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ADVENTURE PATH<sup>™</sup>



## JADE REGENT

### TIDE OF HONOR

By Tito Leati





## FAITH AND HONOR

Throughout Minkai stand shrines to Kofusachi, the Laughing God; Shizuru, Empress of Heaven; Tsukiyo, Prince of the Moon; and the numerous other deities of Tian Xia. Yet the veneration of Minkai's people is not restricted to gods and goddesses. Across the land, villagers and nobles alike bow their heads in reverence to the mysterious kami who make their homes among even the smallest natural features, while the spirits of wise scholars and honored ancestors are remembered in monuments and shrines alike. In Minkai, reverence and respect know no boundaries, not even the barriers of race or death.



## MASK OF EVIL

Nearly 50 years ago, the nation of Minkai fell under the influence of fiends, the nefarious oni known as the Five Storms. Today, most of the empire's people still have no idea that these subtle shapeshifters walk among them, monsters whose plots have wrested the nation away from its divinely mandated rulers and into their cruel claws. Yet oni dominance is not absolute, a fact the leaders of this fiendish conspiracy know all too well. So the agents of the Five Storms continue to scour Minkai, watchful for any sign of those who might claim the imperial throne and threaten their harsh rule.





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## **JADE REGENT**

ADVENTURE PATH • PART 5 OF 6

# TIDE OF HONOR



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“Tide of Honor” is a Pathfinder Adventure Path scenario designed for four 12th-level characters.  
By the end of this adventure, characters should reach 13th level.

This product makes use of the *Pathfinder RPG Core Rulebook*, *Pathfinder RPG Advanced Player's Guide*, *Pathfinder RPG Bestiary*, *Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 2*, *Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 3*, *Pathfinder RPG GameMastery Guide*, and *Pathfinder RPG Ultimate Combat*. These rules can be found online as part of the Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Reference Document at [paizo.com/pathfinderRPG/prd](http://paizo.com/pathfinderRPG/prd).

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## HORSE, HORSE, TIGER, TIGER

Over the years, I have visited Asia, worked for a Japanese company, and helped represent the United States in the first World Taiji Festival in Sanya, China, so the launch of our Jade Regent Adventure Path has been a great delight. A little understanding of a culture can really help bring depth to your Pathfinder character and your campaign. There are many ways to learn about a country and its culture, but I believe two of the most beneficial and fun ways are through food and language.

Eating one's way through a culture is about as good as it gets. When I worked for a Japanese company, I spent time in Tokyo with my friend Masaaki, a soba gourmet. Soba is noodles made mostly of buckwheat, eaten cold and dipped in a sauce partially of your own making. And you must make lots of noise while eating.

One night Masaaki took me to a soba joint out on the edge of Tokyo. The owner of this place sits in front

of his shop grinding buckwheat every morning to make his own noodles. Then he opens shop. When the noodles are all sold, he closes. It does not matter if it is two in the afternoon, or one in the morning; he stays open until the noodles are gone, then he goes home.

Masaaki had already coached me in my slurping, and we sat down and went at it. Eventually a young Japanese man approached, complimented me on the noise I was making, and asked if he might sit with us and practice his English. We had a long, leisurely meal including exquisite sashimi and the best sake I have ever had.

The next night we went to Rocky Top, a bluegrass bar in Ginza where Masaaki's band played, then on to an after-hours geisha bar where Masaaki's banjo player, Kingyo, had a girlfriend, a geisha, who joined us. In this case, food and drink led to socializing, meeting various people I otherwise would not have known, and the culture began to seep into my pores.



With this experience under my belt, I was later asked by author Neal Barrett, Jr. to help him write a *Predator* comic set in Japan, which was published by Dark Horse. Experiences fit together in unexpected ways.

For 10 years I taught Tai Chi (Taijiquan) in Seattle's Chinatown, where Chinese culture bombarded me from every angle. My teacher was Chinese, and our school was in the oldest building in Chinatown. It is owned by a family association, Lung Kong Ting Yee (Four Families Association), which has roots going back to the fall of the Han Dynasty and the rise of the Jin. The story of the four founders of Lung Kong Ting Yee is chronicled in the famous Chinese novel *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*. The Four Families have traditionally supported Chinese martial arts, and so lent space to us for our classes.

Throughout the year, in Seattle, the various martial arts clubs hold banquets. There are speeches, mostly in Chinese, favorite martial artists mount a stage to demonstrate their wushu, and the host always begins by apologizing for not having enough food. Then the dishes begin pouring out of the restaurant kitchen in excess. Normally, the first banquet course is pickled jellyfish, or jellyfish salad. I have come to love it, and usually rate a Chinese restaurant by the quality of its jellyfish salad. At each banquet, my teacher would invite various people to fill the 10 chairs at her table. Once she invited a student at our school who had just been promoted to instructor. This instructor was Caucasian, and had very little experience with Chinese food or culture. With her chopsticks, she ate some of the first dish. As she chewed the somewhat challenging meat, she asked me out of the side of her mouth, "What is this?" I smiled. "Jellyfish." She spat it onto her plate. Our teacher's eyes grew wide, and that instructor was never invited to another banquet.

And tea, do not forget about tea. Call it "cha," and brew it right. Drink it with respect. Tea is the liquor that exhilarates without intoxicating, and it is incredibly intrinsic to almost every Asian culture.

Knowing a little about a language also goes a long way in understanding a culture, and demonstrates a willingness to understand that culture. Masaaki taught me how to greet old friends. Instead of the more formal "O genki desu ka," just exclaim enthusiastically, "Genki, genki!"

All languages have colloquialisms. In American English we have tons: "as old as the hills," "whistling in the graveyard," "there's more than one way to skin a cat." If I had just come to the US from another country, would these make any sense? And so colloquialisms exist in Japan and China. Masaaki explained that Yakuza was really three numbers in an archaic counting system: 8, 9, 3, ya-ku-za, a really bad hand in Japanese black jack. The Yakuza walk in the shadows so others might walk in the sunlight. Or perhaps, as Willie Dixon wrote, "If it wasn't for bad luck, I wouldn't have no luck at all."

## ON THE COVER

This month Wayne Reynolds introduces us to O-Sayumi, a geisha as dangerous as she is lovely and a major power player in the intrigues afoot in Minkai. Behind her, Lini and Sajan face a gigantic fire yai servant of the Five Storms, merely one of the many oni threats in store for them in this month's adventure, "Tide of Honor."

In Chinese, assuming I am not having the best of all possible days, my favorite response to "Ni hao ma?"—meaning "How are you?"—is "Ma, ma, hu, hu." This translates, literally, as horse, horse, tiger, tiger.

Huh? At first I did not understand. Then one of my wushu teachers offered a possible explanation: "Once, a great warrior came to an inn at a mountain pass. The inn was full to overflowing. Of course, the great warrior was seated immediately. He ordered wine and asked why there was such a crowd. The owner of the inn replied, 'Just above the pass lives a ferocious tiger. He kills all who try to proceed. So everyone stops here.' The warrior drank until he had consumed eight jugs of wine, then pounded the table with his fist and shouted, 'I will fight that tiger!' He mounted his horse and rode only a short distance before the tiger appeared. The warrior jumped from his horse, grabbed the tiger by the scruff of his neck, and punched the tiger in the head. The tiger immediately collapsed and the warrior celebrated. He had killed the tiger. But the wine had truly gone to his head, and ready to return to the inn, instead of getting on his horse, the warrior mounted the tiger, which awoke. Suddenly the warrior found himself on the back of the tiger."

So, this colloquialism means, "I am so-so." It could be better, it could be worse. The tiger is awake, but at least I am on his back, not in his mouth.

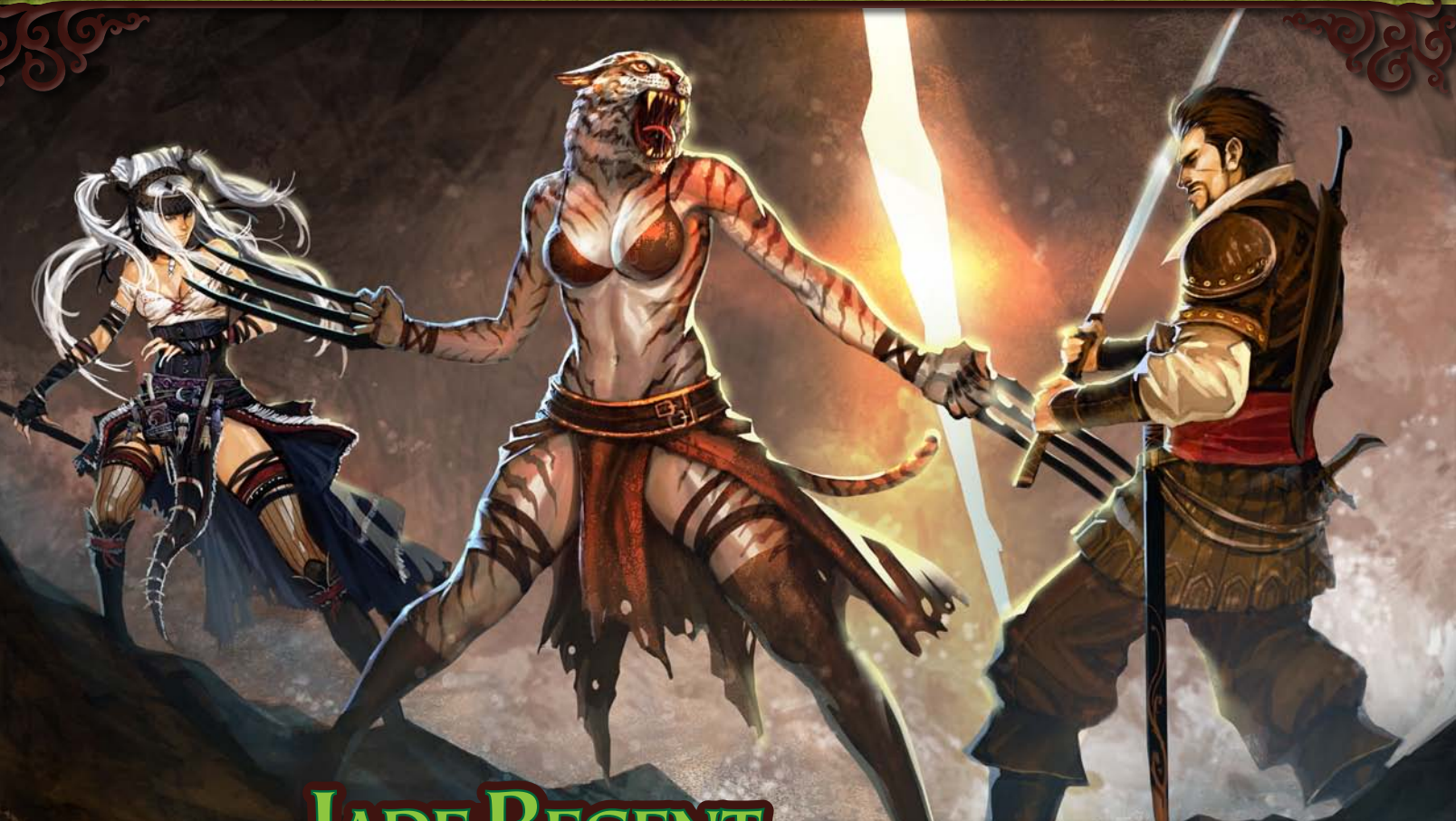
These are just a few examples of how understanding food and language can greatly modify the characters you play or the stories you might tell. You may be offered strange and disconcerting foods in Minkai. How do you deal with that? The blunt, straightforward speech patterns of the West could be construed as crude and insulting. Your character might not only have trouble gathering information, she might wind up fighting for her life because of a sentence gone wrong. The better you understand a culture, the more real your character and your adventure.



Pierce Watters  
Sales Director



# JADE REGENT



## JADE REGENT

### TIDE OF HONOR

**PART ONE: THE RONIN AND THE BANDITS**  
*Entering Minkai, the PCs meet a ronin who is willing to aid them, but they must first defeat bandits who are plaguing the area.* PAGE 7

**PART TWO: THE SHADOWS OF ENGANOKA**  
*The ninja clans of Minkai are powerful, and the PCs must see where the ninja stand in the struggle against the Jade Regent.* PAGE 21

**PART THREE: THE PEARLS OF SAKAKABE**  
*To gain the support of Minkai's merchant class, the PCs must rescue a famed geisha from her shadowy prison.* PAGE 25

**PART FOUR: THE HONOR OF SIKUTSU ITSURU**  
*To earn the assistance of Minkai's samurai, the PCs must defeat the powerful governor of the province of Enganoka.* PAGE 42

**PART FIVE: THE SIEGE OF SEINARU HEIKIKO**  
*Having gained new allies, the PCs return to their hidden base to find it under attack by the forces of the Jade Regent.* PAGE 48

### ADVANCEMENT TRACK

“Tide of Honor” uses the medium XP track.

**12** The PCs begin this adventure at 12th level.

**13** By the time the PCs are ready to attack Sikutsu Sennaka in Part Four, they should be 13th level. If the PCs are not 13th level by this point and have not yet completed the missions in Parts Two and Three, they should complete those missions first.

The PCs should be 13th level by the adventure's end.



## ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

In 4708 AR (7208 by the Tian Imperial Calendar) Higashiyama Shigure was crowned emperor of Minkai, but he soon went into hiding at the behest of his family, leaving the Jade Regent the de facto ruler of the empire of Minkai in his absence. In reality, the Jade Regent secretly assassinated Emperor Shigure and is now emperor in all but name. Officially, and as far as the vast majority of Minkaians are concerned, the Jade Regent is just that, ruling in the emperor's name until his return. But with each year that passes without an emperor at its head, the clutches of the usurper tighten around Minkai, and the Jade Regent becomes more brazen, strengthening his grip on the capital and the surrounding provinces.

For most Minkaians, the political situation in the capital of Kasai has little effect on their daily lives, but rumors make their inexorable rounds through the empire, and even the most isolated farmer has heard tales of vice and excess in the Imperial Palace; of the execution of so-called traitors and dissidents, be they powerful samurai or lowly peasants; and of monstrous soldiers in the employ of the Jade Regent prowling the countryside. If no one stops the Jade Regent, it's only a matter of time before he crowns himself emperor. And once the tyrant becomes the de jure ruler of Minkai, it's likely that the law-abiding citizens of the empire will accept him as such no matter what.

Fortunately, unrest is beginning to grow throughout Minkai, but as yet there is little organization, and the Jade Regent and his allies have been thorough in rooting out dissidence and opposition to his rule. The Jade Regent's hold on Minkai is most tenuous in the northern provinces and territories of the empire, however, and a few daimyo there have stopped paying their yearly tribute to Kasai after a steep, and to many, unjustified, increase in the Jade Regent's demands. In addition, many ronin and other exiled dissidents have come to the north, struggling to survive while keeping the flame of rebellion burning.

The kitsune Miyaro knows of the unrest in Minkai from the few traders still crossing the Forest of Spirits to reach Hongal and mainland Tian Xia. Everyone she talked to thinks that the outnumbered dissidents are bound to submit or be crushed. The negotiations between the rival daimyo and the Jade Regent have stopped, and it is unlikely that they will resume before an armed confrontation takes place. Although things may seem hopeless now for those who oppose the Jade Regent, the situation might change if someone were able to persuade more people and groups to turn against the Jade Regent—someone, perhaps, like the rightful heir to the Jade Throne.

## ADVENTURE SUMMARY

Entering the northern frontier of Minkai, the PCs meet the ronin Hirabashi Jiro, who is willing to help them

oppose the Jade Regent if they can defeat the bandits who have been preying upon the peasants under his protection. After the PCs clear out the bandits occupying the hidden fortress of Seinaru Heikiko, Jiro becomes a trusted ally of the PCs and offers to garrison the fortress in their name, making it a safe haven for the PCs and their allies and a base for future operations in Minkai.

Following Jiro's suggestions, the PCs journey throughout northwestern Minkai to find others who oppose the Jade Regent and persuade them to join the PCs' cause. The PCs must travel to the port of Enganoka to secure the aid (or at least a promise of noninterference) of Minkai's ninja clans, but they soon find that another infamous ninja is on their trail, having accepted a contract to hunt down and assassinate the PCs and Ameiko.

The PCs also visit a teahouse in the city of Sakakabe to meet with representatives of Minkai's geisha, who hold great influence over the empire's merchants and nobility. To befriend the geisha, however, the PCs must first rescue one of their number from the evil wizard who has kidnapped her and imprisoned her soul in a maze that lies on the Shadow Plane.

The PCs must also confront the ruthless and powerful daimyo who rules the northwest provinces of Minkai and who is a staunch supporter of the Jade Regent. If the PCs can remove this daimyo from power, his younger brother will inherit his position and swear allegiance to Ameiko, giving the PCs an army they can send against the forces of the Jade Regent.

Finally returning to Seinaru Heikiko, the PCs must defend the fortress and their allies from a group of powerful oni sent by the Jade Regent to end the threat of the PCs and the Amatsatsu heir once and for all.

## PART ONE: THE RONIN AND THE BANDITS

After traversing the Forest of Spirits under the guidance of the kitsune Miyaro, the PCs enter Minkai's northernmost region, the Osogen Grasslands, a vast, sparsely inhabited plain disputed between northern barbarians and Minkai settlers. To better understand the situation in Minkai, Miyaro suggests that the party seeks out a poor but generous ronin named Hirabashi Jiro. The leader of a large group of masterless samurai, Jiro is said to have taken up residence in Osogen after being dishonored in the south. Miyaro is not conversant with the intricacies of human politics, but she knows that Jiro has been a ronin since the rise of the Jade Regent, and that he and his followers are opposed to the Jade Regent. If the PCs can secure the aid of Jiro and his ronin, they can begin weaving together the various factions who oppose the Jade Regent into a cohesive group that can help overthrow the usurper. According to Miyaro, Jiro's camp is located



almost 200 miles south of the Forest of Spirits, in the southern reaches of Osogen known as the Borderlands. The PCs' trek through Osogen to the Borderlands is uneventful, though you can add a few caravan encounters or other random encounters to break up the journey.

## THE RONIN'S CAMP

As the PCs enter the Borderlands, humble farmsteads surrounded by ditches and palisades begin to dot the landscape. Scattered across large expanses of uncultivated land, and surrounded by millet and rice fields, the farmsteads belong to brave Minkai settlers who left their impoverished condition in the south to win their own pieces of land in the Borderlands. Ubiquitous watchtowers stand above the farmsteads, allowing the local militia to keep an eye out for marauding bandits and other dangers. A lattice of footpaths and irrigation canals fed by the waters of the Kosokunami River connect the scattered settlements.

The number of settlements increases noticeably near the great bend where the river turns to flow into Lake Tsukishizuku. There, the PCs can easily find Jiro's camp. Read or paraphrase the following as the PCs approach the camp.

A cluster of wooden huts with thatched roofs stands atop a hillock overlooking the northern riverbank. The area seems somewhat inhospitable, with most of the surrounding millet fields overgrown with brambles. Barely visible in the distance west of the hillock, several figures are at work digging a ditch and demarcating the boundaries of a paddy. Closer by, a group of youths are training with shortbows before a line of straw targets. Next to them, a tall figure yells orders in a husky voice.

**Creature:** The tall figure is Jiro's lieutenant, Habesuta Hatsue, who is keeping watch on the camp and training a band of young recruits with the few bows and arrows available. When she becomes aware of the PCs, Hatsue goes to meet them. She is unfazed by the PCs' foreign appearance, but is curious about where they might come from. If none of the PCs speak Minkaian or Tien, Miyaro can translate for them. If the PCs ask about Hirabashi Jiro, Hatsue becomes wary, and asks their reasons for seeking a meeting with the ronin leader. Her initial attitude is indifferent, but if made at least friendly with a successful Diplomacy check, Hatsue agrees to take the PCs to meet Jiro. She yells to the young trainees that the session is suspended, and orders one of the youths to fetch the ronin leader.

Hatsue invites the party to the camp's main hut, as the young trainees gather outside to take a look at the odd-looking strangers. Besides a clay fireplace and a low table, the interior of the hut is almost bare, and the only item worthy of notice is a portable *shogi-ban*, a Minkai chessboard, currently laid open for a game in progress. Hatsue introduces herself as a sohei, or warrior-monk, from the Sankyodai Mountains currently engaged in defending the settlers in the Borderlands. She offers the PCs a cup of green tea and some millet cookies.

While the PCs wait for Jiro, Hatsue asks if any of them know the game of *shogi*, or Minkai chess, and inquires about similar games played in their homelands. Hatsue says her passion for *shogi* is the only thing preventing her from fully embracing the peace of Irori in her current life.

An orphan survivor of a barbarian attack, Hatsue was raised in a sohei fortress in the Sankyodai Mountains. She has no memory of the attack, and only vaguely remembers her parents. She does, however, have frequent nightmares, and often yells and sits up in her sleep, waving her hands as if fighting some invisible enemy.

Hatsue normally stays with Hirabashi Jiro, acting as his lieutenant and diplomat. It is unlikely that she will join the PCs during the adventure, unless you feel that they need some extra muscle to defeat the bandits in Seinaru Heikiko.



HABESUTA HATSUE

### HABESUTA HATSUE

CR 10

XP 9,600

Female human monk (sohei) 6/paladin of Irori 5 (*Pathfinder RPG Ultimate Combat* 60)

LG Medium humanoid (human)

Init +6; Senses Perception +12

Aura courage (10 ft.)

#### DEFENSE

AC 23, touch 20, flat-footed 19 (+2 armor, +2 deflection, +3 Dex, +1 dodge, +1 monk, +1 natural, +3 Wis)

hp 63 (11 HD; 6d8+5d10+6)

Fort +9, Ref +12, Will +13; +2 vs. enchantment

Defensive Abilities evasion; Immune disease, fear

#### OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee +1 keen naginata\* +14/+9 (1d8+5/19-20/x4) or  
+1 keen naginata\* flurry of blows +14/+14/+9/+4  
(1d8+5/19-20/x4) or  
unarmed strike +11/+6 (1d6+2)



**Ranged** mwk composite shortbow +13/+8 (1d6+2/x3)

**Special Attacks** channel positive energy (DC 13, 3d6), flurry of blows, *ki* weapon\*, smite evil (+1 attack and AC, +5 damage), weapon training (polearms +1)\*

**Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 5th; concentration +6)

At will—*detect evil*

**Spells Prepared** (CL 2nd; concentration +3)

1st—*bless weapon, divine favor*

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## TACTICS

**Before Combat** Hatsue drinks a *potion of shield of faith*.

**During Combat** Hatsue casts *divine favor* on herself before entering combat, favoring her naginata over unarmed strikes and focusing on evil opponents. She prefers to fight from horseback, if possible, but is a capable combatant on the ground as well.

**Morale** Hatsue fight to defend her friends and allies, and fights to the death if the lives of innocents are at stake. If outnumbered or outmatched and no one is else is in danger, Hatsue has no problem fleeing to fight again another day.

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## STATISTICS

**Str** 14, **Dex** 16, **Con** 8, **Int** 10, **Wis** 16, **Cha** 12

**Base Atk** +9; **CMB** +13; **CMD** 31

**Feats** Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Improved Unarmed Strike, Lightning Reflexes, Mounted Archery, Mounted Combat, Power Attack, Ride-By Attack, Spirited Charge, Toughness, Weapon Focus (naginata\*)

**Skills** Acrobatics +10 (+16 when jumping), Climb +7, Diplomacy +8, Handle Animal +8, Heal +8, Intimidate +8, Knowledge (religion) +8, Perception +12, Ride +14, Sense Motive +10, Stealth +8

**Languages** Minkaian, Tien

**SQ** devoted guardian\*, divine bond (mount), divine grace, high jump, *ki* pool (6 points, magic), lay on hands (2d6, 3/day), maneuver training, mercy (shaken), monastic mount\*, still mind

**Combat Gear** +1 *flaming arrows* (6), *potion of cure moderate wounds*, *potions of shield of faith* (2); **Other Gear** +1 *keen naginata*\*, masterwork composite shortbow (+2 Str) with 20 arrows, *amulet of natural armor* +1, *bracers of armor* +2, wooden holy symbol of Irori, shogi set

\* See *Ultimate Combat*.

## HIRABASHI JIRO

The ronin Hirabashi Jiro arrives at the hut a few minutes later, patting dirt and dust off his robe and leaving his staff near the door. When he sees his lieutenant lecturing the PCs about the rules and strategy of shogi, he rolls his eyes in dismay. As Jiro sits to take a cup of tea, he gruffly murmurs that Hatsue was probably an “angle mover” (the “bishop” piece in shogi) in a previous life. After the mandatory introductions, Jiro maintains a brisk demeanor, asking the PCs what they are doing thousands

of miles from home, how they managed to cross the frozen Crown of the World, and similar questions.

If the PCs ask Jiro whether he opposes the Jade Regent, the ronin says that he is more concerned with digging irrigation canals, feeding the peasants under his protection, and playing shogi. A DC 15 Sense Motive check detects Jiro’s innuendo—that the government is no longer providing infrastructure or protection to its people, and that patience and strategy are required before more deliberate action can be taken.

If informed about Ameiko and her heritage, Jiro and Hatsue simply laugh, as if such a thing were not possible. The ronin is not ready to just accept a story about a rightful heir from the other side of the world who has come back to reclaim Minkai. Even if shown the *Amatatsu Seal*, Jiro still seems unconvinced of their claim, and is wary of joining what is likely to be a lost cause.

To evaluate their worth, Jiro decides to test the PCs’ wits and attitude. He looks at Hatsue, who nods, and poses them the following riddle.

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“A samurai and a peasant are brought before a ruthless daimyo. The daimyo wants to know whether a matched katana and wakizashi set are capable of killing a man with a single cut, so he commands the samurai to kill the peasant in order to test the swords. The samurai is faced with two dilemmas—first, he has two swords, but only one would-be victim, and second, he loathes his duty. He does not want to kill an unarmed, innocent man, but his lord has commanded him to do so. What does the samurai do?”

---

As with all tricky logic riddles, there is no single right or wrong answer, but Jiro judges the character of the PCs based on their answer. Each PC can make a DC 15 Intelligence check to receive a hint. One successful check allows them to realize that there is more than one acceptable answer. Two successful checks are enough to perceive that the two most acceptable answers are somehow keyed to the personalities of Jiro and Hatsue. Allow the players to come up with a suitable answer to the riddle. When the PCs give their answer, decide which of the following answers their answer is closest to.

**Obedient Answer:** “There is no way to test both swords on one man. The samurai should kill the peasant, then kill himself, thus fulfilling his duty to his lord.”

Jiro accepts this answer, but cautions the PCs that blind obedience without questions rarely has the intended result. Both the innocent peasant and the obedient samurai are dead, and only the cruel daimyo remains, a situation that is good for no one but the lord himself. The PCs earn no reward for such an answer.

**Honorable and Loyal Answer:** “The samurai should kill the peasant, as his lord commanded, then kill the daimyo



for giving a dishonorable order. The samurai may now be a ronin, but he obeyed his lord's command, and did the honorable thing."

This is a better answer in Jiro's mind, but although the samurai was honorable and loyal to his lord, he was not true to himself, as he still killed the peasant. Jiro tells the PCs that while honor is important, forgetting oneself for the sake of that honor is no better than blind obedience. The PCs earn no reward for this answer either.

**Ronin's Answer:** "Since the daimyo is ruthless and the samurai loathes his duty, the samurai should spare the peasant, keep the swords for himself, and leave the service of the dishonorable lord, becoming a ronin."

This answer most pleases Jiro. The samurai is master of his own fate, mirroring Jiro's own history and situation. If the PCs give a similar answer, Jiro gives them his *restorative ointment* when they go to Seinaru Heikiko.

**Sohei's Answer:** "The daimyo is despicable, and the samurai is an honorable man. The samurai should kill the daimyo for giving a contemptible order, then kill himself for the dishonor of slaying his lord. The samurai has tested both swords as his lord commanded, but his honor is also satisfied, and the innocent peasant is spared."

This answer most pleases Hatsue, for whom honor, dignity, and innocent life are paramount. Even though the samurai is dead, the cruel daimyo is also dead, the peasant is alive, and the samurai's honor is intact. If the PCs provide this or a similar answer, Hatsue gives them her six *+1 flaming arrows* when they go to Seinaru Heikiko.

**No Answer:** "Huh? I have no idea..."

Jiro is slightly disappointed if the PCs do not have an answer to the riddle, but Hatsue is somewhat amused, saying that a warrior's hopes rest in his might in battle, not in his reasoning after eating a millet cookie. The PCs receive no reward for not providing an answer, and Jiro resolves to watch their actions more closely to get a true feel for their mettle.

**Refusal to Answer:** "Ha! What a stupid question!"

Mocking one's host is never a good idea, whether in Minkai or elsewhere. Jiro views the PCs with thinly veiled contempt, and Hatsue is clearly frustrated. In the cold silence that falls after the PCs' refusal, Jiro shrugs and says that the PCs will soon have ample opportunities to sneer in the face of more powerful enemies, if they still intend to oppose the Jade Regent. Unless the PCs do something special to placate Jiro (or make a DC 20 Diplomacy check to improve his attitude), the ronin does not offer them his *daijyū of commanding presence* later in the adventure.

Regardless of the PCs' answer, Hatsue points out that the riddle is also a metaphor for the current situation in Minkai, where a ruthless ruler is manipulating the nobles and causing woe to the people. If the PCs truly

wish to overthrow the Jade Regent, then Jiro is willing to join forces with them for that reason alone.

But Jiro needs the PCs to prove themselves first. He points out that his ronin are ill equipped and outnumbered, and currently live in a muddy camp in the middle of nowhere—hardly an army capable of effective resistance. As a first step, Jiro asks for the party's help in eliminating a notorious group of bandits who are harassing the local population.

These bandits, Jiro tells the PCs, have been plaguing the region for the past few months without serious opposition to their activities. The local daimyo have effectively ignored the bandits, focusing on their own political maneuverings in the Jade Regent's court. Recently, the bandits discovered an abandoned fortress in the hills called Seinaru Heikiko, and began restoring it and turning it into a well-protected hideout. Led by a chieftain of the Yumogu barbarians named Gangasum, the bandits have been using the fortress as a base ever since, and Jiro believes that they might be negotiating with a local daimyo to become allies of the empire. If this were to happen, the bandits might attract many more of their kin and become a powerful tool for the Jade Regent to use to fight dissidents such as Jiro's ronin.

The cruelty of the bandits has already left its mark on the Borderlands, and the local peasant elders have pleaded with Jiro to lead his ronin against Gangasum's bandits as soon as possible. Thus far, Jiro has been hesitant, even though Hatsue has tried more than once to persuade him to take immediate action. Jiro knows that his band is too small and under-equipped to face Gangasum's troops, who are accompanied by a powerful barbarian shaman.

The bandits, Jiro says, are usually split in two groups. The first group is always on the move, traveling the plains on fast horses to forage, rob travelers, and occasionally pillage the local peasants. The members of the second group stay with their chieftain Gangasum in their fortress hideout. Jiro fears that if one group is attacked and destroyed, the other might retaliate against the defenseless peasants. Hatsue shares Jiro's worries, for it is said that the winds magically inform the bandit shaman about everything that happens in the Osogen Grasslands.

Jiro suggests that the PCs, who seem powerful and well equipped, attack the bandits' fortress of Seinaru Heikiko while he and his ronin lure the riders into an ambush the next time they visit a settlement to trade goods or buy slaves. Working together, the PCs and the ronin can destroy the bandit threat and earn a safe base of operations in the Borderlands at the same time. In any case, the security of the peasants seems a primary concern to both Jiro and Hatsue, and both will be reluctant to leave them defenseless as long as the bandits are in the area.



Jiro has also been looking for an ancient treasure of his family, a legendary adamantine sword that once belonged to his revered ancestor Hirabashi Akikaza. The sword is supposedly held within a secret cache of weapons inside Seinaru Heikiko. According to legend, the cache can only be opened by a true imperial scion of Minkai. If Ameiko can open the cache, it would be irrefutable proof of her ancestry, at least in Jiro's eyes. If the PCs successfully conquer the bandit fortress and open the cache, Jiro only wants his family sword in exchange for his cooperation.

Hirabashi Jiro is the last descendant of an ancient samurai family. With his father Hito and his elder brother Ichiro, he was part of the retinue of the governor of Kasai, a strong supporter of Emperor Shigure. When the emperor went into hiding, the Jade Regent accused the governor of Kasai of treason during the turmoil that followed, and the Jade Regent's forces attacked the governor's residence. Most of Jiro's family and friends found death in that battle, including his father and brother, but Jiro and a few others managed to escape and flee north, becoming ronin. Since then, Jiro has fought for the benefit of the Borderlands settlers, struggling against barbarian raiders and corrupt officials alike.

## HIRABASHI JIRO

CR 12

XP 19,200

hp 115 (see page 52)

## SEINARU HEIKIKO

Five centuries ago, the emperor of Minkai sent one of his most trusted daimyo to put down a rebellious nobleman in the Osogen Grasslands. Hirabashi Jiro's ancestor, Hirabashi Akikaza, was one of the samurai in service to the daimyo. The daimyo established a camp in a huge cavity in the face of a cliff in the hills south of Osogen, which grew into the headquarters of the daimyo's sizable army during his 3 years of campaigns against the barbarians of the north.

After his victory, the daimyo created a shrine to the ancestors in the fortress, which became the sacred armory of Seinaru Heikiko. The daimyo's weapons and those of his warriors were consecrated to Shizuru and sealed into an impenetrable room that only a member of the imperial family could open. Among these weapons was Hirabashi Akikaza's katana, said to be razor-sharp and utterly unbreakable.

After losing its military importance, the fortress was slowly abandoned. With the passing of decades, even its location in the wilderness was forgotten. Lost for centuries, the fortress was recently rediscovered and occupied by Gangasum's bandits.

Seinaru Heikiko lies some 50 miles away from the ronin's camp in a large crack in the wall of a ravine along a small brook that flows into the Kosokunami River about

10 miles upstream of Jiro's camp. Along the way, the PCs can spot the tracks of the bandit's horses and occasional traces of logging activity with DC 10 Survival checks. Built in a natural cavity in a 40-foot-tall cliff face, the fortress is partially hidden by a grove of tall pine trees, and is directly visible only from a very short distance away.

## SEINARU HEIKIKO FEATURES

The fortress is constructed from a mixture of wood and stone carved out of the natural rock walls. The fortress's original wooden structures have been entirely replaced and rebuilt by the bandits. A 70-foot-wide, 15-foot-tall log wall (hardness 5, hp 80, Break DC 25) blocks the opening in the cliff face, with only a single 20-foot-wide gate allowing entry (area **A1**). To the east, another log barrier blocks a smaller, 20-foot-wide gap between a rocky spur and the main wall of the ravine. A gurgling rill of clear water flows out through an opening at the base of the wall, feeding the brook that runs through the ravine.

Two observation platforms stand high in the rocky walls of the cliff, west and east of the gate (areas **A6a** and **A6b**). The platforms are 20 feet off the ground and carved into the rock to look as natural as possible. To spot the platforms, an observer at ground level must be within 30 feet of a platform and make a successful DC 15 Perception check. Climbing the cliff to the platforms requires a DC 15 Climb check.

Access to the fortress is also possible through a rough and overgrown hollow to the east of the fortress, where a secret passage leads inside (area **A2**).

Unless otherwise noted, the ceilings in the fortress are 10 feet high, both in the wooden structures and in the underground chambers. The doors have been rebuilt using strong wood. The windows overlooking the courtyard (area **A3**) are wide enough to allow a Medium creature easy passage, and provide cover to creatures inside. All of the windows have shutters, which are kept closed at night.

## THE BANDITS OF SEINARU HEIKIKO

Most of the bandits in the gang are low-level mounted warriors, out scouring the plains under the command of one of their subchiefs. Jiro and his ronin ambush these bandits while the PCs attack the fortress. The garrison left behind at Seinaru Heikiko represents only a portion of the bandits' strength, and is made up of the most elite warriors and the group's commanders. Currently, the bandit garrison consists of 16 veteran bandits; one of the band's two subchiefs, Ilgama; and the chieftain, Gangasum. In addition, the shaman Kamuy-Paro and his concubine Tos Katun also reside in the fortress.

Gangasum resides in area **A12** with his bodyguard of four veteran bandits. Kamuy-Paro and Tos Katun are







normally present area **A8**, while Ilgamal and six veteran bandits are usually found in area **A9**. The remaining six veteran bandits guard the main gate, guardrooms, and lookout posts (areas **A1**, **A5**, and **A6**). Note that these locations may change if the PCs decide to attack Seinaru Heikiko at night, or if the fortress is put on alert. You should read the following encounter areas closely to know the disposition of the bandits in the fortress, and adjust them to fit the situation.

Although they represent the cream of the bandit crop, the veteran bandits likely pose little threat to the PCs if they are taken on singly and by surprise. Stealthy PCs should be able to infiltrate the fortress with relative ease before facing the remaining bandit commanders. If the PCs try a frontal assault, however, they should find themselves facing most of the garrison at once. All of the veteran bandits are equipped with two whistling arrows (*Pathfinder RPG Ultimate Combat* 130), which emit a loud keening sound audible within 500 feet, used to raise the alarm when intruders are detected.

Once the alarm is raised, the veteran bandits on guard grab their weapons and engage intruders as a united force, firing missile weapons from the walls or the windows overlooking the courtyard (area **A3**) if possible. Ilgamal and his veteran bandits join the battle 1d6 rounds later, followed by Gangasum, Kamuy-Paro, Tos Katun, and the remaining bandits 1d8 rounds later. Once a fight breaks out with the whole garrison, it will likely last until either the bandits or the PCs are defeated.

## A1. MAIN GATE (CR 7)

Behind a grove of black pine trees, a wooden wall obstructs a gap in the cliff face, which seems to give access to a huge natural cavity. Beyond, two mighty chimneys, fashioned to resemble a giant warrior and a great square tower, rise over the roof of a large building built against the bare rock.

A wooden walkway runs along both sections of the wall, 10 feet above the ground. A ladder climbs up to each walkway from the ground. The sturdy wooden gate is kept closed at all times, and is kept barred (hardness 5, hp 30, Break DC 25). Scaling the 15-foot-high wall requires a DC 15 Climb check and must be done stealthily to avoid alerting the guards on the walkway above.

The eastern section of wall between rocky spur and the main wall of the ravine contains an iron grate (hardness 10, hp 60, Break DC 28) allowing a rill to flow out of the fortress grounds. A creature attempting to scale this wall gains a +4 bonus on Stealth checks to pass unnoticed.

**Creatures:** Two veteran bandits are posted on the walkway above the gate, watching over the outer wall at all times.

### VETERAN BANDITS (2)

CR 5

XP 1,600 each

Raider (*Pathfinder RPG GameMastery Guide* 280)

hp 67 each

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#### TACTICS

**Before Combat** The bandits fire their whistling arrows at the first sign of intruders. If they have the opportunity, the bandits apply their *oil of magic weapon* to their weapons.

**During Combat** The bandits fire arrows at intruders, if possible. If engaged in melee combat, the bandits rage and attack with their spears.

**Morale** The veteran bandits fight to the death to defend the fortress. If both Gangasum and Kamuy-Paro are slain, however, the morale of any remaining bandits breaks, and the survivors either flee or surrender.

## A2. CONCEALED HOLLOW (CR 11)

This overgrown hollow is not easily accessible, and finding it requires a successful DC 15 Survival check while scouting along the ravine east of the fortress. PCs who succeed at a DC 20 Perception check discover a secret door in the west wall of the hollow that opens onto a passage that ends at another secret door opening onto area **A4**. This second secret door is plainly visible from inside the passage.

**Creatures:** Two stacks of green firewood stand inside the hollow near the secret door. The stacks each contain a vengeful wood spirit, the ghost of a kodama kami slain when its tree was cut down. The shaman Kamuy-Paro enslaved the spirits with a twisted ritual performed over their fallen trees in the Forest of Spirits, binding them to his service. Normally unable to interact with the Material Plane, the spirits are too weak to be detected or to manifest during the day, and the stacks of wood are completely normal then. At night, however, the stacks radiate faint conjuration magic, and the spirits inside can see and hear their surroundings (with darkvision 60 feet and low-light vision). Between dusk and dawn, if an intruder comes within 60 feet of one of the stacks of wood, the evil spirits inside possess the stacks and animate them as constructs similar to wood golems. The spirits attack intruders relentlessly, using their splinter ability as often as possible, and fight until destroyed, at which point the spirits inhabiting the wood are freed to vanish harmlessly into the night.

### VENGEFUL WOOD SPIRITS (2)

CR 9

XP 6,400 each

Advanced variant wood golem (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 164)

NE Large construct

**Init** +4; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception +4

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#### DEFENSE

AC 23, touch 13, flat-footed 19 (+4 Dex, +10 natural, -1 size)



**hp** 96 each (12d10+30)

**Fort** +4, **Ref** +8, **Will** +8

**DR** 5/adamantine; **Immune** construct traits, magic

**Weaknesses** vulnerable to fire

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#### OFFENSE

**Speed** 30 ft.

**Melee** 2 slams +18 (2d8+7)

**Space** 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.

**Special Attacks** splintering (DC 16)

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#### STATISTICS

**Str** 24, **Dex** 19, **Con** —, **Int** —, **Wis** 19, **Cha** 1

**Base Atk** +12; **CMB** +20; **CMD** 34

## A3. COURTYARD (CR 12)

This natural, dirt-floored courtyard is almost empty, with the exception of a few scattered tools and three large stacks of chopped firewood. An imposing, two-story building with two wings stands to the east. The south wing has a thatched roof, while the north wing is more elaborate, with a wooden roof dominated by two tall chimneys. The first chimney is thirty feet tall and overlooks the courtyard; it is crudely shaped to represent a noble warrior. The other chimney is fifty feet tall, its towerlike top jutting out from the rocky cliff above the roof. A large stable and a smaller stone building stand in the northern part of the courtyard, with a doorway carved into the rock between them. In the southeastern corner of the courtyard, a rill of water forms a natural pool, partially buried by a cluster of fallen boulders.

**Creatures:** The three stacks of firewood in the south part of the courtyard contain vengeful wood spirits, identical to the ones found in the stacks of firewood in the concealed hollow (area A2). Aware of their surroundings only at night, these spirits animate their stacks of wood when they sense intruders in the vicinity.

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#### VENGEFUL WOOD SPIRITS (3) CR 9

**XP** 6,400 each

**hp** 96 each (see page 13)

**Development:** If the PCs are attacked by the vengeful wood spirits here, the noise of the battle alerts the entire fortress. The bandits, however, fear the spirits' dangerous splinter bursts, and do not join them in melee combat, preferring to shoot arrows from the windows overlooking the courtyard.

## A4. OLD BATH (CR 12)

This large, dusty room smells of freshly cut wood and is sprinkled with sawdust. Four old stone columns support the thatched roof, standing within a 3-foot-deep depression lined with enameled tiles now faded, cracked, and encrusted with

dirt. A wooden trough carries a stream of water from a pipe in the east wall, filling a large tub between the two westernmost columns before flowing out of the south wall via another trough used for the watering of animals. Three sturdy tables stand in the room, containing numerous carpentry tools, including mallets, saws, and wood axes. In the northwest corner of the room, a wooden stairway leads to the upper floor.

Once a large and luxurious bath for the daimyo who founded Seinaru Heikiko, this large room is now used as a carpentry workshop, wood storage, and granary. Mud stains and tufts of horsehair outside the entrance testify to the frequent passage of horses to water inside. The tools here are unremarkable, but the precise cuts and the perfect joints of some unfinished pieces hint at the great skill of the bandit carpenters. A secret door in the east wall can be found with a DC 20 Perception check, opening into a hidden passage leading to area A2. The stairs lead up to area A15.

**Creatures:** The shaman Kamuy-Paro is usually found working in the shop, along with his concubine Tos Katun. Kamuy-Paro is a renegade from the relatively peaceful Utare people and worships the darkest aspects of nature in the form of Lady Nanbyo, the Tian goddess of plague, fire, earthquakes, and suffering. He has a long, dark beard and is very tall for a Tian-Min. Besides being a powerful druid, Kamuy-Paro is a master carpenter and an able orator, and Gangasum listens to his words carefully. Kamuy-Paro has bound five evil spirits of nature to his service (the vengeful wood spirits in areas A2 and A3) and keeps a weretiger named Tos Katun as his personal servant and concubine.

Tos Katun is a natural lycanthrope born from the union of an Utare witch and a weretiger, and is considered an abomination by her people. She is a thrall of Kamuy-Paro, who treats her cruelly, sharing her as an occasional bride with Gangasum. Years of exclusion and abuse have twisted her mind, and Tos Katun is now totally devoted to her master, and would do anything to protect him. To the other women enslaved by the bandits, however, the heavily tattooed Utare woman appears to be just another unfortunate servant of the savage barbarians. With the exception of Gangasum, the superstitious bandits are afraid of Tos Katun, and shun the weretiger as much as possible.

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#### KAMUY-PARO CR 10

**XP** 9,600

Male human druid of Lady Nanbyo 11

NE Medium humanoid (human)

**Init** +5; **Senses** Perception +15

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#### DEFENSE

**AC** 24, touch 11, flat-footed 23 (+7 armor, +1 Dex, +4 natural, +2 shield)

**hp** 97 (11d8+44)



**Fort** +9, **Ref** +4, **Will** +13; +4 vs. fey and plant-targeted effects  
**Defensive Abilities** resist nature's lure; **DR** 10/adamantine;  
**Immune** poison; **Resist** fire 10

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## OFFENSE

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**Speed** 30 ft.

**Melee** mwk scimitar +8/+3 (1d6–1/18–20)

**Ranged** mwk dagger +10/+5 (1d4–1/19–20)

**Special Attacks** fire bolt (1d6+5 fire, 7/day), wild shape 11 hours/day

**Spells Prepared** (CL 11th; concentration +15)

6th—*fire seeds*<sup>D</sup> (DC 20), *greater dispel magic*

5th—*call lightning storm* (DC 19), *fire shield*<sup>D</sup> (DC 19), *stoneskin*

4th—*cure serious wounds*, *flame strike* (DC 18), *rusting grasp*,  
*scrying* (DC 18), *wall of fire*<sup>D</sup>

3rd—*call lightning* (DC 17), *cure moderate wounds*, *fireball*<sup>D</sup> (DC  
17), *greater magic fang*, *poison* (DC 17), *protection from energy*

2nd—*barkskin*, *flame blade*, *heat metal* (DC 16), *produce  
flame*<sup>D</sup>, *warp wood* (DC 16), *wood shape*

1st—*burning hands*<sup>D</sup> (DC 15), *cure light wounds*, *entangle* (DC 15),  
*longstrider*, *magic stone*, *obscuring mist*

o (at will)—*flare* (DC 14), *guidance*, *mending*, *resistance*

**D** Domain spell; **Domain** Fire

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## TACTICS

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**Before Combat** Kamuy-Paro casts *barkskin*, *longstrider*,  
*protection from energy* (electricity), and *stoneskin* on himself,  
and *greater magic fang* on Tos Katun.

**During Combat** Kamuy-Paro casts *fire shield* (warm shield) on  
the first round of combat, and supports his vengeful wood  
spirits and the other bandits with his combat spells, trying  
to avoid melee combat as much as possible. If pressed into  
melee combat, the shaman uses wild shape to transform  
into a Large fire elemental, or casts *flame blade*.

**Morale** Kamuy-Paro fights as long as Gangasum survives, but  
if the chieftain is slain, he uses wild shape to take the form  
of an eagle and fly away.

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## STATISTICS

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**Str** 8, **Dex** 12, **Con** 14, **Int** 14, **Wis** 18, **Cha** 10

**Base Atk** +8; **CMB** +7; **CMD** 18

**Feats** Combat Casting, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Natural  
Spell, Skill Focus (Craft [carpentry]), Skill Focus (Diplomacy),  
Toughness

**Skills** Craft (carpentry) +21, Diplomacy +16, Fly +6,  
Handle Animal +10, Heal +14, Knowledge (nature) +14,  
Perception +15, Ride +9, Spellcraft +13, Survival +16

**Languages** Druidic, Ignan, Minkaian, Terran, Tien

**SQ** nature bond (Fire domain), nature sense, trackless step,  
wild empathy +11, woodland stride

**Combat Gear** *wand of cure moderate wounds* (39 charges), *wand of  
speak with animals* (36 charges); **Other Gear** +2 *horn lamellar*\*,  
+1 *light wooden shield*, masterwork dagger, masterwork  
scimitar, wooden holy symbol, spell component pouch,  
*ironwood* key to chest in area **A4**, diamond dust (worth 500 gp)

\* See *Ultimate Combat*.

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## TOS KATUN (HYBRID FORM)

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**CR** 10

**XP** 9,600

Female human natural weretiger ranger (skirmisher\*) 10  
(*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 2 183, *Pathfinder RPG Advanced  
Player's Guide* 128)

NE Large humanoid (human, shapechanger)

**Init** +7; **Senses** low-light vision, scent; Perception +14

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## DEFENSE

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**AC** 23, touch 13, flat-footed 19 (+3 armor, +3 Dex, +1 dodge,  
+7 natural, –1 size)

**hp** 109 (10d10+50)

**Fort** +10, **Ref** +10, **Will** +4

**Defensive Abilities** evasion; **DR** 10/silver

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## OFFENSE

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**Speed** 30 ft.

**Melee** bite +17 (2d6+7 plus grab and curse of lycanthropy), 2 claws  
+17 (1d8+7 plus grab)

**Space** 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.

**Special Attacks** favored enemy (animals +2, humans +6, native  
outsiders +2)

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## TACTICS

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**Before Combat** Kamuy-Paro casts *greater magic fang* on Tos  
Katun before combat.

**During Combat** Tos Katun tries to surprise her foes by changing  
from a small Tien woman into her ferocious hybrid form at  
the most appropriate moment. She fights savagely to survive  
and to protect Kamuy-Paro. Tos Katun despises the other  
bandits and does not fight beside them, preferring to stay  
with her master and guard him as he casts spells.

**Morale** If wounded by an enemy, Tos Katun fights to the death.

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## STATISTICS

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**Str** 23, **Dex** 16, **Con** 17, **Int** 8, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 12

**Base Atk** +10; **CMB** +17 (+21 grapple); **CMD** 31

**Feats** Dodge, Endurance, Improved Initiative, Improved Vital  
Strike, Mobility, Toughness, Vital Strike, Weapon Focus  
(bite), Weapon Focus (claws), Wind Stance

**Skills** Climb +14, Craft (carpentry) +7, Handle Animal +9,  
Intimidate +10, Knowledge (nature) +7, Perception +14,  
Ride +10, Stealth +12, Survival +9, Swim +14

**Languages** Minkaian, Tien

**SQ** change shape (human, hybrid, and tiger; *polymorph*),  
combat style (natural weapon\*), favored terrain (forest +2,  
plains +4), hunter's bond (companions), hunter's tricks\* 6/  
day (hateful attack\*, upending strike\*, vengeance strike\*),  
lycanthropic empathy (tigers and dire tigers), swift tracker,  
track +5, wild empathy +11, woodland stride

**Gear** masterwork studded leather, *amulet of natural armor* +2

\* See the *Advanced Player's Guide*.

**Treasure:** An elaborate birch chest, inlaid with ivory  
horse figures and locked with an *ironwood* padlock (DC  
25 Disable Device check to open), sits in the southeast  
corner of the room slightly set apart from everything



else. The chest belongs to Kamuy-Paro, and contains a set of masterwork artisan's tools (carpentry), two sacks of valuable shellac flakes (worth 50 gp each), an ivory palm box (worth 50 gp) holding 2 doses of *salve of slipperiness*, and a bronze flask containing 3 ounces of *sovereign glue*.

## A5. GUARDROOMS (CR 5)

Two identical guardrooms flank the courtyard, but they are currently serving as rest chambers for off-duty guards posted to the fortress's two lookout posts (area A6). The furnishings include a straw mattress, a carpet, a cast-iron brazier, and a small table.

**Creatures:** Two veteran bandits rest in these guardrooms, one in each chamber. Relying on their fellow bandits in the nearby lookouts, these bandits are inattentive and take a -2 penalty on their Perception checks.

**VETERAN BANDIT** CR 5  
**XP 1,600**  
 Raider (*Pathfinder RPG GameMastery Guide* 280)  
 hp 67

## A6. LOOKOUT POSTS (CR 5)

Two identical observation platforms have been hewn into the rock 20 feet above the ground, overlooking the approaches to the fortress. Almost invisible from the ground outside, each provides cover and an advantageous position for a single archer. A gallon jug of water and a clay vessel holding 20 arrows stand on each platform. Behind each platform is a winch mechanism that allows a fleeing guard to drop a portcullis and bar the corridor from outside intruders. The bandits have replaced the original steel gates, which had rusted beyond repair, with wooden portcullises (hardness 5, hp 30, break DC 25).

**Creatures:** A single veteran bandit is on guard in each lookout post, keeping watch while her fellow bandits nap in the nearby guardrooms (area A5). The bandit lookouts fire whistling arrows as soon as they spot intruders in the ravine outside.

**VETERAN BANDIT** CR 5  
**XP 1,600**  
 Raider (*Pathfinder RPG GameMastery Guide* 280)  
 hp 67

## A7. STABLE

An array of wooden trusses support the roof of this large and well-equipped stable. Two rows of wooden stalls provide ample space for a score of riding horses.

This stable, entirely rebuilt by the bandits, is functional and tidy, suiting the tastes of people who live most of

their lives on horseback. Riding tack for 20 horses and their riders is stored in the loft above the stable.

**Creatures:** Eighteen combat-trained light horses—the bandits' mounts—occupy the stable. These horses can be used or sold as normal mounts, or can function as three horse trains for a caravan.

**HORSES (18)** CR 1  
**XP 400 each**  
 hp 15 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 177)

## A8. KAMUY-PARO'S SUITE (CR 6)

This apartment is divided into two rooms. The southern part contains a wooden bed; a desk; and shelves holding an assortment of small wooden flasks, linen pouches, and leaf-wrapped packets, while a circular, shallow pool of fresh water sits in the middle of the northern room. Wooden panels line the walls and floors, and an artistic latticework of bright green moss decorates the ceiling.

The shaman Kamuy-Paro and his concubine Tos Katun live in these rooms. A simple, unlocked wooden door opens to the courtyard outside, and thick linen curtains hang in the two open doorways leading to other rooms in the fortress. Kamuy-Paro uses the pool in the north room as a divine focus for scrying.

**Hazard:** The mossy decoration on the ceiling is a patch of yellow mold, magically crossed with other fungi to create a hybrid. A DC 21 Knowledge (dungeoneering or nature) check is required to identify the moss as a dangerous hazard. The mold has been conditioned to react to the odor of anise-flavored sake, and releases a cloud of spores into the room if one of the sake flasks on the shelves is opened or if otherwise disturbed. The mold is less effective during the day (+2 circumstance bonus on Fortitude saves against the mold). If combat with Kamuy-Paro takes place in this area, he might try to smash a sake flask to activate the mold (to which he is immune).

**HYBRID YELLOW MOLD** CR 6  
**XP 2,400**  
*Pathfinder RPG Core Rulebook* 416

**Treasure:** On the shelves are a healer's kit, several pouches of fennel seeds, pepper grains, and cloves (worth 50 gp total), four small flasks of anise-flavored sake (worth 5 gp each), numerous packets of various dried flowers, and a pouch containing 40 gp.

**Development:** Kamuy-Paro and Tos Katun are found here at night, Tos Katun sleeping on a mat on the floor at the foot of Kamuy-Paro's bed. If surprised by stealthy PCs during the night, the weretiger pretends to be a thrall



of the bandits, and waits for the right moment to attack them by surprise.

## A9. COMMON HALL (CR 12)

Huge logs support the ceiling of this large hall, which is furnished with tanned animal pelts and exotic carpets. Wooden planks line the walls, and several stools and benches are scattered near a stone fireplace in the southwest corner. Two corridors exit the hall to the north and west. In the north and the east, two curtains draped between the support pillars partition the room. A wooden stairway in the southeast corner leads to the upper floor.

The north wing, once the daimyo's residence, is now used as a common hall for the bandits. The curtains divide two smaller areas from the main hall: a kitchen area in the north, with two kitchen counters and various utensils, and a meeting area to the east, containing a large pinewood table. A wall of wooden planks separates these two areas, and a double fireplace at the base of the towerlike chimney warms the two rooms. The stairs lead up to area A14.

**Creatures:** The bandit subchief Ilgamal and six veteran bandits not on watch duty spend most of their time here in idle pursuits, such as playing drums, gambling with dice, or engaging in arm wrestling contests. One of Gangasum's lieutenants, Ilgamal is an exceptionally able Yumogu warrior. He pays due respect to his chieftain's might and shares Gangasum's dreams of power and conquest. Ilgamal serves as commander of the bandit garrison while his fellow subchief Nalkalun commands the bandit outriders that constantly patrol the plains. In addition, seven peasant girls (N female human commoners 1), who have been kidnapped by the bandits or sold into slavery by their destitute families, labor in the hall, cleaning, cooking, serving food and drink, or otherwise attending to the bandits' wishes. The bandits grab their weapons and engage any intruders in combat, while the peasant girls simply hide or try to flee if a fight breaks out.

### ILGAMAL CR 10

XP 9,600

Male human fighter 6/rogue 5  
LE Medium humanoid (human)

Init +3; Senses Perception +15

#### DEFENSE

AC 23, touch 13, flat-footed 20 (+8 armor, +3 Dex, +2 shield)

hp 98 (11 HD; 6d10+5d8+39)

Fort +10, Ref +9, Will +4; +2 vs. fear

**Defensive Abilities** bravery +2, evasion, trap sense +1, uncanny dodge

#### OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

**Melee** +1 scimitar +15/+10 (1d6+7/15-20)

**Ranged** +1 composite shortbow +13/+8 (1d6+4/x3)

**Special Attacks** sneak attack +3d6, weapon training (heavy blades +1)

#### TACTICS

**During Combat** Ilgamal fires arrows at opponents while his bandits engage them. Once half of his bandits are slain, Ilgamal enters melee combat with his scimitar, flanking with his bandits to make sneak attacks when possible.

**Morale** A loyal soldier, Ilgamal fights to the death.

#### STATISTICS

Str 16, Dex 16, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 8

Base Atk +9; CMB +12; CMD 25

**Feats** Critical Focus, Deadly Aim, Great Fortitude, Improved Critical (scimitar), Mounted Archery, Mounted Combat, Point-Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Toughness, Vital Strike, Weapon Focus (scimitar), Weapon Specialization (scimitar)

**Skills** Climb +10, Handle Animal +8, Intimidate +13, Knowledge (local) +4, Perception +15, Ride +15, Stealth +15, Survival +10

**Languages** Minkaian, Tien

**SQ** armor training 1, rogue talents (bleeding attack +3, weapon training), trapfinding +2

**Gear** +2 breastplate, +1 light wooden shield, +1 scimitar, +1 composite shortbow (+3 Str) with 20 arrows and 5 whistling arrows, dagger

### VETERAN BANDITS (6) CR 5

XP 1,600 each

Raider (*Pathfinder RPG GameMastery Guide* 280)

hp 67 each

**Treasure:** Twelve of the carpets in this area are valuable Yumogu art objects, worth 100 gp each.

## A10. CELLAR

A large brazier on a tripod in the northeast corner dimly lights this underground room. Three bamboo cages are mounted to the west wall, furnished with furs and reed mats. Several small kegs sit along the north wall, while shelves in the southeast corner contain baskets of dried mushrooms, net bags of wild turnips, and a few haunches of smoked meat.

Foodstuffs and water are stored on the shelves and in the kegs in this room. Prisoners and slaves of the bandits are held in the bamboo cages, which are locked with ironwood padlocks (DC 25 Disable Device check to open; Gangasum has the keys).

**Development:** The cellar is normally empty during the day, but the seven peasant girls enslaved by the bandits (see area A9) are locked in the cages at night or in case of trouble.



## A11. ARMORY

An ancient, undecorated altar, hewn from the bare rock, stands near the north wall of this chamber. Two wooden weapon racks are mounted on the north wall on either side of the altar.

This room was originally a shrine to some forgotten god, of which only a stone altar remains. Now the bandits use this room as an armory to hold their lances. One rack holds a score of lances for the bandits stationed at the fortress; the other rack is empty, its lances in use by the bandits currently roaming the plains.

**Treasure:** All of the lances in the rack are normal weapons, except for one. This is Gangasum's personal weapon, a +2 *lance*.



GANGASUM

## A12. GANGASUM'S QUARTERS (CR 13)

A row of curtains blocks off the rear portion of this underground chamber, which is furnished as a bedroom with a magnificent tiger pelt rug on the wooden plank floor. A large bed with colorful wool blankets stands near the west wall. A large chest with an ornate wooden saddle resting on the lid sits against the north wall. In the northwest corner, a spherical brazier hangs from a chain fixed to the ceiling. A decorated rice paper folding screen stands against the east wall.

**Creatures:** The bandit chieftain Gangasum resides in this chamber, accompanied by the four veteran bandits who serve as his bodyguard. Gangasum is a proud and mighty Yumogu chief, who dreams of restoring his people's long-lost dominance over a large part of Minkai. His dangerous ambition has set him against the cautious elders of his tribe more than once. Gangasum wants to take advantage of the struggle between the Jade Regent and his opponents, offering his services to the highest bidder. Currently, Gangasum is conducting secret negotiations with the officials of a local daimyo, through which Gangasum hopes to obtain recognition as an ally of the empire and feudal dominance over the Borderlands.

### GANGASUM CR 12

XP 19,200

Male human barbarian 13

CE Medium humanoid (human)

Init +4; Senses Perception +15

#### DEFENSE

AC 21, touch 13, flat-footed 16 (+5 armor, +4 Dex, +1 dodge, -2 rage, +3 shield)

hp 168 (13d12+78)

Fort +15, Ref +8, Will +8

Defensive Abilities improved uncanny dodge, trap sense +4;

DR 4/—

#### OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft.

Melee +2 scimitar +22/+17/+12 (1d6+8/15-20)

Ranged +2 composite shortbow +19/+14/+9 (1d6+5/x3)

Special Attacks greater rage (32 rounds/day), rage powers (clear mind, guarded stance [+3 dodge vs. melee], increased damage reduction, mighty swing, no escape, powerful blow +4)

#### TACTICS

**During Combat** Gangasum fires arrows at opponents while his bodyguards engage them in melee combat. Once one of his bodyguards has fallen, Gangasum rages, activates his guarded stance rage ability, and enters combat himself.

**Morale** Gangasum considers retreat an option only when he is fighting from horseback or from a distance. Once he has entered hand-to-hand combat, he fights to the death.



**Base Statistics** When not raging, Gangasum's statistics are  
**AC** 23, touch 15, flat-footed 18; **hp** 129; **Fort** +12, **Will** +5;  
**Melee** +2 scimitar +19/+14/+9 (1d6+5/15–20); **Str** 17, **Con** 14;  
**CMB** +16, **CMD** 31; **Skills** Climb +12

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**STATISTICS**


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**Str** 23, **Dex** 18, **Con** 20, **Int** 10, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 8

**Base Atk** +13; **CMB** +19; **CMD** 32

**Feats** Deadly Aim, Dodge, Great Fortitude, Improved Critical (scimitar), Mounted Archery, Mounted Combat, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (scimitar)

**Skills** Acrobatics +16, Climb +15, Handle Animal +9, Intimidate +15, Perception +15, Ride +20, Survival +10

**Languages** Minkaian, Tien

**SQ** fast movement

**Combat Gear** *potion of cure serious wounds*; **Other Gear** *armor of the tireless warrior* (+3 leather armor; see page 60), +2 light wooden shield, +2 scimitar, +2 composite shortbow (+3 Str) with 20 arrows, masterwork dagger, belt of incredible dexterity +2, ironwood keys to cages in area A10

**VETERAN BANDITS (4)**
**CR 5**
**XP 1,600 each**

 Raider (*Pathfinder RPG GameMastery Guide* 280)

hp 67 each

**Treasure:** The bedroom shows Gangasum's taste for luxury. All of the furnishings here, with the exception of the recently built bed and chest, are precious spoils taken during his raids. The most precious item here is the folding screen, decorated with animal silhouettes by a top master from Oda, a large town in southern Minkai. The screen is worth 2,000 gp while the dire tiger pelt rug is worth 1,500 gp. A low, circular table near the bed holds a small silver jug (worth 25 gp) and a golden cup (worth 200 gp). The chest is unlocked and contains a golden plaque in the shape of a deer head with emerald eyes worth 400 gp, a cloak of white fox fur worth 300 gp, and a large pouch containing 150 gp.

**Development:** Gangasum is usually found here at night as well, sleeping or enjoying the company of Tos Katun or one of the servant girls, while his bodyguards sleep in area A14.

### A13. FORLORN SHRINE

The walls of this room are covered in faded, abstract decorations, and riddled with cavities and cracks. Stone display tables stand along the north and south walls, bare but for rusty metal shards and blackened splinters of wood. A six-foot-tall stone statue of a female samurai stands in a niche in the middle of the east wall, her elaborate armor engraved with numerous cartouches filled with inscriptions. The statue once held a two-handed sword, but the stone blade has been sheared off, and many of the statue's features have been defaced or destroyed.

This ancient shrine was once dedicated to Shizuru, the Tian goddess of ancestors, honor, swordplay, and the sun. Her statue can be recognized with a DC 20 Knowledge (religion) check. The shrine was robbed long ago, and the holes in the walls were created by thieves removing precious stones and plaques. Thieves also defaced the statue, breaking its sword and obliterating many of the cartouches on its armor.

The bandits have not put the old shrine to any official use yet, though Gangasum likes to come here from time to time to sharpen and polish his weapons in peace. Kamuy-Paro suspects that something is hidden in the room, for the statue emanates faint transmutation magic, but he has thus far been unable to discover the cache.

The tiny inscriptions inside the cartouches on the statue are in Minkaian, usually the names of samurai followed by expressions of thanks and prayers for good luck. A character who can read Minkaian (or using magic to understand the language) can make a DC 15 Perception check to find the name of Hirabashi Akikaza in one of the inscriptions. A second DC 20 Perception check finds a single inscription with no author's name, which reads, "Empress of Heaven, touch me with your grace!" If Ameiko, or another Amatsatsu scion, touches this cartouche with the *Amatsatsu Seal*, all of the cartouches on the statue flash with light, and a 10-foot-deep cylindrical pit opens in the center of the room, revealing a repository of many weapons. Touching the *Amatsatsu Seal* to the cartouche again closes the pit, hiding the cache once more.

**Treasure:** Inside the secret cache are several samurai weapons, still sharp and shiny after half a millennium. The collection includes two masterwork o-yoroi, two kabuto helmets, 10 masterwork daikyus (longbows) with 20 arrows each, five masterwork katanas, a masterwork naginata, four masterwork shortspears, and three masterwork wakizashi. Two of these items are especially remarkable. One of the two kabutos, decorated with a scalelike pattern, is a *helm of underwater action*. In addition, one of the katanas is a +1 *adamantine katana* with the Tien characters for Hirabashi engraved along the blade. This is the sword of Hirabashi Akikaza, the ancestral weapon that Hirabashi Jiro has been searching for.

### A14. DORMITORY

Ilgamal and the veteran bandits sleep in this large dormitory, which contains a score of bunk beds and a large cast-iron stove. A single window looks out on the courtyard below (area A3), and wooden stairs to the south lead down to area A9.

**Development:** Ilgamal and the 10 bandits from areas A9 and A12 are usually sleeping in this chamber at night.



## A15. STORAGE

The bandits keep bales of hay, spare logs and planks, firewood, boxes of rice, and sacks of millet in this dry and ventilated storage area. Two windows overlook the courtyard below (area A3), and wooden stairs to the north lead down to area A4.

## CLAIMING THE HIDDEN FORTRESS

After defeating Gangasum and his band, the PCs soon meet up with Hirabashi Jiro again. The ronin has defeated the roaming group of bandits and killed their subchief, eliminating the bandit threat for good. If the PCs used the *Amatatsu Seal* to open the hidden cache in Seinaru Heikiko's shrine and proved the authenticity of their claim, Jiro recognizes Ameiko as the rightful heir to the Jade Throne of Minkai and offers his services to the PCs until the Jade Regent is defeated. Jiro intends to occupy Seinaru Heikiko and establish a base for the PCs and the allies they will acquire. The ronin is obviously eager to reclaim his family's ancestral katana, and offers his *daikyu of commanding presence* (see page 60) to the PCs in exchange for the sword. If the PCs refused to answer Jiro's riddle when they first met him, however, the ronin simply demands that they hand over the sword and does not offer the bow in exchange.

When Jiro and his ronin occupy the fortress, a number of settlers accompany them to Seinaru Heikiko to make it as safe and comfortable as possible. These folk quickly repair any damage and expand on the work already done by the bandits. Hatsue and Jiro begin organizing the ragtag band into a well-organized peasant militia. At your option, Miyaro can also take her leave of the PCs to return to her home in the Forest of Spirits at this time, after wishing the party good luck. However, if the PCs have grown especially fond of her, or if they require her services as a translator, Miyaro can stay with the PCs, continuing to act as a guide during their journey through Minkai.

## RAISING THE TIDE

Jiro and Hatsue know that the Jade Regent is amassing troops to defend his claim to the Jade Throne. In addition, with the emperor in hiding and the governor of the capital, Kasai, accused of treason, Minkai has become alienated from the other nations of Tian Xia, creating a long-lasting trade crisis. The budding merchant class of Minkai, centered in the western cities of Akafuto, Enganoka, and Sakakabe, resent the economic decline of the empire more than anyone else. Most daimyo are also unhappy with the present situation, as they are obliged to pay surplus taxes for the upkeep of a mercenary force of uncertain origin, called the Typhoon Guard, who now serve the Jade Regent as a private army. The common people suffer the most, for many haughty, high-ranking nobles are simply squeezing

their extra dues from their subjects. The nobles also see the officers of the Typhoon Guard as dangerous rivals for positions in the imperial bureaucracy.

In this situation, stirring a rebellion in the northwestern provinces of Enganoka and Sakakabe would not be impossible, but the PCs will need much more support than Jiro's ragtag band of peasants and ronin can provide. According to Jiro, the PCs need to contact powerful representatives of Minkai's military, merchants, and criminal underground, either to sway them to the PCs' side, or at least to ensure their neutrality in the conflict to come. The order in which the PCs talk to these groups is up to them, but they'll need to contact all three of them to give a revolution any chance of success.

Jiro outlines the following three "missions" to the PCs, which they can undertake to acquire fresh information, find allies against the Jade Regent, and defeat powerful enemies opposed to their cause.

**The Ninja Clans:** There are numerous ninja clans in Minkai, and while perhaps distasteful, their aid in the coming rebellion would be helpful. Even if the PCs don't wish to hire the ninja themselves, they should at least make an attempt to convince the ninja not to serve the Jade Regent. To contact the ninja, the PCs should travel to the port city of Enganoka and visit the Kuroi Yane market. Jiro has heard that three regular customers of a restaurant there are actually high-ranking ninja, sometimes referred to as *nokizarusan*, the "three monkeys on the roof," or simply the "Three Monkeys." Talking to one of these three people, who serve as contacts between their clans and potential clients, is one way to buy the services of the ninja in Minkai. Every month, with the new moon, these notables meet to discuss matters between the clans, and this is the only time one can talk to them for any reason but hiring their services. This mission is detailed in Part Two.

**The Geisha:** According to Jiro, the best way to get the support of the merchants is through the geisha of Minkai, who know many secrets that can be used to manipulate the empire's merchants and nobility. Jiro recommends visiting the renowned Kiniro Kyomai teahouse in downtown Sakakabe, whose entertainment district is second only to that of Kasai. The owner of the Kiniro Kyomai, a skilled and respected geisha named O-Kohaku, is a niece of the late governor of Kasai, and likely hates the Jade Regent for killing her uncle. Many people discontent with the rule of the Jade Regent frequent the Kiniro Kyomai, and befriending the geisha would give the PCs a chance to contact and persuade them to join their cause. Jiro suggests that the best way to approach the geisha is to flatter O-Kohaku by personally delivering an expensive gift to the teahouse. This mission is detailed in Part Three.



**The Daimyo:** One of the Jade Regent's most zealous supporters is the current governor of Enganoka, a man named Sikutsu Sennaka. Sennaka is cruel, efficient, and powerful, and anyone trying to give voice to dissent in the province has been ruthlessly persecuted. Besides ruling in his domain, Sennaka exerts a strong influence over Minkai's military and the adjacent provinces through terror, espionage, and blackmail. No one in northwestern Minkai is likely to rise against the Jade Regent as long as Sennaka lives, but once he is removed from power, the PCs have a much better chance of gaining the support of Minkai's samurai. Sennaka is well guarded, however, and an open attack on the daimyo is likely doomed to failure. The PCs need to find a way to ambush Sennaka or otherwise take him unawares and unguarded if they hope to have any chance of success. This mission is detailed in Part Four.

Once they have this information, the PCs will likely travel to the locations mentioned by Jiro, gathering information and encountering both enemies and potential allies before the confrontation with Sikutsu Sennaka, which can happen as soon as the PCs feel ready for it. You should read all three missions thoroughly, as there are points of contact between them, and the PCs are free (and likely) to move from one mission to another, as they may feel that their progress in one direction depends from something found elsewhere. Since the party can move in different directions, you should be flexible and imaginative when describing the PCs' travels through northern Minkai. Once the PCs have accomplished all three "missions," the makings of a rebellion begin to stir in northern Minkai, leading the PCs to the finale in Part Five.

Before the party's departure from Seinaru Heikiko, Jiro and Hatsue caution the PCs about attracting too much attention. The sohei suggests that the PCs keep a low profile during their journeys in northern Minkai, and Ameiko fully agrees. A party that insists on openly traveling through Minkai or drawing attention to themselves in other ways should face progressively more difficult opposition and random encounters along the way.

## PART TWO: THE SHADOWS OF ENGANOKA

In this mission, the PCs must treat with the ninja of Minkai, either to gain them as allies or to ensure their neutrality in the struggle against the Jade Regent. According to Jiro Hirabashi, the PCs can meet with the ninja at the Kuroi Yane market in the port city of Enganoka on Minkai's west coast. Enganoka is the third largest city in Minkai and famous for its trade in silk, pottery, semiprecious stones, and rock alum from the coastal hills.

Although the port and the marketplace are still relatively busy, Enganoka is clearly suffering from

## WHAT ABOUT THE CARAVAN?

By this point in the Jade Regent Adventure Path, the PCs' caravan should begin to fade into the background. After all, it has done its job of getting the PCs and Ameiko safely to Minkai. As mentioned by Hirabashi Jiro and Habesuta Hatsue, the PCs have many enemies in Minkai, and a Varisian caravan traveling through the countryside would be sure to attract unwelcome attention. As a result, the PCs should probably leave their caravan with the ronin at Seinaru Heikiko while they complete the missions given to them by Jiro, returning to their base at the fortress between missions as needed. But just because they are leaving the caravan behind doesn't mean the PCs have to leave their allies behind as well. Bringing Ameiko with them will likely help sway others to their cause, and Shalelu won't be willing to let Ameiko go off without her protection. Likewise, Minkai is an entirely new land for Koya to explore, and Sandru might certainly want to see whether he can quietly make some new trade contacts. Exactly how much of a role these NPCs play is up to you and your players, but the significant NPCs should remain so for this adventure, even if the caravan is no longer as important as it once was.

economic depression. Trade with other Tian nations has decreased substantially in the past few years, and imperial custom officials are nervous and strict. Although they dare not speak openly, the locals blame the Jade Regent for the crisis, and they are quite right. The Jade Regent's persecutions, in fact, have ruined many successful merchants, and his regency has alienated many rulers in the Successor States of mainland Tian Xia, many of whom now refuse to trade with Minkai.

## THE KUROI YANE MARKET

The Kuroi Yane market is a large, two-story hall with a black roof, surrounded by a maze of outdoor huts, tents, and market stalls. Wealthier merchants, namely those who deal in silk and gemstones, conduct business in the hall itself. One of the main attractions of the hall is a restaurant that serves quality food to wealthy visitors. Not many know that this activity provides a point of contact between the wealthy and three ninja clans lairing in the nearby hills.

The entrance to the Kuroi Yane market is guarded by a group of police officers armed with jutte, who have orders to leave undisturbed only those who pay an entry fee. Because of this exorbitant (for a commoner) fee, all lower class people in the hall are likely to be servants



of some noble or merchant. To enter without any kind of trouble, the PCs must pay 3 sp per person or the equivalent. Otherwise, the irritated officers take note of the PCs' names and require them to leave all bags and large weapons in the officers' custody for as long as they stay in the hall.

In spite of the trade crisis, however, the market still offers almost everything that is available in Minkai.

The market provides a view of a culture very different from that of Sandpoint and Varisia's Lost Coast. Minkai merchants are quite honest, but are likely to charge higher prices to exotic-looking customers. Eating in the hall is also expensive, with the typical meal costing around 8 sp per person. The market is not usually

dangerous, other than an occasional pickpocket or swindler, and non-Tian PCs are likely to attract nothing more than curious looks and a few comments about their odd appearance from the locals.

## THE CRUELTY OF SIKUTSU SENNAKA (CR 12)

As they wander through the hall, the PCs notice a well-to-do commoner haggling with a shopkeeper. Suddenly, a half-dozen police officers surround him. The shopkeeper retreats to the back of her booth, and the commoner looks visibly frightened.

One of the police asks the man, "Are you a trader from the village of Kokomugi?" The man bows deeply and answers affirmatively, breaking into a servile grin. The officer responds, "You are a liar! That village doesn't exist!" The man's eyes grow wide in horror.

Immediately, the police officers grab the poor trader and force him to his knees. The crowd moves away, forming a wide circle around the scene, as one of the officers unsheathes her sword.

"You are a smuggler and a spy!" cries the officer.

With a swift stroke and a collective scream of the crowd, the man's severed head rolls across the floor.

No one does anything to stop the police, and if left unmolested, they swagger through the market as people scurry away from them, avoiding looking at them or at the dead man on the floor.

A DC 10 Knowledge local check (or talking to a passerby) identifies the police as *daikan tetsuku*, rural police who serve the governor of Enganoka, Sikutsu Sennaka. They normally patrol the countryside, but have lately been coming into town to exert their brutal authority. Unfortunately, they have the right to put commoners to death for any crimes. However, a DC 15 Knowledge (local) check is enough to realize that the village of Kokomugi does exist, so the police officer's expression can mean only a thing—that the entire village has been razed and plundered at the governor's order, and that all its former inhabitants must die and disappear from history.

**Creatures:** The *daikan tetsuku* are actually *kuwa*, oni who take human forms. If the PCs can see through magical disguises (with *true seeing*, for example), they can see the oni's true forms—fiendish humanoids with golden skin, claws, horns, and monstrous features. They form a terror strike team lent to Sikutsu Sennaka by the Jade Regent, used by the governor of Enganoka for gross displays of abuse and violence. Normally, the *daikan tetsuku* patrol the countryside, hunting for dissidents or simply innocent victims. If the PCs challenge the



DAIKAN TETSUKU



daikan tetsuku, the oni immediately attack, but keep their human forms as much as possible. When slain, the daikan tetsuku revert to their oni forms.

**DAIKAN TETSUKU (6)** **CR 7**

**XP 3,200 each**

Kuwa oni fighter 3 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 3 208)

LE Medium outsider (human, native, oni, shapechanger)

**Init** +4; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception +11

**DEFENSE**

**AC** 22, touch 14, flat-footed 18 (+7 armor, +4 Dex, +1 natural)

**hp** 86 each (8 HD; 5d10+3d10+43); regeneration 5 (acid or fire)

**Fort** +12, **Ref** +6, **Will** +8; +1 vs. fear

**Defensive Abilities** bravery +1; **SR** 15

**OFFENSE**

**Speed** 30 ft.

**Melee** nodachi\* +15/+10 (1d10+9/18–20) or

jutte\* +14/+9 (1d6+6) or

2 claws +14 (1d6+6)

**Ranged** composite longbow +12/+7 (1d8+3/x3)

**Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 5th; concentration +8)

3/day—*darkness*, *fly*

1/day—*charm person* (DC 14), *deep slumber* (DC 16),

*invisibility* (self only)

**TACTICS**

**During Combat** The oni try to intimidate opponents at the beginning of combat. They enjoy combat, so they attack with their weapons rather than use their spell-like abilities, unless it would give them a clear advantage.

**Morale** If more than half their number are slain, the surviving oni attempt to flee into the countryside, using flight if necessary to escape.

**STATISTICS**

**Str** 22, **Dex** 19, **Con** 20, **Int** 10, **Wis** 17, **Cha** 17

**Base Atk** +8; **CMB** +14; **CMD** 28

**Feats** Cleave, Combat Reflexes, Intimidating Prowess, Power Attack, Vital Strike, Weapon Focus (nodachi)

**Skills** Bluff +11, Disguise +7, Fly +4, Intimidate +17, Knowledge (arcana) +8, Perception +11, Sense Motive +11, Spellcraft +2, Stealth +9, Use Magic Device +7

**Languages** Minkaian, Tien

**SQ** armor training 1, change shape (any human, *alter self*)

**Combat Gear** tanglefoot bag; **Other Gear** masterwork tatami-do\*, composite longbow (+3 Str) with 20 arrows, jutte\*, nodachi\*

\* See *Ultimate Combat*.

## MEETING THE THREE MONKEYS

Three of the most prominent ninja clans in Minkai are active in the hills overlooking the city of Enganoka: the Black Lotus, the Dragonshadow, and the Emerald Branch. All three clans offer their services to the highest bidder, though each has its own outlook and purpose. Of

the three, the Emerald Branch are most concerned with fighting tyranny and supporting the cause of freedom. The Black Lotus are less interested in politics and more mercenary, willing to take on any job for a profit. Said to serve a powerful imperial dragon, the Dragonshadow follow their own inscrutable goals, and only accept jobs that further the mysterious aims of their purported patron. More information on these ninja clans and others can be found in “Way of the Ninja” in *Pathfinder Adventure Path* #52.

The nokizarusan, or “Three Monkeys,” who represent the ninja clans are **Ishibasho** (LN male human ninja 5/ranger 3) of the Black Lotus, a balding, middle-aged man; **Hosokaya Kazu** (NE male human ninja 7) of the Dragonshadow, the youngest of the Three Monkeys, who always has a half-smile on his face; and **Kondo Yori** (CG female human commoner 3/ninja 6) of the Emerald Branch, a plain peasant woman with a thick neck and hard eyes. A DC 20 Knowledge (local) check reveals that they are referred to as the Three Monkeys only in rumors and high-level ninja jargon, and they are offended if strangers like the PCs address them as such.

If the PCs paid the entrance fee to the market hall, they may go the restaurant in the Kuroi Yane to speak with one of the Three Monkeys. If the PCs make it clear that they are not interested in hiring a single “mercenary” for a contract, the representative they are speaking to politely asks them to come back later when his peers are present to discuss other matters.

Making such an appointment means waiting for the next new moon, and each person who wishes to attend must pay a 100 gp advance for the representatives’ time and attention. These conditions are nonnegotiable. It is no surprise that strangers are rarely seen at such meetings. If the PCs pay the advance fee, the representative and their servants treat them with the utmost respect, telling them to come back at a specific time, and giving them a token (a scroll with the image of a black lotus flower, a silhouette of a dragon’s claw, or a cluster of green bamboo stalks, depending on the clan) that will grant them free access to the restaurant for their appointment.

On the evening of the meeting, the representatives of the three ninja clans greet the PCs in a private room. The Three Monkeys, all of whom wear nondescript gray kimonos, sit quietly in the half-light of the room and let the PCs speak first, then come straight to the point. The ninja claim to have already heard of the return to Minkai of the last Amatsatsu heir, and can well imagine Ameiko’s aims and the role of the PCs. While the ninja clans do not make a habit of interfering in politics, the Three Monkeys say, the current state of affairs is damaging their business as well, for fear of the Jade Regent and his forces has dampened enthusiasm for illegal activities,

and the Jade Regent himself shuns the services of the ninja clans, with one exception.

According to the Three Monkeys, the Jade Regent has hired a single, very powerful ninja to kill Ameiko and the PCs. This ninja, called Kaibuninsho, belongs to the Oni's Mask clan, a relatively new ninja clan that is notoriously hard to contact and hire. Kaibuninsho is an exceptionally secretive figure, even for the standards of his profession, and is said to have developed superhuman abilities that exceed those of traditional ninja training. For the past few years, Kaibuninsho has worked exclusively on behalf of the Jade Regent, subtly yet frequently engaging in acts of violence and assassination, keeping contact with other ninja, even those of his own clan, to a minimum. It's a fair bet that he is already stalking the PCs and their allies.

The ninja clans represented by the Three Monkeys are honorable mercenaries, and the PCs can theoretically hire them, though they charge very high fees. Alternatively, the PCs can bribe the ninja clans into inaction should the Jade Regent try to employ more of them in the future. Unfortunately, there's a catch. Since the PCs already have a contract on their heads, none of the ninja clans will accept a contract with them until the matter is solved, either with the death of Kaibuninsho or those of his targets. If the PCs defeat Kaibuninsho, they can return to the Kuroi Yane and the Three Monkeys will be more than willing to accept a contract, provided the price is right.

## A DEADLY STALKER (CR 14)

Soon after the PCs leave the Borderlands to enter the more civilized provinces of Minkai, the ninja Kaibuninsho begins stalking the PCs. The assassin shadows the PCs relentlessly, often in disguise (see page 55 for a sample of Kaibuninsho's many disguises). If the PCs manage to detect the assassin and lose him, or use a supernatural means of movement (such as *overland flight* or *teleport*) to escape, the ninja makes good use of the *scrying* and *shadow walk* powers of the *shinobi fuhonsen* (see below) to catch up to them within 1d4 days.

If Kaibuninsho can get close enough to his foes in disguise without arousing their suspicion, he attempts to kill the most dangerous opponent (in his eyes) with his assassinate ninja trick. Once he is revealed, Kaibuninsho flees at the earliest opportunity, only to return soon after in another disguise to whittle his targets down by one by one. If they do not defeat him earlier, the PCs should have their final confrontation with the ninja after they defeat Sikutsu Sennaka (see Part Four).

**KAIBUNINSHO**

**CR 14**

**XP 38,400**

**hp 86** (see page 54)

## KAIBUNINSHO'S BRONZE COIN

The source of Kaibuninsho's rumored superhuman abilities is an ancient-looking bronze coin charm that he wears around his neck, an artifact called the *shinobi fuhonsen*. The coin has six powers, five unlocked by previous owners, and one unlocked by Kaibuninsho. Kaibuninsho found the coin in the ruined city of Ishidai, and the *shinobi fuhonsen* quickly drove the ninja master to stalk and murder many of his former allies and associates. Thus far, the coin has had six consecutive owners, each mysteriously chosen by the artifact itself after the death of the previous ones. Obscure legends claim that when the eighth power of the *shinobi fuhonsen* is permanently unlocked, a major disaster will strike the world.



**SHINOBI FUHONSEN (FRONT)**

## SHINOBI FUHONSEN (MINOR ARTIFACT)

**Aura** strong illusion; **CL** 15th

**Slot** neck; **Weight** —

### DESCRIPTION

The *shinobi fuhonsen* is said to have been the first payment ever made to a ninja in the history of Minkai. The

tarnished bronze coin has a square central hole and bears six ideograms on its two faces—four on one face and two on the other, with two spaces apparently left blank. A leather thong is threaded through the coin's central hole, allowing the coin to be worn around the neck.

The six ideograms on the coin correspond to six different skills: Acrobatics, Climb, Disguise, Escape Artist, Perception, and Stealth. A DC 30 Knowledge (arcana) or DC 20 Linguistics check identifies the ideograms and their corresponding skills. The *shinobi fuhonsen* currently has six powers, each corresponding to one of the six ideograms and its associated skill. If a new owner has at least 8 ranks in another skill, the *shinobi fuhonsen* gains an additional power based on that skill, and a new ideogram emerges on the coin's surface. The new power and the skill it corresponds to are left up to the GM, though the power should be related to its skill, and the skill should be one on which the owner often relies. Although the existing powers of the *shinobi fuhonsen* are based on skills common to rogues and bards, new powers and their corresponding skills are not restricted to those of any one class. Only one new power may be unlocked per owner.

The coin's powers only function for a worthy owner, who must have at least 8 ranks in each of the six skills, plus 8



ranks in another skill. If the bearer of the coin is not a worthy owner (i.e., does not have enough skill ranks), the coin vanishes from the bearer's possession at the next new moon, reappearing elsewhere in Minkai to seek out a new owner.

When a new owner first takes possession of the *shinobi fuhonsen* and activates a new power, the new ideogram (and its associated power) appears on the coin on a temporary basis, and the owner receives a vision of the coin's previous owners at the time of their deaths. If the new owner is not chaotic evil, he must immediately make a DC 25 Will save or his alignment shifts one step toward chaotic evil. If the save succeeds, the owner resists the change and can use the coin's powers until the next new moon, when he must make another save. The owner must make a new Will save at every new moon until his alignment becomes chaotic evil, or until the artifact is no longer in his possession.

As long as the owner is not chaotic evil, he can simply discard the *shinobi fuhonsen*, at which point the coin vanishes at the next new moon. Once the owner becomes chaotic evil, the new ideogram (and its associated power) becomes permanent and he can no longer discard the coin, as if it were a cursed item.

Each of the coin's powers can be activated by speaking the name of the corresponding ideogram, unless otherwise noted. The known powers (and their associated skills) of the *shinobi fuhonsen* are as follows.

- **Power #1 (Acrobatics):** The owner can cast *shadow walk* once per day.
- **Power #2 (Climb):** The owner can cast *spider climb* three times per day.
- **Power #3 (Disguise):** The owner is permanently under the effects of *misdirection*.
- **Power #4 (Escape Artist):** The owner can cast *dimension door* three times per day.
- **Power #5 (Perception):** The owner can cast *scrying* once per day.
- **Power #6 (Stealth):** The owner can cast *mislead* once per day.
- **Powers #7–8 (8 ranks in another skill):** Yet to be discovered.

#### DESTRUCTION

The *shinobi fuhonsen* can be destroyed if it is swallowed by an ancient sovereign dragon (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 3). If the dragon succeeds at a DC 30 Fortitude save, the coin is destroyed. If the save fails, the coin remains intact and vanishes to reappear elsewhere.

## CONCLUDING THE MISSION

The PCs can complete this mission by killing Kaibuninsho. If the PCs return to the Kuroi Yane and show the Three Monkeys the ninja's *dragonmaw nunchaku*, the weapon is proof enough that Kaibuninsho is dead,

and they are willing to accept a new contract with the PCs. The PCs can hire the three ninja clans for the princely sum of 20,000 gp each. Alternatively, the PCs can secure the ninja's promises not to interfere with their actions against the Jade Regent for a fee of 5,000 gp per clan.

Depending on the PCs' actions, however, these fees can be reduced, or even waived entirely. If the PCs kill Sikutsu Sennaka (see Part Four), the Emerald Branch agree to ally with the PCs for only 10,000 gp to cover their expenses. If the PCs acquired the *shinobi fuhonsen* from Kaibuninsho, either the Black Lotus or the Dragonshadow agree to waive their fees in exchange for the artifact. If the PCs accept this offer from one of the clans, however, the other clan doubles its fees.

If the PCs show the *shinobi fuhonsen* to the Three Monkeys, the three ninja clans demonstrate an exceptional interest in it, for legends about the artifact abound in ninja lore. If the PCs do not offer the coin as payment, one of the three clans is likely to offer an exorbitant sum of money to buy it at a later time. The repercussions of the artifact falling into the hands of one of Minkai's ninja clans are left for you to develop as you see fit.

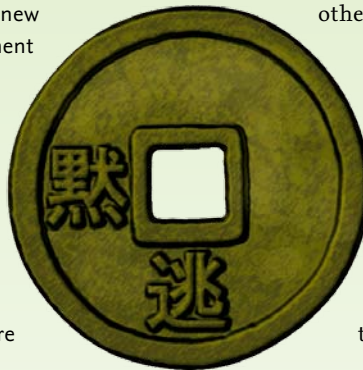
The ninja have their fair share of spies working in northwestern Minkai, and are willing to share their knowledge with the PCs, if the price is right. Any of the Three Monkeys can provide the following information, for 1,000 gp per question.

If asked about the geisha, the Three Monkeys can confirm that the Kiniro Kyomai teahouse is the best place to contact them, but reveal that one of Sakakabe's most talented geisha has recently gone missing, and is believed to have been kidnapped. Rescuing her would likely go a long way toward getting on the good side of the geisha.

If asked about Sikutsu Sennaka, the ninja can tell the PCs that a group of ronin calling themselves the Nine Pawns are opposed to Sennaka, and are planning to attack the daimyo at a hunting lodge near Sakakabe called Shuryo Onsen. The Nine Pawns are notoriously difficult to contact, but rumor has it that Sennaka's younger brother, Sikutsu Itsuru, has some connection with the ronin. The geisha of Sakakabe could certainly arrange a meeting with Itsuru for the right price.

## PART THREE: THE PEARLS OF SAKAKABE

In this mission, the PCs must contact representatives of Minkai's geisha community, who have influence over the land's merchants and nobles. Jiro Hirabashi instructs



SHINOBI FUHONSEN (BACK)

them to visit the Kiniro Kyomai teahouse in the city of Sakakabe, just up the coast from Enganoka. Sakakabe is a busy coastal town; slightly smaller and less populous than Enganoka, it enjoys much prosperity because of the silver mines in the nearby Sankyodai Mountains. Both merchants and government officials visit the port of Sakakabe, and frequently spend their money in the company of the geisha of the local entertainment district.

Sakakabe is built on a series of steep terraces that extend from the port to the top of the hills, where the richest houses are built. The entertainment district, or *hanamachi*, is built on one of the highest terraces, centered on a large street called the Way of the Songbirds. Two gates stand at either end of the street, manned by local guards, who summarily check visitors to ensure that no beggars (or worse, ronin, who tend to be rowdy as well as penniless, and are forbidden by decree) enter. The guards are obviously suspicious of heavily armed strangers, and ask lots of questions about their origins and business. On the other hand, the guards have orders to be as discreet as possible and to let rich visitors pass freely, so the safest and quickest way through the guards is with a minor bribe (no more than a few gold pieces). Inside the gates, the entertainment district is a pleasant area of nice shops, small gardens, a few shrines, and upscale teahouses, including the famous Kiniro Kyomai, easily identifiable by its ornate roof and brightly polished brass gutters.

## THE KINIRO KYOMAI TEAHOUSE

According to Jiro, the PCs should seek an appointment with O-Kohaku, mistress of the Kiniro Kyomai teahouse, by introducing themselves as admirers of the geisha and bringing an expensive, tasteful gift (at least 100 gp in value) to the door of the teahouse. Assuming that the PCs follow the advice, they are met at the gate by a young and exceptionally polite *maiko*, or apprentice geisha, wearing a flowery, long-sleeved kimono, who introduces herself as **O-Hakami** (NG female human bard 2). If the PCs have a gift for O-Kohaku, they can automatically gain an appointment with her that evening. Otherwise, they will need to make a successful DC 17 Bluff or Diplomacy check to convince O-Hakami to set up an appointment with the mistress of the teahouse in 1d3 days.

At the appointed time, O-Hakami once more greets the PCs at the teahouse gates and leads them to an inner

garden. The garden is only a semiprivate area, and is under constant surveillance by the district guards. **O-Kohaku** (LN female human aristocrat 4/bard 8) arrives soon after. She invites the PCs to sit down and orders O-Hakami to bring tea for the guests. The girl does as requested, then sits quietly in a corner, occasionally strumming a samisen. After greetings and introductions, O-Kohaku inquires whether the PCs wish to hire one or more of her geisha, and seems very interested about the reason why strangers from lands so distant have come



O-KOHAKU

to Minkai. If the PCs mention Hirabashi Jiro, O-Kohaku states that she remembers him as a samurai in her late uncle's service, and fondly recalls how he and his "unruly swords-for-hire" were kicked out of the district a year before.

If the PCs introduce Ameiko as the rightful heir to the throne, or speak about deposing the Jade Regent, the geisha gives them an astonished look, and claims that imperial politics are of little interest to provincial entertainers like herself, but a DC 20 Sense Motive detects the statement as an equivocation.

If the PCs say that Jiro believes in them and has joined their cause, or if they show the geisha the *Amatatsu Seal*, O-Kohaku becomes more open. She states that she is no friend of the Jade Regent, but her hopes of seeing Emperor Shigure back on the throne have faded, and that the Jade

Regent will soon become the legitimate ruler of Minkai. Even here in Sakakabe, far from the imperial capital of Kasai, everyone is too afraid of the provincial governor, Sikutsu Sennaka, to do anything that might disrupt the status quo.

O-Kohaku has many contacts among both the nobles and merchants of the northwest provinces, who could likely provide much assistance to the PCs' plans, but unfortunately, O-Kohaku has her own problems. One of the Kiniro Kyomai's most talented and respected geisha, O-Sayumi, has gone missing. O-Sayumi is adored by the local nobility, and has even received gifts from Sikutsu Sennaka's younger brother, Itsuru, a gentle, honorable man who doesn't share his brother's beliefs and methods.

O-Sayumi recently agreed to entertain a pearl merchant named Yugureda Shosaito, a regular client of the teahouse, and traveled to his private island for a week-long stay, but she never returned. The merchant himself claims the girl never arrived at his island, but O-Kohaku fears that O-Sayumi is being held against her will.



Yugureda Shosaito had repeatedly requested that O-Sayumi visit his residence by the sea, and made very generous offers, but O-Sayumi always refused, for Yugureda seemed to be driven by some kind of morbid obsession for her. A month previously, however, O-Sayumi suddenly accepted his offer and left the teahouse, promising to return in a week. O-Kohaku doesn't know why O-Sayumi finally accepted Yugureda's offer, but she thinks the merchant's obsession for the geisha, and her agreement to finally visit him, had their roots in both the merchant's and the geisha's pasts.

O-Sayumi boarded Yugureda's barge, which periodically travels between Sakakabe and the merchant's house, called Shinju-no-Ie, about 70 miles northwest of Sakakabe. Shinju-no-Ie stands on a small island rising from a coral reef in the pearl-rich waters of Namidakame Lagoon, at the mouth of the Jikko River. The place is secluded and nearby villagers fear it, believing the merchant to be an evil wizard. Whether these rumors are true or not, neither the barge nor the geisha have returned.

At this point, O-Hakami jumps into the conversation and begs the PCs to look for O-Sayumi, who is her "older sister" or mentor in the teahouse, and still has many things to teach her. O-Kohaku gives the apprentice a stern look, but says that O-Sayumi's disappearance has been a blow to both the teahouse's finances and its reputation. If the PCs agree to find O-Sayumi and return her to the Kiniro Kyomai, O-Kohaku promises to reward them, as well as to arrange meetings for them with powerful individuals who can help them with their rebellion.

## O-HAKAMI'S CLUES

If the PCs do not seek out O-Hakami before they leave the Kiniro Kyomai teahouse, the apprentice geisha seeks them out and asks to speak to them in private about O-Sayumi. As much as she adores O-Sayumi, O-Hakami is very afraid of Yugureda Shosaito, "a man so cold you would say he is dead," according to the maiko. Like O-Kohaku, O-Hakami doesn't know why O-Sayumi finally accepted Yugureda's offer. She does have some information about O-Sayumi, however, and shares the following with the PCs.

- O-Sayumi owns a magical samisen and is a masterful player. She sometimes plays her samisen for hours alone in her room. O-Hakami once peeked into the geisha's room during one of these solo sessions, and saw O-Sayumi in a kind of trance. O-Hakami was frightened, because she thought she saw the shadow of a huge, prowling tiger on the rice paper *shoji* doors.
- O-Sayumi seems to have uncanny knowledge of the past, the present, and the future, and it is not uncommon for nobles and merchants to come to the Kiniro Kyomai and ask for O-Sayumi's advice on matters that would not normally fall under a geisha's

expertise. Even people as important as Sikutsu Itsuru, the brother of the governor of Enganoka, have come to O-Sayumi for advice.

- O-Sayumi didn't say much about her trip to Yugureda Shosaito's house. Before leaving, however, she gave O-Hakami a little paper packet. The geisha told the maiko to give the packet to an honorable person who would look for her if she didn't return from Yugureda's island. The packet contains a piece of folded rice paper and an ivory *inro*, a small Minkai carrying case. On the paper is written a short poem, or *tanka*, in Minkaian. If translated, the poem reads as follows.

*I must discover  
what lies inside of myself  
to enter your place  
through dark and shadowed gates, but  
the reflection is not me.*

## O-SAYUMI'S INRO

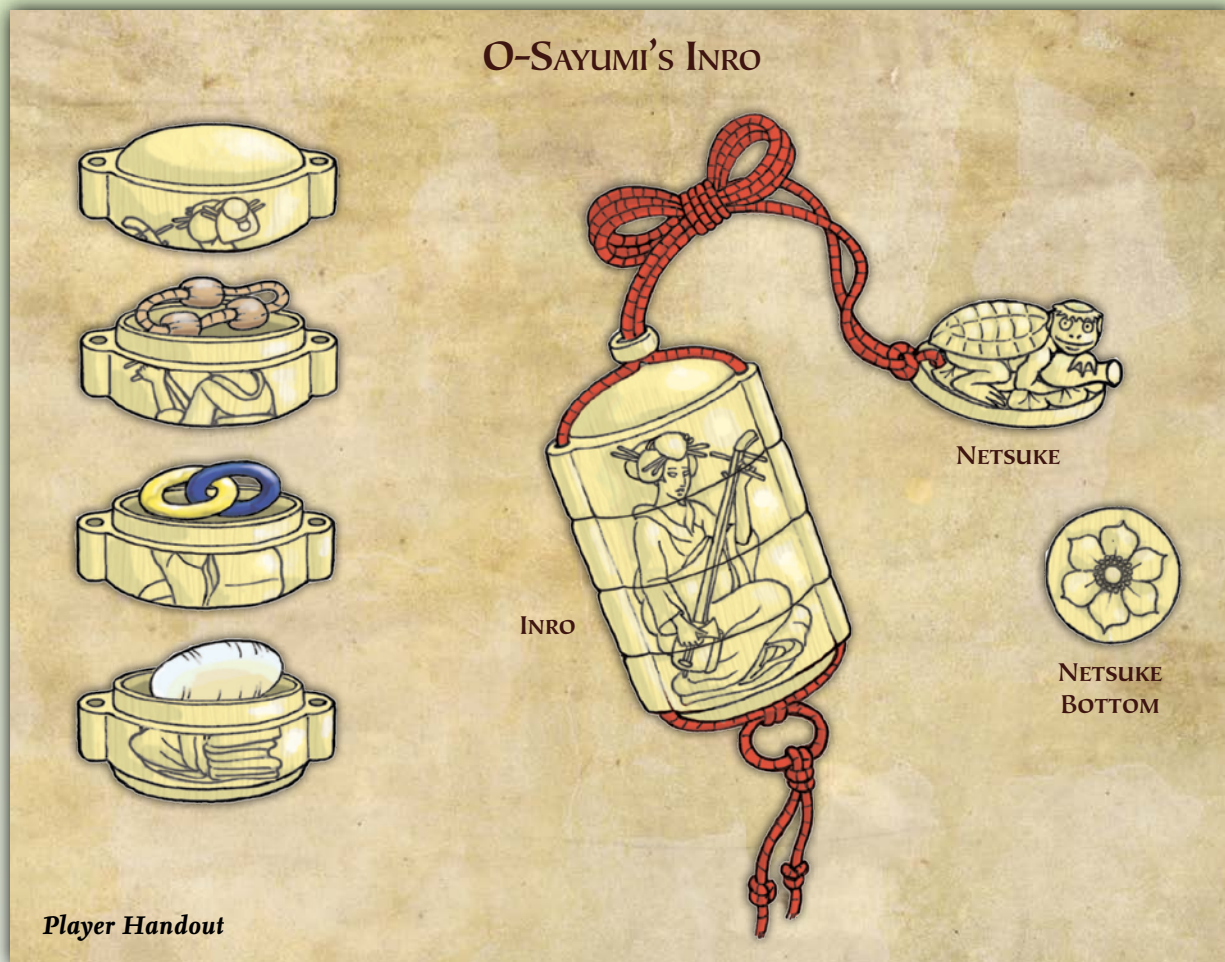
The inro O-Sayumi left behind is a small ivory box with four segments, held closed with a silk cord, a sliding fastener, and a *netsuke* (decorative toggle) to hang it from a sash. The segments of the inro are engraved with a depiction of a geisha playing the samisen. The netsuke is carved into the likeness of strange turtle-like humanoid holding a vase in its webbed hands, and a six-petaled magnolia flower is carved on the bottom of the netsuke.

O-Sayumi's inro, together with her *tanka*, contains several clues designed to lead potential rescuers to where she is imprisoned—the dungeons beneath Yugureda Shosaito's home, at the end of a maze that actually exists on the Shadow Plane, which only Yugureda and his nue cohort Tosakage know how to navigate safely. To find O-Sayumi, the PCs must decipher the clues contained in the *tanka* and inro.

O-Hakami thinks that the geisha on the inro represents O-Sayumi herself, and the *tanka* tells the PCs to "discover what lies inside" O-Sayumi to reach a place through several "dark and shadowed gates"—in other words, look inside the inro for clues to traversing the Shadow Maze leading to Yugureda's inner sanctum. In addition, the *tanka* warns the PCs to avoid the tapped mirrors in the Shadow Maze ("the reflection is not me").

A DC 12 Knowledge [nature] check identifies the turtle creature on the netsuke as a kappa. O-Hakami believed that the kappa might represent Numataro-sama, a figure O-Sayumi often joked about and referred to as her "uncle." The fact that the inro with O-Sayumi's image hangs from the kappa-shaped netsuke hints that Numataro-sama can help the PCs rescue the geisha, while the six-petal magnolia flower on the netsuke's underside represents the great magnolia tree where Numataro-sama can be found (see The Wise Kappa on page 30).

## O-SAYUMI'S INRO



### Player Handout

The segments of the inro actually form three small compartments. A maker's mark is stamped inside the lid of the inro. A DC 15 Knowledge (local) check identifies the mark as belonging to a local artisan named Saburo. Inside the compartments, the inro contains three odd items: an empty silkworm cocoon in the lower compartment; two interlocking stone rings, one of yellow calcite and one of blue lapis lazuli, in the middle compartment; and three camphorwood beads on a cord ring in the upper compartment.

These three items are the clues to traversing Yugureda's Shadow Maze, and have the following meanings. Details of the Shadow Maze can be found in area G2 on page 37.

1. The silkworm cocoon in the lower compartment means to first pass through the gate with the silk curtain. Five gates in the maze contain fabric curtains, but only one is silk. All of the curtains are a natural white color, and appear identical in the dim light of the Shadow Maze. Anyone using the cocoon as an example can recognize the right fabric by touch and smell with a successful DC 20 Perception check. A character with at least one rank in a Craft or Profession skill related to textiles automatically succeeds, as does any creature with the scent ability.

2. The two interlocking rings of yellow calcite and blue lapis lazuli mean the second gate to traverse is the green jade moon gate. The maze has five moon gates, each framed with a different colored stone, but only one frame is green jade. There is no color in the Shadow Maze, and a DC 20 Perception check is required to distinguish the correct hue. A creature with low-light vision, or one canny enough to compare an item of similar color (such as a green cloak) with the gate, gains a +2 circumstance bonus on the roll. A creature with the stonemasonry ability or with at least one rank in a Craft or Profession skill related to stone or minerals automatically succeeds.

3. The three camphorwood beads mean the third gate to pass through is the gate with the camphorwood bead curtain. Five gates in the maze contain bead curtains. The beads are all a natural light brown color, and appear identical in the Shadow Maze. Using the beaded cord ring as an example, a DC 20 Perception check is required to recognize the right wood by touch and smell. A character with at least one rank in the Craft (carpentry) skill, the ability to identify plants, or the scent ability succeeds automatically.



The players can deduce all of the above facts on their own, but you can give additional clues to those PCs who succeed at a DC 15 Intelligence check. Possible clues include the fact that the intro's items are ordered in a sequence, that the interlocking rings have a round shape and refer to some kind of combination, and the like.

## THE FATE OF O-SAYUMI

The pearl merchant Yugureda Shosaito is indeed a wizard, and his obsession with O-Sayumi goes back over 20 years, when the merchant was married to O-Sayumi's mother, a lady of modest origins named Kaori. At that time, Yugureda already lived in Shinju-no-Ie, administering his pearl fishing business and studying the arcane arts. Yugureda used alchemy and magic to increase the production of pearls, and when Sakakabe Province fell under the influence of the Sikutsu clan, Yugureda was already very rich. When the Sikutsu family offered Yugureda the opportunity to become their business partner and begin the large-scale export of pearls to other Tian nations, Yugureda began using dark magic to further increase the production, summoning sea monsters and conducting experiments on the human body.

Needless to say, his gentle wife was shocked, and tried to dissuade her husband from violating the laws of nature for profit. Yugureda's marriage was already an unhappy one, and when he was offered the hand of a noble lady to cement his pact with the Sikutsu clan, the evil wizard decided to get rid of his first wife. Kaori sensed the danger, however, and fled into the swamps bordering Namidakame Lagoon with their infant child. Yugureda sent his nue cohort, a monstrous tiger with the head of a fanged monkey and a viper for a tail, after her, and Kaori was slain by the beast. Just before the nue reached her, however, Kaori abandoned the baby in a basket next to a stream, where she was later found by the kappa Numataro-sama (see *The Wise Kappa* on page 30).

Years later, Yugureda visited the Kiniro Kyomai in Sakakabe and saw O-Sayumi, now working as a geisha in the teahouse. The merchant immediately noticed O-Sayumi's resemblance to her mother, and after making discreet inquiries, determined that the geisha might be his missing daughter. In his arcane studies, Yugureda had learned of an obscure ritual, similar to *magic jar*, to exchange consciousnesses between two bodies, but only if one of the bodies was of the blood of the caster. If O-Sayumi was truly Yugureda's natural daughter, then perhaps he could use this ritual to transfer the mind of his aging wife Tarukimi into O-Sayumi's youthful body, which so reminded him of his first love, Kaori.

Yugureda began wooing O-Sayumi, and his persistence soon led the young geisha to make her own investigations into his origins, whereupon she learned

of Yugureda's marriage to her mother, and the fact that the wizard was responsible for Kaori's death, through his nue cohort Tosakage. O-Sayumi resolved to have nothing to do with the man, but Yugureda threatened to kill the monks and orphans at the monastery where she was raised if she didn't accept his invitation. Hoping to stir compassion in her father's dark heart, O-Sayumi finally decided to accept Yugureda's invitation, and agreed to come to Shinju-no-Ie.

O-Sayumi expected treachery, however, so before she left, she used the *scrying* power of her *samisen of oracular vision* (see page 61) to track Tosakage as it traversed the Shadow Maze to learn the proper route. Afraid that Yugureda would find out if she left more explicit instructions, O-Sayumi created an intro to guide her rescuers along the correct path through the maze.

When O-Sayumi arrived at Yugureda's house, the wizard enacted his ritual to exchange O-Sayumi's soul with that of Tarukimi, but the ritual went awry. Now O-Sayumi's body sits lifeless in Yugureda's sanctum beyond the Shadow Maze, her soul trapped inside a pearl, while Yugureda desperately searches for a way to complete the ritual.

## THE SEARCH FOR O-SAYUMI

The PCs may wish to begin their search for O-Sayumi in Sakakabe. If they go to the port looking for Yugureda Shosaito, the harbormaster tells them that the pearl merchant's barge has not been seen for more than a month, which is unusual. The barge, in fact, used to visit the port every 2 weeks or so to transport supplies to Namidakame Lagoon, though Yugureda was on board only on rare occasions. During his visits to Sakakabe, the merchant did little more than bring pearls to sell to local dealers and spend time in the entertainment district. With a successful DC 20 Diplomacy or Intimidate check, or a bribe of at least 10 gp, the harbormaster adds that the last time the barge left the port, a young woman wearing a white veil and carrying a black *samisen* case had just come on board. The PCs can look for the half-dozen respected traders that buy Yugureda's pearls, but they won't learn any additional information.

During their stay in Sakakabe, the PCs might also want to visit Saburo, the artisan who created O-Sayumi's intro, and whose maker's mark is stamped inside the intro's lid. Saburo's workshop can be found in the vicinity of the entertainment district. Saburo is primarily a potter, and displays vases of all shapes and sizes in small window on the street. He also carves wood and ivory on commission, and created O-Sayumi's intro just a couple of months before her disappearance. Like many people in Sakakabe, Saburo adores the geisha and is very worried about her. If the PCs reveal their intention to rescue O-Sayumi,

Saburo gives them another object he crafted for her—a bulbous, long-necked vase with an unusually deep recess in the bottom. The vase, whose shape matches the one on the inro's netsuke, is painted with the likeness of a smiling kappa, and contains a pound of cucumber-scented bath salts, which can be used to summon the kappa Numataro-sama (see The Wise Kappa below).

If the PCs decide to seek out O-Sayumi's "uncle," the kappa Numataro-sama, a successful DC 20 Knowledge (local) check, DC 20 Knowledge (nature) check, or DC 15 Diplomacy check to gather information among the herbalists and fisherfolk of Sakakabe reveals that an aged kappa is said to live beneath a great magnolia tree at the mouth of the Jikko River, near the Namidakame Lagoon.

If the heroes try to find O-Sayumi with divination magic, they find only impenetrable darkness, as if the geisha had vanished into nothingness. O-Sayumi is actually imprisoned in Yugureda Shosaito's lair, which is warded by a permanent *mage's private sanctum* effect.

## NAMIDAKAME LAGOON

To reach Namidakame Lagoon and the house of the pearl merchant Yugureda Shosaito, the PCs must travel 70 miles northwest of Sakakabe. Read or paraphrase the following when they arrive at the lagoon (see the map on page 34).

The air around Namikadame Lagoon is strangely heavy, and a stifling cloak of silence seems to hang oppressively over the land and water. Half-shrouded by mist, a dark island rises from the water amid coral reefs. The colors of the landscape seem washed out around the island, their hues drained by an unnatural gloominess.

Over the years, the increasingly lonely and paranoid Yugureda Shosaito has turned his home into a place inhabited by enslaved monsters. Now, no humans but himself, his second wife Tarukimi, and poor O-Sayumi remain alive at Shinju-no-Ie. The crew of his barge are ja noi oni, his pearl divers have been turned into aquatic ghouls, his household servants have been transformed into murderous undead creatures, and his guardians are a pair of dragon turtles and his nue cohort.

If the PCs have traveled by land, they can find a ferry dock on the northern shore of the lagoon. Just visible in the middle of the lagoon is Yugureda's private island, with a pier extending into the waters of the lagoon. No one is present at the ferry dock, but a large, pole-propelled raft is moored at the dock and can easily carry the PCs across to the island.

## B. THE WISE KAPPA

If the PCs go in search of the kappa Numataro-sama, they can easily find the large magnolia tree standing on the bank of a stream in the delta of the Jikko River on the northeast shore of the lagoon with a successful DC 15 Survival check. A DC 12 Knowledge (nature) check reveals that kappas can often be contacted by offering them food, preferably cucumbers or horsemeat thrown into the water of the stream. Alternatively, if they received the kappa vase from Saburo, the PCs can sprinkle the cucumber-scented bath salts from the vase into the stream to call Numataro-sama. If correctly summoned, the kappa surfaces a few minutes later to greet the party.

**Creature: Numataro-sama** (CG male kappa oracle of lore 14) is one of the oldest living kappas in Minkai. He looks like a humanoid turtle with a wrinkled, apelike face, and an ashen ring of hair surrounds his bowl-shaped head, which is filled with water. Numataro-sama's shell is decorated with Irori's symbol, a blue hand in a circle, and although he leans on gnarled wooden staff, he remains



NUMATARO-SAMA



youthful and energetic. Numataro-sama is a skilled wrestler and a great master of natural healing, and is also a very good shogi player.

Kappas are usually inveterate tricksters, and are also known to drown those who venture too close or anger them. However, PCs who succeed at a DC 20 Sense Motive check perceive Numataro-sama's venerable age and great wisdom, and if he is greeted courteously, he is exceedingly polite in return. If the PCs mention O-Sayumi or the geisha's disappearance, Numataro-sama invites them into his home, a large, semi-submerged cave. The wizened kappa is immediately willing to aid the PCs in rescuing O-Sayumi, for she indeed became his adoptive "niece" more than 20 years before. If asked about his relationship with O-Sayumi, Numataro-sama is happy to tell the PCs the geisha's story.

When O-Sayumi was just a baby, her mother was killed by a monstrous tiger sent by an evil wizard. Desperate to save her child, O-Sayumi's mother left her infant in a basket on the bank of a stream under a blooming honeysuckle bush, and fled away from her. Fortunately, Numataro-sama found O-Sayumi before the tiger did, and took her to safety. The young O-Sayumi lived with Numataro-sama for several years, and the kappa took it upon himself to teach the girl many of the ancient stories and tales of Minkai. He grew to love his adopted "niece," whom he called Momo-chan, or "little butterfly," but he soon realized that the child needed more than he could give her—if nothing else, human companionship. So Numataro-sama took the little girl to an orphanage in a monastery of Irori. The monks adopted the child and taught her how to play the samisen, for which she showed an exceptional talent. When she was older, she left the monastery and traveled to Sakakabe, where she took the professional name O-Sayumi and became the respected geisha she is today.

Numataro-sama doesn't know why O-Sayumi agreed to meet with Yugureda Shosaito (and is saddened that she didn't come to visit him when she was so close), but he does know that the pearl merchant is a powerful wizard, and suspects he may even be the same wizard responsible for the death of O-Sayumi's mother. Numataro-sama also knows that Yugureda Shosaito is a shogi master, and the kappa shows the PCs a large shogiban carved in the rock floor of his cave. The stone playing pieces are twice the size of normal ones and radiate faint conjuration magic. Although there are not enough pieces to play a game anymore, Numataro-sama says that these old pieces can channel the greatest shogi player in Minkai if broken during a game. The kappa offers the party one of the pieces, the "angle mover," as a lucky charm. The PCs can use the piece when they encounter the magic shogiban in Shinju-no-Ie (see area F9).

## C. BARGE DOCK (CR 13)

Yugureda Shosaito's barge is tied up to a dock on the northern shore of his island.

**Creatures:** Eight ja noi, oni who take the form of hobgoblins, live aboard the barge. The oni crew the wizard's barge and perform chores on his property, and usually stay in human form. If the PCs take the raft from the ferry dock on the mainland to reach the island, or otherwise investigate the area around the barge dock, the ja noi issue forth to attack them.

### BARGE CREW (8)

CR 7

#### XP 3,200 each

Ja noi fighter 2 (*Pathfinder Adventure Path* #52 90)

LE Medium outsider (oni, goblinoid, native, shapechanger)

**Init** +7; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +11

#### DEFENSE

**AC** 20, touch 13, flat-footed 17 (+3 armor, +3 Dex, +4 natural)

**hp** 94 each (8d10+50); regeneration 3 (acid or fire)

**Fort** +14, **Ref** +8, **Will** +4; +1 vs. fear

**Defensive Abilities** bravery +1

#### OFFENSE

**Speed** 30 ft.

**Melee** +1 spear +17/+12 (1d8+13/19–20/x3)

**Ranged** javelin +11 (1d6+8)

**Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 6th; concentration +7)

3/day—*command* (DC 12), *doom* (DC 12), *fly*, *magic weapon*

1/day—*bull's strength*

#### TACTICS

**Before Combat** The barge crew cast *bull's strength* and *magic weapon* on their spears.

**During Combat** The ja noi gang up on foes, using *fly* if necessary for mobility in combat.

**Morale** If more than half their number are slain, the remaining ja noi try to flee using Yugureda's barge.

**Base Statistics** Without their spell-like abilities, the barge crew's statistics are **Melee** spear +14/+9 (1d8+9/19–20/x3);

**Ranged** javelin +11 (1d6+6); **Str** 23; **CMB** +14; **CMD** 27;

**Skills** Climb +15, Swim +15

#### STATISTICS

**Str** 27, **Dex** 17, **Con** 22, **Int** 12, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 12

**Base Atk** +8; **CMB** +16; **CMD** 29

**Feats** Athletic, Cleave, Improved Critical (spear), Improved Initiative, Lunge, Power Attack

**Skills** Bluff +10, Climb +17, Disguise +10, Fly +10, Intimidate +10, Perception +11, Profession (sailor) +11, Stealth +12, Swim +17

**Languages** Goblin, Minkaian, Tien

**SQ** change shape (Small or Medium humanoid, *alter self*), serene fighter

**Gear** masterwork studded leather, spear, javelins (3)

#### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Serene Fighter (Su)** A ja noi is extremely disciplined and

maintains its focus even in the midst of combat. Once per day as an immediate action, a ja noi may reroll a Will save.

## D. VILLAGE OF THE PEARL DIVERS (CR 12)

A small cluster of mud-walled huts sits on the northeast shore of the island, home to the pearl divers that collect pearls for Yugureda Shosaito from the reefs in Namidakame Lagoon.

**Creatures:** Yugureda infected the villagers here with a particularly virulent strain of ghoul fever in a necromantic experiment. Those who did not succumb to the disease were slain by the manananggals from area F6. Now only six pearl divers remain, transformed into powerful aquatic ghouls called lacedons. The pearl divers appear to be thin men and women dressed in loincloths and sleeveless shirts, with a faint bluish tint to their skin. As the PCs approach the island, they might spot one of the divers swimming with a wooden bucket and diving to collect pearls and other valuables. In this case, the pearl divers are wary of intruders, swimming out of sight among the reefs or diving deep into the lagoon. If the PCs approach their village, the lacedons regroup and attack them.

### PEARL DIVERS (6) CR 7

XP 3,200 each

Advanced lacedon expert 6 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 146)

CE Medium undead

**Init** +8; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +14

#### DEFENSE

**AC** 18, touch 14, flat-footed 14 (+4 Dex, +4 natural)

**hp** 88 each (11 HD; 5d8+6d8+39)

**Fort** +5, **Ref** +7, **Will** +11

**Defensive Abilities** channel resistance +2; **Immune** undead traits

#### OFFENSE

**Speed** 30 ft., swim 30 ft.

**Melee** bite +12 (1d6+2 plus disease and paralysis), 2 claws +12 (1d8+2 plus paralysis)

**Special Attacks** paralysis (1d4+1 rounds, DC 14, elves are immune to this effect)

#### TACTICS

**During Combat** The pearl divers attempt to paralyze and drown their foes before feasting on their flesh.

**Morale** If a pearl diver is reduced to 22 hit points or fewer, she flees, diving deep into the waters of the lagoon.

#### STATISTICS

**Str** 14, **Dex** 18, **Con** —, **Int** 11, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 15

**Base Atk** +7; **CMB** +9; **CMD** 23

**Feats** Improved Initiative, Improved Natural Attack (claw), Toughness, Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus (bite), Weapon Focus (claw)

**Skills** Acrobatics +16, Climb +14, Perception +14, Profession (pearl diver) +14, Stealth +16, Swim +24

**Languages** Minkaian, Tien

#### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Disease (Su)** *Ghoul Fever*: Bite—injury; save Fort DC 14; onset 1 day; frequency 1/day; effect 1d3 Con and 1d3 Dex damage; cure 2 consecutive saves.

**Development:** The pearl divers hand over all their pearls to Yugureda and have no treasure, but PCs who succeed at a DC 20 Perception check while searching the village discover a concealed trap door in one of the huts. The trap door opens onto a tunnel that leads 500 yards southwest to the Shadow Maze beneath Shinju-no-Ie (area G1).

## E. CAVE OF THE SEA DRAGONS (CR 12)

This small island lies just east of Yugureda's island, near the mouth of the Jikko River.

**Creatures:** Yugureda has made a pact with a mated pair of evil dragon turtles, who act as the main guardians of his pearl grounds in exchange for fresh seafood and the occasional human sacrifice. Locals know them by the nicknames Bekko-eki and Kekko-shou, or "Great Shell" and "Small Shell." The dragon turtles usually sleep in a submerged cave under the island, but they are likely to notice an approaching barge or raft, the sounds of combat, or any kind of unusual activity on the shore, which soon brings the dragon turtles to investigate. They attack any boats in the lagoon other than Yugureda's barge.

### BEKKO-EKI AND KEKKO-SHOU (2) CR 10

XP 9,600 each

NE advanced dragon turtle (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 112, 294)

**hp** 150 each

#### TACTICS

**During Combat** The dragon turtles try to attack intruders by surprise, suddenly surfacing to capsized boats and puff out clouds of searing steam.

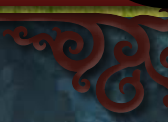
**Morale** If one of the dragon turtles is slain, the survivor fights to the death to avenge its mate.

**Treasure:** The dragon turtles' submerged cave can be found with a DC 20 Perception check made while underwater, requiring a searcher to hold her breath or breathe water. Bekko-eki and Kekko-shou keep a remarkable hoard of pearls, precious shells, and gemstones in their lair, worth a total of 10,000 gp.

## SHINJU-NO-IE, THE HOUSE OF PEARLS

Yugureda Shosaito's house, Shinju-no-Ie, must once have been a beautiful seaside villa with a colorful tile roof, surrounded by pleasant gardens. As with everything else on the island, however, it seems that a cold shadow has slowly crept over the place, leaving it a dull, gloomy husk of its former splendor. A plastered brick wall surrounds the house, with two gates, one to the north and one to the east. From the





north gate, a path leads to the barge dock, while a second path leads from the east gate to the pearl divers' village.

Both gates are slightly open, and the house looks almost abandoned. Other than the stables, storerooms, and kitchen, most of the rooms in the house do not have doors. Instead, they are partitioned with sliding panels called *shoji*, made of translucent rice paper over a wooden lattice (hardness 0, hp 2, Break DC 10).

Most of the rooms in Shinju-no-Ie are unoccupied, and contain little of interest, so they do not receive detailed descriptions. Certain rooms, however, do contain encounters, and these are described after the room summary below.

**F1. Sentry Box:** A short flight of steps leads up to a raised sentry box standing beside each of the house's gates, to the north and the east, but both boxes are empty.

**F2. Courtyards:** Shinju-no-Ie incorporates two courtyards inside each gate. Each contains a brick oven, both of which seem to have been used recently and are full of ash and blackened debris.

**F3. Stables:** The house's north and south courtyards each contain their own stable, but only moldy hay remains in the stalls.

**F4. Garden:** This ornamental garden is unkempt and overgrown with weeds.

**F5. Storage:** The house's three storerooms are stocked with mundane household items, all clean and in good order, but food is exceptionally scarce. The large storeroom to the south contains several large water barrels, almost all empty.

**F6. Servants' Rooms:** These areas are detailed below.

**F7. Privies:** A small lavatory also opens onto each courtyard. Both are unoccupied.

**F8. Kitchen:** A small kitchen, clean and scarcely used, sits between the two courtyards.

**F9. Main Reception Room:** This area is detailed below.

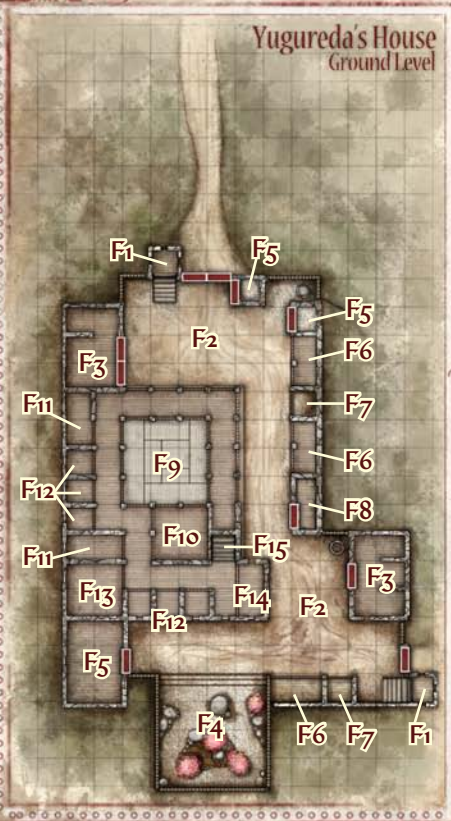
**F10. Side Reception Room:** This area is detailed below.

**F11. Baths:** Each of these two baths contains a large wooden tub, full of cold water.



## Shinju-no-Ie

- I Mirror Trap
- Safe Gate
- Silk Curtain
- Green Moon Gate
- Camphor Beads
- Trap Gate
- Orange Moon Gate
- Cherry Beads
- Mulberry Beads
- Cotton Curtain
- Purple Moon Gate
- Linen Curtain



Bland II



**F12. Guest Room:** Six guest rooms run along perimeter of the main house. They contain simple furnishings and are all empty.

**F13. Master Bedroom:** This is Yugureda's bedroom, but he rarely uses it, and instead spends most of his time in the Shadow Maze beneath the house.

**F14. Tea Room:** This room provides a peaceful setting for tea ceremonies, but is currently empty, except for a few low tables.

**F15. Cellar Stairs:** These steep stone stairs lead to the sake cellar (area G1) and Shadow Maze beneath the house.

## F6. SERVANTS' ROOMS (CR 12)

There are three bedrooms for Yugureda's housekeepers located around the two courtyards. Of all the rooms in the house, these look the most lived-in.

**Creatures:** Yugureda has transformed his housekeepers into manananggal, horrible undead creatures who separate their upper torsos at night to feed on the living. During the day, the women stay inside, out of the sun, and carry out mundane domestic chores around the house. If encountered during the day, the women claim to be simple domestic servants, with no knowledge of their master's whereabouts or dark deeds, and try to stay out of the PCs' way until nightfall. At night, the housekeepers' upper torsos detach from their lower bodies, and they fly around the lagoon and to the mainland to hunt for living prey, leaving their helpless lower torsos behind in these rooms. During this time, they attack any living creatures they find in the house, on the island, or on the waters of the lagoon.

### YUGUREDA'S HOUSEKEEPERS (4) CR 8

**XP 4,800 each**

Female manananggal rogue 2 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 3 190)

CE Medium undead

**Init** +5; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +19

#### DEFENSE

**AC** 22, touch 16, flat-footed 16 (+5 Dex, +1 dodge, +6 natural)

**hp** 114 each (12 HD; 10d8+2d8+60)

**Fort** +8, **Ref** +13, **Will** +11

**Defensive Abilities** evasion; **DR** 10/good or silver; **Immune** undead traits

**Weaknesses** light sensitivity, vulnerable to light blades

#### OFFENSE

**Speed** 30 ft., fly 100 ft. (good)

**Melee** bite +14 (1d8+6), 2 claws +15 (1d8+6 plus grab)

**Special Attacks** blood drain (1d2 Constitution), sneak attack +1d6

**Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 9th; concentration +14)

At will—*bleed* (DC 15), *dancing lights*, *touch of fatigue* (DC 15)  
3/day—*darkness*, *deep slumber* (DC 18), *fear* (DC 19)

#### TACTICS

**During Combat** The manananggal use Stealth to take opponents by surprise, then coordinate flanking attacks

with one another, using their Flyby Attack feat to avoid being pinned down in combat.

**Morale** If reduced to 30 hit points or fewer, a manananggal withdraws to rejoin the lower half of her body.

#### STATISTICS

**Str** 23, **Dex** 21, **Con** —, **Int** 12, **Wis** 18, **Cha** 21

**Base Atk** +8; **CMB** +14 (+18 grapple); **CMD** 30

**Feats** Deceitful, Dodge, Flyby Attack, Lightning Reflexes, Weapon Focus (claws), Wingover

**Skills** Bluff +24, Disguise +24, Fly +20, Knowledge (religion) +11, Perception +19, Sense Motive +12, Spellcraft +6, Stealth +20

**Languages** Abyssal, Minkaian, Tien

**SQ** rogue talents (surprise attack), separate, trapfinding +1

#### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Separate (Su)** During the day, a manananggal looks like a living human woman. She does not detect as undead during the day, but is still an undead creature. At night, her upper torso rips away (this is a full-round action that occurs at sunset), leaving her lower torso behind. Her lower torso is helpless, but her upper torso gains its fly speed and natural attacks at this time. The upper and lower portions share the same pool of hit points (despite any intervening distance), and if the helpless lower portion is damaged, the manananggal is immediately aware of the attack. Since manananggal can be destroyed by damage to their lower bodies, they prefer to hide their lower torsos when separated. A manananggal must return to its lower torso and reattach to it (a full-round action) within the hour before sunrise—each round a manananggal remains separated after sunrise, it takes 1d6 points of damage until it rejoins its lower torso or it crumbles into dust.

**Vulnerable to Light Blades (Ex)** Light blades (such as daggers, kamas, kukris, rapiers, short swords, sickles, and starknives) deal double the weapon's base damage on a successful hit against a manananggal.

## F9. MAIN RECEPTION ROOM (CR 12)

Shoji screens form the walls of this large, tatami-floored room. A lantern hangs from the center of the ceiling, filling the room with yellow light. Under the lantern stands a traditional, four-legged shogi-ban table, with two pillows for players to sit upon and two small side tables for captured pieces.

The master of Shinju-no-Ie normally greets visitors and guests in this room, which also serves as a living room, dining room, and salon. The room is empty, but a game seems to be in progress on the shogi-ban. A DC 15 Intelligence check reveals that one of the sides is clearly winning the game. The shogi-ban radiates strong illusion and necromancy magic.

If a character touches the shogi-ban or any of the pieces, the PCs hear the soft sound of a shoji panel sliding open, and the figure of a dark-clad, middle-aged

man with a long moustache and beard and wearing a tall courtier's hat emerges from the shadows of the corridor. The man bows politely to the visitors, then indicates the shogi table with one long-nailed hand. "As you can see," the man says, "one side is winning the game. But is it the King, or the Jade General?" He throws back his head and laughs diabolically, then disappears.

The man is a *programmed image* of Yugureda Shosaito, left here to taunt any would-be rescuers of O-Sayumi. Immediately after the *programmed image* ends, the magic effect of the shogi-ban activates, causing walls of semisolid shadow to rise from the floor, isolating each creature in the room in a 5-foot-square cell with translucent mother-of-pearl walls.

In fact, every creature in the room has been transported to a three-dimensional shogi board located on the Shadow Plane. The shogi board is 45 feet square, divided into 81 cells, forming a 9-by-9 grid. The walls of the cells are created from raw shadowstuff, similar to objects created using *shadow conjuration*, and are only one-fifth as strong as normal walls.

These quasi-real walls are bathed in a ghostly light and do not block sound, so the PCs can see within their own spaces, hear their companions, and guess their positions on the board. The walls do block sight and line of effect, however. A creature can attack or break through a wall (hardness 1, hp 12, Break DC 4), though breaking a wall provokes an attack of opportunity from any enemy on the other side of the wall. When a section of wall is broken, it makes a distinctive noise somewhere between shattered glass and torn canvas. All broken walls re-form to their original unbroken state at the end of every round.

A creature can disbelieve the illusion with a successful DC 16 Will save, seeing the walls as transparent, shadowy images, but each wall the creature interacts with still has a 20% chance of affecting the creature as normal. Two or more creatures inside a single cell are considered to be squeezing. If a creature breaks through the outer walls of the grid and leaves the "board," it ends up back in the room on the Material Plane. Any creatures that leave the board and return to the room can still be attacked by the shadows on the board. If the shogi-ban in the room is destroyed (hardness 5, hp 15, Break DC 23, save bonus +9), all living creatures on the board are immediately transported back to the room.

**Creatures:** When the PCs are transported to the Shadow Plane shogi board, a group of black figures pour out of the shadows as well. These four greater shadows are former shogi players whose damned souls are linked to Yugureda's shogi-ban. The shadows appear in random cells on the board, and because of their incorporeal state, are unaffected by the quasi-real walls. The shadows cannot see through the walls, but they can sense the

presence of creatures within a square of their current position. When they attack through a wall, the shadows can either maintain total cover, taking a 50% miss chance, or they can partially emerge, maintaining only partial cover and taking only a 20% miss chance (and exposing themselves to a readied attack action).

If they have not detected any living creatures by noise, the shadows move in straight lines until they sense the presence of an enemy beyond an adjacent wall. The shadows are completely silent, so the PCs cannot guess their locations from sound alone. If a shadow does not make contact with an enemy, it makes a second move in another direction. The shadows attack creatures that have escaped the shogi board back to the room only if they cannot detect any more creatures on the board. The shadows fight until destroyed.

## DARK SHOJI-KA MASTERS (4)

CR 8

XP 4,800 each

Greater shadow (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 245)

hp 58 each

**Development:** If one of the PCs is carrying the magic shogi "angle mover" piece given them by Numataro-sama (see page 31), that PC gains a +1 luck bonus on all attack rolls, damage rolls, saving throws, and skill checks for the duration of the encounter. If the shogi piece is broken during the battle (a standard action), the piece summons the dream self of the sohei Habesuta Hatsue. The PC loses the shogi piece's luck bonus, but Hatsue fights against the shadows with uncanny determination. Use Hatsue's normal stats (see page 8), but her dream self's armor and weapons are treated as if they had the *ghost touch* special ability.

At some point during the battle, the incorporeal sohei looks at one of the PCs in astonishment and asks, "What are you doing in my dream?" Hatsue's dream self and the shogi piece disappear at the end of the battle, but miles away, the real Hatsue wakes up from a nap in Seinaru Heikiko, healed of her nocturnal terrors.

**Story Award:** If the PCs use Numataro-sama's magic shogi piece to summon Habesuta Hatsue, thus freeing the sohei from her nightmares, award them 9,600 XP.

## FIG. SIDE RECEPTION ROOM

This side room, separated from the main reception room by sliding shoji doors, is used for private meetings with visitors. The room is currently empty, but 100 playing cards are strewn across the floor in one corner of the room, each card inscribed with half of a short poem. These cards are used in a traditional Minkai card game called *uta-garuta*, in which players must recognize the poem a reader recites and find the matching half of the



poem among the cards. A DC 15 Knowledge (arcana) check made while examining the cards notices that arcane writings are mixed in with the normal verses. The cards are nonmagical, but a DC 25 Spellcraft check reveals that the arcane writings are related to the *magic jar* spell. The cards are incomplete in some way, however, and it is clear that something went wrong when the cards' necromantic effect was triggered. Yugureda used the cards as the focus of a ritual aimed to exchange the souls of O-Sayumi and his wife Tarukimi, but the ritual went awry, and the souls of the two women remain trapped outside their bodies (see area G3).

### SHINJU-NO-IE DUNGEON

To find Yugureda Shosaito and O-Sayumi, the PCs must descend the stone stairs on the ground floor (area F15) into the cellar, where Yugureda conducts his arcane experiments. The dungeon under Shinju-no-Ie was dug out of the bare rock of the island, though the wizard has separated his sanctum from the rest of the cellar by transforming the short tunnel that once connected the two areas of the dungeon into a maze full of deadly perils that actually exists on the Shadow Plane (area G2). Yugureda's sanctum is now only accessible via this shadow maze, though Yugureda himself can use *shadow walk* to move instantly and precisely to his inner sanctum from the outside. The rooms beyond the maze (areas G3 through G6) are protected by a permanent *mage's private sanctum* effect, which effectively blocks all attempts at magical scrying. Except for the Shadow Maze, which has its own unique appearance, the ceilings in the dungeon are 10 feet high, and the lacquered wooden doors are unlocked.

### G1. SAKE CELLAR

The stairs lead down to a large room hewn in the rock. The room is cool and moist, and smells faintly of alcohol. Four sets of shelves stand in the corners, containing scores of ceramic bottles, glass vials, and small barrels of various sizes and shapes. Two passages, to the north and east, lead into darkness.

Numerous varieties of sake are stored on the shelves in this cellar. The north passage leads to the Shadow Maze (area G2). The east passage leads to a 500-yard-long tunnel that connects the cellar with a concealed trap door under a hut in the pearl diver village (area D).

**Treasure:** This cellar is a treasure of sake, offering a multitude of blends, tastes, and flavors. Although sake, unlike wine, lasts only a few months, there are very old bottles that seem to have preserved their original contents. A DC 15 Craft (alchemy) or DC 20 Knowledge (arcana) check notices that alchemy has been used to preserve, alter, or enhance the various bottles of sake

stored here. If collected and sold, the sake in the room is worth 2d6×100 gp.

### G2. SHADOW MAZE (CR 14)

The walls of this dark corridor are engraved with dense patterns of arcane graffiti. A fine dust covers the stone floor, diffusing into the air when stirred by footsteps. Everything looks a little blurry, as if a shadowy duplicate of the corridor has been superimposed onto the passage.

With the help of a wayang sorcerer, Yugureda Shosaito replaced the original 20-foot-long section of tunnel that once connected area G1 to area G3 with this shadow maze, which actually exists on the Shadow Plane. Inside the maze, there is only dim light, and there is no color—everything is black, white, and shades of gray. Spells with the shadow descriptor are enhanced on the Shadow Plane, while spells with the light descriptor or that use or generate light or fire are impeded on the Shadow Plane (see page 187 of the *Pathfinder RPG GameMastery Guide*). Spells that produce light are less effective in general, because all light sources have their ranges halved on the Shadow Plane.

Only Yugureda and his nue cohort, Tosakage, know the correct path through the maze. Fifteen “gates” made of different materials stand throughout the maze. Five of the gates have fabric curtains—two have linen curtains, two have cotton curtains, and one has a silk curtain. Five are circular gateways called moon gates—two have orange agate frames, two have violet jasper frames, and one has a green jade frame. The other five gates have wooden bead curtains—two with cherrywood beads, two with mulberrywood beads, and one with camphorwood beads.

The correct (and safest) route through the Shadow Maze passes through only three of the gates—the silk curtain (gate I), the green jade moon gate (gate II), and the camphorwood bead curtain (gate III). The clues in O-Sayumi's intro (see page 27) were designed to guide her rescuers through these gates.

**Creatures:** The other gates in the maze lead to small, empty rooms. When a creature passes through any of the gates other than three “correct” ones, a number of creatures from the Shadow Plane are summoned into the room beyond it to attack any creature straying from the correct path through the maze. If the PCs repeatedly choose the wrong path through the maze, they will have to deal with more and more of these monsters. After a group of creatures is summoned into a room, the summoning effect of the gate leading to the room ceases to function for 24 hours. The actual gates in the maze are purely cosmetic (i.e., they simply show the correct route through the maze), and destroying a gate does

not deactivate the summoning effect. The number and type of creatures summoned depends on the room, as follows:

Area **B2a**: Three dread wraiths led by a spectre.

Area **B2b**: Four tenebrous worms.

Area **B2c**: Four greater shadows.

## DREAD WRAITHS (3) CR 7

Advanced giant wraith (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 281, 294, 295)

hp 67 each

## GREATER SHADOWS (4) CR 8

hp 58 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 245)

## SPECTRE CR 7

hp 52 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 256)

## TENEBOUS WORMS (4) CR 8

hp 105 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 2 260)

**Traps:** In addition to the summoned gate monsters, Yugureda has placed eight full-length mirrors throughout the maze that launch magical attacks when light reaches them. The mirrors are octagonal, though twisted and irregular in shape, and seem to be made of some kind of dark crystal. When a mirror is illuminated by a light source providing at least normal light within 20 feet, the mirror trap triggers, launching a *shadow evocation* spell targeting or centered on the closest creature to the light source. The mirrors break after they are triggered, but they reform out of shadowstuff after 24 hours.

## SHADOW MIRROR TRAPS (8) CR 8

Type magic; Perception DC 30; Disable Device DC 30

### EFFECTS

**Trigger** visual (normal light); **Reset** automatic (24 hours)

**Effect** spell effect (*shadow evocation* [CL 14th], roll 1d4 for the exact spell effect)

- 1—*magic missile* (5 missiles, 1d4+1 damage each, DC 22 Will save reduces damage to 20%)
- 2—*scorching ray* (Atk +8 ranged touch, 3 rays, 4d6 fire damage each, DC 22 Will save reduces damage to 20%)
- 3—*lightning bolt* (10d6 electricity damage, DC 22 Reflex halves, DC 22 Will save further reduces damage to 20%); multiple targets (all targets in a 120-ft. line)
- 4—*ice storm* (3d6 bludgeoning damage plus 2d6 cold damage, DC 22 Will save reduces damage to 20%); multiple targets (all targets in a 20-ft.-radius area)

**Story Award:** Award the PCs 38,400 XP for negotiating the perils of the Shadow Maze, regardless of whether they follow O-Sayumi's clues or the number of monsters or traps the party actually faces.

## G3. LOUNGE (CR 12)

Illuminated by a lantern and furnished with carpets, tapestries, and cushions, this large room is dry and comfortable. A life-sized statue of an eight-armed female humanoid sits in the lotus position on a platform in the northwest corner. The statue holds a strange string instrument and several sets of hand cymbals. Near the middle of the room, two women kneel on the floor facing each other, as immobile as the statue. One of the women looks mature and elegant, wearing a rich, multi-layered kimono that spreads on the floor, as does her very long hair. The younger woman is equally graceful and very beautiful, and is dressed like a geisha.

The two women are Yugureda's wife, Tarukimi, and O-Sayumi—or more accurately, their apparently lifeless bodies. The two were playing uta-garuta upstairs when Yugureda treacherously extracted their souls with his experimental ritual. The ritual failed, however, leaving the women's bodies empty shells without their souls. Yugureda has not yet given up hope of completing the ritual, or failing that, restoring their souls back to their rightful bodies to try again. Until he can do so, however, he must keep both women's bodies intact, and had them moved to this chamber for safekeeping.

The women seem frozen in place, their eyes half closed and their skin cold to the touch. A DC 23 Knowledge (arcana) check recognizes that both bodies have been preserved with *gentle repose*, while a second DC 25 Knowledge (arcana) check reveals that the bodies appear to have been emptied of their souls, as if by a *magic jar* spell (the PCs gain a +2 bonus on the second check if they found and deciphered the uta-garuta cards in area **F10**). A successful check also allows the PCs to realize that O-Sayumi's body can be restored if they find the *magic jar* receptacle that holds her soul. *Dispel magic* has no effect on the bodies other than to end the *gentle repose* effect; the *magic jar* effect can only be dispelled if one of the women's souls inhabits a body, or if cast on the *magic jar* receptacle.

**Creature:** Yugureda's cohort Tosakage has been left in this chamber to guard the bodies of O-Sayumi and Tarukimi. Tosakage is a nue, a beast with a tiger's body, a fanged monkey's head, and a venomous serpent for a tail, who can also can turn himself into a cloud of darkness. Tosakage is a savage beast who enjoys inflicting cruelty and terror on his enemies. It was Tosakage who killed O-Sayumi's mother, Kaori, and his monstrous shadow that O-Hakami saw when she spied upon O-Sayumi during the geisha's divinatory trances. Tosakage is absolutely loyal to his master, and attacks anyone who makes it through the Shadow Maze into this room.



## TOSAKAGE

CR 12

## XP 19,200

Male advanced nue (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 3* 204)

NE Large magical beast

**Init** +10; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception +20

## DEFENSE

**AC** 27, touch 16, flat-footed 20 (+6 Dex, +1 dodge, +11 natural, -1 size)**hp** 161 (14d10+84)**Fort** +15, **Ref** +15, **Will** +11

## OFFENSE

**Speed** 30 ft.**Melee** bite +21 (2d6+8 plus energy drain), bite +21 (1d4+8 plus poison), 2 claws +21 (1d6+8)**Space** 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.**Special Attacks** energy drain (2 levels, DC 19), pounce**Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 12th; concentration +14)3/day—*contagion* (DC 16), *hold person* (DC 15)1/day—*nightmare* (DC 17), *shout* (DC 16), *waves of fatigue*

## TACTICS

**During Combat** Tosakage attacks intruders with *shout* and *waves of fatigue* before pouncing into combat. He casts *hold person* on spellcasters while he tries to bite and uses his energy drain ability against those who engage him in melee combat.**Morale** If reduced to fewer than 75 hit points, Tosakage retreats to area G6 to join his master.

## STATISTICS

**Str** 26, **Dex** 23, **Con** 22, **Int** 11, **Wis** 21, **Cha** 14**Base Atk** +14; **CMB** +23; **CMD** 40 (44 vs. trip)**Feats** Combat Casting, Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Mobility, Skill Focus (Stealth)**Skills** Climb +15, Perception +20, Stealth +23**Languages** Tien**SQ** cloud form

## SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Cloud Form (Su)** Tosakage can change into the form of a 10-foot black cloud or back to his normal form as a standard action. A nue in cloud form is otherwise treated as if under the effects of *gaseous form*, except that it obscures vision like fog cloud.**Poison (Ex)** Bite—injury; *save* Fort DC 23; *frequency* 1/round for 6 rounds; *effect* 1d4 Strength; *cure* 2 consecutive saves.

**Treasure:** The statue on the platform represents a minor Vudrani death goddess, identifiable as such with a DC 20 Knowledge (religion) check. The statue is made of hollow bronze and is quite bulky. The statue weighs upward of 150 pounds, but it is valuable as an art object, worth 2,000 gp. If sold to a Vudrani temple or a collector of Vudrani religious icons or art, the statue could be worth up to twice that amount.

## G4. STUDY

This small room contains a writing desk with a tall chair, a small cabinet, and two bookshelves units loaded with scrolls. An unlit lantern sits on the desk. Near the chair, a long, dark case lies on the mat-covered floor.

The shelves hold Yugureda's archives, the accounts of 20 years of his business, as well as a few maps of Minkai. In the cabinet are bunches of aromatic herbs, jars of honey, vases of sea salt, ink blocks, quills, and other trivial items. A DC 25 Perception check reveals that one of the shelves on the east wall is curiously empty. Pushing the empty shelf inside the wall and sliding the entire bookshelf aside reveals a secret door that opens into a stone-paved corridor leading to areas G5 and G6.

**Treasure:** In addition to their mundane contents, the shelves hold *scrolls of bestow curse*, *ice storm*, and *lightning bolt*. The cabinet also contains *potions of bull's strength*, *cure moderate wounds*, *protection from energy (cold)*, and *water breathing*. The case on the floor is tied with silk ribbons and contains O-Sayumi's *samisen of oracular vision* (see page 61) and an ivory plectrum.

## G5. LABORATORY

This chamber is an alchemical laboratory with a marble table in the middle of the room and an assortment of alembics and other tools of the trade neatly stored on wall shelves. A wheeled cart stands near the table, with a set of silver surgery implements on its upper shelf and an array of ominous-looking torture implements on the lower shelf.

Yugureda has conducted his experiments in pearl farming in this laboratory for the past 20 years. It has also occasionally served as a room for the transformation of living humans into undead, as a trio of bare skulls—human, lacedon, and manananggal—on a shelf grimly testify.

**Treasure:** Several wooden crates under the shelves contain shards of mother-of-pearl, worth a total 100 gp. A small wooden box on one of the shelves holds a dozen oversized, oddly shaped pearls (worth 200 gp each).

## G6. ROOM OF SHADOWS (CR 14)

The colors in this large room have completely faded, and even the familiar scent of green tea seems to have lost part of its fragrance. Panels of gray wood line the walls, imitating the lattice of rice paper shoji walls, and the floor is paved in marble. An ornate archway stands in the middle of the north wall, opening onto a short tunnel that ends in a stain of inky darkness. Four braziers burn in the corners, dimly illuminating the room with a shadowy light.

# JADE REGENT

Like the Shadow Maze, this chamber is only dimly lit. While the archway in the north wall is not an actual portal or gate, the barriers between the Material Plane and the Shadow Plane are especially thin here, and shadowstuff from the Shadow Plane occasionally bleeds through, resulting in the faded colors and scents in the room. Over the years, Yugureda Shosaito has used this proximity to the Shadow Plane to forge uneasy alliances with denizens of that plane, and was able to transform the short tunnel that connects area G1 to area G3 into the Shadow Maze.

**Creature:** Yugureda Shosaito waits here for a final showdown with the PCs, standing next to the table against the east wall. He is sipping a cup of tea, his pale face illuminated by the candle glowing under the tea kettle on the table. When Yugureda extracted the souls of

O-Sayumi and Tarukimi from their bodies, O-Sayumi's soul was siphoned into its intended receptacle (a large pearl), but Tarukimi's soul escaped, leaving him unable to complete the ritual. In fact, Tarukimi's soul was drawn into the Shadow Plane, and now wanders aimless and lost through the shadowy gloom of that plane. Yugureda has no idea where his wife's soul went, however, and until he can find it and restore it, he must hold on to O-Sayumi's soul and both women's bodies. Since the ritual's failure, Yugureda has desperately been trying to fix things, but the loss of Tarukimi's soul has seriously unbalanced his mind.

If the PCs threaten or move to attack Yugureda, he lowers his teacup and whispers (in T'ien), "I wouldn't rush that, if I were you. You want to save the girl, don't you?"

If the PCs stop, Yugureda smiles and reaches into a vase full to the brim with pearls, letting a handful of pearls fall back into the vase from between his long-nailed fingers. "Of all the pearls in the world," he says, "she is the most beautiful. But I'm afraid my wife is gone for good, and without her soul, O-Sayumi's body is just an empty shell."

Yugureda explains that something went wrong with the ritual aimed at transferring his aging wife's soul into the youthful and desirable body of O-Sayumi, who "looks so much like her poor mother." But even though Tarukimi is doomed, the wizard adds, "O-Sayumi can still be saved. Her soul is inside a pearl—you just have to find her."

At this point, Yugureda topples the pearl-filled vase, and scores of pearls spread across the floor, bouncing and rattling on the marble. Toppling the vase creates a 30-foot cone of pearls that spreads across the floor from the table to the west wall of the room. A creature entering a square with pearls scattered on it must make a DC 10 Reflex save or fall prone. Any creature moving at half speed or slower can pick its way through a square of pearls with no trouble. As the pearls roll across the floor, Yugureda prepares for combat as two shadowy sentinels appear in the archway to attack the PCs.

## SHADOW SENTINELS (2)

CR 9

XP 6,400 each

Advanced greater shadows (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 245, 294)  
hp 76 each

## YUGUREDA SHOSAITO

CR 13

XP 25,600

Male human illusionist 14  
NE Medium humanoid (human)



YUGUREDA SHOSAITO



**Init** +8; **Senses** Perception +15

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## DEFENSE

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**AC** 26, touch 18, flat-footed 21 (+4 armor, +2 deflection, +4 Dex, +1 dodge, +1 insight, +4 shield)

**hp** 108 (14d6+57)

**Fort** +9, **Ref** +12, **Will** +16

**DR** 10/adamantine

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## OFFENSE

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**Speed** 30 ft.

**Melee** mwk dagger +7/+2 (1d4–1/19–20)

**Ranged** mwk dagger +12 (1d4–1/19–20)

**Arcane School Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 14th; concentration +19)

At will—shadow step\* (420 feet/day)

8/day—binding darkness\* (3 rounds)

**Spells Prepared** (CL 14th; concentration +19)

7th—*greater shadow conjuration* (DC 22), *quicken lightning bolt* (DC 22), *waves of exhaustion*

6th—*chain lightning* (DC 21), *silent cone of cold* (DC 21), *shadow walk*, *summon monster VI*

5th—*silent enervation*, *interposing hand*, *magic jar* (DC 21), *quicken magic missile*, *shadow evocation* (DC 20)

4th—*fear* (DC 20), *silent lightning bolt* (DC 19), *phantasmal killer* (DC 19), *shadow conjuration* (DC 19), *shout* (DC 19), *stoneskin*

3rd—*silent acid arrow*, *dispel magic*, *displacement*, *lightning bolt* (DC 18), *ray of exhaustion* (DC 19), *vampiric touch*

2nd—*command undead* (DC 18), *darkness*, *false life*, *see invisibility*, *silent magic missile*, *mirror image*

1st—*alarm*, *color spray* (DC 16), *mage armor*, *magic missile*, *ray of enfeeblement* (DC 17), *shield*, *ventriloquism*

o (at will)—*ghost sound* (DC 15), *message*, *read magic*, *touch of fatigue* (DC 16)

**Focused School** Shadow\*; **Opposition Schools**

Enchantment, Transmutation

\* See the *Advanced Player's Guide*.

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## TACTICS

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**Before Combat** Yugureda casts *alarm* on the secret door in area **G4** and *false life* and *mage armor* on himself every morning. Once this alarm is triggered, he drinks his *potion of cat's grace* and casts *shield* and *stoneskin*. Finally, he readies a swift action to topple the vase full of pearls on the table.

**During Combat** Yugureda casts *displacement* on the first round of combat, followed by *summon monster VI* to summon a shadow demon. Thereafter, he attacks enemies with his spells while the shadow sentinels engage them in melee. If necessary, Yugureda uses his arcane bond to cast *finger of death* against a particularly dangerous foe. If cornered, Yugureda uses his shadow step ability to escape from danger and reposition himself to renew his attacks.

**Morale** After almost 3 decades as a merchant and spellcaster, and after the tragic outcome of his latest experiment, Yugureda has lost interest in both the

mundane world and the Shadow Plane. He shrugs wearily and fights to the death.

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## STATISTICS

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**Str** 8, **Dex** 18, **Con** 12, **Int** 20, **Wis** 13, **Cha** 10

**Base Atk** +7; **CMB** +6; **CMD** 31

**Feats** Brew Potion, Combat Casting, Defensive Combat Training, Dodge, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Quicken Spell, Scribe Scroll, Silent Spell, Spell Focus (necromancy), Toughness

**Skills** Appraise +18, Craft (alchemy) +18, Knowledge (arcana) +22, Knowledge (planes) +22, Knowledge (religion) +18, Perception +15, Profession (merchant) +16, Spellcraft +22, Swim +18

**Languages** Abyssal, Aquan, Draconic, Infernal, Minkaian, Tien, Vudrani

**SQ** arcane bond (*ring of swimming*), extended illusions +7 rounds

**Combat Gear** *potion of cat's grace*, *potion of water breathing*, *scroll of resist energy*; **Other Gear** masterwork dagger, *cloak of resistance +4*, *dusty rose prism ioun stone*, *ring of protection +2*, *ring of swimming*, spell component pouch, spellbook (contains all prepared spells, all 0-level spells, plus *animate dead*, *bull's strength*, *cat's grace*, *create undead*, *finger of death*, *gentle repose*, *mage's private sanctum*, *permanency*, *programmed image*, and *water breathing*), darkwood inro (see *Treasure* below), diamond dust (worth 250 gp)

**Treasure:** The pearls scattered on the floor are of low quality, worth only 10 gp each, but if the PCs spend the time to collect all of them, they find the pearls have a total value of 2,000 gp. A DC 20 Knowledge (arcana) check is enough to realize that none of these pearls are valuable enough to be used for a *magic jar*. In addition, Yugureda carries an inro tucked into his sash. The inro is a carrying case similar to O-Sayumi's, but it is made of lacquered darkwood encrusted with tiny emeralds that form the stylized image of a dragon turtle, and is worth 1,000 gp. Each of its three compartments holds a gemstone: a blue-green aquamarine, a large black pearl, and a large white pearl. The aquamarine is a *water elemental gem*, while the pearls are the receptacles for Yugureda's *magic jar* ritual. The black pearl was intended for Tarukimi's soul, but it is now nonmagical and worth 500 gp. The white pearl contains O-Sayumi's soul, recognizable as such with *detect magic* or a DC 20 Knowledge (arcana) check.

**Development:** When Yugureda dies, the Shadow Maze disappears, leaving a mundane 20-foot-long stone corridor between areas **G1** and **G3**.

Once the pearl containing O-Sayumi's soul is found, a DC 15 Knowledge (arcana) check reveals that her soul can be restored by simply crushing the pearl, or by casting *dispel magic* on it. A *miracle* or *wish* can also reverse the effects of the ritual, even without the pearl. Such

powerful magic completely undoes the ritual, restoring both O-Sayumi's and Tarukimi's souls to their bodies—the only way, in fact, to restore Yugureda's wife. If only O-Sayumi's soul is restored, Tarukimi's soul is lost forever, and her body in area G3 slumps to the floor with eyes wide open, definitively dead. In this case, the PCs can find O-Sayumi in area G3, restored to her former self. The young geisha is weeping over Tarukimi's body, but is otherwise in good health.

## O-SAYUMI

CR 12

XP 19,200

hp 75 (see page 56)

**Story Award:** If the PCs restore O-Sayumi's soul to her body and return the geisha to Sakakabe, award them 25,600 XP.

## CONCLUDING THE MISSION

The PCs complete this mission by bringing O-Sayumi back to the Kiniro Kyomai teahouse. Everyone in Sakakabe greets the geisha with joy, particularly O-Hakami and O-Kohaku. O-Sayumi is grateful to the PCs for rescuing her and avenging her mother's death. She rewards the PCs by giving them her *samisen of oracular vision* (see page 61), and claims to have seen a vision of the future, assuring Ameiko that she will become a great empress. O-Sayumi also offers to arrange a private meeting with Sikutsu Itsuru, the brother of Enganoka's daimyo, Sikutsu Sennaka. Itsuru dreams of putting an end to his brother's tyranny, and would be a powerful ally for the PCs. See Part Four for details of this meeting.

As promised, O-Kohaku rewards the PCs for rescuing O-Sayumi with a gift—the *karyukai tea set* (see page 60). In the following days, the mistress of the teahouses arranges meetings for the PCs with several nobles and merchants opposed to the Jade Regent. After these meetings, the PCs learn that Hirabashi Jiro can expect substantial support in Sakakabe and Enganoka provinces, should he lead a rebel army south toward the capital to overthrow the Jade Regent.

## PART FOUR: THE HONOR OF SIKUTSU ITSURU

In this mission, the PCs must confront Sikutsu Sennaka, the evil daimyo who holds the northwestern provinces of Minkai in the grip of terror. As long as Sennaka is alive, nobody, from the humblest peasant to the most powerful noble, will dare to oppose the Jade Regent in the provinces of Enganoka and Sakakabe. Sennaka's strategy of terror involves frequent travels through the countryside to local castles, sentencing many commoners to death on the basis of false accusations. Sennaka always travels with a company of over a hundred warriors and samurai, and

the few assassins who have attempted to take his life have met horrible deaths.

Unknown to Sennaka, however, his greatest enemy is none other than his younger brother, Itsuru. While Sennaka considers his brother to be a pathetic weakling, Itsuru is known to be a good and honorable samurai. If Sennaka were removed from power, Itsuru would inherit his brother's title, and perhaps the largest obstacle to a popular uprising in the north would be removed. If Itsuru can be convinced to swear his allegiance to the rightful Amatatsu heir, the PCs would gain a powerful ally against the Jade Regent.

## MEETING SIKUTSU ITSURU

O-Sayumi arranges a meeting between the PCs and Sikutsu Itsuru in a private room at the Kiniro Kyomai teahouse. O-Sayumi remains in the room to facilitate the meeting, and after making formal introductions and serving tea, she opens negotiations by identifying the PCs as heirs of the Amatatsu line. Itsuru seems dubious at first, but if Ameiko is with the party, or if he is shown the *Amatatsu Seal*, he quickly gets down to business.

**Sikutsu Itsuru** (LN male human aristocrat 2/samurai 11) is in his mid-thirties, but looks 10 years younger, something that no doubt contributes to his brother's low opinion of him. With his brother often away on government business, Itsuru manages the Sikutsu family castle, and has a number of loyal samurai under his command. Itsuru is no friend of the Jade Regent, and chafes under the heavy hand of his brother's rule as well. Tired of years of horrors and abuse, Itsuru has finally decided that his brother's injustices must be put to an end. Honor prevents Itsuru from killing his brother and lawful lord on his own, but if Sennaka were somehow removed from power, Itsuru would inherit Sennaka's position. Most of the samurai under Sennaka's command are honorable warriors, but that same honor traps them—they follow his cruel orders because honor and duty require them to. If Itsuru became the new governor of Enganoka, these same samurai would follow him, and he could begin to repair the damage of his brother's rule. The armies of the north form a not insignificant proportion of Minkai's military might, and if these armies swore themselves to the Amatatsu heir, the Jade Regent would lose much of the military strength he now commands. Itsuru even believes that the army of Kasai, which now guards the imperial capital, might turn against the Jade Regent if faced with a rising tide of honorable samurai sworn to Ameiko rather than the Jade Regent.

Itsuru tells the PCs that his brother Sennaka will soon be journeying to Shuryo Onsen, a secluded hunting lodge on the border between the provinces of Enganoka and Sakakabe. Sennaka visits Shuryo Onsen four times a year to bathe in its hot springs, and is currently renovating





the lodge as his private residence. The daimyo employs many peasants from nearby villages as laborers for the renovation, housing them in a small camp east of the lodge. Sennaka normally leaves most of his retinue in the camp to guard the company's baggage and mounts, keeping only a small personal escort with him at the lodge. The PCs would have a much better chance of defeating Sennaka if they can ambush him at the lodge, while at the same time preventing the soldiers in the workers' camp from coming to his aid.

While Itsuru cannot use the resources of his clan to aid the PCs directly, he can arrange some aid for them. Recently, a handful of samurai were dismissed from Sennaka's service. These samurai were ordered to burn a village for not paying its taxes, but the samurai somehow managed to raise enough money to pay the village's taxes, and so decided not to destroy the village. The samurai disobeyed a direct order, but Sennaka got his tax revenue (and can now continue to tax the village), so the daimyo simply dismissed them in a rare moment of mercy. Although these samurai are now masterless ronin, Itsuru knows they are good, trustworthy people. These ronin, known as the "Nine Pawns," already have a score to settle with Sennaka, and assisting the PCs with their ambush will give them a chance to redeem their honor. In

exchange, once Itsuru becomes governor, he can restore the ronin to their former status as samurai. According to Itsuru, the Nine Pawns have already infiltrated the laborers working at Shuryo Onsen and prepared a stratagem to isolate Sennaka from the bulk of his forces. If the PCs agree to coordinate their actions with the ronin, the Nine Pawns will set their plan into motion on the day of Sennaka's arrival at Shuryo Onsen, dealing with Sennaka's soldiers in the camp while the PCs target the daimyo himself at the lodge.

## CLASH AT SHURYO ONSEN

Shuryo Onsen is a rustic retreat in the wooded hills east of Sakakabe. The lodge itself lies along a thermal stream just over half a mile west of its confluence with a small river that descends from the hills. The laborers working at the lodge are housed in a camp located at the confluence of the stream and the river. A narrow, sloping footpath connects the camp and the lodge, crossing a stretch of rugged and densely wooded terrain, and serves as the only way to traverse this area without considerable difficulties. If the PCs arrive early, they can easily survey the area to learn the general features of the region.

**H. Workers' Camp:** About 50 artisans, lumberjacks, and laborers from nearby villages work at the lodge and

in the surrounding area during the day. They spend the night in this camp, sleeping in several log bunkhouses. The laborers have been working for the past 3 months to renovate and expand the hunting lodge. The work is still in progress, and the workers are nervously awaiting Sennaka's inspection and further orders.

When Sennaka arrives, he leaves 100 foot soldiers (N human warriors 2) in the camp to guard his baggage and mounts, while he and his personal bodyguard spend a relaxing evening in the hunting lodge itself, under a solid roof and away from the sights, sounds, and smells of a soldiers' camp.

**I. Roadblock:** Since infiltrating the workers, the Nine Pawns have placed a large stack of logs on top of a slope overlooking the footpath, so that they can be toppled to form a roadblock. On the day of the attack, the Nine Pawns plan to use an unfrequented lumberjacks' trail to reach the area unseen, then wait for Sennaka to leave his troops at the workers' camp. Once the daimyo is at the lodge, the Nine Pawns will kill the few guards along the path and cut the logs loose to create the roadblock, at which point the PCs should attack Sennaka at the lodge. The Nine Pawns will exploit the favorable terrain and defend the roadblock to keep at bay the soldiers in the camp, who will likely rush to help their lord once the alarm is raised.

## SHURYO ONSEN

The hunting lodge of Shuryo Onsen is a sizable wooden building surrounded by a stout wooden palisade. A single gate in the south wall of the palisade connects to the footpath that leads to the worker's camp, while a double gate in the palisade's north wall provides access to hunting trails in the forest north of the lodge and is wide enough for horses to pass through to enter the compound. A ditch is currently being excavated to bring hot running water from the thermal stream to the lodge, but it ends about 10 feet south of the palisade. An earth-and-wood dike at the southern end of the ditch holds back the waters of the stream during construction.

Inside the palisade, much of the lodge is still under construction or undergoing renovations. The foundations of an unfinished extension sit north of the lodge, while an incomplete pool is still being dug to the southeast of the building. The lodge is built in traditional Minkai style, and most rooms have sliding shoji panels (hardness 0, hp 2, Break DC 10) instead of wooden walls and doors. Those doors present in the compound are of good wooden construction, but unlocked (hardness 5, hp 15, Break DC 16). Floors are wooden throughout the lodge, and ceilings are 10 feet high. In the occupied areas of the lodge, paper lanterns provide light. Other areas are unlit except for what light comes through windows.

Many of the rooms in Shuryo Onsen are still undecorated, or under construction, or are unoccupied. These rooms are summarized below. Those rooms that do contain encounters are described in more detail after the room summary.

**J1. Paddocks:** Two paddocks adjoin the north wall of the palisade. The western paddock holds eight horses, the mounts of Sennaka's samurai bodyguards. These horses are loyal samurai mounts, but they are not likely to join in any combats at the lodge, so no stat blocks are provided for them. They are slightly more powerful than normal horses, but their bonds with their samurai masters are strong enough that each must be retrained to accept a new rider with a DC 20 Handle Animal check and 1 week of work.

**J2. Storehouse:** Lumber, tools, and other construction materials are stored in this outbuilding. The door is locked (hardness 5, hp 15, Break DC 18, Disable Device DC 25), but the foreman in the workers' camp has the key.

**J3. Teahouse:** This small outbuilding is used for tea ceremonies and peaceful contemplation. Tatami mats cover the floor, but the building is otherwise empty.

**J4. Outer Courtyard:** A wooden palisade surrounds this dirt-floored courtyard. The lodge's cooking is done in the fire pit in the center of the yard to avoid the danger of fire.

**J5. Inner Courtyard:** A cobbled stone path connects the different rooms opening onto this small inner courtyard.

**J6. Guardrooms:** This area is detailed below.

**J7. Bath:** Hot water from the thermal stream outside is used to fill two large wooden tubs in this chamber. Once the ditch connecting the stream to the lodge is completed, residents will be able to pump hot water directly into the baths. For now, though, the tubs are empty.

**J8. Kitchen:** Food is prepared in this kitchen, which contains a few tables and cabinets, but no stoves or ovens, as all cooking is done in the courtyard outside (area J4).

**J9. Servants' Rooms:** Household servants live in these two simple wooden cells, both of which are empty. There are currently no servants at the lodge, as Sennaka came only to inspect the restoration work and have a private meeting with his allies.

**J10. Stable:** This large stable contains stalls for a dozen horses, but only two currently occupy it. One of the horses is Taro, Sennaka's samurai mount. The other is a normal combat-trained heavy horse belonging to Sennaka's bodyguard Kazuo. The stable also holds tack for these mounts and the horses in the western paddock. Taro follows the same rules as the samurai mounts in the paddocks (area J1).

**J11. Garden:** This small inner garden contains a single cherry tree. Shoji panels connect the garden to the corridor on either side.



**J12. Master's Bedroom:** One of the few finished rooms in the lodge, this room is Sennaka's personal bedchamber. As he has just arrived, however, tatami mats have yet to be installed, and his personal baggage is stacked up near the doors, still waiting to be unpacked.

**J13. Privy:** A shoji panel blocks off this small lavatory for the use of the lodge's guests.

**J14. Entrance Hall:** This area is detailed below.

**J15. West Living Room:** Meals are normally taken in this room. The tatami mats that normally cover the floor are absent, and the only furnishings are two low tables. The room is otherwise empty.

**J16. East Living Room:** Almost identical to the west living room (area J15), this room is slightly smaller, and is used for more intimate gatherings or for the purposes of lodge guests.

**J17. Lounge:** This area is detailed below.

**J18. Trophy Room:** Sennaka displays his hunting trophies in this room. Currently, only a few specimens are on display—two deer heads, several stuffed birds, a stuffed wolf, and a bearskin rug.

**J19. Guest Rooms:** These four rooms are meant for the use of future guests of the daimyo, but they are all unfinished and no more than bare wooden cells.

## J6. GUARDROOMS (CR 12)

This small room contains a table, a few chairs, a cot, and a small stove for warmth. A weapon rack stands against one wall.

Shuryo Onsen contains two guardrooms, one in the northeast corner of the lodge and a second in the southwest off the inner courtyard.

**Creatures:** Eight samurai bodyguards make up Sikutsu Sennaka's escort. While at the lodge, four samurai are posted in each guardroom. They attack anyone in the lodge who is not a member of the daimyo's retinue, after throwing down a thunderstone to sound the alarm. If the alarm is sounded, the samurai leave their guardrooms and head to the source of the alarm, reaching the area in 1d6 rounds to join the combat.

### **SIKUTSU SAMURAI (4)** CR 8

**XP 4,800 each**

Human samurai 9 (*Pathfinder RPG Ultimate Combat* 18)

LN Medium humanoid (human)

**Init** +2; **Senses** Perception +10

#### **DEFENSE**

**AC** 21, touch 13, flat-footed 18 (+8 armor, +2 Dex, +1 dodge)

**hp** 90 each (9d10+36)

**Fort** +10, **Ref** +5, **Will** +4

**Defensive Abilities** greater resolve, resolve 5/day

#### **OFFENSE**

**Speed** 20 ft.

**Melee** +1 katana\* +15/+10 (1d8+7/18–20) or

mwk wakizashi\* +14/+9 (1d6+4/18–20)

**Ranged** mwk composite longbow +12/+7 (1d8+4/x3)

**Special Attacks** banner +2/+1, challenge (+9 damage, DR 3/—, 3/day)

#### **TACTICS**

**During Combat** Three of the samurai issue challenges to opponents and charge them (gaining a +1 bonus on their attack rolls during the charge from their allies' banner ability) while the fourth sounds the alarm, then attacks spellcasters or ranged attackers with her bow. The samurai use their combat feats as often as possible in melee combat.



**SIKUTSU SAMURAI**

**Morale** The samurai fight to the death to defend Sikutsu Sennaka. If Sennaka is slain, the samurai commit seppuku (ritual suicide by performing a self-inflicted coup de grace with their katanas) for failing their lord.

## STATISTICS

**Str** 18, **Dex** 14, **Con** 14, **Int** 8, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 10

**Base Atk** +9; **CMB** +13; **CMD** 26

**Feats** Cleave, Dodge, Great Fortitude, Power Attack, Toughness, Vital Strike, Weapon Focus (katana)

**Skills** Handle Animal +6, Intimidate +12, Knowledge (nobility) +5 (+9 about Minkai nobility), Perception +10, Ride +14, Sense Motive +7

**Languages** Minkaian, Tien

**SQ** mount (horse), mounted archer, order of the warrior (honor in all things 2/day, way of the samurai), weapon expertise (katana)

**Combat Gear** *potion of cure moderate wounds*, thunderstones (2); **Other Gear** +1 *tatami-do*\*, +1 *katana*\*, dagger, masterwork composite longbow (+4 Str) with 20 arrows, masterwork wakizashi\*, sashimono banner

\* See *Ultimate Combat*.

## J14. ENTRANCE HALL (CR 13)

Sliding shoji panels open onto a veranda overlooking the northern grounds of the compound. Inside, more shoji panels form the three interior walls of this entrance hall. Several pairs of shoes sit on the polished wooden floor next to the entrance.

This hall serves as the lodge's main entrance, providing access to the rest of the building and a place for guests and visitors to leave their shoes before going inside.

**Creatures:** Six members of the Typhoon Guard, the Jade Regent's private mercenary army, have been assigned to Sennaka's escort. The six yamabushi tengus, oni who normally take the form of tengus, are training in the hall. When traveling with Sennaka, the oni usually stay in human form, but they all display elongated noses that betray their true nature. The yamabushi tengus attack any intruders in the lodge, and use their thunderstones to sound the alarm.

If the alarm is sounded, the yamabushi tengus rush outside to face attackers in the open, assuming their natural, winged oni forms. If the PCs have already invaded the building, the oni move to the area of the disturbance. The yamabushi tengus are somewhat lazy, however, and take 1d8 rounds to join any ongoing combat.

### TYPHOON GUARDS (6)

CR 8

XP 4,800 each

Yamabushi tengu ranger 2/rogue 2 (*Pathfinder Adventure Path* #49 88)

LE Medium outsider (native, oni, shapechanger, tengu)

**Init** +10; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, *see invisibility*; Perception +19

## DEFENSE

**AC** 21, touch 16, flat-footed 15 (+2 armor, +6 Dex, +2 natural, +1 shield)

**hp** 103 each (10 HD; 6d10+2d10+2d8+50); regeneration 2 (fire or acid)

**Fort** +13, **Ref** +17, **Will** +6; –2 vs. illusion (pattern) spells

**Defensive Abilities** evasion; **SR** 16

**Weaknesses** susceptible to patterns

## OFFENSE

**Speed** 30 ft., fly 30 ft. (average)

**Melee** katana\* +13/+8 (1d8+5/18–20) and wakizashi\* +12/+7 (1d6+5/18–20)

**Ranged** composite longbow +15/+10 (1d8+4/x3)

**Special Attacks** favored enemy (humans +2), sneak attack +1d6, steal voice

**Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 5th; concentration +9)

Constant—*see invisibility*, *ventriloquism* (DC 15)

3/day—*dimension door*, *hideous laughter* (DC 16), *ray of enfeeblement* (DC 15), *scorching ray*

1/day—*blur*, *glitterdust* (DC 16)

## TACTICS

**Before Combat** The yamabushi tengus cast *blur* before combat.

**During Combat** The oni attack foes with their spell-like abilities as they close to melee range, using flight or *dimension door* to position themselves for sneak attacks. Against spellcasters, the yamabushi tengus use their steal voice ability to take such foes out of the fray.

**Morale** The yamabushi tengus are cowards at heart. If half their number are slain, the rest abandon Sennaka and flee the lodge.

## STATISTICS

**Str** 19, **Dex** 23, **Con** 20, **Int** 12, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 18

**Base Atk** +9; **CMB** +13; **CMD** 29

**Feats** Double Slice, Improved Initiative, Improved Two-Weapon Fighting, Iron Will, Two-Weapon Defense, Two-Weapon Fighting, Weapon Focus (katana)

**Skills** Acrobatics +19, Bluff +17, Disguise +17, Fly +14, Intimidate +17, Knowledge (planes) +10, Perception +19, Ride +14, Stealth +19

**Languages** Minkaian, Tengu, Tien

**SQ** change shape (Medium humanoid, *alter self*), rogue talents (weapon training), track +1, trapfinding +1, wild empathy +6, yamabushi weapons

**Combat Gear** thunderstones (2); **Other Gear** leather armor, katana\*, composite longbow (+4 Str) with 20 arrows, wakizashi\*

## SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Steal Voice (Su)** Up to three times per day, but no more than once per target, a yamabushi tengu can attempt to steal a victim's voice as part of its bite attack. When it does so, the creature bitten must make a DC 17 Will save or lose



the ability to speak aloud. This prevents the use of any spell with verbal components and the use of command-word-activated magic items, among other difficulties. The yamabushi tengu's voice changes to match the one stolen. The victim's voice remains stolen until the oni steals another voice, until the oni agrees to give the stolen voice back (a standard action requiring the oni to touch the victim), or until the next sunrise. Any effect that removes curses (such as *remove curse* or *break enchantment*) can restore a stolen voice (DC 17), as does the death of the oni who stole the voice in the first place. The save DC is Charisma-based.

**Susceptible to Patterns (Ex)** A yamabushi tengu takes a –2 penalty on all saving throws made against illusion spells of the pattern subschool. For 1 round after a yamabushi tengu either makes a successful save against a pattern or recovers from the effects of a pattern, it is dazzled.

**Yamabushi Weapons (Ex)** A yamabushi tengu is proficient with all monk weapons and all swordlike weapons (including katanas and wakizashi), and gains a +1 bonus on attack rolls and damage rolls with such weapons.

\* See *Ultimate Combat*.

## J17. LOUNGE (CR 14)

A few low tables and comfortable chairs are scattered through this large room. Martial banners decorate the walls and paper lanterns hang from the rafters, softly illuminating the chamber.

Guests at the lodge can take their ease in this comfortable lounge, which Sikutsu Sennaka also uses as his headquarters while at Shuryo Onsen.

**Creatures:** When the PCs arrive at the lodge, Sikutsu Sennaka is in this room conferring with his bodyguard, or *yojimbo*, an ogre mage named Kazuo. Assigned to Sennaka by the Jade Regent himself, Kazuo remains at the daimyo's side at all times. Like most of the oni in Sennaka's service, Kazuo normally stays in human form, but he quickly assumes his natural form—that of a portly, blue-skinned demonic ogre—once combat begins.

If the alarm is sounded, Sikutsu Sennaka waits in the lounge with Kazuo. If the attackers are outside, Sennaka and Kazuo shoot arrows from the windows in support of the guards' minions. Sennaka does not try to flee, waiting for the PCs inside, but he does move around the lodge trying to evade them as long as he believes the bulk of his forces might come to relieve him. If cornered, or once all of his guards are defeated, Sennaka faces

his attackers in honorable combat, Kazuo at his side. The ogre mage has been entrusted with Sennaka's safety, and offers to carry the daimyo away in flight when things turn against them or Sennaka is reduced to fewer than 75 hit points. If Sennaka is currently in combat with a target of his challenge, there is a 50% chance that the daimyo refuses the oni's help and fights his adversary to the bitter end.

### KAZUO THE YOJIMBO

CR 11

XP 12,800

Male ogre mage fighter 3 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 221)

LE Large outsider (giant, native, oni, shapechanger)

Init +8; Senses darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception +18

#### DEFENSE

AC 25, touch 13, flat-footed 21 (+7 armor, +4 Dex, +5 natural, –1 size)



KAZUO THE YOJIMBO

**hp** 140 (11d10+80); regeneration 5 (acid or fire)  
**Fort** +16, **Ref** +9, **Will** +13; +1 vs. fear  
**Defensive Abilities** bravery +1; **SR** 19

## OFFENSE

**Speed** 30 ft., fly 40 ft. (good)  
**Melee** mwk tetsubo\* +18/+13/+8 (2d8+9/19–20/x4)  
**Ranged** composite longbow +14/+9/+4 (2d6+6/x3)  
**Space** 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.  
**Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 9th; concentration +12)  
 Constant—*fly*  
 At will—*darkness*, *invisibility*  
 1/day—*charm monster* (DC 19), *cone of cold* (DC 20), *deep slumber* (DC 18), *gaseous form*

## TACTICS

**During Combat** Kazuo fights to protect Sennaka, focusing his attacks on any foes attacking the daimyo. He uses his spell-like abilities to hinder or remove spellcasters or ranged combatants from combat.

**Morale** Kazuo fights to the death in defense of Sennaka. Even if the daimyo is killed, Kazuo fights on, knowing that the Jade Regent will not be forgiving of his failure to protect Sennaka.

## STATISTICS

**Str** 22, **Dex** 19, **Con** 25, **Int** 14, **Wis** 18, **Cha** 21  
**Base Atk** +11; **CMB** +18; **CMD** 32  
**Feats** Combat Reflexes, Critical Focus, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (tetsubo), Improved Critical (tetsubo), Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Weapon Focus (tetsubo)  
**Skills** Bluff +19, Disguise +14, Fly +10, Intimidate +19, Knowledge (arcana) +10, Knowledge (nobility) +10, Perception +18, Sense Motive +18, Stealth +10  
**Languages** Common, Giant, Minkaian, Tien  
**SQ** armor training 1, change shape (Small, Medium, or Large humanoid; *alter self* or *giant form I*), flight  
**Other Gear** Large masterwork tatami-do\*, Large composite longbow (+6 Str) with 20 arrows, Large masterwork tetsubo\*  
 \*See *Ultimate Combat*.

## SIKUTSU SENNAKA

CR 13

XP 25,600

hp 151 (see page 58)

**Development:** If the PCs coordinate their attack with the Nine Pawns, the ronin are able to keep Sennaka's soldiers at bay at the roadblock for the duration of the fight at the lodge. If the PCs attack Sennaka on their own without the Nine Pawns' distraction, the 100 soldiers at the camp respond to the alarm and rush along the footpath, arriving at the lodge 20 rounds after the alarm is sounded. In this case, the PCs will either need to flee or face more than a hundred soldiers. While the PCs might survive such a battle, these soldiers are not evil

minions, but rather average people who would follow Sikutsu Itsuru if given the chance, and their deaths would displease Itsuru.

## CONCLUDING THE MISSION

The PCs complete this mission by removing Sikutsu Sennaka from power, either by killing him or convincing him to take his own life. Sikutsu Itsuru becomes the head of the Sikutsu clan and governor of Enganoka, and Sennaka's armies and most of his samurai swear allegiance to their new daimyo. The death of Sennaka dissolves the hesitations of many daimyo in northwestern Minkai, and Itsuru is able to sway most of the nobility of Enganoka and Sakakabe to swear allegiance to Ameiko and join their forces with those of Itsuru and Hirabashi Jiro against the Jade Regent.

## PART FIVE: THE SIEGE OF SEINARU HEIKIKO

After planting the seeds of rebellion in northwestern Minkai, the PCs will likely return to Seinaru Heikiko, where Hirabashi Jiro is eager to discuss the incoming news of recent events. If the PCs do not return on their own, they soon learn that the fortress might be in immediate peril, as the Jade Regent has sent a force to besiege the PCs' allies. Depending upon how the adventure has developed, this information can come from the Three Monkeys, Numataro-sama, a vision from the *samisen of oracular vision*, a letter from Hirabashi Jiro, or even a reappearance of Habesuta Hatsue's dream self.

When the PCs arrive at Seinaru Heikiko, they are welcomed by Jiro and Hatsue. Thanks to the PCs' efforts to secure aid from the different factions in Enganoka and Sakakabe, many more people have come to Seinaru Heikiko to join Jiro's banner, such that he now has the makings of an actual army. Jiro has seen no signs of an imminent attack on the fortress, but he is not surprised by such rumors. If such an attack comes, he is confident that his troops can defend the fortress.

## BATTLE FOR THE FORTRESS (CR 16)

A day or so after the PCs arrive at Seinaru Heikiko, or as they confer with Jiro and Hatsue, a sudden boom of inhuman laughter comes from above, and a passing shadow momentarily obscures the light coming through a nearby window. Guards on the walls sound a bell to raise the alarm, and the soldiers in the fortress scramble to grab their armor and weapons. Suddenly, there is the sound of a tremendous impact, and the bell falls silent. Looking outside, the PCs can see that the fortress's main gate, where the alarm bell stood, has been knocked down. Several guards lie motionless on



the ground, and Jiro's banner, which stood nearby, has fallen down in the dirt.

Seeing their people shot down and the banner in the dirt, both Jiro and Hatsue jump out screaming to join the fight, leaving the PCs little choice but to follow. Jiro's archers take positions at the windows and on the walls, but their arrows seem to have little effect on the attackers. Meanwhile, the civilian occupants of Seinaru Heikiko rush to take refuge in the fortress's underground rooms.

**Creatures:** The Jade Regent has indeed sent a band of giant oni to attack Seinaru Heikiko. They have only been waiting for the PCs to return to begin their siege, killing two birds with one stone, so to speak. The oni are led by the fire yai Nigankona, a three-eyed, red skinned fire giant oni, who stands before the walls of the fortress and has just knocked down the gate with the giant *tetsubo of the titans* in his hands. With him are two atamahuta, two-headed ettin oni, called Nobunobu and Tokikokito. Each of them has one head that is bestial and brutish, while the other head has three eyes and looks slightly more civilized. Both are armed with giant monk's spades, elaborate double-headed polearms. The atamahuta have flown to the top of the jagged crags surrounding the fortress's courtyard, perching precariously about 60 feet above the courtyard—these positions don't provide cover and the oni lose their Dexterity bonus to AC.

As combat begins, Nigankona calls out in a thundering voice like roaring flames: "Come out little mice, hiding in your hole, or I'll take down this fortress stone by stone! Show me this Amatatsu heir I've heard so much about! I want to crunch her little bones between my teeth and drink her royal blood! Bring her to me, and I promise you all quick deaths. Keep her for yourselves, and I'll tear every one of you limb from limb and make sweet music from your screams!"

The three oni together are a CR 16 encounter, certainly an epic challenge for 13th-level PCs. However, the PCs have allies to assist them, namely Jiro and Hatsue, as well as their other NPC friends, such as Ameiko, Shalelu, Koya, Sandru, and perhaps others. If the PCs have a large number of allies to help them, you can even increase the challenge by adding another atamahuta or a few normal ettins as well. Let the players control the actions of their NPC allies; the PCs should be the ones leading the defense of the fortress, and the NPCs should take a secondary role to the true heroes of the adventure. Although Jiro's archers shoot at the oni during the fight, assume that most of the arrows miss or that the oni easily regenerate the damage. The oni don't attack the archers, or anyone else in the fortress besides the PCs and their NPC allies, planning on killing such puny foes later at their leisure.

**NIGANKONA****CR 15****XP 51,200**Male fire yai (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 3 206)

NE Large outsider (fire, giant, native, oni, shapechanger)

**Init** +7; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception +23**DEFENSE****AC** 29, touch 12, flat-footed 26 (+6 armor, +3 Dex, +11 natural, -1 size)**hp** 229 (17d10+136); regeneration 5 (acid or cold)**Fort** +18, **Ref** +10, **Will** +15**Immune** fire; **SR** 26**Weaknesses** vulnerable to cold**OFFENSE****Speed** 30 ft., fly 40 ft. (good)**Melee** *tetsubo of the titans* +29/+24/+19/+14 (2d8+18/x4) or 2 slams +26 (1d10+15)**Ranged** fiery missile +19 touch (4d6 fire plus burn)**Space** 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.**Special Attacks** burn (2d6, DC 26), smoke form**Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 15th; concentration +17)

Constant—fly

At will—*darkness*, *invisibility* (self only), *scorching ray*3/day—*charm monster* (DC 16), *deep slumber* (DC 15), *fire shield* (warm shield only), *fireball* (DC 15), *wall of fire*1/day—*incendiary cloud* (DC 20)**TACTICS**

**During Combat** Nigankona casts *fire shield* on the first round of combat, then casts *incendiary cloud* to drive defenders out of the fortress, readying his fiery missiles or *scorching rays* to cut down fleeing opponents. If no one comes out to face him, Nigankona focuses his attacks on the walls of the fortress, dealing triple damage to the walls with his *tetsubo of the titans*. Once he can attack in melee, he does so eagerly, casting *wall of fire* to cut off spellcasters or ranged combatants so he can focus on enemies in melee.

**Morale** If reduced to 100 hit points or fewer, Nigankona assumes his smoke form, hoping to hinder attackers while he regenerates. As soon as he is able, he resumes his normal form and renews his attacks. Nigankona fights to the death, knowing that failure is not an option.

**STATISTICS****Str** 31, **Dex** 16, **Con** 26, **Int** 14, **Wis** 17, **Cha** 15**Base Atk** +17; **CMB** +28; **CMD** 41**Feats** Cleave, Combat Reflexes, Great Cleave, Improved Initiative, Improved Overrun, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Power Attack, Vital Strike**Skills** Bluff +22, Craft (weapons) +12, Diplomacy +13, Disguise +14, Fly +16, Intimidate +22, Knowledge (arcana) +17, Perception +23, Sense Motive +23, Spellcraft +14, Use Magic Device +14**Languages** Giant, Minkaian, Tien**SQ** change shape (Medium or Large humanoid; *alter self* or *giant form I*)

## NPC RELATIONSHIPS

If you're using the relationship rules presented in the *Jade Regent Player's Guide*, the PCs have the opportunity during this adventure to further increase their Relationship Scores with the significant NPCs traveling with them. The PCs can increase their Relationship Scores with the following NPCs by the listed amount for taking the following actions or completing the following tasks.

**Ameiko Kaijitsu:** giving Ameiko the Vudrani goddess statue (area G3): +1; restoring O-Sayumi's soul: +1; giving Ameiko the *samisen of oracular vision*: +1

**Koya Mvashti:** taking Koya to explore the cities of Eganoka or Sakakabe: +1; introducing Koya to Numataro-sama: +1 (area B); giving Koya the maps of Minkai from Yugureda Shosaito's study (area G4): +1

**Sandru Vhiski:** taking Sandru to the Kiri Kyomai teahouse: +1; giving Sandru the sake from Yugureda Shosaito's sake cellar (area G1): +1

**Shalelu Andosana:** giving Shalelu Gangasum's folding screen or deer head plaque (area A12): +1; giving Shalelu the *daikyu of commanding presence*: +2

**Gear** +1 *Large do-maru\**, *tetsubo of the titans* (+3 *tetsubo\**, as *maul of the titans*)

\* See *Ultimate Combat*.

### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Fiery Missile (Su)** As a swift action, Nigankona can launch a bolt of fire from his third eye. This attack has a range of 180 feet with no range increment.

**Smoke Form (Sp)** As a standard action, Nigankona can turn into a cloud of smoke. This ability functions like *gaseous form*, except the cloud has the properties of the smoke cloud from a *pyrotechnics* spell (Fort DC 26 negates the effects of the smoke cloud). Nigankona can end this ability as a standard action.

### NOBUNOBU AND TOKIKOKITO (2)

CR 11

XP 12,800 each

Male and female atamahuta (*Pathfinder Adventure Path* #51 86)  
LE Large outsider (giant, native, oni, shapechanger)

**Init** +5; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, *see invisibility*; Perception +24

### DEFENSE

**AC** 25, touch 10, flat-footed 24 (+7 armor, +1 Dex, +8 natural, -1 size)

**hp** 147 each (14d10+70); regeneration 5 (acid or fire)

**Fort** +14, **Ref** +5, **Will** +12

**Defensive Abilities** ward off distractions; **DR** 10/adamantine; **SR** 22

### OFFENSE

**Speed** 30 ft., fly 40 ft. (good)

**Melee** monk's spade\* +20/+20/+15/+10 (1d8+10)

**Ranged** javelin +14 (1d8+7)

**Space** 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.

**Special Attacks** double weapon mastery, spellstrike

**Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 11th; concentration +14)

Constant—*see invisibility*

3/day—*chill touch* (DC 14), *dimension door*, *fireball* (DC 16), *haste*, *rage*, *shocking grasp*

1/day—*black tentacles*, *stoneskin*, *wall of fire*

### TACTICS

**Before Combat** The atamahuta drink their *potions of fly* and cast *stoneskin* before entering combat.

**During Combat** The oni cast *haste* on the first round of combat. Each round, one of them jumps down into the courtyard (the equivalent of a charge), while the one still above casts *fireball*, *black tentacles*, or *wall of fire* to hinder defenders. Once both oni are in the courtyard, they attack the closest foes, channeling their spell-like abilities through their weapons with their spellstrike ability and attempting to sunder the weapons of powerful opponents.

**Morale** If reduced to 75 hit points or fewer, an atamahuta casts *rage* on himself and his partner and they continue attacking. Thereafter, they fight savagely to the death.

### STATISTICS

**Str** 25, **Dex** 12, **Con** 20, **Int** 13, **Wis** 16, **Cha** 17

**Base Atk** +14; **CMB** +22 (+24 sunder); **CMD** 33 (35 vs. sunder)

**Feats** Cleave, Combat Casting, Improved Initiative, Improved Sunder, Power Attack, Spell Penetration, Vital Strike

**Skills** Bluff +20, Disguise +20, Fly -2, Intimidate +20, Knowledge (planes) +18, Perception +24, Sense Motive +20, Spellcraft +18

**Languages** Giant, Minkaian, Orc, Tien

**SQ** change shape (Large humanoid, *giant form I*)

**Combat Gear** *potions of fly* (2); **Other Gear** kusari gusoku\*, javelins (5), monk's spade\*

### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Double Weapon Mastery (Ex)** While making a full attack, an atamahuta controls its arms with both heads and does not take a penalty on attack or damage rolls for attacking with a double weapon.

**Spellstrike (Su)** An atamahuta can imbue its weapon with magical properties using its spell-like abilities. Whenever an atamahuta casts a spell with a range of "touch" from its spell-like abilities, it can deliver the spell through any weapon it is holding as part of a free melee attack at its highest base attack bonus as part of casting its spell. If successful, this melee attack deals its normal damage as well as inflicts the effects of the spell. This attack uses the weapon's normal critical threat range, but the spell effect deals only double damage on a successful critical hit, while the weapon damage uses the weapon's normal





critical multiplier. An atamahuta cannot make a full attack during the same round that it uses a spell-like ability unless another effect would allow it to do so.

**Ward Off Distractions (Ex)** An atamahuta uses one of its heads to defend against attacks while the other is using a spell-like ability, giving it a +4 bonus to AC against attacks of opportunity while casting.

\* See *Ultimate Combat*.

## CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

With the defeat of Nigankona and the oni, the PCs have won an important battle against very powerful agents of the Jade Regent. The attack only further convinces Jiro and Hatsue that the Jade Regent must be removed as soon as possible and that the rightful heir, Ameiko, must be placed on the Jade Throne.

With Sikutsu Sennaka dead, and his brother Itsuru now governor, the provinces of Enganoka and Sakakabe join the northeastern provinces in opposition against the Jade Regent, and the tide begins to turn in favor of

the rebels. To many of the samurai, forming an army and marching south to wrest the capital from the tyrant's clutches seems finally possible. The Jade Regent's army is still powerful, but with the additional help of the merchants and ninja of Minkai, the hopes of the rebels are significantly less tenuous.

Under the leadership of Sikutsu Itsuru and Hirabashi Jiro, the rebel army begins moving south from Seinaru Heikaku. But while the rebel army will face the Jade Regent's forces outside Kasai, Ameiko and the PCs will have their own duties to perform. According to Itsuru, a new emperor must receive the blessing of the past emperors of Minkai before she can sit upon the Jade Throne. To gain this blessing, the PCs and Ameiko will first need to visit the Imperial Shrine on a mysterious island off the coast of Kasai. Once they have the sanction of the emperors, the PCs can take the battle to the Jade Regent himself in the Imperial Palace. The final push to claim the Jade Throne of Minkai comes in the final installment of the Jade Regent Adventure Path, "The Empty Throne."



## HIRABASHI JIRO

FORCED TO FLEE THE MINKAI CAPITAL OF KASAI, THE SAMURAI HIRABASHI JIRO BECAME A RONIN AND WENT INTO EXILE IN THE OSOGEN GRASSLANDS, WHERE HE LEADS A RAGTAG BAND OF PEASANTS AND RONIN AGAINST BANDITS, BARBARIANS, AND CORRUPT FRONTIER OFFICIALS.

### HIRABASHI JIRO

CR 12

XP 19,200

Male human samurai 13 (*Pathfinder RPG Ultimate Combat* 18)

NG Medium humanoid (human)

**Init** +2; **Senses** Perception +10

#### DEFENSE

**AC** 25, touch 15, flat-footed 22 (+9 armor, +2 deflection, +2 Dex, +1 dodge, +1 shield)

**hp** 115 (13d10+39)

**Fort** +12, **Ref** +8, **Will** +6

**Defensive Abilities** greater resolve, honorable stand 1/day, resolve 7/day

#### OFFENSE

**Speed** 20 ft.

**Melee** mwk bokken +18/+13/+8 (1d6+3) or mwk bokken +16/+11/+6 (1d6+3) and +1 wakizashi\* +15 (1d6+4/18–20)

**Ranged** *daikyu of commanding presence* +18/+13/+8 (1d8+5/x3)

**Special Attacks** banner +3/+2, challenge (+13, +4, 5/day), demanding challenge

#### TACTICS

**During Combat** Jiro prefers to fight honorably, issuing a challenge to an honorable foe and facing that opponent in single combat. Experience in battle has taught Jiro about the value of self-preservation over honor, however, and he is more than willing to do whatever is necessary to attain victory, even if his tactics might be considered dishonorable or underhanded by more “respectable” samurai. If hard pressed or outnumbered, Jiro drinks his *potion of heroism*.

**Morale** With no lord to serve, Jiro withdraws from combat if reduced to fewer than 50 hit points. If defending the innocent peasants under his charge, however, Jiro fights to the death.

**Base Statistics** Once his ancestral katana is returned to him, Jiro’s stats are **Melee** +1 *adamantine katana*\* +18/+13/+8 (1d8+4/18–20) or +1 *adamantine katana*\* +16/+11/+6 (1d8+4/18–20) and +1 *wakizashi*\* +15 (1d6+4/18–20)

#### STATISTICS

**Str** 16, **Dex** 15, **Con** 14, **Int** 12, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 10

**Base Atk** +13; **CMB** +16; **CMD** 31

**Feats** Deflect Arrows, Dodge, Double Slice, Improved Unarmed Strike, Power Attack, Two-Weapon Defense, Two-Weapon

Fighting, Vital Strike, Weapon Focus (composite longbow), Weapon Focus (katana)

**Skills** Bluff +10, Climb +7, Craft (bows) +10, Diplomacy +10, Handle Animal +6, Intimidate +12, Knowledge (local) +15, Perception +10, Ride +13, Sense Motive +9

**Languages** Common, Minkaian, Tien

**SQ** mount (horse named Tetsu), mounted archer, ronin (self-reliant, without master), weapon expertise (katana)

**Combat Gear** *potion of heroism*, *restorative ointment*; **Other Gear** +1 *o-yoroi*\*, *daikyu of commanding presence* (+2 *seeking composite longbow*; see page 60) with 20 arrows, +1 *wakizashi*\*, masterwork bokken (wooden practice katana; treat as katana for feats and class abilities, as club for damage), *cloak of resistance* +2, *ring of protection* +2

\* See *Ultimate Combat*.

Hirabashi Jiro was born in the imperial capital of Kasai and raised among the retinue of the governor of Kasai. His father Hito was a well-respected samurai in the governor’s service, and Jiro was trained as a samurai himself. As a second son, Jiro was also trained as his elder brother Ichiro’s adjutant. Overcoming the envy that a second son’s position entails was Jiro’s first challenge as a youth, but he eventually took a philosophical view of his position, realizing that less responsibility meant more freedom.

During his early years as a samurai, Jiro fought under the command of Sikutsu Sennaka, where he witnessed firsthand the daimyo’s legendary cruelty. In his idle time, Jiro cultivated a love for history, spending many hours in the library of Kasai and researching the few historical facts about his most famous ancestor, Hirabashi Akikaza, and her supposedly unbreakable adamantite sword, said to be hidden in the lost armory of Seinaru Heikiko.

When the Jade Regent assumed control of Minkai in the name of the emperor Higashiyama Shigure and the simmering strife in the capital exploded into bloody conflict between Jiro’s new master, the governor of Kasai, and the Higashiyama clan, Jiro found himself on the losing side. After the death of their lord, the three Hirabashis—Hito, Ichiro, and Jiro—had to fight for their lives, as did many samurai in Kasai. Hito and Ichiro were slain, but Jiro barely managed to escape, thanks to the sacrifice of his father and brother.



Following the massacre, Jiro was forced to flee the capital. A wanted man without a lord, he became a ronin. To escape the vendetta of Jade Regent and the Higashiyama clan, Jiro lived in hiding until amnesty was granted to those samurai who had fought for the governor. This declaration gave Jiro back his freedom, but not his status as a samurai. Instead of returning to Kasai, Jiro decided to move farther north to the Osogen Grasslands, where he met Habesuta Hatsue, a wandering sohei. Together, the two have raised and trained a small militia of peasants, training them with bow and spear. This close-knit group has built a semipermanent camp in a boggy area in southern Osogen, and works to defend the settlers of the Borderlands from the violence of barbarian bandits.

Jiro is a man in his early thirties. He is of average height, and his head is shaved except for the traditional samurai topknot that he wears long, in the northern style. Although a scion of a noble clan, his existence as an exile and a ronin means that he is seldom clean-shaven or well groomed. Jiro tends to be grouchy and sulky, but balances this with a sharp humor. A skilled shogi player, Jiro enjoys the strategy of the game, but he does not possess the innate talent and love of the game that his friend Hatsue displays.

Jiro carries a wakizashi and a wooden practice sword, or *bokken*, which he uses in place of a steel sword. Jiro's own katana was broken the day he fell from samurai status, and both his father's and brother's swords were lost when they died; since then, the ronin has been unable (or unwilling) to save enough money to buy a new katana. He has become quite skilled with the wooden sword, wielding it in concert with his wakizashi, and he refuses to even borrow another sword. Instead, he searches southern Osogen for the lost fortress of Seinaru Heikiko, where he hopes to find and reclaim the sword of his ancestor Hirabashi Akikaza. Jiro's most treasured possession and his one link to his family's past is his bow, the *daikyu of commanding presence*. Originally an ancestral weapon of the Higashiyama family, the bow was given to Jiro's great-grandfather by the Higashiyama emperor almost 100 years ago, when Jiro's great-grandfather saved the emperor's life. The bow has been handed down among the Hirabashis since that time, and only the return of his family's own ancestral katana would convince Jiro to part with it.

### CAMPAIGN ROLE

Jiro becomes an ally of the PCs early in the adventure, and can provide a wealth of information to them about the current political situation in Minkai and those groups also opposed to the Jade Regent. After the conquest of Seinaru Heikiko, Jiro and his band of peasants and ronin

garrison the fortress and turn it into an efficient base the party can return to while they seek allies against the Jade Regent.

When the Jade Regent sends oni to attack the fortress at the end of the adventure, Jiro fights like a cornered lion to protect those under his charge as well as the rightful heir to the Jade Throne. Provided he survives the attack, Jiro joins his forces with those of Sikutsu Itsuru and other northern daimyo, and becomes a general of the rebel army that will attack Kasai to overthrow the Jade Regent. Sikutsu Itsuru restores Jiro's rank as a full samurai, and Jiro is likely to play an important role in the final phase of the struggle against the Jade Regent.





## KAIBUNINSHO

A POWERFUL MEMBER OF THE ONI'S MASK NINJA CLAN, KAIBUNINSHO HAS BEEN HIRED BY THE JADE REGENT TO TRACK DOWN AND KILL THE AMATATSU HEIR AND PREVENT HER FROM CLAIMING THE JADE THRONE OF MINKAI.

### KAIBUNINSHO

CR 14

XP 38,400

Male human ninja 15 (*Pathfinder RPG Ultimate Combat* 13)

CE Medium humanoid (human)

Init +9; Senses Perception +17

#### DEFENSE

AC 29, touch 18, flat-footed 23 (+6 armor, +2 deflection, +5 Dex, +1 dodge, +5 natural)

hp 86 (15d8+15)

Fort +5, Ref +16, Will +4

Defensive Abilities improved uncanny dodge

#### OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee *dragonmaw nunchaku* +19/+14/+9 (1d6+4/19–20) or *mwk wakizashi\** +17/+12/+7 (1d6+3/18–20)

Ranged +2 *shuriken* +18/+13/+8 (1d2+4) or +2 *shuriken* *flurry of stars* +16/+16/+16/+11/+6 (1d2+4) or *blowgun* +16/+11/+6 (1d2 plus poison)

Special Attacks sneak attack +8d6

#### TACTICS

**Before Combat** Kaibuninsho drinks his *potion of barkskin* before combat.

**During Combat** Kaibuninsho always attacks from hiding, using his assassinate ninja trick and making sneak attacks against his targets. Once he is revealed, Kaibuninsho attempts to flee to assume another disguise. If forced into combat, Kaibuninsho proves to be a focused combatant, concentrating his attacks on one opponent at a time.

**Morale** Kaibuninsho fights to the death—behavior dictated by the *shinobi fuhonsen*, which is eager to find a new and more powerful owner.

#### STATISTICS

Str 14, Dex 20, Con 10, Int 13, Wis 8, Cha 12

Base Atk +11; CMB +16; CMD 31

Feats Agile Maneuvers, Combat Expertise, Dodge, Improved Critical (nunchaku), Improved Disarm, Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Mobility, Spring Attack, Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus (nunchaku)

Skills Acrobatics +18, Appraise +14, Bluff +14, Climb +15, Diplomacy +14, Disable Device +18, Disguise +21, Escape Artist +18, Intimidate +14, Knowledge (local) +8, Knowledge (nobility) +8, Perception +17, Sense Motive +7, Stealth +23, Swim +11, Use Magic Device +10

Languages Common, Minkaian, Tien

SQ *ki* pool (8), light steps, ninja tricks (assassinate [DC 18], finesse rogue, flurry of stars, master disguise [DC 18], see the unseen, sudden disguise, weapon training), no trace +5, poison use

Combat Gear *potion of barkskin* (CL 12th), *potion of cure serious wounds*, *potions of invisibility* (2), black adder venom (5 doses), deathblade (5 doses), oil of taggit (6 doses); Other Gear +2 *mithral chain shirt*, *dragonmaw nunchaku* (+2 *nunchaku*; see page 60), +2 *shuriken* (10), blowgun (disguised as a flute) with 20 darts, masterwork *wakizashi\**, *portable hole* containing various outfits and props used in disguises, *ring of protection* +2, *shinobi fuhonsen* (new magic item; see page 24), disguise kit

\* See *Ultimate Combat*.

Slimly built and of below average stature, with short, fuzzy gray hair, Kaibuninsho is hardly impressive physically. An attentive observer, however, might notice an unusual, almost inhuman agility in his every move.

When in the vicinity of others, Kaibuninsho is always sharp and attentive. He tends, however, to alternate between moments of lucidity and periods of melancholy. During these latter periods, he embraces seclusion as a form of defense, and can hide away from the world for weeks.

Kaibuninsho was born in the hills near the coastal town of Sakakabe, and trained in the arts of the ninja by one of the minor clans there. He soon gained fame as a talented spy and imaginative assassin, and was eventually recruited into the Oni's Mask clan.

Since he discovered the artifact called the *shinobi fuhonsen*, however, Kaibuninsho has become a solitary figure. Afflicted with an incurable form of psychosis by the ancient coin, Kaibuninsho was driven to murder many of his former associates, which has led to a rift between the ninja and his clan, but the leader of the Oni's Mask has thus far not taken action against his wayward follower, likely because of Kaibuninsho's current patron, the Jade Regent.

Now an agent of the forces of chaos, Kaibuninsho follows a sinister personal agenda and supports the rise of the oni in Minkai as just another means to spread anarchy in the world, a tragic prelude to the transformation of the human race through a new, radical cycle of natural selection.



## KAIBUNINSHO'S DISGUISES

Kaibuninsho is a master of disguise, able to assume a variety of identities, and he carries a wide assortment of outfits and items in his *portable hole* to further augment his false personas. These disguises are not magical, but rather part of a well-rehearsed repertoire. In addition, the *misdirection* ability of the *shinobi fuhonsen* allows Kaibuninsho to conceal his alignment and his lies. When a situation requires quickness and improvisation, Kaibuninsho uses his sudden disguise and master disguise ninja tricks instead.

Since Kaibuninsho does not have a fixed encounter location in the adventure and shadows the PCs during their journeys, he can drop in at any moment, using any of the disguises detailed below to gain the PCs' trust or at least allay their suspicions. You should detail any encounters featuring these disguises, following the guidelines given below, but you can also create new personas for the ninja master to assume.

**Farmer:** This is the simplest of Kaibuninsho's disguises. As Hitoshi the farmer, the ninja looks like nothing more than an average Minkai peasant, dressed in a worn tunic with a broad sash, simple sandals, and a wide-brimmed, conical straw hat. The PCs can encounter Hitoshi almost anywhere during the adventure. Hitoshi seems jovial, but simple. He pretends to be looking for work as a hired farmhand. To gain the party's trust, he says that his former employer, a samurai in the service of Sikutsu Sennaka, has committed suicide at his liege's order for an act of disobedience. The Typhoon Guard confiscated the samurai's lands, and his tenants were turned out.

**Fortune-Teller:** Miwa the *uranaisha*, or fortune-teller—a heavily made-up, long-nailed, mature lady wearing a dark brown kimono and a white veil on her head—is actually Kaibuninsho in a masterful feminine disguise. Sitting in a wicker armchair with a small matching table, Miwa often sets up shop in an inn or tavern. She charges 5 gp per hour, and employs traditional Minkai methods to divine one's fortunes. Miwa demonstrates some skill in guessing facts about the PCs and Ameiko, but Kaibuninsho's predictions remain superficial unless the PCs reveal their next destination. In this case, Miwa tries to sow the seeds of distrust toward potential allies in the PCs' minds. If the PCs say they are going to the Kuroi Yane in Enganoka, Miwa sees “three evil, gray apes” (the Three Monkeys). If they say they are going to the Kiri Kyomai teahouse in Sakakabe, Miwa sees “a grotesque hag who leads men to dishonor” (O-Kohaku). Miwa also serves the PCs green tea and offers to read the tea leaves for them. This is just a ploy, however, as Kaibuninsho attempts to poison the PCs by lacing their tea with oil of taggit (*Pathfinder RPG Core Rulebook* 559). Anyone who falls unconscious from the poison is then vulnerable to a coup de grace attack from the ninja.

**Mendicant Monk:** In this disguise, that of a nameless wandering monk (or *komuso*), Kaibuninsho wears only a gray robe and a large basket called a *tengai* hat on his head. He plays a bamboo flute called a *sakuhachi* and carries about him an air of mysticism and aloofness. Rumors and legends about wandering holy men capable of miracles abound in Minkai, and the PCs might have heard some of them. The PCs might spot the busking monk more than once and in different places; in each case, he seems to ignore them, although his frequent appearances might tease the PCs into following him. If the PCs chase the false monk, Kaibuninsho leads them into an ambush, using his bamboo flute as a blowgun to shoot poisoned needles at the PCs.

## CAMPAIGN ROLE

Kaibuninsho now works exclusively for the Jade Regent. Shortly before the PCs arrived in Minkai, the Jade Regent instructed Kaibuninsho to destroy the Amatsatsu heir and her closest allies, and the ninja tracks the PCs throughout Minkai until he has fulfilled his contract, or dies trying. If the PCs defeat Kaibuninsho but do not kill him, he continues to harry them wherever he goes, driven by his honor to complete the contract, as well as by the psychosis of the *shinobi fuhonsen*.







## O-SAYUMI



O-SAYUMI IS A YOUNG AND TALENTED GEISHA WHOSE BEAUTY IS RENOWNED THROUGHOUT NORTHWESTERN MINKAI, BUT SHE HAS BEEN KIDNAPPED AND HER SOUL IMPRISONED BY A SHADOWY FIGURE FROM HER PAST.

### O-SAYUMI

CR 12

XP 19,200

Female human bard (lotus geisha) 13 (*Dragon Empires Primer* 22)  
NG Medium humanoid (human)

**Init** +4; **Senses** Perception +15

#### DEFENSE

**AC** 20, touch 15, flat-footed 15 (+4 armor, +4 Dex, +1 dodge, +1 shield)

**hp** 75 (13d8+13)

**Fort** +5, **Ref** +14, **Will** +7

#### OFFENSE

**Speed** 30 ft.

**Melee** +1 *defending fighting fan\** +15/+10 (1d4+1/x3) or +1 *defending fighting fan\** +13/+8 (1d4+1/x3) and mwk fighting fan\* +13/+8 (1d4/x3)

**Ranged** +2 *shuriken* +15/+10 (1d2+2)

**Special Attacks** bardic performance 32 rounds/day (swift action, countersong, dirge of doom, distraction, fascinate, inspire competence +4, inspire courage +3, inspire greatness, soothing performance, suggestion), enrapturing performance (swift action)

**Bard Spells Known** (CL 13th; concentration +17)

5th (1/day)—*mass suggestion* (DC 21)

4th (4/day)—*break enchantment*, *hold monster* (DC 20), *modify memory* (DC 20), *zone of silence*

3rd (5/day)—*charm monster* (DC 19), *cure serious wounds*, *dispel magic*, *displacement*, *good hope*

2nd (6/day)—*calm emotions* (DC 18), *detect thoughts* (DC 16), *enthrall* (DC 18), *sound burst* (DC 16), *tongues*

1st (6/day)—*charm person* (DC 17), *cure light wounds*, *disguise self*, *hideous laughter* (DC 17), *hypnotism* (DC 17), *unseen servant*

0 (at will)—*dancing lights*, *daze* (DC 16), *detect magic*, *ghost sound* (DC 14), *lullaby* (DC 16), *summon instrument*

#### TACTICS

**Before Combat** If expecting combat, O-Sayumi drinks a *potion of mage armor*.

**During Combat** O-Sayumi tries to avoid combat if possible, preferring to support her allies with her bardic performance and spells from a distance, but she is more than capable of defending herself with her two fighting fans if necessary.

**Morale** O-Sayumi flees if reduced to fewer than 50 hit points.

#### STATISTICS

**Str** 10, **Dex** 18, **Con** 12, **Int** 14, **Wis** 8, **Cha** 19

**Base Atk** +9; **CMB** +9; **CMD** 24

**Feats** Dodge, Eschew Materials, Greater Spell Focus (enchantment), Improved Two-Weapon Fighting, Lightning Reflexes, Spell Focus (enchantment), Two-Weapon Defense, Two-Weapon Fighting, Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus (fighting fan\*)

**Skills** Acrobatics +20\*\*, Bluff +20\*\*, Diplomacy +20\*\*, Disguise +14, Escape Artist +14, Fly +20\*\*, Knowledge (arcana) +12, Knowledge (history) +18, Knowledge (local) +18, Knowledge (nobility) +18, Perception +15, Perform (dance) +20, Perform (sing) +20, Perform (string) +20, Sense Motive +20\*\*, Sleight of Hand +13, Spellcraft +11, Stealth +13

**Languages** Aquan, Common, Minkaian, Tien

**SQ** jack-of-all-trades (use any skill), versatile performance (dance, sing, string)

**Combat Gear** *potion of invisibility*, *potions of mage armor* (2);

**Other Gear** +1 *defending fighting fan\**, masterwork fighting fan\*, +2 *shuriken* (5), *headdress of alluring charisma* +4 (as *headband of alluring charisma*), *samisen of oracular vision* (see page 61)

#### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Enrapturing Performance (Su)** See below.

\* See *Ultimate Combat*.

\*\* These skill bonuses are from O-Sayumi's versatile performance ability.

O-Sayumi is the daughter of the pearl merchant and wizard Yugureda Shosaito and a lady of humble origins named Kaori. When Yugureda decided to have Kaori killed to arrange a more advantageous marriage for himself, Kaori fled into the nearby swamp, but Yugureda's nue cohort chased her down and killed her. Before she died, however, Kaori managed to hide her daughter in the swamp, where she was found by the wise kappa Numataro-sama. The kappa raised O-Sayumi as his own daughter until he finally gave her into the care of monks of Irori. O-Sayumi learned to play the *samisen* in the orphanage, and when she was older, she left the monastery and began training to become a geisha in the Kiniro Kyomai teahouse, an elegant building with shiny brass gutters in the entertainment district of Sakakabe.



O-Sayumi is a master of traditional geisha skills, including song, classical music, dance, song, and the tea ceremony. O-Sayumi is a virtuoso performer on the samisen, and is also an accomplished practitioner of the geisha fan dance, which she has modified into her personal fighting style. Her weapons are two folding fighting fans that she normally carries in her sash. O-Sayumi loathes violence, however, and fights only in self-defense.

A beautiful young woman in her early twenties, O-Sayumi bears a striking resemblance to her mother Kaori. With her noble features, jet-black hair, and slender body, O-Sayumi cuts a stunning figure. An epitome of the geisha spirit, O-Sayumi believes in peace and goodness, and is exquisitely mannered and gentle.

## CAMPAIGN ROLE

When the PCs arrive in Sakakabe, O-Sayumi is already a prisoner of her estranged father Yugureda Shosaito—pearl merchant, evil wizard, and the man responsible for her mother's death. If rescued by the PCs, O-Sayumi becomes a trusted ally, helping them to reach their objectives and gain influential friends, including Sikutsu Itsuru. While O-Sayumi would prefer to remain in Sakakabe, the PCs might be able to convince the geisha to accompany them to Kasai in the next adventure. O-Sayumi is not a warrior, however, and she will most likely only provide aid in social situations and outside of combat.

## LOTUS GEISHA ARCHETYPE

The lotus geisha of Minkai are renowned for their supernatural powers of seduction, and numerous tales tell of lotus geisha disarming foes and bolstering allies both before combat begins and in the heat of battle. The lotus geisha is an archetype of the bard class. This archetype appears in *Pathfinder Player Companion: Dragon Empires Primer*, and is reprinted here for your convenience.

**Weapon Proficiency:** A lotus geisha is proficient with all simple weapons, plus the butterfly sword,

fighting fan, iron brush, sai, shortbow, and shuriken. See *Pathfinder RPG Ultimate Combat* for details on these Eastern weapons. This replaces the normal bard weapon proficiencies.

**Enrapturing Performance (Su):** At 2nd level, a lotus geisha gains the ability to execute an enrapturing performance in addition to her bardic performance ability. An enrapturing performance is exactly like a bardic performance with the following exceptions.

A lotus geisha can use an enrapturing performance to recreate the effects of any of her known bardic performances, but she focuses the performance on only a single target within range. While other creatures see and hear a lotus geisha's enrapturing performance, only the target of this ability is affected by it. A lotus geisha cannot have a bardic performance and an enrapturing performance in effect at the same time. Every round spent engaged in an enrapturing performance counts against the total number

of rounds per day she can use her bardic performance, and she cannot use this ability if she does not have any more rounds of bardic performance left for that day. Starting an enrapturing performance is a standard action; at 7th level, it becomes a move action; at 13th level, it becomes a swift action.

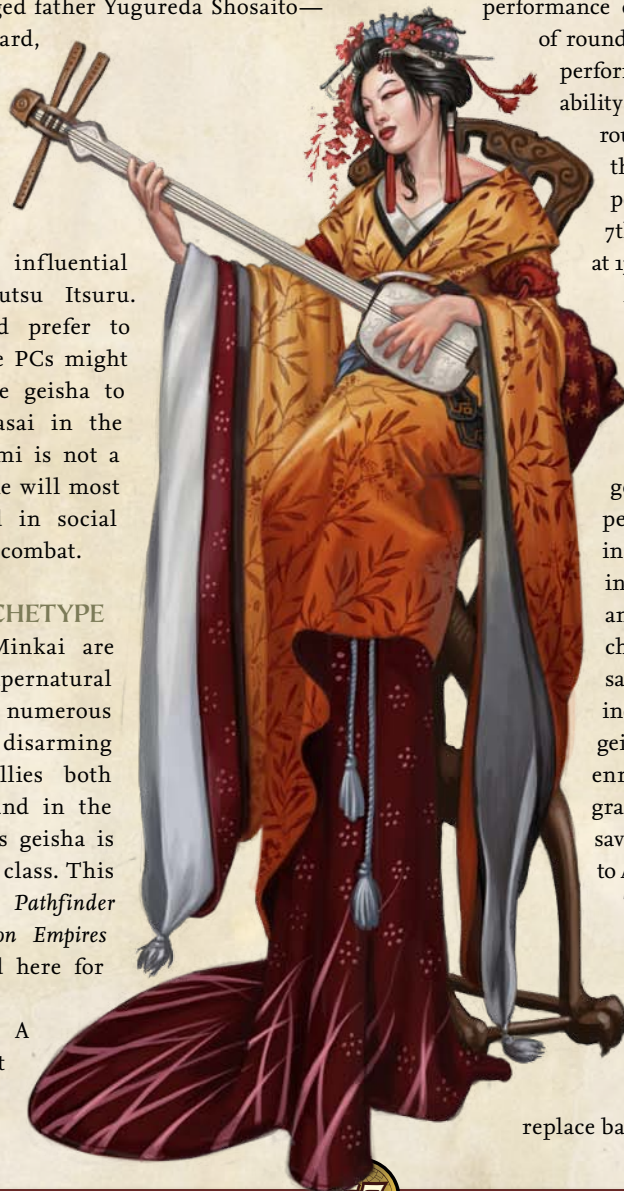
A lotus geisha adds a +2 bonus to the DC of Will saves made to resist the effects of her fascinate, suggestion, and frightening tune enrapturing performances. When a lotus geisha uses her enrapturing performance ability to emulate inspire competence, inspire courage, inspire greatness, or inspire heroics, any bonuses to AC or on ability checks, attack rolls, damage rolls, saving throws, and skill checks increase by +1. For example, a lotus geisha using inspire heroics as an enrapturing performance would grant her target a +5 moral bonus on saving throws and a +5 dodge bonus to AC, instead of the usual +4 bonuses.

This ability replaces well-versed.

**Bonus Feats:** At 1st level, a lotus geisha gains Spell Focus (enchantment) as a bonus feat.

At 5th level, she gains Greater Spell Focus (enchantment) as a bonus feat. These bonus feats

replace bardic knowledge and lore master.







## SIKUTSU SENNAKA



AN AUGUST MEMBER OF THE LANDED GENTRY OF MINKAI AND THE GOVERNOR OF ENGANOKA PROVINCE, SIKUTSU SENNAKA IS THE EPITOME OF HONOR, BUT HE HAS SACRIFICED HIS LAST GLIMMER OF COMPASSION TO HIS DUTY TO THE JADE REGENT.

### SIKUTSU SENNAKA

CR 13

XP 25,600

Male human samurai 14 (*Pathfinder RPG Ultimate Combat* 18)

LE Medium humanoid (human)

**Init** +2; **Senses** Perception +9

#### DEFENSE

**AC** 28, touch 18, flat-footed 25 (+10 armor, +5 deflection, +2 Dex, +1 dodge)

**hp** 151 (14d10+70)

**Fort** +16, **Ref** +8, **Will** +8

**Defensive Abilities** greater resolve, honorable stand 1/day, resolve 7/day

#### OFFENSE

**Speed** 20 ft.

**Melee** +2 katana\* +23/+18/+13 (1d8+11/15–20) or mwk wakizashi\* +21/+16/+11 (1d6+6/18–20)

**Ranged** +1 composite longbow +17/+12/+7 (1d8+5/x3)

**Special Attacks** banner +3/+2, challenge (+14 damage, DR 4/—, 5/day), demanding challenge, greater banner +2

#### TACTICS

**Before Combat** Once the alarm is sounded, Sennaka drinks his *potion of bull's strength* and *potion of shield of faith*.

**During Combat** Sennaka challenges any samurai among his opponents, preferring to face honorable foes rather than lesser opponents. He moves around in combat to avoid becoming cornered, and if given the opportunity, strikes at anyone in reach with his Whirlwind Attack feat.

**Morale** Sennaka does not fear death and fights until killed, neither retreating nor surrendering, unless convinced to flee by his bodyguard Kazuo.

**Base Statistics** Without his potions, Sennaka's statistics are **AC** 23, touch 13, flat-footed 20; **Melee** +2 katana\* +21/+16/+11 (1d8+8/15–20) or mwk wakizashi\* +19/+14/+9 (1d6+4/18–20); **Str** 18; **CMB** +18; **CMD** 31.

#### STATISTICS

**Str** 22, **Dex** 14, **Con** 16, **Int** 13, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 8

**Base Atk** +14; **CMB** +20; **CMD** 38

**Feats** Combat Expertise, Dodge, Great Fortitude, Improved Critical (katana), Iron Will, Mobility, Spring Attack, Toughness, Weapon Focus (katana), Whirlwind Attack

**Skills** Bluff +12, Diplomacy +12, Handle Animal +12, Intimidate +16, Knowledge (nobility) +14 (+21 about Minkai nobility), Perception +9, Ride +19, Sense Motive +10

**Languages** Giant, Minkaian, Tien

**SQ** mount (horse named Taro), mounted archer, order of the warrior (honor in all things 4/day, way of the samurai), weapon expertise (katana)

**Combat Gear** *potions of bull's strength* (2), *potion of cure moderate wounds*, *potion of darkvision*, *potion of lesser restoration*, *potions of shield of faith* (2; CL 18th); **Other Gear** +2 *o-yoroi*\*, +2 katana\*, +1 composite longbow (+4 Str) with 20 arrows, dagger, masterwork wakizashi\*, *belt of mighty constitution* +2, *cloak of resistance* +2, banner

\* See *Ultimate Combat*.

Sikutsu Sennaka is one of the most powerful daimyo and generals in Minkai, and the current head of the Sikutsu clan. He has seen much action in countless petty conflicts against lesser daimyo as well as other Tian nations, and is an accomplished naval commander as well. Like many of his forebears, Sennaka is also the governor of Enganoka Province. After Emperor Higashiyama Shigure went into hiding, the Jade Regent ordered Sennaka to maintain order in the northwestern provinces at all costs. Sennaka keeps a particularly sharp eye on the merchant class, considered to be the most likely source of unrest, but also closely watches the oppressed peasants and miners of the prosperous hills that surround the towns of Sakakabe and Enganoka, which play a decisive role in the empire's economy—especially so now, given the current trade crisis between Minkai and the rest of Tian Xia.

Although officially responsible only for Enganoka, Sennaka also exerts a noticeable influence on the neighboring province of Sakakabe, whose governor is weak and irresolute in comparison. Sennaka even enjoys significant authority in the large port of Akafuto to the south, where the city's complacent bureaucracy traditionally favors his family's business. Sennaka usually spends only half his time in the provincial capital, for he has set a schedule of frequent inspections in the surrounding castles, which he carries out in person with a large escort of loyal samurai.

In recent years, the people of Enganoka have begun subtly resisting their haughty ruler, whose energies have always been focused more on warfare than on maritime commerce and good administration of the territory. When



Sennaka levied extra taxes to support the Jade Regent's new government and his private mercenary army, the Typhoon Guard, many villages refused to pay. The village chiefs, with the unspoken support of the local gentry, instead spent the funds to develop and improve their land. When Sennaka learned of this, he ignored the good that had been done to his own lands and took it as an offense to his honor, triggering a chain of violent episodes. Several prominent members of local noble families were forced to commit seppuku for betraying the trust of their daimyo, and many tax collectors, only some of whom were actually guilty of malicious embezzlement, were beheaded. Sennaka now sends his *daikan tetsuku*, or rural police, throughout the countryside as well, and the persecution continues, in even the smallest of villages.

After his appointment as governor, Sennaka had to leave his beloved family castle in the hands of his younger brother, Sikutsu Itsuru. Sennaka considers Itsuru an unruly, useless sentimentalist. But Itsuru is stronger than Sennaka knows, and seeks to remove Sennaka and right the governor's many injustices, provided he can find a way to do so honorably.

A middle-aged man of tall stature and gracious manners, Sikutsu Sennaka is the ideal image of the honorable samurai, but his decorous exterior conceals a cruel heart and naked lust for power. Since becoming governor, Sennaka has adopted a much more lavish and extravagant lifestyle. Sennaka specially commissioned a suit of jade-green *o-yoroi* in honor of his lord, the Jade Regent, complete with a horned helmet and a scowling, demonic faceplate. He also took from the treasury of his family's castle one of the Sikutsu clan's most valuable treasures, a darkwood box of potions, given to the family centuries ago by the high priest of Shizuru. The box once contained six powerful *potions of shield of faith*, but Sennaka has already consumed four of them, leaving only two remaining.

## CAMPAIGN ROLE

As one of the Jade Regent's highest-ranking commanders and the governor of Enganoka, Sikutsu Sennaka is a major obstacle to the PCs' plan to acquire support against the Jade Regent. In order to rally northwestern Minkai to their side in support of Ameiko (or another *Amatatsu* heir), the PCs will likely need to kill Sennaka.

Alternatively, the PCs might be able to show Sennaka the error of his ways. For all of his cruelty, Sennaka is still an honorable man, and if confronted with the truth, he might reconsider his actions and his loyalties. If the PCs capture Sennaka, a DC 44 Diplomacy check convinces Sennaka that the Jade Regent is not the true ruler of Minkai, and that an honorable person would refuse to serve such a lord (Intimidate does not achieve the same results on Sennaka, as the effects of

intimidation are only temporary). If Ameiko is with the PCs and they show Sennaka irrefutable proof of her status as the true heir to the Jade Throne (such as the *Amatatsu Seal*), the PCs gain a +5 bonus on the Diplomacy check. If the check is successful, Sennaka realizes that he has failed his lord—the true emperor of Minkai—and that the only way to restore his family's honor is to commit seppuku and allow his brother Itsuru to inherit his title.

If Sennaka escapes, the PCs have lost a decisive opportunity to remove him. Sennaka flees to Kasai to report his failure, where the Jade Regent interrogates him about all he has learned of Ameiko and the PCs. Although he retains his title, Sennaka loses much of his power and influence, and he remains in Kasai at the Jade Regent's side. In this case, the PCs should face Sennaka at some point in the next adventure, when they take the battle to the imperial capital and the Jade Regent himself.





## JADE REGENT TREASURES

THE FOLLOWING UNIQUE TREASURES CAN BE FOUND IN “TIDE OF HONOR.” PLAYER-APPROPRIATE HANDOUTS APPEAR IN THE GAMEMASTERY JADE REGENT ITEM CARD SET.

### ARMOR OF THE TIRELESS WARRIOR

**Aura** moderate necromancy; **CL** 9th  
**Slot** armor; **Price** 25,900 gp; **Weight** 15 lbs.

#### DESCRIPTION

Crafted by shamans of the Yumogu tribe for their mightiest chieftains, this undecorated +3 *leather armor* is made from strips of boiled horsehide. While her enemies tire around her, the wearer of this armor can keep fighting. If the wearer is a barbarian, the *armor of the tireless warrior* allows her to rage for 2 additional rounds per day. Once per day on command, the wearer can cause her enemies to become fatigued, as per the *waves of fatigue* spell. In addition, once per day, the wearer can draw upon the armor’s strength to banish her own weariness. For 10 minutes, the wearer takes no penalties from the fatigued or exhausted conditions. This effect is merely an illusion, however, and when it ends, the wearer takes 1d6 points of nonlethal damage and the condition or conditions return.

#### CONSTRUCTION

**Requirements** Craft Magic Arms and Armor, *invigorate* (*Pathfinder RPG Advanced Player’s Guide* 230), *rage*, *waves of fatigue*; **Cost** 13,030 gp

### DAIKYU OF COMMANDING PRESENCE

**Aura** strong evocation; **CL** 12th  
**Slot** none; **Price** 26,000 gp; **Weight** 3 lbs.

#### DESCRIPTION

This asymmetric Minkai longbow, or *daikyu*, is over 6 feet long, and made of laminated bamboo, wood, and leather with a grip crafted from the hide of an imperial dragon. The *daikyu of commanding presence* is a +2 *seeking composite longbow* that adjusts its strength rating to match the Strength bonus of its wielder. Once per day, the wielder of the *daikyu of commanding presence* can fire a single arrow into the air, which illuminates the surrounding area with the effects of a *daylight* spell for 1d6 rounds. All allies within the *daylight* spell’s area of increased illumination (120 feet) receive a +2 morale bonus on saving throws against fear and a +1 morale bonus on attack rolls made as part of a charge, for the duration of the daylight effect. If the wielder of the *daikyu of commanding presence* is a cavalier or samurai, this *daylight* effect counts as a banner for the purpose of the character’s banner ability, and the morale bonuses are treated as for a cavalier or samurai of five levels higher. In addition, a cavalier or samurai wielding the *daikyu of commanding presence* can use his challenge ability against a foe within the

first range increment of the bow, and deals extra damage to the target of his challenge with arrows fired from the bow.

The *daikyu of commanding presence* is an ancestral weapon of the Higashiyama family, one of the five imperial families of Minkai. The *daikyu* is imbued with royal honor, and bestows one permanent negative level on any creature without honor who attempts to wield it (such as oni, traitors, kinslayers, and the like). The negative level remains as long as the weapon is in hand and disappears when the weapon is no longer wielded. This negative level cannot be overcome in any way (including by *restoration* spells) while the weapon is wielded.

#### CONSTRUCTION

**Requirements** Craft Magic Arms and Armor, *bull’s strength*, *daylight*, *heroism*, *true seeing*; **Cost** 13,200 gp

### DRAGONMAW NUNCHAKU

**Aura** strong evocation; **CL** 12th  
**Slot** none; **Price** 29,902 gp; **Weight** 2 lbs.

#### DESCRIPTION

The bars of this +2 *nunchaku* are solid iron, wrapped in leather decorated with an imperial dragon motif, and connected by a chain. Once per day, when the wielder of a *dragonmaw nunchaku* confirms a critical hit against an opponent with the *nunchaku*, he can cast *confusion* on that creature as a free action. The *confusion* effect lasts for 8 rounds, and a DC 16 Will save negates the effect.

In addition, in the round following a successful disarm attack with the *dragonmaw nunchaku*, the wielder can spin the *nunchaku* as a standard action, creating a curtain of whirling force replicas of the disarmed weapon around himself for 1 round. This functions as a ringed *blade barrier* with a radius of 10 feet around the wielder (Reflex DC 19). The disarmed weapon determines the damage dice of the *blade barrier* (i.e., 12d6 for a wakizashi, 12d8 for a katana, and so on). The disarmed weapon is unaffected, and drops to the ground as normal. The wielder can create the *blade barrier* once per day, and only in the round following a successful disarm attack.

#### CONSTRUCTION

**Requirements** Craft Magic Arms and Armor, *blade barrier*, *confusion*; **Cost** 15,102 gp

### KARYUKAI TEA SET

**Aura** moderate conjuration; **CL** 11th  
**Slot** none; **Price** 38,160 gp; **Weight** 4 lbs.



# JADE REGENT TREASURES

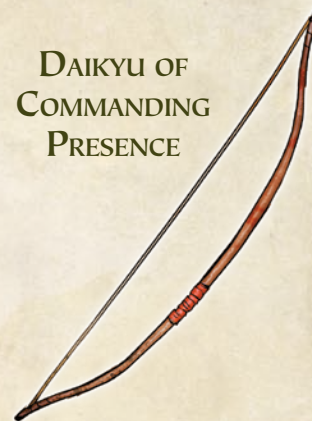
SAMISEN OF ORACULAR VISION



ARMOR OF THE TIRELESS WARRIOR



DAIKYU OF COMMANDING PRESENCE



KARYUKAI TEA SET



DRAGONMAW NUNCHAKU



## DESCRIPTION

This tea set includes an array of utensils, painted with pictures of willows and flowers, used in traditional tea ceremonies: a small teapot, three bowls of various sizes and shapes, six cups, bamboo utensils (a ladle, a scoop, and a whisk), and several smaller containers, all stored in a wooden box. Once per day, a user can spend 1 hour performing a tea ceremony with the tea set. At the end of this time, the user must make a Diplomacy check. The tea used in the ceremony must be green tea of exceptional quality (worth a minimum of 10 gp per dose) or the user takes a  $-4$  penalty on her Diplomacy roll to perform the ceremony. Up to six creatures (including the user) can drink the tea brewed during the ceremony. The tea's aroma arouses a sense of serenity in those who drink it, as they receive an impression of the sights, sounds, and smells of a blooming willow grove at sunset. The result of the user's Diplomacy check determines the effects of the tea on those who drink it.

10 or less: No effect.

11–15: The drinker gains a +4 morale bonus on saving throws against poison and fear effects for 12 hours.

16–20: As above, and the drinker receives the benefits of *neutralize poison* and *remove disease*.

21–25: As above, and the drinker receives the benefits of *heroism*.

26 or more: As above, but the drinker receives the benefits of *greater heroism* instead of *heroism*.

## CONSTRUCTION

**Requirements** Craft Wondrous Item, *greater heroism*, *heroes' feast*, *heroism*; **Cost** 19,080 gp

## SAMISEN OF ORACULAR VISION

**Aura** moderate divination; **CL** 10th

**Slot** none; **Price** 46,575 gp; **Weight** 3 lbs.

## DESCRIPTION

This elegant, long-necked samisen is crafted of cat skin stretched over a wooden frame. The samisen's three silken strings are magically keyed to the past, present, and future. A user must succeed at a DC 20 Perform (string instruments) check to play the correct tune and cast one of the following spell effects: *legend lore* (using the string of the past), *scrying* (using the string of the present), or *divination* (using the string of the future). Each tune can be performed once per day, and the user must play the samisen for the required casting time of the spell effect. In the case of *legend lore*, if the required casting time is 1 or more days, the user needs to play for just 1 hour. As a masterwork samisen, the *samisen of oracular vision* provides a +2 circumstance bonus on all Perform checks using the instrument (including Perform checks to use its abilities).

## CONSTRUCTION

**Requirements** Craft Wondrous Item, *divination*, *legend lore*, *scrying*, creator must have 10 ranks in the Perform (string instruments) skill; **Cost** 24,075 gp





## MINKAI

NEVER HAVE I VISITED A LAND SO AT EASE WITH ITS OWN WONDERS. IN FIELDS GROOMED AND CULTIVATED FOR CENTURIES ON END, GENERATIONS OF PEASANTS GO ABOUT THEIR DAILY RITUALS, NOT EVEN LIFTING THEIR HEADS AS SPIRIT CREATURES TAKE SHORTCUTS THROUGH THEIR CROPS. IN THE CITIES STERN PARENTS WARN THEIR CHILDREN NOT TO DALLY NEAR THE DOCKS OR ON BRIDGES, LEST THEY MAKE THEMSELVES PREY FOR WHAT LIVES BENEATH. IN THE CAPITAL RISE MONUMENTS TO RULERS PAST, HONORED STILL AS BEINGS AS WISE AND MIGHTY AS THE GODS, WHILE UPON A THRONE OF JADE THEIR WORLDLY INHERITOR RULES OVER A REALM OF WONDERS.

—VIMERIDO “TOGASHI” RIRDOMERIO, *FROM WHENCE I RETURNED*



**K**nown as the Empire of Dawn, or the Land of the Three Fires, Minkai is the easternmost nation of Tian Xia, and is renowned as a legendary place of mystery and marvels among the peoples of the Inner Sea. A land of endless riches and home to a proud people, Minkai fosters a tradition of national honor that breeds independence and a degree of aloofness. Wherever the nation's ships travel, they spread treasures and artistry of singular skill and coveted design. The people of Minkai, the Tian-Mins, thirst for opportunities to prove their strength and skill just as surely as the other peoples of Tian Xia, and might be encountered far from their homeland, driven by their need for adventure or by matters of great import. But nowhere is the genius, talent, and pride of this people better exhibited than in their ancient homeland, Minkai, a land of wonders unlike any in all of Golarion.

## GOVERNMENT & IMPERIAL FAMILIES

For the majority of its history, Minkai has been ruled by emperors and empresses descending from one of five imperial families, each of which was blessed with the right to rule by the goddess Shizuru in the distant past. Today, however, most of these five families have been hunted to extinction by the oni of the Five Storms and their emissaries. The nation is ruled by a merciless warlord known as the Jade Regent, who for the past few years has indulged his cruel whims upon the nation, forcing the governors of the land's eight provinces and the numerous feudal lords to levy strict and exploitative laws upon an increasingly downtrodden population. Yet despite the legitimate families' demises, their works, monuments, and influences upon Minkai remains present even today, endlessly inspiring the peasantry with the hope that of one of their rightful rulers will return. The five imperial families are described below.

**Amatatsu:** This imperial family has a reputation for producing traders, explorers, and reformers. One member of this family, Amatatsu Aganhei, forged the trade route between Minkai and Avistan thousands of years ago, but his triumph was suppressed by the Teikoku family and he himself executed by the Teikoku shogun. When the Five Storms began slaughtering the imperial families, the Amatatus fled across the trade route established by their ancestor and changed their name to Kaijitsu. Currently, Ameiko Kaijitsu is the only living true heir to the line.

**Higashiyama:** Members of this family were respected scholars and pious worshipers of the goddess Shizuru. This family ruled Minkai for much of the last 100 years since the fall of Lung Wa. Their downfall came when the Oni of the Five Storms, in the person of the Jade Regent, killed the previous monarch, Emperor Higashiyama Shigure. Rumors suggest that there may still be living heirs of this family, but that they have either allied with the oni or been hidden away in remote prisons under the Five Storms' control.

**Shojinawa:** Although the oldest rulers from this family have reputations for revering ancestral spirits, raising fantastic shrines, and creating grand public works, the memory of the Shojinawas' great works was soured by later generations' decadence and madness. Some claim the family was even cursed by the moon for dabbling in dark magic and bloody sacrifices under its gaze—and doubt one could tell the difference between an oni and a Shojinawa heir if forced to say which was which. The Shojinawa family was supposedly destroyed when their palace was consumed by a conflagration of freezing black fire.

**Sugimatu:** Historically, the Sugimatus were peacemakers and the imperial family most in touch with the needs of the people. Historians have granted members of this dynasty titles such as the Empress of Pleasant Rains, Emperor of the Sake Sea, and the Six Springs Empress. Rather than being intimidating titles, these names reflect eras that number among the most peaceful and bountiful in Minkai's history. Most members of the Sugimatu family were poisoned over a period of years, making it the first of the five families to fall.

**Teikoku:** A family of traditionalists and isolationists, the Teikokus were among the most militaristic of the five imperial families. This family founded the Teikoku Shogunate—the empire that predated Minkai. Its members were slain by the Oni of the Five Storms within the last half century, though it is said the fiends suffered considerable losses at the ancient family's hands.

## CITIES & PROVINCES

Ever since the days of warring tribes and feuding clans, life in the land now known as Minkai has depended upon the bounty of the sea. As such, the oldest and largest settlements in the nation have risen upon the shores, and the culture of Minkai has grown and radiated from these centers of trade, learning, and government, coloring the lives and ways of all who live nearby. As these cities exerted their influences over the land, each became the hub of its own province, and the seat of an imperial governor who administers the emperor's will. Beyond the eight provinces exist three additional regions: the Ikkaku Peninsula, a harsh land home to a rugged people and ancient mysteries; the Osogen Grasslands, a vast plain home to reckless barbarian tribes; and the Higashita Coast, which technically falls within the province of Hiyouai, but whose people have developed a distinctive identity of their own.

**Akafuto:** The second largest port of Minkai and terminal of the empire's major fluvial route, Akafuto boasts a population of more than 40,000. A major center of lumber trade in the Tian Xia, it exports a variety of raw and semifinished products, and its large junks are the Minkai crafts most likely to be seen sailing along the coasts of Tianjing and in foreign ports in general. The most famous temple of Akafuto, Ukuashi-Ji, is dedicated to Kofusachi, who



blesse the fields and the rich harvests that seasonally flow down the Tagiryu River and from Akafuto to markets across the nation. Akafuto is also the seat of the Juhimeiyō School, a monastic institute traditionally frequented by young nobles who aspire to become clerks at the imperial court. A city of remarkable political stability, Akafuto has been ruled by the governors of the Moniwa family almost continuously for 11 centuries. The current governor, Moniwa Kamon, was among the first to swear fealty to the Jade Regent; though doing so earned him the suspicion and loathing of many of his people, it also ensured the province would face relatively few changes under the new ruler's regime.

**Enganoka:** A younger city than Sakakabe, but similarly built in a favorable landing spot on the west coast of Minkai, Enganoka is an important commercial port. The trading activity concentrates in the open market located behind the port, with wares ranging from ordinary cereals and fish. Luxury goods are available in the Kuroi Yane market, one of Minkai's most famous and luxurious commercial venues. The chief exports of Enganoka are silk, coming from the mulberry orchards of the nearby hills, and rock alum, widely used to dye fabric and almost exclusively extracted in the domain of the governing Sikutsu family. Across the nation, Enganoka has a reputation for catering to decadent tastes—legal and illegal—that only the wealthiest can afford, giving rise to an oft unmerited condition among both city dwellers and nearby villagers known as “Enganoka arrogance.”

**The Higashita Coast:** Officially part of Hiyosai Province, the villages of the Higashita Coast are heavily influenced by the vast Seseragi Forest, said to have been the ancestral home of the legendary hero Okirori Tomoko. Tomoko was said to have mediated a resolution between the proud kami lords of the forest and the Warashi River, and ever since, those who have walked the forest's paths have been granted advice in the form of visions and whispers from its ancient guardians. Even beyond the forest, tales of the kami and ancestral spirits have ensnared the imaginations and traditions of what might otherwise be a string of poor coastal fishing villages. For generations, the coast dwellers have gathered riches from the sea, crafting incredibly fine works from driftwood, pearl, coral, urchin shells, and other materials of inherent beauty. Their artistry tends to have a morbid bent, with a focus on 114 types of gruesome and generally ironic deaths depicted in varied sculptures. Though sometimes grisly, this artwork has become incredibly popular across Minkai, and many go to great lengths to gather examples of all 114 deaths.

**Hiyosai:** Called the eastern treasury of Minkai, Hiyosai grew rich on the copper-mining activity in the hills south of town and the manufacture of bronze objects, which are exported to Kasai together with the raw material needed for the empire's coinage. With frightening unpredictability and varying organization, *siyokoys* (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 3 246) originating from coral complexes deeper in the Okaiyo

Ocean attack ships as they leave Hiyosai's port, dragging metal goods and sailors alike back to their dens in the coral ruins of the drowned city of Sangoshi. In response, the city's harbor patrol has grown into a veritable navy, captained by daring samurai and their students, who train endlessly with a variety of pole arms. Some families in and around Hiyosai claim to be descended from the survivors of Sangoshi, who were known for their unusual fairness and green eyes.

**The Ikkaku Peninsula:** The northernmost lands of Minkai are poor and scarcely inhabited, but those who do make their homes amid the frosty cliffs prove exceptionally proud and independent. Most eke out hard lives from the cold stone of the Kamifushi Mountains and the varied mineral treasures found within. Several villages, however, benefit from the region's geological instability and mineral richness, being home to mineral springs. Such springs are often accompanied by temples dedicated to Desna, Kofusachi, or Qi Zhong, and boast remarkable medical, spiritual, or magical healing properties. Few of these mystical resorts promote their remarkable waters, however, believing that the spirits guide those most in need to the springs—which sometimes prove quite treacherous to reach. Though over the past decades this region has been largely untouched by the rule of the Jade Regent, its residents are just as traditional and patriotic as any of Minkai's people. Many staunchly oppose the changes sweeping the land and shelter fugitives from new implemented imperial laws.

**Kasai:** The largest and most prosperous province of Minkai hosts the capital and the highest number of feudal domains, which are mostly located in the bountiful land between the Tagiryu and Kamiteki rivers. Kasai is a bustling city with more than 100,000 inhabitants, and the main center of foreign commerce. Founded to serve as a hub port connecting the main sea lanes of the Xidao Gulf to Uddo, the previous capital, and the fertile inland of southeastern Minkai via busy fluvial routes, Kasai experienced rapid growth during the Teikoku Shogunate. When Uddo was razed and abandoned with the end of Teikoku rule, Kasai was already the most important community of Minkai, and so it was chosen as the new capital. As the current seat of the empire, Kasai hosts the imperial palace, the palace of the governor, various holy monuments, and the busiest port in Minkai. From the imperial palace, the Jade Regent rules the land, his edicts being meted out with ruthless efficiency by legions of servants, soldiers, and more sinister agents. The city of Kasai is presented in detail in *Pathfinder Adventure Path* #54.

**Oda:** The granary of Minkai, Oda's countryside hosts the most productive rice paddies in the empire. The city itself has seen the coming and going of thousands of Tian immigrants, recruited to work as farmhands in the rich estates of the local feudal lords. Oda is the Minkai city with the most resident foreigners, mostly Tian merchants,







artisans, and restaurateurs, who have come over the generations to support their own communities across the Xidao Gulf and beyond. Numerous criminal groups have grown influential in Oda, with bandits preying on farmers and travelers headed to the city, several yakuza groups running discreet rackets in the city itself, and pirate junks watching for poorly guarded merchants ships sailing too close to Aogaito Island.

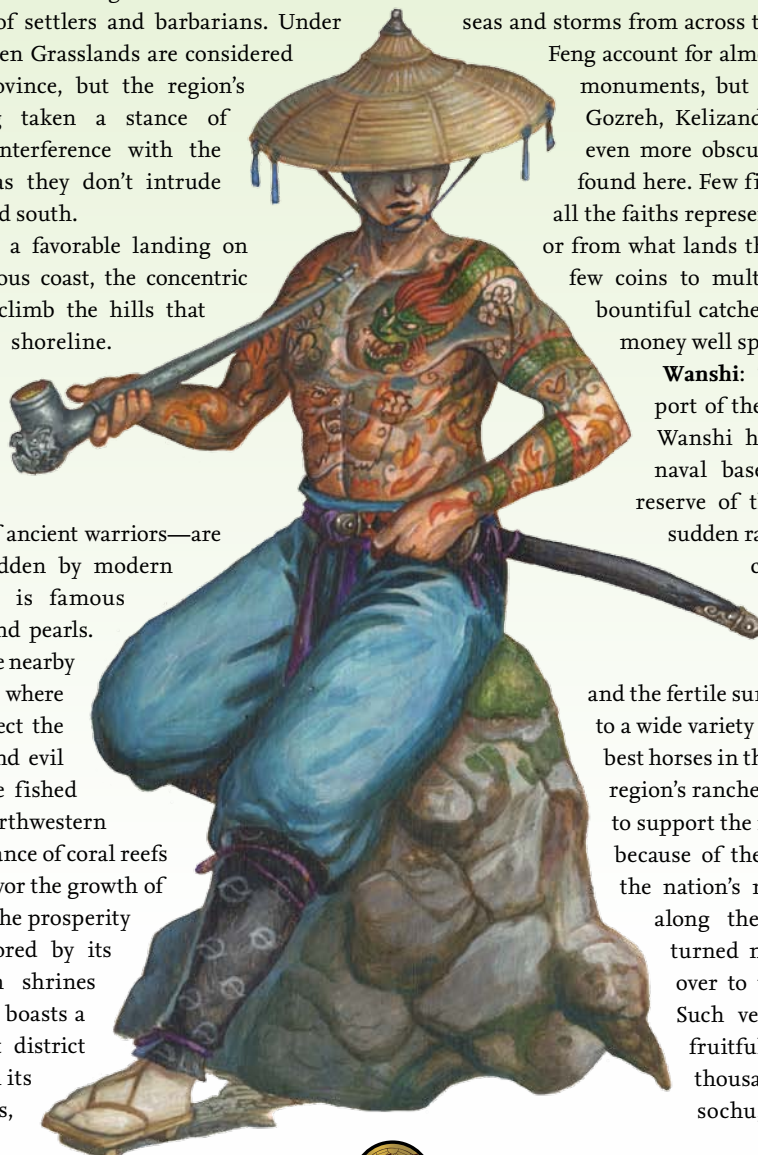
**The Osogen Grasslands:** Near the Forest of Spirits, Osogen is inhabited by two kindred of barbarians: the Utare, fishermen and hunters who keep to the coasts, and the Yumogu, proud nomadic herders with a reputation for deceit. Both peoples were slowly driven back to the grasslands by the Minkai people in a centuries-long struggle that largely subsided before the rise of the Teikoku Shogunate. The Yumogu and the Utare have never been able to seriously challenge the might of the empire since then, but the southern reaches of Osogen have been contested between generations of settlers and barbarians. Under imperial law the Osogen Grasslands are considered part of Sakakabe Province, but the region's governors have long taken a stance of disinterest and noninterference with the barbarians, so long as they don't intrude upon the more civilized south.

**Sakakabe:** Built on a favorable landing on an otherwise treacherous coast, the concentric terraces of Sakakabe climb the hills that overlook the narrow shoreline. The lowest terraces lean on the ruins of a stone fortress built millennia ago, whose ancient stone walls—adorned with reliefs of ancient warriors—are almost completely hidden by modern structures. Sakakabe is famous for trading in silver and pearls. Silver is extracted in the nearby Sankyodai Mountains, where several fortresses protect the mines from bandits and evil humanoids. Pearls are fished along the entire northwestern coast, where an abundance of coral reefs and natural lagoons favor the growth of oysters and conches. The prosperity of Sakakabe is mirrored by its culture. Besides rich shrines and temples, the town boasts a refined entertainment district that is famous for both its teahouses and theatres,

which are second only to those in Kasai. The high standard of living of the town's middle class, coupled with the somewhat lenient attitude of its governor, has allowed the yakuza to thrive in most of their traditional activities, especially gambling. The openness and appeal of these games have become something of an attraction for visitors, lending the city's single yakuza group a measure of legitimacy not found elsewhere in the country.

**Shogokabe:** This rugged city overlooks a large bay at the confluence of many nonnavigable streams and irrigation canals. The chief fishing port in Minkai, it boasts a mile-long wharf from which a multitude of junks sail every day to fish the bountiful waters of the Sorui Gulf. Shogokabe is a pacific and welcoming town, known throughout the nation for its symbol and regional specialty, the purple Sorui squid. The fishermen of Sorui are highly practical when it comes to both their work and their faith, and the city's wharves are lined with dozens of shrines dedicated to deities of the seas and storms from across the world. Statues of Hei Feng account for almost three-quarters of the monuments, but images of the faiths of Gozreh, Kelizandri, Valani, Dagon, and even more obscure faiths might also be found here. Few fishermen claim to know all the faiths represented along the sea front, or from what lands they hail, but if tithing a few coins to multiple deities wins them bountiful catches, the sailors consider it money well spent.

**Wanshi:** The main commercial port of the south coast of Minkai, Wanshi harbors a well-defended naval base, built to protect the reserve of the imperial fleet from sudden raids. Like Shogokabe, the city of Wanshi bases its economy on fishing and farming rather than on commerce, and the fertile surrounding plains are put to a wide variety of agricultural uses. The best horses in the empire come from the region's ranches, with the majority sold to support the imperial cavalry. In part because of the city's association with the nation's military, canny farmers along the Awahana River have turned much of their rice crop over to the production of sake. Such ventures have proven so fruitful that now hundreds of thousands of gallons of sake, sochu, wine, and medical





## RANDOM ENCOUNTERS IN MINKAI

Aquatic	Forest	Hills	Mountains	Plains	Creature	Avg. CR	Source
1–12	—	—	—	—	1d6 ningyos	4	<i>Pathfinder</i> #37 80
—	1–8	—	—	—	2d6 sagaris	4	<i>Bestiary</i> 3 234
—	9–15	1–9	1–8	1–10	1d12 tengus	4	<i>Bestiary</i> 263
—	16–21	—	—	11–16	1d6 oni, spirit	5	<i>Bestiary</i> 3 209
—	22–27	10–16	9–15	—	1 rajju	5	see page 90
—	28–36	—	—	—	1d4 tanukis	6	<i>Bestiary</i> 3 259
13–49	—	—	—	—	2d6 kappas	7	<i>Bestiary</i> 3 166
50–66	37–41	17–21	16–21	17–21	1 kirin	7	<i>Bestiary</i> 3 168
—	—	22–30	—	22–32	1d6 oni, kuwa	7	<i>Bestiary</i> 3 208
—	—	31–37	22–28	33–39	1 baku	8	<i>Bestiary</i> 3 31
—	42–46	38–43	29–34	40–47	1d8 foo lions	8	<i>Bestiary</i> 3 120
—	47–54	44–52	35–42	48–56	1d6 oni, ja noi	8	<i>Pathfinder</i> #52 90
—	55–60	53–57	—	57–63	1d6 penanggalens	8	<i>Bestiary</i> 3 216
67–77	—	58–63	43–51	—	1 yuki-onna	8	<i>Bestiary</i> 3 287
—	61–68	64–71	52–59	64–71	1d4 manananggals	9	<i>Bestiary</i> 3 190
—	69–75	72–77	60–63	72–79	1d6 vampires, jiang-shis	9	<i>Bestiary</i> 3 278
—	76–84	—	—	—	1 kami, zuishin	10	<i>Bestiary</i> 3 165
—	85–94	—	64–69	—	1 nue	10	<i>Bestiary</i> 3 204
—	—	78–84	70–76	80–89	1d4 oni, ogre mage	10	<i>Bestiary</i> 221
—	—	85–89	77–84	—	1 jorogumo	12	<i>Bestiary</i> 3 156
—	—	90–98	85–94	90–96	1 oni, earth yai	13	see page 88
—	95–100	—	—	97–100	1 adult forest dragon	14	<i>Bestiary</i> 3 94
78–91	—	—	—	—	1 kami, suijin	14	<i>Pathfinder</i> #52 88
92–100	—	—	—	—	1 sea bonze	15	<i>Bestiary</i> 3 239
—	—	99–100	95–100	—	1 ancient underworld dragon	16	<i>Bestiary</i> 3 103

alcohols flow down the river for sale in Wanshi every year. This practice makes the nearby hills and forest a favorite home of many tanukis (*Bestiary* 3 259), which prove to be both a curse and a blessing for the regional brewers.

## ADVENTURING IN MINKAI

Although a highly civilized land, Minkai is not without its dangers and opportunities for adventure. Noted here are just a few of the most infamous sites across the empire.

**Aogaito Island:** While technically the feudal domain of the Kinoshita family, Aogaito Island, with its numerous coves and nearby shoals, has long served as a base for piracy in the Sorui Gulf and beyond. While the younger members of the Kinoshita family insist that their family has no ties to the pirates that hunt near their lands, their patron, Domeki, is said to be either too senile to effectively combat the threat—or the secret master of the seafaring bandits.

**Sangoshi:** The island city of Sangoshi crumbled into the sea long centuries ago, drowning a metropolis of beauty, art, and science beneath the waves. In the centuries since, the nearby coral reefs have overgrown the underwater ruins, transforming them into a vast maze of living caves. Large numbers of eel-like siyokoys dwell in the sunken city, from which they raid the western coast of Minkai. Legends say

that every 44 years the strange wonders of Sangoshi rise from the water for one day, only to sink again at day's end.

**Seven Venoms Springs:** A cluster of mysterious hot springs connected to an ancient temple of Nalinivati, these acrid smelling pools are said to bubble with the poisons of seven deadly nagas buried beneath the mountain. The springs are notoriously difficult to find, supposedly hidden by the illusions maintained by the temple's mysterious caretakers.

**The Three Fires:** The collective name for Mount Kazunan, Mount Kumijinja, and Mount Yogan, the Three Fires are a trio of active volcanoes that run along the spine of the Kamifushi and Kyojin Mountains. Legends say that each is a passage to a vast realm of fire deep beneath Minkai, where underworld dragons hoard the greatest treasures of the earth.

**Uddo:** The nation's capital under the rule of the Teikoku Shogunate, Uddo was razed during the battle that marked the downfall of the Teikoku family and the rise of the modern nation of Minkai. In the centuries since its destruction, the city has largely been reclaimed by nature, leading bandits to frequently use the maze-like ruins as hideouts, tempting tomb raiders to plunder the ancient tombs of Teikoku shoguns, and serving as the source for endless tales of deathless soldiers and enraged rulers past.





## IRORI

IRORI (IH-ROH-REE) WAS ONCE A MORTAL, A GREAT MAN WHOSE RIGID DISCIPLINE ALLOWED HIM TO ACHIEVE PHYSICAL, MENTAL, AND SPIRITUAL PERFECTION. IN DOING SO, HE FREED HIMSELF OF THE RESTRAINTS OF MORTALITY AND BECAME A GOD, INSPIRING COUNTLESS OTHERS TO FOLLOW HIS EXAMPLE, AND ENCOURAGING THEM TO CHALLENGE THEIR MINDS, BODIES, AND SOULS IN ORDER TO PUSH THE LIMITS OF WHAT THEY THOUGHT POSSIBLE. HE IS A TEACHER WHO LEADS BY EXAMPLE RATHER THAN ISSUING REPRIMANDS AND CORRECTIONS, FOR HE UNDERSTANDS THAT FOR SOME THE QUEST FOR SELF-PERFECTION IS ALMOST EASY, WHILE FOR OTHERS IT IS FRAUGHT WITH PITFALLS AND SETBACKS.



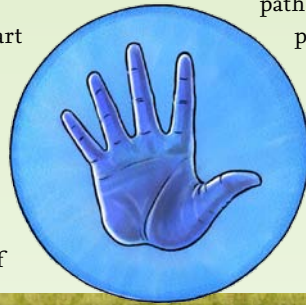
Irori knows that there is no technique that works best for everyone, and each student must experiment and practice to find the method that works best for her. He is patient, forgiving, and serene, welcoming as brothers and sisters all who seek perfection. Meanwhile, he constantly tests his own limits as a deity, expanding his awareness and control without impinging upon the works of others. Originating from distant Vudra, Irori has gained a diverse following, with many people of the Inner Sea coming to embrace the disciplined regimens of the Master of Masters to see them through these troubled times.

Irori's followers rarely depict him in art because they believe that any icon of him cannot hope to live up to his perfect image. They describe him in poetry and prose as a flawless man, with no hair save a long braid, and wearing simple robes and wooden sandals. His race often changes to reflect that of the artist, though artists of the Inner Sea often depict him as being of any number of exotic backgrounds. Irori rarely manifests to mortals, and sees no need to cloak himself in mystery or augment himself with divine power, so in the rare times when he personally appears, his avatar is a physically fit man, looking exactly as his followers describe him, often sitting, kneeling patiently, or resting in a meditative pose. More often, he projects a portion of his awareness into a statue, animating its face and speaking through it.

The Master of Masters teaches that body, mind, and spirit are inexorably linked, that within each individual is a perfect version of these three aspects, called the Triune Self. Mastering all three aspects is the key to achieving perfection and enlightenment. As most have difficulty sensing and refining their own spirits, novices usually prioritize improving the body and the mind, allowing the control gained from these efforts to steer the growth of the spirit. Irori believes that self-awareness leads to discipline, which leads to mastery, while ignorance forces the spirit to repeat its mistakes in the next life. He opposes radical action and extreme changes in habits and behavior, preferring subtle shifts over time to allow a creature to adjust to unfamiliar practices and find a new internal balance. He points to the physical and mental reactions to extreme change as examples of this philosophy: an untrained sprinter who runs for hours on her first day of training risks cramps and injury, and a gluttonous eater who goes on a starvation diet suffers from cravings. Discipline, moderation, and temperance are the keys to creating a lasting change in a person's life; radical

action without proper preparation is chaotic and leads to negative outcomes.

Irori's realm in the Great Beyond is called the Serene Circle—a large, flat, gardenlike space within Axis, broken by footpaths and large rock outcroppings like pebbles scattered by a colossal hand. The few buildings typically resemble Vudrani temples, palaces, or monasteries, though the enlightened claim they can see aspects of all of these structures in each, as if the buildings appear in whatever shape is needed. The god's divine servants walk the paths, discussing philosophy and taking breaks to practice meditation, martial arts, or breathing exercises. Most have been reincarnated dozens of times, aided by Irori in experiencing life anew again and again, refining their souls' fundamental experience and nearness to perfection with each life. The Triune Selves of the enlightened who choose to return to the Material Plane again and again help others find wisdom, often acting as mentors, antagonists, or martyrs. At the god's insistence, Axis's native inevitables and formians are forbidden to enter the Serene Circle, for their alien nature and constant noise is disruptive to the sense of



**"TO TRANSCEND YOUR FLAWS, YOU MUST KNOW YOUR INNER SELF. GAINING THIS KNOWLEDGE IS A JOURNEY, AND THE PATH MAY BE STRAIGHT OR TWISTED."**

**—UNBINDING THE FETTERS**

tranquility there. A few fortunate mortals may receive visions of this place, its serenity motivating them to continue their work toward perfection.

Irori is lawful neutral and his portfolio is history, knowledge, and self-perfection. His weapon is the open hand, representing unarmed combat as well as the unlimited potential of mortal life guided by serene intelligence. His holy symbol is an open blue palm overlaid upon a circle, though in some lands his name-rebus (see page 70) is used more often than the hand. His domains are Healing, Knowledge, Law, Rune, and Strength.

When Irori is pleased, he eases the path toward enlightenment, soothing pain, bestowing mental clarity, and granting insight about the next step in the worshiper's journey. Especially devout followers might see a brief image of the god, his serene eyes, or a mysterious imprint of a sandal where no person has trod. He sometimes punishes transgressions with cramps, fatigue, dizziness, and obvious setbacks in the path to self-perfection. However, in most cases he refrains from these actions, as he believes that if a person is sincere, straying from her ideal path is punishment enough, and for those who are not sincere, it is best they leave the church and pursue other interests. Only in extreme cases—such as with a mortal destined for greatness—does he afflict the person with an injury or disability to overcome,



## THE MASTER'S REBUS

In at least one alphabet, Irori's name can be written to look like a mirror image of itself, and when this image is rotated it creates a starlike pattern. The faithful call this image the Master's Rebus, and say that the lines of the "star" represent knowledge and enlightenment flowing outward from the god to illuminate the Triune Selves of all mortals. The horizontal axis represents the physical self, and on another level it represents a mortal lifeline, with birth on the left and death on the right. The vertical axis represents the mind, with the lower half representing base interests and simple needs such as food, shelter, and sex, and the upper half representing enlightened concepts such as charity, ethics, fellowship, and self-sacrifice. Wise aspirants realize that the rebus has a third dimension, projecting out of and into the surface it is drawn on, representing the spirit, oscillating through positive and negative incarnations until it stabilizes at the perfect center, aligned at the point where the physical and mental rays cross.

Crafting a Master's Rebus, whether by painting it on canvas, carving it from wood, shaping it from clay, or hammering it into copper, is an art form among many temples, and some poorer monasteries supplement donations by selling these creations to pilgrims and other benefactors. Some have a tiny cup at the center to hold a small candle, lit on holy days and representing the spirit axis of the rebus. It is common for a temple to have a rebus mosaic on a floor or wall, and to have a prayer service each morning to trace its lines with sand, ash, or water; the material is allowed to drain or blow away, as a person should strive for perfection every day.



either as a way to give an alternate perspective to a problem or to encourage humility in someone especially prideful.

Irori's primary worshipers are mystics, ascetics, and martial artists—folk who seek to better themselves through meditation, diet, and exercise. Though most of his followers worship him as the god of self-perfection, a significant minority pray to him as a god of history or knowledge, particularly in regard to anatomy, medicine, philosophy, comparative studies of martial arts, and the history of combat and the Vudrani lands. These secondary aspects are more prominent among elder members of the faith and those whose health prevents the rigorous exercise needed to perfect the physical self; these worshipers often become the archivists and lorekeepers of the faith, transcribing oral traditions into lasting forms to ensure the preservation of wisdom that would otherwise be lost.

Rituals in Iroran temples usually involve a period of meditation or prayer, sometimes with a ritualized consumption of particular foods, which varies from region to region or may be unique to a particular monastery. Drums, gongs, rainsticks, and bells are common instruments used to mark time in a ceremony. Monasteries devoted to martial arts may consider practicing their combat forms a kind of ritual prayer. The church does not practice animal or human sacrifice. Physical offerings are usually seeds, bread, rice, sweat from the worshiper's brow, tea, or even folded paper goods shaped like useful objects (such as teapots, flowers, or animals). These objects are burned in a sacred fire that represents the god's spirit.

There is evidence that Irori was an ascetic for a portion of his mortal life, and some of his followers practice varying levels of asceticism in search of enlightenment. Known by the Vudrani word *sathu*, meaning "done well," these religious folk give up material goods and sexual acts to strengthen their connection with the divine. Some *sathus* live alone in forests, caves, or graveyards, while others live in a temple and are positive examples for aspiring monks. Some wear only rags, some go naked, some paint their flesh, some carry swords, some never cut their hair, some shave or pluck all hair from their bodies—all give up most worldly possessions, but the definition of "most" varies from sect to sect. *Sathus* are greatly respected among the faithful, even by those who do not practice asceticism, but outsiders may view them with suspicion and believe they can curse people or summon ghosts.

Some enlightened members of the faith, particularly monks, are so aware of their own bodily processes that they can sense their approaching death from old age, knowing in advance the day or even the hour they will pass. A few of these wise folk employ a method of self-mummification, using a diet of poisonous nuts and teas that prevents their corpses from putrefying after death. These masters of life and death leave behind their bodies to watch over Irori's temples, and in some cases these bodies animate as mummies to defend the temple against threats. These dried but perfectly preserved Iroran mummies are extraordinarily rare, and their magical attacks have no effect on Irori's worshipers, but otherwise they have nearly the same statistics as normal mummies.

Among the most devout and most powerful members of Irori's faith, a very rare few have been known to simply disappear from the world, presumably to continue their studies on another physical plane or a higher plane of consciousness (though what exactly that means is a matter of debate even among church elders). This is called "walking with the Master," as if such individuals



were hand-picked by Irori for a greater purpose, and is considered a great honor. Many of these lucky individuals revisit Golarion decades or centuries later as spirit guides, and at least one has become a divine servant of the god.

## TEMPLES AND SHRINES

Iroan temples typically take the form of sprawling complexes, all featuring rooms for prayer, sleep, and exercise, where Irori's faithful study and train in an endless quest to achieve perfection and purify their *ki*, or life-force. Such temples are not generally open to the public, and visitors must wait outside lest their presence disturb the energy of those within. A temple's leader is the resident closest to self-perfection, normally determined through collective meditation but sometimes through combat. In most cases, the leader is a guide rather than a tyrant, though some temples tend to be more aggressive and evil in their outlooks, requiring combat challenges (sometimes of a bloody or even deadly variety) to ascend to higher status.

An increasing number of temples devoted to Irori also train monks, and it is through these temples that the martial arts of distant lands have spread across the Inner Sea region. Such simple temples often gain footholds in oppressive lands where commoners are not allowed to use weapons, for the expert hands of a monk can show a peasant how to disarm a knight or use a farm implement with deadly skill.

Irori's priests have no formal garb other than a long rope of braided hair tied in a loop and worn like a necklace. There is no specific requirement for the hair's origin; some use their own hair, while others use the hair of a mentor or an exotic creature.

Many of Irori's followers are monks, men and women who have dedicated their lifestyles to simplicity and purity in order to perfect their bodies. Others focus instead upon the secrets of the mind, turning their attention inward to perfect their very thoughts. Because Irori teaches that there are many paths to perfection and each individual's path may be slightly different, his followers are a strangely varied lot for a group focused on an identical goal, and come from all walks of life. Followers who rise to the rank of master are said to go to Irori's side to serve him forever when they die, while those who fall short of perfection are reincarnated to begin the journey anew.

## A PRIEST'S ROLE

Irori's priesthood consists of clerics and monks in almost equal numbers, with only a few druids involved in the church. Priests are responsible for aiding others on their path to self-perfection, either by guiding followers with the priest's insights or through rigorous questioning and encouragement to provoke a student's revelations upon her own personal path. Even though clerics and druids





can wear armor, many choose not to so as not to hamper the movement of their bodies—though there is no stigma for wearing armor. The rare druid-priests typically believe civilized folk have become too separated from their natural instincts and extol the emulation of various animals as the most natural way to achieve self-perfection. Iroran priests feel a kinship for ancestor and lore oracles, particularly those cursed with blindness or lameness, and while these oracles are rarely officially part of the church, they are welcome in Irori's temples. Arcane spellcasters occasionally seek out Irori's followers, hoping to find aid in their searches for arcane lore. Such magic-obsessed individuals, however, are regularly disappointed—most find the lore gathered by Irorans too holistic to prove particularly useful, and thus are driven toward Nethys's faith instead.

While the specifics of the path may vary, all worshipers of Irori require good health and a clear mind, so priests avoid excessive drinking or eating, and the use of intoxicants or other things that dull the senses. However, some sects teach that drunkenness and certain drugs help expand the user's consciousness, and priests of these sects dose themselves on a regular basis.

Most temples and monasteries are self-sufficient, though some operate at a near-poverty level and depend on donations from pilgrims and layfolk. In either case, it is only loner or extroverted priests who find reason to barter or sell their services. For example, masters of a specialized diet might sell rare herbs used for medicinal or cultural purposes, practitioners of exotic martial arts might work at a fighting academy, and others might teach at a university or lecture members of other faiths on various topics.

As it is well documented that Irori often challenged himself both physically and mentally on his path to enlightenment, many of his followers attempt to do the same in reverence to their god. Traditionally, a worshiper attempts such a trial for exactly 1 year, though some embrace multiple challenges for longer periods. Such tests of body, mind, and faith might include living on rice and water, taking a vow of silence, raising a limb for a year, counting every waking breath, and so on.

A typical day for a priest begins with exercise, a meal, and meditation, with these activities repeating throughout the day. Depending on priests' chosen paths, they may emphasize one of these activities more than others, or avoid certain activities entirely. Some priests spend days at a time meditating, only pausing a few minutes each day for bread and water, while others eat raw meat every hour and spend the rest of their time lifting heavy stones to build strength.

## HOLY TEXT

Irori's sacred book is *Unbinding the Fetters*, a lengthy tome describing meditation, physical exercises, diet, and other methods to transcend the limitations of the mortal form. Each sect tends to use its own version of the book, adding chapters that clarify and expand upon what its members feel is the best way to achieve enlightenment. Though one sect may not approve of another sect's amendments, the main sections of the book are used by the entire religion, and some scholars of the church collect different versions to compare and contrast the various methods.

## APHORISMS

Although countless individual masters have written or spoken informative quotations within the context of Irori's faith, two quotes from the god himself stand out as key among the faithful.

### Endure and Renew:

Just as a battle is not won with a single punch or kick, enlightenment is not reached with one bout of meditation or the reading of one book. Most people spend lifetimes trying to achieve perfection. Expect setbacks. Learn from your mistakes. Improve yourself now that your next life will bring you closer.

**Mastery without Form:** This is the root of Irori's manifold philosophy: that each person's path is unique, and while you can learn much from the teachings of others, you must be willing to strike out on your own path if that is the way for you to achieve perfection. One who spends too much time trying to learn another person's path may limit his own potential. Recognize the limits of others—physical, mental, or spiritual—and do not assume they are also your limits.





## HOLIDAYS

As there are many paths to enlightenment, a community devoted to a particular path may have its own set of holidays; for example, a temple espousing the invigorating power of sunlight might hold the summer solstice as a holiday, while another promoting the health aspects of raw grains might celebrate the Harvest Feast. This means there are countless holidays in the church, varying from sect to sect, and some scholars of religion claim that any particular day of the year is a holy day for at least one sect of Irori's faith. Despite these varied practices, most churches use the Master's Rebus in their holiday celebration. Worshipers draw the rebus on thin cloth or paper and set it afloat on a lake or river to bump into others, sink, or be carried out of sight, much as individual mortal lives interact.

## RELATIONS WITH OTHER RELIGIONS

Irori respects that other deities are different spiritual beings and that what is correct for him may not be so for them. As such, he tries to avoid interfering with other divine beings unless they threaten his work or his people. He dislikes those who wish to tear down or corrupt the accomplishments of others, and he has an ongoing feud with Asmodeus because the Prince of Darkness likes to taunt the Master's followers with shortcuts to perfection that are fraught with pitfalls. There is a minor rivalry between his faith and those of Cayden Cailean, Iomedae, and Norgorber, for, unlike them, he became a god without the help of a magical artifact—in effect, he considers their achievements cheating, but is polite enough not to confront them about it unless he feels they grow too arrogant. His feud with Norgorber goes somewhat deeper—whereas Irori seeks to share knowledge, the god of secrets binds wisdom and often endangers his followers. This conflict is ongoing, but Irori views it as merely one more challenge to be experienced and overcome.

Irori had a friendly relationship with Aroden, as they both were powerful mortals who became gods, and the death of the Last Azlanti greatly troubled him for a time. Followers of Irori are taught to show respect for Aroden's holy sites, much as a great warrior would honor the graves of his friends and honorable enemies. This reverence does not extend to sites that have been converted to Iomedae's service, though he holds no enmity toward Aroden's heir and understands the practicality of these alterations.

## RELIGIOUS TRAINING

Clerics of Irori may prepare *astral projection* and *moment of prescience* as 8th-level spells, and *transformation* as a 6th-level spell. Monks with access to the quivering palm ability may use it to render a target comatose for an extended period (lasting until the target receives a *heal*, *restoration*, or *greater restoration* spell) rather than kill, chosen at the time the

## CUSTOMIZED SUMMON LIST

Irori's priests can use *summon monster* spells to summon the following creatures in addition to the normal creatures listed in the spells.

### Summon Monster IV

Giant mantis\*

Tiger\*

\* This creature has the extraplanar subtype but is otherwise normal for its kind.

quivering palm is activated. Monks may use their wholeness of body ability on a willing creature as a standard action. The monk must touch the target, and the target becomes fatigued from this aid. In addition to the *channel vigor* spell (see *Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Gods and Magic*), priests of Irori have access to the following spell.

### REPLENISH KI

**School** conjuration (healing); **Level** cleric 4

**Casting Time** 1 minute

**Components** V, S, DF

**Range** touch

**Target** creature touched

**Duration** instantaneous

You tune the target's internal store of supernatural energy, replenishing its *ki* pool. If you are the target, you regain 2 *ki* points. If another creature is the target, it regains 1 *ki* point. This does not allow the target to exceed its *ki* pool's maximum. This spell has no effect if the target does not have a *ki* pool.

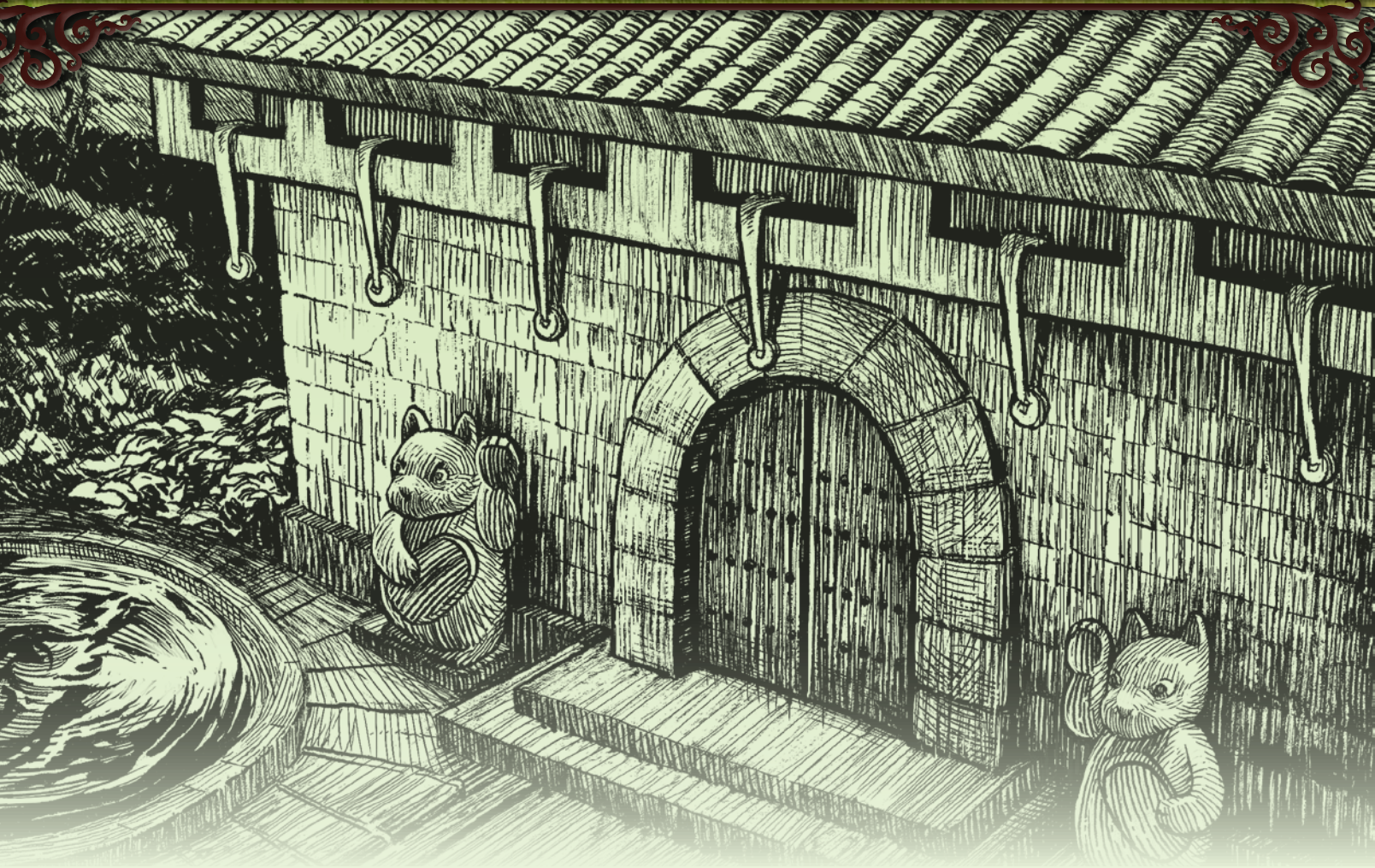
## PLANAR ALLIES

Most of Irori's divine servants are ascended or reincarnated mortals, taking steps toward perfection with each lifetime and gaining wisdom with each journey. His herald is the Old Man, a bald, elderly human of uncertain ethnicity who moves with an alien grace that belies his apparent age and whose strength far exceeds that of a mortal of his build. Notable masters who serve Irori include the following.

**Cheu Chem:** This "ghost tiger" is an intelligent, celestial white tiger who can speak several languages. She claims this is her fourth incarnation as an intelligent animal, and believes her path to perfection does not require a humanoid shape. She has been known to "play rough" with her students, cuffing them for back-talk, though always with her claws sheathed.

**Sixth Rebirth:** This dour stone giant's flesh bears several rough scars, as if he had scoured away tattoos from a life he wishes to forget. He prefers meditation to physical exertion, but can pulverize stone and steel with his bare hands for the proper cause.





## CRIMSON STRINGS

### PATHFINDER'S JOURNAL: HUSKS 5 OF 6

**W**e crouched beside the entrance to a one-story stone building. The boss cupped his hands around his magic ring to illuminate the doorframe. I checked for nasties and gave him the nod to kill the light.

He listened to the conversation inside. Without his pointy ears, all I could make out was the murmur of the men's voices. Now sure it was safe, I pressed my ear to the keyhole.

"...killing everyone with one of his special tattoos. They'll come here soon, Hiroshi."

"I don't know what you're talking about."

At the sound of ripping cloth, I peeked through the keyhole. Neither man was in view, but I saw their shadows against the wall. There was no problem telling which one

belonged to Square-Head. The outlines of his hands held open the moneylender's robes at the chest.

"I know an Ichisada when I see one," he growled. "I recognized your dragon at the bath. What an idiot, to show it off in public!"

"Let go of me. I'll call for the watch."

"The Kappa will hear you first."

"The Kappa? Why—?" Hiroshi the moneylender lowered his voice. "I always pay on time!"

"They killed Ichisada, and now they're going after those who bought tattoos from his secret book. It started when the old Kappa died and his children began fighting over leadership of the gang."

"I don't know about these things," said Hiroshi. His shadow slapped hands over its ears. "I don't want to know!"



“Too late. They’re coming to flay the tattoos from our skin. We need to leave Oda tonight. Let’s take all the money we can carry.”

“This is a trick to rob me! You mean to steal my—”

“I mean to save my skin. Yours too, if you have the coin to make it worthwhile.”

The boss moved his ear closer to the door, putting his face a few inches from mine. He made the signs for *open* and *quiet*.

While I tickled the lock, the boss closed his eyes to concentrate on the conversation. I wondered how different it sounded to him. It wasn’t just that his hearing was better. He knew the language, even though he’d never visited Minkai before. If he hadn’t cast a whammy on me, I wouldn’t understand a word of Tien.

Takeda and his men had already slipped behind the building. They’d agreed to wait until the boss signaled or one of the men inside tried to scarp, so I took my time on the door. The hushed voices of the tattooed men covered the scrape of my picks in the lock, and the boss kept listening while I worked. As he’d taught me long ago, we might learn more that way than by interrogating the men.

We already knew a little. After the stir we’d caused in the Seahorse District, Shiro tailed Square-Head—whose name we now knew was Goro—to a neighborhood of single-story houses and shops. That’s where we caught up with him, following the chalk marks he left on the corners of houses each time he’d turned. One look at the place, and Takeda told us it was the shop of the moneylender whose name we’d seen on Ichisada’s list of secret tattoos.

Goro had pounded on the shop door. Above him hung a string of wooden coins, the moonlight turning the gold-and copper-painted discs as dark as blood. The gangster cringed each time he struck the door.

Eventually Hiroshi opened the door, letting a sliver of yellow lamplight fall across the gravel street. He craned his neck to look left and right, but Goro pushed him inside and shut the door behind them.

We kept low and ran to the front door, the boss with a hand on his sword to keep it from rattling in the scabbard. The samurai peeled away to cover the back. Arnisant stayed with us, silent and alert. I was starting to think the wolfhound would make a great lookout for a second-story job.

We’d missed whatever the men inside the house said at first, but they were scared even before Goro mentioned the Kappa. I didn’t know whether they were cowards or the Kappa were just that scary. We hadn’t seen anything but a few footprints from these ninja characters since the first brief attack outside Yamana’s house. My shoulder still itched where they’d hit me with one of their throwing stars.

I felt the tumblers snap into place, louder than I’d expected. I winced, thinking the men inside must

have heard the click. They hadn’t. They’d taken their conversation deeper into the house. I put my ear back to the keyhole, but I couldn’t make out their words anymore. The expression on the boss’s face suggested he still could.

Beside me, Arnisant growled. I followed his gaze to a tail disappearing around the corner of a house across the street. Oda was lousy with cats. They must grow their vermin smaller here than we do back in Egorian, where the giant rats give as much hell as they get from the mousers.

“Hush, Arni.” I put a hand on his back.

I signed a question at the boss. *What do you hear?*

He shook his head and raised a finger. *Wait.*

While I did that, I wondered again what it meant that one look at Takeda and his wakizashi had made a whole mob of gangsters retreat. Was the inspector some kind of master swordsman? The way that last kid fell over himself when the samurai drew his short sword just an inch made me think Takeda had some deadly reputation. But that wasn’t the only possibility. Maybe the gangsters refused to fight him for some other reason. Maybe they’d bought him off. Or maybe he had something over their boss and owned a piece of the action.

There was no way to tell without knowing more about Takeda. The boss had a theory, but he wasn’t sharing it—not that it bothered me. Telling a street-raised hellspawn what was up with the samurai might break the code of silence between blue-bloods, even though the boss had more in common with me than with this inspector from the other side of the world.

All right. It bothered me some. I tried to put it out of my mind.

Arnisant’s gaze moved from where the alley cat had disappeared. He lifted his head to stare at the edge of the roof above us. There was no way the cat could have leaped all the way from the other side of the street. All I saw was a wisp of a cloud over the face of the moon. Still, it made me think maybe Goro and Hiroshi had climbed up into the attic for their little chat. Maybe that’s where the moneylender kept his emergency stash.

The boss signaled, *Go.*

I went in, keeping one hand on the door as I pushed it all the way open to make sure no one stood behind it. Beyond the spare front room were two doorways. The one on the left was closed, as were both shuttered windows I could see. Lamplight revealed the shadows of the men through the open doorway on the right. I slid over to look inside.

Goro still had a handful of Hiroshi’s robe twisted up in one big mitt. Hiroshi grasped the gambler’s wrist in both hands, but his fingers were made for counting coins, not grappling. The moneylender couldn’t have weighed much more than my left arm. I could count his ribs even under the bright colors of the image on his chest.



The dragon wasn't the kind you see on shields and banners back home. For one thing, it didn't have wings. For another, its claws were tiny compared to its snakey body. It had long fishy whiskers and a lion's mane. Its scales weren't all one color, either. They were blue and red and yellow and green and black. In one claw it clutched a scroll, in the other a wand.

"—as much money as we can carry and leave the city." Goro emphasized each phrase by thrusting a stiff finger against Hiroshi's skinny chest. He'd backed the moneylender up against a steel vault bolted to the floor.

Already scared, Hiroshi gaped as he looked past the gambler and saw me in the doorway. He cried, "A demon! They sent a demon!"

I get sick of hearing that sort of thing, so I shot him the tines. He whimpered, probably afraid that I'd hexed him.

The boss moved up beside me. I looked over to see that he'd closed the front door and left Arnisant to guard it. "Calm yourself," he told the man. "We are here to help—"

Goro let go of Hiroshi, whose legs collapsed like boiled noodles. The big gambler ran to the back door and threw open the bolt. The moment he opened it, Takeda and Osamu came in, forcing him back to stand beside the kneeling moneylender. Shiro came in behind them, closing and bolting the door.

"I've done nothing!" Hiroshi tried to cover his chest, but Takeda slapped away his hands.

"That tattoo," Takeda said. "You received it from the artist Ichisada?"

Apparently the samurai hadn't heard as much from the back door as we had through the front.

Hiroshi put his palms on the floor and kowtowed. "Yes, sir!"

"Why this particular tattoo? Was it not expensive?"

"Yes. Yes, it was expensive. But the honorable Ichisada said the dragon would lend me great fortune. And it has! He offered me a bargain price, too. It would have cost far more than I could afford, only—" He hesitated.

"Ichisada owed you money?" said Takeda.

Hiroshi pressed his forehead on the floor.

"And you?" He turned toward Goro. The block-headed gangster sneered, making his scarred face that much uglier, which

was some trick. He wasn't the kind to talk to constables. I respected that, but it wouldn't make our job any easier.

Osamu shoved his face close to Goro's ugly mug. "Answer the inspector!"

Goro hissed, spraying flecks of spittle into Osamu's face. The samurai backed up, his hand gripping his katana. He unsheathed the weapon a few inches, but there wasn't enough room to draw the long sword all the way.

The sight of naked steel was still enough to make Goro think twice. He didn't completely break, though. His gaze flickered over Takeda. He spat on the floor and muttered, "You've got no right. You're nothing but a pimp."

Everyone froze as Goro said the word. On the floor, Hiroshi tucked his arms and legs close to his body, trying to make himself too small to notice. Osamu and Shiro stepped back to draw their weapons. One look at their stone-cold eyes told me that they were ready to execute the man.

I looked to the boss, but he was watching Takeda. The inspector stood still, his face an emotionless mask. I expected him to order his men to stand down, but he said nothing. He only stared through Goro. I knew that look. What he was looking at wasn't in the room.

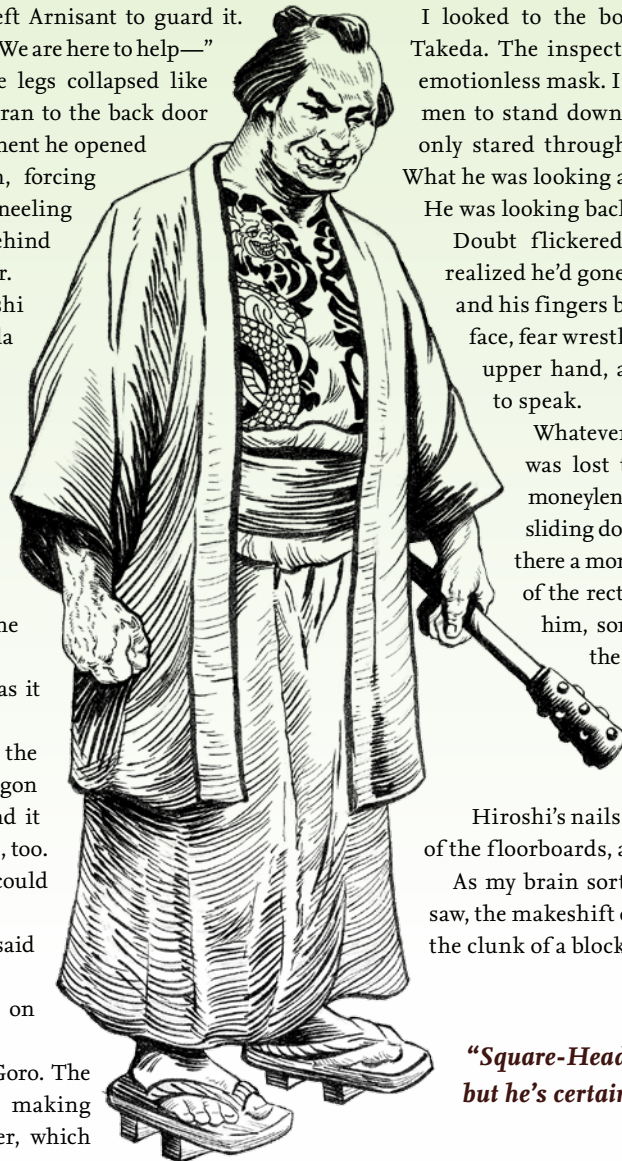
He was looking back in time.

Doubt flickered over Goro's face as he realized he'd gone too far. His lips twitched, and his fingers began to shake. All over his face, fear wrestled with pride. Fear got the upper hand, and he opened his mouth to speak.

Whatever he might have said was lost to Hiroshi's scream. The moneylender fell through the floor, sliding down a chute that hadn't been there a moment earlier. On three sides of the rectangle that opened beneath him, someone had sawed through the wood without making a sound. The fourth side bent like a hinge, and I could see a wedge had been cut from below.

Hiroshi's nails scratched the broken edge of the floorboards, and then he was gone.

As my brain sorted through what my eyes saw, the makeshift chute closed again. I heard the clunk of a block shoved under the wood.



***"Square-Head isn't the brightest, but he's certainly got guts."***



Beneath the house, Hiroshi's screams rose high and shrill.

Goro lost the last of his nerve. "The Kappa! The Kappa!"

From the front room came a deep growl. I looked back to see Arnisant staring at the peaked ceiling. There was no attic up there, only exposed beams beneath the roof. Behind the hound, the front door shuddered but didn't open. Shiro shoved the back door with his shoulder, but it didn't budge. He unbolted it and tried again, but whoever was outside had jammed that one, too.

Beside me, the boss fumbled with the pouches on his bandolier and came up with a pair of riddle scrolls.

"They'll kill us all!" screamed Goro.

"Shut up."

He kept screaming. I was about to slug him when a stream of dust rained down on his face. He shook his head, confused.

I grabbed him by the sleeve, but it was too late. His arm shot up. Between his wrist and the ceiling, I saw a glimmer of steel chain.

Before he could scream again, Goro flew up to the ceiling, kicking. One of his feet caught me in the face. The other struck the boss's shoulder, knocking the riddle scroll out of his hand.

Takeda leaped up, the steel of his wakizashi flashing in the lamplight. The blade sparked on metal but didn't sever the chain. By the time the Inspector's feet hit the floor, Goro's left arm had disappeared through a hole in the roof.

Two more hooked chains shot down, and now I could see the tiny holes they came through. One chain caught Takeda's sword, but he twisted the blade free before it could tighten. The second wrapped around Goro's right arm, holding him tight against the canted ceiling.

Shiro and Osamu threw themselves against the back door, but whatever the Kappa had done to block it held up to their full weight and strength.

As the boss came up with his dropped scroll, I ran to the nearest window. It took me a second to throw the bar and open the latch. The moment I touched the windowpane, the whole thing exploded in my face. I whirled away, too late to cover my eyes from the flash. My face burned, and wood splinters stuck deep beneath my skin. I clawed away thick scraps of burning paper.

Takeda shouted a warning to stay away from the windows, which was real helpful. I heard the riffling sound of one of the boss's scrolls and then a whoosh of flame nearby.

"No fire!" called Takeda.

The boss sighed but said, "Yes, yes." I heard him plucking at his pouches as I probed my eyes. There were no splinters in them, but my eyelids were hot and tender. A little fire is all right by me—even a hot poker doesn't do much more than tickle—but this was more than a little fire. Some thick, wet gunk clung to my face, and that's what burned.

Still, I didn't feel the change coming on, that maddening pain that turns me into a full-on fiend when I've been immolated.

I was plenty mad, all right, but I didn't feel half my mind slipping away the way I did when dropped on a bonfire or lit up by one of the boss's fireballs. If the flash at the window had been a little hotter, lasted a little longer, then whoever was outside the house wouldn't have been happy when I came out to play.

I couldn't decide whether I was relieved or disappointed.

"Here," said the boss. He poured cool liquid over my eyes. Blinking, I saw his fretful expression fade as he realized I could see again. He put the potion bottle in my hand and chose another scroll. I drank the syrupy stuff and pulled a few splinters out of my face.

By the time I was back in action, Takeda and Osamu were up onto the furniture and pulling down on Goro's suspended body. The gambler had screamed himself hoarse, and then all at once he screamed louder than ever as a torrent of blood poured down from the hole that captured his left arm.

The chains holding him went slack. Goro's one-armed body fell to the floor, bringing the samurai with him. Takeda leaped back up, catlike, to thrust his sword through the hole in the roof. He didn't seem to hit anything. Osamu slipped in the blood, falling down beside the glistening red chains.

"Radovan!" The boss indicated the window I'd failed to open. His fire spell had burned through the wreckage, leaving a hole that might just be big enough.

I ran two steps and dove through the opening. I hit the ground and rolled up to my feet, throwing myself to the right for good measure. Nothing hit me, but I kept moving toward the rear of the house. There I found a pair of black-garbed men, their faces covered with those same leathery masks we'd seen outside Yamana's house. The ninja crouched over Hiroshi's flayed body. One of them held a roll of the moneylender's skin, blood dripping from either end. Beyond them, another ninja dashed down the street, cradling Goro's severed arm close to his body.

I threw my darts. The ninja holding the bloody scroll of flesh turned his back, catching the darts in his own body rather than let them strike his prize. The other flung a big white stone at me. I swatted it away, but it exploded on my wrist. It wasn't a stone but an eggshell. Instead of a flash, this one burst into a stinging cloud of pepper. I shut my eyes and held my breath, but it was too late. The stuff burned my eyes and got up my nose. It was all I could do to breathe.

Blind again, I ran back around the corner of the house. I took the big knife in hand, put my back against the wall, and listened for a step on the gravel. Considering how quiet these guys had been, I knew I couldn't count on that. Blinking and weeping away the pepper, I lost my patience and stabbed a few times at empty air.



Someone hit the ground beside me, near the open window. "It is I," hissed Shiro. After a moment, he added, "Are you all right?"

"Blind. Two around the corner."

"Wait here."

The boss came out next. I could almost see his tall figure through my tears, so that was something. He put the last of the potions in my free hand and moved toward the front of the house. A moment later I heard the door opening. The boss commanded Arnisant to fetch. A few moments later, the hound cried out and the boss shouted, "Arnisant, come!"

My sight was coming back, so I saved the potion for later. Goro and Hiroshi were past saving, and there was no catching up to the ninja after they'd hit Arnisant with one of their pepper bombs. The hound whimpered and pawed at his nose while the boss poured water over his big brown eyes and dabbed them with his handkerchief.

Soon we were back where we started, standing beside Hiroshi's corpse while lights went up in all the nearby houses. A night patrol answered the call of Shiro's whistle within a few moments, but they hadn't seen the ninja. The bastards got away with Hiroshi's dragon and Goro's whole arm.

Takeda and the boss examined the bodies while the local constables pored over the house and climbed up to study the roof.

"What a disaster," Shiro muttered. I remembered then that there'd been something I wanted to ask him. Once we got out of this mess, I hoped to pay a visit to Yamana's cute little housekeeper, but I didn't know where she lived.

"At least you got Kazuko back home before things turned ugly." He'd returned pretty quickly from that unwanted errand. "She must have lived pretty close, huh?"

"Not too far."

I didn't like the way he hesitated before answering. "You took her all the way home, didn't you?"

"Well, she said I should get back to help—" began Shiro. Before he could finish, Takeda and the boss came out of the house. I could almost see the steam coming off of the count.

He yanked Ichisada's ledger out of his satchel and flipped through the pages, tearing the corner off a page in his hurry. This was the guy who put on white gloves before touching a new addition to his library.

"How stupid of me," he groaned.

I thought of two or three funny things to say to that. Instead I asked, "What?"

"Did you notice which of Goro's arms the Kappa appropriated?"

Goro had lost his left arm. The fact that the boss asked the question made me look inside the house at the gambler's body. Definitely the left arm.

"Is that not strange?" said the boss. Takeda frowned as if he already knew the answer.

Osamu and Shiro looked as clueless as I felt. Then I realized the obvious.

"They took Yamana's left arm, too."

"Why would they need two left arms?" said Osamu. One of the constables who'd been on the roof approached to show him a strip of cloth.

"They do not," said the boss. His finger traced the names on the secret page in Ichisada's ledger. "In my haste to show the inspector this list so that he might identify Goro and Hiroshi, I neglected to examine it myself. Yamana's name is not among those who received Ichisada's special tattoos."

The inspector was the one who had examined the list back at the tattoo parlor. His expression faltered between surprise and anger.

"The responsibility is mine," he said. "I did not notice. I thought only of the new names."

Shiro and Osamu lowered their heads, sharing their leader's shame.

"You have been working without rest for days," said the boss, throwing him a bone. Takeda wasn't having it.

"The clue is so obvious, there can be no excuse for my failure."

"If that is true, then the failure is equally mine," said the boss. "Had I but spent a few moments longer to examine the page myself, I would have noticed the discrepancy."

"No," said Takeda. "You were right to proceed in haste. Once we knew the names of the surviving recipients of the Ichisada tattoos, it was imperative to act quickly. You have acted correctly."

"By that logic, you too were correct to press on with your investigation despite the fatigue that clouded your perception. If I have acted correctly, then so have you."

Takeda startled, realizing the boss had maneuvered him into excusing his own mistake. He bowed. Beside him, his men did the same, grateful that my boss saved face for their boss.

These pantomimes of mutual admiration were getting old. I looked to Arni for commiseration, but he sat at attention, eyes on the boss.

"All right, now that we're all correct, will somebody tell me why these ninja cut off Yamada's skin? Did he have a tattoo or not?"

"It does not matter," said the boss. "We were meant to think he did, distracting us from the true object of the Kappa gang's theft."

"This pearl the Decemvirate sent you to fetch."

The boss scowled at last word, but he nodded. "The pearl is infused with the residual power of the wish magic it once contained. It can still infuse other items of magic with its energy. It is reasonable to surmise that the Kappa wish to activate the full power of the tattoos they have stolen only after they have gained all six."



"To do what?"

"Ichisada told the moneylender that the dragon tattoo would grant him great fortune, although without a catalyst such as the celestial pearl, no doubt its powers were limited. Each of the designs must have a unique quality. Combined, the complete set could be far more powerful than the sum of its parts. That is why Ichisada spread them among many different subjects: to ensure that no one person held the power of all the tattoos combined."

"This conjecture is sound," said Takeda.

"Inspector." Osamu bowed and offered Takeda a scrap of cloth the other constable had given him. It was twisted tight like a tourniquet, and blood stained the loop where they'd cut off Goro's arm.

The boss arched an eyebrow and raised a hand above the cloth. Takeda nodded his permission, and the boss plucked something out of the fabric. He rolled a tiny object between his fingers and sniffed it before offering it to Arnisant to smell.

"Find," said the boss.

Arnisant put his nose to the ground and snuffled. He searched along the street until he nosed one of the footprints. The boss knelt beside it and reached down to pluck something out of the gravel. I leaned in for a better look as he compared the two objects.

They were tiny fragments of straw, not much bigger than a grain of rice. Their edges were fresh and sharp where they'd been cut. While the boss showed them to me and Takeda, Osamu and Shiro collected more of the stuff as Arnisant sniffed it out from the ninja's footprints.

"The uniformity of these cuts suggests a manufacturing process," said the boss.

"The Tatami House," suggested Takeda. "The blades they use to trim the reeds could leave fragments like these."

"Is this establishment under the control of the Kappa?"

"It lies within their territory."

"Assuming the Kappa have recovered all six tattoos, they can now activate them with the husk."

"They still need one from a right arm," I said. "What's the name on Ichisada's list?"

The boss tucked the ledger back into his satchel. Now that he'd taken a good peek, he didn't need to look at it again. "The sixth name listed is simply Shinju, with no family name."

"Shinju." Shiro glanced at his superior before casting his eyes down. "Is that not the name of the Master Kappa's daughter?"

After a moment's consideration, Takeda nodded once. "It is."

"Oh, hell."

The revelation hit me like a gut punch. I turned it over in my head a few more times before deciding there was no

better explanation. She'd been at the scene of the murder, and the Kappa backed off only after they saw her come out of Yamada's house. Then she sent Shiro away rather than pretend to return to a house where she didn't live.

The others looked at me, waiting for the explanation I didn't want to give. I took a deep breath and told them, "Kazuko is Shinju. She's been playing us from the start."

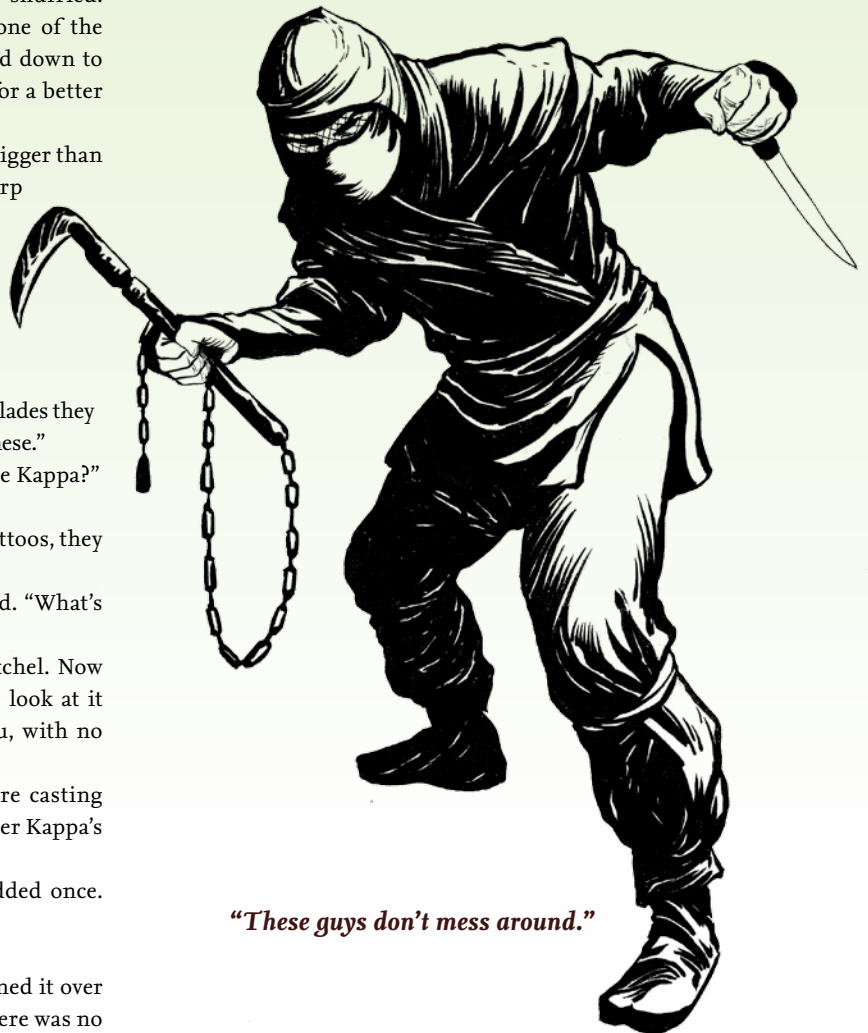
Takeda and Osamu squinted at me. My word wasn't good enough for samurai. But Shiro's face dropped as he also realized how he'd been duped.

"Honorable Count Jeggare," began Takeda. "No member of the Kappa would have remained to be caught at the scene of a murder. Surely your man has misjudged—"

"No," said the boss. "Radovan is correct. Kazuko—or Shinju—has used us for her own ends."

"I do not understand," said Takeda.

"There is no time," said the boss. "Lead us to this Tatami House, and pray we arrive before the Kappa can activate the power of these stolen tattoos."



*"These guys don't mess around."*





## BESTIARY

“HUNTERS?” I ASKED, EYEING THE STRANGE NATIVES FROM OUR BLIND ON THE RIDGE. MANES OF SUNSET RED HAIR BOUNCED WITH EACH OF THE LITTLE SAVAGES’ STEPS, EVERY ONE OF THEIR HEADS LOOKING LIKE THE LIT WICK OF A CANDLE. THE LITTLE TROUPE WOULD HAVE BEEN COMICAL IF IT WEREN’T FOR THEIR SPEARS.

“NO. A WAR PARTY,” MAHUSUKI SAID AND DENOVIN QUICKLY TRANSLATED.

“A WAR—” I GUFFAWED, “BEST OF LUCK TO THEM.”

OUR GUIDE HISSED SOMETHING HUSHED AND HURRIEDLY, AND DENOVIN PUSHED ME TO THE GROUND. “HE SAYS THEIR FIGHT’S ALREADY OVER AND THEY’VE TAKEN CAPTIVES, AND WE’D BEST KEEP QUIET IF WE DON’T WANT TO BE NEXT.”

SQUINTING MY EYES, I SAW THAT ONE OF THE KIJIMUNA DID INDEED CARRY A CAGE, CRAMPED WITH CAPTIVES: AT LEAST FIVE WRIGGLING OCTOPUSES.

—FROM *THE EXPLORATIONS OF FALSTON LHEITMAR*



Savage creatures from across the Dragon Empires fill this entry into the Pathfinder's Bestiary. The kijimuna and the bizarre chon chon prove that not all the terrors of Minkai take the form of gigantic oni. That said, the mountainous earth yai continues our ongoing series of oni, supplementing the veritable army presented in the *Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 2*. The rajju and an enigmatic being known only as the Old Man round out this month's entry, focusing on the exotic powers and philosophies of the Dragon Empires.

## CARAVAN ENCOUNTERS

As the PCs' caravan travels, there's a 10% chance of an encounter each day. Encounters marked with an asterisk have a 50% chance of occurring at night while the caravan is camped—all other encounters occur while the caravan is on the move. No encounters occur while the caravan camps at a settlement. If an encounter occurs, roll on the following table to see what the PCs have encountered. Note that all of the following encounters are caravan encounters and use the caravan combat rules found in the *Jade Regent Player's Guide*.

**Curious Villagers:** A group of inquisitive farmers, curious children, or other locals confront the caravan and insist on learning its destination, intentions, origins, cargo, best stories, and impressions of Minkai. The group can be scattered with a DC 20 Security check. Otherwise, the caravan travels only half the usual distance that day.

**Landslide (CR 12):** After several days of rain, the winding trail the caravan is following along a mountainside gives way as part of a massive landslide. In the first round of the mudslide, the caravan must make a Security check, and may take damage as a result as determined by the table below.

Result	Damage
10 or less	10d6
11–15	8d6
16–20	6d6
21–25	4d6
26–30	2d6
31+	No damage

One or more wagons may also be stuck in the landslide, as determined by a Resolve check using the table below.

Result	Stuck Wagons
10 or less	All wagons stuck
11–15	4 wagons stuck
16–20	3 wagons stuck
21–25	2 wagons stuck
26–30	1 wagon stuck
31+	No wagons are stuck

If a wagon is stuck, freeing it requires a DC 24 Resolve check and 10 minutes of work. Each stuck wagon requires

MINKAI CARAVAN ENCOUNTERS	
d% Roll	Encounter
01–40	Curious villagers
41–55	Landslide
56–75	Nogitsune bard*
76–00	Ronin marauders

12 creatures to work toward freeing it. (If a smaller group of caravan members work on a wagon, they take a –2 penalty on their resolve check for every 2 members they are short of 12.) If the check fails by 5 or more, the efforts cause another landslide, requiring a new Security check to determine damage dealt to the caravan.

Special efforts by PCs may gain bonuses to these Security and Resolve checks, as determined by the GM. Casting a spell that seems likely to help grants a bonus on a single check equal to half the level of the spell. Skills or special abilities that seem likely to help, such as appropriate Knowledge checks, each grant a +1 bonus on a specific check.




**Nogitsune Bard\* (CR 10):** A nogitsune bard (AC 24; hp 100; Attack +16; Damage 4d6+12) disguised as a wandering minstrel is found wondering along the road, and asks to become a passenger. Uncovering her true nature requires a DC 30 Resolve check, which can be made once per day. (Spells expended in an effort to uncover information about her grant a bonus on Resolve checks equal to the spells' levels.) Rather than attacking directly, she uses her bardic magic and natural abilities to sow discord. Each day she is with the caravan, it must make a DC 25 Security check or take 2d6 points of damage as the nogitsune uses her contagious whisper ability to convince members of the caravan (not the PCs) to ignore basic maintenance, mistreat pack animals, and get into fights with each other over minor offenses. Each time she successfully causes such damage, the caravan may make an additional Resolve check to uncover her true nature. If uncovered, the nogitsune fights until reduced to half her normal hit points, then attempts to flee.

**Ronin Marauders (CR 11):** Disgruntled former samurai cavalry, these ronin marauders (AC 25; hp 145; Attack +19; Damage 7d12) have given up their honor, left their lords, and turned to banditry to make a living. They demand 4d6 cargo units as a toll for using a stretch of road, and attack if they do not receive their tribute. Once attacked, the ronin fight to the death, unless they are offered even greater tribute. If the caravan wishes to buy off the ronin after fighting has begun, the former samurai demand an additional 2d6 cargo units for every 10 hit points of damage they have taken.



## CHON CHON

This flying head has incredibly large ears that constantly flap to keep the creature aloft. It babbles to itself as it flies, as if to remind itself of secrets only it knows.

**CHON CHON** CR 1/2     
XP 200

CN Tiny aberration

**Init** +2; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +6

**Aura** jabber (15 ft., DC 11)

### DEFENSE

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

**hp** 9 (2d8)

**Fort** +0, **Ref** +4, **Will** +4

### OFFENSE

**Speed** 10 ft., fly 60 ft. (good)

**Melee** bite +1 (1d3–2)

**Ranged** acid spit +5 (1d4 acid)

**Space** 2-1/2 ft.; **Reach** 0 ft.

**Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 3rd; concentration +4)

Constant—*detect magic*

### STATISTICS

**Str** 6, **Dex** 15, **Con** 10, **Int** 7, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 13

**Base Atk** +1; **CMB** +1; **CMD** 9

**Feats** Lightning Reflexes

**Skills** Fly +15, Perception +6 (+10 to listen); **Racial Modifiers**

Perception (+4 to listen)

**Languages** Common

### ECOLOGY

**Environment** temperate or tropical forests or ruins

**Organization** solitary, pair, flight (3–12)

**Treasure** none

### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Acid Spit (Ex)** A chon chon can spit a disgusting blob of acid at a single foe, making a ranged attack with a range of 30 feet and no range increment. A successful attack deals 1d4 points of acid damage and forces the target to make a DC 11 Fortitude saving throw to avoid becoming nauseated for 1 round. The save DC is Constitution-based.

**Jabber (Su)** A chon chon endlessly mutters half-remembered spells and meaningless arcane formulae to itself. This jabbering creates a kind of magical static that interferes with spells being cast nearby. Any creature attempting to cast a spell within 15 feet of a chon chon must make a successful DC 11 concentration check or lose the spell. This is a sonic, mind-affecting effect. The concentration DC is Charisma-based.

**CHON CHON SWARM** CR 3     
XP 800

CN Tiny aberration (swarm)

**Init** +6; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +8

**Aura** jabber (15 ft., DC 11)

### DEFENSE

**AC** 16, touch 16, flat-footed 14 (+2 Dex, +2 insight, +2 size)

**hp** 27 (6d8)

**Fort** +2, **Ref** +6, **Will** +6

### OFFENSE

**Speed** 10 ft., fly 60 ft. (good)

**Melee** swarm +6 (2d6)

**Ranged** acid spit +8 (2d4 acid)

**Space** 10 ft.; **Reach** 0 ft.

**Special Attacks** babble, distraction (DC 13)

**Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 7th; concentration +8)

Constant—*detect magic*

### STATISTICS

**Str** 10, **Dex** 15, **Con** 10, **Int** 7, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 13

**Base Atk** +4; **CMB** +4; **CMD** 14

**Feats** Improved Initiative, Improved Lightning Reflexes, Lightning Reflexes

**Skills** Fly +19, Perception +10 (+14 to listen); **Racial Modifiers**

Perception (+4 to listen)

**Languages** Common (cannot speak)

### ECOLOGY

**Environment** temperate or tropical forests or ruins

**Organization** solitary

**Treasure** none

### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Acid Spit (Ex)** A chon chon can spit a disgusting blob of acid at a single foe, making a ranged attack with a range of 30 feet and no range increment. A successful attack deals 2d4 points of acid damage and forces the target to make a DC 13 Fortitude saving throw to avoid becoming nauseated for 1 round. The save DC is Constitution-based.

**Jabber (Su)** A chon chon swarm mutters even more loudly than a solitary chon chon. Any creature attempting to cast a spell within 30 feet of a chon chon must make a successful DC 11 concentration check or lose the spell. This is a sonic, mind-affecting effect. The concentration DC is Charisma-based.

Chon chons appear to be human heads with ears so grotesquely enlarged that they can serve as fleshy wings. Their jealous hatred of all beings with full bodies easily counters their comical appearance, however. Accursed creatures drawn to places of dark magic and arcane disasters, chon chons possess the desires of the most obsessed magic users, but their dementia and twisted forms prevent them from ever obtaining the power they seek. Although these crazed beings loathe all things, they do find a vicious kind of solace among their own kind, not out of any sort of commiseration, but rather by wallowing in the pain of their own kind. Such hateful swarms gather to bear witness to each others' misery, inadvertently increasing the deadly efficacy of the entire group.

A single chon chon is no larger than a human head and weighs 10 pounds at most. The creature's ears give



it a total wingspan of 3 feet, making it appear much larger and more menacing.

## ECOLOGY

A chon chon's winglike ears endlessly flap, serving as monstrous wings that give it surprising grace in flight. These creatures always seem distracted, carrying on perpetual one-sided conversations and listening to voices only they can hear, then replying aloud with magical recitations or snippets of botched arcane formulae in a gibberish amalgam of Common, Draconic, and meaningless noises. This blathering has no meaning, mundane or arcane, but sounds so similar to the common phrases and syllables of magic that it insidiously intrudes upon the minds of spellcasters working their craft, invading their thoughts like an arcane earworm. An individual chon chon can suppress this babbling to speak semi-intelligibly—as much as such an insanely erratic creature can be called intelligible—but rarely does so for more than a minute before lapsing back into nonsense. Groups of chon chons seem to have no ability to quiet themselves, being little more than a collection of raving lunatics inspiring one another to ever-greater heights of insanity.

Although chon chons appear to be disembodied human heads, they are a unique race of creatures and not merely the victims of a magical curse—though some particularly demented spellcasters have discovered methods by which they might take the forms of these creatures to horrific effect (see below).

How chon chons increase their numbers few scholars know—and far fewer care to find out. Hateful of all things, including others of their kinds, to say nothing of their lack of generative organs, they seem doomed to extinction. Many assume these terrors spread their terrible condition in a way similar to that of *vargouilles*, which many mistake them for at first glance. Chon chons, however, lack those outsiders' terrifying kiss. Beyond general appearance, few similarities exist between these two races.

## SECRET OF THE KALKUS

Certain nefarious sorcerers—known in some lands as *kalkus*—seek to mimic the horrifying shape and strange abilities of chon chons, or afflict their foes with such a curse. To this end, they've created a terrifying draught with the power to transform the drinker into a being resembling a chon chon, though few can guess for how long.

### CHON CHON ELIXIR

**Aura** moderate transmutation; **CL** 11th

**Slot** none; **Price** 2,750 gp; **Weight** —

#### DESCRIPTION

When a humanoid imbibes this foul-tasting green fluid, its ears grow to 10 times their size, and its head separates



from its body. This effect is similar to *beast shape II*, shifting the drinker's consciousness into a Tiny form cosmetically similar to that of a chon chon, with the same powers of flight, constant *detect magic* sight, and +4 racial bonus on Perception checks made to listen, but lacking the creature's acid spit or jabber abilities. The duration of this transformation proves highly unpredictable, though. The GM should roll on the following chart to determine how long the effect lasts.

d%	Duration of Transformation
1	1 minute
2–25	1d10 minutes
26–50	6d10 minutes
51–75	1 hour
76–80	1d10 hours
81–85	6d10 hours
86–90	1 day
91–95	1d6 days
96–99	1 week
100	Permanent

The transformation can be ended prematurely by *remove curse*—*dispel magic* has no effect. However, when the effect ends, the drinker's head immediately returns to normal. If the head is not within 5 feet of its body when the elixir's duration expires, the creature is slain immediately. The drinker knows when the elixir's effects will end 1 minute before they do so (no earlier). If the drinker's body is harmed or destroyed while its head is elsewhere, it takes that damage as soon as it reunites with its body, or is slain if its body has been destroyed. Until the elixir's duration ends, the drinker can only reattach its head to its body through the use of *remove curse*. The drinker's body is considered helpless while the head is unattached.


#### CONSTRUCTION

**Requirements** Craft Wondrous Item, *detect magic*, *polymorph*;  
**Cost** 1,375 gp



## KIJIMUNA

At first glance, this creature appears to be a mischievously smiling young child with bright red hair clad only in a grass skirt. A closer look reveals goblinoid ears and a mouth full of pointed teeth.

<b>KIJIMUNA</b>	<b>CR 2</b>	
<b>XP 600</b>		
CN Small humanoid (goblinoid)		
<b>Init</b> +3; <b>Senses</b> darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +0		
<b>DEFENSE</b>		
<b>AC</b> 15, touch 15, flat-footed 11 (+3 Dex, +1 dodge, +1 size)		
<b>hp</b> 19 (3d8+6)		
<b>Fort</b> +3, <b>Ref</b> +6, <b>Will</b> +1		
<b>OFFENSE</b>		
<b>Speed</b> 30 ft.		
<b>Melee</b> spear +4 (1d6+1/x3)		
<b>Ranged</b> net +6 (special)		
<b>Special Attacks</b> steal fire		
<b>STATISTICS</b>		
<b>Str</b> 13, <b>Dex</b> 17, <b>Con</b> 15, <b>Int</b> 12, <b>Wis</b> 10, <b>Cha</b> 14		
<b>Base Atk</b> +2; <b>CMB</b> +2; <b>CMD</b> 16		
<b>Feats</b> Dodge, Stealthy		
<b>Skills</b> Escape Artist +5, Profession (fisherman) +9, Sleight of Hand +5, Stealth +14, Survival +4, Swim +10; <b>Racial Modifiers</b> +4 Profession (fisherman), +4 Swim		
<b>Languages</b> Common, Goblin		
<b>ECOLOGY</b>		
<b>Environment</b> temperate or warm forests or coasts		
<b>Organization</b> solitary, family (2–7), or tribe (8–28)		
<b>Treasure</b> standard (net, 3 spears, other small treasures)		

**SPECIAL ABILITIES**

**Steal Fire (Su)** As a standard action, a kijimuna can call out to a nonmagical fire within 30 feet equivalent in size to the flames of a burning torch. Doing so causes the flame to become a light similar to that created by a *dancing lights* spell, under the control of the kijimuna. An attended object can make a DC 13 Reflex saving throw to avoid this effect. Unlike a *dancing lights* spell, a kijimuna's steal fire ability can cause a stolen fire to strike a creature, either ringing the target in light as per the spell *faerie fire* for 5 minutes, or dealing 2d6 points of fire damage (DC 13 Reflex, half). Both save DCs are Charisma-based. A lantern, candle, torch, or similar item that has its flame stolen cannot be relit by any means for 24 hours.

The childlike kijimunas bear physical similarities to their Inner Sea cousins, the goblins, sharing their small size, leathery skin, and large, pointed ears. However, kijimunas' hair stands out as their most prominent features—long, wild manes of blazing red. These tricky creatures nearly always wear devilish grins, causing some who first see them to mistake them for trouble-making urchins.

Kijimunas take pleasure in two pastimes: fishing and playing pranks. When a kijimuna grows distracted from its catch, it seeks out targets for its practical jokes. These hijinks often prove relatively harmless, but some escalate to the point of becoming injurious or potentially lethal. Most kijimunas genuinely do not understand how their “play” frustrates, harms, or otherwise impacts the targets of their tricks and are insulted when victims become angry rather than seeing the comedy of the situation. The insulted kijimunas then take retribution the only way they know how: with more elaborate pranks.

A kijimuna stands only about 3 feet tall and weighs approximately 50 pounds. Its size belies its sinewy strength, gained from years of fishing and climbing tall banyan trees.

## ECOLOGY

Consummate fishermen, kijimunas while away the hours fishing on the shores of oceans or large lakes. Although they delight in the taste of fish—especially the eyes—they easily grow bored and become distracted, sometimes leaving their fishing spears and a pile of fish to rot onshore. The creatures alleviate their boredom by playing tricks on fishermen and villagers living near their cavern or treetop homes. A kijimuna makes every effort to hide its involvement in the tricks it pulls, more out of a sense of pride about a well-executed joke than fear of reprisal.

A young kijimuna grows to adulthood in a matter of 5 months, but retains its childish appearance for the entirety of its life. In the unlikely event that its activities don't cause its premature demise, the creature lives for about 15 years. An elderly kijimuna, having reached the ripe old age of 12, settles down and does little else beyond fish in solitude, except perhaps to bargain with children from nearby villages for its catch. It extracts a promise from a child in return for the fish, as well instructions for a devious prank or practical joke to pull on an elder.

Although their societies and world view differ wildly from those of the goblins of the Inner Sea Region and elsewhere in Golarion, physiologically kijimuna are little different. As true goblinoids, any sort of device, concoction, or magical effect that only affects goblins affects these erratic tricksters as well.

## HABITAT & SOCIETY

Tribes of kijimunas maintain small lairs in seaside caves, amid groves of banyan trees, or in other secluded, enclosed areas near the shore. Their homes typically stink of rotten fish from catches brought home and promptly forgotten, while the walls often bear half-completed diagrams of pranks members intend to pull on neighboring creatures. Kijimunas rarely pull pranks on each other, mostly because they hold their peoples'



cleverness in high regard, and believe that it's impossible to trick their own kind. Occasionally, however, some event leaves a kijimuna the victim of some accidental hilarity—well-placed meal scraps left on its face, tripping into a tide pool, falling down—such occurrences are the height of kijimuna comedy.

Much like their Inner Sea cousins, kijimunas have a strong, bizarre hatred for a particular creature—in this case, the octopus. When faced with octopuses, kijimunas either flee in terror or desperately attack, their whoops and howls vastly exaggerating the threat the cephalopods pose. Kijimunas often share frightening stories about octopuses at night, scaring one another with fearful tales of squirming tentacles and clutching suckers. Occasionally these stories incite groups to action, leading them to go on raids of local tide pools and rocky beaches where the sea creatures regularly lurk. The resulting battles prove loud but brief, with skewered octopuses and the occasional “hostage” taken as supplies for the goblinoids' most startling jokes.

Kijimunas have few strong feelings about other animals, especially as predators more dangerous than large lizards and the occasional hunting cat rarely occupy the same lands that they do. They delight in sharing their homes with large tropical birds, however, a sentiment that is hardly reciprocated, as they frequently employ the creatures (and the creatures' eggs) in their pranks and take endless delight in mimicking the birds' squawking. Spiders, with their numerous legs, are generally avoided by kijimuna, many of which suspect the insects might be just miniature octopuses in disguise.

Kijimunas share goblins' affinity for fire, but this attraction manifests in a less overtly destructive way. These creatures have developed secret techniques allowing them to befriend small fires, calling such flames to them to light their paths, lead travelers into their pranks, or steal a lantern's ability to hold a light. No kijimunas remember how their people managed to make friends with small fires, just that they did a long time ago. Large fires remain dangerous to kijimunas, however, and not only do they have no power over such blazes, but they generally have nothing pleasant to say about any flame larger than a campfire.

Kijimunas often form relationships with other humanoids who fish along the same shore. Some befriend such creatures, eagerly sharing all manner of trivial secrets—where the best fishing spots are, what trees grow the stinkiest fruit, and which rocks octopuses hardly ever visit. As a show of friendship, kijimunas make their companions favored targets for particularly embarrassing practical jokes.

Those of a superstitious bent view kijimunas as evil spirits, pointing to the ghostly flames that often follow

the creatures and their mischievous behavior as proof. Once in a while, someone discovers kijimunas' hatred for octopuses and carries one around as a ward. This typically backfires spectacularly, as the kijimunas then focus their ire on the person—who is obviously some sort of octopus spy or ally. Kijimunas reserve their most elaborate tricks for cephalopod sympathizers.

The only counter to most humanoids' distrust and wariness regarding kijimunas manifests in times of famine or poor fishing seasons. In numerous such cases, a town on the brink of starvation has found its food stores replenished on a daily basis by an energized tribe of kijimunas, as these creatures apply their considerable fishing talents to feed their neighbors. After all, kijimunas realize that corpses are considerably less entertaining than living creatures, especially when serving as the butts of jokes. Thus, most communities accept that if their benefactors happen to play a trick or two on them, matters could be far worse.





## THE OLD MAN

*This old human man is bald, with long white eyebrows and an even longer white beard. He is dressed in an embroidered robe, wears wooden sandals, and carries a staff adorned with metal rings.*

### THE OLD MAN

CR 15



XP 51,200

LN Medium outsider (extraplanar, lawful)

**Init** +10; **Senses** blindsight 30 ft., darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception +30

### DEFENSE

**AC** 37, touch 35, flat-footed 26 (+10 Dex, +1 dodge, +4 monk, +10 Wis, +2 natural)

**hp** 178 (17d10+85); regeneration 15 (chaotic)

**Fort** +10, **Ref** +20, **Will** +20

**Defensive Abilities** improved evasion; DR 10/chaotic; **Immune** disease, poison; **Resist** acid 30, cold 30, electricity 30, fire 30, sonic 30; SR 26

### OFFENSE

**Speed** 80 ft., climb 30 ft., swim 30 ft.

**Melee** unarmed strike +22/+17/+12/+7 (2d8+5) or flurry of blows +20/+20/+15/+15/+10/+10/+5 (2d8+5)

**Ranged** pebble +27/+22/+17/+12 (1d3+5)

**Special Attacks** stunning fist (16/day, DC 28)

**Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 17th; concentration +23)

7/day—*air walk, augury, cure light wounds, dimension door, invisibility, true strike, water walk*

3/day—*commune, haste, heal, legend lore*

### STATISTICS

**Str** 20, **Dex** 31, **Con** 20, **Int** 21, **Wis** 31, **Cha** 22

**Base Atk** +17; **CMB** +27 (+31 grapple); **CMD** 57 (59 vs. trip)

**Feats** Agile Maneuvers, Combat Expertise, Dodge, Greater Grapple, Improved Disarm, Improved Grapple, Improved Trip, Improved Unarmed Strike<sup>B</sup>, Mobility, Stunning Fist<sup>B</sup>, Weapon Finesse<sup>B</sup>, Wind Stance

**Skills** Acrobatics +30 (+66 when jumping), Climb +13, Diplomacy +23, Handle Animal +14, Heal +16, Knowledge (history) +22, Knowledge (religion) +14, Perception +30, Perform (string) +23, Ride +27, Sense Motive +30, Sleight of Hand +30, Stealth +30, Swim +30

**Languages** Common, Tien, Vudrani; telepathy 100 ft.

**SQ** monk abilities

### ECOLOGY

**Environment** any land

**Organization** solitary

**Treasure** standard

### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Monk Abilities** The Old Man has the following abilities of a 16th-level monk: AC bonus (+4), fast movement (80 ft.), high jump, ki pool (18 points, adamantine, magic), quivering palm (DC 28), slow fall (70 ft.), stunning fist (blinded, deafened, fatigued, staggered, or stunned)

The Old Man is the herald of Irori, a teacher, mentor, guide, and trainer in the service of the god of knowledge. He can be patient or irate, confusing or enlightening, lenient or strict, depending on what his students need. He often wanders Golarion as a mortal man, bereft of his supernatural powers, instructing others and leading by example. If attacked when in this limited shape, he usually allows himself to be beaten or killed, especially if his “death” would provide a powerful lesson to an important student. If slain as a mortal, he simply reincarnates in his celestial form, unharmed, and never bears a grudge about it.

The Old Man’s true form is that of an elderly human man, perhaps of Tien or Vudrani ancestry but never clearly identifiable as such. He is typically bald and wiry, and usually wears a long white moustache or beard. Though he appears frail and may support himself with a cane, crutch, or staff, he is incredibly strong and can move with an alien grace when he so chooses. He may dress in a simple robe, an elaborate ceremonial garment, or a simple loincloth. He is often accompanied by one of five animals: a turtle, monkey, ox, rooster, or pig.

When not acting on Irori’s behalf, he likes tending to animals, planting gardens, meditating, practicing martial arts forms, swimming, and quipping with pretty young students.

## ECOLOGY

The Old Man enjoys exceedingly spicy food, good wine, hearty bread, plain rice, seasoned noodles, and many other kinds of Tien and Vudrani food. He of course does not need to eat, but he enjoys the taste and the act of sharing a friendly meal with mortals. He is normally an example of moderation, but once each year he indulges himself in an episode of gluttony and excess, telling raucous jokes, challenging others to wrestling matches, and pinching bottoms. His antics are meant in good fun, and the targets are usually folks too full of their own superiority to recognize their shortcomings—folks who could stand a good roast, throwdown, or goosing.

The Old Man exists mainly to teach, but takes violent action when necessary to protect something of value to his god or destroy a threat to Irori’s church. Because he can deal with threats in a nonlethal manner, he may try to subdue and humble an opponent who is merely arrogant or misguided rather than malevolent, but when necessary he has been known to crush the skulls of giants with his bare hands and break the spine of a raging dragon. When in battle, he takes great care to avoid damaging mortal structures, especially places of study, worship, or meditation, preferring to lure his opponents elsewhere—often by pretending to be a coward.

## HABITAT & SOCIETY

The Old Man loves to see people achieving their potential, even if a person’s lifetime limits that potential.



He enjoys watching over favored students in successive lifetimes, guiding them in different ways each time. His soul is that of a teacher, and sometimes he claims to be one of Irori's first followers when the god was just a great mortal. If a person genuinely asks him for help with something (as opposed to an enemy asking as part of a ruse), he can't help but offer some assistance or guidance, even if he can only contribute a strong back and steady hands—but only if the person asking would otherwise be willing to do the work without help. He often says, "It is not enough to pray for a thing; you must work for it—the work is the prayer." The faithful claim that he has helped build hundreds of temples in Vudra, whether by moving heavy stones or simply carrying meals to hungry workers, never revealing his true identity or asking for payment, but accepting simple things if offered, such as a loaf of bread, a cup of wine, or a bowl of rice.

When called to Golarion with mortal magic, the Old Man is not so generous with his efforts, for he feels that anyone powerful enough to call him can afford to pay for his services. He is not interested in gold and jewels, but accepts magic items that can aid young monks in their training and travels; rare books of history that contain valuable anecdotes; magic that increases Intelligence or Wisdom; and pledges to build or restore temples, shrines, schools, and monasteries of Irori in places that could benefit from such attention. While he often proves curt when summoned, he quickly assesses the honest needs of whoever called him and proves quick to act if their wishes parallel the will of Irori.

In battle, the Old Man is fierce and direct in his attacks and elusive and flexible in his defense. He often uses his abilities to make himself nearly impossible to hit, striking carefully at his opponent to weaken or disable it so he can finish it off quickly. He prefers fighting with his hands or simple weapons such as a club or a staff, and against flying foes he throws individual pebbles the size of sling bullets, usually picking up a handful at a time but sometimes pulling them out of thin air. After a

battle, followers of Irori look for any pebbles touched by the Old Man, noting the impressions of his fingerprints in the stones and the subtle aura of Irori's blessing. The followers use the pebbles thereafter as reliquaries in a temple or shrine, or incorporate them into magic items or simple jewelry.

Sometimes, if the Old Man thinks a dangerous foe can be humbled by a crippling injury and might alter its character because of this, he tries to put out one of an enemy's eyes to teach it a lesson, and only destroys its other eye if the creature continues to fight (see page 193 of *Pathfinder RPG Ultimate Combat* for details on called shots). He uses his maneuverability on land, air, and water to his best advantage, especially if he can slow an opponent in difficult terrain. He considers no creature to be his enemy, but willingly battles those who choose to be his opponent.

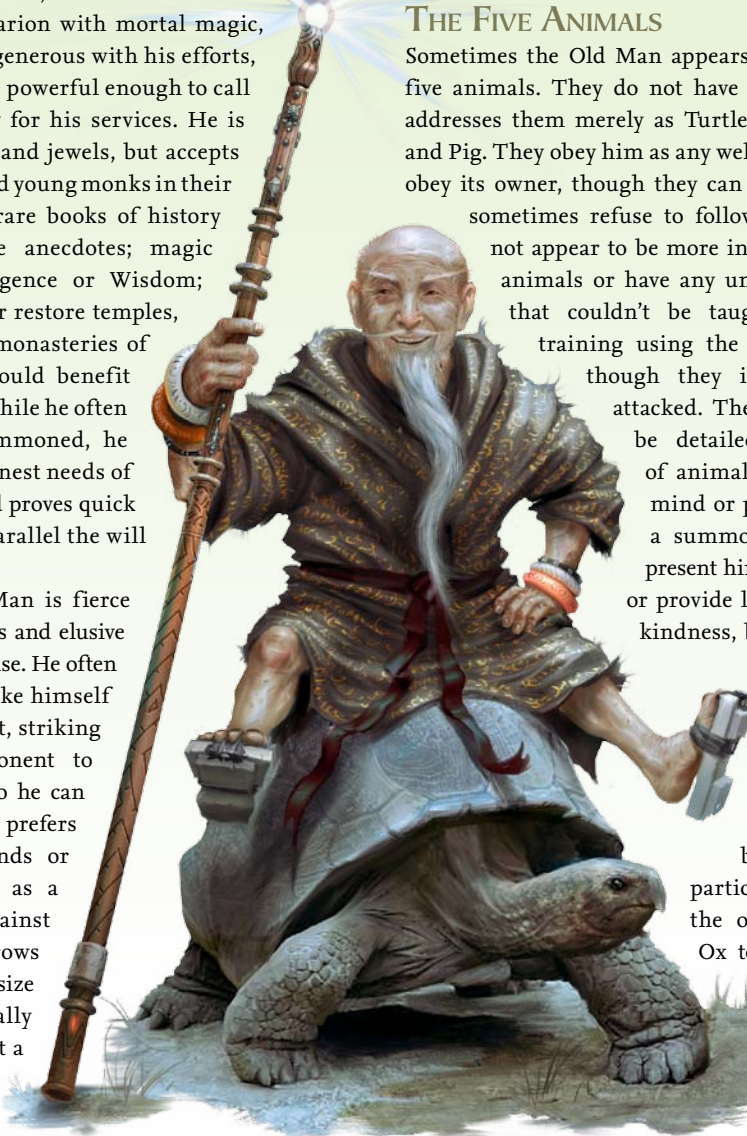
### THE FIVE ANIMALS

Sometimes the Old Man appears or travels with one of five animals. They do not have unique names, and he addresses them merely as Turtle, Monkey, Ox, Rooster, and Pig. They obey him as any well-trained animal might obey its owner, though they can be temperamental and sometimes refuse to follow commands. They do

not appear to be more intelligent than common animals or have any unusual powers (nothing that couldn't be taught with conventional training using the Handle Animal skill),

though they immediately vanish if attacked. The animals may actually be detailed, lifelike projections of animals from the Old Man's mind or perhaps something like a summoner's eidolon, used to present himself as a common man or provide lessons on patience and kindness, but he treats them as if

they were individual living creatures he has known for a long time. There may be a secret significance to which animal he brings with him for a particular task (other than the obvious, such as using Ox to pull a plough, which of course Rooster cannot do), but his followers have been unable to spot a pattern in these choices.





# JADE REGENT

## ONI, EARTH YAI

Jagged cracks and pebbled growths mar the surface of this three-eyed giant's rocky skin, making it appear to have burst forth from rugged stone.

ONI, EARTH YAI

CR 13



XP 25,600

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

Init +6; Senses darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision;

Perception +17

### DEFENSE

AC 29, touch 15, flat-footed 23 (+6 Dex, +14 natural, -1 size)

hp 184 (16d10+96); regeneration 5 (acid or fire)

Fort +16, Ref +11, Will +14

SR 24

### OFFENSE

Speed 50 ft., fly 50 ft. (good)

Melee greatclub +23/+18/+13/+8 (2d8+12) or

2 slams +23 (1d10+8)



Ranged stony missile +21 (3d6 plus awesome blow)

Space 10 ft.; Reach 10 ft.

Special Attacks spiky skin

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 16th; concentration +18)

Constant—fly

At will—darkness, invisibility (self only), passwall (stone only)

3/day—spike stones (DC 16), stone shape, stone tell

1/day—earthquake, repel metal or stone, transmute mud to

rock (DC 17), transmute rock to mud (DC 17)

### STATISTICS

Str 27, Dex 22, Con 23, Int 12, Wis 14, Cha 15

Base Atk +16; CMB +25; CMD 41

Feats Combat Reflexes, Improved Precise Shot, Intimidating

Prowess, Iron Will, Pinpoint Targeting, Point-Blank Shot,

Power Attack, Precise Shot

Skills Bluff +21, Fly +27, Intimidate +29, Knowledge (arcana) +20,

Perception +21, Sense Motive +21, Stealth +21 (+29 in rocky

terrain); Racial Modifiers +8 Stealth in rocky terrain

Languages Common, Giant

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

### ECOLOGY

Environment temperate mountains

Organization solitary, band (1 plus 4–8 stone giants), or tribe

(1 plus 2–3 stone giant elders and 10–20 stone giants)

Treasure standard

### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Spiky Skin (Ex)** An earth yai may grow spikes from its stony skin at will as a free action. These spikes are treated as armor spikes that deal 1d10 points of damage.

**Stony Missile (Su)** As a swift action, an earth yai can fire an incredibly dense stone from its third eye. This attack has a range of 200 feet, with no range increment, and deals 3d6 points of bludgeoning damage. Upon striking the target, the stone immediately makes an Awesome Blow attempt against the target using the earth yai's CMB.

Although they possess the rocky physiques and near indestructibility of stone giants, earth yai scorn that race's humble ambitions, and instead prove as brutal and destructive as avalanches. For them, physical force and destruction are the ultimate demonstration of power. This belief doesn't necessarily require them to be the strongest or to go on gory rampages, though. After all, what is mere strength if a soldier can fire a catapult that brings down an entire tower, or an emperor can give the decree beginning a war that ravages an entire empire, using both their tools and words to sow ruin. Such ability to cause calamity grants one power over others; those who have the potential to cause the greatest devastation have the greatest power. Earth yai endlessly seek to hold the



greatest power, leading many to become brutal warlords or bandit kings, but some to embrace more subtle, long-term machinations in their pursuit of gradual and far-reaching ruin.

In its natural form, an earth yai stands 16 feet tall and weighs 3,000 pounds.

## ECOLOGY

Earth yai possess forms similar to the rocky bodies of the stone giants their otherworldly shapes mimic. While stone giants often appear to be sculpted from rock, earth yai tend to have a more rugged appearance, with features that seem to have been clawed from mountainsides, teeth and claws like sharp stones, and three eyes like angry red gems. Their skin is always as hard as rock, the cracks and ravines that riddle their bodies having no impact on their formidable resilience.

Like their yai brethren, earth yai possess an unnerving third eye that serves as a portal through which destruction passes. Whenever one so chooses, it can cause a shard of stone to blast from its eye at the speed of a catapult shot. Those struck risk being crushed by the rock, but might also be thrown aside by the sizable projectile. Earth yai typically use this incredible ability not only to annihilate those who oppose them and intimidate witnesses, but also to tear down larger structures or sow greater devastations, like by using it to start landslides, break dams, or destroy bridge supports.

## HABITAT & SOCIETY

Earth yai dream of conquest like many other oni, but how they pursue victory tends to vary from individual to individual. While all would agree that victory is only attained when one's foes are crushed and shattered, the methods used to accomplish this goal range from brute displays of power to the slow erosion of a foe till nothing remains. The scope of an earth yai's ambitions also seems largely dependent on its age, with younger oni proving content to raid territories and subjugate peasant villages, while older individuals seek greater conquests and the destruction of whole lands.

Earth yai enjoy the moment when their long-term plans reach fruition, and might spend decades reveling in past successes before moving on to new conquests. An earth yai who manages to conquer a community or subjugate a region might spend this time acting as a brutal tyrant, installing itself in a palace or fortress and demanding that its slaves supply its every whim. Those who refuse are dramatically murdered. While one of these oni would never give up past conquests, most earth yai eventually grow bored and seek new challenges—if such opportunities don't present themselves during the oni's rule. These oni might move on to find new opponents, but

still regularly return to their past holdings to reinforce their control and instill dread among their prisoners.

While an earth yai does not have the greatest intelligence and cannot necessarily outwit a wise hero, most possess deep wells of patience and centuries of experience. An oni who finds itself bested time and time again might wait out foes or opposing alliances. Their ages of experience mean that earth yai can generally discern the amount of time they must wait before a threat to them passes—perhaps with the help of a few inconvenient disasters to accelerate an enemy's decline.

When two or more earth yai encounter one another, they invariably engage in an extended strategic match, seeking to undermine and outdo each other in acts of cleverness and violence. All earth yai know that a battle between two of their kind must end in a face-to-face confrontation and brutal combat. Occasions for assassination or impersonal defeats might arise in such conflicts, but they are never exploited. These oni see a final battle between members of their kind as a form of honor, and all seek to avoid slighting even their weakest or most reviled kindred.

Although all earth yai dream of being the masters of regal citadels dominating lands filled with fearful servants, few actually achieve this goal. Those still campaigning for their despotic dreams typically find lairs in mazelike mountain ravines and in large caverns near the earth's surface. These hideaways can prove notoriously difficult to uncover, as the oni often make use of their *passwall* ability to sink through solid barriers or walk past gates that don't appear to be portals at all. There they meditate and plot, seeing all the threads of probable events in their minds and determining which ones they need to pull on to shape the future to their liking. If any creature interrupts an oni in its lair, the oni violently attacks, viewing intruders as not just dangerous, but dishonorable, as they trespass upon the oni's private home. This obsession with privacy extends not just to yai in their secret lairs, but also to those with greater holdings. Most earth yai only tolerate creatures of living stone to share their homes, and only bear the intrusion of lesser creatures when they themselves demand the lesser creatures' presence.

## EARTH YAI DAIFU

Just as stone giants develop a variety of special abilities related to their age, so too do earth yai grow in power as their years mount upon them. Known as daifus, such earth yai have Charisma scores of at least 20 and can use the following spell-like abilities once per day: *stoneskin*, *summon monster XI* (earth elementals only), *wall of stone*. Most earth yai daifus are sorcerers or oracles with abilities tied to the earth or destruction. Earth yai daifus add +1 to their CRs.



## RAIJU

The air around this strange, pale animal sparks with erratic flashes of static electricity, its body constantly twitching as if filled to capacity with the energy. It suddenly perks up, alert and seemingly ready to bolt.

**RAIJU**

**CR 5**



**XP 1,600**

CN Small outsider (air, extraplanar, shapechanger)

**Init** +8; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +9

### DEFENSE

**AC** 19, touch 15, flat-footed 15 (+4 Dex, +4 natural, +1 size)

**hp** 51 (6d10+18)

**Fort** +8, **Ref** +11, **Will** +2

**Immune** electricity

### OFFENSE

**Speed** 40 ft., fly 60 ft. (good)

**Melee** 2 claw +8 (1d3+1 plus 1d6 electricity), tail slap +3 (1d4 plus 1d6 electricity)

**Special Attacks** shocking burst

**Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 5)

3/day—*call lightning*

1/day—*control weather* (thunderstorm only)

### STATISTICS

**Str** 12, **Dex** 19, **Con** 16, **Int** 5, **Wis** 11, **Cha** 10

**Base Atk** +6; **CMB** +6; **CMD** 20 (24 vs. trip)

**Feats** Combat Reflexes, Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes

**Skills** Acrobatics +10 (+14 when jumping), Fly +19, Perception +9

**Languages** Auran

**SQ** change shape (Small animal only), electric body

### ECOLOGY

**Environment** any land or sky (lightning storms)

**Organization** solitary, pair, or group (3–12)

**Treasure** None

### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Change Shape (Su)** On the Material Plane, a raiju typically assumes the form of a badger, cat, giant rat, monkey, weasel, or wolf (as per *beast shape II*) to blend in with native wildlife. Even in these forms, however, it typically has pale coloration and lightninglike patterns.

**Electric Body (Su)** As an immediate action, a raiju can transform itself into a ball of living lightning. While in this form, the raiju gains the incorporeal subtype and incorporeal quality. It only takes half damage from corporeal sources if they are magical (it takes no damage from nonmagical weapons and objects). Additionally, it sparks with electricity while it is in this form. Any creature that touches the raiju with a natural or unarmed attack or whose square the raiju passes through during its movement must succeed at a DC 17 Reflex save or take 2d6 points of electricity damage. The save DC is Dexterity-based. In normal weather, a raiju can remain incorporeal for a

number of rounds per day equal to its Hit Dice, though it can remain incorporeal for as long as it pleases during a thunderstorm.

**Shocking Burst (Su)** Besides dealing normal slashing damage, the claw and tail of a raiju are considered to have the shocking burst weapon special quality. They deal 1d6 extra points of electrical damage on a normal hit and an additional 1d10 points on a critical hit.

Raijus are beings of living electricity that cross the border between the mundane world and their native plane, a region of the Plane of Air alive with endless thunderstorms. Raijus can be involuntarily hurled across the dimensions by a powerful lightning bolt originating in the Plane of Air, or might be called by magic users to do their bidding. When the weather is calm, raijus are quiet, and assume the forms of Tiny or Small animals such as cats, raccoon dogs, monkeys, or weasels. As weather gets worse, however, so do their tempers. In their real form, raijus appear as lean, foxlike creatures with long, sharp claws and luminous eyes, shrouded by crackling electricity. These swift, even panicky, creatures are charged with the electricity of their native realm, and those who touch them risk receiving a deadly shock. In times of great distress, they transform entirely into living electricity, a force that few barriers can contain and even fewer creatures can survive the passage of.

In their natural forms, raijus measure about 3-1/2 feet long and weigh 40 pounds, but they often take the form of small mammals when not on the Plane of Air. They can be still recognized as raijus in this form, however, as they bear markings suggestive of jagged lightning.

## ECOLOGY

When they are born on the Elemental Plane of Air, raijus are semi-sentient, formless spheres of living electricity. Only after a period of weeks or months do they gradually take on a favored form, that of a vaguely rodent- or caninelike beast, agile enough to twist and bound amid the endless storms and debris that soar through their home plane. Sometimes particularly powerful elemental storms, strange eddies of magic, or drifting portals bring raijus to the Material Plane. When this happens, invariably during a thunderstorm, the creature spends but a little time regaining its bearings; it then uses its innate shapechange power to blend in with the local fauna, taking on the shape of a local animal—typically a cat, raccoon dog, monkey, or weasel. While such raijus constantly seek to return to their home plane, they aren't terribly uncomfortable on the Material Plane. When the weather is calm, raijus are likewise quiet, and remain in their apparently harmless animal forms all the time. As weather gets worse, however, they become increasingly



energetic, racing and soaring about in rampages that occasionally prove accidentally destructive. They typically resume their natural forms during such storms, reveling in their memories of their home plane. Some scholars believe that rajjus can return to their native plane when lightning strikes them, thus explaining the creatures' eagerness and agitation during such weather.

### HABITAT & SOCIETY

Rajjus are extraplanar creatures that have little organization on their home plane, roaming and romping as little more than wild animals in their dangerous planar wilderness. On the Material Plane, they gravitate toward areas where storms are frequent, or where the effects of lightning are apparent. This means they frequently occupy the windward sides of mountains and wet forests, eagerly making small dens in the trunks of lightning-blasted trees or scorched, rocky crevices.

Rajjus can live on the Material Plane indefinitely, though all seek ways they might return to the Elemental Plane of Air. Those separated from their native plane rarely manage to find their way home without the intervention of some other being. Although life on the Material Plane often means a rajju will never encounter others of its kind again, few seem to realize this fact, or, if they do, become despondent over it. Rather, many rajjus adopt the habits and communities of the creatures they spend the most time imitating and live as such creatures—except, of course, during violent lightning storms.

Many believe that despite their destructive natures, rajjus are good luck. This belief comes from the creatures' propensity for finding warm spots to nestle into and rest in during the lazy times between storms. One story tells of a rajju that found a snug spot in the navel of a sleeping giant. The giant was exhausted after a day of tromping on a local town and stealing away an entire year's harvest of rice, so it didn't even notice the sleeping creature. When the giant finally awoke and felt the dozing creature's claws on its belly, it flew into a panicked rage. The sudden activity startled the sleeping rajju, and it immediately summoned a storm and called down lightning, which promptly electrocuted the giant—killing the villain on the spot. When the curious townsfolk saw the brief, explosive storm nearby, they stopped rebuilding their homes and came to investigate. What they found was a charred giant and a sleepy rajju, nestled amid their stolen rice. Rajjus have been considered lucky spirits ever since, though many refuse to sleep face up during lightning storms lest their bellies seem like a comfortable place for a rajju to rest.

### KAENJU

This rarer variant of the rajju dwells upon the Plane of Fire, in regions filled with smoke and wracked by firestorms and endless volcanic eruptions. Just as their kin from the Plane of Air, kaenjus may visit mundane worlds during volcanic eruptions or when huge fires devastate towns or forests. A kaenju is very similar to its cousin, but its substance is made of fire instead of lightning.

**Defensive Abilities:** Kaenjus have the fire subtype (immunity to fire, vulnerability to cold) and resistance 10 to lightning. **Special Attacks:** A kaenju's tail and claws are considered flaming burst weapons.

**Special Qualities:** All kaenjus' supernatural abilities are based on flame instead of lightning, and have the same effects but deal fire damage instead of electricity damage. Also, instead of a rajju's spell-like abilities, a kaenju can cast *produce flame* at will, and *flaming sphere* and *quench* 3 times per day.





## THE EMPTY THRONE

War has come to Minkai! As the resistance rises against the Jade Regent's tyranny, the PCs must escort their friend Ameiko to one final site—the Imperial Shrine on a hidden island in the capital's harbor. Here, Ameiko and the PCs must seek the blessing of Minkai's dead emperors if they hope to have a chance to liberate the nation, but even in this most sacred resting place the Five Storms and the Jade Regent have their influence, and the heroes must defeat hungry demons and ravenous ghosts before the ancestor spirits of the empire will give their blessings. Only then can the PCs take the battle to the Imperial Palace and confront the Jade Regent and his allies in the Five Storms.

## CONTINUING THE CAMPAIGN

The Jade Regent Adventure Path may be coming to a close, but that doesn't mean your campaign needs to! Take inspiration from this collection of possible plots for high-level adventures, giving you plenty of resources for furthering your exploration of the mystical Dragon Empires or pressing on to see what other mysteries lie beyond the edges of the map.

## KASAI GAZETTEER

Discover majestic and mysterious Kasai, capital of the Empire of Minkai. Learn what secrets lurk amid the streets and alleys of this ancient city, from ports bustling with exotic treasures and schools steeped in the secrets of martial masters and accursed temples and the imperial palace itself. Danger and wonders await in the greatest city of mythical Minkai.

## AND MORE

Betrayal and revelation mark the final chapter of Dave Gross's *Pathfinder's Journal*. Also, urban terrors from the legends of Japan haunt the latest entry into the *Pathfinder Bestiary*.

## SUBSCRIBE TO PATHFINDER ADVENTURE PATH

The Jade Regent Adventure Path concludes next month! Don't miss out on the deadly climax of this epic campaign—venture over to [paizo.com/pathfinder](http://paizo.com/pathfinder) and subscribe today! Have each Pathfinder Adventure Path, Pathfinder Campaign Setting, Pathfinder Module, Pathfinder Player Companion, Pathfinder Tales, and GameMastery product delivered to your door! Also, download the free *Jade Regent Player's Guide*, available now!

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## WINDS OF REVOLUTION

Despite the hidden hand of the oni of the Five Storms reaching across Minkai, the people have not lost their sense of pride or tradition, and the ancient ways of the empire persevere in artistry, craftsmanship, business, courtesy, and innumerable other forms. As the people feel the shadowy but ever-tightening grip of the oni invaders, it is in these ancient ways that their discontent first takes shape. Even now, in the baths, tea shops, geisha houses, markets, and homes of the Minkaians, word spreads of dark days and rising unease—winds of discontent that may hint at a coming season of revolution.



## A HUNDRED STORIES

The cruel beings known as oni are not the only things to lurk and plot in the dark places of Minkai. For all its centuries of existence and grand civilization, the empire still holds shadows where beings elusive, perverse, and deadly make their lairs and prey upon the unwary. Ask any Tian-Mins about the legends of their home, and alongside the stories of great heroes and disguised deities they'll weave tales of horror, of beings that lurk in murky pools or ambush those who tarry upon lonely trails. And for all the mystery and terror of such stories, no detail is more frightening than the fact that most are true.



# THE SEEDS OF REBELLION

The heroes arrive in Minkai only to discover an empire on its knees. The Jade Regent has twisted the ruling government to cater to his despotic whims, and throughout the realm the people suffer. Before the PCs can attempt to stand against the tyrant and liberate Minkai, they must first earn the trust of its people and recruit aid from across the beleaguered empire—all the while dodging murderous oni and deadly ninjas controlled by the Five Storms. Defeating bandits who ride forth from a hidden fortress, rescuing a famous geisha from a deadly island prison, and standing tall before a corrupt daimyo's army of samurai are all in a day's work for the hopeful liberators of the empire.

This volume of *Pathfinder Adventure Path* includes:

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