



FORTUNES & WINDS



ORIENTAL ADVENTURES



FORTUNES & WINDS

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To use the d20 System™ portions of this book, a Dungeon Master also needs the *Player's Handbook*™, the *Dungeon Master's Guide*™, *Rokugan*™, and *Oriental Adventures*. A player needs only the *Player's Handbook*™ and *Oriental Adventures*.

To use the L5R RPG 2nd Edition portions of this book, a GM needs the *Game Master's Guide* and the *Player's Guide*.

A player needs only the *Player's Guide*.

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THROUGH BLOOD AND THUNDER PART ONE

THE YEAR 1128, MONTH OF THE DOG

"I have nothing further to teach you," the old man had said.

There had been no disdain, no judgment, no emotion whatsoever. It had been a simple statement of fact. The Grand Master no longer had any use for a student, at least not if that student was Morito Tokei. With those six words, Master Kuro vanished as quickly as he had come.

...

"Do not let this consume you, Tokei," Morito said, frowning at his brother across the low table.

"You cannot understand, brother," Tokei replied with a sigh. "You do not know what it is like to call upon the kami. The Grand Master showed me how to summon wind, rain, and flame, to hear the eternal voice of the earth. I thought that I was making great progress, as if I were on the edge of a great breakthrough... instead I am abandoned, as if I am not even worth the great Kuro's time."

Morito shrugged. "Perhaps you are not," he replied, lifting a chunk of fish with his chopsticks and popping it into his mouth.

Tokei looked at his brother curiously.

"That seems a rather insulting thing to say," Toku said, peering at the unshaven mercenary with a hurt expression. Toku had been the only member of Toturi's command staff to remain in the village with Tokei after the Black Lion had departed.

Morito chewed thoughtfully for a moment before explaining. "Tokei and I have wandered the Empire for years now. Because we are ronin, everyone has told us we're worthless, from the lowest peasant to the great daimyo of the Unicorn."

"Except for Kuro," Tokei corrected.

"And Toturi," Toku added.

"And that's exactly my point," Morito said, pointing at Toku with his chopsticks — an impolite gesture, but Morito had never been much for etiquette. "Look at Toturi. There is no question that he is an important man. Everyone knows he is important, and look where that has gotten him. Dishonored. Reviled. Half the Empire wants him dead. The other half probably wants him tortured first. In the long run, he has it even worse than we do. Better, I think, to go unnoticed than make a spectacle of yourself and end up like the Black Lion. Perhaps Kuro was doing you a favor, turning his back on you like that. The student of Naka Kuro, that's the sort of person who attracts attention, but another ronin shugenja sitting in a sake house in Nanashi Mura? Nobody cares."

"I don't understand," Tokei said. "Are you saying that it is better to hide like a coward than to risk failure?"

"What sort of life is that?" Toku sneered, disgusted. "Without honor, one may as well be dead."

"I'm saying that there's no point in being honorable," Morito said. "I'm saying that there's no sense in sticking your neck out without a good reason."

"Toturi has a great purpose!" Toku said.

"That he does," Morito agreed. "As much as the Empire may hate him right now, you have to respect him. But you, brother?" He turned to Tokei. "You had no purpose studying under the Grand Master other than to scrounge up all the power you could, as quickly as you could. That's not noble. That's the sort of thing that gets you into trouble."

"I was not 'scrounging.' I intended to put the Grand Master's studies to good use."

"Such as?" Morito sipped from his sake.

Tokei stalled, his mouth open but no words coming out. "I'm sure I would have found a purpose in time," he said finally.

"Of course," Morito said with a laugh. "That's always been your trouble, little brother. Always eager to throw yourself into the breach, never smart enough to stop and think about what's on the other side."

"Like when I left the Unicorn to follow you as a ronin?" Tokei said.

"Exactly. I never asked you to follow me." Morito shook his head slightly. "Well, I'm done eating," he said, rising from his seat. "Good knowing you, Toku. Are you ready to go, Tokei?"

"I'm not leaving," Tokei said, looking down at the table.

Morito gave a sharp chuckle. "You can't be serious. Yogo Junzo knows that Nanashi Mura is allied with the Black Lion. Rumor has it his oni are marching here even now. Toturi has his hands full in the south; we need to leave before the snows set in. The Horde will wipe this place off the map of the Empire."

"Toturi asked me to stay here," Tokei said.

"Only because he wanted you out of the way," Morito said.

"Nonetheless," Tokei said. "This is my duty."

Morito looked around. "To die for a village of ronin? Nobody here really cares about Toturi's cause, or they'd be with his army right now."

"I care," Toku said, frowning.

"And if there were a hundred of you in Nanashi Mura, Toku, things would be different," Morito said. "But they're not. If you're looking for something to fight for, Tokei, I don't think you'll find it here."

"I have to begin somewhere," Tokei said, meeting his brother's gaze.

"I will stay and fight, Toku."

The young ronin nodded quickly.

Morito sighed. For a moment, it looked as if he were about to argue. He scratched at his unshaven cheek and gave another sharp chuckle. "All right, then," Morito said. "I'll tell you what, brother. If you survive, and you find what you're looking for, you come let me know. Hm?" Though his words were light, Morito's voice was thick. The gruff ronin knew that he would never see his brother again.

"I will," Tokei said. "Will you do me a favor as well?"

"Name it," Morito asked.

"When you win back your honor and become a true samurai again — for I know that you will — name your castle after me," Tokei said.

"Ha," Morito replied. "Of course. I will name it the Castle of the Ox, for you are surely as stubborn as one."

"Fair enough," Tokei said.

With a final grin, Morito bowed to his younger brother and exited the sake house.

"You made the right decision, Tokei," Toku said. "We may die, but we will die with honor."

As Tokei listened to Morito's horse galloping away, he wondered if Toku was right.

THREE MONTHS LATER...

"Foolish samurai!" the oni roared. "You should have run when you had the chance."

This, Tokei reflected as he unleashed a blast of jade in the oni's face, had definitely been a poor decision.

The village was surrounded. The Shadowlands Horde had broken through Nanashi's feeble defenses on every side. The armies of the walking dead marched beside squat bakemono and terrible oni that defied all description. Only a handful of defenders remained to stand against the onslaught, and they were quickly losing ground to the Horde. Toku and a few others had ridden out in search of reinforcements, but there had been no sign that they had even escaped.

Again and again Tokei shouted to the kami, summoning forth the power of jade in the manner that Naka Kuro had taught him. Beams of green energy lanced into the Horde's ranks, striking down three

creatures at a time. It was not enough. The Horde seemed endless, and they were intent upon making an example of this tiny village that had allied itself with the Black Lion.

"What do we do, Tokei-sama?" shouted a desperate voice at his side. It was Tsuo, the young peasant who now led the Eyes of Nanashi. The young man's face was pale with fear. Tokei wondered how much of that fear was reflected in his own eyes.

"Keep fighting!" Tokei shouted. He had hoped to say something more inspiring, but it was all he could manage under the circumstances.

It seemed to have the desired effect. The samurai redoubled their efforts, holding the line against the enemy. Then Tokei heard it; it was not his encouragement that had inspired the troops — it was the loud, clear note of a Unicorn hunting horn. Reinforcements? There may be hope yet.

"I think not, little samurai," shouted a voice from the ranks of the Shadowlands Horde. A massive creature stepped forward from the army, as tall at the waist as the largest ogre. The beast held a great nodachi in each hand. Its skin was covered in sharp, glistening scales and two great horns curled from the crest of its head. Around its neck it wore a necklace of shattered helms, taken from Crab samurai. The Shadowlands forces withdrew at his approach. Even the mindless undead seemed to sense this creature's power. "Lord Junzo demanded that an example be made of Nanashi. You will all die today."

Even from here, Tokei could sense the creature's power. The combined forces of Nanashi stood no chance. Unless the entire Unicorn army rode to their rescue, even the reinforcements would likely perish when they arrived.

It was then that Naka Kuro's final lesson took shape in Tokei's mind. The young shugenja realized what he must do.

"No!" he shouted, stepping forward from the ranks of the village's defenders. The power of the fire kami swirled in brilliant aura around his body, as if angered by the corruption of the oni.

The oni laughed at Tokei. "Ah," it said. "Run, little shugenja. Turn around and scamper into the forest while you can. Perhaps you can live to tell others what we have done to your village. I will give you this chance, for your bravery."

Tokei merely scowled, and said three words.

"Not this day."

Raw energy flared from the former student of the Grand Master, and the world itself seemed to bend to Tokei's will. A great sphere of white energy widened from the shugenja's position, consuming all else in its path. The armies of the Horde screamed in pain and terror as they scuttled away. Trees were torn from the earth by their roots. The skies above, clear only an instant before, now churned with clouds as black as night. Lightning crackled from Tokei's fingers, and fire burned in his eyes. The great oni did not try to turn or run as the others did; it knew there could be no escape from what was to come. It seemed to bow in respect for a single instant before the wave struck and its body crumbled into dust.

The Eyes of Nanashi turned to retreat as well. The daring paused to look back at the onslaught Tokei had unleashed. The wise just ran. The earth trembled and seemed to scream as the shugenja released his power. Tokei fell to his knees in the center of the storm, struggling vainly to control the magic. He knew that there was only one way.

Tokei glanced up just as the reinforcements arrived at the edge of the clearing, and for a single instant he could see his brother at Toku's side, leading the charge to save Nanashi Mura. Morito shouted something, but Tokei could not hear.

Tokei could control the power he had summoned no longer. He surrendered himself to the power of the spell. One instant he knelt amid the great crater of destruction he had unleashed. The next instant, he was merely gone, and all was at peace once more.

• • •

One week later, the ronin Morito arrived at the secluded home of the Grand Master, carrying news of his former student's sacrifice.

"Sacrifice?" Kuro replied. "What sacrifice? My student has merely begun his greatest journey." With a nod of satisfaction, he closed the door in Morito's face.

THE SPIRIT REALMS

BY TORITAKA SHIRANE, PHANTOM HUNTER

Look around you. The world that you perceive is but one of many possible states of existence. Countless other realms lie superimposed over the realm of mortal men. Some of these realms are much like our own; others are by their very nature inconceivable. Some of these realms are inhabited, and the creatures that dwell in them live out their entire existences as unaware of us as we are of them. The creatures that dwell in these realms are referred to as "spirits," and thus the worlds they live in are called "the Spirit Realms." The term "spirit" does not necessarily imply that a creature has returned from the dead, or that it is in any way less real than a human. It merely describes creatures not native to Ningen-do, our own realm.

The concept of realms beyond our own may seem strange and unfamiliar. However, the presence of the Spirit Realms can be found throughout the history of the Empire. The existence of the Shadowlands, the War of Spirits, the Legacy of the Forge, and the many tales of ghosts, shapeshifters, and trickster spirits are direct evidence of these Realms. My family has studied the Spirit Realms since our founding, and has often consulted with the Kitsus, whose particular expertise is the realms of the dead. Even with our combined knowledge, there is much about the Spirit Realms that is unknown, but I will share what knowledge I have.

One does not enter Tengoku as if entering the next room or journeying to a faraway province. A traveler does not seek out the Heavens. They surround us at all times; we merely fail to perceive that realm and are thus unable to affect it. Likewise, denizens of these other realms are often unable to perceive our existence, and thus cannot interact with us.

There are many different ways to enter the Spirit Realms, with the most common being an alteration in the way one perceives reality. The most extreme example of this is death. When a mortal's soul dies, it immediately transfers to one of these realms, where it awaits reincarnation. Depending upon a person's actions in life, he may find himself reincarnated as a lesser beast, tormented by the oni of Jigoku, or sent to live in blessed harmony with his enlightened ancestors. Some spirits, such as *hengyokai*, never reincarnate but seem effectively immortal. Other creatures, such as the *Naga*, have their own form of reincarnation entirely. Indeed, I suspect that the *Naga Akasha* is similar in many ways to our Spirit Realms; perhaps it exists in the realm of *Yume-do* or *Meido*. My encounters with members of the *Naga* race lend credence to this theory.

Of course, it is not necessary for one to die to enter a new realm of existence. As was proven during the Battle of Oblivion's Gate, spirits can also enter other realms by the intervention of powerful magic. Some realms are said to be "closer" than others. Again, this is not due to any physical proximity (all Spirit Realms overlap one another) but because they are similar in one way or another. Travel between two strongly

disparate realms may be very difficult, if not impossible. For example, consider Jigoku, the Realm of Evil. In Jigoku it is relatively simple to make the transition to a similarly horrifying realm such as Gaki-do, the Realm of the Hungry Dead. A realm such as Chikushudo, the Realm of Animals, differs from Jigoku in such a way that passage from one directly to another is very difficult, and the heavenly realms of Tengoku are virtually inaccessible.

Entering the Spirit Realms is a difficult task even for those who know what they are seeking. Among humans, only shugenja and monks seem to have any reliable ability to locate passages into these realms. Most scholars of the Spirit Realms believe that the magical abilities possessed by such individuals are responsible, but I believe it is wisdom, rather than magic, that allows one to journey the realms. As monks and shugenja have an enhanced understanding of the nature of the universe, they can comprehend and enter these strange realms more easily. I have heard legends that races such as the zokujin, kenku, and Tsuno have extraordinary talents at traversing the Spirit Realms, but have been unable to question any such creatures at length.

Most spirits only occupy and comprehend one Spirit Realm at a time. Some enlightened (or unfortunate) creatures can perceive multiple realms simultaneously, coexisting in each. The spirits known as kami, though simple in many ways, can comprehend and exist in all Realms at once (though they generally remain in Ningen-do). This makes the kami of great use as messengers between the Spirit Realms, if one has the means to enlist their services.

There are ten documented Spirit Realms, including Ningen-do. I believe that there could be countless more, all existing alongside our own in perfect harmony. However, most of these would be so different from our own realm of existence that their natures would be entirely incomprehensible. The documented Spirit Realms are as follows.

CHIKUSHUDO

The Realm of Animals — This realm is very close to our own, and all ordinary animals can perceive it. When a soul is reincarnated as an animal, it must pass through this realm. Chikushudo is the domain of the greater animal spirits as well as the curious and sometimes destructive hengeyokai. It is also the chosen home of Inari, Fortune of Rice.

GAKI-DO

The Realm of the Hungry Dead — This is a realm of punishment for those who lived lives consumed with selfishness or dishonor. These spirits live to feed, to consume until their hunger is satisfied and they can rise to a higher realm. They are often quite harmless, but a few varieties of gaki are malicious and deadly. They should be treated with utmost caution.

JIGOKU

The Realm of Evil — Common parlance has caused this name to be applied to all Spirit Realms. I believe this is a fiendish trick of some oni or another, but a custom is a custom. When you see the term "Jigoku" used to refer to the domain of the blessed ancestors try not to be confused, though your ancestors no doubt gnash their teeth in disgust. Jigoku is a realm of utter darkness. All that exists there is pure, soulless evil. Those rare souls unfortunate enough to be cast into Jigoku seldom return, but deserve such punishment. Jigoku is home to oni and the source of the Shadowlands, where the borders between our realms are far too thin.

REIDO

The Realm of the Dead — This is the realm where spirits go to await reincarnation. It is a domain of waiting, ruled by Emma-O, the Fortune of Death. Occasionally, confused spirits slip through the gates to Ningen-do once more in an attempt to resume their former lives. Emma-O's servants then venture forth to bring these lost souls home.

NINGEN-DO

The Realm of Mortals — This is the realm in which we live. To the spirits, our world is just as real as any other — just as solid and often just as ephemeral. Like any Spirit Realm, Ningen-do has its share of strange creatures. The zokujin, the ningyo, the Nezumi, the Ashalan, and many other races all seem to have originated in this world.

SAKKAKU

The Realm of Mischief — This Spirit Realm is the home of the mujina, kappa, and kenku (though the kenku often deny it). Mischief spirits enjoy journeying to the mortal world solely for the sake of causing trouble and confusing unfortunate mortals. The spirits of Sakkaku are not evil, merely mischievous. They are unpredictable, but also very wise. Those who can meet their tricks with equal cunning may be offered friendship.

TENGOKU

The Celestial Heavens — This realm is the home of most of the Seven Fortunes, the Elemental Dragons, and many other divine entities. It is also the home of deities that were born in our own realm, such as Yakamo, Hitomi, and many lesser Fortunes. Mortals are rarely allowed to perceive Tengoku, though it is said the True Emperor can see into Tengoku at will. The Kami who founded the great clans and their brother, He Who Shall Not Be Named, originated from this realm but the touch of our realm prevented them from returning home.



TOSHIGOKU

The Realm of Slaughter — When a warrior dies in senseless battle or perishes consumed by thoughts of revenge, his soul is cast into Toshigoku. Toshigoku is a realm of endless battle, where spirits kill spirits only to rise up and kill again. Fortunately, Toshigoku does not border closely on the realm of mortals, for its inhabitants are a cruel and savage lot. Instances of spectral armies destroying entire towns or the incidence of mysterious Shadow Samurai are, in fact, examples of visitors from Toshigoku. This is one of the two realms that opened into our own through Oblivion's Gate.

YOMI

The Realm of the Blessed Ancestors — Those who have fulfilled their destinies and their karma are allowed to enter into this realm upon their death. Yomi borders very closely upon our own world; our ancestors walk alongside us and guide our every action as shiryo — guardian spirits. This is the other realm that opened into our own through Oblivion's Gate.

YUME-DO

The Realm of Dreams — This is the only realm aside from Ningen-do that ordinary mortals regularly perceive. While sleeping, our minds wander this world. The shiyokai, predatory harbingers of nightmares, and the mysterious but often helpful baku, both originate in this realm. In truth, this realm seems to be composed of countless lesser realms, all created by the minds of dreamers.

USING THE SPIRIT REALMS IN YOUR GAME

Entering the Spirit Realms is quite difficult, the subject of conjecture and legend. Only the most extraordinary individuals can enter these realms and return intact. As such, a journey to one of the Spirit Realms makes the perfect subject for an adventure. A journey to Yume-do seeking a way to defeat a powerful Onisu, a quest into Yomi to find a long-lost ancestor, or even a journey into Sakkaku to seek the wisdom of an ancient trickster spirit are perfect examples. Such a quest could be an interesting change of pace for a long-running campaign.

When planning a campaign in the Spirit Realms, there are several things that should be taken into account. Often times, a trip into a hostile realm endangers not just a visitor's life, but his very soul. A character who lingers too long in a place where he does not belong may find himself unable, or even unwilling, to leave.

The following section describes many rules regarding the Spirit Realms. Most of these are stated in very general terms, so that the later chapters of this book can specifically define them as per individual realms.

ENTERING A SPIRIT REALM

There are three methods by which a Spirit Realm may be entered — death, passages, and spontaneous transition.

DEATH

"That urn full of ashes is not your grandfather, samurai, any more than the horse that you rode to find this temple is you."

— Kitsune Juri, Caretaker of the Hall of Ancestors

When a person dies, his or her soul is immediately transferred to one of the other Spirit Realms. Where a soul ultimately ends depends upon what sort of life they lived, and what karma (if any) they must work off from their past life. All must wait for a time in Meido, where the Fortune of Death judges each soul and determines its fate. Particularly wicked individuals end up in Toshigoku, Gaki-do, or even Jigoku. Others may pass through Chikushudo and be reincarnated as animals. Those who lived a worthy and honorable life will either pass into the blessed fields of Yomi, or be reincarnated in Ningen-do.

Generally speaking, death is not a reliable way for a player character to enter a Spirit Realm. It's generally a one-way trip. Also, depending on the soul's final destination, it may remember little or nothing of its former life. In addition, there is no way of knowing exactly where a soul will come to rest. A samurai who believes that he has been a worthy and honorable person may find himself in Gaki-do because he was excessively arrogant, or in Toshigoku because he died consumed with thoughts of revenge. No one truly knows a soul's destination before death, except perhaps the Fortunes themselves.

PASSAGES

"I have never seen anything quite so beautiful — or horrible — as Oblivion's Gate."

— Isawa Hochiu, Master of Fire

In any place where two Realms are extremely similar, there exists a strong bond, or passage, between them. This similarity may be obvious physically or spiritually, or it may be completely obscure and understood only by the denizens of those Realms. For example, passages to Chikushudo often form in areas where the land is lush and untamed, resembling the primal landscapes of the Realm of Animals. Passages to Toshigoku linger in the sites of pointless battles or mass murder. Passages to Meido seem to follow a pattern no one truly understands, forming at the will of the Fortune of Death. Passages to "close" Realms are easier to find than passages to "distant" Realms. Finding a passage between two barred Realms (such as Jigoku and Tengoku) is impossible. A traveler seeking such a passage must first journey to a Realm that is not barred, then continue onward from there.

Just because a passage exists does not mean that someone can pass from one Realm to another as easily as walking into a room. Passages are not doorways; they are merely areas where a person can realign his own awareness of the Realms, and thus move from one to another. Most passages merely represent the potential for travel between Realms. For a traveler to exploit the passage, he must know how to activate it. The easiest way to do this is through the use of magic — many spells exist that allow one or more travelers to sense the existence of a passage and activate it. (These spells are described at the end of this section.) While it is not unheard of for a traveler to unwittingly find himself in another Realm (those lost in the Shinomen or Kitsune Mori may very well pass into Chikushudo without realizing it), it is extremely rare. Realms that allow the possibility of such spontaneous travel mention it in their chapters.

Certain rare nemuranai facilitate the use of passages. Oblivion's Gate is a perfect example — a powerful nemuranai that allowed passage into both Toshigoku and Yomi, and created new mortal bodies for spirits who passed through its arch. The hengeyokai sometimes craft charms that allow their friends to escape into Chikushudo in time of need. Other artifacts can create passages — the Favors of the Dark Oracles create a continuous passage to Jigoku in their presence. Such items are rare and powerful, and are described throughout this book.

One risk any traveler in the Spirit Realms should keep in mind is that returning home is not always easy. Some passages do not work both ways. Once a visitor from Ningen-do uses a passage, he may have to find another passage to Ningen-do to return home.

SPONTANEOUS TRANSITION

"To find heaven, one must remain serene enough to avoid all distractions, and distracted enough to not become absorbed in serenity."

— Hoshi Wayan, wandering monk

The most unpredictable manner in which one can enter the Spirit Realms is through spontaneous transition. For every Realm, this means something different. An aged monk who comes to a sudden understanding of the true meaning of harmony may ascend to Tengoku as a Minor Fortune. A shugenja who tinkers with the powers of maho may be pulled physically into Jigoku to be tormented by vile oni. Every night, sleepers throughout the Empire wander the Realm of Dreams. Such transitions, if they happen within a campaign, are always left to the whim of the GM, but suggestions for when, why, and how these things can happen are described throughout this book.

NEW MECHANICS

The Legend of the Five Rings game setting has been officially presented in two separate game systems, the *Legend of the Five Rings RPG 2nd Edition System* (presented in the *Player's Guide* and *Game Master's Guide*) and *Wizards of the Coast's d20 System™* (presented in *Rokugan*, the official supplement to *Oriental Adventures*). While these two systems are somewhat dissimilar, the setting presented in both versions of the game is the same, and thus it is our intent to present a sourcebook that is useful no matter which of these systems you choose to use when running your game.

Generally, when a new rule or mechanic is presented, whenever applicable we will present equivalent d20 System™ and L5R RPG 2E System versions in close proximity.

Rules and options for the d20 System™ look like this.

Rules and options for the L5R RPG 2E System look like this.

Occasionally, extensive new information may be exclusive to a specific system (such as New Paths for the L5R RPG 2E System or new feats for the d20 System™). In such a case, the information will follow the same convention as above. The d20 System™ material will appear in black and the L5R RPG 2E System material in blue.

In the case of characters, occasionally, a character's name will be followed by a short explanation of his character class in lieu of full statistical information. Such an example might look like this:

TORITAKA TATSURE

[Samurai 6/Berserker 4/Shadowlands Veteran 10; Hida Bushi 5/Hida Avenger 3]

The information presented before the semicolon is the character's class and level in the d20 System™. The information presented after the semicolon is the character's rank and school in the L5R RPG 2E System.

Sometimes material must be presented for one system or the other. In such cases, this text will be contained in a callout box with a gray background, such as the one below. The headers for these boxes will clearly label which information is for the d20 System™ and which information is for the L5R RPG 2nd Edition ("L5R RPG 2E").

JEALOUS REALMS

"Getting into Jigoku is easy. As for getting back... surely you can't be serious."

— Omoni, Shaper of Flesh

A number of the Spirit Realms seem to have a will of their own, and compete with other Realms for possession of the creatures that live within them. The most obvious example is the Shadowlands Taint. The Taint is the influence of Jigoku, seeking to transform souls into its pawns. Though a person corrupted by the power of the Shadowlands Taint might never physically enter Jigoku, the corruptive power of that Realm suffuses him at all times, perverting his actions.

Other Realms, such as Ningen-do, do not seek to corrupt, but only possess. For this reason, spirits from other Realms are very careful when entering Ningen-do, lest they become trapped here. Remember that the original Kami once dwelled in the Heavens, but were forced to remain in the mortal world after the first Hantei's duel with Lord Moon. The jealous nature of Tengoku had suffused even the Kami, preventing them from returning to the Heavens.

All jealous Realms use a mechanic similar to the Shadowlands Taint as they attempt to take possession of a creature. In each of the following chapters, the jealousy of a particular Realm is described as follows:

JEALOUSY

This describes how often, and under what circumstances, a Realm attempts to take control of a creature.

CONTROL

This describes when a creature is considered a full native of the jealous Realm, and the consequences of that control. Some Realms seek to control or influence their inhabitants' actions. Others are more passive, and simply possess travelers for the sake of possessing them. Some Realms (such as Jigoku) will not relinquish their hold on a creature, but will gladly share it, letting their minions travel freely through other jealous Realms.

Table I-1: Control Points

Control Points	Control Modifier*	Bonus Spells†								
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1-5	0	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
6-10	0	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
11-15	+1	1	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
16-20	+1	1	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
21-25	+2	1	1	1	—	—	—	—	—	—
26-30	+2	1	1	1	—	—	—	—	—	—
31-35	+3	1	1	1	1	—	—	—	—	—
36-40	+3	1	1	1	1	—	—	—	—	—
41-45	+4	2	1	1	1	1	—	—	—	—
46-50	+4	2	1	1	1	1	—	—	—	—
51-55	+5	2	2	1	1	1	1	—	—	—
56-60	+5	2	2	1	1	1	1	—	—	—
61-65	+6	2	2	2	1	1	1	1	—	—
66-70	+6	2	2	2	1	1	1	1	—	—
71-75	+7	2	2	2	2	1	1	1	1	—
76-80	+7	2	2	2	2	1	1	1	1	—
81-85	+8	3	2	2	2	2	1	1	1	1
86-90	+8	3	2	2	2	2	1	1	1	1

* This modifier may apply to certain rolls, saves, or checks. This varies by Spirit Realm.

† Certain Realms may or may not offer certain types of bonus spells to spellcasters. This varies by Spirit Realm, and stacks with bonus spells for high ability scores, if any.

If a creature escapes into another Realm, does this Realm's possessive nature fade? Some Realms, like Jigoku, maintain their hold permanently. Others, such as Toshigoku, are conditional; those who escape the Realm of Slaughter find that the bloodlust quickly fades.

Control by a Realm is measured much like the Shadowlands Taint. (The Shadowlands Taint is, in fact, simply Control exerted by Jigoku.) Once Control reaches a certain level, a character may find himself acting differently. The amount of Control a Realm has over a character is measured in levels. The effects of various levels of Control vary by Spirit Realm, and some are even beneficial.

Control is measured in points, with each ten points causing the "control modifier" of that Realm to increase as indicated on Table I-1. Control by a Realm is measured by how many ability score modifiers are exceeded by the control modifier.

Control is measured in ranks, similar to Honor. Once a character gains ten points of control, the rank increases by one. Control by a Realm is measured by how many Rings are exceeded by the rank of Control.

LEVELS OF CONTROL

Level One

Control modifier higher than two ability score modifiers.

Control Rank higher than lowest Ring.

Level Two

Control modifier higher than three ability score modifiers.

Control Rank higher than two Rings.

Level Three

Control modifier higher than four ability score modifiers.

Control Rank higher than three Rings.

Level Four

Control modifier higher than five ability score modifiers.

Control Rank higher than four Rings.

Level Five

Control modifier higher than all ability score modifiers.

Control Rank higher than all Rings.

ABILITIES

Some Realms grant their inhabitants natural abilities. Jigoku, for example, allows Tainted individuals to draw on their corruption for power — at a price. Ningen-do will always draw its inhabitants back home. Other Realms may offer other abilities.

Control Modifier: This modifier may apply to one more ability checks or saving throws, depending on the Realm. Rules for using the control modifier are given under specific Realms. Some do not use this modifier at all.

PROTECTION FROM JEALOUS REALMS

The easiest way to avoid becoming an unwilling inhabitant in some strange Spirit Realm is by bringing along an item suffused with the power of your home Realm. Each Realm offers different protection to its natives, with differing amounts needed to resist the control of foreign Realms. These protective items work similarly to jade as protection against the Shadowlands Taint. Each time a Realm attempts to assert control over a visitor, one unit of the protective item is expended. (A "unit" is defined under the rules for using each item.) Each Realm lists how often a unit of protection lasts. Carrying multiple units increases the protection, but only to a point.

PROTECTIVE ITEMS AND THE SHADOWLANDS

Any items listed as used for protection under a certain Realm may be used to protect natives of that Realm from the Taint while in the Shadowlands. These items protect for half the duration of jade, and decay into corrupted sludge in the same manner.

JADE

Many shugenja and scholars consider jade to be a "perfect" mineral, a careful balance of all five elements. The natives of any Spirit Realm may use jade as a protective item against the controlling nature of foreign Realms. The only exception to this is Jigoku — the purity of jade brings the oni and corrupted denizens of the Realm of Evil great pain. They cannot rely upon jade to protect them against the control of other Realms.

A finger of jade — a shaft of the mineral about the length and thickness of a man's finger — counts as one "unit" of jade.

MAGIC IN SPIRIT REALMS

The kami can be found throughout the Spirit Realms. However, some Realms tend to attract certain types of kami, and therefore certain types of magic are more powerful in these Realms. The chapter pertaining to each individual Realm will describe in detail which sorts of magic are more or less effective within its boundaries.

Bonus Spells: Certain Realms are strong in some varieties of magic, and grant bonus spells of specific types to those with a high Control modifier. If a controlled individual is not already a spellcaster, no bonus spells are gained. Rules for using bonus spells are given under the rules for specific Realms.

NEW SPELLS 10201

DETECT PASSAGE

Divination
Level: Shu 6, Sor/Wiz 7
Components: V, S
Casting Time: 1 full round
Range: Medium (100 ft. + 10 ft./level)
Area: Quarter circle emanation from you to the extreme of the range
Duration: Concentration, up to 5 minutes/level (D)
Saving Throw: None
Spell Resistance: No

You can sense the naturally occurring passages that link the various Spirit Realms to one another. For those who possess knowledge of the passages and how to perceive them, they are actually fairly common and easy to access.

How much information you gain on the passage depends upon how long you study a particular area or passage.

1st Round: Presence or absence of Spirit Realm passages.

2nd Round: Precise location of the passage.

3rd Round: The Spirit Realms that can be accessed by entering the particular passage.

PASSAGE INTO CHAOS

Alteration
Level: Shu 7 (Water)
Components: V, S
Casting Time: 1 full round
Range: 50 ft.
Area: You and willing creatures within 50 ft., maximum one creature per five levels
Duration: Instantaneous
Saving Throw: Will negates
Spell Resistance: No

This spell activates any existing passages to Chikushudo or Sakkaku, sending all those in the affected area to that Realm immediately. (If the passage connects to both Realms, the caster must choose which Realm is the destination.) Using this spell blindly is not recommended; if the caster is not aware of where he is going, and the portal to a jealous Realm is in the vicinity, he may find himself irrevocably pulled into that Realm.

PASSAGE INTO DARKNESS

Alteration
Level: Shu 7 (Earth), Maho 5
Saving Throw: Fortitude negates

As *passage into chaos*, except that this spell activates passages to Gaki-do or Jigoku.

PASSAGE INTO DEATH

Alteration
Level: Shu 7 (Fire)
Saving Throw: Reflex negates

As *passage into chaos*, except that this spell activates passages to Meido or Toshigoku.

PASSAGE INTO DREAM

Alteration
Level: Shu 7 (Air)
Saving Throw: Reflex negates

As *passage into chaos*, except that this spell activates passages to Yume-do or Tengoku.

PASSAGE INTO HARMONY

Alteration
Level: Shu 7 (All), Void 5
Saving Throw: Will negates

As *passage into chaos*, except that this spell activates passages to Ningen-do or Yomi.

NEW SPELLS 12ND EDITION

DETECT PASSAGE

Element: All
Mastery Level: 4
Duration: Concentration
Area of Effect: Self
Range: 100' radius

This spell enhances your natural senses, extending them into all the Spirit Realms simultaneously. As long as you concentrate, you can sense the presence and location of any natural passages to other Spirit Realms within the area. With a successful Void roll vs. TN 20, you can determine which Spirit Realm the passage leads to. At the GM's discretion, particularly weak or dangerous passages may have a higher TN.

PASSAGE INTO CHAOS

Element: Water
Mastery Level: 5
Duration: Instantaneous
Area of Effect: Caster and up to two creatures within range
Range: 20'

This spell activates any existing passages to Chikushudo or Sakkaku, sending all those in the affected area to that Realm immediately. (If the passage connects to both Realms, the caster must choose which Realm is the destination.) Unwilling creatures must make an opposed Water roll against you to avoid being taken along.

Using this spell blindly is not recommended; if the caster is not aware of where he is going, and the portal to a jealous Realm is in the vicinity, he may find himself irrevocably pulled into that Realm.

Raises: For each Raise made, you may bring an additional creature along.

PASSAGE INTO DARKNESS

Element: Earth

Mastery Level: 5

As Passage Into Chaos, except that this spell activates passages to Gaki-do or Jigoku. Unwilling creatures must make an opposed Earth roll against you to avoid being taken along.

Any caster with at least one Rank of Taint may learn and cast this as a Mastery Level 4 spell, but gains Taint as if it were a maho spell.

PASSAGE INTO DEATH

Element: Fire

Mastery Level: 5

As Passage Into Chaos, except that this spell activates passages to Meido or Toshigoku. Unwilling creatures must make an opposed Fire roll against you to avoid being taken along.

PASSAGE INTO DREAM

Element: Air

Mastery Level: 5

As Passage Into Chaos, except that this spell activates passages to Yume-do or Tengoku. Unwilling creatures must make an opposed Air roll against you to avoid being taken along.

PASSAGE INTO HARMONY

Element: All

Mastery Level: 5

As Passage Into Chaos, except that this spell activates passages to Ningen-do or Yomi. Unwilling creatures must make an opposed Void roll against you to avoid being taken along.

Ishiken may learn this spell as a Mastery Level 4 Void spell.

INHABITANTS OF THE SPIRIT REALMS

"I am a spirit, yes, but I am as real as you are, samurai. Just as solid, just as warm, just as soft... would you care to find out for yourself?"

— The Lady Kitsune

Creatures who hail from the Spirit Realms are collectively referred to as spirits. Despite this word's connotations, many spirits are neither incorporeal nor dead. In fact, even many intangible ghosts are not truly incorporeal; they just do not exist fully in the Mortal Realm and thus can pass through solid objects.

Spirits gain certain abilities and immunities by entering other Realms. These abilities are as follows:

Spirit Subtype: Many creatures in this book have the "spirit" subtype described in *Oriental Adventures* and elaborated on in *Creatures of Rokugan*. The benefits of this subtype are as follows: Spirits gain a +4 racial bonus against all enchantment effects except those of other spirits. Spirits can sense any passages to their home Realm within one mile. Spirits are also vulnerable to certain spells and effects that affect the spirit subtype.

Spirit Abilities: Spirits have +10 on all Willpower rolls vs. hostile magic except that cast by other spirits. Spirits can sense any passages to their home Realm within one mile. Certain spells specifically target and affect spirits.

In their home Realms, spirits are no longer considered spirits. When visiting other Realms, human characters are considered spirits. Nezumi characters are never considered spirits. Most denizens of Jigoku are not considered spirits, unless they were spirits prior to their corruption.

RETURNED SPIRITS

Of all the denizens of the Spirit Realms who have walked Rokugan, none have had greater impact than the souls of those who have died only to return. One need look no farther than the Splendid Emperor Toturi I — or the War of Spirits — to see what a tremendous effect these beings have had on Rokugan's development over the past few decades.

In the era of the Four Winds, relatively few true spirits remain in the Realm of Mortals. In accordance with the wishes of Toturi after the Battle at Oblivion's Gate, the majority returned to their home Realms through the noble ritual of seppuku, or simply retired until such a time as the karmic wheel would return them to their rightful place. Many allowed themselves to be subjected to a Phoenix ritual that severed their ties to the Spirit Realms and made them fully mortal once more. So far as anyone in the Empire is aware, the only spirit to escape this fate was Toturi himself, who remained exactly as he had emerged from Oblivion's Gate until the time of his death.

Rokugan is a land of secrets, however, and a handful of spirits remained within the Empire after the Battle at Oblivion's Gate, although very few realize it. Since Toturi's death, those few who remain have become more open with their true nature, since there is no longer an Emperor to demand that they return to their Realms or undergo the rather unpleasant Phoenix ritual of return.

Returned spirits are generally treated with a mix of respect and caution. They are respected for their wisdom and experience, for they have seen and done things that no mortal being can claim. However, they are also treated carefully because of the inherently unstable nature of beings from certain Realms. The War of Spirits proved that spirits are a force to be reckoned with, and few will willingly or knowingly risk antagonizing them.

JIGOKU

Fortunately, few of the souls consigned to Jigoku ever gain the power or force of will necessary to reenter the Empire under their own power. Of those few that do, the majority are mere shadows of their former selves, insubstantial remnants of humanity with only a vague semblance of sentience to guide their actions. The souls of humans trapped within Jigoku are known as yokai, and suffer one of two fates. Either they are torn apart by the evil forces that dominate that dark Realm, becoming little more than mindless wraiths summoned to Ningen-do by strong negative emotions, or they resist the tumultuous energies of Jigoku and carve their own tiny domain out of the blackness. The latter are extraordinarily few.

A small handful of spirits are rescued from their gruesome fates by the Blessed Guard of Yomi and imprisoned within that Realm until they repent of their sins.

A small number of yokai managed to escape the Spirit Realms during the Battle at Oblivion's Gate and return to the Realm of Mortals. Obviously, these individuals kept their status a closely guarded secret and avoided the Phoenix ritual of return, which would have revealed their true nature. Instead, these yokai have remained largely in hiding. While some seek to atone for their past lives, others have embraced the madness that their power and Taint have bestowed upon them. Although none has yet come to the attention of the Empire at large, it is only a matter of time until one distinguishes itself in some way and alerts the clans to this hidden threat.

MEIDO

The general populace of Rokugan believes Meido to be an empty, silent Realm where the spirits of the unfulfilled dead go to contemplate their failures and await judgment. All dead souls arrive in Meido to be judged by Emma-O, the Fortune of Death. From this stark Realm, a soul may travel on to Yomi if it is found worthy, or it may be condemned to one of the lower Realms: Gaki-do, Toshigoku, or Jigoku. Under normal circumstances, those spirits that can reach from the Realm of the Dead to the Realm of Mortals are morose, sorrowful creatures that cannot comprehend their deaths, only knowing that they have left behind some kind of unfinished business. While typically not aggressive, these spirits have posed a threat to the welfare of the living in the past, and are often dealt with by the likes of the Toritaka phantom hunters and the Kitsu sodan-senzo.

The return of spirits from Meido to Ningen-do is extraordinarily uncommon. The Fortune of Death, Emma-O, is an unforgiving, unwavering master, and he does not allow spirits to exit his domain until such time as he deems it appropriate. Exceptions occur, however, and a small number of such spirits returned to the Empire through Oblivion's Gate. Like yokai, the number of Meido spirits to cross over was extremely low in comparison to the number of spirits from Yomi and Toshigoku, and thus hardly anybody realized that any at all had emerged. Also like the yokai, few Meido spirits submitted to the rituals that the Phoenix offered to return them fully to life, preferring to remain spirits. This was not due to any malice on the part of the spirits. Spirits escaped from Meido are virtually emotionless, and very introspective. They gain insight into the natural order of things in the mortal realm that few are willing to give up.

TOSHIGOKU

The Realm of Slaughter is an empty, barren place. It is little wonder that its forsaken spirits leapt at the opportunity to return to Ningen-do when Oblivion's Gate opened. In fact, the great majority of the spirits who returned to Rokugan through the Gate were from Toshigoku. Their unending thirst for battle found plentiful foes in the Shadowlands and minions of the Lying Darkness in that great battle. When it was over, the spirits finally found their bloodlust at an end. For some, it was the first time in centuries that the crimson haze lifted from their vision.

Unfortunately, this respite was brief. After years of endless combat, the spirits of Toshigoku were not prepared to abandon it so easily. Those who returned refused Toturi's order to return to Toshigoku and flocked to the banner of Hantei XVI, a genocidal madman who had spent centuries in Toshigoku himself. This led to the War of Spirits, the conclusion of which saw most of these spirits returned to Toshigoku. A small number hid from the forces of Toturi. Now that the Emperor has died and the Empire is embroiled in conflict, they no longer feel the need to conceal themselves, and travel the Empire once more.

YOMI

The return of the legions of Toshigoku to Rokugan through Oblivion's Gate could easily have spelled the doom of Emperor Toturi's empire had not many shiryo of Yomi passed through as well. As shiryo have great respect for the Celestial Order, most chose to respect Toturi's wishes and immediately returned to their native Realm. A large number did remain, however, as they recognized the coming conflict with Hantei XVI. The valiant blessed ancestors helped to turn the tide against the forces of Hantei XVI during the War of Spirits. During the War, many of these individuals formed an elite fighting force known as the Heroes of Rokugan, and were essential in helping Toturi keep his throne.

Afterward, many of the former shiryo (including the Heroes of Rokugan) were allowed to remain within the Empire. Some quietly chose not to do so, however, and remained in their half-spirit form rather than fully embrace mortality. Slow to age as all spirits are, these few have remained in Rokugan throughout the rule of Toturi and his subsequent death, and many now seek to find their place in the Empire during the reign of the Four Winds.

NEW FEATS

MEDIUM

You speak easily with the spirits of the dead, and they with you.

Prerequisites: Void Use, Knowledge (arcana) (4 ranks)

Benefit: Any undead creature can automatically understand you, and you can automatically understand them. This is not a function of language, but a primal, spiritual connection that confers mutual understanding. In addition to this benefit, you gain a +2 competence bonus to any Charisma-based ability or skill rolls with returned spirits (those individuals who possess any of the templates detailed in this chapter).

SPIRIT BLOOD

You are the child of a spirit that returned to the Empire through Oblivion's Gate. Although you do not possess the wide array of abilities your parent did, there are hints of your spiritual lineage within you.

Prerequisites: Void Use

Benefit: When spending Void points, you gain a +3 bonus rather than the normal +2. This additional +1 bonus is cumulative with any other Void bonus effects, such as those conferred by level benefits of the inkyo class.

NEW TEMPLATES

DENIZEN OF MEIDO

"Denizen of Meido" is a template that can be added to any neutral humanoid or animal creature (referred to hereafter as the "base creature"). The creature gains the "spirit" subtype. It uses all of the base creature's statistics and special abilities except as noted here.

Death Sense (Su): Denizens of Meido can perceive the aura of an individual who is destined to die of natural causes within the next 24 hours. This aura manifests as a vague black outline around an individual.

Spirit Qualities (Ex): Denizens of Meido gain a +4 resistance bonus against all enchantment effects except those of others with the spirit subtype. Denizens of Meido can sense all passages to Meido within one mile.

Ageless (Ex): Denizens of Meido age at three-quarters of the normal rate for a member of their race or species.

Saves: As base creature

Abilities: Same as base creature, except that its Charisma is reduced by -4, and its Wisdom is increased by +2.

Skills: As base creature

Feats: As base creature

Climate/Terrain: Any land

Organization: Solitary

Challenge Rating: As base creature

Treasure: Standard

Honor: Any non-dishonorable

Alignment: True neutral

Advancement: As base creature

SAMPLE DENIZEN OF MEIDO

This example uses a 5th level human samurai as a base creature.

SHINJO RYENKU, UNICORN CLAN DENIZEN OF MEIDO (SAMURAI 5)

Medium-sized Humanoid (Spirit)

Hit Dice: 5d10 (27 hp)

Initiative: +6 (+2 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative)

Speed: 30 ft.

AC: 16 (+2 Dex, +4 partial armor)

Attacks: Katana +8

Damage: Katana 1d10+3

Special Attacks: None

Special Qualities: Death Sense, Spirit Qualities, Ageless

Saves: Fort +4, Ref +3, Will +6

Abilities: Str 15, Dex 14, Con 11, Int 12, Wis 15, Cha 4

Skills: Battle +10, Iaijutsu Focus +5, Ride +10, Spot +5, Wilderness Lore +10

Feats: Dancing With the Fortunes, Improved Initiative, Shinjo's Technique, Void Use, Way of the Unicorn

Climate/Terrain: Any land

Organization: Solitary

Challenge Rating: 5

Treasure: Standard

Honor: 3

Alignment: Neutral

Advancement: By character class

DENIZEN OF TOSHIGOKU

"Denizen of Toshigoku" is a template that can be added to any chaotic, dishonorable humanoid creature (referred to hereafter as the "base creature"). The creature gains the "spirit" subtype. It uses all of the base creature's statistics and special abilities except as noted here.

Bloodlust (Ex): Denizens of Toshigoku are predisposed toward violence. When one is presented with hostility or combat, even a combat that does not involve it, it must succeed at a Will save (DC 15) or immediately attack.

Feast on Death (Su): Denizens of Toshigoku are accustomed to the constant thrill of combat, and can draw strength from slaughter. Immediately after it has made an attack that kills another sentient being, the Denizen of Toshigoku regains 1d10 hit points.

Spirit Qualities (Ex): Denizens of Toshigoku gain a +4 resistance bonus against all enchantment effects except those of others with the spirit subtype.

Denizens of Toshigoku can sense all passages to Toshigoku within one mile.

Ageless (Ex): Denizens of Toshigoku age at three-quarters of the normal rate for a member of their race or species.

Saves: As base creature, with an additional +2 to all Fortitude saves.

Abilities: As base creature, with a +2 bonus to its Strength and Constitution, and a -2 penalty to its Charisma and Wisdom.

Skills: As base creature

Feats: As base creature

Climate/Terrain: As base creature

Organization: As base creature

Challenge Rating: As base creature +2

Treasure: Standard

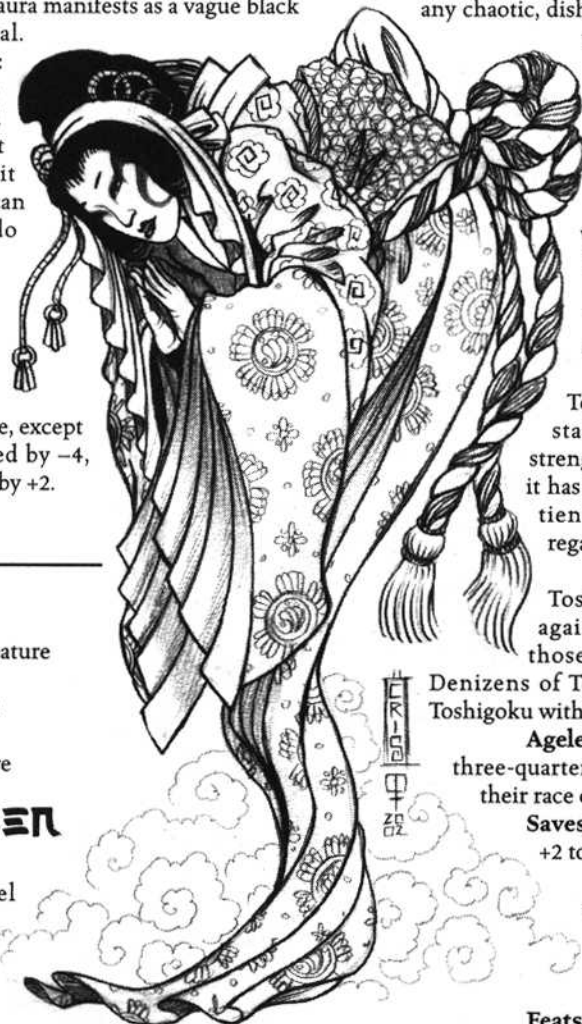
Honor: Dishonorable

Alignment: Usually chaotic

Advancement: By character class

SAMPLE DENIZEN OF TOSHIGOKU

This example uses an 8th level human fighter as a base creature.



MATSU GOHIME, LION CLAN DENIZER OF TOSHIGOKU (FIGHTER 8)

Medium-sized Humanoid (Spirit)
Hit Dice: 8d10+24 (68 hp)
Initiative: +2 (+2 Dex)
Speed: 30 ft.
AC: 18 (+2 Dex, +4 partial armor, +2 Dodge)
Attacks: Katana +14/+9
Damage: Katana 1d10+4
Special Attacks: None
Special Qualities: Bloodlust, Feast on Death, Spirit Qualities, Ageless
Saves: Fort +11, Ref +4, Will +1
Abilities: Str 18, Dex 14, Con 16, Int 12, Wis 8, Cha 6
Skills: Climb +15, Handle Animal +9, Jump +15, Ride +13
Feats: Armor Focus (partial armor), Cleave, Death Trance, Improved Critical (katana), Power Attack, Way of the Lion, Weapon Focus (katana), Weapon Specialization (katana)

Climate/Terrain: Any land
Organization: Solitary
Challenge Rating: 10
Treasure: Standard
Honor: 1
Alignment: Chaotic neutral
Advancement: By character class

DENIZER OF YOMI

"Denizen of Yomi" is a template that can be added to any honorable human or animal creature (referred to hereafter as the "base creature"). The creature gains the "spirit" subtype. It uses all of the base creature's statistics and special abilities except as noted here.

Damage Resistance (Ex): Denizens of Yomi gain DR 5 against any damage from a dishonorable opponent.

Honorable Aura (Su): Denizens of Yomi are surrounded by an aura that subtly influences those around them. No honorable citizen of Rokugan can attack a non-hostile Denizen of Yomi without a successful Will save (DC 20).

Spirit Qualities (Ex): Denizens of Yomi gain a +4 resistance bonus against all enchantment effects except those of others with the spirit subtype. Denizens of Yomi can sense all passages to Yomi within one mile.

Ageless (Ex): Denizens of Yomi age at three-quarters of the normal rate for a member of their race or species.

Saves: As base creature, with an additional +2 bonus to all Will saves.

Abilities: As base creature, with a +2 modifier to its Dexterity and Wisdom.

Skills: As base creature

Feats: As base creature

Climate/Terrain: As base creature
Organization: As base creature
Challenge Rating: As base creature +2
Treasure: Standard
Honor: 3+
Alignment: Any lawful
Advancement: By character class

SAMPLE DENIZER OF YOMI

This example uses a 6th level human shugenja as a base creature.

ASAHINA YORIKO, CRANE CLAN DENIZER OF YOMI (SHUGENJA 6)

Medium-sized Humanoid (Spirit)
Hit Dice: 6d6+6 (27 hp)
Initiative: +5 (+1 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative)
Speed: 30 ft.
AC: 14 (+1 Dex, +3 masterwork partial armor)
Attacks: Wakizashi +3 melee
Damage: Wakizashi 1d6-1
Special Attacks: Spells
Special Qualities: DR 5/honorable, Honorable Aura, Spirit Qualities, Ageless
Saves: Fort +2, Ref +2, Will +7
Abilities: Str 8, Dex 12, Con 13, Int 14, Wis 14, Cha 16
Skills: Concentration +10, Craft (Netsuke) +11, Diplomacy +12, Heal +11, Knowledge (Arcana) +11, Knowledge (Yomi) +11, Spellcraft +11
Feats: Craft Tsangusuri, Depths of the Void, Improved Initiative, Void Use

Climate/Terrain: Any land
Organization: Solitary
Challenge Rating: 8
Treasure: Standard
Honor: 4
Alignment: Lawful good
Advancement: By character class

Spells: Shugenja spells per day (6/7/6/4; base DC 13 + spell level; Elemental Focus — Air, Asahina School): 0 — *commune with elements, daze, flash of insight, flight of doves, ghost sound, guidance, read magic, summon*; 1st — *awaken the spirit, burning hands, cure light wounds, expeditious retreat, obscuring mist*; 2nd — *cat's grace, detect thoughts, lessons of the lion*; 3rd — *clairaudience/clairvoyance, haste*.

FREED YOKAI

"Freed yokai" is a template that can be added to any non-good humanoid (referred to hereafter as the "base creature"). The creature gains the "spirit" subtype. It uses all of the base creature's statistics and special abilities except as noted here.

Maho (Sp): Freed yokai can cast maho spells as if they possessed two levels of the maho-tsukai prestige class. If a yokai already possesses levels of the maho-tsukai prestige class, he casts spells as if two levels higher.

Spirit Qualities (Ex): Freed yokai gain a +4 resistance bonus against all enchantment effects except those of others with the spirit subtype. Freed yokai can sense all passages to Jigoku within one mile.

Tainted (Su): Freed yokai retain the Taint that wracked their spirits in Jigoku. They begin with 11 points of the Taint and the corresponding +1 Taint modifier.

Ageless (Ex): Freed yokai age at three-quarters of the normal rate for a member of their race or species.

Saves: As base creature, with a -2 modifier to all Will saves.

Abilities: As base creature, with a +2 modifier to its Constitution and a -2 modifier to its Wisdom.

Skills: As base creature

Feats: As base creature

Climate/Terrain: As base creature
Organization: As base creature
Challenge Rating: As base creature +2
Treasure: Standard
Honor: 0 or 1
Alignment: Any non-lawful, usually chaotic evil
Advancement: By character class

SAMPLE FREEED YOKAI

This example uses a 7th level human shugenja as a base creature.

KUNI WAZINU, CRAB CLAN FREEED YOKAI

(SHUGENJA 6/MAHO-TSUKAI 1)

Medium-sized Humanoid (Spirit)

Hit Dice: 7d6+11 (48 hp)

Initiative: +4 (+4 Improved Initiative)

Speed: 30 ft.

AC: 13 (+0 Dex, +3 masterwork partial armor)

Attacks: Wakizashi +6 melee

Damage: Wakizashi 1d6+2

Special Attacks: None

Special Qualities: Maho, Spirit Qualities, Tainted, Ageless

Saves: Fort +6, Ref +2, Will +2

Abilities: Str 14, Dex 10, Con 14, Int 12, Wis 8, Cha 15, Taint +2

Skills: Bluff +7, Concentration +12, Heal +9, Knowledge (Shadowlands) +11, Wilderness Lore +4

Feats: Improved Initiative, Maho Focus, Taint Binding, Void Use

Climate/Terrain: Any land

Organization: Solitary

Challenge Rating: 9

Treasure: Standard

Honor: 0

Alignment: Chaotic evil

Advancement: By character class

Spells: Maho Spells per Day (6/7/7/6/4; base DC 11 + spell level): 0 — *be the mountain, call earth, commune with elements, mage hand, mending, pebble charm, read magic, summon*; 1st — *blood rite, burning hands, cure light wounds, magic weapon, sanctuary, whispers of the land*; 2nd — *desecrate, endurance, hold person, lesser restoration*; 3rd — *inflict serious wounds, speak with dead, stone shape, tremor*; 4th — *phantasmal killer*.

NEW ADVANTAGES & DISADVANTAGES

DENIZEN OF MEIDO

15 POINTS

You escaped the Realm of the Dead through Oblivion's Gate and dwell among the mortals. While not as fulfilling as life was the first time, it is far preferable to imprisonment by the Fortune of Death, Emma-O. You suffer a +5 to the TN of all social rolls because of your flat, emotionless state; you simply cannot express emotion. You can, however, sense the approach of death in others. You can perceive a black aura surrounding someone who will meet their end through natural causes within the next day. You can move to change this fate, but doing so attracts the attention of Emma-O, something you are usually loath to do.

DENIZEN OF TOSHIGOKU

16 POINTS

You escaped Toshigoku through Oblivion's Gate, and escaped the purge of your kind following the War of Spirits through a combination of luck and skill. You are still tempestuous, and must make an Honor roll versus a TN of 10 to avoid immediately attacking anyone who treats you with even minimal hostility. Your centuries of experience in combat have paid off, however, and you roll an additional die on all attack and damage rolls.

DENIZEN OF YOMI

15 POINTS/LEVEL

You were once a shiryo, a blessed ancestor. When your Empire needed you, you charged through Oblivion's Gate and answered the call. Now you walk among the mortals once more. For some reason, you did not experience the Phoenix ritual that would have made you mortal. For every five points you spend on this Advantage, you maintain one level of Control from Yomi. You may not begin a game with more than three levels of Control.

FREEED YOKAI

1-4 POINTS

In life, your dark deeds damned you to the pits of Jigoku, where you suffered torments a living mind cannot imagine. When the opportunity presented itself, you escaped through Oblivion's Gate to walk among the living once more. You have 1 Rank of the Shadowlands Taint, and the effects of the Dark Secret Disadvantage. You do, however, gain a Free Raise on any Lore (Shadowlands) roll, when casting a maho spell, or when using any Low Skill. Any oni, Lost, or natural denizen of the Shadowlands who looks upon you instantly knows your true nature and will attempt to destroy you as quickly as possible to return your soul where it belongs.

MEDIUM

15 POINTS

You have a deep, primal connection with the Spirit Realms, and can converse freely with the spirits of the dead. Any non-Tainted undead creature or spirit of the deceased will respond positively toward you unless you treat them with overt hostility. Additionally, you gain a Free Raise on any social roll with any returned spirit (any individual with one of the Denizen Advantages above).

SPIRIT BLOOD

17 POINTS

One or both of your parents were spirits returned to the Empire through Oblivion's Gate. Although the majority of their gifts were not passed on to you, you do possess some vestige of their mystical abilities. You receive an additional Void Point per day to use on any roll. This Void Point refreshes with each sunrise, but you may never have more than one extra point as a result of this advantage. This bonus Void Point may be spent during on the same action as a normal Void Point. This bonus Void Point does not increase your Void Ring.

SHAPESHIFTERS

At the GM's option, a variety of shapeshifting spirits may be made available as player characters. Most are animal spirits of Chikushudo, also known as hengeyokai, but a few hail from Sakkaku or even Tengoku. Shapeshifters tend to be young spirits, curious about the Realm of Mortals and eager to explore the strangeness of human society. Older shapeshifters exist, but most of these creatures satisfied their curiosity and returned to their own Realms long ago.

Shapeshifter player characters all have certain characteristics.

SHAPESHIFTER PLAYER CHARACTERS

Though certain abilities are common to all shapeshifters, there is a considerable amount of variety within the various shapeshifting races. To represent this, players are allowed to customize their characters to some degree, using a mechanic referred to as Spirit Points. Spirit Point costs are the same regardless of which game system is used, though the benefits of those powers vary. The amount of Spirit Points a character begins with depends on his race. Spirit Points need not be spent all at once, but can be retained to purchase more expensive abilities at a later time.

All shapeshifters gave the following base abilities. Individual shapeshifter types have additional abilities.

SHAPESHIFTER ID201

- **Spirit Subtype:** Shapeshifters have a +4 racial bonus against enchantments, except for those cast by other spirits. Spells that affect spirits will affect a shapeshifter character. Spirits can detect any passages to their home Realm within one mile.
- Shapeshifter base speed is 30 feet.
- **Low-light Vision:** Shapeshifters can see twice as far as a human in starlight, moonlight, torchlight, and similar conditions of poor illumination. They retain the ability to distinguish color and detail under these conditions.
- **Shapeshifter abilities:** Additional Spirit Points depend upon the specific type of shapeshifter chosen. You must meet all character level requirements for Shapeshifter abilities.
- **Taboos:** Shapeshifters who choose to dwell in Ningen-do (such as player characters) must select five points of Taboos. At 5th, 10th, 15th, and 20th level a spirit character must choose five additional points of Taboos.
- **Natural Form:** Shapeshifters all have a humanoid form and a natural form, which they can assume at will as if casting the polymorph self spell at a caster level equal to their character level. The duration of this effect is unlimited. Use of this ability is an extraordinary ability (though it draws attacks of opportunity as if casting a spell), meaning that *dispel magic* has no effect and the shapeshifter can assume its natural form normally in areas where magic does not function. The shapeshifter may change shape once per day with no difficulty. Thereafter, he must make a Fortitude save (DC 10 + 5 per number of times he has shapeshifted since last sunrise) or remain in his current form. Shapeshifters who fail three of these saves in one day cannot shapeshift again that day.

- Shapeshifters may not take the Void Use feat or any ancestor feats.
- **Starting Honor:** 2.
- **Automatic Languages:** Common and the language of the shapeshifter's home Realm.
- Shapeshifters have no level adjustment. (They gain experience normally.) During character creation a shapeshifter may choose to impose a permanent level penalty (as per the rules for using powerful races in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*) to gain more Spirit Points at first level. For every level penalized, the character begins with an additional ten Spirit Points.

NEW FEAT

SOUL OF THE HEAVENS

You have harnessed a bit of your magical potential as a shapeshifting spirit.

Prerequisite: Shapeshifter or Denizen only.

Benefit: You gain an additional five Spirit Points with which to choose Shapeshifter Powers. Characters with one of the spirit templates described in this book (Denizens of Meido, Yomi, and Toshigoku or Freed Yokai) may select this feat, but may only purchase Shapeshifter Powers which begin with the word "Spirit."

Special: You can gain this feat multiple times.

SHAPESHIFTER [2ND EDITION]

- Shapeshifter player characters follow the normal rules for creating characters. Shapeshifters may not attend Clan schools (though the Alias ability can negate this drawback).
- In lieu of attending a school, a shapeshifter instead focuses upon his natural abilities. Instead of gaining Rank techniques, the shapeshifter gains ranks in the "Shapeshifter School." (There is no actual school; these ranks represent private study, meditation, and aligning the spirit with one's home Realm.)
- Shapeshifters begin with zero Glory, and cannot attain any Glory.
- Shapeshifters gain a Free Raise to resist any spells that attempt to control or influence their minds, except for those cast by other spirits.
- Shapeshifters can detect any passages to their home Realm within one mile.
- Shapeshifters do not have the mastery of the Void that humans possess. They cannot spend Void Points or learn techniques that require Void expenditure. They do, however, use their Void Ring to determine the number of Raises they can make and to use certain skills, so they may increase their Void Ring through normal Experience Point expenditure.
- Shapeshifters may not take the following Advantages or Disadvantages unless they also take an Alias that could have the Advantage: Blackmail, Ear of the Emperor, Favors, Gentry, Inheritance, Imperial Spouse, Kaiu Sword, Kakita Blade,

Patron, Social Position; Bad Reputation, Black Sheep, Death-seeker, Dependent, Dishonored, Social Disadvantage; or any other Advantages or Disadvantages that rely upon membership in a family or clan.

- Shapeshifters may never take the following Advantages or Disadvantages under any circumstances: Blood of Osano-Wo, Forgotten, Forsaken, Haunted, Momoku, Nemesis; Ancestors, or any other Advantage or Disadvantage that involves blood ancestry or Void Point use.
- All shapeshifter player characters have a human form, and can shift between their natural form and human form at will. Shapeshifting (whether to human form or by use of a Shapeshift ability) requires a full round, during which time the shapeshifter can neither move or defend himself. (TN to Be Hit at this time is 5 + armor.) Once per day the character may shapeshift with no difficulty, but thereafter he must roll Earth vs. a TN of 5 + 10 for each time he has shapeshifted since sunrise. If this roll is unsuccessful, he remains in his current form and can try again later. A shapeshifter who fails three times cannot shapeshift again until the next sunrise. Involuntary shapeshifts due to Taboos always occur without fail, but also count toward the number of times the character has shapeshifted that day.
- When in animal form, the shapeshifter's physical traits (Strength, Reflexes, Agility, Stamina) are equal to that of a normal creature of that variety, plus one-third of his original traits (rounding down). He possesses all attack forms and natural abilities of that creature.
- A shapeshifter has a starting pool of Spirit Points, depending upon his race. These points may be spent to purchase powers. Much like spells, Spirit Powers have Mastery Levels. A shapeshifter may not choose a Spirit Power with a Mastery Level greater than his Shapeshifter School Rank.
- Taboos are special Disadvantages that can be taken only by shapeshifters. All shapeshifters (whether or not they attend the Shapeshifter school) must take at least 5 points worth of Taboos. The shapeshifter gains no extra Character Points for these Taboos, and they do not count against the maximum 10 points of Disadvantages a character may select. Taboos in excess of 5 points may be taken, and count as Disadvantages normally.
- Each time a shapeshifter increases in Insight Rank, he must select five additional points of Taboos. Shapeshifters gain Insight Ranks normally. However, since they rarely increase their Void Ring, they generally have lower Insight than a human or Naga player character.

THE SHAPESHIFTER SCHOOL

Benefit: +1 Willpower

Beginning Honor: 2, plus five boxes

Skills: Hunting, Lore (Myth and Legend), any five Skills

Techniques: This school has no true Techniques. However, for every rank taken, the character gains an extra ten Spirit Points to spend on new abilities. In addition, any character with at least one rank in this school may gain more Spirit Points by spending Character Points. For every two Character Points or four Experience Points spent, a shapeshifter gains an extra Spirit Point.

HUMAN FORM

A shapeshifter in human form has a specific appearance. Though they can choose to appear old or young when they shapeshift, the form is always the same person. They cannot imitate other specific individuals without other shapeshifting powers.

SHAPESHIFTER STARTING OUTFIT

Kimono, Traveling Pack, one weapon of choice, 1 koku.

COMMON TYPES OF SHAPESHIFTERS

In the endless expanses of the Spirit Realms there are countless varieties of shapeshifters. If an animal walks the earth, there is a *hengeyokai* that can transform into it. Some shapeshifters are even more bizarre, taking the forms of creatures that exist only in fable. The following are merely examples. Note that while some shapeshifters resemble the symbols of Great or Minor Clans, this does not necessarily give that shapeshifter any sort of affiliation with that clan. Only kitsune regularly consort with the clan that bears their name.

SHAPESHIFTERS AS PLAYER CHARACTERS ID201

The tanuki and kitsune described here also appear in *Creatures of Rokugan*. While the creatures in that book are typical examples of these creatures, not all shapeshifters have identical abilities. By using the rules in this chapter, a player can create customized shapeshifter characters. In fact, the exact creature types that appear in *Creatures of Rokugan* can be created using these rules.

FUSHICHO (PHOENIX)

Starting Spirit Points: 0

Phoenix shapeshifters are cousins to the *houou*, the majestic firebirds of the Celestial Heavens. They are not as fickle or mischievous as most shapeshifters, and never descend from Tengoku without a serious purpose. Noble and brave, the fushicho are great warriors. In their animal form, they are majestic birds with a twelve-foot wingspan and plumage the color of fire. In the Celestial Heavens, fushicho can never truly die. Unfortunately, this ability does not extend to other Realms. As a result, their courage can often get them into trouble.

Fushicho have no qualms about sacrificing themselves for what they believe to be a noble cause, and often throw their lives away foolishly unless cooler heads prevail.

Home Realm: Tengoku

- +2 Dexterity, -2 Wisdom. Fushicho are agile, but impulsive.
- **Fire Beak:** As a free action a fushicho may surround his body in flame, extending even to weapons he is holding. This causes the fushicho's attacks to do 1d4 additional fire damage that round, but the fushicho also takes 1d4 damage at the end of that round (this damage may not be negated by fire resistance). This is a supernatural ability.
- **Rejuvenation:** If a fushicho dies while in the Realm of Tengoku, it rises again at the next sunrise, in perfect health and with full hit points.
- +1 Honor.

- **Natural Form:** A fushicho can polymorph into a houou (see *Creatures of Rokugan*, page 30) at will. This is identical to the *polymorph self* spell, except that the duration is unlimited. The fushicho does not gain the houou's immolation ability. While in this form, the fushicho can use its own abilities normally, and cast any spells it knows that do not require material components.
- **Favored Class:** Shugenja. Fushicho shugenja always have a Fire element focus (thus a fushicho cannot take the Alias advantage and effectively disguise himself as a shugenja from a clan without a school that focuses on Fire.)

ABILITIES

- **Trait Benefit:** +1 Reflexes.
- **Fire Beak:** You may add your Fire in dice to a damage roll, but you take damage equal to half the damage total. This damage may not be negated in any way, though it can be healed.
- **Rejuvenation:** If you die while in the Realm of Ten-goku, you are restored at full health at sunrise the following day.
- +1 rank of Honor.
- **Natural Form:** Your natural form is a majestic firebird (use the falcon's statistics on page 110 of the *Game Master's Guide*). You can set flammable objects ablaze by touching them in this form.

INU (DOG)

Starting Spirit Points: 3

Extremely playful and eager to please, the dog always seeks acceptance. Once a mortal has proven itself, the inu will follow it dutifully. Many inu never assume human form, but serve a peasant or samurai loyally in the guise of a simple pet. They are loyal to a fault, and will protect a worthy friend even at the expense of their own lives.

Home Realm: Chikushudo

- +2 Constitution, -2 Intelligence. Inu are tireless companions, but they can often be confused by details.
- +2 racial bonus to all Spot, Search, and Listen checks.
- **Scent:** Inu gain this special ability (described on page 81 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*).
- **Spirit Sense:** Inu gain this Shapeshifter ability for free.
- **Natural Form:** In its natural form, an inu is a large, powerfully built dog. Use the statistics for the riding dog from the *Monster Manual*.
- **Favored Class:** Fighter.

ABILITIES

- **Trait Benefit:** +1 Stamina.
- You may add your Honor in dice to all Perception rolls and Perception-related skill rolls.
- **Track by smell:** you gain a +10 bonus to all Hunting rolls where tracking by smell would be useful, +20 if in your natural form.
- **Spirit Sense:** Dogs gain this Shapeshifter ability for free.
- **Natural Form:** The inu's natural form is a large, powerfully built dog (see *Game Master's Guide*, page 110, for statistics).

KITSUNE (FOX)

Starting Spirit Points: 6

The kitsune are a strange group, more intrigued by mortal man than any other type of shapeshifter. Some kitsune see themselves as protectors and guardians of mankind, adopting a mortal who has treated them well and protecting him from afar. Sometimes, a curious kitsune takes mortal form and lives among the humans as one of them, usually as a beautiful woman. This sort of kitsune often embraces bushido and develops extraordinarily high Honor ranks. The kitsune are protectors of the woodlands, and Kitsune Mori is the largest of their sacred groves.

Home Realm: Chikushudo

- +2 Dexterity, +2 Charisma, -2 Strength, -2 Constitution. Kitsune are quick-witted and clever, but tend to be frail.
- +2 racial bonus on all Will saves.
- Kitsune have a +2 racial bonus on all Hide, Move Silently, Bluff, and Wilderness Lore checks. These bonuses increase to +4 in a wilderness setting. At the cost of 1 Spirit Point, these bonuses may be increased by +2.
- **Natural Form:** In its natural form, a kitsune is a small fox. Use the normal dog's statistics from the *Monster Manual*.
- **Favored Class:** Ranger. Unlike normal Rokugani rangers, kitsune rangers gain spellcasting abilities normally.

ABILITIES

- **Trait Benefit:** +1 Awareness.
- Kitsune gain a free Raise on all Willpower rolls.
- Kitsune gain a Free Raise on all Stealth and Hunting skill rolls, two Free Raises in a wilderness

setting. A kitsune may gain an additional Free Raise on these rolls by spending one Spirit Point.

- **Natural Form:** The kitsune's natural form is a fox (see *Game Master's Guide*, page 111, for statistics).

KOUMORI (BAT)

Starting Spirit Points: 3

The kyoumori are the children of the night, and share the form of the bat, a good-omened creature in Rokugan. The kyoumori are extremely reclusive and loath to reveal their existence to outsiders. In fact, very few people outside the scholars of the Spirit Realms know that these elusive creatures exist. When in Rokugan, the kyoumori typically take a more active role in the events of the mortal Realm, for they share the same protective nature of humans as their bestial brethren, who protect humans from harmful insects.

Home Realm: Chikushudo



- +2 Wisdom, -2 Strength. Koumori are perceptive, but weak.
- Koumori gain a +2 competence bonus on all Hide and Move Silently checks. This bonus increases to +4 in darkness, shadows, or even poor lighting. For one Spirit Point, you can increase both of these bonuses by a further +2.
- **Eyes of the Night:** Koumori gain this spirit power for free.
- Koumori gain the Flyby Attack feat for free.
- **Natural Form:** The koumori's natural form is a rather large bat. Use the statistics from the *Monster Manual*.
- **Favored Class:** Rogue.

ABILITIES

- **Trait Benefit:** +1 Perception.
- Koumori gain two Free Raises on any Hunting or Stealth rolls. This increases to three Free Raises during the night or in heavy shadows.
- **Eyes of the Night:** Koumori gain this spirit power for free.
- Koumori gain one level of the Luck Advantage for free.
- **Natural Form:** The koumori's natural form is a rather large bat (all Rings at 1, Perception and Reflexes at 4, Bite Attack: 3k2, Bite Damage: 2k2, Wounds: 10: -1; 20: -2, 30: Dead).

RYU (DRAGON)

Starting Spirit Points: 2

The so-called dragon shapeshifters are actually independent extensions of the Elemental Dragons. From time to time the dragons separate a piece of their own intellect and sending it into the mortal world seeking wisdom. They usually serve as assistants for the Oracles. These shapeshifters have a great thirst for knowledge, but their arcane wisdom causes them to speak cryptically, often rendering their speech incomprehensible to mere mortals. The dragons usually do not realize when this happens, as it is such an ingrained part of their nature, and it can ruin their disguise for those who know the signs. In its natural form a ryu appears as a wingless serpent the size of a horse, hovering in the air.

Home Realm: Tengoku

- +2 Wisdom, -2 Charisma. Ryu possess extraordinary wisdom, but often have difficulty expressing it.
- **Strong Spirit:** Ryu are inherently attached to their dragon patrons, and are thus difficult to corrupt. They gain a +6 racial bonus to resist the controlling effects of other Spirit Realms (including resisting the Shadowlands Taint). Any time a ryu is forced to take Taboos, he takes two fewer points of Taboos.
- +1 Honor.
- **Samurai Spirit:** Ryu samurai may gain the Soul of the Heavens feat as a technique feat.
- **Natural Form:** In its natural form, a ryu is a hovering serpentine dragon. Use the normal medium-size constrictor's statistics from the *Monster Manual*, but add a flight speed of 30 ft. (perfect). For two Spirit Points, this flight speed can be permanently increased to 60 ft. (perfect). The ryu can speak, use supernatural abilities, use spell-like abilities, and cast spells normally while in this form.
- **Favored Class:** Paladin. Though this class is normally forbidden in Rokugan, the ryu's strong attachment to the elemental dragons allows them to act as champions of order and justice. Ryu paladins may take levels of the samurai class and later take levels of paladin again with no penalty.

ABILITIES

- **Trait Benefit:** +1 Perception.
- **Strong Spirit:** Ryu are inherently attached to their dragon patrons, and are thus difficult to corrupt. They gain three Free Raises on any rolls to resist the controlling effects of other Spirit Realms (including resisting the Shadowlands Taint). Any time a ryu is forced to take Taboos, he takes two fewer points of Taboos.
- +1 rank of Honor.
- **Natural Form:** The ryu's natural form is a hovering serpentine dragon (see *Game Master's Guide*, page 109). Unlike a normal snake, the ryu can fly at normal speed. For two Spirit Points, the ryu's flying speed is permanently doubled. The ryu can speak and use all of its abilities normally in this form.

SARU (MONKEY)

Starting Spirit Points: 3

The saru were once animal spirits, but eventually grew bored with their brethren and moved to the Realm of Tricksters. Saru are incorrigible pranksters. Often their pranks serve only to amuse themselves, and can do great harm to others. Some saru learn to curb their destructive ways (usually after foolishly getting caught in one of their own traps) and become companions to great heroes. Heroic saru enjoy using their remarkable intelligence to help others and foil the deadly pranks of other spirits.

Monkey shapeshifters are delighted by the fact that a Minor Clan has adopted their spirit as a symbol. A handful of saru have secretly infiltrated the clan out of friendly curiosity.

Home Realm: Sakkaku

- +2 Dexterity, +2 Intelligence, -2 Wisdom, -2 Strength. Saru are quick and clever, but weak-limbed and often foolish.
- +2 racial bonus on all Bluff and Climb checks. These two skills are always class skills for a saru.
- **Trickster:** A saru may learn any Shapeshifter Abilities with the word "False" in the title as if he were three levels higher. All of these abilities cost one fewer Spirit Point.
- **Natural Form:** In its natural form, a saru is an innocent-looking monkey (see statistics in the *Monster Manual*) with opposable thumbs. In this form, the saru can speak, manipulate tools, and use all of his supernatural abilities, spell-like abilities, and spells normally.
- **Favored Class:** Rogue.

ABILITIES

- **Trait Benefit:** +1 Reflexes.
- Saru gain a Free Raise on all Sincerity and Athletics checks.
- **Trickster:** A saru may learn any Shapeshifter Abilities with the word "False" in the title as if they were one Mastery Level lower. All of these abilities cost one less Spirit Point.
- **Natural Form:** The saru's Natural Form is a small monkey with opposable thumbs. Reduce Strength and Stamina by 2 in this form, but increase Reflexes and Agility by 1.

TANUKI (BADGER)

Starting Spirit Points: 2

These shapeshifters tend to be jolly and friendly, though they are also hot-tempered. Badgers do nothing halfway — they play malicious pranks upon those who displease them, and go out of their way to reward those that treat them with kindness. Badger shapeshifters are loyal friends and terrible enemies. They have a habit of adopting the forms of inanimate

objects and hiding someplace they hope an interesting person will find them.

Home Realm: Chikushudo

- +2 Constitution, +2 Strength, -2 Charisma, -2 Intelligence, -2 Charisma. Tanuki are fierce creatures, but often act without consideration to others.
- +2 racial bonus on all Fortitude saves.
- +2 racial bonus on Climb, Hide, Intimidate, and Move Silently checks. For one Spirit Point, these bonuses may be increased by a further +2.
- **Talented Shapeshifter:** A tanuki adds only 2, rather than 5, to his save DC each time he attempts to shapeshift multiple times in one day.
- **Natural Form:** In its natural form, a tanuki resembles a normal badger (see *Monster Manual* for details).
- **Favored Class:** Fighter.

ABILITIES

- **Trait Benefit:** +1 Stamina.
- Tanuki gain a Free Raise on all Earth rolls.
- Tanuki gain a Free Raise on all Athletics, Intimidation, and Stealth rolls.
- **Talented Shapeshifter:** A tanuki adds only 5, rather than 10, to his TN each time he attempts to shapeshift multiple times in one day.
- **Natural Form:** A tanuki's natural form is a badger. (See the *Game Master's Guide*, page 108, for details.)

TSURU (CRANE)

Starting Spirit Points: 3

Quick and graceful, no one is more impressed and captivated by a tsuru's beauty than the tsuru itself. The tsuru are believed by some to be distantly related to kenku, though both races vehemently deny it. These shapeshifters love to associate with others as beautiful as themselves, but in the long run they are fickle friends (they cannot stand competition). Tsuru tend to make snap judgments based solely on appearances, but are generally good-hearted. A tsuru who can overcome his own vanity and pride can become a great hero indeed.

Home Realm: Chikushudo

- +2 Charisma, -2 Wisdom. Tsuru are lovely, but their self-absorption often leads them to trouble.
- +2 Dodge bonus to AC. Tsuru are extremely graceful, and can quickly move out of harm's way.
- **Natural Form:** In its natural form, a tsuru resembles a crane. Use the hawk's statistics from the *Monster Manual*, but reduce flight speed to 60 ft. (average).
- **Favored Class:** Samurai. Tsuru can learn Crane Clan technique feats even if they are not associated with the Crane Clan.

ABILITIES

- **Trait benefit:** +1 Awareness.
- Tsuru calculate their TN to Be Hit as if their Reflexes were one higher.
- **Natural Form:** A tsuru's natural form is a crane. (Use the eagle's statistics, see the *Game Master's Guide*, page 110, for details.)
- **Crane Techniques:** A tsuru may learn Kakita Bushi school techniques even if he does not have any connection to the Crane Clan.

NATIVE SPIRITS

If the party visits foreign Realms, the rules in this chapter can be used to create the natives of the Spirit Realms. Shapeshifters who never intend to visit Ningen-do can increase in level without adopting Taboos, and have not necessarily mastered the human form. Shapeshifters without a human form have two extra Spirit Points to spend on other abilities.

USAGI (HARE)

Starting Spirit Points: 4

The usagi are incredibly lucky, but their luck works both ways. While usagi bring great fortune to themselves and others, they are also magnets for trouble. Luckily, these shapeshifters are quite adept at making the best of a bad situation. A hare's first instinct is usually escape, but when the time comes to stand and fight they are tenacious opponents.

Home Realm: Chikushudo

- +2 Dexterity, -2 Constitution. Usagi are quick and nimble, but not particularly tough.
- +2 racial bonus on all Reflex saves.
- **Good Fortune:** Once per day, an usagi may re-roll any failed attack roll, save, or skill check and keep the better result. For each Spirit Point spent, the usagi may use this ability an additional time per day, to a maximum number of times per day equal to the usagi's character level.
- **Natural Form:** An usagi's natural form is a hare. Use the cat's statistics from the *Monster Manual*, but replace the Climb skill with Jump, and attacks do only 1 point of damage.
- **Favored Class:** Rogue.

ABILITIES

- **Trait benefit:** +1 Agility.
- Usagi gain a Free Raise on all Reflexes or Agility rolls to avoid danger.
- **Good Fortune:** Usagi gain one rank of the Luck advantage. For each Spirit Point spent, an additional rank of Luck can be gained. An Usagi can a maximum number of Luck ranks equal to his Insight Rank \times 3.
- **Natural Form:** An usagi's natural form is a rabbit. (Use the small game statistics in the *Game Master's Guide*, page 112.)

SHAPESHIFTER ABILITIES

All Shapeshifter abilities are supernatural abilities, unless noted otherwise. Spell-like abilities are cast as a sorcerer of equal level to the shapeshifter's character level.

Some of the following abilities grant access to spells. No scrolls are needed to cast these spells (and a shapeshifter does not get a Free Raise for having a scroll at hand). The spell is cast as if by a shugenja of School Rank equal to the character's Shapeshifter Rank, using the Shapeshifter's appropriate Ring.

ALIAS

14 POINTS

You have spent many years cultivating a human (or, conceivably, Naga or Nezumi) identity. Perhaps you replaced a samurai killed in the heat of battle; perhaps you replaced a stillborn

child at his birth. In any case, over years you have created an identity as a samurai in one of the Great Clans, and can now function within Rokugani society.

This ability may only be selected during character creation, unless the GM feels that you have gone to sufficient lengths to create an alias for yourself.

Prerequisites: 1st level.

Benefit: You have a flawless disguise, an alias as a member of one of the Great Clans that even members of that clan perceive as genuine. You may gain technique feats, attend dojo, and gain other abilities reserved only for members of that clan. You have human friends and "relatives" who believe you are who you claim to be.

Mastery Level: 1

Benefit: With this advantage, you gain Glory normally (start with 1.0 Glory) and can take other Advantages and Disadvantages that depend upon a place in Rokugani society. You may attend one of your clan's schools, and may attend the Shapeshifter School at a later time using the normal rules for Multiple Schools. You have human friends and "relatives" who believe you are who you claim to be.

ANIMAL TONGUE

14 POINTS

You can speak to all animals in their own language.

Prerequisites: 6th level, Pack Soul, Silver Tongue.

Benefit: You can cast *speak with animals* as a spell-like ability, a number of times per day equal to your character level.

Mastery Level: 2

Benefit: You can speak to animals.

BOND OF THE MOON

12 POINTS

Your promises carry special weight.

Prerequisites: 14th level.

Benefit: If you make a promise under the light of the moon, you gain a +6 luck bonus on all rolls, saves, or checks that directly contribute toward fulfilling the promise. This bonus can be used once per round. While bound by a promise, you take four points of damage every sunrise that cannot be healed in any way until the promise is fulfilled. You may only have one of these promises in effect at any time.

Mastery Level: 4.

Benefit: If you make a promise under the light of the moon, you roll and keep three extra dice on all activities that directly contribute toward fulfilling the promise. You take four Wounds every day at sunrise that cannot be healed or recovered until the promise is fulfilled. You may only have one promise of this sort in effect at any time.

BRUSH OF TENGOKU

115 POINTS, 10 POINTS FOR RYU OR FUSHICHOI

You have learned to draw upon a small measure of the invincible power of the Celestial Heavens, girding your soul against damage.

Prerequisites: 6th level, Extraordinary Healing.

Benefit: You gain damage resistance equal to 5/+2 (crystal).

Mastery Level: 2

Benefit: Any damage rolls against you subtract 1 from each die, to a minimum of 1. (10s are re-rolled before this effect occurs.) Crystal or magic weapons ignore this effect.

CRYSTAL TOUCH

17 POINTS

You have mastered the purity of the universal minerals — crystal and jade.

Prerequisites: 5th level.

Benefit: Your unarmed attacks can pierce damage resistance as if you were wielding a jade or crystal weapon with an enhancement bonus equal to one-fourth your character level (round up).

Mastery Level: 2

Benefit: Any unarmed attack you make does normal damage to creatures who can only be harmed by crystal, magic, or jade.

DEADLY HOWL

12 POINTS

Once per combat you can utter a bloodcurdling howl, scream, or loud battle cry.

Prerequisites: 1st level.

Benefit: This ability allows you to cause fear as a spell-like ability, at a level equal to your character level, simultaneously targeting all opponents within 20 feet.

Mastery Level: 1

Benefit: This ability generates a Fear effect equal to your highest Ring against all enemies who can hear it.

EXTRAORDINARY HEALING

14 POINTS

You heal very rapidly.

Prerequisites: 2nd level.

Benefit: You heal your Constitution modifier in hit points each hour that you rest.

Mastery Level: 1

Benefit: You heal your Earth in Wounds every hour.

EYES OF THE NIGHT

12 POINTS

You can see in the dark.

Prerequisites: 1st level.

Benefit: You gain darkvision with a range of 60 feet, and a +2 racial bonus to all Spot checks.

Mastery Level: 1

Benefit: You can see in total darkness, and roll an extra die on all Perception checks involving sight.

FALSE FRIEND

17 POINTS, 5 POINTS FOR TSURU

You are skilled at magically manipulating others.

Prerequisites: 11th level.

Benefit: You can cast *charm monster* as a spell-like ability, at will. You may have only one charm in place at a time. If you use this ability a second time, the first charm immediately ends. In addition, you gain a +4 bonus on all opposed Charisma rolls to control a charmed target. Once a successful charm is broken, you may not use this ability on the same target again for one month.

Mastery Level: 3

Benefit: By succeeding in an opposed Willpower check against an individual, you gain that individual's trust and respect. The target regards you as a trusted ally. You may only have one False Friend at a time, and must renew the connection daily with another opposed Willpower check or it will fade. If you ever perform an act proving that you are untrustworthy, or fail to maintain the connection, the spell is broken and the target automatically realizes that he has been manipulated. Once this ability has been used successfully, you may not use it on the same target until one month after the charm has been broken.

FALSE SELF

17 POINTS

You can assume a nearly transparent, shadowy form, rendering yourself effectively invisible.

Prerequisites: 9th level.

Benefit: You can cast *invisibility* on yourself as a spell-like ability three times per day.

Mastery Level: 3

Benefit: You can become effectively invisible three times a day. You immediately become visible once more if you touch a solid object other than the ground, or are exposed to bright light. It takes a full round to assume invisibility, during which time you can do nothing else but concentrate (TN to Be Hit = 5 + Armor). This ability lasts for one hour before you become visible again.

FALSE SHADOWS

15 POINTS

You are adept at spinning illusions.

Prerequisites: 1st level.

Benefit: You can cast *silent image* and *ghost sound*, once per day each, as spell-like abilities.

Mastery Level: 1

Benefit: You can cast *Mists of Illusion* once per day. You can also generate illusionary sound to accompany your illusions, once per day, with the same range and area as *Mists of Illusion*. The sound cannot be heard outside of this area.

FALSE VISION

16 POINTS

You can create simple but lasting illusions.

Prerequisites: 6th level, False Shadows.

Benefit: You can cast *silent image* as a spell-like ability, once per hour. The duration of the spell is unlimited, so long as it is not disbelieved, or voluntarily dispelled by you. Each time you use this ability, the last illusion you created vanishes.

Mastery Level: 2

Benefit: You can cast *Mists of Illusion* once per hour as a shugenja of School Rank equal to your Shapeshifter Rank. The duration of the spell is unlimited, so long as it is not disbelieved, or voluntarily dispelled by you. Each time you use this ability, the last illusion you created vanishes.

FLIGHT

15 POINTS

Gravity cannot restrain you.

Prerequisites: 6th level.

Benefit: You can fly at your normal movement rate, with perfect maneuverability, in any form. You take one point of damage every minute you remain aloft.

Mastery Level: 2

Benefit: You can hover and fly at your normal walking speed, in any form. You suffer one Wound every minute you remain aloft.

GHOST TONGUE

13 POINTS

You can speak to all spirits, including other animal spirits, *gaki*, and *oni* normally incapable of meaningful communication. Speaking to *gaki* can often be useful in finding a way to help the ghosts on their way to redemption, but the more monstrous *oni* seldom have anything useful to say.

Prerequisites: 1st level, Silver Tongue.

Benefit: You gain *Oni* and all the Spirit Realm languages as bonus languages.

Mastery Level: 1

Benefit: You can speak to any of the creatures that hail from the Spirit Realms described in this book.

HEAVENLY ARMOR

110 POINTS, 5 POINTS FOR RYU OR FUSHICHO

Your physical form is toughened by the raw magical energy of the Celestial Heavens.

Prerequisites: 11th level, Brush of Tengoku.

Benefit: You gain damage resistance of 15/+4 (crystal).

Mastery Level: 3

Benefit: You gain a Carapace rating equal to twice your Insight Rank (maximum 8). Crystal weapons ignore this Carapace rating.

HUMANITY

18 POINTS, 5 POINTS FOR KITSUNE

Once per day, at sunrise, you can choose to become temporarily human. You remain human until the next sunrise, and cannot leave human form until then. If you use this ability continuously for a year and a day, you become human forever.

Prerequisites: 9th level.

Benefit: While using this ability, you no longer need obey Taboos and you lose the spirit subtype. You lose all shapeshifter abilities and racial abilities other than ability score bonuses.

Mastery Level: 3

Benefit: While using this ability, you no longer need obey Taboos and are not affected by spells which only affect spirits. You lose all shapeshifter abilities and racial abilities other than trait bonuses.

HUNTER'S BANE

15 POINTS

You are skilled at deceiving and eluding others in the wilderness.

Prerequisites: 1st level.

Benefit: You can cast *dancing lights*, *entangle*, and *pass without trace* once per day, each, as spell-like abilities.

Mastery Level: 1

Benefit: You leave absolutely no footprints or traceable trail of any kind. Those who track you through a forest environment are slowed to one-half speed as the undergrowth intentionally bars their passage. Once per day, you may create pale glowing lights that move about in your line of sight and last for one minute; these usually serve as a distraction to set hunters on a false trail.

IMPROVED ANIMAL FORM

12 POINTS, 1 POINT FOR KITSUNE OR TANUKI

You may assume an alternate animal form that is obviously unnatural, but possesses greater power. If you possess this ability, this form (rather than your animal form) is considered to be your natural form.

Prerequisites: 1st level.

Benefit: When in this form, you can speak, manipulate tools, and use any spells or supernatural abilities that you possess. You may substitute your own ability scores or use the animal's, if they are better, while in this form.

Mastery Level: 1

Benefit: When in this form, you can speak, manipulate tools, and use any spells or supernatural abilities that you possess. You may add one-half of your physical traits (round down) to your animal form's traits rather than one-third.

INVULNERABILITY

115 POINTS, 10 POINTS FOR RYU AND FUSHICHO

You are immune to normal damage.

Prerequisites: 18th level, Brush of Tengoku, Heavenly Armor.

Benefit: You gain damage reduction 10/-. This damage reduction applies to all damage, not just weapon damage.

Mastery Level: 5

Benefit: You are immune to normal weapons. Magic, crystal, and jade weapons cannot re-roll 10s on damage against you.

IMPROVED ANIMAL FORM

The following list describes the Improved Animal Form for each of the races described in this book.

Fushicho — Appears the same as normal form.

Inu — An enormous dog with unusually colored fur (silver, gold, etc.)

Kitsune — A nine-tailed fox with black, silver, or white fur.

Ryu — Appears the same as normal form.

Saru — A monkey with metallic bronze or gold skin.

Tanuki — A human-sized, pot-bellied badger.

Tsuru — An elegant human with a sharp beak and white feathers.

Usagi — A tiny man with the head of a rabbit.

KAMI TONGUE

12 POINTS

You can speak to the elemental spirits.

Prerequisites: 5th level, Silver Tongue.

Benefit: You gain Kami as a bonus language, and can cast *commune with elements* three times per day as a spell-like ability. This ability may be selected multiple times, granting you additional uses.

Mastery Level: 2

Benefit: You can cast *Commune* a number of times per day equal to your Void, just as if you were a Shugenja of School Rank equal to your Insight Rank.

PACK SOUL

15 POINTS, 3 POINTS FOR INU

You are particularly adept at befriending animals.

Prerequisites: 1st level.

Benefit: You can cast *animal friendship* once per day. You may cast *speak with animal* on canines once per day. These are both spell-like abilities.

Mastery Level: 1

Benefit: You can cast *Heart of Nature* and *Nature's Touch* once per day. The latter spell may only be cast upon canines.

POSSESSION

17 POINTS

Once per day, you can assume an incorporeal form and attempt to possess a living creature.

Prerequisites: 12th level.

Benefit: This effect is identical to casting *magic jar* as a spell-like ability, except that you need no receptacle and do not leave your body behind. If you are expelled or the vessel dies, you immediately assume solid form in the square adjacent to the vessel.

Mastery Level: 3

Benefit: Possession requires one full round and an opposed Willpower roll. If this roll succeeds, you immediately enter the possessed individual. You have complete

control of the new body but have no access to its memories, skills, techniques, spells, or learned abilities. If the body dies while you are inside, you die as well unless you can immediately make a Willpower roll vs. TN 25 to escape. Possession can be maintained for a number of hours equal to your Willpower.

REINCARNATION

(8 POINTS, 2 POINTS FOR FUSHICHO)

A shapeshifter with this power has a powerful bond with the mortal Realm, and can will himself to return to life upon his death.

Prerequisites: 18th level, Brush of Tengoku, Heavenly Armor.

Benefit: When you die, you are reborn at the next full moon at the nearest passage to your home Realm. This effect is exactly as if a *raise dead* spell had been cast upon you.

Mastery Level: 5

Benefit: If you die, you will be reborn during the next full moon in the same location that you first entered the mortal world. Your Void Ring and all of your Traits are permanently reduced by 1. If you no longer have enough Insight for your current Rank, you lose that Rank and all powers associated with it. (If you lose this power, you are still reborn.) If one of your Rings is reduced to zero, you remain dead.

SHAPESHIFT: IMITATE

(4 POINTS)

You can shapeshift into specific people. Your voice, mannerisms, and appearance are all exactly the same as the person imitated; only learned knowledge can separate the reality from the fake.

Prerequisites: 12th level, Brush of Tengoku.

Benefit: You can cast *alter self* once per day as a spell-like ability, except that the duration is unlimited. If you have a cherished possession of a specific person, or a bit of their hair, blood, or fingernails, you can emulate them specifically. You gain a +20 to your Disguise checks and Bluff checks that involve pretending to be this person. Only one alternate form can be chosen per use of the ability.

Mastery Level: 4

Benefit: You can now use your shapeshifting power to imitate a specific person. You must have a cherished possession of that person, or a part of the person (a bit of hair or blood will do) and carry it with you at all times. While in this form, you are indistinguishable from the original.

SHAPESHIFT: OBJECT

(5 POINTS)

You can assume the form of non-living objects. This is a shapeshifting ability, and follows the normal limitations for multiple uses of shapeshifting per day. Shapeshifter abilities may be used normally in this form. (For example, a shapeshifter with this power and Crystal Touch could become a sword and be wielded to do injury to an invulnerable oni, or could use Flight to wield himself.)

Prerequisites: 10th level; Tanuki can learn this ability at any level for 5 extra Spirit Points.

Benefit: You may polymorph into any inanimate object of your size or smaller. You gain all attributes of the object, including hardness. You can become a masterwork item, but not a magical one (though you will appear to radiate magic to a detect magic spell). You can see normally, but cannot move or speak. You may maintain this form for one hour per level.

Mastery Level: 3; Tanuki can learn this ability as if it were Mastery Level 1 for 5 extra Spirit Points.

Benefit: You can assume the shape of a nonliving object your own size or smaller. While in this form, you have all the attributes of the object. If you are a weapon, you can be wielded to inflict damage. If you are armor, you can be worn for protection (though you takes damage when his wearer does). You can see, hear, and feel while in this form, but cannot move or speak. You may maintain this form for four hours per Insight Rank.

SHAPESHIFT: SPIRIT

You now have a greater spirit form. This ability may be selected multiple times, learning a different form each time.

Prerequisites: 17th level.

Benefit: Select one specific oni, gaki, outsider, or creature with the spirit subtype described in *Creatures of Rokugan* (with the exception of Oracles and Oni Lords). This creature's hit dice may not be greater than your level. Once per week, you may transform into this creature as per a polymorph self spell, except that you gain all supernatural abilities of the creature. If you fail an attempt to shapeshift out of this form, you lose control of your body and act like a typical creature of that type for a full day. You may maintain this form for one hour per level.

Mastery Level: 5

Benefit: You may select one oni, gaki, greater spirit, or any other creature described in the *Game Master's Guide*, the *Book of the Shadowlands*, *Way of the Shadowlands*, or this book. The selected creature's cannot have more than two Rings higher than your two highest Rings. While in this form the natural abilities (and weaknesses) of the new form are now available to you. If you fail an attempt to shapeshift out of this form, you lose control of your body and act like a typical creature of that type for a full day. You may maintain this form for four hours per Insight Rank.

SILVER TONGUE

(3 POINTS, 2 POINTS FOR TSURU)

You are skilled at twisting the truth.

Prerequisites: 1st level.

Benefit: You gain a +6 on all Charisma-related skill checks that involve lying to someone.

Mastery Level: 1

Benefit: Roll three extra dice on all Sincerity, Courtier, and Etiquette rolls in which you are attempting to deceive or mislead someone.

SPIRIT BROTHER

(5 POINTS)

You have a strong kinship with the kami, and other spirits are loath to harm you.



Prerequisites: 15th level, Spirit Sense.

Benefit: You gain SR equal to 10 + your character level.

Mastery Level: 4

Benefit: Any spell (even maho) that targets you has its TN increased by your Insight Rank \times 5 unless you consciously will otherwise.

SPIRIT FIRE

15 POINTS, RYU AND FUSHICHO ONLY

You can consume your own spiritual essence to smite your foes with the power of the Celestial Heavens.

Prerequisites: 7th level.

Benefit: You can sacrifice your own hit points to fire a bolt of energy up to 30 feet as a ranged touch attack. For every hit point you sacrifice, the bolt does 1d4 damage. You cannot sacrifice more hit points than your level. The maximum damage of this attack is 10d4 damage. This bolt does no damage to objects. Use of this ability is a standard action.

Mastery Level: 2

Benefit: You can hurl a bolt of pure energy with a range of 30 feet. This bolt does no damage against unliving targets, but damages other spirits, humans, and animals. The bolt does XkX Wounds, where X is your Fire. Every use of this power does a number of Wounds to you equal to three times your Fire.

SPIRIT SENSE

13 POINTS

You are automatically alerted whenever another spirit is interacting with the Mortal Realm nearby.

Prerequisites: 5th level.

Benefit: You can cast *spirit sight* (see *Magic of Rokugan*) as a spell-like ability, at will.

Mastery Level: 2

Benefit: You can sense any creature that is not in its home Realm or has any ranks of Control from a foreign Realm. The range of this ability is equal to your Air \times 100 feet. Normally, this ability only indicates the number of such creatures and what Realms they come from. However, by concentrating for three rounds and making a Void roll vs. TN 25, you can pinpoint which specific creatures are from other Realms. (Oracles, Elemental Dragons, Oni Lords, the Fortunes, and Pekkles no Oni automatically sense this power, and can choose to make themselves immune.)

SPIRIT VISION

15 POINTS

You can see *gaki*, *oni*, *shiryo*, and other spirits even if they are invisible.

Prerequisites: 2nd level, Eyes of the Night.

Benefit: You can see invisible creatures with the spirit or oni subtype. You gain a +4 bonus on all Will saves against illusions.

Mastery Level: 1

Benefit: You can see invisible spirits and oni. You gain two Free Raises on all attempts to pierce or resist magical illusions.

SPIRIT WALK

12 POINTS

You traverse great distances in the mortal world by traveling swiftly through the boundaries between the Spirit Realms.

Prerequisites: 15th level, Spirit Sense.

Benefit: You can cast teleport without error at will, but take 6d6 damage each time you do so. You cannot teleport into or out of an area that houses a passage to any Realm but your home Realm.

Mastery Level: 4

Benefit: You can transport yourself anywhere in Rokugan that you have been before by concentrating for one full round. You take 5k5 Wounds when you do so. You cannot transport yourself into or out of an area that houses a passage to any Realm but your home Realm.

UNNATURAL SPEED

14 POINTS, 2 POINTS FOR USAGI

You are extraordinarily fast.

Prerequisites: 3rd level.

Benefit: Your base speed in all forms is doubled.

Mastery Level: 1, Hunter's Bane

Benefit: Not only can you move twice as fast as normal in any of your forms, but your TN to Be Hit when taking the Full Defense action is increased by 5.

VERSATILE SPIRIT

15 POINTS

You have additional abilities.

Prerequisites: 1st level.

Benefit: You gain a bonus feat. You must meet all other prerequisites for this feat.

Mastery Level: 5

Benefit: You gain an additional 5 Character Points which may only be spent on Advantages.

TABOOS

Like all visitors from foreign Realms, shapeshifters are vulnerable to the jealous nature of Ningen-do. Though these creatures can be quite fascinated by the mortal world, few are willing to become permanent residents there. (Such a change often results in becoming truly mortal or losing one's powers, a fate most shapeshifters dread.)

Shapeshifting spirits can avoid Mortality, the Control of Ningen-do (see Chapter 10), by imposing taboos upon themselves. By enforcing strict rules upon his own behavior, a shapeshifter shields himself with the spiritual essence of his home Realm, thus preventing becoming seduced by the mortal Realm. Unfortunately, these taboos only apply to Ningen-do's Control. Even the most powerful taboos cannot negate the jealous nature of more sinister Realms, such as Jigoku and Toshigoku.

The older and more powerful a shapeshifter becomes, the more inviting a target it becomes to Ningen-do's jealous nature. For a powerful shapeshifter to remain in the Mortal Realm, it must impose more and more taboos upon itself. Eventually, many shapeshifters voluntarily return to their own Realms rather than continue to place further restrictions upon their behavior.

Taboos are permanent, binding promises. Once in place, a taboo cannot be removed, even if a shapeshifter never visits the Realm of Mortals again. Only by remaining sequestered in his home Realm for several centuries can a shapeshifter remove a taboo (a process beyond the scope of most campaigns).

The rules for taboos in this book overrule those presented in *Way of the Minor Clans*.

VIOLATING TABOOS

Breaking a celestial promise carries great risk. A shapeshifter who violates his taboos becomes temporarily vulnerable to the controlling nature of the Mortal Realm, and may even find himself stripped of its powers, fully and permanently human. The survivors of the original kitsu race, at the brink of extinction, voluntarily subjected themselves to such a process to become the founders of the Kitsu family.

Each time a shapeshifter breaks a taboo, he loses for a day access to his supernatural abilities. This includes shapeshifting, causing the character to revert to his natural form and remain in it. In addition, if the shapeshifter is in Ningen-do at the time he must make a Will save (DC 20 + the shapeshifter's character level + 5 per each additional taboo broken in the last twenty-four hours) or immediately accumulate one rank of Control from Ningen-do.

If the shapeshifter's Control rank ever exceeds his highest ability modifier, he becomes permanently trapped in his natural form, losing all shapeshifter abilities and racial abilities.

Each time a shapeshifter breaks a taboo, he loses for a day access to any abilities gained by being a shapeshifter. This includes shapeshifting, causing the character to revert to his natural form and remain in it. In addition, if the shapeshifter is in Ningen-do at the time, he must make a Willpower roll (TN 10 + 5 times the shapeshifter's Insight Rank + 5 per each additional taboo broken in the last twenty-four hours) or immediately accumulate one rank of Control from Ningen-do.

If the shapeshifter's Control rank ever exceeds his highest ability modifier, he becomes permanently trapped in his natural form, losing all shapeshifter abilities.

TABOO LIST

1 Point

- You cannot cross running water.
- You cannot drink alcohol.
- You cannot eat meat of any kind (including fish, a Rokugani staple). Eating meat causes you to immediately vomit, in addition to the normal drawbacks of violating a taboo.
- You must always dress in the colors of your Natural Form.
- Your shadow is always the shadow of your true animal form. You must not let anyone notice it who does not know your secret. You may only tell your secret to those you trust, and if they betray your trust this taboo is broken.

2 Points

- You cannot bathe.
- You cannot enter a building where someone lives unless you are invited by someone within. (You can naturally sense if you are unable to enter such a building.)
- You cannot lie, and must reveal the truth to others if you are aware that someone else is lying or hiding the truth. You must answer every question posed to you with another question.
- You must wear as little clothing as possible.
- You must repay a human's kindness toward you with a greater kindness within twenty-four hours. Likewise, you must repay a human's insult toward you with great mischief in a like amount of time.

3 Points

- If someone drops something in your presence, you must pick it up and return it to them.
- You cannot allow a shugenja to use magic upon you (mahotsukai are not affected).
- You cannot enter a holy temple, and your shapeshifter abilities do not function within a temple or shrine.
- You cannot own more than you can carry. If you ever own more than you can carry, you can negate the penalties of violating this taboo by giving away the excess to the first person you meet.
- You must eat living flesh once a day. Insects and mice will do nicely, but the meat must be alive when you start chewing.

4 Points

- You cannot allow a human to touch you.
- You cannot kill except in self-defense.
- You cannot tell anyone of your true nature, nor allow anyone to speak of it in your presence.
- You own an item that you must have with you at all times. Each day you cannot find it, you break this taboo. If someone takes it from you and reveals it to you, you are no longer harmed by this taboo but you must obey the thief until you can get the item back. Any attempt to harm or betray the thief is considered a violation of this taboo.

5 Points

- You can never take human form.
- You may not speak or write to communicate.
- You may not touch steel or an item that contains steel.
- You must marry a worthy human within one year, and treat your spouse with loyalty and respect. If your spouse proves unworthy, you must return to your own Realm forever.

THE SPIRIT REALMS THROUGHOUT HISTORY

Although they exist beyond the ken of most mortals, the Spirit Realms are much nearer to Rokugan than many think. Far from being inaccessible, incomprehensible worlds that exist in some distant corner of the heavens, the Spirit Realms are living, changing worlds that overlap and coexist with Rokugan itself, and often reveal themselves to those who possess the wisdom to see them. There have been many instances in the past where other Realms have had a major impact upon the events of the Empire, although in most cases very few realize the exact nature of events.

THE BATTLE OF KYUDEN KITSUNE

In the year 1090, the Empire was shocked at the intense violence that erupted between the tiny Hare and Fox clans, seemingly without provocation. Border skirmishes had been occurring between the two for some time despite the relative distance between their respective primary holdings. Although it was never discovered by the clans, these hostilities were actually the result of a game between some playful kitsune and a pack of bakeneko. Each group would harass the samurai of one of the two clans while masquerading as the other. The mischievous creatures delighted in the outrage of their prey, and enjoyed the joke tremendously. When the conflict finally escalated to the point that mediation was required, the creatures lost interest and moved on.

Unfortunately, that was not the end of the matter. The kitsune and bakeneko had plagued others with their tricks before, and some spirit beings are not so forgiving. A pack of bloodthirsty kumo infiltrated the Hare/Fox negotiations and slaughtered a large number of Fox samurai, thinking them somehow linked to the kitsune whose scent they still bore. This nearly spiraled the two clans into total war, but was narrowly averted when the Crane intervened. Nonetheless, this conflict left a great deal of bad blood between not only the Hare and the Fox, but the Fox and the Crane as well.

THE TOUCH OF THE HEAVENS

Tengoku, home of the gods, is not actively involved in the day-to-day affairs of the Empire. However, the nigh-omnipotent beings that dwell there do oversee the affairs of humans, their chosen children. Although rare, there have been several occasions when the forces of Tengoku have selected particularly pious or talented mortals to join their ranks as a minor Fortune. This was once the province of the Hantei line, who

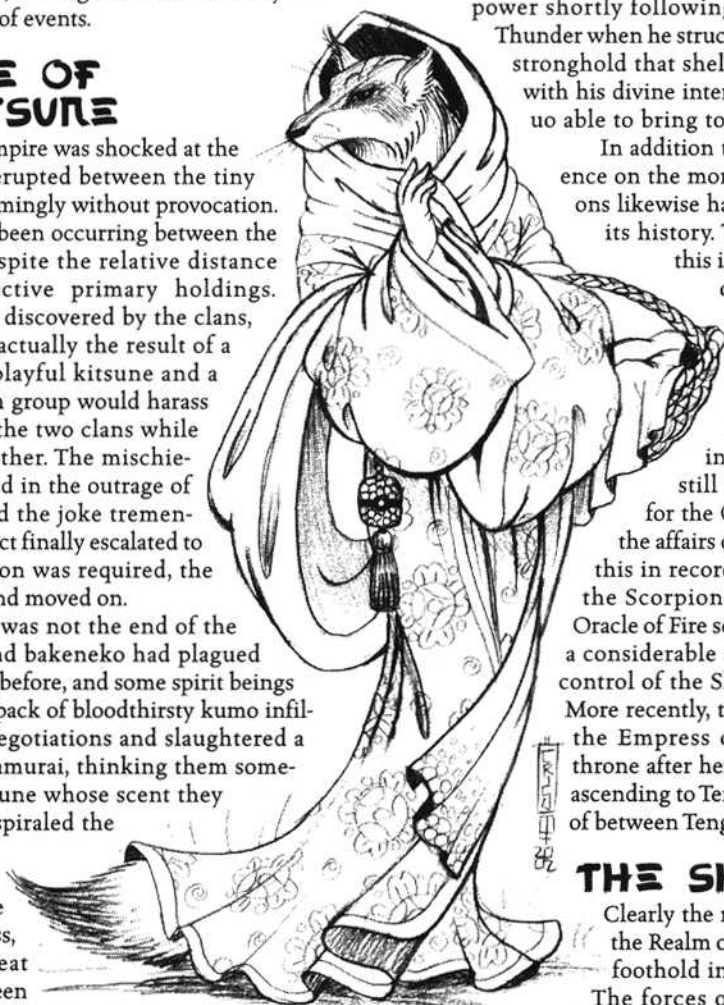
could invoke the power of Amaterasu, mother of the first Hantei to bring mortal souls to power. In other instances, the Fortunes themselves have chosen mortals to join their ranks, such as when Osano-Wo came to Ningen-do in search of Shiba Tsukune. Had Tsukune remained, the landscape of the war between the Dragon and Phoenix might have been very different indeed, and the Last Wish might have remained hidden. Finally, it is possible for mortals to so personify an aspect of human behavior that they spontaneously ascend to Tengoku as a minor Fortune upon their deaths. This is exceedingly rare, and has only occurred a handful of times in the Empire's history.

Fortunes do, rarely, directly involve themselves in the affairs of mortals. Osano-Wo is particularly active in Ningen-do, such as his recent aforementioned encounter with Shiba Tsukune. Even more dramatically, Osano-Wo manifested his power shortly following his ascension to Fortune of Thunder when he struck down the gates of the Phoenix stronghold that sheltered his own murderer. Only with his divine intervention was his son Kaimetsu-uo able to bring to justice Osano-Wo's murderer.

In addition to the Fortunes and their influence on the mortal world, the Elemental Dragons likewise have influenced the Empire over its history. The most frequent example of this is by the selection of the Oracles of Light, those mortal souls chosen to share their essence with the power of the Dragons. Nearly gods themselves, the Oracles are the most accessible facet of Tengoku's power in Ningen-do, although they are still very reclusive. While it is rare for the Oracles to take an active part in the affairs of mortals, there are instances of this in recorded history. Some years before the Scorpion Clan Coup, for example, the Oracle of Fire seemingly went mad and ravaged a considerable amount of territory under the control of the Shosuro before his rage abated. More recently, the Oracle of the Void served as the Empress of Rokugan, even taking the throne after her husband's death before finally ascending to Tengoku to reestablish the balance of between Tengoku and Jigoku.

THE SHADOWLANDS

Clearly the most influential Spirit Realm in the Realm of Mortals is Jigoku, thanks to its foothold in Ningen-do, the Shadowlands. The forces of the Shadowlands have presented the single greatest ongoing threat to Ningen-do's continued survival since the time of its creation. Deep within the Shadowlands, a spirit passage directly to Jigoku exists. This dreaded place is known as the Festering Pit of Fu Leng, and no mortal has ever seen it and survived. From this evil chasm, the spirit denizens of Jigoku may directly enter the Realm of Ningen-do. The most twisted oni, the most seductive shuten doji, and the most powerful kansen escape through this portal directly into Rokugan, where they plague the samurai of the Empire.



The influence of the Shadowlands on Rokugan's history is as extensive as it is undeniable. The first war with Fu Leng radically changed the way that the citizens of the Empire lived their lives. The Crab Clan found themselves pledged to protect the Empire, and the first Hantei, the Son of Heaven, was killed. Immersed in such a long and brutal conflict, the Great Clans became far more accepting of warfare, eventually going to war with one another over territory and honor. Had not the precedent been set by the first war, the philosophy of battle could have developed very differently.

The Shadowlands continue to pose a threat despite the considerable setbacks the forces of Jigoku have suffered. Many in Rokugan foolishly believed that Fu Leng's death at the conclusion of the Clan War would end the threat of the Shadowlands forever, but it is the power of Jigoku that fuels that dark land, not a mere fallen god. The recent resurgence of the forces of the Shadowlands under the command of the new Dark Lord, Daigotsu, has proven to the Empire that the Shadowlands can never be stopped without ending the threat of Jigoku itself. Given the Realm of Evil's importance in the balance of the Celestial Order, that seems very unlikely.

IUCHIBAN AND THE BLOODSPEAKERS

Although few realize it, the menace posed to the Empire by the Bloodspeaker cult is born of the Realm of the Hungry Dead, Gaki-do. None know how the cult's progenitor, the infamous blood sorcerer Iuchiban, gained his incredible power, but the Bloodspeakers often unknowingly traffic with gaki. The link to Gaki-do is further supported by the fact that many powerful and unique spirits supported Iuchiban's forces during the Battle at Sleeping River, such as the Shimushigaki, a particularly powerful spirit that plagued the Empire for some time after Iuchiban's demise. Some witch hunters and inquisitors posit that this association is a result of the Bloodspeakers having learned to use maho through accessing the power of Gaki-do rather than Jigoku directly. This could account for the fact that Bloodspeakers are legendary for resisting the effects of the Shadowlands Taint or, at the very least, maintaining control over their mental faculties despite the influence of the Taint.

Ultimately, this difference is meaningless. The Realm of Gaki-do is inherently tied to Jigoku, and by accessing its power rather than Jigoku's, the Bloodspeakers only delay the inevitable. Nevertheless, this distinction has allowed many Jade Magistrates, witch-hunters, and inquisitors keen insight into the nature and behavior of the strange spiritual phenomenon of the Shadowlands Taint.

THE BATTLE AT OBLIVION'S GATE & THE WAR OF SPIRITS

Mention of the Spirit Realms in Rokugan inevitably brings to mind the Battle at Oblivion's Gate. One of the most critical battles in the Empire's history, this great conflict would doubtless have been remembered regardless of the circumstances. With the opening of the Gate, however, the influence of the battle on subsequent events increased dramatically.

The opening of Oblivion's Gate allowed tens of thousands of spirits of dead samurai to return to the Realm they once knew as their own. The two Realms most directly involved in

this occurrence were Yomi and Toshigoku, both of which were directly accessed by the Gate's power. Denizens of other Realms also entered Ningen-do in limited numbers.

The return of the spirits through Oblivion's Gate allowed the forces of Rokugan to defeat the combined minions of the Shadowlands and the Lying Darkness and prevent the destruction of both the mortal world and the Spirit Realms. Once that matter was attended to, the lingering effects of the spirits' existence in Rokugan became far more problematic. United under the banner of Hantei XVI, a madman whose mind had been further damaged by centuries in Toshigoku, a massive army of spirits and loyalists to the Hantei line threatened to overthrow the Empire.

The War of Spirits was one of the most dramatic conflicts in the Empire's history, easily the equivalent of the Clan War or the first war with Fu Leng. What made the conflict more painful was that the enemy of the Empire was not the nebulous, inhuman evil of the Shadowlands, but rather a force of samurai, many of whom had descendants in their enemy's ranks. That most of the spirits who threatened the Empire had been unhinged by their experiences in Toshigoku eased the decision for some of Rokugan's soldiers, but many nonetheless found themselves incapable of facing their own ancestors on the battlefield.

REALMS OF THE SPIRIT REALMS

BLESSED JADE

Created somehow in the Realm of Yomi, where all things are pure and uncorrupted, is a substance closely resembling jade but far more powerful. It is roughly the same color as jade, the same hardness, the same workability, but it glows with a strong light the color of newly-risen grass. This substance is incredibly rare. Rumors abound of what it can do to Tainted creatures, some exaggerated, some understated, and about the potency of its ability to keep the Taint at bay. It can be found only in Yomi.

Blessed jade is identical to normal jade except for the following respects.

It can never, under any circumstances, be corrupted by Shadowlands Taint. Anyone who carries a finger of blessed jade is protected from the Taint indefinitely, even if he walks into Jigoku itself. The rays of green light that it gives off causes great pain to many Tainted creatures.

Needless to say, the Crab Clan is intensely interested in the origins of this substance, and in procuring copious amounts. Only a handful of pieces exist in Ningen-do.

For every 5 points of Taint a creature possesses, it takes 1 point of damage every round it is exposed to the light emitted from blessed jade. The area of this effect is a 30 ft. radius centered on the substance. Tainted creatures must make a Will save (DC 20) every round they are within the area of effect, or any time they wish to enter the area of effect, or else they must move out of the area. Blessed jade has a hardness of 10 and 15 hit points per inch of thickness.

For every Rank of Taint a creature possesses, it takes 1 Wound every round it is exposed to the light emitted from blessed jade. The area of this effect is a 30 ft. radius centered on the substance. Tainted creatures must make a Willpower Test (TN 25) every round they are within the area of effect, or any time they wish to enter the area of effect, or else they must move out of the area.

PERFECT CRYSTAL

The origin of this substance is unknown, but it is one of the most powerful materials ever discovered. It appears in all respects to be normal crystal, useful in combating Tainted creatures and minions of the Living Darkness. These powers are nevertheless only one aspect of its true nature, like a mere drawing of a real object. A piece of perfect crystal exists simultaneously in every Spirit Realm, so weapons made from it can harm creatures from any Realm. Only two items made from this substance are known to exist in Ningen-do. One is a katana; the other is a small rod in the shape of an arrow.

KATANA OF PERFECT CRYSTAL

This weapon is a stunningly beautiful katana made from a single piece of flawless crystal. The handle has been wrapped in black silk. Its edge is so fine that anyone who touches it may cut himself without noticing. This katana was once wielded by the famous Crab Champion Hida Tadaka. It has not been seen in several centuries.

The *katana of perfect crystal* can harm any creature, regardless of incorporeal abilities, Damage Reduction, or similar abilities that would reduce or negate this weapon's damage. It is considered a +5 keen vorpal wounding katana capable of causing damage to creatures from any Realm. Creatures that possess Taint or Shadow points take an extra 1d20 damage from this weapon. Only a single katana of perfect crystal is known to exist in Ningen-do. This weapon's abilities resemble magical enhancements, but are not magical in nature, and cannot be negated by effects which negate magic.

The *katana of perfect crystal* can harm any creature, regardless of incorporeal abilities, Carapace, Techniques, or similar abilities that would reduce or negate this weapon's damage. It is considered a nemuranai katana. It is normally a 4k4 weapon that can damage creatures from any Realm. Against creatures that possess Taint or Shadow, it becomes a 5k5 weapon. Only a single *katana of perfect crystal* is known to exist in Ningen-do.

PASSAGE SEEKER

This item appears to be a small arrow shaped item with a string tied in the middle of the shaft. When held suspended from the string, the arrow spins to point toward the nearest potential passage between Spirit Realms. The seeker does not open passages, or indicate which Realm might be on the other side; it merely indicates an area where barriers between Realms is thin and more easily breached. Only one of these items is known to exist in Ningen-do; it is in the possession of Kitsu Juri, daimyo of the Kitsu family.

The point of the arrow automatically points the direction to the nearest passage between Spirit Realms. The passage may not be open, but it points to the nearest area where the barrier is thinnest. When the holder is within a arm's length of the passage, the arrow spins slowly. Casting *detect passage* while holding the *passage seeker* automatically grants the knowledge about which Realm is on the other side of a particular passage. Casting *passage into...* spells while holding the *passage seeker* doubles the area of effect and the number of creatures that may be transported.

Caster Level: 14th. Weight: 2 lb.

The point of the arrow automatically points the direction to the nearest passage between Spirit Realms. The passage may not be open, but it points to the nearest area where the barrier is thinnest. When the holder is within a arm's length of the passage, the arrow spins slowly. While holding the *passage seeker*, you gain two Free Raises when casting *Detect Passage* or any *Passage Into...* spell.

OBLIVION'S GATE

The place known as Oblivion's Gate is one of the most feared, most fascinating locations in any Realm. When it was whole, it appeared to be a gateway of dark, shiny stone built into the circular shape of a dragon devouring its tail. However, it was destroyed during the Battle of Oblivion's Gate to prevent any more spirits from pouring into Ningen-do.

It was built untold centuries ago by the trolls in the city known as Voltturnum, long before the Kami fell to earth, long before Fu Leng's descent created the horrid corruption known as the Shadowlands, long before the trolls were corrupted by the Taint. The city of Voltturnum lies in what is now the Shadowlands. It is unknown if all the Spirit Realms were open to Oblivion's Gate, but it was known to reach to Jigoku, Ningen-do, Meido, Toshigoku, and Yomi. With that many realms touched by the gate, it might well have opened into all of them, or possibly even into realms yet undiscovered by the Empire. Even this was not the Gate's most remarkable ability — it not only allowed passage by spirits of every Realm, but physically altered them so that they could better survive at their destination. The shiryo, yokai, and other spirits who escaped through the gate were rendered flesh and blood once more by passing through it.

After the Kami fell from Heaven and mortals began to populate what would become Rokugan, the Kami known as Ryoshun recognized the danger that Oblivion's Gate represented, and so chose to guard it for over a thousand years. For centuries it had stood closed, after the trolls of Voltturnum passed into it and never returned, until the Living Darkness discovered the means of opening it. It was through Oblivion's Gate that Hantei XVI escaped Toshigoku into the Mortal Realm.

Now it lies among the ruins of Voltturnum, broken by Isawa Hochiu, the top half of the circle rubble strewn about its base. Daigotsu has repeatedly attempted to reopen the gate, perhaps hoping to draw more aid from the heart of Jigoku, perhaps seeking to enslave the savage fury of the Legacy. As yet he has had no success.

CHAPTER ONE:

JIGOKU,
THE REALM OF EVILTHROUGH BLOOD
AND THUNDER
PART TWO

When Tokei opened his eyes, he saw a darkness so complete, so total that it made him cry out in pain. He felt as if he had stared into the antithesis of the bright light of the sun, a sight that hammered a spear of pure ice into his heart and drained all hope from his soul. He curled into a ball and clawed at his own face as if trying to remove what he had seen from his mind.

Was this what it was like to die?

"Open your eyes, shugenja," hissed a voice in his ear. "I want you to see this."

Tokei opened his eyes once more. He floated amid a great void. Strange shapes flickered in the corner of his vision, half-formed creatures that stared at him with great mournful eyes. The darkness in this place had nothing to do with light; it was the essence of hopelessness. He was not meant to be here.

"Can you feel it?" the voice said again. "Can you feel the eyes of this place staring into you, Morito Tokei? You belong to Jigoku now, Morito Tokei. You will languish in the Realm of Evil forever."

Tokei saw the form of a large creature hovering near him, a man-like beast with two great curling horns. "You..." Tokei said. "The oni who attacked Nanashi Mura."

The creature seemed to resolve itself from shadow, becoming more real as Tokei remembered it. It scowled down at the shugenja. "I am called the Maw," the creature roared. "I am a true Oni Lord, a master

of demons. My true name was lost due to fools such as you. I thought that I was damned to remain in this place forever, until the Dark Lord gave me one last chance to redeem myself, to return to the mortal realm. You took that chance away from me, Morito Tokei." The beast pointed at Tokei with one long, gnarled finger.

"You dragged me to Jigoku?" Tokei asked.

"No," the oni replied flatly. "You came here yourself; the spell you cast simply pulled me along. Not that I am not pleased to see you." The oni smiled and gestured vaguely. Tokei felt a sharp pain in his arm. Sharp spikes of bone suddenly pierced Tokei's kimono from within, stains of blood welling up where they appeared. The shugenja hissed in pain. Another spike erupted suddenly from his leg, and a third from the center of his chest. As a fourth pierced the skin of his jaw, Tokei realized that his very bones were erupting from his flesh at the Oni Lord's command. He attempted to call upon the kami, and the sound of maniacal laughter filled his ears.

"Your spirits cannot help you, Morito Tokei," the Maw said. It reached out with one hand, gently wrapping its fingers around the curling horn of bone that grew from Tokei's jaw. More bone spears erupted from Tokei's arms, legs, and spine. The pain was inconceivable, but Tokei would not give this thing the pleasure of hearing him scream.

"I am not afraid to die," Tokei said. "I am a samurai."

"Death?" the Maw looked surprised. "Morito Tokei, there is no death here." With a quick twist of his wrist, the Maw snapped off the spear of bone. Tokei did not realize that he could create such a scream. "There is only me." He turned the long shaft of bone over in his hand, tracing it idly along Tokei's chest.

"You intend to corrupt me?" Tokei asked, his voice hoarse and ragged. He could no longer move his limbs for the painful protrusions that erupted from his body at the oni's command. "You intend to make me into an undead abomination like Yori and Junzo?"

The Maw looked pointedly at Tokei. "No. I would not share Jigoku's gifts with the wretched little bug that robbed me of my freedom. You will remain here in the Realm of Evil, sane and untainted, forever." The oni buried the bone shaft in Tokei's shoulder so deeply that the shugenja coughed blood.

"There are many reasons that even an Oni Lord should fear Jigoku, Morito Tokei," the Maw said. "I intend to show you every one."

...

One torment ran into another in Tokei's mind, an endless chain of pain. He had no idea how long he had been in this endless realm of night, or if time even followed rules in such a place. His existence had become a cycle of torture and humiliation at the Oni Lord's hands.

A sudden light appeared at the edge of Tokei's vision. He did not bother to turn and face it. Too often had he seen such visions, assumed that he would be rescued, and had instead been greeted with another torment at the Maw's hands. Once, Naka Kuro had saved Tokei, brought him back to Rokugan. For seven years he had lived a peaceful life, even married and fathered a son, all to discover that the entire affair had been an illusion created by the Maw. The Oni Lord had shattered the illusion with malicious glee, drinking in Tokei's pain.

Since that day, Tokei faced each new torture with grim acceptance. The Maw had become increasingly frustrated, irritated by Tokei's inability to appreciate the cunning new horrors he had devised. As Tokei floated through the dark haze of damnation, he took some solace in this small victory.

"Tokei," a familiar voice called to him. "You must come with me. I have distracted the Maw, but if we are to leave this realm you must hurry!"

"Go away," Tokei said. "I've learned your lesson. There is no hope."

"Toturi would be disgusted to hear you say that," the voice replied.

"Look at me, damn you."

Tokei opened his eyes. The white-clad figure of Matsu Hiroru, the ninja who had served Toturi, hovered before him. "Damn me?" Tokei laughed. "I'm afraid someone beat you to it."

"Not yet," Hiroru said. "Not if we hurry."

"You must be quite a talented ninja, to sneak into the Realm of Evil to rescue me."

"I was trained by the best."

"Go away, illusion," Tokei snapped.

"Fine then," Hiroru said, pulling his mask away and scowling at Tokei. "Would the Maw know the face behind this mask?"

"Perhaps. This place seems to know everything I know..."

"Fine," the ninja spat. "Pretend I am an illusion created by the Maw. Would you rather hover here in eternal pain, or spite the Maw by taking comfort from the very illusion he created to torment you?"

Tokei looked at the ninja warily. "How will we escape?" he asked. "My magic does not work here."

"Ninja do not need magic," Hiroru replied with a smile. "Follow me, old friend."

JIGOKU AND THE CELESTIAL ORDER

Jigoku holds a terrible but necessary place in the cosmology of

Rokugan. This dark realm represents the essence of corruption, the absolute nadir of virtue and morality. The seductive power of this realm is so absolute and insinuating that few can truly call themselves immune to its power. The Realm of Evil has consumed a Kami, a former

Elemental Dragon, and

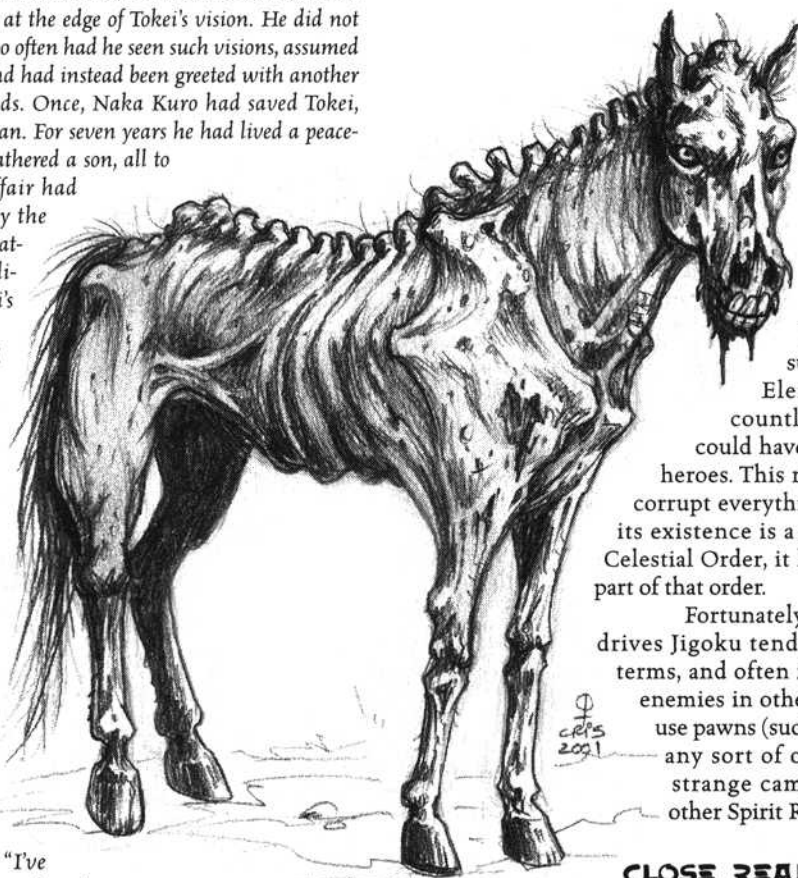
countless human souls that could have otherwise been great

heroes. This realm actively seeks to corrupt everything it touches; though its existence is a necessary part of the Celestial Order, it has no respect for any part of that order.

Fortunately, the intelligence that drives Jigoku tends to think in abstract terms, and often fails to understand its enemies in other realms. Jigoku must use pawns (such as oni) to conceive of any sort of organized plans in its strange campaign to corrupt the other Spirit Realms.

CLOSE REALMS

Jigoku borders closely on Gaki-do, as it shares much in common with the Realm of the Hungry Dead. Sakkaku is also a close realm, though most of its inhabitants have proven infuriatingly impossible to corrupt. As both realms embody different facets of honor and virtue, Jigoku is also very close to Yomi. The realm that lies closest to Jigoku is Ningen-do; the Realm of Evil hungrily corrupts everything it touches in the Realm of Mortals, and has sought to do so even before the fall of Fu Leng and dawn of the Empire.



DISTANT REALMS

Jigoku is far from the realms of Chikushudo and Toshigoku. The Realm of Animals is above such concerns as good and evil, and Toshigoku represents a force of pure destruction disconnected from any sense of morality.

BARRED REALMS

Both Meido and Tengoku are completely closed to Jigoku. The Celestial Heavens and the Realm of Waiting are beyond the touch of corruption. Jigoku would like nothing more than to gain a foothold in either of these realms, but for the moment such a thing is impossible.

DEATH AND JIGOKU

While Jigoku is part of the karmic cycle, the spirits of the dead do not often end up in this realm. Only those who intentionally embraced Shadowlands corruption in life are banished to Jigoku, and only if their mortal bodies remain well and truly dead (something rare for a truly corrupted mortal). Some of the most powerful of the corrupted dead (such as Chuda Bikomi, Kuni Yoshimitsu, and Yogo Junzo) have carved niches in this hostile realm, but many of these tainted spirits escape into other realms. The spirits of unnamed oni devour the souls of those who do not flee swiftly enough.

KNOWN PASSAGES FROM NINEN-DO

The most powerful known passage to Jigoku is the Festering Pit of Fu Leng. Through this rip in the fabric of reality, anyone can enter the Realm of Evil, even without the use of magic. Outside of this, anyplace that carries the Shadowlands Taint also serves as a passage to Jigoku. Artifacts with the power to corrupt their surroundings, like the Dark Oracles' Favors, also carry portable passages to Jigoku that can be activated by those foolish enough to enter this realm.

SPONTANEOUS TRANSITION

It is rare for any to spontaneously enter Jigoku. The most prominent example of spontaneous transition is Fu Leng. When Fu Leng fell to the mortal realm and became separated from the other Kami, the Realm of Evil saw an unavoidable opportunity. Fu Leng was physically torn from the mortal realm into Jigoku upon his fall from Tengoku, whereupon Jigoku directed all its power to utterly corrupting him. Since then, few individuals have been spontaneously transported to Jigoku. When it does happen, it is usually by accident, the result of maho gone terribly awry.

JEALOUSY

Jigoku is an extraordinary jealous realm. Its touch is not only extremely powerful, it is also contagious. The Shadowlands Taint is a manifestation of this Realm's control. While in Jigoku, its effect is similar to that of being in the Shadowlands, but even more intense.

After each ten minutes spent in Jigoku, a character must make a Fortitude save. This roll begins at DC 15. If this roll fails, the character immediately accrues ten points of Shadowlands Taint. Every ten minutes this DC increases by 5, whether the roll is successful or not.

After each ten minutes spent in Jigoku, a character must make an Earth roll. This roll begins at TN 15. If this roll fails, the character immediately accrues a full rank (ten points) of Shadowlands Taint. Every ten minutes, this TN increases by 5, whether the roll is successful or not.

CONTROL

Jigoku's control is better known as the Shadowlands Taint. Jigoku permits creatures it controls to accumulate control from other realms, for it knows that its own influence is absolute. There is no reliable way to remove the Shadowlands Taint.

LEVEL ONE

The influence of Jigoku at this level is subtle; your temper may be somewhat short, but you can control yourself with effort.

You must make a Will save vs. DC 12 to avoid reacting to any slight to your honor with violent action.

You gain the Brash Disadvantage (if you did not have it). You also receive a +5 penalty to all Honor Tests.

LEVEL TWO

Control at this level becomes more difficult. You may acquire a taste for raw meat and make emotional outbursts at inappropriate times.

You receive a -5 penalty to all Will saves to resist dishonorable behavior.

You receive a +10 TN for all Willpower tests to resist dishonorable behavior. You receive another +5 penalty to all Honor Tests.

LEVEL THREE

Your mind and will are still your own, but you have begun to develop instincts that are becoming impossible to ignore.

You must make a Will save vs. DC 20 to avoid becoming violent in any stressful situation.

You must make a Willpower test vs. a TN of 15 to resist becoming violent in stressful situations. You receive another +5 penalty to all Honor Tests.



LEVEL FOUR

Your bestial instincts are becoming stronger. Your sense of self has weakened, and it is difficult to tell whether your instinct or your human personality is your true self.

The DC to maintain control in stressful situations increases to 30. A number of times per week equal to your Taint modifier, the DM can force you to make a Will save vs. DC 20 or lose control in any situation. A character that loses control is run by the DM for a number of in-game hours equal to his Taint modifier, and cannot remember what occurred during the lost time.

The TN to resist becoming violent in stressful situations is now 25. A number of times per week equal to your Taint Rank, the GM may force you to make a Willpower Test vs. TN of 15 or lose control in any situation. A character that loses control is run by the GM for a number of in-game hours equal to his Taint Rank, and cannot remember what occurred during the lost time. You receive another +5 penalty to all Honor Tests.

LEVEL FIVE

You are Lost. The Taint is now fully in control. Any sense of self that remains exists only as a cruel joke. Unless the GM plans to make redemption possible through some outside avenue, it is recommended that the player make a new character.

For the record, you must make a Will save vs. TN 40 to maintain control of yourself at any time the DM wishes to enforce Jigoku's control. If you fail, you lose control until the DM chooses to surrender it. You can remember your actions during this period only if you cannot do anything to undo them.

For the record, you must make a Willpower test vs. DC 45 to maintain control of yourself at any time the GM wishes to enforce Jigoku's control. If you fail, you lose control until the GM chooses to surrender it. You can remember your actions during this period only if you cannot do anything to undo them.

GMs should keep in mind that Jigoku is an intelligent, cunning force for evil. Though many of its servants are mindless and stupid, the Taint itself is not. A Tainted character who loses control won't necessarily kill everything in sight if such an act would deprive Jigoku of a useful pawn. The Taint is more likely to cause the character to perform acts that alienate him from friends, family, and clan.

With no one else to turn to, surrendering to Jigoku becomes an increasingly more attractive option. True, the Taint often drives its victims to homicidal mania or self-destruction, but only when they would be useless as pawns, or when the powers of darkness are trying to make a point. The armies of the Lost that serve under Daigotsu seem to live in relative peace with one another, though they still meet their uncorrupted brethren with ferocious, seething hatred.

PROTECTION AGAINST JIGOKU

- 1 unit — 15 minutes
- 2 units — 25 minutes
- 3 units — 30 minutes
- 4 units — 32 minutes
- 5 units — 33 minutes
- Each additional unit — +1 minute

Using jade as protection doubles all of the above times. Protective items slowly transform into black sludge while exposed to the Taint.

PROTECTION BY JIGOKU

Denizens of Jigoku can protect themselves from the control of other realms by carrying slivers of corrupted jade. This item also increases the wearer's ability to hide his Taint and protects him from magics which target the Taint. This Tainted jade resembles obsidian, but is distinguishable from normal obsidian by its soft, greasy texture.

A sliver of corrupted jade can survive up to five days out of a Tainted area, after which time it crumbles to dust. If multiple pieces are carried together, they feed off of one another's corruption. Only one piece crumbles at a time when carried within ten feet of another.

Any time an individual carrying corrupted jade accumulates additional points of Taint, he gains one more point than normal. If he is carrying more than three slivers, he gains two extra points each time he gains more Taint. Lost characters do not gain any extra Taint for carrying corrupted jade.

A sliver of corrupted jade at least one inch long and one half inch thick counts as one "unit."

For every sliver of corrupted jade carried, the DC to detect the bearer's Taint is increased by 10. Spells and effects which detect Taint require their caster or user to make a Spot check vs. TN 15 plus 2 for each additional piece of corrupted jade carried.

For every corrupted jade sliver carried, the target can resist 30 points of damage from spells that specifically harm only Tainted creatures. After 30 points of damage are negated, the corrupted jade sliver is reduced to ash.

For every sliver of corrupted jade carried, the TN to detect the bearer's Taint is raised by 10. Effects which would normally detect the wearer's Taint automatically require their user to make a Perception roll vs. TN 10, plus 5 for every additional piece of corrupted jade carried.

For every corrupted jade sliver carried, the target can resist 20 Wounds of magic damage inflicted by spells which specifically harm only Tainted creatures. After 20 total Wounds are negated, the corrupted jade sliver is reduced to ash.

BONUS SPELLS

A character with a Taint modifier gains bonus maho spells, using Table I-1, only if he can cast maho spells already.

ABILITIES

Jigoku offers many powers, but these powers always come at a price. The Shadowlands grants a variety of dark powers to its minions. Maho is an example of power offered by the Realm of Evil. Other Shadowlands powers are described in *Way of the Shadowlands* and *Magic of Rokugan*.

A character with the Taint may draw upon it in a subconscious manner, adding his Taint modifier to any Strength, Dexterity, or Constitution related check. A character's Taint modifier applies as a negative modifier on all Charisma related checks except for Intimidation rolls and interactions with other Tainted individuals. Once a character becomes Lost, this drawback fades.

All creatures who bear the Shadowlands Taint may draw upon it in a subconscious manner, adding their Rank in Taint to any Skill rolls involving Strength, Stamina, Agility, or Reflexes and gaining one point of Taint in the process.

MAGIC

Even the kami fear the corruptive nature of Jigoku, and thus all elemental magic is more difficult to cast there. The notable exception to this effect is any spell which creates a passage out of Jigoku. The kami are only too eager to provide such a service.

Maho is incredibly powerful within the boundaries of this realm, as kansen flock to the corruptive Realm of Evil.

Any divine spell cast in Jigoku requires its caster to make a Spellcraft check against a DC of 25 + the level of the spell. If the check fails, the spell does not function, though it still counts as cast that day. In addition, the caster gains one point of Taint for every 2 points by which he failed his Spellcraft check.

All maho spells react as if they had the Empower Spell and Maximize Spell feats applied to them.

Any elemental spell cast within Jigoku has its TN increased by 15. If a shugenja fails to cast a spell, he gains one point of Taint for every 2 points his roll fell short of the TN.

All maho spells gain three Free Raises.

RELATIONS WITH OTHER REALMS

CHIKUSHUDO

Though hengeyokai possess no special immunity to the Taint, the Shadowlands rarely corrupts them. The two realms are simply too distant to significantly concern each other.

GAKI-DO

This realm lingers close to Jigoku, and is filled with vengeful, resentful spirits. The ghosts of Gaki-do fall into the abyss of Jigoku with startling regularity, and Tainted gaki are among the most fearsome of Fu Leng's minions.



MEIDO

This realm is off limits to the Realm of Evil. It is a domain of waiting, nothing more. There are no passages between the two.

NINGEN-DO

Jigoku has a special hunger for Ningen-do. Fu Leng was brought under Jigoku's rule expressly to corrupt this realm, one which the powers of Jigoku believe is the key to all other realms.

SAKKAKU

Though the realm of Sakkaku is closely linked to Jigoku, most of its inhabitants seem immune to the Taint. However, the race of tricksters once known as pekkle (and now known as Pekkles no Oni) were utterly corrupted by the Taint. The kappa claim that the Kappa King once tricked the Dark Lord and stole the secret of curing the Taint, but this story has little commerce outside kappa circles. Inhabitants of Jigoku are violently disposed toward tricksters, and exterminate them whenever possible. The tricksters find the belligerence of Jigoku's demons as amusing as they find everything else.

TENGOKU

The home of the Fortunes, the Sun, the Moon, and the Elemental Dragons is unreachable at this time. Though the Realm of Evil would like nothing better than to corrupt all that lives in Tengoku, the mortal world must be dealt with first.

TOSHIGOKU

The deranged ghosts of Toshigoku make terrific servants of darkness, but the spiritual realms of Jigoku and Toshigoku are well removed from one another. The effort required to corrupt the spectral armies is more trouble than its worth, especially when they do quite a good job creating havoc and destruction without assistance. Daigotsu's alliance with the Tsuno grants the Shadowlands increased access to this realm, but the two realms are still quite distant.

YOMI

Tainted humans who are not yet Lost have a chance of going on to Yomi if they fulfilled their destiny honorably. Those who dwell in Yomi are protected from the Taint. It is thought that the realms of Yomi and Jigoku are closely connected, but that the Realm of Evil has not invaded the realm for fear that generations of noble shiryo will unite and crush the hordes of oni. Jigoku has problem enough corrupting the samurai who are currently alive; it is not yet ready to simultaneously attack the finest samurai who have ever lived. Some scholars wonder if the Lying Darkness' attack on Yomi (which was assisted by Jigoku) was merely a ploy on the Realm of Evil's part to destroy its shadowy rival.

Jigoku's dream spirits — the shiyokai — have made several forays into the land of dreams, creating terrible nightmares and corrupting several baku. With the aid of the Tsuno, Daigotsu has harnessed nightmares and bound them to oni, creating the Onisu. When the Dark Lord's minions spread their wings over the Realm of Dreams, terrible nightmares and madness follow. Fortunately, a dreamer cannot contract the Taint through his dreams, so the Shadowlands' dealings in this realm primarily torment those who have already been Tainted by other means, or open passages through nightmare to grant the Onisu and Tsuno greater maneuverability.

INHABITANTS

The only natural inhabitants of Jigoku are nameless oni. These creatures can enter the mortal realm through a powerful passage, such as the Festering Pit, or by binding themselves to a mortal summoner. Oni who pass through the Pit gain power quickly, but do not possess potential as great as those who are summoned. Summoned oni can draw upon great power by binding themselves to a strong master. The Oni Lords were all summoned oni, and their power far outstrips anything that the oni who entered Rokugan through the Pit have to offer.

The Taint rapidly infects anything it touches, and has created a variety of strange races by corrupting existing creatures. Ogres, trolls, and bakemono were all once independent races transformed into monsters by the Taint. Daigotsu's armies of Lost represent what might happen to Rokugan if the same thing happens to mankind.

FEATURES OF JIGOKU

Jigoku is largely formless and indistinct. Most of the realm lacks definition, and these areas are populated only by nameless oni. The only areas that are remotely "normal" are those that are inhabited by the spirits of the seven Oni Lords. Each of them has a stronghold of a sort deep in the realm of Jigoku, strongholds that shift and change with their whims.

THE SHADOWLANDS

The most notorious passage between Ningen-do and Jigoku is the Shadowlands. This entire area exists in both realms simultaneously, though even in the most corrupted areas of the Shadowlands the Taint is relatively weak compared to the Taint of Jigoku itself. The Festering Pit is the very heart of this passage, and through it a traveler can physically enter the Realm of Evil. Of course, only the suicidally brave would ever attempt such a journey, and none have ever returned from such a quest.

DARK PASSAGE

An indestructible corrupted nemuranai created by a mahotsukai many years ago was confiscated and sealed away in a tomb deep beneath the castle of a player character's daimyo. Over the years, the item's presence has slowly corrupted the lower levels of the castle, creating a passage to Jigoku. Now dark creatures have begun to boil out of the depths of the castle. It falls to the player characters to enter the lower levels, perhaps venturing into Jigoku itself, to find and remove the artifact before the passage becomes permanent.

MADNESS

A Kuni Witch Hunter who lingered too long in the Shadowlands now prowls Rokugan. Infected with several ranks of Taint, he is a hair's breadth from becoming Lost. He believes that he is still in the Shadowlands, and that everyone around him is a Tainted beast. To make matters worse, the touch of Jigoku has twisted the Witch Hunter's magic in a peculiar way. All magic that once harmed and detected the Tainted now instead targets creatures native to Ningen-do (like human player characters). The Witch Hunter must be stopped before his madness brings even more destruction.

NEW MONSTERS

ONISU ID201

The most notorious creations of the Dark Lord Daigotsu are the mysterious Onisu. A strange blend of oni and baku, these demons are literally the stuff of nightmares. These beasts were created with the aid of the Tsuno and magic stolen from imprisoned Grand Master of the Elements Naka Tokei. Now they draw from vice and dishonor, growing stronger as they prowl the Empire. Each of the Onisu represents the worst aspects of one of the Great Clans, but they hardly restrict themselves to attacks upon their counterparts. The Crane Onisu would destroy a Crab as readily as a Crane.

As they are oni, Daigotsu can possess any of the Onisu and roam Rokugan in their powerful bodies. The Onisu of each clan will be described in the upcoming *Secrets of the Clans* books. Fushin, the Onisu Daigotsu possessed when he slew the Emperor Toturi, is described here.

FUSHIN, ONISU OF BETRAYAL, NIGHTMARE OF THE SCORPION

Large Outsider (Evil, Oni, Shadowlands, Spirit)
Hit Dice: 16d8 + 64 (136 hp)
Initiative: +8 (+4 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative)
Speed: 40 ft.
AC: 28 (-1 size, +4 Dex, +15 natural)
Attacks: 4 Huge +5 dishonorable katana, +23 melee
Damage: Huge katana 2d6+12 +2d6 damage vs. honorable opponents
Face/Reach: 5 ft. by 5 ft. / 10 ft.

Special Attacks: Spell-like abilities, enhancement, summon weapons, weakening gaze

Special Qualities: Oni Qualities, damage reduction 20/+4 (jade), honorable vulnerability, regeneration 3, rejuvenation, SR 25

Saves: Fort +14, Ref +14, Will +15

Abilities: Str 24, Dex 18, Con 18, Int 20, Wis 20, Cha 30, Taint 12

Skills: Bluff +26, Concentration +20, Hide +20, Iaijutsu Focus +26, Knowledge (History) +21, Knowledge (Scorpion) +21, Knowledge (Shadowlands) +21, Knowledge (Yume-do) +21, Move Silently +20, Search +21, Sense Motive +21, Spot +21 Listen +21

Feats: Cleave, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (katana), Improved Initiative, Multidexterity, Power Attack

Climate/Terrain: Shadowlands, Yume-do, any land and underground

Organization: Solitary

Challenge Rating: 15

Treasure: Standard

Honor: Always 0 Honor

Alignment: Always neutral evil

Advancement: 13-24 HD (Large); 25-36 HD (Huge)

Fushin is a massive red-skinned creature covered in overlapping plates of chitinous armor. It has four arms, and wields a katana in each hand. It has been recently sighted in Unicorn lands, and is known to prowl the depths of the Shinomen Forest.

COMBAT

Fushin takes great delight in sapping the will to fight from its opponents with its gaze, then slicing them to pieces. It usually travels with a pack of Tsuno Ravagers and at least one Soultwister.

Enhancement (Ex): Any time a person within 100 feet of Fushin commits a dishonorable act of betrayal (such as defying his lord's commands or fleeing from battle while his comrades remain behind) the Onisu gains 1d8 temporary hit points. All other benefits of advancement (such as higher saves, base attack, and caster level for spell-like abilities) are also gained. This benefit lasts for one week, after which time the Onisu loses one bonus hit die per week until it returns to the above statistics. Each time the Onisu gains ten levels from this ability, it increases by one size category.

Honorable Vulnerability (Ex): Any time a person within 100 feet of Fushin commits an act of selfless loyalty, the Onisu receives a temporary negative level. This negative level remains for one week, or until the Onisu can cancel the effect with its enhancement ability. If the Onisu is reduced to zero levels by this effect, it perishes.

Oni Qualities (Su): All oni have certain qualities, described on page 5 of *Creatures of Rokugan*.

Regeneration (Ex): Holy and honorable weapons do normal damage to Fushin, as do weapons that have been immersed in the water of the Realm of Dreams.

Rejuvenation (Su): If slain (or reduced to zero levels), Fushin can be harvested from the Realm of Dreams once more by a special ritual known only to the Dark Lord Daigotsu and the Tsuno Soultwisters. The Onisu cannot be restored more often than once a month.

Spell-like abilities: at will — *cause fear*, *detect passage**, *dispel magic*, *know alignment*, *passage into darkness**, *passage into dream**, *protection from good*. 3/day — *desecrate*, *emotion*, *gaijin flames*, *haste*. These abilities are as cast by a 16th level sorcerer (DC 20 + spell level). Spells marked with an asterisk are described in this book.

Summon Weapons (Su): If separated from its katana, Fushin can summon them to its hands again as a free action. If Fushin is destroyed, its swords vanish.

Weakening Gaze (Su): Any enemy that meets Fushin's gaze must make a Will save (DC 24) or become panicked.

ONISU 12ND EDITION FUSHIN, ONISU OF BETRAYAL, NIGHTMARE OF THE SCORPION

Earth: 4

Fire: 4

Water: 5

Air: 8

Rolls when Attacking: 10k7

Rolls for Damage: 7k4

TN to Be Hit: 45

Carapace: 8

Wounds: 30: +5; 55: +10; 70: +15; 80: +25; 120: Dead

SPECIAL ABILITIES

The following is the special abilities of Fushin, Onisu of Betrayal, Nightmare of the Scorpion.

Fear: 6 (This fear stems from the oni's gaze; any opponent who makes a Raise on all attacks directed at the Onisu to avert his gaze can ignore this Fear.)

Multiple Arms: Fushin can attack four times per round, once with each arm.

Enhancement: Any time a person within 100 feet of Fushin commits a dishonorable act of betrayal (such as defying his lord's commands or fleeing from battle while his comrades remain behind) one of the Onisu's Rings (and associated Traits) increases by one. This benefit lasts for one week, after which time the Onisu loses one bonus Trait per week until it returns to the above statistics. The oni grows slowly larger each time it draws upon betrayal in such a manner.

Honorable Vulnerability: Any time a person within 100 feet of Fushin commits an act of selfless loyalty, one of the Onisu's Rings (and associated Traits) decreases by one. This penalty remains for one week, or until the Onisu can cancel the effect with its enhancement ability. If one of the Onisu's Traits is reduced to zero, it perishes.

Passages: The Onisu can cast *Detect Passage*, *Passage Into Darkness*, and *Passage Into Dream* at will.

Carapace: Weapons that have been dipped in the waters of Yume-do ignore Fushin's Carapace rating.

Rejuvenation: If slain, Fushin can be harvested from the Realm of Dreams once more by a special ritual known only to the Dark Lord Daigotsu and the Tsuno Soultwisters. The Onisu cannot be restored more often than once a month.

Summon Weapons: If separated from its katana, Fushin can summon them to its hands again with a thought. If Fushin is destroyed, its swords vanish.

CHAPTER TWO:

GAKI-DO, THE REALM
OF HUNGRY GHOSTSTHROUGH BLOOD
AND THUNDER
PART THREE

Token had been to Ryoko Owari once before. It seemed almost as if he were standing there now. He recognized many of the buildings, and the river was definitely familiar, but this was not Ryoko Owari. Everything seemed somehow empty, washed out with tones of gray. The usually crowded streets were vacant, littered with the half-eaten bodies of animals. The smell of rotten flesh was everywhere. Somewhere, he could hear a loud buzzing, like the sound of a swarm of insects mixed with an endless hollow moan.

Already the shugenja felt his strength returning. Since leaving Jigoku, he could hear the voices of the kami once more. They were faint, but they were definitely there. He had not yet convinced himself that this was not an illusion created by the Maw to taunt him, but neither had he abandoned hope.

"Hiroru, where are we?" Token asked, turning to face the ninja.

"We are in Gaki-do, the Realm of the Hungry Dead," the ninja replied, wrapping his silken mask about his face again. "The spirits of those who lived their lives consumed with greed and avarice linger here, feeding on whatever the fates decree fit for their punishment, consuming endlessly until they can move on to a better fate."

Token looked at the ninja curiously. "You know much of this place," he said.

"I should hope so," the ninja said, looking over his shoulder at Token.

It was then that Token noticed that his friend was not fully himself. Below the waist, Matsu Hiroru was vague and insubstantial. "A gaki," Token said. "But how? You were a hero."

Hiroru laughed. "When you knew me, perhaps. It never struck you as odd how fiercely I embraced Toturi's cause? I had much to atone for, shugenja. I have no regrets. I deserve this fate."

"I am sorry."

"Do not pity me. This realm borders closely on Jigoku. If I had not met this fate, you would be there still. Take comfort in my hunger, Morito Token; it has bought you freedom."

"How do I return to Rokuogan?" Token asked.

"Look about you," Hiroru gestured. "You are already in Rokuogan."

"You know what I mean."

"The living world," Hiroru said wistfully. "I can see it sometimes, but only when I feed."

"Show me," Token said.

"I will not," Hiroru said. "I would rather you remember me as I was."

"There must be another way out of this realm," Token said.

Hiroru shrugged. "Perhaps for you," he said, drifting away down the street. "This is where I belong. Token. I wish you luck, wherever your journey takes you next."

"You will not come with me?" Token asked.

Hiroru looked back at the shugenja. His eyes had become twin segmented orbs. Sharp mandibles emerged from his cheeks, piercing his mask on either side. "Soon the hunger will be upon me again, Morito Token," he said, his voice echoing with a menacing insect buzz. "I cannot be held responsible for what will happen then. I can only ask, for the sake of our friendship that once was, that you be as far from me as possible when that happens."

Token said nothing, only nodded.

Hiroru paused. "And if you see Shizue," he rasped after a moment, "tell her... tell her that you saw me, and that I am well. Lie to her, Tokei. For me."

"I will," Tokei said, his voice thick.

Hiroru nodded a final time, and drifted away, his white figure shining in the gray shadows of Ryoko Owari.

Tokei continued onward in the opposite direction.

GAKI-DO AND THE CELESTIAL ORDER

Gaki-do is the most common destination for wicked souls after they are judged in Meido, the Realm of Waiting. The Celestial Order is a karmic force, and those who have done wrong must be purified by punishment before being allowed rest within the Realm of Blessed Ancestors, or reincarnation on Ningen-do. It is viewed by other realms with as much disdain as Jigoku, though not nearly as much fear. The only spirits in this lonely realm are the souls of those who must be punished for their misdeeds in life.

Inhabitants of this realm are among the most dangerous denizens of the Spirit Realms, and can cause serious trouble in Ningen-do. The ghosts of Gaki-do constantly search for ways to satisfy their immortal hungers, and would flood the other Spirit Realms if they thought it would help assuage their suffering.

CLOSE REALMS

A realm of sin and punishment, Gaki-do borders closely on both Jigoku and Toshigoku. Some of the tortured denizens of the Realm of Hungry Ghosts actually bear the Taint of the Shadowlands, as Jigoku's mere proximity can corrupt the depraved ghosts of Gaki-do. Occasionally a native of either Toshigoku or Gaki-do crosses into the other realm, and the results are always violent, if brief.

Gaki-do also borders the Realm of Mortals, and most wayward gaki find their way there, drawn to the world of the living they vaguely remember. If a gaki's desire to return to a particular spot is strong enough, the ghost can cause Gaki-do to overlap the Realm of Mortals at that point. Ghosts haunt such places, drawn to them by a particular strong memory. Many restless ghosts haunt the homes they had in life, or the private chambers of loved ones who were left behind. Other gaki haunt the places where they died, and a few linger in places connected to some random fragment of a memory, significant now only because the ghost remembers nothing else of its life.

DISTANT REALMS

Both Tengoku and Meido keep a distance from the Realm of Hungry Ghosts, shunning its vile influence. Emma-O takes great pains to ensure the journey of a dead soul from Meido to Gaki-do is one-way and final.

BARRED REALMS

Gaki-do and its suffering inhabitants are not completely barred from any realm.

DEATH AND GAKI-DO

Death is the only reason to journey to Gaki-do. It is a realm of punishment for souls who have been sinful in life, but have not earned the eternal torture of Jigoku. Souls are condemned to the Realm of Hungry Ghosts until they have spent enough time as mindless and dishonorable creatures to work off their misdeeds in life. Living interlopers are often overwhelmed by hungry spirits that desire to feed on their flesh, blood, or sweat.

KNOWN PASSAGES FROM NINGEN-DO

There are only two reliable ways to reach Gaki-do: the common one is death. Souls that are deemed unworthy to rest within Yomi are sent to Gaki-do by Emma-O after they are judged in Meido. The great portal that takes souls from the Realm of Waiting to the Realm of Hungry Ghosts bars returns, and trapped souls must find another way to leave.

The second passage is in the heart of a great volcano within the Shadowlands known as Amaterasu's Furnace. It is a single point of purity within the Dark Lands, bearing absolutely no Taint. It is said the pure of heart may travel within the geysers of flame that the volcano produces and find a passage to Gaki-do. A handful of legends involve heroes taking this path in order to save a lost loved one. The most recent of these legends features the white-clad ninja Matsu Hiroru, who entered the Furnace near the beginning of the War of Spirits and has not been heard from since.

AMATERASU'S FURNACE

Scholars of the Crab, Phoenix, and even the Dragon marvel at the existence of Amaterasu's Furnace, the only known point of purity in the Shadowlands, a passage to the Realm of Hungry Ghosts.

Some decades ago, the Unicorn shugenja Iuchi Karasu stumbled out of the Shadowlands half mad from torture of body and mind. Karasu spoke of many strange things; one of his more outrageous tales contained the supposed fate of Hida and his son, the Crab Thunder, Hida Atarasi. Karasu claimed that Hida had found his lost son, who had been corrupted by the will of Fu Leng, and the two battled to this day. Naturally, the poor shugenja's ravings were dismissed and Karasu never spoke of it afterward.

Ironically, Karasu's tale had a grain of truth in it. The fate of Hida is largely connected to the origin of Amaterasu's Furnace. When Hida left his Clan some time after the war with Fu Leng, he did indeed find his son, Tainted in the Shadowlands. Though Hida was stooped with age and far past his prime, the two fought for nearly a year. Finally, Hida struck a great blow to Atarasi that slew his son, shattered the barriers between the Spirit Realms, and sent Atarasi's soul screaming into the depths of Gaki-do. His victory complete, Hida finally succumbed to the infirmities of old age and died in that same place. His soul ascended into Tengoku to join many of his brothers and sisters.

However, not even in death would Hida be defeated by the Shadowlands. The area that marks his final resting place not only still serves as a passage to Gaki-do, but remains to this day utterly immune to the Shadowlands Taint.

SPONTANEOUS TRANSITIONS

There has never been an instance of sudden transportation to the Realm of Hungry Spirits from other realms. The realm itself is not aware enough to attempt to draw others into it, and the hungry ghosts have neither the motivation nor, generally, the power to do so.

JEALOUSY

When a spirit is sent to Gaki-do by the Fortune of Death, the Realm of Hungry Ghosts immediately attempts to make that soul one of its shambling horrors. Every hour, starting with the instant the soul of a dead mortal comes within Gaki-do's borders, the spirit is tested by the will of Gaki-do itself. Failure means the soul joins the ranks of the tortured and restless dead. Though more honorable spirits withstand the Realm's influence longer, most souls sent to the Realm of Hungry Ghosts are hardly honorable... and none can deny Gaki-do forever. Sooner or later, the soul must be punished.

Every hour, the spirit must make a Will save at a DC of 25. The spirit gains a +5 circumstance bonus for every rank in honor he has (these bonuses stack). If this save fails, the spirit falls under the control of Gaki-do so long as it remains within it (see Control).

Every hour, the spirit must make a Honor Test at a TN of 20. If this test is failed, the spirit falls under the control of Gaki-do so long as it remains within it (see Control).

CONTROL

The influence of Gaki-do wears on the mortal mind as the tide sweeps the sand clean. Those who find themselves in the thrall of the Realm of Hungry Ghosts are quickly reduced to gibbering creatures seeking only to consume what they must to end their punishment.

Mortal visitors to Gaki-do must also make the hourly Will save described under Jealousy. Each time the character fails the Will save, he gains one level of Control from the Realm of Hungry Ghosts. For each level of Control he accumulates, one of his ability scores is lowered to match that of a gaki. First the character's Wisdom is changed (to 11), then his Intelligence (to 6), then his Charisma (to 10). If the character's ability score is lower than the gaki's score, the score is left unchanged. Once the character reaches Control 3, he is completely under the influence of Gaki-do, although not actually a gaki.

Changed ability scores may be recovered with a heal, remove curse, or restoration spell.

Mortal visitors to Gaki-do must also make the hourly Honor Test described under Jealousy. Each time the character fails the Honor Test, he gains one level of Control from the Realm of Hungry Ghosts. For each level of Control he accumulates, one of his Traits is lowered to match that of a Muzai-gaki. First the character's Willpower is changed, then his Intelligence, then his Awareness. If the character's

Traits is lower than the gaki's score, the score is left unchanged. Once the character reaches Control 3, he is completely under the influence of Gaki-do, although not actually a gaki.

These lost Traits may be recovered if a shugenja of Rank 4 or higher casts Path to Inner Peace on the victim with four Raises declared specifically for this purpose. This casting heals no Wounds, but restores the lost Traits immediately.

A soul under the control of Gaki-do becomes completely oblivious, seeking out only what it requires to eat. The blank periods last from two to twenty days, broken up by short flashes of sanity. These short spurts of humanity last of a number of minutes equal to the spirit's Honor rank at death. Gaki-do understands that the more honorable a spirit was, the more painful it will be for them to contemplate their foul deeds in Gaki-do for longer periods of time. Naturally, these outbreaks of sanity are usually spent weeping or lying motionless, completely frozen by the disgusting things they have done because of their burdened soul.

PROTECTION AGAINST GAKI-DO

One unit — 24 hours
2 units — 36 hours
3 units — 42 hours
4 units — 45 hours
5 units — 46 hours
Each additional unit — +1 hour

The clarity of crystal averts the mystical influence of Gaki-do. A piece of crystal at least the size of a man's eye provides one unit of protection against the Realm of the Hungry Dead's will. As Gaki-do erodes the protection the crystal grants, it becomes a dull yellow color and begins to crack and wear at the edges. Finally, when the crystal can protect its bearer no more, it crumbles like brittle paper.

PROTECTION BY GAKI-DO

Spirits of Gaki-do cannot be affected by the influence of other realms. They are condemned by the Celestial Order to suffer for their sins until such time they may join the honored ancestors in Yomi. The only exception to this rule is the influence of Jigoku, also known as the Shadowlands Taint. Beings from Gaki-do acquire this Taint in the same fashion as any other creature.

ABILITIES

Gaki-do grants its inhabitants no particular abilities.

MAGIC

The use of magic is completely unaffected by the Realm of Hungry Ghosts. However, the gaki are drawn to shugenja and their power like moths to a flame, hoping for some sort of reprieve from their sentence. More often than not, they express this desire by attempting to devour the shugenja.

RELATIONS WITH OTHER REALMS

The denizens of Gaki-do deal with all realms in a somewhat simple matter — any new area is ground in which to feed. As mentioned previously, most gaki who can attempt to cross the borders of the Spirit Realms force their way into Ningen-do, while others are touched by the essence of Jigoku when they come to close to the bordering Realm of Ultimate evil. This Tainting of gaki leads to the horrific nightmares spoken of in ghost stories and children's tales across the Empire of Rokugan. Some shugenja theorize that all insects are, in fact, related to gaki, and that gaki are the souls of people whose sins prevented them from being reincarnated as animals (the next step in the Celestial Order). Squirming bugs huddled under rocks, crawling insects swarming over cast-off food, and even maggots feeding upon corpses are all said to be gaki. Even when taking human form, many gaki display insectoid traits such as segmented eyes, wings, or antennae.

INHABITANTS

The only native denizen of Gaki-do is naturally the gaki themselves. These damned souls are both many and varied, as each there is a gaki for each particular sin that a soul has been condemned for. Most gaki fall into one of three categories of ghost, though their "breed" may vary widely from others within its same category. These classifications generally apply to those who venture out into the Realm of Mortals, though remain a reliable indicator of their behavior within the Realm of Hungry Dead.

First there are the muzai-gaki, who are the most common of all gaki. They are cursed to wander, hungering for something that simply cannot be defined. They are violently frustrated by their inability to sate themselves, and often cause items to hurl themselves across the room or topple other objects. Muzai-gaki often attempt to hide themselves from mortal eyes out of shame of what they have become.

A more fortunate gaki is known as a usai-gaki, and may feed upon the waste of mortals and civilization. While this can be as disgusting as the offal of humans and animals, the insects the gaki often become in Ningen-do more often swarm over cast-off bits of food or plants. Compassionate Fortunes will even allow these gaki to occasionally feast upon offerings left at their shrines. These gaki tend to take the form of ants and beetles most commonly, and rarely cause any harm to mortals. If they are actually identified for their true nature, usai-gaki will actually be helpful to anyone that provides them with food. Since usai-gaki are condemned to wander as gaki until they consume a certain amount of material, any aid they can be granted on their task is received well. Such gaki often travel in groups, and are known to show their ghost selves in order to drive others away from what they will define as their own territory. Once these gaki consume enough food, they are allowed to move onto Yomi and become shiryo.

The most dangerous (and generally well-known) of the gaki are the shozai-gaki. They are the violent spirits forced to feed upon impure and living substances such as flesh, blood, sweat, bile, or some similar substance. Each shozai-gaki will only ever feed upon one certain substance during its life as a ghost. These ghosts become trouble when they recognize mortal humans and animals as a source of food, and cannot be convinced otherwise afterward. They are also known to inhabit the body of a mortal, causing fever and chills until the ghost is satisfied for a short while. Like usai-gaki, they will generally attempt to claim one area for their own territory, and force interlopers out as best they can. These gaki are the most likely to be corrupted by Jigoku, and often appear as oni-like in their "true" form.

MUZAI-GAKI

Tiny Undead (Incorporeal)

Hit Dice: 2d12 (13 hp)

Initiative: +2 (Dex)

Speed: Fly 30 ft. (perfect)

AC: 15 (+2 Dex, +2 size, +1 deflection)

Attacks: Incorporeal touch +5 melee

Damage: Incorporeal touch 1d6 cold

Face/Reach: 5 ft. by 5ft./5ft.

Special Attacks: Telekinesis

Special Qualities: Damage reduction 10/jade, incorporeal, undead

Saves: Fort +0, Ref +2, Will +2

Abilities: Str —, Dex 14, Con —, Int 3, Wis 9, Cha 3

Skills: Hide +14

Feats: Weapon finesse (incorporeal touch)

Climate/Terrain: Any

Organization: Solitary (within Ningen-do), Group 3-10 (within Gaki-do)

Challenge Rating: 2

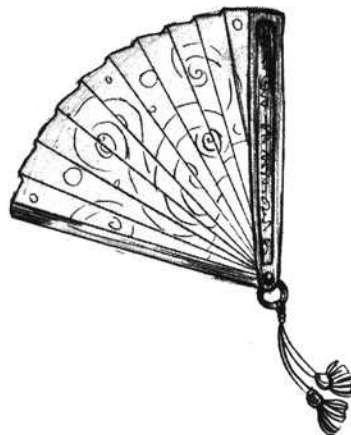
Treasure: None

Honor/Alignment: 0/Chaotic Neutral

Advancement: Usai-gaki: 3-4 HD (Small), shozai-gaki: 4-5 HD (Medium-size)

SPECIAL ATTACKS

Telekinesis (Su): Once per round as a free action, the gaki may use telekinesis as cast by a 12th level sorcerer. With the exceptions of self-defense, mizuai-gaki almost never use this ability and usai-gaki only use it to annoy and frighten others. Only shozai-gaki consistently use telekinesis to harm others without provocation.



SPECIAL QUALITIES

Rejuvenation (Su): In most cases, it's difficult to destroy a gaki through simple combat. The "destroyed" spirit is banished back to Gaki-do, and may not manifest again in Ningen-do for 1d20 months. At that time, the gaki has a strong (80%) chance of returning to the place where it was destroyed as an undead. The only release from the damnation of gaki-do is penance, not being "killed" by others.

MUZAI-GAKI AND USAI-GAKI

Earth: 1

Water: 1

Strength: 2

Fire: 1

Agility: 3

Air: 1

Reflexes: 3

Rolls When Attacking: 3k2 (touch or hurled objects)

Rolls for Damage: 1k1 (touch or hurled objects)

TN to be Hit: 10 (requires Jade, Crystal or Obsidian weapon)

Wounds Per Level: 10: Dead*

*(Gaki that are destroyed instead are forced back into the realm of Gaki-do)

SHOZAI-GAKI

Earth: 2

Water: 2

Strength: 3

Fire: 2

Agility: 3

Air: 2

Reflexes: 3

Rolls When Attacking: 4k2 (touch or hurled objects)

Rolls for Damage: 2k2 (touch or hurled objects)

TN to be Hit: 10 (requires Jade, Crystal or Obsidian weapon)

Wounds Per Level: 30:

Dead*

*(Gaki that are destroyed instead are forced back into the realm of Gaki-do)

A gaki of any variety may be seen for what it truly is when a shugenja with an elemental focus of Air uses his sense elements ability. It is also important to note that gaki in the form of insects are as vulnerable as normal insects (1 hp, 5 AC), and require a full-round action to change shape.

A Sense Air spell may be cast specifically to see and sense gaki in the area. It is also important to note that gaki in the form of insects are as vulnerable as normal insects (1 wound, TN to be hit: 5), and require a full round to change into their true gaki form.

SPECIFIC TYPES OF GAKI

NIGHT MOTHS

Moths with dark and even black coloration are often the souls of wives who died poorly, and those who forsook maintaining their household in order to pursue their own agenda. These insects are the bane of silk, as the gaki is forced to eat this fabric and expose herself to other households and relive their failures.

JIKI-KWA

These gaki are forced to burn themselves and consume the fires of lamps and torches.

In most cases, the gaki destroys the form it has taken in Ningen-do and is forced back into Gaki-do for a period of time.

This is usually the fate of those who caused fires in their life, which is a great offense within Rokugan.

JIKI-MIN

The souls of those who have stolen from temples are forced to become jiki-min-gaki. These pitiful insects can consume nothing but the false hair on temple and shrine idols. Many times, they are swatted and destroyed by temple caretakers, and forced back into the Realm of Hungry Ghosts.

FUJO-KO-BYAKU

Also known as flesh eaters, these insects are usually maggots or beetles and feed upon the skin of both the living and dead. Those who donate dirty and unwholesome food to shrines and temples suffer the fate of becoming a flesh eater.

JU-CHU

Ju-chu-gaki are almost always muzai-gaki, and can only appear in the Realm of Mortals inside trees. It is said the growing of grass and grain around them causes them pain, and that is their punishment for cutting down the trees and flowers on holy ground.

DOKU

The spirits of those who sold and used poison much in their mortal lives become doku-gaki, the poison eaters. These gaki often become leeches and slugs in Rokugan, and are used by clever shugenja for both the benefit of the gaki and a poison victim.



SHIKKO

Samurai lords who ignore the suffering of their vassals often are doomed to wander as shikko-gaki. These ghosts feed off the corpses of humans only, and carry a plague with them that they spread as they wander from place to place in search of food. Some even realize that they cause a sickness that can kill, and will haunt a village for weeks in hopes of creating a large feeding ground.

YOKU-SHI

The ghosts of those who fell victim to the sin of desire many times in their life often become yoku-shi-gaki. These ghosts rarely appear as insects, instead choosing to show themselves as comely women and men, leading others down their dark path and feeding off of their desire.

UBUME

Also known as "mourning ghosts," ubume are the spirits of those who have forsaken their loved ones and those who depended on them in life. They can feed off of only sorrow, and often appear as despairing humans wandering the Empire and moaning in a low howl.

FEATURES OF GAKI-DO

Gaki-do itself is a featureless plain of undulating organic material. The only constant features of the realm are the endless milling spirits and the vile ground. The sky is a dusky red-yellow hue that swirls and rolls like thunderclouds, and the very ground shifts as if angrily attempting to push its way out from under itself.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

HAUNTING

While traveling, the party will hear about a particular area or structure nearby that is considered cursed or haunted by the

local population. Even the local samurai will admit to their fears of the place, if pressed. The actual location can be anything appropriate to the campaign — anything from an abandoned corner of a great stronghold to a simple clearing in a nearby forest.

Sooner or later, the characters will either confront the gaki out of curiosity, or the needs of the local peasantry. The exact identity of the gaki can easily be fit to the campaign, as well. Perhaps an ancestor of the local lord or a relation of one of the party's antagonists. In any case, the gaki has no qualms about letting intruders learn it is angry, though will not make any attempt to enlighten the characters as to why.

With some research (depending on the setting, it could be as easy as finding an old map of the village, or attempting to track down any rumors of descendants of the gaki), the characters will learn the haunted area is the location of a burial ground from before the Empire began to cremate their dead. The gaki returned to Rokugan only to find its resting place was forgotten and ignored. If the party is able to appease the ghost with recognition and perhaps a ceremony to bless the area in the ghost's honor, it will depart. Naturally, the gaki may impart some wisdom from the past to the characters, providing a vital piece of information the party was missing.

GENERAL GAKI TIPS

The most common type of interaction between other Spirit Realms and Ningen-do is a haunting caused by a spirit from Gaki-do. These hauntings are common, though few are severe enough to warrant any more attention than a local shugenja purifying the area and driving the spirit back.

In some cases, however, a tortured spirit can be the key to a campaign's mystery, and players may find themselves having to contend with an angry gaki in order to learn something that will both further their own quest and help the restless spirit find some semblance of peace.

Of course, the easiest method of applying the denizens of Gaki-do into your campaign is an old-fashioned haunted house. Shambling spirits, eaters of flesh, and hordes of insects that appear and disappear like the wind should all be enough to keep characters peering around every corner of an abandoned castle with a torch.



CHAPTER THREE:

SAKKAKU, THE REALM OF MISCHIEF

THROUGH BLOOD AND THUNDER PART FOUR

"This is wrong," Tokai said, looking about in confusion. "All of this is wrong." He may never have visited the Seikitsu Mountains, but he was fairly certain that the River of Gold did not flow uphill. He was also relatively sure that it did not rain origami birds, as it seemed to be doing now.

Tokai paused for a moment, sat on a stone, and wiped a chunk of horse excrement from his shoe with a handful of leaves. He had stepped in such piles three times in the last hour, despite his efforts to watch his step. He had yet to see any horses. With a sigh, he tossed the mess aside. On impulse, he plucked a small bird up between two fingers. It seemed to be made of some sort of rough green paper. Despite his peculiar surroundings, he could not help but consider this place an improvement after his seemingly endless encounters with the broken spirits of Gaki-dō.

"You like?" asked a shrill voice by his ear, so startling Tokai that he nearly toppled from his stone. A short, plump creature hovered in the air beside Tokai on flapping wings far too tiny to possibly bear its form aloft. When it saw Tokai's reaction it bared its small, sharp teeth in a broad smile and bowed in midair.

"A mujina," Tokai said, glancing about quickly to see if there were more. He knew enough about mujina to know it was a bad idea to turn your back on them. They were generally harmless, but at times their pranks could go too far.

"You like birdie?" the mujina asked again, pointing at the toy in Tokai's hands. "I make birdie."

"It is a very nice... birdie," Tokai agreed, smiling politely.

"Birdie?" the mujina replied. "What birdie?"

Tokai glanced down at his hand. The lump of horse dung and leaves he had tossed aside had somehow replaced the origami bird in his hand. Tokai tossed it aside with a curse. "So I am in Sakkaku, then," he said, rising from the stone and wiping his hand on the earth.

The mujina nodded rapidly.

"Do your worst, trickster," Tokai spat. "I was tortured in the pits of Jigoku. Your foolish tricks can do little more than annoy me."

"Oh," the mujina looked crestfallen. "Sorry, thought you'd enjoy joke."

"I do not appreciate that sort of humor," Tokai said.

"Really?" the mujina looked confused. "If no like jokes, then why in Realm of Tricksters?"

"I assure you it is only temporary," Tokai said. "As soon as I can find a passage leading from this place to a more peaceful realm, I will do so."

"Oh," the mujina said. "Easy. Go that way." It pointed to its left with a wide smile.

Tokai looked at the mujina for a long moment, then walked in the opposite direction.

The mujina giggled, just loud enough for Tokai to hear.

Tokai stopped, sighed, and walked in the other direction.

The mujina giggled again, louder.

Tokai stopped, sighed again, and kept walking.

The mujina happily followed, at a safe distance.

SAKKAKU AND THE CELESTIAL ORDER

Sakkaku is the Realm of Mischief, but it could equally well be described as the Realm of Capriciousness, the Realm of Chaos, and the Realm of "Because-It-Would-Be-Funny." It is a realm of fleeting shadows and transparent illusion, where nothing is ever as it seems.

Sakkaku has no place in the Celestial Order. It does not host the dead as Meido and Yomi do. It is not a punishment realm like Gaki-do and Toshigoku. Neither is it a cornerstone of reality like Yume-do and Ningen-do, nor does it house the Fortunes or demons. It is a realm without purpose, and as far as anyone can tell, exists solely as a cosmic joke.

If Sakkaku is a joke, it is a joke that holds nothing back. The concept of willpower is anathema to the residents of Sakkaku. The very nature of Mischief is whimsy and chaos. Restraint is both alien and harmful to the denizens of Sakkaku, and indeed can damage those under Sakkaku's control.

CLOSE REALMS

Ningen-do, Chikushudo, Jigoku, and Yume-do are close to Sakkaku. The first three are favored visiting places for Sakkaku's residents (though only mujina go to Jigoku). The reason for Yume-do's proximity to Sakkaku is unknown, though the mujina find it amusing.

DISTANT REALMS

Tengoku, Meido, and Yomi are far from Sakkaku. All of these Realms are distant by design. The denizens of Yomi and Tengoku have chosen to distance themselves from Sakkaku, and the residents of Sakkaku have chosen to stay as far away from the deadly dull Realm of Meido as possible.

BARRED REALMS

Though many would wish otherwise, Sakkaku cannot be kept out permanently. No realms are barred from or to Sakkaku.

DEATH AND SAKKAKU

Mortals who ended up in Sakkaku when they died would potentially be the most pitiable creatures in existence. Fortunately, that does not happen. Nobody goes to Sakkaku upon death.

KNOWN PASSAGES FROM NINGEN-DO

Somewhere in the Twilight Mountains, a cave leads directly into Sakkaku. The Crab have tried vainly to locate it for centuries. Mujina use the cave to flee from both Crab shugenja armed with shadow-binding spells and the utter crushing boredom of Sakkaku itself.

Sakkaku is littered with passages to all other realms, though some are more difficult to navigate than others. Through these passageways, the denizens of Sakkaku travel to the other realms so that they may torment the residents.

SPONTANEOUS TRANSITIONS

There has never been a case in recorded history of any human spontaneously traveling to Sakkaku. However, given the undeniably spotty nature of Rokugani recorded history, it is not at all improbable that it has happened at some point. Such an event would occur only at the whim of Sakkaku, and only to those that were trying too hard to be funny. It would take the poor creature out of Ningen-do and return it only after a suitable amount of chame had developed.

JEALOUSY

Sakkaku is a jealous realm. Perhaps appropriately, its degree of jealousy is random. The realm itself is capricious; some who enter find themselves immediately succumbing to its trickster ways, while others don't feel its effects for months.

CONTROL

CHAME AND FUZEN

Sakkaku's Control is called *chame*, and is inflicted on those who enter Sakkaku unprotected. *Chame* does not harm the visitor in any way, and does not prevent him from leaving Sakkaku. In fact, its effects are undetectable until the victim returns to his home realm. Once he is back home, his self-restraint seems to be gone. As if drunk, a character with high levels of *chame* is much more willing to act on all his thoughts, though he will not violate any of his beliefs or ideals (unless, of course, prudence and restraint are among them).

The only difference between levels of *chame* is the difficulty of restraining oneself, assuming the character even tries. One restraint roll allows a character full control over his actions for an hour.

Natives of Sakkaku do not have *chame*. It only affects visitors from other realms.



The daily Will save DC to avoid getting chame is 15, and increases each day by 10 until a roll is failed. Once a roll is failed, the save DC resets to 15, and the character gains 1d10 points of chame.

To restrain yourself in any circumstance, you must make a Will save against the DC listed for the level of chame you have.

- Level 1 — DC 10
- Level 2 — DC 20
- Level 3 — DC 30
- Level 4 — DC 40
- Level 5 — DC 50

The *chame* modifier is applied as a penalty to Will saves. Will saves involving *chame* — the roll to resist getting it, the roll to restrain yourself, and the roll for withdrawal — do not suffer this penalty.

The daily Willpower TN to avoid getting chame is 15, and increases each day by 10 until a roll is failed. Once a roll is failed the TN resets to 15, and the character gains 1k1 points of chame.

To restrain yourself in any circumstance, you must make a Willpower roll against the TN listed for the level of chame you have. You may make Raises to increase the duration by one hour per raise.

- Level 1 — TN 15
- Level 2 — TN 25
- Level 3 — TN 40
- Level 4 — TN 60
- Level 5 — TN 75

A character's rank of *chame* is applied as a penalty to all Willpower rolls, though not to the Willpower rolls involving *chame* directly — the roll to resist getting it, the roll to restrain, and the roll for withdrawal.

After the fifth level of Control is acquired, the *chame* begins to change into a more serious form of Sakkaku's Control called *fuzen*. Characters with *fuzen* become malicious and dangerous. Each full week that the character remains in Sakkaku, one level of chame becomes a level of *fuzen*.

— Only one restraint roll is made for both types of Control. If the roll falls between the number required to refrain from *fuzen* behaviors and *chame* behaviors, the character exhibits only the *chame*. Characters who also fail their *fuzen* restraint rolls engage in outright inhumanities instead of simply acting on their inner thoughts. They steal medicine, sabotage vehicles, engineer the disgrace of courtiers, and make themselves dangerous in every way they can think of. They consider their actions hysterically funny and refuse to stop.

If the character successfully restrains himself, the *chame* or *fuzen* tears at him on the inside. This is the only way to be free of Sakkaku's Control: the character must want to be free, and want it badly enough to go through withdrawal.

Each time the character restrains himself, he takes 1d10 damage as the conflicting energies (his *chi* and the *chame*) within him strain. However, he is entitled to a saving throw to begin to withdraw from *chame*. The save DC is the same as the restraint roll. If the character makes five consecutive withdrawal saves, his *chame* is reduced by one level permanently. Failing restraint rolls does not affect the withdrawal rolls.

A character with *fuzen* loses levels of *chame* as normal until his *chame* level and his *fuzen* level are equal. After that point, the withdrawal process removes both *fuzen* and *chame*, but each level of *fuzen* removed also permanently drains two points of Wisdom.

Each time the character restrains himself, he takes one die of damage as the conflicting energies (his *chi* and the *chame*) within him strain. However, he is entitled to another Willpower roll to begin to withdraw from *chame*. The TN for this roll is the same as the restraint roll. If the character makes five consecutive withdrawal rolls, his *chame* is reduced by one level permanently. Failing restraint rolls does not affect the withdrawal rolls.

A character with *fuzen* loses levels of *chame* as normal until his *chame* level and his *fuzen* level are equal. After that point, the withdrawal process removes both *fuzen* and *chame*, but each level of *fuzen* removed also permanently reduces Willpower by a point.

PROTECTION AGAINST SAKKAKU

- One unit — 1 day
- 2 units — 2 days
- 3 units — 3 days
- 4 units — 4 days
- 5 units — 5 days
- Each additional unit — +1 day

Smooth rounded stones from Ningen-do protect against *chame* and *fuzen* perfectly. A stone approximately the size of a man's fist (and not appreciably larger or smaller) is one unit of protection. Why this protects visitors is yet another mystery of Sakkaku. When the stone can protect no more, it crumbles to nothingness.

PROTECTION BY SAKKAKU

Creatures from Sakkaku have a natural resistance to the Control of other realms. The only Control that can affect them is the Shadowlands Taint. While *mujina* and *kappa* are immune to even that, tragically, none of the other races have any defenses against the Taint. *Pekkle*, when Lost, become *Pekkle* no Oni, creatures whose Taint is so subtle that one has even managed to become a close advisor of Toturi Sezaru. Lost *Orochi* swim the Sea of Shadows and occasionally attack *Rokugani* shipping lines. Thankfully, *orocho* are rare, and the Lost variety are even more rare.

No substance protects the residents of Sakkaku from the Taint, aside from jade. However, Taint less than a day old can be healed. If the creature can make it back to Sakkaku and remain there for one day per point of Taint, all of the creature's Taint will be removed.

ABILITIES

Sakkaku does not grant abilities to those with its Control. It merely mocks them.

MAGIC

Magic functions in Sakkaku exactly the same way that it functions in the Ningen-do, the Realm of Mortals.

NEW SPELL

SHADOWBINDING

ICRAB CLAN SECRET SPELL

Transmutation (Earth)

Level: Shu 1 (Earth)

Components: V, S, DF

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: Medium (100 ft. + 10 ft./level)

Target: One creature's shadow

Duration: Instantaneous

Saving Throw: Fortitude negates (harmless*)

Spell Resistance: Yes (harmless*)

This spell was developed by a Kuni shugenja several decades ago, the renowned Kuni Ikashi. It allows you to take control of a single creature's shadow and animate it harmlessly. Originally designed to amuse, it was only through sheer happenstance that the spell was tested on a mujina's shadow.

When cast on a mujina, this spell has the same effect as a dominate monster spell (see the *Player's Handbook*).

SHADOWBINDING

ICRAB CLAN SECRET SPELL

Element: Earth

Mastery Level: 1

Duration: One day

Area of Effect: One character's shadow

Range: 50'

This spell was developed by a Kuni shugenja several decades ago, the renowned Kuni Ikashi. It allows the caster to take control of a single creature's shadow and animate it harmlessly. Originally designed to amuse, it was only through sheer happenstance that the spell was tested on a mujina's shadow.

The shugenja may command the targeted mujina for a number of days equal to his School Rank. Controlled mujina will not obey any orders that threaten their own safety, including entering combat.

RELATIONS WITH OTHER REALMS

CHIKUSHUDO

Whimsy is a trait common to both Sakkaku and Chikushudo. The bakeneko live in both realms, and their constant travel between their two homes has brought the two realms close together.

Mujina enjoy enraging the predator spirits in Chikushudo, and find it particularly hysterical when they manage to provoke a wolf-spirit into leaping into the air in pursuit of the small tricksters.

GAKI-DO

Thousands of souls constantly attempting to devour each other is funny. Thousands of souls constantly attempting to devour any visitor that enters the realm is not nearly as funny, especially for the less invulnerable creatures of Sakkaku.

JIGOKU

Even the mujina, immune to the Taint, dislike Jigoku. The forces of that dark realm have destroyed even mujina, and corrupted the pekkle. None of the races native to the Realm of Mischief like Jigoku in the slightest, and yet it remains close.

One of the rare pleasures that a mujina has is pulling a prank on those that could conceivably exact retribution. Hence, Jigoku is a common destination for bored mujina. Thousands of mujina enter it daily, and most are able to return. Jigoku would like to seal its borders to Sakkaku to prevent the plague of mujina, but so far it has not been able to do so. Instead it simply attempts to destroy those who enter.

MEIDO

Possibly the most boring realm, even duller than Sakkaku itself, is the Realm of Waiting. This realm is a punchline in mujina jokes: "What is the worst place to be? Meido!" As far as mujina are concerned, jokes at the expense of Meido never grow old.

NINGEN-DO

What greater joy is there than tormenting the natives of Ningen-do? The Realm of Mortals is the favorite destination for all the denizens of Sakkaku. Humans provide an endless source of amusement for the mujina and kappa. The orochi care for the ningyo, the pekkle live with humans, and the kenku adore their forest homes. Only the bakeneko have no real ties with the Realm of Mortals, but they visit anyway.

TENGOKU

The Fortunes have distanced their realm from Sakkaku. The Fortunes are quite capable of destroying those who wander into their realm. Even were mujina or pekkle able to bypass Okura no Oni (see *Creatures of Rokugan*, page 55), the Fortunes would simply annihilate them. For all intents and purposes, Tengoku is off limits.

TOSHIGOKU

Like Gaki-do, Toshigoku is another realm of constant senseless violence. Aside from mujina, the denizens of Sakkaku avoid Toshigoku — and mujina stay only as long as they can taunt those dead souls who cannot harm them.

YOMI

All the best humans go to Yomi, and the pekkle, mujina, and kappa would give a lot to be able to get into Yomi more easily. The blessed ancestors, however, are quite capable of distancing their realm from Mischief. While this does not completely prevent the various trickster spirits from getting in, it does make it an ordeal that few have the patience to endure.

YUME-DO

Yume-do is a boring realm. Not quite as boring as Sakkaku, but there's nothing to entertain even mujina in a realm where nothing's real. The two realms are close for no reason other than it seems to amuse Sakkaku for it to be so.

INHABITANTS

BAKENEKO

Bakeneko are shapeshifting cat spirits that are native to both Sakkaku and Chikushudo. Nearly to an individual, they dwell in Ningen-do. They are fascinated by humans.

Unlike the kenku, with whom the bakeneko have an ancient rivalry, the bakeneko do not teach humans. Instead, they play pranks on those humans that they find interesting.

Life, to the bakeneko, is a great joke. They take very little seriously, and frequently humiliate humans in an attempt to demonstrate the humorous nature of life. As duelists are often quite somber and dour, they are frequently the target of bakeneko pranks.

The d20 System™ bakeneko stats can be found in *Creatures of Rokugan* (page 8).

BAKENEKO

Earth: 2

Fire: 2

Water: 2

Air: 2

Rolls When Attacking: 6k2

Rolls For Damage: 5k2

TN to Be Hit: 25

Carapace: 6

Wounds: 4: +0, 8: +3, 12: +6, 16: +10, 20:

+15, 24: +20, 28: Down, 32: Out, 36:

Dead

Notable Skills: Acting 3, Athletics 4, Kenjutsu 3, Iaijutsu 4, Sincerity 4

SHAPESHIFTING

As hengeyokai, the bakeneko have the ability to transform to the form of any creature that is human-sized or smaller. Often, they take human form to deal with humans on a somewhat equal level. Bakeneko in human form tend to be small and attractive. This transformation takes one round.

KAPPA

If a blind man had to describe a kappa, he would likely begin his description with "Similar to a mujina..." The kappa are a race of small humanoids with a shell like a turtle's. They are malicious to the point of murder, and occasionally drink the blood of their kills.

In spite of this malice, the kappa have a reputation for honesty. Money and power mean nothing to the kappa, but they honor their promises at any cost — although extracting those promises is extremely difficult.

The d20 System™ kappa stats can be found in *Oriental Adventures* (page 169).

KAPPA

Earth: 2 / 1

Fire: 1 / 1

Water: 3 / 1

Perception 4 / 2

Air: 3 / 1

Rolls When Attacking:

2k1 / 1k1

Rolls For Damage: 3k2 / 1k1

TN To Be Hit: 15 / 5

Carapace: 8

Wounds: 10: +5, 25: Dead

WATER BOWL

On the top of a kappa's head is a bowl of water, seemingly carved into the head itself. If this bowl is ever emptied, the kappa becomes weak and lethargic. Use the second set of stats while the bowl is empty. Clever samurai often bow to the kappa, which occasionally return the bow (spilling their water).

ILLUSION

A kappa can cast the spell *Mists of Illusion* as if it were a Rank 1 shugenja with an Affinity for Air.

KENKU

Kenku are a race of manlike ravens originally from Ningen-do. Through their peculiar breed

of magic, they have altered themselves so that Sakkaku considers them natives, and thus are not subject to *chame*.

Kenku are not nearly as fond of pranks as the other races of Sakkaku, though they enjoy trickery. They have a close relationship with the mujina and the pekkle; the kenku consider them to be children in need of wise kenku guidance.

Unlike the other races, the kenku see trickery not as worthwhile in itself, but as a means to an end. Often this end is teaching. Kenku have a well-earned reputation as some of the finest kenjutsu masters anywhere, though only rarely will one take a human student. The techniques of the kenku are not for the casual student. Only after grueling tests of dedica-



CHAPTER THREE
SAKKAKU

tion, character, and patience can a human prove himself. In the past century, only three humans have received training at kenku hands, and only one is alive today — Doji Yasuyo. Despite the stringent requirements, kenku truly love instructing students in the art of kenjutsu. Skilled sensei have high prestige in kenku society.

KENKU

Medium-sized Fey
Hit Dice: 2d8+2 (11 hp)
Initiative: +2 (Dex)
Speed: 20 ft., fly 50 ft. (poor)
AC: 15 (+2 Dex, +2 leather armor, +1 natural)
Attacks: 2 claws +3 melee, bite -2 melee; or katana +3 melee; or quarterstaff +3 melee
Damage: Claw 1d4, bite 1d4; or katana 1d10; or quarterstaff 1d6/1d6
Face/Reach: 5 ft. by 5 ft./5 ft.
Special Attacks: Spell-like abilities
Special Qualities: Skills
Saves: Fort +1, Ref +5, Will +3
Abilities: Str 12, Dex 15, Con 13, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 8
Skills: Disguise +6, Escape Artist +4, Hide +6, Listen +3, Move Silently +6, Open Lock +4, Pick Pocket +4, Spot +3
Feats: Flyby Attack

Climate/Terrain: Deep forest
Organization: Solitary or company (2-4)
Challenge Rating: 2
Treasure: Standard
Honor: Usually 3
Alignment: Usually neutral
Advancement: By character class

COMBAT

Kenku prefer to attack with a weapon, either a katana or bo staff. If unarmed, a kenku attacks with its claws and beak.

Spell-like Abilities: 1/day — *Alter self*, *invisibility* (self only). These are as the spells cast by a 16th level sorcerer.

Skills: Kenku receive a +4 racial bonus to Disguise checks.

KENKU

Earth: 2
Willpower: 3
Fire: 3
Agility: 6
Water: 4
Air: 5
Rolls When Attacking: 10k6
Rolls For Damage: 7k3
TN To Be Hit: 25
Wounds: 4: +0, 8: +3, 12: +6, 16: +10, 20: +15, 24: +20, 28: Down, 32: Out, 36: Dead
Notable Skills: Acting 3, Kenjutsu 6 (or higher!)

KENKU MAGIC

Kenku may cast *Mists of Illusion* and *Essence of Air* as if they were Rank 2 shugenja with an Affinity for Air.



Kenku swordsmanship is legendary, and rightly so. The basic form and techniques are simple enough to be applied to any school — in fact, they are so simple that a character with a kenku sensei need spend only half the normal amount of experience points to raise his Kenjutsu skill while under the kenku's tutelage. These techniques cannot be learned without instruction, and every student of a kenku must swear upon his life and honor that he will not teach the methods to another. Having a kenku instruct you is very prestigious, and is worth five boxes of Glory.

MUJINA

Tormentors of humans, allies of ratlings, and by far the most common denizens of Sakkaku, the mujina are perhaps the most useless creatures ever created. Their entire existence is, like Sakkaku, inexplicable.

They seem to have only one goal in life: to amuse themselves, usually at the expense of others. Their sense of humor is juvenile. A mujina will take equal joy in stealing a priceless heirloom, tripping a running man, or poking and slapping a distracted victim. They are reasonably intelligent, and enjoy mocking Rokugani society. One time, a mujina danced along the entire length of the Carpenter Wall incessantly singing "Fu Leng is the best," off-key. Another time, a mujina attempted to synchronize his lips to a speech the Emperor was giving, and quickly fled when the Seppun guardsmen moved to attack it.

Despite the irritation they bring, they are mostly benign creatures, and rarely cause permanent harm. To a mujina's way of thinking, it is better to let the humans live to pester them again later.

The d20 System™ mujina stats can be found in *Rokugan* (page 207).

See the *Legend of the Five Rings Game Master's Guide*, page 140, for mechanical information on mujina.

OROCHI

The orochi are a race of enormous serpents, sixty feet from nose to tail, who dwell deep beneath the sea of Rokugan. Though they look monstrous, they are highly intelligent and social creatures.

Though they do not like to admit it, the orochi were originally from Sakkaku. They have the trickster spirit within them, but it has been suppressed for so long that Sakkaku barely remembers its largest children. Orochi are immune to the Control of Sakkaku and seem to possess little in the way of sense of humor. Perhaps their entire existence is merely another of the Realm of Tricksters' strange jokes.

Ages ago, at the dawn of the Empire, the orochi made a deal with the king of the ningyo for safe refuge in his realm in Ningen-do. The orochi were desperate to leave Sakkaku, as they suffered endlessly at the hands of the mujina.

The king of the ningyo offered the orochi sanctuary in exchange for service, and the orochi were desperate enough to take it. Since then, the orochi have served the ningyo people. Because of the agreement over a thousand years ago, the orochi remain in bondage to the ningyo, though many consider it a point of pride that they remain loyal despite their indentured servitude.

Fortunately for the orochi, the latest King of the Ningyo, Ryujin, has begun to make several concessions to the serpents. The treasures and souls aboard the ships they sink belong to

the orochi, who take a sadistic pleasure in owning the wailing souls of sailors.

Those who knew nothing of the orochi would never imagine that they came from the Realm of Mischief, and that is just how the orochi like it.

The d20 System™ orochi stats can be found in *Creatures of Rokugan* (page 59).

OROCHI

Earth: 8

Fire: 1

Agility: 3

Water: 5

Strength: 10

Air: 1

Reflexes: 3

Rolls When Attacking: 7k4

Rolls For Damage: 10k10

TN to Be Hit: 10

Carapace: 5

Wounds: 100: +5, 250: +10, 400: +20, 600: Dead

Skills: Stealth 4

CONSTRICTION

Any creature caught in the coils of an orochi takes 10k4 Wounds per round as the orochi constricts with its massive strength.

SWALLOW WHOLE

The orochi can swallow creatures of ogre size and smaller with three Raises on its attack roll. Once swallowed, the digestive acids and throat muscles deal 6k4 Wounds, with the acid dealing another 4k2 on each subsequent round until the swallowed creature is dead. The creature can attempt to cut a way out if it has a dagger, claw, or other such small cutting object. No roll to hit is required, and 25 Wounds in a single round allow the creature to burst free. An orochi can fit one ogre or up to five humans in its gullet.

PEKKLE

Most often, the denizens of Rokugan are familiar with the Lost cousins of these spirits: the Pekkles no Oni (see *Creatures of Rokugan*, page 60, or *Way of the Shadowlands*, page 121). While most pekkles have been Lost, a few remain as they were — malevolent trickster spirits in the form of human children.

Unlike mujina, pekkles have but a single trick that keeps them constantly fascinated and amused: maintaining a perpetual masquerade as a child. There is little that pekkles find as amusing as impersonating a child and spending years living its life. In the end, the pekkle reveals itself and then vanishes, to cries of terror from the confused parents. If it has done a particularly good job, it can watch the ex-parents try to piece together what happened, and laugh at their misery.

If there is a single thing in all of creation that the pekkle can be said to universally hate, it is the pekkles no oni, who are a perversion of everything that the pekkles are. Though pekkles are vulnerable to the taint, the pekkles no oni are, inexplicably, unable to taint their untainted brethren. Pekkles eagerly enter combat with pekkles no oni, whom they can identify on sight.

PEKKLE

Medium-sized Outsider (Spirit)
Hit Dice: 9d8+18 (54 hp)
Initiative: +7 (+3 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative)
Speed: 30 ft.
AC: 13 (+3 Dex)
Attacks: 2 fists +12 melee
Damage: Slam 2d6-1
Face/Reach: 5 ft. by 5 ft./5 ft.
Special Qualities: Invulnerability, sense darkness, shapeshifting, spirit qualities
Saves: Fort +8, Ref +9, Will +11
Abilities: Str 8, Dex 17, Con 15, Int 20, Wis 20, Cha 25
Skills: Bluff +16, Diplomacy +20, Disguise +18, Hide +12, Knowledge (etiquette) +14, Knowledge (nobility and royalty) +14, Listen +16, Move Silently +12, Pick Pockets +14, Search +14, Sense +14, Sense Motive +14, Spot +16
Feats: Alertness, Improved Initiative, Weapon Finesse (slam)

Climate/Terrain: Sakkaku, any area populated by humans
Organization: Solitary
Challenge Rating: 8
Treasure: Standard
Honor: Usually 0
Alignment: Chaotic neutral
Advancement: 10-27 HD (Medium-size)

COMBAT

Under normal circumstances, pekkle attempt to avoid combat, in order to maintain their masquerade and their lives. If pressed, pekkle fight only until they can escape the combat. If faced with a pekkle no oni, however, a pekkle will fight it to the death.

Invulnerability (Ex): Pekkles have an incredible resistance to harm. The first 10 points of damage from any source are ignored, and any further damage is reduced by half (rounded down). Pekkles often use their shapeshifting ability to appear wounded, maintaining the illusion that they are normal children.

Sense Darkness (Su): Pekkles have a keenly attuned spiritual sense that lets them detect Taint and Shadowlands creatures within a mile. This ability also allows pekkles to sense pekkles no oni despite the latter's Hidden Darkness ability.

Shapeshifting (Ex): Pekkles can be male or female, from age one to eighteen. They cannot shapeshift to resemble a specific person, but a pekkle can change details of its appearance to maintain several different disguises that are the same age and sex. Shapeshifting is a move-equivalent action.

Spirit Qualities (Ex): As spirits, pekkles gain a +4 racial bonus against all enchantment effects except those of other spirits. Pekkles can sense any passages to Sakkaku within one mile.

PEKKLE

Earth: 4
Willpower: 8
Fire: 2
Water: 1
Air: 6
Rolls When Attacking: 2k2
Rolls For Damage: 1k1
TN To Be Hit: 30
Wounds: 20: +5, 50: +10, 80: +20, 120: Dead
Skills: Courtier 6, Etiquette 7, Investigation 5, Seduction 6, Sincerity 6, any three High skills at 3

INVULNERABILITY

While not as acute as the ability of the same name possessed by Shadowlands creatures, pekkles are amazingly resistant to harm. All damage is halved against a pekkle, and damage dice may not explode.

CONTROLLED APPEARANCE

A Pekkles can change its apparent age at will, ranging from infancy up to eighteen years of age. A pekkle can also change genders at will, and can choose to "age" at the normal rate while it remains in its role.

FEATURES OF SAKKAKU

Sakkaku itself is quite bland and uniform. The landscape is somewhat similar to the features of Ningen-do; the rivers, hills, oceans, and mountains are all in the same places, but there are no trees, buildings, or other monuments to distinguish one area from another. The ground is smooth and picturesque, and the sky is permanently lit as if it were dusk. One notable detail is that those who visit the realm often have the uncomfortable feeling that someone is watching them, or laughing at them.

ADVENTURE HOOK

In the middle of a long journey, the PCs stumble into a passage to Sakkaku. Before they can return, the passage closes, leaving the PCs trapped in the Realm of Mischief. Fortunately, only mujina are in the area. They leave the characters to their own devices for several hours, laughing and giggling just beyond the PCs' field of vision. After the PCs have adjusted and have begun to be bored, the mujina begin to harass them, attempting to steal anything of value (especially a katana). The PCs are likely to chase the trickster spirits; the giggling mujina carry the stolen object around, just out of the characters' reach. Any attempt at conversation provokes the mujina to flee immediately, invisibly. The mujina otherwise allow the chase to go on until the characters seem exhausted, then turn invisible and fly off.

At this point, a kenku approaches the PCs, suggesting that they find the mujina who took the blade and simply ask for it back. If the PCs argue with the kenku, it claims to know what it's talking about, and indicates the location of the mujina. The thieving mujina are easy to find, but convincing them to return the stolen item will prove to be more troublesome. They refuse all requests to return the blade, although forcing the issue with threats of physical violence causes them to return the item.

The PCs may instead give up and return to the kenku. Should they tell it that the mujina did not listen, or that its advice was flawed, it nods and tells them to return to Ningen-do; Sakkaku is not the place for them. If they return humbly, saying that they could not convince the mujina to return their possession, then the kenku smiles and produces the item from within its robes. It claims to have been testing the PCs, and offers them tutelage in the famed kenku form of kenjutsu.

CHAPTER FOUR:

MEIDO, THE REALM OF WAITING

THROUGH BLOOD AND THUNDER PART FIVE

"Where am I now?" Tokei asked, glancing about in confusion. The mujina's endless pestering had turned him around completely. At least the creature had finally abandoned him, and he seemed to have passed into yet another realm at some point. Tokei was uncertain how he felt about the creature's absence. If the mujina had grown bored, that was fine. If the mujina had been frightened, the Tokei was concerned — anything that could frighten a mujina was not to be trifled with. Then again, this could be yet another joke at his expense.

All about him was still, unmoving, unchanging. A slight haze seemed to cover everything, like the smoke after a great fire; yet Tokei could smell no fire, or anything at all for that matter.

A lone samurai stood at a crossroads in the distance, leaning heavily on a long spear. Tokei headed toward him. The samurai peered up at the shugenja's approach. Tokei could see no face behind the helm — the armor was entirely empty.

"Why do you come to Meido, Morito Tokei?" it asked in a sepulchral voice that was neither male nor female. "This is not your time."

"The Gray Realm?" Tokei whispered. "How do you know my name, samurai?"

"I am Emma-O, and I know all that passes through my borders," it replied.

"The Fortune of Death," Tokei exclaimed, bowing deeply. "Forgive my ignorance, great one. I seek only to return to my own realm, Ningen-do. Any aid you can provide..."

"You no longer belong to Ningen-do, Morito Tokei," Emma-O howled with a savage intensity. "You have wandered too long, and your own realm no longer has any claim on you... but there is always room for you here."

"With all due respect, great one, I am not yet dead," Tokei replied. "I can change that, if you wish," Emma-O replied, lifting the spear and pointing its tip at Tokei's chest. "The choice is yours. There will be no pain."

"I choose to live," Tokei replied, facing the Fortune of Death without fear. "I must find my way back where I belong."

"You may find the outcome of such a choice surprising, Tokei-san," the Fortune said. "One day you may look back upon this day and wish you had chosen an endless expanse of gray over the fate that lies in store for you."

"I may," Tokei said, "but if I surrender to death now, I know I will regret my choice."

"You are wise, mortal," Emma-O said with a chuckle. "I will help you."

"You will return me to Ningen-do?" Tokei asked, hopeful.

"No," Emma-O replied. "I said that I would help you..."

MEIDO AND THE CELESTIAL ORDER

If Jigoku represents the ultimate evil of the Celestial Order and Tengoku is the purest good, Meido falls exactly in the center. It is the Realm of Waiting, known also as the Realm of Perfect Judgment and the Revealing Court of All Truths. The souls of all dead mortals must first travel here, to be judged by Emma-O, the Fortune of Death.

Other realms concern the powers of Meido very little. Emma-O is the only being of note that calls the realm home, and he is constantly busy judging the dead. Emma-O must only ensure he can guarantee passage of the souls to their proper place within the other Spirit Realms. Meido has never been drawn into any conflict of power between the other realms, including the endless war between Tengoku and Jigoku. Though Emma-O understands Jigoku would overtake his realm if he could, he also knows that the Order forestalls such a disaster.

CLOSE REALMS

As the realm where mortal souls go when they die, Meido borders on the Realm of Mortals, Ningen-do. Much like Yume-do, it exists on the very edge of mortal perception, and only a slight altering of state is required to perceive the realm. Because of the similar position both realms hold in relation to the Realm of Mortals, Meido is also close to the Realm of Dreams. Spirits on the edge of death often wander from their mortal shells into one realm or both, causing those brought back from such a state to speak of dream-like visions of the afterlife. Meido ferries the bulk of its judged souls to either Yomi or Toshigoku, and thus stands close to those two Spirit Realms.

DISTANT REALMS

The realms of Chikushudo and Sakkaku have little to do with the souls of the dead or their afterlife. The souls of the unworthy occasionally are reincarnated as animal spirits, but the inhabitants of these two realms otherwise care little about each other. Though souls of the dead are also sent to the Realm of Hungry Ghosts, Meido keeps a safe distance from such a place lest its basic nature attempt to reach into the Realm of Waiting. Tengoku is distant from Meido, as very few attain that honored resting place.

BARRED REALMS

The Realm of Waiting is completely barred to Jigoku. Those who have earned the wrath of Jigoku's fires never come to Meido for judgment when they die — their souls go directly to Jigoku.

DEATH AND MEIDO

Only the dead belong in Meido, but not for eternity. Nearly every mortal human soul finds its way to Meido after death, and there they must remain until their time of judgment comes. Once judgment is passed, the soul is sent off to the Realm in which it will spend its eternity in the afterlife, or ushered along the Kharmic Cycle into rebirth.

KNOWN PASSAGES FROM NINGEN-DO

Though Oblivion's Gate once was able to carry mortal souls from any of its multiple openings to another, including Meido, the Gate was destroyed by the efforts of Isawa Hochiu generations ago. As it has not been rebuilt since, the only reliable way for a mortal soul to travel to the Realm of Waiting is death. There is no equally reliable way of returning.

The soul of a particularly powerful being, such as a Kami or Emperor, frequently creates a permanent passage to Meido.

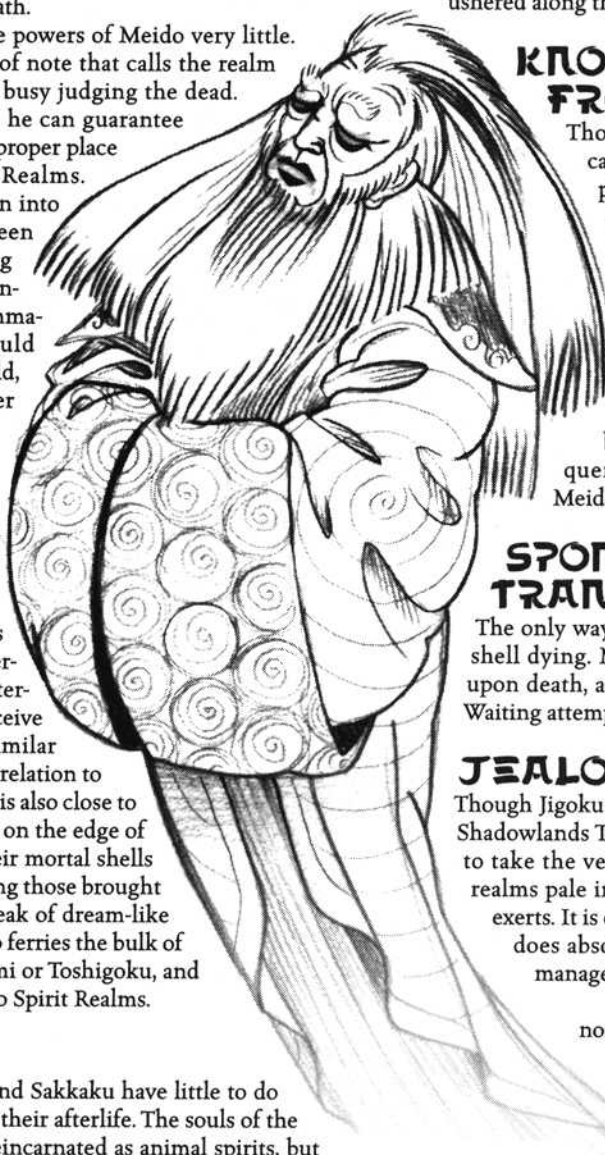
SPONTANEOUS TRANSITIONS

The only way Meido claims a soul is by the mortal shell dying. Meido takes nearly every mortal soul upon death, and this is the only time the Realm of Waiting attempts to bring others into it.

JEALOUSY

Though Jigoku may be the source of the soul-altering Shadowlands Taint, and Ningen-do has been known to take the very immortality from the Kami, both realms pale in comparison to the influence Meido exerts. It is completely opposed to interlopers, and does absolutely nothing to living beings who manage to cross its boundaries.

Souls who travel to Meido in the normal fashion (i.e. by dying) find themselves without a trace of any other realm's influence that may have touched them in life. Those mortals who succumbed to the Shadowlands Taint go immediately to Jigoku to suffer an eternity of torment or servitude, or perhaps a place of power within that realm. Those who were never Lost to the Shadowlands Taint shed all traces of it upon death, and await judgment in Meido like every other soul. The notable exception to this rule is Fu Leng, who retained his Shadowlands Taint even after his death. Perhaps this was due to his powerful evil nature, or perhaps it was simply that his death did not occur while he was in his original body. In either case, Fu Leng maintained his Taint (if not his power) while bound in Emma-O's domain.



Leaving the Realm of Waiting is practically impossible for the souls of the dead. Meido's influence completely snuffs out any will to do anything but wait for judgment. It is particularly difficult to cross the barriers of the Spirit Realms when one is literally a pale reflection of one's living self. Even the mightiest shugenja find their wills bent to waiting; the kami no longer heed their call.

CONTROL

The control of Meido over its inhabitants is complete and absolute. Within moments of being taken to Meido after death, the soul is stripped of all emotion and need. All there is for the waiting soul is judgment, and the soul can wait for eternity in silent peace until that moment comes. Meido is a realm without joy or sorrow, but instead the infinite patience that is required for the endless task of sorting out the fallen souls of mortal men and women.

Those who travel to Meido by means other than their own deaths are untouched by the Realm of Waiting. Meido has no claim and no need regarding those who have yet to die. The most likely thing to happen when the living enter Meido is for Emma-O to dispatch some of his attendants to return the errant being to their native realm. Those who enter with the intent of rescuing the souls of the dead face a worse fate. Emma-O seems innately able to sense individuals who invade his realm with such a purpose in mind, and will utterly destroy any he finds attempting to do so.

PROTECTION AGAINST MEIDO

There is no protection against the influence of Meido. No supernatural power functions within the Realm of Waiting save for that which Emma-O himself allows.

PROTECTION BY MEIDO

Though Meido's influence on those within it is beyond compare, it is quickly lost once a soul leaves the Realm. There is no way for a soul in Meido to protect itself from the influences of other Realms. Indeed, this is intentional. The soul is usually sent to another Spirit Realm where it will spend eternity, and Meido has no need to mark those whom it sends away. Any soul departing from Meido is completely vulnerable to any influences by other Spirit Realms as soon as it enters one.

ABILITIES

Meido grants no abilities to those under its influence.

MAGIC

Meido is perhaps the only truly "magic-dead" place in the Celestial Order. The realm itself is nothing but a gray reflection of a grassy plain with a few scattered trees, and the kami that are the source of Rokugani magic are quite rare. A shugenja that somehow rouses himself from Meido's influence to even attempt magic will find only the most basic prayers effective. Emma-O and those few spirits chosen to serve as his guardians have no trouble using magic in Meido. Their powers flow directly from the Fortune of Death.

Shugenja in Meido may only use the 0-level shugenja spells commune and summon, and the shugenja ability to sense elements still functions normally. Sensing the elements always draws a completely "blank" reading unless living beings are present.

Other spellcasters can cast no spells at all, as the essence of magic is completely gone from the Realm of Waiting, and the influence of other deities is completely cut off.

Shugenja in Meido may only cast the most basic spells — Sense, Commune, and Summon. Uses of Sense always give the shugenja a "blank" reading unless living beings are present.

RELATIONS WITH OTHER REALMS

Meido and its denizens deal with only five other Spirit Realms — Toshigoku, Yomi, Gaki-do, (rarely) Chikushudo, and Ningen-do. The souls of those who are to remain dead are judged to fit into the Realm of Slaughter, the Realm of Blessed Ancestors, or the Realm of Hungry Ghosts. Naturally, the manner in which a mortal lived and died dictates to which of these three realms the soul passes on.

Souls that are to be reincarnated are sent once again to the Realm of Mortals to have another turn in the karmic cycle. This judgment is reserved for those who fall into one of two categories: either the soul has much to learn and has not failed miserably enough to warrant eternity in Gaki-do or Toshigoku, or the soul is destined for greatness that must be achieved in the next life. Souls that are meant for reincarnation can wait centuries before being sent back to Ningen-do, as Emma-O awaits the right time for the soul to return.

INHABITANTS

The only true inhabitants of Meido are the souls of the dead and the Fortune of Death himself. Emma-O is the cold and unforgiving master of Meido, exacting perfect and unwavering judgment upon countless souls as they come before him to be weighed. Unlike the other Fortunes, Emma-O is the uncontested lord of his own realm, and cares nothing for the affairs of the living. He is a heartless Fortune in the same way that a grizzled Hida sensei is heartless. He has a duty to perform, and will not allow the caterwauling of the living to interfere with his divine role.

Occasionally Fukurokujin and Jizo visit Meido for their own reasons. Emma-O has asked for Fukurokujin's complete wisdom in several cases where his own has failed. The Fortune of Mercy, Jizo, has been known to plead the cases of worthy souls in need of a "second chance." Though Jizo has altered the Fortune of Death's decree only five times in the history of Rokugan, it is a feat that no other immortal or mortal can claim.



FEATURES OF MEIDO

The flat, colorless plains of Meido hold only a handful of features: the plains themselves, the endless waiting souls in every direction, and the titanic gate to which they are all slowly, inexorably drawn. This gate stands ten times the size of a man, and is as wide as it is tall. Its frame is a coiled serpent of stone that intertwines with itself to form a circle. The Fortune of Death himself stands beside the gate and judges each mortal soul here, one by one. When he pronounces his judgment, the soul enters the gate to go to the appropriate Realm.

The gate itself leads into a nexus of similar portals, all with similar stone dragons and each leading to another of the lands of the dead (Gaki-do, Toshigoku, Chikushudo, and Yomi). It is here that the Tenth Kami, Ryoshun, stands guard and ensures that each soul is drawn into the realm Emma-O has assigned it.

ADVENTURE HOOK

The party is approached by a sinister-seeming monk who introduces himself as an acolyte of Emma-O, the Fortune of Death. The monk is both cunning and calculating, and quickly identifies the most pious character in the group. He directs most of his questions, answers, and advice towards this character.

The monk has a favor to ask of the party, and claims to have been drawn to them by their reputation (if appropriate), or obvious potential. A soul has overcome its lassitude and fled from the Realm of Waiting, and Emma-O has commanded the monk to locate and return it. The escaped soul is nearby, attempting to masquerade as one of the living after having undergone the rituals that remove the aura from a returned soul. Honorable characters should be horrified at this violation of the Celestial Order.

The exact nature and identity of the escaped soul is up to the GM. Of course, if one of the characters recently suffered a tragic loss, they may not have to go looking very far for the rather familiar soul...

CHAPTER FIVE:

YOMI, THE REALM OF BLESSED ANCESTORS

THROUGH BLOOD AND THUNDER PART SIX

The disorientation of moving between the realms did not improve over time. Tokei's head swam as the earth solidified beneath his feet. He was grateful for the feel of solid ground once more, even if he could tell that he was not yet in the mortal realm. After the melancholy wastes of Meido and the desperate hunger of Gaki-do, any change was welcome. When he finally regained his senses, he took in his new surroundings with a sudden gasp of surprise.

At first, Tokei thought that he had returned to Ningen-do at last. His surroundings were strangely familiar: rolling hills, vast plains, mountains dotting the horizon and a great forest in the distance to the west. Slowly, though, he realized that this was not the mortal realm he knew. Details were somehow too crisp, too clear. The wind was too sweet, the textures flawless. This place was simply too...

"Perfect, my student?" Tokei jumped, spinning on his heel to seek out the source of the words. Off to his left stood a strangely familiar figure, an aged man with a curious smile and a faint glowing aura. The man stood with his hands tucked into the sleeves of his kimono and looked at Tokei expectantly.

"Master Kuro-sama!" Tokei exclaimed, laughing in surprise. Remembering himself, the shugenja knelt before his former sensei, touching his forehead to the soft grass of the hill on which they

stood. Even the ground is perfect, he thought to himself. "Master, it is beyond joyous to see you once more."

"Rise, Tokei," Naka Kuro said, reaching down to clutch his student's elbow. "There is no need for such a ritual here." He spread his other arm wide to include the beautiful landscape before them. "Here, all men are equal unless they choose to serve another."

"What is this place, master Kuro-sama?"

"This is Yomi, the Realm of Blessed Ancestors. The final reward for samurai who revere the Celestial Order. It is the home of all the souls who have fulfilled their ultimate destiny."

"It is beyond beautiful," Tokei said breathlessly. "But... it is not right. I do not belong here."

"Not yet," Kuro said with a small smile. "You are as astute as ever, my student. You have unfinished business in the mortal realm."

"Then why am I here?" Tokei asked. "I felt almost as if I were being drawn..."

"If the connection between two souls is strong enough, one can draw the other from the depths of Jigoku itself," Kuro said. "I brought you here."

"Why?" Tokei asked.

"I once told you I had nothing more to teach you, Tokei-san," said Kuro. "But only because neither of us was ready. Now, however, there are lessons you must learn if you are to truly take my place in Ningen-do." The old man smiled and beckoned Tokei to follow him.

...

Tokei was no longer certain how long he had been in Yomi. The days melted together seamlessly, and the idyllic surroundings dulled the senses, making one less aware of the passage of time. Kuro had insisted it was merely an effect of the realm on the Tokei's still-living soul and that it would fade in time. Tokei was less certain.

"Kuro-sama, there is something that I have wished to ask you."

"Of course, Tokei."

Tokei hesitated for a moment. "My allies from the Clan War," he said finally. "Are they among the honorable departed here in Yomi? Are they yet alive? Or are they... elsewhere in the realms?"

Kuro laughed. "Always thinking of others! You are a delight to such an old soul as mine, Tokei. Of whom do you wish to know?"

"My brother, Morito, of course. And my friends Toku and Ginawa."

"All three are yet alive, and still very much active in the affairs of Ningen-do. You might be somewhat surprised what those three men have become in your absence. All of them have met destiny in their own fashion, and embraced it."

Tokei smiled. "And what of Toturi?"

Kuro nodded sagely. "Toturi has passed on. But he is not among us. He has been granted passage into the Celestial Heavens."

"Into Tengoku? I did not think that mere samurai could easily pass into Tengoku."

"Samurai, no," Kuro said. "Emperors, yes."

"Toturi... Emperor?" Tokei stared into the distance, stunned. "How long have I been away from the Empire?"

Kuro said nothing. Tokei did not pursue the matter. He was not sure if he truly wished to know. Instead, he returned to another topic that he and Kuro had been debating for days. "Master," he objected for what felt like the hundredth time, "I am not worthy to take your place. I cannot be the Naka."

"You will," said Kuro, his voice certain. "Your travels through the realms are changing you in ways you do not yet comprehend. But you soon will come to understand the power that lies at your command. More importantly, you will understand that the true use of power is not to use it at all. It is the wisdom that power brings that is the true measure of a man. The first human chosen to bear the title Naka understood this. I eventually came to understand it as well." He fixed Tokei with a stare, and smiled. "The essence of the Naka is understanding. You will be the Naka."

"I am not ready," Tokei repeated. "I do not even know what it means to be the Naka."

"Yes you do. You proved it that day the village of Nanashi. Your travels through the realms are changing you in ways you do not yet understand," said Kuro. "But you soon will come to comprehend the power that lies at your command. And more importantly, you will understand that the true use of power is not to use it at all. It is the wisdom that power brings that is the true measure of a man."

Tokei could think of nothing to say, and so he said nothing. He merely sat upon the cool cobblestones of the shrine in which he and his master had conducted their studies, gazing out over the beautiful landscape. He sat for several long moments, weighing the implications of Naka Kuro's words. "You have never spoken anything but the truth, master," he finally responded. "I trust your wisdom." He smiled warmly at his sensei, then briskly rubbed his hands together. "Now, what more shall we learn today?"

"Nothing." There was no mirth in Kuro's smile now, only sadness. "Your time with me is finished. You must move on now. When you finally return to Ningen-do, your travels shall be complete. As the Naka, you will be the most

enlightened, and perhaps the most powerful, within Rokugan. It is a great burden, but one that fulfills one's soul completely. You shall be the guardian of the mortal realm. You shall be Naka Tokei."

"Will I be able to see you here if I need your guidance?"

"You will not, and you will not." A glint of humor returned to Kuro's eyes. "We shall see one another again only when your destiny is fulfilled and you join me here in Yomi. And your destiny shall be great indeed."

Tokei looked troubled for a moment, then tentatively asked, "What is my destiny, Kuro-sama?"

"You are the only one who can discover that truth, Tokei. Now you must journey on. The Celestial Heavens await. You must seek the wisdom of the seven dragons before you return home."

"The Elemental Dragons will speak to me?" Tokei asked, surprised.

"Or they will devour you," Kuro said bluntly. "Either way, you will find wisdom."

The two walked together in silence for some time until Tokei asked another question. "What was your destiny, master?"

Kuro's laughter rang out through the hills. "To find you, Tokei."

With his master's laughter fresh in his mind, Tokei strode into the mists that symbolized a passage to the next realm, and disappeared from Yomi.



YOMI AND THE CELESTIAL ORDER

Yomi, the Realm of Blessed Ancestors, is the ultimate reward for a samurai, the result of a life lived in perfect harmony with the tenets of bushido and the laws of the Celestial Order. Only the souls of those who have lived a proper samurai life may enter and receive their final reward: the ability to pass on wisdom to their descendants, bringing honor and glory to their family and clan.

Yomi fulfills a vital role in the Celestial Order: it is the reward for human beings who fulfill their destinies. It also stands as a barrier between Tengoku, the Celestial Heavens, and any who would attempt to defile them.

CLOSE REALMS

Yomi shares close bonds with the realms of Ningen-do, Jigoku, and Meido. Yomi's proximity to Ningen-do is what allows the spirits of the dead to pass into the realm, and likewise allows some spirits in Yomi to reach out to their descendants. The regions that border Jigoku are heavily patrolled by the army of Yomi, the Blessed Guard. The two realms represent the opposite facets of honor and virtue, and there is little love lost between them. Meido is close to Yomi purely by virtue of their shared role: homes for the souls of the departed. The spirits of Yomi sometimes escort disgraced souls to Meido so that they might be reincarnated and redeem themselves.

DISTANT REALMS

The pathways to Sakkaku and Chikushudo are long and arduous. Yomi's guiding essence has no tolerance for Sakkaku's mischievous denizens, and the primal spirits of Chikushudo have little in common with Yomi's honorable spirits.

BARRED REALMS

No realms are truly closed to Yomi, though some are extremely difficult to reach. The Blessed Guard tirelessly patrols the edges of the realm, eliminating the possibility of any significant incursion by other realms and giving the joy of duty to the honorable spirits who dwell there.

DEATH AND YOMI

Death is an integral component of the natural order of Yomi. The souls of the departed who are bound for Yomi simply awaken there after their timeless time in Meido, greeted by their honored ancestors upon their arrival within the realm. The arrival of a new soul is always treated as a joyous occasion akin to a new birth or gempukku ceremony.

KNOWN PASSAGES FROM NINGEN-DO

Passages to Yomi are perhaps the rarest of all spirit passages, for Yomi is extremely exclusive in who is allowed to enter the realm. The only known permanent passage to Yomi exists at the sacred Hall of Ancestors in the Lion Clan's lands. This is not a natural passage, but one created through the careful maintenance of ancestral shrines by the reverent Kitsu family of the Lion.

Until a few decades ago, another passage to Yomi existed in the lost city of Voltturnum. Known only as Oblivion's Gate, this ancient artifact lay dormant for over a thousand years until it was destroyed in the War against the Shadow. During that war, however, the Gate allowed a vast number of spirits from Yomi and Toshigoku to reenter Rokugan and take up the fight against the forces of the Shadow. Unfortunately, many of the spirits from Toshigoku united under the banner of the mad Hantei XVI and launched a campaign against the forces of Emperor Toturi I. Almost to a man, the remaining Yomi spirits followed Toturi in the War of Spirits, then many returned to Yomi. In the grand scheme of things, the denizens of Yomi consider it fortunate that Oblivion's Gate has been destroyed.

JEALOUSY

Although Yomi changes those who enter it much as other realms do, it is not a jealous realm per se. The guiding intelligence behind Yomi is a benevolent one, and the ways it affects others are largely beneficial, but nevertheless have the effect of lulling those who enter Yomi into complacency, making it more difficult to exit the realm when the time comes.

For every full day spent within Yomi, the DC for any attempt to find a pathway out of the realm increases by 5. If a character has a means of leaving the Realm that would not normally require a check to succeed (such as certain spells or magical effects), each full day adds a 5% chance of failure to the check. Additionally, for each day spent within Yomi, an individual must make a successful Will save (DC (Honor \times 10)) or gain one level of Control. An individual may choose not to make this roll and willingly gain a level of Control.

For every full day spent within Yomi, the TN of any roll made by a character to locate or create a spirit portal to another realm is increased by 5. These additional levels of difficulty cannot be decreased in any way, although Free Raises may still be taken advantage of. Additionally, for each day spent within Yomi, an individual must make a successful Willpower roll (TN = Honor \times 5) or gain one level of Control. An individual may choose not to make this roll and willingly gain a level of Control.

CONTROL

Yomi's control manifests as a brilliant aura that surrounds its denizens. It is a permanent feature of natural residents such as the shiryo, and can only be removed through an elaborate and unpleasant magical ritual developed by the Phoenix or through the infusion of another realm's control. Non-natives who enter the realm slowly develop the aura while they remain within Yomi. The aura remains with them after leaving, although it fades over time or given the proper circumstances. The aura is linked to an individual's honor, and becomes brighter as the person acts in a more honorable fashion. In addition to its illuminating effects, the Yomi aura also increases an individual's physical and mental abilities.

LEVEL ONE

You have attained a very minor infusion of Yomi's energy. Your aura is as yet very dim, and is noticeable only in complete darkness. Even then, it only manifests as a very weak luminescence, certainly not bright enough to see by.

Your honor, if less than 2, is increased to 2. You must make a Will save (DC 10) to take any action that would cause honor loss. A number of times per day equal to your class level (rounding down), you may add a +1 insight bonus to any attack, ability, or skill check.

Your Honor, if less than 1, is raised to 1.0 and cannot be reduced below that number. You may not take any action that would cause your Honor to decrease below 1.0. You gain one Free Raise per day that may be used on any physical ability roll (Strength, Agility, Reflexes, or Stamina) or any High skill roll.

LEVEL TWO

Your aura has become stronger and can be noticed in low-light conditions such as torchlight in an otherwise dark environment. This aura glows more brightly during times of intense emotion, when others can see it even in normal lighting.

Your honor, if less than 3, is increased to 3. You must make a Will save (DC 20) to take any action that would cause honor loss. A number of times per day equal to your class level (rounding down), you may add a +2 insight bonus to any attack, ability, or skill check. This ability replaces previous Yomi Control abilities.

Your Honor, if less than 2, is raised to 2.0 and cannot be reduced below that number. You may not take any action that would cause your honor to decrease below 2.0. You gain two Free Raises per day that may be used on any physical ability roll (Strength, Agility, Reflexes, or Stamina) or any High or Bugei skill roll.

LEVEL THREE

Your aura has become visible under normal lighting conditions. It is faint in daylight, and although others notice something different about you, they may not immediately recognize exactly what it is. Close scrutiny will definitely reveal your nature.

Your honor, if less than 4, is increased to 4. You must make a Will save (DC 30) to take any action that would cause honor loss. A number of times per day equal to your class level (rounding down), you may add a +3 insight bonus to any attack, ability, or skill check. This ability replaces previous Yomi Control abilities.

Your Honor, if less than 3, is raised to 3.0 and cannot be reduced below that number. You may not take any action that would cause your honor to decrease below 3.0. You gain three Free Raises per day that may be used on any ability roll or on any High or Bugei skill roll.

LEVEL FOUR

Your aura is unmistakable and readily apparent. In low light it illuminates an inch or so all around your body.

Your honor, if less than 5, is increased to 5. You must make a Will save (DC 40) to take any action that would cause honor loss. A number of times per day equal to your class level (rounding down), you may add a +4 insight bonus to any attack, ability, or skill check. This ability replaces previous Yomi Control abilities.

Your Honor, if less than 4, is raised to 4.0 and cannot be reduced below that number. You may not take any action that would cause your honor to decrease below 4.0. You gain four free Raises per day that may be used on any ability or skill roll.

LEVEL FIVE

You have become completely suffused with the energy of Yomi. Your brilliant aura provides as much light as a standard torch or lantern.

Your alignment is changed to lawful, although you retain the good, evil, or neutral element of your alignment. A number of times per day equal to your class level (rounding down), you may add a +5 insight bonus to any attack, ability, or skill check. This ability replaces previous Yomi Control abilities, although you retain your changed honor (and Will save to act dishonorably) as a result of previous levels.

Your Honor, if less than 5, is raised to 5.0 and cannot be reduced below that number. You may not take any action that would cause your Honor to decrease below 5.0. You gain five free Raises per day that may be used on any roll of any type as long as it would not result in a loss of Honor.

PROTECTION AGAINST YOMI

The effects of Yomi's Control are largely beneficial, and few attempt to resist them. Nevertheless, it is possible to do so by force of will alone. This is the means by which dishonorable or Tainted individuals who stumble into Yomi, or captured yokai (see page 63), maintain their "pure" state in the face of Yomi's "corrupting" influence.

Individuals who wish to avoid gaining levels of Yomi's Control may choose to make a Will save each day they remain within Yomi. The DC for this save is five times the number of days spent within Yomi. Individuals may choose to gain a bonus to this save equal to 5 minus their Honor. Any Shadowlands Taint modifier should be added to this save as well.

Individuals who wish to avoid gaining levels of Yomi's Control may choose to make a Willpower roll each day they remain within the Realm. The TN for this roll is equal to the number of days spent within Yomi \times 5. If they so choose, the individual making the roll may add 5 minus their Honor to the roll. Any Taint Ranks the individual possesses are also added to this roll.

PROTECTION BY YOMI

Those under Yomi's Control have an innate protection from the Control of other Spirit Realms, as their aura resists those Realms' jealous grasp.

Individuals who possess Control from Yomi gain a +5 bonus per level of Control they possess to any save against acquiring the Control of another Realm.

Individuals who possess Control from Yomi add 5 per level of Yomi Control to any roll resisting the acquisition of Control from another Realm.

ABILITIES

The abilities conferred by the influence of Yomi are considerable, even without taking the Control of the realm into consideration. The occupants of Yomi are proponents of and adherents to the Celestial Order, and the realm they occupy reflects their devotion to that sacred hierarchy. Even those who only visit Yomi are, for the duration of their visit, deeply connected to and in harmony with the universe, granting them a more innate connection with the mysterious quantity known as the Void.

Individuals who possess at least one level of Control and who are honorable (Honor of 3 or greater) gain the Void Use feat, or the Depths of the Void feat if they already possess Void Use. The maximum number of Void points that the character may normally spend on any one attack, check, or save is increased by one.

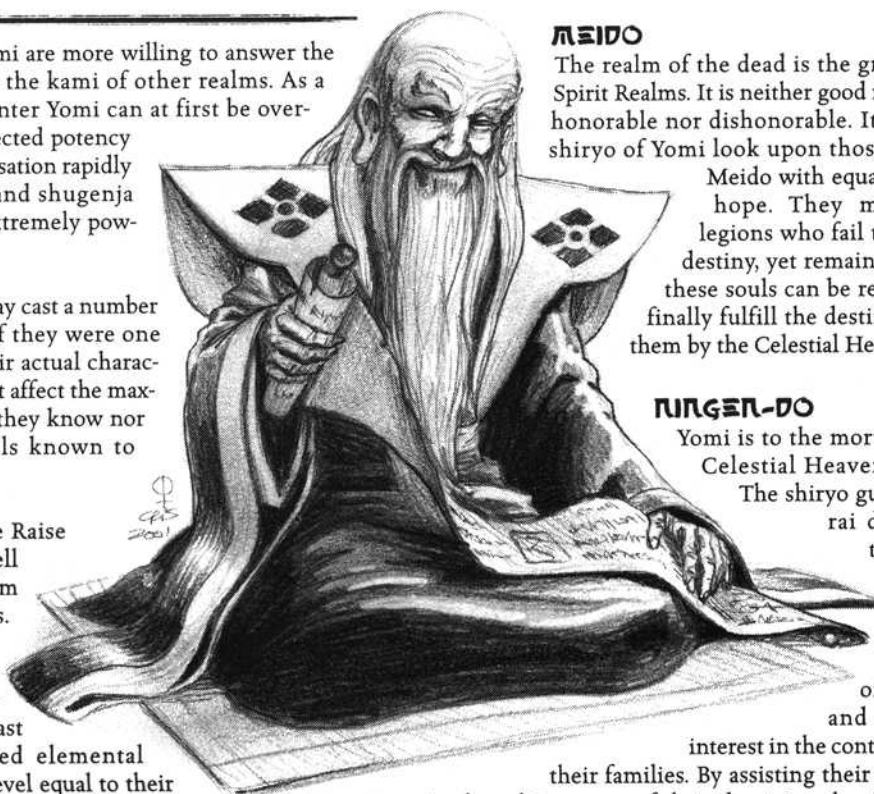
Individuals who possess at least one level of Control and an Honor of 3.0 or higher gain an additional number of Void points per day equal to their Honor rank. The maximum number of Raises the character may make on any given roll is now equal to his Void plus one, and he may now spend multiple Void points on a single roll, although he may not spend more than twice his Void Ring in Void points on any single roll.

MAGIC

The kami present in Yomi are more willing to answer the call of a shugenja than the kami of other realms. As a result, shugenja who enter Yomi can at first be overwhelmed by the unexpected potency of their magic. It is a sensation rapidly adjusted to, however, and shugenja within Yomi become extremely powerful.

Divine spellcasters may cast a number of spells per day as if they were one level higher than their actual character level. This does not affect the maximum level of spells they know nor the number of spells known to them.

Shugenja gain a Free Raise on any elemental spell cast while in the Realm of Blessed Ancestors. All Deficiencies are ignored while within Yomi, allowing all shugenja to cast their non-specialized elemental spells at a Mastery Level equal to their overall School Rank.



GAKI-DO

If Jigoku is the balance for Tengoku, then Gaki-do is the balance of Yomi. The shiryo of Yomi seek to uphold and enforce the Celestial Order, while the slaving beasts of Gaki-do seek only to usurp it with their unending thirst for the lives of others. As unclean parasitic beings, they are beneath even eta in the Celestial Order, yet they lust after the essence of beings higher up the Order than themselves. No quarter is ever given to the gaki.

JIGOKU

The realm of evil is the antithesis of all that Yomi embodies. The shiryo of Yomi have nothing but contempt and condemnation for the foul evil that dwells there, even though they recognize that it must exist in order to balance the scales against the overwhelming good of Tengoku. Recognizing the need for its existence, however, does not extend to allowing its wretched influence to spread.

MEIDO

The realm of the dead is the great void of the Spirit Realms. It is neither good nor evil, neither honorable nor dishonorable. It simply is. The shiryo of Yomi look upon those consigned to Meido with equal parts pity and hope. They mourn for the legions who fail to achieve their destiny, yet remain optimistic that these souls can be reincarnated and finally fulfill the destiny ordained for them by the Celestial Heavens.

NINGEN-DO

Yomi is to the mortal realm as the Celestial Heavens are to Yomi.

The shiryo guide their samurai descendants in the proper direction. They consider themselves the guardians of Ningen-do, and have a vested

interest in the continued success of their families. By assisting their mortal relatives in the achievement of their destinies, the shiryo aid in the proper fulfillment of the Celestial Order.

RELATIONS WITH OTHER REALMS

CHIKUSHUDO

Yomi has very little to do with the Realm of Animals. The shiryo pay homage to Inari just as they do to all Fortunes, of course, and they respect the greater animal spirits who lend strength and courage to their warhorses, warcats, hunting dogs, and falcons. Beyond this mutual respect, however, the denizens of the two realms leave one another to their own affairs. Yomi, after all, is the pinnacle of honor and order, whereas Chikushudo is a primal, untamed place.

SAKKAKU

Although not outwardly hostile toward the denizens of Sakkaku, the Realm of Mischief, the inhabitants of Yomi nevertheless have little use for those irreverent beings, and consider them unwelcome in Yomi. There is little room in the mind of an honorable warrior for the demeaning "humor" of beings from Sakkaku.

TENGOKU

The shiryo recognize Tengoku as the sacred home of the gods. They consider themselves to be the final barrier through which any foe must pass before reaching the gates of Tengoku, and take their self-appointed responsibility as the guardians of the heavens very seriously. Should Tengoku ever be threat-

ened by the dark forces of Jigoku, it will only be after every warrior in Yomi has been destroyed. Such an attack would have to be rapid, for Emma-O would almost certainly return the destroyed spirits to Yomi as soon as he had time to judge them.

TOSHIGOKU

The denizens of Yomi feel pity toward those trapped in Toshigoku, for they are truly lost. In some ways, they consider Toshigoku a worse fate than Jigoku, for not even the forces of the Blessed Guard dare breach the Realm of Slaughter. To do so would invite its mindless, virtually indestructible hordes into Yomi, and that must not be allowed. To some extent, the shiryo recognize that those bound for Toshigoku have chosen their own damnation, and so do not feel the same obligation to save them from themselves as they do the yokai of Jigoku. Whenever they encounter a Toshigoku spirit outside that realm, they attempt to destroy it to give that soul a chance for peaceful rest or eventual reincarnation.

YUME-DO

Shiryo require no sleep, although some choose to do so purely out of habit. Nevertheless, they do not dream. As such, they have little or no contact whatsoever with the beings of the Realm of Dream, and have no particular feelings toward them. They do, however, recall the dreams of their mortal lives, and recognize the importance of dreams to the living. More often than not, dreams inspire the mortal soul to heights of honor and glory, and as such should be regarded with respect.

INHABITANTS

Yomi is home to few native inhabitants; almost its entire population comes from other Realms. Those who reside there have, however, made the realm their own, and been changed by it significantly enough so that they are truly different from the inhabitants of the other realms.

SHIRYO

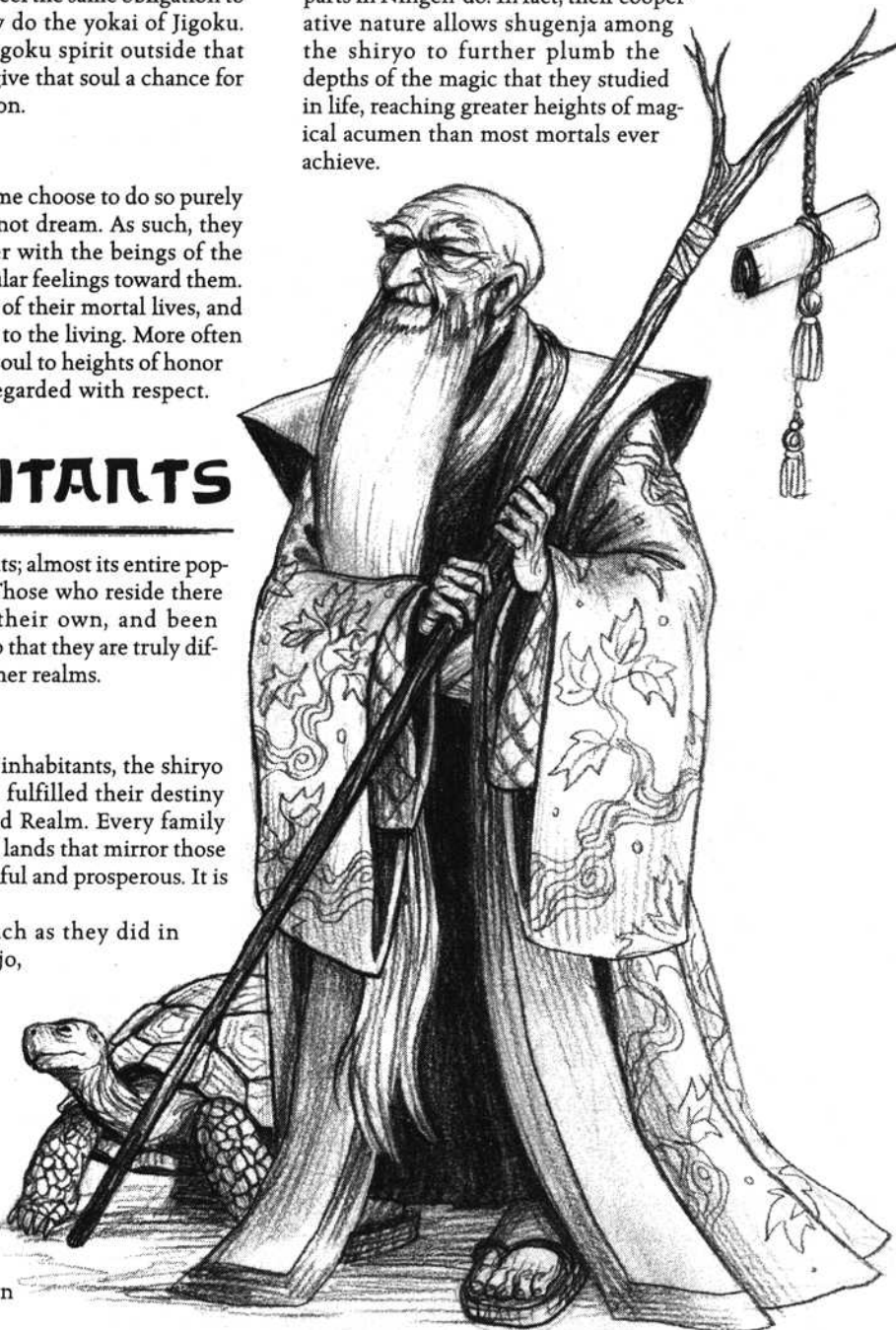
By far the most numerous of Yomi's inhabitants, the shiryo are the souls of Rokugani that have fulfilled their destiny and earned their place in this sacred Realm. Every family and clan is represented, and each has lands that mirror those they held in life, only far more plentiful and prosperous. It is a beautiful, idyllic place.

Shiryo organize themselves much as they did in life, with temples, monasteries, dojo, palaces, and the like dotting the landscape. Unlike their mortal lives, however, their time in Yomi is peaceful. The clans respect one another, and treat each other with, at the very least, the polite courtesy that bushido demands. The only combat in Yomi occurs when two students of different styles choose to compare their respective talents in the dojo, or when the Blessed Guard engages an enemy force from another realm.

The shiryo of Yomi appear as they did in the prime of their mortal lives. For most bushi, this is their youth, when they were in their physical prime combined with the wisdom of their accumulated experience. Shugenja, however, tend to appear somewhat older, as they often reach the peak of their mystical power later in life after many years of study and contemplation. Courtiers and magistrates vary considerably in age and appearance according to their mental outlook.

KAMI

Although not native to the spirit realms, the elemental kami exist in Yomi as a gift from the Elemental Dragons to their chosen disciples, the enlightened shugenja of the realm. The kami of Yomi are less enigmatic than their counterparts in Ningen-do. In fact, their cooperative nature allows shugenja among the shiryo to further plumb the depths of the magic that they studied in life, reaching greater heights of magical acumen than most mortals ever achieve.



KITSU

Extinct in the mortal realm for over a thousand years, a small handful of the legendary Kitsu have made their home in Yomi. When the spirit beings first arrived, the realm was vast and uninhabited. Human souls began arriving almost immediately, however, and soon the Kitsu became concerned that the fate they had met in the mortal realm would be repeated. This fear proved unfounded, as the transition from life to death apparently has an enlightening effect on those spirits who enter Yomi. The Kitsu have existed in harmony with the shiryo since their arrival in the realm, although they rarely interact.

One of the few ways in which the Kitsu and shiryo aid one another is in the activities of the Blessed Guard. The Kitsu admire the devotion the shiryo of the Guard have to the sanctity of the human soul. They respect that the samurai of the Guard are willing to risk their own immortal existence for the souls of the damned lost in Jigoku. The Kitsu therefore lead the Blessed Guard through the spirit passages to Jigoku for their occasional forays into the realm of evil in search of the souls of the damned.

YOKAI

The yokai are easily the fewest in number in Yomi. These corrupted souls are those that the Blessed Guard liberate from the depths of Jigoku with the aid of their Kitsu allies. Those yokai who are saved from consumption by the evil of that wretched realm are imprisoned in Yomi to contemplate the enormity of their misdeeds. On the one hand, this is an extraordinarily dangerous feat for the Guard to perform, as yokai can learn to contact their own descendants in Rokugan just as the shiryo themselves do. However, the shiryo consider the risk well worth it, as they have seen many damned souls come to understand their failure while imprisoned, and then go on to Meido to be reincarnated and redeem themselves.

SHUTSUDOHIN

In Rokugan, items of great importance sometimes spontaneously develop supernatural powers, or even a consciousness of sorts. These awakened items go on to become powerful nemuranai and are revered by those who possess them. The ancestral blades of the Great Clans were such nemuranai, and many other relics from the Empire's first days have become artifacts of great importance to many Rokugani.

Shutsudohin are spirit beings that once existed within these awakened material possessions. When these items are destroyed, their spirits manifest in Yomi. Some scholars of the spirit realms theorize that this is because the items have fulfilled their purpose in the mortal realm and, as such, their awakened spirits are rewarded with a place in Yomi. Whatever the reason, there are relatively few of these spirits, as the Rokugani place great emphasis on the protection and preservation of their sacred artifacts and rarely allow them to be in a position where one could be destroyed. The most common are spirits that once occupied the katana of particularly prominent families within a clan but that have been destroyed for one reason or another.

SHUTSUDOHIN

Medium-sized Undead (Spirit)
Hit Dice: 5d12 (62 hp)
Initiative: +1 (+1 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative)
Speed: 30 ft.
AC: 15 (+1 Dex, +4 natural)
Attacks: Katana +4 melee, slam +4 melee
Damage: Katana 1d10+2, slam 1d6+2
Face/Reach: 5 ft. by 5 ft./5 ft.
Special Attacks: None
Special Qualities: Undead, spell-like abilities
Saves: Fort +1, Ref +2, Will +6
Abilities: Str 14, Dex 12, Con —, Int 12, Wis 14, Cha 10
Skills: Battle +8, Craft (relevant object) +9, Diplomacy +4, Listen +10, Spellcraft +9, Spot +10
Feats: Improved Initiative, Power Attack, Toughness

Climate/Terrain: Yomi
Organization: Solitary
Challenge Rating: 5
Treasure: Standard
Honor: 3
Alignment: Lawful neutral
Advancement: By character class

Object Ability (Ex): Each shutsudohin has a single bonus that is granted to it depending upon the type of object it once inhabited. Spirits that inhabited weapons gain a +1 competence bonus to all attacks; spirits that inhabited armor gain a +1 resistance bonus to AC; and spirits that inhabited works of art or other objects gain a +2 competence bonus to all Charisma- and Wisdom-based skills.

Undead: Immune to mind-influencing effects, poison, sleep, paralysis, stunning, and disease. Not subject to critical hits, subdual damage, ability damage, energy drain, or death from massive damage.

Spell-like Abilities (Sp): A shutsudohin may cast the following spells as a 16th level sorcerer up to three times per day: *major creation*, *minor creation*, *polymorph any object*, *polymorph self*.

SHUTSUDOHIN

Earth: 3
Water: 3
Fire: 3
Air: 3
Rolls When Attacking: 4k3
Rolls for Damage: 3k3
TN to Be Hit: 20
Wounds per Level: 15: +5, 25: +10, 35: +15, 50: Dead
Special: All shutsudohin may transform themselves into a likeness of the object they once inhabited. This usually takes the form of a weapon, armor, or a work of art, although other objects are also possible. Transformed shutsudohin have all the normal properties of an Exceptional quality item of the same type. Shutsudohin who are able to transform into a weapon also gain +1 Fire and +2 Agility in their normal form. Those who transform into armor gain +1 Earth and +2 Strength, and all others gain +1 Air and +1 Void.

FEATURES OF YOMI

Yomi is a land of expansive samurai holdings, with beautiful natural features and a multitude of palaces, shrines, and dojo dotting the landscape. There is an almost infinite variety of attractions that a visitor could partake of, each unique in its own way. The development of a single style or practice by the same master for several hundred years can have a considerable impact on a dojo or temple's progress, after all.

THE DOJO OF THE ONE TRUE BLADE

In the mortal realm, the martial techniques of individual families, clans, and schools are jealously guarded, lest they be mastered and employed by their enemies. In Yomi, however, most set aside such petty hostilities, allowing willing students to study a wide variety of styles and techniques in search of the perfect fighting style. The most prominent such dojo was established well over five hundred years ago by a brilliant Phoenix samurai; Shiba Tenko remains in charge of the dojo she founded. She has mastered dozens of techniques from various schools, but continues her quest for the perfect combination of fighting styles.

THE PATH TO HEAVEN

If the nearly infinite realm of Yomi can be said to have a center, this titanic mountain is it. Visible for hundreds of miles in all directions, the Path to Heaven serves much the same function as Otosan Uchi does in the mortal realm. Here, representatives of all clans, families, and factions gather to debate important matters. The peak of this colossal mountain disappears far into the clouds, and the shiryo believe that at the top lies a spirit passage to Tengoku, the Celestial Heavens. The mountain is therefore one of the holiest places in all of Yomi, with innumerable shrines and temples ringing its base. Although the first few thousand feet of the mountain's height have been settled, with numerous watchtowers keeping lookout over the horizon, attempting to climb farther is considered a blasphemous offense punishable by exile. Fortunately, none have ever broken the law forbidding it.

THE WALL

While the shiryo of Yomi are supremely confident that they will not fail to protect Tengoku from the predations of Jigoku, they recognize that not to prepare for such a grim eventuality would be both foolish and dishonorable. Toward that end, they have constructed a massive wall — like the Great Carpenter Wall of Rokugan, but much larger — near the region of their realm that touches upon Jigoku. Although it is not discussed, those shiryo who fulfilled their duty in life through incompletely honorable means are chosen to defend the Wall and all of Yomi. It is a prestigious duty, and one that many a former Scorpion or Crab has embraced as a means of atoning for what they perceive to have been dishonorable behavior during their mortal lives.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

Yomi can be a difficult Realm to incorporate into traditional Rokugan adventures because of its general inaccessibility to mortal souls. However, interaction between the shiryo and their mortal descendants lends itself to a few interesting possibilities that could theoretically lead to a visit to Yomi itself.

BLACKENED KHARMA

One member of the party, preferably the most honorable of the group, is visited in a dream by an ancestor previously unknown to him or her. The shiryo informs the character that a corrupted soul has escaped Jigoku and reincarnated as a powerful figure in Rokugan. If this person is not stopped, legions of samurai will die dishonorable deaths because of his machinations.

The person the character is told about is Otomo Reiku, an up-and-coming courtier among the Imperial families who has attempted to negotiate a peaceful end to several border skirmishes over the past few years. Unfortunately, few of his negotiations have turned out well, although somehow this has not damaged his reputation. With the Imperial Court trying to curry favor with all of the Four Winds, Reiku could conceivably become an important advisor to the next Emperor.

The truth is that Reiku is an honorable man who has had a run of misfortune, causing him to fail in a handful of prominent negotiations. The ancestor who visited the player character is a yokai currently imprisoned in Yomi; the yokai is trying to weaken his enemies among the shiryo by having his descendants eliminate the descendants of his enemies. How will the party deal with Reiku? Will they discover the truth, and if so, how will the characters react to the knowledge that one of their own is the descendant of a maho-tsukai?

THE COST OF LOYALTY

While traveling through a particularly dense wilderness, such as the peaks of the Seikitsu Mountains or the depths of Shinomen Mori, the characters suddenly find themselves... somewhere else. Rare and mysterious, there are occasionally spirit passages that open at random and allow mortals passage into the spirit realms. This is one such instance, and the characters find themselves in Yomi, Realm of the Blessed Ancestors.

In Yomi, the characters find themselves amid a group of the Blessed Guard who are preparing a strike into the heart of Jigoku in an attempt to rescue the souls of the yokai. They invite the characters to join them, hoping both that their mortal knowledge will be useful in the raid and that they can return to the mortal realm with firsthand knowledge of Jigoku and the horrors therein, perhaps preventing further souls from being lost.

The characters should be made aware that time passes differently while in Yomi, and that there is no way to anticipate how much time will pass in the mortal realm while they remain in Yomi. Is their duty to return and fulfill their vows to their lord, or to aid the souls of their honored ancestors?

NEW MECHANICS

THE BLESSED GUARD

A samurai's soul, even those honorable individuals who have fulfilled their destinies in the realm of the mortals, is not a complacent one. Those who have passed into Yomi still long for the privilege of service in the name of something greater than themselves. It is unsurprising, then, that many of the spirits of Yomi have organized themselves into a grand army, one far larger than any found in the mortal realm. This army, the Blessed Guard, defends Yomi against all those who would threaten its idyllic life.

One of the duties of the Blessed Guard is to periodically invade Jigoku, which borders upon Yomi. This particularly unsavory duty is one of the most telling indications of Yomi's devotion to all the tenets of bushido, including compassion. The Blessed Guard consider it their duty to rescue the souls of any humans condemned to Jigoku, returning them to Yomi and imprisoning them there to contemplate the enormity of their dishonor. When they have realized the folly of their lives, the spirits of Yomi escort them to Meido, where they can be reborn into Ningen-do and attempt to correct their grievous mistakes from past lives.

THE BLESSED GUARD (PRESTIGE CLASS)

Members of the Blessed Guard are rare in Rokugan, and all have ties to a handful of spirits who reentered the mortal realm through Oblivion's Gate almost three decades ago. Among those spirits were members of the Blessed Guard of Yomi, most of whom returned to Yomi upon the conclusion of the War of Spirits that followed the Battle at Oblivion's Gate. The few who remained underwent the Phoenix ritual that made them fully human once more, and some of them have passed on the teachings of Yomi to a few honorable and worthy descendants.

Hit Die: d10.

REQUIREMENTS

To qualify to become a member of the Blessed Guard, a character must fulfill all the following criteria.

Base Attack Bonus: +7.

Feats: Depths of the Void, Void Use, any three other technique feats, including clan technique feats.

Honor: Any honorable.



Special: Ancestral Daisho class ability. Must be invited to join the Blessed Guard, either by passing on to Yomi and entering its ranks or by being trained by a returned spirit.

CLASS SKILLS

The Blessed Guard's class skills (and key ability for each skill) are Battle (Wis), Climb (Str), Handle Animal (Cha), Intimidate (Cha), Jump (Str), Knowledge (Shadowlands) (Int), Sense Motive (Cha), Spot (Wis), and Swim (Str). (The Battle and Tea Ceremony skills are described in *Rokugan*.)

Skill Points at Each Level: 4+Int modifier.

CLASS FEATURES

All of the following are class features of the Blessed Guard prestige class.

Light of Yomi: Even at 1st level, the power of Yomi shields the blessed guard from harm. The Blessed Guard character may add his Honor as a sacred bonus to all saving throws. **Bonus Feat:** At 2nd level, the blessed guard gains a bonus technique feat. This may be a general technique feat, or any clan technique feat the character could legally learn. (The Multiple Schools feat is still a requirement to learn Technique Feats from other clans, although permission to attend a new school is easier to come by than in Ningen-do.) The guard gains an additional technique feat at the 5th level and again at the 8th level.

Spirit's Vengeance: At 3rd level, the blessed guard can smite the minions of the darker Spirit Realms. If the blessed guard's opponent displays symptoms of control by Toshigoku, Jigoku, or Gaki-do, he may spend a Void Point to gain a Void bonus on a damage roll equal to his opponent's Control modifier. This bonus increases to twice an opponent's Control modifier at 6th level, and to three times the modifier at 9th level.

TABLE 5-1: THE BLESSED GUARD

Class Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special
1st	+1	+2	+0	+2	Light of Yomi
2nd	+2	+3	+0	+3	Technique Feat
3rd	+3	+3	+1	+3	Spirit's Vengeance/1
4th	+4	+4	+1	+4	Eternal Courage (0 hp)
5th	+5	+4	+1	+4	Technique Feat
6th	+6	+5	+2	+5	Spirit's Vengeance/2
7th	+7	+5	+2	+5	Eternal Courage (-10 hp)
8th	+8	+6	+2	+6	Technique Feat
9th	+9	+6	+3	+6	Spirit's Vengeance/3
10th	+10	+7	+3	+7	Heaven's Fury

Eternal Courage: At 4th level, the blessed guard's soul is strongly tied to the power of Yomi. If fighting for a noble cause, he may continue to operate normally at zero hit points or below. Once he reaches -10 hit points, he dies normally. At 7th level, he no longer dies normally at -10 hit points, but instead becomes disabled. At -11 hp he begins dying, and loses 1 hp per round until stabilized. Once he reaches -20 hp, he dies normally.

Heaven's Fury: At 10th level, the guard may turn any spirit or denizen of Jigoku, Toshigoku, or Gaki-do as if they were undead and the guard were a cleric of level equal to their own level in this class.

THE BLESSED GUARD (ADVANCED SCHOOL)

REQUIREMENTS

Rings/Traits: Agility 5, Willpower 4, Void 3

Skills: Defense 3, Iaijutsu 4, Kenjutsu 4, Lore (Bushido) 5

Other: Honor 3+, must possess the Denizen of Yomi Advantage.

TECHNIQUES

Rank 1: Blessings of Heaven

The guardians of Yomi are the finest samurai the Empire has ever known, continuing their lifetime of service in the afterworld. A member of the Blessed Guard may add twice his Honor rank to all attack and damage rolls. This is cumulative with any other techniques that allow a samurai to add his Honor to a roll.

Rank 2: Eternal Courage

The defenders of heaven know no fear. Members of the Blessed Guard who face opponents with less Honor than themselves gain a number of Free Raises equal to their own Insight Rank. Raises not used during the skirmish are lost upon its conclusion. The Guard may not gain more free Raises than his Insight Rank even if he faces more than one less-honorable opponent.

Rank 3: The Light of Yomi

The essence of heaven suffuses the being of the Blessed Guard, and he can call upon that power to overwhelm and disorient his opponents. By spending a Void Point, the Guard can cause one opponent to lose one action in the present combat turn. Only one Void Point may be spent per round in this manner, and no individual can be targeted with this ability for two consecutive combat rounds.



CHAPTER SIX:

TENGOKU, THE CELESTIAL HEAVENS

THROUGH BLOOD AND THUNDER PART SEVEN

A sea of stars surrounded him in every direction. A great road curled from above, as wide in places as a city. Tokei tried not to stare upward as he approached. The size of the great ivory spirals was almost more than he could comprehend. He kept his gaze focused on the star-speckled earth and continued walking forward. If this was truly Tengoku, it was indeed a strange place. Of all the realms he had visited, this one was perhaps the least like his home. Even Jigoku seemed somehow more familiar than this.

"Who comes?" a voice demanded.

Tokei peered up. At the base of the road, a massive figure waited. It resembled a samurai-ko in heavy armor, but sleek ram horns curled from either temple. Her eyes burned with a dark flame as she barred the road to the Celestial Heavens. He knew it to be an oni — it had to be. The thought of an oni in this place worried him greatly. What had happened here?

"I am Mor... Naka Tokei," he said, still not accustomed to the sound of the name. "I have been sent by Kuro, he who was once Naka."

"You would approach the Dragon Road, mortal?" she snarled, hand resting on the hilt of her heavy blade.

"I would," he replied. "I must speak to the Elemental Dragons."

"Bah," she said with a sneer. "You are unworthy."

Tokei frowned. "Perhaps," he said. "Yet I have traveled a long way. I require their wisdom and guidance."

"You do not deserve it," she said bluntly.

Tokei scowled. All of the exhaustion, frustration, and anger of his long journey came forth in one moment. "You would tell me where I do not belong, demon?" he said. "We are far from Jigoku."

"And yet you carry more of that foul realm in your heart than Okura-san," boomed a voice throughout the heavens. Tokei glanced about for its source, staring up into the dizzying spirals of the Dragon Road. Their heights were so staggering they almost seemed to move.

Tokei suddenly realized that the road was moving. It curled down toward him, and at its end the head of an impossibly large dragon looked down at him. In its eyes, he saw entire worlds reflected. Tokei fell to his knees, the strength draining from his body.

"You are not ready to set foot in the Celestial Heavens," the great dragon said. Its lips did not move; its voice seemed to emanate from within Tokei himself.

"Kuro-sama told me that the Grand Master must understand the Heavens," Tokei said, surprised he could speak at all.

"And the Grand Master is never ready," the dragon said. "I could show you the way... but you must be prepared to set aside all that is wicked in your soul. The pain you will face will make what you endured in Jigoku seem as nothing in comparison."

"I am prepared for pain," Tokei said with grim resolve.

"That was never in question," the dragon said, "but a brighter light casts a deeper shadow. Will you be prepared to face what you find within yourself after looking into the light of the Heavens?"

Tokei paused. "I... do not know," he said.

"A fine answer," the dragon said. "Step onto the Dragon Road, Naka Tokei, and earn the name you now bear."

TENGOKU AND THE CELESTIAL ORDER

"He stood with me here once, after he had believed his beloved daughter lost forever. Now that he has returned to the world of mortals to reclaim her, I do not believe he shall come back. Shosuro surpassed even the magnificence of our Celestial home in Bayushi's eyes."

— Hantei

Everything in the Order is part of a great cycle, and the Celestial Heavens are the pinnacle. It is here that most of the Fortunes, both greater and lesser, make their homes, along with the Elemental Dragons and the supreme beings of the Celestial Order — Lord Sun and Lady Moon. Tengoku itself is aware, much like the dark influence that drives the Realm of Evil, though it has invested far more of itself in manifestations and other pawns than Jigoku has. All the mighty powers of the Oracles, Fortunes, Dragons, and even Sun and Moon are but gifts of this Spirit Realm — gifts that can be taken away as easily as they are granted.

Tengoku does not care to extend its influence into the other Spirit Realms. It is the highest plane for honored beings to reach, not an evil darkness that must draw others into its influence. By simple virtue of what it is, Tengoku need not take any action except simply existing in order to have others aspire to become one with it.

CLOSE REALMS

Yume-do, the Realm of Dreams, shares a close tie with the Celestial Heavens due to their common inspirational nature. Denizens of Tengoku often travel to the dreams of heroes to spur them to great deeds.

DISTANT REALMS

Tengoku keeps its distance from Ningen-do, Sakkaku, and Gaki-do. The realm itself has little to do with tricksters and the souls of the forever hungry. The inhabitants of Gaki-do aren't usually aware enough to care about Tengoku's low opinion, and even the pranksters of the Realm of Trickery aren't foolish enough to annoy the most powerful entities in existence. Ningen-do and Tengoku once were close, but Amaterasu and Onnotangu (the first Sun and Moon) drew the Heavens away from the Realm of Mortals long ago. They feared they would be "corrupted" by the mortal world as their children were, and that the influence of the well-meaning (but immortal-minded) Dragons and Fortunes would devastate the mortal Realm.

BARRED REALMS

The Realm of Evil and the Celestial Heavens are in total opposition, and by natural order are as far apart from each other as two Spirit Realms can be. The same law that keeps Jigoku from directly influencing Tengoku also keeps the Heavens

from moving in any overt manner against the Realm of Evil. Because of this, many of the inevitable conflicts between the two realms tend to be played out on other realms... most often Ningen-do.

DEATH AND TENGOKU

A very few mortal souls have journeyed to the Celestial Heavens after their deaths. For most of the honored dead, the after-life consists of the bliss of Yomi, the Realm of Blessed Ancestors. Eternity in Tengoku is an honor, but an endless existence of further duty and expectation. Every being in the Heavens is responsible for enforcing the will of the Realm of Good — an endless task. Among the ranks of those who have died and passed on to Tengoku are the Kami, children of Sun and Moon. The soul of Emperor Toturi I also resides within the Celestial Heavens, along with those who have become Fortunes after their deaths (such as Hida Kisada).

KNOWN PASSAGES FROM NINGEN-DO

The only constant passage into the Celestial Heavens is located in the City of the Emperor, Otosan Uchi. The ancestral dojo of the Seppun Miharū is suffused with the essence of the Celestial Heavens, due to the nature of the Seppun themselves and its location in the home of Tengoku's chosen ruler of Rokugan.

Any of the Elemental Oracles may create a passage for those they deem worthy, drawing upon the power granted to them by their patron Dragon. Of course, such a favor is rarely bestowed.

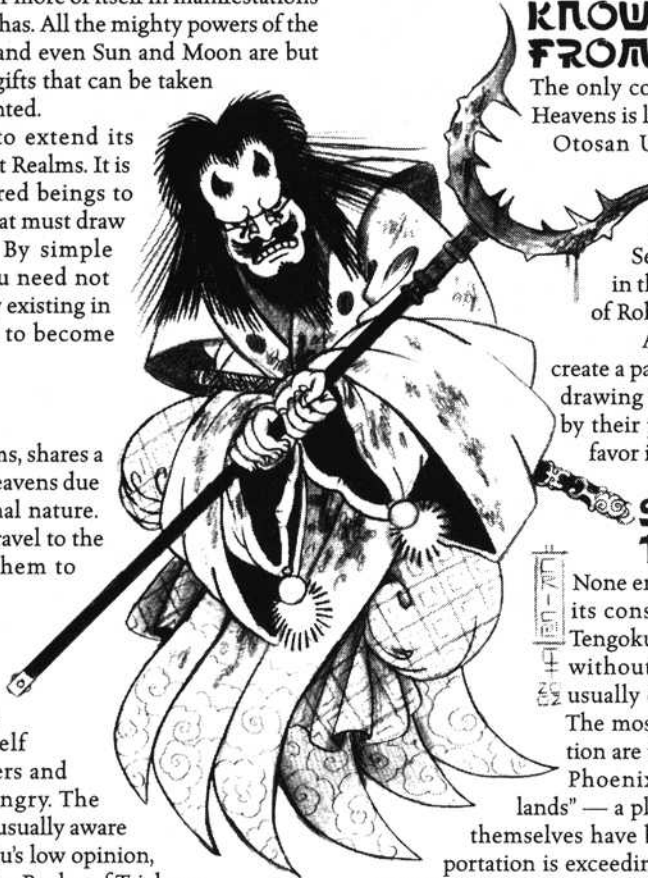
SPONTANEOUS TRANSITION

None enter the Celestial Heavens without its consent. On the rare occasions that Tengoku has chosen to bring outsiders in without their knowledge, the visitor is usually overwhelmed by the experience. The most famous examples of this transition are the reports from Dragon Clan and Phoenix Clan scholars of the "Dragonlands" — a place where the Elemental Dragons themselves have brought great heroes. Such transportation is exceedingly rare, and used only when the beings of Tengoku wish to protect or aid someone of unparalleled importance to them. Akodo Kaneka is one such person, as he was held in the care of the Water Dragon until the time was correct for him to be brought into the mortal world.

JEALOUSY

"I have returned to my home only to find it devoid of our great Mother," Shinjo said in a hoarse whisper, and not even Doji could banish the pain in her sister's eyes.

Tengoku is perhaps the least jealous of all the Spirit Realms. To visit the Celestial Heavens is an honor and a privilege, and Tengoku does not attempt to maintain its hold on those who would discard its gifts. Most beings of Tengoku consider it the only "pure" realm, with the influence of any other realm being



a taint. The mark of Tengoku can purify a soul of all other influence, granting the strength of the Heavens to those who linger within its borders for a long while. Mortal souls cannot stay within Tengoku for extended periods of time without the active patronage of one of its natives. Without such favor, outsiders may only linger within the Celestial Heavens for a number of days equal to their Honor rank before the breathtaking scenery of the realm around them begins to fade, and they find themselves standing once again in their own realm.

If for any reason any inhabitant of Tengoku wishes to preserve a creature native to either the Shadowlands or Jigoku, they may do so with a simple act of will. So long as the Tainted creature is within Tengoku by the consent of one (or more) Celestial beings, it does not lose any part of its Taint. The most obvious example of this is Okura no Oni, who now guards the gates of Tengoku.

Every hour spent in the Celestial Heavens negates one full rank of any other Realm's Control. This effect cannot bring a creature below five points of the Shadowlands Taint (though anyone with the Shadowlands Taint should have an extraordinarily good reason for being in Tengoku), unless the creature is native to Jigoku or the Shadowlands. In this case, once the creature is brought to 0 points of Taint it is destroyed.

Those not influenced by any realm (without any ranks of Taint or other types of Control) slowly gain the strength of the Celestial Heavens. Every day such a creature remains in Tengoku, one of its ability scores is permanently raised by one (though no ability score rises above 25 in this manner). If the creature ever leaves Tengoku, these ability bonuses disappear at a rate of one point per day (from the score of the DM's choosing), though the will of Tengoku can maintain these bonuses if it so chooses once the creature leaves.

Every hour spent in the Celestial Heavens negates one full rank of any other Realm's Control. This effect cannot bring a character below one rank of the Shadowlands Taint (though anyone with the Shadowlands Taint should have an extraordinarily good reason for being in Tengoku), unless the creature is native to Jigoku or the Shadowlands. In this case, once the creature is brought to 0 ranks of Taint it is destroyed.

Those not influenced by any Realm (without any ranks of Taint, etc), slowly gain the strength of the Celestial Heavens. Every day such a character remains in Tengoku, one of his Traits is raised by one (though no Trait rises above 10 in this manner). If the character ever leaves Tengoku, these ability bonuses disappear at a rate of one point per day (from the score of the GM's choosing), though the will of Tengoku can maintain these bonuses if it so chooses once the character leaves.

CONTROL

As the embodiment of what the Emperor's Law strives to become, the influence of Tengoku sculpts mortal souls into its own image. The longer one remains in the influence of the Celestial Heavens, the more mortal concern and indecision are swept away from both mind and spirit.

For every two points of ability score increase the Celestial Heavens grants to a creature, that creature's alignment moves one step closer to Lawful Neutral or one Honor Rank closer to 5. These changes are permanent unless the creature leaves Tengoku, at which time the creature's honor or alignment moves a step closer to its original status every two days.

For every two points of Trait increase the Celestial Heavens grants to a character, that character's Honor increases by one full rank. These changes are permanent unless the character leaves Tengoku, at which time the character's Honor decreases by one rank every day until it becomes what it was before entering the Celestial Heavens.

PROTECTION AGAINST TENGOKU

There is no known protection against Tengoku's influence.

PROTECTION BY TENGOKU

There is no protection for denizens of the Celestial Heavens against the influence of other Realms save their nature. In the case of mortals who bear the mark of Tengoku (ability score or Trait increases), this influence must be completely worn away before any other Realm may exert its Control over them. Natives of the Celestial Heavens must make careful preparations when leaving the realm or suffer the fate of the first Kami — imprisonment outside of Tengoku. The immortality and godlike status granted by Tengoku rapidly fades outside of the Heavens, until the errant immortal becomes a native of the Realm he has traveled to. This was the fate of the children of Onnotangu and Amaterasu, banished from Tengoku by their father without time to prepare for the journey. Because of this, they were quickly taken by Ningen-do, and forced to live out a mortal (if extended) lifetime and return to their home only after death.

ABILITIES

Tengoku does not grant its residents any powers. A large percentage of the most powerful beings known reside here — the Fortunes, the Dragons, the Sun and Moon — and they have no particular need for more powers.

MAGIC

"I will never be apart from you," spoke the voice of Togashi in the souls of the Kami. "I have become part of all that surrounds you, and am ever a hidden power to aid you in time of need."

The kami that are the source of all (non-maho) Rokugani magic serve the will of the Fortunes, Elemental Dragons, and the Sun and Moon. Because of this, Tengoku itself is a realm of pure and powerful magic. The entire realm is saturated with the essence of Rokugani magic. There are no statistical modifiers for the incredibly powerful inhabitants of Tengoku — if Osano-Wo wishes to end your life in fire, no amount of dice will save you.

Mortals who find themselves in Tengoku find the magic of the kami greatly amplified in power and ability. Spells leap unbidden into a shugenja's mind, and the prayer scrolls of their craft are all but forgotten; the kami need little encour-

agement in such a place. Of course, maho does not function, and attempting to cast such blasphemous magic in the Celestial Heavens cannot end well for the offending spellcaster.

Creatures capable of casting spells as a shugenja have their effective caster level raised by two — this increase affects the creature as if he had gained these two levels, though he does not gain hit points or skill points. A shugenja's spells require no divine focus or material component while in the Celestial Heavens, though all other components must still be used normally.

Divine spellcasters not of Rokugan may find their spell ability and level-dependent benefits weakened greatly or cut off completely, at the DM's option.

Shugenja have their Insight Rank raised by one for the duration of their stay in Tengoku. The Elemental Ring associated with a shugenja's affinity increases by 2 for the purposes of casting spells only. The shugenja also gains three new spells (chosen by the GM) in the element he has an affinity for, and three other spells of the other elements. All spells and spellcasting benefits vanish once the shugenja leaves Tengoku.

RELATIONS WITH OTHER REALMS

Tengoku tends to involve itself only in the affairs of Ningen-do, the Realm of Mortals. As the Empire of Rokugan is a creation of the children of Sun and Moon, most beings within the Heavens feel a kinship with the Empire itself and the mortals who scurry within it. Because the mortal world worships the Celestial Heavens and its inhabitants, the relationship works harmoniously.

Since both Tengoku and Jigoku meddle incessantly within Ningen-do, they come into constant conflict, though they never influence one another directly. The beings of the Celestial Heavens sometimes make their will known through the behavior of animals, and thus the Fortunes and Kami occasionally visit Chikushudo.

INHABITANTS

"Stand before me, Toturi, and let me see the man who claims my blood and held my brother's throne when none else could."

— Akodo, greeting Toturi I upon his entry into Tengoku

Tengoku itself is the home of the most powerful entities known. The Fortunes, the Elemental Dragons, and even Lord Sun and Lady Moon call this realm their own along with the founding Kami of the clans and other legendary figures in the history of Rokugan.

SUN AND MOON

Originally the Sun and Moon were responsible for the creation of almost all that exists. The first Sun was Amaterasu, and was seen as a benevolent and matronly figure, mother to creation and the Empire. When Lady Sun destroyed herself in the shame of what her husband, Onnotangu the first Moon,

had done, Hida Yakamo of the Crab Clan ascended to the Heavens with her blessing. Yakamo, though tempered by immortal senses and concerns, is still very much a Hida. He is a figure of war and inspiration against the dark forces that constantly seek to destroy Rokugan. Though the balance of the Spirit Realms prevents Yakamo from directly campaigning against Jigoku and the Shadowlands, he is all too happy to aid those who seek such ends and meet his (nearly impossible) standards of a hero.

Before Hitomi replaced him, Onnotangu was seen as a dark and somewhat evil deity. Lord Moon was consumed by the jealousy he felt for Rokugan, as Lady Sun openly favored their children and the Empire they founded over him. The Dragon samurai Hitomi (once of the Mirumoto family) drew godlike power from the soul of the Kami Togashi himself, as well as artifacts forged from the blood and body of Lord Moon. Hitomi destroyed Lord Moon and replaced him in the Heavens, seeking to protect the Empire from his evil. She is widely seen as no less sinister than her predecessor, though she has no intention to work against the Empire she fought to preserve.

TWO MONKS AND SEVEN FORTUNES

There were once brothers named Tsugu and Yori. Their family was poor, and in order to ease their father's burden, they both retired to a monastery to follow the path of Shinsei. Tsugu was the younger of the two. He was a diligent student of the Tao, and a pious man. He carried himself with humility and thought only for the good of others. Yori, on the other hand, only valued his position as a monk for the power it gave him. He enjoyed the respect and deference shown him by samurai who once treated him as a mere peasant, and grew fat off of the charity of others. Yori was not a bad man, but he was a lazy one.

In time, the abbot of the monastery asked Tsugu and Yori to go forth on an important errand. In the heart of the Scorpion mountains, a great shrine to the Seven Fortunes had fallen into disrepair. The journey was long, and the path was dangerous.

Tsugu agreed to go attend the shrine, for the Seven Fortunes were great and benevolent deities worthy of respect. He wished to repair the temple so that their friendship with the Empire would be maintained and they would continue to shower their blessings upon Rokugan for generations to come.

Yori agreed to attend the shrine because he was fearful of the Fortunes' wrath. In addition, he was hopeful that the Fortunes might provide him with a gift for his dutiful service. Yori knew these feelings were selfish, so he kept them concealed. Yori felt certain that his brother Tsugu had agreed to the mission for similar selfish reasons, for men of low moral caliber always expect the same of others.

The two brothers set out on their quest. Had the brothers been anyone but who they were, their voyage may have been difficult. Yori's thoughts were filled with delight at his temporary escape from the stuffy confines of the monastery. Tsugu was merely content to travel in the company of his beloved brother. The hardships and dangers of the journey were forgotten, and the trip was a happy one. The weather did not burden them. Even the rough-hewn bandits of the road left them alone, for it was clear these two simple monks had nothing to steal and carried the love of the Fortunes in their hearts.

When they reached the shrine, they found it in terrible disrepair. Tsugu set to work at once, repainting the fixtures and replacing old, warped wood with fresh lumber taken from the

cedar forest. Yori visited the local village and persuaded laborers to help in the repair. Though Yori in truth did nothing, his efforts sped Tsugu's work considerably. Within a week, their repairs were done. The two brothers stood back to admire their accomplishment as the sun rose above the Spine of the World Mountains.

Tsugu and Yori realized to their surprise that they were no longer alone. Six men and one woman now stood before them. By the serene beauty of their faces and the immaculate radiance of their kimono, it was clear that these were the Seven Fortunes. Tsugu and Yori fell to the ground in obeisance.

"Little monks, you have done us a great service," said Bente, the Fortune of Romantic Love. She held a gleaming biwa in her hands, and her gown seemed woven from the roiling sea. Her beauty was indescribable.

"Because of you, we shall not be forgotten," added Bishamon, the Fortune of Strength. He was a large man, dressed in the armor of a samurai. In one hand he held a mighty spear. In the other, he clutched a miniature model of a great castle, carved in perfect detail. If one looked closely enough, there almost seemed to be little people moving about inside.

"Indeed, our shrine is more splendid than ever it has been," added Ebisu, the Fortune of Honest Work. Though Ebisu was dressed like a simple peasant, a net full of fish slung over one shoulder, he somehow seemed no less regal than the rest.

"Name your reward, and you shall have it," said Hotei, the Fortune of Contentment. He drummed his fingers on the side of his ample belly as he spoke.

"I wish for you to shower your blessings upon us!" Yori exclaimed impulsively.

"Indeed," Daikoku replied slyly. The Fortune of Wealth toyed with a small hammer as a curious little rat ran about by his feet. "You shall have everything you deserve, Yori," he said cryptically. Then the Fortunes turned to Tsugu.

Tsugu looked at the eager face of his brother, then turned to the Fortunes. "I ask only that you do not harm my impetuous brother," he replied. "I know that he is a selfish man, but he is not a bad man, and he is my brother."

The Fortunes were touched by Tsugu's selfless plea. In fact, they had been prepared to smite the selfish Yori with the full brunt of their power. Instead, they stayed their hands.

"So be it," said Fukurokujin, the Fortune of Wisdom. Fukurokujin was much older than the others, and his eyes were sharper. "Here is our judgment. For the good you have done, Tsugu, you and those that follow you shall forever bear our blessings. Yori, for your selfishness and arrogance, you and those who emulate you shall forever bear our curses."

Yori's mouth dropped open in horror. "Curses?" he spat. "But you promised my brother that you would show mercy!"

"And indeed we have," Jurojin, the Fortune of Longevity replied, tugging at his long white beard with one hand. "By bearing our curses with honor, you may one day prove yourself the better man. Your brother's goodness does not excuse your weakness, but it may give you the chance to overcome it. Do you understand?"

And Yori understood. He wandered out into the wilderness alone, riddled with the curses of the Fortunes.

The brothers never saw one another again. Tsugu never left the Shrine of the Seven Fortunes, and is buried there still. Among the Brotherhood of Shinsei, he is still listed among the most serene and enlightened who have ever lived. It is said that he never died, but was eventually carried into the Celestial Heavens by the Fortunes themselves.

And what became of Yori?

DIVINE INTERVENTION

Those blessed or cursed by a Fortune are always under that Fortune's watchful eye. At the GM's discretion, the Fortune may step in from time to time to make that character's life a bit more interesting.

This isn't to say that a Fortune will meddle in a mortal's affairs at every opportunity. The Fortunes are busy, after all, and are generally content to leave a mortal to his fate. However, in times of great crisis the Fortune may provide inspiration, distract a foe at an opportune time, or simply appear in mortal guise to offer advice. Even the cursed occasionally receive aid from the Fortunes, for even the cursed are obviously important enough that a Fortune has taken interest in them.

When adjudicating divine intervention, be careful not to use it so often that it becomes cliché. If Bishamon appears to save the party every time they get into danger, the Fortunes begin to lose the element of wonder.

Perhaps the selfish monk overcame his curses as Fukurokujin suggested.

Perhaps he did not.

THE SEVEN GREATER FORTUNES

Known commonly as the Seven Fortunes or sometimes just the Fortunes, these are the seven most influential and powerful supernatural patrons of Rokugan. They are the most widely known, and almost every member of the Empire prays to at least one if not all of them on a daily basis.

BENTE, FORTUNE OF ROMANTIC LOVE

Bente is the only female among the Seven Fortunes. Though the Seven Fortunes have no true leader, she appears to be their spokesperson on the rare occasions when they appear together. Bente is a beautiful goddess who dresses in clothing woven from the ocean waves, and carries a magical biwa with which she can calm any mortal's soul. She is beloved by the Crane, and returns their adoration. The Scorpion also reveres Bente.

Bente is not a spiteful Fortune, and often assists those she has cursed in order to make their lives a bit easier. Both the blessed and cursed of Bente have interesting social lives, if not always successful ones.

BISHAMON, FORTUNE OF STRENGTH

Bishamon is a patron of bushi, but also of visionaries and idealists. He is the thinking man's warrior, who turns to battle only when there is no other alternative. Bishamon is always depicted in full armor, wielding a naginata and carrying a small temple in one hand. He is greatly esteemed by the Lion, the Crab, and the Unicorn. When Bishamon intervenes in

someone's life, it is likely to be on a dramatic scale — a thunderstorm on the day of a critical battle, or a sudden wind to sweep away the enemy's fleet. Unfortunately, he can also be somewhat unpredictable towards those in whom he has taken an interest, whether they be blessed or cursed. If Bishamon feels that someone under his scrutiny has been weak or dishonorable, he may arrange for a suitable test of their courage.

DAIKOKU, FORTUNE OF WEALTH

Daikoku is very popular among the peasantry, for he is a patron of farmers and merchants. Of all the Fortunes, Daikoku is the most humorous and approachable by the common man. A small rat always accompanies him, devouring the rice Daikoku spills everywhere he goes. The rat does not bother Daikoku, who can afford to lose a little rice. The two are in fact great friends, and the rat often is dispatched to watch over those favored by the Fortune. Daikoku carries a magical hammer with which he grants wishes for those who display cleverness.

Daikoku favors the Unicorn Clan, for they treat their peasants with more care and respect than any other. He respects the Mantis Clan, who understand the pursuit of wealth like none other. He is also quite fond of the Yasuki and Daidoji families. Daikoku is perhaps the most mischievous Fortune, and often travels the Empire in disguise to sate his curiosity regarding mortals. Daikoku is slow to anger, which is fortunate as his wrath is terrible to behold. Those who anger Daikoku can find their life's work reduced to nothing in an instant, their fields turned barren and their valuable possessions crumbled to dust.

EBISU, FORTUNE OF HONEST WORK

Ebisu is a simple Fortune with simple needs. He respects honesty and hard work above all else. Though he favors the peasants (who tend to work harder than anyone else), he approves of anyone who sees a difficult job through to its completion. For this reason, he is a patron of the Crab Clan, who have the most thankless job of any Great Clan, and the Mantis, who have earned their position instead of inheriting it. He is also quite fond of the Badger Clan and the Shinjo family for their grim determination. Ebisu does not have much use for the Scorpion, who have proven themselves untrustworthy time and time again. Ebisu always appears as a simple laborer in rough clothing, though he is obviously more than he appears. Ebisu rarely blesses or curses anyone — he simply doesn't have the time. In Ebisu's mind, a job well done is more than enough reward, and living with the disappointment of failure is ample punishment.

FUKUROKUJIN, FORTUNE OF WISDOM

To many, Fukurokujin is seen as the living embodiment of enlightenment. Some scholars believe that the Fortune is actually an aspect of Shinsei, and regard him with equal respect. Fukurokujin is usually depicted with a long face and many wrinkles, but sharp, alert eyes. Fukurokujin favors the Phoenix and Dragon Clans above all others, for their thirst for

wisdom mirrors his own. The current war between these two clans pains the Fortune greatly, and he has distributed blessings and curses on both sides of the conflict. This is unusual for him; Fukurokujin rarely intervenes directly in mortal affairs. To those whom he favors, he may appear in disguise from time to time to offer advice.

HOTEI, FORTUNE OF CONTENTMENT

Hotei is the embodiment of serenity and peacefulness. He is a plump, happy character who makes friends easily and is well received wherever he goes. Hotei is also the Fortune of Serenity, of those who know their true place in the universe.

Those cursed by him are out of place, ill-fitting in the dance of the elements. Hotei has favorites among every clan and truly dislikes no one. Hotei is fond of those under his protection, but never resorts to violence. When in a terrible crisis, those who have Hotei's attention may find an unexpected opportunity for escape.

JUROJIN, FORTUNE OF LONGEVITY

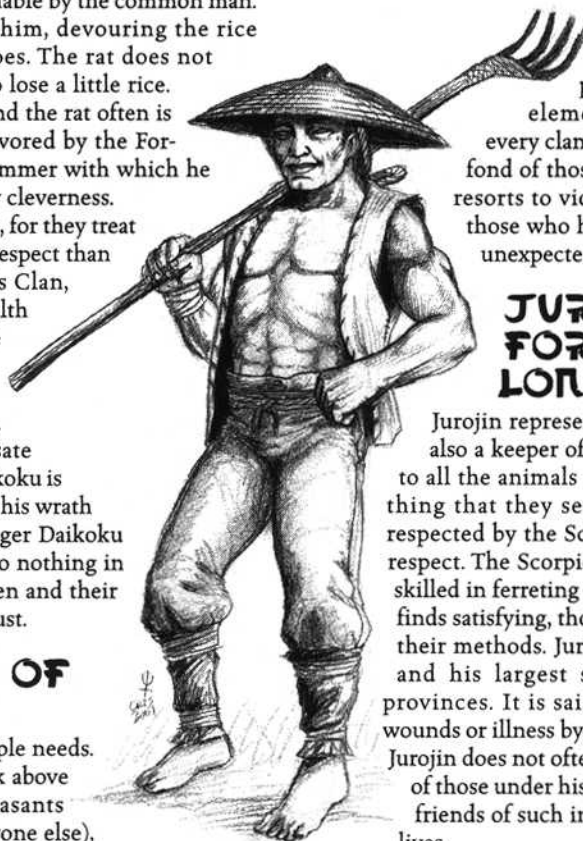
Jurojin represents health and long life, but he is also a keeper of sacred wisdom. Jurojin can speak to all the animals of the Empire, and knows everything that they see. For this reason, he is greatly respected by the Scorpion Clan, and he returns this respect. The Scorpion are adept at survival and quite skilled in ferreting out secrets, both traits that Jurojin finds satisfying, though he is sometimes disturbed by their methods. Jurojin is also revered by the Crane, and his largest shrine is located within their provinces. It is said that the faithful can heal any wounds or illness by drinking the waters of this shrine. Jurojin does not often take a personal hand in the lives of those under his protection, though the family and friends of such individuals tend to live long, happy lives.

LESSER FORTUNES

Though less powerful and generally less worshiped than the Seven Fortunes, the lesser Fortunes of Rokugan each represent facets of life. They also tend to serve the wishes of one (or more) of the Greater Fortunes. These small groupings of lesser Fortunes to one of the Seven Fortunes tends to go unnoticed in all but a few cases among the mortals of Ningen-do.

EKIBYOGAMI

Only those who wish to avoid her wrath invoke the cruel and indifferent Fortune of Disease. She serves the will of Jurojin when she is asked, sparing or spreading disease as the Fortune of Longevity sees fit. Outside of those edicts, however, Ekibyogami is free to act as she sees fit, and tends to be among the most spiteful of all Fortunes. If she notices an offense against



one of the Fortunes, she visits sickness upon the offending party, his family, and most of the area. Fortunately for the men and women of Rokugan, Ekibyogami tends to flit from place to place instead of attempting to monitor the whole of Rokugan. The only temple to Ekibyogami that is constantly maintained stands next to Jurojin Seido in Asako lands.

EMMA-O

The Fortune of Death is also the judge of the afterlife, sending souls to Yomi, Meido, Gaki-do, Toshigoku, or even Jigoku as their lives dictate. He is an aloof Fortune who generally disregards the pleas of souls or their living relatives. Though Emma-O is seen as a cruel Fortune by some, he carries out his duties as a samurai would, letting nothing sway him but justice. Emma-O works with Ebisu to judge those who are worthy to be born as samurai. He has also been known to call upon the guidance of Fukurokujin in the cases of some mortal souls to ensure proper judgment. Though shrines to Emma-O are numerous, they are all rather small, with the exception of the one recently constructed by the Hitomi family. The sinister *kikage zumi* blatantly ignore any questioning about the temple.

INARI

Inari is easily one of the most popular Fortunes, simply because he is the Fortune of Rice. Rice plays such a vital role in the life of Rokugan that nearly every mortal prays to him at least once a day before they eat. He is a caring Fortune, wishing all to be fed and content, and is the most likely Fortune to bless those who have gained his favor in some way. As rice is also a heavily traded commodity, Inari often works together with Daikoku to see the pious rewarded. By virtue of necessity, the Lion maintain the largest shrine to Inari, hoping to draw his favor in cultivating their somewhat barren land. The Fox Clan also has several large shrines to Inari.

ISORA

The lonely and quiet Fortune of the Seashore is invoked by sailors wishing to make it back to port safely, and by those who live along the coast. Isora is a temperamental Fortune prone to causing suffering simply to express her own sudden surges of anger. Many other Fortunes consider the tragic Isora to be nearly insane with grief; her lover, another Fortune, was obliterated by the Lying Darkness long ago. Every morning and night Isora frustrates herself into anger as she tries and fails to remember the name and the face of a Fortune that was erased forever. The Mantis Isles house Isora's greatest temple.

JIZO

As the Fortune of Mercy, Jizo is perhaps the most active Fortune. Even in times of peace, small skirmishes and plague cause mortals to petition Jizo for aid. Many Rokugani also pray for him to intercede with Emma-O on behalf of their recently-dead relatives, although the compassionate Jizo can only rarely sway the emotionless Judge of the Afterlife. Jizo is known to work in tandem with Jurojin to bring to the deserving the great blessings of a full and long life unmarked by tragedy. Naturally, the peaceful Asahina family maintains the greatest of Jizo's shrines.

JOTEI

The Fortune of the Morning Dew, also enigmatically called the Reverse Fortune, is perhaps one of the least known of all Fortunes, as his only established shrine remains hidden deep within Unicorn lands. He is said to protect people who are

foolish but pure of heart. Their lives are like the morning dew itself, seemingly without reason, but pure and simple. Those who follow Jotei's path care for the weak of mind, and protect others who live completely unaware of their karma. It is said Jotei himself is a bit of a trickster, enjoying the constant humor a life lightly lived brings, and appears in Ningen-do as a great dragon.

KAZE-NO-KAMI

One of the three Unnamed Fortunes, the Fortune of the Wind is unpredictable and all-seeing. It lacks a name, for the Fortune has never appeared to mortals to make its name known. It is said that the actual being that is Kaze-no-Kami changes yearly with the seasons, as a new wind is born every spring. With rare exceptions, the Fortune of Wind is aloof from the concerns of the mortal world. It ignores mortal prayers to spare its wrath of hurricanes and other great winds, though Otosan Uchi has never once been touched by the fury of a sea storm. No shrine to Kaze-no-Kami is greater than another, as mortals understand the uncaring nature of the Fortune.

KENRO-JI-JIN

Every farmer and gardener tends to a small shrine to the Fortune of the Soil near their fields. Kenro-ji-jin is far more important to the farmers of the Empire than anyone else because a ruined crop is far harder to replace than a handful of withered flowers. The Fortune of Soil tends to be impartial, and it takes great efforts to draw the attention of Kenro-ji-jin for good or for ill. Since he represents such a basic element of daily life, Kenro-ji-jin often interacts with the other Fortunes, most notably Inari, Kuroshin, Daikoku, and Ebisu. The Fox Clan holds the ground under their feet as sacred and naturally maintains the foremost of Kenro-ji-jin's shrines within the Empire.

THE SHRINE OF REVERSE FORTUNES

Once there was a peasant named Jotaru who discovered a small, forgotten shrine. When he asked a passing monk whose shrine it was, the man answered "Hotei." Eager to find the favor of the Fortune of Contentment, Jotaru cleaned and tended the shrine. For forty years he tended the shrine dutifully, though he knew none of the proper prayers or rites. Finally, as he was about to die, he visited the shrine one final time. The Fortune who protected the shrine appeared to bless the peasant for his service.

The peasant was confused. "Who are you?" he said, not recognizing the Fortune.

"I am Jotei," the Fortune replied, "the Fortune of Morning Dew."

The peasant was shocked; he had wasted his entire life worshipping the wrong Fortune. Still, as he died, he bowed down in thankfulness to Jotei for, in the end, his life had been a good one.

Jotei was greatly amused by what had happened, and determined in the future to protect those who were faithful, but foolish. His shrine, well hidden in Unicorn lands, has come to be known as the Shrine of Reverse Fortunes, though few recall the reason why. Occasionally Jotei can be seen in the form of a great dragon, descending to the mortal realm to protect those who are pure of heart but weak of mind.

KISADA

One of the youngest of the Fortunes, the Fortune of Persistence once walked the world of mortals as Hida Kisada, and some still live who remember him as Champion of the Crab. He is also the father of Hida Yakamo, who succeeded him as Champion, was the second Thunder of the Crab Clan, and then ascended to become Lord Sun. Many say Yakamo's successes are owed to his father's legendary. He is worshiped throughout the Crab lands, and is popular with bushi all over the Empire. Those entering tests of skill often pray to him for luck, and he is tightly associated with both Yakamo and Bishamon. The ancestral home of the Hiruma holds Kisada's greatest shrine, which has become quite well attended.

KOJIN

The Fortune of Kitchens is also jokingly referred to as the Fortune of Housewives. Many cooks and wives pray fervently to Kojin, as she is said to protect homes from the ever-present threat of fire. As most homes are made primarily of wood and paper, even small kitchen fires could destroy an entire estate. Kojin also helps guide people through the Rokugani art of cooking, which can be as ritualized as the tea ceremony. The Fortune of the Kitchen is usually depicted as a rotund and happy woman with nimble hands and a constant smile. Kojin's most famous temple resides in Shosuro lands, where a handful of Scorpion can always be found praying to the Fortune for guidance in their cooking. Curiously enough, few of the supplicants there are housewives.

KOSHIN

Though most Rokugani travel infrequently, the Fortune of Roads is popular with the Unicorn Clan and the Miya Heralds. Those who embark on a long journey carry tokens of his favor, and relatives pray to the Fortune of Roads for a safe trip for their loved ones. One of the more whimsical Fortunes, Koshin does not associate much with the other Fortunes. He favors those who set off upon their own paths, and brings ruin upon anyone who attempts to restrict lawful travel upon his roads. The greatest of Koshin's temples stands within Heigen Toshi, a large trade city in Crane lands. Most caravan masters pray for Koshin's blessing before taking a long journey, or make offerings at one of his shrines in thanks for a safe trip.

KUROSHIN

The Fortune of Agriculture works closely with Inari and Kenro-ji-jin, and is worshiped by the same people who venerate the Fortunes of Rice and Soil. Farmers are naturally the most fervent of those who court his favor, especially those who maintain a silk farm or herd animals. Kuroshin is a

patient and paternal Fortune, favoring those who are willing to learn the ways of the land and make their lives part of it. He frowns upon those who abuse the bounty granted by the lands, and when angered has caused fertile fields to become barren in a single season. The plains of the Unicorn are home to Kuroshin's most respected temple, where Unicorn peasants constantly pray to gain the Fortune's favor for their endless tasks.

MUSUBI-NO-KAMI

The second of the Unnamed Fortunes, Musubi-no-Kami holds sway over marriages in Rokugan. It knows no gender, and changes its form at will to suit its own mind. Musubi-no-Kami is venerated by matchmakers who wish to make wise choices for their clans, and by unmarried samurai wishing to betroth their one true love. The Fortune of Marriage guides intended couples together, and sometimes aids a troubled marriage if the hearts of the two people are truly set on being a proper husband and wife. The cunning Otomo family houses the most famous of Musubi-no-Kami's temples, as they often perform matchmaking duties.



OSANO-WO

The most powerful and most popular of the lesser Fortunes, Osano-Wo is the Fortune of Fire and Thunder as well as the patron of bushi. Shugenja must invoke his name to cast some of their more impressive spells, and warriors across the Empire pray to him for guidance along the warrior's path. Osano-Wo was once the mortal Hida Osano-Wo, and like Hida Kisada, was the Crab Champion of his time and became a Fortune after his death. Osano-Wo is infamous for his blunt and aggressive nature, as he has not allowed immortality to in any way soften his Crab nature. He is one of the more meddlesome Fortunes, and has begun walking Rokugan himself since the Battle of Oblivion's Gate. While the other Fortunes wonder if his actions will upset the Order, he has done nothing grave enough for them to get over their fear of his temper. The Mantis city Toshi no Inazuma is home to the spectacular and ancient Temple of Osano-Wo. The Fortune of Fire and Thunder himself hurls lightning from the Heavens once a year upon the great temple to show his continuing favor of the monks there.

SUITEIRU

Like Isora, the Fortune of the Sea is an isolated and lonely figure, rarely depicted in the company of any other Fortune or mortal. He is a cold and jealous Fortune, fond of punishing those who would call themselves "master" of the sea or enter

his domain without first praying for his benevolence. Other than to appease his unpredictable wrath, mortals pray to Suitengu for good fishing and to keep them safe from sea storms. Clear Water Village in Crab lands houses the oldest and most frequented of Suitengu's shrines. As nearly every trade kobune travels to the city eventually, scores of sailors pray there every day.

TENGEN

A popular Fortune among scholars and shugenja, the Fortune of Writing is a wise and old figure. Though not as powerful as the Seven Fortunes, Tengen is held in the same regard as a daimyo's retired father — respected for his wise counsel. Tengen is a quiet and thoughtful Fortune, and favors those who understand the power of written words. Wise shugenja pray to him daily. The most ancient and famous temple to Tengen was the Ikoma Libraries, which were destroyed by the Lying Darkness a generation ago. Through political maneuvering, Miya Hatori has caused the construction of an even larger shrine to Tengen, which houses the Imperial Histories that his family now oversees.

TOYOUKE-OMIKAMI

The Fortune of Grain is venerated much less than Inari, the Fortune of Rice. Bread has never been as popular as rice within Rokugan, and fewer farmers must rely on a good grain harvest to get them through the year. He is popular among the Unicorn peasantry, however, as grain is the staple food for their mighty warhorses. Toyouke-Omikami does not have any rivalry or hatred for Inari and simply accepts his place in the Order, showing favor to those who venerate him correctly for their harvest. Phoenix peasants (with the aid of the Brotherhood) long ago constructed what is still the largest of this Fortune's temples, as the frigid climate of their home in Ukabu Mura does not encourage rice paddies.

TSI XING GUO

Tsi Xing Guo is the first mortal to have ascended to the Celestial Heavens by the will of the new Sun and Moon. The master smith became the Fortune of Steel, and his first duty was to forge the Celestial Swords for the Great Clans of Rokugan. He now serves the Sun and Moon directly by supplying them with weapons to continue their feud across the Heavens when it sparks into occasional violence. Xing Guo is a rather calm Fortune, and is content to simply do as he is told and continue the mastery of his craft. He has gained popularity with the bushi of Rokugan, and is prayed to by smiths all across the Empire for good fortune in their art. The Kaiu and Tamori families both maintain large temples dedicated to the Fortune of Steel to beseech his aid in their unending craft with the blade.

TSUKUNE

The newly named Fortune of Rebirth has held her place within the Celestial Heavens for less than a year. The mortal Shiba Tsukune was to be the final bearer of the Soul of Shiba, as the ancient Phoenix sword Ofushikai no longer existed to herald a new Champion. Out of deference to the Soul of Shiba, Osano-Wo himself came to Tsukune and made her into the Fortune of Rebirth, so that she would enter the Heavens and return Shiba to his rightful home. Because of her lineage, the newest Fortune is popular in Phoenix lands; because of what she symbolizes, she is worshiped by those who wish to rise above their surroundings.

UZUME

The humorous and friendly Fortune of Dance is a contrast to many severe immortals of Rokugan. Many dances within the Empire are serious and ritualized things, but just as many are drunken revelries. Uzume enjoys both as he dances across Tengoku. Very few can earn the wrath of the Fortune of Dance, who tends to frown upon those who take life too seriously for the good of themselves or any around them. Uzume has two shrines that constantly compete in a friendly manner to be the most prominent of the Fortune's devoted structures. One is located within the Asahina Temples, and the other stands near Shiro Ide.

YAMA-NO-KAMI

Little is known about the enigmatic third Unnamed Fortune. His only shrine stands at the distant northern edge of what was once Badger Clan territory. A reclusive and mysterious order of monks tends his shrine. It is said that only members of the Order of Stone know the Fortune's name, and why he chooses to seclude himself so far from the Empire.

THE ELEMENTAL DRAGONS

The Elemental Dragons of Rokugan are manifestations of the primal forces of both the physical realm and the spiritual. They are like the minor kami in that they represent a power beyond the mundane. Unlike the kami, they represent stronger ideas than simply a certain element. The Dragon of Fire is not merely the avatar of flame; he is the embodiment of inspiration, intensity, and the driving force within every soul as well as a creature of elemental fire. These dragons dwell in the Celestial Heavens and interact rarely with the mortal world themselves — the Oracles are seen as the voice of the dragons in Ningen-do.

Since the dragons are beyond the ken of mortals, they simply do not have statistics that have any meaning. They are forces of nature, more easily comparable to deities than monsters. The dragons themselves are said to appear in the dreams of true heroes, and stories of great samurai being invited to the Court of Dragons are the stuff of legends.

At certain points in history, dragons have sacrificed themselves for great causes or stepped down from their place in the Heavens to become mortal as the children of Sun and Moon did. Though the dragons are divine creatures and representations of their elements, they also represent even greater, more abstract, powers. In any case where a dragon ceases to fulfill its duties for one reason or another, the will of the Celestial Heavens causes another Elemental Dragon to come into existence. This is an extremely rare event, and is only known to have happened three times in the history of Rokugan.

THE DRAGON OF AIR

The most curious of the Elemental Dragons, this dragon interacts with mortals more frequently than any of its brethren save the Void Dragon. The Air Dragon's visitations are usually subtle. This dragon tends to visit the mortal realm invisibly to personally view important events. Scholars speculate that the

Air Dragon whispers to worthy men and women in their dreams, foretelling the future or revealing the secrets of the Heavens. Those with a gift of prophecy or strong foresight are said to be blessed by the Air Dragon. Though the dragons of Void and Fire are more frequently responsible for seers, the vain Air Dragon gladly takes credit for any prophecies attributed to it. The dragon itself never appears in a solid form, taking the appearance of a swirling mass of foggy coils headed by two piercing eyes of light.

During the time of the Battle of Oblivion's Gate, the Air Dragon delivered the hero Isawa Hochiu to the battle so that he could face Goju Adorai. It allowed itself to be corrupted by the terrible forces of darkness, sacrificing itself to guarantee the Phoenix hero's arrival. Though a new Air Dragon soon came into existence to replace the one that was lost, the corrupted dragon did not cease to be. Tales of a Dragon of Shadow persist in the nightmares of shugenja, and in the reports of Hiruma scouts driven mad by what they have beheld.

THE CELESTIAL DRAGON

The Celestial Dragon, also known as the Dragon of the Heavens, stands apart from its kind. When the Heavens were raised from Ningen-do, the Realm of the Gods came to rest on the broad back of the Celestial Dragon. This powerful beast is the guardian of Tengoku, opening the path to mortals who ascend to the status of Fortune. The Celestial Dragon is said to touch the mortal realm only in Ootosan Uchi, where its glistening tail forms a great Dragon Road to guide the Emperor on his journey to the afterlife.

The discovery of the Celestial Dragon's existence is a recent event. None could persuade the spirits to confirm nor deny the tales of a dragon holding the Heavens aloft. If there were such a dragon, where was its Oracle? Why had it never shown itself to any mortal? However, when the Great Crater was formed, an aged ise zumi happened to witness the cataclysm. When the tattooed man emerged days later, he seemed dazzled by what he had seen. The ise zumi had spoken with the Celestial Dragon for two days, and has only hinted at the full extent of the wisdom he received. Togashi Mitsu's accounts, combined with eyewitness reports of a huge dragon-like figure creating the pass at Lord Sun's direction, sundering the mountains with a single thrust of its great tail, have become all the testimony the Empire needed to verify that a Celestial Dragon does indeed exist.

THE DRAGON OF EARTH

With the exception of the Celestial Dragon, the Dragon of Earth is the least likely to involve itself with the affairs of the mortal world. It does not find humans amusing, nor does it wish to learn the deeper meanings of mortal life. Like the

mountains, the Earth Dragon is simply content to be. Its impartial nature has caused the other dragons to regard it as a creature of great wisdom; it is the de facto leader of the Elemental Dragons. The few times the Earth Dragon has chosen to walk amongst mortals, it was a great serpentine creature of stone and earth, moving forward by creating new coils and letting the end of its tail crumble away.

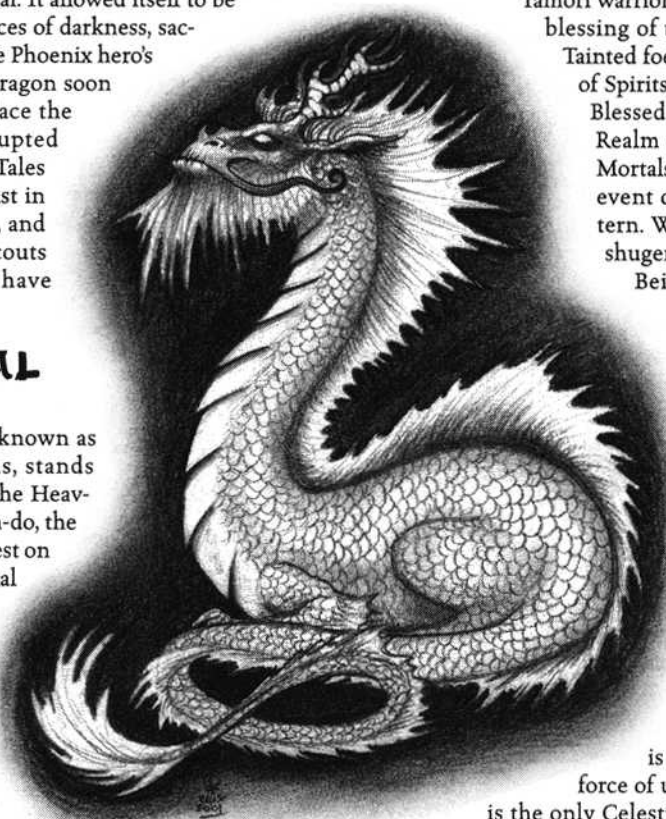
The blessings of the Earth Dragon are powerful — those who have a strong connection to Earth are men and women with limitless stamina and perseverance. Decorations that depict the Earth Dragon are popular among Hida and Tamori warriors, and any who seek to carry the blessing of the Heavens into battle against Tainted foes. The invasions during the War of Spirits from both Meido (the Realm of Blessed Ancestors) and Toshigoku (the Realm of Slaughter) into the Realm of Mortals concerned the Heavens, as this event openly defied the Celestial Pattern. When the Scorpion and Phoenix shugenja implored the kami to tumble Beiden Pass down upon the spirit armies, the Dragon of Earth itself responded. With a mighty swing of its claws the cliffs tumbled down, leading to the eventual return of the spirits to their proper realms and the restoration of the Pattern.

THE DRAGON OF FIRE

Perhaps the most popular dragon in the art and stories of the Empire, the Dragon of Fire is a symbol of change and a savage force of unchecked fury. The Fire Dragon is the only Celestial being to spend more time in Ningen-do than the Celestial Heavens. It is drawn to the Realm of Mortals by the constant struggle, change, and destruction. The Heavens are static, and thus boring. The Dragon of Fire does not, however, interact with mortals directly, but conceals itself in dormant volcanoes or makes itself undetectable near epic battles, or the home of a great duelist or artisan. When the Fire Dragon allows itself to be seen, it is a serpent of red and yellow fire, its eyes, claws, and scales flickering goutts of lava and flame. It is said that none can look at the Dragon of Fire and be unchanged by the experience. Some are struck blind; others look at the world with greater wisdom.

The Dragon of Fire is often seen as a herald of destruction. The recent disturbances of the Dragon Clan mountains woke the Fire Dragon from its rest near Sleeping Thunder Mountain. As the eruption was not a natural part of the Celestial Pattern, the dragon rose to see what had caused it. The dragon's appearance was noted by many in the area, and it was believed to be responsible for the eruptions. For now, the Dragon of Fire has returned to the Celestial Heavens to confer with its kin.

As fire is the element of inspiration as well as destruction, many aspiring playwrights and artisans seek this dragon's favor. Duelists also liken the art of iaijutsu to fire — a sudden



movement, over in an instant. In addition to this, the touch of the Fire Dragon is responsible for the creation of many prophets.

THE DRAGON OF THUNDER

The Dragon of Thunder is not truly a creature of the storm, as is suggested by its name. It symbolizes strength, courage, and power, that every mortal creature can aspire to be something greater. Some sages speculate that Shinsei was the first Oracle of Thunder, and each time the Seven Thunders faced Fu Leng, they took their title from his element. The dragon itself is said to have strong connections to Osano-Wo, the Fortune of Fire and Thunder. In truth, Osano-Wo and the Thunder Dragon are different incarnations of Thunder, though the dragon is far more powerful. Osano-Wo, in fact, was the progeny of the Kami Hida and the original Thunder Dragon, who sacrificed her divine powers to assume mortal form and give birth to Osano-Wo. For this reason, Osano-Wo sometimes addresses the current Dragon of Thunder as "sister."

Though tied strongly to the Heavens, the concept of Thunder is intertwined with the soul of every mortal born in Rokugan. Bold and fearless warriors are favored by the Thunder Dragon. The sound of rolling thunder is said to herald victory for the pure, and even the beasts of the Shadowlands show unease at such a noise. The Thunder Dragon last journeyed to Rokugan when Emperor Toturi the First died. Several Seppun shugenja standing ceremonial watch over Toturi's body were visited by the great dragon, who took the Emperor's soul upon its back and carried him to the Heavens, where he would reign forever with the finest Emperors of the Hantei Dynasty.

THE DRAGON OF VOID

Everything and nothing at once — this is the Void, and the Void Dragon as well. By far the most worldly of the dragons, the Void Dragon constantly monitors the Realm of Mortals for both its own interest and the interest of the Celestial Heavens. The Void Dragon knows more about Ningen-do than any other being in Tengoku. Since mortals balance of all element, the Void Dragon feels a connection to them. As part of its nature, it is more capable than its kin of splitting itself up and experiencing many things at once. For this reason, it is the most inscrutable of the dragons. It understands more of the mortal world than its dragon kin will ever comprehend, and possesses heavenly wisdom mortals can never achieve. Even among dragons, the Void Dragon is one of a kind, and will therefore forever be alone.

The Void Dragon is never fully visible, usually appearing simply as a pair of serpentine eyes hovering among inky blackness dusted with twinkling stars. When it speaks to mortals, its cryptic tendency to speak of the past, the present, and the future as if all were currently happening, had yet to happen, and already had happened strikes most as unsettling. The Dragon of the Void sees all things at once, overlapping the present with the past and even countless possible futures. Shortly after the defeat of the Lying Darkness at Oblivion's Gate, the power of the Void Dragon descended upon the cursed ruins of Mori Kage Toshi near Phoenix lands, breaking the Darkness' grip on the castle. It has not been seen in the Empire since.

THE SHADOW DRAGON

When the Air Dragon allowed itself to be corrupted so that Isawa Hochiu could reach the battleground at Oblivion's Gate, the raw Taint did not kill the Celestial being. It was corrupted, though the power of the dragon was such that it was not

simply subjugated to Jigoku's will. It has roamed the width of the Shadowlands as well as the nightmares of mortal men and women, gathering worshippers, and forgoing Tengoku for a new home in Jigoku. When the Void Dragon learned what had happened to its sibling, the dragon mourned, for the Air Dragon and the Void Dragon were the closest in temperament and were quite fond of one another.

The Shadow Dragon's corruption allowed a small bit of the Lying Darkness to escape into the being of the fallen dragon, a fact which disturbs the great Void Dragon deeply.

THE DRAGON OF WATER

Though Rokugan has but one coast, the Empire considers water one of the most important elements. The Dragon of Water represents all aspects of water, which can be as destructive as fire and as nurturing as earth. Rokugani equate the element of Water with strength, change, movement, and warfare. The Dragon of Water is a favorite among the Unicorn, who value swift and free journeys, and the Lion, who are the undisputed masters of warfare. The Water Dragon is perhaps the least fond of mortals, not necessarily hostile but certainly disinterested. Scholars theorize that the Water Dragon's careless disregard of mortals is the reason Rokugan suffers from a season of powerful storms, and the coasts are constantly threatened by tsunami and hurricanes.

The Water Dragon usually reveals itself as a serpentine dragon with scales that glitter and shift coloration in the light. It also changes the details of its appearance with the moment, growing longer or shorter. One moment, it may have fins and legs, and the next it may have two heads. It was the Water Dragon that directed the Great Sea Spider to the shore after it had been awakened, preferring the humans suffer from their mistakes instead of protecting them from them. The corruption of the former Air Dragon has not improved the Water Dragon's view of humans, and it has made it a point to not let the Dragon of Void forget the Air Dragon's "reward" for sacrificing itself to the humans.

FEATURES OF TENGOKU

Yakamo closed his eyes sadly, and the universe grew dim for a moment. "No," he said, turning away from the great Celestial Court. "I will perform the duty she asked, but I will never sit upon Amaterasu's throne."

Hitomi watched Lord Sun walk away in silence, a thin smile forming on her dark features.

There are only two constant features in the swirling realm of Tengoku. One is the Celestial Palace, in which all of the natives of the Heavens reside. There is a great courtyard not far from the Palace known as the Celestial Court, where the immortal beings hold proceedings not unlike those courts held within the Empire. These two landmarks form the center of Tengoku, and those who call the realm home may change everything outside of them on a whim.

The Celestial Palace is a gigantic structure by mortal reckoning, the very building as wide as the city of Otosan Uchi itself. There appears to be no end to its height, as clouds obscure its upper reaches. The great gates around the building are guarded by eternally vigilant servants of the Heavens com-

manded by the spirit of Seppun Mako, the most cunning general the Seppun ever produced. There is no end to the fountains and gardens outside the Palace, just as the number of hallways and rooms within can never be counted. It is here that most Fortunes and other Celestial inhabitants make their home, and each being has carved out its own large lair within the Celestial Palace's walls.

The Court is located outside the grand walls of the Palace, but is encircled by great gardens and verandas where more immortal guardians watch over their home. At the center of this great open court there are two empty thrones — one each for Sun and Moon. These seats are largely symbolic, as the immortal denizens of Tengoku hardly ever hold court. Such an event only occurs when a new Fortune is welcomed into Tengoku, or the Celestial Dragon brings the soul of a worthy mortal to stay in the Heavens.

When the new Fortune of Rebirth was introduced into the Heavens, the Celestial beings assembled to greet both Tsukune and Shiba in their eternal home. The Kami rejoiced at being reunited at last with one another, though tears were shed for those who would never join them again. Out of respect to Amaterasu in the presence of her children, Yakamo refused to take the Sun's Throne, an act that elicited mixed responses from the assembly.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

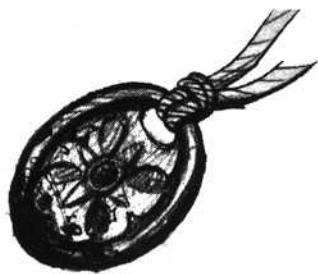
"What of Ryoshun?" Hantei asked of Shinjo. "As we have returned to our home," the First Ki-Rin said, "so has he returned to his."

CELESTIAL HERALDS

As travel from the Celestial Heavens is both difficult and risky for natives of the realm, the Kami and Fortunes often employ outsiders to make their wishes known to the other Spirit Realms. This also includes carrying messages from one powerful entity to another. For this purpose, the natives of Tengoku have found mortals from Ningen-do are most suited to travel between the Spirit Realms.

This particular adventure hook is simple, though the actual execution can be somewhat of a challenge. The PCs can be approached by a monk or other religious figure that has been sent by a Fortune or other Celestial being. The inhabitant of Tengoku offers its aid to the PCs if they will perform a simple task on its behalf. A message must be delivered, in person, to another Spirit Realm. Of course, this should only be presented to a group that has any hope of such a path being opened up for them if they're resourceful enough.

The choice should be somewhat difficult for the characters, as travel to the other Spirit Realms is done only in legends, and not all such tales end happily. On the other hand, the favor of a Fortune itself is not to be weighed lightly...



BLESSINGS AND CURSES OF THE SEVEN FORTUNES

Occasionally, an individual is born with the favor of one of the Seven Fortunes. Just as often, an inopportune birth or some arrogance on that individual's part causes a Fortune to show disfavor. Such individuals are blessed or cursed by the Fortunes.

Blessings and curses of the Seven Fortunes are seldom obvious physical traits. They add a certain ethereal quality that the subject can escape only with great difficulty. An individual with Bente's Blessing may be extraordinarily beautiful, but her exquisite beauty will radiate even through rags and filth. Likewise, the cursed of Bente will be disliked and avoided no matter how much they attempt to present themselves in a charming and respectable manner.

Characters who are touched by the Fortunes have more to look forward to than the mere mechanical effects of their blessing or curse. Such effects indicate that the Fortunes have taken a personal role in the character's life. A character cursed by Bishamon would do well to avoid temples dedicated to that deity, lest he incur further disfavor. A character blessed by a Fortune is under that deity's protection, and powerful supernatural entities (such as the Living Darkness or Oni Lords) will sense this and be wary of the character.

Blessings and Curses of the Seven Fortunes are special attributes that must be selected at character creation. They may only be taken at 1st level, or granted by the GM at a later time. (For example, if you rescue a high ranking monk of Bente from assassination by the Kolat, Bente may choose to grant you her blessings free of cost.)

When taking a Blessing or Curse at 1st level, the player may choose to either spend six skill points or give up a feat. If a feat is sacrificed to obtain a blessing or curse, it counts as that character's mandatory ancestor feat. A character may have only one Blessing or Curse at any time.

Blessings are always positive, providing bonuses in certain situations. They also reflect the Fortune's favorable attention. They have no mechanical effect other than that stated in their description. Keep in mind that if you anger the Fortune that provided the blessing, it can be taken away with no recompense.

Curses always impose some sort of penalty. However, a cursed person is being tested by the Fortune. Each curse includes the description of a test. If a character finds himself in the situation described in the test, but succeeds despite the effect of the curse, he gains experience for that encounter as if it was two Challenge Ratings higher.

All Blessings are 3-point Advantages. All Curses are 3-point Disadvantages. They may be purchased at character creation, or at a later time if the GM allows purchasing such things during play. Blessings and Curses can also occur spontaneously. (For example, if you attempt to assassinate a high-ranking monk of Bente at the command of the Kolat, Bente may afflict you with her curse.) A character may have only one Blessing or Curse at any time.

Blessings are always positive, providing bonuses in certain situations. They also reflect the Fortune's favorable attention. They have no other mechanical effect than that stated in their description. Keep in mind that if you anger the Fortune that provided the blessing, it can be taken away with no recompense.

Curses always impose some sort of penalty. However, a cursed person is being tested by the Fortune. Each curse includes the description of a test. If a character finds himself in the situation described in the test, but succeeds despite the effect of the curse, he gains two extra Experience Points for that session.

BLESSINGS

BENTEN'S BLESSING

People are attracted to you. It may be your looks or your charm, or maybe both. You just have that certain "something."

You gain a +2 bonus on all Charisma-related skill checks in social situations. This bonus increases to +6 with someone who is already extremely friendly toward you (either physically attracted or a trusted friend).

Whenever you make a roll involving persuasion, keep an additional die (two if they are attracted to you already). This Advantage costs one point less for Crane characters.

BISHAMON'S BLESSING

When taking great risks in combat, you reap great rewards.

When using any feat that grants you a bonus for voluntarily imposing a penalty on your attack roll, such as Power Attack or Expertise, you get an additional 50% bonus (round down). For example, when using Power Attack to give yourself a -2 penalty to hit, you gain a +3 bonus to damage.

You receive a Free Raise for every two Raises you make in combat, including other Free Raises not provided by this Advantage. This Advantage costs one point less for Lion characters.

DAIKOKU'S BLESSING

You're quite talented at managing your money, and the lower classes get along well with you.

Appraise and Profession are always class skills for you. (If they were already class skills, you gain a +2 bonus to checks with these skills.) When determining the initial attitude of peasant NPCs, shift their reaction one column toward friendly. If you take the Leadership feat, your leadership score is considered two points higher for the purposes of determining non-cohort followers.

You gain one rank of Commerce and Appraisal. You may roll two extra dice on all social interactions with peasants, and can always count on help from common folks when you are in trouble. This Advantage costs one point less for Unicorn characters.

EBISU'S BLESSING

You are driven to stand by your word, and see through a job to its completion. No distractions will sway you from completing your duty.

When making any Will or Fortitude save to resist an effect that would distract you from your duty, you may roll twice and keep the better result.

When making any Tests of Honor, roll three extra dice. This Advantage costs one point less for Mantis characters.

FUKUROKUTJI'S BLESSING

You have a profound, deep, and lasting wisdom.

For every two skill points you spend on Knowledge skills, you gain a bonus skill point that must be spent on a Knowledge skill. (This free skill point does not count toward more bonus skill points.)

All your Lore and Meditation skills above Rank 3 count double toward determining Insight. This Advantage costs one point less for Dragon and Phoenix characters.

HOTEI'S BLESSING

You maintain serenity in the face of adversity.

Effects which would cause you to lose Void Points or to be unable to spend or recover Void Points do not affect you. This does not include voluntary expenditure of Void Points.

Effects which would cause you to lose Void Points or to be unable to spend or recover Void Points do not affect you. This does not include voluntary expenditure of Void Points. You may not intentionally select Disadvantages that prevent you from spending Void Points.

JUROJI'S BLESSING

You are strong, healthy, and long-lived.

You receive a +4 sacred bonus on all rolls to resist the effects of poison and disease.

You roll and keep 2 extra dice on all attempts to resist the effects of poison or illness.





CURSES

BENTEN'S CURSE

There is something about you that others find repulsive.

Test: Successfully outmaneuvering an opponent in a social situation without resorting to intimidation.

You suffer a -10 penalty to all Charisma-related checks except for Intimidation checks.

You roll and keep an extra die on any fear or intimidation attempts, but subtract two dice from any attempts at cordiality or etiquette. Crab receive an additional Character Point for taking this Disadvantage.

BISHAMON'S CURSE

You are ill-suited for battle, and are often clumsy and inept in the face of steel.

Test: Defeating an opponent with a CR no less than your character level minus two in melee combat, without resorting to magic.

You suffer a -6 penalty to all melee attack rolls. (This does not include touch attacks resulting from spellcasting.)

All your attack rolls (except for those that somehow involve a spell) require two Raises in order to successfully hit. These Raises have no other effects. On the plus side, you roll one extra die on any attempt to resolve a dispute without combat.

DAIKOKU'S CURSE

When it comes to commerce, you are absolutely clueless. Peasants dislike you.

Test: Refusing to accept a greater reward for a good or service than it is worth.

You suffer a -10 penalty on all Charisma checks with merchants or other individuals who relate to commerce, leading them to gouge you whenever possible. When determining initial attitudes of peasant NPCs, their reaction is shifted one column toward hostile.

You roll two fewer dice on all Commerce rolls and interactions with peasants or merchants. Members of the lower classes assume the worst about you even when you're trying to treat them with honesty and respect.

EBISU'S CURSE

You are a terrible liar. Even when you tell the truth, people don't trust you.

Test: Make the truth be known when a lie would be easier.

You may never spend skill points on Bluff. Any Bluff checks you make suffer a -10 penalty. If you fail a Diplomacy check, people will generally leap to the conclusion that you lied to them in some way.

You roll two fewer dice on all Sincerity rolls or other attempts to convince others of your honesty without powerful evidence or corroborating testimony.

FUKUROKUJI'S CURSE

Sometimes, you just can't seem to figure things out.

Test: Make a successful Concentration or Knowledge skill check with a DC of 15 or higher in a situation where success is critical.

Concentration and Knowledge are always cross-class skills for you. You must make a Concentration check (DC 12) to spend a Void Point.

You must Raise once on any Meditation or Lore skill rolls. You must make a Meditation roll (TN 10, with one Raise required) to spend a Void Point.

HOTEI'S CURSE

It's odd, but it seems like you have the most terrible luck sometimes.

Test: Successfully overcome an encounter even after this curse has activated. You must be personally responsible for the party's success, and not a mere witness.

Whenever you fail a roll, check, or save and miss the original DC (or AC) by 3 or less, you fail miserably and dramatically. (Your sword flies out of your hands, a spell takes effect but chooses a different target, etc...) The DM determines the details of your failure.

Whenever you fail a skill roll and miss the original TN by 5 or less, you fail miserably and dramatically. (Your sword flies out of your hands, a spell takes effect but chooses a different target, etc...) The GM determines the details of your failure.

JUROJI'S CURSE

You are ill-prepared to resist outside chemical influences.

Test: Make a successful save vs. poison or disease.

You suffer a -10 penalty to all rolls to resist poison or disease.

Roll 2 fewer dice on all attempts to resist poison or disease. If this would cause you to roll less than one die, then the poison or disease is automatically effective.

CHAPTER SEVEN:

CHIKUSHUDO, THE
REALM OF ANIMALSTHROUGH BLOOD
AND THUNDER
PART EIGHT

Naka Tokei struck the earth heavily, the air forced from his lungs. He could taste the blood in his mouth. That was something of a relief; for a long time he had felt almost as he were no longer truly real. Now, as he sat up against the trunk of a very real tree, he looked at his palms and fingers with nervous glee.

It was good to be whole once more... or something like it. He felt something missing deep inside after his time with the great dragons. He felt more powerful, but somehow less human. He looked at a small hare perched in the grass nearby. It regarded him with curious eyes.

"I am home," Tokei said. "At last."

"I don't think so," the hare said.

Tokei blinked.

"You are the new Naka?" it asked, sitting up on its hind legs, its paws folded upon its chest.

"I am."

The hare's eyes narrowed. "I see."

"This is Chikushudo, is it not?" Tokei asked.

"Yes."

"And this Realm lies close to the mortal Realm?"

"Yes."

"So I could pass into my own home through here."

"No."

Tokei scratched his beard curiously. "Why not?"

"You are not welcome in the Realm of Animals," the hare said.

"You are the one who created the Nightmares."

"I do not know what you are talking about," Tokei said, "but I have been away from my home for too long. Show me the way or stand aside, rabbit."

"How sad," the hare said. "I thought the Grand Master was supposed to be wise."

It was then that Tokei felt all the eyes upon him. He looked about the forest. Foxes, birds, hounds, even a badger and a pair of wolves surrounded him. They all watched him with strangely human eyes.

"Let me pass, spirits," Tokei demanded, rising to his feet. Wisps of energy surrounded his fists at his silent command. "I am needed in Rokugan."

"Maybe your journey isn't done yet," the hare said.

"You cannot comprehend my responsibilities, rabbit," Tokei replied, glancing around at the advancing creatures.

"Human problems," the hare chuckled. "Don't bother trying to reason with the others. Most of them can't even understand you, Naka. They just know that you're trouble."

"I do not wish to harm you," Tokei said as the creatures advanced.

The hare only laughed.

CHIKUSHUDO AND THE CELESTIAL ORDER

Chikushudo holds an important place in the Kharmic Wheel. Souls that reincarnate as animals, whether they were once animals, humans, or something else, are born in Chikushudo into the animal bodies they will wear throughout that lifetime. Sometimes a human is reborn as an animal if he committed acts in his previous life that warranted his demotion in the Celestial Order. A man who was cruel to horses, for instance, might be reincarnated as a horse and then returned to Ningen-do as the property of a cruel master. Most souls change their species many times throughout their kharmic existence. Animals reincarnate as other kinds of animals until they are able to reincarnate as humans.

CLOSE REALMS

Chikushudo is very close to Ningen-do. In wilderness areas the two Realms are so similar that a traveler might not even notice he has passed between them. Animals and animal spirits are able to perceive both Realms simultaneously. Chikushudo is also close to Sakkaku. Animal spirits of a mischievous nature, such as tanuki and kitsune, can travel between these Realms with ease.

DISTANT REALMS

Chikushudo is far from the Realms of Gaki-do, Jigoku, Meido, and Toshigoku. The idyllic peace of the Realm of Animals is so different from the horrors of Jigoku and the blood-drenched slaughter of Toshigoku that travel from Chikushudo to either of these Realms is all but impossible, and vice versa. The Realm of the Dead is distant because Meido is populated mainly by spirits who were once human, and the Realm of Animals is home mainly to spirits who have not yet become human.

BARRED REALMS

Chikushudo is closed to Tengoku. The Celestial Heavens is so far above the Realm of Animals in the Celestial Order that travel directly between them is impossible.

DEATH AND CHIKUSHUDO

Master Benkei was giving a series of lectures on the Tao to acolytes of the Brotherhood. Unseen by the other monks, an old man also attended every lecture. One day, the old man remained after all the monks had gone, and Benkei asked him, "Who are you?"

The old man answered, "I am not a human being, but I was in the last days of Shinsei's presence in this land. I was a Master in what would become the Brotherhood. One of my students came to me and asked, 'Does the enlightened man obey the law of cause and effect?' I answered him, 'No, the enlightened man does not obey the law of cause and effect.' Because I so foolishly clung to the absoluteness of my reply, I became a fox for the next five hundred lifetimes. I am still a fox. Can you help me? Is the enlightened man subject to the law of cause and effect?"

Benkei answered, "The enlightened man is the law of cause and effect."

At those words, the old man became enlightened. He bowed deeply and said, "Thank you. I am free. I am no longer a fox, but I must

leave my body behind. It is in my home behind this mountain. Please give me a monk's funeral." With that, he turned and walked out of sight.

The next day, Benkei gave the order to prepare a monk's funeral. His students were astonished, because no one in the monastery had been ill. That evening, Benkei led his students around the mountain, where they discovered a small cave. Inside the cave was the dead body of a grizzled old fox. Benkei gently took the body and performed the ceremony of cremation.

Chikushudo plays an integral part in the kharmic cycle, as the souls of those who reincarnate as animals come here to be reborn. Creatures who die in this Realm remain part of the Celestial Order, and reincarnate much like as in Ningen-do. Some of the shapeshifting creatures such as hengeyokai, kitsune, and tanuki view themselves as stepping-stones in the kharmic cycle between the lower animals and humanity. However, many of them view themselves as superior to humans because they are able to live equally well in two Realms.

KNOWN PASSAGES FROM NINGEN-DO

One known passage to Chikushudo is in Kitsune Mori, the Fox Clan forest. However, to intentionally use this passage, the traveler must have permission from the fox spirits of the forest. The passage is in the heart of the forest, but spreads throughout the woods in unpredictable locations. Another passage, known only to animal spirits, is in a nondescript copse of trees within sight of Kyuden Doji. To humans, the passage is all but unnoticeable. The kitsune call this passage the Eye of the Needle. The only distinguishing feature is the deep, lush green of the trees, richer and more vibrant than the surrounding vegetation. Animal spirits come and go freely through this small passage. Some believe there may be passages deep in the heart of Shinomen Mori or other wild places, but the truth is unknown.

SPONTANEOUS TRANSITIONS

There are tales of spontaneous transition into Chikushudo by humans, most of which have taken place in the depths of Kitsune Mori. It is the only place where the veil between Ningen-do and Chikushudo is known to be thin enough for mortals to accidentally make the transition. Tales usually involve mortals becoming hopelessly lost, then finding themselves in a land more lush than Ningen-do. These accidental travelers usually mention seeing a kitsune at some point during their excursion, so perhaps these transitions are not truly "accidental."

JEALOUSY

Chikushudo is a mildly jealous Realm. The beauty of its landscapes enralls nearly every creature that comes here. Because of this jealousy, souls who reincarnate as animals can spend many lifetimes here before making the transition to other forms or other Realms. The longer a non-native creature remains in the Realm of Animals, the more the Realm exerts its influence. This influence is called Hitsu.

For every day spent in Chikushudo, a character must make a Fortitude save (DC 15 + number of days). If this roll fails, he immediately accrues 1d10 points of Hitsu. After leaving

Chikushudo, a character's accumulated Hitsu points go away at a rate of 1d10 points per day. Any levels of Control and any transformations diminish along with the Hitsu.

For every day spent in Chikushudo, a character must make an Earth roll at TN 15 + the number of days. If this roll fails, he immediately accrues 1k1 points of Hitsu. After leaving Chikushudo, a character's accumulated Hitsu points go away at a rate of 1k1 points per day. Any levels of Control and any transformations diminish along with the Hitsu.

CONTROL

The Control exerted by the Realm of Animals is known as Hitsu. Hitsu measures how much influence Chikushudo has over the actions and bodies of non-native creatures who enter. Hitsu exerts its control by making the mind and body more beast-like. Creatures under the influence of Hitsu begin to think like an animal and take on physical traits of animals.

All bonuses and penalties received from the increasing levels are cumulative.

LEVEL ONE

The influence of the Realm of Animals is slight but noticeable. You gain one animalistic trait, such as pointed ears, longer nails, more hair on your body, or a small, concealable tail.

You suffer a temporary loss of 1d2 Intelligence, to a minimum of 10, and 1d2 Charisma, to a minimum of 4.

Your "fight or flight" instinct is heightened. Whenever faced with a potentially violent or dangerous situation, you must make a Will save (DC 12) to avoid reacting in one of these two ways, chosen at random:

Fight — You respond with hostility.

Flight — You experience fear. You suffer a -1 morale penalty to all attack rolls, saves, and checks for the duration of the encounter. You must flee, if possible. You may only fight if you are unable to flee. Note that all "Flight" effects are not cancelled by feats or abilities that render a character immune to fear (such as the Death Trance feat). Such abilities instead grant the character a +4 morale bonus vs. fear.

You roll one fewer die on all rolls involving Intelligence.

Your "fight or flight" instinct is heightened. Whenever faced with a potentially violent or dangerous situation, you must make a Willpower test (TN 10) to avoid reacting in one of these two ways, chosen at random:

Fight — You respond with hostility.

Flight — You experience Fear 1. You may not use Void Points until the current situation has ended, and you must drop all dice that roll a 1. You must flee if possible. You may only fight if you are unable to flee.

LEVEL TWO

Chikushudo develops a stronger hold at this level, bringing out more bestial tendencies and traits. You gain another animalistic trait, and the trait chosen at Level 1 becomes more pronounced.

You suffer a further 1d3 Intelligence loss, to a minimum of 8, and another loss of 1d2 Charisma, to a minimum of 4. All your Bluff, Innuendo, Perform, Sense Motive, and Diplomacy checks are subject to a -4 circumstance penalty.

Your "fight or flight" response is heightened; the Will save is DC 15.

Fight — You respond with violent action and attack.

Flight — You become shaken, and suffer a -2 penalty to your attack rolls, saves, and checks.

You roll a total of two fewer dice on all skill rolls involving Intelligence.

You roll and keep one fewer die for all Courtier, Etiquette, Manipulation, and Sincerity rolls.

Your "fight or flight" response is heightened; the Willpower test is now TN 15.

Fight — You respond with violent action and attack.

Flight — As Level 1, but you must drop all dice that roll less than 3.

LEVEL THREE

You are well on your way to becoming an animal. You gain another animalistic trait, and the traits chosen at previous levels become more pronounced. You now appear to be markedly animalistic, and you have begun to shed the trappings of honor.

You suffer a further 1d4 temporary Intelligence penalty, to a minimum of 6, and another loss of 1d2 Charisma, to a minimum of 4. You gain the extraordinary ability Darkvision (60 ft.).

All Bluff, Innuendo, Perform, Sense Motive, and Diplomacy checks are subject to a further -4 circumstance penalty (total of -8). You receive a +4 circumstance bonus to all Intimidation checks.

You begin to shed the veneer of civilization. Once per day, you must make a Will save (DC 18), or throw away your armor, clothing, equipment, and weapons.

Your "fight or flight" instinct is further heightened, and is the same as Level 1, except the Will save is DC 18.

Fight — You respond with murderous fury, and attack the nearest enemy.

Flight — You become frightened, suffering a -2 morale penalty on attack rolls, weapon damage rolls, and saving throws. You flee from any enemies you are aware of. If unable to flee, you may fight with the above penalties.

All of your Honor Tests have a +5 TN penalty.

You lose one point of Intelligence.

You gain the ability to see perfectly in the dark.

You roll and keep one fewer die for all High Skills except for Hunting.



You begin to shed the veneer of civilization. Once per day, you must make a Willpower test (TN 20) or throw away your armor, clothing, equipment, and weapons.

Your "fight or flight" response is further heightened, the same as Level 1, but the Willpower test is now TN 20.

Fight — You respond with murderous fury, and attack the nearest enemy.

Flight — As Level 1, but you must drop all dice that roll less than 4.

LEVEL FOUR

The traits of your native species are slipping away, subsumed in the animal nature that all but controls you. You have little use now for the artifice of civilization. Your sense of self is diminishing. You have developed a taste for raw meat. You gain another animalistic trait, and the traits chosen at previous levels become more pronounced.

A number of times per week equal to the character's Hitsu Rank, the DM can require a Will save (DC 20) in any situation. If this save is failed, the character falls under the DM's control for a number of hours equal to his Hitsu Rank and cannot remember what occurred during the lost time.

You suffer a further loss of 1d4 Intelligence, to a minimum of 4, and another loss of 1d2 Charisma, to a minimum of 4. Your senses become sharper, giving you a +4 competence bonus to all Listen, Spot, and Wilderness Lore checks.

You have little use for civilization. Once per day, you must make a Will save (DC 21), or throw away your armor, clothing, equipment, or weapons.

Your "fight or flight" instinct is barely controllable. The Will save is now DC 21.

Fight — You become enraged and throw yourself into battle with the nearest enemy with no regard for tactics, strategy, or personal safety. This is identical to a barbarian's Rage special ability (see the *Player's Handbook*), but you receive no bonuses to Strength, Constitution, or Will saves. (You are subject to all the adverse effects but receive no benefit from the good effects.) This rage does not end until all enemies in sight are dead.

Flight — You become panicked, dropping anything that you hold and fleeing at top speed from any threat, as well as from any other dangers you encounter along the way. If cornered, you cower and do not attack, though you may use the total defense action. You suffer a -2 morale penalty on all saving throws. You also suffer the penalties for being frightened listed under Level Three.

A number of times per week equal to the character's Hitsu Rank, the GM can require a Willpower test vs. TN of 20 in any situation. If this test is failed, the character falls under the GM's control for a number of hours equal to his Hitsu Rank and cannot remember what occurred during the lost time.

All of your Honor Tests have a +10 TN penalty.

You lose another point of Intelligence, to a minimum of 1.

You roll one extra die on all rolls involving Perception.

You roll one fewer die on all High Skill rolls except for Hunting. This penalty is cumulative with earlier penalties.

Your personality has little use for civilization. Once per day, you must make a Willpower test (TN 25) or throw away your armor, clothing, equipment, or weapons.

Your "fight or flight" instinct is barely controllable. The Willpower test is now TN 25.

Fight — You become enraged and throw yourself into battle with the nearest enemy with no regard for tactics, strategy, or personal safety. This rage does not end until all enemies in sight are dead.

Flight — As Level 1, but you must drop all dice that roll less than 5.

LEVEL FIVE

You have succumbed to your animalistic urges, and taken on numerous bestial traits. Civilization is meaningless to you. This Realm's hold is so strong that it takes an effort of supreme will to even attempt to leave. You have become practically an animal. The scent of fresh meat and blood makes your stomach growl and your mouth water. You gain another animalistic trait, and the traits chosen at previous levels become more pronounced. Your senses and natural instincts become razor sharp.

A number of times per week equal to the character's Hitsu Rank, the DM can require a Will save (DC 25) in any situation. If this save is failed, the character falls under the DM's control for a number of hours equal to his Hitsu Rank and cannot remember what occurred during the lost time.

Any attempt to leave Chikushudo requires you to first make a Will save (DC 20). If you fail this save, you refuse to leave, and resist any attempt to force you by whatever means necessary, possibly even triggering your instinctive responses below.

You suffer a further 1d4 Intelligence loss, to a minimum of 3, and another 1d2 Charisma loss, to a minimum of 2. You gain another +4 competence bonus to all Listen, Spot, and Wilderness Lore checks.

Civilization and Honor have no meaning for you. Once per day, you must make a Will save (DC 25), or throw away all armor, clothing, equipment, and weapons.

Your instincts are those of a wild beast. The Will save to resist these instincts is now DC 25.

Fight — You fly into a mindless rage. This is identical to a barbarian's special ability (see the *Player's Handbook*). This rage does not end until all enemies in sight are dead.

Flight — As described under level four, except that the morale penalties to saving throws, attack rolls, and weapon damage rolls are doubled.

A number of times per week equal to the character's Hitsu Rank, the GM can require a Willpower test vs. TN of 25 in any situation. If this test is failed, the character falls under the GM's control for a number of hours equal to his Hitsu Rank and cannot remember what occurred during the lost time.

Any attempt to leave Chikushudo requires you to first make a Willpower test (TN 20). If you fail this roll, you refuse to leave and resist any attempts to force you, possibly even triggering your instinctive responses below.

All of your Honor Tests have a +15 TN penalty.

You lose another point of Intelligence, to a minimum of 1.

You gain another unkept die to all rolls involving Perception.

You may no longer use any High Skills, except for Hunting.

Civilization and Honor have no meaning for you. Once per day, you must make a Willpower test (TN 30) or throw away all armor, clothing, equipment, and weapons.

Your instincts are those of a wild beast. The Willpower test to resist these instincts is now TN 30.

MAGIC

Fight Instinct — You fly into a mindless rage. For the duration of this rage, you gain 1 point each of Strength, Stamina, and Willpower. This temporarily increases your Earth Ring, and thus changes your Wound levels. When this rage ends, the amount of Wounds taken remains the same, so it is possible you may die as the Wounds cascade into increasing Wound levels. Your TN to Be Hit is reduced by 5, to a minimum of 5. You may not cast spells, or use any skill or ability that requires patience or concentration. This rage does not end until all enemies in sight are dead.

Flight — As Level 1, but you must drop all dice that roll less than 6.

The jealousy and control of Chikushudo is not intelligent or manipulative. Hitsu is merely a force of nature, the pure essence of bestial instinct. Non-native creatures that leave Chikushudo gradually lose those instincts as ranks of Hitsu drain away. However, GMs and players should remember that acts committed while under the influence of Hitsu may have a serious impact on a character's Honor (if he has any). Honor is what separates men from animals, and even the most noble samurai may degenerate into a beast and go face down in a haunch of bloody meat. He will always remember that experience, no matter how much he tries to forget it.

PROTECTION AGAINST CHIKUSHUDO

- One unit — 1 day
- 2 units — 2 days
- 3 units — 3 days
- 4 units — 4 days
- 5 units — 5 days
- Each additional unit — +1 day

Protection from the control of Chikushudo is gained by possessing something made by the hands of mortals of a substance not to be found naturally within the Realm of Animals: steel. One unit of protection is considered to be any steel item the size of an aiguchi or larger. Larger weapons are still considered to be one unit. A suit of heavy armor is considered to be 3 units, while a suit of light armor is 2 units. Steel objects are not affected physically by the influence of Chikushudo, but their ability to protect their bearer gradually becomes ineffective. That ability is restored anytime these objects leave Chikushudo.

PROTECTION BY CHIKUSHUDO

Animal spirits of Chikushudo can protect themselves from the control of other Realms by carrying a sprig of cherry or maple wood grown in Chikushudo. Each sprig at least six inches long counts as one unit. A single sprig can protect its bearer for a maximum of five days. At the end of its duration of protection, the sprig has completely dried up, becoming nothing more than a useless stick.

ABILITIES

Abilities granted by the Realm of Animals are described under the Levels of Control.

Chikushudo and Ningen-do are so close that magic functions in the Realm of Animals just as it does in the Mortal Realm. The elemental kami do not generally distinguish between the two Realms.

Maho is weaker here, because of the natural beauty and purity of this Realm. The power of the Realm of Evil holds less sway where the concept of evil is alien.

Any maho spell cast in Chikushudo requires its caster to make a Spellcraft check against a DC of 15 + the level of the spell. If the check fails, the spell does not function, though it still counts as cast that day.

Any Maho spell cast within Chikushudo has its TN increased by 10.

RELATIONS WITH OTHER REALMS

GAKI-DO

Chikushudo and Gaki-do have little to do with one another. The Realm of the Hungry Dead consists mainly of souls who lived wicked lives as humans. The Realm of Animals is content to ignore them. Such ghosts have little place in Chikushudo's idyllic landscape. The vast majority of animal spirits have no idea other Realms exist, and those that do want no part of such a place as Gaki-do.

JIGOKU

The creatures of Chikushudo recognize the evil of Jigoku's influence, and want no part of it. Nevertheless, it seems that Jigoku is trying to corrupt the Realm of Animals. If not for the great distance between the Realms, Jigoku's influence might be more extensive. The Tainted spider spirits known as kumo can be found in some areas, waiting to ensnare the unwary.

MEIDO

The Realm of the Dead is so far from Chikushudo that the creatures here have little perception of it. Animal spirits tend to reincarnate in Chikushudo, unless they move on to the Realm of Mortals. The spirits of Meido are mostly those who have passed on from the Realm of Mortals, so they care little for the Realm of Animals. In Meido, spirits contemplate their misdeeds; this Realm's animals do not contemplate at all.

NINGEN-DO

Relations between the Realms of Animals and Mortals are generally good. Many animal spirits pass into Ningen-do, some just to cause trouble, others because of a fascination with the mortal world. Humans sometimes come to Chikushudo seeking guidance from the wisest of the animal spirits, or make the passage unknowingly in area where the barrier is thin.

SAKKAKU

Sakkaku and Chikushudo are close. Many of the mischievous animals spirits who call Chikushudo home also travel to Sakkaku, and vice versa, namely kitsune and tanuki. These creatures find little to amuse them in Chikushudo, however, because animals do not respond well to pranks. The lower animals have no conception of mischief, so these mischievous creatures must go to Ningen-do to have their fun.

TENGOKU

These two Realms are closed to each other. The Celestial Heavens are so far above the Realm of Animals that there is no point of reference. Chikushudo is the grass on which the Fortunes walk.

TOSHIGOKU

The Realm of Slaughter has little awareness of the Realm of Animals. The denizens of that Realm have no perceptions other than their own lust for blood and carnage. The animals of Chikushudo do not understand what drives the spirits of Toshigoku, because except for rare exceptions animals kill only out of necessity, not for pleasure or any other "civilized" motivation.

YOMI

The Realm of Animals has little contact with the Realm of Blessed Ancestors. Like Meido, Yomi is filled with spirits who were once human, spirits who may not have been animals for many lifetimes. The ancestors of Yomi are much more concerned with their descendants in Ningen-do than the creatures of Chikushudo. It is not unheard of for ancestors to accompany mortals to this Realm, but contact beyond that is all but unheard of.

YUME-DO

There is a great deal of contact between the Realm of Animals and the Realm of Dreams, even though these Realms are not close. Animals dream just as mortals do, thus they travel nightly to Yume-do and interact with the Dream Realm as often as those in Ningen-do. The dreams of animals are not complex, but they often have a raw emotional intensity undiluted by the trappings of civilization.

Most inhabitants feel no need to travel between Realms because they can perceive no difference between Chikushudo and Ningen-do. There are other types of *hengyokai* (shapeshifters) here, but kitsune and tanuki are the most common.

The single most powerful inhabitant of Chikushudo is Inari, the Fortune of Rice. He lives at the top of Kurokazan, a tremendous, snow-capped extinct volcano in the center of the Realm. The strange and mysterious Inari is both male and female. His most common aspect is that of a portly old man with a bulbous head and a beard, carrying two bundles of rice. Every year Inari descends in her female aspect from Kurokazan to the rice fields to bless their growth. In his male aspect, he oversees the harvest.

Inari's messengers are the kitsune, and he may assume the shape of a fox at will. Many kitsune know the deity first-hand, having performed some task for him or her in the past.

Inari sometimes assumes the shape of a spider when she chooses to teach the wicked a lesson. In this shape she hounds her subject, never giving him a moment's rest. The only way she can be appeased after she has begun this course of action is for her subject to turn away from his wicked ways and offer prayers and sacrifices at one of Inari's shrines. The length of time required to appease Inari's wrath varies with the deeds of the evildoer and the sincerity of his repentance.

Shrines to Inari can be found all across Rokugan, but they are most common in Fox Clan lands. The shrines are guarded by statues of foxes, Inari's divine messengers. Inari is celebrated in her female aspect at a festival held during the first days of spring.

Other powerful spirits inhabit Chikushudo as well, but their existence is little known to creatures from other Realms. Greater animal spirits are known to reside here, including kitsune, tanuki, and others of near-godlike power.

The Queen of the Kitsune, also known as Kitsunehime, or more often simply Lady Kitsune, is said to live somewhere within the Chikushudo counterpart of Kitsune Mori. She is said to be a creature of godlike beauty who watches over the welfare of other kitsune. She holds no particular love for mortals, but she certainly finds them amusing.



INHABITANTS

There are many inhabitants of Chikushudo, and they take as many forms as there are animals. Animal spirits are the most populous group in Chikushudo, and every type of animal is represented. Horses, rats, birds, rabbits, lions, monkeys: any animal that exists in Ningen-do can be found here. Among these are more intelligent animal spirits such as kitsune and tanuki that are capable of traveling between Realms.

FEATURES OF CHIKUSHUDO

Visitors to Chikushudo perceive a land that so closely resembles Ningen-do that they might not know they have changed Realms. Most terrain features in Ningen-do have near-duplicates in Chikushudo, and vice versa. Hills, forests, rocks, and rivers closely resemble their counterparts between Realms, although with subtle differences. Perhaps a river is wider and deeper, or the crest of a prominent hill is a different shape, or a forest is thicker.

The most notable difference between Chikushudo and Ningen-do is the complete lack of any structures made by mortals. In the Realm of Animals, the land exists as if humans had never touched it. There are no roads, no rice fields (save those Inari chooses to create), no bridges, no towns, and no cities. To human eyes it might appear to be an empty wilderness, but Chikushudo teems with life. Countless animals live, die, fight, mate, bear young, and undergo the endless karmic cycle within the Realm.

The single greatest feature of the Realm of Animals is the gigantic extinct volcano Kurokazan at the center of the Realm. It is a black mountain with snow on the upper reaches of its majestic slopes, wearing deep green forests about its foothills. Its summit, reaching untold miles into the sky, is usually veiled by wispy white clouds; it is so tall that it can be seen from anywhere in the Realm. The fortune Inari lives atop Kurokazan, some say in a splendid castle, others say in a simple cave, but no mortal has ever been able to climb to the summit to find out for certain.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

AN ENEMY'S VENGEANCE

While traveling through Kitsune or Shinomen Mori, the characters realize that the forest around them has become more forbidding, and that the path they have been traveling is now little more than a game trail. They may try to retrace their steps, but to no avail. They have been brought to Chikushudo by a kitsune who opened a passage without their knowledge and allowed them to pass through, closing it behind them. An enemy of one or more characters in the party wished them dealt with, and bargained with the kitsune to have them removed from the Realm of Mortals altogether. If the characters can catch the kitsune who did this to them, the kitsune has no reservations about telling them who is responsible, but alas, the kitsune will not open a return passage. The characters are trapped here until they can find a way to return.

LUNACY OF THE KITSUNE

A female family member or close friend of one or more characters, perhaps even their daimyo or wife of their daimyo, has been possessed by a kitsune-tsuki (see below). Her behavior grows ever stranger, until she runs away to find a passage to Chikushudo. The characters may follow her, but they cannot catch her until after she finds a way into the Realm of Ani-

mals. The characters are faced with the prospect of following her to retrieve her. But how does one find a single creature in a whole wide Realm? And even if they find her, they must still force the kitsune-tsuki to relinquish control.

NEW MONSTERS

KITSUNE-TSUKI

A kitsune-tsuki is the ghost of a kitsune that died in anguish far, far from its native forest. Most often they are foxwives who have met with bad ends. The kitsune do not like to speak of these ghosts, because they are tragic, dangerous figures. Driven mad by anguish and homesickness, these ghosts slip outside of the Celestial Order, doomed to wander Ningen-do until they can return to Chikushudo. They are locked in the Realm of Ningen-do until they can possess a living host and force that host to return them to Chikushudo — or so they believe. The truth is that even if a kitsune-tsuki's host enters the Realm of Animals, it is not free until the spirit relinquishes its hold. In their madness, the kitsune-tsuki cannot see this and cling to their hosts, enjoying the flesh once again. A kitsune-tsuki will never willingly release its host, so the only ways to release the host are through death or magical means.

For reasons unknown, kitsune-tsuki possess only the bodies of living human women. They do not attempt to possess men or any other type of creature. Once it has possessed the woman's body, the kitsune-tsuki takes complete control. The mind and will of the woman are locked away, unable to do anything but watch what happens. If freed from the kitsune-tsuki's possession, she remembers everything. While possessed, the woman is effectively transformed into a kitsune, with all the shapechanging and magical abilities of a fox spirit. Unless it possesses a physical form, a kitsune-tsuki is unable to open a passage to Chikushudo.

They are invisible unless they choose not to be. When they choose to show themselves, they most often appear as a vaporous, insubstantial fox with wild, unkempt fur and eyes that glow blazing red, but they can also appear in their customary human shape.

A kitsune-tsuki has one goal — to possess the body of a woman and use her to return to Chikushudo. While kitsune-tsuki are insane, they are not stupid, and they are inhumanly patient. They are perfectly willing to wait for weeks or months for an opportunity. They flee any combat where there is no chance to possess a woman.

KITSUNE-TSUKI

Medium-sized Undead (Incorporeal Spirit)

Hit Dice: 2d12 (13 hp)

Initiative: +1 (Dex)

Speed: 40 ft., fly 30 ft. (perfect)

AC: 16 (+1 Dexterity, +5 deflection)

Attacks: 2 incorporeal touch +1 melee

Damage: Incorporeal touch 1d4 subdual

Face/Reach: 5 ft. by 5 ft./5 ft.

Special Attacks: Possession, spell-like abilities

Special Qualities: Incorporeal, manifestation, rejuvenation, shapeshift, spirit qualities, undead

Saves: Fort +0, Ref +1, Will +7

Abilities: Str —, Dex 12, Con —, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 12

Skills: Bluff +5*, Disguise +4, Hide +8*, Intuit Direction +3,

Knowledge (Chikushudo) +5, Knowledge (nature) +2, Listen +5, Move Silently +8*, Search +2, Spot +5, Wilderness Lore +5*

Feats: Alertness

Climate/Terrain: Any land

Organization: Solitary

Challenge Rating: 5

Treasure: None

Honor: 1

Alignment: Usually chaotic neutral

Advancement: none

COMBAT

While a kitsune-tsuki currently possesses a living vessel, it loses the following traits: Incorporeal, Incorporeal Touch, Manifestation, and Undead. It regains them as soon as it no longer possesses a body.

If its host is killed, a kitsune-tsuki returns to its incorporeal existence; it does not pass on into other Spirit Realms. The spirit of the possessed person passes on as normal.

Incorporeal (Su): The kitsune-tsuki can be harmed only by other incorporeal creatures, +1 or better magic weapons, or magic. Any corporeal weapon, even magical ones, has only a 50% chance of damaging this ghost. It can pass through any solid object at will, ignore armor, and always moves silently.

Incorporeal Touch (Su): Because it has no physical body, a kitsune-tsuki cannot physically harm corporeal beings, but the anguish locked within its spiritual essence is capable of stunning other creatures. Its melee attacks ignore armor, but do subdual damage only. When its target falls unconscious, it may attempt to possess the victim.

Manifestation (Su): The ghost cannot affect, or be affected by, anything in the physical world. Until it manifests, it is invisible. When it manifests, it becomes visible, but remains incorporeal.

Possession (Su): In its incorporeal form, a kitsune-tsuki can attempt to possess an unconscious or sleeping victim. The chosen victim, always a woman, must make a Will save (DC 20) or be possessed by the kitsune-tsuki. This possession is permanent, unless the spirit chooses to relinquish its control and depart. Once per day, the victim may make a contested Wisdom roll. The kitsune-tsuki receives a +5 racial bonus to this roll, in addition to the normal Wisdom bonus. If the victim is successful, her willpower drives out the invading spirit. Every week the victim is possessed, she receives a cumulative -1 morale penalty to this contested Wisdom roll.

While possessing a living victim, the kitsune-tsuki is in complete control.

Rejuvenation (Su): In its incorporeal form, a kitsune-tsuki cannot be permanently destroyed through combat. If "destroyed" it returns in 1d4 days. If the host body is killed, the kitsune-tsuki returns to its incorporeal state.

Saves: Kitsune-tsuki have a +2 racial modifier on all Will saves.

Shapeshift (Ex): After a kitsune-tsuki has possessed a living human, it confers upon that human the ability to transform into a fox at will, gaining the size, natural attack modes, special attacks, special qualities, and extraordinary abilities of that creature (use the statistics of a normal dog).

Skills: Kitsune-tsuki receive a +4 racial bonus to Hide, Move Silently, Bluff, and Wilderness Lore checks. These bonuses increase by an additional +2 in a forest setting.

Spell-like abilities: 1/day — animal friendship, dancing lights, entangle, ghost sound, pass without trace, silent image, and speak with animals (canines only). These spells are cast as a 2nd-level sorcerer (save DC 13).

Spirit Qualities (Ex): As spirits, kitsune-tsuki are immune to all charm effects except for those of other spirits. They are hedged out by effects that hedge out outsiders. Kitsune-tsuki can sense passages to Chikushudo within one mile.

Undead (Su): Since this creature is undead, it is immune to poison, sleep, paralysis, stunning, disease, death effects, necromantic effects, and mind-influencing effects. It is not subject to critical hits, massive damage, subdual damage, ability damage, ability drain, or energy drain. It has no Constitution score, and is therefore immune to anything requiring a Fortitude save.

KITSUNE-TSUKI

Earth: 2

Water: 3

Fire: 3

Air: 2

Rolls When Attacking: 2k2

Rolls For Damage: 2k2

TN to Be Hit: 15

Wounds: 15: temporarily destroyed

Kitsune-tsuki are completely insubstantial and invisible, unless they choose to manifest themselves. They can pass through any physical barrier at will, they ignore armor in combat, and they always move silently. They cannot be harmed by non-magical weapons. Other spirits can harm them normally, and so can magic, but they are not Tainted creatures, so they are immune to jade, crystal, and anything else that affects only Tainted creatures. If they take enough damage to be destroyed, they automatically rejuvenate in 1–5 days.

Because it has no physical body, a kitsune-tsuki cannot physically harm corporeal beings, but the anguish locked within its spiritual essence is capable of stunning other creatures. Its melee attacks ignore armor. Damage caused by a kitsune-tsuki cannot reduce its victim below Out. After two hours rest, any damage caused by an incorporeal kitsune-tsuki is healed.

When its target is sleeping, Down, or Out, the kitsune-tsuki may attempt to possess the victim. The chosen woman must make a Willpower test (TN 25) or be possessed by the kitsune-tsuki. This possession is permanent, unless the spirit chooses to relinquish its control and depart. Once per day, the victim may make a contested Willpower roll. The kitsune-tsuki receives one extra unkept die on this roll. If the victim is successful, she drives out the invading spirit. Every week the victim is possessed, she rolls one fewer die on this Willpower roll. If the victim fails the roll, the kitsune-tsuki maintains complete control for another day.

If its host is killed, a kitsune-tsuki returns to its incorporeal existence; it does not pass on into other Spirit Realms. The spirit of the possessed victim passes on as normal. After a kitsune-tsuki has possessed a living human, it confers upon that human the ability to transform into a fox at will, with the same statistics and abilities as a normal fox. Kitsune-tsuki can sense passages to Chikushudo within one mile.

Once each per day, the kitsune-tsuki can attempt to cast the following spells as if it were a Rank 1 shugenja: Nature's Touch, Way of Deception, Speed Growth, and Heart of Nature.

CHAPTER EIGHT:

TOSHIGOKU, THE
REALM OF SLAUGHTERTHROUGH BLOOD
AND THUNDER
PART NINE

"I am quite tired," Tokei growled, "of being the whipping boy of the Spirit Realms." The Grand Master of the Elements spat sand from his mouth and rose to his feet. "The Oni Lord was an acceptable defeat. The mujina, perhaps, under the circumstances... but a rabbit?" Tokei sighed. "This surely must be a lesson in humility."

Tokei glanced around. It was then that he realized that he was seated in a field of gray sand, surrounded by the bloody corpses of countless samurai.

"By the Fortunes!" Tokei exclaimed.

Then the nearest body moved. Then another. Tokei backed away across the battlefield as the corpses twitched and moved. As they staggered and rose, their wounds sealed with a sickly ripping sound. The battered samurai looked about, seizing their damaged weapons from the filth and ash. As soon as they rose, they leapt into battle once more, tearing into one another with a berserk ferocity.

"Toshigoku," Tokei whispered, blasting a trio of spirit samurai from his path with a column of flame. "The Realm of Slaughter." Each day, Kuro had said, the spirits of those consumed by vengeance and murder fought one another on these blasted plains. Every day, the dead rose anew to fight each other. According to Kuro, many of the spirits from this Realm had escaped through Oblivion's Gate some time ago. One of them, the dreaded Iron Chrysanthemum, had nearly torn apart the Empire with his lust for power. The dead spirits of Toshigoku were every bit as deadly as the demons of Jigoku, if less unified and focused.

A harsh inhuman shriek echoed across the fields of slaughter. Tokei turned quickly to see what new threat approached. In the distance, he saw a pack of creatures as tall as ogres. Great horns curved from their foreheads. They wore blackened armor, and their sharp, curved blades carved through the spirit samurai. These creatures, a strange mix of beast and man, fought as a cohesive unit, showing no mercy to any in their path.

"What are they?" Tokei asked, staring out at the creatures.

The air seemed to ripple before Tokei's eyes, and one of the creatures appeared before him. This one's skin was covered in complex scar designs, with rings and fetishes piercing its flesh. It held a long spear casually in one hand, covered from shaft to blade in mystic carvings. The creature locked eyes with Tokei for a long moment, then bowed.

"It is a pleasure to meet you, Grand Master," it said. "We are the Tsuno. I am called Nintai."

"I am Tokei."

"I know." The creature's eyes gleamed.

"You dwell in this Realm?" Tokei asked, regarding the creature warily.

"We travel the Realms as we wish," Nintai said.

"An enviable ability."

"We could show you our ways. There is much we could learn from each other, Grand Master."

Tokei looked toward the field of battle, where the rest of the Tsuno continued to cut down the spirits of Toshigoku. "If you can travel the Realms freely, why would you come to a place like this?"

"Many reasons," Nintai replied. "To begin with, the constant fighting is excellent practice for our troops."

"Your troops seem rather bloodthirsty," Tokei said, noting the glee with which they dismembered the samurai troops.

"Tsuno do not waste their energy showing mercy to those beneath us. I believe that is something upon which we can agree, is it not?" Tokei looked at the Tsuno.

"During the Clan Wars you were as bloodthirsty as we," he said. "You smote the armies of Jigoku, the goblins, the ogres, the oni, the undead, without a care."

"They were not worthy of mercy," Tokei replied.

"Nor are humans," Nintai said, looking pointedly at Tokei.

"I am a human," Tokei said.

"No. You are no longer human. You are a Grand Master, as far above these dogs as we are."

"You know nothing about me," Tokei said with a sneer.

"Is that so?" Nintai seemed to smile. "You might be surprised at what lies within you, Tokei. I have seen it. The Maw has seen it. Why do you think Okura refused to allow you entrance into Tengoku?"

"What?" Tokei exclaimed.

"No one escapes from Jigoku, Naka Tokei." The Tsuno laughed. "Not unless it suits Jigoku's purposes."

"So you have come to taunt me?" Tokei hissed.

"Perhaps," the Tsuno said. "Then again, perhaps I only wished to warn a fellow master of the Realms..."

A savage explosion erupted to Tokei's left. The Grand Master glanced in that direction, shields of Air spirits appearing to shield him from the damage.

When he turned back, Nintai was gone. The armies of the Tsuno had vanished like smoke on the wind.

TOSHIGOKU AND THE CELESTIAL ORDER

"I have seen many faces of death in my life, but never before have I seen whole legions of death, brutality incarnate, as I saw in the Realm of Slaughter. Bloodshed without respite. That is the essence of this loathsome place."

— Naka Tokei

TOSHIGOKU AND THE CELESTIAL ORDER

Toshigoku is a horrible place, as unnatural as a samurai without a master. The unfortunate spirits trapped here must suffer through an eternity of carnage with no hope of reincarnation. Toshigoku represents the dangers of senseless conflict. Mortals who die with thoughts of slaughter in their hearts may be cast out of the karmic cycle, into the bloodied landscape of Toshigoku. The spirits here are little more than mindless killing machines, so consumed by bloodlust that they fail to recognize old friends, comrades, or family members. They hardly recognize their own brethren in Toshigoku. The spirits here perpetually form armies and throw themselves at one another in senseless butchery, only to rise again the next day and do it all again. This Realm is an abomination to the Celestial Order, perhaps as terrible as Jigoku, because those trapped are doomed for eternity with no hope of reincarnation.

The only hope for spirits trapped in Toshigoku is to somehow escape to another nearby Realm, where it might be possible for them to break the cycle of endless death and regeneration that is Toshigoku, but they are so fixated on violence thoughts of escape are irrelevant.

CLOSE REALMS

Toshigoku borders on Gaki-do; the hungry dead have much in common with the bloodthirsty spirits of Toshigoku. Both are Realms where those who die badly are cast into endless punishment. Toshigoku is also near Meido, the Realm of the Dead who are waiting to be reincarnated. These Realms have in common that their inhabitants are the spirits of dead mortals who have not yet been reincarnated. However, for the spirits of Toshigoku, continuing their path in the karmic cycle is not an option.

DISTANT REALMS

Toshigoku is far from Jigoku, Ningen-do, and Yume-do. The Realm of Slaughter has little in common with Jigoku. Whereas Jigoku is a sentient force of pure evil, seeking to corrupt the rest of the Spirit Realms, Toshigoku represents mindless destruction, so trapped in its own self-destructive cycle that morality and evil simply have no meaning. The Realm of Mortals is fortunately distant from Toshigoku; were it not, the fighting spirits of Toshigoku could easily break through the barrier between Realms and lay waste to all of Rokugan. The Realm called Ningen-do knows that Toshigoku must be kept at bay or there will be dire consequences to all mortals. Yume-do is far from Toshigoku because the spirits of the Realm of Slaughter do not sleep. They know only two states of being; fighting and death. On the morning after they have been killed in battle, they regenerate and rejoin their legions of brethren to fight again. Some believe that the endless cycle of mindless obsession with destruction and carnage of the spirits of Toshigoku might be broken if they could simply sleep and dream.

DEATH AND TOSHIGOKU

Ending up in Toshigoku is one of the most horrible fates a mortal can imagine. To be cast out of the karmic cycle, unable to be reborn, forever denied enlightenment, shut out of the company of one's revered ancestors, doomed to repeat the tragic mistakes of one's life for all eternity: these are nightmares of the worst hells. The thought makes even the hardest bushi shudder with uneasiness. And the thought that an entire Realm of such spirits exists — countless thousands of fellow samurai forever doomed to such a fate — is more than some can bear.

Mortals who die with thoughts of revenge or slaughter in their hearts may end up here, forever trapped, forever doomed. What honor they may have had in life is quickly stripped away by the endless savage bloodletting.

KNOWN PASSAGES FROM NINGEN-DO

There are two known locations where Toshigoku joined with Ningen-do. The first instance was only tenuously, near Toshi Ranbo wo Shien Shite, or Violence Behind Courtliness City. In the early days of conflict between the Lion and the Crane, just before the outbreak of the Clan War, the barrier between Toshigoku and Ningen-do was nearly bridged by the efforts of an evil Kitsu *sodan-senzo*. His machinations allowed a horde of Toshigoku spirits known as the Legacy of the Forge to possess the armies of both the Lion and Crane, and throw both clans fully into the jaws of war. Toshigoku opened fully into Ningen-do at the Battle of Oblivion's Gate. Spirits of Toshigoku poured through Oblivion's Gate into the Realm of Mortals, wreaking great swaths of death and destruction.

Areas of the Mortal Realm where battles of tremendous bloodshed have taken place are believed to be closer to Toshigoku than the rest of the Realm.

Since Toshigoku is close to both Gaki-do and Meido, some believe that there might be several easily traversable passages into or out of either of those Realms. Toshigoku spirits sometimes maintain enough of their intellect and personality to search for these passages for a short time, before the savagery of the Realm strips these things away. It is unknown if any spirits cast into Toshigoku have ever escaped of their own volition.

SPONTANEOUS TRANSITIONS

Spontaneous transition to or from any of the Realms distant from Toshigoku is impossible. However, spontaneous transition between Meido and Gaki-do is only uncommon. The Realms border each other so closely in areas that they can be easily traversed by spirits who have not been enslaved to the Realm of Slaughter. The vast multitudes of spirits trapped in Toshigoku are too caught up in their perpetual tortures to seek these passages.

JEALOUSY

Toshigoku is a jealous Realm. The power of its mindless destruction quickly strips away the minds and the personalities of the hapless souls cast into it, until only an automaton, a mindless killing machine remains. Any non-native creature killed in Toshigoku is automatically lost to Toshigoku's control.

After each hour spent in Toshigoku, creatures must make a Will save. This roll begins at DC 12. If this roll fails, the creature immediately accrues 1d10 points of Satsugai. Every hour thereafter, the DC of this save increases by 1, whether the roll is successful or not. If at any time a character is killed while in Toshigoku, he immediately accrues the maximum amount of Satsugai, and becomes one of the Legacy.

After each hour spent in Toshigoku, a character must make a Willpower test (TN 15). If this roll fails, he immediately accrues 1k1 points of Satsugai. Every hour thereafter, the TN of this test increases by 1, whether the test is successful or not. If at any time a character is killed while in Toshigoku, he immediately accrues the maximum amount of Satsugai, and becomes one of the Legacy.

CONTROL

Satsugai is an expression of Toshigoku's control. It is the essence of mindless, bloodthirsty violence, and it immediately makes its presence felt when entering the Realm of Slaughter. However, unlike Shadowlands Taint, Satsugai is not permanent. Spirits or creatures that manage to leave Toshigoku gradually feel its influence draining away.

LEVEL ONE

The influence of the Realm of Slaughter has taken hold in your spirit. The desire to fight become your first response to any situation. However, you can still control yourself with effort.

You must make a Will save (DC 12) to avoid reacting with violence to any adverse situation. You also take great offense to any slight to your honor and must make this same save or respond with violence.

You must make a Willpower test (TN 15) to avoid reacting with violence to any adverse situation. You gain the Brash Disadvantage (if you did not have it). You also receive a +5 penalty to the TN of all Honor Tests.

LEVEL TWO

Your thoughts are turning ever more toward violence, often finding yourself thinking with pleasure about the fury of battle and the satisfaction gained from hacking your enemies to bits. Your flesh is growing pallid, your eyes sunken and dark.

As level 1, but the Will save is now DC 17.

As level 1, but the Willpower test is now TN 20. You receive another +5 penalty to all Honor Tests.

LEVEL THREE

Your mind and will are still your own, but your growing lust for violence is growing unmanageable. Your cheeks are growing sunken, and your nails are becoming cracked and yellow.

As Level 1, but the Will save is now DC 22. You must make this Will save once per hour, or you immediately attack the nearest individual, friend or foe. If this individual is a friend, you may make this save at the end of each round to cease your attack.

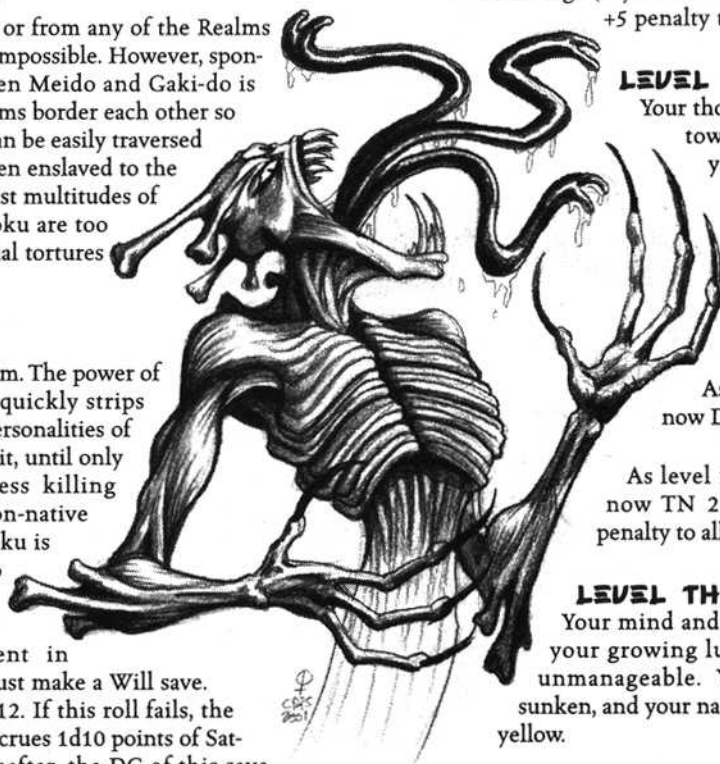
As Level 1, but the Willpower test is now TN 25. You must make this Willpower test once per hour, or you immediately attack the nearest individual, friend or foe. If this individual is a friend, you may make this test at the end of each round to cease your attack.

LEVEL FOUR

You have a shriveled, corpse-like appearance. You feel your mind and will slipping away, subsumed by a boiling cauldron of bloodlust. You barely remember who you are, who you were, or why you are here. You now want only to kill and maim anything around you.

As Level 3, but the Will save is now DC 27.

Any attempt to leave Toshigoku requires you to make a Will save (DC 30), or you resist the attempt by whatever means necessary.



As Level 3, but the Willpower test if now TN 30.
Any attempt to leave Toshigoku requires you to make a Willpower test (TN 35), or you resist the attempt by whatever means necessary.

LEVEL FIVE

You are one with the Legacy of the Forge, the barbaric horde of Toshigoku spirits that exist only for battle and destruction. Your body has shriveled like a long-dead corpse, but it does not decay. Your skin is like pale gray clay, your eyes covered with a yellow film. Unless you can be forcibly removed from Toshigoku, you are trapped here forever. The GM is in complete control of the character until you are removed from Toshigoku, after which time your accumulated Satsugai begins to drain away. If you are killed here, you will simply rejuvenate within a day. However, becoming one with the Legacy grants you power over them. You now have the power to attempt to control them.

You may attempt a Will save (DC 25) to control 10d10 Legacy spirits.

You may attempt a Willpower test (TN 30) to control 10k10 Legacy spirits.

GMs should remember that Satsugai is the distilled essence of violence and butchery. Acts committed under the influence of Satsugai may have a serious effect on a character's Honor. Fortunately for those who escape Toshigoku, the memory of their time there slips away with their accumulated points of Satsugai, leaving only a disquieting pool of fleeting impressions and vague memories.

Characters who leave Toshigoku lose points of accumulated Satsugai at a rate of 1d10 points per day.

Characters who leave Toshigoku lose points of accumulated Satsugai at a rate of 1k1 points per day.

PROTECTION AGAINST TOSHIGOKU

"Within a day, my crystal katana was useless! It turned this putrid color, and as soon as I struck one of them, the blade shattered! Thank the fortunes I only lost my arm in that encounter. I could have lost my soul!"

— Akodo Tadashi

One unit — 1 hour
2 units — 2 hours
3 units — 3 hours
4 units — 4 hours
5 units — 5 hours
Each additional unit — +1 hour

Visitors to Toshigoku can protect themselves from its influence only by carrying items made of crystal. A unit of crystal is defined as a piece of crystal equivalent to the size of a finger. As crystal becomes saturated with the influence of Satsugai, it turns opaque and becomes the color of congealed blood. After the protective ability of the crystal has been spent, it is no longer considered to be crystal; it becomes merely a lump of dark, reddish-purple stone.

PROTECTION BY TOSHIGOKU

There is no known way for Toshigoku spirits to protect themselves from the influence of other Realms. They exist only to kill and destroy, so they do not care about the influence other Realms might exert upon them.

ABILITIES

Toshigoku offers power to those who succumb to its influence. Strength and ferocity increase, and the desire to protect one's own life falls away. A character with Satsugai automatically channels it into his fighting ability.

For every level of Satsugai Control, a character receives a +1 bonus to both Strength and Constitution, and a -1 penalty to AC. These increases provide all applicable bonuses to hit points, attack, damage, etc. For example, a character at Level Four receives a +4 bonus to Strength and Constitution, and a -4 penalty to AC.

For every level of Satsugai Control, a character receives an extra unkept die to all Strength and Stamina rolls. The character's TN to Be Hit receives a -2 penalty for every level of Control, to a minimum of 5. For example, a character at Level 4 receives a 4 extra unkept dice to all rolls involving Strength and Stamina, and -8 to his TN to Be Hit.

MAGIC

Toshigoku is so distant from both Ningen-do and Jigoku that both elemental magic and maho function poorly here. The violence here suffuses even the air and the rocks, such that the kami are loath to respond. The raw amorality of the place is also a hindrance to the power of maho. When all is death, evil begins to lose its significance.

Any elemental or maho spell cast in Toshigoku requires its caster to make a Spellcraft check against a DC of 15 + the level of the spell. If the check fails, the spell does not function, though it still counts as cast that day. In addition, the caster gains one point of Satsugai for every 2 points by which he failed his Spellcraft check.

Any elemental or maho spell cast within Toshigoku has its TN increased by 10. If a shugenja fails to cast a spell, he gains one point of Satsugai for every 2 points his roll fell short of the TN.

RELATIONS WITH OTHER REALMS

CHIKUSHUDO

Toshigoku and the Realm of Animals have little to do with each other. The animal spirits of Chikushudo avoid the senseless violence of Toshigoku; they kill only for food. The spirits of Toshigoku have no interest in Chikushudo, because there are no mortals there to kill. Animal spirits cannot join the ranks of the Legacy.

GAKI-DO

Toshigoku and Gaki-do are very similar Realms. Both contain the spirits of mortals who died while consumed dangerous thoughts. Occasionally spirits pass between these Realms. Gaki that come here are invariably consumed by the Realm, and thus they join the Legacy. Toshigoku spirits that find their way into Gaki-do slowly lose their savagery and battle madness, but must then somehow remember who they once were. They sometimes wander Gaki-do for decades or centuries, lost, without will or personality.

JIGOKU

The Realm of Evil looks upon Toshigoku with unbridled envy and greed. The powers of Jigoku know that the Legacy could be a force of incredible potency if somehow bound to the will of Fu Leng. Toshigoku pays little heed to the machinations of the Tainted. The Legacy is too fixated on carnage to care about morality. The distance between these two Realms is a fortunate circumstance for the rest of the Spirit Realms.

MEIDO

While the Realm of the Dead is near to Toshigoku, few spirits from Meido are willing to make the passage. Most know that Toshigoku is the Realm of the Legacy, and that they would be forever trapped there if they tried to make the journey. There would be then be no chance for reincarnation. Toshigoku, on the other hand, welcomes any travelers from Meido, knowing that they must inevitably join the ranks of fighting spirits.

NINGEN-DO

The Realm of Mortals is the only Realm viewed with greed or avarice by the spirits of Toshigoku, because Ningen-do is the greatest source by far of new spirits for the Legacy. Toshigoku waits patiently as perpetual battles between humans keep the fields of Toshigoku teeming with fresh souls. Ningen-do, on the other hand, fears Toshigoku almost as no other for the very same reason. The day may come when Toshigoku is filled to bursting with fighting spirits, and the barrier between Realms is ruptured, as nearly happened at Oblivion's Gate, when the spirits of Legacy walked free in Ningen-do.

SAKKAKU

The denizens of Sakkaku do their best to avoid Toshigoku. It is not a Realm that responds well to tricks and mischief. The danger involved in provoking the Legacy is dire, increased by the fact that those who die here can never escape. Even mujina sometimes fear to come here because the Realm's distilled brutality makes them uneasy.

TENGOKU

The denizens of the Celestials Heaven view Toshigoku with little but distaste and loathing, and perhaps even fear. They do not know what to do about the spirits trapped here, banished from the Celestial Order. They do not dare release them for the destruction they would wreak upon the other Realms. The Toshigoku spirits are largely unaware that such a Realm as Tengoku even exists.

YOMI

Yomi looks upon with Toshigoku with both pity and fear. The Blessed Ancestors feel pity for those unfortunate souls who will never be permitted to reincarnate. Some ancestors have tried to guide beloved family members out of this terrible Realm, but always to no avail, and they risk becoming trapped themselves. Like so many other Realms, Toshigoku sees the spirits of Yomi merely as fodder for the Legacy.

YUME-DO

The spirits of Toshigoku are all but unaware such a Realm as Yume-do exists. Since they do not sleep, they cannot dream, so they are incapable of entering Yume-do. Likewise, the inhabitants of Yume-do have little contact with Toshigoku. They know only that is a Realm of death and horror.

INHABITANTS

Toshigoku has three main types of inhabitants.

The first type is the Legacy of the Forge, a horde of fighting spirits who have been consumed by Satsugai. They spend their existence fighting endless battles among themselves.

The second type is fighting spirits who have somehow managed to retain a large portion of their sense of self and take control of the Legacy. These are individuals of near god-like status themselves. Hantei XVI was just such an individual, having led the Legacy out of Toshigoku during the War of Spirits. It is unknown how such individuals are able to rise above the madness and exert their control over the Legacy. The vast majority of individuals consumed by Satsugai completely lose their will and personality.

The third type is the unfortunate spirits who are new to Toshigoku, perhaps having just arrived. They still clutch vainly at their humanity, but their time is short. Before long they must join the Legacy.

FEATURES OF TOSHI-GOKU

The Realm of Toshigoku is a bleak and wasted landscape, desolate and barren. There are no forests, no lakes, no rivers, nothing that represents life. It is filled with naked boulders and drifting sands, barren steppes and cracked, parched earth where the armies of the Legacy endlessly clash. The sky is a deep, dull gray, with no sun, no moon, no stars; simple emptiness. It is said that those who look too long into the sky go mad, joining the Legacy that much more quickly.

Some believe Hantei XVI has constructed a palace here, a grim place of dark gray stone. There, they say, the ancient emperor broods, dreaming of vengeance for his defeat in the War of Spirits. None can say for certain that this is untrue.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

THE LEGACY UNLEASHED

Something has been destroying helpless villages. The scenes of senseless carnage are horrendous; entire villages have been wiped away in rivers in blood. The local garrison cannot discover who could perpetrate such horrible deeds — until a single half-mad peasant wanders out of the countryside. This peasant rants about an army of hollow-eyed, spectral bushi who simply marched out of nowhere and slaughtered everyone, then disappeared again. Someone is using the Legacy to exact revenge. Perhaps it is a long-time enemy of the clan who can open a passage between Realms. Perhaps someone has hired a shugenja with the proper knowledge, wishing to distract attention from their activities elsewhere. The identity and motives of the villain is left up to the GM.

COMRADES IN ARMS

One of the PCs has a dream wherein one of his ancestors imparts some horrible information. Someone close to the PC has been cast into Toshigoku. It might be another PC who was recently killed, it might be a father or brother, or it might even be the PCs daimyo. Such a horrible fate cannot be accepted. In the dream, the ancestor tells the PC to seek out a certain shugenja with the knowledge to travel between Realms. The shugenja can help, but time is running out. It is only a matter of time before the dead character is drawn irrevocably into the ranks of the Legacy. If the dead character is rescued from Toshigoku, he may yet be redeemed.

THE ORDER OF TSUNO

From Kozue, swordmaster of the Kenku, to his student, Doji Yasuyo of the Crane:

The historians of your race tell you that there was no world before the Empire. Even with the evidence of great Naga cities clearly within their boundaries, they close their eyes and refuse to believe there could be any other world than the one that they have created. They are wrong, but I cannot blame them for their ignorance. Knowledge demands responsibility; ignorance demands nothing. Better to forget the worlds that came before than accept the burdens they carried. Even the cities of the Naga are young compared to what we have seen.

When we arrived through Oblivion's Gate, this Realm was a place of chaos. The spirits you now know as kami were maddened, destructive spirits. All were as one, forces of seething energy that changed by the moment. Five races, all of which possessed great power and wisdom, came upon this Realm and united in an attempt to tame the kami and bring the Mortal Realm peace. We brought order and identity to the kami, shaping them in our own images. My ancestors, the quick and clever kenku, represented Air. The mighty intellect and creative energy of the trolls represented Fire. The wise and enduring zokujin represented Earth. The versatile and adaptable ningyo represented Water. Finally, the mysterious kitsu represented the perfect balance between all elements that is Void. Together, we created a great crystal city where the kami could be tamed and calmed. Together, we brought order to the world.

But not all were content with order.

In that time, the leonine kitsu were a peaceful people, divided into eight great orders, each representing a different facet of their society. They rarely engaged in conflict, even in their own defense. Only one brotherhood was dedicated to the arts of war, acting in the defense of the whole. This was the order led by a great elemental named Kishenku. This was the order called Tsuno.

Tsuno Kishenku looked upon the power of the crystal city and dreamed of harnessing all of existence to the Tsuno's will. His followers slaughtered those who helped build the great city, including many of his kitsu brethren. Kishenku intended to wield its power alone, or not at all. His fellow kitsu were trusting and generous by nature. They could not foresee Kishenku's betrayal, and were in no way prepared to stop him.

Fortunately, we kenku have a rather suspicious nature. We had installed safeguards against the ambitious, and when Kishenku attempted to reshape the world, those safeguards took effect. Unfortunately, we had underestimated Kishenku. He defied the city's efforts to resist his control, and the great energies that once brought order to the kami raged wildly throughout the land. The oceans boiled. The sky bled. For a moment, the existence of this Realm hung in the balance. Finally, a great mountain rose from the earth and buried the crystal city. Kishenku was unmade by the power he unleashed, but his followers survived and escaped.

The alliance between our races had been shattered by Kishenku's betrayal. The trolls retreated to their final city, Voltturnum, leaving behind one of their greatest warriors to guard the ruins of the crystal city. The ningyo adapted aspects of the water spirits they had created and took to the seas. The zokujin retreated into the depths of the earth and were seen no more. Though the world had been reduced to ruin by the power Kishenku unleashed, many would not rest while the Order of Tsuno went unpunished. Soli Izumo, the fallen lord of the kitsu, hunted the rebellious Tsuno. A great battle was fought against the Order of Tsuno, and in the end the Tsuno were captured.

Even after all that the Tsuno had done, Izumo and his peaceful brethren could not bring themselves to kill their fellow kitsu. Together, the Soli brotherhood summoned powerful magic to cast the Order of Tsuno from our Realm. They sought out a dark and twisted place that would better suit their savage natures, and bound them there. For countless eons the wicked Tsuno languished in the Realm of Slaughter. Their bodies became twisted, to reflect their sinister souls. In time, they have become unrecognizable as kitsu.

I do not know how they have escaped their prison in the Realm of Slaughter or why now, of all times, they have chosen to return.

I only know that the Order of Tsuno has returned at last. I fear that in these times there are none who survive that know how to defeat them.

RETURN OF THE TSUNO

Though they were once members of the kitsu race, natives of no particular Realm, the Tsuno have been bound in the Realm of Slaughter for so long that they no longer resemble kitsu. They are now a separate, independent race. Though the magic that bound them in Toshigoku endured for many centuries, the Tsuno Soultwisters eventually shattered the prison, allowing the Tsuno to wander freely once more. Currently, none can match their mastery of the passages between the Realms, especially Yume-do and Toshigoku.

Tsuno Nintai, the current leader of the Order of Tsuno, is the son of Tsuno Kishenku. It was he who engineered the Tsuno's current alliance with the Shadowlands Horde. As a result of this alliance, all Tsuno who have entered Ningen-do have the Shadowlands Taint, and have generally been mistaken for some new race of oni. This serves the Tsuno's purposes perfectly, allowing them to scour the Empire for signs of the lost crystal city and surviving members of the five races.

Though the Tsuno have long been free of their prison in Toshigoku, they have only recently returned to Ningen-do in large numbers. Something, it seems, was barring their return, but circumstances have changed. Tsuno Nintai's alliance with Daigotsu is believed to be a factor in the order's return, though even most Tsuno do not know exactly why their race has chosen to invade Rokugan now.

This is not the first time the Tsuno have returned to the Empire. Before their alliance with Daigotsu, the Tsuno attempted to return two other times. Both attempts met with egregious failure, and are not spoken of by the Tsuno elders.

TSUNO AND CONTROL

Tsuno have adapted well to travel throughout the Spirit Realms, and in doing so have learned that it is easier to accept Control from the powerful jealous Realms than to attempt to escape it. Tsuno accumulate ranks of Control normally when visiting other Spirit Realms, but this Control does nothing to the Tsuno. They suffer no ill effects and gain no special abilities for having any ranks of Control. (A Tainted Tsuno, for instance, could not draw upon its Taint to increase its strength.)

Only when targeted by outside effects do a Tsuno's accumulated ranks of Control come into play. For example, a Tsuno with Taint would be harmed by a jade strike. A Tsuno with ranks of Satsugai would register to a sense spirit spell as if he were a Toshigoku spirit. Most Tsuno found in Rokugan have several ranks of Taint, Satsugai, and Mortality.

The Tsuno's immunity to Control has worked to their advantage in their recent invasion of the Empire. With entire packs of Tainted Tsuno attacking Rokugan, most samurai have assumed that they are merely yet another creation of Jigoku.

TSUNO MAGIC

Tsuno Soultwisters are capable of extraordinary feats of magic involving manipulation of the Spirit Realms. The Tsuno opened a passage to the Realm of Slaughter on the battlefield where Oni no Akuma fought the Otaku Battle Maidens, allowing their rapid invasion of the Kitsu Tombs. During Daigotsu's invasion of the Kaiu Wall, Tsuno Nintai used the presence of the Onisu to inspire nightmares among the Crab troops, and then used the Crab's nightmares to open a passage between Yume-do and the mortal Realm. This allowed the Onisu to slip past the Wall unnoticed, causing six of the towers of the Kaiu Wall to fall.

The shugenja Naka Tokei seems to understand a fraction of the Tsuno magic, and has begun developing wards that could safeguard against the Soultwisters. However, until a way to counter their magic can be found, the Tsuno could appear almost anywhere.

TSUNO AND HONOR

The Tsuno Ravagers have a complex code of honor. They value bravery and loyalty, but they also encourage ambition and cruelty. Tsuno Ravagers regularly torment lower-ranking members of the pack, and believe that to accept pain without complaint is a sign of courage. However, as cruel as the Tsuno may be, the Tsuno are careful never to kill their own.

The Soultwisters seem unbound by the Ravager code of honor. In fact, destructive and aberrant behavior is encouraged among their kind so long as it brings no permanent harm to a Tsuno. The Ravagers are often confused by the behavior of the Soultwisters, but leave them to their "games." After all, perhaps the chaotic behavior of the Soultwisters is what makes their magic so strong.

The Tsuno code of honor does not seem to apply to "lesser races." In their view, other races exist only to feed and support the Tsuno. The only exceptions the Tsuno make are the Five Races — trolls, zokujin, kenku, ningyo, and kitsu — which are regarded as worthy adversaries. The Tsuno vaguely regret the downfall of these races, but take their dwindling numbers as evidence that their way is superior.

Tsuno hold a special hatred in their heart for the Lion Clan, whose founder, Akodo, is responsible for the near extinction of the kitsu race. Though the Tsuno hated their kitsu brethren, they feel personally insulted that their enemies could be defeated by a lesser race. Those kitsu who became the Kitsu family are considered especially reprehensible. The Tsuno will accept nothing less than the extermination of the Kitsu family.



TSUNO AND DEATH

The Tsuno's advanced healing magic can patch up even the most grievous wounds. While within Toguchi Shinden, the Soultwisters can locate the soul of a dead Tsuno wherever it may be. So long as the original body remains, the Soultwister can recall the spirit and restore the dead. It is for this reason that Tsuno always make an effort to carry their dead from the field of battle. All Tsuno know that they can never truly die, so long as one of their brothers survives to carry them home.

TSUNO LIFE CYCLE

The Tsuno are extraordinarily long-lived. Many of their Soultwisters are, in fact, effectively immortal due to their mastery of spirit magic. These creatures mature quickly and live for centuries. Tsuno reproduce very rarely, producing one perhaps one offspring per century. Tsuno children are rare and

precious treasures, tended to by the entire order. Any threat to the Tsuno children is met with quick and violent retribution.

Though there are male and female Tsuno, there is little physical distinction between the genders. Their physical differences are mostly internal, and only Tsuno can easily tell the difference. With Tsuno reproduction an infrequent occurrence at best, their race sees little reason to make any distinction between sexes. Pregnant Tsuno are confined to the Tsuno temples so that the process of childbirth will be uninterrupted, but otherwise gender has no effect on a Tsuno's standing in the society. Rokugani organizations that discriminate on the basis of gender — such as the Utaku Battle Maidens and the Brotherhood of Heaven's Wing — are utterly incomprehensible to the Tsuno. Some believe that such peculiar behavior is merely more evidence that the human race deserves extinction.

NEW MECHANICS

LEGACY OF THE FORGE 10201

TOSHIGOKU SPIRIT

The d20 System™ statistics for these spirits may be found in *Creatures of Rokugan* on page 71.

LEGACY OF THE FORGE 12ND EDITION

TOSHIGOKU SPIRIT

Earth: 2

Water: 1

Strength: 3

Fire: 1

Agility: 3

Air: 1

Reflexes: 3

Rolls When Attacking:
3k3

Rolls For Damage: 6k2
TN to Be Hit: 20

Wounds: 15: -1; 30: temporarily destroyed

One a spirit has been consumed by the influence of Toshigoku, it becomes part of the faceless legions known as the Legacy of the Forge. A Toshigoku spirit's equipment can no longer be dropped, stolen, or removed. Toshigoku spirits attack mindlessly, with no regard self-preservation. If they are killed, they regenerate somewhere within Toshigoku.

These spirits speak Rokugani, using it to shout orders and relay commands, but they do not perceive anything spoken by creatures not of their own Realm.

In Ningen-do they are incorporeal as ghosts and can only be harmed by magical weapons or magic. They can pass through any solid barrier, and their attacks ignore armor. In Toshigoku they are as solid and real as any mortal in Ningen-do.

Toshigoku spirits are considered to be undead, but they are not Tainted unless the particular individual was Tainted at death.



CHAPTER NINE:

YUME-DO, THE REALM OF DREAMS

THROUGH BLOOD AND THUNDER PART TEN

Токеи stood at the center of a great field of poppies, a carpet of red leading to the horizon on every side. The land was serene, surreal, beautiful. Every sight, smell, and sound seemed to lull him to sleep. He pushed the feeling away; he could not afford weakness in the Realm of Dreams.

"Face me, creature!" he shouted, spittle flying from his lips. "Face me!"

Laughter echoed across the poppy fields, the same maniacal laughter that he had followed across the fields of Slaughter into this Realm. The spirits slain by this creature did not rise again like other denizens of Toshigoku. This beast consumed the souls of everything it faced. In the Realm of Dreams, what sort of damage could it cause?

"What damage indeed?" the creature replied. "Much, I hope."

"Show yourself!" Токеи demanded. As his anger flared, the landscape twisted. The poppy fields faded and were replaced by a blazing desert.

"So you could destroy me?" the voice replied. "What purpose would that serve? I would only be created anew, now that we know the way... now that you have shown us."

Токеи sneered and shouted a complex spell. Kami of fire and air flashed out from his position, suddenly congealing around a tall figure. Токеи's quarry was stripped of its invisibility, standing revealed on a nearby sand dune. It almost resembled a man, but

was too tall, too thin within its robes of black and deep red. Its face was covered with horned ridges.

"You found me," the creature said, disappointed. "I thought I'd have a chance to toy with you a bit longer."

"No more games, Hakai," Токеи replied. He unleashed a mighty beam of green light toward it. The creature's figure withered and tore apart. A moment later, only ash remained.

As Токеи caught his breath, the landscape changed again. He now stood at the heart of the Emperor's throne room in Otosan Uchi. A strange place to be, considering that he had never seen the Emperor's throne room before. It appeared exactly as he had imagined it in his dreams. He slowly ascended the steps toward the throne, shoulders relaxed. Then, suddenly, one hand shot out. With a strangled cry, Hakai appeared seated in the cracked Emerald Throne, its throat clenched in the Grand Master's hand.

"I could smell you," Токеи hissed. "What are you?"

Hakai's eyes narrowed. The room darkened. Long, hooked chains descended from the ceiling, clinking ominously. In the distance, the wails of tortured men hung on the air. Tiny dark creatures scuttled about in the corners of the room. Токеи ignored the shifting environment, focusing instead upon Hakai, squeezing just tightly enough that the creature could barely speak.

"This place has changed, you know," Hakai said hoarsely. "Your memories are out of date, Grand Master. Not that I can complain. They served us well enough."

"What do you mean?" Токеи demanded.

"I am an Onisu," Hakai replied. "A creature forged of the nightmares of samurai. We are pieced together from baku — dream spirits — and oni. I am Hakai. I represent death and destruction. My brethren represent similar forces."

"There is no such creature," Токеи replied. "Baku cannot be corrupted."

"Not without effort," Hakai answered. "With the wisdom the Dark Lord Daigotsu gained from the Tsuno, it was simple enough. He reached into the Baku from dreams, and used you to channel raw power from Jigoku itself."

"You claim I created you?" Tokei shook his head. "You're lying."

"Really?" Hakai coughed. "Tell me, Tokei, how much of your time in Jigoku do you really remember? Do you really believe the Maw would have allowed a mere ninja to rescue you from the Pit?"

"What are you saying?" Tokei demanded.

"No," Hakai said with a grin. "That's all you get for now."

"I will kill you."

"What do I care?" Hakai asked. "The Dark Lord will create me anew. You have shown him the—"

Tokei twisted his hand. With a loud snap, Hakai twitched and fell limp.

Leaving the Onisu's corpse in the Emerald Throne, Tokei continued his journey, dark thoughts weighing heavily upon his mind.

YUME-DO AND THE CELESTIAL ORDER

In Yume-do, everything can exist — and does. Ningen-do is defined by mortality, and Meido is defined by death, but Yume-do is defined by concept. Anything that has been, will be, or could be, is in the Realm of Dreams. It is a boundless Realm of that which could be, shaped by thoughts and dreams, and navigated by both the mind and the spirit. It is an infinite swirling blue fog filled with that which has been thought.

Nearly every living creature enters Yume-do every day, coming from almost every Realm. Every creature's dreams exist in Yume-do, and yet the Realm never "fills up." Yume-do is infinite in size, and can never be diminished or strengthened. It simply is.

Yume-do is vastly larger than any other Realm, and it is the least jealous Spirit Realm. Some consider an analogy to a mortal's confidence — the powerful feel no need to be jealous. The true reason is unknown and possibly unknowable. Simply put, this is the way Yume-do must be; were it any other way, there would be a very real danger of Dreams simply swallowing up every other Realm, reducing them to mere shadows and figments.

CLOSE REALMS

Yume-do is close to many Realms: Ningen-do, Tengoku, Meido, and Sakkaku. The Realm of Mortals is close to the Realm of Dreams, allowing the natives of Ningen-do to travel to Yume-do on their nightly journey, despite the jealous nature of the Realm of Mortals.

The contents of a great many human dreams dictate the placement of Yume-do. Meido figures prominently in the dreams of many humans, and this has drawn the two Realms close together over the years. Similarly, Tengoku intensely fas-

cinates the people of Rokugan, and has drifted close to Yume-do through the influence of their dreams of the Celestial Heavens.

Sakkaku is also close to Yume-do, though the reasons are unclear. No sane human dreams of that Realm. It may simply be that Sakkaku itself wishes it to be, and that chaotic Realm moved itself close to Yume-do. Perhaps the Realm of Mischief finds it funny to be near Dreams.

DISTANT REALMS

The only Realm distant from Yume-do is Toshigoku. Those few in a position to speculate say that the Realm of Slaughter's inhabitants suffer from insanity because they do not sleep. Whether this is a quality that is inherent to mortals because of the distance between Yume-do and Toshigoku, or whether Toshigoku itself was shaped by the effects of sleep deprivation is not known, though scholars familiar with the Realms in question debate the question.

BARRED REALMS

No Realm is completely closed to Yume-do.

DEATH AND YUME-DO

*"Death is but a dream
Though lost to man's subtleties
When I die, I dream"*

—attributed to Rezan, the ronin poet



Very few humans go to Yume-do upon death. The virtuous, the wretched, the vile, and the blessed disperse to other Realms. The only humans who find themselves spending eternity in Yume-do are those who spent more time dreaming than living. Of the handful that have ended up in the Realm of Dreams, most are those who have gone mad with visions and hallucinations. Most of the rest are those who spent more time in their minds than the world around them. The very few humans with more *yumeji* than any other form of Control also enter Yume-do upon death. Among the more notable of those who went to Yume-do upon death was the child prodigy Isawa Ijime, who has since returned to life as one of the Heroes of Rokugan.

Naga and Nezumi, on the other hand, nearly all go to Yume-do after death. Naga find themselves pulled to the great city Akasha, deep in Yume-do (see below). There, they await rebirth in the next generation of Naga. In Yume-do, the Naga race is eternal.

The Nezumi find themselves pulled to Yume-do after death as well. They join the Transcendent of their race, though unlike those exalted Nezumi spirits, most dead Nezumi do not have eternity to look forward to. They exist only as long as they are remembered, and when no living Nezumi remember them, they vanish into oblivion.

KNOWN PASSAGES FROM YUME-DO

The Shinomen Forest, home to millions of sleeping Naga, borders Yume-do closely while that great race slumbers. Unwary travelers through the forest can find their perceptions slipping into dreams — seeing things that they simply imagine. This has contributed in no small part to the legends that have grown up around the Forest. Once again, the Shinomen has become a place of legend, wonder, and mystery.

In addition to the Shinomen, Yume-do borders on small areas across the Empire. A small patch of forest known as the "Forest of the Dreamers" near Shiro Iuchi, an underground lake under Kyuden Hitomi, a shrine to Yume-do on the Mantis Isles, and an opium den in Otsan-Uchi all lay close to Yume-do.

Every living being, human and otherwise, has the ability to travel to Yume-do. All that is required to enter is to dream.

JEALOUSY

THE VEIL OF SLEEP

"If I could remember every dream I ever had, I would be far more prolific, I assure you."

—Bayushi Shinochu, Scorpion Clan Playwright

While Yume-do is not a jealous Realm, it is a secretive one. Yume-do leaves no taint or scars on visitors (if it did, every creature in existence would bear them), but is fiercely protective of its secrets.

The Veil of Sleep is how Yume-do protects itself. Anyone entering or leaving Yume-do passes through it, though only those leaving are subject to its effects. The Veil is why dreamers do not remember their dreams — things created in Yume-do stay in Yume-do. Concepts, being the foundation of the Realm, are most carefully tied to the Realm of dream. The Nezumi call this Tcha'lun, or "Losing Forever-Name."

The Veil affects all creatures, from the darkest unnamed oni, to the daimyo of Rokugan, to the Fortunes themselves. Nearly infinite power exists in Yume-do for those capable enough to breach the Veil. Actually doing so, however, is both dangerous and unpredictable: Yume-do always knows, and the consequences can range from a mild headache to instant and complete annihilation.

PIERCING THE VEIL

Despite the dangers inherent in piercing the Veil, several methods exist to do so.

Water kami can pass through the Veil with little effect, so Water magic has proven effective in communicating between Yume-do and the Realms close to it. They cannot help others to pass through, however.

Powerful maho can tear the Veil — Yume-do's nature prevents the Taint from spreading, but the energies of Jigoku are highly disruptive to the Veil's stability. Though maho cannot permanently harm the Veil of Sleep, it can damage it enough to allow material and creatures both native and non- to escape, even if they have yumeji.

Kitsu (the creatures, not the Lion Clan family), because of their aptitude in traversing the Spirit Realms, may roll to partially resist the Veil's effects. Tsuno, having been twisted by Toshigoku's dreamless nature, are still subject to the Veil in its entirety.

Kitsu are allowed a Will save (DC 15) upon waking to recall the night's events without the Veil's interference.

Kitsu may roll Water at a TN 20 upon waking to recall the night's events without the Veil's interference.

DREAMING

"Thoughts of that which pass:

My fantasy, my nightmare,

All are real, but false."

—Togashi Chirai, the Babbling Poet of the Mountain

Everyone who lives, dreams. Even many of the dead dream. But what does it mean to dream? Poets have likened dreaming to everything from marriage to death to birth, but no analogy is quite accurate.

Strictly speaking, dreaming is the act of passing one's mind into Yume-do through the Veil of Sleep. This creates a small pocket of the Realm that is influenced by Yume-do, the Realm the sleeper exists in, and the deepest thoughts of the sleeper.

A sleeping mind generates baku (see Inhabitants, below) to populate the dream, and give it shape. These baku act as appropriate for their role in the dream, and do not leave the dream.

While dreaming, the sleeper is not fully in Yume-do. As such, no permanent harm can come to him. Even if an Ashura or Baku no Oni were to enter the dream and torture, maim, and finally kill a dreamer, no harm would come to him — he would simply awaken early as from any nightmare.

LIFE AND YUME-DO

Yume-do is a cornerstone of life. Every living being outside of Toshigoku makes the journey countless times. Each time, the dreamer passes through the Veil of Sleep twice, leaving a bit of himself behind upon awakening.

Those who cross into Yume-do by sleeping never fully enter the Realm. They exist in both Yume-do and the Realm they fell asleep in, and thus cannot suffer any permanent effects while in Yume-do. Ratling superstition holds that those who die in Yume-do will suffer a horrible fate within a day of awakening, though this tradition seems to be unique to the Nezumi.

CONTROL

YUMEJI

Yume-do's actual Control (known as yumeji) is not exerted over visitors, only natives and those who take on Yume-do's influence deliberately. The more yumeji an individual has, the harder it is to pierce the Veil of Sleep to leave Yume-do, but while he remains in Dreams, he has far more control of his surroundings.

LEVEL ONE

Even at level one, yumeji is a tremendous influence. This level is the most yumeji that anyone can have and retain enough control of their own actions to maintain a normal life. Characters with any yumeji who are awakened from sleep prematurely are considered groggy, and are not able to function to their peak efficiency. As a guideline, a normal character needs eight hours of sleep per night to function properly.

All natives of Yume-do have at least one level of yumeji.

You may choose to not wake up from any sleep, remaining in Yume-do indefinitely. However, you require four extra hours of sleep per night. While you sleep, you age at only one-tenth speed. Natives with this rank of *yumeji* are never sentient, though they may still be clever and cunning. You are also now under the protection of Yume-do, and other Realms have a difficult time controlling you and your actions.

You gain a +10 *yumeji* bonus to any roll to resist acquiring Control from another Realm (including Taint). Note that this includes actions that grant Control as a side effect — casting maho is now very difficult for you. You must make a Spellcraft check at a DC of 20 plus five times your *yumeji* rank each time you wish to cast a maho spell, or else it automatically fails.

You gain a +2k2 bonus to resist acquiring Control from any other Realm (including Taint). Note that this includes actions that grant Control as a side effect — casting maho is now very difficult for you. For maho spells, you roll and keep two fewer dice. If you would roll or keep zero dice, the result is automatically a failure and no Taint is accrued.

LEVEL TWO

You have begun to develop an affinity for dreams and dreaming. Natives of Yume-do have sentience with this rank or higher of *yumeji*. Characters with this level of *yumeji* require twice as much sleep as normal members of their race.

You are completely immune to Control from any other Realm. Crossing the Veil is difficult but not impossible — you must make a Will save (DC 25) when leaving Yume-do (waking up, for example) or you become groggy. Groggy characters are considered staggered (may only take partial actions). However, your thoughts are not robbed upon awakening — the Veil takes its toll in other ways. Characters may attempt to shake off the grogginess every quarter of an hour by attempting the Will save again.

You are completely immune to Control from any other Realm. Crossing the Veil is difficult but not impossible — you must make a Willpower roll (TN 30) when leaving Yume-do (waking up, for example) or you are considered groggy. Groggy characters have a +5 on all physical TNs, and +10 on all mental TNs. However, your thoughts are not robbed upon awakening — the Veil takes its toll in other ways. Characters may attempt to shake off the grogginess every quarter of an hour by attempting the Willpower roll again.

LEVEL THREE

Characters of this level of *yumeji* cannot function properly in other Realms. They constantly sleep if left to their own devices, and if forcibly awakened are continually groggy as the Veil refuses to allow their minds to fully return to their home Realm. Also, at this level of *yumeji*, you begin to shed other Realms' Control.

While in Yume-do, your senses are expanded. Your DCs to locate creatures and objects within Yume-do are halved. Every week that you remain in Yume-do, you lose one level of Control (or, in the case of the Taint, five full points).

While in Yume-do, your senses are expanded. Your TNs to locate creatures and objects within Yume-do are halved. Every week that you remain in Yume-do, you lose one level of Control (or, in the case of the Taint, one full rank).

LEVEL FOUR

You cannot leave Yume-do. Upon achieving this level of *yumeji* the character's mortal body dissipates, and he is henceforth merely a dream in other Realms. Those who acquire this much *yumeji* tend to speak in cryptic puzzles, saying little that they do not have to.

You may cast scrying on any creature in Yume-do with less *yumeji* than yourself as per the spell. This is a spell-like ability, for which your effective caster level is your character level. You do not need a pool of water, instead using the foggy backdrop of Yume-do.

At the penultimate level of *yumeji*, you may control baku with your voice. They cannot disobey you, and must follow even self-destructive commands. If a baku is given contradictory orders by another with this level of *yumeji*, it may decide for itself.

You may cast a modified form of Reflective Pool. Your range within Yume-do is infinite, though you may only use this spell to see creatures with less *yumeji* than yourself. This ability requires no roll, only concentration. You are considered to be a Rank 4 shugenja for this effect.

At the penultimate level of *yumeji*, you may control baku with your voice. They cannot disobey you, and must follow even self-destructive commands. If a baku is given contradictory orders by another with this level of *yumeji*, it may decide for itself.

LEVEL FIVE

In Yume-do, you are near to a god. Out of Yume-do, you barely exist. Characters this tied to Yume-do are barely comprehensible by those without significant amounts of *yumeji*. This level of power is extremely rare. The only known way to attain this power is through the reality-defining power of Name magic, the exclusive province of the Nezumi race. Other methods exist, but those that achieve it do not share their secrets.

The true power of dreams is the power that all living beings possess — creation. At this final level of *yumeji*, you can create baku with your thoughts. They can be anything you wish to create, though they cannot exist outside of your presence unless they develop *yumeji*. Only baku you create with personality traits and ideals similar to yours have chance of developing independence. For example, a Transcendent could create an baku of an oni, but it could not exist without its creator's presence, as it would be vastly unlikely to develop any *yumeji*. A baku of a Nezumi child would be far more likely to develop *yumeji*.

GMs should treat *yumeji* as a reward. Those who possess it are both chosen and cursed by the Realm of Dreams.

Yumeji is difficult to acquire, though there are methods to do so. A dreamer can, with effort, cling to his dream. A young boy dreaming of becoming a hero, a widow dreaming her husband were still alive, or any of a thousand other dreams can be appealing enough for the dreamer to prefer them to the reality of Ningen-do. If his will is strong enough, and his desire genuine enough, he can spontaneously generate a single rank of *yumeji*, and maintain the dream indefinitely.

Some magic can grant *yumeji*. Nezumi Name magic can do so, as can Naga pearl magic. Elemental magic is too tied to Ningen-do to allow such an attunement to another Realm, as is maho to Jigoku. Because there is no consistent human method of acquiring it, few humans live in Yume-do.

Those with *yumeji* can slowly accumulate more. While there are no set time limits to accumulate more, typically several decades must go by before *yumeji* level two is achieved, at least another century before *yumeji* level three, and several more centuries pass before level four. *Yumeji* level five cannot be accumulated; it must be earned.

Because of the powers associated with mid-to-high levels of *yumeji*, it is recommended to the GM that PCs only acquire *yumeji* levels one or two, if that. Treat a character with a *yumeji* level of three or more as you would a character Lost to the Taint. Under no circumstances should a PC have *yumeji* level five.

PROTECTION AGAINST YUME-DO

No protection is needed from *yumeji*. Those who do not wish to be in the grip of Yume-do may resist its Control simply by being unwilling. For the willing, even jade cannot stop the accumulation of *yumeji*.

PROTECTION BY YUME-DO

Yume-do does not allow other Realms' Control to be spread through Dreams. No effect can increase the level of Control any being has while in Yume-do. Even the insidious Shadowlands Taint cannot be spread or increased, except when voluntarily increasing one's own Taint.

Natives of Yume-do are fully immune to Control from other Realms, even natives with only one level of *yumeji*. As such, they need no protection from other Realms.

Baku are the exception. Since baku are formed from dreams of a resident of another Realm, they carry many of the characteristics of the dreamer's home Realm with them. Baku are vulnerable to the Control of the Realm that spawned them. To protect them, they may use jade as normal (except baku no oni), but no substance exists to protect Yume-do natives in particular.

ABILITIES

Yumeji grants many abilities to those who have taken within themselves some of Dream. Command over baku, protection from other forms of Control, and even the ability to alter time lies within *yumeji*. These abilities are detailed under the Control section.

MAGIC

The magic of all races save the Nezumi are largely unaffected in Yume-do. Human, Naga, and other non-Nezumi races cast their spells in Yume-do without any changes from their Ningen-do functions. Keep in mind that any spell that would put a person to sleep has no effect when cast in Yume-do — the person is already dreaming!

In Yume-do, all spells cast by a Nezumi sorcerer or ratling shaman gain the effects of four spell levels of metamagic feats without penalty.

In Yume-do, any spell cast by a Nezumi shaman gets four Free Raises, and the shaman is considered to be one School Rank higher than he normally is (allowing him to cast higher level spells, if he knows them).

NEW SPELL

SKEIN OF SLEEP

Enchantment [Mind-affecting] (Water)

Level: Shu * (see text) (Water)

Components: V, S, F, DF

Casting Time: See text

Range: Medium (100 ft. + 10 ft./level)

Target: One or more living creatures within the range

Duration: Instantaneous

Saving Throw: See text

Spell Resistance: No

You send everyone within the range to Yume-do, the Realm of Dreams. Their physical bodies remain in the Realm this spell was cast in, but their minds travel to Yume-do — exactly as if they were sleeping. The spell has no effect on those with *yumeji* already, or on unwilling targets.

This spell also grants *yumeji* to the targets. If this spell is cast as a third level spell, it grants the first level of *yumeji*. If it is cast as a sixth level spell, it bestows the second level of *yumeji*, and as a ninth level spell, the third level of *yumeji*.

This is a weaker version of the spell that the Naga Jakla used to bring their race into the Great Sleep.

SKEIN OF SLEEP

Element: Water

Mastery Level: 2/4/6

Duration: Instantaneous

Area of Effect: One character

Range: 15'

You send everyone within a hundred feet to Yume-do, the Realm of Dreams. Their physical bodies remain in the Realm this spell was cast in, but their minds travel to Yume-do — exactly as if they were sleeping. The spell has no effect on those with *yumeji* already, or on unwilling targets.

This spell also grants *yumeji* to the targets. If this spell is cast as a Mastery Level 2 spell, it grants the first level of *yumeji*. If it is cast as a Mastery Level 4 spell, it bestows the second level of *yumeji*, and as a Mastery Level 6 spell, the third level of *yumeji*.

This is a weaker version of the spell that the Naga Jakla used to bring their race into the Great Sleep.

RELATIONS WITH OTHER REALMS

Natives of Yume-do are, for the most part, baku. The only consensus among baku is that there is no consensus.

Other permanent residents of Yume-do typically show some ties to Ningen-do. The Transcendent came from the Realm of Mortals, and the Naga lived there for untold ages. Both groups still have interests in Ningen-do, but they are the exception rather than the norm.

INHABITANTS

Nearly every creature visits Yume-do. Very few live there. The baku are numerous and diverse, but they are also the vast majority of the creatures that live in Yume-do. Much more rare are those creatures from other Realms that chose to live in Yume-do. The Transcendent were originally mortal Nezumi from Ningen-do. The Naga are natives of Tengoku, previously residing in Ningen-do. For the largest Spirit Realm, Yume-do is surprisingly uniform.

Though Jigoku cannot spread its grip into Yume-do, several Shadowlands creatures spend a great deal of time in Yume-do. The baku no oni are technically natives of Yume-do, though they serve Jigoku's interests. Rarely, even shiyokai (see *Creatures of Rokugan* page 64 and *Way of the Shadowlands* page 129) also wander Yume-do, terrorizing and consuming baku.

NEZUMI TRANSCENDENT

Perhaps the most powerful and enigmatic creatures in all of Yume-do are those who the Nezumi call "Those-Whose-Power-Shines-Brighter-Than-a-Thousand-Torches-and-Whose-Name-Stands-As-a-Great-Wall-Against-Tomorrow"—what the Rokugani call the Transcendent. The Transcendent are the Nezumi equivalent of gods—powerful shamans who have left the mortal world behind to embrace an unknowable destiny in Yume-do. Their power could be compared to those of the Fortunes, though their numbers are fewer. They universally have five levels of yumeji, and their particular form of magic grants them even more power in Yume-do. To the Transcendent, linear time means very little—as the most powerful denizens of a Realm that defies time, they can manipulate the past and future almost as easily as the present with their Name magic.

Unsurprisingly, the Transcendent favor the Nezumi. They have bent reality to extreme lengths for the Nezumi as a race, though they seem remarkably uncaring about most individuals. They are the beings responsible for the famed Nezumi immunity to Taint—all Nezumi carry a little yumeji with them, lending them both the immunity to Taint and drawing them to Yume-do for their afterlife.

They are also responsible for their own creation. At some point—"when" is not relevant to beings such as the Transcendent—they reached back through time and the Veil to the era of the Naga race's dominance. The Transcendent existed, while the Nezumi race did not yet. The Transcendent found (or perhaps knew all along) that their destiny was to create... themselves.

The Transcendent saw the day when the Naga retreated from Ningen-do into their Great Sleep. The once ubiquitous, dominant race left vast empty lands, which the Transcendent remembered as their homeland. They knew then that there was room for the Nezumi race to truly be born. The Transcendent found the ancestors of the Nezumi: large ratlike beasts of burden left behind by the Naga. Using powerful Name magic, they gave one of these beasts the first Name. In addition, they gave him the gift and task of elevating the rest of his kind, which he did. Thus began the Nezumi race—the Transcendent quite literally defined themselves into being, fitting for the ultimate expressions of the power of Name.

None aside from the Transcendent know of this, though others with strong yumeji could eventually see the event, if they knew when to look. The Transcendent have not interfered so drastically in any other event that has yet to come to pass. It is likely that were they to interfere again, they would be so subtle as to escape notice.

See the sourcebook *Way of the Ratling* for more background about Name and the Transcendent.

BAKU

Baku are the creatures that make up the vast majority of the Realm of Dreams. Everything that exists in a dream creates a baku. Every long-lost lover, every unforgiving homicidal sensei, every childhood toy lost years ago, every feature in every dream is a baku created by the dreamer to play that role. Only those actually asleep create baku: natives of Yume-do and those who entered the Realm any other way do not create them. Normally, baku are ephemeral, nonsentient, and do not survive the dreamer awakening. However, if the dream was extremely vivid and meaningful to the sleeper, there is a chance that one of the baku in it will spontaneously generate yumeji, allowing it to survive and wander the Realm of Dreams even after its creator wakes up. A good rule of thumb is this: if the dreamer finds his thoughts drifting back to the dream, or if something in the dream causes him to alter his waking behavior, then a baku will have survived the dream.

While in Yume-do, the baku has the same statistics as the entity or object it was created to mimic—potentially anything. The creature acts in a manner consistent with the role it played in the dream, with influences from the Realm it was dreamed from.

For example, when Tsi Xing Guo, the Fortune of Steel, dreams of the mortal son he left behind upon his ascension as a Fortune, the child may be a rebellious little brat, but he will still be regal and honorable, as befits a dream from Tengoku. A mujina in Sakkaku dreaming of a samurai to torment will create a capricious and chaotic baku in the guise of a human. Baku all have at least one level of yumeji, with a few rare specimens possessing more. Outside of Yume-do, however, a baku takes on what some theorize is the natural state of the creature, undistorted by the personal perceptual bias of Yume-do. This is the baku as described in *Creatures of Rokugan* and *Bearers of Jade*.

BAKU NO ONI

Baku no Oni are the dark counterpart to the baku. The rare times that creatures in Jigoku dream of anything strongly enough to form a baku that can survive awakening, the result is a baku no oni.

Within Yume-do, they wander the plane, and like any oni, they seek to destroy and corrupt. They are intelligent and cunning, though single-minded.

Still, they cannot enter a dreamer's dreamscape, and Yume-do itself prohibits Jigoku's Control from spreading. Thus, the baku no oni attempt to cross the Veil into Jigoku or Ningen-do as often as possible. Most weak baku no oni do not survive the crossing, though the powerful ones can cross... once. The Veil has no love for Jigoku, and so much of the baku no oni's spirit is ripped from it when it passes through the Veil that a second trip would in all likelihood destroy it.

Baku no oni need no sleep, and thus never need to return to Yume-do.

The statistics presented here are for those baku no oni outside Yume-do. As with the baku, within Yume-do they have the form of whatever their dreamer made them.

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Death of Dreams: If a Baku no Oni hits someone with claw attacks a number of times equal to his Void Rank within a 24-hour timespan, the target must make a Water roll (TN 20) or fall into a dreamless sleep after the third attack. This sleep lasts for three hours. The character cannot be awoken from this sleep without magic; the sleep is not restful in the slightest, and the sleeper's mind does not travel to Yume-do as normal.

Yumeji: Baku no oni have level two yumeji.

PERCEPTION AND TRAVELING IN YUME-DO

Yume-do is a Realm of concept and individual thought. As such, there is no "true appearance" of anything in the Realm. Everything appears as a composite of its own self-image and the paradigm of the viewer.

For example, a baku that represents a concept of "the ultimate weapon" would appear as several different things to different viewers. To the eyes of a Mantis samurai, the baku could be the kama that the already-legendary former daimyo Yoritomo wielded. To a Lion, it might be the Celestial Sword Shinrai, etc. Items do not change appearance for any given viewer once established.

Places are distinct in Yume-do more through variations in concept than spatial relations. As such, altering your own perception of the Realm is the primary method of transportation... but this means of travel is available only to those with some tie to Yume-do. Yume-do natives, Naga, and Nezumi may use this method, as can anyone with yumeji.

Properly aligning your perception to find the target requires a Concentration check using your Wisdom modifier instead of your Constitution modifier.

The broader your search, the more likely you are to find the dream you look for.

Target is...	DC
Specific individual	40
Member of a specific family	35
Member of a specific clan	25
Specific individual well known to you	20
Member of your clan	15

Properly aligning your perception to find the target requires a Meditation/Awareness roll. The broader your search, the more likely you are to find the dream you look for.

BAKU NO ONI

Medium-sized Aberration

[Spirit, Oni, Shadowlands]

Hit Dice: 6d8+30 (57 hp)

Initiative: +2 (Dex)

Speed: 50 ft.

AC: 21 (+2 Dex, +9 natural)

Attacks: 2 claws +7 melee

Damage: Claw 1d4+3 plus Charisma drain

Face/Reach: 5 ft. by 10 ft./ 5 ft.

Special Attacks: Charisma drain

Special Qualities: Damage Reduction 5/+2

(jade), Spirit qualities, Yumeji

Saves: Fort +7, Ref +4, Will +4

Abilities: Str 16, Dex 15, Con 20, Int 10,

Wis 8, Cha 16, Taint 8

Skills: Balance +7, Hide +7, Jump +8,

Listen +4, Move Silently +7, Tumble

+7

Climate/Terrain: Yume-do, Shadowlands

Organization: Solitary or pack (3-8)

Challenge Rating: 6

Treasure: None

Honor: Always 0

Alignment: Always chaotic evil

Advancement: 7-15 HD

(Medium-size)

COMBAT

Charisma Drain (Su): The first successful claw attack in a round by a baku no oni deals 1d4 points of temporary Charisma damage.

Spirit Qualities (Ex): As spirits, baku no oni gain a +4 racial bonus against all enchantment effects except those of other spirits. Baku no oni can sense passages to Yume-do and Jigoku within one mile.

Yumeji (Su): Baku no oni have level two yumeji.

BAKU NO ONI

Earth: 5

Water: 3

Fire: 3

Agility: 4

Air: 3

Awareness: 5

Shadowlands Taint: Innate

Shadowlands Powers: Unholy Vision, Fu Leng's Hunger

Skills: Athletics 5, Hand-to-Hand (Claws) 4, Stealth 4

TN to Be Hit: 25

Carapace: 7

Attack Roll: 8k4

Damage Roll: 5k2

Wounds: 30: +5, 50: +15, 65: Down, 90: Dead



Target is...	TN
Specific individual	50
Member of a specific family	40
Member of a specific clan	30
Specific individual well known to you	25
Member of your clan	20

If you know where someone is in Ningen-do, and you can relate your position in Yume-do to locations in Ningen-do, you can usually find your target. The relative position is usually the same, or very close. Traveling in this method requires the same amount of travel time as traveling in Ningen-do does, though it may be done by anyone.

FEATURES OF YUME-DO

OTHER TIMES

One unique feature of Yume-do is the passage of time. While time is nearly always linear in Yume-do (events always happen in the same order, regardless of Realm), the speed at which time passes is highly variable. Often, a dreamer will spend a full night asleep in his home Realm, and spend anywhere from ten minutes to six weeks (or more) in Yume-do. This effect is erratic, though more enlightened souls tend to have time slow down for them more often.

Those who possess high levels of *yumeji* can control this phenomenon to a degree. Even without *yumeji*, magically gifted individuals can occasionally benefit from it in the form of a prophetic dream or vision.

Characters with *yumeji* level three have the ability to see the past and future, though only within Yume-do. The vision comes freely, but making sense of it enough to glean useful information from it requires a Scry check. The DC is 25 for events within a week (in the future or past), 40 within a month, 55 within a year, 70 within ten years, and 90 for beyond. A failed roll confuses the perceptions of the character, and the ability may not be used for a full day afterwards.

Yumeji level four allows one to see the Realm much more precisely. Such characters may, on a successful Scry check as above, see twice as far into the past or future within Yume-do. Seeing events outside of Yume-do is now possible, though range is limited to one-tenth normal range (DC 70 within a year)

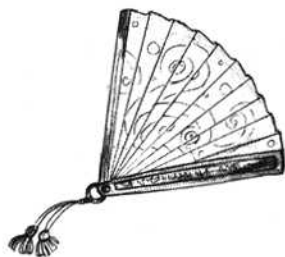
Yumeji level five allows one to affect times other than the present. On a Spellcraft check (DC 35), the character can attempt to reach through with any Name spells (any spell cast by a Nezumi sorcerer or Ratling shaman is Name magic) or Water spells he may possess. These spells may not cause direct harm to any object or creature. The target must be first perceived as per the scrying rules above. If the Spellcraft check fails, the spell is still considered used, though it has no effect.

Characters with *yumeji* level three have the ability to see the past and future, though only within Yume-do. The vision comes freely, but making sense of it enough to glean useful information from it requires a Lore (Yume-do)/Perception roll. The TN is 25 for events within a week (in the future or past). Every three Raises increase the range, following this pattern: week, month, year, ten years, one hundred years, etc. There are no limits to the number of Raises that can be made on this roll. A failed roll confuses the perceptions of the character, and the ability may not be used for a full day afterwards.

Yumeji level four allows you to see the Realm much more precisely. Such characters may, on a successful Lore (Yume-do)/Perception roll as above, see twice as far into the past or future within Yume-do. Seeing events outside of Yume-do is now possible, though range is limited to one-tenth normal range.

Yumeji level five allows you to affect times other than the present. On a Lore (Yume-do)/Water roll (TN 40), the character can, once per day, attempt to reach through with any Name spells (any spell cast by a Nezumi is Name magic) or Water spells he may possess. These spells may not cause direct harm to any object or creature. The target must be first perceived as per the scrying rules above. If the Lore (Yume-do)/Water roll fails, the spell is still considered to have been used, though it has no effect.





THAT WHICH MIGHT HAVE BEEN

Within Yume-do lie other worlds that exist deep in possibility. These sub-Realms are very similar to Ningen-do — the physical laws are identical, and there is nearly always an Empire of Rokugan, though subtly (or in some cases, not so subtly) different.

Finding these worlds is a DC 45 check, as per the traveling rules above.

Finding these worlds is a TN 55 check, as per the traveling rules above.

ALTERNATE WORLDS KNOWN TO EXIST

- A Rokugan in which the Gozoku never fell from power. The Phoenix, Crane, and Scorpion together dominate a puppet Emperor, Hantei XXXVI. The Emperor is old, and his health is failing. His daughter Hantei Yugo-zohime, who was raised by the Ikoma, has already set in motion plans to usurp the three clans' power and install herself as a powerful Empress.
- A dark Rokugan in which Fu Leng won the Second Day of Thunder. The Shadowlands rule the mainland, and Toturi's Army is entrenched on the Mantis Isles. The future is bleak for this world, and even those powerful enough to be able to travel to it tend to stay away.
- A Realm where nothing exists. Scrying powers detect only utter blackness, and anything that enters never returns. It is possible that this is either an alternate world in which the Lying Darkness won the Battle of Oblivion's Gate and successfully unmade everything, or perhaps it is a world that has yet to be created by Nothing's first words, before the Three Gods Who Have No Names, before even the birth of Amaterasu and Onnotangu. Perhaps it is both...
- A Rokugan beset by civil war — though unlike the Clan War of the 'real' Rokugan, in this world, the Shadowlands never interfered, and the clans formed coalitions against each other. The Phoenix, Dragon, and Crane war on the Lion, Unicorn, and Scorpion under the auspices of a weak Hantei. The Empire is fracturing, and yet the Crab stand firm against the Shadowlands.
- A technological Rokugan, one where skyscrapers and helicopters rule the skies, and the Mantis Clan is the Imperial House. In this world, the Second Day of Thunder has been history for a thousand years, and the Third rapidly approaches. This world is much more difficult to reach than the others (DC 70, TN 80), and some wonder if it is not one of the myriad "what-if" Realms they have found, but a passageway to the true future. The history of this world is mostly lost, but the bits that remain seem to match current events.

AKASHA, THE GREAT CIVILIZATION OF THE NAGA

Finding Akasha is a DC 28 check, as per the traveling rules above.

Finding Akasha is a TN 30 check, as per the traveling rules above.

Deep in Yume-do, hidden from prying eyes, lie the immortal remains of a once-mortal race. The Naga, born of Tengoku, residents of Ningen-do, now live in Yume-do, in a city they call "Akasha."

Ages ago, the Naga race found themselves triumphant over what they termed "the Foul." The astrologers of the Jakla breed foresaw that the Foul would again rise, and that the Naga would live to see that day. Taking destiny into their own hands, they wove a Veil of Sleep around their greatest city, and nearly all the Naga throughout the world fell into a deep slumber.

They awoke ages later. An empire of pink-skinned talking monkeys with two legs ruled what had been Naga lands, their formerly domesticated pets were now sentient, and the Foul was as strong as ever. The Isawa Calendar places this event in the year 1124.

However, what the Naga had left behind, deep inside Yume-do, is the greatest tragedy of all.

That which they sought to recreate — their vast civilization at the height of its glory — still exists in Yume-do. The city is larger than any other known: even Otosan Uchi and the great Medinaat al-Salaam in the Burning Sands are not as large as the glorious Akasha. Millions of Naga live in the bright city Akasha, but only while they sleep. All Naga dreamers re-enter Akasha, and live a second life there while they sleep.

When the Naga were awake, they remembered little of the city they created inside Yume-do. The second Veil that the Jakla erected to protect the city has done its job too well. Even awake, the Naga cannot remember Akasha except in the vaguest of legends. In fact, the 'lost city' the Naga sought upon awakening is, in fact, Akasha, the one true home of the Naga. The city, deep in Yume-do, superimposed over the Cobra city Vyakarana, began to decay when the Naga left it.

With the return of the Great Sleep, the Naga have returned fully, and the city has been restored.

That which the Naga prize above all else, the collective racial soul (also named "the Akasha") lies at the heart of the city, in the Qatol's Palace. All Naga return to the Akasha upon death, and emerge when they are born. Within Yume-do, this makes the race effectively immortal; a new Naga exists as soon as one dies. Individuals die, but the People live on.

Despite the power the Naga have within Yume-do, they have a problem. While the Shadow which infested the Akasha ages ago is gone, enough Naga have been born inside Yume-do that the Akasha itself has *yumeji*. This has manifested itself as infertility of the majority of the Naga in other Realms (especially Ningen-do). Without a way to leave Yume-do, this could very well be the end of the Naga living in other Realms, as a scant percentage of the populace can reproduce each generation.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

MY LORD, MY... BUTTERFLY?

(This adventure hook is suitable for those PC groups who have some way to breach the Veil.)

One of the PCs' daimyo has fallen ill. Upon awakening one morning, he has simply not moved. His attendant shugenja has found that the spirit of the daimyo is not present — the spirit in his body is that of a butterfly.

The daimyo's spirit is still wandering Yume-do, lost in its dream. The PCs must find a way to enter Yume-do and breach the Veil, locate their daimyo's dream, and find some way to wake him up. Each task is difficult in itself, and a quest to accomplish all of them sounds like a fool's errand.

Waking him up will possibly be the hardest of all, and the task for which there is no precedent. The daimyo's dream is not a pleasant one — the GM should use this opportunity to delve into the daimyo's true nature, perhaps with an unhappy childhood or terrible battle. To awaken him, the PCs must convince him that the sensations he is experiencing are only phantoms, and he must instead war with the butterfly spirit (a pathetically easy target) to regain his life.

If they are successful, the daimyo will be understandably grateful, and be a valuable ally for the PCs in the future (even those who do not serve him).

THE WOMAN OF HIS DREAMS

Doji Mitsuda is a young shugenja with a serious problem: he is in love. She is the perfect woman: demure, intelligent, honorable, and responsible. She has a sense of humor that makes him laugh more than is appropriate. She is the woman of his dreams.

She is the woman in his dreams.

For nearly a year now, he has been in love with a baku, visiting her every night. She is a spirit in the form of his ideal woman, and Mitsuda has fallen for her. And though that is usually not a factor, Mitsuda has one item very much in his favor — his family is powerful and wealthy. He has grown up able to get anything he wants, and he wants this baku woman more than anything.

The PCs' activities have caught his attention, and there are rumors that one or more of the PCs has the ability to control dreams. He approaches them with the simple request that they bring his beloved out of Yume-do to him.

He will not listen to reason, and if refused, he will conclude, in his love-stricken haze, that the PCs are his enemies, and they seek to keep him apart from his love.

Failing that, he has also heard that maho can unite him with his beloved...



CHAPTER TEN:

RINGEN-DO, THE REALM
OF MORTALSTHROUGH BLOOD
AND THUNDER
PART ELEVEN

Tokei shuddered, his eyes adjusting slowly to the shimmering light. Uncertainty was the worst part; he never knew quite where he was. Sometimes he was unsure if there ever had been a man named Morito Tokei.

How long had it been? How long since that fateful day in Nanashi Mura? If he had known what was truly about to occur... well, who can say what he would have done?

In his strange journey he had seen sights of wondrous beauty: the animal spirits galloping across the great plains of Chikushodo. The noble ancestors of Yomi. The glittering palaces of the Elemental Dragons. He had also seen things that had scarred his soul: the blood-crazed legions of Toshigoku, Realm of Slaughter. The ravening hungry spirits of Gaki-do. The indescribable pits of Jigoku. The last memories he wished deeply he could rid himself of, but they were a part of him now.

Through blood and thunder he had come, and he was no longer the man he had been. He was Naka Tokei now, for better or worse, for now and forever.

Such was the price of wisdom.

There was much pain in the mortal world, but also so much left to do. As much as he had learned, as much as his power had grown — now greater even than his teacher's — he was uncertain if he was prepared to face that which waited for him in Ningen-do. He knew he was unprepared... but the one who awaited him, if she were willing...

What he wished was irrelevant. Kuro had taught him that much. "The only matter worth considering is necessity," the old man had always said. "The rest can take care of itself." The necessity at the moment was for him to return, to pass on what he had learned.

And he must do so now, by whatever means were available.

Tokei reached out with the heightened senses of a true Master of the Elements, seeking his path through the Realm of Dreams, seeking the heart of a like-minded mortal.

He found something, and focused upon it. Not knowing who he had found, or who had found him, he drew himself through the ether.

With a sudden thud, Tokei struck the ground headfirst. Blurred vision and a throbbing pain in his skull reminded him what it felt like to be mortal, aspects he had not missed. With a painful grunt, he sat up and looked at his surroundings.

Tokei found himself in a darkened temple, facing a small shrine. In the deep shadows, a figure knelt in supplication and prayer. When Tokei appeared, her eyes widened in alarm. One hand darted to the katana beside her.

Tokei lifted his head, and for the first time, their eyes met. A flicker of recognition passed between them, a karmic connection stronger than simple memory. Her hand fell away from the blade.

"Pardon my arrival—" Tokei said, his voice rough. "I am—"

"I know who you are," the young samurai-ko replied. "I have studied the allies of Toturi the Black. The histories record your death."

"Mortal history records a number of peculiar things," Tokei said.

"The wise trust only what they know."

A look of confusion crossed her features. She opened her mouth to protest, but the Master's grim eyes silenced her. There was something there, something older than she could name. It awed and frightened her at once.

"What is your name?" he demanded, breaking the tense silence.

"I am Miyako, daughter of Lord Toki, your old comrade. You stand in his castle, the Vigilant Keep of the Monkey."

"Indeed," Toki smiled, and extended a gentle hand toward her. "I am indebted to you, Miyako-chan. You shall be my finest student, if you would have me. It is the least I can do."

She looked at his hand curiously.

"Pardon me," he said with a chuckle. "Shaking hands is a custom of my former clan. I hope I did not offend you, Miyako-chan. It has been quite some time since I had to obey the normal rules of etiquette."

"Of course I am not offended," she said, accepting his hand warmly. "I would be honored to become your student, but I fear I have little to offer you. I am no shugenja. There are others in the castle, the Fuzake family—"

"I am not looking for an apprentice, Miyako-chan," Toki said. "I seek only to share what I have seen, to share the wisdom of the Spirit Realms."

"Of course, Toki-sama," Miyako said with a bow.

Toki began his story.

NINGEN-DO AND THE CELESTIAL ORDER

Ningen-do, the Realm of the physical world in which the Empire of Rokugan is located, is at the center of the Spirit Realms. It stands between the dark pits of Jigoku and the holy Realm of Tengoku. Ningen-do is a testing ground for mortal souls, a Realm that measures each spirit to determine its worthiness for the next life. It is also the primary buffer against the Realm of Evil, the battleground that prevents the demonic oni from devouring all else. Ningen-do is a remarkably jealous Realm, and attempts to claim all who enter it. When the children of the Sun and Moon fell from Tengoku, they became bound by the power of Ningen-do and could not leave until they were released by death.

CLOSE REALMS

Ningen-do is closer to more realms than any other Spirit Realm. Chikushudo, Gaki-do, Meido, Sakkaku, Yomi, Yume-do, and Jigoku all border on this Realm. As a result, the Realm of Mortals is often visited by spirits driven by mischief, conquest, or simple curiosity.

DISTANT REALMS

Tengoku is distant from Ningen-do. The only known passage is in the throne room in Otosan Uchi, where so many Fortunes have been proclaimed by the Emperors. Toshigoku is also mercifully distant from Ningen-do. Were it not, the murderous spirits of that realm would have massacred the population of Rokugan long ago.

BARRED REALMS

None.

DEATH AND NINGEN-DO

Ningen-do is a central part of the karmic cycle. Those who did well in life but did not quite fulfill their destiny are often reincarnated in Ningen-do. These reincarnated spirits rarely remember much of their former life, but are occasionally drawn to their former friends and associates. Certain spells (such as *kharmā*) can awaken a soul to the truth of its former existence.

KNOWN PASSAGES TO NINGEN-DO

Passages to Ningen-do are plentiful throughout the other Realms.

SPONTANEOUS TRANSITIONS

No souls are ever spontaneously pulled into Ningen-do.

JEALOUSY

Ningen-do is a jealous realm indeed. Any who dare linger within its borders risk becoming trapped.

After each ten minutes spent in Ningen-do, a creature must make a Fortitude save. This roll begins at DC 15. If this roll fails, the creature immediately accrues ten points of Mortality. Every ten minutes this DC increases by 5, whether the roll is successful or not.

After each ten minutes spent in Ningen-do, a character must make an Earth roll. This roll begins at TN 15. If this roll fails, he immediately accrues ten points of Mortality. Every ten minutes, this TN increases by 5, whether the roll is successful or not.

CONTROL

Ningen-do's Control is called Mortality. All human, Nezumi, and Naga characters, as well as most other creatures in Rokugan, are assumed to have Level Five Mortality. Only spirits that go to extraordinary lengths to protect themselves from Mortality need worry about being contaminated. Mortality has no effects until Level Five.

Dead spirits such as *gaki*, Toshigoku spirits, and ancestors are immune to Mortality. Some Fortunes and certain Elemental Dragons seem to have discovered ways to ignore Ningen-do's control for short periods, and sometimes visit the mortal realm.

The only known cure for Mortality is death and reincarnation.

LEVEL FIVE

You are now considered a native of Ningen-do. You lose any ranks of Control other than Shadowlands Taint.

If you have the Spirit sub-type, you lose this as well.

PROTECTION AGAINST NINGEN-DO

- 1 Unit — 15 minutes
- 2 Units — 25 minutes
- 3 Units — 30 minutes
- 4 Units — 32 minutes
- 5 Units — 33 minutes
- Each additional unit — +1 minute

PROTECTION BY NINGEN-DO

Denizens of Ningen-do can protect themselves from the Control of other realms by carrying slivers of jade. A sliver of jade at least one inch long and one half inch thick counts as one "unit."

ABILITIES

Ningen-do offers its natives only one ability, but it can occasionally be quite useful.

After each hour spent outside the Realm of Mortals, a native of Ningen-do must make a Will save (DC 10) or be immediately dragged back to the mortal realm. Each hour this DC increases by 2. This save may be failed voluntarily. While this can be useful for finding one's way back home, it can make protracted exploration of the Spirit Realms very difficult.

After each hour spent outside the Realm of Mortals, a native of Ningen-do must make a Willpower roll (TN 5) or be immediately dragged back to the mortal realm. Each hour this DC increases by 5. This save may be failed voluntarily. While this can be useful for finding one's way back home, it can make protracted exploration of the Spirit Realms very difficult.

Certain powerful magics, such as the fate that befell Morito Tokei in this book's fiction, may permanently remove this ability.



JIGOKU

This realm bleeds into the mortal realm in the area known as the Shadowlands. Jigoku seeks to corrupt every facet of Ningen-do, perhaps because Ningen-do seems unable to resist the Realm of Evil's insidious nature.

MEIDO

This realm touches the mortal realm in many places, but interactions between the two realms are few. The Fortune of Death makes certain that none cross the borders; the dead do not deserve the joy of Ningen-do, and those mortals eager to seek death will find it in good time...

SAKKAKU

The natives of Sakkaku are very fond of the Realm of Mortals. They find its natives endlessly amusing.

TENGOKU

The Fortunes, Dragons, Sun, and Moon frequently watch the Realm of Mortals with great interest, but are always careful not to linger there for too long. Mortals may be beneath them, but they are the only line of defense against the Realm of Evil. Also, some of those who now dwell in Tengoku were once mortal, and are eager to find out what their descendants are up to.

TOSHIGOKU

The denizens of Toshigoku have no special feelings for the Realm of Mortals. All is fodder; all must bleed and die.

YOMI

The blessed ancestors are always concerned with the mortals who carry their family names. Watching the Realm of Mortals is the primary pastime for the shiryo of Yomi.

YUME-DO

Yume-do is strongly connected to the Realm of Mortals, as it is the only realm which all mortals visit regularly. Much of the shifting dream-scape of Yume-do is fashioned by the natives of Yume-do.

RELATIONS WITH OTHER REALMS

INHABITANTS

CHIKUSHUDO

Many young animal spirits are quite curious about the realm of mortals, and sometimes visit in human guise. The older animal spirits know better — the Realm of Mortals is nothing but trouble.

GAKI-DO

Lonely gaki frequently visit the Realm of Mortals, both to feed and to look upon all that they have lost. These pathetic spirits never quite escape their own realm, and those that enter Ningen-do carry the sadness of Gaki-do with them.

The dominant inhabitants of Ningen-do are currently humans, but it was not always so. Before the humans ruled, there was a kingdom of free ogres. Before this, there was an empire of Nezumi. Before them, the Naga civilization covered the land. Forgotten in the mists of time, an alliance between five powerful races — the kenku, kitsu, zokujin, trolls, and ningyo — brought order to the mortal realm. This alliance ended in tragedy, and only the vaguest remnants of the Five Races remain today.

Each of the races that lived in the mortal realm has its own explanation for the creation of the universe, many of which are mutually contradictory. Which of these tales is the truth is not in question — what each of these races believed to be true was in fact the truth, for them. The origins of creation are as fickle and impossible to grasp, it seems, as enlightenment itself.

It is entirely possible that other civilizations could have come and gone during the times before Rokugan.

NINGEN-DO

The Five Races — kenku, kitsu, trolls, zokujin, and ningyo — once ruled the land that would become Rokugan. In the days since their civilization fell, these once-mighty races have become shadows of their former selves. Only two known ruins remain to testify to their former greatness — the city of Voltturnum in the Shadowlands, and the City of Night recently unearthed in Unicorn territory.

The Five Races still exist today, after a fashion. Most of the kitsu were destroyed by Akodo, who mistook them for wild beasts. Only a handful of kitsu remain anywhere in the Spirit Realms, and most avoid Rokugan carefully lest they meet the same fate their kinsmen did. The trolls were eventually corrupted by the Shadowlands. The Lion Clan enslaved the zokujin and put them to work in their copper mines, though some free tribes remain deep within the earth. Only the ningyo remain more or less unscathed. They now dwell in cities beneath the oceans of Rokugan, and associate only with their Orochi servants and with the occasional awakened Naga. The ningyo king, Ryujin, made a deal with the great Orochi sea-serpents so that their kingdom would always be protected from mankind.

Kenku, kitsu, ningyo, trolls, and zokujin are described in *Creatures of Rokugan*.

The pitiful modern-day trolls are described in the *Game Master's Guide*.

KENKU

Earth: 4
Fire: 2
Water: 2
Strength: 4
Air: 3
Rolls when Attacking: 4k2
Rolls for Damage: 6k2
TN to Be Hit: 15
Carapace: 7
Wounds: 15: +5; 25: +10; 35: +15; 45: +25; 55: Dead

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Flight: Kenku can fly at twice their normal walking speed.
Illusion: Once per day, a kenku can take human form for up to an hour or become invisible. If the kenku attacks anyone while invisible, the effect instantly ends.

Magic: Many kenku have spell-casting abilities. These are identical to shugenja of the Soshi school.

Kenku are mysterious, mischievous, and extremely unpredictable. They have been known to act as patrons to great

heroes as well as incorrigible destructive pranksters. Kenku are usually solitary; if they have any civilization to speak of, they keep it a secret from mankind.

KITSU

Earth: 3
Fire: 4
Water: 5
Air: 3
Void: 5
Rolls when Attacking: 6k4
Rolls for Damage: 5k3
TN to Be Hit: 20
Wounds: 20: +5; 30: +10; 40: +15; 50: +25; 60: Dead

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Invulnerability: Kitsu are harmed only by crystal and magical weapons.

Spirit Sense: Kitsu can automatically sense and enter any passage to another Realm in the area. By concentrating for one round, they can detect the nearest passage to any Realm within ten miles.

Spirit Voice: Kitsu can communicate with any spirit that speaks a language.

Void Use: Kenku can spend and recover Void Points as humans can.

Note: Many kitsu have spell-casting abilities. These are identical to the Kitsu school of the Lion (either the sodan-senzo or shugenja version).

Kitsu are generally surly and reclusive. They are not fond of humans and regard them as unpredictable, violent savages. However, a human who approaches them peacefully and shows respect (especially a member of the Kitsu family) might be able to draw upon some of the great wisdom of these spirits.

Kitsu have a special hatred for the Tsuno, and attack them whenever possible.

NINGYO

Earth: 2
Fire: 2
Water: 3
Air: 2
Reflexes: 4
Rolls when Attacking: 4k2
Rolls for Damage: 3k1
TN to Be Hit: 20
Wounds: 10: +5; 20: +10; 30: Dead

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Poison: A ningyo's bite carries a mild poison. Any creature bitten must make an Earth roll vs. TN 10 or lose one rank of Intelligence. This loss lasts for only one day. If a creature is reduced to zero Intelligence, it falls asleep until the poison wears off.

Water Breathing: Ningyo can breathe normally underwater, but suffocate if removed from it.

Darkness Adaptation: Ningyo are nearly invisible in water. They roll and keep six dice on all Stealth rolls underwater. Ningyo can see in total darkness.

Magic: Many ningyo have spell-casting abilities. These are identical to shugenja of the Iuchi school.

THE KENKU KENJUTSU SCHOOL

Ningyo are extremely skittish. They dwell in the deepest regions of the sea and avoid all other races except orochi and Naga. Occasionally a curious young ningyo investigates a passing ship, or even dares to rescue a drowning sailor, but these creatures keep to themselves for the most part.

Some say that Shiba's wife, a mysterious woman he met in a kingdom beneath the sea, was a ningyo.

ZOKUJIN

Earth: 2

Fire: 4

Water: 4

Air: 5

Rolls when Attacking: 6k4

Rolls for Damage: 7k2 (katana), 4k1 (beak or claws)

TN to Be Hit: 25

Carapace: 8

Wounds: 8: +5; 24: +10, 50: Dead

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Stone Brotherhood: Zokujin can sculpt metal and steel like soft clay; the material simply parts at their command. They can move at normal speed through solid stone and metal, and ignore metal and stone armor when attacking. If the zokujin does not spend a full round making a conscious effort to hold stone or metal into a new form, it immediately melts back into its previous shape. This never happens if such an occurrence would harm the zokujin.

Carapace: Zokujin carapace applies only to stone and metal weapons.

Underground Adaptation: Zokujin can automatically sense the location of any creature within one hundred feet that is touching the ground. They can also see in total darkness.

Magic: Many zokujin have spell-casting abilities. These are identical to shugenja of the Kuni school.

Zokujin are the living embodiment of patience. They live for a long, long time and are invulnerable to most weapons, so they see very little reason to be belligerent. By their way of thinking, most things have a way of working themselves out in the end.

These creatures have a deep understanding of the magic of the earth, and are pained by anything that harms or corrupts the earth. Zokujin shamans speak of a great tragedy called the "Day of Broken Thunder," when the Bloodwhite Stone — their most powerful artifact — was stolen and their race began a gradual decline into barbarism. Some zokujin believe that if they could find this stone, their race would be great once more.

A zokujin's average lifespan is several centuries; one can live for up to six hundred years barring accident. A select few zokujin shamans live even longer, and some are rumored to be truly immortal.

Rokugan has a wealth of legends involving kenku swordmasters, willing to teach their techniques to anyone who can pass an exhaustive test of character. Usually, these students are ronin, skilled swordsmen who have somehow survived without the benefits of formal training. If the kenku feel that a swordsman is worthy, they may approach him and offer their secrets. The following bushi school is one possible example of kenku swordsmanship, translated slightly from the kenku style so that mortals might practice it.

Under most circumstances, a player character should not be allowed to start play as a student of the kenku. Kenku techniques are on par with the bushi schools of the Great Clans. Further, respect and patronage of the kenku swordmasters must be earned, not assumed. Learning the following techniques should generally be the reward at the end of a great adventure. That being said, the GM is free to do as he pleases and may allow kenku-trained characters if they fit the campaign.



THE KENKU KENJUTSU SCHOOL 10201

The Multiple Schools feat is not required to learn kenku technique feats. However, only those who have found favor in the eyes of a revered kenku sensei may acquire these feats.

WING OF THUNDER

KENKU TECHNIQUE

You are able to take expert advantage of slower opponents.

Prerequisite: Base attack bonus +1 or higher, kenku teacher.

Benefit: Once per round, you gain a +1 insight bonus on an attack roll for every two points by which your initiative check is higher than your opponent's. The total bonus gained from this feat cannot exceed your base attack bonus.

HEAVEN'S CLAW

KENKU TECHNIQUE

You can strike at the very heart of your opponent.

Prerequisite: Base attack bonus +4 or higher, Depths of the Void, Void Use, Wing of Thunder.

Benefit: If you inflict more than 10 hit points of damage with a single attack, your target must make a Will save (DC 5 + total damage dealt) or lose one Void Point. Against opponents with no Void Points remaining (or no Void at all), you gain a +2 damage bonus on any attack that inflicts more than 10 hp.

ROIL AND CHURN

KENKU TECHNIQUE

You can make the best of a powerful attack.

Prerequisite: Base attack bonus +10 or higher, Depths of the Void, Heaven's Claw, Power Attack, Void Use, Wing of Thunder.

Benefit: Once per day when using the Power Attack feat, the damage provided by the power attack is doubled.

THE SAME BREEZE

KENKU TECHNIQUE

You can copy the techniques of your foes.

Prerequisite: Base attack bonus +13 or higher, Depths of the Void, Heaven's Claw, Power Attack, Void Use, Wing of Thunder.



Benefit: Once per round as a free action, you may spend a Void Point to copy a Technique Feat of another character within twenty feet. You may copy feats even if you do not have the proper prerequisites to use them. The other character must have actively used the feat during the battle for you to copy it. True kenku do not need to spend Void to use this technique, and may use it even if their opponent has not yet used his techniques.

THE KENKU KENJUTSU SCHOOL 12ND EDITION

Characters who learn from the kenku must be True Ronin or Clan Ronin with the Different School advantage. In addition, they must purchase a 5 point Sensei, as only the greatest kenku swordsmen pass their secrets on to human bushi. Other requirements, such as Great Destiny, Luck, Inner Gift, or perhaps all three may be necessary in order to get a kenku swordmaster's attention.

REQUIREMENTS

Benefit: +1 Reflexes

Skills: Defense, Hunting, Kenjutsu, Lore (Myth and Legend), Meditation, Tea Ceremony, any one Bugei Skill

Beginning Honor: 2.5

TECHNIQUES

Rank 1: Wing of Thunder

The bushi has learned to harness the speed of the wind itself, and can draw that element into himself. If the bushi beats his opponent on initiative, he rolls an extra attack die for every 5 points of difference between their initiative scores.

Rank 2: Heaven's Claw

The bushi has tapped the power of the thunderbolt, striking hard at his enemy's weaknesses. Any time he inflicts more than 10 Wounds with a single attack, his opponent loses one Void Point. Against opponents with no Void Points remaining (or no Void at all), this bushi may add his Air Ring to all damage rolls.

Rank 3: Lightning Kiss

The bushi has captured the swift fury of lightning. He may make two attacks per round.

Rank 4: Roil and Churn

In nature, there is no excess. Every bit of energy is directed to where it is needed. Whenever the bushi makes an attack roll and exceeds his opponent's TN to Be Hit, half of the excess is added to his damage roll. For instance, if the bushi rolls a 35 to hit an opponent whose TN to Be Hit is 25, he may add 5 to his damage total.

Rank 5: The Same Breeze

Two leaves carried on the same breeze seldom blow in the same direction. This is the final lesson of the kenku. The bushi may spend a Void Point in order to copy for one round the bushi Technique of any other character within 20 feet. This technique gives the bushi no special awareness of his opponents' abilities. If the bushi has not seen a Technique, he may not copy it. True kenku do not need to spend Void to use this technique, and may use it even if their opponent has not yet used his techniques.

NEW SPELL

KHARMA

Element: Water

Mastery Level: 6

Duration: Instantaneous

Area of Effect: Remains of dead person

Range: Touch

The shugenja importunes the Fortunes on behalf of a deceased person, begging that his soul be restored and new life granted. No more than one week must have passed before the spell is cast, and the subject's soul must be willing to return.

Reincarnated characters are not the old characters, though they always fulfill a similar role to their predecessors and are similar in many ways. They may have mannerisms, posture, habits, or even identifying features (scars, birthmarks, etc.) of the former character, but they are a completely different people with lives of their own. The reincarnated character recalls only pieces of his former life (often in dreams or flashbacks). He is, however, compelled to fulfill any work left unfulfilled by the previous character. The new character is usually connected to the old one in some way — a friend, relative, lover, or child — although sometimes the new character is merely a stranger with a great deal in common.

All Rings and Traits are the same as the previous character's, as are skills, Advantages, and Disadvantages. The character's Void is reduced by 2. (If the character's Void is 2 or less, reduce two other Rings and associated Traits by one each instead.) The character may choose any school available to his new clan and family. All afflictions and physical ills are cured (as this is a new body) with the exception of the Shadowlands Taint and Shadow Points, both of which are afflictions of the soul as well.

The specifics of the new incarnation's identity are determined by the following table.

- 01-50 — Same clan, same family as previous incarnation.
- 61-70 — Same clan, but different family (if possible) as previous incarnation.
- 71-80 — Different clan. If you were previously a Great Clan character, you become a member of a different Great Clan (roll below; reroll results that indicate previous clan)

- 01-20 — Lion
- 21-40 — Crane
- 41-55 — Crab
- 56-65 — Unicorn
- 66-75 — Scorpion
- 76-85 — Phoenix
- 86-95 — Dragon
- 96-00 — Mantis

If you were previously a member of an Imperial Family, you remain a member of the Imperial Family. Any other characters may become either a Minor Clan or ronin character as they choose.

81-90 — Minor Clan (Select a Minor Clan of choice.)

91-95 — Imperial Family (Otomo, Seppun, or Miya)

96-99 — Special; roll below

01-75 — Vassal family of a clan. A minor samurai in good standing. May take the Different School feat to learn their clan's techniques if they wish.

76-00 — Ronin

100 — GM's choice (may be a Nezumi, spirit, or other creature but not a Naga or Tainted beast unless the target already is one.)

The new character always arrives on the scene at the end of the spell, seemingly by total coincidence. The new character realizes the truth of his existence when he sees his former body, and replaces the former character as a player character.

This extremely powerful spell is cast but rarely. A mortal who did not live well and fulfill his karma in life may not be allowed to return. At the opposite extreme, the Fortunes themselves have been known to use this spell without petitioning from a shugenja. A mortal who dies without fulfilling his destiny may find himself returned to life through the use of Karma, or may be returned for a second chance after a heroic death or a life well-lived. The exact details of the use of this spell should always be considered carefully by GMs and players alike.

The Kitsune have theorized in depth as to how this spell actually works. How can a soul be reincarnated in a person who partially shared the lifetime of his predecessor? They have concluded that the power of the spirit transcends the boundaries of time itself, and cannot be understood by mere mortals.

(The d20 version of this spell can be found in *Rokugan*.)



NEWS OF THE EMPIRE

The world of Rokugan is a living, breathing, ever-changing place where major events occur all the time. This section is intended to bring you up-to-date on recent events in the Empire, especially those centering on the recent L5R CCG expansion, *Broken Blades*, and appearing in weekly fiction on the Alderac Entertainment Group website. (This fiction can be found at <URL:<http://l5r.alderac.com/fiction/>>.)

In a startling move, Akodo Kaneka declares himself Shogun, military leader of Rokugan — a title that previously existed only in the theories of Sun Tao. He demands that those daimyo who would follow him break their wakizashi as a show of loyalty. From the shards of these blades a new sword will be created in the Kaiu Forge, a katana the Shogun will use to bring unity to Rokugan.

The fact that Kaneka's ownership of the Yasuki lands was apparently a fabrication created by someone attempting to defame Kaneka is more or less forgotten in the controversy surrounding this incident.

Isawa Taeruko, Isawa Hochiu, and Shiba Ningen escape from their prison deep within the earth and return to find Shiba Aikune now leading their clan. Though Aikune welcomes the returning masters, he makes it clear that he intends to continue leading those who would follow him. Upset by this threat to their power, the Masters decide that the Elemental Council must be rebuilt swiftly.

In the Seikitsu Mountains, the gargantuan King of Trolls awakens. Through the efforts of the legendary Togashi Mitsu, his apprentice Togashi Matsu, Scorpion shugenja Bayushi Ogura, and the noble sacrifice of Kuni Junji, the beast is rendered inert once more.

Yoritomo Kitao's search for the Son of Storms' missing heir takes an unexpected turn when Yoritomo's daughter Kumiko reveals herself. Kumiko pledges her fealty to Akodo Kaneka after Kitao fails to do so, placing herself and her followers under the protection of the Shogun.

With Hida Kuon as their new leader, the Crab mount a massive counterattack upon the conquered towers of the Kaiu Wall. To their surprise they discover Hida Kuroda, now possessed by the Crab Onisu, Kyofu, leading the defenses against his former brethren. Despite this chilling discovery, the Crab retake three of the six lost towers.

Toturi Tsudao's First Legion enters the Shinomen Forest in search of the Tsuno. A large group of Ravagers awaits her there, and battle is joined.

Toturi Sezarú decides to take a more proactive role in seeking his father's throne. He arranges to have supplies sent to the beleaguered Dragon Clan, gaining their gratitude and support.

Emerald Champion Yasuki Hachi confronts Hantei Naseru in the Imperial Court in an attempt to prove that he is not a pawn of the Anvil. Though his gambit is successful, the victory is short-lived. A fleet of ships carrying Shadowlands forces immediately attacks Otosan Uchi. Daigotsu, Lord of the Shadowlands, has arrived to assault the Imperial City.



"MANY WORLDS LIE BEYOND THIS ONE.
TRY MY PATIENCE, SAMURAI,
AND I WILL SEND YOU TO THEM."

— SHANAI

Mysterious shapeshifters. Terrifying demons. Bloodthirsty ghosts. Mystical dragons. These creatures often appear in the Empire of Rokugan, but where do they come from? The world that the samurai see and perceive is merely one realm overlapping many others, a single piece of a much larger puzzle. Great wonders lie beyond the borders of the mortal realm, but terrible dangers wait there as well.

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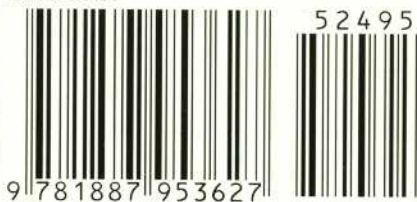
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