# DIM SPIRIT Curse of the Golden Spear: Part 2

An adventure recommended for 4 characters at 6th level



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# The Curse of the Golden Spear Dark Path: Part 3

As Lord Hachiwara swept into the cold room, she tried to scream, but her gag would not let her. Tears came to her eyes as she pulled futilely at the chains pinning her to the bloody stone table. Lord Hachiwara grinned broadly, a disturbing sight. "Your father thinks he's clever, but he shall learn the folly of trying to cheat me! He has already learned one lesson. Even now he comes, carrying with him the **Golden Spear of Himojo Takio**. Yet I think we can arrange one more, final lesson." Moving to the side of the table, the Daimyo took a moment to survey the incantations and sigils drawn in a circle around the table on the floor. Satisfied, he leaned forward and whispered in her ear soothingly. "What I am about to do will hurt you terribly. But do not fear, for what comes after is much, much worse."

# **Going Deeper into Kaidan**

In *The Gift*, the PCs, a group of gaijin tasked with escorting a merchant and his cargo to Lord Hachiwara of Tsue-jo, were introduced to the cursed island nation of Kaidan. They encountered undead, mountain bandits and oni. They witnessed the effects of mind-fever and discovered the existence of the tamashinaki, soulless monsters delighting in murder and bloodshed. Now, as events continue to unfold around them, they are going to learn that the situation in Kaidan is actually much worse than ע רדד בבבעונוייי

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it first appeared. While men are naturally focused on the suffering which the archipelago's curse brings into their lives, they are scarcely the only ones suffering.

The oldest of tales, those still told by the yokai, speak of a time before there was land. The ocean was vast, featureless and dark, for there were not yet lights in the sky. The gods of heaven looked down and desired something more. They took a lantern and placed it in the sky so that they might see to work in the darkness. Thus was the moon born. Reaching from the clouds with a fiery naginata, they caused the ocean to boil, bringing forth land. Thus were born the islands that today are called Kaidan. The gods looked down and they delighted in their creation and sent their children to live therein. These are the kami – the spirits that even today fill the land.

Though the kami entered the land with joy, many soon found reason to complain. There was no warmth to be had in all the islands. Many of the kami, loving heat, cried out for relief as snow and ice multiplied. In answer, the gods placed their great naginata in the sky and its fire brought warmth and joy. Yet the fire burned too hot and after a time the land began to scorch and the very earth billowed forth fire. Those of the kami who had loved the cold were displeased and now it was their turn to cry out for relief. Thus the gods decided to alternate between the light and the dark. They set the flaming spear opposite the moon, that they might circle the land. Likewise, to better please all their children, they allowed for both a time of cold and a time of heat. Thus were made day and night, winter and summer. All was in balance.

The gods brought forth other children to live on the land. First the yokai and then men. They bid these mortal children to heed well the wisdom of the immortal kami, and for a time it was so: men lived in harmony with the spirits and balance was maintained. The yokai say that it was the greed of men which undid this age of balance. For their part, men point to the oni as the first harbingers of evil and disharmony. Regardless of the original cause for the loss of harmony, the coming of the yurei emperor and his undead court threw the world even further out of balance.

Naturally, the shogun and his loyal followers deny they are a blight on the world. Indeed they preach

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a doctrine of order, balance, honor and harmony. Yet their concept of harmony is a self-centered ideal in which life itself bends knee to their whims. Their balanced world is one in which the strong dominate the weak, taking that which they desire without repercussion. Their honor is the honor of the grave and like the grave they are never satisfied, desiring to grasp ever more in their cold, dead hands. Thus they work to subjugate all to their vision. The struggle is not always an easy one. Nature itself, perhaps remembering the world as it was, rightly rebels against the machinations of the nobility, raising up champions of its own.

Today, Kaidan is a land at war with itself and violence is a daily occurrence. Evidence of the disorder is everywhere. Oni wander at will, reveling in the darkness they find. The armies of the shogunate oppress the poor villages of the land, taking what they desire. When the imperial troops leave, bandits arise to take up where the soldiers left off. Nor is it any better in the cities and towns where the yakuza threaten and extort. Even in the spiritual world there is trouble. Positive and negative energies battle for dominance, with negative too long in the ascendancy. Perhaps the most damning evidence of Kaidan's lack of harmony is the fact that Nature and Civilization live in perpetual fear of one another. The yokai hide from the eyes of men and men fear to tread too far from the safety of their doors, lest they be savaged. This was not how it was meant to be and the kami, though still revered by man and yokai alike, weep that it is so. That is to say, those of the kami which remain unblighted weep, for even the kami are susceptible to the negative energies which flood the islands, corrupting the balance.

#### Kaidan: A Land of Oriental Horror

The Kaidan setting draws the majority of its inspiration from Japanese folklore, which is rife with tales of the supernatural. The word "kaidan" is itself Japanese for "ghost story." While Kaidan is a land full of adventure, it is also a land full of horror, tragedy and dark deeds. In Kaidan, humanity lives in fear of the spiritual world, knowing well that vengeance-driven yurei lurk in the darkness of the night and bloodthirsty oni boldly walk the streets disguised as men. While we hope that this adventure, and this setting, provides your players with hours of enjoyment, we also hope that it works to bring a little more horror into the lives of their characters.

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Marl Tyro, a successful merchant, is making his third trip to Kaidan, but he is compelled by more than mere greed for an easy profit. Marl's second trip ended disastrously for him when he ran afoul of Lord Hachiwara of Tsue-jo, daimyo of Oniba province on Yonshu Island. After Marl tried to cheat the noble, Hachiwara took the merchant's daughter, Honya, as a hostage and sent him back to gaijin lands with a mission: the retrieval of a powerful weapon of ancient Kaidanese manufacture. Marl complied, even as he schemed for a way to destroy the undead daimyo.

Now Marl returns to Tsue-jo to reclaim his daughter, bearing the spearhead of the Golden Spear of Himojo Takio. The magical spearhead is a powerful weapon against oni, but it also bears a curse of loyalty. Any who view it are compelled to remain close to it lest they suffer. Marl knows of the curse and keeps the spearhead in an ornate chest. This chest, at the same time, carries the instruments of Marl's vengeance: four gems of condensed positive energy, keyed to explode at a command from Marl. The spearhead sits in the chest atop a third magic item: a *talking pillow*. To protect his treasures. Marl has hired a group of mercenaries as guards: the PCs. It was well that Marl did so, for the oni court, not wanting the spear to fall into the hands of the shogunate, attempted to wrest it away from Marl. Nevertheless, the oni were thwarted and Marl eagerly anticipates rescuing his daughter and hurting the daimyo. Marl is not alone in plotting devious machinations. Lord Hachiwara himself has a surprise planned for the merchant. The daimyo, an undead wizard, has plucked the heart of young Honya from her chest, transforming her into a hone-onna, a skeletal undead woman who sucks the life from those around her. By day she appears human, but at night she is monstrous, with an insatiable hunger for life.

Meanwhile, elsewhere on Yonshu, a village of hengeyokai, shape shifting humanoids, are experiencing a problem with their water. The kami which dwells in the spring from which their water originates has become corrupted and the water has turned to poison. An ushi-oni, or ox demon, is responsible. The village does not know this but it does know it must soon discover a solution to their dilemma. While the troubles of a henge village are far removed from the workings of the Oniba daimyo, both are going to end up playing a part in the PCs' future as Marl's conniving ways serve to make them fugitives from the law.

#### **Designer's Note: Dim Spirit**

The title of this adventure, *Dim Spirit*, is a literal interpretation of the Japanese word, "yurei," which is often translated as "ghost." Specifically, in the context of this adventure, it refers to Honya Tyro, whose existence is fated to prove troublesome to the PCs.

# **Adventure Synopsis**

As the PCs, having arrived in Tsue-jo with Marl Tyro, await an audience with the daimyo, Marl assigns them the task of buying horses and distributing "presents" to the population. The daimyo, after a day of delay, arranges a meeting with Marl and the PCs. At this audience the Golden Spear of Himojo Takio is brought out of the chest and shown to all in attendance as its history is recounted by a court singer. Satisfied, the daimyo gives Marl a present, and his daughter, and dismisses them. As Marl and the PCs leave the city, Marl detonates his gems, hoping to catch the daimyo in the blast. Only after he has done so does Marl reveal his full plan to the PCs. Armed with dubious map of the mountains, Marl intends to avoid confrontations with Kaidan soldiers by heading straight west through a "secret" pass.

That night, as the group takes refuge near an abandoned garden shrine, tragedy strikes. The shrine is abandoned because it is haunted. The ghost is not the only problem. Marl's daughter, now an undead monster, kills her father. Soon the PCs are faced with a number of dilemmas including an undead girl who is attached to them, groups of assassins and soldiers, sent by the daimyo to kill them, and, if they choose, a ghost who desires to be laid to rest. They also may begin to realize that they are afflicted by a curse of some kind; though it is doubtful they realize that the *Golden Spear* is the cause of their problem.

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The choices the PCs make eventually bring them through the dangerous forest northwest of Tsue-jo to the hengeyokai village of Kitsumura. The village is suffering from an affliction with their water. The village elders, who know of the PCs' earlier actions in Agoya, offer to help the PCs if the PCs first discover the source of their problem and put it right.



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The PCs, traveling upstream, must face and defeat both a ushi-oni who has poisoned the water and the now-corrupted kami. If they can succeed at this task, they learn that the pass west is real, that it is guarded by a powerful oni, and that the further they travel from the *Golden Spear*, the weaker they will get.

Player characters should be 6th level when they begin this adventure. Those who succeed in defeating the ushi-oni and the water kami should earn enough experience to reach 7th level, using the medium advancement track.

#### <u>Magic in Kaidan</u>

Because of the nature of the curse encompassing the archipelago, some magic works different in Kaidan. For the sake of brevity the following rules apply in Kaidan:

1. Spells and magic items which bring the dead back to life do not work in Kaidan, including *raise dead*, *resurrection*, and *reincarnation*.

2. Spells and magic items which allow planar movement, such as *astral projection* or *plane shift*, do not work properly in Kaidan, as Kaidan is connected to only two planes: Yomi and Jigoku. Ethereal-related spells still function but they take one through Yomi.

3. Any positive energy effect which requires a dice roll, such as cure spells or a cleric's ability to channel positive energy suffers -1 for each die rolled.

# **Beginning the Adventure**

It is assumed that the PCs have completed part one of this adventure arc, The Gift. If you have not played through The Gift, you need to determine the reason why the PCs have agreed to work for Marl Tyro. For some, the promise of payment may be enough, but there are many reasons why gaijin adventurers might be in Kaidan. They may be working as agents of a church, a government or some other organization interested in learning more about Kaidan. Kaidan is a land cut off from world, metaphysically politically, and the spiritually. Sailors share fantastic stories about the ghosts, goblins and demons of the islands. It is natural that the outside world would take advantage of any opportunity to learn more of the mysterious archipelago and escorting a merchant and his cargo makes a good cover. Regardless, as this adventure begins, the PCs are in Tsue-jo, on

the island of Yonshu. They have been in Tsue-jo for two days and Marl, who is growing impatient, has been assured that he will have an audience with Lord Hachiwara on the morrow.

Between the conclusion of The Gift and the beginning of Dim Spirit, the player characters should have had a chance to level up and do some shopping in Tsue-jo. Because they are gaijin, the PCs have a harder time buying and selling than would normally be the case. In The Gift, the problem of speaking the language was one difficulty affecting interactions with the natives. It is possible, even probable, that one or more of the PCs, when they leveled up, took a rank in the linguistic skill and learned the Kaidanese language. Despite this, they are still foreigners in a xenophobic culture where buying and selling is tightly controlled, especially the buying and selling of magic, weapons and armor. Characters who want to find any of these things for sale must first succeed at a DC 20 Diplomacy check (If none of the characters speak Kaidanese, impose a -5 circumstance penalty to the roll). Success means they have found someone willing to sell them that item. Failure means they have not. Additionally, if the roll is failed by 10 or more, government officials confront the PCs within an hour and demand they cease looking for illegal items. Even after the PCs have found such an item for sale it costs 150% what it would normally cost. Characters wishing to sell items of a similar nature must go through the same procedure. Excessive failure on a Diplomacy check in this case means that soldiers arrive to confiscate the contraband material. If the PCs bother to learn the language and think to disguise themselves magically, they may avoid most of the difficulties they would otherwise face in regards to commerce.

#### Designer's Note: The Language Barrier

Even if the thought does not occur to the players, GMs should consider encouraging at least one of them to take a rank in linguistics for their character and learning the Kaidanese language. In *The Gift*, there were multiple NPCs who could assist the PCs in translating, including Marl Tyro. For much of this adventure the PCs will not have that luxury. If the players do not have their characters learn the language, penalize them accordingly as they struggle to interact with NPCs.

# Part One: Flight from Tsue-jo

The first part of this adventure takes place in Tsue-jo. PCs have a brief opportunity to explore the city before they and Marl Tyro meet with Lord Hachiwara and exchange the *Golden Spear* for Marl's daughter. Following this exchange, Marl's actions make immediate flight from Tsue-jo a good idea. Going north and west from Tsue-jo, Marl will lead the PCs and his daughter to the "safety" of an abandoned Garden Shrine where events conspire to further enmesh the PCs in difficulties.

# The City of Tsue-jo

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Tsue-jo is the largest settlement on Yonshu island. It serves as the administrative capital of the island, particularly Oniba province, and as the seat of Lord Hachiwara's power. Despite being located on a river-island, it is also the island's main port, the epicenter of the Yonshu's economy. Its streets are constantly busy during the day, though at night things are much more subdued. Like most Kaidanese, the citizens of Tsue-jo are both xenophobic and racist. They fear and despise those who are not human and feel superior to those who are not Kaidanese. Most interactions the PCs have with locals in the city should reflect both of these attitudes.

# Tsue-jo

LE Small City Corruption +1; Crime -2; Economy +3; Law +5; Lore +1; Society -1 Qualities: Militant, Prosperous, Racially Intolerant (gaijin, non-human), Strategic Location Danger 5 **Demographics** Government Overlord (Daimyo, Lord Hachiwara) Population: 10,000 (human only) **Notable PCs** Daimyo, Lord Hachiwara (LE dread wight human wizard 8) **Exalted Captain of the Palace Guard,** Lord Damoko Shinichi (LE human fighter 9) **Chief-Minister of Zaoism, Lord** Fuiwara Hoto (LE human inquisitor 9) Marketplace Base Value 5,600; Purchase Limit 37,500; Spellcasting 6th Minor Items 4d4 ; Medium Items 3d4; Major Items 1d6 (natives only)



Following are some of the notable locations found in this bustling city, including the locations the PCs will be visiting during the course of the events of this part of the adventure.

1. Tsue-jo Ports Though Gaijinoshima, and Uesaki are the primary ports of entry for ships and goods from the west, they are not the chief ports of Yonshu. Kaidan ships are far more likely to instead dock in Tsue-jo. The docks are typically full of a variety of travelers including sailors, soldiers, diplomats and merchants. During the day, ships are being loaded and unloaded constantly. Canny buyers know that it is often possible to buy cheap goods as they are being offloaded and there is an active, though very informal market at the docks.

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2. The Golden Koi This inn is the one in which Marl and the characters are quartered. It is a reputable establishment which is often used to quarter those guests of the daimyo who are, for one reason or another, not deemed important enough to be granted rooms within the palace complex. The owners of the inn, Ayokoto Arata and his wife Aimi, are courteous to their gaijin guests, but only to their faces. They appreciate the daimyo's business but view the presence of foreigners in their establishment to be damaging to their reputation.

**3. Yoshirou's Horseyard** This is the location of the adventure's opening scene.

4. Hidehoshi's Consignment Shop PCs looking for a merchant willing to buy or sell with them may end up here. A bright yellow star on an old red door is the shop's only sign and, night or day, there hardly ever seems to be any customers going in through the front door. The three rooms that make up the interior of the shop are crammed with odds and ends, though most of them are worthless junk. Despite appearances, the shopkeeper, Takanori Hidehoshi does a brisk business in black market goods, including weapons and magical items. A secret door on the back wall leads to stairs descending into a large basement room containing the store's "real" merchandise.

5. The Summer Palace This is the building in which the daimyo will meet with Marl and the PCs. An underground water system keeps this

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building habitually cool, even during the hot days of summer. During the summer, province soldiers, courtiers and bureaucrats alike fill the building, each eager for any excuse to work within.

#### Yoshirou's Horseyard

The day before the audience with the daimyo, Marl sends the characters out into the city on two separate though simultaneous errands. The first errand is the distribution of gifts to the citizens of Tsue-jo. The "gifts" in question are red silk handkerchiefs, eight inches wide on a side. The handkerchiefs, if checked, radiate illusion magic but do not, in and of themselves, do anything. Marl wants them distributed to as many people as possible. Some ideas for encounters involving these gifts follow this scene. The other (and more important) task Marl has for the characters is the acquisition of seven good riding horses. Marl gives the PCs 550 gp worth of Kaidanese coins with which they may make the purchase. (Note: The seven horses and 550 gp assumes only four PCs. If there are more or fewer than four, adjust the number of horses accordingly and add or subtract 75 gp from the amount for each horse.) As the PCs search for someone willing to sell them horses, they are directed to Yoshirou's Horseyard. Yamayashi Yoshirou has been in the business of buying and selling steeds for over thirty years and there are few men on Yonshu with a better eye for horseflesh. Unfortunately for the player characters, he also possesses the stereotypical Kaidanese attitude towards gaijin and initially wants 125 gold for each of his quality riding horses. It is possible that the characters are willing to cover the difference out of their own pockets. Otherwise, the PCs must find a way to either reduce the price or gain some extra money.

# To begin, read or paraphrase the following, adjusting as necessary.

The smell of horse, hay and dust combine to assure you that, after much searching, you have finally found the place you want. The horseyard itself, a small field of dirt encircled by a rough wooden fence, is not overly large, but the stables on the other side appear to be capable of holding three dozen horses or more. Above the door of the stables is a broad wooden placard, engraved with large, red Kaidanese characters. Various horse-related gear, including bridles, saddles, blankets, stirrups and even a garishly decorated suit of barding are all on display around the yard. In the small yard, a swarthy-looking man wearing a dusty leather TTTTLELEUM

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vest is attempting to control a rather rebellious looking horse. Ignoring him, sitting just outside the yard near the stables, is a trio of men sitting on the ground, gambling with dice. A fifth man, tall with a short, well-trimmed black beard, stands at the gate, a look of displeasure on his face as he watches the struggling horse. As you approach, the bearded man espies you and his scowl deepens.

The bearded man is Yoshirou (LG human expert 7), the owner of the yard. The man in the dusty leather vest trying to work with the horse is Kenta, Yoshirou's foreman (LN human expert 6). The three gambling near the stables are also employees, working as grooms and stable hands, as the situation demands, though currently they are taking a break from their labors. None of the men speaks common, which means that PCs who do not speak Kaidanese are going to have to first find a way to bridge the communication barrier. Once that obstacle is overcome, the characters must still settle on an acceptable price for horses. As mentioned already, the beginning price for a good horse for gaijin is 125 gp (and Yoshirou does not sell anything but good horses). Characters who wish to have the price reduced may do so in a number of ways.

• PCs can use Diplomacy to shift Yoshirou's attitude from unfriendly to either indifferent (DC 22) or friendly (DC 27). For each step of attitude adjustment, the price of the horses is reduced by 15 gp. A hostile Yoshirou charges 150 gp for a horse.

PCs can adjust Yoshirou's attitude another step by helping to calm the horse in the yard. The horse is a trained warhorse which Yoshirou picked up cheap. Unfortunately, after the death of its previous owner, the animal allows no one to ride it and does not like being handled.

PCs who succeed at a DC 12 Diplomacy check can convince Yoshirou to dice for a cheaper price for the horses. Yoshirou is an avid gambler and rarely turns down a game. The exact game (or mechanic) does not matter. Yoshirou is most familiar with the Kaidanese game of Cho-Han (Even-Odd) but is willing to learn new games. PCs who beat Yoshirou at gambling can knock up to 20 gp per horse off the price.

#### Development

Once the PCs have purchased the horses, Yoshirou will agree to stable them for up to 2 days for no further charge, though he makes it clear that if the PCs fail to claim them within that time period, he charges an additional 2 gp a day. PCs who manage to reduce the price should earn experience for doing so. For every 10 gp by which the price was reduced per horse, increase the CR of the encounter by 1. Thus, PCs who reduced the price by 30 gp a horse should be awarded experience as if they had defeated a CR 3 encounter. Those who managed to reduce it by a full 65 gp should earn experience as if they had defeated a CR 6 encounter.



# Encounters while Distributing Marl's Tokens

GMs can choose how much time to devote to describing the act of distributing Marl's silk tokens to the populace of Tsue-jo. Marl gives the PCs twenty of them to hand around, keeping a similar amount for himself. The silkhandkerchiefs are meant to amplify the range of a similar magical handkerchief carried by Marl himself. The intent is to allow Marl to magically detonate the gems atop the chest containing the Golden Spearhead. Normally the range of Marl's device is 1,000 feet (see sidebar) but with the extra handkerchiefs acting as transmitters, one to another, Marl anticipates being able to set off the explosion of positive energy from the edge of the city. GMs desiring to role-play through the distribution of at least some of the handkerchiefs can use the following encounter seeds as a starting point.

• A Kindly Child This child, if given a handkerchief, grins and runs off. She finds the PCs about thirty minutes later and gives them each a fresh baked roll from her house as repayment.

• Suspicious Old Woman This old woman, when given a handkerchief, begins yelling for help, convinced the PCs are planning on trying to lure her into some nefarious trap. Regardless, she still keeps the token.

• **The Crippled Beggar** This old man, with a twisted leg and a bad eye, is most grateful for a silk handkerchief and loudly blesses the PCs if given one.

• The Flirtatious Floozy This woman, a prostitute, assumes a gift of a silk handkerchief is a come-on and responds accordingly. If the PCs refuse her advances (and a suggested fee of 5 silver coins), she curses at them and demands her fellow citizens rise up and chase away the foreigners who would treat a decent woman so commonly.

• **The Bashful Child** This child, if given a handkerchief, blushes fearfully. He refuses to speak more than one or two words to the PCs but will follow them faithfully the rest of the day, fascinated with their doings.

# The Chest of Marl Tyro

**Aura** moderate evocation; **CL** 5th **Slot** -; **Price** 6,000 gp; **Weight** 10 lbs. Description

This chest is made of mahogany and is 30 inches long, 18 inches wide and 20 inches tall. Carvings of travelers and gift givers adorn its sides and its lid is decorated with pearls. Four of the pearls atop the lid are actually condensed positive energy and, when the command word is spoken, they explode, unleashing 20d6 points (5d6 each) of positive energy. This energy heals the living and damages undead.

**Creation Requirements** Craft Wondrous Item, channel positive energy; **Cost** 3,000 gp

# **Talking Pillow**

Aura moderate illusion; CL 1st Slot -; Price 2,000 gp; Weight -

Description

A *talking pillow* is a red silk pillow enchanted with a *magic mouth*, keyed to some second device, most often a silk handkerchief. Anything spoken into the handkerchief is subsequently repeated by the pillow. The handkerchief and pillow operate so long as they are not further than 1,000 feet from each other.

**Creation Requirements** Craft Wondrous Item, *magic mouth*; **Cost** 1,000 gp

#### In the Daimyo's Palace

Early the next morning, following the characters' horse buying excursion, an official summons for Marl from the daimyo arrives at The Golden Koi. Marl, naturally, expects the characters to finish their task of guarding his chest and accompany him. The official delivering the summons, a thin, pompous samurai named Satoko Ryuu stays to escort the group to the palace. Ryuu meticulously inspects the group for cleanliness, even to the point of demanding quick baths before allowing them to depart the inn.



# Designer's Notes: Nothing for the PCs to do

The scene in the palace, while important to setting up the challenges later in the adventure, is one which presents something of a challenge to the GM as it might easily devolve into a story-telling session in which the players have little to do. GMs should do two things. First, the GM should move quickly through the action. Second, the GM should be careful to continue to inquire about the players' actions and responses to events as they unfold. Don't just tell the players what their characters are doing. Make sure to involve them in the process of cursing themselves.

Once on the Palace grounds, any obvious weapons are confiscated from the characters. They are, under no circumstances, allowed to approach the daimyo armed. The palace complex is filled with soldiers, over two hundred on any given day, and all of them heavily armed. Characters who complain about being disarmed are treated with the utmost suspicion and are thereafter, while in the palace, constantly followed by a dozen soldiers. For his part, Marl urges the PCs to either comply or wait for him outside. Assuming the PCs comply, they entire group is escorted to Court of the Summer Palace. Once they are there, read or paraphrase the following, adjusting as necessary.

With Marl in the lead, you are escorted into a large room with a high ceiling and a smooth wooden floor. The pillars holding aloft the ceiling and trim on the wall are painted bright red. There are several open doors along the walls on either side of the room. On the far end of the room, a set of steps leads up to a large dais, upon which sits a wide folding screen, backlit with lanterns. Soldiers, courtiers and various official-looking personages fill the room. As you enter, all eyes turn to look at you and a path opens through the crowd.

When the group has reached a spot about twenty feet from the dais, they are stopped. At the same time, the daimyo, Lord Hachiwara, enters the room through a door behind the screen. Throughout the meeting the daimyo does not actually show his face. This is not because of any embarrassment over his undead status, for he habitually maintains an *alter self* spell, allowing him to appear as he did in life. Rather the screen

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is to protect him from having to view the *Golden Spear of Himojo Takio* and thus fall prey to its curse: a curse of which he is quite aware

Throughout the meeting, Lord Hachiwara speaks to Marl through a translator, a distinguished looking man who stands just outside and to the left of the screen. Though the daimyo understands the common tongue, having learned it from Marl's daughter, Honya, he feels it is beneath him to deign to use it. Throughout the meeting, the undead lord's tone is habitually haughty and sarcastic. He makes no pretense of having anything other than contempt for the merchant and those with him. Furthermore, he is anxious to make the meeting as brief as possible. Barring interference from the PCs, three things happen during the interview. First, the daimyo, speaking through his translator, takes a minute or two to publicly berate Marl Tyro for having tried to cheat him. Second, the daimyo demands the Golden Spear and Marl bids the characters to at last relinquish the chest they have been guarding. The daimyo instructs his men to open the chest (Marl gives them the key) and hold the spear aloft. This is an important moment as it is possible the player characters have not yet seen the spear (and thus become subject to its curse). Though the PCs are allowed a saving throw against being afflicted by the curse, GMs should not call for those at this time (later, when Marl detonates his device is a more opportune time, providing, as it were, misdirection for the players). As the spear is held aloft, its history is briefly recited by a court historian (see sidebar). Thirdly, following the presentation of the spear to the whole court, the daimyo instructs his men to bring out Honya Tyro. At this point, the tone of the daimyo changes. He announces that he considers the balance paid in full. To show he has no hard feelings, he has one of the courtiers present Marl with a gift, an enchanted ball which lights up and plays music when it is held. This singing ball is detailed in appendix 2 and is rather important to the future of the PCs as it contains Honya's heart. Though Marl accepts the gift, he is more interested in his daughter's welfare. Though the young woman, dressed in an unadorned kimono, is pale and frightened looking, her father is overjoyed to see her. Following their reunion, the daimyo dismisses Marl and those with him, bringing the interview to a close. So long as they behaved themselves, when they leave the palace grounds, the characters are given back any weapons taken from them earlier.

# The Golden Spear of Himojo Takio

Aura strong conjuration; CL 15th Slot -; Price 60,000 gp; Weight 4 lbs. Description

In the days before Kaidan was cursed, the Golden Spear of Himoko Takio was formed for the first great Oni War. Fashioned for the hero, Himojo Takio, the spear gained a fearsome reputation and served to destroy at least three Oni Lords. Following the war, Takio sailed west, away from the archipelago, in response to a vision. He never returned and the spear was lost to the islands. The spear currently lacks a shaft. The spearhead, which appears to be fashioned from gold, though it is as hard as steel, is seventeen inches long with a six-inch collar and a ten-inch tang. When joined to a shaft, the Golden Spear functions as a +3 keen oni-bane spear. Without the shaft it can be used improvised short-sword. as an Additionally, the *Golden Spear* is enchanted in such a way as to compel loyalty to the spear and the one carrying the spear. Any who gaze upon the spear must succeed at a DC 18 Will save or be cursed with loyalty to the spear. Those so cursed cannot travel far from the spear without beginning to suffer. For every five miles separating the afflicted from the spear, 1 point of Constitution damage is suffered by the afflicted individual. This ability damage can be healed simply by lessening the distance between the afflicted and the spear. Magical healing can temporarily heal the ability damage, but it returns after 24 hours. Remove curse (DC 25) can also be used to remove the affliction from an individual.

**Creation Requirements** Craft Magic Arms and Armor, *geas/quest*, *keen*, *summon monster I*; **Cost** 30,000 gp

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## Leaving Tsue-jo

Following the exit from the Tsue-jo palace, Marl wastes no time in trying to arrange things so he and those with him can leave the city. Gear and other possessions are first gathered from the inn (including his daughter's handy haversack and other possessions), after which he is anxious to claim the horses the PCs purchased. Also waiting at the inn is a young Kaidanese man, Sadaharu (CG human commoner 2) who has experience with horses. Marl hired him the day before to accompany the party out of Tsue-jo. Once at the gates, Marl produces a red silk handkerchief from a pouch and speaks into it. Then with a grin on his face he vehemently urges speed in departing from the city. This is a good time to call for DC 18 Will saves to determine which of the PCs have escaped the curse of the Golden Spear. At the same time, Marl is quite right to insist on speed from the city. His explosion did not destroy the daimyo as he had hoped, but it did destroy two of the daimyo's undead courtiers and severely injured the daimyo himself.

During the exodus from the palace, the gathering of goods and the departure from the city, Honya Tyro says not a word. She appears scared and skittish, jumping at every little thing. Characters observing her might conclude she is in a state of shock. In truth, her mental condition is much worse than that. She has been made into a honeonna, a skeleton woman, and the experience has driven her completely crazy. During the day she remembers almost nothing of her nightly activities. What she does know is that she needs to stay close to someone and she will latch onto a single that person, individual, almost clinging to presenting herself as a helpless figure desiring only to be protected. Initially, the person she chooses is her father and the only time she appears even slightly hopeful is when she is looking at him. At those moments, she expresses a thin loving smile.

About ten miles out of Tsue-jo, the road reaches the outskirts of the forest. It takes the group a little more than an hour of hard riding to reach this spot, and here Marl bids the party stop and dismount. His plan is to have Sadaharu ride north to Agoya (where the young man has permission to sell the horses, keeping the money for himself) while Marl's group heads west into the forest away from the main road. Though Marl is anxious to move quickly, fearing pursuit, he nevertheless is willing to explain some of his actions, promising to reveal more when the party reaches a safer location. Among other things, Marl explains the explosion he detonated in the palace, the culpability of the PCs in delivering the device to the daimyo and the likelihood of being wanted men. He also assures them he has a plan of escape, one which requires heading northwest as Sadaharu makes tracks north on the main road.

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#### Development

Assuming that some of the player characters are, in fact, cursed by their viewing of the *Golden Spear*, the effects of the curse begin to manifest as soon as the group is more than five miles from Tsue-jo. The effects will first manifest as a feeling of being ill, and the afflicted PCs will each suffer 1 Constitution damage. It is likely the PCs begin to notice they do not feel well some time before they reach the abandoned village and haunted garden shrine detailed hereafter. As they leave the road and head into the woods, afflicted characters suffer their second point of Constitution loss.



# Designer's Note: Dealing with Remove Curse and other Difficulties

Afflicting the PCs with the "curse" of the Golden Spear is a big part of this module. In fact, the whole series is named after this eventuality. And, whereas The Gift relied upon "fear of the unknown" to induce panic, Dim Spirit attempts to focus instead upon a feeling of helplessness and despair. GMs playing by the rules may end up with no afflicted PCs, and intelligent players, once they discover they are cursed, may try repeatedly to cast *remove curse* until at last they are free of the affliction. Either way, part of the horror of this adventure is gone. What to do? One answer is to let the dice fall where they may and allow the PCs the chance to cheat fate. Or, alternatively, you can cheat; though only a little. If all the characters make their save, afflict the one who rolled lowest anyway. If they use remove curse, make one of the PCs incurable. At least, that's what I would do.

# The Abandoned Village and the Haunted Garden Shrine (CR varies)

If the PCs stay with Marl, he leads them west for three miles, stopping finally near what appears to be an old, deserted garden shrine. If the PCs leave Marl, perhaps heading north with the horses, events will need to be altered accordingly (see Insuring the Characters reach Kitsumura). The area is about twelve miles, as the bird flies, from the city; so-afflicted PCs suffer -2 to Constitution while in the village.

The shrine itself is a small, three-room building. The garden-yard around the shrine is filled with weeds, small shrubs and overgrown grasses. The wall enclosing the yard is seven feet tall and in poor repair. Twenty yards north of the shrine is the remains of an old cemetery, now overgrown with small trees. There once was a small village just east of the shrine but all that remains now is a collection of rotting timbers and broken clay tiles from where the roofs have fallen in. The lone exception is the crumbling remains of the old mill near a small but swift flowing stream. A successful



DC 12 Knowledge (nature) or Survival check allows a character to make an educated guess, based on the size of some of the trees growing through old structures, that the area has been deserted for at least twenty years. Those who succeed in this check by 5 over the DC also notice a distinct absence of tracks. There have been few men (or large animals) in the immediate area for some time.

There are two creatures in this area with which the characters should, at some point, interact. The exact order or manner in which these interactions occur depends on the choices of the PCs but a suggestion of how the encounters should play out is provided hereafter. The first of these creatures, though not necessarily the first the characters meet, is the ghost of a slain maiden, Katsumi. The second of these creatures, a jikininki named Minako, dwells below the cemetery, coming out at night to hunt for food.

#### <u>Background</u>

The village near the shrine, now abandoned, was a small community devoted to logging bamboo and caring for the shrine. Katsumi was a shrine maiden native to the village. She was not only extremely beautiful, but her kindly grace gave her a good report throughout the region. Her appearance and demeanor won the heart of an impulsive young samurai Akihiko, whose official duties brought him often to the small village. Their romance was hampered by their different social stations, but Akihiko was determined to wed Katsumi at any cost, even to the point of renouncing his rank and station if need be. They set a date for the elopement and arranged to meet at the shrine. As fate would have it, a third soul also sought refuge that night in the garden shrine. A thief named Minako, fleeing pursuit, arrived at the shrine about an hour before Katsumi. When the beautiful young maiden entered the shrine, dressed in a white bridal kimono, her beauty overcame the wicked Minako. The rapine-minded bandit moved from his hiding place to grab the maiden, who froze in shock.

It was at that moment that Akihiko entered through the doors of the shrine. The young samurai, misunderstanding the tableau before him, was moved to rage, and, drawing his sword, he slew Katsumi and then chased Minako down, killing him in the nearb y graveyard. Overcome with remorse, his sword still dripping with the blood of his beloved, Akihiko fled west into the forest, taking refuge in a cave, where, as dawn broke, he killed himself. Katsumi was discovered by the priest Akihiko had hired to perform his wedding. Her body was buried with honor in the cemetery. Minako's body was likewise discovered, but it was assumed he was responsible for Akihiko's death and his body was dragged to the woods and left for the beasts. Akihiko's body was never found.

If the tale had ended there, it would have been tragic enough but such was not to be the case. The violent death of Katsumi at the hands of her own beloved kept her from finding peace in the grave. Akihiko, who committed suicide, likewise found no rest in death. He rose as a ghost, fated to keep an unending vigil over his rotting corpse. More devastating yet, for the small village, was the fate of Minako. The wicked hungers of the rogue, coupled with the lack of proper burial rites, was enough to allow him to return to life as a ghoulish jikininki. Two weeks after the events already described, villagers began disappearing, one a night, victims of the crafty Minako. The ghoul would creep into homes of the villagers while they slept. He then dragged his paralyzed victims into the forest where he devoured them. It was not long before the few remaining villagers packed up their belongings and left

# <u>Running the Abandoned Village and the</u> <u>Garden Shrine</u>

After finding the shrine and the nearby old mill, Marl expresses a desire to hide and rest. He is motivated by his daughter's condition and a need to explain himself to the PCs. Though the PCs can choose to sleep where they want, Marl, after his experiences to this point on Yonshu, is leery of the shrine and chooses to hole up in one of the rooms in the mill with Honya. Before night comes, however, Marl does his best to answer any questions the PCs have. Besides explaining his past actions, he also shares with them a map he possesses which shows an old passage through the mountains to the northwest and offers them 2,000 gp each if they escort him and his daughter back to the Scarlet Harlot in Gaijinoshima.

After the sun sets, Minako exits from the cemetery and begins to hunt for food. He naturally targets the group making camp in the area, first working to observe them and then attacking any that either part from the main group or fall asleep. At the same time, Honya's true nature begins to manifest. To all appearances she begins to come out of her shell, even to the point of laughing, or offering to play music for the group. Marl assumes this change means that she is overcoming the shock of her





ordeal and takes it as a hopeful sign. Unfortunately, after he goes to bed, his daughter kills him, draining away his life force. Following this act, she cannot assume human form for at least an hour. If possible, she spends this hour next to the body of her slain parent, pretending to sleep and hoping his desiccated body is not discovered until morning. The ghost, Katsumi, manifests in the shrine, either at midnight, or after Minako is slain, whichever comes first. Her ghostly presence radiates a pale light which cannot be missed by anyone in the shrine. Even those outside of the shrine are likely to notice this light (Perception DC 10) as it pours softly out through the windows and cracks around the door.

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Gentle even in death Katsumi has no interest in fighting, though her sorrowful presence can powerfully affect those who encounter her. Should the PCs meet her after having dispatched Minako, she thanks them before proceeding to ask them to bring her beloved back to her that they might rest together. Should the PCs encounter her before meeting Minako, she bids them to destroy the evil that prowls the night. Only after Minako is destroyed does she mention her other request. The ghost of Katsumi can relate how she died and the fact that her beloved keeps vigil in a cave to the west. Whether the PCs agree to help Katsumi is, of course, up to them.

# <u>Areas of Interest in and around the</u> <u>Garden Shrine</u>

Area 1 The Garden Shrine This three room building was once quite beautiful and was surrounded by a well-kept garden. Now it is in disrepair and the garden is a mess of weeds, overgrown grasses and wild shrubs. The rooms of the shrine are bare, excepting the small altar at the back of the central room atop a wooden platform. A secret panel on the bottom of the platform hides a cache of treasure, secreted away by the villagers in better times. The artfully fashioned panel can only be found with a successful DC 30 Perception check.

Area 2 The Overgrown Cemetery While there are no headstones in this area, numerous statues mark burial plots. The statues, whether carved from stone or fashioned from clay, are mostly in the crude likeness of various animals. Young trees have sprouted up amongst the statues, creating a surreal arboreal menagerie. Minako has fashioned a lair by tunneling between the roots of one of the

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larger trees on the edge of the cemetery, creating a lair. Those searching the area can find the hole with a successful DC 15 Perception check.

Area 3 The Old Mill Besides the Garden Shrine, this mill is the only standing structure remaining from the abandoned village. The roof of the two story structure leaks, and the stairs leading to the second floor are partially rotten. Nevertheless, the rooms on the first floor are relatively dry. Unless the PCs prevent it, Marl claims **room 3a** for himself and his daughter, choosing it because it has a stout door he can bar from the inside if need be.

#### **<u>Creatures</u>**

Now a ravenous jikininki, Minako prowls the region around the garden shrine. This ghoul lord relies on stealth to hunt, moving silently through the trees and along the ground. He has, over the years, killed most of the animals in the area and is constantly hungry. Despite his hunger, he is cautious, observing before attacking. Spotting the jikininki as he moves through the area requires succeeding at a DC 28 Perception check. Though Minako has the ability to change his appearance, he seldom does so, much preferring the thrill of the hunt to subterfuge. Minako's natural form is that of a wizened, gray skinned creature with long, tangled black hair, black lifeless eves and a mouth full of crooked teeth. He still wears the leather armor he wore in life and carries a rusty dagger at his belt.







#### **Str** -, **Dex** 13, **Con** -, **Int** 12, **Wis** 11, **Cha** 23 **Base Atk** +4; **CMB** +4; **CMD** 16

**Feats** Dodge, Skill Focus (Diplomacy), Skill Focus (Knowledge[religion]), Skill Focus (Perform [sing]) **Skills** Craft (basket-weaving) +10, Craft (sewing) +10, Diplomacy +18, Heal +9, Knowledge (local) +10, Knowledge (religion) +13, Perform (sing) +18, Perception +8, Perform (string) +15, Stealth +9; **Racial** +8 Perception, +8 Stealth **Languages** Kaidanese, Sylvan

#### **Special Abilities**

**Rejuvenation** (Su) Katsumi can only be laid to rest when Minako is destroyed and Akihiko is buried beside her.

#### **Treasure**

Minako has hidden a few treasures in his lair below the cemetery. They include a ruby valued at 1,000 gp, a set of masterwork thieves' tools, an *everburning* hooded lantern and three extremely dirty silk robes. If cleaned, the robes would be worth 50 gp each.

The secret compartment underneath the altar in the shrine is full of gold bars and coins. The total value of the treasure in the shrine is 3,000 gp.

#### **Development**

Katsumi knows that her love waits in a cave to the west. While she does not know he is a ghost, she can provide information to the party concerning the general direction and distance they need to travel in order to find him. If the party succeeds in laying Katsumi to rest, award them experience as if they had defeated her. At the same time, as soon as she is laid to rest, the secret compartment below the altar audibly opens, revealing the treasure within.

If Honya succeeds in killing her father without getting caught, in the morning she is genuinely horrified when his body is found, and she withdraws once more into her shell. At the same time, she latches onto a new target, practically clinging to that person for protection. She targets the male with the highest Charisma first, preferring men over women as her prey. Honya attempts each night to surreptitiously kill her new victim. If she is slain, she reforms with the dawn, having little memory of what she has done. During the day, even after her secret is discovered, she persists in following after the party and refuses to fight back if attacked. If one of the characters does not claim the *singing ball* which holds her heart, she latches on to it herself, cradling it throughout the day. Discovering a method of dealing with Honya should eventually prove to be a genuine challenge. The first time the party defeats her in combat, award them experience for the encounter. Thereafter, they earn no further experience from her until they discover how to lay her to rest. When they succeed at this, award them experience as if they had again defeated a CR 7 encounter.

# The Hillside Cave (CR 8 XP4,800)

In the back of a small cave, three miles west of the village, a two hour journey by foot, rests the body of the samurai, Akihiko. The corpse and clothing are not decayed. The negative energies of its ghostly guardian serve to keep all life at bay, even the small microbes which would normally facilitate the breakdown of the tissues. Thus the body of Akihiko, after twenty years, appears much as it did when he disemboweled himself. Day or night, if anyone or anything approaches his remains, Akihiko manifests and attacks. Animals instinctively avoid the cave, sensing the unnatural aura within. The cadaver of a not-as-wise bandit, dead now ten years, lies about halfway into the cave. His corpse, unlike Akihiko's, is quite decayed, infusing the air in the cave with a pungent odor. PCs who examine the bandit's body must succeed at a DC 15 Fortitude save or become sickened for 1d4 minutes. A DC 10 Heal check is sufficient to deduce, incorrectly, that the man appears to have been dead for about a year.

The cave is within 15 miles of Tsue-jo, so characters cursed by the *Golden Spear* do not suffer additional Constitution damage as they make the journey to the area.

#### **Creature**

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Akihiko was a handsome man in life. Now his features are contorted with sorrow and rage. His spirit wears the white wedding garments he died in, but they are bloodstained and his death wound is clearly visible. Akihiko's ghost attacks without warning as soon as it manifests, howling with pain and anguish the whole time.

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#### Akihiko CR 8 (XP 4,800)

Male human ghost fighter 7 CE Medium undead (incorporeal) Init +5; Senses darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +22

#### Defense

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AC 16, touch 16, flat-footed 14 (+4 deflection, +1 Dex, +1 dodge)

**hp** 73 (7d10+35)

**Fort** +9, Ref +3, Will +2

**Defensive Abilities** channel resistance +4, rejuvenation; **Immune** undead traits Offense

Spd fly 30 ft.

**Melee** corrupting touch +7 (7d6; Fortitude DC 17 half) or *Shinjitsuko* +9/+4 (1d10; 15-20/x2; ethereal foes only)

Special Attacks slice of death

#### Tactics

**During Combat** Akihiko uses his sword to make all his attacks, even his corrupting touch. He never moves further than 50 feet from his own body. **Morale** Akihiko fights until destroyed.

Statistics

**Str** -, **Dex** 13, **Con** -, **Int** 12, **Wis** 11, **Cha** 18 **Base Atk** +7; **CMB** +7; **CMD** 19

Feats Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Improved Initiative, Skill Focus (Diplomacy), Skill Focus (Profession [accounting]), Quick Draw, Weapon Focus (Katana), Weapon Proficiency (Katana), Weapon Specialization (Katana)

**Skills** Handle Animal +9, Diplomacy +7, Knowledge (nobility) +11, Perception +22, Profession (Accounting) +9, Ride +11, Stealth +9; **Racial** +8 Perception, +8 Stealth

Languages Celestial, Kaidanese

**SQ** add all special qualities here, listed alphabetically

**Gear** Shinjitsuko (+1 keen katana) Special Abilities

**Rejuvenation** (Su) Akihiko can only be permanently laid to rest by burying him next to Katsumi.

**Slice of Death (Su)** Akihiko can forego damage from his corrupting touch attack to instead inflict 1d4 Wisdom damage with each successful strike. To those struck by the blow, it feels as if their life is draining out through a phantom cut.

#### <u>Treasure</u>

Akihiko fled to the cave with nothing but what he was already carrying. The silk robes he was wearing are, if cleaned and mended, worth 200 gp. He also has a pouch with coins totaling 300 gp and a masterwork wakizashi, or short sword. The real treasure, however, is Akihiko's katana, *Shijitsuko*. The sword is a priceless family heirloom (see sidebar), an ancestral relic containing the soul of one of Akihiko's ancestors. Ancestral relics, powerful items whose method of creation has been lost, function only for those of the proper family. Unfortunately, the samurai was, in his day, the last of his line, excepting one elderly uncle, also now deceased.

#### **Development**

If the party defeats Akihiko, they can safely remove his body in order to bury it with Katsumi's, thereby laying both ghosts to rest. As the bodies are laid to rest, Akihiko briefly manifests, as does Katsumi. They smile happily and Akihiko mouths, "Keishi," indicating he accepts them as family before the two spirits fade away. From this point on, the party members are considered honorary members of the Fukuisaki family. Indeed, they are the only members of this family, as Akihiko had no children. The practical ramification of this honor is that Shijitsuko will now fully function for each of the PCs, and their descendants after them. Additionally, the act of burying Akihiko grants each member of the party 1 point of honor. (See appendix 4 for more on Honor as a mechanic.)

# Shijitsuko

Aura moderate divination, moderate transmutation CL 20th

Slot none; Price -; Weight 7 lbs.

Description

This katana bears the etched symbol for truth on its blade near the hilt. The guard, collars and pommel are all of a hard gold-steel alloy. The grip is fashioned from polished ebony wood, covered with white silk cord. This sword holds the soul of Fukuisaki Ito, a samurai who betrayed his clan by accepting a bribe. Repentant and filled with remorse he subjected himself, as a punishment, to the horrific rites necessary to bond his soul to his sword. In the hands of someone not of the Fukuisaki clan, the sword functions as a masterwork katana. However, if the one using the sword is an honorable member of the Fukuisaki clan, the sword reveals new properties as the sword's owner grows in honor (see appendix 4) and power. Each of the powers thus revealed are keyed to a specific trigger and require a prerequisite character level and a certain amount of honor to function. Once one ability has been unlocked, the user instinctively knows what is necessary to unlock the sword's next power. Using the sword has one potential drawback. Its owner cannot willingly tell a lie or accept a bribe.



**1st Power:** Functions as a +1 Katana; sword owner gains a bonus to Sense Motive equal to 1/2 level when gripping the sword's hilt; **Requires** Level 2, 1 Honor; **Trigger** 1 Honor **2nd Power:** 5/day By gripping the sword in one

hand the wielder can ascertain the truthfulness of a written document. The nature of any potential dishonesty is not revealed, just the existence thereof; **Requires** Level 4, 2 Honor; **Trigger** The owner must bring a criminal to justice.

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**3rd Power:** Gains *keen* quality; **Requires** Level 6, 3 Honor; **Trigger** The owner must return stolen property to its rightful owners. The combined value of the property must be at least 1,000 gp.

**4th Power:** Functions as a +2 katana; **Requires** Level 8, 4 Honor; **Trigger** The owner must bring a criminal to justice. The CR of this criminal must be 9 or higher.

**5th Power:** 3/day zone of truth; **Requires** Level 10, 5 Honor; **Trigger** The owner must swear allegiance to a higher authority (king, church, god, clan elder, etc.) and maintain that allegiance. This allegiance can be transferred if events warrant.

**6th Power:** Gains *axiomatic* ; **Requires** Level 12, 6 Honor; **Trigger** The owner must bring a criminal or traitor to justice. The CR of this individual must be 14 or greater.

**7th Power:** Functions as a +3 katana; **Requires** Level 14, 7 Honor; **Trigger** The owner must return stolen property to its rightful owner. The total value of this property must be at least 10,000 gp.

**8th Power:** Damage on a critical increases to x3; **Requires** Level 16, 8 Honor; **Trigger** The owner must bring a criminal, traitor or LE outsider to justice. The CR of this individual must be 18 or higher.

**9th Power:** Functions as a +4 katana; at will *true seeing*; **Requires** Level 18, 9 Honor; **Trigger** The owner must return stolen property to its rightful owner. The total value of this property must be at least 100,000 gp.

**10th Power:** Functions as a +5 *katana*; The owner knows as soon as he hears or reads a lie so long as Shijitsuko is on his person; **Requires** Level 20, 10 Honor; **Trigger** The owner must bring a criminal, traitor or LE outsider to justice. The CR of this individual must be 23 or higher.

# Part Two: Towards Kitsumura

Following the events of the shrine, the PCs are bereft of any outside influence and are completely on their own. Their exact movement is up to them, but ultimately events are going to steer them toward the village of Kitsumura. As the PCs journey through the forest east of the mountains and west of Tsue-jo, they encounter a number of dangers, as set out in this section. The forest is a dangerous place, full of wild animals, evil spirits, mischievous kami, and uneasy souls. The woods grow increasingly thicker as one moves west and northwest, away from the road and towards the mountains. Most native humans are fearful of the area, avoiding it as much as possible.

As the characters journey through the forest, there is a 15% chance each day of a significant wandering monster encounter. If a random encounter is called for, the GM should roll on table 2.2 in order to determine what is met. Additionally, for each day spent on the island, table 2.1 can be used to determine general weather conditions.

#### Table 2.1: Yonshu Weather

d100 Temperatu	re* Humidity/Precipitation
01-10 80 + 1d10	Dry
11-60 80 + 1d12	Humid
71-75 90 + 1d12	Very Humid
76-80 70 + 1d10	Humid
81-85 80 + 1d12	Rain lasting 2d3 hours
86-90 75 + 1d12	Rain lasting 3d6 hours
91-95 80 + 1d10	Thunderstorm lasting 1d3
	hours, rain lasting 2d3 hours
96-99 75 + 1d10	Thunderstorm lasting 1d6
	hours, rain lasting 2d6 hours
00 70+1d20	Hurricane!

# Table 2.2: Wandering Monsters on Yonshu

d20 Encounter

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- 1 1d4 kappa (*The Gift*)
- **2-3** A lone jikininki posing as a merchant (use ghoul stats; *Pathfinder Bestiary*)
- 4 1d2 oni-brutes (*The Gift*)
- **5-6** 1d3 bears (use grizzly stats with simple young template; *Pathfinder Bestiary*)

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- 7 A giant stag beetle (*Pathfinder Bestiary*)
- 8-10 1d8 wild boars (Pathfinder Bestiary)
- **11** 1d2 dire boars (*Pathfinder Bestiary*)
- **12** 1d6 giant centipedes (*Pathfinder Bestiary*)
- **13-14** A poisonous viper (*Pathfinder Bestiary*)
- 15-17 3d4 wolves (Pathfinder Bestiary)
- 18-19 1d2 bakeneko (appendix 2, see appendix 2)
- **20** A tamashinaki wolf (*Pathfinder Bestiary*, see appendix 2)

While Kitsumura is only about ten miles from the abandoned village and eight miles from the cave in which the body of Akihiko rests, reaching the village can take up to two days as there are no good paths to it and travelers through the woods rarely move further than a mile in an hour. Even following the animal paths does not greatly increase travel time as these paths meander back and forth seemingly at random. Added to this is the fact that the PCs may not head straight toward the village.

#### **Insuring the Characters reach Kitsumura**

For the events of Part Three to occur, it is necessary for the player characters to make their way to Kitsumura. If the PCs travel northwest toward the mountains as Marl intended, GMs should find it fairly easy to make sure their path eventually brings them into Kitsumura. The area around the village is filled with animal trails. Traveling through the forest is easiest on these paths and many of the trails actually lead, eventually, toward the forest village. If the PCs discover they are moving toward a village and decide to go around it, or if they simply travel in the wrong direction through the forest, an encounter with a group of hengeyokai hunters can be used to bring them into the village. The henge are distrustful of humans, but they are willing to help men who seek to escape the evil clutches of the shogunate and the daimyo.

As the PCs move further and further away from the Golden Spear, they grow increasingly sick. Eventually, they should make a connection between their sickness and their travels. This, in and of itself, should prevent them from going too far. Agoya, to the north, is approximately 40 miles in a straight line from Tsue-jo; characters who make it that far will be very weak. Hara, to the south-west, is about 35 miles. Additionally, an increasing number of soldiers, encountered on the road, reinforces the point that the characters are going to need to find an alternate route on which to travel. Assume the soldiers on the road have a complete description of the party within a day of the flight from Tsue-jo. If the group heads west, away from the road, and deeper into the forests, these soldiers are not likely to be a problem (though at least one group follows the party's tracks as far as the shrine: see The Daimyo's Soldiers, hereafter). If the characters insist on keeping to the roads, they will encounter more of these groups, each one a little larger and better organized than the last.

One of the easiest ways to point wandering PCs in the right direction is to have the characters reencounter Atsukawa Kenshi (NG male human ranger 6), of Agoya, who is well acquainted with the henge of the area. So long as the PCs helped drive the bandits from Agoya, Kenshi is willing to help them in their present difficulties. Recognizing the long reach of the daimyo, his advice is to seek help from the hengeyokai and is willing to lead them to the village of Kitsumura. Among other things, the hengeyokai have gifted healers and he assures them, provided he is aware of any health issues, that the yokai will be able to advise them as to the nature of the problem.

## The Daimyo's Soldiers (CR 7 XP 3,200)

A group of soldiers, five samurai fighters led by a yojimbo samurai, reach the Garden Shrine just after the characters have laid the ghosts to rest (or after they have decided not to help the ghosts). The soldiers have successfully followed the tracks left by the PCs and the arrival of these samurai should remind the PCs that they are now outlaws in a foreign country.

#### **Creatures**

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There are two sorts of soldiers patrolling the island at any given time. The first are commoners serving as foot-soldiers. The second are samurai, who, either because of youth or poverty, have not yet procured a better appointment. The first sort of squad is distinguished by their hide armor and spears. They are not allowed helmets, and their gear, while serviceable, is generally plain and unadorned. The squads of samurai wear breastplate armor, helmets, and are armed with masterwork katanas. The following stats reflect the samurai squads but can be easily altered for use as a squad of commoner soldiers (AC 14; **melee** spear +4 [1d8+1]; 1d10gp).

#### Samurai Soldiers (5) CR 1 (XP 400)

Male human fighter 2 LN Medium humanoid Init +0; Perception +0 Defense AC 16, touch 10, flat-footed 16 (+6 armor) hp 17 (2d10+6) Fort +5, Ref +0, Will -1 Defensive Abilities bravery +1 Offense Spd 30 ft. Melee masterwork katana +5 (1d10+1; 18-20/x2) Ranged shortbow +3 (1d6; 20/x3) Tactics During Combat These soldiers prefer to begin

combat with arrows fired from a distance, softening up their opponents before closing in with swords. **Morale** As this is a mission from the daimyo, these men are honor-bound to fight to the death.

#### Statistics

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Str 12, Dex 10, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 9, Cha 10 Base Atk +2; CMB +3; CMD 13 Feats Point Blank Shot, Weapon Focus (shortbow), Weapon Focus (katana), Exotic Weapon Proficiency (katana) Skills Climb +6, Ride +5, Survival +4 Languages Kaidanese Gear Breastplate armor, masterwork katana, masterwork

wakizashi (short sword), shortbow, 20 arrows, dagger, backpack, 10 days rations, flint and steel, tent, 2d10 gp

Any squads the characters encounter at this time are led by yojimbo samurai (see appendix 3). These men are trained to lead the way in fighting the enemies of their lord. While not as polished or cultured as the samurai serving in the palace, they are nevertheless proud men, disdainful of anything inferior to themselves.

#### **Squad Captain CR 4 (XP 1,200)**

Male human ranger (yojimbo archetype) 5 LN Medium humanoid **Init** +6; Perception +12 Defense AC 17, touch 10, flat-footed 17 (+7 armor) hp 47 (5d10+20) **Fort** +6, Ref +4, Will +2 **Defensive Abilities** swift to act Offense

**Spd** 30 ft.

**Melee** masterwork katana +10 (1d10+4; 18-20/x2) **Ranged** masterwork composite shortbow [+2] Strength] +6 (1d6+2; 20/x3) Tactics

Before Combat If the situation allows, the vojimbo meditates for ten minutes before combat. adding a +2 dodge bonus to his AC. This bonus lasts an hour and is not included in these stats.

During Combat Standard yojimbo tactics are to begin combat with arrows from a short distance, only using swords when the enemy closes in or arrows prove ineffective. In melee, the squad captain uses Power Attack until missing with such an attack twice. Morale Yojimbo are honor-bound to fight to the death if need be in service to their lord, but pragmatic enough to know that sometimes withdrawal and regrouping is called for. Statistics

Str 14, Dex 11, Con 15, Int 13, Wis 12, Cha 10 Base Atk +5; CMB +7; CMD 17

Feats Die Hard, Endurance, Improved Initiative, Point Blank Shot, Power Attack, Skill Focus Toughness, (Perception), Weapon Focus (shortbow), Weapon Focus (katana)

Skills Climb +10, Diplomacy +8, Knowledge (local)

+9, Perception +12, Ride +8, Survival +9

Languages Kaidanese, Sylvan (hengeyokai dialect) SQ ancestral discourse 2/day, honor bound (2 honor), warriors bond (katana)

Favored Enemy humanoids (humans) humanoids (yokai) +2

Enemy Clan Taihori +2

**Combat Gear** potion of cure moderate wounds; Gear breastplate. +1masterwork katana. masterwork wakizashi, masterwork composite shortbow [+2 Strength], 20 arrows, backpack, flint and steel, 10 days rations, tent, 4d12 gp

#### **Into the Forest**

Despite its proximity to Tsue-jo, the forest, particularly as one moves closer to the mountains, is a wild and untamed place. Travel, as has already been mentioned, is relatively slow, for there are no good, straight paths and there is much undergrowth beneath the trees. It is possible that the characters might have some other way of traveling, such as flight, or that one or more of the party has the ability to walk unhindered through vegetation. If this is the case, the GM will need to adjust events to reflect these abilities. The presence of Honya, assuming the PCs have not yet discovered she is actually undead, should also serve to slow the PCs. Ideally, even if the PCs move in exactly the desired direction, they should be forced to camp at least once in the forest while traveling.

Provided hereafter are four encounters for use as the PCs travel through the forest. These encounters are not tied to a particular location on the map and can be used in any order.

#### Dangers in the Forest 1: Dire Boars (CR 6 XP 2,400)

The woods and mountains of Yonshu are famous throughout Kaidan for the ferocity of its many boars. These aggressive wild pigs are one of the primary game animals on the island and those hunters who make their living hunting boar are generally considered capable, dangerous men.

Of particular note are the giant boars which roam the foothills of Yonshu. The majority of these are found on the northern side of the island, but they are also known to wander the eastern foothills. Two of these large creatures, females searching for food, come across the scent of the PCs and begin trailing them to see if they are good to eat. PCs are likely to notice the sound of large creatures moving through the woods toward them a couple of rounds before the animals reach them (DC 10 Perception check). The animals attack the closest character, one rushing straight at the target and the second circling around to attack from the side.

#### Creatures

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Dire Boars (2) CR 4 (XP 1,200) **AC** 15 (Pathfinder Bestiary) **hp** 42 Morale Both animals fight aggressively to the death

# Dangers in the Forest II: Dragonflies (CR 6 XP 2,400)

Giant dragonflies, while not as common as wild boars, are another recognized danger on Yonshu, especially in the eastern woods near to the swamps. Primarily forest dwelling scavengers, these bright green creatures are quite capable of attacking wounded men and small children. This encounter works well if one of the PCs is injured. Drawn by the smell of blood, a pair of giant dragonflies swoops in through the trees to attack the injured character. Characters that succeed on a DC 14 Perception check hear the buzzing of the insects' wings a round before the creatures attack.

#### **Creatures**

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# Giant Dragonfly (2) CR 4 (XP 1,200)

N Medium vermin (*Bestiary 2*) Init +2; Senses darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +1 Defense AC 17, touch 12, flat-footed 15 hp 45 (7d8+15) Fort +7, Ref +4, Will +3 Immune mind-affecting effects Offense Spd 20 ft., fly 80 ft. (perfect) Melee bite +9 (2d8+6 plus grab) Special Attacks darting charge (+4 CMB on charge) Tactics

**During Combat** The tactics of the insects are straightforward enough. They alternate their attacks, sweeping in and out as they bite and grab at a single character. If one manages to grab its target, it flies off with its prey while the other continues to make biting attacks against the grappled character.

**Morale** If reduced to less than 10 hp, a dragonfly withdraws from combat to nurse its wounds. Statistics

Str 19, Dex 15, Con 14, Int -, Wis 12, Cha 9 Base Atk +5; CMB +9 (+13 grappling, or +17 grappling on a charge); CMD 21 (29 vs. trip) Feats Flyby Attack<sup>B</sup> Skills Fly +10

# Dangers in the Forest III: The Spirits of the Trees (CR 7 XP 3,200)

Animals and vermin are far from the only dangers in the forests of Yonshu. Kami spirits long ago entered into the trees of Kaidan, in particular, the oaks. A few of these ancient trees still exist on the islands of the archipelago and knowledgeable

natives leave offerings to them when they desire a blessing. Upon occasion, the seeds of these kamitrees produce sentient offspring, some benign, others malevolent. This encounter is with one such plant and works well as a nighttime encounter, after the party has made camp in the woods. The living tree in question is a carnivorous quickwood and hunts at night, often catching its prey offguard and asleep. By day the monster rests, though it is never truly asleep, and, if the opportunity presents itself, it is not above snatching at a potential meal as it passes by. During the day, PCs may notice something amiss with the quickwood tree by succeeding on a DC 23 Knowledge (nature) or Perception check. The quickwood lairs in an area populated with oak trees so that it knows everything occurring within 360 feet of itself.

# **<u>Creature</u>**

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At first glance the quickwood appears to be a gnarled oak tree. When it moves, it becomes something out of a nightmare with flexible roots twisting like grotesque tentacles and a cavernous maw full of jagged wooden teeth.

# Quickwood (reduced CR) CR 7 (XP 3,200)

N Huge plant (Bestiary 2) Init +4; Senses darkvision 120 ft, low-light vision, oaksight; Perception +21 Aura fear aura (variable distance, DC 20) Defense AC 19, touch 9, flat-footed 18 (+1 Dex, +10 natural, -2 size) **hp** 75 (10d8+30) **Fort** +10, Ref +4, Will +5 Defensive Abilities spell absorption; Immune electricity, fire, plant traits; SR 18 Offense **Spd** 10 ft. Melee bite +12 (2d6+7), 6 roots +10 (1d6+3 plus pull) Space 5 ft.; Reach 15 ft. (60 ft. with root) Special Attacks pull (root, 10 ft.) Tactics Before Combat The quickwood prefers to attack by surprise. It mimics a tree until it is discovered, or its prey is off guard. During Combat The quickwood focuses its attacks on one or two creatures at a time. As soon

as it can activate its fear aura, it does so. **Morale** The quickwood is too slow to effectively retreat and thus fights till the death.



**Str** 25, **Dex** 12, **Con** 17, **Int** 12, **Wis** 15, **Cha** 12 **Base Atk** +7; **CMB** +16; **CMD** 27

**Feats** Improved Initiative, Lunge, Multiattack, Power Attack, Skill Focus (Perception)

**Skills** Knowledge (nature) +11, Perception +21, Stealth +4 (+8 in forests); **Racial** +4 Stealth in forests

Languages Kaidanese, Sylvan

**Special Abilities** 

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**Fear Aura (Su)** A quickwood with stored magical energy can activate its fear aura as a standard action. The aura has a radius of 10 ft. per spell level of the effect and lasts for 1 round (Will DC 20 negates). Creatures failing their saving throw become panicked for 1 minute.

**Oaksight** (Su) A quickwood may observe the area surrounding any oak tree within 360 feet as if using clairaudience/clairvoyance. If the quickwood possesses line of sight to even a single oak tree it cannot be flanked.

**Roots (Ex)** A quickwood has dozens of long roots, but it can only attack with up to six of them in any given round. If the quickwood uses its pull ability to pull a target within reach of its bite attack, it can immediately make a free bite attack with a +4 bonus against that target.

**Spell Absorption (Su)** If the quickwood's spell resistance protects it from a magical effect, the creature absorbs that magical energy into its body. It can release this energy to activate its fear aura ability. While the plant is storing a spell, its SR decreases by 5. It can store only one spell at a time.

#### Treasure

The quickwood keeps a number of treasures in small holes in the ground around the base of its trunk, pulling these items out to admire or play with when there is no prey in the area. Finding this cache requires success on a DC 16 Perception check. Most of the treasures are nothing more than highly polished bits of bone. Mixed in with these gruesome trophies is a polished cherry wand of *lesser restoration* (9 charges), a large emerald worth 500 gp, and a piece of jade carved in the likeness of a skull valued at 200 gp.

# Dangers in the Forest IV: Bakeneko (CR 6 XP 2,400)

The bakeneko is a rare size-shifting cat which haunts the forests of Kaidan. Though these creatures are not above hunting and eating humans, they are intelligent. If treated with respect, they have been known to befriend and aid

those in need. A mated pair of bakeneko lives south of Kitsumura. In return for being left to their own devices by the henge, the two cats monitor the area and make occasional reports of interesting things to the villagers. As the PCs move through their area, these creatures become aware of their activities and begin following them. When in their small form, the two are very stealthy. It requires a successful DC 30 Perception check to notice their presence. Depending on how the characters conduct themselves while observed, the bakeneko may decide to show themselves and guide the PCs to Kitsumura. Alternately, if the PCs seem an unworthy lot, the two cats might simply decide to wait until one of the PCs is alone and make a meal of them. Finally, if torn between helping or eating, the bakeneko are not above using their magical abilities to play small tricks on the PCs, leading them on merry chases through the woods after phantom sounds and, at night, distant lights.

#### **<u>Creatures</u>**

The bakeneko possess tawny coats, wide eyes and long, lashing tails. Unlike most cats, they are capable of something akin to a grin, although they only use such an expression to display displeasure or violent intentions.

# Bakeneko (2) CR 4 (XP 1,200) AC 17 (see appendix 2)

<b>AC</b> 17	(see	appendi
<b>hp</b> 37		

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# A Shadowy Stalker (CR 4 XP 1,200)

Though Lord Hachiwara intended for Honya to be the tool by which he killed Marl Tyro and those gaijin accompanying the merchant, the daimyo is not above having a contingency plan. In fact, following the explosion of positive energy from Marl's chest, Hachiwara set two alternative plans into motion. Descriptions of the characters, quickly distributed via arcane channels, are already in the hands of the port officials and those soldiers patrolling Yonshu. Additionally, the daimyo has dispatched an elite team of hunters to insure the demise of the gaijin. Six shadow stalkers, evil killers made all the more dangerous through an infusion of negative shadow energy, are on the trail of the PCs. Though the main encounter with these assassins is slated to occur after the characters reach Kitsumura, one of their number, an advance scout, strikes at the PCs in the forest, foreshadowing the oncoming danger.

This encounter occurs just before the characters reach Kitsumura. The shadow stalker strikes suddenly, appearing quickly from the shadows. Unless PCs succeed at a DC 35 Perception check, they are caught by surprise.

#### **Creature**

The shadow stalker is a whip thin humanoid figure wearing black leather armor and equipped with a jet-black short sword. At first glance the creature appears to be garbed all in black, from head to toe, but a closer inspection reveals the truth: it is a creature of pure shadow, given substance and form.

#### Shadow Stalker CR 4 (XP 1,200)

AC 19 (see appendix 2) hp 22

**Morale** The shadow stalker makes a quick attack, testing the defenses and abilities of the player characters. It does not stay longer than 3 rounds and attempts to depart even sooner if brought to less than 11 hit points.



# Dangers in the Forest V: Sagari (CR 4 XP 1200)

Sagari are strange, undead creatures which haunt the forests of Kaidan. Little more than the head of the horse on a snake-like strip of skin and muscle, the venomous sagari is nevertheless a very real danger, especially feared by horsemen; for their bite is capable of forever cursing a prized horse.

This encounter can be used before the characters reach Kitsumura, or after, perhaps when the characters are traveling from Kitsumura to the Shrine of the Spring. If one of the characters still has a horse, the sagari, given the opportunity, attacks such an animal first, stealthily following the party through the forest, looking for a chance to strike.

#### <u>Creature</u>

The sagari is a bizarre undead creature consisting of the head of a horse and a length of gory flesh. It "lives" to kill and eat, though it derives no nourishment from its diet. If the characters have no horse, the goal of the sagari is instead to attack the PCs, preferably one at a time. It has a total of three tactics. Firstly, its favorite tactic is to climb a tree near to human prey and make a sound like a horse in distress. A successful Knowledge (nature) DC 18 discerns that it is not, in fact, the cry of a horse. If a lone target approaches, the sagari drops upon this unfortunate, biting and constricting. If multiple targets approach, the sagari hides in the branches of its tree and adopts a different tact (DC 20 Perception check to spot the sagari so hiding). Its second tactic is to follow potential prey, attacking after dark when the target is asleep, or picking off stragglers, using its suffocating constriction to keep its victim from crying out. Finally, when all else fails, the sagari attacks, poisons a target and then withdraws into the underbrush of the forest, allowing its poison to work for a time before attempting another such attack. The sagari is clever but not overly intelligent and can be easily tricked by those aware of its presence. It is not above acting as a scavenger and can be distracted with fresh meat.

#### Sagari CR 4 (XP 1200)

**AC** 18 (see *appendix* 2) **hp** 27

**Morale** The sagari fights until injured and then withdraws, if possible, to adopt a different tact.

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The sagari is an interesting creature and you might consider using it in a different manner if the players decide to go off of script, and keep their horses. It is entirely possible for one of the horses the characters buy to have been previously bitten by a sagari. Should such a horse die, it would be quite horrific to have its head subsequently detach and begin hunting its previous owners through the forests of Yonshu.

# Dangers in the Forest VI: Kama Itachi CR 5 (XP 1600)

As the characters wander the forest near to Kitsumura, they come across a strange little stone shrine set between the trees. The shrine is a large flat rock with an indentation atop it, similar to a bowl. Behind this rock stand two other, pillar like stones. If they investigate the "bowl," the PCs may notice that it smells faintly of alcohol (DC 12 Perception check). Examing the ground around the shrine possible reveals the presence of a number of tracks (DC 13 Perception or Survival check) which a successful DC 12 Knowledge (nature) check can identify as belonging to a weasel like creature. Though the tracks go all through the forest, it is possible to eventually follow the tracks, using Survival (DC 13), back to a burrow into the earth about 300 yards west of the shrine. The burrow, which is too small for Medium creatures, is the lair of a pair of mated kama itachi, fast moving weasel like creatures. The hengeyokai leave the kama itchi frequent libations of saki so that the creatures leave them alone. The kama itachi, should they become aware of the PCs near the shrine, naturally expect to be left an offering, and if no offering is forthcoming, they attack.

#### <u>Creatures</u>

Kama itachi are weasel like creatures with sword like forelimbs. They move too fast for the eye to follow, becoming effectively invisible when they move or attack. These two kama itachi are not interested in killing the characters, they merely want to punish them should they fail to leave the proper libation.

# Kama Itachi (2) (CR 3 XP 800)

AC 22 hp 22 (see *appendix 2*)

**Morale** Should one of the kama itachi be killed, the other fights to the death to avenge its mate. Otherwise, they fight until they have either drawn blood from each PC or else have themselves each been injured.

# <u>Treasure</u>

The burrow of the kama itachi contains 65 gp, 100 sp, and 50 cp. It also contains a masterwork dagger, a gold ring worth 200 gp, and a cut crystal vial containing an *elixir of truth*. The kama itachi do not know of the magical properties of the elixir, they merely keep the vial because it is shiny and pretty. The cut crystal vial is itself worth 200 gp.

# Part Three: Kitsumura and the Shrine of the Spring

The path of the PCs, regardless of the exact meandering route, should eventually lead them to Kitsumura. Still, this is not the sort of village nonhengeyokai can just wander into. It is intentionally well hidden from the eyes of men, especially those affiliated with the shogunate and its metsuki. Unless the characters move with intentional stealth, the hengeyokai become aware of them before they actually reach the village and a group of warriors is sent to intercept them and provide an escort into the village. Regardless of whether or not Kenshi is with the PCs, the ranger, and those hengeyokai serving as spies in Agoya, have already shared information with the hengeyokai concerning the characters and their role in defending Agoya. Assuming these reports are favorable, the henge are inclined to be helpful to the PCs. Additionally, the yokai village has been suffering its own hardships and there is hope that the PCs might be the answer to Kitsumura's current dilemma.

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Once the PCs are safely within the village, they are granted a public meeting with the village council. At this meeting, the characters may learn

some things helpful to them, such as the nature of a hone-onna and the fact that the passage through the mountains shown on Marl's map does exist and is well known to the henge. They also receive assurance that the hengeyokai will assist them in discovering the cause of their "affliction," assuming some of the characters are indeed suffering from the curse of the Golden Spear. At the same time, the council entreats the characters, after they have had an opportunity to rest, to assist them in solving the problem with their spring. If the PCs are willing to venture to the Shrine of the Spring, they discover the presence of an evil oni using vile magics to corrupt the kami of the spring. In the meantime, there is another non-yokai in the village, a tamashinaki posing as a mute toy-maker. The characters have encountered the work of this psychopathic killer already and may possess the clues necessary to uncover his true nature. While the henge do not suspect the evil they are harboring, the characters have an opportunity to bring the villain to justice. Finally, while the characters are resting in the village, they are beset by the daimyo's shadow stalkers. The characters must overcome all of these challenges if they are to have the opportunity to rid themselves of their curse and find a way off of Yonshu.



# In Kitsumura Village

Kitsumura is a village comprised entirely of hengeyokai, shapeshifting humanoids. While henge can take the form of both a human and an animal, their true form is that of a humanoid with the face of an animal. The villagers subsist on hunting and domesticated animals, though the hengeyokai do supplement their diet with wheat and vegetables they grow themselves. Their lives are simple ones, devoted primarily to avoiding humanity as they care for their needs. They are a very spiritual people, keeping alive traditions handed down through the generations. Though they are distrustful of humans, the villagers are willing to give strangers the benefit of the doubt and do not attack anyone without provocation.

#### Designer's Notes: Hengeyokai Traits

As the characters are not expected to fight the hengeyokai, no stats are provided for them in this publication. Nevertheless the following racial traits are provided to help GM's better run these NPCs.

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

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

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

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

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

The village has little in the way of government. What decisions must be made apart from common consent are left to the wisdom of the village elders. There are seven of these councilors, fou r men and three women. The acknowledged head of the village council is Adaru, a warrior and hunter who, despite his age, is still strong in both mind and body. Nabi and Suba are the spiritual leaders in the village, and Daiki, nicknamed "The Captain," oversees the defense of the community. Other members of the council include Saaya (Adaru's wife and the village herbalist), Kobee (blacksmith), and Taiyo (the oldest member of the village).

There are no businesses, as such, in the village, and, for the most part, the hengeyokai have little day-to-day use for money. When they need something they cannot make themselves, such as weapons, armor, or new seed, they sometimes barter with tengu from the mountains. At other times, they will place an order with one of their human acquaintances, such as Kenshi, drawing upon village funds.

As the PCs interact with the villagers, most of them will, out of politeness, adopt their human visage. They do not, however, attempt to hide their true nature. For the most part, when not interacting with the PCs, the villagers wear their animal faces as they go about their daily tasks. None of the villagers speak common, though they all speak Kaidanese and Sylvan (yokai dialect).

#### Kitsumura

NG Village Corruption -1; Crime -2; Economy -1; Law -2; Lore -2; Society +4 Qualities: Insular, Pious (Yokinto) **Danger** 0 Demographics Government Council **Population**: 200 (Hengeyokai only) **Notable PCs** Chief Elder, Adaru (NG Male hengeyokai (badger) barbarian 5) Herbalist, Saaya (NG Female hengeyokai (badger) expert 4) "Captain" Daiki (LG Male hengeyokai (dog) ranger 6) Nabi (NG Male hengeyokai (dog) druid 4) Suba (NG Female hengeyokai (rat) oracle 3) Marketplace Base Value 500; Purchase Limit 2,500; Spellcasting 3rd Minor Items 2d4 ; Medium Items 1d4; Major Items -

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The buildings of the village are all of wood. There are no streets in the village, just a large area of heavily trampled ground. Pigs, ducks and a few chickens meander around the buildings during the day, though the pigs are herded into the barns at dusk for safe-keeping. About a third of the village is comprised of children of various ages. The youngest play with each other and with the pigs. The oldest help with chores. The village is within 25 miles of Tsue-jo and any cursed characters who reach the village suffer -4 to their Constitution while there. Following are some of the notable locations in the village.

**1. Village Hall** This is the largest building in the village and serves as both a meeting and a banquet hall. When the PCs are escorted into the village, they are brought to this building in order to meet with the village elders.

2. The Fox The fox statue in front of the village hall is older than the village itself and is considered a sacred idol by the villagers. Legend has it that the statue is actually an ancient and powerful kitsune who, lost in deep meditation, slowly turned to stone. The villagers leave her offerings each month in case she awakens and is hungry.

**3. Village Barns** The village maintains two communal barns in which they house both horses and pigs. Individuals are allowed to keep their personal animals within, but are expected, in turn, to help maintain the barns and the other animals.

4. Blacksmith Kobee the blacksmith works here nearly every day, mending and forging tools, kettles, and knives. Metal ore is one of the few things the village cannot produce on its own and must trade for. Thus it is perhaps natural that Kobee also serves as the village banker and treasurer.

**5. Kitsumura Shrine** This simple shrine, honoring the kami, is maintained by Nabi and his wife Suba. The majority of the village's religious celebrations, weddings and funerals take place here.

**6. Guest House** Though the village has no inn, they collectively maintain this house for visitors. The PCs are allowed the use of it while in the

village. Like all the village houses, it has a central room for cooking and eating and side rooms for sleeping.

Before the Kitsumura Council

As the PCs are escorted into the village, they are directed toward the Village Hall. Once they are within, read or paraphrase the following, adjusting as necessary.

As you are escorted into the Village Hall, most of the village, it would seem, enters in behind you, talking quickly. Your arrival seems to be a cause for general excitement. The building is fashioned from roughhewn wood, though the floors are highly polished. Smoky lanterns, hanging from tree-like pillars, provide illumination. You are motioned toward cushions on the floor as seven individuals, four men and three women, carrying themselves with quiet dignity, take up positions at the front of the room.

As soon as the PCs are ready, the elders introduce themselves and let the PCs know that tales of their exploits in Agoya have preceded them. Adaru, sitting in the middle of the village elders, does the majority of the talking. He first requests to know how the village might aid the group. At this time, if the PCs ask the proper questions they can learn the following two facts.

The hengeyokai know of a path through the mountains, the same one on Marl's map. The henge call it the Dark Path and warn that it is guarded by an evil and powerful oni who slays any that pass therein. Long ago the hengeyokai used it to travel from one side of the island to the other but they no longer do so.

Nabi and Suba can, if given enough information concerning Honya Tyro, deduce she is a hone-onna and provide some help in dealing with the problem. They know that a hone-onna can only be destroyed by destroying the creature's heart and that the heart, while never far from the hone-onna, is not kept in the creature's body.

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Regarding the character's potential curse, the elders let it be known that they must look into the situation before offering advice. In this matter, Saaya, who is knowledgeable about such things, already has a good idea about what is causing the sickness, but she does not volunteer information at this time. After the characters have made their needs known, it is the elders' turn. They confess that they too have a difficulty and that, if the PCs will assist them in correcting it, the entire village will be in their debt and do all in their power to convey them back to Gaijinoshima. Adaru summarizes the problem they have thusly.

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The village's main water source is the nearby swiftly flowing stream. For many years the village has offered annual tributes to the kami of the spring and in turn, the water has never dried up and has always been "sweet." Recently, the water in the stream has turned bad. It has a strange color and those who drink it feel funny in both the body and the head. It is unfit even for the livestock. One pig, after drinking heavily of the water, went insane and had to be put down. The village has been forced to make a long journey to a separate stream for their daily water needs.

Two days previously, a group of village men, led by Daiki and Nabu, made the journey upstream to the Shrine of the Spring; as they neared the cavernous entrance, a foul fog cloaked the area, rolling out from the cave mouth. The fog was followed by a loud cry. Neither man felt it was safe to be there and they fled. It seems certain some evil has moved into the shrine, and the village has debated what to do. Now that the PCs have arrived, it is hoped that they are willing to attempt to cleanse the shrine, in return for the village's assistance in their own difficulties.

The elders make it clear that they fully expect the PCs to act on their behalf, but they do so confident that they themselves can, in turn, provide aid. If the PCs hesitate or refuse, the elders do not try to pressure them but instead offer them a place to stay (the guest house) and food for as long as they are in the village. So long as the PCs remain there, the elders continue to ask, day by day, whether they have changed their mind. If, for some reason, the PCs do not provide aid, eventually the whole village is forced to relocate, though only after losing several of their own young men to the demon in the shrine.

This year, the tamashinaki's victim died after only

a single night of torture. In despair, Snow-fallingon-the-Blood impulsively kidnapped one of the henge children. The child has been missing now for a whole day but has not actually yet been harmed in any way. If the PCs can make a connection between Snow-falling-on-the-Blood and the Well of Dead Children, they may be able to prevent another such tragedy.

There are three ways the characters can be introduced to this problem. These three events each occur, one after the other, on the first day the PCs are in the village, unless they act beforehand to make the events unnecessary.

Following the meeting with the elders, the PCs see a henge child playing with a spinning wooden top. The top is painted white, with bright red symbols painted on its side. Scarlet on white is the color scheme used in all of Snow-falling-onthe-Blood's toys. Characters who were asleep when the events at the Well of Dead Children began will have a brief flashback to the dream they had at that time. Inquiries about the toy quickly reveal the toy-maker's presence. A grieving hengeyokai mother approaches the PCs, weeping. She has lost her child and fears that he has been to the Shrine of the Spring and killed by the demon within. Both the mother and the missing boy are rabbit hengeyokai. If the PCs make inquiries they learn that the boy often ran wild through the woods (though this is not overly unusual for the village children) and that he was last seen in the woods west of the village. If the PCs scour the area for tracks, they can find the child's footprints with a successful DC 25 Perception check and follow them with a successful DC 16 Survival check (the tamashinaki took some care to hide his trail). Successfully following the tracks leads the party to a small cave two miles away from the village. The boy is in a pit at the back of the cave. The remains of five other bodies are in the pit with the boy. The freshest, the mutilated body of a young woman, is only two days dead.

Snow-falling-on-the-Blood is also being housed in the guest house. After the PCs move in, he moves his bedroll to a spot near the door. That night, the characters may notice the tamashinaki sneaking out the front door (DC 33 Perception check). Failing this, any PCs keeping a watch notice he is missing, 1d6 x 10 minutes after he has gone. Following the tracks of the villain at night requires a successful DC 19 Survival check.



So long as he is not killing or fighting, Snowfalling-on-the-Blood maintains a tender angelic smile. A successful DC 30 Sense Motive check is necessary to see through this facade, but only characters who succeed this check by more than 5 over the DC begin to sense the true evil behind the smile. When he begins to fight, or when he is torturing his victims, all pretense is dropped and Snow-falling-on-the-Blood smiles with a devilish glee.

Snow-falling-on-the-Blood (CR 6 XP 2,400)

**AC** 16 **hp** 39

(see appendix 2)

#### **Development**

If the PCs manage to end Snow-falling-on-the-Blood's trail of carnage, they also fulfill the trigger for unlocking the second power of Shijitsuko. Before the power can manifest, it is additionally necessary that a character using the sword possess sufficient honor. A character using the sword senses that helping the village would satisfy the demands of honor. Award the characters extra experience, equivalent to defeating a CR 4 encounter, if they can rescue the boy. If they can rescue him before he is harmed, increase the bonus experience to that of a CR 6 encounter.

# The Daimyo's Death Squad CR 6-8 (XP 6,000-7,200)

This encounter occurs on any night following the arrival of the PCs to the village. Shadow stalkers, sent by the daimyo, having discovered the location of the characters, begin their attacks. The exact location of the attack can vary. If the characters are resting comfortably, they can be attacked in the guest house. The encounter can also be used as the PCs track Snow-falling-on-the-Blood through the woods. If the PCs defeated the first shadow stalker they encountered, there are 5 remaining, otherwise the scout has rejoined his group and there are 6 of them. Two of the creatures attack initially as an advance force. A few minutes later the remaining 3 or 4 attack. The shadow stalkers carry no treasure other than their gear.

Creatures Shadow Stalkers (5-6)CR 4 (XP 1,200) AC 19 (see appendix 2)

hp 22

**Morale** The shadow stalkers use hit and run tactics, striking from the shadows and then fading away a round later. Nevertheless, they press the attack to the death.

# **Reaching the Shrine of the Spring**

The Shrine of the Spring is located a little over a mile from the village. The easiest, though not the straightest, method of reaching it is to follow the stream which flows by the village until it splits. One can follow the larger stream on the right for another mile, arriving at the last at a good-sized pond. The smaller, left hand stream flows out of the Shrine of the Spring, two hundred yards to the south-west. The water flowing into the main stream from the right-hand side is pure and fresh. The water flowing in from the shrine spring on the left has a decidedly green tint. The water from the shrine is poisoned and though the poison is diluted once the two springs combine, it is much more concentrated in the stream coming out of the shrine cave.

The poison is caused by an accursed magical item, left by an ushi-oni as an offering to the kami of the spring. This item constantly weeps a sicklylooking and extremely potent toxin into the waters of the spring. The toxicity of the poison grows weaker the further one moves away from the source, as other waters flow into the stream, further diluting the effect. Between the village and the joining of the two streams, those drinking the water must succeed at a DC 12 Fortitude save or suffer 1 Wisdom and 1 Constitution damage.

#### The Shrine of the Spring

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This shrine is an ancient and sacred relic of Kaidan's more innocent youth. It harkens back to a simpler time when yokai and humans dwelt together in peace. Somewhat unusually, the shrine is located inside a cave. This cave has two rooms, the Hall of Cleansing and the Hall of the Kami. For the last two hundred years, the hengeyokai of Kitsumura village have tended to the Shrine of the Spring. Once a year the whole village makes the trek to the Hall of Cleansing while their priests enter the Hall of the Kami to leave offerings on behalf of the villagers. More regularly, Nabi and Suba visit to clean the shrine and renew the offerings. In all that time, the kami of the spring has been beneficent and kind, even deigning to occasionally manifest to council the henge. About ten days before the characters arrived at the village, the shrine received anothe

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visitor. A ushi-oni, or ox demon, named Okor, having acquired a *baipaseki*, entered the shrine and placed the evil relic on the rock of offering in the Hall of the Kami. Once so placed, the arcanely enhanced necrotic poisons of the magic-stone seeped down into the water of the spring and began to afflict the kami of the spring. As the poisons infected the kami, the water of the spring also turned toxic, leading to the present situation. It was the ushi-oni, stationed within the Hall of Cleansing, who scared away the villagers. Okor's plan is to wait until the kami is completely insane (a matter of a few more days) and then destroy the hoidan in the Hall of the Kami, ritually freeing the kami from the spring. When this happens, Okor anticipates the kami will rush downstream, destroying everything it encounters. To prevent this it is necessary to kill the ushi-oni. To free the kami from the grip of the *baipaseki*, the evil stone must be removed from the shrine.

# Baipaseki

Aura Strong Necromancy; CL 13th Slot -; Price 130,000; weight 2 lbs. Description

This dangerous, porous stone glows with a faint, sickly, inner green light. A vile green ichor, called a Baleful Venom, constantly seeps from

its surface, poisonous to the touch. Indeed, anyone holding the stone barehanded must save against its effect and any item touched to it becomes envenomed. Each day, the stone produces 5 doses of its lethal poison. If not collected, this toxin pools around the stone and flows as a sluggish liquid. Even when the stone's 5 doses of venom per day have been used, the stone is still dangerous to carry by hand. The stone does not cease daily producing poison until destroyed (hardness 5, 10 hp). Once destroyed, the pieces of the stone can be ground to produce a toxin identical to that of the seeping venom, but with a DC 26 save and requiring 3 consecutive saves to cure. Baleful **Venom**, necrotic poison: *Type* touch; *Save* Fortitude save DC 16; Frequency 1/round for 10 rounds; Effect 1d3 Constitution damage and 1d3 Wisdom damage; Cure 2 consecutive saves. Construction

**Requirements** Craft Wondrous Item, *insanity*, *poison*; **Cost** 65,000 gp



The stream from the spring flows north out of the side of a cave mouth. As it cascades over rocks downhill, it passes beneath a large white torii, or shrine gate, before continuing on to the location where it joins the pond stream. As the characters approach, read or paraphrase the following, adjusting as necessary.

Ahead of you is a large wooden shrine marker, a long wooden timber mounted atop two stout wooden legs. This one is painted white, but other than that it is the same as the shrine entrances you have seen elsewhere, including those in Agoya and Kitsumura. The stream you are following flows down the hill and between the legs of the structure. Next to the stream is a well-trod dirt path. The path leads up to a set of stone steps and then from there to a wide cave mouth. The stream and the path both lead into the cave.

# Area 2. The Hall of Cleansing CR 7 (XP 3,200)

The Hall of Cleansing serves to provide the worshiping hengeyokai with a font in which to ritually cleanse their hands and mouths, and with a large enough chamber in which to crowd together at those times they congregate at the shrine, generally speaking, only the priests go up the steps into the Hall of the Kami. The stone floor of the room is worn quite smooth from years of use. When it is wet, it becomes slick. Those wishing to move upon the floor at full speed when it is wet must succeed at a DC 15 Balance check to do so. Those who fail this check slip and fall prone, sliding 5 feet in the direction they were moving as they do so. The room is dominated by a pool of water. A lively stream of water enters this pool from the west and flows out of the pool to the north. If the PCs have the opportunity to examine the room they cannot help observe the stone chozuya, or font, near the large pond. Water from the pool constantly bubbles up into this font, so that it is constantly full. The excess water from the chozuya flows out the back of the stone basin and down again to the pond. The whole room is thus constantly filled with the sound of flowing water. Currently the water is quite poisonous and anyone drinking the water, either from the chozuya or the pool, must make a DC 14 Fortitude save or suffer 1 point of Constitution damage and 1d2 points of Wisdom damage (Frequency 1/round for 3 rounds; Cure 1 save). There are no lights in this chamber, though during the day, the ambient

sunlight makes the whole of the chamber dimly lit. There are sockets on the walls suitable for torches.

Make a Perception check for the Ushi-oni to notice the PCs as they approach the cave (Perception +16). Assuming the demon succeeds, he immediately uses his fog cloud ability to create fog which rolls out from the cave as he screams at the PCs. If the PCs manage to surprise Okor, they catch him floating lazily in the water of the pool in his human form. Whether caught unaware, or attempting to put a good scare into the PCs, the oni is naturally curious about these strange visitors to the shrine (provided they are not disguised as Kaidan natives), and takes a moment to question them before attacking. Such conversation is fated to last only a short time before Okor, in his true form, does his best to kill the would-be heroes.

#### **Creatures**

In its natural form, the ox demon possesses a humanoid-like torso, a tentacled spider-like body, two great scythe-like arms and the massive head of a bull.

#### Okor, Ushi-oni (CR 7 XP 3,200)

<b>AC</b> 20	(see appendix 2)
<b>hp</b> 85	

**Melee** 2 scythe-arms +17 (1d10+9; 20/x3) and gore +12 (1d6+4)

**Tactics** As Okor fights, a good deal of water sloshes from the pool, coating the whole floor in 2 rounds. Though the PCs have to guard against slipping on the floor, the tentacle legs of the oni are immune to this effect and he makes good use of his mobility and superior reach as he fights. **Morale** The ushi-oni will fight to the death. **Gear** belt of giant strength +2

# Area 3. The Approach

Gently climbing steps, carved out of the cave floor, lead up to the Hall of the Kami. Just south of the steps, the water from the upper Hall flows constantly down to the lower Hall. 11111111111111111111

# Area 4. The Hall of the Kami CR 9 (XP 6,400)

Whenever a living creature other than the kami enters this chamber, six magical torches, one per red wooden column, spring to life, flooding the

room with light. The torches are easily removed from the columns but cease to burn once so removed. This is due to the fact that it is the columns, not the torches, which are enchanted. Any torch placed in the sconces on the column will burn as an *everburning* torch, so long as someone is in the room.

Small wooden plaques hang from silk lines draped between the columns. These are ema, or prayer plaques, and written upon them are the prayers of the villagers, hung by the priests. As in the lower chamber, there is a pool of water dominating the southern half of the room. This pool is fed by a natural underground spring and the water flows out of the eastern edge of the pool and down to the Hall of Cleansing.

In the pool are two things of note. A small building, or honden, has been built atop a small rock "island" on the south side of the pool. Stone steps carved into this miniature island lead up to the honden, which is the symbolic dwelling of the kami. On the northern side of the pool, a mere six inches away from the pool's rocky shore, is another tiny rock "island." This flat topped stone is the Rock of Offering, upon which the priests place gifts from the village for the kami. At the moment, the only thing on the rock is the baippaseki, glowing with a soft, unholy green light. Venom can clearly be seen dripping down the Rock of Offering and into the water. Though the kami is immune to most natural poisons, this one has affected its mind, reducing its Intelligence and Wisdom, turning it into a creature of rage.

#### **Creatures**

The Kami of the Spring, its mind enraged by the necrotic poison coursing through its pool, manifests as a towering creature of water, shaped something like a bear with wings. Because of its seasonal nature and the poison in the water, the coloration of the water forming the avatar is a combination of blood red and vivid lime green. Though it will not leave the pool, its great reach allows it to lash out at anyone in the chamber. The avatar forms one round after the characters enter the Hall of the Kami.

# Enraged Kami Avatar CR 9 (XP 6,400)

CN Huge seasonal poisoned outsider (elemental, extraplanar, water)

Init +4; Senses darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +9 Defense

AC 21, touch 13, flat-footed 16 (+4 Dex, +1 dodge, +8 natural)

**hp** 105 (10d10+50)

**Fort** +11, **Ref** +11, **Will** -1

**Defensive Abilities** +2 on saves vs. fire; **DR** 5/-; **Immune** elemental traits; **Resist** electricity 5, fire 5

Weaknesses -2 on saves vs. cold

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**Spd** 20 ft., swim 90 ft.

**Melee** 2 slams +16 (2d6+8 plus 1d4 fire plus poison [DC 20])

Space 15 ft.; Reach 15 ft.

**Special Attacks** breath weapon (60 ft. cone, baleful toxin, Reflex DC 20 negates, useable every 1d4 rounds), drench, vortex (DC 22), water mastery

Tactics

**Before Combat** The kami takes one round to manifest its avatar, after which it attacks immediately.

**During Combat** The avatar lashes out at the nearest foe. The kami is insane with pain and not at all rational.

**Morale** The kami avatar fights until it is destroyed.

Statistics

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**Str** 26, **Dex** 20, **Con** 21, **Int** 6, **Wis** 3, **Cha** 13 **Base Atk** +10; **CMB** +19; **CMD** +34

**Feats** Cleave, Dodge, Great Cleave, Improved Bull Rush, Power Attack

**Skills** Acrobatics +12, Escape Artist +16, Knowledge (planes) +7, Perception +9, Stealth +4, Swim +27

Languages Celestial, Kaidanese, Sylvan Special Abilities

**Baleful Toxin (Ex)** poison *Type* injury, touch; *Save* Fortitude DC 20; *Frequency* 1/round for 4 rounds; *Effect* 1 Constitution damage and 1 Wisdom damage; *Cure* 1 save.

Detect Anti-poison (Su) At will, as a standard action, the avatar can sense the presence of alchemical items.

**Poisonous Cloud (Ex)** The avatar is surrounded by a cloud of invisible, poisonous gas affecting any breathing creature within 10 feet of the avatar, including those creatures in the water. **Poison Cloud** Type inhaled; Save Fortitude DC 20; Frequency 1/round for 10 rounds; Effect 1 Strength damage plus sickened; Secondary Frequency 1/10 minutes; Secondary Effect 2 Strength damage plus sickened; Cure 2 consecutive saves.

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Venomous Breath (Ex) Once every 1d4 rounds

# <u>Development</u>

It is not necessary for the characters to defeat the kami's avatar in order to save the village. If they can manage to carry the poisonous stone out of the shrine, the kami will return to normal in 2d6 days as the ever-flowing water naturally washes the pool clean. Even if the PCs defeat the kami, unless they remove the *baipaseki*, nothing is actually solved. If the stone is removed, regardless of whether the kami is defeated, award the PCs experience as if they had defeated a CR 6 opponent. Additionally, PCs who clear the shrine of the poison and defeat the Ushi-oni earn 1 Honor for their deeds. If one of the characters is using *Shinjitsuko*, that character should now have access to the sword's second power.

# **Concluding the Adventure**

As the characters leave the shrine, after defeating the ushi-oni and removing the baipaseki, the PCs are greeted by a feminine laugh. Standing just out of charge range but clearly visible is a familiar sight: a beautiful woman, nine feet tall, with snakes for arms. Though defeated by the characters once, the hebi-no-onna, Jadoko, has somehow returned. She has no interest in fighting the PCs, rather she is there to taunt them. "I see you have lost your Golden Spear," she says pleasantly, and assuming some of the characters are afflicted by the curse, she adds, "The further you go from it, the weaker and sicker you become! I suggest you get it back." So saying she turns invisible and flies off, her now familiar laugh dying in the distance.

Once the characters have succeeded at the shrine, the hengeyokai can confirm the truth of the snake-woman's words, relating most of the history of the *Golden Spear of Himojo Takio*. They also share that it is powerful against oni and that with it the PCs would have a good chance of defeating the demon which dwells along the Dark Path, as the henge call the passage through the mountains shown on Marl's map.

If the PCs have not yet defeated Honya, and are unable to deduce the location of her heart, the hengeyokai can also provide assistance here, though the more help outsiders provide, the less final experience the PCs should receive for ultimately ending her wretched existence.

After taking council with the elders of Kitsumura, it should become clear that the PCs need to find a

way to enter the palace of the daimyo and recapture the *Golden Spear*. Here, true to their word, so long as the

characters have cleansed the shrine, the hengeyokai can provide assistance. Using Kenshi as a go-between, the characters can sell and buy whatever gear they need, though the more they require, the longer the process. Additionally, the hengeyokai send word to the tengu of the mountains, who have among their number, trained shinobi, able to assist the PCs in infiltrating the palace of the daimyo.

> - The Curse of the Golden Spear Concludes in Part 3: The Dark Path -


### Appendix 1: PC Reincarnation

d100 Effect

01-05 A natural rebirth

05-10 Yurei

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- 11-23 Reincarnated in a tamashinaki
- 24-29 Reincarnated in a tamashinaki; altered memories
- 30 Reincarnated in a tamashinaki; new memories
- 31-84 Reincarnated through mind-fever
- 85-99 Reincarnated through mind-fever; altered memories
- 00 Reincarnated through mind-fever; new memories

**Natural Rebirth:** The character does not find a swift reincarnation. Either his anger is not sufficient or his target successfully fights off the attempt at possession. The character's soul finds a home in the body of a new baby, destined to be soon born. When he's born, the trauma of birth will erase his memories of this incarnation. Barring some extraordinary efforts on the part of his companions, the character is gone.

**Yurei:** The pain of death causes the character to be reformed as a malevolent yurei within 1d4 days of death. Until the spirit is laid to rest, the character cannot be reincarnated. The GM has the right to determine the exact method by which the yurei must be laid to rest. Alternately **Table A1.2** can be used as a guide.

**Tamashinaki:** The soul of the character finds a suitable tamashinaki and drives the elemental spirit out, claiming the body. The character returns to play in 1d4 days within 4d6 miles of where she died. Reroll Strength, Dexterity and Constitution, in order, using 4d6 and dropping the lowest die. The character gains 1 permanent negative level, representing lost memories. If the character is level 1, she instead loses two points of Intelligence, Wisdom, or Charisma (player's choice).

**Mind-Fever:** The soul of the character finds a suitable adult body and drives the current occupying soul out. The character returns to play in 2d10 days within 4d6 miles of where she died. Reroll Strength, Dexterity and Constitution, in

order, using 4d6 and dropping the lowest die. The character gains 2 permanent negative levels, representing lost memories. If the character is leve 1 2 or lower, she instead loses two points of Intelligence, Wisdom, or Charisma (player's choice).

Altered Memories: The character reincarnates with different memories than those possessed at the moment of life. Sometimes these memories represent past lives but just as often they represent the memories of the former soul occupying the body. The character avoids one negative level he might have gained through the reincarnation process. However, the character also replaces one class level possessed prior to death with the abilities of a different class. To determine this class, roll on **Table A1.3**.

**New Memories:** The character reincarnates with his old memories fully intact. He also gains new memories. Sometimes these memories represent past lives but just as often they represent the memories of the former soul occupying the body. The character avoids any negative levels he might have gained through the reincarnation process. Additionally, the character gains a level. This level is in a random class chosen using **Table A1.3**.

#### Table A1.2 – Yurei Motivation

<b>d4</b>	The yurei is motivated by
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1-2	vengeance.
3	Jealousy.
4	Grood

**Vengeance:** The yurei desires the death of one of its still-living enemies

**Jealousy:** The yurei desires the sacrificial death of one of its companions.

**Greed:** The yurei wants its possessions, and one other valuable thing (worth  $1d1,000 \times CL$  gp), buried with its former body.



#### <u> Table A1.3 – Random Class Table</u>

<u>Iaple Al.5</u>	- Kandom Class Tabl
d100*	Class
01	Player's choice
02	Adept
03-08	Aristocrat
09-18	Barbarian
19-23	Bard
24-26	Cavalier
27	Cleric
28-40	Commoner
41	Druid
42-55	Expert
56-65	Fighter
66-70	Monk
71-72	Oracle
73	Paladin
74-78	Ranger
79-83	Rogue
84-87	Sorcerer
88-98	Warrior
99	Wizard
00	GM's choice
* TC	

\* If you do not have access to class information for a class rolled, choose the next lowest class instead. Subsequent publications may change this table to reflect available classes or archetypes available in Kaidan

#### Table A1.4 - Karma Pool and Equivalent Caste

$1-15^{*}$	Jigoku**
16-45	Hinin
46-90	Animal***
91-135	Commoner
136 - 165	Asuras
166-180*	Heaven****

\* The karma pool is actually a circular cycle. A karma score of 181 is the same as a karma score of 1 and a karma score of 0 is the same as a karma score of 180.

\*\* Jigoku is the caste of demons, goblins and other evil creatures. Player characters reborn into the Jigoku caste become NPCs.

\*\*\* The animal caste contains both animals and yokai. Players may choose to be reincarnated as an animal, retaining their own mental attributes, or they may choose to be reincarnated as a yokai (henge, kappa, or tengu).

\*\*\*\* Heaven is the caste of the nobility. Player characters who should be reborn as nobles instead become yurei, unable to be appeased in any way. Such characters become NPCs.

#### <u>Table A1.5 – Modifiers to Initial gaijin Karma Pool</u>

Initial gaijin Karma is 1d100+25 modified as follows. Multiple modifiers are cumulative. **Note:** Any alignment, class or race <u>*not*</u> listed is assumed to neither add nor subtract from the final pool.

AlignmentChaotic-15Evil-5Good+5Lawful+15

Class Barbarian -5 Bard -15 Cavalier +10Cleric +10Druid -5 Inquisitor +5 Paladin +15Ranger -5 Rogue -15 Witch -5 Wizard +10Race

Dwarf

Gnome

Half-elf

Half-orc

Halfling

Elf



#### Table A1.6 - Gaining and Losing Karma

-5

-5

+5

-10

-5

+10

+2 Karma	Refusing to hurt another at the cost
	of one's own life
+2 Karma	Act of extreme generosity resulting in
	personal loss
+1 Karma	Aiding those in authority in a
	significant way
+1 Karma	Honesty resulting in personal harm
+1 Karma	A significant act of benevolence
+1 Karma	Purposefully eschewing significant
	personal profit
+0 Karma	Self-defense
-1 Karma	An act of unprovoked violence
	resulting in death
-1 Karma	An act of theft resulting in personal
	gain
-1 Karma	Dishonesty resulting in personal gain
-1 Karma	Rebelling against authority in a
	significant way
-2 Karma	Torture and murder for pleasure and
	profit

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#### Appendix 2: New Monsters

#### Bakeneko

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The green eyes of the house cat stare at you, beguiling you, even as the creature begins to grow, its tail twitching in anticipation of a toothsome meal.

A bakeneko, or demon-cat, is a feline possessed of supernatural powers. Most often appearing as a simple house-cat, these creatures are capable of all manners of magical tricks, though their most common ability is the power to change their shape and size. Bakeneko, like their mundane counterparts, are typically lazy creatures, spending much of their time in languid repose. Beyond a basic self-interest, the creatures are motivated by a love of magic and a fascination with humanoid cultures.

#### Bakeneko CR 4 (XP 1,200)

N Large magical beast (shapechanger) Init +8; Senses darkvision 60 ft., lowlight vision; **Perception** +16 Defense AC 17, touch 13, flat-footed 13 (+4 Dex, +4 natural, -1 size) hp 37 (5d10+10) **Fort** +6, Ref +8, Will +3 DR 5/cold iron; Immune poison SR 15 Offense **Spd** 40 ft. **Melee** bite +9 (1d6+4) and 2 claws +9 (1d4+4) Space 10 ft.; Reach 5 ft. **Special Attacks** pounce, rake (2 claws +9, 1d4+4) Spell-Like Abilities (CL 5th) At will – *dancing lights*, *ghost sounds* 3/day - hypnotism (DC 13), ventriloquism (DC 13) Statistics Str 19, Dex 18, Con 15, Int 10, Wis 14, Cha 14 Base Atk +5; CMB +10; CMD 24 Feats Alertness, Improved Initiative, Skill Focus (Perception) Skills Acrobatics +13, Perception +13, Sense Motive +4, Stealth +16 (+20 when Small); Racial +4 Acrobatics, +4 Stealth Languages Common **SQ** change size Ecology Environment any mountain or forest **Organization** solitary or pair

Treasure standard

#### **Special Abilities**

**Change Size (Su)** As a move action which does not provoke an attack of opportunity, the bakeneko can alter its size. Though it is often encountered in a size similar than that of a house cat, it can grow to be as large as a lion.

**Variations:** The longer a bakeneko lives, the more powerful its spell casting ability becomes. Older bakeneko possess levels of the sorcerer class. Other bakeneko, characterized by pitch black fur, have necromantic powers. These bakeneko can cast *animate dead* once per day.





#### Hone-Yurei (Skeleton-Spirit) (Template)

Undead monstrosities which steal the life from their victims, hone-yurei are most often women. These hone-onna masquerade as beautiful living women during the day, but at night their true form, that of a withered, skeletal monstrosity, is revealed as they drain those they have tricked or seduced into complacency. Like a ghost, the honeyurei is difficult to destroy. Those slain during the night return with the dawn. Only by destroying the creature's heart can a hone-yurei be laid to rest for good. Unfortunately, the hone-yurei does not keep its heart in its chest.

#### **Creating a Hone-Yurei**

"Hone-yurei" is an acquired template which can be added to any humanoid creature. The process by which a hone-yurei is created varies from case to case. Some individuals are unwillingly transformed into hone-yurei through a complicated necromantic ritual, and others, empowered by vile passions and hungers, rise from the grave on their own. In each case, the unifying factor in the creation of the honeyurei is the removal of the heart from the chest of the individual.

#### **CR:** +2

**Type:** The creature's type changes to undead. Do not recalculate the creature's base attack bonus, saves or skill points.

**Alignment:** The creature's alignment becomes CE.

**Armor Class:** A hone-yurei's natural armor bonus increases by +4.

**Hit Dice:** Change all the creature's racial hit dice to d8s. All Hit Dice derived from class levels remain unchanged. Hone-yurei use their Charisma modifiers to determine bonus hit points (instead of Constitution).

**Defensive Abilities:** A hone-yurei retains all the defensive abilities of the base creature. Honeyurei gain channel resistance +4, darkvision 60 ft., DR 5/bludgeoning and all of the immunities granted by its undead status. Honei -yurei gain undetectable alignment as a permanent ability and are immune to both cold and electrical attacks. Hone-yurei also gain the rejuvenation ability.

*Rejuvenation* (Su): A hone-yurei cannot be defeated through combat or spells alone. To permanently destroy a hone-yurei, the creature's heart must be destroyed. So long as the heart

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remains whole, the hone-yurei reforms each dawn, completely regenerating. The hone-yurei does not regain any treasure it might have lost from a defeat, so long as that treasure has been moved more than 500 feet from its heart. Any personal possessions still within range of the heart are regained by the hone-yurei when it reforms.

**Weakness:** A hone-yurei's weakness is its heart. If the heart is destroyed, so is the hone-yurei. Moreover, a hone-yurei cannot travel more than 500 feet from its heart. Each hone-yurei hides or protects its heart in different ways. The organ can be sealed in clay, stored in a chest, or even buried in the ground. The heart itself possesses a hardness of 2 and a number of hit points equal to 1/10 the hone-yurei's hit points.

Melee Attacks: Assuming it does not already possess natural attacks, a hone-yurei gains 2 claw attacks, each dealing 1d4 points of damage (small 1d3, large 1d6) plus 1d3 Con damage (Fortitude negates).

**Special Attacks:** A hone-yurei gains the following special attacks. Save DCs are equal to 10 + 1/2 the hone-yurei's HD + the hone-yurei's charisma modifier.

Draining Kiss: As a full round action, a honeyurei can drain life from a helpless or willing creature via a kiss. Each round the hone-yurei drains 1d6 points of Constitution from its victim, gaining a like number of temporary hit points. These temporary hit points last for 24 hours. A successful Fortitude save halves the amount of the ability drain each round.

Lover's Lullaby: As a full round action, hone-yurei can target a single individual, singing soothingly to that creature. This ability can be used in one of two ways. It can be used as a *charm monster* spell, or it can be used to cause the target to fall asleep for 1d6 rounds. The hone-yurei must choose the desired effect when initiating the action. In either case, a Will save negates. Those who are actively engaged in combat, whether with the hone-yurei or a different foe, receive a +5 bonus to their save. This is a sonic, mind affecting attack.

**Special Qualities:** A hone-yurei gains the following.

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*Gaseous Form:* A hone-yurei can assume a gaseous form once a night (caster level 5th).

*Mortal Seeming:* During the day, the hone-yurei appears as a beautiful (or handsome) mortal and gains no benefit from any abilities gained from the hone-yurei template. The hone-yurei can, at will, maintain this facade at night, so long as it



does not use either its *draining kiss* or its claw attack. When either of these abilities is used, the true form of the hone-yurei, that of a withered, skeletal husk of its former self, is revealed. Once the *mortal seeming* is dropped, it may not be resumed for an hour. *True seeing*, and similar effects, reveals a hone-yurei for what it is, even during the day.

**Ability scores:** Str +2, Dex +4, Cha +6. As an undead creature, a hone-yurei has no Constitution score.

**Skills:** A hone-yurei gains a +8 racial bonus on Bluff, Perform and Sense Motive checks.

**Feats:** A hone-yurei gains Alertness, Toughness and Weapon Finesse as bonus feats.

#### Honya Tyro

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Honya has traveled the world since she was a babe, assisting her father in his mercantile activities. Her natural beauty and charm, coupled with training in the bardic arts, meant that, in time, she came to be indispensable to his business. Her world came crashing down on her when Lord Hachiwara took her hostage and the ritual that turned her into a hone-onna broke her mind. By day she is a cowering shell of a girl, broken and afraid, though enchantingly beautiful. At night, when the sun sets, her hunger comes to the surface and she becomes cold, calculating and manipulative. She will latch onto a single target, preferably a strong male, pursuing him until she succeeds in draining his life.

#### Honya Tyro CR 7 (XP 3,200)

Female hone-onna (human) bard 6 CE Medium undead Init +4; Senses darkvision 60. ft; Perception +12 Defense AC 22, touch 15, flat-footed 17 (+3 armor, +1 dodge, +4 Dex, +4 natural) **hp** 75 (6d8+48) Fort +7, Ref +10, Will +7 Defensive Abilities rejuvenation; DR 5/bludgeoning; Immune cold, electricity, undead immunities Weaknesses heart Offense **Spd** 30 ft **Melee** 2 claws +8 (1d4+1 plus 1d3 Con) Special Attacks draining kiss (DC 20), lover's lullabye (DC 20) Spell-Like Abilities (CL 5th) 1/night – gaseous form Spells Known (CL 6th)

2nd (5/day) – blur, daze monster (DC 19), eagle's splendor, sound burst (DC 19) 1st (6/day)— cause fear (DC 18), charm person (DC 18), identify, summon monster i cantrips (at will) – daze (DC 17), know direction, lullaby (DC 17), prestidigitation, read magic, summon instrument Tactics

**Before Combat** At night, Honya attempts to find a way to be alone with her intended target. If possible, she attacks while they are asleep. If combat seems unavoidable, she casts *blur* and *eagle's splendor*.

**During Combat** If forced into combat, Honya attempts to first use *charm monster*, *cause fear* and *daze monster* to control her enemies. For damage she relies on *sound burst* and her claw attacks.

**Morale** Honya fights until destroyed. Statistics

**Str** 12, **Dex** 18, **Con** -, **Int** 13, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 24 **Base Atk** +4; **CMB** +5; **CMD** 19

**Feats** Alertness, Dodge, Extra Performance, Skill Focus (Perform [sing]), Skill Focus (Profession [merchant]), Toughness, Weapon Finesse

**Skills** Appraise +10, Bluff +24, Diplomacy +16, Knowledge (geography) +13, Perception +12, Perform (percussion) +19, Perform (sing) +26, Profession (merchant) +13, Sense Motive +20; **Racial** +8 Bluff, +8 Perform, +8 Sense Motive

Languages Common, Kaidanese

**SQ** Bardic Knowledge, Versatile Performance, Well Versed

**Bardic Performance** 27 rounds/day; Countersong, Distraction, Fascinate, Inspire Courage +2, Inspire Competence +2, Suggestion

**Gear** leather armor, masterwork rapier, masterwork lap drum, *handy haversack*, *cloak of resistance* +1

**Special Abilities** 

**Heart (Su)** Honya's heart (hardness 2, hp 8) is buried in a ball of hard-baked clay (hardness 4, hp 5) which is in turn contained within a beautiful, enchanted gold-lined ceramic *singing ball* (hardness 2, hp 4) which hangs from a red silk ribbon.

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#### Kama Itachi

At the center of the swirling dust and leaves is a weasel like creature with two long sickle-like swords for forelimbs.

The kama itachi is a strange, sometimes vicious animal, with the ability to move faster than the eye can follow. Roaming through the woods with speed sufficient to kick up a trail of leaves and dust in its wake, the kama itchi lives for little except the moment. The creature is made all the more dangerous by its sword-like forelimbs. The typical melee strategy of the kama itachi is to run in, slash a target, and then move out of range before turning and repeating the process. In this way, it is capable of bringing down large foes with little threat to itself. Though a single kama itachi can be a fearful thing they most often operate as pairs or trios, alternating attacks and leaving foes off-balance by the sheer speed of the onslaught.

Kama itchi are not evil, but they do possess a vindictive streak and delight in punishing those who have slighted them. Dwelling in burrows, kama itchi are playful with their mates and siblings. Kama itchi litters typically contain two or three pups, all of the same sex. As soon as they are mature, the pups leave home, dwelling together until they find a suitable set of mates, at which point they separate from their siblings to establish a burrow with their new mate. While kama itchi have no interest in treasure as a source of wealth, they do collect shiny metallic objects with which to decorate their burrows.

#### Kama Itachi

#### **CR 3 (XP 800)**

N Tiny Magical Beast Init +11; Senses darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +1

#### Defense

AC 22, touch 20, flat-footed 14 (+7 Dex, +1 dodge, +2 natural, +2 size) hp 22 (4d10) Fort +4, Ref +11, Will +2 Defensive Abilities Faster than the Eye

#### <u>Offense</u>

Spd 120 ft., climb 60 ft. Melee 2 slashes +11 (1d4+1) Space 2 ½ ft.; Reach 0 ft. Special Attacks whirlwind slash

#### Statistics

Str 5, Dex 24, Con 11, Int 5, Wis 12, Cha 10 Base Atk +4; CMB -1; CMD 16 (+20 vs. trip) Feats Dodge, Improved Initiative, Mobility<sup>B</sup>, Spring Attack<sup>B</sup>, Weapon Finesse<sup>B</sup> Skills Acrobatics +20, Climb +19, Stealth +19 (+15 if *invisible*); Racial Modifiers Dexterity modifies Climb

Languages understands Kaidanese and Sylvan

#### <u>Ecology</u>

Environment Any Temperate Organization Solitary, Pair or Trio Treasure standard (a stash of shiny, metallic objects)

#### **Special Abilities**

Faster than the Eye (Ex) The kama itchi moves so fast than it is invisible to the eye when it attacks or moves. So long as the kama itchi is not standing still, it is considered *invisible*. As this is not a magical effect, spells such as *true seeing*, cannot overcome the effect. However, when the kama itchi moves, it creates a vortex of wind, kicking up leaves, dust and the like. Because of this, any Perception check made to locate the invisible kama itchi benefits from a +4 bonus.

Whirlwind Slash (Ex) The furious slashes of the kama itchi strike with such force that the attack benefits from a +4 bonus to damage

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A rotting, slimy horse's head hangs from the branch of the tree by a strip of long flesh. Its eyes open and it moves, vaguely snakelike, venom dripping from its jaws.

A sagari is the undead head of a horse attached to a length of horse-flesh and gory muscle. Moving something like a snake, the sagari is a voracious hunter of flesh, though it derives no true nourishment from its feedings, lacking, as it does, any physical means of digesting the food. Legends say the first sagari was formed when a horse died below a cursed tree and absorbed the curse into its flesh. Whether this is true or not, most sagari are spawned from horses infected with the unnatural poisons of other sagari. The poison of a sagari is supernaturally effective and known to cause brain damage in those afflicted by it. When a horses brain is affected by the poisons, it begins a process, which upon the death of the horse, results in a new sagari. Horses are one of the few creatures a sagari does not kill, though a sagari bites and infects horses when given the opportunity, often choosing to do so before attacking and killing other potential prey. Sagari are capable of making a sound like that of a horse in distress. A successful Knowledge (nature) DC 18 discerns that it is not, in fact, the cry of a horse. It is also a capable climber and lurks in trees, at times dangling from the branches to bite those below it. It's favorite tactic, however, is to drop upon its victims, biting and suffocating them. Once a target is dead, the sagari feasts upon the carcass. Though not highly intelligent, the sagari is not mindless and prefers to hunt and stalk prey rather than engaging in straight up fights against superior numbers.

#### Sagari CR 4 (XP 1,600)

NE Medium undead Init +2; Senses darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +10 Aura Fear (30 ft.)

#### **Defense**

AC 18, touch 12, flat-footed 16 (+2 Dex, +6 natural) hp 27 (5d8+5) Fort +3, Ref +4, Will +6 DR 5/fire or silver ; Immune undead traits; Resist cold 10, electricity 10; SR 15

<u>Offense</u> Spd 20 ft., climb 15 ft. **Melee** bite +7 (1d4+3 plus poison plus grab) **Special Attacks** constrict (1d2+3 plus suffocate), create spawn, poison

#### **Statistics**

Str 16, Dex 14, Con -, Int 3, Wis 12, Cha 10
Base Atk +3; CMB +5 (+9 grapple); CMD 17 (can't be tripped)
Feats Skill Focus (Perception), Skill Focus (stealth), Toughness
Skills Climb +16; Perception +10, Stealth +14;
Racial Modifier +4 Stealth

#### **Ecology**

**Environment** any forest **Organization** solitary **Treasure** incidental

#### **Special Abilities**

Constrict (Ex) The sagari, after biting a target, wraps its loose skin around the victim, attempting to suffocate the target. When a target is first constricted by the sagari, it must make a successful DC 15 reflex save or begin to suffocate. **Create Spawn** (Su) A horse bitten by a sagari may itself become a sagari if the poison makes its way to the horses brain. If a horse takes Intelligence damage from the sagari's poison, 2d6 hours after the horse dies its head rips free from its body, a newly spawned sagari. This effect happens upon death, no matter how much time has passed between the initial bite and the death of the animal. Cremating the horse's body prior to the transformation will prevent the effect, as will remove curse (DC 13). Remove curse can be cast either before or after the death of the animal to negate the effect.

**Fear Aura (Su)** All those within 30 feet of the sagari must make a DC 13 Will save or become frightened for 1d6 rounds. Those who succeed on the save are shaken for 1 round but subsequently immune to the effect for 24 hours. Animals suffer a -4 penalty to the save. The DC is Charisma based. The sagari can suppress this ability at will and does so suppress it when hunting.

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Poison The poison of the sagari is supernaturally effective, both draining and damaging  $\mathbf{the}$ victims Constitution and potentially doing permanent brain damage. Bite - injury; save Fort DC 13; frequency 1/round for 4 rounds; effect 1d3 Constitution drain; secondary effect 1d2 Constitution damage and 1 Intelligence drain; cure 1 save; special horses suffer a -4 penalty to saves to resist the poison.

When a body has no soul, it is an empty vessel waiting an owner. In Kaidan, certain malicious elemental spirits, akin perhaps to demons, enjoy entering such vessels in order to cause pain and suffering in the world. The exact nature of the tamashinaki depends on the vessel, but all of them are psychotic, delighting in torture, murder and bloodshed. Though not highly intelligent, tamashinaki possess a certain primitive cunning and can often pass for a member of the species to which its host-body belongs. However. tamashinaki are, by their nature, sadistic loners, eschewing companionship unless they believe they will be able to harm those they "befriend." Beyond their depraved violent nature, Tamashinaki share another common characteristic. They make little sound and never speak, grunt or utter a vocal noise of any sort.

#### Creating a Tamashinaki

Tamashinaki is a template that can be added to any creature which would normally possess a soul, such as animals, humanoids and monstrous humanoids. Tamashinaki are created when a body has no soul, allowing a malevolent elemental spirit to take control of that body. A tamashinaki is intelligent enough to possess class levels, though classes with access to arcane or divine spells are never taken.

#### **CR**: +1

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**Type**: The creature gains the outsider (native) type and the evil subtype. The creature also gains an elemental subtype (cold, earth, or fire). This does not affect the creature's HD or skills.

**AL**: All tamashinaki are chaotic evil, without exception.

**Defense/Qualities:** Darkvision 30 ft.; each tamashinaki is associated with a certain energy type (fire, acid, or cold). The tamashinaki has Resist 10 against its associated energy. All tamashinaki have Resist sonic 5.

**Weakness:** *Possessor* – If the tamashinaki fails its save versus a dismissal effect, the elemental spirit is driven from the host body, rendering the body comatose. The spirit cannot return to that same body again for 24 hours, though it will return if the body is not destroyed, protected by magic, or no other soul takes up residency in the spirit's absence.

**Special Abilities:** A tamashinaki has the following special abilities:

*Bloodlust:* Violence excites a tamashinaki. If the tamashinaki scores a hit which deals damage, it gains a +1 morale bonus to all attacks for one round. A tamashinaki which continues to hit continues to enjoy the bonus, but it is not cumulative with itself and if a tamashinaki fails to score a hit during a round, the effect ends until it does so again.

*Elemental Strike:* Once a day, a tamashinaki can, in connection with a critical hit, choose to unleash an elemental blast which delivers damage of the energy type associated with the tamashinaki. This strike does 1d6 points of additional damage for every 2 HD the tamashinaki possesses (minimum 1).

Sense Weakness: A tamashinaki naturally senses a creature's weak, vulnerable points. A tamashinaki is considered to have Improved Critical with any weapon or natural weapon it uses.

**Special Qualities:** *Mute* – A tamashinaki never makes any vocal noises and therefore cannot utilize any ability or effect which would rely upon doing so, such as spells with vocal components.

Abilities: Strength, Dexterity and Constitution are as base creature. Intelligence 7, Wisdom 12, Charisma 10. Other templates do not raise either Intelligence or Charisma, although magical effects might.

**Skills:** Available skills are as the base creature or according to class. In addition to any base racial modifiers, Tamashinaki have a +8 racial modifier to Bluff, Sense Motive and Stealth.

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**Feats:** A tamashinaki does gain any of its base creature's racial feats. It does naturally gain Dodge, Improved Critical (all), and Toughness.

**Environment:** Change to any land.

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Organization: All tamashinaki are solitary creatures

### Snow-falling-on-the-Blood

The villagers call him Ashi, but he knows his name is Snow-falling-on-the-Blood, for when he delivers a true killing stroke, the blood of his victims' freezes. Traveling from village to village on the island of Yonshu, he sells his simple wooden toys to the children for paltry sums, smiling angelically the whole time. He points to his cut out tongue with sadness when questioned about his muteness. Villagers understand, for the samurai sometimes cut out tongues for the crime of insolence. The truth is that Snow-falling-on-the-Blood cut out his own tongue and he sells toys because his preferred victims are children. That is not to say, however, that he will not waylay and torture women and men when the opportunity to do so presents itself. When Snow-falling-on-the-Blood takes victims, he binds them and hides them away, going each evening with his dagger to "play" with them. He is clever enough to make sure that he is never connected in the minds of the villagers with any disappearances. For thirty years he has been successful, though how much longer his luck can last is hard to say. During the heat of the summer months, Snow-falling-on-the-Blood is more slothful in his activity, but when the weather turns cold, his desire for blood and violence burns hot.

#### Snow-falling-on-the-Blood CR 6 (xp 2,400)

Male human tamashinaki Rogue 6 CE Medium outsider (cold, evil) Init +3; Senses darkvision 30 ft., lowlight vision; Perception +10 Defense AC 16, touch 14, flat-footed 12 (+2 Deflection, +3

Dex, +1 dodge) **hp** 39 (6d8+12)

**Fort** +3, Ref +8, Will +3

**Defenses** trapfinding, trap sense +1, uncanny dodge; Resist cold 10, sonic 5

Weaknesses Possessor

Offense

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**Spd** 30 ft

Melee masterwork dagger +7 (1d4+1; 17-20 x2) plus elemental strike)

Special Attacks bleeding attack (3 bleed damage), bloodlust, elemental strike (1/day, +3d6 cold), sense weakness, sneak attack +3d6 Tactics

Before Combat Snow-falling-on-the-Blood prefers to strike unexpectedly, when his chosen victim is alone, utilizing either stealth or deception, as the situation warrants.

During Combat Once combat is initiated, Snow-

falling-on-the-Blood uses his Bluff skill to set up subsequent sneak attacks. His goal in combat is to bleed his opponent into unconsciousness so that he can subsequently torture them.

Morale If outnumbered, Snow-falling-on-the-Blood flees, so long as he is not caught up in his bloodlust. Nevertheless, he will return, stalking any witnesses to his activities. Statistics

Str 12, Dex 17, Con 13, Int 7, Wis 12, Cha 10 Base Atk +4; CMB +5; CMD 18

Feats Dodge<sup>B</sup>, Improved Critical<sup>B</sup>, Skill Focus (Bluff), Skill Focus (Stealth), Toughness<sup>B</sup>, Weapon Focus (dagger)

Skills Bluff +20, Craft (wooden toys) +7, Perception +10, Sense Motive +18, Stealth +23, Survival +7; Racial + 8 Bluff, Sense Motive and Stealth

Languages Kaidanese (understood) SQ mute

**Gear** masterwork dagger, *ring of protection* +2 Ecology

**Environment** any

**Organization** solitary

Treasure incidental and gear

#### Ushi-Oni (Ox Demon)

This massive abomination rises from the water, revealing the horned head of a bull, a vaguely humanoid torso atop a great spider-like body, four arms, two of which end in scythe-like appendages, and tentacle-like legs.

The ushi-oni is an aquatic demon which haunts coast lines, springs and lakes. No two ushi-oni are exactly alike. Their defining characteristic is a bull-like head but their multi-limbed torsos can possess characteristics reminiscent of spiders, crabs, and even octopi. While the ushi-oni enjoy preying upon swimmers and fishermen, their true delight is in causing misfortune. The ushi-oni, like all oni, is a shapechanger, able to assume the form of either a man or a minotaur-like giant. Despite their violent, brute nature, ushi-oni are clever and observant, with a natural aptitude for manipulating magic.

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#### **Ushi-oni** CR 7 (XP 3.600)

CE Large outsider (aquatic, giant, evil, native, oni)

Init +1; Senses darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +16

Defense

AC 20, touch 10, flat-footed 19 (+1 Dex, +10

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natural, -1 size) hp 85 (9d10+36); regeneration 5 (acid) Fort +9, Ref +4, Will +8 DR 5/slashing; Immune cold, poison; Resist electricity 10, fire 5 Offense

**Spd** 30 ft., swim 40 ft. Melee 2 scythe-arms +16 (1d10+8; 20/x3) and gore +11 (1d6+4) Space 10ft.; Reach 10 ft. (5 ft. reach with gore) Spell-Like Abilities (CL 9th) At will – *detect magic* 3/day – dispel magic, grease, fog cloud **Statistics** Str 26, Dex 12, Con 17, Int 13, Wis 14, Cha 12 Base Atk +9; CMB +18; CMD 29 Feats Cleave, Combat Reflexes, Power Attack, Stand Still, Toughness Skills Knowledge (arcana) +10, Knowledge (nature) +10, Perception +16, Sense Motive +14, Swim +28, Use Magic Device+16; Racial +2 Perception, +6 Use Magic Device, +8 Swim Languages Abyssal (Jigoku), Common, Giant SQ amphibious, shapechanger (human or minotaur; *alter self*, *giant form I*)

#### Ecology

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Environment any water

Organization solitary, pair

Treasure standard

**Variations:** There is a great deal of variety among ushi-oni. Some have massive pincers in place of the more typical scythe-bladed arms (2

pincers +16 [1d8+8 plus grab]; constrict 1d8+8). Some have more spider-like legs (speed 30 ft., swim 30 ft., climb 20 ft.). The most dangerous are massive creatures which tower 20 to 40 feet in height.

**Oni Subtype:** Oni are evil outsiders, who, although native to the plane of Jigoku, have taken on flesh in the material world. Oni possess a particular suite of traits (unless otherwise noted in a creature's entry) as summarized here. This information replaces the oni subtype contained in the *Pathfinder Bestiary*.

**Immunity** to cold and poison **Resistance** to electricity 10

Change Shape (Su) Oni are natural shape changers. While some oni can also take on the form of an animal, all oni can appear as Small, Medium or Large humanoids; *alter self* or *giant form I* 

**Regeneration** (Su) All oni regenerate, although the rate of regeneration varies. Most oni are susceptible to damage from fire or acid.

Oni speak Abyssal, Common and Giant.

An oni's natural weapons are treated as evil for the purpose of resolving damage reduction.

**Native** Oni are native outsiders. As evil spirits clad in mortal flesh, all oni possess one of the humanoid subtypes, typically giant.



#### Ranger (Yojimbo Archetype)

A member of the samurai caste, the yojimbo is the face of the noble lord throughout the lord's province. Traveling about the lord's lands righting wrongs, and defeating his lord's enemies, the yojimbo is comfortable living either a solitary existence or working with a unit. A ronin yojimbo often serves a community in place of a lord. Those who follow the path of the yojimbo are considered some of the hardiest of the samurai.

**Weapons and Armor Proficiency:** A yojimbo is proficient with all simple and martial weapons and with the katana. He is proficient with light and medium armor but not with shields.

**Class Skills:** Climb (Str), Craft (Int), Diplomacy (Cha), Handle Animal (Cha), Intimidate (Cha), Knowledge (local) (Int), Knowledge (noble) (Int), Perception (Wis), Perform (Cha), Ride (Dex), Sense Motive (Wis), Stealth (Dex), Survival (Wis) and Swim(Str).

Skill Ranks per Level: 4 +Int modifier.

Enemy Clan (Ex): At 1st level a vojimbo chooses an enemy clan. He gains a +1 bonus on Bluff, Knowledge, Sense Motive and Perception, Survival checks against foes from this enemy clan. Likewise, he gets a +2 bonus on weapon attacks and damage against them. This damage stacks with any bonus gained from Favored Enemy. At 5th level and every five levels thereafter, a yojimbo gains another +1 bonus against an enemy clan. He may choose a new enemy clan or apply the bonus to one enemy clan he already possesses. A yojimbo may select Humanoid (human) as a favored enemy at 1st level, regardless of alignment. This ability replaces the ranger's normal track and swift tracker abilities.

**Honor Bound (Ex):** As a free action, by concentrating on a single individual within 30 feet, the yojimbo can sense whether the individual has honor and whether it is negative or positive. When interacting with anyone with equal or less honor than himself, the yojimbo can add his honor score to any Charisma-based skill check as a bonus modifier. The yojimbo may possess an amount of honor equal to half his yojimbo character level (minimum 1). He may gain honor by defeating a challenge with a CR 1 greater than

his character level in the name of his lord (in the case of a ronin yojimbo he must defeat this challenge in the name of a community). The yojimbo is under no obligation to defeat this challenge alone but he must contribute significantly to the success of the endeavor. If the yojimbo ever fails at a challenge where the CR is 1 or more less than his character level he loses 1 honor. This ability replaces the ranger's wild empathy.

**Tough to Kill (Ex):** The yojimbo gains Toughness as a bonus feat at 1st level. He gains Endurance as a bonus feat at 2nd level, Die Hard as a bonus feat at 4th level and Fight On\* as a bonus feat at 7th level. These replace the ranger's Endurance and Woodland Stride abilities, as well as 2 of the ranger's normal skill ranks per level.

**Combat Style Feat (Ex):** At 2nd a yojimbo must select a combat style to pursue in a manner identical to the normal ranger. The yojimbo must select one of the following styles: Iaijutsu, Mounted Combat\*, Two-Handed Weapon\*, or Yabusame.

If he selects Iaijutsu he chooses from the following list whenever he gains a combat style feat: Cleave, Power Attack, Quick Draw, Vital Strike. At 6th level add Furious Focus and Improved Vital Strike to the list. At 10th level add Deadly Stroke and Improved Critical to the list.

If he selects Yabusame (an alternate archery list), he chooses from the following list whenever he gains a combat style feat: Mounted Archery, Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, and Rapid Shot. At 6th level add Improved Precise Shot and Point Blank Mastery to the list. At 10th level add Pinpoint Targeting and Shot on the Run to the list.

**Ancestral Bond (Su):** At third level, the yojimbo becomes more attuned to the wisdom and knowledge of his ancestors. He gains Skill Focus as a bonus feat. He gains another Skill Focus bonus feat again at 8th, 13th and 18th levels. This ability replaces the ranger's favored terrain ability.

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**Swift to Act (Ex):** Beginning at 3rd level, the yojimbo gains a bonus to his initiative modifier equal to 1/2 his yojimbo character level.



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Warriors Bond (Ex): At 4th level, instead of forming a hunter's bond, a vojimbo forms a bond with either his weapon or his mount. If the yojimbo chooses his mount, the animal becomes an animal companion. This ability functions like the druid animal companion ability except that the vojimbo's effective druid level is equal to his yojimbo class level -3. The yojimbo gains a +2bonus on Handle Animal and Ride checks with his animal companion mount. If the yojimbo chooses to form a bond with his weapon, he chooses a specific individual weapon (not a weapon type) with which to bond. When using this weapon he gains a competence bonus to attacks and damage with the chosen weapon equal to 1/4 his yojimbo class level. When using this weapon against a favored enemy, its critical threat range is increased by one step. If the yojimbo decided to bond with a new weapon, he must forgo the bonus for one month before transferring the bond. Likewise if the chosen weapon is lost or destroyed, the yojimbo may not form a new bond for a period of 1 month.

Ancestral Discourse (Su): Beginning at 4th level, the yojimbo is able to directly attune himself to his ancestors. By meditating for ten minutes, the yojimbo may gain one of the following benefits: +1 to attacks, damage and saving throws, lasting 1 hour. A yes/no answer to a question concerning events not in the future, otherwise as an *augury*, with an 80 + character level percent chance to be right. +2 ancestral bonus to a single skill, lasting an hour. +2 ability increase, lasting an hour. +2 dodge bonus to AC, lasting an hour.

A yojimbo may use ancestral discourse a number of times per day equal to 1/5 his yojimbo character level + 1. This means he may use it 1/day at 4th level and 2/day at fifth level. At 12th level, all numerical bonuses gained from ancestral discourse are doubled and the time they yojimbo must spend in meditation is halved. At 20th level the yojimbo may gain the benefits of ancestral discourse without meditation, as a swift action. This ability replaces the ranger's spell casting ability.

**Soft Footfall (Ex):** Beginning at 7th level, the yojimbo gains a bonus to his Stealth skill equal to his Wisdom bonus, if any. At 12th level, he gains an additional bonus to Stealth equal to 1/4 his yojimbo class level. This ability replace

s camouflage and hide in plain sight.

**Bushido Master (Ex):** A yojimbo may, as a standard action, make a single attack against a favored enemy at his full attack bonus. If the attack hits, the target takes damage normally and must make a Fortitude save or die. The DC of this save is equal to 10+ 1/2 the yojimbo's level + the yojimbo's Wisdom modifier. A yojimbo may choose instead to deal an amount of non-lethal damage equal to the creature's total hit-points. A successful save negates this damage. A yojimbo may use this ability a number of times per day equal to 1/5 his yojimbo class level + his Wisdom modifier. He may not use the ability more than once against the same creature in a 24-hour period.



#### Appendix 4: Samurai Honor

The term samurai is derived from a verb meaning "to serve," and the samurai's code of personal honor is centered on the concept of serving. The samurai code of conduct, *bushido*, or the way of the warrior, has four primary virtues.

Loyalty to your king or emperor

- Loyalty to your nation
- Loyalty to your daimyo, clan or to your community
- Loyalty to yourself

As samurai remain true to these ideals, performing acts of daring or duty for others, they rise in honor. As they act selfishly or cowardly, they lose honor. A samurai devoted to bushido would sooner die than be shamed and dishonored. Even ronin, those samurai who turn away from serving a particular nobleman, frequently seek out communities which they can serve, thus maintaining their honor. Samurai with no honor are considered less than dogs by their peers. Likewise, even though two samurai may be sworn enemies, so long as their foe is honorable, they treat one another respectfully, even in the midst of combat.

In Kaidan, shame and honor are primarily samurai concepts. The commoners are too busy trying to scratch out a living to care about such things. The hinin, except perhaps the Yakuza who teach loyalty to their family, generally think such high-minded ideals are foolish. The nobles encourage bushido in the samurai, but. considering themselves as the ones who should be served, feel no obligation to practice it themselves. Some hengeyokai, the badgers and dogs in particular, may practice something akin to bushido, but never as strictly as the samurai. Thus for a character in Kaidan to have an honor score, he must first belong to a samurai clan (either through birth or adoption) or be a part of the samurai caste. There are some exceptions to this rule, but a character who does not belong to the samurai must conscientiously and actively pursue *bushido*.

Honor is determined by a numerical score, with 0 being the lowest. A character's honor can never be a number more than half his or her character level. The only exception to this is 1st level characters who may possess an honor of 1. The primary way to gain honor is to fight and defeat a challenge in service to another. The challenge defeated must be at least 1 CR above a character's

level. Though it is never necessary for a character to defeat this challenge alone, he must contribute significantly to the cause. The one being served must have either requested the action or benefit significantly from the action. Thus a character that fights a powerful oni for the fun of it earns no honor. But the character sent by either a daimyo or a community to fight the oni would gain 1 honor if successful. Honor is always gained, and lost, 1 point at a time. Alternatively, it is possible to earn honor by making an extreme sacrifice for another, either monetarily or in terms of time. Monetary sacrifices to gain honor require an amount of gp equal to the character's level squared x 1,000. Sufficient sacrifices of time are measured in months per character level. Characters lose honor by failing a challenge in which the CR is lower than the character's level or by running from a challenge in which the CR is equal to their character level.

Honor has a variety of benefits. Those who possess honor may expect samurai of equal or lesser honor to treat them respectfully. Class archetypes associated with the samurai caste (such as the yojimbo archetype) have built-in powers related to honor. Ancestral relics also require honor in order to activate the powers of the item. Beyond this, certain feats take advantage of honor. Two are presented here.

#### **Driven By Honor**

Your dedication to your honor inspires you to try harder.

Prerequisite: An honor score of at least 1

**Benefit:** Any time you are involved in an endeavor in which success or failure will alter your honor score (either negatively or positively), you add a +1 morale bonus to all d20 checks.

#### **Honor's Tongue**

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Your honor inspires you to do well in interacting with others.

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**Prerequisite:** An honor score of at least 1, Charisma 13

**Benefit:** You may add twice your honor score to any Charisma-based skill check. You may use this ability a number of times per day equal to your charisma modifier (minimum 1). This ability does not stack with any other ability which allows you to use honor as a bonus to skill checks.

### Appendix 5: Pregenerated Characters Aarenia

**Quote:** The wind blows me, to sights unseen and people not yet met.

Aarenia lives to see new things. She has been traveling since she can't remember when and has never known a true home. Though some would chaff at such an existence, Aarenia revels in it, eagerly anticipating the next new sight. Because of her love of travel, she was a natural choice for church officials who wanted a report on Kaidan and the religions therein. Though by nature a softhearted, engaging individual, she has something of a temper. She particularly grows cross when she sees people mistreating or enslaving others.

#### Aarenia

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Female human cleric 6 CG Medium humanoid (human) Init +3; Senses Perception +13 Aura chaotic (strong), good (strong) Defense AC 17, touch 9, flat-footed 17 (+7 armor, -1 Dex, +1 shield) hp 42 (6d8+12)**Fort** +6, Ref +1, Will +9 Offense **Spd** 20 ft. **Melee** +1 rapier +5 (1d6+1; 18-20/x2) **Ranged** sling +3 (1d4) Special Attacks channel positive energy (7/day, 3d6, DC 15) Domain **Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 6th; Concentration +9) 7/day-agile feet, dazing touch Spells Prepared (CL 5th; Concentration +9) 3rd – blindness/deafness (DC 17), fly<sup>D</sup>, searing light (x2)2nd - hold person (DC 16) (x2), locate object<sup>D</sup>,sound burst (DC 16), summon monster II 1st — bless, charm person<sup>D</sup>, comprehend languages (x2), sanctuary Orisons (at will) — detect magic, detect poison, resistance, stabilize **D** Domain Spells; **Domains** Charm, Travel Statistics Str 10, Dex 9, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 18, Cha 15 Base Atk +4; CMB +4; CMD 13 Feats Extra Channel, Improved Initiative<sup>B</sup>. Selective Channeling, Turn Undead **Skills** Diplomacy +11, Knowledge (religion) +7,

Linguistics +5, Perception +13 Languages Celestial, Common, Kaidanese

**Combat Gear** potion of cure light wounds (3), potion of cure serious wounds; **Gear** +1 chain mail, +1 rapier, small metal shield, sling, hat of disguise, pearl of power (1st level), 5,000 gp.

#### Deymin

**Quote:** Honest labor never killed anyone, but why take the chance?

Deymin is a rascal and he knows it. He sees himself as a charitable sort, constantly giving to those in need. The fact that his generosity is most often expressed with other people's money has had an unfortunate tendency to land him in trouble. Most recently, the theft of a large sack of money from an unsavory crime lord and the subsequent distribution of that gold to the poor of the city, made Deymin very unpopular with some rather violent individuals. Thus Deymin decided to take an extended vacation to Kaidan until the heat died down.

#### Deymin

Male human rogue 6 CG Medium humanoid (human) Init +6; Senses Perception +9 Defense AC 20, touch 13, flat-footed 17 (+5 armor, +2 Dex, +1 dodge, +2 shield) hp 37 (6d8+6) **Fort** +2, Ref +7, Will +2 Defensive Abilities evasion, trap sense +2, uncanny dodge Offense **Spd** 30 ft. **Melee** mwk rapier +7 (1d6+1/18-20) **Ranged** mwk shortbow +6 (1d6/x3) Special Attacks sneak attack +3d6 Statistics Str 12, Dex 15, Con 11, Int 12, Wis 10, Cha 16 Base Atk +4; CMB +5; CMD 18 Feats Dodge, Improved Initiative<sup>B</sup>, Persuasive, Weapon Focus (rapier), Weapon Finesse<sup>B</sup> Skills Acrobatics +11, Appraise +10, Bluff +12, Diplomacy +14, Disable Device +15, Intimidate +14, Knowledge (dungeoneering) +9, Linguistics +5, Perception +9, Sleight of Hand +11, Stealth +16Languages Common, Elven, Kaidanese SQ rogue talents (finesse rogue, stand up, surprise attack), trapfinding +2 **Gear** +1 glamered shadow mithral shirt, +1 light

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wooden shield, mwk rapier, mwk shortbow and 40 arrows, everburning torch, mwk thieves' tools, 5,000 gp



#### Kurain

**Quote:** To die at the hands of a sharp blade, used skillfully? Such a death is a good death.

Kurain comes from a proud tradition of elven swordsmanship. His clan not only trains heavily in the use of the elven curve blade, they are also renowned as superior weaponsmiths. Having heard tales of the Kaidan Katana, the clan elders instructed Kurain to seek out an example of these blades to see if there was anything to be learned from them. Kurain has little respect for anything not elvish, except it be talent in the art of combat.

Kurain Male elf fighter 6 NG Medium humanoid (elf) Init +3; Senses low-light vision; Perception +2 Defense

AC 21, touch 14, flat-footed 17 (+7 armor, +3 Dex, +1 dodge)

 ${\bf hp}\; 44\; ({\bf 6d10{+}6})$ 

Fort +5, Ref +5, Will +2 (+2 vs. fear); +2 vs. enchantment

**Defensive Abilities** bravery +2; **Immune** sleep Offense

**Spd** 20 ft.

**Melee** +1 frost elven curved blade +12 (1d10+8 plus 1d6 cold/18-20)

**Ranged** mwk composite (+3 Str) longbow +10 (1d8+3/x3)

**Special Attacks** weapon training (heavy blades +1)

Statistics

**Str** 16, **Dex** 16, **Con** 10, **Int** 14, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 10 **Base Atk** +6; **CMB** +9; **CMD** 23

**Skills** Acrobatics +5, Climb +8, Linguistics +5, Knowledge (dungeoneering) +7, Ride +7, Swim +8; **Racial** +2 Perception

Languages Common, Draconic, Dwarf, Elven, Giant, Goblin, Kaidanese

 $\mathbf{SQ}$  armor training 1

**Combat Gear** potion of cure moderate wounds, potion of shield; **Gear** +1 chainmail, +1 frost elven curve blade, mwk composite (+3 Str) longbow with

20 arrows, 5,000 gp.

#### Lyshna

Quote: How can you not love a face like this?

Lyshna is a winsome halfling woman, with a near-perpetual grin. Perhaps because of her winning personality (or perhaps due to her use of scrolls containing *charm person*), she has always found it easy to find out secrets. Because of her penchant for subtle espionage, she has been commissioned with obtaining maps of Kaidan, something sorely lacking in the west. Lyshna, though charming, is somewhat self-centered, given to pampering herself whenever possible. She can rough it when necessary, but much prefers an inn to a tent and a hot bath to a cold, dewy morning.

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Female halfling sorcerer 6 CG Small humanoid (halfling) Init +1; Senses Perception +2 Defense **AC** 12, touch 12, flat-footed 11 (+1 Dex, +1 size) **hp** 230 (6d6+6) **Fort** +2, Ref +4, Will +6; +2 vs. fear Resist electric 10 Offense **Spd** 20 ft. Melee quarterstaff +3 (1d6-1) Special Attacks elemental ray (8/day, +5 ranged touch, 1d6+2 electricity) **Spells Known** (CL 6th; concentration +11) 3rd (4/day) – *lightning bolt* (DC 18) 2nd (6/day) - glitterdust (DC 17), invisibility, *scorching ray* (electricity) 1st (8/day) — burning hands (electricity, DC 16), comprehend languages, disguise self (DC 16), mage armor, magic missile Orisons (at will) – daze (DC 15), detect magic, light, mage hand, open/close, prestidigitation, read magic **Bloodline** elemental (air) Statistics Str 8, Dex 12, Con 8, Int 10, Wis 11, Cha 21 Base Atk +2; CMB +0; CMD 11 Feats Craft Wand, Craft Wondrous Item, Eschew Material<sup>B</sup>, Toughness

Skills Acrobatics +3, Bluff +13, Climb +1, Diplomacy +11, Linguistics +1, Knowledge (Planes) +4, Spellcraft +7; Racial +2 Acrobatics, +2 Climb, +2 Perception

Languages Common, Halfling, Kaidanese **SQ** bloodline arcana

Combat Gear dust of appearance, dust of disappearance, dust of illusion, scroll of charm person, scroll of disguise self, scroll of enlarge person, scroll of mage armor, scroll of reduce person, wand of mager armor (27 charges), wand of magic missile (2 missiles, 31 charges); Gear quarterstaff, bag of holding (type 2), ring of feather falling, wind fan, 50 ft silk rope, 5,000 gp

#### Lyshna Flask

Female halfling sorcerer 6 CG Small humanoid (halfling) Init +1; Senses Perception +2 Defense **AC** 12, touch 12, flat-footed 11 (+1 Dex, +1 size) **hp** 230 (6d6+6) **Fort** +2, Ref +4, Will +6; +2 vs. fear Resist electric 10 Offense

Spd 20 ft.

Melee quarterstaff +3 (1d6-1)

Special Attacks elemental ray (8/day, +5 ranged touch, 1d6+2 electricity)

**Spells Known** (CL 6th; concentration +11)

3rd (4/day) – *lightning bolt* (DC 18)

2nd (6/day) - glitterdust (DC 17), invisibility, *scorching ray* (electricity)

1st (8/day) — burning hands (electricity, DC 16), comprehend languages, disguise self (DC 16), mage armor, magic missile

Orisons (at will) - daze (DC 15), detect magic, light, mage hand, open/close, prestidigitation, read magic

**Bloodline** elemental (air)

Statistics

Str 8, Dex 12, Con 8, Int 10, Wis 11, Cha 21 Base Atk +2; CMB +0; CMD 11

Feats Craft Wand, Craft Wondrous Item, Eschew Material<sup>B</sup>, Toughness

Skills Acrobatics +3, Bluff +13, Climb +1, Diplomacy +11, Linguistics +1, Knowledge (Planes) +4, Spellcraft +7; Racial +2 Acrobatics, +2 Climb, +2 Perception

Languages Common, Halfling, Kaidanese **SQ** bloodline arcana

Combat Gear dust of appearance, dust of disappearance, dust of illusion, scroll of charm person, scroll of disguise self, scroll of enlarge person, scroll of mage armor, scroll of reduce person, wand of mager armor (27 charges), wand of magic missile (2 missiles, 31 charges); Gear quarterstaff, bag of holding (type 2), ring of *feather falling, wind fan*, 50 ft silk rope, 5,000 gp.



### **Glossary of Words**

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A forest town Agoya Asuras The samurai caste **Baipaseki** A viper stone, an enchanted rock which oozes poison A demon or spirit cat able to change its size Bakeneko The way of the warrior; the code of samurai conduct **Bushido** Even-Odd; a dice game **Cho-Han** A shrine font for the washing of the mouth and hands Chozuya Lord of a province Daimyo The mountains of central Yonshu Daitengu Ema Small wooden plaques upon which prayers or wishes are written Foreigners to Kaidan; sometimes referred to as those from "beyond the mist" Gaijin Literally, island of the gaijin; the only port open to gaijin ships Gaijinoshima An inn in Tsue-jo Golden Koi, The Hebi-no-onna A snake-woman oni Humanoids that can shapeshift between animal and man forms Henge, Hengeyokai The most holy area of a kami shrine; the "home" of the kami Hoidan The hell of the oni; also the caste of demons, oni and goblins Jigoku Jikininki A shape-changing ghoul A cursed archipelago nation containing four main islands Kaidan Spirits worshiped as divine Kami A single edged curved sword Katana A type of garment Kimono Hengeyokai village Kitsumura A shrine priestess or oracle Miko A type of polearm Naginata Bandits Nobushi Malevolent spirits who take on flesh Oni Main province of Yonshu Island Oniba Shinjitsuko An enchanted katana, a powerful ancestral relic The true ruler of Kaidan; makes decisions in the name of the Emperor Shogun The office and minions of the Shogun Shogunate The soulless; bodies inhabited by malevolent elemental spirits Tamashinaki Raccoon dog Tanuki Birdlike yokai Tengu A shrine gate comprised of a large crossbeam set across two wooden legs Torii Main city and port of Yonshu Tsue-jo Port town of Yonshu Uesaki A short, single-edged sword Wakizashi A criminal enterprise focused on gambling, drugs, entertainment and Yakuza prostitution Yokai Humanoids with animal features Worship of localized kami spirits, a tradition among henge villages Yokinto Yomi Kaidanese realm of the dead Smallest of the three main islands of Kaidan Yonshu Undead, often a ghost, but the term can refer to any sort of undead Yurei State religion of Kaidan Zao

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### **Glossary of Names**

Adara Atsukawa Kenshi Avokoto Aimi **Ayokoto Arata** Daiki, "Captain" Damoko Shinichi, Lord Fukuisaki Akihiko Fuiwara Hoto, Lord Hachiwara Nobu, Lord Hakoto Maki Himoji Takio Honya Tyro Jadoko Katsumi Kenta Kobee Marl Tyro Minako Nabi Okor Saaya Sadaharu Satoko Ryuu Suba Taiyo Takanori Hidehoshi Yamayashi Yoshirou

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Head elder of Kitsumura Village; a badger hengeyokai, husband of Saaya A ranger of Agoya Owner of The Golden Koi; wife of Arata Owner of The Golden Koi; husband of Aimi Village elder of Kitsumura village; a dog hengeyokai Exalted Captain of the Palace Guard in Tsue-jo A young samurai, now a ghost Chief-Minister of Zaoism on Yonshu Daimyo of Oniba province on Yonshu Elder of Agoya Ancient hero and oni slayer; the original owner of the Golden Spear Daughter of Marl Tyro; a hone-onna Hebi-no-onna sent to capture the Golden Spear Beautiful shrine maiden, now a ghost Foreman in Yoshirou's Horseyard Elder and Blacksmith of Kitsumura village; a tanuki hengeyokai A merchant bearing a gift to Lord Hachiwara A thief, now a jikininki Priest of Kitsumura village; a dog hengeyokai, husband to Sabu An ushi-oni Elder and herbalist of Kitsumura village; a badger hengeyokai, wife of Adaru Young man hired by Marl Tyro to take the horses to Agoya A samurai in service to Lord Hachiwara Miko of Kitsumura village; a rat hengeyokai, wife of Nabi Oldest elder of Kitsumura village; a rat hengevokai Black-market merchant Owner of a horseyard

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## In the Company of K A P P A

## IN THE COMPANY OF HENGE

We are a people of laughter and good cheer. True, our humor is not always understood by others, we find the sound of breaking bones to be hilarious, but we amuse ourselves first and others second. We love loud jokes, large meals and a good wrestling match. There are many stories told of us, that we eat children, or delight in drowning swimmers. Certainly, we have had our share of villains, but, taken as a whole, we are no more wicked than any other race. Most of us want nothing more than to humble the proud and make the wise man feel foolish. We like to think we are well suited to these tasks. And let us not forget, not only did we break the first bone, but we afterward showed the man how to set it.

A player character race designed for use with the Pathfinder Roleplaying Game

Jonathan McAnulty **NOW AVAILABLE!** 







# In the Company of TENGU

## IN THE COMPANY OF TENGU

We are tengu. We are children of the wind and the mountain. Our way is the way of the sword, the path of the warrior. The highest challenge for a tengu is that which tests both heart and soul, mind and body. We seek enlightenment at the edge of good steel. When each movement flows seamlessly into the next, a perfect dance of flesh and wind and flashing blade, we find peace.

Listen and I will teach you wisdom, I will tell you of the tengu...

Jonathan McAnulty

A player character race designed for use with the Pathfinder Roleplaying Game

## **COMING IN JUNE 2011**







# In the Company of H E N G E

## IN THE COMPANY OF HENGE

We are hengeyokai. We are children of the woods. We are shapechangers, walking where we will, dwelling at once in two worlds. Ours are the gifts of men and ours are the gifts of the wild. Who has been blessed as we have? And yet, is it not our very gifts which so cause the simple to turn on us? It was not always thus. Once we were honored by men. Now we dwell apart them, feared and from fearing. Yet we continue in the old ways, the right ways.

Listen now and I will teach you better who we are...

A player character race designed for use with the Pathfinder Roleplaying Game

Jonathan McAnulty COMING IN JULY 2011







# WAY OF THE YAKUZA



## **WAY OF THE YAKUZA**

Greetings, my friend. If you have come for knowledge, enter and have a seat. Pardon, that I do not rise and greet you properly, but I am not as young as I once was. As the hair grays, the bones grow weak. But I've outlived more than most and I'll wager there's a few more I'll yet outlive.

Yes, indeed. I've seen many young bo-kan like yourself come through those doors over the years. Full of spirit and ready to take on anyone, be they demon or men. Most do not last long. Perhaps you will be different? ...Or, perhaps not. Only time will tell, for ours is a dangerous path, yet we would choose no other.

In every village and every town, our presence is felt. Though others see only the gambling houses and sake shops, we know the true reason we fight. We are the champions of our people, and the heroes of the outcast. It is we who defend our way of life.

Come, I shall instruct you in the way of the yakuza, that you may be prepared for the road you have chosen...

## The Way of the Yakuza

by Jonathan McAnulty

A Faction of Kaidan designed for use with the Pathfinder Roleplaying Game

## Jonathan McAnulty COMING SOON







## ANCESTRAL RELICS

## **30 ANCESTRAL RELICS**

Ancestral relics are powerful magical items, powered by the very souls of a family member. Of near artifact quality, these rare creations become progressively stronger as your honor increases. Likewise, if you suffer a loss of honor, the ancestral relic becomes weaker.

Ancestral relics are priceless, and the secrets to their manufacture were forcibly lost by imperial decree over 600 years ago. At that time, the crafting of Ancestral Relics was the province of the onmyoji wizards, who jealously guarded the secrets of their manufacturing. These wizards would make the Relics for any house which desired one, whether they were noble or commoner. However the price was steep.

It is known that the creation of the relics demand the soul of a prominent member of the household and that the individual was sacrificed in a most gruesome and murderous way. Of some debate is whether the sacrifice was voluntary or not. Regardless, the ancestor's soul is what fuels the item.

## **#30 Ancestral Relics**

by Michael K. Tumey

An Item Book for Kaidan designed for use with the Pathfinder Roleplaying Game



Michael K. Tumey COMING SOON







## www.RitePublishing.com



## Danger lurks with the Forests of Kaidan ... Traveler Beware!

You came to Kaidan, escorting a merchant and the gift he carried, a gift meant for a powerful Kaidanese lord. Yet with the gift delivered, and the merchant's daughter rescued, your troubles are only just beginning. Kaidan is cursed and now that you are within its borders you discover that not even death will release you from the Islands' powerful grip. As new horrors continue to present themselves, you must ask, do you have what it takes to survive the *Curse of the Golden Spear*?

The second of a three part campaign, *Dim Spirit* is an adventure set in the cursed land of Kaidan and is suitable for a group of 6th level characters. Drawing inspiration from Japanese folklore, and fully compatible with the *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game*, Kaidan is a land of horror and mystery. In Kaidan, demons stalk the land in human form, the dead seldom rest easy, and life is cheap. This adventure continues the story which began in *The Gift*, introducing players and game masters alike to the cursed realm of Kaidan.

#### An adventure for 4 players of 6th level Designed for use with the Pathfinder Roleplaying Game

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