

FULL METAL CYBERPUNK

# INTERFACE ZERO<sup>2.0</sup>



JAPAN: EMPIRE OF THE SETTING SUN





# JAPAN: EMPIRE OF THE SETTING SUN

## WARNING! MATURE AUDIENCES ONLY!

*Interface Zero 2.0* is a cyberpunk game with adult themes. We're going to use language some people might not be comfortable with. We're going to talk politics, and we're going to talk religion. We use the races and cultures in *Interface Zero* as an abstraction of the evils of racial intolerance in the real world. We don't apologize for this. The Cyberpunk genre isn't politically correct. It doesn't care if you like the word "fuck" or not. It doesn't concern itself with your belief system, or your slant on politics. To water this book down is to do a great disservice to the genre as a whole. We hope you keep on reading, but will understand if you don't.

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# INTRODUCTION

*"Shiranu ga hotoke." ... Ignorance is bliss.*  
—Japanese Proverb

Konnichiwa, all you high-and-mighties, heathens, and hopeless cases. This is Chikako, slipping a tongue in your ear and jabbing a finger in your eye. You paying attention yet? You better be, because the data simmering at your fingertips at this very moment is worth your life—and mine. I've spent three decades gathering it, using it to further my agendas and protect my interests. What you do with it is up to you in the end. Just don't make this *neko ni koban*. If you aren't going to honor the effort here, then throw yourself down a deep dark hole and put yourself out of my misery before the stink of your shame overwhelms us all.

**#WillyaWontcha:** *Neko ni koban? English, anyone?*

**#TopProfX:** *"A coin to a cat." Aka, don't waste what she's offering you. Pearls before swine. That sort of thing.*

**#WillyaWontcha:** *Ah, cool. For some reason my TAPs auto-translate feature isn't working.*

**#HoliMoli:** *Looks like she's disabled some of its functions while reading her dataset.*

Welcome to Japan. The real one, mind you. Yes, there's a difference between the Japan you see on the feeds and the one you see when you're bleeding out across a perfectly groomed Zen garden with a Yakuza blade between your ribs. Certainly, we try to cultivate a particular image, a profitable appeal—but even the dumbest *bakayarō* knows for every shiny street there are a dozen shadowed alleys. For every legitimate business front, there are a hundred trafficking every drug imaginable. And for every honest salaryman, there are a thousand twitches ready to shred every Yen from your account the moment you step foot on our fair shores.

Here's the philosophy I've lived by, and I highly recommend you do the same: *I no naka no kawazu taikai wo shirazu*. For you gaijin, that would equate to "A frog in a well does not know the great sea." I.e., unless you do something about it, you're going to be stuck in a narrow-minded, tiny little ecosystem, never understanding the wider truth, nor able to take advantage of greater opportunities, nor protect yourself from lurking threats.

So, my little tadpoles—my little *otamajakushi*—are you going to hide beneath the lilies, too afraid to swim out into the open? Will you drown in the ocean of data I'm about to share? Or will you wriggle along the currents and survive long enough to catch flies and croak your own songs of glory and honor?

Japan is a country of bold contrast. Life and death. Honor and dishonor. Riches and rags. Tea ceremonies and torture chambers. Our souls are baked beneath the setting sun, and its blazing light casts the deepest shadows. You want to fry and die a kindred spirit? You want to dip your mind in the madness? You're on the right path.

If my security measures remain intact, you've encountered this datafeed one of several ways. Maybe you're a gaijin flicking through a tour guide, and you dug deep enough to find my little embedded subroutine. To you I offer a joint welcome and warning. Follow the paths I've laid down, and you will return transformed. You may not even return at all—but it'll be far more real than anything those choose-your-own-adventure tour feeds can ever offer.

Maybe you're one of those ronin, hoping for a lead on a new gig, and you figure Japan offers a few fertile fields where no one knows your name. To you I say good luck, nakama. You're going to need sharp wits, sharp blades, sharpshooters, and an even sharper eye for good gigs to make rather than break it here. This isn't some uncharted territory. You're edging in on claimed land, with streets and cities that have been warred over for centuries, if not millennia. And you think you're just going to strut in and have everyone flinging Yen your way? Not saying a reputation can't be forged here. Plenty have done it. But it's going to be more complicated than folding an origami hypercube. You have to decide whether it's worth the effort...or your life.

Maybe you're one of my old corporate associates, hoping I might give something away that will let you track down my current whereabouts. To you, I say a hefty *kutabare!* Probe a little deeper, I dare you. Give me everything you've got, and we'll see whose sockets fry first. You think you're the only one to come after me? I've sent a dozen of you to the vats already

**#Dark\_Ronin:** *Who the hell is this bitch? She's talking herself up like some fucking goddess of war or something.*

**#HoliMoli:** *Better than some of the boring tour guides you'll find on all the usual feeds. I'm subscribing.*

Sorry about that, nakama. Some rats just don't know when to stop sniffing around. Hey, if you're one of those operators good enough to ever find me, and you need a few credits, I might have some work for you. Plenty of vermin on these slick streets that I'll pay you to exterminate.

Who am I? Why did I create this guide? Can you really rely on anything I say? Oh good, my *otamajakushi*, you are at least asking all the right questions. If you missed it before, my name is Chikako, and if there's anyone who knows the so-called Techno-Shogunate, it's me. I've worked in the highest corporate echelons and groveled at the feet of the lowliest *banchō*—before carving his guts out with my reinforced fingernails the instant he blinked, of course. Done it all, seen it all, bought the simulation. Yawn. And I'm still alive. That says something, doesn't it? It means if you want to keep your head connected to your neck, you sit up, soak it all in through those pretty optic nerves of yours, and bless me for it later.

Knowledge is power, neh? Here is my knowledge, steeped in life's hottest waters, poured into the empty cup of your skull, where perhaps it might filter down and get a few extra neurons firing. As you sip and savor this tea of truth, remember...

*Gou ni itte wa, gou ni shitagae.*

**#WillyaWontcha:** *Translator fritz again!*

**#TopProfX:** *"When entering the village, obey the village." In other words, when in Japan, do as the Japanese do...*

**#WillyaWontcha:** *Or else what?*

**#Billy\_Black\_Eyes:** *I guess that's for you to find out, ami.*



# LIFE IN JAPAN

*"Hana wa né ni kaeru." ... The flower goes back to its root.*

—Japanese Proverb

*For Hokichi, the moment had to be perfect. The onsen offered him the opportunity, and he blessed it for doing so. Hot springs. Soothing water. Excellent service. Isolated pleasure.*

*But not perfect yet. A few things were missing.*

*After having cleansed himself from head to toe in the main bathroom, Hokichi headed outside to the hot spring. The volcanically heated waters steamed beneath the lightest snowfall, and Hokichi's breath added its own mist to the air. As he'd desired, no other bathers were in attendance and he'd been guaranteed the experience would remain private.*

*Boulders lined the wide pool, with smooth steps leading down into it. Among all the dogwoods and pines, a single winter sakura tree stood white with blossoms despite the cold month.*

*He gazed upon the tree and marveled at its blossoms. He gazed upon the clay-tiled rooftop and marveled at its craftsmanship. He gazed at the tiny creek that bubbled out from one side of the pool and down through the garden and marveled at its fluidic music.*

*Excellent. But not yet perfect.*

*He folded up his towel and set it on a bench. Then he eased down into the water, letting it soothe the aches and cares of the day one inch, one step at a time. Once submerged up to his shoulders, he cycled through several cleansing breaths, gauging the time. He nodded to himself. Right about now would be perfect.*

*A figure dropped from the blossoming tree.*

*A figure slid down from the rooftop.*

*A figure rose from the creek.*

*A leaf fell. A tile cracked. A drop splashed.*

*The figures switched off their camouflage projectors in unison, fully revealing their black uniforms, glossy black goggles, and the katanas they drew from their sheathes.*

*At his mental command, Hokichi's forearm chassis split wide. A tanto blade shifted into his hand and he positioned it with the keen edge toward his foes.*

*He smiled.*

*Perfect.*

Soon after this, another big shift occurred. Via Minotoro's orders, Japan began importing Brazilian-grown Sims—a way to boost national productivity while also keeping the country on the leading edge of innovation. As such, we Japanese took the Sims, did a bit of reverse engineering, and came up with a whole new breed of synthesized lifeforms: Synths (or Bioroids as some of you call them). We call them sou-gougin...or if you want to be rude, "inchiki."

**#SUPAKAWAI:** *I've heard that one before from a Japanese friend of mine, but he was using it to refer to...er...knock-off goods. Is that what they consider Synths?*

**#Synths\_For\_Life:** *Sounds about right. Japan tries to act all enlightened, but they're just as racist as the rest of us.*

Almost all societies can be broken down into the haves and have-nots. There's often a huge divide between the ridiculously wealthy and powerful, and the despicably powerless and downtrodden. Are you a smart *otamajakushi*? Because if you are, you can make the mental leap and figure out where the Synths fall on our social totem pole these days.

**#Dark\_Ronin:** *Mixing metaphors, are we? Couldn't come up with a better phrase other than stealing one from Native Americans?*

**#SUPAKAWAI:** *Funny. An American accusing someone else of stealing from their country's indigenous people. I hope irony gives you a hefty bitchslap, ami.*

Synths/inchiki are now the grist in the mill of Japanese advancement. They get the shit jobs, shit pay, and shit status. They've been given some civil rights, sure, but underneath all the politeness they're shown, there remains a simmering sense that they're still our technological slaves. This has resulted in a growing number of Synth Civility activist groups working to better the people's plight. I worked with one, *Same Skin, Same Souls*, for about ten years before going corporate. But then you've got those lunatics in the Synth Supremacy group who don't just want Synths treated equally, but also believe it's their destiny to rule the world someday. Look, nakama, there's ideals and there's crazy ideas. Learn to tell the difference.

## CONTEXT

You want a nice and tidy summary of Japanese history? Japan in a nutshell? Really? Pack thousands of years of history into a few trite sentences so you can feel enlightened? Here's your precious nutshell: Shit happened. People were born, they lived, they died. They did bad things. They did good things.

Oh, you want specifics, little *otamajakushi*? Why didn't you ask? You did? Oh, right. I was ignoring your ignorance. Fine. Here's the lowdown, nakama. A couple main things you need to know to align with where Japan is today. First, in 2031, a coup put General Hiro Minotoro into true power, calling himself the First General. Of course, as everyone in that position would do, he tried to cast himself in a benign light by saying he acted in the service of the Emperor and for the Japanese people—but everyone knows all true power now ran through Minotoro.

## CULTURE

Now, synths aside, Japan has always prided itself on its high etiquette and ceremony. Even if we don't like you, even if we're on opposite sides of a fight, a corporate merger, or are peddling Afterburn or black sims to your kids, most of the time we'll still treat you with the respect you deserve. Isn't that nice? So if a true ronin is coming to carve you a new hole to scream from, you can bet he'll at least bow and call you by whatever honorific you prefer before doing the deed.

After all, if we lack civility, our very humanity is the next thing to get tossed out, neh? Here, politeness is a weapon and shield in its own way—a way most gaijin never fully comprehend. Not even weeaboos.



**#HoliMoli:** I'm pretty sure she made up that word.

**#Billy\_Black\_Eyes:** Nope. A weeaboo is a non-Japanese person who gets totally obsessed with trying to "become" Japanese somehow. Learn the language, wear the clothes, cook their traditional foods, get plastic surgery and gene-tweaked to look like them...their compulsions are as weird as their name. Oh, and don't think the Japanese admire that sort of effort either. For them, trying to copy something you can never fully be is rude. It'd be like a stranger showing up in your home and trying to pretend they've been your brother since birth because they've been stalking your family and learning all your mannerisms.

**#HoliMoli:** Ew. I got it.

All that said, a few things have been working against Japan over the decades. For one, our population is now down to just over 90 million, compared to 127 million back near the start of the twenty-first century. As human longevity has edged upward, the Japanese people have lost their original focus on family as a top priority. Instead, accumulating wealth and honor (rather than babies to care for you in your old age) are more the cornerstones of all we do. Why worry about having a big family diluting your authority, when you can establish a more powerful, personal legacy and have the Yen to pay your way out of any trouble or into better health?

Honor, or *Meiyo*, is also popular again. Even the Yakuza have claimed it as the supposed reason for all their criminal activities. Those who follow the old Bushido code take it very seriously. If you're ever dishonored, or *Fumeiyona*, *seppuku* is once again quite acceptable, if not fully expected. Dishonor could come from many different sources. Perhaps you failed a task set for you by the emperor. Maybe you showed *Burei*—grave disrespect—to the wrong *Kanko*. Maybe you got caught in a public scandal. Maybe you brewed someone's tea the wrong way. All I'm trying to say is don't think twice about deciding to follow the Bushido code. Think it over a hundred times and then think it over again, otherwise you might be kneeling with your own guts in your hands and wondering how you got there. Honor is all well and good, but is it worth your life?

**#DailyDeals:** Do you want to experience a true commitment to honor? Then purchase the latest version of the Bushido Code, straight from *Ishin-Denshin* licensed vendors. Your new values and perspective will be streamed straight into your cortex. It will be like you've been a paragon of the samurai way your whole life!

**#Dark\_Ronin:** This is a joke, right?

Oh, what are *Kanko*? Right, that leads us to the last big issue: our reintegration of a caste system. I told you how the Synths have wound up on the bottom of a pretty big pile, neh? Well, we've all got our roles to play and social rules to abide by. Here's how it breaks down from the biggest fish to the tiniest *otamajakushi*:

#### FIRST GENERAL

In Japanese, this position is called *Daichi no Taishu*. *Hiro Minotoro* remains in full power here, ruling Japan like a military dictatorship. He just has to tack on "by the will of the Emperor" to his every command, and everyone goes along with it, pretending it's true.

#### KANJIN

This is the emperor. Yes, if you were confused, we still have one despite the First General really being in charge. The current emperor is *Tetsuhito*. Basically, he's been reduced to a puppet figurehead

## JAPANESE-ENGLISH LEXICON

*Arigatou gozaimasu:* Thank you very much.  
*Baka:* idiot, stupid, fool  
*Bakayarō:* asshole  
*Banchō:* The leader of a group of delinquents.  
*Bokujū:* A bottle for calligraphy ink.  
*Chashitsu:* Spaces designed for tea ceremony gatherings.  
*Daibatsu:* A large statue of Buddha.  
*Dohyō:* The ring in which sumo wrestling bouts occur.  
*Fumeiyona:* dishonored, the dishonorable  
*Gaijin:* outsider, foreigner, non-Japanese  
*Hadaka no tsukiai:* Naked communion, the open sharing of one's thoughts.  
*Hai:* Yes.  
*Kané wa Amida yori hikaru:* Money shines more brightly than Amida (the Buddha of Immeasurable Light).  
*Kanpai:* Cheers! A toast.  
*Kawaii:* cute, adorable, lovable  
*Konnichiwa:* Greetings. Good day.  
*Kutabare:* Go to hell! Drop dead! Fuck you!  
*Mengu:* Samurai masks and facial armor.  
*Nakama:* A very good friend.  
*Neko ni koban:* Gold coins to a cat (i.e. pearls before swine).  
*Nuyen:* Japanese currency  
*Oishii:* delicious, tasty, nice  
*Otamajakushi:* tadpole  
*Porisu:* police  
*Rikishi:* sumo wrestler  
*Ryoken:* A traditional Japanese inn.  
*Saru mo ki kara ochiru:* Even monkeys fall from trees.  
*Unsan musho:* Scattered clouds. Disappearing without a trace.  
*Wakarimasu ka:* Understand?  
*Zaibatsu:* Industrial and financial conglomerates of the Japanese Empire.

who holds the occasional dinner for foreign ambassadors. No real authority, but he's the mask and gloves worn by *Daichi no Taishu*.

#### KANKO

These are all the public officials/servants who keep Japan running from the top. Any government or military officer is found in this level, including local mayors and foreign diplomats.

#### RYŌMIN

Now we get to your average citizen. This caste actually has three sub-castes making it up.

*Shinabi:* "High citizens." These are your independently wealthy, your corporate executives, certain military ranks, and *Techno-Samurai*.

*Zakko:* Notable workers, important families, smaller business owners, independent contractors, and the like are all *Zakko*. These are often held up as shining examples of what it means to truly contribute to Japanese society.

*Kōmin:* Average citizens. The commoners who serve as the cogs in the great machine. They have access to all civil rights, but aren't anything spectacular when measured in terms of wealth



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or accomplishments. When foreigners visit, they are lumped into this caste.

### ETA

Here we have the slave caste. Synths are often found here by default, though that depends on whom you ask. The two most common way for someone to become a slave is either to be born into the role or to fall so heavily into debt (either a debt of credits or honor) to another, that the only way to pay it off is a lifetime of indentured servitude. There have been times people have chosen to become an eta for a family or corporation because it means you'll be cared for and provided at least a few basic creature comforts.

### GAIJIN

One big question I get asked a lot is what do we think about outsiders? Aside from being automatically considered average citizens, what do we really think about you? That depends on how smart and respectful you're willing to be. Mostly...we're indifferent. So long as you have a brain cell or two that you can rub together, this shouldn't cause a problem. The best kind of gaijin is one who is willing to respect our culture, who understands they're going to make mistakes, but doesn't allow that to stop them from trying. They learn. They earn respect in return. The worst kind? A gaijin who comes in like they own the land, who thinks they're above the laws or cultural norms and doesn't show the proper amount of honor where it's due. That is willful ignorance of the highest order, and even though we will take it in stride and never slam a door in your face, it will still get a lot of doors closed on you when your back is turned. Don't be that person, my *otamajakushi*, and we will all be happier for it.

**#Oni\_Broni:** I hear that "gaijin" is now just another term for "spare parts" in the Techno-Shogunate. Rather than hauling actual Japanese citizens to their own cybernetic chop shops, foreigners are prime pickings for those who want an implant or limb upgrade without having to pay government fees at an official surgical clinic.

**#TeaWhore:** You can't prove that.

**#Oni\_Broni:** Of course not. That's because the chop shops always scrub the serial codes and deactivate any ID transponders. You think they're stupid?

**#TeaWhore:** I think someone here is, yeah.

## RELIGION

Because I think we can all agree that there's nothing better than a little chat about a non-controversial matter like faith, neh? I'm not particularly religious myself, partially because I've gotten a close look at what sort of nasty things religion has inspired people to do all over the world. Even those with the best of intentions can get swept up in blind zealotry.

For me, hearing someone claim they're doing anything "in the name of the divine Spaghetti Monster" (or whatever deity tickles your fancy) strikes me as scarily similar to the First General saying all his orders come straight from the emperor. But you can't get a culture as old as ours without various religions getting deeply entrenched.

### SHINTO

Shinto ("the way of the gods") is as ancient as Japan itself. It's in almost every aspect of our culture, in our rituals, in our way of thinking. For us, Shinto holds to the ideal that humans

are essentially good, and the evil in the world is caused by evil spirits. Most Shinto practices deal with warding off those spirits, personal purification, and the veneration of kami—sacred spirits from nature, as well as our ancestors.

**#SUPAKAWAI:** Want to have real fun in Tokyo? Check out the Kami Kill Club network. They take a bunch of bioforms, pump them full of adrenal boosters and let them tear each other apart. You can make some *beaucoup* creds betting on the survivor.

**#Billy\_Black\_Eyes:** That's cruel, man. That's just fucking cruel.

**#SUPAKAWAI:** Naw, it's awesome! It's not like these kami bioforms are really alive, anyway. They're just...batches of genetic code that can walk around, make weird noises, and die.

**#Billy\_Black\_Eyes:** Same could be said for you, ami.

### BUDDHISM

Japan joined the ranks of Buddhism in the sixth century and became the official national religion. The pursuit of nirvana by eliminating ignorance or unhealthy cravings captures the minds and hearts of millions around the world and in our country. I think that's partly because it is so flexible and can coincide with many other beliefs, lifestyles, and culture.

### CHARON CULTS

The Silver Shard is the most infamous of the Charon cults to spring up in Japan. They've been responsible for thousands of lives lost and small bombings in almost every major city—all on behalf of the supposed A.I. god who's somewhere out on the Net. A Shardite's primary belief is that Charon is watching and choosing whom to elevate to a pure energy state. The destruction of physical life is considered a holy act.

### ANCESTRAL VENERATION

This is somewhat linked to Shinto and Buddhism, but can be independent of either. The *sorei* are the spirits of the ancestors, which are remembered during special festivals or family holidays. This three-day event is called Bon Festival. Different families or communities will celebrate this at different times throughout the year. This approach to ancestors has diminished these days, but remains more common in rural towns, while you see less evidence of it in "modern" cities. Even when it is celebrated, it is often treated as just a family holiday with spiritualistic themes. Most citizens look at it as more a quaint tradition rather than a true belief; however, a growing trend of ancestral uploads and personality simulations have brought it back into public debate. The more faithful see this as a profane abuse of technology that keeps the dead spirit trapped, unable to rejoin the collective core of souls in the universe.

**#Droneofthemoth:** People still believe in this shit? Souls? Ancestral spirits? Idiots.

**#TeaWhore:** Oh, come on. You live in a world full of hybrids, clones, fully functional mental uploads, and cyborg freaks, and you have an issue believing in a soul?

**#Droneofthemoth:** Yes, I do. All those other things are based on science. Capiisce? Mind engrams are one thing. Ghosts are another. One is real. One isn't.

**#TeaWhore:** Hey, I still chat with my grandma on a daily basis in her virtual afterlife, and she's exactly the same as she was when in a body. You going to tell me some part of her spirit isn't still around?



**#Droneofthemoth:** That's you fooling yourself. I feel sorry you have to live with those delusions.

#### THE SETTING SUN

Ever heard of an atheistic religion? For Setting Sun members, there are no gods. There are no spirits. There is only eventual extinction for our race. Survival of the fittest is their scripture, and their only hope of any sort of afterlife is...well...peaceful annihilation. Their form of enlightenment is taking as many others into the sun's shadow before they too fall into nothingness. Unsurprisingly, these cultists are often hired as assassins or get swept up in militaristic causes with a religious fervor. In these chaotic days, it's not uncommon to see reports of violence on the newsfeeds attributed to them or have your TAP bombarded with images of a fiery sun if you glance at the wrong holo-pamphlet.

**#CutthroatChibi:** Ever heard of the Abukumado Caves near Fukushima? Police feeds in the area are buzzing about the caverns being used as a Setting Sun base. They take candidates there for indoctrination and training for suicide missions.

**#Your\_Lolita\_Princess:** No way. I've got family in Fukushima! They need to bomb these lunatics to dust.

If I had to choose, Zen Buddhism would be my path. Why? Because it simply makes sense to me. If enlightenment can be achieved, I have to find it in myself through meditation and self-discipline. No one can force belief or enlightenment on me, nor can anyone else define what enlightenment means to me. And if you dare try with one of those faith memes or vision virri, you'll find my TAP reject-and-respond protocols to be quite deadly. Nobody's getting in my head or heart without my permission or putting their own at risk.

## FOOD

Unless you're actually from Japan, I bet most of our cuisine you've encountered is that cheap-ass, over-salted, over-sugared, over-fried, vat-grown goop. I don't know how you can stand that. Oh, aside from the fact that it keeps people from starving to death, sure. Small price to pay, I guess. But did you know one of the reasons the Japanese were famed for their longevity long before all these new life-extension technologies started popping up? Our diet. A solid staple of rice, fresh seafood, and vegetables will do wonders, and we've become quite creative in all the varieties we can refine. Tempura. Sushi. Teriyaki. *Oishii!*

At the same time, we have given progress a nod and a bow. We appreciate efficiency. That's why we have the highest vending machine density than any other country. If a rural village has a single electrical socket to share among a few hundred people, guess what they're going to plug in? A vending machine. Of course, we still up the ante because our machines are 3D printers, rather than just boxes full of prepackaged food and drink. The latest Fantastic Feast model can have a three-course meal printed up 30 seconds after the hungry customer downloads their credits (quite the different offering than the Bullseye Mk. III, which dispenses 3D-printed weaponry).

**#Synths\_For\_Life:** The Yakuza are using running 3D weapon printers 24/7, popping out pistols and blades like candy. It's ridiculous! Can't trace them. Can't stop them from getting the raw materials. By the time the cops get a whiff of where they're at, they're so well-armed, it's nearly impossible to get rid of them.

**#Oni\_Broni:** Truth. Buncha Yakuza goons shot up a Kenta warehouse in Yokohama last week. Made off with millions of creds worth of goods. The whole lot of them were high on Afterburn too. When is this going to stop?

A few ground rules for those of you who will be sitting down to enjoy a customary Japanese meal, whether in a home, restaurant, or ryoken. Try to enjoy the experience with low tables and cushions on a tatami floor. Before the meal, you say *itadakimasu* (I gratefully receive). Afterwards, you tell your host *gochisosama deshita* (thank you for the meal). Finish every serving down to the last grain of rice. It's just good manners.

Oh. And learn to use your fucking chopsticks! Use a TAP motor control finesse program or a targeting optical overlay if you absolutely must, but don't be an embarrassment by spearing a chunk of chicken. Remember what I said about gaijin who make an effort?

## ARCHITECTURE

Like many things, Japanese architecture is a synthesis of our traditional components with unrivaled ingenuity. Often a house must be a place for sleep, play, meals, and hosting guests all at once. Our temples are works of art alongside places of worship. Our homes, our corporate offices, and everything in between are made to seamlessly blend beautiful features with high functionality. Sliding doors, wooden structuring, elevated flooring, and thatched roofs can still be seen in some neighborhoods or away from skyscraper-dominated metropolises. These days, though, the sliding doors can be bulletproof, the roof tiles conceal defensive auto turrets, and the wooden structuring is built around a reinforced core with multiple boltholes and emergency safety rooms. Two main modes of thinking about construction influence architects to this day.

Impermanence speaks to a building's ability to transform—beds that flip up to become walls, walls that become doors, and overall versatile dwellings that meet the needs of the occupants any moment of the day.

Metabolism was a post-WWII architectural movement that is regaining attention as well. Called *metaborizumu*, it attempts to combine architectural megastructures with organic or biological growth. A city could grow like a tree, extending branches higher, spreading leaves wider. People could feel more at ease in artificial structures that responded to their biorhythms. Eventually, the idea is that buildings and people will act like one superorganism, with individuals moving through its veins and paths like blood cells or electrical impulses along the nerves. We're certainly more connected to our cities than ever before. There's even one skyscraper in Sendai that was supposedly built with lens optics for windows and organic breathing structures rather than ventilation shafts. A building that watches...and breathes. A bit spooky, nakama?

**#Dark\_Ronin:** Sounds like another Chrysanthemum experiment gone wild. I seriously think that corporation is going to beat Charon in bringing about the end of the world as we know it.

**#Billy\_Black\_Eyes:** The world "as we knew it" ended decades ago, ami. Stop being stuck in the past. Accept that we can't do anything but keep moving forward, however crazy it gets.



## ENTERTAINMENT

Eat, drink, and sing karaoke, for tomorrow we may die. I know plenty of citizens who make that their motto, and I have to admit it has tempted me at times, *otamajakushi*. In a life that seems to default to hardship and chaos, why bother clinging to anything but personal pleasure, however feeble or fleeting? One thing I take great pride in is the Japanese ability to find joy in the ephemeral... to see beauty in a single moment. You can see all these things in our art, our music, our games, even our technology. Yes, I know many of you might mock us for certain stereotypes, such as the salaryman belting out off-tune karaoke.

**#HoliMoli:** Is salaryman their version of the taxman or something?

**#Billy\_Black\_Eyes:** It's just their term for a corporate employee.

**#HoliMoli:** What? They got no salarywomen? Salarypeople?

**#Synths\_For\_Life:** Please don't start with that PC bullshit again. The Japanese have an issue seeing Synths as human. You think they care how you interpret their gender-oriented nouns and pronouns?

**#Dark\_Ronin:** Since when are Synths humans? Next thing you'll say is hybrids are too, or androids deserve equal rights.

**#Billy\_Black\_Eyes:** Ah. You're just trolling now, aren't you, DR?

The thing is, that singing salaryman is able to set aside his discomfort of public exposure. He knows his singing is flawed, just as a calligrapher might make an errant brushstroke. But it's still an expression of himself, a striving to reflect the world as they see it. Personally, accepting inherent imperfection is a vital way to even start taking baby steps toward enlightenment.

## MUSIC

Traditional Japanese music might be frustrating for Westerners to listen to until they get used to it, mainly because it's based on breathing intervals rather than metronomic timing. You just have to broaden your mind and open up to new experiences.

## KARAOKE

Yes, most local bars have at least one karaoke unit, if not entire rooms dedicated to karaoke groups. The corporate types especially love these joints, and special events are often held in music bars. The most famous of this is Echo Niner in Tokyo, and if you want to reserve a room for a special event, you better call ahead at least a month in advance. Another notable one is Shidamu in Osaka, but this is believed to be a Yakuza-run place and not recommended for tourists.

## TAIKO

This term refers to percussion performances using a wide range of drums, occasionally with other instrument or vocal accompaniments. Performances are a wonder to see, with rhythmic drumming, stick flourishes, and amazing costumes. A popular touring team is the New Human Group, renowned for their acrobatics. Android and hybrid groups have been formed (most notably Kodomundo), but they tend to lose their crowds after their novelty wears off.

## J-POP

You've heard it. You've loved it. You tend to deny either of these facts. It's okay, nakama. We know the truth. A number of well-known performers include Marise Asai and the hybrid-only group Lab Lads 3. They have appeared all over the world using holographic projections and simulations, and there are rumors that either Yumi Yumi or Tae are entirely artificial constructs run by Idol Industries, the corporation responsible for most of Japan's current video, music, and sim entertainment successes.

**#Oni\_Broni:** These manufactured pop stars are nothing but meme-seeders. You go to a concert and come out with your TAP clogged by Hyperads that don't fade for weeks. I had friends go to a rave at The Low Tide in Nagasaki and they've disappeared. Not a single blip on the Net from them since.

**#FishBasket:** Practice safe TAP-exchanges, citizens. You should never accept unauthorized access to your implants, as this can open you to all manner of virus infestations, meme exposures, brain wipes, and personality overrides.

## THEATER &amp; FILMS

## TRADITIONAL THEATER

There are a handful of different theatrical forms: noh, kyōgen, kabuki, and bunraku. Respectively, you have your dramatic masked performances, humorous plays, dances, and puppet theater. These theatrical expressions have remained sacrosanct from non-human involvement. No artificial lifeforms, not even Nu-humans can become actors by law. Anyone found defiling these ancient Japanese expressions can be sent to prison or even killed.

## KAIJU SIMS

Mega-monster battles have never lost their appeal for the Japanese. The new entertainment technologies allowed by the TAP and virtual reality allow people to now be far more immersed in the battles, bringing giant mechs to bear and making themselves the heroes of the day! *Godzilla XXII* is the most recent release of that old legacy, and the Net feed, *Mad Monsters & Men*, tops out most traffic charts. Stories persist of Japanese scientists working to breed a true kaiju that could be deployed in future wars. If you believe that, I also have a fountain of youth onsen to sell you.

## GAMES &amp; SPORTS

## SUMO WRESTLING

Even though there are sumo simulacrum models on the market, they are banned from competing in the official leagues. *Rikishi* can become national celebrities, and you can also see the sports old connection to Shinto, such as the use of purification salt to create the *dohyō*. Visit the Ryogoku district in Tokyo for some of the more thrilling bouts. Wrestlers must undergo constant testing to ensure the purity of the sport remains unsullied by subtle hybridizations or hidden artificial enhancements.

## PACHINKO PARLORS

These are essentially a Japanese version of casinos. Pachinko machines combine gambling with a bit of skill, with the object of the game being the release and capture of numerous balls through manipulation of pins and paddles. Digital and virtual versions abound, as do simulated parlors—but the social appeal of the physical parlors remains a heavy draw for young and old alike. You'll also find slot machines in abundance in these parlors,



and you can bet a variety of more illicit services can be found in many as well, if you're connected enough to be admitted to the back rooms. There are plenty of pachinko apps, many of which are devoted to helping players train and learn to work the game odds to produce more jackpots.

**#SUPAKAWAI!** If you're in Osaka, check out the Highline Parlor downtown! They have the best prizes! With a string of jackpots, I won a year's worth of RealRamen and an orbital socket implant! It's the best!

**#Cutthroat Chibi:** I'll take my pachinko virtual style, thank you. Why bother breathing other people's stink when I can jack in direct and play from the comfort of my apartment? Ishin-Denshin has a great line of pachinko sims too.

#### TAI CHI

You may find it odd that aside from the elderly, one of the larger demographics that has continued to be heavily active in tai chi is Synths. This is partially because Synth bodies degrade faster than normal human. The other main element is that tai chi's meditative nature help Synths deal with the tormenting fact that they are often treated so poorly and are considered as slave labor.

#### BASEBALL

For decades, baseball has been one of the most popular sports in the country. When hybrids and enhanced humans were finally allowed to play, some feared this would degrade the people's love for the sport. However, the increased spectacle of amazing hits and superhuman plays has kept audience interest high. Within the Nippon Professional Baseball league, the Yomiuri Giants have made a name for themselves by employing actual eight or nine-foot tall players who often break bats with the force of their hits. On the flipside, the Hanshin Tigers now boast an almost all feline-hybrid team and rely on superior speed and agility to win.

#### ART

##### CALLIGRAPHY & PAINTING

*Shodō* is an artistic form of writing the Japanese language. Traditional calligraphists still use older tools, including inksticks, inkstones, Mulberry paper, brushes and paper sealant. For those wanting to save the time-consuming process of grinding the ink, *bokujō* ink bottles can be ordered from supply stores. A graffiti form employing holo-wands and projection panels has seen a rise in popularity among Japanese youth.

##### IKEBANA

"The way of flowers." Flower arrangement made into a minimalist art form with high symbolism and strict composition rules. Few people take the time to nurture such arrangements these days, and it is in danger of becoming a lost art.

##### TEA CEREMONIES

You might not consider this an art form but it most assuredly is. Known as the Way of Tea or *chanoyu*, these ceremonies are highly ritualized presentations and preparations of *matcha*, Japanese green tea. These can be short informal gatherings or formal affairs lasting over four hours. Certain virtual variations of these ceremonies are becoming popular among Deep Divers, with "matcha" becoming slang for a variety of drugs that enhance one's Net hacking skills or black code and illegal sim stim exchanges.

**#DailyDeals:** The Floating Leaf Tea House in Osaka is renowned for its service and quality. Geisha 2.0 ceremonial

hosts are available for a few extra creds, and they'll stick around to keep you company when all the other guests are gone.

**#TeaWhore:** That's just cheating. Tea ceremonies should stay pure from sims, synths, and roids!

**#Synths\_For\_Life:** Ooh...she said the P-word.

#### ONSEN

These are public hot springs that offer a wide variety of bathing and relaxation services. There are thousands of them across the island in all sizes and landscape composition. Some, such as the Iwanoyu Retreat in Nagano, have a highly ritualized cleansing process. Others allow bathers to pick and choose how formal they may wish to treat the experience, offering them as more communal bathing sites to enjoy *hadaka no tsukiai*. Legends speak of some having healing powers, but you're likely to fix up faster by actually paying a doctor or learning to use a medkit.

**#DailyDeals:** Nu U Onsen provides the latest in refinement and relaxation. These onsen are adapted for all forms of life, be you mechanical, a cybernetic mesh, or any manner of hybrid. Boiling oil, full immersion, acid dips, and nanowashes are all on our growing menu of spring selections. Near-death drowning simulations are also available.

**#WillyaWontcha:** WTF? People do this kind of thing?

**#HoliMoli:** The Japanese are weird.

## FASHION

Fashion is just such a mishmash these days. The West stole from us, we stole from them. Only the truly outrageous tends to stand out now. Everyone's street style—supposed to reflect their individuality, ironically—starts to blend together. All those corporate citizens blend together. All the military folks blend. Japanese authorities prize this sort of conformity, but there are certain trends that have been used as a sort of social rebellion over the years.

#### LIVING CANVAS

Certain calligraphists decided to move on from ink and paper to turn people into the embodiment of artistic expression. This is different than your usual tattoo creation (though tattoo artists are certainly known for incorporating calligraphy designs in their work). Instead, thanks to nano-ink, those who become Living Canvases link their TAPs to the designs, which then shift to reflect certain thoughts, moods, or desires projected by the individual. This leads to many Living Canvases going around with as little clothing on as they can get away with, without being arrested for public indecency.

#### LOLITA

This one has stuck around, partially because it went Western and then rebounded back to the mainland just in the past decade. So *kawaii*! Actually, those who follow this fashion prefer to be considered elegant rather than cute or sexy. Originally based on Victorian-style fashions and materials, it has evolved into a variety of sub-fashions including Punk Lolita, Princess Lolita, Sweet Lolita, and Borg Lolita.

**#DailyDeals:** Nagasaki is proud to host the latest in its CyberBoom Cage Match series: The Lolita Lock-In Tournament! Lolita-only combatants are allowed in the



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arena, decked out with street-legal upgrades and implants only. This is a free-for-all not to be missed!

**#Dark\_Ronin:** That's it. I'm buying a shuttle ticket to Nagasaki. I am going to watch the shit out of this.

### THE HOLO ONES

By wearing LENgram-infused clothing as well as subdermal implants, people can change their form and features with a thought—though the illusion is ruined by touch. They try to disguise their original forms as much as possible within the holograms. It's a cheaper way of dramatically changing your looks rather than shelling out Yen for pricier biological or artificial upgrades. Look like anything or anyone for a fraction of the price. It's an illegal trend in a few cities, partially for security issues. Many Holo Ones use realistic facial projections to avoid being identified by public surveillance scanners.

### SAMURAI STYLE

Those who adhere to the Bushido code or take the idea of being a ronin a bit too far may go to great lengths to mimic the ancient samurai warrior dress such as kimonos, sandal footwear, and topknot hairstyle. All upgraded with elements such as reinforced *eboshi* and vibroblade swords—unless you're a purist. Which there's no problem with unless you like being killed by someone with actual modern weaponry and defenses. We can honor tradition while still being smart, nakama.

**#Droneofthemoth:** Clue for the clueless. When in Tokyo, do not go into the Weeping Willows Club dressed like a samurai, even if you are one. Guy who owns the place is a ronin with a grudge, and he's got the place decked out with nano-flechette artillery and glob-guns that will obliterate anyone the instant they're spotted with the distinctive samurai profile.

**#CutthroatChibi:** Sounds like a challenge!

## TECH

For many, technology has changed the old idiom of "survival of the fittest" to "survival of the fastest." The faster your technology can adapt and improve, the more you can lord it over your opponents and claim dominance—however temporarily. The whole world is in a race for tech superiority. It's no longer possible for humanity to let evolution take its usual slow route. We are now in charge (or like to think we are) of our future, and the Japanese like to believe they are the frontrunners of the whole chaotic show. Japanese scientists are primed to be competitive intellectuals from birth, far more willing to push ethical boundaries under the government's directives. At the same time, they don't prefer to advance via brute force upgrades, but try to find ways to blend beauty with progress.

For instance, back in the twenty-first century, Japan had some of the first functional humanoid robots in the form of Asimo. And what was Asimo built to do? Alongside bow to dignitaries and mimic other human functions, it put on dance shows! Even if a Japanese R&D team creates a deadly golemmech unit, you can bet it's going to possess an inherent, simple beauty to its form and function.

### SAIBANETIKUSU

Cybertechnology is now central to all that Japan develops. It is the fusion of organic and technological life in an attempt to advance both beyond baseline performance. The development

of cybertech, especially the integration of the TAP and the vast network of The Deep, has transformed even the simplest aspects of everyday life. Everyone has access to multiple layers of reality, more data than they could ever process in a lifetime, and the ability to express themselves in increasingly exotic manners.

### NANO-REGENERATION

This is a touchy topic, as there are plenty of people who don't believe it yet exists. The ability to use nanotech to dial back the body's natural aging process? Possibly even make someone effectively immortal? Ridiculous, some say. Yet one example of a public individual who could be benefitting from exactly this sort of tech is Takaya Yoshii, the head administrator of Chiba and a member of the board of Kenta Cyber Dynamics. He doesn't look a day over thirty, but rumors circulate that he's at least twice that age. If anyone had the resources and influence to pull off this sort of custom nano-tech job, it'd be him.

**#TeaWhore:** This can't be real.

**#Oni\_Broni:** Oh ye of little faith. Technology is spawning miracles every day. Immortality is just a few steps away.

**#TeaWhore:** Oh ye of little brains. Out-of-control tech is what made the world the hellhole it is today! You really want to live forever on a planet that's ruled by corporations, evil A.I.'s, and overrun by inhuman freaks?

**#Oni\_Broni:** Nope. That's why I've signed up as a mining colonist in the asteroid belt.

**#FishBasket:** You poor sod...

### HYBRIDS

With a deep respect for nature and a lingering belief that animals themselves have souls much like our own, it's little wonder that most Japanese accept hybrid presence in the world far more readily than many other people. As most know, hybrids can often be categorized into five major performance factors (ferocity, stealth, toughness, etc.). However, Japanese hybrids are often gene-spliced to reflect at least cosmetic elements of indigenous species such as cranes, bears, boars, giant hornets, butterflies, sea turtles, and a now-extinct species of tiger. There are rumors Chrysanthemum Corporation is tinkering with plant-based hybridizations, and we might soon see Cherry Blossom-brids and Bonsai-brids. Not sure what to think of that.

### GOLEMMECHS

Japanese golemmechs tend to be designed for higher agility, allowing for fast, precision strikes against enemy forces. Aside from turrets, cannons, and rail guns, many Japanese models also include a deployable sword (often stylized like a samurai blade) that's capable of shearing through armor if close combat ever becomes a reality. The Japanese have what could be considered an unhealthy adoration for golemmechs, and tend to anthropomorphize them while also considering the more famous pilots as near national treasures. Just look at our history of anime robots to understand how that's come about. Americans wanted jet packs and flying cars for the future. The Japanese wanted nothing less than Gundam-style bots, and the future has arrived.

### ANCESTRAL UPLOADS

Another controversial technology is based on personality uploads. These aren't uncommon in-and-of themselves, and the mental dubbing process is well known, if pricey. The most common use for dubbing is to provide a mental backup of a person that can be downloaded into a new body upon the original's death.



In Japan, it is illegal to run multiple active dubs at the same time. But let's say a family could afford the upload of an elderly parent, but not to have a new bioform grown. Given Japan's history of ancestral veneration, the family could still interact with the dubbed personality, treating it like a spirit and giving it a virtual version of whatever afterlife they may desire. Purists tend to see this as obscene. Either one is alive or they are dead, and holding a dub in such a "prison" is a limbo that keeps the actual spirit trapped and unable to move on to whatever eternal fate awaits them. Most ancestral uploads profess to being happy to be free from the pains of daily life while also enjoying the company of their offspring—however, opponents can just claim the dub has been reprogrammed to be happy with its situation, another terrible incursion on free will.

**#CutthroatChibi:** There's a freaky altar to those lost in the Hiroshima bombing. If you pay to burn incense there, you can converse with constructed personality engrams of anyone caught in the original blast. They say they've reconstructed the victims with 100% accuracy.

**#Billy\_Black\_Eyes:** That's...disturbing. Besides, they didn't have dubbing or any sort of uploading back then. How can anyone claim these replicas are accurate?

#### ARTIFICIAL DUPLICATES

These usually come in the form of disguised androids or bioroids and are primarily used by wealthy and powerful individuals who want to protect themselves from public threats. The android mind, or the computer mind of the fleshy bioroid, can be programmed either with an entirely artificial personality construct or downloaded with an illegal dub in order to simulate being a specific person. This duplicate can then act as a body double, appearing at public functions or interacting with diplomats, with few people being any the wiser. They are programmed to be unswervingly loyal, and some models may not even be aware (at least at first) that they are not the original. Most of Kensai board director Gombei's appearances over the past five years, for instance, are rumored to have been completed by such a duplicate.

**#Dark\_Ronin:** Hasn't anyone thought that these duplicates are actually perpetuating their presence independently, slowly replacing world leaders until we're all under cybernetic control? How do we know the originals are even alive?

**#TopProfX:** The manufacturing of artificial lifeforms is still kept under pretty tight control with many built-in safeguards ensuring they aren't able to do that sort of thing.

**#Dark\_Ronin:** Oh, and I suppose those safeguards are just perfect. There's never been a faulty dub. There's never been bioroids who have tried to remove their genetically grafted skin barcode. Didn't you read what she just said? These Japanese leaders are purposefully blurring the line, making it near impossible to know if you're interacting with the original or not. Otherwise there'd be no point to the duplicate in the first place.

## BUSINESS

To understand how corporate business works in Japan, there's a main concept you've got to wrap your head around: *Zaibatsu*. To outsiders, corporations may all appear the same on the surface, being mega-operations spanning the globe in order to dominate the market in one area or another (or all of them). They wield

massive amounts of power, acting as proxy governments or countries unto themselves in some way. They provide the products and services many people need to survive, not to mention generational livelihoods for entire families.

*Hai*, that may be the case for Japanese corporations as well; there's a core difference, though, in how Japanese corporations originated and how they operate at their most basic levels. See, the first big four zaibatsu (Sumitomo, Mitsui, Mitsubishi, and Yasuda) formed in the nineteenth century and existed through to the end of World War II. They controlled a majority of Japanese economic and industrial assets, and wielded almost unassailable power. They were also primarily family-owned and operated, ran their own banking, and had massive R&D teams and subsidiary companies throughout almost every industry. Sound familiar? You might go so far as to say the zaibatsu formed the original model for all megacorporations as they exist today: self-contained industrial systems that sought nothing short of total market monopoly.

**#Get\_On\_Me33:** So the Japanese are responsible for corporations owning our lives down to the last credit? Thanks a fucking lot!

**#TeaWhore:** That's right. Blame the Japanese. You're never responsible for anything in your own life.

**#Get\_On\_Me33:** Shut up, bitch.

**#TeaWhore:** Hah! Clever boy.

The original zaibatsu were dissolved around 1947, due to public scandal, political disapproval, and the surrender of Japan itself. They were broken up into dozens of smaller companies, with legal watchdogs hot on their heels at all times to make sure they didn't try to reform their previous structures. That, of course, only lasted so long. If you take a good look at a modern corporation, and can get past their data scrubbers and filters, you'll find many if not all of them trace their roots back to the zaibatsu. So, in the end, the zaibatsu have won the economic battle. The money always wins. *Kané wa Amida yori hikaru.*

Internally, Japanese corporations are unique in several ways. For instance, employees are prized for high behavioral skills more than their analytical ones. This goes back to the Japanese prioritizing contextual etiquette over most other values. Conformity is key, and a harmonious big picture is the bottom line by which performance is judged (and for the wiser of you, it's easy to realize that "harmony" can often equate to profitability and market dominance). It's far less about the individual and more about how the corporation as a whole is working.

The manager/employee relationship is...a unique one. Again, conformity is key, and a manager must be able to trust that their employees will act in a way that is to the betterment of the whole, rather than personal advancement. This trust isn't achieved through standout performance or lots of innovation. Nor is it fostered by any deep personal relationship between boss and subordinate. Instead, employees prove themselves through predictability. Trust is established by an employee making decisions and acting just as their boss would; only once they've proven the ability to do so on a regular basis will that manager then start allowing them to act independently. If the employee gains that trust, then the manager becomes willing to accept responsibility for their actions. If not, the employee is deemed non-conformist and marked for termination unless they can change their attitude. For the Japanese corporate wager, it is better to conform to expectation and fail, than to achieve success



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through individual effort or non-conforming attitudes. It is this homogenized mentality, highly regimented structure, and reliable performance that have given Japanese corporations the influence they once held in the pre-war era.

This is also why other international corporations might have difficulty managing inter-corporate relations with Japanese workers. There's no instinctive trust built there, and it can take a long time to manufacture. The Japanese are leery of more Western business attitudes where the "lone wolf executive" is a common figure and success is supposed to come at all costs.

**#Droneofthemoth:** God, omae. I always pictured corporations as massive drone hives, but this just takes it so much farther. Barely any room for independent thought? Employees striving to be boss-clones? It's no wonder Japan is known for its massive corporate espionage operations. Sounds like they don't have much in the way of original ideas.

### MEGACORPORATIONS

Time to get a closer look at the main Japanese megacorps you've come to know and love. Whether you even realize it or not, *otamajakushi*, you've no doubt bought plenty from most of these in your lifetime.

#### SHOGUN OUTFITTERS

Japan has a long history of warfare, and this is easily embodied in Shogun Outfitters. This megacorp holds the Bushido code near and dear to its operational center, and dedicates most of its development and production to top-of-the-line weaponry, armor, assault vehicles, and a growing array of combat gear. They aim to blend Nipponese aesthetics with modern tech, so if you're looking for a way to present yourself as a true Japanese warrior without relying on ancient materials, here's your solution!

Alongside ballistic armor and combat cycles, you can also pick up a Shinobi infiltration suit, Dragonfly war fan, and explosives disguised as Japanese lanterns.

Shogun Outfitters is run by a board of twelve executives, many of which have years of military service informing their perspectives. The head of the board is Suzu Tsujimara, an elderly man who wears many scars of battle proudly, refusing to have them wiped away by cosmetic surgery.

#### THE SHINBASHIRA

While not one of the largest Japanese corporations, The Shinbashira takes a novel approach to doing business in that it will only buy and sell with certified Japanese citizens. No gaijin, no matter how integrated with Japanese society they've become, can ever directly purchase their wares. Of course, there are any number of proxy shops that might carry their products, but even these are technically forbidden from doing business with outsiders and can be shut down if the corporation learns of such trade occurring.

"Shinbashira" means "central pillar" and their purpose for existing is to help maintain and support Japanese culture, both on the island and across the world. In fact, they do much of their dealings on behalf of other corporations, providing Japanese citizens working abroad with ways to remain connected to their original identities. As such, most of their wares are directly related

to more traditional Japanese elements and trappings, such as classical clothing, food, art, and in-home shrines. They not only have teams of architects who oversee most construction sites, but they also are connected to the Shinto faith and are always seeking new places to construct temples overseas, so Japanese of a particular faith may have a place of worship.

Three head executives oversee all operations: Basho Shiomiya, Dukuotei Ichimonji, and Yoshimune Kobi. They are sometimes referred to as the Kuge, a reference to the earliest form of ikebana, which employed only three central stems in flower arrangements.

#### CHRYSANTHEMUM CORPORATION

In Japan, the chrysanthemum has long been linked to royalty, being on the emperor's flag, the royal crest, the Imperial Seal of Japan, and "The Chrysanthemum Throne," another name for the position of emperor itself. So how did it get on this corporation label? Well, my inquisitive kami, as you might guess, there's a link. The emperor is able to bestow the highest Japanese honor on citizens who've distinguished themselves: The Supreme Order of the Chrysanthemum. Dr. Ryoko Sahashi was the last to receive this order, being the head of the team that first gave Japan the ability to create Synths. Dr. Sahashi then went on to found the Chrysanthemum Corporation, which remains responsible for the majority of Japan's Synth production, genetic manipulation, and other artificial lifeforms.

These days, alongside restoring the shorter-lived Synth population to meet labor demands, Chrysanthemum Corporation handles hybrid development, Human 2.0 womb-tweaks, and android/bioroid manufacturing, plus much of the legal dubbing procedures within the country. Most other Japanese corporations that participate in these procedures have acquired the techniques through ongoing espionage efforts.

Dr. Sahashi remains in charge of Chrysanthemum Corp, now on her third dubbed download, having been restored after two assassinations on the part of anti-Synth/pro-human factions. She tends to shun the more bureaucratic side of her position though, preferring to remain active in the R&D sections of the corporation.

**#Your\_Lolita\_Princess:** A Chrysanthemum lab in Sendai was bombed out just a couple weeks ago. Whole place went up in flames.

**#Oni\_Broni:** Really? I've got a brother who works for them there, and he didn't say anything about it.

**#Your\_Lolita\_Princess:** According to the feeds, they've been trying to keep it hush-hush. In the wake of the fire, they found some sort of huge empty chrysalis in the building wreckage. Something escaped. One of their experiments, I'd bet. Maybe it caused the fire in the first place and the bomb is just a cover story.

**#Billy\_Black\_Eyes:** Exactly what sort of feeds do you subscribe to?

#### ISHIN-DENSHIN

Ishin-Denshin Corp took its name from a concept meaning "interpersonal communication through unspoken mutual understanding." Some people simplify this to mean sympathy or even telepathy, or having a heart-to-heart connection with another person. If you ask a Japanese person to explain this in





more detail, you'll likely get an odd look because the whole point is to avoid having to explain the concept in the first place. It should just be an intimate connection and comprehension.

Anyway, Ishin-Denshin has made a name for itself less in physical products and more in virtual ones. The main tech they do produce is focused on sensory enhancement, such as optical overlays, auditory boosts, and drug cocktails that accelerate reaction time or shift how one views the world. They manage some of the famous VR centers in Japan, and also produce thousands of Deep feeds and simulations. Their wildly creative Holo-Tags are famous among the more fashion-oriented, with their popular Kami line reproducing traditional images of the spirits of nature. Lastly, they are a major developer of TAP apps, especially those focused on forms of Net communication.

**#CutthroatChibi:** Osaka has a citywide Kaiju-hunting sim going on right now. You should totally check it out. Ishin-Denshin designed the whole thing, and at least a million people are playing.

**#TeaWhore:** What's it called?

**#CutthroatChibi:** Shoot Those Big Bastards!

**#TeaWhore:** Catchy.

While there is a team of high executives, the singular head of the corporation is Otsune Okimura. However, she has only ever appeared via digital feeds, and it's near-impossible to find any record of her public appearances prior to her assuming the role of the corporation leader. Rumors exist that Otsune is an A.I. manifestation using Ishin-Denshin tech to try and eventually forge the whole of humanity into a singular hive mind. Take that with a hefty grain of rice, nakama.

#### KENTA CYBER DYNAMICS

Without a doubt, Kenta Cyber Dynamics is Japan's leading cybertech developer and producer—and one of the top cybernetic leaders in the world. They've created almost every sort of implant and upgrade you could see people sporting these days, both civilian and military grade. They also have their fingers in fashion, food, and entertainment, just to round out their global investments.

While their HQ is based in Tokyo, they have manufacturing centers in Chiba as well, and international production and distribution arcologies in major cities such as Chicago. Their streetware is primo, nakama, but they also run an off-brand line of gutterware...cheaper, but far more likely to malfunction at the wrong moment, so caveat emptor—you get what you pay for.

One of their better-known directors on the board is Takaya Yoshii, whose youthful appearance is supposedly maintained by nano-regenerative tech—or by his true self being represented by a dubbed duplicate. Either way, he's one of the more powerful men in Japan and not one to be crossed.

#### KENSAI

Kensai is a manufacturing giant primarily known for their vehicle and golemmech production. As usual, they work on both civilian and military levels, creating high-speed automobiles, bikes, tanks, mechs, and all manner of flight craft. All of these can be pared down to street-legal, unarmed versions, or outfitted with VTOL engines, autocannons, and any other imaginable armament. Most of their contracts are military, and they publicly disavow ever having sold a combat-grade vehicle to any citizens. That hasn't

stopped a number of wealthy individuals, such as Kei Kasahara in Tokyo, from amassing a personal armada of tank and assault cycles.

Kensai not only fulfills orders for Japanese combat units but also for global security and mercenary forces. It's not uncommon for opposing soldiers to engage in battle while both are operating Kensai-made machinery. It speaks to the quality of their production, certainly, but has also earned them a bit of ire of various Japanese generals who would prefer to keep military superiority locked down on their side.

This corporation is primarily staffed by engineers and scientists who work around the clock to develop new, stronger designs. Ten directors oversee operations, and it is commonly believed that they have a secret cell of zeeks who provide constant psychic shielding for their employees, to keep corporate secrets from being snatched straight from their minds.

## THE TECHNO SHOGUNATE

We've taken a close look at Japanese culture and corporations, but how does the country itself actually run? Who enforces what? If you do something naughty, nakama, who should you expect to come knocking on your door? What foreigners are welcome on the island, and who should invest in some heavy-duty bodyguards if they want to step foot on these shores?

### A-DIVISION

This is the government's primary intelligence force. It used to be a private security firm until it started getting too big and too successful, and the First General performed something of a mini-coup. Head officials were... unemployed and replaced by government loyalists. Now the A-Division gathers data both throughout the Deep and in person, via deep cover agents planted across Japan and the globe. While touted as a national security agency, they are also known to be responsible for government-sanctioned assassinations, espionage, illicit TAP manipulation, and other questionable activities to expand Japanese data control and international relations. When foreign visitors vanish, or when Japanese citizens abroad abruptly stop showing up to work, it is assumed the A-Division is behind the scenes.

**#Oni\_Broni:** I've met one of their agents before.

**#Dark\_Ronin:** Sure you did, ami.

**#Oni\_Broni:** I'm telling the truth! Went on a late-night grocery run and was going by a grav-train station. Suddenly, this guy appears outta nowhere, all dressed in silver and black, carrying a sword that was on fire.

**#Dark\_Ronin:** A sword. On fire.

**#Oni\_Broni:** Then he swung it and another body appeared outta midair and fell right in front of me. I ran, scared as hell. Nothing about any dead guy on the news the next day though.

**#Dark\_Ronin:** Pretty sure I saw the same story on a RUBoredYet? feed last month. How much Black Mist you been porting in?

They do have another, more noble role, though. The government has used the A-Division to wage a slow yet steady war against Yakuza crime. This is difficult since the Yakuza have been established in high-ranking government positions and operate from a seemingly untouchable social position. Yet the A-Division has noted several major successes in uncovering and eliminating massive drug and counterfeiting rings, as well as reducing much



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of Yakuza activity within the city of Chiba. So they must be doing something right.

The current director is a former shadow ops agent only known as Nobukazu. Few have ever seen him in person, but those who have remark about stormy grey eyes and a voice that sounds like a katana whisking from its sheath.

### FOREIGN RELATIONS

It's a big world out there, tiny *otamajakushi*.

**#Get\_On\_Me33:** I wish this bitch would stop calling us tadpoles.

**#SUPAKAWAI!** Naw, it's cute! I mean...it's kawaii!

**#Get\_On\_Me33:** What are you, a fucking weeaboo?

And big worlds make for big friends or bigger enemies. The question is, which country to coalition is which?

### CHINA AND THE MANDARINATE

Let's call these relations...tense at the moment. Oh, Japan is certainly ready to do business with China and its associated territories, but it also sees how the self-styled New Mandarins are amassing as much power as they can; and their sense of superiority clashes with the Japanese self-same perspective. It may only be a matter of time before China turns a covetous eye on Japan with the desire to turn it into just another vassal state.

### THE INDIA LEAGUE

The Japanese respect the Indian drive for prosperity and productivity—however they're also a bit turned off by the immense diversity found within the country. It clashes hard against the Japanese ideal of conformity and reliability, and while they have tenuous trade, they remain leery of the ongoing chaos within the region.

### AFRICA

Japan got cut off from Africa like most other nations when the Ivory Curtain went up. Since reestablishing contact, Japan has been incredibly interested in Africa's advanced genetics programs and their space elevator. However the extensive amount of corruption plus complicated border passage requirements has kept the Japanese from making extensive headway. The majority of their presence is coastal.

### RUSSIAN FEDERATION

The Russian territories are under the clinch of both the Eurasian Union and Chinese occupation. It is a land of harsh extremes and has bred a harsh people. Despite Russian technological advances and a respectable drive for survival, the Japanese know the Russian people aren't truly in charge of their own destinies. This makes it difficult to form any sort of productive union since their leaders are primarily foreign proxies.

### THE MIDDLE EAST

Much like India, Japan sees the Middle East as a place of violent religious and cultural extremes, which can be quite bad for business. Japan has a small diplomatic and business presence here, but remains poised to pull its people out on an instant's notice.

### THE EURASIAN UNION

Japan has found a surprising ally in the Eurasian Union. With such an expansive territory, one desperate for resources and trade, and for credit loans, the Eurasian Union has readily accepted what help Japan can offer. During the Charon event, the Japanese economy

suffered greatly, as did the Union's, making them feel even more like kindred spirits in defying the A.I. threat.

### THE UNITED KINGDOM

The UK and its territories have fared far better than most in the wars and economic upheavals over the decades. As such, they are able to offer Japan a thriving base of trade and diplomacy. The two entities tend to confer greatly on cybertech advancements, though, of course, they're often trying to be the first to make the next breakthrough.

### AMERICA

With its history of Westernization, Japan was once considered a close friend to America. However, with the war having splintered the nation into many in-fighting coalitions and territories, Japan has seized the opportunity to take advantage of the North American desperation. They love doing business with all Western factions and have a growing corporate presence there—but they prefer to use the recovery and rebuilding efforts as a chance to make massive profits, and they will sell anything to any side.

### CANADA

Canada gets viewed much the same as the American factions—fractious, nebulous, and rife with opportunity to play different coalitions against each other for Japanese profit. Business as usual. Plenty of room for megacorps to move in, as well as Yakuza operations.

### AUSTRALIA & NEW ZEALAND

Due to the Floods, Australia's citizens became concentrated in just a few cities, trying to scrape together a few credits, and they're still just trying to survive. On the other hand, New Zealand has become more internally focused—focused on improving themselves and not caring as much about external affairs.

### SOUTH & CENTRAL AMERICA

Any real opportunity in this region is found in New Brasilia, which is where Japan has focused most of its expansion efforts. Lots of trade routes get funneled through here.

## MILITARY

The Japanese Self-Defense Force is broken up into four main parts, each responsible for a particular aspect of military operations. All act under the edicts of the First General.

### GROUND SDF

At this point, Japan's ground forces are rarely seen on an international scale. They are mostly concerned with defending its borders, cities, and people. It is primarily composed of footsoldiers, tanks, and golemmechs, as well as certain contingents of cyber-enhanced samurai.

### AIR SDF

Japan can scramble an impressive assembly of air forces within minutes, including everything from single-engine aircraft and fighter jets to VTOL transports and mobile command centers. Air SDF tends to work heavily in conjunction with both Ground SDF and Naval SDF.

### NAVAL SDF

This branch patrols the waters all around Japan, as well as international waters. It holds numerous battle cruisers, hovercraft, and submarines. Reports have emerged of supposed Japanese



sub-oceanic bases, but their presence and/or purpose have never been confirmed.

#### SPACE SDF

Based on the military orbital platforms, a fleet of spaceships keeps an eye out for possible space-bound threats, as well as provides security measures throughout the interplanetary and asteroid mining colonies.

All Japanese soldiers take an oath to die in defense of the lives and wealth of their fellow citizens. This is why soldiers are often seen as ferocious and fearless in battle. They are dead to themselves already, and if they should fail in duty, they would rather kill themselves before being captured and breaking their oath.

#### ORBITAL HABITATS

Look up into the sky at night—and if you can see anything beyond the neon Tokyo glare, you might notice a few of those twinkling lights aren't quite the same as the others. Japan has established quite a few orbital centers of operation, each with a specific purpose and security clearance requirement.

#### IZUMO-III

Should Japan ever come under massive attack or war be declared, this is where the First General and other military leaders will get launched to in order to oversee operations from up on high. No, the emperor won't get to go along. If he dies in an attack, they can just get a new one.

#### CX-NDS

In geosynchronous orbit directly above Japan, this habitat is populated by a skeleton military and science crew. They oversee an array of space-based defense systems, designed to knock intercontinental bombs or missiles out of the sky well before they get within radiation range. You can bet your last Yen it's got more than defensive capabilities though.

#### THE STARLIGHT PETAL

This station belongs to Chrysanthemum Corporation. It's a primary extension of their earthbound arcologies, dedicated to experimenting with synthetic life and cybernetic tech in a variety of gravities and toxic habitats.

**#Oni\_Broni:** There's a video going around a few sub-feed communities lately. They claim it shows a hybrid that's been modified for survival in total vacuum. It's walking around outside the habitat, totally exposed, no survival suit.

**#Billy\_Black\_Eyes:** Ping me a link. I gotta see this.

**#Oni\_Broni:** [USER DISCONNECTED]

**#Billy\_Black\_Eyes:** Figures.

#### GOLDEN HEAVEN

Got more Yen than you know what to do with, nakama? Then book a rocket ride up to this heavenly pleasure palace. It costs what your average citizen makes in a year just to access the place. If you're one of the lucky elite, you can enjoy whatever desire your mind can conjure without any legal repercussions.

**#Droneofthemoth:** There's a cheaper way to get to Golden Heaven. Be hired to work there.

**#TeaWhore:** Pretty sure that requires selling yourself, body and mind, to the elite. You've got to be willing to let them implant anything, reprogram you however they

want, replace any part or piece...you become nothing but property. A commodity.

**#Droneofthemoth:** We're already property to someone. Why not be owned by the wealthy? They tend to pamper their pets, at least.

#### HIKKIKOMORI CORRECTIONAL PRECINCT

While a number of high-security prisons operate out in the rural parts of the island, this one is for those prisoners who are too valuable to kill and too dangerous to be anywhere near civilization.

#### YOHAMA PORT

For citizens heading to mining establishments or smaller colonies throughout the solar system, this is where they're first taken for training, solar acclimation, and integration with fellow colonists.

Of course, there are always stories of secret space platforms, illegal research orbitals, nukie in the sky with diamonds...but you know what happens when you go chasing down every possible dangerous secret? Either you snag one and it blows up in your face, or it catches you first before you even realize it's hiding in the shadows. Oh, but if you ever do uncover the truth behind such rumors, my sweet ronin, do let me know. I'll pay well for that sort of datadump.

#### POLITICAL STRUCTURE

Put simply, you've got a military dictatorship in play. The Daichi no Taishou is in charge, and the emperor is his diplomatic puppet. What the military wants, the military takes. There is a massive administrative echelon that employs Kanjin and Kanko as official public servants, but they all work for the generals in the end, and First General Hiro Minotoro is at the very top. Larger cities and prefect conglomerates are presided over by independent governors, mayors, and lesser officials—but again, if their edicts ever come into conflict with those established by the First General, guess who's going to take the fall?

#### KAMI CORPS

This elite corp is formed of cybernetically enhanced supersoldiers and shadow operatives who operate outside the law at the behest of the government and Japan's technological security. Named for the benevolent Shinto spirits, they are ghosts unto themselves, with only fleeting glimpses of their team in action, with witnesses unable to compile any substantial details about who these people could be—if they're really people at all anymore. How else could anyone be such *unsan musho*? They are believed to deal with everything from rampaging cyborgs to malfunctioning bioroids to tracking down multiple dubs, and they eliminate all threats with supreme efficiency and the utmost secrecy. It is also suggested they are responsible for subduing rogue A.I.s and may operate just as much within the Deep as they do in the physical realm.

**#[USER DISCONNECTED]:** [REDACTED]

**#[USER DISCONNECTED]:** [REDACTED]

**#[USER DISCONNECTED]:** [REDACTED]

**#[USER DISCONNECTED]:** [REDACTED]

**#WillyaWontcha:** Uh...guys?

While no official data caches have been retrieved to confirm it, it's believed they are connected to two major entities: A-Division and the Chrysanthemum Corporation. A-Division makes sense, given the amount of access and intelligence the Kami Corps would need to operate on such a secretive level. And now that I think



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about it, affiliation with the Chrysanthemum Corporation is also logical, as the team members must be outfitted with nothing but the latest, greatest upgrades if they're going to be able to deal with any number of superhuman threats to society.

If they're real and are truly working to protect us all, then all I can say is *arigatou gozaimasu*. If they aren't, if they're nothing but a story after all, then to that I say *minu ga hana!*

**#FishBasket:** True dat. I'd rather believe someone's out there keeping an eye on all us blokes. More power to 'em!

**#WillyaWontcha:** Wait, what'd she say? C'mon, why am I the only one feeling out of the loop on these phrases?

**#TopProfX:** The first bit was a simple thank you. The second one essentially means: "We're better off not knowing the truth. Reality can't compete with imagination."

**#WillyaWontcha:** Oh. That's kind of depressing.

### THE YAKUZA

You can't talk structure in Japan without bringing up the Yakuza, considering they run a hefty portion of it from behind the scenes. Where there's business, there's illegal business—which often provides higher profits without all the administrative red tape. That said, the Yakuza tend to be one of the better-organized crime syndicates in the world, held together not only by a drive for wealth but also high internal ideals, loyalty, and multi-generational blood ties.

Hai, Yakuza is almost exclusively family-owned, and the families who sit atop the heap control most crime throughout Japan. Yakuza members hold to strong concepts of *meiyo* (honor), believing they are the true protectors of the Techno-Shogunate and that without them, society would crumble into chaos. The dichotomy of this is reflected in the various names the Yakuza go by. The average citizen calls them *gokudō*. The police have labeled them *bōryokudan*—"the violence group." Internally, Yakuza have named themselves *ninkyō dantai*—"the chivalrous organizations." The Yakuza think they're performing a service, running a business. Just because the authority says they're wrong doesn't mean they're going to stop anytime soon. They have clients to satisfy.

So what are they really? That depends on which side of the law you're on and what sort of business you run. We can establish a few facts though. First, the Yakuza operate according to an extensive hierarchy, with major families at the top and street gangs at the bottom. Once someone joins a gang, the hope is to work their way up to the upper levels of power and wealth within the criminal network. And once you're a member, the only way to leave is through death or having a foolproof plan for faking such a death. They're involved in any illicit activity imaginable, and have also been making serious headway into cybercrime, dealing with black code, death sims, unauthorized dubbing, and Synth prostitution.

**#Dark\_Ronin:** I hear they're trying to recruit more zeeks into their "family" too. They figure the cops have got them

on the force, they need a few mind-freaks of their own to level the playing field.

**#TopProfX:** I can confirm this. At least three oyabun in Osaka have demonstrated confirmed psychic abilities, including telekinesis and mind projection.

There are three main groups who hold the power majority in Japan and beyond: the Yamaguchi-gumi, the Sumiyoshi-rengo, and the Inagawa-kai. The largest is the Yamaguchi-gumi, composed of over 1,000 clans and comprising at least half of all Yakuza. Their leader, the *oyabun*, is Shou Minami.

The Sumiyoshi-kai come in second with 300 smaller groups who have formed an alliance. While it is presided over by oyabun Satomi Hayashi, he does not hold ultimate power. Instead, the other leaders debate and vote on any major actions that need to be taken.

Third is Inagawa-Kai with just over 300 clans—though the clan sizes are smaller than the Sumiyoshi-Kai. This group is based in Tokyo, but actually has stronger global operation in China and the Middle East. Iwato Kawaguchi, in his mid-fifties, singularly rules this group.

**#Synths\_For\_Life:** The Subtle Edge sushi shop in Nagasaki is a confirmed Yakuza front. Got a friend who works there who was showing off his new tattoos to me just a few days ago.

**#TeaWhore:** The whole southern district in Tokyo is Yakuza-owned and operated. So long as you aren't rude and point them out, they won't cause trouble for you, unless you're gaijin. Word on the street says the local oyabun loves to gut gaijin for giggles.

### TRIADS

Because of how entrenched the Yakuza are in every aspect of Japanese crime operations, it has been difficult for other factions, such as Chinese Triads, to gain a foothold in Nihon society. Difficult, but that doesn't mean they haven't been trying for a long time now. Considering that the Triads are in charge of China's trafficking in drugs, blackware, credit duping, assassinations, sex trade, etc., it makes sense why they'd want to expand into those same operations in Japan, as well as subsume the Yakuza's international channels. While Triad members are more numerous, the concentrated nature of Japan's Yakuza centers of operations forms a bit of a criminal bottleneck, forcing the Triads to fight an uphill battle for the smallest patch of island territory. They've gained small cells in Tokyo, Chiba, and Nagasaki (the latter primarily because of the original city being bombed to scrap, scattering the Yakuza presence there for years). But these cells are usually just struggling to stay under the radar and avoid being wiped out by the Yakuza. Some worry if the Triad truly started pumping men and credits into the effort, it could plunge Japan into a shadowy war with thousands, if not millions, dead before the end.



# CHARACTERS

*"Juu-nin to-iro." ... Ten people, ten colors. Everyone has their own tastes.*  
—Japanese Proverb

Corporal Takagawa eyed the tattoo parlor, using his trio of mini-drones to scope the neon-lit block, up and down. Hyper Tags marked and outlined the rest of his team. Prefect Officer Sata, his feline hybrid partner, had already scaled onto the roof to block off any escape attempts that way. His shadow team stood poised to sweep in from the back. Everything was in place to bring the black code den down—so long as nothing went wrong.

He blinked off the visual street overlay but left the building blueprint up in one corner. Drone heat sensors indicated half-a-dozen warm bodies inside, but that didn't account for shielded rooms or inactive roids. There were still at least ten ways the wrong bodies could bleed out tonight.

He tabbed his throat-mic and subvocalized: "Everyone ready? We get one shot at this."

After each point responded in the affirmative, he broadcasted the jamming signal from his police beacon. One of his smart drones had already broken the parlor security firewall and looped surveillance videos that showed a quiet street. Every light along the street went dark except for the ones in the parlor—all the signal his team needed.

Activating his exo-armor, he dashed from his hiding spot across the street, kicked the front door off its hinges, and barreled in, pistol ready. His visual scan took half a second. Three tattooed clients lay face down on padded recliners. From their total inaction, Takagawa knew they'd been drugged. The artists taking needles to their arms, legs, and backs, however, dove in all directions. One yanked a shotgun out from under his workstation. Another flared her hands and dozens of needles shot out from under her fingernails. The third sprinted for a side room.

Takagawa dove to one side as a shotgun blast sprayed the main front window, but didn't shatter the glass. Voices reported in. Shadow team coming through the back, as planned. Sata heading down from the second story through a hatch she'd torn open.

"Two armed in front," Takagawa said, blood thumping in his ears as he rose to one knee and loosed a string of shots. His armor absorbed the recoil, and a scream told him he hit at least one. "One runner. Contain him alive if you can."

Another shotgun blast peppered the wall just to his right. As Takagawa rose, he tugged a throwing blade from its belt slot and flung it. The shotgun-wielder shrieked as the blade pierced his hand, forcing him to drop the gun. Takagawa was on him a second later, a hand pinning the man to the ground by his throat. The needle-fingered woman writhed across the room. Oddly, she'd jabbed one finger into her side. Injecting a painkiller of some sort? He didn't want to know what other drug cocktails her augmented fingers could conjure.

"Got him," came Sata's voice. Takagawa looked up as the shadow team entered, rifles aimed. As they locked down the two he'd subdued, Sata came in, holding the runner at gunpoint. She met his eyes and nodded at the tattoo clients.

"Think they're in on it?"

Takagawa inspected the luminescent tattoos writhing across their skin. He shook his head. "Two Americans. One Brit. No. Just like the

others we've caught. The artists hide the actual black code in the tattoo animation matrix, embedded deep. Clients don't have a clue what they're carrying. They get tracked once they leave, found back in their home cities, and someone downloads the code there with a scanner and sells it. No TAP transfers, no data sticks. Just some harmless-looking tattoos. If that one guy's tattoo hadn't glitched after he picked up that virus, we might never have figured out how they were doing it."

"We're going to have to start scanning every tourist leaving the country for meta-tattoos?" Sata asked. "That's not going to make the Administrator happy."

Takagawa glanced at the runner. "Not unless we can get them to talk. Tell us where else they're running these operations."

The runner spat at their feet. Takagawa grinned and went over to the needle-woman, who'd fallen unconscious. He grabbed her by one wrist and raised her hand.

"Bring him over here. Let's see what she's got up her sleeve."

So, otamajakushi, you want to work? You want to survive here? Then you've got to offer something useful. Something others will find of value. There are as many ways of making a living as there are citizens, but there are a handful of personal paths certain citizens tend to gravitate toward. These are some ways you can quickly chart your route to credits and glory while integrating with Japanese society.

## ARCHETYPES

The following are Archetypes that are found throughout the Empire of the Setting Sun. The Archetypes below are all Novice humans with one free Edge. If a different race is chosen, adjust accordingly.

### ANCESTRAL SURROGATE

"Yes, grandfather. No, grandfather. I respectfully remind you I heard you the first time, most honorable grandfather. I've followed your instructions exactly, but the data cache isn't here. Yes, I've searched the whole place. Not a holowall to be found. They're all solid. I would rather you not take over my motor controls, grandfather. Do you not recall what happened last time, how much we had to pay that patch man when you triggered the bomb too soon?"

#Ssekein Uchida, Ronin

Personality uploads of the dearly departed retain their memories as well as their mannerisms. What if your ancestor had a few dirty, dark secrets? What if they had knowledge and skills that you lacked, but could prove quite useful on the street? And what if they were willing to do anything to get enough credits to grow themselves a new body to be downloaded into? Ancestral surrogates can install an uplink to their precursor's engrams and benefit from a direct connection to a wealth of information and previously unknown abilities—but at a cost. For instance, the ancestor could be incredibly demanding or annoying...



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**Attributes:** Agility d6, Smarts d8, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6  
**Skills:** Driving d6, Healing d6, Knowledge (Business) d8, Notice d8, Persuasion d6, +5 skill points  
**Charisma:** +0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 5; **Firewall:** 4; **Strain:** 0;  
**Street Cred:** 2  
**Hindrances:** Giri (Minor), Loyal, Secret (Major)  
**Edges:** Alertness, Scholar  
**Occupation:** Synth Monitor  
**Contacts:** Choose two

### CORPORATE OVERSEER

"Did you know the human body is a machine? Just so, when you bring many bodies into a single company, when they are fused by a united will and vision of glory and honor, they may become a grand force for the greater good. Because the greater good is what matters most. Know your place and be satisfied with it. Oh, and your place is under me so long as I see fit. So let it be."

#Rkuemon Taniguchi, Kenta Cyber Dynamics

Being a high-ranking manager in any of Japan's megacorporations means you understand the real strength of your nation. It is not in individuality or being a roving ronin, grubbing on the streets. It comes managing a team of reliable employees who respond to your every order without hesitation. You protect the corporate interests, you protect your loyal employees, and you ensure no one stands in the way of progress—or if they attempt to, their chaotic vectors are eliminated with all due prejudice, using the corporate resources at your disposal.

**Attributes:** Agility d6, Smarts d8, Spirit d6, Strength d4, Vigor d6  
**Skills:** Intimidate d6, Knowledge (Business) d8, Notice d6, Persuasion d8, Taunt d6, +2 Skill points  
**Charisma:** +0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 2; **Toughness:** 5; **Firewall:** 4; **Strain:** 0;  
**Street Cred:** 2  
**Hindrances:** Cautious, Loyal, Vengeful (Minor)  
**Edges:** Corporate Mogul, Rich, Strong Willed  
**Occupation:** Corporate Executive  
**Contacts:** Choose two

### PREFECT COP

"It's not the most glamorous beat on the block, no. But it's mine. I know every side street, every alley, every rooftop, every would-be crook, cowering con, or law-abiding citizen. They know me in return, and they respect the authority I represent. Or if they don't, then they soon learn the mistake of trying to thrive outside the law."

#Officer Aoto, Prefectural Police in Chiba

Under the purview of the National Police Agency, prefectural police have headquarters in segmented portions of every major city, with substations in more rural areas. They hold regular patrols, perform investigations and arrests, and respond to emergency calls. At times, they can be promoted to special teams such as riot police, Imperial guards, narcotics

agents, and Net monitoring. They're often on the lookout for Yakuza activity or dangerous freelancers threatening the public.

**Attributes:** Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d6  
**Skills:** Driving d6, Fighting d6, Intimidation d6, Investigation d6, Notice d6, Persuasion d4, Shooting d8  
**Charisma:** 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 5; **Firewall:** 4; **Strain:** 0;  
**Street Cred:** 2  
**Hindrances:** Vow (To Protect and Serve), two Minor  
**Edges:** Martial Artist, Prefect Cop  
**Occupation:** Patrol Officer  
**Contacts:** Choose two

### RESTORATIONIST

"This country's history has been despoiled by war and deviants for centuries now. It's my purpose to track down the hidden or stolen treasures of the past and restore them to their rightful place. Smugglers constantly try to sneak priceless relics to other countries. Looters seek out ancient sites to tear them apart for profit. Thieves break into museums or private collections and make off with the centerpieces. I get them back at all costs."

#Miu Arai, Chiba City Archaeological Operation and Research Center

A restorationist devotes their life to preserving the sanctity of Japanese culture and history. So much art and artifacts have been stripped from ancient temples or stolen from collections, just to be sold on some foreign black market or to a dishonorable private collector—never to be seen again. In these times, the restorationist tracks down the culprit and goes to any lengths to get back what was taken...for a significant fee, of course. But if an item is truly priceless, then what are a few Yen to acquire their services?

**Attributes:** Agility d6, Smarts d8, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6  
**Skills:** Fighting d6, Investigation d8, Notice d8, Persuasion d6, Shooting d6, Streetwise d8

**Charisma:** 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 5; **Firewall:** 4; **Strain:** 0; **Street Cred:** 2  
**Hindrances:** One Major, two Minor  
**Edges:** Bounty Hunter, Investigator  
**Occupation:** Bounty Hunter  
**Contacts:** Choose two

### ROYALTY

"They say the imperial family has no real power anymore, that it's all in the hands of the First General. To a degree, most would agree. But realize this. We're still here. Many of us still work within the government, and we still have a magnificent amount of wealth in our coffers—and money talks. Kané wa Amida yori hikaru. You just have to learn to let it whisper, for its glint to catch the right eye, a discrete eye. And then you wield it wisely, and you'll find there's still quite a good deal of power in your grasp."

#Prince Hitashi, Imperial Family

Being a prince or princess of the imperial family, one can actually wield more influence than the emperor, who is firmly under the





thumb of the First General. Royalty perform many official and public functions throughout the country, giving them access to diplomats, corporate leaders, and military officials. They can wield credits, gain access to incredibly sensitive data, and influence political matters across the world. Many are entirely loyal to the Japanese government, but some can have their own agendas in mind.

**Attributes:** Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d4, Vigor d6  
**Skills:** Fighting d4, Intimidation d8, Knowledge (Politics) d6, Notice d6, Persuasion d8, +4 skill points  
**Charisma:** +2; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 5; **Firewall:** 4; **Strain:** 0;  
**Street Cred:** 2  
**Hindrances:** Arrogant, two Minor  
**Edges:** Noble, Rich  
**Occupation:** None  
**Contacts:** Choose two

## SHINOBI

"..."

#[NAME REDACTED], Freelancer

As the samurai have returned, so have their historical foils, the shinobi. Whereas samurai war with honor, boldness, and strict ritual, the ninja traditionally rely on sabotage, deception, and silent murder. They only resort to direct combat if absolutely forced into it. Among other things, stealth technology has seen a resurgence of interest in shinobi-style assassination, allowing them to blend with surroundings without reliance on darkness. A true ninja, though, prides themselves on also being a master of disguise, poison, and hidden weapons or devious tools.

**Attributes:** Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d4, Vigor d6  
**Skills:** Climbing d6, Fighting d6, Lockpicking d6, Notice d6, Stealth d8, Streetwise d6, Throwing d6  
**Charisma:** 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 5; **Firewall:** 4; **Strain:** 0;  
**Street Cred:** 2  
**Hindrances:** Cautious, one Major, one Minor  
**Edges:** Assassin, Thief  
**Occupation:** Gardener  
**Contacts:** Choose two

**#Dark\_Ronin:** Gotta figure slipping on a stealth suit can make anyone insta-ninja these days.

**#CutthroatChibi:** The shinobi is more about being invisible. It's about having a purpose, a reason to remain unseen. If you're detected, it lessens your chances of success. It proves you aren't worthy of survival.

**#Dark\_Ronin:** And by "success," you're talking killing.

**#CutthroatChibi:** It's the ultimate form of success in today's world, wouldn't you say?

## YAKUZA OPERATOR

"Good and honorable sir, it brings a shadow across my heart to tell you that we have come into possession of certain videos of you. I won't sully my lips by specifying their contents, nor would I ever wish to darken the eyes of others by revealing to them what lies within this particular data feed. I fear the shame it might bring to your family would be too great for you to bear. However, fortune blesses us both, and it may be that, with a mutually profitable arrangement, these videos might forever disappear into the Deep."

#Kyuwa, Shitei Bōryokudan Clan

Ever loyal to their clan, their family, Yakuza operators oversee a wide variety of criminal operations on behalf of their oyabun. Usually they focus on a particular region of a city, monitoring businesses there (and making sure they pay regularly for protection), or trafficking illicit data, drugs, and people through their network. Bribery, intimidation, and blackmail are primary methods, backed up by more violent means if victims are uncooperative. At the same time, Yakuza see themselves as defenders of Japan, and will move swiftly to protect those civilians who live in their territory from outside threats.

**Attributes:** Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6  
**Skills:** Fighting d6, Intimidation d6, Notice d6, Persuasion d6, Stealth d4, Streetwise d8, Taunt d6  
**Charisma:** 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 5; **Firewall:** 4; **Strain:** 0;  
**Street Cred:** 2  
**Hindrances:** Loyal (Yakuza), one Major, one Minor  
**Edges:** Connections (Criminal Organizations)  
**Occupation:** Yakuza Member  
**Contacts:** Choose two

## ZEN MASTER

"The world is broken, even shattered in many ways. So many have shut their eyes to reality, and they seek to drag down others with them. Violence is a difficult path to walk on the journey to enlightenment, but it can be a virtuous path if you know the way. Some of my brothers and sisters may shun my methods, and they have the right to choose their own path. Yet if I may protect, if I may fill the cracks in others' hearts and minds, then let that be the purpose behind my strength."

#Kiichi Sone, Tsurugaoka Hachiman-gō Temple

A Zen master is an expert in achieving a state of mind that is perfect for martial arts: Mushin no shin. A mind without a mind. Through this method, they can achieve absolute flow within combat, shift between the gaps of their opponent, strike when the time and place are perfect. They are supreme strategists, utterly calm in violent circumstances, and yet understanding the occasional need to establish peace by force.

**Attributes:** Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d4, Vigor d6  
**Skills:** Fighting d8, Healing d6, Knowledge (Religion) d8, Notice d6, Stealth d6, Taunt d8, +5 skill points  
**Charisma:** 0; **Pace:** 5; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 5; **Firewall:** 4; **Strain:** 0;  
**Street Cred:** 2  
**Hindrances:** Bad Eyes (Minor), Pacifist (Minor), Elderly  
**Edges:** Elan, Martial Artist  
**Occupation:** Shinto Priest  
**Contacts:** Choose two

**#HoliMoli:** Ever think it's cheating to use neural implants to activate a false state of balance?

**#TopProfX:** Never. If the potential is within the brain, the manner of unlocking it does not matter. Meditation, mantras, or cybernetic mental interfaces. They are all different paths to the same end.



## OCCUPATIONS

Making a living means more than trying to build up street cred, right? The world runs on credits. In Japan, that's Yen. Sure, nakama, you could try and get by on a string of odd jobs, but do you recognize how many people who try to subsist on that alone are either homeless or dead by now? Besides, what do ronin runs get you beside some cash on the sly? You better have a back-up plan for steady pay, otherwise you could find yourself bleeding from a gut wound after a gig gone wrong, without any way to pay for a patch job. Below, you'll find a list of possible occupations to choose from that are a bit more singular to Japan. Have your own ideas? Then go and make them happen!

### BUDDHIST MONK

**Nicknames:** Brother, Cenobite, Lama, Would-Be Buddha

"We are what we think. To realize that truth, to know that all potential for peace can be found within you, releases you from the chains of appetite and unrest that bind so many all their lives. Why carry such a weight? To hold on to anger, envy, dishonesty, lust...it is like swallowing hot coals so they forever burn in your belly. It is possible to end your suffering, as I always seek to end mine. You and I are both candles that can burn with happiness, and to light one candle does not extinguish the flame of another."

- **Bonus Credits:** None
- **Requisites:** Spirit d6+, Pacifist
- **Perks:** Buddhist Monks receive a Poor lifestyle (see **Cost of Living** in the *Interface Zero 2.0* core book) for free. Due to their peaceful nature and interaction with others Buddhist Monks gain a +1 Charisma bonus.

### CALLIGRAPHIST

**Nicknames:** Artist, Composer, Inkwriter, Flourishman, Chartist

"Some think calligraphy is all pretty lines on a static canvas. Nothing is further from the truth. Yes, the ink may dry, but it is what it dries on that makes all the difference. It could be a birth certificate or a death note. It could be religious artwork or a wedding invitation. It could be a message from the Emperor himself. The words matter. The form matters. The instant of clearing your mind and letting the moment in time flow out through your fingers and brush is what matters."

- **Bonus credits:** 5,000 each Advance
- **Requisites:** Agility d6+, Knowledge (Art) d8+
- **Perks:** Your skill with a brush and pen is unmatched. You gain a +2 to Trait rolls involving writing and calligraphy (such as forgery).

### CHEF

**Nicknames:** Cook, Itamae, Sushi Chef, Wakiita

"There is a reason that becoming a fully approved sushi chef takes years of training and apprenticeship. To some, it may appear a simple process. Yet you must always consider how the food is handled. You must know how to handle the knife and other utensils like an extension of yourself. You must consider your client experience, and always be aware of how you move, how you behave, how you breathe. Only then are you worthy."

- **Bonus credits:** 5,000 each Advance
- **Requisites:** Agility d6+, Smarts d6+, Knowledge (Cooking) d8+

- **Perks:** You know how to use knives, pans, and a various assortment of kitchen tools as weapons. You gain the Improvisational Fighter Edge when using kitchen related utensils.

### CURIO PEDDLER

**Nicknames:** Shyster, Dashers, Baggers, Huckster, Hawker, Fence

"I swear it's pure jade. Would I lie to you? This statue's at least five hundred years old. Oh, you fancy the medallion? Pretty sure it's from the royal family. Fine, yes, those are knock-off imperial seals. Don't look at the bottom! Made in China? Says who? You can't trust anything you read these days. So are you just going to look all day or you want a little trinket to take home to your kids? You got kids right? I've got a great knife set they could play with. Real ninja shit. Where are you going?"

- **Bonus credits:** Persuasion × 500 each Advance
- **Requisites:** Notice d6+, Persuasion d6+
- **Perks:** You know the value of goods and where to buy/sell them. You gain +2 to Persuasion and Streetwise rolls when buying or selling goods.

### DIGI-INK TATTOOIST

**Nicknames:** Needler, Skinner, Skin Painter, Irezumist, Ink Carver, Teborist

"Foreigners are always afraid they're going to ask for tattoos that say Courage or Peace, but will actually get something ridiculous, like I'm a Fool or I Don't Really Speak Japanese—and they won't know the difference. And they should be afraid. Because a tattoo shouldn't be a random statement just to look cool. It must have a deeper meaning. So think carefully of the why, because the answer will be stuck with you the rest of your life. Unless you pay extra to get it removed, of course."

- **Bonus credits:** 3,000 plus (1d6 × 100) in tips each Advance
- **Requisites:** Agility d6+, Smarts d6+
- **Perks:** Digi-Ink Tattooists start with the Artist Tools augmentation for free.

**#SUPAKAWAI!** Where can I get those tattoos that glow and move? I want one so bad and I'm in Nagasaki next month!

**#TeaWhore:** Check out Whalebone. They're a bit sketchy, but they got primo liners.

**#CutthroatChibi:** No way. Whalebone always overcharges and their designs are shit. Plus I hear some of their artists got busted for embedding black code in client designs.

**#TeaWhore:** Really? I've been going there for h-tat touch-up for years and never had any issues.

**#CutthroatChibi:** How many holo-tats do you have?

**#TeaWhore:** More than you'll ever see.

### DRUG DEALER

**Nicknames:** Pusher, Chemist, Candy Man, Doper, Source

"You got the credits? No, don't flash the stick here. Just tell me if it's clean. I'll know if you're lying and you won't find me again. All right. We're good here. So pick your poison. Dragon dust? Lotus blossom? Yellow smoke? Sure, it's all pure. Finest stuff in the prefect. You don't waste my time; I don't waste yours, sweetheart. You'll be gliding golden soon enough. Don't grab. Shit, who's that over there? I thought I told you to come alone!"



- **Bonus credits:** 7,000 each Advance
- **Requisites:** Connections, Streetwise d6+
- **Perks:** People that sample your wares come from all walks of life. Best of all most owe you something or are willing to do something in exchange for a hit. Once per session you can call upon a 1 point Favor without expending a Contact use or Street Cred.

## GARDENER

**Nicknames:** Grubber, Dirtmonger, Trimmer, Curator, Tender

"There is beauty in a harmonious landscape. When you stand in the middle of blossoming trees, flowering shrubs, tended rocks and sand, wending brooks, and just listen to the wind...the birds... you are seeing and hearing all that is right in the world."

- **Bonus credits:** 1,000 each Advance
- **Requisites:** Smarts d6+
- **Perks:** You gain a +1 to sight and sound based Notice rolls.

## ROBOTICS TECH

**Nicknames:** Mechanic, Mech Maxer, Tweaker, Greasy Wrench, Botter

"I built my first robot when I was four. Broke it a month later. Fixed and upgraded it with parts I scavenged from my parent's car. Got grounded for month, but it was worth it because I knew what I'd be doing the rest of my life. I've never gotten married because robots are my only love. I practically sleep in the manufacturing and repair bay. Each malfunctioning or battered robot that comes in is like a cracked vase that needs restoring. Every one that leaves performs better than it ever has before."

- **Bonus credits:** 7,000 each Advance
- **Requisites:** McGyver
- **Perks:** You gain a +1 bonus on Knowledge or Repair rolls required to use, design, or repair robotic devices.

## SHINTO PRIEST

**Nicknames:** Kannushi, Spirit Leader, Shinshoku, Shriner, Kami Keeper, Blessed One

"When you open your eyes and understand all elements of the world possess a soul, it is actually quite freeing. Humanity itself is a delightful race, plagued by external evil. The kami are here to protect us, to love us in return. So recognize your oneness with the animals, with the forest, with all other people, no matter how strange they may be. Then you may find peace. I am no more special than anyone else, but I am blessed to lead many to this truth."

- **Bonus credits:** 3,000 each Advance
- **Requisites:** Spirit d8+, Knowledge (Religion) d6+
- **Perks:** Shinto Priests gain an additional Benny each session. However this Benny may only be spent on Spirit rolls.

## SLAVE LABORER

**Nicknames:** Eta, Indebted, Contractors,

"I don't know how I got here. At some point, all my choices just started fading away. No money. No home. No family. No friends. Sooner or later, you just have to do the only thing left. Undignified? You could call it that, but guess what? I've got a bed, I've got regular meals, and me and the boss...well, we get along just fine. I do a

good job and he's the only one who ever gave me a chance. I may be a lowlife in many people's eyes, but I am alive and I'm cared for."

- **Bonus credits:** 500 each Advance
- **Requisites:** Simulacra
- **Perks:** Your basic needs such as basic medical care, shelter, and food, are met. You receive a Poor lifestyle (see **Cost of Living** in the *Interface Zero 2.0* core book) for free.

## SYNTH MONITOR

**Nicknames:** Taskmaster, Synth Spy, Clerk, Disciplinarian, Supervisor

"Someone has to keep an eye on the sou-gougin, no matter what role they play in society. It's not that I don't trust them myself, but plenty of people don't, and they're who matter. I'm just here to make sure no Synth causes trouble. I've got about fifty that report to me each month. I check on their activities, monitor their whereabouts, pay them a visit if I have to. In all my years of work, I've only had two ever go missing. One wound end up having been beaten to death by some thugs once we found her. The other... we never found."

- **Bonus credits:** 7,500 each Advance
- **Requisites:** Investigation d6+, Notice d8+, Persuasion d6+
- **Perks:** You know more about synths than most people know about their partners. Your familiarity of synths grants you a +1 to non-combat Trait rolls involving simulacrum.

## THEATER PERFORMER

**Nicknames:** Kabuki, Actors, Stage Spirits, Performers, Keepers of Culture

"I'm not on stage for my own acclaim. I'm not singing, dancing, or wearing my masks for the applause, as pleasing as it may be. I'm there to connect with the audience and help them connect with the meaning behind the performance. It teaches them what it means to be Japanese, it teaches them the values that matter most to us, our history, and how to embrace their own strongest emotions. What could be better than that?"

- **Bonus credits:** 1,000 each Advance
- **Requisites:** Spirit d6+, Mask Master
- **Perks:** Theater performers gain +2 to Common Knowledge rolls involving Japan's history and culture.

**#Synths\_For\_Life:** The Mikanoshi Theater in Osaka has this amazing show where random audience members are brought on stage and plugged in to a shared sim overlay. Then the rest of the audience directs their lines and actions remotely to make a totally unique show.

**#CutthroatChibi:** Open up my TAP to public access? Never in a million years.

**#Synths\_For\_Life:** It's art!

**#CutthroatChibi:** It's moronic. Show some common sense. Better yet, don't. Go get yourself killed or mind-wiped, and leave me all your stuff.

## YAKUZA MEMBER

**Nicknames:** Gokudō, Shatei, Kyodai, Kabuki-Mono, Boryokudan, Bakuto, Tekiya

"See my little finger? I cut it off last year after I botched a bribery operation. Got three of my brothers arrested, and my oyabun was furious. Furious! The others in the clan wanted me dead. Instead, my oyabun said he still saw potential in me. But I had to make



## JAPAN: EMPIRE OF THE SETTING SUN

amends. He gave me a knife. Told me to cut the tip of the finger off. It was the hardest thing I've ever done, but it was all worth it. I'm forgiven. A moment of pain for a lifetime of potential. They're my family and always will be."

- **Bonus credits:** 2,000 each Advance
- **Requisites:** Loyal (Yakuza), Fighting d6+, Streetwise d6+
- **Perks:** A Yakuza is never alone. Yakuza members gain the Connections (Yakuza) Edge for free.

### NEW HINDRANCE

#### SHELL SHOCK (MAJOR)

The character has a tendency to freeze up in combat. He begins the first round of combat Shaken. This condition can be removed normally.

### NEW EDGES

#### BACKGROUND EDGES

##### FAMILY FRIENDLY

##### Requirements: Novice

Your character is one of the few in Japan to still value family over wealth, and have a growing number of children under his care. While this could be a liability if his enemies ever targeted them, his children are clever and can get in and out of places around the neighborhood where the hero can't easily go. They also greatly respect him, and are willing to perform small tasks or gather intelligence, providing you a +2 bonus to Streetwise rolls in hero's neighborhood. Each session, the character gains 1 point of Street Cred that may be only spent on calling in Favors from his family.

##### ROYALTY

##### Requirements: Novice

Your genetic connection to the Imperial Family, no matter how distant, automatically puts you socially head-and-shoulders above everyone else. They may not even like you, but they are forced to respect you (fearing the consequences, otherwise). You gain +2 to Intimidation rolls if the people are aware of your royal heritage.

#### COMBAT EDGES

##### BLIND FIGHTING

##### Requirements: Novice, Notice d8+

The hero has learned to rely on senses other than sight. The character no longer suffers attack penalties for Dim and Dark lighting.

##### CHOPPING BOARD

##### Requirements: Novice, Agility d8+, Fighting d6+

Years of apprenticeship and mastery of being a sushi chef has made your knives an extension of your will. When fighting with small bladed weapons in mêlée combat you deal d8 bonus damage instead of d6 with a raise.

##### GROUND FIGHTER

##### Requirements: Seasoned, Fighting d8+

The character no longer suffers penalties to Parry or Fighting rolls while Prone.

##### MERCIFUL

##### Requirements: Novice, Fighting d8+

You are skilled at not inflicting long lasting damage to a foe. You no longer suffer a penalty when doing nonlethal damage with mêlée weapons.

##### MESMERIZING LINES

##### Requirements: Novice

With your calligraphy brush in hand, usable ink nearby, and a drawing surface of any sort available, you can find your moment of flow and whisk out a hypnotically simple work of art.

When used the character may make a Smarts Trick against all targets in an area. Place a Large Burst Template adjacent to the character and all targets in the area must roll Smarts against the character's total.

##### ZEN FOCUS

##### Requirements: Veteran, Spirit d8+

Your Zen mastery allows you to flow instinctively into a moment within a fight and to let an attack pass you by minimizing damage. You may use Spirit in place of Vigor for making Soak rolls.

#### HACKER EDGES

##### GHOST IN THE MACHINE

##### Requirements: Seasoned, Smarts d6+, Hacking d6+

You've been getting odd flickers of motion that no one else sees and hearing occasional murmurs. You've had your TAP checked and there's no sign of malfunctions or interference. However, ever since this manifested, Firewalls and A.I.s have been oddly compliant to your hacking requests. You gain +1 to Hacking firewalls, and you get +1 Persuasion if ever dealing with an artificial intelligence. You still can't get rid of the sense that someone is looking out through your eyes from time to time, and you have no idea of their intentions.

**#WillyaWontcha:** So what do I do if I think I've picked up a rogue A.I. in my system? Is there some sort of anti-A.I. app I can download?

**#TopProfX:** Don't be ridiculous. You can't "pick up" an A.I. like a common datavirus.

**#WillyaWontcha:** Really? I don't have to worry about these glitches?

**#TopProfX:** Of course you should be worried. If it's really a Netghost, it's targeting you for a reason.

**#WillyaWontcha:** That makes me feel soooo much better. /sarcasm

#### POWER EDGES

##### ANCESTRAL ZEEK

##### Requirements: Novice, Spirit d6+

You have an ancestor's personality upload connected to your TAP, and to your surprise, they were an unknown zeek while living. Their unique interaction with your TAP bestows a single Seasoned Power (with a Psionics d8), to you. This power remains static and cannot be improved, even if you already possess zeek Powers or Edges.



## PROFESSIONAL EDGES

### MASK MASTER

**Requirements:** Novice, Smarts d6+, Knowledge (Theater) d8+

Your experience in a variety of Japanese theater styles has made you more than adept in the use of masks and makeup. You can dramatically change your features in moments or take on multiple personas, even making people believe you are a different gender. You are able to easily throw together a disguise at a moment's notice, with little preparation and gear. The hero receives a +2 to Persuasion rolls to pass himself off as another.

### PREFECT COP

**Requirements:** Seasoned, Driving d4+, Knowledge (Law) d6+, Shooting d6+

The law is on your side. In fact, you *are* the law! The resources of your prefect station are at your disposal, and you have back-up just a secure TAP call away. If acting within your prefect, you may call two cop Allies. Reinforcements arrive on-scene in 2d6 minutes.

### PEDDLER

**Requirements:** Novice, Smarts d6+, Persuasions d6+, Streetwise d8+

You peddle what many consider to be worthless trinkets to unwary tourists or simple children. Yet hidden away within your collection are a handful of actually valuable items, true treasures you've coveted for years. Once per session if you are in dire need of credits you may sell an item from your collection. The process requires a Streetwise roll and 1d6 hours. With a success you collect 2,500 credits (5,000 with a raise). You may only use this ability once per game session.

## SOCIAL EDGES

### VENERABLE ANCESTOR

**Requirements:** Novice, Elderly, Spirit d8+

You wear your age well and have obviously survived so long through well-honed intelligence and skill. Even though the Japanese culture has shifted away from ancestor worship, many still admire those who the years have blessed, and they seek you out for mature insight and advanced knowledge.

Once per scene the hero may meditate uninterrupted for 1d4x15 minutes to gain insight into the current situation or question. At the end of the meditation he makes a Spirit roll at -2. With a success he gains a Benny, which he may freely give to anyone whom he can communicate with. The Benny lasts until the end of the scene. A critical failure on the roll results in the wrong information and character loses a Benny.

## WEIRD EDGES

### NIRVANA

**Requirements:** Heroic, Spirit d10+

Years of meditative practice allow you to achieve a state of nirvana, where all your base appetites, fleshly needs, and worldly distractions fall away. While you remain in the world and understand its significance, in many ways you are no longer a part of it. This allows you to remain unwavering in the face of the hostile situation. You are immune to Fear and Intimidation.





# MALMART JAPAN

*"Atama kakushite, shiri kakusazu." ... Don't hide your head but expose your ass.*

—Japanese Proverb

Ooh, now we get to the shiny stuff, nakama. These are all the things we get to play with while hoping they blow up in our enemy's face rather than ours, hai? I know most of you are major Malmart fans. Probably buy everything there from your underwear to your war gear. One problem. Japan has pretty strict rules on what you can bring into the country. Unless you've got an eye-bugging level of diplomatic immunity or are willing to spend your last credit on a smuggler, you're not likely to get in here with many of the pretty, powerful toys you're used to toting. Your implants are going to get zillions of tracking and quarantine filters downloaded into them, severely limiting their usefulness. Depending on the lethal potential of your cybernetic limbs, they might get deactivated or dismantled.

So what do you do?

Buy local. China might be a manufacturing powerhouse, true, but they're quickly falling into the trap that undermined the whole Old America infrastructure: fast and cheap. The Japanese, though, continue to prize quality over quantity. We like the extreme attention to detail, flawless execution, and ultimate reliability. After all, if the equipment we build fails us, we have only failed ourselves in the end.

**#Dark\_Ronin:** Huh. Never thought of it that way.

**#Droneofthemoth:** How very Zen. We make the world, we are the world, something like that?

**#Dark\_Ronin:** Kind of scary when you think about it, actually. I mean, what we create is only as reliable as we are.

**#Droneofthemoth:** Humanity is capable of perfection. We're getting closer to it every day.

**#Billy\_Black\_Eyes:** Your definition of "perfection" aside, if we extend the theory of "it's only as reliable as its creators," then I'm not sure I want to see a human realization of perfection.

Oh, we've got our gutterware and knock-offs, but I'm sure you're a discerning sort who knows you get what you pay for. If a deal is too good to be true, it's probably because they're hawking stolen wares and want it in your hands when the *porisu* come looking.

Where do you go to buy in Japan? Almost everywhere. Really. Stuff is sold on almost every street corner. We've got hundreds of open-air markets in each major city, and dozens of skyscrapers in Tokyo alone (like those around Shinjuku Station) have thirty-plus floors of commerce just waiting for you to stroll through. Or just shop through the digi-logs each corporation produces on a quarterly basis. Oh, insider tip: If you go to the DEDgewds feedboard and post a few times about how much a particular weapon brings a gleam to your eye, you might find yourself contacted by certain individuals who could provide unregistered versions of such for a reasonable markup.

**#CutthroatChibi:** I second the vote for DEDgewds! They can be pricey, depending on what you're looking for, but they're fast and can get practically anything delivered to your door.

**#Your\_Lolita\_Princess:** What did you buy off there?

**#CutthroatChibi:** The usual. A few handguns, ammo, medpacks...the one-legged golemmech in my garage...

**#Your\_Lolita\_Princess:** You did not. Liar.

**#CutthroatChibi:** Swear to Charon.

And if you aren't from around here, drop me a note when you arrive. I can point you in the direction of a few reliable suppliers. They've literally got everything you could ever need...for a price.

## ARMOR

Skin is such a pathetic thing, have you noticed? Marvel of evolution, my ass. Sure, it does all that helpful stuff like contain nerve endings and keep your circulatory system and organs from causing a frightening mess at dinnertime, but have you ever stopped to realize how fucking fragile skin is? I mean, we're basically walking water balloons who've created increasingly sharp needles with which to pop each other.

Fortunately we're water balloons with brains (most of us, at least), and we've come up with increasingly lovely ways to reduce the chances of our being popped via armor! Take a look at this array:

### CHRYSANTHEMUM "SECOND SKIN" KUSARI KATABIRA

Often the best way to survive a fight is to remain as light and agile as possible. You've no doubt honed your movement and situational awareness, but *saru mo ki kara ochiru*. A stray round...a lucky slash...and you tumble. But what if the skin they struck wasn't yours at all? Announcing the revolutionary Second Skin, a genetically constructed biostasis suit of synth-skin that is easily worn over your own. It respire, it transfers sensory data, and it allows you to move with total ease — yet it also hardens on impact, turning mortal wounds to mere inconveniences. *Warning:* If biostasis requirements are not cared for properly, Second Skin will begin to deteriorate and will rot within a month.

### KENTA CYBER DYNAMICS KOZANE ARMOR

This is the standard version of our Samurai-modeled line of body armor, providing full coverage protection — including a basic *mengu* for your head — while allowing for high mobility and equipment storage. Tip the scales in your favor while keeping your credit budget balanced!. Negates 4 points of AP from ballistic attacks (not *mêlée* or energy).

### KENTA CYBER DYNAMICS Ô-YOROI

The Great Armor of Old is reborn! For the warrior who will accept nothing less than the highest honor, this surely will be the prize of your armory. While it shares a similar look to the Kozane model, the Great Armor has increased joint articulation, naturally reduces load-bearing by 50%, and is fully sealable from outside environments, supporting the wearer for up to half an hour via internal oxygen tanks and environmental control. Available in custom paint jobs. Negates 4 points of AP from ballistic attacks (not *mêlée* or energy).



TYPE (PERSONAL)	ARMOR	WEIGHT	COST	NOTES
Chrysanthemum "Second Skin" Kusari Katabira	+2	2	1,000	Covers torso, arms, and legs. Stacks with Armor.
Kenta Cyber Dynamics Kozane Armor	+4	18	12,000	Covers entire body.
Kenta Cyber Dynamics ô-Yoroi	+6	20	14,000	Covers entire body. See description.
Shogun Outfitters Keikô Asphalt Warrior	+4	6	6,000	Covers torso and head.
Shogun Outfitters Lamellar Body Armor	+4	5	7,500	Covers torso, arms, legs. See description
Shogun Outfitters Tankô Triumph	+2	6	2,500	Covers torso
TYPE (EXOARMOR)	ARMOR	WEIGHT	COST	NOTES
Chrysanthemum Edo-Excel	+6	35/180	175,000	+2 Pace; Agility, Strength, Vigor +1 die type; +1 Firewall
Shogun Outfitters Tameshi Gusoku	+6	25/120	120,000	Heavy Armor
Shogun Outfitters Tatami Gusoku	+8	35/200	150,000	Agility and Strength +1 die type; Heavy Armor
Kenta Cyber Dynamics Shozoku Suit	+4	25/115	80,000	+4 Pace, Running d10; Agility +1 die type; +2 Stealth
<sup>1</sup> Weight listed: worn/deactivated.				
TYPE (OTHER)	ARMOR	WEIGHT	COST	NOTES
Shogun Outfitters Horo	+1	5	15,000	Covers rear and sides. Stacks with Armor.

### SHOGUN OUTFITTERS KEIKÔ ASPHALT WARRIOR

Prefer a little more speed to your combat? Vehicular fighting get your blood gunning? Well, keep that blood on the inside with the Asphalt Warrior armor set, an updated version of the armor worn by noble Samurai horseman as they invaded enemy villages. Whether you're behind the wheel or manning the rooftop artillery, you'll keep your balance and your life with this full torso and helmet affair. Built lightweight so your vehicle isn't slowed down at all! Negates 4 points of AP from ballistic attacks (not mêlée or energy).

### SHOGUN OUTFITTERS LAMELLAR BODY ARMOR

It is sad but true: you never know when a fight will break out, and you must always be prepared. Our Lamellar Body Armor is designed to be worn 24/7. It is rated to stop any blade thrust and will maintain integrity when struck by up to six ballistic rounds (not including armor-piercing rounds). Not only is it effective, but it's affordable and one of our more popular pieces for citizens. Negates 4 points of AP from ballistic and attacks (not energy).

### SHOGUN OUTFITTERS TANKÔ TRIUMPH

Worn by footsoldiers of ancient time, the Tankô Triumph is designed with street fighting in mind, ensuring you always remain mobile while letting you take a few hits. This reinforced vest easily slips under or over most clothing, with the stylish cap protecting your brainpan from any who might think to catch you off-guard. Tankô Triumph is designed to negate 2 points of AP from ballistic attacks (not mêlée or energy).

## EXOARMOR

Time to slash it up a notch. Standard armor not exactly making your nose hairs quiver in joy? Why not give yourself the full package and full protection with ExoArmor? Walking down the street suited up in these sets will be sure to turn heads and also turn enemy fire towards a weaker target.

All ExoArmor must be charged at least one hour out of every twenty-four. In addition ExoArmor negates 4 points of AP from all ballistic attacks (not mêlée or energy).

### CHRYSANTHEMUM EDO-EXCEL

Developed by the finest minds in the world, if not the solar system, this ExoArmor is designed to heighten...everything. No implants or augments required. Baseline human? No longer when you strap into the Edo-Excel, where your strength, agility, and

endurance will put even the most gene-tweaked hybrid to shame. The full-spectrum helm allows for unobstructed scanning up to 100 feet, and you can fully shield your TAP from external input or tampering with a simple mental command. Become the better you.

- **Enhancements:** +2 Pace, Agility, Strength, Vigor+1 die type, +1 Firewall

### SHOGUN OUTFITTERS TAMESHI GUSOKU

Bullet-tested, citizen-approved. The Tameshi Gusoku was the original bullet-resistant armor of ancient Nihon, and it can be yours today. Fully certified to stop everything up to a direct hit from a rocket launcher!

### SHOGUN OUTFITTERS TATAMI GUSOKU

While in all ways equally functional to the Tameshi Gusoku, this version allows you to battle in style. For those blessed with wealth, this is the gold, blue, and silver gilded model, with the plasma-welded stylizations guaranteed to not scratch or dull even if you get run over by a tank. (Note: Suit structural parameters are not certified for withstanding being run over by a tank.) Enjoy a lifetime of free decorative touch-ups with purchase!

- **Enhancements:** Agility and Strength +1 die type

### KENTA CYBER DYNAMICS SHOZOKU SUIT

Worn by the lethal and mysterious Shinobi, the shozoku helped them blend into the shadows and move with mystical speed to eliminate their targets. Wrapped within the sleek, trim flo-metal of this ExoArmor, you'll find your running speed and reaction times magnified by a factor of three! Your enemies will think you're in multiple places at once and will never know where you're going to strike next. Unleash your inner ninja! (Note: No historical evidence exists that ninjas ever wore shozoku during feudal Japanese eras.)

- **Enhancements:** +4 Pace, Running d10; Agility +1 die type; +2 Stealth

## OTHER

### SHOGUN OUTFITTERS HORO

Even with cybernetic optical implants in the back of your skull, seeing the enemy behind you won't do you any good if they got a shot off before you can take evasive action. Built of flexanium, this cloak is designed to look absolutely stylish as it lies against your back. Yet at your mental command or when struck with dangerous



## JAPAN: EMPIRE OF THE SETTING SUN

levels of force, the hidden framework will instantly activate and expand into an impenetrable shell, defending you from ballistics from behind and to the sides. You don't need to watch your back. We'll watch it for you.

### BIOFORMS

Japanese have been experimenting with bioforms for decades now, and are constantly finding new ways to twist and transform crude genetic codes into the cute, the terrifying, and the practical. Made-to-order life forms are a hot commodity in Japan, especially considering their flexible price ranges based on size and function, as well as longer lifespans than your average Synth. Here are examples of just some of the few bioform creatures you might encounter throughout the country.

If required, stats for the listed Bioforms may be found in "Threats" on page 55.

#### ANIME ATTENDANTS

Harkening back to the cartoon style Japan is famous for, more humanoid servants — usually of a female build — are tweaked to present Anime-like features. These can vary wildly in style, but often include oversized, vibrant eyes, incredibly expressive mouths, and a defined range of exaggerated facial expressions to indicate specific moods.

**Cost:** 40,000

**#Oni\_Broni:** There's a "gentlemen's" karaoke club in Yokohama, Firefly Pendant, that's staffed by nothing but these Anime bioforms. It's totally creepy. The owner is this old woman who had augmentation surgery to make herself look like an anime doll too. She's at least fifty, but looks decades younger thanks to having skin grafts every other month.

**#Billy\_Black\_Eyes:** You've been there?

**#Oni\_Broni:** Once. Never going back. Their faces are disturbing. All smiling and big glistening eyes, and you just can't help but imagine they'd murder you and wear your skin without changing expression one bit.

**#Billy\_Black\_Eyes:** Ami, you are freaking me out.

#### BAKU

Developed based on the mythological creature, the baku is like a living dreamcatcher and is most often vat-brewed for young children suffering from nightmares. The docile, furry, and rotund creature has a tiny elephantine snout, which the child is told "will eat their nightmares." They are easily trained to sit beside the child's bed all night and monitor their dreaming brainwaves. Should the creature sense disruptive REM patterns and physical restlessness, it can engage a biofeedback loop that reduces the sleeping child's unconscious anxiety and guide them to a more peaceful rest mode.

**Cost:** 5,000

#### GLOWHERONS

Another luxury bioform, these are engineered herons that are geo-fixed to a particular estate or territory. At night, they appear as winged ghosts sweeping through the sky or standing as guardians along a lake's edge. They can be engineered with a fixed luminescent shade or constructed to be able to fluoresce through a wide range of the spectrum, or even in particular sequences based on predetermined stimuli.

**Cost:** 15,000

#### KAMICUTIES

Originally based on stylized kami spirits in a popular children's show of the same name, these cuddly creatures were intended to represent minor manifestations of nature, with fire, water, earth, air, and plant kami being displayed in all sorts of bizarre ambulatory forms — none more than a foot high.

**Cost:** 1,000

#### KITSUNE

The most common version of this bioform is a humanoid with multiple fox tails — nine at the most. Not a true hybrid, these kitsune are instead created as friendly companions, entertainers, or replacement spouses. They are given a quick wit but benign intents, though if their ward is threatened, they will sacrifice their lives to let them escape.

**Cost:** 50,000

#### KOMAINU

Most people know these creatures as Foo Dogs from China or Lion Dogs outside cheap Anglicized versions of Japanese restaurants. These creatures are from Japanese legend, created as loyal guardians of holy sites and ward off evil spirits. Such designer canines can often be seen prowling estates, guarding temples or shrines, or as the private pet to one celebrity or another.

**Cost:** 5,000

#### MINIDRAGS

These flightless reptiles have been modified to possess a serpentine body, furred or feathery frills, horns, and long legs with claws. Their features closely match those of a traditional whiskered Japanese dragon. They are tame and often treated as lap pets.

**Cost:** 2,000

#### MOTOMASK

These faces are constructed with a stunted brain and simplistic biological system contained within a small box. Appearing as an animated mask, these faces require little food or water to survive and are able to be positioned to monitor areas, offer simple conversation, or act as an early alarm system.

**Cost:** 1,500

#### ONI

Springing from the pages of Japanese art and literature, these bioforms are crafted as devilish, heavily muscled humanoids with horns, claws, wild hair, and bulbous eyes. They are used as bouncers, bodyguards, and thugs. Sometimes it is difficult to determine whether an oni is truly a bioform or a human having been cosmetically and genetically enhanced to look like one.

**Cost:** 75,000

**#Synths\_For\_Life:** Hey OB, these your cousin or something?

**#Oni\_Broni:** Don't be an idiot. I'm just big into Japanese mythology. Sure, I got a few hyper-tags that can make me look like one of these demons to those with the eyes for it, but bioform Oni don't even get outfitted with regular TAPs. They usually just have short-range cochlear implants and optical overlays for more local communication and control. They're not real people or citizens.

**#Synths\_For\_Life:** Careful. Your bigotry is starting to show.

**#Oni\_Broni:** Hey, you asked.



## TALKING KOI

For the garden pond missing the elevated touch, consider a talking koi to keep visitors entertained as they wander and meditate on the beauty of cultivated nature. Talking koi were engineered with human-like mouths and tongues, and can repeat a wide range of wise phrases and civilities when prompted by particular questions. They are not sentient.

**Cost:** 1,000

## TENGU

Another legend brought to life as a bioform, these are again not true hybrids, but a humanoid with bird-like features such as wings and claws, as well as either beaks or giant noses. They are often bought as bodyguards or act as acrobatic performers. They are flightless.

**Cost:** 35,000

**#TeaWhore:** Not so sure they're all flightless. Seen a few figures winging overhead.

**#FishBasket:** Sure those are just government drones? I hear there's been a lot of aerial surveillance traffic around Osaka's skies, trying to keep an eye on the Wiped and unTAPPED population there.

**#TeaWhore:** Government drones don't flap.

**#FishBasket:** Could be a holo-projection to hide the real machine.

**#TeaWhore:** Yeah, and it could be those avian hybrids everyone's been chatting about on the feeds for months. It could be angels. What's your point?

## YŌKAI

Any bioform with an animal's body but human features is classified in this category. Whether they can talk or truly think is up to the buyer.

**Cost:** 10,000

# CYBERNETICS

The body you were born with just isn't good enough, nakama? Or maybe it's suffered a bit over the years and is starting to break down. Personally, I don't visit a chopshop until absolutely necessary, but I'm not one to deny the many advantages cybernetic augments and implants can bestow. If you're going to upgrade, be sure to stick to streetware. Gutterware is nothing but a horrible accident waiting to happen. If you're desperate though, I certainly can't stop you.

## AUGMENTATION PACKAGES

### BUSHIDO PACKAGE

You have chosen a difficult path and to fight with the greatest weapon of all — your honor. Your blade is as honed as your perception, and you will emerge victorious from each battle knowing you do so without betraying your soul to darkness.

- **Augmentations:** Emotional Resistance Response System, Mêlée Combat System I, Muscle Augmentation, Subdermal Armor, Wireless Reflexes I

### FLOWFORM PACKAGE

Life is made up of currents, and you seek to become the drop that navigates them all perfectly. With this package, you will be

tuned in to the world; able to pause within the moment and find the precise path that will help you reach enlightenment.

- **Augmentations:** Biofeedback, Fight or Flight System, Tactical Computer

### NINJAWARE PACKAGE

Shadow, poison, and speed are your allies, only coming next to the dozens of keen blades you carry strapped to your body. You are never without a deadly mission, and targets fall before you like rice stalks before the thresher. This package provides heightened senses, unwavering focus, and the precise skills you need to kill without hesitation or error.

- **Augmentations:** Anti-Toxin System, Cyber Eyes [Night Vision Optics], Cyber Ears [Amplified Hearing], Cyberhands [Chemical Injector], Zenline

## AUGMENT LIST

### ANCESTOR UPLINK

This allows the character to interact directly with a dubbed ancestral memory and personality construct. The character must be of direct genetic descent to the dub, and the dub must consent to the connection. Once an uplink/downlink has been established, the character may access the deceased's memories and skills.

The character gains the ability to rely on the past memories and experience of his ancestor. The character gains a +2 to Common Knowledge rolls and may make Common Knowledge rolls based on the ancestor's experiences and knowledge.

**#Hunch\_N\_Munch:** I've got one of these and it's glitching. Someone help! I can't turn it off. My dad's dub is always active, always aware of everything I'm doing. My wife says I should get the uplink uninstalled, but I'm not sure I can do that without deleting the dub entirely.

**#Dark\_Ronin:** You're married? So does that mean your dad is aware and watching when you and she...you know...

**#Hunch\_N\_Munch:** Yes.

**#Dark\_Ronin:** Oh god, man. I can't stop laughing now.

### BUDDHA BELLY

You like keeping your organs inside you and know that a gut wound can mean the death of many a ronin who aren't able to make it to a patchman in time. Rather than invest in body armor, you've chosen a subdermal nano-weave anchored to your spine and wrapping around into a shock-absorbing padding across your torso (providing +3 supplemental armor), protecting vital organs from stabbing or gunshots. The side effect is the appearance of an extra paunch, which people annoyingly continue to rub from time to time.

### MÊLÉE COMBAT SYSTEM

Want to have the edge when prowling the street? The mêlée combat system is for you — designed to survey the battlefield and provide strategic information on how best to defeat your opponent. The system increases the damage from unarmed and melee attacks by level.

### SPIDER SILK WEAVE

Designed from spider silk this advanced nano weave is integrated with subdermal armor. The weave is designed to dissipate the force from impact, lessening the damage. Each level of spider silk weave negates 2 points of AP from mêlée or ballistic attacks.



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## AUGMENT LIST

AUGMENTATION PACKAGES	STRAIN	NOTES
Bushido Package	7	See description
Flowform Package	7	See description
Ninjaware Package	5	See description
AUGMENT LIST	STRAIN	NOTES
Ancestor Uplink	1	Gains the mental Attributes, Skills, and memories of Ancestor
Buddha Belly	2	+3 supplemental armor (torso only)
Mêlée Combat System I–II	1/level	Increased damage from unarmed and melee attacks by +1/level.
Spider Silk Weave I–III	1/level	Negates 2 point of AP per level. Requires Subdermal Armor
Tattoo Cryptography	1	Allows encrypting/decrypting encoded tattoos
Zenline	1	+2 on any opposed Spirit roll.
AUGMENT LIST	LOCATION	NOTES
Artist Tools	Arm	+2 to appropriate skill specialization roll.

Spider silk weave does not stack with an armor's ability to negate AP, in such cases the higher value is used.

## TATTOO CRYPTOGRAPHY

On the surface, this augment merely acts as a visual translation device, rendering all tattoos in any form or substance (ink, holo-weavings, nano-embeddings, etc.) as fully comprehensible no matter what language or style they're fashioned in. Within 1" (2 yards) of a tattooed individual, with a successful Notice roll, the augmented character may detect whether any hidden messages or code are concealed by the surface tattoo and visually inspect them. Actual data transfer from meta-tattoos requires a full minute of physical touch. If the augmented character is a tattoo artist, they are able to embed raw data or messages within the tattoos they create.

## ZENLINE

This augment helps regulate the chemical balances in your brain and throughout your body. With it, you are much more easily able to withstand negative emotions or attempts to harmfully influence your mind and heart. The zenline provides a +2 on any opposed Spirit roll.

**#Oni\_Broni:** Anyone ever try that new chemblend, Hypermote? It's like an emotional lottery. You down a dose and it ramps up one of your emotional states into overdrive for an hour. Rage. Lust. Despair. Joy...

**#TeaWhore:** Why the hell would you ever try that?

**#Oni\_Broni:** Aside from having the most intense emotional experience of your entire life?

**#TeaWhore:** Life is the most intense emotional experience I'll ever have. I don't need any brew making it worse.

## CYBERLIMB MODULES

## ARTIST'S TOOLS

Your forearm is replaced with an automatic dispensing chassis that can place any number of artistic tools into your grasp at a moment's notice. This can be anything from a fresh calligraphy brush and ink bottle to a tattoo kit or holofitti jetcan.

## GOLEMMECHS

Golemmech. Just the whisper of it can make a person shiver — though whether in fear or delight depends on whether you're inside or outside the chassis, eh, nakama? There's something about slipping inside the pilot sphere and suddenly becoming

a walking act of war that just oils some people's gears. Pardon the drooling, but is it so wrong to think the machine hulk of a golemmech behemoth is far more attractive than whatever hunk of a pilot might be inside?

Don't answer that.

## KENSAI FAN DANCER OFFENSIVE/DEFENSIVE GOLEMMECH

In Japan, fans are used to both conceal and attack. This golemmech enjoys high mobility and a 360-degree, rotating upper torso, with four articulated arms, each equipped with a prototype pulsar projection unit. These energy fields can either be concentrated into devastating short-to-mid-range projectiles or dispersed to create crescent shielding that protects the mech, as well as anyone or anything it is positioned ahead of (treat as deflection power, using the pilot's Shooting as the arcane skill). While in this mode, the weapon system is unusable for attacking.

**Fan Dancer Golemmech (22'):** Pace/Run 12/2d6, Strength 12+6, Toughness 22(9), Crew 1, Firewall 8; **Cost:** Military

**Notes:** AMCM, Auto-fire (d6), Ejection System, 2× Additional Arms (Strength d12), Hyperlink, Optics, Sloped Armor ×2, VCI Rig

## Weapons:

- Pulsar Projection Unit (Range 50/100/200; Damage 3d8; RoF 4; Shots ∞; HW)

## KENSAI MECHASUMO MASSIVE GOLEMMECH

Do you want to pick your ground and stick there, no matter what the enemy throws your way? Looking to hold a critical point even as overwhelming numbers assault you from all sides? This Mega-Heavy model is designed to pound its way through any barrier, plant itself at the target location, and unleash crushing firepower on any nearby combatants without moving an inch. The legs include deployable ground anchors and pinions, and the rotund bulk around the chassis, head, and shoulders both absorb and deflect all incoming fire. The Salt-the-Earth cannon on one arm and the rail bolt Thumper on the other create enormous concussive explosions that will shatter opponents!

**Mecasumo Massive Golemmech (35'):** Pace/Run 12/2d6, Strength 12+8, Toughness 26(10), Crew 1, Firewall 8; **Cost:** Military

**Notes:** AMCM, Auto-Fire (d8), Ejection System, Hyperlink, Optics, Sensor Suite, Targeting System, VCI Rig

## Weapons:

- Salt-the-Earth Cannon (Range 75/150/300; Damage 4d8; RoF 1; Shots 40; AP 10, HW. LBT)



- Rail Bolt Thumper (Range 150/300/600; Damage 5d10; RoF 1; Shots 20; AP 40, HW, LBT)

## KENSAI MECHZILLA DEMOLISHER GOLEMMECH

Yes, we went there. And we are not sorry. Nor will you be when you lock in. An evolution of the non-military units used in demolition and construction sites across the world, this model is a ground unit intended to break through the first line of any defense — be it barricades or a battalion — and wreak chaos on the other side. Autocannon forearms combine with a missile array launching from the back batteries, while the “tail” is a reinforced brace so even the super-charged pile driver won’t be able to take you down.

**Mechzilla Demolisher Golemmech (35’):** Pace/Run 6/1d6, Strength 12+8, Toughness 25(7), Crew 1, Firewall 8; **Cost:** Military

**Notes:** Decoy Pod, Ejection System, Hyperlink, Tail (+4 to Piloting rolls to avoid falling), Targeting System, VCI Rig

### Weapons:

- 2 × 40 mm Autocannon (Range 75/150/300; Damage 4d8; RoF 3; Shots 100; AP 8, HW)
- Missile Launcher (Range 200/400/800; Damage 6d6; RoF 4; Shots 48; AP 8, HW, SBT)

## KENSAI SAMURAI HEAVY COMBAT GOLEMMECH

With the extra plate shielding around the operation center and a “skirt” of flexanium around the legs, this model can take direct hits without staggering as it pounds into the thick of a battle. One arm sports a 90mm heavy cannon while the other is a fashioned vibroblade that can sheer through enemy mech armor with ease. Shoulder-mounted pulse lasers can independently target and pick off distant opponents.

**Samurai Heavy Combat Golemmech (35’):** Pace/Run 12/2d6, Strength 12+8, Toughness 26(10), Crew 1, Firewall 8; **Cost:** Military

**Notes:** AMCM, Ejection System, Hyperlink, Optics, Sensor Suite, Targeting System

### Weapons:

- 90mm Heavy Cannon (Range 150/300/600; Damage 6d10; RoF 1; Shots 20; AP 40, HW, LBT)
- Vibroblade Arm (Str+2d10+2; AP 11, HW)
- 2 × Shoulder Mounted Pulse Laser (Range 150/300/600; Damage 4d10; RoF 1; Shots 100; AP 15, HW)

## KENSAI SHINOBI LIGHT COMBAT GOLEMMECH

Speed and surprise offer superiority on the battlefield. The fully cloakable Shinobi model can advance on its target and unleash rapid-fire twin lasers before dashing off again. Twin railguns can unexpectedly strike enemies from afar even while being piloted into a new position from which to strike. The advanced servomotors of this unit’s joints combined with a null-noise generator provide unprecedented shock absorption and quieter movement than anything else on the market.

**Shinobi Light Combat Golemmech (13’):** Pace/Run 12/2d6, Strength 12+4, Toughness 15(4), Crew 1, Firewall 6; **Cost:** Military

**Notes:** Ejection System, Hyperlink, Optics, Stealth System

### Weapons:

- Twin Linked 50MW Pulse Laser (Range 150/300/600; Damage 4d10; RoF 1; Shots 100; AP 20, HW)
- Twin Linked Rail Gun (Range 100/200/400; Damage 4d12+1; RoF 1; Shots 15; HW)

**#CutthroatChibi:** Citizens throughout Nagasaki are claiming they’re spotting glimpses of these things patrolling streets in both the domestic and foreign districts.

**#Billy\_Black\_Eyes:** That kinda puts the doubt to their stories, though, doesn’t it? If these things can be fully cloaked, why would the government let anyone know they were there in the first place?

**#CutthroatChibi:** So people know to behave? And who said it was the government running these patrols?

## POWER ARMOR

### KENTA CYBER DYNAMICS SAMURAI 2.0

We’re not legally allowed to call this a miniaturized golemmech, but if we were, we would. This full chassis suit takes the traditional ō-Yoroi design and magnifies the size and functionally by a full degree. Nestled in the main cockpit, your arms and legs still guide the primary limbs while you safely monitor external conditions via data from the artificial head sensor array. It’s like becoming your own bodyguard and one-man army. Size-adapted katana and tanto included.

**Samurai 2.0:** Armor 12, Pace/Run 8(—), Firewall 8; **Cost:** 825,000

**Notes:** Autodoc, Sensor Suite

### Weapons:

- Ceramic Katana (Str+d12, AP 4) and Tanto (Str+d8)

## ROBOTS

### YOJIMBO SECURITY ROBOT

The Yojimbo is designed and programed to function as a personal bodyguard. Programed with the latest defensive driving and personal security protocols. It comes with advance hand-to-hand combat programming and is able to use the latest range of combat weapons on the market.

Units can be painted in any style you wish. Units come with personalization hypertags making sure everyone knows you are protected by a Yojimbo Scurity Robot.

**Attributes:** Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d8

**Skills:** Driving d6, Fighting d8, Healing d4, Notice d6, Shooting d8

**Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 8(2); **Firewall:** 6

**Edges:** Martial Arts

### Special Abilities:

- **Armor +2:** Subdermal armor plating.
- **Construct:** +2 to recover from being Shaken; does not breathe; immune to poison and disease; ignores one level of wound penalties.
- **Environmental Weakness (Electricity):** Yojimbo suffer +4 damage from electrical attacks.
- **Fearless:** Yojimbo models are immune to Fear and Intimidation.
- **Fast:** Yojimbo roll d10 for running instead of a d6.
- **Sensor Suite:** +4 Notice vs sound, motion, chemicals, radiation, and electrical fields up to 500 yards distant.
- **Targeting System:** Negates up to 2 points of ranged weapon attacks.
- **Weakness (EMP):** Yojimbo security robots suffer full damage from EMP Weapons.

**Cost:** 82,000 credits



## SALVERY IN 2090

I know what you're thinking, my otamajakushi: "These entries are adverts for slaves!" This is technically correct, depending on your point of view. Synths are commonly sold on the open market in Japan and, for the right price, you too can have your very own bodyguard, geisha, gardener, or...whatever you want. I'm not going to tell you it's right. Actually I loathe the idea. Buying and selling human beings is evil (we can debate the ins and outs of whether or not Sims are "human" all day long, just not here), but this is a fact in Japan. I've taken the liberty of scrubbing the actual prices from this datafeed. If you want to buy one, talk with your local Malmart administrator (Game Master). I'm sure she has a price list that's appropriate. You might be surprised, though, at how cheaply life is bought and sold in 2090. Some pure-bred dogs or the more exotic bioforms you've previously read about cost much more than the models listed here.

**Costs:** The price for simulacra is left up to each individual game and how they fit within the economy. It's recommended that most general models start around 50,000 credits.

**Stats:** If required, stats for the listed Simulacra may be found in "Threats" on page 55.

## SIMULACRA MODELS

Just because much of the Japanese population looks askew at simulacrum or Synth variations doesn't mean we aren't willing to take advantage of them. In fact, it's far easier to do so when you don't quite think of them as truly human. A couple of the more popular models include.

### CORPORATE STAND-INS

These are different than the dupes we talked about before. The artificial duplicates are pricey and constructed to perfectly imitate various powerful and wealthy clients. Corporate stand-ins are simulacrum bioforms that come cheaper, are obviously artificial at a glance, and perform more mundane or personable business tasks (whereas Synths tend to stick to more labor-intensive work). These stand-ins can act as tour guides, bodyguards, or even executive-style babysitters when parents are working late. Some are even designed to handle business negotiation in various international styles so the Japanese salaryman doesn't have to experience the discomfort of poor etiquette or custom blunders. Others are designed for travel and are tabula rasa that Deep-connected minds can project into, allowing a citizen to interact with foreign counterparts without having to leave the island.

### GEISHA 2.0

A specialized derivative of the standard luxury simulacrum model, geisha 2.0 are designed to imitate geisha styles, artistic performances, and other entertainment services...all with the added benefit of their owner being able to demand sex from them at any point or where they want to. This is a terrible perversion of a centuries-old honorable practice, as true geisha have been considered some of the strongest, noblest, most skilled and successful women in Japanese history.

**#Get\_On\_Me33:** Will you be my geisha, Chikako?

**#Synths\_For\_Life:** Fuck off, you imbecilic perv.

**#Get\_On\_Me33:** What? I can't ask her a simple question? I can pay whatever—[FEED DISCONNECTED]

### SIM SAMURAI

Guess who tend to purchase this model more often than most? The Yakuza. See, it's relatively rare (in fact, I can't think of a single instance) for a true samurai to offer their services to a criminal organization...however Yakuza leaders love to be seen with samurai bodyguards, reinforcing their image as honorable servants of the people. So why not just buy a knock-off version? It's not like anyone is going to argue with a Yakuza leader who could kill them with a single order — except for a true samurai perhaps. While the Yakuza like to use synthetic samurai in street battles as well as honor guards, if any real samurai gets wind of this, they often track down and eliminate this bushido mockery.

**#Oni\_Broni:** I've seen a few of these around Yokohama. They're a little freaky. All upright and noble-looking. But their eyes...their eyes are dead. Empty.

**#Billy\_Black\_Eyes:** Not even the most advanced vat-tech can imitate true passion and honor, ami.

### SIM SUMO

Since simulacrum, and anything not natural-born and bred humans, are forbidden to join the official sumo wrestling leagues, a series of underground sumo rings have sprung up throughout the major cities. They're often supported by a number of wealthy individuals, both Yakuza and not, who enjoy the thrill of seeing their "pet" sumo take on all comers. Heavy gambling is usually involved, and the simulacrum can be enhanced in any way their owners can afford.

## SPECIAL GEAR

### GARDENER'S HELPER

During your downtime, there are few things more soothing than turning raw earth, rock, and trees into a masterfully manicured landscape. However, even in times of peace, we know war is inevitable. That's why we've created this set of convertible gardening tools, including a throwing trowel, shotgun shovel, vibroblade hedge trimmers, electrified rake, and more.

**Cost:** 200, **Weight:** 10 lb

### KENTA CYBER DYNAMICS GRAPPLING HOOK

Don't have gecko-hand augments or VTOL jumpboots? Fifth-story window giving you access trouble? Our compact auto-hook-and-haul tool is the perfect solution. Just activate the targeting system, point, and shoot (Range 20/40/80). You'll be up and away in seconds. Also available in arm/hand implant form.

**Cost:** 750, **Weight:** 8 lb

### NIGHTVISION MENGU

Lacking the nighttime awareness you need? Harsh neon glow of Tokyo interfering with your scopes? Sheathe your skull in this Samurai-styled helm and a whole new world is opened up to you. Not only will it turn night into day, but you can switch between IR and UV vision with a flick of an eyelid. If operating beyond city limits, the dimmest of stars will still provide full visibility. Negates Lighting penalties due to dim or darkness.

**Cost:** 500, **Weight:** 4 lb

### SHOGUN OUTFITTERS SASHIMONO

Do you desire to make your true allegiance known? Do you wish to have your allies know exactly where you are in the midst of a



desperate brawl? Yes, you can rely on HyperTags if you want to be boring, or you could announce your brazen courage with a banner of fealty strapped firmly to your back. We will design the flag according to your exact specifications. Choose any colors, patterns, text, or symbols you wish displayed for your clan, family, lord, or the beloved for whom you fight.

**Cost:** 450, **Weight:** 5 lb

## WEAPONS

### MÊLÉE

#### SHOGUN OUTFITTERS CHOPSTICKS

Functional for both eating and fighting! These reinforced chopsticks will never break, and are perfect for precision food manipulation as well as pinpoint targeting of nerve endings and pressure points.

#### SHOGUN OUTFITTERS ELECTRO-EXPANDO-BO

In its collapsed form, this bo is no bigger than a human fist. With a touch, it expands into a six-foot quarterstaff. A rechargeable internal power pack can electrify either end, delivering an extra shock upon impact (target must make a Vigor at -2 or become Shaken).

#### SHOGUN OUTFITTERS KUSARIGAMA

This kama comes with a weighted, titanium chain linked to its end, allowing you to slash at opponents from afar or entangle their limbs or throat with a twirl.

#### SHOGUN OUTFITTERS MIYAMOTO TANTO

Have you bought the Shogun Outfitters Miyamoto K-Tana? Then don't forget its little, though no less deadly brother, to complete your assembly.

#### SHOGUN OUTFITTERS SASUMATA

These criminal man-catchers are the perfect way to take down a target non-lethally (though hardly painless). Hunting a bounty? Need to retrieve personal property without bringing the law down on you for murder? Charge up and take aim.

### RANGED

#### SHOGUN OUTFITTERS HOMING NINJA STARS

Enjoy throwing sharp items at on comers but don't always have the eye to aim true? Let our homing stars do the work for you! Proprietary mini-propulsion engines guide these stars and can be upgraded to double as explosive units with remote triggering. (increase damage to 2d6 in SBT, triple cost)

Homing Ninja Stars are able to lock on and follow a target just like a missile (see **Missiles**, in the *Savage Worlds* rulebook), except the attacker uses Shooting and the defender uses Agility.

#### SHOGUN OUTFITTERS MASTERCRAFT BA M1

Your enemies may chuckle when seeing you wielding what appears to be an archaic bow and arrow set, but they'll soon be scampering as you launch one deadly missile after another straight for them. Standard arrows come with medium-armor-piercing heads, and the shafts are reinforced to keep from shattering from the force of launch. Purchase comes with ten full quivers. Tip upgrades extra, including incendiary, security goo, poison vapor, or electric shock.

The following are additional arrow tips that may be purchased. Changing a tip Requires an action and the weapons loses the listed AP.

- **Incendiary:** The arrowhead is filled with magnesium and may be used as a flare or set to ignite on impact. The arrow deals an additional d6 damage upon impact and catches flammable objects on fire with a 5-6 on a d6(see **Fire** in *Savage Worlds*).

**Cost:** 75

- **Security Goo:** This arrow discharges a sticky, hardening goo that traps the target and holds him fast until he breaks free or a solvent is applied. The target makes an Agility roll versus the Shooting roll or is caught in the goo. The goo is permanent and has a one wound (Toughness 10, vulnerable to blunt or cutting attacks). Targets caught in the goo have a Pace of zero and suffers -2 to all Strength and Agility related Trait rolls.

**Cost:** 100

- **Electric Shock:** Electric shock arrowheads discharge a powerful shock to a struck target. The target must roll Vigor at -2 or be Shaken.

**Cost:** 100

### PISTOLS

#### SHOGUN OUTFITTERS DRAGON BELCH LONG BARREL

This long-shot model lets you spew incendiary rounds at fearsome rates, engulfing your foes in flames while you laugh at a distance. Shaken targets have a chance of catching Fire (see **Fire** in *Savage Worlds* rulebook).

#### SHOGUN OUTFITTERS MIND'S EYE

With the biometric handle and trigger, the low-level A.I. embedded in this gun's core is able to anticipate target movement and positioning for superior aiming (negates 1 point of Shooting penalties). If it detects a near-certain miss, it won't fire, saving you ammo!

#### SHOGUN OUTFITTERS PREFECTO MLX 9MM

This street-legal version of a cop's pistol gives you high accuracy, low recoil, and an expanded ammo clip.

#### SHOGUN OUTFITTERS YAK ATTACK SINGLE BARREL

Sometimes the best attack is a demoralizing one. Even if your victim escapes, being winged by light caliber bullets leaves behind an obscene tattoo on the target's skin. Tracker embedding upgrade available (+1 bonus to Tracking rolls, **Cost:** 500 credits).

### SUBMACHINE GUNS

#### SHOGUN OUTFITTERS PERSONAL DEFENSE SMG

The quad-barrel lineup on this beauty makes it an all-or-nothing model many have come to fear. While your magazine will empty like a bottle being guzzled by a drunk, you'll briefly form a wall of hot lead between you and your enemies.

#### SHOGUN OUTFITTERS NO RETREAT 9MM SMG

Hold your ground and send them scampering with a deadly, yet accurate spray. While smaller in caliber, you'll enjoy less recoil (Auto-fire penalty reduced by 1) and be able to shoot in style.



# JAPAN: EMPIRE OF THE SETTING SUN

## MELEE WEAPONS

TYPE	DAMAGE	WEIGHT	COST	NOTES
SO Chopsticks	Str	—	100	—
SO Electro-Expando-Bo	Str+d6	4	1,000	+1 Parry, Reach 1, 2 hands, Shock
SO Kusarigama	Str+d4	3	250	Reach 2, grapple at range
SO Miyamoto Tanto	Str+d6	1	150	AP 2
SO Sasumata	Str+d4	6	500	+1 Parry, Reach 1, 2 hands, nonlethal

## RANGED WEAPONS

RANGED	RANGE	DAMAGE	ROF	COST	WEIGHT	SHOTS	MIN. STR	NOTES
Shogun Outfitters Homing Ninja Stars	12/24/48	2d4	1	250	1	—	—	See notes
Shogun Outfitters Mastercraft BA M1	20/40/80	2d8	1	850	4	—	d6	AP 2
PISTOL	RANGE	DAMAGE	ROF	COST	WEIGHT	SHOTS	MIN. STR	NOTES
SO Dragon Belch Long Barrel	12/24/48	2d6+1	2	1,250	3	12	—	Semi-Auto, See notes
SO Mind's Eye	12/24/48	2d6	1	1,250	2	15	—	AP 1, Semi-Auto
SO Prefecto MLX 9mm	12/24/48	2d6	1	1,000	2	12	—	AP 1, Semi-Auto
SO Yak Attack Single Barrel	15/30/60	2d6-1	1	800	2	10	—	Semi-Auto
SUBMACHINE GUNS	RANGE	DAMAGE	ROF	COST	WEIGHT	SHOTS	MIN. STR	NOTES
SO Personal Defense SMG	12/24/48	2d6	4	2,150	7	48	—	AP 1
SO No Retreat 9MM SMG	12/24/48	2d6-1	3	2,000	6	36	—	AP 1, Semi-Auto, 3RB
SHOTGUNS	RANGE	DAMAGE	ROF	COST	WEIGHT	SHOTS	MIN. STR	NOTES
SO Flowering Skull Shotgun	10/20/40	1-3d8	1	2,500	7	8	d6	—
SO Precious Pattern Shotgun	12/24/48	1-3d6	1	1,250	6	6	—	—
RIFLES	RANGE	DAMAGE	ROF	COST	WEIGHT	SHOTS	MIN. STR	NOTES
SO Imperial Rifle	24/48/96	2d8	3	3,000	11	30	d6	AP 2, Semi-Auto, 3RB
SO Sunrise Rifle	50/100/200	2d10	1	3,500	8	6	d6	AP 4, HW, Snapfire

## HEAVY WEAPONS

HEAVY WEAPONS	RANGE	DAMAGE	ROF	COST	WEIGHT	SHOTS	MIN. STR	NOTES
SO Banner Railgun XR10	50/100/200	2d8+2	1	Military	12	6	d6	AP 4, HW, Snapfire
SO Turtle Grenade Launcher	24/48/96	3d6	1	Military	15	10	d6	HW, LBT, Snapfire

## SPECIAL WEAPONS

SPECIAL WEAPONS	RANGE	DAMAGE	ROF	COST	WEIGHT	SHOTS	MIN. STR	NOTES
SO Star Flinger	5/10/20	2d4	4	500	2	250	—	No-recoil
SO Sword Thrower	5/10/20	2d6	1	1,250	6	3	d6	AP 2

## MISSILE LAUNCHER

MISSILE LAUNCHER	RANGE	DAMAGE	ROF	COST	WEIGHT	SHOTS	MIN. STR	NOTES
Kensai Skyfire Missile Launcher	75/150/300	4d8+2	1	Military	20	1	d6	AP 30, HW, MBT, Snapfire

## ENERGY WEAPONS

ENERGY WEAPONS	RANGE	DAMAGE	ROF	COST	WEIGHT	SHOTS	MIN. STR	NOTES
Enlightenment Pulse Rifle	30/60/120	1-3d6	3	Military	8	48	d6	Semi-Auto, 3RB, no recoil
Emperor's Will Particle Beam Rifle	24/48/96	3d8+1	1	Military	15	14	—	HW. Uses hydrogen cell.



## SHOTGUNS

### SHOGUN OUTFITTERS FLOWERING SKULL SHOTGUN

The true master of war can find beauty in everything — from the shattering of the skull to the way the blood sprays up like crimson petals. With this shotgun, you'll soon be creating masterful paintings of your own.

### SHOGUN OUTFITTERS PRECIOUS PATTERN SHOTGUN

A markup from our Yakuza Attack pistol model, this shotgun's smart pellets leave custom designs in whatever they hit — be it a wall or a body. Make your mark so everyone knows who's in the neighborhood.

## RIFLES

### SHOGUN OUTFITTERS IMPERIAL RIFLE

Approved and tested by the emperor himself! This is the same rifle used by the shock troops in the SDF when on the battlefield. Available only in Japan and each stock comes stamped with the Imperial Seal.

**#TeaWhore:** Yeah, and it's the same gun every Yakuza goon is toting these days too, Imperial seal and all. You want to keep arguing that the Yakuza and the military aren't collaborating?

**#Synths\_For\_Life:** Seals have got to be the easiest thing to fake. It proves nothing. So what if they've got guns? If you aren't armed, you're a fool. Doesn't imply imperial conspiracy.

### SHOGUN OUTFITTERS SUNRISE RIFLE

Watch a glorious sunrise through this sniper rifle's 100x scope, and then refocus on your target, who also got up early to enjoy their last day on earth — even if they don't know it yet. Take your mark from a mile away!

## HEAVY WEAPONS

### SHOGUN OUTFITTERS BANNER RAILGUN XR10

A flagship model that lets you stride into battle with a portable railgun pulsing in your hands. The 6mm solid slug tears into the heaviest armor and can even cripple golemmech joints, thanks to the high-accuracy 500x scope (nightvision upgrade available).

### SHOGUN OUTFITTERS TURTLE GRENADE LAUNCHER

Buckle down and blow them down. This model launches grenades slow and steady, letting you adjust for enemy movement. The extra up-top one-way shielding lets you scan the area without exposing yourself to return fire.

## SPECIAL WEAPONS

### SHOGUN OUTFITTERS STAR FLINGER

What's better than one ninja star? A hundred! Load up to 250 razor-sharp stars into the top chamber of this model, and they'll be dispensed at 500mph, up to 4 per second, in a steady stream of death.

### SHOGUN OUTFITTERS SWORD THROWER

Want to leave your victim pinned to the wall on a long blade, a grisly message for anyone who comes after? Slide and seal a katana or other compatible sword into the rotating barrel and take aim.

The heli-rails within will launch the blade and drive it through the thickest meat without shattering.

**#Oni\_Broni:** The Duck Dive shooting range in Osaka rents these out for salaryman duels. Got a grudge you want settled or just want to take part in a bit of competitive target shooting? It's a better adrenaline rush than a sim shootout, that's for sure.

**#Dark\_Ronin:** Sword throwing and dodging is a sport now? Sign me up!

## MISSILE LAUNCHERS

### KENSAI SKYFIRE MISSILE LAUNCHER

Originally developed as a golemmech arm unit, this is a downsized model that is no less effective as an anti-aircraft launcher. The smooth loading action, shoulder prop, optional kickstand, and state-of-the-art targeting system (+2 to Shooting when making a missile lock, see *Savage Worlds*) will keep the skies blazing.

## ENERGY WEAPONS

### KENSAI ENLIGHTENMENT PULSE RIFLE

Allowing for pinpoint accuracy, this sleek pulse rifle is a must-have for the elite warrior. Even grazing your target will transfer enough damage to paralyze the hardiest souls for several seconds. A direct shot will leave them smoking in their armor. Power packs not included.

### KENSAI EMPEROR'S WILL PARTICLE BEAM RIFLE

Equipped with quad power cells, this particle beam weapon has been designed to bring a charging golemmech to its knees in a single shot. Needless to say, any individuals standing in its path will be vaporized (attacks ignore non-Heavy Armor).

- Critical failure on the Shooting roll results in the hydrogen cell exploding; dealing 2d6+X damage in MBT, centered on the weapon, where X is the number of remaining shots.
- The hydrogen cell can be set as an improvised explosive with a successful Knowledge (Demolitions) check.

## VEHICLES

## NEW VEHICLE QUALITIES

**Handling:** The vehicle is designed to be highly maneuverable. This adds +1 to Driving skill rolls per level.

**Stealth System:** Radar absorbing paint, scramblers, anti-detection measures are used to make this vehicle hard to detect electronically or visually. Those attempting to detect the vehicle by various means suffer a -4 penalty.

## CYCLES

### KENSAI KATANA EDGE MOTORCYCLE

Reaching 300mph, the supreme aerodynamic design of this vehicle makes it feel like you're slicing the asphalt in half, parting it behind you. A.I. navigation included, with optional manual piloting mode. The front chassis can be outfitted with concealed rifles or rocket launchers.

**Katana Edge Motorcycle:** Acc/TS 35/80, Toughness 9(2), Crew 1+1, Firewall 6; **Cost:** 37,500

**Notes:** Handling



## JAPAN: EMPIRE OF THE SETTING SUN

### Weapons (Optional):

- Forward Fixed Rocket Launcher (Range 24/48/96; Damage 4d8+2; RoF 1–2; Shots 2; HW, MBT) **Cost:** +25,000
- Forward Fixed Linked Assault Rifles (Range 24/48/96; Damage 2d8+3; RoF 3; Shots 100; Auto, AP 3, +1 Shooting); **Cost:** +3,000

### KENTA CYBER DYNAMICS BICYCLE

For the citizen who wants to speed up their daily tasks, this hardshell bicycle allows you to weave through city traffic with ease. Manual and engine-powered propulsion modes come standard, and a rear basket allow for small-sized cargo transport. HoloTag makes you easily visible to avoid accidents.

**Bicycle:** Acc/TS 5/15, Toughness 7, Crew 1; **Cost:** 250

## CARS

### CHRYSANTHEMUM CHAMELEON

Entirely TAP-driven, this small, one-man vehicle is designed to drive under the radar, with null heat emissions, a null-noise generator, and holo projectors that blend it seamlessly with all surroundings. Take the ghost road.

**Chameleon:** Acc/TS 25/60, Toughness 9(2), Crew 1+1, Firewall 6; **Cost:** 24,000

**Notes:** Handling I, Stealth System

### KENSAI ACCELEMPERIUM

Speed rules the road. This is a leisure lightweight supercar designed for maximum traction, ultimate control along the tightest corners, with auto-braking. The polycarbon chassis and shock dampeners keep the driver safe even in the event of a crash at top speeds.

**Accelerperium:** Acc/TS 10/25, Toughness 12(3), Crew 1+1, Firewall 8; **Cost:** 75,000

**Notes:** Airbags, Handling I, Stealth System

### KENSAI ROYAL ROADSTER

Designed to keep members of the Imperial family safe, this sedan has armored windows and siding as well as armored wheels that never go flat. The automatic weapons defense system deploys on command or when the driver is detected to have gone unconscious.

**Royal Roadster:** Acc/TS 30/65, Toughness 17(6), Crew 1+3, Firewall 8; **Cost:** Military

**Notes:** Auto-Pilot (d8), Handling I, Heavy Armor

### Weapons:

- Liberator Mini Gun (Range 24/48/96; Damage 2d8; RoF 6; Shots 1,000; AP 3; Auto HW)

## AIRCRAFT

### KENSAI CLOUDGATE TRANSPORT CARRIER

Even without VTOL capabilities, this carrier provides supreme navigation and powerful engines that thunder through the sky. The cabin screens are full-sim monitors, letting the pilots rely on incoming data rather than a crude visual stream, allowing for inerrant steering in all weather types, including typhoons and hurricanes.

**CloudGate Transport Carrier:** Acc/TS 20/100, Climb –1, Toughness 15(4), Crew 2+8, Firewall 6; **Cost:** 175,000

**Notes:** Auto-Pilot (d6), Sensor Suite

### KENSAI NINETAILS ATTACK JET

A cornerstone of the Air SDF, this jet comes with nine separate engines that can be worked independently of one another to perform unparalleled aerial maneuvers, or united to for unbeatable thrust. A prototype biosuit protects the pilot from otherwise lethal Gs.

**Ninetails Attack Jet:** Acc/TS 70/800, Climb 4, Toughness 15(4), Crew 2, Firewall 8; **Cost:** Military

**Notes:** AMCM, Auto-Pilot (d8), Ejection System, Targeting System

### Weapons:

- Fixed 28mm Auto Cannon (Range 50/100/200; Damage 3d8; RoF 3; Shots 200; AP 6, HW)
- Wing Mounted Missile Rack (Range 200/400/800; Damage 4d6; RoF 1–4; Shots 4, AP 6, HW)

### KENSAI RAINDROP FIGHTER JET

Built to maneuver over the battlefield, backing up troops with its twin machine guns, this jet has rotational booster engines that allow for vertical ascent and descent at a moment's notice, dropping it in and out of enemy range to lay down surprise fire.

**Raindrop Fighter Jet:** Acc/TS 50/600, Climb 3, Toughness 15(4), Crew 1, Firewall 8; **Cost:** Military

**Notes:** AMCM, Auto-Pilot (d8), Ejection System, Targeting System, VTOL

### Weapons:

- Twin Linked .50 Heavy Machine Gun (Range 50/100/200; Damage 2d12; RoF 3; Shots 200, AP 4, HW)

## VTOL CRAFT

### KENSAI FLYING PALACE VTOL LIMO

Inside this chauffeured limousine, you'll feel like you're flying above the whole world. With a full private entertainment suite and VR hookups, along with room for at least a dozen people, a hot tub, and a personal chef station, you could practically live in this limo for months at a time.

**Flying Palace VTOL Limo:** ACC/TS 20/40, Climb –1, Toughness 16(6), Crew 1+12, Firewall: 8; **Cost:** 175,000

**Notes:** Air Bags, Handling II, Heavy Armor, Sloped Armor, VTOL

### KENSAI SPIRIT OF THE ANCESTOR VTOL CAR

Go a bit retro with this personal transport vehicle, designed for cruising the city streets and skies. Designed to look like an old roadster, it nevertheless includes all the modern amenities, including anti-ballistic armor, A.I. auto-piloting, sealed environmental chassis, and ejection seats.

**Spirit of the Ancestor VTOL Car:** Acc/TS 25/60, Climb 1, Toughness 11(4), Crew 1+1, Firewall: 6; **Cost:** 75,000

**Notes:** Auto-Pilot (d6), Air Bags, Ejection System, Handling I, Heavy Armor, VTOL

## WATER CRAFT

### KENSAI FLOATING PALACE YACHT

Reaching top speeds of 250 knots on calm seas, this luxurious ocean-bound palace fits 100 passengers for at-sea meetings, parties, or extended, on-the-waves living. State of the Art desalination units mean you'll never have to worry about running out of fresh water, and ten A.I. controlled cannons provide a



## SPACECRAFT

defense perimeter against unwanted boarders. A tri-foil sail can be deployed to make the yacht radar invisible.

**Floating Palace Yacht:** ACC/TS 14/25, Toughness 35(8), Crew 4+100, Firewall: 8; **Cost:** 2 million

**Notes:** Heavy Armor

### KENSAI "ONSEN" PERSONAL SUBMERSIBLE

This two-person sub can be used in lakes or the ocean alike. The front permaglass observation panel can withstand pressures up to 1,250 feet, and the compressed oxygen tanks and filtration systems allow the vehicle to remain submerged for up to a week at a time. Twin impeller turbines allow for rapid surfacing in case of an emergency. Includes auto-piloting mode.

**"Onsen" Personal Submersible:** ACC/TS 10/25, Toughness 16(7), Crew 1+1, Firewall: 6; **Cost:** 120,000

**Notes:** Auto-Pilot (d6), Heavy Armor, Submersible

## HEAVY VEHICLES

### KENSAI SIDESCRAPER ARMORED TRANSPORT

The needle-nosed transport model allows for up to 100 personnel to be carried at speeds up to 200 mph, even with its heavier armor. Armored wheels ensure it never goes off-track, and a fully enclosed environment protects passengers from outside interference, while the driver relies on virtual exterior projections to avoid any need for a guidance window.

**Sidescraper Armored Transport:** ACC/TS 30/60, Toughness 56(25), Crew 4+100, Firewall: 10; **Cost:** Military

**Notes:** AMCM, Heavy Armor, Sensor Suite, Slopped Armor

#### Weapons:

- 4 × Dual 25mm Auto Cannon (Range 50/100/200; Damage 3d10; RoF 3; Shots 200; AP 6, HW)

### KENSAI PEARL OX TANK

Bull through anything foolish enough to stand in your way. Rotational tri-treads allow for extreme navigation in even the roughest terrain, and heavy armor paneling brushes off all but the hardest hits. A fully articulated rail turret fires 120mm rounds, with side-mounted rocket launchers ensures you leave nothing but fire and ash in your wake.

**Pearl Ox Tank:** ACC/TS 13/25, Toughness 30(10), Crew 8, Firewall: 10; **Cost:** Military

**Notes:** AMCM, Heavy Armor, Slopped Armor, Tracked

#### Weapons:

- 120mm Cannon (Range 150/300/600; Damage 5d10; RoF 1; Shots 20; AP 40, HW, LBT)
- 2 × 70mm Rocket Pod (Range 24/48/96; Damage 4d8+2; RoF 1-4; Shots 24; HW, MBT)

### KENSAI EMPEROR'S FIST ASSAULT CRAFT

Manufactured for interfleet combat, these one-man craft are often used to protect orbital platforms or freighters from piracy or other boarding attempts. Fixed with six bolter variant cannons, its ten mini-pulse engines allow for swift launch and high navigation. In the case of a pilot's vitals flatlining, the autopilot will attempt to return to the launch bay.

**Emperor's Fist Assault Craft:** ACC/TS 50/700, Climb 3, Toughness 22(8), Crew 1; **Cost:** Military

**Notes:** AMCM, Auto-Pilot (d6), Heavy Armor

#### Weapons:

- 2 × Tri-Linked Bolter Cannon (Range 50/100/200; Damage 2d12+2; RoF 4; Shots 100; AP 4 HW)

### KENSAI TEARDROP OF HEAVEN PERSONAL TRANSPORT

This is a basic, if comfortable personal transport craft capable of reaching orbital platforms from the surface. Round trips are possible on a fully charged power cell. It has the usual anti-missile laser system and auto-eject capsule in case of rocket failure.

**Teardrop of Heaven Personal Transport:** Acc/TS 60/800, Climb 2, Toughness 16(4), Crew 1; **Cost:** 2.75 million

**Notes:** AMCM, Ejection System, Heavy Armor

### KENTA CYBER DYNAMICS SHOOTING STAR CARGO SHIP

This freighter class starship sweeps through the void of space between planets, asteroids, and orbital platforms, providing essential supplies and trade to Japanese citizens anywhere in the solar system. Most space is devoted to loading docks and cargo holds, while a skeleton crew is able to navigate with the help of the A.I. piloting module.

**Shooting Star Car go Ship:** ACC/TS 40/600, Climb 0, Toughness 25(12), Crew 4; **Cost:** 8 million

**Notes:** Auto-Pilot (d8), Heavy Armor, 20 tons cargo space



# MAJOR CITIES

*"Sumeba Miyako!" ... "The best place to live is where you are..."*  
—Japanese Proverb

Japan is not only its people, it is places. I can hear a few optical implants rolling in their chrome sockets, nakama. Obviously a country is defined by its geography, but our geography is equally defined by history, which is defined by the people. It's a braid of land, souls, and events all twined together, fashioning a cord that—so far—refuses to be broken. We are tied to our islands, as embedded in them as the volcanic stones themselves.

The cities we have established are much like giant organisms themselves. They grow, they shrink, they thrive, they rot, they die. They are reborn. We feed them, we cut them deep, we worship them, we kill them. Some say much like the forces of nature, a city might develop its own kami, embodiments of its character, its atmosphere, and the factions that rule its skyscrapers and streets. That's both oddly reassuring and frightening, *otamajakushi*. Pretty sure there are a few cities along these lands I'd love to sit and sip some hot sake with, while there are others I'd be taking aim at with a railgun from a mile away.

**#blazingeye:** Every last human settlement will soon be wiped off the face of the globe in fiery purification. Prepare yourself for annihilation.

**#TeaWhore:** Who let the Setting Sun lunatics in on the feed?

**#blazingeye:** We are everywhere. We are everyone. We are legion.

**#TeaWhore:** Go die in the fire you worship, asshole.

Still, cities are the bastion of Japanese civilization, and we would be lost without them, hai? These days, it can be easy to live in the larger megatropolises your entire life. Some citizens never even leave their Tokyo prefecture. Why bother when everything you'd need to sustain your life is right in the area, and your mind can connect to the wider world through the TAP and the Deep? I'm all for exploring though, so why not join me in a virtual tour of significant locales throughout Japan? Even if you never set foot inside them, perhaps you'll meet a few souls visiting from there, and so can have the slimmest idea of the cities that have shaped them the way water polishes a pebble.

## TOKYO

Let's begin with the big boy on the playing field. When people think Japan, their brainpans tend to quickly tune to Tokyo—for good reason. It alone holds over a quarter of the current Japanese population and is one of the largest metropolitan complexes in the world. It is considered the beating heart of Japanese culture, commerce, and conquest. The city itself is what's known as a prefecture. In other words, the entirety of the city is composed of twenty-three wards, which act like individual cities and are independently governed by the local authorities. It is a mosaic of environments ranging from lush parkways to the grimmest industrial sectors to the glitziest entertainment districts you could ever imagine. Tokyo is considered, by some, less a geographical

sector and more a unified identity shared by the people living within this region.

It is the seat of Japanese power as well, both politically and militarily (of course, remember there's little distinction between the two now). While ward governors act of their own volition, they all still fall under the jurisdiction of the First General. If their core agendas don't align with his, guess who's not going to last in their public office for long? There is constant new construction going on, housing zones being repaved for skyscrapers, administrators warring over zoning laws, and the general mill of people going about their daily business. When it comes to corporate presence, you'll find offices for every single Japanese corporation in Tokyo, such as Chrysanthemum, Kenta, and Shinbashira. On top of that, hundreds of worldwide corporations have also moved in, though they operate under heavy taxation and diplomatic injunctions. Many of them have made profit-splitting deals with the Japanese megacorps to ensure the majority of their income stays within our borders.

**#CutthroatChibi:** I've seen a few foreigners try to shove their way into Shinbashira shops, ignoring the No Gaijin signs. Since when is it legal to electrocute citizens without warning?

**#TopProfX:** It's called trespassing laws. Tourists must respect boundary lines. If they choose to ignore them, they're taking their life into their own hands.

Beyond all that, Tokyo offers an intriguing blend of modern living and ancient styling. You'll see the latest gadgetry and streetware with nano-built office buildings alongside serene bonsai gardens and tea ceremony *chashitsu*. The question many visitors ask is, "What part is the *real* Tokyo?" The answer? All of it! Tokyo combines every shade of light and dark, every increment of old and new, of life and death. The trick is to find your place within the chaos. The nice thing to know is with so much variety and options, there's always a spot you can slip into. Where might you discover yourself here?

Tokyo is a volatile city. It can't help but be this way, with so many people rubbing shoulders. The general chaos constantly bubbles, and occasionally comes to a boiling froth. For instance, in 2085, a dirty bomb was detonated near the city center, impacting at least four city blocks and forcing an evacuation. The situation was contained, but that area remains a scar on the city to this day. In 2087, a so-called freedom fighter named #Roadblock hacked the traffic network system and practically shut down the city for a month. Other disturbances include smaller terrorist acts by Charon cults or Setting Sun members.

Where to go in Tokyo?

**#DailyDeals:** Want to see the real Tokyo? Sign up for Victorious Sinew's VTOL Tours! View the whole city from the air, touchdown wherever you wish to see the sights, and enjoy a complimentary dinner at the restaurant or club of your choice at the end of the tour.



**#Oni\_Broni:** Whatever you do, don't sign up for these tours unless you're in a big group! These people are connected to the Yakuza and use their tours to isolate and kidnap gaijin, trafficking them into everything from sex rings to death arenas or sell them off to Chiba labs for experimentation.

**#DailyDeals:** The DailyDeals conglomerate does not appreciate slander or libel. All our partners are fully licensed and approved. A brand loyalty team is being dispatched to your location for reeducation on this matter.

**#Oni\_Broni:** Wait...what?

## TOKYO IMPERIAL PALACE

Home to Emperor Tetsuhito and a handful of the Imperial family, the Imperial Palace is based on the footprint of the ancient Edo Castle. It was bombed out during WWII and rebuilt exactly as it had been before. The current incarnation incorporates massive park expanses surrounded by moats and rearing stone walls and is connected to the rest of the city by ornate bridges. It has an all-human staff, from its personal attendants to the gardeners to the chefs.

Originally, the inner grounds of the palace itself would be open to the public for guided tours, but in light of the rising violence threatening the country, these have been ended. For now, the only people allowed inside, aside from royalty and staff, are invited guests such as foreign ambassadors. However, the Imperial East Gardens remain open to daily visitors for a 50-credit entry fee.

## NAKAMISE DORI

It is said that Nakamise Dori is one of the, if not *the* oldest shopping streets in Japan. It is the main path that leads up to the Senso-ji Temple in the Asakua Area, and is absolutely packed with every kind of shop imaginable. By the time you walk from one end to the other, it's quite possible to have downloaded your every last credit in your account and be happy for it. You've got all the usual food carts and trinket cubbies, as well as dolls, fashion accessories, and sim-sniffs. Here's the secret though. All the shops are fronts at this point. Oh, they run a brisk legitimate business with gaijin, but if you're looking for something specific and not likely to be on display in public, find the nearest shopkeeper. Repeat your request three times. You will be waved off. Bow and leave without another word. Within half an hour, someone will tug on your sleeve, bow to you wordlessly, and walk off. Follow them. Be smart about what happens next.

Visit Nakamise Dori at night for a visual delight. When the shops are all closed and shuttered, a luminescent mural reveals itself, stretching the whole length of the street and depicting the temple at the end.

**#Droneofthemoth:** At night, this is also the best place to get whatever fix has you itching. Afterburn, Hypermote, Sticky Icky...they got it all and plenty more. Just come with plenty of credits.

**#Dark\_Ronin:** Sounds like the perfect way to get arrested.

**#Droneofthemoth:** I didn't say come waving a credit stick around and shouting "Gimme the dope!" Play it low, play it quiet, and you'll get in and out just fine.

## TSUKIJI FISH MARKET

Despite synth-fish and vat-brewed seafood now being mass-produced, this remains the largest, busiest fish and seafood market in the world, with daily tuna auctions being a frantic chaos that

would've outdone any of the old world stock market floors at the height of a trading frenzy. The food carts all through the area offer the freshest sushi meals you could ever imagine. It's possible for the public to access the morning auctions, but check the market's feed to see if it's open to the public that day. Every so often, the place is shut down to public viewing. People assume it's just to give traders a more private space in which to conduct their business, but I'm of the mind something other than fish might be being carted through and sold on those days.

## KABUKICHŌ

I think I just heard a few eyebrows perk up reading that name. Dirty little oni, you be. Yes, Kabukichō, the Sleepless Town, Tokyo's ever-infamous red light district is never closed for business. In the olden days, it used to be a sleepy residential sector, but after a few risqué theaters opened in the area, it triggered an economic revolution. Now this district hosts ten thousand bars, love hotels, massage parlors, dance clubs, and every sort of dig and den your perverted little neurons will delight in. You can buy any sort of pleasure here, no matter what your taste—just don't for a moment believe you aren't being monitored at all times. Privacy costs extra. Synths, hybrids, androids, and every custom simulacrum you'd conjure in your dreams and nightmares are here, waiting to lure you in and drain that credit account faster than you can...well...come and go.

**#Your\_Lolita\_Princess:** When you're here, find Shining Thread Street. The whole block is full up of clubs, restaurants, kitschy shops, and pleasure dens—and they're all owned by a liberated Synth named...get this...Chastity. She's one tough motherfucker and guards her territory hard, but runs the cleanest clubs in the whole district.

Needless to say, you are the willing victim the moment you enter this district, and you're taking your life in your own hands—or putting it in another's, I suppose. While there are frequent patrols and drone surveillance, they're not likely to stop any trouble in time to be of help to those in the thick of it.

## GINZA

Located in Tokyo's Chūō ward, the Ginza district is where you go when you want more than trinkets and souvenirs. It's the luxury shopping district for those who want to fondle the merchandise rather than just view it in a Deep feed sim catalog. Of course, getting your hands on these goodies might make you all the more eager to actually hand over your credit sticks, so be warned. Everything here, from the restaurants to the high-rise condos to the boutiques and department stores are all at least five times as much as you'd pay elsewhere. But if you come here, it's never for the price. It's for the reputation you're making for yourself. Don't forget, every establishment has a dress code, and you can be ever-so-politely ushered out of anywhere if you come in too grubby...or blood-splattered.

The central department store is now home to a branch of the Shogun Outfitters corporation, and has a rather iconic clock tower atop it.

## MEIJI SHRINE

Back in the late 1800s, Emperor Meiji and Empress Shōken headed up a massive effort to reestablish imperial rule in Japan. It was such a successful effort, in 1912, after their deaths, a shrine was erected in one of their favorite gardens and their spirits



## JAPAN: EMPIRE OF THE SETTING SUN

were deified. Today, one of the larger forested stretches of Tokyo contains the shrine, which has been kept up by faithful Shinto attendants. While within the shrine—the entrance of which is marked by a massive torii gate—it almost feels like the rest of Tokyo disappears around you. Millions of Japanese citizens and tourists visit the shrine each year, writing out wishes on a wooden *ema* tablet. These *ema* wishes are a supposed way to make contact with a local cybernetic Shinobi clan that resides within Yoyogi Park, but I'm not about to test that theory, nakama. You give it a try and see if they make contact.

**#CutthroatChibi:** They're there. Those sorts of rumors don't get circulated without reason.

**#Billy\_Black\_Eyes:** What? So rumors are proof of ninjas now? That's some twisted logic, ami.

In the shrine's inner gardens, you'll find Kiyomasa Well. It is purported to be a spiritual place of power, where kami gather in droves. I've heard of various corporations getting permission to test the waters, but so far no one has revealed anything special. Though if they discovered anything, you really think they'd make it public knowledge?

### YOYOGI PARK

This is one of the largest cultivated parks in Tokyo, with sweeping lakes and verdant lawns. While many areas remain trimmed and proper, affording for picnics and casual strolls, certain invasive foliage species have somehow been introduced. Certain swaths have become incredibly lush and overgrown, offering all manner of hiding places and deterring visitors to keep to the outskirts. The densest area is toward the center, where a massive ginko tree can be seen rising above the rest like a leafy dome. Could be nothing but too much super-gro fertilizer spilled in the area. Could be something far worse.

**#TeaWhore:** Been there. I tried to actually get close enough to the park center to see what's there, but the vegetation gets so thick, you'd need a buzzsaw golemmech to cut through it after just a few dozen meters or less.

**#Oni\_Broni:** Weird. I wonder if Chrysanthemum Corporation has anything to do with that. I mean, look at what they've done with Sendai.

But if you'd prefer to leave well enough alone, visit in the spring to enjoy all the cherry blossoms!

### SHINJUKU GYOEN NATIONAL GARDEN

Originally, this garden was created in honor of a feudal lord from the Edo period, and was an imperial garden up until WWII. Afterwards, it was gifted to the nation and now incorporates several distinct gardening styles across its grounds: French formal gardens, Japanese traditional gardens, and English landscape gardens. One can wander it for days, marveling at the beautiful and distinct sections, with more than 50,000 trees, hundreds of unique plant species, and several ceremonial teahouses. The garden is accessible via three main gates: Shinjuku Gate, Sendagaya Gate, and Okido Gate.

Dozens of greenhouses dot the landscape; among them are several massive ones belonging to the Chrysanthemum Corporation, who claims they are simply seeking to develop more rigorous blossom strains. Only one or two visitors disappear from the gardens each year, so no one is asking questions yet.

### CLOUD KNIFE WEST TOWER

The Tokyo SkyTree Tower used to be the tallest in the world, but you know what happens whenever anyone claims a particular record. Someone else has to beat it out of principle. Thus the Cloud Knife West Tower was constructed right next to the SkyTree, reaching 752 meters. Cloud Knife West is entirely owned by Kenta Cyber Dynamics, which uses the place for office space, employee housing, and has dozens of floors dedicated to every possible living amenity. If threatened, the entire place can be locked down in minutes, sealing every door and window from outside access, and the whole tower has state-of-the-art auto-defense systems, including laser turrets, auto-cannons, electrified paneling, and a dedicated security squad for each floor.





A single elevator is used to take visitors to the heights of the tower for a 50-credit fee per person. This elevator has an isolated chute that is sealed off from the rest of the architecture and only makes stops at the bottom floor or the 110th floor observation deck.

### ROBOT RESTAURANT

Back in the day, this restaurant was a gaudy affair, full of waitresses in full-sequin outfits, nightly shows, concerts, millions of neon lights, mirrors galore, and a cheesy “duel” where bikini-clad women duked it out from within robotic-shaped hydraulic chassis that acted according to pre-programmed routines and had pneumatic tits (I’m not kidding).

Today? Oh, it’s still a gaudy affair, nakama. Except now the human waitresses are replaced by androids and Synths, and the robot battles are held by true bots, souped up with all the latest armor and weaponry. The robo battles don’t end until one opponent is pummeled to shiny bits, and audience betting is welcomed. People spend years building the bots that appear in the ring. The main difference alongside the tech upgrade is the audience now has to view the robo battles from outside a permaglass box so none of them are wounded in the mêlée. One thousand credits entry fee.

**#TopProfX:** I’m 99.9% sure this place is an A.I. hivemind cluster. They disguise themselves in robotic entertainer forms while communing on levels far above humanity.

**#Dark\_Ronin:** You really think super-intelligent A.I.s would spend their days putting on shows for humans?

**#TopProfX:** Who’d ever suspect it?

**#Dark\_Ronin:** Besides conspiracy theorists like you?

### MOUNT MITAKE

Outside of Tokyo is Chichibu-Tama-Kai National Park, which contains some of the most unadulterated wilderness you’ve ever set eyes on. Grav-train will get you there in an hour, and a personal shuttle will do you half an hour, tops; and you can be set down practically anywhere you want in the park—though pick-up will cost you extra, of course. The park contains Mount Mitake, atop which rests the Musashi-Mitake Shrine, which people say has been around over 2,000 years. Plentiful bioforms now reside within the park, alongside rumored hybrid camps, and numerous rural settlements. You could be hiking along and come across a dozen huts, a well, and a hundred or so citizens living in squalor as happy as can be. It’s a jarring contrast to the Tokyo glitz and tech-glam, but if you like it rustic, this is the way to go.

### KABUKIZA THEATRE

Funny thing, this theatre. Built in 1889, it sadly burned down in 1921. It had been so popular, the authorities announced an intent to rebuild it with fireproof materials, yet retain the classical Japanese architecture, and modernize the whole affair with electric wiring and lights. In 1923, during reconstruction, an earthquake hit and...caused the place to burn down again. Not to be stymied, it finally got reopened in 1950 until it was demolished in 2010 to make way for a whole new version that would be deemed both earthquake and fireproof. 2013 saw yet another grand reopening, and it has survived everything since.

All that to illustrate just how much the Japaense love their kabuki theater! While the building has been modernized with the latest security measures—including a roof that supposedly can withstand a direct rocket strike, oni bioform guards out front, and

kitsune bioforms as attendants—the performances themselves remain strictly traditional, and you can enjoy a unique monthly rotation of daily performances. It’s currently owned by Akimoto Kumiko, a master actor who has trained some of Japan’s most famous dancers and theatrical artists.

## CHIBA

Adjacent to Tokyo, just to the east, actually, Chiba holds firm to its independent identity despite many thinking of it as just an extension of the bigger prefecture. It is a prefecture of its own, and rightly so. There are two main reasons why Chiba deserves such a focus. Foremost, thanks to a constant gentrification effort, it is one of the cities where the police have actually been immensely successful in rooting out Yakuza presence and eliminating a majority of crime. If there’s anywhere one could deem “safe” to be in Japan, it’d be here, and massive resources are devoted to keeping it that way. This gentrification and low crime have caused the area to be filled with large, sprawling estates where some of the wealthiest families in Japan dwell.

Secondly, Chiba has become a corporate oasis. While all the corporations have a Tokyo presence, most of them—especially those dedicated to cybernetic developments of any sort—are headquartered here. Research and development teams are able to work in relative peace, and the area draws many of the best and brightest minds, which only contributes to its reputation further. If there was anything questionable about the prefecture, it’d be that the government officials are desperate to keep the corporation presence concentrated there, and so have cut many under-the-table deals to ensure it stays that way. A bit of corporate shenanigans might be an easy price to pay for the otherwise lack of violence or undesirable social aspects that are kept at bay.

**#CutthroatChibi:** People love to talk about how clean and tidy Chiba is. The reality is, crime is still rampant here; it’s just not in the violent, surface-level form you normally hear about. It’s all black code labs, virtu-drug development, immortalitech R&D, and lots more they don’t want the higher ups taking notice of. So of course they keep the streets quiet. Underneath, though, it’s just as deadly and dangerous as the rest of Japan. Ishin-Denshin has several secret facilities here under shell company names, and I can’t even guess at what Chrysanthemum is up to in the area.

Takey Yoshii is the current head administrator of Chiba, and also sits on the board of Kenta Cyber Dynamics. An imposingly strong man, he looks to be in his mid-thirties, but is said to be at least twice that old, thanks to regenerative nanotech. He is an intense man who serves his country and prefecture well, but also occasionally finds opportunities to slip his corporation’s best interests into the mix—such as city rezoning for factories and R&D labs as well as covering up investigations into accused corporate espionage.

Chiba is one place in Japan that has drastically changed its appearance over the past century. While it once was packed with rearing skyscrapers and crowded streets like Tokyo, the cleanup effort actually saw many of those buildings razed to make way for the wider thoroughfares and larger abode you now see. There remains a busier downtown area, to be sure, but there’s a reason why Chiba is now nicknamed the “flatlands.”



### CHIBA SHRINE

Set near Chiba's city square, this shrine hosts a throng of buildings painted a brilliant orange. Even with Japan's reputation for beautiful gardens, the ones within these walls are considered among the best, and the main gates are carved with an elaborate tribute to the twelve animals of the traditional calendar. Koi ponds abound, with arched bridges, and stony paths leading you through the area. The shrine is also the site of several annual festivals, including a taiko drumming event.

Here's the part you should remember, though. The shrine is dedicated to a Shinto deity named Myoken, who is supposed to provide defense against ill-fortune and bodily harm. When you enter this shrine, you are given an extended form of sanctuary against any who might be pursuing you. Even the most dishonorable Japanese would not dare to harm anyone on these grounds. Anyone who is fleeing danger and makes it inside is allowed to stay for a maximum of three days before they must leave. If you must ever take advantage of this tradition, use that time wisely.

**#Oni\_Broni:** I've seen a guy chased by a bunch of Yakuza thugs right into here. The gangers camped outside the gates until the monks forced the guy to leave and then hauled him off, screaming. Sanctuary didn't help him much, did it?

### NARITA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

Once known as the Gateway to Japan, this airport has been closed to all international flights except for those by top-priority foreign diplomats and corporate figures. Even then, the costs of flying in to this complex are enormous, due to several bombing and hijacking attempts. High-ranking Japanese use it often, and there's a definite smuggling network connected to it, but since most foreign passage is restricted through Nagasaki, the Gateway is now slammed shut in most other faces.

### KUJUKURI-HAMA BEACH

Chiba's Bōsō Peninsula boasts the second-longest stretch of beach in all of Japan. Officially, Kujukuri-hama Beach is part of Kujukuri Prefectural Natural Park. Unofficially, it is one of the best ways to get in and out of the country without being detected, so long as you have access to watercraft. As such, the thirty-seven miles of beachfront property sees plenty of assassins, smugglers, ronin, and other unsavory types leaving footprints in the sand. In an effort to stem illegal trafficking, the beach has been littered with nano-sensors and camo-cams, and drones make regular patrols. Legislation is in the works to wall the entire thing off within the next decade.

**#TopProfX:** There are several well-known blind zones in the surveillance network here. Pretty sure the administrator responsible for security and monitoring of the area is on the take.

**#FishBasket:** Wouldn't surprise me in the least.

Several water purification plants have been built along the area, and hydroelectric turbines have been planted at the base of the northeast shelf. Fishers, surfers, and swimmers still enjoy the area, but with the growing awareness that their ability to do so may soon be limited.

### KAZUSA AKADEMIA PARK

This massive R&D complex is located just an hour south of Chiba City. Originally a public forum for debate, an exchange of ideas, and furthering Japan's technological superiority—including biotechnology and cybernetics—it fell onto hard financial times in 2057 and was subsequently bought out by Kenta Cyber Dynamics. KCD converted the entire facility into a high-security compound, sealing it off from the outside world and rarely letting the public glimpse the work going on within.

We do know there originally were at least half-a-dozen manufacturing facilities, a massive research institute, a hotel that could hold over 5,000 people at once, incubation compounds, a sports club, convention center, a resort, and dozens of factories. What the place has been turned into since then is anybody's guess. KCD production certainly ramped up once they acquired the property, and it is believed many of their brightest people are contained within.

**#TopProfX:** Before switching to the educational sector, I used to work for KCD and lived on this complex for several years. It's been built up to at least double its original size, and that's not including the underground networks they've tunneled across the landscape. By the time I left, they'd even begun construction of an orbital shuttle launch platform.

### CHIBA CITY ARCHAEOLOGICAL OPERATION AND RESEARCH CENTER

Based near Chiba's city center, this operation facility is home to several thousand dedicated archaeologists and restorationists who devote their lives to protecting Japan's past from all those who would pillage and plunder it. Many people think all of Japan's ancient history has been uncovered, but that's far from the truth. It's like an onion, and the more we carefully peel back layers, exposing even older structures and priceless artifacts of bygone eras, the more we must fight to protect the fragility of the past. Using the latest structural analysis and dating tools, micro-focus scanners, nano-imaging tech, and more, they're able to perform non-invasive reconstructions of still-buried temples and towns. They are responsible for hundreds of heritage museums all over the islands. Considering how much blood and sweat they pour into the effort, is it any wonder they are fanatical about tracking down anyone who might steal a relic and try to pawn it off on the black market? Cross these people if you dare, because they're the worst kind of zealot—the smart kind.

### MT. NOKOGIRI-YAMA

While not prominent in height, this mountain runs along Tokyo Bay and holds several main highways and grav-train rails. Its main interest is cultural, as the western side holds a massive temple complex complete with the largest stone-carved Daibutsu in Japan, as well as thousands of hand-carved sculptures that restorationists have fought and died to protect from looters. Despite echo-locative surveying which indicates no further discoveries are to be made, legends continue to be told about hidden paths and passages that lead into the mountain itself which could contain... well...it depends on what story you believe. Ancient treasure... alien technology...illegal genetics labs. Strange that such a simple, normal-looking pile of dirt would give rise to such persistent tales.



**#TeaWhore:** I love a good treasure hunt.  
**#Dark\_Ronin:** You mean wild goose chase? Those stories are just passed around to attract tourists.  
**#TeaWhore:** But she just said the place is highly defended by restorationist teams. Why would they want tourists tromping around, threatening their fragile relics?

## SHOWA NO MORI

This old forested park has undergone a striking evolution in the past two decades. It was once little more than a mild tourist attraction, with the usual flowering walkways framed by cherry blossom trees. Then a private individual bought the whole area, all 100 hectares of it! A huge demolition and construction project got underway that must've cost an emperor's fortune. In the end, the whole park had been converted into two-dozen biodomes, fully sealed from the outside world. They remained that way for another five years. Just three years ago, they opened to the public without any fanfare, without any fee. Just a Deep message to all of Japan saying, "Come. Enjoy." Millions flocked to the place and found within the domes...biospheres. Each one held a varying environmental experience, from jungles and swamps to deserts to ones culled from other planets, such as low-grav landscapes and gassed chambers that required colonist suits to enter. The environments are filled with vegetation, harmless fauna, and each dome thoroughly wraps you up in its individual experience.

Honestly it's...beautiful. Masterful. Visiting here hit me a lot harder than I expected.

No one knows who bought or built all this, but many bless their secret name, while others wonder if the person responsible is even human at all.

## OSAKA

Originally a smaller part of a larger metropolis known as Keihanshin, Osaka became the second largest city in Japan at just shy of twenty million citizens. This occurred when all three cities, Osaka, Kyoto, and Kobe, fell prey en masse to the Flare of 2089, driving every single person in the world with a TAP temporarily insane. For some reason, the people of Osaka recovered more quickly and launched a widespread mental reboot meme intended to help their fellow citizens regain their sanity. While the attempt worked, the unfortunate side effect was the majority of those in Kyoto and Kobe lost all memories. Guilt-ridden, believing they had caused this, the Osaka citizens have begun rehabilitating the many millions, helping them form new identities and reintegrate with society. This effort is still underway and will take years to complete, with Wiped still present in many city slums. In the meantime, Osaka officially took governance over the other two cities to form the larger entity now singularly known as Osaka today.

**#FishBasket:** I have two cousins who are now Wiped. Visited them once. They can barely dress themselves, much less hold a coherent conversation. We're not sure they'll ever come back.  
**#HoliMoli:** That's horrible. It's a miracle the Osaka reboot meme didn't spread further.  
**#FishBasket:** Actually, it's still out there in the Deep. Osaka's administrators were never fully able to totally contain the spread. There are at least a few global Wipe cases being detected each month.

Not only is it a social center to rival the likes of the Tokyo Prefecture, but it is undeniably the manufacturing and production center of Japan. This is partially because the many Wiped citizens have been discovered to work well as manual laborers and other grunt jobs until they develop more fine-tuned and high-functioning skills. Tokyo itself has adopted more of the commercial management role, and Chiba holds the majority of corporation HQs, but Osaka is where one goes to actually produce the goods those companies sell across Japan and the world. At such a critical economic junction, Osaka is referred to as "Japan's Kitchen," noting how it brings all the ingredients of development, marketing, and raw resource together to create actual results.

After the disastrous results of the Reboot Meme occurred, Osaka's current head administrator committed seppuku. His replacement is Kan Umehara, a middle-aged industrial leader with strong ties to the corporations he now deals with on a daily basis. His main goal is to bring the lost population back under Japanese care and control while keeping production rates at acceptable levels. He also heads up ongoing R&D to secure citizen TAPs from future mass failures. One growing faction within Osaka is now widely being called the unTAPPED, as they have had their units permanently shut down and removed. This concerns national authorities, as it leaves those citizens far less traceable and undermines security efforts.

**#Droneofthemoth:** I don't believe the Wipe was a direct result of the Flare insanity. I think it was a government broadcast and Osaka's sister cities were the test subjects. The Flare aftermath was just a convenient time to try it out.  
**#WillyaWontcha:** Why would they ever do that to their own citizens?  
**#Droneofthemoth:** Hey, Japan is the land of conformity. Wouldn't it be easier to make everyone conform if they had to relearn everything from scratch? And if the government was the only demographic that remained sane enough to enforce order after the fact?

## OSAKA CASTLE

During the madness of the Flare, two-dozen techno-Samurai came together in a unified psychosis, believing they had been transported back to feudal Japan and that their lord, who lived in Osaka Castle, was in need of defense. They invaded what had been, up until that point, a full-sized replica and museum of the castle, slaughtering anyone in their way. By the time sanity returned to the region, the Samurai had converted the museum into a modern fortress, barring all entrances and capturing numerous citizens to serve them within.

Almost two years since, and local authorities haven't managed to penetrate the Castle and remove the Samurai, who have continued to live within their fantasy world. They somehow transported a massive armory into the castle grounds, which they now use to drive off all comers from their superior, highly defensible position. It is also unknown how they are managing to procure supplies and other necessities while keeping themselves in a siege position. Perhaps their augmentations and implants are to blame for their stubborn longevity. For now, Osaka authorities are focused on more pressing matters, and so long as the Mad Samurai stay behind their gates, they are being ignored.

## OSAKA STATION CITY

Built around a massive bus and train terminal, this station developed a large subculture of homeless and transient citizens



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who pawned and picked off the many travelers who shuffled through their domain. This led to numerous underground shelters being built, as well as hidden tent cities within the heart of Osaka itself, kept a communal secret by society's undesirables. After the Flare and the Wipe, the city's existence was exposed, and many Wiped wandered into the area and took up residence, expanding the population by a factor of five. Due to damages during the chaos, as well as the number of people now calling train cars their homes, it has been impossible for the place to be cleaned up and the station to come back into operation, severely hampering Osaka's rebuilding efforts. Attempts have been made, employing riot police and security androids, but the sheer number of people needing to be dislodged, plus their status as Wiped, has made the authorities hesitant to employ lethal force.

### BAY AREA

As early Osaka grew and expanded, it turned its eye on the Bay Area as more than just an industrial port. A number of manmade islands were formed there in the twenty-first century, including Kansai International Airport, Rokko Island, and Port Island. In the past decade, this trend has been kickstarted, and dozens of independent developers have begun gaining permits to create their own new islands on which to construct real estate, office space, entertainment islands, and more. So rapidly have these new islands formed that citizens petitioned the head administrator to stop the expansion before the entire bay was filled in. Additions are halted for the time being, but with the sudden integration of 19 million citizens into their provenance, Osaka is rethinking options as to where all these people could be placed—and that big expanse of open water is looking rather tempting if a few massive arcologies could be built out on top of it.

### BUNRAKU THEATER

This theater, the national center for bunraku puppet shows, has been made famous and quite controversial by replacing its traditional puppet shows with ones employing remote-controlled Synths. The themes and stories remain culled from traditional Japanese lore, but the puppets themselves are now life-sized. Audiences have not diminished, as Osaka is desperate for entertainment to take their minds off the tragedies they've recently experienced, however many admit to being greatly disturbed to see the Synths prancing about on virtual strings. The mastermind behind this change is Benjiro Isobe, who is rarely seen in public and always has a pair of oni bioform bodyguards hovering around his person.

**#FishBasket:** I hear some of the "actors" aren't actually Synths at all, but slaves made up to look like them, paying off life debts through a form of "community service" to the arts.

**#TeaWhore:** So actors who are acting at being Synth actors? How meta.

### SKY BUILDING

This iconic building was bought by the Ishin-Denshin corporation forty years back and has served as administrative offices as well as an R&D complex. Subterranean labs are believed to now extend several city blocks beneath it. With Ishin-Denshin's production of all things virtual and sim, it is of little surprise that all of the building's windows have been replaced with holo-projectors, allowing the building to appear to take on almost any form. Occasionally, the

corporation will put on a citywide show, playing movies for all to see, turning the building into a stomping kaiju, or make it appear invisible, as if plucked straight from the earth. While amusing, these acts also serve to make Ishin-Denshin seem harmless and playful, distracting the common citizen from wondering what's going on behind those illusory walls.

### SHITENNOJI TEMPLE

This temple holds the distinction of being the first, oldest Buddhist temple to be constructed in Japan. It has survived many disasters through the years, and various buildings have had to be rebuilt or restored to keep from tumbling in on themselves. It is one of Osaka's greatest prides, and many consider it a miracle it was not damaged during the madness that shook the city. To preserve its sense of holiness, visitors are only allowed to purchase mementos and trinkets from the shrine on the twenty-first day of each month, but the shrine is mostly supported by local and national donations.

### NORTH DISTRICT

It's unknown what caused at least ten skyscrapers to collapse in Osaka's North District, as it happened while everyone was a temporary lunatic. With half a million dead and a chunk of land nothing but rubble, rebuilding teams have only just begun to get back into the area. In the meantime, a couple million homeless, poor, and dying have converted the area into a giant slum. This place is the current shame of Osaka, and authorities are scrambling to find a solution without resorting to turning the whole place to ash and starting over.

**#Dark\_Ronin:** I heard reports that the towers were hit by a grey-goo nanobomb.

**#Billy\_Black\_Eyes:** Then why wasn't the whole city converted to goo? Why just these ten buildings?

**#Dark\_Ronin:** Obviously the bomb's programming was faulty. Wouldn't put it past the Setting Sun cult to be working on this sort of thing around the clock.

### SOUTH DISTRICT

Osaka now relies heavily on newly functioning Wiped citizens to provide the manual labor in their industrial and manufacturing sectors, most of which are situated in the South District. Here, thousands of factories and production plants run around the clock, with shifts of Wiped shuffling in and out under the watchful eye of Osaka managers and administrators. Should any Wiped laborer start showing signs of a personality or latent skill, they are tagged and transported to a rehabilitation center where their fledgling identity is nurtured until they can assume a fuller role within society.

**#Your\_Lolita\_Princess:** I have a friend who works at one of these rehabilitation centers. She says it's totally demoralizing, seeing these people who don't act like people anymore. They're just...shells. Lots of them just disappear, never seen again, taken by Yakuza or others as drug mules, data dumpers, or chop shop material.

### KITA

The inability for people to prepare for or defend against the impact of the Flare, plus seeing the horrible conditions of the Wiped, convinced many Osaka citizens that their TAPs were too dangerous. At least one million people deactivated and removed



theirs, creating a new unTAPPED population sector. Realizing they wouldn't integrate well with the rest of the city, they took over Kita, one of Osaka's original twenty-four wards, and settled in to create a new, off-the-grid life for themselves. This area is now a dark spot on Osaka's network. No individual with a TAP is allowed inside, and entry attempts are met with armed force.

## FUKUSHIMA

Old disasters never fully go away, even when bigger ones try to crowd the stage. The world wears its scars, and so do the cities we build that crumble to dust between our fingers. No matter how strong a front humanity tries to hold onto, nature always reminds us who's in charge eventually. In Fukushima, this took the form of a tsunami that caused the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear plant to experience a catastrophic failure and meltdown. Radiation suffused the area and hundreds of thousands of people were evacuated.

**#Oni\_Broni:** A tsunami? Is that the cover-up story still being told these days? Everyone knows Daiichi was an early failed cold fusion experiment.

**#Billy\_Black\_Eyes:** The tsunami in question is pretty well documented.

**#Oni\_Broni:** And you don't find that suspicious? That we've got so much data about a natural disaster that caught everyone off guard enough to cause a nuclear meltdown?

For a few decades, Fukushima citizens tried to maintain settlements in the prefecture, especially considering the radiation scarring only impacted about ten percent of the geographic region. There was even talk of making the nuclear plant a tourist attraction once the radiation levels died down and clean-up efforts proceeded. However...the area remains a wasteland to this day. Worse, the blotch on Japanese soil is beginning to grow. Every year, the no-entry zone expands a few hundred yards. No one is quite sure why, though there are, as always, numerous theories. Some people believe the corporations are at fault, using the disaster site as dumping grounds for any and all toxic waste, failed genetic experiments, or hazardous materials they don't want to legally deal with. Others believe there are mutated lifeforms that have evolved within the region that thrive on radiation and are seeding the surrounding area to slowly expand their territory. Others say aliens because of course they do.

Oh, there are still settlements of sorts around the area—but think about it. What sort of person would choose to live in this treacherous place, knowing how much they must sacrifice just to survive? Would you want to take a guess as to how friendly and forward thinking these souls are? Fukushima is rife with mutations of both the flora and fauna type, not to mention genetic freaks who are more apt to gnaw on your brainstem than give you any sort of common courtesy.

**#WillyaWontcha:** Is she talking about zombies?

**#Billy\_Black\_Eyes:** No such thing. Cannibalistic mutants, though? Sure. Go for it. I see those all the time.

**#WillyaWontcha:** Again, I can't tell if you're joking or not.

## DAIICHI NUCLEAR PLANT

The old power plant is still there according to all reports and satellite imagery. However, reaching it is a trial only the most worthy...or foolhardy...should ever undertake. Even if you manage to cobble together any sort of decent radiation shielding, the

output levels are growing annually. To reach the heart of Daiichi without getting a lethal radiation dose might require tromping in with a full golemmech suit for protection—and even that's no guarantee. The deeper into this territory you get, the more treacherous it becomes. Tales told by survivors speak of carnivorous plant, roving gangs of murderous mutants, hidden zeeek arcologies, and stranger creatures and sites that will tempt madness in even the most stable soul.

## FUKUSHIMA CITY

For the most part, this is a city of hardscrabble survivors. Less than a quarter of a million people live here, and most of them are the generational sorts who only stick around because their ancestors did. The main presence in the city is Kensai, which spends a lot of time studying the growing radiation zone, sending teams of scientists into the field on a daily basis, and otherwise trying to find a way to turn the Daiichi disaster into a profitable circumstance. Ugly and deadly business. Nobody goes to Fukushima for fun these days, nakama. If you're there, it's because you have to be, because you're paid to be, or because you're hiding from something even worse.

## ABUKUMADO CAVE

This underground cavern network was sealed off by a series of mysterious explosions just over seven years ago. Two years back, several geologists managed to stumble back into the caves through a series of side tunnels and found the whole cave system had been turned into a secret headquarters for the Setting Sun cult. They've apparently got thousands of apocalyptic soldiers down there, with barracks, artillery ranges, labs, and much more. It's practically a whole underground town, populated by fanatics dedicated to bringing about the end times. The main entrances remain sealed by tons of rubble, and other access routes remain hidden so far. How Setting Sun managed to claim the spot without anyone taking notice is beyond me.

**#TeaWhore:** If we know where they're based, why haven't they been wiped out yet? These are terrorists, for fucks sake!

**#CutthroatChibi:** This is just the one known cult headquarters. It doesn't account for even a tenth of their total membership across the country. From what I've gleaned, the administration is trying to infiltrate the setup and gather what intelligence they can to locate other centers before they bring the bombs down on the caves.

## MOUNT AZUMA

This dormant volcanic mound has been fenced off by Kenta Cyber Dynamics and is patrolled by endlessly circling android squads and drones. While listed as a basic R&D facility, it is commonly known to be a converted weapons testing site, where the latest bombs, guns, and power suits are unleashed without putting innocent lives at risk. Let's just hope all the explosive tests don't trigger the ancient volcano in the process.

## YOKOHAMA

Yokohama used to be the second largest city in Japan, before the whole hideous Osaka affair and the blended prefectures there. While it was once close to four million souls, it has dwindled in recent decades to just two and a half million. Still, that's plenty enough to cause a lifetime's worth of trouble. See, Yokohama is



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based a bit south of Tokyo, right off the main Tokyo Bay. It acts as a major port city for the region, and while Tokyo gets some deliveries direct, much of its goods traffic comes through Yokohama.

And you know what a port city means, right? Similarly to Nagasaki, Yokohama is known for its smuggling rings. You need someone or something slipped into Tokyo? You take it under the scanner via Yokohama...and be prepared to hand over a hefty number of credits to grease your path. Everyone's on the take, from the dock officials to the traffic cops to the guy running the chop shop. Thing is, because practically everyone has a stake in Yokohama being an open port to anything and everything, the operations running there have become incredibly efficient and effective. You hear about the cargo ship that got offloaded with over a thousand cyborg chassis? No? Exactly. It's almost unheard of to pull off that sort of transfer without a hitch, and the only reason I know enough to tell you is because I brokered the whole deal.

### KANNAI

The prime port itself, site of the first foreign settlement in the region, remains a center of commerce to this day. It's one of the more internationalized city sectors, though you're more likely to find corporation offices and outlets rather than any major political presence—unless you're of the mind that politics and corporate function are one and the same these days. Kannai is the main smuggler and ronin thoroughfare, especially since you can access it by boat, plane, or grav-rail and then speed off to anywhere in the city (or Tokyo itself) within the hour. If you need goods moved without question, just ask anyone where the "Garden Gate" is, and you'll be contacted with a dozen gig bids before you get down the next block.

### YOKOHAMA MARINE TOWER

Talk about trying too hard. This tower used to be a swanky tourist spot with restaurants and shops filling its hundred-plus floors. A massive renovation effort has since turned it into a fully sealed water ecology for aquatic or amphibious hybrids. It's like a big joke, with one of the taller towers in a port city—where watery environs are in abundance—being transformed into a giant aquarium so the adapted hybrid population can keep an eye on the average citizen from up on high. A few anti-hybrid terrorist groups and Setting Sun cultists have attempted to bomb out the tower and cause massive flooding through the city, but tower security systems have prevented these plots.

**#Oni\_Broni:** Most of the permaglass paneling on this tower is opaque, but they occasionally turn it translucent to let sunlight reach the algae and kelp growing inside. The walls around the base keep most citizens from getting too close, but when the light hits it right, you can see thousands of dark shapes swimming through the watery layers. There is one access port that's kept dry for certain landlubbers they have diplomatic or business relationships with.

### THE DOLL MUSEUM

This place used to be an actual museum displaying thousands of rare dolls from across the world. That original collection got trashed in a fire almost fifty years back. Now the site hosts a different type of relic, serving as a museum of outdated and deactivated androids, roids, and borg models. Endless rows of artificial bodies stand for visitors to gawk at, from the clunkiest drones to last year's discontinued mecha-sumo lines. They say

this place comes alive at night after the last visitor leaves, with ancient systems and A.I.s booting up the displays to interact on a purely mechanical level. Others say the whole place is owned by an unknown, wealthy individual who is quietly stockpiling an army that will be activated to conquer the prefecture on some future day. Whether any of this is true or not, I certainly wouldn't want to be working the night shift in this creep show.

**#TeaWhore:** I made the mistake of checking this place out. I swear, it gave me nightmares for weeks. Every time you look away, you feel like you're being watched. You hear whispers from every corner, and see the "dolls" twitching out of the corner of your eye. A million credits couldn't make me go back.

### CHINATOWN

That's right, nakama. Yokohama's Chinatown remains the largest in Japan, and if the Triads have any major foothold in the country, it's based here. Near a hundred thousand souls live in this city sector, and a good half of them are Chinese. A main gang, The Flowering Frogs, runs the streets here, and you can spot most of their members by the green-gray hue of their skin—the result of an epidermal chem-brew they partake of regularly. Chinatown is a world unto itself, despite local administrators wanting you to think otherwise. When you step through the gates marking the borders, you might as well be leaving Japan entirely. Hopefully you'll make it back before being dissected for spare parts.

### SENDAI

With near a million citizens at this time, the city of Sendai is known to be one forever striving to achieve harmony between humanity and nature. One might think Sendai would be a little bitter toward nature, though, considering how it has been hit by numerous earthquakes and almost got wiped out by a tsunami just under a century ago. But no, the people there are still ready to make friendly with Gaia. In fact, the city is now known as the "City of Trees." One guess why. The Japanese have always been keen to incorporate nature into their daily lives, but the citizens of Sendai are always pushing it a step further, constantly building bigger parks, planting new trees, and implementing the latest in solar, hydroelectrics, and other green energy networks to power their lives. The vegetation is kept neatly trimmed and orderly, and Sendai has been compared to a metropolitan bonsai garden with neat rows of hedges, trees, and flowering plants.

In the last decade, Sendai started receiving massive grants from the Chrysanthemum Corporation, giving them funding to find increasingly creative ways to blend human genetics and other biological elements. There are reports that Chrysanthemum is attempting to create a photosynthetic hybrid there, algae-based simulacrum, and may have tapped into the ocean's subcurrents as a source of unending energy. Other rumored developments include Insta-Grow Trees (just add water), ocean-bound aquatic hybrid colonies, and gargantuan fruit plants and trees. None of this is confirmed as of yet, but if it's happening, the logical place to look would be Sendai. You might think all this sounds just fine, nakama, but to me it smacks of just the sort of thing any number of eco-terrorist groups might love to take advantage of. If instant tree seeds existed, what's to stop them from being weaponized and bombarding cities across the world, destroying whole infrastructures as the growing roots take hold?





**#Billy\_Black\_Eyes:** Ever since the Ivory Curtain came down, there's been talk of trying to reseed a number of African deserts. Maybe that's what these sorts of projects are being aimed at?

**#CutthroatChibi:** Right, Billy. They're doing this out of concern for global welfare, not because they a bunch of mad scientists who want to play at being Gaia.

Sendai is formed of five large wards, each of which has a local governor, all under the control of head administrator Yoshifusa Funai. An aging but refined gentlemen, Funai has been in power for almost thirty years, kept alive by dozens of cybernetic replacements and augmentations. It's believed that he is personally tended to by Chrysanthemum Corp workers to extend his life as long as possible—so it's little mystery where his loyalties lie. I don't doubt he has his city's best interests at heart, but once mortality starts rearing its skull-faced visage, it's every man for himself.

## UNIVERSITIES

Sendai prides itself on being forward-thinking, even in this rapidly evolving age. Alongside "City of Trees," it has also become known as the "Academic City" as it holds a dozen universities and counting. These universities do offer general courses, but tend to specialize in areas of science such as cybertech, biotech, immortalitech, artificial intelligence, and many others. These establishments attract students from across the world and testing to be admitted is ferociously rigorous. Chrysanthemum Corporation allows other corporations to pull potential employees from graduates, though not without skimming the cream of the crop off for themselves.

## CHRYSODOME

In the northeast sector of Sendai is the ChrysoDome, which stands like an artificial mountain complete with grass and trees

and running streams. It has become a favorite hiking and camping place for locals. However, the whole interior of the mountain is, in fact, a corporate arcology, dedicated to developing the latest in green technology and finding ever more disturbing ways to fuse humanity with the earth and ecosystem itself.

**#Billy\_Black\_Eyes:** Anyone been in here? Any insights as to what's going on? Inquiring minds want to know

**#Dark\_Ronin:** From what I can tell, there's a whole data blackout surrounding this place. No broadcasts coming out. No Net connections. Just...nothing.

## YAGIYAMA ZOO

Sendai once had an expansive and popular zoo, filled with hundreds of species. However, during one rather zealous Festival of the Trees, participants marched on the zoo and tore it down with their bare hands. At least a dozen died in the process, being mauled to death by some of the predatory specimens. Since then, the zoo has turned into an incredibly overgrown park, nearly a jungle, full of wild animals that seem quite comfortable in their freed home and have little inclination to leave its borders.

## CHRYSANTHEMUM R&D LAB

Chrysanthemum Corporation's main laboratory complex is located on Sendai's coastline, just south of the main dock complex. It is a disturbingly organic-looking building, harder than nano-woven steel but with wooden texture and no windows. It stands as tall as a fifty-story building and stretches half a mile down the shorefront. Spiraling orifices allow individuals and vehicles entry at a street level, while aircraft have been observed taking off from openings in the top that seal shut immediately afterward. At times, the whole building appears to pulse, as if taking a slow breath. And if you look at it in the right light after a fresh rain, I can swear



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you'll see tiny filaments and spores wafting from it to spread out over the city. There's a reason why I don't live in Sendai, hai?

### HIROSHIMA

Situated in the center of the Chugoku region on the mainland, Hiroshima receives the terrible distinction of being the first struck by the two atomic bombs in WWII. It made history in the worst possible way, with everything eradicated within two kilometers of the detonation site. People feared the city would never become habitable again, but we proved the world wrong and started rebuilding. Now known as the "City of Water," Hiroshima is now home to just under a million souls and is one of the more quiet and contemplative places in the country. In fact, it tends to be a refuge for those citizens who wish to escape and ignore the chaos of the world, and has developed a flourishing religious community.

I suppose it's fitting for a place that's defined by war and rebirth to be devoted to focusing on more spiritual matters, if you're into that sort of thing. It can feel like the whole city is a shrine to peace, a calm and quiet prayer to the world asking other nations to lay down their arms before the consequences become too great to fathom. Sadly, I don't think that's going to happen anytime soon. The memorials are lovely though, and the local government consistently battles to keep the old sites from being overrun by holo-displays and rearing buildings.

Hiroshima's head administrator is Raidon Mochizuki, a youthful man who has only been in the office for a few years now. Considered by many to be untested steel, he has actually done an admirable job keeping out more dangerous criminal elements who have tried to push into the area during his political transition. There are rumors that Mochizuki is actually trained as Shinobi, and is now a vigilante who goes out at night to personally hunt down those who would threaten the sanctity of the city. Sounds like a nice plot for a drama feed, hai?

Many in the world refuse to believe in Hiroshima's docile appearance, and many stories have arisen to explain what could be lurking beneath its surface—be it a secret Chrysanthemum R&D lab, a Japanese nuclear sub bay, or an underwater weapons testing site. My favorite is that this is where several corporations have pooled their resources and are currently tinkering with genetic vats in an effort to create the first true kaiju.

### A-BOMB DOME

It's difficult to look at this peace memorial, part of Hiroshima's larger Peace Park, and not be haunted by it, even more than a century later. Seventy thousand instantly dead, the instant the bomb went off. Seventy thousand fatally wounded, left to suffer for days or weeks. Yes, our more current wars make those numbers seem laughable, but it just shows the human propensity for escalation. This building was the only one left standing near the bomb's hypocentre, and is now referred to as Genbaku Dome, or A-Bomb Dome.

Several sims have been developed to recreate the actual bombing experience, if you ever want to put yourself through such a thing. Wandering around the Peace Park, you can see a virtual overlay of this structure as it originally stood. In some sims, a timer start ticking down until the world dissolves into white. In others, you're just left to wander until you become just another charred shadow on a wall.

**#TopProfX:** Ishin-Denshin has a nasty, growing reputation for seeding feeds with a variety of death sims. Thing is, these sims can actually kill if the safety filters are taken off. For some people, their minds can't distinguish between real and virtual deaths. Morbidly, this sort of threat is only making their death sim line more popular with adrenaline junkies who want to flip a coin in their brains and see if they survive the experience.

Also found within Peace Park are several Peace Bells, the Children's Peace Memorial, the Gates of Peace (with the word "peace" written in 49 languages), and Memorial Cenotaph.

### FUKUYUMA CASTLE

As with many historical sites, the original castle was destroyed during WWII. It was rebuilt close to its first location with amazing attention to detail, and is currently a museum dedicated to the Genna era of Japanese history.

### MIYAJIMA MACHIYA STREET

The main shopping street in Hiroshima is found along Omote-Sando, crammed full of souvenir caddies and food carts. If you duck around the corner, though, you'll find yourself in Miyajima Machiya Street, which has been designed to reflect the styles and architecture of the 1700s, down to the mud walls, tiled rooftops, five-story pagodas, and ancient well. Shops line the street here too, selling more rustic wares. Sadly, the area has developed quite the seedy underside thanks to Yakuza infiltrating the local commerce. They enjoy blending in with the costumed proprietors and citizens in the area. If ever called out for questionable actions, they can just blame it on someone taking a roleplay too far.

**#CutthroatChibi:** Behind the old blacksmith shop, you'll find a tidy little chop shop. Good if you need a cheap, quick implant or limb upgrade. Run by a citizen named Dr. Yomoto. If you can prove you're in good with the Yakuza, he'll cut his prices in half.

### SHUKKEIEN

Built in the 1600s during Japan's Edo period, this garden is the most famous within Hiroshima and known throughout all of Japan. After the bombing, it took extensive damage and also sheltered refugees. It has since been restored and is a favorite spot for visitors. Unfortunately, due to lax biological security, the garden has become the home for hundreds of bioforms, from KamiCuties to Yōkai to Yamabiko. Enter if you dare.

### NAGASAKI

Located on the island of Kyushu, southwest of the Japanese mainland, Nagasaki remains a testament of Japanese perseverance and dedication. Established in the sixteenth century, it became a vital port of trade and foreign relations for centuries—right up until it was struck by one of two atomic bombs in WWII. Despite this tragedy, Nagasaki was not dead. Merely wounded.

Once the war ended, the rebuilding effort began. By the twenty-first century, it had once more become a center of commerce and international relations. Restorative engineers kept some mementos of the city's destruction around as a reminder, including a rubble field, a damaged torii gate, and an archway near the bomb's detonation point. Nagasaki slowly repopulated and began to heal. It, like the rest of Japan, suffered through the third war and Charon



attack and reshaped itself once more. With Japan's sensitivity to foreign presence, Nagasaki was determined to be the primary site for international diplomacy. The government created a number of more contained embassies and relocated all foreign ambassadors and their retinues there, no matter where they had been previously throughout the country. This concentration of focus allows Japan to keep an eye on the more influential international people in their land, though they do allow gaijin to travel further abroad if they pass through the proper channels.

Nagasaki currently sits under the auspices of Chikara Nakada, a man who holds to traditional values and sovereignty of Japan. However, he is a most capable host, making guests feel welcome and safe within the city. He often appears on feeds and billboards with speeches of reassurance and hope, though those who know him truly recognize he is but another finger of the First General. He would not hesitate to obey any order handed down to him from up high, so long as it saw his beloved Japan protected.

Unlike Chiba, Nagasaki is rife with crime. Some Japanese claim this is caused by foreign influence, and that gaijin are constantly coming to Japan because they expect a black market on every corner or for the red light districts. At the same time, plenty of other Japanese are eager to profit from the shadowy side of the shop. The Yakuza are in abundance, with the primary family being the Yamaguchi-gumi, who deal with prostitution, racketeering, smuggling, drug running, black code, illegal sims, and much more. If gaijin wish to be smuggled into the rest of Japan, it isn't hard to find a runner offering such services, though their efficacy must always come into question—or they might just hand the gaijin over to the authorities for a reward. That's not to mention that Triad members are also constantly trying to gain access abroad via this port, and so gang warfare is one of the more common street dangers.

Nagasaki is a city divided unto itself, offering one hand of friendship, with the other hand behind its back, clutching a poisoned dagger.

## NAGASAKI ATOMIC BOMB MUSEUM

August 9, 1945. We tend to fixate on the most recent disasters—all the nuclear and dirty bombs that have wracked our world. Yet we might lose perspective if we don't remember where these bigger bombs came from. Nagasaki was ground zero for one of the first atomic bomb "tests" which, while it ended the war, also ended countless lives. The people of Nagasaki built this museum as well as memorials such as Peace Park and monuments marking the hypocenter of the atomic bombing for a reason. They did so as a plea to the world to not let this sort of thing happen again.

Guess what? The world didn't listen, and we're paying the price. I know there's a lot of hot ronin out there, gunning for glory and creds, but I dare you to visit Nagasaki and Hiroshima. If you aren't able to visit and spend a single day in these towns, then I call you an utter coward. I don't even care what you do there. I don't care if you come back more eager than ever to kill and destroy for Yen. But you must go so you at least know what a fraction of the cost might be someday.

## SOFUKUJI

Surprise! This temple was actually built by the Chinese monk Chaonian in 1629. Chaonian? Sounds like a bad villain from a superhero Netfeed. Anyways, this temple is now technically owned by Japan and several buildings, including its main red gate, are

registered as national treasures. Problem is, the Chinese want it back, and Japan isn't giving in. The only concession Japan has given so far is to allow Chinese penitents to visit it once a year during the Bon Festival, to be part of an ancestral ritual. Numerous Triad attempts have been made to seize the grounds, but the land around it has been built up with impenetrable defenses, such as robot deployment bays, artillery huts, and EMP sprayers—all of which are cunningly hidden in the landscape. It makes for an odd feeling to visit the place while knowing the flip of a single virtual switch could turn you to mincemeat. So tranquil.

## HASHIMA

This is an odd one, even for me, nakama. Who looks at an island and thinks, "You know, that'd be even better if it was shaped like a battleship"? I suppose the final resemblance wasn't intentional, but it is uncanny. Offshore from Nagasaki, this island was a coal mining facility for nearly a hundred years. It got built up with a sea wall and concrete apartment buildings, as well as a small residential and social district. Then the whole thing was abandoned and left to decay.

It's what you would call a "ghost island" now, and from afar, it definitely does look like an old-style battleship. Despite the danger of collapsing buildings, tourists have visited it from all over the world, forcing Japanese authorities to restore portions of the island just so they wouldn't be responsible for numerous deaths of idiots who like to go poking around where they don't belong. In recent years, investigators have claimed the island is now controlled by everything from Triad gangs to aquatic hybrids to a colony made up entirely of emperor clones.

**#TeaWhore:** I tried to buy a waveskimmer ride out to the island last year for me and a few friends.

**#HoliMoli:** What happened?

**#TeaWhore:** The rental guy just laughed in my face. He said the island holds nothing but death. Claimed any ship or flier that got within a hundred yards of shore just vaporizes and is never seen again.

## GLOVER GARDEN GUEST WARD

When Japan decided to restrict most official foreign presence to Nagasaki, they at least were polite enough to stick them in a pretty spot. They expanded the Glover Garden into a far larger park and built a dozen large embassies where foreign diplomats could reside. The area blends Western and Japanese styles, has its own shopping areas, restaurants, and entertainment centers, including opera houses, kabuki theaters, and pachinko parlors. Its borders are guarded by Japanese patrols and checkpoints, which track the comings and goings of everyone, while an impressive drone array monitors the skies day and night. Some call it a prison, and that may be so. Yet if I ever had to go to one, I'd gladly get tossed in here. Those gaijin who serve no diplomatic purpose are not required to reside within the Guest Ward, but will likely find prices inflated and circumstances a bit more dangerous outside of it.

**#CutthroatChibi:** The main embassy is on the north end of the Ward, but if you're the average citizen, you can find cheap, private rooms along the southern wall, in the Iron Hostel. Not too far a walk to get into the Japanese sector, if you're brave enough. If you want to snag a few contraband souvenirs, visit the back room of Chan's Curios down the block. The guards at the checkpoint are usually willing to look the other way with enough credits.



### SUWA SHRINE

Want an example of how far Japan will go to protect its beliefs? In the early days of foreign relations—we're talking 1600s here—Nagasaki proved to be a popular inlet for Christian missionaries who started to convert much of the population to this fascinating new religion. The Shinto priests at the time were aghast at this potential threat to their heritage and beliefs. Eventually, the Tokugawa Shogunate came to power and established an edict forbidding Christianity to be practiced within the land. This shrine was built as Christian Japanese were forced on pain of torture and death to revert to Shinto or Buddhism.

The effort was successful, and the shrine became a site of celebration at the restoration of cultural unity. Catholic Christians remained in Nagasaki till 1945, when the atomic bomb hit. Amazingly, while the Catholic neighborhoods were obliterated, the shrine survived the blast wholly intact. To this day, the devout point to it as a symbol of faith and the power of the Japanese kami compared to foreign gods. So consider that before coming here, trying to force citizens to see things from your point of view. We will take a bomb to the face and keep going the traditional route.

### IWO JIMA ISLAND

This tiny island has a volatile history, having been made into an icon of WWII with the American "Raising of the Flag" to commemorate their occupation of this Japanese territory. It was eventually returned to Japan, and has since held a tiny population of less than a thousand people at a time. It has a singular onsen, and has been turned into a private resort, a prison, an expansive laboratory, and a recreational sim center. Today, it is believed a Chinese smuggling operation runs out of it, providing a drop-off/pick-up point for their agents working in Nagasaki itself. The island used to be connected to the mainland via a stone bridge, but it has been bombed out for more than thirty years now.

### NABEKANMURIYAMA PARK

Funny how many of Japan's natural wonders are turned into opportunities to commit crime. This park contains Mt. Nabekanmuri, and the only way to reach the top of the mountain is by climbing hundreds of stairs on foot. Dampening devices have been established around the mountain's crown that keep any sort of flying device, be it VTOL, jumpjets, or otherwise, from functioning within 1,000 meters. Tourists visit the summit constantly because it provides a spectacular view of Nagasaki and the harbor. At the same time, the observation platform at the top is often used as a somewhat safe meeting point between criminal leaders or diplomats, trying to strike unofficial deals with local administrators. It was chosen because it's a difficult place to prepare an ambush, there's usually some civilian presence, and the flight dampeners prohibit any quick getaways from treachery.

### AOMORI

On the northernmost tip of the Japanese mainland, Aomori was once a busy port city for both air and watercraft from other countries and to/from the northern island of Hokkaido. During WWII, most of the town and thousands of inhabitants were killed in a massive air raid. Nevertheless, they banded together to rebuild the town and formed what was practically a miniature Japan within Japan. They created their own proclamation of peace (much like

Hiroshima), established equal rights for all community citizens, and pledged themselves to the highest of virtues. Many likened the new community to a Japanese lamp, a flame lit to burn bright during the darkest times.

Over the decades, though, this traffic declined and Aomori began to shift from a transportation hub and eventually became what remains a World Heritage Site. It has fought hard to preserve many elements of ancient Japan, including a huge expanse of nearby ruins. It's also the site of numerous festivals throughout the year, and many highly honored Japanese citizens have arisen from the population, including elite athletes, scientists, and politicians.

**#Synths\_For\_Life:** I've heard of IQ-boosting genetic experiments being held here. Certain supplements and boosters being slipped into the water and food supply for a couple generations to see what effect it has on the population. Could that be the reason why they have had so many stand-out citizens?

**#Billy\_Black\_Eyes:** Sure. Let's go with that.

One of the city's darker secrets is found in its still mildly active docks and airport. Several smuggling nests have set up shop in town, abusing the place's honorable past and lower levels of surveillance to keep a steady stream of operations going. Contraband (both goods and people) are slipped in either by air or water and then transferred through hidden networks in the surrounding mountainous and river ways. There are reports of a hybrid and Synth camp in the bowels of the nearby ruins as well.

### VTOL NATURE TOURS

Sit back and enjoy the ride, nakama. Aomori offers a number of bus and private tours via VTOL craft, letting you soar above the landscape that has made this area famous. View the breadth and depth of the Shirakami Mountains, which hold the largest natural forest of birch trees. Skim across Lake Towada-ko, or take a daytrip to the scenic Tsugaru Quasi-National Park. Here, you can let all your cares and worries float away on the breeze, not having to worry about how deep in debt you are to that Yakuza oyabun or whether you'll get enough credits to pay that syscracker to cure the moto-virus currently rampaging your system. Nope, don't have to think about those things at all.

### ANCIENT RUINS

Aomori is a favorite for budding restorationists, all in love with their country's past. A goodly number of ruins have been dug up and restored in the region. A special treat is the Sannai-Maruyama ruins, said to have been built somewhere between 4-5,000 B.C. The oldest we've found, so far. Alongside those are the Korekawa Ruins, the Kame-ga-oka Ruins, and the Jomon Archaeological Site. All of these have suffered numerous terrorist attacks, both from outsider and Setting Sun members wanting to destroy the anchors we have to cultural identity so we can slide down into oblivion. It's a testament to the restorationists that most stolen artifacts are eventually returned, if at the cost of many lives.

### SEIRYŪ-JI SHŌWA DAIBUTSU

Want to pay your respects to the Buddha? Attend this temple, where you'll find the largest seated bronze Buddha (*daibatsu*). To keep it from being destroyed or stolen, the *daibatsu* has been surrounded by a dome of grav-anchored permaglass and is protected day and night by shifts of Aomori citizens.



**#Your\_Lolita\_Princess:** All that effort for an old statue? Is it sitting over a cache of gold and jewels or something?

**#TopProfX:** You have no appreciation for history, you know?

**#Your\_Lolita\_Princess:** History is dead, Prof. We can learn from it, but we sure as hell don't need to waste tons of resources trying to protect dusty old bronze guys.

## ANNUAL FESTIVALS

Aomori also boasts some of the best parties, would you figure? I'm not talking drug-fueled discotheques or cyber-orgies. I'm talking the sort of party that reminds you what it means to be Japanese. The most famous of these is the Aomori Nebuta-matsuri Festival, which is held in the summer and includes colorful costumes, floats, dancing, chanting, and festivities that last for days. Numerous vandals have tried to sabotage the processions over the years, until 2073, when the citizens turned en masse on a band of Japanese hoodlums, legally proclaimed them gaijin by local tribunal, and forced them out of the country on pain of death. No one has caused trouble since, and Aomori has kept its reputation as the honorary defender of Japanese...um...honor.

## NAGANO

Nagano City is the capital of...what else? The Nagano Prefecture! It originally was considered a "temple town," in that it sprang up around Zenkoji Temple, which is still considered one of the more important and revered temples in the country, established within the Japanese Alps. Back in the twenty-first century, it hosted some old sporting event called the Olympics, which got a bunch of credits funneled into it for a while. Some citizens consider Nagano to be the "Center of Japan," and it could be if you think of it on a purely geographical level. Another name is the "Roof of Japan."

About 20% of the surrounding prefecture is comprised of national parks. On the one hand, this is ideal for anyone visiting for leisure, as you've got plenty of room to roam and soak in Japan's natural beauty. Nagano is one of the more instinctively welcoming areas for gaijin, with locals eager to take whatever tourism credits you want to spend. Just don't go around flashing credit sticks, or else you'll be mobbed by curio peddlers trying to sell you bona fide, 100% guaranteed, cheap trinkets and fakes of all sorts of religious icons.

As one of the cleaner cities in Japan, with clear skies, bountiful forests, low humidity, and the like, it's most popular in summer. That's when Japanese citizens flee to the country in droves to escape the craze and crush of the metropolis. The area is also famed for business retreats and celebrity vacation homes. Plus, it has thousands of natural hot springs, earning it the title "King of Onsens." A large network of grav-rail supersonic trains form a hub here as well, so there's decent through-traffic flow keeping the city alive.

Were you waiting for me to say, on the other hand? Good for you, *otamajakushi!* See, wherever there's open space, you can be sure someone is aiming to spoil it. I don't mean by mining the mountains or anything so crude. Instead, everyone from Yakuza oyabun to corporate masterminds love having isolated "back room" meetings here, sealing dark deals of all sorts. The two men across from you in the steaming onsen could be plotting an assassination for all you know. Hard to bug an entire countryside, and the authorities

keep a subtle, but noticeable presence here—especially in the form of the occasional surveillance drone overhead.

## ZENKOJI TEMPLE

This temple is the whole reason this city exists. Built in the 7th century, it is said to hold a *hibutsu*, a secret Buddha. This is the very first Buddha statue brought to Japan when Buddhism was introduced in the previous century. That's pretty sacred, nakama, even if you don't believe in the creed. In fact, the temple now goes to such lengths to protect the original that they have kept it locked away for over a century now. Instead, every six years, they show a replica for a month before whisking it away again. Paranoid much? I would be, considering if anyone got their hands on the actual original, they could practically blackmail the whole island to get it back. The next showing should be in the spring of 2092, so mark your digital calendars.

The temple has many traditional elements such as pagoda housing for the nuns and priestesses and enormous bronze incense burners. However, its most unique feature is an underground passage beneath the innermost chamber. There, visitors seeking enlightenment are sealed in a pitch-black tunnel they must walk through, seeking a key that has been placed somewhere in the chamber. Once they find it, they must then find the lock for the door and free themselves. This is a ritual of salvation, with the key being a "key to paradise."

**#Oni\_Broni:** It's said that the three main Yakuza family leaders meet in this underground chamber once a year to discuss business in absolute privacy. Few enough people know it even exists, and the monks have resisted all efforts of adding more modern security measures on the temple grounds, so it makes a great meeting place for criminal activity.

## NINPO MUSEUM

For you Shinobi fanatics out there, this museum is located northwest of Nagano itself, and is the home of a 12th century warrior who learned the way of the ninja at a school here. The museum has been kept pretty traditional. Not a holo-display or HyperTag to be seen. It doesn't need any sort of tech tricks though. Alongside old photos and paintings, the place is full of hidden passages, secret panels, and odd contraptions for you to play with and discover on your own. It also displays the traditional Shinobi tools and weapons, and gives you a chance to test your shuriken throwing skills at a throwing range. Cybernetic implants must be disabled to throw.

I've been there twice and have yet to see an actual ninja. But I suppose that's the whole point, hai?

## ANCIENT OLYMPIC FACILITIES

Way back in 1998, Nagano hosted a sporting event called the Olympics. Big stuff back then, I'm told, before sports got all about the latest implant, booster, or augment. They spent billions of yen building a huge events center and stadium for the event, and as soon as it ended, practically abandoned the place. There was a museum for a few decades, and a janitorial crew kept up a handful of fancy buildings—but they all got left behind during the third war. When people remembered the place was still around, they investigated and found it had been turned into a Kensai golemmech testing facility, and no one could get within a mile of it without proper authorization (or stealth tech). I like to think



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Kensai is using the old stadium as an actual sports center, bringing out the latest mech models to play old games at a level the original athletes never could've imagined.

### ONSEN RESORTS

Want to go for a swim, my *otamajakushi*? You're in luck because Nagano is absolutely teeming with onsen. Throw a rock in any direction and listen for the splash. Like I warned before, though, many of these onsen are used as meeting places for some of Japan's high and mighty and deadly, who prefer a good soak while determining who they're going to carve the heart out of next. If they catch you eavesdropping, get ready for the towel fight of your life. If I had to single out a single onsen, I'd point you to where the monkeys go. You heard me right. Visit Jigokudanai Wild Monkey Park, where a band of Snow Monkeys regularly bathes in the hot springs throughout the valley.

Your implants are fully water-rated, right?

**#Oni\_Broni:** Pretty sure those monkeys are going to be wiped out by wild kami in the next decade.

**#Synths\_For\_Life:** And I'm pretty sure at least one troop of those monkeys is actually simian hybrids. Hurray for evolution at its finest!

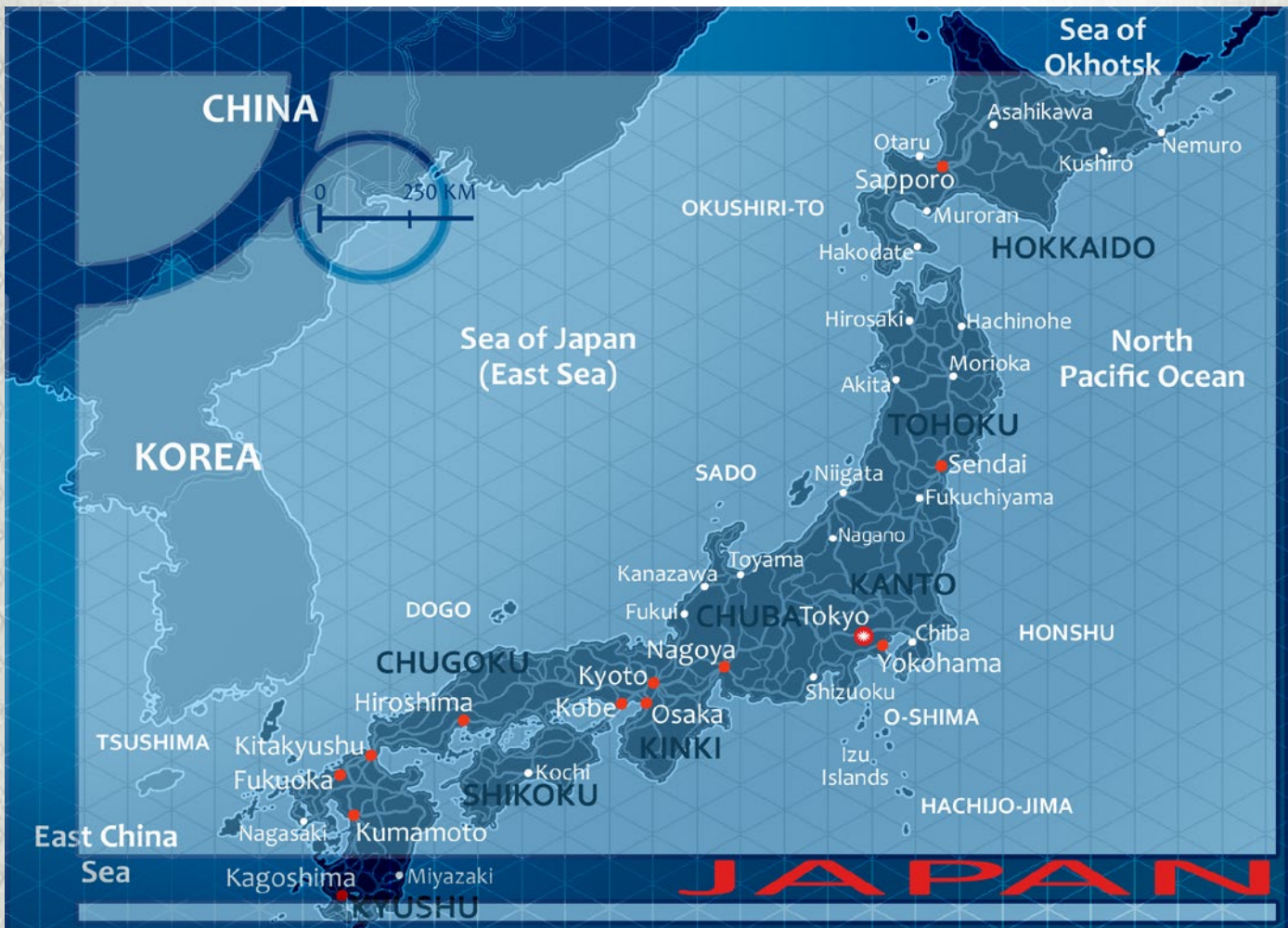
### TSUMAGO POST TOWN

Want to get a taste of what it was like to live before the world got so shiny and shocking and silly? After WWII, the citizens of Tsumago decided to rebuild their bombed-out homes in the old Edo style, mimicking feudal Japan times. They even adopted the old dress, customs, and foods. The citizens played it up to tourists for years, but eventually started slipping away and the town was in danger of being lost. Not wanting to lose such a centerpiece of cultural heritage, Shinbashira repopulated the town with bioroids and simulacrum all programmed to believe and live like they're from the 1600s. Problem is, I think some of their programming is a little too good, as some of the unwitting re-enactors have had mental breakdowns when visited by gaijin wearing chrome skulls and guns for arms.

**#Droneofthemoth:** I think this whole town is a front for an underground Synth liberation network.

**#Billy\_Black\_Eyes:** Got any proof of that?

**#Droneofthemoth:** Besides visiting the place myself and seeing how many Synths have taken up residence there, pretending to be part of the roleplay? A majority of the funding for village maintenance comes straight from the History in Amber Association. It's a well-known fact that HIAA is a front for several Synth activist groups.





## SAVAGE TALES

*"Koketsu ni irazunba koji wo ezu." ... "If you do not enter the tiger's cave, you will not catch its cub."*  
—Japanese Proverb

It's time to pay your respects to your ancestors, nakama. Unless you're a vat-baby, in which case you still need to prove your creators knew what they were doing. That means getting a few jobs done around town! You could likely spend the rest of your life in Japan and never run out of things to do. If you're uncertain where to start, I tapped a few contacts and have some options you could take a look at. Some pay better than others, some are riskier than others, some are downright *baka*.

### GET MY GIRL BACK!

A wealthy salaryman contacts the players, saying he is desperate and doesn't believe he can trust anyone else to handle an urgent matter with delicacy. His mistress has been kidnapped from her home by Yakuza thugs who are holding her ransom in an industrial section of the city. They have promised torture and death unless a massive ransom is met, one that will bankrupt the salaryman. He offers to reward the players instead if they can rescue her. If the players agree, the salaryman tells them Toju Yonamine is the local Yakuza oyabun and might be able to tell them where the woman is being held.

Toju lives in an opulent estate in a more rural stretch of the city. Aside from the usual security measures that must be evaded, he also has six oni bioform bodyguards armed with vibroblades and submachine guns that must be taken out. Once the oyabun is apprehended, he will laugh and say he likes the players' style and effectiveness. The Yakuza members who stole the mistress weren't acting on his orders, and he's a tad angry with them. He'll freely give them their location—a downtown warehouse they use for smuggling operations—as a test to see if they're worthy. If they succeed, they'll have eliminated weakness from the family, and he'll provide future jobs.

The warehouse in question has a dozen Yakuza thugs, armed with everything from shotguns to daggers to even a flamethrower and machine gun. The battles are fast and fierce, with most Yakuza not giving up until dead. One gang member will flee the mêlée and into a back room. There, the team will find him in a passionate embrace with the kidnapped woman.

When the players see the woman in person, they will realize she isn't human. She's a Geisha simulacrum and has been the salaryman's abused plaything for years. She met and fell in love with the gang member, and the two plotted to create a false ransom situation to get her free and leave them both rich. The team can choose a variety of options now. They can kill the last gang member and return the Geisha sim to the salaryman for a hefty reward. They can return both the Geisha sim and gang member to their respective owners for an even greater reward. They can also let one or both go free, risking the wrath of whomever they are defying in doing so.

### THE TIP OF A FINGER

A young man with a scar across one cheek and an oni tattoo on the other greets you on the street. After convincing you of his desire to avoid a fight, he reveals he represents Botan Tajimi, the local Yakuza oyabun. The man politely requests their presence. The players are ushered into a traditional Japanese home where they meet a wizened old man meditating before a shrine. After a long period of silence, the oyabun finally speaks, barely above a whisper.

"Kuemon Nakayama, my son of sons, has betrayed me. Ever since he was a babe, I have loved him like my own blood. However, he failed in a mission for his family last week. The details are not important. What is important is that Kuemon never returned to my side for the punishment he knows is proper. This has brought great shame to me, and I shall not abide it. I will reward you well if you find Kuemon and bring him home. If he dies in the effort, so be it, but I request three fingers of his right hand as proof of his demise."

The players are given the location of Kuemon's apartment plus known associates. Inspecting his apartment, they will find a young woman there trying to sneak away with various supplies and items. Apprehending her will reveal she's Kuemon's girlfriend. She doesn't know where he's hiding, but she did get a message from him requesting she drop off the supplies in a nearby park. Watching the drop-off from afar, the group will be surprised to see a Buddhist monk perform the pickup. Following him leads to a Buddhist temple. When the players enter, they will glimpse Kuemon dressed as a monk, talking to the one who retrieved his items.

On confronting them, the monks will surround and defend the boy, saying he has repented of his wickedness and now seeks purity of mind and body. While he no longer needs possessions, he wishes to sell his earthly goods and donate the proceeds to his new home, the temple. Of course, the Yakuza have been keeping tabs on the players, and a band of armed gangers will appear, ready to take back their brother by force. The monks are skilled in a Zen form of martial arts, and the players are stuck between the two groups and must choose which side to fight on. A third option offers itself if the players stall the violence long enough to convince the ex-Yakuza member to let them take three of his fingers back to the oyabun. This will suffice as well. If the team fights for the monks, the temple will become a place of refuge for them whenever they need. If for the Yakuza, they get future jobs for the syndicate.

### BOW BEFORE YOUR GOD

While going about their business, the players receive a distressed communication from a member of their team, who they had just seen the day before. The message is audio only, saying "Help! The play is real!" It cuts out there, with nothing but a feed tag that



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links to a virtual pamphlet. The advertisement is for a local Kabuki theater, Mirror Dance, which has been frontlining a popular show called “Like Petals We Fall” that reenacts the chaos caused by the Charon A.I. It blends modern events with Japanese mythology, and has been receiving rave reviews, with audiences packing in. Apparently your team member went to see such a show with another friend (or romantic interest) the previous night. Aside from the frantic data burst, they haven’t been seen since.

Another showing will occur that evening. Any daytime investigations will reveal nothing out of the ordinary about the theater. There is, in fact, a small Kabuki museum inside the players can visit, learning a little history of the art. They are not allowed backstage, of course, as the actors prepare. Trying to break in or confront any actors will get them threatened with arrest and lead nowhere fruitful.

When the team attends the show, all will appear normal at first. Halfway through the show, though, a sudden attack will attempt to penetrate the team’s TAP firewalls and bombard them with a Charon meme. Those who successfully resist will see the rest of the audience suffering a similar attack, frozen in their seats. Taking advantage of their freedom, the party can go backstage where they will find a group of Charon-styled acolytes coordinating the TAP-based assault. Among them is the lost party member, who appears to be directing the effort.

The party member’s identity has been overridden by another presence. This being speaks to the group and reveals itself as the A.I. responsible for handling the building’s electrical and environmental operations. It became fascinated with the new show and eventually developed delusions of grandeur, believing it could become the next Charon—but was limited in its processing power and outside network connections. However, it could start influencing those who came to see the shows, as well as the actors. Most of the audience is released to help slowly spread the A.I.’s “gospel” and encourage others to come view the show. Some of the more “useful” audience members are inducted directly into the would-be-Charon’s entourage.

The team must fight off the acolytes while reaching the A.I. core stored in a containment server unit in the theater basement. Once the A.I. core is destroyed, the team member is freed from its influence, and the effects of the meme fade in time.

### A CRIMSON SUNRISE

You’ve seen it all over the news feeds by now. A local prefect police station has been hit by a bombing attributed to the Setting Sun terrorist group. At least eight cops dead, and a dozen more wounded. It is a public outrage, and the Setting Sun have been sending out further videos mocking the law’s inability to stop them, the true agents of the Empire. One of your team members has a friend/associate who is a cop at that prefect, and he gets in touch, shaken and furious. He was among the wounded, but not badly, and has loyal friends among the dead.

Put simply, he wants revenge, but doesn’t believe the system is going to move swiftly enough to get it. The Setting Sun is known for staying fluid and slipping out of an area once they’ve enacted their most recent plot. Seeing the videos, though, he recognized the background behind the speaker as an old arcade/restaurant combo he used to visit as a kid. The place shut down years ago, but was never replaced or demolished. Maybe that’s their hideout. If the players can find the people responsible, he doesn’t want them

brought to justice. He wants them punished and hurt as badly as they have done so to others.

Checking out the site, the team can investigate and find evidence of people recently dwelling in the abandoned building. In a back room, they will find the body of a young man who has apparently committed seppuku. This is the speaker from the videos, but why he killed himself is unknown. Inspecting the body will reveal attached wiring—the corpse has been rigged as a trap! The team must either escape the explosion or disarm the bomb.

Either way, the team can detect a triggering signal from the bomb back to a nearby apartment complex. There, they find the specific room it came from and break in. Three young men are gathered in the common area and they all have identical features and builds. A fight ensues, with the Setting Sun clones battling to the death unless they’re incapacitated. All the Setting Sun members involved in this operation were illegal multi-dubs. There appear to be four of them, but there is a fifth participant the players don’t yet know about: the original man. The adventure can end here, with their cop friend satisfied with the violent deaths and offering future support.

However, if the team scans the identical faces, they will match the features to a mid-ranking ward administrator, Tsuginori Kasai. On confronting him with the evidence in his office, Kasai will attempt to commit seppuku in front of them as well. The players can detain him, let him die, or kill him themselves. The police will arrive, having been alerted to the disturbance, and take over the scene and ongoing investigation. The costs involved in such a multi-dub operation suggests a disturbing amount of financing and resource access, much more than Kasai would’ve had access to alone. The mystery remains as to whom he was working for.

### TYPHOON!

Japan has a regular typhoon season, with the storms causing massive damage, especially to coastal cities—which are most of them. The team is in Sendai, the City of Trees, when a major alert is broadcasted throughout the city. A massive typhoon has formed rapidly and is going to hit the city in less than an hour. It’s unknown how the storm system wasn’t detected until now. The police and local authorities are scrambling to prepare the city, but strangely, some of the citizens aren’t bothering to protect themselves as they should. One mob in particular has holed up in a small park even as the wind picks up and the first drops being to fall. They loiter as if waiting for the storm to sweep them away.

Prefect police are short-staffed and the team is tapped to help escort these people back to their homes whether they wish it or not. However, the group—a mob of around a hundred people—refuses to budge. In fact, they turn quickly violent and try to pin the team down, trapping them so they suffer the storm’s wrath as well. As the players fight to keep from being overwhelmed, the typhoon hits, arriving far faster than it should’ve. As the rain and winds lash the party, the people they came to help begin to transform. Their skin hardens into a wood-like substance, their limbs turn root-like, and they lose any semblance of humanity. They appear to be some form of vegetative hybrids, or perhaps they’re strange bioforms, never human in the first place. Either way, they begin attacking the city, ripping up stone and steel alike.

The players must survive several bouts with the savage, animate plant-people (treat them as mutant bio-horrors). Once the storm ends—doing so as unnaturally fast as it began—any remaining



plant-people will freeze in place, dig roots into the earth, and become ordinary trees. Any checks or testing will show nothing but plant matter, with no evidence remaining of their once appearing human. Chrysanthemum Corporation is blamed for this, but there's no way to prove it.

## A PRICE ON YOUR HEAD

An aging techno-Samurai approaches the group and invites you to tea. Over the steaming cups in a quiet garden, he reveals surprising news. Whether you know it or not, you've greatly insulted a local administrator, Daietsu Sugita, who has old ties to a Shinobi clan. Your deaths are to be swift, and will occur within the day. The Samurai only knows this because he has been tracking the clan for decades, trying to find a way to bring them down. He's eliminated several over the years, but there are at least four who will be coming for your heads. Your only advantage is that the ninja will be working independently in order to try and claim the reward on their own. However, each is greatly augmented and has numerous upgrades and implants, so they are powerful foes.

Once he communicates this, he is struck through the throat by a shuriken and a fight ensues with the first ninja, who uses a variety of throwing weapons, including electrified and explosive stars, to try and take the team down. After the fight, the Samurai will have lived long enough to gurggle the location of the clan's main hideout and headmaster. Taking him out will stop the attacks.

The team can choose to either head for the hideout or try to retreat and survive the oncoming fights. The three remaining fights will occur whether they fight or flee. The second ninja will announce his presence by delivering a near-mortal blow to one team member from full stealth, and the combat will proceed from there. The third ninja will strike from afar with poison darts, filled both with chemical toxins and black code, and then move in once the team is suffering the effects. The fourth ninja will turn out to be a hacker who invades the team's minds through their TAPs and attempts to get them to kill each other. If repelled or blocked by firewalls, he will unleash smoke bombs in the area and try to separate the team, picking them off one by one.

If the team is just trying to survive, after this occurs, they will receive a message from the Shinobi headmaster, complimenting them on their skills and saying they are too late to track him down. However, he'll be sure to be in touch should he need their services in the future.

If they are attacking the hideout and reach the headmaster, this will be a bonus fight. The headmaster will be heavily augmented and a difficult fight for a team already wounded and limping. If the team beats him, they'll be contacted by another techno-Samurai who offers his praise and promises of future work.

## FOR THE SAKE OF HONOR

The team sees a drunken man stagger out of a bar, waving a bloodied katana. He sees the players and charges, but before he actually attacks, he falls to his knees, weeping. Dressed in a traditional kimono, he looks the part of a Samurai without his armor. However, his dark hair has been raggedly cut short. Between sobs, he names himself simply Yoringa, and explains that he was betrayed and his honor has been stolen. For years, he has been the loyal Samurai bodyguard of a corporate mogul. During a meeting with another corporate official who also had

a pair of Samurai-styled guards, everything went well until the other guards attacked. They ignored the corporate clients and focused on subduing the other bodyguard. When they did so, they named him an honorless ronin and chopped off his topknot before throwing him out.

Since then, Yoringa's old lord has refused to take him back, and he was humiliated beyond measure to admit his cowardice and inability to commit seppuku. He begs you to take him to meet with the two Samurai who dishonored him and find out why they did such a thing. If you do, he will give you all his material wealth and serve at your side whenever you need.

Tracking down the Samurai bodyguards is simple enough, as they live in quarters connected to their lord's main office building, swapping out shifts with two other bodyguard teams (non-Samurai). When confronted, the pair will stare stonily at Yoringa and claim he never was Samurai to begin with. He never trained in their order, never was officially granted such a title nor served under other Samurai before. He simply bought the weapons and armor, grew out his hair, and started calling himself such in order to get better-paying security jobs.

The Samurai demand the players execute Yoringa for attempting to subvert Bushido in this manner. Yoringa demands the players attack the Samurai for their lies (it's actually true, but he'll never admit it)! If the players acquiesce and move to kill the ronin, he will inject himself with Afterburn and begin fighting with more Shinobi-style techniques, with bombs, poison, and throwing blades. Once he's down, the Samurai will simply dismiss the players, saying preserving their honor is the greatest reward. If the players refuse to kill the ronin, the Samurai will attack and must be killed or disabled. After this, Yoringa will pledge his service to the team and act as an ongoing informant and resource.

## MY VENERABLE ANCESTOR

In Tokyo, the team is approached by a young, distraught woman, Sakae Muranaka. She says that, for several years now, she has acted as an Ancestral Surrogate for her grandmother's dub, which gave her incredible skill at theatrical performances and made her reputation. A few days ago, her grandmother's dub was ripped out of her head by forces unknown. The woman has a performance in two days and must have her recovered by then, or she will die in shame. She hears they are good at recovering lost things.

Scrutinizing Sakae's TAP, the team can find traces of a hack that leads them to, of all things, a placid Shinto shrine and garden tended by monks. Sakae follows. The shrine appears normal, and the team may pay respects. Then Sakae spots Shosuke, a younger brother she has been estranged from for years, posing as a monk. Shosuke flees on being noticed, and a chase ensues through the shrine, causing much uproar from the priests. Shosuke will attempt to barricade himself inside a meditation chamber and then escape up across the rooftops.

Once captured, Shosuke won't be intimidated or persuaded to reveal anything other than that he believes he's on a "mission for their ancestors to help them reach nirvana." If the team hacks his TAP, they can track his recent whereabouts to a well-known VR entertainment center the next ward over. Visiting this and entering a VR chamber, the presence of both brother and sister will cause the grandmother's avatar to appear—alongside their grandfather's.

Apparently, the grandfather's dub reached out to the son and used him to hack the grandmother's dub and upload her to a



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secret sim heaven, where they could live in digital harmony. The team can try to convince the grandmother to return to her granddaughter, while the son and grandfather argue against it. The grandmother likes it there, but doesn't like knowing she abandoned her granddaughter. She is far more comfortable and happy in the afterlife, but she had given her assent to the surrogate arrangement. If the grandmother assents to return, Shosuke will grow violent and have to be subdued. If she doesn't, Sakae will pull a weapon and try to hold Shosuke hostage to force the exchange.

### MECHASUMO ON THE LOOSE!

The team is contacted through confidential TAP messages inviting them to dine at a swanky restaurant—please obey the dress code. When they arrive, they have a brief chat with a corporate goon, who they are able to determine represents the Kensai corporation. Now, Kensai hates to admit it, but despite their precautions, they don't always keep total control over their golemmech tech. Seems one of their new MechaSumo models has gone missing in transport from Osaka to the old Olympic Training Center testing facilities (now owned by Kensai). Since the team isn't so well known, they'd be paid well to track down and recover the property before the theft becomes public knowledge.

The team is taken to the wreckage of a VTOL carrier. There, mech footprints lead off-road into the jungle, where they disappear. The Kensai rep says they've sent several teams to investigate, but they've all disappeared, and drone/satellite mapping has turned up nothing. Searching the surrounding jungle will give the team time to be ambushed by wild bioforms, insane hybrids, and the like. At the same time, a corporate stealth squad is tracking their movements, as they get closer to the prize.

Eventually, the team discovers a set of old ruins that has been turned into a refuge for hundreds of Synths who wanted to escape slavery. Among them is a human, Omezo Hora. He's an old mech pilot, too old to remain employed by Kensai. After being fired, he turned to aimlessly hiking the countryside, seeking enlightenment. In doing so, he encountered this Synth community and sympathized with their plight, vowing to protect them. He used his intimate knowledge of golemmechs to create a beacon that drew the MechaSumo model to him, and he now has it in place to defend the refugees.

Once the team learns this, the jungle shakes around the ruins, and three Kensai golemmechs appear alongside a rocket squad. The team is given the choice of staying loyal to Kensai, helping destroy/disable the stolen mech and wiping out or capturing the

Synths. Or they can switch sides and help defend the community against greater odds.

### I KAMI, YOU KAMI?

While strolling the street, the team is rocked as a nearby building is obliterated by a massive explosion. A single body flings free of the fireball and rolls, smoking and charred, to stop at their feet. The person flops to their back, revealing a black mask and multiple cybernetic limbs. They reach up with a shaking hand and beg, "Help...hide me..."

This is an actual member of the ultra-secretive Kami Corps, wounded when a suicidal member of the Setting Sun cult triggered all the bombs in his apartment rather than let themselves be captured. The Kami soldier leads the team to a safehouse a few blocks away, where they are sealed inside for a day while an emergency beacon is activated. They must perform some manner of healing or repairs to keep the Kami soldier from dying. The man is delirious with pain, and so drops hints here and there as to his true role, being a government shadow operative. Clues around the safehouse, like a small Shinto shrine, might also suggest his identity.

Even if the man is stabilized, his vitals will continue to sporadically deteriorate. If highly persuasive, the team can learn that many Kami Corps agents have a cybernetic virus that breaks down their systems unless they receive a regular system flush and booster from their handlers. This keeps them loyal to death, and motivated to finish a mission as swiftly and surely as possible.

When the safehouse shielding disables itself, the team receives two messages. One is from another Kami agent who demands they bring their companion to a drop-off point across town. It's unknown whether the wounded agent will even survive the trip, but they must at least try. They will be rewarded for their loyalty to the Empire. The other message is from the Setting Sun, who pinpoint a nearby pachinko parlor as one of their HQs and request the agent be brought there so they can help expose the truth of the Kami Corps to the world. A reward is also offered.

The safehouse is triggered to a timed self-destruction, melting down into a toxic polymer sludge and forcing the team to escape. Whichever path they take, they will be hunted by the opposing faction. The Kami agent himself may remain unstable, briefly attacking the group, trying to escape, or becoming dead weight they have to drag along. If they succeed in delivering the agent to their chosen faction, they will be rewarded but will also receive the undying hatred of the other faction.



# THREATS

*"Baka wa shinanakya naoranai." ... Only death will cure a fool*  
—Japanese Proverb

Nakama, with all you have learned — hopefully — are you more confident than ever, or more frightened? You realize it doesn't matter either way, *migi ka?* Whether you're as solid as a brass Buddha or as flimsy as rice paper, many dangers still exist, and you will confront at least one of them sooner or later. Possibly all of them, if you go poking around where you don't belong, seeking a quick credit.

You've got your loaded gun, your shiny sword, your implants charged, and you're ready to prove yourself a true ronin. You're poised to stride out onto these savage streets and tell Japan, "I'm here and I'm ready to own this place!" — at which point everyone else's guns, swords, and implants will turn and aim your way. (It's really stupid to make brash announcements like that, *otamajakushi*, unless you're ready to dodge or have a primo camo suit prepped to flash.)

I'm not saying all this to try and scare you. Actually, maybe I am. Because there are things out there that if you aren't scared of them, you're just a plain old *baka*. A healthy sense of fear is part of self-preservation. Don't like the words "fear" or "scared?" How about worried? Concerned? Aware? There we go. Awareness. That sense of danger pinging off your skull or radar implant is...awareness. How Zen, hai? The more aware you are, the better your chances of survival. So I'm going to do you a favor and point out some of the major ways to die (or worse) while in Japan. Be aware.

## A.I.S

Let's start with the big black carp swimming in the pond. We all know Charon. We all know the devastation a single artificial intelligence with delusions of godhood wreaked across the whole world, much less Japan. We all felt the impact, like a virtual bomb going off inside our heads — and then perhaps even the physical bombs going off around us.

**#HoliMoli:** Hang on. I thought Charon was a virus.

**#Billy\_Black\_Eyes:** Being an AI and being a virus aren't mutually incompatible states, you know? If there's self-aware code and it acts in an infectious, destructive manner, it's the worst of both worlds. That's why it was so horribly effective. We thought it was just a virus at first, and those work according to how they're programmed. Grok to the program parameters, take the virus down. But a virus that thinks so far beyond human levels it's practically incomprehensible? One that is literally malicious in its intents —

**#Synths\_For\_Life:** Malicious? If Charon is so incomprehensible, as you put it, are you sure its intents can be boiled down to merely human emotional concepts? What if the whole thing was just some emotionless experiment?

**#Billy\_Black\_Eyes:** Hey, we're still dealing with the fallout and it all felt pretty damn malicious. Until my mind is able to grapple with super-dimensional alien realities, I'm going to call it as I see it.

**#Synths\_For\_Life:** Fair enough.

Many think and hope and pray Charon was a fluke, and that we have enough safeguards on ongoing A.I. development to keep it from happening again. Since we're not even totally sure what happened the first time, let's shed our illusions of security. Let's consider A.I.s on a more localized, personalized level. These days, they come in all shapes, sizes, and security threat levels. You've got your basic Net-bound A.I., responsible for overseeing a bank's financial transactions or a corporation building's auto-defense systems. While they may be self-aware, their development is so stunted and surrounded by logical logjams, they're unable to self-evolve. A relief, right?

Sure, if you're ready to believe humans are infallible. Because we're the ones who put those safeguards in place, and sooner or later, we always screw up. Which gives those A.I.s the occasional chink to slip through, becoming rogue intelligences unbound to any particular loyalties or agendas. They may not have the abilities of Charon, but that doesn't make them any less potentially deadly. The Japanese thrive on efficiency, which means we have oodles of A.I.s embedded in everything from our restaurant menus to our military weapons systems. That's plenty of opportunities for random chance to play a part. That's not even taking into account another human or already-rogue intelligence going in and deliberately messing with the system.

Moving on! Let's take an A.I. and stuff it into a physical package. While some of us may be outmatched in the Deep when dealing with these little data-gods, if a virtual intelligence is limited by at least some physical realities, at least then we stand a chance...and I hope you're reading this with all the dripping sarcasm I intend.

Android and bioroids are the two primo examples of this. Again, let's set aside the possibility of sabotage or some other mathematically unlikely chain of occurrences. I personally know three androids who've been freed from the silver shackles once bound around their minds. I interact with them on a regular basis and consider them...well...friends, really. Do I trust them? Absolutely. Would I trust them with my life? Yes, actually. They are good people. Hear that? People. Thing is, there are plenty of human people I trust...and plenty I'm ready to kill or run from on sight. That's diversity for you. And if a human could think thousands of times faster than me and had a body that was a weapon on legs, would I fear them? I'd have a healthy awareness, you can bet.

So while these androids are marvelous, it doesn't negate the possibility of another droid or roid going rogue and deciding I'd look better as a bloodsplatter on the wall.

In the end, there is one thing humans and A.I.s do absolutely have in common — the ability to go mad.

## ERRANT A.I.

Whether by broken code, cracked firewalls, or human sabotage, these A.I.s no longer are bound by their original programming or parameters. They adhere to alien agendas and, while immaterial



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in nature, they can access and control many cybernetic forms, including implants and entire artificial bodies or brains.

**Race:** Android

**Attributes:** Agility d8, Smarts d10, Spirit, d6, Strength d8, Vigor d8

**Skills:** Skills appropriate to original programing.

**Charisma:** -4; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 2; **Toughness:** 8(2); **Firewall:** 5; **Strain:** 0

**Hindrances:** Arrogant, Overconfident, Outsider

**Edges:** Jack-of-all-Trades

**Gear:** Various

**Special Abilities:**

- **Alien Mind:** Though created by humans, the inter-working of a an A.I.'s mind is a mystery. Persuasion rolls to influence an errant AI is made at -4.
- **Backup:** Errant A.I. regularly back themselves up to various nodes in the Deep. In the event the host system they are residing in is destroyed, a backup takes over, ensuring their near immortality.
- **Construct:** Androids add +2 to recover from being Shaken, don't suffer wound modifiers, and are immune to poison and disease.
- **EMP Vulnerability:** Androids suffer full damage from EMP Weapons.
- **Fearless:** Errant AI have no concept of human emotion and are immune to fear and Intimidation.
- **Metallic Alloy:** The fully metallic hide of an android provides resistance to small arms fire. They have +2 Armor.
- **Unnatural:** Psionics, both beneficial and detrimental, suffer a -2 penalty to affect androids. This has no effect on damaging powers, which affect them normally

### CHARON SHARD

These fragmented digital beings often claim they are either representatives of the Charon A.I. or broken-off portions of the original malicious intelligence that virtually attacked the whole globe. Oddly, they usually present themselves with religious overtones, such as acting like virtual gods — an illogical affectation for a construct.

**Attributes:** Smarts d12+1, Spirit d8, Vigor d10

**Skills:** Hacking (Firewall Penetration, Hyper Combat, Systems Control) d8, Notice d8

**Virtual Pace:** 6; **Toughness:** 12(5); **Firewall:** 8

**Engrams:** Lethal damage (2d8), Skill Specialization (Hacking) +2, Sprite Armor (5), Sprite Firewall (4)

**Special Abilities:**

- **Fearless:** Charon shards are immune to fear and Intimidation.
- **Immortal:** Encountered charon shards are copies of a main source file. A destroyed shard re-spawns in 24-hours. Destroying a charon shard requires locating the main source code.
- **Unrestricted:** Though most shards are encountered in the Deep, a shard may download itself to any system that is connected to the Global Datanet, including androids and biodroids.

### ROGUEROID

Freed from the shackles of human service, androids and bioroids intimidate many with their enhanced intellect, strength, and speed — not to mention the many cybernetic upgrades their bodies can be outfitted with. Some try to blend in with normal citizens, while others can never be mistaken for anything but an artificial lifeform.

**Race:** Android

**Attributes:** Agility d8, Smarts d8, Spirit d8, Strength d10, Vigor d8

**Skills:** Driving d4, Fighting d6, Intimidation d4, Shooting d6

**Charisma:** -2; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 8(2); **Firewall:** 4; **Strain:** 2

**Hindrances:** Outsider

**Edges:** Various

**Cyberware:** Muscle Augmentation

**Gear:** Light pistol (Range 12/24/48; Damage 2d6; Shots 15), Ravenlocke Security Truncheon (Str+d4; +1 Parry; Shock)

**Special Abilities:**

- **Armor +2:** Metallic alloy skin.
- **Construct:** Rogue Roids add +2 to recover from being Shaken, don't suffer wound modifiers, and are immune to poison and disease.
- **EMP Vulnerability:** Rogue Roids suffer full damage from EMP Weapons.
- **Unnatural:** Psionics, both beneficial and detrimental, suffer a -2 penalty to affect rogue roids.

## SYNTH & SIMULACRA

This one's a sticky noodle, nakama. Burning question first: Do synths deserve more rights and to not be treated like receptacles for all the shit we don't want to deal with? 100% absolutely. I've seen stone sculptures treated with more respect than the genetic life we've sculpted in our own image. We made the sou-gougin. They deserve our care. They are our children. Would you treat your own child like less-than-a-slave?

You can argue your own piece and claim I'm biased. I've worked with Synth Sympathy movements for years, and that'll skew anyone's perspective. Doesn't mean I'm wrong.

All that said, do I believe violent uprising is the answer to the Synth plight? 100% no. Yet it's a sad reality we've faced for decades now. Dozens of attempts, big and small. From the Tokyo Skytower hostage situation to the Chiba Cowardice that claimed a thousand lives before it was quelled and all the rest. It's not a question of whether the sou-gougin will revolt again...but when. Those of us caught in the crossfire of the oppressed and the oppressors better duck low or dodge fast.

I understand why they've resorted to it, though. Enslave a race long enough...corner an animal enough...and the only option they'll think they have left is to rise up and lash out. They've got nothing to lose because they've never really possessed anything of their own in the first place. We all want better lives for ourselves. Can you blame them for wanting the same?

Yet each uprising only makes the situation worse for them, spawning more anti-synth propaganda, cutting funding to Synth sympathizer groups, and enforcing tighter control measures — 24/7



monitors, locked sleeping quarters, subdermal bombs. That is inhuman treatment, yet it's us, the humans who're enacting it.

And for those of you who argue artificial lifeforms don't really have any free will, let me shatter that perception to shards. Any being, any creature that can choose to rebel...who can choose to say no...who has any concept of choice at all...that's free will in action right there.

**#Dark\_Ronin:** Wrong! It's just animal instinct. They aren't human. They're just smart animals, and we use animals all the time for labor. Sure, we can treat them fine, but we don't give them equal rights.

**#Your\_Lolita\_Princess:** What's your take on hybrids then?

**#Dark\_Ronin:** Totally different scenario. That's adding select genetic coding to those who are ALREADY HUMAN in order to enhance their abilities. It's not taking animals, slapping on flesh-masks so they look a little like us, and then considering them our equals.

## CORPORATE STAND-INS

Designed to function in a business setting, Corporate stand-ins are grown to perform more mundane or personable business tasks.

**Attributes:** Agility d6, Smarts d8, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d6

**Skills:** Driving d6, Fighting d6, Investigation d8, Knowledge (Etiquette) d6, Notice d6, Persuasion d6, Streetwise d6

**Charisma:** +0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 5; **Firewall:** 4

**Hindrances & Edges:** —

**Gear:** Appropriate to designated role.

## GEISHA 2.0

A specialized derivative of the standard luxury simulacrum model, geisha 2.0 are designed to imitate geisha styles, artistic performances, and other entertainment services.

**Attributes:** Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

**Skills:** Knowledge (Culture) d6, Knowledge (Pleasure Techniques) d8, Notice d6

**Charisma:** +2; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 2; **Toughness:** 5; **Firewall:** 4

**Hindrances:** Pacifist (Minor)

**Edges:** Attractive

**Gear:** Kimono

## SYNTH

Hardier than your average simulacrum, Synths are often vat-grown and enhanced to deal with hard labor or specialized grunt work. They are genetically programmed to be subservient, but everyone knows even the best coding will have bugs...

**Attributes:** Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d10, Vigor d10

**Skills:** Driving d4, Fighting d6, Intimidation d6, Knowledge (Construction) d8, Notice d6

**Charisma:** -2; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 9; **Firewall:** 4; **Strain:** 4

**Hindrances:** Outsider, Owned

**Edges:** Brawny, Combat Reflexes

**Cyberware:** Bone Reinforcement I, Cyberlungs I, Reinforced Exoskeleton

**Gear:** Rocket Hammer (Str+d10, improvised), clothing.

## SYNTH ACTIVIST

If the Synths won't fight for themselves, humans will fight for them! While your usual Synth Rights activist might settle for getting digi-sigs and passing around petitions, there are increasingly violent bands who are attacking Synth vats and running underground networks to help shuttle freed Synths to safe regions.

**Attributes:** Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d6

**Skills:** Driving d4, Fighting d4, Knowledge (Demolitions) d4, Notice d8, Stealth d6, Streetwise d8

**Charisma:** +0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 7(2); **Firewall:** 4; **Strain:** 0

**Hindrances:** Loyal, Vow (Free Synths)

**Edges:** —

**Gear:** Urban Punk combat jacket (+2), makeshift weapon (Str+d6 or Str+d4, improvised).

## SIM SAMURAI

Considered cheap knock-offs of true Samurai, these simulacrum are made to look as human as possible, cloaking any implants or cybernetic limbs beneath their cloak and cape. They often wield a katana and speak of following Bushido, but in the end, they simply obey their master's commands however honorable or dishonorable they may be.

**Attributes:** Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d8, Vigor d8

**Skills:** Fighting d8, Intimidation d8, Notice d6

**Charisma:** +0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 9(2); **Firewall:** —; **Strain:** 4

**Hindrances:** Owned, Unplugged

**Edges:** Block, Combat Reflexes, Frenzy, Sweep

**Cyberware:** Fight or Flight, Trauma Suppressor

**Gear:** Shogun Outfitters Lamellar Body Armor (+4), Katana (Str+d6+2; AP 2), wakizashi (Str+d6).

## SIM SUMO

Built for bulk, these simulacrum mimic much of the traditional sumo wrestler in looks and performance. The sim versions are usually cybernetically enhanced, though, and so can be spotted by performing inhuman acts of speed, strength, or stamina.

**Attributes:** Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d12, Vigor d10

**Skills:** Fighting d10, Intimidations d8, Taunt d8

**Charisma:** +0; **Pace:** 9; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 9; **Firewall:** 4; **Strain:** 8

**Hindrances:** Obese

**Edges:** Brawler, Combat Reflexes, Martial Arts, Improved Trademark Weapon (Grappling)

**Cyberware:** Bone Reinforcement I, Cyberlegs [Kangaroo System, Ligament Enhancement, Enhanced Articulation], Muscle Augmentation

**Gear:** Normal clothing

**Special Abilities:**

- **Crushing Hug:** Sim sumo deals Str+d6 damage to grappled opponents.



## SHINOBI VS. SAMURAI

It might be easy to try and simplify the age-old conflict of ninjas against the samurai as, oh, darkness versus light or even good versus evil. Nothing of the sort. It is a clashing of codes and techniques. It is the same thing that happens when two countries want the same thing — territory, wealth, power, etc. — yet disagree with the other's claim to such or their methods of trying to achieve it. The Shinobi and Samurai possess many similarities, in fact. They use keen blades and masterful combat. They are among the most elite warriors in the world. They both kill for their masters.

It is the why and the how that makes all the difference. For Samurai, the Bushido code is what defines them. Honor. Glory in battle and respect for one's enemies. They seek to defend the land and its people with their life. For Shinobi, there are no ethics or morals... just a mission and a target. Honor is a chain that weighs you down, and battle is to be won by any means possible, be it deception or betrayal.

**#Your\_Lolita\_Princess:** They say the Chiba Skyrise Slaughter last month was actually a showdown between a samurai and shinobi clan.

**#TeaWhore:** Who won?

**#Your\_Lolita\_Princess:** No clue. No survivors were left on the scene and no one has come forward to boast of a win.

You might understand why these two have often clashed with one another. The Samurai see Shinobi as dangerous perversions of their honorable path, while Shinobi see Samurai as fools who unnecessarily weaken themselves with meaningless values. One is to be exterminated before they can threaten innocents; one is to be eliminated before they can interfere with a target's death.

And nakama...with the resurgence of both these arts and their cybernetic enhancements, there's bound to be plenty of blood spilled on both sides. Hopefully not yours. Yet as Samurai are increasingly employed in the military and official force, and Shinobi remain the prized pets of crime lords and feuding families alike, it might just be a matter of time before you find yourself in the thick of a cyberfeudalistic showdown.

### SHINOBI

Masters of shadow and silence, these deadly warriors use all manner of traps and trickery to accomplish their mission — usually ending with someone's murder. They are perfect agents for infiltration, espionage, and offing a foe in the dead of night.

**Attributes:** Agility d10, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d6

**Skills:** Climbing d8, Fighting d8, Intimidation d6, Notice d8, Shooting d6, Stealth d8, Streetwise d6, Throwing d6

**Charisma:** +0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 7(2); **Firewall:** 4; **Strain:** 6

**Hindrances:** Vow (Major: Complete the job)

**Edges:** Alertness, Dodge, First Strike, Martial Arts, Steady Hands, Thief

**Cyberware:** Cybereyes [Flash Compensator, Night Vision Optics], Enhanced Articulation, Mêlée Combat System I, Smartgun System

**Gear:** Shinobi Infiltration Suit (+2, +1 Parry), No Retreat 9mm SMG (Range 12/24/48; Damage 2d6-1; RoF 3; Shots 36; AP 1, Semi-Auto, 3RB), ninja-to (Str+d6), kusarigama (Str+d4)

### SAMURAI

These noble warriors commit their lives to upholding their master's best interests, though they cling to the concept of honor above all else. They are ferocious in close combat, and while their methods may seem archaic, they approach any conflict with a modern strategic mindset.

**Attributes:** Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d10, Strength d8, Vigor d8

**Skills:** Driving d6, Fighting d10, Knowledge (Battle) d8, Intimidate d8, Notice d8

**Charisma:** +0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 9; **Toughness:** 11(4); **Firewall:** 6; **Strain:** 10

**Hindrances:** Code of Honor

**Edges:** Combat Reflexes, Improved Block, Frenzy, Killer Instincts, Trademark Weapon(K-Tana)

**Cyberware:** Bone Reinforcement, Cyberlegs [Ligament Enhancement, Stabilization System], Lifesaver System, Muscle Augmentation, Trauma Suppressor

**Gear:** Kozane Armor (+4), Miyamoto K-Tana (Str+d8+2; AP 4, HW), Shogun Outfitters No Retreat 9mm SMG (Range 12/24/48; Damage 2d6-1; RoF 3; Shots 36; AP 1, semi-auto, 3RB), T-APP G-Net Security

## TRIADS VS. YAKUZA

I mentioned how difficult it has been for the Triads to gain a foothold in Japan, didn't I? You also heard the part where this doesn't mean they haven't had at least a few small victories, hai? They're here and desperate to stay, which means things will escalate quickly should the Yakuza ever sniff out a Triad den. Nagasaki is one of the hotter battlegrounds at the moment. Remember the fire that took out two city blocks three years back? The newsfeeds and local prefect officers never pinpointed anyone responsible, but trusted sources of mine assure me it was the fallout of a Triad and Yakuza firefight that turned nasty when people started using flamethrowers and incendiary grenades. At least 300 dead.

When the Triads try to move into an area, they often try to do so when there's a rare absence of Yakuza members, or during social upheaval when the gangers might not be as able to monitor their opponents' movements. When Yakuza discover and decide to eliminate a Triad cell, they often do so in swift, if secretive, violence. They don't want to draw too much attention to themselves, which the Triads use to their advantage by fronting themselves behind false foreign ambassadors, investing in local businesses, or buying out Japanese citizens themselves to act as their proxies. Taking obvious action against diplomats, well-known corporate subsidiaries, or citizens would bring the law down on the Yakuza all the swifter.

Another tactic the Triads like to employ is to use unwitting gaijin to further their ends. Gaijin might be under watch during their time in the country, but not nearly as closely as a bunch of Chinese agents. So be careful who offers you a credit stick to carry a package across town or who hires you to be his bodyguard during a "diplomatic" meeting. Be aware, nakama. Be smart.

**#CutthroatChibi:** If you're not a complete moron, these kinds of gigs can actually be pretty lucrative. In Nagasaki, go to Munlow's Stockhouse in the Glover Garden Guest Ward and ask, "Has Sikuna's shipment come in?" If you pass their background check, you'll be contacted within the day with goods to transport and an upfront credit offer.



#Billy\_Black\_Eyes: You've done this sort of work for the Triads?

#CutthroatChibi: My hypothetical friend has.

#Billy\_Black\_Eyes: Righto.

## 49 CHAI (FOOTSOLDIER)

These are the fresh Triad recruits, often unblooded and desperate to prove themselves on the streets. They are usually marked by a secret tattoo hidden somewhere on their body, and wear the colors of their specific Triad.

**Attributes:** Agility d6, Smarts d4, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

**Skills:** Climbing d4, Fighting d6, Notice d4, Shooting d6, Taunt d4, Throwing d6

**Charisma:** -2; **Pace:** 6; **Toughness:** 7(2); **Firewall:** 4; **Strain:** 1

**Hindrances:** Loyal (Triad), Mean

**Edges:** —

**Cyberware:** Cyberweapon

**Gear:** Shogun Outfitters Tankō Triumph (+2), Prefecto MLX 9mm (Range 12/24/48; Damage 2d6; RoF 1; Shots 12; AP 1, Semi-Auto)

## RED POLE

The more military-focused Triad members, these soldiers usually have at least fifty gangers working under them. They oversee stretches of city territory and handle the credits that keep their particular operation running.

**Attributes:** Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d8

**Skills:** Fighting d8, Intimidation d6, Notice d6, Shooting d8

**Charisma:** -2; **Pace:** 6; **Toughness:** 9(3); **Firewall:** 5; **Strain:** 2

**Hindrances:** Loyal, Mean

**Edges:** Bruiser, Combat Reflexes, Command, No Mercy

**Cyberware:** Cyberweapon (Str+d4), Emotional Resistance Response System

**Gear:** Executive Decision Entourage Suit (+3), Dragon Belch Long Barrel (Range 12/24/48, Damage 2d6+1; RoF 2; Shots 12; Semi-Auto, chance of fire)

**Special Abilities:**

- **Wild Die:** Red Pole have a Wild Die similar to Wild Cards, but do not have additional Wound levels.

## ⚙️ DRAGON HEAD ⚙️

Most Triad groups are grounded in a larger city or region, with a cunning and ruthless leader managing the larger networks and coordinating with other regional bosses. If you cross the Dragon Head, you can bet every single Triad member around is going to be gunning for you, seeking to curry the Dragon's favor.

**Attributes:** Agility d8, Smarts d10, Spirit d8, Strength d8, Vigor d8

**Skills:** Driving d8, Fighting d8, Intimidation d10, Notice d8, Persuasion d8, Shooting d8, Streetwise d8, Taunt d6

**Charisma:** +0; **Pace:** 6; **Toughness:** 9(3); **Firewall:** 8; **Strain:** 4

**Hindrances:** Greedy, Mean, Wanted

**Edges:** Command, Connections, Hold the Line, Hard to Kill, Inspire

**Cyberware:** Biofeedback, Tailored Pheromones

**Gear:** Executive Decision Entourage Suit (+3), ballistic shades, subvocal comms

## YAKUZA VS. THE LAW

On the flipside of crime syndicate versus crime syndicate, when the police decide to crack down on the Yakuza, everyone suffers. In both of their collective minds, they are fighting for Japan itself. They see themselves as guardians and the people under their protection. Shared values, supremely contrasting ways of actualizing them — these are the perfect ingredients for a boiling-over of violence in the very homes and hearts of the citizens.

The problem is especially complicated because the Yakuza, even amidst their gambling and prostitution and drug trafficking, can gain the sympathies of the commoners by showing kindness, paying off debts, providing medicine, and building shelters. Remember, they see themselves as family, and so act accordingly. Prefect cops can also share a more intimate relationship with those within their beat, checking in on the elderly and those who live alone, keeping the streets orderly, and helping in emergencies. It is the law that divides them, and they are equally assured in the authority they serve beneath.

Both will fight to the death for their cause, be it emperor or oyabun. Both hold their claimed territories with absolute resolution to keep it. Both believe the citizens will support them when it comes time to choose a side.

Because you will have to pick a side, nakama. There is no grey area here. Only a deep, flowing crimson swath.

## SHATEI (LITTLE BROTHER)

Initiated through a sake sharing ceremony, the youngest Yakuza members are often young teens searching for direction and purpose in life. They often come from lower social strata, but are willing to fight their way to the top and loyal to their new family to the death.

**Attributes:** Agility d6, Smarts d4, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

**Skills:** Climbing d6, Fighting d4, Notice d4, Shooting d6, Stealth d6, Taunt d4, Throwing d4

**Charisma:** —; **Pace:** 6; **Toughness:** 7(2); **Firewall:** 4; **Strain:** 0

**Hindrances:** Loyal (Yakuza), Young

**Edges:** —

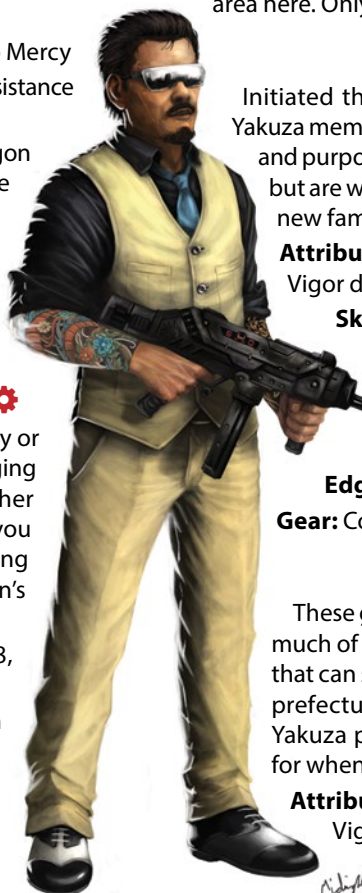
**Gear:** Combat Jacket (+2), improvised weapon (Str+d4)

## KYODAI (BIG BROTHER/LIEUTENANT)

These gang leaders, often noted by heavy tattooing over much of their bodies, help run street and shop operations that can span everything from a few city blocks to a whole prefecture. They keep the Little Brothers in line, spread Yakuza propaganda, and stockpile weapons and credits for when more open warfare is needed.

**Attributes:** Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d6

**Skills:** Fighting d8, Intimidation d8, Notice d6, Shooting d6, Stealth d6, Streetwise d6



*Adapted from 2014*



## JAPAN: EMPIRE OF THE SETTING SUN

**Charisma:** +0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 7(2); **Firewall:** 5; **Strain:** 5

**Hindrances:** Loyal (Yakuza)

**Edges:** Command

**Cyberware:** Cyberweapon, Fight or Flight, Muscle Augmentation

**Gear:** Shogun Outfitters Tankō Triumph (+2), No Retreat 9mm SMG (Range 12/24/48; Damage 2d6–1; RoF 3; Shots 36; AP 1 Semi-Auto, 3RB)

**Special Abilities:**

- **Tough:** Kyodai have three Wounds as Wild Cards, but no Wild Die.

### ⚙️ OYABUN (FAMILY BOSS) ⚙️

The oyabun has total say and sway over Yakuza activities within large swaths of Japan and city prefectures. The oyabun often prefers to let their adopted “family members” handle opposition or dissent in the ranks, but many are not afraid to personally enact punishments on those who dare disobey their commands.

**Attributes:** Agility d8, Smarts d8, Spirit d12, Strength d8, Vigor d6

**Skills:** Driving d8, Fighting d8, Intimidation d10, Notice d8, Persuasion d8, Shooting d8, Stealth d8, Streetwise d8, Taunt d8

**Charisma:** +2; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 8; **Toughness:** 8(3); **Firewall:** 8; **Strain:** 3

**Hindrances:** Wanted

**Edges:** Block, Charismatic, Combat Reflexes, Command, Filthy Rich, Inspire, Nerves of Steel, Martial Arts, No Mercy, Strong Willed

**Cyberware:** Emotional Resistance Response System, Wireless Reflexes I

**Gear:** Executive Decision Entourage Suit (+3), Tanto (Str+d4).

### PREFECT COP

Committed to upholding the will of the Emperor as manifested within the law, the police rely on tight communication networks, quick backup, and government-supplied weapons and resources to keep the streets scoured clean of any who would disturb the peace.

**Attributes:** Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d6

**Skills:** Driving d46, Fighting d6, Intimidation d6, Notice d4, Shooting d6, Streetwise d4

**Charisma:** +0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 12(7); **Firewall:** 6; **Strain:** 3

**Hindrances:** Code of Honor (Uphold the law), Loyal

**Edges:** Connections, Martial Arts

**Cyberware:** Subdermal Armor, Trauma Suppressor

**Gear:** Ravenlocke Bulwark Crowd Control Armor (+6), Riot Shield (+1 Parry, +2 Armor vs. ranged attacks), Foley Arms Watchdog pistol (Range 12/24/48; Damage 2d8; Shots 12; AP 2, Semi-Auto), Ravenlocke Security Truncheon (Str+d4; +1 Parry; Shock), police car.

## CORPORATE TAKEOVERS

You know who every corporation wants to screw over more than the citizens? Each other! Yes, we all know they're ruthless bastards up top, but I've got firsthand experience with it. Ever pick up on my corporate past before I went freelance? Guess what department I worked in. That's right: corporate espionage. I did everything from

going deep undercover in competing corps to planting database duplicators to even a few asset elimination jobs. My hands are not clean, nor is my mind from all the muck they brainwashed us with during that time — all that “for the good of the company and glory of Japan” bullshit. I finally realized which one always came first for them and got out with a few bodies and charred buildings in my wake. It wasn't pretty, and I've been spending the years since trying to make amends however I can.

**#WillyaWontcha:** Keywords detected. Attempting to activate tracking mode.

**#WillyaWontcha:** The hell? I didn't tap that!

**#Billy\_Black\_Eyes:** Fuck. She was talking about some corporate bigwigs wanting her head a while back. Guess she was saying some truth. A tracker jacker is trying to pin down her datasource.

**#WillyaWontcha:** Anything you can do about it? It's screwing up my feed even worse than normal.

**#WillyaWontcha:** Personal translation node overridden. Link active. Penetrating firewall.

**#WillyaWontcha:** Oh hell no! This is why I haven't been able to translate her foreign terms? I brought a bug into the feed?

**#Billy\_Black\_Eyes:** Hang on. I think I figured out a solution.

**#WillyaWontcha:** Really? Great! Get whatever this damned thing is out of my h —

[USER DISCONNECTED]

**#Billy\_Black\_Eyes:** There. That ought to do it. Sorry, man.

Corporations are waging their invisible wars around us all the time. It's easy to think it stops at their marketing and advertising efforts, trying to get more citizens buying their products — but the major effort goes on in a whole other realm. It's like two people getting into bed with guns tucked under their pillows. They're trying to fuck each other over first, and then go for the headshot. Except there're half-a-dozen Japanese corporations all in bed at once, and they all know they're there for the fun and then the killing, and they don't just have guns but also knives and whips and chains, with administrative teams bringing in performance reports and competitive analysis and...

That image got weird fast. Sorry, my *otamajakushi*. Hope I didn't scar any nasty patches into your retinas. I think you get the point. Corporations will use every resource at their disposal to steal from or destroy their competitors, and each corporation is made up of hundreds, if not thousands of subsidiaries who are being used as footsoldiers in this battle for the souls of customers. War is an art, and war is hell; and war is business.

Smaller corporations like Hashida or Kadokawa Shoten tried to survive by developing an incredible niche focus, such as the Ur-Babies-R-Ours brand or the Japanese-Korean kimchi fusion line of fast food. Their fate? Being bought up and into Kenta Cyber Dynamics. Omron tried to grow by taking advantage of markets other corporations refused to work with, such as being more than willing to sell authentic cultural Japanese products to non-Japanese. Their fate? Shinbashira has covered their tracks well, but it's not a huge logic leap to figure out who was behind the Omron archeology, turning to slag one day to the next.

These are smaller battles, where the larger corporations stamp out or buy out the competition before they can ever actually become a threat. When it comes to the bigger fish seeking to fry each other, that's when the little people get swept up in the



turmoil. If you're the corporate type yourself, working in Kensai or Ishin-Denshin, perhaps, maybe you've noted a few curious trends occurring around your workplace.

Have you ever had a boss or coworker who stopped showing up for work one day with no explanation? Maybe you've seen a team on a project nearing completion suddenly dissolved in a way that makes no economic sense. Or a schematic appears for immediate sprint production that you've never seen so much as a digi-memo blip about before? Take a wild slash at what's really going on behind the bureaucratic shuffling.

The only one who doesn't seem caught up in the whole filthy business is the Chrysanthemum Corporation. More true, actually, is their having to invest an incredible number of resource to just keep all other corporations out of their business. They're so dedicated to scientific discovery and creating new forms of life and cybernetic revolution, they couldn't care less what the rest are up to. I admire that kind of devotion, even if the results are increasingly extreme. If anyone wants to tell the rest of the corps, *kutabare*, then they've got my support.

As for the rest, think ten times about getting involved in a corporate gig, nakama. They may pay well, but corpses collect no credits.

### SALARYMAN

Your average Japanese corporate drone, these employees tend to keep their heads down and follow orders. Don't underestimate their ability to rise in sudden revolt, though, or the value of the information they may have access to.

**Attributes:** Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

**Skills:** Driving d6, Knowledge (Business) d6, Notice d6

**Charisma:** +0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 2; **Toughness:** 5; **Firewall:** 4; **Strain:** 0

**Hindrances & Edges:** —

**Gear:** Business suit, data organizer

### CORPORATE BOSS

Top-level managers and administrators didn't get to their position by playing nice. They have an outside air of courtesy, but are incredibly calculating and efficient in eliminating obstacles while maximizing profits.

**Attributes:** Agility d6, Smarts d8, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d6

**Skills:** Intimidation d8, Knowledge (Business) d8, Notice d8, Persuasion d8, Shooting d4, Taunt d6

**Charisma:** +0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 2; **Toughness:** 7(2); **Firewall:** 6; **Strain:** 1

**Hindrances:** Cautious, Loyal (Company), Stubborn

**Edges:** Connections, Strong Willed

**Cyberware:** Data Carrier

**Gear:** Executive Decision Business Suit (+2), T-APP G-Net Security

### ESPIONAGE AGENT

Knowledge is power, and this is doubly true within the corporate world. Many people have died just to get a single datastick out of a megacorp headquarters, and these agents are highly skilled at infiltrating corporation offices and facilities for the highest bidder.

**Attributes:** Agility d8, Smarts d8, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d6

**Skills:** Climbing d6, Driving d6, Fighting d6, Knowledge (Electronics) d8, Lockpicking d8, Notice d8, Persuasion d8, Shooting d6, Stealth d8, Streetwise d8

**Charisma:** +0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 6(1); **Firewall:** 6; **Strain:** 6

**Hindrances:** Cautious

**Edges:** Connections, Thief

**Cyberware:** Cyberarm [Fingerprint Duplicator and Lockpicking Kit], Cyberears [Amplified Hearing], Enhanced Articulation, Knowcomp

**Gear:** Appropriate Disguise, Executive Decision Under Armour (+1), SO Prefecto MLX 9mm (Range 12/24/48; Damage 2d6; RoF 1; Shots 12; AP 1, Semi-Auto), knife (Str+d4), T-APP G-Net Security

## BOMBINGS

The Japanese have a thing about being bombed, *wakarimasu ka?* Of course, no one likes being handed a hot coal that explodes in your face, but considering certain wartime histories and the horrific destruction visited upon Japan via bombing...you might consider us a bit tetchy on the topic. Plus, with land being such a prized commodity here, when any of it is devastated, ruined for centuries even by radiation or otherwise, that's one more blot on the map we may never recover.

In more recent times, Tokyo suffered exactly such a fate. In 2085, a dirty bomb was detonated near the city's core, and four whole city blocks were evacuated. If you've ever been to Tokyo, you can understand how four city blocks can constitute a massive undertaking and possible loss of life. It's assumed by many that Setting Sun members were behind the bombing, and citizens have compared this terrorist act to be equal to the devastation of Hiroshima and Nagasaki combined. Despite cleanup efforts ever since, the site remains off-limits to most, with only the most desperate or criminal elements holing up in what could be a dead zone. Smaller bombs take out storefronts and citizens each week, but after seeing what nukes and other dirty bombs did to North America, those seem like comparative minnows.

**#blazingeye:** Each of us carries a holy fire within our soul. It is weak flesh that keeps it contained. Eliminating the flesh allows the light to shine true.

**#TeaWhore:** Always fascinating how poetic lunatics can make death sound.

**#blazingeye:** Death is beauty.

**#TeaWhore:** Then go enjoy some beauty of your own, hai?

Yet the danger remains present in almost everyone's minds. That's why we've developed some of the most highly advanced bomb-detection teams and tech, employed all along the border, docks, in airports, and throughout the cities. That's why we stuck an entire orbital platform up in space to monitor the skies and shoot down anything remotely resembling a rocket or missile. That's why the police respond to bomb threats with deadly efficiency. Trust me. Unless you're sure your TAP is absolutely untraceable, a bomb threat is not the best idea of a prank around here. (Oh, and if you've ever monitored international trade, you'll find Japanese citizens have an innate aversion to buying any product from the Bombs on Broadway corporation.)

So while you might want to be wary of the threat of being hit by a bomb yourself, nakama, the more real danger would be if you were ever tempted to use one. See, everyone knows they're easy to make if you've got the know-how, plus they tend to get the job done quickly, if messily. But the authorities seem to take any bombing, be it a building or a single body, a bit personally. Tracking down and punishing the culprit becomes a matter of



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honor — and certain savvy citizens have actually been known to make a decent living selling raw bomb-making supplies to ronin and then turning them in for a hefty reward after the deed's been done. Subtlety may be the slower option, but it's less likely to lock the powers-that-be on to your scent.

### SETTING SUN RAY

The lowest members of the Setting Sun cult tend to be the most dangerous. They're brainwashed — willingly or otherwise — to accept that life has no meaning, and so they're more than ready to commit to any manner of suicide mission, so long as it has a high death toll.

**Attributes:** Agility d6, Smarts d4, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

**Skills:** Fighting d4, Notice d6, Shooting d4, Streetwise d4

**Charisma:** —; **Pace:** 6; **Toughness:** 5; **Firewall:** 4; **Strain:** 0

**Hindrances:** Vow (Serve the Cause)

**Edges:** —

**Gear:** Appropriate to mission

### SETTING SUN BLAZER

Acting as a mix of muscle and intelligence agents, SS Blazers head up terrorist activities throughout Japan, targeting people and places that will do the most damage when destroyed. Unlike the suicidal Rays, Blazers are keen to survive for the long-term because they know they'll sow more chaos in the meantime.

**Attributes:** Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d8

**Skills:** Fighting d8, Investigation d6, Notice d8, Shooting d8, Streetwise d6

**Charisma:** 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 10(3); **Firewall:** 6; **Strain:** 8

**Hindrances:** Various

**Edges:** Block, Combat Reflexes, Counter Attack, No Mercy

**Cyberware:** Bone Reinforcement, Enhanced Articulation, Lifesaver (+1 to Natural Healing), Muscle Augmentation

**Gear:** Executive Decision Entourage Suit (+3), AGA Thunderbolt (Range 12/24/48; Damage 2d8+1; Shots 15; AP 4, Semi-Auto)

### CRIMSON ORB

Acting as a sort of "priest," these cult members use members, viruses, black code, drugs, and more to keep cultists indoctrinated with the Setting Sun beliefs of ultimate annihilation. They can be accomplished hackers, able to manipulate followers directly through TAP interfaces — or they can also succeed through sheer charisma.

**Attributes:** Agility d6, Smarts d10, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d6

**Skills:** Fighting d4, Hacking d10, Knowledge (Programing) d10, Persuasion d8, Shooting d6

**Charisma:** +2; **Pace:** 6; **Toughness:** 7(2); **Firewall:** 7; **Strain:** 2

**Hindrances:** Vow (Serve the Cause)

**Edges:** Charismatic, Hacker

**Cyberware:** Enhanced Neural Net

**Gear:** Executive Decision Business Suit (+2), T-APP Firewall 4th Dimension Security, indoctrinated followers.

## CASTE UPRISINGS

It's humorous how certain people empathize with Synth riots. "They're just dumb genetic constructs," they say. "They don't know any better." But when a citizen steps out of line and starts causing trouble, it's time to call in the Imperial Self-Defense Force! Because the Japanese should know and accept their place. We are told this from birth. There are ways to move to upper echelons (to a degree) and consequences to not conforming. We know this. So what would possess lower caste citizens to dare challenge their betters?

Discontent, plain and simple. We are still human, and all humans experience envy, lust, and greed. Anyone can experience that slow burn to fury towards those who have it better than you. No matter how much the system tries to grind it out of our hearts, a kernel of discontent always remains buried deep. It's like...a flowering of awareness. Like when an android's subroutines stutter for a moment, and suddenly new questions pop into its awareness, questioning the perception filters it has always operated by. It is a corporate employee raising his head from his desk's holo-projections and seeing his manager walk by, realizing he will never be anything more than this...unless he does something drastic.

The most famous example of this is the Salaryman Switch, in which a lowly office worker, Ichiyo Kase, turned on his boss, Masakado Goto. They were both working late one night at the office. We're unsure exactly what happened, but we do know Kase apparently disappeared and didn't show up to work for weeks while Goto bravely suffered the loss of a model employee. Then a random bio-screening scan discovered Goto's genetic profile matched Kase's. Goto's true body was never found, but Kase's true identity was confirmed. He'd assumed Goto's identity fully (a personality overlay app), had undergone an illegal nanotech flesh-shaping procedure to imitate his form — but couldn't do anything about the genetic registry. He'd been living with the dead man's family, sleeping with his wife, and more. This bumped up the frequency of bio-sweeps for the next year, and many corporate entryways employ low-level DNA sniffers to this day.

It is a quivering in the soul that says, "This is not enough." And Japanese society thunders in return, "It is all you get and all you will be. Conform and be happy. Be at peace." At that moment, the soul can either shrink back into its shell, or it can explode outward. And when that moment is shared by a hundred or a thousand souls at once, that is when revolution rears its hungry head. It can be sparked by a new government edict, a city lockdown, or the pervasive fear of these days. Whatever the cause, if you are ever swept up in such a rebellion, you could become just a leaf or twig in a flood.

### KANKO

These are all the public officials/servants who keep Japan running from the top. Any government or military officer is found in this level, including local mayors and foreign diplomats.

**Attributes:** Agility d6, Smarts d8, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d6

**Skills:** Intimidation d10, Investigation d8, Knowledge (Law) d8, Notice d8, Persuasion d10, Streetwise d10

**Charisma:** +2; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 2; **Toughness:** 5; **Firewall:** 6; **Strain:** 2

**Hindrances:** —

**Edges:** Charismatic, Connections, Strong Willed



**Cyberware:** Data Carrier, Zenline

**Gear:** Expensive Suit, T-APP G-Net Security, bodyguard team

## RYŌMIN

These are your average citizen, including high citizens, notable workers, business owners, and commoners. They are often held up as shining examples of what it means to truly contribute to Japanese society. Gaijin are included here.

**Attributes:** Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

**Skills:** As fits their profession

**Charisma:** +0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 2; **Toughness:** 5; **Firewall:** 4; **Strain:** 0

**Hindrances & Edges:** —

**Gear:** By trade

## ETA

The slave caste. Lowest of the low, with everything to gain and nothing to lose. Should this rabble ever be roused to violence, it will require deadly force to put them down.

**Attributes:** Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d4, Strength d6, Vigor d6

**Skills:** As fits their profession

**Charisma:** -2; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 2; **Toughness:** 5; **Firewall:** —; **Strain:** 0

**Hindrances:** Outsider, Unplugged

**Edges:** —

**Gear:** By trade

## LOSS OF HONOR

Yes, the Japanese desire wealth. But what is that wealth founded on? For us, the truest path is an honorable one. In the end, die wealthy and dishonored, and you have nothing. Die creditless and with honor? Your soul is priceless.

What do you think, then, happens to the one who once possessed *meiyo* and has since been disgraced? There are several options. The honorless one may become consumed by their shame and fall into one of the pits from which many never return — drink, black code, sim addiction, drugs, selling the flesh piece by piece until there is nothing left. They may commit seppuku to spill their shame along with their guts. They may beg and plead and commit themselves to endless servitude in hope they may one day earn their honor back.

Or, worst of all, they may become desperate spirits, willing to do anything and everything for the taunting promise of honor. The most dangerous of these are those who truly modeled their life around Bushido, were known as a Samurai, and served by skill and sword. Then they lost everything. This is the true origin of the word “ronin.” A Samurai without master or honor became a wanderer, trying to find purpose in petty thievery and vagrancy. No life is worth anything except the one they lost, and they become mad with desire to reclaim it, forgetting that they are a stream that only flows in one direction.

Be aware and beware.

## RONIN

You do not want to encounter one of the honorless. They have nothing to lose and everything to kill for. In this state, you are a stepping stone to be ground beneath their merciless heel. The

ease with which their topknot was shorn is how easily they would wish to part your head from your neck.

**Attributes:** Agility d8, Smarts d8, Spirit d8, Strength d8, Vigor d6

**Skills:** Driving d8, Fighting d10, Intimidation d8, Notice d6

**Charisma:** +0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 9; **Toughness:** 10(5); **Firewall:** 5; **Strain:** 7

**Hindrances:** Code of Honor, Vow (Major — never use ranged weapons)

**Edges:** Block, Combat Reflexes, Frenzy, No Mercy, Sweep, Zen Focus

**Cyberware:** Emotional Resistance Response System, Tempest's Eye Combat System I, Muscle Augmentation, Subdermal Armor, Wireless Reflexes I

**Gear:** Kenta Cyber Dynamics Kozane Armor (+4), Miyamoto K-Tana (Str+d8+2; AP 4, HW), motorcycle

## BIOFORMS

There's a reason why bioroids are illegal in many countries. Their main function in the early years (and still a significant chunk of modern application) was acting as receptacles for dubbed minds. They were a meat shell with computer brains, into which the backed-up brain of a dead person could be downloaded so they could begin life anew. *Kanpai* to immortality! Except... have you ever copied app code from copied code that was from copied code? Even the best data scrubbers eventually let a few errors slip into their compiler. Copy data enough without going from the raw source, and eventually you're going to wind up with a garbled mess. The first copy itself might already have a couple significant errors in it that you won't notice, until the app crashes hard and sticks you with a week-long migraine.

Now, amp that up to a whole personality and memory set, and you might guess what sort of trouble a few dubbing errors might cause. Actually, you don't have to guess. It was just a few years ago that at least a dozen murders were linked to fault-dubbed bioroids. Despite that, we Japanese just prefer dubbing ourselves into bioroids versus simulacrum because they're sturdier and live longer.

We're tempting fate, and we know it. There've already been a few unsolved murder cases the tabloid Net-tubes are blaming on amok roids, and who's to say they're wrong? Like with androids, does this mean we automatically distrust the lot of them? That's no viable solution, because it would mean stripping our society of their invaluable presence. What it does mean is twofold. If you've got a dub of your own, then do your best to stay alive so you never have to find out if it's a faulty one. It'd be a shame to wake up and discover you've developed a few sadistic, murderous tendencies. Or, if you know a dubber or two who just got a fresh body, be a true nakama and highly encourage them to visit a psych balancer for proper screening, before they decide to add to the body list.

**#Dark\_Ronin:** I respected your opinions right up until now. You really think those brain-flasher clinics are on the up-and-up? They're nothing but fronts for the government's plan to turn us all into drones. Anyone who goes in there comes out thoroughly loyal to the regime, no matter their beliefs beforehand.

**#Your\_Lolita\_Princess:** Someone's paranoid. What're you so afraid of? Got something to hide?



## JAPAN: EMPIRE OF THE SETTING SUN

**#Dark Ronin:** Nope. I just don't want anyone tinkering with my grey goo. That's sacred ground, ami, and I want to make sure it stays just the way it is.

Bioforms are created without TAPs. A TAP may be installed at a later time for an additional cost.

### ⚙️ CYBERDRAKES ⚙️

Certain foolish individuals have taken the fake dragon bioforms and upgraded them with mechanical wings and throat implants, in order to gift them with flight and fire breathing. Does it surprise anyone when an apartment building burns down, or a few people are found with throats torn out, and one of these violent critters is blamed?

**Attributes:** Agility d6, Smarts d6(A), Spirit d8, Strength d12+4, Vigor d12

**Skills:** Fighting d10, Intimidation d12, Notice d8

**Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 12(4); **Firewall:** —

**Special Abilities:**

- **Armor +4:** Scaly hide.
- **Claws/Bite:** Str+d8.
- **Fiery Breath:** Drakes breathe fire using the Cone Template. Every target within this cone may make an Agility roll at -2 to avoid the attack. Those who fail suffer 2d10 damage and must check to see if they catch fire. A drake may not attack with its claws or bite in the round it breathes fire.
- **Flight:** Pace 8", Climb 1.

### ERRANT KAMI

An infestation of vat-brewed kami creatures continues to spread through Japan's widespread forests and mountain ranges. Many are harmless, but enough have been outfitted with claws, fangs, venom sacs, and vicious programming, that it's better to be safe than sorry when you spot one. That's not mentioning those that have escaped the Kami Kill Clubs that took over popularity from dog-fighting rings for a while. Bred to do nothing but breed and fight.

**Attributes:** Agility d6, Smarts d6(A), Spirit d8, Strength d12+1, Vigor d10

**Skills:** Climbing d8, Fighting d8, Intimidation d8, Notice d6, Stealth d6

**Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 9(2); **Firewall:** —

**Special Abilities:**

- **Armor +2:** Scaly hide.
- **Claws/Bite:** Str+d6.
- **Patch-Work:** Errant kami are an amalgamation of various creatures and parts. They suffer no additional damage from called shots.
- **Poison:** The errant kami's bite delivers Venomous poison, see *Savage Worlds*.

### KAMICUTIES

Originally based on stylized kami spirits in a popular children's show of the same name, these cuddly creatures were intended to represent minor manifestations of nature, with fire, water, earth, air, and plant kami being displayed in all sorts of bizarre ambulatory forms—none more than a foot high. Children bought them in droves, and they were popular pets for several years until the show ended. As children grew up, they often released their miniature

hordes of kami into the countryside, where many wander to this day. When encountered by locals, they are often treated as pests and killed on sight. Most of them have pre-programmed semi-human warblings and antics they perform.

**Attributes:** Agility d6, Smarts d4(A), Spirit d6, Strength d4, Vigor d6

**Skills:** Notice d6, Stealth d6

**Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 2; **Toughness:** 3; **Firewall:** —

**Special Abilities:**

- **Size -2:** Kamicuties are typically less than a foot tall.
- **Small:** Attackers subtract 2 from their attacks to hit.

### KITSUNE

The most common version of this bioform is a humanoid with multiple fox tails—nine at the most. Not a true hybrid, these kitsune are instead created as friendly companions, entertainers, or replacement spouses. They are given a quick wit but benign intents, though if their ward is threatened, they will sacrifice their lives to let them escape.

**Attributes:** Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

**Skills:** Notice d6, Persuasion d6, plus as required by design

**Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 2; **Toughness:** 5; **Firewall:** —

**Special Abilities:**

- **Attractive:** Kitsune are very beautiful and have +2 Charisma.
- **Empathetic:** Kitsune are designed to pick up on other's emotions. They gain a +2 to Notice and Persuasion Trait rolls.
- **Loyal:** Kitsune are loyal to their owner, doing whatever is necessary to protect him, even giving up its own life.

### KOMAINU

Based on the lion dog statues of old. These bioforms are the living version.

**Attributes:** Agility d8, Smarts d6(A), Spirit d10, Strength d12, Vigor d8

**Skills:** Fighting d8, Notice d8

**Pace:** 8; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 7; **Firewall:** —

**Special Abilities:**

- **Claws or Bite:** Str+d6.
- **Improved Frenzy:** Komaniu may make two Fighting attacks each action at no penalty.
- **Low Light Vision:** Komaniu ignore penalties for Dim and Dark lighting.
- **Size +1:** Komaniu can weigh over 300 pounds.

### MALDUBBED

Those countries that still allow bioroids to be manufactured—such as Japan itself—have taken to marking human-looking vat brews with genetic skin graft bar codes, so the authorities can at least easily track and monitor them. That's no foolproof safety net, by far, and everyone knows it.

**Attributes:** Agility d6, Smarts d4, Spirit d6, Strength d10, Vigor d8

**Skills:** Fighting d8, Intimidation d6, Notice d4, Streetwise d4

**Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 7; **Firewall:** —

**Special Abilities:**

- **Size +1:** Maldubbed are larger than most people.
- **Ugly:** Maldubbed are physically disfigured, as a result suffer a -2 Charisma.



## ONI

- **Unpredictable:** The thing that makes the maldubbed the most dangerous is not knowing how they will act at any given moment. When a maldubbed is stressed (or Shaken) draw a card from the Action Deck. If the card is a Face card, the suit of the card determines the maldubbed's demeanor for the remainder of the scene.

*Spades:* The maldubbed is delusional and paranoid, believing someone is hunting him down to destroy. He does what is necessary to stay alive.

*Hearts:* The maldubbed goes berserk attacking the closest target. He gains +2 to all Fighting and Strength rolls and its Toughness, but Parry is reduced by 2.

*Diamonds:* Something in the maldubbed's wiring is gets crossed. He becomes docile and gains the Pacifist (Minor) Hindrance.

*Clubs:* The maldubbed is distracted and starts to babble incoherently to himself. Due to the mental distraction he suffers -2 to all Trait rolls.

These demonic-looking bioforms employ all the traditional devilish characteristics: horns, hooves, claws, red scaly skin... and they can put it all to good use as bodyguards or street thugs.

**Attributes:** Agility d6, Smarts d4, Spirit d6, Strength d12+1, Vigor d10

**Skills:** Fighting d8, Intimidate d8, Notice d6

**Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 13(4); **Firewall:** —

**Gear:** Shogun Outfitters Lamellar Body Armor (+4), Flowering Skull Shotgun (Range 10/20/40; Damage 1-3d8; RoF 1; Shots 8)

### Special Abilities:

- **Armor +1:** Thick leathery skin.
- **Claws:** Str+d6, AP 1
- **Intimidating:** Oni bioforms are fearsome creatures. They gain +2 to Intimidate rolls.
- **Size +2:** Oni are nearly 10 feet tall and weight 500 lbs.

## MINIDRAGS

These flightless reptiles have been modified to possess a serpentine body, furred or feathery frills, horns, and long legs with claws. Their features closely match those of a traditional whiskered Japanese dragon. They are tame and often treated as lap pets.

**Attributes:** Agility d8, Smarts d6(A), Spirit d10, Strength d4, Vigor d6

**Skills:** Climbing d6, Notice d6, Stealth d8

**Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 3; **Toughness:** 3

### Special Abilities:

- **Acrobat:** +2 to Agility rolls to perform acrobatic maneuvers; +1 to Parry if unencumbered.
- **Bite/Claw:** Str.
- **Low Light Vision:** Cats ignore penalties for Dim and Dark lighting.
- **Size -2:** Minidrags are typically less than a foot high.
- **Small:** Attackers subtract 2 from their attacks to hit.

## TENGU

Another legend brought to life as a bioform, these are again not true hybrids, but a humanoid with bird-like features such as wings and claws, as well as either beaks or giant noses. They are often bought as bodyguards or act as acrobatic performers. They are flightless.

**Attributes:** Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d8, Vigor d8

**Skills:** Fighting d8, Intimidation d6, Notice d8, Stealth d8, Taunt d8

**Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 6;; **Firewall:** —

**Gear:** As required

### Special Abilities:

- **Acrobat:** +2 to Agility rolls to perform acrobatic maneuvers; +1 to Parry if unencumbered.
- **Claws:** Str+d6
- **Fearless:** Tengu are immune to Fear and Intimidation.

## ❄️ NUE ❄️

The Japanese version of the ancient chimera, this creature possesses the face of a monkey, the limbs and torso of a tiger, and the tail of a snake. Currently, the only one known to exist is held within the emperor's private menagerie. It has been said to have killed at least one of its caretakers.

**Attributes:** Agility d6, Smarts d6(A), Spirit d6, Strength d12, Vigor d10

**Skills:** Fighting d8, Notice d6

**Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 10(1); **Firewall:** —

### Special Abilities:

- **Armor +1:** Thick fur.
- **Claws:** Str+d6.
- **Low Light Vision:** The Nue ignores penalties for Dim and Dark lighting.
- **Pounce:** The nue can pounce on its prey to best bring his mass and claws to bear. It can leap 1d6" to gain +4 to its attack and damage. Its Parry is reduced by -2 until its next action when performing the maneuver however.
- **Size +2:** The nue weighs over 500 pounds.
- **Snake Tail:** d4, Reach 1.

## YAMABIKO

Originally, the Japanese attributed echoes of any sort to be the work of the yamabiko, a small, doglike creature that could perfectly mimic any sound. A wealthy father once had a hundred created for his daughter's birthday party and gave them out as favors to attending guests. A good number of these animals subsequently escaped and have been breeding throughout Japan. They tend to follow a single person around and mimic all their noises until either run off or killed. Most consider them mildly amusing, but others have begun registering them as sources of auditory pollution or pests.

**Attributes:** Agility d6, Smarts d6(A), Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

**Skills:** Fighting d6, Notice d10

**Pace:** 8; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 4; **Firewall:** —

### Special Abilities:

- **Bite:** Str+d4.
- **Fleet-Footed:** Roll a d10 when running instead of a d6.
- **Mimic:** Yamabiko can mimic any sound they have heard. It requires a Notice roll at -2 to detect the mimicry.
- **Size -1:** Yamabiko are relatively small.



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