corruption -2; **Crime** -1; **Economy** +0; **Law** +1; **Lore** +4; **Society** -1
Qualities: Academic, Insular, Magically Attuned
Danger 5

DEMOGRAPHICS

Government magical (Council of Elders)
Population 2130 (1550 henge, 450 tengu 130 kappa)

NOTABLE NPCS

Kikimako (N male badger henge Druid 9th)
Bobosa (NG male rabbit henge Wizard 9th)
Troooka (N female tengu Fighter 2/Cleric 6th)

MARKETPLACE

Base Value 2400 gp; **Purchase Limit** 12,000; **Spellcasting** 9th
Minor Items 3d4; **Medium Items** 2d4; **Major Items** 1d4

There are several Tengu villages upon the slopes of Haji-san and the largest of these is **Hisupika.** Although renowned among the tengu for its two famous sword-schools, Hisupika is also a center of scholastic excellence and the scribes of Hisupika are always eager for new books and manuscripts, especially those possessing historical value.

Economy

Though the iron mines of Ika were once closed, having been thought to have been played out, the work of the Shotomato clan have caused them to be reopened and they are proving more profitable than before. The presence of the newly discovered iron deposits promises to bring great wealth to the Shotomato clan and already other clans are vying to claim land in the province near to the iron mines. In the absence of iron, timbered cedar has been the primary export of the region, followed closely by ships fashioned in Goji. An additional export are weapons and armor crafted in Saka-jo. The city boasts more weapon-smiths than any other city in all of Kaidan and they supply many of the clans and armories in the archipelago.

Secrets of the Region

Ika province contains one of the three sacred bamboo groves of the yokai (the other two being found in Oniba and Unori provinces). The bamboo of the grove has stalks five to ten feet wide, towering hundreds of feet into the air. It is kept by a kitsune priestess, who uses strong illusions to keep humans from finding it.

There are as any kitsune living in Ika province as in all of the rest of Kaidan combined, and these kitsune are closely allied to the henge of the province. Humans in Ika are more fearful of foxes than humans living anywhere else in Kaidan. The kitsune maintain three separate, but sizeable fox enclaves, with each claiming a territory bounded by one of the four principle rivers of the province. The kitsune have no villages of their own, but once a month, when the moon is full, the fox people gather together near the head-waters of the Shisakatoki-gawa for a grand council and feast, often inviting luminaries visiting in Tapa-mi to join them.

Though the fact is not widely known, the town of Hiro trains and maintains some of the best teams of exorcists in Kaidan. Every few weeks the Choudaihashi sees at least one suicide off of its lengths and there is always the danger of the area around the bridge becoming haunted. Thus teams of priests and other spiritualists are sent daily to patrol the length of the bridge, blessing it and consecrating it. Many of these exorcists are hired out upon request, bringing extra income to the town coffers.

Though most people assume that the daimyo uses the women brought to his palace for carnal pleasures, the undead lord is well past such desires. The truth is much more sinister. Lord Sakakikuma feeds on the memories of his evening companions. Having thus dined, he then implants new, artificial memories, thoughts and commands. The women of the province, those that have visited his chambers, each have implanted within them suggestions and ideas which subtly alter their behavior and make them more compliant and loyal to the daimyo. Though the women do not realize their latent loyalties, should an opportunity arise, they are programed to act in a manner most beneficial to the daimyo.

Itaro Province

The most heavily populated of all the provinces, and the heart of the Kaidanese empire, Itaro leads the nation in just about every way: spiritually, politically, militarily and economically. A region of broad, fertile fields, bounded by the sea to the west and mountains to the east, Itaro is under the direct control of the shogun, and though outwardly it is a happy, prosperous place, full of much natural beauty, the facade is thin, hiding a morass of pervasive evil and fetid corruption.

Besides being the political center of the empire, Itaro is also the spiritual hub of Kaidanese Zaoism. In many places in Itaro, including the capital, high ranking Zaoist monks and priests possess as much political power and influence as the mightiest samurai clan lord. Yokinto is much supressed and the yokai have been forcefully and systematically driven out of the province, even within the forests and mountains, an example of the sort of racial zeal the shogun would like to see elsewhere in his realm.

Flora

Though the mountains forming the eastern border of Itaro are heavily wooded, much of the province by both nature and design, is covered with grassy fields and rice paddies. The region is home to a wide variety of grasses and bamboo, including stilt-grass, silver grass, and blood grass, the latter of which is particularly common in the region. One species of bamboo endemic to the province is the silver stalk bamboo, which ironically, when properly blessed, makes a powerful weapon against undead. The plant has been outlawed as an undesirable nuisance weed, the only such plant to receive such official recognition, but nevertheless, groves of the unique bamboo are still found from time to time, especially near to the mountains. Along the rivers, many lush ornamental grasses and reeds grow thick and in abundance. In the grasslands, elm, wingnut and cherry are the most frequently encountered trees, followed by swift growing maples, and other soft-woods. The forest east of Lake Inoshiko contains oak, sugi, maple, cherry, and ash, with a bamboo grass and fern undergrowth. In the mountain forests, common trees include Kaidanese ash, wingnuts, kitsura, cherry, sugi, and pine, with cypress becoming more common in the forests south of Ika.

Fauna

Itaro has less wildlife than some other provinces, due in no small part to the heavier population of humans in the region and the depletion of wildlife through hunting and settlement. Bear are almost unheard of in the province, except in the north, and wolves, while they can still be found in the mountains, rarely descend into the western lowlands, preferring to migrate east, over the mountains in times of hunger and stress. Herds of deer sometimes form, but in regions of farmland, they are heavily hunted, not for the meat, but to prevent damage to crops. Only boar continue to

thrive in large numbers, always a nuisance and sometimes a very real danger for those caught unawares. Years of hunting boar seem to have little to no effect on their numbers and there are many tales of giant boar gods that live yet in the mountains of Itaro, disdainful of men. Hare and a variety of rodents, including mice, vole and moles thrive in the province, due in no small part to a dearth of natural predators. Along the rivers, weasels and otters can still be found, and in the forests and mountains there are yet foxes, bats, badgers and raccoon dogs. Venomous snakes are rare, due in no small part to being hunted out, but rat snakes, grass snakes, and odd tooth snakes thrive. Songbirds are prevalent in the province, with larger birds being found primarily along the coast (gulls, albatross and sea eagles) or in the mountains (eagles, hawks and owls). Ducks are plentiful along the rivers, with some also being raised by farmers for eggs and meat.

Mountains

Mount Kochiyama rises in the north of Itaro, a massive peak known for its violent winter weather. Partway up the mountain is the Miyamakoori monastery, founded by Koyamata Ito in response to a vision of a woman of unsurpassed beauty. South of Kochiyama is **Mount Moumako**, once home to a large number of Anu, now long gone, though some remnants of their civilization yet remain in the form of subterranean bear-temples. In the shadow of Moumako lies **Mount Tamachan**. Tamachan is volcanic, though its eruptions are sporadic and small.

Mount Sumi, east of the capital, is one of the most famous of the mountains in Itaro. Many shrines and temples have been built on the slopes of Sumi-san, the most famous being the Temple of Kaikou, who introduced Kuraikuruma to Kaidan. While Kaikou long ago passed the reigns of the temple on to his successors, his name is yet venerated within the temple that bears his name, and it is taught they he did not die, but instead ascended into the perfect state of undeath. Sumi was once an active volcano, but it has not erupted in many years.

Other mountains in Itaro include **Mount Daruma**, which sprawls between Sumi and Tamachan, **Mount Imoga** in the south, and the **Dobiko** mountains south of Sumi.

Rivers and Lakes

While numerous small streams and creeks flow west from the mountains to the coast, Itaro contains five rivers of note. In the north, the **Takitakigawa**



twists and turns, broad but swift, cascading down with many rapids and falls out of Kochiyama. The waters of the Takitakigawa are cold, even as it flows into the Jintosango bay. Descending from Moumako is the Kudagawa, renowned for the smooth concave black cliffs it flows rapidly between as it exits the mountain.

Three rivers flow through the center of Itaro. They are the **Kinchougawa**, the **Asamakokiyuugawa** and the **Yamomigawa.** The best farmland in Itaro, broad and relatively fertile flat-land, lies in the vicinity of these three waterways, and the region of these rivers is the most heavily settled land in all of Kaidan.

Just west of Fukuhara-kyo is **Lake Inoshiko**. Air blowing off the lake is generally cool, making the capital far more bearable in the summer-time. Though at one time there were several small villages around the lake, edicts making fishing in the lake illegal for peasants led to the dissolution of these villages. Now the lake shores are solely given over to the summer estates of wealthy samurai and the nobility.

Government

Seii Tai Shogun Taira no Kiyomori, grandfather of Emperor Taira no Anotku, and undisputed master of Kaidan, personally holds the office of daimyo of Itaro province. Initially, after the reconquest of the capital, Kiyomori appointed a series of men to serve in that capacity but grew angry and dissatisfied with each of them in turn, so that at the last, he took the responsibility onto himself. He attempts to run Itaro as a role-model of what every province should be, as he sees it. While the shogun has many individuals under him who wield great power as advisers, overseers and commanders, ultimately it is he alone who sets the course of the empire and determines the direction and vision of the government.

Power in government flows down from the shogun through his commanders and chief advisers, and from there to regional magistrates and city governors. In turn, the local magistrates may oversee a number of lesser offices and within each of these offices there are others who manage individual affairs. The capital province is the most bureaucratic province in the empire, with numerous officials having oversight over matters both internal and external. Nearly every bit of government regulation or jurisdiction has its own office of management and every town, no matter how lowly, maintains an official office to handle paperwork, manage deeds, deaths, births, marriages, taxes, and numerous minor matters. There is a popular saying concerning Itaro: Every farmer is a bureaucrat. While this is an exaggeration, it is not far from the truth. While samurai hold all the positions of real authority, it is possible for even a lowly born peasant to find himself having a position in his home village, managing anything from the recordings of birth to disposal of bodily wastes. Each position comes with some measure of authority and an official stipend (however small and subject to taxation). New offices and positions are created, it seems, almost daily, and every man aspires to some manner of government job, regardless of caste or station.

At the same time, Itaro is the most regimented of provinces concerning caste and rank, and such matters are strictly enforced. Non-samurai caught carrying weapons, especially bows or swords, are in danger of immediate and summary execution. Anyone looking a superior in the eyes is in danger of immediate and summary execution. Anyone found to be pretending to an office they do not hold is in danger of immediate and summary execution. And any official found to not be enforcing these regulations is likewise in mortal danger. It is not surprising then that officials are zealous to maintain high standards in insuring everyone understands and acts accord to their station in life.

While the shogun has complete control, in theory at least, over all of Kaidan, bureaucraticly Itaro serves as chief province over Unori, Oteru and Onari provinces, with those daimyo directly answerable to the Shogun and his officials. This oversight is handled, as is all the bureaucracy of Itaro, officiously and with copious amounts of paperwork and file-keeping. Likewise, the provinces of Nijo, Ika, Nigasa and Oniba are all answerable directly to the shogun's ministers, though these chief provinces are all handled by a different set of offices, officials and rules.

Cities, Towns, and Areas of Interest

The largest city in Itaro, indeed the largest city in all of Kaidan, **Fukuhara-kyo** teems with a strange mixture of life and unlife. At the heart of the city is the Imperial palace, the single largest palace in all of Kaidan. The living do not enter the imperial palace, at least not of their own free will: many are dragged there each day to feed the needs of the nobility within, and rumors abound of the dungeons below the palace in which men are raised like wild beasts. Surrounding the imperial palace are the estates of the nobility, Fukuhara-kyo's Heavenly Quarter, a city in it's own right. Behind the many estate walls dwell the families of the daimyo and other exalted nobility, each of them uniformly in one state or another of undeath. Durig the day, the streets of the heavenly quarter are quiet and empty, save for the sound of the occassional street cleaner, or the passage of a still living servant of the nobility. At night, everything changes and they become alive with activity as the nobles interact with one another. Nearly two miles from the edge of the Heavenly Quarter, is the palace of the shogun, high atop a hill and heavily defended. A great road, called the Harmony of Power, leads directly north in a nearly perfectly straight line from the gates of the shogun's palace to the imperial palace. The Harmony of Power is said to be the second greatest feat of engineering in all of Kaidan, and it is a beautiful sight, being perfectly paved with massive sunken white stone and lined with a multitude of ponds, fountains and gardens. The city of Fukuhara-kyo stretches out uniformly on either side of this great thoroughfare, in a well ordered manner and the balance of buildings to the east and west of the Harmony of Power is strictly enforced.

Before Fukuhara-kyo was made the capital, that honor belonged to the city of Rakyo. When the capital moved, Rakyo was renamed **Aki-jo**, and the citizens of Aki-jo were forbidden from owning or carrying weapons. That prohibition has been lifted for the samurai of Aki-jo in the years after, but still today, Aki-jo is renowned for its many schools of unarmed martial arts. The shogun maintains a fortified palace at Aki-jo, and the city currently houses nearly as many military troops as the capital.

Asaki is a large town and serves as the major port of Itaro. This function gives it economic standing far out of proportion to its size. The wealthy, however, is primarily in the hands of two samurai clans, the Mitani and the Nabu. These two clans vie constantly for greater control over the port, and tensions in Asaki are often just shy of breaking out into violence.

North of the Kinchougawa, the Shogun maintains fortifications and standing armies in **Takita** and **Opune**, so that he can respond quickly to any military threats all along the coast of Itaro. These two towns are economically and agriculturally centered on feeding and equipping the units assigned to them. The units in Takita are primarily cavalry and several samurai clans operate horse farms near to the town. Contrarily, Opune focuses on archery, and the premier archery troops in the nation are trained and housed in Castle Monasami, which rises over the small town.

Secrets of the Region

The ground below the imperial palace is honeycombed with passages, tunnels, and dungeons. A portion of these rooms were created for the amusement of the emperor, who enjoys watching men die. Understanding this, it is accepted among the nobles that one way to gain temporary approval from the emperor is to design and finance the creation of a new set of death rooms, in which the emperor can watch prisoners and heroes strive to survive against hard odds and deadly traps. Many of the other chambers serve an even darker purpose. For hundreds of years, the imperial family has kept men in tunnels and warrens below the castle as a sort of livestock. Those kept in the farm tunnels are little more than feral savages, subsisting on any scraps they can find, and sometimes on each other.

Though the shogun has acted to forcefully remove yokai from his province, hunting them, he thinks, to extinction, there is a sizeable group of henge who operate out of Aki-jo. These shapechangers, agents of the Brotherhood of Bamboo, pose as merchants. Their commercial activities give them great access to information on imperial movements and policies, as well as an easy way to disseminate that information to their kin and fellow conspirators throughout Kaidan. They are very careful to maintain their facade as ruthless businessmen, and have, in the course of their activities through the years become quite wealthy.

By and large, the shogun has kept the yakuza from having influence within Itaro, and the many laws against non-samurai carrying weapons go far to maintain this situation. Yet within the port city of Asaki, the yakuza are beginning to make inroads, in no small part because of the Mitani samurai clan, who, in their desire to wrest more power from the Nabu clan, have secretly allied themselves with the Inomi yakuza family. In return for the Mitani looking the other way when the Inomi smuggle goods through Asaki, the Inomi have begun assassinating various of the Nabu, as opportunities present themselves.

Sleeping in the heart of Mount Tamachan is a fire-dragon. This ancient beast has scarcely roused itself for over three hundred years. The entrance to its palace lies on the eastern slopes of the mountain, but the entrance is well hidden and overgrown. The dragon's palace may also be entered through the volcanic cone at the top of the mountain, if one could survive the heat.

There was once a daitengu shrine atop Mount Imoga but after a fierce campaign five hundred years ago, the Shogun "cleansed" the mountain and killed or drove out the tengu. The daitengu himself was imprisoned and tortured in the shoguns' palace. The ruins of the tengu can still be found on the mountain, and atop the mountain the shrine remains. Fifty years ago, quietly and without fanfare, a holy kirin alighted upon the mountain and now waits within the shrine.

Kosa Province

Surrounded on three sides by the sea, Kosa is a land of serene beauty masking hidden peril. Sugi trees, growing tall and straight, dominate the mountainous interior and along the coast, lush grasses grow thick. Yet the grass hides vipers and many dangerous monsters and demons yet prowl the woods. Travelers through the region must be

always on the alert for peril and it is foolhardy to travel alone. Kosa is sparsely populated, with villages of men being found primarily upon the south-eastern coast, living as fishermen and woodsmen. Northwest of the mountains yokai maintain a strong presence and have thus far discouraged human expansion over the mountains, though the Shogun has begun pressing Lord Shamgoru to send expeditions of samurai over the mountains to violently drive out the yokai from their strongholds.

Flora

Sugi trees dominate the province, especially in the mountains, growing tall, straight and numerous. The sugi are interspersed with oak, ash, some maple and a smattering of firs and kitsura. There is little underbrush in the forests, with some hardy grasses, shrubs and bamboo-grasses making an effort, but the soil is too acidic in most places in the mountains to support an abundance of small flora. As one moves away from the mountains, this changes and oaks and ash become more common, and the underbrush becomes thicker, with many flowering shrubs and a variety of bamboo grasses growing thick between and under the trees. In the northwest of the province, tall stands of bamboo are common in the woods. Along the coast, grasses grow thick, and reeds abound along the rivers.



Fauna

Snakes are plentiful in Kosa. Of particular not is the species of small venomous green snake which hides in the grasses near the coast. These snakes feed primarily on birds, and sometimes fish, but are lethal enough to kill a man if they bite him. A second species of viper lairs in the mountains. These pit vipers are potentially less deadly than those snakes which live in the grass-lands, but they are larger and more aggressive. Spotted deer are plentiful in the mountains and lowlands, and there are serow which dwell in the rocky mountain areas. Black bear are common, especially in the north-east of the province, and red foxes and anshu wolves alike can also be found in the region. Near to the rivers there are otter and marten, and seal bask on the north-western shores, especially in the winter. Ducks, geese and swans are all to be encountered along the waterways, and close to the sea gulls and other sea birds abound, including albatrosses and sea-eagles. In the forests there are eagles, hawks, owls, and a variety of small birds, including three species of woodpeckers. West of the mountains, a species of giant wood-bee lairs in the trunks of giant sugi. Their honey is especially prized, but dangerous to extract as the bees are omnivorous and not above supplementing their diet with meat.

Mountains

A single, narrow range of mist-covered mountains, the **Kizunaminemine,** forms the backbone of Kosa. These mountains are predominately comprised of a green sandstone, and are geologically distinct from the volcanic mountains found elsewhere in Kaidan. The central peak of the range is **Mount Aouza,** the top of which is the highest point in the province.

Rivers and Lakes

Kosa has several rivers, all characterized by their rapid flow and many rapids and waterfalls. Even the slowest moving of the seven primary rivers, the **Surusuru-gawa** in the south of Kosa, on the eastern coast, is swift enough to make ferries treacherous. Moreover, as it is prone to swift floods, the road through Kosa passes through the mountains, where the river, though rapid and dangerous yet, is more easily bridged. North of the Surusuru-gawa is the **Midorinoneko-gawa,** named for the legend of a green wild cat rumored to prowl its banks at night. Like its sister river, the Midorinoneko-gawa is prone to violent floods and thus there is no bridge over the river. Rather, at the town of Kasua, near to

the mouth of the river, one may charter an ocean ferry to travel further up coast. The third river on the eastern coast of Kosa, and the shortest of the provinces seven rivers, is the **Tsuiha-gawa.** This forked river is little more than one long continuous series of falls, descending down from the mountains to the sea. The sandstone rock through which the Tsuiha-gawa flows has been carved by the rushing water, forming many recess caves along the rivers edge.

Flowing north, north-east along the western edge of the Kisunaminemine is the **Suyakagawa.** Though much of this river's "shore" is cliff walls, the land rises precipitously on the eastern edge of the river and hundreds of waterfalls cascade into the river from this direction. The river flows through a variety of astounding rock formations. Though few people live along the river, adventurous souls in Yoshika sometimes make the dangerous trek upriver to view these formations for themselves. South of the Suyakagawa, west of the mountains, are the **Nijibashi-gawa,** the **Samehachi-gawa** and the **Ijushujugawa.** Henge live along these rivers, the Ijusujugawa in particular, in small farming and hunting villages. There are also many kappa still living in and near the rivers. The kappa are most numerous around the Samehachi-gawa. All three rivers are prone to flooding in the rainy season, and those henge villages closest to the rivers have been rebuilt many times.

Government

Lord Shimoshika no Shimoutako has been Daimyo of Kosa province for five hundred, ninety-two years, and is known for his adherence to tradition. Mistrusting innovation, he seeks to maintain all things just as they were in the youth of his life. Anything "modern" is outlawed in his province, regardless of its utility, unless forced upon him by the shogun. The samurai of Kosa are therefore a bit more rustic than their counterparts elsewhere in Kaidan, and the bureaucracy of Kosa is likewise very antiquated in how it deals with matters.

Taxes within the province are standard for the empire, but the province is so impoverished and underpopulated, that revenue is slight and most of it goes to the shogun as tribute. The daimyo's palace outside Yoshika is, by the standards of Kaidan, a small affair, with a slight staff. Regional oversight is modest, though all samurai clan head are required to make reports, in person, to the daimyo's chief of staff each month.

Cities, Towns, and Areas of Interest

Yoshika is the primary human community in Kosa and is the provincial seat of the daimyo. Built amidst majestic sandstone rock formations high above the Suyakagawa, Yoshika is one of the oldest extant settlements in all of Kaidan, dating its history to shortly after the death of Queen Himiko. While most of the town is built of wood and bamboo, there are several structures including the main building of the palace, which were built using the local sandstone. The **Huja shrine**, located just north of Yoshika, is one of the oldest human maintained yokinto shrines in all the archipelago, being as old as the town itself. Though the shrine is rebuilt every twenty years, the same family has maintained control of the shrine for the entirety of its existence. The Kinji clan, responsible for trade within the province, maintains a harbor at the mouth of the Suyakagawa, though few permanent buildings are built next to the river due to the threat of flooding.

The second human settlement of note in Kosa is **Kasua,** a dark sinister sort of town, with a reputation for being a dangerous place to visit at night. The inhabitants of Kasua are an insular lot, with broad, swarthy faces and large eyes. Those outside the town often insinuate that the inhabitants have more than a small amount of Anu blood in their heritage. The town is ruled by a single samurai clan, the Sakayako, and the common people of the town are fanatically loyal to their lieges. The town operates the ferry service across the mouth of the Midorinoneko-gawa and the majority of the men of the town, including members of the Sakayako, are skilled fishermen and boaters. The local shrine, the **Gobyou-no-dekishikami**, is located offshore, upon a rocky outcropping about a quarter of a mile from the village, at the juncture where the river water mingles with the sea water. The townspeople row out to the shrine on the night of the new moon, for a monthly celebration.

Hidden from the eyes of men, deep in the woods, half-way between the Samehachi-gawa and the Ijushujugawa is the henge village of **Yun'kim.** The largest henge village in all of Kosa, the elders of Yun'kim weild a great deal of influence over all the henge villages between the rivers, even to the point of levying taxes on their neighboring villages to support a small standing army. Some henge complain that the Yun'kim council ape the political structures of the humans, but they cannot deny that the council has brought a great deal of structure and unity to the region, and that the trained military units the village sends to patrol the region has kept everyone a great deal safer.

Economy

Kosa is the poorest of all the provinces of Anshu. Its insulated nature and backwards ways does a good deal to inhibit economic growth, but the soil is also poor for farming and the rice production of the province is the lowest of all the provinces of Anshu. The province exports very little, save the services of the its samurai, the Sakayako clan in particular.

Secrets of the Region

The Kappa of the Samehachi-gawa prize the honey of the local giant bees and are skilled in collecting it. They ferment a unique honey mead with it, a drink found no-where else in all of kaidan. Samples of this mead can fetch a high price among collectors, but its true potency is in its ability to hold enchantments cast upon it, so that it functions as a potion.

Buried below the Kizunaminemine mountains is the ancient city of Yoshi-jo. This subterranean city was carved by men at the order of ancient queen Himiko, for reasons lost to time. Though vast and the labor of many lives, the city was abandoned after her death as it was deemed impractical to dwell apart from easy access to crops and food. Many of those that lived within the city settled northward, establishing Yoshika. Today the city of Yoshi-jo is just a legend and the entrances to the city are forgotten, at least by men. The henge know where it is and they know that oni have moved into the city, establishing it as a fortress. Though the city could house many thousands more monsters and demons, it is still a dangerous place to find.

Lord Shimoshika maintains a long standing feud with Lord Suwanuma of Hatsuko province, and sometimes sends samurai across the border to conduct raids on the horses and lands of his enemy. A samurai of Kosa can earn a good reputation through such actions, and the majority of the horses in the province are either stolen, or the descendants of stolen horses. Likewise, there are more than a few clan "heirlooms" in Kosa which had once belonged to clans of Hatsuko.

Kasua is a village of secrets and the Sakayako clan is at the heart of its mystery. Long a power in the region, the Sakayako are a family of sorcerers, with ancient ties to the ocean. Three hundred years ago, members of the Koji clan of Shojo in Unori province, married into the Sakayako clan and through this union founded the sixth branch of Kaidanese shinobi, the Yaminamimahou school of assassination, which relies on magic to kill its targets. Beyond this role as ninja, the Sakayako also serve their community as priests and avatars of the sea spirits worshipped by the people of Kasua. Worship in the Gobyou-no-dekishikami is a parody of true yokinto and involves ritual human sacrifices which are sunk into the sea as offerings to the entities that live therein. Sacrifices are most often chosen from the ranks of any travelers which might be staying in the town's solitary inn.

Lord Shimoshika is a lich, although his spellcasting prowess is rather lackluster considering his status. He owes his condition and his position more to good fortune than any true skill. Nevertheless, he considers himself an intellect of the first order and spends his time in amassing literature, especially of an arcane or esoteric nature. His palace, though modest, boasts a tremendous library of ancient tomes, many of which are entirely unique, and not a few of which are potent in their potential.

Nijo Province

By all rational measurements save one, Nijo, the smallest of the provinces of Anshu, should be a poor, unpopulated region. Besides being comprised, in the main, of mountainous jungle, the region is also highly volcanic. The earth quakes on a nearly daily basis, and smoke billows forth continually from Mount Gunso. The best land in the province, that along the Boukasuigawa, floods violently with the spring rains, and then again, with regularity, when typhoon season begins, a problem accentuated by the fact that more than half of all the typhoons which strike Kaidan hit Nijo. Add to these things the unbearable heat and humidity in the spring and summer, the sever snowfall on Mount Gunso in the winter (which causes even more flooding in the spring), the multitude of biting insects endemic to the province, and the multitudes of monsters which lair within the jungle, and one might well wonder why anyone would live in Nijo, let alone why Nijo would be given oversight of the neighboring provinces of Shingo, Tojima and Hamato.

However, the same volcanoes which make the region so dangerous are responsible as well for its success. Nijo is a province rich in ore. The mountains of Nijo, Gunso-san in particular, contain proven veins of iron, silver, tin, gold and copper. Close to sixty percent of all the metals produced in Kaidan come out of Nijo.

Flora

Broad leaved evergreens, including chinquapin and evergreen oak, grow abundantly in Nijo, as

do chestnuts, and cycads. In the mountains there are pine, cedar and sugi, though they do not reach the sizes often seen in other parts of Kaidan. Along the river, and within the coastal forests, grow mangroves, katsura, musa, pigeon wood trees, tree ferns, tassel ferns, and a variety of bamboos. Ferns and bamboo grass comprise the majority of undergrowth in the forests. Along the rivers, grasses and reeds grow lush. The residents of Nijo cultivate a number of citrus trees, such as the yuzu, sudachi and kinkan. They also cultivate grapes in great numbers, and grapes are the only food regularly exported out of the province.

Fauna

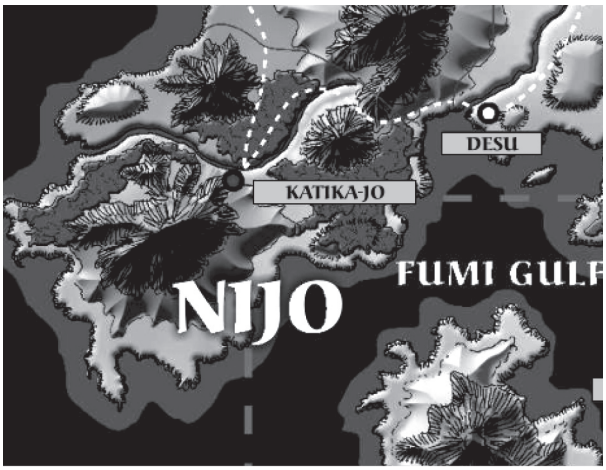
Deer, and Anshu wolves are the primary large mammals living in Nijo, though their packs and herds are seldom large. Bear and boar also live in Nijo, though in very small numbers. More common are the smaller mammals: rabbits, squirrels, mice, moles, weasels, and red foxes. Nijo boasts a great variety of songbirds inland, and gulls and albatross are ubiquitous, especially on the western shores. A variety of lizards make their homes in the jungle, as do snakes, including a species of boa which can be found nowhere else in Kaidan. In the mountains lair giant black scaled constrictors, snakes large enough to eat men. Of all its wildlife, Nijo is most famous for its insects, many of which aggressively bite or sting. Among the most dangerous of these insects is a species of giant ants, with an affinity for fire, which make their nests in Mount Gunso.

Mountains

Nijo has three mountains, all of which are active volcanoes. The largest and most active of these volcanoes is **Mount Gunso**. Gunso-san is also the mountain richest in mineral wealth and, despite the danger of giant ants, earthquakes and eruptions, thousands of men work daily to extract ores from its surface. In the winter, snowfall on Gunso can be heavy, but snow rarely lasts, and when the volcanic energies melt the snows, the water descends in great, muddy washes down the side, sweeping along trees and wildlife in its wake. North of Gunso, across the Boukasuigawa, is **Mount Gyokagyra**, the top of which maintains a faint but perpetual red glow, visible on most nights. The smallest of the three mountains, **Mount Hamusha**, is also the least active, volcanically.

Rivers and Lakes

The **Boukasuigawa**, flowing out of Onari and across the entire length of the province, is the primary river of Nijo. The river, flows rapidly, being fed by the waters coming down from four separate mountains, and it is prone to violent floods in both the spring and the fall. In the summer, temporary fishing camps are often built along the river, but come flood season, these camps are abandoned. When the river is not flooding, it may be crossed by ferry north of Katika-jo.



Government

Lord Sugasora no Harumori, daimyo of Gunso for four hundred thirteen years, dwells in a palace set into the cliff face abutting the southern edge of Katika-jo. While the palace, the majority of which is comprised of carved chambers deep in the rock, is nigh impenetrable to outside attack, the frequent earthquakes in the region make many doubt Lord Sugasora's sanity, at least privately, or else to speculate that the palace is maintained through dark magics. Slaves work constantly to repair, reinforce and expand the subterranean structure and the structure is a source of wonder and fascination to all who see it.

There are two primary divisions to the provincial government, and they operate largely independent of one another. The first division, which works from office buildings in the heart of Katika-jo's business district, is tasked with the oversight of the three provinces of Shingo, Tojima and Hamato. This particular bureaucracy is currently overseen by Shinjotake Tiaka, perhaps the most honest and efficient government official in all of Kaidan, who nonetheless maintains his post through sheer determination and cunning. The second division, that tasked with managing the province itself, operates out of offices attached to the palace, and it is this division which maintains the taxation and policing

of Nijo. Yashokimo Tametaka heads the internal bureaucracy and is a polar opposite of Shinjotake Tiako, being cruel, inefficient and thoroughly corrupt; maintaining his post through sheer ruthlessness. The two men hate each other, and are constantly battling via official channels and bureaucratic underlings.

Taxes in the region are very high; Lord Sugasora uses the excess beyond what the shogun demands and the necessities of administration to fund the perpetual expansion of his palace ever deeper into the mountain. Official patrols keep a close watch on the two primary provincial roads, especially guarding shipments of ore going out from Katika-jo. Beyond this purview, official oversight is minimal, requiring individuals and communities to provide their own security.

Cities, Towns, and Areas of Interest

Nestled in the rocky foothills of Gunso, and surrounded on three sides by steep cliff walls, lies the bustling city of **Katika-jo,** provincial seat and chief settlement of Nijo. The cities income, like that of the province, revolves around the mining industry located on Gunso, and the majority of the miners in the province make their homes in the city. The city is divided into three tiered layers, each walled from the other, and a winding chief road threads its way ever higher into the city. At the very top of the city, at the southern edge, lies the entrance to the daimyo's palace. The wealthier and more privileged live closest to the palace, while the poorest live furthest from it. Industry fills the city, and the smoke of countless furnaces and smithies rises perpetually from its many chimneys.

Katika-jo, City of Industry, Provincial Capital of Nijo

CN small city
Corruption +3; **Crime** +1; **Economy** +3; **Law** +3; **Lore** +1; **Society** -1
Qualities: Industrious, Notorious, Prosperous, Racially Intolerant (non-humans)
Danger 5

DEMOGRAPHICS

Government overlord (Lord Sugasora)
Population 7500 (7500 humans)

NOTABLE NPCS

Daimyo Lord Sugasora (CE male human lich Wizard 13)
Yashokimo Tametaka (LE male human Expert 3/ Samurai 4)
Captain of the Guard Yashokimo Hadaki (LE male human Samurai 6)

MARKETPLACE

Base Value 6400 gp; **Purchase Limit** 50,000; **Spellcasting** 6th
Minor Items 4d4; **Medium Items** 3d4; **Major Items** 1d6

Though there are no permanent villages along the Boukasuigawa, every year, following the spring floods, makeshift fishing villages form along the river. The majority of those who comprise these villages also maintain grape farms north of the river. When the summer and fall floods begin, the villages are abandoned and those living within take their catches and return to their farms. One of these tent villages is to be found in the same location each year and is large enough to warrant its own name, **Katichan**. Katichan, besides serving as a fishing community, does duty as a yakuza meet-up, with yakuza families sending emissaries each year to the location to negotiate contracts, seal bargains, and settle disputes with other families.

North of Boukasuigawa, overlooking the Naga sea, is the **Didokiko Watchtower,** the ruins of a massive fortress, long since abandoned by the shogun. Today it houses the Didokiko sword school, a martial academy which secretly advocates the practice of Tenraikuruma zaoism, a doctrinal position at odds with imperial dogma. The monks of Didokiko are aware that were they to openly promulgate their faith, the forces of the shogun would turn against them and so they train, dreaming of a day when they can take a stand against what they perceive to be a blasphemous interpretation of Zaoism.

Economy

Nijo is the largest producer of grapes in all of Kaidan, with grape orchards lining the road leading to Onari. However, grapes are hardly the biggest factor in Nijo's wealth; that honor goes entirely to the ores mined on Guson and processed in Katika-jo. While the amount of ore mined is hardly enough for all of the needs of Kaidan, it is enough to bring great amounts of wealth into the province and to make Nijo the leading producer of metal in the empire. This wealth is by no means equitably distributed; much of the wealth goes to paying for the perpetual expansion of the daimyo's subterranean palace, but the poor of Katika-jo nevertheless enjoy a marginally better standard of living than that to be found elsewhere in Kaidan.

Secrets of the Region

Though tengu do not live in great number within the mountains of Nijo, disliking the seismic activity, there is a rather unique tengu shrine named Sadajuto which lies within the very fiery heart of Mount Gyokagyra. Built three hundred years previously, Sadajuto, unlike other tengu shrines, is devoted to spirits of fire and flame. The tengu builder, Kaamin no Gyokagyra, master of both sword and flame, dwells immortal, as one of the daitengu, within Sadajuto, spending his days in meditation and training. Though very few, even among the tengu, know of the shrine's existence, every few years a knowledgable tengu arrives at the mountain seeking to become a student of the fire master. Most such applicants do not survive the grueling ordeals which follow, but those who do leave as masters of the Sadajuto fire-blade technique, a devastating martial discipline which utilizes both sword and flame alike to decimate foes.

A river dragon rests in the Boukasuigawa. This dragon slumbers in the winter and summer, but awakens with the spring and fall floods to revel in the destruction caused by its river. The dragon's existence is rumored but most who actually see it perish. The daimyo has recently began to plan on a method to either capture or destroy the dragon, fearing and coveting its power.

Lord Sugasora no Harumori's transition to undeath severly unhinged his mind, instilling a profound sense of paranoia and persecution in him. He has a profound fear of assassination, and a perpetual sense that other nobles are plotting his death. His perpetual migration ever deeper into the mountain of Gunso is one aspect of this paranoia; indeed the daimyo only leaves his palace when the shogun requires him in the capital; at all other times, he deals with the world entirely through intermediaries, giving the heads of his bureaucracies a great amount of power. While many suspect the underground chambers of the palace must be quite extensive, few realize that the daimyo's servants have carved out rooms and chambers as far as a mile into the mountain. While some of the palace rooms are inhabited by servants, both living and unliving, others exist as little more than intentional death-traps, designed to catch and eliminate intruders.

Oda Province

Heavily forested Oda possesses a scattered population of woodsmen, fishermen, and outlaws. Though it lacks large settlements, it nonetheless has more people living in it than any of the other northern provinces of Anshu; those living there merely live in small groups scattered across the province rather than in a centralized locale. Oda is often seen as a refuge for those seeking to flee from undesirable situations elsewhere, and the populace tends to be more open towards inter-caste relationships than is elsewhere true on Anshu.

Though Oda has more than its share of bandits and outlaws, it also possesses a sub-culture of wandering ronin who work to keep the peace and bring lawbreakers to justice. Those samurai loyal to the daimyo generally tolerate these ronin, even , at times, hiring or supporting them in various tasks, though they still look down on them as social inferiors.

Flora

The bulk of Oda is forest, the trees being a mixture of coniferous and deciduous trees throughout. Sugi grows large, though not quite as uniformly large or as tall as in neighboring Ika province. Oaks, maple, and ash are common trees, as are short pines and twisted firs. Fern and bamboo grass make up he bulk of the forest undergrowth, though these are interspersed with flowering shrubs and hardy grasses. Barberry bushes are common in spots, often growing so thick as to prevent easy passage.

Fauna

Oda has more wolves per square acre than any other province of Anshu. The wolves are of the typical Anshu stock and rarely threaten men. Indeed most of the inhabitants, men and yokai alike revere the wolves and leave food for them. Despite the large wolf population, deer are still plentiful, as are boar. Bear dwell in fewer numbers in Oda than one might expect and local legends tell of a migration of bear across the strait to Genshu when the Amu were chased out of the region. There are a surprising number of weasels and marten in the region, as well as a large river rat which can grow up to four feet in length. Fox are most numerous in the south of Oda, but they are not exclusive solely to the south. The fox of Oda have a reputation for being especially cunning, a reputation likely owing to the kitsune that inhabit the province. Heron are plentiful along the rivers, sharing the river shores with swan, ducks, and numerous other water-fowl. Hawks are a common sight in the skies above Oda, and eagles and owls can also be spotted with regularity. A variety of small birds fill the woods, with woodpeckers being one of the most common birds. Gulls are numerous along the coast and east of Lake Okireisenthere is a colony of giant red beaked gulls which nest along the shore. These gulls are especially fearsome, but killing them is considered bad luck.



Mountains

Oda has no mountains uniquely its own, sharing the **Ikoyama** and **Haji** mountains with Ika. There are many tengu living on Mount Haji and they are, in fact, more numerous on the eastern half of the mountain, that side lying in Ika. There are few iron mines on Ikoyama-san than in neighboring Ika, but there are some and, without exception, they are owned by the Kaso clan, as a consequence of which, the Kaso are the wealthiest of the samurai in Oda.

Rivers and Lakes

The primary river of Oda province is the **Arukimawarugawa,** a meandering body of water that flows from Mount Ikoyama north into the sea. A relatively slow river, for Kaidan, the Arukimawarugawa is home to many water-fowl and a large number of kappa make their home on the northern shore of the river. Smaller than the Arukimawarugawa is the **Hay'ka-gawa.** Though the waters of the Hay'ka-gawa are swifter and colder than that of its sister river, there are more humans living along the river and the road near the Hay'ka-gawa is the best protected section of road in the province, excepting for the land closest to Ikaga.

Southeast of the Arukimawarugawa is Lake Okireisen, whose waters, stories say, are sometimes salty and sometimes sweet, depending on the mood of the water spirits that live in the lake. Sea birds live near the lake in large numbers and there are rumors of giant sea creature lairing in its depths. Despite the many stories surrounding the lake, the fish normally caught on the lake are off the normal fresh-water variety. Flowing from Okireisen into the sea is the placid **Bikou-gawa**.

There are two notable rivers in southern Oda: the **Harimomi-gawa**, named for the many pruce which grow near to it, and the **Bottari-gawa.** Both of these rivers flow swift and cold, with numerous falls. The Bottari-gawa contains many recessess and caves behind its falls, and bandits, oni, and a variety of strange creatures have all been known to make their homes in these caves.

Government

Lord Inji serves as daimyo of Oda province, ruling from his arcane palace, served by a contingent of seventeen powerful veiled servants who carry out his every command tirelessly and speedily. It is well known that Lord Inji is a powerful spell-caster and though his palace is to be found on a hill overlooking Ikaga, he is able to make it appear anywhere he wishes within his province, and routinely does so, though it never appears to leave its true locale. Inji is obviously not the daimyo's true name. That name is known only to the Shogun, who appointed Inji to the post six hundred and thirty seven years previously.

Bureaucracy is apparently very light, seemingly non-existent in Oda, with no official branches of government anywhere to be found. However, the daimyo manages to keep paperwork on everything that goes on in his province, and his servants regularly arrive on the doorsteps of those living within the province, including yokai and bandits, to collect all taxes due, seemingly knowing every detail of life, from births to deaths to marriages, relevant to their collections. The fact that taxes are collected from even those normally outside the purview of the government, such as the yokai, is not a fact well known outside of Oda, and is not even known by all those within Oda. The yokai, for their part, aware that the daimyo is aware of them, pay what is claimed to be due, afraid to bring wrath down upon themselves.

Security along the roads is nominally provided by the Hijomato clan of Ikaga, but they are too small to fully patrol the roads and heavily rely upon ronin and other hired swords. For this service the daimyo pays them a stipend; but in return, they must answer for any of his interests that are harmed by bandits and thieves. Strangely, though the daimyo himself never pursues or puts a price on the heads of bandits, and though he does collect taxes of the bandits, a percentage of all they steal, he nevertheless expects the Hijomato clan to do their best to kill the bandits. Such behavior is typical of Lord Inji, who seems to delight in everyone and everything fulfilling a certain role in the world to the best of their ability.

Cities, Towns, and Areas of Interest

The largest human community in Oda is **Ikaga,** a port town on the north-east shore of Oda. Ikaga serves as the primary egress for those few goods leaving Oda, as well as a port of entry for those who do not want to travel overland. Ikaga also serves as the provincial capital for Oda, though, in truth, this distinction means very little to the populace, as the daimyo's palace is a half a mile from the town, on a steep hill, and the daimyo interacts with the town as much as he does with the rest of the province: like everyone else in Oda, the only time the daimyo's presence is felt by the citizens of Ikaga is when one of the daimyo's vieled servants arrive for tax collection. Of more import to the activities of the town are the wishes of the Habutaeken clan, which dwells on estates south of the town. Though the town derives some income as a port town, most of the town's prosperity comes from coin spent by the Habutaeken. Besides working to cater to the needs of the noble Habutaeken, the townsfolk also work as fishermen and pearl-divers.

The village of **Kirunodo,** on the north bank of Harimomo-gawa, is a tough community comprised of ronin, former bandits, and retired sell-swords; all seeking to settle with wives and children and begin a new life. Led by a ronin who calls himself Koumanko, the men of the village protect the bridge crossing the river, and the thereabouts. They charge steep fees to any non-samurai using the bridge, but are honorable in their dealings and do not prevent others from crossing the river elsewhere. About six miles upriver from Kirunodo is the yokai village of **Saba.** Saba contains an eclectic mix of yokai, including tengu and a family of kappa. The Saba yokai have peaceful dealings with Kirunodo, and an agreement to provide mutual aid to the other in times of need, a rarity in modern Kaidan racial politics.

Kirunodo, Village of Ronin

LN village
Corruption -1; **Crime** -2; **Economy** +0; **Law** +1; **Lore** +0; **Society** -1
Qualities: Insular, Strategic Location
Danger 0

DEMOGRAPHICS

Government autocracy (Koumanko)
Population 95 (93 humans, 2 henge)

NOTABLE NPCS

Village Leader Koumanko (LN male human Samurai 7)
Koumanko's wife, Jinkokamira (LG female human Cleric 3)
Former Bandit Jo (CG male human Rogue 5)

MARKETPLACE

Base Value 550 gp; **Purchase Limit** 2500; **Spellcasting** 3rd
Minor Items 2d4; **Medium Items** 1d4; **Major Items** -

Economy

Oda exports very little. The services of the Habutaeken clan bring in some amount of coin as does iron, mined on the slopes of Ikoyama-san by the Kaso clan. Pearls from Ikaga and furs and leathers make up the rest of the exports. Though the region is rich in lumber, it is considered too difficult to transport out of the province, and thus little actual lumbering is done other than to support local and immediate needs.

Secrets of the Region

Though its exact location has been lost to time, most scholars correctly deduce Oda province to contain the tomb mound of Queen Himiko. This mound lies north of the Arukimawarugawa, deep in the woods. Many treasures still lie buried within, but they are guarded by those that were buried with the queen, and Queen Himiko herself sleeps only lightly, rising from her burial chamber with the fullness of the moon to reenact the grisly rites she practiced in life.

Many of the secrets of Oda revolve around Lord Inji. A few of these secrets are as follows:

Lord Inji was once Hasatako Inimanoko, a powerful court wizard and head of the Hasatako clan. He slaughtered his entire clan in an evil ritual, embuing the shogun with vast amounts of necromantic power. In exchange, the shogun made him lord of Oda in perpetuity, to do with as he would. Unbeknownst to the shogun, the ritual had a secondary beneficiary of the power generated: Inimanoko himself. Lord Inji is very probably the second most powerful lich in all of Kaidan, behind only Kagayakyou himself in ability.

Inji is one of only a few living souls who knows the location of Queen Himiko's chambers, and unlike all others, he has entered the queen's catacombs, becoming the undying shade's consort and privy to many of her ancient secrets.

Among other abilities, Lord Inji is one of the few remaining individuals in Kaidan capable of soul binding: the ritual by which heirloom artifacts were once made.

The palace of Lord Inji is an arcane wonder, capable of being two places at once. By binding souls to his palace in a ritual very similar to that used to make an heirloom artifact, Lord Inji gave his palace a spiritual essence which he is capable of projecting, via the realm of the dead, to anywhere in Kaidan; he is in no way bound by the borders of his province.

The daimyo's seventeen servants are strange abominations: undead oni bound body and soul to the daimyo. They are capable of teleportation and shapechanging, though the daimyo keeps them bound into the form of large, veiled, muscular humanoids. Each of the servants was crafted from a different oni race and each possesses their own unique powers.

Buried deep within Lord Inji's palace are a multitude of bound divination spirits which keep tireless track of all that goes on within Oda and maintain mountains of papers and files one everything. Other bound servitors collates this material and assess, with meticulous accuracy, who owes what taxes. The daimyo himself rarely checks the paperwork, but he does keep abreast of any developments that peak his interests.

The Habutaekan clan, led by Lady Habutaekan Sadano, are practitioners of the Geiyuusatsu school of shinobi, one of the six Kaidan schools of assassination. Geiyuusatsu assassins are trained to seduce their targets and then kill them unawares. While both men and women alike are trained in the art, the clan itself is a matriarchy and men traditionally play a secondary role in the politics of the clan. At any given time, only a fourth of the clan dwells on the clan estates, for the Habutaekan practice is to embed their members deep within other clans, so that those members may act promptly when ordered to do so. Besides hiring themselves out as assassins, Habutaekan derive a good deal of their income as spies and information brokers. Indeed, though the citizens of Ikaga do not realize it, their chief import is information. Lady Sadano receives regular missives and coded messages keeping her abreast with events happening all over Kaidan.

Onari Province

The "bread-basket" of Kaidan, Onari province produces more rice than any other province in all of Kaidan. A land of well watered rolling hills and rich, fertile soil, Onari is dotted with numerous small villages, almost all of which are devoted, in the main, to farming. It is also the second most populous of all the provinces, behind only Itaro in number of souls dwelling therein, and then only because of the heavy population of the capital. The countryside of Onari is much more densely populated than any other province.

Flora

A goodly portion of the Onari countryside is devoted to farming. Rice is the predominate crop, but a goodly number of other grains are produced also, including barley and wheat. Beyond the fields, the land is primarily grassland. The rich soil supports a wide variety of grasses, shrubs, and bamboo. Onari is the least forested of all the provinces on Anshu. Ornamental cherries and maples, and dwarf sugi have all been heavily cultivated and are used to line the roads crisscrossing the province. In the woods elm, ash, maple and oak are the most common trees, though sugi and other evergreens grow thickly on the slopes of Mount Dedemushi.

Fauna

Most of the larger wildlife native to Anshu are rarities in heavily settled Onari. Bear, deer, boar and wolves may sometimes be encountered in the mountains, but seldom in the farm-fields, where men with dogs and weapons are ready to chase them away (especially the deer and boar). There are probably more domesticated dogs in Onari than in any other province on Anshu; likewise domesticated hogs are numerous. Fox, due in the main to superstition, escape the persecution afflicted on other animals. Because of this, and the absence of other large competitors such as wolves, fox abound and are a common sight in the wild. The high number of fox contributes to Onari having a higher percentage of kitsune than many other provinces, which in turn contributes to the continuance of the many legends surrounding fox-kind. The lack of forested land means there are slightly fewer songbirds in Onari than elsewhere, though field birds, such as grouse and pheasant, are more prolific and larks are common. Eagles, hawks and owls all dwell in the mountains, as do woodpeckers, thrush and mountain larks.

Mountains

Onari shares **Mount Imoga** with Itaro province, but citizens of the province tend to think of the mountain as their own, if for no other reason than Ochi-jo is nestled at its foot. Dozens of monasteries have been built on the slopes of Imoga, above Ochi-jo and the mountain has a reputation for being an especially sacred mountain. To the southeast of

Imoga-san is **Mount Ikokun,** famous for the wild men rumored to wander its slopes.

Mount Dedemushi, so named because, with its large round mountain top on the east, and a broad smaller peak to the west, it looks a little like some enormous, forest-covered snail, lies near to the center of the province. Dedemushi is the only mountain in Onari to have a noteworthy tengu-presence. The lower slopes of the mountain provide refuge for a half-dozen small bandit gangs, mostly made up of men who have fled authorities due to inability to pay their taxes. **Mount Ichisakin**, in the southeastern corner of Onari likewise harbors bandits, those these tend to be both more canny and more dangerous than those on Dedemushi-san. The bandits of Ichisakin occasionally make forays westward, to attack ore shipments coming out of Nijo, though such attempts meet with failure more often than not.

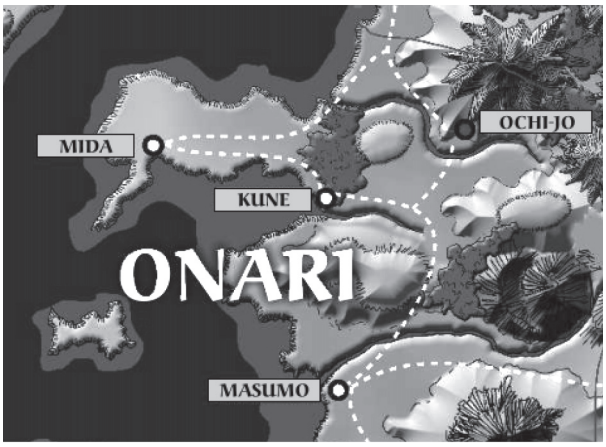
Rivers and Lakes

Numerous small streams flow actoss Onari, watering the land before flowing into one of the three major rivers of the province. The **Hebidaio-gawa** is watered by streams flowing down out of both Mount Ikokun and Mount Imoga. It flows swift and fast, cascading over many falls before finally ending its journey in the Naga Sea. South of the Hebidaio is the **Hebichan-gawa**, also often called "The Little Sister." This short river is marginally slower than its "big sister" and is considered quite a scenic river. The longest of the three rivers in the province is the **Hakuryuaiji-gawa**. This white foamed river is no less swift than the Hebidaio-gawa, and is likewise fed by streams from two different mountains.

Government

Daimyo **Lord Daidoiendo no Kinjiromaro** of the Palace of Ten Temples is something of a sycophant in matters related to the Shogun and the culture of the capital. He strives in every way to emulate the manner in which Lord Tairo conducts his affairs and constantly points his underlings towards the latest fad underway within the capital as an example of how they too should behave. Despite this, he is a competent administrator and rules over Onari efficiently, and when necessary, ruthlessly. Lord Daidoiendo's primary responsibility, beyond quashing the occasional rebellion, is to ensure that food is harvested on time and delivered to Itaro and those other regions dependent upon Onari.

Despite its mostly rural nature, bureaucracy in Onari is second only to Itaro in its complexity



and expanse. Samurai regularly patrol the roads, tax-collectors are stationed in every village, and officials record nearly everything, archiving it in the provincial capital of Ochi-jo. Taxes are maintained in exact accordance with imperial standards, and tax-collectors are severely punished at the slightest suggestion of corruption or incompetence. Likewise, rebellion, once a problem, especially in the eastern regions of the province, closer to the mountains, or even the merest hint of rebellion, brings swift reprisal.

The daimyo, before accepting his position as daimyo, served as a priest in the Zaoist church, and is yet an ardent devotee of the faith. It is with some regularity that he sponsors the construction of new temples and monasteries throughout the province, and surrounds himself with others who are as zealous for Zaoism as he himself is. Though there are strong remnants of yokinto yet remaining in Onari, it is almost a hidden faith, practiced quietly and without fanfare.

Cities, Towns, and Areas of Interest

The capital of the province, and the only city in the province, **Ochi-jo** sits in the foothills of Mount Imoga. A heavily fortified city that relies on the natural terrain and strong stone buildings for defenst, Ochi-jo is most distinguished by its many religious buildings and the numerous which fill its streets, all reflecting a long heritage of spiritual zeal. There are over a dozen martial monastic orders in Ochi-jo, and there are more than that further up the mountain. The cities monks (and sometimes their brethren from the mountain-side) play a complex game of one-up-man-ship, constantly vying for the favor of the people and the good-will of the daimyo. There are constant tournaments as the champions of each school fight one another to prove their skill,

and the head-monks regularly debate fine points of theology over tea or sake in public houses. The daimyo approves of all of this, and encourages it, sometime forcefully so. The daimyo's palace lies in the heart of the city, a magnificent walled structure containing no less than ten seperate zaoist temples, each one placed strategically around the daimyo's own quarters. It is sometimes said that half the citizens of Ochi-jo are priests, but while this is an exaggeration, there are many priests in the city, and the city is responsible for the training of nearly a third of the priests serving elsewhere in Kaidan.

The towns of **Kune, Masumo** and **Mida** all serve as port-towns for Onari. Ships containing grains and rice sail from these three towns regularly, carrying their cargo all across Kaidan, although admittedly more than half the shipments go to Asaki in Itaro. Despite their commonality of purpose, the three communities are very much distinct. Kune is an upright town, with a friendly sort of disposition, and a reputation for honesty and forthrightness. Mida is a town run by a rather villainous yakuza family and is well known to be both dangerous and violent. Masumo, the largest of the three towns, and the busiest, is run by a group of Zaoist nuns, the Sisters of the Watchful Wheel. The sisters are far more concerned with matters material than spiritual. They work to ensure that the rice flows as it should, from seller to buyer; regulate commerce within the community with exactness, and an eye towards their regulations.

Kinogasa is a small farming village south of the Hakuryuaiji-gawa. The village, despite its size, is noteworthy for two reasons. First, it is home to the locally famed **Kinogasa-taisha shrine**, which is purported to help control the weather. Secondly, as the site of a failed rebellion against the shogun, it also, by imperial decree, houses a school of sohei; said school having direct ties with shogunate officials. The village has produced, over the years, a number of great priests and swordsmen alike, and is rumored to have connections with yokai living in the mountains.

Kinogasa, Shrine Village

LN village
Corruption -3; **Crime** -1; **Economy** +0; **Law** +0; **Lore** +0; **Society** -1
Qualities: Holy Site, Prosperous
Danger 0

DEMOGRAPHICS

Government autocracy (town elder)
Population 200 (200 humans)

NOTABLE NPCS

Village Elder Kinogasa Simohasa (LN male human expert 4)
Shrine Priest Maeda Takisha (LG male human cleric 3)
Sohei Master Mori Anamosho (LN male warrior 7)
Sohei Advisor Takinatsu Akine (LE male wizard 6)

MARKETPLACE

Base Value 650 gp; **Purchase Limit** 2950; **Spellcasting** 3rd
Minor Items 2d4; **Medium Items** 1d4; **Major Items** -

The bandits of Ichisakin operate out of a series of fortified caves. The largest of these, the **Konsi cave,** extends deep into the mountain. There are two hundred bandits that live in the upper caves, but even they fear the demons they sometimes hear howling in the depths and so post guards against dangers from without and below alike.

Economy

Onari's economy is almost entirely agricultural. Large amounts of rice and grain are sipped to Itaro and other points around Kaidan. Most of the income derived from these sales, that which is not transferred directly to the Shogun, goes to the daimyo and the maintenance of the province. While the majority of peasants are still impoverished, they do have one of the safest, cleanest, and best maintained of the provinces of Kaidan, a fact most of them take great pride in.

Secrets of the Region

The Kinogasa-taisha shrine in Kinogasa is haunted. Nakashima Ren, the Yokinto priest who initiated the failed rebellion, over 90 years previously, now dwells within the shrine grounds. He watches over the shrine, encouraging in his own way, the priests there to follow the traditional paths of yokinto. The shrine priests are aware of the ghost, and have learned how to placate him so that the haunting is benign.

Lord Daidoiendo no Kinjiromaro is one of the more publicly active of the Kaidanese daimyo's, and is often out and about in public. He appears as a handsome man in his late forties, and there is never more than a hint of the unnatural about him. Nevertheless he is a unique cleric-lich, having obtained undeath through divine necromantic means. He is a powerful spell-caster, possibly the most powerful divine caster in all the government, and is, besides this, a master of several martial arts, a mastery made all the more powerful by his own undead status. There have been several martial challenges made against Lord

Daidoiendo over the years and he has vanquished them all, stealing the very life essence of his opponents as they fought. Despite his undead status, the daimyo has few real weaknesses, and no especial hungers, though he does have the ability to absorb life energy, in a manner similar to a wraith.

Stories of the wild-men of Mount Ikokun are the result of two separate groups which live on the mountain. The first is a selection of henge who dwell in small villages on the eastern slopes of the mountain. These henge often adopt the role of wild-men to scare visitors away from their lands. The second group are a collection of primitive humans, related to the Anu, who dwell in caves on the northern slopes of the mountain. These "cave-men" live simple lives, trying to avoid contact with the Kaidanese, though, upon occasion, when hunting on the mountains, they are seen. Like the Anu of Genshu, these men worship the bear. Unlike other Anu, a good number of these individuals are "blessed" with lycanthropy and can assume the shape of a bear at well.

Oteru Province

An uneven land filled with hills, mountainous crags, and deep ravines, Oteru would be largely uninhabited were it not for the resort city of Ruko. Oteru serves as a place for the wealthy and powerful among the samurai to retreat and is renowned across Kaidan for its hot springs, orchards, and walled gardens. Civilization in Oteru is set against a wild and primitive background, and those men that do dwell outside the walls of civilization are largely solitary woodsmen seeking to escape the company of others or hermetic priests seeking for enlightenment in the natural world. There are also a large number of Yokai and korobokuru that dwell in the province, relatively unmolested by men.

Flora

Oteru is famous for its cultivated orchards and gardens. Many homes boast both peach and cherry trees, and the practice of bonsai is nearly universal among the men of the province. Outside of the boundaries of civilization, and despite the topography of the region, the plant mixture is fairly typical of Anshu, with a mixture of coniferous and deciduous trees, albeit with a tendency towards thinner, hardier growths. Oak, ash, katsura, sugi, wild cherry, and hardy firs are all common. Along the river, reeds grow thick and willows are common. Bamboo grows sporadically, but where it is found, it occurs in thick groves. The most common bamboo is a broad, short variety, easily adapted by the inhabitants to a variety of uses. The hills of Oteru contain a mixture of bamboo, brambles, hardy brush and bushes and bamboo-grass.

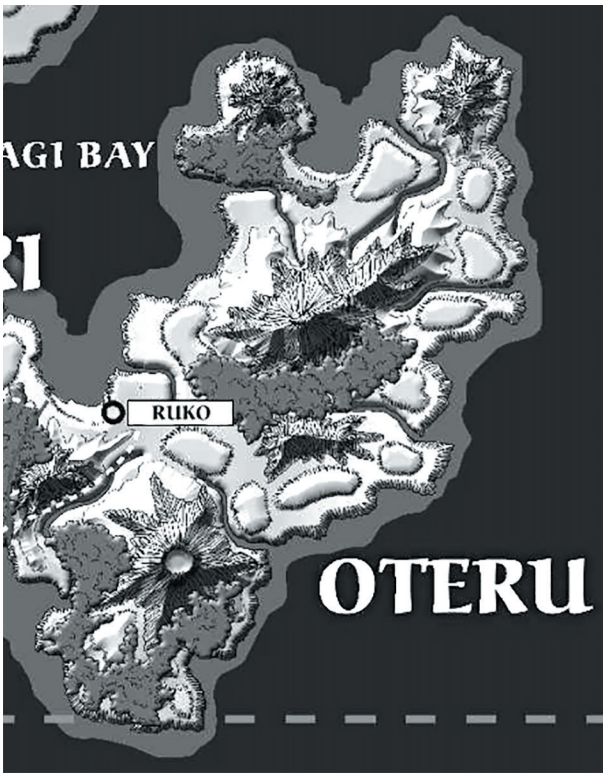
Fauna

Oteru contains wolves, spotted deer, bears, fox and most of the other small mammals common to Kaidan. Boar and dire boar alike are prolific in the lands east of Ruko, though men keep their numbers in check in those areas where they live. One animal unique to the province are the snow monkeys who dwell in and near the hot springs of Mount Dotaisha. These monkeys are found nowhere else on the island and have thus come to symbolize the province. Many of the resorts and hot-spring houses keep some of the monkeys as pets. Snakes are common in the province, though there is only one venomous snake of note, a rock viper, the rest are typically benign. Lizards, many of them adapted to living in rock crags, are also common and the streams are full of salamanders. One species of river salamanders in the province can reach lengths of ten and fifteen feet, can be quite dangerous if encountered. There are also rumors of fire salamanders that dwell in the hot springs and the volcanic flows of Mount Dotaisha. Frogs and turtles also fill the rivers, and the Kaerubi-gawa is known to be home to a unique species of giant short-tailed frogs. Birds fill the province. Field birds nest throughout the hills, and in the wooded areas, song birds, woodpeckers and owls are prolific. There are two species of eagles in the province, and several types of hawks. As elsewhere in Kaidan, there are always gulls along the shores, along with other sea birds such as albatross.

Mountains

The tallest mountain in Oteru, and the best known, volcanic **Mount Dotaisha** is home to numerous hot-springs, and the mountain's vast crater-lake is always hot. Dotaisha's summit has not erupted in over three hundred years, but its last eruption was massive and is yet remembered. Periodic lava flows which erupt from its sides, as well as its many hot springs, attest to the volcanoe's continued activity. Besides its hot springs, Dotaisha is perhaps best known for the monkeys that dwell upon its slopes, near to the hot springs. Despite its thermal energies, Dotaisha has snow for almost half the year and certain hot spring bath houses on the mountain advertise themselves as places to enjoy both snow and heat together.

Mount Dosoushi is considered the little sister of Mount Dotaisha. Like the larger mountain, the smaller mountain is full of thermal hot springs, but Dosoushi is much more accessible and thus more heavily populated with resort bath-houses.



While Ruko draws the majority of the tourism in the province, Mount Dosoushi is not far behind in its popularity, with its resorts being able to offer two things harder to find in the city: privacy, and a breathtaking view of Mount Dotaisha to the south.

Northeast of Mount Dotaisha is diminutive **Mount Mudosha**. This small mountain marks the easternmost expansion of civilized men in the region. The forest and mountains north of Mudosha are given over to Yokai, Korobokuru and Tengu. The daimyo maintains a fortification on the west slopes of Mudosha, with patrols occasionally making forays into the land between the mountain and Ruko.

The **Bakkona** mountain range, a series of peaks running across the northeastern half of the province is home to fierce boar-riding kite tengu, and there is a daitengu shrine on the western edge of the range: the only such shrine to be held by the kite tengu. Two small mountains, **Mount Notoma** and **Mount Shakimo**, both volcanic, form mountainous peninsulas on the north-east edge of the province. Each of these mountains are fairly young, the oldest having been formed a mere five-hundred-fifty four years ago, and the second a hundred and thirty years later. Both were formed in similar ways: volcanic eruptions just off the coast of the province driving up molten earth and rocks to form new land. Because of their youth, both mountains teem with spiritual life and young kami.

Rivers and Lakes

There are seven major rivers in Oteru and they are each, without exception, fast flowing, rushing from mountain to sea in rapid descents and full of numerous falls. The **Bishonure-gawa** runs south of Mount Dosoushi, flowing east to west into the Atsuki Bay. It is fed by both Dosoushi and Dotaisha. Though the river is subject to flooding in the spring, the road from Shojo in Unori, to Roku runs north of the river, and the banks of the river are home to many estates, road-houses and inns. Many of those who stay in the various hot-spring bath-houses on Dosoushi enjoy making forays to the river for fishing.

The **Kaerubi-gawa** flows around the north and eastern edge of Mount Dotaisha, The river has many fish and frogs, including one species of venemous giant frog unique for its short tails. The land east of the Kaerubi-gawa is some of the best farmland in the province, excepting those areas around the **Zaiho-gawa**, the river east of Ruko. Though it is not exactly a slow river, falling approximately three hundred feet, from start to finish over the course of about twenty miles, the Zaiho-gawa is the slowest river in the province, and the area around it is some of the flattest in the province.

The other four rivers in Oteru are each fed primarily by waters coming off the Bakkona range. Few men live around these rivers, but many henge, korobokuru, and kappa call these rivers home. The **Shoumushigawa,** flowing around the northern and eastern edge of Mount Mudosha, cascades down into many wide, terraced pools along its length. Many of these broad calcium pools are thermally heated and are home to a diverse spectrum of colorful fish, frogs and aquatic insects. Many kappa live along the Shoumushigawa, and it is a favorite fishing destination for henge living in the forest between the Bakkona and Mount Mudosha. The Kana-gawa flows east out of the Bakkona, and several henge villages are built near to its length. Flowing north out of the Bakkona range are the **Kagimu-gawa** and the **Hensu-gawa**.

Government

Lord Hasatanori no Kazukatsumasa serves as daimyo over Oteru province and has done so for a little over five hundred years. Answerable directly to the daimyo, Lord Hasatanori rules from a heavily fortified palace five miles outside of Ruko, disdaining interaction with any but his immediate subordinates. He employs the Yamsanaki clan as defenders of his privacy and person, and this elite family of warriors carry out their duties with cruel efficiency.

Taxes are strictly in line with imperial standards, and are collected on a quarter-annually basis. Outside of taxes, regulations and bureaucratic expectations are kept at a minimum; as are laws regulating conduct. Might and wealth make right and visiting "dignitaries" and wealthy tourists in the province are allowed a great deal of leeway regarding their activities. Not surprisingly, this atmosphere of license lends itself to licentiousness and decadence, and thus Oteru has something of a reputation for vice and wickedness.

Cities, Towns, and Areas of Interest

The primary community in Oteru is **Roku,** a city dedicated to the entertainment of guests to the region. Filled with bath-houses, tea-houses, gambling parlors, and other assorted houses of pleasure, the city is one of the most decadent in all of Kaidan. The yakuza are prominent in the city, and though the Hamashi clan has rule of the city, there are few decisions made in the affairs of the city to which Chiifushi Pajiko, the head of the leading yakuza family, is not privy.

Fort Danrinmagureatari represents the easternmost area of imperial control in the province. The fort, built on the ruins of an ancient Zaoist temple, sits on the western slope of Mount Mudosha and is tasked with preventing non-human excursions into human lands. The fort is habitually undermanned and is viewed by the samurai reluctantly stationed there as a punishment they must endure.

The picturesqe town of **Dimo** on the southern slope of Dosoushi, is, like Roku, dedicated to the entertainment of guests to the province, with a multitude of bathhouses, inns and restaurants. However, the town has a much more different atmosphere than Roku, and the townspeople, a rather pious group, are very careful to keep it that way, cherishing their reputation as a place of beauty and spiritual tranquility. Dimo boasts a rather prestigious Yokinto shrine. The priests of the shrine are the true leaders of the community, and though they ostensibly hold to imperially approved dogmas, they nonetheless do what they can to nurture an appreciation of the beauty of the region and a dedication to the preservation of the natural order.

There are several yokai communities scattered across the eastern half of the province. The largest of these villages is **Jiha,** a collection of henge of various clans on the eastern slopes of The Bakkona range. However, the village of **Inhajoki** is the most prestigious of the henge communities. Located at the branching of the Hensu-gawa, Inhajoki is ruled over by a triad of ancient henge wizards, whose collected wisdom is deemed nigh infallible.

Economy

Though it exports little to nothing, Oteru is far from poor. The economy of Oteru is almost entirely entertainment based and such is the attraction of its bath-houses and sundry diversions, that it does a brisk and constant business, attracting wealthy patrons from across the archipalego. Even the few farmers who work the land, and those fishermen plying the coastal waters derive much of their income from supplying the food necessary to feed visitors to the region. There is a noticeable secondary economy in Oteru, centered around the business of buying and selling. The yakuza influence in Roku is such that, next to Kyobe on Genshu, Roku is the second largest haven for smuggled and illicit goods in Kaidan.

Secrets of the Region

One of the tasks given to Lord Hasatanori is the training of necrotic warriors. Though the Shogun maintains a school for the training of these warriors in Itaro, and while some of the shinobi clans also train such warriors, the majority of the shoguns necrotic warriors come from Oteru. The daimyo maintains three secret castles along the norther coast of Oteru for the indoctrination, rituals and regimentation required to create these unnatural warriors.

Juxtaposed next to its reputation as a place of vice and decadence is Oteru's reputation as a place of spiritual tranquility. The wilderness of Oteru is home to many wandering holy men and hermetic priests. One of the most powerful of these is a priest named Hanto. Hanto is three hundred years old and is rumored to have henge ancestry, though he seems human enough. Hanto maintains a shrine in the Bakkano range, and is friendly with the yokai of the province, who themselves view him as a mighty holy man. Hanto's shrine is built atop a great center of spiritual energy, the resting place of a mighty kami, and only Hanto's ministrations keep this wellspring of divine power at peace.

A Zaoist priest and the leading son of a wealthy noble family, Lord Hasatanori was one of the earliest nobles, following the rebirth of the emperor, to embrace undeath. However, his method of choice involved a painful process of self-mummification, and while there is no doubting the power he gained through the ordeal, the aesthetics of the result were less than ideal. The daimyo hides his grotesque features behind a golden mask and silk robes, but he rarely ventures from his quarters. Besides his other duties, Hasatanori is gifted at the art of foretelling, and he spends the majority of his time in attempting to glimpse the future, writing down cryptic prophecies for later contemplation and distribution.

Shingo Province

A rural province, devoted almost entirely to farming, Shingo is oft considered something of a backwater region, full of ignorant peasants and unwashed rebels. Despite this perception, Shingo has produced an unexpected number of noble warriors, learned scholars and renown priests over the last two to three hundred years. The stolid work ethic of the province, combined with simple, practical values seems to be conducive to providing a foundation upon which greatness might be built. This is not to say the province does not have a share of ignoble miscreants, but overall, the people of Shingo are good folks, seeking to press on with their lives regardless of what the wheel sets before them.

Topographically, the province contains a smattering of just about every type of geographical feature common to Kaidan: including mountains, hills, forests, grasslands, swamps and fields. The northern half of the province is temperate woodlands, whereas the forest covering the southern half of the province is more tropical in nature. Though the central region of Shingo is heavily farmed, it is some of the driest land in all of Kaidan and it is common for the farmers of central Shingo to suffer bad years of meager harvests.

Flora

Shingo has a smattering of nearly every type of vegetation indigenous to Kaidan growing somewhere in the province. The northern forest are, due to their elevation and location, cooler, temperate forests, containing the mixture of deciduous and coniferous trees common in provinces such as Ika and Oda, with sugi, oak, maple and ash being most prolific; though there is a healthy dash of wild cherry and katsura in the mixture. The southern forests of Shingo are much warmer and the trees there are akin to those growing in tropical Hamato with chinquapins, evergreen oaks, chestnuts, and mangroves being among the most common trees. Likewise, there are a wide variety of bamboo, grasses, flowering shrubs, and bamboo grasses to be found in the province, most of which can be found, as already noted, elsewhere in Kaidan, but a few of which, due to Shingo's drier central region, are unique to the province.

Fauna

The range of diversity among the animals of Shingo is akin to that of its fauna. Anshu wolves, bear, spotted deer, foxes, weasels, rabbits, squirrels and a wide variety of rodents all call Shingo home, though the larger mammals are more common in both north and south, where population density is much less. Rumors abound of giant rabbits in the northern woods, though skeptics put these down to henge activity. Giant rats and dire weasels have certainly been encountered in the southern woods, especially along the Nendowashi-gawa. The province boasts a wide variety of bird life, with sea birds such as gull, albatross and sea-eagles along the coast, field-birds in the center of the province, and a large assortment of songbirds in the woods including robins, finches, doves and woodpeckers. Eagles, hawks and owls can also be found in the region in some numbers, as can sparrowhawks. Various water fowl, including ducks, heron and storks are common along the rivers, especially the Yorogawa and the Yoinaoru-gawa in eastern Shingo. Shingo's snakes are mostly non-venomous and include green rat snakes, striped rat snakes, odd-tooth snakes, and small garden snakes which subsist primarily on insects. Perhaps more common in Shingo than in many other areas of Kaidan are the bachi hebi, oddly shaped venomous snakes with magical powers and a fondness for sake.

Mountains

Shingo has two mountains of note: **Mount Futo** and **Mount Wokima**. Mount Futo is a dormant volcano, with a large crater-lake on is northern slope. The mountain is home to tengu and henge alike, and rebels are known to occupy its southern slopes. These rebels are a canny lot, given to attacking officials and samurai traveling along the main road. Several attempts have been made to drive them out, but they seem to have magical protections and the ability to hide from official sight whenever they want. Mount Wokima is remote from the rest of Shingo, and is geographically isolated from the reaches of Unori province due to the many crevices and gorges of its north-eastern foothills. Thus it too is home to tengu and henge and is quite safe, at the moment, from imperial incursions, despite its proximity to the town of Nimika in Unori.

Rivers and Lakes

Shingo possesses four primary rivers, two flowing eastward and two flowing westward. The smallest of these, the **Yorogawa**, flows out of Lake Shigeasago in Hamato province. Also fed, at least in part, by lake waters in Hamato is the much longer **Yoinaoru-gawa,** whose waters are thought to be beneficial in medicines and tonics. A number of medical schools have been established in small villages along the river, and though they are small, rural schools, students trained in these academies can easily find employment anywhere in Kaidan as physicians.

Flowing west are the **Nendowashi-gawa** and the **Kassagawa**. The nendowashi-gawa, named for the giant statue of an eagle on its northern shores, flows along the southern border of the province, being fed by streams flowing out of Hamato. The Kassagawa is a slower river, with several farms and farming communities built along its length. The largest of these communities is Desu, the provincial capital.

Government

Lord Minkobushi no Yorinoriharunaga rules over Shingo from a great palace, five miles east of Desu. His rule is militant, and he maintains great numbers of soldiers, ever ready to march across his province and counter those rebels that continue to arise in this village or that. He likewise maintains a veritable army of tax-collectors and regulators to keep abreast of the economic activities of his citizens. Though Shingo is a rural province, comprised of many, many small farming communities, scattered across the breadth of the region, Lord Minkobushi nevertheless keeps a tight grip on the populace through sheer force of will and strength of arms.

Bureaucratically, Shingo is answerable to Nijo province, though Lord Minkobushi sees this arrangement as a mere formality, more a matter of paperwork than true subserviance. Like his peer to the south, Minkobushi thinks of himself as his own man, accountable to none but the Shogun. While some of this is mere blustery bravado, the Shogun does rely on the daimyo for the training of troops and many of the Imperial troops have gone through the training grounds of Shingo. The province seems to breed rebellion at a faster rate than almost any other province in Kaidan, and every few years it seems a new "general" is raising up troops to fight against the Shogun's forces. While many find it odd that the Shogun does not completely overrun the province, others note that these rebellions only seem to provide exercise and training to the shogun's loyal samurai.

Taxes in the province are standard for Kaidan, and, regulations, though strictly enforced, are not overly arduous. Indeed, each community is more or less expected to set their own standards, maintain their own records and punish their own criminals. Such a hands-off attitude seems strange, but it is a subtle method by which the daimyo allows rebellion to breed, so as to have someone to fight every few years.

Cities, Towns, and Areas of Interest

Shingo province has numerous villages, but few of any size. The largest town is **Desu,** which serves as provincial capital, primary port of entry into the province, and as the storehouse for the daimyo's



many soldiers. Because of the many roles it fulfills, Desu has a number of faces. The town does a brisk business in providing housing and entertainment to soldiers, sailors, and travelers into the province. There is a certain disreputable underside to the community, an underside that is juxtaposed with its official status as the provincial seat of government and the general upright nature of the cultural norms of Shingo. There are several Yokinto shrines in the town, and a Zaoist temple also. Generally the two sides of Desu's community leave the other half well enough alone, living and letting live, but never entirely at ease with the other.

Because of the many rebellions in the province over the years, the countryside is dotted with fortresses and castles: some occupied, some abandoned. One of the largest of these castle ruins is **Samana Fortress** in central Shingo. The fortress is strategically located, but is heavily haunted and thus avoided by all but the most desperate. While few are sure of the exact nature of the haunt, many tales speak of a ghoulish samurai who feasts on any foolish enough to attempt to spend the night in his abode.

Though Mount Wokima lacks a daitengu shrine, the tengu of the mountain are well organized and as well fortified as any tengu in kaidan. Their presence on the mountain dates back hundreds of years and the mountain itself is named for the tengu castle sitting on the northern slope of the mountain. From this arcanely protected fortress, their warriors make occasional forays into Tojima to steal weapons and harass samurai. Because the tengu do not bother him directly, Lord Minkobushi does not bother himself with them, and the daimyo of Tojima lacks the resources to mount a serious expedition against the fortress so that, thus far, the tengu operate with impunity.

The small village of **Teho,** on the shores of the Yoinaoru-gawa impressively boasts a medical school, a prestigious yokinto shrine, and a market. Not surprisingly, it has nearly triple the number of citizens as most Shingo villages, with a grand total of 321 souls calling the village home. Despite its small size, the village does very well for itself financially, thanks in no small part to the work of Shiho, the head of the school and, though he denies his authority, the leading man of the village. Shiho teaches the young men and women who come to him for tutelage both medical knowledge and an impressive martial discipline so that they are, in addition to being fine doctors, formidable fighters. He never accepts more than ten students at a time, and, while half of his students always come from poor families that cannot pay for their learning, the other half are the scions of wealthy families who pay quite well for the opportunity to study with the master. Tehotaisha, the village shrine, is said to be nine hundred years old and has been maintained all that time by the same family of priests who keep the ancient traditions alive. Many of the priests and shrine maidens over the years have been potent spell-casters, though they keep this fact rather secret, for fear of imperial wrath.

Teho, Pious Village of Learning

LG village
Corruption -3; **Crime** -1; **Economy** -1; **Law** +0; **Lore** +0; **Society** +0
Qualities: Academic, Holy Site
Danger 0

DEMOGRAPHICS

Government autocracy (Shiho)
Population 321 (321 humans)

NOTABLE NPCS

Master Teacher **Shiho** (LG male human Monk 11)
Shrine Priest Dakihio (LG male human Cleric 6)
Shrine Maiden Tasi (LG female Monk 2/ Cleric 2)

MARKETPLACE

Base Value 500 gp; **Purchase Limit** 2500; **Spellcasting** 6th
Minor Items 2d4; **Medium Items** 1d4; **Major Items** -

Economy

Shingo's economy is primarily agricultural. Though its harvests are typically dwarved by neighboring Onari, in a good year, Shingo produces enough rice to feed itself three times over, a fact which helps sustain it through hard years. Besides rice, wheat and other produce, the province also produces horses. Shingo horses have a reputation for speed, and are much prized by samurai who practice mounted archery.

Secrets of the Region

The rebels of Mount Futo are led by a ronin named Anibuko Sadabushi, who, in addition to his skill with a blade has some skill as a divine spellcaster. Sadabushi claims to be led by visions granted to him by the kami, and desires nothing less than the overthrow of the shogun, though he knows he must start small and so is building forces and devising a method by which to eradicate Lord Minkobushi. The rebels lair in lava tubes under the mountain, the entrances of which are well hidden. These tubes account for much of their vaunted ability to "disappear" on the mountain, though Sadabushi's spell casting also plays a part in that.

Lord Minkobushi is renowned as a mighty warrior in his own right, often carrying out executions himself in full view of his troops. The daimyo always appears in public in full armor, fully masked. While many speculate the masks hides his hideous nature, in truth the daimyo is quite handsome, having managed to pass into undeath without marring his flesh. Like a vampire, the daimyo feeds on blood to maintain his youthful complexion, but he is not a true vampire, lacking both the ability to spawn, but also possessing the ability to move about in sunlight without harm. Rather he is a unique creature, the result of highly successful necromantic experiments which granted him both unlife and the ability to manipulate, channel and control negative energy. His sole weakness is positive energy and he sends out assassins after any priests in his province he suspects of being able to channel such energies. Thus far he has failed to learn about the powers of the Teho priests, but hundreds of others have all died over the years by the will of the daimyo.

Tojima Province

Tojima is the leading producer of fabrics in Kaidan. Best know for its silk, indeed Tojima leads the empire in silk production, the province also produces great amounts of hemp and ramie fabrics, enough to clothe an empire. The land of the province is quiet suited to agriculture, though not necessarily rice. While rice is grown, other crops are grown in much greater measure. Tojima's

climate contains both temperate and tropical zones, though the most tropical region, the forest south of the Gojuu mountain range, is unsettled territory, inhabited only by yokai and wild-things.

Tojima is a province focused on the business of business. The drive to buy, sell, and make a profit is ingrained in the citizens of the province, regardless of caste. This instinct has not gone unnoticed outside the province, and "trading like one born of Tojima," is a proverb indicating a cunning ruthlessness in matters related to turning a profit. Tojima is also a province of monsters. The daimyo gives special protection to certain malevolent creatures, allowing them liberty to dwell in her domain in exchange for their full obedience.

Flora

The northern woodlands of Tojima are typical of Kaidan, with sugi, ash, katsura, oak, pine, maple and elm all being well represented. Wild cherry and peach trees are also common in the woods north of Sono-jo. The woodlands south of the Gojuu range are more tropical in nature, featuring mangroves, ever-green oaks, and chestnuts. Bamboo also grows thickly in the woods, throughout the province, and in there are, in places, bamboo groves a mile or more in length. Undergrowth in the woodlands consists primarily of a blend of fern and bamboo-grass, though flowering vines and bushes are also common. Much of the province is grass-covered hills, well suited to the growth of hemp and ramie, the regions primary cash crops. Because of the large textile industry in the province, plants useful for making dyes have also been encouraged to prosper and the creation and production of dyes is a vibrant provincial industry.

Fauna

Deer and boar alike are prolific in much of Tojima. However, bear and wolves are found in lesser numbers than elsewhere, in part because of the greater number of monsters in the region, monsters which compete for resources. Fox are also found in lesser numbers, in large part because Tojima is the only province in Kaidan where there is a bounty paid on fox tails. Smaller mammals such as squirrel, dormice, weasels, raccoon dogs, rabbits, rats and the like are common. One mammal endemic to Tojima and rarely found elsewhere in Kaidan are giant flying squirrels. These large squirrels grow up to two feet in length and can glide up to 400-500 feet, leaping from tree to tree. Turtles, frogs (including giant frogs), lizards, and snakes are all well represented throughout the province, especially nearer to the rivers and streams, as are salamanders, many of which grow to prodigious sizes. Birds are those typical of Anshu and include eagles, hawks, owls, finches, larks, grouse, woodpeckers, and a variety of sea-birds. Cranes, storks, and pipers are common near to the waterways, as are ducks, swan, and geese.

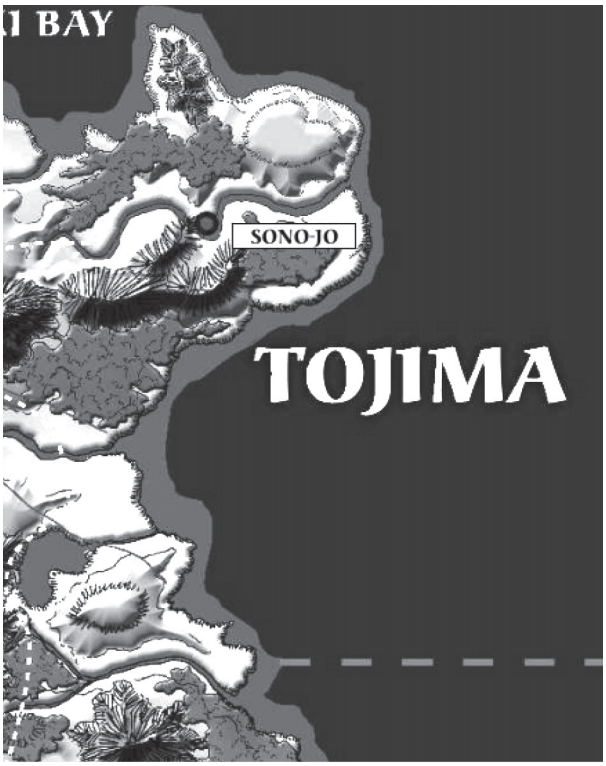
Mountains

Though Tojima shares mountains with both Itaro and Shingo provinces, the daimyo rarely concerns herself with these regions of her province. This is not true of the range of mountains which cuts across the southern portion of the province: the **Gojuu** mountain range. The range was once the realm of many tengu, but the daimyo encouraged many monstrous things to move into the mountain's, and the forest south of them, eventually killing the majority of the tengu, and driving the rest further into hiding. The range's primary peak, **Mount Fufimi** once possessed a daitengu, but the daitengu shrine was taken by an oni warlord who had sworn himself to the daimyo, and the dread monster now rules as the immortal lord of the mountain range.

North of Sono-jo, rising out of the Atsuki bay is **Mount Riniki**, a peninsula unto itself. The daimyo maintains a palace at the very top of the mountain. The palace is reached by a narrow, mountain path, seldom traveled, leading to speculation that she travels there magically each night from her palace in Sono-jo.

Rivers and Lakes

The **Enchouda-gawa,** flowing north of the Gojuu mountains, winds its way back and forth through the hills, gathering speed, power, and ever more water as it flows until it eventually reaches the sea as a mighty rushing body of water. The effect of this force is such that for more than half a mile around the mouth of the river, the ocean is comprised almost entirely of fresh water. North of the Enchouda-gawa are the **Kazenokami-gawa** and the **Mizuhagawa,** two moderately slow rivers bordering a broad, thick forest between them: a forest with a sinister and evil reputation. It is said that any body buried in the ground between the two rivers, rises to an unwholesome life within a week. Few live along the Mizuhagawa, on either side, but there are several well fortified farming villages on the north side of the Kazenokami-gawa.



In the northern third of the province are the two rivers: the **Denshogawa** and the **Juuyogawa.** The northernmost of these two rivers, the Denshogawa flows just south of the provincial border, a swift moving river with many rapids and falls. It is crossed by a bridge, though the bridge is often in poor repair. The Juuyogawa is a shorter river. Many plants used to craft dyes grow near to it and the region south of the river is home to Tojima's dye industry. A ferry northwest of the town of Nimika takes passengers back and forth across the river twice a day.

Government

Lady Taira no Heimasami, called the Spider Queen by many, including, at times herself, is the only female daimyo in all of Kaidan, having "inherited" the rule of the province, from her husband, after his demise nearly four hundred years ago. Though it is generally understood she killed her husband herself, there was never any proof of this and with the passage of time, it is likely such proof will never surface. Despite the misogynistic attitude of the Shogun, the Lady keeps her rule by sheer malevolent strength of will, diabolical cunning, and a certain amount of personal arcane power. The shogun has sent replacement's at least twice to the province, and both times the nobles died before ever reaching Tojima. At least five times assassins have attempted to take her life, and as the shinobi clans will accept no contracts on a daimyo apart from the command of the shogun, it is well understood where the attempts originated. Nevertheless, the Lady yet lives and, though it may irritate the shogun, she manages the affairs of her province in such a way as to always be in compliance with whatever the shogun asks of her. Indeed, her official position is that she is merely managing the affairs of the province until such time as the shogun finds a suitable replacement for her deceased husband. The shogun has seemingly accepted the situation, though many suspect he would be happy to find a way to discredit and dishonor her sufficiently as to have cause to take more open action.

Tax rates and regulations are exactly in keeping with the imperial standard, though the daimyo is generous in granting exemptions to those who perform outstanding services for the province, or who please her in some manner. In many ways, Lady Taira might appear to be a rather benevolent overlord. She takes care to maintain the province in the best possible way, the roads are well kept, food is plentiful, bandits are routinely routed and destroyed, and those who excel in their profession, regardless of caste, are recognized and rewarded. Many of the citizens of Tojima like to pretend as if they are happy with their lot, but most realize the truth: their good fortune is the fortune of livestock being fattened. While the daimyo herself does little to directly harm her subjects, many of her servants are less kind and in the majority of the province, there is a regular culling of the population. In most places there is a show of choosing only "criminals" or troublemakers for elimination, and the process is given an official sounding name, such as "selective administration of ideals," but the standards are often arbitrary so that the most minor of offenses can result in a person being chosen. Those so chosen are removed from their homes, taken away to prisons and never heard from again. Most understand, even if they do not give voice to the knowledge, that those removed have been eaten.

The daimyo makes a point of treating all creatures "equally," so that anyone or anything, regardless of its nature, can swear allegiance to her and be freed from the threat of execution or elimination. In practice, such pardons are never given to yokai, only to evil creatures of

great power and strength. There have even been occasions on which the daimyo has accepted the services of oni, though she is careful to keep such arrangements secret lest the wrath of the shogun be turned against her. As a result of this policy, the daimyo is served by many evil things and most offices of any real power or authority are held by inhuman monsters. Those that chaff at this situation find themselves soon selected for "philosophical reorientation" and "administrative action" and are never heard from again.

Cities, Towns, and Areas of Interest

Sono-jo, built on a rise overlooking the Enchouda-gawa, is the provincial capital and the province's only true city. Renowned for the many fabrics crafted in the city, Sono-jo attracts merchants from across Kaidan who come to buy silk and bast cloths alike. Besides fabrics, the city attracts many clothiers, eager to make a name for themselves. Outside of Fukuhara-kyo, Sono-jo is the most influential of Kaidanese cities when it comes to fashions and every other week sees some new fad in regards to what is being worn and how. This frivilous fixation on clothing minutia seems odd to many visitors to the city, but the citizens of the city view such things as legitimate matters of life or death, for those that fall out of favor culturally, politically, or even fashion-wise, are more likely to be taken away by the daimyo's officials and never heard from again. Tensions and fears run high in the city, though few give voice to their fears, instead spending their time, when not working, drinking, gambling, and immersing themselves in pursuit of mindless pleasures. The daimyo's palace, where she spends her days, sits on the north side of the city. It is common knowledge in the city that the daimyo spends her nights in a different palace high atop Mount Riniki.

While many clothiers and peasants are quite capable of rendering their own dye, there is still a brisk business in Tojima in mass produced dyes. The home of this industry is the town of **Nimika** and the dyes of Nimika are exported across Kaidan, though the majority of the dye is used in province. Nimika is ruled over by a trio of monstrous sisters, web spinners who lay eggs in those members of the community which displease them. Their eggs, when hatched, produce a variety of monstrous imp-like creatures which are slavishly devoted to their mothers. Despite their evil natures, the three spider-women maintain the community in accordance with the daimyo's standards, and, for those not chosen to be hatcheries, life is relatively good.

Mulberry trees grow well north of the Kazenokami-gawa, and though silk farms can be found throughout the province, the best silk is generally thought to come from this region. The town of **Hajaka** is the principle hub of this region, and several merchants native to the town do a good business buying the silk from the local farmers for transport to Sono-jo. These merchants often hire ronin or employ sohei to guard their shipments and there is a school of sohei just north of the town. Of late, Hajaka has been a community beset with terror, for there are rumors of an army of undead massing in the forest south of the river.

Sono-jo is the center of the textile industry in the province, but cloth manufactured in the city must be shipped. Normally cargo is shipped down-river from Sono-jo on broad boats to the harbor town of **Giriko** where it is loaded onto ocean worthy ships. The river's rapid flow makes the return trip difficult and so the river-boats are pulled upriver, against the current by teams of strong horses.

Economy

An agricultural province renowned for silk, bast cloths, and dyes, Tojima derives most of its income from these industries. The daimyo encourages innovation in these fields and more than one peasant has made himself and his family wealthy by crafting a better loom, or creating some new and better process of dying fabrics. Cloth from Sono-jo ships across Kaidan, and the majority of clothing worn in Kaidan originates in Tojima.

Secrets of the Region

Kumo gaki, or spider ghouls are a flesh-eating undead unique to Kaidan, and over the last four hundred years have spread across the archipelago so that they may be found almost anywhere, preferring in the main to lair in caves and rocky crevices. Lady Taira is the first of these creatures and it was she who first spawned others of her kind. However, as befits her primarch status, the daimyo is rather unique among kumo gaki. She has tremendous power over the vermin of the earth, with an especial affinity for spiders, being able to command them at will, and, while she can nourish herself off the living, she far prefers the dark energies of the undead. That is, she is an undead who preys on other undead. Just as her monstrous servants cull the population of Tojima, so too does the Spider-Queen cull the population of her

own servants, dining on those that displease her in anyway. When she first gained undeath, shortly after her husband, she made him her first victim, though she disguised her crime well. The daimyo appears most often just as she did in life, but her true visage is one of multi-eyed, multi-limbed fanged horror.

The daimyo keeps her alliances with oni secret from the Shogun, for she knows he would violently disapprove, leading to war agianst her. Ironically, it is her fear of war with the Shogun which prompts her to make such alliances, and her oni allies slowly gather power in the Gojuu mountains, for use as soldiers in any such conflict. They are, however, more than any of her other monstrous servants, untrustworthy allies and of late these oni have begun conducting surreptitious raids into Shingo and Hamato.

As feared in Hajaka, there are a tremendous number of undead amassing in the forest of the dead between the Kazenokami-gawa and the Mizuhagawa. A samurai wight-lord, Hakato Munimasanoke, once sworn to serve the daimyo's husband, has been stealing bodies for years, burying them in the cursed soil of the forest so that they rise as zombies and ghouls under his control. The town need not fear though, for the army is not meant for them. When he thinks he has enough troops, the plans to march against Sono-jo, destroying everything in his wake.

Unori Province

Many would be excused for thinking of Unori province primarily as a region necessary to travel through in order to reach the famed hot springs of Oteru, for that is all the exposure many in Kaidan ever have to the province. Despite this perception, Unori is a well-populated province, industrious and productive in its own quite way. It excels at nothing in particular, and yet in almost every arena of life, it never lags far behind those provinces which do lead. The men and women of Unori are a steady, humble lot, rarely given to excess, and dutiful to their obligations both spiritual and political.

At the heart of Unori are the majestic tree covered Yojihikka mountains. The mountains are said by the people dwelling in the region to symbolize the strength of its people, and their capacity to withstand anything. The land, both north and south of the mountains, is comprised mainly of steeply sloped hills: fertile, but difficult to farm. Unori farmers rely heavily on terracing their landscapes, molding the ground to suit them through hard labor and sheer tenacity.

Flora

One of the few areas in which Unori does lead is in the production of peaches. The peaches of the province are renowned across Kaidan for their size and flavor, and preserved peaches are one of the provinces most famed exports. Peaches are far and away the most commonly cultivated tree in the province. The mountains of Usari are densely covered with foliage. On the mountains, Katsura is common tree as are ash, oak, sugi, and an assortment of fir trees. The trees of Unori are mostly hardwoods, and old growth. Undergrowth in the forest is predominately ferns, followed by bamboo grass. Stands of actual bamboo do grow here and there in the forest, but the majority of bamboo in Unori lies outside the heavily wooded areas. Farmers plant bamboo around the edges of their land for both aesthetics and to harvest. The hills north and south of the mountains are predominantly grass-lands, though small stands of trees, hardy shrubs, and bamboo are scattered throughout. Reeds, rushes and willow trees are all common along the rivers.

Fauna

Unori has a large number of wild boar. Spotted deer and Anshu wolves are also numerous, especially in the mountain regions. Fox are more prolific south of the mountains than north, but they may be found anywhere in Unori. Other common mammals include rabbits, raccoon dogs, weasels, squirrel, and a variety of rodents. Small herds of wild horses roam the hills south of the Onawabaki-gawa. In the woods, hawks and owls are common, and eagles roost in the mountains. Along the coast, gulls, albatross, and sea eagles are all common sights, and grouse, larks and pheasant can be found further inland. Geese and ducks swim along the waterways, especially north of the mountains, and in the wetlands east of the Fosakai-gawa, cranes abound. Unori has less snakes than some other provinces, at least until one gets south of the central mountains and woods, and encounters green-rat snakes and small, non-venomous black snakes.

Mountains

Unori shares **Mount Daruma** with Itaro province. Daruma possesses a few small villages, renowned for their artisans, on its lower slopes. South of Daruma, and bordering Itaro is **Mount Ikraori**, which is home to half a dozen yamabushi monasteries and a rather secretive zaoist monastery: The Black Walled Temple.

Running east to west through the heart of Unori are the **Kamido** mountains. This range of peaks is heavily wooded and often shrouded in fog. These mountains have a reputation as containing great spiritual powers, and the men who live near

or on the mountain speak, very sincerely, of the mountains and woods being alive. All of Unori are quite reverential towards the Kamido mountains, and there are numerous shrines around the mountains honoring the spirit of the mountain.

Mount Damiri in the south-west corner of the province is the provinces only active volcano. Though eruptions are small and rare, the sizeable crater-lake on the top of the mountain attest to the possibility of a larger eruption. The waters of the Damiri lake are warm and have been well stocked with fish by the tengu which live on the mountain.

Rivers and Lakes

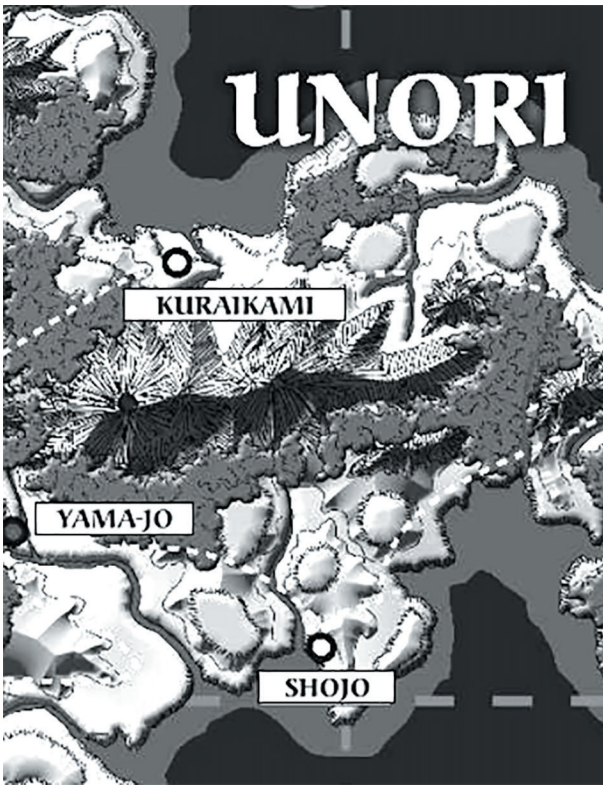
The **Yorukigawa,** flowing out of Itaro, forms the northern border of Unori. Few men ever visit this river, which is home to many kappa.

Flowing north out of the Kamido mountains are the **Shugawa** and the **Fosakai-gawa.** The Shugawa is a short, fast river cascading over multiple falls. It is crossed by a wide wooden bridge over one of these falls. The bridge, the Jinghisenhashi, offers a beautiful view of the river, and the falls, but is, tragically, better known for the many suicides off of its span. The Fosakai-gawa is a longer river, though only a little less swift. It too is crossed by a wooden bridge over a set of falls, and there are many inns near to this bridge, which serves as a common stopping point for travelers to and from Oteru.

South of the Kamido mountains are the **Onawabaki-gawa** and the **Gaitora-gawa.** The regions around these two rivers are the most heavily populated in the province, with numerous villages, farms, orchards, and even horse ranches being scattered throughout. The Onawabaki-gawa is the longer of the two rivers and there is scarcely a mile of its length that does not have a settlement of some sort for the land to either side of the river is some of the flattest in Unori. The river is subject to periodic flooding, but rarely so devastating as to dissuade those that live near it to move further upland. The Gaitora-gawa is a swift river, flowing between massive hills and cliffs, but, as it descends from the Kamido mountains, the river is held in especial veneration and there are many shrines, temples and monasteries along its length.

Government

The citizens of Unori feel rightly blessed to have **Lord Tando no Masateruyoshi** as their daimyo. An honorable and benevolent man, Lord Tando shines amongst all the daimyo of Kaidan as a man concerned with the welfare of his subjects. Deeply



spiritual and renowned as a follower of the ancient paths of Yokinto, though still holding to Zaoism as being the authority in all matters eternal, Lord Tando obtained his post through his loyalty to the daimyo, his unquestionable honor, and his keen intelligence in matters political. The shogun values the opinion of Lord Tando, knowing the honor of the man will compel him to answer always truthfully and that this same honor will keep him ever loyal.

Taxes and regulations are standard for the empire, as befits a province directly answerable to the Shogun himself, but Lord Tando is merciful in the application of these regulations and does what he can to increase the revenue and welfare of his subjects so that the taxes do not drive them into hunger and poverty. The samurai of the province, in accordance with the wishes and nature of the daimyo are some of the most honorable in the empire, and service to others is preached often by the daimyo to the heads of the clans, and thus from the heads to their underlings. Samurai work to keep the roads safe, and there is less banditry in Unori than elsewhere, partly because of this diligence, and partly because of the kindly nature of the daimyo.

The daimyo maintains a palace in Yama-jo and the provincial bureaucracies operate directly out of the palace, which, excepting the private house of the daimyo and his family, is ever open to all samurai, regardless of the exact rank of the samurai. Likewise, any samurai, regardless of station, can request an audience with the daimyo, though samurai who abuse this privilege may find themselves penalized by the daimyo.

Cities, Towns, and Areas of Interest

The provincial capital and the largest community in Unori is the city of **Yama-jo.** A clean, friendly city, Yama-jo reflects the disposition of its ruler, Lord Tando. The city is renowned for its appreciation of learning and houses a number of schools, universities and academically minded temples. At the heart of the city is the grand market of Unori, a place where almost anything legal can be bought and sold during the day, and where, if one knows the right shops, a fair number of illicit things can be bought during the night. While Yama-jo is one of the most attractive cities of Kaidan, it is also a city under a curse. Each night, a different individual dies horribly. The screams of those so slain reverberate throughout the city each night and in the morning the dessicated, tortured body of the one killed is discovered in the streets. These murders have been happening for hundreds of years now and, while the daimyo offers a reward to any who can solve this horrid mystery, so far none have been successful, and those who are most diligent in trying to stop the killing are often the ones chosen to die.

Shojo, a port town on the eastern bank of the mouth of the Gaitora-gawa, is renowned as the City of Shrines. Though not truly a city, the number of shrines in the town do outnumber the citizens of the town by at least three to one. Nearly every street corner has a shrine, as does every house, shop, and inn. While many of the shrines are dedicated either to the river or to the mountains to the north, there are shrines to a variety of kami, deity, and ancestral spirits. In keeping with the religious nature of the community, a goodly number of those who live in the town serve as priests and shrine-caretakers, even if only part time. Visitors to the community are heavily encouraged to donate to as many shrines as possible for good luck. There are three large shrines on three different hills around the town, each cared for by a different family, the heads of which serve as the elders of the town.

North of the Kamido mountains, serving as a way-stop for travelers on their way to Oteru, is the town of **Kuraikami.** Kuraikami has a number of high-quality inns, but the town's proudest feature is the Hozomo Taisha shrine south of the town. All visitors are heavily encouraged to visit the shrine to pray for safer travels, and to take in the rather splendid beauty of the shrine itself. Kuraikami hosts a peach festival at the end of each summer and during this festival, the population of the town quadruples as visitors from surrounding villages and even from out of the province pour into the community for the celebration.

Economy

The economy of Unori is primarily agricultural, though no one single crop makes up the entirety of its production. Naturally, a good amount of rice is grown in the province, in terraced paddies. Peaches, hemp, wheat and an assortment of other crops are also grown in abundance. Horses are raised south of Yama-jo and the Onawabaki-gawa. Though Unori exports little, it is one of the most self-sufficient provinces in the empire, possessing a smattering of almost everything, including small scale mining on the western slopes of the Kamido mountains.

Secrets of the Region

Unori province contains one of the three sacred bamboo groves of the yokai (the other two being found in Ika and Oniba provinces). The bamboo of the grove has stalks five to ten feet wide, towering hundreds of feet into the air. The grove contains a large pond, in which live a trio of kappa priests who are charged with keeping the grove. Those humans who do find the grove are routinely drowned in the pond by these same priests.

The Koji clan of Shojo are practitioners of the shinobi art of kakuretete. Their members are adept at blending into any environment, whether it be social or natural, so that they appear to be a part of that environment or community. Thus positioned, they can act as information gatherers and, when necessary, assassins, though the preferred method of the Koji clan, when it comes to dealing death, is to manipulate others to do their killing for them, leaving them, and their clients unmarked by the death. They are master of subterfuge, intrigue and disguise, and their members are scattered across Kaidan, working to bring about the goals of the clan.

Lord Tando is exactly what he seems to be, an undying man of extreme benevolence, at least during the day. Always possessed of a noble heart, Lord Tando nevertheless, because of his loyalty to his Shogun, sought a means to achieve undeath; though he sought to do this without becoming a monster of death and destruction. He was only partly successful. The ritual by which he and his family crossed over into immortality left them appearing, during the day, exactly as they did in life, albeit possessed of an unnatural vigor powered by negative energies. However, at night, the family transforms into spectral horrors which, escaping the bonds of the palace, enter into Yama-jo to torture and feast upon one of the citizens of the city. The noble daimyo is the curse which haunts his own city, though he does not know it, for, during the day, he and his family remember nothing of that which transpires during the night. Indeed, they are mentally incapable of recognizing their own handiwork in the death that visits the city each night, and the daimyo is quite sincere in seeking to end the curse. However, the daimyo's night persona retains knowledge of what his day self has done and routinely kills those that volunteer to find the truth.

The Black Walled Temple on Mount Daruma is a secretive zaoist monastery with few ties to the world outside. The monks are raised in the monastery from birth, though where or how the monks manage to acquire new orphans is something of a mystery. Though the monks maintain a strict lifestyle and meditate upon matters spiritual, the true purpose of the monastery is not the enlightenment of its members so much as it is protecting the temple's vault from ever being opened, for within the vault are said to be ancient and terrible demons which, if freed, would bring untold destruction upon the world.

The kami of the Kamido mountains are quite active, and are ruled by a powerful mountain kami-lord. Among other activities over the ages, the Kamido Kami have awoken many of the plants and animals of the mountains. These sentient beasts and plant-creatures, in conjunction with the activities of the kami, are largely responsible for the stories concerning the "living mountains."

Kaidan Sea

Comprised of the ocean waters between the three primary islands of Kaidan, the Kaidan Sea is the best traveled body of water within the Emperor's realm. Its cerulean waters provide an incredible



bounty to those who live upon its shores, but, as with all things in Kaidan, the beauty is a facade hiding both danger and death. Besides the seasonal possibility of violent storms, many dread creatures lair beneath the ocean waves of Kaidan, and, as on land, so in the sea, the dead do not always rest easy.

Flora

The waters of the Kaidan sea are rich in oxygen, and the soil beneath the salty waves are as rich as any upon the land. Hundreds of different varieties of plants grow on the sandy sea-bottom including colorful seaweeds, kelp, and, along the coasts, sea grasses. Fishermen often harvests the seaweed, using it for food, linens, baskets, and even medication. Likewise, one species of kelp, called the rope vine, grows tremendously long, and when cut, dried and braided, makes a strong, thin rope.

Fauna

Within the waters of the Kaidan Sea swim a multitude of creatures. Fish abound, including cod, pollock, salmon, trout, anchovies, sardines, mackerel and herring. There are several species of squid, also octopus, and both of these are happily

eaten by the Kaidanese, though fishermen are cautious about where they fish for squid, for there are numerous stories of giant squid which dwell in certain deep recesses of the sea. Such giants of the sea are often thought to be as intelligent as men, and as capable of great evil and cruelty. Dolphins and shark are all also to be found in the waters of the seas around Kaidan. Sometimes whales and seals can also be spotted in this region, but only infrequently as they prefer the waters of the Naga and Eastern Seas. The sea snakes of the Kaidan sea have a bad reputation and their bite is rightly feared for the lethality of their poison.

Islands

The islands of the Kaidan sea are numerous, and many of them have never been given an official name. Some of the more famous islands include the following.

Ansigitou The island of Ansigitou has a bloody and notiorious history. The sugi trees of the island have a curious charcoal colored bark found nowhere else in Kaidan, and the wood of the trees is a rich ebony. Though there have been many attempts to colonize the island, including at least one by the Shogunate, no colony has ever survived longer than a month.

Dangato A relatively flat, lush island, northwest of Takita, Dangato boasts natural hot-springs, numerous streams, ponds and small lakes, and some of the best fresh water fishing in all of Kaidan. It is also the habitual target of fierce seasonal storms. Many rich families maintain vacation estates on the island, and much time and energy is frequently spent in rebuilding and repairing structures damaged by storms.

Kamaba Located near to Ika province, the rocky slopes of Kamaba island have, for hundreds of years been used as a cemetery. Though the island still serves as a cemetery to various Ika families, it is widely rumored to be heavily haunted by both ghouls and ghosts, and nobody but the most foolhardy ever remain on the island after sundown.

Kamisatoi The small island of Kamisatoi is little more than a rocky mountain peak rising out of the water, at the top of which is built an ancient yokinto temple. The temple has been maintained by the same family since time out of mind, and it is rumored that the members of this family are blessed with perpetual health.

Otsuma Surrounded by rocky shoals which make approaching the island difficult for those lacking knowledge of the underwater terrain, Otsuma has long been used by pirates as a safe harbor. A small village devoted to building and repairing ships exists on the island, though years of such activity has severely depleted the availability of trees of sufficient size.

Joto Strait

The waters of Joto strait are relatively storm free and see much traffic throughout the whole of the year. Rumors of a family of sea dragons making their home in the strait persist, and legend has it that it is the underwater shrines of these dragons which keep the strait so perpetually calm. For this reason, fishermen who ply the strait are careful to make offerings of coin and food upon every voyage. Skeptics observe that if there are no dragons in the strait, the floor of the sea there is well on its way to being paved with gold from these offerings.

Secrets of the Region

Sea dragons do live in the waters of Joto Strait, and consider the area there their province and domain. Though it is geography rather than any shrine which keeps storms out of the strait, the dragons do keep an eye on things above them, and subtly work to protect those fishermen who offer them tribute from pirates and the dangers of the sea. The dragons hate the Shogunate, but are not willing to actively work against the Shogun, preferring to wait him out. The dragons are also antagonistic towards the devil fish who rule the region of the sea between Yonshu and Anshu, and their minions and those of the devil fish often clash.

A race of fiendish octopoid like creatures, devilfish, rule the ocean floor between Anshu and Yonshu. The most ancient of these evil creatures have grown to enormous size and are cruelly intelligent and wise. Their emissaries pay tribute to the Shogun, though more out of a desire to avoid unnecessary conflict then any true subservience. In return, the shogunate turns a blind eye to the occasional boat sunk by the creatures, and forbids magical exploration of the deep sea floor.

The priests of Kamisatoi are a family of yokai, gifted spell-casters who use their abilities to keep the Shogunate off of their island. As such, the island is one of the safest of refuges for yokai in all of Kaidan, and the family often takes in those who are fleeing persecution by the government.

Naga Sea

As bountiful as the Kaidan Sea is, it cannot compare to the warm waters of the Naga Sea, as the body of water between Yonshu and Ryuki Island is called.

Warmed not just by dint of geographical location, but also by active underwater volcanos, the Naga sea is a cornucopia of ocean life, with every manner of fish, and vasts forests of giant kelp. Despite the abundance of the Naga Sea, few men fish its waters, for fierce ocean drake also call the region home and only well fortified and well armed ships can safely navigate its waters.

Those Kaidanese who do call the region home dwell primarily upon Ryuki island. The men of the island have a reputation for insularity, and many rumors abound throughout Kaidan regarding their strange practices and heathen religious practices. Though fishermen from Yonshu and Anshu avoid the waters of the sea for fear of the sea drakes, fishing boats out of Ryukyo suffer no seeming harm from the dangerous creatures, further fueling speculations about their strange ways.

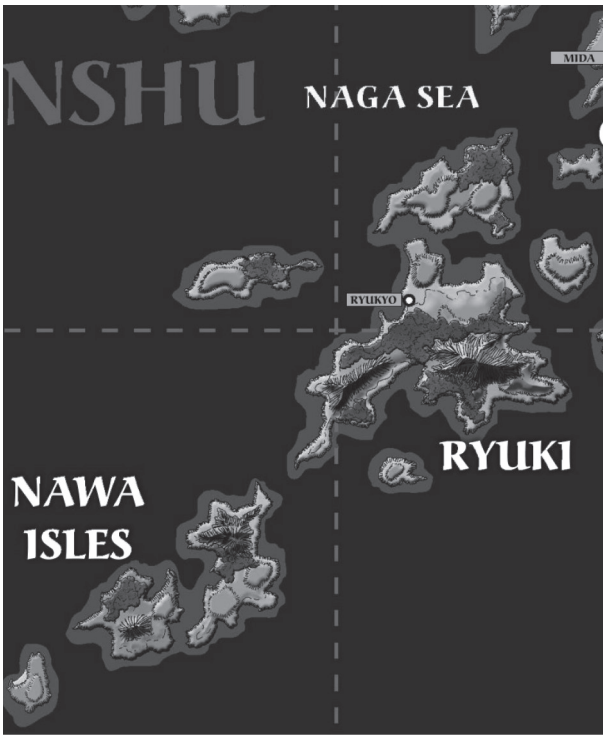
The sole province of the region is Ryuki province, and the Daimyo of the province is answerable directly to the Shogun.

Flora

Though best known for its giant kelp forests, the tops of which often reach the ocean surface, the variety of seaweeds, kelp and other assorted sea plants growing along the sea floor in the Naga Sea is staggering. Excepting spots where lava actively and frequently flows, the floor of the Naga sea is a lush carpet of vegetation abounding in color. The vivid purple and scarlet colors of some of the sea weeds are rendered by the fishermen of Ryuki and used to produce brightly colored clothes.

Fauna

Massive schools of fish swim in the Naga sea; schools of mackerel, tuna, sardines and anchovies. Other fish include cod, pollock, salmon, herring, and each of these are found in large numbers. Shrimp also call the region home in great numbers, as do eel and sea snakes. Likewise there are many species of sharks, inhabiting the waters, including the odd looking frilled sharks, and where it not for the danger posed by the sea drakes, sharks would be considered a real threat. Octopus and squid are also found in numbers, but the sea drakes which lair within the kelp forests keep the larger specimens of these species in check. Whales are sometimes seen swimming through the area, but as such massive creatures make a good meal for the ravenous sea drakes, they tend to avoid the region.



Islands

Despite a rich bounty of natural resources, the islands of the Naga Sea are only slightly settled by men. Indeed, Ryuki is the only island to boast a population of any size. But this does not mean the region is devoid of history or potential adventure. Following are some locations of interest other than Ryuki.

Inshiwana The large island just north of Ryuki is Inshiwana, a mountainous island covered with trees and teeming with wildlife. A few scattered fishing villages along the eastern shore comprise the bulk of the human population, but there are said to be yokai settlements further inland. The men of the island prefer to keep to themselves, and though they pay taxes to the Daimyo of Ryuki, there is no government presence on the island. Tales persists of ancient oni fortresses and yokai ruins upon the island, but few outside the island know the truth of such tales.

Nawa Isles Unihabited by any Kaidanese, the three Nawa isles are home to yokai. The yokai of the Nawa islands remain aloof from their northern cousins and practice a particularly dark version of yokinto, sacrificing individuals to a strange cat spirit. Besides this, the islands are home to a small species of wild cat, the only place in all of the world this particular race of cats is to be found.

Rokiwa A small island north of Inshiwana, Rokiwa houses a fortified harbor, maintained by the shogunate. From Rokiwa, government ships patrol the Naga and Southern Kaidan Seas, sinking any non-authorized ship they encounter.

Ryuki Province

Though, in theory, Ryuki Province covers the entirety of the Naga Sea, including the Nawa Isles, in practice, the Ryuki province and Ryuki Island are one and the same, with little effort made by the daimyo and his officials to stretch their rule beyond the shores of the island they call home.

Despite its remote location, or perhaps because of it, Ryuki has seen its share of history and has played a part in two major wars. It was upon Ryuki that the oni-lord Amatsu-Mikaboshi established his fortress and it was there that the last major battle of the great oni wars took place. Likewise, during the Minamoto rebellion, the island served as base to the doomed fleet of the Tiara clan. Today, the island has little in the way of armed forces, but the men of the island are vigilant to keep the island free of the taint of oni, and they work tirelessly to improve their lot.

Flora

Chestnuts, cycads, and broad leaved evergreens grow abundantly throughout Ryuki, and as one heads further into the island pine, cedar and sugi also become plentiful. Among the villages of Ryuki, and around Ryukyu itself, cultivated citrus trees, sudachi and kinkan in particular, line the roads, as do ornamental bamboo groves. Along the Syogawa mangroves, musa and pigeon wood trees are all commonly found. Within the forests, ferns and bamboo grass make up the majority of the undergrowth.

Fauna

Few bears or wolves make their home on Ryuki, but occassionally a forester will report having seen one. More common are fox, badgers and boar. Large flying fox bats roosts throughout the island, primarily on the branches of trees. Though they weigh only about two pounds, and primarily eat fruit, their five foot wingspan can make them a frightening sight, especially at night. Also calling the island home are the crested serpent and the variable lizard. Green and black snakes are very common, but few vipers. Another common sight, especially on the southern half of the island are eagles. Hawks and a variety of songbirds can be found throughout the island.

Mountains

The whole of Ryuki island rises up to a single broad peak, which shares the name of the island.

Rivers and Lakes

Flowing past the city of Ryukyo, the **Syogawa** is the only body of water of note on the island. Though fish from the river are caught, the true value of the river is felt in its swift flowing currents, the strength of which turns many a water-wheel along its banks, powering saw blades, grinding wheels and forge bellows.

Government

Ryuumakai Tanchiko serves as daimyo of Ryuki and has done so since the death of his father, Sankisan three hundred and ten years earlier. The daimyo is a hard, but just man, who drives his people to constantly improve upon what they already have. Once a year, a maiden of the village is publically and ceremonially chosen to serve as the daimyo's "bride" and after a year of pampered luxury, this maiden's life force is used to perpetuate the undeath of the daimyo. Rather than hide what he is, the daimyo is quite public about his condition, and many suspect he does all that he can to make the public revile his undead state.

Taxes in the city are slightly lower than the Imperial standard, and little is done to actually collect taxes beyond the city itself. Nevertheless, every year, the tribute to the Shogun is exactly what it is required to be.

The daimyo maintains patrols across the island, and pays for the upkeep of a small, but well armed fleet. He also offers rewards for individuals who kill oni, undead (other than himself), and any other monstrosities which choose to lair on the island.

Cities, Towns, and Areas of Interest

Ryukyu is both chief city of the province, indeed its only city, and the provincial capital. The city, though not large, is fairly prosperous, and it is certainly clean and well kept. Industry is kept out of the city, and there are numerous forges, saw-mills and textile factories along the Syogawa south-west of the city. Order in the city is constantly maintained. Besides the daimyo's palace, the most ornate structure in all of Ryukyu is the Shrine of Choosing in the middle of the city, where every year a single maiden is publically betrothed to the daimyo in a ceremony, attendance of which is mandatory for everyone in the city.

Ryukyu, City of the Dragon, Provincial Capital of Ryuki

LN small city
Corruption +3; **Crime** -2; **Economy** +4; **Law** +5; **Lore** +3; **Society** +0
Qualities: Insular, Prosperous, Secret Allies, Strategic Location
Danger 5

DEMOGRAPHICS

Government overlord (Lord Ryuumaki)
Population 5500 (5350 humans, 100 Tengu, 50 Yokai)

NOTABLE NPCS

Daimyo Lord Ryuumaki (LN male half-dragon human advanced wight Samurai 12)
Port Master Sanjoaki Markiosa (LE male human expert 5)
Captain of the Guard Ryuumaki Dajo (LG male dragon-blooded human Samurai 4/Sorcerer 4)

MARKETPLACE

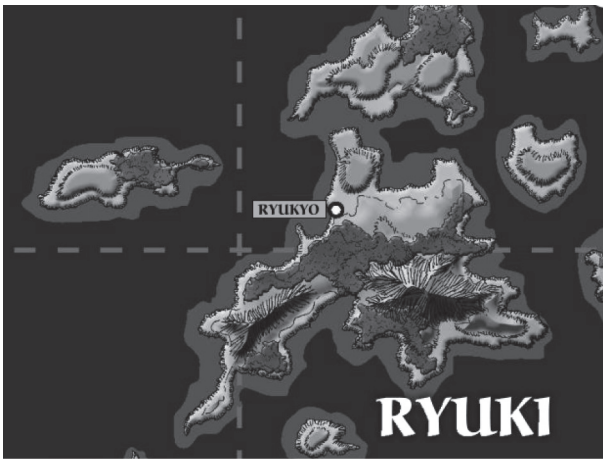
Base Value 5600 gp; **Purchase Limit** 37,500; **Spellcasting** 6th
Minor Items 4d4; **Medium Items** 3d4; **Major Items** 1d6

Economy

Ryuki is largely self-sufficient, and purposefully so. They import little from outside their own borders, nor do they need to, for they produce their own cloths, dyes, ore, lumber, and food, and in sufficient quantities to sustain themselves. Some of this has to do with trade between the men of the island and the inhabitants of the sea around them, but the island itself is rich in ore and timber and the sea immediately around Ryukyu is well harvested by the canny men. The island does export dried fish and shrimp north to Anshu, both for trade and as tribute to the Shogun. Technically and mechanically, the island inhabitants are further advanced than all the rest of Kaidan, though they keep their technological secrets to themselves and do not make a spectacle of their knowledge.

Secrets of the Region

The true ruler of Ryukyu is the great sea dragon Ryuuseikai and all of the island venerates him, though they will not discuss his existence with outsiders. The daimyo, is the grandson of the dragon, who volunteered to undergo the process of transformation to undeath in order to maintain



peace with the Shogun, and keep the armies of the Shogunate away from Ryukyo. Ryuuseikai is uninterested in the affairs of Kaidan at large, caring only for the domain he has claimed as his own, a domain which encompasses all of the Naga Sea. Besides the men of Ryukyo, he is served by the sea drakes which inhabit the region. Though he does not war against the Shogunate, nor care to, Ryuuseikai's forces frequently clash with the devilfish to their north.

Sankisan, the father of the current daimyo is not actually dead, but instead retired to join his father, Ryuuseikai beneath the waves of the Naga sea. Though he maintained a facade of being undead, unlike his son, Sankisan never made the transition to undeath but instead used powerful illusions to make it appear as if he had. Eventually he grew tired of the energy spent in maintaining the constant deceit and so staged his "death," making it appear as if his son had assassinated him in order to assume the throne.

Tengu, dwelling in the heart of Ryuki, trade with the men of Ryukyu. Because of this alliance, the steel and weapons of the Ryuki forces are second to none, and the daimyo's guard are fearsome swordsmen.

One of the chief historical sites of the island are the ruins of the the fortress of Amatsu-Mikaboshi. The ruins themselves serve as a magnet to evil forces and so every so often it is necessary for the ruins to be re-explored and cleansed. Though most of the fortress was razed to the ground, it had many subterranean levels, and many hidden chambers. Every few years, adventurers find new, previously unexplored rooms within the dungeon complex.

Eastern Sea

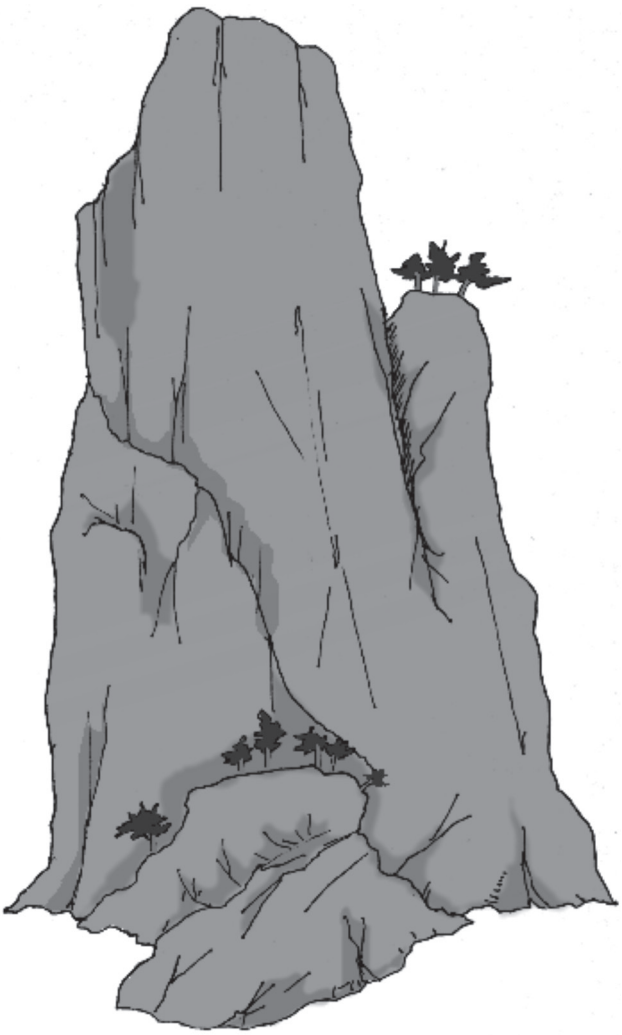
East of Anshu and Genshu stretch the waters of the Eastern Sea. Kaidanese legends say there is no land past the Hokai Isles, and certainly, no craft which ever set out to the east returned to tell of what was to be found.

Flora

While not quite as rich in vegetation as the waters of the Naga and Kaidan seas, there is still much plant life in the eastern sea. Sea grasses grow near to shore and further out kelp and seaweed grow in the fertile, sandy soil of the sea. Unique to the region is the shark-eating kelp, a strange species of rope-like kelp which strangles its prey and then allows the bodies to sink to the ocean floor and decompose. Another predator ocean plant native to the Eastern Sea is the razor-leaf seaflower, a distant cousin of the land bound moonflower.

Fauna

Whales, seals, and dolphins all ply the waters of the Eastern Sea. Likewise shark, octopus and squid hunt the region, constantly on the lookout for prey. Schools of tuna and mackerel can be found in great number, as can trout, salmon, herring, anchovy, and sardine. One fish much prized by those who fish the Eastern Sea are blow-fish, which, although potentially poisonous, are considered a rare delicacy. Along the coast shrimp are found in goodly numbers, as are clams and scallops. Giant sea-snails sometimes roam near to the coast hunting clams, especially within Unagi Bay, and these strange creatures are not above attacking humans.



Islands

There are far fewer islands in the eastern sea, then in the waters west of Anshu, and such islands as there are, excepting Ata are uninhabited by Kaidanese men. Despite this, of note are the **Hokai Isles**, which the Shogun has never bothered to subjugate. Thus upon the wooded shores of these small islands, yokai and tengu still dwell in peace, as do a few tribes of Anu. Bear are more numerous, in terms of population density, upon the Hokai Isles then anywhere else in Kaidan.

Secrets of the Region

The eastern sea holds far fewer secrets, as there have been fewer who call it home over the years. However, there is one fact known by very few, but of potential interest to the adventurous. East of Anshu and South of the Hokai Isles, there was, in days of old, another island, home to a powerful wizard priest, distantly related to the Anu. At the height of his power, the entire island upon which his palace was built sank into the sea, though whether because of natural means or arcane is lost to time. Various underwater races have dwelt within the remains of the palace, but none have ever penetrated to the dungeons and vaults beneath, rooms which still hold ancient treasures and arcane mysteries.

Ata Province

Ata Island is populous enough to warrant its own province, though only just. The island is itself fairly nondescript, with no great claim to historical fame, and scarcely any resources to make it unique. Nevertheless, those that call it home are very fond of it and consider it, rightly or wrongly, the jewel of Kaidan. Small villages are scattered across the wooded isle, and forestry, more than farming, is the mainstay of the island. Beyond the shores of Ata island, the daimyo has no influence, nor has he ever shown interest in expanding his reach -indeed, there is scarcely anyplace for him to expand it to, save Hota Isle northeast of Ata, upon which none dwell.

Flora

Ata is heavily wooded, with plentiful amounts of deciduous trees, such as oak, ashwood and maple. Spruce and fir, as well as sugi, can also be found on the island, as can beech and birch trees. Dwarf bamboo makes up a goodly amount of the undergrowth, and outside of the wooded areas there are a large variety of grasses and wild-flowers.

Fauna

Bear are plentiful on Ata, both brown and black bear. There are always rumors of dire bear here and there, but none have actually been seen in years. Spotted deer roam in great number throughout the island, and there are more than a few wolves which feed upon these herds. Also to be found are fox, martens, hare, and a variety of small rodents. Birds of many variety, including sea eagles, hawks, owls, cranes, swan, ducks, geese, tits, finches, robins, warblers and woodpeckers make a home upon the island, and it is hard to step out of doors without seeing a half dozen different kinds of birds within the space of a few minutes.

Mountains

Though Ata itself rises up from the ocean to a peak of sorts, it is not high enough to properly be considered a mountain.

Rivers and Lakes

Ata has many streams, but no rivers or lakes of note.

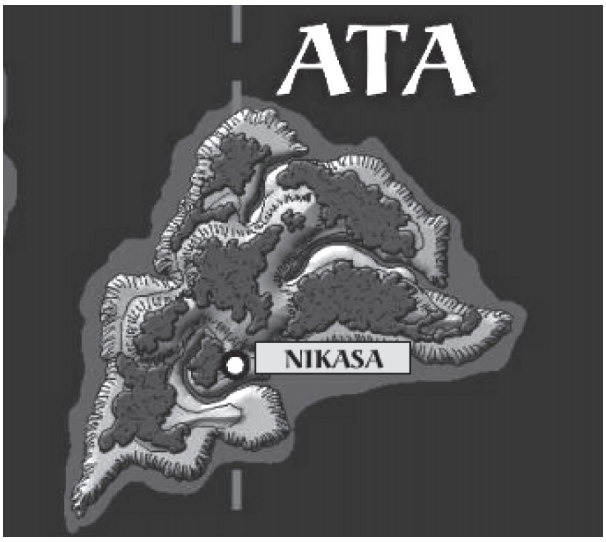
Government

Lord Kinja no Dakishi has served as daimyo of Ata province for four hundred and seventy four years. A rotund, ghoulish man, Lord Kinja has few thoughts beyond gratifying his appetite and keeping the Shogun and Lord Ashikuma of Niigasa happy. He delegates as much as possible to his subordinates, eating those that displease him. Within the palace, the true authority is the seneschal Domohijo no Tunikosikan, who has managed to keep his position for nearly three hundred years.

Taxes in Ata are kept to the Imperial standard, and there are few provincial troops, for there is little to patrol. Excepting for taxes, both government and governed within Ata are pleased to leave the other mostly alone, pursuing their separate goals. Nevertheless, while Lord Kinja is not overt in his demands for flesh, there is a constant resentment and fear of the daimyo, for his nature is little more than an open secret. However, all attempts upon his life have ended badly, and few have the courage to try and unseat him.

Cities, Towns, and Areas of Interest

The sole city of Ata is **Nakasa,** and this city also serves as the provincial capital. As cities go, it is, like



so much of the island, nondescript. The harbor is the primary focus of activity in the city, though there are also a variety of markets and shops around the harbor. The palace lies on the east side of Nakasa, and on the west side are the estates of the noble samurai clans, the Yumite clan chief among them.

Economy

There are a few jewel mines upon the island, and the jewels that are brought out of these mines are Ata's primary export. A secondary export is lumber, which is used on both Anshu and Genshu for ship building. Most of the islanders survive by hunting and gathering from the forest, though there are farms north of Nakasa where pigs are raised, and wheat is grown.

Secrets of the Region

The Yumite clan of Nakasa comprise one of Kaidan's six shinobi clans, and are masters of Sogessatsu, the art of the far kill. These assassins maintain estates north of the city upon which they train all of their warriors in the use of the bow, selecting only the very best to learn stealth, and how to kill with a single, well placed shot. The clan hires out its archers, surreptitiously, to any clan head able to pay the price. These samurai never join actual combat, but instead creep around the edges of camps, battles, and fortifications, eliminating enemy commanders as necessary.

Many of the people of the island are of mixed Anu and Kaidanese descent, and, though the practice is officially outlawed, there is a sizable Bear Cult amongst the population which worship bears according to Anu tradition. Some of this cult have gone so far as to infuse themselves with the spirits of slain bear, becoming lycanthropes.

Chapter 6: Life in Kaidan

The Tale of Shinsa

Upon the slopes of Mount Ikoyama in Ika province, within the temple of the dread god of death, there was a faithful priest, who, despite his general piety, fell into temptation so that he was struck blind and died. This wretch, though penitent, was not allowed to move on to his next life, but was instead bound into the trunk of an ancient sugi some distance away.

Near to this tree was a village named Shinsa, infamous in the comportment of its young folk. The young women of the village had a deserved reputation for being wanton and among them marriage was held in low esteem. Among other crimes against the gods, the village used the occasion of sacred feasts to comport themselves abominably, dancing wickedly and flirtatiously.

On one such occasion, a young girl named Kimi had wandered outside the village, as was her custom, to meet clandestinely with her lover, Fumisure. As she searched for her paramour, she espied a comely young man who beckoned to her. The man's beauty enraptured the wayward girl and, her former lover forgotten, she blindly followed the young man and so disappeared from the village. This event repeated itself nine more times over the next month, each time with a different girl so that soon all the village was in an uproar, not knowing what had become of their daughters and wondering what manner of creature was stealing them away.

A wandering young priest, Sobone, hearing of the villages despair, offered his services. After listening to their accounts, he admonished them, "No doubt your own wickedness has brought this trouble on you. But nevertheless, I will do what I can to aid you." After



meditating for a day and a night, he announced, "the gods have revealed to me that your difficulty comes from the spirit of Yukikoshi, who is bound into the great sugi tree outside the village. I shall speak to him on your behalf."

Sobone went to the tree in which the blind priest was bound and prostrated himself upon the ground, "Wise spirit, said the young priest, "your unworthy servant beseeches you to relent from punishing this village further."

The spirit of Yukikoshe manifested itself before Sobone. "I hear your plea and I grant it. Know this. The offenses of this village have been many, but the girls are unharmed. They have been bound on trees beyond the next hill. They have repented of their behavior and shall preach decorum and propriety to future generations. Go and release them."

Sobone did as the spirit bade him. The girls were where he was told and, true to the words of the spirit, their comportment was much improved. From that day to this, the village of Shinsa is known for the quietness and meekness of its women, and the piety of its men.

The life experience of each individual in Kaidan is going to, naturally, be different with preset factors such as caste, family wealth, and home province all making a difference, besides those factors naturally variable in a life. Nevertheless, the men of Kaidan are bound together by a common principle language, a common culture, a common set of religions, and the overarching factor of the curse that lies heavy on the archipelago. The goal of this chapter is to provide an overview of a few of the commonalities which help to define life within Kaidan. The entries of this chapter are offered alphabetically for ease of reference. Some subjects, such as religion, discussed briefly in this chapter, by way of an overview, are expanded upon more fully elsewhere.

Animals and Livestock

Kaidanese of all stations are frequently around animals. The wealthy may keep pets, including dogs, song-birds, and even birds of prey. Some samurai families breed dogs for hunting, especially in northern Kaidan, and most samurai children learn to ride horses while still young. Poorer families also keep animals, though for more practical purposes and chickens, geese and ducks are found in many a yard in Kaidan. Such birds, while sometimes eaten, are also used to provide eggs.

While the eating of red meat is taboo in much of Kaidan, especially on Anshu, it is not a universal ban and some Kaidanese do raise meat animals. Chickens, ducks and pigs are the most common animals to be eaten, after fish, and in some places pig is actually the most common of meats. The Kaidanese do raise cattle, and on either Yonshu or Genshu, such animals can be a common sight, though most such animals are raised as draft animals rather than for meat.

Horses are primarily raised by Samurai, and the animal is traditionally seen as a creature of battle, rather than a beast of burden. However, ownership of horses is not restricted to samurai, and some wealthy farmers and merchants may elect to own a horse as a sign of their wealth.

Art

While the poor of Kaidan have little use for art, the nobles and the samurai alike deem the creation of art to be a high calling, and the artist capable of creating beauty can earn esteem as great as any warrior. Four recognized forms of art exist in Kaidan: painting, sculpture, calligraphy and poetry.

Sculpture is likely the least appreciated of the art forms, chiefly because it is an art form typically connected with religion. That is, the best sculptors have historically been employed to create religious iconography or to craft ward statues to frighten evil spirits. However, in the capital of Fukuhara-kyo, there has been a growing trend in the creation of statues depicting both samurai and horses, and these statues are beginning to prove quite popular throughout the archipelago.

Poetry is probably the one art form with the most participants, for the creation of poetry is deemed a suitable and desirable past-time for nobles and samurai alike. The typical Kaidanese poem is short, heavily structured, cryptic, and focused on natural beauty. The haiku, with its set parameters of syllables, is typical of Kaidanese poetry but there are several other accepted forms.

Calligraphy is also widely practiced by samurai and nobles, though women are more likely than men to practice it frequently. Practiced calligraphers are thought to be able to capture the actual emotions and depth of meaning of a written word, and the goal of calligraphy is to create a written word that is at once beautiful to look at and which is able to awaken deep philosophical insights.

The final art form, painting, is also the most revered, for it is thought that so few are able to do it well. In ancient days, it was thought that the painting of portraits enabled evil spells to be more easily cast upon the portraits subject, and so paintings of landscapes and animals became the cultural norm. While this taboo is no longer as

strong as it once was, there are very few successful portrait painters and the most cherished of artists are renowned for their landscapes. Paintings are normally done upon sheets of silk which are then incorporated into a practical effect, such as folding panels, or cabinet doors. While wall hangings are not unknown, they are the exception, and a wall hanging is just as likely to be calligraphy as it is to be a painting.

Bamboo

Bamboo is a tall, woody, evergreen grass which grows in tube-like stalks. It is one of the fastest growing of plants and many of the varieties of bamboo are quite durable and strong. There are well over a hundred varieties of bamboo growing in Kaidan and the majority of them are utilized by the Kaidanese in one fashion or another. The quick growing nature of bamboo, combined with its inherent strength, make it a versatile commodity. Bamboo, especially the shoots, is used as a food source, but the true value of the plant lies in its ability to provide a fast growing substitute for lumber. Though actual wood is readily available, and greatly utilized by the kaidanese, they also incorporate bamboo into many aspects of their architecture, utilizing it for decoration, fencing, in fountains, and as scaffolding for large projects. Bamboo is likewise utilized to craft utensils, and small household items. In some regions it even serves as a viable fuel.



Clothing

There are a variety of different clothing styles in Kaidan, and the clothing one wears expresses a great deal concerning one's wealth, caste and occupation. Kaidanese prefer loose, flowing styles of garments. Wealthier individuals, and those with social standing, tend towards layered fashions.

The kimono is at once the most formal and the most common of clothing styles. At its heart the kimono is a sleeved robe and there are various styles of kimonos extant in Kaidan. Wealthy individuals wear kimonos of silk, peasants make do with baste fabrics. Noble ladies, and other women with wealth or standing, wear layered kimonos, with colors matching a chosen scheme. Especially rich kimonos are voluminous in nature, utilizing great amounts of fabric. Poorer individuals make do with simpler robes of a single layer and far more modest cuts. The traditional sleeve of the kimono is a broad, flowing sleeve which tapers a bit at the wrist. This taper creates a natural pocket, and as the Kaidanese do not use pockets in their garments, their sleeves often serve as a place to store or conceal items. Though most kimonos have sleeves extending to the wrist, some men, warriors in particular, prefer a shorter sleeved kimono, one which extends to the mid forearm. Often, over such styles, a sleeveless, vestlike layer is worn. Other kimono, typically only worn by samurai, are not full robes, but descend just past the waist. Such kimono tend to have the shorter sleeves and are typically worn with trousers and a surcoat, or a winged vest. Kaidanese trousers, worn in the main by men, are never tight, but are loose legged, though warriors sometimes tie the legs around the ankles to prevent the fabric from interfering with movement and stealth.

Peasant clothes are typically blue, or blue and white, as indigo dye is the cheapest dye manufactured in Kaidan. In most provinces colors other than blue are reserved for samurai and nobility, and there is a hierarchy of colors used to signify rank, standing and wealth. Wives tend to wear colors reflective of their husband's station and clan, samurai men tend towards more somber tones, with less decoration of the fabric.

Footwear is frequently, especially among the poor, foregone, but when worn it most often takes the form of sandals. Sandals are typically made of either straw or cloth and they can come in a variety of styles. Wooden clogs, called geta, essentially stilted sandals, may also be worn, though such shoes are considered, in the main, the property of the lower class. Boots are not unknown, and at one time bearskin boots were popular among the samurai. Today boots are reserved primarily for travel in the winter. The poorest of boots are fashioned of straw and are worn in snow to keep the feet dry. Boots of cloth are also worn, often being little more than socks worn under sandals to keep the feet warm. Leather boots are worn primarily by the Anu though some samurai still wear them, especially on Genshu and in Northern Anshu.

One common accessory, especially among the samurai and nobility, is the fan. Most often made of paper, though silk fans are not unknown, the fan serves a variety of purposes other than cooling the user. Folded fans make excellent pointers, especially for officials, and ladies often use their fans as notepads upon which small notations or messages may be written with ink.

Besides straw hats, the Kaidanese possess a number of different sorts of headgear, most of which is distinctive of a particular class or occupation. Cloth headbands are common among both samurai and peasants. Samurai wear a variety of helmets and head coverings for battle and for ceremonial occasions. Priests likewise often wear headgear distinctive to their school or office in some way.

Commerce and Merchants

Merchants are traditionally held in slightly less esteem than farmers, and the shogunate in particular maintains an unfavorable view of the occupation. Nevertheless, commerce between the provinces ever increases, and a canny merchant can amass almost as much wealth and power as a samurai. There is little regional control over the buying and selling of goods in most of the provinces. So long as everyone pays their taxes and all the proper tribute is made to the authorities, then what individuals do with what is left over is their business. What goods are shipped into or out of a province is rarely decided by the daimyo of the province, but is instead a matter of expedience for the local merchants.

Merchants frequently form trade guilds, establish alliances with other merchants through marriage, and generally do all they can to promote their own interest. Thus the best source of news from other regions is oft-times the local merchant, who shares such information with his business partners and in return gathers such information. The merchant in a small community therefore occupies a rather curious position. On the one hand, socially, he is considered somewhat inferior. On the other hand, he likely has more wealth than anyone else in the community, and his connections outside of the community are probably the strongest of anyone within the community.

Etiquette

Etiquette is very important in Kaidanese life. The basis for all proper etiquette is understanding the relative rank or standing of any two parties engaged in a social interaction. Lower ranks are expected to act properly subservient to those of higher rank, and the higher the party being addressed, the more fawning the subservience should be. Contrarily, those of higher rank are expected to act properly haughty and superior, as befits their station. Only with peers of exactly equal standing, or close friends, can one act informally. Even among peers, etiquette may demand, upon occasion, that one act in a defacing way, either by way of apology, or to acknowledge the current standing of the other. Rarely will peers act superior to one another unless trying to be deliberately insulting.

One of the most obvious ways to demonstrate both good manners and the superior rank or standing of another is through the bow. Close friends and peers may acknowledge one another with a curt nod but when addressing one of higher rank, a deeper bow is necessary, even to the point of prostration if one is addressing an especially high superior, as with a peasant addressing a samurai or a samurai addressing his lord. Prostration can also be used when apologizing, regardless of rank (though superiors rarely apologize to inferiors) and apologies are made far more acceptable, socially, by sincere prostration. Relatedly, it is considered poor form for an inferior to ever stand taller than a superior when engaged in conversation, and so, following a bow, it is proper for an inferior to speak from a kneeling position, regardless of the deportment of their superior.

Etiquette also manifests itself in speech and grammar, the language itself being structured so as to reflect the social position of a person being discussed in relation to the speaker. Different verbs are utilized to reflect relative rank and, when addressing another, it is proper to add modifiers to their name reflective of their social position.

In conduct and deportment, there are a myriad of small things which reflect proper manners. It is extremely rude to wear shoes within a domicile. Likewise, when addressing superiors indoors, one should always remove weapons, if worn, and lay them facing away from the superior party. Loud, boisterous behavior is generally considered a sign of poor breeding, although among friends such standards are often relaxed.

Failure to show proper manners among friends will mark a person as uncouth and unfit to socialize with, a stigma that can be hard to remove. Failure to show proper deference when addressing a superior, especially among samurai (but also the yakuza) can result in a person being beaten severely or even killed, depending on the nature of the infraction.

Exorcists

The prevalence of so many supernatural threats in Kaidan has led to the existence of the professional exorcists, individuals trained and experienced in dealing with inhuman threats against their fellow man. Individual exorcists may have very specific skills. One might be trained against oni, another might have experience with ghouls and other undead, and a third might be quite capable in fighting ghosts. Any individual who succeeds in destroying a supernatural threat is going to gain a reputation for exorcism and may find that they are in demand to handle other threats that may arise. Many an adventurer in Kaidan got their start by gaining a reputation as an exorcist.

Officially, most provinces, and the Shogun himself, maintain and fund groups of trained exorcist, sending them here and there to combat whatever threat manifest itself. Unofficial exorcist also wander the land, hiring themselves out to villages and towns who might wish to avoid official involvement, or who are unable to gain the aid of officially sanctioned exorcist. Regardless, nearly everyone in Kaidan is aware of the existence of, and need for, these talented individuals willing to face the powers of those forces wishing harm upon humanity.

Food

The staple of the Kaidanese diet is rice, followed closely by seafood and fish. Though pork and venison are widely available, there is a taboo in much of Kaidan against eating red meats (though there are regional exceptions to this rule), in part because of the influence of Zaoism. While most branches of Zaoism do not teach against the eating of meat in and of itself, the idea that men are reincarnated as animals has led to a general reluctance to eat something that was in all likelihood once a man. For some reason, fish have escaped this unacknowledged taboo and all manner of seafood and river fish are consumed throughout Kaidan. Wild birds, such as grouse, pheasant, geese and duck are also eaten, though not as often as fish.

The preferred rice is a sticky short grain, able to be molded into balls or eaten easily with the fingers. Samurai sometimes use chopsticks, especially for formal affairs, but hands are the most common of utensils. Soups are normally thin affairs, lightly flavored and able to be drunk from the bowl.

Fried foods are rare, reserved for the most special of occasions, as cooking oil is an expensive and uncommon commodity. Wheat, while known, is generally expensive, making bread another delicacy. (The exception to this rule is Genshu, where wheat is more plentiful.) Noodles are known, being made of rice flour and water, but are uncommon due to the labor involved in making them. Most foods are roasted or boiled or even, in the case of fresh fish, eaten raw.

The Kaidanese utilize a variety of vegetables, but mainly as an accompaniment to fish and rice, to add variety and flavor. Few vegetables are a meal or course unto themselves, though fruits such as peaches are often served as a single course of a meal.

Liquor and vinegar is most often made from fermented rice. This liquor, called sake, is normally served warm.

Gaijin

For many years, Imperial dogma held that there were no lands beyond the borders of Kaidan, that Kaidan was a world unto itself. Though those who were historically literate knew this to be nonsense, for the Kaidanese themselves had sailed out of the west to the shores of their home, yet the dogma became, over time, accepted truth. When the Shogun, for his own nefarious purposes, opened the borders of Kaidan to foreigners, this truth was shattered, but the effect of that belief remains. Foreigners, called gaijin, are considered inherently evil and unclean, little better than yokai or oni. Most Kaidanese think it entirely reasonable that any Gaijin are forced to stay upon their own little island and are forbidden from ever sitting foot upon any of the three main islands. Nevertheless, the influence of foreigners into the closed society of Kaidan cannot be without affect, and in subtle ways, the idea that there are other lands beyond Kaidan has began to awaken non-conformist thoughts in some of the population. Gaijin weapons, clothing, and tools can all fetch a

decent price anywhere in Kaidan, and new foods and crops are being introduced to the islands for the first time in hundreds of years.

Gambling and Gaming

Gambling is a popular past time in Kaidan, regardless of caste, though heavily structured gambling is the purview of the hinin-eta caste who operates actual gambling halls. These halls are open to one and all, but the visitation of them is socially frowned upon. The most popular games of chance employ dice and are typically guessing games where participants bet on whether an unseen roll is odd or even. However, card games are not unknown, especially on Yonshu, and other games, such as board games may also be subject to wagers.

While samurai and nobility rarely engage in such structured gambling, they still frequently make wagers on other matters, including races (on foot and mounted), archery contests, and chance events. Betting is only done between social equals (or those of comparable rank), and it is considered bad form to place a wager with those too far above or beneath you in station. The upper castes, or at least the men of these castes, also enjoy various strategy games. Go, a game played with stones on a grid, is the most popular, but some samurai also enjoy war-games and battle simulations. It is thought that such exercises are good for developing martial skills and a good grasp of battle-field tactics.

Glass

The Kaidanese never developed the craft of fashioning items from glass. As such, the only items made of glass are those items imported into Gaijinoshima. Glass windows are still unknown to the archipelago at large and glass vessels are extremely rare and valuable. To reflect this, all items made of glass, are worth four times their listed price in the Core Rulebook.

Honor

The concept of honor, or face, permeates Kaidanese culture, though the exact permutations of honor differ from caste to caste. While in some other cultures, guilt and conscience are the primary motivators in regards to morality, in Kaidan shame and honor serve instead. Choices are made less on their rightness and wrongness in relationship to spiritual edicts and more based on how they will reflect on the honor of the one making the choice.

Among the hinin-eta, and to a lesser extent the human caste, honor is defined primarily by loyalty to one's group or compatriots. One gains honor when one acts in a way that displays fidelity to friends, family, or associates. One loses honor when one places the interest of self ahead of the interest of the group. Likewise doing something that reflects poorly on the group can be cause for shame. Thus, in service to the group, almost any action is deemed socially acceptable, so long as it conforms to the wishes of those in command of the group and advances the good of the group. There is little dishonor to be found in murder, theft, lies, or even rape so long as such things are done against those outside the group and do not run counter to the interest of the group. Such things done to members of the group are, however, strictly taboo and cause for shame. The exact nature of a group can vary. It might be a family or clan. It might be an association of businesses. It might be a village. Or it could be a yakuza family. Belonging to a group of some sort is a very important thing and those with no such affiliation are looked down upon.

Among the samurai, honor is defined not as loyalty to a group, but as loyalty to one's sworn lord. Those things which advance the cause of one's lord, or fulfill his commands are honorable and those things which defy him are dishonorable. Under such a definition, competence and efficiency are the hallmarks of high honor. Sloth and insolence are shameful. Depending on the nature of one's sworn superior, certain actions may also be deemed of themselves dishonorable. Situation and duty, rather than specific criteria of right and wrong determine the amount of honor a character has. A samurai with no sworn lord to serve is, by definition, less honorable than one with a lord; which is why ronin are generally despised as second class samurai, regardless of their skill.

Honor is of less importance to the yokai in general, with the exception of the tengu, who claim to have taught the concept of honor to humans. However, whereas the Kaidanese might define honor as loyalty to a group, or loyalty to a sworn lord, the tengu define honor as loyalty to self. Within the framework of tengu culture, each tengu determines an individual code of conduct and then strives to uphold that code. Though teachers might influence such a code, ultimately it is the individual who determines what is right and what is wrong for him.

Closely related to honor, at all levels of Kaidanese society, is the concept of Debt. Debt takes three forms: a sense of duty or obligation, consideration for others, and a need to repay the actions of others. The level of indebtedness a person has, and

the manner in which they fulfill it reflects on their character. Some debt, such as the duty one owes superiors or the obligations one has for spiritual duties, is never fully eliminated; one can only hope to continually pay what is owed. Other debts may be fully discharged and in so discharging a debt a person proves their value. Again, as with honor in general, specific actions of right and wrong are less important culturally than doing what is necessary to fulfill a debt.

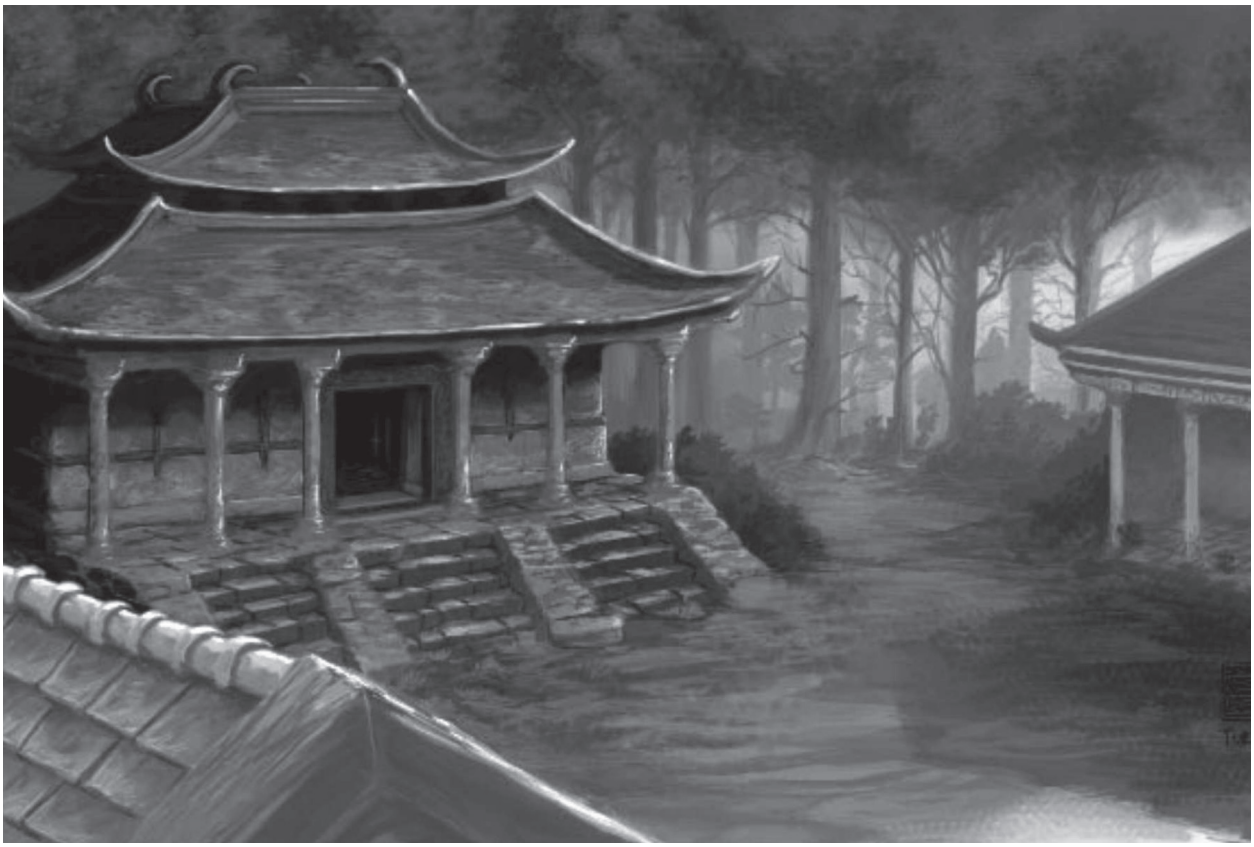
Housing, architecture and furniture

Traditional Kaidanese architecture favors wooden structures, often stilted, with tiled or thatched roofs. This overall style holds true regardless of caste and station, but the size of a given structure and the quality of the material used varies greatly according to means. The poorest of individuals make do with rough wood, self-cut bamboo and often straw. Cut wood and bamboo are used in most homes, and more affluent homes and buildings make use of highly polished woods, laminated bamboo, and sometimes plaster. Stone is generally reserved for those structures requiring some level of fortification, or for pagoda foundations.

Interior walls are sometimes fixed, but those who can afford it prefer sliding walls made of paper, which allow rooms to be highly customized according to the demands of privacy and occasion. Windows are either open to the air, or able to be shuttered. Most doors lack locks.

In more expensive structures, the most striking feature of the building is the roof, which can often account for over half the structures actual size. Roofs tend to be slightly curved and spread out to cover a veranda or porch. The size and scope of a building's veranda speaks to the affluence of the residence. The best of homes, as well as many temples, have verandas which surround the entire outside of the structure. More modest homes may only have a porch on a single side. Also common in wealthy residences are interior courtyards, and these courtyards will often be framed by the porched walls of the house.

Typically, the Kaidanese cook their food over fire pits, with said pits being located in the center of the residence, or in a dedicated room. Chimneys are virtually unknown in most of Kaidan and smoke is expected to escape via holes in the ceiling, or out through windows. Some homes also possess small clay cooking stoves called kamado, though again, these stoves lack proper chimneys.



Standing beds are virtually unknown in Kaidan, as rich and poor alike make do with sleeping mats. These mats, made from either cloth or straw, are rolled up during the day and set to the side, thereby creating space within the room for other activities. Chairs are also uncommon, with most opting to sit upon the ground. Such chairs as do exist are frequently little more than low benches.

Koku

Rice is, in many ways, central to the Kaidanese culture. It is the chief staple of the diet. It is also the foundation of the Kaidanese economy and is the basis for all taxation. The primary unit of Kaidanese currency is the koku, which is calculated as the amount of rice necessary to feed a man for a year. All monetary units are derived from the koku, and a samurai's wealth or income is given in terms of koku. A samurai who earns one koku from his lord is making barely enough to keep himself fed. One who earns ten koku can feed himself, his wife, children, and possibly a servant, while having enough left over to buy clothing and equipment. A hundred koku samurai is truly wealthy. Tax rates are likewise given in values of koku, so that a small village might owe twenty koku each year and another, with more land, might be assessed at two hundred koku.

While a koku is a rice measurement, payment need not necessarily be made in rice. Gold is used for larger transactions. The koban is a golden coin valued at four koku, and gold bars of ten or thirty koku are also minted by individual daimyo, the emperor, and the shogun. Silver coins, worth a tenth of a koban (2/5th of a koku) and copper coins worth a hundredth of a koban (1/25th of a koku) are also minted.

Marriage and the Role of Women

Kaidan is largely a patriarchal society, and the differences between gender roles defines the social structure of the nation almost as much as do caste roles. This does not mean that women are without rights in Kaidan, for that is far from being the case, and in general women can inherit property, travel and engage in commerce in exactly the same way men can. Indeed, in some samurai clans women receive training in arms on par with the men, though they are seldom expected to actually fight in battle. And the wife of a noble, or a samurai, while expected to be subservient to her husband, still exercises authority over his underlings, as if she was speaking with his voice. Indeed, it is understood that a wife shares in all the authority and rank of the husband, and that his station is her station.

Nevertheless, a Kaidanese woman derides almost all of her honor and her rank from her association and relationship to the men in her life, and it is an exceptional woman indeed who can break this mold and be recognized for her own accomplishments. Initially a woman is regarded according to the rank of her father. In fairness, so are male children, but whereas a male child is expected to seek his own station, it is regarded that the woman will typically marry or be given in marriage and her rank will then become the rank of her husband. As the rank of the daughter reflects upon the rank of the parents, daughters become an asset by which a family, regardless of caste, can establish relationships with other families and raise their own status. Even in the lower castes, marriages are used to create alliances between families and to cement deals or agreements, though the nature of such alliances change according to station and needs. This does not mean that all marriages are arranged without thought of the feelings of the daughters, but emotional considerations are seldom the sole consideration in making a marriage.

Most Kaidanese tend towards monogamy, although fidelity is a different matter. Discrete adultery is, in many circumstances, expected of both men and women, and the only shame is in getting found out. There is no punishment for adultery within the society at large, though some men, if they discover the unfaithfulness of their wives have been known to throw the woman out of the home, forcing her to fend for herself, and there are tales of domineering wives who treat their husbands in much the same way. Likewise, bigamy is not a crime, and polygamy, especially among the noble caste, is not unknown. In such situations, the eldest wife is generally considered to have rank over the newer wives, though in practice, this may not always be the case.

In the case of the death of the husband, property is generally inherited by any sons who are of age, but if there are no such heirs, it goes to the wife. How such property is treated if the woman remarries, or her daughters marry, or even if her son comes of age, is highly variable from region to region. Generally speaking, however, property is considered the joint possession of a married couple, and as the husband ranks the wife, the property of a widow becomes the property of a new husband, to do with as he sees fit.

Within a marriage, the exact duties of a wife are highly dependent upon the husband's rank and position. In general, a woman is expected to help advance the cause of her husband and assist him with his labors. Thus, the wife of a farmer would be expected to aid in the farming, the wife of a merchant would aid in buying and selling, and the wife of a samurai would aid in advancing her husband's rank, through the application of her natural charms and skills. Wives, especially in families of means, are also expected to oversee the coordination of underlings, and to help

maintain the family accounts. Also it is expected of a wife to produce children, both sons to advance the family line, and daughters to strengthen the family's position through marriages. A man with a barren wife is understood to have a legitimate cause of divorce.

While marriages are rather formal affairs, divorce in Kaidan is much less so, and either party in a marriage may, if they choose, at any time, annul a marriage. Doing so brings with it great social risk for men, as it insults the family of the woman, and, for a woman left without means, divorce can literally lead to destitution. For these reasons divorce, although easily obtained, is fairly uncommon.

Medicine and Doctors

While some Kaidanese priests are able to provide divine healing, the average person has no access to miraculous aid when sick or injured. Doctors are fairly rare among the Kaidanese and most that become sick or injured have to make do with family remedies and herbal medicines. The exact treatment of an illness will vary from region to region, based upon local access to herbs and local superstitions, and the value of any particular remedy is questionable. For this reason, an individual who shows true aptitude in treating the sick, or even just appears to show aptitude, is going to be highly valued in almost any community.

That being said, Kaidan does have an actual medicinal tradition, and it is possible for an individual to receive formal training as a doctor. This training incorporates learning a specific catalog of herbs to be used in conjunction with specific symptoms, the use of acupuncture, and a heavy reliance upon moxibustion. Moxibustion is the use of dried mugwort, or moxa, to produce a fluff to be burned. The moxa is sometimes rolled into a cigar like shape and the burning end applied to the patient, or at other times, used as a sort of incense. At other times moxa is used in conjunction with acupuncture needles.

Trained doctors rarely settle in a single community, but instead wander the countryside, believing that the spirits will guide them where they are most needed. Many doctors are also proficient martial artists, as it is believed that training in the field of martial arts provides insight into the body, and thus increases one's ability as a man of healing.

Metal Poor

Kaidan is a metal poor country. While there are iron, tin, copper and even gold mines in operation, they are uniformly small in scope and the actual amount of metal produced is minor in comparison to the needs of the population. Recently, the islands have begun importing metals into Gaijinoshima, but demand still far outstrips supply. Because of this, poor people must make do with tools fashioned of bamboo, stone, wood, or at best, bronze. Metal armor is rare, and reserved for only the wealthiest of individuals. The majority of iron is used to craft weapons, only rarely is it used to make tools. Bronze is used for tools, vessels and jewelry. Gold is used for ornamentation, jewelry and coinage. Because of the scarcity of metal in Kaidan, all objects crafted from metal cost three times the list price given in the Core rulebook. The exception to this is Gaijinaba, Atosa and Oniba provinces, where such items sell for only twice their normal cost. It should not be surprising that masterwork weapons, such as katana, are often jealously guarded family heirlooms, too valuable to even consider selling outside the direst of circumstances.

Oni and Goblins

The Kaidanese are a very superstitious people—it is not without reason—and the chief object of their fears are the oni. While some might think that rationally, the majority of the Kaidanese should be more afraid of their own rulers than they are of oni, such a viewpoint would miss the insular and xenophobic mindset which characterizes so much of Kaidanese philosophy. The Shogunate, while evil, is at least Kaidanese. The oni represent an outside force which threatens to disrupt the "natural order" of Kaidanese society. As such, the oni becomes symbolic of all that is wrong, and most Kaidanese fear that, at the back of any ill luck, illness, or disaster, is the unseen hand of the oni.

Compounding this fear is the influence of Yokinto, which teaches that all things have a spirit. While most spirits are deemed to be either benignly ambivalent or mildly helpful, it is thought that the world is also full of wicked spirits, generically deemed goblins. The exact interpretation of what is a goblin varies from one individual to another, with some thinking them but a weak kind of oni, and others seeing them as corrupted spirits, in general, the kaidanese are fearful of offending such spirits and most utilize charms of one sort or another to ward off goblins.

These viewpoint is made all the stronger by the fact that there are actually oni and malign spirits at work in Kaidan, though not in as great a number as is often feared by the populace. Moreover, what most Kaidanese think they know about both oni and spirits is generally wrong. Nevertheless, every Kaidanese has a story to tell about some haunt, goblin or oni known to them, and most have a plethora of advice to share as regards dealing with such entities.

Property

Property is a nebulous concept among the Kaidanese, chiefly because, in theory, all things belong to the Emperor and are overseen by the Shogun. Nevertheless, property is bought and sold, deeds to land are kept, and most individuals consider those

things they have bought to be their own, though they must always recognize that their claims to property are always subject to the opinion of their superiors. This rule is true regardless of caste, though the amounts of property at stake vary greatly from the low to the high.

The Shogun controls all things, but he grants daimyo oversight of regions of land and can remove that oversight at any time, giving it to another. The daimyo, in turn, allow noble individuals and samurai clans to have control of certain localities. Those clans and nobles can then parcel out smaller pieces of land, as they see fit, to their underlings, who can in turn rent or lease that land to others. Such oversight of land, regardless of the size of the land, carries with it specific responsibilities, chief among them paying taxes and fees for the use of that land. It is for this reason that, in most of Kaidan, detailed deeds are kept, denoting who "owns," or is renting, pieces of land. The bureaucracy of title keeping is a complex affair, with multiple levels. In the capital, provincial deeds are stored; in provinces, deeds detailing clan lands are kept; in cities and towns, deeds detailing family ownership and oversight of smaller parcels, such as town lots, are managed; and a family head may even keep deeds denoting which members of a family are charged with the care and control of various pieces of family property.

While the majority of Kaidanese individuals may never own their own land, they may still own smaller pieces of property, including tools, clothing, utensils, weapons, and animals. Theft from an equal is frowned upon as dishonorable. Theft from a superior is a crime. Theft from one of a lower station, however, is merely the assertion of rights.

Reading and Writing

Kaidan possesses two forms of the written word, and which form one is taught often depends entirely upon whether one is male or female. Both forms are similar in nature to each other, and, rather than being built upon a phonetic alphabet, instead utilize stylized logograms (pictures representing words) and symbols to form words, or the parts of words. There are tens of thousands such symbols which comprise the written Kaidanese language, and few Kaidanese know more than a few thousand of these symbols.

The form of writing learned by most Kaidanese men, kaigana, is also used for official documents, scholarly and religious texts and business transactions. That form of writing typically learned by the women, kaikana, is the form utilized in formal poetry and classical literature. Familiarity with one sort of Kaidanese script grants the user a partial understanding of the other, but very few individuals can read both with ease.

Almost all samurai and nobles learn to read. Among the lower classes, reading is less common, but not unknown, and there is no taboo against reading amongst the lower classes.

Religion

The Kaidanese are generally very religious people and give fealty to two different religious philosophies: Yokinto and Zaoism. Yokinto is a form of spiritism devoted to the veneration of the kami, and, to a lesser extent, one's ancestors. Zaoism is a philosophy devoted to the search for personal enlightenment and perfection. The Kaidanese use Yokinto to interact with the world around them and they rely on Zaoism to explain the workings of the human soul.

Yokinto shrines are found throughout Kaidan and the kaidanese use these shrines to venerate the spirits associated with them. The shrines may be small, or they may be grand temples; but regardless of size, each shrine is thought to contain the essence of a spirit and, through prayers to these spirits, the practitioners seek to find divine guidance and receive blessings. Yokintoism emphasizes ritual cleansings and spiritual purity, but makes few moral demands upon its adherents. The priesthood of yokintoism is primarily devoted to caring for shrines, cleansing individuals and buildings, and blessing the congregants. Yokinto priests are often practiced exorcists, and are very mindful of the positive and negative flows of the spiritual world. Yokintoism is also served by miko shrine maidens, who, historically, serve as both oracles and healers.

Zaoism, as practiced in Kaidan, teaches that life is an endless series of reincarnations and rebirths and that only through undeath may one truly escape the perpetual dark wheel. Such an escape, however, is reserved for the noble and the enlightened and it is blasphemy for commoners to become undead. Most kaidanese rely upon Zaoist priests to conduct funerals. In areas where zaoist have more influence than their yokinto counterparts, Zaoist priests and monks will also be relied upon for exorcisms, especially of the corporeal undead. Faithful zaoist pray to departed saints, the Mujiga Zao in particular, for divine protection and guidance, but generally, the faith is practiced through meditation upon scripture and contemplation of spiritual matters.

Silk

Silk is derived from rendering cocoons into strands, most often by hand, and then fashioning those strands into threads from which fabric may be woven. The cocoon of the silk worm, an insect that thrives on the leaves of a particular breed of mulberry tree, is the traditional and most useful of cocoons for this process. The labor involved is intensive, making silk an expensive quality, however the fabric produced by this labor is soft, supple strong and, if the threads have been treated right, able to be dyed in a variety of bright hues (though the cheapest of silks are an undyed white).

Nobles and the wealthy dress almost exclusively in silk, not only because of the prestige associated

with the material, but also because the fabric is lighter and cooler than baste fabrics.

Silk is also used to make umbrellas, wall hangings, and even rope (though this is used primarily by shinobi).

Straw

Straw, primarily rice straw, is used for a variety of clothing accessories. It is the preferred material used to make winter boots, as well as sandals. Likewise straw hats are ubiquitous and cheap; wide brimmed straw hats are worn by all castes and social stations. Even horses are frequently "shoed" with straw sandals. These shoes are reserved for the front hooves of a horse and do not last long. Indeed, the length of a journey may be measured in how many sandals a horse goes through, with the average straw sandal lasting seven and a half miles. While these equine footpads do little to protect the horse, they do serve to give the horse greater traction, especially in muddy conditions, and, in matters military, to quiet the sound of their hooves.

Straw is also used to make baskets, back-packs, coats, cords, wall hangings, bedrolls, blankets and window shutters. As a cheap, renewable, readily available commodity, if a use can be made of straw, the poor of Kaidan (and ofttimes even the wealthy) do so.

Taxation

Taxes are, in the main, assessed according to land. Calculations are made of a land's theoretical agricultural yield and the overseers of that land are then expected to turn in a portion of that assessed yield to their lord who in turn gives the majority of it to the daimyo who in turn gives the majority of that to the Shogun. The imperial taxation standard is forty percent of a land's assessed yield each year, though daimyo and individual samurai lord are free to increase that total for their own enrichment. Typically a daimyo takes another ten to twenty percent and a samurai lord may demand up to ten percent himself. In some regions of Kaidan taxes may run as high as seventy or eighty percent of a land's yield. In other regions they may be as low as a reasonable forty-five or fifty percent.

Assessed taxes, once fixed, are a permanent and invariable amount. meaning that in good years, a village, after paying taxes will still have an abundance of food, while in lean years, or drought years, the village may be literally left with nothing of that which they have grown and still be found wanting. Traditionally, taxes in a province are assessed with the appointment of a new daimyo over a province, but, due to the very long reign of the daimyo, other occasions have been created for new assessments so that every fifty years or so, in this region or that, rates are recalibrated. Assessed taxes almost always increase. Very seldom does an assessment determine a land's potential yield to be less than that for which it previously been assessed.

Tea

Aside from sake, the beverage of choice in Kaidan is tea, and its preparation and serving has become an art form, and a sign of good etiquette. Tea was originally a drink associated with priests, but the consumption quickly spread to the samurai, and then to the nobles. Now, even peasants sometimes drink tea, though the quality of their tea is vastly inferior, and it is not always available to the poor. Henge and Tengu have also become quite fond of tea, and some yokai villages have learned to cultivate it.

The brewing of tea is often a formal affair called a Tea Ceremony, during which the tea is prepared, brewed, and served. The manner in which the hosts perform these services is thought to demonstrate their grace, manners, and inner spirituality. Wealthy families will sometimes construct whole rooms or pagodas, called tea houses, in which to conduct these ceremonies.

Theatre and Entertainment

The subject of entertainment in Kaidan is socially quite complex, as traditionally, the hinin-eta caste is most closely associated with providing various forms of entertainment, from theater to dance to prostitution. This is not to say that all performers are regarded as being undesirable, nor does it imply that all manner of performances are looked down upon, but there is a stigma attached to those who serve as entertainers.

Throughout the provinces, traveling acrobats and actors visit towns and villages providing shows, especially for festivals and feasts, and the arrival of the same is generally regarded as a happy circumstance. Such shows are deemed socially unfit for both Samurai and Nobles, but the surreptitious visitation by young Samurai is seen as a rite-of-passage, a small rebellion against the social structure routinely engaged in by those to whom it is forbidden.

At the same time, various forms of theater are highly appreciated by the upper castes, and some performers can find patronage among the wealthy. Traditionally, there are two sorts of plays deemed suitable for court performances, and thus suitable for noble-born and samurai. These play types are differentiated both by the style of song, and by the tone of the drama. The first of these, sarugaku, or monkey-music, incorporates vigorous acrobatic performances within the play, and is highly comical. The second, dengaku, or field-music, is based on traditional songs such as may be sung by field workers and is considered a more dramatic art form. Recently, a newer form of play, the No drama, has begun to grow in popularity in the capital, and it is only a matter of time before it is exported more broadly to the provinces. These dramas are more ritualized, stylized even, and incorporate a more somber form of song and dialogue than the older forms.

Chapter 7: Death in Kaidan

Hamisa of Kurakami

In the village of Kurakami, in Unori province, there lived a woodcutter by the name of Hamisa, a kind man, diligent in his work but very poor. His wife, Asuima, who had married the woodcutter when she was very young and he was very handsome, possessed extraordinary beauty, but had, over many years of marriage, become as cruel as Hamisa was kind. She resented her situation and longed to marry the son of the village chief, for that family had money.

"Why can you not be rich?" she would yell at Hamisa before throwing one of her wooden bowls at his head. Hamisa took his wife's rants with good grace, and ever forgave her, thinking that she would one day remember the love they had shared in years past. But in this Hamisa was mistaken. The more Asuima dwelt upon her poverty, the angrier she became, until at last she could stand her station no more and resolved to change it.

Despite her resolve, Asuima did not act immediately. For three months she played the role of the changed woman, so much that all the village could not help but notice how she doted on her husband, how neatly she kept his clothes, how well she prepared his food, and with what radiant joy she greeted him when he returned home each evening. She was the model wife and all the village marveled, including the son of the village chief, who thought enviously to himself what a lucky man Hamisa had become.

One day, when all thought well of Asuima, including the happy Hamisa, she met him in the woods and fed him on rice and sake. Thus sated, Hamisa drifted into a slumber and, as he slept, the lovely Asuima stove his head in with the blunt side of his ax and then pushed him over into a rocky ravine.

When the body was discovered, all assumed that Hamisa had stumbled drunkenly upon the rocks and killed himself. Asuima grieved loudly and publicly, wondering what would become of her and her unborn child, for she was pregnant. The son of the village chief took pity on her, consoled her, and quickly married her, thinking himself blessed by the heavens to have the opportunity to capture such a woman.

When, in the course of time, Asuima gave birth to her son, she and her husband named the boy Hamisa, in honor of his father. Though a good-looking child, the young Hamisa soon gained a reputation as being a rather odd child. This is not to say that the lad was unpopular, for the opposite was true, and, just as his father had been, the child was merry and kind to all he met, with one exception. From the beginning it was clear that the boy had no fondness for his mother. Even as a newborn, whenever he gazed upon the woman who had born him, his gaze was always cold and stern. Though he suckled upon her breast, he accepted nothing else from her, and refused to play with her. When the young Hamisa began to speak, a feat he accomplished before he was a year of age, he would scarcely speak to Asuima, and he never called her mother. Asuima, who thought that her new marriage and wealth would bring only joy, soon found herself despondent because of her offspring's behavior towards her. As he grew older and ever more distant, she sank deeper and deeper into melancholy, eventually succumbing to a wasting disease.

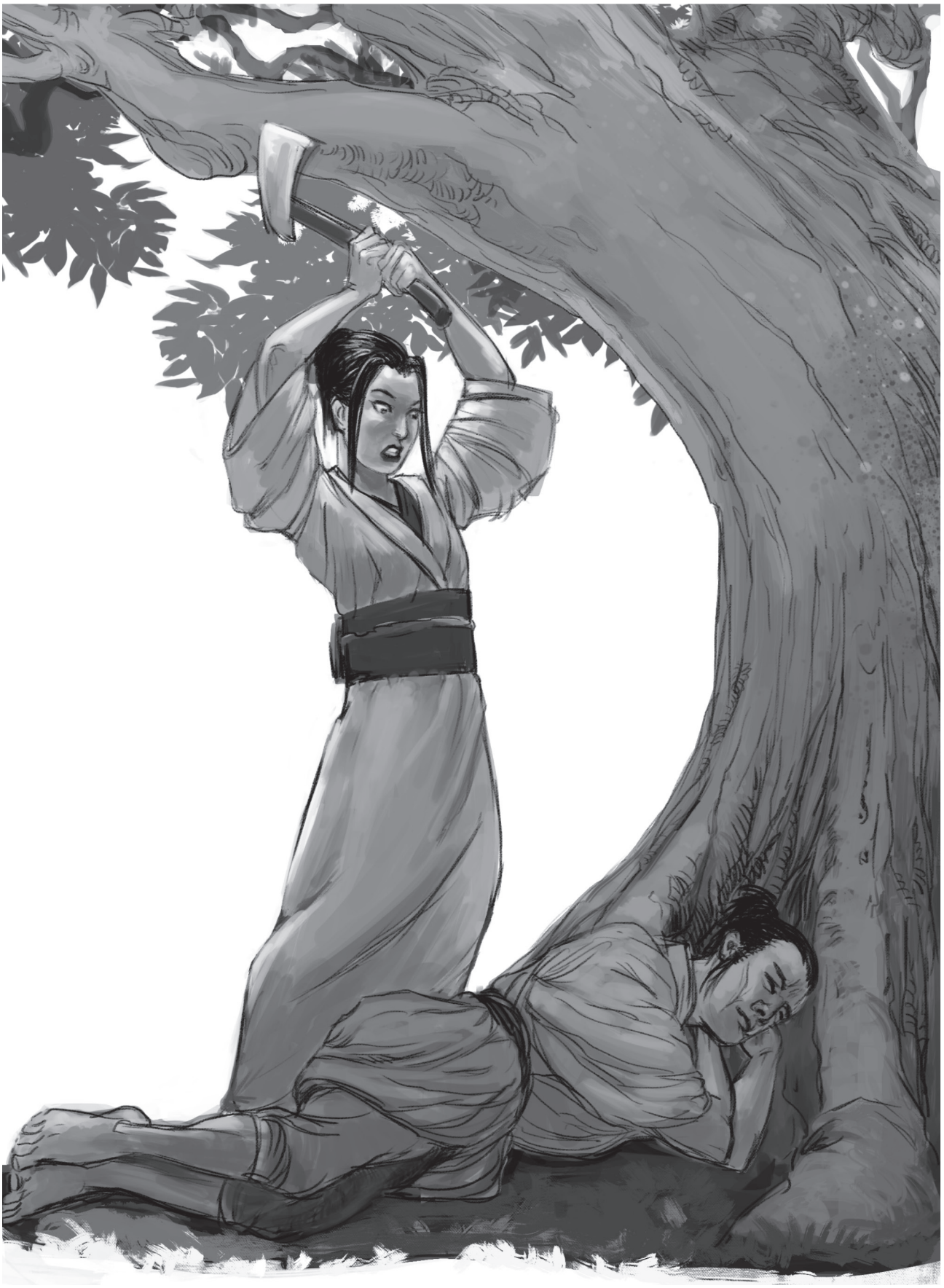
As she lay dying, surrounded by her husband and all his family, she could stand it no longer and cried out at her five year old son, "At the last will you not speak to your mother? Must you hate me so, even now?"

For a time, the young Hamisa said nothing, but at the last he clearly answered, so that all could hear, "For many years I loved you, but when at the last you killed me with my own axe, I hated you and I have hated you ever since."

Death and the Broken Wheel

The Curse that lies upon Kaidan has many ramifications and subtleties, but at its heart it is a simple thing: the souls of Kaidan are bound to the land; they cannot leave nor are new souls being created within Kaidan. When a sentient entity dies within the borders of the curse, the soul of that entity is bound to Kaidan for the duration of the Curse. While, in other realms, souls migrate to a higher plane, those souls bound to Kaidan go for a time into either the shadowy realm of Yomi, or into the hellish plane of Jigoku. After seven days, the soul returns to the material plane and seeks out a new body.

The ultimate destiny of a returning soul varies according to what sort of bodies are available.



Generally, most spirits seek out the easiest body suitable for habitation: an unborn member of their own caste. When born, the violence of birth typically suppresses and erases the memories of the previous life and thus the soul enters its new life in the normal sort of way. Occasionally, a few memories from a previous life are retained, and it is normal for sleeping Kaidanese to dream of lives they have lived in the past. After unborn infants, the next easiest bodies to possess are those of the tamashanaki. The elemental spirits that inhabit the soulless are easily overpowered by true sentient souls. Those that return in this way retain the majority of their memories from before death and sometimes remember other facts from lives before that one. Souls with a pressing need to finish some business or other in the material realm find such flesh-vehicles perfect for their needs.

While most souls seek bodies easily claimed, there are those, driven by a need for vengeance, powered by dark magics, or simply full of great spiritual energy, which take a more difficult path to reentrance into the material realm. Such souls make a claim for anybody they deem suitable, attempting to forcefully drive out any other occupying soul. The result, for the living, is an affliction known as mind-fever. Essentially a battle of wills between two souls, mind-fever at first manifests as headaches, chills, mild fever and blurred vision. As it progresses, the victim's temperature rises alarmingly, and the individual becomes quite delirious. Finally, the victim falls unconscious, and, should the original soul lose the battle, when the victim awakens, the victim is truly a different person. The cycle of mind-fever is very taxing on a soul, and it is normal for individuals who reenter the world in this way to have significant portions of their memory erased, though they still retain a sense of their self from before death.

Regardless of whether a soul enters an unborn or mature body, tenmei dictates that the body must have been born into the caste appropriate for the soul's Karma.

When a soul in Kaidan departs the body, and enters Yomi, it must typically wait for 7 days before once more entering the world of the living, seeking a new form. Not all souls go to Yomi, nor do all souls leaving Yomi always find a suitable host body. In both cases the soul becomes a yurei, one of the undead. Such souls are typically twisted, evil things, driven mad either by wrongs committed against them in their previous incarnations or else by their hopeless situation. The islands are filled with such unfortunate souls and every year their number increases.

Mind-Fever

Mind-fever is a non-communicable disease caused by a bodiless soul attempting to displace the current occupant of a body.

Type disease, supernatural**; Save** Will DC 13
Onset 1 day; **frequency** 1/day
Effect 1d2 Int damage, 1d2 Wis damage, 1d2 Cha damage; if any ability is reduced to 0, the old soul is displaced and a new soul enters the body; if a new soul displaces the old, mental ability scores change to reflect those of the new occupant, physical stats remain unchanged, all class related abilities are as those of the new occupant as if the new occupant had been the target of *raise dead* (any potential Constitution loss as a result of coming back to life is instead taken as either Intelligence or Wisdom).
Special *Remove disease* does not affect this affliction, but *protection from evil* cast upon the victim works to slow the disease for 24 hours and counts as a successful save.

Whereas, in other lands, it is sometimes possible for a body to have conflicting souls sharing the same body, the metaphysical nature of Kaidan makes this impossible. Bodies can possess only a single soul at a time. Any magical effect or supernatural ability which allows a soul to possess a body, of necessity drives away the original occupant, in effect killing that individual. This makes such magic and abilities even more dangerous in Kaidan. However there are rites, spells and ceremonies which can recall a soul to its body, if those around the body can manage to dismiss, banish or exorcise the offending spirit. If a body is somehow left soulless it sometimes simply dies. Just as often, a body can reanimate as either a mindless undead or as a tamashanaki.

Funerals

Following the death of an individual, it is traditional for the Kaidanese to have a seven day long funerary process, incorporating a wake, a burial and a memorial service on the seventh day. Exact practices vary from caste to caste and from one locality to another, but there are some commonalities across the archipelago.

When an individual dies, the family is expected to report the occurrence to their superiors or to the village headman so that proper records may be

kept. In cities and towns this practice is enforced more stringently than in small villages, and during times of great calamity, it is often abandoned altogether. Failure to report a death may result in fines or even beatings for the oldest male of the offending family, depending on the ruling of the daimyo or the local samurai lord.

If the deceased had children of age, the oldest son is expected to arrange the funeral services. If there is no such son, then the oldest son-in-law or the oldest daughter (if she is not married) is deemed responsible. Yokinto priests, who consider the dead to be unclean and therefore avoided by the devout, never conduct funeral proceedings; such matters are deemed better handled by zaoist clergy if such are available. The amount of clergy involvement, and the complexity of the funeral rites, vary depending on the amount of money the family of the deceased pays to the Zaoist church. The poor are lucky to get a prayer and a few simple words said over the corpse. A wealthy family can expect the priest (or priests) to be by the side of the body each day, anointing it with oils, consecrating it with prayers, and protecting the soul of the departed with powerful spells and rituals.

The body of the deceased is washed and, ideally, dressed in white, though the very poor make do with the clothes owned and worn by the deceased, regardless of color. The orifices of the body are filled with cloth and the body is prepared for viewing. In small villages, preparing the body is a task performed by relatives or, if there are none, close neighbors. In larger communities, professional morticians called nokanshi, members of the eta-hinin caste, can be hired. These individuals ritually prepare the body in full view of the family in such a way that the corpse is washed, undressed and dressed while never being fully and shamefully exposed.

Wakes are held one or two days before the final memorial service, though never on the second day of the week, which is deemed an unlucky time for such a proceeding. Guests to the wake are expected to wear white, if they can, and it is customary to give gifts to the family in honor of the dead. The zaoist priest presiding will chant a sutra and then the family members and honored guests will proceed to offer incense for the departed in an incense urn near the body. Wakes are typically held in the family's home, and any yokinto shrines are covered with a white cloth during the week of the funeral to keep them from becoming unclean.

Bodies are prepared for burial the day following the wake, and those that are destined to be cremated are done so at this time. In older days, it was customary for important personages to be buried in mounds, but such an occurrence is rare anymore in Kaidan and most bodies are simply buried in communal or family cemeteries. Burial plots are marked, either with stone markers, or, in more rural settings, stone and clay figures in the shape of animals or people. Coffins, when used, are nailed shut.

On the seventh day following the death, the day on which the soul is freed from Yomi, a final ceremony is held in honor of the departed, with a ritual much like that at the wake. Traditionally, the soul of the departed is given a new name at this time, and prayers are offered for a safe and speedy rebirth. For those that can afford it, the ritual of the new name incorporates powerful incantations, which guide the soul back into a chosen body, either born or unborn.

Yokai Funerals

Yokai funerary tradition differs markedly from human tradition, primarily because the yokai have been less influenced by Zaoism.

Among the henge and the tengu, the bodies of the dead are washed by their closest relatives and dressed in white, much as in human homes. Any yokinto shrines in the dwelling are covered and the body is laid out for visitors. A small memorial shrine made from twigs, and incorporating something shiny or reflective as a shintai, is placed on the right side of the body. Visitors lay offerings in front of the shrine in memory of the departed and offer prayers to and for the deceased at this shrine. At the end of three days, the body, the shrine, and all the offerings, are placed upon a pyre and cremated. The remains are carefully removed after and sealed within a suitable urn. Such urns may either be kept in a shrine dedicated to the dead, or else sealed within a burial mound. These urns are rarely buried and they are never kept in the yokai dwellings.

Kappa funerals follow much the same pattern as other yokai, but kappa do not cremate their dead. Rather, kappa place their dead upon makeshift boats and float these boats, at night, down-river to the ocean. They will push the boats out into the ocean currents. Such boats may float for a day or two on the currents before coming apart and sinking. Kappa never invite non kappa to participate in sending a death boat to sea, though honored guests may be allowed to keep vigil before the funeral shrine.

Anu Funerals

The Anu have a conflicted set of beliefs when it comes to death. On the one hand, they have a deep reverence for the souls of both men and animals and engage in several elaborate rites throughout the year intended to appease any spirits that might be angry at them. These rites are a blend of ancient shamanistic practices and yokinto influence. On the other hand, the Anu have a deep antipathy towards death itself and are, in many ways, quite severe in their treatment of the dead.

In former times, the Anu buried their important dead in mounds, but such a custom has not been followed for many years. When an Anu dies, the family removes all valuables from the deceased's dwelling and burns it to the ground. This is facilitated by the fact that the typical Anu dwelling is made from little more than straw and sticks. Prior to the fire, the Anu observe a period of mourning and the village shamans conduct elaborate rituals designed to speed the passage of the soul to the next world. After the fire, the bones are removed, sealed into a wooden casket and then buried in the woods in an unmarked grave. The Anu never name their children after someone who has died, and rarely speak of the dead by name, lest they draw the attention of the departed soul to themselves.

The Anu do not subscribe in any fashion to zaoism, though they cannot deny that some of their dead have refused to properly depart and some of them have vague memories of other lives. Yet the Anu continue to try and maintain their old beliefs, even as the spiritual world around them becomes increasingly hostile.

Korobokuru Funerals

The funerary tradition of the korobokuru is, in many ways, derivative of the yokai tradition. Like the yokai, the korobokuru have a period of mourning for their dead in which offerings are left at a funeral shrine next to the body of the deceased. Offerings often include small clay figurines, clay bowls, colorful rocks, and flint knives and arrow-heads. After four days, the dead are wrapped in tightly woven grass mats and laid upon a pallet fashioned from bamboo or wood. They are then carried to a place of burial, some distance from the village.



The korobokuru still maintain a tradition of burial mounds. These mounds are generally small affairs. The dead is covered with rocks and then dirt is piled atop the rocks forming a key-hole shaped mound.

Upon the island of Genshu, in the Genjima province, some korobokuru have descended into an oni-influenced savagery. These villages are unique in their treatment of the dead, for they do not bury anything but the bones; the rest they cook and eat. These cannibals feast upon friend and foe alike, although for relatives and neighbors they hold a ceremony of remembrance, a mockery of the memorial practiced by korobokuru elsewhere, prior to their grisly feast.

Festivals for the Dead

The Kaidanese have several festivals throughout the year related to the dead. Some of these are to honor the dead, others are to appease them.

The largest of these festivals is the *Oiwai-no-Bondourou*, or Festival of the Fire Lanterns, celebrated on the fifteenth day of the seventh month, and for two days thereafter. According to Zaoist tradition, on these days the gates of Yomi open wide and the dead may travel freely back to the land of the living. The time period is especially emphasized in Kuraikuruma doctrine, which teaches the days is auspicious for rebirth, for both the living and the dead. Most Kuraikuruma practitioners seeking to become undead choose this day for their attempt. During the days of the festival, celebrants visit and tend to their family tombs and cemetery plots, leaving offerings of food at the graves. During the night, the living light bright lanterns throughout their homes, yards and communities. The festival is filled with music, ritual dances and much gift giving. On the last night of the festival, small lights are placed on small boats and sent down rivers and streams, in an attempt to guide the dead back to their place of rest, if possible.

There are many superstitions surrounding the Lantern Festival. Sailors believe it is a bad time to be at sea, and there are many stories told of the dead drowning men who did not deal with them properly. While those with understanding realize that, under the curse, the dead leave yomi on a regular basis, there is a widespread belief that the lifting of the curse will come on the last night of a Lantern Festival, when the dead will be compelled to follow the boats back to the realm of the dead. For this reason, the Festival



celebrations mix reverence for the dead with joyful anticipation of better times to come. The Shogun is aware of these rumors, but, discounting them, allows the festivals to continue anyway.

While the Festival of the Fire Lanterns is a zaoist celebration, the yokinto faith also has days set aside to remember and honor the dead. The dates vary by region. Many dates are chosen to mark great tragedies, or else the passing of a local potentate. During such celebrations, there is much eating, music and dancing, but there are also prayers offered before shrines and many offerings made on behalf of the departed.

Yurei

Kaidan is a land plagued by the restless dead, due in no small part to the curse that lies over the land. The most obvious examples of this unnatural situation are the nobility which rule over everything, but the aristocracy is far from being alone in their undead existence. In general, undead beings are known as yurei, a term meaning phantom or ghost, but which is used by the Kaidanese to describe even those undead still possessing a physical body.

The yurei of Kaidan generally fall into one of three categories: the aristocracy, the eaters of flesh, and the tormented; though there are many variations within each of these groups.

The nobles of Kaidan have embraced an undead existence voluntarily. Though malevolent and cruel in their appetites, they play at being human, maintaining estates and houses, dwelling amongst their family (who are likewise undead), passing laws affecting their citizens and conducting themselves much as they did before death. Yet they are not living and their needs are not the needs of the living. They crave blood and the life forces of their subjects. They devise entertainments that would make calloused men shudder and engage in schemes which require many lifetimes to fully mature. Though the nobility of Kaidan dwell apart and isolated from those they rule, and though those who dwell within the shadow of their decrees do their best to ignore the proclivities and unwholesome natures of their masters, no citizen of Kaidan ever fully escapes the reach of the nobility and, sooner or later, all find themselves caught up in the machinations of their undead lords.

Negative energy strongly permeates the spiritual fabric of Kaidan and when evil men die, or when bodies are not properly treated following death, it is common for those bodies to reanimate in ghoulish form. The Kaidan call their ghouls jikininki, and though these monsters take a sundry of forms, they share two commonalities: they feast on human flesh and they can change their shape to appear as human. Many jikininki possess a cunning intellect and hide in plain sight for many years, robbing graves, murdering travelers and children, and gorging themselves on flesh nightly in the safety of their homes. Other jikininki dwell apart from men, hunting through the countryside in a manner akin to that of wild animals. Regardless of their exact habits, appearance and mannerisms, the jikininki are a plague feared and loathed across Kaidan.

The third sort of undead, the tormented, grow in number every year. These are those yurei trapped between lives, either by the vagaries of tenmei or else by their own personal tragedies. Strengthened by the same negative energies which give birth to the jikininki, these yurei exist as ghosts, wraiths and haunts. Night after night they relive their sorrows, gladly inflicting a portion of their misery upon those who venture into their dark territories.

Death Taboos

The Kaidanese live lives surrounded by fear, sorrow and death. It should not be surprising that part of their reaction to their situation is to attempt to ignore some of the more disturbing aspects of their existence. This, coupled with their yokinto and zaoist heritage has led to the creation of a number of taboos.

The Kaidanese never speak of the nature of their undying lords. They do their best to pretend that the nobles are merely long lived, or blessed by the celestial court with immortality. When one of their number is taken by the nobles, there is no discussion as to the fate of the individual, and sometimes the community members will do their best to forget that the individual in question ever lived among them. This taboo does not hold true among the yokai, who long for the power to overthrow the abominable shogunate, but in human communities, mentioning either the nature of the local daimyo, or making an issue of the dietary habits of the nobility, is a good way of ostracizing one's self, or, worse, making one's self the target of a lynching.

Mind-fever has created a similar taboo. While a victim suffers from the effects of the fever, those aware of the situation will discuss it, but should the victim succumb and a new soul take root, the topic becomes taboo. The new "person" is given clothing, a day's worth of food, and then urged to leave quickly. Concerning the old identity, there is sorrow, and likely mourning, as with a death; but

there is no memorial, no discussion of the event, and no speculation about where the old soul has gone. Those that discuss such things make themselves the objects of social scorn and ostracization.

While death is accepted as a reality, it is considered a situation that is spiritually unclean. Those that are in the business of dealing death are both feared and looked down upon by those that aren't. Curiously, this allows the average peasant to feel morally and spiritually superior to their samurai masters, even as they bow respectfully. After a death, a residence, building, or piece of land is considered spiritually tainted until a proper exorcism ritual has been performed. If no such ritual is forthcoming, the very devout will go so far as to abandon a place, even to the building of a new home. Relatedly, clothing and beds used by the dying are also exorcised following the death.

As bodies are typically laid out for viewing with the head pointing in a northward direction, it is taboo to sleep with one's head pointed in the same direction. To lay out a person's bed without regard to this taboo can be seen as an attempt to bring misfortune. Similarly, concerning the giving of gifts, it is considered rude to give anything in units of four, as the word for four sounds very similar to the word for death. A gift of four items can, in the right situation, be as good as threatening someone's life.

The Mechanics of Reincarnation in Kaidan

When persons in Kaidan die violently, there is a good chance that their souls return quickly to the material world to continue their struggles. In game terms, this means that, so long as the GM agrees a death was violent, a PC may be reincarnated into another grown body within a week or so of the death. To facilitate this, each PC character created for Kaidan should have a Karma score known by the GM. The initial Karma score is determined by caste as given on **Table 7.1**.

As PCs adventure and interacts with the world, it is possible for them to affect their Karma. Such gains or losses to Karma happen slowly, and it generally takes many lifetimes for an average person to significantly change her standing. PCs, being the heroic sort that they are, have more potential opportunity than most. On the whole, especially lawful actions and especially benevolent actions gain Karma. Especially chaotic or especially destructive actions lose Karma. Karma gains and losses are always determined by the GM and GMs should keep a running private tally for each character. Many common or small actions do not deserve Karma gains or losses. A character who gives a copper to a poor man is not going to earn enough Karma to matter. One who gives a year's supply of rice is going to likely earn one or more points. Likewise, a moment of anger with one's friends is not going to lose enough Karma to be worth counting. But the man who murders his wife will most certainly lose one or more Karma points. Alternatively, at the GM's discretion, many small, consistent actions, over a period of time, may warrant a small move in Karma, such as would be merited by a single large deed. Some suggested examples for actions which affect Karma are given in T**able 7.2**. Generally, no single action should move Karma more than a point or two.

When determining how valuable an action is to Karma, you should remember that tenmei does not care so much about ideals like bravery, strength and courage; nor is it overly concerned with how rich or poor individuals are. Tenmei is concerned with whether or not a given action was destructive or constructive, selfish or unselfish. Giving a generous gift to a wealthy man is nearly as beneficial to Karma as giving a generous gift to a poor man, though it can be argued that the second is more constructive as the poor man's situation is more greatly improved by the gift.

A character's caste after death, as determined by Karma points, is reflected in **Table 7.3**.

When a character dies and has the option of being reincarnated, use **Table 7.4** to determine the method of reincarnation. About 1 in 10 times the character will be unable to be immediately brought back. Characters that think to abuse the ability to be reincarnated will eventually find themselves truly gone, or worse, they will become a yurei and haunt their former companions. Sometimes when a character is reincarnated, he comes back with new or altered memories. These memories might well be from one of the PCs' own past lives, but they could also be latent memories in the physical brain of the host body. If, through the process of reincarnation, the character loses enough in any one ability score to bring the ability score to 3 or lower, that individual is considered an NPC.

Table 7.1 - Initial Karma Score for Kaidanese Characters

Eta-Hinin	30
Beast	68
Human	113
Asura	150

Natural Rebirth: The character does not find a swift reincarnation. Either their anger is not sufficient or their target successfully fights off their attempt at possession. The character's soul finds a home in the body of a new baby, destined to be soon born. When they are born, the trauma of birth will erase their memories of this incarnation. Barring some extraordinary efforts on the part of their companions, the character is gone.

Yurei: The pain of death causes the character to be reformed as a malevolent yurei within 1d4 days of their death. Until their spirit is laid to rest, the character cannot be reincarnated and is effectively an NPC. The GM has the right to determine the exact method by which the yurei must be laid to rest. Alternately **Table 7.5** can be used as a guide.

Tamashanaki: The soul of the character finds a suitable tamashanaki and drives the elemental spirit out, claiming the body. The character returns to play in 1d4 days within 4d6 miles of where he died. Reroll Strength, Dexterity and Constitution, in order, using 4d6 and dropping the lowest dice. The character gains 1 permanent negative level, representing lost memories. If the character is level 1, he instead loses 2 points from Intelligence, Wisdom, or Charisma (player's choice, and the ability loss can be divided between two abilities).

Mind-Fever: The soul of the character finds a suitable adult body and drives the current occupying soul out. The character returns to play in 2d10 days within 4d6 miles of where he died. Reroll Strength, Dexterity and Constitution, in order, using 4d6 and dropping the lowest die. The character gains 2 permanent negative levels, representing lost memories. If the character is level 2 or lower, he instead loses 4 points from Intelligence, Wisdom, or Charisma (player's choice, and the ability loss can be divided between two or more abilities).

Altered Memories: The character reincarnates with different memories than those possessed at the moment of life. The character avoids 1 negative level he might have gained through the reincarnation process. However, the character also replaces one class level possessed prior to death with the abilities of a different class. To determine this new class, roll on **Table 7.6**

New Memories: The character reincarnates with his old memories fully intact. He also gains new memories. Sometimes these memories represent past lives but just as often they represent the memories of the former soul occupying the body. The character avoids any negative levels he might have gained through the reincarnation process. Additionally, the character gains a level. This level is in a random class chosen using **Table 7.6**.

NPCs and Reincarnation

The reincarnation rules provided in this chapter are meant to be a mechanic by which PCs killed violently can be brought easily back into the game following death. There is no reason that they cannot also be used with NPCs, but GMs should feel no compulsion to do so. Rather, it is suggested that you handle most NPC death by GM fiat. If it would be interesting to the story to have a particular NPC come back in another body, or as a powerful undead, then do so. If not, then feel free to ignore the question of what happens to them after death and continue with the story you are creating with the players.

Vengeance: The yurei desires the death of one of its still living enemies and will not rest until that enemy is killed.

Jealousy: The yurei desires the sacrificial death of one of its companions and will not rest until that character is dead.

Greed: The yurei wants its possessions, and one other valuable thing (worth 1d1000 x CL), buried with its former body.

If the PCs are not native to Kaidan, they are still, if they are slain within Kaidan, subject to the same rules of reincarnation as everyone else.

Table 7.2 – Gaining and Losing Karma

+2 Karma	Refusing to hurt another at the cost of one's own life
+2 Karma	Act of extreme generosity resulting in personal loss
+1 Karma	Aiding those in authority in a significant way
+1 Karma	Honesty resulting in personal harm
+1 Karma	A significant act of benevolence
+1 Karma	Purposefully eschewing significant personal profit
+0 Karma	Self-defense
-1 Karma	An act of unprovoked violence resulting in death
-1 Karma	An act of theft resulting in personal gain
-1 Karma	Dishonesty resulting in personal gain
-1 Karma	Rebelling against authority in a significant way
-2 Karma	Torture and murder for pleasure and profit

Table 7.3 – Karma Pool and Equivalent Caste

1-15*	Jigoku**
16-45	Eta-Hinin
46-90	Beast***
91-135	Common
136-165	Asura
166-180*	Heaven****

* The Karma pool is actually a circular cycle. A Karma score of 181 is the same as a Karma score of 1 and a Karma score of 0 is the same as a Karma score of 180.

** Jigoku is the caste of demons, goblins and other evil creatures. Player characters reborn into the Jigoku caste become NPCs.

*** Though the beast caste, in theory, includes non-intelligent animals, sentient creatures are typically reborn as a member of the yokai. Depending on the kind of game and story the GM wants, however, it is possible for players to choose to be reincarnated as animals, retaining their original mental attributes.

**** Heaven is the caste of the nobility. Player characters who should be reborn as nobles instead become yurei, unable to be appeased in any way. Such characters become NPCs.

Table 7.4 – PC Reincarnation Following a Violent Death

d100	Effect
01-05	A Natural Rebirth
05-10	Yurei
11-23	Reincarnated in a Tamashanaki
24-29	Reincarnated in a Tamashanaki; Altered memories
30	Reincarnated in a Tamashanaki; New memories
31-84	Reincarnated through Mind-fever
85-99	Reincarnated through Mind-fever; Altered memories
00	Reincarnated through Mind-fever; New Memories

Table 7.5 – Yurei Motivation

d4	The yurei is motivated by...
1-2	*Vengeance*
3	*Jealousy*
4	*Greed*

Table 7.6 – Random Class Table

d100*	Class
01	Player's choice
02	Adept
03-10	Aristocrat
11-16	Barbarian
16-19	Bard
20-22	Cleric
23-32	Commoner
33-35	Druid
36-45	Expert
46-55	Fighter
56	Inquisitor
57-61	Monk
62	Ninja
63-65	Oracle
66	Paladin
67-71	Ranger
72-76	Rogue
77-81	Samurai
82-86	Sorcerer
87	Summoner
88-97	Warrior
98	Witch
99	Wizard
00	GM's choice

Table 7.7 – Modifiers to Initial Gaijin Karma Pool

Alignment	
Chaotic	-15
Evil	-5
Good	+5
Lawful	+15
Class	
Barbarian	- 5
Bard	-15
Cavalier/Samurai	+10
Cleric	+10
Druid	-5
Inquisitor	+5
Paladin	+15
Ranger	-5
Rogue	-15
Witch	-5
Wizard	+10
Race	
Dwarf	-5
Elf	+10
Gnome	-5
Half-elf	+5
Half-orc	-10
Halfling	-5
Taurian	-10

Even if they manage to leave Kaidan following a reincarnation within Kaidan, when they die again, their souls are drawn back to the island realm. Gaijin characters, regardless of their social standing outside of Kaidan, are treated as members of the eta-hinin caste by the Kaidanese, but when they die their true spiritual state is revealed. To determine a character's initial Karma pool, GMs should roll 1d100+25 and modify the score using **Table 7.7**. GMs may choose to do this before characters begin adventuring in Kaidan, but it is not necessary to do so. Once a character has died and been reincarnated, however, GMs will need to make sure to keep an ongoing Karma tally for that character, same as for any other native of the island.

Initial Gaijin Karma is 1d100+25 modified as follows. Multiple modifiers are cumulative. **Note:** Any alignment or class *not* listed is assumed to neither add to nor subtract from the final pool. Any race not listed here is subject to GM discretion, though bestial races should have a -10 modifier. Any archetypes count as the base class.

Death and Magic

Because of the metaphysical nature of Kaidan, certain spells do not work the same within the boundaries of the cursed land as they do outside.

Spells and effects that would elsewhere bring the dead back to life in Kaidan simply do not work. These spells include *raise dead*, *resurrection*, and *reincarnation.*

Any spell or spell-like ability that would allow two souls to simultaneously inhabit the same body have a -2 penalty to their DC, but if successful, the original soul is kicked out of the body as with a death. Such a death counts as a violent death for the purpose of rebirth.

There are several spells that are used to help guide a departed spirit into a new body. See **Chapter 9: The Magic of Kaidan** for these.



Chapter 8: Adventuring in Kaidan

The Corpse Eater

The samurai-monk Muosi, having spent a year meditating on Mount Hashikami, decided to visit his old master in Rakyo and so made the journey north. As he traveled, late in the day, he saw a small shrine ahead on a hill, and thought that it looked like an appropriate place in which to pass the night. However, as Muosi approached, the shrine's priest came out to the gate, rudely and forcefully demanded the samurai to continue upon his journey, directing him to seek shelter in a village at the bottom of the hill.

When Muosi arrived in the village, he was welcomed by the village headman, but, after resting within the man's home awhile, he was awakened by his host and informed that the household was leaving.

"I did not like to bother you with it when you first came," said the headman, "but my father, who was advanced in years, died this morning, prior to your arrival. It is the custom in this village, when an individual passes, to leave the house until morning, for strange things happen to corpses."



Muosi, much puzzled by this, volunteered to sit with the body through the night, performing the funerary rites. The headman gratefully accepted this offer, thanking Muosi profusely for his bravery and generosity of spirit. Soon Muosi found himself alone with the corpse, and, true to his promise, the holy samurai began reciting the appropriate prayers. When the prayers were completed, he drew his sword and laid it upon his lap, resolved to keep vigil until dawn.

Around the middle of the night, the room grew cold, and an evil shape crept into the chamber. The thing proceeded to crouch over the corpse, as if to feast, but Muosi, with a shout, stood and attacked the monster. Confronted by steel and a stout heart, the foul creature fled from the room, disappearing into the night. The next morning, the village was very much surprised to find the corpse still intact and congratulated the samurai on his courage and zeal.

"I am surprised," said Muosi, "that you have not asked the priest on the hill to deal with this matter for you." The villagers were puzzled, and explained there was no priest on the hill, the shrine had lain empty for many years. Hearing this, Muosi understood better, and, after breaking his fast, he departed from the village, returning back to the shrine.

At the shrine, he once more encountered the priest, now injured, and quite penitent. "In my life," explained the ashamed priest, "I served that village, but I was a wicked priest and abused my position. Now that I am dead, I am cursed to dwell as a jikininki, feasting on the flesh of men." Overcome with horror and pity, Muosi drew his sword, and with a swift blow severed the priest's head, thus freeing the village from its curse.

What is Kaidan?

Before characters can properly adventure in Kaidan, the question must be asked on behalf of the Game Master who hopes to utilize Kaidan as a setting: "What is Kaidan meant to be?"

At its heart, as a fictional setting, Kaidan is an oriental land of dark horror and a realm of subtle mystery. It is a kingdom where darkness holds sway and the dead reign supreme. But it is in deepest darkness that light becomes most necessary, and so Kaidan is also a land full of adventure: a place where great deeds may be done by those with courage, and the willingness to pay the price that must be paid for the doing of such deeds.

More specifically, and stepping out of the fiction of the setting for a moment, we could say that Kaidan is an Asian-flavored setting designed to be used in fantasy role-playing. While far from being the first oriental land created for such an endeavor, Kaidan is unique for a number of reasons. While we have weaved in some tropes common to the sword and sorcery genre, Kaidan draws the bulk of its inspiration directly from the legends, histories, mythologies, and ghost stories of Japan. Japan itself was historically influenced by the legends and mythologies of other nations, such as China and Korea, but, for Kaidan, in all cases where there were multiple versions we have endeavored to remain true to the Japanese renditions.

But Kaidan is not just Japan reimagined. It is Japan reimagined through a twisted lense, at once both horrific and fantastic. Men have always loved a good ghost story, and the Japanese are no exception. Their old tales abound with ghosts, ghouls, goblins and demons, and these are the stories we have tried to give a good home in Kaidan (which is itself the Japanese word for ghost-story). Kaidan is a land where men are beset on all sides by horror. Demons and monsters fill the dark forests and lurk in the shadows of the mountains. The dead do not rest easy and the undead control the seats of power. Religion itself, in other lands a bulwark of safety against the horrors of the dark, offers only further misery and prolonged suffering. Kaidan is a land of despair, desperately in need of hope and heroes.

Thus while it is possible to use the setting of Kaidan as a straight-up setting of oriental fantasy: a land of samurai, ninja, and magic; Kaidan finds its fullest potential in offering up tales of horror, mystery, and hopeless odds. Because of the uniqueness of the setting, and because of the dark themes of Kaidan, not every traditional fantasy trope will be as suitable for a Kaidan adventure as others might be. To most fully utilize the setting, it is useful to gives some forethought to the nature of adventure in Kaidan, as well as why Player Characters might choose to participate in such undertakings. What follows in this chapter are thoughts related to these issues, as well as information which can be utilized to help fully utilize the uniqueness of Kaidan as a setting.

The Tropes of Kaidan

Let us begin by examining some of the underlying assumptions of Kaidan. While there is a great deal of variety in the kind of adventures which can take place in Kaidan, there are some basic premises which should be kept in mind if you wish to capture the essential spirit of the setting. They are as follows.

Evil is Ascendant
Life is Hard
The Supernatural is Hidden
Magic is Divine
Tenmei is Absolute
Death is not an End

Let us comment on each of these concepts and talk a little about how they can influence your game. Some of them will be mentioned again further on in our discussion.

Evil is Ascendant

In many settings, good and evil are in a state of constant contention, with good most often being dominated. In Kaidan, evil, in the form of the Shogun and the Nobility, is clearly and uncontestedly in power through divine fiat. Nor is this situation destined to change for another 281 years. While PCs may grow powerful, even powerful enough to oppose a given daimyo and live, there is little they can do to ultimately bring about a total defeat of evil within the boundaries of Kaidan. No matter what they do, evil will still be in charge at the end of the day (see Tenmei is Absolute). While this is an important fact of life in Kaidan, it is a facet of the setting which needs to be handled with subtle care lest players become discouraged or the game becomes camp. While evil is powerful, it is not absolute, it is not omnipotent, and it rarely goes out of its way to crush the good guys needlessly.

As in most places, so in Kaidan, men both good and evil can be found. Evil individuals, it is true, have a smoother path to power, and the ascendancy of evil in the land means that men have less reason than elsewhere to temper their baser natures. Nevertheless there are still those noble souls who desire to do what is right and strive to live kindly, charitably and decently. PCs who themselves strive for goodness will not be without allies. Nor does evil always have things all its own way. The Shogunate is powerful, the nobility have many servants, and Tenmei insures that the land will remain in darkness for some time yet, but it

is still possible for heroes to thwart villains, save lives, and make life momentarily better for those around them, winning victories as they can. Game sessions should offer a balance between NPCs which act against the PCs and those who are willing to help. PCs should both suffer setbacks and enjoy successes in their actions.

Finally, while the bad guys in Kaidan are a ruthless bunch, lacking in respect for life, and more than happy to kill any in their way, they also recognize the value of the lower castes and the need for someone to rule over. The nobility of Kaidan is, by and large, lawful evil: desiring their domains to function in an efficient manner. Most powerful NPCs in Kaidan are perfectly willing to have "heroes" working for them rather than against them. The Shogun himself maintains groups of exorcists which can be used to combat oni threats and non-noble undead. While some adventures in Kaidan will no doubt pit PCs against the feared nobility, it is equally possible for the PCs to be engaged in activities where the powers that be are on their side, at least nominally.

Life is Hard

Life for all but the most privileged in Kaidan is a struggle for survival. Hunger, weather, taxes, bandits, oni, the undead, angry kami, short-tempered samurai, meddlesome bureaucrats and fearsome, psychopathic monsters are all factors which work to make life in Kaidan uncomfortable, unpleasant and, all too frequently, short. Added to this, Kaidan is metal-poor with little contact with the world beyond its borders. Only the wealthiest in Kaidan live in anything like luxury. Even when one has money, the goods are not always available to be bought, and scarcity is more common than plenty. Beyond just color for NPCs, this fact of life has some potential in-game ramifications. Heroic PCs, while likely wealthy by the standards of Kaidan, are going to be comparatively poorer than their counterparts in other settings. This is discussed further under ***Wealth and Property in Kaidan***.

The Supernatural is Hidden

While there are a variety of supernatural threats in Kaidan including undead, oni, kami, yokai, magical beasts, and a variety of monsters, most of them have one thing in common: an ability to change their shape and appear human. Even the lowliest of monsters in Kaidan are, more often than not, shape-shifters, and it is the rare Kaidanese monster which always appears just as it is. This factor greatly influences social interaction, on the one hand encouraging a spirit of generosity and politeness (because you never know if the stranger begging for food is a kindly spirit in disguise) and on the other hand fostering a general suspicion of strangers (because you never know if the stranger begging for food is an undead demon plotting to kill you and take your place in the village).

The ability of monsters to shapechange is going to affect the PCs in two different ways. On the one hand, it means that they will not always be able to trust their eyes in determining friend from foe. How each PC deals with this is naturally dependant on the will of the player controlling the PC, but it should not take many encounters before PCs have a healthy skepticism about everyone they meet. On the other hand, when PCs are entering a new environment, they themselves are going to often be objects of suspicion. It is normal for Kaidanese to blame strangers for misfortunes, unexplained deaths, and strange occurrences. Unless the PCs can establish their identities in some way, they should be prepared for a certain level of paranoia directed at them. This factor also plays a part in the ability of Kaidan to serve as a realm of horror, a thing discusses further on.

Magic is Divine

While Kaidan has both arcane and divine casters, the line between the two, in the minds of the populace, is murky at best. Little distinction is made between those that work magic by appealing to the spirits of the world and those who work magic through manipulation of the arcane energies of the world. Kaidanese sensibilities in this regard are largely shaped by the cultural interplay between Yokinto and Zaoism, and the manners in which both religions teach their adherents to view the world. Yokinto teaches that all things have an element of the divine within themselves, so that it is only natural that all things are, at some level, capable of interacting with the divine in a primal and powerful way. Zaoism teaches that all things are circular and interconnected, which, at least theoretically, means that any single thing can in some manner influence all other things. Thus a court wizard who is able to control, summon and dismiss fire is, in the minds of the people, merely using the divine energies within himself to interact with the world around him and

is little different than a priest who is able to use his own divine energies to connect to more powerful energies so as to heal or cast out demons. The only difference is in one of focus and training.

What this means for PCs is that any character able to work magic to any degree is going to be assumed to be more spiritually attuned. The Kaidanese, especially those who can't work magic, are respectfully fearful of such individuals, venerating them as holy men. The more powerful the magic, the more "holy," or in some cases "unholy," the caster is assumed to be. This has both advantages and disadvantages. An average kaidanese citizen hesitates before cheating, defrauding or mistreating anyone with obvious spellcasting abilities. Even riffraff and thieves think twice before stealing or robbing anyone whom they know is able to work magic. However, those with the known ability to wield magic, are also going to be more often approached by individuals in need, who assume that the spiritually attuned may be able to help them with this difficulty or that, said difficulty being anything from a sick family member to an infestation of ghouls.

Tenmei is Absolute

Tenmei is the concept that all things have a place in the world, dictated by their past actions and manifested by the caste into which they were born. In Kaidan, tenmei is a real concept and cannot be escaped. A person is born into a particular caste and their place in Kaidanese society is fully determined by that caste. There is no upward or downward mobility out of one's caste and attempting to escape one's place in the world is both criminal and likely to bring severe repercussions. Most kaidanese stoically accept this reality, and, instructed in large part by the dictates of Zaoism, consider it offensive for an individual to act in a manner contrary to that suitable to their station.

The caste of a character can only be changed at death and if a character is reincarnated, they are always reincarnated into the body of the appropriate caste. While it is possible for PCs to pretend to be of almost any caste, there are severe legal repercussions, including death, for pretending to be something they are not. Likewise, while there are often circumstances in which the various castes interact, social norms demand that one behave according to one's place and failure to do so brings with it severe penalties to Diplomacy attempts.

Death is Not the End

While many Kaidanese do not realize all the ramifications of the curse, most not knowing for instance that there are no new souls being created in Kaidan, all Kaidanese know that when a person dies they are reborn or that their souls migrate to a new host body. All Kaidanese have experienced the horror of having a loved one awaken from a bout of soul-fever as a new person. There are many credible examples of individuals retaining full knowledge of one or more of their previous incarnations and there are many more who have vague recollections of previous lives. In the face of the evidence, few Kaidanese would argue against the reality of reincarnation in their life.

It is in the handling of death that Kaidan truly stands apart from other settings. Any PC who dies a violent death in Kaidan has a good chance of coming back to life very shortly after dying, in another body. While this might seem like a boon, the horrific ramifications of it should not be overlooked, and indeed we will discuss in a bit how this helps play into Kaidan's ability to function as a horror setting.

Besides the effect this mechanic has on the PCs, it also affects villains. There is no guarantee that merely killing off a villain permanently removes them from circulation. And, if a villain is reborn, their appearance is likewise altered, so that they are now, potentially, a hidden menace. This creates some unique opportunities for the Game Master to shape the story.

Reasons for Adventure

Individuals in Kaidan can find themselves caught up in adventure, danger, horror and grand schemes for any number of reasons. Even within a party of comrades, different individuals may have different motivations for doing what it is they are doing. The court-trained wizard may adventure out of a desire to learn more and uncover arcane secrets known to the ancients. Perhaps she has as her goal the elimination of the Shogunate but realizes she needs more power to bring about such an end. The honorable Samurai may feel compelled to protect those he deems as being entrusted to his care. The clever yakuza rogue may desire a heavy purse and so she keenly feels the call of treasure. The ronin may roam the land, seeking to escape his past and restore his honor. Still others may simply see it as the job for which they are trained.

What follows are some general motivations shared by many Kaidanese adventurers, with explanation of how they might apply to those within the realm of Kaidan.

Survival

Kaidan is a dangerous place and any man or woman can find themselves, and the ones they loved, threatened. When faced with horrific opponents and deadly circumstances, it is then that some find within themselves the strength necessary to survive, and if fortunate, help those they care about to survive as well. More than one rugged adventurer in Kaidan is little more than a constant survivor, simply doing what they can to live from one day to the next in a land beset with horror on every side.

Duty

Still other individuals actively pursue danger, not because they want to, but because they know they are the ones best trained to deal with the monsters and demons which plague mankind. Their sense of duty compels them to move from job to job, protecting their fellow citizens from dangers without and within. Such individuals might work for the Shogunate, which, although itself one of the dangers of the land, nonetheless protects its citizens in the same way a hungry shepherd might drive away predators from the sheep he is expecting to slaughter and eat. Others might work for various religious groups, villages, or merchant guilds, commissioned agents which go where they are sent. A select few, primarily monks and ronin, are self motivated.

Honor

Similar to those motivated by duty are those adventurers compelled by honor. But where the duty bound adventurer does what he does for the good of those he protects, the honor bound adventurer does so because of his loyalty to a specific object. Such motivation is a highly personal calling, and the exact definition of the honor driving the adventurer will depend largely on the individual's background and caste. Loyalty to one's lord may drive a Samurai to engage foes he would otherwise flee. Loyalty to ones comrades in arms and family name might drive a yakuza to explore ruins he would rather leave alone. Loyalty to her own standard of courage might compel a tengu swords-woman to constantly seek out those things she fears most.

Justice

When one has seen great evil done, or when one has lost all that one holds dear, a thirst for justice can be a powerful motivator in trying to set things right. In a land like Kaidan, injustice is a constant, and many noble souls yearn to do what they can to better the world, or at least punish those who have wronged them, or those close to them.

Curiosity

In any community there are always those who are driven to learn, to explore, and to find that which is hidden. Kaidan is a land of mystery, where ancient secrets and present subterfuges intertwine in an unholy marriage. More than one adventurer in Kaidan began questing simply to try and learn more of the world in which they find themselves. Whether it is seeking out long-forgotten tombs, or trying to find out just where the missing girls in a particular village have disappeared to, the ever present mysteries of Kaidan provide suitable motivation for those whose curiosity cannot be contained.

Wealth

While Kaidan is a land filled with riches, the majority of its inhabitants live in poverty. To those who have never had a lot, the lure of riches can be a powerful motivation. Whether it is pursuing fast coin through the collection of a large bounty, trying to steal the riches belonging to the more powerful, or finding treasure long buried, the promise of gold drives many to risk danger, partake in violence, and face near death, again and again. More often than not, the gold prize proves hollow, but still, like fools, there are those who try and try again.

Adventuring Groups

How and why a particular group of individuals comes together for adventure is always a subject of some interest. Because of the strict caste system, and the racial intolerance of the Shogunate, most adventuring groups in Kaidan share a certain homogeneity of background within its members. While in other realms, a noble human paladin, a halfling rogue from a seedy slum, and a pious elven priest might all find themselves drawn to

the same tavern at just the right time to share a common adventure, in Kaidan, a peasant would scarcely ever find himself in the same sake house as a samurai, and a Zaoist priest devoted to the Shogunate would scarcely deign to enter an establishment frequented by henge, unless it was to arrest them.

Such considerations should be kept in mind when players in a Kaidan game are seeking to create characters meant to travel and work together. Samurai, in particular, unless ronin, will have a hard time moving in hinin-eta and peasant circles. Players should also especially keep in mind the need for yokai characters to disguise their nature if they are going to be attempting to move within human society. Generally, however, there are four broad cultural backgrounds for an adventuring group within Kaidan and play will go most smooth if all of the group comes from the same background.

Gaijin Culture

While it might seem strange to include Gaijin as a possible cultural background for Kaidan adventurers, the trope of all of the group being outsiders to the realm allows for a story of discovery and unfolding horror. It also fits into the theme that the Shogun wants Gaijin in Kaidan because he wants their souls. A Gaijin base group also allows the gradual introduction of characters from a broad range of other castes as those castes are interacted with and friendships are formed. Gaijin will have less cultural reluctance to mingle the various castes than native Kaidanese.



Yokai Culture

A group built around the yokai culture would, of course, include yokai characters, but can also include korobokuru and those human characters who know of, and have been exposed to the hidden world of the yokai. This would allow humans from vastly different castes as such humans are bound together by their secret support of non-humans. As yokai are not knowingly allowed in most Kaidanese communities, adventurers of this sort tend to operate on the fringe of, or completely outside of the broader Kaidanese culture. Such adventurers often campaign in the darkness to protect their homeland from unseen threats, or else work actively against the Shogunate as rebels.

Hinin-Eta/Human Culture

While they are two distinct castes, the Hinin-Eta caste and the Human caste do somewhat intermingle and adventuring groups from one caste may well incorporate individuals from the other. Groups formed with such a background tend to be of two sorts: those who band together to protect one or more villages, and those who find common ground in their relationship to the Yakuza. (Granted, some might find common ground in their relationship to the Yokai, but those are considered as having the Yokai cultural background.)

Samurai Culture

Many, if not most, adventuring groups come from the samurai caste. This should not be surprising, as the samurai are not only trained warriors, but also have the greatest of latitudes when it comes to movement within the country. Samurai have one other advantage over peasants, and that is a level of authority that comes from their station. Samurai adventurers can have any number of motivations. A goodly number work for clan lords or daimyos who use their specialized skills as needed to settle problems within their domains. Others are ronin who have banded together to fight for a common cause or purpose. The exact reason for any given samurai group's existence is going to depend very much on the nature and goals of their individual clans or liege lords, and on their relationship to the Shogunate. Most samurai work to defend Kaidan from the dangers without, but there are those who recognize the greatest threat comes not from the oni, but from the Shogunate and the daimyo.

Kaidan's Challenges

The background of a group of adventurers or warriors coupled with the motivations of the individuals within that group is going to greatly shape the nature of the challenges faced by that self-same group. A group of samurais motivated by wealth and honor combined are going to very likely be chasing bounties and fulfilling missions for their lord. A group of yakuza who desire to simply survive are not likely to be seeking out adventure, but might find themselves caught up in it nonetheless as unknown (or known) forces try to destroy them, and those around them. A group of yokai, and their human compatriots, who seek for justice, are more likely to be trying to clandestinely overthrow the local daimyo and the challenges they face are going to be sent against them by that daimyo. A yokinto priest from a humble village, bound by duty, is perhaps going to collect compatriots able to help him as he travels from village to village performing exorcisms and seeking to rid the land of evil.

Generally speaking, there are three root causes for most of the major difficulties facing those living in Kaidan: Oni, Monsters, and the Shogunate. Other complications, of course, do arise, from the greed of men and yokai alike, and so sometimes the villains might be something else: a yakuza boss, an evil arcane artifact, a blood-crazed tengu, or even just a mischievous kappa. But such villains are typically minor compared to the aforementioned three.

Monsters

Though heroes have, through the ages battled monsters of various sorts, never has Kaidan been free of the scourge of strange creatures which lurk in the shadows. The simplest monsters are little more than powerful beasts, given to wanton destruction. Far more insidious are those monsters which can take the shape of men, or those which were themselves men in times past, before death or strange magics warped them. Kaidan is constantly in need of heroes who are willing to stand against the monsters when they appear, or, more importantly, hunt for them in the shadows. Adventures which involve monsters are most often of two sorts: those in which the monster is attacking or threatening a village, or one in which the monster must be hunted down and destroyed.

Oni

If you were to ask the average Kaidanese citizen what the greatest threat to their safety was, most would instinctively supply the oni as an answer. Demons in physical bodies, the oni are the most feared of monsters, and the history of Kaidan has been, in part, shaped by the fight of human and yokai alike against the corrupting influence of the oni. The oni pursue an agenda of conquest, and though their numbers are thought to be fewer than in ages past, the truth is that the oni are once more multiplying in the land, working to set the stage for their return. They know the prophecies concerning the fall of the Shogun and they are determined that even if they are not the ones who cause the downfall, their armies will nevertheless be ready to march in and reclaim lands they once owned. To that end, they scheme and plan and work to shape events to their liking. As almost all oni are able to change their form, or turn invisible, oni have great latitude in how they can accomplish their goals. While more brutish oni are ofttimes little better than monsters, adventures in which powerful oni are the primary antagonist are not always obviously such and can involve a great deal of misdirection and intrigue as heroes try to pinpoint the source of a community's problem. As well oni, it is worth noting, are interested in corrupting the kami, and exorcists and other adventurers frequently have to contend, not only with the oni causing the corruption, but with those spirits the oni has managed to twist to evil.

Shogunate

The Shogun, the Emperor, their households, and each daimyo in Kaidan are all malevolently undead. They and their most powerful servants are evil monstrosities which feed upon the life force of the citizenry and do so with complete impunity. To fight against them is an impossible task, one doomed to failure, and yet there are those who do so, seldom overtly, but with great dedication and resolve, knowing that there is no greater monster in all of Kaidan than the Shogun himself. For his part the Shogun's sole purpose is to retain his power, by any means necessary. Individual daimyo, as noted in chapter 5, might have their own motivations, but they are each, in one way or another, a threat to their own subjects. Heroes in Kaidan can find themselves caught up against the Shogunate in a number of ways. Most obvious are those who purposefully work to bring down the power of the Shogun and his daimyo. Others, in the wrong place at the wrong time, may find themselves caught up in the nefarious machinations of one of the daimyo, or of the Shogun himself. These evil overlords have been known to destroy whole communities as testing grounds for new weapons, or new magics. At other times, they send assassins against those they fear are growing too powerful, and heroic characters are exactly the sort to be targeted by the paranoid rulers. Still others may be exposed to the evils of the Shogunate when they themselves are chosen as agents are forced to choose whether or not to carry out their given tasks. Those who forswear themselves become ronin, are labeled as criminals, and bounties are placed on their heads. Such individuals are forced to constantly be moving as they try to survive the wrath of those they have disappointed.

Kaidan's Tales of Horror

Kaidan is a realm of fantastic horror and those who adventure in Kaidan are constantly exposed to that horror. Such exposure can dull the senses and make the horrific common-place. Game-wise, running an adventure campaign with a horror centric theme is a tricky balancing act. On the one hand, it is too easy to slip into common tropes and a traditional role-playing mentality where the players, and the characters, are focused on nothing more than killing monsters and looting their bodies. On the other hand, if the horror is too crushing, the players will become nonplussed and thus inclined to disinterest. For short adventures, this is much less of a problem, as the adventure itself should frame the horror and be self-contained. But in longer campaigns, it is necessary that true horror be balanced with hope, even if the hope is not always fulfilled.

In order for horror to be effective in a role-playing game, the players must be invested in both the setting and the characters. They must feel that the struggle of their characters matters. They must also find the struggle to be an actual challenge, where failure is a very real possibility. In some campaigns, Game Masters try to avoid killing the characters. It is advised that in a Kaidan campaign, no such effort be made. This is not to say that the Game Master should be purposefully antagonistic towards the PCs, as that attitude will also work against the desired feel; rather the Game Master should be disinterested in the survival of the PCs themselves as much as possible (though we recognize that Game Masters can become just

as invested in characters as players). The Kaidan setting has an obvious advantage, however, in allowing the Game Master to participate in the death of characters with impunity: the mechanism of reincarnation.

The reincarnation mechanism, through which a dead PC's soul inhabits another's body, not only keeps a player actively engaged in a campaign, but it works to reaffirm, thematically, the strange and twisted nature of Kaidan as the players realize that there is no escaping Kaidan. More than this, the reincarnation mechanism makes the character an active participant in the horror of the realm. While, at first, players might not fully grasp what happens when they die and then reawaken, eventually it will dawn on them that the death of their character, and the subsequent rebirth into a new, mature body typically requires the expulsion of another individual out of that body. So while a character may indeed have a new body with which to fight and adventure, it is very likely that acquiring it cost someone else to lose their beloved spouse, or child. Perhaps their new body was a village's chief defender, or hunter, and now that village is more vulnerable. While discussing this is taboo among the Kaidanese, the reality of the exchange should, ideally, cause the players to fear death more than if they had to start entirely afresh.

Horror, as a device, is induced in several ways, and Kaidan is well suited as a campaign setting for each of them. When crafting adventures keep each kind of horror in mind and alternate from one to another to affect your players with the proper mood of Kaidan. Don't overdo it; subtle build-ups are often more effective than outright exposure. As well, alternate horrific elements with moments of exploration, rest, levity, or even victory in order to keep that all-important sense of hope alive, thus making the forthcoming moments of horror that much more horrible. In each case, also bear in mind that for the horror to fully manifest, the fear cannot simply affect the character; the true target is the player's mind.

Fear of the Dark

While we might label this particular kind of fear as fear of the dark, it could also be called the fear of the unknown. We instinctively fear that which we do not understand, or that which we cannot see, for when we cannot see our minds have free reign to fill in the empty spaces with things sinister and fearful. The dread of night, the fear of the unseen hand, and apprehension at the great mystery which lies on the other side of death are all manifestations of the fear of the dark.

Fear of the dark can be utilized in several different ways, in an adventure, to affect players. The most obvious is through the actual use of darkness, with terrible things known to be lurking just out of sight. When the characters are being affected, but cannot see what is affecting them, fear and frustration are the natural result. Understand and enforce the mechanics for light, dim light and darkness. Know for certain where the edge of what can be seen is, and have the monsters lurk just beyond that range, able to see the characters, but unable to be seen. Describe movements and sounds from beyond the range of sight, but never allow the characters to see what is there.

Things unseen, however, do not have to always lurk in the literal dark. Most monsters in Kaidan are able to shapechange and not knowing, for sure, whether the individual your character is interacting with is actually human creates a certain level of phobia. Perhaps the kindly store keeper is actually the oni which has been kidnapping children. Perhaps the young samurai is actually soulless: a psychopathic killer with a charming smile. Perhaps the maiden you meet by the side of the road is actually a spider woman, with plans to eat you; or perhaps she's nothing more than what she appears to be. In Kaidan there should always be mistrust when dealing with strangers for you do not know who they truly are. Establish this principle early and then reinforce it periodically within the game.

An additional way to introduce the fear of the dark, or the unknown, is to place characters in situations where everything is new, and they are uncertain as to how to behave, or what they should affect. This theme works especially well with Gaijin characters, who, when introduced to the setting, do not know the language, the nature of the regime, nor the customs of the land.

Fear of Corruption

The fear of corruption is the fear felt when one perceives that which is good becoming decayed and weak. Corruption can take many forms. A body, slowly dying of poison has been corrupted. The morals and ethics of strong individuals can begin to erode until they are as twisted as those they might once have fought against. The natural order can be overtaken by unnatural forces, and that which is clean and pristine can become sullied.

Corruption, as a horrifying presence, can be experienced by characters both externally and internally. Experienced externally through the eyes of a character, it becomes a set piece, and a reminder

of the presence of evil and decay. Experienced internally, it becomes more horrifying yet, as the character finds themselves changing or being changed in significant ways. Externally, for players, corruption serves as a warning that things are not right, and as a reminder for the need for action or vigilance. But when the character themselves begin to be corrupted, it can induce actual fear or horror in the player's mind as control of their character slips further and further out of their hands.

In Kaidan, corruption touches all things: the government, the people, the natural world, the kami, religion, and relationships between people. Working corruption into a story is fairly easy, and whether it is the ghost of a child, a kami turned demon at a haunted shrine, a once noble samurai now driven to murder; some elements of corruption should touch all stories set in Kaidan.

But don't be afraid to allow corruption to actually work upon the player characters also. After all, they too are a part of Kaidan, and they cannot escape the curse unscathed. Mechanically, poisons, curses, and energy drains are all methods by which a character's body can be weakened. Such effects are more horrifying when they are both slow and seemingly unstoppable. As the character finds some element of their physical or mental state growing inexorably weaker, panic is likely to set in. When this happens, however, keep in mind the rule about keeping hope alive so that the characters are propelled into finding a cure, or some way to halt the progression of decay. More intangible, but no less important is the possibility of spiritual decay. Use the stories of Kaidan to present the characters with hard choices, where the easy path is not necessarily the right path, and there is the possibility of becoming that which one despises. Likewise, let the player's know that you are, in fact keeping abreast of their karma, and, should they descend on the wheel of karma, allow both player and character some way of discovering this fact in-game.

Fear of the Unnatural

Closely related to both the fear of the unknown and the fear of corruption is the fear of that which is not natural. We all have certain expectations about how things should be, and when they fail to be as we would expect them to be, there is oft times a natural inclination to revulsion. Likewise, when we encounter something not understood via the lenses of what we already know, there is a natural inclination to fear that we have encountered something that should not be.

Kaidan is a setting full of unnatural things. In Kaidan, the natural cycle of life and death is badly broken. Likewise, in Kaidan, the living are ruled by the dead, and evil is ascendant. Both of these things should make players feel uneasy as they interact with them. More basically, monsters, such as fill Kaidan, are often quite unnatural.

By emphasizing the unnatural state of things in Kaidan, horror can be increased. Perhaps it is a child possessed by the spirit of its own father. Perhaps it is a two headed, undead wolf, full of decay and surrounded by a cloud of white flies. Perhaps it is a tree with blood for sap, which cries out in pain when cut. Perhaps it is water which when drank induces dehydration in the drinker. There are a multitude of ways for unnatural things to make their presence felt in Kaidan and you should not be afraid to use them as tools to increase horror.



Fear of the Terrifying

Perhaps the hardest aspect of fear to pin down, but no less real for all that, is the simple fear of that which is personally terrifying. Such a fear is hard to define because what terrifies one individual is not the same as what might terrify another. Witness, for instance, the blind panic experienced by some people when confronted with a spider, or a snake; while others might simply shrug and go about dealing with the creature. The self-same individual, so blasé about a spider, might in turn, have an absolute dread of enclosed spaces, or heights, or blood, or any number of other things that people often fear.

In crafting adventures and stories in Kaidan, the inclusion of those things which the players themselves find terrifying helps psychologically reinforce the horror of the setting. Such inclusions should be done subtly, and naturally, but they should still be present. Likewise, pay attention to what actually works to disturb the players so as to focus on those areas. It does no good to describe, in minute detail, small spiders crawling across the skin of a character if it turns out none of the players are actually afraid of spiders. But if there is one who is afraid of spiders, then just the mention of silk like cobwebs hanging from a door frame, brushing against the face of a character, might be enough to put a player on edge.

So what are people typically afraid of and how might these fears show up in a game?

People are afraid of flying and falling. It is also common for individuals to be afraid of heights. Game-wise, attacks using levitation, either through magic, or spiritual means, could trigger such a fear, as could a situation in which a character must traverse a narrow beam or ledge over sharp and dangerous objects far below might serve well.

Other individuals are afraid of particular creatures. Dogs, spiders, snakes rates and mice seem to be the most commonly reported villains in regards to such fears. These creatures are all easily included into a story as threats or encounters.

Many people, it is reported, fear lightning and thunder, which means that when describing a storm, in game, a game master should not forget to talk about the sound of the thunder as lightning crashes nearby. Do not feel afraid to have the lightning strike close, so that it is felt by all, a reminder, perhaps that the characters themselves are in danger of being struck.

Blood is another common fear. In haunted settings, walls might drip with blood. At a scene of murder or death, pools of blood should be described, so that attention is drawn to the presence of the blood.

Finally, darkness and death alike are common phobias, but we do not need to mention much about those at this time, for their inclusion in a Kaidan adventure is likely to be a given.

Allies in Kaidan

In Kaidanese society, honor is typically defined by an individual's membership in, and loyalty to, a particular group, or even, at times, groups. First and foremost in life, it is expected that one be loyal to one's family or clan. As maturity is reached, though many, especially in the lower classes, continue to be associated primarily with their kith and kin, it is understood that loyalties may change according to philosophical differences, moral impulses, or other life choices. Samurai may, when of age, choose to swear allegiance to a lord other than their clan head. A man or woman might choose to leave the life they know to be joined to a monastic order. Individuals with drive or talent may seek out a teacher of the martial arts and swear allegiance to them in exchange for tutelage. Yakuza gangs, drawing their members from the hinin-eta caste, requiring their initiates to disavow their old families and, through various rituals, be joined to their new "family."

Regardless of the nature of such allegiance, it is vitally important in Kaidanese society to belong, and those that do not in some way belong to some group or other feel the stigma of their isolation and dishonor. It is not surprising then that Kaidan is a land filled with a wide variety of organizations and societies. Membership in any group is rarely taken lightly and it is expected of those within the group to be loyal to the edicts, ideals, and directions of the group, as expressed by the leadership of the organization in question, even when that organization is secret. Those who are publicly known to have, in some way, betrayed their past associates are forever marked by the stain of that dishonor. For player characters, such groups provide both background flavor, and potential allies in times of need; for the self-same honor which demands loyalty of the characters likewise demands that loyalty be shown to them.

What follows are a sample of some of the societies of Kaidan with which a character might interact. This list is scarcely exhaustive.

The Brotherhood of Bamboo

A loose association of yokai, primarily henge, the Brotherhood of Bamboo are the self appointed guardians of the yokai heritage, working through means both covert and overt to protect yokai from the machinations of the Shogun. The largest outpost of the Brotherhood, among humans, is in the city of Aki-jo, where they pose as ambitious merchants, rivals of the Takekago brotherhood, always willing to buy and sell anything, including information, for the right price; but the brotherhood has agents throughout Kaidan, and many Henge living among the humans in disguise are affiliated with the group. Not all henge agree with the aggressive, albeit covert actions of the brotherhood, but there are enough that the brotherhood has an extensive reach into every corner of Kaidan.

The brotherhood derives its name from the three sacred bamboo groves of the yokai, and, among their other self-appointed tasks, they take great care to do what they can to keep knowledge of these groves from the shogun. The general password of the group is, "Iron is made to cut bamboo," to which the countersign is, "Iron rusts while the bamboo grows anew."

The Hakayami

The Hakayami are the Shogun's own elite death squad. Hand selected from military units around Kaidan, the members of the Hakayami are efficient killers long before they are recruited into the squad. Following their initiation ritual, one in which the recruit is expected to literally kill himself, they only become more powerful. The hakayami are virtually fearless, for they know that as soon as they die, they will be reborn within the hour, able to continue to carry out their sworn duty. While most of the populace knows nothing about the actual inner workings of the hakayami, all know to tremble in their presence.

The Honorable Brotherhood of the Cherry Blossom

One of the oldest, largest and most organized groups established with a view towards overthrowing the Shogun is the Honorable Brotherhood of the Cherry Blossom, often simply called The Blossoms, or The Brotherhood, by those who belong to its ranks. Though the members of the society loathe the iron fist of the undead shogun, they are slow and meticulous to act, planning every move thoroughly, understanding that were they ever to draw attention to themselves, they would surely be undone. Well known to the upper echelons of the Brotherhood are the prophecies foretelling the fall of the Shogun at the end of a thousand year reign. Thus they work a long game, laying the groundwork for the fulfillment of the prophecies, fearing to push too soon and thus set themselves against the turning of the wheels of life.

No single member of the Blossoms knows more than a handful of other members and no one, besides themselves, are aware of the identities of the three individuals who lead the society. A pair of haiku aid the members in identifying each other. Every member is taught the first poem, the lines of which are used as signs and countersigns so that if one member hears another saying any of the three lines, they may identify themselves with one of the other two lines.. The second haiku is taught only to those who have proven their loyalty, and is again used for signs and countersigns to identify seasoned members.

melting hearts; spring snow
snow white flowers on the trees
life following death

summer heat brings strength
blossoms bring forth hard won fruit
blood red on the leaves

The Sisterhood of Death

There are six established clans of shinobi assassins in Kaidan, but not all members of those clans remain true to the clan, and some, having left their clans, nevertheless continue to work as mercenaries and assassins. The Sisterhood of Death is collection of such individuals, all female, who first joined forces in order to maintain a wide sphere of contacts, and provide mutual protection against possible retaliation by the members' former clans. Since its establishment, the Sisterhood has become a religious cult devoted to the worship of the god of death. Kills are made in service to this god, albeit for payment, and when possible, targets are kidnapped in order to serve as ritual sacrifices. The Sisterhood maintains a presence in most major cities on Anshu, and is ever on the lookout for new talent, women capable of being trained to kill, and susceptible to conversion to the cult's religion.

The Takikago Brotherhood

A guild of rice merchants, the Takikago brotherhood is one of the wealthiest and oldest of associations in Kaidan, with an influence that far exceeds what one would expect from members of the peasant caste. The guild buys, stores and sells rice. Their rice stores are, outside of those belonging to the Shogun, the largest in all of Kaidan, and are well defended, and sometimes, well hid.

Wealth and Property in Kaidan

There is great wealth to be found in Kaidan, but it is hard to come by. Likewise, while there is a robust market in which things are bought and sold, such items as are for sale are mostly food, tools, simple clothing, and the like. What little people do own is often too precious for them to part with, and there are few people who can afford to buy truly luxury items. Thus the market for such things is very specialized and most artisans work directly for their patrons.

To mirror these facts, it is recommended for Kaidanese campaigns that the general wealth per level rules be entirely discounted. Likewise, treasures per encounter should be approximately half of what is generally recommended, so that such treasure as is found is all the more precious. When treasure is found, it should not necessarily be in the form of piles of gold. Rather treasure found treasure should be pieces of art, furniture, weapons, and jewelry.

Additionally, money itself might not be sufficient for the characters to buy what they want, or need. Simply having access to money is not the same as having access to a good, especially a good such as weapons or armor Supply is limited and heavily controlled. PCs must make the right connections to buy what they want. It is generally illegal for weapons to be sold to non-samurai and the samurai clans arrange their own purchases for their members. Nor is it just weapons that might be hard to obtain at times. It is perfectly reasonable for there to be times when the PCs will not be able to buy food, not because they haven't the money, but because those they are interacting with either do not have food to sell, or because food, to the hungry, is too valuable to part with.

This does not mean you should thwart the PCs at every turn. You don't want to frustrate them beyond measure. Such a game is not likely to be too much fun. Nevertheless, it should be made clear that PCs must learn to make the right connections to buy what they need or want, that they will need to earn most of what they receive, and that if something is not available, it cannot be bought.

Such changes do affect, somewhat, a character's assumed ability to face level appropriate challenges, but so long as this factor is kept in mind, it can be easily accounted for as Game Master's plan out encounters.

Player characters that become too wealthy are going to draw the attention of those around them, and not necessarily in a good way. Government officials in particular will be desirous of taxing any wealth owned, and clan lords and family heads will expect that those under them give a good portion of their wealth to the clan or family. Bear in mind that in Kaidan, all that a person possesses is deemed the actual property of their superiors, should those superiors choose to exercise their rights.

Relatedly, most characters are going to have few opportunities to actually buy land, especially as land is rarely for sale in Kaidan. This is not to say that characters cannot gain land. Abandoned property can be claimed or settled, land and houses might be parceled out by clan lords or daimyo, and unsettled territory can be built upon with impunity. But already occupied land or buildings is scarcely ever put up for sale, no matter the amount offered for it. For one thing, it is very possible that those who live upon the land do not themselves own the land, but are instead tenants, and secondly, those who might consider giving up their land for gold will realize that they will then be left homeless, a not altogether welcome occurrence. If characters do gain possession of land, so long as it is within imperial reach (i.e. it's not atop some lonely mountain or in a yokai village), characters will be expected to fill out the proper forms, including a detailed deed, and to pay the appropriate annual taxes. Taxes on land are assessed either for size of a plot, or for the potential of the land to yield crops, regardless of whether the character actually grows crops upon it. Failure to pay taxes can result in heavy fines, loss of life, imprisonment, and, almost certainly, eviction.

One additional thing we might mention as being very hard to buy in Kaidan are magical items, including potions and scrolls. Besides the practice of magic being illegal for all but a select few, there is simply not enough demand to make stocking magical items on a regular basis a viable business practice. And, on top of this, the majority of known magical items of any power are rightly regarded as family heirlooms and are never offered for sale. This is not to say that magic items can never be bought or sold, where there is a will there is a way, after all. Rather, characters will either need to directly know a person capable of making magical items and willing to sell the same, or will have to be diligent to discover as to when such items might be for sale. Upon occasion, a store or merchant will stock a magical item without realizing the nature of that item. But only a character of keen eye and wit will be able to tell when such an opportunity arises to be taken advantage of.

Equipping the Adventurer

Following are some of the more common armors and weapons an adventurer in Kaidan might use or purchase. As noted elsewhere, Kaidan is a metal poor country and items made of metal are both more expensive and harder to come by. The prices herein reflect a typical price in Kaidan for weapons, armor and the like. In some regions, especially those with more ready access to steel and iron, these prices might be lower. In other regions, where the buying and selling of weapons and the like is forbidden, they will most certainly be higher.

ARMOR

Generally speaking, in Kaidan, heavy armors are reserved for members of the samurai caste. Priests and samurai alike have ready access to medium armors. All others have to make do with light armors, or hide armor. While shields are not unknown in Kaidan, shields are not normally used by samurai, as too many of their weapons are two handed, however, they will make use of tower shields to protect from arrow fire.

Armor Descriptions

Do-Maru
A coat of steel and leather plates, do-maru armor covers the chest and is favored as a foot armor by samurai. Do-maru means "body wrap."

Haramaki
Originally haramaki referred to any chest armor which was fashioned to close from the back, but it has come to mean a simple sash lined with metal rings and worn around the stomach. Such haramaki is most often worn by those who do not want to appear to be wearing armor.

	Price	Armor Bonus	Max Dex Bonus	Armor Check Pen	Arcane Spell Failure	Speed		Weight
						30 ft	20 ft	
LIGHT ARMOR								
Haramaki	9 gp	+1	-	0	0%	30 ft	20 ft	1lb
Silken	40 gp	+1	-	0	0%	30 ft	20 ft	4 lbs
Lamellar cuirass	15 gp	+2	+4	0	5%	30 ft	20 ft	8 lbs
Leather	10 gp	+2	+6	0	10%	30 ft	20 ft	15 lbs
Wooden	20 gp	+3	+3	-1	15%	30 ft	20 ft	25 lbs
Lamellar (leather)	60 gp	+4	+3	-2	20%	30 ft	20 ft	25 lbs
MEDIUM ARMOR								
Hide	15 gp	+4	+4	-3	20%	20 ft	15 ft	25 lbs
Do-maru	200 gp	+5	+4	-4	25%	20 ft	15 ft	30 lbs
Kikko	90 gp	+5	+4	-3	20%	20 ft	15 ft	25 lbs
Lamellar (steel)	450 gp	+6	+3	-5	25%	20 ft	15 ft	35 lbs
HEAVY ARMOR*								
Kusari gusoko	1200 gp	+7	+1	-6	35%	20 ft	15 ft	45lbs
Lamellar (iron)	750 gp	+7	+0	-6	40%	20 ft	15 ft	50 lbs
Tatami-do	3150 gp	+7	+3	-5	35%	20 ft	15 ft	45 lbs
O-yoroi	5250 gp	+8	+2	-5	35%	20 ft	15 ft	45 lbs
SHIELDS								
Light Wooden	3 gp	+1	-	-1	5%	-	-	5 lbs
Tower	30 gp	+3	+2	-10	50%	-	-	45 lbs

**All the heavy armors in this list are considered masterwork. Characters in heavy armor may not run faster than triple their normal speed*

SIMPLE WEAPONS

	price	DMG(s)	DMG(m)	Critical	Range	Weight	Type	Special
Light Melee Weapons								
Hanbo	1 gp	1d4	1d6	x2	10 ft	1 lb	B	Monk
Kama	18 gp	1d4	1d6	x2	-	2 lbs	S	Monk, trip
Kunai	3 gp	1d3	1d4	x2	10 ft	1 lb	P	Monk, see text
Tanto	9 gp	1d3	1d4	19-20/x2	-	1 lb	P or S	-
Tekko	3 gp	1d2	1d3	x2	-	1 lb	B	Monk, see text
One handed Melee Weapons								
Club	-	1d4	1d6	x2	10 ft	3 lbs	B	-
Makura yari	2 gp	1d4	1d6	x2	-	2 lbs	P	-
Te yari	3 gp	1d4	1d6	x2	-	3 lbs	P	-
Two-handed Melee Weapons								
Staff	-	1d4	1d6	x2	-	4 lbs	B	Monk, double
Kama yari	20 gp	1d6	1d8	x3	-	11 lbs	P, S	Brace, see text
Yari	15 gp	1d6	1d8	x3	-	9 lbs	P	Brace, reach
Ranged Weapons								
Blowgun	2 gp	1	1d2	x2	20 ft	1 lb	P	-
Dart	1 gp	1d3	1d4	x2	20 ft	½ lb	P	-
Ishiyumi	100 gp	1d4	1d6	x2	60 ft	6 lbs	B	-
O-yumi, heavy	100 gp	1d8	1d10	19-20/x2	120 ft	8 lbs	P	-
O-yumi, light	70 gp	1d6	1d8	19-20/x2	80 ft	4 lbs	P	-

MARTIAL WEAPONS

Light Melee Weapons								
Jutte	24 gp	1d4	1d6	x2	-	1 lb	B, P	Disarm, monk
Kodachi (short sword)	30 gp	1d4	1d6	19-20/x2	-	2 lbs	P, S	-
Ono (hand ax)	18 gp	1d4	1d6	x3	-	3 lbs	S	-
Tonfa	1 gp	1d4	1d6	x2	-	1 lb	B, P	Blocking, monk
Wakizashi	105 gp	1d4	1d6	18-20/x2	-	2lbs	P, S	Deadly
One-handed Melee Weapons								
Bokken	10 gp	1d4	1d6	x2	-	2 lbs	B	Nonlethal
Shikomizue (sword cane)	135 gp	1d4	1d6	19-20/x2	-	4 lbs	P, S	Concealed
Tekkan	15 gp	1d6	1d8	x2	-	4 lbs	B	-
Tsurugi (long sword)	45 gp	1d6	1d8	19-20/x2	-	4 lbs	S	-

Two-handed Melee Weapons								
Bisento	24 gp	1d8	1d10	x3	-	10 lbs	S	Reach
Konabo	30 gp	1d8	1d10	x3	-	8 lbs	B	-
Naginata	70 gp	1d6	1d8	x4	-	9 lbs	S	Reach
Nodachi	180 gp	1d8	1d10	18-20/x2	-	8 lbs	P, S	Brace
Odachi (great sword)	150 gp	1d10	2d6	19-20/x2	-	8 lbs	S	-
Otsuchi	50 gp	1d10	2d6	x3	-	14 lbs	B	-
Naginata	105 gp	1d6	1d8	x4	-	9 lbs	S	Reach
Ranged Weapons								
Yumi (daikyu)	75 go	1d6	1d8	x3	100 ft	4 lbs	P	-
Yumi (hankyu)	30 gp	1d4	1d6	x3	60 ft	2 lbs	P	-

EXOTIC WEAPONS

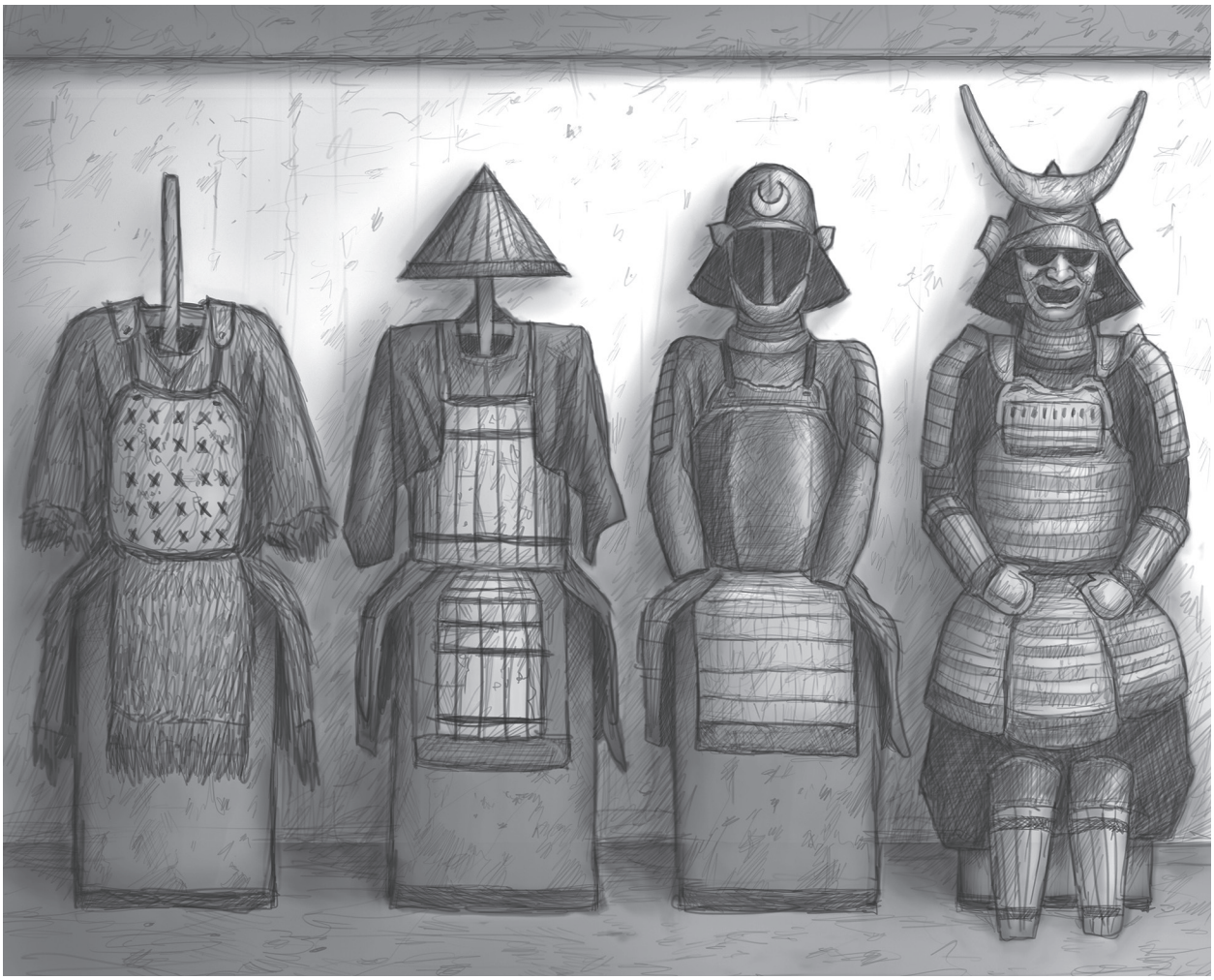
Light Melee Weapons								
Nunchaku	2 gp	1d4	1d6	x2	-	2 lbs	B	Disarm, monk
Sai	3 gp	1d3	1d4	x2	-	1 lb	B	Disarm, monk
Tekko-kagi	6 gp	1d2	1d3	x2	-	-	P	Disarm, see text
Tessen (iron fan)	15 gp	1d3	1d4	x3	-	-	P	Distracting, monk
One-handed Melee Weapons								
Katana	150 gp	1d6	1d8	18-20/x2	-	6 lbs	S	Deadly
Tachi	200 gp	1d8	1d10	19-20/x2	-	6 lbs	S	-
Two-handed Melee Weapons								
Bo	1 gp	1d4	1d6	x2	-	3 lbs	B	Blocking, double, monk
Kusarigama	36 gp	1d2/1d4	1d3/1d6	x2	-	3 lbs	B, S	Double, grapple, monk, reach, trip
Kyoketsu Shoge	16 gp	1d3	1d4	x2	20 ft	1 lb	P, S	Disarm, grapple, monk, reach
Tetsubo	40 gp	1d8	1d10	x4	-	10 lbs	B	-
Ranged Weapons								
Hand Crossbow (shudo)	200 gp	1d3	1d4	19-20/x2	30 ft	2 lbs	P	-
O-yumi, Double-shot	600 gp	1d6	1d8	19-20/x2	80 ft	18 lbs	P	see text
O-yumi, Multi-shot	1000 gp	1d6	1d8	x2	80 ft	22 lbs	P	see text
O-yumi, Repeater	500 gp	1d6	1d8	19-20/x2	80 ft	6 lbs	P	
O-yumi, Siege	300 gp	2d6	2d8	18-20/x3	120 ft	40 lbs	P	-
Shuriken (1)	1 gp	1	1d2	x2	10 ft	-	P	Monk

AMMUNITION			
	price	DMG(s)	DMG(m)
Arrow, daikyu	1 sp each	10 for 1 gp	20 @ 3 lbs
Arrow, hankyu	5 cp each	20 for 1 gp	20 @ 2 lbs
Bolt, o-yumi	2 sp each	5 for 1 gp	10 @ 1 lb
Bolt, siege o-yumi	1 gp each	-	2 lbs

Hide and leather
Hide and leather armors alike are little more than tunics made from thick animal skins and are generally worn by either bandits or woodsmen who can easily acquire the materials to make them.

Lamellar
Lamellar armor is chest armor fashioned from plates sewn together and covering the chest. It can be made from a variety of materials, but is most often constructed with metal plates. Lamellar is typically worn by guardsmen and poorer samurai who cannot afford the more expensive armors.

Kikko
An early form of samurai armor, Kikko is comprised of metal plates sewn together. Variations of Kikko armor are sometimes incorporated into o-yoroi and tatami-do armors, but it is currently only worn by samurai who have inherited it from family members and cannot afford better armor.



Kusari gusoko
Kusari gusoko is a chain armor worn by samurai, and is the most recent innovation in Kaidanese armor, having been first introduced on Yonshu by armorers who had seen gaijin chain mail. Largely because it is so much cheaper than tatami-do, it has swiftly grown in popularity and can be found being worn by young samurai on all three islands. Kusari is meant to be worn as field armor by foot soldiers, but has been adopted by some clans for their mounted troops.

O-yoroi
The traditional armor of high-ranking samurai, o-yoroi is comprised of multiple layers of other armors, including a helmet, and normally includes a gruesome face mask, fashioned to resemble a snarling oni, or fearsome beast. O-yoroi is usually considered a mounted armor, meant to be worn by a samurai on horseback. Each o-yoroi armor is a unique treasure, only ever meant to be worn by the samurai for which it was commissioned and it is normally buried with that samurai after death. O-yoroi means "great armor."

Silken
Silken armors are elegant robes feature multiple layers of cloth and covered with metal studs. They offer little actual protection, but are worn by nobility for ceremonial and military occasions.

Tatami-do
Tatami-do is full body folding armor worn by samurai as field armor. Like o-yoroi, tatami-do is actually a layered collection of other armors and includes a helmet. Tatami-do means "folding armor."

Wooden
Worn primarily by the Anu, who fashion them in styles aping samurai armors, wooden armor is made of hardened wood plates attached to leather.

WEAPONS

Throughout Kaidan, it is law that only Samurai can wear the twin swords: the katana and the wakizashi together. In some provinces, the edict is taken a step further so that it is illegal for any but the samurai and the nobility to own or carry a weapon, under penalty of death. However, throughout Kaidan there are plenty of individuals besides the samurai who are trained in the use of weapons. Guards in the employ of merchants, bandits roaming the woods and mountains, priests defending their temples, and exorcist protecting villages from demons and ghosts are but a few examples of those who find a sharp blade handy. Following are some of the more common weapons to be found in Kaidan. Explanations are given for some, but not all of the weapons listed.

Weapon Descriptions

Bisento
A bisento is a kaidanese pole-arm, with a thick blade mounted on a long shaft.

Bo
A six foot wooden staff, the bo can be used as a simple weapon, but those who are trained in its use can also use it defensively to block , gaining a +1 bonus to AC.

Bokken
A bokken is a wooden weapon shaped like a katana and used for sword training. A bokken may be utilized to deal non-lethal damage without incurring an attack penalty.

Hanbo
A hanbo is a three foot long baton of wood and is normally used in pairs.

Ishiyumi
A ishiyumi functions something like a crossbow, but instead of bolts, it launches rocks at opponents. While not quite as accurate or as deadly as a crossbow, it has the advantage of easily found ammunition. As with a light crossbow, it takes a move action to load an ishiyumi.

Jutte
These batonlike weapons have hooks at the base of the shafts with which to catch an opponent's weapons. It is the weapon of choice for city police who desire to subdue their opponents, as opposed to killing them. In Kaidan, the traditional jutte comes to a sharp point and, in a pinch, can also be used to stab, as with a dagger.

Kama
A kama is a field sickle but is sometimes used as a weapon. Monks are proficient with kama and typically use them in pairs.

Kama yari
This spear has two sicklelike blades at the base of the main blade which curve around slightly towards the front. When set against a charge, if your attack hits, you gain a +2 Shield bonus to AC against that opponent.

Katana
The traditional sword of the samurai, a katana is normally worn with a wakizashi, and the paired swords are termed a daisho. A katana may be used two handed as a martial weapon.

Konabo
A konabo is a heavy, two handed club, studded with small spikes or knobs.

Kunai
Originally a farming and masonry tool used for digging holes in dirt, plaster and wood, a kunai has

a broad, blunt blade attached to a simple shaft, with said shaft normally having a ring on the pommel end, large enough to affix a rope. A Kunai can function as a weapon, a piton, or as a weight with which to loop climbing ropes around shafts and tree limbs. When attached to a rope, the kunai can also be used as a make-shift "flying blade," granting a 10' reach, albeit at a -4 penalty to hit. This penalty may be ignored if you have the Flying Blade exotic weapon feat.

Kusarigama
A single kama, attached via a 10 foot chain, to a weighted metal ball, the kusarigama is a versatile weapon, able to be used as a kama, or as a metal whip capable of bludgeoning foes, and entangling limbs and weapons, prior to using the kama.

Makura yari
The makura yari, literally translated as "pillow spear," is a spear-blade mounted on a very short shaft. The weapon is typically kept by the bedside for home protection.

Otsutchi
This massive weapon is little more than a huge wooden mallet, originally designed for breaking down doors and gates. Because of its tremendous size and weight, it is unwieldy and always requires two hands to swing.

O-yumi (crossbow)
Crossbows have been used in Kaidan for hundreds of years, but are not currently popular among the samurai. Despite this lack of popularity, Kaidanese inventors often try to improve upon the design, and there are several exotic variations of the crossbow that can be bought if one has the money, though learning to use them properly takes practice.

Oyumi, Double-shot
This crossbow can be used to fire two regular crossbow bolts at the same time. Because if its size and weight, proficient users suffer a -4 penalty to use it in combat; all others suffer a -8 penalty. If the attack hits, the target takes damage from both bolts, though only the first bolt counts for critical hits, sneak attacks, etc.. Reloading a single bolt is a standard action; the Rapid Reload feat reduces this to a move action, and Crossbow Mastery allows you to reload both bolts as a move action.

O-yumi, Multi-shot
This crossbow can be utilized in one of two ways. Firstly it can fire three bolts simultaneously at a single target, or it can be used to fire three bolts: on straight left, one straight right, and one straight ahead. When firing at a single target, you make a single attack roll with a -4 penalty to hit, assuming you are proficient with the weapon (non-proficient users suffer a -8 penalty). If the attack hits, all three bolts do damage, but only the first bolt counts for any precision based bonuses such as criticals or sneak attacks. If you are firing in three directions, the two secondary bolts fly off at exactly 90 degrees from the first, to the left and the right. Separate attack rolls must be made for the targets in all three locations, and only the target straight ahead is subject to precision based bonuses, such as sneak attacks or criticals. Firing in this way incurs a -2 penalty to hit the target in front of you and a -6 penalty to hit each side target, assuming you are proficient with the weapon (non-proficient users suffer a -6, and a -10 penalty respectively). Reloading a single Reloading a single bolt is a standard action; the Rapid Reload feat reduces this to a move action, and Crossbow Mastery allows you to reload all three bolts as a full round action.

O-yumi, Repeater
This light crossbow holds five bolts at a time, and as long as it holds bolts, you can reload it by pulling the reloading lever (a free action). Loading a new set of bolts into the weapon is a full round action that provokes attacks of opportunity. The repeating o-yumi functions exactly as a crossbow, but it must be held in two hands to make use of the reloading feature. Likewise, reloading a new case of bolts into the weapon requires two hands.

O-yumi, Siege
This massive crossbow requires specialized bolts and is about as large a weapon as a single man could actually carry and fire. It takes a full round action to load a siege o-yumi, and, unless the crossbow is mounted or otherwise braced for support, proficient users suffer a -4 penalty to use it; all others suffer a -8 penalty.

Sai
Sai are normally used in pairs and feature a central spike, flanked by two prongs. The hilt of the weapon is used as a bludgeoning instrument, while the spike and prongs are utilized in catching an opponent's blade.

Tachi
A precursor to the katana, the tachi is a slightly longer sword, with a slightly more curved blade. The sword is still favored by mounted warriors. A tachi may be used as a two-handed martial weapon.

Tanto
A straight, single edged knife or dagger, a tanto is sometimes used in place of a wakazashi as a samurai's second weapon.

Tekkan
A tekkan, literally "iron pipe", is a metal club superficially designed to look like a sword. However, as the edges cannot be sharpened, it does not violate ordinances against commoners carrying a sword and is thus popular among Kaidanese merchants for use in self-defense.

Tekko
A stirrup shaped device, that gives mass to a fist, tekko allow the user to deal lethal damage with a punch. You may not wield another weapon while holding a tekko, but spell casters may cast spells with a somatic component while using one so long as they succeed at a Concentration check (DC 10 + the level of the spell you are casting). Monks are proficient with tekko.

Tekko-kagi
This claw-like weapon, comprised of three or four spikes protruding over the back of the hand, and secured to the forearm, can be used offensively or defensively. When used defensively as a bucker, or in an attempt to disarm an opponent. A tekko-kagi grants you a +2 circumstance bonus on attempts to disarm or sunder swords or other slender weapons.

Tetsubo
A heavier version of the konabo, the tetsubo takes slightly more skill to use due to the increased weight.

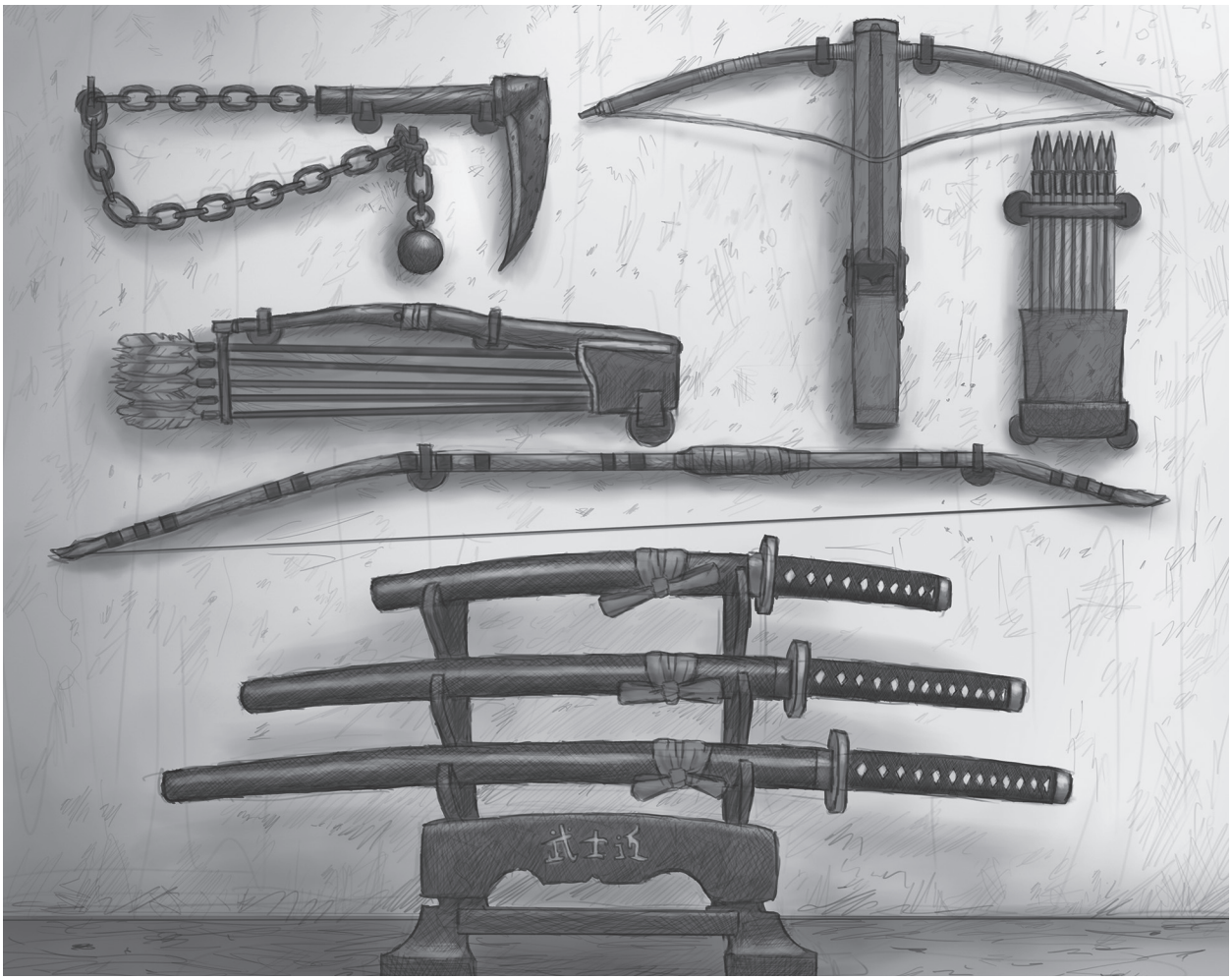
Te Yari
A te yari is a short spear, capable of being thrown.

Tsurugi
A double edged long-sword, the tsurugi is considered old-fashioned and is little used in modern Kaidan.

Yari
A yari is a straight-bladed long spear.

Yumi
A yumi is an asymmetrical bow made of laminated bamboo, wood and leather. The daikyu, or long-bow stands nearly seven feet tall on average and is expected to be taller than the archer using it. The hankyu, or half bow, is much shorter, and is preferred for hunting, or other activities requiring stealth.

Wakazashi
A short sword, traditionally worn by samurai alongside the katana as the second half of a daisho, the wakazashi is normally used to decapitate fallen enemies, or in ritual suicide. However, there is a school of sword-play which focuses on the short sword over the katana for close combat fighting, and the wakazashi is also the preferred sword of many female members of the samurai clan, as it favors dexterity over strength.



Chapter 9: Magic in Kaidan

Of Raiko and the Goblin King

In the hundred and tenth year of the reign of the all-powerful Shogun, and the undying emperor, a dreadful oni began to terrorize the capital. This foul creature could assume any form it chose and would steal into the city to kidnap young men and women with which to feed its many servants. So great did the ravages of this demon become that the Shogun assembled a council and tasked them with the slaying of the creature.

Making inquiries, the council heard tell of a stalwart warrior named Raiko, and selecting him for the task, they bade him arm himself, select choice companions and venture forth to slay the goblin king which had been plaguing the inhabitants of the capital. Raiko chose five fellow samurai and before they journeyed forth, the six of them prayed at three different shrines for success in their battle. Then the brave knights set forth to do battle. On the first night of their journey, three old men, the spirits to which the samurai had prayed, appeared unto them, pleased with the devotion the men had shown. Speaking words of encouragement, they gifted Raiko with a keen sword and a jar of enchanted sake, shimben-kidoku-shu, a sweet drink for men, but poison to goblins.



The next day, the samurai reached the fortress of the oni, and passing through the corridors, they found themselves in a great hall. Upon his throne, at the far end of the hall sat the goblin king, a creature of great stature, with blood red skin and snow white hair. Seated at long tables in the hall were dozens more oni, all engaged in a great and grisly feast. When Raiko introduced himself and explained their mission, the oni all laughed.

"Battle can wait," said the goblin king, "Have a seat and join my fellows in our merrymaking. Then after we can fight." Raiko agreed and he and his men took their seats at the tables. As food was set before him, Raiko took a drink of the shimben-kidoku-shu, and proclaimed it the best wine he had ever had. Then, apologizing for his poor manners, he offered his host a drink. Greedily the oni accepted and drank a great cup full, and then a second. Soon all the foul creatures in the room were clamoring for a drought, a request Raiko fulfilled, for it seemed the flask of sake could not be emptied.

Shortly, all of the oni in the room had drank heavily, and one by one they fell to the floor, stupored and helpless, including the goblin king. Raiko offered a prayer of thanks for the spirits gift and, drawing his keen sword, he came to the great oni and cut off its head. With a shriek the head flew into the air, screaming out curses. The body of the oni, likewise rose as if to attack.

Overcoming his fright, Raiko cut the legs from the monster's headless torso and then swung the enchanted blade at the shrieking head. The blade clove in the oni's brain-pan and the demonic head fell to the floor lifeless. After this, it was easy work for the samurai to slay the rest of the goblins. The returned in triumph to the capital with the great head of the goblin king, which they offered to the shogun's council as proof of their success.

Twisted Magic and Corrupted Faith

Kaidan is a land suffused with magics arcane and divine. Born at a nexus of planar energies; filled with fantastic creatures, restless spirits, and primal spirits; to fully grasp the realm of Kaidan, one must understand the importance of the wondrous in making it what it is today.

Kaidan was brought into being amidst a perfect maelstrom of the elements. Fierce ocean volcanoes erupted in the midst of a hurricane of immense proportions, and from that union of fire and water, earth and air, were born the islands of Kaidan. From the beginning, Kaidan was a land of elemental spirits, for the veil between the planes was weakened by the violent creation of the islands, and many creatures and spirits migrated eagerly to the new land, desirous of making a home for themselves. These were the first of the kami.

When men, korobokuru, and yokai alike began to settle in Kaidan, they found the spirits relatively easy to commune with, and from the spirits, men learned magics, and the beginnings of the faith that was to become Yokinto. Because of the nearness of the elemental planes, evocation and divination spells, in particular, always had a particular potency to them, as did spells meant for the summoning of elemental creatures. Over time, as men continued to migrate to Kaidan, they brought with them additional arcane knowledge and religious dogmas and the magical tradition of Kaidan continued to grow.

The Curse of Kaidan has had a profound impact upon this magical tradition. The ascendancy of evil to power has not left the practitioners of magic unscathed, and today, the most powerful of magics are welded by evil men. Negative energies are more potent than positive. The connection of the people to their gods has been restricted, as has access to the majority of the planes. Souls are metaphysically trapped in Kaidan and even the kami are susceptible to corruption.

An Overview of Magic in Kaidan

Magic, as is so much else, is heavily regulated by the Shogunate. The use of magic is only legal for wizards trained in Imperial schools, or for Zaoist priests loyal to the Shogun and the Emperor. Court wizards in Kaidan are onmyoji (see sidebar), noted for their use of origami as spell components, and their relationship to the mischievous shikigami oni, a relationship the wizards use to advocate the believe that men can bind oni to their will, so long as the men possess sufficient strength of will. Cynics argue that the oni imps are merely manipulating the onmyoji into complacency and are acting as spies for more powerful oni.

Though the Shogun forbids all magic use by non-approved casters, the edict is far from universally followed. Hedge wizards practice their arts surreptitiously out of sight, avoiding overt displays of power. Yokinto priests and shrine maidens with knowledge of divine magics regularly work as exorcists for their villages, trusting that their activities will be either overlooked, or go unreported. Individuals born with sorcerous talents (the majority possessing elemental bloodlines, but there are others) are unable to be fully regulated, though the Shogun offers pardons to those sorcerers who register, either provincially or with the capital bureaucracy. Not all take advantage of this amnesty, as registered sorcerers are most often conscripted into service for either one of the daimyo or for the Shogun's elite squads, and such service is highly dangerous and morally dubious.

Obviously, the yokai take no notice of the Shogun's edict concerning magic use, as their very existence is deemed both illegal and undesirable. The henge in particular maintain schools of wizardry, and yokai priests are open in their practice of divine magics. The government points to such unsanctioned magical use as further evidence of the unnatural wickedness of the yokai.

For the unstudied common man, there is little difference between arcane and divine magics. All things, including the elements, according to yokinto doctrine, have the divine within, and the ability to manipulate arcane energies is viewed as simply a manifestation of those inherently divine powers by men. Thus, all spell casters, regardless of their type, are considered more spiritually attuned by the populace at large.

An Optional Rule for Kaidan

If you want a much darker and more dangerous campaign in Kaidan, then consider using the rule that all Positive Energy effects, such as turning undead, channeling positive energy for healing, and healing spells suffer a -1 penalty per dice rolled, representative of the muting effects of the curse on all things good, and related to life.

Wizard Archetype: Onmyoji

Onmyoji are noted for the use of folded paper spell components (origami) and their relationship to the shikigami oni. While most onmyoji are diviners or conjurers, an onmyoji wizard can follow any of the arcane schools. An onmyoji has the following class abilities.

Spells An onmyoji prepares spells like a wizard, except an onmyoji has one less spell slot per spell level a day, including cantrips. Any spell level reduced in this way from 1 to 0 still receives bonus spells gained from the onmyoji possessing a high Intelligence score. Moreover, each spell prepared by the onmyoji, excepting cantrips, is bound up in a piece of origami (see also origami caster). If the onmyoji loses his prepared origami spells, he is out of spells for the day, except for cantrips. When an onmyoji casts a spell, the paper holding the spell bursts into flames. If the spells are not used within 24 hours, the papers lose their energies.

Shikigami Bond At 1st level, an onmyoji takes a shikigami as a familiar. The oni, when it first enters the service of the wizard, is a weak example of its kind, but it grows in power alongside its master. If the shikigami is slain, the onmyoji must wait 2 weeks before summoning another one. Summoning a new shikigami requires a specialized ritual that costs 200 gp per onmyoji level. The ritual takes 8 hours to complete. This ability replaces arcane bond.

Origami Caster The onmyoji replaces all material components costing less than 5 gp, with folded paper. These origami are prepared by the onmyoji each morning when he prepares his spells. Each day, when preparing spells, by expending an amount of arcane materials worth 25 gp x the spell level, the onmyoji may prepare one spell paper, using any spell he knows. This one spell is in addition to any spells he is able to cast that day. These specially prepared spells do not lose their potency after 24 hours and can be used by any onmyoji as a standard action. This ability replaces Scribe Scroll.

Shikigami Familiar A shikigami is a small oni of the goblin subtype. No two shikigami are exactly alike, but all are capable spell casters and have an affinity for wizards. A shikigami chosen by a 1st level onmyoji is weaker than a standard CR 2 shikigami, but as the wizard increases in power, so does his familiar. For every 2 levels the onmyoji gains in his class, the shikigami improves as follows. (Shikigami oni statistics are provided in Appendix 3 of this book.)

Hit Dice: As the onmyoji gains levels, the shikigami gains HD. The shikigami gains any appropriate feats or skill points when it gains HD. The shikigami has good Reflex and Will saves and fast BAB progression. For the purpose of effects related to number of Hit Dice, use the master's character level.

Natural AC: The shikigami familiar's natural AC is equal to its HD.

Spell Resistance: The shikigami has a natural spell resistance equal to 10 + HD. This spell resistance does not function against spells cast by the shikigami's master.

Spells: A shikigami has a number of spell-like powers, and as it gains HD, it continues to gain new ones.

Share Spells: The onmyoji may cast spells with a target of "You" on his shikigami familiar (as a touch spell) instead of on himself. The onmyoji may target the shikigami with such spells even if the spells do not normally affect outsiders.

Regeneration: A shikigami gains the ability to regenerate and as it grows in power, this ability does also.

Evasion: When subject to an attack that normally allows a Reflex save to take half damage, the shikigami familiar takes no damage on a successful save.

Ability Increase: As the shikigami grows more powerful, its ability scores improve as described above.

Improved Evasion: When subject to an attack that normally allows a Reflex save to take half damage, the shikigami familiar takes no damage on a successful save and only half damage if the save fails.

Damage Resistance: When the shikigami has 6 HD, it gains DR 5/magic. This improves to DR 10/magic at 10 HD.

Master's Class Level	Natural AC	HD	SR	Special
1st – 2nd	+1	1	11	see shikigami familiar above, share spells
3rd – 4th	+2	2	12	*charm person* 1/day, regeneration 1 (acid, fire)
5th- 6th	+3	3	13	*inflict moderate wounds* 3/day, evasion, regeneration 2 (acid, fire), Str +2
7th-8th	+4	4	14	*gaseous form* (3/day), Dex +2
9th-10th	+5	5	15	*bestow curse* (1/day), improved evasion, Con +2, regeneration 3 (acid, fire)
11th-12th	+6	6	16	*baleful polymorph* (1/day), *tongues* (constant), DR 5/magic, Dex +2
13th-14th	+7	7	17	*harm* 1/day, regeneration 4 (acid, fire), *scry on shikigami*
15th-16th	+8	8	18	*break enchantment* 1/day, *true seeing* (constant), Con +2
17th-18th	+9	9	19	*word of chaos* 1/day, regeneration 5 (acid, fire)
19th-20th	+10	10	20	*earthquake* 1/day, DR 10/magic

Kaidan and the Planes

When the curse descended on Kaidan, the islands were cut off, metaphysically from almost all the planes, excepting two: Yomi and Jigoku. The manifestation of this curse, physically, is a great cloud which surrounds the borders of Kaidan. While travelers, and other physical effects, such as the weather, can travel in and out of the cloud, and thus in and out of Kaidan, other arcane and esoteric transportations, such as *teleportation* or *plane shift* are impossible. In a sense, Kaidan exists in its own little pocket world.

The two planes to which Kaidan is connected, Yomi and Jigoku, each play a role in the way in which Kaidan functions under the Curse of Tenmei. Yomi, a subplane of the ethereal plane, is the realm of the dead where the souls of those who have died in Kaidan wait to be reborn. Prior to the onset of the curse, it was a portal realm for spirits as they journeyed on to higher planes, but no longer can souls exit Yomi, unless it is to return to the material plane. Wizards and others sometimes use Yomi as a plane of passage, allowing them to quickly traverse via the ethereal jaunt spell, from one locale to another, but such a journey is not without its risk, for not all of the dead are peaceful, and the realm itself is a dark and dreary place, suffused with sorrow and malaise.

Jigoku is the realm of the oni. When an oni is slain, their spirit returns to this realm, bodiless and angry. Any creature who has descended far enough on the wheel of karma (or ascended as the case may be) also journeys to jigoku upon death, joining the oni spirits and all others who die as part of the demon caste. It is a fiery realm of stone palaces, windswept mountains, and endless caverns. Some brave spell casters have traveled there in order to treat with the oni-lords upon occasion, but their numbers are few.

There are rumors, at times, among powerful Kaidanese spellcasters, of portals which still, upon occasion open to the elemental planes, but these, more often than not, prove to be something else.

What spells do not work in Kaidan?

While many spells work normally in Kaidan, there are others which simply do not function properly.

Teleportation spells, and the like, while they will work within the borders of Kaidan, will not work to transport one in or out of Kaidan.

Spells and magic items which allow Planar movement, such as *Astral Projection* or *Plane Shift*, do not work properly in Kaidan, as Kaidan is connected to only two planes Yomi and Jigoku. Ethereal related spells still function but they take one through Yomi instead of through the ethereal plane. Plane shift can be used to travel to either Yomi or Jigoku, but nowhere beyond those realms.

Spells and magic items which bring the dead back to life do not work in Kaidan, including *Raise Dead*, *Resurrection*, and *Reincarnation*.

Divine divination spells such as *augury*, or *commune*, have a 25% greater rate of failure in Kaidan, than those cast outside of Kaidan, as communication.

Summoning spells which summon animals, as per *Summon Nature's Ally*, or elementals, work as normal, as do spells used to summon the undead, or creatures with a shadow subtype. All other summoning spells fail 50% of the time.

Kotodama School

Instead of specializing in one of the standard eight schools of magic, a wizard in Kaidan can choose to specialize in the magic of Kodama. Like a normal arcane school, the Kotodama school grants a number of school powers and one bonus spell slot of each level the wizard can cast, from 1st on up. This bonus spell slot must be used to prepare a spell from the true school's spell list. A kotodama wizard does not utilize the same spell list as other wizards, and thus does not have a restricted school.

Followers of the Kotodama School believe that mystical powers dwell in words and names. K*otodama* accepts that specific words and names, when spoken with a certain form, can magically affect objects, and that ritual word usages can influence our environment, body, mind, and soul.

Power of the Spirit Name (Su): At 1st level, once per round you may add a +1 bonus to the DC, caster level and dispel check of any spell when it applies to a creature whose spirit name you know and speak at the time of casting (this is part of the casting action). You can learn a creature's spirit name by making a knowledge check appropriate to the creature's type with a DC equal to 11 plus the creature's CR plus its Wisdom modifier. No spell can compel a creature to reveal its spirit name or the spirit name of anyone it knows. When a creature dies and returns from the dead (for example *raise dead*), this changes creature type (such as becoming undead), and the creature's spirit name changes.

Obey Your Spirit Name (Su): At 6th level if you know a creature's spirit name and speak it aloud, you can force it to carry out some service or to refrain from some action or course of activity, as desired. The subject can make a Will saving throw to resist (DC 11 + half your wizard's class level + your Intelligence modifier). The subject must be able to understand the character. While you cannot compel a subject to kill itself or perform acts that would result in certain death, you can compel almost any other activity. The subject must follow the given instructions until the task is completed, no matter how long it takes. If the instructions involve some open-ended task that the subject cannot complete through its own actions, the subject remains compelled for a maximum of one day per wizard level you possess. Note that a clever subject can subvert some instructions.

If something prevents the subject from obeying the instructions for a whole day, it takes 3d6 points of damage each day it does not attempt to follow them. Additionally, each day it must succeed at a Fortitude saving throw (Same DC). A failure means it becomes sickened and cannot benefit from any magical healing effects. Starting on the second day, a sickened creature must succeed at a Fortitude save each day or become disabled (as if she had 0 hit points) these effects remain until the day after the subject attempts to resume the task. This magical effect cannot be dispelled, but it can be removed with a *break enchantment*, *limited wish*, *miracle*, *remove curse*, or *wish* spell, it also ends if you die. You can use this ability over a given subject only once, but only if it fails its initial Will save. It is a full-round action to invoke Obey Your Spirit Name.

Bound By Your Spirit Name (Su): At 8th level, if you know a creature's spirit name and speak it aloud, you can 3/day affect it with a *binding* spell though you do not require the material components for this effect to work. The subject can make a Will saving throw to negate this effect (DC 11 + half your wizard's class level + your Intelligence modifier). This magical effect cannot be dispelled, but it can be removed with a *break enchantment*, *limited wish*, *miracle*, *remove curse*, or *wish* spell, it also ends if you die. You can use this ability against a given subject only once, but only whether it makes the initial Will save or not. It is a full-round action to invoke Bound by Your Spirit Name.

Kotodama Spell List

A kotodama wizard's spell list is derived from the Sorcerer/Wizard spell list but contains all of the following spells: Any calling spell, any compulsion spell, any polymorph spell, any phantasm spell, any "curse" spell, any "power word" spell. The kotodama spell list also contains the following individual spells: *banishment, blindness/deafness, dismissal, dispel magic, finger of death, greater dispel magic, imprisonment, limited wish, trap the soul, soulbind,* and *wish.* All spells on the kotodama spell list are of the same spell level as those on the Sorcerer/Wizard spell list.

Kotodama Domain

Closely related to the domain of Runes and the subdomain of Language, the Kotodama domain specifically draws upon the primal forces of the spirit names. Any follower of either the Yokinto or Zaoist religions who have access to domains as a class ability, may choose to take the Kotodama domain.

Granted Powers: You learn the power of Kotodama. You gain bonus languages known equal to your wisdom bonus, in addition to those gained from your Int bonus. You may choose any languages as your bonus languages.

Voice of Power (Su): By focusing all your divine power into a single, short utterance you can use a power word spell as a swift action. This takes all your divine power, making it impossible to do on the same round you cast any other spell or use a spell-like ability. You can do this once per day at 1st level, plus an additional time per day at 6th, 12th, and 18th level.

Power Word of Command (Sp): At 8th level you can give commands in Kotodama. This acts as the command spell, except it has a range of close and rather than grant a saving throw, the command automatically affects a target with current hit points equal to your cleric level x5 or less. You may do this once per day at 8th level, and an additional time per day for every four levels beyond 8th.

Domain Spells: 1st – *power word fascinate*;* 2nd – *power word decelerate*;* 3rd – *power word inspire*;* 4th – *power word mute*;* 5th – *power word weary*;* 6th – *power word stagger*;* 7th – *power word blind;* 8th – *power word stun;* 9th – *power word kill.*

*Indicates a new spell presented in this product.

Designer Notes: How do you Balance Spells with no Saves?

Clearly *power word kill* is an extremely powerful spell, but it's also 9th level. Between being compared with spells such as *wish* and *meteor swarm*, and the fact that by the time a spellcaster has access to it *anti-magic fields* and *spell resistance* are more common, it's not too much of a stretch to think of it as a balanced, if powerful option. But when creating 1st-6th level power word spells, a designer cannot assume spell resistance is going to be common. How, then, can such spells be balanced?

The answer is twofold. First, lower-level power word spells affect targets with much lower hit point totals. While *power word mute* is very useful when facing a spellcaster, it's a 4th level spell that can only affect a creature with 75 hit points (compared to 150 for the much more devastating *power word stun*, or 200 hp for *power word blind*). Further, targets with 56-80 hp are affected for only 1d4 rounds. While it's an excellent spell to make it impossible for spellcasters to fulfill verbal spell components, it doesn't restrict any other ability they have, and unless they are already low on hit points it doesn't last long.

Similarly *power word nauseate* may seem horrifyingly powerful, as it can restrict a creature with up to 250 hp to move actions for a number of rounds. But since *power word stun* can prevent them from taking any actions if they have 150 hp, and is a level lower, the lesser restriction of only being able to move falls in line with the existing power words. And, of course, like *power word kill*, by the time spellcasters have 9th level spells the toughest foes they face will have some protection in the form of SR.

The second balancing factor is that lower-level power words have less useful effects than blinding, stunning, and killing. This is important as well, because even high-level foes can be impacted by power words after they take significant damage. Consider the 1st level power word spell presented below. *Power word dazzle* just places a foe at a -1 penalty to attacks and Perception checks. *Power word fascinate* only works on foes that don't currently perceive a threat. *Power word hesitate* is only useful before initiative checks are made. While useful, none of these can bring a fight to a close.

The very mechanics of power word spells makes them work differently from other spells, and adding 40 new ones to a campaign can create a sudden shift in tactics and what kinds of encounters PCs can handle easily. For example, as single-target spells, all power words are more effective in fights against a single for than in conflicts against 2 or more targets, or a major target with a pack of lower-level defenders. A GM concerned with being prepared for the consequences of adding a larger number of new and low-level power word spells may wish to introduce them slowly, starting with the 1st-3rd level power word spells, and only giving access to higher-level spells once the GM is used to the effect of more such spells being in play.

– Steve Russell

Spells of Kaidan

The following are new spells available to characters in Kaidan.

Additions to the Bard Spell List

1st-Level Spells

Power Word Fascinate: Cause one creature with 20 hp or less to be fascinated.

Power Word Fumble: Cause one creature with 20 hp or less to fumble its next attack.

Power Word Mishap: Cause one creature with 20 hp or less to create a minor mishap with the next spell it casts.

2nd-Level Spells

Power Word Disarm: Cause one creature with 30 hp or less to be disarmed.

Power Word Disorient: Cause one creature of 30 hp or less to move in a random direction -2 circumstance penalty to initiative checks, attack rolls, Acrobatics, Fly, Jump, Perception, and Swim checks.

Power Word Hindrance: Cause one creature with 30 hp or less to take -2 penalty to AC.

Power Word Mishap: Cause one creature with 20 hp or less to create a minor mishap with the next spell it casts.

3rd-Level Spells

Power Word Impediment: Cause one creature with 60 hp or less to take -2 penalty to all saving throws.

Power Word Inspire: Cause one creature with 60 hp or less to gain a +1 morale bonus.

Power Word Insult: Cause one creature with 60 hp or less to attack you and suffer penalties to AC and attacks.



4th-Level Spells

Power Word Betray: Cause one creature with 75 hp or less to attack an ally.

Power Word Euphoria: Cause one creature with 75 hp or less to feel good despite danger or pain.

Power Word Mute: Cause one creature with 75 hp or less to become mute.

5th-Level Spells

Power Word Beguile: Cause one creature with 60 hp or less to be unable to save against an illusion.

Power Word Fury: Cause one creature with 60 hp or less to gain rage bonuses and penalties and it must attack nearest creature.

Power Word Rouse: Cause one creature with 60 hp or less to gain a +4 bonus to attacks, Will saves, and against fear effects.

Revert to the True Form: You force all shapechanged creatures within range to return to their true forms.

6th-Level Spells

Power Word Despair: Cause one creature with 150 hp or less to suffer –4 penalty on attack rolls, saving throws, ability checks, skill checks, and weapon damage rolls.

Power Word Surprise: Cause one creature with 70 hp or less to become flat-footed.

Additions to the Cleric/Oracle Spell List

1st-Level Spells

Detect Soul: You may determine if a target creature has a soul.

Minor Kanjo: You may create a go-shintai for a yokinto shrine.

Sense of Wrongness: You can detect nearby non-humans

2nd-Level Spells

Blessing of the Kami: You and your allies are stronger against unnatural foes, and have a deeper tie with nature

Consult the Kami: You may ask a yes or no question of a kami.

Karma's Kiss: You impose a vision of the karmic wheel upon another, temporarily dazing them, but also granting them the ability to better shape their path for the day.

Semblance of Life: You grant a dead corpse, or an undead creature, the appearance of living flesh.

3rd-Level Spells

Fortify the Spirit: You guarantee that the target of this spell's soul will seek a new body upon death.

Greater Kanjo: You may create a go-shintai for a yokinto shrine capable of manifesting an elemental.

4th-Level Spells

Sword of Yumi: You conjure forth a weapon of pure negative energy.

5th-Level Spells

Soul Swap: You permanently exchange bodies with another creature.

Speak with Kami: You may consult a kami via one of its shrines in order to ask it yes or no questions.

6th-Level Spells

Revert to the True Form: You force all shapechanged creatures within range to return to their true forms.

Vault of Flesh: You bind a soul to a living body in such a way as to allow the target to rise as undead, if slain.

Additions to the Magus Spell List

1st-Level Spells

Power Word Dazzle: Dazzle one creature with 30 hp or less.

2nd-Level Spells

Power Word Combust: Cause one creature with 30 hp or less to spontaneously combust.

3rd-Level Spells

Power Word Bleed: Cause one creature with 40 hp or less to begin bleeding.

4th-Level Spells

Power Word Burden: Cause one creature with 120 hp or less to become entangled.

Power Word Failure: Cause one creature with 120 hp or less to suffer a –20 penalty on next d20 roll.

5th-Level Spells

Power Word Deafen: Deafen one creature with 150 hp or less.

Soul Swap: You permanently exchange bodies with another creature.

6th-Level Spells

Power Word Impede: Cause one creature with 120 hp or less to be unable to use one class feature or one universal monster ability.

Power Word Stagger: Cause one creature with 120 hp or less to become staggered.

Additions to the Paladin Spell List

2nd-Level Spells

Blessing of the Kami: You and your allies are stronger against unnatural foes, and have a deeper tie with nature.

Additions to the Ranger Spell List

2nd-Level Spells

Blessing of the Kami: You and your allies are stronger against unnatural foes, and have a deeper tie with nature.

Additions to the Sorcerer/Wizard Spell List

1st-Level Spells

Power Word Dazzle: Dazzle one creature with 30 hp or less.

Power Word Fascinate: Cause one creature with 20 hp or less to be fascinated.

Power Word Fumble: Cause one creature with 20 hp or less to fumble its next attack.

Power Word Hesitate: Cause one creature with 30 hp or less to take -10 on initiative checks.

Power Word Hindrance: Cause one creature with 30 hp or less to take -2 penalty to AC.

Power Word Mishap: Cause one creature with 20 hp or less to create a minor mishap with the next spell it casts.

2nd-Level Spells

Detect Soul: You may determine if a target creature has a soul.

Power Word Combust: Cause one creature with 30 hp or less to spontaneously combust.

Power Word Decelerate: Cause one creature with 60 hp or less to move slowly.

Power Word Disarm: Cause one creature with 30 hp or less to be disarmed.

Power Word Disorient: Cause one creature of 30 hp or less to move in a random direction -2 circumstance penalty to initiative checks, attack rolls, Acrobatics, Fly, Jump, Perception, and Swim checks.

Power Word Hinder: Cause one creature with 30 hp or less to be unable to use one of its natural attacks.

Power Word Trip: Cause one creature with 30 hp or less to fall prone.

3rd-Level Spells

Power Word Bleed: Cause one creature with 40 hp or less to begin bleeding.

Power Word Broken: Cause one object or construct creature with 90 hp or less to become broken.

Power Word Insult: Cause one creature with 60 hp or less to attack you and suffer penalties to AC and attacks.

Power Word Impediment: Cause one creature with 60 hp or less to take -2 penalty to all saving throws.

Power Word Inspire: Cause one creature with 60 hp or less to gain a +1 morale bonus.

Power Word Sicken: Cause one creature with 90 hp or less to become sickened.

Semblance of Life: You grant a dead corpse or an undead creature the appearance of living flesh.

4th-Level Spells

Fortify the Spirit: You guarantee that the target of this spell's soul will seek a new body upon death.

Power Word Betray: Cause one creature with 75 hp or less to attack an ally.

Power Word Burden: Cause one creature with 120 hp or less to become entangled.

Power Word Euphoria: Cause one creature with 75 hp or less to feel good despite danger or pain.

Power Word Failure: Cause one creature with 120 hp or less to suffer a –20 penalty on next d20 roll.

Power Word Frighten: Cause one creature with 105 hp or less to become shaken.

Power Word Mute: Cause one creature with 75 hp or less to become mute.

5th-Level Spells

Power Word Beguile: Cause one creature with 60 hp or less to be unable to save against an illusion.

Power Word Deafen: Deafen one creature with 150 hp or less.

Power Word Fury: Cause one creature with 60 hp or less to gain rage bonuses and penalties and it must attack nearest creature.

Power Word: Laughter: Cause one creature with 30 hp or less to fall into a fit of laughter.

Power Word Rouse: Cause one creature with 60 hp or less to gain a +4 bonus to attacks, Will saves, and against fear effects.

Power Word Weary: Cause one creature with 100 hp or less to become fatigued.

Soul Swap: You permanently exchange bodies with another creature.

6th-Level Spells

Power Word Despair: Cause one creature with 150 hp or less to suffer –4 penalty on attack rolls, saving throws, ability checks, skill checks, and weapon damage rolls.

Power Word Impede: Cause one creature with 120 hp or less to be unable to use one class feature or one universal monster ability.

Power Word Stagger: Cause one creature with 120 hp or less to become staggered.

Power Word Surprise: Cause one creature with 70 hp or less to become flat-footed.

Vault of Flesh: You bind a soul to a living body in such a way as to allow the target to rise as undead, if slain.

7th-Level Spells

Power Word Daze: Daze one creature with 135 hp or less.

Power Word Torment: Cause one creature with 150 hp or less to suffer a -8 penalty on attack rolls, skill checks, and ability checks due to intense pain.

Revert to the True Form: You force all shapechanged creatures within range to return to their true forms.

8th-Level Spells

Power Word Confuse: Confuse one creature with 220 hp or less.

Power Word Megalomania: Cause one creature with 220 hp or less to suffer -4 morale penalty that they believe is a bonus on attack rolls, saves, and skill checks, and will not retreat; they also believe they are much tougher than they actually are (treat the creatures as believing they have extra hit points equal to double your caster level even though they do not possess them).

9th-Level Spells

Power Word Nauseate: Nauseate one creature with 250 hp or less.

Power Word Steal: Cause one creature with 250 hp or less to steal an object and bring it to you.

Additions to the Witch Spell List

1st-Level Spells

Power Word Dazzle: Dazzle one creature with 30 hp or less.

Power Word Fascinate: Cause one creature with 20 hp or less to be fascinated.

Power Word Fumble: Cause one creature with 20 hp or less to fumble its next attack.

Power Word Hesitate: Cause one creature with 30 hp or less to take -10 on initiative checks.

Power Word Hindrance: Cause one creature with 30 hp or less to take -2 penalty to AC.

Power Word Mishap: Cause one creature with 20 hp or less to create a minor mishap with the next spell it casts.

2nd-Level Spells

Detect Soul: You may determine if a target creature has a soul.

Power Word Combust: Cause one creature with 30 hp or less to spontaneously combust.

Power Word Decelerate: Cause one creature with 60 hp or less to move slowly.

Power Word Disarm: Cause one creature with 30 hp or less to be disarmed.

Power Word Disorient: Cause one creature of 30 hp or less to move in a random direction -2 circumstance penalty to initiative checks, attack rolls, Acrobatics, Fly, Jump, Perception, and Swim checks.

Power Word Hinder: Cause one creature with 30 hp or less to be unable to use one of its natural attacks.

Power Word Trip: Cause one creature with 30 hp or less to fall prone.

3rd-Level Spells

Power Word Bleed: Cause one creature with 40 hp or less to begin bleeding.

Power Word Broken: Cause one object or construct creature with 90 hp or less to become broken.

Power Word Impediment: Cause one creature with 60 hp or less to take -2 penalty to all saving throws.

Power Word Inspire: Cause one creature with 60 hp or less to gain a +1 morale bonus.

Power Word Insult: Cause one creature with 60 hp or less to attack you and suffer penalties to AC and attacks.

Power Word Sicken: Cause one creature with 90 hp or less to become sickened.

Semblance of Life: You grant a dead corpse or an undead creature the appearance of living flesh.

4th-Level Spells

Power Word Betray: Cause one creature with 75 hp or less to attack an ally.

Power Word Burden: Cause one creature with 120 hp or less to become entangled.

Power Word Euphoria: Cause one creature with 75 hp or less to feel good despite danger or pain.

Power Word Failure: Cause one creature with 120 hp or less to suffer a –20 penalty on next d20 roll.

Power Word Frighten: Cause one creature with 105 hp or less to become shaken.

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Power Word: Laughter: Cause one creature with 30 hp or less to fall into a fit of laughter.

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Power Word Weary: Cause one creature with 100 hp or less to become fatigued.

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Power Word Stagger: Cause one creature with 120 hp or less to become staggered.

Power Word Surprise: Cause one creature with 70 hp or less to become flat-footed.

Revert to the True Form: You force all shapechanged creatures within range to return to their true forms.

Vault of Flesh: You bind a soul to a living body in such a way as to allow the target to rise as undead, if slain.

7th-Level Spells

Power Word Daze: Daze one creature with 135 hp or less.

Power Word Torment: Cause one creature with 150 hp or less to suffer a -8 penalty on attack rolls, skill checks, and ability checks due to intense pain.

8th-Level Spells

Power Word Confuse: Confuse one creature with 220 hp or less.

Power Word Megalomania: Cause one creature with 220 hp or less to suffer -4 morale penalty that they believe is a bonus on attack rolls, saves, and skill checks, and will not retreat; they also believe they are much tougher than they actually are (treat the creatures as believing they have extra hit points equal to double your caster level even though they do not possess them).

9th-Level Spells

Power Word Nauseate: Nauseate one creature with 250 hp or less.

Power Word Steal: Cause one creature with 250 hp or less to steal an object and bring it to you.

Spell Descriptions

Blessing of the Kami

School: abjuration [Yokinto only]
Level: Cleric 2, Paladin 2, Ranger 2
Casting Time: 1 standard action
Components: V, S
Range: 50 ft
Target: The caster and all allies within a 50-ft. Burst, centered on the caster
Duration: see text
Saving Throw: none; **Spell Resistance:** yes (harmless)

The spiritual energies of the kami fill you and your allies. The spell has two effects. Firstly, each beneficiary of the spell gains a +2 morale bonus on attack and damage rolls made against oni and the undead for a period of time equal to 1 min/level. Secondly, for 1 hour/level after the spell is cast, all who benefited from the spell's initial effect have a +2 morale bonus to all Knowledge (nature) and Survival skill checks.

Call Forth the Kami

School: conjuration [Yokinto only]
Level: Cleric 3
Casting Time: 1 round
Components: V, S, F (a greater go-shintai)
Range: close (25 ft plus 5 ft/level)
Effect: one summoned elemental
Duration: 2 rounds/level

If a yokinto shrine has a greater mitama, you may use this spell to cause the elemental within the go-shintai to manifest. So long as the elemental has no more than 2HD per your caster level, you may partially control the elemental. The elemental will

never damage the shrine, nor attack any who are genuine servants or worshipers of the shrine (the elemental is aware of all who have ever sincerely prayed in the shrine, as well as all priests and miko attached to the shrine). The elemental will also never leave the vicinity of its shrine (generally remaining within the boundaries of its temple complex). Within these strictures, if you can control the elemental, it will do as you request. If you cannot control the elemental, it will still manifest, but will act as it wishes.

Consult the Kami

School: divination [Yokinto only]
Level: Cleric 2
Casting Time: 1 minute
Components: V, S, M (incense worth at least 25 gp), F (a go-shintai)
Range: personal
Target: you
Duration: instantaneous

Consult the Kami functions similar to *augury*, but it must be cast in the presence of a consecrated go-shintai (one containing a mitama). For every four levels over 2nd level, you may ask one additional question of the kami whose mitama is contained in the shrine.

Detect Soul

School: necromancy
Level: Cleric 1, Sorcerer/Wizard 2, Witch 2
Casting Time: 1 standard action
Components: V, S, F/C
Range: medium (100 ft. + 10 ft. level)
Target: a single creature per round
Duration: 1 round/level
Saving Throw: none; **Spell Resistance:** no

Upon casting this spell, you may immediately target a single creature within range and, as a free action, determine if they possess a soul. The spell cannot tell you anything about the soul other than its presence. You may, as a free action, for the duration of the spell, choose a different target creature each round.

Fortify the Spirit

School: necromancy [Kaidan only]
Level: Cleric 3, Sorcerer/Wizard 4
Casting Time: 1o minutes
Components: V, S, C
Range: touch
Target: one creature which must have a soul
Duration: 1 year
Saving Throw: none; **Spell Resistance:** yes



For the duration of this spell, the target of this spell's soul, when the target is slain, does not go to Yomi but immediately begins the process of possessing another host body. Should the body selected have a soul in it already, that individual suffers a penalty to all Will saves made resist possession equal to the spell target's Charisma modifier (i.e. a +2 Charisma modifier bonus inflicts a -2 penalty). The material component of this spell is a gem worth no less than 50 gp. The gem is destroyed upon completion of the spell.

Kanjo, Greater

School: conjuration [Yokinto only]
Level: Cleric 3
Casting Time: 8 hours minimum
Components: V, S, F (the focus becomes the go-shintai)
Range: touch
Target: one object, which becomes a new go-shintai within a shrine
Duration: permanent
Saving Throw: none; **Spell Resistance:** no

This spell functions in all ways as *minor kanjo*, but the mitama captured by the spell is capable of manifesting as an elemental. The type of the elemental is chosen during the casting of the spell, and is typically related to the nature of the kami designated at the beginning of the spell. This elemental has a number of HD equal to 4 + your caster level and can be called to manifest up to once a month via the use of *Call forth the Kami*.

Kanjo, Minor

School: conjuration [Yokinto only]
Level: Cleric 1
Casting Time: 8 hours minimum
Components: V, S, F (the focus becomes the go-shintai)
Range: touch
Target: one object, which becomes a go-shintai within a shrine
Duration: permanent
Saving Throw: none; **Spell Resistance:** no

Through the casting of the spell, you are able to capture a minor mitama within a go-shintai, thereby consecrating a yokinto shrine. In order to cast the spell you must designate a specific kami known to you, and choose one object to serve as the focus of the spell. The base chance of the spell working is 10% plus 10%/caster level. If unsuccessful, you can continue casting the spell beyond the base time and each additional hour spent casting the spell increases the chance of success by another 10% with a new check for success being made at the end of each additional hour (So a 2nd level caster would have a base 30% chance of success after eight hours, 40% chance of success after nine hours, and a 50% chance after ten hours.) If the spell is interrupted it must be recast. A mitama entrapped in a go-shintai by this spell is valid for the casting of *Speak with Kami* and *Consult the Kami*.

Karma's Kiss

School: divination [Zaoist only]
Level: Cleric 2
Casting Time: 1 standard action
Components: V, S, F
Range: close (25 ft. +5. ft/level)
Target: A single living creature
Duration: 1 rd/level plus special
Saving Throw: Will negates; **Spell Resistance:** yes

You designate a single individual and cause him to be momentarily overwhelmed with visions of his place upon the karmic wheel. The individual affected by the spell understands in a moment of clarity whether they have progressed, regressed or remained the same karmicly since their birth (or rebirth) into the world. For the duration of the vision, the target must succeed at a Will save each round or be dazed by the immensity of what they are experiencing. If the target succeeds at the save, they are instead staggered. However, following the vision, for the next 24 hours, whatever actions the target might make which would affect his karmic score counts double.

Power Word Beguile

School: enchantment (compulsion) [mind-affecting]
Level: Bard 5, Sorcerer/Wizard 5, Witch 5
Casting Time: 1 standard action
Components: V
Range: close (25 ft. +5 ft./2 levels)
Target: one creature with 60 hp or less
Duration: instantaneous
Saving Throw: none; **Spell Resistance:** yes

You utter a single word of power that causes a creature to completely accept the first illusion it encounters by the end of its next turn. For as long as that illusion is maintained, the target automatically fails any saving throw the illusion normally allows. Any creature that currently has 61 or more hit points is unaffected by *power word beguile*.

Power Word Betray

School: enchantment (compulsion) [mind-affecting]
Level: Bard 4, Sorcerer/Wizard 4, Witch 4
Casting Time: 1 standard action
Components: V
Range: close (25 ft. +5 ft./2 levels)
Target: one creature with 75 hp or less
Duration: See text
Saving Throw: none; **Spell Resistance:** yes

You utter a single word of power that causes a creature to attack the nearest ally, whether the creature can hear the word or not. The target's face twists and contorts as he turns to vent his wrath on his ally. You force a target to attack its nearest ally. This attack can be of any sort, but it must be an attack that, to the target's knowledge, deals damage and is the most effective form of attack in the target's arsenal. If the creature has no ally, or if all its allies are out of attack range, it takes no actions but defends itself normally. The duration of the spell depends on the target's current hit

point total but ends once the creature has attacked its nearest ally. Any creature with 76 or more hit points is unaffected.

Hit Points	Duration
25 or less	4d4 rounds
26-50	2d4 rounds
51-75	1d4 rounds

Power Word Bleed

School: enchantment (compulsion) [mind-affecting]
Level: Magus 3, Sorcerer/Wizard 3, Witch 3
Casting Time: 1 standard action
Components: V
Range: close (25 ft. +5 ft./2 levels)
Target: one creature with 40 hp or less
Duration: See text
Saving Throw: none; Spell Resistance: yes

You utter a single word of power that causes a creature to begin to bleed 1d6 hp/round, whether the creature can hear the word or not. See the bleed condition in the *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Core Rulebook* for information on bleeding, and how to end it. Any creature that currently has 41 or more hit points is unaffected by *power word bleed*.

Power Word Broken

School: transmutation
Level: Sorcerer/Wizard 2, Witch 2
Casting Time: 1 standard action
Components: V
Range: close (25 ft. +5 ft./2 levels)
Target: one construct creature or object with 60 hp or less
Duration: See text
Saving Throw: none; Spell Resistance: yes

You utter a single word of power that causes an object or construct creature to gain the broken condition, whether the construct creature or object can hear the word or not. This does not affect the object or creature's hp total, see the broken condition in the *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Core Rulebook* for more information. The duration of the spell depends on the target's current hit point total and attended object uses the attending creatures hit points or its own whichever is greater, the condition can also be removed if even one hit point of damage is repaired. Any target with 61 or more hit points is unaffected.

Hit Points	Duration
14 or less	24 hours
15-30	1d4+1 minutes
31-60	1d4+1 rounds

Power Word Burden

School: enchantment (compulsion) [mind-affecting]
Level: Magus 4, Sorcerer/Wizard 4, Witch 4
Casting Time: 1 standard action
Components: V
Range: close (25 ft. +5 ft./2 levels)
Target: one creature with 120 hp or less
Duration: See text
Saving Throw: none; **Spell Resistance:** yes

You utter a single word of power that causes a creature to become entangled and the point is anchored, whether the creature can hear the word or not. The duration of the spell depends on the target's current hit point total. Any creature with 121 or more hit points is unaffected.

Hit Points	Duration
30 or less	Permanent
31-60	1d4+1 minutes
61-120	1d4+1 rounds

Power Word Combust

School: enchantment (compulsion) [fire, mind-affecting]
Level: Magus 2, Sorcerer/Wizard 2, Witch 2
Casting Time: 1 standard action
Components: V
Range: close (25 ft. +5 ft./2 levels)
Target: one creature with 30 hp or less
Duration: instantaneous
Saving Throw: none; Spell Resistance: yes

You utter a single word of power that causes a creature to catch on fire, whether the creature can hear the word or not. The target is not allowed the normal DC 15 Reflex save to avoid catching on fire, and takes 1d6 fire damage immediately. See Catching on Fire in the *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Core Rulebook* for information on the effects of catching on fire, and how to end them. Any creature that currently has 31 or more hit points is unaffected by *power word combust*.

Power Word Confuse

School: enchantment (compulsion) [mind-affecting]
Level: Sorcerer/Wizard 8, Witch 8
Casting Time: 1 standard action
Components: V
Range: close (25 ft. +5 ft./2 levels)
Target: one creature with 220 hp or less
Duration: See text
Saving Throw: none; **Spell Resistance:** yes

You utter a single word of power that causes a creature to become confused, whether the creature can hear the word or not. The duration of the spell depends on the target's current hit point total. Any creature with 221 or more hit points is unaffected.

Hit Points	Duration
54 or less	Permanent
55-110	1d4+1 minutes
111-220	1d4+1 rounds

Power Word Daze

School: enchantment (compulsion) [mind-affecting]
Level: Sorcerer/Wizard 7, Witch 7
Casting Time: 1 standard action
Components: V
Range: close (25 ft. +5 ft./2 levels)
Target: one creature with 135 hp or less
Duration: See text
Saving Throw: none; **Spell Resistance:** yes

You utter a single word of power that causes a creature to become dazed, whether the creature can hear the word or not. The duration of the spell depends on the target's current hit point total. Any creature with 136 or more hit points is unaffected.

Hit Points	Duration
45 or less	4d4 rounds
46-90	2d4 rounds
91-135	1d4 rounds

Power Word Dazzle

School: enchantment (compulsion) [mind-affecting]
Level: Magus 1, Sorcerer/Wizard 1, Witch 1
Casting Time: 1 standard action
Components: V
Range: close (25 ft. +5 ft./2 levels)
Target: one creature with 30 hp or less
Duration: See text
Saving Throw: none; Spell Resistance: yes

You utter a single word of power that causes a creature to become dazzled, whether the creature can hear the word or not. The duration of the spell depends on the target's current hit point total. Any creature with 31 or more hit points is unaffected.

Hit Points	Duration
10 or less	3d4 rounds
11-20	2d4 rounds
21-30	1d4 rounds

Power Word Deafen

School: enchantment (compulsion) [mind-affecting]
Level: Magus 5, Sorcerer/Wizard 5, Witch 5
Casting Time: 1 standard action
Components: V
Range: close (25 ft. +5 ft./2 levels)
Target: one creature with 150 hp or less
Duration: See text
Saving Throw: none; **Spell Resistance:** yes

You utter a single word of power that causes a creature to become deaf, whether the creature can hear the word or not. The duration of the spell depends on the target's current hit point total. Any creature with 151 or more hit points is unaffected.

Hit Points	Duration
40 or less	Permanent
41-75	1d4+1 minutes
76-150	1d4+1 rounds

Power Word Decelerate

School: enchantment (compulsion) [mind-affecting]
Level: Sorcerer/Wizard 2, Witch 2
Casting Time: 1 standard action
Components: V
Range: close (25 ft. +5 ft./2 levels)
Target: one creature with 60 hp or less
Duration: See text
Saving Throw: none; Spell Resistance: yes

You utter a single word of power that causes a creature to move more slowly, whether the creature can hear the word or not. The target's fastest move rate is reduced by 50%. The duration of the spell depends on the target's current hit point total. Any creature with 61 or more hit points is unaffected.

Hit Points	Duration
14 or less	24 hours
15-30	1d4+1 minutes
31-60	1d4+1 rounds

Power Word Despair

School: enchantment (compulsion) [emotion, mind-affecting]
Level: Bard 6, Sorcerer/Wizard 6, Witch 6
Casting Time: 1 standard action
Components: V
Range: close (25 ft. +5 ft./2 levels)
Target: one creature with 150 hp or less
Duration: See text
Saving Throw: none; **Spell Resistance:** yes (harmless)

You utter a single word of power that depresses a creature's spirits causing it to lapse into despair, whether the creature can hear the word or not. The subject suffers a -4 morale penalty on all attack rolls, damage rolls, saving throws, skill checks, ability checks, level checks (such as caster level checks), and concentration checks, as well as a -4 morale penalty to AC. The duration of the spell depends on the target's current hit point total. Any creature with 151 or more hit points is unaffected.

Hit Points	Duration
40 or less	Permanent
41-75	1d4+1 minutes
76-150	1d4+1 rounds

Power Word Disarm

School: enchantment (compulsion) [mind-affecting]
Level: Bard 2, Sorcerer/Wizard 2, Witch 2
Casting Time: 1 standard action
Components: V
Range: close (25 ft. +5 ft./2 levels)
Target: one creature with 30 hp or less
Duration: instantaneous
Saving Throw: none; Spell Resistance: yes

You utter a single word of power that causes a creature to drop one item it is carrying of your choice (even if the item is wielded with two hands) whether the creature can hear the word or not. Any creature that currently has 31 or more hit points is unaffected by *power word disarm*.

Power Word Disorient

School: enchantment (compulsion) [mind-affecting]
Level: Bard 2, Sorcerer/Wizard 2, Witch 2
Casting Time: 1 standard action
Components: V
Range: close (25 ft. +5 ft./2 levels)
Target: one creature with 20 hp or less
Duration: See text
Saving Throw: none; Spell Resistance: yes

You utter a single word of power that causes a creature to become disoriented, whether the creature can hear the word or not. The duration of the effect depends on the target's current hit point total. A disoriented creature suffers a -4 circumstance penalty to initiative checks, Acrobatics, Fly, Jump, Perception, and Swim checks. Also whenever the creature moves, it must roll 1d8 to randomly determine the actual direction traveled. . Any creature with 31 or more hit points is unaffected.

Hit Points	Duration
7 or less	24 hours
8-15	1d4+1 minutes
16-30	1d4+1 rounds

Power Word Euphoria

School: enchantment (compulsion) [mind-affecting]
Level: Bard 4, Sorcerer/Wizard 4, Witch 4
Casting Time: 1 standard action
Components: V
Range: close (25 ft. +5 ft./2 levels)
Target: one creature with 75 hp or less
Duration: See text
Saving Throw: none; **Spell Resistance:** yes

You utter a single word of power that causes a creature to become struck by pure pleasure, whether the creature can hear the word or not. The target suffers a -4 morale penalty to Wisdom and gains a +4 morale bonus to Constitution. In addition, the subject gains a+4 morale bonus to saving throws versus fear (for a net +2 to saving throws versus fear including the Wisdom penalty). The target does not fall unconscious if brought to negative hit points, being only disabled each round until dying or healed to positive hit points. The duration of the spell depends on the target's current hit point total. Any creature with 76 or more hit points is unaffected (do not calculate the bonus hit points gained from the Constitution bonus).

Hit Points	Duration
25 or less	4d4 rounds
26-50	2d4 rounds
51-75	1d4 rounds

Power Word Fascinate

School: enchantment (compulsion) [mind-affecting]
Level: Bard 1, Sorcerer/Wizard 1, Witch 1
Casting Time: 1 standard action
Components: V
Range: close (25 ft. +5 ft./2 levels)
Target: one creature with 20 hp or less
Duration: See text
Saving Throw: none; Spell Resistance: yes

You utter a single word of power that causes a creature to gain the fascinated condition (becoming fascinated by the first thing it sees), whether the creature can hear the word or not. The duration of the spell depends on the target's current hit point total, but ends normally if the target perceives any obvious threat. See the

Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Core Rulebook for more information on the fascinated condition. Any creature with 21 or more hit points is unaffected.

Hit Points	Duration
5 or less	24 hours
6-10	1d4+1 minutes
11-20	1d4+1 rounds

Power Word Failure

School: enchantment (compulsion) [mind-affecting]
Level: Magus 4, Sorcerer/Wizard 4, Witch 4
Casting Time: 1 standard action
Components: V
Range: close (25 ft. +5 ft./2 levels)
Target: one creature with 120 hp or less
Duration: See text
Saving Throw: none; **Spell Resistance:** yes

You utter a single word of power that causes a creature to fail spectacularly on its next action, whether the creature can hear the word or not. The target suffers a -20 penalty to its next d20 if that attempt fails to hit or meet the required DC it is considered a critical failure as if the creature had rolled a natural 1. The duration of the spell depends on the target's current hit point total but ends once the creature has failed an action. Any creature with 121 or more hit points is unaffected.



Hit Points	Duration
30 or less	24 Hours
31-60	1d4+1 minutes
61-120	1d4+1 rounds

Power Word Frighten

School: enchantment (compulsion) [emotion, fear, mind-affecting]
Level: Sorcerer/Wizard 4, Witch 4
Casting Time: 1 standard action
Components: V
Range: close (25 ft. +5 ft./2 levels)
Target: one creature with 105 hp or less
Duration: See text
Saving Throw: none; **Spell Resistance:** yes

You utter a single word of power that causes a creature to become shaken, whether the creature can hear the word or not. The duration of the spell depends on the target's current hit point total, this spell will not stack to make a creature panicked, freighted or cowered. Any creature with 106 or more hit points is unaffected.

Hit Points	Duration
35 or less	4d4 rounds
36-70	2d4 rounds
71-105	1d4 rounds

Power Word Fumble

School: enchantment (compulsion) [mind-affecting]
Level: Bard 1, Sorcerer/Wizard 1, Witch 1
Casting Time: 1 standard action
Components: V
Range: close (25 ft. +5 ft./2 levels)
Target: one creature with 20 hp or less
Duration: See text
Saving Throw: none; Spell Resistance: yes

You utter a single word of power that causes a creature to critically miss its next attack, whether the creature can hear the word or not. The duration of the effect depends on the target's current hit point total, but ends once the creature has critically missed its next attack. See the *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Core Rulebook* for more information on critical misses. Any creature with 21 or more hit points is unaffected.

Hit Points	Duration
5 or less	24 hours
6-10	1d4+1 minutes
11-20	1d4+1 rounds

Power Word Fury

School: enchantment (compulsion) [mind-affecting]
Level: Bard 5, Sorcerer/Wizard 5, Summoner 5, Witch 5
Casting Time: 1 standard action
Components: V
Range: close (25 ft. +5 ft./2 levels)
Target: one creature with 75 hp or less
Duration: See text
Saving Throw: none; **Spell Resistance:** yes

You utter a single word of power that causes a creature to go into furious rage, whether the creature can hear the word or not. The target's creature gains a +2 morale bonus to Strength and Constitution, a +1 morale bonus on Will saves, and a -2 penalty to AC. The target attacks the nearest creature and continues to fight until unconscious or dead or until no living thing remains within 30 feet. The effect is otherwise identical with a barbarian's rage except that the subjects aren't fatigued at the end of the rage. The duration of the spell depends on the target's current hit point total. Any creature with 61 or more hit points is unaffected (do not calculate the bonus hit points gained from the Constitution bonus).

Hit Points	Duration
25 or less	3d4 rounds
26-50	2d4 rounds
51-75	1d4 rounds

Power Word Hesitate

School: enchantment (compulsion) [mind-affecting]
Level: Sorcerer/Wizard 1, Witch 1
Casting Time: 1 standard action
Components: V
Range: close (25 ft. +5 ft./2 levels)
Target: one creature with 30 hp or less
Duration: See text
Saving Throw: none; **Spell Resistance:** yes

You utter a single word of power that causes a creature to hesitate, whether the creature can hear the word or not. The creature suffers a -10 penalty on initiative checks. The duration of the spell depends on the target's current hit point total. Any creature with 31 or more hit points is unaffected.

Hit Points	Duration
7 or less	24 hours
8-15	1d4+1 minutes
16-30	1d4+1 rounds

Power Word Hinder

School: enchantment (compulsion) [mind-affecting]
Level: Bard 2, Sorcerer/Wizard 2, Witch 2
Casting Time: 1 standard action
Components: V
Range: close (25 ft. +5 ft./2 levels)
Target: one creature with 20 hp or less
Duration: See text
Saving Throw: none; Spell Resistance: yes

You utter a single word of power that causes a creature's natural and unarmed attack to be hindered, whether the creature can hear the word or not. The duration of the effect depends on the target's current hit point total. A hindered creature suffers a -4 circumstance penalty to attack rolls with one natural attack (your choice) with unarmed strikes, and with combat maneuver checks performed with natural or unarmed attacks (such as grapple). Any creature with 31 or more hit points is unaffected.

Hit Points	Duration
7 or less	24 hours
8-15	1d4+1 minutes
16-30	1d4+1 rounds

Power Word Hindrance

School: enchantment (compulsion) [mind-affecting]
Level: Sorcerer/Wizard 1, Witch 1
Casting Time: 1 standard action
Components: V
Range: close (25 ft. +5 ft./2 levels)
Target: one creature with 30 hp or less
Duration: See text
Saving Throw: none; **Spell Resistance:** yes

You utter a single word of power that causes a creature to become hindered and slightly more vulnerable to physical attacks, whether the creature can hear the word or not. The creature suffers a -2 penalty to Armor Class. The duration of the spell depends on the target's current hit point total. Any creature with 31 or more hit points is unaffected.

Hit Points	Duration
7 or less	24 hours
8-15	1d4+1 minutes
16-30	1d4+1 rounds

Power Word Impede

School: enchantment (compulsion) [mind-affecting]
Level: magus 6, Sorcerer/Wizard 6, Witch 6
Casting Time: 1 standard action
Components: V
Range: close (25 ft. +5 ft./2 levels)
Target: one creature with 120 hp or less
Duration: See text
Saving Throw: none; **Spell Resistance:** yes

You utter a single word of power that causes one class ability or named universal monster ability (see *Pathfinder Bestiary*™), chosen at the time of casting, rendered non-functional (a rogue cannot sneak attack, a dragon cannot use its breath weapon etc.), whether the creature can hear the word or not. The duration of the spell depends on the target's current hit point total. Any creature with 121 or more hit points is unaffected.

Hit Points	Duration
40 or less	4d4 rounds
41-80	2d4 rounds
81-120	1d4 rounds

Power Word Impediment

School: enchantment (compulsion) [mind-affecting]
Level: Bard 3, Sorcerer/Wizard 3, Witch 3
Casting Time: 1 standard action
Components: V
Range: close (25 ft. +5 ft./2 levels)
Target: one creature with 40 hp or less
Duration: instantaneous
Saving Throw: none; Spell Resistance: yes

You utter a single word of power that impedes your target, whether the target can hear the word or not. The target takes a –2 morale penalty to all saving throws, target you with a spell, or include you in the area of a spell. The duration of the spell depends on the target's current hit point total. Any target with 61 or more hit points is unaffected.

Hit Points	Duration
14 or less	24 hours
15-30	1d4+1 minutes
31-60	1d4+1 rounds

Power Word Inspire

School: enchantment (compulsion) [emotion, mind-affecting]
Level: Bard 3, Sorcerer/Wizard 3, Witch 3
Casting Time: 1 standard action
Components: V
Range: close (25 ft. +5 ft./2 levels)
Target: one creature with 60 hp or less
Duration: See text
Saving Throw: none; **Spell Resistance:** yes (harmless)

You utter a single word of power that causes a creature to become inspired, whether the creature can hear the word or not. The subject gains a +2 morale bonus on all attack rolls, damage rolls, saving throws, skill checks, ability checks, level checks (such as caster level checks), and concentration checks, as well as a +2 morale bonus to AC. The duration of the spell depends on the target's current hit point total. Any creature with 61 or more hit points is unaffected.

Hit Points	Duration
20 or less	4d4 rounds
21-40	2d4 rounds
41-60	1d4 rounds

Power Word Insult

School: enchantment (compulsion) [mind-affecting]
Level: Bard 3, Sorcerer/Wizard 3, Witch 3
Casting Time: 1 standard action
Components: V
Range: close (25 ft. +5 ft./2 levels)
Target: one creature with 40 hp or less
Duration: See text
Saving Throw: none; Spell Resistance: yes

You utter a single word of power that causes your target to become flustered and enraged, whether the target can hear the word or not. The target takes a –2 morale penalty to AC and on all attack rolls made against creatures other than you and has a 10% spell failure chance on all spells that do not target you or that have you within their area of effect. On its next turn, the target must attempt to make a melee attack against you, make a ranged attack against you, target you with a spell, or include you in the area of a spell. The effect ends if the creature is prevented from attacking you or attempting to do so would harm it (for example, if you are on the other side of a chasm or a *wall of fire*). The effect ends as soon as the creature attacks you. Once a caster has targeted a creature with this spell, the same caster cannot affect the same creature again with this spell for 24 hours.

Hit Points	Duration
14 or less	24 hours
15-30	1d4+1 minutes
31-60	1d4+1 rounds

Power Word Laugh

School: enchantment (compulsion) [mind-affecting]
Level: Sorcerer/Wizard 5, Witch 5
Casting Time: 1 standard action
Components: V
Range: close (25 ft. +5 ft./2 levels)
Target: one creature with 30 hp or less
Duration: See text
Saving Throw: none; **Spell Resistance:** yes

You utter a single word of power that instantly causes one creature of your choice to fall into a fit of laughter, whether the creature can hear the word or not. The subject can take no actions while laughing, but is not considered helpless and other than being prone defends itself normally. The duration of the spell depends on the target's current hit point total. Any creature that currently has 31 or more hit points is unaffected by *power word laugh*.

Hit Points	Duration
7 or less	3d4 rounds
8-15	2d4 rounds
16-30	1d4 rounds

Power Word Mishap

School: enchantment (compulsion) [mind-affecting]
Level: Bard 1, Sorcerer/Wizard 1, Witch 1;
Casting Time: 1 standard action
Components: V
Range: close (25 ft. +5 ft./2 levels)
Target: one creature with 20 hp or less
Duration: See text
Saving Throw: none; Spell Resistance: yes

You utter a single word of power that causes a creature to suffer a minor mishap with the next spell it casts (as if it failed to cast the spell from a scroll), whether the creature can hear the word or not. The duration of the effect depends on the target's current hit point total, but ends once the creature has suffered the minor mishap. See the *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Core Rulebook* for more information on minor mishaps. Any creature with 21 or more hit points is unaffected.

Hit Points	Duration
5 or less	24 hours
6-10	1d4+1 minutes
11-20	1d4+1 rounds

Power Word Mute

School: enchantment (compulsion) [mind-affecting]
Level: Bard 4, Sorcerer/Wizard 4, Witch 4
Casting Time: 1 standard action
Components: V
Range: close (25 ft. +5 ft./2 levels)
Target: one creature with 75 hp or less
Duration: See text
Saving Throw: none; **Spell Resistance:** yes

You utter a single word of power that causes a creature to become mute, whether the creature can hear the word or not. The target cannot speak, sing, complete verbal spell components, play an instrument, clap its hands, or make any kind of communicative noise. The duration of the spell depends on the target's current hit point total. Any creature with 76 or more hit points is unaffected.

Hit Points	Duration
25 or less	4d4 rounds
26-50	2d4 rounds
51-75	1d4 rounds

Power Word Nauseate

School: enchantment (compulsion) [mind-affecting]
Level: Sorcerer/Wizard 9, Witch 9
Casting Time: 1 standard action
Components: V
Range: close (25 ft. +5 ft./2 levels)
Target: one creature with 250 hp or less
Duration: See text
Saving Throw: none; **Spell Resistance:** yes

You utter a single word of power that causes a creature to become nauseated, whether the creature can hear the word or not. The duration of the spell depends on the target's current hit point total. Any creature with 251 or more hit points is unaffected.

Hit Points	Duration
64 or less	Permanent
65-125	1d4+1 minutes
125-250	1d4+1 rounds

Power Word Pride

School: enchantment (compulsion) [mind-affecting]
Level: Sorcerer/Wizard 8, Witch 8
Casting Time: 1 standard action
Components: V
Range: close (25 ft. +5 ft./2 levels)
Target: one creature with 220 hp or less
Duration: See text
Saving Throw: none; **Spell Resistance:** yes

You utter a single word of power that causes a creature to believe that its skills are so much better than they really are that its overconfidence causes it to act rashly and without forethought., whether the creature can hear the word or not. The target begin to make wild swings, confident in its ability to overwhelm an opponent. Spell casters confidently step into battle believing they can't be struck before completing a spell. Creatures suffer a -4 morale penalty on attack rolls, saves, and skill checks, and will not retreat; they also believe they are much tougher than they actually are (treat the creatures as believing they have extra hit points equal to double your caster level (maximum of 40) even though they do not possess them). The duration of the spell depends on the target's current hit point total. Any creature with 221 or more hit points is unaffected.

Hit Points	Duration
54 or less	Permanent
55-110	1d4+1 minutes
111-220	1d4+1 rounds

Power Word Rouse

School: enchantment (compulsion) [emotion, mind-affecting]
Level: Bard 5, Sorcerer/Wizard 5, Witch 5
Casting Time: 1 standard action
Components: V
Range: close (25 ft. +5 ft./2 levels)
Target: one creature with 60 hp or less
Duration: See text
Saving Throw: none; **Spell Resistance:** yes (harmless)

You utter a single word of power that rouses a creature's spirits, whether the creature can hear the word or not. The subject gains a +4 morale bonus on all attack rolls, damage rolls, saving throws, skill checks, ability checks, level checks (such as caster level checks), and concentration checks, as well as a +4 morale bonus to AC. The duration of the spell depends on the target's current hit point total. Any creature with 61 or more hit points is unaffected.

Hit Points	Duration
20 or less	4d4 rounds
21-40	2d4 rounds
41-60	1d4 rounds

Power Word Sicken

School: enchantment (compulsion) [disease, mind-affecting]
Level: Sorcerer/Wizard 3, Witch 3
Casting Time: 1 standard action
Components: V
Range: close (25 ft. +5 ft./2 levels)
Target: one creature with 90 hp or less
Duration: See text
Saving Throw: none; **Spell Resistance:** yes

You utter a single word of power that causes a creature to become sickened, whether the creature can hear the word or not. The duration of the spell depends on the target's current hit point total, though any spell that can cure a disease will remove this effect. Any creature with 91 or more hit points is unaffected.

Hit Points	Duration
15 or less	Permanent
16-45	1d4+1 minutes
46-90	1d4+1 rounds

Power Word Stagger

School: enchantment (compulsion) [emotion, fear, mind-affecting]
Level: magus 6, Sorcerer/Wizard 6, Witch 6
Casting Time: 1 standard action
Components: V
Range: close (25 ft. +5 ft./2 levels)
Target: one creature with 120 hp or less
Duration: See text
Saving Throw: none; **Spell Resistance:** yes

You utter a single word of power that causes a creature to become staggered, whether the creature can hear the word or not. The duration of the spell depends on the target's current hit point total. Any creature with 121 or more hit points is unaffected.

Hit Points	Duration
40 or less	4d4 rounds
41-80	2d4 rounds
81-120	1d4 rounds

Power Word Steal

School: enchantment (compulsion) [mind-affecting]
Level: Sorcerer/Wizard 9, Witch 9
Casting Time: 1 standard action
Components: V
Range: close (25 ft. +5 ft./2 levels)
Target: one creature with 250 hp or less
Duration: See text
Saving Throw: none; **Spell Resistance:** yes

You utter a single word of power that causes a creature to use the best means at its disposal

to steal an object and bring it to you, whether the creature can hear the word or not. The target must immediately steal a valuable object you envision when you cast this spell. The creature may have to go through threatened or dangerous areas (passing by guards or moving through an area protected by a *glyph of warding*) to get at the object, or it may even have to break through a barrier or pick a lock. A barrier that requires more than 10 rounds to get through is considered impassable for the purposes of this spell. The spell ends immediately if the creature physically cannot reach the object—including a situation forcing the creature to pass through an area that would, without a doubt, kill it. For example, a creature with only 30 hp that must swim through acid to reach the object is unaffected by the spell.

While under the effects of *protection from evil* or a similar spell, the subject can ignore the compulsion, but such a ward does not prevent establishing *power word steal* nor dispel it.

Once the subject takes the object and gives it to the caster, the spell ends regardless of duration otherwise the duration of the spell depends on the target's current hit point total. Any creature with 251 or more hit points is unaffected.

Hit Points	Duration
64 or less	Permanent
65-125	1d4+1 minutes
125-250	1d4+1 rounds

Power Word Surprise

School: enchantment (compulsion) [mind-affecting]
Level: Bard 6, Sorcerer/Wizard 6, Witch 6
Casting Time: 1 standard action
Components: V
Range: close (25 ft. +5 ft./2 levels)
Target: one creature with 70 hp or less
Duration: instantaneous
Saving Throw: none; **Spell Resistance:** yes

You utter a single word of power that causes a creature to lose all actions and become flat-footed until the beginning of its next turn, whether the creature can hear the word or not. Any creature that currently has 71 or more hit points is unaffected by *power word surprise*.

Power Word Torment

School: enchantment (compulsion) [emotion, fear, mind-affecting]
Level: Sorcerer/Wizard 7, Witch 7
Casting Time: 1 standard action
Components: V
Range: close (25 ft. +5 ft./2 levels)
Target: one creature with 150 hp or less
Duration: See text
Saving Throw: none; **Spell Resistance:** yes (harmless)

You utter a single word of power that causes a creature to remember every pain it has ever experienced all at once, whether the creature can hear the word or not. The subject suffers a -8 morale penalty on attack rolls, skill checks, and ability checks. The duration of the spell depends on the target's current hit point total. Any creature with 151 or more hit points is unaffected.

Hit Points	Duration
40 or less	Permanent
41-75	1d4+1 minutes
76-150	1d4+1 rounds

Power Word Trip

School: enchantment (compulsion) [mind-affecting]
Level: Bard 2, Sorcerer/Wizard 2, Witch 2
Casting Time: 1 standard action
Components: V
Range: close (25 ft. +5 ft./2 levels)
Target: one creature with 30 hp or less
Duration: instantaneous
Saving Throw: none; Spell Resistance: yes

You utter a single word of power that causes a creature to fall prone, whether the creature can hear the word or not. Any creature that currently has 31 or more hit points is unaffected by *power word trip*.

Power Word Weary

School: enchantment (compulsion) [emotion, fear, mind-affecting]
Level: Sorcerer/Wizard 5, Witch 5
Casting Time: 1 standard action
Components: V
Range: close (25 ft. +5 ft./2 levels)
Target: one creature with 100 hp or less
Duration: Instantaneous
Saving Throw: none; **Spell Resistance:** yes

You utter a single word of power that causes a creature to become fatigued, whether the creature can hear the word or not. This spell will not stack to cause a creature to become exhausted. Any creature with 101 or more hit points is unaffected.



Revert to the True Form
School: abjuration
Level: Bard 5, Cleric 6, Wizard 7, Witch 6
Casting Time: 1 Swift action
Components: V, S
Range: 50 ft.
Target: All shapechanged creatures within a 50 ft. burst, centered on the caster
Duration: instantaneous
Saving Throw: Will negates; **Spell Resistance:** yes

When you cast this spell, a burst of energy centered on yourself forces all shapechanged creatures, including lycanthropes, polymorphed individuals, and the like, to revert immediately to their original, true form. This does not preclude them from changing back as soon as they are able to again, should they so choose.

Semblance of Life
School: necromancy (evil)
Level: Cleric 2, Wizard 3, Witch 3
Casting Time: 1 standard action
Components: V, S, M
Range: close (25 ft. +5. ft/level)
Target: A single dead or undead creature
Duration: varies; see text
Saving Throw: Will negates; **Spell Resistance:** yes

By casting this spell upon a dead, or undead, creature, you give their body the appearance of live, including warmth, breath, and color. This appearance is not technically an illusion, but it may be seen through via the use of true seeing, or a similar spell, nor does this spell change the creature's type, or weaknesses, if any, in any way. The spell may be cast using a bit of flesh as a Material component, and when so cast, it lasts for 1 rd/level. The spell may alternately be cast using a quart of blood, and when cast in this way, it lasts for 1 hour/level. Both flesh and blood must have been harvested from a living creature no more than 24 hours prior to the spells casting.

Sense of Wrongness
School: divination (human only; Zaoist only)
Level: Cleric 1
Casting Time: 1 standard action
Components: V, S, F
Range: 60 ft.
Target: self
Duration: 10 minutes/level
Saving Throw: no; **Spell Resistance:** no

For the duration of this spell, you are aware of the presence of any living non-human, non-animal creatures within range of the spell. You cannot discern the location, number or identity of such creatures, but are fully aware of their presence. Variations of this spell can be tailored for other races, granting them the ability to discern creatures not of their same race.

Soul Swap
School: necromancy [soul binding]
Level: Cleric 5, Magus 5, Sorcerer/Wizard 5, Witch 5
Casting Time: 1 round
Components: V, S, C
Range: medium (100 ft. + 10 ft. level)
Target: self and one target creature (target must have a soul)
Duration: Permanent
Saving Throw: Will negates; **Spell Resistance:** yes

Upon casting this spell, you may immediately attempt to exchange bodies with a single viable target within range. If successful, your soul inhabits the target's body and their soul inhabits yours. Bodies without souls (such as outsiders and constructs) are immune to this spell and

should you attempt to target such a creature, the spell immediately fails. Upon exchanging bodies, your Intelligence, Wisdom and Charisma remain the same, as do all your skills, class abilities and class related HD and BAB. If the body you now inhabit has racial HD, you gain those, along with any extraordinary abilities possessed by the new body. If the target creature is of a different race than you, they gain a +5 to their Will save. If they are of a different creature type than you (dragon, animal, etc), the target receives an additional +5 to their Will save. The material component to this spell is a gem worth at least 100 gp and the gem is destroyed upon casting, regardless of whether the spell succeeds or not.

Speak with Kami

School: divination [Yokinto only]
Level: Cleric 5
Casting Time: 1 minute
Components: V, S, M (incense worth at least 500 gp), F (a go-shintai)
Range: personal
Target: you
Duration: 1 round/level

Speak with Kami functions as *commune,* but must be cast in the presence of a legitimate go-shintai (one containing a mitama) and the answers provided are correct within the limits of the knowledge of the kami whose mitama is contained within the shrine. Generally speaking a kami will be aware of all activities which occur near to itself as well as any activity which occurs within a temple, or other area, housing a shrine to itself. This means that a kami whose domain is a mountain knows more than a kami whose domain is a tree, and a kami with a hundred shrines dedicated to it knows more than a kami with only one shrine.

Sword of Yumi

School: conjuration (Zaoist only)
Level: Cleric 4
Casting Time: 1 standard action
Components: V, S, F
Range: Medium (100 ft + 10 -ft./level)
Target: see text
Duration: 1 round/level
Saving Throw: Fortitude negates ability damage; **Spell Resistance:** Yes

By casting this spell, you conjure a flying weapon made of pure negative energy, and direct it to make a single attack per round against one designated target. The weapon attacks with a modifier equal to your BAB + your Wis modifier. If the weapon hits it deals 1d8 + your Wis modifier in negative energy damage. Furthermore, if the target takes damage from the weapon, it must succeed at a Fortitude save or suffer 1d3 Constitution damage. The weapon can be redirected against a new target within range as a swift action and moves with a perfect fly speed of 50 ft. Creatures immune to negative energy damage are immune to all effects of this weapon. Though the spell is called *sword of yumi*, the weapon may take any form you desire.

Vault of Flesh

School: necromancy [evil]
Level: Cleric 6, Sorcerer/Wizard 6, Witch 6
Casting Time: 1 hour
Components: V, S, C
Range: touch
Target: one living creature
Duration: One Year, see text
Saving Throw: none; **Spell Resistance:** yes

You bind a soul to a living body, in such a way as to ensure that, should the body be physically slain, the soul will continue to inhabit and animate the body. If the target is slain before the spell duration expires, they rise as an undead within 1d6 rounds. As an undead, the target creature's HD, hp, BAB and all abilities remain unchanged, except that they now have undead immunities and no Constitution score (All Constitution bonuses are replaced by Charisma bonuses). Upon rising as an undead creature, the creature's hit points are fully restored. Though the spell has a duration of one year, if the target becomes undead, the effect is permanent, at least until the target is once more slain, at which point the soul leaves the body. Casting this spell requires a gallon of blood as a material component and the blood must be taken from a source of an identical race to the target of the spell.

Magic Items of Kaidan

Tsukumogami

One of the unusual side effects of having so many spirits in Kaidan, is that those spirits inhabit anything of significant age or majesty as to grant them access. These habitations can be anything: rocks, trees, lakes, mountains, or even, in some

cases furniture. Those spirits inhabiting natural features are known as kami and they take many forms. But there are other lesser spirits, elemental creatures, and they seek out whatever hosts they can find. Some of these creatures find homes in otherwise soulless bodies, creating the entities known as tamashinaki, or "the soulless." These foul creatures are thoroughly malevolent, manifesting a psychotic delight in pain and blood. Still other elemental spirits find homes in man-made objects.

Not every manmade object makes a good home for an elemental spirit, though there are spells, prayers and rituals, such as those used by yokinto priests in the creation of shrines, which will make objects far more suitable. But when an object is suitable, either because of age or intrinsic qualities, spirits will, in due course, discover such objects and inhabit them. These "possessed" objects are known collectively as tsukumogami.

Typically, an object becomes a tsukumogami by reason of age. A man-made object which manages to reach a hundred years of age, without gaining the broken condition, is almost always capable of housing one of the many elemental spirits of Kaidan. However, upon occasion, a masterwork item is made of such surpassing quality that it is immediately possessed. When an object becomes possessed by an elemental spirit, the exact effect can take a variety of forms, but in general there are three broad categories of tsukumogami. The first is simply an object which is mildly enchanted in some way. This might be an umbrella, the user of which never gets wet or a tea-pot whose tea is of such quality as to make social interactions easier. The second style of tsukumogami are those items which gain a measure of intelligence. Over time, almost all of the first sort become those of the second sort, for as an enchanted tsukumogami matures, it becomes more powerful. But some are fully "born" with intelligence and awareness. Finally the third sort of tsukumogami are those possessed by a wicked spirit, very similar in nature to the elemental spirits which inhabit tamashinaki. Tales of these creatures abound in Kaidan and nearly everyone has heard of the boroboroton, a killer futon which strangled its household, and there are few children in Kaidan who could not recount to you the tale of the chochin-obake, a ghostly lantern which floats through the night air in swamps, luring travelers to their doom in bogs and quicksand.

A tsukumogami of the first sort, an enchanted object, is little different from a standard wondrous item, excepting that it was not created by the will of men, but came about of its own accord, so to speak. A tsukumogami of the second sort, the intelligent item, is likewise very close in nature to an intelligent magical weapon, and can be fashioned, game-wise, in much the same way. The tsukumogami of the third sort is an intelligent, malevolent animated object. Such a tsukumogami is always CE, with a Wisdom of 12, and an Intelligence score between 4 and 9 (1d6+3). For some reason, a surprising number of these objects (such as the boroboroton) prefer to kill via strangulation or suffocation.

Sample Tsukumogami

The Aruki-no-Guuzou of Akikasa

Aura strong enchantment
Slot none; **Weight** 2500 lbs

DESCRIPTION

In Akikasa, many hundreds of years ago, in return for a kindness shown, a very talented sculptor created a great statue of a powerful samurai warrior and erected it near the gates of the village. Over the years, the villagers came to worship the statue, leaving it small gifts each day. A day came when bandits attacked the village and began to ravage the women and kill the men. To the surprise of all, the statue moved and attacked the bandits, rescuing the village. After the battle, the statue returned to its original position. Shortly thereafter, the villagers carefully moved the statue to a new shrine just within the gates, and appointed one of their own to be its priest, a function which continues to this day.

The Aruki-no-Guuzou is a stone statue which came to be inhabited by a water spirit and which functions as an intelligent stone golem (Int 12, Wis 16). The statue can cast (CL 17) *control weather* once per day, and *lightning bolt* three times per day. Over the years, the statue's awareness has increased but it is content to remain motionless until danger strikes the villagers it has come to love.

Buusabake

Aura moderate enchantment
Slot none; **Weight** 1 lb

DESCRIPTION

The buusabake has been haunting Yonshu for years. A pair of well-worn sandals, the buusabake often appears on the door-steps of some poor individual, as if a gift left by a benefactor. However, soon after they are put on, the wearer begins walking, and

they continue walking until they die of exhaustion, far, far from home; after which the buusabake go on without them, looking for another victim. A few strong willed individuals have managed to remove the sandals and escape death, and it is from such that stories of the buusabake continue to grow.

A pair of old sandals haunted by an evil earth element, the buusabake, after being worn for 1d4 hours attempts to *dominate* the wearer (DC 16). If the save is successful, the buusabake will attempt on the next day and every 24 hours thereafter for 1 week, after which it will move on, if no domination is possible. If the save fails, the buusabake forces the wearer to walk in a random direction and continue walking. At some point fatigue, then exhaustion, and hunger all set in, but still the wearer continues to walk, without stopping for food, drink or rest. The wearer is allowed a second save after three days of walking, but if this fails, the wearer will continue to walk until they die of exhaustion. When not being worn, the buusabake can move on their own, running or walking as if being worn by a humanoid with a speed of 30 ft..

Ganpishigami

Aura strong enchantment
Slot none; **Weight** -

DESCRIPTION

A traveling piece of paper which especially delights in accompanying scholars, wizards and priests, at least for a brief time, the Ganpishigami is a legend among the learned. Though it often goes completely unnoticed by those to whom it latches, the Ganpishigami, if discovered, is more than willing to share some of what it has learned in its years of travels, provided the one doing the asking is polite about it.

The Ganpishigami is a piece of high quality paper measuring 12 inches by 24 inches. Possessed by a curious air spirit, the paper seeks to learn as much as possible about the world, and it does so by observing and listening to those around it. The paper has an AC of 6, 9 hp, regeneration 1 (fire), Int 24, Wis 24. If a person is aware of its nature and writes a question in ink upon its surface, the question will disappear and, if the paper knows the answer, new writing replaces the question, providing the answer. The paper is considered to have a Knowledge (all) +21 skill modifier for the purpose of answering questions, but it cannot answer questions about unknowable things, such as the future. The Ganpishigami will travel with a single individual for 1d6+1 days and then move on, unless the individual is actively involved in something of great interest or importance, in which case the paper may decide to remain longer.

Most often, the paper, once it settles on a temporary companion will slip quietly into that person's belongings, as a rolled up piece of unassuming paper, and it will remain in that position until it decides to move on, or is threatened. Besides its rolled up form, the Ganpishigami can fold itself, as origami, and assume three other forms, assuming any of these forms is a standard action for the paper.

The first additional form is that of an origami butterfly. In this form, the Ganpishigami has fly 40 ft. (perfect), an AC of 13, Reflex +5, and evasion. This is the Ganpishigami's traveling form.

The second additional form is that of an origami wand. In this form, the Ganpishigami has fly 20 ft. (perfect), an AC of 12, Reflex +4, and cast spells as a 9th level wizard. The Ganpishigami has no need to prepare spells and is considered to know all core spells.

The third additional form is that of an origami dagger. In this form, the Ganpishigami has fly 20 ft. (perfect), an AC of 13, Reflex +4, Stealth +27, and attacks as a 9th level rogue (melee +13, 1d4, 19-20/x2; sneak attack +4d6). The dagger form counts as having a +3 bonus for the purpose of overcoming damage reduction.

Gyokucakigumidai

Aura weak enchantment
Slot none; **Weight** 2 lbs

DESCRIPTION

A delicate tea set carved from finest jade, the Gyokucakigumidai, was from the very beginning, prized as a piece of art. Though it has passed through many hands over the years, it currently belongs to the Sugachi clan, who use it when entertaining important guests. At all other times it occupies a place of honor in the clan's great hall.

The Gyokucakigumidai was possessed by an air element almost as soon as it was finished, so exquisite was its construction. All tea served using the Gyokucakigumidai removes fatigue, nausea, fear and panic from the ones drinking it. The tea also grants a +4 morale bonus to all Diplomatic skill checks made by the drinker(s) for one hour.

Of late, the spirit in the tea set has grown more powerful, capable of short episodes of flight, and upon occasion, in the mornings, the members of the Sugachi clan will find the tea set in places where no one remembers placing it.

Kikuiwa Hammer

Aura moderate enchantment
Slot none; **Weight** 4 lbs

DESCRIPTION

When old Kikuiwa village was almost entirely destroyed by a flood, the few remaining villagers abandoned their houses and moved to higher ground. While they took most of their belongings with them, a single old wooden mallet which had been placed in a high corner of a hut, was overlooked. Many years later, a wandering musician found the hammer on the floor of the ruins of the old hut, remarkably well preserved and he took it with him, unleashing a great deal of violence upon the world.

The Kikuiwa hammer is possessed by a bitter earth spirit which delights in bloodshed. The hammer has an animal like cunning and at night, when unobserved, it floats through the air, seeking out a sleeping victim to brain. The hammer functions as a tiny animated object, with fly 20 ft. (perfect). It has 6 hp (hardness 5), regeneration 1 hp/hour, AC 14, and Melee slam +4 (1d4+1, x3). When moving, it has Stealth +14. If the hammer's victim is asleep, it gains an automatic critical when it attacks the first time.



Tsukashi Saddle

Aura moderate enchantment
Slot horse body; **Weight** 35 lbs

DESCRIPTION

This heavy military saddle has been in the Tsukashi family for seven generations and has, in each generation, seen use in battle. Each father has given it to their son when that son is called upon to fight for the clan, and so far, it has seen the sons of the family safely through every battle. When not in use, the saddle is given a place of honor in a small shrine at the back of the family's stable.

The saddle is possessed of a fire spirit and grants the rider, while seated upon the saddle gains a +4 morale bonus to all Ride skill checks. Both horse and rider also gain a +4 bonus to Dexterity and the evasion ability. Further, while wearing the saddle, the horse has a +4 morale bonus to all Saving throws.

Ancestral Relics

A type of magic item fairly unique to Kaidan, and quite rare, are those items termed Ancestral Relics. Ancestral relics are powerfully enchanted items, taking a variety of forms and functions, but each sharing one thing in common: they derive their power from the soul of a slain individual. Because of their unique creation method, most ancestral relics are only capable of being used by a character who bears a blood relationship to the one who was sacrificed to power the item, though there have been some cases where an ancestral relic will accept as a wielder one who has done a great deed for the family.

When an ancestral relic is properly used, it grows in power as its user grows in power, and as the user completes tasks pleasing to the item.

Ancestral relics are priceless, and the secrets to their manufacture were forcibly lost by Imperial decree over 600 years ago. At that time, the crafting of Ancestral Relics was the province of the onmyoji wizards, who jealously guarded the secrets of their manufacturing. Unscrupulous wizards would make the Relics for any house which desired one, whether they were noble or common, so long as the payment was sufficient, and the price was always very steep. The last known ancestral relic to be

created was the Hamato Mirror. Lord Hamato's brother was an onmyoji who coveted his lands and, in order to gain those lands, wickedly entrapped Lord Hamato in a mirror, using the rituals for Relic creation. Following this episode, the manufacturing of further Ancestral Relics was forbidden, on pain of honorless death. All documents detailing the creation of such items were confiscated and burned.

Today, only a little over 100 such items are known to still exist, most of them held in the hands of the various noble, samurai and commoner houses who commissioned their creation. Only a handful of samurai houses possess more than one of these items.

Despite the loss of the specific rituals necessary for the creation of an Ancestral Relic, some generalities are still remembered. It is known that the creation of the relics demand the soul of a prominent member of the household and that the individual was sacrificed in a most gruesome and murderous way. While some gave their souls voluntarily, not all did. Regardless, the ancestor's soul is what fuels the item, and the spirit of the item is always subject to the will of the user.

The following rules apply to all Ancestral Relics:

- Ancestral Relics are tied to the family that possesses the item, having been empowered by the binding of the soul of one of that family's ancestors into the weapon or item. Individuals granted honorary family status for deeds of service to the family may sometimes be able to use an ancestral relic.
- Ancestral Relics detect as magic (normally strong necromancy) but they function as masterwork items in the hands of someone not of the appropriate family.
- Ancestral Relics may take any form, many are weapons, but certainly not all of them.
- The powers of an Ancestral Relic are activated through event triggers, unique to each item. (For example: An Ancestral Relic Katana's first power is activated once its wielder defeats an enemy of the family in single combat). Powers are always activated at GM's discretion.
- The powers of an Ancestral Relics only manifest if the character using the Relic manifests the proper abilities or characteristics prior to activating the event trigger. For each item, the required abilities or characteristics will vary. One item might require sufficient honor, another sufficient Strength or Intelligence, and still another a preset level of personal wealth. As a character's relevant abilities become stronger, the powers of an item grow progressively stronger. Typically, it is necessary, among other things, for a character to gain at least two character levels before being able to activate the next power an item possesses. Characteristics necessary to be able to qualify for the next power are given in parenthesis, *(2nd level; Ride 1)*, for example.
- Once a character activates a power of the ancestral relic, that power is always available to them. A power must always be activated before the next power becomes available.
- Ancestral Relic Weapons must comply with the rules for Weapon creation, meaning no relic can have greater than a +5 bonus, though it may possess other abilities on top of the bonus to hit and damage.

Sample Ancestral Relics

Dark Brush of House Yumisada

Aura Strong Necromancy; **CL** 20th
Slot -; **Weight** 1 lb.

DESCRIPTION

The dark brush of house Yumisada appears as an elegant calligraphy brush. Its brush-head made of black boar bristle, and its handle is of the darkest ebony, inlaid with runes of gold. Infused with the soul of a mad poet, the brush is a powerful tool in the hands of the right artist. The brush is traditionally given to the oldest daughter of the clan head, who serves as the major domo of the house. If the clan head does not have a daughter, it is given to a niece. The brush is capable of writing glyphs, runes and words of power, each of which functions as the casting of a spell. All spell effects utilize the user's character level as the Caster Level.

1st power *(2nd level; Craft [calligraphy] 2) alarm* 1/day; ***event trigger:*** you must swear allegiance to your clan lord

2nd power *(4th level; Neutral alignment) fear* 1/day, and then an additional time per day every four levels for a maximum 5/day at 20th level; ***event trigger:*** you must create a masterwork piece of calligraphy

3rd power *(6th level; Scribe Scroll) arcane lock 3/day* per day; ***event trigger:*** you must slay an enemy of your clan and dip the brush in their blood

4th power *(8th level; Charisma 14) fireball* 1/day; ***event trigger:*** you must convince an enemy of your clan to support your clan in some way

5th power *(10th level; Bluff 10) darkness* at will; ***event trigger:*** you must be marry or be married to a member of your clan

6th power *(12th level; Sense Motive 10) glyph of warding* 1/day; ***event trigger:*** you must raise the slain body of a clan enemy as a skeleton or zombie under your control

7th power *(14th level; Evil alignment] zone of truth* 1/day; ***event trigger:*** you must convince an enemy of your clan to swear fealty to your clan lord

8th power *(16th level; Charisma 16) power word torment* 1/day; ***event trigger:*** you must give birth, or have given birth, to a son

9th power *(18th level; Dexterity 16) calm* at will, *speak with dead* 1/day; ***event trigger:*** you must give birth, or have given birth, to a daughter

10th power *(20th level; Craft [calligraphy] 20) wish* 1/year, but must be cast for another person; ***event trigger:*** you must kill the son of a rival clan lord and dip the brush in his blood

Sangiro's Useful Kunai

Aura Strong Necromancy; **CL** 20th
Slot -; **Weight** 3 lbs.

DESCRIPTION

This ancestral relic is possessed by House Tanaka, a rice farming clan in Oteru province and is, to all appearances, nothing more than a common farmer's tool, being only a dull iron spike on a wood handle: useful for digging, prying, rough carving, and if need be, serving as an improvised weapon. Sangiro Tanaka was an altruistic farmer of middling wealth who sought to better his village and lord by giving aid to every person. The spirit of this item encourages its owner to give aid and money to every cause.

1st power *(2nd level; Good alignment)* When placed on a flat surface, the awl always rotates to point to true north; ***event trigger:*** you must act to help someone less fortunate than you in a meaningful way.

2nd power *(4th level; Sense Motive 4)* +1 ancestral bonus to Hit/Damage; ***event trigger:*** you must help someone with equal fortune as you in a meaningful way and not accept payment for it.

3rd power *(6th level; Knowledge Local 6) detect secret doors* at will, you must tap the kunai on a wall to discern any secret doors on that wall; ***event trigger:*** you must help someone with greater fortune than you in a meaningful way and not accept payment for it.

4th power *(8th level; Charisma 14)* +2 ancestral bonus to Hit/Damage; ***event trigger:*** you must help someone who does not deserve it in a meaningful way and not accept payment for it.

5th power *(10th level; Wisdom 14) detect traps* at will, you must tap the kunai on the floor to reveal any traps within 15 feet; ***event trigger:*** you must help someone whom you consider an enemy in a meaningful way and not accept payment for it.

6th power *(12th level; Sense Motive 10)* +3 ancestral bonus to Hit/Damage; ***event trigger:*** You must save the life of someone less fortunate than you.

7th power *(14th level; Profession [farming 10]* knock at will, you must tap the kunai on the lock to be opened; ***event trigger:*** You must save the life of someone of equal fortune to you and not accept payment for it.

8th power *(16th level; Wisdom 16)* +4 ancestral bonus to Hit/Damage; event ***trigger:*** You must save the life of someone of greater fortune than you and not accept payment for it.

9th power *(18th level; Knowledge Local 18)* The kunai gains the hardness of adamantine and is considered Good for the purposes of bypassing damage reduction; ***event trigger:*** You must save the life of someone who does not deserve it and not accept payment for it.

10th power *(20th level; Charisma 18)* +5 ancestral bonus to Hit/Damage, and you cannot be disarmed of the kunai; ***event trigger:*** You must save the life of someone you consider an enemy and not accept payment for it.

Kumoheki, Yumi of House Rucaso

Aura Strong Necromancy; **CL** 20th
Slot -; **Weight** 4 lbs.

DESCRIPTION

The Rucaso clan was, in ages past, renowned for their mounted archery, and the symbol of their clan, wielded by their clan head, has long been Skysplitter, a powerful yumi, which legends say, can call lightning from the sky upon the enemies of the clan. While such power has not been demonstrated in living memory, for the current clan head is more bureaucrat than warrior, as was his father before him, the clan storytellers still

delight in recalling those famous battles where Skysplitter rained down death. The bow holds the soul of Rucasowa no Shikomo, a powerful archer who was renowned for his precisely place shots, but who angered the clan head through fiery insolence.

1st power *(2nd level; Ride 2)* +1 ancestral bonus to Hit/Damage; ***event trigger***: you must kill an enemy with but a single shot from the bow.

2nd power *(4th level; Mounted Combat)* +4 ancestral bonus to Ride checks; ***event trigger***: while mounted, you must kill an enemy archer

3rd power *(6th level; Dexterity 14)* +2 ancestral bonus to Hit/Damage, bow's critical threat range increases to 19-20/x3; ***event trigger:*** with the bow, you must slay an enemy who is at least 200 feet away from you

4th power *(8th level; Ride 6) lightning bolt* 1/day (Caster Level equals Character Level; number of *lightning bolts* per day increases by one every 4 levels, to a maximum of 4/day at 20th level); ***event trigger:*** using the bow, you must defeat an enemy with 2 more HD than yourself, in the rain

5th power *(10th level; Far Shot)* +3 ancestral bonus to Hit/Damage, bow's critical threat range increases to 19-20/x4; e***vent trigger***: using the bow, you must kill an enemy who is at least 300 feet away from you.

6th power *(12th level; Dexterity 16)* bow is *shocking;* ***event trigger***: you must be struck by *lightning*, while holding the bow, and live

7th power *(14th level; Mounted Archery)* +4 ancestral bonus to Hit/Damage; ***event trigger:*** using the bow, you must kill an enemy who is at least 400 feet away from you.

8th power *(16th level; Charisma 14) control weather* 1/day, bow's critical threat range increases to 18-20/x4; ***event trigger:*** you must kill at least three foes with HD equal to, or greater than, yours, in a single combat, using a combination of arrows and lightning.

9th power *(18th level; Deadly Aim)* +5 ancestral bonus to Hit/Damage; ***event trigger:*** you must engage an enemy force numbering at least a hundred strong

10th power *(20th level; Dexterity 18) control weather* 1/day, a target hit by a critical hit from the bow must succeed at a DC 18 Fortitude save or die; *event trigger:* Must lead a mounted military charge into an enemy force in a lightning storm

Bag of Rice

Aura weak conjuration; **CL** 5rd
Slot none; **Price** 780 gp; **Weight** 1 lbs.

DESCRIPTION

Once per day, you may use this small rice-filled hemp bag to immediately absorb up to 2 gallons of water. The bag of rice gains no weight from the water so absorbed. You may do this a total of 7 days, and the days need not be consecutive. Upon command, the bag will immediately release all of the water within it (up to 14 gallons). The bag may be used and reused in this way indefinitely. Alternately, the bag may be cut open, and it will immediately produce a quantity of cooked rice equal to twice the amount of water contained within (14 gallons of water would produce 28 gallons of rice; a gallon of rice is enough to feed 10 people). Cutting the bag in this way destroys the bag.

CONSTRUCTION REQUIREMENTS

Craft Wondrous Item, *create water*; **Cost** 390 gp

Bracers of the Viper

Aura strong transmutation; **CL** 7th
Slot wrist; **Price** 51,030 gp; **Weight** ZZ lbs.

DESCRIPTION

These bracers are made of green snake skin, and when worn, they infuse your blood with venom. When you place these bracers on your wrist, you take an immediate point of Constitution damage which cannot be removed unless the bracers are removed. While wearing the bracers you are immune to all poisons and your unarmed strikes are counted as being envenomed *(type* touch, *save* DC 16, *effect* 1d3 Con, *frequency* 1/round for 4 rounds, *cure* 1 save). Once per day, while wearing the bracers, you may change into a large viper, as *beast shape II,* and remain in that form for up to seven minutes. As a viper, your bite is poisonous.

CONSTRUCTION REQUIREMENTS

Craft Wondrous Item, *beast shape* II, *poison,* non-good; **Cost** 25,515 gp

Distracting Fan

Aura weak enchantment; **CL** 3rd
Slot none; **Price** 3,630 gp; **Weight** 1 lb.

DESCRIPTION

This silk hand-fan, when opened, focuses the attention of a single targeted individual so that they are less likely to notice other things going on around them, and they are more likely to agree with what you say, without realizing what they are actually agreeing to (DC 14 Will negates). All Bluff, Sleight of Hand and Stealth attempts made against this target have their DC decreased by 8 for the duration of the effect. To select the target you must open the fan and speak to them. The target of the fan must be within 10 ft. of yourself for the fan to be effective. The effect lasts for ten rounds and the fan may be used up to three times per day.

CONSTRUCTION REQUIREMENTS

Craft Wondrous Item, *sleep*; **Cost** 1815 gp

Kami's Bell

Aura moderate enchantment; **CL** 5th
Slot hand; **Price** 3030 gp; **Weight** 1 lb.

DESCRIPTION

This brass bell is attached to a leather strap which may be worn on the wrist. When you purposefully ring the bell, all undead within thirty feet become panicked and flee (DC 16 Will negates) for 1d6 rounds. The bell may be rung this way three times per day. Additionally, if the bell still has daily charges, so long as it is attached to your wrist, all attacks you make against any undead foe gain a +1 morale bonus to hit and to damage.

CONSTRUCTION REQUIREMENTS

Craft Wondrous Item, *bless,* turn undead; **Cost** 1515 gp

Kami's Brew

Aura strong enchantment; **CL** 10th
Slot none; **Price** 2020 gp; **Weight** 2 lbs.

DESCRIPTION

When you unseal this clay bottle, you may proceed to pour out up to twenty gallons of sake. After you have poured twenty gallon's worth of sake, the bottle is empty. The bottle is also empty, regardless of the amount poured, at the end of an hour. The sake created is unique in that it has no effect on most creatures, other than taste. However, any creature of the oni subtype, possessing fewer than 10 HD, which drinks the brew falls asleep for ten minutes (DC Will 16 negates).

CONSTRUCTION REQUIREMENTS

Craft Wondrous Item, *create water*, *deeper slumber*; **Cost** 1010 gp

Kami's Robe

Aura moderate transmutation; **CL** 11th
Slot body; **Price** 97,060 gp; **Weight** -

DESCRIPTION

This white-silk ceremonial robe is styled in the fashion of yokinto priests. When worn, you gain Resist fire 10, and Resist cold 10. Furthermore, natural terrain never counts as difficult terrain and you may, for up to ten rounds a day, move through solid objects, as with *pass wall*. These ten rounds need not be consecutive.

CONSTRUCTION REQUIREMENTS

Craft Wondrous Item, *passwall*, *resist energy*; **Cost** 48,530 gp

The Lover's Brush

Aura moderate enchantment; **CL** 12th
Slot none; **Price** 4100 gp; **Weight** -

DESCRIPTION

Once per day you may activate the magic of this brush as you use it to write a letter to another person. That person, upon reading the enchanted letter, will be convinced of their affection for you (DC 14 Will save negates). Any Diplomatic attempt you make to convince them to perform an action for you gains a +10 circumstance bonus. The effect lasts for 12 hours after the target's initial reading of the letter.

CONSTRUCTION REQUIREMENTS

Craft Wondrous Item**,** *charm person*; **Cost** 2050 gp

Sandals of the Lake

Aura moderate transmutation; **CL** 7th
Slot feet; **Price** 9004 gp; **Weight** 2 lbs.

DESCRIPTION

These simple stilt sandals made of wood and straw twine are unassuming in appearance. Your speed, when wearing them, is increased by 10 feet per round, and you are not hindered by muddy terrain. Additionally, so long as you are moving at at-least a double move rate, you may walk on water for up to 20 rounds per day and these rounds need not be consecutive.

CONSTRUCTION REQUIREMENTS

Craft Wondrous Item, *freedom of movement, water walk*; **Cost** 4502 gp

Shawl of Winter

Aura moderate transmutation; **CL** 16,010th
Slot shoulders; **Price** 16,010 gp; **Weight** 4 lbs.

DESCRIPTION

A straw shawl, lined on the inside with linen, such as is sometimes worn by peasants, the *shawl of winter* is used by mountain witches to better traverse wintry conditions. The shawl grants you resist cold 10 and the ability to see perfectly in snowy conditions. Furthermore, snow does not in any way impede your movement while you wear the shawl.

CONSTRUCTION REQUIREMENTS

Craft Wondrous Item, *freedom of movement, resist energy*; **Cost** 8,005 gp

Skull of the Yokai

Aura strong abjuration; **CL** 11th
Slot none; **Price** 22,000 gp; **Weight** 2 lbs.

DESCRIPTION

This polished skull, fashioned from the skull of a henge-yokai, prevents all shape-changing within a twenty feet of itself (DC 19 Will negates) and any shapechanged individual who enters the area of effect must succeed at a Will save or be forced back into their true form.

CONSTRUCTION REQUIREMENTS

Craft Wondrous Item, *revert to the true form*, evil; **Cost** 11,000 gp

Soldier's Finger-bone

Aura weak necromancy; **CL** 5th
Slot none; **Price** 1,000 gp; **Weight** -

DESCRIPTION

This human finger bone, when eaten (a standard action), grants you 10 temporary hit-points and makes you immune to fatigue. Both effects last one hour.

CONSTRUCTION REQUIREMENTS

Craft Wondrous Item, *false life*, evil; **Cost** 500 gp

Soldier's Heart

Aura strong necromancy; **CL** 13th
Slot none; **Price** 4500 gp; **Weight** 1 lbs.

DESCRIPTION

This preserved human heart, when swallowed whole (a full round action), grants you 30 temporary hit-point, +4 to Strength and Constitution, and immunity to all energy drain effects. These effects last for one hour.

CONSTRUCTION REQUIREMENTS

Craft Wondrous Item, *bear's endurance*, *bull strength*, *false life*, evil; **Cost** 2,750 gp

Soldier's Rib

Aura moderate necromancy; **CL** 9th
Slot none; **Price** 2,800 gp; **Weight** -

DESCRIPTION

This one inch piece of a human rib, when eaten (a standard action), grants you 20 temporary hit points, +4 to all Fortitude saves and makes you immune to poison. The effects last for one hour.

CONSTRUCTION REQUIREMENTS

Craft Wondrous Item, *delay poison*, *false life*, evil ; **Cost** 1,400 gp

Vault of the Ready Home

Aura strong necromancy; **CL** 18th
Slot none; **Price** 255,000 gp; **Weight** 500 lbs.

DESCRIPTION

This burial vault is inscribed with runes of warding and power on both the inside and the outside. To use the vault, you inscribe your name on the lid of the vault and then place a living body inside. The soul inhabiting the body is cast out (DC 20 Fortitude save negates) and the body lies within perfectly preserved for up to a month. If, during that month, you are killed, your soul is immediately drawn into the body within the vault and you awaken 1d6 rounds after death in your new body. If the lid of the vault is lifted prior to your death, the body inside is killed instantly unless (20% chance) there is a nearby elemental spirit to possess it, in which case it rises as a tamashaniki. The body used, besides being capable of fitting within the vault, must be either an animal or humanoid. You gain the physical ability scores of that body (Strength, Dexterity, and Constitution), any racial HD associated with that body type, and any extraordinary abilities native to the body. You retain your own mental ability scores (Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma) as well as all class abilities. There is a 50% chance per use of the vault that you take one permanent negative level.

CONSTRUCTION REQUIREMENTS

Craft Wondrous Item, *fortify the spirit*, *magic jar*, *preserve corpse*, evil; **Cost** 127,500 gp

Appendix 1: The Calendar of Kaidan

The Kaidan Calendar is divided into a thirteen month division based on a seven day week and the lunar calendar. Before the rise of the Undying Emperor and the ascension of the Shogun to power, the calendar year was more complicated, being based on the Zaoist calendar, which added extra days to months and extra months to the calendar every few years, as necessary, according to the calculations and needs of the priests. Under the Shogun, the calendar was standardized with the addition of the month of Nekketsusuki. Under the Shogunate calendar, an extra week is added every six years just prior to Nagatsuki. This week is known as Shukan'no'taiteifushi, the week of the eternal emperor, and is a national celebration. The Kaidan Year begins on the first day of the month of Kisaragitsuki, which roughly corresponds to the English month of February, and ends in the month of Shiwasusuki.

The Kaidanese reckon years according to the reign of each emperor so that, as the Undying Emperor has been on the throne for 724 years, it is currently the 724th Year of the Reign of Anotku, or, more officially, the 724th Year of the Eternal Throne.

Note: *Though it has been only 719 years since the beginning of the Curse, Anotku officially took the throne five years before the onset of the Curse, and thus his reign is counted from that earlier date, and not the latter date.*

The Days of the Week:

Nichiyo	Sun Day (Sunday)
Getsuyo	Moon Day (Monday)
Kayo	Fire Day (Tuesday)
Suiiyo	Water Day (Wednesday)
Mokuyo	Wood Day (Thursda)
Kin'yo	Gold Day (Friday)
Doyo	Earth Day (Saturday)

The Thirteen Months of the Year

Kisaragisuki	The month of changing clothes	Winter
Yayoisuki	The month of new life	Spring
Unohansuki	The month of blooming flowers	Spring
Sanaetsuki	The month of early rice planting	Spring
Minatsuki	The month of water	Spring/Summer
Fumisuki	The month of books	Summer
Nekketsusuki	The month of hot blood	Summer
Nagatsuki	The long month	Summer
Kamiarisuki	The month of the kami	Fall
Haochisuki	The month of falling leaves	Fall
Shimotsuki	The month of frost	Fall
Mutsuki	The month of affection	Winter
Shiwasusuki	The month of running priests	Winter

Appendix 2: Feats of Kaidan

Animal Speaker
You can speak with all animals.

Prerequisites: Hengeyokai, Wisdom 13, ClanAnimal Speaker

Benefits: You can now use the *speak with animal* spell-like ability, granted by the Clan-Animal Speaker feat to speak with any animal. You also gain an additional 3 uses of this ability per day.

Armored Horseman (Combat)
Many hours in the saddle, combined with your physical strength, allow you to more easily wear armor when on horseback.

Prerequisites: Str 13, Ride 5 ranks,

Benefit: You may reduce your armor check penalty by an amount equal to your Strength bonus when making a Ride check. You may not reduce your armor check penalty to less than 0 through the use of this feat.

Bird Speaker
You can speak with birds.

Prerequisites: Tengu, Wis 13

Benefits: You gain *speak with animals* as a spell-like ability so long as the animal being spoken to is a bird. You can use this ability a number of times per day equal to 2 + your Wisdom bonus

Clan-Animal Speaker
You can speak with animals affiliated with your clan.

Prerequisites: Hengeyokai, Wisdom 13

Benefits: You gain *speak with animals* as a spell-like ability so long as the animal being spoken to is the same as the one you can change into using your racial shapechanging ability. You can use this ability a number of times per day equal to your Wisdom bonus.

Dice Whisperer
Your ears are so sharp, and so attuned to the fall of the dice, that you can tell, sight unseen, what numbers are showing on their faces.

Prerequisites: Blind, 6 ranks in Perception, Incorrigible Gambler.

Benefit: You gain a +2 bonus to Perception checks. Furthermore, if you succeed on a DC 20 Perception check, you can tell what numbers are showing on any dice you have heard land. When playing gambling games which require you to guess the face of dice, you may add your Perception skill when making a Profession (gambling) check.

Extra Hengeyokai Shapechanging
You can change shape an additional two times per day.

Prerequisites: Hengeyokai Benefits: You can use your racial shapechanging powers 2 extra times per day.

Special: You can take this feat more than once and each time its effects stack.

Greater Kotodama Syntax
Your mastery of Kotodama significantly increases your power word spells.

Prerequisites: Kotodama Syntax, Linguistics 9 ranks.

Benefit: As Kotodama Syntax, but the skill bonuses increase to +4 and the increase in each hit point range is now 20%. These benefits do not stack with the increases from Kotodama Syntax.

Greater Shell and Shield
You always have cover against ranged attacks when using a shield.

Prerequisite: Kappa, Greater Shield Focus, Shell and Shield

Benefit: When equipped with a shield, you gain cover against ranged attacks (+4 AC and +2 Reflex save), so long as you are not in melee. When in melee, and equipped with a shield, you gain partial cover against ranged attacks (+2 AC and +1 Reflex saves). These bonuses do not stack with the bonuses granted by Greater Shield Focus and Shield Focus.

Heighten Power Word (Metamagic)
You can cast power word spells as if they were a higher level.

Benefit: A heightened *power word* spell has a higher spell level than normal (up to a maximum of 9th level). Unlike other metamagic feats, Heighten Power Word actually increases the effective level of the spell that it modifies. All effects dependent on

spell level (such as the ability to penetrate a *lesser globe of invulnerability*) are calculated according to the heightened level. Additionally, increasing the spell level of a power word spell increases the maximum hit points it can affect. For every level increase, the hit point maximum of each effect of the spell increases by +10.

For example, Davor is a wizard with Heighten Power Word, who casts *power word burden** as a 6th level spell. When determining the hp maximum of its effect categories, its duration becomes permanent for creatures with 50 hp or less, 1d4+1 minutes for creatures with 51 to 80 hp, and 1d4+1 rounds for creatures with 81 to 140 hp.

Level Increase: The Heightened Power Word spell is as difficult to prepare and cast as a spell of its effective level.

*Indicates a new spell found in this product.

Improved Far Shot

Your skill allows you to increase the range of your weapons without sacrificing accuracy.

Prerequisites: Far Shot, BAB +5.

Benefit: When using a ranged weapon, the range of the weapon is increased by 50%.

Normal: A weapon's range is given in the weapon's description. When you take this feat, a weapon with a normal 10 ft. range would instead, for you, have a 15 ft. range and a weapon with a 100 ft. range would, in your hands, have a 150 ft. range.

Incorrigible Gambler

You have long been a gambler, and greatly enjoy the toss of the dice and the jingle of coins exchanging hand.

Benefit: You gain a +2 bonus to Profession (gambling) and a +2 bonus to both Sense Motive and Bluff checks made in conjunction with a game of chance in which you are involved.

Kappa Crawl

You can walk on all fours without penalty

Prerequisites: Acrobatics +2, Kappa

Benefit: When prone, you may move at your full walking speed without having to stand. Your AC penalty against melee attacks in this position is reduced to -2. You may not run in this position.

Normal: When prone, a character's speed is normally 5 feet and the character takes a -4 penalty to AC against melee attacks.

Kappa Kiyup

Up or down, it's all the same to you.

Prerequisites: Acrobatics +4, Kappa, Kappa Crawl

Benefit: While prone you suffer no AC penalty against melee attacks. Moving from a prone position to a standing position is a free action which provokes no attacks of opportunity.

Normal: When prone, a character normally suffers a -4 penalty against AC. Moving from a prone position to a standing position is normally a move action which provokes attacks of opportunity.

Kotodama Enlightenment

You have reached a true understanding of the Kotodama so that nearly every enchantment becomes a power word.

Prerequisites: Kotodama Lore, Greater Kotodama, Skill Focus (Linguistics), Linguistics 19 ranks, able to speak Abyssal, Celestial, and Infernal, caster level 19.

Benefit: You can cast any enchantment (compulsion) as a power word, its range changes to close, affects only 1 target creature and rather than grant a saving throw, the enchantment (compulsion) spell automatically affects that one target if its current hit points are equal to the spell's level x11 or less. For example, a witch could transform a *dominate monster* spell into a power word that would only affect creatures with 99 hit points or less.

Kotodama Lore

You know enough of Kotodama to make yourself understood to any speaking creature.

Prerequisites: Skill Focus (Linguistics), able to speak Abyssal, Celestial, and Infernal.

Benefit: You can make a DC 15 Linguistics check as a free action once per round to communicate a simple concept to a creature that speaks a language without sharing a language with that creature. More complex concepts require a DC 20 or DC 25 Linguistics check (at the GM's discretion), and generally require a move action to express. You can also make a DC 15 to DC 25 Linguistics check as a free action to get the general gist of the meaning of any spoken statement, regardless of what language it is in.

Two creatures that both have this feat can communicate freely with each other even if they do not share a common language, though their meaning is impossible for anyone without this feat to understand without the aid of magic.

You can also cast *read magic*, as a spell-like ability using your total hit dice as your caster level, at will.

Kotodama Mastery
You ability with Kotodama allows you to call upon its power spontaneously when spellcasting.

Prerequisites: Kotodama Lore, Skill Focus (Linguistics), Linguistics 3 ranks, able to speak Abyssal, Celestial, and Infernal, caster level 3.

Benefit: You can channel stored spell energy into power word spells you know that you haven't prepared ahead of time. If you are a preparation spellcaster (such as clerics and wizards) you can "lose" a prepared spell in order to cast any power word spell of the same level or lower. If you are a spontaneous spellcaster (such as a sorcerer), you can apply metamagic feats to power word spells without increasing the spell's casting time.

Kotodama Origami
You are capable of using a creature's written spirit name and origami image as a focus.

Prerequisite: Linguistics 6 ranks, Spellcraft 6 ranks, Caster Level 6

Benefit: You may enhance the effects of your spells by using a victim's written spirit name as a focus. When you create the origami license you must write the name perfectly on the first try. Make a Linguistics check (DC 10 + CR of the target creature + its Wisdom Modifier). Failure results in this feat being useless against that specific individual until you gain another rank in Linguistics, at which point you may attempt kotodama origami against them again.

If successful, the save DC of any spell you cast on that individual creature is increased by +2. A *binding* spell, *banishment* (or similar spell) and Spells with the curse descriptor cannot be removed until the origami is ruined.

You can only have one functioning Kotodama Origami at a time; if you use Kotodama Origami on another individual it removes the effects on the previous creature. If a Kotodama Origami is ever ruined you can never create another focus of that individual creature again (though another spellcaster with this feat could).

Special: When a Kotodama Origami is created, the next time that creature sleeps it dreams of the Kotodama's creator casting the spell and uttering its spirit name, if the creature does not sleep it learns of the existence of the Kotodama Origami upon the next sunset. A successful Knowledge (arcana) check (DC 15) recognizes the origami as a Kotodama Origami.

Kotodama Syntax (General)
You have learned enough of the basic structure of the Kotodama to channel more spell energy into power word spells.

Prerequisites: Linguistics 5 ranks.

Benefit: Increase the hit point maximums in each category of effect of power word spells you cast by +10%. You also gain a +2 bonus to all Bluff, Diplomacy, and Intimidate checks made by speaking.

For example, Xasha is a cleric with the Kotodama domain (see below) and First Language Syntax. She casts *power word daze**, which normally has three categories of effect based on the target's hit points: a target creature with 45 or fewer hp is dazed for 4d4 rounds, one with 46-90hp is dazed for 2d4 rounds, and one with 91-135 hp is dazed for 1d4 rounds. Because Xasha has the Kotodama Syntax feat each of those hit point ranges is increased by 10%, such that a target with 49 or fewer hp is dazed for 4d4 rounds, one with 50-99 hp is dazed for 2d4 rounds, and one with 100-148 is dazed for 1d4 rounds.

*Indicates a new spell found in this product.

Mountain Strider
You are more nimble when in the mountains.

Prerequisites: Tengu, Mountain Tengu, Dex 13

Benefit: When in mountainous terrain, you gain a +2 racial bonus to Acrobatics checks. Furthermore, your speed increases by 5 feet, even when moving through rough terrain. Thus, when moving through normal mountain terrain your speed is 3/4 your base speed + 5 feet, and when through trackless mountain terrain, you actually move at 1/2 speed + 5 feet.

Mountain Heart
You draw strength from your connection to the mountains.

Prerequisites: Tengu, Mountain Tengu, Wis 13

Benefit: When in mountainous terrain, you gain a +1 racial bonus on all saving throws.

Mountain Tengu
You have a close spiritual connection to the mountains.

Prerequisite: Tengu

Benefit: When in mountainous terrain, you gain a +2 racial bonus on Climb checks, Survival checks and Initiative rolls.

Never Speechless
No matter the form you take, you can speak as normal.

Prerequisites: Hengeyokai

Benefits: When you use your racial shapechanging ability to adopt a form normally incapable of speech, you can still speak normally. You may also use any class ability requiring speech when in such a form.

Skillful Follow Up (Combat)

Your extensive training means you are able to more effectively make iterative attacks with a melee weapon.

Prerequisite: BAB +6.

Benefit: All attacks made with a melee weapon, after the first in a round, gain a +2 bonus.

Normal: The penalty for iterative attacks is normally a cumulative -5. This feat effectively reduces that to a -3 penalty.

Shell and Shield

You can use your shell and shield together to grant yourself cover against ranged attacks.

Prerequisite: Kappa, Shield Focus

Benefit: When equipped with a shield you gain partial cover (+2 AC and +1 Reflex saves) against ranged attacks, including spells, so long as you are not in melee. This bonus does not stack with the bonus provided by Shield Focus.

Short Blade Warrior (Combat)

You have trained extensively with smaller swords and can use them to make quick, vicious attacks.

Prerequisite: BAB +3.

Benefit: When wielding a light, one handed sword, such as a short sword, dagger or wakizashi, you gain a +2 bonus to initiative and a +1 bonus to damage with that weapon. The initiative bonus applies only so long as the weapon is in your hand and you are making a melee attack.

Speaker of the Kotodama

You can imbue one of the words of Kotodama with some of its original power.

Prerequisites: Kotodama Lore, Skill Focus (Linguistics), Linguistics ranks equal to triple power word level (see text), able to speak Abyssal, Celestial, and Infernal.

Benefit: Select a power word spell. You must have ranks in Linguistics equal to triple the level of the spell you select. The first time you select this feat you must choose a 1st level power word spell (but see Special, below). You may use this spell once per day as a spell-like ability, using your character level as its caster level.

Special: You may select this spell more than once. Each time you may select a power word spell one level higher than the highest level you have already selected with this feat, gaining the ability to use that spell once per day as a spell-like ability.

Split Word

You can divide the effect of a power word spell among multiple targets.

Prerequisites: Kotodama Lore, Skill Focus (Linguistics), Linguistics 3 ranks, able to speak Abyssal, Celestial, and Infernal, caster level 3.

Benefit: When you cast a power word spell, you may divide its effect between two targets within its range. You reduce the hit point maximum of every effect category of the power word spell by 50%, and apply it separately to the hp totals of the two targets. For example, Eliana is a sorcerer with Split Word who casts *power word stun* at two targets, one with 28 hp and one with 70 hp. She divides the hitpoints of the effect categories of her spell by 50%, so the target with 28 hp is affected for 2d4 rounds, and the target with 70 hp is affected for 1d4 rounds.

Turtle Speed

You may switch between moving on four "legs" and two legs, even at a run.

Prerequisites: Acrobatics +4, kappa, kappa crawl

Benefit: You may, when prone, now move at a running speed. Furthermore, when walking or running, you may move from two legs to four or from four to two as a free action without reducing your speed. When moving on all four limbs, you enjoy a +4 AC bonus against ranged attacks but may not use any weapons requiring hands, nor may you carry anything in your hands while running in this position. Your height, on four legs, is 1/3 your height when on 2 legs. You may thus freely go under some obstacles that might otherwise provide obstruction to movement.

Woodland Cover

You are skilled at using features of the forest to provide yourself cover.

Prerequisites: Favored Terrain class ability (forest)

Benefit: When fighting in a forest environment, you have constant partial cover against ranged attacks. You may not benefit from this feat if you are helpless or flat-footed.

Appendix 3: New Monster: Shikigami

Three and a half feet tall, this creature possesses swarthy green skin, a leering face with oversized features, and small, ivory horns.

The shikigami is one of the smallest oni. As a race, there is little commonality of features between one shikigami and the next. Their skin color varies wildly and garishly, as does their hair color. They tend to have large eyes, large noses, and big ears, but even these features are not universal and some shikigami are more bestial in appearance than others of their ilk. In terms of personality, one shikigami is much like the next. They are simple, possessed of a crude humor, and delight in causing small miseries. A shikigami, left to its own devices, frequently takes to haunting a locale, and playing obnoxious and mean-spirited pranks upon those it encounters.

Shikigami are rarely encountered as independent agents. More often than not, they are conscripted into serving other, more powerful creatures. This includes other oni, but shikigami are also frequently compelled into service as familiars for onmyoji wizards.

Shikigami CR 2

XP 600
CE Small outsider (evil, goblin, oni, shapechanger)
Init +2; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +6

DEFENSE

AC 16, **touch** 13, **flat-footed** 14 (+2 Dex, +3 natural, +1 size)
hp 22 (3d10+6); regeneration 2 (acid, fire)
Fort +4, **Ref** +5, **Will** +3
Immune cold, poison; **Resist** electricity 10; SR 13

OFFENSE

Spd 30 ft.
Melee 2 claws +3 (1d3) or greatclub +3 (1d8)

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 5th)
At will – *invisibility*
3/day – *inflict moderate wounds* (DC 12), *dancing lights, gaseous form, mage hand*
1/day – *charm person* (DC 12)

STATISTICS

Str 11, **Dex** 15, **Con** 12, **Int** 10, **Wis** 11, **Cha** 8
Base Atk +2; **CMB** +1; **CMD** 13
Feats Great Fortitude, Toughness
Skills Bluff +5, Craft (any) +6, Intimidate +6, Perception +6, Sense Motive +6, Stealth +12
Languages Abyssal, Giant, Goblin, Kaidanese
SQ change shape (small or tiny animal; *beastshape II*)

ECOLOGY

Environment any
Organization solitary, pack (2-8), band (5-20; led by a more powerful oni)
Treasure standard

Shikigami Familiar

CE Small outsider
Init +2; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +4

DEFENSE

AC 14, **touch** 11, **flat-footed** 12 (+2 Dex, +1 natural, +1 size)
hp 7 (1d10+2)
Fort +1, **Ref** +4, **Will** +2
Immune cold, poison; **Resist** electricity 10; SR 11

OFFENSE

Spd 30 ft.
Melee 2 claws +0 (1d3-1) or greatclub +0 (1d8-1)

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 5th)
At will – *invisibility*
3/day – *dancing lights, mage hand*

STATISTICS

Str 9, **Dex** 15, **Con** 12, **Int** 10, **Wis** 11, **Cha** 8
Base Atk +1; **CMB** +0; **CMD** 12
Feats Toughness
Skills Bluff +3, Craft (any) +4, Intimidate +4, Perception +4, Sense Motive +4, Stealth +10
Languages as master
SQ change shape (small or tiny animal; *beastshape II*)



Appendix 4: Inspiration for Kaidan

As we researched Kaidan, understanding and inspiration was drawn from a variety of sources. What follows are an alphabetized list of some of the media (books and films) that influenced or informed the writing of this book, along with some minor comments. There were many others, but these come first to mind...

Aragami: The Raging God of Battle (*film, 2002*) Filmed in the space of a week, with only two principle actors, Aragami still manages to pack quite a punch and is a martial treat. A samurai finds himself in a temple, healed of mortal wounds and in the company of the temple's immortal occupant, a "tengu" who calls himself Aragami, and who has saved the samurai by feeding him the liver of the samurai's friend. Aragami's goal is to find an opponent who can defeat him and the battle between the two fills the rest of the movie. The director, Ryûhei Kitamura, has two other films which we will mention for this list: ***Versus*** (2000) about a modern battle in a forest full of undead, and ***Azumi*** (2003) a manga inspired film about a young girl trained as an assassin.

Daimajin *(film; 1966*) *Daimajin* (literally, Great Demon God) is the story of a town, oppressed by evil samurai. After much drama, the villains are crushed by the god of the nearby mountain, who manifests as a giant stone samurai capable of crushing all before him. There were two follow-up movies released the same year with similar plots (***Return of Daimajin***, and ***Wrath of Daimajin***). The relationship of the peasants to the samurai, the potential cruelty of the samurai, and the spiritual forces at work in the background help make this film good viewing when thinking about Kaidan.

Dororo *(film, 2007)* Based upon a 1960s Manga series, *Dororo* tells the tale of an infant whose evil father trades his son's body to 48 demons in return for political power and military victory. The baby, little more than a shell and a soul, is given a golem-like clay body by a skilled healer. As the boy grows, relying on only his spiritual senses (remember he has no real eyes or ears), he learns to use a magical sword and proceeds to hunt down the demons who stole his body and get the pieces back, accompanied only by a female thief who takes to calling herself Dororo. While the middle of the film is weak story-wise, being little more than a series of montages, over-all it is an entertaining movie. It contains several traditional Japanese demons as adversaries, and the whole idea of a body-lacking soul questing to get his body back is, we think, cool.

Handbook to Life in Medieval and Early Modern Japan*; Deal, William E* (*book; 2006*) A wide ranging book, detailing in brief a whole hosts of subjects sociological, martial, religious and historical, we found this to be an interesting "handbook" for our subject.

Japanese Culture Fourth Edition*; Varley, Paul* (*book, 2000*) The original of this book was published in 1973, and it has been updated and expanded since. It came highly recommended and we have indeed found it to be an excellent sourcebook on Japanese culture.

Japanese Experience, The*; Beasley, W. G.* (*book; 1999*) The subtitle of this book is *A Short History of Japan*, and that's about right. It packs a quite a bit of history into an easily read package and while there is much that is left out, what remains is still quite interesting.

Kaidan *(film, 2007*) This Japanese ghost story is the account of a series of events stemming from wrongful murders and leading to more death, misery and the like. It is a slightly convoluted tale which nevertheless all ties together and shows that there is no escaping karma, or the vengeance of the dead.

Kibakichi *(film; 2004*) and **Kibakichi 2** *(film; 2006)* Kibakichi is a werewolf samurai wandering through a land filled with humans, kappa, and yokai. The films are campy, but fun, and they certainly showcase a variety of classic Japanese monsters alongside the werewolf protagonist. And really, a werewolf samurai... what more needs to be said?

Kwaidan *(film, 1964)* This anthology movie is a collection of four stories taken from the classical ***Kwaidan: Stories and Studies of Strange Things*** (Hearn ,1904) and other books written by Lafcadio Hearn. While rarely scary, it is a good introduction to some of the folklore of Japan and contains within it, as well, a retelling of the Battle of Da-no-ura, an episode central to Kaidan's history.

Mushishi *(anime; 2005-2006*) Originally a manga, and also made into a live action feature film (2006), Mushishi (literally Mushi Master) is a beautifully rendered series of stories detailing the efforts of

mushi master Ginko, who travels from place to place dealing with the supernatural entities known as mushi. There is little doubt that the concept of mushi is derived from that of Kami, and while the series has its own mythology, it is heavily informed by the sensibilities of Japanese superstition and traditions. Mushishi is well worth watching for its own sake, but for anyone desiring ideas for a supernatural campaign set in a place very much like Japan, Mushishi cannot be recommended highly enough.

Myths and Legends of Japan*; Davis, F. Hadland* (*book; 1913*) Still being printed today, Davis' book is an excellent sourcebook for some of the various folktales of Japan. The book has its weaknesses, but the breadth of its coverage more than makes up for them, especially as a primer to the subject. Several of the short pieces of fiction at the front of our chapters were derived from this book.

Princess Mononoke *(anime film; 1997*) This lush anime film from Studio Ghibli is set in a sort of feudal Japan, one on the verge of an industrial revolution and the story is told through the experiences of a young Emishi warrior named Ashitaka, who is suffering from a curse he received when he kills a mad-god. The title character (literally Spirit-monster Princess) is a girl raised by giant wolf-gods who is striving to halt the advance of progress and save the great forest spirit which walks the land, bringing life. The film is filled with talking spirit-beasts, kami, brave warriors, and foolish humans, and while it is far from being horror themed, the interplay of the spiritual with the material in the realm of the fantastical strikes a desired chord.

Sanjuro (*film, 1962*) Akira Kurosawa is one of the most renowned of Japanese directors and there are several movies he directed which could make this list. We will mention two others in passing: ***Seven Samurai*** (1954) is perhaps his best known film (and almost won out over Sanjuro for inclusion here), and *Sanjuro's* predecessor, ***Yojimbo*** (1961) has had several remakes and is probably the better known of the two movies. But we have a soft spot for *Sanjuro,* which is the tale of a ronin who decides to help nine young, naive samurai bring down the corruption in their district. This effort unleashes a great deal of violence and bloodshed, much to the eventual frustration of the ronin, who, though quite skilled in violence, would prefer not to have to kill in order to bring about change.

Shinobi: Heart Under Blade (*film; 2005*) Billed as a "romantic-drama," Shinobi is the adaptation of the novel, ***The Kouga Ninja Scrolls***, and is concerned with the romance of two individuals from feuding ninja clans. The ninjas of the movie are somewhat reminiscent of the eight devils of Kimon in the anime film ***Ninja Scroll*** (1993), with each individual having a different preternatural killing technique. If we are going to be brutally honest, the ninjas in this movie served as a major inspiration for the Necrotic Warrior character class which was first introduced in the Kaidan Curse of the Golden Spear trilogy.

Spirited Away (*anime film; 2001*) Another Studio Ghibli film, Spirited Away is set in a modern Japan, but one in which the old gods still exist in their own parallel world. We include the film because it does a good job of showing some of the Japanese concepts of spirits, kami, yokai, dragons and other superstitions. The modern setting merely serves as a contrast to these more ancient ideas and there is plenty of good material here to glean ideas from.

Tale of Zatoichi, The *(film; 1962)* Ichi is a blind yakuza swordsman and gambler who roams the countryside as a masseuse, his sword hidden in his cane. There were a total of twenty-six Zatoichi (literally, blind Ichi) movies made starring the original actor, Shintaro Katsu, and *The Tale of Zatoichi* was first. In addition to the movies, there was a television series, a 2003 and a 2010 movie, each with a new actor portraying the titular Zatoichi, an American adaptation (***Blind Fury***, *1989*), and a spin-off, *Ichi* (2008), featuring a female protagonist. The originals, however, in our opinion, are still the best. In The Tale of Zatoichi, our hero is hired by the Yakuza as a swordsman, and despite his blindness, he proves more than capable of handling the situation around him. Specifically, for Kaidan, the series provided ideas for the workings of the Yakuza, and life among the Hinin caste.

Twilight Samurai, The *(film, 2002*) The story of Seibei Iguchi, a widower samurai employed as a low level bureaucrat in the mid 19th century, is a deeply moving tale of a man who is seeking happiness in life, despite the turbulent world around him and the frequent tragedies of his life. The film is frank in its depictions of the humanity of its characters, reminds us that samurai were more than mere soldiers: theirs was an entire caste with its own internal structure and customs. This is one of our most favorite samurai movies and has informed our thinking greatly as we worked to create our own world of Samurai, with living breathing characters.

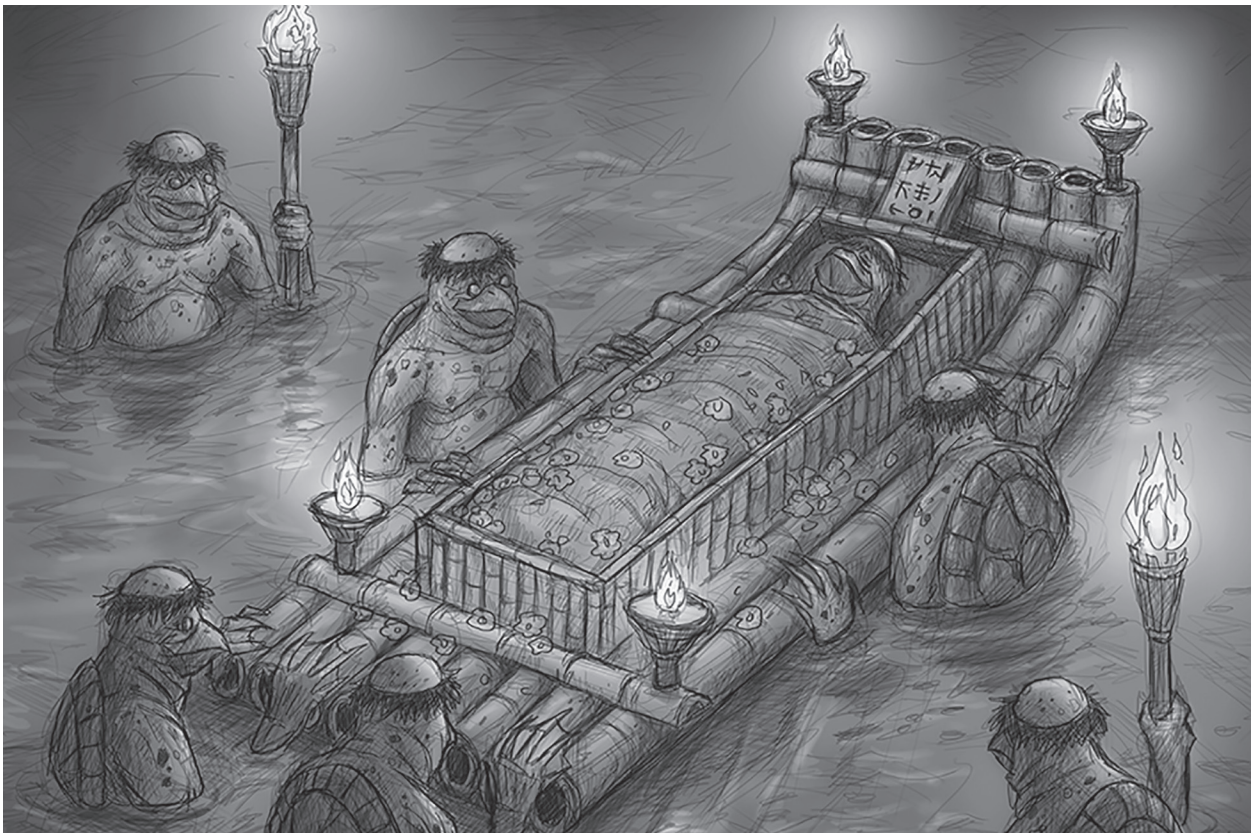
Finally, we cannot in full honesty finish this list without acknowledging the help of ***Wikipedia*** in serving as a quick, handy reference tool for all manners of subjects ranging from the mundane (sandals and swords) to the fantastical (goblins and ghosts) and everything in between. It's not without its flaws, but its strengths far more make up for that, and while it is certainly far from the last word on any subject, for Game Masters and Game Designers alike, it's a handy first look at many things.

Appendix 5: Glossary for Kaidan

Following are some of the words used in this book for which a definition might be desirable. We did not include proper names. Most of these are of Japanese origin, though not all.

Anshu	One of the three main islands of the Kaidanese archipelago
Anu	The first humans to dwell in Kaidan
Asura	The name the samurai give to their caste, literally, "semi-divine"
Buke	The samurai caste
Bushido	The unwritten code governing samurai deportment and lifestyle
Daimyo	The ruler of a province
Daisho	The paired blades, most commonly a Katana and Wakazashi; only legally worn by samurai
Daitengu	An immortal tengu
Emma Daio	The great god of death; supreme ruler of the oni
Genshu	One of the three main Islands of the Kaidanese archipelago
Goryo Shinko	A cult based on the worship of the dead
Henge	Yokai which are capable of appearing as either humans or animals
Hinin-eta	The lowest caste among the humans of Kaidan
Hyakushou	Farmers
Gaijin	A foreigner
Geisha	A woman trained in the art of entertainment, she might or might not be a prostitute
Go-shintai	The heart of a shrine, the shintai houses a fragment of a kami
Inu	Dogs
Jikininki	Flesh eating undead; ghouls
Jingoku	The hellish realm of the oni
Koku	The primary unit of wealth in Kaidan; it represents enough rice to feed one man for one year
Kami	Elemental spirits that dwell within the features of the world
Karma	The believe that wrong actions lead to a cycle of suffering
Karuma	Another name for Karma
Kanjo	The ritual by which a go-shintai is created
Kannushi	A yokinto priest
Kappa	Turtle-like humanoids
Kitsune	Fox who have lived long enough to become magical shape-shifters
Korobokuru	Small men who live in the woods
Kotodama	The magic of words and names
Koyokinto	The most primitive version of the yokinto faith
Kuraikuruma	The sect of Zaoism prevalent in Kaidan; it teaches that freedom from the cycle of birth and rebirth is found in undeath
Magatama	A tear-shaped sacred jewel
Mika	A yokinto shrine maiden
Mitama	That part of a kami's essence contained in a shintai
Mitamashiro	Another name for a go-shintai
Monogashira	The head of a lesser samurai clan; literally "captain"
Mujina	Badgers
Neko	Cats
Nezumi	Rats
Oni	Demons that inhabit mortal bodies

Onmyoji	A wizard who uses origami to cast spells; a court-wizard
Ronin	A samurai without a liege lord
Sankin-Kotai	The law which requires all Daimyo to spend every other year in the capital
Sake	Rice wine; normally served heated
Saru	Monkeys
Shogun	The supreme ruler of Kaidan; he controls all lands in the emperor's name
Sohei	Zaoist warrior-monks
Taisho	The head of a powerful samurai clan; literally "general"
Tamashanaki	The soul-less; a person or animal possessed by a psychotic elemental spirit
Tanuki	Raccoon-dogs
Tengu	Bird-like humanoids, renowned for their swordsmanship
Tenmei	The doctrine that divine will is supreme and inescapable
Usagi	Hares
Wa	The name the Yokai use for Kaidan
Yamabushi	Warrior monks who follow a blend of Zaoism and Yokinto doctrines
Yakuza	Criminal gangs of the hinin-eta caste
Yokai	Animal-like humanoids, most capable of shape-shifting and appearing as human
Yokinto	The traditional religion of Kaidan, taught to men by the Yokai; it teaches that all things have a spirit
Yomi	The realm of the dead
Yonshu	One of the three main Islands of the Kaidanese archipelago
Yurei	The restless dead including ghosts and other forms of the undead
Zaoism	The official religion of Kaidan; it teaches that life is a cycle of birth, death and rebirth



Appendix 6: Kaidan Patrons

Yakuza Shatei

Akiazoth
André Bogaz & Souza
Andy Kitkowski
BAJORQUE aka Annsy
Ben Callahan
Ben Callahan
Benjamin Barling
Bob Whitely
Chris Wolfe
Christoph
Christoph
Cyndy "Ahiruko" Cooper
David E Mumaw
Dean Keith
Derek Guder
GMGerrymader
Greg LaRose
Holly Cook
Hugo "Butterfrog" Solís
James Knevitt
James L Poole Jr
Jamison Thing
Jay Collins
Jeff Xilon
Jesse Reynolds
Jordan Lane
Joseph Boster
Josh Street
JP Chapleau
Kargrieg
Kevin Harada
Lerolabell
Lobachevsky
Loki-Kun
Mark Gedak
Martijn Tolsma
Michael Waite
Nathan Wormer
Paul Rimer
Paul Woods
Prototype00
Raymond D. Arrastia
Reverance Pavane
Ryan C. Jarrell
Scott Gable
Shadowcthuhlu
Shane LeRose
Shawn Lamb
Simon Moore
Stephen Esdale
Stephen Guttridge
Steve John Burnage
Steven Purcell
TadK
Travis Bryant
Troy Truchon
Xorron

Yakazu Kyodai

Aaron "Itchy" Tranes
Aaron Wong
Alex Putnam
Allan MacKenzie-Graham
Andrew J. Hayford
Ben Ferguson
Brandon D
Brian Walsh
Catherine Hariton
Chad 'Skrymir' Hughes
Chloe Katzburg
Chris Archer
Chris C.
Chris Thompson
Christine Trupiano-Rodriguez
Christopher "Welshy" Coker
Chuck Warren
Craig Johnston(flash_cxxi)
Craig McClung
Cyrus Chow
David Bagdan
David DeRocha
David Stegora
David Wickham
David Wolf
Doug O'Brien
Ed Kowalczewski
ElfIRL
F. Wesley Schneider
Filthy Monkey
Francois Michel
Graham Lewry
Heine Stick
Heinrich Krebs
Herman Duyker
Jan Egil "Jedidiah Curzon" Bjune
Jason E. Bean
Jean-Luc Brouillet
Jeff Erwin
Jeff Vincent
John Tanzini
Jonathan A. Gillett
Joseph W. Duis
Keith Davies
Kristopher Volter
Kyle Frazier
Lauren & Aaron Feingold
Lin Wyeth
Luke Jordan
Luke Parry
Malanis Leallow
Mark Daymude
Martin Blake
Martin Dexter
Michael D. Blanchard
Michael G Townsend
Michael Lane
Nate Swalve
Nicoulin Louis
Oliver von Spreckelsen
Paul Anderson
Phil Ward
Pinvendor "Legendary Merchant of Pins"
Richard Leiva
River and Zeph Archwright
Robert Thomson
Ross Thompson
Ryan Holdbrooks
Seth Corbett
SK Lim
Steve Huntsberry
Thomas LeBlanc
Wiktor Zuzanski

Samurai

Akimotos
Bryce Undy
CardiacKangaroo
Darin Kerr
Erik Freund
Novakowski
Patryk Adamski (Ruemere)
Scott Werba
Thilo "Endzeitgeist" Graf

Daiymo

Alexander W. Corrin
Andrew Cotgreave
Kyle A Lovett
Paul Ryan
Vaughan Monnes

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KD15



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