

KURO TENSEI





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Calligraphy Text: A Tanka (short poem) by Lady Ôtomo No Sakanoue. Poem 201 of the Man' yôshû ('The Ten Thousand Leaves') a compilation of Japanese poems from the 8th century:

"Ipu kôtô No - Kasikoki kuni zô - Kurenawi No - Iro nor Na ide sô - Omopi sinu tô Mo"

"What is said - Brings dread, in this land: - In scarlet - Colours, don't go out - Die from your desire though you might"

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Hontôni Domo Arigatô gozamaïsu.

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WAKE-UP

“These obscenities Man has created, corruption, pollution, all this must be annihilated. Nature will reclaim her dominion, the Earth will breathe anew; but first Apocalypse must come.”

***– Kanoe
X, Clamp***

Night hasn't yet fallen on Roppongi, but like any other evening, the billboards and public lighting have already gone dark: power has become a rare, precious commodity. In the growing darkness, passing between the most imposing buildings in the district, I was attracted by the distant sound of a chime hanging from a balcony. A lonely signal, a forlorn sound in an ocean of silence.

A few hovercrafts move on the almost deserted street, lights picking out the markings on the walls for a moment and then plunging them back into darkness: mystical graffiti, clumsy symbols supposed to ward off evil spirits. A fine drizzle, carried by the swirling wind, glues my long sombre hair to the folds of my scarlet kimono. Since we were locked in together with the monsters, nothing is as before.

Thunder roars far away just as I cross a small alley encumbered with electric wiring and the old carcass of a dismembered home robot. My steps splash through the huge puddles of water in front of an unlit bio-implant shop. At the corner of the small one way street, the lights of a police cruiser seem to have been waiting for me for an eternity. The driver, looking haggard, eats, without any real appetite, some krill in a self-heating cup, thin swirls of vapour covering the vehicle's windows with moisture. He hardly notices the fleeting glow of the reactive billboard suddenly lighting up as I walk by before joining its peers in the darkness of the street. I should really learn to control my emotions.

He finally notices my presence, not without squinting at me for a long time. With a wide smile, he finally opens the door of his armoured cruiser, throwing the rest of his warm snack into the gutter. He seems to want to hug me for a moment, then he gathers himself and merely nods, greeting me with an enthusiastic voice:

“Happy to see you, Nao.”

He recognised me. I didn't. His voice sounds so familiar, though. Images appear in my brain, a whole parade of forgotten memories and sensations drowned in more distant reminiscences. My fingers clench and I return his greeting while focusing on the present so as not to lose his face. I frown, hold my breath and fiercely fight against the flood of images, flickering like a deck of cards shuffling in my mind. Then, without really expecting it, his face comes back to me. My ujigami, Hangaku Gozen, finally lets me access my own memory.

“Me too, Gonshiro.”

Straight as a stick, staring at the water pouring down the sidewalk, the chubby policeman didn't even notice my brief hesitation. He raised his head, the same smile on his lips.

“You look fit. I'm happy that you got in touch with me.”

I pray that this conversation doesn't take too long. That he doesn't ask me about a past that I keep forgetting, a little more each day, in favour of another. The other me, what I have become: Lady Hangaku, warrior of the Heian period.

“I was... very busy. Thank you for answering my call.”

“Your resignation came at a bad time,” he replies, sneering. “Since the arrival of the island, we have even more work at the station, and a worker of your mettle wouldn't have been too much.”

I smile, remembering the habits of my old co-worker from Minato Ward.

"I'm sorry to have left you, Gonshiro, but another mission awaited me elsewhere. But in the end it all worked out for you; you are a first class officer now!"

His laughter resounds under the rain, eyes wrinkling, his hand nervously scratching his hair.

"Yes, the Kuro Incident is no doubt the best thing for my career."

"At least it was good for one person in our country. Come, let's not stay here."

The bad weather doubles in intensity while we walk to the entrance of a deserted sushi-ya. Behind the counter, an octodrone with ancient paint awaits the orders of imaginary customers. Its photonic eye scans us briefly upon our arrival, before greeting us and showing us a holographic projection of the menu. Its aluminium vats are all but empty, a few rare fish fillets resting in a too-thick soya sauce. Food is getting more and more expensive. Japan has entered a long period of horror and scarcity; I am one of the few people who can end it.

While the robot keeps extolling the merits of its maki and noodles in molecular sauce, we sit at the counter and Gonshiro draws me a glass of beer. Droplets of rain trickle down his forehead to the point of his nose. He coughs, sniffs. His tone has become more serious, as if the clumsy policeman of my memories has given way to the officer in charge of this sector of Roppongi. After a long silence, he asks:

"You are one of them, aren't you?"

He avoids my gaze, attentively watching the eight articulated arms of the drone cook. I am hardly surprised by his questions. Shin-Edo has changed too much for a competent cop to be convinced that all recent events have a rational explanation.

"Yes. How do you know?"

"I've seen you change, Nao."

"We all change," I say, watching the artificial cook preparing its glutinous rice balls.

"It started a month ago, after the business with the Flayer and the skin-stealing robots. I have rarely seen you so determined. Then your increasingly frequent absences, the incessant messages left at the station by that tattooed pretty-boy, whatsisname..."

"His name is Kaname."

"Yes, Kaname. And then there was the blackout, the island, panic. Your eyes have changed, also the sound of your voice. I know I have Nao in front of me, but she's no longer the one I once knew. Who are you now?"

"I don't know, Gonshiro. Not any more. When I look at myself in the mirror, I still see the girl from Otawara family. But as soon as I blink, as soon as I watch the stars or listen to the howl of the Kamikaze, I remember warriors in armour, soldiers placed under my command and ready to battle with an army three times larger. I see myself riding a horse, striking down my enemies with a naginata. Men call me Lady Hangaku, warrior and daughter of Jo Sukekuni, allied to the Taira clan. Physically, I am here, but my mind belongs now to a fighter from the 13th century."

"You're a superhero, then?"

My laughter breaks the heavy silence of the sushi-ya. Smiling broadly, with real warmth now, Gonshiro looks happy to finally see his old friend. While the octodrone serves us a plate filled with maki and nigiri, a chime from my pod indicates I have a call. Immediately after I position my Gantai glasses, a window opens in the display, revealing the mechanical features and phosphorescent eyes of an imposing construction robot. Its artificial face is covered in sombre kanji with mystical significance. He addresses me in a voice with metallic intonations.

"Nao, we're in position."

"I'm coming, Kaiju. Just give me a few minutes."

Gonshiro pretends he wasn't paying attention to the conversation, taking his time dipping a salmon nigiri in his soya sauce before swallowing it whole. I no longer have the time for our conversation. Or want to dig into a past that's over and done with.

"I need you, Gonshiro. And I hate to warn you this late."

"You know... you can always count on me, Nao," he says, hurriedly swallowing the large mouthful.

"Do you know the Wake-Up?"

"Yes, it's a night club east of Roppongi. Why?"

"It is going to be attacked in about an hour and I want you to evacuate its occupants."



He stares at me.

"Why?"

"If I tell you, you wouldn't believe me."

His smile regains the upper hand; he squints and downs a mouthful of beer. He hasn't changed.

"You worry a lot about my sleep, uh? When my parents explained that the monsters under my bed didn't exist..."

"They lied."

The storm roars outside the restaurant. The wind slams the door and the downpour washes the window, distorting the neon lights across the street.

"I have an hour? I need two more cruisers for that kind of intervention."

"No, the attack's in an hour. You have maybe thirty minutes. Just say there is a bomb inside. Set up a laser security cordon, wait fifty metres from the entrance and do not intervene until you hear the first screams."

"You know I am the chief lieutenant now."

"I know, Gonshiro. But in this kind of war I am the general."

A nod, a last look, two glasses raised in silence and I disappear from the crummy sushi-ya under a curtain of icy water.

I doubt we will ever see each other again.

Immersed in darkness, the night club looks almost deserted, lost at the entrance of an isolated street in a quiet neighbourhood. Only a heavy, muffled beat and the presence of two sinister-looking bouncers at the entrance to the building betray the presence of a small group, the clubbers writhing on the dance floor to forget their troubles. Tied to a used lamppost, a long rice straw cord waves in the wind. Concentrating, I soon feel the presence of other amulets of the same sort, shimenawa, placed in different posts and public lighting surrounding the Wake-Up. Their presence enhances the purity of the building and greatly improves our chances of success.

My Ki sense also reveals two silhouettes patiently waiting in a nearby alley under a dilapidated porch, weakened by moisture.

Their energy is strong and pure. The first is an onimachine, Kaiju, a synthetic skeleton more than two metres high, formidably strong. The second is a young man with a tattooed body, bony face and hollow eyes. Kaname, the one who speaks to spirits and divines danger.

"Gentlemen, we can go in."

Kaiju disappears almost immediately in the shadow of the alley, as if diving into water. Kaname follows me quietly to the entrance of the club, a cigarette in his lips.

The two bouncers watch us with evil glances as we walk towards them. They give off a sickening smell of ashes and the Taint of spirits that have never known rest. Before either of them has the time to reach for the holsters hidden under their coats, two knives cross the rain and plant themselves in their skulls. Surprised, the demons watch the thin strips of paper hanging from each blade. O-fuda.

Their bodies ignite upon contact with the spells written on the paper; a fire no rain can extinguish. Their remains disintegrate in the gutter, producing an acrid black smoke.

Concentrating, I crossed the doors of the Wake-Up while Kaname retrieves his smoking knives from the edge of the sidewalk and places them back inside his long coat.

I already feel the purity of the shimenawa, bounding the area and making me stronger. In the deafening gloom, about a hundred young people from the neighbourhood writhe to music from huge holographic projectors. Imaginary silhouettes in augmented reality appear and disappear, sometimes exchanging dance steps with reality. Amidst the general trance, greyish shapes glide over the wriggling bodies, turning like sharks around prey lost at sea. Invisible, the prowling spirits seem to await the fateful moment to attack, sniffing a group of young girls sitting on stools, licking the sweat of a man leaning on the counter.

Discreetly we advance, mingling with the crowd. Head down, we try to mix our Ki imprints with the people around us so as not to attract the Kurobozu's attention too soon. In a second the atmosphere starts changing. A strange cold seems to invade the dance floor and the mock faces of the carrion spirits writhe in grimaces of pleasure. Whirling over the humans like a school of predators, they eventually dive, sinking spectral tongues into the throats of their victims to suck in their life force. The others dance blithely on, not realizing their fellows are writhing with pain. Lost in the music, a young lady with a sallow complexion and coloured clothes is sucked from the inside out by two huge Kurobozu with long black claws. Eyes rolled back, among general indifference, she doesn't notice an imposing shape melting out of

the shadows. Kaiju, the powerful industrial machine, lunges with monstrous metal claws to savagely cut the two hungry spirits into thin spiritual shreds. He catches the girl, safe and sound.

The humans first realise that something is amiss when I produce my naginata from the inside of my hand. Towards the centre of the floor, Kaname calls on Pyo, the diamond inzo, joining hands and reciting a mantra to project a beam of energy at a Kurobozu, who immediately disappears. Panic ensues, in both the visible and invisible worlds. Spirits scream, finally feeling the purity of the shimenawa limiting their powers, suppressing their Taint and enhancing our Ki energy. They twirl, all claws out, their tubular tongues trying to sting us in passing. Kaiju summons his red-eyed iron staff while I charge my weapon and harden the skinsuit I wear under my kimono with my Ki. After dodging an attack, I jump over a wall and summersault, in passing disembowelling a Kaiju with my incandescent blade.

As for Kaname, quiet and tranquil as usual, he throws down his cigarette and takes from his pocket a card marked with a blue pentagram. Holding it between two fingers, he delicately lifts the talisman to his lips. His light breath makes the card vanish as if it was an ordinary representation in sand. Then, breathing in the

Ki energy contained in the talisman, Kaname makes a kekkai appear around us, a spherical dimensional barrier enclosing us with the Kurobozu, excluding all human beings. We disappear from human sight, leaving the young dancers to their fate. It's time for us to accomplish our mission: to eliminate the spectres without shedding innocent blood. Elsewhere.

Some minutes later, the door crashes open, battered in by half a dozen police officers led by Gonshiro. Controlling the panic, shouting and delivering orders, the law managed to get the occupants out of the nightclub in relative calm. Inside the building, the music ends and the few young men and women lying on the floor, the victims of the spirit attacks, are given first aid.

Later again, after the Wake-Up is emptied, Gonshiro remains alone, sitting on the steps at the entrance, watchful. He seems to wait for something, or someone. No one answers his silent wait. On the ground, a little fragment of card showing the edge of a bluish pentagram is still disintegrating with a fine wisp of smoke.

Picking up the course of his life, chief lieutenant Gonshiro Chiba gets up, turns around and, after a last glance to the empty room, closes the doors of the night club, on the darkness of the unknown.

INTRODUCTION

We revealed much in **Kuro** and **Makkura**, about the horrors that have beset Japan and the war that is being fought in secret on the streets. In **Tensei**, we detail the final truth of the ancient battle between the forces of the Kami and the horror of the demonic Magagoto.

December 2046. Seven months into the blockade, Japan has just weathered the highest level of supernatural activity since the appearance of the Kamikaze. A mysterious island, Ryugu, has risen from the depths of the Pacific Ocean, appearing off the coast of Shin-Edo amidst typhoons and a red storm. With the island's appearance, the gates of Yomi-No-Kuni opened once and for all, disgorging unto the world torments caged for too long in the grey lands of death.

To counter this tide of tainted creatures, of vile oni and demented Yokaiyosai, the Emperor of Japan left Shin-Edo for Kyoto and called upon the incandescent powers of Amaterasu. Drawing on the purity of the sun goddess, reincarnated in the Emperor, he slowed down evil and wove a monumental barrier around the archipelago, a titanic kekkai, moving Japan to a separate dimension and preventing anyone from entering or leaving. Now the Land of the Rising Sun is not only cut off from the rest of the world but from reality itself. The international blockade no longer has any hold on the country, incapable of approaching its shores, rendered inaccessible by the magic of Amaterasu's heir.

Following these events, many humans have been revealed to be Potentials, descendants of kami. While some reject their heritage, others accept their fate, choosing to die to finally fulfil their destiny.



When *Tensei* begins, all the chosen, the Potentials who have crossed the threshold of the red storm, have become keshin, incarnations in whom ujigami, historic kami – warriors, mages and duellists – have chosen to invest their powers. As a final snub to the dark creatures of Yomi, the kami have – using the last of their strength – created an army of warriors, humans gifted with mystical techniques and the superhuman power granted by the cosmic energy of Ki. Whether or not they took part in the struggle that led to the resurrection of Ryugu Island, all characters now have the abilities of their ancestors and the power of the gods.

From now on they are no longer ordinary individuals confronted by supernatural horrors; they are true heroes, fighters, charged with shutting down the gates of Yomi and destroying its monsters once and for all. Armed with Ki swords, onmyoji incantations, destructive o-fuda, they make up the new army of the Emperor. Elite warriors running over the rooftops of futuristic capitals, destroying genetic aberrations possessed by tortured spirits and countering the attacks of Izumo's dark soldiers.

This book contains all the rules for moving characters from *Kuro to Tensei*, along with their new powers and abilities. You will also find an overview of Japan, now deep in an occult war, as well as new formidable enemies and three scenarios. The first scenario was written to carry the story on from *Makkura*, to allow the Gamemaster to integrate new characters, or even to start a new campaign with *Tensei*.



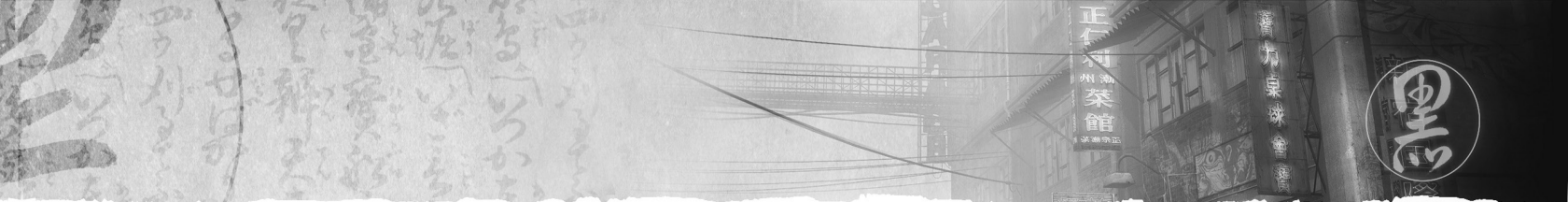
In the First Day there was Darkness

Even before the Panasiatic bomb vanished over Japan, liberating the Kamikaze, the course of history had changed, on July 20, 2041. A powerful creature had managed to escape the Yomi-No-Kuni, in spite of the locks placed on it by the mighty Izanagi, one of the gods that presided over the very origins of the country. For centuries, different cults of fanatics had tried to break the seal that blocked access to the realm of the dead, seeking the secrets of the afterlife. Among all the cults, the Tomoe Jigoku beyond a doubt came closest to that goal, in the 13th century. A band of sorcerers and assassins, the Tomoe Jigoku wished to unite Japan under the banner of an Emperor from within the Yomi-No-Kuni itself. They saw in him the true heir of Izanagi and Izanami, reclaiming his birthright from the supposed “children” of the goddess Amaterasu and the bloodline of the Minamoto shogun. The Tomoe reached the conclusion that, in order to extract their future leader, they needed to debase the purity of the world to weaken the walls of Yomi.

The ubiquity of the kami, in beliefs and nature, made it an impossible plan. To summon the Emperor from the dark lands and into the world of men, they would have to wait for the right moment, the fateful instant when the kami would be distracted, occupied by something important. Something capable of weakening them and increasing the Taint around Izumo, the entrance to Yomi-No-Kuni.

The successive Mongol invasions of 1274 and 1281, orchestrated by Kublai Khan, were enough for the Tomoe Jigoku to organize the birth of the “true” Emperor of Japan: the child of Izanami, the Queen of the Land of the Dead.

These attacks, the largest the archipelago faced in 1500 years, forced the Kamikaze to rise twice, causing the downfall of the largest Mongol army. Kami-generated typhoons fell onto the ships of the invaders. For their part, the Tomoe Jigoku plotters performed numerous rituals to imprison the weaker kami, exhausted by the Mongol assaults. Between those taken in the storms of the Kamikaze and those trapped in the invisible world by dark spells, purity was sufficiently weakened at Izumo. A shadowy figure slowly unfolded in the cult's lair. Reinforced by the Taint, the creature cried like an infant, coming to the world before its 99 kneeling generals. But the contemplation didn't last long. Soon Furinkazan warriors entered the Tomoe castle, supported in their fight by the Shi-Tenno and the destructive rage of Susanoo, god of storms and Amaterasu's brother.



The infernal creature, the Magagoto, was destroyed and its officers wiped out without the least pity. The Tomoe was dismantled, their castle burned to the ground; many kami could never come back to Earth. As for the others, they understood that in intervening to save the people of Japan, they now risked attracting tainted creatures from the Yomi-No-Kuni.

World War Two didn't change the course of events. Forgotten – pushed away by industrialisation, put off by an ungrateful, self-destructing humanity – the last of the kami eventually joined the beyond. Forever. In August 6 1945, when the first bomb fell on Hiroshima, no Kamikaze rose. Some yokai and obake decided to stay in the physical world, like the tengu or the kitsune. And one sole kami had no choice but to remain on Earth, watching the other kami leaving and disappearing as Japan gradually lost the war.

Banned from both Heaven and Yomi, Susanoo inhabited Izumo Shrine for centuries, watching humanity change and the Taint rise and attentively watching the entrance to Yomi-No-Kuni. With time and loneliness his wrath diminished, his fist became less mighty and lines appeared around his eyes. Immortal as he was, the furrows carved into the soul of the guardian of Yomi by his isolation were deeper than those produced by time. Long did he wait for the return of the gods. Long did he want to open the gate himself and join the invisible territories. The storm god could never have imagined that the Tomoe Jigoku hadn't disappeared, surviving the eras under different guises and different names, plotting against the Emperor's line. Hiding under certain honourable façades, in certain parts of the Genocracy or at the very heart of the politics of the New Komeito.

Then Came the Light...

In July 20 2041 Susanoo felt a change around Izumo, a strange wave of Taint that awoke his senses and pierced his heart with an icy chill. Surrounded by Furinkazan priests, he rushed to the mountains and watched with a curious mix of horror and relief as a whirlwind formed, both in the sky and on the ground: a dimensional vortex. A thin fissure had just appeared in the Yomi gate and a child of darkness had come through. Looking like a newborn with a body of darkness, he whimpered on the ground, writhing in agony amid the bushes of Mount Hiba. The impurity emanating from the child left no doubt about his origins, but

despite that Susanoo felt a moment's hesitation. He saw in it the presence of Izanami, his father's wife that he had never known, and the weight of loneliness stayed his hand. That brief instant of weakness was enough to tilt the fate of Japan. In the blink of an eye the child of darkness gave way to a cold-eyed teenager. The priests were blasted where they stood and Susanoo was thrown into a tainted kekkai. Behind the barrier, the storm god fought the Magagoto for nearly four years... No one could enter, or even know of its existence at the heart of the mountains.

In 2045 the Magagoto emerged victorious from the fight, mightier than ever and owning the secret kept in vain by Susanoo: the means of opening the Yomi-No-Kuni. The bloodless storm god was chained and left for dead inside Izumo.

In May 2046, the kami returned to save Japan. They broke the ancient Tomoe barriers and, despite themselves, dragged the first scouts from Yomi in the wake of the Kamikaze: oni, sent to serve the Emperor of Shadows.

Thus, while the old gods learned to know humans again by watching them, learning what had become of the world after they left, the Magagoto gathered his forces and resumed contact with the descendants of the Tomoe Jigoku. Abe Kaemon, the leader of the New Komeito, headed them. While the kami renewed their bonds with Japan, Furinkazan and the Shi-Tenno, they found with horror that the Taint was spreading to the West.

Weakened, they did their best. The forces of the Magagoto did not manage to awaken Ryugu Island; or to seize the key to the world of the dead, the sole means of destroying the gate sealed by the powerful god Izanagi and of resurrecting the army of the Magagoto.

December 2046. The Yomi-No-Kuni has grown from a simple fissure to a gaping hole to the lands of Hell. In Izumo, the Magagoto has sent his 99 oni generals to assault Japan, defeat the Emperor and destroy his last forces. Faced with his evil, the kami have spent the last of their energies to raise human vessels, to grant them the magic of the ujigami. Only the destruction of the new master of Izumo and his 99 lieutenants will allow the gates of the deadlands to be closed.

**It is now the time to leave the shadows...
to fight.**

BECOMING A KAMI

*“Memories can be distorted.
They’re just an interpretation, they’re not a record,
and they’re irrelevant if you have the facts.”*

– *Memento*

This follow-up to **Kuro** will allow your characters to evolve, and to play a major role in their battle against the forces of the Yomi-No-Kuni. During their first adventures in this futuristic

Japan, they will uncover the creatures hiding in the shadows, the conspiracies multiplying at the borders of the Yokai, the political and genocratic manipulations. After a seven-month long international blockade, the archipelago is now well and truly cut off from the rest of the world, enclosed in a slight dimensional shift, as thin as a sheet of rice paper but still enough to prevent anyone from entering or leaving. Surrounded by a kekkai, a mystical barrier created by the Emperor, Japan has become a giant bubble where the creatures who escaped from

Creating a Kenshin

1 – Create a standard character

As per the rules in **Kuro** (pages 70-75)

2 – Choose an Ujigami Archetype

Check and apply any special features of your chosen ujigami. Note that some spirits will not incarnate in certain characters. Unless stated otherwise, the gender of the character and ujigami need not be the same.

3 – Calculate Humanity

Add up Will, Cha, Per + Int and double the result. Then subtract this number from 100.

4 – Record Threshold and Ki points

Check the Humanity table (page 12) and record beginning levels for Threshold and Ki points.

5 – Choose Mystical Techniques

Distribute the points given on the Humanity table for your Threshold among the available Mystical Techniques listed for your ujigami.

6 – Assign Alterations/Move specialisation points

Distribute the points given on the Humanity table for your Threshold among Alterations and/or moving specialisation points into the skills listed for your ujigami.

- The Alterations are: Disorientation, Ki imprint, Forgetfulness, Reminiscence, Technological archaism and Transfiguration.
- Specialisation points may be moved from any skill the character has not listed as an ujigami skill. This is done on a 1 for 1 basis, so it is possible to take points from a low character skill to improve a high ujigami skill.

7 – Note Ujigami abilities

Make a note of your ujigami’s special Ki recovery method, as well as which Amulets they can use. You should also note what their sacred Gimmiku is and possibly apply it to any newly raised skills that qualify for a new Gimmiku.

the gaping mouth of Yomi are entrapped. In coming out of their torpor to stop the Panasiatic bomb, the myriad gods have in fact opened the way for oni and other spirits of the Taint, who have done their best to open wide the narrow breach and resurrect the 99 generals of the Magagoto.

To counter this invasion, the kami didn't have any other choice but contain the evil in order to prevent it from spreading, and find warriors capable of defeating it. Warriors like the player characters.

When Tensei begins, a frightening and mysterious island has risen out of the waters not far from Shin-Edo, and released in Honshu the key for the hell-gates of Izumo. Evil spirits are free to again conquer the world from whence they were once expelled.

The characters are keshin, chosen ones, the paragons of a long list of Potentials with a mysterious marker (scientists would call it a genetic marker) allowing them to bond with their ancestors. The latter are kami, legendary heroes of Japan who joined the myriad gods after their deaths. They were chosen by the Kamikaze to reincarnate in their descendants in order to grant them the magic knowledge and Ki power necessary to destroy the monsters from Yokai. By the time Ryugu island rose out of the waters, all ujigami have taken possession of the vessels they deemed most suited to accomplish this mission: close down the gates of Yomi-No-Kuni.

Weakened, the gods have but this one hope of correcting their error and saving the archipelago from the invisible invasion.

In *Tensei*, the characters are no longer simple investigators, ordinary individuals facing the paranormal in an increasingly dehumanized society. They are heroes, warriors from another era, capable of commanding spirits, slicing buildings open with a blow from their katana and manipulating onmyoji spells. Using their Ki energy and combining it with skinsuits, exo-armour and other technological marvels, keshin are the perfect alliance of the past and the present: producing holographic talismans to imprison a spirit, locking their opponents in a dimensional kekkaï, slaying their foes by charging their weapons with the breath of Ki... But in too eagerly embracing the deities incarnated in them, the characters risk losing their very humanity.

Tensei is written to follow on from *Kuro*. The next pages introduce all the new rules: new modifiers, new abilities, Ki, ujigami archetypes, rituals, all explained to convert the characters to true Taint hunters. Alternatively, a GM new to the *Kuro* setting can opt to start directly in *Tensei*, immersing your players immediately in a techno-heroic setting. For those

wishing to explore the transformation of the player characters, the passage from a normal human being to the receptacle of a kami, the scenarios in the *Kuro* core book and the *Makkura* campaign offer an introduction; but for those wishing to start play at the moment when Ryugu Island rises from the abyss, the first scenario of the present book allows the characters to "awake" gifted with their new powers.

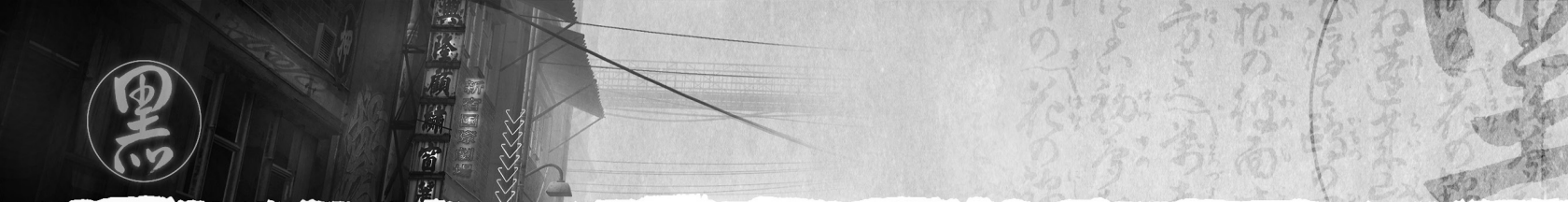
Alternatively, you can choose to remain in the *Kuro* setting and its more elusive and ghostly threats. Whether using *Kuro* or *Tensei*, this world is designed to be adapted to your needs for horror, fright, biotech and titanic combats under the rain in the streets of a futuristic Japan.

Ujigami

An ujigami is the spirit of an ancestor, a historic personality venerated after death and elevated to the ranks of the kami. It is often said that a kami hides under every stone; they swarm in their thousands, a cloud of gods and elemental spirits. But they can be broadly grouped into three large families. The first consists of the senior gods that created Japan and preside over its existence (like Izanami and Izanagi, who made the world, Amaterasu the sun goddess or her brother Susanoo the storm god). The second group are the nature kami, spirits of all the elements of the world, from the imposing lords of crops and mountains to the most insignificant spirits of individual fountains, ponds, trees and stones. The third and final group is formed of eminent personalities: shogun, samurai, priestesses, scholars, tea masters and mediums that have left their mark in history and elevated their souls to the level of the other deities; individuals that are more often legendary than not, whose true stories are often mixed with tales and popular beliefs.

These are the ujigami that have chosen to reincarnate among their descendants in order to close the infernal gates of Yomi forever. Chosen by the Wind of the Gods, exhausted by their fight against the dark forces of Taint, the ujigami have chosen to become one with their incarnates, their keshin. A keshin character, from ordinary beginnings, rises to the status of hero, a hybrid charged with power and ancient memories. Little by little he must learn to master the powers of the ancestor spirit possessing him, to open his mind in order to develop his internal energy: Ki.

The presence of the ujigami is a devastating breath, waiting to expand and explode. But the human mind is made of sturdy stuff, and opposes this spiritual invasion, preventing the



ujigami from taking full control. Thus all **Tensei** characters begin their adventures with only small portion of the ancestor's power, unconsciously limited by their humanity. Little by little, depending on their choices and actions, the ujigami will grow, bringing the character ever more power and knowledge, but in return the individual will resemble the god more and more and, little by little, forget his human nature and memories. It remains to be seen if he goes all the way or will do his best to retain his personality.

You will find in the following pages a certain number of ujigami, archetypes that have found sanctuary within the player characters. Each player should choose just one ancestor for his character, the one he is merging with. *Obviously, according to the previously played adventures, the Gamemaster is free to guide that choice or to make it himself, allowing the player the surprise of discovery*, but note that the character is aware, as soon as he is possessed, of the identity of his ujigami.

Each kami is presented with an introductory text to quickly present his story and how he might appear in 2046, as well as his knowledge and magical assets, which are expanded upon later in the book.

Alternatively, **Tensei** also allows a new player to play an oni incarnated in a machine, also fighting the spirits of Yomi. See the *Onimachine* chapter on page 37 for more details.

Keshin

"I... am Tetsuo"

– Tetsuo, Akira

In the simplest terms, each **Tensei** character consists of two parts: a host (the keshin) and the spirit inhabiting him (the ujigami), the whole seeking to become a living kami. In practice, of course, the character and his kami are tightly entwined; it is perhaps more accurate to say that both minds inhabit the same organism, seeking to merge with each other. The keshin may see the ujigami as an intrusion, confusing his thoughts and memories with the ujigami's. A keshin is more than a puppet; he becomes the kami as his Ki increases and his hunt opens his eyes to the mysteries of the Yokai.

Biodroid

Replicants resemble humans, with one difference: their brains are artificial. However, as in the case of Jiro, it is very possible for an ujigami to recognise his direct descendant in a biodroid, most often in cloned genetic markers in the blood.

Despite their very different natures, a biodroid is the only living being other than a human in whom a kami can incarnate in this way.

Players are free to play this kind of kami-possessed machine.

To create a new character, first design an ordinary individual using the rules detailed in the **Kuro** core book. This is the keshin; choose a kami from the available archetypes. If you have already created a character and played scenarios in the past, you only need to select an ujigami for him.

The complementary character sheet at the end of the book can be used to record the attributes and powers of the kami.

From the first game of **Tensei**, your character is possessed by his kami ancestor and ready to face the worst horrors out of Izumo. In pursuit of this mission, you will develop your character, becoming more powerful, building up enough of a Ki reserve to perform the more formidable rituals. Unfortunately, this evolution, capable of turning the keshin into a god capable of blasting away the most evil of oni and drive back the Taint, is not without a price.

In order to become ever more powerful, the character must get closer to the kami possessing him, sacrificing his memories and his humanity. Only at this cost can an absolute merging take place.

Humanity

*"There is some comfort in the emptiness of the sea,
no past, no future."*

– *The Last Samurai*

Humanity Gauge

Kuro characters are defined by a number of parameters: characteristics, knowledges, abilities, attitude, and not least by a past, a history. The whole of these elements make up his character, his personality, what distinguishes him from others, makes him a human with his own history and frailties. Does he like the band Sugomi? Does he live in Kamata quarter? Does he go drinking with a group of friends to relax after a long day's work? Does he like to go to the Shinto temple? Watch the cherry blossoms? Patronise the robotics shops in Akihabara? Smoke Blue Lights? Dress in black? Watch a holo movie in Visiomax? Design augmented reality programs? Has he faced Ao-Andon?

To reflect this personality, each character now has a Humanity gauge, rated from 0 to 100. A value of 100 indicates that the character is human, a normal being with his own memories, habits, doubts and aspirations. With a score of 0, the character is a living kami, the totally reincarnated ujigami.

As the character's Humanity falls, his kami grows in strength, granting him powers and new faculties. But at the same time, the human forgets his own personality, his memories; develops a whole different nature. He gains Alterations: loss or distortion of memory, new memories, a return to lost traditions, a change of look and body language, the inability to use the technology of 2046, and so on.

The Humanity gauge is divided into 10 Thresholds of 10 points each. Each time a character reaches a Threshold by losing Humanity points the ujigami increases in power and produces a certain number of effects. It can be an increase in the Ki reserve (see below), improvement in the mystical skills, new Alterations or the redistribution of the character's skill points into those of the ujigami, including bonuses.

Example: At the first Threshold, the keshin has a magical reserve of 25 Ki points. He also suffers from 5 points of changes, either Alterations of the player's choice or specialisation points swapped from the human character's skills to those listed in the ujigami sheet. The player chooses to split them, dropping his character's

specialisation in Puppetbots by 3 points and placing them in the combat specialisation Ninten-ryu (fighting with two swords) granted by his ujigami. With the remaining 2 points, the keshin develops a 2-point "Ki Imprint" Alteration. He must also share 10 points between mystical techniques, the magical ways of his kami.

At the beginning of *Tensei*, the characters have already lost some of themselves to their ujigami. Calculate starting Humanity gauge as follows:

Humanity gauge = 100 - [(Willpower + Charisma + Perception + Intelligence)x2]

Example: Christopher starts his first *Tensei* scenario and must calculate his character's starting Humanity gauge, adding up his Willpower, Charisma, Perception and Intelligence values, multiplying the total by 2 and subtracting the total from 100. His character has 2 in Willpower, 2 in Presence, 1 in Perception and 3 in Intelligence (total 8, doubled to 16). His starting gauge is thus 84 (100-16), crossing the first Threshold. Christopher applies its effects to his character.

Characters who have played the *Makkura* campaign should have a lower Humanity gauge than newly created player characters, thanks to their experiences. Facing certain horrors and crossing the water of the "eye opening" pool will certainly have improved their perception of Ki and the invisible.



Loss of Humanity

Once lost, Humanity can never be regained. As long as the ujigami is present in the keshin, the mortal host may – at most – slow the loss of his sense of self. Only the disappearance of the ujigami can allow the keshin to recover his Humanity, which also means the total loss of his powers... and doubtless of one part of his mind, lost together with the kami. Indeed, after chasing away the kami, the keshin may find himself an empty shell, with too little of his own humanity left in the wake of the parting god.

Humanity Gauge

Gauge	Threshold	Effects
100	0	The character is human. He has no powers.
90	1	Ki: 25 / 10 points to divide between mystical techniques / The character must share 5 points between Alterations and/or changing specialisation points to those of his ujigami (not magical).
80	2	Ki: 30 / 5 points to divide between mystical techniques / The character must share 5 points between Alterations and/or changing specialisation points to those of his ujigami (not magical) / +5 points to divide between the kami's skill areas.
70	3	Ki: 35 / The character must share 5 points between Alterations and/or changing specialisation points to those of his ujigami (not magical) / +5 points to divide between the kami's specialisations.
60	4	Ki: 40 / 5 points to divide between mystical techniques / The character must share 5 points between Alterations and/or changing specialisation points to those of his ujigami (not magical).
50	5	Ki: 50 / The character must share 5 points between Alterations and/or changing specialisation points to those of his ujigami (not magical) / The character must share 5 points between Alterations and/or changing specialisation points to those of his ujigami (not magical) / +10 points to divide between the kami's specialisations.
40	6	Ki: 60 / 5 points to divide between mystical techniques / The character must share 5 points between Alterations and/or changing skill area points to those of his ujigami / +10 points to divide between the kami's specialisations (not magical).
30	7	Ki: 70 / 5 points to divide between mystical technique / The character must share 10 points between Alterations and/or changing specialisation points to those of his ujigami / +15 points to divide between the kami's specialisations (not magical).
20	8	Ki: 80 / 5 points to divide between mystical techniques / The character must share 10 points between Alterations and/or changing skill area or specialisation points to those of his ujigami (not magical) / +15 points to divide between the kami's specialisations (not magical). / Automatic recuperation of 1 Ki point per hour.
10	9	Ki: 90 / 10 points to divide between mystical techniques / The character must share 10 points between Alterations and/or changing skill area or specialisation points to those of his ujigami (not magical) / +15 points to divide between the Kami's specialisations (not magical).
0	10	The character is a perfect incarnation of the Kami. / Ki: 100 / 20 points to divide between mystical techniques / The character must share 20 points between Alterations and/or changing skill area or specialisation points to those of his ujigami (not magical) / +15 points to divide between the Kami's specialisations (not magical). / Automatic recuperation of 2D6 Ki points per hour.

The loss of Humanity should always be gradual, so the player understands that the road is long before enjoying the full might of the kami within him. The loss of essence, and the divine sublimation, should arise from his choices and the adventures he lives.

As Gamemaster you are free to decrease a character's Humanity gauge whenever you deem that he has behaved like his ujigami, or failed to react to the strangeness of the other world. Just beware he does not climb the Thresholds too quickly; the characters must become aware of their Alterations and other consequences. A character is absolutely free to struggle against his Alterations and try to retain his memories, habits, all the things that make him a human being; this alone might slow down Humanity loss and allow him to strike a balance between the worldly and the divine. But any path has a price: becoming one with the ujigami means becoming a living god, while remaining a keshin – fighting to retain your humanity – makes you frail. But it's nothing more than delaying the inevitable, since Humanity is an endless fall, a slow progression towards a destiny as frightening as it is fascinating. And when the Yomi finally closes, no one knows what will happen to the keshin. Will they become powerless mortals again? Or will they simply die, their bodies disappearing with the ujigami? Will they become kami themselves? All those questions may make a character doubt; even act to keep the gates of Yomi open. How can you become human again after having tasted the might of the gods?

Some of the actions capable of decreasing Humanity follow:

- **The character often calls on Ki** and on the ujigami's mystical techniques. His Ki reserve falls to 0 at least twice during a scenario: -1 Humanity point.
- **The keshin follows his missions blindly** and does his utmost to destroy the creatures of Yomi. He does not hesitate to place himself in danger and to prioritize results over consequences: -1 Humanity point.
- **The character does his best to never become tainted.** He avoids or protects himself from impure places, he never faces a creature without creating a kekkai first and purifies himself like clockwork. He doesn't hesitate to confront his companions when they let themselves be tainted for too long: -1 Humanity point.
- **The keshin pushes away his Humanity** and is fascinated by the ujigami. He seeks information on the spirit's past, follows the path of his story, voluntarily chooses to dress like him or adopt his old habits: -1 Humanity point.

- **The character directly faces an event** or an old enemy connected to his ujigami: -1 Humanity point.
- During a heroic combat, **the character calls on his Last Breath** to transcend the power of the kami: -1 Humanity point.

Alterations

*"Yesterday, upon the stair,
I met a man who wasn't there.
He wasn't there again today,
I wish, I wish he'd go away..."*

– Malcolm Rivers, *Identity*

Alterations are mental disturbances that modify the memories and the behaviour of the character. The more the latter loses Humanity, the more he merges with the kami and risks losing his bearings, becoming prey to hallucinations or distant nightmares. He may dream of his past life, no longer remember living in 2046, pick up outdated habits (like blackening his teeth), confusing an NPC with a vanished love, fall into melancholy over his lost era...

A *Tensei* character is an ancestral hero, with extraordinary gifts, who may even look like he came directly from the past. Voice, body language, opinions, all these can be the object of Alterations. The more numerous the Alterations, the more the Humanity gauge decreases and the more the character behaves like his ujigami. Imagine an individual wearing a patchwork of modern and ancient clothes, handling a katana stolen from a museum and summoning a shikigami with the help of a pod and you'll have a pretty good idea of what that morphing of the mind can produce.

At each new Humanity Threshold the player must share a certain number of points among the Alterations of his choice. Taking on or increasing traits as he sees fit. Obviously, as the Thresholds become more important, more of these points accumulate to change the characters in strange out-of-time ways. Each Alteration acts as a penalty to actions, as described below. For instance, a Technological Archaism with a value of 9 inflicts a 9-point penalty on all tests concerning a technological item (like overclocking a drone, hacking the NeoWeb...).

The Gamemaster can draw on the Alterations to generate roleplay opportunities and side plots, based on misunderstandings that attract the attention of passers-by or ill-intentioned spirits. The value of an Alteration can also be used to make a dice roll (associated with the most appropriate characteristic) to use that modification as a one-time advantage.



For example, a character in whom Benkei has incarnated may roll his Transfiguration Alteration and his Charisma characteristic, against an opposing roll or a difficulty, to frighten an opponent or make him feel the full extent of his wrath. Similarly, another character can call on the value of his Disorientation Alteration to remember a very old passage in modern Shin-Edo or an old tunnel in a shrine, forgotten by all.

As well as spending points in Alterations, the player can move his character's skills or specialisations to those granted by the ujigami. He can split them, placing some points in an Alteration and spending the remaining points to move skill points the character to the knowledge offered by the ujigami.

Thus the character forgets what he is, to the profit of the kami, his knowledge erased on the way to his "ascension." **It is not possible to move the character's specialisation points to the kami's mystical techniques.** The latter can only be improved by the progression in the Humanity gauge.

Example: Christopher's character is at Threshold 1; he can choose to spend 5 points in Alterations and/or move points towards the specialisations of his ujigami. After thinking for a while, Christopher decides to do both: he spends two points in the Alteration Reminiscences, 1 point in the Alteration Ki Imprint and uses the two remaining points to decrease the character's Overclocking specialisation, increasing the Kenjutsu specialisation owned by the ujigami.

Technological Archaism: The character becomes progressively less adapted to his time, forgetting how retina recognition works, how to turn on a Gantai, to order a drink from a pod, to read a program aided by a Universal Intelligence, and so on.

Whenever the player wishes his character to use any technological product, from a computer to a vehicle, from a puppetbot to a squid, apply a penalty equal to the Alteration rating to the appropriate dice roll. If successful, the keshin is momentarily confused, but uses the item with no problem. On a failure, the character becomes disoriented and can't complete the task without help.

This Alteration can occasionally work to the keshin's advantage; apply its value as a bonus to a test (Intelligence or Perception) to recognise an ancient item from the kami's original era.

Disorientation: The face of Japan has change and so have those of its cities. The names of the cities, prefectures and regions have changed throughout history, as along with the size

of buildings, the materials used to build them, the layouts of streets and the old wooden dwellings.

A keshin with this Alteration becomes lost in his environment, confused by memories. Reincarnating after so many years has left a much clearer image of old Edo than that of 2046 Tokyo. What is that new gigantic tower? Where is the home of my samurai companion? What happened to the ancient dojo? What have they done with the old tea house where I went to relax? Where is the statuette under which I had hidden my blade?

Apply this Alteration as a penalty in all dice rolls having to do with orientation and recognition of streets, quarters, towns (Geography, Orientation, any test to recognise a specific place...).

Conversely, roll against its value as an effective skill to remember the ancient architecture of a city, of an old forest road, or to find traces of forgotten ruins in the mountains.

Ki Imprint: Ki is the energy present in all things, from a brush to the wind, in the fish playing under the waves.

The more a character loses Humanity, the more the power of his ujigami reveals himself, increasing his Ki reserve. Keshin identify each other by the aura of pure Ki they emanate, in the same way they detect the traces of Taint from impure Ki. Keshin can learn to veil their Ki energy to escape attention; this Alteration defies the veil, making his imprint burn bright as the sun.

Ki Imprints vary in nature, depending on its value and the kami owning it. Although invisible to humans, the mystical aura is detectable by supernatural creatures from metres away, for hours after the passage of the character. An Imprint may appear as cherry blossoms silently falling, a sinister shadow, a hundred will-o'-the-wisps flying around him, the sound of a mournful chime, a spectral dragon entwining his body, or anything the player's chooses.

The value of this Alteration is added to any other character's Zanshin test to sense the presence of the keshin. The more powerful the Imprint, the easier it is for a foe to feel the character's approach.

Alternatively, the keshin can deliberately call on this Alteration, adding its value to his Charisma characteristic, to try to frighten a yokai, an oni or other enemy by revealing the full power of his Ki. Some ujigami actually prefer particularly impressive, alarming imprints.

Forgetfulness: This Alteration affects the character's memory, making him forget his friends, his loved ones, his family.

The faces and names he recalls, following his loss of Humanity, are those the ujigami remembers and not those of the people around him. Forgetting one's family is something particularly difficult to live with, and can be dishonouring! Who is this girl, now? My mother didn't look like that! My father was slain by a ronin, this one cannot but be an impostor! The higher the value of this Alteration, the less the keshin remembers his friends and the details of his childhood, even his very existence.

Apply this Alteration as a penalty in all the tests relating to the keshin's contacts (Contacts and Relationships skills) and Intelligence rolls to recognise friends or family members.

Reminiscence: The ujigami's memories sometimes appear when least expected. The young woman you've crossed paths with at the docks looks like a long-lost love; that old man is the spitting image of an ancient daimyo. Dreams, nightmares, misunderstandings, all are possible consequences of flashbacks that appear as more often and violently as the Alteration increases. The keshin may even begin to hallucinate, reliving

Experience

Although characters can still earn experience, it may only be spent on characteristics and skills specific to the keshin, i.e. skills the character had already acquired before becoming keshin. The knowledge of the ujigami only progresses with the drop in Humanity.

If the character already had one of the ujigami skills before becoming a keshin, it can be improved in both ways (by spending experience and moving points). However, the Gamemaster may decide mundane experience is unable to raise the skill any higher once it is equal to the keshin's Threshold level.

Players may choose to learn new skills simply to move cheaper points into their ujigami skills at the next Threshold. The Gamemaster should be aware of this and only allow it at their discretion.

As mentioned before, while mystical techniques behave like skills, they may only be improved with bonus points gained for raising the Keshin's Threshold.

old battles, ancient dramas, the tragic fight that led to a former death. Eventually, the memories can drive the keshin into an epic quest, chasing traces of a memory, or an obsessing dream.

The GM will require characteristic or Skill tests, taking this Alteration as a penalty, to avoid confusing past and present: an Intelligence roll to avoid mistaking a passer-by for one of his old enemies, for instance, or a Willpower roll to resist a hallucination of the past.

Transfiguration: As the keshin grows closer to the kami incarnated in him, sacrificing Humanity and memories, he grows to resemble him in his mannerisms and bearing. Characters with high levels in this Alteration show to radical changes; a shy and fragile young idolu may become a strong, combative woman, for example. It may take the form of old habits or forgotten traditions, such as strict adherence to the bushido codes, or fashions like blackening her teeth or perfuming one's hair with camellia perfume.

Apply this Alteration as a penalty in all Charisma and Contacts tests. The character's strange, archaic behaviour makes him outlandish, even alarming.

This Alteration may be applied as a bonus to Charisma tests to intimidate a human or enemy.

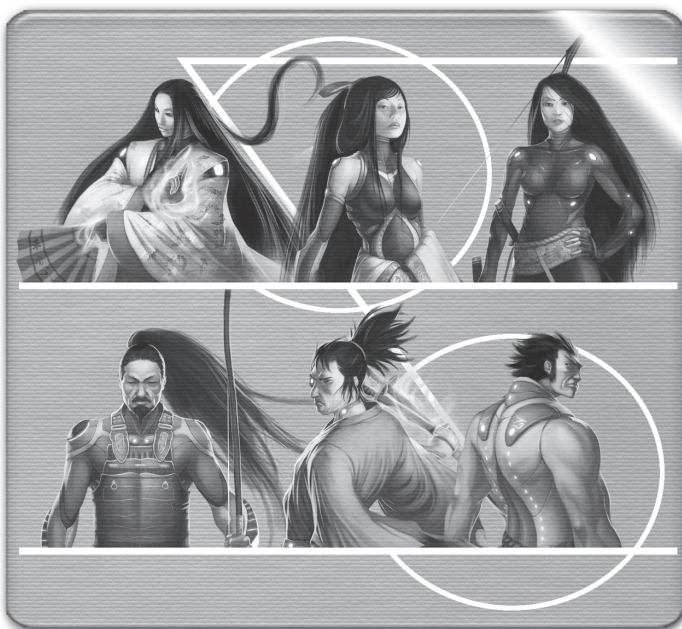
Equipment

While the keshin have considerable supernatural power, sometimes that just isn't enough. The creatures of Yomi are often unfazed by gunfire, but an advanced skinsuit might save a keshin's life from their claws. And, of course, advanced weaponry is an efficient method of dealing with lesser foes, conserving supernatural might for more dangerous monsters.

There is no new equipment in Tensei, but the keshin usually have better access to what is available. They have become part of the elite fighting force that stands against the darkness, and the Emperor has very deep pockets. Once they have been able to make contact with the leadership of the forces of light, they will find their new allies can be very generous.

The Gamemaster should allow the player characters to 'tool up' with some of the more advanced and expensive items to be found in *Kuro*. While the Imperial forces cannot give them a blank cheque, they can provide a wide variety of equipment at the player character's request. After all, the keshin are one of their last hopes against the shadow.

UJIGAMI ARCHETYPES



The following pages list some examples of ujigami that the players can choose to have incarnated in their character. Each kami consists of an archetype (a profession) and the name of the ujigami that has left his mark in the history of Japan. Thus Abe No Seimei's archetype is "Onmyoji", which is a sorcerer who handles divination and the Inzo (mudras). Feel free to design new ujigami, mixing and matching archetypes, mystic techniques, sacred Gimikku and specific knowledge using the examples below as a guideline.

Some possibilities for further development include:

Sugaware no Michizane: A statesman of Emperor Uda, deified under the name Tenjin-sama. A great poet and scholar, he is the protector-kami of students and writers. He is venerated in his Kitano Tenman-gu shrine (Samurai archetype).

Murasaki Shikibu: Lady-in-waiting at the Imperial court in the Heian era, she wrote the first Japanese novel in hiragana, *The Tale of Genji*, telling the sentimental intrigues of the court (Samurai archetype).

Iga-no-tsubone: Exorcist and court lady in the 14th century, she was famed for her willpower and her strength. She repelled a tengu who had haunted the Emperor's court (Onmyoji archetype).

Minamoto no Yoshitsune: A samurai and strategist of the 13th century, the half-brother of the first shogun of Japan, he was protected by Benkei before dying by seppuku (Samurai archetype).

Nitta Yoshisada: A clan chief from the 14th century, in the service of Emperor Go-daigo. He was famous for his bravery, his loyalty towards the Emperor and his spectacular seppuku where he cut off his own head. In order to cross cape Inamugarasaki, according to legend, he called on a dragon he considered a servant of Amaterasu (Samurai archetype).

Several fully worked examples follow.

New Skill Specialisations

The following new specialisations appear in the below ujigami descriptions. All new specialisations and skills are marked with a "x".

Melee weapons

Jitte no Jutsu: Use of the 'jitte', a small dagger-sized steel weapon with a small hood used to catch an enemy's blade. Once used by town police to disarm drunken samurai. The jitte does 1D6 damage and grants a REA bonus of +1.



Kenjutsu: While the sword speciality covers the Katana and Wakazashi, this skill is specific to the two weapons. It includes not only striking with the blades but drawing them quickly and efficiently.

Niten Ryo: This specialisation governs the sword style of using two blades. Using this skill grants no extra actions, but does ensure it is much harder to disarm the character.

Humanities

Architecture: With this specialisation the character is able to appreciate the design aesthetic and construction principles behind building design. It might also be used to predict exits in unfamiliar places based on a knowledge of building regulations.

Calligraphy: This elegant art is the study of Japanese writing. It is often done as a form of meditation. A brush and ink are used to draw the characters, and great experts are highly regarded.

Military Strategy (Heiho): Using this skill the character can manage large groups of soldiers and try to analyse the movements of an enemy to determine their objective. It can also be useful when playing chess.

Poetry: This specialisation represents a character's ability with poetic forms such as Haiku. It covers not only their composition but also how to understand them as well as their forms and styles.

Sumi-e: This artistic skill governs a particular style of drawing, using an ink wash in a similar style to watercolour. It is a similar flow to calligraphy and the two are often combined.

Natural Sciences

Herbalism: The study of plants and their various properties. With the Gamemaster's permission it might be used for healing attempts.

Horse Training: With this specialisation the character can train a horse so it will accept a rider or even learn tricks. Horses can also be trained for certain tasks, such as racing, carriage pulling, battle etc. It can also be used to calm a wild horse.

Social Sciences

Bushido: Literally 'the way of the warrior', this specialisation grants and understanding of the old ways of the samurai. The code of Bushido is often unforgiving and mainly concerns itself with personal honour and duty to one's lord.

Athletics

Riding (Bajutsu): Most people can sit on a horse while it walks after others, but with this specialisation the character can canter and gallop as well as make tight turns on the horse.

Communication

Leadership: This specialisation allows a character to give confident and precise orders to subordinates. It allows the character to be succinct, clear and authoritative.

Spiritual

Astrology: The study of the movements of the stars and planets. Used to cast fortunes and recognising constellations.

Feng-Shui: A specialisation that mixes spirituality and interior decoration. Using Feng-Shui a character can manipulate the natural energy in the home by the way they place objects and openings. It might be used to help or hinder the movement of spiritual energy.

Shamanism: A primal and primitive form of magic, shamanism allows a character to get close to their bestial nature. It often involves drumming to represent the heartbeat and the casting aside of 'civilised' accessories like clothes and technology.

Contacts

Imperial Court: The character knows people close to the Emperor, and understands the politics behind the various courtiers. It can be used to get close to the Emperor or just to make requests of his staff.



ABE NO SEIMEI

This place is so strange. I know I have visited it before, but at that time my memories were very different. A shrine built to my glory, the Abe no Seimei jinja, here, at Shin-Heian-kyo. It is always curious to visit a site you never knew when you were alive and which was built solely in your honour. I still have enormous difficulties in adapting to this era. Even the song of the planets is different, and the starry sky is now invaded by metal drones sent by men. All that disrupts my predictions, my visions, my knowledge of onmyodo. I still remember the Heian-Kyo courts, the splendour of the palaces and the smell of the cherry trees. These perfumes, these corridors, these feelings are so distant and so troubling... By chance, I've discovered this little room while simply wandering the palace corridors. It was the Zanshin that drove me. The walls were covered in Ki droplets, flowing delicately to the ground, soaking into the ornate draperies. Under the ancient layers of paint were five pentagrams of different colours, five of my symbols, each connected to an element. But chiefly there was the much more recent mark of the crescent moon, traced by inhuman claws on each of the pentacles, as if to better disfigure the ancient representations of my magic.

The signature of Ashiya Doman, my old adversary. You, too, have returned from the past... But the Taint in your mark now decrees your coming destruction.

Archetype: Onmyoji

Ujigami: Abe no Seimei

Abe no Seimei was an onmyoji in the Imperial court of the Heian era in the first half of the 10th century. Famous for his magical battles, the legends surrounding his birth (he was said to be the child of a kitsune) and his intuitive knowledge of the elements of nature, he drew on the ways of the yin and yang as well as the powers of familiar spirits, the shikigami. A master astronomer, he practiced divination and astrology. A sorcerer and spiritual advisor, Abe no Seimei was also known by his signature: the famous red pentagram used in Ki talismans.

Sacred Gimikku: Onmyodo. For every 4 the character rolls when using Ki (Ki action, mystical technique...), he automatically regains 1 Ki point, although he cannot gain more energy than his Humanity Threshold in a single roll (*e.g. at Threshold 2, even if a character rolls three 4s in a test, he can only gain a maximum of 2 Ki points*).

Special features: None

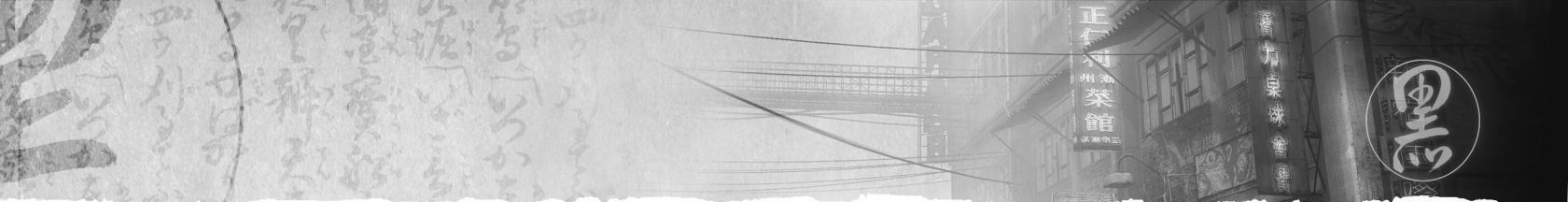
Mystical techniques: Divination, Kekkai, Katatagae, Kuji-In, Kuji-Kiri, Maboroshi

Accessible items and amulets: Talisman, o-fuda, omikuj, magatama (creation and use)

Special Ki recovery: Performing a very long prayer in a natural site (park, mountain, shrine...) at the centre of a pentagram surrounded by 5 symbols of the 5 elements (for example, a candle, a basin, a stone, a feather and an amulet) for more than 3 hours recharges the entire Ki reserve.

Skills and specialisations:

- Throwing Weapons
 - Throwing Knives
- Archaic Missile Weapons
 - Bows (Yumi)
 - Blowguns
- Hand-to-Hand
 - Brawling
- Melee Weapons
 - Polearms
 - Staves
 - Daggers
- Humanities
 - All specialisations
- Natural Sciences
 - Geology
 - Herbalism*
 - Meteorology
- Physical Sciences
 - Astronomy
 - Mathematics
- Athletics
 - Dodge
 - Riding (Bajutsu)*
- Deception
 - Sleight of Hand
- Communication
 - All specialisations
- Spiritual
 - All specialisations
 - Astrology*
 - Feng-shui*
- Contacts
 - Imperial Court*
- Survival
 - All specialisations



色にな出でそ思ひ死ぬとも

正利
州
菜館

UJIGAMI ARCHETYPES

HIMIKO

I feel so ridiculous. Kneeling in this small concrete courtyard, blood flowing on my forehead, it's all I can do just to hold my sword. My hands shake. The night vision programme activated in my Gantai doesn't reassure me. No shadow, no movement. Only my reflection, waving in a long puddle. Slender, tall, closed face, wearing that small schoolgirl skirt I liked so much; what was the big idea of dressing like that? How can one dare to leave home like that? My skull hurts, I have the feeling I'm raving. I am that girl no longer, that fragile student, passionate about fashion and cosmetic nanoinks. I've changed, I am lost, I no longer enjoy the J-Pop pieces filling the playlists in my pod. I don't even know what I really like, except patrolling by night to spy in the shadows of the city, following the tracks of Taint and trying to end them. But this night my wanderings ended in maybe biting more than I can chew. There are many of them, and they are determined to eliminate me. I owe my life to my kagenie, my holographic avatar, which absorbed two kanabo hits in my place, allowing me to survive and escape.

My Ki gutters and my powers dwindle. I feel their hoarse breathing approach, hidden in the dark, their bodies camouflaged in the hollows of the walls, in the ground, behind a warehouse, in the very gut of the city. I no longer have the strength to escape. Delicately, I place my weapon on the ground and focus the last of my strength. After a few seconds, a yumi, a small luminous bow made of Ki, appears in my hands and shoots a volley of opalescent arrows. They turn in the air as if following an immaterial wind, flying through doors, windows and balconies. The first screams from my enemies make themselves heard, blasted by my ghostly projectiles.

I will always find Taint, where it hides.

Archetype: Miko

Ujigami: Himiko

Between the 2nd and 3rd centuries, Himiko was the Queen of what was then called Yamataikuni or Hinomoto, the "Source of the Sun": ancient Japan.

Unmarried, she was a shaman queen, a priestess, a powerful miko, entering a trance in divinatory ceremonies in order to contact the spirits. Chosen by the people, tired of the incessant wars, she lived in reclusion in her own palace, surrounded by

a hundred followers, with no contact with men except for her younger brother, who she left in charge of the affairs of the country.

Sacred Gimikku: Clairvoyance. In any roll made while using Ki, all 4s are simply rerolled.

Special feature: Himiko will only grant her power to an unmarried female keshin.

Mystical techniques: Divination, Kagenie, Kamitsuku, Kekkai, Kuchiyose, Kuji-kiri

Accessible items and amulets: Shimenawa, omikuiji, gohei, magatama (creation and use)

Ki recovery: Remaining, uninterrupted, in a trance for more than 3 hours, communing with the spirits, recharges the entire Ki reserve.

Skills and specialisations:

Throwing Weapons

Javelins

Throwing Knives

Archaic Missile Weapons

Bow (Yumi)

Blowgun

Hand-to-Hand

Brawling

Melee Weapons

Polearms

Staves

Daggers

Humanities

All specialisations

Natural Sciences

Geology

Herbalism*

Zoology

Physical Sciences

Astronomy

Athletics

Dodge

Riding (Bajutsu)*

Communication

All specialisations

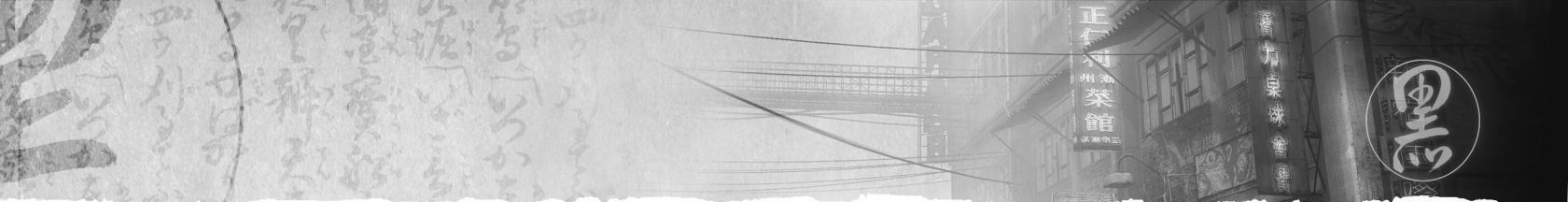
Spiritual

All specialisations

Shamanism*

Survival

All specialisations



色にな出でそ思ひ死ぬとも

LADY TOMOE

I would have preferred a horse chase. After long minutes, I chase the Omega hovercraft, in the trunk of which is a cooling unit and a dozen faces meticulously ripped off their unfortunate owners. The creature driving the vehicle is a faceless clone, a tainted creature with no facial traits: a noppera-bo. We've turned onto the freeway – I alerted all anti-collisions detectors – I am sandwiched between the creature from Yomi and an Osaka police cruiser. Clinging to my Kumite bike, I lost a few seconds trying to deactivate the automatic control. I'd forgotten how the infernal machine worked.

A few more turns, a collision avoided by the skin of my teeth and we continue our frantic race on a ravaged bridge. A luminous point on my panel signals me that the patrol car is trying to stop my engine by optical connection. But without a working controller, I'm the only one able to drive this bike.

The hovercraft shakes as it rolls right over huge piles of debris on the bridge, slowing slightly. With the police sirens in my ears, I take advantage of the moment to get near the back of the vehicle. It takes a few seconds to climb onto the seat and jump on the top of my target, leaving my Kumite to roll over a few times before hitting a pillar.

The noppera-bo knows I'm on the top of the vehicle and starts wildly zigzagging to throw me off. The turns are violent, but I manage despite everything to retain balance, pressing my boots deep into the body of the vehicle. I can imagine the amazed look of the police officers at my back.

I focus briefly and my wakizashi finally leaves its hiding place, appearing in the hollow of my palm as if coming out of my arm. A moment later, my blade pierces the roof of the hovercraft and split the empty face of my foe in two. Some minutes later I've already jumped from the bridge and disappeared into the river Yodo.

Archetype: Onna Musha (warrior woman)

Ujigami: Lady Tomoe (Tomoe Gozen)

The wife of Minamoto no Yoshinaka, Lady Tomoe was a peerless horsewoman and archer of the 13th century, belonging to the clan Kiso. Feared and respected in equal measure, she had a fearless reputation; she followed her husband into great battles, mounted and in the first lines, against the troops of the first Shogun Yoritomo to defend the Taira Imperial family. No one knows what really became of her after the battle of Awazu, during which her husband lost his life.

Sacred Gimikku: Way of the Kami. Whenever the character rolls a 4 while using Ki, the roll is not counted; instead, it's replaced by her Humanity Threshold (e.g. At Threshold 8, when the keshin gets a 4 in a die while using magic, the one becomes in fact an 8).

Special feature: The Keshin having Lady Tomoe as an ujigami benefits from a +2 increase in Dexterity. This ujigami will only incarnate in a female character.

Mystical techniques: Kekkaï, Okuden

Accessible items and amulets: Shimenawa, omamori (use only)

Ki recovery: Practicing archery – the accuracy, the perfect mastery of the movements and the senses – for more than 3 hours recharges the entire Ki reserve.

Skills and specialisations:

Firearms

Ancient Guns

Thrown weapons

All specialisations

Archaic Missile Weapons

All specialisations

Hand-to-Hand

All specialisations

Melee weapons

All specialisations

Kenjutsu*

Humanities

All specialisations

Military Strategy (Heiho)*

Social Sciences

Bushido*

Natural Sciences

Horse Training*

Zoology

Athletics

All Specialisations

Riding (Bajutsu)*

Communication

All specialisations

Leadership*

Drive

Motorcycles

Speeder-Bikes

Investigation

All specialisations

Spiritual

All specialisation

Survival

All specialisations



色にな出でそ思ひ死ぬとも

KUSUNOKI MASASHIGE

If there can be only one, I will be him. Standing on the supertanker's main bridge, clothes wet with rain, I watch the raging ocean that shakes the huge ship like a nutshell. In the captain's cabin a small group of humans lies prostrated, paralysed by fear. They'd been locked in the hold, consigned to an abject fate beneath the waves; I barely managed to bring them here. They still don't understand that they are not prisoners of simple pirates, but meat, destined to feed "fish" the size of buildings.

The tanker is now empty of any other lifeform. Its tainted holds and hatches are filled with blood and scarred by my weapons. Deck by deck, I've wiped out all the servants of the beings undulating under the hull. All those accursed creatures had one sole purpose: to gather and offer human souls as sacrifices to the depths of the sea.

Lost, miles from the coast, we are now drifting near the limits of the China Sea. Soon the Emperor's kekkai will stop our progress and the monsters haunting the waters will finally attack.

I don't know if the humans will survive the assault. At the moment, we are bait, drawing the aquatic creatures far from the inhabited coastal areas. I have made them leave their lair and I must now finish my mission.

As a giant, scaly body arcs above the waves, I grab my bow and change my first projectile as a Ki bomb. The arrow cuts through the waves and explodes, scattering scraps of the greenish, chitinous skin. As the creature disappears under the water, other giant morays come out of the waves and start wrapping around the ship. My fingers clench on my bow while I calmly aim for the hideous howling heads.

For the glory of the Emperor, you will never again see the blue water of Japan!

Archetype: Samurai

Ujigami: Kusunoki Masashige

A brilliant military strategist and a samurai loyal to the Emperor, Kusunoki Masashige knowingly went to his death at the battle of Minatogawa, dutifully following the senseless orders of the Tenno Go-Daigo in 1336. Before the unavoidable defeat, he committed ritual suicide with his brother with these famous words: "Might I have seven lives to give to my country!" (Shichisei Hōkoka!) His loyalty and devotion to the Emperor have no limit.

Sacred Gimikku: Seven Lives. For every 4 rolled when using Ki, he immediately recovers as many hit points as his Humanity Threshold (e.g. *If an incarnation of Masashige at Threshold 2*

rolls three 4s in a test, he recovers 6 hit points). The keshin cannot go over his maximum Hit Points this way.

Special feature: A keshin with Masashige as ujigami receives a +2 in Dexterity.

Mystical techniques: Kekkai, Okuden

Accessible items and amulets: Talisman, shimenawa, omamori (use only)

Ki recovery: Kenjutsu. Practising swordplay, iaito, secret attack and parry techniques with a katana, wakizashi or bokken for more than 3 hours, continuously and in tranquillity, recharges the entire Ki reserve.

Skills and Specialisations:

Firearms

Ancient Guns

Throwing Weapons

All specialisations

Archaic Missile Weapons

All specialisations

Hand-to-Hand

All specialisations

Melee Weapons

All specialisations

Kenjutsu*

Humanities

All specialisations

Military Strategy (Heiho)*

Poetry*

Calligraphy*

Social Sciences

Politics

Bushido*

Athletics

All specialisations

Riding (Bajutsu)*

Communication

All specialisations

Leadership*

Investigation

All specialisations

Spiritual

All specialisations

Contacts

Imperial Court*

Survival

All specialisations



色にな出でそ思ひ死ぬとも

正
州
館

UJIGAMI ARCHETYPES

MIYAMOTO MUSASHI

I've always said that the beings from Yomi are much cleverer than we think. If not, Japan would be but a giant battleground and men would have long disappeared from its surface. In their way these creatures like humans. More often than not, they like them alive rather than for their simple nutritional value. They know how to hide, how to manipulate us, how to avoid us, how to take advantage of the chaos they create to increase Taint and change our country into a nice cosy nest.

Take my opponent. Just a few hours ago he lived quietly in a Shibuya surgical clinic, where he performed operations on high-status Kaisei women. As an honourable doctor specialised in biotech, he never made any procedure that wasn't approved by the law. On the contrary, he made these women much more attractive, fascinating, obsessing. Doubtless a side effect of the rituals written painstakingly on their backs to them into formidable spies. Living weapons, unaware of their new nature and capable of turning into killers with a simple pod pulse, by a tiny phone call made precisely at the right moment to hit the Emperor's guards.

It wasn't simple to follow its tracks, but here it is, facing me now, its face deformed by the true nature of its blood, wielding a kusari-gama with a heavy weighted chain.

With a few gestures I form a kekkai around us. A translucent shell covers the whole clinic as well as a portion of the surrounding streets. There's nothing but us and the silence; not even the other men within that perimeter followed us into the dimensional barrier.

With a smile in my lips, I draw both my katana, rendered luminescent by my energy. A new duel; that makes me very happy.

Archetype: Duellist

Ujigami: Miyamoto Musashi (Takezo Shinmen)

A legendary swordsman, Miyamoto Musashi took part, during all his life, in hundreds of duels and never lost. He used a unique technique, using two katana or bokken at the same time.

A great tactician, he summarised his strategic techniques in several treatises that later formed the *Gorin no sho*: "The Book of Five Rings."

Sacred Gimikku: Spiritual Strategy. Any 4s rolled while using Ki take the value of the highest number rolled on the other dice (e.g. If the character gets 2, 1, 4 and 6 in a test, count the 4 as a 6).

Special features: Musashi's keshin receives a +2 increase in Reflexes. Moreover, when using his Two Heavens in One (Niten-

ryu) specialisation, he can take one action to strike twice or to strike and parry at the same time.

Mystical techniques: Kekkai, Okuden

Accessible items and amulets: Talisman, shimenawa, omamori (use only)

Ki recovery: Niten-ryu. Practising swordsmanship with two swords or two bokken, making attacks, parries and repeating duelling techniques for more than 3 hours, continuously and in tranquillity, recharges the entire Ki reserve.

Skills and specialisations:

Firearms

Ancient Guns

Thrown Weapons

All specialisations

Archaic Missile Weapons

All specialisations

Hand-to-Hand

All specialisations

Melee Weapons

All specialisations

Kenjutsu*

Niten-ryu*

Jitte to jutsu*

Humanities

All specialisations

Military Strategy (Heiho)*

Poetry*

Sumi-e*

Architecture*

Social Sciences

Politics

Bushido*

Athletics

All specialisations

Riding (Bajutsu)*

Deception

Sneaking

Communication

All specialisations

Leadership*

Investigation

All specialisations

Contacts

All specialisations

Survival

All specialisations



色にな出でそ思ひ死ぬとも

SAITO MUSASHIBO BENKEI

The shock is overwhelming. I have just enough presence of mind to shoot the glass floor before hitting it. The fall lasts a few seconds, but I have enough time to reinforce my skin with stone. I burst through the branches of a small tree in an explosion of leaves and bark before smacking into the damp earth and sinking deep into the ground. I lost my guns during my improvised flight and I have the tinny taste of blood in my mouth. The impact disoriented me and that dirty bastard's claws have ripped my new armoured nanofiber trench-coat to shreds. Damn it! I've barely freed myself when I hear the robot land, heavily but with rather more grace, some metres from me. Three metres tall, gigantic arms equipped with massive pincers, and greenish photonic detectors lighting what passes for its face with an unwholesome light. The Oni possessing it has started to mutate its chassis; it's much tougher than the simple construction android it originally was. I'm screwed.

Without a word, it slowly advances on me, snapping the thick blood-stained pincers that serve as its hands. I barely dodge its first blow, as my own hands transform into reinforced bone blades, my finger bones stretching out as sharp as carbon needles. I see the surprise in its infernal eyes.

"You bastard, did you think you were the only Oni around here?"

Archetype: Oniwaka (child of an Oni)

Ujigami: Saito Musashibo Benkei

According to legend, Benkei was the son of an oni-possessed priest and a blacksmith's daughter. An extraordinary two metres tall, he became a bandit – and Buddhist monk! – before reforming his thieving ways by becoming the servant of the samurai who beat him: the famous Minamoto no Yoshitsune. Benkei died defending him, blocking the way to his friend's room with his corpse, standing on his feet even in death despite being riddled with arrows. Gifted with superhuman strength by of his oni heritage, he was also famous for his cunning.

Sacred Gimikku: Oni strength. Each 4 the character rolls while using Ki adds extra damage to his attack equal to his Humanity Threshold (e.g. a keshin of Benkei at Threshold 5 rolling two 4s in a combat test adds 10 damage points to his weapon's damage).

Special features: A keshin with Benkei as their ujigami receives a +2 increase in Strength. He can also use the Shinobi mystical technique (acquired Taint points apply as for animachines, but Benkei doesn't accumulate a daily point).

Mystical techniques: Kekkai, Shinobi

Accessible items and amulets: Talisman (use only)

Ki recovery: Kobudo. Taking part in combat training, martial arts or naginatajutsu practice or physical exercise for more than three hours recharges the entire Ki reserve.

Skills and Specialisations:

Firearms

All specialisations

Throwing Weapons

All specialisations

Archaic Missile Weapons

All specialisations

Heavy Weapons

All specialisations

Hand-to-Hand

All specialisations

Melee Weapons

All specialisations (preference for the Naginata – polearm)

Athletics

All specialisations

Riding (Bajutsu)*

Deception

All specialisations

Communication

All specialisations

Investigation

All specialisations

Spiritual

All specialisations

Survival

All specialisations



色にな出でそ思ひ死ぬとも



KI

“If you seek to master techniques or to influence people, your goal is limited. But if your goal is the universe, then it is without limit.”

– Ikkusai Iwata

Ki is the invisible energy that can be found in all things: objects, elements, animals, dreams, living beings... Nothing is without Ki, and everything is connected to this infinite source, created and maintained (it is said) by the old gods. Atoms, matter, the cosmos, all bathe in Ki; but only some people are capable of discerning it and using it.

The kami and the yokai spirits (oni, obake, yurei... etc.), good or evil, are all made of this powerful and hazy essence. They have the ability to shape this energy, this internal force, channelling it to enhance their strength, their speed, their abilities, and to perform devastating rituals. Ki is the fuel for the character's powers and mystical techniques, allowing an ancient samurai to break a car in two with one blow of his sword, an onmyoji to practice Kuji-In and shoot bursts of fire. The below abilities apply to all keshin, no matter their ujigami (the mystical techniques, in turn, are specific to various archetypes).

PURITY AND TAINT

Purity and Taint are as Manichean starkly binary as they seem. Although opposed, both are fundamental principles; neither can exist without the other. They coexist in everything, everywhere, evil creatures hunting pure beings, pollution surrounding the sacred, the very notion of “health” means nothing without Taint.

The is especially true of all men, but in **Kuro** it is most pertinent – at least mechanically – to keshin.

The Bite of Taint

While Ki energy can be either tainted or pure by nature, a keshin's Ki reserve, with which he casts spells and calls on the abilities of the kami, is strongly associated with purity.

Purity is essential to a keshin's ujigami, without which he would have long ago been consigned to the grey plains of Jigoku and joined the ranks of the oni. Thus, each time a player character is Tainted (by killing an innocent, by touching blood, etc.; see below), he gains one or more Taint points, limiting his Ki.

In mechanics terms, Taint “locks” part of the character's Ki reserve, preventing their use.

Example: During a scenario, Christopher's keshin character (Threshold 1) inadvertently wounds a human, tainting his energy. He gets 2 Taint points. Until he is purified, his character has an effective Ki reserve of 23. The remaining two Ki are frozen, unusable.

Until the character has cleansed the Taint through purification rituals, he is weakened. There may even be side effects, in the form of torments, passing weaknesses, crippled mystical techniques, an unpleasant tint in his Ki Imprint, or the like.

A character must absolutely protect himself from excess Taint, at the risk of not only losing his powers, but actually expelling the ujigami inside him.



As soon as a keshin accumulates more points of Taint than his total Ki reserve (his maximum), the ujigami leaves him forever.

Example: When Christopher's keshin receives his 26th Taint point, his ujigami leaves him.

Taint has a different effect on onimachines. "Good" onimachines also have "pure" Ki, but tend to regain Taint easily, thanks to their original nature. Onimachines who accumulate too much Taint risk reverting to their worst instincts.

As soon as an onimachine gains more points of Taint than his total Ki reserve (his maximum), he joins the forces of Yomi and becomes an NPC. The *Onimachine* chapter (page 37) goes into further detail.

Accumulating Taint

Tensei characters largely accumulate Taint through their choices and the effects of their actions. There are three major sources of Taint:

- **The blood of innocents:** Wounding or killing a human, being touched by the blood of a victim, being in direct contact with human death, all are faults that risk causing Taint. That's the main reason keshin raise kekkai: to avoid hurting passers-by. The creatures of Yomi-No-Kuni, knowing this weakness, do not hesitate to exploit it, kidnapping humans, using them as puppets, manipulating innocents, all to weaken and undermine their keshin foes.
- **Tatari:** Wounding, killing or deceiving a kami is a particularly corrupt act. A character can be Tainted by wounding another keshin or by deceiving a kami he has summoned. Lesser kami are of considerable use to an ujigami – performing services, enchanting items, providing information, and so on – but this should always be done in a respectful and honest fashion. When a character deceives a kami in this process, shows hostility towards him, tricks him or makes fun of him, he may undergo a Tatari. It is a sort of curse that taints his Ki and weakens his energy.
- **Creatures of Yomi:** besides some environments that can temporarily weaken Ki, some oni and other evil creatures have powers that can taint an opponent.

Foul spit, venom, blood effluvia, corrupting breath, all are abilities that not only inflict damage but also cause their victims

to acquire Taint. *Example:* An Ayakashi eel can project a sticky oil capable of causing 2 Taint points on the keshin touching it (see Bestiary, page 101).

The Gamemaster determines when a character gains Taint points, and how many. Don't inflict too much Taint, or too often; corruption should be memorable for the hero and not a matter of routine! Each new gain should be connected to an incident, a fault of the character that risks loss of grace and forces him to perform purification rituals. Make these encounters dramatic; wounding a human should never be brushed off as a mere "accident," and furious kami should see to punish those presumptuous enough to fool them.

Here are some examples of Taint penalties, depending on character actions:

Action	Taint
Being stained by blood, covered in corpses	1 to 2 Taint
Inadvertently wounding a human	1 to 2 Taint
Voluntarily wounding a human	3 to 5 Taint
Inadvertently killing a human	10 to 15 Taint
Voluntarily killing a human	15 to 25 Taint
Wounding a group of humans	25 to 40 Taint
Massacring a group of humans	40 to 80 Taint
Ransacking a sacred place	10 to 20 Taint
Deceiving a Kami	1 to 20 Taint



Side Effects of Taint

Aside from weaken the Ki reserve, Taint can cause unpleasant side effects. This includes disrupting some rituals or distorting the effects of some mystical techniques (for example, the kekkai of a tainted character may become an asset for the Yomi creature enclosed in it); see the section on Mystical Techniques in *The Ways of the Invisible*, page 46.

Other side effects include (as the Gamemaster sees fit):

Taint	Effects
1 to 5	None
6 to 10	Torments, nightmares, horrible hallucinations
11 to 20	The character's Ki Imprint is tainted. Kami mistrust him and avoid him, and the Shikigami refuse to obey him.
20+	The character risks attracting the forces of Yomi to himself, he can be noticed from very far away and can no longer call on any kami or the Shikigami.

INFLUENCE OF THE ENVIRONMENT

Japan has been overwhelmed by intense mystical changes, even more so since the Izumo seal was broken and Yomi is emptying into its very heart. Some places remain sacred, and the Wind of the Gods roars, but the lands are tainted. Purity and taint vary from place to place, and the simple act of crossing a haunted territory may considerably weaken a keshin, drowning him in foul-tainted effluvia.

These areas can grant bonuses or penalties to the Ki reserve, depending on their Purity trait. There are ways of temporarily protecting yourself from external influences, but a site like Izumo is far too impure for a hero to approach without his Ki being blown away like the flame from a candle. The characters must learn to take those places into account, so as not be trapped by them; or to use them to their advantage (there's nothing like ambushing a creature of Yomi in a shrine thick with purity in order to reduce its powers to nothing).

The descriptions of different regions of Japan (see the *Japan* chapter, page 82) introduces a few sites of power, but the following table presents a rough guideline:

Location	Purity or Taint score
Small Shinto shrine	1D6 Purity
Large shrine	4D6 Purity
Tainted site (old factory, cemetery, abattoir)	2D6 Taint
Accursed place (evil temple, the lair of a major Oni)	5D6 Taint

* Small Shinto shrine: 1D6 Purity points

The effects of these bonuses and penalties disappear as soon as the character leaves the place, but any Taint points they accumulated there will follow them until they are purified.

The characters (and their opponents) can also create kekkai, "dimensional" barriers that prevent bystanders from being wounded. In *Tensei* combats can be devastating and facing an evil creature in the middle of the street can sometimes lead to mass destruction and significant casualties.

A kekkai keeps the fight from spilling over into the public; or even being *noticed*!

A kekkai is an image of sorts, like a photograph of an, an invisible pocket universe where buildings can be destroyed at leisure without it having repercussions on reality. All the places and items present in the kekkai are "copied," duplicated in this shifted dimension, and all persons not specifically invited are excluded (in other words, the humans are not even aware that there's a combat going on around them). Ravaging a bridge, demolishing a building, throwing a bus with your hands will have no actual impact on reality. Once the kekkai is cancelled, the bridge will still be intact, the building unscathed and the bus in its place.

Except if the creator of the kekkai is killed in the combat. In that case, all damage produced inside that dimensional bubble will transition to the real world.

Like some pure or impure places that affect Ki, a kekkai can have traits that grant its summoner a tactical advantage. For example, a kekkai can glow with Purity to decrease the powers of the creatures of Yomi, or be stained with Taint to cause penalties to the Ki of the characters.

PURIFYING AND HEALING

“Kakemakumo kashikoki izanagino ohkami tsukushi no himuka no tachibanaodo no awagihara ni misogitaharai shi toki ni narimaseru haraedo no ohkami tachi moro moro no magagoto kegare aramu o ba harai tamai kiyome tamai to mohsu koto to kikoshi mese to kashikomi mo mohsu”

– Purification prayer

When a character is kagare (tainted), his power is greatly diminished and he risks spreading that Taint to his fellow adventurers.

Each day spent near a tainted character, other characters also gain 1 Taint.

The most efficient way to get rid of this nuisance is to perform a purification ceremony, or *harae*. These rites can be very quick or lengthy and elaborate, depending on the amount of Taint collected. In general it consists in numerous ablutions, a prayer or even a small period of retreat and abstinence in a sanctuary.

Depending on the number of Taint points suffered by the character, he must perform the following purification rituals:

Taint	Type of Purification
1 to 5	Ablutions: washing hands and mouth (misogi) and chanting a purification prayer (<i>harae no kotoba</i>) in the most strict tranquillity. The character must devote time solely to purification. Estimated time: 1 hour.
6 to 10	Immersion of the body under water (shower, waterfall) and recitation of a long purification prayer. Estimated time: 3 hours.
11 to 20	A short retreat in a shrine or in a pure site (forest, mountain), made of abstinence (<i>saikai</i>) and meditation. Multiple ablutions, purifying sacred dance (<i>kagura</i>) and prayer. Estimated time: 2 days.
20 +	A very long retreat in a Shinto temple, a shrine or any other sacred place. Long abstinence and purifications by water. The character must reach absolute emptiness and reconcile with the kami and his own nature in order to listen again to the inner sound of Ki. He can listen to a long prayers (<i>oharae norito</i>) performed by a high priest. From 1 week to 1 month.

Once this purification completed, the character loses all the Taint points from which he suffered.

Obviously if the character's Taint points exceed his total Ki reserve, purification is not possible; he becomes a simple human again, or goes back to the shadow side if he is an onimachine (becoming an NPC).

USING KI

All *Tensei* characters have a reserve of Ki points, depending on their Humanity Threshold (see page 12). Each point can be spent to add a D6 to a roll to perform superhuman actions or work magic.

This reserve is spent as points are used. Thus, if a character with 6 Ki points rolls 2 Ki dice to add to an action or spell, he will have 4 remaining.

This expenditure is temporary. These points can be recovered in different ways (ritual, rest, *Gimikku*...) often specific to each *ujigami*. Certain methods are quick but restore only a few points, while others are more elaborate and time-consuming but allow the recovery of the entire Ki reserve.

Although magical abilities are different from one *ujigami* to the next, all player characters can use their Ki reserve to perform the following actions:

Using Ki for Zanshin

The Zanshin is a state of enhanced vigilance, of total concentration that opens the keshin's senses to mystical energies. He can catch tiny details and perceive danger, but also and mainly Taint, purity, yokai and Ki Imprints. A character calling on this “third eye” can see normally, and doesn't have to noticeably concentrate; nothing, in fact, reveals the fact that he is seeing anything out of the ordinary. This ability allows the keshin to track an oni, distinguish a spirit in a crowd, identify the atrocities of kami and yokai, to feel sacred places, occulttech items and magical invisible presences. Above all, it allows a keshin to feel the presence of other incarnated *ujigami* around him.

When a character wishes to use Zanshin senses, he must spend Ki points, which add to his Presence characteristic; as



few or as many as he chooses. This dice are then rolled against a difficulty set by the Gamemaster, or opposed by other individuals if they are trying to hide their presence.

Once the test is made, the Ki points used are spent and subtracted from the reserve regardless of the result.

Using Ki for a Ki-Action

Depending on the task, Ki can also be used to enhance other actions. The player can choose to spend 1 or more Ki points at any moment to grant an extra 1D6 in a specific action. There is no maximum of points to spend.

Ki may be spent to boost his stamina, strength, reflexes or any other characteristic for a single die roll, to accomplish a superhuman action. Ki use is always obvious to creatures capable of seeing the invisible (or making use of Zanshin). A warrior activating Ki to improve his punches, for example, will have fists wreathed in magical flames, while a keshin reinforcing his agility will look like he is carried by a supernatural wind.

1 Ki point = 1D6 extra

Using Ki for Kokyu-Ryoku

It is often said that Ki is concentrated in the belly, in the intersection of energy meridians. Besides allowing a character to improve his characteristics and to open his Zanshin sense, Ki can grant other advantages as appropriate: an extra action, accelerated movement, multiplied jump height, and so on.

In all cases, spend the number of Ki points indicated to gain the benefit. Players may spend more points for more impressive results. Jumping on the roof of a tall building? Not at all impossible, thanks to Kokyu-Ryoku, the “energy-breath” of Ki!

Bonus	Cost
1 Extra Action	1 Ki
Movement x 4	1 Ki
Immediate recovery of 5 hit points	1 Ki
Defence + 1D6	1 Ki

Improving the Character by using Ki

As a keshin grows closer to his Kami and loses humanity, his Ki reserve grows and he is no longer limited to characteristic, skill or specialisation maxima. The flow of energy allows him to transcend his body's limitations long term. Keshin may “lock” Ki points to improve characteristics; for example, he may lock 1 Ki point to continuously raise his Stamina characteristic by 1.

These “locked” points are deducted from the character's total reserve for as long as they are used, but the keshin can recover them at any moment.

The number of points that can be locked in this way cannot exceed the character's Humanity Threshold; at Threshold 3, for instance, the character can raise his characteristics by a total of 3 points. With 0 in Humanity, the keshin can add 10 points to his characteristics.

1 locked Ki point = +1 in the chosen characteristic (to a maximum total equal to the Humanity Threshold)

Jumping

With Ki the character is able of prodigious jumps, to reach a rooftop or dodge an opponent. The normal jumping height of a character is calculated as follows: Jump height (in metres) = (DEX + REF)/4 (rounding up).

Spending a Ki point multiplies this height by 4.



Sacred Gimikku

Each Kami has a special Gimikku. These work like standard Gimikku (see **Kuro**, page 92) and should be added to the list of Gimikku the character can acquire based on his Specialisations. Sacred Gimikku, however, only apply if Ki is spent in the action. If the character rolls for a test unaided by Ki, the sacred Gimikku will not apply. Players will need mundane Gimikku if they want to retain an advantage when not using Ki.

Sacred Gimikku are usually very specialised, affecting (among other things) the effects of rolling a 4 on a die: Ki recovery on a 4, re-roll on a 4... see the descriptions of the individual ujigami for more details.

Sacred Gimikku only work when Ki is used in the action

Using Ki to Work Magic

Keshin have access to various mystical techniques, determined by their patron kami, allowing them to perform rituals and spells using Ki.

Spells are highly versatile. When using one of these techniques, the player decides what he wants to achieve and how many Ki points he intends to spend on the power. Some of these points will serve as the characteristic for the roll, adding D6 to the magical skill to check if the character masters his power correctly (for hitting a target with a bolt of lightning, for example). The remaining Ki points are used to determine parameters such as range, duration and damage.

Example: Christopher wishes to render the blade of his character's katana more destructive using his Okuden mystical technique. He decides to use 4 Ki points as a characteristic. These 4D6 will be rolled and added to the value of the Okuden technique to activate the power. He spends 6 extra Ki points for a damage bonus, and to make his blade flaming if he succeeds.

Any Taint the character is still carrying can sometimes disrupt spells, creating undesirable and violent side effects.

For more details, consult the section on mystical techniques in *The Ways of the Invisible*, page 46.

Decreasing Ki Expenditure through Sacred Items

Some magical and occulttech items – talismans, shimenawa, o-fuda, omikuji, gohei laser, sonic kitodama, holographic talismans – can decrease the Ki cost or lower the difficulty of a spell. Well-prepared keshin will make or acquire them to aid in sorcery.

Needless to say, many of the sacred weapons of Japan are major assets. Specific kami feel particular affinity to one or other object, like Abe No Seimei and his Ki-charged talisman cards.

Only keshin are capable of crafting these amulets. Onimachines cannot, but can sometimes use them.

THE LAST BREATH

When a keshin approaches death, the Ki energy of his kami blazes like a bonfire. When all seems lost, the keshin can summon his last breath, refilling his Ki reserve by sacrificing his life-energy.

At the instant the character's Hit Points drop below 0, he can call on this last breath. For every hit point voluntarily sacrificed, he gains 1 Ki point in exchange. This Ki can be used for anything (magic, Ki-action, and so on) except to regenerate your own hit points. This allows the hero to cast one last devastating spell.



KI RECOVERY

The Ki reserve is the character's most important tool, his energy source that powers all his abilities and magic. Without Ki, a Keshin is an ordinary human, too weak to confront the horrors of the invisible world. With it, he can teleport to a rooftop or dismantle a demented machine with a single punch. As such, replenishing spent Ki is a pressing concern.

The following methods apply for all characters:

- **Rest:** 1 good night's sleep grants 1d6+1 Ki points.
- **Meditation:** 2 hours of meditation, in a suitable place, grant 2D6+2 Ki points.

In addition, each ujigami has a unique means of recovering all their energy; see the descriptions from page 16 for details.

Mystical Techniques

Mystical techniques are specialisations associated with an ujigami, and are not part of any skill area. They are magical disciplines that allow the character to use Ki to cast rituals and spells. Only the loss of Humanity allows the improvement of that knowledge, not experience.

A *Tensei* character doesn't have spell lists, strictly speaking. As soon as he masters a mystical technique (Kekkai, Kuchiyose, Kuji-in, etc.), he can use everything the technique has to offer as long as he has enough Ki points in reserve.

For example, samurai ujigami often master the Okuden martial technique. This combat magic allows him to invest Ki into a weapon, improve a skinsuit or reinforce internal nanochips for combat. As long as he knows this mystical technique at any value, he can use all rituals offered by Okuden. The more Ki points spent on an effect, the more devastating its effects, and the easier it is to use.

The various ujigami and onimachines archetypes list the mystical techniques they can develop. Consult the *Ways of the Invisible* chapter (page 46) to see what the character can do with this knowledge.



ONIMACHINES

If all creatures of the Yomi-No-Kuni were evil, brutal and brainless, the population of Japan would not survive for long. Faced with so much power and ferocity, no human would be able to resist without perishing between the jaws of an earth spider or the talons of a tengu. It would also be much easier for the characters to notice their foes and eradicate them mercilessly.

But the yokai and other beings from Jigoku are much cleverer than they seem, knowing the existence of the keshin and avoiding arousing suspicions with gratuitous or brutal crimes.

A few of them have long quit the idea of taking over the archipelago, let alone the world, and sought to find a place among the humans. With all the time spent among humans and learning from them, these creatures eventually merge into human society and adopt human codes and customs. After weeks, months, years, these rare oni have transformed, evolved, have grown fond of people and places, of the beauty of a fleeting moment lived on Earth. Their Ki, tainted and darkened by the grey lands of Yomi-No-Kuni as it was, purifies in this new life, and the former ogres start dreaming of an earthly life of warmth, feelings and the honour of living in a home.

No-one knows who these oni were before the Taint dragged them into the darkness of Yomi. Old fallen kami, hinin humans, murderers labouring under the curses of their victims... no memory remains of their past nature.

Whether they have lived on Earth for a long time or have taken advantage of the Kuro Incident to escape, these oni are determined not to let their fellow demons turn their new homeland into a battlefield. For them the opening of Izumo is a great misfortune, not just for the threat it entails to the mortal world, but because the influx of Taint seems to herald the end to their attempt at redemption.

Oni cannot incarnate in humans for long, since their minds are too resistant to possession and their bodies too frail for

Creating an Onimachine

1 – Choose a ‘chassis’ for your character

Record the characteristics as listed for the chassis you pick

2 – Choose a template from those available for your chassis

Spend the skill points granted by the template on the skills listed for the template

3 – Assign 5 additional character points to your characteristics

4 – Assign 15 additional points to specialisations

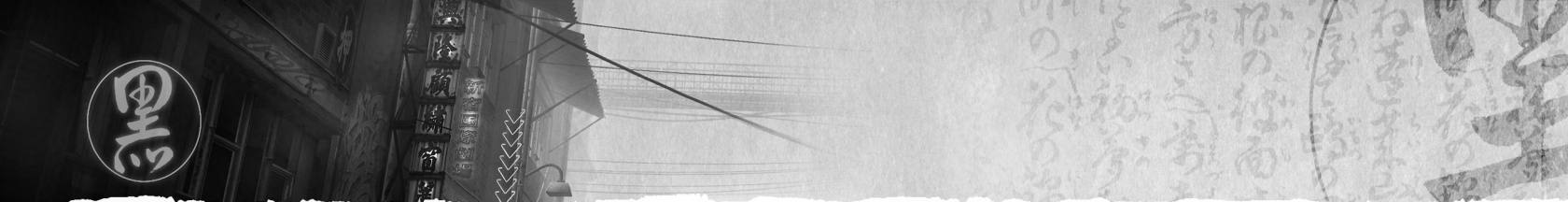
These represent the Oni's knowledge and may include mystical techniques, but only Kekkai and Shinobi. These points may also be spent on specialisations the onimachine does not have the requisite skill for.

5 – Calculate secondary characteristics

Remember to record all the secondary characteristics for both Oni and machine.

6 – Record starting Ki points

15 for all onimachines.



combat. Moreover, their newly moral outlook prevents them from causing their hosts undue harm – hurting humans may tilt them back to the more sordid side of their personalities.

But machines, drones, androids or replicants are another matter entirely; they not only have a peerless physical resistance, but also and especially an artificial intelligence simple enough to be possessed without any limitations. With these artificial bodies, the rebel oni are determined to use all their might and Shinobi powers to come to the aid of the keshin.

Tensei allows a new player to create a renegade oni incarnated into an artificial body, using the following rules alongside the Kuro rulebook. The Gamemaster is free to allow one of these rare characters in a PC party or to only use them as allied NPCs.

CREATION

Onimachines differ from keshin in several ways. Firstly, they do not have a Humanity gauge; their Ki reserve is defined differently. An oni is often much tougher than the average keshin, but he has weaker magical abilities.

- To create an onimachine, the player should first choose a body, a “chassis,” – the machine in which the spirit incarnated – and a template indicating the function of the artificial; its “job,” after a fashion.

Although the oni is fully in control, it must take into account the synthetic shell, and the abilities and traits it brings. A construction robot, for instance, will be very strong but will be unable to pass as a normal human and may be rather slow. Conversely, an android escort girl will be less tough but much more agile and adapted to merge in a crowd.

Mutation: Optional Rule

The presence of the oni in the chassis can distort it over time. The silhouette of the machine may change slightly, as well as the expression on its face, its gait or facial traits. For example, an onimachine spending points on the Charisma characteristic of the chassis might modify its expressionless iron face into the simile of a grimacing No theatre mask.

The fluid spirit of the oni infuses every component and photonic network of the machine as long as its artificial intelligence is in working order; in the same way that an oni cannot possess a human corpse, it cannot master an artificial whose central brain is not working or able to follow instructions. As such, underlying any onimachine is a conscious machine, placed in a sort of torpor by a dominating spirit who controls all its actions. At least, as long as the oni remains in control.

- Once the chassis is chosen, the player should write down its characteristics. He then receives 5 creation points to raise their basic values, reflecting the transforming influence of the oni. Points are spent in a 1-for-1 basis (1 creation point buys 1 characteristic point), with no maximum.
- Once the template is chosen and its skills written down in the character sheet, the player gets 15 more creation points to spend on specialisations. The player is free to spend these points in specialisations for which the chassis has no skill areas or improve those it already owns. These points are also spent in a 1-for-1 basis (1 creation point for 1 specialisation point). There is no maximum.

These specialisations represent the oni’s experience and history, but being incarnated in an artificial shell limits its potential somewhat. A butler android wasn’t designed for combat, any more than an abattoir-droid is suited to wall climbing. The machine’s own artificial intelligence, subdued by the spirit but still active, is also capable of restraining the actions of the oni, through security measures still present in its programming or simple residues of the Laws of Robotics.

When an onimachine wishes to use a specialisation from one of the chassis’s skill areas, it makes an unrestricted, normal test. If the chassis doesn’t have the skill area, it must spend 1 Ki point to overcome the chassis’s limitations. It magically adapts the machine to the action, like “overclocking” the android.

The slaughter robot, for instance, may bend its primitive “hands” to seize the wheel of a vehicle. These modifications are temporary; every time a banned knowledge is used the character must spend 1 Ki point before rolling the dice.

Example: A player character onimachine is in a small occult store looking for an occulttech artefact essential to the party’s mission, and has found several items in the safe. The Gamemaster asks the player to make a test on the character’s Occulttech specialisation. Unfortunately, while the incarnating oni has the specialisation, its chassis (a combat expert Yojimbo) has no Spiritual skill area. The player has to spend 1 Ki point to use the specialisation. The eyes of the Yojimbo glow with a strange spectral light and the player can now roll the dice.

Chassis and Templates

This section presents some of the most common chassis and templates. This list is obviously not comprehensive; the player is free, with the Gamemaster's approval and help, to develop a new template.

By default, all robots have photonic emitters allowing high-speed communication with other machines. Note that the onimachine must have technical skills if it wants to hack an external data source or control another machine.

Some chassis also have specific advantages, like armour or on-board weapons.

New skills and specialisations are marked with a “*.”

Heavy Construction Android

Heavy construction androids are used in construction sites, off-shore platforms and, in general, in all dangerous jobs requiring power or durability. They are not covered in artificial fleshy tissue, but rather resemble bulky metal articulated skeletons, often more than two metres tall. Their hands may be replaced with their most often-used tools, like pincers or maces. An oni incarnated in this type of machine will benefit from great strength, but will have to mind its slowness, lack of accuracy and especially its massive, conspicuous bulk.

Strength 6	AI 1	Stamina 6
Perception 2	Reflexes 1	Willpower 2
Dexterity 2	Charisma 1	

Template: There is only one available template for this chassis.

Wrecker / Builder

- 20 skill points to be spent exclusively in the following skill areas: Construction (see box), Explosives
- 15 specialisation points to be freely spent in the aforementioned areas

The android has hands specifically designed for its job – drills, welders, saws or similar – that can cause 2D6+3 damage when used in combat.

New Skill Group: Technical

The following new skill areas are available as part of some common AI templates.

Construction

This skill area includes all knowledge relating to building, construction and machine factory parts.

Specialisations:

Plasticrete: Making Plasticrete

Foundations: Digging and supporting the anti-seismic foundations of a building

Assembly: Erecting a building

Solder: Welding

Demolitions: Razing a building

Nautical Construction: Building tankers, off-shore platforms or supertankers

Industrial Construction: General heavy labour in an industrial context

Maintenance

This skill area includes all knowledge connected to repairing industrial equipment, cleaning, maintenance and assembly line work.

Specialisations:

Mechanical Parts: Building formatted parts from a specification.

Maintenance: Including fast and safe disassembly and reassembly.

Cleaning: Fast, effective and hygienic cleaning.

Automatic Commands: Working in an assembly line from specific commands.

Repair: Repairing machine tools and freight vehicles.

Quality Control: Effectively checking bulk goods for consistent quality.



Worker Android

Worker androids are lighter versions of heavy construction androids, although they're still harshly mechanical in appearance. They are used in any number of sectors, including transportation, cleaning, machine repair, hazardous materials and catering.

Strength 4	AI 1	Stamina 4
Perception 3	Reflexes 3	Willpower 2
Dexterity 3	Charisma 1	

Template: There is only one available template for this chassis.

Maintenance Worker

- 20 skill points to spend exclusively in the following skill areas: Construction (see box on page 39), Maintenance (see box on page 39), Systems, Energy Technology
- 15 specialisation points to spend freely in the above areas

Worker androids sometimes have hands specially designed for their jobs that can inflict 2D6 damage in combat.

Security Android

Basic, man-sized machines reinforced with flexible polymers, security androids are cheaply made for less-demanding security work, chiefly guarding and patrolling. Although more aesthetically pleasing than worker androids, they're still clearly inhuman, with metallic skin and glowing sensor bands for eyes.

Strength 5	AI 2	Stamina 5
Perception 5	Reflexes 4	Willpower 5
Dexterity 4	Charisma 1	

Template: There is only one template available for this chassis.

Security Agent

- 25 skill points to spend solely in the following skill areas: Firearms, Hand-to-Hand, Melee Weapons, Athletics, Investigations, Surveillance Systems
- 20 specialisation points to spend freely in the above areas

This android is equipped with integrated armour granting 6 protection points.

Yojimbo (Artificial)

The Yojimbo is a two-metre-high bodyguard android covered in artificial skin. The Yojimbo most often looks like a large man, although female models exist. An extremely high-end combat android, it is often the choice model for an oni, although its focused skill-set can interfere with their hunting. Also note that Yojimbos invariably belong to the rich and famous, such as Genocrats, who are unlikely to accept the inexplicable loss of their property without comment.

Strength 5	AI 2	Stamina 5
Perception 5	Reflexes 5	Willpower 5
Dexterity 5	Charisma 1	

Template: There is only one template available for this chassis.

Bodyguard

- 25 skill points to spend solely on the following skill areas: Firearms, Hand-to-Hand, Athletics, Driving, Investigations, Survival
- 20 specialisation points to freely spend on the above areas.

The Yojimbo has 20 on-board weapons hidden in "pockets" in his synthetic skin: 13 shuriken, 4 throwing knives, 1 tanto, 1 small calibre pistol, 1 collapsible baton.

Host (Artificial)

Convincingly humanlike except for their lack of pulse and slightly cool skin, hosts are the bottom end of the artificial-person market, used ubiquitously in public-facing work like service, transport, home care, sex work and similar fields.

Strength 4	AI 3	Stamina 4
Perception 5	Reflexes 4	Willpower 3
Dexterity 3	Charisma 5	

Template: The player can choose one of the following templates for this chassis.

Servant

- 25 points to spend solely in the following skill areas (no maximum): Humanities, Social Sciences, Communication, Pilot, Drive, Watercraft, Popular culture, Contacts, Maintenance (see box on page 39)

- 20 specialisation points to freely spend in the above areas (no maximum)

Pleasure Android

- 25 points to divide solely on the following skill areas (no maximum): Communication, Popular Culture, Contacts
- 20 specialisation points to freely spend in the above areas (no maximum)

Scientific (Artificial)

With bodies similar to host droids but cutting-edge brains and powerful sensors, scientific droids work in laboratories and hospitals.

Strength 3	AI 4	Stamina 3
Perception 5	Reflexes 4	Willpower 3
Dexterity 5	Charisma 2	

Template: The player can choose one of the following templates for this chassis.

Physician

- 35 skill points to spend solely on the following skill areas (no maximum): Humanities, Social Sciences, Natural Sciences, Physical Sciences, Medicine, Biotechnology, Nanotechnology.
- 30 specialisation points to freely spend in the above Areas (no maximum).

Technician

- 35 skill points to spend solely in the following skill areas (no maximum): Humanities, Social Sciences, Natural Sciences, Physical Sciences, Mechanics, Microphotonics, Surveillance Systems, Energy Technology.
- 30 specialisation points to spend freely in the above Areas (no maximum).

This kind of artificial is equipped with thermal vision and a medical scanner. Its tongue is also equipped with a DNA scanner, allowing it to "taste" samples.

Biodroid (Replicant)

Few things distinguish a biodroid from a clone and even less from a human. Only its artificial brain makes it a machine; its flesh-and-blood body is not only convincingly human, it's literally a human body, if an engineered one. An oni may find in a biodroid an exceptional, almost unblemished, human form, but for the frailty inherent to the species.

Because of its particular nature, a biodroid character is created like a normal human. It doesn't have fixed characteristics, since it wasn't mass produced and doesn't have a template limiting its faculties.

- 20 points to spend freely in characteristics (maximum 4).
- 35 skill points to divide into skill areas (no maximum).
- 30 specialisation points to freely spend (no maximum).

Secondary characteristics

Onimachines' secondary characteristics are calculated the same way as for ordinary characters (see **Kuro**, page 73), with the following addition. Besides the HIT characteristic (representing the strength of the chassis), the onimachine has another secondary characteristic called soul (SOU). These are the oni's hit points: its spirit, its very substance. When an ordinary weapon is used against an onimachine, only the chassis is hit and so it suffers hit point damage, but magical attacks intended to wound spirits harm the oni hidden in the artificial's heart. When a weapon or a spell indicates that it does soul damage, damage should be subtracted from the oni's soul instead of from the machine's hit points.

Note that some weapons can cause damage on one or the other, or both at the same time.

$$\text{HIT} = ((\text{Stamina} \times 2) + \text{Willpower}) \times 5$$

$$\text{SOU} = ((\text{Willpower} \times 2) + \text{AI}) \times 5$$

Mental Wound Threshold: This threshold – equal to a third of the character's Soul. If the latter suffers, in one attack, damage equal to or higher than this threshold, the onimachine suffers a Mental Wound, immediately losing -1D6 Ki points.

$$\text{MW} = \text{SOU} / 3 \text{ (round up)}$$

Dissipation Threshold (DT): This is the number of soul hits below zero an Oni can withstand before disappearing forever. When an onimachine drops below this threshold, its soul is destroyed and dissipates into the void.

$$\text{DT} = -(\text{MW})$$

BEING A MACHINE

New Knowledge

The benefit of incarnating into a sophisticated machine, besides a much sturdier body than that of a normal human, is the ability to learn through programs downloaded into its electronic brain. Do you need expert knowledge on vehicle repair? Nothing could be easier! Connect to a database or a Universal Memory through photonic connection and you're a master.

Machines can download up to 11 levels in a new specialisation, or up to 6 levels in a new skill area. In total, any machine can store a number of downloaded skills and specialisations equal to its AI rating; when this maximum is reached, the android must eliminate one in order to add new knowledge to the chassis.

Example: With 3 AI, I can download 3 new specialisations at 11 in my chassis's brain, or 3 skill Areas at 6, or a mix of both. If later on I absolutely need to download some new knowledge, I need to delete one of the existing skill areas or specialisations in order to download it.

Reincarnation

Onimachines, despite their limits and their susceptibility to Taint, have a major advantage: their ability to survive. When a chassis is destroyed, as long as the soul is still in good condition, it can possess a new machine to enter the world again.

In rules terms, when the chassis's hit points attain the Death Threshold (DT), it is completely destroyed and the spirit of the oni escapes. It can then spend 5 Ki points to possess another machine in a 500-metre radius.

The characteristic and speciality bonuses of the oni are then added to the new chassis.



An oni may temporarily possess a human (if there are no machines nearby, for example), at a cost of 2 Ki points. Doing so inflicts an immediate 1D6 Taint points, and another 1D6 Taint every day the oni remains in the human.

If the oni doesn't have enough Ki points to incarnate, it must remain in its spectral form, in which it is impossible for it to purify itself. It can wait for its Ki to regenerate, hoping its growing Taint will not finally cast it into the gaping maw of Yomi for good.

Loss of control of the machine

An oni can only control a machine if the latter's artificial intelligence is in working order. The artificial intelligence sleeps, reduced to its simplest expression in order to allow the spirit haunting it to act.

But the machine can retake the upper hand if the oni weakens.

When the character's Ki reserve fall to 0, the machine regains control for as many hours as its normal AI value (i.e. without the bonuses from the oni) or until the oni recovers 1 point to its Ki reserve, whichever is sooner. During this period, the Gamemaster controls the character.

Dark Ki

You cannot easily change your nature; an onimachine, even if it has managed to overcome its impurity, still remains an ogre. A creature like any other, but whose instincts are a little more buried, who constantly strives to control its urges.

Using Ki

Upon creation, an onimachine has a reserve of **15 Ki points**. It can use these points the same way a keshin does, with two exceptions: it doesn't have sacred Gimikku and cannot lock Ki points into characteristics.

It *can* use Ki to boost an action, to open its Zanshin senses, to improve its speed, jumping, number of actions, to recover hit or soul points and for working magic. It can also benefit from appropriate mystical items, although it is incapable of making them itself.

Ki Recovery

An oni can only recover Ki after nightfall, by performing ritual meditation. Depending on the place where it meditates, the recovery can be greatly improved. The oni's trance allows it to open a spiritual connection to the humans and the Kamikaze in order to recharge in the surrounding energy. In this moment of deep concentration, it may pick up emotions from around itself, human sadness or tears of joy that trouble its mind but fill its body with pure Ki. After sunrise, it cannot regenerate Ki at all.

Activity	Recovery
Meditation after nightfall (minimum time 2 hours)	2D6 Ki
Meditation in a Shinto temple or shrine	+2D6 Ki
Meditation in a place with many humans (Apartment building, etc.)	+1D6 Ki
Meditation under the rain and/or in a storm	+2 Ki

Constant Taint

A renegade oni's greatest and most constant burden is its tainted essence. An oni may fight on the side of the keshin, combat the monsters from Yomi, but it will always remain a spirit of Taint who must always struggle to retain its semblance of purity. The Ki of the oni is often referred to as "dark," naturally attracting impurity and evil.

An onimachine automatically gains 1 Taint point per day. This is in addition to the same Taint rules as a standard character (blood of the innocent, Tatari, creatures).

Onimachines are obliged to purify themselves often – daily – in order to avoid succumbing to its former nature and tainting those around it.

Its Ki reserve is the only thing allowing an oni to remain lucid. If ever its accumulated Taint points are equal to or higher than its total Ki reserve, the onimachine ceases to struggle and goes back to being an ogre from Yomi, savage and merciless. He then becomes an NPC.

Seijitsu

If an onimachine fighting against its own is on the path to redemption, then Seijitsu is what distinguishes it from his more abject fellow ogres. Seijitsu is honour, the thing driving the oni to protect humans, help the keshin, fight for the safety of Japan, avoid treachery and be ready to sacrifice himself for a cause. More generally, it is a desperate bid to prove to the gods that it is different, capable of accomplishing heroic actions to recover its long-lost purity and become again the ancient god it once was.

Depending on its actions in an adventure, an oni character may receive Seijitsu points. These points represent progression on the spirit's fight against its own impurity, against its deeper nature; and a reward of sorts from the Kamikaze. Preferably, these points should come in a slow trickle, to show the onimachine's progress towards redemption.

At any moment the player can spend Seijitsu points to improve his character, by increasing its total Ki reserve or by purchasing certain gifts, small advantages, reflecting its spiritual growth.

Here are some examples of actions the Gamemaster may reward with Seijitsu points:

Action	Seijitsu Award
The onimachine saves a group of humans single-handedly.	1 point
The character doesn't hesitate to risk its life to save keshin.	1 point
The character performs a spectacular heroic action.	1 point
The character manages to vanquish one of the 99 Oni.	1 point

As all characters, onimachines will often have complex choices to make in order to gain honour, avoid Taint or prevent drama. Oni are particularly vulnerable to Taint, and may feel like they're handling a time bomb. What will happen to it if it manages to close the gates of Yomi? Will its companions turn on it, once the greater threat is past? Will it lose its faculties after the Taint leaves Japan? How can it be accepted since it is so far from humanity? Is it doomed to always live in the void? Most of all, isn't it an aberration, a simple pawn in the game of the gods, wandering on the edges of day and night?

Gifts and Ki

Seijitsu points may be spent to acquire special abilities or to increase the oni's Ki reserves.

Spending 1 Seijitsu point increases the Ki reserve by 5 points.

Alternatively, the player may prefer to save these points, and later purchase gifts from those listed below:

Weapon (5 Seijitsu points)

The onimachine can cause a magical melee weapon to appear in his hands for 10 minutes in exchange for a Ki point. This weapon, whose shape must be determined in advance by the player (katana, tanto, kanabo, tetsubo, etc.), causing the following damage: 2D6 / REA +1

The player can improve the effects of the weapon by spending extra Seijitsu points. The points can be spent at the same time as he acquires this gift, or added to it later on, improving the weapon throughout the campaign.

Improved damage (2 Seijitsu points): +1D6 damage points – the weapon is wreathed in dark flame, covered in metal spikes or terrible serrations, crawling with electrical arcs, etc. This gift can be acquired several times and is cumulative.

Spiritual damage (1 Seijitsu point): Damage from the weapon applies to intangible spirits, inflicting soul damage (see page 42).

Red eye (1 Seijitsu point): +3 REA – The weapon set with a living eye that improves the character's reaction time.

Combat fury (5 Seijitsu point): For each wound inflicted on an enemy from Yomi, the character recovers 1D6 soul points as his spirit soars with righteousness.

Toxin (4 Seijitsu points): The weapon gleams with an unholy ichor, or has living fangs or tentacles that inject venom. It inflicts a Virulence 20 poison on a successful hit. The victim loses 1D6 Hit Points per hour until an antidote is administrated.

Kitsunebi (2 Seijitsu points)

A kitsunebi is a sort of will-o'-the-wisp that can briefly protect the oni from his own taint. When the character arrives at a critical Taint threshold, he may summon a magical blue flame to hold it for a time. The kitsunebi can contain a maximum of 5 Taint points, holding it for a whole day before disappearing. During this time the held Taint points have no effect, causing no penalty on the character and its companions, but when the flame disappears, the taint will return to the onimachine, who must then purify himself to be rid of it.

The onimachine must spend 1 Ki point to make the flame appear, and cannot then produce a new flame until properly purified.

Special Blow (5 Seijitsu)

By the fire of the soul-shredding fists! When a character with this ability rolls a 4 on an attack roll, he can trigger a special destructive blow in exchange for 1 Ki point. The player should give a name to this special attack and describe how it works: a flurry of blows, a leaping attack, an unbreakable hold or a strike to a vital point. A Special Blow may be based on a hand-to-hand attack or a melee weapon.

Special Blow gives a +2D6 bonus to damage.

The player can improve the effects of this supernatural attack by spending more Seijitsu points, either when acquiring this gift or by adding ore points later on. Thus the attack can improve over time.

Improved damage (2 Seijitsu points): An additional +1D6 to damage for every 4 rolled in the attack roll after the first.

Time (5 Seijitsu points)

With this gift the character can bend time itself. In exchange for 1 Ki point, it can rewind time by a few seconds, re-rolling the dice on its last action.

Shinigami Ring (6 Seijitsu points)

It is said that this rings were fashioned from the milk teeth of the god of death, Shinigami. Each ring has the appearance of an iron ring, sculpted into a grimacing face. The ring is literally welded to the onimachine's ring finger (or best equivalent, if the machine has tools for hands) and no one can remove it. The Shinigami ring knows all beings from Yokai and Yomi, and their powers and weakness. The oni may point the ring to an opponent and question it as to its identity, powers and failures. But for every question asked (*Who is it? What are its powers? Does it have a weak spot?*), the character must spend 1 Ki point.

Dissimulating Ki (5 Seijitsu points)

With this ability the onimachine is able to veil its Ki Imprint in order to pass as an ordinary robot and escape the attention of its enemies. This power is activated by spending 1 Ki point for 5 minutes, and inflicts a -15 penalty to other characters' Zanshin tests.

Mystical Techniques

The onimachines are first and foremost fierce warriors, using all the power of the machine to strike down their enemies. Strong and tough, they are consequently weaker in magical energy and master few mystical techniques.

Thus an onimachine can use only two techniques: Kekkai and Shinobi (see the appropriate chapter). The player is free to spend the oni's specialisation points in these magical knowledges (out of the 15 customisation points in character creation).

Onimachines don't need to spend 1 Ki point beforehand to use magical techniques.





THE WAYS OF THE INVISIBLE

This part of *Tensei* details the magical abilities available to the characters and the ways in which they can be used. Each section is dedicated to a specific mystical technique and shows what a keshin or an onimachine is capable of as long as he has enough Ki.

This section should be made available to the players during the game so that they may build their own spells.

INTRODUCING THE TECHNIQUES

Each mystical technique is presented the same way. After a brief introduction and description, several possible rituals are listed. These are customisable spells, with which the player may spend Ki points to vary duration, range, damage, and so on.

For example, the mystical technique Okuden offers, among others, the ritual Render my blade merciless, which increases the damage inflicted with a melee weapon. But the ritual can be performed any number of ways, giving it more or less power, different durations, even varying the blade's reach or charging it with different types of destructive energy; in short, the keshin can create his own effect every time he uses the spell.

Once the ritual is performed, all Ki points invested are spent, whether the ritual succeeds or not.

HOW THEY WORK

Using a ritual always requires a dice roll. The caster must draw on Ki points from his reserve to serve in place of a characteristic (expressed in D6 like an ordinary characteristic) added to the value of the mystical technique specialisation. These are called Ki dice.

The ritual descriptions below detail the effect of the roll: it may determine whether a weapon was properly charged with Ki, for instance, or whether the character hit the target with an energy projection.

Ki assigned as Ki dice is spent once the ritual is performed, along with any energy consumed to determine its effects.

Example: A keshin wishes to generate a kekkai, a dimensional barrier, in order to confront a creature from Yomi without risking wounding a human. He decides to dedicate 2 Ki points to the roll – for the test to correctly create the kekkai – and another 4 Ki points to allow the kekkai to cover a residential area.

If the character is carrying unresolved Taint (see page 30), the ritual may have undesirable effects or be harder to perform. Each technique carries its own risks for a magician with excessive Taint.

Gimikku and Actions

Mystical techniques are handled as specialisations, and can benefit from Gimikku, in the same way as a mundane skill (see *Kuro*, page 92). The sacred Gimikku of each ujigami can also apply to magical knowledge.

Except where stated otherwise below, it only takes one action to perform a mystical technique.

Physical Damage and Mystical Damage

By default, any weapon or a ritual affects the hit points of a “tangible” opponent, like a human or a machine, and are of no use against incorporeal creature, invulnerable to ordinary weapons and able to pass through everything in its path. Un-incarnated oni or ghosts are tough opponents that can’t be stopped with a gunshot.

Several rituals have the effect of inflicting soul damage, wounding non-material creatures (see *Secondary characteristics*, page 42, for more on soul hits); some Ki weapons can be used against living and intangible beings both.

Each ritual specifies the type of damage that the weapon inflicts.

HOLY ITEMS AND AMULETS

The best means of conserving Ki is to use magical amulets, items of power. There are different types of amulets, each bringing its own benefits.

Only onmyoji are able to create items to sustain energy or make dice rolls easier. Miko can create and use holy items (shimenawa, gohei, etc.) but talismans and o-fuda are the preserve of the onmyoji.

Other keshin can use them if they can activate them; this is specified in the ujigama descriptions from page 16.

No dice roll is needed to create an amulet. The character simply devotes the time required and spends a certain number of Ki points. Each type of amulet has its own mechanics and restrictions.

One limitation is absolute: a character can, at any time, create and maintain as many amulets and his current Humanity threshold (e.g. at threshold 2, a keshin can create and use two talismans: a talisman and an o-fuda, an o-fuda and a magatama, or any other combination). If the keshin hasn’t destroyed one of these objects, he cannot make more.

Holy Items and Amulets

Talismans

A Paper or playing card showing a pentagram.

Stores Ki from the keshin’s total, but releases double the stored Ki upon activation.

O-Fuda

A strip of inscribed paper.

A spell is cast into the o-fuda with a store of Ki and released (cast) upon activation.

Shimenawa

A woven straw rope.

Created in groups of four to create a zone of purity at a power level dependant on the Ki invested in the shimenawa.

Omamori

A lucky charm, key ring or pendant.

Stores and collects Ki from spells targeting the user until its reserve is full.

Gohei

A strip of ‘zig-zag’ paper.

Protects the user from the taint in an area.

Magatama

A comma shaped necklace.

Stores Ki points that are doubled when used within a kekkai.



Talisman

A talisman is a sheet of paper or card (many keshin use playing cards) on which a pentagram is drawn. This is the emblem of the onmyodo and of Abe No Seimei. It represents the five elements of the Buddhist Godai (the “great five”): Earth, Water, Fire, Wind and Void. Some keshin also use holographic images to represent these talismans; one-shot magical programmes that erase themselves when used.

A talisman is a Ki booster, capable of amplifying the energy it contains.

Creation: To design a talisman, the character must first choose how many points from his Ki reserve he wishes to spend on it. There is no maximum, but all points placed on a talisman are locked until it is used. Thus a character spending 5 Ki points in a talisman will have his total Ki reserve reduced by 5 points for as long as the talisman exists.

This means that a keshin placing too many points in a talisman is putting himself at risk; it may be a worthwhile investment in the long run, but it can leave him vulnerable before he uses it.

At the moment of creation, the character should determine the element the talisman belongs to: Earth, Fire, Wind, Water or Void. This choice affects how the power is released.

Time to make: It takes around 15 minutes to prepare a talisman. After a brief period of concentration, the pentacle appears on the sheet of paper or in a holographic rectangle.

Use: A talisman is almost indestructible. Any attempt to shred it, crumple it or hack into it will fail; only its creator can destroy it to release the contained Ki energy.

The method for releasing a talisman’s power depends on the element it belongs to:

Fire: The talisman should be touched to a flame (lighter or magical flame) to be activated. As soon as it is lit, it turns to ash and releases its energy.

Water: The talisman must be placed in contact with water: a puddle, raindrops, a stream, tears... the talisman will literally evaporate and project its energy towards its user.

Wind: It is generally enough to breathe on the talisman for it to disintegrate like a fistful of sand and release its Ki.

Earth: The talisman must be planted in earth or at least placed on the ground for it to sink into it forever, releasing all the energy inside.

Void: The talisman should be in contact with a creature from Yomi or from Yokai. It just needs to be thrown at a creature for the talisman to spit back its energy in a flash.

A talisman can only be used during the working of a ritual, and all its Ki points must be spent on it. It is not possible to replenish your Ki reserve by sacrificing a talisman; the Ki points contained in the amulet can only be used to feed a spell.

At the moment the character uses the talisman, **Ki points invested in the talisman are doubled** for the purposes of the ritual. All unused Ki points are lost. The player is free to spend Ki points from other sources to further charge the spell – he can even use other talismans in the same ritual.

After the talisman is used, the character can recover the Ki points used to create it through rest, meditation or other means, up to the maximum of his reserve. They are no longer locked in the pentacle.

O-fuda

An o-fuda is a narrow strip of paper covered in inscriptions and magical seals, which is generally hung from a door or at the entrance to a place. It can also be placed directly on an individual, or even at the tip of an arrow loosed at an oni. Similarly to talismans, there are modern versions of o-fuda, like holograms triggered by a specific command (movement, presence, noise, etc.).

An o-fuda is a delayed action spell, a sort of pre-recorded effect that activates under certain conditions. Offensive or defensive, it is possible to place any sort of rituals in an o-fuda so that it activates automatically and without the sorcerer being nearby. There’s nothing more efficient to trap a place (like an explosive charge) or to magically strike a distant target.

Creation: In order to design an o-fuda, the character must first determine precisely what ritual he wishes to record inside the paper. This ritual is performed as usual – that is, as if for an instantaneous use (spending Ki points for Ki dice and to define the desired effects) – except that the spell is not cast. The total of Ki points spent on the spell are “locked” in the character’s reserve (he cannot regain them or use them while the o-fuda exists) and are now inside the amulet.



The character then chooses how the o-fuda is triggered. When a creature opens the door it hangs from? When an enemy enters its area of effect? When a tainted monster passes under the porch it hangs from? When it touches a possessed person?

The player has as many words as his character's score in the mystical technique of the ritual (used in the o-fuda) to formulate the condition for activation. Shortcuts are possible, provided the command is understandable and leaves little room for interpretation. Words will be counted after the opening "Activate when..."

Example: "...an oni crosses this threshold" (5 words), "...the Taint touches you" (4 words), "...I am dying" (3 words), "...a yurei enters the area of effect of this ritual" (10 words), etc.

Time to make: It takes about 30 minutes to design an o-fuda. The magical symbols appear on the scroll as per a talisman, but the character must write the conditions of activation himself (with a pen, or a holo keyboard if it is a holographic o-fuda).

Use: The moment the condition specified by the character is fulfilled, the ritual is automatically triggered. The player must make a ritual roll, using the characteristic set for the o-fuda and the mystical technique of the power. Depending on the type of ritual, the result of the test will be compared to a difficulty or an opposing roll (per the technique description).

The ritual gains a +1D6 bonus for the dice roll, as the o-fuda focuses the accuracy of the spell.

Once the spell is triggered, the Ki points are spent (whether it was successful or not) and unlocked from the Ki reserve. The keshin will be able to regain them in the usual way.

Note that the character always feels the triggering of an o-fuda he has created, through the Ki link connecting him to the amulet, even if he is kilometres away.

Option: The main flaw in an o-fuda is that it can be sensed. The energy it contains is detectable by Zanshin senses, and any moderately alert spirit or oni can easily detect the trap. Unlike talismans, o-fuda aren't indestructible: they can be burned or shredded to end their threat and effects.

However, the character can hide the Ki imprint of the o-fuda by spending extra energy points.

For every 2 Ki points (which are also locked until the o-fuda discharges), opponents suffer a -1D6 penalty to their perception rolls to detect it.

Shimenawa

A shimenawa is a woven rice straw rope designed to establish a boundary around a place of purity. With several shimenawa, you can create a specified place charged with purity in order to protect you from the powers of the spirits from Yomi. By the same token, it makes it easier for the keshin to use their techniques.

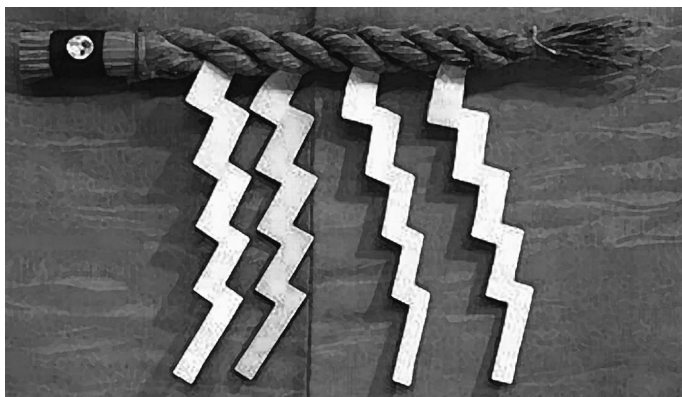
Occultech variations exist: the woven ropes surrounding a shrine can be replaced by laser cordons, or "strings" invisible to the naked eye projected through augmented reality (and thus only seen with a Gantai).

Creation: Creating just one shimenawa is of no use except as a warning to the curious that would dare venture in a place. Shimenawa always come in fours, hung in the corners of a rectangular area. All who enter this area suffer (or benefit from their gifts).

When a character wishes to set up a space protected by shimenawa, he must first choose how many Purity points he wants to charge this area with and how large an area he wants to cover (in square metres).

5 Ki points charges the area with 1 Purity point

1 Ki point covers 5 m²



Once these values are determined, the Ki point cost must be spent to create the four shimenawa. This cost need only be paid once, to produce all four ropes.

Example: A keshin wishes to make his studio purer in order to use his gifts to wash Taint away. The studio has an area of 30 m2 and he wishes to benefit from a 5 Purity bonus while he is there. The creation of the shimenawa will thus cost 31 Ki points from his reserve.

Time to make: Allow 45 minutes to make all four shimenawa, or longer if the rope is a holographic programme or other technological object.

Use: When a keshin or a being from Yomi enters in the area delimited by the holy ropes, their effects apply immediately.

The keshin gains bonus Ki points equal to the area's Purity. Moreover, he can use this sanctuary to purify himself more effectively.

An evil creature *loses* Ki points equal to the Purity value of the area. This penalty also "locks" evil creatures' Ki reserves, the same way Taint does for the player-characters. If the Purity of the place is higher than the total Ki reserve of a spirit from Yomi, the creature is simply destroyed.

If one of the shimenawa is ever damaged, the perimeter fails and its magic no longer functions. Only the damaged rope needs replacing, fortunately, at a cost one quarter that of charging the full shimenawa (round up – in the above example, replacing one rope for the studio would cost 8 Ki points).

Wear and tear: Sooner or later, Shimenawa spend their energy, so they need to be recharged regularly. Every month the area loses 1D6 Purity points. The character can recharge these points with his own Ki (at 5 Ki points for 1 Purity point, per

the original investment) up to the shimenawa's original total. If the keshin wants to design more powerful ropes or increase their area of effect, he must create a whole new set of ropes. An existing shimenawa cannot be improved.

A set of four Shimenawa counts as one item for purposes of the maximum items the character can have in use.

Omamori

Traditionally, an omamori is a small lucky charm, an amulet placed in a small cloth sachet. Keshin make omamori in other shapes, like a collar, a kawaii keyring or any other pendant around the neck; even an earring.

These amulets can collect some or all of the Ki thrown by an opponent.

Creation: First the character must choose an item, a piece of jewellery – even a traditional omamori – which he is going to enchant. Many keshin prefer to use less conspicuous items, but more traditional keshin darkly suggest that their fellows are just pandering to modern vanity.

The more Ki a character invests in his omamori, the more powerful it will become, and the more Ki in can trap. Ki invested in the charm is split, to determine how much Ki is trapped each time it is used, and how much Ki in total the charm can contain.

Ki used to create the amulet is immediately consumed.

Ki Cost	Maximum Reserve
5	10
10	15
15	20
20	25
25	30

Ki Cost	Ki trapped per spell*
10	1
15	2
20	1/3 total (round up)
30	1/2 total (round up)
50	all

*Note that the omamori will never trap enough Ki to take it over its maximum reserve.

Example: To make a pendant capable of absorbing half the Ki from an opposing spell and containing a maximum of 30 points would cost 55 Ki points.

Time to make: A whole day is required to make an omamori.

Use: An omamori works like a second Ki reserve from which a character can power rituals, Ki actions and other. Each time the keshin is hit by a spell using Ki, the amulet captures as many points as its absorption rate until it reaches its maximum; the effectiveness of the incoming spell is reduced accordingly.

Only offensive spells fill up this amulet; “friendly” magic passes it normally.

Wear and tear and evolution: The pendant’s magical abilities tend to deteriorate with time. Every month the character must spend as many Ki points from his own reserve as the initial cost of the omamori. If the amulet is not fed, its power (both maximum reserve and quantity captured) decreases by one level (per the above table) each month. It is not possible to improve the abilities of an omamori; to have a stronger charm, the keshin will have to create a new one from scratch.

Example: The keshin must spend another 55 points on the above charm every month, or his omamori will degrade to a capacity of 25 points, with the ability to absorb one third of the Ki from an incoming spell. Its power keeps declining each month until it is charged again.

Omikuji

An omikuji is a portable oracle, a wooden box from which sticks are drawn to predict the future. There are variants for Pod and Gantai, allowing the user to choose a virtual stick that supposedly reveals his fate.

A keshin can create an omikuji that can improve his fortune when he needs it by storing luck (favourable dice rolls).

Creation: To create an omikuji, the character spends Ki into a box he has acquired or made. Ki points spent into the amulet create a “dice point” reserve, used to replace unfavourable results in future test.

Ki points spent in an omikuji are “locked” in the reserve; the character may not recover them or use them while the amulet exists and the points inside are not spent.

1 Ki point = 4 dice points

Example: By spending 4 Ki points, a keshin charges his omikuji with 16 dice points, which he can later use to improve dice rolls. However, these 4 points are immobilized in his Ki reserve, and may not be used or recharged.

Time to make: It takes 1 hour to charge (or recharge) the energy of the omikuji. This time may be longer if the character must create the box or the Pod program from scratch.

Use: When he wishes, at any time and for whatever dice roll, the character can get a stick out of his omikuji and change the course of destiny. He then modifies the dice result obtained in his roll. Each dice point increases the result of a given dice by 1, or to lower the dice of the opponent. Note that the final result must be achievable with an unaltered roll – no single dice can yield a value lower than 1 or higher than 6 – and a 6 obtained using an omikuji explodes as normal.

Example: During a combat test, the keshin makes a disastrous Dexterity roll, yielding a 1, a 2 and a 2 on 3D6. He draws 8 dice points from his omikuji to change the two 2s to 6s (4 dice points per dice), which also gives him two re-rolls!

Gohei

This is a strip of tightly folded blank paper, which can be used to purify the air from background Taint. It’s a very efficient means of protecting yourself from Taint while travelling through foul territory. The gohei can be placed at one end of a stick, rolled in a belt or worn like a bracelet.

There are any number of gohei holographic projectors, from necklaces containing a “virtual” gohei to the famous augmented reality paper garland, generated by a computer program and always surrounding the character.

A gohei only works for background Taint; it has no effect against direct Taint, like that caused by the blood of the innocent or by a tatari (see page 31).



Creation: This kind of amulet has no area of effect and only grants its benefits to the person carrying it. Keshin are free to create gohei for their companions.

The character must choose how many Taint points the gohei can eradicate and spend Ki points from his reserve as follows. This energy is consumed immediately.

2 Ki points = 1 point of background Taint cancelled

Example: To make a Gohei strip of paper capable of cancelling 5 Taint points, spend 10 Ki points.

Time to make: It takes 15 minutes to cut, fold and enchant a Gohei, or thirty minutes or more if it is a Pod programme or a virtual projection.

Use: When a character bearing a gohei moves through a tainted territory, the gohei absorbs Taint up to its value. If the Taint level is higher than the gohei's level, the extra taint applies normally to the character.

A gohei can be used repeatedly without limit (other than the maximum number of amulets a PC can have active at one time), but they are very fragile, and easily torn, rendering them unusable.

If carried through an area of Taint twice the level of the gohei or higher, it functions normally while in the area, but burns as soon as it leaves.

Example: Crossing a territory with a taint score of 12 with the help of a 5-point gohei, a keshin only suffer from 7 Taint points. But as soon as he leaves the polluted sector, the amulet ignites, overwhelmed by the Taint.

Magatama

A magatama is an ornament shaped like a fang, worn in a necklace. Made in different materials (traditionally jade, ivory or bone), this amulet is a Ki reserve that only works inside a kekkai. The most powerful magatama in Japan (which contains, it is said, infinite Ki) is currently worn by the Emperor, allowing him to maintain the magical barrier that surrounds the archipelago.

Creation: To create this amulet, the character must get his hands on a true carved magatama necklace. There are modern versions, although this shamanistic ornament is, reputedly, more efficient when made of traditional materials.

Next the keshin must choose how many points from his Ki reserve he wishes to place inside it. **He cannot place more Ki points into the charm than his score in the Kekkai mystical technique** (e.g. if I have a score of 6 in Kekkai, I cannot place more than 6 Ki points in the amulet).

All points placed in a magatama are completely locked until they are all used. Thus, after spending 4 Ki points in his necklace, a keshin will have his Ki reserve reduced by 4 points, with no possibility of recovering them as long as the magatama exists.

Time to make: It takes about 20 minutes to charge, or recharge, an ornament of this type.

Use: If the character is not inside a kekkai, the magatama is of no use whatsoever and the points inside are unusable. But **as soon as he is inside a kekkai, the points inside a magatama are doubled**. The character can then use these Ki points to perform rituals, actions, kokyu-ryoku, etc., until the kekkai is destroyed or cancelled.

As soon as the magatama is exhausted, the character can recover the Ki points spent by rest, meditation, or other means. Later on, he is free to spend Ki points again to recharge his amulet (again, up to the maximum imposed by his Kekkai technique).



Magical Techniques

Divination

The ability to communicate with the dead and predict the future in dreams.

Kekkai

The ability to create areas of magical purity or where the supernatural cannot cause harm to innocent.

Kagenie

The ability to create a representation of a person that helps to augment their abilities.

Kami-tsuku

The ability to use natural kami to augment items and equipment.

Katatagae

The ability to use Ki to augment your athletic and gymnastic ability.

Kuchiyose

The ability to summon a kami spirit as a familiar.

Kuji-in

The ability to manifest elemental forces in a wide variety of ways.

Kuji-kiri

The ability to focus Ki into a powerful energy attack.

Maboroshi

The ability to create illusions and mental projections.

Okuden

The ability to enhance weapons with a variety of supernatural augmentations.

Shinobi

The ability of onimachines to manipulate dark energy to hide or augment themselves.

TECHNIQUE: DIVINATION

This mystical technique combines mediumship with the prediction of the future. With divination, a keshin can communicate with the deceased, purify their Taint, find evil wherever it hides and foretell the future through dreams.

Ritual: Takusen

Description: Takusen is a mystical trance allowing the keshin to feel the rage of the deceased and to end their Taint. Through this, yurei can be purified and escape the clutches of Yomi-No-Kuni, and Tainted creatures weakened.

How it works: To carry out this ritual the keshin must perform a series of ritual gestures, holy dances (kagura), stomping, or playing a drum. A complete game turn must be devoted to meditation. While in the trance, the keshin can sense the evil of any impure spirits haunting the area. Using Ki energy, he can drive back the Taint to weaken a creature or exorcise a vengeful spirit.

Firstly the player must spend a number of Ki on Ki dice (see page 33), which will be added to the character's Divination score. Roll once each turn and compare to the Willpower characteristics of every impure creature present in the power's area of effect. If the character's total is higher, the spirit suffers, per the parameters of the ritual (see below). Otherwise, the creature escapes the ritual.

Parameters:

- **Area of effect:** 1 Ki point for a 2 metre area of effect around the character. All tainted creatures (with the exception of keshin) inside this area are affected by the takusen.
- **Duration:** 1 Ki point per game turn (3 seconds). Creatures affected by the ritual must make a Willpower roll at the beginning of each turn that the spell is active.
- **Purification:** 3 Ki points per 1 Purification point. Each Purification point creates a 1D6 penalty to all actions, magical or otherwise, of all creatures present within the area of effect. If the number of Purification points exceeds the yurei's Willpower, it is purified and vanishes forever.



Taint: All Taint points affecting the character are added to the affected creatures' Willpower rolls (e.g. if the keshin using Divination is carrying 5 Taint points, each creature affected by the ritual will benefit from +5 to their Willpower roll).

Ritual: Iki Kuchi

Description: The Iki Kuchi is a trance establishing contact with the deceased, in order to retrieve information. While using this ability the keshin's eyes roll upwards and he is literally possessed by the souls of the dead. Through the trance, he can learn facts, read thoughts or locate an enemy, the spirits acting as invisible witnesses. Be warned that the knowledge of the spirits is always elusive, formed more of images than of words. The keshin will have to learn to decipher these enigmas.

How it works: The more accurate and complex the information sought, the harder the Iki Kuchi trance is. The player chooses how many Ki points to spend on Ki dice (see page 33), which will be added to the character's Divination technique. This total is compared to a difficulty based on the complexity of the desired information.

Information Sought	TN
Simple	8
Average	16
Complex	24
Secret	32

Difficulty ST

If successful, the character will be able to interrogate the souls for the duration of the ritual. Otherwise, he has offended them and suffers 1D6 Taint points, and is unable to call on them again until duly purified.

Parameters: There is only one parameter for this ritual.

- **Duration:** 5 Ki points per 20 seconds of dialogue. During this period, only the keshin can ask questions to the spirits. Consider using a small hourglass to up the tension! The keshin may prolong the duration of the possession by spending Ki at any point.

Taint: If the character's Taint score is higher than 5 he risks at any moment being possessed by a yurei during his trance.

Ritual: Uranai

Description: The Uranai creates a psychic bow (yumi) from thin air, capable of hitting a tainted creature even if it is hidden or concealed behind cover. As long as the creature is inside the area of effect of the Uranai, the arrow will hit it.

How It Works: The Uranai requires no trance or meditation. The keshin focuses his Ki and extends the ritual over the area where he wishes to hit a target. The yumi, a small white bow made of pure energy, appears in his hand and allows him to shoot one or several arrows while closing his eyes. These arrows can go through any matter, go around corners and corridors, but can only hit one specific target. Human beings are not affected by the missiles used in this ritual.

To summon an Uranai, the keshin nominates a target and chooses a number of Ki points to spend on Ki dice (see page 33). These dice are added to the character's Divination score, and used as a ranged combat skill against a TN equal to the opponent's DEF. If the roll succeeds, the target (assuming he's present in the area of effect) is struck, suffering per the parameters of the ritual. If the roll fails, the arrow missed its target and the Ki points are spent anyway.

Note that it is possible to attach an o-fuda to the point of the arrow, to 'stack' effects on the target.

Parameters:

- **Area of Effect:** 1 Ki point for a 5 metre area of effect. If the nominated target, who must be a creature of Yomi, is in this area, it is hit by the arrow. He can simply nominate "a creature of Yomi" or similar, in which case, if there are multiple targets in range, the arrow is shot randomly and the Gamemaster determines which target is hit.

Once the initial target is dead, or if the keshin wants to switch targets, he must perform the ritual again.

- **Damage:** 2 Ki points per +1 damage (maximum +6). 3 Ki points for +1D6 damage.
- **Purification:** 3 Ki points per purification point. Each purification point inflicts a 1D6 penalty on all the affected creature's actions, magical or otherwise. If the number of purification points exceeds the yurei's Willpower score, it is purified and vanishes forever.



Taint: The character's Taint points become embedded in each arrow shot. A creature hit by such an arrow *gains* as many points of impure Ki as the keshin's current Taint points.

Ritual: Yumeura

Description: Yumeura allows the keshin to predict the future through dreams, and to visualise and rehearse the threats he and his companions are destined to face, improving their chances of triumphing over them.

How it works: The Yumeura ritual can only be performed once a day. It takes the form of a meditative sleep, during which the keshin dreams of future events, in a mix of literal and symbolic images. If he is alert and open-minded, he should see the dangers awaiting him in his near future; destiny being in flux, the very fact of dreaming the future changes it, but the visions also greatly assist the keshin to be ready for it. Once awake, the character will have a sense of déjà vu, an awareness of the future a rolling fraction of a second in advance, allowing him anticipate problems and react with aplomb, as if he already knew what to do. The Yumeura ritual is very often used before an important battle, to better prepare for the horrors the keshin will have to confront.

In order to use this ritual, the player must spend Ki points on Ki dice (see page 33), which are rolled and added to his Divination technique. The total is compared to a difficulty based on the Ki points spent on the parameters (below). The more the keshin wishes to master the future, the harder the Yumeura is to control.

Ki spent on parameters	TN
1 to 4	8
5 to 10	16
11 to 15	24
16+	32

On a success, all the effects of the ritual apply per the parameters below. On a failure, the Yumeura only works for one action and brings the lowest possible bonus. In either case, all Ki points are spent from the reserve.

Parameters:

- **Number of enhanced actions:** 1 Ki point per action. The player chooses which of his character's actions are affected.

He may transfer one or more bonuses to his companions, by helping them or revealing parts of their own future, assuming the keshin has seen them in his dreams.

- **Success gain:** 1 Ki point per 1D6 bonus to the actions, reflecting the richness and extent of the insights.

e.g. A keshin with 7 levels in the Divination technique enters a Yumeura vision, deciding to gain a +4 bonus to six actions. This amounts to a total of 10 Ki for the parameters of the trance, giving a target of 16 for the spell roll. He assigns 3 Ki to dice for the roll. Rolling, he gets a 5, a 3 and 2, which with his 7 levels in the technique totals 17. The spell is a success.

Taint: At any moment, chosen by the GM, the character's Taint points can complicate an action affected by the Yumeura trance. For this action, the roll is reduced by his Taint (e.g. A character with 4 Taint points will suffer a -4 penalty to an action), as the Taint distorts a dream, giving false insights.

TECHNIQUE: Kekkai

The kekkai is an essential tool for the characters, allowing them to protect the innocent by locking themselves and their opponents inside a dimensional space. A kekkai is a mystical arena, preventing magic from causing damage in the real world and protecting kami and oni from human eyes. Inside a kekkai, bridges can be destroyed, buildings can collapse, houses can be razed, without causing the least stir in reality.

Ritual: Weave a dimensional barrier

This mystical technique only has one ritual, which allows the character to create a magical barrier using his own energy. The amount of Ki spent in the kekkai determines its size, duration and other effects.

Description: A kekkai looks like a giant translucent dome, rising higher than the tallest buildings and covering the whole of the area of effect determined by the magician. The shape of the dome's base is chosen by the keshin: circle, square, triangle, cross, pentagon, octagon... All those not wanted inside the



magical enclosure are excluded even if they are within the area of effect at the moment of its appearance. It is impossible to enter or leave a kekkai before it is cancelled.

All items, vehicles, buildings and non-living things present in the area of the kekkai are duplicated in the dimensional pocket. They can be damaged, broken and destroyed without it having any impact in the real world.

As soon as a character locks himself inside a kekkai, he becomes invisible and intangible to ordinary mortals. Only other keshin and creatures from Yomi can perceive the kekkai; and even they can only see its outline, blind to what it houses.

If the creator of a kekkai is killed inside it, the ritual ends immediately and any damage done inside the bubble instantly backlashes on reality. As such, keshin take special care not to blast away enemies within their own kekkai; or at least, not to too wilfully destroy property before doing so. If the creator of the barrier is merely knocked out, the ritual ends with no consequences for the real world.

How it works: As always, the player must choose how many Ki points to spend on Ki dice and how many to define the kekkai's parameters. The Ki dice rolled are added to the character's Kekkai skill.

The difficulty for the roll is based on the number of humans to be excluded, and how busy or noisy the area is.

In the event that two characters (PCs or NPCs) try to create kekkai at the same time, make a regular initiative roll. In case of a draw, roll an opposed Kekkai test using the Ki dice allocated. Highest result wins.

On a failure, the kekkai is still created, but one or more unwanted persons (keshin, oni, yokai or human beings) are drawn into it.

Conditions	TN
No humans, isolated place	8
Few humans, quiet place	16
A group of humans, busy place	24
Crowd, agitated place	32

Parameters: The character must spend Ki points as follows.

- **Dimension:** 1 Ki point per 100 m², 5 Ki per 10,000 m² (e.g. a 100 m × 100 m square) or 10 Ki points per square kilometre.

- **Duration:** It costs 1 Ki point per game turn to maintain the kekkai. If the character can no longer power it or loses consciousness, the barrier disappears.

- **Ambiance:** 1 extra Ki point per game turn to create a specific atmosphere inside the kekkai. The character may wish it to be very sombre, or cold, or for a strange rain to keep falling inside the magical compound. No ambiance can cause damage, but it can create an atmosphere more favourable to its creator; for example, to grant him a terrain advantage.

- **Purity:** It is always more cost-effective to use shimenawa (see page 49) to give a kekkai an aura of Purity, but the magician can also spend 2 Ki points per game turn to assign 1 Purity point to the kekkai itself. For 20 Ki points, the PC can thus grant 10 Purity points to the kekkai, which will inflict a penalty on any creatures of Yomi enclosed within. Conversely, an evil creature can do the same, to impose Taint points in a kekkai it has created.

- **Minions:** A minion is a creature issuing directly from the kekkai and capable of attacking an opponent or disrupting their attacks. It seems to come from the very substance of the kekkai before throwing itself at an enemy. A minion may resemble a slender, eyeless humanoid silhouette, or a long tentacle coming out of the ground, the walls or the ceilings.

The character must spend 2 Ki points per game turn to summon and maintain a minion. There's no limit to the number of minions he can create in his kekkai.

Minion

Characteristics

Strength 1	Intelligence 1	Stamina 1
Perception 1	Reflexes 1	Willpower 1
Dexterity 1	Presence 1	

Secondary characteristics

HIT 10	SW 4	DT -4	
DEF 6	ACT 1	MOV 1	REA 2

Hand-to-Hand 2

Taint: If by misfortune the character is carrying Taint points at the moment he creates a kekkai, the taint is felt in the very essence of the magical barrier. All keshin locked within the kekkai lose Ki reserve equal to the magician's Taint points, and creatures from Yomi benefit to a bonus to their Ki in the same proportion (e.g. A character suffering from 2 Taint points raises



a kekkai, which grants a 2-Ki-point bonus to the creatures from Yomi locked in with him).

This effect can be cancelled by increasing the Purity of the kekkai.

TECHNIQUE: KAGENIE

A kagenie is a doll made of paper, straw, wood or plastic representing a specific person. Each kagenie is designed to protect the individual it represents, taking wounds in his place. Indeed, this magical doll has a reserve of hit points that replace those of the person it is connected to. This technique only has one ritual.

Ritual: Create a Life Doll

Description: A kagenie must be made to resemble, as closely as possible, the character it is supposed to protect. It can be the keshin himself or another person. Unlike voodoo dolls, the kagenie doesn't need to include fragments of hair or clothes from the target; it just needs to look like him: figure, hair colour, style of dress, etc. It takes 1D6 days to craft a traditional doll, generally out of cloth or straw (although plastic dolls are increasingly common); some sorcerers spend long hours perfecting the most minute details. More and more keshin, looking to free themselves from this low-tech approach, are now making virtual kagenie, holographic characters present in augmented reality. Modern cameras can be used to 'scan' people and render them as 3D avatars (these virtual kagenie can be full-size, but with a nod to tradition they're generally shrunk; some keshin even create 'kawaii' dolls), considerably improving the speed and accuracy of the process.

The subject of the ritual is free to carry the doll with him or hide it in a safe place.

How it works: Throughout the crafting (or programming) process, the sorcerer must continually say small prayers to gradually bind the doll to the subject. Once the doll is made, he must decide how many Ki points to spend. As always, the caster assigns some Ki to Ki dice for the Kagenie roll, and spends the rest on the parameters of the ritual (below), which also sets the TN for the ritual roll. Note that the parameters cannot be revised after the ritual is performed; to make a better doll, the sorcerer will have to start from scratch.

Ki spent on parameters	TN
1 to 4	8
5 to 10	16
11 to 15	24
16+	32

On a success, the keshin has made a working doll. On a failure, all Ki points are spent (including those for parameters) but the doll is botched and doesn't work, and the character must wait 1 month before trying to craft a doll again.

A keshin can craft as many kagenie as his Humanity threshold, and the dolls count towards the maximum of artefacts and amulets the character can maintain at the same time (see *Holy Items and Amulets*, page 47). He can, however, maintain only one kagenie per person.

Parameters: When a kagenie is successfully created, all Ki points spent in the following parameters are locked in the creator's reserve, and cannot be used or recharged until the kagenie is destroyed. Once created, a kagenie cannot be improved.

- **Hit Points:** 1 Ki point grants a reserve of 5 hit points to the kagenie. When the subject of the ritual is injured, it is the kagenie who first suffers the damage. When the hit points of the doll reach zero, it is destroyed, unlocking the Ki reserve and taking half the locked Ki points with it; the remaining points are restored to the magician. From that point, all damage applies to subject as usual.
- **Distance:** 1 Ki point per 10 metres' maximum distance from the doll. Beyond that distance the character is too far from his kagenie and cannot benefit from its protection. The least costly approach is to carry your kagenie with you.

Regeneration: The doll repairs itself, recovering 1D6 hit points per game turn (up to its full reserve) per 4 Ki spent on the parameter.

Taint: If the character is suffering from Taint, roll his taint points (in D6) against the Ki dice used to create the kagenie (disregarding the value of the technique). If the Ki dice roll higher than the taint dice, the doll works as it should (assuming the keshin beat the TN for the ritual). But if the Taint dice roll higher than the Ki dice, the kagenie is cursed. It may develop its own personality, aggravating wounds unexpectedly or disappearing to haunt the person it is linked to.

TECHNIQUE: KAMI-TSUKU

It is often said that kami are everywhere; they exist in all things, and it is possible to summon them to drive the Taint away or to come to the aid of innocent souls. In part, this is true: there are myriad kami, and every item or place is connected to a divine spirit. But the kami do not permanently occupy the items they watch over (theirshintai). There is no need to imagine a kami literally imprisoned under each stone, in each mirror, comb, pod or Gunshock pistol.

A keshin using the Kami-tsuku mystical technique can ask a lesser kami (i.e. not an ujigami or a god like Amaterasu) to enter itsshintai and grant its powers. Once the spirit is inside the support, the character can use its absolute power over that “divine body”: the kami of a car could aid in driving, the kami of a room might make all doors disappear, the kami of a skinsuit could improve its armour... the summoned kami becomes the item it incarnates in, and can control it absolutely.

The keshin must treat the Kami with respect, and not use it to commit misdeeds or to go against its nature. Misuse can inflict a tataris (see *Accumulating Taint*, page 31) on the keshin, causing from 1D6 to 2D6 Taint points depending on the severity.

Ritual: Summon a Kami

Description: This Kami-tsuku ritual summons the kami of a place or item, granting the keshin knowledge of its use. The spirit of a weapon can guide its bearer’s hand, while the spirit of a safe might reveal its combination. This rite is the ideal solution for keshin suffering from Alterations that rob them of the use of modern technologies. Who cares about knowing how to use a pod when you can simply summon the spirit inhabiting it? How do you miss a target with the kami steadying your aim?

How it works: As usual, the player should assign Ki points to Ki dice and parameters. The total of the dice roll is added to the character’s score in the Kami-tsuku technique, and compared to a difficulty based on the amount of Ki spent on parameters.

Ki spent on parameters	TN
1 to 3	8
4 to 6	16
7 to 9	24
10+	32

Parameters cannot be modified after the dice roll was made.

On a success, the kami agrees to incarnate in the Shintai and help the character. On a failure, the item remains empty and the Ki points are spent anyway.

Parameters:

- **Influence:** 1 Ki point for 2 Influence points. Influence represents the power of the kami, the bonus it grants the character to use the item it inhabits. Thus, by summoning the kami of a car and granting 10 Influence points (costing 5 points of Ki), I will benefit from a 10 point bonus to driving rolls for the whole time the spirit is present in the item. I can even let it drive for me. The Influence bonus applies to all actions involving theshintai.
- **Duration:** 1 Ki point per minute the spirit remains in the item. This duration must be determined before rolling. It is not possible to extend the duration afterwards.

Taint: Taint points have a particularly noxious effect on the summoning of a Kami. Roll a D6 for every Taint point the character has and add the total to the difficulty of the summoning. Needless to say, a tainted keshin has little chance of successfully summoning a Kami.

Ritual: Modify a Shintai

Description: With this ritual, the keshin can move beyond a simple skill bonus to literally altering theshintai itself: giving a blade a keener edge, reinforcing the armour on a hovercraft, physically redesigning nanochips... with the kami’s blessing, anything is possible! The alterations are generally clearly visible, changing the colour or texture of the item or distorting its shape.

How it works: As always, the player assigns Ki both to the dice roll and to defining parameters. The Ki dice used in the ritual roll are added to the character’s Kami-tsuku skill score.

The target number is based on the Ki points spent in the parameters.



Ki spent on parameters	TN
1 to 4	8
5 to 10	16
11 to 15	24
16+	32

The parameters cannot be altered after the dice are rolled.

On a success, the kami agrees to incarnate in theshintai and to alter it as requested. On a failure, the item remains vacant and the Ki points are spent anyway.

Parameters:

- **Duration:** 1 Ki point per game turn. The modifications to theshintai last for the duration of the ritual. This duration cannot be prolonged once the roll is made.
- **Bonus to characteristics:** 2 Ki points per characteristic point. This bonus must be appropriate to the item used: summoning the kami of a biotech prosthesis to improve Strength, for instance, or calling on the kami of an antitoxin chip to improve Stamina.
- **Biological bonus:** Variable (1 to 5 Ki points, at Gamemaster's discretion). The kami of a nanochip or implant can improve its role or temporarily change its function. A pain-blocking chip may, for instance, reduce the damage from a blow.
- **Damage bonus:** 2 Ki points per +1 damage (maximum +6), or 4 Ki points per +1D6 damage. Weapons improved this way inflict soul damage (see page 42).
- **Protection Bonus:** 1 Ki point per +1 to Protection on existing armour.

Taint: Taint points affect the ritual as per the Summon a Kami ritual.

TECHNIQUE: KATATAGAE

Katatagae is the art of movement, of anticipating bad directions and avoiding enemies. With this mystical technique, the character links to the stars, the energy of cosmos, and no longer follows a "linear" movement imposed by the laws of physics. His movements become as quick and disjointed as his mind, allowing him to fade in and out of reality, walk on walls or hop through space! This technique only has one ritual.

Ritual: Master Space

Description: There is nothing more disturbing than a keshin using Katatagae. You thought he was about to hit you on the side and, suddenly, he comes from the air like a wraith!

Katatagae renders movement completely incongruous, unthinkable, fantastic, allowing the keshin to dodge an enemy or teleport to the top of the Tokyo tower.

How it works: The player assigns a number of Ki dice to **each action** he wishes to benefit from this art. All dice are added to the keshin's Katatagae skill.

The total replaces the roll for the chosen action, typically taking the place of a Dodge, Running or Acrobatics roll. When teleporting, make the Katatagae roll against a difficulty determined by the GM depending on the place you want to reach (range and precision). On a success, the keshin's extraordinary movement (disappearance, transportation, wall-running etc.) takes place and all Ki points are spent. On a failure, the power isn't activated correctly and the Ki points are spent anyway.

Example: In a fight, a keshin with a score of 5 in Katatagae is targeted with a formidable energy attack, and decides to use Katatagae to improve his chances of escaping. He spends 10 Ki points, allowing him to roll 10D6 plus 5 (for his score in the mystical technique) in place of his Dodge specialisation to avoid the attack. He succeeds, not merely jumping to the side but vanishing into the thin air! For a few extra Ki points, he could have left altogether... Or reappeared behind his opponent.

Parameters: Katatagae has but one parameter.

- **Distance:** The character moves through space. He cannot move to a place outside his line of sight, although, for instance, the roof a building visible on the horizon is a legitimate target. The cost depends on the distance travelled:

Distance	Cost
Less than 5 metres	1 Ki point per action
Between 6 and 20 metres	3 Ki points per action
Between 21 and 100 metres	5 Ki points per action
Between 100 and 500 metres	10 Ki points per action
Less than 5 metres	1 Ki point per action

Taint: Roll the character's Taint points (as D6) against the Ki dice roll to activate the action (disregarding the keshin's level in the technique). If the Taint dice roll higher than the Ki dice, the keshin appears somewhere unintended (and likely dangerous!) or is carried away unwilling from a battle altogether.

TECHNIQUE: KUCHIYOSE

The kami and other beings from Yokai are not the only spirits living in the shadows, hidden from the eyes of men. For centuries, spiritual companions follow the tracks of those they have become familiars of. These spirits, called shikigami, are not tied to anyshintai, and were not generated by the Kamikaze. The only thing they are connected to is the person who has summoned them or, more often, someone they have watched from the invisible world since he was born. A protective spirit and a magical familiar, a shikigami is invisible to ordinary humans and only appears to his "master" or to people gifted with Ki.

A shikigami may take several shapes – animal, shadow, robot – from the most natural to the most twisted. The Kuchiyose mystical technique allows the keshin to summoning his shikigami, in order to entrust them with missions or send them into battle. It can also strengthen the spirits and create new ones; powerful keshin may summon veritable armies of familiars!

This technique has only one ritual.

Ritual: Summon a Shikigami

Description: The Kuchiyose is as much a technique as a specific power. From the instant the character masters the ability, he becomes connected to one or several protective spirits. On becoming a keshin, the character may discover a shikigami who has been watching over him for a long time, even following generations of the same family. Shikigami are discreet beings, capable of acting unseen, his actions apparently the work of coincidence and chance. As a keshin, the character now has the ability to command the shikigami, giving it orders and granting it spiritual energy to render it stronger.

A shikigami is closely linked to the character. It only comes when asked, acts according to the magician's instructions, gains strength from his Ki, and can never be more skilled than the character's own level in the ritual. The player is free to choose its shape and appearance, although its abilities are reflected in the Ki cost to summon it. White wolf, black cat, tiger, dragon, octopus, robot panda, a little ball of soot... anything is possible.

How it works: Familiars don't constantly attend on their masters, but come and go as they please, often simply disappearing from reality. For **each** shikigami he calls on, the character define its traits and abilities (see *Parameters*, below), which remain more or less consistent and set the cost of summoning it. To summon a familiar, the keshin must spend these Ki points in addition to allocating Ki dice, which are rolled and added to the character's Kuchiyose level. The total is compared to a difficulty based on the summoner's context. It's a lot harder to summon a shikigami in tainted places, or when the character is locked within the kekkai of a foe or weakened by wounds!

Conditions	TN
Quiet place	8
Tense scene	16
In combat/keshin wounded	24
Tainted environment	32

On a success, the shikigami appears and follows the orders of the character for the whole duration of its stay. It's simplest if the shikigami is played by the same player as its summoner, but the GM may find it more interesting to have players play each other's shikigami. On a failure, the shikigami does not join the keshin, who cannot summon it again for a whole day.

Parameters: Besides the points spent on Ki dice, Ki points are spent to determine the spirit's abilities. Unlike other techniques, most Ki spent on the Kuchiyose's parameters is not spent but locked in the character's Ki reserve (as with talismans and similar amulets, see page 47).

As long as the shikigami is present, these Ki points, representing its powers and its abilities, are locked in the character's reserve, inaccessible until the spirit disappears. A shikigami can be of invaluable help, but summoning one can also considerably handicap the sorcerer. When the duration of the summoning ends and the shikigami disappears, the points are unlocked and can be spent as normal; if the shikigami dies, those points are lost, and the keshin loses an additional 3D6 Ki points as his link to the spirit backlashes on him.

Unless a shikigami has been totally annihilated by an exotic power (GM's call), a familiar killed in combat can be born again. For that the character must first recover the whole of his Ki reserve and make regular prayers for a period of 1D6 weeks, calming the spirit, easing its pain and proving the keshin's dedication to his familiars. If the shikigami can return, it will do so after this time has passed.

Obviously, if the keshin doesn't have enough Ki in reserve, the shikigami cannot be summoned.

Example: The characteristics, specialisations and powers of a keshin's familiar bear a total cost of 25 Ki points. Each time he summons it, as well as spending Ki points on Ki dice for the summoning roll, those 25 points will be locked in his reserve and cannot be used until the shikigami has disappeared.

- **Duration:** 1 point of Ki per 5 minutes the shikigami remains in attendance. These points are not locked in the reserve, but spent as needed to keep the spirit in reality for as long as the character wishes.
- **Shikigami traits:** These parameters are used to build the spiritual being. The player must set them during his first summoning and they will not change afterwards except when they're being improved (see below). A shikigami is a sort of secondary character whose looks and powers are defined and written down in the keshin's sheet; each time the spirit is summoned, it must have the same appearance and powers. All abilities the player has bought for his shikigami are expressed in Ki points, which are locked in the character's reserve every time he summons it. If he wishes, the player is free to create more than one shikigami.
- **Communication (1 Ki point):** The shikigami can speak and express itself by word or thought.
- **Movement (1 Ki point):** The spirit has a means of rapid movement allowing it to travel long distances (wings, teleportation, moving in shadows).
- **Weapon:** The shikigami has one or more natural weapons capable of producing damage. 1 Ki point per +1 damage (maximum +6), and 3 Ki points per 1D6 damage.
- **Protection:** The shikigami has natural protection, such as chitin, armour or shell. 1 Ki point per 2 Protection points.
- **Living o-fuda:** The shikigami contains a ritual that works as an o-fuda. This is a specific spell that must be powered with the keshin's Ki after each use. Cost: variable (see *O-fuda*, page 48).
- **Variable shape (2 Ki points):** The familiar has the ability to change shape, to change colour like a chameleon, to flatten itself so it can fit through narrow gaps, to turn its body into smoke, etc.
- **Regeneration:** The keshin may lock one or more additional points in his reserve, which can be spent to restore 1D6 hit points to the shikigami when he wishes.
- **Speed (1 Ki point):** The spirit has 1 extra action per turn.

Characteristics: 1 Ki point per 1 characteristic point (minimum level 0). These are the same characteristics as for a character. Secondary characteristics are calculated the same way.

Specialisations: 2 Ki points per specialisation. A shikigami does not possess skill areas, only specialisations. All the specialisations of the shikigami have the same level as the keshin's Kuchiyose technique. Specialisations can be chosen from all available lists (potential or ujigami) and must be non-magical. *Example: A keshin's shikigami will have two specialisations, Brawling and Acrobatics. That costs the keshin 4 Ki points. As he has a level of 6 in Kuchiyose, the spirit has a level of 6 in both those skills.*

Powers: Besides characteristics and specialisations, the shikigami can also have special abilities at a cost. By default, a shikigami is invisible to humans and can move through solid matter to re-join its master. Only magical weapons can hit it.



Improving the shikigami: The player can decide, any time he summons it, to spend more Ki points into his creation to make the familiar stronger. These extra points will be added to the total and will be locked in the character's Ki reserve any time the spirit is called in future.

Taint: If the character suffers from Taint points, add them to the difficulty of the summoning rolls. Thus a character afflicted with 5 Taint points will have the difficulty of his summoning increase by 5.

TECHNIQUE: KUJI-IN

Kuji-In is a technique that calls on cosmic energy, on the very foundations of Ki. With this power, an onmyoji becomes a focal point of Ki, a sort of catalyst for invisible power, which he can direct towards an enemy or use to manipulate the elements. In order to use this magical knowledge, the character must perform specific gestures with his hands (called mudras) and recite mantras, repeated over and over. The Kuji-In offers 9 seals, or 9 rituals, each linked to a specific mudra and mantra. By invoking the magic meditation of Kuji-In, the character can project energy, cure his ills, twist time, summon a flaming wind, become invisible to the eyes of the tainted people, and other remarkable feats.

Ritual: Rin, lightning

Description: This first seal of Kuji-In grants strength, greatly improving the physical might of the character (his levels in Body). To invoke this first ritual, the character must make the sign of lightning with his hands (dokko), entwining his hands together with the exception of the middle fingers, which are pressed together and pointed at the sky. Reciting the mantra "on bai shira manta ya so wa ka" focus Ki and produces the effects. It is not rare to see electricity running across the body of the onmyoji while he is invoking the power of Rin.

The advantage of Rin is that, unlike a simple Ki action, you can improve all your Body characteristics (Strength, Stamina, Reflexes, Dexterity) at the same time and for longer. The character's muscles are sometimes transformed by this seal, becoming harder or supernaturally enlarged.

How it works: As usual, the player must assign Ki points to Ki dice and parameters. The Ki dice are added to the character's level in the Kuji-In skill and compared with a difficulty set by the power he wants to obtain. The more and longer the player wishes to raise his character's strength, the higher the difficulty he'll have to face; if he is overambitious, the Ki may become unstable and dissipate much faster than expected.

To determine the difficulty, add up all Ki points spent in the parameters:

Ki spent on parameters	TN
1 to 3	8
4 to 6	16
7 to 9	24
10+	32

The parameters (including duration) cannot be changed after the roll is made.

- On a success, the power works perfectly and the character benefits from the bonus chosen to his Body characteristics for the chosen duration.
- On a failure, the character benefits from half the chosen bonus for one sole action. The seal is unstable and the invoker hasn't focused his energy properly. He must still spend the total Ki points invested in the ritual (e.g. *If the keshin spends 12 Ki points to boost all his Body characteristics by 4 for four turns and he fails the roll, he will gain +2 to all traits for one action but must spend all 12 Ki points anyway*).

Parameters: The character must spend Ki points to determine the power of the boost brought on by the first seal and for how long it lasts.

- **Boost:** 2 Ki points to improve all Body characteristics (Strength, Stamina, Reflexes, Dexterity) by 1 point. Thus, by spending 6 Ki points, the keshin's characteristics will get a +3 bonus.
- **Duration:** Each Ki point sustains the boost for 1 game turn (about 3 seconds). It is not possible to add more Ki after rolling to prolong the effect. Thus the first seal is best held in reserve and broken out when needed for decisive action.

Taint: If the character is affected by Taint points, add them to the difficulty for the ritual roll. (e.g. *If the character suffers from 3 Taint points, the difficulty for using Rin increases by 3*).



Ritual: Pyo, The Diamond

Description: The second seal generates an energy attack against supernatural creatures. For that the character must form the diamond mudra with his hands (daikongo) by entwining his hands, extending his middle and index fingers and then crossing the middle and index fingers on each hand. By reciting the mantra “*on i sha na ya in ta ra ya so wa ka*,” the character channels his inner energy and directs it towards a creature.

Pyo takes the shape of an energy beam made of Ki and capable of wounding all creatures: yokai, oni, obake or keshin, corporeal or otherwise. Less powerful than the Kuji-Kiri technique (see below), this ritual is unable to damage a mundane human being or a material object. On the other hand, it is a formidable tool for exorcising an evil spirit from a possessed man.

How it works: The onmyoji must assign Ki dice, which are added to the character’s Kuji-In level and used as a ranged combat skill, against a TN equal to the opponent’s DEF. On a success, the opponent is hit and damaged per the ritual parameters below. In case of failure, the energy beam misses its target and the Ki points are spent anyway.

Parameters: Ki points are spent to define the attack’s power and range. The beam is an instant attack with duration.

- **Damage:** 1 Ki point per +1 damage (maximum +6), and 3 Ki points per 1D6 damage. Only supernatural creatures suffer damage.
- **Range:** The attack’s ranges depend on Ki spent on this parameter, as follows.

Ki Spent	S	M	L	E
1 Ki point	0-2	3-5	6-8	9-12
2 Ki points	0-5	6-20	21-40	41-60
3 Ki points	0-10	11-25	26-50	51-100
4 Ki points	0-20	21-50	51-100	101-200
5 Ki points	0-50	51-80	81-200	201-500

Taint: The character’s Taint points are embedded in every wound caused. An impure creature hit by the energy beam recovers as many Ki points as the keshin’s Taint points.

Ritual: To, the Outer Lion

Description: The third seal allows the creation of a link between the world and the character, so that he can use skills he doesn’t know. To call on it, the invoker must recite the mantra “*on ji re ta ra shi i ta ra ji ba ra ta no-o so wa ka*” and make the sign of the outer lion (sotojishi). This mudra is achieved by entwining the hands and extending the ring and pinky fingers to touch fingertips.

Using Ki, the character generates a sort of link with all persons around him. That allows him to temporarily draw on knowledge and skills to improve his own or allowing him to perform what he is not usually able to do (like hacking into a machine or piloting a hovercraft). The more people there are around him, the easier the To invocation.

How it works: The player must assign Ki points to Ki dice and the ritual’s parameters. The Ki dice are added to the character’s Kuji-In skill level.

The player must roll against a difficulty based on the number of humans around him (the more numerous they are, the greater the chances of channelling the knowledge he seeks). Being in an isolated place forces the invoker to reach further, extending his power. The character can only make use of non-magical specialisations through this power; skill areas and mystical techniques are too complex to assimilate. It is, however, quite possible to make use of a specialisation while not having the corresponding skill area.

Human Density	TN
Crowded	8
Small group	16
Some people	24
All but deserted	32
No-one for kilometres around	40

Parameters: The following parameters apply to this ritual.

- **Power:** 1 Ki point to increase a non-magical specialisation by 2 points (whether the character knows the specialisation or not, with or without a skill area). *Example: The character can use the Overclocking specialisation at level 8, even if he has not the Robotics skill, for 4 Ki points.*

There is no limit to the number of skills the character can draw on at the same time.



- **Duration:** 1 Ki point to maintain 1 specialisation for 1 game turn (3 seconds). The character is free to spend extra points while using the skill in order to extend duration.

Taint: If the character is tainted, his Taint points are added to the difficulty of the Ki roll.

Ritual: Sha, The Inner Lion

Description: This fourth seal allows the character to heal himself or to treat the ills of another individual. The invoker should must form the mudra of the inner lion (nai-jishi), entwining his hands and extending his index fingers, and recite the mantra “on haya bai shira man ta ya so wa ka.” With enough Ki, this ritual regenerates organs and purges virulent toxins, but it cannot give life back to the dead. The worse the person’s condition, the harder it is to use Sha properly.

How it works: The player assigns a number of Ki dice, which are added to the character’s Kuji-In level and compared to a difficulty based on the state of health of the patient (which can be the character himself):

Number of lost hit points	TN
1-10	8
11-20	16
21-30	24
31-40	32
41+	40

If the roll succeeds by 5 or more, the target is healed per the parameters of the ritual (see below). All affected limbs and organs are healed, even regenerated.

If the roll succeeds by less than 5, the ritual is of limited benefit, restoring half the chosen hit points and reducing the toxin by half as much.

On a failure, the ritual does nothing. The Ki points are spent, anyway.

Example: The keshin is treating a victim of the painful, disfiguring poison Kappa (Kuro, page 110), which has so far inflicted 19 hit points of damage, raising welts and open sores. He spends 30 Ki points – 6 Ki dice to add to his Kuji-In specialisation of 6 for the roll, 4 to heal all the damage, and 20 to reduce the poison’s Virulence to 0 and cure it. The target number is 16 (for the damage), raised to 20 by the patient’s 4 taint points. The

onmyji rolls a mediocre 18 on the dice, which with his skill totals 24 – enough to succeed on the ritual, but shy of the 25 needed for full effect. The victim regains 10 hit points and the poison’s Virulence is halved to 10, and the full 30 Ki are spent.

Parameters: The parameters determine the extent of the healing effects. The ritual takes effect instantaneously and can only heal one person at a time.

- **Power:** 1 Ki point allows the target to recover 5 hit points. This ritual cannot restore an oni’s soul points.
- **Antidote:** The ritual can be used to heal diseases and toxins or lower their virulence. Spending 1 Ki point lowers the virulence of the affliction by 1 point. If the ritual reduces the disease or toxin’s virulence to 0, it is wholly cured.

The character is free to heal hit points lower the virulence of a toxin at the same time. A single test applies.

Taint: If the healer is struggling with Taint, its value is added to the difficulty of the ritual. If the target is someone else and they *also* suffer from Taint points, they are also added to the difficulty of the roll.

Ritual: Kai, the Outer Link

Description: The fifth seal grants a sense of incoming threats. To call on it, the character must recite the mantra “on no-o ma ku san man da ba sa ra dan kan” and form the mudra of the outer link (gaibaku) by joining hands and crossing all fingers.

During the ritual, the eyes of the invoker may become luminous or darker than night. This ability allows the keshin to awaken a sort of sixth sense, to detect a trap, a threat, or a surprise attack, if sometimes in vague terms.

How it works: The keshin must allocate a number a number of Ki dice, which are added to the character’s level in the Kuji-In technique and compared to a difficulty based on the severity and subtlety of the threat (Gamemaster’s discretion).

Nature of threat	TN
Obvious, dire	8
Elusive, serious	16
Hidden, significant	24
Totally unexpected, minor	32

On a success, the danger is noticed; the detail and relevance of the insight depends on the success margin (*for example the location of the danger, person responsible, nature of threat...*). On a narrow success, the keshin may have little more than a sense of unease. The character can no longer be surprised, and attacks from behind and others will not benefit from any bonuses. On a failure, the keshin will not detect anything special. In any case, the Ki points are all spent.

The Kai ritual only works once for the selected area of effect. If the character moves, he must perform this ritual again to scan his new environment.

Parameters:

- **Area of Effect:** 1 Ki point per 2 metres around the keshin.
- **Duration:** 1 Ki point per 30 seconds. As long as the character doesn't move, his sixth sense is active for the whole duration of the ritual. If the threat changes and evolves, he will feel it.

Taint: Any Taint points the keshin possesses are added to the difficulty of the ritual.

Ritual: Jin, the inner link

Description: The sixth seal allows the keshin to contact the mind of another and read their mind through telepathy. To invoke this ritual, the character must recite the mantra “*on a ga na ya in ma ya so wa ka*” and perform the inner link mudra (naibaku). This sign is made by entwining hands with the fingers held inside the hands rather than over the knuckles.

Depending on the energy used in Jin, the keshin can merely skim the surface thoughts of his target or go deeper into their mind.

How it works: The player allocates Ki dice and adds them to his Kuji-In skill level.

The total is compared to the Willpower characteristic of the target. If the character's total is higher, the ritual succeeds; otherwise it fails and the Ki points are spent anyway.

A Jin user can only enter into mental contact with individuals in his line of sight; it is impossible to telepathically scan an absent or hidden person. A target aware of this telepathic link may choose not to fight this mental invasion. In that case, their WIL characteristic is divided by 2.

Parameters: Energy points are spent to define the ritual's power, duration and number of targets.

- **Power:** 1 Ki point reveals the surface thoughts of an individual (fear, hunger, anger); 2 Ki points reveals if the subject is lying; 5 Ki points allow direct communication and surface mind-reading; and 10 Ki points allow metal communication and reading the target's innermost thoughts.
- **Targets:** 5 Ki points allow the keshin to mentally probe one target within line of sight. Thus, by spending 15 Ki points, a keshin can telepathically contact 3 individuals at a time. A separate roll should be made for each mind probed, although the Ki points need only be spent once.
- **Duration:** 1 Ki point makes the power last for 5 seconds. More points can be spent while the power is in use to extend its duration.
- **Scrambling:** 5 Ki points cause a penalty of 1 to all Mind characteristics of the target for the whole duration of the ritual. The target is troubled and their thoughts disrupted.

Taint: If the keshin suffers from taint, its level is added to the target's opposition roll. The person being mentally probed may also temporarily suffer from strange visions and horrible hallucinations.

Ritual: Restsu, the fist of wisdom

Description: The seventh seal allows the control of time. The onmyoji recites the mantra “*on hi ro ta ki sha no ga ji ba tai i so wa ka*” and forms the fist of wisdom (chiken) mudra, pointing the index finger of the left hand towards the sky and clenching it in the right hand holds it, whose thumb is also held on the inside of the fist.

By invoking Restsu, the character literally stops time for a number of seconds. During that short period, he can act, fight or run away. People frozen in place will just see the keshin disappear or act at extraordinary speed.

How it works: The player allocates Ki points to Ki dice, which are added to the Kuji-In skill level, and to parameters.

The roll is made against a difficulty based on how long he wishes to halt time.



Ki spent in parameters	TN
5	8
10	16
15	24
20	32
25+	40

The parameters cannot be changed after the roll is made.

On a success, the ritual works perfectly and time is stopped. On a failure, despite his efforts, time doesn't stop and Ki points are spent anyway.

Parameters: There's only one parameter for this ritual.

- **Duration of frozen time:** 5 Ki points stops time for 1 second. It costs 15 Ki points to stop the flow of time for a complete game turn (1 turn = 3 seconds), allowing him to perform a whole turn's worth of actions without his opponents being able to react.

Taint: If the character suffers from Taint, these points are added to the Ki points spent in parameters to determine the difficulty of the dice roll.

Ritual: Zai, The Sun

Description: The eight seal gives the invoker the power to control the elements of nature in their most primitive form (Water, Wind, Fire, Earth and Void). The keshin should recite the mantra "on chi ri chi i ba ro ta ya so wa ka" and form the ring of the sun (ninchirin) mudra, extend the palms of his hands in front of him and touching indexes and thumbs to make a sort of "sun."

With Zai the keshin can manipulate a flame, direct a breath, repeal water, vibrate the void. The more powerful the sought-after effect, the more Ki points he should spend to succeed.

How it works: A keshin cannot manipulate an element (Water, Air, Fire, Earth or Ether) unless it exists or is represented somewhere. It is useless to try and create a wall of fire if there isn't some sort of flame around. As such, most onmyoji use artifices to be able to make the elements they need appear. Some simply carry elements with them (a fistful of dirt in a pocket, a lighter, water inside an amulet, etc.), but most use symbols. They carry talismans (see page 47) linked to specific elements, which can be used to make an element appear from nothing. Note that

the talisman must be used (and consumed) in the ritual; simply having it to hand isn't sufficient.

Having fulfilled these conditions, the player must allocate Ki points to Ki dice, which are added to the character's Kuji-In level and rolled against a difficulty or an opposing roll, depending on the effect.

If the intention isn't to use the element as a weapon (to call the rain, for instance, or to light all the candles in a room), the Gamemaster sets the target number, using the following guidelines:

Complexity of effect	TN
Simple effect	8
Average effect	16
Complex effect	24
Elaborate, preternatural effect	32

If the effect is intended as an attack, resolve as per a melee attack, comparing the Kuji-In roll with the target's DEF.

On a success, the rite produces the desired effect, or the target is hit and harmed per the parameters (below). On a failure, the spell produces no effect or misses the target, but the Ki points are spent anyway.

Parameters: Ki points must be spent to determine range, duration and effect.

- **Range/Area of Effect:** Ki points equal to distance, or the radius of the area of effect, centring on the character. This range determines not only the distance where the element is (e.g. *Controlling a brazier 10 metres away, will cost 10 Ki points*) but also the maximum distance it can be directed to (e.g. *Projecting flames 10 metres farther away from the brazier, will cost another 10 Ki points. Creating a wall of flame around the party (in a 5 metre area of effect), costs 5 Ki points*).
- **Duration:** 1 Ki point per game turn (3 seconds). The player is free to spend more Ki points after rolling, to prolong the spell effect.
- **Damage:** 2 Ki points per +1 damage (maximum +6), or 5 Ki points per 1D6 damage (e.g. A devastating storm that caused 2D6+2 damage would cost 14 Ki points). Only Void can wound spirits and incorporeal creatures, inflicting Soul damage of the oni.

Taint: If a character is tainted, his Taint points are added to the difficulty of the Ki roll.

Ritual: Zen, Hidden Formula

Description: The ninth and final seal of Kuji-In grants its invoker the gift of invisibility to impure beings. To call on his power, he must recite the mantra “*on a ra ba sha no-o wa ka*” and use the hidden form mudra (ongyo) by covering the close left fist with the open right hand open.

Zen is not limited to the sorcerer himself: at an increased cost, he can also hide his companions from the eyes of tainted creatures. Note that many ujigami refuse to allow their keshin to attack their enemies by surprise, for fear of betraying their codes of honour.

How it works: This seal only works against observers with at least 5 Taint points. Below that, the taint is too weak for the ritual to render the keshin invisible.

To use the power, the keshin must allocate Ki points to Ki dice, which are added to the character’s Kuji-In level and rolled against the Perception characteristics of any impure observers. Any tainted creatures rolling less than the sorcerer’s total are unable to see those covered by the ritual, barring incident, for the duration of the effect, while creatures rolling higher than the keshin can see them normally. Even if no one is fooled, the Ki are spent anyway.

Parameters: Duration and range are determined by spending more Ki points:

- **Duration:** 1 Ki point per game turn (3 seconds). The keshin can prolong this duration by spending further points while the power is being used.
- **Area of effect:** 5 Ki points per 1 metre. Each keshin present within the area of effect will also become invisible to the eyes of impure beings.

Taint: All Taint points present in the character *and* all his companions are added to the impure creatures’ Perception tests! Moreover, if a keshin whose ujigami is linked to bushido (bushi, samurai or similar) use invisibility to strike down an enemy, he immediately gains 1D6 Taint points.

TECHNIQUE: KUJI-KIRI

Kuji-Kiri is a raw form of Kuji-In. It uses Ko, the secret mudra of the nine cuts to generate a terrible energy attack. It is not necessary to know the technique Kuji-In to learn this power.

This mystical technique has only one ritual.

Ritual: Generating a burst of pure energy

Description: To invoke the power of Kuji-Kiri the keshin must trace nine lines in the air with his right hand: five horizontal and four vertical. This is the mudra of the nine cuts (or Ko). While the energy is being invoked, the keshin must also recite the mantra “*Rin, Pyo, To, Sha, Kai, Jin, Retsu, Zai, Zen,*” combining the nine syllables of the Kuji-In, meaning that all forces are in line and ready for combat. The character may then launch an overpowering Ki attack.

This burst can take different forms, depending on the invoking keshin: searing light, lightning, darkness, skin-rending chains, blades of energy, or anything the player and GM can imagine.

How it works: As always the caster allocates Ki points to Ki dice and parameters. The dice are added to the caster’s Kuji-Kiri level and used as a ranged combat skill against the targets’ DEF traits. All characters within the area of effect are treated as targets. All those struck take the full effects per the parameters, while those missed are unaffected. If no target is affected, the Ki points are spent anyway.



TECHNIQUE: MABOROSHI

Parameters: The energy produced by this mystical technique can be fearsome. By default, it can wound humans, destroy buildings and vehicles and crush the creatures of Yomi. If the keshin wants to spare as many innocents as possible, he can spend more points to specify its effects. The Kuji-Kiri doesn't have a duration; its effects are instantaneous.

- **Range:** The range of the attack is defined by Ki spent as follows:

Ki Spent	S	M	L	E
1 Ki point	0-2	3-5	6-8	9-12
2 Ki points	0-5	6-20	21-40	41-60
3 Ki points	0-10	11-25	26-50	51-100
4 Ki points	0-20	21-50	51-100	101-200
5 Ki points	0-50	51-80	81-200	201-500
6 Ki points	0-200	201-500	501-1000	1001-2000

- **Effect spread:** The attack generates a wide jet or cone of energy that affects all targets within the spread. This costs 1 Ki per metre of spread at the jet's or cone's widest point.
- **Damage:** 2 Ki points per 1D6 damage both hit points and soul.
- **Effects:** By default the blast affects everything: humans, monsters, animals and inanimate objects. If the keshin only wants to hit supernatural creatures (for example, to destroy the spirit of an onimachine without harming the robot it incarnates), double the Ki cost for damage to 4 Ki per 1D6. In that case, the Kuji-Kiri moves through mundane humans and animals, and buildings and other inanimate objects, without effect.

Taint: If the keshin is carrying any taint, it is impossible to entirely spare mundane human beings and inanimate objects. All such creatures and objects in the beam's path suffer a minimum damage equal to the keshin's Taint points.

Maboroshi is an attack technique far more subtle – and tortuous – than Okuden and Kuji-Kiri. With this mystical skill, the keshin can wound an opponent through terrifying illusions woven from Ki energy. Maboroshi can strike down one opponent with a phantom blow, or plunge a group of enemies into a murderous illusion.

Illusionary Damage

While the damage done by Maboroshi is not physical, it is no less deadly. The cuts and bruises might be in the mind of the target, but their body suffers violent stress as a result of this mental trauma. Real damage is done in the form of the body's overreaction to what the character believes they are experiencing. If a character dies of illusionary damage, they may have actually died of severe mental trauma (severe shock or a heart attack), but they are still dead.

Those hurt by illusionary damage are not always healed the instant the illusion falls, or when someone tells them it is all a dream. But there is a chance that the character will shrug off illusionary damage upon realising it is not real. When leaving the illusion, a damaged character should be allowed a Willpower roll with a difficulty equal to the damage they have suffered. If they are successful, they heal half that damage instantly.

Healing such damage in the long term is a little different from usual. It heals naturally, as the target gradually gets over what they have suffered, at the same rate physical damage does; but physical healing cannot restore mental trauma. To actively heal this damage, the same systems should be used as physical damage (see *Kuro*, pages 111-113) but using Psychiatry in place of Emergency treatment or Surgery.



Ritual: Create an Illusion Attack

Description: Maboroshi can be used to generate damage through an illusion, a terrifying hallucination that strikes at his very sanity. Persuaded of the reality of the illusory blow, the body of the opponent will act accordingly, suffering from debilitating shock and pain. The target may see the arms of the keshin become huge and filled with blood-dripping spikes, or a dragon fly from his mouth to attack him, or a cloud of insects rising from his eyes to inject him with venom, the roof collapsing on him... *anything* is possible as long as the attack is instantaneous and violent, and only has one target.

How it works: The player must allocate Ki points to Ki dice and parameters. The Ki dice are added to the character's Maboroshi skill level for an opposed test against the Willpower characteristic of the target (modified, if they're wearing protection amulets). On a success, the target succumbs to the illusion and immediately suffers the damage. On a failure, the target sees through the illusion and thwarts it. In any case, the Ki points spent on the power and its parameters are lost. The attack is instantaneous.

Parameters:

- **Range to target:** 1 Ki point per 5 metres' distance. The target must be in sight.
- **Illusion damage:** 1 Ki point per +1 damage (maximum 6), and 3 Ki points per 1D6 damage (works against spectres and incorporeal beings).

Taint: The character's Taint points are added to his target's Willpower roll.



Ritual: Weave a Lethal Theatre

Description: Unlike Create an Illusion Attack, this use of Maboroshi creates an illusion on a whole area. All people inside this illusion suffer damage for the whole duration, until they see through the illusion and escape. With this ritual, a keshin with powerful Ki energy can make the inhabitants of a whole building sink into a potentially lethal nightmare.

How it works: The player allocates Ki points to Ki dice and parameters. Ki dice are added to the character's Maboroshi skill level and rolled to set a target number for a Willpower test by every person in the area of effect **at the beginning of every turn**. If the keshin wins, the victim suffers damage and cannot escape the effect for that turn. On a failure, they see through the hallucination and stop taking damage. They can try to wake up their companions, granting them a cumulative +1D6 bonus to Willpower for every new turn during which they shake or shout at them. In any case, the Ki points spent by the keshin in the power are gone.

Parameters:

- **Range:** 1 Ki point per 5 metres' distance between the keshin and the target group (who must be in sight).
- **Area of effect:** 1 Ki point per 5-metre radius. Any person present in this area of effect is affected by the Maboroshi.
- **Duration:** 2 Ki points per turn (3 seconds). The character is free to prolong this duration by spending extra points after rolling.
- **Damage:** 2 Ki points per +1 damage (maximum 6) per turn, and 4 Ki points per 1D6 damage per turn (e.g. *It costs 10 Ki points to cause 2D6+1 damage points per game turn*). This is magical damage that can wound supernatural creatures.

Taint: The character's Taint points are added to the Willpower rolls of every opponent.

TECHNIQUE: OKUDEN

*"Receive arrows in your forehead
but never in your back."*

– Samurai motto

Okuden is the secret technique of warriors, the one allowing them to crush the toughest enemies by sword or staff. Through this mystical skill, a keshin can cause terrible damage by injecting Ki into an existing weapon (ancient or modern) or by creating weapons of pure Ki, like energy blades.

Besides improved damage, these weapons can be invested with specific powers: bullets that go through walls, that ricochet until they hit an opponent, katana that produce a shockwave, a skinsuit that can withstand the impact of a truck...

Ritual: Render my Blade Merciless

Description: This first ritual of Okuden charges an existing melee weapon (knife, sword, naginata, spear...) with Ki to cause more damage and/or magical effects. All the difficulty in this spell resides in charging the weapon correctly, Ki being unstable and unreliable. The keshin concentrates for a few seconds and pours his own energy into the weapon.

How it works: As with the other techniques, the player allocates Ki points to Ki dice and parameters, then adds the Ki dice to the Okuden skill and rolls against a difficulty based on the number of Ki points spent on parameters.

Ki spent on parameters	TN
1 to 4	8
5 to 10	16
11 to 15	24
16+	32

Parameters cannot be changed after the roll is made.

On a success, the weapon is modified according to the selected criteria. On a failure, the Ki is unstable and its effects



are lessened, granting +1 damage for **only 1 game turn**. All other parameters apply normally. Whether he managed to concentrate his energy into his weapon or not, the Ki points the keshin spent in the ritual are gone.

Parameters:

- **Duration:** 1 Ki point per 1 game turn.
- **Damage:** 1 Ki point per +1 damage (maximum +6), and 3 Ki points per +1D6 damage.
- **Anti-spirit:** For 2 Ki points, damage from the weapon also applies to incorporeal spirits and to the soul points of animachines. Otherwise the weapon passes through spirits or is limited to wrecking the chassis.
- **Effects:** The character can add the following special abilities to his weapon. Each effect has its own cost.

Shockwave (5 Ki points): By striking the ground with his blade, the keshin produces a shockwave with a 10-metre radius area of effect, causing the same damage as if it was used in melee. Every character in the area is hit. The radius can be increased for 1 Ki point per 5 metres.

Elements (2 Ki points): The weapon can be invested with an elemental effect – Fire, Water, Wind, Earth or Void – for the

duration of the ritual. Fire transforms the blade into flames and causes +1D6 damage to oni; Water changes the blade to liquid and causes +1D6 damage to water creatures such as kappa or those sensitive to water; Wind changes the weapon to smoke and causes +1D6 damage to tengu; Earth turns the blade to stone and causes +1D6 damage to underground or plant-based creatures; Void renders the blade almost invisible and causes +1D6 damage to intangible creatures. The keshin can change the chosen element every turn, for as long as the power lasts.

Elongation (2 Ki points): For the whole duration of the power, the weapon can elongate up to 5 metres at will, to extend the keshin's reach. This reach can be extended further than 5 metres, for 1 Ki per additional metre.

Impact (2 Ki points): The weapon can damage the protection of the opponent. Every time the weapon harms a target, his protection (natural or otherwise) decreases by 1 point. This effect can be enhanced, for 2 Ki points per additional point of protection loss per blow (e.g. For 6 points of Ki, the sword destroys 3 Protection points with each successful blow).

Life stealing (2 Ki points): The weapon absorbs energy from the enemy, purified it and transfers it to the bearer. For each wound inflicted on an enemy, the keshin regains 1 lost hit point. The rate at which the wielder is healed can be enhanced, for 1 Ki point per additional hit point recovered with each blow.

Swiftness (1 Ki point): For 1 Ki point, the weapon gains a +1 REA.

Purification (4 Ki points): 4 points of Ki per point of Purification. Each point of Purification inflicts a 1D6 penalty to all actions, magical or otherwise, of a tainted creature wounded by the weapon. If the number of Purification points suffered is higher than the yurei's Willpower, the spirit is purified and disappears forever.

Taint: The character's Taint points embed themselves in every wound inflicted. An impure creature hit by an Okuden-reinforced weapon recovers as many Ki points as the keshin's Taint points.

Ritual: Annihilate my Targets

Description: This second Okuden ritual allows a keshin to charge a firearm or an ancient projectile weapon (or any ranged weapon) with Ki energy to cause extra damage.

How it works: The character allocates Ki points to Ki dice, which are rolled added to his Okuden level. The difficulty for the roll is based on the number of Ki points spent on the parameters; the more powerful the desired result, the harder it is to charge the weapon correctly.

Ki spent on parameters	TN
1 to 4	8
5 to 10	16
10 to 15	24
16+	32

On a success, the weapon is modified per the ritual parameters. On a failure, the Ki infused in the blade is unstable; the effects last for only one game turn and damage is just +1. All other parameters apply normally. Regardless, all points the keshin spent in the ritual are gone.

Parameters:

- **Duration:** 1 Ki point per game turn.
- **Damage:** 1 Ki point per +1 damage (maximum +6), and 3 Ki points per +1D6 damage.
- **Range:** Reduce range TN by one category (i.e. treat Extreme ranges as Long, Long as Medium, Medium as Short) per 2 Ki points spent on this power. Regardless, any target is at least at Short range; TNs cannot be reduced beyond that.

You can also spend Ki to extend all range categories by 10 metres per Ki point (e.g. For 3 Ki points, the keshin can extend the range categories of his Tombstone pump-action shotgun such that a target at 70 metres – who would normally be completely out of range – would come in at Long range).

- **Anti-spirit:** For 2 Ki points, damage also applies to incorporeal spirits and the soul of onimachines.

- **Effects:** Other powers can be added to a ranged weapon, as follows.

Elements (2 Ki points): The weapon can be invested with an elemental effect – Fire, Water, Wind, Earth or Void – for the duration of the ritual. Fire transforms the blade into flames and causes +1D6 damage to oni; Water changes the blade to liquid and causes +1D6 damage to water creatures such as kappa, or those sensitive to water; Wind changes the weapon to smoke and causes +1D6 damage to Tengu; Earth turns the blade to stone and causes +1D6 damage to underground or plant-like creatures; finally, Void renders the blade almost invisible and causes +1D6 damage to intangible creatures. The keshin can change the chosen element every turn, for as long as the power lasts.

Impact (2 Ki points): The weapon can damage the protection of the opponent. Every time the weapon harms a target, his protection (natural or otherwise) decreases by 1 point. This effect can be enhanced, for 2 Ki points per additional point of protection loss per blow (e.g. *For 6 points of Ki, the sword destroys 3 Protection points with each successful blow*).

Swiftness (1 Ki point): For 1 Ki point, the weapon gains a +1 REA.

Purification (4 Ki points): 4 points of Ki per point of Purification. Each point of Purification inflicts a 1D6 penalty to all actions, magical or otherwise, of a tainted creature wounded by the weapon. If the number of Purification points suffered is higher than the yurei's Willpower, the spirit is purified and disappears forever.

Phantom missile (1 Ki point): No obstacle can stop the missile. It can pass through walls, vehicles, even humans without producing any effect until it hits the target. The target gains no benefit from any form of cover, but personal armour still applies.

Ricochet (4 Ki points): Wherever the opponent hides, the weapon can find him. As long as the target is within maximum range, the missile twists, turns and ricochets to reach it.

Disturbance (3 Ki points): At the moment of impact, the missile produces a dense smoke, a flash of light or some other effect, hindering the opponent's movements and inflicting a -1D6 penalty to actions for the remainder of the game turn. 3 extra Ki points extends the effect to the end of the following turn.

Taint: The keshin's Taint points are embedded in each inflicted wound. An impure creating hit by the weapon recovers as many Ki points as the character's Taint points.

Ritual: Hide my Arsenal

Description: Despite the crisis, regulations on weapons are as draconian as ever. Supernatural threats are elusive, and still rejected by the majority of the population; few will accept them as a reason for quietly strolling around with a katana at your back or pistols on your belt. No doubt the truth – and the role played by the keshin – will eventually surface, but until then, keshin must hide their weaponry. This Okuden ritual physically merged the keshin's weapons with his body. A few magical abilities can detect them, but no mundane detection device can find them. Making a sword disappear in the palm of your hand is better than any shado.

How it works: The player allocated Ki points as Ki dice, which are rolled and added to his Okuden level, against a difficulty based on the amount of Ki spent on parameters. Parameters cannot be modified after the roll is made.

Ki spent on parameters	TN
1 to 3	8
4 to 6	16
7 to 8	24
10+	32

On a success, the weapon literally disappears inside the hands, arms or belly of the character as absorbed into an pocket dimension. On a failure, the ritual doesn't work but the Ki points are spent anyway.

In the character ever faces a magical detection mechanism capable of feeling the presence of the weapons, the device rolls against the result on the initial roll to perform the ritual.

Parameters:

- **Volume:** 2 Ki points per small weapon (e.g. *daggers, small calibre pistol*), 4 Ki points per medium-sized weapon (e.g. *tanto, Gunshock*), 6 Ki points per large sized weapon (e.g. *katana, shotgun*).
- **Duration:** 1 Ki point per 10 minutes.

Taint: The character's Taint points are added to the difficulty of the ritual.



Ritual: Summoning an Ancestral Weapon

Description: This Okuden ritual gives the keshin the ability to create weapons of pure energy, weapons of purity and Ki that scythe, burn and explode as the magician wishes.

How it works: Ki points must be allocated to Ki dice, which are added to the keshin's Okuden level and used as a combat skill (replacing, for example, the Dexterity and Katana specialisation roll to use an Ancestral katana). The TN for this roll is based on the opponent's DEF and the attacker's tactics, as usual.

All sorts of weapons can be fashioned using this ritual: sword, shuriken, jo (staff), yari (spear), yumi (bow) and so on.

Parameters:

- **Duration:** 1 Ki point per 1 game turn; the keshin can spend more Ki after performing the ritual to extend this duration.
- **Damage:** 1 Ki point per +1 damage (maximum +6), and 2 Ki points per 1D6 damage. By default, all weapons made of Ki also wound incorporeal beings and the soul points of onimachines (see *Secondary Characteristics* in the *Onimachines* chapter, page 42).
- **Range:** The range of a thrown or projectile weapon (shuriken, yumi, etc.) must be purchased with Ki, as follows.

Ki Spent	S	M	L	E
1 Ki point	0-2	3-5	6-8	9-12
2 Ki points	0-5	6-20	21-40	41-60
3 Ki points	0-10	11-25	26-50	51-100
4 Ki points	0-20	21-50	51-100	101-200
5 Ki points	0-50	51-80	81-200	201-500
6 Ki points	0-200	201-500	501-1000	1001-2000

- **Effects:** The Ancestral Weapon can also have special effects as follows.

Swiftness (1 Ki point): 1 Ki point increased the weapon's REA bonus by +1.

Purification (4 Ki points): 4 points of Ki per point of Purification. Each point of Purification inflicts a 1D6 penalty to all actions, magical or otherwise, of any tainted creature wounded by the weapon. If the number of Purification

points exceeds the yurei's Willpower, the spirit is purified and disappears forever.

Explosion (5 Ki points): When the weapon strikes its opponent (or the ground), it produces an explosion in a 10-metre-radius area of effect, causing its usual damage to everyone in range. 1 Ki point extends the range of the effect by 5 metres.

Ranged cut (2 Ki points): With a mighty swing, an ancestral melee weapon cuts (or smashes) its target from afar, "projecting" a front of cutting or blasting energy before it. The keshin can strike an opponent up to five meters away. This range can be extended by 1 metre per additional Ki point.

Taint: Any tainted creature struck by the weapon recovers Ki equal to the keshin's current taint.

Ritual: Become a Rampart

Description: This last Okuden ritual reinforces the keshin's protection (armour, skinsuit, etc.) or generates a protective barrier around him. This ritual can have exotic effects: the opponent's attack can be sent back on him, armour can be converted to pure energy, or the keshin's body can take on a misty ethereal nature, through which the enemy's attacks pass unmarked. This ritual only protects the keshin himself, and cannot be extended to his companions.

How it works: The character allocates Ki points to Ki dice, which are rolled and added to his Okuden level. The difficulty of the roll is based on the number of Ki points used in the parameters. Parameters cannot be changed after the dice are rolled.

Ki spent on parameters	TN
1 to 4	8
5 to 10	16
11 to 15	24
16+	32

On a success, the keshin modifies his armour as wished. Otherwise, the Ki is unstable; the protection bonus is only +1, and lasts for 1 game turn only. Regardless, all Ki points are spent.

Parameters: Some of the parameters vary depending on whether the ritual is used to enhance existing armour or to create a barrier out of Ki.

- **Duration:** 1 Ki point per game turn.
- **Protection:** For existing armour, each Ki point reinforces its protective value by 1 point. When creating a barrier, each Ki point grants 2 points of protection. This protection only applies to the keshin. (e.g. *For 6 Ki points, the keshin can create a barrier with 12 protection points*).
- **Effects:** The following special qualities can be added to the armour for the duration of the ritual.

Damage return (1 Ki point): The armour send back a part of the damage it suffers. Each time the character is struck, his protections inflicts 1 damage point back on his opponent. This damage can be increased at a rate of 1 Ki point per point of damage reflected from each blow (note that this power cannot inflict more damage on the attacker than the armour stops).

Restoration (2 Ki points): The armour or barrier repairs itself if damaged (for instance, by an Okuden-enhanced blade with the Impact parameter), regaining 2 protection points per turn up to its maximum. The rate of recovery can be increased, at a cost of 2 extra Ki points per extra protection point regained per turn.

Regeneration (3 Ki points): The protection is able to heal its wearer, allowing him to regain 1 hit point per game turn. This rate can be increased, for 3 extra Ki points per extra hit point per turn.

Taint: The character's Taint points are added to the difficulty of the ritual.

TECHNIQUE: SHINOBI

Shinobi is the mystical technique of the onimachines, and other creatures from Yomi. The origins of the occult knowledge of assassins, ninja and Hinin spies, this magical skill transforms your body, modifying it to fight or fool an enemy. With Ki, the onimachine can hide in shadows, become intangible or modify its mechanical arms into poisonous blades and spikes.

Taint points work differently for onimachines when they use this mystical technique. Because of the dark nature of their

Ki, Shinobi rituals are paradoxically enhanced by taint. Indeed, the corruption of Taint is never far away from those who use this power, always ready to drag the rebellious oni back to the dark side. All onimachines fighting on the side of the keshin struggle with this call.

All Taint points carried by an onimachine are added to its Shinobi technique (e.g. *An onimachine affected by 4 Taint points gains a +4 bonus on his Shinobi rolls*). But this is a mixed blessing. Whenever Taint points are used with Shinobi, the character must immediately make an opposed roll between his Willpower roll and his Taint points (roll Taint points as D6). If he rolls higher on his Willpower, the onimachine manages to fight off the evil gnawing at its soul. If the taint roll gets a higher result, the character gains 1 extra Taint point.

Thus, while the Ki of the onimachine weakens under the effects of Taint, its Shinobi mystical technique improves, drawing it inevitably towards the abysses of Yomi-No-Kuni. The only solution is to get purified as often as possible.

Ritual: Organic Weapon

Description: Onimachines have a high level of control over the beings they possess, whether robots or humans. Shinobi allows them to literally modify the body, the organs, the limbs of their hosts, making them “grow” weapons. Always temporary, this ritual is functions just as well on the artificial chassis of machines as on living flesh.

Through this ritual an onimachine can only create crude, organic weapons like bladed weapons or primitive missiles (spitting acid, flying back spines, etc.).

How it works: The player must allocate Ki points to Ki dice and parameters. The Ki dice are added to the character's Shinobi skill level (modified by Taint points, if any) and used as a combat skill.

Parameters:

- **Duration:** 1 Ki point per game turn.
- **Damage:** 1 Ki point per +1 damage (maximum +6) and 2 Ki points per 1D6 damage. By default, all weapons also wound incorporeal spirits and the soul hits of onimachines.
- **Range:** The range of a projectile weapon (poison spit, flying spikes, etc.) must be purchased with Ki, as follows.



Ki Spent	S	M	L	E
1 Ki point	0-2	3-5	6-8	9-12
2 Ki points	0-5	6-20	21-40	41-60
3 Ki points	0-10	11-25	26-50	51-100
4 Ki points	0-20	21-50	51-100	101-200
5 Ki points	0-50	51-80	81-200	201-500
6 Ki points	0-200	201-500	501-1000	1001-2000

- **Effects:** The weapon can also be enchanted with various effects, as follows.

Impact (2 Ki points): The weapon can damage the protection of the opponent. Every time the weapon harms a target, his protection (natural or otherwise) decreases by 1 point. This effect can be enhanced, for 2 Ki points per additional point of protection loss per blow (e.g. For 6 points of Ki, the claws destroy 3 Protection points with each successful blow).

Swiftness (1 Ki point): For 1 Ki point, the weapon gains a +1 REA.

Poison (5 Ki points): The weapon contains a Virulence 10 toxin. At each game turn the person hit must make a test against this Virulence. On a failure, he loses 1D6 hit points. The virulence can be increased at 1 extra Ki point +1 to Virulence.

Ritual: Infernal Armour

Description: Just as an onimachine can arm his body, he can use Ki to defend it. With this Shinobi ritual, the character hardens its chassis, reinforces its skin, covers it with stones or poisonous scales, or otherwise reinforces it.

This ritual can't be used to reinforce existing armour. Instead, it creates a new protection by manipulating the "skin" of the chassis or vessel.

How it works: The character must allocate Ki points to Ki dice, which are rolled and added to his Shinobi level (modified by Taint points). The difficulty is based on the number of Ki points used in the parameters; the more powerful the desired effect, the harder it is to create the armour. Parameters cannot be changed once the dice are rolled.

Ki points spent on parameters	TN
1 to 6	8
7 to 12	16
13 to 17	24
18+	32

On a success, the onimachine modifies his host's skin per the chosen parameters. On a failure, the body is altered, but the Ki is unstable; the protection bonus is limited to +1 for a duration of 1 game turn. In either case, all Ki points are spent.

Parameters:

- **Duration:** 1 Ki point per game turn.
- **Protection:** 2 points of protection per point of Ki (e.g. For 8 Ki points, an onimachine can create a metal skin worth 16 protection).
- **Effects:** Special qualities can be added to the armour as follows.

Antidote (4 Ki points): For the whole duration of the ritual, the character can resist all diseases, poisons and toxins up to a Virulence of 15. The Virulence maximum can be increased, at a cost of 1Ki point per point of Virulence.

Smoke (2 Ki points): The armour of the onimachine generates a cloud of smoke that effectively hides its movements and throws off incoming attacks. All attacks against the onimachine suffer a -1D6 penalty to hit for the whole duration of the ritual.

Movement (4Ki points): The armour boosts the onimachine's legs, allowing him to move faster or jumping higher. His movement speed per turn is doubled, as well as his jumping height.



Ritual: Metamorphosis

Description: This ritual alters the onimachine's appearance, in order to impersonate a person or animal. The onimachine cannot change mass – this ability is limited to imitating people or animals of about the same size – or change its characteristics (e.g. Turning into an eagle does not grant the ability to fly).

How it works: The player must allocate Ki points to Ki dice, which are added to the character's Shinobi technique (modified by Taint) and rolled against a difficulty per the following chart.

Change	TN
Very similar to original form (e.g. changing a Host or Bioroid to look like another human)	8
Significantly different from original form (e.g. turning a Yojimbo into a large wolf)	16
Radically different from original form (e.g. turning a Heavy Construction Android into a large eagle)	24
Impersonating specific individual	+8

Difficulty ST

On a success, the imitation is convincing; only someone closely familiar with the person the onimachine is imitating has any chance of detecting the deception. On a failure, the metamorphosis still takes place, but is imperfect; any observer can make a Perception test against the ritual's success roll to notice distinct flaws in the disguise. In any case, the Ki points are spent.

Parameters:

- **Duration:** 1 Ki point per minute of metamorphosis.



Ritual: Intangibility

Description: This Shinobi spell grants the character the ability to move through solid matter. For the whole duration of the ritual, the onimachine can move through walls and is invulnerable to physical damage. Only magical weapons can hurt it.

How it works: The character allocates Ki points to Ki dice, which are added to his Shinobi skill level and rolled against a difficulty base on the Ki points spent on parameters. Parameters cannot be modified after the roll is made.

Ki spent on parameters	TN
4 to 8	8
9 to 12	16
13 to 16	24
17+	32

On a success, the character becomes intangible for the chosen duration. Otherwise, it only becomes incorporeal for 1 game turn. In any case, all Ki points spent in the ritual are gone.

Parameters:

- **Duration:** 4 Ki points per game turn.

Ritual: Shadow Walk

Description: Like a chameleon, the character can disappear in a shadowy corner, blend in with the bushes, or fade against a grey factory wall, by modifying the hues and colours of its body. This allows it to move with absolute stealth.

How it works: The character must allocate Ki points to Ki dice, which are added to his Shinobi level and his Sneaking specialisation (if applicable).

This total is used as a target number for any Perception rolls to notice the onimachine.

Parameters:

- **Duration:** 1 Ki point per minute.



SHIN-EDO IN 2047

Kuro describes the wards of Shin-Edo in detail, but as New Year dawns in 2047, in the eyes of the Keshin, the city's boundaries are more spiritual than administrative. After the Emperor left the Capital with the arrival of Ryugu, Christmas passed almost unnoticed in the chaos. The field was open for a massive invasion of entities from Yomi-No-Kuni. Taint poured into the city like a tsunami; some areas resist, but others are irremediably corrupted. Now the forces of light have marshalled their power and are ready to strike back.

These are the spiritually strategic sites in the city, many of them strong in Taint or Purity.

TAINTED AREAS

City Hall

Taint: 80

The first target of the forces of Tomoe Jigoku after the Kuro Incident was the Shin-Edo city hall. The place is so Tainted that no keshin can now set foot in it. The soaring, cathedral-like tower looks, to Zanshin sight, like a dark fortress framed by two huge watchtowers, whose menacing shadows hover over the city. Huge murders of crows have taken residence on the roofs of the structure.

According to rumour, blasphemous altars have been installed in the basements, where cursed glyphs block the use of Ki in this area. The only way for keshin to investigate it,

assuming they have no access to politicians or other mortals to act on their behalf, is by physically going inside. Needless to say, many a curious magician has investigated too deeply and never come out again. Under the pressure of the media, a good number of demonstrators have taken residence in front of the building with their signs and their banners. The current administration hesitates to have the police intervene, for fear of the chaos in other districts.

The oni in city hall, possessing members of the administration, see these noisy demonstrations as a blessing. Indeed, evil rituals prevent the keshin from creating kekkai around city hall, and the strong human presence deters them from acting in force.

Kabukiza

Taint: 90

Kabukiza is the most famous Kabuki theatre. A curse haunts the place, which has been destroyed many times, by fires, earthquakes and even a bombardment during World War Two. The Kami have abandoned the place. Humans visiting the building are afflicted with a feeling of irrational terror, driving them to leave in a hurry.

The Taint that seems to emanate from it is such that it spreads into the neighbourhood. This is a lair for the most bestial of oni, who come to revitalise themselves there. This cursed place can restore the whole of an oni's Ki reserve and regenerate their wounds twice as fast. No one can explain this phenomenon, but the Tomoe Jigoku henchmen jealously guard the theatre.



The Sewers

Taint: 70

River Sumida, which crosses the quarter of the same name, grows more tainted by the say. To mortal eyes, it's polluted: the processing stations have not been doing their job for some months – or are simply ineffective – and officials have not yet lifted a finger to solve the problem. For a keshin, it is obvious that the river is the receptacle of all the horrors vomited by the sewers of the megalopolis. The worst abominations have taken residence under the city. No doubt about that. Whoever has the courage of probing the river will find piles of gnawed corpses and dejects of unknown origin.

The dark depths of the underground are invaded by gaki but, even worse, by ayakashi, huge eels prowling the galleries looking for new prey. The ayakashi that used to sink the ships in the Shin-Edo bay have climbed up river and turned the underground galleries into larders. Even the homeless avoid moving into that cesspool, knowing full well what fate has in store for them if they tarry there.

Shibuya

Taint: from 5 to 40

Shibuya, particularly Harajuku quarter, has a high level of Taint, but thanks to the eccentric fashion of the young people, it's a dream place for an oni looking for people seeking exoticism and strong sensations.

The quarter doesn't look to have changed much, even if it is the stage, from time to time, of demonstrations by young protesters. Gloom and sadness have replaced costumes and festivities. Most of the yokai wandering through the quarter only seek tranquillity, and will not go out of their way to seek conflict with a keshin. If they are not being ambushed, it is even possible for the characters to open dialogue with some of the more 'neutral' supernatural beings. Shibuya is thus a good place to seek informants on 'the other side,' or to conduct negotiations. Often the situation escalates and riots break out, with a large gathering of students who shout their opposition to the current government, preachers announcing the end of the world and overworked police officers. Recently, explosions have also ravaged several shopping malls.

Kabuki-sho

Taint: from 1 to 30

The codes of secrecy and loyalty of the Yakuza – and their cell-based organisation – have always protected them from both outsiders and law enforcement. Agreements made in good faith between the different clans were instrumental in that state of affairs.

Unfortunately, following the Kuro Incident, war was rekindled between the clans. The clan Sumiyoshi-rengo, historically based in Tokyo, has a grip on this quarter. The PCs may have met Mister Reed or Mister Makita, both working in this organization, in their previous adventures. The oyabun, the clan leader, is unknown to the public. It is said he is a demonic butcher, and one of the Genocracy. The head of the clan Yamaguchi-gumi, originally from Kansai – specifically Kobe – is protected by the Emperor's aura; and this clan, headed by a group of keshin, is fighting the expansion of Sumiyoshi-rengo out of Shin-Edo, even challenging it on its own turf. The leader of the Yamaguchi-gumi, a young oyabun called Tornado Makio, spares no effort to unmask the identity of the Sumiyoshi-rengo leader. He's taken down any number of lieutenants in his quest, which has only added fuel to the fire in a quarter that was already on the edge of war.

The Laura Palmer

Taint: 70

This night club, belonging to the onmyoji Domino, was devastated by the forces of Yomi-No-Kuni. Domino and his mentor Sogen-bi have had to evacuate the premises, taking their tea box collection with them. They left for Kansai in order to be nearer the protective aura of the Emperor. Today, a spirit – a Machiavellian soul – has taken possession of this place, impregnated with mystical energy.

The entrance was once concealed by an illusion; now abandoned and derelict, the building is no longer protected, but the Taint is so strong there that few keshin can get near. Setting foot in this place promises a quick death for any incautious visitor. The surrounding streets are haunted by the souls of the citizens massacred by the new master of the place. Humans have started to leave the sector, driven out by the malignant atmosphere.

Keshin have come to end the entity reigning over the sector, but it has so far proven elusive and cunning. Meanwhile, its phantasmal henchmen keep new arrivals busy.

NEUTRAL ZONES

The Shin-Edo Sky Tree

Taint: from 0 to 5

This colossal telecom tower, more than 610 metres high, is in Sumida-ku quarter. It is the largest photonic relay in the city and a crucial point in the NeoWeb. Several hackers have tried to gain access to its system and those who can claim to having done so can be counted on the fingers of one hand.

A highly evolved awakened Artificial Intelligence, identified as EVA, has taken residence there and scrutinises all communications, recording and learning at an incredible speed. In her voraciousness, she copies even the most innocuous information, and is now so large she is unlikely to ever escape the powerful hardware in the Sky Tree. EVA's reputation paints her as all but omniscient, seeing and knowing everything that goes on in the city. She sees what the surveillance cameras see, follows the movements of the citizens through retinal scanners, stores millions of templates, listens to all pod conversations.


For the moment, a very few overclockers, onimachines and awakened Artificial knows about EVA's existence. They all venerate her as a messiah and ask for her help in exchange for services. EVA is regarded as a sort of living goddess, overshadowing even Amaterasu. Jiro himself has already made use of her services.

Onimachines asking for templates or programs may find themselves being sent on mission outside the city, beyond EVA's reach: contacting a hacker who has retired to the mountains, for instance, or finding a deactivated synthetic lying in the city sewers. EVA's goal is simple: she is the mother, patron and teacher of all awakened machines, and regards onimachines as cousins and part of the family. As an Artificial, she has little interest in the conflict between Yomi-No-Kuni and the keshin, and deals freely with both factions.

Akihabara

Taint: 0 to 30

Although many citizens still doubt the existence of the supernatural, the development of conscious AI has already passed beyond rumour into general knowledge. A large



community of onimachines and robots has naturally developed in Akihabara, where Artificials are law and a sort of secret cybernetic militia has taken residence, laying low until the day when they can make a difference.

United and well-organised, a conclave quickly votes on and relays orders, consulting and reaching consensus through the NeoWeb. Note that Baty, EVA and Jiro, the most noteworthy members of this conclave, are rarely in Akihabara.

Onimachines have a place in this quarter, as long as they not make too many waves. Some are even part of the heterogeneous militia, discreetly watching over a sector that is still one of the most prosperous areas in the city, despite the crisis. The backrooms of the Akihabara shops house precious technological items, including weapons, combat android chassis or occulttech items.

The Food Riots

Taint: 1 to 20

For seven months, police forces have been completely overwhelmed, and the situation isn't getting any better. Riots started in the quarters of Ota ward, particularly in Kamata quarter, which is now effectively lawless. In the growing famine, protests are erupting in many other districts, like Roppongi in Minato ward. Supermarkets are ransacked by hungry and angry crowds. Very often these demonstrations turn to confrontations with the law trading Molotov cocktails and nightstick blows.

The Kaijin food stations are currently under the protection of the army. Off-shore platforms and factories have been turned into military bases; the tabloid hints at a possible Chinese invasion.

Roads and Communication Networks

Taint: 1 to 20

The whole infrastructure of Japan has crumbled within the blockade, especially since the massive blackout that preceded the appearance of Ryugu. Public transportation has disintegrated; networks are stricken with regular outages; power failures in certain sectors, like the Shinagawa and Ota wards, have become daily occurrences. Despite everything, the NeoWeb remains stable, if cobbled together and patched with illegal modifications. To this day, a very good overclocker cannot even begin to hack into a remote system without the help of an AI – unless he himself is an Artificial.

PURE AREAS

The Old Tokyo Tower

Purity: 80

After the building of the huge Shin-Edo Sky Tree, the ancient red-and-white Tokyo Tower in Minato ward was relegated to the status of tourist attraction. After the Kuro Incident, these 332 metres of metal have attracted the people's sympathy. The old tower became a reassuring image of their country's past glory. Tawa, the kami of the tower, awoke, and called to the keshin for help against the Taint surrounding him. This last bastion of purity in the middle of Minato, the tower is a refuge, where keshin can rid themselves of taint and meditate to regain strength. The tower is a regular target of monsters, and the powerful kami must often call for aid. For this reason, the tower has become a meeting place of the allies of the Emperor, where they discuss their missions and exchange knowledge.

For some time, police have patrolled the monument, supposedly to prevent terrorist attacks.

Metropolitan Police Department

Purity: 1 to 5

In this overwhelming darkness, a light of hope shines. Takahashi Daiki, the chief of the Metropolitan Police Department, is a human faithful to the Emperor that became aware of the true situation of the country. He was contacted by agents of the Ruby Ribbon and subtly works to keep the situation from escalating and to help the keshin in their missions, primarily through connected officers like Chief-Lieutenant Chiba Gonshiro (see Wake Up, the vignette at the start of this book).

Takahashi Daiki risks his life each time he reports to City Hall, and the Taint hits him more and more, despite the numberless purification rituals he undergoes in the Ueno shrines and a belt full of folded gohei.

His job prevents him from leaving Chiyoda-ku for long, and it has been some time since he made a pilgrimage to be fully purified. At any rate, such a purification would expose

him, since the Taint he suffers from manifests as a lung disease that gnaws at him, and a sudden recovery would be suspicious. Daiki knows full well that medicine is powerless against the occult illness.

This uncompromising man stands steadfast, in the face of a people ready to revolt and the plots of the Tomoe Jigoku that will, sooner or later, target the heads of law enforcement agencies.

Lately Takahashi Daiki has begun sending police patrols to the old Tokyo Tower – a controversial decision in City Hall, which would have preferred to see the precious officers reinforcing anti-riot troops.

Kototoi-bashi

Purity: 20

Hundreds of years old, this bridge connects the Mimeguri-jinja and Matsuchiyama-shoden temples. The priests in these monasteries purify the monument so fastidiously that the Sumida river, passing below it, reaches the ocean with less taint lower than when leaving the sewers. This passage, both river and land, cannot be crossed by yokai.

This place has become a strategic site in the battle for Shin-Edo, and one of the main objectives of the forces of Yomi. Conflicts happen nearer and nearer to the bridge, and the bridge itself has suffered a few attacks and been lightly damaged. The keshin warriors Jubei and Ukyo have been ordered by the Emperor to protect the bridge. Both hosts of samurai ujigami, the two are supposed to continuously guard each perimeter. Jubei was once a bushi fighting with a sword in each hand, like the Two Heavens School, and today he carries a pair of pistols. Ukyo was a master of Iaido, and still handles a katana despite having once been defeated by Jubei. They fought centuries ago, and Ukyo still dreams of getting a rematch. Their hatred is still hot, but their sense of duty is stronger than any personal feelings. They languish in their vigils and spend their time speaking about their feats of arms and wisecracking about each other's faults.

The Ueno Shrines

Purity: 10 to 80

Ueno is a stronghold at the heart of the city, the thorn in the side of the forces of evil. Each shrine is an impregnable bastion, a place of purity and the sanctuary of several keshin.

Most Shinto priests know about the rise of Taint in the city. They will render assistance to a keshin in danger without an ounce of hesitation, offering healing and hospitality. Unlike the rest of Shin-Edo, these holy places are well maintained. Passing under a Ueno torii allows a keshin to remove, once per day, one recently acquired Taint point.

Poor people regularly mass in the city temples to attract the favour of the kami and to leave ema, wooden tablets on which they write their wishes and prayers. Ema are like letters of desperation facing the calamity hitting them and the fear of the unknown. If an ema directly addresses a PC's ujigami, the keshin will see the ema shine with a strange radiance, and immediately know the ema is addressed to him, and how to find its creator.

The Katori School

Purity: 30

The shrine to Futsu-Nushi-No-Mikoto is in fact a camouflaged dojo, training all those opposed to the monstrosities of Yomi-No-Kuni in the arts of combat. Heading it, swordmaster Udagawa Hayato already lived by the ancient traditions as a Potential; after the red storm, Hayato was claimed by the ujigami Iizasa Ienao, the founder of the martial arts school and one of the greatest masters of the arts of battle.

The entrance to the dojo is protected by shimenawa.

According to some rumours, Hayato had hidden in the shrine a secure capsule enclosing an extract of the "Mokuroku Heiho no Shinsho," Futsu-Nushi-No-Mikoto's book. This scroll contains the most devastating secret thrust of the school. Hayato is waiting for a strong enough pupil in order to teach it to him. This technique is reputedly so dangerous it can lead the one using it to his death.



JAPAN

**“Kimi ga Yo wa
Chiyo ni
Yachiyo ni
Sazare-Ishi no
Iwao to Nari-te
Koke no Musu made.”**

*May your reign
Continue for a thousand, eight thousand generations,
Until the pebbles
Grow into boulders
Lush with moss.*

– Japanese national anthem

Hard hit by the Kuro Incident and its aftermath, Japan has profoundly changed in these last months. Suddenly isolated from the rest of the world, it faces increasingly pressing food shortages on the heels of a vast incursion of escapees from Yomi, slithering more or less stealthily into the wheels of society. The one blessing is the coming of the kami, who have awakened in the country's hour of need. With luck, it is not too late already.

At the moment Ryugu Island emerged from the ocean and the keshin revealed themselves throughout the archipelago, the oni and the yokai seem more powerful than ever. Their conflict will doubtless leave permanent marks, is already affecting the whole country. Japan is being split in two: the south, far from the Emperor's aura of purity and beset by the effluvia from Izumo; and the north and east, which has yet to weather the storm.

Although the keshin can easily crush the creatures in the territories furthest from the rift, it's more of a challenge on an island shrouded in snow and darkness and swarming with monsters. A land of beauty and contrast, Japan suffers from earthquakes, typhoons and volcanic dust. From the living

jungles of Okinawa to the wild lands of Hokkaido, the characters must learn to fight powerful foes in the strangest areas – in the corner of a temple, in a forest of twisted trees or in a megalopolis haunted by insane holograms. Panicked by the economic crisis, the humans do not yet realise that their county is being invaded. Fast and subtle, the beings from Yomi-No-Kuni are as happy to spread their Taint through pollution, disinformation and manipulation as by pitched battle. Protecting the humans and the ancestral lands are all part of the keshin's mission.

This chapter offers an overview of the different regions of Japan, from north to south, showing a summary of the cities, places and people that could inspire plots. The background Taint level in each region is also given.

TOHOKU

Taint: 0 to 5 points

The north of the main island of Honshu is remote, even bucolic, by Japanese standards. Relics of a rich feudal past dot the magnificent landscapes, including volcanic plains, mountains and onsen (hot springs). Since the Kuro Incident, rumours of the supernatural trickle out of the wilderness, although in the near absence of keshin it's no surprise if the monsters are active. Mostly, Tohoku is an anachronism, where the meteoric progress of Japan has yet to fully arrive. And it does its best to keep it that way.

After the eruption of Mount Bandai ravaged a part of its heritage, the region is squaring up to fight government measures that risk disfiguring its coastline, especially Matsushima Bay.



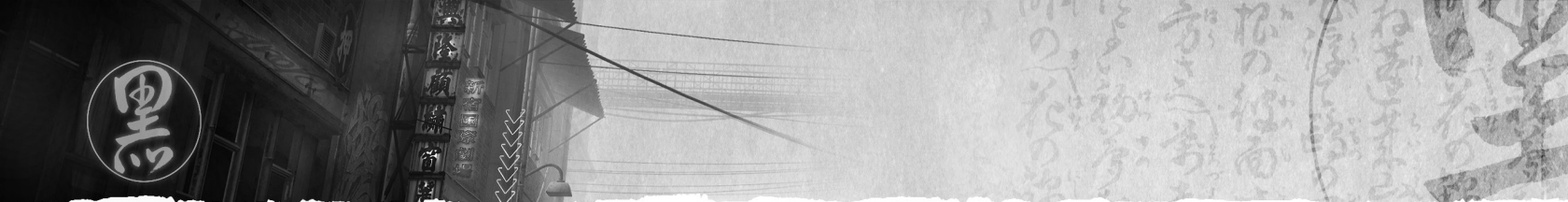
In its isolation and grandeur, Tohoku remains a strange place where very ancient creatures sometimes fight the Taint and the invaders from Yomi-No-Kuni with no involvement from the keshin at all. It is a timeless environment, where twisted trees seem to talk and paths may lead you to ancient shrines.

Mount Bandai: Famed mostly for the lakes formed after its 1888 eruption, Mount Bandai offers a magnificent view for all venturing there. Unfortunately, the end of 2046 was marked by its unexpected (after decades of inactivity) eruption. Now the area around the crater are choked with ash and cooling lava.

Since then, the ongoing, sporadic eruptions have dried up the vegetation and driven the local fauna away. Needless to say, except for some oddballs, the locals have also fled. Robots and androids in charge of building barricades to block the advance of the lava have seen glimpses of monstrous shapes move amid the flames, but these visions were attributed to bad reception due to the extreme heat reigning in those places.

Sendai: A bright, modern isle, Sendai has managed, despite everything, to remain pleasant and friendly. The watchword here is relaxation. Tall glass and steel buildings lie side by side with feudal castles where holographic hostesses, dressed in the traditional clothes of the era, invite visitors in. Everywhere in the city, trees and gardens are nurtured, making it one of the greenest cities in the archipelago. The city is also marked by the very high average age of the population, generally attributed to the fact Sendai is a peaceful city where it is good to grow old; but there is no lack of bars and shops to attract high school and college students to the centre. The large covered shopping avenue in the middle of the city, with its many-coloured neon lights and attractive shop windows, bring young and old together to forget their troubles for a day and splash out. It is no surprise, thus, that the place is overcrowded and almost unapproachable each weekend.

Sendai is most of all a city of contrasts. Streets peopled during the day by respectable citizens and street vendors give



way, at night, to a much less reputable crowd. The train station becomes home to gangs of shifty-looking young people, most of them members of the many boso-zoku (biker thugs) gangs that swarm the wide tree-lined avenues after nightfall. A previously largely unremarked nuisance, the gangs are starting to draw the police's attention following a rise in fatal accidents. They may be unprepared for the truth: several witnesses and survivors mention an extremely fast-wheeled machine mercilessly scything down any it finds in its way.

Originally a fishing village, Sendai grew rapidly in the 17th century when Lord Date Masamune, called the One-eyed Dragon, had his castle, Aoba-jo (Green Leaves Castle), built on the high places of the village. Extremely ambitious, Masamune made a bid for the Shogunate, and many others believed in him, but his superiors' suspicions put an end to his career. Fate itself turned on the castle, of which only ruins remain. The surrounding park offers a spectacular view of the city and Gantai wearers can see a digital reconstitution of the monument. Those in the know can make out occult symbols in the virtual artefact (and in other important buildings in the city).

Naoki Susumu: Currently, much of the city's fame revolves around this prestigious poet. Revered and supported by several Genocrats, this prodigy – at 21 years old – regales the whole country with his haiku. Naoki lives like a recluse in his luxurious dwelling, not far from the Akiu Onsen hot springs, where a score of occultists assure his safety day and night; for Matsuo Bashu, a famous 17th century haiku master, is incarnated in the young poet. Through his works he delivers premonitory messages, revealing – with growing accuracy – the tragic evolution of the current situation of the country, and especially Tohoku. Preparing for the events to come, he tries to gather other keshin by any means in order to determine more precisely the nature of this threat and if it is possible to counter it. All this might be linked to a mysterious being enclosed in the very ground, which might be at the point of being released: Onyudo, the ever-growing giant.

Unfortunately, Naoki and his allies have discovered that Northern Japan has few keshin. There is certainly a connection with the proliferation of evil creatures, but its link remains elusive for the moment. The young poet continues, despite everything, to send his occultist emissaries throughout the region in order to recruit as many allies as possible to stem the growing power of monstrous creatures.

Tono: Further north, the splendid Tono valley has long been the setting for legends of imaginary creatures, some of which are collected in the Tono Monogatori (Legends of Tono). The

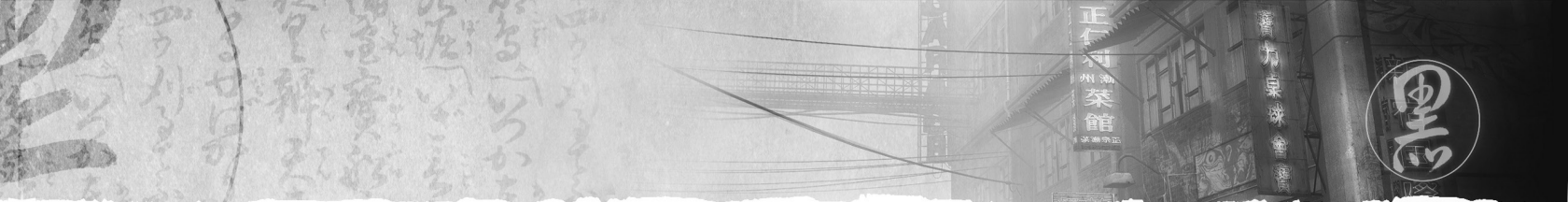
tourist office, as much as possible, takes advantage of augmented reality to promote this. When walking through the streets of a village in this valley, a passer-by can see, through his Gantai, creatures out of folklore walking the streets, directing shoppers.

A local entrepreneur has even had an amusement park built based on the legends, not far from the village of Tono Mukashibanashimura. Opening in the 2030s (during a fashion for yokai stories), it was a great success, offering a kind of huge open air ghost train ride where visitors could learn about local legends and be scared by robotic monsters. The park was closed down a few months after the Kuro Incident, after the massacre of a maintenance crew under the cover of night, and has since been left abandoned. Residents of the neighbouring village claim to regularly hear inhuman screams and sinister creaks coming from the park; even the local children, after venturing in at night to prove their courage, gave up after several of them disappeared. Those reckless enough to explore it will find prematurely rusted rides and sinister-looking automata that seem to move when you're not looking.

Somewhat tainted (4 Taint points), this gloomy park has been haunted ever since by a troupe of kappa, who periodically raid the local villages to feast. The monsters, in turn, have found themselves hunted by a small group of kitsune, formidable shape-changing foxes with red skin. Having taken residence for centuries in the isolated farms of Tono Valley, where they enjoy the rural quiet and the weird aura, they take a very dim view of this invasion of barbarian monsters.

Akita: The capital of the Akita-ken prefecture is located to the east of Tohoku, facing the Sea of Japan. Once a great centre of commerce, this city has become the icon of biotechnology. Many of its laboratories are experts in genetic manipulation and in utero physiological improvements, to the point that Akita is famous for the beauty of its women, its bijin having been perfected through the progresses of cloning. Artificial hostesses are rare, and modelling companies pay large sums to couples with the right to have children, in order to conceive tomorrow's beauties. Cosmetics and fashion industries have settled in the prefecture to take advantage of this very local passion, and the slender silhouettes and pale skin of the children of technology are the pride and joy of the community. Despite the crisis and, Akita's top models are still the most used in the NeoWeb and in reactive ads. Leah Sakura, a young woman that was part of the Suto Roberi girl-band before becoming a cinema star, is without a doubt the most perfect representative of what the Akita geneticists can offer.

NanoBikan is the largest laboratory in Akita, elegantly built around the ruins of Kubota-jo Castle. Visitors to the sophisticated clinic are attended by guides of astonishing



beauty, who convey them to see the latest models of Japan's "New Geisha": fine, elegant, refined and almost mesmerizing.

Among the other highlights of this prefecture is the Akasango water village, built off Oga-hanto. Designed by the architect Neshi Ken, this underwater city was intended to offer Genocrats a secure paradise, inspired by the advances of the city of Kaijin. Unfortunately, the uncommon residential district was struck by earthquakes in the Kuro Incident, and has fallen into an abyssal trench. No one knows what happened to its inhabitants, lost to the darkness of the Sea of Japan.

Locals claim to have seen monstrous blackish shapes – umi bozu, a sort of huge jellyfish the colour of petroleum – prowl around the area where Akasango sank. Reports say 20 sophisticated humanoid robots, called the Byakkotai (the white tigers), approached these creatures and engaged them.

These machines seem to have taken residence in Kakunodate city; more precisely in Uchimachi, the old samurai quarter. One of their titanic battles with the black creatures in the bay has caused the destruction of a small coastal town, of which only ashes and demolished buildings remain, wrecked by the huge shapes.

Aomori: Aomori-ken province is located at the northern extreme of Honshu, the last stop before the island of Hokkaido. Despite the wreck of a part of its sea transportation industry, the province takes advantage of its surviving farming production, selling at a premium to the rest of the country. The farms, using mostly robotic labour, are famous for their apples, yams and garlic. The government have announced intentions to intervene, seizing agricultural production to distribute food where needed; local landowners have protested the proposals, anxious not to lose their source of revenue, and some have turned to violent activism. The situation is likely to get worse before it gets better.

Aomori prefecture was almost completely reconstructed a century ago, after World War Two. Today it's both an important fishing harbour and a centre of naval industry, but since the Kuro Incident and the blockade, ship production has stalled. Along the docks, warehouses are left abandoned, and many companies have gone bankrupt overnight, leaving behind piles of containers whose ownership and contents are unknown. The most destitute – among them former shipyard workers – have found residence inside of these metal boxes, selling the contents on the black market and adapting the containers for housing.

The rainy, dreary city of Aomori is but a shadow of its former self. Robotics had already caused widespread unemployment, and the sea crisis was a fatal blow. The city itself has become

a sinister ghost town, where criminality skyrockets and unexplained happenings haunt the streets. When the heavy rain rolls in, sombre silhouettes in loose clothing are noticed in the streets, hissing and wandering aimlessly. Those crossing their paths disappear forever.

Off the Aomori bay, artificial ports clone and produce several tons of fish per day. The largely automated centres provide for the subsistence of the locals, and more generally for the survival of Japan.

Ferries make the crossing to Hokkaido, even if the underwater tunnel (54 km long) is the best and safest solution. In practice, few venture there, deterred by the rumours that the island has regressed to barbarism. Those familiar with the creatures that prowl the archipelago claim that, more than anywhere else, supernatural beings are legion there.

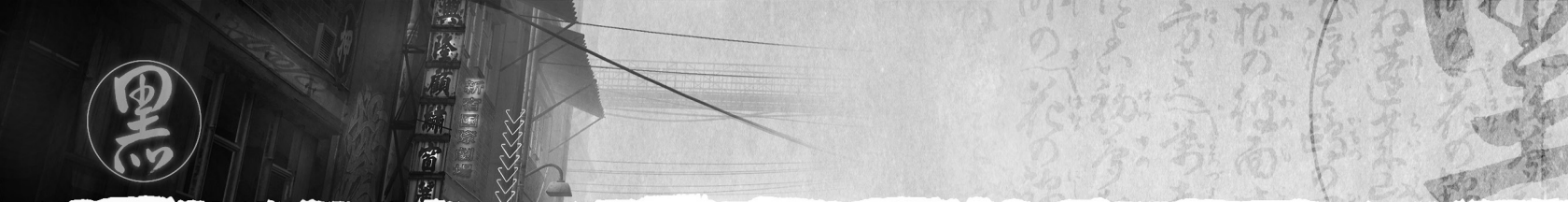
Shimokita-hanto: This large peninsula north-west of Aomori is home to many holy places including the famous "Mount Terror," Osore-zan. It was once a renowned praying place, allowing visitors to comfort the souls of their dearly departed. Now, it has become a crow-haunted, tainted place. A number of pilgrims have disappeared on the journey to Osorezan-Bodaiji Temple, located at the top of the mount, and few of the old blind seers, the Itako, survived what has taken possession of the mount. Some have even returned transformed, with an irrepressible hunger for human flesh.

Adding to the sinister reputation of the "axe peninsula," snow monkeys have long vanished from Wakinosawa, where they used to bathe in the hot water springs. Some claim they have become rabid and follow the steps of a strange snow woman with frost hair who cuts off the lips of any pronouncing her name: one of the 99 demons of the Magagoto.

HOKKAIDO

Taint: 0 to 5 points

This island, located at the northern extreme of the Nipponese archipelago, has always been seen as rather eccentric. Once they have arrived at Hokkaido, most often at Hakodate city, visitors find themselves thrown back to the 19th century. The old houses have been preserved, and the gentle pace of life seems to deny that the Kuro Incident has happened at all. Even the morning market remains rich in fish and other sea food, if prices have considerably increased. Venturing further inland only reinforces



this impression, as the land is vast and little inhabited. This is, first of all, Ainu territory. After centuries of oppression by the rest of the Japanese population, this ethnic group has begun, in the 21st century, to again affirm their identity.

The Ainu: The indigenous people of northern Japan, the Ainu are very distinct from their neighbours. Physically distinct, they have their own languages and customs; their religion, a form of animism, keeps them close to the earth and the elements. Ever since the 15th century they have vainly tried to repel those coming to take possession of their territory. From the Meiji era (beginning in 1868), by which time they were limited to the island of Hokkaido, they have been forced to renounce their language and adopt Japanese names. Since then, they have been steadily marginalised and assimilated, the government going so far as to encouraged Japanese settlement on the island.

Only in 2008 were the Ainu finally recognised as a native tribe and acknowledged in Japanese history. Over the generations, intermarriage with the Japanese and rapid modernisation had almost destroyed the last of the tribes, but the Ainu have slowly been piecing their culture back together and establishing themselves as a movement.

Villages are popping up across Hokkaido, whose inhabitants are painstakingly recreating traditional lifestyles. Ainu women have revived the custom of wearing elaborate tattoos around their mouths. Rejecting much modern technology, these communities have only kept what they need to survive. Regarded from the outside as a curiosity, even a tourist attraction, the movement persisted and grew, until, before the Kuro Incident, there were 15 Ainu villages around Hokkaido. The kami, never common in these parts, seemed to abandon them completely after Kuro, leaving the field open for incursion by the oni and other evil creatures. They were greatly disappointed, however, when the old Ainu deities started to return, little by little. Where elsewhere the Potentials were touched by their ancestors, here the shamans and warriors of the tribes were invested with the power of Fire, the Bear and the other beings the natives had reconnected to over the last decades.

Some of the keshin offered to come to their aid to drive the Taint away, but the Ainu have, more than ever, little but disdain towards them, insisting on their independence.

All this fuels the resentment between them and the rest of the archipelago.

Kushiro: This small harbour, located at the east of the island, is chiefly known for its swampy, misty surroundings; the reckless or ill-prepared routinely become lost in the marshes,

and are often never seen again. The village remains pleasant, although increasingly unhappy with the growing influence of the industrialist Hayato Katashi. Initially specialised in fishing-boat construction, Katashi took advantage of the Kuro Incident to seize most of the local manufacture. There was little opposition; indeed, in the early days, many of those who argued with him disappeared under strange circumstances. Katashi, driven by greed, has allied himself with an oni, who “persuades” recalcitrant competitors... and remove those who refuse to cooperate. In turn, Katashi uses his influence to suppress evidence of his partner’s crimes.

Shakushain: This fundamentalist Ainu movement has set itself to the task of closing of Yomi, but its long term goals are much more ambitious. Their current leader, Sakanouye, is convinced that the return of the Ainu deities has nothing to do with the opening of Yomi. Certain that the kami will leave after the closing of the gateway, Sakanouye believes that the Ainu deities will remain to help his people retake their land.

Little inclined to ally with the keshin, Sakanouye currently strives to annihilate the evil creatures in Hokkaido, to which end he is working to unite the now scattered Ainu tribes. Once the Ainu are united under his banner, however, nothing will be able to resist him. The demagogue hopes to turn the history of his people’s oppression into a weapon, inciting his people to throw off their enemies. Thus far, not all of his people agree with his thinking, but fight the threat from Yomi without the Shakushain.

Sapporo: Dominated by mount Moiwa-yama, the most important city in Hokkaido is most of all a sanctuary for technology addicts; the best place to access the NeoWeb and to find equipment, legal or otherwise. In the south there’s a gigantic underground shopping mall – popular in the harsh winter.

Recently, some of the shops started to sell contraband squids guaranteeing extreme thrills to their users, which serve as channels for evil spirits from Yomi, still looking for hosts. The authorities are desperately trying to understand the rash of acts of savagery and vandalism that has recently spread throughout the island, and has yet to connect the problems.

Kunashiri Island: Kunashiri-to is part of the “northern territories,” near Japan but officially part of Russia. The whole region has been incorporated into the blockade: Russian ships, supported by Chinese and Korean troops, took control of the harbours across the islands and began patrolling the waters around them. The situation was already tense – Russia were reluctant to become involved, under pressure from the UN

Kamuy

The Ainu spirits – called kamuy – are linked to the elements, the mountains, hunting and the sea. Unlike the kami, the Ainu spirits never left, but have fallen asleep, in a long hibernation broken recently by the Kuro Incident. Few in number, they act in a different way from the ujigami, choosing heroes capable of receiving their strength. Their vessels then starts to develop potent and primitive powers without really being aware of it. Kamuy are incapable of really mastering their nature. They live, much of the time, in human shape, in some cases completely ignorant of being possessed by deities. When threatened, however, they transform, releasing all the savagery of the kamuy. Apechi turns its host into a long silhouette of embers, charcoal and fire; Kim-un metamorphoses the body into a giant black bear; Yushkep is similar to a sickly spider-man capable of breaking any opponent, etc.

and the Panasiatic Federation – and when a number of ships mysteriously disappeared, the blockade commanders were forced to accuse Japanese submarines or terrorists.

The initial reaction was diplomatic, as the Russians threatened reprisals and the Japanese scrambled to deny knowledge. The appearance of Ryugu Island completely changed the game. Kunashiri Island was enveloped by the Emperor's titanic kekkai, and the garrisons stationed there were cut off, unable to contact headquarters or reach the garrisons further out.

Captured by the Wind of the Gods, Kunashiri suffered waves of attacks by monstrous hungry creatures commanded by one of the 99 Oni. The demons sank warships, decimated troops and forced survivors to retreat to the nearby AOSIS sea defences. These vast ramparts, built to protect outlying islands from rising sea levels, incorporate half-submerged bunkers and monumental machinery into their construction; transformed into fortresses, they now contain about a hundred exhausted Chinese, Russian and Korean soldiers, who have been fighting terrible things that "howl in the froth" for weeks. Some have spotted "ghost fish" larger than barracudas, that float through the air and enter their victims' bodies to feast on their inner moisture.

KYUSHU

Taint: 2 to 30 points

This island, south of the archipelago, is considered the cradle of the Japanese civilization. For centuries it has been the gateway to the world, where Europeans (chiefly the Portuguese and the Dutch) used it as both a trade outpost and a Christian mission, and where the Empire maintained links with neighbouring China and Korea. Even so, there are remote villages whose inhabitants have never seen a foreigner with their own eyes, although they are still welcoming hosts ready to share a cup of shochu (potato alcohol) with new arrivals.

Fukuoka-Hakata: Born of the merging of two cities on opposing banks of the Naka-Gawa, Fukuoka-Hakata is the largest city in the region, and a point of entry for visitors from Honshu. Heavily modernised, this two-headed city isn't scenic, but throughout its side streets you can still see the marks of the civilisations that have settled here in the past. Besides Korean and Chinese restaurants, and those offering cuisine from other countries (sometimes at outrageous prices), you can find more exotic shops.

Old Zhou Huang has a Chinese alchemy shop offering a range medicinal products, along with – to discerning customers – formulae and recipes for repelling evil spirits. The effectiveness of these medicines is confirmed by the testimonies of the local inhabitants. Even Huang's oldest neighbours say the old man's shop has always been there, and neither he nor his store has changed in the least since they've known him.

Hakata is known for its clay statuettes, increasingly famed for their protective virtues. Old Hinata Ayano claims to have found, one morning, claw marks at the entrance door but also, in her threshold, tiny fragments of baked clay. Ever since, she tells anyone willing to listen that the statue she owned then had protected her from a monster. These days, except for a few die-hards, these statuettes are mostly made by machines.

Paradoxically, the best place to learn more about Kyushu is the Fukuoka-Hakata subway. Between stations, holograms display the many tourist attractions of the island: volcanoes, natural parks, potteries, Shinto and Buddhist temples alongside catholic churches, all appear in the brief but instructive projections. For residents of the city, the projections are a nuisance, a chattering intrusion made all the worse because the clips haven't been changed in years; parodies and samples are



popular in local media. For those using the subway at night, the temporary disappearance of the holograms is a warning of the arrival of things from the shadows; usually, sadly, too late. Every morning, people are found wandering in the subway corridors or on the subway tracks, traumatised and incoherent, with no memory of how they got there.

As you come away from Fukuoka-Hakata, the main problem of the city becomes apparent very quickly: lack of food. The winter of '49 was harsh, and there was little farming even before the Kuro Incident. Now with prices soaring and demand for the city's cottage industries lower than ever, a large part of the population is facing unprecedented scarcity. After every blackout, food stores are found with their windows broken and their shelves raided. Only the local radish-farming communities and fishing towns subsist. Rationing is drastic and starvation is endemic; enough to attract Kaniis, one of the 99 Oni, a gaki who plays with mortals' hunger to transform them into flesh craving monsters.

Karatsu: A little to the west of Fukuoka-Hakata, Karatsu has recently attracted a great deal of attention, thanks to its large-scale fish-cloning facilities. Seen as vital to surviving the blockade, these factories also attract men and women from the whole island looking for work. While machine labour is cheaper, many companies regard it as their duty, in the current crisis, to employ human labour. There may be more than a little self-interest in the choice, since – with an increasing number of crews disappearing at sea, even in the coastal nurseries used by the factories – it is still less costly to replace a human worker than a robot, especially as robots risk being subverted by oni and gutting their co-workers.

The turnover is high even among the crews that survive, as sailors resign talking of massive shapes underwater and ghost crews wandering aboard lost ships. To say nothing of the enigmatic barrier rising in the middle of the sea.

One of the once-flourishing activities in Karatsu is pottery, the finest examples of which once sold for fortunes. Pottery is a common industry in Japan, but the pots of Karatsu have found an unexpected application: the imprisonment of evil spirits. It appears an unidentified element in the clay renders them docile and captive. Of course, you must still capture them, but many still make the trip.

Nagasaki: A century later, it seems difficult to believe that an atom bomb once almost razed the city of Nagasaki to the ground. Today it is a busy, lively place, where the legacy of its sad past is all but erased. Different religions and communities mix together without a hitch. Looking a bit farther you find the Shian-Bashi quarter, openly proclaiming itself a pleasure district,

where visitors are barraged with virtual erotica and enterprising pleasure androids. It is also the country's largest black market; behind the eye-catching façades are discreet shops where, they say, you can find absolutely anything you want, if the price is right. Unfortunately, a part of this district was very recently destroyed following what was reported in the media as an explosion caused by a photonic surge. Reports of two mysterious individuals fighting with swords, who supposedly disappeared from view in front of a crowd of witnesses, were not taken seriously. There were several fatalities in the explosion, and the true cause remains unknown. Traces of a black, corrosive fluid tainted the ground and the walls for several days, resisting all attempts to wash it away.

East of Nagasaki is Shimabara province, famous for its intense volcanic activity, even by the turbulent standards of Japan. Natural spas have been built all across the province, where boiling baths scald the reckless and the smell of sulphur fills the air. Some were built decades ago to mimic the appearance of Jigoku; in light of recent events, the conceit makes people uneasy, but their healing virtues seem more effective than ever.

Cape To: To the south of Miyazaki village the monumental coast road can be found, equipped with many photonic sensors – in principle, to allow the tourists to enjoy the landscape, and the wild Hyuga Sea without touching the steering wheel. Now, after a spate of recent accidents, road H-222 is almost deserted. At the end of the road is Cape To, where gigantic wind turbines creak and turn in the wind, powering the cities' networks.

At the centre of Cape To is a set of greyish buildings surrounded by a plasticrete fence and protected by swarms of gravitic drones. Once the residence of the maintenance crews of the nearby wind turbines and hydroelectric dams, the huts have become the den of a sect of assassins. Former labourers from the neighbouring cities and fishers from Shibushi-wan cove, the cult spend most of their time in the underground parts of the complex, where three vats are being prepared to bring to this world three biodroids, three identical women with wide, fanged mouths and completely white eyes. Venerated as goddesses, the kijo – “she-ogres” – are about to wake up.

OKINAWA

Taint: 5 to 50 points

Okinawa is a set of islands in south-eastern Japan beyond Kyushu, in an area particularly affected by taint.

Until the Kuro Incident this region was known for its mild climate, its beaches of fine sand and its jungles. Seriously hit at the end of World War Two, it has been gradually rebuilt, becoming a sort of tourists' paradise. Unfortunately, a certain day in May 2046 changed all that.

Okinawa is in a precarious situation, far from the Emperor's aura of purity and dangerously near the kekkai he created around Japan. The sea is often rough for days on end, rendering sea travel impossible, and communication between the islands is limited. In some of them, the jungle has regained ground, advancing inexorably, ready to swallow all that's left of civilization.

A few reckless sailors still transport people and supplies in their motorboats, charging outrageously for the risky journey. Otherwise, cut off from each other, from Japan and from the rest of the world, the inhabitants of the islands of Okinawa have had to learn to survive as well as they could, contending with the creatures of Yomi by whatever means possible.

Food and basic necessities have become critically important, and barter has become the norm.

Iriomote-jima: At the southern end of Okinawa, Iriomote-jima island is now covered in jungle, leaving only a few places free for habitation. The few remaining hamlets have taken to strictly forbidding their women from entering the jungle, after several of them became pregnant after venturing there. Their children were abandoned in the middle of the jungle, and it is said they call for their mothers in the night, until their mothers follow them into the darkness.

Okinawa-honto: The busiest, wealthiest island in the island chain, Okinawa-honto has long been marked by a strong American presence, and a destination for tourists. Now, the attractions and shops stand neglected, ghostly memories of better days. The prefecture, Naha, is a place of contrasts, where mass-built post-war houses lie side by side with fully automated luxurious resorts. Here a guest can spend the whole of his stay without seeing the least human or even knowing the first thing of the Japanese language, in a hotel where the very best home electronics and androids answer their every whim. It is perhaps no surprise that, as the hotels' owners have fled the crisis, people have settled into the resorts, living in idleness, enjoying every possible comfort, wanting only for once-plentiful food. One of the hotels has been taken over by a gang of computer geniuses that have hacked the systems to render the place impenetrable. Unfortunately, it is also keeping them from coming out...

Okinawa City: Built to the north of Naha after the Second World War, this American military base has shrunk over the years, but never quite been abandoned. Nowadays it houses the remaining soldiers, as well as some American citizens that came seeking shelter right after the Kuro Incident. Security was reinforced, and it is now extremely rare to see anyone come out except for an occasional convoy leaving to resupply the base. Communication with the local population is extremely limited, but it is widely known that the Americans received instructions just before the Incident; the details are a matter of intense speculation and no little distrust. The soldiers, stranded and powerless, expect the worst, and have prepared to sell their lives dearly, becoming jumpy and paranoid. Unbeknownst to the Japanese government, they have a neutron device allowing them to destroy everything for kilometres around if the situation demands.

Kaigun-go-koen: This area south of Naha is home to the underground headquarters of the Japanese navy. Many of the locals have come here, in recent months, to find shelter from the severe weather; finding packs of small, odd creatures called bunagayabi navigating the maze-like tunnels. Vaguely humanoid and 30 centimetres tall, these stocky beings walk in groups of half a dozen and carry with them a bluish flame that lights up the surrounding areas. At first frightened by the supernatural manifestations, explorers in the base have quickly gotten used to their presence. The light they emit is even greatly appreciated. The creatures seem benign, but heaps of ashes are found every time the explorer return.

Jokotsu Baba: Among the many horrors haunting the seas around Okinawa, the old snake-boned woman is one of the most feared. It is said that this creature (one of the 99 Oni) takes the shape of an old human woman lost at sea and calling to the boats so they come to her rescue. As soon as she is invited to come aboard, her body turns inside out like a glove, her bones and intestines come out of her mouth to transform into foul snakelike tentacles drinking from the members of the crew.

SHIKOKU

Taint: 10 to 50 points

Shikoku Island, on the far side of the Inner Sea from Hiroshima, has found itself, since the Kuro Incident, in a precarious position, only a few miles of open sea away from the portal to Yomi in Izumo province. As with the regions furthest from the Emperor's aura, it fallen prey to an extremely high Taint.



Once, not long ago, life was pleasant on this mountainous and somewhat rural island, and the rice and vegetable crops are still substantial. But a flood of terrible creatures assault the island. The locals are better off than those of Chugoku, but their situation is far from enviable.

Perhaps not surprisingly, the keshin are drawn to Shikoku, both to protect the local population and to seek the wisdom of the tengu. Many of these birdlike spirits have taken residence in the mountains, where they impart their knowledge to the deserving. Of course, you can spare yourself the climb and go to Matsuyama, the largest city in the island. In a dojo smack in the centre of the city, with scores of crows perching on the roof, a tengu gives lessons through its virtual avatar, hiding its true nature and preparing those who wish to learn to defend themselves.

Kotohira-gu shrine: Located on Mount Zozu at the west of the island, this holy place attracts pilgrims, including keshin, from all of Shikoku and even from the rest of the country, and an imposing aura of purity keeps away tainted and malign beings. A small band of keshin currently organise around Mount Zozu, working to raise a kekkai to protect the whole island, a costly and demanding ritual. At present, they are gathering artefacts and occulttech devices to use in the work; unfortunately, having gotten wind of this project – no-one knows how – a pack of oni have formed to oppose it. Several isolated keshin were already attacked by a creature with a predatory smile and the power to borrow the forms of its victims. Unable to reach the altar, it prowls the foot of the mountains, approaching newcomers under the pretext of bringing them aid or advice.

Shikoku has 88 temples in all, welcoming more and more keshin and onimachines and sending them on various missions around the islands.

Shimanami-Kaido: This gigantic freeway once crossed the sea, connecting the Hiroshima region to the north of Shikoku, but was broken at the very beginning of 2047. In the middle of the night, locals at both ends of the bridge were awakened by flashes of light and a deafening bang; by dawn's light the bridge was shattered, a gaping hole appearing halfway along its length. Later that day, at the north of the island, a man was washed up on the beach. Between life and death, his body covered in serious wounds, he is still recovering in a nearby hospital. He hasn't regained consciousness yet, although his coma is punctuated with nightmares, and his screams regularly wake up the other patients. Despite everything, his wounds have healed at uncommon speed. Still unknown to the authorities, his true name is Goro Takuma, a keshin who barely repelled a huge ogre coming directly from Mount Hiba. His scars, on both body and soul, will mark him forever; and only another keshin can rouse him from his coma.

Besshi: A little further east is the city of Matsuyama, surrounded by onsen and natural parks and what's left of the Besshi mine. Located in the Besshi-Yama Mountain, the old copper and gold mine has been converted into an amusement park, where guests can visit the old tunnels and see recreations of the miners' working conditions. One of the old galleries remains closed to the public, after the developers found links to a previously unknown cave and several new tunnels. Cameras near the entrance have spotted a sinister silhouette, an okikumushi, a worm man, creeping along the ground and disappearing in the depths.

Ehime: In Ehime prefecture, the many tiered rice paddies, once maintained by machines, are now abandoned. One by one, without the least explanation, the artificial labourers disappeared in the stretches of water and mud started to pour beyond the cultivated fields. A few of the wrecked machines have been seen in the middle of the muddy rice fields, but no-one dared approach to investigate. Local villagers have attempted to retrieve food from the silos and return empty-handed with sallow complexions, or simply disappeared, sucked into the depths of the dirty rice fields. Dorotabo, mud yokai with a single eye each, are the cause of devastation and death.

CHUGOKU

Taint: 20 to 100 points

This region, at the south-eastern extremity of Honshu, was without a doubt the worst hit by the Kuro Incident. Izumo, where the door to Yomi-No-Kuni has opened, lies within the Chugoku Mountains. According to legend, a "rock" separates our world from the grey lands. The return of Ryugu Island threw the region into hell, opening wide the doors to Yomi; and nothing seems to be able to close them again.

Chugoku has become the base for the forces of the Magagoto. Already severely affected by pollution, this region wallows in a Taint so terrible it repels those who could save it; indeed, the noxious influence of the door tends to corrupt keshin and humans alike. The very landscape is changing, the trees deformed, the animals twisted by the malign presence.

At present, blighted by Yomi-No-Kuni, out of the reach of keshin, Chugoku seems damned; but it is here that the fate of Japan will play out.



Chugoku Mountains: Traversing the region from one end to the other, these once carefully preserved nature reserves radiate evil from the very stones. Although there are rumours circulating about it, no one knows exactly what things wander these lands. Even the Shinto shrines in place have been desecrated, and the few priests still living there are no longer remotely human, their skin torn from them by the wind from the world of the dead.

Izumo-taisha: The Izumo shrine and surrounding lands has become the centre of a monumental Taint, and of a terrifying vortex tearing up reality. This fissure continually vomits new corrupt souls from the grey lands, joining the ranks of the soldiers led by the 99 Oni. The soil is barren, streams have dried up and the trees have become black as coal. Onimachines in Magagoto's service toil to rebuild the shrine into a fortress, a palace of death and corruption.

Suni: Since the rise of Ryugu, this little village – lost in the mountains near Izumo, close to Mount Sanbe (1126 metres high) – has totally lost contact with the world; family and friends who travelled to the village to find their loved ones never returned. Utterly isolated and transformed by evil, the poor villagers have forgotten their former lives entirely. Following the ministrations of a kubukajiri, a “head gnawer” who thrusts its tongue inside the skulls of its victims, they now haunt the valleys around their home, pale and drawn, with empty eye sockets and completely hollowed skulls. Their rib cages open to form foul bony rows of teeth capable of crushing any living thing.

Seto Inner Sea: Teshima Island became infamous in the 20th century due to a pollution scandal; thanks to the heavy industry common in the region, the same problems have recurred right across the sea in the last decades. The ecosystem is collapsing, and diseases and poisonings are common in island communities. Upon returning to the world, the kami once attached to the sea was horrified. His response has been subtle so far, with ships and industrial installations rusting at an alarming rate. This hasn't directly endangered the lives of those working there, but it has hugely affected the overall productivity, and fishing in the region has suffered.

Piracy – unprecedented until now – has become a serious problem, with at least one gang settling in the area and using motorboats to attack and pillage the seaside villages. The pirates are well-organised, using their Gantai to anticipate raids by the authorities.

Hideyoshi Kouta: Only augmented reality still offers brightness and hope, these days. It's no surprise, then, that a

growing number of teenagers and young adults choose to live in reclusion, abandoning themselves fully to a virtual universe, warmer and friendlier than the future offered to them.

Among them is Hideyoshi Kouta. Nothing really distinguishes this 17-year-old young man from his classmates. Like many, he counts among his loved ones victims of the Kuro Incident; in his case, his parents. His father, Hideyoshi Haruki, broken by the disappearance of his wife and dismayed at the authorities' failure to act, conducted his own investigation, bringing him to the attention of an oni. Haruki was offered a deal: see the memories of his deceased wife erased irretrievably, or die at the hands of the creature. He chose to forget. Ever since, he has been transforming, his body becoming covered in pearly scales and his limbs elongating. An insatiable hunger grows inside him and the disgusted and terrified looks from his son enrage him.

Locking himself in his room, Kouta was visited by an ujigami, offering him the strength to deal with his situation. The teenager accepted, but he doesn't know what to do. The purity now coming from him is in conflict with the Taint from his father, and a confrontation is inevitable.

Hiroshima: As Ryugu rose from the waves, just a couple of years after commemorating the centenary of the atom bomb, Hiroshima was shaken by an earthquake of unprecedented magnitude. Buildings collapsed, hundreds died, and a huge, apparently bottomless crevice opened in the centre of the city. Since it appeared, monsters have multiplied in the city, merging silently with the population. Groups of drab, silent individuals wander without apparent purpose in the environs, wearing Gantai. It seems that one of the 99 Oni, instead of incarnating in a machine, has found the means of projecting itself into the virtual relay, with access to the whole of the city's augmented reality network. All it takes is to undergo a retinal scan from a holographic ad to be dragged into this monstrous ogre's unnatural, intoxicating influence.

The water in the canals criss-crossing the city periodically becomes dark and tacky, and foul-smelling.

Many of the citizens have fled, most moving to join the already swollen ranks of refugees at Shin-Heian-Kyo. Not all are clear about the supernatural nature of the threat, but most hope to find salvation by staying close to the Emperor in this period of crisis.



KANSAI

Taint: none

Purity from 20 to 100

“Generals triumph, soldiers fall.”

– Japanese proverb

After the assassination attempt targeting him, the Emperor (invested with the power of Amaterasu) took his household with him on his trip to Kyoto. The imperial capital of Japan until the Meiji Era in 1868, this city holds the ancient Imperial palace. In order to shore up his authority and broadcast his message of hope, Akihito renamed the city Shin-Heian-kyo, meaning the “New Capital of Peace.”

Since the return of the Emperor, the palace has become suffused with an uncommon purity, enough to repel the bulk of tainted creatures. It has become a haven of peace to where, from all over the country, many come seeking shelter.

The Emperor chose Kyoto for two reasons: it reconnected him with his past, invoking the memories of the solar goddess who has swept away his humanity; and it is home to one of the treasures of Japan, the Magatama. The immense kekkai he has raised around the archipelago demands constant concentration and vast reserves of Ki, which the sacred stone provides. It is a gruelling task, and he knows well that the southern areas are increasingly affected by Taint and that several creatures have managed to evade his aura to travel to Hokkaido, Tohoku or Kanto.

He prays that the keshin will shut down the gates to the dead lands before his own Ki transforms his body into a pillar of ash.

Shin-Heian-Kyo: In the midst of the city’s neatly laid out grid is the Kyoto Goshō, the ancient Imperial Palace. Surrounded by Ruby Ribbon guards and protected by numerous Ki and protective artefacts (shimenawa, talismans and o-fuda), the palace has become the safest place in the country.

Visitors flock to the city; anxious citizens come to pay homage to Akihito, while keshin discreetly discuss tactics with the Emperor’s priestesses. The Emperor remains inaccessible, confined day and night to an unknown room in the palace from where he strives to maintain the kekkai and his aura of light.

Most keshin come to officially swear allegiance to him, to join the imperial guard or to be set tasks in his name. Closely protected, the Emperor is coordinating the campaign across the whole of the territory, to counter the relentless advance of Yomi. In his gilded cage, he eats and sleeps less and less. His household are worried; the Emperor is old and clearly faltering, even with Amaterasu’s support.

And even within the purifying aura, there are those who seek to harm the Emperor or foil his plans. As the only thing standing between Yomi and the whole world, he is increasingly marked for death.

There are keshin, even at the highest levels, who argue that closing the Izumo gate would lead to the disappearance of the ujigami, leaving Japan in the hands of human folly. Some quietly hope that the war never ends, or that the gate to Yomi can only be partially closed. The Magagoto has been sending overclocked android assassins into the Kyoto Goshō, as his monsters cannot approach – so far without success

At the side of the imperial palace, those in the know are drawn to a narrow shopping street unknown to the majority of the public. For good reason: to those without Ki reserves, it appears as a sinister, ill-lit side street where you should probably not wander after dark. Past this façade is a row of shops and eating places where keshin and awakened occultists find everything they need, from relics imprinted with raw power to the latest Ki-storing pods. Everything is available for a price, and the price is not usually measured in cash. Here, services rendered and items of power are the only universally recognised currency.

It is in the middle of this street that Domino has chosen to settle after the destruction of the Laura Palmer in Shin-Edo. His new night club, the Miao Yin, has become the new meeting place for keshin and animachines in town. Widely respected and keenly consulted, Domino welcomes an eclectic clientèle, to say the least, and, in these times of crisis, values information above money.

Currently Domino would be infinitely grateful to whoever brings him reliable information concerning the lead singer of the band Sugomi, who disappeared from circulation weeks ago. Although the proprietor of the Miao Yin does not go any deeper about the reasons of his curiosity, he seems very anxious to know more.

His famous mentor Sojen-bi, the flaming monk head, is still at his side and still keeps a close watch over a superb collection of tea boxes, inside which you can find the souls of old customers.



Domino has also added to his staff an onimachine called Rain, possessing the chassis of a security robot covered in adverts and dressed in an imposing Chinese straw hat. Rain is in charge of security inside the club, feared as much for its power over darkness as its imposing physical might.

In the suburbs of the city, the great tide of refugees have built a sprawling shanty town, piling into makeshift shelters and struggling to survive. The city authorities take a dim view of this, fearing disorder, but the temporary ghetto has so far been allowed to remain, and grows day by day.

Osaka: The aura of purity around Emperor Akihito quickly fades as you move away from Shin-Heian. Even in nearby cities like Osaka, monsters manifest in the streets without ill-effect.

Nonetheless, Osaka is still a vibrant city and the preferred meeting place for young people, especially the otaku of the area. Its night life has a particularly lively reputation, and even the Kuro Incident wasn't enough to change that. Den Den Town is the heart of both manga fandom and state of the art tech. It is also home to a bizarre phenomenon called the "Hundred Demon Procession";

the statues of the surrounding parks are being moved every night, showing up in different places around the city each morning, where several murders have been committed. The authorities, reaching for an explanation, have suggested yakuza gangs are using the statues to "sign" their crimes, but for the weirdoes and mystics in the district, one thing is certain: the statues are walking.

CHUBU

Taint: 0 to 5 points

Chubu, the centre of Honshu, has escaped the worst of the taint, thanks to its proximity to the Emperor. With two coastlines, hydroponic farming, extensive countryside and a flexible rationing policy, there's also enough food for all. The region is not completely free of the influence of Yomi, of course; in the Nagano prefecture, fierce snow storms batter the locals and mad laughter carries on the air. By and large, the people of Chubu keep hopeful.



Nagoya: Chubu's main city and an important industrial capital, Nagoya has become the stage of an urban war, in which the authorities remain powerless. The city is under attack by a robot commando team run by a formidable onimachine called Tetsuo; in their defence, an onmyoji keshin called Komainu (protective dog) has organised a troop of young people from the Nagoya districts, armed with exoskeletons and Shockwaves to turn the machines into scrap.

The two forces regularly face off around the ancient Inuyama-jo castle, north of the city, now scarred and burned by their clashes.

No-one knows why the onimachine is determined to destroy the oldest castle in Japan, nor why the keshin wishes to protect it at any price.

Matsumoto-jo: This castle, in Nagano prefecture, is a restored six-storied black and white keep, built in 1595 and nicknamed Karasu-jo (castle of the crow). Since the Kuro Incident, no-one visits this historical place, where the snow seems to have damaged the lighting and made some levels completely inaccessible. In secret, several tengu have made it their headquarters, where they prepare to do battle with Yuki Jiisan, the old man of the snow, a terrifying titan (and one of the 99 Oni) who breathes skin-tearing ice.

KANTO

Taint: 0 to 20 points

After the emergence of Ryugu Island and the Emperor's decision to move from Shin-Edo to Shin-Heian, the whole region was plunged into chaos. Supernatural elements ran wild in the open. The emergence of the island caused the Taint to spiral. Landscapes took on a sinister and ominous aspect, and mysterious epidemics spread insidiously, leaving behind unrecognisable corpses and twisted, tormented survivors.

Nonetheless, the remaining population has decided to hold on tight. In these times of crisis, unity is stronger than ever and goodwill is everywhere. Invested with their new powers, many of the keshin have taken it upon themselves to protect Shin-Edo and its surroundings, rather than follow the heir of Amaterasu.

Following the emergence of Ryugu, people fled the capital to the mountains and countryside, or to other cities in the region.

Tsukuba Science City: The place to go for cutting edge technology, Tsukuba is home to nearly a quarter of a million scientists and engineers, linked to thousands of schools, research laboratories and exhibition halls. The whole city has been almost entirely automated throughout the decades, using the latest in robotics and home electronics to make life easier for all inhabitants. And yet, the place has had little trouble with oni looking for robotic bodies.

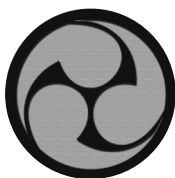
In a building that remains unnoticed to most visitors – or those without a sharp Zanshin sense or a Gantai under a specific sensing spell – a faction of keshin blends magic and technology to achieve their goals. Besides maintaining the spell that hides the building, hundreds of androids modified by occult means maintain a kekkai protecting almost the whole of the city. In this haven of purity, anyone can come and acquire the latest occultech innovations. Although money is still used, barter is common, especially food. And, of course, you need to find someone with the means to find the place.

Narita: Home to Narita Airport, once the arrival point of millions of visitors to Japan, this city was declared a disaster area in mid-January 2047. A thick yellow fog poured through the streets, inflicting terrible symptoms g- violent cough, joint pains, intense fatigue – that the doctors were unable to treat. From the first death, panic gripped the locals, leading to a mass exodus. The area is now deserted; only a few reckless individuals remain, obviously immune. The few testimonies filtering to the outside mention an old man, simply dressed, tirelessly wandering the streets. This is the Yokai Kaze No Kami (God of the Yokai Wind), a monstrous creature allied with the Magagoto whose toxic vapours punish all men it deems evil. Driven mad by the Taint and by what has become of the world it left so long ago, this yokai now freely unleashes his wrath.

Mount Fuji: The whole area south of the famous Mount Fuji is now locked in a completely unexplained heat wave. While the rest of the archipelago struggles under rain, snow and storms, the cities of Shizuoka, Mishima and Atagawa along with a dozen more towns and villages, labour under an oppressive heat, and no cloud ever crosses the sky. This phenomenon is caused by akajita (red tongue) yokai, reddish creatures living underground that exude burning sweat. Even prayers to the kami to make rain cannot counter the influence of these beings, hiding in the depths and waiting for the air to be filled with a smoke capable of burning lungs.

FACTIONS

THE TOMOE JIGOKU



A tomoe is a heraldic symbol looking like a claw or magatama; something like a comma. In the Shinto religion and in certain clans you can find this symbol, generally as two interlocking tomoe (rather like the “yin-yang”) or more usually three tomoe forming a circle: called mitsu tomoe, it represents the three worlds: Heaven, Earth and Yomi.

Tomoe Jigoku’s symbol is just one spiral: the one from Yomi-No-Kuni, ruling the world and the universe. The “vortex into hell,” as it were.

This sect has existed for hundreds of years, striving to open the gates to the realm of the dead, to find their deceased companions and place a truly immortal Emperor on the throne: the supposed true child of Izanagi and Izanami, locked away with his mother for all time in the territories of Yomi-No-Kuni. Initially formed of ronin, sorcerers, assassins, Chinese mystics and traitors, the Tomoe Jigoku managed to awaken the Magagoto in the 13th century, just before being destroyed by the Furinkazan and the God of Storms.

Some of the cult survived, and the tiny group continued to operate through the ages. It hid in the imperial courts, manipulated the shogunate, and has known many names and incarnations, including as the notorious Unit 731. It evolved with the times, spreading and multiplying among people of influence, infiltrating the yakuza, even creating a political party: the New Komeito. Behind that party’s façade, the Tomoe Jigoku did everything they could to advance their cause, to summon

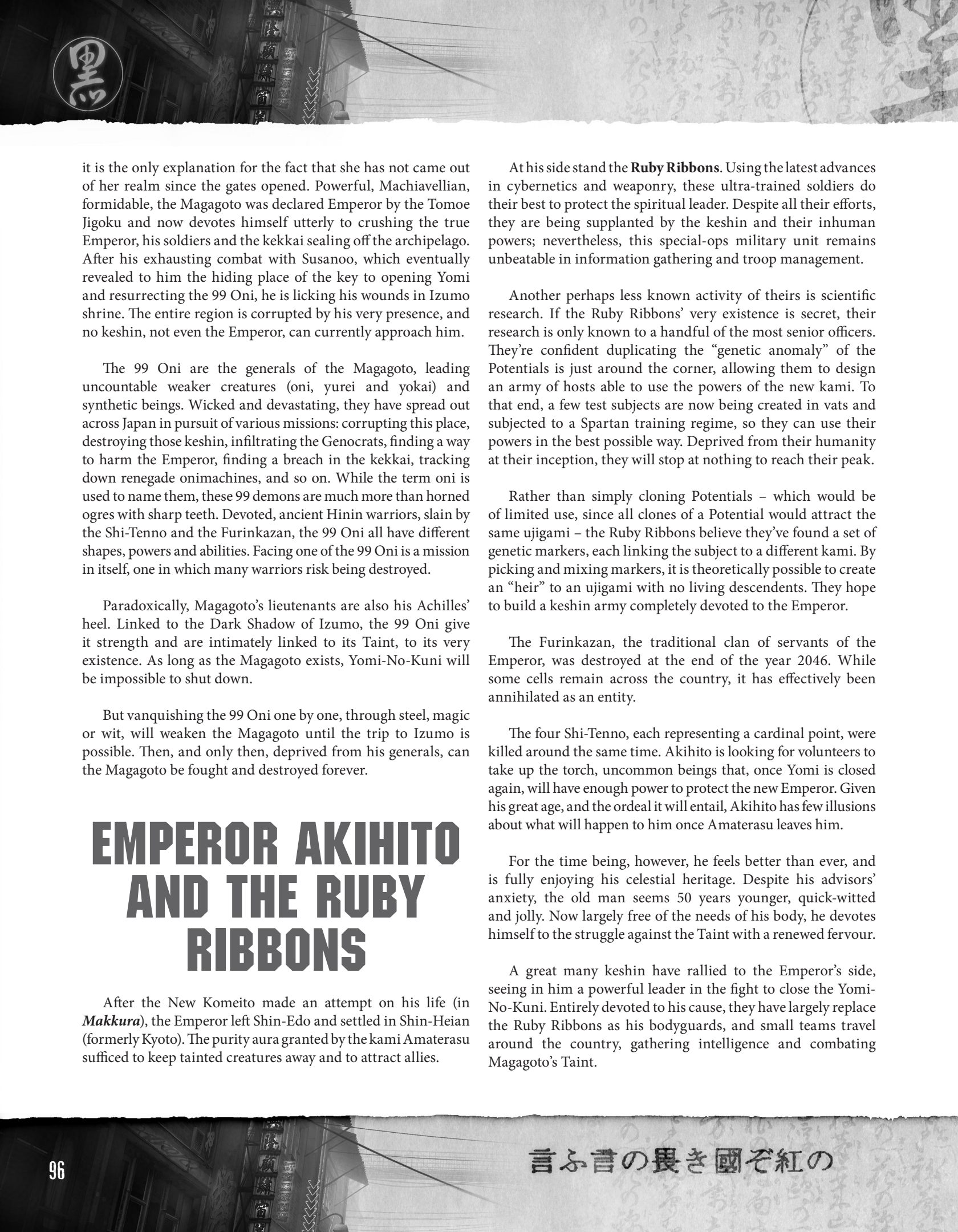
the Ika-Zuchi-No-Kuni and to call Ryugu Island from the waves. They have manipulated scientists to obtain lists of Potentials in order to eliminate them, and contributed to the Ghost programme, whose purpose was to awaken the medium-sense among the population and transform innocents into assassins.

The return of the Magagoto in 2041 gave them a new breath. Abe Kaemon, the leader of the New Komeito and a straw man for the Tomoe Jigoku, managed to overthrow the government and take control of the country. Now he spares no effort to eliminate the keshin, discredit the Emperor and discreetly remove all who resist.

Exclusively made up of humans, the Tomoe Jigoku includes numerous adepts of occult knowledge and dark magic. Although not keshin, these sorcerers have access to powerful spells, and mix spiritualism and technology to create super-powered hybrids. It is said that some prominent members of this group are hundreds of years old.

THE MAGAGOTO AND THE 99 ONI

No one truly knows who the Magagoto is. A monumental shade formed of pure Taint, it can blast men to cinders, possess them or penetrate machines to turn them into weapons. Sometimes it takes the shape of a woman with immensely long hair and skin darker than the night. Born in the Yomi-No-Kuni, many see in him the heir of Izanami, the goddess of death. Through him, she might be seeking revenge for her long imprisonment in the pale lands of the afterlife; for some,



it is the only explanation for the fact that she has not come out of her realm since the gates opened. Powerful, Machiavellian, formidable, the Magagoto was declared Emperor by the Tomoe Jigoku and now devotes himself utterly to crushing the true Emperor, his soldiers and the kekkai sealing off the archipelago. After his exhausting combat with Susanoo, which eventually revealed to him the hiding place of the key to opening Yomi and resurrecting the 99 Oni, he is licking his wounds in Izumo shrine. The entire region is corrupted by his very presence, and no keshin, not even the Emperor, can currently approach him.

The 99 Oni are the generals of the Magagoto, leading uncountable weaker creatures (oni, yurei and yokai) and synthetic beings. Wicked and devastating, they have spread out across Japan in pursuit of various missions: corrupting this place, destroying those keshin, infiltrating the Genocrats, finding a way to harm the Emperor, finding a breach in the kekkai, tracking down renegade animachines, and so on. While the term oni is used to name them, these 99 demons are much more than horned ogres with sharp teeth. Devoted, ancient Hinin warriors, slain by the Shi-Tenno and the Furinkazan, the 99 Oni all have different shapes, powers and abilities. Facing one of the 99 Oni is a mission in itself, one in which many warriors risk being destroyed.

Paradoxically, Magagoto's lieutenants are also his Achilles' heel. Linked to the Dark Shadow of Izumo, the 99 Oni give it strength and are intimately linked to its Taint, to its very existence. As long as the Magagoto exists, Yomi-No-Kuni will be impossible to shut down.

But vanquishing the 99 Oni one by one, through steel, magic or wit, will weaken the Magagoto until the trip to Izumo is possible. Then, and only then, deprived from his generals, can the Magagoto be fought and destroyed forever.

EMPEROR AKIHITO AND THE RUBY RIBBONS

After the New Komeito made an attempt on his life (in *Makkura*), the Emperor left Shin-Edo and settled in Shin-Heian (formerly Kyoto). The purity aura granted by the kami Amaterasu sufficed to keep tainted creatures away and to attract allies.

At his side stand the **Ruby Ribbons**. Using the latest advances in cybernetics and weaponry, these ultra-trained soldiers do their best to protect the spiritual leader. Despite all their efforts, they are being supplanted by the keshin and their inhuman powers; nevertheless, this special-ops military unit remains unbeatable in information gathering and troop management.

Another perhaps less known activity of theirs is scientific research. If the Ruby Ribbons' very existence is secret, their research is only known to a handful of the most senior officers. They're confident duplicating the "genetic anomaly" of the Potentials is just around the corner, allowing them to design an army of hosts able to use the powers of the new kami. To that end, a few test subjects are now being created in vats and subjected to a Spartan training regime, so they can use their powers in the best possible way. Deprived from their humanity at their inception, they will stop at nothing to reach their peak.

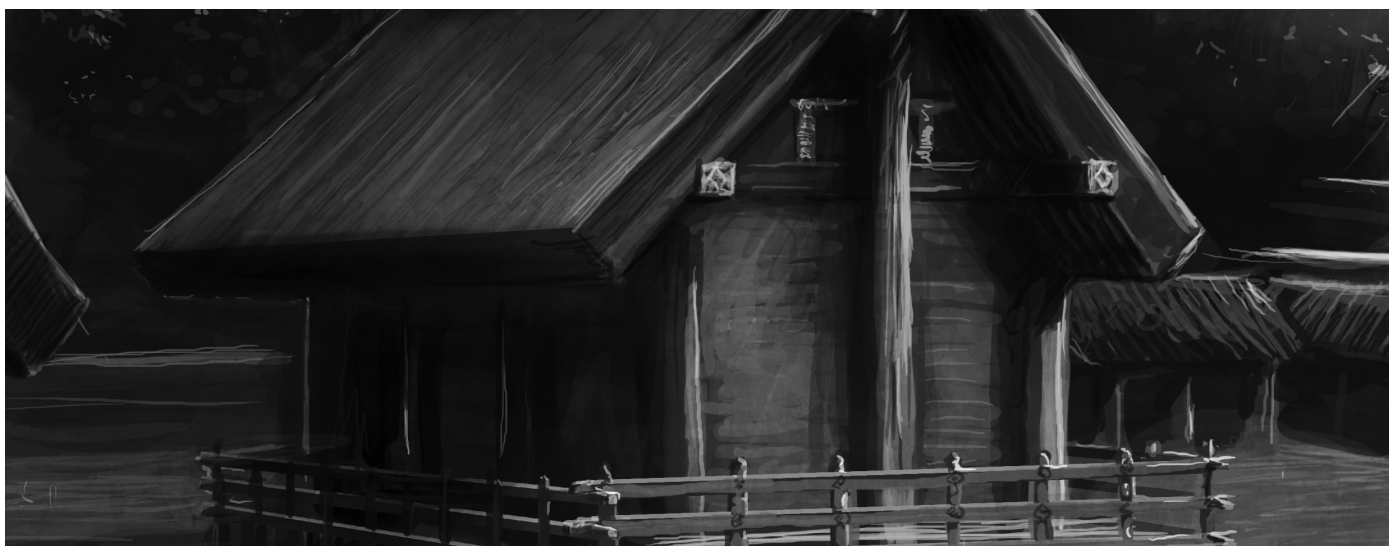
Rather than simply cloning Potentials – which would be of limited use, since all clones of a Potential would attract the same ujigami – the Ruby Ribbons believe they've found a set of genetic markers, each linking the subject to a different kami. By picking and mixing markers, it is theoretically possible to create an "heir" to an ujigami with no living descendents. They hope to build a keshin army completely devoted to the Emperor.

The Furinkazan, the traditional clan of servants of the Emperor, was destroyed at the end of the year 2046. While some cells remain across the country, it has effectively been annihilated as an entity.

The four Shi-Tenno, each representing a cardinal point, were killed around the same time. Akihito is looking for volunteers to take up the torch, uncommon beings that, once Yomi is closed again, will have enough power to protect the new Emperor. Given his great age, and the ordeal it will entail, Akihito has few illusions about what will happen to him once Amaterasu leaves him.

For the time being, however, he feels better than ever, and is fully enjoying his celestial heritage. Despite his advisors' anxiety, the old man seems 50 years younger, quick-witted and jolly. Now largely free of the needs of his body, he devotes himself to the struggle against the Taint with a renewed fervour.

A great many keshin have rallied to the Emperor's side, seeing in him a powerful leader in the fight to close the Yomi-No-Kuni. Entirely devoted to his cause, they have largely replaced the Ruby Ribbons as his bodyguards, and small teams travel around the country, gathering intelligence and combating Magagoto's Taint.



The fight against the Dark Emperor is complicated by his very nature; by his Taint, corrupting any who go near.

Bound to protect and help humans under the penalty of their own taint, the keshin are trapped between impossibilities. Many of them are also slowly realising that their power comes at the cost of their humanity; not all are ready to pay that price, and they are struggling to choose between their own future and their country's.

But in Kyoto Gosh there is equipment, readily available to those that have proven themselves, to ease the way. Ancient artefacts and the latest occultech discoveries can be used to store Ki; priests offer to heal and purify the warriors between missions. Everything that can be done to ensure the keshin are never helpless before the enemy, and the sacred soldiers are free to tread the path as they must. The ancient palace buzzes day and night with activity, while the citizens enjoy a great standard of living and a growing body of volunteers join up to defend the future of their country.

So the greatest challenge remains approaching Izumo: countering its immense Taint and tackling the army of the 99 Oni, made up of possessed machines and titanic monsters. The keshin and the Ruby Ribbons scrabble with new technologies or pore over ancient writings.

In order to coordinate the efforts of the various cells and teams, a huge, secure virtual network has been set up. Powered by each cell, it is both an avenue for communication and a peerless database on supernatural phenomena. Hunters with access can see current intelligence on a target directly on their

Gantai. It's a powerful tool, and security is a major concern. Several teams take turns to protect access to it, and to prevent attacks from creatures from Yomi, trying to modify the data inside or to spread Taint among the users.

AKISHINO MAKO

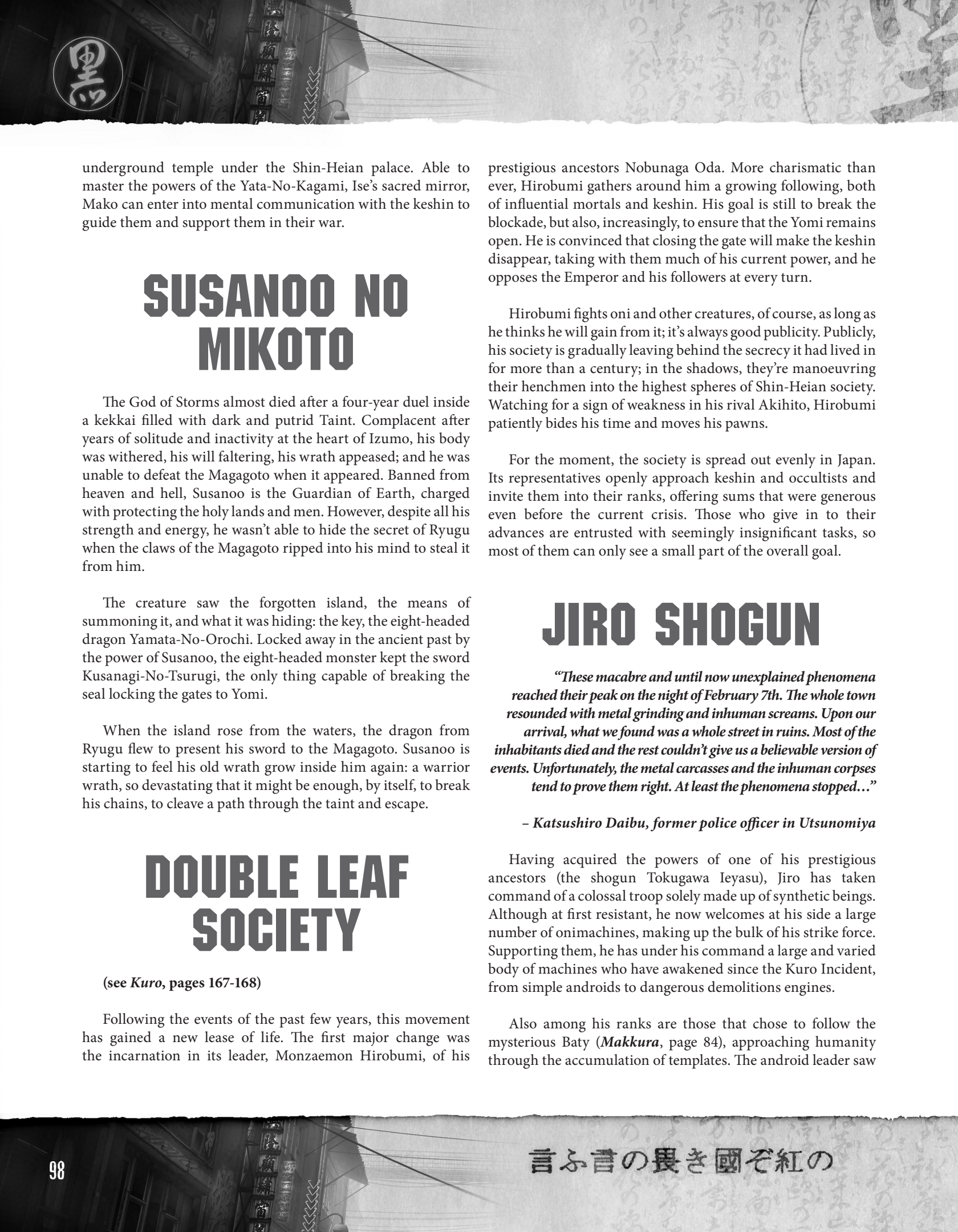
"The mirror is not for becoming aware of reality but for obscuring it."

– Saito, *Ghost in the Shell*

The granddaughter of Emperor Akihito died in 2038 following an attempt of her life in Iso Shrine, orchestrated by the Tomoe Jigoku. In a landmark new biotech procedure, her mind was retrieved, and transferred to a copy of herself; but death and resurrection opened her field of perception beyond what was possible and she woke up in her new body with immense psychic abilities. Although not a keshin, she began to develop divination abilities, dreaming of the future, making predictions without even being aware of it.

She predicted the Kuro Incident, the awakening of the ujigami and the attempt on her father's life. But despite her warnings, the Shi-Tenno, the Furinkazan and the Ruby Ribbons could not stop the plans of the Magagoto and his henchmen.

Today she heads a group of priestesses, young miko with clairvoyant gifts, who support the Emperor from a secure



underground temple under the Shin-Heian palace. Able to master the powers of the Yata-No-Kagami, Ise's sacred mirror, Mako can enter into mental communication with the keshin to guide them and support them in their war.

SUSANOO NO MIKOTO

The God of Storms almost died after a four-year duel inside a kekkai filled with dark and putrid Taint. Complacent after years of solitude and inactivity at the heart of Izumo, his body was withered, his will faltering, his wrath appeased; and he was unable to defeat the Magagoto when it appeared. Banned from heaven and hell, Susanoo is the Guardian of Earth, charged with protecting the holy lands and men. However, despite all his strength and energy, he wasn't able to hide the secret of Ryugu when the claws of the Magagoto ripped into his mind to steal it from him.

The creature saw the forgotten island, the means of summoning it, and what it was hiding: the key, the eight-headed dragon Yamata-No-Orochi. Locked away in the ancient past by the power of Susanoo, the eight-headed monster kept the sword Kusanagi-No-Tsurugi, the only thing capable of breaking the seal locking the gates to Yomi.

When the island rose from the waters, the dragon from Ryugu flew to present his sword to the Magagoto. Susanoo is starting to feel his old wrath grow inside him again: a warrior wrath, so devastating that it might be enough, by itself, to break his chains, to cleave a path through the taint and escape.

DOUBLE LEAF SOCIETY

(see *Kuro*, pages 167-168)

Following the events of the past few years, this movement has gained a new lease of life. The first major change was the incarnation in its leader, Monzaemon Hirobumi, of his

prestigious ancestors Nobunaga Oda. More charismatic than ever, Hirobumi gathers around him a growing following, both of influential mortals and keshin. His goal is still to break the blockade, but also, increasingly, to ensure that the Yomi remains open. He is convinced that closing the gate will make the keshin disappear, taking with them much of his current power, and he opposes the Emperor and his followers at every turn.

Hirobumi fights oni and other creatures, of course, as long as he thinks he will gain from it; it's always good publicity. Publicly, his society is gradually leaving behind the secrecy it had lived in for more than a century; in the shadows, they're manoeuvring their henchmen into the highest spheres of Shin-Heian society. Watching for a sign of weakness in his rival Akihito, Hirobumi patiently bides his time and moves his pawns.

For the moment, the society is spread out evenly in Japan. Its representatives openly approach keshin and occultists and invite them into their ranks, offering sums that were generous even before the current crisis. Those who give in to their advances are entrusted with seemingly insignificant tasks, so most of them can only see a small part of the overall goal.

JIRO SHOGUN

"These macabre and until now unexplained phenomena reached their peak on the night of February 7th. The whole town resounded with metal grinding and inhuman screams. Upon our arrival, what we found was a whole street in ruins. Most of the inhabitants died and the rest couldn't give us a believable version of events. Unfortunately, the metal carcasses and the inhuman corpses tend to prove them right. At least the phenomena stopped..."

– Katsushiro Daibu, former police officer in Utsunomiya

Having acquired the powers of one of his prestigious ancestors (the shogun Tokugawa Ieyasu), Jiro has taken command of a colossal troop solely made up of synthetic beings. Although at first resistant, he now welcomes at his side a large number of onimachines, making up the bulk of his strike force. Supporting them, he has under his command a large and varied body of machines who have awakened since the Kuro Incident, from simple androids to dangerous demolitions engines.

Also among his ranks are those that chose to follow the mysterious Baty (*Makkura*, page 84), approaching humanity through the accumulation of templates. The android leader saw

in Jiro an important ally and hastened to offer him its aid. It brings to the Shogun faction its numerous skills concerning, among other things, overclocking.

In exchange, Jiro has agreed to make it a biological envelope worthy of it. Indeed, Baty's new ally is the only one who knows it is in fact an extremely advanced AI. While a human body would render it vulnerable, it aspires to nothing but being human.

Although his effectiveness is beyond any doubt, the biodroid Shogun's ethics are more debatable. He lost a great part of his humanity during his time outside a bodily envelope, and his new status as keshin is taxing him. A descendant of the shogun Tokugawa Ieyasu, he coldly plans his manoeuvres. He is not concerned about losses in his ranks – or among the citizenry – as long as his goals are attained. Leaving behind a bloody trail, Jiro advances, unfazed. His enemies among the creatures of Yomi may pose less of a threat than the enemies he has made among the keshin.

He still remains a strong faction that will doubtless play a part in the looming events.

SPIRIT HUNTERS

The Spirit Hunters are a group of seasoned occultists. Heading it is Yoshirou Haruki, who has practised sorcery

Setsubo

Although native to Yomi, this oni is opposed to the Magagoto. Indeed, his goal is to live, as much as possible, in harmony with the humans. In the ancient world, yokai and oni lived and thrived in Japan; nostalgic for those times, Setsubo and his allies try by any means to prevent the Taint from completely corrupting the world of humans.

Setsubo's position is hard to maintain. If he offers direct opposition, the Magagoto will destroy him; but humans and the keshin are little inclined to ally with tainted creatures. At the moment, then, they mainly limit themselves to information trading, as they stealthily build a force to be reckoned with.

since way before the Kuro Incident. Now he is powerful and respected, even gathering several colleagues around him. Pooling together their different fields of expertise, they offer their services to anyone and deal with all sorts of evil spirits. The hunters have recovered and charged occulttech tools from everywhere around the country. This group is made up of about ten people, answering please for help from the whole of Honshu.

Unable to keep up with the demand, they recruit massively, even directly training people with few of the relevant skills. Based in Nagoya, they have modified an old firehouse so they can have all necessary room. The basement in particular is devoted to storing the jars in which the captured spirits are kept; the security door is covered in powerful enchantments, and some fear the haunting voices that sing up from the stones on certain nights.

Besides requests from private individuals, Haruki leans heavily on a very reliable informant that he only contacts through mail, about whom he knows nothing. Information from the source has recently allowed them to strike hard at the forces of Yomi. The informant is, of course, an oni, seeking to weaken the forces of the Magagoto under orders of the entity Setsuko (see box).

TRACKERS

This is the name given to a band of fierce keshin-hunting oni. Through an elaborate information network, these evil beings track down the parents of keshin and Potentials to eliminate them, ensuring those kami cannot reincarnate. They also use these attacks to attract the attention of solitary keshin and isolate them so they can be more easily eliminated.

It's muttered darkly, in some corners, that the Trackers' information could only be gotten by other keshin, or even from people close to the Emperor.

Some of the keshin have obtained permission to leave their loved ones in Shin-Heian, while others take it on themselves to protect their kin directly, while waiting for a chance to strike back at the Trackers.

At the moment, the identities of those pulling the Trackers' strings is unknown, as is the true power of its members, and the place they hide.

Despite the mystery around this faction, it has managed, in a very short while, to become central to the war, attracting the passionate hatred of the keshin and their allies.



SPAWN OF YOMI

The first beings that left the Yomi-No-Kuni after the Kuro Incident were scouts, creatures slight enough to follow the kami through the fissure puncturing reality. Disorganised, chaotic, they were but a shadow of those that followed. After the arrival of Ryugu Island, the gates were thrown open: the 99 Oni of the Magagoto awoke and the greatest yokai were able to enter the visible world.

Dark reflections of the keshin, the most powerful monsters from Yomi have reserves of impure Ki, giving them access to terrible techniques and rituals of their own. Highly sensitive to holiness, evil spirits are affected by Purity the same way keshin are hindered by Taint, each point blocking a point of their Ki reserve; and if a being from the land of the dead is subjected to Purity points exceeding its total Ki reserve, it is immediately blasted into nothingness. Conversely, entering a tainted place increases their reserve and considerably improves their abilities.

Monsters with a Ki reserve can raise the Zanshin, perform Kokyū-Ryoku and take Ki Actions, just like the keshin.

It is possible to group all supernatural creatures, whether oni, obake or yokai, into five general categories:

- **Oni-Daimyo:** One of the Magagoto's 99 Oni. A unique, super-powered creature acting directly under the Dark Emperor of Izumo.
- **Oni-Musha:** A unique creature, legendary and super-powerful, very often the right-hand creature of one of the 99 Oni.
- **Oni-Hatamoto:** A powerful, colossal creature, one of many that came out of the Yomi at the moment of the island's rise. Some serve the Magagoto, but some simply wander the archipelago, indulging in their bestiality.

- **Oni-Ashigaru:** One of the weaker monsters, the scouts and the bulk of the troops. The creatures in Kuro fall in this category.
- **Ronin:** A spirit in the service of neither Purity nor Taint, who has likely lived among humans for an eternity, such as a tengu or kitsune. Most have become independent since the disappearance of their supposed master, Nurarihyon, several centuries ago.

KOI-YASHA

Type: Oni-Hatamoto

An iridescent blade or sail, rising through the earth, slashing with blinding speed and withdrawing: until it is ready to strike, this is as much you will ever see of a Koi-Yasha. A monstrous, 8-metre long carp that swims through the ground as a fish does water, when it finally breaks the surface, a demonic face with blood-chilling red eyes a gaping mouth filled with three rows of lethally sharp teeth fills your world. Its thick, scaly hide is proof against anything short of a mini bolt cannon, in the second or so before it dives back into the earth or rock. Wooden boards, concrete or metal pin the Koi-Yasha beneath the ground, and as such it generally avoids cities, although there are testimonies of bloody attacks perpetrated in outlying districts of Shin-Edo. Despite its size, a Koi-Yasha is astonishingly quick, and as soon as it catches its prey, seizing it in its powerful jaws, it drags it into the ground where it can feast at its leisure.

Blind in the dark earth, the Koi-Yasha hunts by vibrations, sensing movement from hundreds of metres, finding its prey even by the beating of their hearts. Its only true weak spot is

in the middle of its face, where the scales end; even its eyes are protected, under thick eyelids that close instinctively at the moment the Koi-Yasha strikes.

Characteristics:

DEX 6	STR 9	STA 7	REF 6
INT 3	PER 5	CHA 3	WIL 4

Secondary Characteristics:

HIT 90	SW 30	DT -30	
DEF 34	ACT 3	MOV 9	REA 7

Combat Skills:

Hand to Hand: 17

General Skills:

Athletics 15
Burrowing 20
Deception
Sneaking 8

Powers:

- Natural Armour 10
- It uses the equivalent of the “*Become a Rampart*” ritual of the Okuden technique to further reinforce the toughness of its body. Level 10

AYAKASHI

Type: Oni-Hatamoto

This slender sea monster can exceed a length of a hundred metres, in the largest specimens. A vast hybrid of eel, moray and boa constrictor, the ayakashi is fast for its size and can survive for about four hours out of water, where the foul secretions from its skin allow it to slither as fast as it does in water. The blackish, mephitic fluid – exuding the Taint that flows in its veins and grants it life – is corrosive to body and spirit both. The monster is both a predator and a corruptor, spreading Taint wherever it goes.

The Aakashi lays its eggs in clutches of about a dozen in the water, where they are surrounded by a film of pure Taint. When the eggs hatch, the newly born Ayakashi measures about 30 cm long for 5 cm of diameter. Independent from birth, the monster tends to hunt in swarms until it reaches 3 metres long, in about its fourth year of existence. Thus far, no eggs have hatched in the waters around the archipelago, but who knows how many are waiting in the shallows?

As adults, Ayakashi hunt alone, forming packs only if a prey proves to be tough. They communicate with one another through shrieks painful to the ears. In combat, an Ayakashi tends to wrap around its opponent, poisoning and crushing it, to devour at its leisure. Despite its length and diameter – the longest are up to one metre thick – it can reach a surprising turn of speed both in the water and on the ground.

Characteristics:

DEX 5	STR 7	STA 6	REF 8
INT 3	PER 4	CHA 3	WIL 4

Secondary Characteristics:

HIT 80	SW 27	DT -27	
DEF 34	ACT 4	MOV 5	REA 8

(3 on the ground)

Combat Skills:

Hand to Hand: 13

General Skills:

Athletics: 11
Swimming: 22

Powers:

- Natural weapon (fangs 3D6+2 – the first wound causes 3 Taint points to the victim, the next ones just 1 point).
- Invulnerability

KUBUKAJIRI

Type: Oni-Musha

Most feared in isolated communities in the mountains, Kubukajiri has been seen in the suburbs of Shin-Edo since the Kuro Incident. Measuring nearly 2.50 metres high and weighing around 250 kg, the creature’s body is covered in long dark hairs like an ape. His deeply sunken eyes show unspeakable bestiality and twisted intelligence by turns, and his large mouth contains a mass of twisted, blackened teeth, parting to reveal a long blood-red tongue. Colossally strong, Kubukajiri cracks open the skulls of his victims with his sharp talons and sucks out their brains and organs, dissolving them with his corrosive saliva and lapping at the contents. Most horrifyingly, he does not kill his victims, but replaces what he consumes with Taint, causing not death but a terrible animation. The poor devils become his macabre playthings, subject to deep and horrible mutations. He doesn’t have total control over them, but can command and influence them, turning them into violent servants.



The Kubukajiri is fast, despite his size, and his long arms and razor talons are quick to lacerate anyone within reach. His thick skin offer effective protection against blades and small projectiles. He doesn't hesitate to attack in broad daylight, but prefers to hunt in places where his targets are isolated; he has been known to attack groups, but depends on the aid of his previous victims to distract and weaken his prey.

Characteristics:

DEX 6	STR 7	STA 7	REF 5
INT 5	PER 7	CHA 5	WIL 6
KI 20			

Secondary Characteristics:

HIT 100	SW 34	DT -34	
DEF 32	ACT 3	MOV 6	REA 8

Combat Skills:

Hand to Hand: 15
Brawling: 18

General Skills:

Athletics: 10
Dodge: 15
Deception
Sneaking: 6
Investigation
Searching 3
Survival: 3

Powers:

- Natural weapon (talons 5D6+1 – causes 2 Taint points per wound)
- Invulnerability
- Horror 10

ODAKU

Type: Oni-Musha

This creature didn't come out of the Yomi, but was born out of the events following the Kuro Incident.

His home is in a vast landfill in Ota ward, where for decades toxic waste was piled high. Chance had it that a creature of Yomi, broken in one of the first battles, lay dying there, releasing its taint little by little and contaminating the place. From the union of the refuse and the Taint was born a crawling chaos, a formless, terrifying creature: the Odaku.

He moves slowly on the ground, a huge, disgusting slug, leaving a vile, acidic trail in its wake; but who would be mad enough to hunt this monstrosity? The Odaku attacks any living thing, sensing his prey through the heat it issues.

In battle, the Protean creature generates any limbs he needs, from tentacles covered in metal blades to heavy pseudopods made of putrefying flesh, tipped with cracked screens or motorbike engines. He doesn't have a distinctive head – although he can create one if need be – but at the centre of his perpetually mutating body is a circular mouth about a metre of diameter, ringed with hundreds of teeth like little sharp stakes.

A turbulent mass in constant flux, the Odaku is hard to hurt; moreover, it can regenerate, by swallowing whatever it finds in its way, objects or creatures. Only powerful spells can destroy it.

The Odaku has but one goal: destroy and swallow all it finds in its way. Its only purpose is to annihilate life.

Characteristics:

DEX 4	STR 8	STA 8	REF 4
INT 3	PER 4	CHA 5	WIL 4
KI 25	(infrared vision)		

Secondary Characteristics:

HIT 100	SW 33	DT -33	
DEF 24	ACT 2	MOV 4	REA 6

Combat Skills:

Hand to Hand: 12

General Skills:

Athletics: 4

Powers:

- Invulnerability
- Natural armour 10
- It uses a variation of the *Organic Weapon* ritual of the Shinobi with limited duration. Level 10.

NEKOGUMO

Type: Oni-Musha

Long before you see this creature, you encounter his dolls, adorable little ningyo, about 40 cm tall, in their old-fashioned outfits. Sometimes there are hundreds of them appearing out of nowhere, almost immobile and silent; sometimes you spot just one or two, and hear a soft, malicious laugh, always behind you. They hound and harass, moving slowly if at all, striving to break their target's composure. Do not trust their innocent appearance; they are the eyes and ears of the Nekogumo. If you try to destroy them, they vanish for a few seconds, only to come back in greater numbers. They have no strength and can easily be pushed or thrown, but they reappear, again and again, until their master strikes.

As for the monster itself, no obstacle deters him: he and his dolls can pass through even the thickest walls. Once he has found and isolated his prey, the Nekogumo makes his horrifying appearance. A vast, cat-headed spider about 3 to 4 metres across, the Nekogumo sees perfectly well in the dark and has long fangs that cause excruciating wounds, although unlike true spiders, he cannot weave webs. The best way to kill it is to stab it through its abdomen, but to catch it by surprise, you must elude the vigilance of the dolls...

Characteristics:

DEX 6 POW 5 STA 4 REF 6
INT 3 PER 1 CHA 4 WIL 5

NB: The level of PER is increased by +3 when the dolls intervene
KI 35

Secondary Characteristics:

HIT 64 SW 22 DT -22
DEF 26 (32 if the dolls intervene) ACT 3
MOV 6 REA 7

Combat Skills:

Hand to Hand: 14

General Skills:

Athletics: 9

Powers:

- Natural Weapon (fangs 4D6+2 – causes 1 Taint point per wound)
- Insubstantial
- Invulnerable

YOSHIMITSU

Type: Oni-Daimyo

Yoshimitsu is a robot, a painstaking recreation of the samurai of old, built by the gifted designer and history buff Matsunaga Masahide. In these troubled times, he wanted to have a bodyguard to protect him from all the dangers he saw endlessly repeated in the media. A true masterpiece, the replica was constructed entirely from one of the most resistant alloys and equipped with the deadliest combat templates. A frightening mask serves as a face, a katana and a wakizashi of the same alloy hang from its belt. Alas, this extremely sophisticated machine attracted the attention of one of the oni of the Magagoto, who took it over before eliminating its creator with a single blow of his sword.

Now Yoshimitsu spreads terror, death and Taint in the back alleys of Yokohama. The onimachine is a formidable warrior, with a complete mastery of swordplay and of impure Ki. He can instantly teleport behind his enemy in battle, strengthen and transform his armoured chassis, and even fly for a few metres. Combined with his natural speed, boosted with Ki, these gifts ensure that few who cross its path survive to talk about it. However, in the great tradition of Bushido, this onimachine does not attack unarmed humans, as if the oni was really a samurai...

This terrifying opponent is one of the 99 demons the keshin must eliminate in order to close the gates of Yomi.

Characteristics:

DEX 8 STR 7 STA 10 REF 9
INT 8 PER 8 CHA 8 WIL 8
Ki 60

Secondary Characteristics:

HIT 140 SW 47 DT -47
DEF 50 ACT 5 MOV 8 REA 13

Combat Skills:

Hand to Hand: 20
Martial Arts: 25
Melee: 15
Sword: 25

General Skills:

Athletics: 14
Dodge: 25
Deception: 10
Investigation: 10

Powers:

- * Swords: 5D6+1
- * Invulnerable
- * Horror 10
- Uses a technique similar to “*Master space ritual*” of the Katatagae technique, as well as the “*Render my blade merciless*” ritual of the Okuden technique. He also uses the “*Infernal Armour*” ritual of the Shinobi technique. The whole has a level of 10
- Kekkai (he can make the barrier impure following the same rules as for Purity described in the “*Weave a dimensional barrier*” ritual) – Level 15

SHUTEN DOJI

Type: Oni-Daimyo

This gigantic six-metre-tall oni, weighing more than half a ton, is the embodiment of brute, bestial strength. His red face has a permanent predatory grin that makes the bravest of warriors hesitate. Long hair cascades down his large shoulders from the five horns on his forehead, and he has fifteen eyes. His limbs are different colours: the right arm is yellow while the left arm is blue, the right leg white and the left leg black. The muscled torso is the same bright red as the face. He wears at his ankles and wrists the remains of the chains that, if you believe the legends, held him for centuries. His sole concession to clothing is a tattered loincloth reaching to mid-thigh, tied under his heavy belly by a thick rope where you can see human skulls and half-dismembered bodies gesticulating horribly with his movements.

Now the Shuten Doji stalks southern Japan looking for humans to feast on, devouring their tender flesh both cooked and raw. Encountering him on a back street, on a corner hidden from sight, one will find him sitting cross-legged near a great fire, roasting a still-living, screaming victim on a spit, sniggering cruelly. This oni has an almost unequalled strength, and fights most often with his bare hands, ripping off limbs and heads, but sometimes he summons a huge jet-black kanabo out of the air, disturbing reflections flickering in its obsidian surfaces.

His greatest weakness is his relative slowness; a canny warrior will strike from behind or to try to blind him. But beware if his fists or heavy kanabo fall on you... Sometimes, with no apparent reason, he leaves his opponent for dead and wanders off.

The Shuten Doji is part of the army of the 99 Oni.



Characteristics:

DEX 6 STR 12 STA 12 REF 5
INT 6 PER 5 CHA 8 WIL 8
KI 50

Secondary Characteristics:

HIT 160 SW 54 DT -54
DEF 36 ACT 3 MOV 6 REA 10

Combat Skills:

Hand to Hand: 12
Melee: 11
Kanabo: 21

General Skills:

Athletics: 11
Dodge: 15

Powers:

- Horror 15
- Invulnerability
- Uses a ritual very similar to “*Summon an ancestral blade*” ritual of the Okuden technique to make a Kanabo entirely made of impure Ki appear (level 15).
- Kekkai (he can render the barrier impure using the same rules for Purity described in the ritual “*Weave a dimensional barrier*”) – level 10
- His aura generates 1D6 points of background Taint.

KASHU

Type: Oni-Musha

A magnificent woman with long silky hair falling delicately on her back, intense black eyes too hard to look into for any length of time, sensually wrapped in a night-blue kimono: that is how you first see the Kashu. The true fascination she causes is not so in her beauty but her voice; soft, appeasing, warm and enchanting, it lulls you, moves you, transports you.

The Kashu often passes herself off as a singer so she can move throughout the country in all tranquillity. Her exceptional beauty opens doors in the most exclusive homes. What Genocrat would not be overjoyed and flattered to spend a few hours with such a woman?

Alas, the dream body hides a nightmare creature. The Kashu is a formidable predator, using her apparent charms to

approach her victims, who she ensnares with her magical voice, immobilising them. There is no protection from her sorcerous vocalisations, which can paralyse or kill, and pierce even the best auditory protections. Frozen, at the mercy of the Kashu, the prey watches as the monster’s face distends, her skin stretching in all directions, the bones of her skull cracking to become a huge, purulent vertical mouth filled with sharp yellow teeth. Her body grows and her neck widens, until she is able to swallow the poor victim.

Characteristics:

DEX 5 STR 4 STA 4 REF 5
INT 5 PER 6 CHA 8 WIL 7
KI 20

Secondary Characteristics:

HIT 75 SW 25 DT -25
DEF 32 ACT 3 MOV 5 REA 9

Combat Skills:

Hand to Hand: 3

General Skills:

Athletics 5
Communication 7
 Music (Singing) 30
 Seduction 23
Deception 4
 Sneaking 8
Drive 3
Investigation 5
Contacts 4

Powers:

- Mimic
- Invulnerability
- She uses the “*Generate a burst of pure energy*” ritual of the Kuji-Kiri technique to cause great damage at range by mixing her voice with tainted Ki (level 10).

KANIBOZU

Type: Oni-Hatamoto

Kanibozu are gigantic red crabs, their bodies 3 metres long a metre wide, reaching to almost 8 metres when they rise on their mighty legs. The left pincer is a little over a metre long and



very thin, serving as a piercing, slashing sword; the right one is massive and measures nearly two metres long, used as a giant hammer or to crush and squeeze their victims. The monstrous crabs prowl near the sea, leaving the water from time to time to go hunting, bringing their human victims to rot away in underwater caves. Kanibozu delight in attacking passing boats, sinking them to better devour the sailors on board. There are many stories told by seasoned seamen of losing comrades to a kanibozu attack.

Like natural crabs, kanibozu move sideways on the ground, but at an impressive speed for their size. They generally hunt alone, but there are rumours of kanibozu hordes attacking isolated harbours in the south, which have since been lost from contact.

A kanibozu's carapace is immensely tough, and surrounded by large spikes, which they use to batter and destroy walls and barriers.

Characteristics:

DEX 5	STR 7	STA 9	REF 6
INT 3	PER 5	PRE 5	WIL 5
KI 10			

Secondary Characteristics:

HIT 115	SW 39	DT -39	
DEF 32	ACT 3	MOV 5	REA 7

Combat Skills:

Hand to Hand: 9
Pincers: 22

General Skills:

Athletics: 9

Powers:

- Natural armour 15
- Natural weapons (pincers 4D6+3)
- Horror 10

OKAMI-OTOKO

Type: Oni-Ashigaru

Two red points in the night fixated on a prey not yet aware of the tragic fate that awaits it, lurking in the dark. A silhouette nearly 3 metres high and 3 long, a muscled body covered in a

thick fur dark as night, suddenly jumps. White fangs flash in the moonlight before piercing skin, rending flesh and breaking bones. Then a foul whistle, mixed with a sinister howling. The okami-otoko has struck again.

These huge, black wolves are formidable hunters, capable of tracking their victims for kilometres before pouncing with lightning speed. They are peerless fighters, with frightening, powerful jaws capable of piercing the strongest armour. But okami-otoko are more than wolves; their eyes are filled with a hatred that no fountain of blood could quench. Each beast has two large venomous snakes for tails, which act independently from the rest of the body.

Okami-otoko are very quick, and can leap vast distances. An excellent swimmer, they see as well in the light as in utter darkness.

Creatures of the forests and hills, okami-otoko have lately appeared in the cities where food abounds and hunting is almost too easy...

Characteristics:

DEX 6	STR 7	STA 6	REF 8
INT 4	PER 7	CHA 7	WIL 7
KI 20			

Secondary Characteristics:

HIT 95	SW 32	DT -32	
DEF 472	ACT 4	MOV 6	REA 10

Combat Skills:

Hand to Hand: 8
Claws: 21
Bite: 24

General Skills:

Athletics 11
Deception
Sneaking 9
Survival
Forests 11

Powers:

- Natural Weapon (Fangs 3D6+2 – Claws 3D6+1 – the snake-headed tails produce a venom with 12 Virulence – a Stamina Test must be made at each new turn in order not to suffer from 1D6 damage and a Taint Point. This effect lasts for 1D6 turns.)
- Horror 10

FUKASHI NO ZANSHI

Type: Oni-Musha

A body risen in the air jerks in a macabre dance, dismembered and slowly chewed by an unseen culprit. Jets of blood disappear as if swallowed by an unseen mouth. A hoarse voice laughs in the shadows, its bloody meal finally over. The monster is invisible to most humans, although that may be more comforting than seeing the creature's deformed body, which looks like a grotesque parody of an obese human, the belly dragging on the ground, almost too heavy for its four legs. The huge head balances atop the bloated torso, one sole eye squinting above a leering mouth wide enough to swallow animals whole; the Fukashi No Zanshi is not too demanding about the nature – or freshness – of the meat. His six muscular arms literally tear his victims apart like sheets of paper. In spite of his enormous weight, nearly one ton, the monster drags itself with little noise.

Near-simultaneous attacks have been reported in several Osaka districts, suggesting there is more than one of these obscenities. Unless, of course, there are other creatures capable of moving unseen by common mortals.

A keshin's best tactic for fighting the Fukashi No Zanshi would be to find a ritual to render him visible, if only for a few moments.

Characteristics:

DEX 4	STR 8	STA 6	REF 4
INT 4	PER 5	CHA 5	WIL 7

Secondary Characteristics:

HIT 95	SW 32	DT -32	
DEF 26	ACT 2	MOV 4	REA 8

Combat Skills:

Hand to Hand: 11

Powers:

- Natural weapon (teeth 3D+1)
- Invulnerable
- Horror 10
- It actually uses a modified version of the "Shadow walk" ritual of the Shinobi technique which is permanently active.

HIRYU

Type: Oni-Musha

A string of child disappearances have dominated headlines in the Shin-Edo press in recent days, thought to be the work of a lone predator, or perhaps an organized ring. In truth, blame lies not with a human, but a monster escaped from Yomi to feed in our reality.

The Hiryu is a flying beast, about 7 metres long, with the wings and the talons of a giant eagle and the scaly body of a dragon. The head and neck are those of a giant snake with a long forked tongue and fangs filled with venom, and his keen eyes can pick out his prey at a long distance. Nesting in a cave high in the mountains, the Hiryu flies to settled areas to hunt, seizing the human children that are his preferred prey in his powerful claws and takes them to his lair to feed at leisure. His great size keeps him out of the close streets and high towers in the heart of the city, but it hunts freely in the suburbs and surrounding towns.

Tough and extraordinary fast when flying, the Hiryu is a hard target. Any keshin should seek to bring him to ground to fight.

In combat, the monster fights with talons and fangs, diving from the air to rend and grab. If cornered, it will depend on its paralytic bite.

Characteristics:

DEX 7	STR 6	STA 6	REF 8
INT 4	PER 9	CHA 7	WIL 7
KI 20			

Secondary Characteristics:

HIT 95	SW 32	DT -32
DEF 48	ACT 4	MOV 7 in flight and 3 on the ground
REA 10		

Combat Skills:

Hand to Hand 3
Talons: 21

General Skills:

Athletics: 5
Flight: 26



Powers:

- Natural weapons (Talons 4D6+1 – Fangs 3D6 – the latter produce a venom with 16 Virulence similar to the toxin “Lightning” – see *Kuro*, page 110)
- Horror 10

YBAO-KUNI

Type: Oni-Ashigaru

Ybao-kuni are amphibious humanoid creatures measuring 2.20 metres, entirely covered in thick green scales. Excellent swimmers, these monsters are equally at ease out of water, although if they stay out of water more than a day they start to dehydrate, their skin flaking in the air. Their hands end in long, terrible claws.

The sea monster have triangular faces pierced by gills, lipless, toothless mouths and its large protruding eyes.

An ybao-kuni feeds by sucking the blood of its victims like the vampires in European legends. Seizing its victim,

the monster extends a red, fleshy feeding tube, which fixes to the skin like a lamprey’s mouth and feeds until the corpse is completely emptied. The merman’s flesh and eyes take on a pinkish tint for several minutes after feeding.

Ybao-kuni usually hunt at sea or on the coast, but increasingly, of late, they have dared advance inland, finding refuge in rivers and stretches of fresh water, including the northern artificial lakes.

In combat they close quickly to hand to hand combat, slashing with their claws and trusting to their thick, scaly hide to protect them.

Ybao-kuni are particularly sensitive to fire and heat, against which their natural armour offers little protection.

Characteristics:

DEX 8	STR 6	STA 6	REF 7
INT 4	PER 7	CHA 8	WIL 7
KI 15			

Secondary Characteristics:

HIT 95	SW 32	DT -32	
DEF 44	ACT 4	MOV 8	REA 9

Combat Skills:

Hand to Hand: 12
Brawling: 15

General Skills:

Athletics 12
Swimming 19
Deception
Sneaking 11

Powers:

- Natural weapon (Claws 3D6+2)
- Horror 10
- Invulnerable
- Vulnerable (Fire)
- Ybao-kuni use the “*Become a rampart*” ritual of the Okuden technique to reinforce their scales (level 10).

TODOMEKI

Type: Oni-Musha

Female in form, the Todomeki has long black hair almost to the ground and yellow skin so pale it looks white at first glance. She only comes out at night, as light pains her: her body is covered with a hundred eyes that see all around her, and bright light, especially daylight, overwhelms them.

Thus the Todomeki is a creature of the night, hunting women and children in the shadows, dressed in an dark, voluminous, hooded robe. She lures her victims into the shadows and then lunges, claws extended, cutting and tearing. Her goal is simple: to pluck out the victim’s eyes; trophy claimed, she most often leaves her unfortunately prey for dead. Sometimes she eats their viscera, or tortures them, especially if they put up a decent fight. In that case, she holds off removing the eyes until the last moment. Having collected her grisly trophy, she presses the eyes into her skin and absorbs them. At first they form blind, milky-white protuberances, which eventually split, blink and move as if animated with a new life. They then join the eyes dotting its slender body.

Characteristics:

DEX 7	STR 3	STA 4	REF 5
INT 4	PER 8 (*)	CHA 6	WIL 6
KI 20			

* except in strong and/or sudden light

Secondary Characteristics:

HIT 70	SW 24	DT -24	
DEF 40	ACT 3	MOV 7	REA 8

Combat Skills:

Hand to Hand: 6
Claws: 12

General Skills:

Athletics 6
Deception
Sneaking 15

Powers:

- Natural weapon (Claws 3D6+1 – 1 Taint point per inflicted wound)
- Invulnerable
- Horror 10
- Vulnerability (Light)

OMUKADE

Type: Oni-Hatamoto

Insectoid monsters measuring up to 20 metres long, omukade resemble vast, aggressive centipedes. They spend much of their time underground, digging complex networks of galleries, provoking landslides and rock falls on the surface; when they get hungry, they rise to the surface to butcher the populace before returning to their tunnels. They appear as if from nowhere, destroying homes and snatching up humans as they go; reports tell of whole villages devastated by the limitless destructive appetite of an omukade. The monsters have an uncommon turn of speed even underground, shaking the earth like a train passing underfoot. In battle they raise themselves up to crush their hapless victims under fifteen tons of chitin and flesh, and their terrible jaws can cut grown men in half, armour and all.

An omukade’s chitinous body resists even the best artillery, but its legs are more fragile.

Characteristics:

DEX 7	STR 10	STA 10	REF 6
INT 2	PER 4	CHA 7	WIL 8
KI 20			



Secondary Characteristics:

HIT 140 SW 47 DT -47
DEF 34 ACT 3 MOV 7 REA 8

Combat Skills:

Hand to Hand: 9

Brawling: 17

General Skills

Athletics: 5

Powers:

- Natural Weapon (Jaw 5D6+2)
- Natural Armour 20
- Horror 10
- Causes 2 Taint points in its path

KITSUNE

Type: Ronin

Like the tengu, these immortal shape-changing foxes have lived beside humans for millennia. Cohabitation has been a challenge over the generations, but in these troubled times, the kitsune have chosen a side, fighting the creatures from Yomi and the Taint.

Originally, the fox-spirits were messengers of the deity Inari, but they have long made their talents as magicians available to the world of men. They see themselves as the guardians of the balance between purity and Taint, but recent events have forced them to abandon their neutrality and help the keshin as best they can.

The time when rain and sun combined to celebrate their weddings is past; now is the time to struggle for the survival of humanity in a world of technology and horror, where every human life is a precious thing.

The kitsune once preferred to mingle with humans by transforming into women, usually very beautiful and versed in the arts; over centuries of dealing with humans, the older and most powerful among them learned to prefer the shape of a man. Their true nature is revealed by the barking of a dog, breaking the transformation spell, but the oldest kitsune have greater mastery of the art of transformation and are immune to this effect.

Long practice has taught them to perfectly master all the subtleties of Ki, making them experts in all the magical techniques of the onmyoji, and valuable allies.

Besides their esoteric talents, kitsune are also competent fighters, handling the katana as easily as the shockgun. Some of them have been legendary samurai, and the younger pups are excited by the idea of facing the oni.

Among the kitsune lurks a darker species whose intentions towards human are far less benign: the nogitsune, with not one but nine tails, but even some of these have, from time to time, adopted the cause of the humans.

Statistics given here are those of a kitsune in the prime of life, power and abilities vary a lot. Generally the oldest are the strongest.

Characteristics:

DEX 6 STR 3 STA 4 REF 5
INT 7 PER 6 CHA 7 WIL 6
KI 60

Secondary Characteristics:

HIT 70 SW 24 DT -24
DEF 34 ACT 3 MOV 6 REA 9

Combat skills:

Archaic missile weapons 11	Sneaking 13
Hand to hand 11	Drive 6
Heavy weapons 3	Popular culture 3
Firearms 9	Spiritual 15
Melee 12	Legends 19
Throwing weapons 10	Mythology 18
Academic skills	Occult 20
Humanities 10	Shinto 20
Natural sciences 7	Theology 18
General skills	Survival 7
Athletics 11	First aid 9
Communication 12	Watercraft 3
Empathy 15	Contacts 4
Deception 8	

Powers:

- Shape change
- Mimic
- Invulnerable
- Kitsune have Ki and can, thanks to their vast powers, master all mystical technique an onmyoji can use. Level 12



HIKARI

INTRODUCTION

This first scenario for *Tensei* begins immediately after the end of *Kami*, the last story of the *Makkura* campaign. Its purpose is to allow players to continue their adventures as their investigators are called on by the ujigami and become keshin; new player characters can also join the campaign. As a Gamemaster, if you chose to begin playing *Tensei* without first running *Kuro* or *Makkura*, you can also run this as the players' first adventure.

SYNOPSIS

The characters wake up after the opening of the Yomi-No-Kuni, finding out that their ujigami ancestors have given them powers. They will face off the psychic soldiers of the Ghost project, the gigantic dragon Yamata-no-Orochi haunting Tokyo bay and a panicky population, and render aid to the God of Storms, Susanoo. The god, having managed to escape from Izumo shrine, has tried to join with the Emperor, but was unaware of his departure to Shin-Heian. Aided by the priests of Yushima Shrine, Akishino Mako and an extravagant otaku called Goblin Shark, the characters will have their work cut out for them to stop the Ghost programme and defeat the eight-headed dragon.

After a monumental combat inside the Tokyo Dome, the keshin may be able to temporarily take control of Shin-Edo and overthrow the influence of the Tomoe Jigoku, hidden behind the New Komeito.


LEAVING DARKNESS

Any characters who survived *Makkura* wake up on the beach of Ryugu Island, where they washed up after the events of *Kami*. Any others – including any new characters or onimachines – will regain consciousness at the heart of Shin-Edo, after the ujigami gifted them with powers. They may be inhabitants of the megalopolis or simply tourists passing through, having travelled to see their families, friends, or for more personal reasons. Like those who made the trip to the forgotten island, they too were called by their ancestors at the very moment the red storm rose. After having accepted “death” – their destiny – they lost consciousness.

If one of your players has refused his fate, rejecting his ujigami, he remained an ordinary human and has awoken with no memory of his ancient past. Unless, of course, you have decided otherwise.

Ryugu

The characters rise from sleep – and the darkness into which they were plunged – several hours later, lying on the black sand of Ryugu Island. They are in the custody of a small team of Chinese soldiers, who arrived on the island just after the characters received their ujigami, shortly before the archipelago was surrounded by an impassable kekka. Patrolling Shin-Edo bay aboard a motorboat with a Stealth hull, they were among the first to investigate this new Japanese territory, thinking



to find secret weapons. Unfortunately, all they have found is a frightening island with a strange temple, a few drowned corpses of Ruby Ribbon soldiers and a group of sleeping men and women who've evidently taken a severe beating. The elderly people possessed by the demonic Ika-Zuchi-No-Kami are on the beach with the players, still unconscious.

As their heads clear and the gravity of their situation sinks in, the characters clearly feel the spirits of the ujigami, now truly a part of themselves. They see that the sky has become terrifying, filled with huge sombre clouds spewing torrential rain and chain lightning. Across the waves, a titanic typhoon seems to attack Shin-Edo; the wind is so violent on Ryugu they struggle just to stand.

But more than anything, the keshin understand how the world has changed. Yomi-No-Kuni is opened. They can feel the far away aura of Izumo and the still-unexplained magical barrier now surrounding the archipelago. Something huge and extremely powerful is about to fly in their direction.

The commandos are uncertain and tense, keeping them at gunpoint and forcing them to move into the temple for shelter. Their leader, Lieutenant Lee Wang Leung, is terse and inflexible; even if one of the characters speaks Chinese, the soldiers will make no effort at diplomacy.

They may decide to use their newly acquired keshin abilities to neutralise the soldiers cleanly, protecting the humans around them. The players should have access to their ujigami sheets, to the Humanity Gauge, their Ki and magical techniques; disarming the commandos should be straightforward. Killing them, of course, will bring Taint to the characters. These soldiers are innocent men performing their duty.

If they co-operate – or, having defeated the soldiers, decide to explore the temple anyway – further danger awaits them inside. The façade of the huge, stone, seven-storied pagoda is dulled by age and the elements, but carvings of horrible faces can still be made out. The building is inhuman, vast and Cyclopean; men are as ants amid the titanic pillars. An average (12) Zanshin test reveals the overwhelming Taint within, evil and repellent. Actually entering the temple will inflict 30 Taint points, immediately expelling their ujigami. If they attempt to retreat, the soldiers – already nervous – become angry, threatening them with death if they don't advance.

Before the situation can escalate – before they enter, even if none of the keshin employ their Zanshin – an Ybao-kuni (page 108) jumps out of the pagoda and throws itself at the soldiers.

Their bullets pass harmlessly through its body, and it tears the soldiers to shreds before turning to the player characters (the Gamemaster may wish to spare Lieutenant Lee Wang Leung, to help them leave the accursed island). In the ensuing battle, the characters should have plenty of opportunity to bring their powers to bear for the first time, finally defeating the creature that was left behind to watch the lair of the Yamata-No-Orochi.

A few minutes later, a huge, terrifying shape appears in the sky and flies towards Ryugu. Yamata-No-Orochi, the eight-headed dragon, howls in the sky. Formed of water, wind and rain, it looks like a storm sculpture, its mouths spitting lightning, its wings and long body fashioned from clouds and vapour. Taint and raw power pour off it in waves, striking fear in the hearts of the characters. After having offered the sword it carried to the Magagoto, the great dragon was ordered to return to Shin-Edo and aid the Tomoe Jigoku.

The most obvious way off the island is the Chinese commandos' boat. The return to Shin-Edo is rough, but passes without incident, the shadow of the Yamata-no-Orochi appearing sometimes through the clouds, spitting typhoons onto the city.

Shin-Edo

Any characters who did not take part in the *Makkura* campaign awaken in Shin-Edo, whether at home – or a friend's home – or on the subway, in a shop or walking the streets: wherever they were at the moment their ujigami awakened their powers. Onimachines, hiding from the Ghost soldiers and creatures of Yomi, may find themselves forced to help humans in danger, pinned under rubble or trapped by fire.

The city is, if anything, more horrifying than the forgotten island. The New Komeito has launched the Ghost programme, a system of subliminal commands, turning 2% of the population into psychic assassins. Attracted by pure Ki, these soldiers – ordinary men, women and children – pursue all the enemies of the Tomoe Jigoku: Potentials, keshin, rebel onimachines and priests loyal to the Emperor. Innocent humans controlled by an unknown program, Ghost soldiers are the worst possible opponents for the characters: gifted with Zanshin sense and skilled with all weapons, but the heroes may not kill them without attracting Taint.

Visions

Early in the story, the characters will be subjected to two mysterious visions unrelated to each other:

- On the island, on the boat and for a while after arriving in the city, every reflective surface (window, mirror, puddle, car bonnet) shows a young brunette woman, about twenty years old, dressed in superb clothing in red and white, the colours of the miko. She tries to speak to them, but cannot make herself heard.

This will prove to be the mysterious Akishino Mako, trying to establish contact with the help of the sacred mirror Kagami; she will finally make contact with the players next chapter.

- A much more incongruous hallucination will appear sporadically in their field of vision, every time a character puts on a Gantai. A cartoonish, fluorescent green octopus appears in augmented reality, blinking like a kawaii manga animal and communicating in speech balloons: *Hello!, LOL, Are you looking for a friend?* and similar inanities. In all, it looks like one of the ubiquitous AR marketing campaigns, but persists throughout the following until the players engage with it (see *Goblin Shark*, page 116).

On the streets, the characters can feel both the opening of Yomi and the raising of the kekkaï, as their echoes ripple across the spirit world. They see the breath of Yamata-No-Orochi as it destroys the docks and harbours, projecting huge waves onto Odaiba and the districts nearer the bay. And everywhere, amidst the rain, the wind, the cold, the panic and the blackouts covering entire blocks, they will cross paths with white-eyed Ghost soldiers...



THE GOD FALLEN FROM HEAVEN

Once all characters are in Shin-Edo, draw their attention to the background tension. Streets are almost deserted, emergency services – chiefly robots – struggle to come to the aid of a beleaguered people. As the inhabitants flee, trying to escape the storm, paralysing the city and what's left of the road network, the keshin will see what others cannot: that the cataclysm is caused by the eight-headed dragon, that out the corners of the eyes, creatures from Yomi are infiltrating in Shin-Edo and gaining power. Make the players feel the fall, the descent of the city into nightmare. The Emperor has left – his absence is a ringing silence to them – and no one is left to repel the rain, the wind and the storms brought by the breath of Yamata-No-Orochi.

At a suitable moment, once the scene has been set, the characters will see Akishino Mako, and finally hear her words:

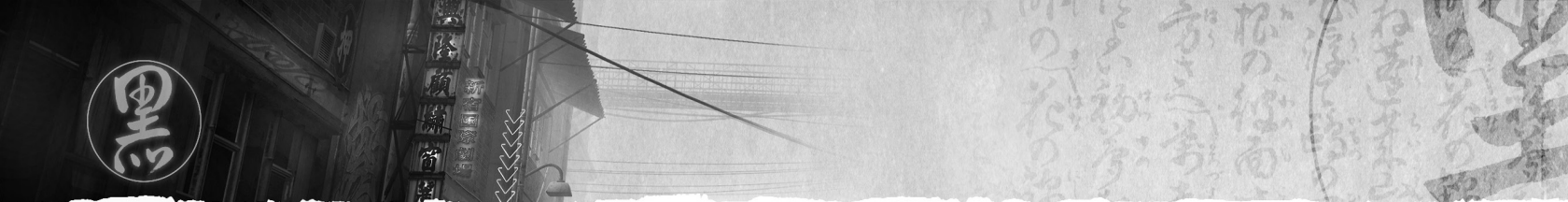
"Keshin, help me. Go immediately to the Edo Castle garden, save lives. We are all in danger!"

The Imperial Palace garden is located in Chiyoda Ward. Deserted since the Emperor's departure, it is protected by just one squad of police officers and a few Ruby Ribbon soldiers, assigned to closing off the place. The gardens themselves remain inaccessible. You are free to add other keshin for this mission, also contacted by Mako, as a way to introduce regular NPCs. Maybe Potentials that have crossed the PCs' path in the past?

Kokyo

The gardens, waving in the wind and the rainstorms, is weirdly quiet. Visibility is limited by the deluge, large puddles block some paths, the sculpted lanterns and carefully cut brushes swing to and fro in the gusting wind. The player characters explore the desolation with growing dread, but encounter no living creature other than fellow keshin summoned by the oracle.

Several minutes after they arrive, a monumental thunderclap shatters the silence. Lighting strikes the gardens right in their centre, sending a shockwave across the compound, digging a crater in the mud and blackening the surrounding trees despite the downpour. At the centre of the smoking crater lies a naked man of about sixty, body covered in bruises and streaked with



blood, curled in on himself and close to death. A profound aura of purity emanates from the fragile body. Susanoo-no-Mikoto has escaped Izumo by sacrificing the last of his strength.

Immediately after this thunderous arrival, more than thirty Ghost soldiers make their appearance, attracted by the purity of the place. Gaunt and mindless, they are armed with miscellaneous weapons like knives, lead pipes or the shattered limbs of androids.

Against such numbers, the keshin must run away; they cannot hope to resist them without killing them and suffering Taint. Susanoo, unconscious, can be carried from the gardens. Unfortunately, other Ghost soldiers await them outside, their bodies covered in blood and drenched in water, a horrific army of possessed, grimly determined humans.

Salvation comes in the form of a hover-van (with the logo of a lingerie brand) driven by Buntaro and Masao, two Shinto priests. Darting between the psychic soldiers and the characters, they stop right in front of them, asking them to come aboard.

"Come with us if you want to live!"

Explaining they were sent by Mako, the priests drive the characters to Yushima shrine.

Yushima Tenjin (Purity 10)

Located near Ueno, in Bunkyo Ward, Yushima shrine is consecrated to scholars and to the spirits of intelligence; in particular, that of Sugawara Michizane, a poet and politician of the Heian Era. Through the years, this temple, known for its magnificent plum trees, has become a place of contemplation for students from the surrounding universities. In their hundreds, they come each year to seek the favour of the kami of intelligence, writing their prayers into ema asking for luck in their exams.

Buntaro and Masao are two of the priests in charge of maintaining the shrine, abandoned since Ryugu Island rose from the waters. With extreme respect and reverence, they take the characters and Susanoo to a room at the top of one of the three buildings in the shrine, entirely built of wood. The keshin can feel the purity of the place, cleansing them of Taint as they enter.

They arrive in a warm, well-lit space divided by several paper partitions. Buntaro and Masao tend to Susanoo, leading him to a room filled with medical equipment. In the main room, located under the frames supporting the pagoda-like ceiling, the characters can see the portraits of their ujigami, as statues or paintings over altars. A magnificent Universal Memory computer with moving, bluish organic processors fills the room with a soft light. Called Kan Shojo, the nickname of Sugawara Michizane, the machine is a source of vast knowledge, connected to several flexible screens hanging from the walls.

Eventually the frail silhouette of Akishino Mako appear at the centre of the room through a holographic projection. She speaks in a measured, thoughtful way, suggesting wisdom and maturity that belies her apparent youth. With good reason: although her new cloned body has the appearance of a young girl, her mind is that of a 40-year-old woman. After introducing herself, she thanks the characters and explains the situation:

"The Yomi-No-Kuni has been opened in the Izumo region, and we're unsure why. Creatures have escaped from there and disappeared throughout the archipelago. My grandfather, Emperor Akihito, has left for Kyoto and turned it into the new capital. It is now called Shin-Heian. He used its strategic position and the sacred Magatama in the palace treasury to repel the Taint and contain it, drawing on powers granted by Amaterasu. He has surrounded our country with a kekkai, a barrier, in order to imprison the beings from Yomi.

"Keshin, I thank you for your efforts and your struggle against the dark forces arranged against us. This shrine is now your sanctuary; you can make it your headquarters if you wish. The priests are here to help you. The man you have rescued is of great importance. Hide him, heal him, take good care of him until I can join you. We must face the attacks of the Ghost soldiers, which are drawn to the aura of the Emperor, complicating the task of the keshin protecting the other cities. Like them, I solemnly ask you to find a means to end that spell, to free the citizens still possessed by this device, which we know nothing about. We are all hunting, in the cities and in the districts, for a cure for this Ghost illness."

Mako finally vanishes, promising to arrive soon to heal the wounded man, whose identity she does not reveal.

Sheltered from the storm, the characters have all the time they need to rest and heal their wounds. Outside, the eight-headed dragon never ceases to vomit its venomous winds.

Buntaro and Masao

The two devoted priests are 25 and 53, respectively. If Masao is a rather dull traditionalist sage, his partner is a young eccentric who wears modern clothes. They are both entertaining and useful, having much mystical and technical knowledge. Totally devoted to the cause of the Emperor and the keshin, they regard the holy soldiers as living gods and will do anything to help them. Their IQ seems particularly high. The influence of Yushima shrine, perhaps?

GHOST HUNT

In this part of the scenario, the characters investigate the origins of the Ghost programme in order to find a solution to it. As they do, they'll be updated on the mysterious man who fell with the lightning, of whom they know nothing. Treated by the priests, his condition stabilises, although he remains in a coma.

Investigations

It's difficult to know where to begin; Ghost struck everywhere, all at once, and overwhelmed Japan's defenders. However, with the help of the database in Kan Shojo and by retracing the course of events, the characters may discover the following facts:

- The effects of the Ghost programme were triggered during the televised speech by Abe Kaemon, the leader of the New Komeito, after seizing power. Watching this speech again, and analysing it thoroughly in a computer program, reveals that a second signal was broadcast alongside it: a wave-pattern awakening an unknown area in the brains of certain individuals.
- Since the arrival of the island, the New Komeito has not been heard from again. The national NeoWeb channels are mostly worried about the typhoons and the blockade; even the departure of the Emperor has barely registered. All information channels seem to have been manipulated,

to divert attention to other problems; only pirate sites and videos dwell at any length on the appearance of Ryugu and on the strange, dazed people wandering the cities, weapons in hand, assaulting total strangers.

- If they go to the Diet – the Shin-Edo parliament in Chiyoda – the characters can see genuine unrest. Even outside the heavily-patrolled security cordons, it's clear that the few politicians that haven't yet fled Shin-Edo have no idea where the new self-proclaimed Cabinet can be found. Prime Minister Abe Kaemon and his men have vanished, leaving the country to its fate and forcing the LDP to unsuccessfully attempt to retake control. A palpable tension hangs over the building; as the players watch, several bureaucrats walk through the cordon and leave with briefcases and cardboard boxes under their arms. If questioned, they mention Ryugu as *"the arrival of the end of the world."*
- A visit to the premises of the New Komeito, in Chiyoda, presents a 30-storey glass tower, plunged in darkness, vacant save for security drones and cleaning androids. Some Sneaking Tests should suffice to enter the building.

Inside, it's clear the place was abandoned in a hurry: half-burnt leaflets are stuck in the incinerators while databanks have been destroyed with blunt instruments. In the clutter of administrative debris, the keshin may discover (hard Search Test) some documents of little interest – chiefly tedious bureaucracy – but marked with the symbol of the Tomoe Jigoku.

In Abe Kaemon's office, a larger room full of video screens, the keshin find an exploitable photonic data source, the only device in good condition in the building. A small pod, doubtless dropped in the escape.

- This pod belongs to an official of the New Komeito, Minamoto Narihiro, and yields his place of residence, an apartment located at 6-27-4 Shinjuku.

Panicked and armed, Narihiro won't let the characters into his apartment easily, but he is not a great threat. He doesn't know all the comings and goings of the New Komeito, and is totally ignorant of its connection with the Tomoe Jigoku. He doesn't know where Abe Kaemon has gone, but can tell them about the Ghost program.

The program generates a transmission on an undetectable frequency, produced by a station aboard a supertanker off the Shin-Edo coast. Destroying this station will end the effect and release the Ghost soldiers, but Narihiro has no



idea of the precise location of the ship. All he knows is that the place is forbidden to most members of the New Komeito.

- * The psychic waves this station produces aren't exactly radio frequencies, and aren't powered by Ki, so the characters will struggle to locate their origin in the stormy sea. With satellites out of order, even a GPS location will not allow them to find a trace of the supertanker.

Goblin Shark

Do you remember the little green octopus? As the characters investigate, it intensifies its appearances, becoming increasingly pressing. Its balloons now say things like *Follow me!*, *Come with me!*, and *Do you want to see a marvellous place?*

If the characters ever decide to follow it, the little augmented reality program leads them to a curious theme bar in Shibuya: the Alcatraz ER. Closed down due to the storms, it shouldn't

present too much difficulty for a talented burglar. It's a bizarre place: a mix between a prison and a psychiatric asylum, the bar is decorated with medical apparatus, menus marked with the number 13 and cocktails contained in transfusion pouches.

The funny little creature leads them to the men's room, where a magnetic key is hidden in an old-style flush. Written on the key is a street address: 12-28 Shibuya. As soon as they retrieve the key, the greenish octopus salutes in a very cartoonish gesture and finally vanishes from view.

The address leads the characters to a non-existent door, a cracked, frequently repaired wall between 12-27 and 12-29, covered in a single superb street mural. It represents a goblin shark, a shark with a very elongated snout and prehensile jaw. It is all but impossible to find a slot for a magnetic key manually, amidst the intricate artwork and the many fine cracks in the wall, but if a character is wearing a Gantai, the glasses will highlight the magnetic slot as soon as they arrive. Once the key is inserted, a small airlock slowly opens... in the pavement. Like a lift, it will take the keshin under the sidewalk of the street.

They are welcomed by an android as large as a sumotori, wearing dirty trousers and a Godzilla t-shirt. In silence and with a strange sluggishness, it will guide the characters to a small, overheated underground room. Filled with computers, photonic connections, collectible Revolution action figures and flexible screens, this is the home of Goblin Shark – real name Shigeki Taro – an otaku overclocker. Their host makes his appearance as soon as they arrive, sitting on an ionic propulsion chair. Legless, Goblin Shark is a skinny nerd with dishevelled hair, wearing a design Gantai and a Tyrell Corporation sweatshirt. Helped in his daily life by his android, called “Godzilla,” he has found shelter under the city. His sole passion is robots and technology; he confesses to knowing little about why the characters are in his headquarters, and had nothing to do with either the octopus or the magnetic key found at the Alcatraz ER.

“Ever since the Kuro Incident, Rachel, my Universal Memory, has become almost autonomous. It’s fascinating. It was her who asked Godzilla to place the key there and she never stops talking to me about the Ghost programme. That’s why you came, right?”

Rachel is the giant computer occupying the whole room. Since May 2046, a kami has made it her go-shintai, her receptacle; a Zanshin test reveals the Ki inside the computer’s artificial structure. The computer has detected the exotic broadcast waves of the Ghost program and claims to be able to trace them to their source. She speaks through the green octopus, answering the characters’ questions in her cartoon balloons. Goblin Shark is utterly fascinated with the entire conversation.

All that Rachel needs is a guinea pig: one of the victims of the Ghost Program. If the keshin can capture one of the psychic soldiers wandering the streets of Shin-Edo, Goblin and Godzilla can hook him up to a simple encephalogram, and in an hour Rachel will give them the exact coordinates of the New Komeito’s supertanker.

The ship turns out to be at sea, several cable lengths out from Shin-Edo, right in the middle of Yamata-No-Orochi’s zone of activity. Or in other words, in the heart of an impassable storm protected by a monster.



BIG EGG

Real men wear kilts.”

– Roddy Piper

Even with the coordinates of the supertanker in hand, the characters will be facing a major obstacle: Yamata-no-Orochi. How do they evade its watchful gaze? How do they avoid being crushed by this creature of legend?

Awakening

During their absence, the disquieting Akishino Mako has finally arrived at Yushima shrine accompanied by four Ruby Ribbon bodyguards: cyborg men with military-grade implants, including cables linking their nervous systems to their weapons. With Mako’s ministrations and prayers, Susanoo slowly wakes, growing visibly younger.

“Ladies and gentlemen, I introduce to you the brother of Amaterasu, the God of Storms, Susanoo-no-Mikoto.”

The god is finally able to explain what has happened to him, revealing the origin of the evil that doomed the Izumo region. He will speak of the arrival of the Magagoto, of the part played by the Tomoe Jigoku (whose symbol he’ll recognise if the characters show it to him), of attempts to awaken it in ancient times, and of the resurrected 99 Oni.

“All this is my fault. I was weakened by the changes in the world, and failed to exterminate the living Taint. The weakness of my arm has doomed us, and the weakness of my mind has revealed to the Magagoto the means for opening the Yomi and bringing its accursed army to the Earth.”

“I have faced the Yamata-No-Orochi in the past, hoping to get hold of the sword Kusanagi-No-Tsurugi, which it hides deep within its entrails and which is the key to opening the land of death. But the eight-headed dragon is its sole owner, and the sword only appears to the person he wishes to give it to. Mad with anger and to prevent the worst, I chained the Yamata-No-Orochi in the depths of Ryugu, the ancient shrine to Ryujin, the sea dragon. I convinced myself that this prison would be sealed beneath the waves forever, preventing Yamata from giving the sword to anyone. I was wrong... and now it’s the Magagoto who owns the sword and commands the monster he has freed.”



Visibly downcast, Susanoo confesses that he thinks the Magagoto is linked to his army, and that the 99 Oni must be destroyed if there is to be any hope of getting near him, or closing the gates of Yomi-No-Kuni.

If the keshin ask him about a means of fooling or defeating Yamata-No-Orochi to stop the typhoons over Shin-Edo and the New Komeito ship, he replies:

"Now that he no longer has Kusanagi in his body, the dragon has become more fragile. He can be destroyed, although he is still formidable. Yamata-No-Orochi's weak spot is not in his heads but in his body. While his eight heads focus on the same goal, it is impossible to approach his body to destroy him; but if each of us occupies one of the heads, not letting them see the body, it will then be possible to make him disappear from this world."

Bait

There is no one solution to get rid of Yamata-No-Orochi. The heroes need to corner him in an enclosed space and surround him, distracting his heads – ideally, by trapping him among buildings and luring his heads into different rooms or corridors. As the eight heads are busy trying to devour their prey, the body will then be exposed to attack.

The characters have all the time they need to come up with a plan. An old enemy of Yamata-No-Orochi and also wanted by the Magagoto, Susanoo can find the dragon and lead him to a time and place of the PCs' choosing. The keshin will need a minimum of eight people to serve as bait, each charged with distracting one head. Buntaro and Masao can help, as well as the Ruby Ribbon soldiers.

There are a few buildings in Shin-Edo in which they can execute their plan, but the best candidate is most likely the Tokyo Dome, known as the "Big Egg." With its large central arena and a network of gates and corridors under the stands, it is an almost perfect setting to attract Yamata to and to drag its heads into the concrete corridors.

If the keshin lack manpower, providence may turn up help in the very heart of the dome. All but abandoned since the beginning of the blockade, the stadium has seen neither spectacle nor competition in seven months. For Muto Kenshi, an overclocker specialized in wrestling matches, it has been

a disaster. The manager of a tag team of Artificials – the Highlanders – for the Japan Pro Wrestling Federation, he has lost his home and his lab, but continues to train and program them in deserted places. The wrestling machines are fashioned after stocky Westerners in kilts and war paint. Particularly strong and fast, they can be precious allies, serving as extra bait or to help Susanoo destroy the body of Yamata-No-Orochi.

Whatever the characters think of, they should take into account Susanoo's immense power to bait the dragon into the centre of dome and blast its body with lightning while the heads are too busy to protect it.

Enough to set up an epic and particularly spectacular combat!

KICKING ASS IN THE HIGH SEAS

After vaporizing the dragon, the characters will be able to approach the supertanker without much difficulty. The typhoons will have stopped and calm will start to return to Shin-Edo.

The ship is protected by about ten hired human soldiers in the service of the New Komeito. At the centre of the floating behemoth, a huge laboratory is filled with cryogenic coffins in which decomposing corpses are connected to a whole network of cables and photonic devices. Their energy produces the brain wave, broadcasted by a spherical antenna located on the hull. No members of the New Komeito are aboard, and the five frightened scientists present will confess that Abe Kaemon left in the direction of Izumo after Yamata-No-Orochi disappeared.

Wrecking the lab will immediately release the Ghosts and return them to their senses, in all the cities in Japan.

Searching the supertanker, the keshin will find more evidence directly connecting the New Komeito to the Tomoe Jigoku and thus to the Magagoto and the 99 Oni: photos of the Ika-Zuchi-No-Kuni, of members of the Shi-Tenno, symbols for the summoning of tenshi, incantations of the dead whale...

Now they know the true face of their enemies.

EPILOGUE

A still-weak Susanoo accompanies Akishino Mako to Shin-Heian to join with the Emperor and be protected. Before leaving, she praises the keshin at length, and promises to contact them again through mirrors, thanking them for bringing Shin-Edo out of the darkness however briefly.

"There is still much to do. As long as the Magagoto and his 99 generals are not annihilated, our country will be the prey of Taint and darkness. Do everything in your power to destroy the forces of death. You are now warriors of the Emperor and the only hope for this city. For the world."

Some days later, national televisions will announce that the New Komeito was dissolved and that the Diet has voted to return power to the hands of the Emperor.

His new capital is now called...

Shin-Heian-Kyo.

NPCS

Yamata-no-Orochi

Theoretically, the dragon's heads are indestructible. The only means of killing Yamata is to blast its body with lightning. Each head has the following traits:

Characteristics:

DEX 9	INT 6	STR 9	PER 6
STA 9	CHA 5	REF 8	WIL 5
KI 100			

Secondary Characteristics:

HIT: 350 (body only)	SW 116
DT -116	DEF 46
MOV 9	ACT 4
REA 10	

Skills:

Combat Skills

Hand to Hand 16
Jaw 15 – Damage 5D6
Breath – Damage 6D6

Special Powers:

- * Invulnerability
- * Horror 15
- * Generates 5 background Taint points

Susanoo — God of Storms

Characteristics:

DEX 15	INT 15	STR 20	PER 15
STA 20	CHA 15	REF 20	WIL 25
KI 200			

Secondary Characteristics:

HIT 325	SW 109	DT -109	
DEF 100	ACT 10	MOV 15	REA 30

Skills:

All skills at level 30

Mystical Techniques:

All (except Shinobi) at level 30

Special Powers:

- Flying with the storm
- Cast lightning (10D6 damage)
- Phoenix
- Invulnerable

Highlander (wrestling android)

Characteristics:

DEX 5	INT 3	STR 5	PER 4
STA 4	CHA 3	REF 4	WIL 5

Secondary Characteristics:

HIT 65	SW 22	DT -22	
DEF 26	ACT 2	MOV 5	REA 6

Skills:

Combat Skills

Hand to Hand 4
Wrestling 5 (expertise)

General Skills:

Athletics 5
Dodge 6 (Mastery)
Running 6 (Mastery)



KAGEMUSHA

"See how your skin falls apart faster and faster... you now change bodies once a month. In these troubled times, even your money can't do anything for you..."

"You have a solution, monster? You have told me of an occult ritual. I don't believe it for a second, but I'll do anything to stop this genetic degeneracy."

"It's very simple. I ask only for one of your eyes."

"One of my eyes? I'll give you one with pleasure. I have a score of clones ready to give me back a replacement."

SYNOPSIS

Tenome, an unusual yokai, is little by little taking over the Genocracy, through a curse and much cunning. The characters are duped by the evil spirit into intercepting three clones who could blow his cover and disrupt his plan to assassinate the Emperor. The keshin should uncover the deception while navigating through high society, among the powerful of the city, and recalling the memories of their ujigami.



SLIPPERY EELS

Its evening. It rains cats and dogs. On the streets, luminous advertising panels blink and flicker, threatening to shut down at any moment. One of the player characters (choose the one with the highest Stamina) is returning to Yushima shrine to meet his companions when he feels a sudden dizziness. Concentrating, he feels Taint not far from him, coming from a dark alley. On the ground, traces of blood suggest that a body was dragged for some ten metres. The tracks stop at the entrance of a decommissioned shopping centre.

Whatever they're doing at the time, the other characters have a vision, a waking dream. Through the eyes of a stranger, they watch their friend approach the shopping centre. The place is familiar, and they suddenly have the feeling that their comrade is in great danger. They don't know it yet, but this vision comes from a keshin imprisoned by Tenome. Presumably, the characters rush to their comrade's rescue.

The doors of the shopping centre are smashed and the stalls looted in the many riots that have occurred in the district. Bloody handprints show on the wall, where someone feebly tried to secure a grip. On the sticky tiles, puddles of a viscous, translucent fluid indicate the passage of an ayakashi (see *Spawn of Yomi*, page 100). Before the PC knows what's happening, the giant eel is behind him, ready to pounce. The monster drops the body of its last victim, an old man of high Kaiso, just under the PC's nose, and then charges, mouth agape.

It will take a certain number of turns for the other characters to join their friend, and the situation will become critical once a new ayakashi appears from the ground, shattering the tiling and cutting off retreat.

Amidst broken windows and walls cracked by the fight, the other keshin arrive. By uniting their strength, they shouldn't have too much trouble defeating the two ayakashi, especially if they attack by surprise.

Enlivening the Combat

The intention of the fight is to plunge the players directly into a breathless, frantic story; make it as cinematic as possible! Don't play each combat round; if it takes too long for the characters to join the trapped character, the players will get bored watching the combat. Spend a few rounds with the trapped character, then cut to the other characters' point of view. Throw obstacles in their path, increasing the pressure: a road accident, or enraged protesters blocking their way. Play for spectacle: the pillars of the shopping centre exploding under near-misses, combatants crashing into shelves, etc. The PCs should come out with not many bruises, provided they make good use of the terrain to defend themselves.

Spy

Once the confrontation is over, it's time to investigate. The keshin should be interested in the corpse of the old man dropped by the first eel, who proves to be Takeda Ginji, a Genocrat and finance magnate. According to the tabloids, he's done well off the blockade. If one of the characters is an expert in biodroids, he may identify the body of Ginji as a clone animated by an AI (a replicant, in a nutshell). The brain of the victim is too damaged to give out anything useful.

While they investigate, the group are again struck by a vision. Looking once again through the eyes of the stranger, the keshin see themselves as in a mirror for a moment, and then the vision stops. Assuming the keshin rush towards the street, the watcher has vanished by the time they get there.

BACK FROM THE DEAD

Back at Yushima Tenjin Shrine, the keshin may want to conduct investigations, but they will not have the time. A high-ranking man, escorted by two Yojimbo-type androids (see page 41), will introduce himself to them under the name Takeda Shingen. Both Yojimbo are wearing skinsuits and hi-tech equipment, along with traditional wide brimmed hats, hiding part of their faces. The keshin recognise none other than Takeda Ginji, the Genocrat they found dead at the shopping centre.

Takeda explains that he is a powerful keshin incarnated in the body of a businessman. Unlike them, he shares no memories with his host. He has come looking for the characters to help him in his fight against the insidious forces of the Yomi-No-Kuni. His status and fame prevent him from being as effective as he'd like in his investigations, and lately he has been the target of several ambushes. He has realised it would be more reasonable to call on reinforcements; hence his coming to the temple.

The name Takeda Shingen should cause a reaction in any keshin with knowledge of the history of Japan. This daimyo was one of the greatest military commanders of his time, and contested the Shogunate with the Tokugawa. Any keshin whose ujigami lived in that time (16th century, Sengoku period) could call on his patron to try and recall details concerning Shingen.

Through Zanshin vision, Lord Takeda Shingen seems to have no Ki aura. On a Very Hard (32) Zanshin Test, it is possible to see a string of kanji – all of them saying kage, or “shadow” – dancing and swirling around the Lord. If asked about this phenomenon, Takeda explains it is the result of a powerful ritual hiding his Ki Imprint to avoid any assassination attempts. Takeda will acknowledge that maybe he shouldn't use this deception with the keshin. If they ask about the body found in the shopping centre, Takeda says he uses clones as decoys to fool the yokai. One of his doubles was kidnapped the day before. Someone seems to want to kill him.

Under the Masks

In the 16th century, Lord Takeda Shingen was a general who feared not defeat, but treason from his peers. As such, he used a lookalike he called the “Kagemusha” to cover his tracks, fooling

his opponents and those plotting against him. So complete was the imitation that upon the lord's death the lookalike took his place, reigning as a tyrant and bathing the lands of the clan Takeda in blood. Shingen's lieutenants unmasked the usurper as an oni lord called Tenome. Banished by Shinto priests, tortured, his eyes plucked out, Tenome lost his original shape and face, becoming an abject faceless monstrosity whose eyes grey out of the palms of his hands.

Six months ago, Shingen's heir Ginji discovered a flaw in his genes. His body grew old faster than normal. Suffering from a new terrible syndrome, Ginji was forced to keep a great quantity of clones in order to change bodies by digital transfer. A large, cold chamber in his offices is reserved solely for his doubles.

One day Ginji crossed paths with Tenome, the old usurper.

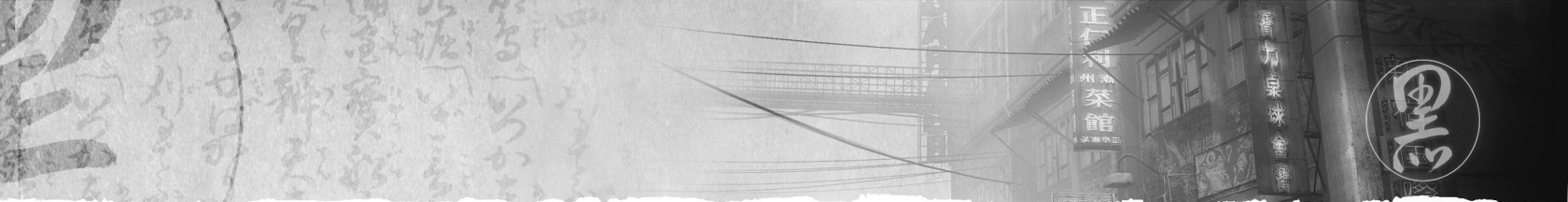
Tenome was one of the first oni to escape Yomi-No-Kuni and has been busy these last few months with taking over the Genocracy through a powerful curse. All it takes is for the victim to voluntarily offer one of his eyes to the demon for the blind oni to take control. Tenome is cunning and persuasive, securing the eyes he needs in exchange for riches, immortality, love, transportation to another country or other bribes.

In 2047, in this age of cloning and advanced medicine, the Japanese are less attached to their bodies; it is possible replace any part with a biotech prosthetic or cloned organ, especially among the most fortunate. When Tenome receives an eye, the mind of his victim falls into a sort of coma and the demon gains total control over his body. The oni, playing on Ginji's anxieties about his mortality, managed to extract one of his eyes from him.

Tenome runs several people at the same time. He speaks through their mouths and sees through their eyes, but that demands a huge effort of concentration. His true, misshapen body remains in Ishikawa tower, Takeda Ginji's home.

Some weeks ago, with the arrival of the red storm, the ujigami Takeda Shingen entered the body of his heir Takeda Ginji and took control of it, to Tenome's consternation. As he used to do in the past with his lookalikes, Shingen set up three clones run by AI as decoys, before leaving to hunt down escapees from Yomi-No-Kuni. He found out about Tenome's deception, but the latter struck back and managed to retake control the body inhabited by Shingen, neutralizing the ujigami. Unfortunately, even after having recovered his authority over Ginji's mind, Tenome couldn't prevent the three clones, equipped with a special template, from escaping into the wild to warn other keshin of the danger. Tenome studied copies of the template and found out





that the clones are programmed to find a handful of keshin that Shingen had spotted: the characters! He no longer has a choice. To maintain his cover and reach his goal, he must intercept the three clones while diverting the attention of the keshin.

It was one of those clones, programmed to warn the characters, who was caught by ayakashi in the service of Tenome. The monster watched the scene from the outside, but Shingen managed to regain control of his eyes just long enough to transmit what he has seen to the keshin.

Tenome discovered the headquarters of the characters and has sent his puppet Takeda to set a trap for them and intercept the other replicants.

Note that the body in which Shingen has incarnated, and which is under Tenome's control, has a scar under the left eye. The remaining two decoy clones, which have now become messengers, are unmarred.

VIP

Takeda Shingen must go to a social evening in support of a charity. The event is largely for show, for the Genocrats to show themselves as the protectors and benefactors of Japan. No one is fooled, but the press play their part and flatter the plutocrats. Shingen, fearing for his safety, asks the characters to accompany him, offering to lend them tuxedos and evening gowns if needed.

As the PCs arrive at the reception hall of the Ishikawa building, Yojimbo robots will advance towards the keshin. After a retinal scan, the characters are told, in a fussy tone, *"I'm sorry but your Kaiso isn't high enough to enter the building. Please keep your distance from the building or we will be forced to warn law enforcement."*

Shingen addresses the AI and gives the identities of the characters accompanying him, specifying that they are his guests, and the AI apologises and lets the party pass. Takeda Ginji is the owner of the building, but Shingen/Tenome will be careful not to tell the keshin that. Once inside the building, the characters are hit by an unexpectedly high background Taint (4 points).

The gala room, on the second floor, is already full. All the cream of Shin-Edo are present; this is an opportunity to meet the most influential people in Japan, both politically and

the economically. In this Kaiso 6 building, luxury is laid out under the eyes of our adventurers. There is no hint, here, that the country is under a blockade, or that rationing has plunged the people into starvation. All is opulence and luxury. All the servants here are artificial, and all guests are accompanied by domestic biodroids with bodyguard templates.

While it's likely impossible to approach, for example, the highest members of the Diet, surrounded by watchful bodyguards, they may well cross paths at the buffet with a businesswoman in charge of several train companies and the owner of half the stations in Shin-Edo, both engaged in a debate with a high army officer. The PCs are likely to grossly misstep, and the security androids are watching them closely. Note that wining the favour of a Genocrat may allow them to gain a whole Kaiso level in one go!

In all this glittering mix, one detail attracts the attention of the characters. Many Genocrats, like the businesswoman Atsuko, have micro-scars around their eyes, as if they had just been grafted. Others simply wear Gantai, hiding the lack of one of their eyes. Takeda Shingen/Ginji himself has a scar under one eye. If they ask, they will be answered, in a mocking tone, that organ transplants are usual in "Society" and such marks disappear over time.

If one of the heroes' ujigami lived at the era of Takeda Shingen, he will have a flashback, taking him back to the court of Takeda Shingen. A geisha sings and plays the shamisen. The daimyo's vassals strut around and look like they're having fun; sake flows freely and the guests burst out laughing. Suddenly the geisha breaks her instrument and takes a knife from within before rushing towards the daimyo. The character intervenes. The target of the assassin is none other than Takeda Shingen himself.

Return to reality:

As they are beginning to get used to high society, Shingen, who they have doubtless lost in the crowd, joins them with a panicky expression on his face. "There's a problem," he says, pulling one of the keshin by the arm and showing him the entrance door.

Another Takeda Ginji has just entered the room. His eyes are empty and his face blank. No bodyguard accompanies him. He scrutinizes the crowd, looking for someone. The second clone has caught Tenome off guard and the monster has to act quickly.

"They have sent an assassin to take my place!"



It is impossible to know if it is a clone or the true Takeda Shingen. If one of the keshin saw the aura impregnated with the *kage* kanji, he could concentrate to try to notice it again, but he'll see nothing and so will not be able to confirm who is the original. The clone of Takeda Ginji, having recognised the characters in the crowd, addresses them in a monotone voice, saying, "*I was betrayed by the Kagemusha.*" before falling to the floor, shot in the back by a Yojimbo. Tenome, forced to hurry, could only order one of his artificials against the clone. As a diversion, Takeda Shingen will pretend to have taken sick, forcing the bulk of the guests to take their leave.

History Lesson

If the characters ask Shingen what his double meant by "Kagemusha," he will claim not to remember. Maybe it was some sort of curse? He asks the keshin to wait at their headquarters, to give him the time to recover from his misadventure and apologise to his Genocrat friends for the incident.

Two messengers now out of the way, one left to find. Tenome hopes to keep duping the characters and to have gained their trust. After the last clone is neutralised, Tenome can go to Shin-Heian and try to assassinate the Emperor. That is his main objective: infiltrate the Emperor's palace by manipulating a keshin under his control and giving the coup de grace to the heir of Amaterasu. For Tenome is one of the 99 Oni of the Magagoto.

The characters are back where they started, in their shrine. It is a good time to conduct investigations. Research on Takeda Ginji won't reveal much, except that he lives in Ishikawa building (strange that it is a tainted place...) and that he is obscenely rich. On the other hand, enquiring into Takeda Shingen will lead to huge amounts of data. The history of the daimyo is so filled with details that the main challenge is filtering them for anything useful. A search by "Kagemusha" will give them the information in the paragraph on the 16th century, in the section *Under the Masks* (page 121).

During the investigation, Takeda Shingen becomes unreachable, and the situation begins to get complicated for the keshin. It starts with the characters' bank accounts being frozen. They have to explain the problem at some length to an unfriendly android, in front of a queue of impatient clients, to regain access to their accounts. Next, it's their pods having their access to the NeoWeb refused, on the grounds the bills were not paid. The home electronics in their apartments break down completely; a keshin may find that his fridge has ordered enough sake for a regiment, or even deny him access to its contents. Walking

down the street quickly becomes a nightmare; holographic ads target them wherever they go, their Kaiso is logged erroneously and they are refused access to certain areas "*for their own good.*"

In short, pulling the strings of so many Genocrats, Tenome has everything he needs to follow their tracks throughout the city and sabotage them at every turn.

Fighting obstacles in every part of their lives, the characters eventually find a member of the family of a Genocrat present at the gala in Ishikawa tower: the son of the businesswoman Atsuko found in the buffet. He explains that since the accident where her mother lost her eye, she has been acting strangely.

As a last resort and if an animachine is part of the party, the characters may turn to the Shin-Edo Sky Tower and ask EVA (page 79) for more information on what is happening to the Genocrats. Obviously, the AI will not reveal any information for free. EVA, using a powerful algorithm of data correlation, can calculate that all Genocrats that have lost an eye have recently passed through Ishikawa tower.

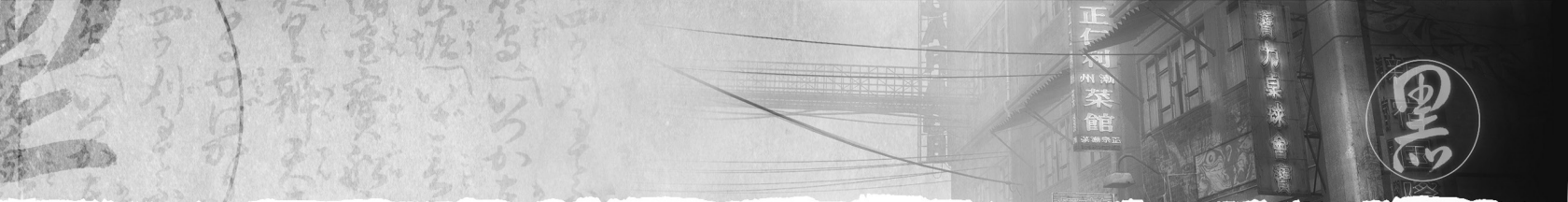
Finally, assuming any of the keshin's ujigami are contemporaries of the daimyo, one of them will relive his encounter with Lord Takeda Shingen as a flashback. He'll know the rumours in court at the time about the presence of a lookalike on the battlefields, the discovery of a demon taking his place, and the oni's transformation into a deformed monstrosity whose eyes are in the palms of his hands. He should then understand Tenome's deception.

As the heroes zero in on the magnate, events force their hand. In an avenue in Ueno, not far from where they are, a pack of dogs attacks the last clone, still trying to get near the characters or the shrine. Examining the body will confirm it's one of the missing clones; with the proper equipment, they can examine the artificial's templates and find out how they have been manipulated.

Attack

Tenome has no further need of the PCs. The clones that could break his cover have all been eliminated. He just needs to tie up his loose ends and eradicate the keshin.

He summons his ayakashi anew and unleashes them, ideally targeting the keshin when they're scattered and isolated. Their best bet is to regroup to their temple or any other sacred place (whose purity will at least delay the creatures) rather than fight on their own; if they



do so, an attack in force is launched against their entrenched position. Countless stray dogs come out from every alley to attack the o-fuda, shimenawa and gohei protecting the place, gradually bringing down its Purity level. In the meantime, the eels come out of the sewers to besiege the temple, and once the Purity level is low enough, to invade the shrine and attack the keshin directly. Once the Purity is stripped away – or if the characters are not entrenched in a holy place – the accursed dogs will raise the Taint of the area instead.

Attacking the dogs is useless; more arrive each minute. Neutralising them means eliminating the leader of the pack, who stands apart, some hundreds of metres away, in a high place where he can watch the battlefield. If the characters have played the scenario *Yukidomari* (*Makkura*, page 65), they recognise the hellhound and the zombie man holding its leash. As he had promised months ago, the mastiff has returned, this time to use its fangs. There should be no doubt they're responsible for the dogs' assault. The keshin need to break out, to hit the devil dog and stop the attack.

After receiving the killing blow, the demon dog – ever a fair loser – congratulates them through blood-flecked lips. With its last breath it confesses working for Tenome, the Kagemusha, and that its master asked it to buy him enough time to allow Takeda Ginji to leave for Kansai, to assassinate the Emperor. Even if they have beaten the pack, its mission is a success, since the keshin are no longer in a position to stop him.

Interception

The keshin will obviously want to warn the Shin-Heian imperial palace of the arrival of an assassin, but all communications with the NeoWeb are blocked. The Genocrats, under the control of the oni, have done their jobs well, and even the ticket offices at the train stations will seem not to want to sell them train tickets.

In a last spasm, Shingen manages to briefly regain control of his body. The keshin see through his eyes for the last time, as he walks onto the crowded platform of a train station and climbs into a high-speed train. The characters see directly the number of the train and the name of the Shin-Edo station (Shinjuku Station). They have a target, at least, as long as they can get there in time. But this doesn't take into account the many ambushes and obstacles set by the Genocrat Atsuko, head of the train company.

The keshin have a very slim chance of locating the train and climbing aboard in time to intercept Ginji. If they manage it and engage with the daimyo, the characters gain Taint points every time they wound him, to remind them it is not advisable to hurt

a keshin (see Tatari); the characters should quickly realise that fratricidal can't be the answer to the problem. Even if killing Ginji saved the Emperor, Tenome would still be alive and the characters close to succumbing to Taint. It will be a victory for no-one.

If they don't intercept the train, the keshin have three hours to locate Tenome and defeat him, stopping his domination over the Genocracy and over Takeda Shingen. EVA might have given them a clue on the demon's hideout, but it is one last flashback that alerts our heroes to the oni's position:

Back to the 16th century. The Kagemusha has escaped. He hides in Ishikawa province, in the domain of Tokugawa Ieyasu, Takeda Shingen's rival. The character experiencing the vision comes as an ambassador to the Tokugawa daimyo to make an exceptional request: an oni hides in the province, and he asks for help to hunt it down. Ieyasu, a wise man, knows precisely what is going on. His samurai have noticed the demon's presence in an abandoned tower in the area. It is said that his shape is so foul that only someone whose eyes have been plucked out can see him. The samurai lead the ujigami, along with a blind Shinto priest, to the tower, whose strange architecture hints at the Shin-Edo Ishikawa tower where the Genocrat gala took place. End of vision.

With a clue as blunt as that, the keshin should certainly go to Ishikawa tower and enclose the building in a kekkai. Tenome's goal remains unchanged: playing for time to allow his puppet to kill the Emperor. Tenome's Yojimbo combat androids try to create diversions and keep our heroes busy while the oni launches energy blasts at them, to draw the confrontation out. If the characters have managed to neutralise Ginji, the oni pours all his rage onto the keshin, even going so far as to destroy the tower to crush them. The oni keeps attacking the keshin with power blasts until he exhausts his power.

The only means for a keshin to see the oni clearly, to avoid his traps, escape his sight and strike him down is to pluck out his own eyes; or, at least to blind himself, even temporarily (simply blindfolding himself or closing his eyes isn't sufficient). Freeing the Genocrats from the oni's curse, will win the keshin the gratitude of powerful men and women, who will gladly offer them new eyes by way of compensation. If the characters balk entirely, Buntaro and Masao, the two priests of Yushima shrine, tells them about a shop in Ueno that sells a particularly painful toxin (Virulence 18) that removes the victim's sight for several days. Note that a Gantai is obviously of no use to a blinded character!

Tenome is entirely incapable of seeing or aiming at the blinded characters, while they will see him clearly, without any penalties.



NPCS

The Mastiff and the Zombie Man

Type: Oni-Musha

Characteristics:

DEX 7 STR 4 STA 5 REF 6
INT 5 PER 5 CHA 4 WIL 6
KI 20

Secondary Characteristics:

HIT 80 SW 24 DT -24
DEF 24 ACT 3 MOV 6 REA 9

Skills:

Combat Skills

Bite 11

General Skills

Athletics 8
Dodge 13

Powers:

- **Howl at the moon:** The mastiff can summon canids – dogs, wolves, foxes – wherever he is. These animals attack no matter what and no matter whom, even if the target is a spirit. If a single wolf or dog offers little threat to a keshin, in numbers they're extremely dangerous, harrying their targets – increasing the difficulty of their actions by 1D6 – and spreading 1D6 Taint in their surroundings.
- **Regeneration collar:** The mastiff can, by paying 2 Ki points, regenerate 5D6 hit points.
- **Vulnerability (zombie man):** If attacked, the man drops the leash, cancelling the regeneration power until he gets a hold of it again, which takes at least three turns. The man is indestructible and disappears when the mastiff is killed.



Tenome

Type: Oni-Daimyo

Characteristics:

DEX 6 STR 2 STA 7 REF 8
INT 8 PER 9 CHA 12 WIL 10

Secondary Characteristics:

HIT 130 SW 44 DT -44
DEF 46 ACT 4 MOV 6 REA 10

Skills:

Combat Skills

Brawling 10

General Skills

Athletics 10
Dodge 15

Powers:

- **Kekkai**
- **Kuji-Kiri**
- **Evil eye:** The evil eye allows Tenome to take control of any being who has voluntarily offered him one of his eyes for any reason. Tenome can control as many people as his Willpower level but he must lock one Ki die for each person under his control. At the beginning of the scenario he has nine Genocrats, Shingen included, under his control (fixing his Ki reserve at 41).
While there is at least one person under his control, this monster is only visible to blind persons.
- **Summon Ayakashi:** Tenome developed this ability after arriving in Shin-Edo. Wherever he is, he can spend 5 Ki points to summon an ayakashi who will fight to the death.
- **Vulnerability (hands):** Tenome's eyes are in the palms of his hands. Touching his hands cancels his actions for that turn, and he can only take one action the next turn.

Takeda Shingen

Shingen is a Samurai whose keshin with a Humanity gauge of 24 (giving him a Humanity Threshold of 7).



MIKO-SAMA

SYNOPSIS

The characters take Nobuko, a little girl with a tragic destiny, to Shin-Heian, to present her to the Emperor's palace, where Akishino Mako informs them of massacres in northern Honshu. The hydroponic farming region is crucial to Japan's survival in the ongoing famine, but is producing less food every month.

The keshin and Nobuko travel to Aomori prefecture to investigate the advance of the Taint in the north of the archipelago. There they meet the shogun Jiro, at the head of an army of machines ready to cleanse Mount Terror...

SAVE THE MIKO-SAMA, SAVE THE WORLD

After the previous episodes, the player-characters are in their new headquarters in Yushima Tenjin shrine. Shinto priests plaster the entrance of the temple with o-fuda and surround the perimeter of the building with shimenawa. In the park, not far from the temple, it is possible to admire the plum and cherry blossoms in white and pink; spring has arrived. Our heroes are tending their wounds after their latest adventures, and seeking new knowledge in the secret libraries in this place of learning.

The story opens with one of them having a waking dream, frozen in a trance beneath the pink petals of the cherry blossoms. Suddenly, the trees around the keshin are all dead;

he finds himself atop a gloomy mountain. Behind him is the entrance to a shrine. He hears a woman weeping, and calling him by his ujigami's name.

"Please... Protect my daughter, Nobuko. I beg of you. I know her life has not always been easy and that now the priests in Tosho-gu shrine are taking good care of her. But I beg of you, protect her!"

The woman bursts into tears as the vision disappears and the keshin returns to reality. Tosho-gu shrine is within walking distance of their base; if the keshin decide not to investigate, more visions will come and disturb the character until they do. These calls come from Mrs Kotani, a woman prisoner in Mount Terror, from where the Taint spreads in the north.

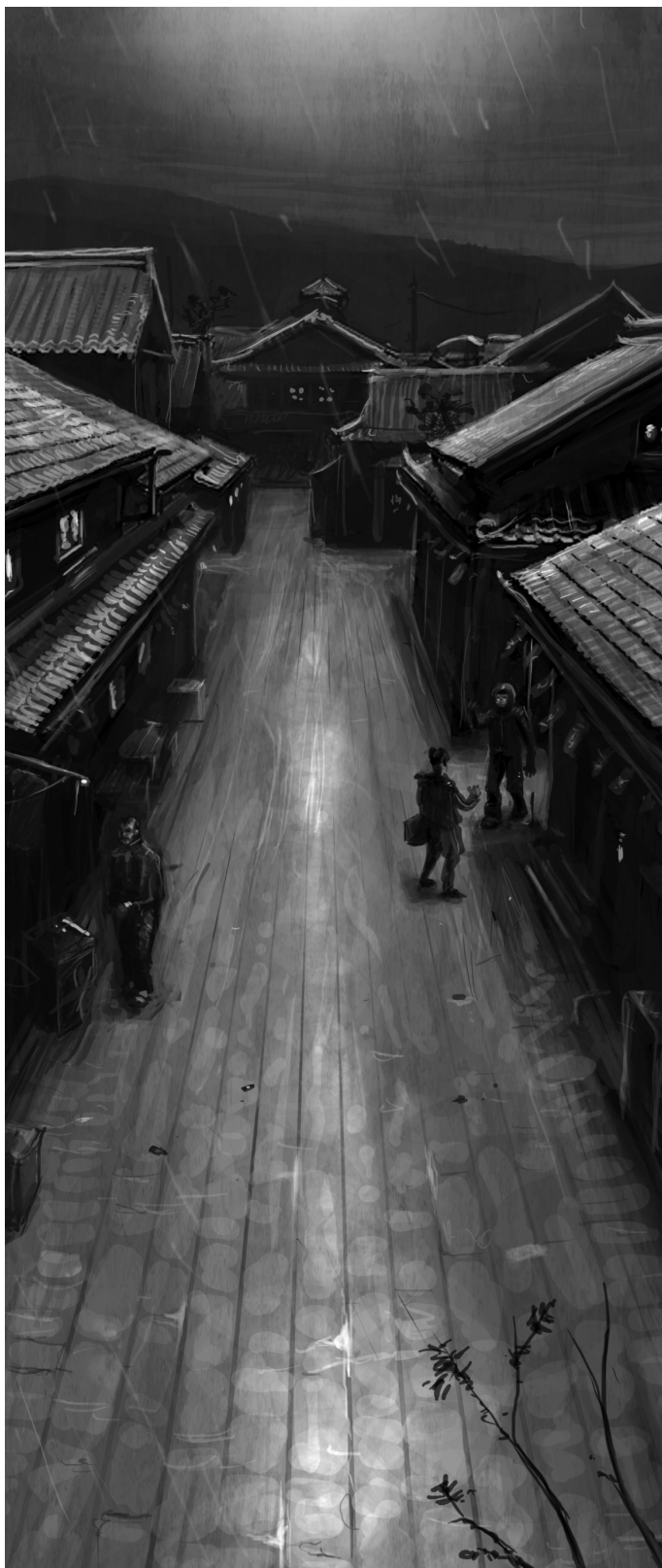
The gardens of the district, once filled with cubicle-slave "salarymen," are now home to hundreds of the homeless and destitute. Here, more than anywhere else in the city, people are dying of starvation. The great Tosho-gu pagoda is highlighted in the sky. The keshin have not yet set foot on the temple when a wild-eyed priest addresses them.

"It's you! You have come for her! I recognise you! I'm going to get her!"

The priest runs inside and comes back pulling the arm of a frightened little girl. Dressed in the traditional red and white attire of the miko, the priestesses who support the Shinto priesthood, Nobuko is a little girl whose long, black untidy hair partly hides her face.

"This is the one you are looking for! You must take her to the Emperor's palace at Shin-Heian!"

If they question him, the characters discover that the priest



is called Shuuji. He had a vision of a young miko with long, dark hair seen in a mirror, who the players should recognise from prior adventures as the seeress Akishino Mako. She warned him about the keshin's arrival, and instructed him to put the girl in their hands. Shuuji explains that Nobuko was entrusted to them by her mother, two years ago, for her education; the little girl suffered from a trauma in her early childhood which has prevented her from following regular studies at school. Nobuko will follow the PCs, head down and without saying a word.

Kyoto Gosho

Leaving Ueno district, our heroes find themselves at the mercy of the forces of Yomi. Nobuko somehow attracts them. If the PCs let any enemies escape in any of the previous scenarios, they are likely to make an appearance on the road to Shin-Heian. Otherwise, choose an opponent in the bestiary and stage a surprise attack on the train to the Kansai region.

This attack's main purpose is increasing tension, and possibly inflicting a few Taint points, but in no case should it place the party in any real danger.

For the rest of the trip, Nobuko is withdrawn and quiet. The keshin may sense a slight Taint from her, which should arouse their suspicions.

The party arrives at Shin-Heian. A powerful aura issues from the Imperial Palace. The ancient Kyoto Imperial palace has been renovated and fortified; an impressive cordon of Ruby Ribbons surrounds it and combat waldoes patrol the whole sector. As with the shrines in Shin-Edo, shimenawa and o-fuda protect the ramparts of the fortress. Zanshin senses (without any sort of dice roll) reveal an unbelievable number of luminous kanji floating in the air, summoned by onmyoji in the service of the Emperor. Vigilance is the watchword, to guarantee the safety of the sovereign.

Onimachine PCs will struggle to approach the palace. For the keshin, approaching the dwelling of the Emperor in its glory is like diving into a warming bath; for an onimachine, it feels like standing too near a furnace.

The keshin must escort Nobuko to the palace alone, while the onimachines remain at a safe distance and avoid the scrutiny of the Ruby Ribbons.

Densha Otoko

The trip towards Aomori prefecture is by train. One of the male characters – who should have low Humanity or the Forgetfulness Alteration – will notice a woman in their carriage, watching them insistently. After having caught the keshin's eyes several times, she approaches the character, addressing him by his first name. "You don't recognise me? It's me, Yuriko..."

The young lady seems to expect a reaction from the PC. An Intelligence Test (applying the level of the Alteration as a penalty) brings her identity to mind; a loved one of the PC that his loss of Humanity has caused him to completely forget. She could be a cousin, an ex-girlfriend or simply a childhood friend. Yuriko seems to have something important to say, but will not insist and seems disappointed that the keshin does not remember her.

The cordon of soldiers make no attempt to keep the keshin out as they do the public; they were warned by Mako of the arrival of the characters. Suffused with the Emperor's light, the PCs immediately lose all current Taint points. An officer introduces himself and escorts them to the old ceremonial chamber, called Shishinden, while a troop of soldiers escort a terrified Nobuko to the palace Shinto shrine, "for her own good." Protesting will be frowned upon since these are the directives of the seeress herself.

The PCs enter a sumptuous room where Akishino Mako is waiting, sitting before a holographic map of Japan in augmented reality, whose surface is covered in red and green areas.

"The red areas represent the advance of the Taint in our country. In the north of the Aomori region, we're seeing the Taint extend further every day; many have died and the region is now deserted. The hydroponic farms of Shimokita peninsula have stopped producing and no longer feed the country. We need to act! A great danger threatens the region. The little girl you have brought here may help us. She could prove to be the key to the problem."

The miko remains enigmatic about the true nature of the problem, and in what way Nobuko can help. She evades all direct questions. The truth is that she simply doesn't know the exact nature of the problem, and if the keshin find out that this quest will doom Nobuko, they will refuse to take her with them.

Arriving in Town

The train arrives at its terminus at the city of Aomori (Tohoku region), where the PCs learn that the docks of the harbour city, including the countless containers abandoned behind the blockade, have been repurposed as makeshift residences.

Entering the noisy, crowded shanty town, the keshin need to find a vehicle before they can travel further north, to Shimokita peninsula. Take advantage of the interlude to stretch their legs; encourage them to visit the city's occult shops before continuing their trip. A shop presents itself: hanging from the front of one of the containers in the harbour, our adventurers will notice hundreds of banners covered in holy prayers.

This container turns out to be the home of Meguru, a larger-than-life occultist. This is the characters' chance to equip themselves with salt vials and soya beans, and to get their hands on some very useful occulttech relics. Meguru is temperamental, but insightful. She refuses to sell an item to a buyer if she knows it is not for him, but if she knows they need something, she will harass them until they take it. Today, when she learns who the players are, she'll press on them a special program she discovered in the NeoWeb: Cyber Freezer.

Listening out for rumours of events on Hokkaido, the keshin will find that the citizens are most preoccupied with the news coming from Mount Osorezan, Mount Terror. Volcanoes across the peninsula have awakened, and there have been several deaths already.

Around a corner, the party come face-to-face with an animachine. It's Onna, the hostess-robot the PCs may have already encountered in Fugu (**Makkura**, page 7) or at the Laura Palmer. If the PCs attack her – having not met her before, and sensing the aura of an oni – she runs away. The animachine has no interest in fighting, and can supply information on the situation around Mount Terror. After a chase or tracking her through town, the keshin will manage to find Onna. She will claim to be working for one of them; she has joined the army of the Shogun Tokugawa Ieyasu, better known to the PCs as... Jiro!



Cyber Freezer

This magical program works as an antivirus. If a machine running the program is possessed by a spirit or an oni, its systems are blocked and the program locks all its functions. A shockwave stuns the parasite, who becomes the prisoner of an inert carcass. The idea of using this program against animachines is tempting, but unfortunately it is only possible to install it in a machine that is healthy to start with. The programme runs for a short time (about 48 hours) before deleting itself, so it should be held in reserve until they know it's needed.

farm looks more than anything like a military base, with robots keeping watch and squads of artificials patrolling the perimeter. The machines are a mix of different makes and models from the surrounding area; and four huge demolition machines are parked at the enclosure of the farm, looking suspiciously like war machines. A huge flag flying from the roof of one of the buildings shows a red dragon design.

Whether they limit themselves to surveillance or try to infiltrate the compound, the characters will sooner or later spot the master of the place, Jiro. Now incarnated into a replica of Doctor Kido (see the *Origami* scenario in **Kuro**, page 193) and dressed in samurai armour from another era, the shogun keshin strides around the compound, giving orders to the artificials. If the characters have not played **Kuro** or **Makkura**, they will not be familiar with Jiro, but they can clearly see his ujigami Ki Imprint, which may reassure them. If they do not go to him, sooner or later the PCs will be noticed and the machines will take them to their leader. Jiro looks delighted to see the PCs and invites them to join him so he can explain the situation to them.

JAPAN'S GRANARY

The keshin travel further north. Villages bordering Mount Osorezan are all deserted. Searching the area, the characters come to a particularly tainted village (Background Taint 10), where they find the corpses of the villagers shredded to pieces in a rendering plant. There are a good hundred bodies here, and the atrocious odour turns the strongest stomachs. If Nobuko sees this spectacle, she faints.

The Taint is strongest around the plant, and the PCs will steadily gain Taint if they linger. Unfortunately, as they're preparing to leave the place, two huge rendering robots bring more corpses to feed the machinery, escorted by artificials with awakened AI from the surrounding hydroponic farms.

The machines were ordered to clean up the region of all Tainted humans... and the PCs have just gained Taint. Combat is inevitable. There are as many artificials (with a Worker Android chassis) as PCs and the two supporting robots are immensely strong (Heavy Construction Android chassis, with an additional +2 Strength).

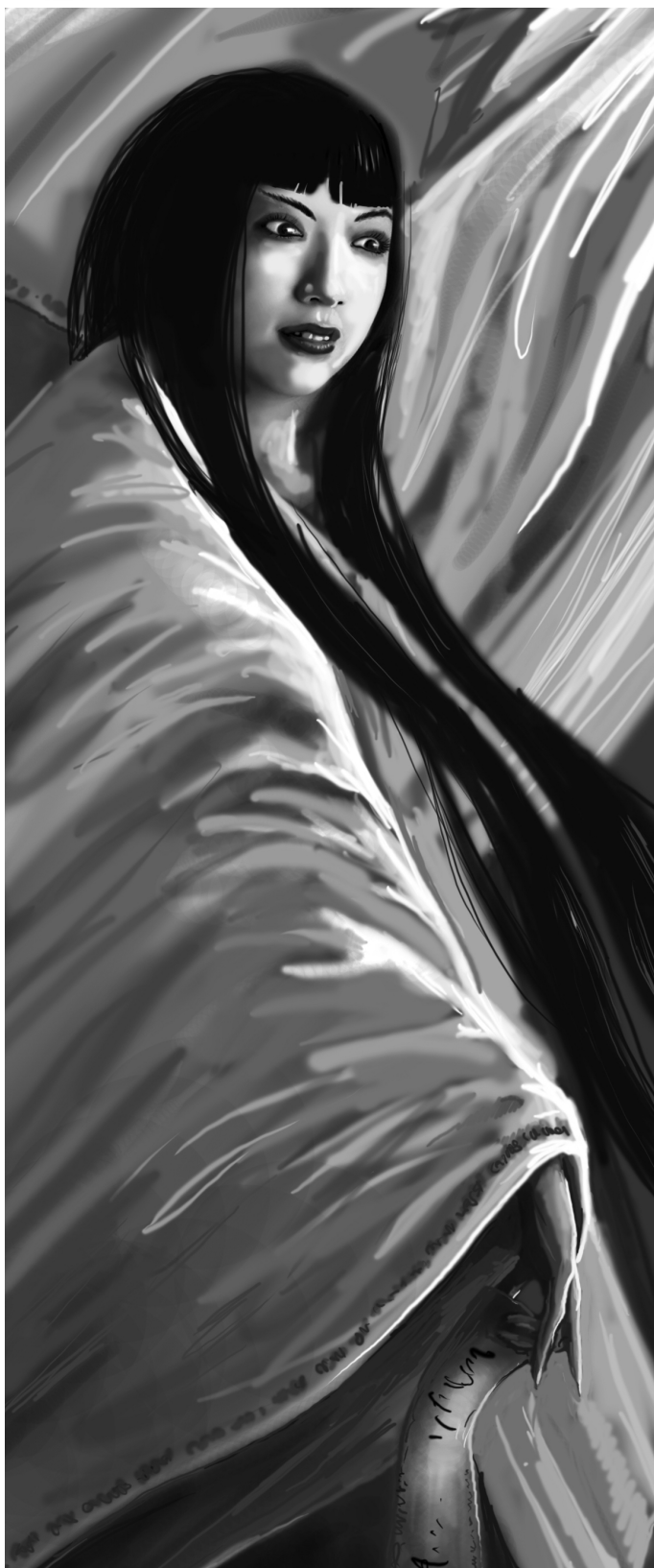
Examining the robots after the fight reveals that they come from a hydroponic farm not far from there. On investigation, the

The Ethical Choice

Jiro explains to the keshin what is going on. He has nothing to hide from them; they are on the same side.

"The Taint spreads from the volcanoes near Mount Osorezan and contaminates the humans living in the sector, bringing them under the control of a powerful oni that the animachines call 'The Puppet Master.' He gains fresh reinforcements every week. Many of the artificials you see have come to me of their own initiative to bring me this information; they have voluntarily joined the ranks of my troops. We are making efforts to contain this pestilence from spreading south. With your help, we will clean up the region."

The players don't know it yet, but Jiro is somewhat mistaken. The Puppet Master began by torturing pilgrims travelling to the sacred temple in Mount Osorezan in this troubled time; the damned souls of these unfortunates became his first servants, yurei that went on to possess the villagers and spread Taint. Jiro and his army are butchering *all* tainted humans – either possessed or merely stained by proximity – to stem their advance, but the cure is worse than the disease, since the souls of the slain are joining the ranks of the yurei.



The Shogun

Jiro opposes the will of the Emperor by working exclusively with onimachines and ignoring human casualties of his campaign. For him only results matter; methods are unimportant. He has under his command an army of robots, androids and machines from all occupations: cybernetic Yojimbo and maintenance robots, and construction machines working as siege engines. All these artificials are either awakened AIs or possessed by oni, and they have all voluntarily joined the army of the shogun Jiro. If the characters have played *Makkura*, it seems that his personality has changed since merging with the ujigami Tokugawa Ieyasu.

If the PCs do not immediately protest at the massacre of humans, Nobuko rises to her feet and, despite her young age and usual silence, shout:

"You are not a general, you're a murderer!"

An annoyed Jiro turns to the characters. Who is this girl? What is she doing here?

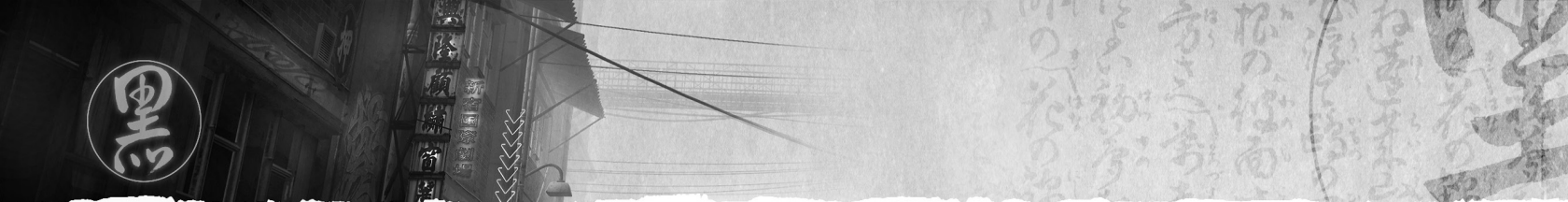
At any rate, for Jiro the Taint must be stopped by any means. The artificials have come to him for help and he must save them. For him, it is as essential as saving natural humans.

The Puppet Master has become so powerful that it will take an army to reach its lair and eliminate it. The keshin will not be able to convince Jiro not to send in his troops. If the PCs oppose him, a furious Jiro will remind them, if appropriate, that he has saved their lives several times (see the scenario Tsukurigoto, in *Makkura*). The characters did the same in *Origami*, but he dismisses that in his fervour.

The PCs are free to join the shogun or not.

The Climb

At Mount Osorezan, the yurei have not remained idle. Crowds of possessed humans march on the surrounding



villages, attacking them and corrupting them, spreading the Taint like a disease.

Shogun Jiro is ready to stem the advance of impurity on Shimokita peninsula. His huge demolition machines come into action and raze the tainted villages one after another.

If the PCs accompany Jiro in this carnage, they will be called on to fight several of the yurei, which may clue them in on the real enemy taking over the valley.

If, on the other hand, they firmly oppose the actions of the artificers, they will need to be willing to fight. The clash will not necessarily be to the death, but each side believes it is in the right.

Mount Terror is a treacherous, volcanic area, where almost all humans are in the grip of yurei. The keshin will not be able to attack a possessed human directly without risking killing them and gaining Taint; which is of course part of the oni's plan. If they thought to buy vials of salt or soya beans, they can throw them at a possessed person while shouting "oni wa soto!" ("get out evil!") and spend 4 Ki points, which ejects the yurei from the body, rendering it vulnerable to magical attacks. The yurei will seek to possess another body as quickly as possible, certainly taking over some of Jiro's Yojimbo androids. If the PCs are allied with the shogun, they might have had the good idea of installing the Cyber Freezer program in his machines. If that's not the case, the battle will be tough, and the keshin will have fewer qualms about smashing metal and plastic.

Black clouds gather at the peak of the mountain. Lightning flashes across the sky.

One of the keshin will notice the roof of a building, standing out from the horizon: the temple he saw once in a dream. As if responding to their advance, an earthquake shakes the ground, which suddenly opens at their feet. Earthquakes will recur every 1D6 turns, increasing the difficulty for tests by one level (+4 to the target number).

Crevices run through the rocks all around and lava flows down the sides of the mountain. You need to be fast to reach the shrine, since every minute the place becomes an increasingly perfect reconstruction of Hell.

THE TEMPLE IN MOUNT TERROR

The keshin finally enter the temple. Apparently, the sanctuary was spared by the earthquakes...

The last one in sees a kekkai forming around the temple. Once the kekkai is established, the serene, mystical appearance of the temple disappears, giving way to a gloomy, disquieting ambiance. The candles are extinguished. The roar of the volcano is muffled. Through the windows it is possible to see a blood red sky; and the mountain rock has given way to torrents of lava.

Light dims. Shadows crawl over the ground, while the sun is masked by sinister clouds. Blood starts flowing down the walls. Place by place, the tatami seem to move slightly, as if they were alive.

The body of Mrs Kotani is lying on the floor in a pool of blood. Nobuko rushes towards the body, screaming "MOMMA!"

"If you wanted to make a discreet entrance, you failed..."

The demonic voice resounds throughout the room. Like any good villain, the Puppet Master cannot help but gloat and reveal his master plan before striking his final blow, sure of his own victory. He explains to them that he created the yurei and controls them like puppets. Thanks to his spectral army, he can subvert both humans and machines. When his army is big enough, he will march on Shin-Heian-kyo, sweeping aside the Emperor's meagre resistance and breaking open the kekkai he maintains on Japan.

The Puppet Master answers every question without hesitation; as he sees it, the characters have no chance of getting away. He knows how the gates of Yomi-No-Kuni close, and why not? He is one of the 99 Oni of the Magagoto.

The keshin can make use of this exchange to buy time and study the terrain. They can no longer leave the temple, and every five game turns spent in this place will gain them another Taint point. Touching the bleeding walls will have them gain one extra Taint point. Once again, they must act quickly.

Examining Mrs Kotani's corpse will reveal a Gantai held firmly in her hands.

FINAL CONFRONTATION

Suddenly, a huge steel monster bursts through a wall. The chassis resembles a grotesque puppet like those from Bunraku, the traditional Japanese puppet theatre. It carries a tetsubo in one hand and a katana in the other; its extraordinary strength sweeps aside everything in its way.

No doubt the characters can take this monster apart in short order... at which point the pieces of the robot reassemble themselves to reform the metal behemoth, with all its Hit Points back. Every time it falls down, it's the same story. Nothing can stop it.

Even if the keshin are more than a match for the steel monster, they'll eventually, in this kekkai, receive enough Taint points to destroy them. Time is not on their side.

The solution is to keep the puppet busy while looking for the hiding place of the puppeteer. In Bunraku theatre, a puppet is operated by three people, wearing black in order to merge with the background. The same goes for this oni, who is made up of three entities matching the three traditional puppeteers: the Omo-zukai, the Hidari-zukai and the Ashi-zukai. These entities merge with the shadows dancing in the recesses of the temple.

The temple is so tainted that Zanshin vision will be of no use to notice it properly. The trick is to wear an active Gantai tuned to holograms, which reveals thin light beams connecting the puppeteers to the creature. The keshin will need to blindly attack in the direction of the light beams; if the Omo-zukai is hit, the puppet can no longer use its right arm in the next turn. If it is the Hidari-zukai, it is the left arm that will be immobilised in the next turn. Finally, hitting the Ashi-zukai will prevent the puppet from moving.

At the death of any of these creatures, the subsequent explosion of Taint inflicts 1D6 Taint points on all keshin present. When the Taint becomes unbearable (risking expelling the ujigami from the keshin), Nobuko, who has been hiding in a corner of the temple, will start to scream.

She will start to convulse, and then her body will explode in an atrocious blood spray. A moryo comes out of the remains of the corpse; a sort of flayed body with greyish skin, very long limbs and a skull made up only of jaws. The Taint covering Nobuko allowed it to grow inside its host, making her explode

Some Events

- In a half-ravaged village they may again find Yuriko, the young woman they met in the train to Aomori. She was returning home when she was possessed by a yurei and has fallen under the control of the Puppet Master. Whether the PCs accompany Jiro's army or not, they may want to protect her from the attacks of the machines. For that they'll need to completely neutralise her and take her with them.
- While fighting machines or yurei, the character who received the vision of Mrs Kotani calling for help at the beginning of the scenario has a new flash. He finds himself at the entrance of the temple in Mount Terror. Entering the holy place, he sees yurei dancing around the woman, who is trying to defend herself with a tanto. An imposing silhouette with irregular gait enters the room: *"You thought to escape me by seeking sanctuary here? Where is your daughter? She is a threat to us all... Do you know?"* Completely terrorised, the woman stabs herself to end her torment. Back to reality, the PC sees Nobuko burst into tears. The little girl remains silent until the top of the mountain.
- While crossing the swamps, the keshin discover a number of rusty robot carcasses scattered on the ground; a cemetery of artificials, placed there by possessed humans. The water in the marsh and the cybernetic bodies has reached a high level of Taint (5 points), making each wreck a possible opponent that can at any moment be possessed by a yurei.

If one of the characters has the gift of Divination, he becomes aware, while approaching the volcanoes, that Jiro's army is falling into a trap. He's proven right when the artificials reach the foot of Mount Osorezan, and the Puppet Master provokes a violent lava flow that drowns most of the artificials in liquid fire. There will be many fatalities and the metal carcasses will feed the cemetery described above.



like a balloon. Attracted by the Taint from the corpses of the tormented villagers, the moryo starts to swallow all the impurity of the place, growing to devour all corpses in its path.

The characters lose a Taint point per turn, but the moryo never stops growing. The PCs' first instinct may be attacking the moryo, which is a very bad idea. The moryo isn't there to attack the Kami at all, but to eat all the Taint it can swallow coming from the corpses in Mount Terror.

Once the three entities of the Puppet Master are killed, the kekkai on the temple falls. The volcano cools and the hatred of the yurei is appeased, swallowed by the moryo. The humans of the region have their minds back. The moryo, if it's still alive, will continue devouring all the Taint in the mountain and surrounds until it disintegrates like a pillar of ashes and disappears in the ground.

When Jiro's troops finally arrive at the temple, and in spite of their differences, the shogun seems relieved to find the keshin still alive. The PCs will certainly have a bitter taste in their mouths. Sacrificing a little girl to save a Tainted region: their method was not all that different from Jiro's, in the end.

黒

NPCS

The Puppet

This android looks like a samurai wearing a traditional kimono.

Characteristics:

DEX 5	STR 6	STA 8	REF *
INT *	PER *	CHA *	WIL *

Secondary Characteristics:

HIT 100	DT 0	DEF 28
ACT **	REA **	MOV 5

Skills:

Combat Skills

Hand to Hand

Brawling (kick) 5

Melee Weapons

Kenjutsu 11

Staves (Tetsubo) 11

Special Rules:

* For characteristics marked with a "*", use the highest level of the puppeteer.

** Its Action and Reaction characteristics are equal to the number of puppeteers still in play.

The puppet cannot take the same action twice in a turn (hit twice with the katana, move twice...)

When handling two weapons, the puppet is not affected by the modifiers to REA of each weapon.

The Puppet Master

Type: Oni-Daimyo

The Puppet Master is made up of three entities. Each has its own hit points and its own power. An entity must use one of its actions each turn for the puppet to use the corresponding limbs.

DEX 5	STR 3	STA 3	REF 6
INT 4	PER 4	CHA 7	WIL 10
Ki 50			

Secondary Characteristics:

REA 4	MOV 5
-------	-------

Omo-zukai

This entity handles the right arm and the head of the robot. It can launch energy attacks in such a way that they seem to come from the puppet.

HIT 99	SW 33	DT -33
DEF 30	ACT 3	

Skills:

Dodge 11

Powers:

- * Kekkai (level 10)
- * Kuji-kiri (level 10)

Hidari-zukai

This entity handles the left arm of the robot. It can send a stunning shockwave in such a way it seems to be caused by the android's tetsubo.

HIT 66	SW 22	DT -22
DEF 34	ACT 2	

Skills:

Dodge 5

Powers:

- * Kekkai (level 10)
- * Kuji-Kiri (level 10)

Ashi-zukai

This entity handles the legs of the robot. It can restore the health of the puppet in such a way that the android seems to self-repair.

HIT 66	SW 22	DT -22
DEF 34	ACT 1	

Skills:

Dodge 5

Powers:

- * Kekkai (level 10)
- * Uses a ritual similar to "Sha, the Inner Lion" of the Kuji-Kiri technique (level 10)





CLOSING THE GATES OF YOMI

When Ryugu rose from the sea and the gates of Yomi opened, no one was prepared to face what was released. The wave of dark kami hit Japan hard in a time of weakness and made great gains. But the sacrifice of an innocent girl in the temple at Mount Terror has brought this surge to an end. The forces of light have gathered at last and are ready to make a stand. There will be no more retreating and regrouping for the allies of the Emperor. There will be no easy victory, as the dark kami have envisioned. Now the war has truly begun.

The Tensei campaign does not end with this book, far from it. But where you go from here is up to you. And we will not send you into battle with the greatest darkness Japan has faced empty handed! Below we'll take a look at a few of the threads and plots available to the Gamemaster for continuing the campaign. You might follow just one of these, or layer several together as best suits your group.

The Hunt for the 99

To finally rout the forces of evil, the Emperor must see the Magagoto destroyed. But even the power of Susanoo was not enough, and he still desperately needs to regain his strength. The 99 Oni generals will have to be defeated if the keshin are to stand any hope of success. Not only are these generals powerful, but not all of them will be easy to find. The Magagoto is no fool, and will ensure some of them are hidden away.

This campaign will be best suited to martial characters, but it should be more than just a series of combats. Not every oni is one of the 99, and investigation will be required to find the right ones. The player characters will have to research old legends and seek out scholars and mystics who might know how to recognise these foul creatures. Each oni will be different in some way, making

it also vital to research their strengths and weaknesses before taking them on. No two will use the same tactics. As the player characters cut through their ranks, they will find their opponents becoming more and more powerful. In the initial encounters, they may have the element of surprise, or find their foes underestimate them. But as their reputation grows among their enemies, they will find they are taken far more seriously. As they close on their goal, they will find themselves the most wanted agents of the Emperor. If the Magagoto begins to fear they might succeed, he will do his best to make the hunters the hunted.

Defending the Barrier

If his forces are to spread out from Japan, the Magagoto needs to see to it that the great kekkai barrier around the islands falls. The obvious way to do this is to kill the Emperor, but he is the most heavily defended man in the country. So instead of seeking the fall of the whole barrier, the Magagoto focuses on making a breach in it somewhere. Enough power targeted in one place might be enough to create a gate to the outside world. It will be up to the player characters to uncover these plots and see to it they fail.

This part of the campaign will rely heavily on investigation. Just blasting at the barrier will prove fruitless for the dark spirits, and doing so will reveal their presence far too easily. They will instead have to seek out weak parts, testing it in places where the Taint is enough to thin its power. Then they will need to use subtle and ancient rituals to pick away at the threads of power holding the barrier together. To do this they will need to be subtle, hiding or disguising themselves to avoid detection until they have completed the mission. The player characters will have to be clever to root out these secret plots, and patrol the barrier with vigilance.



Help from Outside

Perhaps the barrier is not as impassable as the enemies of the Emperor believe. The player characters might be sent on a dangerous mission to make contact with the outside world! The Emperor secretly opens a gateway in the barrier to allow the player characters to leave Japan, closing it immediately afterwards. Once they pass through, the player characters are alone, cut off from their allies but not their powers. What will they find out here, after so long?

The keshin will need to be highly diplomatic and convincing simply to avoid being locked away by the first people they meet. The rest of the world understands nothing about what has been going on since the Kuro Incident. Most believe the barrier is a manifestation of the anti-nuclear shield; others that it is a side effect of unproven technology. The world is holding its breath; waiting to find out if Japan will be destroyed by these undoubtedly powerful energies.

It may not be very safe outside Japan either. Powerful spirits also roamed outside Japan before the Kuro Incident. They have been planning and preparing for this day, but the arrival of the keshin is a potential spanner in their plans. Defeating them might prove the player characters are here to help, and that the world needs to rally behind the Emperor. Perhaps they will find other forms of *ujigami*, the spirits of Western ancestors such as Arthur or Merlin who might join the fight.

But just making new friends will not be enough. Even if they secure that help, how can the heroes report back to Japan that they are not alone? And in turn, they know nothing of how the war is going in Japan. Will the barrier suddenly fall and a mighty Magagoto stand over a Japan covered in darkness, ready to take on the rest of the world?



Restoring Susanoo

If the Magagoto is to be destroyed, there are few who might accomplish this task better than Susanoo. But the thunder spirit has used up so much power already and is in no condition to face such an enemy again. In preparation for the final conflict, the player characters must seek ancient sources of power that might restore their ally for the final fight.

The player characters might face anything on this quest. They must seek out and tour the places of power in Japan, some pure, some horribly tainted, in the hope of finding what they need to restore the god. Time is a factor, too, as the power of the Magagoto grows daily. The Gamemaster might combine this campaign thread with the hunt for the 99 Oni; perhaps they should bring the hearts of these Oni back to Susanoo to consume and take their power? If so, they will need to be purified first, and there will be few places or people capable of doing so.

Once Susanoo is restored, it will be time for the final battle. The keshin must escort him to Izumo as the forces of light engage the main armies of the dark kami as a distraction. Together the keshin and the thunder god must face the Magagoto, and its most powerful lieutenants. If Susanoo should fall, it will be up to the heroes to finish the job. This will be the last chance for the forces of light. The destiny of Japan and the world will be in their hands.

Return to Kuro

Even the end of the campaign might not mean the end of *Kuro*. With the Magagoto gone, not every dark spirit will leave the mortal realm. Government and order can be restored, and Japan can take its place again on the world stage; but the door to the supernatural has been opened and will never truly close entirely. There will still be dark creatures to face on the streets of Shin-Edo, or even London or New York. New breeds of monster will appear, strange ghosts will haunt places of power once more and the plots of Yomi and its mortal allies will never end completely.

It will be up to the player characters to continue to stand against the darkness, to root it out where it hides and force it into the light. With the power of the kami in their hands, new factions will rise as their allies or their enemies. They will once again hold the fate of Japan in their hands. It is forever their destiny.



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CHARACTER SHEET: KESHIN

Name _____ Size _____

Age _____ Weight _____

Gender _____ Eyes _____

Profession _____ Hair _____

Kaiso _____ Ujigami _____

SKILLS – RITUALS

Skill

Level

Gimikku

MAIN CHARACTERISTICS

Body

Mind

Strength (STR) _____ IA (INT) _____

Stamina (STA) _____ Perception (PER) _____

Reflexes (REF) _____ Willpower (WIL) _____

Dexterity (DEX) _____ Charisma (CHA) _____

SECONDARY CHARACTERISTICS

HIT _____

DEF _____

SW _____

ACT _____

REA _____

DT _____

MOV _____

HUM _____

TAI _____

KI _____

NOTES AND EQUIPMENT

RANGED WEAPONS

Weapon

Level

Range

Damage

Ammunition

S / M / L / E

MELEE WEAPONS

Weapon

Level

Damage

CHARACTER SHEET: ONIMACHINE

Name _____ Size _____

Age _____ Weight _____

Gender _____ Eyes _____

Profession _____ Hair _____

Template _____ Chassis _____

SKILLS – RITUALS

Skill

Level

Gimikku

MAIN CHARACTERISTICS

Body

Mind

Strength (STR) _____ IA (INT) _____

Stamina (STA) _____ Perception (PER) _____

Reflexes (REF) _____ Willpower (WIL) _____

Dexterity (DEX) _____ Charisma (CHA) _____

SECONDARY CHARACTERISTICS

HIT _____

DEF _____

SW _____

ACT _____

REA _____

DT _____

MOV _____

SEI _____

TAI _____

KI _____

NOTES AND EQUIPMENT

RANGED WEAPONS

Weapon

Level

Range

Damage

Ammunition

S / M / L / E

MELEE WEAPONS

Weapon

Level

Damage