DARK PATH Curse of the Golden Spear: Part 3

An adventure recommended for 4 characters at 7th level



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KD03





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In the blackness of the tunnel, the darkness moved. Ebon scales of pure shadow slid, one atop the other, as the demon writhed, anxious. The smell on the wind, faint as it was, bespoke trouble and change. "What do you wish Jadoko," spoke the bachi-hebioni, irritably, "I have not eaten in many months, make yourself known or I shall rectify that situation." There was a faint laugh. "Calm yourself, Tsuchi-chan," said the snake woman, playfully. She stepped forward so that the other

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could clearly see her in the darkness of the mountain heart, "I come in the name of Enma-Diao, with all the authority of hell behind me. By his grace I have been reborn and you should not test me. He has a task for you." The black snake demon growled low, uncoiling slowly. "A task? And what manner of task might this be?" "Nothing, but what you would have done anyway," said Jadoko, and she smiled wickedly as she anticipated the violence to come.

Of Oni and Yurei and the Land of Kaidan

When men first came to the shores of the Islands of Kaidan, they found a land thriving with life. Though the land was subject to earthquakes and tsunamis, it was in all other respects ideal. The forests teemed with prey, the fields gave forth food in abundance and the sea was rich with fish. Moreover, though there were other races on the island, and many kami, there was little conflict.

The kami in particular were benign and welcoming. In exchange for the many small gifts and tokens of worship the men gave to them, the elementals and the nature spirits were eager to bless those early settlers and fishermen. In those days the islands were called Wa, or Wakoku.

As men increased in number on the Islands, so too did conflict. Petty clans began fighting over land. Eventually, as some of the clans increased in power, they formed kingdoms and dynasties, few of which lasted for long. During this time, the relationship between men and spirits became strained, and the first demons, the oni, appeared.

The volcanic energies which formed the islands had created a perpetual spiritual foci, weakening the metaphysical curtains between the planes. The spiritual energies manifested in connection with the volcanic energies were susceptible to being influenced by other great energies, such as those generated during tsunamis, earthquakes, or war. The many kami on the island, fey and elementals alike, had themselves been drawn into the world during times of natural upheaval. While it is an oversimplification to say that each tsunami brought more water spirits into Kaidan and each earthquake brought more earth elementals, such a statement would nevertheless be closer to the truth than not. In the same way, every battle fought on the islands served as a catalyst, opening ever wider the doorway into the hellish plane called Jigoku, populated with demons and evil spirits. Slowly but surely, as violence increased, these oni began to settle in the land, corrupting the kami and bringing even more grief to the people of the islands.

During this period, as the oni multiplied, warring clans began to come together, forming the basis for a stronger central bureaucracy and an Imperial court. Men rallied and drove back the demons, in what has come to be known as the first oni war. They fought to subdue the malicious spirits and wrest control of the islands away from the dark powers which threatened them. One of these heroes was Himojo Takio, whose golden spear cut a swath through the oni and compelled his army to remain loyal to him. For a time, it seemed as if the islanders had succeeded and a period of peace and cultural growth followed, lasting about three hundred years. During this time, the Imperial court was moved to Fukuharakyo, where it remains to this day. Indeed, many of

the distinctive features of Kaidanese culture were formed during this respite. But the golden age of Kaidan, if it may be so called, was not destined to last. Politics and clan rivalry led once more to war: the fiercest war the islands had ever seen.

Two of the four great clans, the Taira and Minamoto clans, made plays for the Imperial throne. The Taira clan was smaller, with fewer resources, but through shrewd leadership and deft maneuvering, Kiyomori, head of the clan, captured the office for his infant grandson, Antoku. Unfortunately, Kiyomori's sons lacked his wisdom and presence. Following the patriarch's death, the islands erupted into civil war as the Minamoto clan moved openly to depose the Emperor. For more than five years the war swept back and forth over the nation, though there was, almost from the beginning, no doubt concerning the ultimate outcome. The Minamoto clan was larger, richer and better equipped. Beaten at every turn, the final remnants of the Taira clan marshaled their fleet at the southern end of Ryuki Island. Their plan was to sweep around north in a bold attempt to reclaim the capital. The plan was doomed and they were ambushed by the larger Minamoto fleet as they drew near to Nijo. There were many brave deeds done that day and much blood was shed. At the last, when it became clear that there was no hope, the young emperor was cradled in the arms of his grandmother, Tokiko, and the entire Imperial Court prepared to cast themselves into the sea, that they might die with honor with their Emperor. Before she leapt, Tokiko uttered forth a curse. She cursed the world and all the gods therein for allowing such events to transpire. She cursed the heavens and the hells. She shouted, "Would that my grandson would reign for a thousand years!" And then she leapt and all the remaining Taira clan.

Such a curse and such a sacrifice could not help but have repercussions. Some say that Enma-Dai himself took note and barred the gates of heaven against the island. For seven days oni poured forth into the world. For seven days a mist arose from the sea above the mass grave, roiling out over the islands and the ocean both. At the end of seven days, the entrance to Jigoku was closed, but the gates of Yomi were opened. The Imperial court, joined now by the resurrected Kiyomori, arose from the depths and sailed to Fukuhara-kyo, where they slew the Minamoto and retook the city.



It has been 719 years since the Taira clan arose from their watery graves, and for all that time Antoku has sat on the throne, unaging, his grandmother Tokiko by his side. Antoku does not truly rule. That duty is carried out by the Shogun, the Emperor's undying grandfather, who serves also as Daijo Daijin. During all that time, Kaidan, as the Islands were renamed, has been a land shut away. A perpetual, supernatural mist surrounds the archipelago, a barrier under the control of the Emperor and the Shogun. Entrance to the planar realms is likewise barred, excepting Jigoku and Yomi. The Imperial Court and the Shogunate make the claim that the eternal, undying emperor guarantees stability and peace, but the only peace most find in Kaidan is the peace of the grave, and even that is short-lived and less than certain.

Besides the immediate ramifications of the curse itself (no new souls are made in Kaidan and no souls leave Kaidan), the people of the archipelago find themselves caught between two malicious and powerful forces. On the one hand are the nobles of the Islands, who, following in the footsteps of the Imperial Court, have embraced a corrupt, undead existence. On the other hand are the oni, wicked spirits in mortal form who live to spread fear and terror. Many powerful oni entered into Kaidan during the days of the first Oni War. Many more entered alongside the curse. Ancient and grown strong, they dwell in hidden places of darkness, biding their time and working evil as the opportunity presents itself.

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 vengeancedriven yurei lurk in the darkness of the night and bloodthirsty oni boldly walk the streets disguised as men. Each of the previous adventures in this series focused on a different theme of horror. The Gift featured horror in disguise and fear of the unknown and the unexpected. Dim Spirit's dual theme was corruption and a growing sense of helplessness. The Dark Path is a little less subtle with its horror and focuses on outright creepiness: spiders, snakes, darkness and the like. We hope

that this adventure and this setting provide your players with hours of enjoyment. We also hope that it works to bring a little more horror into the lives of their characters.

Adventure Background

There is, on the island of Yonshu, crossing east to west beneath the southern Daitengu Highlands, a system of almost unnaturally smooth, rounded tunnels. Though one could theoretically use these tunnels to cross from one side of the mountains to the other, their existence has been largely forgotten by men and they are shunned by the hengeyokai, who call them "the Dark Path." Tengu legends say that a portal to Yomi lies in the center of the mountains and occasionally one of the tengu will tread this evil path to prove his bravery. Few of those who enter survive to tell the tale, for the tunnels house many evils, including an ancient and powerful bachi-hebi-oni, named Tsuchidaifu, who lairs near the center of the crossing. Tsuchidaifu entered Kaidan prior to the first Oni War. Since that time, he has grown lazy, but no less powerful. Even oni, crossing through the mountains, tread carefully in his presence.



Despite the obscurity of "the Dark Path" in local lore, Marl Tyro, a gaijin merchant, heard tales of its existence, and managed to acquire a map of Yonshu showing both the east and west entrances of the tunnels. These tunnels became part of a plan, concocted by Marl, to exact revenge on Lord Hachiwara of Tsue-jo, daimyo of Oniba province on Yonshu Island, for Hachiwara had taken Marl's daughter, Honya, hostage after Marl had inadvisably tried to cheat him. The daimyo, sensing Marl to be a potential tool he might use, promised to return Marl's daughter to him if Marl would fetch an ancient Kaidanese relic which now dwelt in gaijin lands: the Golden Spear of Himojo Takio, a famed oni-killer. Marl agreed but even as he left Tsue-jo, he was planning on how he might double-cross the daimyo.

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After a long search, Marl at long last returned to Kaidan, bearing both the Golden Spear and a chest entrapped with positive energy; for Marl knew the daimyo's secret - he was undead. To protect both the spear and the chest, the merchant hired a group of skilled guards: the player characters. Marl was not alone in plotting devious machinations. Lord Hachiwara himself had a surprise planned for the merchant. The daimyo had plucked the heart of young Honya from her chest, transforming her into a honeonna, a skeletal undead woman capable of sucking the life from those around her. By day she appeared human, but at night she was monstrous, with an insatiable hunger for life. Marl's plan failed. The daimyo was not killed by the explosion, but the daimyo's plan worked well and Honya slew her father. Now the PCs find themselves hunted by the local government, with soldiers guarding the roads. Furthermore, the Golden Spear was cursed in such a way as to make it likely that those who saw it would grow weaker the further they traveled from it.

As this adventure begins, the *Golden Spear* lies deep in the daimyo's Treasury, but the character's plight is not hopeless. They have knowledge of a path through the mountains unguarded by the daimyo's men, the "Dark Path." They also have allies who would be only too happy to help tweak the daimyo's nose by stealing back the *Golden Spear*.

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Designer's Note: The Dark Path

The title of this adventure, *The Dark Path*, is a two-fold reference. In Buddhism, there are generally thought to be two spiritual paths. The White Path is the path which leads to rebirth and the higher realms. The Dark Path is the path of demons and devils, leading men down to hell and torment. The Dark Path is also the name the yokai give to an east-west passage through the mountains of Yonshu. It is this passage, in the adventure, which allows the PCs to bypass the armies of the daimyo, but its name is well earned, as the PCs will discover. Like the spiritual dark path, the road the PCs travel is one destined to be filled with monsters and demons and a descent into the dark places of the earth.





Adventure Synopsis

The PCs, needing to reacquire the **Golden Spear** of **Himojo Takio**, obtain help and counsel from the tengu of the mountains and the hengeyokai of Kitsumura village. Thus aided, the characters sneak back into Tsue-jo, infiltrating the daimyo's treasury. The dungeon-like vaults of the treasury are guarded by a fierce river monster, a multitude of spiders, and a powerful undead wraith. Piercing the interior of the treasury, the PCs find the *Golden Spear*. Their actions do not go unnoticed and soon the daimyo's elite guards and shadow stalkers are on their tail. The PCs must flee down and into the river to make their escape.

Once away from Tsue-jo, the PCs are not yet safe, for the daimyo's most feared killers, powerful necrotic warriors called the Danmatsumabatsu, are on their trail. As the PCs head once more toward the mountain, they find their steps dogged by these dangerous assassins. To make matters worse, the Oni Court, alerted to the fact that the PCs once more have the *Golden Spear* in their possession, send their own agent to intercept the characters: a jorogumo, or spider woman. The characters, avoiding capture, reach the eastern entrance of the tunnels through the mountains.

In the tunnels, the characters encounter a bizarre "race" of undead: blind ghouls. They also confront the shadowy Tsuchidaifu, who has been ordered by the Oni Court to kill the PCs and capture the *Golden Spear*. Even after the PCs defeat Tsuchidaifu, their troubles with the oni are not over. Jadoko, the hebi-onna who had previously plagued their travels, has returned, and, trusting that the characters are weakened from their ordeal, she attacks as they exit from the Dark Path.

Once out of the mountains, the characters must still make their way to Gaijinoshima and their waiting ship, the *Scarlet Harlot*. Fortunately for them, the daimyo's forces seem to be focused on the northern and southern roads. So long as the PCs are circumspect, they can reach the small island port safely. Once in Gaijinoshima, the characters discover the crew of the *Scarlet Harlot* has been recently killed and that the Danmatsumabatsu are waiting for them. As the dead crew rise to fight the PCs, and the remaining members of the daimyo's elite squad unleash their full power, the characters must prevail if they are to finally escape the clutches of Kaidan. Player characters should be 7th level when they begin this adventure. Those who succeed in defeating the oni and the daimyo's forces should earn enough experience to reach 8th 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 die 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 finished the first two parts of this adventure arc, The Gift and Dim Spirit, and that events unfolded, more or less, as they were supposed to. As such, the adventure opens in the village of Kitsumura, with the arrival of the tengu, approximately ten days after the conclusion of *Dim Spirit*. Players being who they are, it is entirely possible these assumptions are unfounded and that GMs will need to adjust the events of this module accordingly. Part two of this adventure, Along the Dark Path, contains some ideas for dealing with PCs who depart from the script. Even if the PCs have no reason or desire to steal into the Treasury or enter the "Dark Path," they are still unwanted strangers in a hostile country, where the powerful, undead provincial lord wants them removed, permanently. The encounters of the adventure assume certain localities and prompts, but should the characters go their own way, there is no reason the encounters cannot be moved and the impetus for the encounters changed as necessary.

Between the conclusion of *Dim Spirit* and the beginning of *The Dark Path*, the player characters

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should have had a chance to level up and purchase supplies. While many of the supplies the characters might desire should not be available in Kitsumura itself, as suggested at the end of *Dim* Spirit, if the PCs have aided the village, the hengeyokai are more than willing to help them and can arrange the purchase of quite a few things. In particular, Atsukawa Kenshi, a human ranger from the forest village of Agoya, proves to be very helpful serving as a bridge between the human markets and the henge village. The downside to this sort of commerce is that it is typically slow, with days and maybe even weeks passing between the placement of an order and the arrival of the goods. While there is no certain timeline to which the characters must conform at this point, they are still wanted individuals. In the event that the characters should prove reluctant to leave the village before buying everything their hearts' desire, GMs should feel free to facilitate things by improvising an attack on the PCs by the assassins or soldiers of the daimyo.

As this adventure opens, it is suggested that GMs place the PCs in the center of the village of Kitsumura, where, as they are engaged in conversation or business, they find themselves suddenly attacked by bird-like warriors: the tengu!

Part One: The Daimyo's Treasury

The first part of this adventure deals with the attempt by the PCs to steal back the Golden Spear from Lord Hachiwara. Ideally the characters should have two good reasons to attempt this. First, it is entirely possible (even desirable so far as the adventure is concerned) that the PCs are suffering from the *Spear's* curse. This curse drains their strength and health, the further they travel from the spear. Should they be so afflicted, traveling any further from the spear is a death sentence waiting to happen. Second, should the PCs have mentioned the late Marl Tyro's plan to travel through the mountains using the "dark path," or if they have shown the hengeyokai the map Marl had showing the entrances to this path, the henge will have informed them of the fact that there is a powerful oni dwelling in the midst of the path. Additionally, the henge can inform the characters, should they not already know, of the Golden Spear's legendary ability to kill oni. To aid in the retrieval of the spear, the henge have sent word to their allies, the tengu.

The Tengu Arrive! CR varies

The tengu are a race of mountain-dwelling bird yokai who seek enlightenment through the perfection of their fighting skills. Prior to the arrival of the tengu, the hengeyokai try to explain their relationship to these bird-men. They describe them as "skilled swordsmen," "lovers of battle," "wise allies," and "trustworthy scholars." All of which is true, but doesn't quite capture the totality of the reason the hengevokai have sent to the tengu for help with the characters' troubles. While the hengeyokai are not cowardly, neither are they foolhardy. If the PCs are to safely leave Kaidan, they need to first sneak into the daimyo's stronghold. While some individual hengeyokai might attempt such a thing on his or her own, or with trusted companions, accompanying a group of non-hengeyokai gaijin in such a pursuit is to go begging for trouble. The tengu are far more likely to see such an endeavor as a noble challenge.

Four tengu descend from their hidden mountain villages to answer the call to help the gaijin. Seasoned fighters, disciplined in the arts of stealth and swordsmanship, these yokai are eager to aid any warriors willing to test their mettle against the defenses of the daimyo's complex. Despite this, the tengu must first insure for themselves that those they agree to help have the ability to do what is necessary. For the tengu, the only way to test the ability of another is in battle. Therefore, upon arriving, Taando, the leader of the four tengubushi, chooses one of the PCs and attacks!

To begin, read or paraphrase the following, altering as necessary. The description assumes the tengu arrive as the PCs are gathered with the hengeyokai elders near the great statue of a kitsune in the middle of Kitsumura.

The shadow of the great stone fox has begun to lengthen, as the sun begins its afternoon journey toward the horizon. Your conversation is interrupted by a shout of excitement from the northern edge of the village. The hengeyokai children are laughing and cheering at the arrival of four newcomers. Though humanoid in appearance these travelers have heads similar to those of black-beaked, black-feathered crows. Each of the four is dressed in serviceable armor and dark brown cloaks. "Are these the gaijin?" shouts one of them as he sees you."

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No matter what action the PCs take, Taando, the tengu who shouted, draws his sword, and, making a prodigious twenty foot leap, begins attacking the most likely looking fighter. He bases his choice on the presence of either a sword or armor. If none of the PCs is armed, he attacks the biggest. His companions do not attack unless the other PCs move to interfere in what is meant to be a one-onone combat.

*Note: This module assumes the characters have taken the trouble to learn the local tongue. If the PCs do not speak Kaidanese, GMs should tailor encounters accordingly.

<u>Creatures</u>

All four of the tengu have dark black feathers, plain garments and a distinct, crow-like appearance. They are good-humored, though very intense concerning matters of battle or heroism. Taando serves as the leader of the four, but, time permitting, he is careful to consult his fellows before making difficult decisions, and all four work as a smooth team when necessary. Kokoki, Taando's mate, is the only female in the group, but despite a slight tendency toward mothering her companions, she is little different than her male companions.

Kokoki, Raanshu, Taando, Suaado Tengu Warriors (4) (CR 6 XP 2,400)

Tengu fighter (tengubushi) 7 N Medium humanoid (tengu, yokai) Init +8; Senses low-light vision; Perception +10 AC 22, touch 18, flat-footed 14 (+4 armor, +3 class +4 Dex, +1 Dodge) hp 45 (7d10+7) Fort +5, Ref +6, Will +2 Defensive Abilities agility, armed defense <u>Offense</u>

Spd 30 ft.

Melee masterwork katana +13/+8 (1d10+5; 18-20/x2); bite +6 (1d3+1)

<u>Tactics</u>

During Combat Taando initiates combat, attacking the first PC he sees who is obviously armed with a sword. He presses the attack for four rounds before breaking off. The other tengu only join the fight if any of the PCs other than the one he attacks joins the melee.

Morale The tengu are merely testing the prowess of the warriors asking for their help. If reduced to half of their hit points, any tengu fighting jovially concede.

Statistics

Str 14, **Dex** 18, **Con** 10, **Int** 10, **Wis** 13, **Cha** 10 **Base Atk** +7; **CMB** +9; **CMD** 24

Feats Dodge, Improved Initiative, Mobility, Skill Focus (Stealth), Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus (katana), Weapon Specialization (katana), Wind Stance

Skills Acrobatics +17 (+24 when jumping), Climb +12, Perception +10, Stealth +19; **Racial** +2 Perception, +2 Stealth, +4 Linguistics

Languages Kaidanese, Tengu

SQ dexterous swordplay, gifted linguist, skilled leaper, sword trained

Combat Gear masterwork katana; Other Gear chain shirt

<u>Special Abilities</u>

Agility (Ex): At 2nd level, the tengubushi gains a +1 bonus on saving throws made against effects that cause him to become paralyzed, slowed, or entangled. This bonus increases by +1 for every four levels beyond 2nd. This ability replaces bravery.

Armed Defense (Ex): At 3rd level, so long as he is armed with a manufactured weapon, the tengubushi can add a +2 class bonus to his AC and touch AC. He can only add this bonus if he is wearing light armor or no armor. He may not benefit from this bonus if he is flatfooted or helpless. This bonus increases by an additional +1 for every four levels beyond 3rd.

Dexterous Swordplay (Ex): At 5th level, when using a one-handed sword or heavy blade, the

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tengubushi may add his Dexterity modifier to any attack rolls in place of his Strength modifier. This ability does not stack with Weapon Finesse but instead expands the Weapon Finesse feat to include one-handed heavy blades (including bastard swords, longswords, and scimitars) which would otherwise not be useable in conjunction with the feat. A tengubushi wearing medium or heavy armor cannot use this ability.

Skilled Leaper (Ex) The tengubushi add their class level to all Acrobatic checks made to leap or jump. Additionally, tengubushi always count as having a running start when making such a check.

Development

If the chosen PC (or PCs) win(s) the fight with the tengu (meaning they deal more damage than they receive), the avian yokai readily agree to help them. If the PCs lose, they must find some other way to convince the tengu of their worthiness. The easiest way to do this is to tell the tale of their adventures thus far, succeeding at a DC 20 Performance (oratory) or Diplomacy check. Beyond this, the tengu may decide to set some other task for the PCs, though what this task might be is left to the GM. Once the tengu are on board with helping the characters, award experience as if they had defeated a CR 6 encounter.

The tengu, once they have agreed to help the PCs, prove to be valuable allies. For one thing, they are fully cognizant of the defenses in the daimyo's palace, as well as the location of the treasury and are able to suggest a method of entry. The treasury is located below the shiro (castle or keep) of Tsue-jo, a defensive structure located above and at the back of the entire palace complex. A frontal assault upon the front gate of the palace is likely to end badly, as the characters would have to fight through multiple gate-houses, facing up to two hundred soldiers. If the PCs have a method of flying across the river to the shiro, they could avoid the other defenses. If the characters suggest such a plan, while the tengu agree this is a better strategy than a frontal assault, they point out, reasonably, that the alarm is still likely to be raised by such an endeavor, alerting the well trained soldiers. The method of entry preferred by the tengu is via tunnels in the river (see **Plotting** the Assault on the Treasury, hereafter). They have knowledge of an underwater entrance to the treasury and are willing to show it to the PCs. The

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main requirement of such a plan is some method by which the player characters can prevent themselves from drowning. If the PCs agree to the underwater plan, the tengu can easily acquire 2 *potions of water-breathing* for each character. If the characters insist upon a different method of entry, the tengu still suggest using the river as the means of escape. Ultimately, the player characters must decide how they want to proceed. However, if the PCs refuse all of the tengu's advice, the tengu wash their hands of the whole affair and leave the PCs to perish on their own.

Ideally, the player characters listen to the tengu. If they do so, the tengu are even willing to journey with the characters, helping to guide them: both back to Tsue-jo and then, after, to the eastern entrance of the Dark Path, should the PCs desire to continue to follow Marl Tyro's plan to avoid the daimyo's soldiers. So long as the characters prove genial and honorable, the tengu can be used by the GM to help steer the PCs and keep them from getting in too far over their heads. Eventually, on the Dark Path, the tengu can even be used to heighten the dangers of the journey by serving as initial targets for the attacks of the monsters.

Plotting the Assault on the Treasury

Tsue-jo is a heavily defended city built upon three islands in the midst of the Onikawa River. The most heavily defended portion of the city is that portion housing the daimyo and his household. Reaching the daimyo's palace first requires traversing the entire length of the city and running the gauntlet of the samurai district. Following this hour-long trek through a maze of streets, walls and samurai guards, the real challenge begins. Crossing from the first island to the second island requires breaching two gates and crossing a bridge, all while being attacked with arrows and spears by the guards stationed atop the walls. The bulk of the second island is a maze of walls and towers which leads to yet another bridge which crosses over to the final island. Another series of gates and walls must then be breached before one finally has access to the shinden palace housing Lord Hachiwara. Even more difficult to reach yet is the shiro of Tsue-jo, a seven story fortress located at the highest point of the island. During times of war, the shiro can house up to 2,000 people, though it normally serves as a combination prison and store house.

If the PCs attempt to attack the palace, going through Tsue-jo, GMs should allow them to suffer

mightily and then, if possible, encourage a retreat. There are two hundred regular soldiers kept on the two small islands. While some of these will confront intruders breaching the gates on the ground, the majority will stay behind cover in the towers, peppering any attackers with arrows. Furthermore, there are several court wizards on the grounds and GMs should have no compunction about hitting the PCs with a couple of well-timed fireballs, poisonous clouds and even blindness and deafness.

If the PCs have played through *Dim Spirit*, they have visited the shinden palace once and should have some idea of the futility of trying to plan a frontal assault upon any part of the complex. The palace itself is built using an antiquated architectural style; being comprised of eleven independent structures, each connected by covered corridors. In the midst of these chambers are two ornate gardens, one of which is said to be haunted by Lord Hachiwara's first wife. If the PCs have consulted with the tengu, they should be aware that the *Golden Spear* is most likely housed in the shiro, not the palace. There is therefore no need to attack the palace itself.







Assaulting the shiro, or castle, on foot is even more foolhardy than attacking the palace. While it has fewer defenders, they are more strategically placed and, generally, better trained. The shiro does have two chief weaknesses which the characters can exploit. The first is that it has few arcane defenses. It is theoretically possible to sneak into the shiro by flying in invisibly. The second is that it has direct access to the Onikawa River. While the river is an impractical means of entry for a large force, a small group, such as that comprised by the tengu and the PCs, could locate these aquatic tunnels and thus enter the dungeons of the shiro, which are where prisoners and treasures are kept, all without ever bothering with the guards above. As mentioned before, this is the plan most strongly advocated by the tengu and they will argue hard for the PCs to attempt this entry first, in order to see what they might find.

The Upper Levels of the Shiro

Space prohibits a full detailing of the seven stories of the shiro above ground level. Each story has multiple chambers. Most of the vast building is empty of life but this does not mean it is deserted. For one thing, each story houses one of Lord Hachiwara's elite Danmatsumabatsu (fully detailed in Appendix 3). Though these killers frequently work alone, they will respond as a unit in defense of the shiro. Furthermore, the shiro houses two dozen shadow stalkers and an assortment of ghosts. If the PCs gain entrance to the first floor of the shiro, they will first encounter four shadow stalkers and Honeko, who raises the alarm as she attacks. From the first floor, the characters can find the stairs leading down to the Area A18.

<u>Creatures</u>

The upper levels of the shiro contain three main sorts of foe: shadow stalkers, the Danmatsumabatsu and an assortment of ghosts. GMs should feel free to create ghosts as necessary for the shiro. The Danmatsumabatsu are described in **Appendix 3**. Finally, stats for shadow stalkers can be found in **Escaping the Treasury.**

The Lower Levels of the Shiro

There are three levels below the shiro: the riverchambers, the dungeons and the treasury. The treasury, located closest to the surface levels, contains an armory, an unused barrack, a large vault containing, among other treasures, the Golden Spear, and steps leading down to the dungeons. The dungeon contains cells, pits, an arcane laboratory and a room in which Lord Hachiwara conducts his foul necromantic rituals. The lowest level, a series of caves and man-made tubes, serves to provide fresh water to the upper level of the shiro via pumps and allows for the disposal of bodies and waste from the dungeon. Characters, guided by the tengu, can locate access tubes in the river which allow water to flow through the lower chambers, from these chambers they can make their way up to the upper levels.

Area A1 - River Gates (entrance)

Three separate massive stone pipes feed river water into the natural caverns below the island. The pipes were fashioned in secret and at great expense but they guarantee the shiro and the palace a constant supply of fresh water, so long as the river continues to flow. Following the construction of the pipes, the daimyo ordered all the workers involved to be killed. One managed to escape, making his way to the mountains where he was caught and interrogated by the tengu.

Even with water breathing, accessing the pipes is tricky. The lack of natural light below the water, the swift flow of the river and the stout bars blocking entrance to the pipes all combine to create a series of obstacles the PCs will have to overcome in order to access the shiro's dungeons. Swimming below the surface of the river to the right location requires succeeding at a DC 15 Swim check. Failure means the character has been pulled too far down river by the current. Following a successful Swim check, finding the pipe grates requires succeeding at a DC 30 Perception check. Having a light source which functions below the water reduces this difficulty by 5. Characters can also aid one another in the search, further reducing the difficulty. Once the gratings are located, they must then be bypassed. There is a lock mechanism on each grate, though corrosion from the water makes these hard to unlock (Disable Device DC 30) and PCs may elect to try to break the grates open instead or cut their way through (hardness 10; 60 hp; Break DC 25).

Once within the grates, the flow of the water makes reaching **Areas A2** and **A3** relatively easy.

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Area A2 – Fresh Water Cistern

Water from the three entrance pipes is channeled into a single five-foot wide pipe which then feeds







into this circular chamber. Pumps in both the palace and the shiro connect to the water in this room so that fresh water is constantly available to the buildings above. Swimming in the room is very difficult as the reduction in volume from three large pipes to one increases the hydraulic force of the water flowing into the cistern. Characters who fail a DC 20 Swim check take 2d6 bludgeoning damage as they are buffeted around the stone room. Regardless of the results of the Swim check, the flow of the water naturally leads the characters to the egress through which water flows into **Area A3**.

Area A3 – Waste Chamber (CR 7 XP 3,200)

Whereas the water in A2 is clean and fast flowing, the water in this natural cavern chamber is much slower and very foul. An opening in the ceiling leads, via a shaft, up to Area A7 in the dungeon level above. Waste, dead bodies, and other refuse, thrown down the shaft, lands in the large pool of water which dominates the room. Though the bulk of it is eventually washed out into the river via A4, the water is nevertheless a pool of pestilence. If the characters have a light source, read or paraphrase the following as the characters enter the room. The water in this large natural cavern is brackish and foul smelling, despite the slow but constant movement of the water from west to east. The water dominates the northern portion of the chamber. The southern portion of the room contains an uneven rock floor which sits about two feet above the level of the water. Dried and broken bones, most of them human, litter the rock floor. There are stairs carved into the stone to the south-east leading to a dark tunnel.

Two river crabs, having found their way into the chamber, have over the years become gigantic, monstrous beasts. Feeding on tainted flesh, their own metabolism has warped and they are now carriers of a multitude of foul diseases. These crabs are the primary reason the water in the room is so filthy. They attack anyone entering the chamber.

Creatures

The two crabs in this room are plague-bearing monstrosities. Their shells are warped and discolored and pus oozes from their joints. Just being near them is potentially dangerous.





Plague Crabs (2) CR 5 (XP 1,600)

Advanced plaguebearing giant crab (Bestiary, Advanced Bestiary) N Large vermin (aquatic)

Init +1; Senses darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +4 Defense

AC 16, touch 9, flat-footed 16 (+7 natural, -1 size) **hp** 57 (5d8+35)

Fort +11, Ref +2, Will +2

Defensive Abilities diseased flesh; **Immune** disease, mind-affecting effects **Offense**

Spd 30 ft., swim 20 ft.

Melee 2 claws +8 (1d6+6 plus grab plus disease) **Space** 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.

Special Attacks constrict 1d6+6, disease cloud (DC 19)

<u>Tactics</u>

During Combat The crabs ravenously rush the closest creature, tearing at them until they are torn to shreds, after which they move on to the next target.

Morale The crabs fight to the death.

Statistics

Str 23, **Dex** 11, **Con** 24, **Int** -, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 2 **Base Atk** +3; **CMB** +10 (+14 grapple); **CMD** 24 (36 vs. trip)

Skills Perception +4, Swim +16; **Racial** +4 Perception

SQ virulent carrier, water dependency **<u>Special Abilities</u>**

Disease (Ex): With a successful melee touch attack, the plague crab can infect a creature with slimy doom

and the shakes. In addition to these two maladies, the crab's natural and weapon attacks can inflict red ache. Any creature touched by a plague bearer must succeed on a DC 19 Fortitude save or contract both slimy doom and the shakes. A creature damaged by the plague bearer's natural or weapon attack must succeed on a DC 19 Fortitude save or contract red ache, slimy doom, and the shakes.

Disease Cloud (Ex): A cloud of pestilence surrounds the plague crab, even in the water. All creatures within 30 ft. of the crab must succeed on two DC 19 Fortitude saves against inhaled diseases. Failing the first save infects the creature with cackle fever; failing the second causes the creature to contract mindfire. A successful save precludes contracting the relevant disease from the crab for 24 hours.

Diseased Flesh (Ex): The plague crab carries blinding sickness within its flesh. Any creature making a successful bite attack against the crab,

or in any way ingesting part or all of the crab, must make a successful DC 19 Fortitude save or be stricken with the disease.

Virulent Carrier (Ex) Though immune to all diseases, including magical diseases like mummy rot, the plague crab can carry infections and will continue to do so regardless of magical healing or successful Fortitude saves. Any diseases carried by the crab have an incubation period of 1 round. Any diseases caused by the crab have a DC 19 save and require a DC 19 caster level check to remove through the use of *remove disease*. Failing the caster level check prevents the caster from being able to remove the disease that day. These DCs are Constitution-based.

Area A4 – Water Egress

Water from A3 flows out and back through the river, through this grate. Due to the nature of the water as it leaves the caverns, the metal grate here is extremely corroded and much easier to break than those in A1 (hardness 6; hp 40; Break DC 15; Disable Device DC 30).

Area A5 – Lower Ladder Room

A wooden ladder from this room climbs, via a man-made shaft, eighty feet up to Area A6. The ladder has not been used in some time and is not completely trustworthy. If the party climbs up, one character at a time, the ladder shakes and creaks but does not break. If more than one character climbs up at a time, it breaks forty feet up, dropping all who are on it to the floor.

Development

If the characters entered via the river, accompanied by the tengu, this room marks the point at which the tengu allow the PCs to continue the rest of the way on their own. They, having escorted the characters this far, declare they will keep a guard in this chamber and await the return of the characters.

Area A6 - Upper Ladder Room

An open shaft in the floor descends down to A5.

Area A7 – Waste Shaft

A wide open shaft in this floor opens up over the pool of water, ninety feet below, in A3. The sides of the shaft are encrusted with dried brittle filth (Climb DC 30).

Area A8 – Prison Pits

A series of fetid pits lines the far wall of this room. Prisoners whom the daimyo does not want to keep alive are bound in wet leather cords and thrown into the pits where they typically die painfully from gangrene as the cords shrink and cut into their flesh. Though dead bodies are eventually thrown down the shaft in **A7**, one of the pits has yet to be "cleaned" and the decaying corpse at the bottom fills the air with the foul stench of decaying flesh. The pits are each ten feet deep but are otherwise harmless.

Area A9 – Prison Cells

Prisoners expected to be kept alive, whether for eventual release, torture, or experimentation, are kept in these noisome cells. Dirty grass mats are the sole concession to comfort and the stone floors are stained with blood and worse. All but one of the cells are empty, though the inhabitant of the cell is hard to see through the small opening in the locked wooden door (hardness 5; hp 20; Break DC 25; Disable Device 20). The key to the door is hanging on a nail on the wall of A10. The man within, lying on the floor, his back to the door and covered in an old cloak, moans pitifully, but he does not speak or turn to respond if addressed. The reason for this is simple: he can't. The prisoner is a samurai named Himaka Anuka (LN expert 4/fighter 2; current hp 1). Anuka displeased Lord Hachiwara by showing too much leniency to those under him and was thus imprisoned as an example to other officials. The samurai is in a pitiful state, having been tortured now for days. His mouth has been sewn shut and his legs have been pinned together with an iron bolt.

<u>Development</u>

If the PCs rescue Anuka and provide healing, they earn a faithful companion. Anuka is familiar with the layout of the defenses of Tsue-jo and has considerable skill in both cartography and calligraphy. Any PC working for foreign powers interested in learning more about such things should recognize Anuka as a valuable find.

Area A10 - Chamber of Wax Horror (CR 7 XP 3,200)

Read or paraphrase the following when the characters enter this unlit room.

There are two stout wooden tables in this room. The leather straps attached to the tables make their purpose clear: they are meant for holding people. Several iron rings, such as you might tie a rope to, are attached to the ceiling. A large iron pot in one corner sits above a small fire pit, and a counter on one wall holds sharp knives, scissors, pliers, hammers, and a multitude of leather cords. Below the counter are several bundles of bamboo. The most bizarre-looking things in the room are four off-white cocoon-like structures attached to the south wall. They are each about six feet tall and glisten as if wet.

The large iron pot is full of water. The four cocoons are fashioned of a semi-transparent fleshy material and each contains a solitary naked man. The faces of all four men are a frozen rictus of pain and fear. If the PCs approach close enough, they can just make out that the men's lips appear to have been sewn shut. Even worse, the eyes of the four men are wide open. They move from side to side, desperately following the movement of the characters. Despite this obvious sign of life, the individuals in the wax are actually undead examples of the daimvo's necromantic experimentation. As soon as any of the characters interact physically with the cocoons, either by touching them, cutting them, or even attacking them, the bottoms of the fleshy containers open and the four men slide to the floor in a flood of flesh and slimy fluid.

Creatures

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The daimyo has been experimenting with ways to create undead servants with greater initiative than the typical zombie. To this end, he has attempted to transform living men into zombies using a necromantic cocon-process. His efforts have been only partially successful. The resultant zombies do have greater initiative, but they are difficult to control and prone to ghoulish hungers. These particular men were modified with retractable sword blades in their arms while they were still alive. Observant PCs may be allowed to notice that, in addition to the sewn lips, there are holes through the shins of each monster, indicating that at one time their legs had been pinned together

Samurai zombies (4) CR 3 (XP 800)

Male human juju zombie fighter 3 (*Bestiary 2*) LE Medium undead (augmented human) Init +6; Senses darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +5 <u>Defense</u>

AC 16, touch 13, flat-footed 13 (+2 Dex, +1 dodge, +3 natural)

hp 25 (3d10+9)
Fort +4, Ref +3, Will +1
Defensive Abilities bravery +1, channel
resistance +4; DR 5/magic and slashing; Immune
cold, electricity, magic missile, undead traits;
Resist fire 10

<u>Offense</u>

Spd 30 ft.

During Combat These zombies fight intelligently and aggressively, ganging up on a single opponent, if possible, like a pack.

Morale All four zombies fight until destroyed. <u>Statistics</u>

Str 18, **Dex** 15, **Con** -, **Int** 8, **Wis** 11, **Cha** 12 **Base Atk** +3; **CMB** +7; **CMD** 19

Feats Alertness, Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Improved Initiative, Skill Focus (Stealth), Toughness, Two-Weapon Fighting Skills Climb +12, Perception +5, Stealth +8; Racial +8 Climb Languages Kaidanese Gear masterwork sword-blades

Area A11 – Arcane Laboratory

As the characters enter this chamber, a pale blue fire springs to life in the middle of the floor, illuminating the whole room. Read or paraphrase the following:

The pale blue fire burning in the middle of the floor reveals a room full of shelves, counters and cabinets. Jars, bottles, vials, glass beakers and brass tools are on each shelf and counter. You also observe several piles of paper and a monkey sitting on a high shelf. As you look at it, the monkey's head moves to look at you.

Lord Hachiwara conducts many necromantic rites and often engages in dark experiments. This room houses his necromantic equipment and material components. The stuffed monkey sitting on the shelf radiates weak necromantic magic. It is enchanted so that its head follows movement around it but is otherwise harmless. There are many flasks containing liquids, reagents, powders and metallic shavings. Jars and vases contain mummified tongues, pickled eyes, diced spleens and various other preserved organs and body parts. Spellcasters should immediately recognize the room as being the laboratory of a necromancer.

<u>Treasure</u>

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The various items in the room have a combined value of 5,000 gp, but are not easily carried off all at once. GMs should allow characters looting the room the ability to make a single Appraise check (possibly aided). The amount of the check x 100 gp is the amount of treasure able to be identified and easily taken. One table has a collection of scrolls and notes. These are written in Lord Hachiwara's own coded script. Deciphering them, apart from magic, requires a successful DC 20 Linguistics check and 1d20 hours. Once decoded, the notes can be used to add +4 to any Knowledge (arcana) checks made regarding researching necromancy.

Area A12 - Room of Dark Rituals

The companion room to **A11**, this chamber houses a single bloodstained stone table, suitable for binding a Medium humanoid. The floor is marked with arcane sigils which a successful DC 15 Spellcraft check identifies as being necromantic in nature. One of the last occupants of this room was Honya Tyro; for this is where Lord Hachiwara tore her heart from her chest and transformed her into one of the undead.

Area A13 – Stairs

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These spiral stone stairs circle up from the dungeon level to the treasury level. Flickering everburning flames, set on carved stone torches, light the ascent/descent. The stone torches can be broken from the wall (hardness 8; hp 10; Break DC 20; weight 4 lbs.) without damaging the magic.

Area A14 – Corpse-filled Barrack (CR 7+ XP 3,600)

While this large barrack was originally intended to house soldiery during a siege, it currently serves as a repository for another of the daimyo's gruesome projects: arachnology. Read or paraphrase the following as the PCs enter.

The desiccated remains of a monstrous spider rest in one corner of this room. More disturbing are the apparently mummified corpses resting on each of the many pallets lining the floor. The cadavers appear withered, though their stomachs were apparently bloated before death.

Closer examination of the dried corpses reveals they are actually covered in the wispy remains of webbing. A successful DC 15 Heal check or a DC 20 Perception check allows the characters to notice the bite wounds of a giant spider on each body. Characters should also slowly begin to notice the parchment-like skin of the corpses rippling. The proximity of the PCs has awoken a multitude of newly hatched monstrous spiders. The spiders initially crawl out of the noses and mouths of the cadavers, and then erupt from skin, tearing apart their nurseries in an eagerness to feed.

<u>Creatures</u>

As the spiders pour forth from the bodies, they form into deadly swarms.

Fearful Spider Swarm (3) CR 4 (XP 1,200)

Apocalypse spider-swarm (Bestiary, Advanced Bestiary)

N Diminutive vermin (swarm)

Init +3; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., tremorsense 30 ft.; **Perception** +7

<u>Defense</u>

AC 19, touch 19, flat-footed 14 (+5 Dex, +4 size) **hp** 38 (7d8+7); fast healing 10

Fort +6, Ref +7, Will +2

Defensive Abilities splitting swarm traits; **Immune** mind-affecting effects, weapon damage;

SR 14 Weaknesses swarm traits

<u>Offense</u>

Spd 40 ft., climb 40 ft.

Melee swarm (2d6 plus poison and greater distraction)

Space 10 ft.; Reach 0 ft.

Special Attacks greater distraction (DC 17), fear (DC 14), poison (*save* Fortitude DC 14; *frequency* 1/round for 2 rounds; *effect* 1d2 Str; *cure* 1 save) **Tactics**

During Combat The swarms move forward toward the closest targets, engulfing them. If the PCs flee, the swarms pursue.

Morale The swarms fight until destroyed. **<u>Statistics</u>**

Str 1, **Dex** 21, **Con** 12, **Int** -, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 2 **Base Atk** +5; **CMB** -; **CMD** -

Feats Ability Focus (greater distraction) **Skills** Climb +15, Perception +7; **Racial** +4 Perception; uses Dexterity for Climb checks **SQ** add all special qualities here, listed alphabetically

<u>Special Abilities</u>

Fear (Su): Each creature within 100 feet of a fearful spider swarm that witnesses it bringing down another creature must succeed on a DC 9 Will save or be frightened for 1 minute. Success leaves the creature shaken for 1 minute but does not negate the need to make a new saving throw for each such incident. Fear is a mind-affecting fear effect.

Splitting (Ex): When a fearful spider swarm takes more than 10 points of damage from a single attack, it splits into two identical swarms, each with one-half the hit points that the original swarm had when it split (rounded down). A fearful spider swarm with 1 hit point cannot be split, and one with 0 hit points is dispersed as normal. Each piece of a split swarm can heal damage normally, up to the number of hit points it had upon formation. Healing damage does not allow the swarms to recombine. For example, a fearful spider swarm with 38 hit points that takes 15 points of damage would split into two swarms with 11 hit points each (one-half of the original swarm's remaining 23 hp, rounded down). Each of these two fearful spider swarms can heal 10 points of damage per round with fast healing, but it cannot exceed 11 hit points.



Area A15 - Armory

A wide selection of dust-covered weapons and armors fill this room. Old cobwebs hang from many of the items in the room, but there is no danger. None of the equipment is masterwork or magical. Neither is it sorted very well. Characters searching for a particular kind of weapon, or for armor which fits them, must succeed at a DC 12 Perception check to find what they are looking for. Characters wishing to indiscriminately loot the room should be allowed to make an Appraise check, gathering up 100 gp x the result of the check. Even with such a roll, the equipment is not light and the characters making such a haul should also be considered encumbered so long as they insist on carrying that many pieces of equipment (barring, of course, magical conveniences).

Area A16 - Hall of Fear (CR 8 XP 4,800)

Due to the length of this hall, it is doubtful that the characters will be able to fully make out the details of one end while on the other and GMs should note the range of the character's illumination and describe accordingly. As the characters first approach the hallway, read or paraphrase the following.

This unlit hallway is ten feet wide, with wide alcoves on either side. The alcoves are spaced five feet apart and you can just see that each of the alcoves contains a single dried corpse, suspended by its manacled arms from the stone ceiling.

The corpses provide a macabre sort of defense. As living creatures walk between the individual corpses in the alcoves, they begin to scream, two at a time, and continue screaming until either the living creature leaves the hall, or they are destroyed (hardness 5; hp 40; regeneration 5 [fire, positive]). They can be bypassed using *hide from* undead, but not by using other spells, including invisibility or gaseous form. The screaming of the corpses creates a sonic fear effect and the more corpses there are screaming, the greater the effect. Those hearing the corpses must make a Will save or become panicked. The DC of the save is 10 + 2per screaming corpse. A new Will save must be made each time a new pair of screaming corpses is activated.

When the characters can at last see the details of the double doors at the end of the hall, read or paraphrase the following.

A pair of massive wooden doors stands closed at the end of the hall. Crucified upon the doors is a single, withered corpse. Each arm of the corpse has been nailed tight to one of the doors, making it apparently impossible to open the doors without in some way removing the emaciated body. 111111101011011100

The final cadaver (hardness 5; hp 40; regeneration 5 [fire, positive]), crucified as it is on the pair of double doors, serves a two-fold purpose. It is firstly the gruesome mechanism by which the doors are held shut. Speaking a command word causes the doors to open, rending apart the body. When the

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doors are again closed, the body regenerates. More importantly, the crucified body serves as a trap. Any living creature within 10 feet of the crucified corpse causes the corpse to activate, as described hereafter. All of the corpses in the hall radiate strong necromantic magic and are susceptible to damage from positive energy.

<u>Trap</u>

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When the screaming corpse trap activates, the eyes open, revealing black, lifeless orbs, and the corpse unleashes a wail which deals sonic damage to all creatures in the hall. Furthermore, the noise of the scream is loud enough to be heard throughout every level of the shiro, thus serving as an effective alarm. *Hide from undead* renders a creature invisible to the door's hideous guardian.

Screaming Corpse Trap (CR 8): Type magic; Perception DC 20; Disable Device DC 30; Trigger proximity (alarm, 10 ft.); Reset automatic (24 hours); Effect spell effect (greater shout, 10d6 damage, deafened 4d6 rounds, stunned 1 round, DC 19 Fortitude halves damage and negates deafness and stun); multiple targets (60 ft. cone).



Area A17 – Shiro Vault CR 8 (XP 4,800)

This vault mainly contains those items for which the daimyo has no immediate use, but which, because of their value, must be carefully guarded. The **Golden Spear of Himojo Takio** is a prime example of such an item. The daimyo plans on eventually gifting it to the shogun, knowing that he will gain much prestige in the eyes of the shogunate by doing so. Until the opportunity to do so presents itself, it is stored here, along with a number of other items.

When the door to the vault is opened by the characters, magical darkness will flood out of the vault, five feet into the hall. The aura of the vault's guardian, a creature of darkness and negative energy named Kagenai, creates the darkness and only by defeating Kagenai can the characters actually see within the vault to loot it.

Creature

Kagenai is a creature of darkness and death. Formed of shadow and dark fire, he has no true, lasting shape, though his general appearance is humanoid. Strong oaths and powerful magics bind him to the vault, and he cannot go beyond its doors or walls. Unless ordered not to by the daimyo or one of the daimyo's chief lieutenants, Kagenai keeps the room flooded with darkness so that the only thing people in the room can see or sense is himself. Characters moving through the room moving at a speed greater than five feet per round are likely to run into things such as tables and walls.

Kagenai CR 8 (XP 4,800)

Advanced darkseed wraith (Bestiary, Book of *Monster Templates*) LE Medium undead (chaotic, incorporeal) Init +7; Senses darkvision 60 ft., lifesense 120 ft.; **Perception** +10 Aura darklight (30 ft.), unnatural aura (30 ft.) <u>Defense</u> AC 24, touch 24, flat-footed 15 (+7 deflection, +7 Dex) **hp** 62 (5d8+40); fast-healing 8 **Fort** +8, Ref +6, Will +8 **Defensive Abilities** channel resistance +2, darkseed DC 22, incorporeal; Immune undead traits; Weaknesses sunlight powerlessness **Offense** Spd fly 60 ft. **Melee** incorporeal touch +10 (1d6 negative energy plus 1d6 Con drain plus poison)

Special Attacks channel negative energy (11/day, 5d6, DC 22) create spawn, necrotic poison DC 22 **Spell-Like Abilities (CL 5)**

11/day animate dead

Tactics

During Combat Kagenai begins battle by channeling negative energy. He then proceeds to attack each PC once, allowing his ability drain to do its work. After each PC has been struck once, he channels negative energy again and restarts the process.

Morale Bound by strong oaths, Kagenai fights until destroyed.

Statistics

Str -, Dex 24, Con -, Int 18, Wis 18, Cha 31 Base Atk +3; CMB +10; CMD 20

Feats Blind-Fight, Combat Reflexes, Improved Initiative, Toughness

Skills Diplomacy +12, Fly +13, Intimidate +15, Knowledge (planes) +9, Perception +12, Sense Motive +12, Stealth +15

Languages Kaidanese, Infernal **Special Abilities**

Darklight (Su): The negative energies pulsing from Kagenai act as a continual deeper darkness, centered on himself and providing total concealment for the creature against attacks made from further than 30 ft. away (area attacks are not affected). However, such is the strength of the creature's negative aura that any living creature within 30 ft. can absolutely and unerringly locate the creature regardless of vision. Kagenai can suppress the field of darkness at will, but not the ability of living creatures to target him.

Darkseed (Su): Tightly wound negative energies burn within Kagenai, fueling his abilities and constantly knitting any wounds. If slain, the slim bindings holding this energy together are undone, resulting in an explosion of negative energy which deals 25 points of damage to all living creatures within 30 ft. (Reflex DC 22 halves). Undead within the same area receive a like amount of temporary hit points.

Necrotic Poison (Su): Type injury; save fort dc 22; frequency 1/round for 4 rounds; effect 1d6 +1 Con drain; cure 1 save.

Treasure

The Golden Spear of Himojo Takio, now with a new wooden shaft (see sidebar) rests in a prominent place atop a table in the center of the room. Characters searching the room might also discover any of the following.

- A collection of scrolls containing necromantic spells. These are not magical scrolls rather they

operate as a spell book would. The scrolls, used by Lord Hachiwara when he was a youth studying necromancy, contain all the standard necromantic spells of levels 1-4. They also contain two new spells: bone tattoo and seek the soulless.

- A locked chest of laminated wood (hardness 6; hp 20; Disable Device DC 25) containing the dried remains of the daimyo's first wife and a necklace of strangulation (around her neck). The chest is trapped with a poisoned needle (Perception DC 20; Disable Device DC 20; Attack +10 melee) coated with spider venom (DC 14; 1/round for 4 rounds; 1d3 Strength; cure 1 save).

- A magical suit of lacquered samurai armor sized for a small character. The suit belonged to Lord Hachiwara when he was a child. It functions as a suit of +2 banded mail.

- A seven foot long jade sarcophagus, weighing about 4,000 pounds.

- A childish painting of a sun over the ocean. Despite the fact that the painting appears to have been painted by a five year old, it is in a frame of gold (500 gp value). The painting was a gift to Lord Hachiwara from the emperor. He detests it but dares not get rid of it.

- A set of scrolls describing the religion of Yokinto.

- A carved bone mask in the likeness of a fish's face (200 gp value).

- Two ornate lacquered chairs worth 500 gp each.

- A bag of holding (I) containing mummified hands. The bag is literally full of them.

- A five foot wide folding screen with a mountain battle scene (500 gp value)

- A lacquered cabinet containing a number of flasks, two of which are magical. The first is an eversmoking bottle and the second is a flask of curses. The daimyo considers both of these items to be nuisances.



New Spells

RULLITUN

(Borrowed from 101 3rd Level Spells) Bone Tattoo

School: Necromancy; Level: Sor/Wiz 3 Casting Time: 1 minute Components: V, S, M (ink and a bone needle) Range: Touch Target: One living creature Duration: 1 min./level

Saving Throw: Will negates (harmless); Spell Resistance: Yes

This spell creates a bone-colored skull-and-bones tattoo pattern on the flesh of a living creature. As long as the tattoo lasts, the tattooed creature has spell resistance 10 + your level against cold, polymorph,

Seek the Soulless

School: Necromancy; Level: Sor/Wiz 3 Casting Time: 1 standard action Components: V, S, M (feather dipped in lacquer)

Range: Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels) **Area:** Cone

Duration: Instantaneous

Saving Throw: Reflex half; Spell Resistance: Yes

Seek the soulless creates a cone of strange magical energy. Within its area, living mortal creatures with souls (all creatures other than undead, constructs, plants, or outsiders) find themselves surrounded by a momentary nimbus of light that protects them from the spell's influence. All those not protected suffer 1d6 points of damage per caster level (maximum 10d6). Inanimate objects suffer full damage from this blast of energy. This spell proves useful for fighting undead or other creatures without worrying about harming your friends.

Development

Once Kagenai has been defeated the characters have the opportunity to loot the contents of the vault. However, if the alarm has been raised, they do not have a great deal of time (see **Escaping the Treasury**). Furthermore, once the *Golden Spear* has been taken by the characters, they progress from being mere nuisances to being legitimate enemies of the state. As such, Lord Hachiwara sends his most elite hunters after the PCs, the Danmatsumabatsu. Area A18 – Steps up to the Ground Floor

Stone steps lead up to the first floor of the shiro.

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 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 onibane spear. Without the shaft it can be used as an improvised short-sword. 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 normally succeed at a DC 18 Will save or be cursed with loyalty to the spear. However, Lord Hachiwara, daimyo of Yonshu, has crafted a spear shaft which suppresses the ability of the spear to curse onlookers so long as the shaft is attached to the spearhead. Those cursed by the spear 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 (spear-head)

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

Creation (shaft)

Requirements Craft Magic Arms and Armor, *dispel magic*; **Cost** 15,000 gp



Escaping the Treasury

The breaching of the vault is likely to have set off an alarm. If the PCs managed to avoid doing so. don't penalize them; allow them to easily escape after defeating Kagenai and looting the vault. However, if an alarm was raised, following the destruction of Kagenai, characters have only a short time to examine the contents of the vault and make good their escape before they are again attacked. GMs, in this case, should not just tell the PCs what all is in the vault but should maintain track of initiative and actions per round to maintain the sense of urgency. The first attack, 1d6 rounds after Kagenai is slain, is in the form of a single shadow stalker. Then 1d6 rounds after this, another 1d4 shadow stalkers materialize and attack. So long as the PCs move swiftly, no other shadow stalkers bother them. However, as they move through the dungeon level (or if they attempt to go up the stairs into the shiro), they are met by Honeko (see Appendix 3) who attempts to ambush them. The players should get a sense of urgency from these encounters; at no time should they feel comfortable in stopping to rest while still in the area.

If the characters exit through the river, they encounter no resistance in the water and can easily make it to shore.

Creatures

CR 4 (XP 1,200) Shadow Stalker LE Medium undead Init +10; Senses darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +1 Defense AC 19, touch 17, flat-footed 12 (+2 armor, +6 Dex, +1 dodge)hp 22 (4d8+4) **Fort** +2, Ref +7, Will +5 **Defensive Abilities +4** channel resistance, partially incorporeal (20% miss chance); **DR** 5/magic or silver; **Immune** undead traits; **Resist** +4 channel <u>Offense</u> Spd 40 ft., climb 30 ft. Melee masterwork short-sword +10 (1d6+1 plus 1 Strength drain; 19-20/x2) **Ranged** shuriken +9 (1d2+1; 20/x2) **Special Attacks** +2d6 sneak attack

Spell Like Abilities (CL 4th) 2/day – *ethereal jaunt*

Statistics

Str 12, **Dex** 22, **Con** -, **Int** 10, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 12 **Base Atk** +3; **CMB** +4; **CMD** 18 **Feats** Dodge^B, Improved Initiative^B, Skill Focus (Stealth), Weapon Finesse **Skills** Climb +17, Intimidate +9, Stealth+21 (+25)

in dim light), Survival +6; **Racial** +4 Stealth (+8 in dim light), +8 Climb

Languages Common

 ${\bf SQ}$ shadow walk

Gear leather armor, masterwork short sword Special Abilities

Shadow Walk (Su) In dim light and darkness, shadow stalkers can slip through any cracks, no matter how small. Additionally, once per round as a move action which does not provoke an attack of opportunity, shadow stalkers can step from one shadow to any other shadow within 100 feet.

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Part Two: Along the Dark Path

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Once away from Tsue-jo, Golden Spear in hand, the characters need to make their way back to Gaijinoshima if they are to escape Kaidan and the clutches of the daimyo. Short of flying the entire way, an ability that should still be beyond the reach of the entire party, there are three avenues open to them: the northern road through the Daitengu mountains, the southern route through the settled regions of Yonshu, or the Dark Path under the mountains. (Technically, they could also try crossing straight over the mountains, but the tengu discourage this, having no wish to lead any of the daimyo's forces anywhere near their homes.) Though it is assumed the characters choose the latter route, it is not necessary that they do so, nor should GMs pressure them to do so, apart from making it clear, via NPCs, that the northern and southern routes are likely to be alive with the daimyo's forces. Should the PCs choose to go a different route, GMs should adapt accordingly, using the encounters provided in this section, albeit in different locales than those described. Encounters which might otherwise occur in the deep woods or deep in the earth can instead take place on the road, in rice fields, or even in the alleys of a town. Furthermore, as the PCs travel through areas in which the daimyo has soldiers stationed, they should, in fact, encounter these soldiers in ever increasing numbers.

If the characters decide to head on the road north, or south, consider making the following changes.

- **Dokuga and Sujiko:** These two easily overtake the PCs while they are on the road.

- **Kumakasumiko:** The jorogumo positions her "home" near the road along an otherwise empty section of countryside.

- Boyahiko and Ketsuko: These two ambush the PCs in an inn, or alternately, as the PCs make camp for the night.

- **Blind Ghouls:** The daimyo sends packs of blind ghouls out to hunt the PCs. They are encountered in squads of 10, attacking the PCs at night.

- **Tsuchidaifu:** The bachi-hebi-oni, at the behest of the Oni Court, begins hunting the PCs when they are about halfway to their destination. It attacks each night, under cover of darkness. For a genuine fierce battle, the bachi-hebi-oni attacks one night at the same time as the blind ghouls.

- Jadoko and her minions: Only after Tsuchidaifu fails does Jadoko make an attack. Ideally she attacks when the characters are weak. Otherwise, she and her brutes attack as the PCs are attempting to obtain a boat.

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Table 2.1: Yonshu Weather

d100 T	e m	р	e r	a	\mathbf{t}	u	r	е	*
	umidity								
01-10 80	+ 1d10	Dr	y y						
11-60 80	+ 1d12	Hu	mid						
$71-75\ 90$	+ 1d12	Ver	y Hu	mid	L				
76-80 70	+ 1d10	Hu	mid						
81-85 80	+ 1d12	Ra	in las	ting	g 2d	l3 h	our	s	
86-90 75	+ 1d12		in las	-	-				
91-95 80	+ 1d10		unde	-	-				3
hours, ra	in lasti						U		
96-99 75		0			rm	last	ing	1d	6
hours, ra							0		
00 70		-							

*This chart assumes that it is summer. For the spring and fall, reduce the temperature by 15 degrees and add 5 to the roll.

Table 2.2: Wandering Monsters on Yonshud20Encounter

- 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*)
- 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 1d4 shadow stalkers
- **15-17** 3d4 wolves (*Pathfinder Bestiary*)
- 18-19 1d2 bakeneko (Dim Spirit)
- **20** A tamashinaki wolf (*Pathfinder Bestiary*, *The Gift*)

If the PCs do decide to attempt the Dark Path, the tengu can readily guide them as far as the eastern entrance, though if the characters are very injured or need to rest, the tengu suggest a brief respite in Kitsumura first. Traveling through the forest east of the mountains is a slow process, even when one knows where one is going. Rarely will a party be able to travel more than a mile or two in any given hour. As the party travels, the tengu walk with them only part of the time, preferring to work as scouts, traveling ahead of the PCs.

As the characters journey through the forest, there is a 15% chance each day of a significant wandering monster encounter. If a random

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encounter is called for, GMs 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.

The Daimyo's Soldiers (CR varies)

If the PCs encounter soldiers, the following stat blocks are provided for the convenience of the GM. It is suggested that the PCs first meet a squad containing a single captain and 1d6+4 soldiers. Each time a new squad is met in the same area, increase the amount by an additional 1d6 soldiers.

Samurai Soldiers CR 1 (XP 400)

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Male human fighter 2 LN Medium humanoid Init +0; Perception +0 <u>Defense</u> AC 16, touch 10, flat-footed 16 (+6 armor) hp 17 (2d10+6) Fort +5, Ref +0, Will -1 Defensive Abilities bravery +1 <u>Offense</u> 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**

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 (short bow), Weapon Focus (katana), 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

Squad Captain CR 4 (XP 1,200)

Male human ranger (yojimbo archetype) 5 LN Medium humanoid Init +6; Perception +12 <u>Defense</u> 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)

<u>Tactics</u>

Before Combat If the situation allows, the yojimbo meditates for ten minutes before combat, increasing 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 (Perception), Toughness, Weapon Focus (short bow), 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) +4, humanoids (yokai) +2

Enemy Clan Taihori +2

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

Beauty and the Beast (CR 9, XP 6,400)

Following the flight from Tsue-jo, two of the Danmatsumabatsu overtake the PCs in an attempt to win back the *Golden Spear*. They are the poisoner, Dokuga, and Sujiko, a massive mountain of a man armed with a massive club. They approach the PCs with a simple plan. Dokuga intercepts the PCs from the front, drawing them into conversation in an attempt to gain intelligence before acting. Meanwhile Sujiko advances stealthily from the rear (Stealth +12). Dokuga, while conversing (assuming

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<u>Creatures</u>

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Dokuga and Sujiko have very different styles. She is subtle and devious. He is direct and brash. Nevertheless, they are quite capable of working as a team. In combat, they are talkative, sure of their abilities and prone to taunting their opponents, regardless of how the fight is going.

Dokuga

AC 17 (see appendix 3)

hp 75

Note: If brought to 0 hit points and unable to flee, Dokuga will cease fighting and ask for one last kiss before dying. It is her method of trying to take somebody to the grave with her, and assumes that she has not yet kissed anyone.

Sujiko

AC 16 (see **appendix 3**) hp 68

Development

Though both Dokuga and Sujiko attempt to flee if brought below 10 hit points, in Kaidan, death is far from permanent. In the event one of them is slain, the GM should make sure to include a foreshadowing death scene in which one of the two will, with a smile, promise with his or her dying breath to meet the PCs one more time and even the score.

The Spider's Parlor (CR 9 XP 6,400)

The daimyo is not the only one interested in the fate of the *Golden Spear*. The Oni Court is still desirous of obtaining the relic in order to remove it as a threat. The hebi-no-onna, Jadoko, defeated once by the PCs, has been sent back into the material world to try again. As before, Jadoko prefers for others to do her work for her and thus has arranged for other oni to confront the PCs. The first of these oni encountered by the characters is Kumakasumiko, a jorogumo, or spider woman. By scrying on the PCs, Kumakasumiko is able to determine their route and thus move to meet them, arranging a resting place in which she can trap them in her webs.

Jorogumo have the ability to create an illusionary house using their spider webs and Kumakasumiko employs this ability in order to manufacture what appears to be a cozy, two-roomed hut. Kumakasumiko places her trap in a location likely to be reached by the PCs just before dusk. As the characters approach, they see an inviting-looking home, with warm light streaming from within and a young woman standing by the door. The woman is Kumakasumiko in human form. She invites the characters to enter and rest for the night. Should the party refuse, the jorogumo makes no further attempt to persuade them. If the party enters, she introduces them to her four daughters: quiet, demure girls with wide eyes and mischievous smiles. The party is given food to eat and encouraged to relax as Kumakasumiko sings softly for them. Only when all the party is at ease does the attack begin.

When Kumakasumiko attacks, she reveals her true form and the true form of her four "daughters": four monstrous spiders. At the same time, the illusion over the house is dropped and the characters find themselves in the middle of webbing 20 feet wide, 20 feet long and 5 feet high. Characters failing a DC 17 Reflex save are entrapped in the sticky substance. Characters can escape the web through the use of a DC 17 Strength check or a DC 17 Escape Artist check. The webbing itself has 10 hp per 10 square feet and DR 5/-. If the tengu are with the characters, GMs can choose to have the avian warriors automatically fail their Reflex saves so that the PCs are initially forced to deal with the threat on their own.

<u>Creatures</u>

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Kumakasumiko's four "daughters" are monstrous spiders with an ability to temporarily assume human form. They do not speak when in human form, but frequently giggle.

Giant Spiders (4) (CR 1 XP 400)

AC 14	(Bestiary)
hp 16	
SQ Shape-chang	ge (human, <i>alter self</i>)

In human form, Kumakasumiko is an attractive young woman with a pleasant smile and a soft, demure voice.





Kumakasumiko

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AC 21 (appendix 2) hp 75 Melee +1 short sword +15 (1d6+3 plus poison), bite +14 (1d6+2 plus poison) Gear: ring of feather falling, +1 short sword

(CR 8 XP 4.800)

The Entrance to the Dark Path (CR 9 XP 6,400)

The eastern entrance to the Dark Path is located about nine miles east-northeast from Kitsumura. So long as the PCs are with the tengu, they find the unassuming entrance with little difficulty. Otherwise it takes them 1d10 hours to locate it, even after they are in the right area and are using Marl's map. At the entrance of the Dark Path, the tengu, if they have traveled with the PCs this far, possibly take their leave. They have no real desire to enter the Dark Path themselves. They also suggest the PCs only enter the tunnels after they are fully rested. However, should the characters try to persuade them to continue the journey, it is possible they can be persuaded (DC 15 Diplomacy check). Regardless of the actions of the tengu, just before the PCs enter the tunnels, two more of the Danmatsumabatsu, Boyahiko, the shadow warrior, and Ketsuko, the blood warrior, catch up with them. Ketsuko's unique abilities have allowed him to easily track them through the woods.

As the PCs enter the tunnel, those who succeed on a DC 24 Perception check notice two things. The first is a curious snake-like creature, a bachi-hebi (see **Appendix 2**) resting on a rock near the tunnel entrance. Even as the PCs see this creature, it disappears, turning invisible. They are also aware of footsteps moving toward them, out of the forest. Characters hearing the footsteps can act in the surprise round. PCs who achieve at least a 34 on their Perception check are also aware of a second individual creeping through the rocks above them. If none of the characters succeed at the Perception check, they are taken by surprise.

<u>Creatures</u>

The two necrotic warriors coordinate their attacks. Each of them uses arrows first and then, if approached, enters into melee. Boyahiko has a secure location atop the rocks, fifteen feet above the entrance to the tunnels, behind full cover. He maintains this position for as long as possible, peppering the characters with arrows. Ketsuko, meanwhile, begins with partial cover, behind trees. His position is less secure, but, of the two,

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he considers himself the better melee combatant.

Boyahiko CR 7 (XP 3,200)

AC 17	(see <i>appendix 3</i>)
hp 60	

Ketsuko CR 7 (XP 3,200)

AC 19	(see <i>appendix 3</i>)
hp 60	

Development

Both of these warriors are cautious, preferring to withdraw and try again. They are also willing to follow the PCs into the mountain, and, should they manage to escape, become one more danger within the lightless tunnels of the Dark Path.

Traveling the Dark Path

The tunnels which form the twenty mile long Dark Path are actually dormant lava tubes. Typically ten to fifteen feet wide, the tunnels are fashioned of smooth black rock, cold to the touch. The tunnel walls also have the curious physical property of absorbing more light than they reflect. For this reason, all light sources within the tunnel have their efficiency reduced by half. A torch, for instance, which would normally provide normal light up to 20 feet away and dim light for 20 feet beyond that, instead provides normal light for only 10 feet and dim light for an additional 10 feet. At the same time, sound is amplified within the tunnels. All Perception checks to hear footsteps, breathing, or other sounds, have a +4 circumstance bonus. As a practical matter, this means that characters hear many things which they cannot see.

The actual route from east to west is not perfectly straight, nor is there only one continuous tunnel connecting the eastern entrance of the Dark Path to the western entrance. Various tunnels crisscross with each other below the mountain, sometimes opening into larger chambers, sometimes leading to dead ends or collapsed tunnels. If the party were to walk straight from one end of the mountain through to the other end with no interruptions and no mistakes, it would take them between eight and ten hours to make the trek. Chances are good, however, that the journey will take the characters longer. Rather than provide a detailed map of twenty miles of tunnels, GMs should deal with the journey more abstractly.

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For each hour the PCs spend traveling, they need to make either a Survival check or a Knowledge (dungeoneering) check. Characters can aid another in this endeavor, using either relevant skill. Parties which achieve a success in excess of 20 on their check are considered to have traveled a total of 2 miles in the right direction. Those that obtain a number between 12 and 20 are considered to have traveled one mile in the right direction. Those that obtain a result between 7 and 11 make no discernable progress and those that manage to get 6 or less on their check are considered to have gone back a mile in the wrong direction (if that is possible).

To add to this, make a percentile check each hour for a random event. A result of 01-10 indicates a wandering monster (**table 2.3**) and a result of 11-20 indicates a delay of some kind (**table 2.4**). A result of 21-40 indicates a non-event encounter (**table 2.5**), which, nevertheless, reinforces the mood of the trek. Furthermore as the PCs progress far enough into the mountain, they enter the territories of dangerous creatures. Four miles in, they begin to attract and encounter blind ghouls. Nine miles in, they are within the territory of Tsuchidaifu, the dread Bachi-hebi-oni.

The atmosphere of the Dark Path is, well, dark. It is also oppressive and foreboding. Play up these elements, emphasizing the poor lighting conditions, the amplified sounds, the constant sense of danger, lurking just out of sight, and the never ending, monotonous tunnels of smooth, black stone.

If the characters are being followed by members of the Danmatsumabatsu, keep this fact in mind as well. The villains attack when least expected, preferably when the characters are weakened, or tired. They also retreat easily, confident they have time on their side and that the characters have nowhere to flee. At the same time, any dangers which threaten the characters potentially endanger the necrotic warriors as well. Alternately, if GMs wish to be more cruel to their players, it is possible for the assassins to establish a relationship with the blind ghouls dwelling within the tunnels, joining forces, as it were, for a time.

Camping within the tunnels is also difficult and dangerous, due to the inherently unwelcoming nature of the area. There are no safe camping sites within the tunnels and GMs should make it difficult, though not impossible, for the characters to obtain the eight hours of sleep typically necessary for regaining spells. Wandering monster rolls should be made each hour when camping and each hour spent in one place increases the likelihood of a wandering monster by a cumulative 5%. Thus the first hour spent camping there is a 10% chance of an encounter. There is a 15% chance the second hour, and so forth. Following an encounter, the percentage drops again to 10%. Characters who decide not to camp should suffer accordingly.



- 1 1 bachi-hebi (see **appendix 2**)
- **2-3** 1d4 spider swarms (*Bestiary*)
- 4-5 2d6 dire rats (*Bestiary*)
- 6 1d6 fire beetles (*Bestiary*)
- 7-9 1d6 blind ghouls (see *The Tunnels of the Blind Ghouls*)
- 10 1d10 human skeletons (*Bestiary*)
- 11-12 1d6 giant spiders (*Bestiary*)
- 13 1d2 gray oozes (*Bestiary*)
- 14 1 wraith (*Bestiary*)
- 15 1d8 skeletal champions (*Bestiary*)
- 16 1d4 shadows (*Bestiary*)
- 17-191 wight (Bestiary)
- **20** 1 black pudding (*Bestiary*)

Table 2.4 Delays along the Dark Path (d10)

- 1 A Flooded Passage: PCs must either swim for 1d8 x 100 feet, or lose 30 minutes as they find an alternate route
- 2 A Collapsed Passage: PC can either spend 1d20 man hours clearing it, or lose 30 minutes as they find an alternate route
- **3** A Dead End: Backtracking costs 30 minutes of travel
- 4 *Chasm:* 1d6 x 10 feet wide, 1d10x 20 feet deep; PCs must cross, or lose 30 minutes as they find an alternate route
- 5 Rubble Filled Passage: Characters move at half speed and thus travel half as far as they might otherwise have traveled this hour
- 6 *Cliff:* To go forward requires climbing 1d6 x 20 feet; PCs must climb or lose 30 minutes as they find an alternate route
- 7 *Maze of Tunnels*: The PCs enter an area with many interconnecting tunnels; they must make two successful DC 15 Survival checks to make it through; each failed check adds one hour of travel time
- 8 Weak Floor: The floor here is paper thin rock over a pit which is 1d6 x 20 feet deep. As soon as more than one character stands upon the weak floor it collapses (Knowledge [dungeoneering] DC 20 to spot; DC 25 Reflex to avoid)
- **9-10** Monster Lair: The PCs enter a cavern which houses creatures; Roll on Table 2.3

Table 2.5 Non-events Along the Dark Path(d10)

- 1 A bachi-hebi crawls in front of the characters and turns invisible
- 2 The PCs hear the soft patter of feet ahead of them
- 3 There is a flash of light, some distance behind the party, a little like lightning during a storm
- 4 A weak spot in the ceiling gives way, showering the party with dust and small pebbles
- 5 The characters enter a section of tunnel filled with old webs
- 6 The PCs hear the sound of falling rocks echoing through the tunnels
- 7 Any lights carried by the party suddenly go out and then relight a half second later
- 8 The PCs encounter 1d6 skeletons lying in the midst of the tunnel
- 9 The loud sound of dripping water echoes through the tunnels
- 10 A plethora of rats scurry out from in front of the character's light

The tunnels of the Blind Ghouls (CR Varies)

Four miles into the tunnels, the party enters the territory of the blind ghouls: one of the more pervasive and dangerous denizens of the Dark Path. These creatures are timid when confronted with light and do not immediately attack. Rather, they follow behind the party or scuttle ahead, always just out of sight. Nevertheless, their soft footfalls can be heard in ever increasing numbers until finally, emboldened by their superior numbers, or, encouraged by an opportune moment, they attack.

When the party makes it deep enough into the tunnels, they attract 1d10 blind ghouls each hour. If, at any time, there are four times as many ghouls as there are PCs, or, if at any time the party loses their lights, the monsters attack. Likewise, if, at any time, the GM must roll on **table 2.4**, the blind ghouls take advantage of the terrain and attack.

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This harassment of the characters continues until the party is finally at the western entrance of the Dark Path. The only exception to this is the time the PCs spend within the territory of the bachihebi-oni. The blind ghouls, fearing the might of the oni, never enter Tsuchidaifu's territory and subsequently leave the party alone until they are once more beyond the region in question.

<u>Creatures</u>

The blind ghouls are pale, naked, eyeless humanoid monsters with oversized jaws and wide, gripping claws capable of easily clinging to bare rock. They subsist within the Dark Path by feeding on rats, snakes, spiders and any other living thing that comes their way. Many, many years ago, long before the Emperor's Curse befell the islands, they were a tribe of oni-worshiping men, driven into the mountain by the tengu and their human allies during the first Oni War. Within the tunnels of the Dark Path they eventually died, but, because of their sins, they were denied a place in the hereafter and thus rose again in their new form.

Blind Ghouls CR 2 (XP 600)

Crawler ghoul

CE Medium undead

Init +2; Senses blindsight 120 ft.; Perception +9 Defense

AC 16, touch 14, flat-footed 12 (+4 Wisdom, +2 natural)

hp 16 (2d8+7)

Fort +2, Ref +2, Will +5

Defensive Abilities channel resistance +2; <u>Offense</u>

Spd 30 ft., climb 60 ft.

Melee bite +4 (1d8+3 plus disease plus paralysis), 2 claws +4 (1d6+3 plus paralysis)

Special Attacks disease (ghoul fever) (DC 12), pack tactics, paralysis (1d4+1 rounds, DC 13, elves are immune to this effect), scream (DC 13)

Tactics

Before Combat Blind ghouls prefer to attack under cover of darkness. They can sense light and frequently stay just out of range of the dim light, following their prey, waiting for an opportunity to strike.

During Combat Blind ghouls swarm in on a single opponent, only attacking a second foe if no more are able to reach the first. They move to provide one another flanking, thus increasing their ability to hit, even beyond the bonuses provided by their pack tactics. Likewise, if they can attack from higher ground, they do so, using their natural climbing ability.

Morale Once they have tasted blood, blind ghouls frenzy and fight to the (un)death. Prior to this they flee as soon as they take damage. **Statistics**

Str 17, **Dex** 15, **Con** -, **Int** 9, **Wis** 18, **Cha** 14 **Base Atk** +1; **CMB** +4; **CMD** 18 **Feats** Toughness **Skills** Acrobatics +4, Climb +16, Perception +9, Stealth +7, Swim +5

Languages Kaidanese (understood only) Special Abilities

Pack Tactics (Ex) Blind ghouls seldom attack alone, preferring to swarm their prey. They gain a +1 bonus to attacks and damage rolls for each of their number beyond the first that attacks the same opponent in a round.

Scream (Ex): Once per day, as a move action, blind ghouls can emit a terrible sonic scream in a 10 ft. cone that does 1d6 points of damages to their targets. A DC 13 Fortitude save halves.

The Lair of Tsuchidaifu (CR 9 XP 6,400)

While most creatures entering the tunnels of the Dark Path actually fall to the teeth and claws of the blind ghouls, they are far from the worst danger. That distinction belongs to Tsuchidaifu, an ancient bachi-hebi-oni. As soon as the characters are nine miles into the tunnels, they are in Tsuchidaifu's territory. The lava tubes in this area are slightly wider than elsewhere, being predominantly fifteen to twenty feet in width. There is a musty smell, which characters may associate with snakes (DC 12 Knowledge [nature] check) and the air is warmer. More importantly, the terrain is rougher in this region, containing numerous crevices and rising cliffs. Characters traveling through the region find their progress slowed to a quarter of what it was. Progress (Survival Knowledge checks or [dungeoneering]) which elsewhere would indicate 2 miles of progress now indicate only half a mile of progress and those which would otherwise indicate one mile of travel now indicate a quarter of a mile. Regardless of distance traveled, GMs should still check each hour for encounters and delays using a percentile roll. Within the territory of Tsuchidaifu, a roll of 01-20 indicates the party has come to the attention of the bachi-hebi-oni. A roll of 21-40 indicates a delay of some sort. Additionally, if the party, for whatever reason, makes a great deal of noise while in this region, such as that created in a battle, GMs should simply assume they have awoken the oni.

Once Tsuchidaifu is aware of the PCs, he begins hunting them. He is a creature of darkness and stealth. He stalks his prey, identifies a target and then moves in to attack only that target. Once he has swallowed his intended victim, he retreats and begins the process again. ILTTULLUUU

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<u>Creature</u>

The snake oni is a dangerous hunter. Its natural spell-like abilities, combined with its tremorsense, allow it to attack unseen. The monster also has its blinding acid attack to further hamper potential meals. Though it is capable of taking human form, it seldom does so, much preferring its natural shape.

Tsuchidaifu CR 9 (XP 6,400)

Bachi-hebi-oni AC 23 hp 146

(see *appendix 2*)

Development

If the tengu are with the PCs, the oni targets one or two of them first, before targeting one of the characters. It has a centuries-old grudge against the bird-men. Should the party manage to engage Tsuchidaifu in an actual battle and defeat him, this does not mean the threat is over. The oni's bachi-hebi rebirth ability means that it will be back within 24 hours. Should the characters still be in its territory, it resumes the hunt. Characters who confront the oni and manage to make it out of its lair alive should earn experience, regardless of whether they ultimately destroyed it. One benefit of defeating the bachi-hebi-oni, and one the characters may not immediately appreciate, is that it gives them a section of tunnels free of wandering monsters; or, in other words, a chance to rest and re-gather their strength.

<u>Treasure</u>

Though he does not greatly care for such things, Tsuchidaifu has a small hoard of treasure, items he has accumulated over the years. These items are kept within his primary lair, a large cavern containing a clean pool of heated water and plethora of dried bones and leavings. Finding this lair requires the characters to be actively looking for it. If they announce their attention to search for it, a successful DC 19 Survival check allows the party to follow the trail of the bachi-hebi-oni back to its lair. Within this lair, they can find the following: a magical longbow named Shu'kiochiba (see sidebar), bracers of armor +2, a horn of fog, various coins totaling 3,000 gp in value, a suit of masterwork full plate of an antique Kaidanese design (2,000 gp value), 4 suits of banded mail, 2 suits of splint mail, a masterwork greatsword, a masterwork composite shortbow [+2 Strength], and an assortment of worn armors and rusty weapons of limited value. Also in the lair is a worn set of scrolls describing unique monk



maneuvers and techniques, two books on horticulture, a scroll containing a comical theatrical script, and another scroll containing military orders concerning the movement of troops in long forgotten battle. All the manuscripts are written in Kaidanese. Finally, nestled among the bones is a cursed *loadstone*, or *stone of weight*.

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Aura strong divination; CL 12th Slot none; Price 13,000 gp; Weight 3 lbs. Description

Shu'ki-ochiba is a yumi, or kaidanese longbow. Fashioned from a combination of laminated bamboo, wood and leather, the bow has a pleasant red-orange coloration, reminiscent of autumn leaves. Originally created for a samurai archer in the first oniwar, *Shu'ki-ochiba* has been in Tsuchidaifu's lair for several hundred years. *Shu'ki-ochiba* functions as a +1 seeking longbow, which adds +10 to its user's Perception skill when held in the hand with an arrow on the string. **Construction**

Requirements Craft Magic Arms and Armor, *trueseeing*; **Cost** 6,500 gp

Part Three: Returning to Gaijinoshima and the Scarlet Harlot

Once the PCs manage to make their way through the dark path, they are not yet free and clear. An old acquaintance, the hebi-no-onna Jadoko, is waiting at the western entrance of the tunnels to ambush them. Following this encounter, they must still find a way to reach Gaijinoshima and their ship. Finally, once in Gaijinoshima, one final unpleasant surprise awaits them: the remaining Danmatsumabatsu are already aboard.

Jadoko's Final Attack (CR 10 XP 9,600)

The western entrance of the dark path is located in a remote, rock-filled clearing within a small wood. As the characters emerge from the dark tunnels, two invisible ogre brutes begin to flank them (DC 19 Perception check to notice). Meanwhile, a strikingly beautiful woman, in an expensive kimono, sits on the ground, fifty feet from the entrance, with a large, laminated bamboo tray in front of her. Steam rises from a jade tea set on the table and several rice balls sit on a dainty porcelain plate. The woman is the hebi-no-onna, Jadoko, in human form. The food is what it seems to be, though the tea and the rice are both poisoned. Greeting the characters warmly, she makes it clear she has been expecting them, asks them how their journey was, and offers them a bite to eat. While she would find it humorous for the characters to partake of the poisoned rice balls, she is not truly counting on it and her brutes are instructed to attack at the first sign of aggression from the PCs.

The tea is poisoned with hemlock (Fortitude DC 18; onset 10 minutes; frequency 1/min for 6 minutes; effect 1d6 Dex; Characters reduced to 0 Dexterity suffocate). The rice balls have been filled with poisonous toadstools (Fortitude DC 14; onset 10 minutes; frequency 1/min for 5 minutes; effect 1d3 Wis and 1d3 Int; Characters who take 4 or more damage to either Wisdom or Intelligence are afflicted as with confusion for 5d6 minutes).

If the PCs are agreeable to eating, willing to talk, and generally oblivious, Jadoko does not rush things, being willing to allow the poison to begin its work. If they are belligerent, rude, or otherwise aggressive, she gives the signal to her invisible minions and the attack begins.

Designer's note: If the characters are overly weakened from their time in the tunnels, consider delaying this encounter until the morning following their exit, giving them a chance to heal. The encounter is meant to be challenging: enough so as to make the players think this is the final fight of the module. If you desire it to be even more challenging, add in a third ogre brute. After this battle, allow the players to think the adventure is about over, except for making it to the ship, so that the final scene, with a deck full of dead sailors, packs more of an emotional punch.

<u>Creatures</u>

Death has been good to Jadoko. Once she assumes her true shape, she looks just as she did the first time the characters met her in battle; however, her master, the Lord of the Dead, sent her back into the world with augmented abilities. Once in battle, she boasts of her new prowess and makes mention of her master, and the honor he has bestowed on her in granting a chance to redeem herself.

Jadoko CR 9 (xp 6,400)

Advanced hebi-no-onna (*The Gift*) CE Large Outsider (evil, extraplanar, giant, oni, shapechanger)

Init +11; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, *detect magic*; **Perception** +18

<u>Defense</u>

AC 29, touch 21, flat-footed 21 (+4 armor, +7 Dex, +1 dodge, +8 natural -1 size) hp 105 (10d10+50); regeneration 5 (acid) Fort +8, Ref +14, Will +12

Defensive Abilities improved evasion; **DR** 5/cold iron; **Immune** cold, poison; **Resist** electricity 10
Offense

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Spd 30 ft., fly 30 ft. (perfect), swim 30 ft. **Melee** 3 serpent arm bites +20 (1d4+7 plus poison) or bite +19 (large snake form; 1d6+11 plus grab plus poison)

Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft. (15 ft. with serpent arms)

Special Attacks constrict (large snake form; 1d6+9), echo of the grave 1/day (DC 20), hypnotic gaze (DC 20), sneak attack +3d6, wrap around attack

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 10th) At will - detect magic 1/day – gaseous form 3/day – darkness, invisibility, silence (DC

17) Tactics

Before Combat As soon as her minions attack, Jadoko turns invisible and takes a moment to drink a *potion of bull's strength* and a *potion of mage armor*.

During Combat Jadoko begins combat by casting *silence* on enemy spellcasters. She then wades into battle, especially targeting any characters responsible for her previous defeat. If both of her minions are taken down, Jadoko unleashes her new echo of the grave power.

Morale Jadoko fights until being reduced to 10 hit points or less, after which she attempts to flee and try a different strategy.

Base Stats AC 25; **Melee** 3 serpent arm bites +18 (1d4+5 plus poison) or bite +17 (large snake form; 1d6+9 plus grab plus poison); **Str** 21 **Statistics**

Str 25, **Dex** 25, **Con** 21, **Int** 15, **Wis** 16, **Cha** 21 **Base Atk** +10; **CMB** +16; **CMD** +32 **Feats** Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Improved

Initiative, Skill Focus (Bluff), Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus (serpent arms)

Skills Acrobatics +12, Bluff +22, Diplomacy +15, Fly +15, Intimidate +13, Knowledge (planes) +15, Perception +16, Perform (dance) +10, Perform (wind) +10, Sense Motive +16, Stealth +21, Swim +13; **Racial** +4 Bluff, +4 Stealth

Languages Abyssal (Jigoku dialect), Giant (Oni dialect), Kaidanese

SQ change shape (human female, snake; *alter self*, *beast shape II*)

Combat Gear: potion of bull's strength, potion of mage armor, potion of cure serious wounds <u>Special Abilities</u>

Echo of the Grave (Su): Once a day, as a fullround action, Jadoko can unleash a powerful attack, a blast filled with the power of the grave.

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When she uses this power, a shrieking burst of cold negative energy, affecting all living creatures within 30 feet of Jadoko, washes out from the hebino-onna. All affected by this burst take 8d6 points of damage (half cold and half negative energy). A successful DC 20 Reflex save halves the damage. Any creature damaged by the effect must also make a DC 20 Will save or be shaken for 1d4 rounds.

Hypnotic Gaze (Su): By sacrificing one of her bite attacks, Jadoko can make a hypnotic gaze attack against a single individual within 20 feet. If the targeted individual fails a DC 20 Will save (Charisma-based) he or she is dazed for one round. In her true form, she can make up to three hypnotic gaze attacks a round by sacrificing all three of her bite attacks. In her snake form she can make only a single such gaze attack.

Poison (Ex): Bite- injury; *save* Fort DC 20; *frequency* 1/round for 6 rounds; *initial effect* 1d2 Con; *secondary effect* 1d2 Dex; *cure* 1 save. DC is Constitution-based

Wrap Around Attack (Ex): When making more than one attack a round against an adjacent foe of Medium size or smaller, Jadoko can choose to attack from multiple sides, providing herself a flanking bonus.

The ogre brutes are a pair red-skinned giants with small yellow horns, big teeth, large noses and fierce eyes. Their eyes are their most distinguishing features: Manko has one, Tugo has three.

Manko, and Tugo CR 5 (XP 1,600)

Ogre Brutes (Oni) (2) (The Gift) CE Large outsider (giant, native, oni, shapechanger) Init -1; Senses darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; **Perception** +8 Defense AC 17, touch 8, flat-footed 17 (+4 armor, +5 natural, -1 Dex, -1 size) **hp** 47 (5d10+20); regeneration 2 (fire or acid) **Fort** +7, Ref +0, Will +6 Resist electricity 10; Immune cold, poison; SR 16 Offense **Spd** 40 ft. Melee masterwork greatclub +14 (2d8+13) **Ranged** spear +3(2d6+7)Space 10 ft.; Reach 10 ft. Spell-Like Abilities (CL 5th) 3/day - darkness, fly, invisibility

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Tactics

Before Combat The ogre brutes drink their *potions of bull's strength* while still invisible. **During Combat** The oni's main concession to tactics is to use Power Attack until they miss a target twice. If they can easily provide flanking to each other, they do so, but they do not go out of their way to help each other, unless directed to do so by Jadoko.

Morale The two ogre brutes are quite willing to fight to the death.

Base Stats Melee masterwork greatclub +12 (2d8+10); **Str** 25

<u>Statistics</u>

Str 29, Dex 8, Con 16, Int 8, Wis 10, Cha 8 Base Atk +5; CMB +13; CMD +22 Feats Iron Will, Power Attack, Toughness

Skills Bluff +7, Intimidate +9, Perception +8, Stealth +9, Survival +5; **Racial** +2 Intimidate, +2 Stealth

Languages Abyssal (Jigoku dialect), Giant (Oni dialect), Kaidanese

SQ change shape (Medium or Large humanoid; *alter self* or *giant form I*)

Combat Gear potion of bull's strength, potion of cure serious wounds; **Gear** chain shirt, masterwork greatclubs

Development

Jadoko realizes she is not likely to have a better opportunity to win back the *Golden Spear* and urges her "men" to fight to the death. If both of them are slain, and her attacks seem to be ineffective, she is willing to turn invisible and try a different tact, including stealing the *Golden Spear* while the characters are sleeping.

Reaching Gaijinoshima

The method by which the characters reach Gaijinoshima from Yonshu is up to them. There are three primary avenues open to them, apart from flying or swimming.

It is possible for the PCs to sneak aboard the ferry which travels from Uesaki to Gaijinoshima each day. The ferry leaves Uesaki before dawn, every morning, and passage for non-government travelers costs 2 sp. The main difficulty with this method of travel is that Uesaki is heavily guarded against the characters. Each road into Uesaki is watched over by a dozen soldiers, and each squad has been supplied with drawings of the characters. Any obvious gaijin are going to draw immediate attention. Additionally, the ferry itself is well guarded: a squad of ten soldiers makes the trip every day to insure the safety of the passengers. Bypassing the soldiers in Uesaki requires successful disguises. Attempting to reach the ferry through combat only serves to draw more and more soldiers into battle. All told, there are a hundred and fifty soldiers in Uesaki and they respond quickly to any trouble, so that any major conflict draws the attention of another 1d12 soldiers each round.

A second possibility is for the PCs to attempt to hire one of the fishing boats from a village along the coast. While most of the fishermen are not averse to making some extra coins, neither are any of them going to be overly eager to stick their neck on the line for a group of outlaw gaijin. Any fisherman approached begins with an unfriendly attitude and only agrees to help if brought to friendly through Diplomacy (DC 30). If the characters think to disguise themselves as Kaidanese, they may add +5 to any Diplomacy checks. Diplomacy checks which total less than 20 guarantee that as soon as the characters are out of sight, the fisherman in question moves to report them to authorities. Even if a fisherman has his attitude changed to friendly, he still requires 50 gp per character to be hauled as payment for smuggling.

The third and final option for obtaining passage to Gaijinoshima is for the characters to steal a boat and make the journey themselves. The theft of a boat is not an overly hard thing to accomplish. The real challenge is sailing across miles of water in the right direction. If any characters have Profession (sailor) the feat is not overly taxing and a DC 12 check is enough for success in the venture. Barring this skill, it is necessary for the characters to succeed at four successive DC 20 Survival checks to make sure they are going the right way. Failure on any of these checks indicates the characters are lost at sea, at least for a short time, and the journey takes 2 hours longer per failed check. GMs should also check for weather conditions during this voyage, adding +5 to the DC if there is rain. Any fishing vessels the PCs might be able to steal are mainly coastline vessels. Such ships can just be trusted to make the trip to Gaijinoshima, but they are not ocean worthy and characters who try to take such a vessel out into the open sea are going to find themselves soon in trouble.

Eventually, the characters should reach Gaijinoshima. Once ashore on the smaller island, they encounter no further difficulties before reaching the Scarlet Harlot. It appears as if word



of their "crimes" has not reached the small port town. Any natives encountered are happy to see them and those they met before are quite eager to hear how their journey went. Furthermore, once the PCs are near the Gaijinoshima docks, they can easily ascertain the presence of the Scarlet Harlot. Their ship has not left without them and all appears well. Here, however, as is often the case in Kaidan, appearances can be deceiving.

Designer's Note: Leveling Up

Following the battle with Jadoko, it is very likely the PCs have enough experience to level up to 8th level. The journey to Gaijinoshima is an opportune time for this leveling to occur and, if the PCs have new abilities and powers, the battle aboard the *Scarlet Harlot* provides a good arena in which they can showcase their new abilities.

On Board the Scarlet Harlot (CR 10+ XP 11,600)

The *Scarlet Harlot* provides the final scene for this adventure. The PCs, having made it this far, likely think the worst is behind them. Unfortunately for them, this is not the case. From the docks, the PCs can make out Captain Larmley, the skipper of the vessel, walking on deck. He seems to be alone. Sharp-eyed PCs may notice blood on the mast and sail (DC 24) but short of flying up to gain a better view, or boarding the ship, PCs can see nothing else amiss. If they draw the Captain's attention, he smiles and waves them aboard.

Once they board the ship, the situation becomes clearer. The crew of the vessel lie scattered around the deck, quite dead. They have been positioned in such a way as to be hidden from sight from those not on board the ship. What has happened is this: prior to the arrival of the PCs, three members of the Danmatsumabatsu boarded the vessel during the night and killed everyone. They then utilized a ritual of dark necromantic magic, granted to them by the daimyo, to animate the dead sailors as zombies under their command. Finally Sujiko, using a hat of disguise, assumed the appearance of the captain, and the three assassins waited. As soon as the PCs are on board, the three order their zombies to attack and then proceed to do their best to kill the characters. If the assassins manage to act in the surprise round, they take advantage of their free action to unleash three negative energy attacks.

Adjusting this Encounter

As presented, this encounter is potentially quite deadly for the PCs. To make it a little more fair, remove one of the Danmatsumabatsu, so that there are only two of the assassins and 10 zombies. Conversely, to make it harder (especially if the PCs have leveled up) simply add one or two of the missing assassins and a few more zombies. This encounter assumes the presence of Dokuga, Honeko and Sujiko. The reason for this assumption is that, as these were the first three to encounter the PCs, they are, regardless of whether they were killed or not, the likeliest to have the time to make it to Gaijinoshima in order to waylay the characters. Depending on the actions of the PCs, GMs may choose to alter the lineup. Any of the Danmatsumabatsu who have been killed by the PCs are not likely to have the same magical treasure as before. GMs should alter their possessions accordingly, noting which of the PCs might be carrying looted equipment. Each necrotic warrior is likely to desire his or her gear back, acting accordingly.



Fast Human Zombie (10) **CR 1/2 (XP 200)**

(Bestiary) NE Medium undead Init +2; Senses darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +2 Defense

AC 14, touch 12, flat-footed 12 (+2 Dex, +2 natural)

hp 12 (2d8+3)

Fort +0, Ref +2, Will +3 **Immune** undead traits

<u>Offense</u>

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Spd 40 ft. **Melee** slam +4 (1d6+4) Special Attack Quick Strikes

Tactics

Before Combat The zombies lie on the ground until commanded to arise by one of the Danmatsumabatsu.

During Combat The zombies swarm the closest opponents, moving quickly to surround foes.

Statistics

Str 17, Dex 14, Con -, Int -, Wis 10, Cha 10 Base Atk +1; CMB +4; CMD 16 Feats Toughness^B **Special Abilities**

Quick Strikes (Ex): Whenever a fast zombie takes a full-attack action, it can make one additional slam attack at its highest base attack bonus.

Sujiko is magically disguised as Captain Larmley when the PCs first board the ship. He maintains this disguise at first as Honeko commands the zombies to arise and attack. As the zombies close in, Sujiko gleefully assumes his own form to begin the attack.

Sujiko

CR 7 (XP 3,200)

AC 16 **hp** 68

(see *appendix* 3)

As the PCs board the ship, Honeko is hiding behind the doorway leading to the cabins. She is the one who commands the zombies to arise and attack, and of the three, Honeko is most likely to take advantage of the zombies as combat allies, commanding them to provide her flanking, or sending them to attack particularly troublesome PCs.

Honeko CR 7 (XP 3,200) AC 27

hp 68

(see *appendix* 3)

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Dokuga is invisible when the PCs board the ship, thanks to a potion. She maneuvers herself closest to the character with the highest Charisma, choosing to strike out at this one first with her spitting viper attack.

Dokuga CR 7 (XP 3,200)

AC 17 hp 52

(see *appendix* 3)

Development

Should the PCs win this fight, no further obstacles remain in their way. They can leave Kaidan. Of course, the crew which would have manned their ship is dead, their employer is dead, and they are still wanted on Yonshu. If the PCs are willing to make the inquiries, there are a few gaijin sailors on the small island who would be willing to sign on as crew and if the PCs offer enough money, they can even hire some of the locals.





<u>Treasure</u>

With Marl Tyro dead and Captain Lamley dead, the true treasure available to the PCs from this fight is the *Scarlet Harlot* herself. The galley has a value of 30,000 gp. Additionally, there is 15,000 gp worth of silk and spices in her hold.

Concluding the Adventure

As the *Curse of the Golden Spear* draws to a close, it is very likely the player characters have been greatly affected by the events they have experienced while in Kaidan.

Characters who experienced an actual death and reincarnation are probably the most marked. They now have a different body and a permanent spiritual link to the accursed archipelago. Short of a *wish*, or a *miracle*, any character who died while in Kaidan is destined, following any future deaths, to be reincarnated again and again in Kaidan, regardless of how far they might travel from its shores. GMs who wish to continue with Kaidan can use this spiritual link to draw their players back to the island at some point in their future. Some of the characters may have been commissioned by governments or religions to investigate certain elements of Kaidan. Whether the characters accomplished their missions depend on the choices they made while adventuring. Regardless of the specific outcomes of individual missions, the powers that be are going to be very interested to learn more of the mysterious and isolated nation. For a time, returning PCs may find themselves quite popular in their home countries as they are debriefed again and again. They may also find themselves being commissioned to discover more.

Finally, there is always the possibility that some adventuring souls may not desire to leave the islands. Whether motivated by new friendships, a love for the exotic, or simply a desire to right wrongs, such characters might wish to return to Kitsumura or seek out the hidden mountain villages of the tengu, or, if they have been reincarnated in Kaidanese bodies, travel among the humans of the island. Kaidan has many secrets and many dangers and characters which remain behind have much yet they can discover.

Appendix 1: PC Reincarnation

One of the facts of "life" in Kaidan is that no new souls are being created in Kaidan nor are souls allowed to leave the island. Cut off from all but two other planes, Kaidan is a spiritual prison. When a person is killed, his soul enters into Yomi, the Kaidanese realm of the dead, where, after a brief period of time, he is reborn in a new body of the appropriate caste. While souls are most often drawn into the bodies of unborn children, sometimes souls violently take over an already inhabited adult body, driving out the original inhabitant. Those who die violently are most likely to seek a quick rebirth. As player characters most often die as a result of violence, it is assumed they will often be quickly reincarnated into another fully grown body, retaining most of their current memories. Part 1 of this adventure arc, The Gift, presents a full set of mechanics for easily resolving this eventuality.

Appendix 2: New Monsters

Bachi-hebi

Perhaps eighteen inches long, this black snake possess a flat, almost egg shaped body and a ratlike tail.

The bachi-hebi is a magical snake with an unusually shaped body. Whereas most snakes are long and tubular, the bachi-hebi is short, with a flat body and a distinct rat-like tail. Despite its odd appearance, and its magical abilities, its habits and diet are typical of other snakes, excepting a penchant for beer and liquor. Feeding on small rodents and insects, the bachi-hebi makes its home in rocky crevices, where its flat body allows it to easily slide through narrow cracks in the stone. Bachi-hebi are clever creatures which mate for life, though mated pairs do not always live together. Young are born live and leave their mother's nest shortly after birth.

Bachi-hebi **CR 1 (XP 400)**

N Tiny magical beast Init +2; Senses darkvision 60 ft., tremorsense 30 ft.; Perception +9 **Defense** AC 17, touch 14, flat-footed 15 (+2 Dex, +3 natural, +2 size) **hp** 11 (2d10) **Fort** +3, Ref +5, Will +1 Immune poison; SR 12

Offense

Spd 20 ft., swim 20 ft. **Melee** bite +4 (1d2-3 plus poison) **Ranged** ranged touch +4 (blinding poison) Space 2 1/2 ft.; Reach 0 ft. Special Attacks blinding poison (DC 11), poison (DC 11). Spell-Like Abilities (CL 2nd) At will - *invisibility* 3/day - silence (DC 13) **Statistics** Str 4, Dex 14, Con 11, Int 6, Wis 13, Cha 13 Base Atk +2; CMB -3; CMD 9 (can't be tripped) Feats Point Blank Shot, Weapon Finesse Skills Climb +1, Perception +9, Stealth +14, Swim

+10; Racial +4 Stealth, +4 Perception; uses Dexterity for Swim checks

Languages Kaidanese (does not speak) **Ecology**

Environment Any temperate or tropical

Organization solitary, mated pair, brood (3-12) **Treasure** standard

Special Abilities

Blinding Poison (Ex) Once every 4 rounds, the bachi-hebi can spit a toxin at the eyes of its prey. A touch attack with a range of 10 ft., creatures struck by this toxin must make a Reflex save (DC 13). Those failing this save are blinded for 1d4 hours or until they can spend 1 minute washing their eyes with water. Non-living creatures and creatures without eyes are immune to this ability. The DC is Dexterity based.

Poison (Ex) Bite – injury; save Fort DC 11; frequency 1/round for 6 rounds; effect 1d2 Dexterity; cure 1 save. The DC is Constitutionbased.

Bachi-hebi-oni

The large, snake-like creature morphs and changes, becoming a black-skinned giant with fiery red eyes and a fearsome, cruel smile.

In its natural form, the bachi-hebi-oni appears as a large, fifteen-foot long version of the bachi-hebi, a snake creature with a flat, ovoid body and a rat like tail. Like all oni, the bachi-hebi-oni is a shape-changer, able to take human form or the form of a giant. The bachi-hebi-oni is a solitary creature, given to long periods of hibernation, punctuated by short periods of horrific violence and gluttony. The bachi-hebi-oni avoids confronting large groups all at once, preferring to attack under cover of darkness, picking off opponents one at a time.

Bachi-hebi-oniCR 9 (XP 6,400)

NE Large outsider (evil, giant, native, shapechanger)

Init +7; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., tremorsense 60 ft.; **Perception** +24 <u>**Defense**</u>

AC 23, touch 15, flat-footed 19 (+2 deflection, +3 Dex, +1 dodge, +8 natural, -1 size) hp 146 (13d10+65); regeneration 6 (fire) Fort +8, Ref +11, Will +12

Immune cold, poison; Resist acid 10; SR 20

<u>Offense</u>

Spd 30 ft., swim 40 ft.

Melee bite +19 (1d8+7 plus 1d6 acid plus poison plus grab)

Ranged ranged touch +14 (blinding acid)

Space 10 ft.; Reach 10 ft.

Special Attacks blinding acid (DC 19), poison (DC 20), swallow whole (1d8 constriction damage, 4d6 acid damage, AC 14, 14 hp) **Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 13th)

At will - deeper darkness, ghost sound (DC 14), silence (DC 16)

3/day - invisibility

<u>Statistics</u>

Str 24, **Dex** 16, **Con** 18, **Int** 13, **Wis** 18, **Cha** 17 **Base Atk** +12; **CMB** +20 (+24 grapple); **CMD** 33 (can't be tripped)

Feats Dodge, Improved Initiative, Feat, Power Attack, Skill Focus (stealth), Toughness, Weapon Focus (bite)^B

Skills Acrobatic +19, Bluff +19, Intimidate +19, Knowledge (dungeoneering) +17, Perception +24, Sense Motive +20, Stealth +23, Swim +15; **Racial** +8 Stealth, +4 Perception

Languages Abyssal (Jigoku dialect), Giant (Oni dialect), Kaidanese

SQ bachi-hebi rebirth, shape change (human, large humanoid; *alter self*, *giant shape I*) <u>**Ecology**</u>

Environment any underground Organization solitary Treasure standard

Special Abilities

Bachi-hebi rebirth (Su): If brought to less than zero hit points, but not outright destroyed, as through a *disintegrate* spell, the bachi-hebi-oni transforms into 2d20 normal bachi-hebi. These smaller creatures wait for exactly 1 round and then turn invisible and disperse. After 24 hours, one of the bachi-hebi assumes the mind and powers of the bachi-hebi-oni. The selected creature begins to regenerate 5 hit points per round, growing swiftly as it does so. When the creature has as many hit points as the original monster, the process is complete and the bachi-hebi-oni is completely reborn. The remainder of the bachi-hebi involved, if there are any, turn to dust.

Blinding Acid (Ex): Once every 1d4 rounds the bachi-hebi-oni can spit an acidic toxin at the face of its prey. A touch attack with a range of 15 ft., creatures struck by this toxin must make a Reflex save (DC 19) or take 4d6 points of acid damage and be struck blind for 1d4 hours. The acid continues to cause damage for 1d4 rounds. Those who succeed at the Reflex save take half damage from the acid but suffer no ongoing effects. The blindness can be cured by washing the eyes with water for 1 minute. Non-living creatures and creatures without eyes are immune to this ability. The DC is Dexterity-based.

Poison (Ex) Bite – injury; *save* Fort DC 20; *frequency* 1/round for 6 rounds; *effect* 1d4 Dexterity; cure 1 save. The DC is Constitution based



Jorogumo

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ITT TULUUUU

The torso of a beautiful woman sits atop the monstrous body of a gigantic spider. She smiles sweetly at you as she begins weaving her webs.

A jorogumo's natural form is that of a large, monstrous spider with the torso of a beautiful, human woman. She is also able to take the form of a human woman or that of a large monstrous spider. In all her forms a jorogumo is able to produce webs, and her favored trick is to seduce men while wrapping them securely in such a web. Like spiders, jorogumo subsist on a diet of blood and their poison is designed to paralyze their victims, leaving them alive indefinitely so the oni may feed at their leisure. Jorogumo are often accompanied by monstrous spiders, which they consider pets, and they can summon swarms of smaller spiders to defend themselves when the need arises.

Jorogumo (Spider Woman) CR 8 (XP 4,800)

LE Large outsider (evil, giant, native, oni, shapechanger) Init +8; Senses darkvision 60 ft. tremorsense 30 ft.; Perception +26 Defense AC 21, touch 14, flat-footed 16 (+4 Dex, +1 dodge, +7 natural, -1 size) **hp** 75 (10d10+20); regeneration 5 (fire) Fort +5, Ref +11, Will +10 Immune cold, poison, web; Resist acid 10, electricity 10; SR 19 **Offense** Spd 30 ft., climb 20 ft. Melee short sword +14 (1d6+2 plus poison), bite +14 (1d6+2 plus poison) Ranged web (+14 ranged; DC 17; hp 10) Space 10 ft.; Reach 5 ft. Special Attacks poison (DC 17) Spells Known (CL 9th; as sorcerer) 4th (5/day) - charm monster (DC 22), scrying (DC 20)3rd (7/day) – deep slumber (DC 21), slow (DC 19), suggestion (DC 21) 2nd (8/day) - gust of wind (DC 18), hideous *laughter* (DC 20), *summon swarm*, *web* (DC 18) 1st (8/day) - charm person (DC 19), hypnotism (DC 19), floating disk, mage armor, sleep (DC 19) Cantrips (at will) – acid splash, detect magic, detect poison, ghost sound, message, prestidigitation, read magic, resistance

<u>Statistics</u>

Str 15, Dex 19, Con 14, Int 13, Wis 16, Cha 22
Base Atk +10; CMB +13; CMD 28 (40 vs. trips)
Feats Alertness, Combat Casting, Dodge,
Improved Initiative, Skill Focus (Bluff)
Skills Bluff +22, Climb +10, Craft (webbing) +14,
Diplomacy +19, Perception +26, Perform (singing) +19, Sense Motive +16, Stealth +21; Racial +8
Climb, +8 Perception, +4 Stealth

Languages Abyssal (Jigoku dialect), Giant, Kaidanese, Sylvan

SQ change shape (human, large monstrous spider; *alter self, beast shape II*), enchanted abode, natural enchantress, spider queen, undersized weapons, web

Ecology

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Environment Any **Organization** Solitary **Treasure** Standard

Special Abilities

Enchanted Abode (Sp): Once per day, the jorogumo can create a "house." By spending an hour spinning and weaving webs, the jorogumo creates a web structure 2,000 cubic feet in size (10 x 20 x 10) and then cover it with an illusion so that it appears as a typical humanoid habitation. Those entering this house can interact with it normally for as long as the jorogumo desires. When the jorogumo chooses to drop the illusion, those within the "house" must succeed at a DC 17 Reflex save or else become entangled and trapped in sticky webbing (DC 17; hp 10) as per the web ability. **Jorogumo Poison** *Type* injury; *save* Fortitude DC 17; *frequency* 1/round for 6 rounds; *effect* 1d3 Dex; cure 1 save. Special: a Jorogumo can spend a standard action to coat a melee weapon with her poison.

Natural Enchantress (Su) Any spells cast by a jorogumo of the enchantment school have a +1 CL and a +2 DC.

Spider Queen (Su): Once per day the jorogumo can summon 1d6+1 spider swarms as a standard action. These creatures arrive in 2d6 rounds and serve the jorogumo for 1 hour. In any form, jorogumo can communicate and empathize with spiders. They can use Diplomacy to alter the attitude of spiders, receiving a +8 racial bonus on the check.

Undersized Weapons (Ex): Though Large, the actual humanoid torso of a jorogumo is the same size as that of a Medium humanoid's upper torso. As a result it wields weapons as if it were one size category smaller than its actual size.

<u>Appendix 3: The</u> <u>Danmatsumabatsu</u>

The Danmatsumabatsu are a group of specialized assassins, or shinobi, sworn to serve Lord Hachiwara. Each of the five killers has a unique gift or ability associated in some way with negative energy. Dwelling within the shiro of Tsue-jo, these five act as guards above the daimyo's dungeon and treasury. They leave the shiro only in response to a command from their lord and master. All five of the Danmatsumabatsu have the swift rebirth quality (see sidebar).

Boyahiko

TTTULLIUI

Boyahiko is a graceful man, with long, black hair and a fair face. Dressing in a kimono of black silk, he is ever polite and gracious, especially with women. His outward charm masks a cruel, sadistic soul, one which delights in torture and rape. Nevertheless, his demeanor allows the daimyo to use him for tasks which require diplomacy and tact.

Boyahiko CR 8 (XP 3,200)

Male human necrotic warrior (shadow necrology) 8 LE Medium humanoid

Init +6; Perception +12 Defense

AC 17, touch 12, flat-footed 15 (+5 armor, +2 Dex) **hp** 60 (8d10+16)

Fort +2, Ref +8, Will +6

Defensive Abilities unnatural health

<u>Offense</u>

Spd 30 ft.

Ranged masterwork shortbow +11 (1d6 plus cold shadows; 20/x3)

Special Attacks channel negative energy 2d6, cold shadows (DC 17), fearsome shadows 6/day (DC 17), necromantic strike 3/day (+3 attack/+8 damage)

Spells Known (CL 8th; Concentration +11)

2nd (2/day) – silence (DC 15), invisibility

1st (2/day) \square cause fear (DC 14), pass without trace

<u>Tactics</u>

Before Combat Boyahiko prefers to strike from the shadows, gaining the first blow.

During Combat As soon as combat is initiated, Boyahiko uses his fearsome shadows ability. He makes good use of his ability to feint and is not above withdrawing from combat to strike again, later, from the shadows or invisibly. Boyahiko's area of expertise is stealth and he knows he is often outmatched in a toe-to-toe melee fight.

Morale Boyahiko withdraws from combat if he takes more than 20 points of damage.

Base Statistics

<u>Statistics</u>

Str 10, **Dex** 14, **Con** 11, **Int** 13, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 17 **Base Atk** +8; **CMB** +8; **CMD** 20

Feats Dodge, Improved Initiative, Mobility, Improved Feint, Skill Focus (Stealth), Toughness, Weapon Focus (short sword)

Skills Bluff +14, Diplomacy +14, Heal +12, Knowledge (arcana) +12, Perception +12, Stealth +24

 ${\bf Languages}\, {\rm Abyssal},\, {\rm Kaidanese}$

 ${\bf SQ}$ swift rebirth

Gear +1 chain shirt, +1 frost short sword **Special Abilities**

Cold Shadows (Su): Boyahiko's attacks are infused with bone-chilling negative energies. Those successfully struck by the warrior must succeed at a DC 17 Fortitude save or take an extra 2 points of cold damage. Furthermore, on a critical hit, if the target fails its save, it also takes 1d3 points of Strength damage.

Fearsome Shadows (Su): As a swift action, Boyahiko is able to weave the shadows around him in such a way as to make himself seem more fearsome, thus striking terror into his opponents. When this ability is in effect, any creature attacking the necrotic warrior must succeed at a DC 17 Will save or become frightened for 1d6 rounds. Those who succeed at the save are shaken for 1 round but otherwise immune to the effect for 24 hours. The effect lasts for 8 rounds and can be used 6 times per day.

Shadow Necrology (Su): Boyahiko is capable of manipulating the shadows around him. He gains a bonus to Stealth equal his class level. Furthermore, Boyahiko gains a +2 bonus to attack rolls made against flat-footed opponents.

Swift Rebirth (Su): Through dark rituals and a natural proclivity to violence, some residents of Kaidan are able to facilitate a swift rebirth for themselves. Characters with this ability are able to be reincarnated within 1d3 days in the grown body of another individual of the appropriate caste 90% of the time. The remaining 10% of the time they are reborn naturally and must grow to adulthood as normal.

Dokuga

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サウママ

Habitually dressed in robes of green and yellow, Dokuga is a beautiful woman who enjoys flirting with men. While some in her position lament their poisonous kisses, she revels in them, finding stimulation in the agonized expressions of men as her poison courses through their bodies. Dokuga is frequently sent to seduce and murder men for the daimyo.

Dokuga CR 7 (XP 3,200)

Female human necrotic warrior (poison necrology)

CE Medium humanoid Init +6; Perception +14 Aura info

<u>Defense</u>

AC 17, touch 13, flat-footed 14 (+4 armor, +2 Dex, +1 dodge) hp 52 (8d10+8) Fort +2, Ref +8, Will +7; +8 vs. poison Defensive Abilities unnatural health

<u>Offense</u>

Spd 30 ft.

Melee two masterwork short swords +9/+9/+4 (1d6 plus poison; 19-20/x2)

Ranged spitting viper +10 touch (poison) **Special Attacks** channel negative energy 2d6, kiss of death, necromantic strike (3/day; +5 attack/+ 8 damage), poison (DC 18), spitting viper (8/day)

Spells Known (CL 8th; Concentration +13) 2nd (2/day) - summon monster II (vipers only), water breathing

 $1st (2/day) \square death knell (DC 15), delay poison$

Tactics

Before Combat Before attacking, Dokuga makes sure to lick her weapons, coating them with poison.

During Combat When Dokuga first attacks, she attempts to hit three targets in the first round if possible, two with her swords and one with her spitting viper attack. Her goal is to poison as many as possible. After this initial strike, she repoisons her weapons as she can and is not afraid to make a sole spitting viper attack.

Morale Dokuga tries to flee when reduced to 10 hit points or less.

Base Statistics Charisma 16.

Statistics

Str 10, **Dex** 14, **Con** 10, **Int** 12, **Wis** 13, **Cha** 20 **Base Atk** +8; **CMB** +8; **CMD** 20

Feats Alertness, Dodge, Skill Focus (Diplomacy), Two-weapon Fighting, Improved Initiative, Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus (short sword)

Skills Bluff +16, Diplomacy +16, Disguise +16, Escape Artist +13, Sleight of Hand +13, Perception +14, Sense Motive +14

Languages Infernal, Kaidanese

SQ poisonous, swift rebirth

Gear headband of alluring charisma +2, +1 studded leather armor, two masterwork short swords

Special Abilities

Poisonous (Ex): Dokuga's bodily fluids are considered poisonous. Any creature dealing damage to her using a bite attack is considered poisoned, as is any creature her or otherwise exchanging bodily fluids with her. Dokuga can spend a standard action to lick her own weapons, coating them with a dose of her poison. She is immune to her own poison.

Necrotic Poison (Ex): type poison, ingested, injury (various powers may change the method of delivery); save Fortitude DC 18; onset 1 round; frequency 1/ round for 5 rounds; effect 1 Constitution drain; secondary effect 1d3 Constitution damage; cure 1 save. Frequency and DC are Charisma-based.

Spitting Viper (Ex): Dokuga can spit her poison as a touch attack with a range of 10 feet. This action does not provoke an attack of opportunity and can be made as a secondary attack if Dokuga is in melee combat. However, if she does not make other attacks in the round, the spitting attack counts as a primary attack. When used in this way, the necrotic poison is considered a contact poison, though all other features of the poison remain unchanged.

Kiss of Death (Ex): Dokuga has learned how to concentrate the poison in her mouth and deliver it via a kiss. Any creature kissing her suffers a -4 penalty to their saves to resist the poison. Furthermore, the frequency of the poison, when delivered this way is doubled (1/round for 10 rounds) and the victim must make 2 consecutive saves in order to be cured of the poison. The necrotic poison must be delivered via a mouth-to-mouth kiss in order to be this effective, a bite attack will not suffice.

Honeko

Honeko is a striking woman with pale white hair and a frequent manic grin. Preferring to dress in clothes of black with white trim, Honeko is frequently accompanied by a pair of skeletal warriors, gifts from the daimyo. She has no compunction about torturing and killing anyone and is oft employed to deal with troublesome commoners.

Honeko CR 7 (XP 3200)

Female human necrotic warrior (bone necrology) 8 LE Medium humanoid

Init +5; Perception +11

<u>Defense</u>

TTULLUIU

AC 27, touch 16, flat-footed 21 (+4 armor, +5 Dex, +1 dodge, +5 natural, +2 shield) hp 68 (8d10+24)

Fort +3, Ref +11, Will +4

Defensive Abilities unnatural health **Offense**

<u>oriense</u>

Spd 30 ft.

Melee 2 bone-claws +16 (1d4+3 plus dark infusion)

Ranged bone spear +16 (1d6+3 plus dark infusion)

Special Attacks channel negative energy (2d6; DC 16), necromantic strike (+2 attack/+8 damage)

Spells Known (CL 8th; Concentration +10) 2nd (2/day – barkskin, halt undead (DC 14) 1st (2/day)□death watch, hide from undead (DC 13)

Tactics

Before Combat Before combat, Honeko casts *barkskin*, which is reflected in the stats above.

During Combat Honeko knows she is no match for a large group and prefers to attack lone individuals. She focuses her attacks on one individual at a time, choosing, if possible, opponents with little or no armor.

Morale Honeko fights to the death, trusting in her ability to be swiftly reborn.

Base Statistics Natural AC +2, Dexterity 16. <u>Statistics</u>

Str 12, **Dex** 20, **Con** 12, **Int** 10, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 14 **Base Atk** +8; **CMB** +8; **CMD** 24

Feats Dodge, Mobility, Skill Focus (Stealth), Toughness, Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus (boneclaws), Weapon Focus (short spear)

Skills Acrobatics +15 (+20 jumping), Bluff +13, Climb +11, Perception +11, Stealth +18

Languages Kaidanese

SQ Swift Rebirth

Gear belt of incredible dexterity +2, ring of jumping, chain shirt

<u>Special Abilities</u>

Bone-claws (Ex): As a swift action, Honeko can cause claws of bone to grow from her hands. These bone-claws cause 1d4+2 points of damage and are considered natural weapons. If armed with a manufactured melee weapon in one hand, the remaining claw attack is still considered a primary weapon but Honeko counts as fighting with two weapons and is penalized accordingly. She cannot be disarmed of her natural weapons, though she can retract them at will. The extra damage done by the bone-claws is considered magical for the purpose of overcoming damage reduction. Spear and Shield of Bone (Ex): Honeko can extrude a length of bone from her arm which serves as a short spear doing an extra point of damage for every 4 class levels. The extra damage done by the bone spear is considered magical for the purpose of overcoming damage reduction. When wielded by Honeko, this bone spear counts as a light weapon, and is able to be enchanted by spells affecting either natural or manufactured weapons. Each bone spear functions for 2 hours or until used as a ranged weapon. Honeko can create 4 bone spears per day. Additionally, Honeko is able to create hard shells of bone on either forearm. These function as bucklers and grant a combined shield bonus of +2 to AC.

Dark Infusion (Su): Honeko's natural attacks, including her bone spears, are infused with negative energy. Those successfully struck by one of these weapons must succeed at a DC 16 Fortitude save or take 2 points of negative energy damage. Moreover, if the Fortitude save is failed, the negative energy continues to potentially deal damage for 2 more rounds. The target is allowed a new save each round to cure the ongoing condition. Multiple strikes do not increase the amount of negative energy damage done each round, but may extend the duration of the effect. The effect length and DC is Charisma-based.

Common Necrotic Warrior Class Abilities

The following three abilities are shared by all the members of the Danmatsumabatsu and are thus provided here, once:

Necromantic Strike (Su): Beginning at 1st level, the necrotic warrior has the ability to focus the negative energies coursing through his body into a single powerful strike. When using this ability, the necrotic warrior has a bonus to attack equal to his Charisma

modifier and a bonus to damage equal to twice his class level. If the necrotic warrior declares a necromantic strike and then misses, he continues to benefit from the bonus to his attack rolls until he successfully strikes his target. As soon as damage is dealt using a necromantic strike, the ability is considered used. A necrotic warrior can use a necromantic strike once a day at 1st level. Every three levels after 1st, the necrotic warrior gains an additional use of the ability per day. The bonus damage dealt by this ability is negative energy damage and any creature immune to negative energy damage is immune to the damage caused by this ability. However, even if a creature is immune to the damage, a successful attack against such a creature is still considered a use of the ability.

Channel Negative Energy (Su): Beginning at 2nd level, through the expenditure of a use of his necromantic strike, the necrotic warrior learns to channel negative energy, in a manner identical to a cleric, though the warrior needs no divine focus to channel this energy as he is bringing it forth out of his own body. The amount of energy he can channel in this way increases every four levels after 2nd. In effect, a necrotic warrior channels negative energy as a cleric half his class level.

Unnatural Health (Ex): Upon reaching 5th level, the biology of the necrotic warrior undergoes a radical change. He receives healing from negative energy and takes damage from positive energy, in a manner similar to an undead. Furthermore, he is no longer susceptible to normal diseases. He gains immunity to all non-magical diseases and receives a +4 to any saves made to resist magical or otherwise supernatural diseases. He also gains a +4 to any saves made to resist harmful effects caused by negative energy.



Ketsuko

Ketsuko dresses in sleeveless red leather armor so as to maximize his bloody abilities, and a constant coppery odor lingers in the air as he passes. Red headed Ketsuko is the most good humored of the Danmatsumabatsu, though he is no less violent. The daimyo most often employs Ketsuko as a bounty hunter and the warrior is tireless in his pursuit of quarry.

Ketsuko CR 7 (XP 3,200)

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Male human necrotic warrior (blood necrology) 8 CE Medium humanoid Init +7; Perception +12 <u>Defense</u> AC 19, touch 14, flat-footed 15 (+4 armor, +3 Dex, +1 dodge, +1 shield) hp 60 (8d10+16) Fort +3, Ref +10, Will +6; +4 vs. injury poisons Defensive Abilities unnatural health



Spd 30 ft.

Melee masterwork kama +12/+7 (1d6; x2) or 2 masterwork kama +10/+10/+5 (1d6; x2)

Ranged shortbow +11 (1d6), or ranged touch +12 (blinding blood)

Special Attacks blinding blood 6/day (DC 16), channel negative energy 2d6 (DC 16), mist of blood (DC 16), necromantic strike 3/day (+2 attack/+8 damage)

Spells Known (CL 8th; Concentration +10)

2nd (2/day) \square cure moderate wounds, stinking cloud (DC 14)

 $1st~(2/day) \ \square \ disguise \ self, grease$

<u>Tactics</u>

Before Combat Ketsuko tries to begin combat with a *stinking cloud* and arrows. As his opponents close in, if possible, he uses his blinding blood attack against the strongest seeming foe.

During Combat As soon as combat is initiated, Ketsuko unleashes a mist of blood, followed by a blast of channeled negative energy. He then proceeds to use necromantic strikes to inflict as much damage as possible on the most wounded opponent.

Morale Ketsuko attempts to flee if he loses half his hit points.

<u>Statistics</u>

Str 15, **Dex** 16, **Con** 10, **Int** 10, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 14 **Base Atk** +8; **CMB** +10; **CMD** 22

Feats Dodge, Improved Initiative, Point Blank Shot, Skill Focus (Survival), Toughness, Two Weapon Fighting, Weapon Focus (kama)

Skills Climb +13, Escape Artist +22, Perception +12, Stealth +14, Survival +15 (+23 to track blood-quarry)

Languages Kaidanese

 \mathbf{SQ} swift rebirth

Gear +2 leather armor, cloak of resistance +1, buckler, 2 masterwork kama, shortbow and 20 arrows

Special Abilities

Blinding Blood (Ex): Ketsuko can fling his blood, making a touch attack with a range of 10 feet against the face of a target creature. This action does not provoke an attack of opportunity and can be made as a secondary attack if he is in melee combat. However, if the warrior makes no other attacks in the round, the blinding blood attack counts as a primary attack. The target is considered to have a +2 to its touch AC to defend against this attack. If the attack hits, the target must succeed at both a DC 16 Fortitude and a DC 16 Reflex save. If the target fails its Fortitude save, it is sickened for 1d4+2 rounds. If it fails its Reflex save, it is blinded for 1d4+2 rounds or until it takes a full-round action to remove the blood from its eyes. Ketsuko can make this attack a 6 times per day. Additionally, any creature making a bite attack against Ketsuko is likewise subject to a Fortitude save made to resist being sickened. Creatures without eyes are immune to the blinding effect and non-living creatures are immune to the sickened effect.

Blood Necrology (Ex): Ketsuko knows how to bleed small amounts of blood through his pores at will. So long as he is wearing light armor or no armor, he gains a bonus to Escape Artist checks and a bonus to CMD to resist grapple attempts. These bonuses are equal to his class level. Additionally, if Ketsuko can smell or taste a sample of a target's blood, he gains a bonus to Survival checks made to track that target equal to his class level. Finally, his ability to manipulate his own blood grants him a +4 bonus to saving throws made to resist poisons delivered via an injury.

Mist of Blood (Ex): As a move action, Ketsuko can expel his blood from his pores as a red mist. The resulting cloud has a 15 foot diameter, centered on him, and is negatively charged. All negative energy effects occurring in the area of the blood-mist, such as channeled energy or inflict spells, enjoy a +1 bonus per die rolled and all positive energy effects in the same area, such as channeled energy or cure spells, suffer a -1 penalty per die rolled. Furthermore, all creatures except Ketsuko within the mist must make a Fortitude and Reflex save, as if struck with Ketsuko's blinding blood attack. Each use of the mist of blood ability uses one his blinding blood attacks for the day. The mist lasts for 3 rounds.

Sujiko

Sujiko is a massive man. Standing seven and a half feet tall, he towers over lesser men. A man of simple tastes, Sujiko tends to dress in the plain garments of a peasant, though he was born into a noble family. Delighting in feats of strength and the sound of other people being physically broken, it is no surprise that Sujiko's weapon of choice is a massive, iron-bound club.

Sujiko CR 7 (XP 3,200)

Male human necrotic warrior (brawn necrology) 8 NE Medium humanoid

Init +1; Perception +10 Defense

Defense

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AC 16, touch 11, flat-footed 15 (+5 armor, +1 Dex) hp 68 (8d10+32-8) Fort +3, Ref +7, Will +5 Defensive Abilities unnatural health Offense

Spd 30 ft.

ALL LITTLE

Melee +1 great club +18/+13 (1d10+12)

Special Attacks channel negative energy 2d6, necromantic strike 3/day (+2 attack/+8 damage), strength boost 4/day (1 used), strength thief (DC 16)

Spells Known (CL 8th; Concentration +10)

2nd (2/day) - $bull's \ strength$ (self only), protection from arrows

 $1 {\rm st}~(2/{\rm day})$ - enlarge~person (self only), lesser~restoration

<u>Tactics</u>

Before Combat Before combat, Sujiko will grant himself a single strength boost and casts *bull's strength* (both reflected in the stats).

During Combat Sujiko goes for the closest target, using Power Attack until he misses. His first attack always uses a necromantic strike. If facing a challenging foe he will use one or two more strength boosts, so long as doing so does not bring him below 0 hit points (each Strength boost adds 4 to his Strength at the cost of 8 hit points).

Morale Sujiko fights until reduced to 10 or fewer hit points before fleeing.

Base Statistics hp 76; Fortitude +4; melee +1 great club +14/+9 (1d10+7); Str 18, Con 14; CMB +12, CMD 24; Climb +15.

<u>Statistics</u>

Str 26, **Dex** 12, **Con** 12, **Int** 10, **Wis** 8, **Cha** 14 **Base Atk** +8; **CMB** +16; **CMD** 27

Feats Cleave, Diehard, Endurance, Iron Will, Lunge, Power Attack, Toughness, Weapon Focus (great club)

Skills Climb +17, Craft (straw hats) +11, Intimidate +13, Perception +10, Stealth +12 Languages Kaidanese SQ swift rebirth

Gear +1 great club, +1 chain shirt Special Abilities

Strength Boost (Ex): Sujiko can increase his Strength at the cost of his own health. As a standard action, by inflicting 2 points of Constitution damage to himself, he can increase his Strength by 4 points. The Strength increase last for 8 hours. The Constitution damage cannot be healed by any means, short of a *wish* or *miracle*, for 24 hours. After 24 hours, the ability damage can be healed normally. The warrior can use this ability 4 times a day and the effects of the boosts can overlap and stack.

Strength Thief (Su): Sujiko can steal the lifeforce of others to fuel his own Strength, thoug h such increases have a shorter duration than those fueled through his own Constitution. As a full-round action, he can drain 2 points of Constitution from a helpless target, thereby increasing his own Strength by 4 points. The target can resist this drain by making a DC 16 Fortitude save. The Strength increase gained this way lasts for 8 rounds. The warrior can only benefit from one such increase at a time, but its effects stack with those gained from strength boost.





Appendix 4: 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 soft-hearted, engaging individual, she has something of a temper. She particularly grows cross when she sees people mistreating or enslaving others.

Aarenia

ITT ILLIU

Female human cleric 7 CG Medium humanoid (human) **Init** +3: **Senses** Perception +14 Aura chaotic (strong), good (strong) Defense AC 20, touch 9, flat-footed 20 (+8 armor, -1 Dex, +1 natural, +2 shield) hp 48 (7d8+14) **Fort** +6, Ref +1, Will +9 Offense Spd 20 ft. **Melee** +1 rapier +6 (1d6+1; 18-20/x2) Ranged sling +4 (1d4) **Special Attacks** channel positive energy (7/day, 4d6, DC 15) **Domain Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 7th; Concentration +9) 7/day agile feet, dazing touch **Spells Prepared** (CL 7th; Concentration +11) 4th – dimension door^D, holy smite (DC 18), restoration 3rd – blindness/deafness (DC 17), fly^D, searing light (x2) 2nd – hold person (DC 16), lesser restoration, locate object^D, sound burst (DC 16), summon monster II 1st \Box bless, charm person^D, comprehend languages, detect undead, hide from undead, sanctuary Orisons (at will) \Box detect magic, detect poison, resistance, stabilize Domain Spells; Domains Charm, Travel **Statistics** Str 10, Dex 9, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 18, Cha 15 Base Atk +5; CMB +5; CMD 14 Feats Alertness, Extra Channel, Improved Initiative^B, Selective Channeling, Turn Undead Skills Diplomacy +12, Knowledge (religion) +8, Linguistics +5, Perception +16, Sense Motive +6 Languages Celestial, Common, Kaidanese **Combat Gear** potion of cure light wounds (4), potion of cure serious wounds, wand of cure light wounds; Gear +2 chain mail, +1 rapier, +1 small metal shield, amulet of natural armor +1, 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

TTULLUIN

Male human rogue 7 CG Medium humanoid (human) Init +7; Senses Perception +9 Defense AC 21, touch 14, flat-footed 17 (+5 armor, +3 Dex, +1 dodge, +2 shield) **hp** 42(7d8+7)**Fort** +2, Ref +8, Will +2 Defensive Abilities evasion, trap sense +2, uncanny dodge Offense **Spd** 30 ft. **Melee** mwk rapier +9 (1d6+1/18-20) **Ranged** +1 *shortbow* +9 (1d6+1/x3) Special Attacks sneak attack +4d6 **Statistics** Str 12, Dex 17, Con 11, Int 12, Wis 10, Cha 16 **Base Atk** +5; **CMB** +6; **CMD** 20 **Feats** Dodge, Improved Initiative^B, Persuasive, Skill Focus (Perception), Weapon Focus (rapier), Weapon Finesse Skills Acrobatics +12, Appraise +11, Bluff +13, Diplomacy +15, Disable Device +16, Intimidate +15, Knowledge (dungeoneering) +10, Linguistics +5, Perception +13, Sleight of Hand +12, Stealth +17 Languages Common, Elven, Kaidanese **SQ** rogue talents (finesse rogue, stand up, surprise attack), trapfinding +2 **Combat Gear** potion of cure light wounds (3); **Gear** belt of incredible Dexterity +2, +1 glamered shadow mithral shirt, +1 light wooden shield, mwk rapier, +1 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. Members if his clan not only train 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 for talent in the art of combat.

Kurain

RULLITUN

ITT I ULUUUU

Male elf fighter 7 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) **hp** 57 (7d10+14) **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 +13 (1d10+8 plus 1d6 cold/18-20) **Ranged** +1 composite (+3 Str) longbow +12 (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 +7; CMB +10; CMD 24 Feats Cleave, Dazzling Display^B, Dodge^B, Mobility, Power Attack, Toughness, Weapon Focus (elven curve blade)^B, Weapon Specialization (elven curve blade)^B

Skills Acrobatics +6, Climb +9, Linguistics +5, Knowledge (dungeoneering) +8, Ride +7, Swim +14; **Racial** +2 Perception

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

${f SQ}$ armor training 2

Combat Gear potion of cure moderate wounds (2), potion of shield; **Gear** +1 chainmail, +1 frost elven curve blade, +1 composite (+3 Str) longbow with 20 arrows, bag of holding (type I), ring of swimming, 5,000 gp.





Lyshna

LITTINU MITH

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サウフィー

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.

Lyshna Flask

Female halfling sorcerer 7 CG Small humanoid (halfling) Init +5; Senses Perception +2 Defense **AC** 14, touch 12, flat-footed 13 (+1 Dex, +2 natural, +1 size) **hp** 31 (7d6+7) **Fort** +2, Ref +4, Will +6; +2 vs. fear **Resist** electricity 10 Offense **Spd** 20 ft. **Melee** quarterstaff +3 (1d6-1) **Special Attacks** elemental ray (8/day, +5 ranged touch, 1d6+3 electricity) **Spells Known** (CL 7th; concentration +12) 3rd (5/day) – daylight, lightning bolt (DC 19), protection from energy 2nd (7/day) – glitterdust (DC 17), invisibility, mirror image, scorching ray (electricity) 1st (8/day) 🗆 burning hands (electricity, DC 17), comprehend languages, detect undead, disguise self (DC 16), mage armor, magic missile Cantrips (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** +3: **CMB** +1: **CMD** 12 **Feats** Craft Wand, Craft Wondrous Item, Eschew Materials^B, Improved Initiative, Spell Focus (evocation), Toughness Skills Acrobatics +3, Bluff +14, Climb +1, Diplomacy +12, 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 mage armor, wand of magic missile; Gear amulet of natural armor +2, quarterstaff, bag of holding (type 2), ring of feather falling, wind fan, 50 ft. silk rope, 5,000 gp.

Glossary of Words

L'UNU UNUTU

A forest town Agoya Asuras The samurai caste of Kaidan Bachi-hebi A magical snake Bachi-hebi-oni An oni in the form of a giant bachi-hebi Bushido The way of the warrior, the code of samurai conduct Daimyo Lord of a province **Daitengu Highlands** The mountains of central Yonshu Danmatsumabatsu The clan of death's agony; assassins working for Lord Hachiwara Dark Path, The A series of lava tubes below the southern half of the Daitengu Highlands Ruler and judge of Jigoku Enma-Daio Fukuhara-kyo Imperial capital of Kaidan Foreigners to Kaidan; sometimes referred to as those from "beyond the nists" Gaijin Gaijinoshima Literally, island of the gaijin; the only port open to gaijin ships Hebu-no-onna A snake-woman oni Henge, Hengevokai Humanoids that can shapeshift between animal and man forms Jigoku The hell of the oni; also the caste of demons, oni and goblins Jikininki A shapechanging ghoul Jorogumo A monstrous spider-oni able to take the form of a woman Kaidan A cursed archipelago nation containing four major islands Kami Spirits worshiped as divine A single edged curved sword Katana A type of garment Kimono Hengeyokai village Kitsumura Minamoto clan An ancient Kaidanese clan, now thought to be completely destroyed Malevolent spirits that take on flesh Oni Oniba Main province of Yonshu Shiro Castle or keep The true ruler of Kaidan; makes decisions in the name of the emperor Shogun Shogunate The office and minions of the shogun Taira clan The Imperial Clan of Kaidan The soulless; bodies inhabited by malevolent elemental spirits Tamashinaki Tengu Birdlike yokai Tsue-jo Provincial capital, main city and port of Yonshu Uesaki A port town in Yonshu Wa, Wakoku Ancient name for the islands of Kaidan Wakizashi A short, single edged sword Yakuza A criminal enterprise focused on gambling, drugs, entertainment, moneylending and prostitution Humanoids with animal features Yokai Yomi Kaidanese realm of the dead; the ethereal plane Yurei Undead, often a ghost, but the term can refer to any undead The state religion of Kaidan Zao

Glossary of Names

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וביררתחומיי

Adaru	Head elder of Kitsumura village; a badger hengeyokai, husband of Saaya		
Antoku	Kaidan child emperor; a yurei		
Atsukawa Kenshi	A ranger of Agoya		
Boyahiko	One of the Danmatsumabatsu; shadow necrology		
Daiki, "Captain"	Village elder of Kitsumura village; a dog hengeyokai		
Damoko Shinichi, Lord	Exalted Captain of the palace guard in Tsue-jo		
Dokuga	One of the Danmatsumabatsu; poison necrology		
Fuiwara Hoto	, Lord Chief minister of Zaoism on Yonshu		
Hachiwara, Lord	Daimyo of Oniba province on Yonshu		
Hakoto Maki	Elder of Agoya		
Himojo Takio	Ancient hero and oni slayer; the original owner of the Golden Spear		
Honeko	One of the Danmatsumabatsu; bone necrology		
Honya Tyro	The daughter of the merchant, Marl Tyro		
Jadoko	Hebi-no-onna sent to capture the Golden Spear		
Ketsuko	One of the Danmatsumabatsu; blood necrology		
Kobee	Elder and Blacksmith of Kitsumura village; a tanuki hengeyokai, wife of		
	Adaru		
Kokoki	Tengu tengubushi; Taando's mate		
Kumakasumiko	A jorogumo		
Manko	Oni ogre brute		
Marl Tyro	Deceased merchant		
Nabi	Priest of Kitsumura village; a dog hengeyokai, husband of Sabu		
Raanshu	Tengu tengubushi		
Saaya	Elder and herbalist of Kitsumura village; a badger hengeyokai, wife of		
	Adaru		
Suaado	Tengu tengubushi		
Suba	Miko of Kitsumura village; a rat hengeyokai, wife of Nabi		
Sujiko	One of the Danmatsumabatsu; brawn necrology		
Taando	Tengu tengubushi leader		
Taira no Kiyomori	The Shogun of Kaidan		
Taira Tokiko	The emperor's grandmother and wife of the shogun		

Pronounciation Guide

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	_				13	
1	А	-	ah, as in 'rod'	There are no silent E's; Buke is 'boo keh'	EI	
	\mathbf{E}	-	eh, as in 'men'	There are no short U's; Shogun is 'show goon'	19	
	Ι	-	ee, as in 'seen'	There are no soft G's, as in <i>Gender</i> , always hard as in <i>Gift</i> .	EIE	
	0	-	oh, as in 'bone'		EF	
	U	-	oo, as in 'moon'		EIE	
					日日	
5	Ai	-	ah-ee	(E	
	Ae	-	ah-eh		王王	
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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







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KD()3 **SKU CB76804**



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 this gift bore a powerful curse, and now, unless you can reclaim the golden spear, you will be forever trapped in Kaidan. A dark path lies before you, full of wicked undead, vicious demons and unnatural warriors. To survive The Curse of the Golden Spear, you will need all of your skill, cunning and bravery.

The third of a three part campaign, The Dark Path is an adventure set in the cursed land of Kaidan and is suitable for a group of 7th 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 and Dim Spirit, introducing players and game masters alike to the cursed realm of Kaidan.

An adventure for 4 players of 7th level Designed for use with the **Pathfinder Roleplaying Game**





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