



Heroine OF HEIANKYO



ANDY KITKOWSKI



Heroine
OF HEIANKYO

The title is rendered in a decorative, calligraphic font. 'Heroine' is in a large, green, serif font with a gold outline. 'OF HEIANKYO' is in a smaller, green, sans-serif font below it. The text is surrounded by various decorative elements: a purple mandala-like flower, an orange sunburst flower, a pink and yellow flower, and a circular emblem containing a swan. A green vine with leaves and small flowers arches across the bottom of the title.

BY ANDY KITKOWSKI

BASED ON HEROINE BY JOSH T JORDAN

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HEROINE OF HEIANKYO

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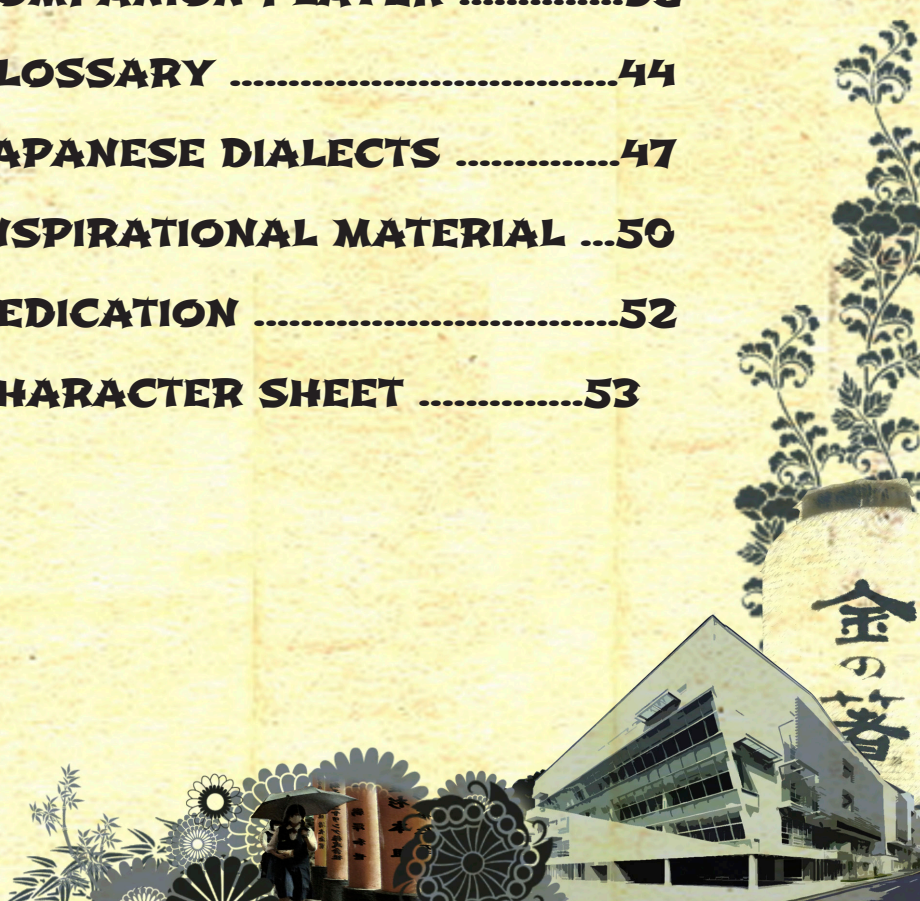
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INDEX

INTRODUCTION	6
HEROINE PLAYER	10
NARRATOR	20
COMPANION PLAYER	32
GLOSSARY	44
JAPANESE DIALECTS	47
INSPIRATIONAL MATERIAL ...	50
DEDICATION	52
CHARACTER SHEET	53



INTRODUCTION

HEIAN-KYO, 937

The Heian period is an era of peace starting with the foundation of the capital city of Kyo (Kyoto) in 794 ending with the Gempei War and rise of the samurai era in 1185. Heian itself means “tranquility” and represents a time of peace, culture, and art.

The Heian period is also a time of courtly politics, legends, monsters, and sorcery. Japan imports and adapts much of its culture from China. While Shintoism is the backbone of all Japanese spirituality, Buddhism is the major religion of the day. New sects and temples form often. Poetry and literature are huge in the courts of the emperor and noble families, and music and leisure, not war, are the main concerns of the movers and shakers of the era.



The heroine finds herself in this world, though the heroine soon realizes that the Heian-Kyo she knows through textbooks is not exactly where she arrived. The people live and work as they do in the books. Emperor Suzaku reigns, and she recognizes familiar landmarks. The similarities end, however, when she sees monstrous *yohjin* bodyguards walking the streets of the capital and encounters sorcery—real sorcery, not trickery or stage magic—upon meeting an *onmyoji*, a Taoist geomancer.

THE IJIN

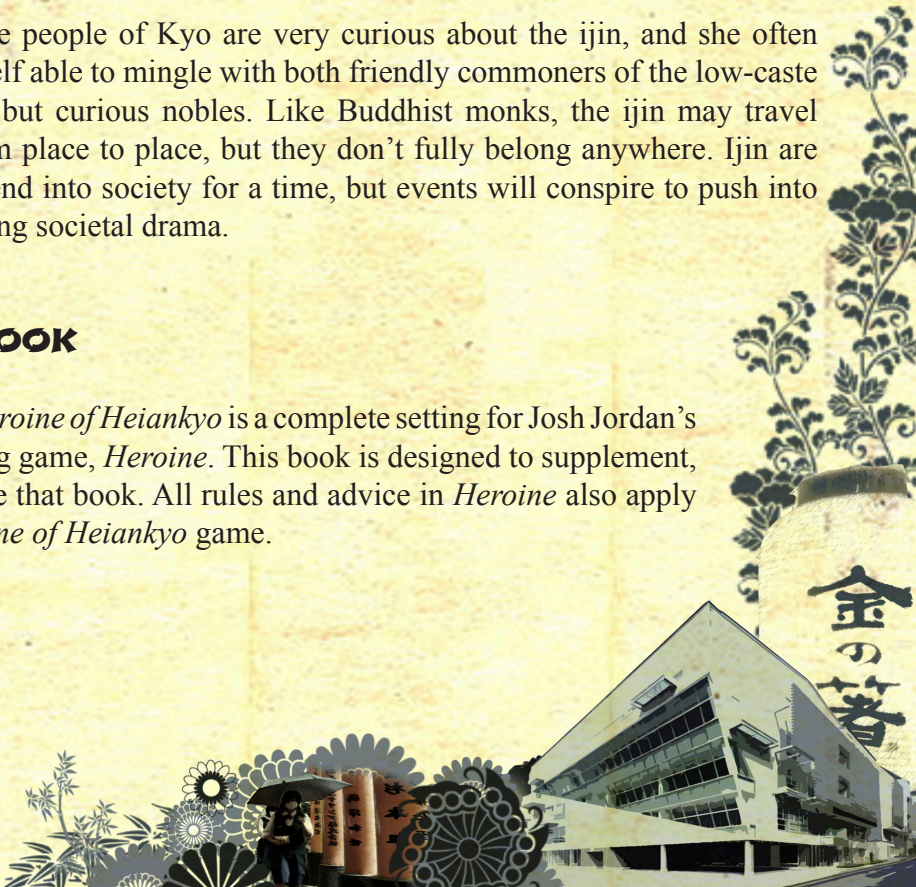
Every sixty years, an *ijin* (EE-jean) arrives in Kyo. An *ijin*, literally “strange person,” is an outsider, a wanderer. This person comes from a faraway land which shares the same language but little of the same culture. According to legend, their arrival always heralds an important event. Sometimes it’s a great blessing, and other times a horrible disaster. The *ijin* always has a pivotal role in the event.

The heroine is the *ijin*.

The people of Kyo are very curious about the *ijin*, and she often finds herself able to mingle with both friendly commoners of the low-caste and aloof but curious nobles. Like Buddhist monks, the *ijin* may travel freely from place to place, but they don’t fully belong anywhere. *Ijin* are able to blend into society for a time, but events will conspire to push into an unfolding societal drama.

THIS BOOK

Heroine of Heiankyo is a complete setting for Josh Jordan’s storytelling game, *Heroine*. This book is designed to supplement, not replace that book. All rules and advice in *Heroine* also apply to a *Heroine of Heiankyo* game.



FEATURES OF THE HEIAN ERA

Do not feel too tied to historical Heian-Kyo for this scenario. This book presents a mixture of history and myth. Some locations, characters, and terms are fictional, but all fit well within the feel of the era.

There are no samurai or katana. Neither will exist for almost two hundred years. There are warriors and protectors of the noble families, and there are swords (straight swords, in the Chinese style.) Duty and honor are meaningful concerns, but the samurai caste and the baggage they bring won't be around for several generations.

The Heian era feels very similar to 18th century French culture. If the Heian era seems alien to you, and you're having trouble thinking of intrigue or "things to do" in Kyo, consider Versailles.

There are no ninja, not even proto-ninja. Spies and sociopolitical intrigue happen between noble families, but the spies did not wear black pajamas and tabi shoes.

There are two classes in Heian-era Japan: the nobles and everyone else. The nobles recorded the glorious culture that the era was known for, and wrote the tales of the day, the writings and art that offered glimpses of court life and history. They wrote little about the farmers, craftsmen, merchants, and townspeople that served them. Formidable walls separated these two classes.

Poetry was the most prominent form of artistic expression in the noble courts. Families held poetry recitals, which were a combination of writing workshop and rap battle. Some families archived noteworthy poems for posterity.

Everyone, by being born Japanese, believes in Shinto spirits, Shinto-based taboos, superstitions, and the like. But Buddhism is the religion of the people. There is no conflict between the two, no warring for control like in the West.

The Shinto religious organization has close ties to the noble families and exerts political influence on them. Buddhist sects vie nonviolently for the acceptance of the people. In short, Shinto and Buddhism exist as layers on top of each other.



Chapter 2



HEROINE PLAYER

This chapter supplements the rules for Heroine Players in the main book. In this chapter you will find alternate interpretations of the Be Heroic move, an expanded list of heroine descriptions, and a set of Introductions designed specifically for the Heian-Kyo setting.

BE HEROIC

In Heian-Kyo, the heroine can Be Heroic by being clever, daring, or by trying her best.

BE CLEVER

Use your wits. Creatively apply things you learned in childhood (“This reminds me of that TV drama I used to watch after school, ‘My Girlfriend Is the Queen.’ I’m going to try to use her royal speech to convince them I’m actually a noblewoman!”.) Use raw book-knowledge. These are all elements of being clever. However, attitude is everything! A heroine that tries to be clever with a smarmy or superior attitude and fails will undoubtedly fall hard in the process. Cleverness is an attribute that comes from humility in Heian-Kyo.

BE DARING

Taking risks and being adventurous in a boisterous manner are not popular heroic actions in Heian-Kyo. However, risk taking is acceptable as long as it’s in service of another. Taking a dangerous leap to save a friend or companion is a good example.

Being daring can express itself in many ways. Trying new things, pushing yourself, and taking action without order or direction are all aspects of being daring. Use these aspects when describing a daring success.

ISSHOH-KENMEI GAMBARU

This is a new Heroic trait. *Isshoh-Kenmei-Gambaru* means to “try my best, with all my might.” There is a nuanced difference between this trait and just being daring. Trying hard, pushing yourself through your weakness and inexperience, and repeating a difficult new task without complaint until you get good at it are all a specific, heroic action in Heian-Kyo. *Doryoku*, extreme effort, and *gambaru*, persistence, are heroic virtues in Heian-Kyo.



The heroine has innate skills and talents which put her ahead of others in her age range, impressing those around her. But people will be truly moved and remember the heroine when she demonstrates long hours of study, practice, physical exertion, suffering, or concentration.

Saying “I succeeded by trying really hard” by itself doesn’t cut it. The heroine has to demonstrate that she exerted herself, trained for the occasion, or suffered in some way. She says *Isshoh-Kenmei Gambaru* to herself, and she tries again.

SELF DOUBT RULE (OPTIONAL)

Throughout the game, if the heroine demonstrates the qualities of *Isshoh-Kenmei Gambaru*, use it in a roll to lower the success threshold. If the Narrator approves of the description, a Be Heroic or Be Successful success threshold can be reduced to 6 or higher on 2d6 (“6 or higher, she overcomes the Challenge”). If the heroine fails despite trying her best, the heroine gains the Self-Doubt Injury (See Injuries.) Use this sparingly, no more than two times per session. Not even the heroine can exert all her effort all of the time.

DESCRIPTION

Consider giving the heroine an unexpected quality apart from her personal history to make for a deeper and more interesting heroine. Describing the heroine helps bring her to life. Here are a few typical Japanese qualities. These may give the heroine certain advantages, but all of them provoke interesting story elements for the heroine’s adventures in Heian-Kyo

ATHLETE

The heroine may not be the best athlete, but consistent practice has taught her what strenuous physical activity is. While most contemporary teenagers would struggle with the half and full- day travels required to get around in the Kyo area, this heroine can manage well. She also has hand-eye coordination and strength that may come in handy.

KOTEN STUDENT

The ancient Japanese language is different from modern Japanese. One optional subject taught in high school is *koten*, classical Japanese. It's infuriatingly difficult, like trying to learn early medieval German in order to read old English texts. If the heroine gets good grades or tutoring in *koten*, she is able to read the writings of nobles of Heian-Kyo, from literature to official documents. If she has not studied *koten* or gotten exceptional grades, it is completely illegible to her.

PART-TIME PET STORE EMPLOYEE

Yohjin, especially oni folk, find the heroine has an odd scent that causes them to shed their suspicions quickly and become friendly with her. They can sense her natural ability to take care of animals. Wild animals (wild foxes, deer, wolves, bears or monkeys) do not consider her threatening or dangerous, which mystifies the normal people of Heian-Kyo.

TRAINED IN FIRST AID

The heroine knows first aid. She might be studying pre-medicine, or she might have parents who are doctors. She can't cure people of rare diseases, but she can treat injuries and sometimes save lives.

CLASSICAL ART PRACTITIONER

The heroine has a skill for a classical art such as calligraphy; poetry; ikebana, floral arrangement; or the tea ceremony. Being trained in one of these—at her parents' insistence—means that the heroine has an “in” with the nobility. She can wow them with her dynamic calligraphy or poetry. Or she can arrange an ikebana display that immediately garners attention from the ladies of the house. Although the tea ceremony was in its infancy in the Heian era (it didn't explode until the late 1400s), she could upstage her peers using not-yet-developed techniques to impress lords and ladies.

CLASSICAL MUSICIAN

Instruments like the *biwa*, classical guitar; *shakuhachi*, bamboo flute; or *kugo*, a harp-like instrument, are used in traditional Shinto ceremonies. One of the heroine's parents is a famous musician in her chosen instrument and ensured that the heroine trained in a classical instrument.



EMPLOYEE AT A FAMILY BUSINESS

By helping out with the business after school, the heroine has a good sense of accounting and money management. This presents her with opportunities among the poor of Heian-Kyo. Nobles don't appreciate money or where it comes from – just that they have it.

MAGICIAN

The heroine knows stage magic, card tricks, cup-and-ball tricks, or other types of illusion. In the Heian era, she can convince people that she is a wizard. She can also see through the trickery that some *onmyoji* rely upon to impress others.

MARTIAL ARTIST

This should really not be a trait the heroine has. It's too easy to fall back on the Japanese heroine knowing martial arts like karate or shorinji kempo. If you decide to make your heroine a martial artist anyway, be aware of the risk of running a "Yet another Badass Kicks Butt through Time" kind of game. If you decide to go with this skill, it's best to choose *kendo* which gives her an edge with a sword or *kyudo* which is applicable to the bow-centric guards and militia of the era.

INTRODUCTION

Introductions in this setting tend to be slightly longer than in the standard Heroine, because they consist of an initial scene introducing the heroine and a field trip scene.ladies.

INITIAL SCENE: OPENING THE INTRODUCTION

All of the stories listed on page 20 of the Heroine rulebook make fine struggles. Here are some other potential struggles that are excellent for this setting.

Bullied by Classmates

High schools in Japan, much like anywhere else, have a palpable caste system.

The heroine either committed an unrecognized slight against one of the popular fashionable girls, it is simply her turn to end their boredom. Either way, their bullying is escalating. The heroine's friends are weaker than her and afraid to support her publicly, lest they become the target of the bullies. At first, her indoor school shoes go missing, and her desk has scribbles on it. Then recently, other students began giving her the silent treatment and throwing her things in the garbage. During the school field trip, the heroine's group of five or six other kids abandons her when her back is turned.

Before the heroine finds herself in Heian-Kyo, does she just sit back and take it, hoping that the bullies would eventually move on to the next kid? Or does she instigate an inappropriate social outburst, yelling back at the bullies, causing them to get angry and escalate their actions?

Pressure from Parents and Teachers

The heroine has ambition. She knows what she wants to be: a hair stylist, a bookstore owner, a professional athlete, or a veterinarian. Because the heroine is extremely bright and gets good grades in all of her subjects, her teachers and parents are pressuring her to aspire to a more prestigious career.

She could be a doctor, a lawyer, an elite businesswoman, or a biochemical engineer if she would just give up her childish dreams and focus more on her future. The heroine is now put into a stressful situation. She knows what she wants to do, but she also knows what will make her teachers and parents happy.

What happens during her quiet walk by herself around a temple ground while considering a prestigious future?

No Real Friends

No one bullies or shuns the heroine. In fact, just the opposite. She's extremely smart or hard-working enough to ace all the tests and maintain the highest grades in her class. She's athletic, too. She takes care of her appearance and style. Everyone respects her. She might even be the iincho, the official class representative.



The iincho is the stern one responsible for all sorts of tasks like passing out papers and taking roll-call. She also keeps order and makes sure the class is clean. If she's aggressive, she chews out students who roughhouse or goof off.

Her responsibility comes with a price—distance. It's not that the other students don't like her. It's just that she has such an air of excellence that others consider her unapproachable. "There's no way she'd join us at the Cherry Blossom festival. She's probably busy studying. Let's not bother her." But the heroine wants to be bothered. She's lonely and hasn't had close friends since grade school.

There are a few girls and a boy in her class who talk to her enough that they would consider her a friend, if only they could see the real her. What can she do to break down barriers and make friends. The field trip is an opportunity to crack through the invincible armor others subconsciously cloak her in.

Just Average

The heroine is an average teenager in the big city. She studies in school just enough to not fail. She works just enough after school to make money to have fun and shop with her friends. She skips just enough school and hangs out in the city to have fun without getting caught. Her parents aren't disappointed in her. after all, she's just average.

She'll drift through high school and get a typical degree from a vocational two-year college. She'll get work at an average company and meet an average man. She'll get married and live out an average life. The heroine doesn't consider herself anything more than average. she has no special skills or qualities.

Living in the Present

Who thinks about the future? The heroine used to, but it scared her. Dreams? What does that matter? It's not like she hates herself, but she doesn't exactly like herself either. She just wants to have fun. Fashion, shopping.

These are the things that she cares about. She's selfish, but not in a way that hurts anybody. She just doesn't consider others or how she lives. Fun and friends are all that comfort her now, so why should she think about others? How will that change when her companions in Heian-Kyo look to her for inspiration and help?

Shut-In Sibling

Hikki-komori, a shut-in—The heroine knew the word from TV, manga and stories, but never expected her own older sister (or brother) to drop out of high school because of some trauma, retreat from the world, and stay isolated in her room, socially connected only to other strangers on the internet forum “Channel Two”. The heroine watched her parents try to encourage her to join the family for meals, or to go outside further than the nearest convenience store, but over time they just learned to live with the shame, blaming themselves for being bad parents. Grandma makes her food and is sometimes allowed into her room to clean it.

She hasn't told any of her friends that her older sister, the popular kid on the block that they all looked up to all their lives, is no longer at school in Tokyo, but rather now a unmoving parasite taking up space at home. She's covered up that familial shame and looked the other way, but it haunts her: Her sister was her role model and best friend, and now she doesn't even know how to get a full sentence out of her.

The heroine isn't sleeping or sleeping well, stress is affecting her grades. This school trip to Kyoto is helping with that a little. Spending some time away from home, with friends, is taking her mind off home and helping her feel normal again.

If the heroine keeps her eyes open at the temples in Kyoto, praying a bit harder than at the temple at home, the Buddha may help give her strength and insight and show her the way to resolve the situation.

Otaku

Books and literature. Manga. Video games. The heroine loves nerdy subjects like these. She's an obsessed, shut-in otaku, but she has friends and social skills.



They're just focused with their own language, obsessions, and shared ambivalence to the real world. While her more fantastic interests will serve her well in Heian-Kyo, she'll need to learn how to deal with others much different than her.

Field Trip Scene

End the introduction on a school field trip to Kyoto. Kyoto is a common field trip destination (the comedy team Rahmens joked in a sketch that “The population of Kyoto is equally divided. Half the population consists of statues of the Buddha. The other half consists of students on a school field trip”.)

The heroine arrives by bus or bullet train (depending on how far she traveled) with the rest of the students in her homeroom. The teacher assigns the students into groups of four to six students (likely other girls if she goes to an all-girls high school), who then wander around the city, observing famous cultural spots (temples, shrines, and other historic locations) to gather information for an after-trip report.

If the heroine is from a large city like Tokyo, Osaka, or Yokohama, Kyoto feels “a little bit country”, as it's not nearly as developed or convenient as those large cities. At the same time, the quiet she finds will likely astound her. The various temples are especially quiet (when there aren't hordes of screeching students.) She'll likely have a harder time adjusting to Heian-Kyo when she arrives.

If she's from a small town or village like Ibusuki, Kusatsu, or Kazamura, Kyoto is metropolitan with large and impressive temples. The heroine adjusts quickly because she sees commonalities among the lifestyles of both the poor and the noble. She's helped plant rice, grow vegetables, or cared for animals and she can get used to being at a noble estate with a many-layered kimono with no air conditioning.

On the trip, because of the school assignment, the heroine visits To-ji – “East Temple”. This temple is famous for multiple reasons. It's important to the Shingon sect of Buddhism, a sect which studies “esoteric Buddhist magic”.

Its history stretches back to the early days of the Heian era, where it was situated next to the eastern gate into the great square capital of Kyo. It's also a lovely wooden pagoda with five stories, rarely open to the public.

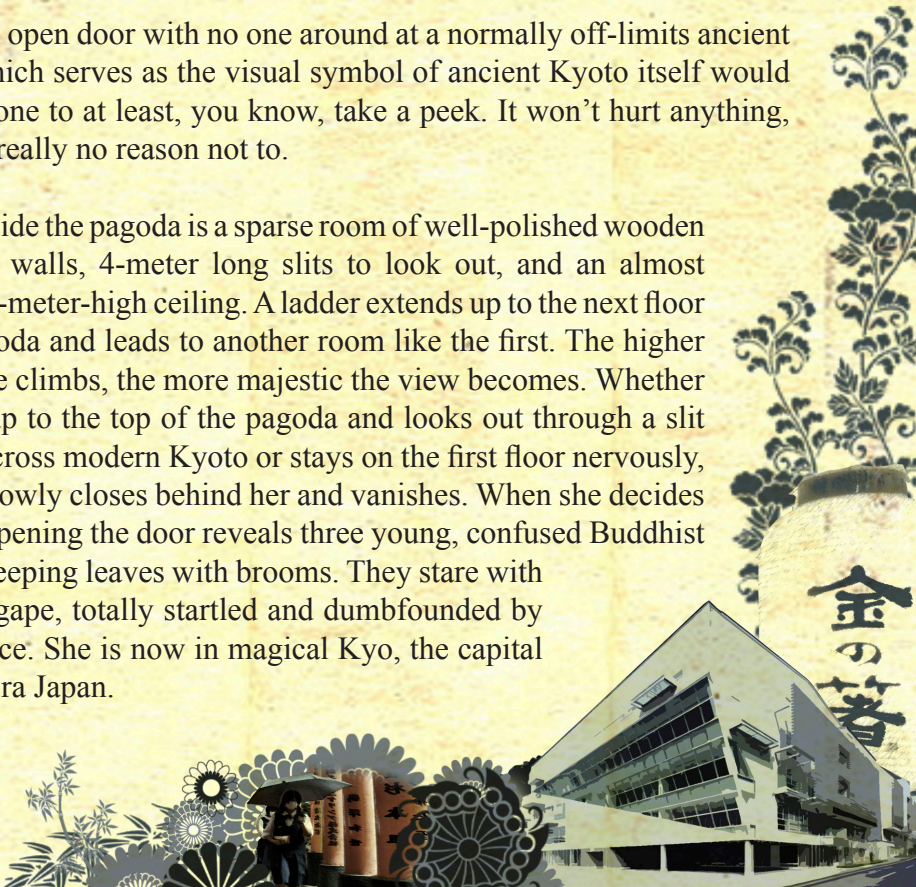
If the heroine is friends with the other students in her assigned group, they stop in front of the pagoda to take a picture together. The heroine is in the back of the group. While one of the members looks for another tourist to take the picture for them, the heroine hears a noise directly behind her, as the door to the pagoda slowly opens.

Another possibility is that her assigned group splits up for 10–15 minutes so that everyone can explore the museum and temple grounds by themselves. The heroine wanders the quiet, peaceful garden in front of the pagoda to contemplate her life. She notices the door to the normally off-limits pagoda is wide open, and no one else is around.

If she is bullied or an outsider amongst her assigned group, they walk away when she is distracted, leaving the heroine alone to wander To-ji and find the open door while looking for them.

An open door with no one around at a normally off-limits ancient pagoda which serves as the visual symbol of ancient Kyoto itself would tempt anyone to at least, you know, take a peek. It won't hurt anything, so there's really no reason not to.

Inside the pagoda is a sparse room of well-polished wooden floors and walls, 4-meter long slits to look out, and an almost cramped 2-meter-high ceiling. A ladder extends up to the next floor of the pagoda and leads to another room like the first. The higher the heroine climbs, the more majestic the view becomes. Whether she goes up to the top of the pagoda and looks out through a slit window across modern Kyoto or stays on the first floor nervously, the door slowly closes behind her and vanishes. When she decides to leave, opening the door reveals three young, confused Buddhist monks sweeping leaves with brooms. They stare with mouths a-gape, totally startled and dumbfounded by her presence. She is now in magical Kyo, the capital of Heian-era Japan.





NARRATOR

This chapter supplements the rules for the Narrator in the main book. In this chapter you will find new Themes to inspire conflict, new Injuries and Divisions, sample antagonists, and more chapter templates for your game.

THEMES

Stories told in Heian-Kyo focus on the Themes, Social Stratification, Autonomy, and Wonder. Narrators can draw inspiration from these Themes in order to create conflict for the heroine.

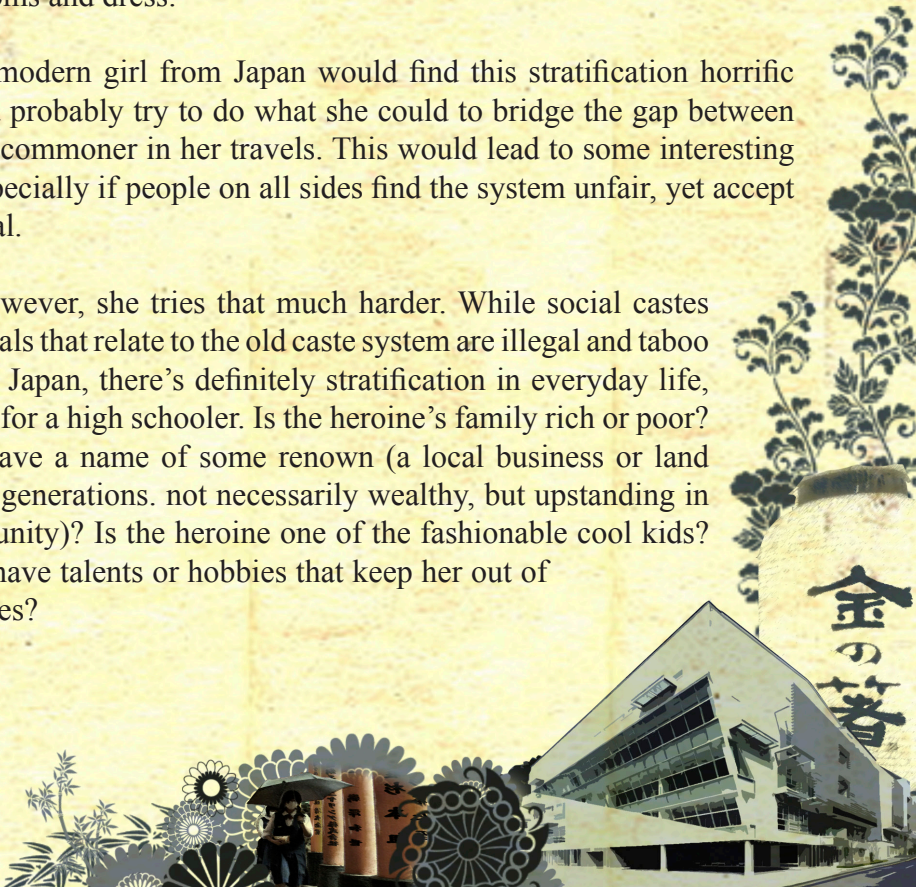
SOCIAL STRATIFICATION

In Heian-Kyo, there are the nobles and the commoners, and the distinction between the two is very sharp. The nobles live an idealistic but idle life thanks to the commoners' labor. The commoners work hard all day to scrape by. They live in huts and shanty-towns around the capital and the surrounding farmlands, usually clumped into small village-like groups. There's not a lot of societal interaction between the two. It's clear who's on top and who's on the bottom.

Among the nobles are a few aristocrats, who are even higher than regular nobles. Aristocrats claim to be of "pure birth." They have their own eerie mannerisms, speech, and dress, visibly distinct from regular noble-class customs and dress.

A modern girl from Japan would find this stratification horrific and would probably try to do what she could to bridge the gap between noble and commoner in her travels. This would lead to some interesting drama, especially if people on all sides find the system unfair, yet accept it as natural.

However, she tries that much harder. While social castes and materials that relate to the old caste system are illegal and taboo in modern Japan, there's definitely stratification in everyday life, especially for a high schooler. Is the heroine's family rich or poor? Do they have a name of some renown (a local business or land owner for generations, not necessarily wealthy, but upstanding in the community)? Is the heroine one of the fashionable cool kids? Does she have talents or hobbies that keep her out of those circles?



AUTONOMY

Convenience is everywhere and forms the basis of life in both the city and suburbs of modern.

Japan. School-age children enjoy freedom from decision and doubt as their parents and teachers tell them what to do, where to go, and how to act. Any activity worth doing has a series of books dedicated to doing it properly. Most Japanese television focuses in some regard on showing you how to do things, how to live a daily life of morals and social mores, and how to navigate life properly.

The heroine now faces a world where she has to think and do things for herself. Her companions look to her for guidance, but the heroine must learn how to give it. This will likely be the first time in her life where she'll have to handle her own travel, her own cooking. She has to navigate ceremonies, wear unusual clothing, and meet with important people. With no convenient instructions, no internet guides, and no books written (with colorful manga demonstrations), she'll need to learn the value of autonomy.

WONDER

Heian-Kyo is an ancient city of a forgotten, peaceful, and magical age. It is also populated by wizards and monsters, a glaring sign that the heroine did not simply slip through time. Instill in the heroine a sense of otherness and wonder as you shift between presenting Heian-Kyo as historic Japan and showing its true face as a magical fairyland. The first time she encounters a Yohjin or the first time she sees something magical happen, awes the heroine and remind her that this isn't just ancient Japan. Reveal to her in bits and pieces that Heian-Kyo really is a whole other world.

INJURIES

An Injury prevents one character from doing one sort of activity until the end of the next chapter. Here are a few new Injuries that are especially appropriate to this setting.

SHAMED

This injury can occur in two different forms, a personal one and a societal one. The social stratification that exists in Heian-Kyo extends to the language that people use. Making a mistake and then recognizing it can be a source of deep shame for the heroine. The heroine feels this shame even if the other party was not offended or chooses to ignore it either because of her Ijin status or because they are friendly.

Shame can also be a social status. If an antagonist is involved, they might draw attention to the character's indiscretion in public to humiliate them. This results in a public shaming that those present will long remember.

STYMIED

The heroine comes from a land where others – her teachers and her parents – make most decisions on her behalf. Being in a land where she has to make her own decisions brings her self-doubt and causes her to falter. Her companions rely on her to fulfill her destiny (as many ijin of legend), but without a well-trod path to follow, the pressure can lead to a huge amount of mental stress. The stress of not fitting into a land which is “Japan-but-not-Japan” can also be overwhelming.

DISBELIEF

Modern-day Japan is a rational, materialistic society. The heroine has read popular phone-novels, light novels and manga about teenagers slipping through space and time into the past or alternate worlds. It's a very popular theme in teenage fiction in Japan. Sorcery and monsters make her wonder if she's trapped in a dream or hallucination. When she realizes that this Heian-Kyo is not just “ancient Kyoto with magic” but shows signs of being another Heian-Kyo altogether is when she starts to question what is real.

SICK OF IT ALL

“*Moh, iya da!*” is a popular expression that describes this emotional state. This injury works particularly well for heroines with a selfish background or who are starting to experience the intense stress of trauma or homesickness.



It represents the heroine transitioning from breakdown to the resulting emotional vulnerability. The heroine is not a cliché anime crybaby with jets of water spraying from her eyes every other scene.

This injury represents the utter despair of the heroine, her loneliness, shame, and desperation. The stress has swelled to the point where she can't proceed without letting it all out and then collecting herself. Typical results include crying, shutting oneself off from others, and wallowing in an atmosphere of failure and hopelessness.

Sick of It All should lead to resolution within a scene or two. The heroine finds the strength – through her own resolve or encouragement of her companions – to collect herself and continue her journey. This is a turning point that means she's a changed or more mature person.

The Narrator should invoke this injury with care. It shouldn't appear at all in a one-session game and only once in a longer game. This injury should usually occur at a significant moment in the last third of the story. Improper use of Sick of It All can derail and ruin a dramatic story.

DIVISIONS

A Division separate one character from another. Players not directly involved in the Division can choose which of the two characters they are with. Here as a Division that is particularly appropriate to this setting.

STRATIFICATION

Stratification divides characters because of differences in social standing. A noble character can easily be separated from the rest if a missive arrives from a servant declaring that her attention is required elsewhere for the sake of court or family. Commoners are uninvited and unwelcome.

A monk might be summoned by the abbot or abbess for some reason (a retreat, a rare meeting with Chinese sister-sect monks, etc.)

Commoner tasks could equally be divisive.

A fire in a commoner district, a neighbor giving birth, a “barn raising” or similar task would require the attention of someone from that neighborhood, and other outsiders (especially nobles) would be out of place and implicitly unwelcome.

ANTAGONISTS

Here are a few sample antagonists to use in a game of Heroine set in Heian-kyo. Pick one that appeals, and make him or her the focus of the scenario.

LORD NIJO-NO-MASANOBU/LADY NIJO-NO-MOTOKO

This aloof governor-lord perpetuates an excruciating tax on the peasants in his district. By law, he’s supposed to tax 20% of the crops and money raised by the peasants living in his district, but secretly he takes closer to 60%. The people are suffering. Lord Nijo-no-Masanobu doesn’t care. He considers them a disposable commodity granted to him by the kami, and little more than slaves.

The heroine will certainly come into contact with him, see the problems of the people underneath him, and try to find a way to stop his terrible rule. The heroine will be a threat to him. As an ijin outsider, she will be able to travel between the noble courts and the commoner houses and farms. His power is predicated on those two worlds never meeting. If the commoners keep their heads down, and the nobles remain aloof, he will remain in power and undiscovered indefinitely. The more she talks to people and makes friends in Kyo, the more of a danger to his power she will become.

By default, the antagonist character is the man, Lord Nijo-no-Masanobu, but if you think a woman domain lord would be more interesting, re-skin this character as the steely Lady Nijo-no- Motoko.

Nijo-no-Masanobu/Lady Nijo-no-Motoko represents the themes of Social Stratification and Autonomy.



SORCERER DOMON

A corrupt self-serving onmyoji and historical rival of Abe-no-Seimei interested more in status and power than truth and natural order. He quickly develops an interest in the ijin heroine when she appears. He will quickly approach her, under the guise of friendly curiosity, offering to help her acclimate to this land, to help her return home. But he will secretly mine her for information and knowledge that will further his dark goals.

He plans to use her as a font of information, stealing ideas about the future (technology, social order, history, and culture) and working to create them in his own time. while at the same time presenting her at court as “under his tutelage”, which will certainly raise his social status. With just a little more status, a little more power, he can finally put that pesky Abe-no-Seimei in his own place.

Domon represents the themes of Autonomy and Self Doubt. He can also represent Wonder, if he is pursuing dark experiments (“First, I raise my status at court by using the heroine. then, when I get my hands on the magical Clear Mirror of the Emperor, I unleash my necromantic army of the undead and demons to take control of the city!”).

MOONSHRINE SPIRIT GUARDIAN

When the heroine arrives in Kyo, the natural balance of the kami falls into disarray. There is a “spiritual confusion” that occurs. Animal attacks increase, ghost sightings become commonplace, and both monks and Shinto priests have dark, disturbed dreams that make it hard for them to sleep.

The heroine will soon find herself (by accident, or companion advice) visiting the Shrine of the Moon at night, to view the beautiful reflection of the moon upon the still pond. That’s when the guardian spirit of the shrine takes form, and introduces itself to her. It is a mysterious kami which can take many forms.

Through onmyoji, or Shinto priest/shrine girl, the heroine discovers that her arrival at in Kyo isn’t the cause of the spiritual disturbance, but an effect of it.

To set things right, she will have to travel several days around Kyo, from the Clearwater Temple to the far temple of Hiei mountain, and finally back to Toji Temple. She must visit three shrines and two temples.

At the three shrines, she will have to calm restless animal kami. At the temples, she will have to pray for the ascension to heaven of a powerful (and dark) ghost which has come and taken residence in the temple. Only by doing this will the restlessness be quelled. If the heroine fails, it can mean nothing other than natural disasters for the capital city (earthquakes, fires, and illness.)

While the Spirit Guardian travels with her, it is not a very friendly spirit. It considers her, an *ijin*, to be a blight in Kyo. It won't consciously hurt her (spiritually nor physically), but it won't accept her presence in Kyo, nor will it take care with its words and accusations as it speaks with her.

Will she ultimately have to befriend the Guardian Spirit? Is such a thing even possible? The Spirit Guardian represents the themes of Self Doubt and Wonder.

CHAPTER TEMPLATES

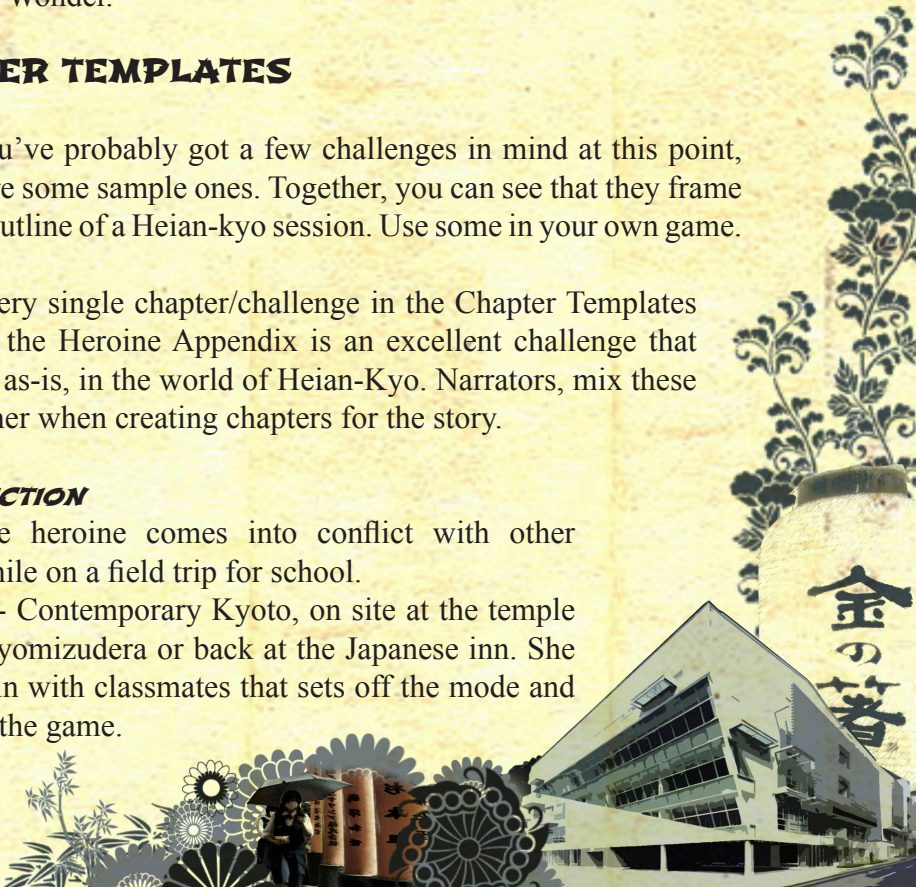
You've probably got a few challenges in mind at this point, but here are some sample ones. Together, you can see that they frame the loose outline of a Heian-kyo session. Use some in your own game.

Every single chapter/challenge in the Chapter Templates section of the Heroine Appendix is an excellent challenge that easily fits, as-is, in the world of Heian-Kyo. Narrators, mix these lists together when creating chapters for the story.

INTRODUCTION

The heroine comes into conflict with other people, while on a field trip for school.

Location - Contemporary Kyoto, on site at the temple To-ji or Kyomizudera or back at the Japanese inn. She has a run-in with classmates that sets off the mode and themes of the game.



Characters Introduced - Heroine's Peers, the ones that she'll have to face when she returns. If quick names are needed: Tajima, Saibara, Negishi.

Challenge - This one will actually not be a "winnable challenge". It is a set-up for failure, just a scene to establish what the Heroine is and what she faces back home.

ARRIVAL

The heroine arrives at the Heian-kyo version of To-ji temple. Monks tend the ground, and are shocked by the arrival of a girl. Doubly so because of her unusual clothes and speech.

Location - To-ji temple grounds, outside the five-story pagoda, near the peaceful reflecting garden.

Characters Introduced - Assortment of monks, men, young and old, a nun, a Companion, if one is a monk or nun.

Challenge - Will the heroine keep it together when she learns that she can't return to modern Kyoto? Can she get them to give her help, guidance?

THE GATE OF THE EAST

The heroine soon finds herself at Roshomon, the legendary huge gate entrance to Kyoto city proper. There are peasants and commoners outside in well-worn clothing, selling simple goods like food, sandals, candles, and clothing. The heroine realizes she hasn't eaten in hours.

Location - At Roshomon gate, a grand gate overlooking a busy marketplace.

Characters Introduced - Peasants. Likely a Companion, if one is a peasant or a wandering Yohjin. Even Abe-no-Seimei. If short on time, all other Companions could intersect and meet here.

Challenge - Can the heroine negotiate a trade for some food (a simple rice ball and pickles)? Will she befriend a peasant who will show her around the city?

THE ESTATE

After a time, the heroine finds herself brought (by suggestion or local police force) to a noble family to explain her presence.

Location - The Fujiwara estate, the front gates, with Lord Fujiwara doing the questioning.

Characters Introduced - The Fujiwara clan, a new companion if a Noble, an Antagonist.

Challenge - Lord Fujiwara is careful and self-serving. Can the heroine convince them to let her go? Or can she even befriend a member of the clan, and gain entrance to their estate as a guest?

DISASTER STRIKES

In the middle of the day, as the heroine travels with her companions, disaster strikes the city of Kyo.

Location - Anywhere in Heian-kyo. For example, inside the esteemed city proper, outside in the peasant longhouses, or at a busy temple.

Characters Introduced - Random people who need help.

Challenge - A natural (or at least, a natural-seeming) disaster strikes. A flash-fire, or an earthquake. The heroine has had basic school drills but has never seen a bad event up close. Can she keep herself safe? Can she push herself to help the people around her? How will she help?

COMPANION AT RISK

One of the heroine's companions is captured and taken by the antagonist or an authority figure influenced by the antagonist.

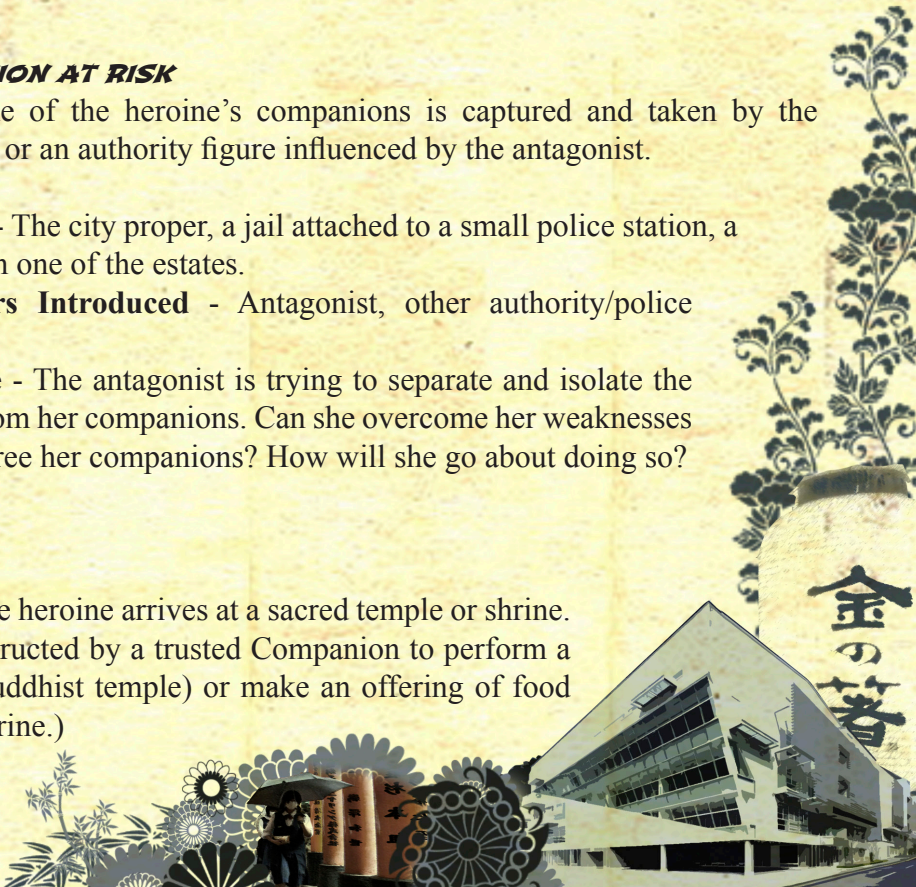
Location - The city proper, a jail attached to a small police station, a dungeon in one of the estates.

Characters Introduced - Antagonist, other authority/police figures.

Challenge - The antagonist is trying to separate and isolate the heroine from her companions. Can she overcome her weaknesses and help free her companions? How will she go about doing so?

INSIGHT

The heroine arrives at a sacred temple or shrine. She is instructed by a trusted Companion to perform a prayer (Buddhist temple) or make an offering of food (Shinto shrine.)



Location - Enryaku-ji, Hall of the Moon's Reflection, Shrine of the Bright Mirror

Characters Introduced - A wise monk or nun (temple), a guardian spirit (Shinto)

Challenge - Can the heroine properly perform the ceremony in order to receive guidance from the temple or shrine? Will the guidance come from a person, a mystical figure, or from the heroine's own reserve? How will she accept or use the guidance?

BETRAYAL

One of the heroine's Companions is not what they seem. She accidentally finds evidence that one of them has strong ties to the Antagonist.

NOTE: The Companion is usually faithful to the Heroine but is in a hard situation because of class, duties, or fate.

Location - Any location. The heroine sees a hidden written missive or journal to or from the antagonist. Or sees that inside of a kimono or tunic is the house crest/mark of the antagonist. Or at night she accidentally sees, and eavesdrops, on a conversation between a companion and the antagonist or their minions.

Characters Introduced - Antagonist or antagonist's minions

Challenge - Will she confront the Companion? Will she be able to get the truth from them? Will she believe them when they tell her "It's not what it looks like!?" Can she help free them of their bind?

SOLACE

The heroine needs to find safety. Either she is hunted by the antagonist, or she needs some time to prepare, or she simply needs a few days to get away from all the craziness. In any case, the companions ask her to pick a location to travel to, a place where she finds comfort and calm. They will likely leave her on her own when they arrive unless specifically asked.

Location - Any location that the players have previously shown interest in.

Characters Introduced - If any, groundskeepers. If possible, avoid “wise magical local who tells the heroine exactly what she needs to do”, but do introduce a local person to act as a kind soul to talk to, to find a small comfort with. The companions are nearby after all, in hiding, and will arrive to show their support when the heroine reaches a resolve.

Challenge - This is a chance for the Heroine to examine her life. Will she have the strength to change herself? Will the companions have a role in that transformation? The heroine will likely do something to indicate she’s made up her mind, what kind of symbolic or real action would that be?





COMPANION PLAYERS

This chapter supplements the rules for Companion Players in the main book. Here you will find sample companions, several locations where the heroine might meet a new companion, and some name lists for different kinds of people in mythic Kyo. The Narrator can also use these names and locations in order to set scenes and introduce other characters.

SAMPLE COMPANIONS

Heian-Kyo is a fantastical land with many possible companion characters. However, to keep things a little grounded in the themes of the game, have at least one normal person. It could be a peasant or a noble, but this companion is distinctly human. This helps the story focus more on human issues and drama even if fantastical elements come into play.

SACHI, THE FISHERMAN'S DAUGHTER

She is one of the first companions the heroine meets and is roughly the same age. Sachi recognizes the heroine at the East Common Market as an *ijin* from legend and tails her for a few minutes before introducing herself. Sachi is boisterous and confident, but reserved around nobility. She lives with her uncle in the East Common Longhouses right outside the city walls and sells fresh produce and fish. Her fishing village is a day's journey away and wants to take the heroine there.

KUJO-NO-FUE-HIME, THE FLUTE PRINCESS OF THE KUJO

Fue-Hime is a young noble girl, traveling from her estate to the city by ox-cart, who takes an interest in the heroine. She is aloof and naive, but extremely intelligent and cultured. She makes it her duty to introduce the heroine to the court and other nobles in order to protect her, a rare *ijin*. The heroine learns her true name is Nobuko if they become close.

KUJO-NO-TADAMITSU

The protective cousin of Fue-Hime, he is an older, gruff warrior and bodyguard assigned to protect the heroine. He doesn't trust the heroine and doesn't want her to influence his cousin with her weird ideas. Something about the heroine inspires him in spite of this, prompting him to treat her less like a stranger and more like family. Tadamitsu is skilled with the bow and a surprisingly good poet.

ABE-NO-SEIMEI

Seimei is a famous *onmyoji* sorcerer of legend. The history books got something wrong, though. Seimei is a girl not much older than the heroine.



Her cunning and worldliness have kept her alive despite her brash, cocky attitude. She's curious about the heroine and wants to tag along, goofing off and using the heroine as a vacation from her studies. Abe-no-Seimei is a good figure to use in stories featuring Domon as an antagonist.

STILL PINE

Once the confusion of the heroine's arrival is sorted out, the abbot chooses this novice monk at the To-ji Temple to follow her and make sure she is taken care of on her journey. Still Pine provides an effective guide for the heroine, despite being nervous and shy. As a monk, he can travel among commoners and nobles, but he isn't truly comfortable anywhere outside his temple. As a monk of the To-ji Shingon order, he is very learned, even in esoteric Buddhist spells.

FOUTEN

This oni folk is muscular and hairy. In his Chinese-looking armor and silken raiment, he cuts an impressive figure. His sharp teeth and fangs scare those who meet him, but he returns kindness with greater kindness. He searches out the heroine and proclaims himself as her protector.

"GOOD QUESTION. WHATEVER YOU WANT, JUST PICK SOMETHING"

He's a young man with a gaudy but high quality silk kimono and angular features. His sing-songy voice complements the excellently-cared-for biwa he carries. As a spirit folk, he can turn into an animal or incorporeal, but he never changes form in public. He is aloof and distractible. Getting into places and touching things he shouldn't is practically his nature. He approaches the heroine because something shiny on her schoolbag catches his attention. He doesn't really understand relationships like friendship, but he's willing to learn.

MOON ORACLE

A woman (you think) in her late 20s, Moon Oracle arrives at the heroine's side and doesn't leave. She has yellow eyes with black slits and sharp facial features.

Feathers entwine her long hair, and she wears the garb of a high-ranking Buddhist monk. She's blunt and direct with her words, and the subtleties of human society escape her. Those in the know recognize her as a Tengu from Mount Hiei.

Moon Oracle can see visions. she knows her destiny is to help the heroine, but she doesn't know the specifics. Moon Oracle's intentions remain a mystery to both the heroine and the other companions.

LOCATIONS

There are some places and set pieces for a Heian-Kyo Heroine game. The first five are real, the bottom ones are fictional, but fitting with a fantastical historical Heian-era Japan.

HISTORIC LOCATIONS

See the References section for good inspiration for real-life places/buildings/temples of the Heian era. Note that most of the below were around then, but went through major changes over the centuries. For example, while Kiyomizu temple existed then, it was likely a small complex, as the expansions that turned it into one of the most recognizable and large temples of Kyoto (plus the most visited by school kids and tourists alike) didn't happen until relatively recently. But there are few historical records of what they looked like then, so take a look at modern pictures and imagine how they might have looked back then, how they might have been different.

To-ji, East Temple

A temple grounds with a famous 5-story pagoda, To-ji is dedicated to Shingon Buddhism, which as a sect is less “Zen” and more “collect information about Buddhist magic and esoterica (maps of the relationships of the Bodhisattvas of heaven, etc.)”. To-ji means “East Temple”, but its official name was “The Temple for the Lord of Scripture, For Protection of Japan”.

It serves as an entry point for the Heroine into the world. It will be much the same in Heian-kyo as it is in contemporary Japan, but with more vibrant colors. It serves as a point of familiarity, with the Heroine returning to a familiar sight for comfort.



Rashomon

Next to To-ji was the huge orange-white entrance to Kyoto, at the end of Phoenix Street: A massive, impressive structure that served as a visual jaw-dropping “WELCOME TO KYO” sign. It was tall, several hundred meters long, and several meters deep. Walking through it took more than a minute. It was no mere “arch”.

This will likely be the first thing the Heroine encounters outside of To-ji. It’s only a hundred meters or so away, it’s phenomenally big and colorful, and it will be the first eyeful of something physical that shows the Heroine “You are no longer in the Japan you know”.

In front of Rashomon will be a common market with all sorts of peddlers and small stands, like a middle-eastern market. See the “East Common Market” in the Fictional Places section below.

Enryaku-ji, Long Calendar Temple and Mount Hiei

This is a famous, large, and longstanding temple complex. Many of the sects of Buddhism came from this temple in some form. At the time of Heian-kyo, it’s actually a big collection of hundreds of small temples of various sects, aspects, Bodhisattvas, and beliefs, framed by a few large temples. Interesting orders exist here in a variety of sizes. Some of the temples are in organized square temples on stone streets. others are built into the side of the mountain, yet others are back in the woods of Mount Hiei along small, unused trails.

If there are Buddhist or Tengu Companions, they likely came from or live here. Mystical Companions likely have some sort of history with Enryaku-ji or the mystical Mount Hiei. Do they bring the Heroine here for guidance?

Kiyomizu-dera, Clearwater Temple

The Heroine will recognize the name of this, one of the most famous temples in Japan. Has she visited there the day before arriving at Heian-Kyo? However, the Kiyomizu-dera of Heian-Kyo is a small, nondescript temple of meditation and reflection built into the side of a stone cliff, with stone stairs leading to it. There are monk grounds workers, but otherwise is not very famous, nor does it have a lot of people visiting it.

This is another location for the Heroine to visit, to understand that “she’s not in Kansai anymore.” The most recognizable temple in Japan totally unrecognizable will likely cause her stress and confusion. However, it is a place of meditation and rest, and an abbess, woman monk, or wandering woman Yaobikuni monk, will take note of the Heroine and provide her advice or guidance. Kiyomizudera could also be a quiet place for a bookish Heroine to get away from it all and find some amount of quiet and grounding.

The Emperor’s Palace

Not a place the Heroine will end up regularly, if at all. Little is known about it, but you can look up pictures of modern “Heian Jingu Shrine”, which was built to look like the old palace. Bright colors, open stone gardens, careful gardening, and impressive numbers of household servants. The palace will have the look and feel almost like China’s Forbidden City, turn there for inspiration.

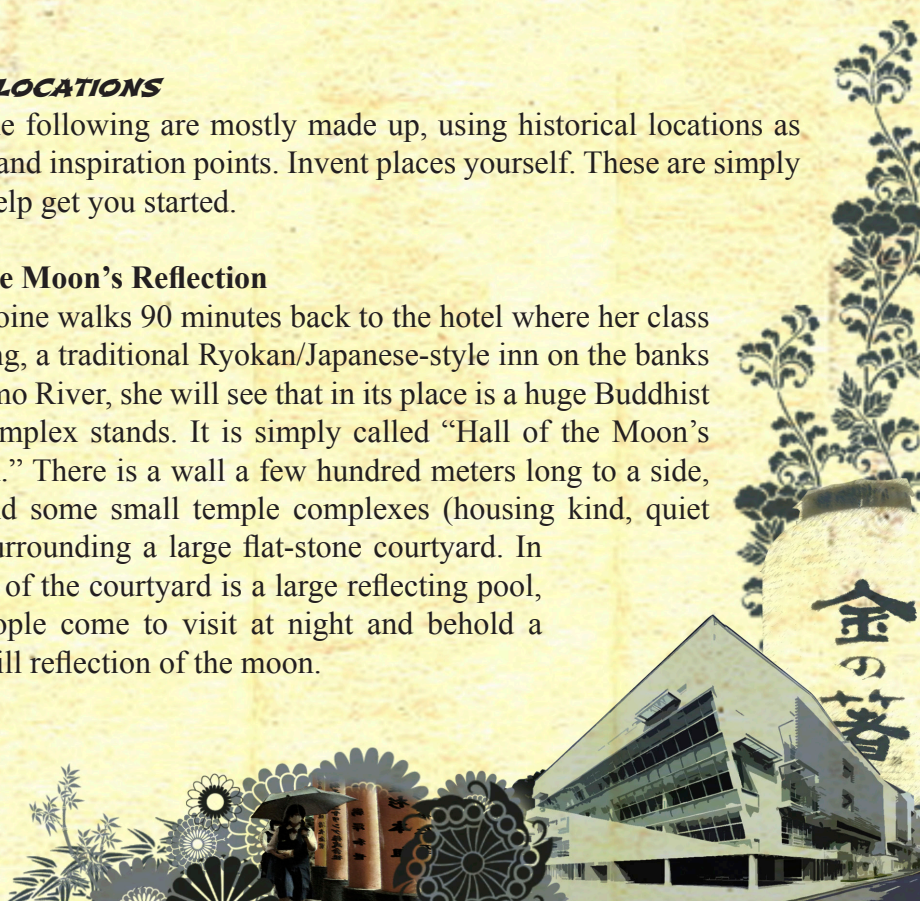
Does the Heroine meet with an aristocrat here or expose a noble/aristocrat scheme? It is likely that she won’t be welcome here too long, or to “hang out”, but it might be a good place for a once-per-campaign Emperor cameo.

MYTHIC LOCATIONS

The following are mostly made up, using historical locations as reference and inspiration points. Invent places yourself. These are simply some to help get you started.

Hall of the Moon’s Reflection

If the Heroine walks 90 minutes back to the hotel where her class was staying, a traditional Ryokan/Japanese-style inn on the banks of the Kamo River, she will see that in its place is a huge Buddhist temple complex stands. It is simply called “Hall of the Moon’s Reflection.” There is a wall a few hundred meters long to a side, a gate, and some small temple complexes (housing kind, quiet monks) surrounding a large flat-stone courtyard. In the center of the courtyard is a large reflecting pool, which people come to visit at night and behold a perfect, still reflection of the moon.



If the Heroine comes here (out of desperation when she first arrives), the horror at the fact that she has no way to get back home is tempered by the peace, tranquility, and equanimity offered by the still, open reflection of the sky above. This temple, while it no longer exists in her time, is huge and very quiet, two aspects that simply don't exist in the Heroine's experience of Kyoto. That alone might get her to take pause, to realize that there is something special to this strange place worth exploring. Does the Heroine find herself staring into the reflecting pool for a long time, hoping a vision will come?

Shrine of the Bright Mirror

A great shrine on the edge of town, it is the current resting place for one of the great magical three treasures of Japan, The Bright Mirror of Bronze, an object of holy origin. There are many Shinto priests and shrine maidens here, organizing, traveling, performing ceremonies and rites for the protection of the people and the land.

Has a mystical Companion brought the Heroine here? It is a good place to receive a charm or blessing, or to have the o-harai, cleansing ceremony, performed on her. If the Heroine takes a moment to explore the compound or find a moment to herself, she will absolutely be approached by a fox, the form of one of the powerful local kami spirits. Whether it speaks with her in a human tongue directly to her mind, or simply performs some sort of gesture in an animal way (tugs at a piece of clothing, drops a special jewel from its mouth, uses its paw to dig a simple picture in the dirt), it provides her with some guidance or help for the events to come. The Heroine will feel light-headed in its presence. The environment will be extremely quiet, with no one else around (even Companions.)

The kami know that the Heroine is from another place connected to this land. They know that she is here for an important reason that she doesn't realize herself, and is here to somehow set things right (even summoned by a more powerful kami.) If she relays the encounter to her Companions, they will completely believe her.

Estate of the Fujiwara

The most lavish estate possible. Attendants are everywhere, the Fujiwara family's every desires are met quickly.

Beautiful art, luxurious areas of rest, decadent theater/poetry areas, gorgeous guest rooms. This experience will be wondrous for the Heroine, but also deeply unsettling when she considers how the commoners live (or her own life) in contrast to these nobles, whose very existence is bought from the taxes they generate.

The Heroine will likely find her way to the complex and lavish Fujiwara compound, brought by a Companion or sent by another noble for information or guidance. She'll be well attended-to, asked many questions in private by other Fujiwara girls near her age, and she will likely be invited to a poetry or theater event, where she'll be expected to perform in front of other members of the clan. Depending on how this goes, she may find supportive friends in the Fujiwara clan, or have an unsettling, guarded experience which leaves her shaken.

A great shrine on the edge of town, it is the current resting place for one of the great magical three treasures of Japan, The Bright Mirror of Bronze, an object of holy origin. There are many Shinto priests and shrine maidens here, organizing, traveling, performing ceremonies and rites for the protection of the people and the land.

Abe-no-Seimei's Estate

The estate of the famous Onmyoji sorcerer. Her (assuming gender-bending) estate has staff and attendants, but not nearly as many as most large estates. Abe-no- Seimei mentions that most of her attendants are there, but unseen. It is common that doors will slide open and close automatically for the Heroine as she wanders the halls. There are many areas of study, and a staircase in the back that descends into a cold, dark, spiraling chasm. Seimei warns her not to go there.

This will mostly serve as a place of protection for the Heroine. She will be safe while she is in Seimei's estate, but it's the equivalent of the Abandoned House At The End of the Street. She will likely find the environment uncomfortable or unsettling. Does she wish to find her own protection?

Northwest Fishing Village

A different aspect of commoner life, this is a small village along the huge Lake Biwa in the Northwest, at the foot of Mount Hiei, about 4 hours walking from Heian-kyo.



It's a quiet village of about a hundred-plus people. Half are fisherman at the nearby lake, the other half are farmers. They are doing their best to make ends meet. It's a hard but good life here, and the people are friendly to respectful outsiders.

If there is a commoner Companion, he or she will likely bring the Heroine to the village, to meet their family, show her another aspect of life here, or just to show off. This will be another opportunity for the Heroine to see firsthand how poor the peasants of the era were, especially in comparison to the city. This location will also serve as a quiet getaway.

The East Common Market

This is the commoner market of mismatched stalls and open tatami/sitting areas outside the front of Rashomon gate. Is this where the Heroine encounters the commoners/peasants of Heian-kyo for the first time?

This is a great place to stage the introduction of a commoner Companion character, who will take note of the Heroine quickly, and start to follow her or get her attention.

The East Common Longhouses

Near the outskirts of town, this is where many of the people who work and sell at the Common Market live. Candle makers, sandal-makers, and all sorts of other craftspeople live in single-room dorms, sharing single walls. The streets are narrow and muddy, but there's communal clean water, communal toilets, and the people of the longhouses work together as a community.

A commoner companion may bring the Heroine here. It serves as an opportunity to see how the people of Heian-kyo live. While cheerful with each other, they are very poor and often worried about making ends meet.

Cave of Naraku

A large natural cave surprisingly close to the city. There are many rumors that surround it, namely that it's a gate to Naraku (Hell.) No one goes there for fear of disease, animal attacks, ghosts, soul-stealing, or all of these at once. This can serve as a home for supernatural Companions, a meeting place for evil, supernatural creatures, a simple thieves' hideout. or even the gate that will one day bring the Heroine back to modern Kyoto.

NAMES

REGAL NAMES

Regal Family Names

There were many regal and aristocratic families, but these were the most powerful:

- **Fujiwara**
- **Nijo**
- **Ichijo**
- **Konoe**
- **Kujo**
- **Takatsukasa**

Men will have a name in the format “(Lastname)-no-(Firstname)” “Nijo-no-Miyro”, “Takatsukasa-no-Yoshimasa”.

Women will sometimes have a name in that format as well if they have a position of power. But in a position of culture (musician, poet, wife) they will often go by a pseudonym, as it’s thought of as uncouth for anyone outside of the family to know their true name: “Murasaki-no- Kimi” (Lady Purple) “Oborozuki-no-kimi” (Lady Drowning Moon.) or just Murasaki or Oborozuki. English is fine, too. For example, “Lady of the Brush” is a skilled writer. “Lady of the Full Moon” is spy, etc.

Regal Masculine First Names

- **Yasuchika**
- **Koreshige**
- **Motonaga**
- **Nagasuke**
- **Ie-akira**
- **Sanenori**
- **Atsumune**
- **Nakakyo**
- **Mitsutaka**
- **Tamefusa**

Regal Feminine First Names

- **Akiko**
- **Gozen**
- **Kenshi**
- **Junshi**
- **Haruko**
- **Nagatsugu**
- **Kusako**
- **Shizuko**
- **Eishi**
- **Kanshi**
- **Hiroko**
- **Nobuko**



Regal Feminine Mask Names

- Murasaki (Purple)
- Oborozuki (Drowning/Hazy Moon)
- Oboroyo (Hazy Night)
- Kurenai (Crimson)
- Yuugiri (Evening Fog)
- Natsu-gasumi (Summer Haze)
- Aoi (Blue)
- Itegasumi (Freezing Mist)
- Utsusemi (Locust Shell)
- Yuugao (Face of Night)
- Ukifune (Floating Boat)
- Fue-hime (Princess of the Flute)

COMMONER NAMES

Commoners did not have last names, rather just one-word plain names. If you were looking for one particular Sachi, you may have to give her features or details. For example, “I’m looking for Sachi of the Market, the rice-grower’s daughter?”

Commoner Masculine Names

- Masa
- Gonta
- Taro
- Seita
- Ryo

Commoner Feminine Names

- Sachi
- Kiyo
- Ren
- Kiku
- Sayuri
- Yae
- Chizuru
- Maho
- Yuki
- Benio

ONI FOLK NAMES

Oni folk are strong of body and heart. They are also a people of devout and noble spirit. As such, when interacting with humans, oni folk commonly take on the name of the Buddhist Heavenly Generals, or another other guardian spirit (Twelve Guardian Devas) or aspect of the Buddha.

- Vasara
- Gatten
- Mikora
- Kannon
- Indara
- Kujaku
- Fudoh
- Makora
- Aizen
- Fuuten

SPIRIT FOLK NAMES

Spirit folk don't have names. They insist that humans they form relationships with come up with a name for them, which they then use with that person. Other people not as close to a spirit folk may use the same name, and they will respond.

- **Mister Fox**
- **Red Kimono**
- **Lovely Eyes**
- **Soft Voice**
- **Wolf Fang**
- **Bamboo Reed**

BUDDHIST PRIEST NAMES

Buddhist Priests, as well as the race of Bird-like Tengu (who often act as devout Buddhist oracles and wandering monks), take upon themselves very esoteric names. Always two words, often a reflection of nature. Some of these are literal English translations of historic monks.

- **Yellow Sky**
- **Quiet Meadow**
- **Mountain of Peace**
- **Starry Pond**
- **Sea of Air**
- **Enlightened Realm**
- **True Sound**
- **White Flower**
- **East Wind**



GLOSSARY

This book uses these Japanese words. Words marked with “*” are specific to this setting and do not occur in common, modern Japanese.



BAKEMONO, 化け物

Inhuman, often unfriendly monsters that eat or kill people. Goblins, oni (“Trolls”), shape changers and the like. Some frightened people think the Heroine is a bakemono.

IJIN,* 異人

“Strange Person/Curious Person” —This is an unflattering but accurate way that people will refer to the heroine (and all characters brought here from other times/ places), based on her dress and speech.

ISSHOH-KENMEI GAMBARU, 生懸命頑張る

It’s a mouthful, but pronounced EE-show-ken-may GAM-ba-rue. Gambaru means “to try hard” and Isshoh-kenmei means “with all your might”. Together, it’s a powerful phrase that cuts to the heart of what it is to be Japanese.

KIMONO, 着物

There are many types and words for kimono. Don't feel bad simply saying "formal kimono", "man-kimono", "Shinto priest kimono", etc. But here are a few specific kinds.

JUUNI-HITOE

The name of the "12 Layered Kimono" that noble women wore. Layers upon layers of silk. Each under-kimono has its own name, check the internet if you want to go deeper into that rabbit-hole.

KAZAMI

A formal kimono, usually white. Basically, a large baggy poncho-looking kimono, worn over a skirt/trousers.

KACHI-E

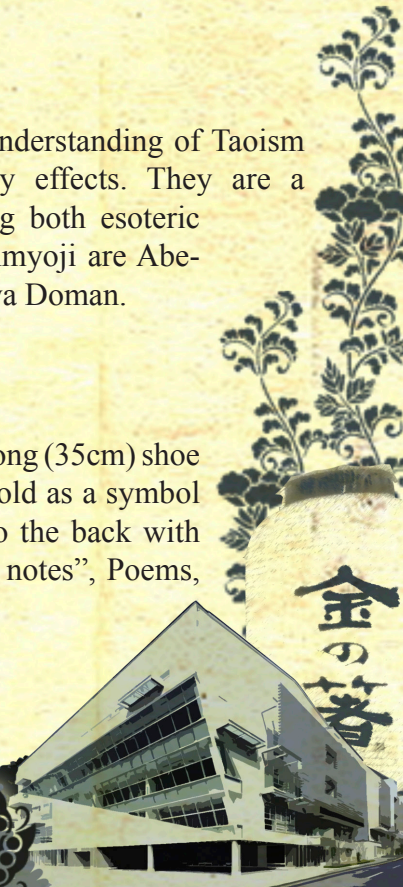
A uniform kimono for men and guards. Basically a baggy poncho-looking kimono tied over trousers and shirt.

ONMYOJI, 陰陽師

Taoist sorcerer, Geomancer. Onmyoji utilize an understanding of Taoism (Yin/Yang) and nature to conjure forth sorcery effects. They are a combination of wizard and priest, often knowing both esoteric Buddhism and Shinto secrets as well. Famous onmyoji are Abe-no-Seimei (the "Merlin of Japan"), and rival Ashiya Doman.

SHAKU, 笏

A wooden scepter ("ritual baton") that looks like a long (35cm) shoe horn, held in the right hand by nobles young and old as a symbol of status. Nobles often attached strips of paper to the back with notes ("What to say at the ceremony", "Etiquette notes", Poems, etc.) When role-playing a noble, you could use a closed foldable fan to represent a shaku, and point/gesture with it for dramatic effect.



SHRINE

A Shinto place of worship

TEMPLE

A Buddhist place of worship.

TENGU, 天狗

Tengu are people with at least some feature of birds (wings, feet, eyes, or head, or a combination of these), usually crow or hawk-like) While Tengu are also referred to as “Yohjin”, they are far less common in human society, so they stand out more in public. They are usually recluse, living high up in the mountains as monks and shamen, but sometimes one is drawn to interact with people for reasons they might not even understand themselves.

TENKUU-NO-MON,* 天空の門

“Gate of Heaven” —People who know legends of the ijin know that at some point, all of them are eventually drawn to seek out a “Gate of Heaven”, which will return them to their home. Only great sorcerers can predict the location of such a gate (usually an existing Torii or Temple entrance-way), and only the ijin can see or pass through the gate. It is unknown why the ijin will eventually find their Tenkuu-no-Mon, or how they can find it unerringly, even while not even actively searching for it. The path/way in which the heroine enters Heian-Kyo is not going to be the Tenkuu-no-Mon to take her home.

TORII, 鳥居

A Torii or “Torii Gate” is the traditional orange gate-looking architectural object, usually used as entrances to Shinto shrines.

YOHJIN,* 妖人

“Monster People” —the common word used to refer to the humanoid monsters that live and function in human society. The two most common types are the honest and direct “oni folk” (oni about the size of a human, but taller and muscular, often with horns and at least small fangs) who often serve as protectors and bodyguards, and the flighty “spirit folk” (fey people with fine elven-like features who can shape change into animals) who often work as entertainers, when they work at all.

JAPANESE DIALECTS

Spoken language is a huge feature of role-playing in Japan. You don't need to know any Japanese to play this setting. The language is delineated along familiarity and class lines. Incorporating these dialectical differences can result in extremely interesting role-play situations.

When using dialects in speech, simply say something like:

- *“I switch to polite form, and say...”*
- *“She speaks Aristocratic form, and says...”*
- *“I say this in a way that is polite, but giving enough indicators to her that I don't really mean it ‘politely’”*
- *“I use noble Japanese to tell her such and such. I'm sure I mess up a few verbs, but she recognizes that I'm trying hard in a dialect that is hard for me, which may endear me to her a little.”*

At the beginning, most of the people the heroine meets (noble or poor) will comment on how unusual her dialect is. They certainly won't understand modern phrases or slang (interject English slang to create an interesting interaction with a stranger or companion.)

After some time, the heroine will likely have to exert herself in order to speak “properly”, in a form that will cause no confusion, stress, or shame even when using polite and plain forms.



Once the heroine expresses taking the time or exertion to speak carefully once or twice, assume from that point on she gets used to it and communicates well with the people of Heian-kyo.

There are many forms of language in Japanese. Here are some, and how they might be used in the game.

SPOKEN JAPANESE

PLAIN FORM

This is how modern Japanese girls would speak to each other. Does the heroine slip into this with friendly characters around her without recognizing that in Heian era Japan, only the dirt-poor use common speech/plain form, or else inside a family estate when the doors are closed, or between exceedingly good friends in private? It's understood by all, but seen as uncouth in most situations, like wearing dirty clothes. It breaks down the distance between people, and that's scary or improper for most.

Speaking notes: Use slang, abbreviations, etc

POLITE FORM

This is the default for most characters the heroine will encounter. In modern Japan it's used everywhere, even sometimes in the home, and with friends that aren't super-close. It adds a respectable distance between people. Noble friends and companions will have to be really close to the heroine before they start using polite form (although the heroine may use polite form back, in an attempt to consciously or subconsciously break those barriers), and even then usually when there are no others present. Using polite form to strangers in town is fine. Using it to nobles or people "in power" will be offensive to them, like spitting or talking with your mouth full.

Speaking notes: Speak normally, and politely.

NOBLE FORM

This involves convoluted verb endings and the like. One could also call it "high speech" (keigo.) It's partially used in contemporary Japan (minus the words that only exist in court settings) in high-level business or political dealings, so the heroine will be able to understand it well enough, but she likely won't be able to speak it well unless she's had training.

This means that, without proper training, the heroine can speak to a noble, but every once in a while they might wince, like fingernails on a chalkboard, at a forgotten verb tense or a never-learned noun substitution.

At some point later in the game, once the Heroine has enough exposure to noble speech, she can justify using it well without penalty. Otherwise, she must make a roll to see if she can speak correctly without offense or mistake. Do this kind of check sparingly, only when the message being relayed is important. Do not do this for every interaction she has.

Speaking notes: Talk as if you are a character in a historical drama. For Americans, that usually means Shakespearian (or at the very least Elizabethan) speech patterns (“Hast thou...” etc.) Or just talk normally, indicating before you speak that your character is using “Noble Form”.

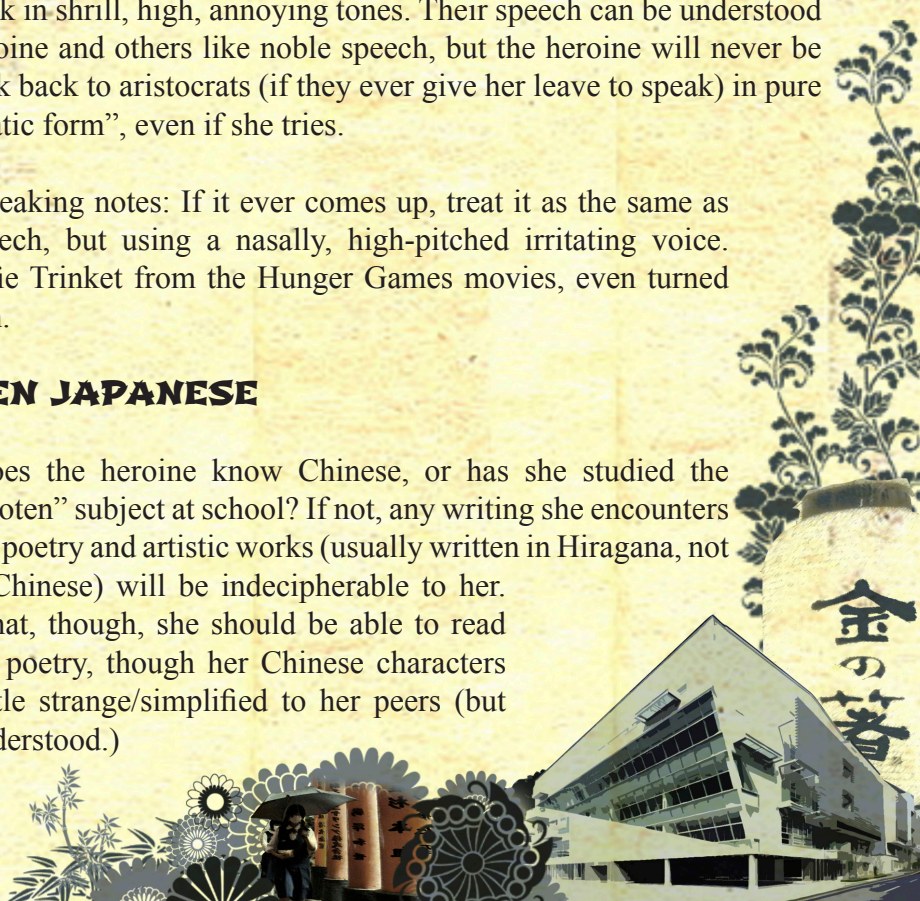
ARISTOCRATIC FORM

The highest aristocrats, those closest to the Emperor usually of families of “pure descent” (inbreeding), have speech patterns all their own. They speak in shrill, high, annoying tones. Their speech can be understood to the heroine and others like noble speech, but the heroine will never be able to talk back to aristocrats (if they ever give her leave to speak) in pure “Aristocratic form”, even if she tries.

Speaking notes: If it ever comes up, treat it as the same as noble speech, but using a nasally, high-pitched irritating voice. Think Effie Trinket from the Hunger Games movies, even turned up a notch.

WRITTEN JAPANESE

Does the heroine know Chinese, or has she studied the classic “Koten” subject at school? If not, any writing she encounters other than poetry and artistic works (usually written in Hiragana, not classical Chinese) will be indecipherable to her. Beyond that, though, she should be able to read and write poetry, though her Chinese characters look a little strange/simplified to her peers (but totally understood.)



INSPIRATIONAL MATERIAL

The most important part of any recommended material for the Heian era is media that has a visual impact. It's hard to describe things like clothing, locations, people, food, when all you have to go on is "It's sort of like the samurai era... but not?" Just let your eyes feast, and re-use what you see in your games.

WEBSITES

Wikipedia

See especially "Heian Period."

www.iz2.or.jp/english

An excellent reference to what people wore, and what the dress looked like. This is invaluable for giving little insights into Heian-era culture. See especially "The Rebirth of the Tale of Genji - The Costume Museum" and "The Heian Period."

MOVIES

Onmyoji, Onmyoji 2

I'd almost call them must see because of the level of visual impact they relay in such a short time. They are fun, solid movies, but beyond that, they will give you more insight into life in (and the visual cues of) the Heian era in two hours' of play than any other collection of art or documents.

Watch them for the Heian-era dress, architecture, relationships. Stay for the story.

Zen

A story of Dogen and the founding of the Soto school of Zen. While it is set 300 years after this setting, it shows the lives of commoners and common living, which had not changed dramatically in that time.

VIDEO GAMES

Kuon (PS2)

An average survival horror game made excellent through incredible use of the tales of Abe no Seimei and Domon. It is a rich, Heian-era, horror game with magic, monsters, ghosts, and betrayal. Three playable feminine protagonists tell three sides of the same story.

You can find it dirt-cheap to boot.

Okami (PS2, PS3)

Heian dress, mythological tales, and monsters.

ANIME

Otogi Zoshi

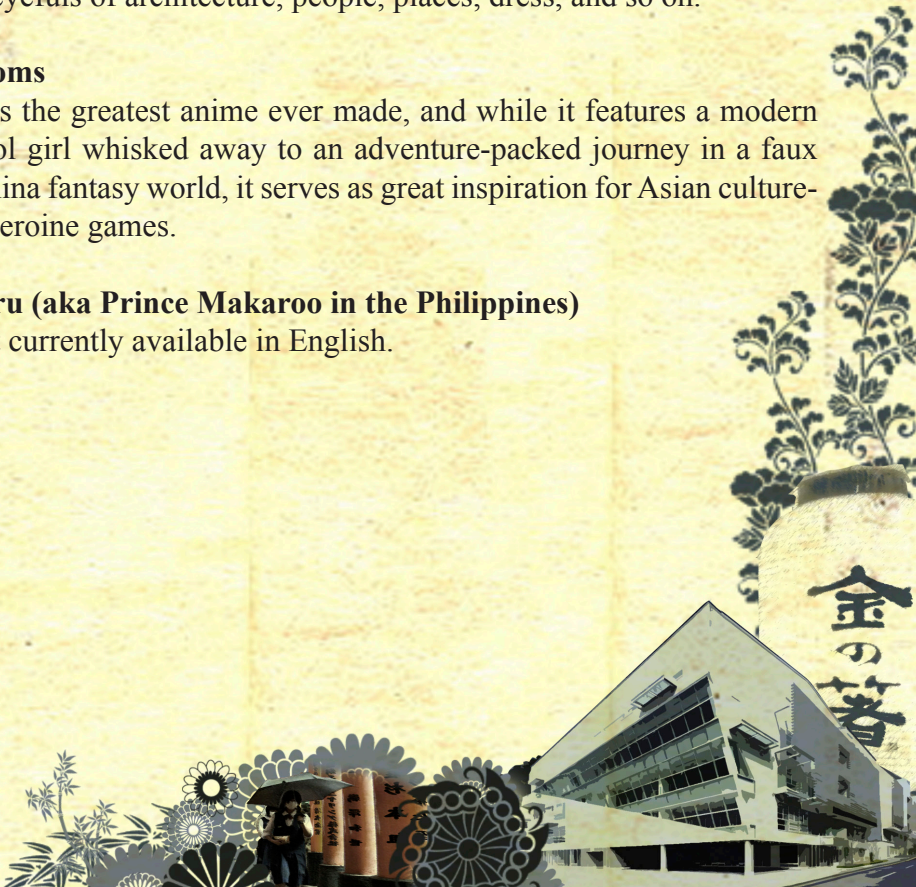
One half of a decent anime. The first half of this series is the tale of a princess and her protector in ancient times, the second is about their reincarnated spirits in modern Tokyo. Just watch the first few episodes to again get eyefuls of architecture, people, places, dress, and so on.

12 Kingdoms

It is the greatest anime ever made, and while it features a modern high school girl whisked away to an adventure-packed journey in a faux ancient China fantasy world, it serves as great inspiration for Asian culture-inspired Heroine games.

Ojarumaru (aka Prince Makaroo in the Philippines)

This is not currently available in English.



DEDICATION

This setting is dedicated to my favorite student back in my teaching days in Japan, Yukika “Kikki” Aeba, who taught me a lot about grabbing your destiny. In the “creating the Heroine” section, I noted “The Heroine is pressured by her parents and teachers.” This is a common enough struggle in Japan. Most kids just sort of fall in line and wander down the path of life, dictated by the expectations of their teachers, parents and peers (usually in that order as well.)

Kikki was a very cheerful and bright junior high school student, and she and her friend Hana truly tried their hardest at learning English. She would regularly come to me after class to ask questions in English, to get extra assignments like English Diary or Essay work. Her level of dedication and innate intelligence put her clearly at the head of her class: Her grades were excellent, and through my own lens of “watching the English education of the students of Azuma Junior High School”, she stood out at one of the top three English speakers in the school. She even won awards at speech competitions, and made the very competitive cut to take a 2-week exchange experience with a school in the Chicago suburbs.

One day, as a diary assignment, I asked her about her future, “What do you want to be when you grow up?” She wrote down, “I want to go to hair design school and be a hair stylist at a salon!”

As an American, I was kinda floored. I kinda scoffed in my head. “Yeah, whatever. That’s nice. She’ll grow out of it. She’s a genius. She can probably go to one of the most prestigious colleges in Japan, become educated and eventually an expert in any academic field she puts her mind to. This ‘hair design’ thing is a phase, and she’ll grow out of it eventually.” I even talked to her about it in private, and while I didn’t particularly pressure her (I knew the kids had enough of that with their homeroom teachers and parents), I did allude to the fact that she shouldn’t sell herself short, that she could seriously do anything, and that I’d be happy to, at any time, write recommendations or speak on her behalf.

However, she stuck to her guns. “I really want to go to hair design school, and become a hair stylist!”

After I returned to America, I lost touch with her and many of my other students. A year ago, on a whim, I found her on Facebook. We reconnected, and I met up with her the next time I went to Japan on business.

She indeed became a hair stylist. After high school, she enrolled in the most brutally competitive, excruciatingly difficult and renowned hair design and beauty academy in Japan. Hearing her tell tales of the life sounded more like a Spartan learning battle than late teen girls learning hairstyling. Many drop out. She stuck with it, and graduated with honors. Kikki now works in a small salon in downtown Tokyo, right off the prestigious Omotesando in Harajuku, the premier fashion district of all of Japan, one of the most famous fashion districts in the world.

Kikki made it, she followed her dream and became an elite stylist in the center of fashion and style in Japan. She didn’t listen to fools like me or her teachers who told her “Give up that silly dream. You could do so much more!” I ate a slice of humble pie as she gave me the best haircut/style I had ever had in 37 years of my life.

Yukika is one of the people in my life who taught me about what being a Heroine is all about, and the various forms they take. Not everyone who follows their dreams and succeeds on a worldwide level is an astronaut.

Andy

looks like this...

Your Heroine OF HEIANKYO

Her story starts when ...

Sign her

Name here..

Her Moves are...

Be Heroic

ROLL 2D6

On a 7 or lower, the heroine fails to overcome the Challenge, but still manages to behave heroically

used

Be Successful

ROLL 2D6

On a 7 or lower, she overcomes the Challenge, but shows confusion, fear, or selfishness

used

Take a Chance?

ROLL 2D6

On a 6 or lower, she fails to overcome the Challenge and behaves out of confusion, fear, or selfishness

used

You must not use the same move for three Challenges in a row.

...& she meets these.

Companions

looks like this...

Your Companion

... & he enters this story when...

And is
this

Type

Sign his

name...

He usually causes trouble by...

Get in Trouble

ROLL 2D6

On an 8 or lower, gain 3 drama points and give the Heroine a penalty to her Roll during this Challenge

Moves
before
The Challenge

Help the Heroine

1 DRAMA Pt.

Heroine Player receives a bonus to her Challenge roll this chapter. Narrator gains one drama pt.

Remember a Way Out

2 DRAMA Pt.

Minimize the terrible consequences when a Heroine fails her roll during a Challenge.

Moves
after
The Challenge

Become the Narrator

4 DRAMA Pt.

Take over as Narrator, starting with the next chapter.

Drama points

A Narrator who becomes a Companion Player keeps any drama points he had as a Narrator.



HEROINE OF HEIANKYO

**A HEROINE SETTING
BY ANDY KITKOWSKI**

Oni, spirit folk, tengu... And she thought the bullies in her gym class were tough. Well, she was tough, too. If these monsters thought they could hurt her and dishonor her hosts, they had another thing coming.

Heroine of Heiankyo is a setting book for the storytelling game **Heroine**. This book gives players everything they need in order to adapt **Heroine** to tell stories about a heroic modern girl transported to a mythic, Heian-Era Japan.

On a school field trip to Kyoto, our protagonist finds herself swept back in time to pre-samurai Japan. But this Japan is filled with monsters. Will she make friends and find her way back to her own time?